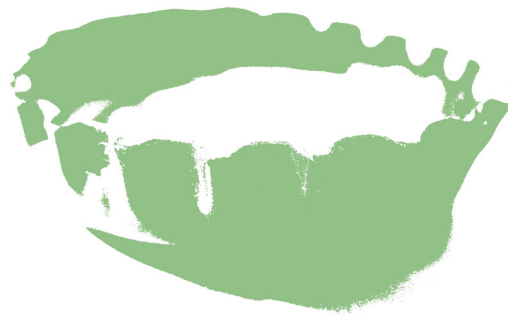


Drunk.

a novelle-scenario
for Fastaval 2008

by
Tobias Wrigstad

Vi åker Jeep





“Drunk” is a jeep form game for three players. It has no game master. Game time is 60-90 minutes including preparation. The game is about the power of alcohol and about choosing the easy way out, in the most difficult manner.

This folder exists in three copies, one for each player. Each folder contains a step-by-step description of how the game should be prepared. You should read it together. The folders differ somewhat, so you all read your own folders and wait for the others each time you are to make a common preparation. The information is presented in a particular order for a reason. Sometimes I want you to discuss something without having knowledge of the complete scenario.

Introduction

Ove, 40, is an alcoholic. He is married to **Pia**, 40, with whom he also has a daughter, **Lisa**, who is 16. At the present time in the game, Ove has recently been released from a treatment centre, a program he entered voluntarily. He has not had a drop of alcohol in four weeks and still suffers from severe withdrawal symptoms, mainly of a psychological character.

The game begins with Ove puking in the sink of a common restroom, where he has barricaded himself in order to **drink himself to death**. After having rinsed his mouth he looks into the mirror and at the rest of the players and holds a monologue describing where he is and where he is going. Pretty soon the monologue turns into a story of why things have ended up the way they are, and this story will in turn evolve into a retelling flashback scene. Ove in the restroom constitute **the present** in the game---everything else are **flashbacks**.

The first flashback begins with Pia and Lisa picking up Ove outside the treatment centre. It starts out as a fairly happy and careless scene, but soon it becomes obvious that all is not as well as it is let on. Pia is nervous and worried if Ove will make it, and even if Lisa is pleased that Daddy is home again she is far too preoccupied with being 16 to be able to be of any support to Ove. Perhaps Ove

Text & idea

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About...

jeepform, 60-90 minutes, 3 players,
0 GMs, jeepen.org/games/dod

Thank you!

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Falling asleep at the wheel

*Stop censoring
my thoughts*

orders wine with dinner out of old habit before Pia stops him, or maybe there is a beer commercial on the telly that puts a damper on the mood, or maybe Ove says something awkward to Pia about her smoking, which makes Pia retaliate. It becomes obvious that it is not going to be completely painless to patch the family back together again.

Back in the present again and Ove is in the restroom. Ove continues to down booze, despite the fact that his body does everything it can to resist, and he continues the story. We cut to the scene Ove is describing as soon as we have understood enough what it is about. The scenario continues in this fashion until the last scene.

This is intended to be a story about a dysfunctional family that is trying to make things right again, but fails. The scenes revolve around Ove, Pia and Lisa.

The story has at least four turning points: when it is revealed that Ove is an alcoholic, when Ove is admitted to the treatment centre, when Ove has a relapse, and when he finally makes up his mind to kill himself in order to escape his hopeless situation.

The last thing to happen is that we cut back to Ove in the restroom, in order for him to say a few last words, if he is able, before he passes out, and it is unclear if he will ever wake up again.

The Story

Which part of the story you wish to focus upon is completely up to you. You can play it straight, from start to finish, or only stress selected parts. The important thing is that the story is about Ove, Pia and Lisa---not about Ove at the treatment centre or what Pia and Lisa are doing when Ove is admitted. However, the story has to be chronologically linear: the flashbacks have to move towards the present at all times. Or else it will be too difficult to keep track of what is happening when, and what leads to what. And it will be more difficult to achieve a proper ending.

Scenes concerning the “revealing” of Ove’s alcoholism could show how Ove is hiding booze, how Ove single-handedly finishes the Friday-wine before Pia is through with her first glass, etc. Or what happens when Ove catches Lisa, who is no fool, pouring out his vodka in the kitchen sink. Or how Ove shows up drunk at parent-teacher meeting at Lisa’s school.

Scenes about how Ove gets admitted can depict how he openly must admit that he is an alcoholic in order to get admitted, how Pia and Lisa have to fight to get him to admit himself voluntarily (a requirement), or how Pia and Lisa tricks Ove into going to the rehab centre without him knowing that he has to willingly sign up etc.

Scenes following Ove’s release can be about how Ove is climbing the walls at home because he is still on sick leave, how Pia and Lisa tries to activate him but fails, how Ove struggles not to loose his temper, and so on.

Scenes dealing with how Ove relapses can focus on how he for example discovers a bottle of wine in Lisa’s room when he, in order to have something to do, is spring cleaning and on the way to the sink realises that he is sitting down and drinking from it. Or how he in a fit of rage happens to hit Pia and runs away, terrified at what he has done and ends up at his old local joint. Or how he, out of habit, buys beer in the supermarket and manages to convince himself that he can drink one and pour out the other five.



Under the Influence

In the envelope containing the scenario there are six pieces of paper. Take two each. On every slip of paper you should write two things that you would be most afraid of would happen if you were Ove, alternatively the worst things that has ever happened to you while drunk. Myself I was very close to being run over by a car about a year ago when I, too drunk for my own good, got out of a car without thinking in order to throw up and ended up in the middle of the road. However, this is not a particularly good scene in a scenario, thus I would not choose this one. Better examples are: Pia leaves you, you hit Lisa or you fall asleep at the wheel. Write down one thing on each piece of paper **without showing it** to the other players and put them in you pocket. Preferably, the events you choose will not take a character out of the game.

While you wait...

If you sit and wait for the others to finish reading you may take the opportunity to test if you are disposed for alcoholism. From what I gather, it is sufficient to answer "yes" to one of the following questions in order to be at risk. The more affirmative responses, the greater the risk:

- ? Have you ever felt that you ought to drink less, and less often?
- ? Have someone annoyed you by criticising your drinking?
- ? Have you ever had regrets regarding your drinking?
- ? Have you ever had alcohol in order to cure a hang-over?

Preplanning

Now the time has come to agree on what you should play. This you should do through a discussion which is to last no longer than ten minutes. First you should decide **how many turning points you want in the story**. Or put differently, what turning point you should begin with. Keep in mind that the scenario ends with Ove dying and is played chronologically.

Then it is time to discuss what in the story you are most interested in playing---what kind of scenes, what kind of circumstances etc. The point is not for you to agree on a specific number of scenes but that you are all on the same page. If you agree on where the story is going it will be tighter and better, and the room for misunderstandings will be smaller and less critical. **When the game has begun you are not allowed to discuss anything out-of-character.**

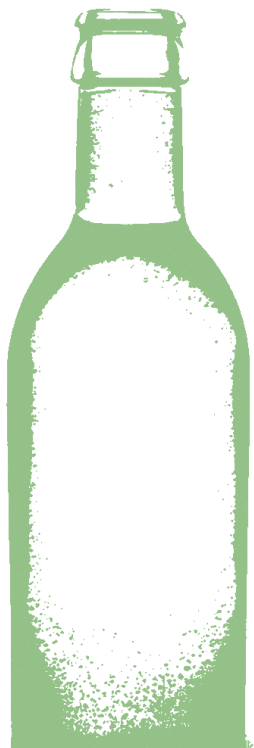
These are your characters

Ove—regretful

Pia—keeping up appearances

Lisa—angry at Ove

When Ove drinks, his attributes are emphasized.



Roles and Switching Roles

The game has three characters: Ove, Pia and Lisa. In some instances there might be a need for support characters, but the focus is on the family characters.

Each character is present in three different versions—with a different focus in each version. You will portray one version of each character—one Ove, one Pia and one Lisa. Role changes will occur regularly during the game and each change has a propagating effect: each time you play Ove, player 2 will portray Pia and player 3 will portray Lisa. When

Role changes can occur at any time during the game, for example in the middle of a scene. The player who wish to switch character, briefly stops the game and announces which character s/he wants to switch to. Following this all characters will rotate, you swap places with each other and continue where you left of before the role swap.

The purpose of switching character is to show several aspects of the character and that different constellations of characters allows for a variety of situations and possibilities.

Now that you have finished reading about the characters it seems fitting to briefly discuss, amongst yourselves, Ove, Pia and Lisa.

What does Ove and Pia do for a living? Is Ove able to keep his job after this? What are they like as people? How did they get along before Ove became and alcoholic and before Lisa entered puberty? Keep it short but do not skip it.

Reaching for the Bottle

Fill a liquor bottle with water or beer. The game lasts until the bottle is empty. The only one who is allowed to drink from the bottle is Ove in the scenes taking place in the present in the public restroom, which means that drinking from the bottle propels the story forward since every restroom scene leads to a new flashback scene. Take out the notes you made in the "Under the influence" section and scotch tape them to the bottle. When the level reaches the note it becomes a factual occurrence in the game. If one note says "Hit Pia or Lisa" and the level reaches the note this has to happen during the next scene. If several players have written the same thing the same occurrence is repeated and it is up to you to solve it story-wise.

This is not an attempt at introducing chance without dice. The only random element in the game is what you write on the notes and the order in which you place them on the bottle. Since the game is not finished until the bottle is empty, all scenes will be played.

If Ove drinks so much that more events are passed then all of these will be incorporated into the story. The bottle is of course a metaphor for that it is the alcohol that is controlling Ove, not the other way around. It is also an interesting way to distribute power regarding how the story progresses and when it ends. If the game is running poorly, just down the bottle.

Player Goals

In order to make it more interesting you will all move in different directions on the meta-level. The purpose of this is to create a more dynamic game. It is not about winning.

Let the goal influence your game, but do not let it completely control it. For example, the purpose is not to immediately change character as soon as you find yourself in a situation that opposes your goal. See it as something overarching and not something pressing that has to emerge in every scene.

Your player-goal is to

Make sure that Ove does not get away with it

The other players' goals are to

"Make sure it is Pia's fault" and "Make sure it's not Ove's fault"

The goals are consciously designed to be fussy to give room for your imagination.



Rules

I have some simple rules for how the game should be played that I hope that you will take to heart:

- § Play realistically—do not exaggerate and do not try to downplay the seriousness.
- § Only Ove can give monologues.
- § You may finish a scene at any point. This is accomplished by drinking from the bottle (and see if it has any effect, which turns you into Ove in the present time. You can now speak to the camera about the next scene. Anybody may start the scene and thereby bring your monologue to a close.
- § You can ask for a scene to be played again from a different perspective but with the same characters. E.g “once more, but all the way” or “once more, although does not dare to” or “once more but this time against Lisa”. A scene can be repeated numerous times.
- § A character that dies comes back as a ghost. Ghosts can talk to the other characters but cannot be seen or heard.
- § The game is not over until the bottle is empty.

Exit the GM

Earlier versions of this game had a game master, but it proved that this was not actually necessary. The game is simple and uncomplicated enough that it does not require someone reading it in advance or making any preparations.

If you feel that the game is not working you ought to cut and talk it through with your fellow players. They probably agree with you. (share the feeling?)

If you feel that something is too difficult to play, because for example you have experience of alcoholism in your family it is good if you have the courage to cut and talk to your fellow players. It is a good idea to be open about these things before the game commences, but it is absolutely not a requirement.

Keep in mind that the game is meant to be short. This is why there are very few mechanisms and very little structure. If not all players are having a good day it is not hard to imagine the game running on low steam if you keep at it for too long.

If you do happen to have a GM it will be the job of s/he to assume the role of Ove’s thirsty demons who hovers around him and whisper into his ear.

A Few Words About Scenes

Solo scenes are exciting but do not let them become too many. Even if the main character of the scenario is Ove, it is important that the situation of Pia and Lisa is not forgotten. One scene with a focus on Lisa can be about how she tries to deal with the shame of having Ove appear drunk at the parent-teacher meeting, or depict how Lisa despairs after having become drunk at a party, just like her Father. One scene with focus on Pia can deal with her fear that Ove will relapse, how she fights not to lose control when Ove lets his frustrations out on her, and so on.

Alcohol is the shit

Not everything about alcohol is bad. Ove would for example never have had the courage to speak to Pia if he had not had something to drink. Also, if not for the booze, Lisa would not exist—an unplanned and unprotected intercourse in the haze and craze following a party. Many of the things in Ove's life that are really good have a connection to alcohol and that should not be forgotten.

Oh, and the smoking!

All anxiety around Ove's alcohol abuse has got Pia hooked on cigarettes again. She is ashamed of it and smokes in secret. When she lights a fag it is because she worries that Ove will not be able to stay sober.

Puberty

Lisa is 16 and is beginning to discover her body and is having her first experience with alcohol and sex. She does not have time to take care of her Dad. Ove think it is extremely embarrassing to buy tampons.

A good game technique for scenes like this is to play insides and outsides. When Ove yells at her, Pia takes ***a symbolic step to the side***, clenches her fists and yells “if you say one more word I will kill you” and then steps back into her original place again and continues to be yelled at. Or when Ove says that “I do not actually feel like beer anymore” he can take a step to the side, look at the place where he was standing and say “lier”, etc. It is about showing what occurs in the minds of the characters. The players hear this, not the characters.

Too many scenes of Lisa and Pia yelling at Ove will be repetitive and not propel the story forward. Keep in mind that the family is trying to heal, but that it proves too difficult. Some days are fine, others are bad. Even if the trend is negative. And ends at rock bottom.

A Set Scene

Every player is given a set scene, that has to occur some time in the game. You are allowed to throw it in at any time you seem fit. It is up to you to play any one of the characters in the scene, but you have to initiate it like every other, that is, by drinking from the bottle. Your scene is:

Lisa comes home in the middle of the night from a party she snuck out to without telling her parents. Ove has fallen asleep on the couch in the living room, and Pia is in the kitchen, smoking and worrying.

Finally

Have you attached the notes on the bottle and filled it with something appropriate? The bottle should be rather sizeable, preferably 70 cl—otherwise the game may proceed too quickly and scene may be too close together. In the envelope you find a schema for how the characters are interlinked. Take it out and place it where it is visible to everyone, or write it down on a whiteboard.

Also, it is not a bad idea to physically place the public restroom in the room and put the bottle there. Ove crawls around on the floor, and so should you.

Drinking yourself to death requires tremendous willpower. Ove will probably pass out at least once and has to force himself to drink despite his body protesting. He does it for Pia and Lisa's sakes, and for his own. You will bring Ove to a point where he cannot go on, and where he sees no other way out than this. Perhaps because he is ashamed or because he do not dare trust himself, or because something he has done during the course of the game, or because this is the only way in which he can regain control over his life.

I think that it is a fairly good idea to drink a very little schnaps right before you begin playing, just enough to get the taste of it. Do not drink anything that you like. Down it together, and view it as a way to get into character.

Down the hatch!

Tobias Wrigstad

