

BRFSST ISSIT

A novella scenario by Elias Helfer

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Introduction

Welcome to *Brasst Issinn*. This scenario is a GM-less scenario for four players, and is designed to be played over the course of two hours, preparations included. The game centers around a family that is being split apart by grudges, frustrations and unresolved conflicts. The scenario takes place in the hour or two before the family's fragile peace splinters completely and irreparably. You will play the calm before the storm, without playing the storm.

In this document you will first find a short description of the scenario, and how you prepare for it. Following are three 'scene sheets,' which describe how the different types of scenes are played. These are designed to lay on the table as you play. The roles come next - four main characters, and a sheet of important secondary characters. At the end you will find some handouts - cards to use in the warm-up game, a set of game markers for each player, and a playing mat.

I will give you one piece of advice: lay into it! Don't pull your punches! Some scenarios take hours to build up to a conflict, and show all the nuances of the characters and their relationships. There's no time for that in *Brasst Issinn*. The ice breaks quickly, and when that happens, you should hate the other characters deeply and sincerely.

Brasst Issinn is not a nice scenario, but I hope you have a good experience with playing it. And when you are finished, I hope you'll tell me about your experiences with it, either face to face or by mail, both good and bad. Good luck!

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The Runes are Gunfjaun Runic by David Kerkhoff

Teaser

The winter has been long and hard. For many months, the family has been cooped up in the small hut. Everyone is on everybody's nerves, and everybody is keeping their feelings on ice. But many years of grudges and complaints lurk right under the surface, and are ceaselessly threatening to break forth.

One early morning, the son of the family sneaks out from the claustrophobic cabin and down to the ice to play. While he moves further and further out onto the creaking ice, the rest of the family slowly awakens, and glares silently at each other over breakfast. When will the ice break, and the cold war break out in flames?

Brasst Issinn is an intense, short form scenario about disappointed love, fermented resentment and ice cold air. The scenario switches between storytelling scenes about the boy on the thinner and thinner ice, and scenes in the cabin, in which the players develop the quiet buildup to the inevitable row. The game ends when the row breaks out - and ice breaks under the boy.

The game has no gamemaster, but one player in each group should have read the game in advance. If you are willing to read the scenario and explain it to a group of co-players, please let us know! Write it in the comments section, or get in touch with the writer directly.

Duration: 2 hours

No. of players: 4

Tags: Narration, Family Drama, Short Run

Player type: This scenario is for players who like joint storytelling. The majority of the game is played without any direct speech, so you should be comfortable with playing through descriptions of physical action. You should enjoy making life hard on your character.

About the Author: Elias has previously written *Antihero* (2012) and the short form scenario "Under My Hive" for the anthology, *The Empire 40k*. He likes watching characters squirm..

How to Play Brasst Issinn

In Brasst Issinn you play a family that has spent the long winter months together in a little hut. The relations between the family members are frozen solid after many years of repressed frustrations and pent up grudges. One cold morning the family's son, Sune, wakes up before everyone else and sneaks down to the ice. As he goes out further and further, and as the ice under him becomes thinner and thinner, the rest of the family wakes up. They go about their morning rituals in silence, and glare at each other as they dress and have their morning porridge. The morning chores are done quietly - in part because everyone knows what they must do, and in part because they sense that the first word spoken will initiate the massive fight that has been underway for months, if not years.

The scenario mainly consists of two different types of scene:

Ice scenes are storytelling scenes, in which you take turns adding a sentence to the tale of Sune on the ice. He ventures further and further out, without realizing the danger in which he's placing himself. The game starts with an ice scene, in which you will narrate how Sune wakes in the cabin and sneaks out to the ice. In that scene you will also describe your sleeping characters in the cabin.

Cabin scenes are more traditional scenes, in which each of you plays a member of the family: the father, Skarde; the mother, Thurid; the grandfather, Arne; and the daughter, Revna. They wake up and silently begin to go about their day. During each cabin scene each player will narrate a short flashback, and describe a situation that has increased their character's hatred toward one or more of the other family members.

After each cabin scene you will use the playing markers to assess the extent to which the scene escalated the situation in the cabin, and Sune moves a corresponding number of spaces on the accompanying board. When he has moved at least ten spaces, any one of you can decide to begin the fight in the next cabin scene. When Sune has moved fifteen spaces all in all, the next cabin scene will only end when the fight breaks

out. The fight is started when someone says the line that begins the fight. When this happens, you immediately cut to the last ice scene.

In the last ice scene you describe how the ice breaks under Sune, and he drowns in the cold water.

There is one fast rule in the game: there is only one spoken line during the course of the game. A 'line' is understood as one character speaking to another character. This also holds true for flashbacks, though a player may use indirect speech here.

Preparing the Game

You need print copies of:

- The characters (cut out)
- The playing board (in colour, if possible)
- Scene sheets
- 4 markers for each player with numbers from 2-5 (cut out)
- Material for the warm-up (cut out)

Aside from that, you should also have a marker that represents Sune on the playing board. That could be a piece from a board game, or perhaps a coin.

What to do when it's time to start:

- Introduce yourselves. Tell each other what your expectations for the scenario are.
- One person who has read the scenario text briefly describes it for the rest of the group. They can, for example, read the 'How to Play' section out loud to the group.
- Play the two warm up exercises.
- Select characters, and take the game markers that are marked with your chosen character's rune.
- Let everyone read their characters.
- Put the scene sheets and the board out on the table, so everyone can see them. Put the Sune marker on the board at the marked place.
- Go through the mechanics of the different scenes. Do a physical demonstration of how you vote at the end of a cabin scene, return the markers at the end of an ice scene and take them back during the course of a cabin scene.
- Begin the opening scene.

Warm Up Exercises

There are two warm up exercises for the scenario. The first is a concrete exercise in how the ice scenes work, while the other should help each of you to show your character's state of mind..

Warm Up Exercise 1: Storytelling round the table

Tell a story one sentence at a time. One player reads one of the accompanying sentences aloud (see the back of the scenario). The player to the left of him continues the story by saying one sentence. Continue a couple of times around the table. Stop if the story runs off track, or if you think the story has gone on long enough - 3 times around the table is plenty. Start a new story with the next sentence, which another player will read aloud.

Warm Up Exercise 2: Describe the feeling

Lay the accompanying slips of paper out on the table with the text-side down, or fold them and put them in a cup or bowl. In turn, each player takes a paper, and describes a character that has the feelings on the paper. The player may not say the word printed on the paper, or a derivative of the word (so if it says 'happiness,' you may not say 'happy'). The other players try to guess the word. They don't need to guess the exact word as it is written on the paper. Continue until there are no more slips of paper.

Distribute the Characters

Chat briefly about how you want to divide the characters. You can mix the characters and take one at random. You can also let one player (who has read the scenario) briefly describe each character, and each player can decide who they would most like to play. Or you can chose the characters based on their approach - read these key words out loud, without naming names:

- The passive, introverted sufferer - Skarde
- The extroverted, frustrated aggressor - Thurid
- The disappointment of age over youth - Arne
- The frustration of youth regarding old age - Revna

Scenes in the Cabin

Skarde, Thurid, Revna, Arne and little Nanna all wake inside the cabin and begin the day: breakfast must be made, wood must be chopped, and so on. Everything happens in oppressive silence: no one says anything to the others. Everyone knows their duties, and everyone gets on each other's nerves.

How to Play a Cabin Scene:

The scene describes how things progress in the cabin.

The first cabin scene begins when the first character awakens. The following cabin scenes begin shortly after the previous one ends.

Each player describes what their character is doing. They can, to a lesser extent, relate what their character's thoughts are.

The scenes contain no dialogue. None of the characters speak to each other.

During the course of a cabin scene each player narrates a short recollection. The recollection revolves around something that stirs the character's loathing, frustration, anger or hate towards another character.

When one player begins their recollection, they reach out a hand to their markers on the table. The others listen to the story. When the recollection is finished, the player takes the marker away from the centre of the table..

How to End a Cabin Scene:

The scene ends when all the players have narrated a recollection, and there are no markers left on the table.

Now each player assesses how much the scene has escalated the situation in the cabin. They take the marker with the corresponding number and hold it in front of them face down. When everyone has chosen a marker, the markers are turned face up and the average number is calculated (rounded up). Sune walks the corresponding number of spaces further out on the ice.

All players set their markers back on the table with the numbers facing up. They should be in a place where everyone can see them..

Alle spillere lader deres brik ligge på bordet med tallet opad. De skal ligge et sted, hvor alle let kan se dem.

A new ice scene starts.

Guidelines and Advice

Don't hold back - let the others know how much you detest them, and why.

Be direct. Narrate a recollection quickly and clearly. Quickly tell others what the point of the memory is, and finish the scene once you have done so.

Your recollection may be a response to someone else's recollection. It can also bring something new into the game.

Don't know what your recollection should be about? Ask yourself, who are you least angry with right now? Who is the least angry with you? Make a scene about them.

Give each other space. Don't interrupt the other players, and describe short sequences that shift often. Silence is not your enemy.

Be as concrete as you can. Describe exactly what you're doing here and now. This also applies to the recollections: it's best to relate a concrete moment.

Important Secondary Characters

Sune: Skarde and Thurid's son. The apple of everybody's eye.

Nanna: Skarde and Thurid's youngest daughter. Born in the summer.

Njal: The man Thurid wanted to marry.

Leif: The apple of Revna's eye. Not from the best family.

Scenes on the Ice

Sune is playing down on the ice. Something entices him, and he goes out further and further.

How to Play an Ice Scene:

The scene begins where the previous ice scene ended. The first normal ice scene continues where the introductory scene ends.

One at a time, players say one sentence, which continues the story where the person before them left off.

Describe only what happens concretely. Don't describe what Sune is thinking.

How to End an Ice Scene:

When a player feels that the scene has reached a natural ending point, he reaches out to his marker on the table. If two or more people do so, the scene ends immediately.

When the scene ends, everyone flips their marker, so that the back side (without the number) is facing up. The markers remain on the table.

A new cabin scene follows immediately.

Guidelines and Advice

Keep the ice scenes short - it's fine if every player says between one and three sentences in each ice scene.

At the start, go around the table from player to player. If everyone feels comfortable with it, you can loosen up the form, so that the players chip in when they feel they have something to contribute. Make sure everyone has room to contribute approximately the same amount. Players can still only say one sentence at a time.

First Scene: Before Sunrise

The family lies sleeping in the little cabin. Everyone except one: Sune, the family's son, has woken early, and has decided to sneak out and go down to the ice to play.

Playing the Introductory Scene:

The scene starts with Sune rising from his bed, and ends when he is down at the water.

The scene plays like an ice scene, with one exception:

Before Sune leaves the cabin, all the players introduce their character. When one player feels it is natural to do so, they take one of their markers in their hand and reaches it into the middle of the table. They describe, in a few sentences, how their character lies sleeping. Then they place their marker on the table with the number side facing down, and the scene continues.

None of the other characters wake during this scene.

The End: the Ice Breaks

The game ends when the fight in the house breaks out. At that same moment the ice under Sune breaks apart, and he is pulled down into the cold water

The Game is Over when Sune has Gone Too Far on the Ice:

When Sune reaches (or passes) the 10th space on the ice, anyone can end the game during a cabin scene.

When Sune reaches (or passes) the 15th space on the ice, the game must end during the next cabin scene..

How to End the Game

A player ends the game by saying a line of dialogue, which is the line that will start the fight.

As soon as the line is said, the cabin scene ends, and you cut directly to the last ice scene. Players may not reply to the dialogue that ends the scene.

In the last ice scene, you describe how the ice breaks under Sune, and he is lost.

The game is over.

Guidelines and Advice

Don't try to plan the ending line. Let it come naturally. Instead, concentrate on making the game intense until the end.



Skarde

You are a proud man of a proud family. All your life, you have worked hard to support your family. Your older brother died, and with him much of the family's fortune was lost. You work hard, but you don't have his gift for leadership and business. You're best at standing in the shadow of another, helping and advising.

Thurid

↑ Your wife is quarrelsome and bitter. She didn't want you - she wanted Njal. You didn't want her, either, but you accepted that she was the one your brother felt was best for you. She has never accepted you. She blames you for everything, and doesn't appreciate all you do to please her. In the past you argued often. But that is seldom now.

Arne

⚔ Your father-in-law is decrepit and haughty. He has often expressed his displeasure with you. You weren't what he'd hoped for when he married Thurid off to you, and he never lets you forget it. He blames Thurid and you because his old age is not filled with comfort and wealth.

Revna

⚔ Your daughter is short tempered and flighty. She's got it into her head that she wants to marry Leif, a bad seed from a bad family. You're tempted to let them have each other, but Thurid will never accept this. When your daughter was born, she was near death, and you had to fight to keep her alive. For that reason she is dear to you, but it has also made her argumentative. Both you and Thurid have often butted heads with her.



Thurid

You are a proud woman who has been trapped in a pathetic life. But no one can say that you share the blame for your family's misfortune. You toil to ensure their happiness and welfare. Not that you are appreciated for what you do. Once you were angry. You screamed your rage and impotence. That is seldom now. Now you are mostly cold and defiant.

Skarde

⚔ Your husband is incompetent and spineless. You knew that from the beginning. Not like Njal, who was strong, fun and energetic. But Skarde was from a good family. The family is gone now, and it has become apparent that Skarde can't do anything without his brother. He can barely keep your family in bread, much less ensure the welfare you both had as children.

Arne

⚔ Your father is infirm and bitter. He has never forgiven you for the fact that you did not become a wealthy woman, even though he was the one who demanded you marry Skarde. You have never forgiven him for refusing to let you marry Njal. In this way he ruined your life and Njal's life - and his own as well. Now he's old, and almost unable to take care of himself. You have to look after him, even though he never looked after you.

Revna

⚔ Your daughter is quarrelsome and haughty. As a child she was sickly, and you had to fight to keep her alive. Since then you've had cause to wish that you'd let her die, for she has not caused you less anguish since then. She's gotten it into her head that she wants to marry that good-for-nothing Leif. Over your dead body!

Arne

F

You were a strong and proud man, once. But you're not what you were - your strength has forsaken you. You are so weak now that you can barely get out of bed by yourself. You ought to rest in your children's home, just as your father-in-law rested in your home when he grew old and his strength left him. But your children are weaklings, unable to take care of their own father.

Skarde

S

Your son-in-law is weak and incompetent. When you married Thurid to him, you thought that his quiet demeanor bespoke manliness and staunchness. And he was of a strong and competent family. Unfortunately the family fell apart, and Skarde has show himself to be weak of will, and unable to get by without his dead brother.

Thurid

↑

Your daughter is bitter and haughty. She's still angry with you because you didn't let her marry Njal. You think that time has shown that Njal hid a rotten core under his pretty exterior. That being said, Skarde didn't turn out to be what you hoped, either.

Revna

R

Your daughter's daughter is quarrelsome and bull-headed. She doesn't appreciate the wisdom of earlier generations, but she thinks she can do everything better herself. She's gotten it into her head that she wants to get married to a miscreant by the name of Leif. Unfortunately, she's the one taking care of your daily needs, and she is rough and miserly with her care.

Revna

R

You are proud young woman, who will soon be ready to leave your parents' house. And you can't wait until that day comes! The day when you can be the lady of your own house - together with Leif. You've seen how your parents have ruined their own lives, and you have no plans to repeat their mistakes! Unfortunately, it looks like they have plans to do exactly that.

Skarde

S

Your father is a feeble and pitiable man. You have often been in a position to twist him round your little finger. Sometimes by pandering, sometimes by threatening tears or anger. You were sick when you were little, and he was afraid of losing you.

Thurid

↑

Your mother is a quarrelsome, bitter woman, who has decided that everyone else must pay for her wretchedness. She has decided that Leif isn't a suitable man for you, and apparently wants to prevent your happiness together, whatever the cost..

Arne

F

Your grandfather is an old, decrepit man. He can't understand that things are no longer the way they were in his glory days. Unfortunately it's your job to take care of the old fool. He nags you day and night - with errands small and large, and with the extent of his disdain for Leif.

2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5

For Warm-Up Exercise 1

The snow stood around the roof of the cabin.

I hate you, she screamed.

For Warm-Up Exercise 2

Disgust	Impotence
Frustration	Hatred
Arrogance	Rage
Grief	Impatience



