

How are you?



Credits:

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Game type

telephone larp, storytelling game, freeform

Number of players

2

Mode

Entirely played over the phone

Topics

An emotional and intimate larp that explores the relationship between the elderly and the young and their defining traits (in regard to their belonging to different time periods: the past and the future, respectively). It will therefore talk about topics such as loss and hope, life experiences and choices to be made, as well as the comparison between different generations. In an alternation of words said and heard over the phone, at night.

Introduction

Do you remember what kind of relationship you had with your grandparents when you were younger? Did you have a grandmother or a grandfather with whom you felt more in tune, or with whom you talked more often?

Well: the grandchildren and grandparents who will be interpreted in these phone conversations are very close, their relationship is unique and special, and they have a feeling that makes it natural for them to confide in each other. We invite you to remember some intimate details of the relationship you had with your grandparent and to draw on them to create the character sheet.

If, on the other hand, you haven't had the chance to know even one of your grandparents, don't worry: you can use your fantasy based on the accounts that someone in your family has probably made about them, or you may about the kind of grandparent you would have liked to have, and then make up the relationship you might have actually had.

In the game you can bring up other persons who don't appear as playing characters through the Doubt, the Advice, the Shared Recollection, the Event or the Promise.

Duration

The game is divided into 3 sessions of 30 minutes each, to be held in 3 consecutive evenings, and is structured as follows:

- *Session n° 1*: Character sheet creation (15 minutes); Player 1 plays the grandparent, Player 2 plays the grandchild (30 minutes);
- *Session n° 2*: Player 1 plays the grandchild, Player 2 plays the grandparent (30 minutes);
- *Session n° 3*: in-role debriefing (see the appropriate section).

Character Sheet Creation

Each player will write 2 sheets, one for the grandparent and one for the grandchild. For the character of the grandparent, both players will draw inspiration from their actual grandparents, while for that of the grandchild they will use themselves when they were younger.

To make the game more captivating, players will be asked to use their memories, putting into play things that were really part of their lives. In this game we seek to create alternative versions of ourselves and our grandparents, which will then be delivered to the other player who, in their turn, will interpret them as a distorting mirror, mixing real elements with their own interpretation.

The grandchild

Write 4 adjectives about the grandchild who will be played by the other Player, choosing among some of the features that defined you when you were between the age of 12 and 24;

Write 3 Doubts you had at that age. Only one of these doubts (the one that inspires you the most) will be central to the game, but the other two are nonetheless important to understand the whole character.

The doubts may be important questions you have asked yourself, difficult situations you have been involved into, or difficult choices you have made. Do not hesitate to put into play parts of your past, which have happened to all of us. Here are some examples:

Come out to your parents or not?

Now that your parents are getting divorced, would you like to find a place of your own or not?

Study abroad after high school or not?

After years of living abroad, come back home now that you are about to become a parent or not?

Accept to work in the family business or not?

The grandparent

Write 4 adjectives about the grandparent who will be played by the other Player, choosing among some of the features that belong(ed) to your real grandparents; in case you couldn't or didn't want to do that, you can draw these adjectives from the stories that someone told you about their grandparents, or think about the kind of grandparent you would have liked to have;

Write 3 Events related to the theme of loss that affected your grandparents (if possible, real ones). Only one of these events (the one that inspires you the most) will be central to the game, but the other two are nonetheless important to understand the whole character.

For example:

*That time your grandmother lost the pendant given by her sister / your grandfather went fishing and lost his wedding ring in the water;
That time when your grandmother was diagnosed with a disease / when your grandfather lost the use of his leg as a result of an accident;
That time when your grandmother/grandfather lost a loved one;
That time when your grandmother was scammed / your grandfather was robbed.*

Structure

The protagonists of this larp are two persons aged between 12 and 24 and their respective grandparents of undefined age: in the first two sessions of the game, the players will play phone conversations initiated by the grandchild who calls to ask their grandparent's advice on a pressing matter (**the Doubt**).

When this part is concluded, the characters will bring to mind a **Memory** that sees them together, and whose creation will take place through the shared narration improvised by the two players.

Finally, towards the end of the phone call the grandchild will discover an unpleasant **Event** that has happened to the grandparent and will promise to do

something specific to try to help them.

Keep in mind that the grandchild will always have to play on the theme of hope (of future, of possibilities, projects and desires, etc.); while the grandparent will always have to play on the theme of loss (of an important object, of something concerning health, of a loved one, of money, etc.). In the third session there will be an in-role debriefing (for those who wish, it in videoconference too).

Structure of the Phone Conversation (first two sessions)

- Greetings and pleasantries between grandparent and grandchild
- Activation of PART ONE of the game when the grandparent asks “HOW ARE YOU?” to the grandchild;
- Presentation of the Doubt by the grandchild (1 chosen among the 3 available in the sheet);
- The grandparent gives their Advice;
- Activation of the BRIDGE of the game when the grandparent asks the question “DO YOU REMEMBER..?”. here through shared narration, the players create a common memory;
- Activation of PART TWO of the game when the grandchild asks, in their turn, “HOW ARE YOU?” to the grandparent;
- Presentation of the Event by the grandparent (1 chosen among the 3 available in the sheet);
- The grandchild formulates their Promise;
- Greetings and pleasantries between grandparent and grandchild.

The Doubt

Raise your hand, those of you who, in young age, didn't lose their sleep over problems and uncertainties: doubts about what was the right thing to do with your life, what was the best choice you could make in a difficult situation, what was the right road to take to go forward without looking back.

Surely, it might have been easier, had we been able to ask our parents for help, but sometimes parents seem so different, so distant from us that they can't come to our rescue.

Back then, we tried to ask our friends, but friends were often as lost as we were and - even when they said they weren't - we had the feeling that their opinions were as valuable as ours: not enough.

If only we had had a point of reference in those moments, a figure we perceived as really reliable and trustworthy to ask on a specific subject... Well, the grandparent played in this larp embodies that exact point of reference and the grandchild calls them for advice on something they care very much about.

Once you have chosen the Doubt you want to bring into play, follow these steps to present it during the phone conversation:

- *How has this Doubt arisen in the heart of the grandchild?*
- *Were there any telling clues that led to this realisation?*
- *Did something specific happen that made the grandchild realise something was wrong?*
- *What is the core of the problem?*
- *And how does this make the grandchild feel? Is the grandchild aware of any ways out of it?*

The grandchild discusses their own opinions about a possible solution and the path they feel more inclined to follow. After this, the grandchild will ask the grandparent for advice.

The Advice

Once they have carefully listened to their grandchild's Doubt, the grandparent will use the Socratic method to give their advice, i.e. through a series of questions that stimulate critical thinking, they will try to bring the grandchild to find their own truth, to decide with the grandparent's help but in a free and conscious way. These questions will push the grandchild to talk heart to heart in order to face their responsibilities or possible faults and find the strength to make a final choice.

Following the method of the ancient Greek philosopher, the grandparent will ask their grandchild three questions to come up with the best solution together. Think it over: what do you think will happen if you take the first road? What if you take the other way instead? What would you be willing to sacrifice in order to make the best choice?

At the end of this dialogue, the grandparent will declare their Advice and settle the Doubt.

The Shared Recollection

It usually happens like this: a scent in the air, an old photograph, a passer-by wearing that same retro hat, a song heard by chance in a TV commercial. Memories can come suddenly, sometimes caressing our face, sometimes like a slap; but we can also decide we want to remember, decide what we want to bring back to mind, trying to reconstruct the happy moments we lived in the past, piece by piece.

And it feels even greater to be able to do it with someone who has lived those very moments with us, someone with whom we can laugh and recall the tiniest details we wouldn't be able to remember all by ourselves.

That's what the Shared Recollection moment is for: a game activity that involves both players and engages them in a shared narrative of a memory with high emotional content.

Players should try their best to make it happen in the most natural and genuine way.

The Event

When spurred to talk about their situation by the grandchild, the grandparent decides to vent their feelings by recounting an Event (1 chosen among the 3 available on the sheet). The introduction of the Event will have to follow the famous "5 W rules", i.e. it will have to be structured in such a way to answer the following questions in order:

- *Who*
- *What*
- *How*
- *When*
- *Why*

After this, your grandparent will be very worried about what happened.

The Promise

Once the grandchild has listened carefully to the Event, they will try to rely on their experience to find a way to deal with its consequences, i.e. the grandchild might urge their grandparent to scan their memory in search of a similar experience to deal with the current situation as best as possible.

Then the grandchild will ask their grandparent 3 questions in order to understand the best way to help them:

Think about it: has something like this ever happened to you before?
If yes: how did you solve it? If not: do you know someone who had the same problem and managed to solve it?
What would be useful to do now to make things better?

In the end, the grandchild will make a promise to their grandparent in response to the Event that happened.

N.B. The Promise should be realistic. For example: if the grandparent tells that they were robbed as an Event, the grandchild should not make the Promise to find the thieves and get the purse back! Rather, they might promise

to accompany their grandparents to the police to report the theft that same afternoon or the following morning.

Debriefing

The Third session of the game is actually an in-role debriefing in which the players sum up what they have experienced and create the ending together. The session is divided as follows:

Part I (15 minutes): Player 1 and Player 2 play again the grandparents they previously played who now share the same hospital room. Chatting about this and that, the two characters end up telling each other about their grandchildren and they do so by answering the following questions:

- *What kind of person is your grandchild - good and bad?*
- *Have you managed to show them how much you love and care for them?*
- *Will they (the grandchildren) be able to defeat their demons in the future?*

Part II (15 minutes): Player 1 and Player 2 play again the grandchildren they previously played who are now outside the hospital room where their grandparents are staying, waiting to see if they can visit them or not. Chatting about this and that, the two characters end up telling each other about their respective grandparents and they do so by answering the following questions:

- *What kind of person is your grandparent - good and bad?*
- *Have you managed to show them how much you love and care for them?*
- *What did they teach you with their advice?*

Part III: The larp is declared finished and the players have the opportunity to exchange feelings and opinions about the game experience just ended.

Safety

Calibration: when creating the character, take a few minutes to discuss with the other player, if necessary, themes you don't want to deal with in the game. We urge you to find your balance by talking sincerely and affectionately.

Safeword

This larp deals with intimate and sometimes personal topics. For this reason, if the game should address yourself on topics that for whatever reason may make you uncomfortable, you can use the word "I'm done" and step away from the phone for as long as you need to.

The other player agrees not to force your return to the game, respecting your time and needs.