

# Beautiful Dreamer

A scenario by Niklas Disefalk



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## Introduction

This scenario is strongly inspired by the short film Beautiful Dreamer. As a game master you can choose to watch the movie to see the mood that the scenario wants to evoke. Or you can choose to disregard the film and create your own version of this family's suffering.

<https://vimeo.com/237784196>

Premise: A dying mother travels at a speed close to the speed of light in an attempt to deceive time and death. All to get the chance to see her daughter grow up.

Beautiful Dreamer is a science fiction time travel story that takes place in the near future. But it is also a personal story. A young mother afflicted with a fatal disease leaves her little daughter and travels into space at a speed approaching the speed of light. Using the theory of relativity, she can extend her last two years over her daughter's entire lifetime but can only visit her daughter for one day every seven years. The visits are sometimes sad and sometimes beautiful. The daughter reaches her own mother's age and then passes far beyond this while her mother is left stranded at the same age as she was when she first left her daughter on earth. Their lives are torn apart by the same technology that gives them a lifetime together. It is a lifetime chopped up in small short moments.

This scenario is about the relationship between a mother and a daughter during a lifetime. From the child's boundless love, to the teenage daughter's emotional liberation process and so on through life, until the two comes to an understanding of each other, and find safety with each other.

But it is also a scenario that wants to discuss what a parent is willing to sacrifice to get to see her child grow up, and how it will affect the child during the rest of its life.

## Practicalities

Number of players:	2
Number of game master:	1
Duration:	1.5-2 h
Material:	Printed character sheets for the players. Something to play the end song with. Beautiful Dreamer from the album Nursery Rhymes 123 (Can be found on <a href="#">Spotify</a> )

# Game master documents

## Arrangement

The session as a whole follows the following structure

- Welcome the players. Tell them about the scenario and the structure of the game.
- Distribute the characters. Answer any questions.
- Let the players name their characters
- **Set level of physical contact between the players. Is this necessary?**
- Go through game start and end of game
- For each scene
  - Read the introductory text
  - Start playing.
    - Help the players keep momentum in the scene if they need it.
  - End the scene when you deem it appropriate.
- Have a short discussion afterwards

## Casting

There are two roles. The mother and her daughter.

The daughter's role is very much focused on telling a story about the life she has had and her reaction to the mother's temporary visits.

The mother's role is focused on discussing the dreams and aspirations that a parent can have for their children.

Explain who, and what, the two roles are, and ask if anyone is interested in a specific role. Or the game master can distribute the roles based on who the game master finds best suited for a role. Ask the players to name their roles.

The gender identity of the players is not relevant in the casting. However, the characters' genders are fixed and should be played as they are written. This is a game about mothers and daughters, missing your loved ones and about finding similarities in each other's lives. About the fear of "becoming their parent", and about coming to understand that we are shaped by our parents. Both in one's similarities and in one's differences.

## Practical information

### Scene directions

Before each scene, the game master reads an introductory text and starts the scene. Each scene (except the first one) starts with the Mother and the Daughter meeting again for the first time in seven years.

Let the scene play out properly and reach its emotional goal. Then start the next scene.

If the game does not find its direction, the game master should guide the players through prompts or guiding questions. Try to guide the players towards the feeling that is the goal of the scene. The scenes are allowed to take time, but if the players get repetitive or get stuck without moving towards the goal, it is time to end the scene.

### Physical Contact (Is this needed?)

Make sure that those who play the couple negotiate a level of physical contact that they both are comfortable with. The game does not need any great measure of physical contact. But let the players negotiate a level that suits them, in their roles as mother and daughter. Both physical contact in the form of intimacy, hugs and holding hands, stroking the daughter over the hair etc ...

But also discuss physical contact during conflict. Pushing, grappling etc.

## Closing discussion

Thank the participants for playing Beautiful Dreamer.

Depending on what the players have focused on, you can use a couple of the following questions to discuss the scenario and the players' experience.

- Discuss the mother's decision. Was she selfish? Was it worth it?
- Ask the players to reflect on their own parents. In what ways are they similar to their parents? How are they different from their parents? (Avoid valuing the relationship with the parents. Even in a bad relationship, one can see the traits of one's parents in one's self)
- Can a parent stop worrying about its children?
- How does a child's role change towards its parents during a lifetime?

Also discuss feedback on the scenario. What worked, what didn't work?

You are welcome to forward this feedback to me at [niklas.disefalk@gmail.com](mailto:niklas.disefalk@gmail.com).

# Scenes

## Scene 1 - The Goodbye - 2 years old

### Setting and goals of the scene

The family is at Gothenburg's spaceport. The mother now has the chance to say her last words to a child who has no opportunity to understand what will happen. Aim for a resolute, low-key atmosphere.

### The game master's presentation

The doctor's diagnosis hit the little family hard. The mother had only two years left to live.

The father would have to bring a small four-year-old daughter to her mother's funeral. Two years was all that they had left.

But then they were told about the alternative. The space company offers dying people a risky method that still allows them to participate in the lives of their families.

The mother will be sent out on exploratory space travels, impossibly far from the earth.

When traveling at such high speeds, time is relative. The mother's travels will last for two months at a time in the spacecraft. Two months of scientific experiments and surveys of other solar systems with other sufferers. But when she comes home after the two months, seven years have passed down on earth. Once at home she gets one day with her family, before it's time to set out again towards the stars.

To the Mother:

...But now is the time to say goodbye. In front of you stands the man you love, along with your little daughter. It's time to say goodbye to her. Time to say your last words to a two-year-old girl.

### The ending of the scene

This scene does not have to be very long. If the emotions become too upset or high key, then it is time to interrupt the scene. Then the game master can step in as a representative of the company, or as the father, and say that it is time to leave.

## Scene 2 - The joy of reunion - 9 years old

### Setting and goals of the scene

This is the child's scene. Getting to meet her mother is like meeting her idol. A person who is loved at a distance. Both the Mother and the Daughter are now filled with anticipation and curiosity. Who is this person standing in front of them? Strive for a loving and exploratory feeling. Bubbling joy.

### The game master's presentation

To The Daughter: As long as you can remember, you have heard the stories of your mother. The Mother that you can not remember, but who you know sacrificed everything just to be able to meet you. Your dad told you that it was the Mother's great love that had created you and that her great love made it possible for her to come back to you over and over again. You and your dad have prepared this for a long time. The walls at home are filled with pictures of everything that you have done together during your childhood. You want to tell her everything about what you have done since she left.

To the Mother: Nothing could prepare you for this. You've only been away for two months, but the man you love has become a middle-aged man with thinning hair. He has been waiting faithfully for you during all these years. And your little, little girl is so big. How could she suddenly become so big? You want to know everything about her and do everything for her. This will be a day of stories and adventures, and tonight you will finally get to put your child to bed again.

When she tells you things about her life, you remember your own childhood and your own dreams of how your daughter's life would be.

### The ending of the scene

This is probably the scenario's longest scene. Try to keep the players running. If you have to, you can step in as the child's father and suggest conversation topics or things to do.

Suggested topics:

- How it was to start school
- Who is her best friend
- Look through photo albums
- What recreational activities the daughter has.
- The daughter's dreams of the future. What she wants to become when she gets older. What she wants to do with her life

When they begin to run out of subject to talk about, they can switch to doing things together as a family.

- Go out and see the city
- Make snow angels
- Go and swim
- Go to a zoo together.
- Make Christmas decorations together

- Bake a cake together

The scene ends when the day is over. For the first time in seven years / two months, The Mother gets to tuck her daughter in for the night . Perform the night ritual, and break the scene when the daughter has fallen asleep.



## Scene 3 - The betrayed teenager - 16 years old

### Setting and goals of the scene

This is about the emotional teens. The absence of a present mother has given the teenager a difficult upbringing. This scene is about conflict and guilt.

### The game master's presentation

To the Mother: You had been so nervous about your first meeting. Would the Daughter understand what you had done? Would you manage to get to know each other again? And then you had such a wonderful day together.

And now you have been away for two months, and you are really looking forward to meeting your big little girl again. You will just hang out, have fun and tell each other stories about your lives.

To The Daughter: You fell asleep that night in a warm, motherly embrace, and everything was so good. But when you woke up in the morning, you were alone again and your dad was crying down in the kitchen. He had that strange smell that some adults get at parties when they start to act strange. But you had never felt that smell on him early in the morning. And everything was her fault. Dad had paused his whole life for her sake. You couldn't move on, because everything was about her coming back again in a few years.

The teenage years had been horrible. Dad had not met any new partner, and there was a big hole in your life, which was not filled by anyone or anything else. Years of therapy have not removed the hormone fueled teenage anger that you feel against the mother who betrayed you. Everything is her fault.

And now she is suddenly standing in front of you again.

### The ending of the scene

In this scene, we want emotional storms and quarrels. It should be screaming and slamming of doors. It is important that the game master keeps the fire burning in the quarrel. Do not let them make up and become friends again

Make sure that the quarrel takes over the scene. Break when the energy disappears or if they start to make up.

You can step in as the child's father if needed to keep the quarrel going.

Point out those times when the daughter needed and missed her mother's support.

- Young love relationships
- Handling the father's grief
- Bullying situations in school.
- How it is to be the only child in the class without a mother present
- Puberty

## Scene 4 - Regret and a desire for friendship - 23 years old

### Setting and goals of the scene

During the passing of years, maturity will come. The violent mood swings of the teenager are gone and it is time to realize that whatever happened, it's time to apologize and look towards the future together.

This scene is about forgiveness and about growing up.

### The game master's presentation

To the Daughter. You said such terrible things. You regret it all. You thought she had destroyed your life, but your life was not destroyed. You are now a young woman, on the doorstep of a professional life. You do what you love, along with a new partner you love. You are very nervous, but you know the next time you meet with your mother, you must apologize and start over with her.

To the Mother. The last two months have been hell. Your family was in such a state when you left them, and your beloved daughter hated you. And for them, seven years have passed. Your daughter is now 23. Imagine if she is still angry with you. She was such a frail, angry teenager. What horrors she may have suffered during these years? All the evil that may have happened to her, and you couldn't be there to support her. Only now do you begin to realize how big the difference is in the two months that pass for you between each visit and the seven years that pass for your loved ones.

And the lump in your stomach just feels worse and worse. When you landed this morning, your husband refused to meet you. He didn't even let you into the hall of the house you used to share.

But now you see your daughter coming towards you. And she could be your little sister. You look so similar. She is no longer a lanky teenager with too hard makeup. Now she is a young woman walking towards you.

### The ending of the scene

It's time for the two of them to make up and to try to find each other again. Let them tell stories about their lives. Talk about life in space and about who the daughter has become. Make sure that the initial tentative nervousness turns into forgiveness, to finally end up in a feeling of family, understanding and affinity.

This scene ends **differently**. Let the players finish the talk. Let them make up. Let them do things together. E.g. going out dancing, going to a restaurant, visiting an important place, etc.

But when they start to feel safe, it is time that you give Modern a secret instruction. Her illness strikes. Give her a note or tell her that she is getting a fit. She has just enough time to ask her daughter to call an ambulance before she faints.

## Scene 5 - Parenthood - 30 years old

### Setting and goals of the scene

It is time to discuss parenthood, the dreams you have for your child and the hope of the future.

The goal of the scene is that the mother should finally be able to be there and support her daughter in all concerns about becoming a parent. But the goal is also to talk about how you want to be as a parent. Who you hope you will be.

### The game master's presentation

To the Mother. The doctors managed to stabilize you, and your illness is now under control. You look forward to meeting the daughter who became your friend two months ago. And there she comes to meet you. But.....

That belly... That is a brand new baby bump.

To the Daughter. You didn't know if your mother would show up today. She was in such a bad state when you parted. She looked so frail when she lay in the ambulance, when the Space Company drove away with her. But now you really need her advice. All the anxiety you feel over the life growing within you. You are as old as your mother was when she left. You are virtually the same age. What would you do if you were in the same situation as your mother.

Together you go to antenatal clinic. You sit in the waiting room and talk about parenting with each other. How do you become a good parent? What kind of parent do you want to be, and what are your hopes for your child.

### The ending of the scene

Make sure that the players dig deep into the concept of parenting and the question of being present for their children.

- Discuss name suggestions for the expected child
- What are you prepared to sacrifice for your children.
- Compare the daughter's dreams of parenting with how her childhood became.
- Can one stop worrying about their children?

In this scene, the Game Master can act as another parent in the waiting room, or step in as a member of the staff.

End the scene when it feels right, by calling the daughter into the midwife's room.

## Scene 6 - Recognition - 37 years old

### Setting and goals of the scene

This scene is about recognizing yourself in the life of your mother/daughter. It is about seeing that some patterns repeats, and about getting an understanding of each other. The feeling that is sought after is low key comfort and recognition.

### The game master's presentation

To the Mother. You are really looking forward to meeting your grandchild. It's only ten months since you left your two-year-old daughter, but she is now older than you are, 37 years old.

You meet at a playground, and you are shocked at how tired she looks. And middle-aged. The hair starts to shift in gray. Somewhere in the playground, your grandson probably runs around. But your daughter also rocks a pram.

To the Daughter. Your life seemed to be on the right path. You had a fun job. You and your partner had great dreams about your future life. You wanted a big family. Maybe you wanted it because you weren't part of a big family yourself. But this is where your problems began. It was all very well when Adam came, but when little Alice was born, the arguments never seemed to end. You have separated from your partner. You no longer talk to each other. Now you have to do everything yourself. You wish your mother was there and helped you. You're so tired.

### The ending of the scene

The game master can act like another parent on the playground in this scene. Steer the discussion towards relationships and how their lives turned out to be. The game master can also jump in as one of the children to more clearly control the discussion

Compare how they both have left their partners, and how they now live in the moment, only for their children.

Let them find comfort in each other, and seek advice from one another. But if they become solution-oriented and want to "fix" the daughter's life, then it's time to intervene and steer the discussion, or to finish the scene.

## Scene 7 - The end - 86 years old

### Setting and goals of the scene

This is the end of the journey. They meet one last time at the end of their lives. Was it a good life? Was it a bad life? Is it even possible to put those two labels on a life?

### The game master's presentation

To the Mother: Your illness has finally caught up with you. You have landed after your last trip. The eleventh trip. Two years have passed. You have followed your daughter through all stages of her life. You got to see it, but only through a window. You have looked through that window every seven years, without being able to act or help. But you are at least together at the end. Now at the end you can finally be there as a comfort for your daughter.

To the Daughter: Your life has finally run its course. Your son Adam visits you on a regular basis, but it is so rare. His job takes a lot of time. Your big grief is your daughter Alice. You have not met for a long time. She doesn't visit anymore.

But now your mother is here. You meet one last time at a palliative care unit where you are admitted (Palliative care is care in the end stage of life).

You are small and fragile. The dementia has been mean to you, and you have difficulty keeping track of whether you are in the present, or if you are nine years old, when your mother appeared for the first time.

You're scared and longing for your Mum. And now she's here again. At least you are together at the end.

### The ending of the scene

This is probably a pretty short scene, but let them both reflect on the lives they have lived. Let Mother comfort her daughter in her anxiety.

End the scene by letting them grasp each other's hands. Together they both pass away. They close their eyes, and the game master plays the lullaby [Beautiful Dreamer](#) for them.

# Player document - The Mother

A dying mother travels at a speed close to the speed of light in an attempt to deceive time and death. All to get the chance to see her daughter grow up.

Beautiful Dreamer is a science fiction time travel story that takes place in the near future. But it is also a personal story. A young mother afflicted with a fatal disease leaves her little daughter and travels into space at a speed approaching the speed of light. Using the theory of relativity, she can extend her last two years over her daughter's entire lifetime but can only visit her daughter for one day every seven years. The visits are sometimes sad and sometimes beautiful. The daughter reaches her own mother's age and then passes far beyond this while her mother is left stranded at the same age as she was when she first left her daughter on earth. Their lives are torn apart by the same technology that gives them a lifetime together. It is a lifetime chopped up in small short moments.

This scenario is about the relationship between a mother and a daughter during a lifetime. From the child's boundless love, to the teenage daughter's emotional liberation process and so on through life, until the two comes to an understanding of each other, and find safety with each other.

But it is also a scenario that wants to discuss what a parent is willing to sacrifice to get to see her child grow up, and how it will affect the child during the rest of its life.

## Your character

Thank you for playing this scenario. You are the Mother of this story. You have suffered a severe illness that will take your life within two years. Your little family, a husband and a two-year-old daughter, will have to live without you no matter what you do.

But you grasp at the opportunity to still be involved in your daughter's life.

Who will she become?

How will she live her life?

Did you make the right decision when you choose to not spend all your remaining time with her?

She would have been four years at your funeral.

Or have you just caused her grief? Was it selfish of you, to only meet her for 12 days, but 12 days scattered throughout a lifetime?

# Player document - The Daughter

A dying mother travels at a speed close to the speed of light in an attempt to deceive time and death. All to get the chance to see her daughter grow up.

Beautiful Dreamer is a science fiction time travel story that takes place in the near future. But it is also a personal story. A young mother afflicted with a fatal disease leaves her little daughter and travels into space at a speed approaching the speed of light. Using the theory of relativity, she can extend her last two years over her daughter's entire lifetime but can only visit her daughter for one day every seven years. The visits are sometimes sad and sometimes beautiful. The daughter reaches her own mother's age and then passes far beyond this while her mother is left stranded at the same age as she was when she first left her daughter on earth. Their lives are torn apart by the same technology that gives them a lifetime together. It is a lifetime chopped up in small short moments.

This scenario is about the relationship between a mother and a daughter during a lifetime. From the child's boundless love, to the teenage daughter's emotional liberation process and so on through life, until the two comes to an understanding of each other, and find safety with each other.

But it is also a scenario that wants to discuss what a parent is willing to sacrifice to get to see her child grow up, and how it will affect the child during the rest of its life.

## Your Character

Thank you for playing this scenario. You are the daughter of this story. You have lived your entire life without your mother by your side. But your mother has always been present. Your entire life depends on that seven-year cycle. You have missed your mother, met her again, only to immediately lose her again. And so it all starts over again.

How has this affected your life?

Who did you become?