

DON'T CARE ABOUT US

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Number of players: 5

Game masters: 1

Time: 2 hours

Props: Blindfolds (one per player), gun replica.

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Description of the scenario

The government has always marginalized you. The frustration has always been there, right under your skin. There is no starting shot, there's only an anger that needs to be released. You are the ethnically largest group in the country, and the land you live on has always belonged to you. Nevertheless, your voices are never heard in the politics, the boundaries are moved so that your land is reduced and your comrades are shot to death without any penalty. The government says they must ensure that the law is followed, but silences when media asks about the hundreds of protesters who lose their lives.

The demonstration is over. You were caught. They want information or your life. You keep together. For now. But what will happen when you can't hold up any longer? When someone let's go?

All players will wear blindfolds throughout the game and must be comfortable with holding hands with the other players. The game strives for an intimate and emotional experience of the security of having each other and the lack thereof.

What is the scenario about?

The scenario is about five individuals, who have been caught by the government after having killed a general during a demonstration for their own human rights. *[The fact that they killed a general should not be told to the players before the second card in the workshop]*. They are now in holding by the government. They are asked to either sell out their friends or die for their cause. And if they sell out their friends, they know that they will die instead. The entire game is about the discussion in the group on what do to; keep together and die together or sell someone out and maybe survive themselves. What's most important; your own life or the cause your fighting for?

The premises for the larp are loosely based on the situation in Ethiopia 2016.

About the characters and setting

The characters are created by the players during the workshop before the game starts. They are free to create the characters as they find fit. The characters gender, age and things like that can be something else than the players. As the game master you should make sure that the players all understand that.

There's no specific setting or geographic area that this scenario takes place in, the players are free to decide that in the character creation workshop if they find it interesting or necessary for their game play.

Matetechniques

The blindfolds

The blindfolds exist both ingame and offgame but for two different reasons. In the game the characters have blindfolds that have been put on by the government as a way to take control over the characters and make them more vulnerable.

Offgame the blindfolds is a technique to hopefully enhance the players other senses. The blindfolds should be on at all times from that the game starts and until the game masters tells the players to take them off.

Holding hands

The players will be holding hands with each other during the entire game. This is only an offgame technique. In the game setting the character are in different parts of the same room chained to the wall by their hands.

Offgame the fact that the players are holding hands symbolizes the characters will to stay together. When they hold hands they keep together. If someone starts to doubt or maybe want to confess or sell out their friends, they could start to loosen their grip a bit. The hands are used as symbol and technique to show have keen the characters are to keep together.

The gun

The gun, only used by the game master, exist both ingame and offgame but for two different reasons. The game master can place the gun at the foreheads of the players during the game.

In the game the guards at the place where the characters are being held carries guns. They use them as a way to scare the convicts and can also kill the convicts with them. If during the game the gun goes off while being held at a characters head, that character dies. When a character dies, that player should let go off the hands they are holding.

Offgame the gun is used as a way to control the intensity of the game, when you as a player feel the gun at your head it is as a reminder that "sell out your friends or die" and "sell out your friends and they die". See this as an opportunity to say all the inner thoughts of your character even though they wouldn't really want to say them.

The gun will be more frequent the closer to the end the scenario comes.

Music

During the whole game music will be played to create a feeling of isolation and also to help heighten other senses of the players. When the larp ends the music will change to a song that concludes the game.

During the original run of the game, these soundtracks were used:

The main larp - White Noise - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ArwcHjmsw3A>

The end - Care About Us, Xriss Jor - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qask1J_y0zg

To run the game

Set up the room

Put a table, preferably round, in the center of the room and arrange one chair per player around the table. Also put a chair a bit away from the table, this is where you as the game master will be during the workshop. You should not sit by the players as they should feel that they are free to do whatever they want during the workshop. Also put a table by your chair and gather all the props and cards for the scenario on it.

Great the players

Welcome the players and ask them to sit down on one of the chairs. Read *The description of the scenario* for them. Ask the players if they feel comfortable with having a blindfold and holding each other's hands during the game. If not, ask them to leave the game area, this is not a scenario for them. If yes, have them try on the blindfolds, just to feel how they feel, and then take them off again.

Workshop - feeling and touching

Inform the players that you will make two short exercises, and that they should divide into two groups: one with two players and one with three players.

Exercise 1

Ask the players to sit in opposite each other. You should sit opposite one of the players in the group of three. Ask them to look into each other eyes until you ask them to stop. Stop after about two minutes time. If you feel like it, you can do this exercise again, with new pairs. "

Exercise 2

Ask the players to hold hands with each other. During the game this technique will be used to show emotions and feeling from the characters to the players. This is what you will do a short exercise in now. Instruct them to hold the hands as if the character were:

- Absolutely sure that they will keep together
- About to let go of the other
- Afraid that the other will let go
- Feeling safe and calm
- Afraid of dying

Workshop - creating characters

Tell the players that they now will create the characters for this larp together. They will soon get some cards with frames for their characters and then they will be able to flesh them out together. The cards are handed out at random to the players.

The process will always look like this:

1. The players get a card and reads it
2. Go around and let everyone read their card out loud (not the last card)
3. Discuss one card at a time and flesh out the character

Card 1 - Relationships

This card describes a relationship between your character and another players character. Makes sure that every player gets two relationship, the one they have on their card as well as being the other part on someone else's card.

The relationships in the game are:

- Relatives
- Lovers
- Recruited
- Childhood friends
- Caretaker

Card 2 - Your part in killing the general

This card describes your characters part or role in killing the general during the demonstration. This is the first time the players should be notified that they killed a general during the demonstration.

The parts they could have are:

- The idealist
- The face
- The fixer
- The killer
- The uncertain

Card 3 - Your view on death or dying

This card describes your characters view on death or dying. **This card should NOT be shared with the other players, it's secret.** This card tells you a bit about what's most important, your own life or the cause your fighting for.

The views they could have are:

- Your family
- The value of life
- The one you miss
- Fate of a friend
- A new beginning

Final discussion

After receiving all the cards the players should be able to have a last discussion about their characters. This could be used to tie up loose ends or flesh out some relationships more. Also tell them that they are free to improvise things during the game as well, and that the others should play along with whatever comes up.

Starting the game

Ask the players to take on their blindfolds and make sure that they fit comfortably. Then ask them to hold hands with each other in a circle around the table. Tell them that the game will start as soon as the music/sound starts playing. Also tell them that the game will end when a new song starts, they should then be quiet but keep their blindfolds on. Then wait a couple of minutes before starting the soundtrack for *White Noise*.

The scenario (about 60 minutes)

The entire scenario centers around the characters discussion about what to do in the situation they are in. If they became silent during the game, let them be silent, that's okay. Don't interrupt. You as the game master should be quiet during the whole game. If the characters tries to talk to some "guard" or such, don't answer them. The only voices that should be heard are theirs.

During the game you, as the game master, should use the gun to increase the intensity of the game. It is up to you to pace when to use it and which character to target. It's recommended that the first use of the gun is about 10 minutes in to the game and the second use 5 minutes

later. After that make sure to use it more and more the longer the scenario goes on. When it's 15 minutes left of the game you can start to kill the characters. It's up to you who to kill, why and when. Use the gun to enhance the experience for the players, to make an emotional game and to put pressure on the characters. When someone dies and let go of their hands, make sure to rearrange the other players hands so that they are still holding on to each other.

Ending the game

When 60 minutes have passed or you feel that the game has come to its conclusion (whichever comes first) put on the ending music. In the play test Xriss Jors cover of *Don't Care About Us* (originally by Michael Jackson) was used. Let the whole song play out. Then let there be silence for a brief period of time, before thanking the players for taking part in the game. Ask them to remove their blindfolds when they feel ready.

After the game

After the game is over and everyone has taken off their blindfold, take a moment to just breathe out together. Then let them all get the opportunity to express their thoughts and feelings after having played the game. This can be done with *rounds*, where everyone gets to speak their mind before passing the speaking space to the next person, no comments or questions should be spoken by the others while someone is talking.

The questions below can be used as a foundation for this closing up reflections.

- How do you feel right now, after having played this scenario?
- Is there anything you need right now?
- Is there anything about the scenario that you would like to change?

Then thank them for taking part in the scenario *Don't Care About Us*. The scenario is then over.

You, as the game master, are more than welcome to send a mail about the experience of running the game, both the goods and the bads, to its writer Simon Larsson at vitasparven@live.se

Make sure to include the debrief talk in the timeframe for the game.

Character Description

On the following pages the cards are described in plain text. A layouted version of the cards can be downloaded in a separate file.

Card 1 - Relationships

Relatives

You are close relatives with one of the other characters. You decide what kind of relatives you are. Decide your relation.

Then ask the other to describe a happy memory that you share.

Lovers

You are in a relationship with one of the other characters. You decide how your relationship is. Decide your relation.

Then ask the other to tell about the first time you met.

Recruited

You were recruited to this group by one of the other characters. How you feel for each other is up to you to decide. Decide your relation.

Then ask the other to tell about how the recruitment were done.

Childhood friends

You are childhood friends with one of the other characters. You decide how your relation is right now. Decide your relation.

Then ask the other to tell about a childhood adventure that you had.

Caretaker

You were taken into care by one of the other characters. How your relation looks right now is up to you to decide. Decide your relation. Then ask the other to tell about one time wene the choice to take care of you felt absolutely right.

Card 2 - Your part in killing the general

The idealist

You were the one that came up with the idea to kill the general.

Describe how you feel about that idea right now.

The face

You are the face for your group. You are the one that they will blame.

Describe how you felt the seconds before the shot was fired.

The fixer

You were the one who fixed the gun. Without it, no shot.

Describe how you felt when you, for the first time ever, held the gun in your hand.

The killer

You were the one who took the general's life. Your hand pulled the trigger.

Describe how you felt pulling the trigger of the gun.

The uncertain

You were the one that wanted to drop out. Before it was all too late.

Describe how you feel now, now when it is too late.

Card 3 - Your view on death or dying

Your family

Your family is here with you.

The ones you care about are standing here, with you.

Your friends are here, with you.

The value of life

Your life feels more worth than death.

Maybe your life is more worth then the cause?

Do you rather live than die?

The one you miss

There is someone at home that your heart beats for.

There is someone at home that you miss.

There is someone at home that misses you.

Fate of a friend

A friend to you died for the cause.

Maybe you should die for the cause as well?

Maybe you should live for the cause?

A new beginning

Death isn't dangerous.

Death isn't the end of anything.

Death is only the beginning of something new.