

A Place Called Home

Number of players	5
Number of organizers	1
Length	2 hours 45 minutes
Recommended age	18 years
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Introduction (5 min)

A family devastated by the death of a parent gets an unwelcome visit from a shadow from the past. How will a family held together by lies survive when the lies no longer can sweep their problems under the carpet? We explore how a family deals with loss, and post traumatic stress. The family will be both their comfort and the source of their troubles.

The scenario is heavily reliant on the characters and their relations to shape the story. Players will have a high degree of freedom and responsibility.

The scenario is greatly inspired by the table top scenario Det är hit man kommer när man kommer hem for Den yttersta domen by Joel Nordström

Themes

The main themes that will be explored are:

- Family drama
- Post traumatic stress
- Melancholia
- Distrust
- Religious comfort

Each participant will not necessarily experience each of these themes, but the goal of the game as a whole is to reflect each of these themes.

Guidance for organizer

Lean back and give the players space to shape the story. Just as the players should trust each other, you should trust them. This will go as a red line across the entire design of the Larp. You are there to lay the groundwork, and to provide help where you can.

Genders

There are basically two choices of what you can do regarding the genders of the characters in this scenario. What choice to make can either be made by you as an organiser or decided by the players. The names are all gender neutral.

1. **Play it genderless** - There is not really any point in gendering the characters. It works just as well without genders. The only problem could be a lingual one.
2. **Let the players chose individually** - You could just let the players choose what gender they want to play in-game. If you choose this option, point out to the players that the gender should be stated in the round of presentations.

Props

- A table and six chairs.
- A replica pistol with holster.
- Cups for tea and coffee and a pot.
- Tape to build the house.
- A flower to put on the grave.
- A white veil.

Sound

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K1X6jF1rPrk&index=5&list=PLmBIzjN9th9fpR17vBVxAUnVypW-v1MCL>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XsYx2kgcduc&list=RDXsYx2kgcduc#t=134>

Light

Spotlight on the grave and one on the main table.

Guidance for players

Greet the players and get right to telling them about the play style. Information will be mixed in with the workshop to prevent players from losing interest.

Style of play (10 min)

The playstyle can be described through seven commandments. Use them to shape your play.

1. **Embrace change.**
A story is about people with human strengths and weaknesses, pettiness and dreams, pushing them to change their world. When your characters try to make reality of these dreams, the ideals they hold as truths come in the way of what needs to be done. Is there any belief they would never break? Find out what it would take for them to break it.
2. **Play earnestly.**
The story is what happens here and now. There is no story except the one you are playing. We have no pre-planned road to guide where you as players should take your characters. Be honest towards your character and do what feels natural and what the truths and goals demand. Realize your goals and drive your fellow players make hard decisions.
3. **Play daringly and leave yourself vulnerable.**
When your character commits a risky or reckless acts, rely on the wrong person, leave herself open to betrayal, you force them to make hard decisions. Through these choices you

learn who your character is. Show that you are vulnerable and leave openings for others to exploit. Allow yourself as a players to feel with the characters and be moved by their story.

4. Be ordinary.

You are not playing the heroes of legend. Say what comes up naturally, act as your character requires and let the story's inherent logic decide what should happen next. No one else thinks as you do and what seems obvious to you, will be unexpected for others.

5. Trust and respect your fellow players.

If someone has been deeply touched by something that happened in the story take a break in the play session and talk about it before continuing. Trust that the other players will act the same way toward you.

6. Encourage and build on the other players ideas.

Together you are building a story bigger than any of you could build on your own. Don't shoot down ideas another player establishes. Build on them instead. If someone mentioned something that a relative did at a family gathering, elaborate on it.

7. You shall have no secrets.

Don't keep secrets from your fellow players. Use the fact that you know than your character to our advantage. Take the opportunity to give away your secrets to your sister who you know will betray you. Use those mistakes to make the character feel more real.

Take the time to talk about the style and make everything as clear as possible. Everyone is free to discuss their view.

Trust (6 min)

Tell the players to stand in a small circle with one person in the middle. Then instruct the player in the middle to close her eyes and lean around in the circle. The people standing in the circle is then supposed to gently keep the central player from falling and keeping her comfortable by supporting her physically. The ring can start very close and be expanded after a short time.

It is extremely important that the exercise doesn't go wrong by someone actually falling to the ground or hurting themselves.

Characters (8 min)

[Hand out the characters]

Each role has four beliefs. These act as the character's self-image, or view of life. Each belief have a corresponding breaking point. This symbolizes that the character have acted against their own perceived self-image. Start the game by establishing your beliefs and then play towards the edge or over the breaking point.

Setting (4 min)

You play a family belonging to a marginalized ethnic group in conflict with the government. Many of you strive for greater autonomy or even a land to call your own. It is therefore unusual to serve in

the military or work for the state. Joining the army is generally looked down upon. The same applies to most forms of cooperation with the state.

Religious practice can vary in the area where you live, but most tend to believe in the same things as their parents believed in, and their parents before them. The same goes for tradition, things change slowly. Many young people have a more open view of religion and tradition. They argue that people can believe in what they want.

The majority of all the relevant background information will be available in the character descriptions.

Disclaimer: Don't be afraid to improvise what you haven't decided on beforehand. The world has no other function than as a vehicle to help move the story forward.

Questions?

The family (4 min)

Your family is comprised of three siblings, their only living parent, and one of the siblings' betrothed. Hilal, the oldest child, torn between love and duty. Sebah, the child who wants to see the family business prosper. Esin, the youngest sibling, a broken soldier searching for a place to call home. Nur, the concerned parent trying to keep the family together. Ikram, engaged to Hilal and former lover of Esin, striving to become a priest.

The family runs a small struggling construction company who makes a meager profit, and that's only because you work long hours and only take out very modest salary for yourselves. The margins are becoming smaller as people are leaving the village in search of work.

The family Nastasen have lost one of their own, the beloved Olgun, for Nur, the love of your life, and for the other three in the family, a beloved parent. Olgun had been sick for a couple of years before passing away at the hospital two years ago. Esin, the youngest child in the family, enlisted so that Olgun could receive medical treatment, but some of you think that it only prolonged the suffering. Esin was declared missing in action six months before Olgun died, and was declared dead soon afterwards.

Ikram, who was deeply in love with Esin before the youngest sibling joined the army, soon found solace in the arms of Hilal, the oldest sibling, after Esin disappeared. They got engaged soon thereafter and Ikram became a part of the family. Now Ikram want to pursue her dream of becoming a priest, which means that Ikram along with Hilal are talking about moving abroad and leaving the village behind, even though they have a lot of conflicting feelings.

Sebah, the middle child, has recently returned from university in the capital and have brought with them new ideas back to the otherwise quite traditional family. Nur Sebah looks like that will save the family even if others feel doubts about Sebahs path is the right one.

What happens when the long lost, and death explained, child, sibling or earlier beloved returns as a changed person?

Build your house (6 min)

Grab a couple of rolls of tape and build your house. Be sure that you can fit a table and some chairs in the same room. You should also choose where to place Olgun's grave. Try to collaborate as much as possible.

Shape your family (17 min)

[Place a table and six chairs in the spotlight]

We will now start to make sense of the family. How does it work in its every day machinations? I'll start by asking you a few questions of how your family does things and you will decide how it all fits together. We will give each of these three scenarios 5 minutes each. You are free to alternate between playing it out and discussing it. You can use the words *stop* and *start* to switch between acting out a scene and discussing it. Don't be afraid to stop the play to adjust things. Remember that this is meant to create a baseline of what your everyday lives look like. Esin should be present as if the character hasn't left for the army yet.

Family dinner

It's a quarter past seven in the evening and the food should have been ready half an hour ago. Those of you who's worked at latest worksite have just arrived home after a rainy afternoon.

- Who cooks and who puts out the plates?
- Who sits where and where did your late parent or spouse sit?
- Who says prayer?

The troublesome relatives comes for a visit

Olgun's parents come to visit, they've heard that Olgun is sick, but not how bad it is. They are traditional in a way that old people often are. This rubs some of you the wrong way. They'll arrive in an hour.

- Who reminds everyone that they need to keep up appearances?
- Who will tell them how bad things are with Olgun?
- Who cleans up the last things lying around the house?

Before the hospital visit

It is an early Sunday morning, but everyone is already awake. After breakfast you'll set off to visit Olgun whose health has gone up and down in recent weeks.

- Who keeps track of the other so that they have what they need for the trip?
- Who is the most stressed about the situation?
- Who is in closest contact with the family doctor who's caring for Olgun?

Playing Olgun (6 min)

You will all have the opportunity to play the lingering memory of Olgun your deceased parent, parent-in-law or life partner. Before doing that we need to decide which pronouns to use for Olgun. It does not really matter, but it makes it easier to talk about the character.

To play Olgun, take the white veil on the table put it on. When finished, return the veil. On the table you will also find all the characters beliefs. There you are free to read these and use the beliefs to create an interesting narrative during the game.

When take on the role as Olgun, you are invisible to the other characters, you are just portraying a lingering memory. Olgun acts as a conscience for the characters. Talk to them as if you were Olgun and act in accordance with how the character remembers its dead parent, parent-in-law or partner. If they feel guilty for having betrayed someone, blame them for it, and try to challenge their beliefs. You will have an opportunity to talk to Olgun but your conversation won't be heard by the other characters. For them, it just looks like they are praying or deep in thought. At the same time, you as a player can of course let the conversation influence you play.

Don't take on the role for too long. Try to stick to five minutes or less.

Divide the participants into three groups and give it a try. Help the player who is left out.

The Acts

The game is divided into three acts with a brief text being read to set the mood before each new act. The acts end when the two minutes after the music. Make sure to finish the scenes you are doing within that time. Heartbeats will indicate when there's 30 seconds remaining. When the heartbeats stop you can move around the space to before the next act starts. Be sure to listen to the text being read while you do that.

Act 1 - The broken soldier is coming home

After many long days of hitchhiking and nights shivering under a highway bridge, the lost soldier is coming back home. You all thought Esin was dead. Not a single letter or call in two years. Life had almost returned to normal, or at least as close to normal things could get.

For Esin: You can wait a few minutes before you enter the scene. How you make your entrance is up to you.

Act 2 - Against everything we stand for

Your traditions are at stake. In a few minutes, a postman with a contract from the government, will arrive. Sebah has negotiated with them to get a deal that would secure the family's income for at a long time, but at what price? It would betray a lot of the communities values. All that is needed to complete the deal are signatures from three family members.

You as an organizer will be acting as postman. Your job is just to ring the bell and hand the letter containing the contract to the first person who answers. You could also hand it to someone outside the house.

Act 3 - Follow me if you want

The taxi is about twenty minutes away, but who makes the decision to leave. Who chooses to say farewell, for god knows how long? Is this the time for the tear filled farewells?

Nur Nastasen

Concept: Distressed parent trying to keep the family together.

Goal: I must keep the family unified, and secure the company's survival.

Many years ago, on the happiest day in your life, you married the amazing Olgun. Together you lived happily together for the rest of Olgun's days. Your beloved has now entered paradise, while you are left behind in a this grim grey world.

Esin, your youngest, died in a skirmish in a foreign country two years ago. Esin enlisted to ensure that Olgun received medical care at the regional hospital. Had your youngest child not thrown away the life given by god, Olgun could at least have lived with dignity until the end. Now all Esin did was to prolong Olgun's suffering, and that the family had to live with the shame of having a member in the military.

What is left of your joint lives is the family company and your children Hilal and Sebah. Sebah has just come home from the university to help you, praise god! But Hilal is set on marrying Ikram and move to study abroad. The family you and your beloved built is falling apart before your eyes. God is the only one who's there for you. Your children care more about their own hopes of dreams than the future of the family.

Relations

Sebah, our middle daughter: I listen to what any advice given now that Sebah's returned home.

Hilal, our oldest child: I can't taken Hilal's opinions completely seriously.

Ikram, Hilal's betrothed: I treat Ikram as my own child.

Esin, our dead child: I blame Esin for Olgun's death.

Beliefs

<p>The one who remembers</p> <p>Olgun isn't gone, not yet. The body might be buried, but the light of your life lives on in your children and your common dream of the family company. Olgun would never want your children to leave you and would never accept a outsiders to run the family business. Your dreams must be kept alive.</p> <p>Breaking point: Leave a flower on Olgun's grave.</p>	<p>The overprotecting parent</p> <p>Olgun is dead, Esin is dead, and Hilal wants to move away with Ikram. The family is breaking apart. Only Sebah is left. There must be a way to get the others to stay as well.</p> <p>Breaking point: Allow any of your children to move away.</p>
<p>Blames Esin</p> <p>Olgun was getting better. But then Esin disappeared, and the hospital stopped taking care of your beloved. Olgun would have survived if your oldest child hadn't thrown away the gift of life.</p> <p>Breaking point: Embrace Esin.</p>	<p>Zelot</p> <p>There is one true faith, and you follow it. The mourning of Olgun opened your eyes to the light. You may have never studied at university, but you know what is right. And you know that God is with you.</p> <p>Breaking point: Accept a differing religious opinion from your children.</p>

Sebah Nastasen

Concept: The middle child that wants to make the family company prosper.

Goal: I must get control of the family company so I can start to work with the government.

You needed to get away. Away from Olgun's illness, away from Nur's suffering, away from the village narrow mindedness. When you saw your chance, you took it. After Esin had been missing for almost half a year, you persuaded your family to pronounce your sibling dead. As a compensation to the family you got a scholarship from the state that enabled you to enroll at the university. After studying political science for two years, you know how the world works. You have seen how neglected your little village is, but also how far away but still controlling the national government is.

Somewhere on the way to that understanding you lost your faith. The village is your home and it is where you belong. You have to work with the government to get a chance to make the village develop and prosper. The government is building a road through the area, that might be the family company's lifeline. Doing work in the construction might be what saves the village from the edge of poverty. The others will not agree, but you know that it is the way forward.

The easiest way would be to get the others away from here and run the company yourself. Then you could realize your plans for the village, and give it the chance it deserves.

Relations

Nur, my living parent: I do all I can to comfort and give a sense of stability to Nur.

Hilal, my older sibling: I encourage Hilal to move abroad to study with Ikram.

Ikram, Hilal's betrothed: I tell Ikram how wonderful the life outside of the village is.

Esin, my dead younger sibling: I got Esin pronounced dead to be able to get into the university.

Beliefs

<p>You did the right thing</p> <p>Declaring Esin dead was the right thing to do. Your younger sibling had been missing for almost half a year. You tell yourself that Esin must have been killed, so why not try to get something out of your loss it at least. It opened up possibilities for you.</p> <p>Breaking point: Beg for Esins forgiveness.</p>	<p>The strong one</p> <p>After Olgun died you have taken on the role as the stable pillar in the family. The rest of them need you to stay strong and rational in a turbulent world. To break down and admit your insecurities would be to let the others down.</p> <p>Breaking point: Seek comfort in someone else's arms.</p>
<p>Love for your home</p> <p>You love your home and it's people. But being away have made you realise how neglected it is. All you do, to take over the family business and start to work with the government, you do for the village best. If you don't do something, it will slowly depopulated and die.</p> <p>Breaking point: Act selfishly.</p>	<p>Autocrat</p> <p>You know what is best for the village. By seeing the world and educating yourself you've realized how much faster the rest of the country is developing. The region can make so much progress if people just listened to you.</p> <p>Breaking point: Follow someone else's traditions and decision for the future.</p>

Hilal Nastasen

Concept: The oldest child torn between love and duty.

Goal: I must decide if I shall follow Ikram abroad or stay at home to help the family.

Should you stay home or do you follow your heart? With Olgun's death and the devastated Nur you are needed at home to help the family cope. Sebah may have come home from having studied at the university, but your younger sibling walks around as a stuck up know-it-all with no sense of tradition. Sebah has forgotten what the your community and traditions stand for.

On the other hand, you and Ikram have talked about getting married and moving abroad to study. You could get a job, while Ikram studies to become a priest. With a degree in theology Ikram could end up just anywhere.

To ask Ikram to stay would be to trample on your beloved's dreams. To not follow Ikram would break your heart. But you have always carried the family on your shoulders. Your parents have never realized it, but it is you who have done most of the job, and run the business. With Esin and Sebah away the company would have gone under if it weren't for you and Ikram. Will someone else be able to carry on the the family tradition and take care of the business?

Relations

Nur, my living parent: To weak to handle the business and the family, so I help.

Sebah, my younger sibling: Doesn't know what's best for the village from just two years of study.

Esin, my dead younger sibling: I tried to stop Esin from enlisting and thereby disgracing the family.

Ikram, my betrothed: I do whatever my beloved wants.

Beliefs

<p>God loves us all</p> <p>God is merciful, and loves all his children equally. You listen to Ikram advice as if it came from a great prophet. You agree with your betrothed, people should be allowed to believe what they want to. Nur sadly doesn't agree.</p> <p>Breaking point: Agree with Nur in a religious question.</p>	<p>Duty to the family</p> <p>You have carried on with the family business while Sebah was gone. Nur has relied entirely on you and Ikram. Now Nur is weaker than ever, and Sebah has been gone for years. Who knows if your younger sibling can actually manage it? The family needs you, now more than ever.</p> <p>Breaking point: Put yourself before the family.</p>
<p>We rule ourselves</p> <p>Your people should govern yourselves, not some bureaucrat sitting in the capital. You uphold your people's traditions proudly and have participated in demonstrations for your rights as a people. Esin's decision to join the army made you scorn your youngest sibling.</p> <p>Breaking point: Act against self governance for your people.</p>	<p>Your sun and stars</p> <p>The love of your life, the intelligent and beautiful Ikram. You will do everything for your beloved. Soon Ikram will be yours in marriage and wherever Ikram goes, you will follow.</p> <p>Breaking point: Go against Ikram's will.</p>

Ikram Khan

Concept: Child of two farmers who studies to become a priest, betrothed to Hilal.

Goal: Convince your beloved to leave the village.

There is no shame in being a child to workers, none at all. Without its small factories the village would be deserted. You sweat on the factory floor, shoulder to shoulder with the other workers without complaint, but you have a higher calling. The local priest has trained you to become a shepherd yourself and has now found a scholarship for you - your theological studies at the university begins in a month, but that would mean leaving the country and the village behind.

You and Hilal have plans to get married and, move there together. Now Hilal has begun to talk about how the family is in dire need of help here at home, after Olgun died. You have also begun to doubt whether Hilal really is the one you are supposed to marry. There is love there for sure, but do you love Hilal just because Esin is gone?

That love was of a different, greater variety - at least according to how you remember it. But when Esin disappeared Hilal was there, and love blossomed. To move alone would be horrible, but if that is the only possibility, that might be for the best. Hilal might join you later.

Relations

Nur, my beloved's parent: I hope to get Nurs blessing to take Hilal with me for studies abroad.

Sabah, Hilal's younger sibling: I usually support Hilal's decisions.

Hilal, my beloved: I'm trying to convince Hilal to come with me to abroad.

Esin, the dead former light of my life: I miss Esin every day.

Beliefs

<h3>Future shepherd</h3> <p>God's love extends to everyone. Forgive and love your neighbor, and seek understanding. You find it hard to accept dogmas and advocate that each person must find their own road to God. Your role as shepherd is to guide and help people to form their own relationship with god.</p> <p>Breaking point: Turn your back on another human being.</p>	<h3>Wanderlust</h3> <p>The village is a picturesque place, but this is not where you'll find your future. It's an easy and simple life, but if you will remain here, you are destined to become a factory worker just like your parents. Your fate is in the world out there. You must get away.</p> <p>Breaking point: Choose not to get away from home.</p>
<h3>Love for Hilal</h3> <p>Your betrothed, that you are about to marry. To wake up next to Hilal every day is an incredible blessing - even if you've sometimes mistaken Hilal for Esin. There is love in your relationship, but sometimes you doubt the reasons behind those feelings.</p> <p>Breaking point: Say that you love another.</p>	<h3>The absence of Esin</h3> <p>Your first real love, and perhaps your greatest. Not a day passes without you thinking about what you had together. Had Esin not left for the army, things might have been different.</p> <p>Breaking point: Push Esin away.</p>

Esin Nastasen

Concept: The youngest sibling, a broken soldier looking for home.

Goal: I got to find a home and to get accepted by my family - as a broken individual in need of help.

Olgun was sick, and you could not afford the treatment your beloved parent needed. The only way to afford it was to join the army, then all your family would get free healthcare from the government. You enlisted even though you knew that it would bring shame on the family. Soon after you completed your basic training you were sent on service overseas as part of a peacekeeping force. You think that was about three years ago, but you don't remember for sure.

Something went wrong, you do not remember what, and a lot of people died. You did some things you now regret, some horrible things. The foggy memories are twisting your thoughts. You can't remember what exactly happened, and what are just nightmares.

Your life was saved by a kind woman. She took care of you and taught you to control your inner chaos. She found you, nursed you back to health, and opened your eyes. Returning to the army wasn't an option, so you set out for the place you called home. You hitchhiked, and traveled through many a wet night. Your memory is broken and your body is emaciated, but you know you have a home, a family, and your beloved Ikram. You do not know how long you have been away from home, but you know they love you unconditionally. If you just get home, everything will be well.

Relations

Nur, my living parent: I've always done everything in my power to keep Nur happy.

Hilal, my oldest sibling: Hilals have always been weak.

Sebah, my older sibling: I've always told Sebah that dreams are meant to be pursued.

Ikram, my betrothed: The memory of Ikram is what pushes me to carry on living.

Beliefs

Find God inside yourself

God is too great and magnificent for people to fully grasp. We must look inside ourselves and meditate on our lives to find the truth of God as it is for each and every one of us. God is for everyone, but the interpretations and relation differ.

Breaking point: Accept the credo of someone else as yours.

Scarred

You have been lost in a foreign land ravaged by civil war, you know what fear does to someone. Your memories are hazy but you know that you've done some bad things you regret deeply. War is hell, nobody should go through what you did and put others through.

Breaking point: Commit an act of violence.

Ikram brought you home

The memories of your wise, beautiful and tender Ikram have carried you all the way home. If could feel your true love's warm embrace again you know everything would be alright again.

Breaking point: Let Ikram love someone else.

Homesick

You long for home, your family and safety. If you can just get home to your family you'll be able to sleep through the night without waking up sweating and out of breath. Nothing can prevent you from getting their love.

Breaking point: Turn your back on a family member.