

Fair Escape Studios 

# PLAYER AGENCY & PLOT IN COLLABORATIVE GAMES

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FOUNDERS OF FAIR ESCAPE STUDIOS



# WHO ARE WE?

## "INTERNATIONAL LARPER'S OF MYSTERY"

- Over 40 years of combined participatory design experience
- Long-time larpers, larpwrights, and organizers
- Gary: Toronto Erie Presence; Toronto By Night; Toronto: Vampire the Requiem
- Nicole: Toronto Changeling the Dreaming; Freelance writer for 7th Sea, The Expanse RPG, Fate Codex
- Four cats
- We like to travel and roleplay, so we do both at the same time!



**WHAT DO WE MEAN WHEN WE  
TALK ABOUT AGENCY?**



## WHAT IS PLAYER AGENCY?

- Directed larps versus collaborative larps and organizer-led plot versus player-led plot
- Agency in collaborative larps = your decisions in and out of game matter: you can create and steer your stories as a player **and** as a character
- Only boundaries of that agency are the rules, the community, and the world as created

## GUIDELINES

- Follow established rules, including those of consent
- Check with involved/affected co-players, and be prepared for opt-outs
- Stay within the plausibility of the world - if unsure, check with your organizers

**OK BUT SERIOUSLY:  
WHAT AM I ALLOWED TO DO?**

# SERIOUSLY, PRACTICALLY ANYTHING.

As long as the guidelines are followed, and the believability of the world is maintained.

Let's discuss some examples!



# HOW CAN I CREATE STORY?

- Look for ideas in your character background
- Look for ideas that you want to explore further from previous games in the Trilogy
- Look for inspiration from TV shows, movies, books
- Have an FB (or other) chat with friends and fellow players and discuss ideas (this can snowball into plots of epic proportions)
- Talk to organizers if you're stuck
- Talk to friends from a totally different larp or game for a different perspective



# EXERCISE

- Find a group of 3-4 people
- Discuss different story ideas for different player characters
- If you don't have a character for Night Watch, characters for other larps and tabletop games are fine too!



# HOW TO MAKE STORY HAPPEN

- Plan a series of events with other players over the course of a larp night
- Ask GMs to play an NPC at a larp or in a directed scene
- Request directed scenes from your character's past
- Meet with other players to have a scene in between sessions, to advance a plot or just see what happens
- Use the FB groups to have a public scene
- Invite one or more players to a Google document to write a scene together





**GREAT STORIES COME OUT OF  
COLLABORATION.**

# CREATING RELATIONS

- If you get relations written into your character, it's just a start - you can create relationships with anyone in the larp
- Introductory posts on FB groups can give people an idea of who your character is and the type of roleplay you are interested in
- Wanted posts: If you want someone to play a specific role in your game (enemy, best friend, rival), posting on FB or where your game communicates can give you options
- Discuss! Chat with people about it. Start with what kind of relationship you **want** or **don't want** and go from there.





Photo by Nicole at Parliament of Shadows

# EXERCISE

- Find a different group of 3-4 people
- Discuss ways your characters could be involved in one another's stories or help those stories happen
- If you don't have a character for Night Watch, ideas are always helpful!



# NPCs

- We can: provide NPCs for directed scenes and larp nights, cast NPCs if necessary, costume NPCs appropriately, brief them on your story and requirements
- We will have a harder time with: monster suits, special effects and special effects makeup, large numbers of NPCs
- If your needs are specific/detailed, we may need more time
- We need **detail** to make sure your NPC scenes happen the way you want, provide as much as possible

A dark, atmospheric background featuring a blue light source on the left side, possibly a candle or a small fire, and a cluster of colorful bokeh lights (yellow, orange, blue) at the bottom. The overall mood is mysterious and magical.

# QUESTIONS?

# TAKE CONTROL OF

# YOUR STORY

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# THANK YOU

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