

FORTUNATELY, YOU WERE THERE



In **“Fortunately, you were there”**, you play a group of friends who reminisce, after a long string of calamities, how they supported each other.

To play, first choose a reassembling activity: rebuilding, brick by brick, a fallen Jenga tower, completing a puzzle (you can find some online), finishing coloring a drawing, or even tidying up a room if you feel like it...

Choose or get inspiration from the examples below to create your characters, your starting situation and the calamities your characters have faced. Talk about their relations, bearing in mind they must care about one another. Take some time as well to think of the situation you will reminisce about together: it needn't be described in detail but that could be an occasion for defining some lines and/or veils if necessary.

Once the situation and the characters are defined, choose who will talk about their calamities first (the Narrator) and who was there to help them (the Comfort). Their dialogue goes like this: the Comfort frames the situation in which the Narrator was; the latter builds on this frame until they describe a first calamity; they then take a Jenga brick, a puzzle piece, a coloring pen or a mismatching sock and give it to the Comfort, implying how the latter helped them; the Comfort then completes the description. If they want, the Narrator can also talk to a second Comfort when they describe a calamity, saying something like “And you, you were also there...”.



Some possible settings:

- Adventurers back from a long and exhausting expedition (*loss of bearings, lack of supplies, decreasing morale, frantic escape, imposing natural obstacles, death of a comrade*)
- Teenagers after a particularly rough school day (*clothing incident, surprise test, constant teasing, fall down the stairs, disloyalty of a good friend, persistent stomachache*)
- Mech pilots at the end of a difficult mission (*clumsiness while following orders, short-circuit, wily opponents, dispute between two pilots, risky ground, important damage to the mech*)

Example:

Comfort: What a rotten day! It all started during maths class, when you sat on chewing-gum and it stuck to your skirt...

Narrator: Yeah, that was dreadful... For the whole next period, the others were glancing and snickering at me and I couldn't understand why, but I felt super bad. [They hand a Jenga brick to the Comfort] Fortunately, you were there and you discreetly slipped me this not so we could meet in the bathroom...

Comfort: Well, I couldn't unglue the chewing-gum but I expertly hid the hole I had cut in your skirt! Oh, and then there was the fire drill, and you almost fell down the stairs during evacuation...

The story continues until a satisfying conclusion is reached, then another player (someone who hasn't spoken yet if possible, otherwise one of the Comforts) takes on the role of the Narrator to describe their own series of calamities. Be careful and avoid turning the Narrator of one turn into the Comfort of the person who helped them during the next turn! Vary the relations and points of view and make sure everyone gets a chance to speak instead of always turning things over to the same persons.

The game ends when the Jenga tower or the puzzle is reconstituted, the drawing is completed or the room is tidied up.

- Animals who fought against nature for a whole season (*cold temperatures, lack of food, badgering of bigger animals, continuous bad weather, weakened shelter, elusive sleep*)
- Members of a sport club at the end of a tournament (*devious tactics by the opponent, lack of coordination, attempted cheating going south, increasing weariness, unexpected change of rules, destabilization in the locker room*)
- Pensioners remembering the setbacks of their entire lives (*unhappy love affair, loss of a beloved, complex illness, squabble with a descendant, financial trouble, falling out with a friend*)