

Arms unfolding

A game about trying to fall in love again, based on the song *Arms Unfolding* by dodie.

Players: 2

Game master: None, or one if many pairs are playing together.

Time: 1 hour

Needed: Something to play music on, pens, paper, and somewhere to play the game.

Preparation:

1. Read through these instructions.
2. Play the song *Arms unfolding*, at least once, and listen to it carefully.
3. Decide and write down three characteristics that describe your character. Then, read your characteristics aloud, and let your coplayer pick one more characteristic for your character, write it down.
4. Spend a few minutes adding other things you find relevant to your own character, like name, age and occupation.
5. Talk about the relationship between your characters and how and why they broke up. Make sure you have something for them to work through as they meet again, and a story you two feel at least somewhat involved in.
6. Decide what kind of place your characters are meeting at, if they meet for a coffee, a drink, or maybe a walk. Also decide how they will decide to meet, and how you will play it out.
7. Decide how long you will play for, 40 minutes is suggested.
8. Discuss how much physical play you are comfortable with.
9. Prepare the space where you will play.
10. Take a break if needed.

Then you are ready to start.

The game itself

Start by setting a timer for the amount of time you will play. Then stand with your backs against each other, and play the song again. When the song is over the game has begun. Play out the conversation where they decide to meet again in a way that fits you. You may message each other on your phones, speak to represent text messages, speak to represent a phone call or any other way. Once the conversation ends, one person moves into the space where you will play. When they are ready, the other will turn around and enter the space and the scene. Make sure to savour the moment the lovers are reunited, seeing each other again for the first time in a long time. Play the game until the timer runs out. At that point one of your characters decides -, or realises they have to, leave, and thus the game ends.

Debrief

When the game is over, be mindful of each other and take a moment of silence if you need. Then, tell your coplayer how you feel and if there's anything you need. If you both want to, you may discuss how you think the relationship progressed after the game.

EXTRAS

Lyrics, Arms Unfolding

*Hope I'm not tired of rebuilding
'Cause this might take a little more.
I think I'd like to try look at you
And feel the way I did before.
Oh, our fire died last winter
All of the shouting blew it out.
You know I could live without or with you
But I might like having you about.
Yes, these new walls are pretty hard to crack
And it might take a while until I trust you won't attack.
Oh, I'd apologize, but it was only self-defense
Running away just made sense.
But here I am with arms unfolding
I guess it isn't quite the end.
Old partner in crime, I'm going to try
To fall in love with you again.*

Online play

The game can easily be played online in a video call, simply turn off your cameras while your characters decide to meet, and then turn on your cameras to start the main part of the game. I suggest that the meeting should be a video call ingame too, and that they decide to meet by texting. You may make use of the limitations of the free versions of for example Zoom and Google Meet for built-in diegetic timekeeping as the call is turned off after a certain amount of time! There are many creative ways to use online communication platforms.