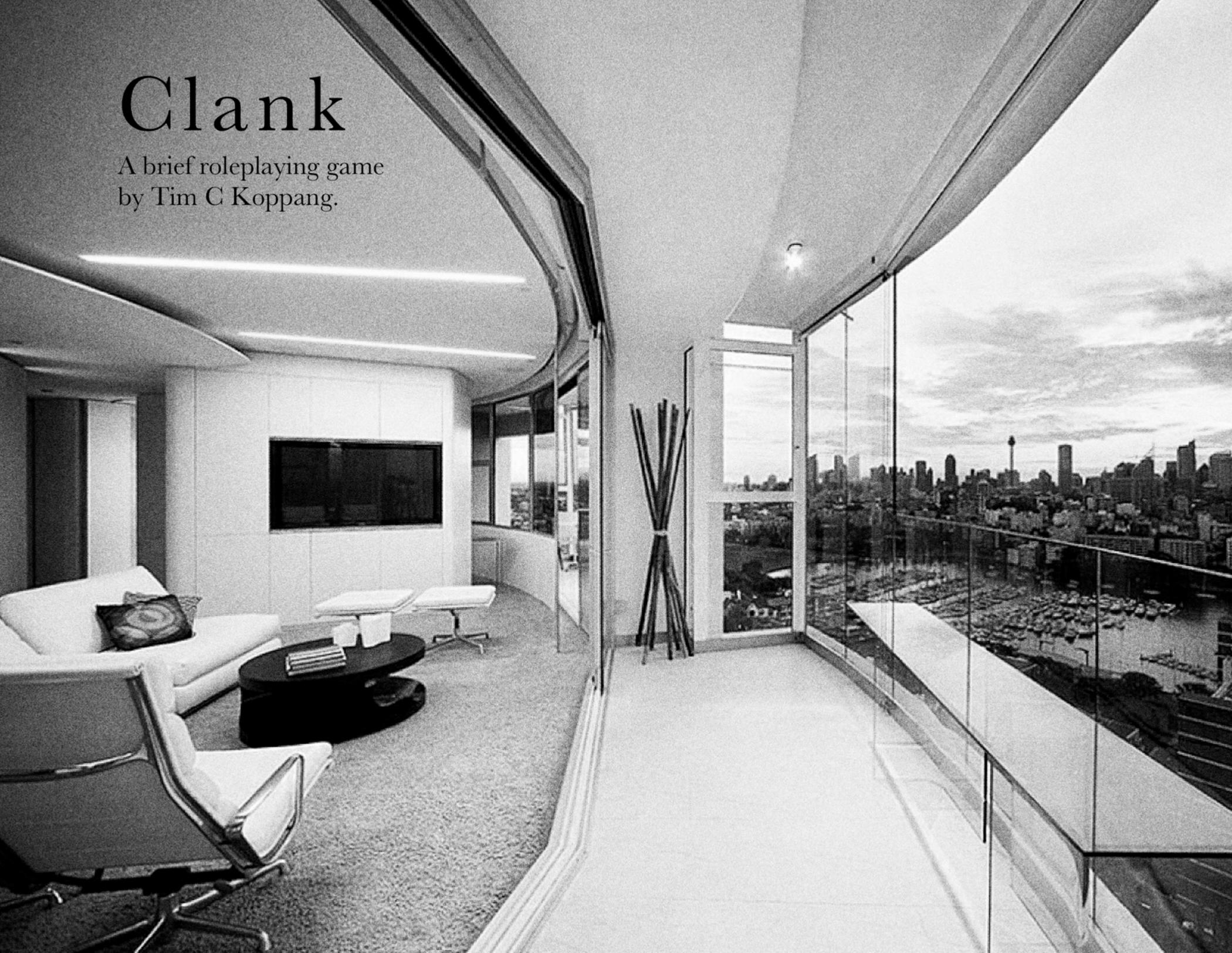


Clank

A brief roleplaying game
by Tim C Koppang.



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A Brief Roleplaying Game for Two People by Tim C Koppang.
You will need a friend, a deck of cards, and about 20 minutes of your time.

First, find a friend and a deck of cards. Keep the six Kings, Queens, and Jacks of ♥s and ♠s. You won't need the rest of the pack. Find a comfortable place to sit or stand. This will take about 20 minutes.

Second, shuffle the cards and have them at the ready. Read the following aloud to your friend:

You are successful. You work for the government, and live alone, downtown in the city. You work late hours. You are single, but find time to see people. It's about 10 p.m., and you are riding the elevator up to your well-appointed apartment.

Third, your friend should take a moment to define a few things about the main character in this story because, as of now, the both of you know only the sparsest of details. Is this character a man or a woman? Name? Age? Take about 30 seconds to decide. Then read the following aloud:

The elevator opens directly to your apartment's foyer. You throw your keys in the bowl on the side table and drop your bag on the wood floor. The bag hits with a soft thud before slouching over on its side. You sigh to yourself, exhausted. And then you hear a noise. You can see the city lights through your picture window in the living room. The kitchen is out of view, around a severe corner. Footsteps. Dress shoes on a tile floor: tap, tap. The refrigerator door slams shut, rattling the metal frame with a sharp CLANK. Whoever it is hasn't noticed you yet, but then a beep beep in your coat pocket alerts you to a dead cell phone. The elevator is gliding back down to the lobby. The footsteps start again.

Fourth, ask your friend what the main character does. Your friend is playing the main character. You are playing the stranger in the kitchen. The stranger is not altogether friendly. You know who the stranger is, but your friend does not. It's up to the two of you to decide how this will all turn out. There's more to come, but your friend should at least try to discover who the stranger in the kitchen is and whether that person is immediately dangerous. Suss out the details by exploring the situation moment to moment. Follow up on new plot developments. Don't summarize: explore.

Fifth, you and your friend should take it from here. Both of you will feel uncomfortable at times. Narrate proactively. Remain realistic and serious. You each have your characters. Negotiate to define other important details. The action may or may not leave the apartment. If new characters are introduced, you must play them too. It's not as difficult as it sounds. Remember that, whatever happens, the story must revolve around the main character and a relationship arising out of the stranger in the kitchen.

Sixth, when you or your friend need inspiration, turn over a card. Work together to integrate new details into the story based on that card:

Jack	Lover	♥	Irrational Reaction
Queen	Rival	♠	Violence
King	Govt. Official		

The cards cannot define the stranger – you already know who the stranger is – but the cards can help you and your friend to create new relationships and details surrounding the stranger. Feel free to interpret the restrictions listed above in any way that makes sense; however, you cannot ignore a card entirely. Once a card is turned, it must have consequence. Be creative.

Finally, the game ends when you have turned over at least one card of each rank (i.e., a King, Queen, and Jack). You probably won't make it through the entire deck. That's okay. Indeed, when you have turned over a card from two of the three ranks, it's a good idea to start planning for a conclusion. When the final card is turned, you and your friend should finish the current scene, and then narrate an ending to your story. Use all of the details you have discovered so far. Tie up any loose ends – or don't. Mystery can remain, but you should create an ending. ☞