

Ménage and Polyamorous Worksheet

by Lor Rose, a polyamorous masochist (www.LorRose.com)

There are several considerations when writing multiple partner fiction. All of the following information doesn't have to make it into your novel (and if it all does than you have some serious chopping to do) but knowing this information can help you know your characters. I do recommend knowing at least 75% of these answers and incorporating as many answers organically as you can into your manuscript to help flesh out your characters' relationship.

Some of these questions overlap in a way but this will help you connect the dots of your characters.

Section One: General Questions

:: Applicable to Couples Living Together or Separately ::

1. Most bathrooms are only designed for one or two people, how do your characters deal with this? Is the bathroom big enough for all of them? Is there another bathroom for someone to use? If there is another bathroom, does the character forced to use it feel left out of the morning routine/bonding? Does (s)he like the space to gather their thoughts? Explain each character's morning routine. Order your characters from highest priority (must get out the door) to lowest (goes to work later, can be late).
2. Name one thing that gets on your characters' nerve about the others. Why?
3. Do their parents know? Why or why not?
4. Where is each characters' getaway in the house? Kitchen, den, office, garden tub, garage? Why that spot? If space is limited, does crowding create tension in the relationship? Is there too much space creating distance in the relationship?
5. What are your characters hobbies? Reading? Quilting? Working out? Riding horses? Cars? Writing? Blogging? Model building? Drawing? Shooting? Kayaking? Shopping?
6. Who is their best friend? Is their friend supportive of the relationship? If not, why? If their best friend is in the relationship how has their dynamic changed?
7. If there's a child or pet (hence known CoP), how does the CoP fit into the relationship? Do the others feel burdened or frustrated by the CoP? Are they vocal about it or is the subject a ticking bomb? If whoever is responsible for the CoP unable to care for the CoP all the time, whose responsibility is the CoP? Oppositely, is the CoP welcomed? Do the others feel lightened by the CoP being around? Are their split feelings in the house/arrangement regarding CoP?
8. What are their birthdays? Age differences?
9. Does their workplace know? If not, are they afraid for their jobs? Of coworkers?
10. How do they decide what to watch? What are their different show tastes? Favorite show? Least favorite? Do they bicker over DVR space?
11. What are each character's favorite and least favorite: music genre, song, book genre, book, animal, movie, drink, food, dessert, color?
12. Who takes out the trash?

13. Does everyone close the chip bag differently?
14. Name each characters' career, their career goals, and salary.

Section Two: Living Together

:: Intimacy ::

1. Do they all sleep in the same bed? How big is the bed? Is one a kicker? A snuggler? Human furnace?
2. What is each characters' language of love (words of affirmation, acts of service, receiving gifts, quality time, physical touch)? Keep in mind there are ways people show love and like to receive love. Sometimes individuals have more than one language of love.
3. Do they prefer their own pillow? Do they care?
4. What about blankets? With multiple people sometimes one blanket isn't enough (especially if there's a blanket hog; is there?)
5. Is there a shower schedule? After all it can't be sex in the shower all the time (well I suppose it could but that's a little unrealistic.) Does one hog all the hot water? Do they fight about this?
6. Do your characters nurture one on one relationships? If yes, how? If no, why not?
7. Do they have a spare bedroom they use for more personal one on one time? If so, who pairs up more often? Does this create tension? If not, how do they get alone time?
8. How does your characters keep their relationship between them strong?
9. Do all your characters need to be present for sex to happen? Have they discussed this at all?
10. What are your characters sex drives?
11. What are your characters kinks?
12. Do any of your characters have a relationship outside of the group? What problems arise from this? (Less time at home, jealousy, insecurities, more open communication, more fulfilling sex, ect.)

:: Home Life ::

:: May apply to Living Apart when a character stays over often ::

1. Does everyone do their own laundry? If so, is there a washing schedule? If not, who does all the washing and why? If there is one who does the laundry, do they feel taken advantage of?
2. Who cleans? Do they assign chores?
3. What about grocery shopping? Do they compile a list and one goes with collected funds? Do they do their own shopping?
4. Do they have a communication board (white/black/cork board)?
5. What about a shared calendar (ie iCloud, Google calendar) for events, doctor appointments, birthdays, and family meetings?

:: What Belongs to Who ::

1. How did they obtain their home? Whose name is on the lease or home owners' papers? Who holds the loan on the home (if it's a house)?

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- How do they tell their toothbrushes apart? By color? Rubber bands? What about their charging cords? Tiny clips? Paper clips? Does one get upset over his/her electric cords going missing?
- How do they divide up closet space? Is there enough closet space for their things to begin with? What about drawer space? If space is limited, how do they deal with it?
- Do they label specific things in the kitchen as theirs? How? Sticky notes? Assigned sharpie colors? Initials?
- Does each have their own car? If so, how did they get it? Is there enough parking space? If they don't have a car how do they work out a schedule with their jobs? Does one or more not having a car put pressure on the relationship and do those frustrations manifest in other areas of their relationship?
- Do they use the same brand of [product] to make shopping easier? Did this change require some sacrifice on another character's part? How does the character feel about giving up his/her favorite [product]?
- What about meals? Does one decide? Whoever is home? Free for all? Who cooks? Why?
- What about restaurants? Any group over four (usually) has a waiting time; do they call ahead to avoid this? How often do they have the money to eat out? Does one pay? Or do individuals purchase their own?
- If one is better-off than the others does it create tension in the relationships? (ie. Does your character that makes less feel babied? Taken care of? Uncomfortable?)
- Does a character get angry when (s)he puts [object] in a certain place and returns only to find [object] moved/missing?

:: Finances ::

- Since they live together does everyone contribute money to an account and one takes care of paying the bills? Are bills divided amongst your characters? How did they decide who pays what? Do they take the sum of the bills and divide the sum equally?
- Do they hold a monthly meeting to discuss the house finances?
- How do they handle one not being able to contribute the shared finances of the house for a month due to whatever reason? Does it put a strain on them financially? Do the others expect payment back?
- Individual personal accounts? One joint account? Both?

:: Conflict and Resolution ::

- Everyone deals with things differently, how does your characters? Does one brush things off until it piles up? Is one a hot head? Peace maker? Stubborn?
- How do they resolve conflict? Divide and conquer or one big heated mess? What steps do they take to better improve their communication?
- Does one character recognize something is a hot button issue for them and take internal steps (or external via therapy) to improve?

Section Three: Living Apart

:: Intimacy ::

:: What Belongs to Who and Conflict and Resolution may apply ::

- Is your character dating one person of a ménage/poly relationship but not the others? What sort of conflict arises from this?
- How often do they stay at one another's place? Whose house do they stay at most of the time? Why?
- What are there plans for moving in together (if there is any)?
- How does the one not living with the others feel? Does your character like the space? Feel separated?
- Is their sex life affected by the separation? Good or bad?

Section Four: Adding Another Lover

:: The Established Couple ::

- What are your characters feelings about adding another lover?
- Does one feel inadequate? Displaced? Jealous?
- Has doubt set in? How does this manifest in the relationship?
- Was adding another lover a unanimous decision? Expand beyond yes and no.
- Were your characters pleasantly surprised by how much they enjoy another lover in their lives?

:: The Entering Party ::

- How does your character feel about entering an established relationship? Intimidated? Excited? Both? Expand your answer.
- Is entering an established couple what your character expected?
- Does your character look for ways to talk him(herself) out of it?
- Is it hard for your character to find their place in the relationship?
- Was entering a relationship with an established couple (or a ménage/poly relationship) something your character wanted or did it just happen?

:: All Dating at Once ::

:: May apply to Living Together: Intimacy ::

- Who picks the date activity? Why that person? Is it their turn or does one always take charge? Does two override another? If so, how does this make the overpowered one feel?
- How often do they all go on dates together? Is everyone happy about this? Does someone want more group dates or less?
- How is the financial situation with dating? Does everyone pay their own way? Or does one take everyone else out? Two taking out a third? Two taking another two?
- Has your characters ever gone on a ménage/poly date before? If yes, does this date live up to exception for everyone? Why? If it doesn't, is there a reason? (Keep in mind a character could feel displeased, jealous, or insecure.)