

The Great Discovery

by Elizabeth Lui

A Free-Form Live Action Role Play for Four to Six Players

Introduction and Background

The Great Discovery is a game about two discoverers and how their choices impact not only the world around them, but their relationships and own identities. It is a game that explores at what cost we are willing to make sacrifices, if our intentions are always noble and always our own, and if we can remain true to ourselves in the face of terrible odds and temptation.

The Players

Players are encouraged to be creative with their characters. There are no restrictions regarding gender, race, sexuality, etc. The only constraints are ones that you decide upon as a group, i.e. no aliens in Victorian England but goblins are fine.

Two players will be the discoverers. It is up to your group to decide if they are scientists, wizards, hackers, etc. It is also up to the group to decide if the discoverers are friends or foes at the beginning, are they partners and allies or are they enemies and rivals? The only requirement is that the two discoverers are both aware of some newly revealed information, be it a scientific discovery or a new magical essence or a computer program that will change the world.

The remaining players will represent the outside forces that impact the discoverers. Each will represent a positive or negative force in the world, split as evenly as possible between the two depending on how many players you have. For example, if there are two players remaining then one is a positive force (for example, a mentor to the discoverers or a love interest) and the other is a negative force (for example, a financially interested party or a sneaky reporter trying to gain information).

All players participate in all chapters of play.

The Setting

This will be up to the play group. Let your imagination run wild! Anything is fair game from Victorian England to a post-apocalyptic wasteland. The world is up to you as is what has been discovered. Come together as a group and create your story.

Set-Up and Game Play

All you need to play is a group of gamers, cards or paper, pens, and envelopes.

At the beginning of the game, once the world, characters, and discovery have been decided, each player writes down their characters intentions and motives regarding the discovery on a card. They also write down what, if anything, would make them change their choices. The card should then be placed in an envelope and set aside for the end of the game.

This game can be told in four chapters, Discovery, Dilemma and Temptation, Decision, and Consequence. The first chapter, Discovery, is about the discovery that sparks a conflict between the discoverers. What is that discovery? What is the conflict? What are the relationships between the discoverers and other members of their world? What do the discoverers want to do with the new information they have found? What do the outside forces want to do? The second chapter, Dilemma and Temptation, brings forth the negative forces in the world to offer a temptation or problem to one or both of the discoverers regarding their new discovery. What is this problem or temptation? Why is it being offered? How do the discoverers react? The third chapter, Decision, deals with how the discoverers decide to handle the temptation offered in the last chapter and how the people in their world seek to influence that choice. How will the discoverers act? How do the people in their lives, positive and negative, react? The final chapter, Consequence, acts to resolve the effects of the decisions made in the previous chapter. Are relationships damaged or saved? Friendships and reputations ruined or made? What is the ultimate fate of the great discovery? How do you envision your character moving forward from this point?

At the beginning of each chapter, the play group should briefly discuss how the chapter will begin, set the scene, and outline the events that will be played out in the chapter. Play proceeds until the group decides that the chapter has come to a satisfactory conclusion. Time does not need to proceed in a rapid fashion, for example the first chapter can take place three years before chapter two and chapter three can take place twenty years before chapter four. This is up to you and your group.

Endgame

At the conclusion of the final chapter, all players should retrieve their envelopes and re-read their thoughts from the beginning of the game. Did their characters stay true to their intentions? Did anyone change? What made them change or stay the same? Discuss this among the group, share your original intentions and how the story affected them.

Now take the time in your group to discuss the game and what happened to your characters. What surprised you? What frustrated you? What were you proud of? What do you wish you had done differently? How did the influences of other players affect you? Decompress and discuss.

Notes on Gameplay

The Great Discovery is a game that is heavily reliant on the players and their willingness to interact with the world and story they create. All players are encouraged to role play as much as possible but within their comfort. For example, one player might be willing to fully act out their disgust with another play while another player might feel more comfortable with saying, "I am totally disgusted by this conversation and I just walk out of the room." Both forms are acceptable, do what feels right for your character and your player style. As always, be creative and have fun!

Thank you for playing!