

Truth or Beauty?

a game of futuristic psychological horror and makeover tips
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Concept:

It is the year 3000 and you are inmates in a prison colony who are about to spend 90 minutes together in the beautification pod before shipment to your final destination. You will ask and answer questions. You will give and receive makeovers. Your choices are limited.

You Will Need:

an even number of players between 2 and 20
a wide variety of makeup, applicators, brushes/combs, hair accessories, and nail polish
as many pillows as players
a blank white mask
as many hand mirrors as players, or enough wall mirrors for everyone to see in at once

Safety:

Use safety techniques, including an X card.

Setup:

Arrange the pillows in a circle on the floor in the center of the room. Place the mask face-down in the center of the circle. Cut up the 10 questions into strips and place them face-down inside the mask. Create a station for hair and makeup on one side of the room. The opposite side of the room represents a thick, transparent wall patrolled by silent guards (not players of the game). Set a timer for 90 minutes.

Gameplay:

The game unfolds in a series of 2-phase rounds. Continue to play new rounds of Phase 1 and Phase 2 until the timer goes off.

Phase 1: Intake

Everyone sits in a circle on the pillows. Someone chooses a partner and asks, "Truth or Beauty?"

Choosing Truth: The asker draws a question randomly from the mask and reads it aloud; their partner answers it in front of everyone. The answer should establish truths about characters individually as well as their shared world. Subsequent "Truth" answers should build upon previously established truths. The answer cannot be a lie from the character's perspective. Whoever draws the last question from the pile must wear the mask – this character, and no other, will be set free at the end of the game. When all the pre-written truth questions have been answered, invent your own.

Choosing Beauty: The asker now has an appointment to beautify the answerer during Phase 2. Wait until then.

Now a different player who has not participated yet this round chooses a partner to ask "Truth or Beauty?", and follows the above instructions. Repeat until all players have participated.

Phase 2: Treatment

If you were in a “Truth” interaction in Phase 1: Freely roleplay as your characters waiting out their time in the prison colony’s beautification pod, making use of the entire room and all truths that have been established, to enrich your interactions. You are allowed to interact with pairs who are doing makeovers, but you may neither assist in the makeovers nor receive beautification.

If you were in a “Beauty” interaction in Phase 1: Stay with your partner from Phase 1. The asker gives the answerer a partial makeover to 1 bodily feature: the eyes, nose, cheeks, lips, hair, or nails. During or after the makeover, the asker should teach their partner how to reproduce the effect. The asker has the final say in all aesthetic decisions and may decide to be strict or flexible in enforcing them. Any conversation should be in character, making use of truths that have been established. When you are finished, return to the circle of pillows.

When 2 players have returned to the circle of pillows, all players stop what they are doing and return to the circle of pillows for a new round.

Ending the Game

When the timer goes off, everyone immediately falls silent and arranges themselves into a single-file line facing the guarded glass wall. If someone is wearing the mask, that character stands to the side of the line and makes a final statement. The lights go out. The game is over.

Truth Questions:

What area of the prison colony will they bring us to after we become beautiful, and what will happen to us there?

Who is the most powerful social group among our captors, and how are we all different from them?

What was the origin and meaning of your old name before they caught you and changed it?

Who cleaned everyone’s body before we all entered this pod, and what was the process?

What was the environmental disaster of 2996, and how did you survive?

What did you steal from the capital city of Earth’s Moon, and why did you need it?

What tools did they use to capture you, and who died during the raid?

Beauty is the greatest virtue, but ugliness is not the greatest vice – what is, and why?

Which of the other inmates are you in love with – or is it one of our captors? – and why are you ashamed?

What styles of hair and makeup do our captors love best?