



# Me & the Devil

**A Blues Chamber Larp**  
**for 5-6 people**  
**By Irene Oppo**

# Me and the Devil

## Setting

Me & The Devil is a chamber larp for 5–6 players, it takes approximately 2 hours to complete and does not need a facilitator, all attendees can play. One of the players will interpret the devil.

The game is set inside a juke joint in the United States during the time of prohibition. A juke joint or barrel house was a clandestine establishment run mainly by Afro-Americans, where music was played, people danced, drank illegal alcohol and gambled.

After a hard day's work, you and the other characters find yourselves at a table in the Ol'House, looking for a well-deserved game of poker and merry with a few drops of moonshine. As you get to the heart of the game, you discover that among your group, there is an intruder who ups stakes and pushes you beyond your limits. Even worse, they know your weaknesses and are willing to exploit them.

“Me & The Devil” is an asymmetric game that simulates the stakes and tension of facing something infinitely greater. Playing for your life, immersed in a mystical, smoky blues atmosphere.



# Preparing the Game

The game takes place around a candlelit table. A gramophone plays warm and melancholic blues melodies from the very depth of the Mississippi delta. You will play a group of workers among which the Devil is hidden in disguise.

Henceforth, we will call the all characters “Souls”.

## Required materials:

- **A table**, or other flat surface, to play poker on.
- **A “bar counter”** Any surface will do as long as it is a few feet away from the poker table.
- **A deck of playing cards**, prepared according to the rules of 5-card poker. These rules and how to prepare the deck can be found at the end of this booklet.
- **Poker chips**. These can be represented by makeshift replacements, candies, monopoly bills or even real money, up to you the group to decide what you want to use.
- **4 or 5 wax or led candles**. The amount should be the amount of Souls present minus one.
- **Printouts of the Souls’ fates**. See below.
- **A device that plays the playlist**. You can play it from [Spotify](#), [download it from the site](#) or play it directly from your browser [here](#).
- **Pen and paper**
- **Something to drink (optional)**
- **Name tags (optional)**



## Setting the game stage

- The candles, the deck of cards and the glasses must be placed on the game table.
- On the other surface, which represents the bar counter, the remaining chips are placed. You can add bottles and glasses so that it looks like a bar counter here too.
- The printed and folded (so that they are not legible) Fates should be placed on the bar counter next to the chips and bottles. Arrange them in two piles, **one for the Devil** and **one for the Souls**. Make sure that the order of the fates in the stacks is the same as in this document.
- You can choose to print the 5-card poker rules and place them on the counter as if they were posted in the juke joint.

## Player preparations

- **Costumes or other time-accurate paraphernalia.** These are optional but recommended.
- **Poker chips.** Each soul receives the same amount before game start: use \$60 if six Souls attend, or \$50 if five Souls attend.
- **2 and Joker playing cards.** All 2 and joker cards are considered fluke cards, and each Soul should receive one at the start of the game. You can put it in your pocket or up your sleeves. (tip: a rubber band can help it stay in place.)



# Running the game

Before starting, read these meta-techniques and narrative tools carefully.

## Poker

The game takes place during a game of 5-card draw poker, so all players should familiarize with the rules, that you can find at the end of the document. Don't worry, you don't have to be a skilled player to play Me & The Devil! The 5 card draw version is really simple, and it takes one or two rounds to get the gist of it, and moreover there are meta-techniques that help you with your luck!

## Flukes

All 2's and jokers are special cards, and they will be called from now on **"flukes"**, remove them from the deck before the game starts and distribute them among the attending souls.

When you show a fluke card at the moment of the showdown, you can declare any combination of poker you want, and the other will interpret that as a big stroke of luck.

For example: the round of betting is over, and Ronnie really wants to win the hand, so, when it's time to reveal his hand, he adds the fluke card to his 5 cards, and declares "Royal flush!". The other souls will use their mind's eye to see the declared hand instead of the real one he played and continue accordingly, cursing Ronnie for his lucky hand.

Flukes cards are tied to a soul, they cannot be traded to other souls during the game.

Should two or more flukes be played in the same round, the player who holds the most valuable hand beside his fluke card wins.

Played flukes cards are discarded in a separate discard deck on the table.

## Bankruptcy

Should you run out of chips, don't stop playing: ask for a loan from the other Souls.

## Game structure

The play takes place in three acts. The first act starts as soon as you enter the room and read your fate (see fates). The other two acts start when you hear the **tobacco factory whistle**. The end of the game will become clear to you once you get to read the third fate.

When you hear the **tobacco factory whistle** indicating the end of the first and second act, the poker game is paused, and the players take some time to “get a drink at the bar”. One by one, each soul goes to the bar counter where the fates are, and reads their fate from the Soul pile or the Devil pile, depending on your role. Once all souls have read their fate, the poker game resumes. Use this time also to chat about your life outside the poker game.

If you need to reread what is written in a fate or the rules of poker, just tell the others: **"I'm going to pour myself something else to drink"**, in this way you have an in-game excuse to get up and go to the counter to read.

## The Devil's Horns

The Devil will reveal themselves at some point in the game by making the **“devil's horns”** gesture: Index finger up, middle fingers down, pinky up, thumb in: the standard rock 'n' roll salute. 🙌

If the devil gives you a command making the horns gesture, you are forced to follow their instruction to the letter.

The souls should interpret seeing the gesture like this: for the briefest of moments in his glance, his smirk or smile, the devil has revealed his true appearance to the other souls, and you realize you are no longer just playing a game of poker. Be unsettled but don't over-act this moment as too shocking, the game must go on after all. Playing with the devil might be dangerous, but it's also an opportunity.

## Rules Summary

- **Flukes:** 2s and joker cards allow the soul to declare any poker combination and cannot be swapped. Once played, the flukes are discarded in a separate deck.
- **Devil's horns:** The Devil can make this gesture to give a command. The command must be executed verbatim.

- **Tobacco factory whistle:** When you hear the whistle, get up one by one to go and serve yourself a drink at the bar counter. Read your fate, Soul or Devil, that corresponds to the current act (II or III).
- **Pour you something to drink:** Use this phrase whenever you need to reread your fate or the poker rules (or actually getting something to drink).

## The Devil

In Me & The Devil, the character of the Devil is actually the Devil himself, with their tempting and mocking features of the 1920s blues imagery. In this lore, the devil is scary but also fascinating, and a striking a deal with them can make your most inner [dreams come true](#).

During the game, the character of the devil will have an important role in determining the pace and intensity of the game. They have to push their hand when needed and invite players to reveal their secrets. They must use their "power" responsibly: not to play above others, but to push them in order to make them step up their game. The Devil will also find additional rules and goals described in their fates.

The role of the devil will not be played by the facilitator but by one of the players, and you will have to decide who will do it. You can choose whether to make an election or draw it randomly. Whoever is chosen as the devil will initially have to hide their true identity and start the game just like all the other Souls. They will reveal their true self in due time using the devil's horns gesture.

### Electing the devil (requires an external facilitator)

Write three things on a ticket:

1. Your name
2. Yes or no, depending on whether you are willing to play the Devil
3. The name of one of the attending players that you think would be the most suited to play the Devil (yes, you can write your own name).

The facilitator will choose the Devil among those who are willing to play it, and based on the votes of the others. Then they will make everyone close their eyes and tap the elected Devil on the shoulder.

### **Drawing the Devil**

Make a deck of 4 or 5 random cards (the number of the players - 1), and add a joker card. Secretly deal the cards to each player. Everybody should watch their card and then close their eyes. If whoever has the joker feels like playing the devil, they will knock three times in the center of the table. If they do not feel like playing the devil, they will knock once and the draw will be redone.



# Cast of Characters

Print the pre-generated Souls you find below, and choose one. The characters are genderless, so feel free to play them with whatever gender you prefer. Remember that the devil too has to choose a character, because at the beginning they will play incognito.

If you want, you can also create a custom character. The only important thing is that none of the characters should have any special connection with the others.

Once everyone has chosen a character, think and write a short answer to these questions on a piece of paper:

- 1. What is your biggest regret?** (ex: I would like to have studied - I wanted to ask the florist on a date - I wanted to have children.)
- 2. What is your greatest desire?** (ex: Get rich - Take a trip to Europe - Become someone important.)

This piece of paper is folded and placed on the poker table in front of you, where you are sitting. During the game, the Devil will be able to read it to push you to reveal your secrets, or read them.

Now do a round of introductions: everyone says their soul's name and make up a reason why the other souls could have seen or noticed them in town.

For example: I'm Jules and I made a bad impression at the market once. - I'm Frankie and you saw me sing here once, I am Danny and I always try to sell junk in the corner of the main street, and so on.

# Safety

In this game, the Devil is encouraged to push the other souls to reveal their innermost desires and regrets using commands. The game is generally serene but, depending on the players' game style, can be quite an intense experience. Understanding how far you can push your fellow players should be something to discuss before starting the game.

Therefore, everyone is encouraged to take a few minutes to think and eventually communicate, topics that they do not wish to address during the game, and what kind of experience they are expecting from the game.

No topics should be forced on a player that does not want to address them.

Once this is done, take some time to familiarize with the safewords, **CUT or STOP**, that are used to regulate the intensity of the scenes, whenever it might feel uncomfortable.

## CUT

Use this word if you want to lower the intensity of the scene, but still wish to continue. (ex: Someone is screaming at you, and it's a bit intense, you'd like to continue but at a lower volume)

## STOP

Say this word if you need to interrupt interactions with your character. After stopping the scene, you can choose whether to exit the room and exit the game momentarily, and then perhaps return at a later time. When you feel ready to resume, just come back in and join the poker game again.

If necessary, the players can also pause the music to interrupt the game completely, perhaps take a moment to discuss and reflect on the scene and continue once everybody is comfortable again.



# Starting the Game

Once you've set up the poker table and bar counter, made the rounds of introductions and reviewed the rules, you're ready to play.

Light all the candles, turn off the lights and start the playlist. Feel the warmth of the blues, the scratchy atmosphere of the 20s in the USA and the humidity of the Mississippi delta.

Everyone leaves the room, and do remember to have with you your poker chips and your fluke card (a Joker or a 2 card). Once you step inside the room you are in game.

Every soul enters the room one at a time, leaving some time between the entrances. First go to the counter to "pour yourself a drink", and read fate number 1, then sit at the table. Then you can begin the poker game!

The end of the game will be described in fate number 3.

Once you've turned on the lights, take a few minutes to discuss your impressions of the game, what you enjoyed playing about your character, or how it felt to play against the real devil.

Thank you for playing Me & The Devil! **Feedback or comments are welcome**, send them to [oppo.irene@gmail.com](mailto:oppo.irene@gmail.com), or follow our [FB page](#)



# Souls

## **Tina/Tom "the hand" Constantine - the talented superstitious guitarist**

They would be a famous guitarist if any producer noticed them. And if only they weren't afraid of everything. They have a superstitious gesture for every concert, every meeting and everyday routines.

## **Smokey Jane/John - the anarchist bartender who smokes like a chimney**

Probably no one has ever actually seen Smokey's face, as it is always framed by a thick cloud of smoke. Smokey always says that there are no rules in their bar and that everyone is free to be as they want. The law is left outside. They welcome even the weirdest customer, and they are the only they can make fun of them, no one else should dare!

## **Baby Julia/Jules - the dreamer who doesn't know what to do with life**

To an intelligent, capable and quick-witted young person like them, the world seems like a showcase. They could be a writer, a painter, or a lawyer. Everyone does nothing but tell them how good and intelligent they are, but they don't know what to do with all their dreams. They just need some more inspiration! And maybe some money.

## **Ma/Pa Rooney - the magnetic singer who sticks to the bottle**

Mother/father of 4 children, Rooney tucks them in, every evening and then goes out for two, three, four shots down at the joint. There the tavern becomes their family, and when they take the stage they sing sweet songs, to warm the hearts of those who have worked all day. They drink the most, but in the end, it's always them who end up escorting drunks home.

## **Magic Tate - everyone's favorite homeless woman who does magic tricks**

Magic Tate lives on the street or, for some star alignment, hosted by some charitable soul. Everyone greets them on the street because they are always ready to lend a hand and often doesn't want anything in return. And of course they do some spectacular magic tricks!

**Regina/Ronnie "Lead Head" McTall, the illiterate who wants the emancipation of workers**

It's not right! The condition in which they and their companions are forced to work is not good! Paid seldom and too little. If only the other workers would get conscious about their potential, they would surely do something about it. "Let's fight the capitol!! Or something like that ..."

**Bo/Bessie "Spring" Gerard, the extravagant who wants to become a white collar**

Always in sight, everybody recognizes them because of her posture, her unmistakable way of smoking, and her sharp humor. They are sure that one day they will become a white collar.

**Dana/Danny "Love me" Matthews, the love addict looking for their other half**

Everyone has heard them at least once reciting poetry full of passion and poignant words in the middle of the street, sometimes dedicated to someone, sometimes to life, sometimes to nothing. Some say that without their opium pipes, they would collapse under the weight of all the love they have inside.

**Rockin' Frankie, the pianist without a finger who wants the limelight**

They learned to play the piano when they were only 4, and their talent was undeniable. They know they could have been someone if it hadn't been for that dramatic accident in which they lost their little finger. But all is not lost yet! (If you want you can use a rubber band to keep the little finger bent)

# Fate - The Devil

**!IMPORTANT, DO NOT READ THESE OUTSIDE OF THE GAME!**

## **The Devil - First act**

You are The Devil, and you are here to play. You decided to take control of the body of a worker that sold you their soul for a few pennies long ago and go down among the mortals to have some fun. Use the first act to observe these lost Souls, try to understand what their strengths and weaknesses are, and, most of all, try to make them to accept something from you.

There are a few additional rules that only the devil knows:

- The devil can't run out of money. If you see that you're running low on chips, go to the bar counter by saying that you are "going to get a drink" and get some more.
- Despite what could be deducted from the general rules, the devil cannot give commands to everybody. You can only control the Souls who have accepted money from you or played one of your personal fluke cards (more info about this in the second act). So don't hold back, raise bets, get them to spend money and ask you for a loan.



## The Devil - Second act

Make sure you've read well before jumping back into the game.

- Without getting noticed, take the deck of flukes that have been discarded. Use these flukes to win, or give them to someone you like. If this person plays the fluke card you gave them, you can start controlling them from now on using the horns gesture. If someone plays a fluke card, take it in your hand instead of putting it in the discard pile.

- During this act, you must reveal yourself and start playing with the Souls. You reveal yourself by making the horns gesture and by giving a command to a soul.

- Remember, you can command only to the souls that have accepted money from you or that played one of your fluke cards (not the initial one). From now on, you are able to read their dreams and regrets (the piece of paper in front of each player) and play with them at will.

- Always consider how playful what you're commanding is - for example, don't ask a person to commit suicide or walk away from the game. Remember that your goal is to push these poor Souls to the extreme, to show themselves as they really are.

Examples of commands:

- John, you can't fold now, keep playing with us!

- Hey Tate, why don't you tell everyone how for years you've only taken advantage of other people's kindness to survive?

- Dan, get up and tell everyone your darkest secret.

- Jules, can you tell us how much of a good-for-nothing you are?

- Hey Bo. Give us a pirouette, come on!

## The Devil - Third act

Make sure you read this carefully before you get back into the game.

As soon as everyone is seated at the table again, announce that this will be the last round. Only after everyone has dealt one hand, you will be satisfied with the evening and leave.

Additional rules of the last act:

- Each round, the dealer plays for their own life. You don't need to say this, they already know what awaits them.
- Everyone in turn will play as the dealer except you. If the dealer loses the hand or folds (abandons the hand), they die, and you should blow out one of the candles on the table.
- Don't use flukes or commands to cheat. Let chance decide the fate of these mortals. But, if someone folds to favor whoever is playing for their life at that moment, you can command them to stay in the game, at your discretion.
- Use a fluke card against a Soul only if the one before has played one. Example: Bessie plays her fluke card on her dealer's turn, and wins the hand, surviving. You can say something like, "I see that you used my tricks against me, so I'll use them against your friends". Collect the fluke card Bessie played and play it on the next turn against whoever will be dealer.
- You will notice that those who died are still in the room as restless Souls, but you will do nothing about them.
- As soon as the last hand of poker has been played, say goodbye and leave the room. Let a few minutes for those who remain to decide what to do with the money left on the table. Then the game ends.

# Fate - The Souls

## The Souls - First act

*Today was a tough day. You've done nothing but run around, definitely cracking your back. While you were hanging your coat on the nail, though, you get an itch that you know too well... The moon, mockingly, is looking from the window and emits a white, enveloping glow that beckons you.*

*"Sure, I could use a little game at Ol' House, that ramshackle bar next to the tobacco refinery," you think inwardly. "And maybe a nice little shot of whiskey..."*

*So you put your jacket back on your shoulders and take the unbeaten track. You wander through the deserted suburban streets until you hear warm notes vibrating softly. When you enter the Ol' House, a cloud of smoke envelops you, and you feel at home.*

*At that table over there, there are already other patrons who, like you, are looking for some entertainment!*

*That's just what you needed!*

## The Souls - Second act

*You suddenly notice that the atmosphere has become humid, dense. You feel that the air is heavier and the music is more strident. A sweetish smell seems to permeate the wooden walls of the old dive bar. The background has lost its contours, as if someone has smudged it with a brush.*

*This is not the usual game between poor souls like you who want to make a nest egg, there is something ... extraordinary about it.*

*A shiver runs down your spine, but you're not sure if it's a shiver of disquiet or of excitement. You feel that this could be a unique opportunity to earn a lot of money, and who knows, maybe fulfill your dream.*

*Everything seems to be permissible on this crazy night, you only exist in the here and now, and luck is on your side!*

Remember that if the horns gesture is made and your name is spoken, you will have to carry out the command that is asked of you. Imagine seeing a quick flash on the face of the person making the gesture, a blurry image that reveals the true nature of that person you thought you knew.

In executing a command, you can put your own spin to it. For example, if you are asked: *"John, tell everyone that you are good for nothing!"* You can enrich this command with an anecdote from your past or by standing up.

When the effect of the command is over, you realize that you have been maneuvered by something very powerful, and you can play off the guilt, fear, or helplessness that it made you feel.

## The Souls - Third Act

*Who you thought was a harmless drunkard is definitely not who they say they are, and they are keeping you glued to this table.*

*Why you of all people? Perhaps God has abandoned you? Or is this a test? You feel you are at stake with something bigger than you, but that you also have been given a chance. You quickly realize that in this last round, you will be playing for a much higher stake than a few dollars. Your life.*

In this last round, whoever is the dealer knows that if they lose or fold (abandon the hand), they will lose their life.

Everyone who is not dealing may fold or lose. The one who risks their life is ONLY the Soul who is acting as dealer.

Everyone has to be a dealer in turn.

- If you lose the dealer hand, simply close your eyes and lean on your seat as if you were a broken puppet, then slowly get up from the table and stand behind the players as a restless ghost. You may whisper a very short sentence (3-4 words) into the ears of one of the players left alive, once per bet. For example: "Do it for your children, Pa", "I always loved you, Frankie".

- If you win your dealer hand, stay at the table and keep playing until everyone has dealt. Then wait for the Devil to leave, and use these last few minutes to say goodbye to those left behind or simply to collect the money you won.

When the last alive player has exited the room, the game ends.

# 5 card draw poker

Read these rules or watch [this video](#) to learn how to play 5 card draw poker.

A deck of French cards is used to play poker. Each of the four suits has 13 cards in sequence from 2 to Ace, considered the highest card in the deck.

The goal of any poker hand is always to get the best possible five-card combination and to win the sum of all the chips wagered in a hand (the pot).

You can win a hand in 2 ways:

- By having the best combination of cards among the players left in the game until the end of the hand
- By making a bet that no other player is available to see. At that point, there is no need to show what you have in your hand.

## Deck preparation

Firstly, remove the fluke cards, the two jokers and the four 2 cards and give one to each player. Then according to the 5 card draw rules, remove the lowest cards in the deck, which are determined by subtracting the number of players from the number 11. I.e.: With 5 players, the lowest card will be 6, so numbers 3 through 5 will have to be removed from the deck.

## Hand preparation

Each player must pay a predetermined minimum opening bet before receiving their cards. It is called the ante. After the ante, the dealer distributes each player (starting from his left) five cards.

Once the dealing of cards is finished, the first round of betting begins, starting from the dealer's left.

## Betting

During a betting round, when it is a player's turn, that player generally has 4 options:



- Fold: The player decides to abandon the game. They will lose all the chips they have put in the pot
- Bet: The player decides to bet some or all of their chips.
- See or Call: The player puts enough chips in the pot to match the largest bet made in the current round of betting.
- Knock or Check: The player continues the game without raising the amount of the pot. One cannot check if they have not covered the current bet.
- Raise: You place an even higher bet than the one that is currently been made to that point. When a player raises, there should be another round where all other players are forced to choose whether to see, raise, or fold.

For simplicity, we do not use the all-in option. If someone does not have the chips to see, they can borrow from another player.

### **Card changing phase**

Once the first round of betting is over, the dealer proceeds to ask the players if they want to change their cards. Starting from the dealer's left, those who have not folded may change as many cards they wish.

A player can "declare himself served," that is, keep all his first five cards, or they can discard from 1 to 5 cards, receiving as many from the deck.

### **Second round of betting and Showdown**

After all players have received their new cards, each must evaluate their hand and proceed to a second (and final) round of betting. With that completed as well, it is time for the showdown (assuming there are at least two active players).

Just as in any other form of poker, the player who shows the best 5-card hand wins.

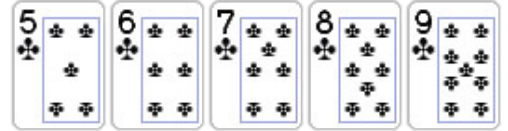
**1. Royal Flush**

A, K, Q, J, 10, all the same suit.



**2. Straight Flush**

Five cards in a sequence, all in the same suit.



**3. Four of a Kind**

All four cards of the same rank.



**4. Full House**

Three of a kind with a pair.



**5. Flush**

Same suit, but not in a sequence.



**6. Straight**

In a sequence, but not same suit.



**7. Three of a kind**

Three cards of the same rank.



**8. Two Pair**

Two different pairs.



**9. Pair**

Two cards of the same rank.



**10. Higher Card**

When you haven't made any of the hands above, the highest card plays.

In the example below, the jack plays as the highest card.