

## (I Declare) Combat

A Larp for 3-6 Players

By Mike Young

### Synopsis:

The players are playing a dysfunctional GM team trying to handle a 26 player combat in an old school secrets and power larp (or if you prefer, 1<sup>st</sup> edition Minds Eye Theatre). Players will occasionally step into the roles of the larp within the larp (*the larp within*).

No GM is required for *the larp without* (this larp), but a facilitator would be useful. The facilitator may also play.

### You will need:

- ✓ 26 index cards (or 26 small blank pieces of paper)
- ✓ A writing implement for each player

### Setup The Larp Within:

1. Write a different letter (A-Z) on the back of each index card. The cards represent the 26 Player Characters in the larp within. Their names are the single letter on the card.
2. Shuffle the cards and give some to each player.
3. Have players write a few sentences that describes the mindset or playstyle of the player of that character of the larp within. Examples include, but are not limited to:
  - a. You had a falling out with S. You want to have your revenge on them in-game. You want their character dead.
  - b. You paid extra for your character to have super speed. You may interrupt three later characters and take additional actions. You want to do this.
  - c. Your character improvised an explosive device which you want to use but the rules don't cover how it works.
  - d. You don't understand these complicated mechanics and need all of your options explained to you. Repeatedly.
  - e. C and P are both your allies, but you've decided to backstab one of them. You need to get C and P to convince you which one to backstab.
  - f. Your goal is to get out of this combat alive. You will wheedle with people who want to attack you and whine if your character takes any damage.
- 3+. If a character is exceptionally reactive to things around them, then you can write on the letter side a simple instruction preceded by an exclamation point. It is strongly encouraged to limit the quantity of characters that have this. Examples include, but are not limited to:
  - a. !Can take attacks directed at other characters.
  - b. !Argues about rules even when not affected by them.
  - c. !Will egg people on to attack D.
4. Scatter the cards letter side up across the play space.

### Create the GM Characters:

Your GM character name is your real name. Have the players stand in a circle. Starting with one and going clockwise each player explains what the GM character to their right values most about the larp, and why their

GM character dislikes the GM character to their left. Players may negotiate and discuss the values and dislikes with each other. Players may want to take notes if, like me, you have a poor memory.

Collectively name and describe the larp within. It can be as silly or as serious as you want.

It would be appropriate at this point to discuss boundaries for arguing, as different people have different levels of comfort for such things. Likewise, it would be useful at this point to discuss meta-techniques for cutting or breaking the scene or a code word for requesting the intensity of the larp turned down.

### Running the Combat:

The larp within is in a time stop during the combat. Some people call this a “combat bubble.”

Starting with A, and going through Z, players take turns playing the characters designated by that letter. When it is that letter’s turn in the combat, a player temporarily abandons their GM character to become the player character.

The player describes what their character wants to do, or negotiates with the GM characters, or asks questions about the rules, or does whatever they think their player character would do. If the actions of the player character would affect a different player character, another player temporarily abandons their GM character to play that player character. **There must always be at least one GM character still playing at all times**, although it doesn’t have to be the same GM character each time.

The GM characters must collectively decide what happens to the player characters as a result of that player characters’ action. This is not a time for agreement. You all have your own agendas and dislikes. Stick to them. The player characters at that time should feel free to roleplay with each other and the GM characters to try to get their way as well.

There is *no* fidelity of character for the player characters of the larp within. If one player plays A, and then it is called upon later for A to be active (perhaps in response to some other character’s actions), then a different player may jump in as A. There *is* fidelity of GM character of the larp within. You are always playing the same GM character in *this* larp.

If a player character’s character dies in the larp within, remove that card from the floor.

The larp without ends when the last player character’s action is completely resolved.