

Just Give Me A Reason

Just Give Me A Reason explores the relationship between two characters as they try to find reasons to stay together in the midst of a conflict. The scenario relies heavily on physical play and silent acting. The scenario is designed for 4 players; a gamemaster can be used as a timekeeper, but otherwise a timer will do just fine.

To enjoy this scenario, we believe that you should be:

- interested in emotional play in an intimate relationship
- comfortable with acting physically and being in close contact with your fellow players

The scene that plays out is an argument between two characters over one or several issues in their relationship. Each character will be played by two persons:

- One player that acts and talks the character in the scene, and that focuses on the conflict and discord in the relationship and tries to protect their own ego and interests.
- One player that silently acts out the positive aspects of the the relationship, remembering, showing and trying to reinforce those aspects of the relationship for the talking players by demonstrating positive emotions and interactions between the characters and through physical intervention in their play.

Preparations

Before you begin the warm-up, decide who will be talking and who will be silent. After doing this, each of the two talking players picks one or several points of conflict from the list below that are relevant to their characters' experience of the relationship. Each talking player remembers the point(s) of conflict they have chosen to bring them into play when they want; the other talking player is also allowed to bring them into play, but does not need to remember the points of conflict of the other player.

Following this, decide on a setting for the argument. It is recommended that you choose a setting that allows for physical play that leaves room for silence between the characters, such as preparing a dinner, packing ahead of a trip, renovating or sorting through stuff together. If you want to, lay out the design of the room, using actual furniture, tape on the floor and/or spoken descriptions.

Warm-up

To get used to the feel of each other, give each of the other players a long hug of about 1 minute each (use a timer if you don't have a GM) while playing *Just Give Me A Reason* by P!nk, and finish with a group hug with the silent players in the middle until the song ends.

How to play

Before the play starts, the silent players direct the their respective talking player where they should stand and what pose they should start in, without using any words. When they are done placing their talking player, the silent players seek eye contact with each other, and the play begins. The scene runs until the timer goes off (if you use one), the talking players voluntarily embrace or one of the talking players leave the room.

Suggested meta techniques

We have found the two meta techniques below useful for this scenario:

- **Tap-out:** A silent player may tap a talking player to change roles; you may also allow a talking player to tap a silent player to change places. Talking players will still remain conflict-seeking after switch, and silent players will keep seeking reconciliation.
- **Off-game box:** A part of the room can be set aside for off-game interaction by the silent players where they either whisper ideas on what to act out, or just stand to indicate that they are not currently acting out anything.

A suggestion is to play the scenario two or more times in a row to get into it, possibly varying the rules for tap-out between the runs (for example only allowing silent players to tap out in the first run and allowing all players to tap out in the second run).

Suggestions for silent players

As the heading says, these are just suggestions – feel free to experiment with different ways of interacting with your talking players:

- Act out happier times together with the other silent player
- Force the body of your talking player into a different position: a more open pose, place a hand over their mouth to stop them from talking, drag them back from physical confrontation, stretch out their hand towards the other talking player, etc.
- Stand between the two talking players to take the brunt of a verbal assault
- Comfort a talking player that is being confronted by stroking their bodies, holding their hand, hugging them etc.
- Act out a vulnerable response to attacks from the other talking player; while your talking player may act stubborn, angry or detached, show emotions that might hide beneath, such as hurt, longing and a sense of insecurity.
- Remember that you can work together with the other silent player in all of this.

Suggestions for talking players

Again, these are just suggestions – feel free to deviate from these suggestion if it makes you feel more comfortable or if it might develop the scene in a more interesting direction:

- Accepting the factual aspects of what the other player says generally helps the argument to progress – if they accuse you of having been absent, negligent, behaving badly, try to accept that you have indeed done this even as you try to protect your own interests and your own sense of self-worth. You did what you were accused of, but you had reasons, or you had no choice, or maybe your partner did something even worse.
- Let yourself be affected by the actions of the silent players. You should begin as self-protecting, but you can change over the course of the scene based on what the silent players give you – nostalgia for better times, a more open posture and attitude towards the other character, a greater sense of calm, seeing the hurt and longing played out by the silent players in the angry responses from the other talking player. When you see memories acted out by the silent players, you can talk about them with the other talking player.
- Feel free to resist the impulses offered by the silent players. Though you should allow yourself to be affected by the actions of the silent players, you are not their slaves. If they try to push you closer to the other talking player, you can push back, if they stretch out your hand, you can pull it back and so on.
- Remember that you have a body. The silent players only have their bodies to work with, but you are also encouraged to express yourself with your body over the course of the scene.

Suggestions for points of conflict

If you want to, print and cut out for talking players to have at hand to remember in play.

Being allowed to realize one's dreams	Nit-picking
Being listened to	Not being emotionally affected anymore
Being made to feel inferior by the other	Not feeling important in the life of the other
Being present	Not caring
Betrayed promises and dreams	Participation in domestic work
Envy	Self-obsession
Feeling less good-looking than the other	Sex
Feeling that one's fears and worries are not taken seriously	The bad habits of the other
Jealousy	The other's bad/boring friends/relatives
Loneliness in things that concern both in the couple (planning and organizing, social responsibilities, emotional labor)	The sloppy appearance of the other
Money (contributing/spending)	The use of coriander in the food
Naivety/stupidity	Time