

A stylized illustration featuring several human profiles in various colors (orange, blue, teal, yellow, pink, brown) and black outlines. The profiles are arranged in a circular or semi-circular pattern, suggesting a group of people. Some profiles are larger and more prominent, while others are smaller. The background is white with black lines radiating from the center, creating a sunburst or fan-like effect.

CIVIC EDUCATION GAME

IN SEARCH OF THE LOST PAST

A Backwards
Role-Play

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**IN SEARCH
OF THE
LOST PAST**

WHAT IS A CIVIC EDUCATION GAME?

Civic education games are activities that aim to affect the beliefs, commitments, abilities, and behaviors of individuals as current or potential community members as well as foster critical thinking, encourage active participation in civic affairs, and build support for democratic and inclusive governance.

Civic education activities contribute to shape *personal efficacy*, that is, an individual's belief in his/her ability to effect positive change in society. Education tools, like civic education games, strengthen an individual's tolerance and resilience to radicalisation and violent extremism by broadening the scope of his/her political values, ideals, and concepts (e.g. justice, honor, freedom) and by introducing alternative perspectives.

THE GOALS OF “IN SEARCH OF THE LOST PAST”

- * To reflect on **available choices** in order to avoid adverse and/or violent outcomes
- * To strengthen **critical thinking** on problems and solutions, as well as the ability to understand **other perspectives**
- * To instill **open-mindedness and respect** for diversities and alternative worldviews
- * To broaden the understanding of **values, ideals, and concepts** such as justice, honor and freedom

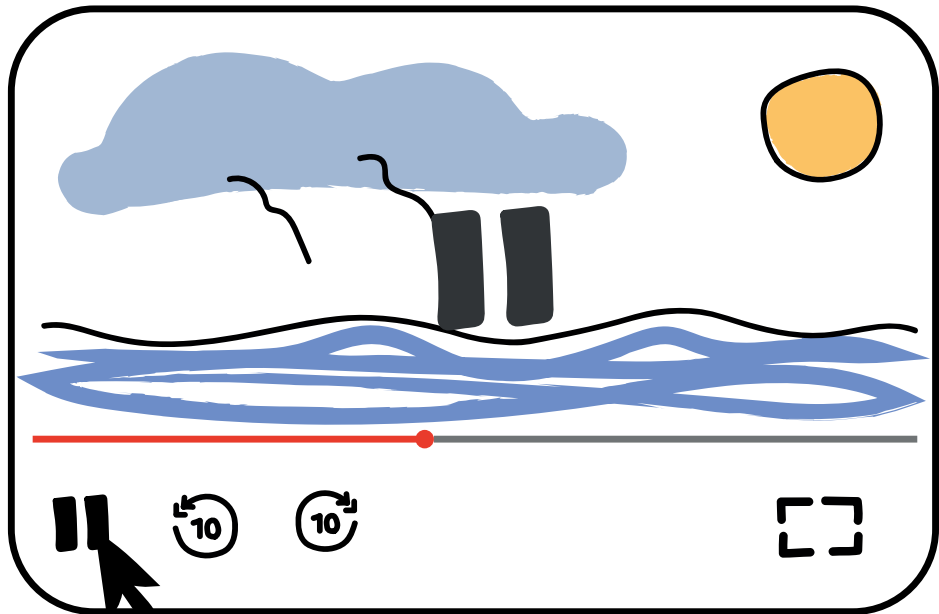
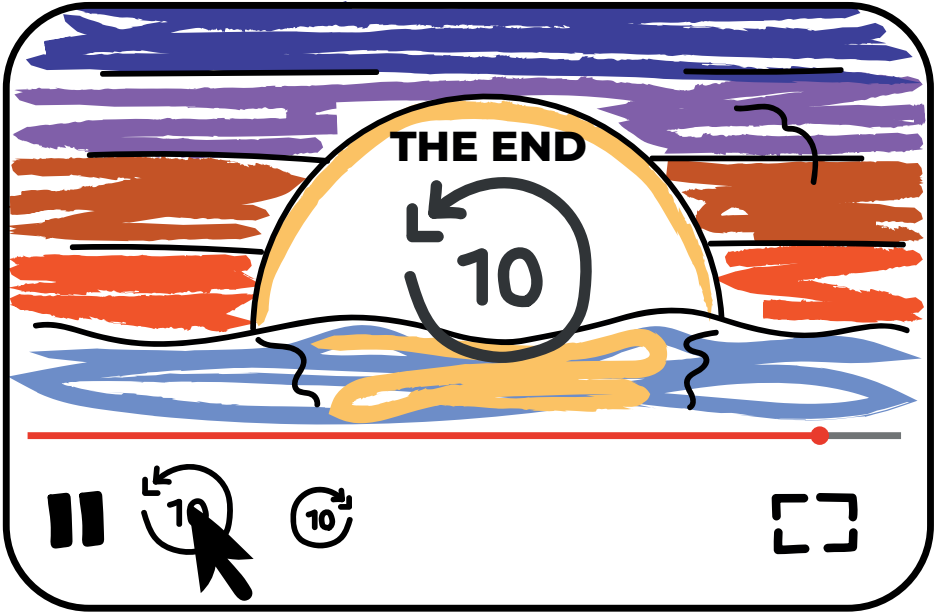
OVERVIEW OF “IN SEARCH OF THE LOST PAST”

The aim of the game is to reconstruct stories as backwards journeys, starting from a set of **Possible Endings** provided as part of the game. Participants assume the role of assigned **Characters** and reconstruct their unique journeys that have led them to the chosen Possible Ending. In this way, participants create a series of **parallel stories** which, although sharing a common ending, are shaped by the distinct profiles and choices of their Characters.



For each turn, participants imagine and narrate their **story in reverse** by embodying the assigned Character's perspective, thereby envisioning their Character's **lost past** and specifying the choices made throughout the journey. The story's events, akin to **frames in a movie**, can be entirely fictional or inspired by personal experiences.

The backwards journey concludes with a **final reflection** among the real participants, focusing on the decisions made by the Characters and the diverse trajectories of their stories.



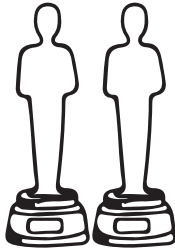
THE BACKWARDS ROLE-PLAY

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

“In Search of the Lost Past” requires **at least 2 participants and a facilitator**. There is no maximum number of participants, although with more than 25 participants it may become difficult to effectively organize and run the role-play. There are 4 Characters available. **If there are more than 4 participants, groups can be formed and assigned to a single Character.** In this case, the group should indicate a spokesperson.

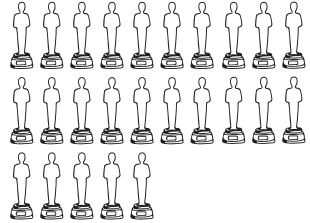
minimum

2



maximum

25

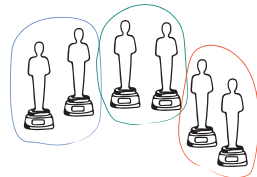


1

facilitator



you may form groups



TIME FRAME

The Role-Play requires approximately **90 minutes**.

MATERIALS



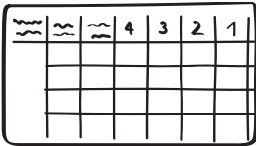
- ◆ (4) Character profiles



- ◆ (6) Possible Endings



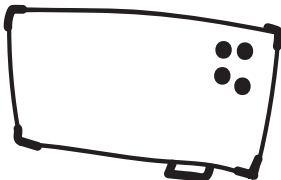
- ◆ Character's Questionnaire



- ◆ Storyboard Template



- ◆ Paper and pens
(not included)



- ◆ A whiteboard or flipchart
(not included)

BEFORE PLAYING

1. CHOOSE THE ENDING

The facilitator chooses one ending from among the six **Possible Endings** that will constitute the starting point of the backwards journey and from which participants will reconstruct their previous actions and choices. Each Possible Ending consists of a **Last frame of the story** (a fictitious event) and a **State of mind** (a feeling experienced by the Characters). The facilitator selects the Possible Ending by taking into account the **context, needs, and attitudes** of the group of real participants. Then, the facilitator presents the Possible Ending and, if desired, adjusts and elaborates additional details of the Last frame of the story.

2. ASSIGN THE CHARACTER

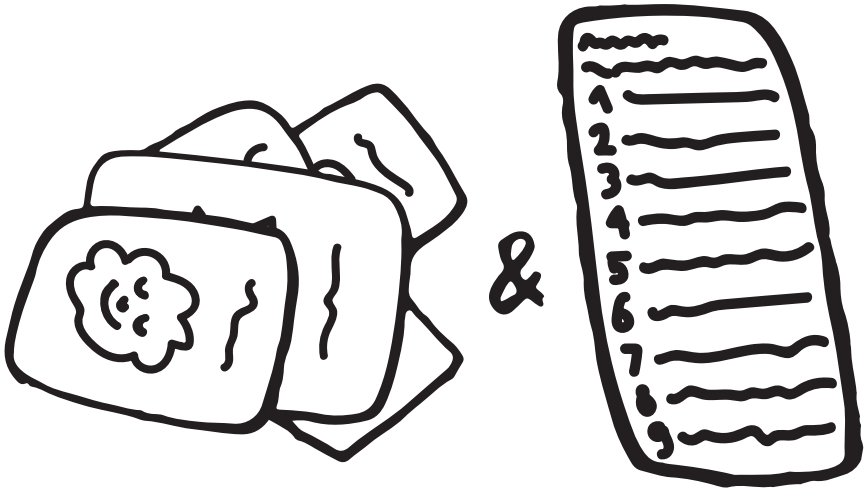
Now that the Possible Ending has been chosen, the facilitator assigns to each participant (or group of participants) one of four available Characters: **Reflective, Impulsive, Curious, and Anxious**. Each Character has a particular personality profile that will guide and orient his/her behaviors, choices, and decisions throughout the course of the backwards journey. The same Character cannot be assigned to more than one participant or group of participants. If there are more than four participants, they can be organized into teams and assigned to a single Character. In this scenario, the group should select a spokesperson. Note that it is not necessary to play with all 4 Characters.

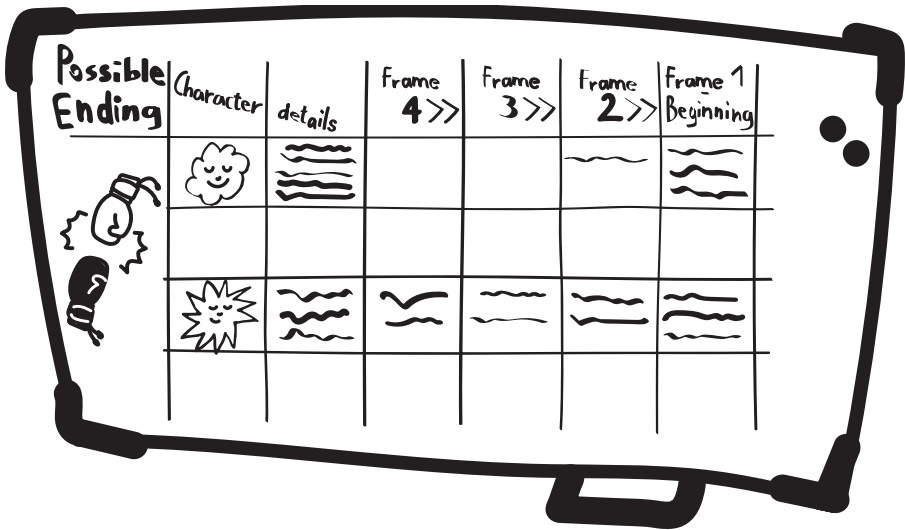


Think about
your Character!

3. DESCRIBE THE CHARACTER

Once participants or groups of participants have been assigned to a specific Character, they carefully read the information contained in the **Character Profile**. Then, they have 5-10 minutes to elaborate in greater detail on the personal features of their Characters. To help participants in describing the assigned Character, they can answer some of the questions of the **Character's Questionnaire** and keep in mind the context of the selected **Possible Ending**.





4. VISUALISE THE BACKWARDS JOURNEY

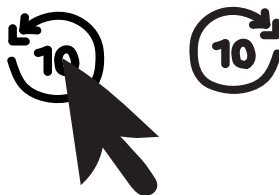
Using the **Storyboard Template**, the facilitator visualises the main elements of the role-play on a whiteboard, flipchart or sheet of paper, including the chosen Possible Ending, the Character's Profiles, and some details from the Character's Questionnaire. The sequence of frames will be filled in during the role-play.

THE ROLE-PLAY STARTS

Starting from the Possible Ending selected by the facilitator, the first participant/group explains how and why his/her Character found him/herself in this situation on the basis of his/her Character's Profile. In other words, participants **depict the previous frame of their story**.

To help participants describe this previous frame, the facilitator can pose the following questions, which can be written on the whiteboard or flipchart:

- * *What did you do to get into such a situation?*
- * *What events immediately preceded and caused the present situation?*
- * *Which feelings were triggered by your action?*



The facilitator encourages each participant/group to reconstruct the frame with **as many details as possible** (action, context, place, people involved, reactions, emotions, etc.). Other participants can also ask questions to better understand the choices made.



The facilitator **gathers and summarizes** the information from each frame into the storyboard, which serves as the record of the backwards journey to be used during the final discussion.

THE ROLE-PLAY CONTINUES

After the first participant/group has reconstructed his/her first frame, the second participant/group reconstructs the next frame of his/her backwards journey according to his/her Character profile. In this way, participants **create a series of parallel stories** or 'parallel universes' which, although sharing a common ending, are shaped by the personal features and subsequent choices of each Character.

What if I don't know how to go on...

If participants/groups struggle to describe their backwards journey, they can ask other participants for help by saying "I can't see my past!". In response, fellow participants can step in to collectively reconstruct this portion of the lost past.

*In the first frame
of my journey,
my Character...*



THE ROLE-PLAY ENDS

The backwards journeys continue until all the participants/groups have completed **at least four turns**. Once the lost past has been reconstructed, the participants arrive at the beginning of their story. Participants figuratively take off their Characters' shoes and engage in a **final discussion** on the parallel stories. The participants, **no longer embodying their Characters**, but speaking from personal standpoints, can freely express their thoughts, ideas, and impressions developed throughout their journey.

The facilitator moderates the discussion and encourages **comparison** between the parallel stories, **points of view** and the **experiences** of the participants in order to reflect on the **varied consequences** that emerged from different **behaviors, attitudes, and choices**.

The facilitator prompts the participants to consider the **connections** between the insights gained from the backwards journeys and their **own life experiences**. Note that the facilitator should plan at least 15 minutes for the final discussion.

Each other's shoes

During the concluding discussion, participants have the option to step into other Characters' shoes to gain a deeper comprehension of why a particular Character made specific choices or exhibited certain behaviours. Participants can briefly reenact certain frames from the perspective of a different Character. This enables a more comprehensive understanding of the decisions made and provides an opportunity to elucidate various possibilities and alternatives that may not have been perceived.



... AND ACTION!

As part of the final discussion, some useful questions for reflection might be the following:

- * *What did the parallel stories have in common? How did they diverge?***
- * *How did the parallel stories reflect the different points of view of their Characters?***
- * *How did you experience the role-play? Were there aspects that were surprising or uncomfortable?***
- * *What connections did you see that linked the different behaviors, attitudes, and choices with the subsequent outcomes?***



To encourage further reflections the facilitator may also raise the following questions:

- * *Had you played as yourself, would your actions have been the same? What would have changed in your backwards journey?***
- * *What was the turning point of your backwards story? Which alternative choice/action would have completely changed the ending?***
- * *Do you think the ending is fair? Given that now you know the whole story, was it also predictable?***

The observations that emerge from each participant/group are collected by the facilitator on a whiteboard or a flipchart as a synthesis of the backwards journey.

Do you want to know more?

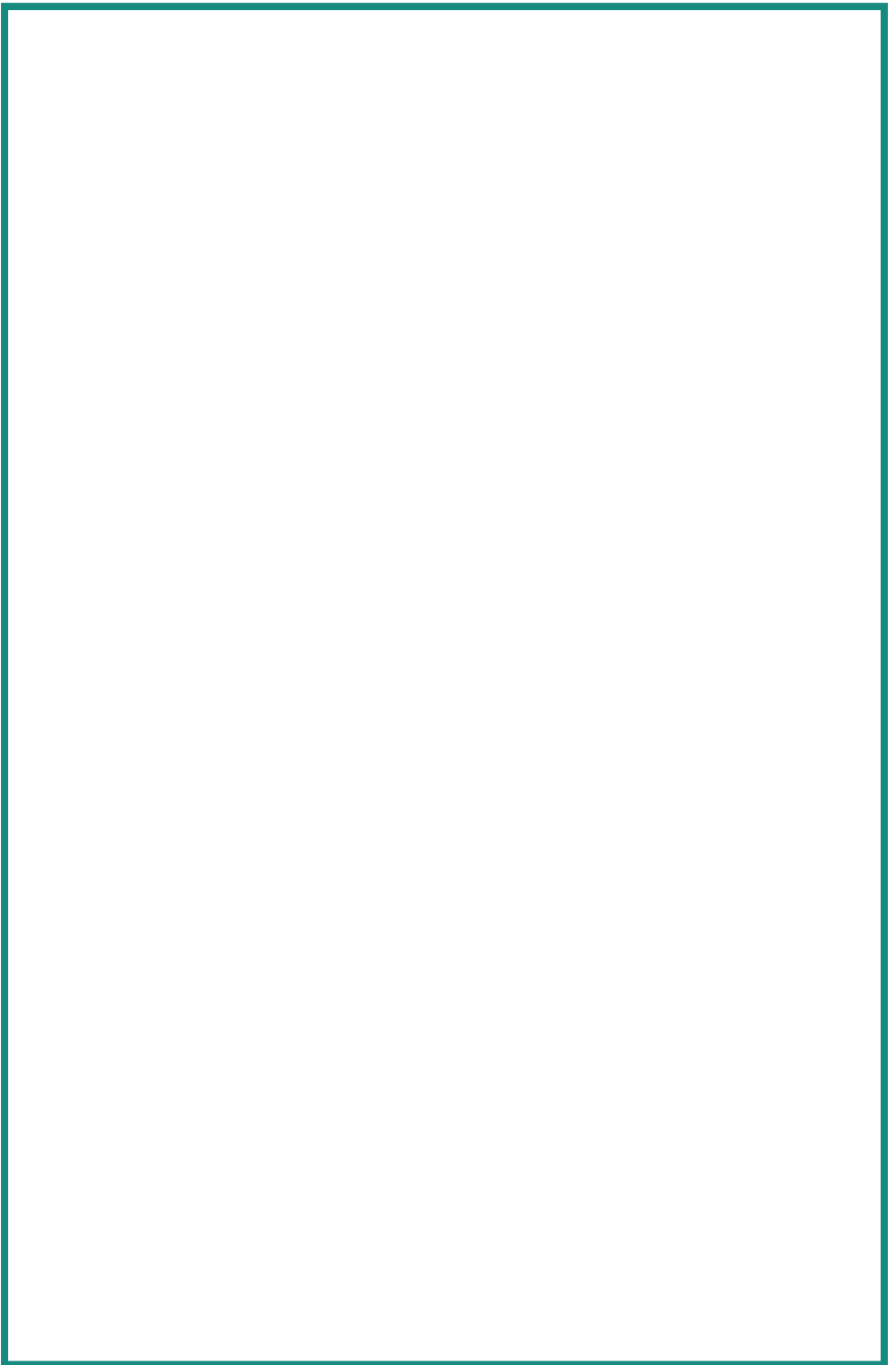
You can download the role-play “In Search of the Lost Past” and the Explanatory Notes on civic education, radicalisation, violent extremism and preventive measures at:

<https://www.eurac.edu/en/institutes-centers/institute-for-minority-rights/projects/pedagogical-tools>



Materials





The role-play “In Search of the Lost Past” is a civic education game that seeks to foster critical thinking, encourage active participation in civic affairs, and strengthen resilience to radicalisation and violent extremism. This role-play is intended for use in community organisations, youth centres, social and educational institutions. “In Search of the Lost Past” was developed within the Horizon-funded D.Rad project, a comparative study of (de)radicalisation in Europe and beyond.

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eurac
research

D.Rad

DeRadicalisation
in Europe and Beyond:
Detect, Resolve, Reintegrate



Istanbul
Bilgi University



AUP The American
University of Paris



OAPIS



FORUM
FRANCONIA | PREVENZIONE



14 years +



2-25



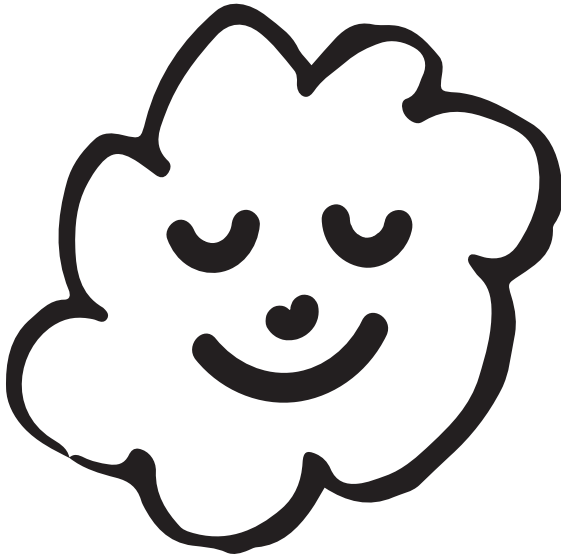
90mins

Reflective



- Thoughtfully assesses the pros and cons of each decision from multiple perspectives.
- Frequently experiences doubts before making decisions.
- Often worries that his/her choices may be incorrect.
- Readily engages in self-questioning.
- Demonstrates a constant willingness to challenge his/her own ideas and certainties.
- Possesses a keen ability to notice details that often go unnoticed.

CHARACTER PROFILE



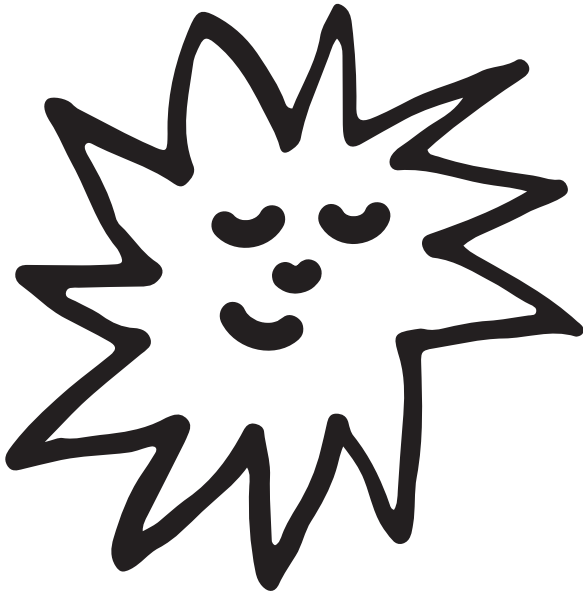
REFLECTIVE

Impulsive



- Always follows the inspiration of the moment.
- Often makes impulsive decisions.
- Prioritizes what he/she feels is necessary in the present moment.
- Embraces risk as he/she finds it useful and stimulating.
- Tends to be guided by emotions rather than rationality.
- Pays minimal attention to the effects associated with his/her choices.

CHARACTER PROFILE



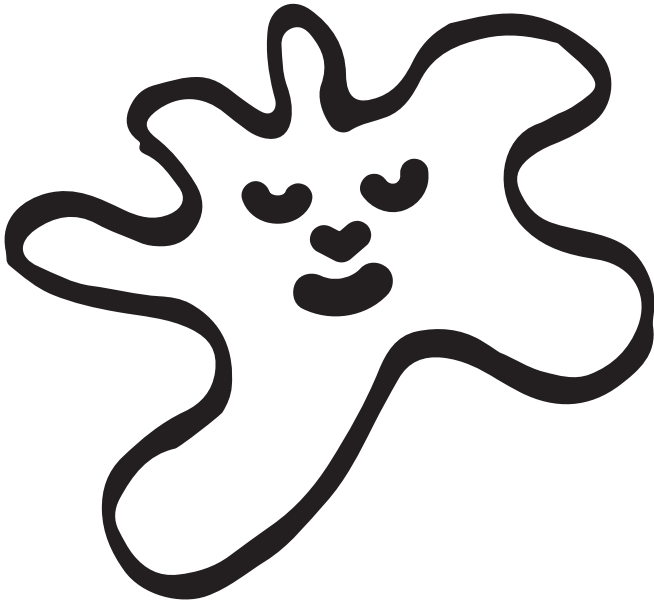
IMPULSIVE



Curious

- Always looks for something new.
- Open to experimentation.
- Actively searches for new possibilities from other perspectives.
- Fascinated by the unknown.
- Constantly seeks to expand his/her knowledge.
- Willing to take new proposals into consideration.

CHARACTER PROFILE



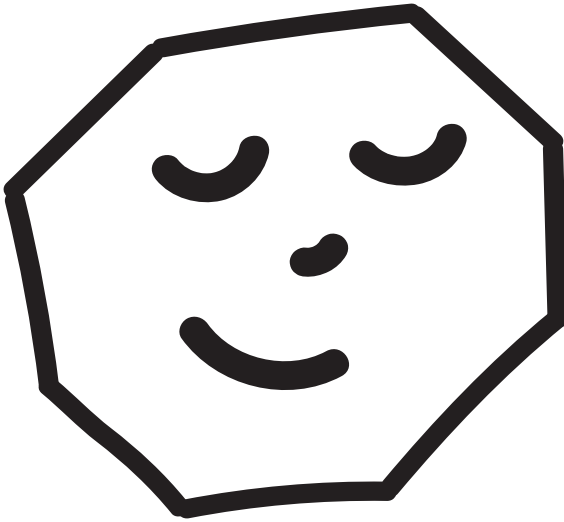
CURIOUS



Anxious

- Experiences situations with stress and concern about the consequences.
- Fears encountering unforeseen new situations.
- Frequently grapples with numerous unanswered questions when facing unfamiliar situations.
- Consistently apprehensive about negative outcomes.
- Occasionally rushes into decisions to escape challenging situations.
- Frequently and persistently besieged by doubts.
- Risk averse.

CHARACTER PROFILE



ANXIOUS

WHAT HAVE I DONE?

Last frame of the story

School has just finished for the day. You are walking towards the bus stop when you see him/her there, laughing with his/her friends. It seems strange, but his/her happiness makes you sad. You run towards him/her and punch him/her in the back. He/she falls down, and you suddenly realize what you've done.

State of mind

You have lived a conflictual story that had a negative outcome for you and now you are surrounded by strong and painful emotions. You cannot change the course of events. The sense of frustration you feel is very intense, as is the regret you feel for how you have faced and managed the whole situation. You realize that you have made a mistake in the path you have taken, and you have the feeling you have overlooked other options but that now it is too late to remedy the situation.

POSSIBLE ENDING

1



WHAT WAS I THINKING?

Last frame of the story

You are at your **office**. You get along with nearly everybody except this one colleague. You are really tired of him/her. One day, you suddenly decide to spread the lie that he/she has stolen something from the office. A few days later you find out that this colleague has been transferred to a different office and now has a lower-ranking position. You feel very sad about this news. How could you have done that?

State of mind

You have lived a conflictual story that had a negative outcome for you and now you are surrounded by strong and painful emotions. You cannot change the course of events and the sense of frustration you feel is very intense, as well as the regret for how you have faced and managed the whole situation. You realize that you have made a mistake in the path you have taken, and you have the feeling that you have overlooked other options but that now it is too late to remedy the situation.

POSSIBLE ENDING

2



IS THERE A WAY OUT?

Last frame of the story

It's midnight. You and a couple of other people from your group have long been planning this attack on the headquarters of your **rivals**. You are ready to go, everything is set. But you are thinking "is this actually too much?". You cannot cancel the attack, but you don't want to go ahead with it.

State of mind

Between tensions, conflicts, and misunderstandings, it was not easy to maintain a balance. But now the situation has suddenly deteriorated and you no longer have the possibility of making choices. You feel that you have been pushed and forced into a situation from which you would absolutely like to get out, but you cannot find a way to do so. You feel that situation has deteriorated beyond your control, but a part of the blame is certainly also yours in an active or passive form. You feel that you are not completely innocent.

POSSIBLE ENDING

3



HAVE I GONE TOO FAR?

Last frame of the story

In the last few months, you were really into the violent ideology of a movement. You find their ideas very interesting, and you start sharing their posts on your **social networks**. Now everybody thinks you are an extremist. Suddenly, you hear the doorbell. It's the police, and they are there to question you about your online activity. Only now, you realize you may have gone too far.

State of mind

Between tensions, conflicts, and misunderstandings, it was not easy to maintain a balance. But now the situation has suddenly deteriorated and you no longer have the possibility of making choices. You feel that you have been pushed and forced into a situation from which you would absolutely like to get out, but you cannot find a way to do so. You feel that situation has deteriorated beyond your control, but a part of the blame is certainly also yours in an active or passive form. You feel that you are not completely innocent.

POSSIBLE ENDING

4



WERE THERE OTHER CHOICES?

Last frame of the story

You are once again running from the police because you were throwing stones at them during a **political rally**. These days, you are tired of running and hiding. However, while you have thought about other ways of spreading your ideas, they always seem too weak and ineffective.

State of mind

Violent acts, once committed, cannot be erased. The consequences of our actions leave a mark outside and inside ourselves. It is hard to understand how you got to this situation. Nevertheless, this is how things turned out, even if it was not your intention, even if you don't remember now the decisions or choices you made. You recognize that the destiny you encountered didn't favor you; instead, it only created a lot of difficulties. Often, refraining from engaging in a conflict doesn't necessarily equate to staying uninvolved.

POSSIBLE ENDING

5



WAS THIS TIME TOO MUCH?

Last frame of the story

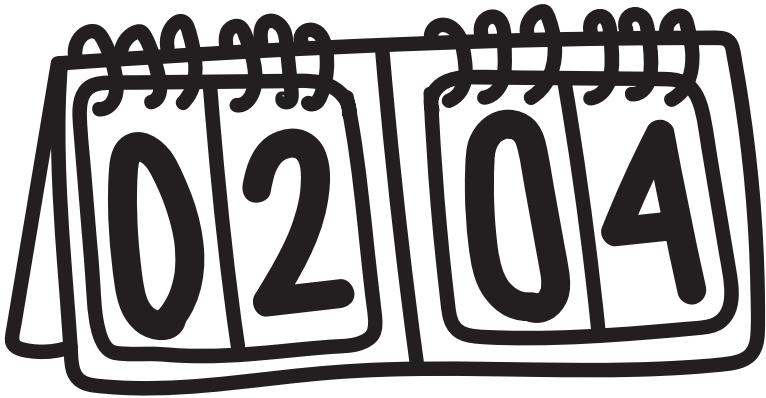
It is an important match for your **sports team**, and you see someone mistreating a teammate. This isn't the first time it's happened. You choose to step in and confront the person hurting your friend and decide to attack him/her. Things get out of hand, and you end up hurting him/her badly. It's such a shock that even your friend can't believe what you did. But you were really tired, and this time you thought it was just too much.

State of mind

Violent acts, once committed, cannot be erased. The consequences of our actions leave a mark outside and inside ourselves. It is hard to understand how you got to this situation. Nevertheless, this is how things turned out, even if it was not your intention, even if you don't remember now the decisions or choices you made. You recognize that the destiny you encountered didn't favor you; instead, it only created a lot of difficulties. Often, refraining from engaging in a conflict doesn't necessarily equate to staying uninvolved.

POSSIBLE ENDING

6



Character's Questionnaire

1. What's the Character's name? Does he/she have a nickname?
2. When and where was he/she born?
3. How tall is he/she? What color is his/her hair? Eye color?
4. Who are the Character's parents and what are they like? What kind of relationship does the Character have with his/her parents?
5. Does she/he have any siblings? What kind of relationship does the Character have with his/her brothers and/or sisters?
6. Is he/she in a romantic relationship? What is the status of this relationship?
7. Does he/she have many friends?
8. What are his/her long-term goals? What are his/her immediate ones instead?
9. What is he/she most afraid of? Why?
10. What is he/she most proud of?

Character's Questionnaire

11. What in his/her past is most embarrassing to him/her?

12. Is he/she religious?

13. Where does he/she live now? In the same city where he/she was born? What is his/her relationship to the place where he/she lives (does he/she love the place, would he/she like to get away...)? Does he/she live in a flat, in a villa, in a residential area, in the suburbs?

14. Does he/she care about his/her body? If yes, in what way? Does he/she go to the gym occasionally or every day? Does he/she follow a diet?

15. Is he/she satisfied with himself/herself? With his/her body? What would he/she change about himself/herself?

16. Is he/she part of a group, sports team or association?

17. Does he/she come from a poor or struggling family?

STORYBOARD TEMPLATE

To be filled in from left to right.

In Search of the Lost Past
A backwards role-play

Possible Ending	Character	Character details	Frame 4 >>	Frame 3 >>	Frame 2 >>	Frame 1 Beginning
	Reflective					
	Impulsive					
	Curious					
	Anxious					