

One Year - a 2hr Larp for 5-10 players, by Jenn Martin and Todd Nicholas

One Year is about a community of people trying to create something beautiful. You will come together to have meetings about and execute a project aimed at making your small space of the world a little bit better. To play, you need an open space, notecards, writing utensils, scotch tape, some nametags, and a facilitator. We also suggest beginning with a primer on safety. If you do not have any background in LARP safety, Leaving Mundania provides a nice primer of strategies you can present to your group: <http://leavingmundania.com/2014/02/27/primer-safety-in-roleplaying-games/>

Setup & Character Creation

In One Year, each participant will play a single person who is a member of the community. There will also be a person who acts as the facilitator. The facilitator should be familiar with the rules and move the players through the various steps of play, explained below. They may also portray members of the community in role-playing scenes.

First, decide together what sort of project the group has undertaken. This decision is completely out of character- play starts with the project underway, so make sure everyone agrees. Think about what you'd like to create and why you'll create it- something that makes you hopeful or that fosters community. Then, decide together what sort of group you are- not every player has to be directly tied to the group, but everyone playing should be actively involved in making the project successful. You all want to be here. See the examples below for project and group ideas.

Project Ideas	Group Ideas	Character Ideas
A mural	Social club	Member of group
A community garden	Activist group	Significant other of member
A park/outdoor structure	Neighborhood	Family/friend of member
An independent library	Faith community	Contracted to work on project
Something else	Something else	Something else

To create your character, write one of the following about yourself- a fear; an anxiety; a regret; something you would change about yourself- on four notecards. You do not ever have to share what you wrote with the group, but you will use the notecards in play. Then, use the four things you wrote to inform your character. Choose a name and occupation, how you are associated with the project/group, and what you intend to contribute (which can include working on the actual project, but doesn't have to). Each of you will bring your character's strengths and talents to the project- no one has to play an artist if you are working on a mural, but if you want to, feel free! Everyone can contribute to the project regardless of their character's talents. Write your name and occupation on a nametag to wear and you're done.

Structure of the Game

Introduce the game	(3min)	<u>Spring/Summer/Autumn</u>	<u>Winter</u>	
Talk about safety	(5min)	Word association	(3min)	
		Group meeting	(10min)	
Pick a project	(4min)	Guided visualization	(4min)	
Pick a group	(4min)	Character vignettes	(5min)	
Create your character	(5min)		Epilogue	(10min)
			Debrief	(10min)

Spring

All players should form a circle. The facilitator then goes around, asking each player to say the first thing that comes to mind when they say one of the following words. The facilitator should feel free to use a word more than once, skip one, or come up with your own. Go around the circle one, two, or three times, depending on how many players there are.

Words: spring; hope; work; future; beginning; excitement; renewal; energy; community; momentum; journey; project; art; labor; anticipation...

Spring focuses on an early planning meeting the group is having after agreeing on the project. You have already decided on what the group is doing, and now you're going to discuss the logistics, challenges and next steps. The facilitator will

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lead the conversation, and should present topics for group conversation. If you are the facilitator, some ideas for topics include:

- Now that we've decided what to do, what steps are next?
- We have the permits, how do we contract labor?
- What do we want this project to look like?
- What should this project communicate to people?
- Who can do what for the project?

Part of the job of the facilitator is to keep the ball rolling. Ask people what their thoughts are on the project, switch topics when appropriate, and make sure everyone gets a chance to talk. The focus on Spring is on possibilities: the project is new, so focus on the excitement of what it could be. If the conversation feels like it's reached a natural conclusion, conclude by making sure all the participants know what they're next move is, and then end the meeting. If you are the facilitator, we may also suggest *setting a timer for 10 minutes* depending on the size of the group (a larger group should get somewhat more time so everyone gets a chance to speak) and ending the scene when the timer goes off.

When you have completed the free role-playing scene, the facilitator asks all players to close their eyes and imagine their character's daily life. What sorts of challenges do they face? What joys do they have? Where do they live? Do they live with anyone? Then, ask the players the following question:

“Why does your character need this project?”

Once the players have thought about their character's life, each player may present an in-character vignette to the group about their character's life. Imagine that you were telling a story about your life to a friend that you were getting coffee with. Talk about your life, the project, the group, and what it all means to you. These vignettes should be short, maybe a minute or so each. Everyone does not have to do one, but ideally everyone will do one at some point.

Once everyone who wants to do a vignette has done so, each player selects one of their four notecards and writes something *hopeful about the project on the side that does not have their fear or anxiety written on it*. Examples: I hope we create something beautiful; I hope my talents are useful on the project; I hope it brings us closer together; etc. When all players have written something on one of their notecards, pick a spot in the room to represent the project and each person tapes their notecard, *hopeful side facing out*, into a pattern in that spot, representing the start of the project.

With this, bring Spring to a close.

Summer

At the start of Summer, you may change the facilitator if there is someone else in the group who is comfortable with the role. Begin summer with another word association exercise, as you did in Spring.

Words: summer; heat; division; strife; fun; labor; argument; sun; party; stress; bright; warm; growth; progress; celebrate; forward; noon

In Summer, the group is coming together to settle an internal division within the group. Examples: disagreement about a detail of the project; a fight between members of the group; running out of money or other resources; etc. You can collectively decide what it is out of character before you start the scene, or let it emerge in the role-playing. The facilitator will act as a mediator, getting people to talk about the problems the group is having. Possible questions/topics of conversation include:

- What is the disagreement between members of the group that has stalled the project?
- How do people feel about what has happened? Is there broken trust? Hurt feelings?
- Is there a conflict of visions about how the project should proceed?
- How can the division be reconciled to continue the project?

As with Spring, the facilitator should keep the conversation moving, making sure everyone gets a chance to talk. The free role-playing scene should last about 10 minutes, and conclude with the group collectively discussing how to deal with their

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internal divisions and proceed. Once again, we suggest either setting a timer or concluding when there is a natural stopping point in the role-playing.

When you have completed the free role-playing scene, the facilitator asks all players to close their eyes and imagine their character's daily life. What new challenges have come up in their life since Spring? What has changed for them? What is the same? Have they experienced any new happiness or sorrow recently? Then, ask the players the following question:

“How has this project created stress in your life?”

Once the players have thought about their character's life, each player may, once again, present an in-character vignette to the group about their character's life, just as in Spring. Start with anyone who did not do a vignette in Spring.

Once everyone who wants to do a vignette has done so, each player selects one of their three remaining notecards and writes something stressful about the project on the side that does not have their fear or anxiety written on it. Examples: This project keeps me away from my family; this project has cost me more money than I intended; this project means I have to regularly interact with people, which is hard for me; etc. When all players have written something on one of their notecards, tape them in a pattern to the spot in the room where you are representing the project, stressful side facing out, to continue creating the representation your work.

With this, bring Summer to a close.

Autumn

At the start of Fall, you may change the facilitator if there is someone else in the group who is comfortable with the role. Begin Fall with another word association exercise, as you did the previous two seasons.

Words: autumn; wind; sunset; orange; solidarity; crisp; bond; work; maturity; harvest; growth; rest; cycles; cool; sepia

In Fall, the group is dealing with an outside threat to the project. Examples: the project has been vandalized; you've received a cease and desist letter from some authority figure; powerful locals are complaining about the project; etc. You can collectively decide what it is out of character before you start the scene, or let it emerge in the role-playing. The facilitator will act as a guide in this scene, helping people to keep their morale up and think through possible ways to get through the obstacle. Possible questions/topics of conversation include:

- How can we maintain a sense of hope in the face of opposition?
- How does the opposition make us feel?
- What can we do to keep the project going?
- Do we need to change or scale back the project to make it work?

As with Spring and Summer, the facilitator should keep the conversation moving, making sure everyone gets a chance to talk. The free role-playing scene should last about 10 minutes, and conclude with the group collectively discussing how to move past the opposition they are facing. Once again, either a timer or waiting for a natural conclusion are appropriate.

When you have completed the free role-playing scene, the facilitator asks all players to close their eyes and imagine their character's daily life. What have they overcome in their life since Summer? What is new with them? Have they had any major life changes? Then, ask the players the following question:

“How has this project brought you closer to someone else in your life?”

Once the players have thought about their character's life, each player may, once again, present an in-character vignette to the group about their character's life. Start with anyone who did not do a vignette in Summer.

Once everyone who wants to do a vignette has done so, each player selects one of their two remaining notecards and writes something about how the project has brought them closer to others on the side that does not have their fear or anxiety written on it. Examples: I have made friends working on this project; the project has brought me closer to my

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partner; my daughter and I have enjoyed working on the project together; etc. When all players have written something on one of their notecards, tape them in a pattern to the spot in the room where you are representing the project, the side with what you just wrote facing out, to continue creating your work.

With this, bring Fall to a close.

Winter

At the start of Winter, you may change the facilitator if there is someone else in the group who is comfortable with the role. Begin Winter with another word association exercise, as you did the previous three seasons.

Words: winter; midnight; cold; shadow; adversity; overcome; completion; wisdom; experience; closing; finished; dark;

In Winter, the group is having a party to celebrate completing the project. The facilitator should lead the group in quickly deciding where the party is and what it looks like before the scene starts. In this scene, players should feel free to walk around and engage each other in conversation about the project. Let details of it emerge in the free role-playing. Things to focus on, with your character, include:

- Are you satisfied with the final project?
- How is it different than you envisioned? Better? Worse?
- How has working on the project changed your relationship the group or members in the group?
- How has working on the project changed you?

As with the other seasons, the facilitator should circulate among the players and keep the conversation moving. The free role-playing scene should last about 10 minutes, and conclude with the the facilitator getting everyone's attention to thank them for participating in the project. In this scene, a timer to measure when to wrap the scene up is very appropriate as there is no central focus for all players.

When you have completed the free role-playing scene, the facilitator asks all players to close their eyes and imagine their character's daily life. How is their life different that it was before the start of the project? Then, ask the players the following question:

“How has this project made the world better?”

Each player then takes the last of their notecards and writes something about how the project has made the world better on the side that does not have their fear or anxiety written on it. Examples: Community members can eat food we grew together; my child can read books from the library; the mural will lift the spirits of everyone who passes it; etc. When all players have written something on their notecard, tape them to the spot in the room where you are representing the project, the side with what you just wrote facing out, to continue creating your work.

Take some time to look at the group of completed notecards- read what the other players wrote and what you wrote. Think about how you now feel about the fear/anxiety/worry/etc you originally wrote. After everyone has had time to observe, gather in a circle and, if you feel inclined, offer a brief epilogue for your character that gives you closure on their story.

With this, bring Winter to a close.

Debrief

The facilitator should begin by asking if anyone has any general comments, thoughts, or things they want to share. Then, the facilitator may go around the group, asking each player (a) is there something from this game they wish to bring into their own life, or (b) is their something that this game stirred in them they think is important to share with the group. No one has to respond, but all should be given time to do so, if they wish. Additionally, everyone should be quiet while others speak. Once all who wish to speak have gotten a chance to do so, the game is over.