

Bewerbung um den miniFRED

Rahmendaten:

- **Ansprechpartner:** Thomas Christophel [tbcheistophel@gmail.com], 0173 545 9701
- **Kurzbeschreibung:** ‘Somehow everything here looks like home’ is an episodic miniLARP about nostalgia, friendship and personal development. It is the story of a group of friends that grow up, grow apart and try to cling to their friendship through times of hardship and change. The friends all have lived together for years in place they called ‘home’. But life means change and at the beginning of this LARP, the friends have to leave home to continue their journey. In the scenes that follow, fate or fortune will reunite them after months or years have passed.
- **Ort, Termin, Homepages:**
 - it's full of larps 01/17 – (x2, 19.1 –22.1, 2017; Tagungshaus Sohrschied; ifol.magency.de)
 - Berlin Modern LARP (x2; Spring/Summer 2017, goo.gl/ZScmAZ)
 - it's full of larps 09/17 – (19.1 –22.1, 2017; Kubiz Berlin-Weißensee; ifol.magency.de)

Idee

- 1.1. **Professional background:** Ausgebildet (Dipl.-Psych.)
- 1.2. **Genre:** Alternative Reality Game playing from 2007-2017
- 1.3. **Topic/Main Idea:** This LARP focusses on nostalgia, friendship and personal development. The main idea was to create a positive experience that portrays life as a path of struggles that can be overcome. Set as the story of a group of close friends, it builds on the notion of communal support. The passage of time (time-jumps of up to 4 years) grounds the individual scenes and the characters’ actions in their personal history and the societal context.
- 1.4. **Unique aspects of the LARP:** A critical aspect of the design is that it plays essentially in the here and now and it builds on experiences that most players have experienced in the past (communal living, close friendship, transitions from education and training to full employment). This leads to a situation where even relatively mild emotional events in the game (e.g. job loss) can strike very close to home and lead to immersive play.
- 1.5. **Concept-to-play transfer:** The game starts with a workshop of about 60 minutes followed by three hours of players (6 scenes). After introducing the players to the core concepts of the game, players choose their character’s from a set of archetypes, flesh them out under the pretense of fleshing out the flat (or house) they cohabitated and form a (more or less complex) network of romantic relationships amongst them. They negotiate boundaries for physical and romantic play and are familiarized with the mechanics.

1.6. **Mechanics and cocreation:** In every scene, the game is initiated and guided by the game master but allows for great freedom for co-creative storytelling by the players.

- **Role of the GM:** The main part of the game consists of six predefined scenes which occur in predetermined time points (from Spring, 2007 to New Year's Day, 2017). Prior to each scene, the game master can provide players with individualized '**cues**', little slips of paper that briefly describe a life event which happened before the scene (e.g. disease, job loss) or an emotional state/desire (e.g. loneliness). These cues are the main driver of the play and represent the struggle of growing up. Furthermore, it allows the GM to focus attention on characters that have had little 'stage-time' in previous scenes. Each Scene comes with **intro and outro music** that sets the mood for the scene (from cheerful optimistic to silently devastated) and a short **introductory text** (read by the GM) which describes the situation and some contemporary events (e.g. ongoing wars, political events or the presentation of the first iPhone) which help representing the passage of time.
- **Role of the Player:** The players are actively encouraged to take ownership of their character's story. They are free to ignore any cues and have the liberty to invent their own life events as it serves their play. They are provided with a number of mechanics to develop their story:
 - **Scene interplay:** Before each scene, the players are encouraged to share information about events in their characters' life (e.g. new romantic partners, jobs or hobbies). This is meant to represent the (scarce) communication between friends that live far apart (e.g. on a social media feed) and (again) the passage of time.
 - **Flashbacks and flashafters:** During and after the scenes, players can direct little scenes that represent events that happened before the scene (flashbacks, e.g. a break-up scene) or the aftermath of the scene (flashafters, e.g. 'who goes home with whom'). A player can initiate such a scene at any moment and time, assigns players to roles ('you play my angry father') and directs the scene.

1.7. **Challenging play:** The game has been played both with first-time LARPer and experienced players. It allows the players to adjust their own game intensity by means of the co-creative nature of the LARP. Play-challenges include the portrayal of individuals facing threatening life events like fatal disease, addiction, harassment and unemployment. Safety is provided using play breaks, safe words and an unstructured debrief.

1.8. **Lore Background:** None.

1.9. **Location requirements:** The LARP has been played in living rooms, kitchens and large seminar rooms (with tables as room dividers). The only requirement is a table and chairs.

1.10. **Limitations of player comfort:** None

Somehow everything here looks like home

How fast we grow. How fast we grow apart.

‘Somehow everything here looks like home’ is an episodic miniLARP about nostalgia, friendship and personal development. You play one of a group of friends who once lived together and now go out into the world.

Disclaimer: While this LARP focusses on topics of friendship and personal development, it also can deal with topics that might be disconcerting to some (topics like sexuality, violence, disease and death). Please consider this before signing up to play and tell the GM if you’d want them to avoid certain topics.

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1. How to GM this

Personal Note

Writing this LARP started with the epiphany of a three-year-old. On the morning after returning from a trip, on our way to the kindergarten, he proclaimed: 'Berlin. Somehow everything here looks like Berlin.' In me, this sparked a sense of nostalgia, a sudden realization of the inevitability of the passage of time and a deep sense of thankfulness for those I had met along the way. This LARP is the attempt to capture this feeling.

About the LARP

This LARP focusses on nostalgia, friendship and personal development. I wanted it to be a positive experience, a story that portrays life as a path of struggles that can be overcome. It builds on the notion of communal support and the grounding of one's actions in one's own history.

I want to caution you not to underestimate the intensity of the game. The events portrayed in the scenes are taken from every day experiences. They may not be as horrific or threatening as what you are typically faced with in a fantasy, science-fiction or post-apocalyptic setting but they can strike very close to home and remind the players of their own private story and friendships that have faded.



Characters and Relationships: The central tenet of this LARP is that all characters are close friends and will remain close friends until the end of the game. The characters, however, are written to represent very different stereotypes and the prewritten relationships harbor potential for substantial conflict. These conflicts between friends can help shaping the characters and overcoming them can form a stronger bond. As the GM, you want to foster both the conflicts and their resolution. In particular, you want to avoid a situation where characters have no sensible reason to meet or interact anymore.

Scenes and Cues: The scenes follow a rough dramatic arch that can be shaped by the players and the GM. Each scene is paired with an intro text which gives context for the time in which each scene plays (2007-2017). Over the course of the game the intensity of play slowly increases and different players fade into focus as they get into trouble. Cues are your tool to steer this experience. Try to identify players that are sliding into passivity and give them something to play. You don't have to use all cues and players are encouraged to create their own stories, but your responsibility is keep them submerged in an engaging story that fosters interactive play.

Music and the flow of game: Intro and outro music is meant to support the mood of the scene and give time for reflection. Most of the music was chosen before the scenes were written and some of the versions feature a very different mood than the original recordings. Inevitably, music is a matter of taste and you are just as free to pick your own music as you are to change any other part of the LARP to your own liking.

What you need to do

(a) In preparation of the game, you want to **read** this and the workshop section carefully. You might not have the time to read all characters, scenes and cues, but you want to have a good overview that allows you to think ahead. If you want to go the extra mile, rehearse reading the intros for each scene which contain some tricky words. You also want to take care of the following **materials**.

- A copy of this document including copies of the **character descriptions for every player**
- For **each run**: A single copy of the Cue Cards and the Notes Sheet
 - Cue cards should be cut out and sorted (e.g. by Scene).
- A sound system and the 12 songs for the six scenes (check the particular versions).
 - Songs should be available on YouTube, check for fade-ins and fade-outs.
- A table and 5-8 chairs. Glasses, (non-alcoholic) beverages and snacks(optional)
- Tape and pens for name tags, scissors

(b) During the workshops, your main goal is to establish the playstyle and mechanics. As a GM, you want to put emphasis on topics of nostalgia and longstanding friendships. For this it is helpful to connect players with their own experiences to make the characters ‘home’ seem close and real.

(c) Before each scene, your task is (1) to decide which player gets which cues and (2) to encourage sharing of some information between characters which helps representing the passage of time between scenes. Not all cues need to be used. Cues should make sense for a given character and player, challenge both the character and the player, but never leave them in a catastrophic downward spiral.

(d) During the scenes, your main task is to observe, to preplan cues for the next scene and to find a good moment to cut by starting the outro music. Sometimes, players ignore the outro music and play on.

(e) After the LARP, please give players some time to debrief and reflect on their experience. If you find the time please give credit to theLARPs that inspired ‘Somehow ...’ (see Acknowledgements)

2. Workshop

Intro (5 min.)

You can start the workshop by saying ‘Welcome home!’, then introduce yourself, the LARPs and its mayor themes. If you like, you can do a quick introduction round if the players don’t know each other.

The Characters (10 min.)

All characters are written in a (hopefully) non-gendered way. In this step, every player receives and customizes their character. All players **read all the characters**. Then, characters can be either randomized or picked. After that, please re-read your character and try to find out how you want to play them. If you like, you can also get one or more **random cues** which are meant as suggestion for quirks or perks that can help you flash out your character. Then every player picks a **name and quickly introduces their character**.

Play style and Boundaries (10 min.)

The story played as an episodic MiniLarp in six scenes. These scenes play late in **the late evenings**, in this moment when the boundaries build over the months and years past gave way to an **open atmosphere** fueled by old friendship and alcohol. **This game is not about secrets, but about shared development**. In character, you are encouraged to share secrets and emotions that you, as a player, might not share.

This game strives on feelings of **closeness**, of intimacy. An even aggressive behavior can build a stark contrast to this closeness. Different players, however, have different boundaries for these two types of play. **These boundaries should be negotiated.** For this, the players can for example express their boundaries by positioning themselves on the continuum for aggressive and romantic behavior.

What kind of relationships did you have? (10 min.)

Finally, while the group is bound by strong ties as a whole group, some friends have their own little story. These stories are handed out as **'relationship cues'** which are handed out to one player who should ask another player whether they want to play this particular relationship with him. This part sometimes leads to feeling of unease amongst the players as they might feel pressured to play romantically with players that they don't know. You can emphasize that the relationship cues are optional, that relationships do not need to be heteronormative and that relationships can be played without any physical contact.

What is Home? (15 min.)

This LARP has been written with a certain feel of home in mind. In this step the players will jointly imagine and agree on how their characters' **'home'** looked like. 'Home' is located in a larger city, somewhere. No particular city should be specified. In this step the following questions might be answered in a **group**.

- **Where in the city** was 'home'? (In the center/a suburb, rich/poor area ...)
- What kind of **place** was it? (An apartment, a house, a loft, a former farm building ...)
- How did everybody's **room** look like? (Decide for yourself and tell the others)
- How did the communal spaces looked like? (**Kitchen**, maybe living rooms or a garden?)
- How was their favorite **bar**? Who was a **friend** to all/most characters?

Mechanics (10 min.)

The scenes are separated by considerable amounts of time, months or even years. During a **'setup'** phase for each scene, players have time to consider how this time might have changed their character and what might have changed in their life. In addition, the GM can offer **cue cards** to any of the players, which suggest character development or experiences. The player can choose not to take the cue and **return** the cards to the GM. Before the scene is started, players are encouraged to **share information** with all or selected players. This represents the limited communication between the character's and the gossiping that might happen in between the scenes (e.g. things you would share on social media).

The scenes will always be set around a table: While the players **stand** next to the table and **close their eyes**, the GM reads out a **description** of the scene (which you can adapt, if necessary) and then starts the **intro** music for this scene. While the song plays the players **silently** choose positions around the **table**. If everyone found their place, the GM **fades** the music out and the scene starts. The ending of the scene is signaled by the **outro** music. It **ends** when all players have finished playing and the music is faded out.

Every player can initiate a **flashback** at any moment in time. A flashback here is an improvised scene that replaces the character **telling a story to the others**. This can be a scene between two or more of the **friends** or could involve **other relevant persons**, which can be played by players or if needbe the GM. To initiate a flashback, any player can at any moment start telling a story and say 'and this is how it happened'. Flashbacks can also be used to retell **phone or short messaging** conversations. For this the players involved sit looking opposite directions. Messaging can be emulated using a monotonous voice and expressions like 'smile' or 'twink twink' for **emotes**. Similarly, players can request **flashafters** to answer open questions after the scene (e.g. 'Where did you sleep that night?'). Please note that whether players want to use flashbacks and flashafters varies a lot and a game without either is fully viable.

3. Characters

The Fighter

'I got to do this'

Life has never been easy for you. You always had to earn everything, academically and financially. But you played hard, studied hard and got where you wanted to. Hence, money was always a little more important to you and you knew the feeling one has when there is not enough money for food. Living alone was simply not an option – financially - and you were glad that 'home' had an extra small room which was cheap. You studied economics, on time, but without achieving excellence. You didn't care, the degree was a means to some end. Now, after many rejected applications, you just accepted a job as a consultant, working from London, working anywhere. Finally, you won't have to worry about money anymore. As long as you keep playing the game.

The Academic

'I have a plan'

Sharing a place to live seemed merely like an efficient choice for you, at first. Studying [*some subfield of the natural sciences*] had always been your plan and you arrived at your university with great grades, many recommendations and a prestigious scholarship. You might be the one that spent least time in the flat (spending long nights in the library), but it surely changed you the most. You were and still are the shyest of the friends, but your time with the friends opened you to all the different ways. You just received your masters in [*some obscure sub-subfield of the natural sciences*] with honors and you managed to get another scholarship to work with some big shot superscientist in the United States. This is your one chance to change how people see the world. You better don't fuck it up.

The Activist

'This is the right thing'

Living in a commune always seemed like both a political imperative and a necessary means to distance yourself from the 'normal life'. Also, you were pretty much broke all the time. Studying the constituents of our social life, politics and some psychology you tried to understand the grand mess that we all live in. But studying was always secondary to activism for the here and now: Blocking nuclear power plants, climbing on trees, demonstrations against war, you name it. Now, you are off to fight for [*a very important issue*] in a place far away. You can finish your degree later. Leaving the safeties of 'home' and what lies ahead is scary for you, but somebody has to do it.

The Shepard

'All for the community'

You always were a family person and the people you lived with grew close to you quickly. Living alone never felt like an option, you needed someone on whose door you could knock late in the evening with the hope for a cup of tea. You quickly became the main organizer of the day-to-day life of 'home', you made sure that issues amongst the friends were resolved and that 'home' stayed 'home'. You also studied to become a teacher for Geography and Biology. Now, you are off to your first teaching job in some small town in the middle of nowhere. Losing your family hurts, but you look forward to working with the kids.

The Party Starter

‘This shall never end!’

Student life always seemed like a never-ending party to you and the commune was your home base. You studied sports science, mainly because it was a way to be part of the student crowd while not being drowned in books. The time that others spend learning, you went out in the night: Dancing, drinking, getting to know people. It was rare that none of the friends could be talked into joining the fun and throwing an ad-hoc party at your place. Studying wasn’t really your thing, but you got your degree. You even managed to set up an interview with a large fitness company that is looking for an ‘assistant product manager’ and you have an offer to start in two weeks. This seems like a good safe job. If only there wasn’t the option to spent the summer with some friends you recently meet, working as a surfing instructor in some sunny place. They need a call in a few days.

The Artist

‘Art for art’s sake’

You always loved the unusual, the extraordinary, the unique. The arts naturally were important to you. You simply weren’t into the same things the other kids liked. You had your own artistic heroes and you wanted to be like them. Studying, for you, wasn’t really a way to get a degree, but a way to expose yourself to people with interesting ideas and visions. Your main goal was to create art, to perfect your own abilities and to promote your work. Now, you managed to receive a stipend to continue your work, abroad. Let’s see what the rest of the world thinks of what you do.

You are free to choose what type of art your character is involved in (painting, music, dance etc.).

The Easy One

‘I own my own body’

You never understood why so many people thought of intimacy as a primarily dangerous thing. If you like somebody, you like to be close to them and if it feels right sex is something that can easily happen. You never felt much guilt about it, but you had to realize that for some your life is confusing. You were the only one of the friends who didn’t study. You worked in a supermarket, bartended, wore the stupidest costumes for promotion and recently you worked in an office, organizing things. You never needed much money and you have little interest in career pressures. As the others are leaving, you decided to set sails yourself. You got another laid-back office job in a different city. Let’s see what life has to offer.

Before starting the game, find out with whom of the other characters you have been intimate.

The Late Arrival

‘Gladly, I became part of this’

You only lived for a little more than a year in ‘home’. You had left your previous place in a rush after a horrible breakup which ended a long relationship. In the beginning, entering this close group of friends felt strange to you, but you were welcomed with open arms and even though the time was short, you are happy to belong, to call the others your friends. You come from a conservative background, but ‘home’ opened your eyes to the many ways people see things. You just finished your engineering degree and you are off to a start a job as big industrial company. It’s time to build great things. You will miss this place.

This character requires that one of the friends had to leave ‘home’ early. If someone chooses this character, the players have to select which one leaves early.

If you want to avoid spoilers, stop reading now.

4. Scenes

The grand goodbye – Spring 2007

Setup: First, **take a break!** The setup for this scene is largely covered by the workshops and character backstories, don't forget the **sound check**. As a final step, **to establish the closeness between close friends** suggest players to join in a big group hug followed by as many individual hugs as the players want. Then, give the players some time to get ready. To start the game, let all players close their eyes, then say: *'This game has the option that any of the characters dies, please consider this for a moment and if it is acceptable for you that your character dies, please raise your hand'*. **Wait** and note down who wants to opt-in. Then read:

It's spring 2007, Steve Jobs just revealed the first iPhone, North Korea agreed to complete denuclearization and the USA just decided to send 20,000 more troops to Iraq. This is the last night all of you will spend together. Two days before, there was big farewell party with many friends, neighbors, colleagues and other acquaintances. Tonight, it's just you, in the kitchen, like so many nights before. The atmosphere is hopeful, even ecstatic, there was food and many a bottle that wasn't meant to move on to anyone's new place. Now it's getting late and slowly this begins to feel like a grand goodbye.

Intro: Same Isaac – Bears

Outro: R.E.M. - It's the End of the World as we know it

A Christmas Reunion – December 2007

Setup: This scene is focused on the (romantic) relationships between the characters. Three characters will get cue cards: Two of them in the love triangle will be asked to make a move. In the long-distance relationship one of them is on the verge of breaking up, the other fears exactly this.

It's the 23rd of December 2007, Christmas is coming. A recent meeting on climate change only brought some vague statements of intend, nine more countries open their borders to the European Schengen zone and four days from now Benazir Butto will be assassinated. You have managed to meet up in your favorite bar again. Close to 'home'. Most of you are on their way to see their families and many underwent considerable struggles to make this moment possible. Seeing the other's again was glorious, strange or both. It is late in the evening. Now, somehow, everything here looks like home.

Intro: Coldplay - Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas

Outro: Olivia Olsen - All I want for Christmas is you

The Wedding Bells – May 2010

Setup: As a first step, the players should know that **three years** have passed. For this scene, ideally, two of the friends are getting married. Hence, during the setup find out whether (1) any of the possibly existing couples, or (2) any of the other characters could imagine getting married. Alternatively, (3) find a common friend of the friends who could get married or (4) improvise. Additional cue cards can be offered.

It's May 2010. The Deepwater Horizon oil spill is devastating the Gulf of Mexico, €110 billion were recently used to save Greece from bankruptcy and scientist just announced that modern humans partly descend from Neanderthals. The wedding night is coming to a close. You went through the ceremony, the food, the games, the even more food and the dancing. Now, late in the night, the party has become calm. Most of the family have left. You have gathered around a table. Now, somehow, everything here looks like home.

Intro: Joe Cocker | You are so beautiful (unplugged live)

Outro: Amy Winehouse | Love is a losing game

At the cottage – November 2014

Setup: As a first step, the players should know that four years have passed. They should have the opportunity to consider what happened in that time. The major topic of this scene is fear of death: One character's parent has been recently diagnosed with Alzheimer's and their mind and memory is fading quickly. Another character has been struggling with cancer and recently received a devastating diagnosis. When choosing the player to get the cue for 'the diagnosis', consider, that playing such a development might be distressing and that only some players might have opted-in to the risk of dying. Emphasize that players can opt-out of playing the cue.

It's November 2014. The IPCC recently warned that climate change could bring 'severe, pervasive and irreversible' damage and a few days ago Philae has become the first spacecraft to ever land on a comet. It's been over four years since you last met. It's sad to realize that work, family and all other things called life keep one from staying in contact as much as one would like. After a number of failed attempts to meetup up for some occasion, you have decided to plan a meeting months in advance. You meet in a seaside cottage you have rented for a weekend. This is the first night, the first flourish of 'it's been so long', of unpacking, dinner and drinks has passed. It's a table again, and somehow, everything here looks like home.

Intro: Placebo | Where is my mind?

Outro: Blue Oyster Cult | (Don't fear) the Reaper

Till Death Do Us Part – March 2016

Setup: At the beginning of the LARP, players could opt-in to the risk of dying prior to this scene. This scene is set at the funeral of one of the friends, 16 months after the meeting at the cottage. As a first step, ask the player whose character is suffering from cancer whether they want to choose their fate or let fate decide by drawing blindly. Players tend to accept their death as logical, but many times a survivor that had already accepted their fate makes for the more interesting story. You can weigh in on the player's decision but in the end the decision is theirs.

If they survive, offer all players that opted-in to the risk of death the opportunity to draw a cue (see the cues for the scene). Most cues feature nonsense text, but one describes the character's death in a car crash. This possible turn of events is intended to be surprising and shocking. Sometimes fate plays horrific games. If all characters survive, this scene is played as the funeral of a common friend. The cues always give an additional part that is to be read out. The player can decide to read the intro text to their funeral.

... It's March 2016. [Name] just died a few days ago. This is the day of [his/her] funeral. It's been a sad day, a dead body, a coffin, kind words, parents that came to bury their own child. Now, later, you and the others have found a table again. Somehow, everything here looks like there is nothing left to say.

Intro: Pearl Jam | Long Road

Outro: I'll Fly Away | Hank Williams

Auld Lang Syne – Winter 2016/2017

Setup: This scene can be about optimism, about despair, about the need to change course. It belongs to the players and no further cue cards should be given. If any character has died, they sit on the side and are treated as a framed picture. They can join in flashbacks.

It's New Year's Eve 2016. In 2016, the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union, wars in Syria and around the globe killed tens of thousands and millions are seeking refuge, overt racism is on the rise in the Western World and Donald Trump just got elected President. Prince is dead, David Bowie is dead, Alan Rickman is dead and yes, [Name] is dead. You meet up again in your favorite bar. Time has changed the place. But still, somehow, everything here looks like home.

Intro: Auld Lang Syne | The Girl Choir of South Florida

Outro: Green Day | Time of Your Life

Debrief

The LARP ends with the outro music of this scene. After the LARP, please give players some time to debrief and reflect on their experience. If you find the time please give credit to theLARPs that inspired 'Somehow everything here feels like home' (see Acknowledgments).

5. Cues

Character creation cues (optional)

The following cue cards are optional perks and quirks in case the players want additional inspiration.

You are a smoker

You always hated household chores

You are an impressive snorer

You have very dark and dry humor

You have a fandom (i.e. Star Wars, Lord of the Rings, ...)

You are some type of foody (cheese lover, craft beer enthusiast, bread maker, ...)

You have a large family (many siblings, aunts/uncles and or cousins)

You were an only child

You have more intense sexual kinks than others

You play an instrument, passionately

You are very interested in history

You strongly believe in life after death

You tend to drink a little more than others

You feel passionately about (some area of) politics

You have some degree of hypochondria

You have some curiosity for conspiracy theories

You love to travel abroad

You love the great outdoors

You always dreamed of going to space

As a teenager, you experienced a horrible break up

Relationship cues

Not quite a love triangle

for character generation

You are 'A'. You have been in love with 'B' for a long time. The two of you had your moments, but you mainly had a strong platonic relationship. Now, as the friends are parting ways, you have this growing urge to come forward and tell them your feelings. But they seemed occupied emotionally recently and you feel that it is too late.

Please pick a character ('B') and ask the player whether they want to play such a relationship with you.

You are 'B'. 'A' is a close friend. A close friend that you find attractive and you love them in many ways. But you never experienced the giant crush, the hunger and the needs you had with others. You are aware of 'A's stronger affection and it is both makes you feel very comfortable with her but makes you worry for your friend. Recently, you have been growing closer with _____ ('C'), both emotionally and sexually. This crush feels more intense to you then many that came before, but it is to fresh to call it anything more than an affair, really.

Pick a character ('C') and ask the player whether they want to play such a relationship with you.

You are 'C'. 'B' _____ always was a good friend. Recently, however, the two of you have become closer. There is this sudden fire to it that surprised you. Maybe it's because both of you know it's days are numbered. You've decided to enjoy it, why it's lasts. You know there is more for you to come.

for Scene II

For 'A': The year living apart from 'B' was hard. You didn't imagine that you would miss him so much. You've been both excited and anxious when looking forward to meeting them again. To you, it seems like the two of you should be together. The though just feels right and you think you have to do something about it.

For 'B': It's been a lonesome year. You've been busy, you have got to know a lot of people, but you haven't met somebody that you felt close with. Living alone makes being single a lot less attractive. Recently, you've been thinking a lot about the great time you had with 'C'.

The long-distance thing

for character generation

You are 'X'. You have been in a relationship with 'Y' for over a year. Being a couple amongst the friends felt awkward in the beginning, but soon felt that being a couple living amongst friends felt very right to you. Breaking up when the two of you move apart was never really an option and both of you though that you should give the long-distance thing a chance.

Please pick a character and ask the player whether they want to play such a relationship with you.

You are 'Y'. You have been in a relationship with 'X' for over a year. Being a couple amongst the friends felt awkward in the beginning, but being with 'X' felt right. You were hesitant to continue the relationship as a long distance relationship but you cannot bring yourself to really broach the topic.

for Scene II

For 'X': You had expected the long-distance relationship to be hard, but this year 'together' with 'Y' was even harder than you expected. You hadn't expected to miss them that much and communication was difficult as well. You didn't talk as much as you would have liked and not hearing from them made you weary, at times. You want things to change. Maybe, you can move closer to them. Or, they could move closer to you. Didn't they say that things were going badly over there anyways?

You are 'Y': Having a long-distance relationship was a mistake. You like 'X' a lot, you maybe love them. But the distance makes it hard to feeling anything. Things worsened when you realized that 'X' turned incredibly insecure. Their constant calls and message started to annoy you at times and doesn't aid their attractiveness. It doesn't help that you are surrounded by many attractive people. You wouldn't say you have been thinking, but something inside of you definitely has.

The Fuck Buddies

for character generation

You are 'O'. You ended up in bed with 'K', early on, but the two of you soon realized that you didn't really work as couple. The sex was good, though. And so, whenever the time felt right, when one of you needed someone to be close or just for fun, it happened again. There might have been moments when one told the other 'this is not happening again'. But it did.

Please pick a character and ask the player whether they want to play such a relationship with you.

You are 'K'. You ended up in bed with 'O', early on, but the two of you soon realized that you didn't really work as couple. The sex was good, though. And so, whenever the time felt right, when one of you needed someone to be close or just for fun, it happened again. There might have been moments when one told the other 'this is not happening again'. But it did.

The former High-School Sweethearts

for character generation

You are 'Alpha': You and 'Omega' got together in high-school. You were each other's first and at the time it felt you could be each other's last. When the two of you broke up it was hard, but you remained friends, throughout the years, knowing that you would always be special to each other.

*Please pick a character and ask the player whether they want to play such a relationship with you.
Decide together when and why the two of you broke up.*

You are 'Omega': You and 'Alpha' got together in high-school. You were each other's first and at the time it felt you could be each other's last. When the two of you broke up it was hard, but you remained friends, throughout the years, knowing that you would always be special to each other.

*Please pick a character and ask the player whether they want to play such a relationship with you.
Decide together when and why the two of you broke up.*

Character-dependent Cues

Money or Morals ('The Fighter')

Scene II or later

Working as a consultant has been a blast: You rose up the ladder quickly, jetted around the world and are finally able to afford all the things that you wanted when you were studying. You recently got promoted to project manager. The first project you lead has been with a large national company in a foreign country, far away. Your team's job was to help in arranging a large trade deal but the insights you gained during the time there horrified you. To say that this company is shady would be an understatement. They are directly or indirectly involved in a number of criminal activities, unethical shit. You even have written evidence about it. The weirdest thing is: Your colleagues and superiors are aware of it and seem not to care, at all. You have signed numerous NDAs and you know how your business deals with people that talk. What do you do?

How am I going to feed myself ('The Artist')

Scene II or later

You never had the delusion that your art would make you rich. But you didn't imagine things would be like that. You might have had good times, but right now you are constantly asking yourself how to pay for next meal. Your landlord showed you a letter the other day starting the eviction process that he'll send unless you start paying your rent again, very soon. You need money. You started bartending, but that money isn't enough and the work leaves you too tired to advance your art. In a moment of disillusionment, you browsed the web for 'normal' jobs. Is this how this will end?

This is my body! ('The Easy One')

Scene II or later

Working in an office turned out to be nice. You have this talent to deal with people, to organize things, to make things happen. You never cared much about getting a career, but now you kind of have one. You also have a new boss, from higher up in the hierarchy. They came with a giant reputation. And working with them was inspiring at first. Now, their behavior has changed. You've been exposed to looks, the inappropriate talk, then ... You've been stunned by this. You didn't think this could happen.

Decide for yourself whether you want to take this cue and how far the harassment has gone, jet.

For what am I doing this ('The Motherly')

Scene II or later

You always thought that teaching would be your thing. But now after a few years in the 'system'. you feel that your motivation is draining out of you. It's not about the kids! They are all right. Crazy and funny and at times annoying, but there is nothing wrong with them. It's the fear that the every single day from now on will be like every other day. Nothing changes. Yes, you can see the kids grow up. But what kind of impact do you have? The pay is good, though. It's a safe job. Much safer than the project with endangered kids a former coed told you about. Weren't they looking for more full time staffers?

Changing the world is hard ('The Activist')

Scene II or later

Changing the world is hard. You just returned from a four week trip working [for/against some important cause]. Little sleep, terrible food, being shouted at and constant conflict in the group. Shouldn't there be a more professional way to do this. The last few set of actions were all failures, no reaction, no change. You feel like giving up. You feel that it doesn't matter whether you do give up or not. Why not get some random job, some random place and watch television. You really liked television when you tried it. You think the universe owes you a hot Choco and some television. Really.

Is this how this ends? ('The Academic')

Scene II or later

It happened a few days ago: You are unemployed. The extension of your contract had been planned for months, but the funding for it fell flat. You are unemployed and you are still pulling all-nighters working on the next project. There are deadlines that you have to adhere to. You are going to a conference in a few weeks. Are you? The money that was intended to fund your work is 'not available' and they cannot tell you when this will change. You need to find a job. You need money to buy food. Finding a job in science takes time. If my own 'home team' doesn't want to pay me, who will? A real job? Is this how this ends?

Back to Plan A? ('The Late Arrival')

Scene II or later

You receive the following letter:

Dear [your name],

it's been years since we talked openly and years since we last saw each other. This may be surprising to you, but I never stopped thinking about you. I've been with others, but nothing ever felt the same. I miss you. I do still love you.

I remember how often I thought that we were perfect for each other. I remember all the little moments that we had, the passion, the fun and the closeness. I remember how we talked about having kids. Building a house. Raising them. I feel that we started this path together, we dreamed of a future and this future is not out of reach. I don't think that how we broke up defines us as a couple. We are still right for each other and you know that. Maybe we can find a way to fix this.

*In love
[your horrible break up]*

Flexible cues

It's not like I actually need it

Any Scene

You have slowly descended into a state of addiction. The substance you are addicted to [please pick, e.g. alcohol, heroin, cocaine etc.] is draining your body and impairs your capability to live a normal life. You might be in a state of denial, but even if that is the case, your addiction shows.

That was one to much

Any Scene

You've never been shy with the drinking, but tonight you've gone a little over. You are very drunk.

That was one to much

Any Scene

You've never been shy with the drinking, but tonight you've gone a little over. You are very drunk.

Up with the flu.

Any Scene

You feel like a little sickly. You are cold and a little uneasy.

The lucky day.

Any Scene

Today, everything is perfect. There might be an obvious reason or no reason at all. But you feel great and your prospect on life is hopeful and positive.

It's one of those days.

Any Scene

Today, you are in a very bad mood. There might be an obvious reason or no reason at all.

It's one of those days.

Any Scene

Today, you are in a very bad mood. There might be an obvious reason or no reason at all.

Scene-dependent cues

A family Christmas

Scene II

You had planned to visit your family over Christmas and you had looked forward to spending time with your parents and all the others. You called them early today, but what was intended to be a cheery ‘Just one more night, I’m coming at four, hooray’-call turned into a full out fallout. Things were said and probably misunderstood, you got loud, they got loud and all because of this, well, you don’t even know why. You told them you are not coming. You haven’t thought about where else to go.

You know what they say about weddings

Scene III

This is a wedding and you are single. You have been single for a little too long. You yearn for some connection. Emotionally, sexually or both. And what better occasion to change this. It’s a wedding, after all.

How we end

Scene IV

A few months ago, your father is diagnosed with Alzheimer’s. For a long time, you thought he was simply growing old. A little bit forgetful. But now, you hear that he’s been getting lost, leaving the stove running, running around in sleepwear if unattended and more distressing, embarrassing things. The doctors say that the disease has been progressing slowly so far, but it might not stay like this.

I’m too old to be alone

Scene V

The death of a friends is a bitter reminder of how short life is. You have been single for way too long. You yearn for some connection in life. You don’t want to die alone and maybe you should do something about it.

The Diagnosis

for Scene IV

In January 2013, your urine starts to become darker and darker, then slightly red. In the beginning you attribute this to some food you ate or some other random thing, but when you start to have pain in your lower abdomen you get worried. Your GP tells you not to worry but sends you to a number of specialists and you undergo a series of very embarrassing examinations. After several weeks of results which show no signs of illness, a radiologist diagnoses you with kidney cancer. From this point on, everything moves quickly, you are sent to surgery. Then chemotherapy. A few days ago, metastases have been found in your brain. The docs tell you that the location of tumor makes it too risky to perform surgery. You have the option to undergo extensive radiation therapy. They say that they are ‘optimistic’, but you have doubts. And you are tired.

Scene V (To be chosen by the player or randomly)

To be read out at the beginning of the scene:

Through the year that follows the meeting at the cottage, you hear hopeful messages from your friend [name]. No further symptoms. The cancer seems not to be advancing. In February 2016, you receive message that [he/she] has been taken to a hospital. In between check-ups the disease has advanced severely. Coma followed quickly. Then death. It's March 2016. [Name] just died a few days ago. This is the day of [his/her] funeral. It's been a sad day, a dead body, a coffin, kind words, parents that came to bury their own child. Later, you and the others have found a table again. Now, somehow, everything here looks like there is nothing left to say.

Through the year that follows the meeting at the cottage, you undergo several sessions of radiation therapy. The treatment wears on you. You felt and feel dizzy, tired, sometimes even out-of-your-mind, but the tumors are not growing. Then, you become aware of another form of treatment: stereotactic radiosurgery. More radiation, but brought to the tumors directly, in a new center. Your new doctors are skeptical. Your case is tricky. There are many little tumors. But after a series of reexaminations, you get the treatment. Lying awake, in an obscure device, while doctors fry the tumors in your head was weird, scary, horrifying or just boring. After two treatments, the doctors tell you that they cannot find any evidence for remaining tumors. This is not safety, but a chance. Tumors can return, they say, but they are ‘very optimistic’.

After rejecting any treatment, you try to focus your life on something else than your disease. Through the year, you don't feel anything of these deadly things inside your head. A few weeks ago, the docs convince you to have another set of brain scans. And find nothing. Not a single light white spot where the things were almost a year ago. They call your situation ‘vanishing tumors’, which ‘can happen’ in such ‘mild cases’ of metastasis. You don't really know what to think of this other than ‘there is hope’.

The Crash

To be read out at the beginning of the scene (slowly):

Through the year that follows the meeting at the cottage. You hear hopeful messages from your friend [name of the cancer patient]. No further symptoms. The cancer seems not to be advancing. Then in February 2016, you receive a phone call. [your name] was in a car crash, late at night, when driving back from work, [he/she] was hit by truck. The driver had fallen asleep. [his/her] heart stopped beating on the site of the crash. It's March 2016. [Name] just died a few days ago. This is the day of [his/her] funeral. It's been a sad day, a dead body, a coffin, kind words, parents that came to bury their own child. Now, later, you and the others have found a table again. Somehow, everything here looks like there is nothing left to say.

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Acknowledgements

This miniLARP drew inspiration from:

- 'Say a little Prayer' by Tor Kjetil Edland
- 'The Last Hour' by Rasmus Teilmann & Mads Dehlholm Holst
- 'M/S Kristina' by Eva Wei, Rosalind Göthberg
- 'Sarabande' by Maria und Jeppe Bergmann Hamming

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Please feel free to send me with feedback, stories or even pictures for your run.

Enjoy, Thomas

Notes

Character	Name	Player	Notes
The Fighter			
The Academic			
The Activist			
The Mother			
The Party Starter			
The Artist			
The Easy One			
The Late Arrival			

Scene I:

Scene II:

Scene III:

Scene IV:

Scene V:

Scene VI:

Somehow everything here looks like home

How fast we grow. How fast we grow apart.

‘Somehow everything here looks like home’ is an episodic miniLARP about nostalgia, friendship and personal development. You play one of a group of friends who once lived together and now go out into the world.

This is the story of a group of friends that grow up, grow apart and try to cling to their friendship through times of hardship and change. It is the story of friends that all have lived together at some point in an apartment or house in a city referred to here as ‘home’. This place has been home for years to them and in many ways, it still is. But life means change and at the beginning of this LARP, the friends have to leave home to continue their journey. In the scenes that follow, fate or fortune will reunite them after months or years have passed. The LARP is intended to run three to four hours.

Run 1	Run 2
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
Optional:	
6.	6.
7.	7.
8.	8.

Disclaimer: While this LARP focusses on topics of friendship and personal development, it also can deal with topics that might be disconcerting to some (topics like sexuality, violence, disease and death). Please consider this before signing up to play and tell the GM if you’d want them to avoid certain topics.

written by Thomas Christophel, tbchristophel@gmail.com

Characters

The Fighter

'I got to do this'

Life has never been easy for you. You always had to earn everything, academically and financially. But you played hard, studied hard and got where you wanted to. Hence, money was always a little more important to you and you knew the feeling one has when there is not enough money for food. Living alone was simply not an option – financially - and you were glad that 'home' had an extra small room which was cheap. You studied economics, on time, but without achieving excellence. You didn't care, the degree was a means to some end. Now, after many rejected applications, you just accepted a job as a consultant, working from London, working anywhere. Finally, you won't have to worry about money anymore. As long as you keep playing the game.

The Academic

'I have a plan'

Sharing a place to live seemed merely like an efficient choice for you, at first. Studying [*some subfield of the natural sciences*] had always been your plan and you arrived at your university with great grades, many recommendations and a prestigious scholarship. You might be the one that spent least time in the flat (spending long nights in the library), but it surely changed you the most. You were and still are the shyest of the friends, but your time with the friends opened you to all the different ways. You just received your masters in [*some obscure sub-subfield of the natural sciences*] with honors and you managed to get another scholarship to work with some big shot superscientist in the United States. This is your one chance to change how people see the world. You better don't fuck it up.

The Activist

'This is the right thing'

Living in a commune always seemed like both a political imperative and a necessary means to distance yourself from the 'normal life'. Also, you were pretty much broke all the time. Studying the constituents of our social life, politics and some psychology you tried to understand the grand mess that we all live in. But studying was always secondary to activism for the here and now: Blocking nuclear power plants, climbing on trees, demonstrations against war, you name it. Now, you are off to fight for [*a very important issue*] in a place far away. You can finish your degree later. Leaving the safeties of 'home' and what lies ahead is scary for you, but somebody has to do it.

The Shepard

'All for the community'

You always were a family person and the people you lived with grew close to you quickly. Living alone never felt like an option, you needed someone on whose door you could knock late in the evening with the hope for a cup of tea. You quickly became the main organizer of the day-to-day life of 'home', you made sure that issues amongst the friends were resolved and that 'home' stayed 'home'. You also studied to become a teacher for Geography and Biology. Now, you are off to your first teaching job in some small town in the middle of nowhere. Losing your family hurts, but you look forward to working with the kids.

The Party Starter

‘This shall never end!’

Student life always seemed like a never-ending party to you and the commune was your home base. You studied sports science, mainly because it was a way to be part of the student crowd while not being drowned in books. The time that others spend learning, you went out in the night: Dancing, drinking, getting to know people. It was rare that none of the friends could be talked into joining the fun and throwing an ad-hoc party at your place. Studying wasn’t really your thing, but you got your degree. You even managed to set up an interview with a large fitness company that is looking for an ‘assistant product manager’ and you have an offer to start in two weeks. This seems like a good safe job. If only there wasn’t the option to spend the summer with some friends you recently meet, working as a surfing instructor in some sunny place. They need a call in a few days.

The Artist

‘Art for art’s sake’

You always loved the unusual, the extraordinary, the unique. The arts naturally were important to you. You simply weren’t into the same things the other kids liked. You had your own artistic heroes and you wanted to be like them. Studying, for you, wasn’t really a way to get a degree, but a way to expose yourself to people with interesting ideas and visions. Your main goal was to create art, to perfect your own abilities and to promote your work. Now, you managed to receive a stipend to continue your work, abroad. Let’s see what the rest of the world thinks of what you do.

You are free to choose what type of art your character is involved in (painting, music, dance etc.).

The Easy One

‘I own my own body’

You never understood why so many people thought of intimacy as a primarily dangerous thing. If you like somebody, you like to be close to them and if it feels right sex is something that can easily happen. You never felt much guilt about it, but you had to realize that for some your life is confusing. You were the only one of the friends who didn’t study. You worked in a supermarket, bartended, wore the stupidest costumes for promotion and recently you worked in an office, organizing things. You never needed much money and you have little interest in career pressures. As the others are leaving, you decided to set sails yourself. You got another laid-back office job in a different city. Let’s see what life has to offer.

Before starting the game, find out with whom of the other characters you have been intimate.

The Late Arrival

‘Gladly, I became part of this’

You only lived for a little more than a year in ‘home’. You had left your previous place in a rush after a horrible breakup which ended a long relationship. In the beginning, entering this close group of friends felt strange to you, but you were welcomed with open arms and even though the time was short, you are happy to belong, to call the others your friends. You come from a conservative background, but ‘home’ opened your eyes to the many ways people see things. You just finished your engineering degree and you are off to a start a job as big industrial company. It’s time to build great things. You will miss this place.

This character requires that one of the friends had to leave ‘home’ early. If someone chooses this character, the players have to select which one leaves early.

Characters

The Fighter

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