

Easter - A Tragedy



By Tim Slumstrup Aunkilde

Dear Game master

First a sincere thank you, for taking the task of game mastering this scenario.

The game was originally written for the Danish Roleplaying convention "Fastaval 2011". This is the first complete English version of the game.

I had previously written a number of humorous or feel-good scenarios since I primarily prefer to make people comfortable or smile. To write "Easter" was my attempt to do the exact opposite and I must realize that I failed in the non-humor attempt.

Nevertheless, I hope you will enjoy to read the scenario, and that you will find it as interesting to play, as I found it interesting to write.

Tim Slumstrup Aunkilde

### Here is the translated original preview of the scenario

Maria starred at the paté. She had no idea what to say. How on earth would she manage to stand there and appear perfectly happy while she could feel her entire world crumple around her? Mostly she felt like standing up, raise her glass and just start to scream. Scream as long and as high as she possibly could. She wanted to throw all her loathing and all her anger against him right in his face. She wanted to tell him how she really felt towards him. She wanted to tell them all what Tim had done. Tell them what she herself had done and show them all what a living hell her life had become because of them. She would try not to cry while she would attack them with her fury and disgust, but she knew it would be impossible. She would start to cry just like mom always used to. Dad would go berserk, and she would probably never see Tim again.

Maria moved her eyes from the paté towards her family. They were all anxiously awaiting her speech. Maria stood up, raised her glass took a deep breath while eating her rage and despair, if only short while.

"Here is my speech about all the great and joyous things that happened to me during the last year."

The Hansen family is not a happy family.

The scenario is about a small family that has secrets. The family meets once a year at Easter. It's a story about four unhappy people who desperately tries to keep their family together. It's a story about traditions. And it's a story about keeping a positive mood at all times and at any price to avoid losing it all.

**Disclaimer:** *Some mentioned characters in this scenario can seem caricatured and seem to portray people of certain genders, sex, religion or creed in a negative light. This should not be confused with the authors own conviction. But sometimes people are just unlucky and find one of the few people that enforce an unwanted prejudice.*

*Front page:* Paperclip inspired by the scenario by Signe Bustard Nielsen [www.snigne.dk](http://www.snigne.dk) . Thank you!

## Introduction

"Easter" is the story of the small Danish traditionalistic yet fragile family "The Hansen family" (Dad George, Mum Anne and the twins Maria and Tim). Although they are portrayed as Danish in the scenario, they could be placed in any country in the world, they are the archetype family.

We follow the family's Easter dinners through a series of years, dinners that only on the surface is the nice and lovely reunion they all desire.

The scenario is all about keeping that said nice and lovely mood at any cost, in the otherwise dysfunctional family. However it will quickly be clear that this could prove difficult, since the characters' lives outside of the family each year will gradually worsen. Hopefully one or more of the characters will break and destroy the nice and lovely mood, by bringing their own or another characters misery to the table, hence stopping the scenario. If all the players "behave" and keep their dirty laundry hidden, the scenario ends in the tragic death of the father. Someone dying always destroys the mood. No matter how the game ends, it will never truly end well for the Hansen's.

## Purpose

The basic theme in "Easter" is to focus on the unsaid and the internal play. The many bad news each player gets about what happens between dinners and can't play upon, is intended to make the players uncomfortable within the dinner situation to get a feel of the horrible ordeal it is for the characters. If this bad news in any way is made public, then the nice and lovely mood is broken.

It is the intension of the scenario, that the players should end the game without any sensation of relief.

- The players should feel suffocated by frustration that they can't play on their characters problems
- They should feel suffocated by their lack of power to get relief for their characters bottled up emotions.
- They should feel suffocated by the annoyance of partaking in the many pointless repetitions.
- They should feel suffocated and a bit disgusted by the actual physical food of the same type that they have to eat scene after scene again and again.

**Easter is not a feel-good scenario.**

**Easter might have huge comical undertones, but it should in no way be played as a comedy.**

**Save the laughs for after.**

## About tragedy, comedy and the tragically comical

tragic situations can often seem extremely comical to others than those tragedy hits. It is important to point out this fact to the players, that even if they as players see the characters as tragically comical, then this is not how the characters sees the situation

It is perfectly fine the players sees and acknowledge the tragically aspects, but they are advised to act on the tragedy and not the comedy.

## The Easter dinner table

A great part of the game is based on the dinner table. (An actual table with food and drinks). Following is the basic list for a traditional Danish Easter dinner table. The specifics can easily be changed to fit your taste and availability. You are also free to add decorations, tablecloth etc.

- Boring cheap rye bread
- Butter
- Liverpaté or pork cold cuts
- Pickled herring
- eggs
- beer and plain water
- Glass, plates and cutlery
- Small schnapps or sherry glasses

Plastic cutlery is fine.

It's recommended to use non-alcoholic beer. And the plain water is to symbolize schnapps.

Eating or not eating pork is of importance in the game and is therefore a must, game wise. In case a player is a vegetarian you can swap the pork with a nut paté or the equivalent, though explaining the paté represents mums homemade pork liverpaté. The Hansen family is NOT vegetarians.

## Game mechanics

The Easter dinner in the Hansen family is very rooted in traditions, and the game is therefore also on the surface rooted in a very strict script.

This script is handed to the players at the start of the game. The script explains how the dinner is played each and every year. It is also the players' tool to avoid a crisis situation that would destroy the nice and lovely mood. As long as the characters don't stray too far from the script it is easier to keep the family content. But at the same time they also have a weapon to stop the scenario at any time, by breaking the said traditions

As the game progress the players gain secrets about themselves and later also secrets about the other characters. These can also be used as weapons to stop the game, either confronting the family with their own misery or by exposing another and thereby avoid appearing as the bad guy, and without exposing oneself.

## About secrets and intrigues

There are written a great number of scenarios about secrets. Most of us have probably enjoyed the thrill of knowing some great secret and looked forward to revealing it to the other players. In this game the player should rather fear the exposure of the secrets, or even worse if someone else exposes the players' secrets.

The two motivating factors the players should have to avoid the secrets should be; that you don't want to break the nice and lovely mood, and by that break the last gathering point for the family. Secondly the player shouldn't want to be the one that ends the game for the co-players.

"Secrets scenarios" often builds on intrigue, and it would be an easy assumption that Easter also is an intrigue scenario. This is not the intension. It is not the games purpose that the players should throw poisonous remarks or comments at each other. It is the intension that the characters would prefer to behave and be polite rather than to challenge fate and possibly be the instigator that causes a scene.

The secrets in this scenario, is not build on wishes of ill towards each other, nor control, envy or hate. They are building on fear, powerlessness and love.

Even though the game has one of its main mechanics based on secrets, there shouldn't be many secrets about to the players about the games main objective. The only real secrets that should be kept are HOW their misery will evolve over the years and also how many game-years the game maximum will last. The players should know what will make the game end, but not when. The players should know that they all are hiding their skeletons. It is at least as painful to know that everyone is miserable as it is to suffer alone.



## The Structure of the scenario

There is only one location throughout the game and that is the dinner table.

Each scene in the scenario is a copy of the previous scene and represents their Easter dinner. After each scene has ended there will be a short break where the players are handed a note that briefly describes what has transpired during the year until they rejoin at the following year's Easter dinner party, which will be executed in the same strict traditional order as last year/scene.

### New traditions

Even though the dinner schedule is very strict, it is actually not chiseled in stone. If an event during the dinner actually strengthens the nice and cozy mood. The players are welcome to add the event as a tradition to the schedule. This could be a nice retelling of old childhood stories, or maybe a joke that can be told again and again. As long as the new tradition in that case will be upheld, it is safe.

The notes they gain each year can have two basic different kinds of information.

The **trivial** information, (marked in green) is news that is safe to talk about, (at least for now).

The trivial news are often very trivial, and helps to enforce how sad and uneventful the characters' lives are apart from their misery, that fills up everything and they can't talk about.

Then there are the **secrets** marked in red, these are game stoppers.

Lastly there is a single "special information" marked in **blue**, which is the mandatory happening that will be the sad demise of George (Dad).

**About others** (game stoppers).

Sometimes the players will also gain information about another character. This information can also be used to stop the game by exposing another character's flaws.

Between scenes, while the players read up on their new information, you as game master can use the break to clean up the dinner table a bit so it can pass as the standard set dinner table, and make sure there is enough food for another round. Thereafter a new year/scene can begin.

There are in all 5 scenes/years built into the game, but it is not at all certain that the game will last through them all. The scenario should preferably stop abruptly by one or more players having enough and start making a scene. However if this doesn't happen, then the game will end at the fifth year, with death of the father, in the process totally killing the nice and cozy mood. As the father is the primary force demanding that mood, he is actually also the primary force that keeps the family together.

This might be the closest thing the players will come to a happy end.

## Starting the game

Before the game begins the players should receive a list of information as to how the game works. There is a handout at the back of the scenario that lists the information you should give the players. The handout also lists what is mandatory to inform the players, and what information you can choose to keep hidden depending on your game mastering preferences, or what you evaluated will work best with your group.

The handout also highlights the rest of the scenario and it should be possible to use that piece of paper as a reference sheet to all aspects of the game, and therefore don't have to rummage through the scenario for information during play.

After giving your players this information they can read their characters. Hereafter the game can begin by the children Maria and Tim coming home for their first Easter dinner after moving away from home. The year is 2003.

**Note! The first year is without any information notes. Their character sheets should be enough.**

Remember this scenario is a novella scenario and is built to last 2 hours. So try not to exceed the duration too much. The players should also know this, and encourage them to move on to the next thing on the schedule, as soon as a situation starts to be too dreary or slow. An entire year shouldn't take much longer than 20 minutes each in real time. You can of course allow this time to vary a bit, depending how the game progress.

## Music and Sounds

If possible a bit of mood music can be played in the background. This could be any kind of classical music written in minor, or schlager music.

Another greatly effective alternative is to download a "metronome" app for your smart phone. And let the rhythm simulate an old grandfather clock.  
- There are many free metronome apps.



## Ending the Game

The ending of the game is the delicate part of the scenario, mainly since it doesn't really have a predetermined ending, nor does it have any natural closure or plot finish, therefore the Game master should be very observant towards game stoppers.

Remember only to stop the game if another player chooses to pick up on the game stopper information and thereby causing a critical reaction that breaks the nice and cozy mood. This could either be an aggressive reaction, or a too long awkward and embarrassing silence. In case of aggression the game should be stopped right after the outburst, and in case of silence the game should be attempted stopped, just before someone decides to react upon it, so the awkwardness gets time to linger a bit.

If a situation occurs very early in the game, (1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> year) you can let them off with a warning and encourage the players to nurture the "nice and cozy" mood they all desire a bit more.

I know the timing can be hard, but if you keep to the basics, that the scenario must not end in a full-blown row. Then it should be possible.

The reason the game must not end in an argument is that in conflict you actually have the possibility to receive relief or even redemption. And not achieving this is however the point of the scenario.

The game should be ended abruptly with a simple "Thank you", where after you congratulate the players for ruining the perfectly nice and cozy mood and asking them "If they are proud of themselves" (don't skip on the sarcasm).

I have written a monolog speech in the textbox on the next page. It is not meant to be used as a

script, but a guideline for your own ending monolog, one that fits better into the game you have played. It is great if there can be a bit of confusion whether or not you address the players or the characters in the monolog.

### Avoiding game stoppers

A player can attempt to stop the game by revealing a secret about themselves or another player, but the other players can (if they are quick), choose to ignore a revealed secret by diverting the conversation to a safe subject, one they know the others like to talk about.

Being afraid of confrontation can often lead to a very selective hearing.

If a counter reaction towards the diversion happens, then there is no way back.

Sometimes only a fragment of the secret is revealed, here it is the game masters job to determine if it is enough to cause a scandal or not.

**NOTE! Safe conversations are noted on all the character sheets.**

**Some of them might end up not being safe throughout the scenario.**

## After the game and debriefing

After you as the Game master have ended your monolog the game is over. And players often enjoy talking about the scenario, and would probably like to tell the other players about their miserable stories. Here you can choose to deny them the option to see the non-revealed notes, since this could enforce the feeling of not getting relief. You can explain to them, that the reason for this is that the feeling of despair, disempowerment and irritation is what they are supposed to feel.

If all players are laughing instead, then ignore this suggestion.

## End Monolog suggestion

"Thank you!"

"Oh m! You really made a job out of ruining our nice and cozy mood."

"It would have cost you so little to play nice. All you had to do was to eat a little of the nice food and small talk and smile a bit. But no! You all simply had to ruin it for everyone else, and even for yourself."

"You shouldn't even sit here for very long, should you?"

"Why is it so difficult for you behave proper and polite?"

"How difficult can it be, to keep your problems to yourself?"

"Now no one feels like seeing each other next Easter, maybe even never again".

"I hope you are very very proud of yourselves!"

...

## What if?

There are a few situations and pitfalls that can happen, that can demand that the game master has to try and get around or improvise on these are:

### *1: The game runs its course*

If the game runs to the last year, then the monolog suggestions don't make much sense. Instead you can blame the characters for failing their opportunity to say all the things they really wanted to say. Life is often a long string of missed opportunities, and this is what happens when you just focus on keeping up appearances. And Easter dinners in the Hansen family will probably never be the same again.

Remember. It must not end well

### *2: Time might run out.*

This is the greatest pitfall in the game. If the game time is running out and there is no hint of any real conflict, then you can choose to kill Dad/George early, there is a black "You die" note in the handout, that you can use for this purpose. However, you should really try to avoid this emergency option.

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### *3: You run out of food.*

Hopefully you will have enough. But if you run out of food you simply have to make-believe the food. It will be a shame though, or maybe apologize that Anne couldn't find that specific kind at the market. It is by the way OK to save some of the drinks for between scenes. There is no reason for you to chuck down 6 non-alcohol free beers, when one or two easily could simulate it.

### *4: An argument starts, that is not part of a character secret*

If the argument isn't too serious it should relatively easy be disregarded as "just a discussion". But if it starts to resemble a row, you can use that as a game stopper as well. This will be up to you as the Game master to determine.

If you have any other questions about the scenario, then you are always welcome to contact the author

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# Bandit



**Special thanks go to:**

Anna Sigrid Pii Aunkilde, Ander Labich, Lærke Hviid Pedersen and Jakob Clausen for input to the idea and first draft of this scenario.

To Jonas Sandberg, Marie Oscowski, Maria Bergmann, Lars Hansen and Luciano Foschi for play testing.

To Kristoffer Rudkjær for constructive criticism

To all previous players and judges at Fastaval, who have given feedback to the small changes that has been made to the game.

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# Handout Easter dinner Schedule

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- **We meet 12 o'clock at Mom and Dad. – “Welcome home”, shake hands, “Nice to see you”**
- **We sit at the table. Mom has set the table. It's beautiful.  
There is Eggs, fish, homemade liverpaté, and of course with a nice seasonal beer and schnapps. Yummy.**
- **The eggs, the fish and the schnapps are passed around. (You can choose freely if you want the eggs or the fish. Mom remembers Tim didn't like fish as a child).**
- **Smalltalk while eating**
- **After the first course; dad asks someone to stand up and give a small speech about what good things have happened the last year. Dad remembers whose turn it is.**
- **Time for a toast in the Schnapps. (Dad made the schnapps himself).**
- **The Paté is passed around.**
- **Small talking while finishing the dinner.**
- **Time for the twins to get home to the big city. Goodbyes are said. And promises that they should do this again soon are given. Maybe a visit? (This never happens and the family will not meet until next Easter.**

***“This was nice” says mom***

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***“This was nice” says mom***

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## **George Hansen: 53 years old. Easter 2003**

**It has been a difficult year to get through. You didn't get the promotion at the rubber factory that you had anticipated, they gave it to Thomas. Thomas comes from outside of the company. He is the son-in-law of the boss, and surely that is the reason he got it instead of you. Avoiding the obvious nepotism, it was claimed that he got the job since he was younger, and therefore was a better investment for the factory in the long run.**

***This must however not ruin the holiday. Maybe there is some more encouraging thing to say at the toast instead. You will never keep a nice and cozy mood by telling the truth.***

***If we just keep to the Easter schedule then nothing can go wrong.***

**George is very set on his principals and traditions. Tradition is what binds a family together and if traditions are broken then the family is broken. Therefore it is of the absolute importance that this last remaining sense of family between you, your wife Anne and your twins Tim and Maria is not to be disrupted.**

**Family is to George the most important thing in the world, and in that regard George has failed years ago. George's stuck-up attitude towards everything that is not classical behavior, has chased the kids far from home. Last year they practically escaped to the big City to get an education.**

**George only likes what is well known, respectable and responsible. Tim and Maria have however often given him reason to use the belt to root out foolish notions. Even Anne has gotten her share. She is , to be honest, the one who has been too sloppy in the kids' upbringing and let them get away with far too many misdeeds. (George tries hard not to be too abusive, and prides himself that he at least isn't a drunk).**

***It is always good to have a family to rely on when nothing else in your life succeeds, even though you might have wished for a slightly better one.***

***Political views: Far right. (Since all else is too soft and too progressive).***

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**If any kind of awkward moments occur you can always talk about:**

- **The Opel (George and Anne's little red car. George sometimes call it "The Ferrari"**
  - **The summerhouse near the sea. (The family was often there when the kids were small)**
  - **Bandit (The family's small dachshund who always makes the most adoring little mischiefs. Bandit is located in the washroom during the dinner since he is "quite the beggar at the table").**
  - **The rubber factory: (George in particular likes to complain about his place of employment)**
-

## **Anne Hansen: 46 years old. Easter 2003**

**There is nothing more important in your world than your family. It hasn't been easy to get the kids to visit after they moved to the big city for their schools. Actually they haven't been home even once. But to the Hansen family Easter dinner is the biggest holiday of the year. And you all get to come together as a family.**

**You really hope that your twin children Tim and Maria have gotten a got start with their studies, and wouldn't it be nice if they found themselves a girlfriend or a boyfriend. George would be so happy if he became a grandfather. Everyone is better off if George is happy – especially you now that the kids aren't around. George doesn't hesitate to use the belt to uphold a healthy disciple. Of course he only disciplines you when you really have done something wrong. He isn't unfair.**

***Well. Better start figuring out what encouraging things you can say if you get to make the toast this year. Who cares if you just tell them a white lie. You don't always keep the nice and cozy mood by telling the truth.***

***If we just stick to the dinner schedule then nothing can go wrong.***

**Anne likes traditions and rituals. If everything goes according to plan, you usually avoid awkward moments.**

**Anne is often in denial off everything bad. Unfortunately she also denies a lot of the good at the same time. She views herself as a "glass half full" kind of person.**

***It is always good to have a family to rely on when nothing else in your life succeeds, even though you might have wished for a slightly better one.***

***Political views: Far Right. (Since so does George)***

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  - **The rubber factory: (George in particular likes to complain about his place of employment)**
-

## **Maria Hansen: 18 years old. Easter 2003**

**You love your family. It's just really hard to be around them. Especially dad can be difficult to love. Dad likes discipline and it wasn't unusual that he took out his belt when things didn't go according to his views on what was right or wrong behavior.**

**You and Tim are twins and both finished high school last year, from there you moved to the big city to continue your studies. You started studying religion, though you must admit it is a bit harder than you anticipated. It has also been difficult to find friends in the city. But it's probably just a phase until you get used to your new life.**

**It would be nice to get a boyfriend, but you haven't had much luck with that so far. There was one a few weeks ago that seemed promising, but when you woke up the next day he was gone, and he had given you a fake phone number.**

***Well. This must however not ruin the holiday. Maybe there is something more encouraging to say at the toast instead. You will never keep a nice and cozy mood by telling the truth.***

***If we just keep to the Easter schedule then nothing can go wrong.***

**Maria feels somewhat bad that mum is now alone with dad. Back then you were at least three people to share dad's moods. Now there is only mum. Therefore it is of the utmost importance to Maria, that today goes according to schedule and that dad stays happy.**

**Luckily Maria doesn't have to see dad until next year.**

**Family is very important to Maria. It is always good to have a family to rely on when nothing else in life succeeds. Even though she might have wished for a better one.**

***Political views: Far Left, (Since dad is Far Right).***

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**If any kind of awkward moments occur you can always talk about:**

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## **Tim Hansen: 18 years old. Easter 2003**

**You love your family. It's just really hard to be around them. Especially dad can be difficult to love. Dad likes discipline and it wasn't unusual that he took out his belt when things didn't go according to his views on what was right or wrong behavior.**

**You and Maria are twins and both finished high school last year, from there you moved to the big city to continue your studies. You intended to start at the university but it never happened and you haven't told your family about it. You are now on social welfare. At least you have some friends who are also unemployed, so you don't have to feel like a complete loser. You spent a lot of time with your friends, especially since you got evicted from your apartment and are forced to crash on one of your friend's sofa. You mostly sit around watching TV, relaxing and smoke a few joints.**

**It isn't the most optimal of situations, but it is ok and surely only temporary.**

***Well. This must however not ruin the holiday. Maybe there is something more encouraging to say at the toast instead. You will never keep a nice and cozy mood by telling the truth.***

***If we just keep to the Easter schedule then nothing can go wrong.***

**Tim feels somewhat bad that mum is now alone with dad. Back then you were at least three people to share dad's moods. Now there is only mum. Therefore it is of the utmost importance to Tim, that today goes according to schedule and that dad stays happy.**

**Luckily Tim doesn't have to see dad until next year.**

**Family is very important to Tim. It is always good to have a family to rely on when nothing else in life succeeds. Even though she might have wished for a better one.**

***Political views: Armchair voter (What does it matter anyway?)***

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# Player Handouts "George"

George Hansen, 54 years old. Easter 2004

**Trivial:** Last week Anne was in a solo accident with the car. The Opel is a wreck. Anne wasn't seriously hurt in the accident.

**Secret:** Thomas is on your tail at work. It seems like a sport to him to find more and more work for you to do. You rarely get home on time.

George Hansen, 57 years old. Easter 2007

**Trivial:** Anne voted for the Christian Democrat at the election this year. They didn't make the cut. Silly of her to waste her vote in such a way. What does she know of politics anyway.

**Secret:** The rubber factory just closed. You still pretend to go to work.

George Hansen, 55 years old. Easter 2005

**Trivial:** Your dash hound Bandit died this year. He was an old dog anyways.

**Trivial:** You got a new "old" Opel. It is also red.

**Secret:** Just after New Year 's Eve you got a minor heart attack. The doctor says your blood pressure is too high, and you should try and relax.

George Hansen, 58 years old. Easter 2008

**Trivial:** You got a new dog. It is also called Bandit.

**Secret:** Absolutely nothing happened this year. No job. No money. Nobody needs an old man like you.

**Other:** During the dinner you die by a new heart attack. It is all quite undramatic.

George Hansen, 56 years old. Easter 2006

**Trivial:** The basement has proven itself to be too moist and is now infested with mold.

**Secret:** The mold ought to have been fixed, but you can't seem to find the money for it..

**Secret:** You sold the summerhouse. You haven't told Anne.

**About Others:** You know that Anne is banging Thomas.

George Hansen

During the dinner you die by a new heart attack. It is all quite undramatic.

# Player Handouts "Anne"

Anne Hansen, 47 years old. Easter 2004

**Trivial:** Last week you rode the car into a tree. You just couldn't find the breaks. You weren't hurt.

**Secret:** Maybe the accident was on purpose. You are not quite sure. You had taken a few Valiums.

Anne Hansen, 48 years old. Easter 2005

**Trivial:** Your dash hound Bandit died. Poor soul.

**Trivial:** You've got a new "old" Opel. It is also red.

**Secret:** You accidently shagged Thomas who is George's boss at the rubber factory

**About Others:** You know that Maria is no longer

Anne Hansen, 49 years old. Easter 2006

**Trivial:** You were supposed to go to Tenerife on vacation, but it was cancelled. Instead you took a one-day trip to a nearby lake. George caught a trout.

**Secret:** Your relationship with Thomas has evolved. You now meet twice a week in a room at the inn. Thomas' wife almost caught you once. It was so exciting. Thomas doesn't want to leave his wife.

Anne Hansen, 50 years old. Easter 2007

**Trivial:** you voted Christian Democrat at the election. A shame your candidate didn't make the cut.

**Secret:** After a meeting with Thomas at the inn you went into the bathtub, filled it, placed yourself in it and slit your wrists with a razorblade. Thomas had forgotten his wedding ring and made it back before something really happened.

**About Others:** The police rang and asked for Tim. They didn't want to tell you what it was about.

Anne Hansen, 51 years old. Easter 2008

**Trivial:** You now have a new dog. It is also called Bandit.

**Secret:** You tried committing suicide by eating pills. Apparently you didn't eat enough.

# Spiller Handouts "Maria"

**Maria Hansen, 19 years old. Easter 2004**

**Trivial:** You now have a boyfriend.

**Secret:** Your boyfriend is named Achmed and is from Yemen.

**Secret:** You have quit the university.

**Maria Hansen, 22 years old. Easter 2007**

**Secret:** Achmed's uncle wasn't dead as he told you a few years back. Achmed was home getting married to his first wife. You are number two. Achmed want you to come to Yemen with him. You have refused.

**About Others:** You know Tim has been to prison.

**Maria Hansen, 20 years old. Easter 2005**

**Secret:** You are three months pregnant. It can't be seen.

**Secret:** Ahmed is home in Yemen. His uncle died and Achmed helps in the family's business until they can find a more permanent solution. He has been away since the baby was conceived.

**Maria Hansen, 23 years old. Easter 2008**

**Secret:** Achmed has started beating you. He says you are a bad wife.

**Secret:** The beating has led you to file for a divorce. The paperwork is just finished. Ali is on vacation with his father in Yemen. He should have been home last week.

**Maria Hansen, 21 years old. Easter 2006**

**Secret:** You got a lovely son. His name is Ali.

**Secret:** You and Achmed got married this summer.

**Secret:** You have converted to Islam.

# Spiller Handouts "Tim"

**Tim Hansen, 19 years old. Easter 2004**

**Secret:** You have been putting on weight. You always get so hungry when you smoke your joints.

**Secret:** You had a job at the local mini market, but you lost it when you showed up stoned for the third time in a month.

**Tim Hansen, 22 years old. Easter 2007**

**Secret:** You got busted by the police. You got 8 months and just got out. Everything in jail was actually a bit worse than you expected.

**About Others:** You tried to hide from the police in the summerhouse, but found out that it had been sold a few years back. It was at the summerhouse that the police caught you.

**Tim Hansen, 20 years old. Easter 2005**

**Secret:** You have started breaking into cars. It is hard to have enough money for drugs. It is still mostly pot and the like. But you take whatever drugs you can get your hands on.

**Om Andre:** You know that Maria has gotten an Arabic boyfriend.

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**Tim Hansen, 23 years old. Easter 2008**

**Secret:** You apparently got a bad needle in jail. You have been tested and you have HIV.

**Tim Hansen, 21 years old. Easter 2006**

**Trivial:** You now have a well paid job.

**Secret:** Your job is to deal drugs.

# Scenario Overview

## (GM Handout)

### Before the game

#### The players should know

1. The game is more a tragedy than a comedy.
2. The game setup. How the game is a copy of the same scene year after year. And how you will stop or force them to escalate slow scenes. And how scenes will change.
3. That the scenario takes 2 hours and they should try to avoid unnecessary downtime.
4. Encourage them to save their drinks to the next scene to avoid toilet breaks.
5. How they all can stop the game at any time.
6. What the difference is between **secrets** and **trivial**.
7. What "the nice and cozy mood" is and isn't
8. They should know that their characters are caricatures and it should be their own expectations and prejudices that should create the rest of their characters stories. There can be more things happening in the characters lives than what is presented to the players.
9. It is more than all right to lie to keep the nice and cozy mood.
10. How to avoid game stoppers.
11. Possibly set a predetermined order of speakers for the toasts in the game.

### During the game

1. Make sure there is always enough of the various kind of food on the table.
2. Be attentive to game stoppers and beginning arguments or rows.
3. Keep an eye on the time. Approximately 15 minutes per scene should be enough.

#### Game stoppers

1. The loss of George's job
2. Anne's infidelity (Thomas)
3. Anne's suicide attempts
4. Sale of the summerhouse
5. Tim's drug usage and arrest.
6. Marias boyfriend/husband and child.
7. Maria quitting her studies
8. Georges violence and abuse
9. All other things that they can bug each other with

#### Possible game stop avoidance maneuvers

1. Selective hearing
2. Bandit talk
3. Opel talk
4. The good old days in the summerhouse
5. Georges work at the rubber factory

#### The Ending

1. Abrupt ending. Without any relief or redemption.
2. The end speech.
3. (Optional). Don't hand out future unread notes.