

# **PARTY<sup>OF</sup>ONE** **FOR 3-4 PLAYERS**

You are a time traveller, at four different stages of your life, attending the same dinner party. What may appear as a narcissistic encounter is an opportunity to air their grievances and reconcile their relationship with themselves.

We all do things we regret or even flat out resent. The time traveller is privileged with the ability not only to improve their own life but they have the means to improve the lives of others. Despite their best laid plans the time traveller had to make some sacrifices to prevent a nuclear holocaust. Sacrificing their core values. These decisions will continue to affect the time traveller for the rest of their life.

The players each take a role as the time traveller from different times in their life. Together you will expand on the story of the time traveller: the decisions they have made and the developments they have made. Passing judgement on the younger or older on the decisions they have made or will make.

## **← BREAKDOWN**

### **Time**

10-40 mins prep  
60-80 mins play

A handkerchief for each player, the character cards, snacks and drinks!

## **PREPARATION**

- Hand a handkerchief to each player.
- The game is best set in a dinner party environment where both food and drinks may be served.
- Acquaint yourselves with the Mechanics and with the time traveller's Character Cards. In a three player game drop the Mono no Aware. Here you will build upon your elements together and get a feel for your time traveller before play.

## **← THE MECHANICS**

The essence of play is to play the role of the time traveller, you are encouraged to build the time traveller's story with the other players, discovering the life you'll live or have lived. The other part of play is to react to these details as you expect your character would. The final objective of play is self-reflection in a literal sense. Each generation coming to terms with the actions they took to prevent nuclear holocaust and save the future or not coming to terms and carrying that regret and grief with them.

### **Handkerchiefs**

The aim of four identical handkerchiefs is aimed to symbolise the fact that you are the same person, only at different stages of their life. This handkerchief is also used as a Cue for players to exert Creative Control and to note their contempt through Knots.

## **Cues**

An important part of play is the Cue. These signal to other players that you are trying to convey a piece of information. The use the handkerchief you all hold to convey the cue.

- Untucking and re-tucking the handkerchief is a Cue that signals that you would like to exert Creative Control over your element or that you want to push a player to describe an event in greater detail.
- Tying a knot in your handkerchief signifies to the other players that you have an opinion on the matter but are restraining yourself. Knots also have a mechanical role.

When using a Cue do this obviously, make sure your fellow players see your intention.

## **Creative Control**

Each character card has Creative Control over an element. This is where everyone establishes the tones of each element a player has Creative Control over. Once a Character Cards have been distributed the group can decide on each of the elements but final say goes to the player that has creative control. This is also an opportunity for players to flag any topics or themes they don't want to explore during play, like graphic details of murder.

When you are in Creative Control of an element, this gives you minor veto power of these elements. This does not mean you have to establish everything about that element on your own. Your aim is to keep that element internally consistent and if you disprove of what someone else narrates about your element. A player may also turn to you to help describe the element.

- During play you may want someone to describe something in greater detail use the untucking Cue and say, "I'm having trouble remembering the details".
- During play if someone narrates something that does not fit well with your element you may perform the untucking Cue and say, "that's not how I remember it". This is a clue to the other players that they are deviating from the internal logic of the element established during preparation.

## **Knots**

When you say something you don't agree with or causes an emotional response in your character, do not say anything but tie a knot in the corner of your handkerchief. Do this every time this happens and make it obvious to the other players. Once all four corners are tied with a knot your character will have emotional outburst let everything that is plaguing you out. Once the outburst is completed remove the knots.

The only other way to remove knots is for the other characters to attempt to address the issue. If they successfully resolve what is the eating at you, remove a knot.

## **The End**

Play ends once each character has had an emotional outburst, all knots are removed or once a suitable narrative conclusion has been reached.

Do you reconcile your relationship with yourself or do you part on bad terms?

## **START** ➡

It is now time to distribute the Character Cards, read them and choose your character. Now each player gets to establish the element they have Creative Control over. Tie the number of Knots mentioned on your Character Card on your handkerchief.

Tuck your handkerchiefs in a pocket or sleeve. It's time to begin your conversation. Break the ice by posing and answering the question 'What just happened to you? Remember to the youngest the rest of you are strangers?

This is an opportunity to get acquainted with which stages of your life each of you are at before blame is thrown around.



Party of One was inspired by the real life 'time traveller party' experiment performed by Professor Stephen Hawking and the Day of the Doctor from BBC's Doctor Who franchise. It was influenced by games such as A Quiet Year, Archipelago, It's a Wonderful Life, Strange Gravity, Old Friends and Don't Rest Your Head. A big thankyou goes to Graham Walmsley for the mentoring. For their invaluable input I also tank David, Elise, Shane, Ben and Michael.

## CHARACTER CARDS

### The Punk

Exploitation of the market means that you will never be strapped for cash. This afforded you the means to pay for your education.

Your approach to effective altruism is a grassroots approach. Organising demonstrations and raising money for effective charities. Though you are willing to put your body on the line you are wary of the potential dangers of time travel.

You still take time to entertain yourself, to drink, party and to find love. It was your brilliant idea to organise this meeting with your future selves.

You are **passionate**: Leave nothing unsaid.

You are an **activist**: Take no guff. Go on the attack.

You have **Creative Control** over your **identity**: who you identify as, what you value, what are your aspirations?

You start with **one Knot**.

### The Sell-Out

You once used your time travelling abilities to optimise your time. Unfortunately, this is not enough to stop the nuclear holocaust. This requires you to thoroughly mess with time.

You are dishevelled and it has been some time since you have slept properly. This existential crisis requires your complete attention. As a result you neglect family and friends. The work consumes you.

You are not impressed that you have been predestined to attend this soiree.

You seem **unfeeling**: Look like a monster.

You are **justified**: Rationalise your actions.

You have **Creative Control** over **obstacles**: what challenges do you face, who opposes you, how has life gotten in the way?

You start with **two Knots**.

### The Midlife Crisis

You stopped the nuclear holocaust but it came with a cost. Maybe it was when you began erasing people from time or created paradoxical twin of yourself but somewhere along the way you lost yourself.

You let the twin live the life you have denied yourself. Having fled to a foreign land you now repair electronic goods for work.

You have been 'clean' for months now having vowed to stop time travelling. Unfortunately, you have an appointment to keep and a promise to break...

You are **vulnerable**: Reveal your emotions. Get hurt.

You are **atoning**: Doubt yourself and punish yourself.

You have **Creative Control** over the **incident**: what was at stake, how did you stop it, who got stuck in the crossfire?

You start with **two Knots**.

### Mono no Aware

Time has a funny effect on memory. You have had time to heal your emotional wounds and have come to accept your actions and your losses.

Not only have you begun to reconnect with loved ones, you are making new connections. You are an advisor with the ability to share your experience.

Events need to transpire as they did but perhaps you can make things easier for your past selves, provide perspective.

You are **empathetic**: Relate to others.

You are a **mentor**: Provide perspective but be critical.

You have **Creative Control** over your **past**: where did you grow up, how many children did you have, what job did you take to pass the time?

You start with **one Knot**.