

Silent Night – A Christmas LARP in three courses

Servings: For 6-8 players Difficulty: Medium Duration: 3-4h (possibly 2h preparation)

A recipe by Marc Bohlen, Alexander Jaensch and Lutz Schmitt

Ingredients:

- This game description
- Handouts for traits and rumors (see appendix)
- Name tags
- Christmas carols and playback device
- Food and drinks for a Christmas three-course menu
- Christmas decoration (Christmas tree, fairy lights, ...) as desired
- A photo camera/smartphone to take photos

Abstract

Every year, the family comes together at Christmas to celebrate the festival of love in a cosy circle. As always, the old rifts and scars break out again, but shocking changes in the lives of family members are also making the rounds for the first time. Everything comes together on this one evening. That can be cheerful...

In "Silent Night", players will re-enact this very evening. In the briefing phase, they will first form their characters while cooking together (really cooking!), which they will then play during the three acts or meal courses.

How did the recipe come about?

At the 2015 Focus Conference, Lutz Schmitt, Marc Bohlen and Alexander Jaensch met by chance in the Mini-LARP workshop. This game is the result of it all. It was played for the first time at an Ifol festival to put the finishing touches on the game. We now know that it is terribly beautiful.

Suggestions, suggestions for improvement and family photos (gladly with approval for publication) to larp@lutzschmitt.com.

This is version 1.0 of the game document. You may find newer versions (and other game scenarios) at <https://lutzschmitt.com/larp/>.



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Gameplay

Briefing, cooking food & decorating the room

Begins with the definition of family relationships. Who is grandpa, grandma, mother, uncle, son, cousin, married and so on? Each player should choose a character trait (see appendix here) and feel free to pick up a few rumors. Both are intended as inspiration, add to your liking! Make name tags!

Then the preparations begin. Cooking the menu, setting the table, decorating the room. The family does it together. Start "Out of Character" and talk to each other about family relationships, the common history. Experience shows that you gradually slip into the characters.

Collect conversation starters and small and big dramas to add the right spice to your celebration of love. What does Grandma Gertrud want to give her grandson Walter a hard time with? When everything is ready, you're ready to go!

Intro

Everyone gathers in front of the Christmas tree for the traditional family photo. What a beautiful sight!

Appetizer (Act 1)

Everyone gathers around the table. Music plays in the background. Everyone is hungry and excited about what's to come. Perhaps a head of the family will open the evening with a table speech? Enjoy your meal!

Everyone is talking to each other animatedly and politely. People tell each other stories and still like each other. If a person leaves the room (thing about a good reason), the rest of the society can and should talk about openly about this person and dig up all the dirt – until the person re-enters the room. Note: The player leaving the room, is very welcome to spy from behind the door.

Rule: Each player should leave the room at least once. If not in the first, then at the latest in the second act.

Rule: In the first act, conflicts are stirred up, but not openly carried out.

When everyone has eaten and some stories have been put on the table, the appetizer can be cleared away and the second act is served.

[There is no off-game break between the acts]

Main Course (Act 2)

The main course is served. Now the politeness is over. You are now also attacking the others when they are present. No mincing words is put in front of their mouths anymore. Even more aggressively, of course, when a person does leave the room. The shreds are allowed to fly.

Rule: in the second act, conflicts are openly addressed, but not resolved.

When the mood is at boiling point, a character (e.g. Simpler or Good Soul) call everyone to reason and Christmas peace: "It's fucking Christmas and we're a family. Love each other, fucking shit!"

This is the end of the second act.

[There is no off-game break between the acts]

Dessert (Act 3)

At the third course, there is peace and quiet at the table again. No open exchange of blows. The fact that everyone is still cooking inside can be played out appropriately.

Rule: In the third act, conflicts are only subliminally continued.

Rule: No one leaves the room anymore.

When everyone has eaten in "intimate" silence, a head of the family should end the meal and give a last speech and invite to the traditional family photo. Can you see traces of this cheerful family reunion on their faces?

[The game ends with the photo.]

Debriefing, Tidying Up & Dishwashing

Of course, the game isn't finished until it's rinsed and tidied up. This offers a good opportunity to review the "most beautiful" moments and to exchange ideas about what happened. Learn to see your nice teammates again and not your hunchbacked relatives in the others. Leave trouble, malice, and everything else with the characters.

Preparations

Cook

Why really cook?

The "ingredient list" for this LARP is meant seriously. It is actually meant to be cooked and eaten. Not only does it provide immersion, but it also offers a wide range of gameplay opportunities and the characters and relationships develop almost by themselves. Finally, however, it also offers good and genuine reasons to leave the room in the first and second acts, e.g. For clearing a corridor.

Chef, Planner and Buyer

For cooking, there should be someone who not only plans the food in advance and gets the groceries, but also has an overview of what needs to be cooked during the game. If a whole family wants to help in the kitchen, then you need a chef to coordinate everything.

Assemble Menu

Dishes should be selected that can be prepared for each course, so that afterwards only the individual courses have to be served. A soup is recommended as an appetizer, stews, goulash, roasts with simple side dishes such as rice or potatoes as a main course. A cold dessert such as pudding, ice cream or fruit cups complete the menu.

Alcohol

Of course, the alcohol flows freely on such an evening, but we recommend only simulating it.

About the time for preparation and cooking

When planning, also pay attention to the time. No one wants to wait an hour for something to cook between chopping vegetables and eating! If slightly longer cooking times are needed, then things should already be prepared and only the last steps should be carried out in the joint first briefing phase.

Decorating the room

Pretty much everyone should be able to contribute some kind of Christmas decoration. An artificial Christmas tree (approx. 20 EUR) completes the whole thing! A lovingly set table also contributes a lot to the ambience. In addition, with a larger group, not everyone will be able to cook.

Hand-Outs

Note: All characters and rumors are playable with any gender. Only for the sake of linguistic simplicity were gender-specific terms used in some cases. Just cut out the character traits and rumors and split them up. Either by selection or randomly.

Traits

Each player should choose a trait. Your own ideas are welcome, just avoid duplicate character traits.

Choleric: "No, I don't get upset!"
Arbitrator: "It's Christmas after all, at least get along today."
Clown: "Look, I've covered myself. Hahaha, how funny!"
Follower: "I couldn't agree more. Listen to what your aunt says!"
Diva: "Without me, your life wouldn't be half as beautiful!"
Know-it-all: "I'm not smart, I just know better!"
Show-off: "My car, my house, my vacation."
Good soul: "Isn't it nice that we are together as a family?"

Rumours / Inspirations

The X stands for any other person in the family. Y may also be members of the family, or people who are not present. This is all for inspiration only, creating your own rumours and inspirations is highly welcomed. There are enough rumours to give each player two.

But X has become old and ugly.
How can X afford this (car, travel, clothes,...)?
When will I have a grandson/niece/nephew of X?
X is on the family's pocket!
X still doesn't have his drug/alcohol/pills addiction under control.
X cheats on his partner (with Y).
X is cheated on by his partner (with Y).
X looks bad (clothing style, impoverished, unkempt...)
X just wants to inherit Y's legacy.
X has already received the 2nd warning, another one and X is out of her job.
X has lost his job, but doesn't dare to say it.
X has continued to give away the gifts from last year.
X has always been Y's favorite [...] and has always received the most gifts.
X won the lottery, but doesn't share it. What a Scrooge.
X destroyed Y's favorite [...] and never confessed it.
X ran over Y's cat and kept it a secret.