

May-December-May

A game about people who connect across a century of relationships.

We have always connected across generations: for love, for sympathy, for the symbiosis or thrill of experience and youth. It's common for those connections to repeat themselves. The younger half ages and they find themselves in a May-December relationship, only now they're the December. And then *their* May learns and ages and the process repeats, again and again, an unbroken string of lives across the decades.

If reincarnation is real, if it's really *a thing*, then surely we would seek each other out. Our string of lives may sometimes close into a circle. Would we recognize when it happened?

In this game, one of you plays someone older, say in their 50s. The other plays someone from the previous generation, between 20 and 30 years younger. The older one will age and die, the younger matures into the older half of another relationship. This process repeats and at the end, perhaps the circle will be closed.

You Need

- Four index cards and something to write with
- The two-sided play cards on the last page. Print one copy of the play cards, cut in half the long way, and fold/tape. You should have one card with *December* on one side and *The Child* on the other, and one with *May* one side and *The Adult* on the other.
- A space with at least a bench or a table and chairs, and room to walk around once play begins.

Start: 1920s

Both players start with a blank index card. Talk about your first May-December relationship idea and write a single letter (W or M or something else) on each to indicate gender. Flip them over. Each player picks one at random.

These people love each other, not necessarily romantic love but it might be! Also consider:

- a boss and employee who's "like family"
- a middle-aged parent and their young adult offspring
- a master artisan and apprentice
- a grizzled old officer and a young soldier

Give your character a name and occupation and write them on your card. The older player starts by playing the older character (December). The younger player starts by playing the younger character (May).

Players take the play card that matches their role: December or May. Don't worry about the backsides for now.

December picks a year in the 1920s when this first relationship takes place. Write it on both cards. Don't worry about historical accuracy; just do your best to frame your relationship in context with the era. May picks the city or town in which their relationship takes place.

The Setting

This game starts in and returns to a park where May and December decide it's the time and place to open their hearts. December came here as a child (although perhaps it was not a park back then). December begins the game by telling May what about this park calls to them: the view, the smells, the weather, or an event in the past.

To Play

When both players have figured out who they're playing and what the relationship is like, begin acting in character: you've arrived at the park, at December's request. Take turns answering the questions on your play card in-character in any order, starting with December.

While answering questions, May's player sets the pace for all physical activity and, being young, is filled with restless energy (so get up and move if you can, or describe your movement to the other player if you cannot). If May's player is walking, December's player must walk with them. If May sits, December sits. If December declines to follow May's pace or if May notices that December is lagging, May declares that December has died.

Do not take notes. Rely only on your memory.



All Things Must End

At any time after any question, May's player can declare that December has died. If December runs out of questions, they talk about their death (outside the park sometime years later) after answering the last question. *This relationship always ends in December's death.* May asks December's player: was it natural causes, violence, an accident, or crime? What was your last thought as you passed? Put December's index card face down in the middle of the table. Trade play cards.

Once December has died, May ages into the next December: keep in mind your May answers as you address your December questions. The new December crosses out the previous year with a single line and adds a new date beneath it, between 20 and 30 years later than the last one (so sometime in the 1950s the first time, then the 1980s the next time, then the 2010s). December may change their occupation as well: draw a line through the old one and write a new one if you want.

Roles By Generation (connected colors are one continuous role)				
	1920s	1950s	1980s	2010s
Player A starts as:	December	May	December	May (The Child)
Player B starts as:	May	December	May	December (The Adult)

The previous round's December player now creates a new May: take a new index card, ask the new December what gender May will be playing, and give them a name and occupation.

The characters once again meet in the park. December explains why here and now was time to open their heart, just as that character had as a May so many years ago.

The Decades Pass

Repeat the questions on your new play card. The roles are reversed: May has aged into December, and the previous December player is now playing a new May. December now

has a new question, which they may ask at any point in the sequence: **Does May know how the previous December died?** **If so, ask May what they think of that.**

Once again, and throughout the game, May always declares when December died and asks them how. Once again, May ages into the December role and a new May is created as before: tell them what gender they're playing, give them a name and occupation, trade play cards, and begin the questions.

Rebirth: 2010s

Once there are three index cards on the table, the player whose character just died now draws randomly from the three cards. **May does not tell December who they drew.**

Flip over the play cards. May takes The Child and December takes The Adult.

May comes into the relationship as The Child, but the rules are different this time. The Child player designates their own gender and describes their relationship with The Adult. Their occupation is "child." There is still a generation gap between them! The Adult tells The Child how old they are when they start play, sometime between 5 to 10.

The characters find themselves in the park again. The Child starts this time, explaining why they've come here, of all places. Can The Adult identify the reincarnated personality? Is the child merely an old soul reborn, or do they have an identity of their own?

The game ends when The Adult answers their last question, or decides they cannot.



Play Cards

December

- **Always answer first:** What is the nature of your relationship with May?
- What about your life has changed since 20 years ago?
- What is the most attractive or compelling thing about May?
- What is the most aggravating thing about spending time with May?
- What activity did you give up as you got older?
- What do you miss most about being younger?
- What would constitute a perfect day for you and May?
- For what are you most grateful for from your relationship with May?
- What is the greatest accomplishment of your life?
- **Ask only after the first December has passed:** Does May know how the previous December died? If so, ask May what think of that.

May

- What has December done that you wish you'd done?
- What is the most embarrassing thing about spending time with December?
- What's your favorite thing to do when you're not with December?
- What does December understand that none of your May peers do?
- What would constitute a perfect day for you and December?
- What do you hope to accomplish in your life?
- What do you wish you could share with December but can't, and why not?
- What about your relationship with December is too serious to be joked about?

When December dies, ask them how: natural causes, disease, accident, or crime? What was their last thought as they passed?

The Child

- **Always answer first:** what is the nature of your relationship with December?
- What is your favorite memory from your previous incarnation?
- What do you need from December?
- What can't December provide to you?
- What will you go on to do when December dies?

The Adult

- What is the most attractive or compelling thing about May?
- What do you see in them from their previous incarnation?
- What do you need from May?
- What can't May provide to you?
- **When you think you've identified May's previous incarnation, but only once:** What do you remember of the child's old December life? What do you see of them in yourself? How do you wish you were different?

After your final answer, May will tell you if you guessed right.

