

This Can Be True If We Say So

A larp about the fictions we craft, and the unspoken agreements to honour them.

What you need:

4-6 players (including one prepared to act as facilitator for the game)
A Discord server; each player needs working cameras and mics
Around 3-3 1/2 hours

Who you are:

In *This Can Be True If We Say So*, you play long-term friends attending a wedding. You have not all been together in the same place in months, but are close enough to slip back into an easy comfort and shared habits quickly. You know each other well enough to not just call each other on your bullshit, but anticipate each others' bullshit - and (usually) take this on the chin when you're on the receiving end.

Where you are:

The wedding is being held in a beautiful country house - the kind that mixes a classically maintained garden designed for dignified strolls with quirky and modern interior design, giving each room inside its own distinctive identity. You could get lost in a place like this - something that can be a curse and a blessing depending on how much you're actually enjoying the celebrations.

None of the characters are staying the night at the country house - each has had to make their own plans, whether it be hotels, B&Bs, nearby friends or long, long taxis home.

What you're doing:

As characters: you're attending a wedding reception, doing your best to have a good time and at the very least posting photos that make it look like you are.

As players: you're exploring the knottier parts of these friendships, contrasting the generic backdrop of celebration with more quiet, complex and messy interactions. You're also exploring the tension between your character's actual experiences and the 'palatable' version of events that they share in photo posts on social media. The tension isn't necessarily one between negative experiences and positive photos - it could just as easily be one between a long-awaited experience that must be scrubbed from photo evidence at all costs. Whatever it is: your character's photos do not tell the whole story of the night. Just the one they've decided should be told.

Set-up:

The facilitator should set-up the following channels on Discord before play:

- One text channel for each character, labelled '[character name]'s photos' (these can be updated once players have named their characters)

- A text channel called 'out of character'
- A voice channel called 'out of character'
- A voice channel called 'bar'
- A voice channel called 'garden'
- A voice channel called 'table'
- A voice channel called 'dancefloor'
- A voice channel called 'toilets'

Begin together in the 'out of character' voice channel. The facilitator should relay the information from the **who you are / where you are / what you're doing** sections above.

Then, create your characters by answering the following questions. The facilitator can run this as a loose discussion - everyone's character will inform everyone else's, given their friendship and history. Look for interesting points of difference and discord, as well as areas of overlap and harmony.

Group questions

- How long have you all been friends, and how do you all know each other?
- What is the biggest argument this friendship group has had in the past, and what was it about?
- What is the fondest memory the friendship group has together?
- Who is getting married, and what is everyone's opinion of the couple?

Individual questions

- What is something you want others to think of you as (that you might worry isn't true of you)?
- What positive influence or trait do you bring to the group?
- What is your most destructive habit?
- Which character do you wish you had a (even slightly) different relationship with, and in what way?
- What are you hoping (secretly or publicly) to get out of the evening?

Rounds of play

The game has 4 rounds. Each round consists of a **role-play section** and a **photo-posting section**.

Role-play sections happen in voice channels; each round has a default channel that players can start in/focus on, but players can move between voice channels as their characters move around different spaces.

Photo-posting sections happen in each character's text channel. Photos are 'posted' by players writing a description of the photo that their character posts at this point in the night, which can be as objective or subjective as wanted, eg:

The photo is an out-of-focus shot of Jay and Zoe goofily beaming at the camera; the blurriness gives it a casual, candid nature that keeps it just the right side of silly and avoids the affection on display seeming too sincere.

Tom smiles warmly at the camera; it's zoomed in so that you can just tell there are people to his left and right with their arms around him, but it's impossible to see who. Tom's pose is studied to make sure his neck and chin look as good as possible given the angle of the camera. The image is poor quality, with the phone struggling with the fairy lights in the dark. In Tom's hand is an empty glass he's been holding for the last 30 minutes – it was the drink that Hannah bought him earlier.

Each role-play section lasts 25 minutes. Each photo-posting section lasts 10 minutes (to be used as time both to write descriptions, read others' descriptions, and take comfort breaks before the next role-play section).

The facilitator should post time updates in the out-of-character text channel, giving a couple of minutes warning ahead of a section of play ending, and a notice when the section has ended/a new section or round is beginning. When a new round begins, the facilitator should post the italicised overview of the round in the out-of-character text channel.

Round 1: Drinks

Default location: bar

You were all only invited to the reception, not the ceremony (some of you feel slighted, others relieved). It's not long before you find each other in amongst the drinks and canapés on offer – all at your freshest and most put-together, excited to catch up and with the energy to gloss over tricky subjects or moments.

The photos 'posted' at the end of this round must feature drinks, e.g: beautifully presented cocktails; people cheers-ing at the camera; beautiful displays and decorations complemented by nearby trays of drinks.

Round 2: Dinner

Default location: table

You have all been sat together for the dinner, with no one else at this table. You've all had a couple of drinks – at least – and your initial energy and patience is waning slightly. Dinner will push you together for the next hour or so – which might be a relief or a terrible prospect, depending on your perspective.

The photos 'posted' at the end of this round must feature at least two characters, including the poster, e.g: friendly hugs and smiles at the table; the reel of photos from a photo booth; an in-joke of exaggerated poses.

Round 3: Party

Default location: dance-floor

Celebrations reach their height as your inhibitions lower – there's not much to stop you from doing something you'll soon regret. Whether you're overheating on the dance-floor or sneaking out for fresh air (or cigarettes), alcohol and adrenaline are combining to make things messy and a little chaotic.

The photos 'posted' at the end of this round must feature the night sky, e.g: the surrounding gardens lit by fairy lights; a definitely-not-safe rooftop view; a bonfire with silhouetted figures.

Round 4: After hours

Default location: garden

The nighttime air is cold, and sobering, as everyone waits for taxis to arrive, coats to be found, lifts to be negotiated. Some of the most desperate might still think there's time to turn the night around, if they think it needs turning around. For others it's a matter of damage control, or finally sealing the deal.

The photos 'posted' at the end of this round must feature wherever the character is sleeping/staying that night, e.g: a view from a window; kicked-off heels in the corner of a room; someone snuggled in bed.

Epilogue

For the final 15 minutes, players can read through each others' photo descriptions again and add any comments their characters post under the photos (though can choose not to comment). These should list when a comment was made and then the comment (as if posted on a site like Facebook), eg:

- *15 minutes after the photo was posted: "Love love love"*
- *One day after the photo was posted: "Such a wild night!!!"*
- *Three months after the photo was posted: "Was just reminded of this – such an amazing night. You look so beautiful, as always!"*

After 15 minutes, the facilitator should direct everyone into the out-of-character voice chat for game debrief.

Debrief/decompress

Invite each player to share a moment they enjoyed from play, focusing on talking about the game with a little distance, to help move back into no longer playing the characters.

If anyone needs more time to decompress or handle bleed, take time to chat, reflect on play, and use any personal tools that help (e.g. listening to music to transition into a different mood).