

FLESHING THE SKELETON

HOW TO EMPOWER PLAYERS TO MAKE CHARACTERS
THEIR OWN, WITHOUT THE RISK OF 'BREAKING THE LARP'

CHARACTER CREATION RESPONSIBILITY

- Created by the larpwright
- ... ?
- Created by the player

SKELETONS

- Designer provides enough structure to make sure that the characters are balanced and will fit together
- Player has enough space to be able to personalize the character
- Players choose, or are assigned, a skeleton
- Give them tools to put flesh upon it

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

- What do you need to define?
- What can you afford to leave open?
- Where can you give freedom without risk?

REAL MEN EXAMPLE

T_____ [choose name]

The Showman [character concept]

Your secret fear (unknown even to yourself): "I'm worthless".

This compels you to perform and prove yourself constantly.

Your fantasy is fame, success and adulation.

The impossible dream is that your ordinariness will be accepted

AND THE QUESTIONS:

- What's your name?
- Where are you from? (A specific place eg. Ealing, or a general description of the type of place eg. a small East Midlands town.)
- How do you spend your time (working, training, studying, unemployed, etc)?
- What do you want to achieve with that?
- Are you in a relationship at the moment?
- How do you feel about that?
- Do you believe in something larger and more mysterious than yourself? (Be it a religion or something else.)

LIST OF CHOICES

- Alien dignitary, android servant, bartender, counsellor, red-shirted security officer, xenobiologist, etc (Delta Sector Helter Skelter)
- Provides comforting safety for players
- Indicates the flavour of the larp

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

- Questions specific to theme and setting
- Allow players to play close to or far from home
- Questions to prompt thoughts and feelings
- Physical tasks as questions ('walk as your character')
- Collaboration and relationships

CONCLUSION

- Designers: don't be afraid to surrender control where you don't need it
- Players: don't be afraid to use your creativity where the design gives you space to do so
- “Rigidly defined areas of doubt and uncertainty”