

STATUESQUE

ACT TWO: THE IMAGE

WELCOME TO LIFE

This is the second narrative half of *Statuesque*. If one player has not yet completed Act One: The Creator, please do so before continuing. If you are the second player, welcome.

To begin, the player in the role of The Creator will describe the prompt they prepared at the end of Act One. The player in the role of The Image will quickly answer these following questions:

- What tone of body language feels natural to you?
- How do you feel about what you see in your reflection?
- What around you are you most curious about?

The Image has a limited knowledge of the world, though their thoughts and feelings result in the approximate mental and emotional maturity of a young adult. They understand cultural basics for the era and area: the role of clothing, common social taboos and customs, fluency in language (excepting many proper nouns), the concepts of manners, gender, emotion, and consent. They are fully sentient and sapient, capable of empathy and sympathy. Any exceptions to the preceding would be a deliberate choice by The Image's player.

The Image, for all intents and purposes, is alive and human. They are no longer made of the artistic material from which

they were crafted. An exception can certainly be made for non-human presentations of The Image. They may also still have signs of their origins, such as unusual coloration or composition of form. Again, these are matters of choice.

PLAYING THE ROLES

This act chronicles the beginning of the relationship between The Image and The Creator. This relationship starts at a place of extreme imbalance: The Creator, both as a player and as a character, has significantly more investment in the game and in The Image than could possibly be reciprocated at first. The two players roleplay through the events that will define the resolution of that imbalance. There is no right answer.

The mantra of this act is "Everything will be okay in the end. If it's not okay, it's not the end." First and foremost, this mantra refers to the players above the characters. Communication is key to assure both players are okay with the path of the story, even if the characters are not. This also does not mean that The Creator and The Image must end up together. Their okayness may be the result of going totally separate paths, but we don't leave them desolate. Take care of these stories and these characters; once it's all okay, this act can end.

TWO INDIVIDUALS

The goal of this second act is to explore the trajectory of the relationship between The Image and The Creator. Just as in relationships outside of this game, there are countless valid paths. “Relationship” here refers to any way two people may get on, whether it be as friends, family, lovers, asexually romantic partners, aromantically intimate buddies; the relationship may be close, casual, or grow distant. The Image and The Creator may explore or avoid any number of options, choosing to accept or reject them along the way.

Furthermore, consider roleplaying relationship structures that you’re familiar with, as well as one’s you might be less so. This may include a friendship with a high level of physical intimacy, a non-exclusive partnership, or a non-sexual romance. Again, the goal of this act is not to commit the two characters to a relationship, but to explore trajectories. It’s very likely that the imbalance introduces too many irreconcilable differences or that the two individuals find fulfillment independent of each other. This is a stage of discovery alongside dependence.

OPEN COMMUNICATION

Statuesque asks you, the players, to explore sensitive topics in an uncomfortable context. It is the players’ responsibility to practice open communication during play by stating when they are uncomfortable and do not want to continue or when they are uncomfortable, but would still like to continue. Even though the rules do ask for a certain amount of concealment

from one another and the exploration of sensitive topics, they are explicitly not at the expense of each other’s well-being. To repeat the above: “Everything will be okay in the end. If it’s not okay, it’s not the end.” Even after the players have stepped out of their roles as the characters, it is mandatory to decompress afterwards by discussing the events of the game and how they made you feel.

At its foundation, *Statuesque* is a subversion of the myth of Pygmalion and Galatea. In this myth, Galatea is brought to life for the soul purpose of being Pygmalion’s companion. This is not the event that sparks Act Two. The Image is explicitly their own individual and does not feel any specific way about The Creator by default. The goal of this act is to explore the agency and choice one has, whether they feel they have no control or all the control over their situation.

LIGHT & DARK-HEARTED

Statuesque has the capacity to host any sort of tone, including a silly romp, a charming romance, a devastating tragedy, a critique of the social pressures of love, and countless others. It can be messy, it can be sweet, it can be both.

Before embarking on the rest of this act, the players must come to an understanding of the tones they’d like to play in, the content their play may feature, the limits they will not cross, and a plan to address accidental missteps along the way.

HOW WE TALK TO EACH OTHER

Act Two is divided into increments of time, representing stages in the relationship (or lack thereof) between The Creator and The Image. At the beginning of each stage, each player rolls three dice and assigns their values to the following columns in an order of their choice: Honesty, Intensity, and Curiosity. The higher the value, the higher the importance and priority that category is as an impetus for action and emotion in that stage. Each player also keeps a running tally of their categories.

THE MORNING

The Image has only just become aware. Understanding is an immediate need and first impressions are very important. The burden on The Creator is significant as they hold the key to the imbalance between the characters. How they choose to share, conceal, and frame this information sets the initial tone.

THE AFTERNOON

The Image and The Creator have met, though much remains to be established between them. Interrupting the flow of this interaction is the introduction of needs: hunger, restlessness, self-expression (The Image is still clothed in whatever they were created in, after all). How are these needs addressed?

THE EVENING

As the day concludes, it's likely (but not necessary) that The Image does not have the resources to be fully independent. What does The Creator provide for them? The evening can be time for freedom as The Image takes an opportunity to explore

on their own or a time of intimacy as The Creator and The Image are able to spend a quiet moment close together.

THE NEXT DAY

This scene of comparable length encompasses a period of time equal to the previous three combined, so condensing and brief time skipping is necessary. The characters hit on similar beats as before, but with a broadened perspective.

THE TURNING POINT

This stage is a single conversation in one moment. It can be dramatic, innocent, violent, passionate—no matter what, it is significant. The situation and relationship between The Image and The Creator before and after this moment are markedly different. Good, bad, or neutral, this event is pivotal.

THE PASSAGE OF TIME

Several days or even weeks pass and not every moment is represented. Interactions that encapsulate the course of the relationship are the focus. The focus narrows on moments when key factors of the situation change or conversations that are particularly evocative of where the characters are at now.

THE EVER AFTER

Everything will be okay in the end. If it's not okay, it's not the end. This stage progresses as long as it needs, including any necessary time skips or compromises outside the voice of the characters, until both The Creator and The Image are okay.

THE RECONCILIATION

Once a state of mutually agreed upon okayness is achieved in the situations of each character, whether it's complete and independent avoidance, the start of a family, or engaged as partners in an open romance, the players compare their sums.

The players, outside their role as characters, compare the totals they have in each column, discussing how that category factored into their character's personality, decision-making, and ultimate narrative conclusion. In fact, these discussions of running tallies may occur during The Ever After stage as the players seek their conclusions.

HONESTY

How open and willing to share were the characters with each other? How did The Creator's history affect their interactions with The Image and how did The Image feel about this history? How comfortable was The Image in discussing their feelings as they explored their new life?

INTENSITY

What energy did each character bring to their interactions? What level of importance, value, and care did each character bring to the relationship and the circumstances of their lives?

CURIOSITY

What interested each character the most about the other? What about the world around them was worth exploring and how did the characters share those experiences with each

other? Did the characters communicate their interests and goals with each other and, if so, how were they received?

THE ALIGNMENTS

The totals for each category speak of something within each character. Spend time discussing each category and how discrepancies or similarities in honesty, intensity, and curiosity affect how two characters interact with each other. Beyond this, how were the characters defined as individuals by their choices and the aspects they prioritized? Review the events of the interactions between The Image and The Creator and how their thoughts and actions affected how they felt.

THE END

Thank you for taking this journey with me. Please share this game with a friend if you enjoyed it or you think they might. I wrote this game as a trade with [Nora Blake](#); we made each other aesthetic moodboards and then RPGs based on the moodboard we received. I am very fortunate for this privilege.

My name is Taylor Smith and I publish games as Whimsy Machine Media. *Statuesque* is a game in two parts, Act One: The Creator and Act Two: The Image; both are copyrighted.

In addition to Nora's wonderful and evocative selection of images, *Statuesque* is inspired by emotional agency and acceptance of all types of relationships. I hope you can find a reflection of yourself in this game. You are valid.