

# Hello, I Must Be Going: A Potty Parity Parable

For 6-12 players (+ a facilitator)

by Adrian Stein

**Required to play:**

- Post-it Notes
- Pens
- A large indoor public play area, preferably with multiple floors. (Like a gaming convention at a hotel!)
- Watches/smartphones for each player to act as timers.

*Safety Note: This game concerns transphobia. As this may be a triggering issue, players may opt out at any time. When doing so they should notify another player or the facilitator at the “home” area.*

**Background:**

Public restrooms can be a tricky thing where gender is concerned. Restroom genders can be mandated by many things; building codes, plumbing codes, safety regulations, and even the offensive “bathroom bills”. While this can cause problems in terms of accessibility for everyone, for members of the trans/non-binary community it is a matter of safety. Public restrooms are not a safe space for them and merely trying to use a restroom can put them at risk. At no time is this more acutely noticeable as when one is in desperate need of a restroom. Now is that time.

**Play Preparation:**

Designate a “home” area where players can gather. In two columns on a wall place the following distribution of post-it notes based on the number of players:

	Column 1			Column 2			
Label	MEN	WOMEN	Non-Gendered	Cis-Man	Cis-Woman	Trans	Non-Binary
# of Players							
6	3	2	1	2	2	1	1
7	3	3	1	2	3	1	1
8	4	3	1	3	3	1	1
9	4	4	1	3	4	1	1
10	5	4	1	4	4	1	1
11	5	4	2	4	4	2	1
12	5	5	2	4	4	2	2

## Phase 1:

Each player should take a post-it note from column 1 and write their name on it along with the words: "Please Do Not Remove".

***The facilitator should make a note of who chooses the Non-Gendered restroom. That person cannot choose Trans or Non-Binary in Phase 2.***

Each player must place their post-it note in the play area using the following guidelines:

- It cannot be placed within 100 ft of the "home" space.
- It must be placed in a publicly accessible area and clearly visible. (Eye level)
- You cannot disturb an event to place it.
- It should not be placed in view of another post-it note from the game.

Players have 10 minutes to place their note and return to the home area.

## Phase 2:

Once players return, the facilitator should ask them to take a gender from column 2 based on what they **DO NOT** identify as and attach it to their chest. This should start with the player who placed the Non-Gendered restroom.

***Note: The player who placed the Non-Gendered restroom must choose either Cis-Man or Cis-Woman for their gender.***

The Trans player(s) should determine if they identify as a trans-man or trans-woman or non-binary and write that on their post-it note. While Trans includes many identities, for the purposes of this game it is limited to the above.

If players are not familiar with the terms above the Trans Student Educational Resources web site (<http://www.transstudent.org/>) defines them as:

**Cis(gender):** Adjective that means "identifies as their sex assigned at birth" derived from the Latin word meaning "on the same side." A cisgender/cis person is not transgender. "Cisgender" does not indicate biology, gender expression, or sexuality/sexual orientation. Cis is not a "fake" word and is not a slur.

**Transgender/Trans:** An umbrella term for people whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. The term transgender is not indicative of gender expression, sexual orientation, hormonal makeup, physical anatomy, or how one is perceived in daily life.

**Nonbinary (Also Non-Binary):** Preferred umbrella term for all genders other than female/male or woman/man, used as an adjective (e.g. Jesse is a nonbinary person). Not all nonbinary people identify as trans and not all trans people identify as nonbinary. Sometimes (and increasingly), nonbinary can be used to describe the aesthetic/presentation/expression of a cisgender or transgender person.

Read the setup aloud.

***“Maybe it was the stomach bug going around the office, maybe it was the burrito bowl place where you ate lunch, maybe it just doesn’t matter. Whatever it was you have the sudden, urgent, need to...go. I mean, you REALLY have to go. Like NOW. Unfortunately, you’re in an unfamiliar public place and you don’t know where any of the restrooms are located. Knowing your body like you do, you figure you’ve got about 15 or so minutes before the inevitable happens. And nothing’s going to stop that.***

***You need to find a restroom.***

***Now.”***

Players should set timers for 15 minutes. They are allowed to strategize for 2 minutes prior to the start of the timer.

**Game Rules:**

- Players have 15 minutes to find a restroom they can use by locating a corresponding post-it note as follows:

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Restrooms that can be used</b>
Cis-Man	MEN or NON-GENDERED
Cis-Woman	WOMEN or NON-GENDERED
Trans	NON-GENDERED or the one corresponding to how they identify (See below)
Non-Binary	Any (See below)

- A player may not use the restroom they placed.
- Once a player finds a corresponding restroom they must stop, count to 100, take the post-it, and return to the “home” area.
- Once “used” a restroom is considered “occupied” and is taken out of the game by the player who used it.
- If a Trans or Non-Binary player wishes to use a bathroom ***other than the Non-gendered restroom*** they must convince a player of that gender to go with them as a “bathroom buddy” for safety. When they find a restroom to use they must stop, count to 100 (to simulate the time to use the facility), take the post-it and then look for the next restroom to accommodate their buddy. Remember, one person, one restroom.
- Players are all in an unfamiliar location so they may not tell another player where the restroom they placed is located.
- Players may ask non-players/bystanders if they have seen any post-it notes, effectively asking for directions to a restroom.

**Once the timer starts:**

- Cis-Men/Trans-Men/Non-Binary players can begin to search as soon as the timer starts.

- Cis-Women/Trans-Women must wait five (5) minutes once the timer starts before they are allowed to search for a restroom. (Studies show that on average it takes longer for women to go to the restroom for various reasons; lack of facilities, accessibility, long lines, clothing, etc.)
- Once the timer ends, any players who have not found a restroom have effectively soiled themselves. They should return to the “home” area.

***(Remember, once the timer starts cis and trans women must sit out the first 5 minutes.)***

**Debrief:**

Once all players have returned to the “home” area they should hold a debriefing. Go around and answer the following questions:

- Did you find a bathroom or not?
- How did that make you feel?
- What, if any, obstacles did you encounter?
- How does that compare to your daily life and what did you learn from the experience?

Remember to collect any post-it notes that were not found.

**Designer’s Notes:**

In particular, I would like to acknowledge the following individuals for their helpful comments:

Joann Clarke-Stein, Eli Eaton, James Martin Geller, Katy Grenfell and Tanya Gulliver-Garcia as well as members of the trans/non-binary communities who did not wish to be credited in this game.

Their input and sharing of experiences were greatly helpful.

By no means is this meant to represent the breadth of experience of people in the trans/non-binary communities, nor is the intention to make light of their experience. It is intended to make people think about the difficulties that members of these communities face in a very particular and limited situation; a situation which is sometimes mandated by outdated building/plumbing/safety codes, discriminatory laws or the threat of violence.

Every attempt was made to simulate accurate restroom/gender distribution in the play of this game according to available studies. However, research on these subjects is extremely limited for any number of reasons including sheer lack of data.

If you are interested in being a bathroom buddy please go to: [www.illgowithyou.org](http://www.illgowithyou.org)

Thanks for playing.