



DISTANCE

A FASTAVAL SCENARIO BY MORTEN JAEGER, COPENHAGEN 2015



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INTRODUCTION

Since 1992, approximately 28,000 Danish soldiers have gone to war abroad. *Distance* is a scenario about some of their wives who were left at home.

Jesper, Simon and Kenneth are stationed in the Danish army in Afghanistan. They will be there for six months and all communication with their loved ones will take place through unstable telephone lines and bad internet connections. Meanwhile, Anne-Mette, Camilla and Josephine take care of things at home. The three women have formed a support group where they share their experiences.

Distance is a tragic story about how the three marriages are affected by the husbands' absence. The scenario is played out through short stand-alone scenes showing highlights spread out over all six months.

The story focuses on the wives and life at home. There are snapshots of busy days and anxious nights waiting for a phone call that never comes. There is awkward Skype sex and confrontations with judgemental friends. There are episodes of meeting new men, some times in the form of unwanted sexual advances, other times igniting new sparks of attraction.

Distance is a scenario for three players and one game master. The players will each get a leading role as one of the three women. They will also play a supporting role as one of the soldiers and perhaps a few extra, small supporting roles.

Storyline

Roles

As game master, you are the director of the story, and you will be setting the scenes. I recommend that you aim for a total duration of 3-4 hours. In the scenario, there are a few key scenes where the story is more or less fixed, but the casting of the roles is left open. In these cases, it is you and the players who decide which roles that participate. Your mission is to make the stories about the three marriages unfold in parallel, but also to mirror each other and create a meaningful whole.

Game master

In order to secure direction and variation, I have defined three storytelling rules that the whole group must follow.

Storytelling rules

1. One couple gets divorced.
(before or right after the husband returns)
2. One couple stays together.
3. One of the husbands die in Afghanistan.

Even though there are different outcomes, all three stories have the same premise: *The men's participation in the war creates distance between them and their partners*. This means that none of the stories can have a happy ending.

THEMES, GENRE AND MOOD

The main theme of *Distance* is how intimacy suffers from the separation. The separation creates distance in different forms.

Geographical: The men and women live far apart and all physical contact is limited to the soldiers' three-week leave. Also, they live very different lives and find it hard to relate to each other's experiences. The women only have limited knowledge about life on the military base, and even though the men know about life at home, they find it increasingly difficult to relate to it emotionally as new and more extreme experiences become the new normal.

Temporal: Six months is a long time and especially the newer couples are not used to being apart.

Ideological: The three women have not objected to their husbands participating in the war, but none of them support the idea of Denmark being at war in the first place. It is an alienating experience when people on the one hand challenge their husbands' decision, but on the other hand expect them to show loyalty and defend their men.

The scenes let the players experiment with how their actions add to the distance, but also, once in a while, reestablish intimacy and a glimpse of hope.

Distance is a realistic drama. The story focuses on the roles' feelings and relationships and how these are expressed in the different scenes. I imagine that the overall mood is more or less similar to Danish television drama as seen in *Arvingerne*, *Nikolaj og Julie*, *Taxa* and *Borgen*. There is room for a few laughs, but all in all it is mainly a serious story.

Geographical
distance

Temporal distance

Ideological
distance

Genre: Realistic
drama about
relationships

Distance focuses on the women and life at home, and it does not include a lot of detailed information about the war and life on a military base. However, as you set scenes and drive the story forward, it would be good if you to have a basic idea about how the everyday lives of the soldiers looks like. To help you with this, I have included "Appendix B: Life in Afghanistan" which will provide you with some basic facts.

Life in Afghanistan



STYLE AND STRUCTURE

All scenes are played semi live. This means that all dialogue must be in first-person and all gestures count as part of the fiction. It is not 100 % live in the sense that the players' actual appearances do not count as part of the fiction.

The role-playing should be extroverted. Emotions and conflicts should be acted out.

The scenario consists of three chapters of stand-alone scenes showing different aspects of the couples' relationships. Most of these are obligatory, but there are a few optional ones you can choose to use if there are certain themes or storylines you wish to explore in further depth.

The scenes are designed as situations that can potentially widen the distance between the couples. To which extent this happens is up to the players who also may choose to build intimacy.

Some scenes can be played with different characters and it is up to you to decide who is in them. This is especially important towards the end where you must decide how to wrap up the different stories. The scenario has three fixed closing scenes, but you must decide which couple that will play which scene.

To help you keep track of the action, I have included a scene overview (Appendix A).

APPENDIX A

SCENE OVERVIEW

CHAPTER	SUMMARY	Roles
1st CHAPTER	Support group meeting. Talk about your marriages.	The women
First meeting	Jesper and Anne-Mette go through practical arrangements.	Anne-Mette and Jesper
Flashback: While I'm away	Camilla treats Simon's wounds. They sense a strong chemistry.	Camilla and Simon
Flashback: The wound	Camilla lets Kenneth know that they must move to Copenhagen.	Josephine and Kenneth
Flashback: Copenhagen	Josephine lets Kenneth know that they must move to Copenhagen.	Camilla and two friends
The party	Friends invite Camilla to a housewarming hosted by her ex.	All
Calls	The soldiers call their wives for the first time.	Josephine and Peter
Peter	Peter from Josephine's study group criticises Kenneth.	The women
Monologues: Waiting for a call	The women wait for a call that never comes.	Anne-Mette and one of the other women
The morning routine goes wrong	Anne-Mette calls one of the other women to talk about a terrible morning.	
2nd CHAPTER	Support group meeting. How do you keep romance and sex life alive?	The women
Romance and sex	Anne-Mette and Jesper try having Skype sex.	Anne-Mette and Jesper
Skype sex? I	Camilla and Simon try having Skype sex.	Camilla and Simon
Skype sex? II	Camilla's ex Daniel offers her concert tickets.	Camilla and Daniel
Concert tickets	Camilla's ex Daniel offers her concert tickets.	Josephine, Anne-Mette, Peter and a student
Critics	Josephine's fellow students criticise the war. Josephine calls Anne-Mette.	Josephine and Kenneth
Skype sex? III	Josephine and Kenneth try having Skype sex.	Jesper, Simon and a psychologist
Debriefing	A mission goes wrong. Jesper debriefs with Simon, and later a psychologist.	?
Comfort	One or more soldiers call home after a mission gone wrong.	Josephine and Kenneth + maybe Peter
3rd CHAPTER	Kenneth plays Playstation. Josephine initiates a serious conversation.	Camilla and Simon + maybe Daniel
Leave I	Camilla and Simon are out to lunch. Simon is stressed by the surroundings.	Anne-Mette and Jesper
Leave II	Anne-Mette wakes up and finds Jesper crying in the living room.	?
Leave III	Other scenes about the leave.	The women
Leave IV (optional)	Support group meeting: How did your husband's leave go?	The players
So, how was it?	Support group meeting: How did your husband's leave go?	Josephine
Meta scene (optional)	The players discuss possible endings to the stories.	Camilla
In love	Peter from Josephine's study group announces that he is in love with her.	Anne-Mette and Jesper
The ex	Daniel and Camilla meet at a party. He wants her back.	The women
No connection	Anne-Mette cannot access the internet. Jesper is unable to help her.	
Love and betrayal	Support group meeting. One of the women have fallen in love with another man.	?
CLOSING SCENES		
The breakup	One of the couples breaks up.	?
Coming home	A soldier comes home early because of an injury or another problem.	?
Terrible news	A soldier comes home early because of an injury or another problem.	Anne-Mette or Jesper
Monologue: The farewell letter	Phone call. A woman announces that her husband is dead.	
	A player recites Jesper's farewell letter to Anne-Mette.	

GAME-MASTERING

As game master, you are the director of the story. Before each scene, you communicate to the players what is the exact location and situation. You start the scene and you cut when it has reached its climax. This may be when a role makes an important decision or step into character with a concluding statement.

Game master as director

I recommend that you aim for a total duration of 3-4 hours. The players need time to immerse and to invest themselves in their characters, but it is equally important that they don't waste their energy playing too many long scenes. A scene should take less than five minutes.

Duration

In all playtest, I had to pace the players. Many players will try to play in a realistic mode where the characters take time to approach the subject of the scene before they get to the main point or the main conflict. In this case, you can ask them to move along faster. For example, in the support group meetings, you can easily skip polite small talk and go straight to the agenda of the meeting. When the couples Skype together or talk via satellite phone, they can also get to discussing an important issue quite quickly, even though they haven't talk to each other for a week or two. If the players find it difficult to get to the point, you can let them start at their own pace and then skip forward in the conversation with phrases such as "twenty minutes later" or "now you have shared a second bottle of red wine and loosened up". You can do this several times during the same scene.

Pacing

If you feel that the players are missing something essential in a scene, it is completely okay for you to give direction while the scene is still playing. During my first play test, Jesper was very passive after Simon had fired his gun without his permission. In a case like that, it is okay for you to say "Jesper, are you really cool with Simon disobeying your orders?".

Direction midway through a scene

At the end of the scenario, there are a few key scenes where it is open which characters that actually play the scene. In these cases, it is you and the players who decide which roles will participate. This casting of characters may seem obvious based on the character descriptions, but it is important that you respect how the players experience the story as it unfolds in actual play. For you it may seem obvious that Josephine should leave Kenneth, but you must take into account if Josephine's player feels "she would never do that".

Closing scenes

In order to make the most of the semi live format, I suggest that you work with the interior of the room in which you are playing. You could divide the room into different zones, so all support group scenes are in one zone, Skype and telephone conversations are in another zone, and so on.

Dividing the room into zones

Try to keep the order of the scenes more or less as it is written.

The order of the scenes

When you set a scene, you may choose to tell the players what they can do in order to create distance or intimacy, respectively. You can find tips for this in the players' character descriptions and in the scene descriptions. This is the players' most difficult task and you may choose to help them identify their options, at least in some scenes.

Building intimacy or distance in a scene

ROLES AND STORIES

ROLES

Distance has three main roles who are all married to soldiers. The three women have gotten to know each other at a social function arranged by the military before the stationing of the men. They enjoyed each other's company and decided to meet every second week.

Each player plays one of the main roles Anne-Mette, Josephine og Camilla, and one of the supporting roles of their husbands. They also a few extra, small supporting roles.

The three marriages are:

Anne-Mette & Jesper: Anne-Mette is a part time teacher and a housewife. She enjoys being in a relationship with traditional gender roles. Her husband Jesper is a serious and caring man who is very structured about making everything work while he is away. Together, they enjoy planning every day activities in much detail.

Camilla & Simon: Camilla studies medicine, while her own emotional scars are still healing after an ended disfunctional relationship. She finds support in her new husband Simon, but together they reproduce the negative patterns of her previous relationship. They are bound together by mutual dependence and strong physical attraction.

Josephine & Kenneth: Josephine is the first in her family to study at the university. This is overwhelming and it has changed her view on life, society and her relationship. She is strong and outgoing and Kenneth is often a bit jealous and a little slower intellectually. But when they are together, they laugh a lot.

"Handout 1: The three marriages" show a map of the relationships. The players will need this at the beginning of your session.

The six roles

Anne-Mette & Jesper

Camilla & Simon

Josephine & Kenneth

Handout with
a map of the
relationships

THE THREE STORIES

In order for the scenario to work optimally, the stories of the three marriages should mirror each other. The stories should have the same structure, but different outcomes. The final outcomes are predestined by the storytelling rules, but the final pairing of stories and endings is still open.

No matter outcome, all stories must have a sad ending. The players' tools to arrive at this are different challenges that lie inherent in the roles and scenes. Both Camilla and Josephine may be tempted by another man. It can be Camilla's ex Daniel or it can be Peter from Josephine's study group. Josephine may also develop into being more actively against Denmark's participation in the war, and this may come between her and Kenneth. Simon's extreme behaviour may scare Camilla away. Or a violent incident may scar Jesper mentally to the extent where he cannot maintain his otherwise very organised and controlled life with Anne-Mette.

Mirroring:
Same structure but
different outcomes

Challenges lead to
sad endings.



EXECUTION

GETTING STARTED

WELCOME

Bid the players welcome, and talk to them about their role-playing experience and their expectations. You can use this knowledge for casting. It is also a good idea to ask them about their preferences. Do they like drama and extroverted play or are they more into the subtle and understated? Do they enjoy having an overview or do they prefer just reacting spontaneously to input from the others?

You should also ask them about their knowledge of the war in Afghanistan and the soldiers' lives down there. They do not need to know much, but some basic information will support their immersion. I recommend that you present selected facts from "Appendix B: Life in Afghanistan".

BRIEFING I

Go through the first page of this document's introduction section. This is equivalent to the first page of the role descriptions. Talk about distance as a central theme, and make it clear, that the perceived distance will increase no matter what, and that, in spite of small glimpses of hope, the players must make sure that all stories have sad endings.

Place "Handout 1: The three marriages" og "Handout 2: Storytelling rules" on the table. Alternatively, you can write the same information on a white board or similar. If you are playing with a group where everyone knows each other, you can add their real names to the handout or the white board.

Talk to the players about how the stories may unfold within the storytelling rules. There can be infidelity, but there may also soldiers returning with severe emotional scars.

Talk about experience and preferences.

Knowledge about the in Afghanistan

Go through the first page.

Make sure the players can see the roles and storytelling rules.

Possibilities within the storytelling rules.

CASTING

Find out who will play which sets of roles.

Casting tips:

Anne-Mette + Simon: This set should be played by an experienced player who masters a wide range of emotions. Anne-Mette must be convincing as the caring mother and host of the support group meetings, but she must also be able to show her weaknesses. Simon is spontaneous, assertive and stubborn and the player must be able to initiate conflict.

Roles for the experienced player

Josephine + Jesper: Both characters are quite composed and controlling, and there is no need for a drama queen for this set of roles. The player must be eloquent and good at progressing a scene towards its dramatic peak without overplaying emotions.

Roles for the controlling player

Camilla + Kenneth: For this set, you need a player who is comfortable with emotional outbursts. Especially Camilla's role calls out for a player who can yell and cry if necessary. Apart from that, this is not the most difficult set of roles to play.

Roles for the dramatic player

GETTING STARTED

Hand out role descriptions, and let the players read them. Take questions in the same room. There are no secrets.

Hand out role descriptions and name tags.

Distribute "Handout 3: Name tags".

Talk about the role-playing style: Semi-live. Divide the room into zones communicating in-game vs. off-game, and different fictional locations.

Semi-live + dividing the room

Talk about the scenario's structure and expected duration (3-4 hours).

Structure and duration

Talk about personal boundaries in relation to sexual content. Is it okay for the players to act out Skype sex? And how? Are they up for explicitly describing sexual favours? Are they okay with doing a sexy dance in front of a webcam? Let them know that they can always avoid or cut a sex scene by letting their characters stop because the situation is too awkward.

Sexual content and personal boundaries

Clarify the rules for improvisation: The players are allowed to improvise by introducing events from their own and other characters' past. This is mainly the women's prerogative while the males roles should mainly follow lead.

Improvisation

The women take the lead.

Have the players talk about one marriage at the time. Make sure the players share the most important information from their role descriptions and that they start improvising details in order to get into their roles. For example, you can ask the players what the women look like.

Establish the three marriages.

Make sure the players talk about both the good and the bad parts of the relationships. You may ask questions such as "What do you do when you want to have a good time?", "What does a perfect weekend look like?", "What do you typically fight about?", and "How do you typically make up after a fight?".

In sickness and in health

Make it clear that the three relationships are relatively stable. They may have problems, but none of them are in the process of splitting up. At least not yet ...

Do a few warm up exercises. Let the players move around in the room and work on their characters' body language. Start with the three women. Let them first ignore each other. Then, have them say hello to each other as their characters would do it. Continue with the three men.

Warm-up

Several scenes are centered around telephone conversations. Play a few short conversations where the characters call each other to arrange a date or something practical. All of these conversations should take place in Denmark before the men take off. It may be Anne-Mette and Jesper coordinating who will pick up Jonas after badminton training. It may be Simon calling Camilla with a surprise dinner invitation. It may be Josephine who is late and wants Kenneth to take care of dinner.

Telephone conversations between the couples

2/2

FIRST CHAPTER

BRIEFING

"In this chapter, we will establish the three marriages. There is room to show both positive and negative sides to them. The scenes may also touch upon themes that foreshadow the hardship that awaits the three couples."

This chapter must establish the three marriages.

FIRST MEETING

Roles: Anne-Mette, Camilla and Josephine.

The women have their first meeting in the support group. The only item on the agenda is that they should talk about themselves and their marriages. At this point, the women's stories are overly positive and optimistic.

Support group meeting. The women tell positive stories.

Cut to later the same evening: One of the women has had a little too much wine and starts taking about her worries. Maybe the others will follow her lead.

One woman talks about her worries.

- The meeting is held at Anne-Mette's house. Let her start by describing her and Jesper's home. Let the others show up one by one. Cut to the beginning of the more serious part of the meeting.
- Ask Anne-Mette to lead the meeting.
- You should cut and skip forward through the evening ("later in the evening...", "after another half bottle of red wine", and so on). In the beginning, the players may be a little cautious or timid. This fits the situation, but for every jump forward in time you must pressure them into revealing more and more personal details.
- I recommend that you do not share with the players how the scene will end. Let them focus on the positive sides of their relationships. When you skip forward, you can either dictate who has had a little too much to drink or you can let a player volunteer. If it is not obvious who it should be based on the course of the scene, pick Camilla. The others are welcome to chime in with some of their own worries.

Anne-Mette and Jesper's home

Anne-Mette is leading the meeting.

Cut and skip forward through the evening.

1/4

FIRST CHAPTER

FLASHBACK: WHILE I'M AWAY

Roles: Anne-Mette and Jesper.

The day before Jesper is leaving. He and Anne-Mette sit at the table enjoying a nice sunday breakfast and go through the practical details about how to run the home while Jesper is away. Anne-Mette is worrying about a lot of different details.

Jesper and Anne-Mette go through practical arrangements before he leaves.

- The scene creates intimacy and presents Jesper the way Anne-Mette likes him. The scene does not need to reach a climax.

FLASHBACK: THE WOUND

Roles: Camilla and Simon.

Camilla and Simon meet for the very first time at a sick bay at the military base where she has her medical doctor internship. Simon has a wound that needs to be cleansed and sewed up. Simon has been in a fight and he has been pushed through a glass window. They quickly sense a strong sexual chemistry and try to find an excuse to see each other again.

Camilla treats Simon's wound. They sense a strong chemistry.

- The main objective of this scene is to establish the chemistry between Camilla and Simon. You can easily skip to the part where Camilla has started to touch Simon's wound. Position the two players close to each other.
- The players do not need to arrive at planning a concrete date or appointment. Cut the scene quite quickly.

FLASHBACK: COPENHAGEN

Roles: Josephine and Kenneth.

It is Saturday evening. Josephine and Kenneth are cooking dinner in their tiny apartment in Jutland. Josephine tells Kenneth that she wants to move to Copenhagen to study. Kenneth is surprised.

Josephine lets Kenneth know that they are moving to Copenhagen.

- The scene may create both distance and intimacy. They can agree to move and build a new future together. The scene can also show an unequal balance of power.

THE PARTY

Roles: Camilla and two friends (supporting roles).

Camilla is out drinking with two friends who are both single. They talk about Simon. Camilla's friends invite her to a housewarming at her ex Daniel's new place. They discuss whether or not she should go.

Friends invite Camilla to a party hosted by her ex.

- Camilla can strengthen her relationship with Simon by staying away, because she knows he will get angry if she goes.

FIRST CHAPTER

CALLS

Roles: Anne-Mette and Jesper. Camilla and Simon. Josephine and Kenneth.

The soldiers call their wives for the first time. In all cases, they sit alone in a little cell in a container with a computer and a satellite phone. They have twenty minutes before the next soldier has his turn.

- You can set all call scenes immediately after each other or you can spread them out over the chapter.
- It is a good idea to use the players' positioning in the room to underline when they are playing telephone calls and Skype calls respectively. In the first play test, I positioned the players back to back on two chairs when they were on the phone and at a table across from each other when they were using Skype.
- The calls may both establish intimacy and distance. The couples can show the joy of finally getting in touch again. Camilla and Josephine can make their husbands jealous by mentioning other men (from Josephine's study group or Camilla's ex Daniel). The soldiers can create distance by talking about situations the women cannot relate to (physical danger, accidents, conflict with the locals).

The soldiers call their wives for the first time.

You may spread these scenes out over the whole chapter.

Use the positioning of the players in the room.

PETER

Roles: Josephine and Peter from her study group (supporting role).

Josephine is walking home from the day's last lecture. She is walking with Peter from her study group. He is against the war and keeps asking questions about why Kenneth would choose to participate.

- Josephine may choose to defend Kenneth and/or start doubting his decision.

MONOLOGUES: WAITING FOR A CALL

Roles: Anne-Mette, Camilla and Josephine.

One or more of the women hold a monologue about the uncertainty of waiting the whole night for a call that never comes.

- Let the women describe the situation. When in the evening is it? Where are they sitting? How did they prepare?
- In this scene it makes sense to skip forward in time ("one hour later...", "It is now passed midnight, and you know you need your sleep").
- It is a good idea to cross-cut between the monologues and let the women inspire each other. You can ask the players to play on differences in the women's reactions. One can take it easy. Another can become scared. The third can become angry.

Peter from Josephine's study group criticises Kenneth.

The women wait for a call that never comes.

Cross-cut between monologues.

FIRST CHAPTER

THE MORNING ROUTINE GOES WRONG

Roles: Anne-Mette and one of the other women.

Anne-Mette calls one of the other women from the support group (the player chooses).

Anne-Mette talks about a morning, where everything has gone wrong and she has missed Jesper's support. It may be about stuff that has broken, a child getting hurt, or just a small thing causing her to be very late for work.

- The scene does not have to be very long. It serves to illustrate the distance between Anne-Mette and Jesper and to show Anne-Mette's weaknesses.

Anne-Mette calls
one of the other
women to talk about
a terrible morning.

SECOND CHAPTER

BRIEFING

"This chapter turns up the heat, both within the relationships and when it comes to outside threats. We will explore how the distance affects romance and sex in all three relationships. At the same time, the war closes in with an event that will shake the soldiers, and subsequently their partners."

Have a short talk about how the players see the different relationships play out. Do they already have a good idea about who will stay together and who will not? Remind them that the couple that chooses to stay together will not get a happy ending.

The chapter explores how the distance affects romance and sex.

The status of the three stories

ROMANCE AND SEX

Roles: Anne-Mette, Camilla and Josephine.

The women meet in their support group. The item of the day is romance and sex life.

Agenda: How do you keep romance and sex life alive when you are apart?

- If some of the scenes have already touched upon romance and sex life, ask the characters involved in this to start.
- It is important that all three women get involved in the discussion.

Support group meeting. How do you keep romance and sex life alive?

SECOND CHAPTER

SKYPE SEX? I

Roles: Anne-Mette and Jesper.

Jesper has convinced Anne-Mette that they should have Skype sex regularly. Earlier, this has happened spontaneously once in a while, but tonight they have their first dedicated Skype sex date. Anne-Mette has arranged babysitting. It is still uncertain whether or not they are actually in mood for this.

- This scene is mainly an instrument to create distance. It is a sign that Jesper's need for control has gotten out of hand. Anne-Mette will probably feel that this is very awkward. There can, however, be glimpses of intimacy if they both can appreciate the silliness of the idea.
- Let the players sit across from each other as if they were sitting with a computer screen and a webcam. You can also do this in a softer version where you don't enforce the semi live format and just have the players talk about what they do. You can let the connection fall in and out so they some times lack either picture or sound.

Anne-Mette and Jesper try having Skype sex.

Position the players across from each other.

SKYPE SEX? II

Roler: Camilla and Simon.

Camilla og Simon have decided to have Skype sex. Camilla has not done this before, but last time Simon was in Afghanistan, he had another girlfriend who was up for it.

- The scene may create both intimacy and distance. Maybe their attraction will work in spite of the difficult conditions. There is also the risk that Simon becomes too extreme in his wishes or that Camilla becomes jealous thinking about Simon's kinky ex.

CONCERT TICKETS

Roles: Camilla and Daniel (supporting role).

Daniel calls Camilla. He has two tickets to a concert with her favorite artist. He should have gone with one of their mutual friends but she has cancelled because she wasn't feeling well.

- Keep this scene short. It serves the sole purpose of establishing Daniel as someone who is still a part of Camilla's life.

Camilla and Simon try having Skype sex.

Camilla's ex Daniel offers her concert tickets.

SECOND CHAPTER

CRITICS

Roles: Josephine and two fellow students. Later on, Anne-Mette.

Josephine has just finished today's lectures and is drinking coffee with two friends from her study group. One of them is Peter (who walked with her in the first chapter). Her fellow students criticise the war and attacks Kenneth's morale integrity.

Skip to later: Josephine calls Anne-Mette and talk about what her fellow students said. She want to know how and to what extend Anne-Mette defends her husband's actions.

- The students' cross-examination of Josephine must be harsh and confrontational.
- Keep the first part of the scene short. The most important part is Josephine's reaction.
- Josephine can create distance between Kenneth and her by adopting her fellow students' opinions. It may also create distance for Anne-Mette when she is forced to think deeper about her husband's involvement in the war.

Josephine's fellow students criticise the war. Josephine calls Anne-Mette.

SKYPE SEX? III

Roller: Josephine and Kenneth

Josephine and Kenneth have set aside time to try Skype sex. Kenneth is looking forward to it. Josephine has dressed sexy, but first, she wants to discuss Denmark's role in the war.

- The scene may widen the distance on several levels. Kenneth may become insecure and even jealous when he hears about Peter. Josephine may not hear the arguments from Kenneth she had hoped for.

Josephine and Kenneth try having Skype sex.

SECOND CHAPTER

DEBRIEFING

Roles: Jesper and Simon. Later a psychologist (supporting role).

The squad has been out scaring away enemy troops in a swamp. They have been ambushed in an area with tall vegetation, mud and an extensive network of watercourses. They opened fire. One of Jesper's men has been killed. This may have happened because Simon became too eager and left his position to go shoot at the enemy. The enemy troops have now been chased away, and Jesper gives Simon a well-deserved lecture.

Skip to the next day: Jesper is sitting in a military psychologist office and must explain the event. He is shaken. He feels a huge responsibility for his men and he feels bad about losing control in general.

- Keep the conversation between Jesper and Simon short. The debriefing with the psychologist is more important. The psychologist must have Jesper talk about his feelings. You may consider playing this role yourself.

A mission goes wrong. Jesper is debriefing with Simon. Later with a psychologist.

COMFORT

Roles: One or more of the couples.

One of the soldiers calls home after the event. He is obviously shaken. His wife has heard about the incident on the news. A Danish soldier has been killed, but international media also report that shots were fired at civilians.

- The scene can be used to create intimacy through comfort and understanding, but it can also be used to spark a conflict. The wife (maybe Josephine) may choose to focus on the negatives sides of the war in general. Simon can scare Camilla by telling her about his actions during the incident. Maybe he feels angry at Jesper for lecturing him.
- You may choose to set the scene between Jesper and Anne-Mette so that it fits their regular Skype sex time slot.

One or more soldiers call home after a mission has gone wrong.

THIRD CHAPTER

BRIEFING

"In this chapter the couples get a chance to meet in person as the men are home on leave. But it is hard to be home and the leave itself may create distance. At the same time, other men may show interest, and the women realise that there are alternatives to the current situation."

"The chapter starts with the men being home on a three-week leave. They have a hard time settling in. They have elevated adrenalin levels which will either make them overreact to even the smallest sense of trouble or become apathetic towards anything that is not a life threatening crisis."

Have a short talk with the players about how they currently see the stories play out.

This chapter explores how the women handle their husbands' leave and other men's advances.

The status of the three stories

LEAVE I

Roles: Josephine and Kenneth. Later maybe Peter from Josephine's study group (supporting role).

Josephine comes home from a long day at the university. Kenneth sits in the sofa for the third day in a row in his underwear in front of the Playstation. Josephine wants to talk about what life in the military does to him.

- If the conversation lacks drama, let Peter call Josephine to say that he is sorry about criticising her husband. He may also invite her to a university related function.

Kenneth plays Playstation. Josephine initiates a serious conversation.

Maybe Peter calls.

THIRD CHAPTER

LEAVE II

Roller: Camilla and Simon. Later maybe Daniel.

Simon has invited Camilla out for lunch at her favorite café. The place is very crowded and noisy. Simon can't relax.

Skip to later: Simon and Camilla has just had sex. Was it as good as it used to be?

- The scene must show that settling down into old routines is impossible.
- You can push Simon by describing how people at the café push him as they pass (maybe even push the player physically). The girl at table right next to them laughs loud and hysterically. Some uptown women have brought crying babies. A waiter drops a tray with plates and glasses. Daniel may be dropping by.
- Last part of the scene lets Simon og Camilla establish a glimpse of intimacy through their sexual chemistry. Alternatively, they can introduce problems in something that is usually one of the relationship's strongest areas. In the first play test, Simon was convinced that Camilla has faked her orgasm.

Camilla and Simon are out to lunch. Simon is stressed by the surroundings.

LEAVE III

Roles: Anne-Mette and Jesper.

Anne-Mette wakes in the middle of the night alone in bed. She finds Jesper on the couch in the livingroom with tears in his eyes. He has had nightmare about the soldier who died.

- This scene must show how Jesper is starting to fall apart. Keep the scene short but keep in mind that it may develop into a serious conversation about Jesper planning to leave the military.

Anne-Mette wakes up and finds Jesper crying in the livingroom.

LEAVE IV (OPTIONAL)

Roles: One or more of the couples.

Ask the players if they have any ideas for extra leave scenes. Maybe they feel the need to introduce a certain topic or they just have a good idea.

Other scenes about the leave

THIRD CHAPTER

SO, HOW WAS IT?

Roles: Anne-Mette, Camilla og Josephine.

The men have been home for three weeks and they have now gone back to Afghanistan. The women meet in the support group and talk about their experiences. There can be both positive and negative stories.

Agenda: How did your husband's leave go?

- By now, the players know the format. If they are slow, just skip to later in the evening.

META SCENE (OPTIONAL)

After the leave scenes, you may choose to have a meta-conversation where the players talk about which endings that may fit the three stories the best. You may already here decide on one of the endings.

Support group meeting: How did your husband's leave go?

The players discuss the three possible endings to the stories.

IN LOVE

Roles: Josephine and Peter from her study group (supporting role).

Josephine's study group has just been up defending a large assignment. They got a good grade and have now spent the whole night celebrating in Josephine and Kenneth's apartment. Everyone but Peter has gone home. Peter sees this as the perfect time to let Josephine know that he is in love with her.

- Josephine is probably not that open to hearing this. It may start a conflict with her and Peter who is still against the war and doesn't respect Kenneth's choice to participate. It is a good idea to cut the scene and let the final outcome remain open.

Peter from Josephine's study group announces that he is in love with her.

THE EX

Roles: Camilla and her ex Daniel (supporting role).

Camilla is at a party at some friends' apartment. Here, she runs into Daniel who wants them to get back together.

- Unless things are going very bad with her and Simon, Camilla will probably reject Daniel's advances. You may challenge her position by skipping forward to later the same evening where she has had more to drink.

Daniel and Camilla meet at a party. He wants her back.

THIRD CHAPTER

NO CONNECTION

Roles: Anne-Mette og Jesper.

Yet again, it is time for Skype sex. But this time, Anne-Mette cannot access the internet. Jesper has called her via satellite phone. Normally, he is good at guiding her through the process of solving technical problems, but this time he is unable to help her.

- Let the players know that they have a certain freedom to interpret this scene. Jesper can become irritated, confused, apathetic or whatever that will make him fail. Anne-Mette can be sweet and understanding, or she can panic, now her otherwise calm and efficient man is falling apart.

Anne-Mette cannot access the internet. Jesper is unable to help her.

LOVE AND BETRAYAL

Roller: Anne-Mette, Camilla og Josephine.

The women meet in the support group to discuss the subject of other men making advances while their husbands are away.

Agenda: How to you handle other men's advances?

One of the women drops a bomb as she admits to being in love with, or strongly attracted to, another man. Maybe she even has an affair. The others choose whether to condemn this act of treason or to chime in with their own confessions.

- Before the scene, find out who will make the first confession. The others may improvise their responses.

Support group meeting: One of the women have fallen in love with another man.

CLOSING SCENES

BRIEFING

"We are almost at the end of the scenario and we must now decide how the stories end."

Have a short discussion with the players about how the stories should play out. You must now, as a group, and in accordance with the storytelling rules, decide how the three stories end.

1. Who will split up?
2. Who will stay together?
3. Who dies in Afghanistan?

If the players cannot reach a decision within a few minutes' discussion, you decide.

Choose, which of the stories that are paired with which endings. Use the storytelling rules.

THE BREAKUP

Roles: The couple that decides to break up. Later on, maybe one of the other women.

One of the women has decided to leave her husband. She may deliver this news over the telephone before he returns, or it can be one of the first days after his arrival.

Alternatively, it can be one of the soldiers who decides to end the relationship.

- You may choose to add a little extra scene where the woman calls on of the others to let her know that she will no longer be part of the support group.

One of the couples breaks up.

CLOSING SCENES

COMING HOME

Roller: The couple that decides to stay together.

One of the soldiers has been sent home a few weeks earlier than planned. Depending on who it is and what fits the story, there can be different reasons for that. Maybe he has become severely injured. He may even be injured permanently, physically or mentally. Or he is sent home due to disciplinary issues.

The couple plays out his arrival at the airport or when his wife visits him in the hospital.

- Simon is probably the only one where disciplinary issues is an interesting option. Jesper and Kenneth's stories work well with both physical and mental injury.

A soldier comes home early because of an injury or another problem.

TERRIBLE NEWS

Roles: The woman whose husband is dead and one of the other women.

One of the women has just received the news that her husband has died on a mission. This may be the same mission where one of the other men got injured, maybe because of a roadside bomb. She calls one of the others to deliver the terrible news.

MONOLOGUE: THE FAREWELL LETTER

Roles: Jesper or Anne-Mette.

The player who plays Jesper recites Jesper's farewell letter to Anne-Mette as a monologue. If Jesper was the soldier who got killed you should instead let Anne-Mette play out how she opens the letter and reads it out loud to herself.

- In order to avoid performance anxiety, remind the players that Jesper is no poet and that he probably writes relatively short letters.

Phone call. A woman announces that her husband is dead.

A player recites Jesper's farewell letter to Anne-Mette.



ROLES

ANNE-METTE

+ SIMON

1/4

DISTANCE

Every time Jesper leaves, he writes letters to all of us, in case he doesn't return. One for his parents, one for each of the kids, and one for me. We keep them in sealed envelopes and hang them with magnets on the fridge. We keep them there until the day we pick him up at the airport. As a ritual, we throw them into a bin when we see him coming through customs. Several times, Jesper has asked me to write a letter of my own. "That is so you can better understand my thought process", he says. Every time I refuse.

Jesper, Simon and Kenneth are stationed in the Danish army in Afghanistan. They will be there for six months and all communication with their loved ones will take place through unstable telephone lines and bad internet connections. Meanwhile, Anne-Mette, Camilla and Josephine take care of things at home. They have formed a support group where they share their experiences. *Distance* is the story about how the three marriages are affected by the husbands' absence.

The story focuses on the wives and life at home. There are snapshots of busy days and anxious nights waiting for a phone call that never comes. There is awkward Skype sex and confrontations with judgemental girlfriends. There are episodes of meeting new men, some times in the form of unwanted sexual advances, other times igniting new sparks of attraction.

The scenario is played out through short stand-alone scenes showing highlights spread out over all six months.

While the soldiers are stationed, their wives take care of things at home.

The three women have formed a support group.

The stationing creates distance between the couples.

Stand-alone scenes

YOUR ROLE

You will play the a leading role of one of the three women. Also, you must play one of the supporting roles as one of the soldiers and perhaps a few extra, small supporting roles.

In the description of your leading role (the wife), you find the most detailed portrait of one of the three marriages. It is your responsibility to share the most important details. Doing this, you also have the largest degree of freedom to improvise and add new aspects.

In the description of your supporting role (the soldier), you have fewer details. Your main task is to follow your wife's lead and give her something to play up against.

You will get a leading role and a supporting role.

Leading role:
The wife

Supporting role:
The soldier/husband

ANNE-METTE – JESPER'S WIFE

You are in your mid-thirties and live with your husband and your two kids, Michala (7) and Jonas (9) in a small house in the suburbs of Copenhagen. You work part time teaching English and Danish. You love your job, but you have never seen yourself as a career woman. It has always been your dream to have a family and you enjoy your time with the kids. You know that you are quite traditional. You like that it is your job to cook, wash clothes and do grocery shopping. You also like that Jesper takes care of the garage workshop, car insurance and your wi-fi.

Jesper is strong and good with his hands, both with power tools and in bed, and he is a caring husband and father. If you were to point out one small shortcoming, you would say that he is a bit too serious and controlling. He is very good at solving problems, but you don't laugh a lot when you are together.

Jesper is first lieutenant in the Danish army. When he was young he went to Iraq. Since then, he has been to Afghanistan several times. He is in command of many men and you are convinced he is a good leader. In general, you are fine with him being a soldier. You do not get too involved in all the details of the conflict, but you agree that Al-Qaeda must be stopped. Someone needs to take responsibility and you are proud that Jesper has the courage.

When Jesper is away, you make sure that everything is in place at home. The kids should not feel too much of a difference and you spend your weekends at the sidelines of Jonas' badminton games. But sometimes everything falls apart, e.g. in situations when the kitchen utilities stop working. All of a sudden, you become very small. It can also be hard to have Jesper at home, especially when he has just returned. Then he just sits uninterested like a robot at the dinner table or in front of the telly. Amazingly, he manages to disturb everyone without even doing anything. Lately, this behaviour has gotten worse.

Family is important.

Everyday chores

Jesper as husband

Jesper as soldier

Everyday life without Jesper

Every time Jesper leaves, he writes letters to all of you in case he doesn't return. One for his parents, one for each of the kids, and one for you. You keep them in sealed envelopes and hang them with magnets on the fridge. You keep them there until the day you pick him up at the airport. As a ritual, you throw them into a bin when you see him walk through customs. Several times, Jesper has asked you to write a letter of your own. Every time you have refused.

In your little support group with Josephine and Camilla, you take the role as moderator. You are used to attending meetings and you hate when people argue just for the sake of arguing. Usually, you are also hosting the meetings at your house.

KEY WORDS

Sensible and organised. Caring. Focused on the family. Wants more fun in her daily life. Takes a motherly stance towards the other women. Is okay with showing weakness.

IT CREATES INTIMACY WHEN

- Jesper opens up and shares his feelings.
- Jesper and Anne-Mette have everything under control and plan practical details, especially regarding the kids.
- Anne-Mette can be proud of Jesper.

IT CREATES DISTANCE WHEN

- Jesper is cold and inaccessible.
- Jesper is insecure and confused.
- Anne-Mette's perspective on the war is challenged.

Farewell letters

The support group

3/4

SIMON – CAMILLA’S HUSBAND

You are in your mid-twenties. You are in Afghanistan for the second time.

You and Camilla have only known each other for about a year, but you have already been married for two months. You both have quite a temper and your stormy relationship could easily provide content for a good handful of Hollywood movies. You are bound together by some strange sexual chemistry.

It is like you are addicted to Camilla’s attention. It is important that you sense her strong emotions, sometimes to a degree where you scare her by voicing extreme opinions about immigrants, tell vivid war stories or by making her jealous. But you never actually cheat on her.

At other times, you surprise her with a romantic gestures such as showing up unexpected at her work with a large bouquet of roses and dinner reservations at a restaurant you cannot really afford and which name you cannot really pronounce.

This is your second time in Afghanistan and it feels just right. Our Western way of living is under attack and it is important to take a stance in that battle. In general, you are not afraid of standing up for yourself and your honour. You don’t shy away from a good argument or a fight if it comes to that.

A stormy
relationship

Addicted to
Camilla's attention

Romantic gestures

Responsibility and
confrontation

KEY WORDS

Temper. Attention seeking. Spontaneous. Proud. Provokes people to get attention. Romantic gestures.

IT CREATES INTIMACY WHEN

- Simon is spontaneous.
- Simon and Camilla act romantically and express their feelings for each other.
- Surrender to their physical attraction.

IT CREATES DISTANCE WHEN

- Simon is extreme in his opinions and actions.
- Camilla and Simon make each other jealous.
- One of them acts cold and uninterested.

SUPPORTING ROLE

As a supporting role, you provide the best context for Camilla if you, as the scenario progresses, become more and more extreme in your opinions and actions.

JOSEPHINE

+ JESPER

1/4

DISTANCE

Every time Jesper leaves, he writes letters to all of us, in case he doesn't return. One for his parents, one for each of the kids, and one for me. We keep them in sealed envelopes and hang them with magnets on the fridge. We keep them there until the day we pick him up at the airport. As a ritual, we throw them into a bin when we see him coming through customs. Several times, Jesper has asked me to write a letter of my own. "That is so you can better understand my thought process", he says. Every time I refuse.

Jesper, Simon and Kenneth are stationed in the Danish army in Afghanistan. They will be there for six months and all communication with their loved ones will take place through unstable telephone lines and bad internet connections. Meanwhile, Anne-Mette, Camilla and Josephine take care of things at home. They have formed a support group where they share their experiences. *Distance* is the story about how the three marriages are affected by the husbands' absence.

The story focuses on the wives and life at home. There are snapshots of busy days and anxious nights waiting for a phone call that never comes. There is awkward Skype sex and confrontations with judgemental girlfriends. There are episodes of meeting new men, some times in the form of unwanted sexual advances, other times igniting new sparks of attraction.

The scenario is played out through short stand-alone scenes showing highlights spread out over all six months.

While the soldiers are stationed, their wives take care of things at home.

The three women have formed a support group.

The stationing creates distance between the couples.

Stand-alone scenes

YOUR ROLE

You will play the a leading role of one of the three women. Also, you must play one of the supporting roles as one of the soldiers and perhaps a few extra, small supporting roles.

In the description of your leading role (the wife), you find the most detailed portrait of one of the three marriages. It is your responsibility to share the most important details. Doing this, you also have the largest degree of freedom to improvise and add new aspects.

In the description of your supporting role (the soldier), you have fewer details. Your main task is to follow your wife's lead and give her something to play up against.

You will get a leading role and a supporting role.

Leading role:
The wife

Supporting role:
The soldier/husband

JOSEPHINE – KENNETH'S WIFE

You are in your early twenties and live together with Kenneth in a small apartment in Vesterbro, Copenhagen. You have just moved there after having lived together in Jutland for three years. Right now, the apartment feels quiet and empty. It is as if everything just sits there waiting. The new Miele is waiting for men's shirts and sweaty soccer jerseys. The coffee machine needs to be more than just half full. You have picked most of the interior and you are worried that Kenneth will not feel at home.

You have moved because you have started to study Sociology at the University of Copenhagen. At first, Kenneth was against you guys leaving all your friends, but in the end, you left him no choice. You are the strong one. You are beautiful, you are eloquent, and when you argue, you typically outsmart him. However, he has this weird aura of strength about him. In contrast to the boys you meet at the university, he is sure of himself and his values.

You are the first in your family to go to university. This gives you new perspectives on life and society. It is obvious to you how many structures in society that are just results of history and habitual thinking, also when it comes to gender roles and relationships. You don't know how much of all this new stuff you actually agree with, but you have started to change. You have started to have more discussions with Kenneth. He is pretty stuck in his old opinions and he is not very strong in abstract thinking. But he is smart enough to shoot you down if your arguments become too far fetched. He has a certain kind of irresistible ironic humor, and you laugh a lot when you are together.

Now he has gone away on his first trip and you miss everything about him. His stubble. His hand on your lower back. Right before he left, you got married at city hall. It felt natural to make this promise before you were to be apart for six months and he would be in a danger zone. Surprisingly, you don't think too much about Kenneth's absence as you

The empty apartment

You are the stronger one.

University gives you new perspectives.

Discussions

You laugh a lot together.

Everyday life without Kenneth

go through your daily routines. However, there is something unpleasant about that you are out of touch with each other emotionally. Whenever you talk on the phone, you feel that you should try to get some kind of strong reaction out of him. You want to sexually arouse him, provoke or hurt him, simply because it brings you closer together than just chatting about simple, everyday stuff. You hate not getting a proper response.

When it comes to the war, you are undecided, but you trust Kenneth's judgement and accept his choice. You do, however, have a lot of unanswered questions.

In the little support group with Anne-Mette and Camilla, you often play Devil's Advocate. Maybe this is because the others set the agenda, and you, as the youngest, take a more rebellious stance. Or maybe it is just a habit from study group.

KEY WORDS

Curious and eloquent. Confident and dominating. Is always ready to have a discussion. Wants Kenneth to react strongly to provocations and sexual advances.

IT CREATES INTIMACY WHEN

- Kenneth steps into character and stands by his values and feelings.
- Kenneth and Josephine laugh together.
- They give into their physical attraction.

IT CREATES DISTANCE WHEN

- Kenneth cannot follow Josephine's development.
- Kenneth is insecure and jealous.
- Josephine criticises the war.

You want a strong reaction.

The war in Afghanistan

The support group

3/4

JESPER – ANNE-METTE'S HUSBAND

You are in your mid-thirties, first lieutenant in the Danish army, and you have been stationed in Afghanistan many times. You are a conscientious leader who cares about your men's well-being. Also, you insist on procedures being followed to the letter. Sloppiness gets punished. There are lives at stake!

You are used to acting cool and efficient under pressure, and sometimes, you have a hard time opening up in a more relaxed setting. You keep your duties as a first lieutenant and as a husband strictly separate and compartmentalised. You very rarely talk to Anne-Mette about war-related events. There is no need to scare her.

You are beginning to become more easily affected by your experiences in Afghanistan. Maybe it is age. Maybe it is your family obligations. Sometimes you become nervous and emotional. At other times, you become cold and guarded. You get this way abroad and you get this way when you are at home as well. You are considering leaving the military to pursue something new, but you don't know what you should do instead. You are yet to share these thoughts with Anne-Mette.

Whenever you go away, you carefully instruct Anne-Mette in everything regarding insurance and whom to call if something goes wrong. Everything must be in place. You are working on a system for when you can have Skype sex without disturbing the kids (Michala is seven and Jonas is nine). You also have a special ritual of writing sealed farewell letters for your parents, Anne-Mette and the kids. They are instructed to read the letters if you don't come home. It is of course forbidden to open the envelopes as long as you are alive.

Conscientious and organised

You keep military and marriage separate.

You become more easily affected by the war.

You are considering leaving the military.

Everything needs to be in place at home.

Farewell letters.

KEY WORDS

Career soldier. Caring and conscientious. Worries about his men's safety and well-being. Focused on his family and related practical details. Used to being cool and efficient, but is slowly starting to crumble. Keeps military and family very separate. Dutiful. Writes farewell letters to the whole family.

IT CREATES INTIMACY WHEN

- Jesper opens up and shares his feelings.
- Jesper and Anne-Mette have everything under control and plan practical details, especially regarding the kids.
- Anne-Mette can be proud of Jesper.

IT CREATES DISTANCE WHEN

- Jesper is cold and inaccessible.
- Jesper is insecure and confused.
- Anne-Mette's perspective on the war is challenged.

SUPPORTING ROLE

As a supporting role, you provide the best context for Anne-Mette if you, as the scenario progresses, become more and more mentally and emotionally unstable.

CAMILLA

+ KENNETH

1/4

DISTANCE

Every time Jesper leaves, he writes letters to all of us, in case he doesn't return. One for his parents, one for each of the kids, and one for me. We keep them in sealed envelopes and hang them with magnets on the fridge. We keep them there until the day we pick him up at the airport. As a ritual, we throw them into a bin when we see him coming through customs. Several times, Jesper has asked me to write a letter of my own. "That is so you can better understand my thought process", he says. Every time I refuse.

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The three women have formed a support group.

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Stand-alone scenes

YOUR ROLE

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In the description of your supporting role (the soldier), you have fewer details. Your main task is to follow your wife's lead and give her something to play up against.

You will get a leading role and a supporting role.

Leading role:
The wife

Supporting role:
The soldier/husband

CAMILLA – SIMON'S WIFE

You are in your mid-twenties and live together with Simon in a three-room apartment in Nørrebro, Copenhagen. Things have happened so fast. Officially, Simon moved in just before your wedding four months ago, but in practice, you have been living together since you met about a year ago.

Things are moving fast.

The apartment is originally bought with help from your parents. It was meant for you and your ex-boyfriend Daniel when you moved to Copenhagen to study. Back then, you still believed that you were on your way to the perfect life. You were studying to become a medical doctor and you had made your family proud. You had landed the clique's most handsome guy and made your friends jealous.

Even though you thought the world of Daniel, his cheating didn't really come as a surprise. It was more like everything suddenly made sense. The handsome dangerous devil was too good to be true as a faithful spouse, but for some reason you could not break away. Years of lies, confessions and forgiving accelerated into a power struggle where you were competing to make each other jealous and to use your scorned emotions to keep each other down.

Your ex-boyfriend Daniel

Power struggle

If it hadn't been for Simon, you had probably never found the strength to kick Daniel out. Who would have thought that you could find a man with the same dangerous aura and who, at the same time, would stay true? You met when you were interning as a military doctor. You have never felt such a strong connection and your first days together was like a Hollywood movie. Who wouldn't fall for such a sexy action hero in uniform? You will never forget how he climbed three stories and smashed a window because you had forgotten your keys. Or when he knocked Daniel to the floor with one punch when he showed up uninvited and drunk at a party. Also, Simon is always good for a romantic gesture, however inappropriate it may be.

Simon is your saviour.

Like a Hollywood movie

But your euphoria is wearing off. You are still hurt from your

years with Daniel and you need time. This makes Simon insecure and he keeps on seeking your attention by starting fights. He keeps pushing your old jealousy button, and he provokes and scares you with dangerous war stories and extreme statements about immigrants. Taken out of context, it almost sounds like he enjoys shooting at the Afghans. You wish, you could care less, but after four years with Daniel, you cannot walk away from a fight. You are good at playing the victim as well as the femme fatale and you hate yourself for it. But you love Simon and he loves you, and you cannot imagine a life without drama.

Simon's need for attention

Victim and femme fatale

In the support group with Anne-Mette and Josephine, you are definitely the drama queen. You have had some rough years and it feels nice to have two strong women listen to you and give you advice.

The support group

Drama queen

KEYWORDS

Marked by a dysfunctional relationship. Stormy relationship with Simon. Drawn to danger. Jealous. Confrontational. Drama queen. Victim and femme fatale.

IT CREATES INTIMACY WHEN

- Simon is spontaneous.
- Simon and Camilla act romantically and express their feelings for each other.
- Surrender to their physical attraction.

IT CREATES DISTANCE WHEN

- Simon is extreme in his opinions and actions.
- Camilla and Simon make each other jealous.
- One of them acts cold and uninterested.

3/4

KENNETH – JOSEPHINE'S HUSBAND

You are in your start-twenties. This is the first time you are in Afghanistan.

You and Josephine grew up together in a small town in Jutland, but you first started dating in your final year of high-school. You have now lived together for three years. A year ago, you moved to Copenhagen because Josephine wanted to study sociology. At first, you didn't like the idea, but she was adamant and you would rather leave your friends than have her leave you. You didn't have any concrete plans for yourself in Jutland, anyway.

Josephine loves to discuss everything. After she started at the university, it is all quite overwhelming. Sometimes, she has some interesting perspectives. Other times, the position she presents is just contrived bullshit, which no real person would actually believe in. Luckily, you are sure of your own values and you sweep her dumbest arguments aside by making fun of her using your own dry, ironic sense of humour.

Shortly before you left, you got married at city hall. It is the first time you are away and you felt that it was natural to make this promise before you went away for six months into a danger zone. Maybe you were also motivated by Josephine's new situation. She seems to meet a lot of new university guys and your stomach crawls when she talks about them. You don't like being jealous.

Josephine got you to move.

Discussions

You are sure of your values.

Humour and irony

Jealousy

KEY WORDS

The youngest and least experienced of the soldiers. Is sure of his own opinions and values. Puts Josephine in her place with dry humour and irony, but lets her make the big decisions. Feels jealous when she mentions her male university friends.

IT CREATES INTIMACY WHEN

- Kenneth steps into character and stands by his values and feelings.
- Kenneth and Josephine laugh together.
- They give into their physical attraction.

IT CREATES DISTANCE WHEN

- Kenneth cannot follow Josephine's development.
- Kenneth is insecure and jealous.
- Josephine criticises the war.

SUPPORTING ROLE

As a supporting role, you provide the best context for Josephine if you, as the scenario progresses, become more and more weak and apathetic.

4/4



APPENDICES

HANDOUT 1

THE THREE MARRIAGES

THE THREE MARRIAGES

ANNE-METTE & JESPER

CAMILLA & SIMON

JOSEPHINE & KENNETH

STORYTELLING RULES

STORYTELLING RULES

- 1) ONE COUPLE GETS DIVORCED.
(BEFORE OR RIGHT AFTER THE HUSBAND RETURNS)
- 2) ONE COUPLE STAYS TOGETHER.
- 3) ONE OF THE HUSBANDS DIE IN AFGHANISTAN.

HANDOUT 3

NAME TAGS



ANNE-METTE

+ SIMON

JOSEPHINE

+ JESPER

CAMILLA

+ KENNETH

APPENDIX A

SCENE OVERVIEW

1st CHAPTER	SUMMARY	Roles
First meeting	Support group meeting. Talk about your marriages.	The women
Flashback: While I'm away	Jesper and Anne-Mette go through practical arrangements.	Anne-Mette and Jesper
Flashback: The wound	Camilla treats Simon's wounds. They sense a strong chemistry.	Camilla and Simon
Flashback: Copenhagen	Josephine lets Kenneth know that they must move to Copenhagen.	Josephine and Kenneth
The party	Friends invite Camilla to a housewarming hosted by her ex.	Camilla and two friends
Calls	The soldiers call their wives for the first time.	All
Peter	Peter from Josephine's study group criticises Kenneth.	Josephine and Peter
Monologues: Waiting for a call	The women wait for a call that never comes.	The women
The morning routine goes wrong	Anne-Mette calls one of the other women to talk about a terrible morning.	Anne-Mette and one of the other women
2nd CHAPTER		
Romance and sex	Support group meeting. How do you keep romance and sex life alive?	The women
Skype sex? I	Anne-Mette and Jesper try having Skype sex.	Anne-Mette and Jesper
Skype sex? II	Camilla and Simon try having Skype sex.	Camilla and Simon
Concert tickets	Camilla's ex Daniel offers her concert tickets.	Camilla and Daniel
Critics	Josephine's fellow students criticise the war. Josephine calls Anne-Mette.	Josephine, Anne-Mette, Peter and a student
Skype sex? III	Josephine and Kenneth try having Skype sex.	Josephine and Kenneth
Debriefing	A mission goes wrong. Jesper debriefs with Simon, and later a psychologist.	Jesper, Simon and a psychologist
Comfort	One or more soldiers call home after a mission gone wrong.	?
3rd CHAPTER		
Leave I	Kenneth plays Playstation. Josephine initiates a serious conversation.	Josephine and Kenneth + maybe Peter
Leave II	Camilla and Simon are out to lunch. Simon is stressed by the surroundings.	Camilla and Simon + maybe Daniel
Leave III	Anne-Mette wakes up and finds Jesper crying in the living room.	Anne-Mette and Jesper
Leave IV (optional)	Other scenes about the leave	?
So, how was it?	Support group meeting: How did your husband's leave go?	The women
Meta scene (optional)	The players discuss possible endings to the stories.	The players
In love	Peter from Josephine's study group announces that he is in love with her.	Josephine
The ex	Daniel and Camilla meet at a party. He wants her back.	Camilla
No connection	Anne-Mette cannot access the internet. Jesper is unable to help her.	Anne-Mette and Jesper
Love and betrayal	Support group meeting. One of the women have fallen in love with another man.	The women
CLOSING SCENES		
The breakup	One of the couples breaks up.	?
Coming home	A soldier comes home early because of an injury or another problem.	?
Terrible news	Phone call. A woman announces that her husband is dead.	?
Monologue: The farewell letter	A player recites Jesper's farewell letter to Anne-Mette.	Anne-Mette or Jesper

LIFE IN AFGHANISTAN

AFGHANISTAN

Afghanistan is a country in Central Asia with borders to Iran and Pakistan (among other countries). The country is hot and has both mountains, large deserts and green areas. The population is predominantly muslim.

WAR

The war started in 2001 as a reaction to 9-11. USA and Great Britain lead an invasion with the purpose of capturing Osama bin Laden, destroy Al-Qaeda and remove the Taliban regime that helped Al-Qaeda hide in the country. Later on, more NATO troops followed, and some of those were Danish. Even though the international alliance succeeded in removing the Taliban regime, the country remained unstable with confrontations between the Western alliance and the surviving Taliban units.

During the years 2006-2014, NATO kept troops in Afghanistan in order to help reestablish the country and clear strategic areas of Taliban troops. In 2014, the last Danish soldiers left the country. Today, Afghanistan remains very unstable.

WHERE ARE THE SOLDIERS LOCATED?

The Western forces resided in several places and lived under very different conditions. In *Distance*, it makes the best sense if the story takes place during the fall of 2008, and the three soldiers are part of the Danish forces residing at Forward Operating Base (FOB) Armadillo. This is not information the players need in order to play the game. I share this information to help you paint a coherent picture of how the soldiers are organised, where they live and what they experience.

FOB Armadillo is located at the edge of a barren desert highland and a low lush, humid area called The Green Zone. The soldiers' missions may take place among dust and rocks in the desert or in extremely muddy and humid surroundings between water paths and tall corn or cannabis plants. The Green Zone is like a swamp and the soldiers cannot use armed military vehicles.

The war

A realistic situation

The local geography

WHAT ARE THEY DOING?

The soldiers' main objective is to control the area and prevent the enemy from establishing a presence there. In practice, this means that they patrol the area and make themselves seen. Patrolling typically takes a work day of eight hours and it will involve a whole company (military organisation is explained in the next paragraph). The tasks are mainly about showing presence, but sometimes the soldiers will help the locals with projects such as building a well.

HOW ARE THEY ORGANISED?

A company consists of three platoons and back office staff which is 130 people in total. A platoon consists of three squads of approx. 10 people. The platoon is led by a platoon leader who can be a first lieutenant.

I imagine that Jesper as first lieutenant is platoon leader and that Simon and Kenneth are privates in the same squad. It is not relevant for the scenario who takes on which military tasks.

In the Danish army, it varies a lot how much the platoon leader is in contact with the privates. Jesper may be pretty close with his men, but he will try to keep a certain distance as he sometimes must send them into life threatening situations.

HOW ARE THEY LIVING?

FOB Armadillo houses approx. 250 soldiers of which the Danish company accounts for about half. The other soldiers are mainly Brits. The base is built on the basis of a big farm that NATO rents from the locals. Almost all facilities are built from scratch to fit a military purpose. For example, toilets are just holes in the ground, and the soldiers shower by hanging a gallon of water in a plastic bag and letting the water run out of small holes in the surface. Almost everything is dirty and worn out.

The soldiers' objective and tasks

Organisation

The military base

1/2

LIFE IN AFGHANISTAN

Besides wearing dirty and worn clothes most soldiers have short hair and long beards. Short hair is practical and the long beard is obligatory as young men without beards are not taken seriously by the locals.

In their spare time, soldiers hang out in large shared dormitories. Jesper, Simon and Kenneths lives in a platoon area. Here they have camp beds and sleeping bags. Also, there is old furniture and a television set that shows a few Danish channels. Besides watching TV, the soldiers spend their spare time reading books, playing video games, doing physical exercise and maintaining their equipment.

When the soldiers want to communicate with their loved ones, they go to a container with four small cells. Each cell contains a satellite phone and a computer with internet access. When they talk on the satellite phone, the sound signal is delayed which can be quite frustrating. I suggest that you ignore this as focus should be on the content of the conversations. The computers are primarily used for emails and sometimes Skype. A soldier can only use a cell twenty minutes at the time so they need to be quite efficient.

TIMELINE

A soldier is stationed for six months. In the middle of this, he has a three-week leave. The stationing starts in either February or August. The leave is typically in November or in May.

Most soldiers find it hard to adjust to life at home. As a reaction to stress, they have elevated levels of adrenalin. Depending on personality, this will make them react differently to the little challenges of every day life. Some will overreact to all kinds of trouble, while others become numb and apathetic. Their emotions are geared to react to life threatening situations, and nothing really seems that important.

Spare time

Communication with
their loved ones

Stationing and
leaves

Being stationed, the soldiers become accustomed to knowing their exact plans for the day. As a consequence, they may find it difficult to manage their spare time in Denmark.

WHICH CHALLENGES WILL THE SOLDIERS MEET AS PART OF THEIR LIFE ON THE BASE?

It may be a good idea for you to illustrate the soldiers' level of stress by referring to different events and problems they may encounter, and through that show how their lives differ from their wives' lives in Denmark. You can do this as you set the scenes where the couples talk over Skype and satellite phone.

Everyday challenges

Here are a few suggestions:

- The soldiers hit a mine. Even though they were in a military vehicle they were reminded of the dangers in the desert.
- The platoon has been in a confrontation with Al-Qaeda. One or more soldiers are injured. Maybe they went through empty buildings in order to clear an area.
- The soldiers accidentally hurt a group of locals as they open fire into heavy vegetation in The Green Zone.
- The locals become angry as the company has killed live stock with their artillery.
- A young soldier faints from dehydration. This is very normal. The temperature is 44° C, and the soldiers carry approx. 20 kg of equipment. At the same time, they have only 3 liters of drinking water per person, and their bodies can only absorb approx. 1 liter per hour.

Since 1992, more than 28,000 Danish soldiers have gone to war abroad. *Distance* is a scenario about the wives of three soldiers.

Jesper, Simon and Kenneth are stationed in the Danish army in Afghanistan. They will be there for six months, and all communication with their loved ones will take place through unstable telephone lines and bad internet connections. Meanwhile, Anne-Mette, Camilla and Josephine take care of things at home.

Distance is the story about how the three marriages are affected by the husbands' absence.

The scenario is played out through short stand-alone scenes showing highlights spread out over all six months.

Distance is inspired by the theatre play *I Afghanistan Skyder Man Med Vandpistoler* by Line Østergaard.

Author: Morten Jaeger

Play testers, 1st test: Kamilla Kate Brichs, Ina Noire, Marie Wolfsberg Oscilowski og Signe Løndahl Hertel

Play testers, 2nd test: Caroline Casten Koren, Sidsel Lundahl, Luciano Foschi og Alex Uth

Play testers, 2nd test: Michael Brunø, Tora de Boer og Nis Haller Baggesen

Reality check: Rasmus Knudsen

Layout: Anders Skovgaard-Petersen, bagmanden.dk

