

A still life photograph featuring a collection of fresh fruit and two wine glasses. In the upper left, a cluster of ripe, red strawberries with green stems is scattered. To the right, another group of strawberries is visible. In the lower left, a pear is sliced lengthwise, revealing its pale yellow flesh and dark seed. To the right of the sliced pear are three whole pears with a mix of green and reddish-brown skin. Two wine glasses are positioned in the center: one is a standard wine glass filled with a dark red liquid, and the other is a shorter, wider glass containing a golden-yellow liquid. The entire scene is set against a plain, light-colored background.

A Little Magic

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J

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Thanks to all our playtesters!

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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.

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 larp can run with as few as 4.

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

Brookview is a New England town of about 200,000 people. It was built up around two foci—the Kingston family investments and Ridley College. Most of the town’s population consists of a relaxed but enthusiastic middle class, although politics, business, and culture are driven by a small, old, and snobby elite.

The Kingston family is at the top of this elite. Their varied businesses dominate the Brookview economy, and little of note is done to the town without their approval. Rumors abound of their mafia connections. However, their indifference to and uninvolvedness with actual Brookview life makes them feel to most people more like a town fixture than any sort of present or looming power.

Ridley College is a small liberal arts college about two hundred years old at the edge of town. Its friendly professors, energetic students, and strong involvement in the community make it quite popular.

The game is set on an evening in late November, at an informal gathering at M. Shelley’s house. M. Shelley is a student who lives at home. All characters are students at Ridley except for J. Kingston, the only child of the Kingston family.

Outside, the night is cool and clear, with a lovely full moon in the sky.

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS KNOWN TO EVERYONE EXCEPT J. KINGSTON: (J. KINGSTON SHOULD LEAVE THE ROOM OR JUST IGNORE THIS INFO)

Professor P. Baxley (nobody knows what the P stands for— rumor says his first name is really just “Professor”) is the most notorious and well-loved professor at Ridley. He’s portly, jovial, and eccentric. He has been teaching at Ridley for forty years, and is widely speculated to be immortal— he looks in his early fifties, and constantly tells stories of his wild and rambunctious youth.

He teaches Natural History 101 in fall semester, a widely popular class, especially for freshman, and advises the Natural History major. He is like the sort of professor in archaeology movies— he goes around in an explorer hat, and has a huge office filled with odd fossils, dried plants, bizarre things in jars, and other artifacts, including what he claims to be an extremely rare iguana skeleton.

Baxley is also slightly notorious for breaking rules, making bargains with students, involving himself in students’ non-academic lives, etc, but is benign and popular enough that the college doesn’t bother him very much. Current and former Natural History students tend to form a loose clique centered around his office hours. Of the PCs, M. Shelley and R. van Fleck belong to this clique. E. Richmond used to, but stopped two years ago.

Secret Background Overview

The magic in this story is of the urban fairy tale variety. Friendly old witches do minor spells and jinxes using obscure herbs in their kitchen, have lots of cats, and drink mint tea every day. An occasional imp or sprite lurks on a park bench, trading and collecting antiques and trinkets for their own incomprehensible purposes. Minor curses or charms work and make life a little easier and a little more enchanting and quaint. Major spells are very difficult to achieve, and tend to backfire or have unintended consequences. Magic is the primary element of no one's life.

Blue moons are the second moon in a month— they happen about once every four years. By the light of a blue moon, newly cast magic is stronger, and old magic is weaker.

Polyphemus Baxley is a professor at Ridley College. 1/4 sprite, he is quite involved with magic, often with obscure spells and researches. He allows this hobby to manifest in the normal world as a detailed and eclectic knowledge of natural history, which he teaches at Ridley.

Baxley is almost a hundred years old— because of his nature, he can be immortal if he likes, and has been a comfortable late-fifties in appearance for the past forty years or so.

More than fifty years ago, in his wild and rambunctious youth, Baxley was in love with two different women. Wanting both of them, he simply couldn't decide which to marry. The decision was taken out of his hands when they learned about each other, fell in love, and both decided to dump him to start a family with each other instead.

Baxley was furious, tried to talk them out of it, and when that failed, threw together a dire curse under a blue moon. He cursed them so that, as they abandoned him, so would they and their children increasingly never find true companionship.

The curse worked, and the women eventually broke up. Later on, both of them married different men, were never quite happy with their relationships, and had children who had even more of the same difficulty.

Baxley eventually got over them, matured, started teaching at Ridley, and gradually began once more wanting a child of his own. Twenty-two years ago, he had a brief liaison that produced his child, Devon/Deva (the mother was uninterested, and left shortly after the child was born). However, as D. grew up, Baxley realized he had a problem— the power of dire curses came from balance. Because he had cursed the two women and their lines to loneliness, his own son was twice as incapable of friendship and companionship.

As D. got older, more obnoxious, and more friendless, Baxley began searching for ways to break the curse. He finally realized that the only way to break it was paradoxical— he had to cause it to fail once: that is to say, make both their descendants find love. But because of the power of the curse, the only time this was possible was by the light of a blue moon.

C. Fisher and J. Kingston are the grandchildren of Baxley's two lovers, both unattached, and of an appropriate age. Baxley has decided that the most efficient way to go about this is to wait until the next blue moon, then save effort by making them fall in love with each other.

To this end, he has gathered a group of students, some of whom owe him favors, some of whom he convinced by miscellaneous other means, to set up C. and J. (He hasn't told any of them why.) Thus, the evening's gathering, under a blue moon, is Baxley's plot to break the effects of the backlash of the curse on his own child.

Character Overview

(Listed in order of decreasing necessity for smaller-group games.)

- J. KINGSTON (PREFERRED MALE): EDC.** Kingston is the only child and heir of the Kingston family. His father is extremely strict about propriety, and controls his life. He is the only person who does not go to Ridley— he is present visiting M. Shelley, his only friend. His grandmother, who married into the Kingston family, was one of Baxley's lovers. For convenience of casting, he is bisexual.
- C. FISHER (PREFERRED FEMALE): ELC.** Fisher is also an only child, born and raised in Brookview. He is a happy and straightforward but somewhat eccentric person. He is also bisexual. He believes in magic because he had a teacher once who knew some. His maternal grandmother was the other of Baxley's lovers. She is generally lucky.
- D. BAXLEY: GDC.** D. Baxley is the only child of Professor Baxley. Because of the curse, he is mediocre at everything, resentful of everyone, and consequently extremely obnoxious and incapable of making friends. He especially resents M. Shelley for being so popular. He knows who his father is and knows about magic, but not about the curse.
- M. SHELLEY: GLS.** Shelley is an extremely sweet and nice person who takes care of everybody and is everybody's best friend, but is easy to pick on. He is the host of the gathering because he befriends with J. Kingston, and Kingston enjoys going to Shelley's house to get away from his father. He owes Baxley a favor for passing him in Natural History two years ago when he was too upset to take the final.
- R. VAN FLECK: GLC.** Van Fleck is one of the people who considers Shelley his best friend. He is passionately defensive of Shelley, though Shelley does not know this. He also hates D. Baxley. He also owed Prof. Baxley a favor.
- A. GROUSE: ELS.** Grouse is Fisher's best friend. He is from out of town, and came to Ridley to study creative writing. He is creative and romantic, very attached to the idea of love, and wants to find love himself. He was taught about magic by his great aunt, and can do a little himself.
- JEAN FROMMER: EDS.** Frommer is a friend of Shelley and Van Fleck who is currently taking Natural History with Fisher. He is deeply in love with Fisher— he asked him out last month, but was refused. He also owes Baxley for not turning him in when he tried to steal from him earlier in the year, but has understandably mixed feelings about setting Fisher up with someone else. He is generally unlucky.
- E. RICHMOND: GDS.** Richmond was Baxley's student three years ago. He is resentful of Baxley's blatantly unethical favor-collecting and the Natural History students' social group. He owes Baxley a great deal and is delighted at the chance to finally return to a clean slate, but prefers to break up and cause tension among the others if he can.

Game Overview

THE SITUATION:

Baxley has told Shelley to invite all the characters except Kingston to a casual evening gathering at his house. He has also used a little luck spell to make sure Kingston would drop by Shelley's house that night.

THE STORM:

About half an hour into the game, Baxley will call. He will express anxiety and mention that a major unpredicted storm is heading in, will arrive in two or three hours, and that however long the team was planning to take, they only have that amount of time. He will complain about the unreliability of weather people, but never explain what the storm has to do with anything. It's the job of the person who answers the phone (probably M. Shelley) to discreetly tell everyone else of this development.

In actuality, the storm is relevant because the cloud cover will completely block the moon for the rest of the night, abruptly shortening the time frame in which the curse can be successfully broken.

FALLING IN LOVE:

Kingston and Fisher do not actually need to fall in love with each other— they just need to both be in requited love with somebody. At the first convenient moment after this happens (don't interrupt an important scene), go to endgame narration.

Love is defined as the sort of romantic crush in which the person in question wants to spend time with and share lives with the target. It does not have to be deep or profound. They don't have to feel like soul mates, or want marriage.

PROFESSOR BAXLEY:

After the first time when he warns the team of the time limit, Baxley will call intermittently (every hour or so) to check up on progress and give encouragement and advice. If things are going badly or uncertainly, he will be palpably anxious, repeatedly ask for reassurance, insist that he knows they can do it, and mutter to himself a lot. If things are going well, he will be excited, compliment their work, and call less often. He can be easily lied to.

He wants very much for them to succeed, and consequently wants to make them understand how important this is, but is not willing to let them know much about what's really going on. He may, if pressed, admit that magic is involved.

He is not present himself because he's afraid that his presence might somehow interfere with the balance of the curse, and also because he feels less certain of himself on the subject of the curse and would rather other people deal with the problem.

If Baxley gets increasingly desperate in the last half hour, he may resort to pressing hard enough to make himself look bad— offering bribes to the team if they succeed, telling them to just set both parties up with anybody, etc.

Keep in mind that Baxley on the phone is the best way for the Director to feed information and/or priorities into the game. Feel free to ask to speak to different people to get different reports or give different advice.

LUCK:

Luck is a theme in this story because it is the primary way magic works. Various characters tend to have good or bad luck, and various abilities affect luck, either in general or in specific areas. Keep this in mind, and occasionally make minor events happen reflecting the way luck goes.

THE MYSTERY AND BAXLEY'S CULPABILITY:

It's fine if Kingston and/or Fisher start suspecting that something strange is going on— Baxley is not a very good conspirator. It is also fine if the team starts feeling suspicious about the assignment as the night goes on, as long as they have spent a long period of time (about two hours) pursuing it.

It remains true that Baxley's motives in this are not pristine: He wants to set up two not necessarily compatible people for the benefit of his own son, regardless about whether it would make them happy. He lied about their compatibility to get their friends to cooperate. If it looks like the characters are going down the road of uncovering Baxley's motives and behavior, have him say more and more suspect things to help them along.

ENDGAME:

The game ends in three possible ways:

In the first case, everyone decides prematurely to reject Baxley's mission, discuss it with Kingston and Fisher, and everything socially resolves before time runs out.

In the second case, the storm comes in and the moon is covered before Kingston and Fisher both find love. At this point, D. Baxley experiences a vague sense of hopelessness. At the same time, the curse goes back into effect, functioning to break up any compelling relationships either of them may have found or been on their way to finding over the course of the game. Kingston's father calls and orders him home, possibly even angrily forbidding him to go to Shelley's house in the future if appropriate. Invent excuses for Fisher as necessary. Professor Baxley will also call again, knowing that the curse did not break. Roleplay his reactions as appropriate to everything that had been going on with him throughout the night.

In the last case, the game ends at an appropriate moment after both Kingston and Fisher have found love. At that point, moonlight spills in through the window. Both of them (and the people they are now attached to, if said people are not each other) suddenly start twinkling with a pale golden light. The light reaches out from the two of them (and only the two of them) to D. Baxley, until he begins twinkling twice as brightly. Then the connection thins and snaps and the light gradually fades, with a sense of conclusiveness, positiveness, and triumph.

Kingston and Fisher will feel a strong sense of connection and possibility. D. Baxley will feel as though a great weight that never knew was there was suddenly lifted from him, and that everything is now possible. In the long run thereafter, D. Baxley will become gradually more personable, and Prof. Baxley will be extremely happy, grateful to the team, and willing to use a little magic to make Kingston's father more inclined to permit his romance.

Advice on Setup

- If you have a larger space or multiple rooms available, use them. The more privacy people can get, the better. Side bedrooms would be especially good.
- Set up furniture in the room to make small two- or three- person conversations rather than entire-group conversations most convenient.
- Have as many objects conducive to a romantic atmosphere available as you can get— drinks and wine glasses, flowers, candles, etc. Keep them somewhere unobtrusive until they are used IC, but it's nice for the characters to be able to get them if they want to use them.
- Have a selection of romantic music available. After Fisher's and Kingston's players have finished developing the characters, discreetly trim the selection down to include primarily music that they will find musically and thematically moving. Add music suited to other romance-prone characters if convenient.
- Have a phone or phone prop in the room so that Prof. Baxley can call once in a while. The best thing to do is briefly leave and actually call in with a cell phone.
- Make sure Shelley's player is familiar with the drink/snack area so he can host
- Have short party games available.
- Designate a window through which the moon can be seen. An outdoor patio area would be ideal if possible, but if not, use a window. If there are no windows, put up a piece of paper to represent one.

Advice on Casting & Running

ADVICE ON CASTING:

- For most groups, it is strongly recommend that Kingston and Fisher be played by people of opposite gender. They are the preferred male and female, respectively, but it is most important for them to be opposite.
- Similarly, Kingston and Fisher should not be given to players who are for other OOC reasons are disinclined to interact with each other, if such exist.
- Lastly, it is very important that both Kingston and Fisher be played by people who can roleplay the natural process of falling in love.
- It is important that D. Baxley be played by somebody who is willing and capable of being extremely obnoxious.

ADVICE ON RUNNING:

- If D. Baxley is being insufficiently obnoxious, prompt him. The premise of the game will fail if people can look at him and say, "he doesn't seem that bad..." Make sure he stays realistic, though.
- Take special care to go over Fisher's and Kingston's characters at start of game to make sure they are at least mildly compatible. If they're not, discreetly suggest changes without giving away too much.
- Arrange for people to discreetly signal you in some way when they have fallen in/out of love, and who they have fallen in/out of love with.
- Remember to occasionally make things go for/against the favor of lucky/unlucky people for no reason. (Fisher is lucky, Grouse is a little lucky, Frommer is unlucky.)

Larp-Specific Rules and Beginning Announcements

(Read this to your players at start of game)

LARP-SPECIFIC RULES:

- This game implements a major rule change: There are no Conflicts. All abilities are Non-Conflict and always succeed. Actions simply execute in the order they are declared.
- Because there are no Conflicts, there are also no Function Levels or Resists. The Resist area of the character sheet instead gives a general idea of how good the character is at dealing with Physical / Social / Emotional threats, simply for roleplaying purposes. Abilities will also include a corresponding type of Resist if relevant, again only as a helpful reference.
- Abilities that change people's minds or attitudes are not set in stone— they can wear off naturally in response to further events.

BEGINNING ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- This game is set in a world that does have a little magic in it, though most normal people don't believe in it. The style of magic follows the urban fairy tale genre: relatively benign, quaint, based off of herbs and charms, an element of dreams and romance in everyday life. Everyone should use this general intuition of the nature of magic. For those who want more detail, ask the Director to read you the relevant section of Secret Background Information.
- Keep in mind that, although the larp is only three hours long, it is a romance story. Love is in the air, and characters are expected to fall in and out of love over the course of the game. Play your characters with this in mind, and update the Director regularly on your feelings.
- You will find over the course of the game that you will have to make up a lot of small details about your daily life, Ridley College, and Brookview in general— don't be shy, feel free to improvise!

Character

CHARACTER	STYLE	AGE	YEAR	YR TOOK NH101
[Julian / Juliet] Kingston	EDC	20	Pre-College	Never
[Cole / Connie] Fisher	ELC	19	Freshman	Freshman (Now)
[Devon / Deval] Baxley	GDC	20	Junior	Freshman (3 yrs ago)
[Mike / Minal] Shelley	GLS	21	Junior	Freshman (3 yrs ago)
[Ren / Renee] van Fleck	GLC	21	Junior	Freshman (3 yrs ago)
[Andy / Amy] Grouse	ELS	19	Freshman	Freshman (Now)
Jean Frommer	EDS	20	Sophomore	Sophomore (Now)
[Eli / Eliza] Richmond	GDS	23	Senior	Freshman (4 yrs ago)

Summary Chart

WHY THEY ARE HERE	KNOWLEDGE MAGIC	OTHER GOALS	FRIENDS
Just hanging out Time away from father	No	Have fun	M. Shelley
Invited Otherwise no idea	Yes— former teacher	Learn about people Set up A. Grouse	A. Grouse
Instructed by Baxley	Yes— taught by Baxley	Be the one to succeed Upstage M. Shelley	None, of course!
Owes Baxley for passing NH101, owns house	No	Be nice / host	J. Kingston R. van Fleck Jean Frommer
Owes Baxley for writing a recommendation	No	Protect M. Shelley	M. Shelley
Baxley said Kingston and Fisher are soul mates	Yes— great aunt	Find love	C. Fisher
Owes Baxley for not reporting theft attempt	No	In love with C. Fisher	M. Shelley
Pay back huge debts to Baxley	No	Make people mad at each other	None

[Julian / Juliet] Kingston

APPARENT IDENTITY: Only child and scion of the Kingston family

REAL IDENTITY: Suppressed young person constantly forced to meet the expectations of his father

BACKGROUND: You are the one expected to continue on the illustrious Kingston family name. Your mother died when you were very young. Your father has always ruled his family, his town, his business, and you with an iron fist. He has very strict requirements of you, and insistent on keeping appearances. Because of this, you have never really had any close friends.

You were, of course, privately schooled. Your father has arranged for you to go to Oxford, starting the coming January. He has also arranged for you to become engaged to an equally respectable French heir whom you will meet there. You know virtually nothing about this person, but you have heard rumors that his family is involved in illicit dealings, and that your father is looking to get back into the business now that your grandparents are dead.

You have always secretly wanted love, and are frustrated that you are not allowed to have it. You've never had a relationship before. You are also bisexual, though your father would never tolerate it if he found out.

You frequently come to M. Shelley's house to get away from your father and servants. You are always welcome there. M. is probably your best friend, but you feel like even he doesn't really understand you.

GOALS: Relax and enjoy your time away from your father.

Non-Conflict Abilities

Etiquette: Fail to make a social mistake. (If you do something wrong, use this ability to take it back so that it never happened IC)

Powerful Stare x5: Make someone feel chastised by looking at them (S)

Public Speaking: Hold an audience's attention when you tell a story or make a speech.

Air of Mystery x3: Add an air of mystery to a gesture or action.

Intimidate: Make someone feel intimidated by you. (S)

RESISTS

Physical Decent
Social Good
Emotional Average

SPECIALS

None

INVENTORY

\$200

OTHER KNOWLEDGE:

The Kingstons are not, in fact, criminals. They were over fifty years ago, but when your paternal grandmother married your grandfather, she did it on the condition that he clean up his act— since then, your family has been the perfectly legal sort of extremely elitist and aloof. Blue moons happen about once every four years.

RELATIONSHIPS:

You are friends with M. Shelley. You know his friend R. White, but no one else.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:

What are some reasons you haven't been able to be able to get really close to anybody in the past?

What was your mother like? How well do you remember her?

Do you spend a lot of time with your father? What do you talk about?

How do you feel about being bisexual? How did you find out?

What is the one thing you like to do most? How often do you do it?

What does love mean to you? Why do you want it so much?

What does home mean to you?

What type of music do you listen to? What books do you read?

Have you traveled a lot? Where have you been?

What are some of your favorite items that you have?

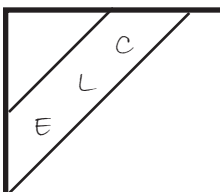
What, in life, do you consider to be truly important?

How do you feel about the idea of your family becoming a criminal again?

What do you picture the French fiance being like?

What was the best thing that ever happened to you?

A Little Magic



Age
19

[Cole / Connie] Fisher

APPARENT IDENTITY: Eccentric freshman at Ridley College

REAL IDENTITY: You are pretty straightforwardly what you appear to be.

BACKGROUND: You are an only child. You've lived in Brookview all your life. You are bright and clever— your parents wanted you to go to a well-known college out of state, but you insisted on going to Ridley because you love it here.

You've always been a little bit eccentric, tending to do your own thing despite inconvenience or disapproval from others. You are fundamentally a happy person, engaged by life and comfortable with yourself. However, because of your eccentricities, your friendships tend to be rocky, inconsistent, and ultimately kind of unsatisfying.

You are bisexual. You've never had a relationship before. Jean Frommer asked you out last month, but you turned him down.

You believe in magic, in secret wonderful things that lurk in everyday life. You had a teacher a long time ago who knew a little magic. You are entranced by mystery and new experiences.

KNOWLEDGE:

You are in Natural History right now with A. Grouse and Jean Frommer. A. Grouse wants to find love

It's a blue moon tonight, a time where magic is easier and anything is possible.

Non-Conflict Abilities

Wish x1: Wish upon a star, and tell the Director. The Director will change circumstances so that it is more likely for your wish to come true.

Soliloquize x2: Force people to listen to you go on about an esoteric topic that you and few other people care about. Nothing meaningful can be said or achieved as long as you keep talking (no more than 15 mins).

Understand x4: Intuitively know the answer to any yes/no question about a person's personality, motivations, issues, or desires. (E)

Luck x3: Cause any event that could happen by chance to go in your favor.

RESISTS

Physical Poor
Social Superb
Emotional Decent

SPECIALS

None

INVENTORY

Lucky worrystone

GOALS:

Get to know people and have a good time.
Set A. Grouse up with somebody.

RELATIONSHIPS:

You are close friends with A. Grouse.
You are casual friends with M. Shelley and Jean Frommer.
You don't know J. Kingston, R. van Fleck, or E. Richmond

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:

In what ways are you eccentric?

What fascinates you?

What are some of your favorite activities?

What does magic mean to you?

What frustrates you about your parents? What about you frustrates them?

Describe your relationship with your family.

What type of music do you listen to? What books do you read?

What do you love about this town?

What is your major? Do you know what you want to do for a living?

How do you feel about the Kingstons?

What makes you angry?

What does love mean to you?

What, in life, do you consider important?

[Devon / Deva] Baxley

APPARENT IDENTITY: Obnoxious child of Professor Baxley, Junior at Ridley

REAL IDENTITY: Bitter friendless person who is mediocre at everything

BACKGROUND: You are Professor Baxley's only child. Your mother was some woman who agreed to have you but didn't want to raise you and took off. Your father cares about you, but he's the only one. All your life, you have been mediocre at everything, and as you watched everyone around you constantly beating you, outshining you, getting the credit and recognition, you grew more and more resentful of them. Your resentment manifested as an obnoxious attitude, winning you even less popularity.

KNOWLEDGE OF PROF BAXLEY: You know magic is real. Your father does it. He's a quarter sprite, and has been around for almost a hundred years. He does a bunch of little magic stuff to make life more convenient. You've tried to learn, but of course, you suck at it. His real name is Polyphemus.

THE ASSIGNMENT: Your father came up to you this morning and told you that he was assigning you to a very important task, with the sort of wink that suggested it's probably part of some sort of magic project. He said that he's dispatching you and a bunch of his former students to hang out at M. Shelley's house and make C. Fisher and J. Kingston fall in love. Everybody is in on it except the two of them. It's very important that it happen tonight.

NON-CONFLICT ABILITIES

Annoy: Know what to say that will make someone more annoyed.

Unwanted Presence: Strongly frustrate people by being present when they don't want you.

Target x3: Make everyone in the room pay attention to what you're doing.

Indifference x2: Upset someone by sheer force of how much you don't care about their problems.

Curse x1: Make something bad happen to somebody. The curse will balance so that a comparable bad thing happens to you.

Charm x2: Cause a trivial event that could succeed by chance to occur.

RESISTS

Physical Average
Social Poor
Emotional Poor

SPECIALS

When you try to use magic, flip a coin. On tails, you fail and waste the ability.

INVENTORY

Nothing remarkable

GOALS:

Be the one who makes them fall in love.

Try to make sure nobody else gets there first, so you get the credit.

Upstage M. Shelley in any way possible. Subtly pick on him.

OTHER KNOWLEDGE:

Tonight is a blue moon. Blue moons are good times to cast major magical effects, but a lot of old magic temporarily stops working.

M. Shelley is disgustingly nice, and really easy to take advantage of.

RELATIONSHIPS:

You've met everyone but J. Kingston because they all go to Ridley.

You kind of hate M. Shelley because he's so bright and sweet and popular.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:

What are some things you've tried and failed at?

What was the closest you've ever come to having a friend? Why did it fail?

What are some things you like doing?

What is your relationship with your father like?

How do you feel about magic?

Do you realize how obnoxious you are? If so, why don't you stop? If not, why do you think people dislike you so much?

If you could have one thing, what would it be?

What do you picture your mother being like?

What does love mean to you?



Age
21

[Mike / Mina] Shelley

APPARENT IDENTITY: Bright, friendly, charismatic and nice junior at Ridley

REAL IDENTITY: Very supportive person that tends to get taken advantage of

BACKGROUND: You are an extremely nice and caring person, many people's best friend. However, you are also sensitive and easy to pick on or take advantage of.

You took Natural History your freshman year, along with D. Baxley and R. van Fleck. At the end of the semester, you had a messy breakup with your significant other, and was too upset to take the final or turn in your paper. Prof. Baxley offered you a behind-the-scenes deal, in which he would pass you anyway if you swore to owe him a favor in the future.

THE ASSIGNMENT: Prof Baxley called you up last week to call in the favor. He has assigned you, several other students, and his son to arrange to hang out at your house together. He said that early in the evening, J. Kingston will drop by. The group of you have to make C. Fisher and J. Kingston fall in love— everybody is in on it but the two of them. He said they will make each other very happy, but that it's very, very important that it happen tonight.

GOALS:

Make them fall in love.
Be a good host.

Non-CONFLICT ABILITIES

Kindness: Make someone feel better by being nice to them. (E)

Empathy x4: Understand why someone is upset. (E)

Human Nature x3: Understand what someone really means when they say something. Cannot be used to detect factual deception, only social or emotional obfuscation. (S/E)

Be There x2: Get the Director to alert you the next time a particular type of event takes place (e.g. J. Kingston gets angry at someone).

Recover: Recover emotionally from setbacks or being hurt in a reasonably short time by force of optimism.

RESISTS

Physical Average
Social Poor
Emotional Bad

SPECIALS

None

INVENTORY

Nothing remarkable

OTHER KNOWLEDGE:

In contrast to how friendly Prof Baxley is, his son D. Baxley is really obnoxious. Nobody likes him. You would kind of rather he not be here.

J. Kingston is oppressed by his ridiculously strict and elitist father (his mother died a long time ago). You've been friends for a few years, and he is always welcome at your house. He comes by a lot to get away from his father. A romantic relationship would be good for him.

You know C. Fisher from school. He's a decent person, but kind of eccentric.

RELATIONSHIPS:

You are J. Kingston's only close friend.

You are also friends with R. van Fleck (Junior) and Jean Frommer (Sophomore).

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:

Why are you so nice? Were you always nice?

What are your parents like? What is your relationship with them?

What are some examples of people taking advantage of you for your niceness? Do you realize how often it happens?

What does friendship mean to you?

What's your major? What are your career plans?

What do you look for in a significant other?

How did that breakup happen? Have you dated anyone else since?

What do you actually think of Prof Baxley?

What are some of your favorite things to do?

Have you travelled? Where have you been?

What do you dislike about yourself?

[Ren / Renee] van Fleck

APPARENT IDENTITY: Friend of M. Shelley, Junior at Ridley

REAL IDENTITY: Secretly ardent defender of M. Shelley

BACKGROUND: You took Natural History your freshman year, along with D. Baxley and M. Shelley. You were unremarkable in the class, but later needed Prof Baxley's recommendation for an internship. He offered you a behind-the-scenes deal: he would write you a stunning recommendation if you promised to owe him a favor in the future.

THE ASSIGNMENT: Prof Baxley called you up last week to call in the favor. He has assigned you, several other students, and his son to arrange to hang out at your house together. He said that early in the evening, J. Kingston will drop by. The group of you have to make C. Fisher and J. Kingston fall in love— everybody is in on it but the two of them. He said they will make each other very happy, but that it's very, very important that it happen tonight.

GOALS:

Watch out for M. Shelley.
Make them fall in love.

Non-CONFLICT ABILITIES

Hit: Make someone socially cowed for a while by hitting them. (S/P)
Detect Lie x2: Tell when someone is lying. (E)
Improvise x3: Sound like you know a lot about a particular topic. (S)
Intimidate x2: Make somebody kind of scared of you. (S)
Press x2: Make someone give you additional information when they originally were not planning to. (S)

RESISTS

Physical Average
Social Decent
Emotional Poor

SPECIALS

None

INVENTORY

Nothing remarkable

OTHER KNOWLEDGE:

In contrast to how friendly Prof Baxley is, his son D. Baxley is really obnoxious. Nobody likes him. You heard his mother left because even she couldn't stand him.

M. Shelley always gets picked on or taken advantage of because he's so nice.

RELATIONSHIPS:

M. Shelley considers you a friend just like the two dozen others he has, but you are deeply devoted to him. You consider him one of the few extremely good people in the world, and are very protective of him. You haven't told him this because it would make him feel self-conscious.

You can stand D. Baxley less than most people, especially because of how cruel he tends to be to M. Shelley.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:

What's your major? What are your career plans?

Why did you take Natural Science freshman year?

What do you like about yourself?

What do you dislike about yourself?

What type of music do you listen to? What books do you read?

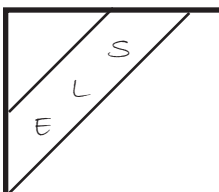
What do you actually think of Prof Baxley?

What is your attitude towards relationships?

Why do you value M. Shelley so much?

What is your sexual orientation?

What characteristics of a person do you consider important?



Age
19

[Andy / Amy] Grouse

APPARENT IDENTITY: Friend of C. Fisher, freshman at Ridley

REAL IDENTITY: Idealistic young person who wants love

BACKGROUND: Your parents neglected you, so you tended to do whatever you wanted. You are from out of state, and chose Ridley for their creative writing program. It feels a little odd because most people at Ridley are from the area. You are taking Natural History with C. Fisher and Jean. Frommer.

You believe in magic. A great-aunt of yours used to know a small amount, and taught you some of it.

THE ASSIGNMENT: Prof Baxley called you up last week with a proposal. He wanted you, several other students, and his son to arrange to hang out at M. Shelley's house together. The group of should make C. Fisher and J. Kingston fall in love— everybody is in on it but the two of them. He said he thinks they're soul mates, but that it's very, very important that it happen tonight because J. Fisher will soon leave for Oxford.

GOALS:

- Make them fall in love
- Find love yourself
- Other goals as you determine them

NON-CONFLICT ABILITIES

Independent x3: Have an easier time succeeding in a discreet task that does not involve other people when you do it yourself.

Kiss: Make someone feel more clear-headed and happy or make a physical injury stop hurting as much when you lightly kiss them/it.

Massage: Give a good relaxing massage.

Storytell: Tell an engaging story.

Jinx x2: Cause any minor action to fail.

Charm x2: Cause the next few random events pertaining to a single objective to fall in your favor. (Director will manage this).

Bless x1: Undergo a significant ritual to make someone else slightly more lucky. Needs a bunch of spices, wax, and half an hour to cast the spell.

RESISTS

Physical Poor
Social Poor
Emotional Decent

SPECIALS

Must make a small hand gesture or say a few words when using magic.

INVENTORY

Nothing remarkable

OTHER KNOWLEDGE:

C. Fisher is really cool, but kind of eccentric. He doesn't have a lot of friends. Jean Frommer asked C. Fisher out last month, but got turned down. Tonight is a blue moon, a special time for magic. Blue moons are very rare.

RELATIONSHIPS:

You're best friends with C. Fisher. You don't know anybody else very well.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:

What do you like about creative writing?

What sorts of things do you write about?

Why is love important? What does it mean to you?

What unusual hobby do you have?

What are some other things you like to do with your time?

Where are you from? What was it like there? Have you moved often?


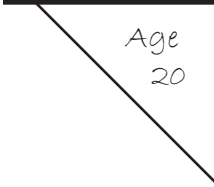
How do you feel about your parents?

What type of music do you listen to?

What do you want out of life?

What are your career plans?

What, in the world, do you consider important or meaningful?

	<h2 style="margin: 0;">A Little Magic</h2> <p style="margin: 10px 0 0 0;">Jean Frommer</p>							
<p>APPARENT IDENTITY: Friend of C. Fisher and M. Shelley, Sophomore at Ridley</p> <p>REAL IDENTITY: Unlucky person desperately in unrequited love with C. Fisher</p> <p>BACKGROUND: You are in Natural History with C. Fisher and A. Grouse. You fell deeply in love with C. Fisher in the first few weeks you knew him, and asked him out last month. He is obviously not interested in you and turned you down. You didn't make a fuss, but are still in love.</p> <p>Earlier this year, you were short on money, and tried to steal Prof. Baxley's rare iguana skeleton to pawn for money. He caught you sneaking into his office at 1AM (heaven knew why he was there in the first place) and, after some negotiation, agreed to let you go if you swore to owe him a favor. You doubt he could prove anything anymore, but you wouldn't put it past him to try to get you in trouble if you don't carry it out.</p> <p>THE ASSIGNMENT: Prof Baxley called you up last week to call in the favor. He has assigned you, several other students, and his son to arrange to hang out at your house together. He said that early in the evening, J. Kingston will drop by. The group of you have to make C. Fisher and J. Kingston fall in love— everybody is in on it but the two of them. He said they will make each other very happy, but that it's very, very important that it happen tonight.</p> <p>GOALS: Figure out whether you want to cooperate with the assignment.</p>								
<p>NON-CONFLICT ABILITIES</p> <p>Sleight of Hand x5: Any sleight of hand action (pickpocketing, theft, magic tricks, etc). (P)</p> <p>Speed: Move very quickly.</p> <p>Sneak x5: Physically hide in a corner or shadow, or move between two places without being noticed when unobserved.</p> <p>Overhear x2: Overhear a conversation without being noticed.</p> <p>Insult: Deliver a stinging and effective insult. (S)</p>								
<p>RESISTS</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">Physical</td> <td style="width: 50%;">Good</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Social</td> <td>Average</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Emotional</td> <td>Poor</td> </tr> </table>	Physical	Good	Social	Average	Emotional	Poor	<p>SPECIALS</p> <p style="text-align: center;">None</p>	<p>INVENTORY</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Pocketknife</p>
Physical	Good							
Social	Average							
Emotional	Poor							

OTHER KNOWLEDGE:

In contrast to how friendly Prof Baxley is, his son D. Baxley is really obnoxious.

Nobody likes him.

C. Fisher and A. Grouse are close friends

M. Shelley always gets picked on or taken advantage of because he's so nice.

People say C. Fisher is eccentric, but you think he's creative, individualistic,
honest, confident...

RELATIONSHIPS:

You are in love with C. Fisher.

You are friends with M. Shelley.

You know everyone except J. Kingston from school.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:

Describe the way you are in love with C. Fisher.

Have you ever been in love before? If so, what happened? If not, what is
your impression of it?

Why did you try to steal the skeleton? Have you ever stolen before?

Do you think Prof Baxley knows about your feelings for C. Fisher?

What do you think of Prof Baxley? Why did you take Natural History?

What is your single favorite activity?

What's your major? What are your plans for the future?

What do you morally value?

What does friendship mean to you?

What do you dislike in a person?

[Eli / Eliza] Richmond

APPARENT IDENTITY: Former Baxley clique member, Senior at Ridley

REAL IDENTITY: Student deeply indebted to Baxley but resentful of him

BACKGROUND: You took Baxley's Natural History class your freshman year, got hooked, and decided to major in it. For two years you were happily in the Baxley clique. During that time, you made free use of your connection with Baxley and his own inclination for favor-trading to your own benefit. Then one day, early in your junior year, you looked up and realized just how much you owed Baxley, and how hard it would be to pay it all back.

You started resenting Baxley for letting you get so far, and resenting the whole social group and the phenomenon it represented. You dropped out of the clique and started avoiding Baxley, but seeing all those people so innocent and ignorantly corrupt makes you irrationally angry at all of them.

For the past year, you have been running small favors for Baxley to make up your debt. Until recently, you didn't think you would ever get out of it.

THE ASSIGNMENT: Prof Baxley called you up last week and told you that he had something very important for you to do, and that if you did it, you would finally be even. He has assigned you, several other students, and his son to arrange to hang out at your house together. He said that early in the evening, J. Kingston will drop by. The group of you have to make C. Fisher and J. Kingston fall in love— everybody is in on it but the two of them. He said it's very, very important that it happen tonight.

NON-CONFLICT ABILITIES

Overhear x5: Overhear a conversation without being noticed

Discreet x4: Cause someone to receive a piece of information without knowing where it comes from. (Tell Director).

Obscure Reference x2: Make someone feel stupid for not understanding a reference you made. (E)

Uninvolvement x2: Make people not pay attention to you when there is a conflict unless you are in some way obviously involved. (S)

Glare x2: Cause a piece of minor bad luck in the form of a random event to befall someone by glaring at them.

RESISTS

Physical Poor
Social Poor
Emotional Average

SPECIALS

None

INVENTORY

Nothing remarkable

GOALS:

Fulfill your debt, make them fall in love
Make the rest of the team fight each other
Specifically, break up M. Shelley, R. van Fleck, and Jean Frommer's friendship
Take advantage of M. Shelley, however convenient

OTHER KNOWLEDGE:

You're not sure, but you bet a lot of the other people on the team are here because they also owe Baxley a lot.
Prof Baxley's son D. Baxley is really obnoxious. Nobody likes him.
M. Shelley is ridiculously innocent and nice, and very easy to take advantage of.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:

What was your life like before college?

What were some of the deals you made with Baxley early on that got you so far in debt for favors? Do you owe anything other than unspecified favors? (E.g., kept trading for good grades so you could skip class, traded for recommendations and internships, academic connections, borrowed money, etc.)

Why were you so willing to trade?

How did you come to realize you were in trouble?

Who do you blame?

Why not just ignore your debts to Baxley?

What do you miss from your Baxley clique days?

Are you still a Natural History major? What are your future plans?

What is your love life like? What does love mean to you?

What activities do you enjoy doing?

What are your politics views?

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

Brookview is a New England town of about 200,000 people. It was built up around two foci—the Kingston family investments and Ridley College. Most of the town's population consists of a relaxed but enthusiastic middle class, although politics, business, and culture are driven by a small, old, and snobby elite.

The Kingston family is at the top of this elite. Their varied businesses dominate the Brookview economy, and little of note is done to the town without their approval. Rumors abound of their mafia connections. However, their indifference to and uninvolvedness with actual Brookview life makes them feel to most people more like a town fixture than any sort of present or looming power.

Ridley College is a small liberal arts college about two hundred years old at the edge of town. Its friendly professors, energetic students, and strong involvement in the community make it quite popular.

The game is set on an evening in late November, at an informal gathering at M. Shelley's house. M. Shelley is a student who lives at home. All characters are students at Ridley except for J. Kingston, the only child of the Kingston family.

Outside, the night is cool and clear, with a lovely full moon in the sky.

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS KNOWN TO EVERYONE EXCEPT J. KINGSTON: (J. KINGSTON SHOULD LEAVE THE ROOM OR JUST IGNORE THIS INFO)

Professor P. Baxley (nobody knows what the P stands for— rumor says his first name is really just "Professor") is the most notorious and well-loved professor at Ridley. He's portly, jovial, and eccentric. He has been teaching at Ridley for forty years, and is widely speculated to be immortal— he looks in his early fifties, and constantly tells stories of his wild and rambunctious youth.

He teaches Natural History 101 in fall semester, a widely popular class, especially for freshman, and advises the Natural History major. He is like the sort of professor in archaeology movies— he goes around in an explorer hat, and has a huge office filled with odd fossils, dried plants, bizarre things in jars, and other artifacts, including what he claims to be an extremely rare iguana skeleton.

Baxley is also slightly notorious for breaking rules, making bargains with students, involving himself in students' non-academic lives, etc, but is benign and popular enough that the college doesn't bother him very much. Current and former Natural History students tend to form a loose clique centered around his office hours. Of the PCs, M. Shelley and R. van Fleck belong to this clique. E. Richmond used to, but stopped two years ago.

Larp-Specific Rules and Announcements

LARP-SPECIFIC RULES:

- This game implements a major rule change: There are no Conflicts. All abilities are Non-Conflict and always succeed. Actions simply execute in the order they are declared.
- Because there are no Conflicts, there are also no Function Levels or Resists. The Resist area of the character sheet instead gives a general idea of how good the character is at dealing with Physical / Social / Emotional threats, simply for roleplaying purposes. Abilities will also include a corresponding type of Resist if relevant, again only as a helpful reference.
- Abilities that change people's minds or attitudes are not set in stone— they can wear off naturally in response to further events.

BEGINNING ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- This game is set in a world that does have a little magic in it, though most normal people don't believe in it. The style of magic follows the urban fairy tale genre: relatively benign, quaint, based off of herbs and charms, an element of dreams and romance in everyday life. Everyone should use this general intuition of the nature of magic. For those who want more detail, ask the Director to read you the relevant section of Secret Background Information.
- Keep in mind that, although the larp is only three hours long, it is a romance story. Love is in the air, and characters are expected to fall in and out of love over the course of the game. Play your characters with this in mind, and update the Director regularly on your feelings.
- You will find over the course of the game that you will have to make up a lot of small details about your daily life, Ridley College, and Brookview in general— don't be shy, feel free to improvise!

[Julian / Juliet] Kingston

APPARENT IDENTITY: Only child and scion of the Kingston family

REAL IDENTITY: Suppressed young person constantly forced to meet the expectations of his father

BACKGROUND: You are the one expected to continue on the illustrious Kingston family name. Your mother died when you were very young. Your father has always ruled his family, his town, his business, and you with an iron fist. He has very strict requirements of you, and insistent on keeping appearances. Because of this, you have never really had any close friends.

You were, of course, privately schooled. Your father has arranged for you to go to Oxford, starting the coming January. He has also arranged for you to become engaged to an equally respectable French heir whom you will meet there. You know virtually nothing about this person, but you have heard rumors that his family is involved in illicit dealings, and that your father is looking to get back into the business now that your grandparents are dead.

You have always secretly wanted love, and are frustrated that you are not allowed to have it. You've never had a relationship before. You are also bisexual, though your father would never tolerate it if he found out.

You frequently come to M. Shelley's house to get away from your father and servants. You are always welcome there. M. is probably your best friend, but you feel like even he doesn't really understand you.

GOALS: Relax and enjoy your time away from your father.

Non-Conflict Abilities

Etiquette: Fail to make a social mistake. (If you do something wrong, use this ability to take it back so that it never happened IC)

Powerful Stare x5: Make someone feel chastised by looking at them (S)

Public Speaking: Hold an audience's attention when you tell a story or make a speech.

Air of Mystery x3: Add an air of mystery to a gesture or action.

Intimidate: Make someone feel intimidated by you. (S)

RESISTS

Physical Decent
Social Good
Emotional Average

SPECIALS

None

INVENTORY

\$200

OTHER KNOWLEDGE:

The Kingstons are not, in fact, criminals. They were over fifty years ago, but when your paternal grandmother married your grandfather, she did it on the condition that he clean up his act— since then, your family has been the perfectly legal sort of extremely elitist and aloof. Blue moons happen about once every four years.

RELATIONSHIPS:

You are friends with M. Shelley. You know his friend R. White, but no one else.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:

What are some reasons you haven't been able to be able to get really close to anybody in the past?

What was your mother like? How well do you remember her?

Do you spend a lot of time with your father? What do you talk about?

How do you feel about being bisexual? How did you find out?

What is the one thing you like to do most? How often do you do it?

What does love mean to you? Why do you want it so much?

What does home mean to you?

What type of music do you listen to? What books do you read?

Have you traveled a lot? Where have you been?

What are some of your favorite items that you have?

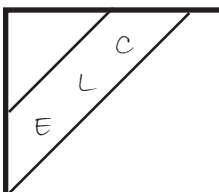
What, in life, do you consider to be truly important?

How do you feel about the idea of your family becoming a criminal again?

What do you picture the French fiance being like?

What was the best thing that ever happened to you?

A Little Magic



Age
19

[Cole / Connie] Fisher

APPARENT IDENTITY: Eccentric freshman at Ridley College

REAL IDENTITY: You are pretty straightforwardly what you appear to be.

BACKGROUND: You are an only child. You've lived in Brookview all your life. You are bright and clever— your parents wanted you to go to a well-known college out of state, but you insisted on going to Ridley because you love it here.

You've always been a little bit eccentric, tending to do your own thing despite inconvenience or disapproval from others. You are fundamentally a happy person, engaged by life and comfortable with yourself. However, because of your eccentricities, your friendships tend to be rocky, inconsistent, and ultimately kind of unsatisfying.

You are bisexual. You've never had a relationship before. Jean Frommer asked you out last month, but you turned him down.

You believe in magic, in secret wonderful things that lurk in everyday life. You had a teacher a long time ago who knew a little magic. You are entranced by mystery and new experiences.

KNOWLEDGE:

You are in Natural History right now with A. Grouse and Jean Frommer. A. Grouse wants to find love

It's a blue moon tonight, a time where magic is easier and anything is possible.

Non-Conflict Abilities

Wish x1: Wish upon a star, and tell the Director. The Director will change circumstances so that it is more likely for your wish to come true.

Soliloquize x2: Force people to listen to you go on about an esoteric topic that you and few other people care about. Nothing meaningful can be said or achieved as long as you keep talking (no more than 15 mins).

Understand x4: Intuitively know the answer to any yes/no question about a person's personality, motivations, issues, or desires. (E)

Luck x3: Cause any event that could happen by chance to go in your favor.

RESISTS

Physical Poor
Social Superb
Emotional Decent

SPECIALS

None

INVENTORY

Lucky worrystone

GOALS:

Get to know people and have a good time.
Set A. Grouse up with somebody.

RELATIONSHIPS:

You are close friends with A. Grouse.
You are casual friends with M. Shelley and Jean Frommer.
You don't know J. Kingston, R. van Fleck, or E. Richmond

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:

In what ways are you eccentric?

What fascinates you?

What are some of your favorite activities?

What does magic mean to you?

What frustrates you about your parents? What about you frustrates them?

Describe your relationship with your family.

What type of music do you listen to? What books do you read?

What do you love about this town?

What is your major? Do you know what you want to do for a living?

How do you feel about the Kingstons?

What makes you angry?

What does love mean to you?

What, in life, do you consider important?

[Devon / Deva] Baxley

APPARENT IDENTITY: Obnoxious child of Professor Baxley, Junior at Ridley

REAL IDENTITY: Bitter friendless person who is mediocre at everything

BACKGROUND: You are Professor Baxley's only child. Your mother was some woman who agreed to have you but didn't want to raise you and took off. Your father cares about you, but he's the only one. All your life, you have been mediocre at everything, and as you watched everyone around you constantly beating you, outshining you, getting the credit and recognition, you grew more and more resentful of them. Your resentment manifested as an obnoxious attitude, winning you even less popularity.

KNOWLEDGE OF PROF BAXLEY: You know magic is real. Your father does it. He's a quarter sprite, and has been around for almost a hundred years. He does a bunch of little magic stuff to make life more convenient. You've tried to learn, but of course, you suck at it. His real name is Polyphemus.

THE ASSIGNMENT: Your father came up to you this morning and told you that he was assigning you to a very important task, with the sort of wink that suggested it's probably part of some sort of magic project. He said that he's dispatching you and a bunch of his former students to hang out at M. Shelley's house and make C. Fisher and J. Kingston fall in love. Everybody is in on it except the two of them. It's very important that it happen tonight.

NON-CONFLICT ABILITIES

Annoy: Know what to say that will make someone more annoyed.

Unwanted Presence: Strongly frustrate people by being present when they don't want you.

Target x3: Make everyone in the room pay attention to what you're doing.

Indifference x2: Upset someone by sheer force of how much you don't care about their problems.

Curse x1: Make something bad happen to somebody. The curse will balance so that a comparable bad thing happens to you.

Charm x2: Cause a trivial event that could succeed by chance to occur.

RESISTS

Physical Average
Social Poor
Emotional Poor

SPECIALS

When you try to use magic, flip a coin. On tails, you fail and waste the ability.

INVENTORY

Nothing remarkable

GOALS:

Be the one who makes them fall in love.

Try to make sure nobody else gets there first, so you get the credit.

Upstage M. Shelley in any way possible. Subtly pick on him.

OTHER KNOWLEDGE:

Tonight is a blue moon. Blue moons are good times to cast major magical effects, but a lot of old magic temporarily stops working.

M. Shelley is disgustingly nice, and really easy to take advantage of.

RELATIONSHIPS:

You've met everyone but J. Kingston because they all go to Ridley.

You kind of hate M. Shelley because he's so bright and sweet and popular.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:

What are some things you've tried and failed at?

What was the closest you've ever come to having a friend? Why did it fail?

What are some things you like doing?

What is your relationship with your father like?

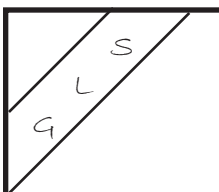
How do you feel about magic?

Do you realize how obnoxious you are? If so, why don't you stop? If not, why do you think people dislike you so much?

If you could have one thing, what would it be?

What do you picture your mother being like?

What does love mean to you?



Age
21

[Mike / Mina] Shelley

APPARENT IDENTITY: Bright, friendly, charismatic and nice junior at Ridley

REAL IDENTITY: Very supportive person that tends to get taken advantage of

BACKGROUND: You are an extremely nice and caring person, many people's best friend. However, you are also sensitive and easy to pick on or take advantage of.

You took Natural History your freshman year, along with D. Baxley and R. van Fleck. At the end of the semester, you had a messy breakup with your significant other, and was too upset to take the final or turn in your paper. Prof. Baxley offered you a behind-the-scenes deal, in which he would pass you anyway if you swore to owe him a favor in the future.

THE ASSIGNMENT: Prof Baxley called you up last week to call in the favor. He has assigned you, several other students, and his son to arrange to hang out at your house together. He said that early in the evening, J. Kingston will drop by. The group of you have to make C. Fisher and J. Kingston fall in love— everybody is in on it but the two of them. He said they will make each other very happy, but that it's very, very important that it happen tonight.

GOALS:

Make them fall in love.
Be a good host.

Non-CONFLICT ABILITIES

Kindness: Make someone feel better by being nice to them. (E)

Empathy x4: Understand why someone is upset. (E)

Human Nature x3: Understand what someone really means when they say something. Cannot be used to detect factual deception, only social or emotional obfuscation. (S/E)

Be There x2: Get the Director to alert you the next time a particular type of event takes place (e.g. J. Kingston gets angry at someone).

Recover: Recover emotionally from setbacks or being hurt in a reasonably short time by force of optimism.

RESISTS

Physical Average
Social Poor
Emotional Bad

SPECIALS

None

INVENTORY

Nothing remarkable

OTHER KNOWLEDGE:

In contrast to how friendly Prof Baxley is, his son D. Baxley is really obnoxious. Nobody likes him. You would kind of rather he not be here.

J. Kingston is oppressed by his ridiculously strict and elitist father (his mother died a long time ago). You've been friends for a few years, and he is always welcome at your house. He comes by a lot to get away from his father. A romantic relationship would be good for him.

You know C. Fisher from school. He's a decent person, but kind of eccentric.

RELATIONSHIPS:

You are J. Kingston's only close friend.

You are also friends with R. van Fleck (Junior) and Jean Frommer (Sophomore).

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:

Why are you so nice? Were you always nice?

What are your parents like? What is your relationship with them?

What are some examples of people taking advantage of you for your niceness? Do you realize how often it happens?

What does friendship mean to you?

What's your major? What are your career plans?

What do you look for in a significant other?

How did that breakup happen? Have you dated anyone else since?

What do you actually think of Prof Baxley?

What are some of your favorite things to do?

Have you travelled? Where have you been?

What do you dislike about yourself?

[Ren / Renee] van Fleck

APPARENT IDENTITY: Friend of M. Shelley, Junior at Ridley

REAL IDENTITY: Secretly ardent defender of M. Shelley

BACKGROUND: You took Natural History your freshman year, along with D. Baxley and M. Shelley. You were unremarkable in the class, but later needed Prof Baxley's recommendation for an internship. He offered you a behind-the-scenes deal: he would write you a stunning recommendation if you promised to owe him a favor in the future.

THE ASSIGNMENT: Prof Baxley called you up last week to call in the favor. He has assigned you, several other students, and his son to arrange to hang out at your house together. He said that early in the evening, J. Kingston will drop by. The group of you have to make C. Fisher and J. Kingston fall in love— everybody is in on it but the two of them. He said they will make each other very happy, but that it's very, very important that it happen tonight.

GOALS:

Watch out for M. Shelley.
Make them fall in love.

Non-Conflict Abilities

Hit: Make someone socially cowed for a while by hitting them. (S/P)
Detect Lie x2: Tell when someone is lying. (E)
Improvise x3: Sound like you know a lot about a particular topic. (S)
Intimidate x2: Make somebody kind of scared of you. (S)
Press x2: Make someone give you additional information when they originally were not planning to. (S)

RESISTS

Physical Average
Social Decent
Emotional Poor

SPECIALS

None

INVENTORY

Nothing remarkable

OTHER KNOWLEDGE:

In contrast to how friendly Prof Baxley is, his son D. Baxley is really obnoxious. Nobody likes him. You heard his mother left because even she couldn't stand him.

M. Shelley always gets picked on or taken advantage of because he's so nice.

RELATIONSHIPS:

M. Shelley considers you a friend just like the two dozen others he has, but you are deeply devoted to him. You consider him one of the few extremely good people in the world, and are very protective of him. You haven't told him this because it would make him feel self-conscious.

You can stand D. Baxley less than most people, especially because of how cruel he tends to be to M. Shelley.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:

What's your major? What are your career plans?

Why did you take Natural Science freshman year?

What do you like about yourself?

What do you dislike about yourself?

What type of music do you listen to? What books do you read?

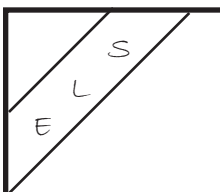
What do you actually think of Prof Baxley?

What is your attitude towards relationships?

Why do you value M. Shelley so much?

What is your sexual orientation?

What characteristics of a person do you consider important?



[Andy / Amy] Grouse

APPARENT IDENTITY: Friend of C. Fisher, freshman at Ridley

REAL IDENTITY: Idealistic young person who wants love

BACKGROUND: Your parents neglected you, so you tended to do whatever you wanted. You are from out of state, and chose Ridley for their creative writing program. It feels a little odd because most people at Ridley are from the area. You are taking Natural History with C. Fisher and Jean. Frommer.

You believe in magic. A great-aunt of yours used to know a small amount, and taught you some of it.

THE ASSIGNMENT: Prof Baxley called you up last week with a proposal. He wanted you, several other students, and his son to arrange to hang out at M. Shelley's house together. The group of should make C. Fisher and J. Kingston fall in love— everybody is in on it but the two of them. He said he thinks they're soul mates, but that it's very, very important that it happen tonight because J. Fisher will soon leave for Oxford.

GOALS:

- Make them fall in love
- Find love yourself
- Other goals as you determine them

NON-CONFLICT ABILITIES

Independent x3: Have an easier time succeeding in a discreet task that does not involve other people when you do it yourself.

Kiss: Make someone feel more clear-headed and happy or make a physical injury stop hurting as much when you lightly kiss them/it.

Massage: Give a good relaxing massage.

Storytell: Tell an engaging story.

Jinx x2: Cause any minor action to fail.

Charm x2: Cause the next few random events pertaining to a single objective to fall in your favor. (Director will manage this).

Bless x1: Undergo a significant ritual to make someone else slightly more lucky. Needs a bunch of spices, wax, and half an hour to cast the spell.

RESISTS

Physical Poor
Social Poor
Emotional Decent

SPECIALS

Must make a small hand gesture or say a few words when using magic.

INVENTORY

Nothing remarkable

OTHER KNOWLEDGE:

C. Fisher is really cool, but kind of eccentric. He doesn't have a lot of friends. Jean Frommer asked C. Fisher out last month, but got turned down. Tonight is a blue moon, a special time for magic. Blue moons are very rare.

RELATIONSHIPS:

You're best friends with C. Fisher. You don't know anybody else very well.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:

What do you like about creative writing?

What sorts of things do you write about?

Why is love important? What does it mean to you?

What unusual hobby do you have?

What are some other things you like to do with your time?

Where are you from? What was it like there? Have you moved often?

How do you feel about your parents?

What type of music do you listen to?

What do you want out of life?

What are your career plans?

What, in the world, do you consider important or meaningful?

<h1 style="margin: 0;">A Little Magic</h1> <h2 style="margin: 0;">Jean Frommer</h2>		Age 20						
<p>APPARENT IDENTITY: Friend of C. Fisher and M. Shelley, Sophomore at Ridley</p> <p>REAL IDENTITY: Unlucky person desperately in unrequited love with C. Fisher</p> <p>BACKGROUND: You are in Natural History with C. Fisher and A. Grouse. You fell deeply in love with C. Fisher in the first few weeks you knew him, and asked him out last month. He is obviously not interested in you and turned you down. You didn't make a fuss, but are still in love.</p> <p>Earlier this year, you were short on money, and tried to steal Prof. Baxley's rare iguana skeleton to pawn for money. He caught you sneaking into his office at 1AM (heaven knew why he was there in the first place) and, after some negotiation, agreed to let you go if you swore to owe him a favor. You doubt he could prove anything anymore, but you wouldn't put it past him to try to get you in trouble if you don't carry it out.</p> <p>THE ASSIGNMENT: Prof Baxley called you up last week to call in the favor. He has assigned you, several other students, and his son to arrange to hang out at your house together. He said that early in the evening, J. Kingston will drop by. The group of you have to make C. Fisher and J. Kingston fall in love— everybody is in on it but the two of them. He said they will make each other very happy, but that it's very, very important that it happen tonight.</p> <p>GOALS: Figure out whether you want to cooperate with the assignment.</p>								
<p>NON-CONFLICT ABILITIES</p> <p>Sleight of Hand x5: Any sleight of hand action (pickpocketing, theft, magic tricks, etc). (P)</p> <p>Speed: Move very quickly.</p> <p>Sneak x5: Physically hide in a corner or shadow, or move between two places without being noticed when unobserved.</p> <p>Overhear x2: Overhear a conversation without being noticed.</p> <p>Insult: Deliver a stinging and effective insult. (S)</p>								
<p>RESISTS</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Physical</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Good</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Social</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Average</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Emotional</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Poor</td> </tr> </table>	Physical	Good	Social	Average	Emotional	Poor	<p>SPECIALS</p> <p style="text-align: center;">None</p>	<p>INVENTORY</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Pocketknife</p>
Physical	Good							
Social	Average							
Emotional	Poor							

OTHER KNOWLEDGE:

In contrast to how friendly Prof Baxley is, his son D. Baxley is really obnoxious.

Nobody likes him.

C. Fisher and A. Grouse are close friends

M. Shelley always gets picked on or taken advantage of because he's so nice.

People say C. Fisher is eccentric, but you think he's creative, individualistic,
honest, confident...

RELATIONSHIPS:

You are in love with C. Fisher.

You are friends with M. Shelley.

You know everyone except J. Kingston from school.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:

Describe the way you are in love with C. Fisher.

Have you ever been in love before? If so, what happened? If not, what is
your impression of it?

Why did you try to steal the skeleton? Have you ever stolen before?

Do you think Prof Baxley knows about your feelings for C. Fisher?

What do you think of Prof Baxley? Why did you take Natural History?

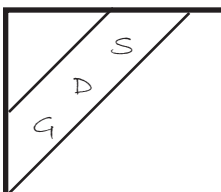
What is your single favorite activity?

What's your major? What are your plans for the future?

What do you morally value?

What does friendship mean to you?

What do you dislike in a person?



Age
23

[Eli / Eliza] Richmond

APPARENT IDENTITY: Former Baxley clique member, Senior at Ridley

REAL IDENTITY: Student deeply indebted to Baxley but resentful of him

BACKGROUND: You took Baxley's Natural History class your freshman year, got hooked, and decided to major in it. For two years you were happily in the Baxley clique. During that time, you made free use of your connection with Baxley and his own inclination for favor-trading to your own benefit. Then one day, early in your junior year, you looked up and realized just how much you owed Baxley, and how hard it would be to pay it all back.

You started resenting Baxley for letting you get so far, and resenting the whole social group and the phenomenon it represented. You dropped out of the clique and started avoiding Baxley, but seeing all those people so innocent and ignorantly corrupt makes you irrationally angry at all of them.

For the past year, you have been running small favors for Baxley to make up your debt. Until recently, you didn't think you would ever get out of it.

THE ASSIGNMENT: Prof Baxley called you up last week and told you that he had something very important for you to do, and that if you did it, you would finally be even. He has assigned you, several other students, and his son to arrange to hang out at your house together. He said that early in the evening, J. Kingston will drop by. The group of you have to make C. Fisher and J. Kingston fall in love— everybody is in on it but the two of them. He said it's very, very important that it happen tonight.

NON-CONFLICT ABILITIES

Overhear x5: Overhear a conversation without being noticed

Discreet x4: Cause someone to receive a piece of information without knowing where it comes from. (Tell Director).

Obscure Reference x2: Make someone feel stupid for not understanding a reference you made. (E)

Uninvolvement x2: Make people not pay attention to you when there is a conflict unless you are in some way obviously involved. (S)

Glare x2: Cause a piece of minor bad luck in the form of a random event to befall someone by glaring at them.

RESISTS

Physical Poor
Social Poor
Emotional Average

SPECIALS

None

INVENTORY

Nothing remarkable

GOALS:

Fulfill your debt, make them fall in love
Make the rest of the team fight each other
Specifically, break up M. Shelley, R. van Fleck, and Jean Frommer's friendship
Take advantage of M. Shelley, however convenient

OTHER KNOWLEDGE:

You're not sure, but you bet a lot of the other people on the team are here because they also owe Baxley a lot.
Prof Baxley's son D. Baxley is really obnoxious. Nobody likes him.
M. Shelley is ridiculously innocent and nice, and very easy to take advantage of.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:

What was your life like before college?

What were some of the deals you made with Baxley early on that got you so far in debt for favors? Do you owe anything other than unspecified favors? (E.g., kept trading for good grades so you could skip class, traded for recommendations and internships, academic connections, borrowed money, etc.)

Why were you so willing to trade?

How did you come to realize you were in trouble?

Who do you blame?

Why not just ignore your debts to Baxley?

What do you miss from your Baxley clique days?

Are you still a Natural History major? What are your future plans?

What is your love life like? What does love mean to you?

What activities do you enjoy doing?

What are your politics views?

Parlor Larps

1 Living Room
1 Evening
1 Director
4-8 Players

RAS

NPC 0

DIR 2

Dark 1

- NC -

(See Page 8)

A Little Magic

A simple story about love and dreamers. Brookview is an engaging New England town with a wealthy and aloof leading family, a quaint local college, and a little magic.

On a clear night in late November, a group of college friends all associated with the same enigmatic professor gather in a warm house under a full moon. Romance and magic are in the air when the local heir arrives unexpectedly, and the enchantments that follow will remake events set in motion long before any of them were born.

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