

Mom, Dad and Sophie



A Worst Case Scenario

Originally written for Projekt Særimner / Forum 2012 / Grenselandet

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Mom, Dad and Sophie

Welcome to “**Mom, Dad and Sophie**” a freeform role-playing scenario for 3 players, no game moderator.

This is a scenario about Sophie and her parents’ divorce.

The scenario consists of this short introduction and three player booklets, one for each player. The scenario has 7 scenes, described separately in the player booklets. The scenes are played in a fixed order, the same order they come in the booklet.

Each scene has an introduction, where the three characters goals for the scene is described. Each character is also described on the first page of the booklet.

The scenario takes around 2 hour to play. Reading the material and creating a common background takes around ½ hour and after that the actual scenario can be played in 1-1½ hour.

First you need to distribute the characters. You do that as follows:

- a) The youngest player gets the role of Sophie.
- b) If the two other players are of different gender, the dad-role is given to the male players and the mom-role is given to the female players.
- c) If the two players is the same gender, give the dad-character to the first player who can say yes to: has a joint-custody child or children/has kids/is a joint-custody child/is oldest.

Now you can distribute the player booklets – start by reading the first page; the character sheet

Before you start

First, before you start you need to agree on, how much influence and power you have on the scenes. Talk about how much/little you can cut and make up stuff in the scenes and if you do not agree on something in a scene, who gets to decide.

For example: Can you make up stuff that the other characters have done in the past? Can you set a flashback in the middle of a scene, showing something from the past? Do you have any power over the others characters?

When you have discussed and agreed upon this it is time to create the history and past that your characters share. Use the following picture postcard questions that you answer together. They create the positive ballast and common ground that you used you used to share, but now has lost.

Mom, Dad and Sophie

Picture Postcard

Answer the following questions in a positive but realistic way:

- Where and when did mom and dad exchange their first kiss?
- What made dad fall for mom, and the other way around?
- How did dad propose?
- How was the wedding?
- What was Sophie's first birthday present that really meant something to her?
- What vacation has been the best for the family?
- What always makes mom laugh?
- What is it, that dad can always do to cheer up Sophie?
- How does mom pacify dad after a quarrel?
- Does Sophie have any pets, if yes, who gave it to her, if not, why not?
- What does dad do for a living? Does he like it?
- How is Sophie's role in her class in school, socially? Is she a popular or more of the quiet girl?
- What friends are close to the family that can be considered shared by all?

Now you hopefully have a clear image of who you are, and were, as a family.

Scene rules

Each scene is presented with an introduction, a description of who is in the scene and what their goals for the scene are. Each scene also contains a number of primers – sentences that can be used as the starting point for a arguments or disagreements with the other person. Each of the grown up characters, mom and dad, shall as a minimum use one primer in each scene. The scenario is not carved in stone, so if you as players can come up with better or fitting primers, you are more than welcome to use them instead. The important part is that primers are put into play, as they drive forth the conflicts and drama of the scenario.

A scene runs until Sophie's players are ready to decide who the winner in the scene is; mom or dad.

The Cards

Each player has a card that can be used to affect the outcome of a scene after it is played. mom and dad have a Rage Card and Sophie has a Love Card.

The Rage Cards

When a rage card is played, mom or dad can veto the result of scene that has just finished. That means that no one gets points for that scene, which is of course advantage if you just lost a scene or you just wants you character further in the gutter it can also be played on a scene where you won.

Mom, Dad and Sophie

To use the card you set up a scene either in connection with the scene just played or as a flashback. The important part is that the new scene should show the character that played the card in a bad and unflattering light. And show just how far the person is willing to go, to would the other part.

It is the player who played the card who sets the scene and decides who is in it and when it ends, but it has to be short. Max five minutes.

An example of a rage card scene could be where dad after the divorce writes an email to all of mom's family, her friends and her coworkers, telling what a bitch she is and flashing all the terrible things she has done to him. Basically a rage scene is about hurting the opposition and exposing yourself as a petty and unpleasant person, willing to do anything if it means winning Sophie in the end.

The Love Card

The Love Card can be used once during the scenario and gives Sophie's player the control over a just played scene, after the winner of the scene has been found, but before a Rage Card is used. If the player wishes to use the card, the player tears the card in two and places the torn card on the table. Now the player can choose to have the just played scene go a notch up, pushing the nasty and vicious further, or a notch down, making Mom and Dad, for just a moment, remember how and why they actually once cared for the other, and end the scene in more civilized way. After the moment, and this scene, has passed, it is of course knives out again.

The Score Card

The scenario has seven scenes and the score card has seven spaces. After each scene has ended, you place either a Mom-token if she won the scene or a Dad-token if he won the scene. The tokens are placed by Sophie's player. At the end of the scenario, the player with most tokens on the score card is the winner. It is quite possible for one player to get ahead early in the game and even win the scenario after four scenes. That is not a problem. You just finish the remaining scenes, with the winning part having every chance to gloat and show his or her superiority, due to Sophie picking him or her over the opposition.

Now, read or skim all the scenes, so you have an idea of the content of the scenario and the progress of the scenes and how it escalates.

You now know where it all ends and it won't be pretty. You will go from being civil and civilized to petty fighting and using all kinds of arguments and dirty tricks to demean each other, and in there, yourself.

Now start with scene 1

Mom, Dad and Sophie

Sophie

You are Sophie. A girl aged approximately 12. You are in the 7th grade and will be confirmed in the summer.

And your parents are divorcing. That is what the scenario is all about.

Your role in the scenario is to serve as the object of your parents fights. They will try to influence you, win you over, appeal to your sympathy, but mainly to try and get each other down.

It is your task to make your parents fights intense, tough and unpleasant for them. They use you as a weapon and a tool against each other and it is your job to make this as hard and painful as possible.

The most important thing for your role is, to guilt up your parent's conscience. Tearful eyes, broken voice, childlike disappointment and build up rage. Do your utmost to show, directly and indirectly, that this is an unbearable and unfair position to place a child of 12 in.

Rule wise you decide the outcome of the scenes. When a scene is over, you decide who won the scene and gets the point. You do this by placing a marker on the score card.

You and you alone, decide who gets the points. You do not have to be fair. Also, you do not necessarily have to give the points to the person who appeared to win the scenes fights or discussions – you cannot expect a 12-year old to react rationally in situations like these. So points can be handed out as a result of pity, sympathy to a parent who has been flattened by the other. Go with the feeling in your gut and follow the flow of the scenario.

Rules and advice:

- The role as Sophie is less direct than that of the other two characters, but not less important. If the other two plays around or over you, fight back and make them pay attention.
- You decide the length of the scenes and it is important that they get a fitting length. Make sure that they do not get too long, so people start repeating themselves or they turn dull. When two primers have been put into play it perfectly legit to close down a scene. At the same time they should not get too short or finished before they get interesting and/or unpleasant.
- In some of the scenes you do not play Sophie, but a support character. In these scenes you should be asking questions, proactive and push the buttons of the other two players. Put pressure on them, but try not to choose sides, you can do that when you decide the winner at the end of the scene.

Mom, Dad and Sophie

Scene One: “We are getting a divorce”

Sophie is 12 years old and now her parents are getting a divorce. They have asked Sophie to join them in the living room so they can tell her about the situation. And, Sophie needs to decide where she wants to live, at least for the first couple of weeks. Dad is staying in the house, until it can be sold. Mom moves over to her parents, where there also room for Sophie.

In this scene are Sophie and her mom and dad.

Sophie’s parents have agreed to be civil and not let their disagreements spill out when Sophie is there. Because of course the both love her, even though they don’t love each other. And they will let decide where she will stay this first night.

Dad: You are going to present the breakup from your point of view and make Sophie stay with you.

Mom: You are going to present the breakup from your point of view and make Sophie go with you.

The scene ends, when Sophie has decided where she wants to stay.

When she has decided, place a token on the score sheet and move on the next scene.

Primers:

- You always want to decide everything.
- Stop going at me!
- It wasn’t me who said no to couples therapy.
- I’m not mad!
- Isn’t it so, sweetheart?
- Fine, you just do what you want to do!

Mom, Dad and Sophie

Scene two – “The new boyfriend”

Mom has a new boyfriend. He is a guy from work and mom seems to really like him. He seems ok. He does not push or tries to be all dad-like. Today Sophie, mom and the new boyfriend has gone to the mall, but neither Sophie nor the new boyfriend really wants to go shopping. So mom suggests that they go and see a movie while she tries on new shoes. So now they are waiting in line at the cinema, when Sophie’s dad walks by.

In the scene is Sophie, mom, dad and in the background, the new boyfriend.

Dad: You need to make sure, that Sophie does not go to the cinema and at the same time try and get to know as much as possible about this new boyfriend.

Mom: You need to keep up appearance and make the best of a bad job, by making Sophie go along with your new boyfriend, as planned.

The scene ends when Sophie has decided if she wants to go to the movies.

When she has decided, place a token on the score sheet and move on the next scene.

Primers:

- We have talked about seeing that film together.
- Could you keep it down a little?
- How/when did you meet each other?
- You are not old enough for that movie anyway.
- How long have you known each other?
- Are you stalking us?
- So what are you doing now?
- How are things at home?

Mom, Dad and Sophie

Scene Three: "The confirmation"

It is spring and it is time for Sophie's confirmation. It costs a lot of money and careful planning. Sophie and her parents decided to sit down together and figure out how it is going to work out and who is going to get invited.

The following 5 things need to be decided:

- 1) Where is it going to be held
- 2) who will be invited (as in, who will have most guests)?
- 3) A possible limit to the number of, or price of, gifts?
- 4) What kind of food, entertainment and fluff (songs, speeches, music)?
- 5) And 5) who is paying and for what?

In the scene is Sophie, mom and dad.

Dad: You need to push through as many of your wishes for the confirmation and obstruct as many of moms as possible.

Mom: You need to push through as many of your wishes for the confirmation and obstruct as many of dads as possible.

The scene ends when all the parts of the confirmation is planned and the winner is decided.

When Sophie has decided, place a token on the score sheet and move on the next scene.

Primers:

- So this you can afford, but not new clothes for Sophie.
- It's always about money with you.
- This is the christening all over again.
- Is X coming? He/she might be your friend, but he/she always ends up drunk and unpleasant.
- You never liked my family.
- If this is the way it is going to be, we can just have to separate parties!
- This is just typical for you and your bad taste.

Mom, Dad and Sophie

Scene four: "Meeting at the school"

Lately it has been downhill with Sophie's grades and school stuff. From being top of her class, her level has fallen drastically. The homework she hands in is below average and she not nearly as active in class as she used to be. So her class teacher has invited Sophie's parents for a meeting to discuss the state of things and to hear about her situation at home.

In the scene are mom, dad and Sophie's class teacher (played by Sophie).

Dad: You need to show, that things are going fine at your place and that Sophie's problems at school, must spring from somewhere else.

Mom: You need to explain, that everything is going fine, when Sophie's is with you. Her issues in school must be rooted elsewhere.

The scene ends, when Sophie's teacher has heard enough.

When Sophie has picked a winner, place a token on the score sheet and move on the next scene.

Primers:

- Things are always a mess at your place.
- She came to school without her rain clothes.
- You always have to be so strict.
- Do you ever consider what she is going through right now?
- Sophie needs structure.
- You always pick her up late.
- Do you even check her homework?
- Do you know who her friends are?

Mom, Dad and Sophie

Scene five: "Holiday"

The holidays are approaching and needs to be planned and coordinated. So Sophie's parents get together decide where she is going to be and when.

Present in the scene is Sophie and her parents.

Dad: You need to get in the way of Sophie going on vacation with mom and her new boyfriend. The week that they plan to go on big vacation to somewhere warm and sunny with his family, is a week that Sophie, according to the plan and the social worker who is handling your case, is going to be with you.

Mom: You want Sophie to come along on the vacation. Everything is paid for and it is a great way for her to get to know her new family. It will only hurt her, if dad cannot be a little flexible.

The scene ends, when Sophie has decided if she wants to go on the vacation.

When Sophie has made her choice, place a token on the score sheet and move on the next scene.

Primers:

- I almost didn't have any time with her last vacation.
- You are never doing anything, when she is at your place.
- Aren't you being just a little petty?
- It is not my decision – it's the rules.
- You never listen to what Sophie wants.
- Typical you, trying to buy her.
- She is just saying that to keep you from being angry. As usual.

Mom, Dad and Sophie

Scene six: “The girlfriends”

Sophie is having a hard time at home. Both at moms and dads place. No one is really listening to her or seems to care what she thinks. Luckily she still has a couple of good friends that she can confide in.

In the scene are Sophie and her two friends (played by mom and dad)

The friends: You need to listen to Sophie’s thoughts and worries and chip in with questions.

Sophie: You need to open up for your feelings and the frustrations you have over your parents and the way they treat you and each other. Use things from previous scenes and get things off your chest.

The scene ends when Sophie has gotten aired her feelings and thought.

When Sophie has decided a winner in the scene, place a token on the score sheet and move on the next scene.

Primers:

- Why do you think your parents got divorced?
- Who lets you do most?
- Isn’t it kinda nice, getting double of everything?
- Do you think they hate each other?
- If you had to choose...
- Have you ever played one out against the other?

Mom, Dad and Sophie

Scene seven: “Meeting with the Social Service”

Things are not going well between Sophie’s parents. At all. Amongst things, they cannot agree on, where Sophie should be and for how long at a time. That is why the situation has ended up as a case at the social service office.

Right now Sophie is three days a week with dad and four with mom.

In the scene is mom, dad and a case worker from the Social Service (played by Sophie).

Dad: You want to get as much time with Sophie as possible. Mainly you want the 3/4 parting of the week flipped in your favor, so you will have Sophie four days a week. It’s unfair, that mothers are always favored in cases like this.

Mom: You want to defend the current deal. You know that it is less about Sophie, and more about hurting you. Maybe you should even try and make the deal more favorable for you, so Sophie’s does not have spent as much time with her dad.

The scene ends, when the case worker has heard enough.

When Sophie has picked a winner, place the token, do a count up and announce the winner. The scenario is over – congratulations.

Primers:

- You were the one cheating!
- Sophie says that you’ve acted inappropriately.
- You never wanted to have children.
- Sophie is always sad and crying, when she returns from your place.
- It wasn’t me, who was drunk all the time.
- Are you even sure, that Sophie is mine/yours?
- I know how many people who have been in and out of your bedroom since the divorce.
- You constantly talk about moving to the other part of the country.

Mom, Dad and Sophie

Mom

You are Sophie's mom and you divorcing Sophie's dad. That is what this scenario is all about.

In the scenario it is your task to fight for Sophie, whatever it takes. At the same time, and maybe even more importantly, you should do your utmost to defeat Sophie's dad.

It is your job to make Sophie's dad appear in the worst light possible. It is his fault that your family has fallen apart, and he should suffer for that, the more the better.

So get her down, especially in the eyes of Sophie. Be nice, caring and loving when it comes to Sophie and hard, cold and patronizing when it comes to her father. Do your best to show, that the situation that you all in, is because of her and that you are a victim.

If you get behind on the score card... Turn up the heat on Sophie. She is the only one who can turn the battle and if you cannot win her over by being positive and in control, then appeal to her by being sad and meek. Be petty and whimpering and appeal to her sympathy and love. If you get hopelessly behind then go all in, and treat Sophie as much as an enemy as her dad. Now there is just two people who has left you and let you down.

If you get ahead on the score card... be overly lenient and patronizing towards your opponent. Throw him a bone, as long as it is obvious to everybody, that it is just tokens and leftovers. Also, take Sophie for granted.

Rules and advice:

- Play to win – the scenario gets better, if you fight for your character.
- Play realistically – You can only buy a child so many times, by offering her a pony. Play within a realistic frame and the victory will be sweeter.
- Vary your style – Once again with the pony. If one type of attack or strategy does not work, then try something else. Try not to repeat your arguments and the game will be more interesting for all.
- Escalate – All the scenes starting point is “of course we can work something out, we are grownups after all”. That is not how they end. Do not stall or wait around. Escalate the scenes and remember that the first cut is the deepest.

Mom, Dad and Sophie

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Dad: You are going to present the breakup from your point of view and make Sophie stay with you.

Mom: You are going to present the breakup from your point of view and make Sophie go with you.

The scene ends, when Sophie has decided where she wants to stay.

When she has decided, place a token on the score sheet and move on the next scene.

Primers:

- You always want to decide everything.
- Stop going at me!
- It wasn’t me who said no to couples therapy.
- I’m not mad!
- Isn’t it so, sweetheart?
- Fine, you just do what you want to do!

Mom, Dad and Sophie

Scene two – “The new boyfriend”

Mom has a new boyfriend. He is a guy from work and mom seems to really like him. He seems ok. He does not push or tries to be all dad-like. Today Sophie, mom and the new boyfriend has gone to the mall, but neither Sophie nor the new boyfriend really wants to go shopping. So mom suggests that they go and see a movie while she tries on new shoes. So now they are waiting in line at the cinema, when Sophie’s dad walks by.

In the scene is Sophie, mom, dad and in the background, the new boyfriend.

Dad: You need to make sure, that Sophie does not go to the cinema and at the same time try and get to know as much as possible about this new boyfriend.

Mom: You need to keep up appearance and make the best of a bad job, by making Sophie go along with your new boyfriend, as planned.

The scene ends when Sophie has decided if she wants to go to the movies.

When she has decided, place a token on the score sheet and move on the next scene.

Primers:

- We have talked about seeing that film together.
- Could you keep it down a little?
- How/when did you meet each other?
- You are not old enough for that movie anyway.
- How long have you known each other?
- Are you stalking us?
- So what are you doing now?
- How are things at home?

Mom, Dad and Sophie

Scene Three: "The confirmation"

It is spring and it is time for Sophie's confirmation. It costs a lot of money and careful planning. Sophie and her parents decided to sit down together and figure out how it is going to work out and who is going to get invited.

The following 5 things need to be decided:

- 1) Where is it going to be held
- 2) who will be invited (as in, who will have most guests)?
- 3) A possible limit to the number of, or price of, gifts?
- 4) What kind of food, entertainment and fluff (songs, speeches, music)?
- 5) And 5) who is paying and for what?

In the scene is Sophie, mom and dad.

Dad: You need to push through as many of your wishes for the confirmation and obstruct as many of moms as possible.

Mom: You need to push through as many of your wishes for the confirmation and obstruct as many of dads as possible.

The scene ends when all the parts of the confirmation is planned and the winner is decided.

When Sophie has decided, place a token on the score sheet and move on the next scene.

Primers:

- So this you can afford, but not new clothes for Sophie.
- It's always about money with you.
- This is the christening all over again.
- Is X coming? He/she might be your friend, but he/she always ends up drunk and unpleasant.
- You never liked my family.
- If this is the way it is going to be, we can just have to separate parties!
- This is just typical for you and your bad taste.

Mom, Dad and Sophie

Scene four: "Meeting at the school"

Lately it has been downhill with Sophie's grades and school stuff. From being top of her class, her level has fallen drastically. The homework she hands in is below average and she not nearly as active in class as she used to be. So her class teacher has invited Sophie's parents for a meeting to discuss the state of things and to hear about her situation at home.

In the scene are mom, dad and Sophie's class teacher (played by Sophie).

Dad: You need to show, that things are going fine at your place and that Sophie's problems at school, must spring from somewhere else.

Mom: You need to explain, that everything is going fine, when Sophie's is with you. Her issues in school must be rooted elsewhere.

The scene ends, when Sophie's teacher has heard enough.

When Sophie has picked a winner, place a token on the score sheet and move on the next scene.

Primers:

- Things are always a mess at your place.
- She came to school without her rain clothes.
- You always have to be so strict.
- Do you ever consider what she is going through right now?
- Sophie needs structure.
- You always pick her up late.
- Do you even check her homework?
- Do you know who her friends are?

Mom, Dad and Sophie

Scene five: "Holiday"

The holidays are approaching and needs to be planned and coordinated. So Sophie's parents get together decide where she is going to be and when.

Present in the scene is Sophie and her parents.

Dad: You need to get in the way of Sophie going on vacation with mom and her new boyfriend. The week that they plan to go on big vacation to somewhere warm and sunny with his family, is a week that Sophie, according to the plan and the social worker who is handling your case, is going to be with you.

Mom: You want Sophie to come along on the vacation. Everything is paid for and it is a great way for her to get to know her new family. It will only hurt her, if dad cannot be a little flexible.

The scene ends, when Sophie has decided if she wants to go on the vacation.

When Sophie has made her choice, place a token on the score sheet and move on the next scene.

Primers:

- I almost didn't have any time with her last vacation.
- You are never doing anything, when she is at your place.
- Aren't you being just a little petty?
- It is not my decision – it's the rules.
- You never listen to what Sophie wants.
- Typical you, trying to buy her.
- She is just saying that to keep you from being angry. As usual.

Mom, Dad and Sophie

Scene six: “The girlfriends”

Sophie is having a hard time at home. Both at moms and dads place. No one is really listening to her or seems to care what she thinks. Luckily she still has a couple of good friends that she can confide in.

In the scene are Sophie and her two friends (played by mom and dad)

The friends: You need to listen to Sophie’s thoughts and worries and chip in with questions.

Sophie: You need to open up for your feelings and the frustrations you have over your parents and the way they treat you and each other. Use things from previous scenes and get things off your chest.

The scene ends when Sophie has gotten aired her feelings and thought.

When Sophie has decided a winner in the scene, place a token on the score sheet and move on the next scene.

Primers:

- Why do you think your parents got divorced?
- Who lets you do most?
- Isn’t it kinda nice, getting double of everything?
- Do you think they hate each other?
- If you had to choose...
- Have you ever played one out against the other?

Mom, Dad and Sophie

Scene seven: “Meeting with the Social Service”

Things are not going well between Sophie’s parents. At all. Amongst things, they cannot agree on, where Sophie should be and for how long at a time. That is why the situation has ended up as a case at the social service office.

Right now Sophie is three days a week with dad and four with mom.

In the scene is mom, dad and a case worker from the Social Service (played by Sophie).

Dad: You want to get as much time with Sophie as possible. Mainly you want the 3/4 parting of the week flipped in your favor, so you will have Sophie four days a week. It’s unfair, that mothers are always favored in cases like this.

Mom: You want to defend the current deal. You know that it is less about Sophie, and more about hurting you. Maybe you should even try and make the deal more favorable for you, so Sophie’s does not have spent as much time with her dad.

The scene ends, when the case worker has heard enough.

When Sophie has picked a winner, place the token, do a count up and announce the winner. The scenario is over – congratulations.

Primers:

- You were the one cheating!
- Sophie says that you’ve acted inappropriately.
- You never wanted to have children.
- Sophie is always sad and crying, when she returns from your place.
- It wasn’t me, who was drunk all the time.
- Are you even sure, that Sophie is mine/yours?
- I know how many people who have been in and out of your bedroom since the divorce.
- You constantly talk about moving to the other part of the country.

Score Card

0 0 0 0 0 0 0

Rage Card



Rage Card



Love Card

