

The Ouija Board—Part Two

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Despite many warnings, most people continue to view the Ouija board as a harmless pastime:

Spiritualists, psychologists, psychiatrists, medical doctors, theologians, and other informed persons have all given warnings on the hazards of using the ouija board and similar devices. In spite of all they have said, it is evident that many persons are still ignorant that dangers exist.

Those who know little or nothing about the occult and ouija board experiences do not understand these warnings concerning the “innocent” use of the board. One who speaks of physical, mental, spiritual, or other problems which might relate to ouija use is often viewed as an extremist, obsessed with groundless fears. How could the use of so simple a device result in anything detrimental to the user? This is often the attitude until, through personal involvement, the reality of the dangers is experienced, and the warnings are then remembered. Often by this time permanent damage has occurred.¹

Indeed, the dangers of the Ouija board have been noted long before our modern revival of the occult. Almost 70 years ago, the medium Carl Wickland, M.D., referred to his own encounters when he wrote of “the cases of several persons whose seemingly harmless experiences with automatic writing and the ouija board resulted in such wild insanity that commitment to asylums was necessitated.... Many other disastrous results which followed the use of the supposedly innocent ouija board came to my notice.”²

Edmond Gruss refers to a clipping from the files of the famous magician Houdini, concerning a Dr. Curry, a medical director of the State Insane Asylum of New Jersey, who stated the Ouija board was a “dangerous factor” in unbalancing the mind and predicted that insane asylums would be flooded with patients if interest in them did not wane.³

Noted psychic researchers Ed and Lorraine Warren refer to one instance where the Ouija board was used “as little more than a joke,” and yet it led to the house becoming “infested” with evil spirits.⁴ Noted occultist Manly P. Hall is founder of the Philosophical Research Society and considered one of the leading authorities on the occult in this century. In *Horizon* magazine for October-December 1944, pages 76-77, he recalls, “During the last 20-25 years I have had considerable personal experience with persons who have complicated their lives through dabbling with the Ouija board. Out of every hundred such cases, at least 95 are worse off for the experience.... I know of broken homes, estranged families, and even suicides that can be traced directly to this source.”⁵

Other authorities on the Ouija board, Ed and Lorraine Warren, cited above, state in their book *Graveyard* (1992, pp. 137-38): “Ouija boards are just as dangerous as drugs. They’re not to be played with.... [J]ust as parents are responsible for other aspects of the children’s lives, they should take equal care to keep the tools of the devil from their children... especially in an era when satanic cults are on the rise. Remember: Séances and Ouija boards and other occult paraphernalia are dangerous because evil spirits often disguise themselves as your loved ones—and take over your life.”⁶

Dr. Thelma Moss, a parapsychologist on the staff of UCLA’s Neuropsychiatric Institute, prefaced her discussion of the Ouija board in *The Probability of the Impossible* with: “Warn-

ing! For certain persons, the Ouija board is *no game* and can cause serious dissociations of personality.”⁷

Some incidents of Ouija board use are bizarre, but they have been documented; for example, Ouija-board-related vampirism. Vampirism is not total fiction; there are many accounts of it in the psychiatric literature. Skeptic William Seabrooke, in his *Witchcraft*, refers to one female “vampire” he actually let suck his own blood in a moment of perverse fascination. Psychic researcher Raymond VanOver refers to a man who was quite serious about his need to drink human blood, particularly that of young girls.⁸

Blood, of course, has long been used in occultism for any number of purposes. Blood may be drunk in ritual (sometimes at the spirits’ request⁹), offered on altars, used in pacts with the devil, or as a means to materialize spirits. In *Occult Science in India and Among the Ancients*, Chief Justice Louis Jacolliot refers to one formula of magical incantation: “The flowers that he offers to the spirits evoked by him should be colored with the blood of a young virgin, or a child, in case he proposes to cause death.”¹⁰ Given the use of blood and the perverted nature of occult practice, it is hardly surprising some people might become “vampires” or feel the need for blood.

In some cases, use of the Ouija board—like astrology—leads to actual involvement with witchcraft and Satanism. (Sociologist Edward J. Moody observes, “Those who eventually become Satanists usually have begun with astrology.”¹¹) On more than one occasion, the spirits themselves—claiming the participants are now “ready” for more serious occult work—have suggested the players “graduate” to such practices. Carl Johnson, who started dabbling with the Ouija board after occasional earlier brushes with occultism states:

The “voices” and other eerie stuff began when he and his sister started playing around with a Ouija board a few years ago, he recalls. This led to nightmares, creeping depression, and a suicide attempt—which Carl says left him revitalized and thirsty for blood. So he delicately pricked the leg of his sleeping sister and slaked his thirst. Then, compulsively, he took to sucking blood from slices he made in the arm of a pliant homosexual pal—a practice shared by other young friends when he organized a satanic coven....

Lilith, too, became a vampiric Devil worshipper. She describes ceremonies under full moons in which her teenaged coven would get zonked out on dope and drink blood mixed with wine. Ultimately, she knew things were getting out of hand when one of the cultists proposed kidnapping her own father and offering him up as a ritual sacrifice.¹²

Thankfully, it appears that some, perhaps many, people do not seem to be harmed by the Ouija board; they may have innocently played with it as a child or for fun at a party and suffered no discernible ill effects. The problem is that no one can tell the outcome in advance. There are also hundreds of cases of innocent or naive occult involvement leading to spirit possession, insanity, financial ruin, adultery, divorce, criminal acts (even murder), and other tragedies, as the books by Edmond Gruss, Stoker Hunt and the literature of occultism and parapsychology proves.¹³

Ouija boards should never be played with, especially for entertainment. Parents should never give the board to their children. Perhaps one day Parker Brothers will no longer deny the ruin that this “game” has brought to thousands of people. Perhaps it will own up to its corporate responsibility and, retaining the copyright, refuse to market this “game” again.

Notes:

¹ Edmund Gruss, *The Ouija Board: Doorway to the Occult* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1975, reprinted and expanded in 1995), pp. 72-73.

- ² Carl A. Wickland, *Thirty Years Among the Dead* (Newcastle, 1974, rpt.), pp. 28-29.
- ³ Gruss, *The Ouija Board*, p. 75.
- ⁴ Robert Curran, *The Haunted: One Family's Nightmare* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988), p. 1.
- ⁵ Gruss, *The Ouija Board*, 1994 ed., pp. 78-79.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 79.
- ⁷ Thelma Moss, *The Probability of the Impossible* (Los Angeles, CA: J. P. Tarcher, 1974), p. 237.
- ⁸ Martin Ebon, ed., *The Satan Trap: Dangers of the Occult* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1976), p. 108.
- ⁹ Mircea Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972), pp. 307-308.
- ¹⁰ Louis Jacolliot, *Occult Science in India and Among the Ancients* (New Hyde Park, New York: University Books, 1971), p. 141.
- ¹¹ Irving I. Zaretsky, Mark P. Leon, eds., *Religious Movements in Contemporary America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974), p. 363.
- ¹² *The National Observer*, June 1, 1974; cf. J. Keel, "More from My Ohio Valley Notebook," *Flying Saucer Review* (British Publication), vol. 13, no. 4, p. 21.
- ¹³ John Ankerberg, John Weldon, *The Coming Darkness: Confronting Occult Deception* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1993).