



THE FAMILY ANDERSSON

A contemporary drama with time pressure

A roleplaying game by

Åke Nolemo

and

Johan Röklander



Thanks to

The Family Andersson was created for the event "Höjdpunkt" in Sweden the autumn of 2008. A big thanks to Anna Westerling and Anders Hultman who organized this fantastic event.

We would also like to thank the group of players who were the first to test this game during Höjdpunkt. Thanks to all of you for your enthusiasm, energy and input!

Emma Öhrström deserves a special mention for bringing the game to Stockholm and testing the game further in February 2009 and giving us further input.

Finally a big thanks to the third group of players who tested the game during Prolog 2009 in Västerås. You gave us many good inputs which assisted us in

writing the final version of the game.

The text was translated into English by Tor Kjetil Edland and Håken Lid for Knutepunkt 2009 in Norway. Design by Martin E. Andresen.

Copyright and those things

You may freely use, copy, change, play, squeeze and whatever else you might use "the Family Andresson" for. The only thing we would like from you is that you write some lines to the creators of this piece to tell about how you used it and what your experience was in playing it.

If you want any of us to come and host this game at your place, contact us and we'll see what can be arranged. We are quite nice people and we want the best for almost everyone. So don't be afraid to contact us!

THE FAMILY ANDERSSON

A contemporary drama with time pressure for 8-10 participants

The Family Andersson is a short game for 8-10 participants. The focus is on exploring relationships between family members and testing how a game functions when more than one players act the same part.

The Background of the Game

The game is about a group of siblings who have gathered in the home of their recently deceased parents to discuss the inheritance. The mother died a little over a month ago after suffering from a chronic illness. The father died a few days ago from a heart attack. The funeral has been settled. What remains to be settled this afternoon are the 700.000,- which the parents have earmarked to an undesignated charity. It is also necessary to decide what will happen with the mansion. It must either be given to one of the siblings or be sold by the end of the year.

The siblings will also try to decide how to celebrate Christmas this year. They haven't celebrated Christmas together for several years. But perhaps this year it is time to honor their parents?

What is needed

To play this game you need 7-10 participants. The game is written for

10 players, but it is possible to play it with only 8 as well. (You can even play the game with 4-5 people, but then you wouldn't share the parts, each role would then be played by only one person. Parts of what is unique with the game would then disappear. But it is better to change some of the framework than not being able to play at all). Apart from the persons playing the characters you need one person to facilitate the game. The facilitator will keep track of the time and play the family's lawyer as well as the personal assistant of one of the characters.

You'll need 2-3 hours in total for the game. At least 1 hour for preparations, 1 hour for the game itself and some time after the game for debrief and feedback.

You'll need a room where there is sufficient space for 4-5 people to act. It can be a kitchen, dining hall, living room or something similar. Make sure that there is sufficient room for the participants to move around quickly as the change of roles should be quite sharp and quick.

As many chess clocks or stop watches as there are participants. You can find stop watches on most current cell

phone models.

As the game takes place the day before Christmas Eve it can be a nice touch to provide typical Christmas biscuits or “gløgg” (Scandinavian hot Christmas drink) to help create a Christmas atmosphere.

How this works

The premise of the game is that each character is acted by two players. These players share equally the time they are “on stage”. The game is written to be played in one hour. This means that each player should be “on stage” acting the part of their character for exactly 30 minutes.

All the characters are divided into couples and receives one character which they will play. The characters are gender neutral and can be played by both men and women. We recommend though that the couples are of the same sex as this will also clearly define the sex of the character. If you have an odd number of players we suggest that the character Anders / Anna be shared by a female and male player.

Each couple then gets some time to discuss and plan their character. We recommend that you plan 30 minutes for this. Afterwards everyone gathers to present their characters and to answer any questions the other players might have.

After this the game itself starts. As stated the game should last for 1 hour, but of course you are free to change this if you so wish.

The players who will start playing the character gather in the part of the room that will be “on stage”, the other players sit or stand on the side, ready to jump into play.

A watch monitoring the total play time starts to run. At the same time the watches for the individual players which starts “on stage” begin running. When a player wishes to start playing his role and send his partner “off-stage” this player starts his own watch and stops the watch of his partner. It is always the “off-stage” player which decides when the switch happens. The player entering the play taps his/her partner on the shoulder and they exchange places. The player who has just been relieved sits observing the game until he or she wants to enter the game again. This process is continued until both players have been “on-stage for 30 minutes each.

There is no “solution” or main plot which needs to be solved in the game. The game ends after one hour (if that is the length chosen for the game), and it is time for debrief and reflections around the game.

Suggestions and ideas for the game

During the test runs of the game we have received many suggestions and ideas for how the game could be improved. Some of those can be found in the list below:

Some have commented that the game can become a bit sedative. Move around while playing your character.

Use the fact that one of the characters is bound to a wheelchair in creating interesting scenes.

Don't be afraid to be nasty against each others in the scenes you play. This is a game. Act out all your resentment against other characters.

You don't have to solve your intrigues. They are there to create "dramatic hooks" in your play. However we recommend to emphasise the troubled relationships between the siblings as the core of the game. Use the lists of what each character wants to inherit with that in mind.

If you need to remove a character, we recommend that you join Alex and Robin into one character or remove one of them.

You can run the game without the stop watches and allowing the players to change whenever they want. You can also allow those "on-stage" to also decide when to change and not only the "off-stage" player.

The "off-stage" players may whisper together to plan situations they want to act out when they return as "on-stage" players.

It can be a good idea to place the players so that they can have eye contact with their partner during play and be aware of when the change of players will occur.

Encourage the group to discuss what type of atmosphere they want in their

game. Are they striving for realism, comedy or drama?

After the game

After the game it can be a good idea to talk about what you have experienced and how it felt to play the way you just did.

If you'd like please send your thoughts, opinions and any suggestions for adjustments to the game to one of the authors. You can send a mail to ake@nolemo.se or johan@irrbloss.com. Or you can call us: Åke: 070-634 94 29 or Johan: 0733-56 26 76.

Don't forget that the main aim of this game is for you to have a good experience!

Best wishes,

*Åke Nolemo and Johan Röklander
Stockholm, February 2009*



Character:

Kim

Kim has been a nurse for ten years. Is now studying to become a priest and is planning to go to South America as a missionary. Has a fundamental conviction that life is a gift from God and must be handled accordingly. Believes that the Bible should be interpreted literally and that one has to live by its rules to reach God.

Family

Two children. Married for ten years. Owns a villa and a car.

Opinion on your parents

Positive. Thou shall honour thy Father and thy Mother.

Expectations of yourself

Settle everything for the best. For the knowledge is here and the right answers most often.

Opinions on your siblings

Robin: nice, a bit dim, loveable and on the right path. Should calm down a little.

Anders \ Anna: insincere and confused. Always wants to be the centre of attention.

Alex: could turn out good if he stopped lying so much. Candidate for salvation.

Tintin: Has God put Tintin in a wheelchair for some reason? Is it perhaps a punishment? Has Tintin exploited the kindness of the parents for too long by just living at home?

Goal from the heritage

700 000 for the church

Want to inherit for yourself

Dining hall furniture

The car

The painting with the children

Photo album with all the family pictures

Märklin model railway (for the children to play with)

Wish for the house

The house should be sold and the money divided.

Goal for Christmas Eve

Must bring the others to the morning mass on Christmas day – then everything will turn out fine.

THE FAMILY ANDERSSON

Character:

ANNA / ANDERS

Is in the middle of a sex change. Has realised that it is time to do it and is totally at ease with the decision. Hormone treatment has started and the final surgery is happening in six months from now. Lives alone but has had several short relationships the last year.

Opinion on your parents

Neither mother nor father was there to support you. Why weren't they there for you? Now it's time for them to pay back by giving the largest share of the heritage to Anders/Anna.

Expectations of yourself

Become complete and finally be you – free.

Opinions on your siblings

Kim: narrow minded and confused. Does not want others to be happy. Can not understand true love.

Robin: never takes anything seriously. Is immature and can't think independently.

Alex is almost always good. A bit better than the rest of us and should be respected. A bit low self esteem that could use a boost.

Tintin has always tried hard. Must

realise that life is not a game. It's time to get a job and grow up now.

Goal from the heritage

700 000 for the sex change surgery and later cosmetic surgery.

Want to inherit for yourself

The race horse Madam Fatall

The car

The sofa group

Dad's DVD collection

The Ming dynasty vases

Wish for the house

Doesn't care. As long as Anders/Anna gets the money he/she is happy.

Goal for Christmas Eve

Kim must accept you and not just think of the sex change as a phase.

Robin must take this seriously. No Christmas celebration until this is accomplished.

THE FAMILY ANDERSSON

Character:

ALEX

Is in the middle of a divorce. The marriage has lasted four years and you have one child with your partner. You are the oldest and most knowledgeable. You have always been considered the successful one, but actually you have a quite bohemian lifestyle. You have been leading a double life behind a façade consisting of a proper job and a good education. Your real dream is to live in a collective in the desert. During weekends and holidays Alex goes away to spend time with a group of hippies who want to turn the world into a never-ending love parade and practice free love.

Opinion on your parents

Positive. What would mom and dad have chosen? That's what's important.

Expectations of yourself

Dare to realise your dreams. But there's no haste.

Opinions on your siblings

Robin: has a good heart deep down inside, but needs to have more empathy with others and start taking things seriously. Is really the most normal person of the five siblings.

Anders / Anna can be an annoying

bastard, but it's probably just a phase he/she is going through. When it's over he/she will probably calm down. Of course the hormone treatment does something to your mood.

Kim: Stiff, pompous, conservative and reactionary.

Tintin: Nice and harmless. Has actually helped Mom and Dad a lot these final years.

Goal from the heritage

700 000 to found a collective so that you can leave this stressful conformist worker's life.

Want to inherit for yourself

The race horse Madam Fatall

The car

The collection of hunting weapons

The photo album with all the family pictures

The dining hall furniture

Wish for the house

Sell it and share the money.

Goal for Christmas Eve

It would be best if Alex, Tintin and Robin celebrated Christmas together and the other two with their own lot.

THE FAMILY ANDERSSON

Character:

Tintin

Is bound to a wheel chair. Was in an accident at a young age and can hardly remember how it was like not being in a wheel chair. Has always lived with the parents to take care of them. The other siblings have seldom been at home helping out. Hopes that the others won't treat Tintin as a child any more. You are in fact a grown up now and have been taking care of your parents.

Opinion on your parents

They were kind. Needed a lot of help near the end, and Tintin was always there for them. You hope you can get something back for that now.

Expectations of yourself

Can cope on your own. Is an independent person who with your assistants can manage anything.

Opinions on your sibling

Alex has pretended to care about the parents, but has only really cared about Alex's own shallow, deceitful life.

Robin is kind and has actually visited and cared about the parents on a few occasions.

Anders \ Anna thinks that his/her handicap is as major as mine. I'm disabled for real. Anders\Anna has just a

"pretend-disability"

Kim: belief is just a way to justify an enormous ego. To be a missionary is only a way to be the centre of attention and having monopoly on "the truth".

Goal from the heritage

700 000 to start a charitable trust for disabled people. This cause was, after all, what the parents were most concerned with. That Tintin should be able to lead a normal life. This money can help others who are in a similar situation.

Want to inherit for yourself

The summer cabin in Orust
The race horse Madam Fatall
Dad's DVD collection
The pool table
The paintings, in particular the one with the children.

Wish for the house

Of course Tintin shall keep the house now that it has been rebuilt to fit Tintin's special needs.

Goal for Christmas eve

Don't care, as long as the others understand that they are Tintin's guests now and that Tintin can manage to be a host.

THE FAMILY ANDERSSON

Character:

ROBIN

Self employed in the field of advertising. Travels a lot, has a new lover every month or so. The longest relationship so far lasted one year. A slacker who likes to joke away life. But this is mostly on the outside. Has severe anxiety and bouts of depression that are hidden away with the attitude that everything is humour, everything is a game and everything is fun.

Opinion on your parents

Ambivalent. You always wished that they would stop fighting. You were scared when they shouted at each other.

Expectations of yourself

Will try to appear more serious in the eyes of your siblings. But it must still be possible joke around a bit.

Opinions on your siblings

Anders/Anna: weird but kind. Confused and a bit too self centred. Does he/she even deserve the heritage?
After all he/she didn't even like mom and dad.

Kim: a good person who after all is reflected and despite his faith (or perhaps because of it) has answers that are worth listening to.

Alex: kind and wise. But deceitful. He really wants to lead a different life.
Tintin: has been pampered by the parents all his life. Time to become responsible for a change.

Goal from the heritage

What would mom and dad want?

Want to inherit for yourself

The Märklin model railway

The car

The weapons collection

Dad's DVD collection

The pool table

The paintings and the one with the children in particular.

Wish for the house

Keep it.

Goal for Christmas Eve

Desperately wish that everyone just got along and celebrated Christmas together in harmony.

THE FAMILY ANDERSSON

THE HERITAGE

This is a short list of the most important items to be divided between the siblings of Family Andersson. 10 swedish crowns is approximately 1 euro.

Item	Estimated value
A house in central Hindenburg	4 500 000 kr
Summer cabin. Small, a bit run down with a beach	3 200 000 kr
50% share of the successful race horse Madam Fatale	600 000 kr
A painting made by grandfather depicting the grandchildren playing with their dog	Insignificant
Various other paintings, total value ca.	700 000 kr
Hunting weapons	95 000 kr
An exclusive collection of Märklin model railway	100 000 kr
Ming vases	50 000 kr
Large collection of DVDs Ca 2000 titles	Insignificant
The car. Bentley Continental GT	1 500 000 kr
Antique dining hall furniture	200 000 kr
Various other stuff in the house and the summer cabin	varies
Total market value	10 855 000 kr

Also 700 000 crowns to be donated to one charitable cause that all the children have to agree on. Since all law firms are closed during the week after Christmas they have to agree on the distribution of the heritage tonight.

THE FAMILY ANDERSSON

GAME MASTERS INSTRUCTIONS

Your responsibility as a GM is before the game starts to inform everyone about the game and the rules.

During the game you will take the role as the family lawyer and hand out a list of all the stuff that the heirs have to distribute among themselves. You must also tell them that everything must be divided before the new year of tax reasons. Since all law firms are closed during the week after Christmas they have to agree on the distribution of the heritage tonight.

The game master can also play supporting characters that the players want to include in the game. Tintin's personal assistant, an additional relative, a public person or anyone they might want to telephone.

When 5 minutes have passed you must enter the game and ask for a final distribution of the heritage. They now have 3 minutes to distribute everything before you close the game.

Good luck.

THE FAMILY ANDERSSON

A contemporary drama with time pressure

The Family Andersson is a short game for 8-10 participants. The focus is on exploring relationships between family members and testing how a game functions when more than one players act the same part.

A roleplaying game by Åke Nolemo
and Johan Röklander.