

Dessert

Dessert is a simple free-form game, that shows how important friendship is, and how much energy and care is needed to maintain this relation or cultivate it to grow. By no means this game has fixed approach or mood to play with, thus could be funny improv with some meaning, serious exercise of social behavior, game of contest and contestation or anything in-between. Basically, this is just bro-story, so no matter how "mint" or "strawberry" will be your interpretation, keep the friendship element at the core of your *Dessert*. And remember that as there should be some sugar, sour and bitter are fine counterparts.

PREPARATIONS

If you have some experience with improvised theatre or live-action/pen-and-paper RPG, then you and your co-players will be ready in few minutes or so. If this is your first game/exercise, then please read carefully and consult rules with other participants. To play this game you need about two hours of time, and few printed sheets (with pens) for voting.

Ideal number of Players is four, with minimal number of three, and maximum of six. With four Players you will have two "teams" of friends, with one pair playing scenes (Active) and other observing them (Inactive). They will be changing their Active/Inactive status one after another.

Dessert doesn't need a Moderator (Director/Referee/Master/etc), but if you have very limited time or inexperienced Players (or you want to cut dialogs in the right time), then be one or designate non-Player. With or without Moderator, most of the decisions are left to Inactive Players, which hold the power to decide about relations of the Active Players. In games without Moderator, Inactive Players can also give signals to Active Players to move with the dialogs or finish the scene but they shouldn't just break or force anything.

Before game will start, all participants should clarify any immediately visible issues, like maximal time (both for whole play time or individual scenes), role of the audience (if done as show), use of furniture/ /items/props (if any) and choosing of language (both in a case of multi-lingual group or severity of street language/curses).

Also rules of presenting friendship require Players to touch each other's hands (palms clenched in fists), and to be able to repeatedly keep arms stretched in the air for a couple of minutes. If there are some problems with those requirements, you must decide if there will be general change of rules or just exception for one or more Players.

GAME BASICS - TEAMS

Firstly, form teams of two Players each (with the exception of three-Player game). Each team consist of two Players playing friends, but they are not Super-Bros or Best-Friends-Forever. At least not yet. Each team is based on some simple antagonisms. These are:

Team 1 - Rich Friend & Poor Friend

Team 2 - Old Friend & Young Friend

Now give, or let to choose, simple names to all Players. You can go with stereotypical John, Carl, Bill, Kate, Sally or similar, but most important is to all participants to remember their new nicknames. You can also ignore names, and just use "bro", "dude", "mate", "sistah" and similar callings.

At the end of the Team forming, other Team (or Moderator) should give few vague elements to the friendship story - what they do for a living, how they met, what they plan to do, etc. The key is to provide other Team with some ideas to play with, and not giving them impossible combination unable to be used.

If you want other teams than those above, or you plan to play this game several times, you can add other, more suitable options. Antagonisms work best, as most of the time, diversity help friendship. If you use this game with three-Players option, then it is recommended to give the third Player an intermediate role - for an example: "Medium-wage Friend" (with Rich & Poor) or "Teamleader Friend" (with Boss & Employee). Of course, you can mix a little more when you will master this *Dessert* of yours.

Some other Teams could be:

Team 3 - Scientist Friend & Activist Friend

Team 4 - Boss Friend & Employee Friend

GAME BASICS - RELATION

At the beginning of the game, relation between friends (played by the Players) in the same Teams is just a Simple Friendship, and this is showed by the "bro-fists" and stretched arms - Players should keep them joined in the air as long, as they are Active Players (the best position is when both Players are standing or sitting about 4 feet/1,2 metre away from each other). If Active Players, by any reason, will break physical contact of "bro-fist", their friendship will experience a setback - this will put a scene to an end, and decrease the advance of relation, if any was made. Note that further advancement past Simple Friendship is possible on the course of the game, but it is not possible to completely destroy this relation, which could be viewed as optimistic, but that is a game, after all (which probably won't stop you from creating options for complete destruction of friendship).

Relations can change by accidental break of the fist-to-fist contact (Players shouldn't try to willingly destroy their friendship), but most of the time, relation will change if they will play convincing friends. After every turn of scenes, Passive Players judge how convincing Active Players were, using voting forms (you will find forms at the end of the game instructions). Every Inactive Player votes independently, and when all finish, one of them (or Moderator) presents the outcome. More "Yes" make relation to advance. More "No" decrease any advancements by one step. If there is a tie, nothing changes. Remember that there are no "below zero" relations - they simply cannot go worst than starting level (Simple Friendship).

When Team is granted an advancement to their relation, they have to act accordingly, and play out their new feelings. Also, the visible symbol of their friendship - "bro-fist", is evolving. When advanced from Simple Friendship, they will get Companionship, and they should now stand or sit closer, and their arms should be bended to easily support their joined fists. If they will not lose this level by the voting, and eventually advance again, they will be granted Bond, which is ultimate step on the road to life-lasting relations we all admire. Players with Bond should stand or sit as close as possible, their "bro-fist" kept simple, and their arms rested or at ease.

GAME BASICS - SCENES

When game will start for a Team (or later, the Team change its status from Inactive), there will be two scenes. In this scenes, Players act to show the friendship of characters they play. Those Players in other, Inactive Teams provide few ideas where the Active Team's characters are and what they are doing, and they should choose from this advices, and play along. If your game have Moderator, he can provide ideas, and be more strict on some of the scenes' background. Remember, that "bro-fist" must be maintained as long as scene is played, and only when scene will end, Players can break free and rest their arms.

In every turn of the scenes, there should be one "action" scene, and one "food" scene. Action scene should be placed somewhere, where characters need help or advice from each other, like sailing boat or nightclub. Action scene gives Players opportunity to show their characters relation, and improvise the surroundings and events. There is no limit to the length of the action scene, but it is recommended to keep it in about five minutes. Inactive Players and/or Moderator can signal to Active Players to finish, but they can also support during a scene, when additional ideas are needed.

Food scene is little different. All rules above, from "action" scene apply, but there is some variations -
- food scene is always complementary to the action scene, and it is always after the "action" (the only exception is the starting turn of the game, as you will see in later part of this materials). Food scene can, but not must, be related (be a continuation) to the action scene before, but it will make easier for Players to improvise fast. The most important thing to remember about "food" scene, is that Players can force the ideal vision of the relation of their characters, and Inactive Players (who will judge, how convincing their current relation is) must take this sweetened moments into the account, along with more harsh decision about "action" scene. Food scene should be shorter than action scene, and about three minutes should be enough.

PLAYING THE GAME

When all Players are ready, you can start by choosing (could be randomly) which Team will be first (or two of three Players , if you play Three-Player game). This Team is now Active with their fist joined in the air, and other Team is Inactive and wait. Now proceed to the first turn of scenes.

First turn is unique, as it has reverse set of scenes - "food" is first, and "action" later. In later turns it will be action, then food, so all Players should try to use starting scenes' composition to their advantage.

Few ideas for characters:

- They have met at the party
- They are distant relatives
- They were at the same school
- They have met at work
- They like the same artist
- They both live nearby

Few ideas for teams:

- Broker & Assistant
- Bookseller & Student
- Dancer & Craftsman
- Veterinarian & Cook
- Accountant & Nurse
- Analyst & Musician

First food scene should be about sweets. This could be anything from chocolate bars, to butterscotch pudding or even fancy ice & fruit desserts. Just keep in mind, that the scene is about shared interests and friendship. This is a great moment to invent how characters met, why they became friends (and why a cherry is so much better than an apple).

After the food scene is over, Active Players can have a few moments to rest their arms, and prepare to action scene. However, this few moments of break can be omitted, if all agree. Action scene should have less sugar and more sour or bitter taste.

Few ideas for action scenes:

- Nightclub
- Shopping
- Sport match
- Beach
- Cooking
- Fishing/Hunting
- Movie/Theater
- Climbing/Swimming
- Airplane/Ship
- Camping/Skiing

After both scenes, Inactive Players judge the efforts of the Active Players, and now they become Active Players and have to play their scenes, and will be judged in the same way (if you have more than two Teams, then just one of them, and after their scenes and voting pass, another Team will get his Active status, and so on).

Every subsequent turn of scenes (two scenes and judging for every Team) is the same, you just need to remember that action scene is first, and food scene is second.

There is no "win" or "lose" in the Dessert, but all Players should try to advance the friendship of their characters, and convince other they did well. If at the end of the game, Team had managed to advance its relation to Bond (and kept it that way), then this Team is pronounced as life-long friends. This is why there is no fixed number of turns of scenes, as there should be a chance for all Teams to advance at least once. Of course, if you are interested in more competitive play, you should set a number of turns of the game. Between five and seven should be enough, but you can prefer much longer (or shorter) gameplay.

GAME VARIATIONS

Along the text you can find few optional rules to make this game more intense, but still, it's just *Vanilla Dessert*. This game is very easy to change or converse to serve purposes other than funny improvisation and light morality play. It's impossible to predict how different will be your vision, but here you can find a couple of ideas. Colour-coded (or more dessert-coded).

Mint Dessert would change friendship into parenthood, and try to emulate how relation between parent and a child can change. Both Three-Player (two parents, one child) and Four-Player (two teams with one parent and a one child in each) game options are good. Scenes should reflect time spent together, and can be easily modified for the right tone.

Strawberry Dessert would be about friendship and love interwoven, between a boy and a girl, so you need at least two Teams, each consisting of male and female Player. Rules are very similar to *Vanilla*, but there should be fourth level of relation (above Bond), called Love, and at this level of friendship, "bro-fist" changes into joined palms. This game version should be very clearly consulted between Players to avoid inconvenience.

Orange Dessert can be more daring, and move to subjects that *Strawberry* barely touches, bringing more emotional (and possibly even sexual) tension. When you will choose the *Orange*, friendship changes into affair, and have four levels (Simple Affair, Affair, Serious Affair, Romance) each symbolized by palm touching the back of the other Player (with reduced distance and stretch of arms after every advancement, just like in *Vanilla*). There should be no more than two Teams, male and female in each, and Three-Player version should not be used. Optional rule for *Orange Dessert* is to play it really intense, and allow for non-mixed gender in Teams, give alternative to play opposite-sex character, and to ignore Three-Player version ban. No matter how much of an *Orange* you will use, this game option is a serious exercise, and should be carefully consulted.

Do you agree that their relation
is convincing?

YES

NO

Do you agree that their relation
is convincing?

YES

NO

Do you agree that their relation
is convincing?

YES

NO

Do you agree that their relation
is convincing?

YES

NO

Do you agree that their relation
is convincing?

YES

NO

Do you agree that their relation
is convincing?

YES

NO