

Queer and Together at the End of the World a digital LARP by gamesforsquids

The world is ending. Your friend group is isolated and scattered, with only spotty wifi to keep you connected. Together, you reckon with the end of the world.

Queer and Together at the End of the World is a 3-5 player digital LARP about queer friendship, radical hope, and fighting fear with connection. It is intended to be played over voice or video chat, and should take about 3 hours.

The end of the world is the backdrop for this game, but this isn't a game *about* the end of the world so much as it's a game about people sustaining relationships (and relationships sustaining people) in desperate times. This *is* a game about queerness, both because it is about queer characters and because it's about a very queer theme--the world wants to crush you and you live and love in spite of it (but not without consequences or fear). It's also a game about and inspired by long-distance queer friendship--those moments when you love each other as loud as you can via text or sit quietly with a grieving friend on a video call. This is not an optimistic game, but it is a radically hopeful one.

Set Up:

Figure out how you will be playing the game and set up a call, server, etc. Make sure that everyone has read through all the rules (or read them together at the start of your session).

As a group, establish **safety techniques** that you'll be using during the game. For example, you may also want to decide on **lines** (content you don't want in the game at all), **veils** (content that it's okay to reference but you don't want to dwell on), and **highlights** (content you're excited about exploring). You may want a "**cut**" or "**X card**" mechanic as well.

As a group, establish the **tone** and **themes** for the game. In particular, since this is a game about the end of the world, you may want to decide how bleak you want it to be. **You cannot avert the end of the world**--whatever that may look like in your game--but you might be able to protect some (or all) of you. Do you want to play an "us against the world" type of game or a "mourning the inevitable destruction of all you know" type of game? Do you want to play a more action-oriented game or more of a relationship study? Decide the contours of the game at the outset, and fill in the details as you play.

Build the end of the world. (See "World Building" for more information.)

Create and introduce your characters. (See "Character Building" for more information.)

Playing the Game:

This game is played over three acts, represented by three video/voice calls. See the instructions below for the specific objectives of each act. Each act should take 30-60 minutes, depending on the number of players and your play speed. Act Two will likely be the longest act, so budget a little extra time for it.

During any act, you can trigger a flashback by asking another player, “**Hey, do you remember when...?**” To end the flashback, say, “**Yeah, I remember everything now.**”

Your characters are also fighting bad connections, flaky wifi, lag, etc., so feel free to integrate your players’ connectivity issues into the narrative.

Act One:

Act One establishes the world, your characters, and your relationships. In this act, you should:

- Establish where you are and whether you’re safe
- Establish what happened to the world and the looming threat
- Hint at what unresolved history lies between you
- Let your fear speak for you

Not sure how to start? Feel free to use one of these prompts to jumpstart your story:

- What, does the world think you’re just going to lie down and die? You have a plan to fight back--you just need to win everyone else over.
- You think you’ve discovered a method of shielding yourself from the end of the world. The only problem? You’re going to need help from your friends to pull it off.
- The world is ending, but that doesn’t mean you can’t do or make something that persists beyond it. How can you make sure some part of yourself survives even if you don’t?
- You can’t do anything about the end of the world, but it’s just the last of an ongoing string of disasters. Reach out and make sure that your friends make it to the finish line intact.
- These are your closest friends, but there are still so many things that lie unspoken between you. The world is ending, and you refuse to go out with regrets. It’s time to talk this out--whether everyone else wants to or not.
- The fact of the matter is, you’re lonely. It’s been weeks since you spoke to anyone, and you’re dying for any human connection. You’ve called the gang together for one last hurrah--if you can get your wifi to behave itself.

When you feel that the act has come to a satisfying conclusion, tell the other players that you’re losing your connection and hang up. When there’s only one player left in the call, the act is over.

Act Two:

Act Two forms the bulk of the narrative as the characters reckon with the change to come, and tensions between your characters reach a boiling point. In this act, you should:

- Build on what you've established in the previous act
- Heighten the threats to you (both physical and existential)
- Work toward achieving your personal goals
- Figure out if there's any way to protect yourselves from the end of the world
- Dig into unresolved history with other characters and let simmering tensions explode
- Let your grief and rage speak for you

When you feel that the act has come to a satisfying conclusion, tell the other players that you're losing your connection and hang up. When there's only one player left in the call, the act is over.

Act Three:

Act Three brings character and relationship arcs to a satisfying conclusion as the characters prepare for the end of the world. In this act, you should:

- Build on what you've established in the previous acts
- Make your preparations for the imminent end of the world
- Achieve your personal goals, fail spectacularly, or realize that you want something else
- Reach out and bring your relationship arcs to a satisfying conclusion
- Let your love speak for you

When you feel that things have come to a satisfying conclusion, ask the other players, **“Are we ready?”** If everyone says yes, count down from five. At zero, the world ends and you end the call.

World Building:

The established facts of the world:

- The world is ending. You cannot stop it.
- You are all queer.
- You are in the same friend group (although you may not be equally close to each other).
- You are staying connected in a voice/video call that is subject to the same limitations as voice/video calls in our world.

Everything else--why and how the world is ending, whether you can do anything to protect yourselves, whether this is a SF/F setting or closer to our world, etc.--is up to you.

As a group, pick two of the following descriptors for the end of the world:

Sudden	Slow	Biological	Chronological
Astronomical	Virological	Natural	Supernatural
Human-made	Prophesied	Unexpected	Inevitable
Unknowable	Aggressive	Unfeeling	[your choice]

You can discover the details as you play, but this will give you a base to work from.

Character Building:

Choose one of the archetypes below. Give your character a name, pronouns, gender, and sexuality (“questioning” is always a valid option). Introduce your character to the other players with their name, pronouns, and two things that everyone knows about them. Then ask two other players one question each from your relationship building questions list.

Note: It’s totally okay to include romance (past or present) in this game (as long as all the players are cool with it), but at its core this is a game about queer friendship. Make sure not to prioritize romance over other relationships!

The Hearth

Someday you’re going to buy a house with a garden and you’ll raise chickens and keep bees. Until then, you have an open door and a couch and a warm meal for anyone who needs it. You are a spare blanket, a check-in text, and a favorite tea stashed until a friend’s next visit. All you want is to build a home where your loved ones can be safe.

Relationship building questions:

- When did I offer you shelter when you needed it most?
- Why do you call me naive?
- How did I make the queer community feel like home for you?

The Fighter

You’re not gay as in happy--you’re queer as in the apocalypse can screw itself. The first Pride was a riot, and you’ve never gone gently. You are a clenched fist, a chant shouted at the top of your lungs, and decisive action. All you want is to use your body and voice to make the world a better place.

Relationship building questions:

- Why do you disagree with my methods?
- When did I fight for you?
- Why are you part of my chosen family?

The Organizer

Some people call you anal-retentive, but you know that revolutions don’t run on passion alone. While your peers were busy being heterosexual, you learned to make yourself indispensable (even if no one ever notices your presence). You are a color-coded spreadsheet, an extra granola bar, and tech crew all-black. All you want is to keep things running smoothly.

Relationship building questions:

- When did I try to problem-solve when you just wanted comfort?
- How did I clean up a mess you’d gotten stuck in?
- Who did you try to set me up with? Why didn’t it work?

The Maker

Your friends call you sentimental, but there's magic in making something with your hands, in taking something and transforming into something else. There's magic, too, in breathing life into whatever you make, knowing that it will leave your hands and live a life of its own. You are an expertly sewn buttonhole, a well-worn sketchbook, and the momentum of starting a new project. All you want is to make something that will outlive you.

Relationship building questions:

- What did I make for you that you cherish?
- What did I make for you that you didn't want?
- Why did I stop returning your calls?

The Educator

You had to do Gender and Sexuality 101 every time you came out, so now you've polished your elevator pitch until you can see your face in it. Your friends rely on your encyclopedic knowledge--or maybe just your unflinching eloquence in the face of even the most awkward questions. You are a diagram sketched on the back of a napkin, a carefully compiled linkspam, and a healthy dose of patience. All you want is for the world to understand who you are.

Relationship building questions:

- How did I help you find the words for your identity?
- When did you see me at a loss for words?
- Why are you the only person I feel like I can be real with?

The Newcomer

You might not be the youngest of the group, but you are the newest to your identity. Your mouth is still learning the shape of the words for who you are, and your relationships still haven't quite resettled. You are a freshly minted pride flag pin, a fresh perspective, and the excitement of new beginnings. All you want is to feel like you belong.

Relationship building questions:

- Why did I come to you for validation?
- When did you make me feel excluded?
- Why did I come out to you first?

The Seer

You saw this coming, but nobody listened. People want to gloss over hard truths instead of confronting them--and, sure, you could be a little gentler, but the truth doesn't care about its delivery. You are the harsh glow of a text message at 3 am, an incisive tarot reading, and a list of historical precedents. All you want is for someone to listen for once.

Relationship building questions:

- What secret do I know about you that no one else does?
- What truth did I tell you when you least wanted to hear it?

- Do you know I'm lonely? Have you done anything about it?

The Rock

You're good at listening--to words and all the spaces between them, every bit of subtext people refuse to articulate. You have your own pains and worries--but we're not here to talk about you, are we? You are a shoulder to cry on, a freshly laundered handkerchief, and the warmth of a tight hug. All you want is to be strong enough to help your friends weather the storm.

Relationship building questions:

- When did you see me burn myself out on empathy?
- What have I understood that you didn't say out loud?
- Why were you the last of our friend group to find out that I was queer?