

due credit

This game was written by An Sheep and Avery Alder Mcdaldno, and is dedicated to Sara Williamson.

Playtesting by Ivy Bakes and Syr Reifsteck, how lovely.

The cover art was done by Amy Clare, whose work is at belovedlights.tumblr.com

Titles in *Delicious*, text in *Minion Pro*.

Each of these games is dedicated to a generous Patreon backer. Which put us in a weird predicament this time—dedicating a game about queer women to a man. Relieved and grateful that Peter Woodworth decided, upon quick consultation, to nominate another for the dedication.

Buried Without Ceremony



special thanks -

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cover art by Amy Clare



on behalf of Peter Woodworth, this game is dedicated to Sara Williamson

written by An Sheep and Avery Alder Mcdaldno, with support from Patreon

a place to fuck each other

introduction

A Place To Fuck Each Other is a game about queer women and the relationships they tentatively build within new spaces. The spotlight moves through a cluster of lovers as they play slice-of-life scenes about hooking up and moving in. It's a game about hope, disillusionment, and attempting to create healthy queer spaces.

The game is for three players. Roles rotate, but in every scene two people will play Lovers and the final person will play the Third. Scenes are about tacit negotiation between the Lovers and the Third, between expectations and realities.

This is a game about queer women—whether gay or bi, butch, femme, trans, not. But it's also about the spaces held by a specific group of queer women. Life is long, gender can surprise us, and for this reason you might find your story occasionally making space for people who no longer identify as women, or don't yet, or who have muddled relationships with queerness, and just—know that all of these stories have a place in this game.

getting together

To play, gather a stack of index cards, a piece of paper to draw a relationship map, pencils, and sharpie. This is a game for three.

Find a place you'll feel comfortable playing in. While the game doesn't necessarily include narrating acts of sex, it definitely includes narrating the contexts and emotions surrounding sex. Will the game feel uncomfortable if played in a public space? Or will you feel weirded out by a space that's too intimate, encouraging? Find the right space for your group to settle into.

If the space you settle into allows for playing music, consider doing so. Make a playlist of sad lesbian music ahead of time, or play songs whenever you decide that they're also playing in scene—whatever.

To start the game, decide which player will play the Third in the first scene.

from An

I used to be a utopian.

The idea that we could just make some sweeping changes to the way things are, or with some small subset of people break off from the way things are and build a self-sustaining social order—it's seductive. But breakthroughs are to be distrusted. Revolutions are rare. And nothing is perfect. The biggest shifts consist not of sudden, shocking redistributions, but of slow, subtle drifting that ends up far from where it began.

The multiple, overlapping systems of oppression we participate in (more or less willingly) are very robust. They find ways to replicate themselves even in the hearts of those who do their best to resist them. Maybe the Big Answers just don't work, or maybe we just haven't found the right ones yet. But for now, anyway, I think the best we can do is to carve out little spaces for resistance: to hold time, to really listen, to pay attention to the ways we rub up against each other.

It adds up.

liner notes

from Avery

I spoke in Sweden last month, about designing games that are structurally and mechanically queer. I listed games I love, and games I've written. We had time for questions at the end, and the first was challenging. "How do you feel about exploring queer communities in a normative world? You didn't talk about this."

Challenging not because it was complicated, but because it involved owning up to a practice I have, a practice of locating my ideals *elsewhere*. Of making games where the difficult work of dismantling patriarchy and oppression has already been done, of telling stories where queerness is innately linked with awesome agency-redefining power, of conveniently skirting the ways that compromise constructs our lives. It's a personal failing of mine—to depend on post-apocalypticism or the mythic as a crutch for making it safe to talk about queerness and humanness. And a beloved friend called me on it, and also called on me to collaborate on a game that broke that pattern, and that's where this came from initially.

This is a game written by ex-lovers. An is someone who used to hold me at night. Those boundaries are different now—we've been through our *I shouldn't be here*. Writing this game together felt weird. But it's a game about processing disillusionment, about seeing queer communities as they are and not as we fantasize they might be, about having three-quarters of your needs met. And so, in a way, it's been the perfect thing to share and navigate together.

creating lovers

In each scene, two of the players will take on the role of Lovers. In the first scene, both of those players will be creating a new character.

It doesn't take much to create a Lover. As her, tell us:

- ☛ your name
- ☛ your sign
- ☛ your hairstyle
- ☛ a *tendency* you have, or something you're *coping* with.

Write these four qualities on an index card using sharpie.

Start with your name. Names can imply a lot about people, signalling details like race, upbringing, and faith. Some names are kept from birth, others clipped and modified, others claimed whole-cloth.

some names -

- | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| ☛ Rita | ☛ Kennedy | ☛ Keen |
| ☛ Mireya | ☛ Eli | ☛ Jae |
| ☛ Monica | ☛ Moni | ☛ America |

Choose your astrological sign, whether it's something that this character attaches meaning to or not. During scenes, your sign is a gift, an option, a point to circle around if you're unsure how to react next.

The Zodiac -

<i>Aries</i>	A fire sign, cardinal, dynamic and assertive - she usually takes the lead.
<i>Taurus</i>	An earth sign, fixed, determined and collected - she draws a lot of boundaries.
<i>Gemini</i>	An air sign, mutable, talkative and curious - she tends to move on quickly.
<i>Cancer</i>	A water sign, cardinal, sensitive and indirect - she cries often.
<i>Leo</i>	A fire sign, fixed, loving and bold - she doesn't equivocate or hesitate.
<i>Virgo</i>	An earth sign, mutable, caring and observant - she can be hard to please.
<i>Libra</i>	An air sign, cardinal, idealistic and diplomatic - she wants romance to be easy.
<i>Scorpio</i>	A water sign, fixed, intense and capable - she's afraid to show vulnerability.
<i>Sagittarius</i>	A fire sign, mutable, ambitious and free spirited - she burns out at times.
<i>Capricorn</i>	An earth sign, cardinal, resilient and reserved - she isn't freely affectionate.
<i>Aquarius</i>	An air sign, fixed, inventive and earnest - she judges others quickly.
<i>Pisces</i>	A water sign, mutable, intuitive and conflicted - she can be unpredictable.

“Emma follows your gaze, to the phone sticking out of her jeans, and sighs. It's a frustrated sigh.” And before Kyle can figure out Emma's actual response, Jenn jumps in, intoning for Jade, “I suddenly get this sense that I shouldn't be here. I see a flash of guilt in Emma's expression, remember the nervous friend that'd clung to her side when I first saw her earlier.” With that, the scene ends. We don't learn how Jade and Emma's evening ends.

Sia says, “Hey, if it's cool, I'd like to do a quick interlude.” The others nod.

Without establishing any of the details of where this interlude scene takes place, Sia says, as Marcy, “No, it's cool. It wasn't a big deal at all, it's just... when people disappear on me, I'm used to it meaning, like, having this whole host of implications. I'm used to it being a scary thing. And so I just wanted to make sure that you were okay.” The interlude ends there.

The roles rotate, and now Kyle is the Third. At least one of the two Lovers needs to be an already-established Lover character, and Sia grabs the index card for Jade. “I feel like we didn't really learn much about Jade in the last scene,” she says.

Jenn can now either reach for Emma's card, or write up a new card. She decides that she wants to write up Marcy, and have her become a lover. She goes ahead and writes:

- ☾ Marcy
- ☾ Pisces
- ☾ blonde hair, classic Bieber cut.
- ☾ I tend to fall in love with women but end up in relationships with men.

Sia says, “It seems like Jade and Marcy didn't know each other in the last scene, but I'd love to jump to a point where they're moving in together.” Jenn nods. Kyle pipes up, “Maybe they're just moving in as roommates, but there's also this palpable chemistry between them, long glances and tender touches. And so it's a fraught, charged move?” The others nod. That sounds like a perfect second scene. They proceed.

“Jade shakes her head, already feeling slightly fuzzier than she planned to be. She suggests water, instead, pulling up to your island and leaning down upon the granite countertop.”

There are a few minutes where Emma and Jade hover around the island, glasses of water in hand, conversation suspended, and it seems like maybe nothing’s going to happen after all. Jade thinks about checking her phone, but doesn’t. Emma thinks about checking her phone, but doesn’t. Sia mentions that if Emma had checked her phone, she would have seen a text from that friend, Marcy: *thinking about leaving- you still here?*

Jade breaks the awkward silence, a few lingering steps toward the art on Emma’s walls, a soft “this is neat.” Emma walks over, stands close, talks about the lady she brought it from. They both lean in, slightly, letting their shoulders touch, and arms, and things move forward from there.

The scene continues, until Jade is straddling Emma, half-clothed, and Emma’s pointing toward the nightstand drawer. There’s a moment of hesitation, then, and Kyle suggests, “Hey, can we not narrate any more of, like, their actual sex?” The others nod, glad that someone has set the boundary.

Sia looks at Kyle and says, “Emma, texts are on silent, maybe, but your ringer is still on if anyone decides to call you. And Marcy is trying to call you. So as the two of you are fucking, the phone rings.”

Kyle glances at the sheet, asking himself what a Capricorn might do in this situation. He decides that, true to her sign, Emma doesn’t show affection very freely. “You know, as much as Emma wants to be a supportive friend, she needs this right now. She hasn’t let anyone touch her since her mom died, she hasn’t had sex in a while, and I don’t know, Jade just seems to invite trust. So she lets the phone ring.”

Sia nods, but continues, “That’s cool. A minute later, you hear the new voicemail sound. And then another forty seconds later, it’s ringing again.”

Jenn looks down at Jade’s index card, and her eyes linger on *I tend to ask questions I don’t want to hear the answers to*. So she jumps in, “Jade pauses, hand stiffening. She suddenly looks serious and nervous. She asks, eyes darting over to your discarded jeans, whether you need to get that.”

Describe your hair—a few choice words signal bigger details about your personality, aesthetic, and identity. You can change clothes as you move between spaces, but haircuts say something about how you navigate the world and how strangers read you.

some hairstyles -

- ☞ a jet-black side shave.
- ☞ teased coils of auburn and burgundy.
- ☞ a braided rat-tail that always finds its way into my mouth.
- ☞ held back with a glittery barrette my daughter made.
- ☞ an unpruned tangle of brown.
- ☞ a dirty blonde pixie cut.
- ☞ loud colours, aggressively styled.
- ☞ in that awkward middle stage.

Finally, write a phrase that starts with either “I tend to” or “I’m coping with,” something that tells us more about your personality or circumstances. It can be a small detail or life-defining. Some examples follow.

I tend to...

- ☞ make tea and then forget to drink it.
- ☞ tune out during serious conversations.
- ☞ wave hello to strangers and friends alike.
- ☞ giggle when I’m scared or uncomfortable.
- ☞ bite my lower lip when I’m deep in concentration.

I’m coping with...

- ☞ undiagnosed depression.
- ☞ a meth problem that’s getting worse.
- ☞ an invasive and unsupportive family.
- ☞ an abusive ex.
- ☞ uncertainties about gender.

hooking up, moving in

Once each Lover has introduced herself, decide whether their scene will be about hooking up or moving in together. Feel free to interpret these loosely. Scenes about *hooking up* will generally focus on figuring out how to use spaces to fulfill immediate desires, while scenes about *moving in* will focus on nesting and attempting to become comfortable in a space.

In later scenes, you may find that two characters who once moved in together are now looking for a place to hook up. Great. Life isn't linear, and these two scene types don't comprise a fixed path or correspond to particular stages of a relationship.

places and thirds

Once you've established who you are and what sort of space you're looking for, each Lover chooses two Needs. Needs are things that they want out of the space, things that will help them feel like they belong there.

some Needs -

- ☛ Privacy
- ☛ Warm light, soft textures
- ☛ Enough space
- ☛ Good music
- ☛ Reasonable quiet
- ☛ A reassuring cleanliness
- ☛ Physical security
- ☛ Trusted folks nearby
- ☛ Windows that open
- ☛ A comfortable bed

This list is incomplete. Create your own Needs as necessary.

Write down all four of the Lovers' Needs on an index card.

In a perfect world, the space they found would meet all of their Needs—but this is a world full of awkward compromises and not-quite spaces. The Third player chooses one Need that will not be met, and crosses it off the list. The Third can also choose to put another of those Needs on thin ice, barely-met or threatened. To do so, underline it.

extended example

Sia, Jenn, and Kyle sit down to play together. They're in Jenn's living room, Gossip on the stereo, sitting on the floor around her coffee table. They've got index cards and all the rest.

Sia decides that she'll be the Third, initially.

Jenn makes a character named Jade:

- ☛ Jade
- ☛ Libra
- ☛ wavy, chestnut, shoulder-length.
- ☛ I tend to ask questions I don't want to hear the answers to.

Kyle is nervous about making his first character, concerned that as the group's one straight guy he'll get it all wrong. Still, he writes down:

- ☛ Emma
- ☛ Capricorn
- ☛ red hair, always elaborately pinned up.
- ☛ I'm coping with a recent family death.

Jenn and Kyle decide that Jade and Emma are looking for a place to hook up, for now. Jade needs *Privacy* and *Enough space*. Emma needs *Trusted folks nearby*, and *Dental dams & lube*.

Sia jots down all four needs on an index card, then crosses out *Trusted folks nearby*. The three collaboratively frame a scene—Jade and Emma see each other at a party, their first connection in six months. They take their conversation, bashfully, into new territory. They kiss. And then they're looking for a space to fool around in, and supplies to fool around with (Emma doesn't fuck around without barriers). And they realize that if they're going to do this, they need to leave the party altogether.

So they arrive back at Emma's place. It's a sterile, lonely studio. But it's private, it's airy, and it's well-stocked. Since *Trusted folks nearby* is crossed out, Sia suggests that maybe Emma ditched a nervous friend back at the party. Everyone nods. Sia decides this is who she's playing. And that's the moment that the scene starts, after about five minutes of discussion—entering that studio, bashful, nervous, their excitement slightly cooled as a result of the chilly walk over.

Kyle says, "Emma looks around, and all she can see is unpaid bills and dirty dishes. It's probably a pretty clean place, objectively, but she feels a little mortified. She offers you a drink."

shifting constellations

In the next scene, the role of the Third rotates clockwise. The remaining two players are the Lovers. At least one of the Lovers must be reintroduced from a previous scene.

The second Lover may be:

- ☾ a Lover reintroduced from any previous scene.
- ☾ a suitable Third character, reintroduced as a Lover.
- ☾ a new Lover altogether.

If that second Lover does not yet have a card, go through the *Creating Lovers* process for her. Give her a name, a sign, a hairstyle, and a detail about her tendencies or coping.

Queer communities can feel small. Embrace that by frequently reintroducing characters we've seen before, reconfiguring the relationships between these women we've begun to know. Let some relationships overlap, whether through polyamory or infidelity. Let some relationships end painfully and abruptly, while others disintegrate hazily, quietly. Start with Luna and Kate. Follow Luna into her next relationship, with Mia. Double back to learn how Kate has mended her broken heart. See what happens when Luna and her roommate hook up, giddy on cheap wine. Learn how Mia's first attempt at a threesome goes over.

Play with a piece of paper in the center of the table—the bigger, the better. As you go along, use a pencil to maintain a map of Lovers. Add new Lovers as they are introduced. Include roommates, childhood friends, whomever. Update your map as you discover new connections and disrupt old covenants: draw lines, erase lines, create arcane symbols with no legend, create a legend, whatever seems necessary to help you keep track of all these shifting hearts.

The game might last a small handful of scenes, comprising an hour of play, or it might sprawl beyond that considerably.

the ending

Play until the characters are content or resigned, or until the players are.

Next, the Third thinks about what their role in the scene will be. The Third can play a character who is physically present, or in the next room, or physically absent but indelibly etched into the minds of these women and the space that they are navigating. The Third can play a group of people, or a cluster of specific folks, or the world in its entirety.

The Third exists because relationships don't happen in a bubble. The Third can be adversarial, supportive, doubting, challenging, or just plain awkwardly *there*. Scene-to-scene, explore different Third dynamics. See what happens.

some Thirds -

- ☾ Mina's mother, sleeping in the guest bedroom.
- ☾ Angry drunk men, yelling on the street corner.
- ☾ Another lover, Shawn, the third in a poly triangle.
- ☾ Another couple hooking up in the same room—it's become that sort of party.
- ☾ Bradley, fourteen months old, asleep in his cradle.
- ☾ Carly, who shows up unannounced and crying.
- ☾ Dianne, who isn't present, but at whose house you're currently cat-sitting.
- ☾ Amy, a live-in partner of Asha, uncomfortable with non-monogamy but even more uncomfortable with setting her own boundaries, clearing out of her own space whenever Asha brings another lover over.

If you're playing The Third, you can choose to pick out a role before the scene starts, and then stick to it, or alternately to let the scene start before identifying your own role within it.

Either way, let the Lovers know what you're thinking. Then, you'll work together to frame a scene that feels both hopeful and fraught. Collaboratively decide what the space is actually like, how the Lovers arrive in that space, whether a Third is immediately present, what is going on within and immediately around the space.

Create scenes rife with possibility for little compromises. This process began when you crossed out a Need, and it's everyone's job to continue it in the way they frame and play scenes. *A Place To Fuck Each Other* is about trying to make a space work, trying to make a relationship work, and compromising as you go—until you hit the boundary beyond which compromise becomes painful.

playing scenes

As *Lovers*, play hopefully and curiously. Your job is to earnestly attempt to make the scene work out for this character of yours, to find delight, to compromise where necessary, and to be surprised by how the scene ends.

Play because things aren't perfect, but nothing's perfect, and you know things will work out this time, because they have to, sometime, and why not now. But notice and honour real points of disillusionment. Things are *not* perfect, even if your character is glossing over those things. As players, push the scene gently toward these recognitions.

Talk about what your character says and what your character does, but also tell us what she almost says, what she almost does. Be transparent. Talk about your character's emotions, and whether she's trying to hide them.

As you play, feel free to use the extra space on your index card to jot down short notes about the habits or qualities your character has. Things that might be useful to remember later.

some notes -

- ☛ refreshes twitter when anxious.
- ☛ always hungry.
- ☛ has a younger sister.
- ☛ doesn't like to talk about her family.

As *the Third*, volunteer details about the world, about other characters in the scene, sometimes even about the Lovers' own bodies and histories. Look for aspects of the scene that aren't being developed and develop them. Play to bring the Lovers together. Play to drive them apart. Ask questions. Ask provocative questions.

you might say things like -

- ☛ "You recognise your ex-girlfriend in the photo on the bedstand."
- ☛ "As the two of you are making out, you realise that you have to pee."
- ☛ "Jilly, you seem a lot more confident here than before. Why is that?"
- ☛ "Bea, have you ever actually given oral before?"

You might also have a character, or maybe you've given yourself several. Involve them in the scene as much or little as you want. You get to decide what your role in this scene is, and how loudly you shape or intrude into the scene. It's okay to claim space awkwardly—that's what the Third does.

should and shouldn't

Scenes end when a Lover acknowledges to herself that "*I shouldn't be here.*" This is the phrase, a sort of ritual phrase, that ends the scene and puts its hopeful beginnings in relief. We don't get to see what she does with that knowledge, or how she might extricate herself from the situation: there is the realisation that "*I shouldn't be here*" and that's that. Play just enough to establish why and how she came to that realization, maybe catching her next expression or gesture, and then end the scene.

You can end the scene on that phrase, or on any variation of it. *We shouldn't be here. She shouldn't be here. I don't know why I'm here. I've been here before.* You get to choose where the emphasis lies—on the *I*, on the *here*.

This might seem like a strange thing—to cut from scenes right when a conflict has been identified. Trust that it will be rewarding to do so. Trust that it will be more interesting to immediately skip ahead, to learn about the ways that these characters reinvent themselves and reimagine their needs from scene to scene.

interludes

If, before rotating roles and shifting to the next scene, it feels important to follow up on a little thread of story, you can call for an interlude. Interludes are short: a few lines of dialogue, a single action taken in a quiet moment alone, a look exchanged at a party, a minute of play at the most.

The default setting for an interlude is a coffee shop, sitting down with a nameless friend. Or maybe alone on the bus, talking on the phone with that same nameless friend. Define a different context if it seems important, or build upon that default.

Finish interludes within a minute of starting them.