

Speech

By Lars Kroll



The game in a nutshell

Sam and Tina is an ordinary Danish couple. We follow their life together, told through the speeches their friends and family give at important milestones in their life. The player characters are guests at four important events in the couples life: Their wedding, the christening of their second child, their 25th wedding anniversary, and finally, Sam's funeral. Sam and Tina are the central characters in the narrative, but we do not hear from them directly, until the last scene which Tina ends. We do however, through improvised speeches, hear a lot about Tina, Sam and their life together.

Gamedesign

The game is played around a table as a traditional tabletop roleplaying game. There is no need for dice, and the rules are very simple. The game can be played in around two hours, with one facilitator and three or four players. You need a clinkable glass and a fork. Festive table decorations such as paper streamers and the like is a bonus, but not necessary. Before each scene the facilitator sets the scene and presents seating cards for the player characters who will give a speech at the event. Each player picks a seating card. If there are only three players, one player can pick an additional seating card, and give two speeches, or the extra seating card can be dropped. The players are not allowed to read the cues and notes inside the seating card before the characters have been distributed: They are supposed to pick based on a short description of the characters given by the facilitator.

Once all seating cards have been distributed, the players read the notes inside, and make up their mind about what to say in the speech. They are free to say whatever they want, within the bounds of the rules (see later).

Players now take turns to clink the glass with the fork, stand and give a brief improvised speech. When the speech is done, everyone can react briefly, in character, to the speech. Perhaps applaud, laugh at a joke, join in a toast or whatever is appropriate. Then the next player gives their speech. When all speeches for the event have been given, the facilitator rounds the scene off, collects the seating cards and presents the next scene.

Not all guests are part of all scenes. The players are welcome to pick new roles for each scene, even picking characters that have been played by other players in earlier scenes. As the facilitator, it is your responsibility to present the scenes, facilitate the game mechanics and, if the players need it, be Sam and Tina, so the players have someone to talk to. As Sam/Tina, you can react with smiles, applause, laughter or whatever fits, but do not use words. Sam and Tina are not meant to have a voice, they are meant to be exactly what the players make of them.

The rules

Tina and Sam's story is intentionally left very open, but there are a few things that must be true during the game. The players are free to make anything else up, as long as it does not conflict with these obligatory events:

Sam and Tina are married in the first scene, in 1984. They have two children: Andy in '86 and Eve in '89. They are separated in the early 2000s, but reconcile in time for their 25th anniversary, their silver wedding in 2009.

Neither Sam, Tina, nor any of the guests dies unless the facilitator says so.

Sam dies in the spring of 2026. (But don't tell the players this yet)

The players are free to improvise and come up with whatever they want, as long as it doesn't conflict with the above. It is up to the players to invent how Sam and Tina met, what they do for a living, how they raise their kids, which crisis leads to them almost splitting up, and how they patch it up again.

When a player decides something happened, it is up to all players to play along and as much as possible incorporate it into their own speeches.

Genre and mood

The story is an everyday drama in a realistic setting. Sam and Tina are ordinary people, living in an ordinary world. They have good as well as difficult times, and they are surrounded by friends and family who love them. Still, they hurt each other, as people do on occasion.

The mood starts upbeat and festive, with Sam and Tina's wedding, and develops into scene 2, the christening, where things may become a little

awkward and cringy. The anniversary is tense and fragile: Wounds inflicted have not fully healed, and Sam and Tina were not the only ones hurt.

The ending is sad, and hopefully cathartic. With a bit of luck, the players will like Sam and Tina enough to mourn Sam and feel Tina's loss.

Game start

You will need a glass and a fork or similar to tap the glass with. You will also need the place cards for all events, and the song for the christening ready for distribution. The game can be run without break in around 2 hours. If you need to have a break during the game, I recommend having it between scene 2, the christening and scene 3: the 25th wedding anniversary.

Tell the players that:

The game is about Sam and Tina, and about the speeches their friends and family give them.

The players will play guests at four occasions in Sam and Tina's life: Their wedding, a christening, a silver wedding (25th anniversary) and a funeral. (They should not be told whose funeral it is)

Sam and Tina's family and friends love to give improvised speeches, and it is OK to hold eloquent as well as inept speeches, so long as they come from the heart.

Explain game design and rules.

Sam and Tina are married in the first scene, in 1984.

Sam and Tina have two kids: Andy in '86 and Eve in '89

Sam and Tina are separated sometime in the 00's but reconcile in time for their silver wedding in 2009

No one dies unless you say differently.

The players are free to invent things that happened, as long as this does not conflict with the above.

Give your players a chance to ask questions, then introduce scene 1, the wedding.

The cast of characters

Sam and **Tina** are the main characters of the story. They are born respectively 1960 and 1961, making Tina one year younger than Sam. They meet in the 80's while they are in their 20's and fall in love. After a short engagement, they marry in 84. They have a

boy, **Andy** in 86 and a few years later, in 89, a girl, **Eve**.

During the 00s they have a difficult time and separate. They eventually reconcile though, in time for their 25th anniversary in 2009. Sam passes away in 2026, only 66 years old.

Greg: Sam's closest friend. He is the best man at the wedding, and helps the couple reconcile after their troubles in the 00s

Sarah: Tina's closest friend. She is the maid of honor at the wedding. She has had a brief fling with Sam before Sam and Tina were an item. Perhaps also after? (Whether or not Sam and Sarah have had an affair is up to the players)

Andy: Born 1986, Sam and Tina firstborn. As a young man, he experiences his parents' troubles from a distance. Andy blames his father for the separation.

Eve: Born 1989, Sam and Tina's daughter. Experiences the parents problems from up close, and may have a very different perspective than her big brother.

John: Sam's younger brother. Enjoys red wine and giving roasty, but heartfelt speeches about his brother.

Odetta: Tina's Grandmother. Is there for the wedding and christening of Eve, but not for the anniversary nor funeral.

Jane: Tina's mother. Is sceptical about her daughter's choice of husband, but tries to keep up appearances.

Dawn: Eve's daughter, grandchild to Sam and Tina. Born 2019, 7 years old at the funeral.

Wedding, 1984

Sam and Tina are getting married! The Bride and Groom have “I do” ’ed in the local church, the bride has tossed her bouquet and all are now gathered at the wedding dinner.

The mood is light and festive, the food is plentiful and the wine delicious. The dinner is held in a large white tent in the garden in Tina's parents home. Family and friends are gathered around a beautifully set table. The entree has been eaten, Sam held a beautiful speech to his wife. Tina replied with a lighthearted speech every bit as heartfelt as his. Now that the main stars of the show have held their speeches, anyone else is invited to talk.

The guests that want to speak are as follows:

The Best Man Greg, and the maid of Honor Sarah have decided to do a speech together. They know each other through Sam and Tina, as part of a small but close knit circle of friends. (Make sure the players understand that Greg and Sarah have agreed to improvise the speech: One person says a few sentences, then nods at the other, who continues. They are going to keep that up for a while, then call for a toast)

John, Sam's little brother, wants to roast his brother lovingly. He has plenty of embarrassing stories about Sam as a kid. He might become emotional, and if we're honest, he may have had a little bit too much red wine.

Jane, the mother of the Bride, wants to offer some advice on marriage to both of the newlyweds. She may be slightly sceptical of her daughter's choice of husband?

Christening, 1989

Sam and Tina have become twice parents: Andy a few years ago, and now a baby girl, Eve. She of course needs a christening, with an accompanying party. The church ceremony takes place in the same church where the couple was married a few years ago, and even the minister is the same. NOTE: In this scene, there are no cues for the players, but there IS a short description of the character.

Greg and Sarah are both invited, and have agreed to reprise the speech from the christening. This time, the speech is slightly more roasty, about how Sam and Tina went from being the life of the party to being the boring parents that need to be back home at 8 PM to get their sleep.

Uncle John is Eve's Godfather. He is extremely honored by this, and takes it very seriously. If we're being honest, he may have had a little bit too much red wine.

Odetta, Tina's grandmother, great grandmother to Eve, has written a song, to the tune of “Auld Lang Syne”. She wants to introduce the song with a few words. Note: Give the songs to the player playing Odetta. Make it clear for the players that they are not expected to improvise a song. Also, do not give them a chance to rehearse. It is supposed to be cringy.

Here is a song from greatgrandmom
To our precious little Eve
If you had been a boy, your mom
Would for sure have called you Steve

But you're a girl so pure and sweet
Who we all will adore
We're looking forward to meet
You and get to know you more

And your big brother is so proud
And so is dad and mom
When you cry you can be very loud
You have from heaven come

Silver wedding, 2009

Sam and Tina have had a crisis in their relationship. The problems escalated to the point where they were separated, and it seemed to everyone that they were headed for divorce. However, they managed to salvage their marriage, and reconcile. They have now invited friends and family to celebrate their 25th anniversary, their silver wedding, at a grand party at Varna estate with a beautiful view over Århus bay.

Sarah, who was maid of honor at the wedding, is not present.

Eve, the 20 year old daughter of Sam and Tina, was badly affected by her parents' problems. She was living at home, and was a first hand witness to her parents' conflict, which hit her hard. She almost doesn't dare believe that the problems are over.

Andy, the 23 year old son of Sam and Tina, had left home to study, and did not see the conflict evolve until it had already gone way too far. Andy has chosen a side in the conflict, and blames his father for the separation.

Uncle John: Never really found out what the conflict was all about, but is happy to see them together again. If we're being honest, he may have had a little bit too much red wine.

Greg, the best man, was instrumental in helping the couple find each other again. He managed to offer a calm, neutral perspective, and with a lot of patience, helped them reconcile.

If the table is decorated, I recommend clearing it completely before the next scene statrts.

Funeral, 2026

Sam has passed away, and has been buried at the local church. The minister has spoken, the coffin has been driven away. Now, the closest are gathering to the wake, and the family tradition is that everybody speaks, or offers a toast for the deceased. Tradition dictates that the youngest start, and everyone else progresses in order of age.

Dawn, Andy's 7 year old daughter, is first up. It is probably hard to say goodbye to grandfather. She has never lost anyone before.

Eve: Sam And Tina's 37 year old daughter speaks next. She may have let go of her guilt?

Andy: Sam and Tina's 40 year old son is next. He may have forgiven his father?

Sarah, Tina's close friend, is invited. She wants to bid Sam farewell.

Greg, Sam's closest friend, says a few words in honor of a lifelong friendship.

Uncle John, Sam's little brother, has promised himself to roast his brother a final time. Perhaps he will fail to keep up his usual clown act. He is not drinking anymore.

Tina, now the oldest of the family, speaks last.

Note that there are seven speeches for the funeral. It is recommended that all speeches are held, so some players will get two speeches. Tina's speech CAN be dropped, if everyone agrees this will work best.

Line up all the placecards, and let a player pick Dawn, then another picks Eve and so on, until all have done one speech. Then, anyone can pick Greg and so on. When only Tina remains, it is a valid option for the players to skip her speech. Round off the game when everything that needs to be said has been said.

Thank you

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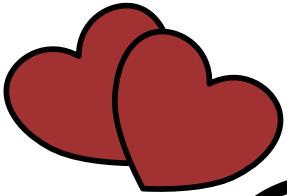
The Aarhus scenario writers gang for sparring and nice events.

Rikke "Munchkin" Sørensen for english lyrics for Odetta's song.

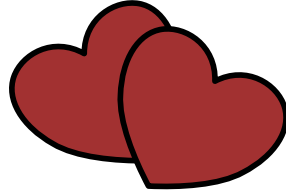
Susanne Gräslund for inviting me to Stockholm Scenario festival

And YOU! You awesome person, for running my game!

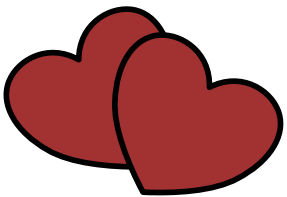
Place cards : Wedding



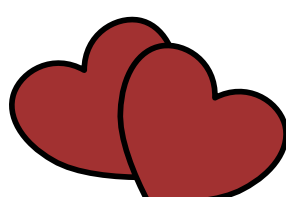
Greg



John



Sarah



Jane

Place card : Wedding back

Sam is your big brother, and you are going to give him a good roasting! You may possibly have had a little too much red wine, but that won't stop you! You love your brother, and Tina seems like a sweet girl.

tough guy big bro
Smartypants Sam as a kid
No more fun and partying
firecrackers
Stagnight!!
Bout time he gets a leach on!

Your little girl is a grown woman, about to make her own family. You are happy for her, but you are also worried about Sam. You don't want to be a stereotypical mom in law, but... something about Sam rubs you the wrong way. You want to give some advice on how to make a marriage work!

Tina as a child
Always nice and sweet and hardworking.
Straight A student, and now university! (studying what...??)
How marriages last!

Sam: So handsome and polite.

Sam is your best friend, from highschool to now. Tina is a great girl, and you are very happy for both of them. You have agreed with Sarah that you will hold a speech together. You will take turns saying a bit: You about Sam, she about Tina, then, when the time is right, say cheers.

Football
Wingman
Ladies man
Ride or die!
~~Stagnight?~~
Sam yapping about Tina

Tina is your best friend. You have been inseperable since highschool. Sam is a great guy that you had a brief thing with before he and Tina became an item. You've agreed with Greg to hold the speech together. You will alternate saying a few words, he about Sam, you about Tina. Then, when the time is right, say cheers.

Choir ! Mallorca
girls night!
David Bowie
Partying at uni

How Sam and Tina met

Place cards : Christening



Greg



John



Sarah



Odetta

Place cards :Christening back

You were very moved and proud when Sam asked you to be Eves Godfather. You consider it an honor and a privilege, even if you are not very religious. You want to give Sam and Tina credit for being great parents. You may possibly have had a few glasses too many of red wine.

You have agreed with Sarah to do a repeat from the wedding, and do a speech together. Since the wedding, you and Sarah have become better friends, as a part of Sam and Tina's friend circle. You've agreed to roast Sam and Tina a bit for becoming boring parents that have to get home at eight, instead of partying.

Odette (Tina's grandmother, Eve's great grand mother)

You have written a song on "Auld lang syne". It is such a nice tune. The parents, as well as little Eve, deserve a few words from old nan. Not everything new is good, and you've learned a thing or two in your life!

You have agreed with Greg to repeat the success from the wedding, and do a speech together. You've gotten a lot closer with Sam, and of course are still best friends with Tina. You're all part of a group of friends. You've agreed to roast Sam and Tina a bit for becoming boring parents that have to get home at eight, instead of partying.

Place cards : Silver wedding



Greg



John



Eve



Andy

Place cards: Silver wedding back

You never really got what the trouble was all about, but you are really happy to see Sam and Tina back together, even if it feels a bit fragile. You may have had a few drinks too many...

Sam was a real idiot, but Tina didn't make it easy for him. You've talked a lot with both of them, and that has helped them pick up the pieces. You know both of them well enough to know they both had their share of the blame for letting it all get so out of hand, and you are happy to see them back together. You really hope it lasts....

Andy: (Sam and Tina's son, 25 years)

It was dad's fault. He should have manned up, taken responsibility for the problems, and not let it all get so much out of control. Mom did what she could, but how much could you expect her to put up with?

When they broke up, you felt relief, even though it was rough on Eve. Now that they have reconciled, you're sceptical, but you do wish them all the best.

Eve (Sam and Tina's daughter. 20 years)

Mom and Dad's troubles took their toll on you. You were scared that they would leave each other, and deeply unhappy when they did. You'd felt the resentment between them, which affected your school and your mental health. As far as you were concerned, it was neither Dad nor Mom's fault, and deep down you feared it might be yours somehow.

Place cards : Funeral

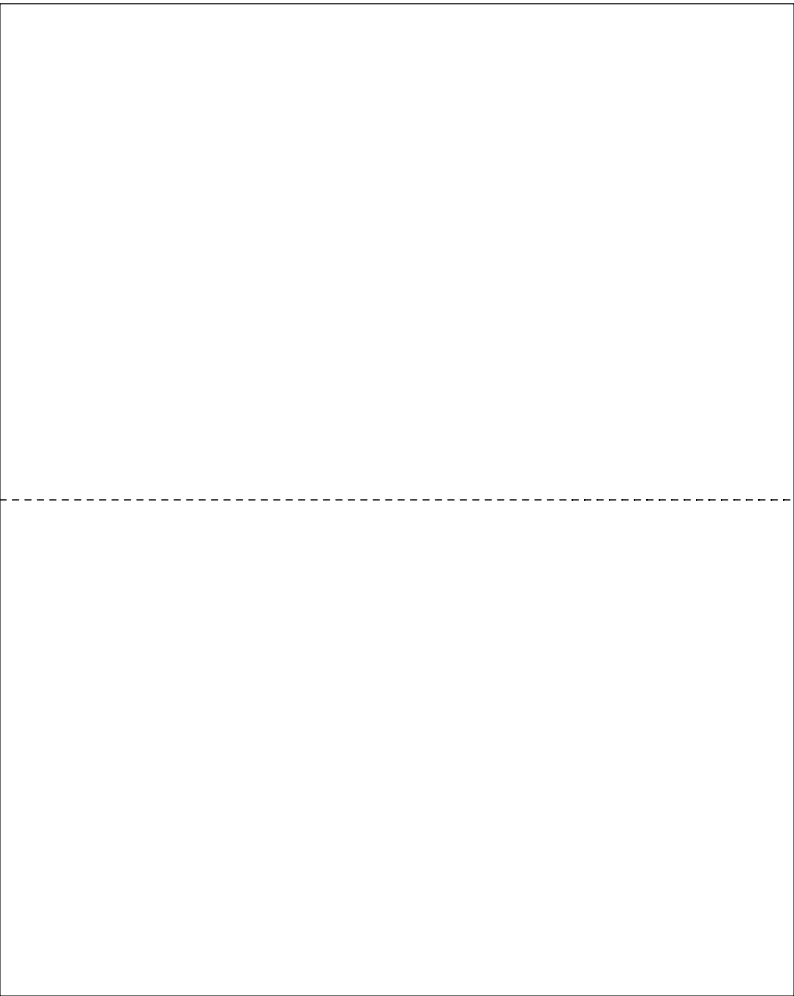


Place cards :Funeral back

Dawn (Eves daughter 7yrs old)

You really loved grandpa Sam. You never lost a grandparent...or anyone really before, and youre really going to miss grandpa. He was always so funny.

He taught you how to ride a bike...



Place card : Funeral



Greg

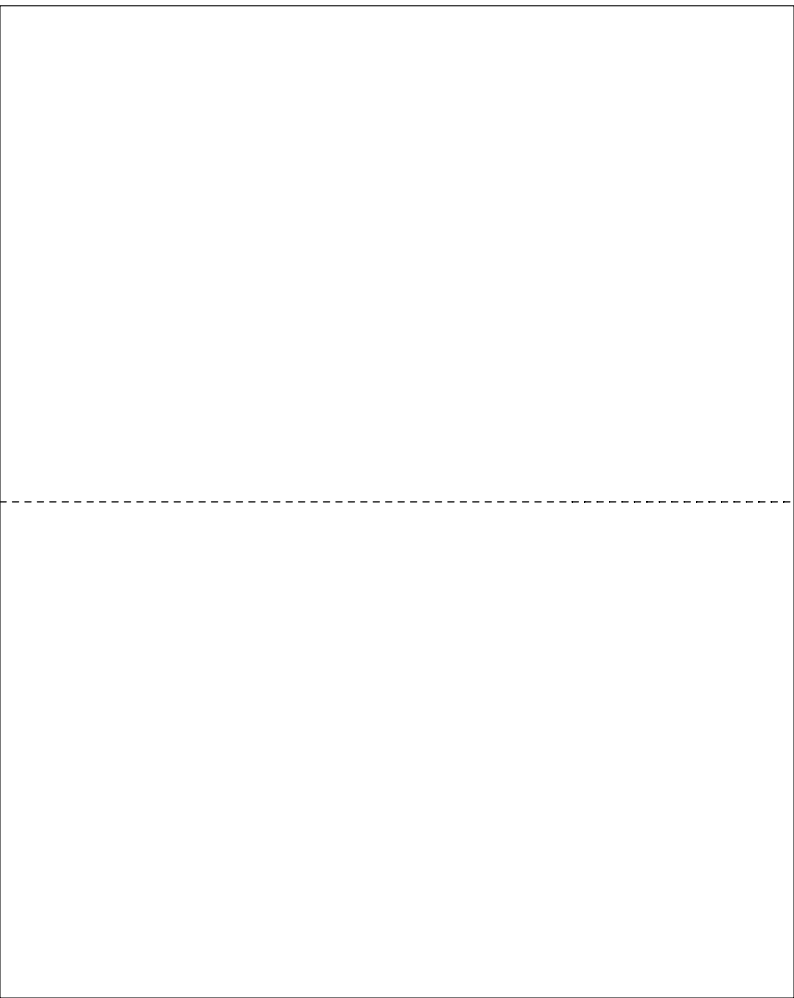


Sarah



Tina

Place card :Funeral back



On the occasion of Little Eves Baptism
1989, From "Nan" Odetta !

Here is a song from greatgrandmom
To our precious little Eve
If you had been a boy, your mom
Would for sure have called you Steve

But you're a girl so pure and sweet
Who we all will adore
We're looking forward to meet
You and get to know you more

And your big brother is so proud
And so is dad and mom
When you cry you can be very loud
You have from heaven come!

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