

Hobby Horse

By Nynne Søs Rasmussen

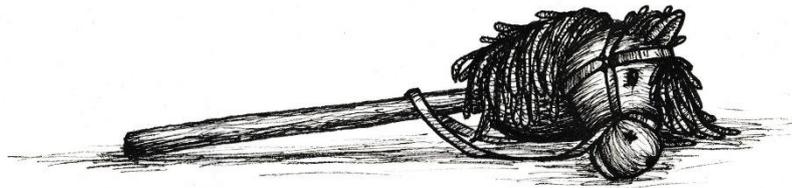


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Dear Gamemaster,

Thank you so much for choosing to gamemaster my scenario
I am looking forward to hearing how your story ended happily.

Questions, comments and stories are very welcome at nynnerasmussen@gmail.com

Nynne

- a strange child, who played so much pretend horse by herself, that her parents' lawn is still marked 20 years later



Thanks to

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Written for Fastaval 2018. Translated for Stockholm Scenario Festival 2018.

Introduction

Hobbyhorse is a feel-good drama about three teenage girls with a quirky hobby. **Amina**, **Cecilie**, and **Olivia** go to the same school and are interested in competitions, where participants simulate traditional equestrian sports on stick horses - also called hobbyhorsing. **Amina** has just moved to town and attends 8th grade, while both **Cecilie** and **Olivia** are in 7th grade. The scenario takes place in a residential area north of Copenhagen and runs from a dark winter towards an early spring and a big hobbyhorse competition called *Riders Cup*, which the girls are preparing for.

Hobbyhorse is a tale about the courage and vulnerability, which can be found in having a hobby and being part of a community, the outside world may deem strange. The three characters all have a personal dilemma, which is linked to hobbyhorsing. During the scenario, the three girls evolve and thus get a chance to change their situation. The scenario must have a happy ending, but exactly how is it up to the players.

The scenario is played out semi-live and with real hobby horses if possible (you can also use brooms, mops or similar if needed). The hobby horses have their own personality and temperament, which the girls have made up. The horses can both enhance their rider's personality or try to pull them in a completely different direction. In the preliminary workshop the players will be giving the tools for animating the hobby horses and use them to influence the narrative. As a gamemaster, you'll run the workshop, set and cut scenes and play supporting characters.

Hobbyhorse consist of a prologue and three acts. Most scenes are determined and set by the gamemaster, while some scenes are optional and set in collaboration with the players. The scenario is scheduled to last just above 3 hours incl. setup and workshop.

Hobbyhorsing

In Finland, more than 10,000 youngsters compete in competitive riding on stick horses, known as 'hobbyhorsing'. In this scenario, the sport has also been established in Denmark. A large part of the hobby consists in designing, sewing and grooming the hobby horses as well as giving them names and personalities. In addition, practitioners study equestrian sports and practice the various disciplines, such as dressage and show jumping. In competitions the contestants are judged by several judges on different parameters. The hobbyhorsing community is known for having a strong unity and being friendly towards everyone. Most of the practitioners are young women who are also responsible for all the planning of events and competitions.

If you want to know more about hobbyhorsing, I recommend the website www.thehobbyhorse.fi and the documentary 'The Hobbyhorse Revolution', but no prior knowledge is needed to gamemaster or play the scenario.

Setting

The scenario takes place in today's Denmark with the one exception, that hobbyhorsing as a sport has recently come to the country. It is still a relatively unknown and niche hobby, but it is large enough for minor competitions to be held around the country and to have a small community surrounding the hobby.

The girls live north of Copenhagen in a small town whose primary characteristic is a large housing block. There is also a residential neighborhood with 70s-style detached houses and a center with a pizzeria, a grocery store, and a bodega. Centrally located is a large, slightly worn primary school, where the three characters attend school. The entire area is chained together by gravel paths, tunnels transcribed with graffiti and sporadic green areas. A little further away is a field and a small spot of trees, one could almost call a forest. The train towards Copenhagen bumps constantly late in the background, filled with tired commuters. It is an area where it is a bit difficult to be different and where everything becomes even more cold, dark and gray during the winter.

The housing block serves as a mood-setting backdrop for the scenario. In the scene catalog, you will find small descriptions of the setting that you can include when setting the different scenes.

Characters

Amina was one of the pioneers in Danish hobbyhorsing. Now she is in the 8th grade and has put her hobby horse in the closet but misses the hobby. She therefore convinces herself to help the two other girls and take part in a final competition: *Riders Cup*. **Amina** has recently moved into the housing block. She has become good friends with the popular girl Laura from her class and has a crush on the charming football-boy Thomas. Amina is fearing for their reaction if she tells them about hobbyhorsing. Amina rides **Thunder**, a black, fiery and headstrong stallion.

Olivia has a very promising career as an elite handball player in front of her but is drawn to the hobby horses. She fears to disappoint her enthusiastic and well-meaning parents who have big dreams on **Olivia's** behalf. Olivia attends 7th grade with her friend Cecilie and lives in detached house a little outside of the housing block area. **Olivia** is playing an important handball tournament the same day as the *Riders Cup*. **Olivia** is a great talent in hobbyhorsing and rides **Silja**, a beautiful white mare with a playful and curious mind.

Cecilie rides proudly on her hobby horse in the housing block area, with all the bullying it brings. She lives in the block alone with her father and attends 7th grade with Olivia. Her father has raised her to be true to herself and be proud of who she is. However, lately she has doubted whether it is all worth it. She has been considering moving to her more chic mother in Copenhagen and dropping hobbyhorsing. **Cecilie** rides **Eyvindur**, a reddish brown, stubborn, and robust gelding.

At the beginning of the scenario, **Amina** has not yet talked to **Cecilie** and **Olivia**. The three girls, however, have noticed each other and need each other to form a team and participate in *Riders Cup*, which is a big competition, where you must compete in teams of three. During the scenario a close friendship develops between the three young women while they prepare for the competition and try to help each other handle the challenges of their everyday life. The three characters might have some disagreements and conflicts along the way, but since *Hobby Horse* is a feel-good drama they will always overcome in the end.

Supporting characters

As gamemaster you must play a variety of different supporting characters. The supporting characters are important features of the scenario, and your tools to influence the story. You will find suggestions and instructions on how to take care of your role in the specific scene in the scene catalog. *Overview 2: Characters, supporting characters and setting* will provide you with a quick overview, which can be helpful while running the scenario.

Laura - attends 8th grade with **Amina** and is very popular. On the surface, Laura can seem very mean, but behind the facade and the cool attitude, there is an insecure girl with a great need for attention and recognition. Laura has taken Amina under her wings and needs Amina to confirm her. Initially, Laura does not know that Amina is hobbyhorsing. **Cecilie's** otherness provokes Laura and enhances her insecurity, and therefore she is especially mean towards Cecilie. Laura's function is to put Amina in a dilemma concerning whether she will stand by her interest in hobbyhorsing. In addition, Laura is one of those who bully Cecilie, and she can be used to challenge the friendship between the three roles.

Thomas – is in **Amina's** class. He is popular and a talented football player. Thomas may seem a bit superficial, but in fact he is a nice guy who wants a girl with some spirit. He is quite interested in Amina, but she does not know at the beginning of the scenario. Thomas does not know that Amina has been into hobbyhorsing. If Amina chooses to tell Thomas, he may find it interesting, though he is skeptical. Amina, on the other hand, is worried that Thomas would think she is childish if he discovers that she is hobbyhorsing. Thomas's function is to create an imaginary fear of Amina's, if she wants to stand by her hobby.

Cecilie's dad – is a bit of hippie. **Cecilie's** dad loves and supports her, and he thinks it's nice that Cecilie has a quirky hobby. On the other hand, he is having a hard time understanding that it can be very hard to be different when you are a teenager, or that Cecilie sometimes gets tired of all the bullying. Cecilie has become part of his own rebellion project against the modern society. In Dad's eyes, it's him and Cecilie against the whole world. Cecilie has lived alone with her father since she was little. His function is to push to Cecilie's personal dilemma as to whether she will continue to be practicing hobbyhorsing and be different.

Cecilie's mom - a chic career woman who left **Cecilie** and her dad when Cecilie was little. Cecilie's mom lives in Copenhagen. Cecilie often talks with her, and within the last year they have developed a closer relationship. Cecilie's mother knows that Cecilie is engaged in hobbyhorsing. She thinks it's strange and could be the cause of Cecilie being bullied. Mom is sincerely concerned about Cecilie and wants to help her. Her function is to give Cecilie a real alternative if she wishes to leave her dad and hobbyhorsing behind to live a more normal life with her mother.

Olivia's mom and dad - **Olivia's** parents do not know that she is hobbyhorsing at the beginning of the scenario. They are well-meaning handball enthusiasts who have big dreams on Olivia's behalf. Olivia is worried about telling them she wants something besides playing handball. Olivia's parents really want to see their daughter happy and wish her the best, they are just not always good at letting her know that. Olivia's parents would try to understand Olivia if she chooses to tell them about hobbyhorsing - even though they may find it strange. The Parents' function is to put pressure on Olivia in relation to whether she prioritizes hobbyhorsing or handball.

Journalist Anna Jensen - well-dressed middle-aged woman. Anna is a journalist from the local weekly newspaper and who will do and interview with **Olivia** on handball in one scene. She is kind but insistent on

getting adequate answers from Olivia. Annas's function is to offer Olivia an opportunity to tell about her relationship with handball - and maybe about hobbyhorsing.

When the characters make plans and help each other overcome their challenges, let them succeed and give them positive reactions from the supporting characters. In addition, it is important that the supporting characters are not played too one-dimensionally. Make them your own and use them to influence both the characters and the narrative. Let it be the characters own insecurities and imaginary fear of the supporting characters that trouble them, rather than what the supporting characters directly do or say.

Amina's parents

Amina's parents are not part of her personal dilemma and are therefore not supporting characters in the scenario. Amina lives alone with her mother who works a lot. Her mom knows that Amina is hobbyhorsing and has always supported her in it.

Mood and tone

The scenario must be played with respect and empathy for the girls' challenges, which for the characters are quite serious. It is therefore important that you as a gamemaster guide the players in the right direction. The workshop helps you set the mood and to make the players safe and confident with the hobby horses. The scenario requires that the players dare to be a little vulnerable, just as the characters are. If the players are fooling around or pulling the scenario too much in a comic direction, it's important that you gently guide them back on track. Think of the scenario as a quirky feel-good movie about people who does something that may seem a little silly, but that they take quite seriously. The players should in best case leave the scenario with sympathy for both the characters and their hobby.

Rules of the narrative

The scenario is a feel-good drama and therefore has two important narrative rules:

1. The scenario must have a happy ending
2. The three characters are friends in the end and they must all participate in Riders Cup

A happy ending can mean many different things. As a gamemaster, it's your job to guide the players towards the happy ending, but at the same time make it clear that the ending also can be a bit ambiguous or bittersweet. A playtest ended for example with Amina putting her hobby horse Thunder back in the closet after the Riders Cup, but that she was happy to pass her love to hobbyhorsing on to Cecilie and Olivia. In another playtest, all three girls rode their horses through McDrive and bought ice cream to celebrate a good run in the competition. Both are good endings are good conclusions to the scenario. It's all up to the players.

That the characters must be friends in the end and that the cup must be ridden is a narrative rule to ensure that there is room for conflicts between the three characters - but that the happy ending is guaranteed at the same time. The interesting part is how the characters will get there. Even if Riders Cup is to be ridden, the characters may, for example, be dramatic and show up at the last minute.

Hobby horses as game mechanic

The hobby horses have their own names and personalities that the characters have made up for them. The girls treat them as they were alive, even though they know that they are not - it's part of the hobby. In the scenario, the personality of the hobby horses is a part of the girls' personality, which they may be aware of. In some scenes, the horses may want something other than what the girls want - but they are still part of the girl and ultimately, she is always in control and responsible for her actions. There may be some interesting play when the hobby horses either reinforce the girls' personality or push them in a different direction.

The workshop teaches players to animate the hobby horses, express feelings with them, and use them to tell stories. Players will be equipped to play hobby horses with different tempers and to play a horse and rider with conflicting wills. In addition, players will learn about the horse's gaits, as well as some simple dressage exercises. It is not important for the scenario that these are performed properly, but rather that they are used to tell about the characters and their relationships. The function of the dressage exercises is to give the players a common starting point and inspire how to be hobbyhorsing. *Overview 4: Dressage* is handed to the players during the workshop as a help for this.

For the *Riders Cup*, participants must ride three on the court at the same time and perform a homemade choreography consisting of different dressage exercises. The winners are those who can perform a complicated and creative choreography. The practice scenes in the scenario therefore consist of practicing the horse's gaits and agreeing on what exercises they are going to do. The event itself is played as a story scene and the players must not focus on having a finished choreography ready but instead using the training scenes to tell something about the characters and their relationship. In other scenes, the three roles meet to groom the horses and make them ready for the competition, for example to arrange their manes, brush them or sew for them.

In some scenes it's a significant choice if the players take their hobby horse with them or not. The players can also express how their role is by interacting with the hobby horse for instance by hugging it, pat it on the neck, fiddle nervously with the mane or whisper to it. Remind the players of this if they forget during runtime.

It's fine if the hobby horses and their personalities is more in focus in the beginning of the scenario than in end. This can help to show a potential development in the characters and their friendship, for example, that they no longer need the horses to communicate and signal who they are towards the end of the scenario.

Can you hide a hobby horse behind your back?

The answer is yes. At least in the first act. If the characters try to hide their hobby horse behind their backs, you should initially let them get away with it so that the conflicts don't escalate too fast. Later in the scenario, it's OK if the supporting character ask what they are hiding and use the opportunity to create either conflict or redemption. It is up to you to assess whether the character should get away with it, depending on where you are in the story.

Scenes and structure

The scenario consists of a prologue and three acts. In the fiction, the scenario spans over for three months, from the dark winter to an early spring. There is an act for each month the scenario covers; January, February and March. Each act begins with the you briefly setting the mood by reading a short text aloud. In the first act, the characters, their personal dilemmas and most of the supporting characters are presented. In the second act, it is possible to create conflicts and focus on personal dilemmas. In the third act, the conflicts must be resolved, and players play towards the happy ending.

In the first act, all scenes are set from the scene catalog. The same applies to the second act, but it may be necessary to adjust the scenes a bit, depending on the characters previous choices. In the third act, there are few scheduled scenes and instead you can set several optional scenes in collaboration with the players. Do not worry about changing the order of scenes or make minor changes, to make your story more interesting and meaningful, at the same time, you can also rely on the scene catalog to provide guidance and inspiration.

The scenario is played primarily semi-live, i.e. that players use their entire body and walk, stand and talk as their character. The scenario's prologue consists of a short story scene, where the characters describe their room, and the actual *Riders Cup* is also played as a story scene. In addition, a short narrative sequence will complete each act. In the narrative sequences in the end of the acts, players must place themselves in circle and take each other's hands, close their eyes and narrate in turn. In this way, the connection between the characters is physically illustrated and focus is created in the narrative sequences.

The introduction, workshop and the character distribution take approx. 1 hour, while the actual scenario can be played in just over 2 hours. The scenario lasts a total of just above 3 hours.

Introduction & Workshop 1 hour	Scenario 2+ hours
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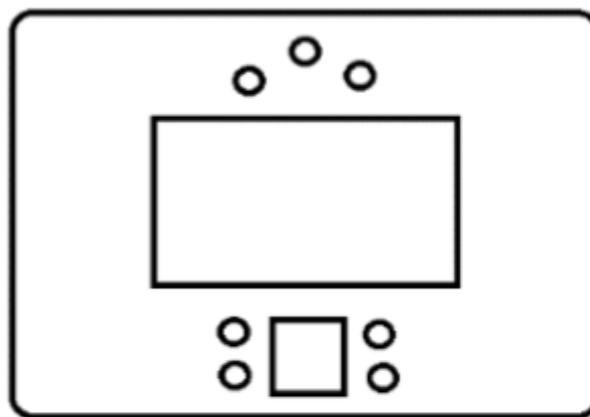
Gamemastering the scenario

As a gamemaster, you are responsible for preparing the room and running the initial workshop. During the run of the scenario, you must both play the supporting characters, set scenes and cut them. Keep the scenes with the supporting characters relatively short and give more space to the scenes between the characters. Especially the scenes with only one character and one supporting character must be kept sharp. Most importantly you must also contribute in creating a safe atmosphere in the game room. Concretely you can go first in the workshop and recognize and encourage the players along the way.

Playtests has shown that some player groups may be so focused on hobbyhorsing that they tend forget to talk about the characters' challenges and everyday lives in the scenes where the roles are practicing hobbyhorsing. Other groups may prefer to talk rather than to hobbyhorse. It is your task to create a good balance between training on the hobbyhorses and talking to each other. The training scenes are interesting when players use it to communicate something about their characters and their relationship. If this is not the case, you should cut the scene and skip forward to after training, where there is time for talking.

Preparing the room

Hobby Horse is designed to be run in a standard classroom, but you just need a big room of any kind. You must make sure that the room is organized so that there is plenty of room for riding the hobby horses. Mark a large rectangle with paint tape on the floor of approx. 2x4 m. It is your riding court. Along one side of the court, you must set up a table with four chairs around which you can use for the introduction and scenes taking place around a table. Opposite on the other side of the riding paddock, you put three chairs in a row where scenes can be played that take place in the rooms of the characters or the like. See the drawing of the layout below. Most importantly, everyone should have a good opportunity to see the scenes they are not in play out. Avoid spending too much time and effort moving around the furniture during the actual runtime of the scenario.



Introduction & Workshop

Introduction and workshop

The workshop has two purposes: to create confidence and comfort in the player group and to prepare the players to play the scenario, including how-to animate the hobby horses and how-to hobbyhorse. *Summary Sheet 1: Startup and workshop* helps you remember what to cover when presenting the scenario, as well as keeping an overview of the workshop and the various exercises.

Welcoming the players

Welcome the players and run a short introduction round. Ask what prompted them to sign up for the scenario. Tell the players that you'll start with a workshop that prepares them to play the scenario. Explain the structure of the workshop: that you'll tell a little about the scenario, hobbyhorsing and quite briefly about the three roles. Then you will do some exercises together, play some test scenes and in the end the characters will be distributed.

Present the scenario

Use *Summary Sheet 1: Startup and Workshop* to present the scenario. In short, you should briefly describe the scenario, the setting, the three roles and tell a little about hobbyhorsing as a sport. Then you are ready to start the exercises.

A personal story

Ask everyone to tell a short story about something they have done or have been interested in they were afraid that others would think was strange or embarrassing. It could be something they've collected, something they've been a fan of or another kind of special interest. It may be a story from when they were younger, and it may also be larp / role-playing-related. Start the round yourself -it's OK to exaggerate a little here, so it will be safer for players to share their story afterwards.

Count to 10

Ask the players to stand up in a circle with you. Shake or stretch your bodies first and take 3 deep breaths together to create focus. Close your eyes. You'll now count to 10 together without speaking at the same time. One starts by saying '1' and then another says '2' etc. If two of you are going to say a number at the same time, start again with '1'. This exercise requires focus and feel for each other. Keep at it until you succeed.

Mirror

You must now come up with figure of body and mimic, which is passed on by the person on the right to copy it as a mirror before making a new figure, which will then be forwarded to the next person in the circle. Take a few rounds and encourage the players to exaggerate and use the entire body. Start the round yourself.

Crazy gaits

Walk around amongst each other. Start yourself by moving differently - for example big steps, mouse steps, with your arms over the head, jumping, walking backwards or sideways. The others should follow your lead. Another will then gradually change your current gait to a new crazy way of walking and the rest will follow. It is important to pay attention to the group and make room for each other. Continue until you have a good flow and have used your body in all possible ways.

The horse's gaits and dressage

Find the hobby horses and start by using one of them to show you how to ride a walk, trot and gallop on a hobby horse - see *Summary Sheet 4: Dressage* for help, but do not worry if you're doing it 'right'. Quite simply, walk are common steps, trot is running with a high knee lift and gallop is leaping forward with one foot at the front a bit like skipping. Run around the square, marked as a riding paddock. Show both fast, slow and elegant / less elegant versions of the gaits. Give the players a hobby horse each and let them try.

Explain to players that dressage exercises consist primarily of 'drawing' different figures in the riding paddock while changing gaits. In addition, the horse sometimes stops at certain places on the court, go backwards or sideways. Show some of the exercises and hand out *Summary Sheet 4: Dressage* for the players, so that everyone gets some inspiration and a common starting point. Give them time to read it. Review the main points from the sheet together. Emphasize while the players are going to do a choreography with different exercises and walks for the competition, the actual event is played as a story scene. The players should hence not focus on making a complete choreography, but instead on creating interesting play in the training scenes.

Then let the players take turns being 'the leader' and riding in front and decide the gaits, exercises and direction. The others will follow. Encourage them to play with pace, exercises and to make transitions between the different gaits. Start by being 'the leader' yourself. After a few exercises, you'll ride down behind the others, and so you change until everyone has tried to be at the forefront.

If some players think it's a bit awkward, acknowledge it, talk about it and most importantly; Give them time and space to get comfortable before moving on. It may also be that you need to let them 'rattle off' and goof a little around the horses.

To play a hobby horse

In the following exercise, players must practice expressing feelings with a hobby horse. Ask each player to choose a feeling, for example: nervousness, anger, wildness, joy or curiosity. Give them a little time to think and then ask them to express their feelings to the others using the hobby horse. The others should try to guess the feeling. Start with yourself and let everyone try. Spend some time after each person to reflect on how to express the given feeling. Below is a list of simple ways to express some basic feelings about which you can tell the players.

A **nervous** horse stiffens, bends or moves sideways away from what it is afraid of. A nervous horse can also trip on the spot, move the head from side to side, look nervously around and suddenly change pace / direction. If a horse is nervous, it can also seek other horses or humans for comfort.

A **happy** horse can run fast, jump carelessly around and look interested in its surroundings. A happy horse can also greet humans and other horses with the muzzle, puff gently to them with its head, smell them and stay close to others.

A **hot-tempered** horse can be prancing, bucking, scratching with his hooves, running away, try to throw his rider, throwing his head and moving quickly. A hot-tempered horse can also bite after and / or kick other horses and humans.

A **stubborn** horse can refuse to walk, walk backwards or run forward and stop suddenly. It can do anything other than what the rider wants it to do. It moves slowly and heavily or draws in a different direction.

Test scenes

You must now play some test scenes. If you feel it is needed, you can play the same scene more than once, and you can change who plays who along the way. If you feel comfortable, you'll only play the scenes through a single time - the most important thing is that everyone tries to play a few scenes. Also use the scenes to get a feel of how-to cast the players. Cut the scenes so they are relatively short. The scenes are played on the floor and by using the whole body.

Scene 1: One plays a shy girl on a curious and playful horse. Another plays a talkative and outgoing girl who has just moved into the housing block, on a slightly cautious and nervous horse. In the scene, the girls meet for the first time a winter evening outside of the housing block.

Scene 2: One plays a girl who is training for a competition. Her horse will not completely do what she wants because she herself is a little nervous and does not believe in herself. Another plays a more experienced girl on a skilled horse trying to help and support the other girl.

Scene 3: One plays an 8th grade girl trying to explain to her parents that she does not want to attend a class celebration because she is going to be a very important hobbyhorsing competition the next day. The other two play her father and mother. Dad is worried that she has no friends and is getting bullied at school. Mom thinks that the girl has become too big to play with hobby horse and she has always loved parties herself.

Casting

Now the players should be warmed up and you must distribute the characters between them. If necessary, briefly present the characters once again. Explain that the characters consist of both a girl and a hobby horse and that the player is playing both - just as you've practiced. The girls have invented the personality of the hobby horse, so the hobby horse also represents a part of the girls as they may be more or less aware of. Also explain that you will play the supporting characters mentioned in their written character. Below you will find some casting advice, but go with your gut feeling and observations from the workshop.

Amina should go to a player who is able to take initiative in the training scenes and to act as coach / bigger sister. Players who are either capable of moving very well or have been or are interested in the horses usually works very well as Amina.

Olivia should go to a player who is good at using the hobby horse to tell a story and can play a little cautious girl on a curious horse. Don't cast the shyest or most withholding player as Olivia.

Cecilie is the character that holds the heaviest themes of bullying and should therefore be given to a player who wants to tell that story. Cecilie can also be given to the player who has the hardest time riding on the hobby horses.

Let the players read their characters and ask them to briefly present their roles to each other. Then you are ready to start the prologue.

Scene catalog

Prologue: My room

Seat yourself around the table. Invite players to imagine the room of their character, ask some of the questions below and give them some time to think. The first player can start describing the room when they are ready. The players should now tell in turn. If a player stops, repeat some of the questions.

- ❖ Which posters / pictures are there on the walls?
- ❖ How is the room decorated?
- ❖ What furniture is there?
- ❖ Is it messy or tidy?
- ❖ Are there trinkets and ornaments or only practical things?
- ❖ What does the character use the room use for?

The purpose of the scene is to get the players tuned into their character and give them an impression of each other's characters.

Act 1: January

In the first act, the three characters and their various personal dilemmas are presented, as well as most of the supporting characters. Read or revert the text below to set the mood.

It's cold and dark outside, both when you go to school in the morning and when you get home again in the afternoon. Fortunately, the apartment block is well lit, and it is possible to find a football field to practice hobbyhorsing on in the dark, cold afternoons and evenings. Real snow never falls, but the everlasting sleet forms a thick, gray layer of slush. The Christmas decorations and lights have disappeared and all that is left is sad January, heavy with all the things you want to change in the new year, but already know that you never really get done.

1.1 'How lame!'

Where: Amina's room. Use some of the details about the room that the player has described in the prologue when setting the scene.

Who: Amina and Laura (Gamemaster)

Purpose: To put Amina's dilemma into play. Will she agree to talk trash about hobbyhorsing / Cecilie and Olivia to get Laura's acceptance? Will she defend the girls and the hobby or try to be neutral?

Amina visits Laura and they drink tea and gossip about boys in Amina's room. Laura asks if Amina has a crush on Thomas from their class. Laura has heard that Thomas has been with many girls and is a bit of a player. A little while in the conversation Laura looks through the window and notice Cecilie and Olivia riding their hobby horses in the yard. Laura thinks it looks childish and lame and wants Amina to confirm that it is stupid. If Amina tries to evade, Laura presses her. Laura is especially gunning for Cecilie, telling Amina that she is known as a freak in school, and that Laura often films Cecilie riding on her hobby horse and makes memes of them.

The scene ends when Amina either defends hobbyhorsing or agrees with Laura that it is ridiculous. Cut the scene with Laura going home to eat.

1.2 The first meeting

Where: Dusk has fallen in the apartment block. Small, wet snowflakes drop in the yellow light of a lamp stick and melts in the slush. Cecilie and Olivia practice in the yard

Who: Amina, Cecilie and Olivia

Purpose: To play out the girls' first meeting and let them take the first step towards their friendship.

Olivia and Cecilie meet to practice hobbyhorsing to and speaks of Riders Cup. Let Amina enter the scene when her player thinks it's appropriate. She has been looking at Olivia and Cecilie from her room after Laura left. Ask Amina's player whether she comes with or without Thunder.

The scene ends when the girls have made a connection to each other. Cut the scene on a sweet or positive comment if possible.

1.3 Too late

Where: At Olivia's house. Mom is waiting at the dining table in the bright kitchen room with a disappointed attitude and a prepacked bag of handball equipment for her feet.

Who: Olivia and Mom (gamemaster)

Purpose: To put Olivia's dilemma into play. What does Olivia choose to tell mom? Does she defend herself and tell her mother off? Does she get sad?

Olivia arrives late after meeting Amina. She has ridden a wild gallop through the apartment block to reach home and is tired and sweaty. Mom wants to drive her to handball practice and is annoyed. She does not understand what Olivia has been up to or why Olivia is late. Olivia usually adheres to their appointments, but now she fails the rest of the team and her coach. She's a bad example for all her teammates who look up to her. Mom gives Olivia a bad conscience and demands an explanation.

The scene ends when Mom is pleased with Olivia's explanation or has given her a very bad conscience. Cut the scene with mom driving Olivia to handball practice.

1.4 We are not like them, Cecilie!

Where: At home with Cecilie and her father in their messy, small, cozy kitchen. There is a lot of dirty dishes, but it also smells of welcoming mint tea from a large teapot warming itself over a lit candle.

Who: Cecilie and Dad (Gamemaster)

Purpose: To put Cecilie's dilemma into play. How does she handle bullying and how does the conversation go with her father?

On her way home from the meeting with Amina, several of the tough boys from the apartment block have yelled unpleasant things at Cecilie and spit after her and Eyvindur. Ask Cecilie how she reacted this time. The scene begins with Cecilie entering the kitchen. Dad would love to talk to Cecilie and drink a cup of tea. Dad tells that Cecilie's teacher has called. The teacher is concerned about Cecilie and has, among other things, been told about rough bullying on social media. Dad, however, is not so concerned as he has also told the teacher. Dad thinks Cecilie is strong and cool and that she does not care - because dad and Cecilie are not the ones who succumb to group pressure and bullying.

The scene ends when the Dad thinks they have had a good talk, or Cecilie gets tired of Dad and leaves the kitchen

1.5 The first practice

Where: Ask the players where they meet up to practice - it can be in the yard where Cecilie and Olivia tend to ride, but Amina may have lured them further away from the apartment block, for example to a more remote football field or basket court.

Who: Amina, Cecilie and Olivia

Purpose: To establish the friendship of the girls and let them tell the others about their lives.

Amina, Cecilie and Olivia meet. If Amina hasn't brought Thunder before, it might be the first meeting of all three horses. First, they practice a little. If they find it difficult to get started with the training, remind them that they are going to make a choreography for the Riders Cup. Give a little room for hobbyhorsing, but it is important that they also talk about their everyday lives. You can cut fast forward after a while to when they stand after practice and talk a bit. Ask them to decide at who's place they'll meet and groom the horses next week. This can provide good reason for girls tell each other about their families and homes.

1.6 Thomas <3

Where: In a classroom with worn linoleum flooring, a sad view and a scent of teens, wet winter clothes and lunchboxes. It is just after the break, and they are in English class.

Who: Amina and Thomas (Gamemaster)

Purpose: To investigate Amina's relationship with Thomas and put her in a dilemma where she may choose to lie.

Thomas and Amina have been paired up in English class. They must make a presentation about the United States. Thomas is more interested in getting to know Amina and ask her about her interests and hobbies. Thomas is charming and insists that Amina must be interested in something. If Amina chooses to tell about hobbyhorsing this early, Thomas is skeptical and makes some jokes about it.

The scene ends when Thomas thinks he has learned something new about Amina. You can cut the scene by letting the bell sound and the school day come to an end.

1.7 Grooming

Where: Where they agreed to meet in *scene 1.5 The first training*. If they are at Amina's place, her mother is not at home. At Olivia's either mom or dad there and asking if they know each other from handball and wondering what to do together if they don't play handball. At Cecilie's, dad is very interested in hobbyhorsing and embarrassingly enthusiastic about Cecilie having friends' home.

Who: Amina, Cecilie and Olivia – maybe the gamemaster playing as either Olivia's parents or Cecilie's father.

Purpose: To let the girls talk together and get to know each other better.

The three girls meet at the home of one of them and greet eventual parents before retiring to the host's room to arrange manes and brush the horses. If they only talk about hobbyhorsing, you can choose to cut fast forward a bit after a while. E.g. By saying that a little later, while they work, they might start talking about their families and lives?

1.8 The best of January

Tell the players that the first act is about to end. Ask the players to stand in a circle, take each other's hands and close their eyes. They must now tell what the best of January was for their character. The first player can start when they are ready. Then the players tell one at a time. When everyone is done, ask the players to open their eyes and release each other's hands. Tell them *Act 1: January ends and Act 2: February begins*.

Act 2: February

The purpose of Act 2: February is to put the dilemmas of the characters at the forefront and to escalate the conflicts. Tell the players that in the second act there will be good opportunity to escalate conflicts, which must then be resolved in the third act - a bit like in feel-good movies. You can choose to adjust the scenes in the catalog, depending on what is meaningful for your story. Read or revert the mood text below.

February has come to the apartment block. Even though the days are a little longer, they seem even more gray if possible. The sky is so gray that it almost goes into one with the apartment block. The rain falls in big heavy drops. It's windy. Stormy even. It feels like a perpetual headwind that makes one cold and tired all the way into the bones. It's like winter will not let go and will never end. The feet are sometimes as heavy as the heart. It's so easy to forget that the sun, the joy and all the green await just around the corner.

2. 1 The national youth team

Where: At Olivia's house. Dad sits in the black leather sofa and waits for Olivia.

Who: Olivia and Father (gamemaster)

Purpose: To put pressure on Olivia and give her the opportunity to tell her father off or open up to him

When Olivia returns home from school, her father is very excited. The handball coach has just called. For the big handball tournament, which Olivia will play on the same day as the Riders Cup, a talent scout from the national youth team will be there. Dad talks about how Olivia is going to do her best; she must practice even more and he thinks she has spent a little too much time with Cecilie. It is now Olivia has to concentrate on her sport! If Olivia would like to keep hanging out with Cecilie, her father should have something in return. For example, Olivia must get up and run very early before going to school. If Olivia tell him off, father gets surprised, but slows down a little. If Olivia gets sad, dad will be comforting and listening, though he has a hard time understanding why she is not as jubilant as he is.

The scene ends when dad and Olivia have put a plan for the preparations for the handball tournament in late March.

2.2 Laura and Amina meet Cecilie and Eyvindur

Where: In front of the pizzeria in the city center. Amina and Laura are sitting in their warm winter clothing, sharing a pizza while gossiping and observing life in the square. In addition to the pizzeria there is a discount grocery store and a bodega.

Who: Amina, Cecilie and Laura (Gamemaster)

Purpose: To put pressure on Amina and give her the opportunity to choose between Cecilie and Laura, as well as to investigate how Cecilie reacts.

Laura and Amina are sitting and talking. Tell Cecilie's player that she must ride by when she considers it appropriate. Laura has watched Amina and Thomas, and she puts some pressure on Amina to make her admit her crush. Eventually Cecilie and Eyvindur pass by and stops to greet Amina. Laura says something nasty and mean to Cecilie, but what does Amina do? What does Cecilie do? If Amina chooses to help Cecilie, Laura slows down a bit, knowing that she is outnumbered - but not without making a mean comment to Amina too. If Amina does not help Cecilie, Laura continues to go after Cecilie until Laura does not bother any more or Cecilie retires.

2.3 Training

Where: At one of their regular training venues a little outside the apartment block. It is afternoon - the weather is wet and cold. The sky is heavy, sad and gray

Who: Amina, Cecilie and Olivia

Purpose: To let the girls discuss the episode with Laura (previous scene) and talk together.

It's the day after the meeting with Laura. Amina, Cecilie and Olivia meets to practice. No matter how Amina's and Cecilie's players have chosen to handle Laura, the girls must be given space to talk about the episode. Let them practice a bit on the hobby horses first, and if necessary, you can cut fast forward to after the practice where they are talking. Also, give Olivia room to tell about the handball news and maybe her challenges to reach both handball tournaments and the Riders Cup. It's fine if there is a conflict between the characters here and one or more leaves in anger.

2.4 Bullied?

Where: In Cecilie's room - use details of the prologue when setting the scene

Who: Cecilie and her mother on the phone

Purpose: To breathe life into Cecilie's inner conflict - Will she trust her mother and how does she respond to mother's offerings?

Cecilie relaxes in her room when her cell phone rings. It is her mother, who has been contacted by Cecilie's teacher about Cecilie being bullied and that she is unsure whether Cecilie's father fully understands the problem. Mother is sincerely concerned about Cecilie and asks why the others are bullying her, what dad says etc. Mom suggests that the bullying is associated with hobbyhorsing. She invites Cecilie on a winter holiday in Copenhagen, so they can shop some smart clothes and enjoy themselves. Mom can also suggest that Cecilie could consider moving away from bullying and in with her if it fits into the conversation.

The scene ends when mom thinks they have had a good talk or Cecilie hangs up.

2.5 Why do you love handball?

Where: At Olivia's house. They sit around the dining table in the brightly lit kitchen.

Who: Olivia and Anna - a journalist from the local newspaper (gamemaster)

Purpose: To breathe life into Olivia's inner conflict and give her the opportunity to talk about hobby horsing if she wants to.

Mom and dad have been pleased to announce that a local journalist from the weekly newspaper would like to make a small report about Olivia - a portrait of a local sports star. The journalist, Anna Jensen, is a middle-aged woman who is kind enough but insists on getting adequate answers and is not happy with single syllable replies. First, the journalist asks about handball:

Why does Olivia love to play handball? How does it feel to be so good at something? What do her parents say about it? Are they proud of her?

Then the journalist turns the questions to the flip side of the medal: Does Olivia have time to do anything other than play handball? Are there any things she must give up for the sport's sake? Is Olivia sometimes tired of playing handball?

The scene ends when Anna thinks she has received some interesting answers from Olivia.

2.6 More training

Where: At one of their regular venues a little outside the apartment block. An uneven and poorly maintained ball court with broken basketball goals.

Who: Amina, Cecilie and Olivia

Purpose: To discuss the different challenges of the characters in Act 2.

Last training session in February. If there is a conflict in the group, you can ask if everybody shows. If only one girl meets up, you let her react to the others not coming. If two of the girls show up, let them play a short scene. If all three girls are present, you can also choose to try to breathe into the internal conflicts, for example by asking them who will ride in front or other small things you sense might bring the conflicts to the top.

2.7 Thomas & Thunder

Where: On the way home through the apartment block one evening. The path between the concrete blocks is well lit.

Who: Amina and Thomas (gamemaster)

Purpose: To give Amina the opportunity to tell Thomas about hobbyhorsing or lie to him. If Amina has already told her about hobbyhorsing, she gets the opportunity to tell more and try to impress Thomas.

One of the last evenings in February on the way through the apartment block, Amina meets Thomas. She has Thunder with her. If she has not been attending, she's just out for a walk to clear her head. Thomas seems happy to see Amina and asks interested about Thunder. He assumes that it might be a gift for a little sister or the like? Thomas also mentions that he has seen some girls from the 7th grade (Cecilie and Olivia) riding on hobby horses, and he thinks that is a bit of a strange hobby. If Amina chooses to tell Thomas about hobbyhorsing, he is interested, but a little skeptical. He asks, for example, what's awesome about it and if Amina is good at it.

The scene ends when Amina has explained Thunder - no matter what she says.

2.8 Maybe practice or grooming

If you feel it's necessary, you can throw an extra practice scene here or a scene where the girls groom the hobby horses and make them ready for the competition. You can give all three players the choice if they will appear. A scene with only two girls can be meaningful depending on your story.

2.9 The best and the worst of February

Tell the players that the second act is about to end. Ask the players to stand in a circle, take each other's hands and close their eyes. They must now tell what the best and the worst of February were for their character. The first player can start when they ready. Then the players tell one at a time. When everyone is done, tell the players open their eyes and release each other's hands, Act 2: February ends and Act 3: March begins.

Act 3: Marts

The purpose of the third act is to play towards the happy end of the scenario. There are only two set scenes with the characters, a possible practice scene and the competition itself, which is narrated rather than played out. In collaboration with the players, you can choose to set the optional scenes you need. The scenes you choose should point towards the happy ending and possibly resolution of conflicts from the second act. Read or revert the mood text below.

The days are brighter and longer. The sun breaks through the clouds and warms a bit. Some days even from a cloudless sky. Spring flowers are beginning to show in the green areas of the apartment block and in gardens of the houses. It can still be cold, but it's a clear and clean cold that gives rosy cheeks and feels comfortable in the lungs after a good gallop. The beginning of spring brings a feeling of butterflies in the belly. It feels a bit like opening a window in a stuffy, sealed room. Marts makes it possible to breathe again and to feel free.

3.1 Would you rather live with mom?

Where: In cozy kitchen of Cecilie and her farther.

Who: Cecilie and father (gamemaster)

Purpose: To give Cecilie the opportunity to confront dad and push her personal dilemma.

Ask Cecilie if she had a winter holiday with her mother and if she had new clothes. Dad is in the kitchen ready for tea and receives her after the winter holiday (if she has not been on a winter holiday with her mother, she will just come home from school). Dad has talked with Mom about how it might be better for Cecilie to move. Dad is sincerely sad and asks Cecilie if that's something she's considering and why. Dad has doubted whether he has let Cecilie down completely and if it is because of his upbringing she is being bullied. However, he also makes clear that it is Cecilie's choice where she wants to live, but that he is willing to try to make things better if she stays.

The scene ends when Dad and Cecilie have had a good talk.

3.2 You are in the newspaper, Olivia!

Where: In Olivia's living room. Mom and Olivia are sitting on the couch together. The newspaper is on the table with a big picture of Olivia on the front.

Who: Olivia and Mother

Purpose: To give Olivia the opportunity to confront mom and perhaps tell about hobbyhorsing

Mom has just received the newspaper with the article about Olivia. Depending on what Olivia has told the journalist, her mother is either worried, sad or proud of her. If Olivia has told the journalist about hobbyhorsing, her mother is shocked and sad that Olivia has not said anything before. If Olivia has only talked about handball, mom praises her to the clouds and tells her how proud her and dad are. Mom may also be worried and sad if Olivia has made it sound like handball is a sour duty or that mom and dad pushes her.

Cut the scene when Olivia and her mother have had a good talk about the interview.

3.3 Maybe training or grooming

If it fits in here, you can add a practice scene or a scene where the girls grooms the hobby horses. If the girls have been on bad terms, two of them can meet and you can give the third girl the opportunity to show up reconciliation if she wants to.

3.4 Optional scenes

Where: Let players choose the places, for example at the school, in their homes or in the apartment block

Who: Amina, Cecilie, Olivia and various supporting characters (gamemaster)

Purpose: To tie ends, play the final confrontations or be telling some truths

Tell the players that this is their last chance to play scenes with each other and the supporting characters before the Riders Cup. These scenes can be used to clarify things that have not been played out in the other scenes. One or more of the characters may be present with the supporting characters, though there may be only one of the supporting characters presents (so you will not have to play more characters in the same scene). Ask the players what they need or suggest the scenes you feel they are missing. Below you will find a list of scenes that are intended as an inspiration – it will takes deepens on the choices that the players have taken or not taken in the previous scenes.

As a rule of thumb, it should be enough with a single scene focusing on each character combined with a scene where all three characters are together. It's also OK if one or more of the players do not need additional scenes because the most important choices of their character have already been played out in the previous scenes.

Suggestions:

- ❖ Cecilie tells mother and / or father of her decision about where she wants to live after the Riders Cup.
- ❖ Cecilie confrontes Laura with the bullying and causes her to back down. Maybe Amina will help Cecilie?
- ❖ Olivia introduces her parents to Silja, maybe with the support of the other girls. Olivia tell her that she would like to go to the Riders Cup the same day as the handball competition.
- ❖ Amina tells Laura that she is engaged in hobbyhorsing - and that Laura must accept if they are to be friends, maybe with the support of the other girls.
- ❖ Amina tells Thomas about hobbyhorsing - maybe one of them asks if the other person would like to go on a date.
- ❖ The girls should buy spectator tickets for Riders Cup and talk about who they would like to invite to see them ride. Play if you like, also the scenes where the supporting characters are invited.
- ❖ Sleep over at one of the girls in the evening before the Riders Cup. They are talking about their expectations for tomorrow and maybe a little about the future.
- ❖ Amina and Cecilie take Olivia to the handball championship before the Riders Cup to support her. Play the scene as a story scene. Let Olivia tell how she plays and how Mom and Dad react.

3.5 Riders Cup

Where: A sports pitch with food stalls with food and hobbyhorse equipment, a nice riding court with fresh, clean sand and a white picket fence. There is a small tribune for the judges and the spectators.

Who: Amina, Olivia and Cecilie - maybe some of the supporting characters.

Purpose: To tell about the event and round the scenario.

This scene should be played as a story scene. Sit around the table to create a calm space. Begin the scene by reading or re-telling the mood text:

You arrive at the venue and see all the other girls with their hobby horses. Girls and hobby horses everywhere. Girls and hobby horses, all excited, nervous, silly and happy to be here. A girl of your own age with a big smile and a t-shirt that says 'organizer' gives you some practical information and wish you good luck. Amina is recognized by many; old friends come over and hug her, younger girls would like to have selfies taken with her and Thunder. Olivia and Silja are noticed by the others, several are very impressed with their elegance. Cecilie see some girls on horses that look like Eyvindur. They look cool and slightly edgy.

Ask each character how she and her horse feel and react to the mood of the venue. Then ask who has come to see them ride and how they react - are they excited, backed up, awkward or over enthusiastic? Give the players power over the reactions of the supporting characters, but please also take part, supplement and build on the stories of the players.

Tell the players that it is now their turn and that you should agree on how it went. Ask the players the following questions and let them tell the story together. If needed, you can also narrate.

- ❖ How did your character and her horse ride?
- ❖ How did you do it as team?
- ❖ Which place did you get in the competition?
- ❖ How did your loved ones respond?
- ❖ What are you going to do after the competition?

3.6 The best of the future

Tell the players that the scenario is about to end. Ask the players to stand in a circle, take each other's hands and close their eyes. Remind the players that the end should be happy, but that happy can mean many things. Players now need to tell about the best thing that will happened to their character in the months following Riders Cup. The first player must start when the player is ready. Then the players tell one at a time. When the last player is finished, you tell players that they must open their eyes and release each other's hands when they are ready, and then the scenario is over.

Characters

Characters

Amina

Sometimes just before Amina falls asleep, she can almost hear **Thunder** whinny at her from the closet. As if he is in there, scratching the door, his eyes wide and his nostrils flaring.

Amina can feel her legs tingling, she feels the steady rhythm of a good gallop, the rush in her guts and the smile on her lips.

On nights like this, Amina turns and pulls the blanket over her head. What would Thomas think if he saw her running around with a hobby horse. How embarrassing. How childish.

On evenings when her mother was working late, as she often did, Amina used to sit alone in their apartment and make accessories for Thunder. She misses the satisfaction of designing a finely detailed bridle. This January the concrete of the housing blocks and the gray sleet and the yellowish light all seem extra gloomy. Amina turns on the TV and tries to focus on Paradise Hotel, so she can join the talk in recess tomorrow. But her thoughts are wandering, and her fingers are itching.

Amina was one of the pioneers in Danish Hobby Horsing. A star. Like Thunder, all the red rosettes are hidden away in the back of the closet. Amina is almost grown up, no longer a little girl, but a young woman in 8th grade. And young women do not play with hobby horses - not even if they really want to.

Amina and her mom recently moved to town and for the first time of her life Amina has friends in school. She does not dare to think what they would say if she brought back her beloved black stallion. **Laura** from class is super cool and Amina is proud and grateful that Laura wants to hang out with her.

And then there is **Thomas**, the popular football player from her class. He sometimes smiles at Amina in a sweet way that turns all her bones to jelly. Amina is sure that if Thomas saw her ride around on a toy horse, he would never look her way again.

And yet, tonight, Amina wakes in the night to the sound of **Thunder** huffing impatiently. She opens the closet and strokes his neck. In that moment she decides on one last adventure. In the blue light of the PC screen she enrolls in *Riders Cup*, a big sporting event that will take place in three months. They need a decent closure, **Thunder** and her, she owes him that much.

Amina has noticed two of the girls from 7th grade who sometimes practice with their hobby horses in the housing block: **Olivia** and **Cecilie**. **Olivia** looks like a real talent, but she always looks so serious and sad - except when she is riding her hobby horse. Amina is sure that with her help **Olivia** could go far.

Cecilie shines with pure joy and pride when she rides her tough little hobby horse around and around; Amina feels the deepest respect and admiration for her. While Amina watches them from her window, she decides: She will invite **Olivia** and **Cecilie** to Riders Cup and offer to practice with them. There is one discipline at the Cup that requires three riders together - it would be just the thing for them. If this is to be her last Cup, she might as well pass something on. Something good. Some joy she can no longer use herself.

Amina in brief:

- Retired hobby horning pioneer.
- New kid at school, and well liked. 8th grader.
- Helpful, empathetic, and mature for her age.
- Lives alone with her mom. Her mom works a lot but has always supported her interest in hobby horning.
- Seems more calm and confident than she really is.

Relations

Thunder – Beautiful black stallion with a hot temper. Large, fast movements. Loves and misses Amina but can sometimes bolt or buck. Tired of being in the closet.

Thomas – Crush from school. Popular and a very talented football player. Seems to like Amina, even if they rarely speak.

Laura – The popular girl in 8th grade. Laura has welcomed Amina and helped her settle in. Amina is quite proud of being friends with her. Amina owes her a lot, even if Laura can be quite harsh sometimes.

Olivia – Timid handball player and a great hobby horning talent. Olivia seems sad. Amina would like to help her follow her dreams. Olivia rides **Silja**, a playful white mare. Amina will not admit this, but it hurts a little that Olivia probably has more talent than Amina herself does.

Cecilie – A strong girl with a mind of her own. Amina wishes that she had some of Cecilie's courage. Amina wants to help Cecilie get ahead in the hobby horning scene, even if her red horse **Eyvindur** is made quite ineptly and Cecilie is not exactly a star. Cecilie might be too reckless for a proper dressage, which is mostly about discipline.

Questions for Amina:

Some questions that might be interesting to explore during the game:

- Will she find the courage to act on her crush on **Thomas**?
- How far will Amina be willing to go to stay friends with **Laura**?
- Can you be popular in school AND ride a hobby horse?
- Is Amina serious about quitting after the Cup, and after she has helped **Olivia** and **Cecilie**, or will she want to continue her hobby horning?

Olivia

‘COME ON, Olivia!’ ‘Yessss!’

The shouts fill the sports arena and ring in Olivia's ears. She's immediately bombarded by hugs and pats on her back from her coach and teammates, from mom and dad. Somebody lifts her up and shakes her 'till it almost hurts. She loses her breath. Olivia scored the winning goal in the handball match and her team has won yet another tournament. Actually, Olivia scored most of their goals. Recently she overheard her parents and the coach saying something about the youth national team.

Olivia no longer remembers why she loves to play handball. It is something she just does, because it is who she is. Who they want her to be. Mom and dad. Practice, diet regimen, game schedules, they run it and Olivia picks up the ball and shoots. Olivia knows you have to keep your promises, and that it's unfair to quit when others depend on you. Olivia knows how to grit her teeth.

When Olivia is not doing her homework or playing handball, she practices with **Cecilie**. **Cecilie** is a girl with a mind of her own. **Cecilie** lives in the big gray housing blocks some distance from the neighborhood of single family houses where Olivia lives. Olivia is never happier than when they practice hobby horsing, partially because she can tell that she's good at it. Really good. Her strong discipline, body control, and ability to focus make up her advantage.

Her white mare **Silja** is a dream. She always gives her best for Olivia. She is tender, forthcoming and devoted. **Silja** also has a playful and curious side to her, one that loves contact and attention. When they ride, **Silja** prefers to be in the lead and sometimes bucks in pure joy. When Olivia can ride **Silja**, the smiles come easily. It feels like a warmth beginning in her belly and spreading all the way to her fingertips and toes.

Cecilie discovered that the new girl in 8th grade, **Amina**, helped build the hobby horse community across all of Denmark. **Amina** is known for riding her beautiful black stallion **Thunder**. It's amazing that she just moved into the housing blocks where they practice. Olivia would love to talk to her but has yet to find the courage. She wonders why she has never seen **Amina** ride **Thunder**; then it would be easy, because **Silja** would just whinny and run right up to them to talk.

Cecilie and Olivia have found a big hobby horse event, *Riders Cup*, which will be held in three months. Olivia wishes she could go, but unfortunately it's the same day as a big handball cup.

Olivia might be able to make both events, but she doubts that either her coach or her parents would accept her spending her precious energy on “playing horse”. Every time Olivia thinks about it she feels sick and gets a tight knot in her stomach. She has no idea how to tell them, or how to make them understand that she needs to ride **Silja**. Mom and Dad have not even met **Silja** yet. Olivia's worst nightmare is disappointing people or making them angry. But she also knows that without **Silja** she would be totally numb.

If only Olivia could be as fearless as **Cecilie** or as cool and confident as **Amina**, everything might be different.

Olivia in brief:

- Hardworking handball player who tries to please everyone around her.
- Good at sensing and understanding people around her - but not herself.
- Socially anonymous in school, but good at schoolwork. 7th grader.
- Very talented at hobby horsing.

Relations

Silja – Curious and adventurous white mare. Good at hobby horsing. More brave and extroverted than Olivia and can sometimes give her a loving nudge with her soft nuzzle when it is needed most.

Dad and **Mom** - Huge handball enthusiasts with big dreams on behalf of Olivia. Own a single-family house, middle class. Love Olivia above all. Olivia hates disappointing them. They don't know that Olivia is hobby horsing.

Cecilie – Classmate and hobby horsing partner. Lives in the housing blocks. At first glance she seems devil-may-care and strong, but Olivia notices that the mask can slip, and that behind that there is a much more vulnerable Cecilie. Cecilie rides a stubborn, tough ginger horse by the name of **Eyvindur**. Cecilie's insisting on "being herself" can sometimes be a bit much for Olivia. It would be so much easier to be Cecilie if she would just fall in line occasionally.

Amina – Hobby horsing star. Recently moved into the housing blocks. Olivia has not yet seen her ride. Is one class above Cecilie and Olivia. Seems cool and confident, but also nice. Olivia would like to get to know her and maybe learn from her. She is famed for mastering her fiery stallion Thunder. Olivia isn't quite sure if Amina's trustworthy, what if she's just as nasty as the cool girls from 8th grade she hangs out with?

Laura – Popular and harsh girl from 8th grade. Is bullying **Cecilie** but is friends with **Amina**. Laura never really noticed Olivia except for a few stupid remarks.

Questions for Olivia:

Some questions that might be interesting to explore during the game:

- Will Olivia find the courage to talk to **Dad** and **Mom** about hobby horsing, and will they understand?
- How will Olivia solve the challenge of *Riders Cup* and handball cup on the same day?
- Can Olivia be both an elite handball player and a ride a hobby horse, or will she have to choose? And if she has to, what will she choose?

Cecilie

Cecilie lets the spittle and the harsh words run down her face. It feels like the spittle is freezing on her cheek. She holds her head high and fights back the tears. Cecilie resolutely mounts **Eyvindur** and trots home, the wind biting her face. The humiliation gradually dissipates as her boots rhythmically beat the gray sleet. At home Dad praises her for being true to herself, for being strong and not bending to group pressure. Sometimes Cecilie hates him deeply for all his alternative bullshit. She feels like screaming at his naive hippie face.

It is hard to not give a damn when you actually do. It is hard to be strong, when deep down you feel small and in need of a hug. It is hard to be who you are, when you do not know who that is.

Cecilie turns on some loud hard music and throws herself on the bed among old socks, creased homework, and untidy blankets. She buries her head in **Eyvindur's** rough mane and lets go. After a while she is ready to wipe away the snot and tears. She digs out needle and thread and begin to mend **Eyvindur's** left eye. It droops a little. Actually, all of **Eyvindur** is made a bit ineptly. Cecilie never really had the patience or neatness for needlework that nice girls have. But she loves him anyway. He is the most stubborn creature she knows, he never gives up. **Eyvindur** is not beautiful, and Cecilie is not a talented hobby horse rider, but together they have something. Tough, proud and invincible. The two of them against the world.

Yet sometimes Cecilie considers giving **Eyvindur** an early retirement in the basement. She wonders if the small ginger hairball hobbyhorse really is worth all the bullying? The tears. The anger, the feeling of inferiority, of being an outsider. Cecilie doesn't want to think about it.

If Cecilie stopped being a freak on a hobby horse, she might get friends in class and be accepted. Maybe she could move in with **Mom** in Copenhagen and get a fresh start. **Mom** would know how Cecilie could fit in, how to act and dress. A dangerous and alluring thought that makes her both dizzy and breathless. She glances at **Eyvindur** with both love and melancholy. Lately Cecilie has felt tired to the bone, she does not know how much longer she can go on.

Fortunately, Cecilie has **Olivia**. **Olivia** is a handball player and spends most of her time on that. But Cecilie has got her to do hobby horning too. Together they are considering a big event in three months: *Riders Cup*. **Olivia** is really talented at hobby horning and really happy when they are together, but the rest of the time she seems really sad. Cecilie does not envy **Olivia's** hard life, it must feel like one long P.E. lesson.

Recently **Cecilie** discovered that **Amina** has just moved into the housing blocks. Amazing! **Amina** was a big inspiration to Cecilie, she was one of the people who started the Danish hobby horse community and helped it spread across all of Denmark. **Amina** is in 8th grade and is cool and popular as well as sweet. Cecilie wonders why **Amina** does not get bullied for her hobby horning. Maybe **Amina's** classmates don't even know. No matter what, Cecilie would love to get to know **Amina**.

Cecilie in short:

- Strong, brave, and devil-may-care, but also vulnerable, insecure, and somewhat lonely.
- Bullied by the pretty, popular girls from school and the tough kids from the housing blocks.
- Her dad always encourages her to be herself, which Cecilie sometimes tires of, and sometimes appreciates.
- Cecilie's mom moved when Cecilie was young. She is a smart career woman living in Copenhagen.

Relations

Eyvindur – A lot like Cecilie; stubborn, brave and persistent. Cecilie’s great strength comes from Eyvindur. He is sometimes cheeky, lazy, or refuse to move. He is not a pretty, sporty hobby horse but has his own bold charm.

Olivia – Hardworking handball player and hobby horse talent. Classmate in 7th grade and Cecilie's only real friend. She lives in the single family houses a short distance from the housing blocks. Cecilie would love to lend Olivia some of her courage and strength to draw a line, but she knows it will only work if it is on Olivia's own terms. Olivia rides Silja, a beautiful white playful mare. Deep down Cecilie sometimes think it is unfair that Olivia has so many talents, good grades and normal parents. Sometimes Cecilia feels like shaking her. How can one be so sad and timid, when everything comes so easy?

Amina – Newcomer. Popular and pretty girl from 8th grade, who pioneered Danish hobby horning. Cecilie would like to get to know her and wonders why she has not seen Amina practice hobby horning around the blocks. Amina rides the famous black fiery stallion **Thunder**. Though Cecilie would like to be friends with Amina and practice with her, she cannot help but fear that Amina will be bossy and rude.

Laura – Popular girl in 8th grade. **Amina's** new friend and one of the girls who are bullying Cecilie. Arrogant and condescending.

Dad – Single dad, hippie-type who loves Cecilie above all else. He is very proud of her. He wishes that Cecilie will keep on “being herself” and has raised her to not yield to anyone or anything. Cecilie fears that he will be disappointed if she becomes too dull and normal.

Mom – Left Dad and Cecilie when Cecilie was very young. Confident, smart career woman. Lately she has taken more of an interest in Cecilie, and they often speak on the phone. Cecilie misses mom but also feels abandoned by her.

Questions for Cecilie:

Some questions that might be interesting to explore during the game:

- Will Cecilie move away from Dad and begin a new life in Copenhagen after *Riders Cup*?
- Will she continue hobby horning?
- Can Cecilie get the better of Laura and the other bullies?
- Can Cecilie satisfy both Mom and Dad and make them understand her?

Overview 1: Introduction and workshop

1. Introduction Round. Why did players sign up for the scenario?
2. The structure of the workshop: Presentation of the scenario -> Exercises -> Distribution of characters
3. Present the scenario

The story:

- ❖ A feel-good drama of 3 teenage girls with a quirky hobby - hobbyhorsing = competition riding on hobby horses. The sport is from Finland.
- ❖ A large part of hobbyhorsing is to find the name and personality of his horse, to make equipment for it and to groom it i.e. fix the mane, brush it.
- ❖ A story about vulnerability, strength and friendship.
- ❖ We follow the girls for three months as they train for a big event Riders Cup. From winter to spring.

Setting:

- ❖ A small station town north of Copenhagen. Apartment building. Large primary school. Footpaths. Detached houses. Center with Grocery store, Pizza place and a Bodega.

The Characters:

- ❖ Amina goes to 8th grade, just moved into the apartment block. Former pioneer in hobbyhorsing. Stopped hobbyhorsing and has become popular in school / started to care for boys.
- ❖ Olivia, a hard-working handball girl who goes to the 7th grade. Handball enthusiastic and well-meaning parents who do not know that she's hobbyhorsing. Living in a detached house.
- ❖ Cecilie is in 7th grade and lives alone with her father in the apartment block. Is raised to stand by who she is and rides openly around her hobby horse. Being bullied. Has a fancy mother in Copenhagen.
- ❖ The girls' hobby horses have their own personality, which may be different from that of the rider.
- ❖ Gamemaster play supporting characters like parents and classmates.

Story rules

- ❖ A happy ending
- ❖ Everybody is friends in the end and all three of them must participate in Riders Cup

Scenes and structure:

- ❖ Primary semi-live with story scenes
- ❖ Three acts
- ❖ A game experience of just over three hours incl. workshop and evaluation

4. A personal story about something you've done that you feared that others would think was silly.
5. Count to 10 with closed eyes without interrupting each other.
6. Mirror each other's facial expressions and body language - pass it on in the circle
7. Crazy gaits – Walk around in a funny way and change gaits
8. Horses' gaits and dressage exercises - show a walk, trot and gallop let the players try. Explain what dressage is and deliver *overview 4: Dressage*. Practice dressage.
9. To play a hobby horse - show horses with different temperaments, let the others guess.
10. Test scenes

Overview 2: Characters, Supporting characters and setting

Characters

Amina - 8th grade. Newcomer. Lives in the apartment block. Pioneer in hobby horsing but has quit. Popular in school. Has a crush on Thomas. Are friends with Laura. Has an absent mother. Rides Thunder - Big, Black, Wild Stallion.

Cecilie - 7th grade. Lives in the apartment block alone with her hippie father. Has a smart mother in Copenhagen. Is open about hobbyhorsing and is being bullied. Friends with Olivia. Rides Eyvindur - red brown, stubborn geldling.

Olivia - 7th grade. Lives in a detached house. Playing elite handball. Have well-meaning but ambitious parents. Hobbyhorsing-talent. Rides Silja - white, playful mare.

Supporting characters

Thomas – 8th grade. Soccer Boy. Popular. Interested in Amina, but does not know that she is hobbyhorsing.

Laura - 8th grade. Popular. Unsure and therefore strict with others. Friends with Amina, but does not know that she is hobbyhorsing. Bullies Cecilie.

Cecilie's father - alone and a little hippie-like. Enthusiastic about hobbyhorsing. Proud that Cecilie is different. Unaware that it may be hard to be a teenager.

Cecilie's mother - lives in Copenhagen and is a career woman. Left the family when Cecilie was little. Believes that hobbyhorsing is the cause of bullying. Is worried about Cecilie.

Olivia's father and mother - handball enthusiasts with great ambitions on Olivia's behalf. Well-meaning. Do not know Olivia is hobbyhorsing

Journalist Anna Jensen - well-dressed middle-aged woman from the local weekly newspaper. Friendly, but insistent when interviewing Olivia about handball.

Riders Cup

Big hobby competition late in March. The participants ride in a teams of three and follow a homemade dressage program. Winning is based on having a complicated and creative program, performed perfectly.

Setting

- ❖ Housing block
- ❖ Worn ball courts
- ❖ Gravel path systems
- ❖ Green areas
- ❖ Single family house quarter
- ❖ Center with a grocery store, a pizzeria and a pub
- ❖ Worn out large primary school
- ❖ Train station and commuter train to Copenhagen

Overview 3: Scenes

Prologue: My room

The players sit at the table and describe the role of the room in turn.

Act 1: January

Run after the scene catalog. Read or relate the mood text.

1.1 How lame!

Amina and Laura are in Amina's room and talking. Through the window, Laura sees Cecilie and Olivia

1.2 The first meeting

Amina decides to seek Cecilie and Olivia out after Laura has gone. Maybe she brings Thunder?

1.3 Too late

Olivia is late after meeting with Amina. Mom waits to drive her to handball and is disappointed.

1.4 We are not like them, Cecilie!

Dad is waiting for Cecilie in the kitchen. A teacher has called and told Cecilie is being bullied.

1.5 The first practice

The girls practice together for the first time. There will also be time to get to know each other.

1.6 Thomas <3

Amina and Thomas work together in English Class. Thomas wants to get to know her better

1.7 Grooming

The three girls meet at the home of one of them and groom their horses. They also talk about life.

1.8 The best of January

Players are standing in a circle, taking each other's hands and closing his eyes. In turn they tell about the best thing that happened to their character in January.

Act 2: February

Adjust the scenes as needed. Turn up the conflicts. Read or relate the mood text

2.1 The national youth team

Olivia's father says that there will be a talent scout to watch Olivia play handball the same day as the Riders Cup

2.2 Laura and Amina meet Cecilie and Eyvindur

Amina and Laura eat pizza. Cecilie and Eyvindur rides by. Laura bullies Cecilie

2.3 Practice

The day after the confrontation with Laura. The girls meet to practice.

2.4 Bullied?

Cecilie's mom calls. She is concerned and offers Cecilie a winter holiday with her - maybe even moving?

2.5 Why do you love handball?

Olivia is interviewed about handball by a local journalist

2.6 More training

One or more of the girls meet

2.7 Thomas and Thunder

Amina and Thunder meet Thomas on their way home.

2.8 Maybe training or grooming?

The girls may meet and train or groomer their horses.

2.9 The best and the worst of February

Players stand in a circle, taking each other's hands and closing his eyes. In turn they tell about the best and the worst thing that happened to their character in February.

Act 3: March

Set optional scenes in collaboration with the players. Play towards the happy ending. Read or relate the mood text

3.1 Would you rather live with mom?

Dad waits for Cecilie. He is sad and concerned that he has mistreated her. Perhaps it's better if she go to live with Mom?

3.2 You are in the newspaper, Olivia!

Mom is sitting with the newspaper. Her reaction depends on what Olivia has told the journalist

3.3 Maybe training or grooming

Maybe the girls meet and train or groomer the jaws before the competition.

3.4 Optional scenes

- ❖ Cecilie tells mother and / or father of her decision about where she wants to live after the Riders Cup.
- ❖ Cecilie confrontes Laura with the bullying and causes her to back down. Maybe Amina will help Cecilie?
- ❖ Olivia introduces her parents to Silja, maybe with the support of the other girls. Olivia tell her that she would like to go to the Riders Cup the same day as the handball competition.
- ❖ Amina tells Laura that she is engaged in hobbyhorsing - and that Laura must accept this if they are to be friends, maybe with the support of the other girls.
- ❖ Amina tells Thomas about hobbyhorsing - maybe one of them asks if the other person would like to go on a date.
- ❖ The girls should buy spectator tickets for Riders Cup and talk about who they would like to invite to see them ride. If you like, also play the scenes where the supporting characters are invited.
- ❖ Sleep over at one of the girls in the evening before the Riders Cup. They are talking about their expectations for tomorrow and maybe a little about the future.
- ❖ Amina and Cecilie take Olivia to the handball championship before the Riders Cup to support her. Play the scene as a story scene. Let Olivia tell how she plays and how Mom and Dad react

3.5 Riders Cup

The girls ride the competition. Together you'll sit around the table and tell how they are and who comes to see them.

3.6 The highlights of the future

Players are standing in a circle, taking each other's hands and closing his eyes. In turn they tell about the best moments for them in the months after the Riders Cup.

Overview 4: Dressage

What is dressage in real life?

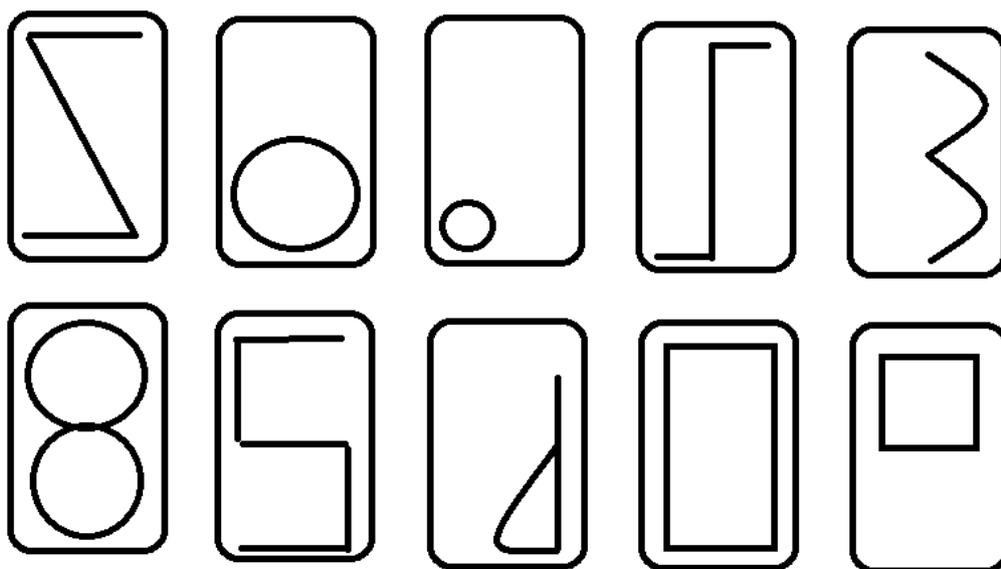
In dressage the focus is on the gaits of the horse and the collaboration between horse and rider. You ride “figures” in different gaits from a predefined program with different levels of complexity. One or more judges grade how well you execute the program.

What is dressage in the game?

In the game the girls compete in a special discipline invented for the scenario. They will ride three together in figures and gaits on the course. The characters will be judged as a team in *Riders Cup*. They’ll practice by rehearsing the gaits: walk, trot, and gallop. They’ll also plan their dressage program by choosing which figures and gaits to ride.

The players get to decide whether one player rides in front or if all three ride side by side. Creativity is welcome, there is no wrong way to do it. The *Riders Cup* itself will be played as a narrated scene, so you need not focus on creating a finished program, but instead on making some good scenes about practicing for the event to showcase the characters and their relations.

These are some examples of dressage figures. You are welcome to make up your own.



Gaits.

Walk – Slow pace. Walk normally, play with how elegantly, how light or heavy your horse walks and vary the speed.

Trot – Medium pace. Lift your legs up and down. Looks a little like high knee running. Play with high/ low, light or heavy lifts. Vary the speed.

Gallop – Fast pace. Jump ahead with one food in front. A little like hopscotch, play with big or small jumps and vary the speed.

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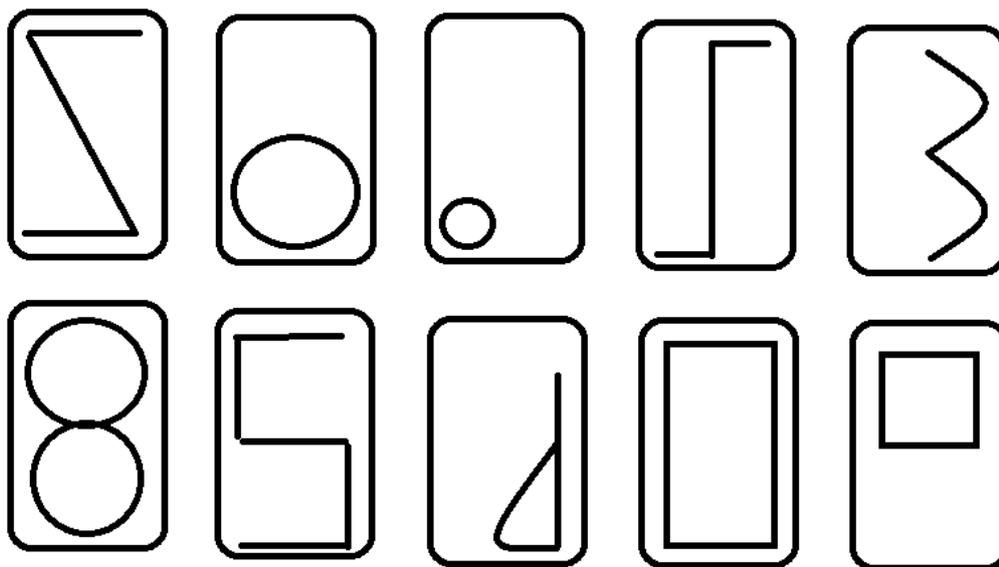
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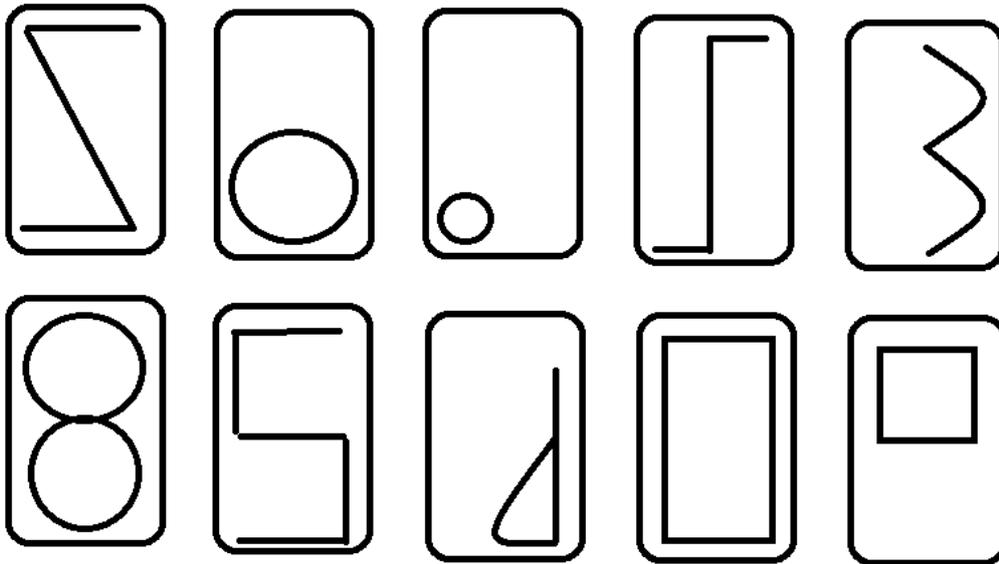
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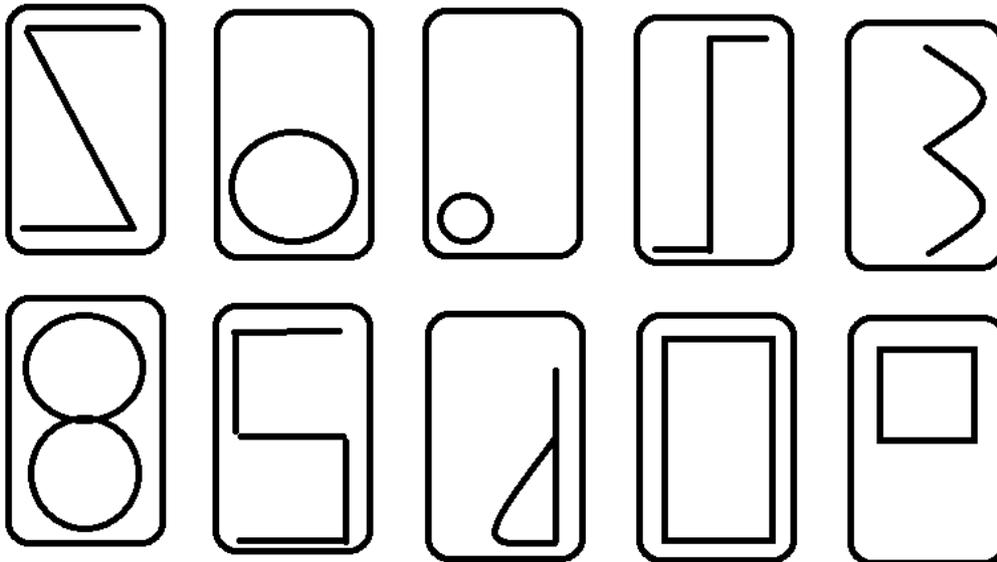
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