



Hamlet

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J

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For my Becca

whom I think of all the time
and who makes everything make sense

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General Information

What is a LARP?

A larp is an activity involving several people in which the participants act out a story. Like a play or traditional improvisational theater, each participant generally acts out one character in real time. Unlike a play, the events and ending of the story are not predetermined. Unlike traditional improvisation, the starting situation and nature of the characters is predetermined.

All but one of the participants (the Players) depict characters in the story. They choose their own interpretation of whatever details are unspecified about the personality and background of the character, and use this to decide on the dialog and actions of their character. They are responsible for the strategic and thematically significant decisions of the character and thinking of the ideas that the character is likely to think of. Some value playing a character for the strategic challenge of trying to achieve the character's goals. Others value the vicarious experience of drama and emotion.

The last participant (the Director) is responsible for managing the larp and performing the many necessary tasks other than depicting main characters. These include general organization, playing minor characters, keeping track of the results of actions and the consequences of hidden aspects of the situation, sometimes introducing new elements or information to manage the plot, and adjudicating rules. The Director does not have the authority to dictate actions of other participants' characters.

Rules exist to represent skill differences between characters that do not exist between players and to resolve actions that cannot be directly acted out, either because they are unsafe (like fighting), or simply impractical/impossible (like magic).

Looking for more explanation? Just check out the detailed guide available on our website, www.shiftingforest.com.

DEFINITIONS:

Player: A participant whose sole role is the depiction of one important character.

Director: The participant managing the larp who performs the other tasks described above. Traditionally called the Game Master.

PC: A character depicted by a player.

NPC: A character depicted by the Director.

In Character (IC): Descriptive of actions, dialog, events or decisions actually made by the character and taking place in the fictional world.

Out of Character (OOC): Descriptive of actions, dialog, events or decisions involving the participants in the real world.

Roleplaying: The act of thinking as a character and deciding and depicting their actions, using the character's own decision making process. An action that is "roleplayed" is carried out by acting rather than abstracted within the rules.

Game: A specific time a larp is played.

THE FIRST RULE OF LARPING:

Always keep IC and OOC knowledge/motivations separate.

What is a Parlor Larp?

FORMAT AND MISSION:

Parlor Larps are designed to provide maximally accessible, artistically satisfying larp experiences to a relatively small group of 4- 8 players and 1 Director. All require little or no preparation, a normal sized living room, and take 4-5 hours.

THE ART FORM:

Parlor Larps are intended as something more than “just a game.” While they are certainly a leisure activity, they are meant to be thought of as exercises in art as well as entertainment, and in that sense are more like theater games than board games, or even many traditional larps.

Like a play or novel, they are designed to provide an experience, provoke an emotional response or make the participants think. While elements of entertainment, fun and challenge will certainly be present frequently, many of the Parlor Larps are not, and are not intended to be, entirely pleasant experiences. (A successful portrayal of a frightening atmosphere is rewarding even though everyone is feeling frightened.) These larps will be much more successful and enjoyable if all participants keep this goal in mind.

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT:

Unlike many other single-session larps, Parlor Larps ask players to fill in many details of their character before beginning to play. This personalization process is guided by a set of questions at the end of each character sheet. It helps turn the characters from a collection of goals and background information into real, fully-fleshed people, and also allows each player to identify better with his/her character.

All characters can be played by either gender, though each game has one preferred male and one preferred female character.

DON'T CONFLATE PLAYER AND CHARACTER SUCCESS!

While each character has his own goals, and many characters have directly opposing goals, it is critical to remember that the players are not competing with each other. The goal of each player is to effectively simulate and portray his character and work with the other participants to build a rewarding story. This is true for most Larps, and is vital to the spirit of Parlor Larps.

Remember: If you produce a dramatic and compelling story, everybody wins.

ADAPTATIONS SERIES:

Adaptations is a Parlor Larp series that take existing, commonly known stories and create a Larps from them, converting characters from the stories to PCs.

Because of the number of central characters in most stories, Adaptations have a 6-8 player requirement rather than the usual 4-8 player requirement.

Also, unlike other Parlor Larps, the characters are all gender specific, because the original story's characters were gendered. Thus, it will usually be the case that some players will have to play characters of the opposite gender. This book will use appropriate gender pronouns when referring to characters.

How to use this Book

GENERAL INFORMATION:

All participants should read this section the first time they play a Parlor Larp, (except the Guide To Directing, which need only be read by the Director.)

DIRECTORS' SECTION:

Directors, and only Directors, should read this entire section ahead of time. This section contains secret story information and advice necessary to direct the larp, as well as Director copies of information given out to players.

Directors should read the Public Background Overview, and then Larp-Specific Rules & Announcements to players at the start of game.

Public Background Overview: Relevant background info that all the PCs know.

Secret Background Overview: Relevant background info that not all PCs know.

Player Character Overview: A quick summary of PCs and their roles in the larp.

Game Overview: A guide to the plot and progress of the game itself.

Larp-Specific Rules: Rule changes or additions for this particular larp.

Announcements: Useful OOC reminders and other info for the players.

Character Summary Chart: A quick summary of major relevant info for all PCs.

Character Sheets: The Director's copy of each character sheet.

PLAYER MATERIALS:

This section contains perforated pages that the Director can tear out of the booklet and hand to players as appropriate. Keep in mind that by default, players should not see other players' Character Sheets or Game Materials.

Rules Summary: A shortened version of the Parlor Larp Rules for reference.

Public Background Overview: A copy of the publicly known background info.

Rules and Announcements: A copy of the larp-specific rules and announcements.

Character Sheets: 8 character sheets to be given out, one per player.

Game Materials: Some larps have additional materials. See Setup Advice.

IC/OOC:

Agree on a symbol (e.g. crossed fingers) to indicate when speaking OOC.

INTERPRETING CHARACTER SHEETS:

Names: [Male option / Female option] Lastname. Or, Firstname Lastname.

Character Style (see next page): Found in upper left corner.

Age: Found in upper right corner. (Certain larps don't include ages.)

Apparent Identity: General idea of what type of person the character appears to be.

Real Identity: General idea of what type of person the character really is.

Goals: A character's goals at the beginning of the larp. Not set in stone; can change through new events and roleplaying. Given in roughly decreasing priority.

Abilities / Resists: See Rules

Inventory: A list of nonobvious items the PC has at the time

Questions: These questions refer to aspects of the character that were not previously specified, that the player should develop at start of game. Make sure to answer questions in accordance with the spirit of the specified parts of the character sheet. Potentially controversial answers should be checked with the Director first.

A NOTE ON GENDER:

All PCs can be played as either male or female, though each larp has one character that is preferentially male and one preferentially female. However, for the sake of saving space and standardization, all PCs (and some background characters of unfixed gender, such as "John/Jane Smith's spouse") will be referred to by default as "he".

PRIORITY OF CHARACTERS:

While 8 characters are always provided, each Adaptations larp can run with 6.

In the Character Overview and in the ordering of character sheets, PCs will always be listed in order of priority. This means that the first 4 should always be included, and each subsequent character should be added with each subsequent player.

Using this order is critical to the balance of the game -- don't change it.

CHARACTER STYLES:

Each character has a 3-letter code representing its Character Style. This code is meant to describe what it's like to play the character to help players pick characters.

G/E: Goal or Emotion oriented. Gs are more rewarding to play when focusing on pursuing goals, and Es are more rewarding when focusing on depicting emotions.

L/D: Light or Dark personality. How depressing/disturbing the PC is.

S/C: Simple/Complex personality. Complexity of the PC's personality/motivations.

Each larp has one character of each style. All letters are given relative to the other characters in the larp (so in a Dark 5 larp, the Ls will be darker than in a Dark 1).

In general, all Ls can be darkened and all Ss can be made more complex if the player desires, but the converse is not true.

QUICK-DESCRIPTION CLASSIFICATION FOR PARLOR LARPS

[SEE UPPER RIGHT OF BACK COVER]:

The classification system is designed to describe the emphases of each larp in order to give an idea of what it would be like to run and play.

PRIORITIES: The opening letters of the classification represent which of five major elements are present as priorities in the larp, in decreasing order of importance.

A: Atmosphere. A particular mood or feel to the larp

D: Discovery. The existence of IC unknowns and the need to find out about them

M: Morality. Moral dilemmas and complicated moral decisions

R: Relationships. Complicated or changing relationship dynamics

S: Strategy. A need to make strategic decisions in pursuit of goals

SCALES: A number from 0-5. 0 = barely present. 3 = average. 5 = maximal.

Dark: The prevalence of depressing or disturbing elements

DIR: The amount of Director plot intervention required, difficulty of Director role

NPC: The amount of time and effort the Director must expend playing an NPC(s)

CONTENT ADVISORIES:

NC: Normal content. Teenagers and older should be comfortable playing.

AC: Adult content. Contains themes/elements that may not be suitable for teens.

DC: Disturbing content. Contains themes/elements that some adults may not be comfortable with. Consider comfort level of everyone in group before playing.

A Guide to Directing

THE BASICS

WHAT DOES THE DIRECTOR DO?

The Director is the person who manages and simulates the universe of the story so that the players can focus on roleplaying their characters. He knows everything about what is really going on, and observes all aspects of the plot as it unfolds. He manages the game, gives descriptions, answers questions about the environment/situation, propagates effects of PCs' actions on the environment and on NPCs' actions, mediates Ability use, and sometimes mediates Conflicts.

The Director also filters information so that each player only knows what he needs to know in order to successfully play his character. Most players find that having a lot of significant knowledge OOC but not IC can get distracting or confusing.

NPCs:

In some larps the Director also physically roleplays an NPC at the same time as his other duties. When doing so, it's fine to move in and out of character as long as it's clear which is which. However, he should take both roleplaying and directing responsibilities into consideration when determining the NPC's actions and timing.

THE DIRECTOR'S OBJECTIVES:

The primary objective of the Director is to produce a satisfying experience for all participants. There are two parts of this: making sure each player is satisfied with his PC's involvement, and making sure that the flow of the collective story is satisfactory.

The first involves making sure that each PC cares about what's going on, always has something to do and is capable of seriously affecting events that matter to him.

The second involves keeping the flow of events roughly within the intended progress, guiding the story to rising action, climax, and an ending that feels conclusive, as well as timing events to be as interesting and dramatic as reasonably possible.

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO DIRECTING A PARLOR LARP

Make sure you are familiar with all the General Information.

Read all the Game-Specific Info, ideally at least an hour before playing. Make sure you know all of it, including character sheets. Important details may only be stated once.

Set up the room according to Advice on Setup.

Gather your players and explain the gist of the game.

Go through PCs. Describe them by name, style, age, and Apparent Identity.

Distribute character sheets, but don't let the players read them in detail yet.

If the players don't know the rules, go over them.

Read aloud Public Background Overview.

Let the players read and answer the questions on their sheets in private. When they are done, quickly go over the character with them--you don't need to know the answer to every question, but get an idea of each character. Give out props at this time.

Have players of PCs with significant relationships (e.g. married couples) go over their PCs' personalities and relationship together before start of game..

Gather everyone together and read the Game-Specific Rules and Announcements.

Run the game!

Afterwards, players tend to enjoy a wrapup to discuss what was going on.

ADVICE ON DIRECTING

PHYSICAL BEHAVIOR:

Maintaining atmosphere and keeping everyone in character as much as possible are critical to a successful larp. Thus the Director's involvement must be very unobtrusive when not playing an NPC: Stay in an unused corner. Don't interact with any props (even chairs). Ask and answer questions as discreetly and quietly as possible. Avoid interrupting important moments. Don't referee conflicts that the players can manage themselves. The Director is invisible IC, and therefore shouldn't be a social presence.

However, you should still move around and query players every once in a while so as to keep track of what is going on with everyone. You will also occasionally have to give expositions of events or people to all parties present-- at these times, interrupt clearly and briefly. Make sure everybody hears you the first time.

UNDERSTANDING PLAYERS AND CHARACTERS:

The more you understand each PC's priorities and way of thinking, the more easily you can guide events in directions that will seriously matter to the characters. The story is about them-- it should evoke ideas, themes, and interactions they care about.

PACING AND ACTION:

Timing makes the difference between a story and a three-hour sequence of events. Time background events and NPC actions so that they contribute to rather than detract from the flow of the plot. Each conflict/situation should be thoroughly addressed: Don't interrupt situations that have not been thoroughly explored with new problems. Don't introduce an event until a few PCs are in a position to properly address it. Don't add lesser plot points to a major plot point in such a way that they will draw attention away from what really matters. Keep in mind that even things like responses from background characters (like servants on errands) will contribute new material.

Be aware that at many times nothing will appear to be happening from the Director's point of view, but the same may not be true of the players'. Do not be afraid of twenty minute lulls. On the other hand, do check with players in a lull to see if they feel involved. If they're not, don't be afraid to give advice or, in more extreme cases, tweak events to make sure things get rolling again. A half hour lull is a problem.

Parlor Larps are written to take approximately three to three and a half hours-- the game will be most rewarding if you pace it to last about that long.

MAKING UP ANSWERS:

You will frequently have to answer questions about a given situation. When doing so, answer based on what is consistent with booklet information and previous answers, generally logical, appropriate to atmosphere and genre, compatible with pacing, interesting for the plot, unlikely to upset or derail the plot, feels fair to the players, and will leave you ample room later to guide the game in a variety of directions.

EXERCISING INITIATIVE AND MAKING EXCEPTIONS:

Parlor Larps are written to save the Director from having to spontaneously take major guesses or make up important plot. However, every Director will run into situations where it seems most beneficial to the game to depart from or override aspects of the scenario. The following is advice to keep in mind when doing so:

Understand the scenario so that you will be able to understand the consequences of your changes. Be selfish: always leave yourself as much room to maneuver as you can, and commit to as little future improvisation as you can. Remember that the bigger the change, the more likely it is to get out of hand. Pay careful attention to how your change draws the PCs' focus, and watch out for pacing.

Most importantly, identify and play to your own strengths. Make it so that any additional work you have to do is work that you understand and comes naturally to you.

Parlor Larp General Rules

RULES IN LARPING:

In a larp, most normal activity is simply acted out, with roleplaying and common sense determining the effectiveness of social interactions. The rules exist as a means to simulate characters' actions and capabilities that cannot be safely or effectively acted out.

FUNCTION LEVELS:

Each character, by default, starts at Function Level 5. A character's FL represents the condition the character is in and their ability to act, both physically and psychologically, and can increase or decrease over the course of the larp as a result of harm or recovery.

In general, a character at FL 5 is essentially unharmed and in good shape, at FL 4 is in an unpleasant but not particularly disabling state, at FL 3 is somewhat disabled, at FL 2 cannot perform most activities, and at FL 1 can do little other than speak. If a character is ever reduced to FL 0, s/he is out of the game and completely unable to affect the plot thereafter. It is impossible to go higher than FL 5 or lower than FL 0.

DAMAGE AND RECOVERY:

Decrease of FL is called Damage, but represents any long term harm to effectiveness, not just physical injury. Increase of FL is called Recovery and represents either fixing or making up for previous harm to the character. Change in general is abbreviated DR.

DR is mostly done to a character through Abilities. Each Ability causes DR in a slightly different way, so it is important that each player keep track of what specific injuries/recoveries his character's DR represents, as well as what FL the character is at.

In most cases, DR is explicitly called for by the rules, but if a player decides that his character would be seriously affected either way by what has happened, he can change his character's FL accordingly, subject to Director approval.

REMOVAL FROM THE GAME:

A character that is taken to FL 0 is removed from the game. Specifically, he is removed by the type of damage dealt in that last blow. All previous damage is simply interpreted as making it easier to deal the last blow. Thus, if a character is removed by being punched, he is probably unconscious, but if he is removed by being intimidated, he is probably hiding in a corner unable to do anything.

ABILITIES:

Abilities are actions that a character can take with success determined by rules rather than roleplaying. Abilities are divided into Conflict Abilities and Non-Conflict Abilities. Non-Conflict Abilities always work; Conflict Abilities start Conflicts in which other characters can use other abilities to oppose them.

Abilities are given in the following format:

NAME x [# of uses] (RANGE OF FLs) [bonus]: DESCRIPTION OF EFFECT (amt DR) (resist type)

Examples:

Intimidate x3 (4-5) 1: Make someone back down (-FL3) (S)

Flatter x1 (3-5): Make someone feel unduly proud of themselves (+1) (E)

Spark (1-3): Briefly create a tiny flame by magic

of uses = the number of times that ability may be used during the Larp. If none is listed, the ability may be used as many times as the opportunity arises.
Range of FLs = the range of the user's FLs at which the ability may be used. If a character's FL is outside the range, he may not use that ability.
Bonus = a number from -3 to 3 that represents the character's effectiveness at using that ability against opposition. +/-1 = significant, +/- 2 = extraordinary, +/-3 = world class. (Conflict abilities only.)
Amt DR= DR caused by the ability, if applicable. -/+ FL# indicates that it takes the target down/up to that FL, respectively. -/+ # indicates that the target loses/gains that number of FLs.
Type = type of Resist required to block the ability. P = Physical, S = Social, E = Emotional, NR = Not Resistable, P/S = Physical or Social, whichever is higher. Other letters for other Resists. (Conflict abilities only.)
Special exceptions to abilities are given in the Special section of the character sheet

CONFLICTS:

A conflict occurs when two or more people use opposing abilities. Conflicts need not be physical; two people attempting to intimidate each other also counts.

Whenever anybody uses an ability listed under Conflict Abilities, everybody able to participate in the conflict is invited to do so simultaneously. To participate is not necessary to be directly involved in the action that starts the conflict—one simply has to be taking an action in reaction to other actions taking place.

If a player thinks that his/her character would be too surprised to immediately respond, he should wait until after the conflict to respond, though he still Resists.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

DECLARING ACTIONS:

Conflict resolution works as follows: First, participants state their intended actions. Others are invited to participate, stop participating, or change their own intended actions in light of the intended actions of others. (In the rare case that this causes an endless circle, everybody should choose actions simultaneously in secret.)

A participant can declare his/her intended action as contingent on the success or failure of another action (e.g. only running away if his partner dies.). He can also declare that he is not acting, and simply focusing on Resisting as a primary action.

RESISTING:

Every participant in a conflict is always by default Resisting, even if he is performing another action at the same time. This means that the character is trying not to be affected by hostile actions of others. There are three default types of Resists: Physical, Social, and Emotional. Certain Larps may change types of Resists. A character always uses all Resists he has at the same time.

Each type of Resist behaves like an ability with a bonus of the Resist number (see bottom left of character sheet) whose effect is to prevent all undesired actions corresponding to that type of Resist from affecting the user.

Note that most actions don't need to be resisted. By default, especially in small conflicts, a player can choose to just permit an action targeting his PC for simplicity, or because he wants it to succeed..

An ability that takes a <type> Resist is called a <type> ability.

BIDDING:

After all intended actions are established, all participants then simultaneously Bid Damage. Bidding means secretly choosing an amount of damage (in FLs) the player is willing for his/her character to risk getting in order to increase the character's action's chance of success.

This is not to say that the character explicitly decides to get damaged in order to succeed-- whether and how much to bid is an OOC decision that is based on the player's judgment of how likely the character is to seriously push for his intended result despite chance of physical or psychological trauma.

No matter how dedicated the character is, however, bid sizes are also limited by the amount of damage the character can plausibly get in the conflict, and each participant is responsible for determining a plausible IC reason to take the amount of damage he bid.. For example, in most cases it is implausible to take more than 1 damage in a petty argument, but any amount of damage is possible in a gun fight. Keep in mind that losing an FL is important, and by default players should not bid.

Bids only apply to a character's primary action. This means that if a character is doing a normal action, the bid does not increase his chances of Resisting. If, however, he is only Resisting, then the bid will increase the chance of all Resists succeeding. Damage that was bid only actually occurs if the action is in any way successful.

When all bids are decided, all participants hold out 0-5 fingers behind their backs corresponding to the size of their bids, then show them at the same time.

RANKING:

Participants then calculate totals by adding their ability bonus and bid. (We recommend then holding out fingers for totals, for efficiency.) If a character is primarily Resisting, any bid he made is added to all his Resist totals.

At this point, participants sort out which attempted actions execute by ranking all participants by their totals, from highest to lowest, with ties broken randomly (such as with rock-paper-scissors).

Actions take place in order, starting from the highest. If a previous action causes a character to have too low an FL to perform his intended action, or simply prevents that action from occurring (e.g. a Resist), that action is cancelled. In essence, a Resist cancels all lower-ranked effects of the relevant Resist type on that character.

If any part of an action succeeded, then the bid goes into effect immediately after the action executes.

It's important to note that when an intended action gets cancelled because of effects of earlier actions, any limited-use abilities spent to attempt the action are still used up, but any damage bid does not occur.

ARTIFACTS

Artifacts are items that make it easier for a character to cause DR, often as a conflict action. The most common type of artifacts are weapons, which obviously cause damage. However, artifacts like drugs may cause recovery.

Certain characters may have abilities that make them good at using an artifact, but by default, characters simply use artifacts with their General Physical ability. If an artifact use action succeeds, then the target is DRed an amount according to the DR amount of the artifact (exactly the same as using an ability that normally causes DR on its own).

In certain cases, artifact use abilities override DR amounts on an artifact, either by the description, or by being themselves fixed DR (i.e. -/+ FL#). Artifact use abilities that are themselves unfixed DR (i.e. -/+ #) stack with the artifact's own DR amount.

By default, knives are (-1) and guns are (-2).

AFTER RESOLUTION:

After the above process is complete, characters may elect to use more abilities in response to the results. This opens a new round of the conflict in which anybody involved can use abilities and the rules for resolution are the same. This process repeats until a round happens in which nobody uses an ability. Then roleplaying can resume.

After a block of conflict is resolved, we recommend playing out as much of the determined actions as possible (without really hurting anybody, of course). This is especially helpful when a conflict ability used corresponded to IC dialog—it is useful for future dialog to know exactly what the characters said.

The Tale of Bob the Surgeon: A Few Examples of Conflict Resolution

Bob the Surgeon is strolling through a park, enjoying the flowers. His wife, Meg the Engineer uses her "Get Bob to Come Home" ability. (She chooses to do this because she has the ability—if she didn't, she could still simply try to talk him into going home through roleplaying.)

Bob does not want to go home, and chooses to Resist (in this case, only his "Social Resist" matters, since the only power being used against him is social). Bob's player thinks that Bob finds this is important enough that he should bid 1 to Resist, which he defines to represent damage from the frustration. Meg's player decides Meg doesn't consider the matter important enough to bid. Bob has a bonus of 0 to "Social Resist" and Meg has a bonus of 1 to "Get Bob to Come Home." Consequently, both of them have totals of 1.

The tie is resolved by rock-paper-scissors. Bob wins—his Social Resist is ranked higher, and therefore executes first, blocking any Social powers used against him for the rest of the round. Since he has bid 1 to use it, he is reduced to FL 4 as soon as he resists. When they play it out, Meg still acts out trying to talk him into going home, but he is prepared to say no, although he gets frustrated at her. Meg's ability is used up, so she cannot try again.

Bob has a non-conflict ability called "Independence" which allows him to recover 1 FL of damage whenever he successfully resists his wife. Since he's just resisted Meg, he can use it, and he is restored to FL 5. Since it's a non-conflict ability, it doesn't create a conflict and Meg can't prevent it.

After this has occurred, Meg does not drop the conflict, but starts a new one by immediately trying a more desperate tactic. She uses her "Guilt Trip" ability, an emotional attack which does actual damage. Bob decides to flee the park; since he doesn't have a specific ability that lets him do this, it counts as a "General Physical." Zagrabas the Restaurateur, who is also walking by, uses his social ability "Tease" on Bob to embarrass him into staying and standing up to his wife.

Bob has a "General Physical" of 0, and again bids 1. Meg has a "Guilt Trip" of 1, and doesn't bid. Zagrabas has a "Tease" of 0, but a special ability that gives him a bonus of 1 to social abilities immediately after taking a refreshing walk. In addition, Zagrabas cares so much about encouraging Bob to stand up for himself that his player decides that he bids 1 FL of damage, representing the social awkwardness of forcefully intruding on a private argument. This gives Zagrabas a total of 2, while Bob and Meg both have totals of 1.

Zagrabas goes first, beating Bob's social resist of -1, and forces Bob to stay; right after his action executes, his bid executes, reducing him to FL 4. Bob's action contradicts this and would have executed after, so it gets cancelled. Since his action didn't happen, his bid gets cancelled as well. Meg can still do her action, and she beats Bob's emotional resist of 0. Her power immediately takes the target to FL 3, and since Bob's current FL is greater than that, he is reduced to FL 3.

They pause to act out the actions of the round. Bob turns to leave, but Zagrabas starts mocking Bob for caving into his wife, whom he describes in unflattering terms. Bob turns back to confront her as she starts making him feel guilty.

Because Zagrabas succeeded during the previous round, Bob stands up for himself, using his "Complain" ability to do damage to Meg. Meg, meanwhile, tries to get revenge at Zagrabas for what he said about her, using her "General Physical" ability

and her unusual, extra-heavy purse (which does the same damage as a knife). Zagrabas gets angry at Meg, and uses "Embarrass" (an emotional attack) to humiliate her for 1 FL of damage, hoping she will then leave. A passerby uses "Instantly Summon Police." When Meg learns this, she decides that she only wants to attack Zagrabas if the police haven't arrived yet. At the same time, an unnamed shady character wishes to slip out before the police arrive, using a "General Physical." Unk the Lawyer, in the escalating argument, tries to use his "Threaten to Sue" ability on Zagrabas because he hates restaurateurs.

Meanwhile, Unk's pet platypus Eggy and Zagrabas' pet echidna Etch each fight to help their masters. Eggy declares that he wants to use his "Speedy Attack" ability to do physical injury to Zagrabas. Hearing this, Etch decides to attack Eggy in his master's defense. Eggy declares that if he is being attacked, he would rather fight his attacker instead of Zagrabas, and Etch decides that he still wants to attack Eggy anyway to demonstrate his loyalty. So Eggy instead uses his ability to attack Etch, while Etch uses his General Physical to poke Eggy with his spines, even though he can't actually cause damage using general physical without an artifact. Thus the fight between the two pets becomes a completely separate conflict happening at the same time.

Bob's bonus is -2, and he is so drained by Meg's guilt trip that he has nothing extra to throw into it, so he doesn't bid. Meg has a bonus of 0, and bids 1 because she's gotten angry and reckless. Zagrabas has a bonus of 2, but all of his Resists are 1. He would like to bid to increase his Resists, but because he is performing an action besides Resisting, his bid could only apply to the action, so he doesn't bid. The passerby has a bonus of 1, the shady character has a bonus of 3, and Unk has a bonus of 2. Finally, the pets both have attacks of -2 and all Resists at -1 (being only pets). None of these people are invested enough to bid.

The shady character goes first at 3, and leaves. Since nobody's action is contradicted by this, everyone else's actions still have the possibility of happening normally.

Unk and Zagrabas are tied at 2. Unk beats Zagrabas' Resist, but the order matters since Zagrabas can only use Embarrass at FL 3 or higher, is currently at FL4, and Unk's lawsuit always does 2 damage. Zagrabas has a single use non-conflict ability that lets him win a tie due to being extremely lucky. He uses it, and humiliates Meg before Unk threatens him. Then he is reduced to FL2.

Now Meg and the passerby both have totals of 1, and Zagrabas has a physical resist of 1. Meg won't attack Zagrabas if the police are there, and has to beat Zagrabas' Resist, so all three throw rock-paper-scissors together (even though it doesn't matter whether Zagrabas or the passerby goes first, as long as one of them beats Meg). Meg wins, and hits Zagrabas with her purse, since she won't react to something that hasn't happened yet. Her purse always does 1 FL of damage, so Zagrabas is reduced to FL 1. Then the passerby summons the police, who see everything that happens, but are too surprised to react until this set of actions have resolved.

Now, at -2, Bob complains to Meg and both animals attack each other. None of these activities contradict each other, so the order doesn't matter, but all the actions lose to the corresponding Resist.

Now that the police are here, Meg's player gets Director approval to take 1 FL of voluntary damage to represent her fear of getting in trouble for caught disturbing the peace by hitting people in a public park, bringing her down to FL3.

Since the police are present, people have to be careful about what they do. Unk uses a social ability, "Slander," to make Zagrabas out to be a violent criminal. Bob decides to try to make Meg feel better using his "Shelter" ability, which recovers someone 1 FL by offering to protect them from danger. Meg is so surprised at this that she fails to take any action, but she decides that the way Bob is helping her is too demeaning, and Resists it. Since the police don't care about the pets, Eggy and Etch attack each other again, and this time each bid 2 because, with Zagrabas so injured, they're both willing to risk serious physical injury to try to hurt the other. No one else bids.

Unk has a bonus of 2, which overcomes Zagrabas' Resist of 1. It does 1 FL of

damage, reducing Zagrabas to FL 0. Zagrabas is so reviled as a criminal that he can no longer affect the game, and is removed from play. His previous damage contributes to this—for instance the bruise from the purse makes him look less respectable—but it is the final ability which determines why he is removed. Bob has a bonus of 0, while Meg's Resist is 1, so Bob is unable to heal her. Finally, Eggy and Etch have totals of 0, so Eggy does 1 FL of damage to Etch while Etch (who used a "General Physical") succeeds in poking Eggy with his spines, but does no damage to him. Finally, they act out the results, with Unk openly accusing Zagrabas of being a criminal and Bob trying to comfort Meg and she rebuffs him, while the pets fight dedicatedly in the background.

Game-Specific Information for Director

Public Background Overview

Some time ago, old King Hamlet of Denmark passed away. He was taking his customary afternoon nap in the orchard when his heart failed him. Many gathered to Elsinore Castle for his funeral and for the wedding, a month later, of his widow, Queen Gertrude, to the late King's younger brother, Claudius.

After the wedding and Claudius' subsequent coronation, the castle returned, for the most part, to its former cheer, with nightly festivity and revelry. The only exception to this was young Prince Hamlet, son of the late King, who would not give up his mourning. Neither did he celebrate his mother's marriage, arguing instead that marrying a late husband's brother should be considered incestuous.

Shortly after the departure of Advisor Polonius' son, Laertes, for France, Hamlet began behaving even more oddly. The consensus seemed to be that he had gone insane (rumors said for love of Polonius' daughter, Ophelia). Hamlet's condition caused everyone to tread lightly.

Then, for a time, things seemed to be looking up. A diplomatic agreement with the King of Norway deterred an attack by Prince Fortinbras' army on Denmark. Deciding that it might be better for Hamlet to get away from Elsinore for a time, the King and Queen made arrangements for him to sail to England. That same evening, Hamlet sponsored a play for the court, an apparent sign that he was at last beginning to recover his former levity.

However, everything fell apart again that night. The play turned out to be about a regicide, an unsubtle accusation leveled by Hamlet at Claudius. Understandably angry, the King left abruptly, creating a great deal of awkward tension. A few hours after, Polonius was accidentally killed when he tripped and fell down the stairs. The court once more entered a state of mourning.

Rather than subject Hamlet to more grief, the King hastened his departure for England. Tonight marks Hamlet's last evening in Elsinore for some time. He will be sailing in a few hours with the evening tide, and will remain in England for the indefinite future, until he recovers his health.

Thus, despite the general gloom of mourning in the castle, the King has called together a small gathering to see him off.

Secret Background Overview

The only secrets are the obvious ones from the play:

Claudius poisoned old King Hamlet.

Hamlet found out about this when the ghost of his father appeared to him instructing him to kill Claudius, and has been trying to work up the nerve to do this ever since.

Hamlet accidentally killed Polonius while he was speaking with his mother. Polonius moved while hiding behind a tapestry, and Hamlet thought it was Claudius and stabbed him.

Claudius is sending a letter with Rosencrantz & Guildenstern to the King of England instructing him to kill Hamlet upon arrival.

Character Overview

(Listed in order of decreasing necessity for smaller-group games.)
All characters are gender-specific.

HAMLET: EDC. Hamlet is the Prince of Denmark, son of old King Hamlet and Queen Gertrude. He returned to Elsinore after his father's death and was furious to find that his mother had already married his uncle. His father's ghost appeared to him and claimed that he was murdered by Claudius, now the King, and charged Hamlet to avenge him. Hamlet has been reluctant to do this, making up excuses and experiments. He appears to have gone mad.

CLAUDIUS: GDS. Claudius is the current King. He poisoned his brother while he was napping and thus became King. He holds parties all the time and deals not ineffectively with affairs of state. He has, however, arranged to kill Hamlet.

GERTRUDE: EDS. Gertrude is Hamlet's mother, the Queen. She seems to be happily married to Claudius, but is concerned about Hamlet and his apparent madness, and a little frightened of him. Hamlet told her only last night that Claudius killed his father.

OPHELIA: GDC. Ophelia is Polonius' daughter, whom Hamlet may have been in love with. Polonius had completely controlled her life, so his absence is very much a shock to her. She is now struggling to make the world make sense.

LAERTES: GLS. Laertes is Polonius' son and Ophelia's older brother. He is forthright and quick to action, the opposite of Hamlet. He was away studying in France, but returned on a surprise visit only to hear that his father just died. He now wants revenge.

ROSENCRANTZ: GLC. Rosencrantz and his best friend Guildenstern were courtiers who went to school with Hamlet in Wittenberg. When Hamlet started behaving strangely, the King and Queen sent for them to talk to Hamlet and try to find out what was wrong with him. Rosencrantz is in love with Ophelia. Guildenstern is not present at the gathering because he is ill.

HORATIO: ELS. Horatio is Hamlet's best friend and confidant. They went to school together. He also saw the Ghost, though did not hear it tell Hamlet about the murder. He is soft spoken and devoted.

MARCELLUS: ELC. Marcellus is a guardsman at the castle and a close friend of Horatio's. He is also extremely loyal to Claudius. He saw the Ghost with Horatio. He is there in the role of the guard.

Game Overview

AN OOC NOTE ON THEME:

Because there is so much scholarly debate about what is really going on in the play, the purpose of this larp is to set up a Hamlet situation with a small amount of plot, and let people have fun filling in their own interpretations. Consequently, very little is definitively established to avoid committing to a particular interpretation.

THE GATHERING:

Gertrude persuaded Claudius to call this gathering to see Hamlet off. Claudius has pretty much ordered people to stay put and socialize so that people will actually succeed in spending time with Hamlet before he's gone (especially since Claudius doesn't plan for him to come back).

LAERTES:

The game will start without Laertes, because everyone expects him to be in France. He will arrive approximately half an hour in, breathless, furious, and demanding to see his father.

PLOT:

Most of the plot is driven by three things. First, Laertes is trying to avenge Polonius. Second, Claudius is trying to get Hamlet killed. Third, Ophelia is trying to figure out what really happened to her father. And, of course, Hamlet is trying to kill Claudius...

THE GHOST:

The Ghost should make an appearance at some point during the night.

If Hamlet spends too long still failing to kill Claudius (as seems eminently likely), the Ghost can appear to him once again and remind him of his purpose. Horatio and Marcellus will be able to see it, but no one else.

If Hamlet does not seem to need spurring, the Ghost can simply appear right before a climactic moment and look on. Stage this as appropriate to the situation.

GULDENSTERN:

If you need to introduce further plot, the absent Guildenstern can serve as a device. In his sickness and delirium, he accidentally reaches for the wrong sheet of paper and opens the letter Claudius sent to England by mistake. Reading it, he finds out that Claudius is intending to have Hamlet killed. He sends a servant from his sickbed to fetch Rosencrantz, and tells him what he found.

RESISTS:

Because of the psychological nature of Hamlet, Emotional Resists are replaced with Mental Resists, which represent defense from insanity.

NUMBERS:

All knives are damage (-1) and all swords are damage (-2), including fencing swords. Poison just kills people. There is no way to resist.

Miscellaneous Guards' Abilities: General Physical (3-5) 0. PR -1. SR -2. MR -1.

Miscellaneous Servants' Abilities: General Physical (3-5) -2. PR -2. SR -2. MR -1.

Advice on Setup

- Have a copy of the play on hand. People will want to refer to it.
- Use as large of a space as you can find, to make it easier for people not to overhear asides. It would also be nice to have some space outside the main room available, in case people go to other parts of the castle.
- Have some beverage available to stand in for wine, so that people can hold toasts and poison each other.
- Use props for swords, ideally also for knives. Have three fencing sword props ready in case they decide to have a fencing match.
- Claudius and Gertrude should have obvious thrones.

Advice on Casting and Running

ADVICE ON CASTING:

- It is, of course, pointless if Hamlet is played too goal-oriented. It is also pointless if he doesn't punctuate periods of inaction with periods of almost success. Give Hamlet to someone who can do very E.
- Ophelia is the most difficult character in this larp. Make sure she is played by someone who can act vulnerable, and really complex.
- Make sure someone who can be very active and assertive plays Laertes.
- As minor characters in the play, Rosencrantz and Marcellus may be somewhat boring for players who prefer not to make/find their own plot.

ADVICE ON RUNNING:

- The hardest thing you will have to do is make everyone stay in the room. Be prepared to keep directing action back into the room whenever possible.
- Check on Hamlet regularly to keep track of his progress toward killing Claudius.
- Although both Hamlet and Ophelia are asked whether they love each other, it would be much preferred if at least once of them did. Try to work this out with them at the beginning.

Larp-Specific Rules and Beginning Announcements

(Read this to your players at start of game)

LARP-SPECIFIC RULES:

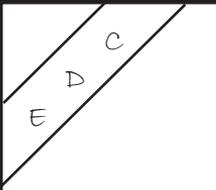
- Resists in this game include Physical, Social, and Mental. Physical and Social resists are as standard -- Mental resists represent soundness of mind.
- All characters have the "Aside" ability that allows them to have private conversations in public. Assume you can't overhear any private conversations, and try to avoid listening to them.
- Being taken to FL 0 by a physical attack means you die. Period. There is no unconsciousness.
- Being taken to FL 0 by a non-physical attack means that you go mad. The style of mad you go should obviously depend upon the nature of the last damage.

BEGINNING ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- DON'T try to speak Shakespearean English. Even if you're great at it, others won't be, and it will just generally complicate everything, for so many reasons.
- This larp has less prewritten plot than other Parlor Larps in order to allow more freedom in interpreting characters. Have fun playing the characters and think of it like a play. Use play-logic, be stylized, don't strategize in too much detail. Everyone knows the story—play around with doing some of the things that happened in it.
- Remember that you have been royally commanded to attend this gathering. It's not a casual invitation, so it's a big deal if you leave.
- There are servants around serving drinks and things. They don't matter much, but you can send them off on errands.

Hamlet

Hamlet



APPARENT IDENTITY: Slightly nuts Prince of Denmark

REAL IDENTITY: Young man trying to get himself to avenge his father's death

BACKGROUND: Shortly after your mother married Claudius, your father's ghost came to you, told you that Claudius had killed him, and charged you with avenging him. Horatio and Marcellus (whom you are somewhat friends with) saw the ghost, though they did not hear it, and you made them swear not to say anything. Since then, you have tried repeatedly to kill Claudius, but can't get yourself to do it. You are also furious at your mother for marrying him-- you think that in doing so, she is shaming your father's memory.

Horatio has been your friend for a long time. You went to school together in Wittenberg, and you trust him a great deal. You set up the play to see if Claudius would react guiltily, and Horatio helped you. His reaction seemed guilty, but you're not sure.

After the play, you failed once again to kill Claudius while he was praying.

That night, you went to speak to your mother. Seeing a movement behind the tapestry and thinking it was Claudius hiding, you stabbed it. It turned out to be Polonius whom you killed. You then told your mother that Claudius killed your father, but you don't know whether she believed you. The ghost appeared once again to rekindle your determination.

If you don't kill Claudius tonight, you might not get another chance for a long time. Perhaps not ever, if he is plotting against you as you suspect.

CONFLICT ABILITIES:

General Physical (2-5) 0: Physical actions not otherwise covered (P)

Fencing (2-5) 1: Fight with a sword (P)

North by Northwest x4 (1-5) 1: Unnerve someone by sounding like you're crazy (-1) (M)

NON-CONFLICT ABILITIES:

Intuition x3 (1-5): Ask the Director a yes/no question

Soliloquy (1-5): Stop all action while you talk aloud to yourself

Loner x3: Feel more certain of yourself after talking through something
-- must give a long Soliloquy out loud (+1)

RESISTS

Physical	0
Social	3
Mental	-1

SPECIALS

You can see the Ghost when it appears
You can hear the Ghost when it talks

INVENTORY

Dagger

GOALS:

Somehow get yourself to kill Claudius to avenge your father
Make absolutely certain you want to kill Claudius before you do
Achieve your desired relationship with Ophelia.
Be honorable and do well by your friends.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:

So... The big question first. How insane are you? Are you pretending? A little bit off? Completely off? If insane, how did you get that way? If pretending, why?

And the next one: Why do you have such a hard time killing Claudius?

And the third one: Do you love Ophelia? If not, how do you feel about her?

What do you actually want from her?

Why treat her so curtly and erratically?

Discuss your sexuality. Why flirt so explicitly with Ophelia at the play?
Anything else of note?

How do you feel about killing Polonius?

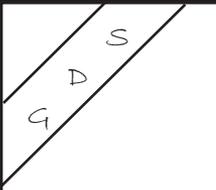
What did you study at Wittenberg?

What was your relationship with your father before his death?

What do you like about Horatio? What do you get from him? Is there anything you want from him that you don't have?

Hamlet

Claudius



APPARENT IDENTITY: Recent King of Denmark

REAL IDENTITY: Man who killed his brother to marry his wife and become King

BACKGROUND: You murdered old King Hamlet by pouring poison in his ear while he was asleep. You were upset by the play, and went to pray afterwards, while Polonius spied on Hamlet's conversation with Gertrude. You found, however, that your heart could not honestly pray.

Later that night Gertrude told you that Hamlet had reacted suddenly when Polonius moved from hiding, and killed Polonius. Nobody knows about this except you, Gertrude, and Rosencrantz & Guildenstern, whom you sent to get the body from Hamlet (this was unsuccessful). You and Gertrude agreed to cover it up for your own reputation's, Hamlet's, and also for Ophelia's benefit.

You are getting desperate. You have sent with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern a letter instructing the king of England to kill Hamlet upon arrival. However, there are a lot of problems with this plan -- you would owe England a favor, and the whole mess would be very embarrassing, awkward, and public. It wouldn't say good things about your reign to the other royalty, and so you would much prefer to get rid of Hamlet discreetly at home if you can.

Hamlet may be in love with Ophelia, you and Gertrude are not sure.

You promised Gertrude to hold this gathering because she wanted to spend time with Hamlet before he left. Consequently you made it a royal order. It's also convenient for you...

CONFLICT ABILITIES:

- General Physical (3-5) 0: Physical actions not otherwise covered (P)
- Majesty x3 (4-5) 2: Impress someone with how kingly you are (+/- 2, depending on whether you feel they're on your side) (S)
- Frighten (3-5) 1: Make someone scared of you (-FL 4) (S)
- Resist Lie Detection (2-5) 1: Cause lie detect abilities to fail on you (NR)

NON-CONFLICT ABILITIES:

None

RESISTS	SPECIALS	INVENTORY
Physical 0	Social/Mental Resists are -1 on the subject of the death of Old King Hamlet	Crown
Social 1		Royal Seal of Denmark
Mental 0		Poison (fatal, unlimited uses)

GOALS:

Make sure no one knows that you killed old King Hamlet. Protect yourself.
Protect the women. Keep Ophelia from finding out that Hamlet killed Polonius.
Have Hamlet killed. Ideally tonight, before he ever sails.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:

First things first: Why did you kill old King Hamlet?

Do you love Gertrude?

Do you love Hamlet?

Do you love Denmark?

Poison is a woman's weapon, and sending Hamlet to his doom in England is also quite roundabout. Why do you avoid direct violence? What does it mean for your self concept that you do so?

What was your relationship with your brother like? How did you feel toward him? How did he feel toward you?

What do you most fear?

What do you most want?

How, in more detail, do you feel about Hamlet?

What is the practical reason that you made plans to have Hamlet killed?

Why, emotionally / personally, is it that you are willing to do this?

What were you praying for? Why can't you successfully pray?

If everything from this moment on could go as you wished, what would you have happen?

How do you characterize yourself?

How, as a player, do you characterize Claudius?

Hamlet

Gertrude

E
D
S

APPARENT IDENTITY: Queen of Denmark, Hamlet's mother

REAL IDENTITY: That's for you to decide...

BACKGROUND: You were married to old King Hamlet for a long time. Shortly after he died, you married his younger brother, Claudius. The two of you have been worried about Hamlet's behavior for some time. Polonius suggested that he might be in love with Ophelia.

After the play, you had a talk with Hamlet in your room. Early on, Polonius who had been listening in behind a tapestry moved, and Hamlet stabbed at it, killing him. Immediately after, he accused you of disloyalty to your first husband, told you that he thought Claudius had killed him, and then started speaking to thin air.

Nobody knows about Hamlet killing Polonius except you, Claudius, and Rosencrantz & Guildenstern, whom Claudius sent (unsuccessfully) to retrieve the body from Hamlet. The two of you have decided to keep it secret.

You insisted that Claudius hold this gathering, and he agreed.

GOALS:

Protect Hamlet.

Decide how you feel about Claudius after talking to Hamlet.

Take care of Ophelia. Keep her from finding out that Hamlet killed Polonius.

Keep peace. Maintain courtesy and relative calm. Make people happy.

Entertain people. Organize social events.

CONFLICT ABILITIES:

General Physical (3-5) -2: Physical actions not otherwise covered (P)

Polite Insult (2-5) 0: Deliver a subtle insult that sounds sweet (-1) (S)

NON-CONFLICT ABILITIES:

Woman's intuition (1-5) x3: Ask the Director to alert you when a certain type of event is taking place (e.g., Hamlet is in danger).

Sacrifice x1: Take all physical injury from an action against someone else, yourself

RESISTS

Physical -2
Social -2
Mental -1

SPECIALS

None

INVENTORY

None

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:

First off... Why did you marry Claudius so quickly?

Do you love Claudius?

What was your relationship with old King Hamlet? Did you love him?

How do you feel about Hamlet's accusation of Claudius? Do you believe him?

How do you feel about yourself? What kind of person do you consider yourself?

How do you feel about Polonius' death?

What are your priorities?

How do you feel about Hamlet leaving for a long time?

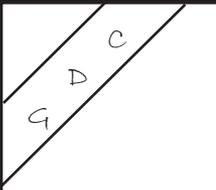
What do you want?

What do you fear?

What are your plans for Ophelia, now that her father is dead?

Hamlet

Ophelia



APPARENT IDENTITY: Polonius' daughter

REAL IDENTITY: Powerless young girl whose world is falling apart

BACKGROUND: For some time, Hamlet was sending you love letters. Your brother warned you that he just wanted to get you in bed. When you went to your father about it, he told you that Hamlet was too far above your station and that you should not consider him, and ordered you to give the letters back. When you did, Hamlet behaved erratically, first being polite, then yelling at you. But then at the play, he flirted with you rather bawdily.

Your father was an extremely controlling man. He filled your world because he controlled every aspect of it, and constantly checked on you. His death is more than the loss of a person, it is in some sense the loss of the structure of world, of everything you're familiar with.

GOALS:

- Get personal power. Don't lose control of your situation.
- Figure out what really happened to your father.
- Make the world make sense. By any means necessary. At all.
- Sort out your relationship with Hamlet once and for all.

CONFLICT ABILITIES:

- General Physical (3-5) O: Physical actions not otherwise covered (P)
- Shame (1-5) 1: Shame someone denouncing them femininely (-FL3) (S)
- Poor Innocent (1-4) 2: Making someone feel sorry for you (-FL 4) (M)

NON-CONFLICT ABILITIES:

- Privacy x3 (3-5): Go off by yourself without your absence being noticed.
- Get Attention x1 (1-5): Do something strange and get everyone's attention
- Overhear Aside x5 (1-5): Overhear a private conversation without being noticed
- Drown In River x1 (1-5): Drown in the river despite attempts to save you

RESISTS	SPECIALS	INVENTORY
Physical -2 Social -1 Emotional -2	Poor Innocent can only be used once per person	Flowers

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:

Do you love Hamlet? How do you feel about him? What do you want from him?

What are you good at?

What do you do all day? In your spare time?

What was your relationship with your father like?

Did you love your father? Did you hate him?

What was the worst thing he ever did to you?

The best thing?

How do you feel about your brother?

What were your hopes before your father died? What are they now?

What can you simply not handle? (Can be specific or general or hypothetical)

How else have things changed since your father's death?

If you could do anything, what would it be?

Describe your perfect world.

Hamlet

Laertes

G
L
S

APPARENT IDENTITY: Polonius' son

REAL IDENTITY: Forthright young man infuriated by his father's death

BACKGROUND: You have been studying in France for the past few months. Before you left, you found out that Hamlet had been going after your sister, and warned her not to listen to him because he obviously just wanted to take advantage of her and get her in bed.

A few weeks ago, you caught your father's servant, Reynaldo, talking to your acquaintances and spying on your affairs in order to report back to your father. This type of controlling behavior was very characteristic of your father.

You thought you'd travel back briefly with Reynaldo and pay your father and sister a surprise visit. When you landed a few hours ago, you heard rumors that Hamlet has gone mad. You also learned that your father had died. You left him under Claudius' protection, and Claudius was obviously responsible for this. You are convinced he could not have died accidentally. You are furious and want revenge.

GOALS:

- Find out what happened to your father and avenge him.
- Do not let anything stop or delay you from avenging your father
- Protect your sister. Especially from Hamlet.
- Serve Denmark

CONFLICT ABILITIES:

- General Physical (2-5) 0: Physical actions not otherwise covered (P)
- Weapon Use (1-5) 2: Fight with a weapon (P)
- Fist Fighting (2-5) 1: Fight unarmed (-1) (P)
- Loud (3-5) 0: Shout at someone (-1) (S)
- Confront (2-5) 1: Make someone shaken by confronting them with something they actually did wrong (-FL 2) (M)
- Detect Lie x3 (3-5) 2: Figure out if someone is lying to you (M)

NON-CONFLICT ABILITIES:

None

RESISTS

Physical 1
Social 1
Mental 0

SPECIALS

You cannot be made to stop wanting to avenge your father.

INVENTORY

Knife
Sword

Questions to Answer:

What was your relationship with your father?

How did you feel about him?

What was the worst thing he'd ever done to you?

The best?

What do you want for your sister?

How are you like your father?

How are you unlike him?

How do you feel about Hamlet?

What is important?

Before you left for France, your father gave you a lot of advice about clean and proper living. Did you follow it? If not, how not?

What were you studying?

What do you like to do in your spare time?

Hamlet

Rosencrantz

APPARENT IDENTITY: A former schoolmate of Hamlet's

REAL IDENTITY: Courtier sent by King & Queen to find out why Hamlet is mad

BACKGROUND: Your background is entirely unspecified, except that you and Guildenstern went to Wittenberg with Hamlet, and were sent for by the King and Queen a few months ago to befriend Hamlet and find out what has been upsetting him. Hamlet, however, seems to be aware of this, and doesn't talk to you.

You know that Hamlet killed Polonius because the King sent you to find out from him where he put the body. You didn't succeed, but the King found out later by asking Hamlet.

You and Guildenstern are very close and trust each other completely.

You are infatuated with Ophelia.

Guildenstern is very ill. He is fevered and bedridden and could not attend this gathering. A doctor is seeing to him.

GOALS:

Gain influence and power at the court.

Get Ophelia's love, or at least her attention.

Matter somehow.

Survive and protect yourself.

Gain Hamlet's friendship. Figure out why he's nuts. Please Claudius.

CONFLICT ABILITIES:

General Physical (3-5) 0: Physical actions not otherwise covered (P)

Fighting (3-5) 1: Do physical damage with a weapon (P)

Look Trustworthy x2 (3-5) 0: Make someone think you're trustworthy (S)

Sycophant (1-5) -1: Shamelessly flatter someone (+1) (S)

NON-CONFLICT ABILITIES:

Spread Rumor x3 (3-5): Get everybody to learn a piece of information without knowing its source (tell Director)

But Stoppard Cared... x1 (1-5): Get Director to give you something interesting to do if you are not involved in major plot

RESISTS

Physical 0
Social -3
Mental -1

SPECIALS

Look Trustworthy does
not work on Hamlet

INVENTORY

Knife

A NOTE: Your character is famous for being mostly undeveloped, and thus is largely up to you. The following questions will guide you in creating Rosencrantz as a character, but you should build a broad, coherent idea of what he's like.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:

How do you actually feel about Hamlet?

How do you feel about Claudius and Gertrude?

What are you like? What's your personality?

How are you similar to Guildenstern?

How are you different from Guildenstern?

What do you see in Ophelia?

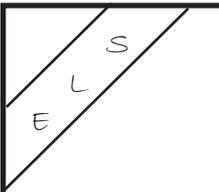
What did you study in Wittenberg?

What do you want out of life?

What do you enjoy doing?

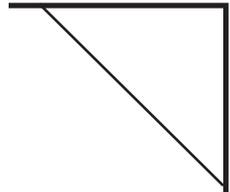
What do you think of everything that's happened?

How do you feel about the way the King and Queen treat you?



Hamlet

Horatio



APPARENT IDENTITY: Hamlet's friend

REAL IDENTITY: Hamlet's close friend and only confidant

BACKGROUND: You went to Wittenberg with Hamlet, and the two of you became close friends. You are extremely loyal to him. You are also friends with Marcellus, the guard.

Shortly after Gertrude and Claudius got married, two guardsmen came to you and Marcellus saying that they had seen a strange apparition when standing watch on the battlements. The two of you went to see, and saw what appeared to be the ghost of old King Hamlet. You told Hamlet about it, and the next night he went to see. He left with it and evidently spent some time speaking to it -- afterwards he made you two swear not to say anything.

Hamlet thinks that Claudius killed his father, and wanted you to help him watch Claudius' reaction during the play. The two of you agree he looked guilty, but are not sure.

GOALS:

- Help Hamlet. Serve him and also do what's best for him.
- Do the right thing.
- Keep your word.

CONFLICT ABILITIES:

- General Physical (3-5) 0: Physical actions not otherwise covered (P)
- Detect Lie x10 (1-5) 1: Tell if someone is lying (M)
- Protect (2-5) 1: Force everyone attacking a person or restricted area to get by you first. (NR)
- Joke x5 (2-5) 0: Cheer someone up (+1) (M)

NON-CONFLICT ABILITIES:

- Recount x2 (1-5): Give a plausible summary of events that will be believed

RESISTS	SPECIALS	INVENTORY
Physical 0 Social 0 Mental 0	You can see but not hear the Ghost	Knife

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:

Are there things you want from Hamlet that you don't have?

Why are you so loyal to Hamlet?

What do you want for him?

What do you want for yourself?

What is your private life like?

What did you study at Wittenberg?

What do you enjoy doing?

What do you like to read?

What are your ambitions?

What are your fears? What makes you uncomfortable?

Is there anywhere you won't follow Hamlet or anything you won't do for him? If so, what is it and why? If not, why not?

Do you get jealous? What of?

Hamlet

Marcellus

E
L
C

APPARENT IDENTITY: A guardsman in Elsinore

REAL IDENTITY: A friend of Hamlet and Horatio and loyal servant of Claudius

BACKGROUND: Shortly after Gertrude and Claudius got married, two guardsmen came to you and Horatio saying that they had seen a strange apparition when standing watch on the battlements. The two of you went to investigate, and saw what appeared to be the ghost of old King Hamlet. Horatio told Hamlet about it, and the next night he went to see. He left with it and evidently spent some time speaking to it -- afterwards he made you two swear not to say anything.

You are very loyal and devoted to your king, but after seeing the Ghost and the play that Hamlet sponsored, you are beginning to wonder if there isn't some substance behind Hamlet's tacit accusation of Claudius with the play.

You are at this gathering as a guard, to keep order and serve the king.

GOALS:

- Serve Claudius and the Crown.
- Figure out what's really going on.
- Protect Horatio.
- Serve Denmark.
- Do the right thing.
- Keep general peace and order.

CONFLICT ABILITIES:

- General Physical (2-5) 0: Physical actions not otherwise covered (P)
- Fighting (2-5) 1: Fight with a weapon (P)
- Intimidate (4-5) 1: Scare someone by pointing a weapon at someone (-1) (S)
- Disdain x1 (3-5) 2: Make someone understand you disapprove of them (-2) (S)
- Loyalty x3 (1-5) 0: Make someone confident in your loyalty (it must actually be true) (+1) (S)

NON-CONFLICT ABILITIES:

- Overhear x2 (2-5): Overhear an aside
- Righteous x1 (1-5): Break a tie in your favor if you are physically present and obviously on the side in question

RESISTS	SPECIALS	INVENTORY
Physical 0	You can see but not hear the Ghost	Sword
Social 0		Knife
Mental 1		

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:

How did the experience with the Ghost affect you?

Did you like King Hamlet?

Why are you so devoted to Claudius?

How do you feel about Ophelia?

What do you respect in a person?

What do you disdain in a person?

Why did you become a guard?

What's your personal life like?

What do you enjoy doing?

What would you do if it was, in fact, proven that Claudius killed the old King?

Player Materials

Rules Summary

FUNCTION LEVELS, DAMAGE, AND RECOVERY:

By default, each character starts at Function Level 5. A character's Function Level (FL) represents the condition that the character is in, physically and psychologically, and can decrease or increase over the course of the larp as a result of harm or recovery.

In general, a character at FL 5 is essentially unharmed and in good shape, at FL 4 is in an unpleasant but not particularly disabling state, at FL 3 is somewhat disabled, at FL 2 cannot perform most activities, and at FL 1 can do little other than speak. If a character is ever reduced to FL 0, he is out of the game and completely unable to affect the plot thereafter. Exactly how the character is taken out depends on the nature of the damage that reduced him to FL 0.

A player can request that the Director approve an FL change even when the rules don't call for it, if he thinks that prior events would cause the change to happen.

ABILITIES:

Abilities are given in the following format:

NAME x [# of uses] (RANGE OF FLs) [bonus]: DESCRIPTION OF EFFECT (amt DR) (resist type)

Examples:

Intimidate x3 (4-5) 1: Make someone back down (-FL3) (S)

Flatter x1 (3-5): Make someone feel unduly proud of themselves (+1) (E)

Spark (1-3): Briefly create a tiny flame by magic

of uses = the number of times that ability may be used during the Larp. If none is listed, the ability may be used as many times as the opportunity arises.

Range of FLs = the range of the user's FLs at which the ability may be used. If a character's FL is outside the range, he may not use that ability.

Bonus = a number from -3 to 3 that represents the character's effectiveness at using that ability against opposition. +/-1 = significant, +/- 2 = extraordinary, +/-3 = world class. (Conflict abilities only.) This will modify the character's chance of success when using the ability.

Amt DR= DR caused by the ability, if applicable. -/+ FL# indicates that it takes the target down/up to that FL, respectively. -/+ # indicates that the target loses/gains that number of FLs.

Type = type of Resist required to block the ability. P = Physical, S = Social, E = Emotional, NR = Not Resistible, P/S = Physical or Social, whichever is higher. Other letters for other Resists. (Conflict abilities only.)

Special exceptions to abilities are given in the Special section of the character sheet

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

DECLARING ACTIONS:

Conflict resolution works as follows: First, participants state their intended actions. All other characters are allowed to participate, stop participating, or change their own intended actions in light of the intended actions of others. (In the rare case that this causes an endless circle, everybody should choose actions simultaneously in secret.)

A participant can declare his/her intended action as contingent on the success or failure of another action (e.g. running away only if his partner dies.). He can also declare that he is not acting, and simply focusing on Resisting as a primary action.

BIDDING:

After all intended actions are established, all participants simultaneously Bid Damage. Bidding means secretly choosing an amount of damage (in FLs) that the player is willing to risk his/her character receiving in order to increase the character's action's chance of success.

Regardless of the character's dedication, bid sizes are limited by the amount of damage the character could plausibly get in the conflict, and each participant is responsible for determining a plausible IC reason to take the amount of damage he bid. For example, in most cases it is implausible to take more than 1 damage in a petty argument, but any amount of damage is possible in a gun fight. Keep in mind that losing an FL is significant; a player's default bid should be 0.

Bids only apply to a character's primary action. This means that if a character is doing a normal primary action, a bid does not increase his chances of Resisting. However, if he is only Resisting, then a bid will increase the chance of all of his Resists succeeding. Damage that was bid only actually occurs if the action is in any way successful.

When bids are decided, participants hold out 0-5 fingers behind their backs corresponding to the size of their bids. All participants then show their bids at the same time.

RANKING:

Participants calculate totals by adding their ability bonus and bid. (We recommend then holding out fingers for totals, for efficiency.) If a character is primarily Resisting, any bid he made is added to all his Resist totals.

At this point, all actions are ranked by their totals, from highest to lowest, with ties broken randomly (such as with rock-paper-scissors).

Actions take place in order, starting from the highest. If a previous action causes a character to have too low an FL to perform his intended action, or simply prevents that action from occurring (e.g. a Resist), that action is cancelled. A Resist cancels all lower-ranked effects of the relevant Resist type on that character.

If any part of an action succeeded, then the bid goes into effect immediately after the action executes.

It's important to note that when an intended action gets cancelled because of effects of earlier actions, any limited-use abilities spent to attempt the action are still used up, but any damage bid does not occur.

ARTIFACTS

Artifacts are items that make it easier for a character to cause DR, often as a conflict action. The most common type of artifacts are weapons, which obviously cause damage. However, artifacts like drugs may cause recovery.

Certain PCs may have abilities that make them good at using an artifact, but by default, PCs simply use artifacts with their General Physical ability. If an artifact use action succeeds, then the target is DRed an amount according to the DR amount of the artifact (exactly the same as using an ability that normally causes DR on its own).

Specific artifact use abilities may override DR amounts on an artifact, either by the description, or by being themselves fixed DR (i.e. -/+ FL#). Artifact use abilities that are themselves unfixed DR (i.e. -/+ #) stack with the artifact's own DR amount.

By default, knives are (-1) and guns are (-2).

AFTER RESOLUTION:

After the above process is complete, characters may elect to use more abilities in response to the results. This opens a new round of the conflict in which anybody involved can use abilities and the rules for resolution are the same.

Public Background Overview

Some time ago, old King Hamlet of Denmark passed away. He was taking his customary afternoon nap in the orchard when his heart failed him. Many gathered to Elsinore Castle for his funeral and for the wedding, a month later, of his widow, Queen Gertrude, to the late King's younger brother, Claudius.

After the wedding and Claudius' subsequent coronation, the castle returned, for the most part, to its former cheer, with nightly festivity and revelry. The only exception to this was young Prince Hamlet, son of the late King, who would not give up his mourning. Neither did he celebrate his mother's marriage, arguing instead that marrying a late husband's brother should be considered incestuous.

Shortly after the departure of Advisor Polonius' son, Laertes, for France, Hamlet began behaving even more oddly. The consensus seemed to be that he had gone insane (rumors said for love of Polonius' daughter, Ophelia). Hamlet's condition caused everyone to tread lightly.

Then, for a time, things seemed to be looking up. A diplomatic agreement with the King of Norway deterred an attack by Prince Fortinbras' army on Denmark. Deciding that it might be better for Hamlet to get away from Elsinore for a time, the King and Queen made arrangements for him to sail to England. That same evening, Hamlet sponsored a play for the court, an apparent sign that he was at last beginning to recover his former levity.

However, everything fell apart again that night. The play turned out to be about a regicide, an unsubtle accusation leveled by Hamlet at Claudius. Understandably angry, the King left abruptly, creating a great deal of awkward tension. A few hours after, Polonius was accidentally killed when he tripped and fell down the stairs. The court once more entered a state of mourning.

Rather than subject Hamlet to more grief, the King hastened his departure for England. Tonight marks Hamlet's last evening in Elsinore for some time. He will be sailing in a few hours with the evening tide, and will remain in England for the indefinite future, until he recovers his health.

Thus, despite the general gloom of mourning in the castle, the King has called together a small gathering to see him off.

Larp-Specific Rules and Announcements

LARP-SPECIFIC RULES:

- Resists in this game include Physical, Social, and Mental. Physical and Social resists are as standard -- Mental resists represent soundness of mind.
- All characters have the "Aside" ability that allows them to have private conversations in public. Assume you can't overhear any private conversations, and try to avoid listening to them.
- Being taken to FL 0 by a physical attack means you die. Period. There is no unconsciousness.
- Being taken to FL 0 by a non-physical attack means that you go mad. The style of mad you go should obviously depend upon the nature of the last damage.

BEGINNING ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- DON'T try to speak Shakespearean English. Even if you're great at it, others won't be, and it will just generally complicate everything, for so many reasons.
- This larp has less prewritten plot than other Parlor Larps in order to allow more freedom in interpreting characters. Have fun playing the characters and think of it like a play. Use play-logic, be stylized, don't strategize in too much detail. Everyone knows the story—play around with doing some of the things that happened in it.
- Remember that you have been royally commanded to attend this gathering. It's not a casual invitation, so it's a big deal if you leave.
- There are servants around serving drinks and things. They don't matter much, but you can send them off on errands.

To His Majesty the King of England:

*Greetings..... an exact com-
mand.....larded with many
several sorts of reasons.....
.....importing Denmark's
health, and England's too.....*

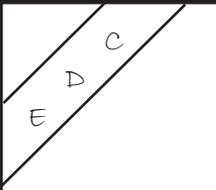
*.....
.....with, ho! such bugs
and goblins in Prince Hamlet's life.....
..... that, on the supervise, no leisure
bated.....no, not to stay the grinding
of the axe, his head should be struck off.....
.....*

Signed,

Claudius, King of Denmark

Hamlet

Hamlet



APPARENT IDENTITY: Slightly nuts Prince of Denmark

REAL IDENTITY: Young man trying to get himself to avenge his father's death

BACKGROUND: Shortly after your mother married Claudius, your father's ghost came to you, told you that Claudius had killed him, and charged you with avenging him. Horatio and Marcellus (whom you are somewhat friends with) saw the ghost, though they did not hear it, and you made them swear not to say anything. Since then, you have tried repeatedly to kill Claudius, but can't get yourself to do it. You are also furious at your mother for marrying him-- you think that in doing so, she is shaming your father's memory.

Horatio has been your friend for a long time. You went to school together in Wittenberg, and you trust him a great deal. You set up the play to see if Claudius would react guiltily, and Horatio helped you. His reaction seemed guilty, but you're not sure.

After the play, you failed once again to kill Claudius while he was praying.

That night, you went to speak to your mother. Seeing a movement behind the tapestry and thinking it was Claudius hiding, you stabbed it. It turned out to be Polonius whom you killed. You then told your mother that Claudius killed your father, but you don't know whether she believed you. The ghost appeared once again to rekindle your determination.

If you don't kill Claudius tonight, you might not get another chance for a long time. Perhaps not ever, if he is plotting against you as you suspect.

CONFLICT ABILITIES:

General Physical (2-5) 0: Physical actions not otherwise covered (P)

Fencing (2-5) 1: Fight with a sword (P)

North by Northwest x4 (1-5) 1: Unnerve someone by sounding like you're crazy (-1) (M)

NON-CONFLICT ABILITIES:

Intuition x3 (1-5): Ask the Director a yes/no question

Soliloquy (1-5): Stop all action while you talk aloud to yourself

Loner x3: Feel more certain of yourself after talking through something
-- must give a long Soliloquy out loud (+1)

RESISTS

Physical	0
Social	3
Mental	-1

SPECIALS

You can see the Ghost when it appears
You can hear the Ghost when it talks

INVENTORY

Dagger

GOALS:

Somehow get yourself to kill Claudius to avenge your father
Make absolutely certain you want to kill Claudius before you do
Achieve your desired relationship with Ophelia.
Be honorable and do well by your friends.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:

So... The big question first. How insane are you? Are you pretending? A little bit off? Completely off? If insane, how did you get that way? If pretending, why?

And the next one: Why do you have such a hard time killing Claudius?

And the third one: Do you love Ophelia? If not, how do you feel about her?

What do you actually want from her?

Why treat her so curtly and erratically?

Discuss your sexuality. Why flirt so explicitly with Ophelia at the play?
Anything else of note?

How do you feel about killing Polonius?

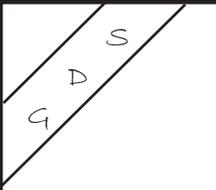
What did you study at Wittenberg?

What was your relationship with your father before his death?

What do you like about Horatio? What do you get from him? Is there anything you want from him that you don't have?

Hamlet

Claudius



APPARENT IDENTITY: Recent King of Denmark

REAL IDENTITY: Man who killed his brother to marry his wife and become King

BACKGROUND: You murdered old King Hamlet by pouring poison in his ear while he was asleep. You were upset by the play, and went to pray afterwards, while Polonius spied on Hamlet's conversation with Gertrude. You found, however, that your heart could not honestly pray.

Later that night Gertrude told you that Hamlet had reacted suddenly when Polonius moved from hiding, and killed Polonius. Nobody knows about this except you, Gertrude, and Rosencrantz & Guildenstern, whom you sent to get the body from Hamlet (this was unsuccessful). You and Gertrude agreed to cover it up for your own reputation's, Hamlet's, and also for Ophelia's benefit.

You are getting desperate. You have sent with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern a letter instructing the king of England to kill Hamlet upon arrival. However, there are a lot of problems with this plan -- you would owe England a favor, and the whole mess would be very embarrassing, awkward, and public. It wouldn't say good things about your reign to the other royalty, and so you would much prefer to get rid of Hamlet discreetly at home if you can.

Hamlet may be in love with Ophelia, you and Gertrude are not sure.

You promised Gertrude to hold this gathering because she wanted to spend time with Hamlet before he left. Consequently you made it a royal order. It's also convenient for you...

CONFLICT ABILITIES:

- General Physical (3-5) 0: Physical actions not otherwise covered (P)
- Majesty x3 (4-5) 2: Impress someone with how kingly you are (+/- 2, depending on whether you feel they're on your side) (S)
- Frighten (3-5) 1: Make someone scared of you (-FL 4) (S)
- Resist Lie Detection (2-5) 1: Cause lie detect abilities to fail on you (NR)

NON-CONFLICT ABILITIES:

None

RESISTS	SPECIALS	INVENTORY
Physical 0	Social/Mental Resists are -1 on the subject of the death of Old King Hamlet	Crown
Social 1		Royal Seal of Denmark
Mental 0		Poison (fatal, unlimited uses)

GOALS:

Make sure no one knows that you killed old King Hamlet. Protect yourself.
Protect the women. Keep Ophelia from finding out that Hamlet killed Polonius.
Have Hamlet killed. Ideally tonight, before he ever sails.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:

First things first: Why did you kill old King Hamlet?

Do you love Gertrude?

Do you love Hamlet?

Do you love Denmark?

Poison is a woman's weapon, and sending Hamlet to his doom in England is also quite roundabout. Why do you avoid direct violence? What does it mean for your self concept that you do so?

What was your relationship with your brother like? How did you feel toward him? How did he feel toward you?

What do you most fear?

What do you most want?

How, in more detail, do you feel about Hamlet?

What is the practical reason that you made plans to have Hamlet killed?

Why, emotionally / personally, is it that you are willing to do this?

What were you praying for? Why can't you successfully pray?

If everything from this moment on could go as you wished, what would you have happen?

How do you characterize yourself?

How, as a player, do you characterize Claudius?

Hamlet

Gertrude

E
D
S

APPARENT IDENTITY: Queen of Denmark, Hamlet's mother

REAL IDENTITY: That's for you to decide...

BACKGROUND: You were married to old King Hamlet for a long time. Shortly after he died, you married his younger brother, Claudius. The two of you have been worried about Hamlet's behavior for some time. Polonius suggested that he might be in love with Ophelia.

After the play, you had a talk with Hamlet in your room. Early on, Polonius who had been listening in behind a tapestry moved, and Hamlet stabbed at it, killing him. Immediately after, he accused you of disloyalty to your first husband, told you that he thought Claudius had killed him, and then started speaking to thin air.

Nobody knows about Hamlet killing Polonius except you, Claudius, and Rosencrantz & Guildenstern, whom Claudius sent (unsuccessfully) to retrieve the body from Hamlet. The two of you have decided to keep it secret.

You insisted that Claudius hold this gathering, and he agreed.

GOALS:

Protect Hamlet.

Decide how you feel about Claudius after talking to Hamlet.

Take care of Ophelia. Keep her from finding out that Hamlet killed Polonius.

Keep peace. Maintain courtesy and relative calm. Make people happy.

Entertain people. Organize social events.

CONFLICT ABILITIES:

General Physical (3-5) -2: Physical actions not otherwise covered (P)

Polite Insult (2-5) 0: Deliver a subtle insult that sounds sweet (-1) (S)

NON-CONFLICT ABILITIES:

Woman's intuition (1-5) x3: Ask the Director to alert you when a certain type of event is taking place (e.g., Hamlet is in danger).

Sacrifice x1: Take all physical injury from an action against someone else, yourself

RESISTS

Physical -2
Social -2
Mental -1

SPECIALS

None

INVENTORY

None

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:

First off... Why did you marry Claudius so quickly?

Do you love Claudius?

What was your relationship with old King Hamlet? Did you love him?

How do you feel about Hamlet's accusation of Claudius? Do you believe him?

How do you feel about yourself? What kind of person do you consider yourself?

How do you feel about Polonius' death?

What are your priorities?

How do you feel about Hamlet leaving for a long time?

What do you want?

What do you fear?

What are your plans for Ophelia, now that her father is dead?

Hamlet

Ophelia

APPARENT IDENTITY: Polonius' daughter

REAL IDENTITY: Powerless young girl whose world is falling apart

BACKGROUND: For some time, Hamlet was sending you love letters. Your brother warned you that he just wanted to get you in bed. When you went to your father about it, he told you that Hamlet was too far above your station and that you should not consider him, and ordered you to give the letters back. When you did, Hamlet behaved erratically, first being polite, then yelling at you. But then at the play, he flirted with you rather bawdily.

Your father was an extremely controlling man. He filled your world because he controlled every aspect of it, and constantly checked on you. His death is more than the loss of a person, it is in some sense the loss of the structure of world, of everything you're familiar with.

GOALS:

- Get personal power. Don't lose control of your situation.
- Figure out what really happened to your father.
- Make the world make sense. By any means necessary. At all.
- Sort out your relationship with Hamlet once and for all.

CONFLICT ABILITIES:

- General Physical (3-5) O: Physical actions not otherwise covered (P)
- Shame (1-5) 1: Shame someone denouncing them femininely (-FL3) (S)
- Poor Innocent (1-4) 2: Making someone feel sorry for you (-FL 4) (M)

NON-CONFLICT ABILITIES:

- Privacy x3 (3-5): Go off by yourself without your absence being noticed.
- Get Attention x1 (1-5): Do something strange and get everyone's attention
- Overhear Aside x5 (1-5): Overhear a private conversation without being noticed
- Drown In River x1 (1-5): Drown in the river despite attempts to save you

RESISTS

Physical -2
Social -1
Emotional -2

SPECIALS

Poor Innocent can only be used once per person

INVENTORY

Flowers

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:

Do you love Hamlet? How do you feel about him? What do you want from him?

What are you good at?

What do you do all day? In your spare time?

What was your relationship with your father like?

Did you love your father? Did you hate him?

What was the worst thing he ever did to you?

The best thing?

How do you feel about your brother?

What were your hopes before your father died? What are they now?

What can you simply not handle? (Can be specific or general or hypothetical)

How else have things changed since your father's death?

If you could do anything, what would it be?

Describe your perfect world.

Hamlet

Laertes

G
L
S

APPARENT IDENTITY: Polonius' son

REAL IDENTITY: Forthright young man infuriated by his father's death

BACKGROUND: You have been studying in France for the past few months. Before you left, you found out that Hamlet had been going after your sister, and warned her not to listen to him because he obviously just wanted to take advantage of her and get her in bed.

A few weeks ago, you caught your father's servant, Reynaldo, talking to your acquaintances and spying on your affairs in order to report back to your father. This type of controlling behavior was very characteristic of your father.

You thought you'd travel back briefly with Reynaldo and pay your father and sister a surprise visit. When you landed a few hours ago, you heard rumors that Hamlet has gone mad. You also learned that your father had died. You left him under Claudius' protection, and Claudius was obviously responsible for this. You are convinced he could not have died accidentally. You are furious and want revenge.

GOALS:

- Find out what happened to your father and avenge him.
- Do not let anything stop or delay you from avenging your father
- Protect your sister. Especially from Hamlet.
- Serve Denmark

CONFLICT ABILITIES:

- General Physical (2-5) 0: Physical actions not otherwise covered (P)
- Weapon Use (1-5) 2: Fight with a weapon (P)
- Fist Fighting (2-5) 1: Fight unarmed (-1) (P)
- Loud (3-5) 0: Shout at someone (-1) (S)
- Confront (2-5) 1: Make someone shaken by confronting them with something they actually did wrong (-FL 2) (M)
- Detect Lie x3 (3-5) 2: Figure out if someone is lying to you (M)

NON-CONFLICT ABILITIES:

None

RESISTS

Physical 1
Social 1
Mental 0

SPECIALS

You cannot be made to stop wanting to avenge your father.

INVENTORY

Knife
Sword

Questions to Answer:

What was your relationship with your father?

How did you feel about him?

What was the worst thing he'd ever done to you?

The best?

What do you want for your sister?

How are you like your father?

How are you unlike him?

How do you feel about Hamlet?

What is important?

Before you left for France, your father gave you a lot of advice about clean and proper living. Did you follow it? If not, how not?

What were you studying?

What do you like to do in your spare time?

Hamlet

Rosencrantz

G
L
C

APPARENT IDENTITY: A former schoolmate of Hamlet's

REAL IDENTITY: Courtier sent by King & Queen to find out why Hamlet is mad

BACKGROUND: Your background is entirely unspecified, except that you and Guildenstern went to Wittenberg with Hamlet, and were sent for by the King and Queen a few months ago to befriend Hamlet and find out what has been upsetting him. Hamlet, however, seems to be aware of this, and doesn't talk to you.

You know that Hamlet killed Polonius because the King sent you to find out from him where he put the body. You didn't succeed, but the King found out later by asking Hamlet.

You and Guildenstern are very close and trust each other completely.

You are infatuated with Ophelia.

Guildenstern is very ill. He is fevered and bedridden and could not attend this gathering. A doctor is seeing to him.

GOALS:

Gain influence and power at the court.

Get Ophelia's love, or at least her attention.

Matter somehow.

Survive and protect yourself.

Gain Hamlet's friendship. Figure out why he's nuts. Please Claudius.

CONFLICT ABILITIES:

General Physical (3-5) 0: Physical actions not otherwise covered (P)

Fighting (3-5) 1: Do physical damage with a weapon (P)

Look Trustworthy x2 (3-5) 0: Make someone think you're trustworthy (S)

Sycophant (1-5) -1: Shamelessly flatter someone (+1) (S)

NON-CONFLICT ABILITIES:

Spread Rumor x3 (3-5): Get everybody to learn a piece of information without knowing its source (tell Director)

But Stoppard Cared... x1 (1-5): Get Director to give you something interesting to do if you are not involved in major plot

RESISTS

Physical 0
Social -3
Mental -1

SPECIALS

Look Trustworthy does not work on Hamlet

INVENTORY

Knife

A NOTE: Your character is famous for being mostly undeveloped, and thus is largely up to you. The following questions will guide you in creating Rosencrantz as a character, but you should build a broad, coherent idea of what he's like.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:

How do you actually feel about Hamlet?

How do you feel about Claudius and Gertrude?

What are you like? What's your personality?

How are you similar to Guildenstern?

How are you different from Guildenstern?

What do you see in Ophelia?

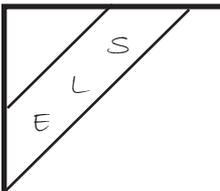
What did you study in Wittenberg?

What do you want out of life?

What do you enjoy doing?

What do you think of everything that's happened?

How do you feel about the way the King and Queen treat you?



Hamlet

Horatio

APPARENT IDENTITY: Hamlet's friend

REAL IDENTITY: Hamlet's close friend and only confidant

BACKGROUND: You went to Wittenberg with Hamlet, and the two of you became close friends. You are extremely loyal to him. You are also friends with Marcellus, the guard.

Shortly after Gertrude and Claudius got married, two guardsmen came to you and Marcellus saying that they had seen a strange apparition when standing watch on the battlements. The two of you went to see, and saw what appeared to be the ghost of old King Hamlet. You told Hamlet about it, and the next night he went to see. He left with it and evidently spent some time speaking to it -- afterwards he made you two swear not to say anything.

Hamlet thinks that Claudius killed his father, and wanted you to help him watch Claudius' reaction during the play. The two of you agree he looked guilty, but are not sure.

GOALS:

- Help Hamlet. Serve him and also do what's best for him.
- Do the right thing.
- Keep your word.

CONFLICT ABILITIES:

- General Physical (3-5) 0: Physical actions not otherwise covered (P)
- Detect Lie x10 (1-5) 1: Tell if someone is lying (M)
- Protect (2-5) 1: Force everyone attacking a person or restricted area to get by you first. (NR)
- Joke x5 (2-5) 0: Cheer someone up (+1) (M)

NON-CONFLICT ABILITIES:

- Recount x2 (1-5): Give a plausible summary of events that will be believed

RESISTS	SPECIALS	INVENTORY
Physical 0 Social 0 Mental 0	You can see but not hear the Ghost	Knife

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:

Are there things you want from Hamlet that you don't have?

Why are you so loyal to Hamlet?

What do you want for him?

What do you want for yourself?

What is your private life like?

What did you study at Wittenberg?

What do you enjoy doing?

What do you like to read?

What are your ambitions?

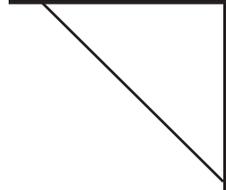
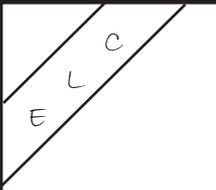
What are your fears? What makes you uncomfortable?

Is there anywhere you won't follow Hamlet or anything you won't do for him? If so, what is it and why? If not, why not?

Do you get jealous? What of?

Hamlet

Marcellus



APPARENT IDENTITY: A guardsman in Elsinore

REAL IDENTITY: A friend of Hamlet and Horatio and loyal servant of Claudius

BACKGROUND: Shortly after Gertrude and Claudius got married, two guardsmen came to you and Horatio saying that they had seen a strange apparition when standing watch on the battlements. The two of you went to investigate, and saw what appeared to be the ghost of old King Hamlet. Horatio told Hamlet about it, and the next night he went to see. He left with it and evidently spent some time speaking to it -- afterwards he made you two swear not to say anything.

You are very loyal and devoted to your king, but after seeing the Ghost and the play that Hamlet sponsored, you are beginning to wonder if there isn't some substance behind Hamlet's tacit accusation of Claudius with the play.

You are at this gathering as a guard, to keep order and serve the king.

GOALS:

- Serve Claudius and the Crown.
- Figure out what's really going on.
- Protect Horatio.
- Serve Denmark.
- Do the right thing.
- Keep general peace and order.

CONFLICT ABILITIES:

- General Physical (2-5) 0: Physical actions not otherwise covered (P)
- Fighting (2-5) 1: Fight with a weapon (P)
- Intimidate (4-5) 1: Scare someone by pointing a weapon at someone (-1) (S)
- Disdain x1 (3-5) 2: Make someone understand you disapprove of them (-2) (S)
- Loyalty x3 (1-5) 0: Make someone confident in your loyalty (it must actually be true) (+1) (S)

NON-CONFLICT ABILITIES:

- Overhear x2 (2-5): Overhear an aside
- Righteous x1 (1-5): Break a tie in your favor if you are physically present and obviously on the side in question

RESISTS	SPECIALS	INVENTORY
Physical 0	You can see but not hear the Ghost	Sword
Social 0		Knife
Mental 1		

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:

How did the experience with the Ghost affect you?

Did you like King Hamlet?

Why are you so devoted to Claudius?

How do you feel about Ophelia?

What do you respect in a person?

What do you disdain in a person?

Why did you become a guard?

What's your personal life like?

What do you enjoy doing?

What would you do if it was, in fact, proven that Claudius killed the old King?

Parlor Larps: Adaptations

Traditional stories as larps

1 Living Room
1 Evening
1 Director
6-8 Players

RA

NPC 1

DIR 2

Dark 3

- NC -

(See Page 8)

Hamlet

This adaptation of Shakespeare's Hamlet is set the day after Hamlet accidentally kills Polonius. Hamlet is about to be sent away to England in a few hours, and will not have another chance to kill Claudius perhaps for years. The majority of the court, Ophelia included, has been told that Polonius accidentally fell down the stairs. At the Queen's insistence, a small gathering is held to send Hamlet off. In the middle of it all, Laertes returns unexpectedly, demanding to see his father.

Very basic familiarity with the plot and characters is required for players. Director should have read the play.

Characters are
gender specific

\$10.00

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