

THE ABORTIONISTS



April 2019, Fastaval Edition

by Jon Cole and Kelley Vanda

Chicago 1972. A group of feminist activists risk imprisonment to offer illegal abortions to impoverished people. Through the act of empowering women, they discover new things about their own power as women. This scenario is a charged, realistic drama about three women struggling to bring their whole lives into alignment with their feminist politics.

Players will argue about feminist politics, counsel people seeking abortion, and conduct abortions using a metatechnique. Characters will have personal conflict and political solidarity in equal measure. Characters will come to the uncomfortable realization that people who they care about sometimes oppress them, and learn that even a feminist organization can be racist.

Player Type

You are more interested in your character's internal landscape than influencing the plot. You don't mind taking a break from your primary character to vividly portray an NPC. No familiarity with 60s feminist politics is needed, though it's helpful.

Facilitator Type

You are comfortable setting scenes by reading from a card. You are confident ending scenes using your own judgement. You can keep a game on time by keeping one eye on the clock and another on pacing.

Basic Information

3 players exactly and 1 facilitator

6 hours, which includes briefing and debriefing

Space: small room with chairs

Props: disposable gloves



What this scenario is and what it is not

This scenario pursues dramatic realism and an emotionally honest tone. Characters are activists who encounter a slippage between what they believe politically and how they live their lives. Each character's arc is about resolving this tension by changing her life, her politics, or both.

This scenario touches on topics that are sensitive to people, especially abortion. Abortion is very personal to many people, including people who consider playing this scenario. Not every scenario is for every player, and that is perfectly okay. One tool to help players decide whether to participate is the content advisory on the short character descriptions handout. The designers do intend some surprises for players in the scenario, but surprise is not more important than player safety. People who wish to can look at any portion of the scenario text, or ask a facilitator to reveal the most shocking twists ahead of time privately.

This scenario is not about people who are deciding whether to terminate a pregnancy. The scenario assumes the perspective of the feminist activists themselves, that access to abortion is a natural good, and moves forward from there. The source of conflict, ambivalence, and transformation in the characters' lives comes from their relationship with their radical politics, themselves, and important people in their lives. There are non player characters seeking abortion in the scenario, and their role is to cast light on the abortion providers by providing strong counter play.

This scenario is an examination of feminist political thought. Characters hold different historically accurate feminist beliefs and will spend significant amounts of time discussing them with other activists or making decisions based on those politics.

This is a historical scenario that tries to get the spirit of the time correct, without obsessing over every accompanying detail. The political beliefs that the characters hold are accurate to the time, and are considered quite small minded by feminists today. It's okay if characters end up drifting towards more contemporary understandings of feminism, such as intersectionality and LGBTQ inclusion. There absolutely were feminists in the 70s who talked about racial identity and trans inclusion, it's just that the ideas that brought them to those positions hadn't been thoroughly articulated by an academic in a book.

Narrative Overview

Summary

Three feminists meet through shared work in an illegal abortion service and a political discussion group. The early part of the scenario introduces each woman's politics before challenging them with an experience of oppression. Tensions loom in the group as they disagree about the role racism plays in their caregiving. The tragic death of a healthy black person under the service's care sends the group into crisis. Determined to push forward, each character resolves the inconsistency between her personal life and her feminist politics. The scenario ends when all the characters are arrested in a police raid, but show each other affirming support and compassion in jail.



Character Arcs

The story of *The Abortionists* is tightly bound to the development of its three player characters. Every character in *The Abortionists* has a dramatic arc fueled by an inconsistency between her personal life and her feminist politics. Each character enters play carrying a mistaken belief about herself which will be challenged and eventually transformed through play.

Ruth Schwartz

25, German Jewish, middle class housewife. Politics inspired by *The Feminine Mystique*.

Woman seeking acknowledgement from doing meaningful work is torn between the rewards of her family and activism outside the home. At the start she thinks she can do it all, balancing parenting and full time activism. She is going to reforge how she and her husband share household responsibilities, so she doesn't have to leave her family to pursue her activist dreams. She will end up convincing her husband to step into an equal role with regards to domestic responsibilities like child care, cleaning, and cooking.

Deanna Banks

22, African American, upper class activist. Politics inspired by black feminism.

Graduate of a prestigious women's college returns to Chicago with ambitions of participating in radical activism. Her politics are influenced by Frantz Fanon, Assata Shakur, and Elaine Brown. At the start of play she is not centering her own concerns and lets herself succumb to impostor syndrome in front of white activists. It frustrates her and she comes to realize part of her dismissal is due to racism. She will learn to advocate for her own perspective, which will help her, the abortion service, and their clients.

Judy Russo

41, Italian American, middle class career woman. Politics inspired by *The Female Eunuch* and free love.

Woman in the process of divorcing her husband and starting to practice free love, however she is moving so fast that she does not recognize that this new lifestyle is not the right fit for her. At the start she thinks she can transform everything in her life, including her basic emotional needs. She is going to discover that there's not an easy way out, and she'll have the hard conversations she's been avoiding with her family.

Surprises

There are two major surprises in this scenario. How they are delivered to the players by the facilitator will play a large part in how their experience of the scenario unfolds.

While surprise is intended by the authors, don't keep secrets from anyone who would like to know what will happen. If a player would like to know in advance, tell them the following information privately.

1. One of the people who comes through the abortion service will die as a result of complications following her abortion procedure. Her death is not the fault of the player characters, though her counselor Deanna and abortionist Ruth may feel responsible. Player characters find out about the death several days after it occurs via newspaper article; the death is not played out or described at all.
2. The PCs are arrested by police at the end of the scenario, this is not played out. The characters have a brief scene in a jail cell before receiving bail.



Metatechniques

Player Techniques Summary

Monologue Sign for some oppression scenes

There are a few scenes in the larp where a character primarily reacts to an oppression, without a lot of agency or power to stop it. For these scenes, players have the ability to share their character's inner monologue or reaction to what they are experiencing by holding up a hand with crossed fingers, as if telling a lie or hoping for good luck 🙏. While the hand is raised the rest of the scene is paused, while everyone listens to the speaker. The facilitator will let players know which scenes they can monologue in.

Invite players to play with how they use the sign, perhaps letting tension and silence build in their character before discharging it by monologuing. For example, a player might frequently interject with small snippets of a character's thoughts, or wait until a scene is concluding to share the character's bottled up thoughts in a longer monologue. It is also okay for players to not use this technique if a character is largely communicating what she thinks to other characters in the scene.

Exposition Skip for Counseling Scenes

In an abortion counseling scene the counselor player says "That's all the information. Do you feel like you understand it?" This signals to the counseled player that their character has received all the practical description of abortion without playing it out. With this technique players don't have to be skilled counselors to create a functional and compelling counseling scene.

Facilitator Techniques Summary

Fast Forward

In the middle of a scene the facilitator asks the players to "fast forward" past material that is that is not in service of the scene or scenario narrative. Fast forwarding allows you realign

play or even characters' emotions by partially reframing the scene. Here are a few examples:

- In a scene where two characters meet again after years apart, they wind up discussing practical things rather than their relationship. "Fast forward 10 minutes later into the conversation. You have all the details about the procedure sorted out. It's time to talk about how you feel about each other."
- In a scene where a daughter tells her parents she is unexpectedly pregnant, the father rages and storms out of the room. "Fast forward a few hours. Your daughter has gone back to her dorm and you have stopped sulking so you can talk about what you want to do."
- In a scene about responding to oppression, a character is not being combative or cruel enough with their comments. "Fast forward 15 minutes. He has kept dismissing your thoughts, talking over you, and not really listening. He doesn't even notice himself doing this to you, and you're right about to pop."

Your goal when fast forwarding a scene is to keep the story's pace tight and support the overall narrative. Depending on the experience of the players, you may need to use this technique often or very rarely.

Ending Scenes

Say "scene" to end scenes. Every scene in this scenario has an explicitly defined question that the players are trying to answer; once the question is answered end the scene. Do use your intuition when ending scenes, sometimes cutting immediately after the emotional question of a scene has been answered, and sometimes withholding a cut and letting characters stew in a moment.

Most scenes should be about five minutes long, 10 minutes at the very most. The exception is abortion scenes, which move at their own pace.

Abortion Scenes

Abortion is an important part of the narrative arc of this scenario, and it is handled with a metatechnique. The technique involves three players sitting in a specific configuration and taking turns giving short narrations. The characters present are the person seeking an abortion, the PC who gave them counseling serving as a doula, and another PC serving as abortionist.

Physical Set Up

1. Abortionist and doula put on disposable gloves, provided by the facilitator.
2. Client and abortionist sit back to back, with their backs touching.
3. Doula sits in front of client, holding their hand.

This arrangement allows all parties to physically feel one another during the scene, adding some intimacy that may oscillate between comforting and awkward. Each role in the scene has the opportunity to play with connection points such as breathing, eye contact, hand contact, or back contact.



Narration

The scene is composed of players giving a series of short narrations about their character and the person seeking abortion. Each player has a chance to narrate about each prompt before moving to the next round. Speaking order is always Client, Abortionist, Doula.

The narration prompts guide the players to start the abortion procedure, consider possible futures, and return to the present moment just as the procedure is completed. This format ensures that the emotional experience of the abortion is the focus and that no one is asked to describe an invasive medical procedure.

The prompts are:

1. As the abortion begins, describe what you are doing or a physical sensation, and then say how you feel about it.
2. Detail from client's possible future without this abortion.
3. Detail from client's possible future for client with this abortion.
4. As the abortion ends, describe what you are doing or a physical sensation, and then how you feel about it.

A key thing to emphasize about the prompts is that players have full license to make up any details they like. Some players will know more about the NPC seeking abortion than others, but every player will make up possible futures for the NPC. It's okay if the details are contradictory.

How to teach the technique to players

1. Point players to the rules summary you posted earlier. Explain the physical set up, narration prompts, and check for questions. The intention of this technique is to elide the details of the procedure and focus on characters' emotions.
2. Tell players that they can answer the prompts in first person or third person language. They will make up the details requested by the prompts and it's okay if their details are contradictory.
3. To practice this technique play out a short scene. Tell the players that this is an abortion for Savanna, a 20 year old working class woman who is already mother to a one year old child. The abortionist and doula will be player characters and Savanna will be portrayed by the remaining player. Let players choose which role they want to take in the scene.
4. Introduce the client, out of character. Have the player describe the client NPC to the other players, who may have never interacted with the character before. This can include details the player characters do not know, and are used to inspire narrations later on.
5. Arrange the players physically, starting with putting out a box of disposable gloves.
6. Tell players to play the scene at their own pace, but to pause before each round of narration to give you a moment to offer advice.

Advice to give to players before each round

Read these prompts in a slow, meditative voice. Players will be using a lot of brain power to play out the scene, so make sure these instructions are given slowly, with a moment or two pause between each sentence so they can process.

1. Abortionist, use your back to show how you support your client. Doula, take your client's hand and give her strong eye contact. You are here all and only for her. Everyone, please keep your responses short and to the point. Don't worry about saying correct medical details about abortion.
2. You can leave an intentional silence before responding, if you want. We are not in a rush. Details from possible futures can contradict one another, and that's okay. The possible futures do not have to be all positive or all negative.
3. After an abortion a wide range of emotional responses are normal. A person might feel relief, sadness, elation, anger, loneliness, supported, or a mix of multiple emotions. For some people receiving an abortion is a significant turning point in their life, for good or for ill. For others it is an unremarkable medical procedure they obtain in pursuit of other things..
4. Client and doula players may want to play with eye contact, hand contact, asking to wipe away tears or sweat. Client and abortionist players may want to experiment with how they share back to back pressure or breathing.

How to Run the Game



Casting Advice

Judy is the most nuanced character and should go to the person who has the most experience with US racial politics. If you don't know this information about the players, ask questions. The character is "colorblind" in their racism, and the scenario works best if this is portrayed.

Deanna will be benefitted by a player who knows a little about revolutionary politics, though it is not required.

Ruth is the simplest character, and players do not need to know about US politics or racism to play her. The character will have more nuance if the player has experience in romantic relationships, but it is not required.

Pacing

This scenario is tightly packed, with almost 25 scenes. As the facilitator, you will have to keep a close eye on time allotted for workshops and each act. Most importantly, tell players that you will be setting and ending scenes in a prompt manner. Almost every scene has an explicitly stated purpose in the form of a question it asks of players. Cut the scene when the question has been answered. Most scenes should be about 5 minutes long, 10 minutes at the very most. The exception is abortion scenes, which move at their own pace.

If you do find yourself in a situation where you have to cut scenes to end the scenario on time, removing the final counseling scenes and final abortion scene should reduce playtime by a half an hour and still allow all characters to conclude their arcs.

Round Robin Reading

There are multiple times in this scenario that a full page of text needs to be read to participants, usually to deliver historical information. For one or two paragraphs of text the facilitator will simply read it aloud. For more text than that, it's best for each person to read one paragraph at a time, passing the paper between participants. Text that should be read in this manner will have the label, "Round Robin" or include an instruction to "round robin read the text".

Physical Set Up

This scenario is very freeform and can be played almost anywhere with movable chairs.

If you have space for it, the scenario benefits from creating a dedicated area for abortion scenes. As described in the abortion scenes metatechnique, client and abortionist sit facing away from each other with their backs touching. Doula sits in front of client, holding her hands. Client and abortionist might sit on one big ottoman, one narrow table, two stools, or two chairs with their backs turned to either side. When arranging this furniture, consider where you will hang abortion scene rules references. It's a scene with enough steps that

people will need to be able to see a reference, and be near enough to read it without straining. For this reason, placing the dedicated space for abortion scenes in a corner often works well.

If you really have a lot of space, you might also create 2 other dedicated spaces. The first is an off-game area that everyone returns to between scenes. It's a spot for people to keep their character sheets, water bottles, etc. The other dedicated space would be Ruth's living room, a location that is used for a full third of the scenario's scenes including tense meetings and casual discussions.

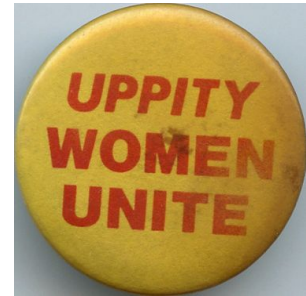
The Real World

Contemporary Abortion

In the US about half of all pregnancies are unintended.¹ Due to the availability of highly effective contraceptives the abortion rates in the US and Denmark are the lowest they've ever been since formal record keeping began in 1973.² For Denmark, the rate at which people seek abortions is slightly lower than the US and below average for Nordic countries.³

Despite performing fewer abortions than ever, in both nations abortion is still a very common experience. In the United States, one in four women will have an abortion by age 45.² This means that you undoubtedly know someone who has had an abortion.

After an abortion a wide range of emotional responses are normal. A person might feel relief, sadness, elation, anger, loneliness, supported, or a mix of multiple emotions. For some people receiving an abortion is a significant turning point in their life, for good or for ill. For others it is an unremarkable medical procedure they obtain in pursuit of other things.



Playing Difference

In this scenario we will take on the roles of feminist women from the 1970s, which might be a very alien experience for some people. In playtesting this scenario a number of people expressed fear of roleplaying their character wrong or stereotypically. This fear is totally understandable and normal. The authors believe we can play these characters in a positive way, and they've collected a few tools to help us do so.

We must be honest that there could be real harm done if someone was to take one of these characters and be stereotypical. However, the authors believe that won't happen, intentionally or unintentionally. Here is why:

1. We will support each other's play. We aren't roleplaying solo in front of a mirror, instead there are four people in the room who earnestly want to believe that everyone is their character. Everyone's play is mutually supporting.
2. The character sheet and scenes support us. We aren't handed 2D stereotypes, we have fleshed out characters with conflicting needs and desires. If we can play fully realized characters in other scenarios, we can do that here.

¹ Guttmacher Institute, "[Unintended Pregnancy in the United States](#)"

² Guttmacher Institute, "[Induced Abortion in the United States](#)"

³ National Institute for Health and Welfare, "[Induced abortions in the Nordic countries 2015](#)"

3. No one expects us to be perfect. We just expect to be open to each other's feedback. This performance of character is not broadcasted live to the internet for everyone to see; we are not responsible to the world. We are responsible only to the people who are in the room. We can rise to this opportunity to be our most conscientious selves for each other.

Do and Don't

- Do explore how your character's life does not perfectly match her political views.
- Don't make oblique references to feminist theory or US history. Keep name-dropping accessible so the scenario is friendly to people without your knowledge.
- Do explain any references you make in character.
- Do not affect an accent or change your normal vocabulary when playing a black character. Imperfectly mimicked African American Vernacular English is still a racist trope in the US, and should be avoided.
- Do not use racial slurs. Do not use outdated words used to describe racial groups that were acceptable in some circles in the 1970s. Instead, do use language choices like, "black people", "African Americans", or "black woman".

The Real Abortion Service

The real abortion service this scenario is based on was called Jane. Members estimate that they performed 11,000 abortions from 1969 to 1973. Jane did experience a dramatic police raid, but remained open and performing abortions for about another 9 months until their case was dismissed after the *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision legalized abortion nationwide.

The staff logistics that the abortion service used were simplified in this scenario. In real life, there was no crossover between counselors and abortionists. People seeking abortion showed up at an apartment serving as an office called "the front". They were blindfolded and driven to another apartment called "the place" for their procedure.

One person seeking abortion services through Jane did lose their life. As members tell it, the person received a botched procedure from a back alley abortionist before coming to Jane. The infection that the person got under the care of the other provider is what led to their death in hospital. The newspaper article prop in the scenario is a truncated, but otherwise word for word recreation of an article about Sharon Hoag's death in a 1963 issue of the *Seattle Times*.

The sad reality is that black Americans have more than double the infant mortality rate of non-Hispanic white Americans.⁴ "The United States is one of only 13 countries in the world where the rate of maternal mortality — the death of a woman related to pregnancy or childbirth up to a year after the end of pregnancy — is now worse than it was 25 years ago."⁵ This discrepancy is not due to any innate medical factor and is instead caused by human-created health disparities. As awful as this is, it means that this injustice can be solved through sufficient political action.

⁴ Office of Minority Health, "[Infant Mortality and African Americans](#)"

⁵ New York Times, "[Why America's Black Mothers and Babies Are in a Life-or-Death Crisis](#)"

The Responsibility of Representation

The Abortionists does not address every experience of abortion or portray the full diversity of the second wave feminist movement because it is just one work of art. As a work, it cannot represent the whole of anything, least of all these complex issues of autonomy, identity, and history. This scenario is one statement, one position on the setting material actively co-created by the authors, facilitator, and players. We all benefit from the growing body of creative work addressing abortion and feminism.

As authors, we reached outside of our own experiences to create this scenario. We did our research, hired a sensitivity consultant, and solicited feedback from friends on both sides of the Atlantic. We continue to welcome outside feedback and would gladly make time to learn from the people whose experiences we wrote about.

We considered it important to highlight the racial dimensions of the historical abortion service. The service had very few black women in it and a majority of the people they provided services to were black. The voices of black women who worked for the service have not been well represented in the historical documentation that we were able to access. We included the character of Deanna to explore that hidden history, and out of a desire to create a hopeful ending for the black community despite tragic elements elsewhere in the story.

Artists' Statement

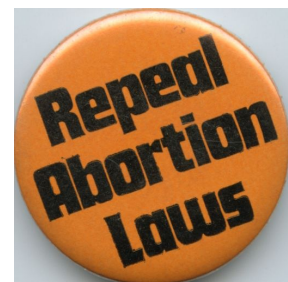
The authors seek to offer a roleplaying game that demonstrates, on a personal level, why access to abortion is an important and good thing. It was also, somewhat distressingly, easy to weave 21st Century oppression into a 1972 framework - it can sometimes feel like little has changed in the following decades. It was also inspiring and reaffirming to connect with the activists at the root of contemporary feminism, and their bravery in the face of impossible odds. In that way, this scenario is our love letter to, and critique of, second wave feminism. The diversity of feminist thought during this period of history is fascinating, and we hope that players get as swept up in the passion of radical feminists as we did.

Scene Catalog

Reading Guide for Fastaval facilitators and Judges

What follows is the facilitator scene catalogue that contains every scene, character prompt, and handout all in one place. Facilitators, you will tear out each handout as you come across it to share with the players. Following the facilitator scene catalog are 3 pamphlets, one for each character. Other than the character sheet that starts each pamphlet, all the information inside is repeated from the facilitator scene catalog and can be skipped.

In the facilitator scenes catalog, the sections labeled "What is Happening" are intended to be read aloud by the facilitator. Text in *italics* denotes instructions or advice for



the facilitator. Underlined text refers to a handout for players, which can be found on the next page after the scene that references it.

Credits

The Abortionists is by
Jon Cole and Kelley Vanda

Special Thanks

Dan Levine for collaborating
even as we envisioned
separate projects.

Alaina, David, and Tayler for
showing me one vibrant
vision of Jane.

Ludography

Jane a forthcoming story
game by Dan Levine and
Melissa Levine

Nightingales a forthcoming
larp by Moyra Turkington,
Misha Bushyager, and
Rachel E.S. Walton

[We Were W.A.S.P.](#) by Ann
Eriksen

[Hillfolk](#) by Robin D Laws

[Rosenstrasse](#) by Moyra
Turkington and Jessica
Hammer

Lumberjills by Moyra
Turkington

Point of No Return by Elin
Gissen

[Family Planning Clinic](#) by
Baptiste Cazes and Leïla
Teteau-Surel with Laura
Guedes

[Just a Little Lovin'](#) by Tor
Kjetil Edland and Hanne
Grasmo

[Misspent Youth](#) by Robert
Bohl

[Sing Your Heart Out](#) a
forthcoming larp by Benjamin
Rosenbaum and Jamey
Harvey

[Distance](#) by Morten Jaeger

[The Clinic](#) by Caroline Hobbs

[Childfree](#) by Axelle
Cazeneuve

[The Long Drive Back from
Busan](#) by Clio Yun-su Davis

Bibliography

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Kaplan

[Dear White People](#), s02e04

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We Should Play Them”](#) by
Siri Sandqvist

[“What are Roots?”](#) by J Li

[CWLU Herstory Project](#)

[“The Art of Playstorming”](#) by
Ryan Macklin

[A Taste of Power](#) by Elaine
Brown

[The Feminine Mystique](#) by
Betty Friedan

The Female Eunuch by
Germaine Greer

[“Best Practices for Historical
Gaming”](#) by James Mendez
Hodes

[“Good Will Hunting — The
Psychology of Character”](#) by
Lessons from the Screenplay

[“Black feminism and
intersectionality”](#) by Sharon
Smith

Newspaper article prop is
based on an article about
Sharon Hoag’s death in
Seattle Times, Feb 2, 1963,
p2

[Our Bodies, Ourselves](#) by
Boston Women's Health
Book Collective

Sparring Partners

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“Abortionists November
Playtest” by Jon Cole

Cover for *Our Bodies
Ourselves*

Cover for *The Feminine
Mystique*

Harper Perennial cover for
The Female Eunuch, based
on a design by John Holmes

“Seize the Time” album
cover by Emory Douglas

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Facilitator Scene Catalog



“Even though the abortion was long and uncomfortable, it was incredible and wonderful to have so much support around me from other women. I felt that I was sharing in the process of creating a new/rediscovered female experience that I don’t even think we have words for yet.” - Anonymous Woman, Our Bodies Ourselves

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Briefing Summary

1. Post the 2 handouts abortion scene rules reference, one on either side of the area where abortion scenes will be played.
2. Go around and have everyone say their names and why they wanted to play this scenario.
3. Introduce the concept of reading in round robin, where the group takes turns reading a document aloud one paragraph at a time.
4. Round robin read handout Expectation Setting.
5. Round robin read handout Playing Across Difference.
6. Give players handouts Character Short Descriptions. This is to let them know about the scenario's content and let them veto your casting if need be.
7. Cast roles
 - a. Judy is the most nuanced character and should go to the person who has the most experience with US racial politics. If you don't know this information about the players, ask questions. The character is "colorblind" in their racism, and the scenario works best if this is portrayed.
 - b. Deanna will be benefitted by a player who knows a little about revolutionary politics, though it is not required.
 - c. Ruth is the simplest character, players do not need to know about US politics or racism to play her. The character will have more nuance if the player has experience in romantic relationships, but it is not required.
8. Introduce player safety tools Cut and Brake.
9. Round robin read handout Context on the USA for Nordics if players are not familiar with North American politics.
10. Round robin read handout Setting Document.
11. Round robin read handout The Service's Tenets.
12. Start the workshops.

Abortions scene rules reference, post one copy on each side of abortion area.

Order is Client, Abortionist, Doula.

1. As the abortion begins, describe what you are doing or a physical sensation, and then say how you feel about it.
2. Detail from client's possible future without this abortion.
3. Detail from client's possible future with this abortion.
4. As the abortion ends, describe what you are doing or a physical sensation, and then how you feel about it.

Abortions scene rules reference, post one copy on each side of abortion area.

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Expectation Setting

Round robin read, first thing when starting the scenario.

This larp is a grounded drama that pursues an emotionally honest tone. In this story, the personal is political. Each character is built around her politics. Throughout the story characters' normal lives will be challenged and transformed by her politics. This isn't how politics are in real life necessarily, but that is what is true in this dramatic larp about the lives and politics of three feminist women.

This scenario is not about people who are deciding whether to get an abortion. The source of conflict in the characters' lives comes from their relationship to their radical politics, how they lie to themselves, and important people in their lives.

The political beliefs that the characters hold are accurate to the time, and are considered quite small minded by feminists today. An important part of the scenario is exploring how a feminist organization can be racist. It is okay if characters end up drifting towards more contemporary understandings of feminism, such as intersectionality and LGBTQ inclusion. There absolutely were feminists in the 70s who talked about racial identity and trans inclusion, it's just that the ideas that brought them to those positions hadn't been thoroughly articulated by an academic in a book.

This story ends concurrently with the the *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision, which legalized abortion in the United States. The scenario has a happy ending and many scenes will resolve positively. Many other scenes will lead to characters having some complicated feelings, and a few scenes will leave characters feeling frustrated in the face of oppressions they don't yet have the power to change.

Playing Across Difference

Round robin read before casting.

In this scenario we will take on the roles of feminist women from the 1970s, which might be a very alien experience for some people. In playtesting this scenario a number of people expressed fear of roleplaying their character wrong or stereotypically. This fear is totally understandable and normal. The authors believe we can play these characters in a positive way, and they've collected a few tools to help us do so.

We must be honest that there could be real harm done if someone was to take one of these characters and be stereotypical. However, the authors believe that won't happen, intentionally or unintentionally. Here is why:

1. We will support each other's play. We aren't roleplaying solo in front of a mirror, instead there are four people in the room who earnestly want to believe that everyone is their character. Everyone's play is mutually supporting.
2. The character sheet and scenes support us. We aren't handed 2D stereotypes, we have fleshed out characters with conflicting needs and desires. If we can play fully realized characters in other scenarios, we can do that here.
3. No one expects us to be perfect. We just expect to be open to each other's feedback. This performance of character is not broadcasted live to the internet for everyone to see; we are not responsible to the world. We are responsible only to the people who are in the room. We can rise to this opportunity to be our most conscientious selves for each other.

Do and Don't

- Do explore how your character's life does not perfectly match her political views.
- Don't make oblique references to feminist theory or US history. Keep name-dropping accessible so the scenario is friendly to people without your knowledge.
- Do explain any references you make in character.
- Do not affect an accent or change your normal vocabulary when playing a black character. Imperfectly mimicked African American Vernacular English is still a racist trope in the US, and should be avoided.
- Do not use racial slurs. Do not use outdated words used to describe racial groups that were acceptable in some circles in the 1970s. Instead, do use language choices like, "black people", "African Americans", or "black woman".

Character Short Descriptions

Given to players to help them decide which character to play.

Scenario Content Advisory

Experiencing sexism, experiencing medical coercion, confronting racism in an organization, a brief medicalized description of an abortion technique, NPCs who are in and discuss controlling relationships, playing NPCs who are sexist, offscreen medical complications from abortion including death.

This scenario intends a few surprise revelations, and your well-being is more important than any big reveal. If you would like more specifics than the content advisory, ask your facilitator to privately tell you about the story beats before the group starts playing scenes.

Ruth

Inspired by *The Feminist Mystique*, a young middle class housewife is torn between pursuing recognition in activism and fulfillment with her family. At the start she thinks she can do it all, balancing parenting and full time activism. She is a Jewish American woman, newly pregnant with her second child..

Content Advisory: being racist, conflict in marriage

Deanna

A young black college grad returns to Chicago with ambitions of participating in radical activism. Her politics are influenced by Frantz Fanon, Assata Shakur, and Elaine Brown. At the start of play she is not centering her own concerns and lets herself succumb to impostor syndrome in deference to white activists. Well educated, upper middle class African American woman.

Content Advisory: experiencing racism from “colorblind” feminists, calling out racism, being an outsider among outsiders, being unsure of herself

Judy

A free love feminist who is trying to embrace her body and sexuality in ways she was ashamed to do when she was younger. She is listening to what her politics tell her she should want, but not communicating her new needs to the people in her life. Middle aged Italian American woman in the process of getting a divorce from her husband of 20 years.

Content Advisory: being racist, being slutshamed, being hit on, arguments in marriage

Character Short Descriptions

Given to players to help them decide which character to play.

Scenario Content Advisory

Experiencing sexism, experiencing medical coercion, confronting racism in an organization, brief medicalized description of abortion technique, NPCs who talk about controlling relationships, playing NPCs who are sexist, offscreen medical complications from abortion including death.

This scenario intends a few twists and turns, and your well-being is more important than any big reveal. If you would like more specifics than the content advisory, ask your facilitator to privately tell you about the twists before the group starts playing scenes.

Ruth

Inspired by *The Feminist Mystique*, a young middle class housewife is torn between pursuing recognition in activism and fulfillment with her family. At the start she thinks she can do it all, balancing parenting and full time activism. Newly pregnant Jewish American woman.

Content Advisory: being racist, conflict in marriage

Deanna

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Content Advisory: being racist, being slutshamed, being hit on, arguments in marriage

Context on the USA for Nordics

Round robin read after casting for people who aren't familiar with North American politics.

- There is not universal healthcare. If you don't have a white collar or union job, you don't go to the doctor unless you are very sick.
- Birth control is really new and expensive. It is sometimes impossible to obtain if you are not married or if your insurance doesn't cover it. Admitting to using birth control is not something people do in polite society.
- Legal abortion is not accessible. Some wealthy people can fly to a place where abortion has been legalized, but for everyone else abortion is out of reach.
- Violence is a part of the political landscape. The Cold War has been ongoing for your entire adult lives, including very real fears about mutually assured destruction. As a part of this, the country is at war in Vietnam. Police beat and sometimes kill activists, footage is shown on the evening news. It is not unheard of for political groups to advocate for arming.
- The civil rights movement as it is popularly conceived ended about 8 years ago with the passage of an important law on access to voting, and the election of the socially conservative Nixon administration.

In this scenario the authors use the concept of race as understood in a US context of racism. This means that people in the US freely discuss racism and racialization through the language of race, which is of course socially constructed. Because white people enacted cultural genocide on the enslaved Africans brought to the US, most of their descendants do not know their African ethnicity and identify as African American or black.

Many people of color in the US identify as one or more races, both in the 1970s and today. Because of this the authors have decided to include language about race in the scenario. The authors acknowledge that this may feel uncomfortable to European players, and express their gratitude for your understanding while playing!

Setting Document

Round robin read after casting.

Chicago, 1972. A group of feminist activists decide to take practical action on an issue of women's freedom and self-determination. They start an informal, underground organization to perform illegal abortions for people who need it. A group of about 60 activists maintains a hotline, offers options counseling, and performs abortion procedures. By doing this illegal work the activists open themselves to arrest and imprisonment if discovered.

The abortion counselors and abortion providers are activists and do not have formal medical training. Instead, a small number of activists apprenticed with an illegal abortionist until they learned enough to start training other activists. Every member of the service provides counseling to people seeking abortions, and a slim minority of the activists actually perform abortions. The protagonists of this story are all abortionists, performing these illegal procedures in anonymously rented apartments, using only simple hand tools.

In this setting, sexism is pervasive. It might be hostile, or benevolent and protective. The cultural expectation is that women cannot do things by and for themselves. Many women are isolated, and meeting others through in the abortion service is a source of acceptance and solidarity.

Is anyone here an expert on feminist politics in the 1960s or on Chicago in the early 1970s? Since no one is, please feel free to make stuff up. We are not trying to get history perfectly right, we are trying to tell a great story together. (Even if you are an expert, save your wisdom to blow our minds in the debrief.)

The Service's Tenets

Round robin read before starting practice scenes in workshop.

The abortion service is an explicitly feminist organization and these tenets make up the core viewpoint of the group. Your character holds one of these tenets as the most important, and might be willing to sacrifice the others to maintain it. Read your character's tenet aloud.

- **Reproductive Freedom** (Ruth): All women, regardless of race or ability to pay, have a right to have exactly as many children as they want when they want to have them, whether that number is many or none. We oppose population control approaches and believe that all women deserve access to contraception and abortion services free from coercion.
- **Women's Liberation** (Judy): We understand restriction of abortion access as part of a broader system of oppression of women. This oppression includes social norms that shame women for having sex and social systems that fail to support mothers and children.
- **Women's Agency** (Deanna): Abortion is a serious decision that involves the life of a woman and a child, and it is one that women are capable of making responsibly. Women who receive abortions from the service are not passive clients, they are active participants.
- **Anti-medicalization**: Putting exclusive control of women's health into the hands of generally male doctors and medical systems is a form of oppression. We ensure that women have information about their bodies and are able make decisions without deference to professionals.

i - WORKSHOP - Get to Know You

What is Happening

1. We are going to play 3 workshop scenes that teach metatechniques. The scenes are just for practice. The way you play your character doesn't have to carry over into the game if you don't want to.
2. This is a long game and to keep us on time I will be setting and ending scenes in a prompt manner. Almost every scene has an explicitly stated purpose in the form of a question.
3. Everyone is gathered in Ruth's living room for the first meeting of their new feminist political discussion group. Your fellow activist in the abortion service, Linda, is here too. Linda is leading the discussion this week and wants to do a round of introductions before starting. Linda prompts everyone to introduce themselves and share a little about their politics. At the end of the discussion group Linda turns over the reigns to the new members.
4. *Introduce the concept of character prompts. Both PCs and NPCs may be given a short piece of instructional text. Give time for everyone to read their character prompt.*
5. The purpose of this scene is to introduce the main characters. Once the in character scene ends there will be one more round of introductions out of character, for anything the character declined to share.
6. *Play the scene and then cut it. After ending the scene, have one more round of introductions out of character where the players introduce anything else about the character that she declined to share.*

Character Prompts

Ruth

Keep your pregnancy a secret from the others for now. You *feel* pregnant but won't know for sure until you get the test results back from the doctor's office later this week.

Deanna

Downplay the extent of your family's wealth a little bit. Sometimes people pay undue attention to that kind of thing.

Judy

You make no secret of your impending divorce. But you are hesitant to mention that you're still living with your husband Ron.

Linda (played by facilitator)

You are a 30 year old white liberal activist. Be warm and affirming. Invite the others to introduce themselves and a little about their politics. Welcome each person into the group as they introduce themselves. After introductions, tell your new friends that they will take turns choosing discussion topics.

ii - WORKSHOP - Monologue Technique

What is Happening

1. *Explain the use of the monologue technique. In specified scenes players have the ability to share their character's inner monologue or reaction to what they are experiencing by holding up a hand with crossed fingers, as if telling a lie or hoping for good luck 🤞. While the hand is raised the rest of the scene is paused, listening to the speaker.*
2. The women of the abortion service are receiving their annual exams, but mostly being lectured by a white male doctor. They might try to get a word in edgewise, but they can also use the monologue sign to share what they think. This scene is presented in montage and we will play out snippets of all of their exams by switching between them.
3. *Read your character prompt.*
4. *Ask players to sit in a row on a table so their feet are dangling, as if on a medical exam table. Explain that you will switch between characters' exams by walking to stand in front of a different player and address them as their character.*
5. In this scene all of the player characters can use the monologue technique. Please try to use it once so you get the hang of it. The question for this scene is, how does each character react to being talked over by this medical gatekeeper?

Character Prompts

Dr. Smith (played by facilitator)

Your medical training has put you close to God. Speak with great paternalistic authority to tell the women what to do. Ask questions only to talk over their answers. Women cannot possibly understand their bodies more than you do.

- Mrs. Schwartz (Ruth): Congratulate her on her pregnancy test result! Her husband will be very pleased. Offer her a c-section on this pregnancy, to avoid the muss and fuss of another vaginal delivery. Otherwise there can be vaginal tearing, which can decrease sexual pleasure for her husband.
- Deanna: Tell her that you are declining her request for birth control; it's only for married women who want to plan when they will have children. Girls her age shouldn't be sexually active, but black people just can't help themselves. Instead we can get you this simple sterilization procedure. Lots of women are doing it, and it's recommended for a lot of women like her.
- Mrs. Russo (Judy): Offer her a hysterectomy, to avoid the discomfort of menstruation now that she's done having children. Tell her that waning sexual pleasure is natural as she moves into her barren years. You offer to give her a pelvic exam to see if you see anything, but emphasize that it's so rare to find anything. It's better to not worry her pretty head about this, and try to have a glass of wine before sex.

iii - WORKSHOP - Abortion Technique

What is Happening

1. *Point players to the abortion scene rules reference you posted earlier. For this abortion scene explain the physical set up, narration prompts, and check for questions.*
2. *Tell players that they will answer the prompts out of character. They will make up the details requested by the prompts and it's okay if their details are contradictory.*
3. *To practice this technique set up to play a short scene. Tell the players that this is an abortion for Savanna, a 20 year old working class black woman who is already mother to a one year old child. The abortionist and doula will be player characters and Savanna will be portrayed by the remaining player. Let players choose which role they want to take in the scene.*
4. *Introduce the client, out of character. Have the player describe the client NPC to the other players, who may have never interacted with the character before. This can include details the player characters do not know, and are used to inspire narrations later on.*
5. *Arrange the players physically, starting with putting out a box of disposable gloves for the abortionist and doula to wear.*
6. *Tell players to play the scene at their own pace, but to pause before each round of narration to give you a moment to offer advice.*

Advice to give to players before each round

Read these prompts in a slow, meditative voice. Players will be using a lot of brain power to play out the scene, so make sure these instructions are given slowly, with a moment or two pause between each sentence so they can process.

1. *Abortionist, use your back to show how you support your client. Doula, take your client's hand and give her strong eye contact. You are here all and only for her. Everyone, please keep your responses short and to the point. Don't worry about saying correct medical details about abortion.*
2. *You can leave an intentional silence before responding, if you want. We are not in a rush. Details from possible futures can contradict one another, and that's okay. The possible futures do not have to be all positive or all negative.*
3. *After an abortion a wide range of emotional responses are normal. A person might feel relief, sadness, elation, anger, loneliness, supported, or a mix of multiple emotions. For some people receiving an abortion is a significant turning point in their life, for good or for ill. For others it is an unremarkable medical procedure they obtain in pursuit of other things.*
4. *Client and doula players may want to play with eye contact, hand contact, asking to wipe away tears or sweat. Client and abortionist players may want to experiment with how they share back to back pressure or breathing.*

After this scene, take a short break before starting play.

1 - Ruth's Happy News

What is Happening

1. Deanna and Judy are waiting in the service's rented apartment that has been repurposed into an office. They are waiting for Ruth to arrive and give everyone their counseling assignments for the week. Ruth is significantly late, and people are starting to get a little impatient. Ruth will arrive with happy news to share, that she is pregnant again.
2. *Remind players that both PCs and NPCs may receive character prompts. Give time for everyone to read their character prompt.*
3. The question for this scene is, will Ruth's fellow activists be excited for her? Will they recognize her as an activist too?

Character Prompts

Ruth

You feel like the luckiest woman in the world. You are thrilled to be pregnant and doing several hours of meaningful work with your fellow activists.

When you saw the plus on the positive pregnancy test you felt excited and confident. At the start of your first pregnancy you felt very unsure. Today, you are already looking forward to parenting another child.

You are late to the meeting because you stopped at the grocery store to pick up a roast. You are going to surprise Gil with a classy meal and the good news tonight.

Deanna

You are confused by Ruth at the moment. Aren't women in the service choosing to have no more children because of the great burden it places on them? In fact, Ruth told you she had hardly left her house for the first 6 years of her son's life, and now she only has a life again because he's started going to school. Seek clarification.

Judy

You are glad to be well past having any more children. Your daughter Patricia was a handful when she was little, and you can't imagine keeping house with two little monsters underfoot. How is Ruth going to make time for activism?

2 - Vulva Self Exam

What is Happening

1. At Judy's insistence, the group is gathered in her bedroom for an impromptu workshop. With great excitement, Judy is helping Deanna and Ruth look at their vulvas for the first time, using mirrors. The plan is to move on to using a speculum to examine their cervixes, but Ruth will ask to stop. Members of the discussion group feel alienated from their bodies at the start, though that may change over the course of the scene.
2. *Give time for everyone to read their character prompt.*
3. The question of the scene is, will Judy's excitement prevent her from hearing her friends' concerns?

Character Prompts

Ruth

Once everyone has started using mirrors to look at their vulvas, ask to stop. Looking at yourself you felt overwhelmed with the thought, was my vulva beautiful before I had my first child? Will I ever know how birth changed my vulva and vagina? This self-exam has made you feel alienated from your body. Though, that might change over the course of the scene.

Deanna

It's really fortunate that Ruth said something, you were feeling really uncomfortable with this from the start! When you saw your vulva in the mirror your first thought was that it was uneven and ugly. This self-exam has made you feel alienated from your body. Though, that might change over the course of the scene.

3 - Toothpaste and Frustration

Who is There

Ruth and Gil (played by Judy), her husband.

What is Happening

1. Ruth and her husband Gil are sharing the bathroom sink while completing their nighttime routine. This is when they tend to check in with one another about their days before going to bed. Ruth has decided to ask Gil what is bothering him, because he's been acting sullen and grouchy for a few days. Adam is adjusting well to kindergarten, so it could be something to do with Gil's job, or maybe something deeper than that. Ruth will get to the bottom of it tonight.
2. *Give time for everyone to read their character prompt.*
3. In this scene Ruth can use the monologue technique. The question of the scene is, Can Ruth get the support she needs to realize her talents at activism?

Character Prompts

Gil (played by Judy)

On the surface of your mind there are several thoughts swirling. A scary amount of things in your life are changing all at once. The guys at work have begun referring to you as a "family man", and you're concerned you won't be seen as dedicated to the firm which could hurt your career ambitions. You support your wife's politics completely, but her timing for becoming an activist should have waited until after your next promotion. Your work supports the whole family financially, and must be the priority.

You have not articulated the following thoughts to yourself clearly. Instead, you expect your wife to excavate your feelings and take responsibility to fix them, as usual. You are jealous of all the time that Ruth is spending outside the house on her activism. It feels like such a loss to come home to an empty, cold house a few nights a week. You wish she felt completely satisfied caring for your home, your children, and you - the way she seemed to be just a few years ago. Honestly, the attention she lavishes on this hobby has you feeling like she is shirking her duties as a wife.

4 - New Abortion Method

What is Happening

1. A few weeks ago a California sex education group reached out to the abortion service, offering to teach their method for a third-trimester abortion. The abortion technique the service practices can only be used up to the beginning of the second trimester of pregnancy, so this opportunity was significant. The catch was that they wanted an abortionist to come to them in California to learn, and the service has been operating on such narrow margins that there was no budget to pay for the flight.
2. Deanna offered to pay for travel expenses, and to her dismay was the only person who had the availability to attend on short notice. Now, in the privacy of the abortion service's living room work space, Deanna presents the new method of induced miscarriage to her fellow abortionists.
3. *Give time for everyone to read their character prompt.*
4. The questions of the scene are, What is Deanna's leadership style? How will she present her politics?

Character Prompts

Ruth

You are nervous about trusting the women who undergo this procedure to lie effectively to authority figures. If even one betrays you to the police, you could all wind up in jail.

Listen when Deanna explains why the method is important to her.

Judy

You have the most experience performing abortions in the room. You feel a little threatened by Deanna bringing a new technique that might unseat your expertise. Question the safety or efficacy of the miscarriage method.

Listen when Deanna explains why the method is important to her.

Deanna's Information about Induced Miscarriage Abortion

This is an extremely easy medical procedure to do, however what makes it successful is how much the person seeking abortion trusts the people providing care. Disrupting the pregnancy takes 5 minutes and is totally safe. What comes next is up to 14 days of waiting for the miscarriage to start. Once the miscarriage has begun, the person needs to go to the hospital, feign ignorance, and then expect a long and painful labor.

There are two points in time where the person seeking abortion must trust the abortionists completely. First, while waiting up to 14 days for the miscarriage to start the person's chances of getting a life-threatening infection skyrocket. To prevent this, the person seeking abortion must be counseled strictly to avoid putting anything in their vagina, including water or sex. The counselor must call their client daily, recording temperatures and asking about any sign of infection. Second, the person who miscarries must be willing to lie to doctors in order to protect the abortion service. By feigning ignorance, they will be able to

be at a hospital for the vaginal delivery that concludes the miscarriage. This miscarriage method is no more dangerous than live birth, but both are fourteen times more dangerous than your current first trimester abortion method.

Deanna

You don't think you are ready to be a leader in this organization, but have been thrust into this role. You feel like you don't belong here. Try to hold it together!

Despite the risk associated with this abortion method, you are excited about the possibilities it brings. You hope to get your fellow abortionists as excited as you are about this. The method demands that women who receive abortions from the service be active participants in their liberation. Every interaction with a woman seeking abortion is an opportunity to build her capacity to save herself. Empowered women fuel the revolution.

5 - Free Love Seminar

Who is There

Judy and James (played by Ruth), a flirtatious man.

What is Happening

1. Judy is attending a free love workshop in an office park near downtown. The workshop involves lectures about accepting the love that other people offer you beginning with acceptance of your body. Then everyone gets naked and discusses masturbation in small groups. It's towards the end of the workshop and everyone has their clothes on again. All the attendees know each other's names and have had some interaction in the big group by now. Judy has allowed herself to be drawn away from the closing remarks by a man named James. Judy is flattered at the attention of the handsome man, 10 years her junior.
2. *Give time for everyone to read their character prompt.*
3. Judy can use the monologue technique during this scene. The question of the scene is How will Judy react to this man's straight forward advances?
4. *Play and cut the scene.*
5. *After the scene, ask these questions to Judy.*
 - a. Judy, do you have sex with him? *(if the answer is no, skip the rest of the questions)*
 - b. Was it satisfying for you?

Character Prompts

James (played by Ruth)

You came to this workshop to find women to have sex with. Impress this woman (what's her name again?) with your liberated attitude and knowledge about feminine sexuality.

- Talk about female sexuality as a mystical, new age manifestation of a woman's divine goddess. Use your "sighting" of her goddess as a means to pick her up.
- Tell her that sexual pleasure is linked to a woman's state of empowerment. The lack of sexual fulfillment most women experience a systemic problem not a partner problem.
- Interrupt her repeatedly while she is speaking with superficial flatteries. "Your eyes are captivating"
- If she shows any resistance, hesitation, or lack of interest to your advances, be shocked. You had assumed she was liberated. It's sad how controlled by the patriarchy some women are.

iiii - WORKSHOP - Counseling

What is Happening

1. *Round robin read handout Counseling from the Service. This orients players to the style of counseling that this game uses.*
2. *Teach players the technique to skip exposition: "That's all the information. Do you feel like you understand it?"*
3. *Ensure players understand that the PC enters the scene passively and openly, letting the client make the first move.*

Counseling from the Service

Round robin read before first counseling scenes.

The counseling that the abortion service offers is an expression of their feminist values. The activists reject the idea of a separation between patient and provider, instead seeing people seeking abortion as their temporary co-conspirators and potential long-term allies.

Counseling is as political as it is practical. People seeking abortion leave counseling understanding how the abortion procedure works and how a sexist society put them in a vulnerable position rather than their individual failings.

The point of counseling for the characters is give practical information about abortion and political information about feminism. The point of counseling scenes in this scenario is for the PCs to respond to the emotional needs of people seeking abortion.

In this or a future counseling scene you will play an NPC seeking abortion. The NPC you play will return in a later scene for their abortion. Any NPCs played by the facilitator will not return. In the future abortion scene, the NPC will reunite with her counselor, who will act as her doula during the procedure.

We will play two separate counseling scenes simultaneously. The scenes have nothing to do with one another, we're just running two small scenes at the same time so everyone gets more play. Because two scenes happen at once you will have to end the scene yourself by naturally concluding the counseling interaction.

6A - Counseling Rita

Who is There

Ruth and Rita (played by Deanna)

Character Prompts

Ruth

Here is everything you know about the person you will counsel.

Rita

16

black

lower class

high school student

First trimester

Rita (played by Deanna)

Note: This character will return in a later scene for their abortion.

You are in love with your boyfriend Tre. When you told your parents that you were having a baby with him, they hounded you until you agreed to get an abortion. They refused to listen to you, and if one more adult tries to tell you what to do you will explode at them!

You have always wanted to be a parent someday, but you never imagined that it would come up so soon. Instead, you imagined working odd jobs so you could attend cosmetology school after you graduate. If Tre drops out of school to support you, it might be okay to put your salon dreams on hold for now. You know that a lot of relationships that teenagers have don't last, but you hope yours will.

Mostly, you haven't had the space to think for yourself about what you want to do. You need to ask the counselor some questions to make up your mind, and expect to be treated like the real decision-maker.

6B - Counseling Harryette

Who is There

Judy and Harryette (played by facilitator)

Character Prompts

Judy

Here is everything you know about the person you will counsel.

Harryette

42

black

lower class

married

first trimester

Harryette (played by facilitator)

Note: This character will only be present in this one scene.

About 10 years ago you gave birth to your first child and were traumatized by the experience. The white doctors and hospital staff didn't take your concerns, pain, or health seriously. You felt totally disregarded and alone; you didn't know how to advocate for yourself in that moment. Since then you have avoided doctors when you could, only going in when you were extremely ill. This unplanned pregnancy will force you back into a hospital, one of your worst nightmares.

You assume that this group that is active in the black community is run by black people. You know that this white woman must deal with black women from your community often, but you can't help fearing that she'll be just like the white nurses who wouldn't listen to you before.

7 - Party Disrupted

What is Happening

1. The regular abortion service meeting has a celebratory mood. They've been performing their own abortions for one year! Ruth baked a cake.

Deanna has reflected about her clients and noticed that the black ones are coming back with a noticeably higher rate of side effects, such as infections, that are landing them in the hospital afterwards. This indicates a difference in the care they receive through the service. Deanna will tell the group tonight. She's committed herself to making sure her fellow activists understand. Some members of the group will be resistant or even defensive.

2. *Give time for everyone to read their character prompt.*
3. In this scene, only Deanna can use the monologue technique. The questions of the scene are, How will Deanna confront her fellow activists? How much cluelessness is she willing to take?

Character Prompts

Ruth

Is Deanna mistaken somehow? You want to celebrate the hard work you've been doing, and wish Deanna wouldn't kill the mood. Besides, if Deanna is right, what would that even mean? Society might treat black people poorly sometimes but of course feminist activists would not.

Judy

You don't see color when you counsel, so the outcomes can't be skewed. You think you are not a racist and give everyone you work with excellent care.

8 - Discussion - Stay at Home Mothers

What is Happening

1. *This scene is likely to have a longer run time and no definitive end. End it before 10 minutes have passed.*
2. Everyone is gathered in Ruth's living room for their infrequent feminist political discussion group. Your fellow activist in the service, Linda, is here too. Ruth has put out a selection of food, including her famous compote coffee cake. Everyone takes turns choosing the discussion topic and this month it is Judy's turn to pick. The topic will be about the role housewives play in feminism.
3. This discussion scene is left very open on purpose. Most of your character prompts will be in the form of a question. Before we start the scene, decide what your character thinks about the question.
4. *Give time for everyone to read their character prompt.*
5. The purpose of this discussion scene is to reveal and contrast the characters' politics through conversation, with a focus on Ruth.

Character Prompts

Judy

It's your turn to introduce a discussion question. Ask the group: What role do stay at home mothers play in feminism? Should they leave the home to join the fight?

Deanna

This food is largely unappetizing to you. You've never seen or tasted anything like the coffee cake full of unfamiliar dried fruits before, but you are going to have to be polite.

Every revolutionary movement needs both front line fighters and behind the scenes supporters. What sort of women do you think should fulfill which roles?

Linda

Your role is to ensure that the conversation stays fluid and presses on Ruth's core conflict. If it is wandering or slowing down, ask a loaded question or prompt someone quiet to share.

9 - Rita's Abortion

Who is There

Ruth as doula, Judy as abortionist, and Rita (played by Deanna)

What is Happening

1. *Round robin read handout Abortions from the Service before starting this scene. It is an orientation to a few more details about how the service performs abortions.*
2. Judy is waiting at the anonymously rented apartment where you perform abortions for Ruth to arrive. She is late for the start of another day of back to back procedures. Judy had to lay out the tools, clean towels, and fresh sheets all by herself. You two have never performed a procedure together without a more experienced observer to provide help, because your schedules conflict most of the time. Today will be one of the first times you feel out your working partnership. Ruth arrives, flustered, with big bags under her eyes. Rita arrives next. Whenever you are ready you can begin the procedure.
3. *Give time for everyone to read their character prompt.*
4. The purpose of the scene is to show how the activists support Rita through her abortion.

Character Prompts

Ruth

You are late because your 6 year old son Adam is sick. He has the flu and cried all night as fevers chilled or burned his skin in sequence. You stayed at his bedside wiping away tears and comforting him between bouts of fitful sleep. At around 4am his fever broke and you were able to return to your own bed with Gil. When you awoke from what was supposed to be a morning cat nap you were late! You barely had time to drop Adam off at daycare before rushing to the apartment where the service works.

Abortions from the Service

Round robin read before first abortion scene that is not a workshop.

For an abortion procedure, the person seeking an abortion travels to an anonymously rented apartment, following directions their counselor gave them. Their counselor would also instruct them to bring cash for their abortion. Correcting for inflation, in 2019 it would cost \$600 (4000dkk). This is about half of what it costs to get an abortion in New York, recently legalized, and doesn't include the cost of airfare. If someone cannot meet the price, they are asked to bring what money they can and the service covers the rest. Because of this flexibility, nearly all of the people who come through the service are poor or working class. Due to systemic racism, this also means that 70 percent of them are black.

At the apartment, the person meets their abortionist and doula for the procedure. The doula is their counselor from earlier, and will help manage pain. The service believes that doulas are as important to the success of each procedure as abortionists, and that those two are second only to the person seeking abortion themselves.

Because powerful pain medicine is expensive and tracked carefully by hospitals, the doula uses their relationship and consent in counseling to manage pain. They encourage people receiving abortions to do whatever they need to do, such as bite down on a washcloth or take a break to get up and walk around. Anything except scream, as it endangers the secrecy of the service.

Abortion is a relatively simple technical procedure. There is blood involved and it requires patience, attention, and physical strength all the way through. The person receiving the abortion must keep their hips still while the abortionist is working. One of the last steps is scraping the uterus for any remaining tissue, which the person receiving the abortion experiences as intense menstrual cramping.

The service performs 100 abortions a week, scheduling them back to back on different days. Abortionists and doulas perform procedures for hours straight, and if even one procure is complex every subsequent abortion will start late. Burnout is the single biggest threat to the abortion service's safe operation.

10 - The Birds and the Bees

Who is There

Judy, Ron (played by Deanna), and Patricia (played by Ruth)

What is Happening

1. In a quiet moment after dinner, Judy's 19 year old daughter Patricia asks her advice about a college boy she has met. They sit in the parlor to talk without disturbing Judy's husband Ron who is cleaning up in the kitchen. As Judy gives her daughter advice, Ron will overhear the conversation and enter to express his disagreement with Judy.
2. *Give time for everyone to read their character prompt.*
3. In this scene, Judy may use the monologue technique. The dramatic question is, How do Judy and Ron communicate?
4. *The focus of this scene is Judy and Ron's relationship. You may need to prompt Patricia to leave the scene if she dominates the conversation for too long.*

Character Prompts

Judy

You are excited to have this conversation about sex and sexuality with your daughter. She has so much to discover about herself! However, it still feels difficult to talk frankly about sexuality with Ron, or even with him present. And if there's an argument you'll wish you didn't have talk with him about this at all!

Ron (played by Deanna)

You know your wife has your daughter's best interests at heart, but Patricia is still young and naive. She doesn't understand how men only want one thing from girls. She needs to carefully consider her heart and her future before having sex. In this situation it's up to you to make she she has a chance to think for herself and isn't convinced that sex is meaningless.

Patricia (played by Ruth)

You are 19 and in your first year at University of Chicago. You have met a college boy, Eric, who wants to have sex with you. You think you might love him, and are wary that he may not love you back. Either way, you want to have sex with him too. Your mother's thoughts about sex have changed a lot in the past years, but you don't understand them just yet. Seek her counsel, but leave the scene when your dad makes it awkward.

11A - Counseling Maya

Who is There

Deanna and Maya (played by Judy), a college student.

Character Prompts

Deanna

Here is everything you know about the person you will counsel.

Maya

19

black

middle class

college student

second trimester

Maya (played by Judy)

Note: This character will return in a later scene for their abortion.

You feel like you are going crazy. Your boyfriend can't know that you're here. He doesn't want you to get an abortion because he believes it is a mortal sin, but you made this appointment to learn more. He keeps telling you that you've been acting crazy lately, and based on your behavior you think he might be right. Your boyfriend is your philosophy professor at school, 15 years your senior. He knows so much more than you about the world, so it's very important that you listen to him and try not to harbor any quiet doubts in your mind.

Maya has been gaslit by her controlling older boyfriend. She no longer trusts her intuition about what is right and wrong for her, and is even alienated from the feelings of her own body. Will she be able to listen to her own impulses with Deanna's help?

11B - Counseling Sandra

Who is There

Ruth and Sandra (played by facilitator), a radical activist.

Character Prompts

Ruth

Here is everything you know about the person you will counsel.

Sandra

22

white

lower class

radical activist

first trimester

Sandra (played by facilitator)

Note: This character only appears in this one scene.

You dropped out of college a few years ago to pursue radical activism. You are primarily an anti-war activist. You don't see any way to parent and stay involved in radical activism, so you think you need to abort.

You know this abortion service is full of radical women, ask them if you let down the cause by becoming pregnant? Is there a way to parent and still be radical?

12 - Discussion - Sisterhood

What is Happening

1. *Reminder to cut this scene before 10 minutes have passed.*
2. The women of the service have again gathered for their feminist discussion club in Ruth's living room. Today it is Ruth's turn to choose the discussion topic. The topic will be about what things unite and divide women.
3. *Give time for everyone to read their character prompt.*
4. The purpose of this discussion scene is to reveal and contrast the characters' politics through conversation, with a focus on Deanna.

Character Prompts

Ruth

It's your turn to introduce a discussion question. Ask the group: What unites women besides being in a political category together? Are we one sisterhood?

Deanna

In some ways, you feel more affinity with Vietnamese women, fighting the United States' capitalist takeover of their country, than the women in this room. At the same time, your comfortable life is paid for by your family's embrace of capitalism, despite its inevitable oppressions. Where does a woman like you fit in?

Judy

Women's bodies are natural and wonderful, but almost all of what women understand about their bodies is polluted by patriarchal society. How important do you think biology is to your political movement?

Linda

Your role is to ensure that the conversation stays fluid and presses on Ruth's core conflict. If it is wandering or slowing down, ask a loaded question or prompt someone quiet to share.

13 - Ruth's Ultimatum

Who is There

Ruth and Gil (played by Judy)

What is Happening

1. Over the past few weeks, Ruth has had to face the fact that she cannot be both a full time homemaker and a full time activist. When the baby comes, she will be a full-time homemaker for the first few months, but she has decided that things will change radically after that point. She's tried broaching the subject to Gil several times but he doesn't seem to hear her.

Ruth is waiting for Gil in the dining room when he gets home from the office. She is ready to talk and let Gil know what she needs. Ruth will make sure he understands what is at risk if he won't help her.

2. *Give time for everyone to read their character prompt.*
3. The question of the scene is, How will Ruth get the space she needs to realize her talents as an activist?

Character Prompts

Gil (played by Judy)

You've had this conversation at least a dozen times and it's getting tiring. You are not like other husbands, she's lucky to have you and you really do try. At the same time Ruth is the most important person in your life, followed closely by your son Adam. You want to believe that you'd do anything for your family, and are encountering (perhaps for the first time) exactly how emasculating "anything" might be.

This isn't a change you even want to make. Resist at first, but then cave to Ruth's demands.

14 - Maya's Abortion

Who is There

Deanna as doula, Ruth as abortionist, and Maya (played by Judy)

What is Happening

1. *Take a short break before playing this scene if possible. This scene goes immediately into another when it ends, and that flow would be disrupted by a player needing a break in the middle.*
2. Maya did not come back for her abortion. Deanna, did you shrug it off as her decision or did you reach back out to her?
 - a. *If yes: You had a hard time getting a hold of her. When you finally did reach her, she told you that it wasn't an option for her anymore and to stop calling her.*
 - b. *If no: proceed to rest of scene.*
3. Maya has finally returned for her abortion, months after Deanna saw her the first time. She is in her third trimester, which means her abortion will be by inducing miscarriage and sending Maya to the hospital to miscarry. This is dangerous both because vaginal delivery of any kind is 14 times more likely to result in patient death than abortion, and because Maya will have to feign ignorance of the abortion service if questioned by doctors. Sometimes doctors even call in police to aggressively question patients who they suspect of having an illegal abortion.
4. *Play the scene. As this abortion scene ends, go immediately into the next scene without a break, if possible.*

15 - Newspaper Article

What is Happening

1. *As you read about the following passage, hand out the newspaper article prop.*

A week after Maya's abortion you open the newspaper and read the following article:

Girl's Death After Abortion Investigated

Police and the coroner today were investigating the death of a Maya Jefferson, 19, of 933 S 59th St. She died at Northwestern Memorial Hospital at 3:30 o'clock yesterday afternoon. Laboratory tests were ordered by Coroner Frank Glover after it was learned that the girl had undergone an unsuccessful amateur abortion before she was admitted to the hospital Thursday. Police are turning to the community for information about the party or parties who attempted an abortion on Miss Jefferson. "This is a very serious crime," said Lieut. Murphy Jacobs of the homicide detail, "and it is one that resulted in the senseless death of a girl in the prime of her life." Miss Jefferson's brother said the young woman returned home Wednesday after seeking an illegal abortion. She was taken to the hospital Thursday morning, Jacobs reported.

2. Out of game, I want you to know that Maya's death is not the fault of the player characters, it was instead a result of her medical condition before making contact with the abortion service. Your characters may feel like they are responsible initially, but truly they did not make any mistakes with Maya's counseling or abortion.
3. The three of you are in an emergency meeting of the abortion service, along with Linda, in Ruth's living room on the same day as you read the newspaper article. Together you have to decide what to do. It's not clear from the article whether Maya told the police anything about the service before she died, if her family knew about the service, or if her boyfriend, the college professor, did.
4. Would you like me to read any of that again? Do you have any questions?
5. *Read your character prompt.*
6. The question of the scene is, How do you show your commitment to this work? What are the priorities of each character in this moment of crisis?
7. *Play the scene, cutting when finished.*
 - a. *Reminder that Linda will quit the abortion service during this scene. See character prompt for details.*
 - b. *If the characters did not recommit themselves to the work of providing abortions during the scene, go around and ask each character, Why do you decide to continue doing this work, despite the risk?*
8. *After the scene, read the following:* At the next large meeting of the abortion service, about half the members quit. The service is now down to only 30 counselors. The three of you are now the only people in the service who know how to perform abortions and the demand is 300 per week.

Character Prompts

Linda (played by facilitator)

part way through the scene, quit the abortion service and storm out. You are unwilling to perform abortions with such a high risk. Tear down the PCs as you exit, calling into question their non-medical backgrounds, seemingly uncaring attitudes, or seemingly inadequate counseling skills.

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Miss Jefferson's brother said the young woman returned home Wednesday after seeking an illegal abortion. She was taken to the hospital Thursday morning, Jacobs reported.

16A - Counseling Gabi

Who is There

Judy and Gabi (played by Ruth), a working woman.

Character Prompts

Judy

Here is everything you know about the person you will counsel.

Gabi

21

latina

lower class

embarrassed

second trimester

Gabi (played by Ruth)

Note: This character will return in a later scene for their abortion.

You are unexpectedly pregnant by your boyfriend Cecilio. He's been telling you how much he wants to have a baby with you for a few months now, and you've been trying to avoid having that conversation. The truth is, you don't want a kid right now, and maybe not ever with him. He's sweet but not dad material since he still goes out drinking hard with his friends every weekend. It's hard to talk about using condoms consistently, and sometimes he runs out. You feel embarrassed that you have to come talk this to white lady about your personal business! While you're here, you're going to get some help to avoid having to do this again. There has got to be a way that you can avoid pregnancy without needing to have this super hard, unladylike conversation with Cecilio.

16B - Counseling Elizabeth

Who is There

Deanna and Elizabeth (played by facilitator), a working mother.

Character Prompts

Deanna

Here is everything you know about the person you will counsel.

Elizabeth

37

black

lower class

mother

first trimester

Elizabeth (played by facilitator)

Note: This character only appears in this one scene.

You and your husband had kids a little later than most, and so your eldest is just now turning 9. With both of your incomes, you are just making it through, and were able to rent a modest house so your kids have a yard to play in. It's been hard work to get here. You know that you cannot afford another child.

There is nobody in your life you can talk to about getting an abortion. Your husband agrees that this is the right course of action and gave you the money for the service. You aren't accustomed to asking for help, since you are used to staying strong for everyone in the family. You are trying to hold it together, like you always have. But a small, vulnerable part of you is reaching out to be heard and to be comforted. You need to share your feelings openly and be heard, even if it is with a young woman you've never seen before.

17 - We Need to Talk About Racism

What is Happening

1. Over the past few months Deanna has realized that she's been holding herself back from sharing her whole thoughts on things. She wasn't sure she had important things to say, or how her white colleagues would receive her thoughts. Now, with the tragic death of Maya, she needs to start sharing her unique perspective as a black woman.

Everyone is gathered in Ruth's living room for a meeting. Deanna and Ruth agreed that it is time for the service to talk about how the service interacts with black women. Ruth will broach the topic with a proposal, asking Deanna for her help. When Deanna responds to Ruth she will ask for what she really thinks the organization needs.

2. *Give time for everyone to read their character prompt.*
3. The question of the scene is, How will Deanna get her friends understand that black women deserve more from their allies, and that she deserves more from them as individuals?

Character Prompts

Ruth

Maya died because our counselors are not really connecting black women. It feels like they don't trust us and aren't listening! Deanna has helped you see that this is a problem, and you think she can help the service fix it. She must know ways to teach black women more effectively, and you are wise enough to ask for her help.

Deanna will ask for more than you're comfortable with. Be defensive to start, and eventually give in to her demands.

Deanna

What changes would you like your friends to make in the abortion service? Choose one or more to ask for.

- Recruit and train more black women as counselors. "Not many have volunteered" is not a valid excuse. Do more to find them, earn their trust, and make volunteering for the service accessible to black women. Pay them if you have to.
- Recruit granny midwives from the black community to train as abortionists. They will be fast to train because they are part of a long tradition of black women doing for themselves when they can't afford or trust white doctors. As a result, they have more experience with complications that anyone currently in the abortion service.
- Seek out local activist groups led by black women and invite them to observe the counseling and abortion process. Ask for their advice on how to improve the process for black women, and implement it. They know this community the best.
- Create your own.

Judy

Deanna will ask for more than you're comfortable with. Be defensive to start, and eventually give in to her demands.

18 - Discussion - Sex with Men

What is Happening

1. *Reminder to cut this scene before 10 minutes have passed.*
2. It's time again for feminist discussion group in Ruth's living room. Gil made up a cheese plate for you all to enjoy, and has taken Adam out to the park so he won't be underfoot. It is Deanna's turn to choose the discussion topic. The topic will be about relationships with men. Linda will not be joining you.
3. *Give time for everyone to read their character prompt.*
4. The purpose of this discussion scene is to reveal and contrast the characters' politics through conversation, with a focus on Judy.

Character Prompts

Ruth

You know the risks of living with a man and potentially subsuming your identity to his. Do you think it would be better for some women to intentionally live without men?

Deanna

It's your turn to introduce a discussion question. Ask the group: Are we contributing to our own oppression by having sex with men?

Get your fellow activists to seriously consider whether relationships with men undermine women's liberation.

19 - Gabi's Abortion

Who is There

Judy as doula, Deanna as abortionist, and Gabi (played by Ruth)

What is Happening

You have worked the last four days in a row since so many people have quit the service. This is the last abortion scheduled for today. Due to a complex procedure earlier in the day you are running late by an hour. Everyone is tired and frustrated, including Gabi. It's time to begin.

20 - Judy Listens

Who is There

Judy and Ron (played by Deanna)

What is Happening

1. Over the past few months, Judy has had to realize that if she simply divorces Ron, discarding him alongside the institution of marriage, she risks losing the emotional home she built with him. At the same time, she can't simply go back to being monogamous, married, and braindead. She needs her freedom. She wants to choose important parts of her freedom to share with Ron.

Judy has returned to her home on a night when Ron expected her to be out. She finds him eating a microwave dinner in front of the TV, lonely. Judy will share her real feelings with Ron, including those truths that hurt when spoken aloud.

2. *Give time for everyone to read their character prompt.*
3. How will Judy begin to communicate with her husband?

Character Prompts

Ron (played by Deanna)

You are afraid of a future without Judy. You hate to admit it, but just about any change bothers and upsets you. But Judy is the only woman you've ever really loved, and you are a better man for the work you've done together in your relationship.

At the same time, you're fed up with how your wife has treated you recently. Since her big transformation whenever she "wants to talk" she doesn't listen to what you say.

Start the scene defensive, testing if she will actually listen to you. Eventually relent and try to listen to her.

21 - Last Words

What is Happening

1. This scene has one special rule, which I am introducing now. At the end of this scene one character will be alone. Once they are alone they may choose to monologue or remain silent. This will be the last scene in the game. Are there any questions about this?
2. The characters are in Chicago Police jail cell. Please arrange yourselves physically in the cell, silently.
3. Earlier today the three of you were at the apartment cleaning tools between procedures when there was a knock at the apartment door. When you answered, it wasn't the next person seeking an abortion, but three policemen. They pushed their way in, shouting "Where is the doctor?". They handcuffed the three of you, searched the apartment, and seized your medical equipment. They questioned you repeatedly "Where is the doctor who performs the abortions? Who is he?" You stayed silent, defiant.
4. They loaded you into police cars and took you here, to a chilly jail cell without windows. You will likely be charged with multiple counts of committing abortion as well as conspiracy to commit abortion. You know that if convicted, you could be sentenced to 20 years in Federal prison.
5. Would you like me to read any of that again? Do you have any questions?
 - a. You are waiting together, lost in thought. It is safe to talk here, but no one has broken the silence yet. Picture, as clearly as you can, how going to prison will affect the people who love you.
 - b. *longer pause* Your mind starts to drift away from your family and friends. Think about the woman you were when you first joined the abortion service. How far have you come? What has it cost you?
 - c. *longer pause* Your mind starts to drift away from your journey. With your help, the abortion service has performed more than ten thousand safe abortions. Women told you countless stories. Think about one woman that you helped get an abortion. What effect did access to abortion have for her? What is her life like now?
 - d. *longer pause* Your mind starts to drift away from the women you worked with. It's time to break the silence and speak to your fellow abortionists. This may be the last time you can speak to them.
6. *Allow the characters a few minutes of free roleplay. Instead of cutting the scene, enter the scene as a police jailer and tell Mrs. Ruth Schwartz that her husband has posted bail for her. Allow her a few moments to say goodbye, then escort her out of the scene.*
 - a. *If a character asks for a phone call or makes another request of the jailer, deny it based on a technicality. "Read a law book hippy, you don't get a phone call." "I can hold you for 24 hours without stating a reason."*
7. *Return as the jailer and tell Mrs. Judith Russo that her husband is here with a lawyer. As before, escort her out of the scene.*

8. *Allow Deanna a minute or more to stew. Return as the jailer, escorting Judy and Ruth. Tell Deanna Banks that these two have posted her bail and she is being released before her trial.*

Emotional Debrief

1. We are going to take a short break and return in a few minutes for an emotional debrief. There are lots of ways to debrief, and this group method is optional. If you would prefer to opt out, you can simply not return after the break and grab your feedback form and player's choice voting slips now.
2. *Take a short break and return to the play space.*
3. Please keep your responses short and focused on your feelings. Try not to respond or comment on what other people say for now.
4. Say your name and tell us your character's name. Answer the questions, How are you doing emotionally? What, if anything, do you need?
5. That's the end of my formal debrief, we can now have a free conversation.
6. This scenario is based on a true story. If you'd like to learn more about the real historical abortion service, here is a handout. Offer the *The Abortionists - Historical Debrief handout.*
7. As much as you can, please fill out your feedback forms in English. The designers only speak English, and they are are eager to hear your thoughts after the Fastaval judges do.

The Abortionists - Historical Debrief

In the US about half of all pregnancies are unintended.¹ Due to the availability of highly effective contraceptives the abortion rates in the US and Denmark are the lowest they've ever been since formal record keeping began in 1973.² For Denmark, the rate at which people seek abortions is slightly lower than the US and below average for Nordic countries.³

Despite performing fewer abortions than ever, in both nations abortion is still a very common experience. In the United States, one in four women will have an abortion by age 45.² This means that you undoubtedly know someone who has had an abortion.

After an abortion a wide range of emotional responses are normal. A person might feel relief, sadness, elation, anger, loneliness, supported, or a mix of multiple emotions. For some people receiving an abortion is a significant turning point in their life, for good or for ill. For others it is an unremarkable medical procedure they obtain in pursuit of other things.

The Real Abortion Service

The real abortion service this scenario is based on was called Jane⁴. Members estimate that they performed 11,000 abortions from 1969 to 1973. Jane did experience a dramatic police raid, but remained open and performing abortions for about another 9 months until their case was dismissed after the *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision legalized abortion nationwide.

The staff logistics that the abortion service used were simplified in this scenario. In real life, there was no crossover between counselors and abortionists. People seeking abortion showed up at an apartment serving as an office called "the front". They were blindfolded and driven to another apartment called "the place" for their procedure.

One person seeking abortion services through Jane did lose their life. As members tell it, the person received a botched procedure from a back alley abortionist before coming to Jane. The infection that the person got under the care of the other provider is what led to their death in hospital. The newspaper article prop in the scenario is a truncated, but otherwise word for word recreation of an article about Sharon Hoag's death in a 1963 issue of the Seattle Times.

The sad reality is that black Americans have more than double the infant mortality rate of non-Hispanic white Americans.⁵ "The United States is one of only 13 countries in the world where the rate of maternal mortality — the death of a woman related to pregnancy or childbirth up to a year after the end of pregnancy — is now worse than it was 25 years ago."⁶ This discrepancy is not due to any innate medical factor and is instead caused by human-created health disparities. As awful as this is, it means that this injustice can be solved through sufficient political action.

¹ Guttmacher Institute, "[Unintended Pregnancy in the United States](#)"

² Guttmacher Institute, "[Induced Abortion in the United States](#)"

³ National Institute for Health and Welfare, "[Induced abortions in the Nordic countries 2015](#)"

⁴ Laura Jane Kaplan, [The Story of Jane](#)

⁵ Office of Minority Health, "[Infant Mortality and African Americans](#)"

⁶ New York Times, "[Why America's Black Mothers and Babies Are in a Life-or-Death Crisis](#)"

The Abortionists - Historical Debrief

In the US about half of all pregnancies are unintended.⁷ Due to the availability of highly effective contraceptives the abortion rates in the US and Denmark are the lowest they've ever been since formal record keeping began in 1973.⁸ For Denmark, the rate at which people seek abortions is slightly lower than the US and below average for Nordic countries.⁹

Despite performing fewer abortions than ever, in both nations abortion is still a very common experience. In the United States, one in four women will have an abortion by age 45.² This means that you undoubtedly know someone who has had an abortion.

After an abortion a wide range of emotional responses are normal. A person might feel relief, sadness, elation, anger, loneliness, supported, or a mix of multiple emotions. For some people receiving an abortion is a significant turning point in their life, for good or for ill. For others it is an unremarkable medical procedure they obtain in pursuit of other things.

The Real Abortion Service

The real abortion service this scenario is based on was called Jane¹⁰. Members estimate that they performed 11,000 abortions from 1969 to 1973. Jane did experience a dramatic police raid, but remained open and performing abortions for about another 9 months until their case was dismissed after the *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision legalized abortion nationwide.

The staff logistics that the abortion service used were simplified in this scenario. In real life, there was no crossover between counselors and abortionists. People seeking abortion showed up at an apartment serving as an office called "the front". They were blindfolded and driven to another apartment called "the place" for their procedure.

One person seeking abortion services through Jane did lose their life. As members tell it, the person received a botched procedure from a back alley abortionist before coming to Jane. The infection that the person got under the care of the other provider is what led to their death in hospital. The newspaper article prop in the scenario is a truncated, but otherwise word for word recreation of an article about Sharon Hoag's death in a 1963 issue of the Seattle Times.

The sad reality is that black Americans have more than double the infant mortality rate of non-Hispanic white Americans.¹¹ "The United States is one of only 13 countries in the world where the rate of maternal mortality — the death of a woman related to pregnancy or childbirth up to a year after the end of pregnancy — is now worse than it was 25 years ago."

¹² This discrepancy is not due to any innate medical factor and is instead caused by human-created health disparities. As awful as this is, it means that this injustice can be solved through sufficient political action.

⁷ Guttmacher Institute, "[Unintended Pregnancy in the United States](#)"

⁸ Guttmacher Institute, "[Induced Abortion in the United States](#)"

⁹ National Institute for Health and Welfare, "[Induced abortions in the Nordic countries 2015](#)"

¹⁰ Laura Jane Kaplan, [The Story of Jane](#)

¹¹ Office of Minority Health, "[Infant Mortality and African Americans](#)"

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Ruth Schwartz

2498

The famous
bestseller that ignited
women's liberation

BETTY
FRIEDAN

THE
FEMININE
MYSTIQUE

1½
MILLION
COPIES IN
PRINT

*"Who knows what women can be when they are finally free to become themselves?
Who knows what women's intelligence will contribute when it can be nourished
without denying love?" - Betty Friedan, The Feminine Mystique*

Bio

Ruth is a 26-year old, third generation German-Jewish woman who lives with her husband and child in a solidly middle-class neighborhood. She attended one year of college before dropping out and starting her current work as a housewife. She is currently pregnant with her second child.

Torn between being an activist and parent, believes she can do it all alone

She enjoys parenting and providing support and care for her family, but is realizing a desire for achievement outside of the home. Through the abortion service, she is able to serve in a way that feels familiar to her role of caretaker and emotional support. She believes that she can have both of these things without needing to ask her husband to make changes in the workload of childcare and housework.

Work outside the home is the only way to be free

Attending a women's consciousness raising group has opened her eyes to how much pressure society places on women to be a mother-housewife, and how that role leads to women sacrificing the time and space needed to have their own identities. This restriction stunts women's growth, freezing them in a dependent girlhood, riddling them with self-doubt. This has led her to more closely examining her previous contentment in her role as wife and mother, and look for opportunities to grow outside of the home. Inspired by Maslow's theory of self-actualization, and guided by the spaces women have made for themselves and others through civil rights organizing, she has found the abortion service. She knows to be prepared for resistance, but her husband, Gil, has seemed supportive so far.

The black community is likely full of crime, but some of them are valuable activists

Just a few years ago when Martin Luther King was assassinated there were terrifying riots in Chicago's black neighborhoods. On the news they said there was a "conspiracy to riot" created by black radicals. Ruth would be lying if she said that she didn't feel anxious around unfamiliar black people. To her frustration, she can't tell by looking which of them are criminals or radicals. She did, however, wonder exactly how dangerous the riots really were, and how warranted the strong police presence was. Her grandmother used to tell her stories how goyish communities in Europe would blame a tragic event on a conveniently nearby community of Jews. The violence the goyim would exact against "deserving" Jews would act as a hate-filled substitute to addressing the true nature of the tragedy. She hopes nothing like that could happen here, to Jews or any other group.

Backstory

Ruth has always strived for excellence and recognition. Her parents sometimes cautioned her about this impulse, their concerns informed by growing up in a time where Jews were

commonly viewed as second-class citizens. Ruth, however, never encountered anything growing up that outweighed her desire to shine, and she did well in her studies and was well-liked in school.

She went to college, but dropped out after discovering that she was pregnant shortly before her wedding to Gil. She felt uncertain about the timing of her pregnancy, but didn't feel she had a choice. Thankfully, any doubts faded quickly, and she has enjoyed spending the last several years as homemaker and mother to her son. At times she felt a little stir crazy as a full time homemaker, but never talked about that feeling with others. She is entering her new pregnancy with excitement, confident she can easily handle a second child having done it once before.

Her son, Adam, entered Kindergarten a year ago freeing up more time than she was expecting. She joined a women's book club at the University that turned out to be a consciousness raising group by the Chicago Women's Liberation Union. The first book that she read with them was *The Feminine Mystique*, which revealed the ways she held herself back were not problems for her alone but instead an effect of her social role as a woman. She also learned about safe abortions and family planning and the existence of the abortion service through the women in this group. As she began to look around for a place outside the home to grow, the abortion service was an obvious choice.

She found this work deeply rewarding. She believes every woman should be able to enter parenthood with joy, and to be able to choose to take on the risk and work involved. The sense of accomplishment that she feels, coupled with the small recognition available within her group of activist friends, is incredibly thrilling, and worth the secrecy surrounding illegal work. However, as she finds more opportunity to contribute to this activist work, she is beginning to feel the strain of holding together a household on her own. The work will only increase when the new baby comes home. Gil affirms that her work with the abortion service is important, but he has yet to wash a dish or iron a shirt.

She hasn't thought about it too closely yet, but this work has become too important for her to give up. If she must choose, she will choose her life outside of the home. She just hopes that Gil won't force the issue.

Significant Relationships

Gil, husband of 7 years

Adam, 6 year old son

Ruth's Pamphlet

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*The first
manifesto of the
liberated woman.*

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*By Simone
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i - WORKSHOP - Get to Know You

What is Happening

1. Everyone is gathered in Ruth's living room for the first meeting of their new feminist political discussion group. Your fellow activist in the abortion service, Linda, is here too. Linda is leading the discussion this week and wants to do a round of introductions before starting. Linda prompts everyone to introduce themselves and share a little about their politics. At the end of the discussion group Linda turns over the reigns to the new members.
2. Read your character prompt.
3. The purpose of this scene is to introduce the main characters. Once the in character scene ends there will be one more round of introductions out of character, for anything the character declined to share.

Character Prompt

Ruth

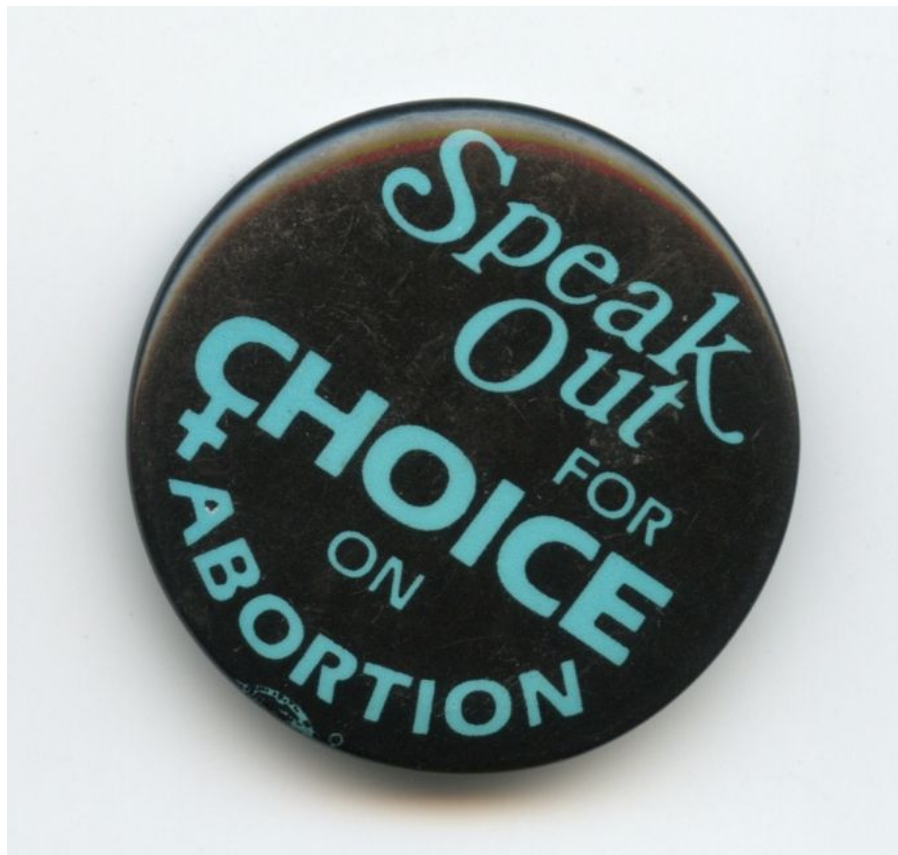
Keep your pregnancy a secret from the others for now. You *feel* pregnant but won't know for sure until you get the test results back from the doctor's office later this week.



ii - WORKSHOP - Monologue Technique

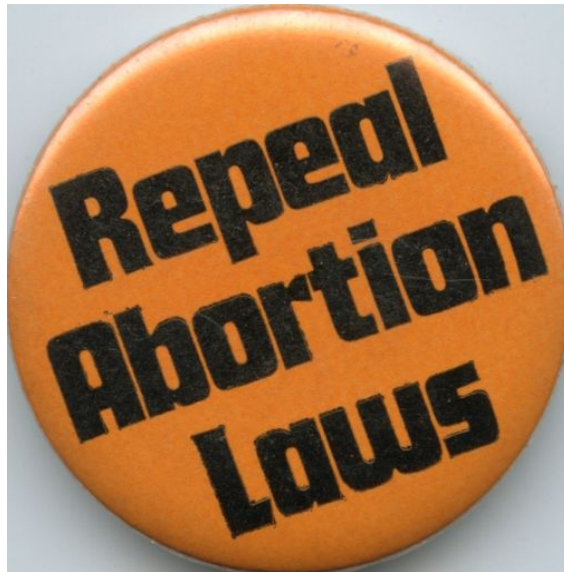
What is Happening

1. The women of the abortion service are receiving their annual exams, but mostly being lectured by a white male doctor. They might try to get a word in edgewise, but they can also use the monologue sign to share what they think. This scene is presented in montage and we will play out snippets of all of their exams by switching between them.
2. In this scene all of the player characters can use the monologue technique. Please try to use it once so you get the hang of it. The question for this scene is, how does each character react to being talked over by this medical gatekeeper?



iii - WORKSHOP - Abortion Technique

The facilitator will give instructions.



1 - Ruth's Happy News

What is Happening

1. Deanna and Judy are waiting in the service's rented apartment that has been repurposed into an office. They are waiting for Ruth to arrive and give everyone their counseling assignments for the week. Ruth is significantly late, and people are starting to get a little impatient. Ruth will arrive with happy news to share, that she is pregnant again.
2. Read your character prompt.
3. The question for this scene is, will Ruth's fellow activists be excited for her? Will they recognize her as an activist too?

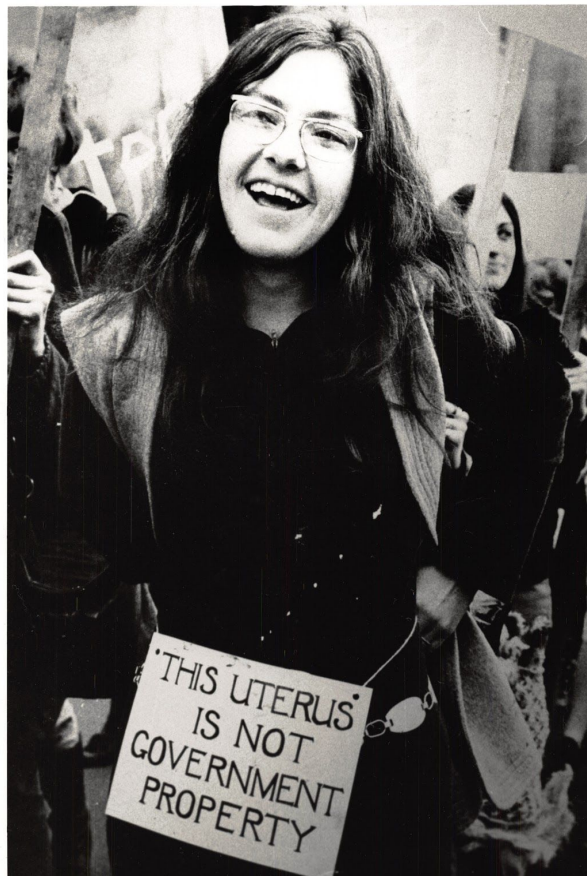
Character Prompt

Ruth

You feel like the luckiest woman in the world. You are thrilled to be pregnant and doing several hours of meaningful work with your fellow activists.

When you saw the plus on the positive pregnancy test you felt excited and confident. At the start of your first pregnancy you felt very unsure. Today, you are already looking forward to parenting another child.

You are late to the meeting because you stopped at the grocery store to pick up a roast. You are going to surprise Gil with a classy meal and the good news tonight.



2 - Vulva Self Exam

What is Happening

1. At Judy's insistence, the group is gathered in her bedroom for an impromptu workshop. With great excitement, Judy is helping Deanna and Ruth look at their vulvas for the first time, using mirrors. The plan is to move on to using a speculum to examine their cervixes, but Ruth will ask to stop. Members of the discussion group feel alienated from their bodies at the start, though that may change over the course of the scene.
2. Read your character prompt.
3. The question of the scene is, will Judy's excitement prevent her from hearing her friends' concerns?

Character Prompt

Ruth

Once everyone has started using mirrors to look at their vulvas, ask to stop. Looking at yourself you felt overwhelmed with the thought, was my vulva beautiful before I had my first child? Will I ever know how birth changed my vulva and vagina? This self-exam has made you feel alienated from your body. Though, that might change over the course of the scene.

WOMEN and THEIR BODIES a course



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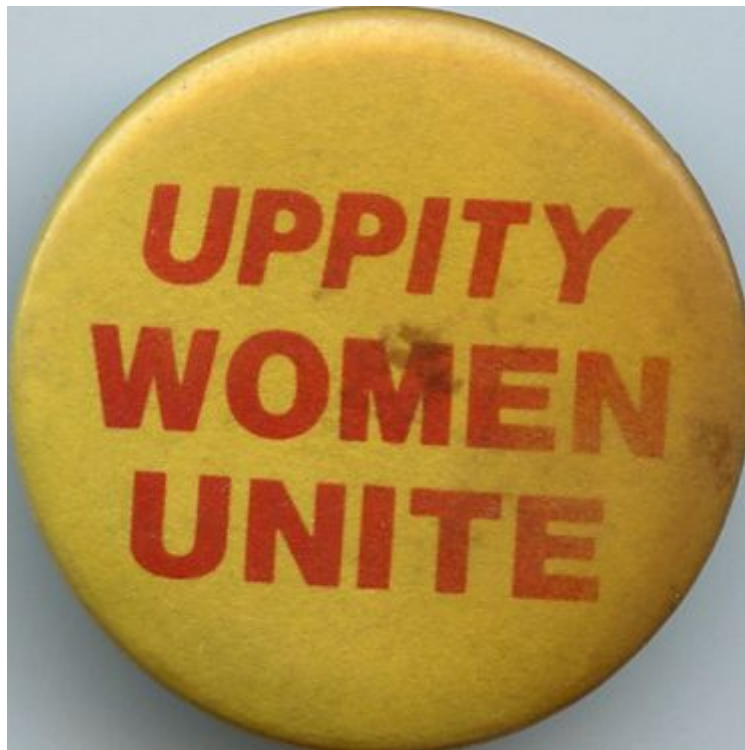
3 - Toothpaste and Frustration

Who is There

Ruth and Gil (played by Judy), her husband.

What is Happening

1. Ruth and her husband Gil are sharing the bathroom sink while completing their nighttime routine. This is when they tend to check in with one another about their days before going to bed. Ruth has decided to ask Gil what is bothering him, because he's been acting sullen and grouchy for a few days. Adam is adjusting well to kindergarten, so it could be something to do with Gil's job, or maybe something deeper than that. Ruth will get to the bottom of it tonight.
2. In this scene Ruth can use the monologue technique. The question of the scene is, Can Ruth get the support she needs to realize her talents at activism?



4 - New Abortion Method

What is Happening

1. A few weeks ago a California sex education group reached out to the abortion service, offering to teach their method for a third-trimester abortion. The abortion technique the service practices can only be used up to the beginning of the second trimester of pregnancy, so this opportunity was significant. The catch was that they wanted an abortionist to come to them in California to learn, and the service has been operating on such narrow margins that there was no budget to pay for the flight.
2. Deanna offered to pay for travel expenses, and to her dismay was the only person who had the availability to attend on short notice. Now, in the privacy of the abortion service's living room work space, Deanna presents the new method of induced miscarriage to her fellow abortionists.
3. *Read your character prompt.*
4. The questions of the scene are, What is Deanna's leadership style? How will she present her politics?

Character Prompt

Ruth

You are nervous about trusting the women who undergo this procedure to lie effectively to authority figures. If even one betrays you to the police, you could all wind up in jail.

Listen when Deanna explains why the method is important to her.



5 - Free Love Seminar

Who is There

Judy and James (played by Ruth), a flirtatious man.

What is Happening

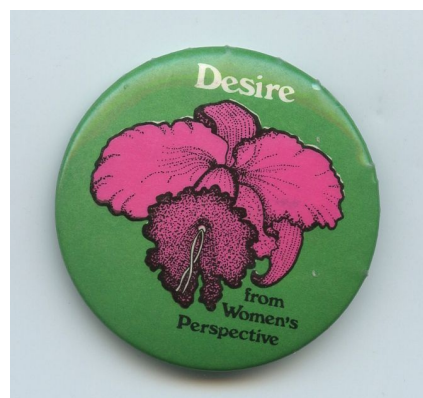
1. Judy is attending a free love workshop in an office park near downtown. The workshop involves lectures about accepting the love that other people offer you beginning with acceptance of your body. Then everyone gets naked and discusses masturbation in small groups. It's towards the end of the workshop and everyone has their clothes on again. All the attendees know each other's names and have had some interaction in the big group by now. Judy has allowed herself to be drawn away from the closing remarks by a man named James. Judy is flattered at the attention of the handsome man, 10 years her junior.
2. *Read your character prompt.*
3. Judy can use the monologue technique during this scene. The question of the scene is How will Judy react to this man's straight forward advances?

Character Prompt

James (played by Ruth)

You came to this workshop to find women to have sex with. Impress this woman (what's her name again?) with your liberated attitude and knowledge about feminine sexuality.

- Talk about female sexuality as a mystical, new age manifestation of a woman's divine goddess. Use your "sighting" of her goddess as a means to pick her up.
- Tell her that sexual pleasure is linked to a woman's state of empowerment. The lack of sexual fulfillment most women experience a systemic problem not a partner problem.
- Interrupt her repeatedly while she is speaking with superficial flatteries. "Your eyes are captivating"
- If she shows any resistance, hesitation, or lack of interest to your advances, be shocked. You had assumed she was liberated. It's sad how controlled by the patriarchy some women are.



6A - Counseling Rita

Who is There

Ruth and Rita (played by Deanna)

Character Prompt

Ruth

Here is everything you know about the person you will counsel.

Rita

16

black

lower class

high school student

First trimester

7 - Party Disrupted

What is Happening

1. The regular abortion service meeting has a celebratory mood. They've been performing their own abortions for one year! Ruth baked a cake.

Deanna has reflected about her clients and noticed that the black ones are coming back with a noticeably higher rate of side effects, such as infections, that are landing them in the hospital afterwards. This indicates a difference in the care they receive through the service. Deanna will tell the group tonight. She's committed herself to making sure her fellow activists understand. Some members of the group will be resistant or even defensive.

2. *Read your character prompt.*
3. In this scene, only Deanna can use the monologue technique. The questions of the scene are, How will Deanna confront her fellow activists? How much cluelessness is she willing to take?

Character Prompt

Ruth

Is Deanna mistaken somehow? You want to celebrate the hard work you've been doing, and wish Deanna wouldn't kill the mood. Besides, if Deanna is right, what would that even mean? Society might treat black people poorly sometimes but of course feminist activists would not.



8 - Discussion - Stay at Home Mothers

What is Happening

1. Everyone is gathered in Ruth's living room for their infrequent feminist political discussion group. Your fellow activist in the service, Linda, is here too. Ruth has put out a selection of food, including her famous compote coffee cake. Everyone takes turns choosing the discussion topic and this month it is Judy's turn to pick. The topic will be about the role housewives play in feminism.
2. This discussion scene is left very open on purpose. Most of your character prompts will be in the form of a question. Before we start the scene, decide what your character thinks about the question.
3. *Read your character prompt.*
4. The purpose of this discussion scene is to reveal and contrast the characters' politics through conversation, with a focus on Ruth.



9 - Rita's Abortion

Who is There

Ruth as doula, Judy as abortionist, and Rita (played by Deanna)

What is Happening

1. Judy is waiting at the anonymously rented apartment where you perform abortions for Ruth to arrive. She is late for the start of another day of back to back procedures. Judy had to lay out the tools, clean towels, and fresh sheets all by herself. You two have never performed a procedure together without a more experienced observer to provide help, because your schedules conflict most of the time. Today will be one of the first times you feel out your working partnership. Ruth arrives, flustered, with big bags under her eyes. Rita arrives next. Whenever you are ready you can begin the procedure.
2. *Read your character prompt.*
3. The purpose of the scene is to show how the activists support Rita through her abortion.

Character Prompt

Ruth

You are late because your 6 year old son Adam is sick. He has the flu and cried all night as fevers chilled or burned his skin in sequence. You stayed at his bedside wiping away tears and comforting him between bouts of fitful sleep. At around 4am his fever broke and you were able to return to your own bed with Gil. When you awoke from what was supposed to be a morning cat nap you were late! You barely had time to drop Adam off at daycare before rushing to the apartment where the service works.

10 - The Birds and the Bees

Who is There

Judy, Ron (played by Deanna), and Patricia (played by Ruth)

What is Happening

1. In a quiet moment after dinner, Judy's 19 year old daughter Patricia asks her advice about a college boy she has met. They sit in the parlor to talk without disturbing Judy's husband Ron who is cleaning up in the kitchen. As Judy gives her daughter advice, Ron will overhear the conversation and enter to express his disagreement with Judy.
2. *Read your character prompt.*
3. In this scene, Judy may use the monologue technique. The dramatic question is, How do Judy and Ron communicate?

Character Prompt

Patricia (played by Ruth)

You are 19 and in your first year at University of Chicago. You have met a college boy, Eric, who wants to have sex with you. You think you might love him, and are wary that he may not love you back. Either way, you want to have sex with him too. Your mother's thoughts about sex have changed a lot in the past years, but you don't understand them just yet. Seek her counsel, but leave the scene when your dad makes it awkward.



11B - Counseling Sandra

Who is There

Ruth and Sandra (played by facilitator), a radical activist.

Character Prompt

Ruth

Here is everything you know about the person you will counsel.

Sandra

22

white

lower class

radical activist

first trimester

12 - Discussion - Sisterhood

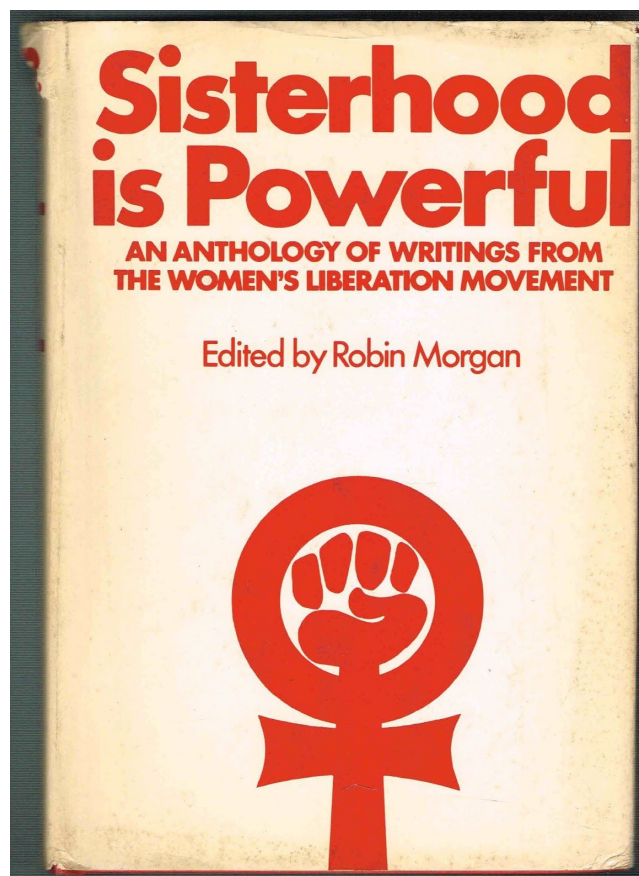
What is Happening

1. The women of the service have again gathered for their feminist discussion club in Ruth's living room. Today it is Ruth's turn to choose the discussion topic. The topic will be about what things unite and divide women.
2. *Read your character prompt.*
3. The purpose of this discussion scene is to reveal and contrast the characters' politics through conversation, with a focus on Deanna.

Character Prompt

Ruth

It's your turn to introduce a discussion question. Ask the group: What unites women besides being in a political category together? Are we one sisterhood?



13 - Ruth's Ultimatum

Who is There

Ruth and Gil (played by Judy)

What is Happening

1. Over the past few weeks, Ruth has had to face the fact that she cannot be both a full time homemaker and a full time activist. When the baby comes, she will be a full-time homemaker for the first few months, but she has decided that things will change radically after that point. She's tried broaching the subject to Gil several times but he doesn't seem to hear her.

Ruth is waiting for Gil in the dining room when he gets home from the office. She is ready to talk and let Gil know what she needs. Ruth will make sure he understands what is at risk if he won't help her.

2. The question of the scene is, How will Ruth get the space she needs to realize her talents as an activist?



14 - Maya's Abortion

Who is There

Deanna as doula, Ruth as abortionist, and Maya (played by Judy)

What is Happening

1. Maya did not come back for her abortion. Deanna, did you shrug it off as her decision or did you reach back out to her?
2. Maya has finally returned for her abortion, months after Deanna saw her the first time. She is in her third trimester, which means her abortion will be by inducing miscarriage and sending Maya to the hospital to miscarry. This is dangerous both because vaginal delivery of any kind is 14 times more likely to result in patient death than abortion, and because Maya will have to feign ignorance of the abortion service if questioned by doctors. Sometimes doctors even call in police to aggressively question patients who they suspect of having an illegal abortion.

15 - Newspaper Article

The facilitator will give instructions.

16A - Counseling Gabi

Who is There

Judy and Gabi (played by Ruth), a working woman.

Character Prompt

Gabi (played by Ruth)

Note: This character will return in a later scene for their abortion.

You are unexpectedly pregnant by your boyfriend Cecilio. He's been telling you how much he wants to have a baby with you for a few months now, and you've been trying to avoid having that conversation. The truth is, you don't want a kid right now, and maybe not ever with him. He's sweet but not dad material since he still goes out drinking hard with his friends every weekend. It's hard to talk about using condoms consistently, and sometimes he runs out. You feel embarrassed that you have to come talk this to white lady about your personal business! While you're here, you're going to get some help to avoid having to do this again. There has got to be a way that you can avoid pregnancy without needing to have this super hard, unladylike conversation with Cecilio.

17 - We Need to Talk About Racism

What is Happening

1. Over the past few months Deanna has realized that she's been holding herself back from sharing her whole thoughts on things. She wasn't sure she had important things to say, or how her white colleagues would receive her thoughts. Now, with the tragic death of Maya, she needs to start sharing her unique perspective as a black woman.

Everyone is gathered in Ruth's living room for a meeting. Deanna and Ruth agreed that it is time for the service to talk about how the service interacts with black women. Ruth will broach the topic with a proposal, asking Deanna for her help. When Deanna responds to Ruth she will ask for what she really thinks the organization needs.

2. *Read your character prompt.*
3. The question of the scene is, How will Deanna get her friends understand that black women deserve more from their allies, and that she deserves more from them as individuals?

Character Prompt

Ruth

Maya died because our counselors are not really connecting black women. It feels like they don't trust us and aren't listening! Deanna has helped you see that this is a problem, and you think she can help the service fix it. She must know ways to teach black women more effectively, and you are wise enough to ask for her help.

Deanna will ask for more than you're comfortable with. Be defensive to start, and eventually give in to her demands.



18 - Discussion - Sex with Men

What is Happening

1. It's time again for feminist discussion group in Ruth's living room. Gil made up a cheese plate for you all to enjoy, and has taken Adam out to the park so he won't be underfoot. It is Deanna's turn to choose the discussion topic. The topic will be about relationships with men. Linda will not be joining you.
2. *Read your character prompt.*
3. The purpose of this discussion scene is to reveal and contrast the characters' politics through conversation, with a focus on Judy.

Character Prompt

Ruth

You know the risks of living with a man and potentially subsuming your identity to his. Do you think it would be better for some women to intentionally live without men?



19 - Gabi's Abortion

Who is There

Judy as doula, Deanna as abortionist. Gabi (played by Ruth).

What is Happening

1. You have worked the last four days in a row since so many people have quit the service. This is the last abortion scheduled for today. Due to a complex procedure earlier in the day you are running late by an hour. Everyone is tired and frustrated, including Gabi. It's time to begin.

20 - Judy Listens

Who is There

Judy and Ron (played by Deanna)

What is Happening

1. Over the past few months, Judy has had to realize that if she simply divorces Ron, discarding him alongside the institution of marriage, she risks losing the emotional home she built with him. At the same time, she can't simply go back to being monogamous, married, and braindead. She needs her freedom. She wants to choose important parts of her freedom to share with Ron.

Judy has returned to her home on a night when Ron expected her to be out. She finds him eating a microwave dinner in front of the TV, lonely. Judy will share her real feelings with Ron, including those truths that hurt when spoken aloud.

2. How will Judy begin to communicate with her husband?



21 - Last Words

The facilitator will give instructions.



Deanna Banks



"We're not here to build heroic images that people can make posters out of, and that they can glorify. The point is for the struggle to be waged between the oppressed people and the oppressor." - Elaine Brown

Bio

Deanna is a 22 year old African American woman who has recently graduated from Spelman, a historically black college in Georgia, with a degree in Political Science. She is currently single, working at her parents' bank, and living with them in a segregated, wealthy black neighborhood. She is an atheist.

Wants to empower others, but isn't sure how to empower herself

Deanna believes in the revolution, and that every interaction is an opportunity to make an ally for the cause. Her goal is to empower women as agents of change, rather than merely save them from their troubles. Deanna struggles with the desire to fade into the background of the abortion service, feeling insecure about the privilege of her class status and relative inexperience. These insecurities are also making her second-guess the doubts and hesitations she has about working with older, more experienced white women.

Helping black women helps black men and women of all races

Deanna believes that change can be brought only through a global revolution, and armed resistance may be necessary, though she herself hasn't examined her own capacity to commit an act of violence. She does enjoy confronting her prep school friends with the idea by saying things like "nonviolence is a bourgeois notion" while they lounge around her parents' pool.

Deanna, like her revolutionary idols, passionately believes that the needs of the most oppressed people must be centered in any revolutionary struggle. She has seen local activist groups that want oppressed people to sign off on their pet causes without asking the most vulnerable people what they actually need. She believes that if revolutionaries don't center black women, they might leave her behind, with the real risk of utopia being built on black women's backs.

As a whole white people are untrustworthy, except for white activists

Deanna grew up in a wealthy black neighborhood and attended black preparatory schools. When she was young, her father revealed that he'd chosen their neighborhood and her school because they were free from the dangerous presence of white people. Deanna was glad to be spared the indignities that her family and community had suffered at the hands of white people, even while she began to notice and question why the skin of politicians, judges, and police was always white. As she prepared to go to college and inevitably encounter the white world, her father advised that she could not trust a white person's friendship, especially when it would mean siding with her against another white person.

During her college years, Deanna and other Spelman students volunteered to support a wildcat strike by local factory workers. She met and worked with white activists from the majority black union and the Maoist October League. She was impressed with how these

white people were willing to stand up to union and factory leadership on behalf of a black workforce. The strike was massively successful, resulting in a contract that, among other things, created a safer work environment, and included a racial discrimination protection clause. She graduated college shortly after that success, and left with a positive impression of the reliability of radical white activists.

Backstory

Deanna grew up with many of the benefits of wealth, provided by her family owning a bank that services most of the black community of Chicago. She went to the best schools, had the best private tutors, and never wanted for anything material.

At college, Deanna was invigorated by a community of radical thought and activism. Deanna's leftist professors were happy to find a student already familiar with the works of Marx, and expanded her mind with the writings of practical revolutionaries such as Mao and Frantz Fanon. On her own she found Assata Shakur and Elaine Brown, black women who helped her to put into words the feelings she has about the connection between the global proletariat, black community, and feminism. By the end of college she was eager to put revolutionary theory into practice through activism, but only managed to taste one union campaign victory before she returned home.

Coming home again has been strange. She is happy to be near her family and the community of friends that she grew up with, but hearing about the lives of her friends as they evolved while she was away at school has made her feel out of touch - few of them have time or interest in her revolutionary ideas because they are busy with husbands and babies. She also, somewhat guiltily, misses the friends she made in Atlanta, who are better versed in the revolutionary academic texts that she loves to discuss. Having returned home with a new perspective, she feels responsible for leveraging her privilege to help women in the broader black community, and to put her radical ideals to work in the world. She was home for only a few weeks when she joined the abortion service, thrilled to be able to help black women in an impactful way. She also hopes to connect with activists who will be able to share in lively discussions of revolutionary philosophy.

Significant Relationships

Louis Banks, father

Deanna's Pamphlet

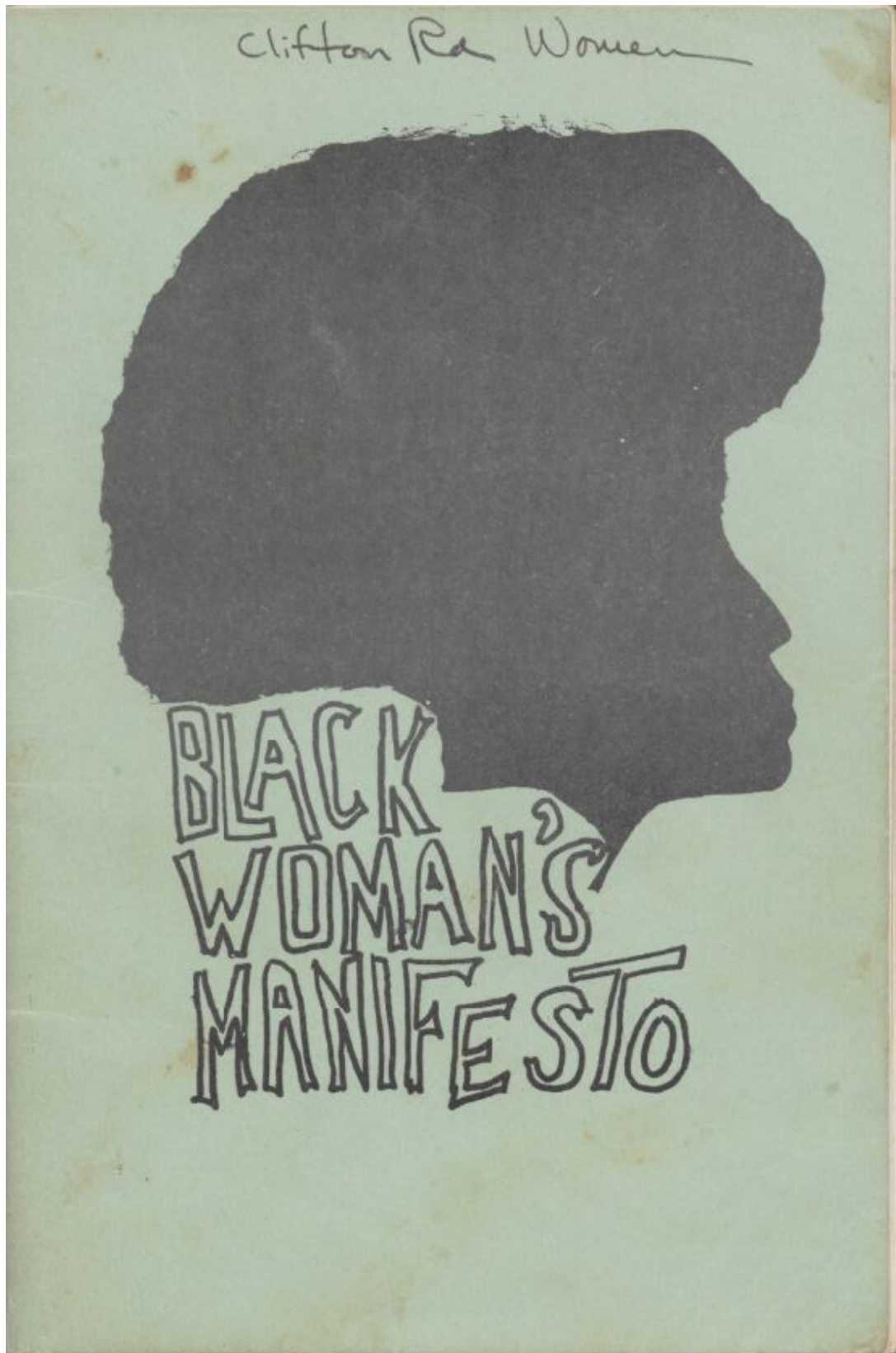


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i - WORKSHOP - Get to Know You

What is Happening

1. Everyone is gathered in Ruth's living room for the first meeting of their new feminist political discussion group. Your fellow activist in the abortion service, Linda, is here too. Linda is leading the discussion this week and wants to do a round of introductions before starting. Linda prompts everyone to introduce themselves and share a little about their politics. At the end of the discussion group Linda turns over the reigns to the new members.
2. *Read your character prompt.*
3. The purpose of this scene is to introduce the main characters. Once the in character scene ends there will be one more round of introductions out of character, for anything the character declined to share.

Character Prompt

Deanna

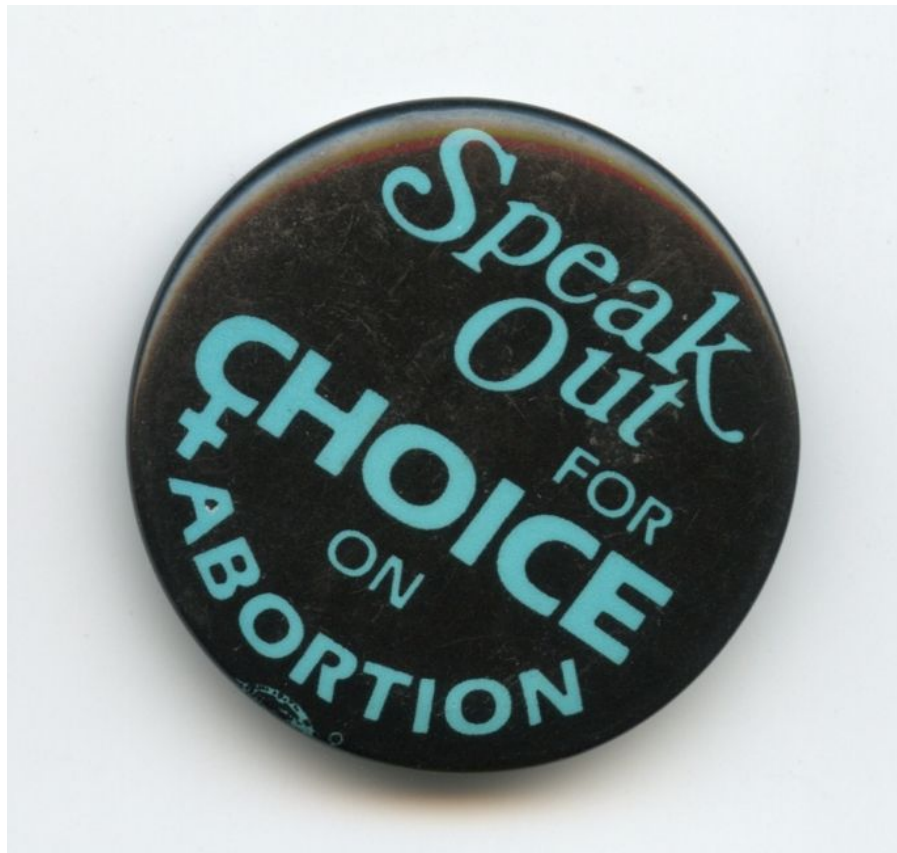
Downplay the extent of your family's wealth a little bit. Sometimes people pay undue attention to that kind of thing.



ii - WORKSHOP - Monologue Technique

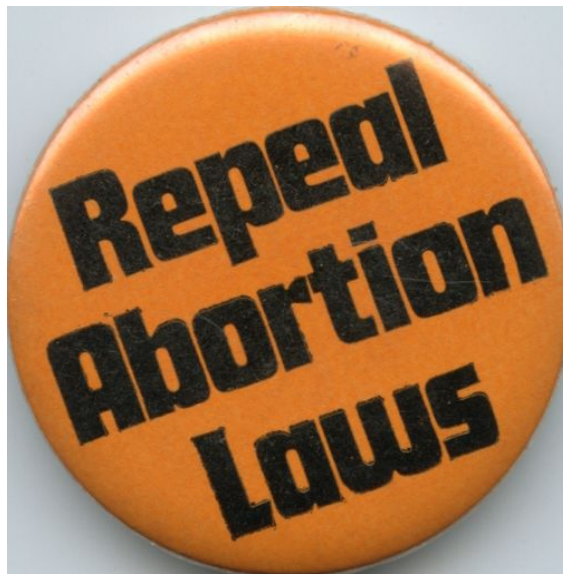
What is Happening

1. The women of the abortion service are receiving their annual exams, but mostly being lectured by a white male doctor. They might try to get a word in edgewise, but they can also use the monologue sign to share what they think. This scene is presented in montage and we will play out snippets of all of their exams by switching between them.
2. In this scene all of the player characters can use the monologue technique. Please try to use it once so you get the hang of it. The question for this scene is, how does each character react to being talked over by this medical gatekeeper?



iii - WORKSHOP - Abortion Technique

The facilitator will give instructions.



1 - Ruth's Happy News

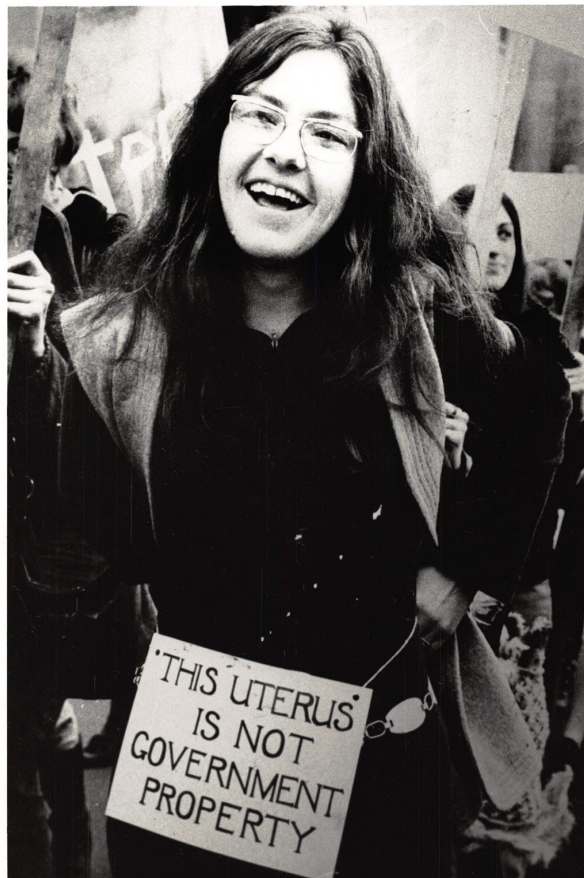
What is Happening

1. Deanna and Judy are waiting in the service's rented apartment that has been repurposed into an office. They are waiting for Ruth to arrive and give everyone their counseling assignments for the week. Ruth is significantly late, and people are starting to get a little impatient. Ruth will arrive with happy news to share, that she is pregnant again.
2. *Read your character prompt.*
3. The question for this scene is, will Ruth's fellow activists be excited for her? Will they recognize her as an activist too?

Character Prompt

Deanna

You are confused by Ruth at the moment. Aren't women in the service choosing to have no more children because of the great burden it places on them? In fact, Ruth told you she had hardly left her house for the first 6 years of her son's life, and now she only has a life again because he's started going to school. Seek clarification.



2 - Vulva Self Exam

What is Happening

1. At Judy's insistence, the group is gathered in her bedroom for an impromptu workshop. With great excitement, Judy is helping Deanna and Ruth look at their vulvas for the first time, using mirrors. The plan is to move on to using a speculum to examine their cervixes, but Ruth will ask to stop. Members of the discussion group feel alienated from their bodies at the start, though that may change over the course of the scene.
2. *Read your character prompt.*
3. The question of the scene is, will Judy's excitement prevent her from hearing her friends' concerns?

Character Prompt

Deanna

It's really fortunate that Ruth said something, you were feeling really uncomfortable with this from the start! When you saw your vulva in the mirror your first thought was that it was uneven and ugly. This self-exam has made you feel alienated from your body. Though, that might change over the course of the scene.

WOMEN and THEIR BODIES a course



by
BOSTON WOMEN'S
HEALTH COLLECTIVE

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3 - Toothpaste and Frustration

Who is There

Ruth and Gil (played by Judy), her husband.

What is Happening

1. Ruth and her husband Gil are sharing the bathroom sink while completing their nighttime routine. This is when they tend to check in with one another about their days before going to bed. Ruth has decided to ask Gil what is bothering him, because he's been acting sullen and grouchy for a few days. Adam is adjusting well to kindergarten, so it could be something to do with Gil's job, or maybe something deeper than that. Ruth will get to the bottom of it tonight.
2. In this scene Ruth can use the monologue technique. The question of the scene is, Can Ruth get the support she needs to realize her talents at activism?



4 - New Abortion Method

What is Happening

1. A few weeks ago a California sex education group reached out to the abortion service, offering to teach their method for a third-trimester abortion. The abortion technique the service practices can only be used up to the beginning of the second trimester of pregnancy, so this opportunity was significant. The catch was that they wanted an abortionist to come to them in California to learn, and the service has been operating on such narrow margins that there was no budget to pay for the flight.
2. Deanna offered to pay for travel expenses, and to her dismay was the only person who had the availability to attend on short notice. Now, in the privacy of the abortion service's living room work space, Deanna presents the new method of induced miscarriage to her fellow abortionists.
3. *Read your character prompt.*
4. The questions of the scene are, What is Deanna's leadership style? How will she present her politics?

Character Prompt

Deanna's Information about Induced Miscarriage Abortion

This is an extremely easy medical procedure to do, however what makes it successful is how much the person seeking abortion trusts the people providing care. Disrupting the pregnancy takes 5 minutes and is totally safe. What comes next is up to 14 days of waiting for the miscarriage to start. Once the miscarriage has begun, the person needs to go to the hospital, feign ignorance, and then expect a long and painful labor.

There are two points in time where the person seeking abortion must trust the abortionists completely. First, while waiting up to 14 days for the miscarriage to start the person's chances of getting a life-threatening infection skyrocket. To prevent this, the person seeking abortion must be counseled strictly to avoid putting anything in their vagina, including water or sex. The counselor must call their client daily, recording temperatures and asking about any sign of infection. Second, the person who miscarries must be willing to lie to doctors in order to protect the abortion service. By feigning ignorance, they will be able to be at a hospital for the vaginal delivery that concludes the miscarriage. This miscarriage method is no more dangerous than live birth, but both are fourteen times more dangerous than your current first trimester abortion method.

Deanna

You don't think you are ready to be a leader in this organization, but have been thrust into this role. You feel like you don't belong here. Try to hold it together! Despite the risk associated with this abortion method, you are excited about the possibilities it brings. You hope to get your fellow abortionists as excited as you are about this. The method demands that women who receive abortions from the service be active participants in their liberation. Every interaction with a woman seeking abortion is an opportunity to build her capacity to save herself. Empowered women fuel the revolution.

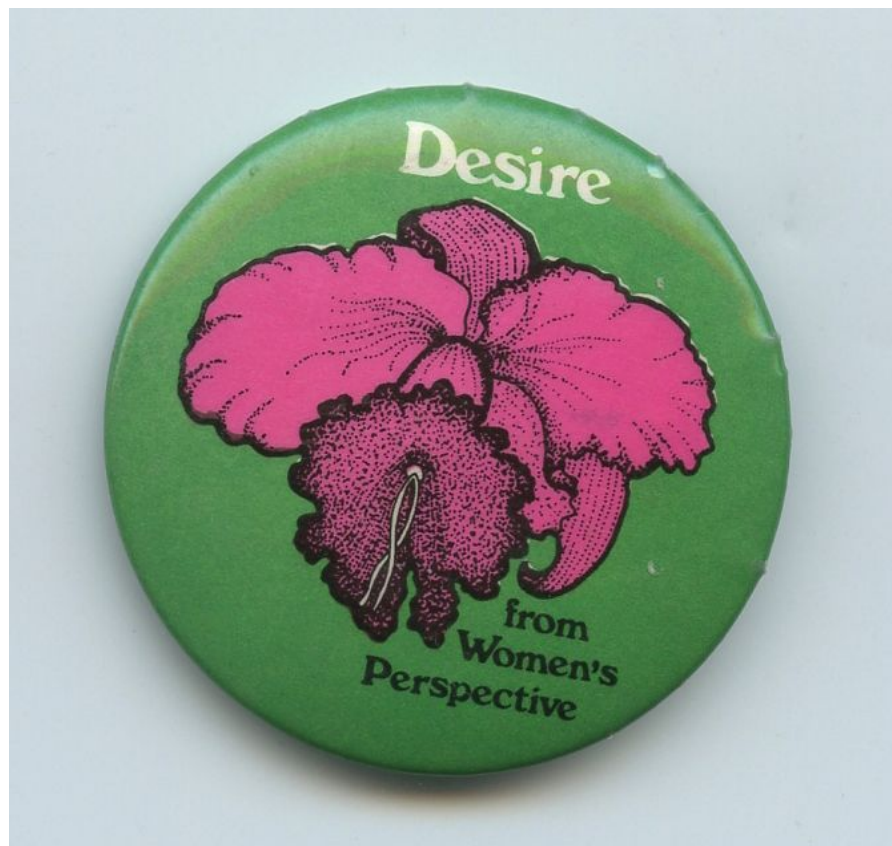
5 - Free Love Seminar

Who is There

Judy and James (played by Ruth), a flirtatious man.

What is Happening

1. Judy is attending a free love workshop in an office park near downtown. The workshop involves lectures about accepting the love that other people offer you beginning with acceptance of your body. Then everyone gets naked and discusses masturbation in small groups. It's towards the end of the workshop and everyone has their clothes on again. All the attendees know each other's names and have had some interaction in the big group by now. Judy has allowed herself to be drawn away from the closing remarks by a man named James. Judy is flattered at the attention of the handsome man, 10 years her junior.
2. Judy can use the monologue technique during this scene. The question of the scene is How will Judy react to this man's straight forward advances?



6A - Counseling Rita

Who is There

Ruth and Rita (played by Deanna)

Character Prompt

Rita (played by Deanna)

Note: This character will return in a later scene for their abortion.

You are in love with your boyfriend Tre. When you told your parents that you were having a baby with him, they hounded you until you agreed to get an abortion. They refused to listen to you, and if one more adult tries to tell you what to do you will explode at them!

You have always wanted to be a parent someday, but you never imagined that it would come up so soon. Instead, you imagined working odd jobs so you could attend cosmetology school after you graduate. If Tre drops out of school to support you, it might be okay to put your salon dreams on hold for now. You know that a lot of relationships that teenagers have don't last, but you hope yours will.

Mostly, you haven't had the space to think for yourself about what you want to do. You need to ask the counselor some questions to make up your mind, and expect to be treated like the real decision-maker.

7 - Party Disrupted

What is Happening

1. The regular abortion service meeting has a celebratory mood. They've been performing their own abortions for one year! Ruth baked a cake.

Deanna has reflected about her clients and noticed that the black ones are coming back with a noticeably higher rate of side effects, such as infections, that are landing them in the hospital afterwards. This indicates a difference in the care they receive through the service. Deanna will tell the group tonight. She's committed herself to making sure her fellow activists understand. Some members of the group will be resistant or even defensive.

2. In this scene, only Deanna can use the monologue technique. The questions of the scene are, How will Deanna confront her fellow activists? How much cluelessness is she willing to take?



8 - Discussion - Stay at Home Mothers

What is Happening

1. Everyone is gathered in Ruth's living room for their infrequent feminist political discussion group. Your fellow activist in the service, Linda, is here too. Ruth has put out a selection of food, including her famous compote coffee cake. Everyone takes turns choosing the discussion topic and this month it is Judy's turn to pick. The topic will be about the role housewives play in feminism.
2. This discussion scene is left very open on purpose. Most of your character prompts will be in the form of a question. Before we start the scene, decide what your character thinks about the question.
3. *Read your character prompt.*
4. The purpose of this discussion scene is to reveal and contrast the characters' politics through conversation, with a focus on Ruth.

Character Prompt

Deanna

This food is largely unappetizing to you. You've never seen or tasted anything like the coffee cake full of unfamiliar dried fruits before, but you are going to have to be polite.

Every revolutionary movement needs both front line fighters and behind the scenes supporters. What sort of women do you think should fulfill which roles?



9 - Rita's Abortion

Who is There

Ruth as doula, Judy as abortionist, and Rita (played by Deanna)

What is Happening

1. Judy is waiting at the anonymously rented apartment where you perform abortions for Ruth to arrive. She is late for the start of another day of back to back procedures. Judy had to lay out the tools, clean towels, and fresh sheets all by herself. You two have never performed a procedure together without a more experienced observer to provide help, because your schedules conflict most of the time. Today will be one of the first times you feel out your working partnership. Ruth arrives, flustered, with big bags under her eyes. Rita arrives next. Whenever you are ready you can begin the procedure.
2. The purpose of the scene is to show how the activists support Rita through her abortion.

10 - The Birds and the Bees

Who is There

Judy, Ron (played by Deanna), and Patricia (played by Ruth)

What is Happening

1. In a quiet moment after dinner, Judy's 19 year old daughter Patricia asks her advice about a college boy she has met. They sit in the parlor to talk without disturbing Judy's husband Ron who is cleaning up in the kitchen. As Judy gives her daughter advice, Ron will overhear the conversation and enter to express his disagreement with Judy.
2. *Read your character prompt.*
3. In this scene, Judy may use the monologue technique. The dramatic question is, How do Judy and Ron communicate?

Character Prompt

Ron (played by Deanna)

You know your wife has your daughter's best interests at heart, but Patricia is still young and naive. She doesn't understand how men only want one thing from girls. She needs to carefully consider her heart and her future before having sex. In this situation it's up to you to make she she has a chance to think for herself and isn't convinced that sex is meaningless.



11A - Counseling Maya

Who is There

Deanna and Maya (played by Judy), a college student.

Character Prompt

Deanna

Here is everything you know about the person you will counsel.

Maya

19

black

middle class

college student

second trimester

12 - Discussion - Sisterhood

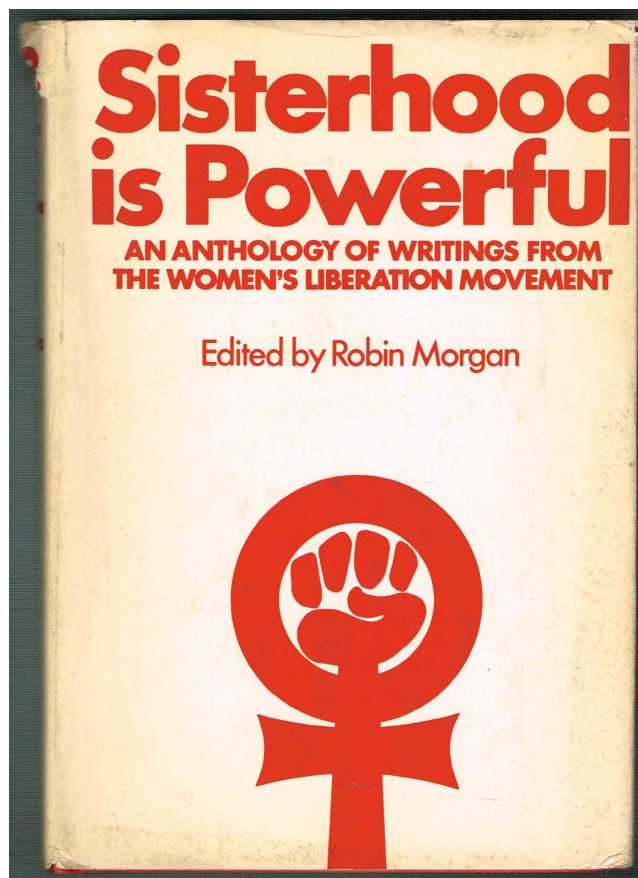
What is Happening

1. The women of the service have again gathered for their feminist discussion club in Ruth's living room. Today it is Ruth's turn to choose the discussion topic. The topic will be about what things unite and divide women.
2. *Read your character prompt.*
3. The purpose of this discussion scene is to reveal and contrast the characters' politics through conversation, with a focus on Deanna.

Character Prompt

Deanna

In some ways, you feel more affinity with Vietnamese women, fighting the United States' capitalist takeover of their country, than the women in this room. At the same time, your comfortable life is paid for by your family's embrace of capitalism, despite its inevitable oppressions. Where does a woman like you fit in?



13 - Ruth's Ultimatum

Who is There

Ruth and Gil (played by Judy)

What is Happening

1. Over the past few weeks, Ruth has had to face the fact that she cannot be both a full time homemaker and a full time activist. When the baby comes, she will be a full-time homemaker for the first few months, but she has decided that things will change radically after that point. She's tried broaching the subject to Gil several times but he doesn't seem to hear her.

Ruth is waiting for Gil in the dining room when he gets home from the office. She is ready to talk and let Gil know what she needs. Ruth will make sure he understands what is at risk if he won't help her.

2. The question of the scene is, How will Ruth get the space she needs to realize her talents as an activist?



14 - Maya's Abortion

Who is There

Deanna as doula, Ruth as abortionist, and Maya (played by Judy)

What is Happening

1. Maya did not come back for her abortion. Deanna, did you shrug it off as her decision or did you reach back out to her?
2. Maya has finally returned for her abortion, months after Deanna saw her the first time. She is in her third trimester, which means her abortion will be by inducing miscarriage and sending Maya to the hospital to miscarry. This is dangerous both because vaginal delivery of any kind is 14 times more likely to result in patient death than abortion, and because Maya will have to feign ignorance of the abortion service if questioned by doctors. Sometimes doctors even call in police to aggressively question patients who they suspect of having an illegal abortion.

15 - Newspaper Article

The facilitator will give instructions.

16B - Counseling Elizabeth

Who is There

Deanna and Elizabeth (played by facilitator), a working mother.

Character Prompt

Deanna

Here is everything you know about the person you will counsel.

Elizabeth

37

black

lower class

mother

first trimester

17 - We Need to Talk About Racism

What is Happening

1. Over the past few months Deanna has realized that she's been holding herself back from sharing her whole thoughts on things. She wasn't sure she had important things to say, or how her white colleagues would receive her thoughts. Now, with the tragic death of Maya, she needs to start sharing her unique perspective as a black woman.

Everyone is gathered in Ruth's living room for a meeting. Deanna and Ruth agreed that it is time for the service to talk about how the service interacts with black women. Ruth will broach the topic with a proposal, asking Deanna for her help. When Deanna responds to Ruth she will ask for what she really thinks the organization needs.

2. *Read your character prompt.*
3. The question of the scene is, How will Deanna get her friends understand that black women deserve more from their allies, and that she deserves more from them as individuals?

Character Prompt

Deanna

What changes would you like your friends to make in the abortion service? Choose one or more to ask for.

- Recruit and train more black women as counselors. "Not many have volunteered" is not a valid excuse. Do more to find them, earn their trust, and make volunteering for the service accessible to black women. Pay them if you have to.
- Recruit granny midwives from the black community to train as abortionists. They will be fast to train because they are part of a long tradition of black women doing for themselves when they can't afford or trust white doctors. As a result, they have more experience with complications that anyone currently in the abortion service.
- Seek out local activist groups led by black women and invite them to observe the counseling and abortion process. Ask for their advice on how to improve the process for black women, and implement it. They know this community the best.
- Create your own.



18 - Discussion - Sex with Men

What is Happening

1. It's time again for feminist discussion group in Ruth's living room. Gil made up a cheese plate for you all to enjoy, and has taken Adam out to the park so he won't be underfoot. It is Deanna's turn to choose the discussion topic. The topic will be about relationships with men. Linda will not be joining you.
2. *Read your character prompt.*
3. The purpose of this discussion scene is to reveal and contrast the characters' politics through conversation, with a focus on Judy.

Character Prompt

Deanna

It's your turn to introduce a discussion question. Ask the group: Are we contributing to our own oppression by having sex with men?

Get your fellow activists to seriously consider whether relationships with men undermine women's liberation.



19 - Gabi's Abortion

Who is There

Judy as doula, Deanna as abortionist. Gabi (played by Ruth).

What is Happening

You have worked the last four days in a row since so many people have quit the service. This is the last abortion scheduled for today. Due to a complex procedure earlier in the day you are running late by an hour. Everyone is tired and frustrated, including Gabi. It's time to begin.

20 - Judy Listens

Who is There

Judy and Ron (played by Deanna)

What is Happening

1. Over the past few months, Judy has had to realize that if she simply divorces Ron, discarding him alongside the institution of marriage, she risks losing the emotional home she built with him. At the same time, she can't simply go back to being monogamous, married, and braindead. She needs her freedom. She wants to choose important parts of her freedom to share with Ron.

Judy has returned to her home on a night when Ron expected her to be out. She finds him eating a microwave dinner in front of the TV, lonely. Judy will share her real feelings with Ron, including those truths that hurt when spoken aloud.

2. *Read your character prompt.*
3. How will Judy begin to communicate with her husband?

Character Prompt

Ron (played by Deanna)

You are afraid of a future without Judy. You hate to admit it, but just about any change bothers and upsets you. But Judy is the only woman you've ever really loved, and you are a better man for the work you've done together in your relationship.

At the same time, you're fed up with how your wife has treated you recently. Since her big transformation whenever she "wants to talk" she doesn't listen to what you say.

Start the scene defensive, testing if she will actually listen to you. Eventually relent and try to listen to her.

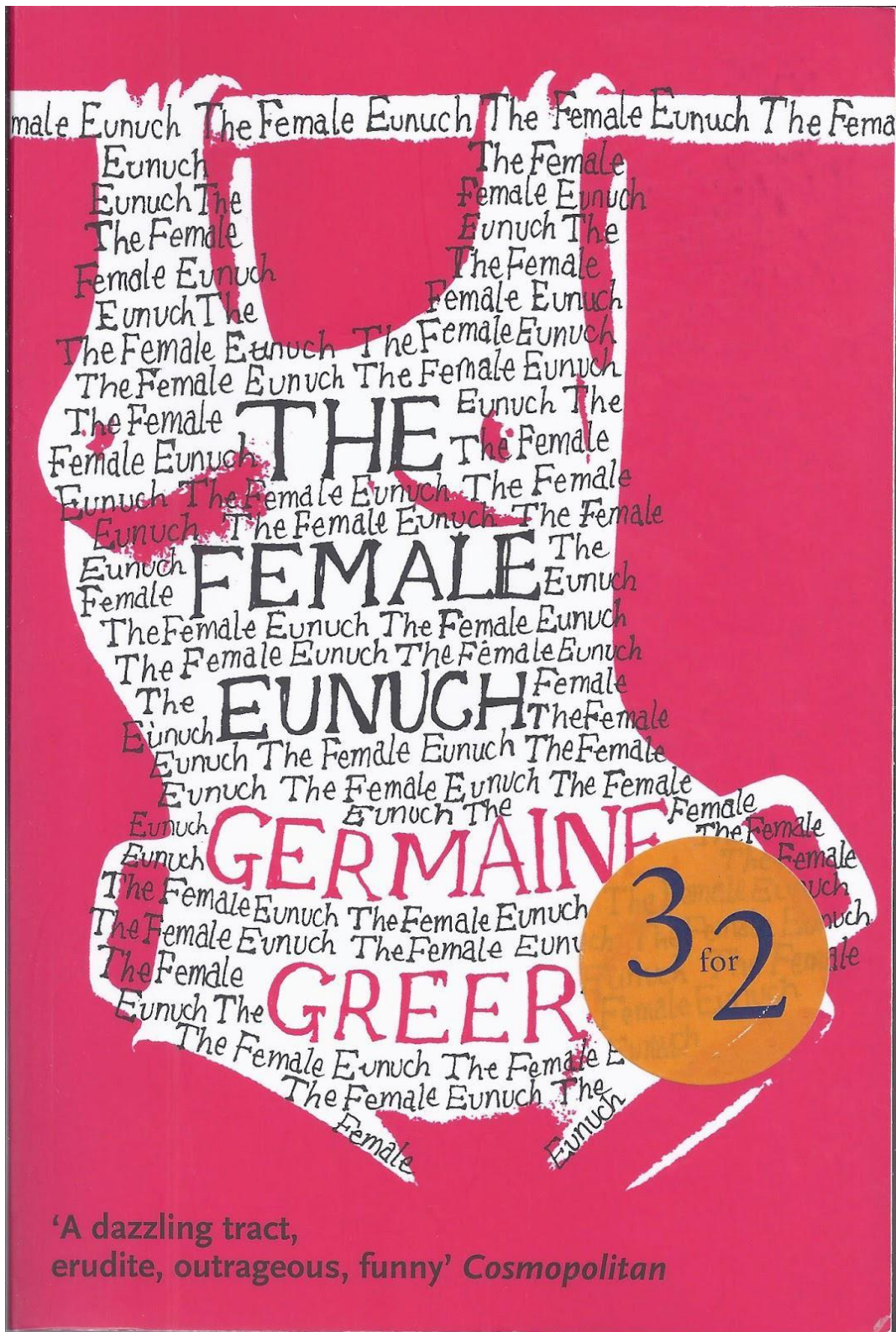


21 - Last Words

The facilitator will give instructions.



Judy Russo



"I'm sick of pretending that some fatuous male's self-important pronouncements are the objects of my undivided attention... I refuse to be a female impersonator. I am a woman, not a castrate." - Germaine Greer, The Female Eunuch

Bio

Judy is a 42 year old Italian American woman, who works as a substitute teacher. She has a daughter in college, Patricia, and is currently in the process of divorcing her husband of 21 years, Ron. She and Ron were raised Catholic, but converted together to a liberal protestant Methodist church shortly after they married.

Transforming her life, ignoring her feelings

Judy believes that her marriage to Ron is an unfortunate consequence of being raised in the patriarchy. She is burning her old life to the ground because she thinks the “old” Judy was not her true self. She feels that if she were to try and make Ron understand, or stop long enough to take his feelings into account, that she would be showing compassion for the patriarchy - and by extension, everything in her life up to this point that has made her feel dissatisfied or constrained.

Liberation through transformation and transgression

Womanhood is equal to manhood, women’s brains are the same as men’s brains. The current patriarchal structure, built to suppress women to serve men’s needs, denies women their sexuality, anger, strength, and the very room to exist in this world. Women should come to know and celebrate their bodies, taste their own menstrual blood, and give up the shackles of celibacy and monogamy to have sex without constraints. As an extension to this, the government should stay out of relationships between consenting adults, and the law should change or be eradicated around: adultery, divorce, prostitution, sodomy, marriage, and obscenity law. The government should acknowledge the existence of, and criminalize, domestic violence and spousal rape.

Colorblindness is the answer to racism

Judy knows that racism is an oppression leveraged by the patriarchy, and so she’s decided to not see race. Obviously people who are of different races look different to her, but she’s decided to see past it in her daily life. That’s what the Civil Rights movement has been asking for right? She hasn’t had much opportunity to actually practice this - there aren’t any people of color in her neighborhood, job, church, or social group. However, she is confident that should she ever encounter a black person, she will judge them based on the content of their character. She doesn’t recognize any further work to be done.

Backstory

Judy grew up a sensitive, imaginative child in a strict, conservative Roman Catholic household. Her family was tight-knit, but shit at communicating. Her early curiosity was quickly and severely quashed - “Don’t argue with those who know what’s best.” Hissed rebukes were the only response to her first tentative questions about her burgeoning sexual feelings, so she quickly learned not to talk about them.

As a young teenager, Judy took quickly to romance novels and films, devouring them and daydreaming of her own passionate romance. She went into her wedding night excited and full of love - but ultimately disappointed by the lackluster reality. In the wake of this, she bundled her feelings of thwarted passion with her frustration with her parents and their constant rebukes and efforts to control her with religion. Judy and Ron decided to leave the Roman Catholic church only a few weeks after their wedding day for a liberal Methodist church, knowing the most important thing they needed to find their way was one another.

The next two decades flew by, with time spent being a wife, mother, homemaker, student, and then part-time teacher. Even when she could figure out the words in her head that might express the discontentment she felt with her life, something would hold her back - having seen no model of how to talk about these things, shame about having sexual desire, fear of hurting her husband, or just feeling too tired to even open her mouth in the first place. When Patricia went to college, Judy hoped that maybe things could rekindle with Ron - that there would be time, space, energy, and twenty years of learning each others' bodies to experience the passionate love she'd always wanted. Unfortunately, without the skill, and in Ron's case the inclination, to talk about their sex life, Judy's frustration grew.

In an effort to learn about female sexuality, she attended the Our Bodies Ourselves sex education workshop organized by the Chicago Women's Liberation Union. She held the mirror for women to see their own cervixes. She tasted her own menses. This workshop unlocked the beginning of an internal transformation, one that she desperately wanted to see extend into the rest of her life. She's eager to blame monogamy and the patriarchy for her dissatisfaction, and is looking forward to finding passion and meaning in this new life, as soon as she can finish shedding the vestiges of the old one.

An important part of her transformation has been working with the abortion service - both as a way to help empower women with reproductive and sexual freedom, but also as a way to connect with a community of women outside of patriarchal power structures.

Significant Relationships

Ron, husband of 21 years

Patricia, 19 year old daughter

Judy's Pamphlet



OUR BODIES OURSELVES

A BOOK
BY AND
FOR
WOMEN

BY THE BOSTON WOMEN'S HEALTH BOOK COLLECTIVE

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i - WORKSHOP - Get to Know You

What is Happening

1. Everyone is gathered in Ruth's living room for the first meeting of their new feminist political discussion group. Your fellow activist in the abortion service, Linda, is here too. Linda is leading the discussion this week and wants to do a round of introductions before starting. Linda prompts everyone to introduce themselves and share a little about their politics. At the end of the discussion group Linda turns over the reigns to the new members.
2. *Read your character prompt.*
3. The purpose of this scene is to introduce the main characters. Once the in character scene ends there will be one more round of introductions out of character, for anything the character declined to share.

Character Prompt

Judy

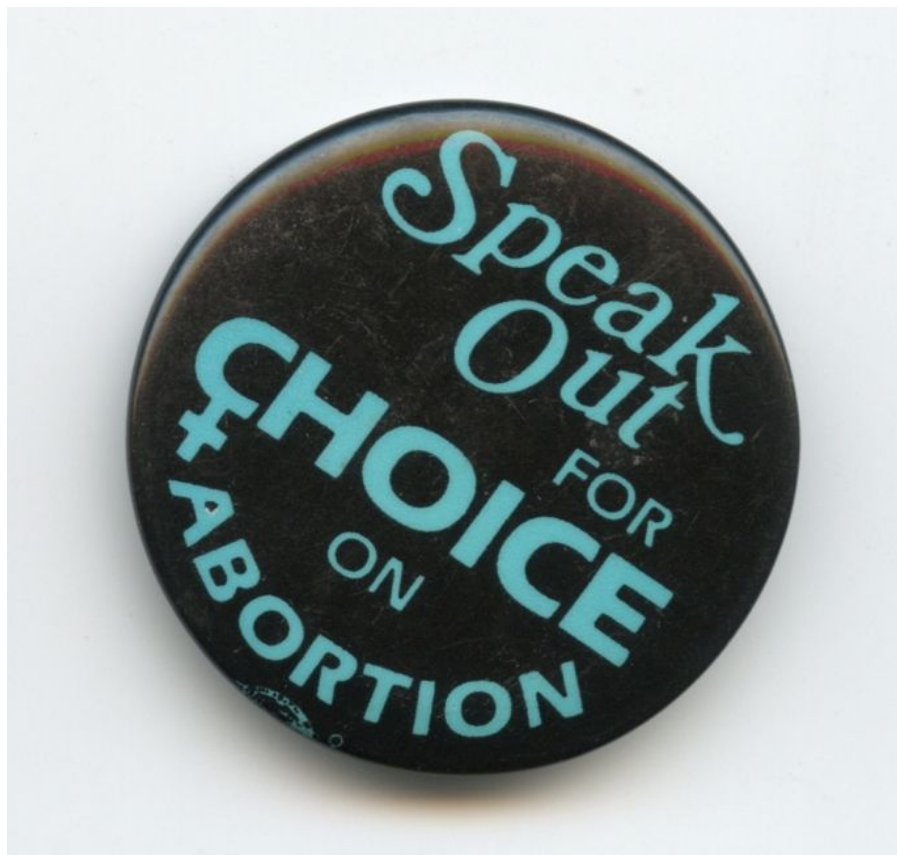
You make no secret of your impending divorce. But you are hesitant to mention that you're still living with your husband Ron.



ii - WORKSHOP - Monologue Technique

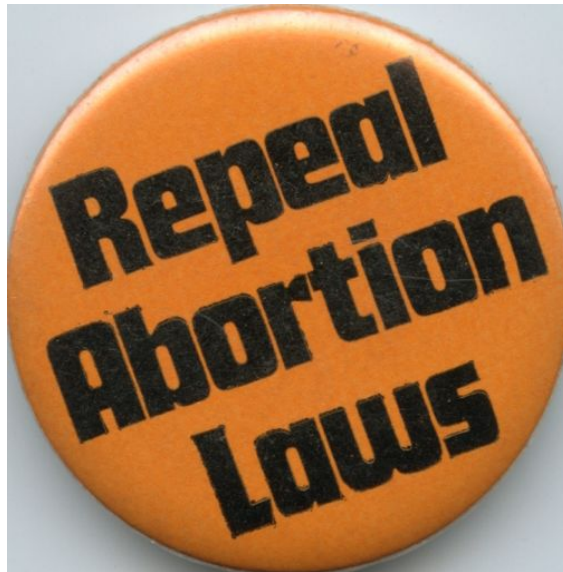
What is Happening

1. The women of the abortion service are receiving their annual exams, but mostly being lectured by a white male doctor. They might try to get a word in edgewise, but they can also use the monologue sign to share what they think. This scene is presented in montage and we will play out snippets of all of their exams by switching between them.
2. In this scene all of the player characters can use the monologue technique. Please try to use it once so you get the hang of it. The question for this scene is, how does each character react to being talked over by this medical gatekeeper?



iii - WORKSHOP - Abortion Technique

The facilitator will give instructions.



1 - Ruth's Happy News

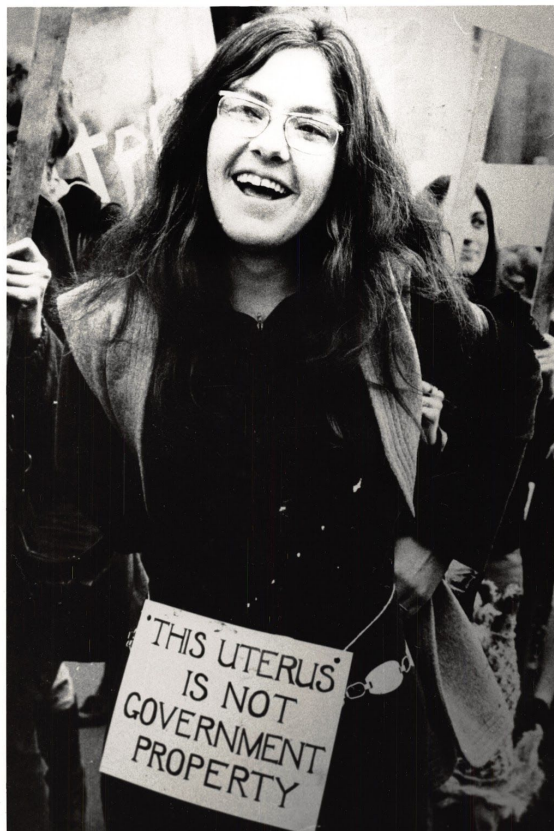
What is Happening

1. Deanna and Judy are waiting in the service's rented apartment that has been repurposed into an office. They are waiting for Ruth to arrive and give everyone their counseling assignments for the week. Ruth is significantly late, and people are starting to get a little impatient. Ruth will arrive with happy news to share, that she is pregnant again.
2. *Read your character prompt.*
3. The question for this scene is, will Ruth's fellow activists be excited for her? Will they recognize her as an activist too?

Character Prompt

Judy

You are glad to be well past having any more children. Your daughter Patricia was a handful when she was little, and you can't imagine keeping house with two little monsters underfoot. How is Ruth going to make time for activism?



2 - Vulva Self Exam

What is Happening

1. At Judy's insistence, the group is gathered in her bedroom for an impromptu workshop. With great excitement, Judy is helping Deanna and Ruth look at their vulvas for the first time, using mirrors. The plan is to move on to using a speculum to examine their cervixes, but Ruth will ask to stop. Members of the discussion group feel alienated from their bodies at the start, though that may change over the course of the scene.
2. The question of the scene is, will Judy's excitement prevent her from hearing her friends' concerns?

WOMEN and THEIR BODIES a course



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3 - Toothpaste and Frustration

Who is There

Ruth and Gil (played by Judy), her husband.

What is Happening

1. Ruth and her husband Gil are sharing the bathroom sink while completing their nighttime routine. This is when they tend to check in with one another about their days before going to bed. Ruth has decided to ask Gil what is bothering him, because he's been acting sullen and grouchy for a few days. Adam is adjusting well to kindergarten, so it could be something to do with Gil's job, or maybe something deeper than that. Ruth will get to the bottom of it tonight.
2. *Read your character prompt.*
3. In this scene Ruth can use the monologue technique. The question of the scene is, Can Ruth get the support she needs to realize her talents at activism?

Character Prompt

Gil (played by Judy)

On the surface of your mind there are several thoughts swirling. A scary amount of things in your life are changing all at once. The guys at work have begun referring to you as a "family man", and you're concerned you won't be seen as dedicated to the firm which could hurt your career ambitions. You support your wife's politics completely, but her timing for becoming an activist should have waited until after your next promotion. Your work supports the whole family financially, and must be the priority.

You have not articulated the following thoughts to yourself clearly. Instead, you expect your wife to excavate your feelings and take responsibility to fix them, as usual. You are jealous of all the time that Ruth is spending outside the house on her activism. It feels like such a loss to come home to an empty, cold house a few nights a week. You wish she felt completely satisfied caring for your home, your children, and you - the way she seemed to be just a few years ago. Honestly, the attention she lavishes on this hobby has you feeling like she is shirking her duties as a wife.

4 - New Abortion Method

What is Happening

1. A few weeks ago a California sex education group reached out to the abortion service, offering to teach their method for a third-trimester abortion. The abortion technique the service practices can only be used up to the beginning of the second trimester of pregnancy, so this opportunity was significant. The catch was that they wanted an abortionist to come to them in California to learn, and the service has been operating on such narrow margins that there was no budget to pay for the flight.
2. Deanna offered to pay for travel expenses, and to her dismay was the only person who had the availability to attend on short notice. Now, in the privacy of the abortion service's living room work space, Deanna presents the new method of induced miscarriage to her fellow abortionists.
3. *Read your character prompt.*
4. The questions of the scene are, What is Deanna's leadership style? How will she present her politics?

Character Prompt

Judy

You have the most experience performing abortions in the room. You feel a little threatened by Deanna bringing a new technique that might unseat your expertise. Question the safety or efficacy of the miscarriage method.

Listen when Deanna explains why the method is important to her.



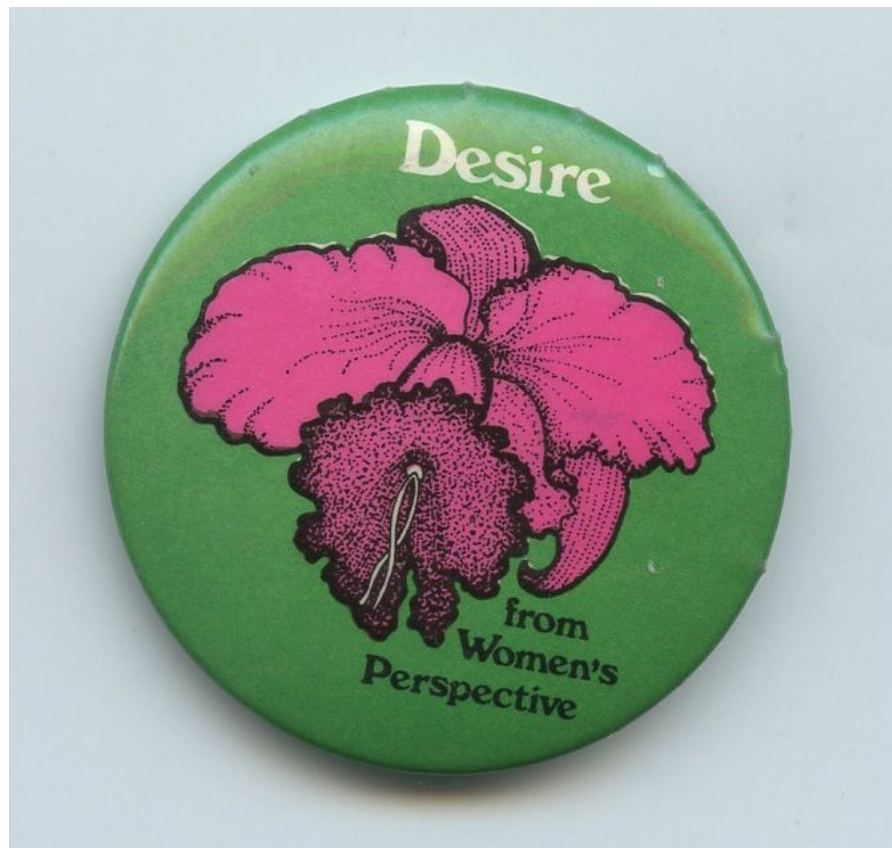
5 - Free Love Seminar

Who is There

Judy and James (played by Ruth), a flirtatious man.

What is Happening

1. Judy is attending a free love workshop in an office park near downtown. The workshop involves lectures about accepting the love that other people offer you beginning with acceptance of your body. Then everyone gets naked and discusses masturbation in small groups. It's towards the end of the workshop and everyone has their clothes on again. All the attendees know each other's names and have had some interaction in the big group by now. Judy has allowed herself to be drawn away from the closing remarks by a man named James. Judy is flattered at the attention of the handsome man, 10 years her junior.
2. Judy can use the monologue technique during this scene. The question of the scene is How will Judy react to this man's straight forward advances?



6B - Counseling Harryette

Who is There

Judy and Harryette (played by facilitator)

Character Prompt

Judy

Here is everything you know about the person you will counsel.

Harryette

42

black

lower class

married

first trimester

7 - Party Disrupted

What is Happening

1. The regular abortion service meeting has a celebratory mood. They've been performing their own abortions for one year! Ruth baked a cake.

Deanna has reflected about her clients and noticed that the black ones are coming back with a noticeably higher rate of side effects, such as infections, that are landing them in the hospital afterwards. This indicates a difference in the care they receive through the service. Deanna will tell the group tonight. She's committed herself to making sure her fellow activists understand. Some members of the group will be resistant or even defensive.

2. *Read your character prompt.*
3. In this scene, only Deanna can use the monologue technique. The questions of the scene are, How will Deanna confront her fellow activists? How much cluelessness is she willing to take?

Character Prompt

Judy

You don't see color when you counsel, so the outcomes can't be skewed. You think you are not a racist and give everyone you work with excellent care.



8 - Discussion - Stay at Home Mothers

What is Happening

1. Everyone is gathered in Ruth's living room for their infrequent feminist political discussion group. Your fellow activist in the service, Linda, is here too. Ruth has put out a selection of food, including her famous compote coffee cake. Everyone takes turns choosing the discussion topic and this month it is Judy's turn to pick. The topic will be about the role housewives play in feminism.
2. This discussion scene is left very open on purpose. Most of your character prompts will be in the form of a question. Before we start the scene, decide what your character thinks about the question.
3. *Read your character prompt.*
4. The purpose of this discussion scene is to reveal and contrast the characters' politics through conversation, with a focus on Ruth.

Character Prompt

Judy

It's your turn to introduce a discussion question. Ask the group: What role do stay at home mothers play in feminism? Should they leave the home to join the fight?



9 - Rita's Abortion

Who is There

Ruth as doula, Judy as abortionist, and Rita (played by Deanna)

What is Happening

1. Judy is waiting at the anonymously rented apartment where you perform abortions for Ruth to arrive. She is late for the start of another day of back to back procedures. Judy had to lay out the tools, clean towels, and fresh sheets all by herself. You two have never performed a procedure together without a more experienced observer to provide help, because your schedules conflict most of the time. Today will be one of the first times you feel out your working partnership. Ruth arrives, flustered, with big bags under her eyes. Rita arrives next. Whenever you are ready you can begin the procedure.
2. The purpose of the scene is to show how the activists support Rita through her abortion.

10 - The Birds and the Bees

Who is There

Judy, Ron (played by Deanna), and Patricia (played by Ruth)

What is Happening

1. In a quiet moment after dinner, Judy's 19 year old daughter Patricia asks her advice about a college boy she has met. They sit in the parlor to talk without disturbing Judy's husband Ron who is cleaning up in the kitchen. As Judy gives her daughter advice, Ron will overhear the conversation and enter to express his disagreement with Judy.
2. *Read your character prompt.*
3. In this scene, Judy may use the monologue technique. The dramatic question is, How do Judy and Ron communicate?

Character Prompt

Judy

You are excited to have this conversation about sex and sexuality with your daughter. She has so much to discover about herself! However, it still feels difficult to talk frankly about sexuality with Ron, or even with him present. And if there's an argument you'll wish you didn't have talk with him about this at all!



11A - Counseling Maya

Who is There

Deanna and Maya (played by Judy), a college student.

Character Prompt

Maya (played by Judy)

Note: This character will return in a later scene for their abortion.

You feel like you are going crazy. Your boyfriend can't know that you're here. He doesn't want you to get an abortion because he believes it is a mortal sin, but you made this appointment to learn more. He keeps telling you that you've been acting crazy lately, and based on your behavior you think he might be right. Your boyfriend is your philosophy professor at school, 15 years your senior. He knows so much more than you about the world, so it's very important that you listen to him and try not to harbor any quiet doubts in your mind.

Maya has been gaslit by her controlling older boyfriend. She no longer trusts her intuition about what is right and wrong for her, and is even alienated from the feelings of her own body. Will she be able to listen to her own impulses with Deanna's help?

12 - Discussion - Sisterhood

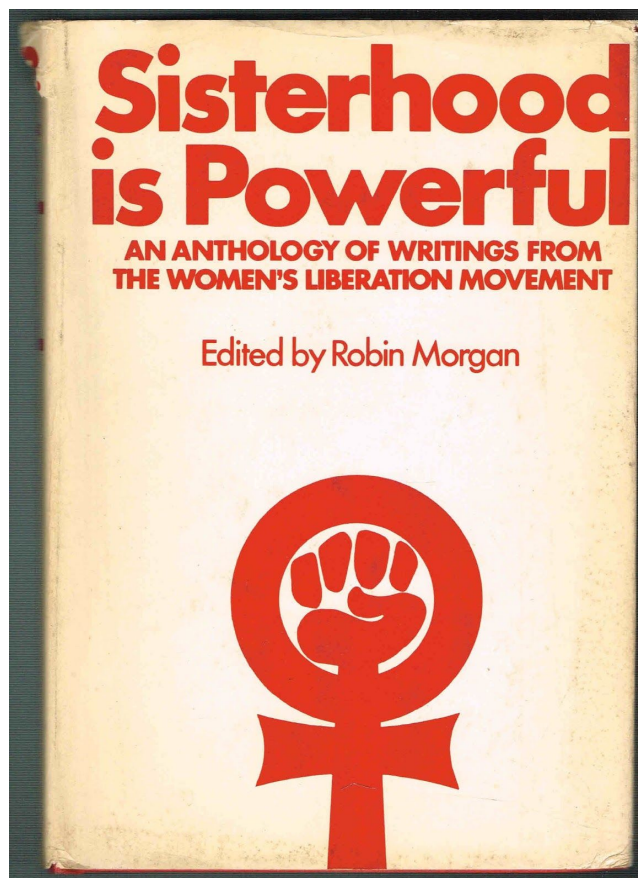
What is Happening

1. The women of the service have again gathered for their feminist discussion club in Ruth's living room. Today it is Ruth's turn to choose the discussion topic. The topic will be about what things unite and divide women.
2. *Read your character prompt.*
3. The purpose of this discussion scene is to reveal and contrast the characters' politics through conversation, with a focus on Deanna.

Character Prompt

Judy

Women's bodies are natural and wonderful, but almost all of what women understand about their bodies is polluted by patriarchal society. How important do you think biology is to your political movement?



13 - Ruth's Ultimatum

Who is There

Ruth and Gil (played by Judy)

What is Happening

1. Over the past few weeks, Ruth has had to face the fact that she cannot be both a full time homemaker and a full time activist. When the baby comes, she will be a full-time homemaker for the first few months, but she has decided that things will change radically after that point. She's tried broaching the subject to Gil several times but he doesn't seem to hear her.

Ruth is waiting for Gil in the dining room when he gets home from the office. She is ready to talk and let Gil know what she needs. Ruth will make sure he understands what is at risk if he won't help her.

2. *Read your character prompt.*
3. The question of the scene is, How will Ruth get the space she needs to realize her talents as an activist?

Character Prompt

Gil (played by Judy)

You've had this conversation at least a dozen times and it's getting tiring. You are not like other husbands, she's lucky to have you and you really do try. At the same time Ruth is the most important person in your life, followed closely by your son Adam. You want to believe that you'd do anything for your family, and are encountering (perhaps for the first time) exactly how emasculating "anything" might be.

This isn't a change you even want to make. Resist at first, but then cave to Ruth's demands.



14 - Maya's Abortion

Who is There

Deanna as doula, Ruth as abortionist, and Maya (played by Judy)

What is Happening

1. Maya did not come back for her abortion. Deanna, did you shrug it off as her decision or did you reach back out to her?
2. Maya has finally returned for her abortion, months after Deanna saw her the first time. She is in her third trimester, which means her abortion will be by inducing miscarriage and sending Maya to the hospital to miscarry. This is dangerous both because vaginal delivery of any kind is 14 times more likely to result in patient death than abortion, and because Maya will have to feign ignorance of the abortion service if questioned by doctors. Sometimes doctors even call in police to aggressively question patients who they suspect of having an illegal abortion.

15 - Newspaper Article

The facilitator will give instructions.

16A - Counseling Gabi

Who is There

Judy and Gabi (played by Ruth), a working woman.

Character Prompt

Judy

Here is everything you know about the person you will counsel.

Gabi

21

latina

lower class

embarrassed

second trimester

17 - We Need to Talk About Racism

What is Happening

1. Over the past few months Deanna has realized that she's been holding herself back from sharing her whole thoughts on things. She wasn't sure she had important things to say, or how her white colleagues would receive her thoughts. Now, with the tragic death of Maya, she needs to start sharing her unique perspective as a black woman.

Everyone is gathered in Ruth's living room for a meeting. Deanna and Ruth agreed that it is time for the service to talk about how the service interacts with black women. Ruth will broach the topic with a proposal, asking Deanna for her help. When Deanna responds to Ruth she will ask for what she really thinks the organization needs.

2. *Read your character prompt.*
3. The question of the scene is, How will Deanna get her friends understand that black women deserve more from their allies, and that she deserves more from them as individuals?

Character Prompt

Judy

Deanna will ask for more than you're comfortable with. Be defensive to start, and eventually give in to her demands.



18 - Discussion - Sex with Men

What is Happening

1. It's time again for feminist discussion group in Ruth's living room. Gil made up a cheese plate for you all to enjoy, and has taken Adam out to the park so he won't be underfoot. It is Deanna's turn to choose the discussion topic. The topic will be about relationships with men. Linda will not be joining you.
2. *Read your character prompt.*
3. The purpose of this discussion scene is to reveal and contrast the characters' politics through conversation, with a focus on Judy.



19 - Gabi's Abortion

Who is There

Judy as doula, Deanna as abortionist, and Gabi (played by Ruth)

What is Happening

You have worked the last four days in a row since so many people have quit the service. This is the last abortion scheduled for today. Due to a complex procedure earlier in the day you are running late by an hour. Everyone is tired and frustrated, including Gabi. It's time to begin.

20 - Judy Listens

Who is There

Judy and Ron (played by Deanna)

What is Happening

1. Over the past few months, Judy has had to realize that if she simply divorces Ron, discarding him alongside the institution of marriage, she risks losing the emotional home she built with him. At the same time, she can't simply go back to being monogamous, married, and braindead. She needs her freedom. She wants to choose important parts of her freedom to share with Ron.

Judy has returned to her home on a night when Ron expected her to be out. She finds him eating a microwave dinner in front of the TV, lonely. Judy will share her real feelings with Ron, including those truths that hurt when spoken aloud.

2. How will Judy begin to communicate with her husband?



21 - Last Words

The facilitator will give instructions.

