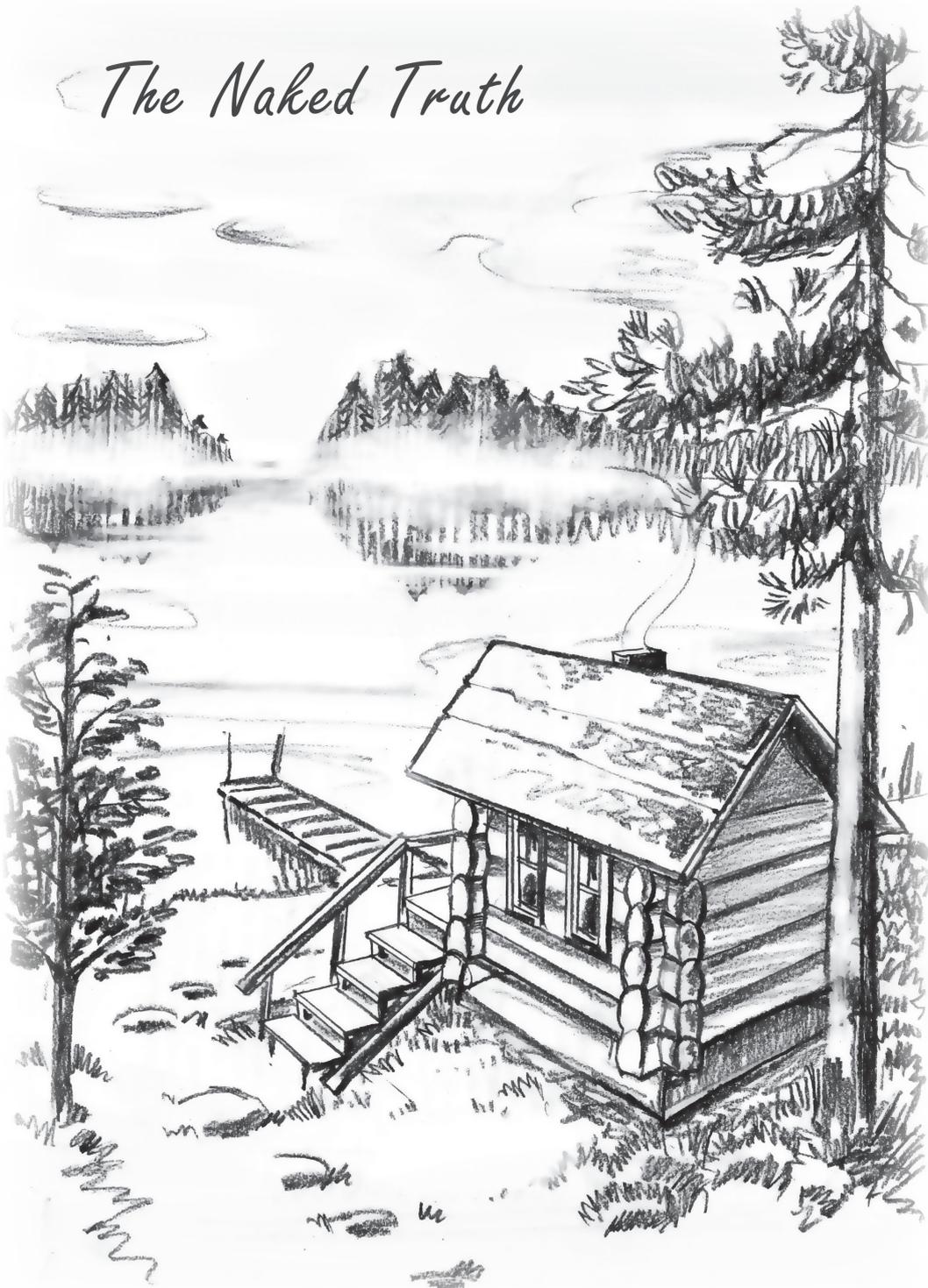


The Naked Truth



The Naked Truth

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Genre: Relationship drama, slice of life, feel-good

Catchwords: Friendship, sauna, Finland

Number of players: 4 + 1 game master

Runtime: 3-4 hours

Playing style: semi-live – the scenes are played using the whole body, but without costumes and with minimal physical props

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Instructions for the game master

Outline of the story

Talking is hard. Talking about feelings is harder - especially to those who mean something to you. It takes a special space for these things. It takes a sauna. This scenario will give a look into a seldom seen side of Finnish masculinity, and give an understanding of why the sauna is such an important part of Finnish culture for many. This scenario wants to tell a story about this reality for the people living outside the Finnish culture.

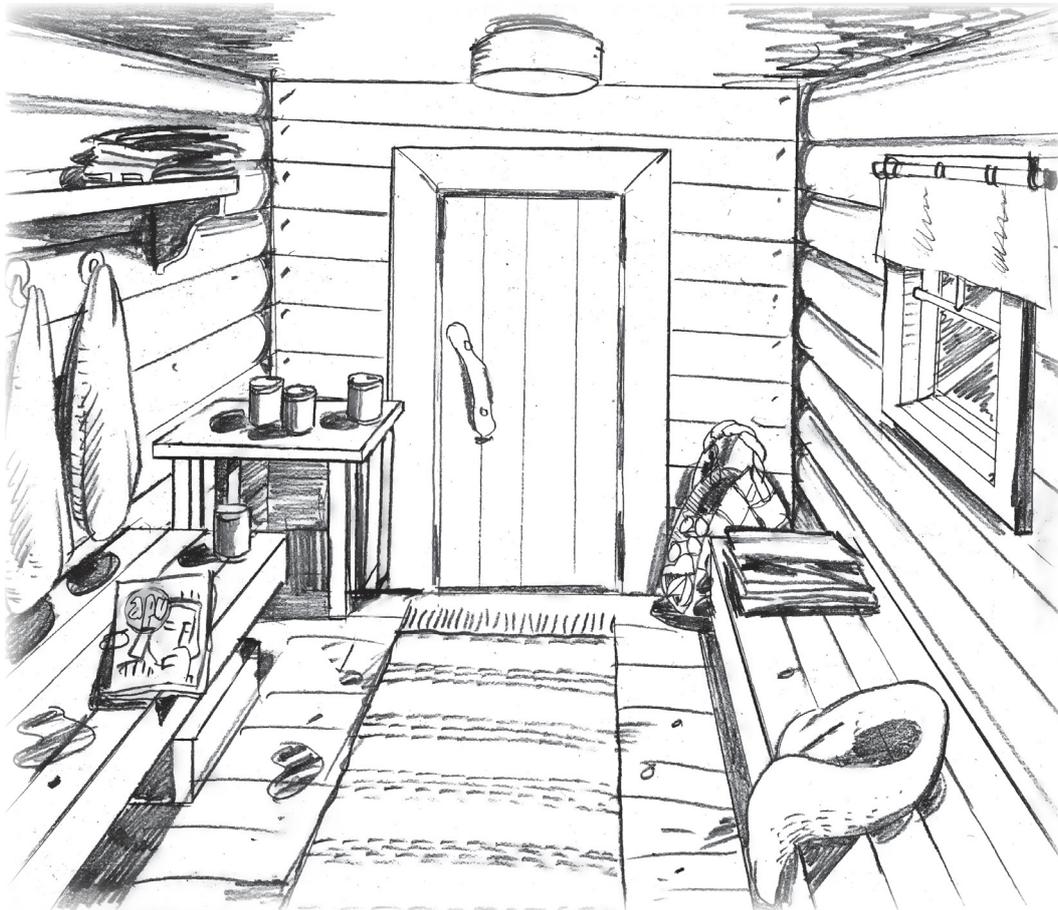
The scenario is about the difficulty of talking and opening up. The theme is explored through four men in a sauna, for whom sauna is an especially important place. In Finnish culture, sauna removes social boundaries and makes everybody equal. Rank, wealth, and seniority carry no weight there. Everyone is naked, both physically and mentally. You are not in a hurry. And in this place alone they can cast away the stoic shell that the society expects of Finnish men.

The scenario is structured in two parts: the prologue and the sauna evening. The prologue builds character backgrounds and sets expectations about the upcoming gathering of friends. The sauna evening covers the the meeting of friends, and the scenes take place in the dressing room and in the sauna. The dressing room acts as a symbolic gateway where the character symbols representing the character's status in society are put aside, and back on in the end. In sauna scenes, players take turns to tell a monologue about characters' real feelings. After a round of monologues, the players play a scene in which the characters are cooling off in the dressing room. Cooling breaks are for light small talk, jokes, and banter — things that are not connected with the experiences discussed in the sauna. There are three sauna scenes, each of which goes deeper into the experiences brought up in the sauna. During the third and final sauna scene, the characters get to choose how they will help their friends.

The theme of this game is friendship, as per the Finnish saying “no friend left behind”. The characters will have to weigh the possible consequences of opening up and showing emotion, but in the end they will realize that their friends will not abandon them.

Equipment and preparations

- Printouts of the characters.
- Printouts of the character symbols.
- Four safety pins to attach the character symbols.
- Printouts of the Experiences.
- 12 cans of beverages representing beer. For example, non-alcoholic beer, soft drinks, or water. Include some non-carbonated drinks if possible.
- Set up two adjacent game areas: one where players sit next to each other facing the same direction, representing the sauna, and one where they sit facing each other, representing the dressing room. Have a table on hand's reach from the dressing room area for the beverages and the character symbols when they are taken off.



Before the sauna

The *Before the sauna* section should take approximately 60 minutes.

Briefing the players

Introduce yourself and tell the others why you chose to game master this scenario. If you have been in a sauna, share the experience with the players. Do a round of introductions: have each player give a reason for why they wanted to play this scenario, and if they have been in a sauna, share a memory about the experience. It's perfectly acceptable to say you haven't been in a sauna.

The setting is current day Finland, but the exact location is not important. In the busy society of today silence is a luxury. This scenario will give a look into a seldom seen side of Finnish masculinity, and give an understanding of why the sauna is such an important part of Finnish culture for many. This scenario is about the silence in which you can sort your thoughts. The company where you don't need to pretend anything provide the characters an opportunity for self-reflection. The scenario is about this opportunity to set aside the differences brought by status in society. This scenario is not about manly macho stereotypes. Neither is it about shady deals, corruption, or the supernatural.

The genre of the scenario is relationship drama, slice of life, and feel-good. The scenario should give a subtle slowly building feel-good atmosphere, so don't make the story overly dramatic or excessive. The slower you are able to move from one thing to another, the better.

The scenario is structured into two parts. The prologue builds character backgrounds and sets expectations about the upcoming gathering of friends. The second act happens during the sauna evening and consists of three rounds, each of which consists of giving monologues in the sauna and coming out to cool off in the dressing room.

Warm-up exercises

The warm-up exercises are used to demonstrate the monologue mechanic, and the cycle of sauna sessions and cooling breaks. It also sets the mood and defines the cultural importance and the atmosphere in the sauna.

Ask the players to move to the dressing room area so they are sitting and facing each other.

Read the following:

Narration Finland is a cold place for the best part of the year. During the winter, having a place where you can sweat in comforting heat is a real lifesaver. A sauna is a special place, but in the countryside it also had a spiritual meaning. In the old times, you were born and washed in the sauna, and when you died they washed your body in the sauna before your funeral. It was a gate between this world and the one beyond.

Each house used to have its own sauna. It was usually its own building, or doubling in function as a type of a barn. For as long as anyone can remember, sauna has been a part of the Finnish way of life.

First warm-up: Sharing memories of past events

Ask the players to tell something about their day or day before. The emphasis is on the things they did. Do not talk about things you thought about, or how things made you feel. Only one may speak at the time and the others must stay silent.

Ask the players to move to the sauna area. Sit shoulder by shoulder and stare straight ahead.

Read the following:

Narration Having access to a sauna is very common. Most houses and even large apartments have their own saunas and others have shared saunas for apartment buildings. Swimming halls, gyms, and sports arenas all have at least one sauna.

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the next page →

In the heat of sauna you will sweat profusely and you will feel tensed muscles relaxing. Throwing water on the stones causes a brief wave of immense heat to flash through the room. It's considered poor manners to pour excessive water on the stones to smoke other people out of the sauna, even if you could take the heat yourself.

Sometimes sauna is associated with loud drinking, but this takes place at special social gatherings. In this scenario, sauna is about silence and contemplation. Sauna is to be treated with respect. Making excessive noise, making a mess, or being noisily drunk is frowned upon. This would annoy the spirit of the sauna, who might burn the place down if angry. The etiquette in a sauna is to remain quiet, calm and give others their time. It will not do to express your feelings with great agitation. Speak, but mind your manners. Sitting shoulder by shoulder is common, but no other touching is allowed.

Read the “The Court in Session”:

Instruction The point of this exercise is to settle you into the sort of mentality that prevails when something truly profound is revealed in the sauna.

Close your eyes. Imagine being present in the audience of a highly publicized court case, such as the infamous murder trial of O.J. Simpson, or the trial of Mark Chapman, the man who shot John Lennon. The judge is about to pronounce either “guilty” or “not guilty”. The court is sitting in silence, as the judge raises the gavel to bring it down and seal their words.

Imagine the silence that reigns in these brief moments. Everyone has their eyes on the judge and you could hear a pin drop. The press, the relatives of both the accused and the victim are straining their ears to hear the fateful words.

Imagine the formal aura of authority radiating from the judge, whose words will either chain or free the accused. [**Pause for a moment.**] Remember this revered silence when you sit in the sauna and someone speaks there.

You may open your eyes.

Second warm-up: Sharing memories of feelings

Ask the players to tell about their day or the day before. The emphasis is on thoughts and feelings. Only one may speak at the time and the others must stay silent.

Read the following:

Narration Sauna makes everyone equal. Even in the military, you do not address others by their rank when you are in the sauna. Think of sharing beers after a football game. Or sitting for a whole day fishing on a calm lake. Or driving through the countryside with a close friend.

In a sauna all is laid bare - your tattoos, your scars, and your whole body. Like in a church, you are also naked in the spiritual sense, with your souls laid bare before something greater. There is a song in Finnish titled “Real medals can only be seen in a sauna”. It means that the scars you bear that others see in sauna mean more than the medals you hang on your chest. Everyone is naked, with nothing to distinguish a convict from a CEO.

Read the “The Lifesaver”:

Instruction The point of this exercise is to settle you into the sort of mentality that should prevail when the characters, towards the end of the game, offer help to a friend.

Close your eyes. Imagine the sense of urgency you experience when you are standing on a pier and see that someone has fallen into deep water. Someone who cannot properly swim. Think of how you feel when you see a lifering nearby. And that you know you can hurl it far enough to reach the one in trouble.

Think of the sense of purpose. The feeling when one is about to throw the lifering to someone who desperately needs it. Imagine the relief on the face of the one who sees the lifering coming and knows that a friend has come to the rescue. When the time comes for the characters to offer aid, return to these feelings.

You may open your eyes.

Ask the players to return to the dressing room area.

Read the following:

Narration It is customary that when you are in a sauna with your friends you sit in the heat for a while, take a swim or a breather of another sort, have beers, and chill with the people you care about. You might sit in the sauna for a few times or for hours.

Third warm-up: Sharing plans and hopes

Ask the players to tell something they want to do on their next holiday. Only one may speak at the time and the others must stay silent.

Read the following:

Narration Sauna takes away your stresses and your worries. There you can rest without hurrying, in the company of those you trust the most.

Characters and Experiences

Lay the Experiences on the table so that only the titles are visible. Ask the players to read the titles of the Experiences and remove any subjects they don't feel comfortable playing with. Just scrap the papers, no questions asked.

Read the short character descriptions:

Tapio – the Successful: Successful self-made man. You worked hard to get what you deserve. No task is impossible if you put enough effort into it. But what did you sacrifice to get where you are now?

Antero – the Man in Uniform: Professional and efficient, almost nothing can pierce your stoic shell. Steady habits, deadpan humor, and loud laughter hide the things you feel inside.

Eero – the Unfortunate: Life is not always easy and you know it well enough. Many things are restricting your life, but you appreciate the little comforts.

Mikael – the Free: Well-traveled free spirit. Blazing high society star burning bright. What lurks beneath your glittering facade?

Let the players choose a character they like and instruct them not to read it yet.

Give each player an Experience at random. If someone wants to change, give them another. The Experience describes something that happened to the character in the recent past.

Tell the players they are free to decide the details about the Experience. It's something that has affected their lives for a few months and is constantly on their mind. The Experiences can be good, bad, or both. The players can also decide the severity and the consequences of the character's Experience, but remind the players about the tone of the game. Everyone is free to set the level or intensity of the Experience to whatever they like. It does not need to be crushingly brutal and you don't have to up the ante once you hear the others. For example, even if Character A has a serious illness, Character B can still have just lost their job and even have a better one lined up.

Give the players their character symbols.

Instruct the players to read their characters. Tell them to put the character symbols on once they have finished reading their character. Remind them to take a moment to think about their Experience as well.

Take a round to introduce the characters. What is their latest Facebook post?

Start playing the scenes.



Scenes

Scene introductions are read by the game master. When reading scene descriptions, start with the game instructions, give the players time to take their positions, and inform the players the scene will start once the game master has finished reading a descriptive text.

In the prologue, introduce the concept of framing and cutting the scenes to the players. Framing means setting up a scene by describing the circumstances and the participants. Cutting means ending the scene when it has run its course. In the prologue, the players will be in charge of framing the scenes. Ask leading questions that will help them to set up a scene. For example, “Who was present when it happened?”, “How did you feel when you heard the news?”, or “Where were you when it started?”. Game master will cut the scenes when appropriate.

During the sauna evening, if a dressing room scene drags for too long, game master should give the players a prod: “You notice that the sauna is ready”. Don’t hesitate to cut the scene if everyone is sitting in silence for a long time. Silence is meant to be profound, not boring. The sauna monologues are an exception as they can be long and there might be silence in-between. Abstain from cutting them if at all possible.

Remind the players it’s okay to make decisions about their past, life, relatives, or anything that could have happened to the group of friends. Encourage the players to use the character’s name often so they are easier to remember. Between the scenes, remember to ask the players if they need a bathroom break since they will be drinking a lot of liquids.

Prologue

Prologue should take approximately 60 minutes.
Read the scene instructions aloud.

The graduation day

Instruction Play a scene where the characters are going to a party after graduating from high school.

You are 18 years old, the legal age to buy alcohol. For years you have been toiling towards this day and now it is here. Earlier this day you were handed your high school diplomas and tonight you will party with your classmates. Adult life and new challenges await, but now it is time to party with the friends with whom you made it happen. You stood by each other through these years and now life will lead you apart.

You are sitting at a bus stop, waiting for a bus to leave for the party. Discuss your hopes and dreams of the future. What will you do next? Where will you be in five years? Do you feel melancholic as your group of friends will be separated? Game master cuts the scene.

Just another day

Instruction Everyone frames a scene about their character's usual day in which they interact with one other player character. It can be about their work, how they relax, how they interact with other people, etc., but it has to involve one other player character. You both wear your character symbols. Keep in mind how your characters' status, profession, and mood affects the interaction. Remember that you are friends even though you might not be able to show it. You may ask other players to play supporting roles other than their characters in the scene. The game master cuts the scene.

Winds of change

Instruction Everyone frames a short scene about when the character first encounters their Experience. For example, a phone call from a doctor, the reading of a will, a letter of termination, or the keys left to a table by a former spouse. You may ask other players to play supporting roles other than their characters in the scene. Ask others if you need more ideas. The game master cuts the scene.

Sauna evening

Sauna evening should take approximately 1 hour 20 minutes.
Read the scene instructions aloud.

Foreword

Read the following:

Narration Life has led you down different paths but you remember those happier times. You try to make time to meet every now and then to reminisce the old days. And as the custom in Finland is, you have rented a summer cottage, where you now have gathered. Through thick and thin you have arranged the time for this rare meetup. You have just arrived at the cottage and are about to head to the sauna. There will be other things later, like more serious drinking, but right now it's time for you to shake off the dust of the trip here and enjoy the calming heat for a while.

The cottage you are gathered at is a typical Finnish one, sitting on the shore of a lake. A small hut, nowadays with electricity, enough space to sleep inside and to cook food, and a separate sauna. It is the culture of these cottages which reaches across the boundaries of social class and the whole geographical Finland. If you don't have direct access to one, you are still likely to know someone who does. A weekend, or a week, at a summer cottage is something many Finns consider a part of their summer without which the vacation just doesn't feel like a vacation at all.

It's the middle of June and you have, for a few days at least, managed to shake loose the chains of your position in society and the facade that it demands from you. With these people, and these people only, you can truly talk freely about your life, your triumphs, your failures, your dreams and your despairs. From these friends, you hide nothing; from these companions, you hold back no secret. An often quoted Finnish saying "kaveria ei jätetä", or "no friend left behind" applies on your part to these people like no other. If it is in your power to help them in some manner you will spare no effort. If you are in truly desperate straits and need a hand, it is these people you will turn to. No friend left behind. Not ever. Not for any reason.

Arrival

Instruction Move outside of the room. Arrive to the dressing room one by one. Take off your character symbol to signify that you are setting aside your status in society. From this moment onwards, it no longer defines you. Say aloud the first sentence in your character text. Sit down and stay silent until everyone has removed their character symbols.

The dressing room

Instruction You are sitting in the dressing room. Catch up with your friends and make small talk about your life but do not reveal your Experience. Take a beverage in your hand once you are ready to go to the sauna. Don't open your drink yet.

Immediately after the instructions, read the following aloud as narration:

Narration You have arrived at the old dressing room one by one. Old beer cans scattered around, old magazines, and the smell of wood. The place looks slightly run down, but seems familiar and feels comforting. The four of you have enough space to sit, but with six people it would be crowded. Outside the evening is slowly getting darker and you can hear birds waking up and making noise.

First sauna session

Instruction Go to the sauna. This is the first of the three sessions in the sauna. Take the rightmost seat if you want to talk first. The first one from the right will take their beverage and crack it open. The others stay silent. There is no discussion in a sauna. Only four monologues spoken without replies. Tell the others about your Experience. Focus on what happened, not on the consequences. Put the beverage down when you have spoken all you want to say. The one to the left will then open the beverage and tell about their Experience. Do not rush, you have all the time in the world.

When the players are ready, read the following aloud as narration:

Narration You go to the sauna. The sauna is a small hot room with the walls and the long bench all made from the same timeworn wood. A wood-fired stove sits in the corner, radiating warmth. With four people on the bench, you can just barely fit. The heat is mild, enough to warm you but not high enough

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to make you uncomfortable. Every now and then someone throws water on the stones and the rising steam lashes across your backs. From the one small window, you can see fog creeping around the sauna. The only sounds you can hear come from the logs burning in the stove, from your own breathing, and from a lonely bird singing somewhere out in the distance. It won't take long for the sweat to start flowing and for your muscles to relax in the comforting heat. A cool drink flowing down your throat feels especially refreshing here.

First cooling break

Instruction Go to the dressing room. During the break, you all talk about subjects you like. Don't bring the Experiences shared in the sauna to the discussion. It is okay to finish the opened drink. Put your drink down when you are ready to return to the sauna. The scene starts when someone says "Have I told you about...".

When the players are ready, read the following aloud as narration:

Narration You return to the dressing room for a cooling break. Steam escapes from the sauna when you open the door. You are sweating and feeling hot after the last scoop of water thrown on the stones. A view to the lake opens from the cottage window. The cooler air here feels refreshing and you all sit quietly catching your breath. Your skin is steaming when it cools down. You hear birds singing and leaves rustling in the wind. The sun is setting over the lake. The beer tastes refreshing and you start to feel relaxed. You have all the time in the world without any worries.

Second sauna session

Instruction Return to the sauna. You may take a new drink as you enter the sauna or finish the old one. This is the second of the three sessions in the sauna. Take the rightmost seat if you want to talk first. The rightmost opens the beverage and may start speaking. The others stay silent. Return to your Experience. What happened afterwards? Was it good, bad, or both? How did you feel about it back then? How do you feel about it now? Like before, proceed with monologues from right to left. Do not rush, you have all the time in the world.

When the players are ready, read the following aloud as narration:

Narration You return to the soothing warmth of the sauna. After cold beers and some time out cooling, the heat feels especially welcoming. You feel a bit light-headed, calm, and thankful for the company of your friends. Your worries and sorrows flow away with sweat. The heat wraps around you like a warm blanket as you sit down and prepare to crack open another cold one. Water is thrown to the stones and for a while it feels hard to breathe in the roaring wave of heat.

Second cooling break

Instruction Go to the dressing room and place your character symbol on the table. During the break, you all talk about subjects you like. This time also think of ways you could help your friends, but do not speak of them yet. Don't bring the Experiences shared in the sauna to the discussion. It is okay to finish the opened drink. When ready, choose one character who you will help in the next sauna scene. Take their character symbol and hold it until the next break. Put your drink down when you are ready to return to the sauna. The scene starts when someone says "Do you remember when we...".

When the players are ready, read the following aloud as narration:

Narration You go to the dressing room for a cooling break. Yet again steam escapes from the sauna when you open the door. You are sweating and the rush of early summer night's air from the window feels refreshing. You all sit quietly catching your breath and enjoying this moment. The night is falling, but it is still warm. The steam slowly evaporates from your skin. The birds are silent. You've had couple more beers. You are feeling relaxed, but at the same time ponder the things heard at the sauna. If only there was something you could do to help your friends.

Third and final sauna session

Instruction Return to the sauna. You may take a new drink as you enter the sauna or finish the old one. This is the last session in the sauna. Take the rightmost seat if you want to talk first. You have heard your friend's stories. Tell how you could help the person whose character symbol you chose earlier. Start by stating what you think is bothering them, and continue with your proposal on how things could be better - maybe you can help them yourself, or just give some guidance. Proceed with monologues from right to left. Do not rush, you have all the time in the world.

When the players are ready, read the following aloud as narration:

Narration The warmth welcomes you as you return to the sauna, after some more time in the rapidly cooling evening. You've had quite a few beers and start to feel it. The heat, the silence, and the company feel especially welcome today. You feel the everyday aches and stiffness leave your limbs as the heat encompasses you once again. You have heard and confessed something serious today. As you prepare to sit down you realize you can do something about the things your friends have told you. You might not have much, but you are willing to go an extra mile for those with you now. No friend left behind.

Back to the dressing room

Instruction Go to the dressing room. Set aside the drinks. Return the character symbols to their owners and hold them in hand. Jest about the Experiences you shared together. Make good-natured jokes. Everyone laughs. Put on your character symbol when you are ready to leave. The scene starts when someone says "We should do this again".

When the players are ready, read the following aloud as narration:

Narration You leave the sauna for the final time and return to the dressing room. The evening is coming to an end. You have washed and are drying, secretly hoping to prolong these moments a little longer. The dressing room is humid, with its windows slowly steaming up. Having a sauna with your friends has left you refreshed if a little drunk. You still have a few moments together in this place where time seems to slow down.

Parting

Instruction Sit in silence. One by one, stand up and bid farewell to the friend you offered to help. Do it in a physical manner, for example, shake hands or pat shoulder. Last chance to speak your mind. Wearing your character symbol, say the final things you might have left unsaid. When everyone is standing and silent, leave the sauna one by one. As you walk through the door, say “Thank you”. The game ends when you all are out of the dressing room.

Immediately after the instructions, read the following aloud as narration:

Narration The time has passed again and it’s time to call it an evening. You have said all that there is to say, or almost. Surrounded by friends and the lingering warmth of the sauna you feel relaxed and refreshed. Ready to face the challenges of the future. Now it is the time for the parting words and for showing your friends that you have their back, come what may.

Debrief

The debrief should take approximately 15 minutes.

Take a round and have everyone answer the following questions:

How do you feel?

What do you think of your character?

The game master starts by answering the first question.
Let everyone speak without others interrupting.

Cheatsheet

Before the sauna (60 minutes)

1) Player briefing:

- **Introductory round:** Why you chose to facilitate this game? All players tell why they wanted to play this game. If they have one, everybody tells an experience about sauna.
- **Setting:** Current day Finland.
- **Themes:** Masculinity, sauna, silence to sort your thoughts, dropping your status in society.
- **Genres:** Relationship drama, slice of life, feel-good.
- **Structure:** Two parts. The prologue builds character backgrounds and acts as foreshadowing. The sauna evening covers the events of the friends meeting.

2) Read the Warm-up exercises

3) Characters and Experiences:

- **Lay the Experiences to the table** and ask the players to remove the ones they don't want to play with.
- **Read Short character descriptions** and let the players choose characters.
- **Give all players Experiences randomly.** Redo if necessary. The players are free to decide the details and the intensity of the Experience.
- **Give the players their character symbols** and tell them to put them on once finished reading the character.
- **Take a round to introduce the characters.**
What is their latest Facebook post?

Prologue (60 minutes)

- 1) **The graduation day:** Play a scene together. Characters have graduated from high school and are waiting on a bus stop, leaving for a party. They talk about their future. The game master cuts the scene.
- 2) **Just another day:** Everyone frames a scene about their character's usual day in which they interact with one other player character.
- 3) **Winds of change:** Everyone frames a short scene about when the character first encounters their Experience.

Sauna evening (1 hour 20 minutes)

- 1) **Read the Foreword**
- 2) **Arrival:** Arrive to the dressing room, take off the character symbols, and say aloud character quote.
- 3) **The dressing room:** Make small talk and take a beverage once ready to go to sauna.
- 4) **First sauna session:** Everyone tells a monologue about their Experience. Focus on what happened, not on the consequences. Put the beverage down when finished.
- 5) **First cooling break:** Talk about subjects you like. Do not discuss the Experiences. Put your drink down when ready to return to the sauna.
- 6) **Second sauna session:** Return to your Experience with another monologue. What happened afterwards? Was it good, bad, or both? How did you feel about it back then? How do you feel about it now?
- 7) **Second cooling break:** Talk about subjects you like. Do not discuss the Experiences. Choose someone to help and take their character symbol. Put your drink down when ready to return to the sauna.
- 8) **Third and final sauna session:** In a monologue, tell how you could help the character whose symbol you chose.
- 9) **Back to the dressing room:** Return the character symbols to their owners and hold them in hand. Jest about the Experiences you shared together. Put on your character symbol when you are ready to leave.
- 10) **Parting:** Stand up and bid farewell to the one you offered to help in a physical manner. When everyone is standing, leave the sauna one by one. Say "Thank you" as you leave.

Debrief (15 minutes)

- 1) **Debrief round:** Everyone answers the following questions: 1) How do you feel? 2) What do you think of your character? The game master starts by answering the first question.
- 2) **Open discussion** facilitated by the game master.

The Handouts

In preparation

Cut the EXPERIENCES into slips and fold them into thirds so that the title is visible on top.

Fold the CHARACTER SYMBOLS and attach the pins.



Prepare the character printouts.

Characters

There are four characters. Each has experienced something seriously important, which they have yet to share with the people they can truly trust.

The character archetypes are *the successful*, *the man in uniform*, *the unfortunate*, and *the free*. They are an example of how friends might take different paths in life, but still share something common, the sauna.

Family



Made stronger by shared hardship or shattered by the cruel hand of fate. For example, the sudden accident suffered by your child that brought your family closer together. Or the reveal of a dirty secret that left you distrustful of one another and feeling lonely and hurt.



(Put me inside your character symbol.)

Illness



Recovering from serious illness or just discovering it. For example, someone you love survived a dangerous surgery and is recovering from an ailment the doctors thought fatal. Or you received a report a few days ago informing that you were diagnosed with cancer.



(Put me inside your character symbol.)

Death

Inheritance you always wanted, a relief, or a cause of great grief. For example, a relative who left you an unforeseen but substantial inheritance, turning your fortunes around in a heartbeat. Or you might have suddenly lost a person who had always been a rock of certainty in your life and without whom you find it hard to carry on.

(Put me inside your character symbol.)

Love

A whirlwind romance, a life of commitment, or hurt feelings. For example, you might be feeling wonderful after finding love after a long time alone. Or you might still be reeling from a messy breakup and having trouble sleeping due to it.

(Put me inside your character symbol.)

Unemployment

Opportunity to pursue a dream or a disaster. For example, getting fired from a stressful and toxic job made you free to look for new opportunities. Or a sudden termination that left you unable to pay your mortgage and desperate for losing your house.

(Put me inside your character symbol.)

Dishonesty

A white lie to soothe aching wounds or dishonesty that broke a bond you thought stronger. For example, you might have saved a friend from facing prison by covering up for them. Or you might have destroyed your partnership by being caught red-handed.

(Put me inside your character symbol.)

Addiction

Battle won or something controlling your life. For example, you might have cast off a lifelong habit of drinking and have been dry for now. Or you might be addicted to a drug and consume it at a dangerous rate to deal with the stress of your life.

(Put me inside your character symbol.)

Conviction

Fresh start, relief, or a great shame. For example, you might have just been let out of prison and are eager to put your life in order. Or you might be facing a long sentence and despairing if you will survive years in prison.

(Put me inside your character symbol.)



Tapio – the Successful

"Around you, I never wear a tie."

You went to the same high school as **Eero**, **Mikael**, and **Antero**. You were good at sports and popular with many other youths, but with these three you shared a deeper bond. They had known you while you were still a scrawny youth and you shared the same hobbies back then. Whatever united you in those days, life later led you apart.

After high school, you studied at a prestigious business school and graduated in a record time. Ever since you have been going forward. An internship in a prominent company soon changed into a promising career and, as the saying goes, you have been striking when the iron is hot. You have appeared on the cover of a business magazine, and you are on speaking terms with several prominent politicians. You have traveled much, although on business trips, and have mastered a few languages aside from your own. You feel at home in New York, Tokyo, and in Berlin.

Sometimes, in the middle of your busy and carefully planned life, you like to blow off some steam with your three friends. It is middle of June and you are on your way to a long awaited summer gathering at the

lakeside cottage. These are the friends you used to hang around with, studied together with, and first got drunk with. In their company, you don't need to watch your every word and gauge every expression. These fellows remind you of carefree days that are nowadays a rare commodity for you. A tailor-made suit and a silken tie, your usual attire, would feel wrong in this company.

You know Eero isn't doing great and Mikael and Antero have their own burdens as well. Deep inside you feel like you want to reach out and help them. Something has been bothering your mind as well and you are grateful for the opportunity to see your friends after a long time. To them alone you can open up and express the longing you sometimes feel when you fall asleep alone in the Vice-President suite of yet another airport. Your finest cotton pajamas can warm your body but something about these people warms your seemingly cold heart. With them, you grill cheap sausages and drink cheap beer. You could afford better, but you don't like to make a number about that. After all, you don't need to show off your achievements to them. The caviar, the champagne, and the lobsters are for other parties.





Antero – the Man in Uniform

“Around you, I don’t carry a rank.”

You went to the same high school as **Eero**, **Mikael**, and **Tapio**. You didn’t quite grow up at the same speed as others and were grateful for the company of a few trusted friends. You loved challenging yourself and always wanted to have a career where you would not be stuck in an office for the rest of your days. As life led your bunch of friends down different paths you would still meet when able and share the latest news.

After high school, you completed the mandatory national military service. Once you got out, you decided that serving the state combined your physical nature and your dislike for a stuffy office job. You applied for and were accepted into the academy and graduated successfully. While you enjoyed success in your career you still remember fondly the fellows who knew you before your professional days. Who were your friends before you had achieved anything.

Your job has given you many opportunities to spend time in different environments and to participate in various shared training exercises abroad. You spent time volunteering for an international organization in a conflict area. You are professional, efficient, and unflappable. Little can surprise you or make you uncomfortable. You have weathered the various storms of your life with stoicism some find admirable and some bemusing. You have always found physical hardship

easy to bear, but you are not quite happy with the things you sometimes feel. The things you have seen and heard in the service make you feel uneasy at times. Your steady habits, deadpan humor, and loud laughter hide things you dare to reveal only to your true friends.

You do not see your friends from high school as much as you would like to. It is middle of June and you are on your way to a long awaited summer gathering at the lakeside cottage. These are the friends you used to hang around with, studied together with, and first got drunk with. You enjoy the company of your three friends because they are not a part of your professional hierarchy and they remind you of the times when things were simple. Around them, you don’t need to think about rank or your career prospects. You can concentrate on enjoying the occasion and sharing a few beers with the people who truly know you. With this bunch, you can talk about the things you normally bury under a calm manner and a professionally cool head.

Something has been bothering your mind for some time. If only you could open your heart and tell the others. You know your friends have their own burdens as well. Deep inside you feel like you want to reach out and help them. If the situation permits you would not hesitate to help any of your friends.





Eero – the Unfortunate

“Around you, I feel equal.”

Four of you went to the same high school: you, **Mikael**, **Tapio**, and **Antero**. Back then you played football, flirted with girls, got drunk, and did all kinds of stupid and funny things. Your school grades were not the best, but you had the quick wits to do just fine. With your friends you always carried your weight and it meant a lot to you. Then your ways separated and you all ended to different places around the country.

You went to the local small-town college to study engineering. You entered the job market before graduating and never came back. For a time, you were doing fine, though felt lonely at times in the new town. Then the layoffs came and you were suddenly unemployed. You lived from one unemployment check to the next while looking for work, but the job market was not hiring.

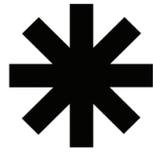
Your family supported you through all this. If only you had the words to express your gratitude. Each month is still a struggle and you feel the loneliness creeping as you cannot afford to join your friends in their pastime. Not everything is bad, though. You have rekindled your passion for football and have accustomed to making do with the little you have. You

also find comfort in knowing that your friends value the warmth of your company. Many times, you have been the only one to listen to someone’s worries when others are too busy with their lives.

You don’t see your friends from high school as much as you would like to. It is middle of June and you are on your way to a long awaited summer gathering at the lakeside cottage. These are the friends you used to hang around with, studied together with, and first got drunk with. You enjoy the company of your three friends because they don’t treat you any different even though you might not be doing as well. You enjoy the same cheap sausages, cheap beer, and the heat of sauna. Around them, you don’t need to think about your hardships. You can concentrate on enjoying the occasion and sharing a few beers with the people who truly know you.

You heard that Tapio is doing extremely well, Mikael has been traveling around the world, and Antero is doing fine on his respected field. Still, you know they have their own burdens weighting their mind as well. If only there was some way for you to help them. Something has also been bothering your mind for some time. You hope this will be the right time to open your heart to others.





Mikael – the Free

“Around you, I do not pose.”

Four of you went to the same high school: you, **Eero**, **Tapio**, and **Antero**. You were the stargazer of the rowdy group. You told the best stories and had the best excuses. When you were bullied for your looks, the others had your back. You lost the safety of the group when your paths led to different ways after the high school.

You went to study art but did not find it satisfying. You dropped the studies but kept doing art. After a couple of financially hard years you assembled your first art exhibition and overnight became the new rising star of the Finnish art scene. You spent the newly acquired wealth to travel around the world to see art installations and exhibitions and to attend glamorous high society gatherings.

Your art was well received, but you are also good at making impressions. You know the latest trends, have the right anecdotes, and deliver it all with a carefree attitude of youthful energy. Meeting all those people and making them like you is like a game to you. You have the freedom to do as you please. Moving, mingling, and traveling without burdens or borders. You do not know how long it will last and you do not

care. You are burning bright.

You do not see your friends from high school much. You easily forget them for long periods of time and feel a little guilty afterwards. It's middle of June and you are on your way to a long awaited summer gathering at the lakeside cottage. These are the friends you used to hang around with, studied together with, and first got drunk with. Something has been bothering your mind and you are grateful for the opportunity to see your friends after a long time. You remember the times when you were inseparable and always had each other's back. It catches you by surprise how much you miss your friends. Miss not having to pose a smile. Miss having someone to watch your back and feeling like you are one of the lads.

You have not heard much from the others, but the last time Eero was not doing that well. From what you heard Tapio and Antero are doing fine, but also have their own burdens in life. If only there was something you could do to help them. They are your friends and you would not change the world for the summer night you will spend together catching up, drinking cheap beer, and sitting in a sauna.



"Around you, I never wear a tie."

You are THE SUCCESSFUL, which means you have achieved what is commonly considered a fine career. Whatever your field, you have had the drive and the determination to take every opportunity life has offered you.

You are 35 years old. You like to talk about your career, the economy on a general level, and your expensive hobbies. You just bought a new boat, play golf in expensive locations, like fast cars, etc.

[choose an Experience] is distracting your thoughts from the professional success.

When your friends are in need, you can offer them AN OPPORTUNITY – a job or at least the chance to get one, or the occasion to hook up with important people.



Cut slits and slip the safety pin through. Tape for further stability

4



Fold the sheet in numbered order to make a character symbol. All folds are away from the central icon.

After the first two folds you have a long, narrow sheet with the character summary readable in the back.

2

The third fold gives you a bottom flap, the fourth a top flap. Slip the bottom flap inside the top flap to close the badge firmly.

Unfold the badge to view it as necessary.

1

3

"Around you, I don't carry a rank."

You are THE MAN IN UNIFORM, which means that you have a career in your country's military, police, fire brigade, border enforcement, or similar. A respected if not the most well-paid profession.

You are 35 years old. You like to talk about the outdoors, your service trips abroad, and the upcoming challenges to win.

[choose an Experience] is distracting your mind on duty.

When your friends are in need, you can offer them SOME TIME AWAY FROM IT ALL – a week or so camping in nature and a chance to get away from dusty routine. Your long hours and weeks abroad mean you can get a leave and access to a place somewhere.



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"Around you, I feel equal."

You are
THE UNFORTUNATE,
which mean you are beaten,
poor, and doubtful. It also
means you are hardworking,
warm, and can be trusted.

You are 35 years old. You like
to talk about the job market,
sports, and your relatives.

[choose an Experience] is
distracting your cheerful
mind.

When your friends are in
need, you can offer them
YOUR TIME – an ear to
listen, help with moving, or a
night out when they need it
the most.



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"Around you, I do not pose."

You are THE FREE, which means you are energetic, passionate, and have no obligations. It also means you are unconfident, erratic, and fear attachments.

You are 35 years old. You like to talk about the art world, your latest work, and traveling.

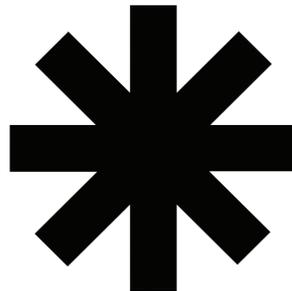
[choose an Experience] is distracting your thoughts from the glamorous art world life.

When your friends are in need, you can offer them YOUR EXPERIENCE - you have seen much and traveled far. Surely you have picked something: a piece of information, life lesson learned, or a new way of looking at life.



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