

Monster Tavern

By Eli Eaton

Designer's Note: My inspiration comes from a Larp I played called "The Adventures of Dr. Dolotts; 'Monsters Anonymous'". It was very comedic and required a lot of improv skills. The pigman character sheet here was actually inspired by one of the players (if you are reading this, hi friend!). What i enjoyed most about the game was the idea of monsters and "villains" connecting to each other and trying to help each other with their problems. So I wanted to make something slightly more structured, that could be expanded to a higher player count and that used more space that people could move around in and have one-on-one interactions. I wanted it to be as easy for new Larpers to facilitate as possible hence why I included so much instruction about techniques and safety mechanics. I wanted a tone that was both potentially humorous and heartwarming. I hope you enjoy.

Summary: Welcome traveller, to the Wishing Well Tavern. Many stories of adventure and bravery begin in places such as this. The only difference is that here is not a place that humans, elves, dwarves or halfling heroes congregate. This is a tavern for monsters and those that employ monsters. Of the monsters, some of you seek a home, fellow monsters to join you in your quests or duties or even just companionship for the evening. The Wizards, Sorcerers, and Royalty among you seek frightening and or magical beings to protect lairs, castles dungeons or wherever else one might keep secrets and treasure. Some might call you all "villains" or "bad Guys", but that really is a matter of perspective. One of you (the one facilitating this game) are the Bartender of this establishment You are here to make sure the others have a place to socialize, connect and otherwise find what they need that isn't drink or food. So come in, grab a drink meet your fellow traveler and see what conversations you enjoy.

You will need:

A medium to large space like a living room, a series of small connected rooms would work also.

A table or counter to act as the bar.

7- 12 players + the Bartender

3-4 hours

Nametags

Preparation For the Facilitator: To prepare for this game print off all pages and cut out the character sheets. If you have a smaller amount of players I suggest only having one or two of the monster employers (the wizard, sorcerer and undead king) and only one Undead Creature in the sheets that you offer.

Once you have prepared the materials and your players have gathered around, read aloud the pitch to the group. Then say this; "This is a free-from LARP. For those new to this type of game it is like improv comedy. The character sheets I will pass around are for your inspiration. The goal of the game is to create a collaborative story. A good way to do this is to ask your fellow

characters a lot of questions and always do your best to answer their questions with “yes and” or “no but”. This is not a combat game, should you and another character get into a scuffle, (this is a bar after all), mime it slowly, allowing for the one receiving the ‘punch’ to react however they wish; dodging, blocking or even swinging back. They must of course also slowly mime their response. Also note that in this game there will be character secrets but not player secrets. This transparency helps us communicate what we want out of play and how to know what others want.”

Next explain the safety mechanics you will use, summarize the structure of the game and the process of character creation and introduction. Then you will be ready to start.

Safety mechanics.

Break: is for when you feel that an interaction is too intense and you wish the other participant(s) to de-escalate or change subject. Signal this by raising your hands up palm out and saying “break”. If someone signals this to you, take a step back and try a new topic or behaviour. You could also check in using the “meta” technique (see below)

Cut: is for when someone is distressed and you wish to stop play and discuss with the group. Indicate this by crossing your arms in front of you and saying “cut”. If you see someone use this tool, also cross your arms and say cut, this way it should circulate around the room until everyone stops what they are doing.

Meta: If you feel you need to step out of character to clarify something or ask a question, place your hand on top of your head then ask your question, if you are responding to this signal, do the same gesture so it is clear that you are also stepping out of character.

Open door: You are welcome to leave at any time, whether it is to go to the bathroom grab a snack or just take a break. If you decide you no longer wish to play that is okay too. If it is possible try to let the facilitator know before you leave the game or shortly after the game is over. This is so they don’t worry about you.

Game structure:

The game will start with an imaginary division of the space. One part will be interior, the other exterior. The interior side should of course include your bar. This is so that some characters may enter gradually while others are already present in the tavern at the start. Characters divide themselves, deciding who wishes to already be there and who wishes to make an entrance. The facilitator will indicate when to begin and characters will enter as they wish. Once all patrons are in the tavern the division of space dissolves and whole room becomes the tavern.

After about 45 minutes to an 1 hour of play the Bartender will declare “Come Bring Me Your Drink Orders!”. Gameplay will pause and players will break character and gather in a circle. Take turns describing what has happened to your characters so far. Go around again and share any themes or topics you would like to experience or any characters you would like to interact

with. Once everyone has shared it is a good time to take bathroom and/or water breaks. Once everyone has returned the facilitator will indicate it is time to start again.

After another 45 minutes to an hour, The Bartender will declare "Last Call". This indicates that it is time to wrap up conversations and either bid farewell or make plans to leave with fellow patrons. Once you feel you have done so, make your way to the area of the room that was originally considered the exterior. Once all characters have made it to that side of the room, the game is over.

Once the game ends de-role by removing your name tags. Debrief by discussing your experiences in the game and thank each other for playing.

Character Creation: Characters should generally be given to players just before you start to play but you could have them choose well in advance if you wanted to allow the opportunity for costumes.

Once characters have been chosen, give players 15-20 minutes or so to write the name and description of their appearance and to think about their first question (the second question will be addressed as a group). Once everyone has finished creating their characters come back to a circle and take turns introducing and describing yourselves, if you wish you may also share the answer to your first question. Go around again in the opposite direction and ask your second question aloud. The second question is designed to create character connections. After all questions have been asked and players have put on nametags, you will be ready to play the game.

Guidance For The Bartender: During introductions, name and describe your character like everyone else. And answer these questions (the one is for yourself, the other you ask of others.)

Question 1: Why do you run this Tavern? What do you like about it?

Question 2: Who here is a regular patron? There can of course be more than one.

Keep track of who is playing which character and anything they may have revealed as they introduced themselves. As the game unfolds watch characters interactions, if anyone seems alone call them to the bar and offer them a drink on the house. Strike up a conversation, spread gossip about other patrons, try to get them to connect to each other.

The bar must never be unattended, if for some reason you to step away, for in game or out-of game reasons, recruit one of your patrons to tend the bar momentarily.

If you feel gameplay is stalling or there are any other issues, declare "Come Bring Me Your Orders", before the 45 min mark. The conversations during this break may reinvigorate the

gameplay. Likewise is after the break things wind down before the 45 min mark you may also choose to end gameplay early.

Character Sheets

The Sorcerer:

You are powerful and have great control of the elements. In the past, creatures have flocked to you for protection and the chance to serve a powerful being. Recently, due to a conflict with a rival, all your minions are dead or missing. You have come to recruit replacements.

Name:

Description:

Question 1: What types of magical creatures do you usually recruit? Why?

Question 2: Who here has been a minion of yours before? OR Who knows your name and has strong feelings about it?

The Former Hero:

You were once a human hero, a great champion. You slayed many a dragon and orc but on your last journey you made a terrible mistake. You thought you were drinking a healing elixir, and it worked, but it also turned you into a monster. Now you must decide what to do next.

Name:

Description:

Question1: Do you seek to change back to your human form or have you decided to make the best out of being a monster?

Question2: Who here has the potential power to turn you back to your original form? Do you know this about them?

The Wizard

You are a creator of potions and mystical items. Many an adventurer has come to steal items from you. Beneath your tower you have an elaborate maze full of traps and hazards. Lately you feel as though the heroes have gotten better at disarming your traps and they make it deeper and deeper into your dungeons.

Name:

Description:

Question1: Are the items you create benevolent or malevolent? Why do you wish to keep them out of the hands of others?

Question2: Which of the monsters here might you have had a hand in making?

Undead Monarch

You were a great and mighty monarch. You ruled a great kingdom but like all mortal rulers, you died. A curse was placed on your tomb so that if ever it was disturbed you would return. And now you are back, slowly making a new kingdom for yourself, recruiting the undead and sometimes other kinds of monsters.

Name:

Description:

Questions 1: Were you a kind or cruel ruler when you lived?

Questions 2: Who knows you from before you became undead?

The Unicorn:

You are a beautiful and rare creature. Humans have hunted you to steal your magical horn. Little do they know it has no use unattached to you. You have the powers related to healing and transformation. Currently you are disguised as an impish, fae-like creature and you have come to seek information on a place where you might live free of the threats of mankind.

Name:

Description:

Question 1: How are you able to disguise yourself? Is it your own doing or the help of someone or something else?

Question 2: Who can see your true form?

The Orc

You are from a mighty and strong race. But due to a great war with a particular human kingdom, you are now alone. Separated from your kind, possibly the last. You are very strong and not as unintelligent as people think. Sometimes you think of vengeance but ultimately for now you just want a home.

Name:

Description:

Question 1: Why were your people at war with a human kingdom?

Question 2: Who here has a fondness for Orcs? What do you like about them?

The Sentient Slime

You are an oozy gloopy creature which makes it surprising how talkative you are. Your pastimes include consuming things and hangout in dark spaces. Your old home is gone and you seek a new one.

Question1: How are Sentient slimes created in this world? Are you pretty typical or unique for your kind?

Question2: Who do you know very well? How do you know eachother.

The PigMan:

Part human, part pig. You are a strong though somewhat frightening creature. You find yourself adrift, not quite fitting into the world of either human or animal. You seek a place of acceptance and purpose.

Name:

Description:

Question1: Where do pig-people come from in this world and why are you alone?

Question2: Who takes the most pity on you OR who feels they relate to you the most?

The Goblin

Your people are great tinkerers, your creations are not so refined as a wizards but they aren't bad either. Sure sometimes you wreck stuff in the process and humans dislike you for it, but that's just how it goes! You seek a place to hone your craft, perhaps if you are lucky you might find someone to learn from.

Name:

Description:

Question1: why don't you live with other goblins?

Question2:Who have you made something for in the past? What was it?

The Witch

Witch is a gender neutral term in this world but it is one who practices solitary magic. You are likely feared by your neighbours and live in a dusty old hut. You are out of loneliness and you

wish to make friends. You can offer spells and charms, not so strong as those of a wizard or sorcerer but they are helpful.

Name:

Description:

Question 1. How did you come about your magic, was it inherited or discovered?

Question 2: Who here have you met before? What did they give to you OR what have they taken from you?

Undead Animal

You were once a wild animal but like all mortal things, you died. Someone put a spell on you and have returned, oddly you are more intelligent than before, capable of thought and speech. Now that you are such an unnatural thing you must find a new place in the world. Maybe a purpose?

Name:

Description:

Question1: what is your overall personality? Friendly or hostile?

Question2: Do you remember someone here from before you died? OR Who here is the most likely to find you interesting.

Undead Human

You were once a living human. But like all mortals you died. Now you are back. You have no idea why and you are curious for answers. Also there is no way you can go back to the living world so you must find a new place to be.

Name:

Description:

Question1: Who were you before you died?

Question2: Was anyone here responsible for your death? If so, do you know? OR Who here tried to save you from your death, how?