

# The Piano Man

The Piano Man is a GMless, musically inspired, slice of life storytelling game where you play a typical Saturday night in the life of characters from Billy Joel's song The Piano Man. Tonight you will swap stories and share drinks. Tomorrow you will, once again, be strangers.

## Recommended set up

Dim the lights, place a few bowls with pretzels or beer nuts, make sure the fridge has plenty of cold beers.

## Phases of play

After everyone is seated at the table you can start.

- 1. Who are you?** choose or select randomly one of the characters
- 2. Choose your songs:** note these on your character sheet.  
Choose a song as an inspiration for your character  
Choose a song and base a happy childhood memory  
Choose a song and base on it your character greatest regret
- 3. Get a drink:** if you haven't yet, grab a drink (if anyone plays the bartender, they should serve the drinks)
- 4. Play me a sweet memory:** sitting around a table, go in a circle with each character sharing a happy memory from their youth. After each story is told the other characters can ask up to 3 follow up questions about that memory.
- 5. Toast:** toast your glasses and have a drink.
- 6. Play me a sad memory:** again, going in a circle each character tells of their greatest regret. After each story is told the other characters can ask up to 3 follow up questions about that memory.
- 7. Cheers:** Once the last round ends, everyone raises their glass and yells "Sing us the song, the piano man!". Play the song The Piano Man, while drinking your drinks in companionable silence. Enjoy the camaraderie before you're all strangers again. The game ends at the end of the song.

## Characters

### ♠ The Old Man

It has been a long life. You're not sure when things went wrong. Why you're alone at a bar on a Saturday night making love to your tonic and gin.

### ♠ The Bartender

You're the smiling sort, quick with a joke, or a light to someone's smoke. But you don't want to be here. You dream of being a movie star. But that will never happen, because there is something that keeps you here, a responsibility that will probably ruin your hopes.

### ♠ The Real Estate Novelist

Real estate deals pay the bills. But every night you sit and write. Trying to finish that book you've been working on. You keep telling yourself this book will be your big break. But deep down you're afraid that it's shit. That you're a failure. Maybe that's why no one you date stays.

### ♠ The Navy Officer

It was either staying stuck in that life or joining the navy. You joined. And now there is nothing else you know how to do. You're too old to start something new now.

### ♠ The Waitress

No one here even remembers your name. But it's OK, you're not here to make friends. You're here to play the game. The same game politicians play all the time: suggest promises you don't intend to keep to get what you want. What a life.

### ♠ The Businessmen

There's a group of you. Same corporate buzz cut, same specialty individual ties and the same custom made suits. The beer is a distraction from the stuff you snort in between verbal sparring. You're lost children tearing each other apart to reach the lonely top of a make-believe pyramid scheme.

### ♠ The Manager

This is your bar but this is nothing like what you dreamed all these years ago. You dreamed of a place where hopes and laughter toast. Instead. This is where dreams come to be forgotten. Smile for your patrons, give them a chance to forget.

### ♠ The Musician

You imagined performing to thousands of smiling faces. Now a dozen confounded faces silently ask you what you're doing here.

