

# The Homeowner's Association



By Marie Skouenborg



Translated by  
Troels Ken Pedersen







"I think it is about time something was done about the filthy road signs in the neighborhood. I think it is a bloody disgrace," says the elderly man from Autumn Avenue, upon entering the living room. He stands firmly with his hands on the hips and gazes at the other guests, impatiently awaiting an answer.



"One might say that one should leave such things to the proper authorities, since they have the responsibility", mumbles the cashier from Penny Drive, while she rummages through the papers in front of her, only to be interrupted by the busybody granny from Butterscotch Road;



"You could pay some of the adorable children from the neighborhood to sweep the area with a nice bucket of soap water and a sponge; then you would have it fixed in a jiffy". She looks him straight in the eye and bobs her head eagerly as to convince him.



"We will get to all that later, surely, but first we have some more important things to debate". The always congenial and smiling family man from Paradise Alley sets the fair trade coffee on the table and places a calming hand on their shoulders. And that kicks off the board meeting of the homeowners' association of Oakbridge Barton.



# Indholdsfortegnelse

## Introduction s4

Preview  
The Ambition  
The Structure, Briefly  
Facilitator

## Setting and Mood s5

Oakbridge Barton  
Oakbridge Barton and Realism  
The Circus Lot  
The Characters  
The Mood  
Effects

## Structure and Effects s6

The Changing Nature of the Game

## Warmup s7

Examples to live by

## Workshop s8

Practice Constraints and Tell the Association  
on a Summer's Day

Escalate from Small to Epic

Learn to Argue as Stupidly and Loudly as  
Possible

## Association Scenes s10

The Three Association Scenes in Relation to  
Each Other

The Facilitator in the Association Scenes

## Bonding Scenes s13

Tell the Association

Naming

The Facilitator and the Bonding Scenes

## Epilogue s14

## The Characters 15

The Structure of the Characters

Play Between the Characters

Casting

Expression

History

The Circus Lot

Small Pains

Existential Doubts

## Run-through s22

Introduction

Run-through of the Scenario

## Characters and Handouts s25

The Characters

Conflict Cards

Small Pains and Existential Doubts

Scene Seeds for Small Pains

Scene Seeds for Existential Doubts

# Introduction

## Presentation

The scenario is about the four board members above, who are desperately trying to impose their will on the board meetings, while privately struggling with personal issues of sorrow, anxiety and loss. The four characters only know each other in a superficial way, and there are caught in their specific manner of expression, body language and phrasing (I, One, You and We), and this makes them look rather ridiculous to each other, especially in the board meetings, where tempers run high. They simply have to get to know each other better outside the board meetings to gain more influence. But what happens with all their plans, ideals and conflicts when they suddenly know their opponents on a personal level?

*Duration: 3 timer*

*Number of players: 4 + 1 GM*

*Tags: Suburban life, caricature, drama, struggle for power, body language, character exploration.*

## The Ambition

One ambition of the scenario is to let the players experience the humanization of the characters, and see how this affects their strife. It has a naïve hope of reminding the players that behind most Facebook shitstorms and polarized debates there are people, not psychopathic monsters. But it's also a point that just because we perceive and possibly understand the person behind the polarized statements, it's not

a given that we can reach agreement. Hippie over and out, and on to the scenario.

## The Structure, Briefly

The game is built up around three Association Scenes where the characters discuss important business of the House Owners' Association, especially what to do with the Circus Lot, and 2 sets of 4 Bonding Scenes, where the characters meet each other in their lives outside the Board of the Association. Before the first scene there's Warmup and Workshop, and the game ends with an Epilogue.

The players start out playing the kind of people who put up passive-aggressive notes in the stairwell when the neighbors hammer in a few nails at 6 PM on a Sunday because the regulations clearly state that all should be quiet after 5 PM. The type who files a complaint with the police when the neighbor puts up a particularly ugly sign in their front yard, because it's so ugly that it's a traffic safety hazard and could lead to dead children. The type who writes an official letter to the county to have the road signs in the neighborhood washed, as it's a major source of aggravation for people that they aren't clearly readable, and gets outraged if the county doesn't respond quickly enough.

To underline the caricatured aspect of the characters, each of them has a set of verbal and physical Constraints, that the players must abide by in the beginning of the game.

In the course of the game, they get to know more about the characters by meeting them on a normal day, seeing their everyday challenges, the *Small Pains*, and on one of their darkest days, where their *Existential Doubts* are dominant and they feel powerless and lost. But every time, we return to the meetings of the Board of the Association, where the context is disagreement, and fights practically unavoidable, to see what the new knowledge does to the debate.

## The Facilitator

As the facilitator, you must put the players in the right mood with the Workshop in the beginning, where they learn to use their Constraints and fight very badly. In the Association Scenes you play a secondary character, a county secretary at the meetings, and you must fan the flames. In the Bonding Scenes, you must help Tell the Association, and as the scenario progresses, you must make more and more room for the choices of the characters and the players, and enforce the constraints less and less..

# Setting and Mood

## Oakbridge Barton

The setting of the scenario is the small House Owners' Association of Oakbridge Barton. It's a fictitious caricature of a House Owners' Association consisting of owners of single family houses in a not-so-distant suburb. Life here tastes of privet hedges, the local train station, grass that needs mowing, driveways to be maintained, carports to be built, gardening waste to be driven to the recycling station, blue trampolines in the back yard, lots of electric fairy lights in the winter months, children riding their bicycles in the middle of the street in the summer sun, neighbors keeping an eye on each other, and a friendly nod as people meet each other on the way to each their car in the morning. Out here, one is known by last name, address or profession; that's the doctor from No. 8 down the street, that the Smiths from Woody Lane, the taxi driver from the Curve, the Reverend etc.

## Oakbridge Barton and Realism

As Oakbridge Barton is a fictitious setting, the scenario should at no point be encumbered with tiresome realistic facts, and any attempt on the part of the players to rule out things done and said in the game as against real-world rules must be put down immediately.

## The Circus Lot

In the House Owners' Association of Oakbridge Barton, there's an unused lot, the Circus Lot. It's been empty for more than 10 years. The only thing on the lot today is a statue that the Association had put up long ago, back when the plan was to set the lot aside for recreational use by the members. Now the lot looks like wilderness, and rumor has it that it's a breeding ground for rats and other pests. Something must be done, and the Board must step up! The debate over what to do with the Circus Lot is the central conflict of the scenario, and constitutes the frame within which we get to know the characters.

## The Characters

The players play four characters who are members of the Board. They don't have real names, but are solely known for their forms of expression which have the starting points *I*, *You*, *One* and *We*, respectively. This doesn't mean that the characters are abstractions, it's just to underline the caricature at the outset of the game. In the last scenes of the game, the players get an opportunity to choose names for their characters.

## The Mood

The game changes mood along the way. It starts out as an amusing conflict between caricatures in the first Association Scenes, but in the Bonding

Scenes, the mood gets more serious and nuanced. And then it's up to the players whether the final Association Scene will be a repetition of the stylized conflicts from the early game, a drama of reconciliation or a bitter power struggle. It's important for the effect of the game that the first Association Scenes be sufficiently warlike and caricatured, for if not, the scenario becomes mostly a somewhat monotonous drama, without major turns or surprises.

## Effects

The Workshop and the Warmup Exercises at the beginning of the game are crucial for setting the mood at the outset. The energy and the level of debate must be in order before you move to the first Association Scene.

The Constraints, especially the physical ones, pull the mood in the direction of comedy, while the Small Pains and Existential Doubts pull in the direction of drama. The constraints must be very prominent early on, and then along the way they step aside in favor of the characters.

To bring the setting to life, there are Telling Scenes along the way where the players tell forth the neighborhood, the houses and the life lived out there in different seasons.

# Structure and Effects

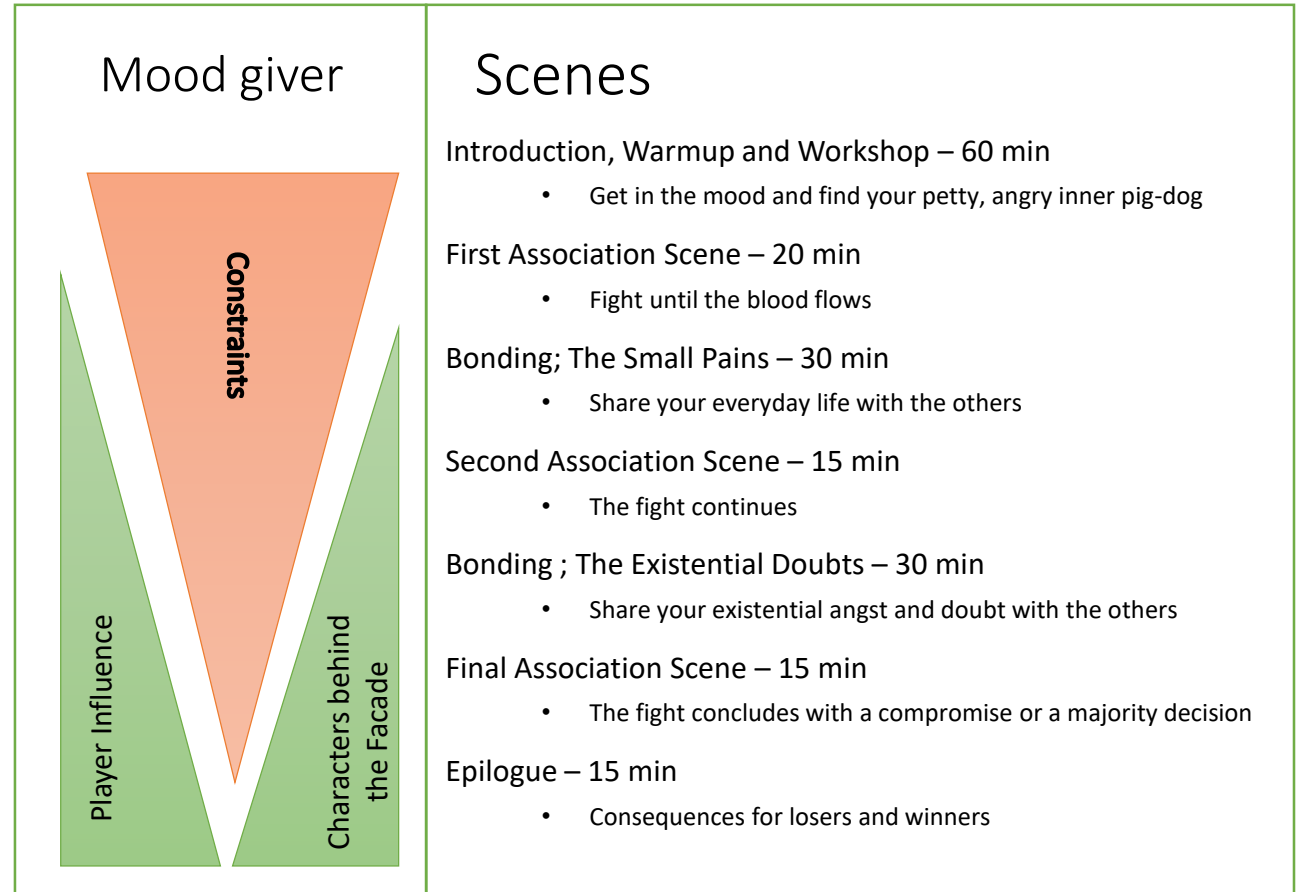
## The Changing Nature of the Game

On the figure to the right, you can see an overview of the structure of the scenario, and how long each scene has taken in test play.

The game is structured so that the Workshop and the Constraints, which lock down the expressions of the players and bring a comical and satirical mood, take up a lot of space early in the scenario.

As the game progresses, the constraints give ground to the characters via the *Small Pains* and the *Existential Doubts*, through which we get to know them better and better. The choices that the players make also become more and more important for the mood of the scenario. In the last Association Scene it's quite up to the players what genre they're playing; comedy, tragedy or feel-good.

On the following pages you'll find a thorough description of warmup exercises and workshop, scene types and your role as facilitator. In the section Run-through there are two pages, one with an overview of what to include when you introduce the players to the scenario and one with an overview of the run of the scenario. When you feel that you understand what those two pages say, and can run the scenario from them, you've read the rest of the text deeply enough.



# Warmup

## Examples to live by

The first warmup exercise is to share experiences from the real world where you and the players have run into ridiculous discussions and strange rules in associations. Start out yourself to set the tone and make it into great tales even if they're about little things. I've written a couple that you're free to use if you or the players lack for examples. Most players will have something to offer, but if you find yourself in a room with completely silent players, let them re-tell mine instead.

After the warmup exercise, you distribute the roles. There are casting tips in the section on the characters.

### *The Saga of Amin Jensen's Sign*

The celebrity comedian Amin Jensen lives in the neighborhood, and has decided to advertise his new show with a large sign bearing a picture of himself in his back yard, looking out over the road. It quickly becomes a topic of conversation in the Facebook group of the local House Owners' Association, and after the initial jokes about the size of Amin Jensen and his sign (he's not a small man) one of the inhabitants urges caution because not only is the sign ugly, it's also dangerously close to a busy intersection. Amin has lit up his sign and it distracts attention from the traffic lights: Amin's sign is simply a traffic safety

hazard. And our children move about the area, so it's a serious matter! Fortunately our Board stands strong and discusses the matter at a hastily called meeting. The next day they can proudly announce that they've called upon the County to act, and the County has promised to take action in the matter. Facebook flows over with grateful posts, now that our children can look forward to not getting killed in traffic because of an oversized picture of Amin Jensen. Until a heretic dares to declare that she doesn't think this is a matter for the Association, and anyway not that serious a matter. She is quickly shut down by a long post from the Board explaining that even though Amin's house isn't in the Association's territory, the sign poses a threat to the safety of us all, and the property value in the area, and therefore definitely a matter for the Association. Thank goodness that the board took action before it all went south!

### *The Battle of the Christmas Lights*

In a little coop housing association in a suburb far, far away, the Christmas spirit had been helped along by a pretty, well-lit little Christmas tree in the common yard. No one could know that this would become the object of bitter struggle that would split the Board once January set in. It turned out that the Board disagreed about how long the lit Christmas tree should remain in the yard. Birthe, who had put up the lights, thought that they should light up the January

darkness while Bente thought that Christmas lights belonged in December only and should be taken down once Christmas was over. A bitter discussion at a meeting of the Association led to no decision, so Bente took matters in her own hand and started turning off the lights every evening. Birthe didn't approve at all, and boldly started turning on the lights every evening after Bente had left. This was too much for Bente, so one dark and stormy night, the Christmas lights were taken down, rolled up and stowed in the basement. Where they lay for a few days until Birthe found them and put them up again, this time with duct tape and other means of ensuring that it would not be easily removed. Now the cup was full for Bente, who simply would not abide such off-season holiday cheer! Armed with gardening sheers, she went down and cut the wires, thus effectively ending the discussion. At the next meeting of the Board the mood was heavy and Birthe completely avoided addressing Bente. At the end of the meeting she dropped the bomb and declared that she no longer felt welcome on the Board and would cease to carry out her duties in that regard, effective immediately. In practice this meant that she would stop watering the three plants in the raised bed in the common yard. Come spring, three sadly withered plants in a raised bed bore silent witness to the struggles of that winter. Birthe never returned to the Board.

# Workshop

In the workshop, the players must *Practice their Constraints, Tell the Association, practice Escalating* their stories and also *Arguing* in a really unconstructive, loud and foolish manner.

Start out by making very clear what mood the scenario aims for here at the beginning, namely caricatured, loud, energetic fighting. The workshop only ends when they're fighting properly.

Then let them briefly describe their characters and their constraints to the others, so the presentation round is done before you move to the workshop exercises.

## **Practice Constraints and Tell the Association on a Summer's Day**

You'll practice the physical constraints by having the players, one by one, standing up and miming a speech for the rest. You and the other players then step up and correct their body language by placing the player in the correct positions until you're satisfied with the results, and then you move on to the next. End by having the players mingle, miming conversations, still maintaining their physical constraints.

You'll practice the verbal constraints by having the players stand with their backs to each other, in positions matching their physical constraints. Then

ask them to Tell the Association on a summer's day but with their verbal constraints in effect. Ask them to describe their houses as seen from the street, and then let them describe other tableaux from the Association. Children playing with garden hoses in the heat, the scent of hot asphalt, that sort of thing. When you have a good feel for the neighborhood, and the verbal constraints are up and running, move on to the next exercise.

## **Escalate from Small to Epic**

The object of the next exercise is driving stories to extremes. The players must abide by their physical and verbal constraints during the exercise. If they forget the physical constraints, correct their physical position, physically. If they forget the verbal constraints, stop the discussion and ask them to repeat the sentence while abiding by their constraints.

The exercise is taking a story that starts with something very small and turning it into an epic tale of Good and Evil. A shoddily kept driveway escalating to falling property prices, rising crime and the utter decay of the neighborhood because the creative classes have no respect for the middle classes that pay for it all with their hard work, too little time with their families and an early grave.

Take an example from the warmup, or something else that fits the setting, and let a player tell it matter-of-factly *"The Jensens could clean up their yard a little better, it doesn't look so nice"*. Let the next player tell it like she's furious and indignant about it *"It's completely unacceptable and before we know it, it'll spread to other areas with a plague of rats and falling real estate prices as consequences, as no respectable people will want to live in such a dump"*. Then let a final player make it into a tale of good vs. evil, life and death. *"It'll become a ghetto area with rampant crime where none of us can feel safe in our own homes, once the gangs take over the area. And we can count on no help from the politicians, as they've always hated those of us with hard, honest work"*

Run at least two examples, until you feel that they're well warmed up and exaggerating and escalating stories come naturally to them.



# Workshop

## Learn to Argue as Stupidly and Loudly As Possible

Here's the last chance for a break before the game starts. There can be no hole between the last part of the workshop and the first Association Scene; make it a bait and switch shift, taking the energy from the workshop with you into the first scene. Remember to tell the players so that it's not really a surprise.

For the final part of the workshop you'll need the *conflict cards* that you'll find at the back of the scenario, marked with a lightning bolt. Print them in two copies and cut them out before the game. Each player gets three cards.

Start by reading out all the cards, so they're known in advance. They're full of good advice for how to debate in a way that ensures that everyone gets as little as possible out of it. Put the pedal to the metal when reading them out – these are silly cards and terrible things to do in a debate. End with the Hitler card.

Then the exercise is quite simply that the players, still adhering to the constraints, discuss a topic from the warmup or otherwise relevant to the setting, and they must do what their cards say. When they've used a card they get a new one until the pile is empty. When the pile is empty, step in as the County secretary and say that now you really need to get

back to the agenda, and talk about the proposals at hand for what to do with the Circus Lot. And the first Association Scene is in swing.



# Association Scenes

The scenario has three Association Scenes. In these scenes you play the board meetings where all the characters are present and discuss what to do with the Circus Lot. As facilitator you take part in the scenes as the neutral secretary from the county.

The scenes are to be played standing up and semi live to let the physical constraints have their best effect, and it works well if you can get the players to move around during the scene, so they aren't locked into one physical position.

## The Three Association Scenes in Relation to Each Other

In the first Association Scene the players get to fight about the fate of the Circus Lot, with all the bad habits they've been practicing in the workshop, and the constraints at full effect. It'll be loud, silly and stupid, and as facilitator you should fan the flames of conflict and enforce the constraints, and ensure that all proposals are discussed before you cut the scene.

In the second Association Scene we've learned about the characters' *Small Pains* through the preceding Bonding Scenes, and the mood will move more in the direction of drama. Here, your role as facilitator is to inflame the conflicts again and enforce the constraints, especially early on when they feel a little unnatural. At the end of the scene, you must make

them decisively vote out one of the proposals, so there's only three to choose between in the final scene. When one of the proposals has been eliminated, end the meeting and cut the scene. It's important that one of the proposals is eliminated, as otherwise there's one per player in the final scene and everyone just votes for their own proposal.

In the final Association Scene the players have learned about the *Existential Doubts* of the characters, and the mood will move another notch from comedy towards drama. In this scene your only role is to make sure that a decision is reached about what proposal the Board want implemented, and otherwise the players get to control the mood themselves. In this scene it is not for you to enforce the constraints or push the conflicts; it's quite up to the players whether it turns out to be a scene where the caricature of debate from the first scene carries on, or a scene of bitter and personal struggle to have their way, or if they decide on a compromise that they can all agree on. When a vote has resulted in a majority for one of the proposals, end the meeting and cut the scene. Then it's straight on to the Epilogue.

## The Facilitator in the Association Scenes

You have four tasks as facilitator in the Association Scenes: *Enforce the constraints*, especially when they

feel unnatural and annoying, you must *inflame the conflicts* through your role as the neutral secretary from the county, you must *conduct votes* about the Circus Lot and you must *cut the scenes*.

## On enforcing the constraints

Under the characters, you can read about the exact nature of their individual constraints. Briefly, they all have a particular body language and they must, as far as possible, start their sentences with a particular word (I, you, one or we). The constraints are to be practiced well and properly during the warmup to get you ready for the first Association Scene.

When enforcing the physical constraints, you simply step up to them and correct their way of standing and where they're looking. Physically move them closer to each other or further away, turn their heads so they lose eye contact with each other. Of course, do it nice and easy so no one gets hurt. Remember to tell the players that they're allowed to move on their own, so they don't turn into statues. It's just that they should move in a way that fits their constraints.

# Association Scenes

The verbal constraints are a bit more tricky to enforce, but here you can use your role as neutral secretary in the scene to say things like *"You mean WE, don't you?"* if the *We* character forgets their constraint of starting sentences with "we". The most effective way to enforce the verbal constraints is to enforce the physical constraints, as this reminds the players of the constraints in general.

When you enforce the constraints it's partly because they're important for the mood of the game, and because it's notoriously hard for players to remember their constraints once the music is playing. But you also do it because the constraints symbolize that the four characters are trapped by their form of expression and the way that the others see them, and it gets in the way of clear communication. It's a point of the game that the constraints aren't just something they themselves choose and remember, but also something forced upon them.

Only enforce the constraints in the first two Association Scenes.

## On inflaming the conflicts

As facilitator you have the role as the neutral secretary appointed by the County. You have no

opinion on what should be done with the Circus Lot, but you conduct the debate to make sure that all proposals are heard and that a decision is made in the end. And in terms of the game, you must be good at emphasizing the things that the players disagree about. You might be neutral, but that doesn't prevent you from emphasizing the conflict.

When the proposals are presented, be good at pointing out disadvantages for the other characters. *"A kindergarten would undeniably mean increased noise levels for the immediate neighbors"* *"A social center for former criminals wouldn't exactly inflate the property values."*

If the characters conclude that two proposals can be combined à la *"The Kindergarten could be a green area too"*, shoot it down by explaining that these are completely contrary wishes. *"The Kindergarten would necessarily have to be secured, and there would be no room on the lot for the trees that are there now, and the lake would definitely have to be drained and filled for the safety of the children"*.

And address and underline it when they say especially aggressive or hurtful things. *"I don't think there's any reason to call me an old fascist."*

Only inflame the conflict in the first two Association Scenes.

## On the votes

In the first Association Scene there's no vote, only a presentation and discussion of each of the four proposals. Make sure that all characters have a chance to speak, so the more quiet players don't disappear. Especially, pay attention to *One*.

In the second Association Scene, you must make it clear that the characters have to vote out a proposal before the meeting can end. It's significant that they must vote *against* a proposal, as it brings out the conflict more sharply when you vote directly against. Then one of the proposals falls because the others are against it, rather than because not enough people were for it. It's a small difference, but still significant. Ask around during the scene, calling on each character to say which two proposals they think are the worst, so they have a lot of opportunity to criticize the other proposals before the vote. Again, make sure that everyone is heard.

# Association Scenes

In the final Association Scene they must decide what to do with the Circus Lot. If some of the players have made up additional proposals during the game (because players do weird things sometimes), find a reasonable, in-game excuse for excluding them, aka you as neutral secretary have looked into the possibilities and the new proposal is unfortunately against the local plan, legislation or something. There can only be three proposals in the final scene. Let the characters whose proposals are still on the table argue for them again, and let the players debate them. Again, ask around, and make sure that everyone has been heard before you move to the vote. Make it clear that the meeting won't end until a decision is reached.

## On cutting the Association Scenes

The first Association Scene must be cut *after* everyone has presented and discussed their proposals for the Circus Lot and *before* the discussion grinds to a halt. It would be super to cut in the middle of a heated discussion, but the most important thing is to do it before the scene gets boring. In your role as neutral secretary, conclude *in game* that the time is up and the meeting is adjourned, and you must take up the discussion again at your next meeting, where you'll have to pare it down to three proposals.

Cut the second and third Association Scenes right after the vote, and again, do it *in game* by declaring the meeting adjourned.

There's nothing to be won by letting the Association Scenes run too long; no one likes boring board meetings that go on forever. If your players don't really go at it in the discussions, even after you inflame the conflicts, move the scene towards the end and cut it.



# Bonding Scenes

The scenario contains two sets of four Bonding Scenes. The two sets are *The Small Pains* and *The Existential Doubts*. It is during these scenes that the players get to know the characters better, and their purpose is to alter the mood during the game, first by giving a bit of humanity to the caricature characters, and later to show them at their most vulnerable.

These are scenes where the characters meet in everyday life, on their way home, on errands, at home, out for a walk and things like that. They are NOT scenes where they get to continue the discussion from the Association Scenes. Each player must choose a scene seed where they randomly run into another character in a situation where the other character's worries stand out. The character choosing the scene is the *initiator*. The other character is the *owner* of the scene.

The purpose of the scenes is to bring the *owner's* worries into play, and is not about the worries of the *initiator*, the Circus Lot or the like.

Before the scenes begin, the players get an addendum for their characters, where their *Small Pains* and *Existential Doubts* are described, marked with a *sad smiley* and a *broken heart*, respectively.

The reason why this can't be handed out at the start is that if the players have understanding and sympathy for their characters from the start, it'll be much too hard for them to play them as the ridiculous caricatures that they need to be in the first scenes.

It's up to the *owner* of a scene if they'll share their worries and how. They can choose to share it *in game* with the *initiator*, as one sometimes shares things with people. They can also decide that the *initiator* isn't someone that they'd like to share with, but still want their worry to get out in play. Then they say goodbye to the *initiator* in game and continue the scene as a monologue. And last but not least they can choose to share nothing at all and just keep it to themselves.

Play testing has shown quite clearly that players can hardly help sharing everything, even when I rewarded them for not doing it. So most likely, your players will share their worries with the people who ask, but it is significant for the scenario that it is voluntary.

The scene seeds are fixed, and you will find them under handouts. Cut them out so you have two sets of four scenes to lay out, one set for each set of Bonding Scenes.

## Tell the Association

The first set of Bonding Scenes is about the *Small Pains* and start with a descriptive sequence where you and the players *Tell the Association* on an Autumn day. Start by having the players describe their houses seen from the outside, and then go on with other little vignettes from life in the suburbs. Withered leaves, asphalt black with rain, raincoats and umbrellas, trailers with gardening waste being driven to the recycling station in the twilight, the clear autumn light through the brightly colored autumn foliage. Then move on to the players each picking a scene.

The second set of Bonding Scenes is about the *Existential Doubts*, and starts with you and the players *Telling the Association* on a winter day. Start by asking the players to describe their house from the outside on a winter day, and carry on with other vignettes from the neighborhood. Naked privet hedges with snow on top, Christmas lights on gables and on the trees in front yards, people driving to work in the dark and coming home in the dark, windows that bear witness to warmth and cheer inside, children in jumpsuits with red cheeks. Then move on to the players each picking a scene.

# Bonding Scenes

## Naming

The second set of Bonding Scenes gives the players the option of naming their characters. It is meant as a last step away from the caricature they started out as.

## The Facilitator and the Bonding Scenes

As facilitator, you hand out additions to the character sheets, explain what the Bonding Scenes are about, you set the mood and you help cut the scenes.

## Hand out character sheets

Give the players a brief introduction to what the *Small Pains* and the *Existential Doubts* are (you might use the description from the next section on the characters) and give the players a good while to read the add-ons before you move on to explaining how the Bonding Scenes work.

## Explain the Bonding Scenes

Put out the scene seeds and explain that they can each choose one of them. Explain that the scenes are about the character written on the scene and that it's their worries that are to be shared or not shared, depending on the choice of that player. Explain that they can cut the scene at

any time by saying goodbye to each other, and otherwise you'll cut it.

## Set the mood

You set the mood by letting the player *Tell the Association*. It's a fairly simple descriptive scene where the players provide vignettes from the Association at different times of year, to create a sense of time passing and life in the suburb.

## On cutting the Bonding Scenes

The Bonding Scenes can be cut both by you and by the owner of the scene. The players can cut it by saying goodbye to each other in game. If they don't (and they probably won't) it's up to you to cut them.

Where the Association Scenes need to be cut quite sharply, the Bonding Scenes can be cut a little more gently. Silence and hesitation in the scenes is quite all right, so give them a bit of time to develop before you cut.

Cut them when the owner of the scene has shared their worries and the conversation is winding down, or when it's clear that they're not going to share.

# Epilogue

The last scene in the scenario is the epilogue. It comes right after the final Association Scene where the Board make a decision regarding the Circus Lot.

Start by letting the players *Tell the Association* on a spring day. Ask them to describe what's happening on the Circus Lot, where people are busy carrying out their decision, and let them carry on with other vignettes from the neighborhood.

If the characters did not reach a unanimous decision in the final Association Scene, the loser starts by telling what negative consequences the decision had for them and their life. Then the winners get to expound all the positive consequences that the decision had for them.

It's a pretty simple thing, but it works nicely to make the end a little bitter for those who enjoyed their victory in the final Association Scene, when they're confronted with what their decision did to the loser. And if they all agreed, the scenario ends in beautiful harmony where everyone's better off.

# The Characters

The scenario has four player characters and a single secondary character played by the facilitator.

What the four player characters have in common is that they are passionate about all things concerning the House Owners' Association. They keep their private lives out of the discussion in the Association, and no power on Earth can make them leave their work in the Association or the debate without fighting to the last.

## The Structure of the Characters

The four player characters consist of a *Form of Expression* defined through their verbal and physical constraints, a description of their *House and History* in the Association, their *Plans for the Circus Lot* and a description of what they think of the other characters in the scenario. In addition there are two expansions for each character; their *Small Pains* and their *Existential Doubts*, which are only handed out in connection with the relevant Bonding Scenes.

The characters are named after their form of expression, so they're named *I*, *You*, *One* and *We*, and they should appear nameless until the players possibly name them in the second set of Bonding Scenes.

The only secondary character is the official secretary for the Board meetings, played by the facilitator. It's

more of a function than a real role, as the only purpose of the role is to interfere in the Association Scenes. As facilitator, you're free to create the secretary. You can name her, give her a background and a body language or fixed expressions that she always uses. You're just not allowed to give her an opinion about what to do with the Circus Lot; here you must be entirely neutral.

The characters' Forms of Expression are there in part to create a comical mood in the scenes in which they're used, but also to give the players a sense of how it feels when you can't control how your message is received because your demeanor gets in the way. For instance, it's hard to express sympathy and personal warmth, when like *I* you're standing straight, hands at your hips, and it's hard to be that persuasive when *One* is staring at the ground. The characters' forms of expression are described on the following overview sheets

House and History in the Association are intended to ensure that the players have something to play upon right away and some good reasons to be in conflict with the other characters, and have an impression of their own character.

Their Plans for the Circus Lot are central to the game, and it's important that all players quite understand

what plans their characters have for the Lot at the start of the game. It's the fixed point of departure for the characters, and they shouldn't lightly change or discard it. Their wishes are carefully aligned with their Existential Doubts, so the more the players learn about their characters, the more relevant their desires for the Circus Lot become.

The characters' Opinions of Each Other at the start of the scenario are characterized by exclamation marks and ALL CAPS, and are pretty hostile, and this is of course on purpose. It is the point of departure for their interplay, and it's basically what the scenario is about changing.

The Small Pains are conceived as the things we handle in everyday life. The kind of thing where one would say "Yes, that sucks, but it's not the end of the world and I can handle it." It's an element in the life of the character that they can't avoid and it colors their everyday life, but it's not all-destroying. These should give the players a sense of having a character who is a bit more than a caricature. They're only handed out to the players just before the set of Bonding Scenes where they are to be used.

# The Characters

The Existential Doubts are the thoughts that turn up on those days when we just can't take any more. The days when the Small Pains loom large, and we feel overwhelmed by it all, and we can't see a way out. They feel all-encompassing and eternal when they hit us, but go away with sleep, or when we've had a good day with people that we care about. In other words, the Existential Doubts don't mean that the characters are fundamentally and permanently unhappy; it just means that they have a sore spot against which they are defenseless on the dark days. They're only handed out to the players right before the set of Bonding Scenes in which they are to be used.

## Play Between the Characters

The player characters are described in detail in the material that you are to hand out to the players, but I've made a couple of overviews for you to make it easier for you to see them in relation to each other. Read the sheets well, so you know how the characters relate to each other. The history of the characters don't make much of a shared past, as this scenario is not about what they had together before the scenario, but rather what they can make together as they get to know each other. For this reason, they're designed so that personality and interests are what drives the dynamic of the game. E.g. *I* and *One* will have some common ground on things being orderly, but at the same time *I* wants to preserve the status quo whereas

*One* wants to seize new opportunities. They're written so that they have something in common and something to disagree about, and then it's up to the players what ends up dominating.

## Casting

After the first warmup exercises you ought to have some sense of the players, so you can distribute the characters.

Start by finding a player that you can counteract for the role as *One*. It's important that the role be given to a player who isn't shy and reticent, as *One* can disappear a bit in the game if she doesn't have a strong player.

It can also be fine to counteract *I*, so you might give him to one of the more quiet players. The effects of *I*'s constraints are most obvious if they're given to a player who doesn't naturally have that body language.

*We* is best given to a player who isn't nervous about physical play, to get the most out of the role. Look for the player who stands right next to you to take a look in the papers, who gives you their hand, or just the one who seems the most free in their body language.

The role as *You* is one in which you can cast most players, but it's especially fun to give to someone fond of giving advice. So if during the examples phase of the

warmup someone has good ideas for what you could just have written or done to close down the discussion, that's the perfect *You*.



# Expression

I

## The elderly functionary from Autumn Avenue

**Body:** *I's* body language is closed, rigid and unapproachable. He will stand with his back straight, arms crossed or hands at his hips, feet apart and planted firmly.

**Words:** *I* prefers to start sentences with "I..." His statements are confident and absolute. There's no room for doubt or nuance; it's good or bad, black or white and nothing in between.

## The treasurer from Penny Drive

**Body:** *One's* body language is submissive and insecure. She will fumble a bit with her hands, nervously fiddle with a piece of paper or her sleeve. She avoids eye contact and shies away if people get too close. Arms and legs stay close to the body.

**Words:** *One* prefers to start sentences with "One..." Her statements are full of reservations and relativizations, and the only time she gets really clear is when she's being passive-aggressive.

One

We

## The jovial family man from Paradise Alley

**Body:** *We's* body language is characterized by freshness and physical contact with the people that he's talking to. He'll put his hands on the others' shoulders, lean on them and give hugs that last a little too long. He has no sense of the personal space of others, and he won't notice if others are too close to him.

**Words:** *We* prefers to start sentences with "We..." Not as a royal We, but as an including and dominating we, with which he speaks on behalf of everyone. *We* rarely makes concrete proposals, preferring to talk about flighty concepts and ideas.

## The neighborhood grandmother from Butterscotch Road

**Body:** *You's* body language is direct and seems overbearing, at times aggressive. She leans towards the person she's addressing, or points at them while talking. She gets in close and keeps intensive eye contact.

**Words:** *You* prefers to start sentences with "You..." She always offers advice and directives on how problems could be solved easily and quickly if only people got their act together. Her advice is usually know-it-all and simplistic.

You

# Background

## Respect for order and the past

*I* has been active in the House Owners' Association since the beginning, and he's been a champion for making sure the Association stayed clean, nice, calm and well ordered, like his home. He's always been particularly insistent on conserving the natural areal down by the river, which has a rich plant and animal life, and where he enjoys going for walks with his wife.

*I* knows that if you don't make an effort to keep up the standards, you risk having the neighborhood overrun by criminal elements. He alone stands like a rock against the storm, keeping everything from falling apart.

## The economy and the rules well in hand

*One* is fairly new in the House Owners' Association, but it quickly dawned on her that essentials weren't under control in the Association. It sounded more like a coffee club than a serious association. So, *One* turned up at the next general assembly and had all her prejudices confirmed. She was especially shocked once she started looking at the accounting books, which were almost non-existent. So, *One* volunteered as treasurer for the House Owners' Association. If none of the others are competent to look after interests and secure the real estate prices as well as compliance with proper rules and regulations, she'll do it.

## Focus on progress and the family

*We* has lived in the Association for about six years, and got involved in the Association at once. It's an area with potential, and it takes a visionary to help it on it's way. There are many examples of great things happening when one person dares to stand up, show leadership and inspire their surroundings. But it requires that we show some spirit and think about the long term. It's also the only way to secure a good future for the children. The only good investment is an investment in families with children, as *We* likes to say. They are the ones who bring the future, and they need all the support they can get. The only real purpose for anything is the children, and making sure that they have the best conditions in which to grow up.

## Social life and responsibility

*You* moved to the Association many years ago with her now ex husband. Right from the start she has fought for the Association to be a socially responsible and including place where people cared more about making room for everyone than whether the hedge was trimmed. She quickly realized that the Association is full of petit bourgeois, anti-social egoists without eye for the needs of the socially vulnerable and without interest in their fellow human beings. But *You* intends to insist that you can be a good person even though you're a house owner. *You* sees everything that goes on in the Association as something she's entitled to know and have an opinion about.

One

You

# The Circus Lot

## Preservation of the Circus Lot

*I* wants the Circus lot to become a part of the protected nature reserve along the river. *I* lives right next to the lot and will under no circumstances tolerate noisy or unruly neighbors who come along and spoil the peace and quiet.

## Sale of the Circus Lot for a shopping mall

*One* wants the lot used to bring business and prosperity to the neighborhood. There's a proposal from a shopping mall developer who wants to build on the lot, and it's the perfect opportunity to secure rich trade for the area.

*One* will under no circumstances accept that the lot be sold for any purpose that could harm the real estate prices.

## Institution for children with special needs on the Circus Lot

*We* knows that the county is in need of a location to place an institution for children with special needs, and the Circus Lot would be the perfect place to do it. It's a wonderful opportunity to do something good for the families with children in the area.

*We* will under no circumstances accept that the lot is left unused and useless for the families of the area.

## Social center for former criminals on the Circus Lot

*You* knows that the local social center for former criminals has received an eviction notice for their place up by the train line. They need a new place to be, and the Circus Lot would be the perfect location for trailers or even prefab housing.

*You* will absolutely not stand by if attempts are made to push the socially vulnerable out of the area to make room for big companies to make even more money.

One

You

# Small Pains

I

## Anna doesn't remember so well

*I's* wife Anna has Alzheimer's. They're getting help from the county, but it's hard seeing her disappear a little month after month, knowing that there's no cure. But *I* has promised to stand by her for better or for worse, and he intends to do just that. They still get a lot of enjoyment out of going for walks along the river, looking at flowers and plants.

## My family is a bit fucked up

*One's* family affairs have always been a mess. The home was characterized by alcohol, drugs, violence and crime. *One* has left that environment behind, but she's still in touch with her mother who's still stuck in it and sometimes needs help with the rent, and with contact with the authorities. It can be quite wearisome, but *One* has to help *One's* mother. *One* has worked hard to escape from that life and attain economic independence, and she avoids everything that bears the taint of social benefits, ghetto, abuse or crime.

One

We

## Tobias has ADHD

*We's* oldest son has exhibited quite violent behavioral difficulties from a very young age, and after a long, tough clarification process, he's received the diagnosis ADHD. He's now medicated, and though *We* has strong reservations against giving such powerful medication to a boy of 7 years, it's the only way to make everyday life work. And the medicine has certainly made it much easier to handle Tobias, who now has a lot less problems than he used to.

## Baby-Bee lives in Canada

*You* has always wanted a big family, but Fate would have it that she had just a single daughter, Beatrice, or Baby-Bee as she calls her. She's the light of her life and the purpose in life that helped her through a terrible divorce from her father. Now she's moved to Canada and has formed a family of her own. *You* misses her so very badly, but it helps that they talk on the phone often, and she can follow her life on Facebook. That helps a little.

You



# Existential Doubts

## The fear of being forgotten

*I* has had to face that as Anna forgets more and more, he's the only one left who knows about their family and their history. The worst thing is that when he and Anna are gone, no one will remember their son Anders, who died 10 years ago. All traces of them will be gone like dew before the sun, as if they'd never lived.

On the Circus Lot there's a sculpture that the House Owners' Association put up many years ago. As *I* was the driving force behind the project he, Anna and Anders got to put their handprints into the foundation and write their names. When they're gone, that will be the only physical proof that they ever walked the Earth.

## The fear that her father was right

Throughout her adolescence, *One* was regularly beaten by her father as he came home drunk. He used to berate her for being weak and useless, and made fun of her way of talking. The better she did, the more he ridiculed her for believing that she was worth something. Stubbornly, *One* fought her way away from her family background, but deep down she's afraid that her father was right; that she's a laughable failure.

*One* bought a house when the real estate market was high, and she expected to sell it with a good profit. Now, she lives alone in the house, and if the sale of the Circus Lot can't increase the market values in the area, she'll have to leave it. *One* can hear her father's drunken, contemptuous laugh in the back of her head.

## The fear that the family will fall apart

*We*'s family is falling apart. They can't get the ends to meet, they disagree furiously about how to handle Tobias, and they're neglecting the younger sister Emma. The practical, logistical stuff is just not working, and they're fighting more and more about everything. Emma is attending a kindergarten a good deal away because it had to be a Rudolf Steiner kindergarten. And Tobias is in a special school in the next county. There's been talk of a similar institution in this county, but they can't find a location.

If only the Circus Lot could be sold to the county with the condition that it be used for an institution for children with special needs, it would ease the strain on their everyday life a lot, and then it could all be OK. Otherwise they'll have to face defeat and split up the family.

## The fear of being alone

*You* lost all of her social network in the divorce, and when Beatrice moved to Canada, she was thrown into paralyzing loneliness. She came down with a depression that she might never have pulled out of. Her salvation was volunteer work at a social center for former criminals. With the other volunteers and the users, she found a new purpose and community, and they became the stable point in her life. But the social center has lost the location because the neighbors complained enough to the county. If they can't find somewhere else to be, the whole thing will shut down, and *You* will lose everything again.

If only the Circus Lot could be sold cheaply to the social center, so they could put up some prefab huts or trailers and start over, so *You* doesn't lose her social network and her reason to get up in the morning.

One

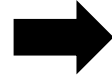
You

# Run-through

# Introduction

## The Purpose

You start out as caricatured board members who hate each other, and then we'll see where you end up

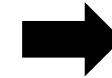


## Setting

The House Owners' Association of Oakbridge Barton

Inspired by reality, but without rules lawyering

It's all about what to do with the Circus Lot



## Structure

Warmup, roles, Workshop, Association and Bonding Scenes, Epilogue

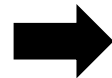
## Association Scenes

All four Characters

Constraints

No talk of private life

The facilitator's role as neutral secretary



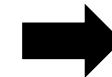
## Bonding Scenes

Tell the Association throughout the year

Play scenes one on one

Learn more about the characters if you feel like sharing

No Association talk



## The Characters

Constraints

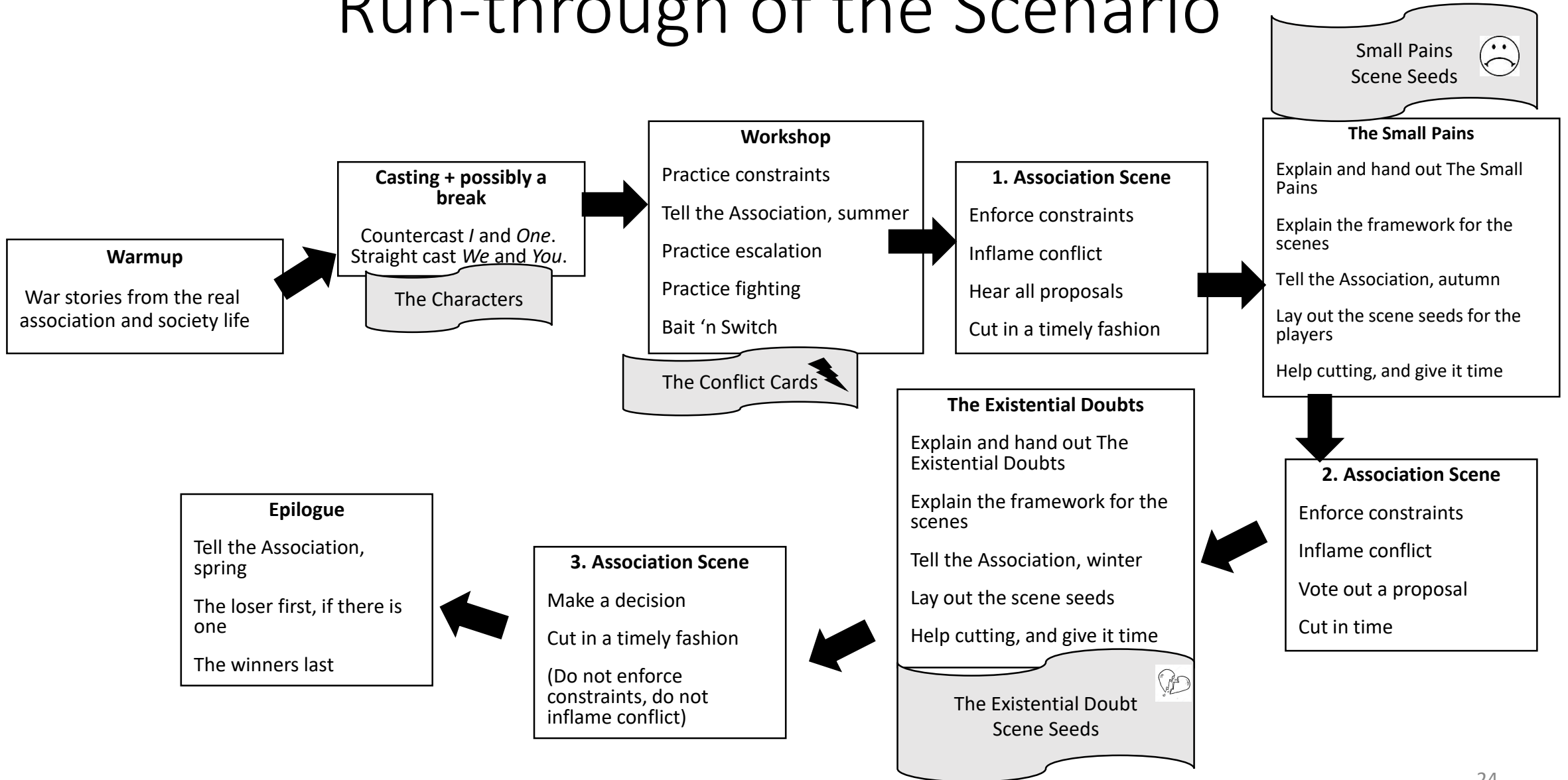
House and History

Hate each other, love being on the Board

Desires for the Circus Lot

You'll learn more about them in the course of the game

# Run-through of the Scenario





# Characters and handouts

All handouts and character sheets to be printed one-sided. The rest of the scenario can be printed double sided.

Conflict cards, scene descriptions and character add-ons must be cut out before the game starts.

# From the outside

We have always done it this way

People must clean up after themselves

## The elderly functionary from Autumn Avenue

*I* lives in a small, well kept bungalow with his wife Anna. The home is situated quietly at the end of the street, right next to the Circus Lot. The interior has brown furniture and a til-topped table, and is generally kept in dark colors with patterned wallpaper and colored lampshades. *I* and Anna still have the dinner set that they received as a wedding present almost 40 years ago, and there are no chinks. The garden is perfect, with figure cut bushes and a goldfish pond.

*I* has been active in the House Owners' Association since the beginning, and he's been a guarantee that the Association stayed clean, nice, calm and well ordered, like his home. He's always been particularly insistent on conserving the natural areal down by the river, which has a rich plant and animal life, and where he enjoys going for walks with his wife and their dog, Fido.

*I* knows that if you don't make an effort to keep up the standards, you risk having the neighborhood overrun by criminal elements and the indigent. He alone stands like a rock against the storm, keeping everything from falling apart.

## Expression

**Body:** *I*'s body language is closed, rigid and unapproachable. He will stand with his back straight, arms crossed or hands at his hips, feet apart and planted firmly.

**Words:** *I* prefers to start sentences with "I..." His statements are confident and absolute. There's no room for doubt or nuance; it's good or bad, black or white and nothing in between.

## The Circus Lot

The Circus Lot forms a natural extension of the nature reserve around the river, and it's a natural part of *I* and Anna's walks with Fido. But the lot is terribly neglected, and *I* has seen rats several times. Someone's started dumping garbage bags on the lot, like it was their private dump, and no one cuts the grass. On some weekend nights, there are even young criminals who drink and do drugs there (that's what it sounds like at any rate). It cannot go on like this!

*I* wants the Circus lot to become a part of the protected nature reserve along the river. *I* lives right next to the lot and will under no circumstances tolerate noisy or unruly neighbors who come along and spoil the peace and quiet.



# I and the Others

---

## *I and We*

*Shut the Hell up about those children!!  
And isn't it a bit perverted that We has to  
hug and touch all the time?!*

*I finds We tactlessly touchy-feely, and it's so annoying that We keeps spouting one unrealistic idea after the other. We generally talks far too much about nothing much! It's a lot of work to constantly point out to We that his wild schemes for the neighborhood are both deeply ridiculously utopian, and would be disastrous for the area. I shudders at the thought of We being allowed to impose all his modern, airy ideas on the quarter, but I will put a stop to it if it's the last thing he does!*

*So move to a hippie commune if you're  
so into alternate lifestyles!*

## *I and One*

*She's a complete waste of space!! A  
spineless, damn bookworm!*

*One is comparatively new in the Association, and if she's the future of the Association, things are looking bleak! She's obviously unfit to talk to anyone about anything – BECAUSE SHE DOESN'T SAY ANYTHING!! She has no personality, no sense of the things that matter in the Association, in spite of her incessant mumbling about real estate prices. And in several important respects, she's completely wrong about what the rules are, and she just sits there fiddling with the papers instead of listening! She must be retarded or something!*

*Wise up before you get involved in the  
discussions of the grownups, silly girl!!*

## *I and You*

*That little Stalinist. When will she realize  
that The Soviet Union is fallen and join  
the real world?!?!*

*You has lived in the Association for almost as long as I and Anna, but she couldn't keep her marriage together, and the daughter seems to have made her escape to Canada too. She's a classic example of what happens when you have high ideals and no sense of reality!! It's not so bloody strange that no one can stand living with her. She's talking all the time, like some damn parrot. And she's always dealing out busybody advice about everything under the Sun. AS IF SHE HAD ANY WISDOM TO SHARE?!?*

*Get your own life in order before you  
interfere with other people!!*

# You



Have you tried doing it differently?

# From the Outside

Have you heard the latest news?

## The neighborhood grandmother from Butterscotch Road

*You* lives in a small, single story, gas concrete villa. In the conservatory, she keeps a small rain forest of plants and a set of wicker furniture on a flaxen rug. The garden is a wilderness of wild flowers and fruit trees.

The house is full of half finished hobby projects; quilted blankets, knitwork, watercolour paintings and homemade jewelry. In a well-lit corner of the living room, there's a good chair next to the telephone on the wall. There's also a clock showing the time in Canada, where the daughter Beatrice lives.

*You* moved to the Association many years ago with her now ex husband. Right from the start she has fought for the Association to be a socially responsible and including place where people cared more about there being room for everyone than whether the hedge was trimmed. She quickly realized that the Association is full of petit bourgeois, anti-social egoists without eye for the needs of the socially vulnerable and without interest in their fellow human beings. But *You* intends to insist that you can be a good person even though you're a house owner. *You* sees everything that goes on in the Association as something she's entitled to know and have an opinion about.

### Expression

**Body:** *You's* body language is direct and seems overbearing, at times aggressive. She leans towards the person she's addressing, or points at them while talking. She gets in close and keeps intensive eye contact.

**Words:** *You* prefers to start sentences with "You..." She always offers advice and directives on how problems could be solved easily and quickly if only people got their act together. Her advice is usually know-it-all and simplistic.

### The Circus Lot

*You* knows that the local social center for former criminals has received an eviction notice for their place up by the train line. She volunteers there herself, and has made it her mission to find a new place for the social center. *You* can't just turn your back on the weakest members of society, and it's just so typical that the better one is off, the less understanding one has for the problems of others! *You* has noticed that the Circus Lot is lying empty, and it would be the perfect location for trailers or even prefab housing.

*You* will absolutely not stand quietly by if attempts are made to push the socially vulnerable out of the area to make room for big companies to make even more money.

# You and the Others

---

## *You and We*

*The petit-bourgeois idiots are the worst, they can't see how privileged they already are!!*

*We is so unbelievably hoity-toity, and just keeps on playing the victim, as if he and his perfect little family weren't part of one of the most privileged population groups in one of the most privileged countries in the world!! Seriously, how can you care so much about color coordinated interiors in the kindergarten when there are people fleeing war and death, and others who must sleep in the street, all because the system is failing in it's responsibilities?!*

*It's bloody easy to play holier-than-thou when you're sitting at your designer table eating your "paleo bread"!*

## *You and I*

*Why don't you just get it over with and move to a retirement home?!*

*You knows I from way back when in the Association. It's not like he was festive back then either, but over the last few years, he's become completely impossible!! And that garden?! It's completely unnatural! I must be some kind of control freak to keep it that neat, and GOD FORBID that anything disturb his Sunday nap!! Well, so sorry that some of us are acting like we still have a pulse!*

*RELAX, FOR FUCK'S SAKE!! There are other people in the world than you!*

## *You and One*

*Oh, just say what you mean, instead of beating around the bush!!*

*What to do with the self-effacing little One? She's completely without life or joy, and never talks about anything other than numbers and finances! You hopes that One wakes up, because it'll be a completely wasted life if she keeps this up!! And she who's so young. And why won't she look at you when she's talking, is that too much to ask?!?*

*How grey can you get before you disappear altogether!?!?*

# One



That's not what the rules say

# From the Outside

What about the real estate prices?

## The grey treasurer from Penny Drive

*One* lives in a single story brick villa of about 100 square meters. It was a renovation offer when she bought it from a deceased person's estate. Systematically and with determination, she's working her way through the house, room by room, as her budget allows. There's masking tape, sandpaper, covering paper, paint spots, moving boxes etc. everywhere.

*One* is fairly new in the House Owners' Association. When *You* came and welcomed her to the the Association it quickly dawned on her that essentials weren't under control. It sounded more like a coffee club than a serious association.

So, *One* turned up at the next general assembly and had all her prejudices confirmed. She was especially shocked once she started looking at the accounting books, which were almost non-existent. So, *One* volunteered as treasurer for the House Owners' Association. If none of the others are competent to look after interests and secure the real estate prices as well as compliance with proper rules and regulations, she'll do it.

## Expression

**Body:** *One's* body language is submissive and insecure. She will fumble a bit with her hands, nervously fiddle with a piece of paper or her sleeve. She avoids eye contact and shies away if people get too close. Arms and legs stay close to the body.

**Words:** *One* prefers to start sentences with "One..." Her statements are full of reservations and relativizations, and the only time she gets really clear is when she's being passive-aggressive.

## The Circus Lot

*One* finds the state of the Circus Lot disgraceful, and it affects the entire Association. It lies unused, a breeding ground for rats, and looks like a bit of Third World country with refuse and holey mattresses. It's foolish that such a large lot in this area gets to lie unused, since it represents such a great asset for the Association. The lot prices are high in the area, and a sale would benefit everyone.

*One* wants the lot used to bring business and prosperity to the neighborhood. The property market is unstable, and one should optimize the property value in any way possible. There's a proposal from a shopping mall developer who wants to build on the lot, and it's the perfect opportunity to secure rich trade for the area.

*One* will under no circumstances accept that the lot be sold for any purpose that could harm the real estate prices.



# One and the Others

---

## *One and You*

*Mind your own damn business!!*

Holy shit, she talks a lot! And her constant whining about the socially vulnerable. As if she knows anything about being socially vulnerable to anything! She's one of those horrible, so-called "charitable" people just looking for someone to dominate with their irrelevant opinions because they're supposed to "help" them on their way. Condescending, know-it-all old WITCH!!

*One would rather gnaw her own arm off than accept help from You!!*

## *One and We*

*The Earth calling WE – anyone home?!*

The man is completely unrealistic in his wild ambitions, and sees the funds of the Association as his own to fritter away on ridiculous projects, hiring consultants to give offers on self-emptying trashcans and other circus tricks! And his schemes are always crazy stuff meant to turn the area into some kind of dream city for people obsessed with breeding and their spoiled brood!! Pull your head out of your café latte ass!

*If you say "the good of the children" one more time, I swear I'll scream!*

## *One and I*

*I don't think one can be more fascist than this!!*

*I* is the worst example of a suburbia fascist that ever lived! And he's always mis-quoting the rules, and just shouts louder and louder when one tries to explain how things really work! And who cares about when to trim the hedges when one should really be talking about local planning and the tax pressure in the county!?! It's time for him to step aside and let younger people take control. Old geezer!!

*Shut the fuck up, Gramps!!*

# We



We agree that this is what's best for everyone

# From the Outside

Consideration for the children must be the most important thing

## The jovial family man from Paradise Alley

*We* lives with his wife Ann-Lisa and their two children, Emma, 5 and Tobias, 7. They live in a two-storey house with wood-clad walls. The interior has been thoroughly renovated, and an extension has been built with two bedrooms and a toilet. The garden is nice and well kept. Simplicity and clean lines, inside and out.

*We* has lived in the Association for about 6 years, and immediately got involved in the board. It's an area with potential, and it takes a visionary to help it on it's way. There are many examples of great things happening when one person dares to stand up, show leadership and inspire their surroundings. But it requires of us that we show some spirit and think about the long term. It's also the only way to secure a good future for the children. The only good investment is an investment in families with children, as *We* likes to say. They are the ones who bring the future, and they need all the support they can get. The only real purpose for anything is the children, and making sure that they have the best conditions in which to grow up.

### Expression

**Body:** *We's* body language is characterized by freshness and physical contact with the people that he's talking to. He'll put his hands on the others' shoulders, lean on them and give hugs that last a little too long. He has no sense of the personal space of others, and he won't notice if others are too close to him.

**Words:** *We* prefers to start sentences with "We..." Not as a royal We, but as an including and dominating we, with which he speaks on behalf of everyone. *We* rarely makes concrete proposals, preferring to talk about flighty concepts and ideas.

### The Circus Lot

*We* is sincerely concerned about the Circus Lot. He's seen how it's decayed over the last couple of years, and for him the lot is a perfect example of how if we're not developing an area, we're letting it fall apart. But fortunately, *We* has a plan; the Association offers far too few amenities for families with children. Kindergartens and schools are all outside of the Association's area, and this must be changed. If the area could be made more attractive to families with children, it could quickly turn into a development hotspot. *We* knows that the county is in need of a location to place an institution for children with special needs, and the Circus Lot would be the perfect place to do it. Close to the nature areas around the river, close to transport but still quiet, in other words perfect.

*We* will under no circumstances accept that the lot be left unused and useless for the families of the area.

# We and the Others

---

## *We and You*

*OK, the Wall has long since fallen, and You're allowed to go home to Mother Russia!*

*You looks like a festive and colorful person, but she isn't at all!? She's just a bitter old-style communist who fouls up our board meetings over her disappointment at not having taken over the world! She's just one of those people who remind us that those who are too stupid to make it in politics end up on boards!*

*We shudders at the thought that You has raised a daughter!! Poor girl!*

## *We and I*

*Who died and made you king of Oakbridge Barton?!?!*

*HOLY FREAKING SHIT, he's so stubborn and reactionary in everything that he says and does! There's no one home, just a tape recorder blabbering about how everything was better in the olden days?! Sure, those Nazis were a great hit for everyone, right?! And we all know what a party the crisis in the 80's was!! It's good that we now have the time to talk about dirty road signs and people who throw bottles late in the evening! And he clearly thinks it's HIS association where everything has do be done according to HIS whims. I wonder if he's even capable of listening?!*


*LISTEN UP!!*

## *We and One*

*There's more to life than numbers!!*


*Another member completely devoid of imagination. She has the naysayer hat on so tight that she can't se anything at all!! Everything is about money and problems and obstacles. And she can't see the opportunities that are right here! And she has a personality of a wet dishcloth! The sooner she's knocked off the treasure chest, the better!*

*What!?! Are you trying to say something?! Speak clearly, for crying out loud!*




Tell the others what they think and feel. Who knows better than you?!

So you don't care if your children die????!!  
You have lots of money and you don't have to care if the rest of us go bankrupt because of the falling real estate prices????!!




Think in final consequences and worst case scenarios!!!

A badly kept driveway could lead to more badly kept driveways, until the whole neighborhood is a slum, the house prices drop, crime rises and we go bankrupt or get attacked in our homes!




Tell us who's to blame, and how it's a sign of a society in moral decay!

The teenagers who smashed bottles at the party Saturday night did so because they hadn't been properly brought up. It would never have happened when we were children, but is an unfortunate sign that modern parents are too busy with themselves rather than with raising their children properly!




Explain that there are more important things that you should be talking about instead!!

Why are we talking about refugee when there are homeless people here!??!  
Our homeless people live in luxury compared to people on the run!!  
If there are other problems in the world, they should be discussed before we even start on this topic!!!




Of course you can generalize!!

A car has been seen on foreign plates in the neighborhood; everyone must be on guard, as they are clearly up to no good!!!!



There's always a rule that someone has broken!!

The sign is 10 cm too large. The mailbox is too far from the road. Bulky waste can only be put out the night before pickup time, not several days. The hedge cannot be taller than 180 cm, and if you want to cut it down to 50 cm or less, or remove it, neighbors must be informed at least 8 weeks in advance.




Be lit up with holy flame and speechify!

If someone interrupts, just talk louder!!!




Be condescending

The others are a bit dumb, and sometimes you must explain what you mean very clearly, because if they understood, they would necessarily agree!!!




Tell the others what they think and feel. Who knows better than you?!

So you don't care if your children die????!!  
You have lots of money and you don't have to care if the rest of us go bankrupt because of the falling real estate prices????!!




Think in final consequences and worst case scenarios!!!

A badly kept driveway could lead to more badly kept driveways, until the whole neighborhood is a slum, the house prices drop, crime rises and we go bankrupt or get attacked in our homes!




Tell us who's to blame, and how it's a sign of a society in moral decay!

The teenagers who smashed bottles at the party Saturday night did so because they hadn't been properly brought up. It would never have happened when we were children, but is an unfortunate sign that modern parents are too busy with themselves rather than with raising their children properly!




Explain that there are more important things that you should be talking about instead!!

Why are we talking about refugee when there are homeless people here!?!  
Our homeless people live in luxury compared to people on the run!!  
If there are other problems in the world, they should be discussed before we even start on this topic!!!




Of course you can generalize!!

A car has been seen on foreign plates in the neighborhood; everyone must be on guard, as they are clearly up to no good!!!!



There's always a rule that someone has broken!!

The sign is 10 cm too large. The mailbox is too far from the road. Bulky waste can only be put out the night before pickup time, not several days. The hedge cannot be taller than 180 cm, and if you want to cut it down to 50 cm or less, or remove it, neighbors must be informed at least 8 weeks in advance.



Be lit up with holy flame and speechify!

If someone interrupts, just talk louder!!!



Be condescending

The others are a bit dumb, and sometimes you must explain what you mean very clearly, because if they understood, they would necessarily agree!!!



Be personal and use nicknames and swearwords !

*When you act like a callous psychopath you deserve to be told!!!! And of course it's relevant to the topic on hand that the opponent is too thin. Or that he has flapping ears!!*



Be offended!!

*Expect the worst from your opponents, everything they say contains a hidden insult, with which they must be immediately confronted!!!*



Interrupt the others, and talk over them !!!

*What you're saying is much more important, so the others must shut up!! If they keep on talking, just talk louder!!!!*



Don't listen too much!!

*The others can't really have anything sensible to say, so while they're talking, think about what you want to say next instead of listening to them!! If you absolutely must listen, hear only the things you can get furious at and completely disagree with!!!!*



SO DID HITLER!!!

*Remember, it always helps to bring Hitler into the discussion!!*





Be personal and use nicknames and swearwords !

*When you act like a callous psychopath you deserve to be told!!!! And of course it's relevant to the topic on hand that the opponent is too thin. Or that he has flapping ears!!*



Be offended!!

*Expect the worst from your opponents, everything they say contains a hidden insult, with which they must be immediately confronted!!!*



Interrupt the others, and talk over them !!!

*What you're saying is much more important, so the others must shut up!! If they keep on talking, just talk louder!!!!*



Don't listen too much!!

*The others can't really have anything sensible to say, so while they're talking, think about what you want to say next instead of listening to them!! If you absolutely must listen, hear only the things you can get furious at and completely disagree with!!!!*



SO DID HITLER!!!

*Remember, it always helps to bring Hitler into the discussion!!*

# We seen from the Inside



## Tobias has ADHD

*We's* oldest son, Tobias, has exhibited quite violent behavioral difficulties from a very young age. To begin with, *We* and Ann-Lisa tried to make do with teaching methods, and he worked part-time to be more present at home. But none of it helped, and after a long, tough clarification process, Tobias has received the diagnosis ADHD. In many ways it's a relief because it explains the problems and shows possibilities for treatment.

Tobias is now medicated, and even though *We* has strong reservations against giving such powerful medication to a boy of 7 years, it's the only way to make everyday life work. And the medicine has certainly made it much easier to handle Tobias, who's having a lot less problems than he used to, and he seems happier.

*We* still thinks the system has much to learn about how to handle children with behavioral difficulties, and he doesn't think that including them in the normal institutions does anyone any favors. More special options are needed, preferably small, local institutions with a focus on the needs of the child, that can create a safe and personal space around them.



## The fear that the family will fall apart

*We's* family is falling apart. It all started so well for him and Ann-Lisa, but the trouble with Tobias has worn them down more than they believed possible. *We* had never thought that he would live in a relationship where snide comments and silence at the dinner table is considered a good day.

He and Ann-Lisa can't get the ends to meet, they disagree furiously about how to handle Tobias, and they're neglecting the younger sister Emma. The practical, logistical stuff is just not working, and they're fighting more and more about everything. Emma is attending a kindergarten a good way away because it had to be a Rudolf Steiner kindergarten. And Tobias is in a special school in the next county. It's clear that he's not properly thriving over there but it's better than the public school he used to attend, where the others beat him.

If only the Circus Lot could be sold to the county with the condition that it be used for an institution for children with special needs, it would ease the strain on their everyday life a lot, and then it could all be OK. *We* can't see how the puzzle can fit together otherwise, and he can't bear the thought of dragging Emma and Tobias through a divorce, sell their home and move to a small apartment somewhere and only see them every other week.

Name : \_\_\_\_\_

# One seen from the Inside

---



## My family is a bit fucked up

*One's* family affairs have always been a mess. Her adolescence and the social circle of her parents were characterized by alcohol, drugs, violence and crime. *One* has left that environment behind and cut off contact with everyone she knew there, except her mother. She was a great source of support for *One* and helped her through her education and onwards; she was always there for *One*.

Now *One's* mother is old and sick, and still stuck in the old environment. She sometimes needs help talking with the authorities, so she'll say the right things at the right times, and fortunately *One* is good at that. It can be quite wearisome, but *One* has to help her mother. Otherwise she'll risk ending on the street or losing her welfare benefits because she hasn't understood or followed the rules. And her mother was always there for her, so she can't let her sink on her own now that she needs help.

*One* has worked hard to escape that life and attain economic independence. She holds no romantic fantasies about poverty and crime or the people living with those things, and she avoids everything that bears the taint of social benefits, ghetto, abuse or crime.



## The fear that her father was right

*One's* mother was a support throughout her adolescence, but the one thing she could never help with was *One's* father. He was a drunk and violent bastard when he came home late, and mean when he woke the next morning. Throughout her adolescence, *One* was regularly smacked around the head by her father as he came home drunk. He used to berate her for being weak and useless, and made fun of her way of speaking when she tried to say something. The better she did, the more he ridiculed her for believing that she was worth something. It was clear that her good grades were due to pity from the teachers who hadn't the heart to do anything else when they saw how pathetic she was.

Stubbornly, *One* fought her way away from her family background, but deep down she's afraid that her father was right; that she's a laughable failure.

*One* bought a house when the real estate market was good, and she expected to sell it with a good profit, but the housing bubble burst soon after, and the prices plummeted. Now, she lives alone in the house, and if the sale of the Circus Lot can't increase the market values in the area, she'll risk bankruptcy. She can hear her father's drunken, contemptuous laugh in the back of her head every time she walks past the Circus Lot as it looks now, and every time the bills must be paid from empty bank accounts.

Name : \_\_\_\_\_

# I seen from the Inside



## Anna doesn't remember so well

I and Anna are some of the few people who have been together for life. Somehow, they never doubted that they would live their lives together and grow old together. A couple of years ago it became clear to I that they were closer to the end than to the beginning when Anna was diagnosed with Alzheimer's.

It started innocently enough with her forgetting little things and getting confused easily, but it got worse and soon they could no longer ignore the symptoms and had to go to the doctor. The diagnosis was given out fairly quickly, and they were sent home with a number of brochures and some phone numbers for contact persons who could help them.

They now have a maid in the house who can help with the practical things and keep an eye on Anna in the day when I is at work. It works reasonably well, but it's hard to see her disappearing bit by bit, month after month, knowing that there's no cure. But I has promised to stand by her for better or for worse, and he intends to.

Fortunately they still get a lot of enjoyment out of going for walks along the river, looking at flowers and plants, and they enjoy their calm, safe home.



## The fear of being forgotten

On the walls at home, I keeps four pictures. They're pictures of his son Anders, who perished about 10 years ago in an accident. Back then they said it was a good thing that he at least didn't leave behind a family; no wife and children who would have had to make do without him. That remark has resounded in I's head ever since. How is it a good thing that his only son is dead, leaving no trace other than his old parents?

Anna has trouble remembering Anders, and she's begun to remove the pictures when I isn't home. "I don't want pictures of strange men in my home!", she says. It's dawned on I that soon he'll be the only one left who knew and loved their son. The only one to remember what an amazing boy he was, and how promising his life seemed before the accident. All the good times, all the long summer evenings in the garden will disappear with him and Anna. All traces of them will disappear like the dew before the morning sun, as if they'd never lived. I has a hard enough time with Anders no longer being among the living, but the thought of all three of them disappearing into forgetfulness is more than he can take. They had a good life, and they deserve to be remembered by someone!

On the Circus Lot there's a sculpture that the House Owners' Association put up many years ago. As I was the driving force behind the project he, Anna and Anders got to put their handprints into the foundation and write their names. When they're gone, that will be the only physical proof that they once walked the Earth.

Name : \_\_\_\_\_

# You, seen from the Inside



## Baby-Bee lives in Canada

*You* has always wanted a big family, but Fate would have it that she had just a single daughter, Beatrice, before the marriage fell apart in a rather unpleasant divorce.

Beatrice, or Baby-Bee as *You* calls her, grew up with *You* and became her whole life after the divorce. So it wasn't too easy for *You* when Baby-Bee moved out, fell in love with a Canadian and moved to the other side of the Earth to form a family. *You* misses her so very much, but fortunately they talk every day on the telephone, and she can keep up with her life on Facebook. She buys gifts for the children online, so they get it delivered straight to them, and she enjoys seeing her gifts turn up in the pictures in her Facebook feed.

And even though *You* misses Baby-Bee very much, she finds solice in the company of the other volunteers. They talk and laugh, and she shows them pictures from Canada. Everybody needs someone to talk to , and if there is one thing *You* does well, it is talking.



## The fear of being alone

*You* comes from a small family that moved around a lot, and she was very lonely in her childhood. When she met Baby-Bee's father she fell head over heels in love with him, and with his big, vibrant family and circle of friends, where you were never alone for long. Someone was always visiting, there was always something to celebrate. It felt for *You* as if she'd finally come home, as if she'd finally found a place where she belonged and felt happy. The early years, when Baby-Bee was still little, were the happiest time of her life.

But all things end, and when he lost his job, Beatrice's father came down with a violent depression that changed everything. He scared off family and friends and got angry if she saw them behind his back. After some time it became too much for her and she left him with Baby-Bee, but to her great surprise, friends and family weren't there for her. They abandoned her, and she was left alone with her daughter.

After that it was just the two of them, and when Beatrice left her too, *You* sank into darkness and loneliness, and if her mother hadn't more or less forced her to do volunteer work for the Social Center, she might never have emerged into daylight again. Now her mother is gone, and the Social Center is closing because they don't have a place to be, and *You* can feel the darkness and loneliness pulling at her again.

Name :

\_\_\_\_\_



**I**  
and Anna by the River

... finds *I* by the river with his wife Anna. They're standing over a flower, with a book in the hand



**You**  
By the phone

... rings the doorbell at *You's*, and she shouts "Come in, I'll be right there" from the living room as she's finishing a conversation



**One**  
at the Public Office

... meets *One*, her arms full of papers



**We**  
on his way home on the train

... meets *We* in the train with his son, and they talk on the way home



**I**

in his living room

... finds *I* in the living room, where he's sitting with a giant pile of bills, looking tired. On the table and on the walls there are pictures of a young man in his early 20's



**You**

at the Christmas Tree Party

... finds *You* sitting by herself as the Christmas Tree Party is ending



**One**

in the middle of the house renovation

... sees that the door is open, and in the middle of the room, *One* sits slumped in a chair, the room in ruins around her



**We**

on a bench by the Circus Lot

... meets *We* on a dark evening as it's snowing. He sits staring into space