

Beyond the Wall

A physical larp about life, memory,
and the (re)construction of self.

Meant for four players and one facilitator,
but can be run with anywhere from one to six players,
or played by one person entirely alone.

Runs up to two hours, possibly less,
workshops and debrief included.



by Kirsten Hageleit

Concept of the larp

Beyond the Wall is a larp set between life and death.

Players create a character, first through physical expression, then through randomly-chosen emotional states, and finally through memories to interpret. At the end, each player will have a sense of who their character is, and then will decide where that character will go next.

This is meant to be a quiet, introspective, but emotionally powerful game. Players will confront the most basic human themes of life, loss, love, and remembrance. It is also a very physical game, with lots of movement and physical self-awareness, but is designed to be welcoming to people of all physical abilities. Please continue that welcome.

The larp is prefaced with physical exercises and workshops for the players to become aware of their own individual physicality, and then to change that physicality to create the beginning of their character.

Then, after a short monologue describing the place beyond the wall, the facilitator will slowly feed emotions and memories to the players, who will continue to develop their character. At the end, the characters will be finally realized, and then choose their fates—to climb the wall and return to life with its pains and joys, to rise above to the eternal stars and remain as they are forever, or to go onward into the mists beyond the wall, where their mortal burdens will be lifted, and they find peace.

Requirements

A single room without much furniture (although a few chairs are good), where the lights can be dimmed

Handouts (included), cut out and organized

One facilitator and one to six players

OR

One person willing to larp alone (see *Single Person Rules*, preceding the handout pages)

Helpful but not required:

Some way to play white noise or atmospheric music softly in the background, to provide a sonic buffer against outside noise

Box of tissues and drinking water

Potential triggers, safety concerns, and accessibility for all participants

Emotional: This larp deals with issues of death, failing memory, and loss; has content about anger, exclusion, and aggression; and may have player-generated content about other sensitive issues. Discuss potential triggers ahead of time with all participants, and go over the cut, break, and OK signals.

If players are triggered by characters acting towards them with aggression, anger, fear, or other violent emotions, feel free to simply remove those emotions from the two Emotion handout stacks.

This larp deals with the variations in human physical ability. By default and design, it highlights the fact that all humans have limitations to their physical selves and physical abilities. This understanding may affect people emotionally.

Bodywork in general is emotionally affecting; it may bring up issues that the players themselves are unaware of. Make sure your space is as safe as you can make it, and watch each other for signs of out-of-character distress.

Physical: This larp may include touch, if the players are agreeable to it; please discuss everyone's parameters and limitations ahead of time.

This larp is very physical: it may inflame old injuries or even create new ones if players are not careful with themselves. Remind players not to push too hard, and allow people to rest when necessary.

There are also breathing exercises in the workshop portion which may cause light-headedness if done too quickly. Remind players to breathe easily, not too quickly or slowly, and relax.

Accessibility: While this larp is quite physical, it is intended to accommodate people of all physical abilities. Some ways facilitators can include everyone:

Make sure your location is large enough for wheelchairs to move and free of obstacles, such as excess furniture or loose rugs, so that people with limited balance or mobility can move safely.

Print the memories larger, or read them aloud (quietly) to players with limited vision.

Make sure chairs or benches are available for players to sit, and take breaks between exercises.

Let each player decide what they are and are not capable of, and support that choice.

Facilitator's Timetable

1. Player's Introduction read aloud (5 minutes)
2. Discussion of acceptable physical touch, cut and brake signals, and "OK" signal; discussion of potential triggers for the participants. (10 minutes)
3. Opening exercises and physical workshops led by facilitator (20-30 minutes)

Deep breathing exercise

Physical awareness exercise

Physical exploration exercise

Physical role workshop

Creation of physical roles

Practice of physical roles

Short break; breathing and role exercise

4. Larp begins (20-45 minutes; each section runs about 5 minutes but exact timing is up to the facilitator, based on how the players progress.)

Facilitator reads beginning monologue

Spirits awake

Players inhabit physical roles and begin to explore the space and each other

First Memory: Simple Emotion

Facilitator hands out Simple Emotion slips to the players; players incorporate them into their characters, physically play out results

Second Memory: Complex Emotion

Facilitator hands out Complex Emotion slips to players; players incorporate them into their characters, physically play out results

Third Memory: Remembered Moment

Facilitator hands out one Remembered Moment slips, players incorporate them into their characters, physically and verbally play out results

Fourth Memory: Remembered Moment

Facilitator hands out one Remembered Moment slips, players incorporate them into their characters, physically and verbally play out results

Mists gather

Facilitator calls for the players to consolidate their characters

Characters tell each other about who they were

Characters make final decisions, and leave to their chosen destinations

Spirits depart

Facilitator reads final monologue

5. Larp ends
6. De-role and debrief (10-20 minutes)
 - Verbal check-in with players
 - Deep breathing exercise
 - Physical de-roleing exercise
 - Facilitator leads debrief

Introduction for the Players

Facilitator Note: This should be read directly to the players, or paraphrased thoroughly, so that players know what will be happening as part of this larp. You may find it helpful to remind players, right before the larp begins, of the sequence of events during the larp—after the workshop, or before the break.

Beyond the Wall is a larp set in the space between life and death.

You will each create a character, first through altering your physical expression, then by integrating randomly-chosen emotions, and finally through memories to interpret. At the end, you will have built a sense of who your character was, and then will decide where the character will go next—back into life, upward into eternity, or onward into the mists of forgetfulness.

This is meant to be a quiet, introspective, but emotionally powerful game. You will be confronting the most basic themes of life, love, and remembrance, and sometimes these themes are emotionally overwhelming. Please play thoughtfully.

The larp will play as follows:

First, there will be a workshop for you to explore physical characterization, and to develop a physical expression of your character. There will be exercises on breathing, on body awareness, and then a workshop on how to alter some of the bodily habits we take as default—posture, balance, physical limitations, and movement. By the end, you will have a physical understanding of your character, but nothing more.

The larp proper will begin with a monologue about the place where your characters have found themselves, beyond the wall of death. You will then be free to move around using your newly acquired physical characterization, to physically explore the space, each other, and yourself. At this point, you cannot yet speak, but can express yourself physically.

After some time, the characters' memories will begin to surface, represented by writing on strips of paper given out at random by the facilitator. These are meant as suggestions for free association, not commands; if you deeply dislike a memory you may return it to the facilitator and get another. But do try to allow your character to be formed by what you are given. These memories are not meant to necessarily link together as a

narrative; they may be coherent, or disjointed. They may be profound, or shallow. They mean only what you wish them to mean.

The first memory is of a simple emotion. You can explore this emotion for a few minutes, integrating the physical sensation of that emotion into your character's understanding and physicality, without speaking.

The facilitator will then give out the second round of memories; these are more complicated, social emotions. You will have more time to explore this feeling, and to interact with each other—still, without speech.

After a few minutes, the facilitator will give out the third round of memories. These are more concrete, images and scenes that you can interpret as you will. At this point, your characters will have remembered how to speak, and may talk with one another about their memories, and what those memories might mean.

After a longer period of time, the facilitator will hand out the fourth and final round of memories. Integrate these new memories with your older ones, or not, as you see fit. Characters can speak with each other at length, if they want, or contemplate their memories in silence.

Once you have a good idea of who your characters were, the facilitator will describe the gathering of the mists. You will have a final chance to tell the others who you were, and then you will choose where you will go next: to climb back over the wall, over the sharp and icy stones, back into the realm of life; to rise above the mists towards the eternal stars, where you will remain as you are always; or to go into the gentle mists of the realm of death, where all your burdens will be lifted, and you will have eternal rest. Once the characters are all decided, the facilitator will read the final monologue, which describes the journeys of the souls as they make their way to what lies beyond. This is the end of the larp.

Afterwards, players will be asked about their well being, and the facilitator lead an exercise to de-role—how the players leave their characters behind and return to themselves. Finally, you have a chance to talk about their experiences, either as a group or individually.

Discussing Parameters and Practicing Safety

At this point, players should discuss ways to keep the space safe for all players, including:

Triggers: Do any of the players have known triggers, particularly ones involving (but not limited to) death, personal loss, the grieving process, speculation on the afterlife, physical ability or disability? There are also potential triggers involved in roleplaying out emotions such as grief, anger, aggression, and exclusion, or in player-generated content created as players make sense of the memories they have been given. Potential ways of making play safer include, but are not limited to: discussing topics to avoid ahead of time, removing trigger-related negative emotions from the Memory handouts, and the use of Cut, Brake, and OK. Descriptions and uses follow:

Cut: Play needs to stop, for whatever reason. This should always be a verbal signal. If someone calls “Cut” play will stop, and the facilitator will check in on the person who gave the signal and see what steps need to be taken next, whether that’s a moment for the player to recover, an enforcement of the boundaries of safe play, or even someone leaving play, for any reason.

Brake: Play is getting intense, and a player needs to lower the intensity but not actually stop. This can be a verbal signal, but can also be a hand signal (hand out and flat, fingers together, as in “Stop.”)

OK: This signal is both question and answer. If a player seems to be in difficulty, the facilitator or another player can signal OK to them (hand forming OK sign on chest, thumb and finger creating a circle with the remaining fingers straight). If the player is doing all right, they can make the signal back; if not, they do nothing, and the facilitator or player who first made the signal can treat it as a Cut. Additionally, a player who may be roleplaying distress (sorrow, fear, anger) can make the OK signal to others to indicate they are not in actual personal distress.

Have players practice these signals if they are not already familiar with them. Cut and Brake in particular are good to use in an exercise defining acceptable physical closeness, as follows.

Touch: Some people are comfortable with being touched in a larp; some people are not, and some people desire it. All of these need to be respected.

All physical touch in *Beyond the Wall* should be positive: while aggressive emotions are present in the larp, they must not be acted out by touching other players, or even miming out physical touch.

Discuss briefly whether the group wishes to allow physical touch in the larp; if so, which people are comfortable giving or receiving touch, and what kind of touch is acceptable (light touch on hands or arms, hugs) and where (arms, shoulders, head, etc.). Physical distance should also be discussed: not all players are comfortable in close quarters.

Physical boundaries can be worked out by having the players partner up with some distance between them, then move toward each other, and one or both of the players will signal (with the hand signal for Brake) when the other person reaches their preferred boundary. Switch up partners until all players have practiced together.

Opening Exercises and Physical Workshops

Facilitator Notes: Players can follow along as you read aloud, if you like, but do allow plenty of time to go through each one. Also, make sure to take breaks between each exercise, even if they are very short.

This larp is designed to acknowledge and work with the natural variations in every person's physical being. Make sure players of different physical abilities are welcome. Each player can alter these exercises to fit their own abilities; please allow players to determine exactly what those are.

Have the players briefly warm up their bodies by swinging their arms and/or jogging lightly, and by stretching out their arms, legs, back, and chest (as possible) before beginning the exercises.

Deep breathing

Stand (or sit straight) with your weight balanced equally, with your hands comfortably by your sides. Close your eyes and breathe quietly for a moment; in through the nose, and out through the mouth. Focus on how the air travels through your nose, your throat, through your chest, and back out again. Do this for a minute or two, gently—do not force your breath or push yourself, just breathe comfortably.

Then, with every inhale, imagine that your breath does not merely go to your chest, but down through your chest, through your belly, and down all the way to your feet. As you exhale, visualize the air returning out, back up through your feet, your belly, your chest, and out through your mouth. Do this for a few minutes—again, gently, and without forcing your breath or pushing too hard.

Physical awareness

Every body is unique and idiosyncratic. None of us are the same: “normal” merely indicates the most common variations, not a perfect standard that individuals deviate from. This exercise is to understand how your own body works, so you can change it for the purposes of creating your character.

Building on the previous exercise, stand (or sit straight) with your weight balanced on both feet and hips, arms comfortably at your sides, eyes closed. Breathe naturally.

Focus your awareness throughout your body, starting with the feet: feel your weight balanced

between your two feet, and between your heels and toes. Do your feet hurt? Do they feel sensitive, tense, strong? Don't attempt to change this, merely notice.

Move your awareness up through your legs: feel your calves, your knees, your thighs. If you are standing, feel how your weight is carried by all of them. Do your knees or ankles feel vulnerable, if they hold you up? Do parts of your legs feel tense, uncomfortable, balanced, strong?

Move your awareness up through your belly, your spine, your chest: feel how these parts move in relation to each other, how they are balanced on your pelvis below you, and how they support your head above, and how your breath affects them, how they shift as you inhale and exhale.

Move your awareness into your shoulders, down through your arms to your hands, and back up to your neck, and finally your head. Do these parts feel balanced? Tense? Stiff?

Now consider your body as a whole. Does tension or discomfort in one part bleed into another? Do you have injuries, old or new? Where do you carry tension: shoulders, neck, back? Do you compensate for a weaker part with one that is strong? Where do you feel powerful, and where do you feel vulnerable? Again, don't try to change this, just be aware.

Finish the exercise by taking a few slow breaths, then open your eyes. Shake out any tensions you may have picked up, swing your arms, get your blood moving again. Stretch gently.

Physical exploration exercises

As every body is unique, you will learn different ways to alter how you stand, sit, walk, and move, and use this new way of carrying yourself to create the seed of a new character. Be aware of your own limitations and vulnerabilities as you do this: the point is to alter your physicality, not hurt yourself or inflame old injuries.

Begin the exercise by standing or sitting in the position that is **most comfortable** for you—not “perfect,” not “neutral,” just comfortable. As you alter how you hold your body, in these exercises, notice if or how your emotional state changes, and pay attention to how well you can hold this change. You want to be slightly uncomfortable in your character's skin, but only slightly.

Space yourselves around the room so you all have room to move without mishap.

Posture: How do you stand or sit normally? Is your head balanced on top of your neck, or do you slouch forward? Is your chest lifted or sunken?

Alter your posture in different ways, just until it feels slightly unbalanced. How does it feel, emotionally, when you lift your chest, or round your shoulders? Move your head forward and back on your spine, and pay attention to how each one makes you feel. Visualize your head being suspended from above, or your shoulders pushed forward or backwards. Pay attention to how this feels.

Shake out afterwards.

Balance: Do you carry your weight equally on both sides, or are you off balance? Do you shift your weight from side to side frequently, rarely, not at all? Which hand or foot do you use, and for what?

Alter your balance by shifting your weight not just from side to side, but from front to back—onto your toes, and back onto your heels. Use your hips to shift your weight, then your shoulders. How does it feel to be off balance? Move your limbs around leading with your non-dominant side, hand or foot—step forward, or grasp at something. How does that feel to you? How much more do you have to concentrate to use that side first?

Shake out afterwards.

Limitation: Are you naturally flexible or stiff? Where are the limits of how you can move comfortably, and what are your constraints—in flexibility, strength, range of motion. How do you feel if you cannot move some or all of your joints as you usually do? Your limbs? What is it like to constrain your movements to less than what you can normally access? How do you feel if you push slightly beyond your comfort level?

Shake out afterwards.

Movement: How do you normally move—are you quick, slow, graceful, jerky, smooth, clumsy? Change up how you move until it feels a little unnatural. If you like, you can start moving slowly around the space, giving enough room for your fellow players. Exaggerate your movements—for example, take steps of a different length, or at a different speed. Wave your arms about. If you like, you can begin to incorporate some of the traits you used in the Posture, Balance, and Limitation sessions. Pay attention to how your body feels as you move about;

you should feel off-kilter, but avoid anything that is painful or pushes your vulnerable areas too much.

Shake everything out at the end of this exercise, stretch, take a few deep breaths, and finally relax back into your most comfortable posture.

Physical Role workshop

In this exercise you will select from the variations you explored in the previous section to create the seed of your character, then practice being and moving in that variation.

Start with your posture, then incorporate variations from all the different categories until you have a way of being in your physical state which feels alien and slightly uncomfortable. Start moving around, as in the previous exercise, but now focus on all the variations you have available. Change things up on the fly, swap out things that are too awkward or take too much thought for you to maintain. Look at your fellow players and see how they have changed; feel free to pick up some aspects of their physicality if they interest you. Find something you feel is interesting, something that affects your mood slightly, for better or worse. This is your character's seed.

Focus on this. Continue to move around the room for a few minutes in this seed, then relax into your own shape again.

Facilitator Note: Give the players a few rounds of getting in to and out of their character seed, then call a short break of five or ten minutes. Ask them to shake off anything they need to, stretch, take a bathroom break or get a drink of water.

When they return, ask them to line up along one wall, a few feet away from it. If the lights are not already dimmed, or the music playing, do so now.

Remind the players of what will happen next: the exploration, the memories handed out at random, and the conclusion. Remind them that their interpretation of memories is their own—not to think too much, associate freely, and return what they can't use for a replacement.

Ask the players to close their eyes and breathe quietly, for a couple of minutes. Ask them to let their bodies relax and their own thoughts go quiet. After a few minutes, then ask them to change their bodies into the seed they have created.

Then the larp will begin.

Larp Begins

Facilitator Note: Remember to watch your players, and intervene (with OK check) if they seem to be in real distress. Also, take timing cues from the players.

Spirits awake

Read aloud:

"You have awakened beyond the wall of death.

Here the sky is dark, and the air is still and cold. Gray mists drift around you, but above, the stars shine bright. They do not move. Beneath you, the ground is bare and icy, and sharp stones press against your feet. Behind you, the wall of death is made from these same stones. You do not remember how you crossed it.

You know you are not meant to be here long, but you do not yet remember where you need to go. Wait. Your answer will come soon. Already, your spirit recalls the body you once were. You feel your own shape, your own way of moving, of being. The remembering has already begun.

As you explore, you realize you are not alone in this cold place. There are other spirits around you. They seem familiar, perhaps, although this may be only that they seem as lost and lonely as you. It is good not to be alone. Perhaps, you might all learn to remember together.

You know one thing most clearly: you need not stay here long. Once you remember who you were, you will know where you need to go next: whether that is up towards the endless, unmoving sky above; or down towards the gray mists of forgetfulness and rest; or back, over the wall made from these sharp and painful stones, back down into the realm of life.

And now begins the time of remembering."

Facilitator Note: If the players have not begun to move about the space by the end of the monologue, ask them to do so now.

Give the players several minutes to move around the space and to confront and react to each other. This can take up to five minutes, although unless you have a hard time constraint, you should always allow the players' progress to determine pacing. More time is generally better than less. Feel free to move around, but stay out of the players' way.

Once the players have thoroughly explored their environment and each other, distribute a Simple Emotion slip to each player. Allow them a moment to decide if they want to work with their particular emotion before you move on to the next.

First memory: Simple emotion

Read aloud:

"A memory has come to you. It is simple, and sharp, and overwhelming. You feel it move through you, coloring all you know. You do not yet know why you feel this; you have no words to describe it. But it is very real."

Facilitator Note: Once again, allow the players to physically explore this emotion for at least a few minutes. If you like, keep track of which player has what kind of emotion, and choose a Complex Emotion slip that is opposite in feel for the next round.

When the all players seem to have played out the emotion they were given, hand out the Complex Emotion slips. These are more nuanced than the first, and many describe relationships. Allow them a moment to decide if they want to work with their particular emotion before you move on to the next.

Second memory: Complex emotion

Read aloud:

"As quickly as it came, another sensation has replaced the first. This one is more complex, harder to understand. You do not know who or what caused this emotion, but it is powerful. You still cannot speak of it, but your spirit expresses it. And you are not alone in this; you can tell your fellow spirits are as consumed as you."

Facilitator Note: Give the players slightly more time with this round, if possible. Gently prompt the players to interact with each other, if they are not. This is a more social round than the first.

Once the players seem have come to some sort of stopping point, hand each one a slip from the Remembered Moment pile.

Third memory: Remembered moment

Read aloud:

"And now, you begin to remember fragments of the life you lived. A moment in time, important or trivial. It is a message from your past, but you do not yet know what it means. But along with it, you have remembered how to speak—how to describe, to analyze, to share. What have you remembered? What does it mean?"

Facilitator Note: At this point, the players can speak, so it will be easier to monitor how the scene is going. Let them explore their memories with each other, but don't let this round run too long, as they will have another memory that will enrich or contradict the first.

Once the players have each had a chance to speak, hand them each another Remembered Moment to work from.

Fourth memory: Remembered moment

Read aloud:

"Other memories are returning to you, but slowly. One moment has overwhelmed you. What does it mean to you? Is it a powerful moment, or a small one? Why do you remember this one moment so clearly?"

You are beginning to feel the shape of the person you once were, much as you feel the shape of the body you once were. The shape of your whole life, the pattern that was you, is re-emerging. And you begin to understand what is left of you."

Facilitator Note: This should be a reasonably long round, as the players have all of the pieces with which to finish their character, and they will need time to integrate them.

When they seem to be close to a resolution, proceed to the final round.

Mists gather

Read aloud:

"As your own self is remembered, you see the mists begin to gather close. You know that you may soon depart, that you were never required to stay here long."

One last time, gather with your companions and speak of who you were. Reveal yourself, and decide where you will go next:

Will you rise to the unmoving stars above, and remain as you are, eternal and unchanging?

Will you go into the mists of this place, where all your burdens will be lifted, and you will find rest?

Or will you climb back over the wall, over the sharp and ruthless stones of the wall of death, and return to the realm of life, to journey there anew?

Tell the others: who you are, and where you will go."

Facilitator Note: This is the final round, so let the scene play out as long as necessary, time constraints permitting.

When each character has chosen their destination, read the conclusion.

Spirits depart

Read aloud:

"As you have chosen, you each move on."

Those who rise to the stars, you feel the earth move away below you. As you do, all of your life becomes clear; every moment, every breath, every memory, is returned to you, never to be taken again. The stars grow brighter as you rise, and like them, you begin to shine.

Those who seek rest, you move forward into the gray mists. They gather about you, soft and welcoming. You feel your sorrows lightened as you go, your burdens taken from you, your spirit given ease. And the mists surround you, and bring you in, and you become mist, and you are gone, at last at peace.

Those who seek return, be strong, for this way is hardest, and full of sorrows. The stones of the wall are sharp, and cut you as you climb. And it is a long climb. The memories you so recently regained begin to slip from you, again, until you do not remember where you are, or why you are here, or how it is you can go on in such pain. But you do go on.

As you reach the top of the wall, you look ahead, over to the realm of life. The sun is rising there, and as its rays touch you, you cross over once again, light and joyous as a breath of wind, as a ray of light, as a memory, back into the living world.

And thus ends your time beyond the wall."

Facilitator Note: Let the players come back naturally from the last scene. Ask them to breathe a moment, shake off their character physically, and then take a few deep breaths, or stretch. Check your players for any signs of lingering emotional distress; ask them if they are all feeling all right.

Then call a break for a few minutes before you begin the debrief.

De-role and Debrief

Check in with your players again after the break. Is anyone distressed or angry? Do they need a tissue, a drink of water, an extra minute?

Ask the players to gather in a circle, either standing or sitting as they prefer. Have them close their eyes, take a deep breath or two, and think about their character: how their character moved, and felt. Tell them to continue breathing easily, then visualize their character leaving them physically, dissolving or rising off of their bodies. If their character had a particular posture, have them shake out of it; if the character had a limitation or constraint on their movement, have the players stretch those parts. Basically, let them physically release the character they had created, and return to their own comfortable way of moving and being. This should take a few minutes.

While they are physically moving their character out, ask them to visualize their character leaving, going to the destination they had chosen. All the joys, sorrows, frustrations, burdens of the character go with them, or are released, leaving nothing left but the player, in the player's own sense of physical and emotional self.

Once the players feel they have returned to themselves, you can begin to ask questions. This can be done either as a full group, or in pairs; ask your players which they would prefer.

Here are some suggestions of questions to discuss, choose which you feel are appropriate. Or, create your own.

What about your character was like you, and what was not? What would you want to take from your character, and keep?

How did the physical transformations change how you, as the player, were feeling during the workshop? During the game? How did it feel to let that physical aspect go?

How does your body feel now?

What kind of insight did your character have, or lack? Do you feel you share that insight, or found it?

Are you happy with the decision your character made? Why or why not?

Did this larp make you feel differently about your physical capabilities? The physical capabilities of others? Do you feel your own personality is shaped by your own physical state, or not?

Are there memories you have as a still-living person that have become touchstones for you? What senses do they engage? Do you reflect on them, or remember them often? How do you use them to make sense of your life?

Finally, check in again with your players before you let the group loose. If players are willing, check in with them a few days afterwards, and encourage them to talk with each other about their experiences.

Single-Person Play

For a single person, this larp becomes even more quiet and introverted—a personal character development, rather than a social construction that is developed in part by one’s peers. To play alone, you will need to set up in a quiet room with some room to move around, and print out the entire larp. Atmospheric music is particularly helpful here.

To prepare, have the “Opening Exercises and Physical Workshops” and “Larp Begins” pages handy someplace where they are easy to read. Cross out the third paragraph of the Beginning Monologue. Print out the Handouts, cut them apart, then select unseen, at random, one Simple Emotion, one Complex Emotion, and two Remembered Moments. Put them where you can pick them up easily, but don’t read them yet.

Run through the exercises and workshops as written. Once you have a sense of your character as a physical being, read the Opening Monologue (all but the crossed-out paragraph).

As you feel you gain insight into your character, read each of the four memory slips at intervals, and incorporate them into your character.

Consider these questions as you play:

Who is this person, and who do they become as their memories return to them?

How does your character’s physicality change, with each new revelation?

What is it like to be alone, to have no one to validate who you are, and how you wish to be seen?

How do you decide your fate, when there are no other people to help you, to ask or answer questions? What do you look for, to guide you?

Contemplate the three possible destinations:

To rise to the stars, and remain always as you are now, fixed and unchanging

To seek rest in the gray mists, given true peace, beyond the trials of the living

To return to the cycle of life in all its forms; to lose what you have, but be given new things in return; to risk pain in the hope of joy

Which will your character choose?

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J Li’s workshop, “How to Write a Larp in 4 hours,” Big Bad Con 2015

Handouts

Print out these two pages, cut the items apart, and keep them in separate piles.

Simple Emotions

Fear

Joy

Love

Anger

Sorrow

Hopefulness

Aggression

Loneliness

Confusion

Empathy

Anticipation

Frustration

Complex Emotions

*Pride,
with Regret
or Loss*

*Defeat,
Exhaustion*

*Anger over
something taken
from you*

*Desire
to protect
someone*

*Mischief,
to play or
provoke*

*Shame
with Fear*

*Fear that
someone will
hurt you*

*Desire to
be seen, paid
attention to*

*Desire
to care for
someone*

*Yearning for
something
lost*

*Worry that
someone
was hurt*

*Fear of
exclusion
or rejection*

Remembered Moments

The feel of sunlight on your hands and face.

Leaves flickering and shimmering in the wind.

The smell of a baby's head.

Someone holds your hand, and speaks to you.

A voice, calling for you, from somewhere far away.

The sound of people cheering.

A bright jolt of terrible pain.

The fur of a friendly animal under your fingers.

The sudden sound of an alarm.

The salt taste of tears, and a tightness in your throat.

Many people, speaking, afraid.

The pull of water around you.

The face of a loved one, turning away.

The sharp shock of loss, then a long and fading grief.

Waking up at night, alone.

Weariness in your arms, your legs, your back.

Searching for something, or someone, you cannot yet name.

An unexpected kiss.

Freezing silence hurts your teeth.

The pounding of your heart and the dribble of sweat down your neck.

Someone is waiting for you.

Children yelling, in joy.