

The Grey Zone

by Siri Sandquist

5

Players



45

Minutes



Intensity

Supplies:

A timer.

Keywords:

Sex, consent,
internal conflict,
date rape.

Background

Last night the one you love was out partying. Although you've only been together for a few months, you think this might be the real thing. Last night he came home a bit drunk after you were in bed, fast asleep. He woke you up. He was horny and wanted sex. You were really tired and really not in the mood, but you ended up having sex somehow.

Now, in the early morning hours, you lie awake and listen to him breathe. You don't know what to think or feel. What really happened last night? Who is really to blame? Was it rape? This is the grey zone.

This scenario takes place within the mind of a woman who had a "grey zone" sexual encounter with her partner last night. Each player portrays one of the quarreling voices inside her head.

What, exactly, happened last night? Who is to blame? What should she do? Come to a decision before it's time to get up and the alarm rings.

This scenario is written about a heterosexual couple with a female victim. If you want to change it up and play the game about a male victim or a same-sex relationship feel free to do so. Reflect over what differences in the story these changed dynamics give to the game.

Setup

Overview

- Read the whole game aloud.
- Establish boundaries for physical play.
- Choose voices.
- Set the alarm for 25 minutes.
- Play to decide what happened.
- Debrief.

Boundaries

Take a minute now to establish what level of physicality and touch this group is comfortable with. If you feel the need to leave during the game you should do so. Other players should not question this decision.

Voices

Everyone should choose one of the voices inside the woman's head:

- **Guilt:** It was all your fault. You didn't really say no. Anyway, he just did it because he loves you so much. You should be happy that he desires you. And it wasn't bad. It's not as if it was rape!
- **Anger:** You said no, but he didn't respect you. It felt awkward and now you feel dirty. You shouldn't stay with someone who treats you this way. It was rape! You should leave him.
- **Rationality:** He didn't mean anything bad by it. He was drunk and you were not clear enough. Sure, he should have respected a "no," but did he even hear you say it?
- **Fear:** Somehow you just couldn't speak up. He scared you last night and now you are afraid that everything is ruined. Will he hate you if you accuse him of being a rapist?
- **Desire:** You love him and, even if you didn't really want to have sex last night, you still kind of liked parts of it. Did he know that you really weren't all that into it?

Have someone set a timer for 25 minutes. When it rings, the woman's alarm has gone off, and she must get out of bed, and the larp will be over.

Play

Begin the game lying down on the floor, eyes closed. Someone should start the collective monologue. During this monologue, all characters speak simultaneously, describing what they remember from last night and how they perceived it. All versions of the story are true. When you have finished telling your story, become quiet, sit up and open your eyes. When everyone is sitting up, one voice should begin the larp by saying: “What really happened last night?” Then you may begin interacting with one another to arrive at a decision before the alarm goes off.

Although you will begin play on the floor, this is not a larp where you just sit still and talk—moving brings energy to the game. In the mind, everything has symbolic meaning; physical actions represent emotional struggle. You may also use “shadow techniques” on each other in this game. This means you can touch, press, or tap each other, whisper in the other players’ ears while they are speaking, etc., to create a feeling of uncertainty or otherwise change another voice’s perception.

The game ends when the alarm goes off and the woman must get out of bed, or when the voices reach a consensus, whichever happens first. If the alarm rings, the voices must quickly make a decision.

Debrief

After the game is over, gather together and check in with your co-players about how they are feeling and if anyone needs anything there and then.

What really happened

last night? Who is

really to blame?

About the Designer

Siri Sandquist (Sweden) is an archaeologist and feminist who has organized larps since 2014. For example, she organized *Suffragett!* about the Women’s Right to Vote campaign in 1915, in collaboration with the municipality of Varberg. She works as a teacher at Lajvverkstaden, which produces edu-larps for school children.