

Do Us Part

A Larp about relationships, crushed dreams and constraints within a patriarchal society. We follow five couples, all part of a Christian church fellowship or sect, through a number of set scenes from their early married days to the time when one or both of them wants out, despite the stigma that would follow.



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Key information

Players and roles

The couples can be played by any mix of gendered persons but the roles have a defined and unchangeable gender. The couples live under traditional gender roles for a setting similar to the 50ies, the men work to make a living for them both and the women are stay at home wives.

Theme: relationships, arguments, heartbreak

Players: 2-10, you need even numbers

Game masters: it's recommended to have 2 GMs for this game, but it's doable with 1

Total time required: 3,5 hours

Playtime: 2 hours

Recommended venue: a bigger classroom, approx 40-50 kvm. You need space for 10 people to shout at each other without disturbing each other too much.

Recommended props/equipment:

12 chairs (players + game masters)

6 tables (couples + game masters)

30+ small white plastic cups (commonly found in hospitals etc. Used both for drinking and meta technique)

Speakers and access to Spotify

Pitchers of water

Cookies

Intro/outro song used to start larp and to end scenes:

Summer 78 -Yann Tiersen

<https://open.spotify.com/user/isobelll/playlist/2g54RhppWFKy9FwmBiAKUh>

The written material

Everything can be found in this folder on Google Drive:

<https://drive.google.com/folderview?id=0B96GWspoxkM4VGo4LVJMSHozLUk&usp=sharing>

The number at the end of the document title indicates how many of that document we recommend that you print.

The documents beginning with GM is for the game masters and we recommend that you start by reading those first to get an overview.

Schedule overview

Introduction: 15min

Casting and characters: 15min

Workshop: 30min

Pee break: 10min

Larp: 2 hours

Debrief: 20min

The Scenes - GM comments

1. The morning after the wedding

What we want to learn from this scene:

- What are their dreams for the future?
- How was the wedding?
- How do they treat each other?

Setting: the breakfast area at a (fancy) hotel

Time: 7 min

Start: "Did you sleep well, dear? "

Mood: You're happy or you're trying to be. This is the happiest scene of the larp. Make the most of it. Create everything that will later (perhaps?) fail.

To GM: Let the players sit down by their designated table and just talk.

This is a good opportunity to just listen in, see if you pick up things from their story that can be used later when shadowing.

2. A normal evening

What we want to learn from this scene:

- What is going on in their lives?
- What do they talk about and share with each other?

Setting: Grocery shopping at the mall, a month after the honeymoon

Time: ~7 min

Start: “Since your parents are coming over for dinner, I want to make them something special.”

Mood: Saw the seeds for future conflicts. This is where you add your secrets into the game but you don’t have to tell them yet.

To GM: Let the players walk around the room, pretending they are in the grocery store and the other players are anonymous shoppers. Listen to see that they start talking or arguing about things concerning their relationships and not get stuck in just talking about food.

3. An argument

What we want to learn from this scene:

- What do they argue about?
- How do they argue?
 - Is it always the same person who wins?
 - Is anyone violent?
 - Is anyone demeaning or degrading?
 - Do they make up or never talk about it again?
 - Who decides that?

Remember: Try to stand up when you’re fighting.

Setting: Setting the dinner table at home

Time: 7 min

Mood: Fight! Next scene is the defining moment when you decide your fate so let all the secrets (you want) come out and play.

To GM: The players are back by their designated table, but try to make sure they get up on their feet when they start arguing. And really try to make sure they start arguing here, in this scene they need to dig into the bad stuff in the relationship.

4. That defining moment

Different for each couple, see separate paper

Remember: Try to stand up when you're fighting.

Time: 7 min

Mood: Tension is so thick you can actually see it. Here you have to decide where you want to take your story. However, make it all about the feels.

To GM: The players are at their designated table. Listen in and shadow them as best you have time for.

5. Mingle with the congregation

What we want to learn from this scene:

- How do they act towards each other when among other people?
- Do they seek comfort in each other or in others?

Remember: Try to stand up when you're fighting.

Setting: There is a mingle party at the local congregation, all the couples are there, they know off each other, they have met before but they are not best friends.

Time: 15 min

Mood: Stay collected, you are in front of other people after all. Of course you will fail? You're both bitter and frustrated. Perhaps sad? Perhaps furious at each other? How could you have gotten to this (embarrassing) point in life?

To GM: Reorganise the room so that you have one table with drinks and one with food (cookies) and take away most or all chairs to make the space good for mingling. Listen and shadow the players as best you can.

6. The Hearing

What we want to learn from this scene:

- Who wants the divorce, both parties or just one?
- What are they willing to say to the panel of elders to make this happen or not make this happen?

Setting: A courtroom with a jury of elders, one couple at a time plead their case

Time: 5 min /couple

Mood: This one is up to you. Every secret is out in the open for everyone to see and judge.

To GM: If there are two of you, split the players into two groups and make two versions of this scene. If there is only one GM, you need to keep each couples scene very quick and snappy.

Put up chairs in a line and lead the scene sitting in the middle. Let one couple at a time stand in front of you/the jury and present their case. You can have the other players not being judge sitting on your sides and either help with the questioning or at least to make shocked and disappointed noises. This is up to the players how much they want to partake.

Remember that this is a christian sect, use the commandments and old fashioned stereotypical views to make this uncomfortable to the roles.

7. Epilogue

What we want to learn from this scene:

- What was the verdict? (you decide together)
- How does the future look for them now?
- It doesn't have to be a happy ending.

Remember: Use monologues frequently during this scene to enhance your story.

Setting: The breakfast after they just heard the verdict (they can also make a time jump to futher in the future if that feels more relevant)

Time: 5 min

Mood: Hurt? Disappointed? Angry? The larp is probably going to be more interesting if you don't make it into a happy ending.

To GM: The players decide the fate of their couple. Listen in, shadow, pressure them to do monologues. Try to make them feel.

Print List

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GM WS - get angry!	x 1
GM Do Us Part - couple summary	x 1
Couples -Do Us Part	x 4
Couples summary for floor	x 1
Physical play	x 4
Nametags	x 2
Scenes - Do Us Part	x 7
Do us part - between the scenes	x 7
The Defining Moment	x 3

Do Us Part Master Schedule

Intro

15min

- Hello and welcome
 - who we are (game masters)
 - Who are you? Say your name and 1 word- what you think about when you think about marriage.
 - give a rough summary of the schedule
- About the scenario
 - 5 couples
 - almost all scenes just with your partner
 - telling a story: the scenes are set
 - Arguing; this is a core element in this larp
 - 7 scenes, 5-15 min
 - morning after wedding
 - a normal evening, sometime after
 - an argument
 - the defining moment
 - mingle party
 - the hearing
 - epilogue
- Techniques
 - Shadow - voices in your head
 - "He doesn't even listen to you."
 - "She always says that right about now."
 - You can choose to ignore this.
 - It doesn't have to be true. All thoughts aren't true.
 - monologues
 - Touch the chest of

- It's ok to say "I don't know."
- Try to change your voice somewhat
- Hand movement up (GM) = add more energy and/or intensity to the scene
- cringe the cup / throw the cup
- stand up when you argue!
- music outro - wind down and end the scene
- You can also cut the scene yourselves before the music starts
- explain how to use the time between the scenes
 - You can end the scene yourselves
 - wind down, fall silent
 - read through the next scene
 - in whispers - discuss what you think has happened between the scene you just played and the next scene. Try to stay focused.
 - Discuss your focus for the next scene.
 - wait for signal before you start the next scene

The Christian cult and culture

- The sect, why are we using that?
 - modern world, old gender roles
 - Christian because we think you all know enough to improvise
 - this is not a statement, just convenient
 - Why not Muslim? Cultural appropriation + we don't know enough.
- No wrongs, make up the rules and definitions of the sect as you play, use it to help make the situation more complicated and limiting.
- The sect can help you define what kind of expectations the roles have on each other, they should be gender dependant

Roles

15min

- The couples/roles
 - read the theme and plot summary for each couple
 - explain how the casting will work
 - it's ok if two couples play the same characters

- explain that they should name their characters with a name starting with the letter defined on the character papers.
- Pick roles
 - Put the short descriptions and name tags on the floor, let people stand by the role they want to play
 - shuffle people around until it works
- Let the players read about their characters/couples
- Chat with your partner
 - what do you think is interesting about these characters and their story?
 - How physical do we want to be? (There's a separate paper for that)
- Nametags

Workshops 30min

- How we argue: see workshop document

-- Pee break + look at first scene + set the room in order --

Larp 2 hours

5min	- "The morning after"	7min
5min	- "A normal evening"	7min
5min	- "An argument"	7min
5min	- "The defining moment"	10min
5min	- "The Dinner"	15min
5min	- "The Hearing!"	5min x 5
	- Epilogue	5min

5min interludes:

- Read the next scene

- Where are we in our story arc right now?
 - Does anyone want a divorce?
 - What has happened since last scene?
 - Have any secrets been revealed?
- What do we want to be the focus for the upcoming scene?

Epilogue

- Remember that it doesn't have to be happy.

Debrief 20min

- Intro: What we will do now
- Debrief in the couples
 - What do you need right now?
 - How do you feel about the story we just played out?
- Roundtable
 - Please share something
- Feedback (if there is time)
 - Anything anyone want to share with the Game masters?
 - If there is feedback for the authors, please ask them to send it to:
annica.strand@gmail.com

WS - To fight

- Learn to fight as your character
- Skills to do so
- Exercise

Basics

- Always stand up when fighting
- Talk in circles - don't solve the argument
- Feel like you're not taken seriously.
- Who usually says "I'm sorry"?
- Does the fight stop just because someone says "I'm sorry"?
- Inconsequence
- Attacking one's character
- No body shaming
- You don't have to scream all the time

Exercise

- **What makes you angry off game?**
 - Decide if you want to play close to home or not.
 - Tell your partner

Intro

- Exercise
- Fail
- Find character
- Things can change
- Short scenes
- Middle of relationship

- Repeat three times
 - We will time it
 - Same scene
 - Change things
 - Answer questions - you will get them
- Stay focused even between the scenes

Fight - Give them the questions

- 1.5 minutes, 3 minutes downtime/preparation.
- Who wins?
- Is there a winner?
- How do they win?
- It's ok to fall back into how you fight off game, the important thing is to keep the **flow**.
- Give example - christmas
 - Middle of their relationship
 - You don't have to use it later in the game.

Remind

- Double bind
- Shame
- Talk in circle

Between the fights

- What worked?
- What made you angry?
- Do you want to change anything?

Repeat methods.

- GM - Shadow
- GM - hands up
- Stand up
- Talking in circles
- Attack one's character
- You can end the scene

The Couples: GM summary

The couples can be played by any mix of gendered persons but the roles have a defined and unchangeable gender. The couples live under traditional gender roles for a setting similar to the 50ies, the men work to make a living for them both and the women are stay at home wives.

The Carlsons

Theme: Oppression, violence, disappointment, alcohol abuse

Plot summary: Mr Carlson can be a violent man and has on several occasions hit Mrs Carlson. Mrs Carlson has developed a drinking problem. Mr Carlson has fallen in love with a younger woman. They have filed for divorce together.

The Gilmartins

Theme: mismatched dreams and expectations, depression, verbal abuse, adultery

Plot summary: She is very bitter and can be very verbally abusive towards her husband, even though she still loves him. He has fallen in love with another and wants to get out of this destructive marriage.

The Burgos

Theme: Infertility, crushed dreams, adultery, betrayal.

Plot summary: He has learned that he is infertile and this has crushed their shared dreams of a big family. She has been unfaithful with their neighbour, perhaps in hopes of getting pregnant but still loves Mr Burgos. He feels betrayed and had filed for divorce.

The Ramirez

Theme: rebellion, poverty, alcohol abuse, pressure, loneliness, desperation.

Plot summary: He never managed to get his career off to a good start and they have always had too little money and too many kids. She has tried to manage but the constant struggle has worn her down. The pressure has made him into a drunk. Her parents have offered their help, but only if she leaves him.

The Wangs

Theme: Faith, wrong kind of love, social pressure, friendship & heartbreak.

Plot summary: They no longer love each other as a couple, but rather as best friends or siblings. They don't have sex, and parents are wondering when the kids will come. She has fallen in love with another and he has lost his faith. She is scared of hell and to be shunned.

Mr Charles and Mrs Clara Carlson

Started: When they were young they were the king and queen of the prom, the couple everyone looked up to and wanted to be, and be with. He was a promising sportsman and she a beauty with style. They were in love, but perhaps more in the idealised image of the perfect couple with a brilliant future rather than in each other.

Theme: Oppression, violence, disappointment, alcohol abuse

Plot summary: Mr Carlson can be a violent man and has on several occasions hit Mrs Carlson. Mrs Carlson has developed a drinking problem. Mr Carlson has fallen in love with a younger woman. They have filed for divorce together.

Story:

He got an injury early in his career and had to give up his sport-star dreams. But connections got him a job at a bank and they have never lacked for money. On the surface they are still the perfect couple, rich, well dressed and with interesting friends and a cool car. But Mr Carlson got bitter after his injury and started taking out his frustrations on Mrs Carlson. At first it was mostly verbally, downgrading remarks, always finding something lacking with how she looked, her cooking, her opinions and friends. Later when he, through her, had driven her friends away and she had stopped showing any reactions to his verbal poison he took to physical abuse.

To cope with Mr Carlson's abuse and desensitize herself Mrs Carlson started drinking. She has now made an embarrassment of herself at several social gatherings and is quite often drunk when Mr Carlson comes home from work. It has come a real addiction.

They argue a lot when she is drunk, she doesn't shy away from speaking her mind when she is drunk. This has lead to Mr Carlson working later and more weekends and he recently got a promotion for his hard efforts. He has also spent a lot of time with his secretary, a young and gentle woman, who really understands him. She often comforts him before he has to go home to his foul-mouthed and drunkard of a wife. They have fallen in love and Mr Carlson now wants a divorce so that he can marry her instead. Both of them fear the shame of a divorce and to be shunned by their friends and family. But for her this is the first glimmer of hope she has felt in a long while, she only hopes that his infatuation with this new woman lasts long enough for her to get out of this hell of a marriage.

The players should discuss:

Do they have any children? If not, you don't have to explain why, just decide if you want that as another layer of complication or not.

Mr George and Mrs Grace Gilmartin

Started: Mr Gilmartin started his career yearly, as a young entrepreneur. The papers wrote about him and everything. He had such a promising future. Mrs Gilmartin was also foreseen to have a bright future. She was always at the center of attention as social gatherings, she knew everybody who was anybody and was great at connecting people and making them feel at ease. So many of her friends found the love of their life through her. And she could have had anybody she wanted. And she wanted Mr Gilmartin as soon as she had met him. He was such a diamond in the rough she thought, a brilliant mind, but so shy and humble. She saw a challenge and accepted it. He never knew what hit him but he fell for her with a bang.

Theme: mismatched dreams and expectations, depression, verbal abuse, adultery

Plot summary: From mingle queen to stay at home wife and from a prospering entrepreneur to struggling businessman. She is very bitter and often turn that bitterness towards her husband, even though she still loves him. He has met a widow who wants to finance his newest project, or all of them if he would divorce and marry her instead...

Story:

Mrs Gilmartin really did manage to polish up Mr Gilmartin. With his many ideas and her social skills they climbed to the top of the social circle and the stock market. They were both so happy. But even before the financial crash Mr Gilmartin had started to feel worn out, and also quite fed up. He wanted to lock himself up and just focus on his work and explore new ideas, not stay up late for parties, being displayed by his wife as a priced dog, encouraged to talk about last month's projects as a party trick to make people feel like they know had something fascinating to tell their friends tomorrow.

She was reveling in the attention and status and also the money of course. Life was proving to be everything she had ever hoped for or dreamed about. Then he started to grumble, not wanting to come out and socialize and when he did he left so early it was rude. She had to make up excuses, try to patch up the holes he created in their social circle. But the received less and less invitations, and she feared the isolation.

Then the economy crashed, and Mr Gilmartin's company and stocks with it. It was the same for a lot of their friends as well of course, times changes. A great shock to everyone. Mr Gilmartin didn't seem too brought down by it though. He had new ideas and managed to get

funding to start something small, he was quite liking having to work his way up again even if he too had days when he missed the glamor of their early married days.. She did not like the changes as all. And the housework and lack of social gatherings made her frustrated, bored and very unhappy. She remembered all the times she was at the center of attention at a social gathering and the drastic change in lifestyle made her very bitter. And she started taking that bitterness out on him. She saw him as a failure and found all kinds of inventive ways to make him feel like one too. He started getting depressed and soon almost every word spoken between them dripped with poison.

He started to spend even more late nights at work. She got even more lonely and sad. It all went downhill. Then Mr Gilmartin got a new investor, a widow with money and time to spend, and all the will to spend it all on him. Mr Gilmartin is not exactly in love with this new woman in his life, but it is just such a relief to have someone who believes in him again and encourages him to work. It has also been strongly suggested that is he was to get a divorce and marry her, he would get full access to her capital and could put it all towards fulfilling his dreams...

The players should discuss:

Do they have any children? If not, you don't have to explain why, just decide if you want that as another layer of complication or not.

Mr Ben and Mrs Belle Burgos

Started: Mr and Mrs Burgos met through friends, they were set up for a blind date. But their friends had judge well, the two had a lot in common and fell instantly in love with each other. They had so much fun together! They didn't need fancy dinners or movies to keep their love alive, just talking about anything and everything over a peanut butter sandwich was enough.

Theme: Infertility, crushed dreams, adultery, complicated love.

Plot summary: He has learned that he is infertile and this has crushed their shared dreams of a big family. She has been unfaithful with their neighbour, perhaps in hopes of getting pregnant but still loves Mr Burgos. He feels betrayed and had filed for divorce.

Story: They fell instantly in love with each other and married not long after they had met. Their friends laugh and just see this a part of their quirkiness. Truth is a bit more complicated than this. The thing is that Mrs Burgos was in a secret relationship with another man when they met, but it was not a match that neither her family or friends would have approved of. But at the time she thought it was still worth pursuing and she had gone against the rules and norms and had sex with him. She had gotten pregnant. She realized this soon after she had met Mr Burgos and broken it off with her secret boyfriend. She chose to tell Mr Burgos about this embarrassing secret. But he was so in love, he forgave her previous transgression and was ready to be the father of any child of hers. Filled with love and the depend trust between them they married and moved to a house with room for a family. But before they had time to reveal the news of the expected child Mrs Burgos has a miscarriage. They were both devastated but found comfort in each other.

After a period of grief they found solace in they they could have kids that wouldn't risk rising awkward questions but be a magical mix of the two. They embraced this, though of it as God's will and delighted in trying to get a habitant for their half finished nursery. But time passed, and then more time passed and Mrs Burgos just didn't get pregnant. They tried every trick in the book; special things to eat or not eat, special sexual positions, time of the month and the day and so on. At first it was a bit of a game, an adventure. But eventually when nothing seemed to work it just got exhausting and frustrating. They finally went to see a doctor, both of them, and got the devastating news that Mr Burgos is infertile and will never be able to have children.

Both of them got crushed by these news. Family and friends got involved and tried their best to console the two. But the two had build their dreams of the future on visions of a big family

with many kids, three at least, and all the picnics, outings, games and fun they would have together. They both got depressed, Mr Burgos the worst as he felt guilty for their crushed dreams. Mrs Burgos tried to make him feel better, but she herself was so sad that it was hard to lift anyone else's spirit.

Then they got new neighbours, a widower with two kids and a maid. Mrs Burgos soon befriended them and delighted in helping to care for the kids during the days. She and the maid also became good friends and soon the two families started spending lots of time together, doing outings on weekends, having dinners and barbeques. The children and this new friendship brought life and laughter back into their marriage. But their own lack of kids also became a bleeding wound, creating a gash between Mr and Mrs Burgos.

And one evening Mrs Burgos asked to have a serious talk with Mr Burgos. Between the tears and many apologies he got the news that she had failed her promises and slept with their neighbour. She still loves Mr Burgos and has promised that it will never happen again. But at the same time she sees in her neighbour a chance to have the family she always dreamed of. Mr Burgos felt very hurt and filed for divorce. But he has to admit to himself that he still loves her too, no less than when they got married. But grief and guilt has created a big gap between them, hard to say if they could ever bridge it again.

Mr Rafael and Mrs Rachel Ramirez

Started: The Ramirez married quite young and very much in love. Mrs Ramirez family was not happy about the match as Mr Ramirez was not a part of the sect and also had a bit of a bad reputation and came from a family with equally poor reputation, much due to his father's drinking problems. But the young couple felt rebellious; he was certain he was not going to turn into his father but rather make a good career for himself and prove everybody wrong. And she really believed in him and despised her parents for judging him based on his father's actions. So he converted to her church and faith and they married despite the lack of parental blessings.

Theme: rebellion, poverty, alcohol abuse, pressure, loneliness, desperation.

Plot summary: He never managed to get his career off to a good start and they have always had too little money and too many kids. She has tried to manage but the constant struggle has worn her down. The pressure has made him into a drunk. Her parents have offered their help, but only if she leaves him. She has filed for divorce, but not fully made up her mind if that is what she really wants.

Story: Their marriage started out great, even though they didn't have much, they had each other and felt they could reach the stars as long as they were together. He was still finishing off his studies and they lived in his aunt's cellar when they had their first kid. They were both excited although a bit scared of this big responsibility, they hadn't planned for kids this early, but here she was, a beautiful daughter.

Their financial situation started to become a strain and he got very stressed about finding a job. He started working part time while studying and she had to handle their daughter pretty much by herself and started to feel very lonely and isolated. They argued about it but mostly forgave each other and fell asleep in each other's arms. Then he got an offer for a full time job. It would mean quitting his studies prematurely and he would also have to start at a low salary as he didn't have a degree yet. But they desperately needed the money and he figured that he could work his way up. So Mrs Ramirez urged him on to take the chance and the job and for a while things got better and they were happy. Then she got pregnant again and he felt stressed to progress in his career to bring in more money. He started working late to impress his superiors and once again she felt abandoned. Even if she knew why she could not fight the loneliness and sadness she felt and the precious little time that they did have to spend with each other were often spent arguing.

The pressure to perform and the constant feeling of not doing enough started to really get to Mr Ramirez and he started to take a drink before he headed home in the evening. And then it became two drinks, and then more. By the time their third kid was born he rarely came home sober. Mrs Ramirez spent most of her time and life in the sole company of her kids who she did her best to care for with meagre means. She talked to them a lot, and she started talking to herself as well. She considered taking a job as well, but few were available for women, and even fewer for a mother of three.

Then eventually Mr Ramirez drinking problem got bad enough for him to lose his job over it. And in his state no other offers stood open to him either. They are on the brink of complete ruin. Mrs Ramirez parents have offered to help her out, but they want Mr Ramirez out of the picture first. Even with the shame a divorce will bring, having a drunken, ruined grown man to deal with stretches beyond the limits of their charity. So she has filed for divorce but still battles with her feelings about it. Deep down she still loves him and her rebellious heart would also hate for her parents to be proven right...

Mr Wayne and Mrs Wendy Wang

Started: The Wangs met on a wedding, Mrs Wang's best friend married the cousin of Mr Wang. It was a very romantic day. The ceremony was held in church of course and then a garden party with the warm summer night lit up by colored garden lights. They talked, then danced and then talked some more. They started dating, encouraged by their families. The congregation is ever shrinking, so it is getting ever so much harder for the younger generation to find someone with the right faith. Everyone, including themselves, agreed that Mr and Mrs Wang would make the perfect couple and so they married, just a year or so after they met. They were so happy and painted a brilliant future for themselves.

Theme: Faith, wrong kind of love, social pressure, friendship & love.

Plot summary: They no longer love each other as a couple, but rather as best friends or siblings. They don't have sex, and parents are wondering when the kids will come. She has fallen in love with another and he has lost his faith. She is scared of hell and to be shunned.

Story: Looking at their marriage from the outside one can see only happiness and success. Mr Wang has a good job that he is happy with, Mrs Wang has the house and garden in perfect order and is also engaged in various social projects. She helps with a soup kitchen through the church, she organizes a book club together with friends and has also started to study arabic to be able to better help refugees in the near future.

The only thing that could be commented on is the lack of kids. Their parents certainly do. At first Mr and Mrs Wang just brushed it off and said "all in good time". Then after a while, when their friends and family started asking discreet questions if something was amiss, they realized it was. But it was not what their friends and family feared, that one of them was infertile. It was just that they didn't have sex anymore, and had stopped fairly soon after their honeymoon. They hadn't really thought about it, why it was so. But now they had to and talked long about it, finally coming to the realization that they didn't love each other like that, and hadn't for some time. They were best friends, they really enjoyed spending time with each other and it was true love that people saw between them. Just not.. that kind of love. They had become almost like siblings. The thought of having sex now felt extremely awkward, for both of them. But they are married, they made their vows under the sight of God, that makes them unbreakable. So they said at first, and tried to continue with their lives. But something fundamental had changed with that realization, that although they love each other, it was not the right kind of love.

Then the forbidden happened when Mrs Wang fell in love with another. A man from her arabic course, a man not of the right faith. And he loves her back, so very dearly. Cryingly Mrs Wang confessed this to Mr Wang who did his very best to console her. He even asked her if she wanted to try and get a divorce so that she could be together with the man she loves. She was appalled. It would mean breaking her vows and betraying her faith. She would probably go to hell once she dies and in life she would be shunned by her family and most of her friends. And he would risk the same faith if he pursued this she warned him. But his heart was breaking from seeing her so unhappy. He started asking himself if this really was God's plan. Or if there was a God at all?

Finally he decided to file for divorce in secrecy, thinking that if he just gets her in front of the judges she can't lie to them, she will have to admit to them that she has fallen in love with another man. And perhaps they will let them part, and she can be happy...

Players should remember:

This is a deeply religious society and Mrs. Wang is truly terrified of them going to hell because of all of her actions and his loss of faith. Will she really be happy if they get a divorce? Can she make him stay by getting angry? Is he going to hell? Will he be able to forgive himself if he lets her go?

The Carlsons

Mr C Carlson

Theme: Oppression, violence, disappointment, alcohol abuse

Plot summary: Mr Carlson can be a violent man and has on several occasions hit Mrs Carlson. Mrs Carlson has developed a drinking problem. Mr Carlson has fallen in love with a younger woman. They have filed for divorce together.

Mrs C Carlson

Theme: Oppression, violence, disappointment, alcohol abuse

Plot summary: Mr Carlson can be a violent man and has on several occasions hit Mrs Carlson. Mrs Carlson has developed a drinking problem. Mr Carlson has fallen in love with a younger woman. They have filed for divorce together.

The Gilmartins

Mr G Gilmartin

Theme: mismatched dreams and expectations, depression, verbal abuse, adultery

Plot summary: From mingle queen to stay at home wife and from a prospering entrepreneur to struggling businessman. She is very bitter and often turn that bitterness towards her husband, even though she still loves him. He has met a widow who wants to finance his newest project, or all of them if he would divorce and marry her instead...

Mrs G Gilmartin

Theme: mismatched dreams and expectations, depression, verbal abuse, adultery

Plot summary: From mingle queen to stay at home wife and from a prospering entrepreneur to struggling businessman. She is very bitter and often turn that bitterness towards her husband, even though she still loves him. He has met a widow who wants to finance his newest project, or all of them if he would divorce and marry her instead...

The Burgos

Mr B Burgos

Theme: Infertility, crushed dreams, adultery, betrayal.

Plot summary: He has learned that he is infertile and this has crushed their shared dreams of a big family. She has been unfaithful with their neighbour, perhaps in hopes of getting pregnant but still loves Mr Burgos. He feels betrayed and had filed for divorce.

Mrs B Burgos

Theme: Infertility, crushed dreams, adultery, betrayal.

Plot summary: He has learned that he is infertile and this has crushed their shared dreams of a big family. She has been unfaithful with their neighbour, perhaps in hopes of getting pregnant but still loves Mr Burgos. He feels betrayed and had filed for divorce.

The Ramirez

Mr R Ramirez

Theme: rebellion, poverty, alcohol abuse, pressure, loneliness, desperation.

Plot summary: He never managed to get his career off to a good start and they have always had too little money and too many kids. She has tried to manage but the constant struggle has worn her down. The pressure has made him into a drunk. her parents have offered their help, but only if she leaves him. She has filed for divorce, but not fully made up her mind if that is what she really wants.

Mrs R Ramirez

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The Wangs

Mr W Wang

Theme: Faith, wrong kind of love, social pressure, friendship & heartbreak.

Plot summary: They no longer love each other as a couple, but rather as best friends or siblings. They don't have sex, and parents are wondering when the kids will come. She has fallen in love with another and he has lost his faith. She is scared of hell and to be shunned. Mr Wang has filed for divorce in hopes that this will lead to her going after happiness and love with the man she loves.

Mrs W Wang

Theme: Faith, wrong kind of love, social pressure, friendship & heartbreak.

Plot summary: They no longer love each other as a couple, but rather as best friends or siblings. They don't have sex, and parents are wondering when the kids will come. She has fallen in love with another and he has lost his faith. She is scared of hell and to be shunned. Mr Wang has filed for divorce in hopes that this will lead to her going after happiness and love with the man she loves.

Give this to the players as they've selected their characters and make them first decide for themselves before showing their partner.

How physically close do you want to play?

- ☐ Hold hands
- ☐ Hold shoulders
- ☐ Hug
- ☐ "Kissing hands"
- ☐ Kiss on the cheek

"Kissing hands"

Instead of kissing each other you touch your partner's face in whatever manner if would feel like kissing them. Soft, nice, hard, forceful, sloppy. Use one or both hands.

Does your partner kiss you back? If you use this method be sure to try it before the game starts.

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"Kissing hands"

Instead of kissing each other you touch your partner's face in whatever manner you feel like kissing them; soft, nice, hard, forceful, sloppy etc. Use one or both hands. Does your partner kiss you back? If you use this method be sure to try it before the game starts.

Clara Carlson

Drinking

Isolated

Wants divorce

Scared

Charles Carlson

Violent

Unfaithful

Wants divorce

Loves secretary

Grace Gilmartin

Bitter

Lonely

Destructive

Loves George

George Gilmartin

Depressed

Wants divorce

Widow offering money for “love”

Belle Burgos

Unfaithful

Depressed

Loves Ben

Childless

Ben Burgos

Intertile

Depressed

Wants divorce

Loves Belle

Rachel Ramirez

Lonely

Poor

Wants divorce

Loves Rafael

Rafael Ramirez

Converted

Poor, Got fired

Drunk

Loves Rachel

Wendy Wang

Only friends

Afraid of hell

Loves someone else

Strong belief

Wayne Wang

Lost faith

Only friends

Wants divorce

Loves Wendy, as friend

Scenes

1. The morning after the wedding

What we want to learn from this scene:

- What are their dreams for the future?
- How was the wedding?
- How do they treat each other?

Setting: the breakfast area at a (fancy) hotel

Time: 7 min

Start: "Did you sleep well, dear? "

Mood: You're happy or you're trying to be. This is the happiest scene of the larp. Make the most of it. Create everything that will later (perhaps?) fail.

2. A normal evening

What we want to learn from this scene:

- What is going on in their lives?
- What do they talk about and share with each other?

Setting: Grocery shopping at the mall, a month after the honeymoon

Time: ~7 min

Start: "Since your parents are coming over for dinner, I want to make them something special."

Mood: Saw the seeds for future conflicts. This is where you add your secrets into the game but you don't have to tell them yet.

3. An argument

What we want to learn from this scene:

- What do they argue about?
- How do they argue?
 - Is it always the same person who wins?
 - Is anyone violent?
 - Is anyone demeaning or degrading?
 - Do they make up or never talk about it again?
 - Who decides that?

Remember: Try to stand up when you're fighting.

Setting: Setting the dinner table at home

Time: 7 min

Mood: Fight! Next scene is the defining moment when you decide your fate so let all the secrets (you want) come out and play.

4. That defining moment

Different for each couple, see separate paper

Remember: Try to stand up when you're fighting.

Time: 7 min

Mood: Tension is so thick you can actually see it. Here you have to decide where you want to take your story. However, make it all about the feels.

5. Mingle with the congregation

What we want to learn from this scene:

- How do they act towards each other when among other people?
- Do they seek comfort in each other or in others?

Remember: Try to stand up when you're fighting.

Setting: There is a mingle party at the local congregation, all the couples are there, they know off each other, they have met before but they are not best friends.

Time: 15 min

Mood: Stay collected, you are in front of other people after all. Of course you will fail? You're both bitter and frustrated. Perhaps sad? Perhaps furious at each other? How could you have gotten to this (embarrassing) point in life?

6. The Hearing

What we want to learn from this scene:

- Who wants the divorce, both parties or just one?
- What are they willing to say to the panel of elders to make this happen or not make this happen?

Setting: A courtroom with a jury of elders, one couple at a time plead their case

Time: 5 min /couple

Mood: This one is up to you. Every secret is out in the open for everyone to see and judge.

7. Epilogue

What we want to learn from this scene:

- What was the verdict? (you decide together)
- How does the future look for them now?
- It doesn't have to be a happy ending.

Remember: You players decide the verdict and fate of your couple. Use monologues frequently during this scene to enhance your story.

Setting: The breakfast after they just heard the verdict (they can also make a time jump to further in the future if that feels more relevant)

Time: 5 min

Mood: Hurt? Disappointed? Angry? The larp is probably going to be more interesting if you don't make it into a happy ending.

Do us part - between the scenes

Try to stay focused, talk in low voices and avoid laughing if you can. Keep the energy up for the next scene.

5min interludes:

- Read the next scene
- Where are we in our story arc right now?
 - Does anyone want a divorce?
 - What has happened since last scene?
 - Have any secrets been revealed?
- What do we want to be the focus for the upcoming scene?

Remember to stay focused and don't decide everything. You still want to larp it.

The Carlsons

The scene:

Option A: Mrs Carlson finds out that Mr Carlson has fallen in love with his secretary.

Option B: The first time Mr Carlson hits Mrs Carlson

What we want to learn from this scene:

- What happened that changed their relationship forever?
- How did it happen?

Time: 7min

The Gilmartins

The scene:

Option A: After the financial crash, Mr Gilmartin explains the lifestyle changes they have to make to Mrs Gilmartin.

Option B: Mr Gilmartin explaining that he wants a divorce, and why.

What we want to learn from this scene:

- What happened that changed their relationship forever?
- How did it happen?

Time: 7min

The Burgos

The scene:

Option A: They get the medical results and learn that Mr Burgos is infertile.

Option B: Mrs Burgos admitting that she has slept with their neighbour.

What we want to learn from this scene:

- What happened that changed their relationship forever?
- How did it happen?

Time: 7min

The Ramirez

The scene:

Option A: Mr Ramirez losing his job and having to tell Mrs Ramirez about it.

Option B: Mrs Ramirez filing for divorce and telling Mr Ramirez about it.

What we want to learn from this scene:

- What happened that changed their relationship forever?
- How did it happen?

Time: 7min

The Wangs

The scene:

Option A: When they realize that they don't love each other as a married couple should.

Option B: Mrs Wang admitting to have fallen in love with another

Option C: Arriving at the judge's house, Mrs Wang realizing that Mr Wang has lied and that he has filed for divorce and tricked her here.

What we want to learn from this scene:

- What happened that changed their relationship forever?
- How did it happen?

Time: 7min