

# Panel -- The Live-Action Roleplaying Game

by Mark “Justin du Coeur” Waks

## Overview

This is a satirical LARP, which pokes gentle fun at LARPing, panel discussions, and anything else that struck my fancy along the way. It has run several times, at both LARP and science fiction conventions. It is light and easy to run, requiring just an hour or two of prep and some basic office supplies.

Panel is a deliberately short game, intended to run in a 45-50 minute slot. That timing is flexible, but don't schedule it for more than 75 minutes or the joke will probably start to wear thin. It's filler, but it's fun filler.

Structurally, Panel is roughly a Horde game, but one in which most people only take one character. As in most Horde games, you have a small number of main PCs (the Panelists) and a large number of Horde (the Audience).

There are seven Panelists, who should ideally be pre-cast, and may want to costume. The names of the Panelists are deliberately chosen to be roughly gender-neutral, and there are no terribly gender-specific characteristics to them, so you should be able to cast gender-neutral, just tweaking the names from, eg, “Mary” to “Mark” or “Robert” to “Roberta”.

The Audience can be almost arbitrarily large, but should ideally be 20-40 people. Unlike a typical Horde game, most people only get one character during the game. I recommend printing enough copies of the Rules (see below) so that each Audience member can have a copy.

The Audience mostly do not need to be pre-cast; just give people characters at whim at the door. You may want to cast a few people like the club members early, to give them time to costume a little, but don't sweat it too much. Note that several Audience “characters” are actually for several people; I recommend assigning those together, to groups of people. Most/all Audience characters are optional; don't worry if you can't fill all roles, and choose which ones to use at your whim. However, the three competing LARP clubs ([Hroathraat], [Tygers] and [Heroes]) are designed to play off each other, so it is strongly recommended that you cast at least one person in each. I also specifically recommend including [Parent], [Psycho], [Conspiracy], [Ex] and [Current], who are designed to play off of specific Panelists.

If a character leaves game for some reason, you may give them a new Audience character, or just have them sit in as a general audience member.

Feel free to add more Audience -- this game is more fun the more chaotic the mix.

If things get completely out of hand late in the game, deputize a couple of players to come in as Police, to shut it all down. You'd be surprised how often that turns out to be necessary.

## **Physical Setup**

All Panelists save the Moderators should have a trifold name card; Robin and James should **both** have one that says “Harry Winan”. Ideally, Greg’s name card should be in a different font than everyone else’s, since he made up his own.

I recommend using an ordinary panel-discussion room, with 2 8-foot tables at the front, and exactly six (not seven) chairs behind them. If possible, place a microphone on the table, with the cord leading underneath. (The microphone specifically does not work, and is required if you are using the [Techie] character.)

There should be chairs set up facing the Panelists, in standard panel-audience formation. If possible, have at least 40 chairs, with a center aisle running up the middle.

The main entrance to the room should ideally be at the back, away from the Panelists, so that Audience can enter and exit. I recommend setting up a table back there with all of the Audience Character Sheets spread out on it, to make it quicker and easier for you to choose and assign Audience Members as players show up.

Print out the Character Sheets for the Panelists; give each their Character Sheet and name card.

Print out the Audience Character Sheets -- separate them with scissors. (To save paper, I haven’t bothered to give each a full sheet.) Make sure to give each Audience member a copy of the Rules.

Print out the door sign (at the end of this file), and tape it to the door. **Important:** note that the panel is clearly about “War Stories”, but the characters do *not* agree on what that’s supposed to mean. Do not make this any clearer for them. Indeed, I recommend not coming to any decision yourself about what the topic is supposed to be. (I haven’t.)

If possible, have a Beach Ball handy, to give to [Beach Ball].

The panel supposedly runs from 12:15 - 1pm. You may want an official clock for mapping that to real-world time.

## **Panel: the LARP Character Sheet**

Moderator (Robin Howard) -- You have no idea what the topic of this panel is, since you were just tapped for it a few minutes ago. (The original moderator, someone named Harry Winan, bagged out at the last minute.) However, you're too embarrassed to admit that you don't know, so you have resolved to work it out from what everyone else is saying. You've moderated panels before, so you know how this goes. First, you ask all the panelists to introduce themselves, then steer the conversation along productive lines. (You have no idea who the panelists are, but you were assured that there were going to be six people on the panel, so you shouldn't have to wing it alone.) Avoid letting any panelist dominate too much; keep arguments down; call on the audience from time to time (ask for questions if no one is jumping up); and try to sound smart. Don't worry too much about the precise topic – all good panels wander a fair amount.

The panel is supposed to start at 12:15pm, and should wrap up at 1pm sharp; the convention says that someone from ops will cue you when you're running out of time. Things have been getting a little raucous here and there, so there are one or two people from convention security hanging around the back to make sure no one gets out of line. You can call them in if you need to eject someone.

In your mundane life, you're a fact checker at the FBI. It's pretty routine work, collating the information that comes in, and trying to ascertain its validity. Everyone thinks that it's much more glamorous than it really is. But things have been getting a little weird for the last week: you've been hearing clicks during your phone calls, a few bills have gone missing, stuff like that. You have a sneaking suspicion that you're in trouble at work, and someone's been watching you. Fortunately, you've never told them about your LARPing hobby (it's innocuous; you know that they wouldn't care), so you've been able to relax this weekend.

## **Panel: the LARP Character Sheet**

Panelist #1 (Mel Jones) -- You are a long-time gamer, who has gotten thoroughly tired of all the stories that everyone tells, since you've heard them all a thousand times. So when you heard about this panel, "War Stories -- Threat Or Menace?", you leapt at the chance. You want to show how all gaming styles are really pretty much the same, and that it isn't really necessary to tell essentially the same stories over and over. As much as possible, show that all war stories are the same, and equally dull.

You regard yourself as something of an advocate for the audience. At most panels, the panelists spend way too much time flapping their gums, and don't give the audience enough time to speak. Don't let that happen. If the moderator doesn't call on the audience members enough, do so yourself. After all, the panel is really for them – the panelists are there to make sure that they are properly entertained.

## **Panel: the LARP Character Sheet**

Panelist #2 (Jean Jacobson) -- You've only been gaming for about six months, but in that time you've played in almost **four** sessions of your local live-combat group! (Well, one of them sort of fizzled because only two of you showed up, but you **were** ready to play, honest!) You think this is all really cool, and when you heard about this panel, "War Stories -- Threats and Menaces", you knew you had to be on it. You can tell everyone about the goblin attack you almost fended off, the cool paper mache dragon the GMs came up with last week, and all the other things you've encountered in your long experience.

Your live-combat group is Rothrats, and it's really neat. It's the oldest of the LC clubs in the area, and by far the coolest. You've heard a lot about the other clubs – the Tygers of Combat, who are these stuffy history wonks who never have any fun, and the Heroes Guild, who just fight a lot and never have any plots. You're sure that, if everyone knew about how cool Rothrats was, they'd join that instead. You're very into it: you've even read almost a quarter of the full Rothrats rulebook already! Some of your new friends from Rothrats are in the audience – make sure that they get called upon once or twice, at least.

## **Panel: the LARP Character Sheet**

Panelist #3 (Robert Belknappe-Jones) -- You've been gaming for a number of years, and you've found that the best part of larping is war stories, listening to them and (especially) telling them. Why, where would gaming be without bards regaling each other with war stories? Why does one even play, if not to tell about the fine memories produced by the games? So when you heard the topic of this panel: "War Stories -- Threat or Menace?", you were personally offended. You will make sure that everyone realizes that war stories are a good thing. You should probably demonstrate with a few choice examples yourself.

Oh, God. Now that you look out into the audience, you see that both your former girlfriend (Melissa Ormand) and your current one (Janice Howard) are sitting there. You just know that Mel's going to try to make a scene, and you've never been good with confrontations. You may need to do some sweet-talking here...

## **Panel: the LARP Character Sheet**

Panelist #4 (Mary Levine) -- You don't have any idea what the topic of this panel is, nor do you much care. You're a dedicated player of Vampire: the Masquerade, and you've heard that these panels are mainly places where the unenlightened mundanes get together and make fun of members of the clans. You decided to get involved in a panel (you didn't pay attention to which), in order to tell them about V:tM, and show them how deep it is. You should feel free to pick the name of your in-game character, and insist that everyone use that instead of your mundane name. You started using that name as soon as you got into LARPing (and stopped talking to your loser parents, who always tried to turn you into some sort of born-again idiot like them), and you're a little annoyed that the con put your mundane name on your name card.

It looks like the audience is full of unenlightened live-combat types, who just don't seem to understand how dreadfully boring their lives are. Worse are the science-fiction crowd, who don't understand that *real* history (especially of the Victorian era) is so much more interesting than the thin imaginings of most SF writers. Help them grasp the true way, both in LARP and lifestyle.

## **Panel: the LARP Character Sheet**

Moderator (James Packard) -- You are a long-time and expert gamer; by now, you know a good deal about everything when it comes to gaming (and most other things by now). You heard that this is a panel for war stories, which sounds like fun. You should tell some stories yourself, but more importantly, you should serve the cause of accuracy. Contradict the other panelists whenever they (in your opinion) make a mistake. You should interrupt whenever they make an error -- better than letting the error be propagated and remembered. The rest of the panelists are nice kids, but they're clearly a little overwhelmed by the experience. Help them out and offer advice whenever possible. After all, they don't have your depth of experience.

You were originally just going to be a panelist on this panel, but the original moderator, Harry Winan, had to leave the convention early, and a friend of yours on the concom asked you to moderate. You haven't moderated any panels before, but how hard can it be? You just have to run the show with a reasonably tight fist and keep things orderly, and everyone will have an informative time.



## **Panel: the LARP Character Sheet**

Panelist #5 (Greg Harrison) – Well, okay, that isn't true; you're not actually on this panel. In fact, you aren't even a guest at this convention. (In fact, you haven't even paid to come to the convention; you snuck in.) But you bet your buddies that you could prove that any idiot can be on one of these panels, and you're going to win that bet. Go to the front, sit down, and pretend that you can BS with the best of them. Hey, it's not like they know what they're talking about either, do they? Talk as much as you can get away with without giving yourself away, to show how easy it is to spout this nonsense.

You have made up a stupid little folding name-card for yourself, just like the ones that the real panelists have, just to make the image complete.

You're a member of the Heroes' Guild, a new live-combat LARP club founded recently. The Heroes' Guild is the fun LARP club, as opposed to Hroatraat (a stuffy bunch with thousand-page rulebooks) and the "Tygers of Combat" (an even stuffier bunch of history geeks). A bunch of your friends are in the audience. Hopefully they won't give you away...

### **Panel: the LARP Character Sheet**

[**Techie**] Audience -- bother, bother, bother. You'd think the damned Con could pay for decent equipment. Apparently, the microphone in this room has been having problems all day, and they've now sent you in to fix it.

You should enter the room a couple of minutes into game, and start fiddling with the microphone. Feel free to crawl under tables, pick the thing up, test it every ten minutes, go out and come back in with a new microphone a couple of times, and so on. Don't be *too* disruptive, but asking people to help out a few times is fine.

### **Panel: the LARP Character Sheet**

Audience -- you are a crotchety old grump, who has been larping since long before any of these whippersnappers began. Feel free to let them know it.

### **Panel: the LARP Character Sheet**

Audience -- you have the line, "That's the stupidest thing I've ever heard!" You should exclaim this loudly at least once during the panel. More times are okay.

### **Panel: the LARP Character Sheet**

[**Novice**] Audience -- you are a novice larper, who has never gamed before this weekend. You are eager and naive, and should ask **lots** of questions about absolutely everything. You know absolutely nothing about what anyone is talking about, but it all **sounds** pretty cool...

### **Panel: the LARP Character Sheet**

Audience -- you have been gaming for several years; you've seen it all and know it all. You've played in the games of several of the panelists, and didn't like them much. Be voluble in your opinions.

### **Panel: the LARP Character Sheet**

**[Expert]** Audience -- you are an expert. You've been gaming for years, and have studied the gaming form in considerable depth. You haven't actually **run** any games yet, but that's because you've been working for the past six years on your magnum opus: *A Not Quite So Short History of Time*. Take every opportunity to tell everyone about your game, and show off your expertise. Contradict the panelists whenever appropriate (in your considered opinion). Don't bother waiting for the moderator -- after all, you know more than any of the GMs, anyway.

### **Panel: the LARP Character Sheet**

**[Wanna-be]** Audience -- you should have been on this panel. After all, it's about War Stories, and you know more War Stories than *anybody*. And you've known everyone on Concom for *years*. Really, it's pretty insulting that they put some of these nobodies on the panel instead of you.

### **Panel: the LARP Character Sheet**

**[Church]** Audience (1-4 players, as a group) -- you are a parishioner from the Church of Our Lady of Intolerance of Evil Revealed. You heard about this diabolical convention via Her Lady's Most Holy Website, and determined to infiltrate it. You have been watching and learning much: it is full of all sorts of pagan fictions, including wicked vampire-worshippers who have sold their souls to Satan. You have been hiding well, but are reaching your limit. You may need to begin to pray (loudly) during the panel, and/or try to convert the salvageable among these sinners to the true way.

### **Panel: the LARP Character Sheet**

**[Parent]** You are Mary Levine's poor unloved mother. Oh, you always tried to do right by your daughter – to help her be a good god-fearing lady like yourself. But no: from the time she was young, she always had a wicked streak. She went off to college, and you scarcely heard from her after that, except occasionally to ask for money. And then you heard that she had gotten involved in this dreadful “roleplaying” that they talk about on the news. As far as you can tell, it's all just Satanism of one sort or another.

You're hiding in the audience, observing these terrible people around you. Listen for a while, and see what it is that Mary has gotten herself into. When the time seems right, give her a piece of your mind, and let her know that her mother is there for her, and will save her from this terrible ungodly path she has gone down, no matter the cost...

*Costume hint:* If possible, wear a scarf or something to partly conceal your face, so Mary doesn't recognize you in the audience.

### **Panel: the LARP Character Sheet**

**[Tired]** Audience -- it's been a long weekend already, and it's only half over! You ducked into this panel because it sounded interesting, but you're just too tired; you will doze off after the first couple of minutes of them droning on. You should sit in the front row, and snore loudly from time to time. Wake up if anything loud or interesting happens, but you slowly drift off again when things get quiet once more.

### **Panel: the LARP Character Sheet**

Audience -- about halfway through the panel, you will need to go to the bathroom. It will get increasingly desperate over the next few minutes. You've noticed some other people raising their hands, so you figure that classroom rules apply. When it gets too much to bear, wave your hand (vigorously) and ask permission to go to the bathroom.

## **Panel: the LARP Character Sheet**

**[Hroathraat]** Audience (2-5 people, as a group) -- you and your friends are part of a local live-combat group. You heard that this panel is about “War Stories – Threats and Menaces”, and it sounded like a fine opportunity to tell stories coming out of your group.

Your LARP group is Hroathraat, which is the oldest and best-established such group in the region. There are a couple of new upstart clubs that have schismed away from Hroathraat, especially the idiotically stuffy Tygers of Combat (who try to make sure that everyone is historically accurate, except for the fact that they still have Elves and Orcs and all), and the kids in the Heroes Guild (who are well-meaning but consistently immature).

You don't want to start any fights or anything, but make sure it's clear that Hroathraat is the club people should be flocking to, with a clear, well-organized thousand-page rulebook and millennia of established history by now. Unfortunately, the group has been declining in recent years, and you've been having trouble getting enough new people involved. You're heavily involved in recruiting new members, so be sure to make clear how useful it is to have a well-organized system and a detailed history.

One of the new kids in Hroathraat, Jean Jacobson, has somehow wound up on the panel. She promised to call on you a couple of times during the panel, so you have an opportunity to show off. You're a little concerned because she has only been to a few games, and doesn't really know the ropes yet, but gently correct any mistakes she makes when talking about the group.

*Costume hint:* If you get a chance to costume, the ideal is generic SCA-style t-tunics – very basic medievalish garb. Also, having a very thick book to serve as The Book of Hroat (the rulebook/history for Hroathraat) would be appropriate. Feel free to open this and cite examples of rules that exist because of specific bad incidents in the past, demonstrating that only Hroathraat has the experience to deal with the problems that arise when playing.

## **Panel: the LARP Character Sheet**

[Tygers] Audience (2-5 people, as a group) -- you and your friends are part of a local live-combat group. You heard that this panel was “War Stories: Threat or Menace?” and thought that that sounded very interesting. It would be good to debunk the usual introspection that so often dominates LARP discussion.

Your LARP group is Tygers of Combat, a newer club that split off from the older Hroathraat because you wanted to do more historically-informed gaming; Hroathraat is just a little too silly in its ridiculously elaborate structure (their rulebook is almost a thousand pages!), and has a history that no longer bears any resemblance to the actual Middle Ages. (Not to mention the fact that the name sounds like an articulated throat cancer.) The Tygers are set in real historical periods, and just happen to have a secret underworld of fantasy forces, as described in the literature. Oh, and then there’s the Heroes Guild, another new club of kids who know even less about history than the Hroathraat.

You don’t want to start any fights or anything, but make sure it’s clear that Tygers of Combat is the club people should be flocking to, with a far better historical basis (and much better writing) than the others.

*Costume hint:* If you get the chance to costume, the ideal is something very authentically medieval. Regardless of whether it really **is** medieval, you should talk about how accurate it is. Also, a copy of *The Historic Guide* would be appropriate: this should be a mammoth book that you can point to as documentation for everything you talk about.

## Panel: the LARP Character Sheet

**[Heroes]** Audience (2-5 people, as a group) -- you and your friends are part of a local live-combat group. You decided to check out this panel, but you may gradually decide that it is pretty dull. At that point, begin to talk among yourselves as appropriate. Laugh loudly at your jokes. At some point, you might start finger-dueling, in a fairly lively way. Hey, it's more fun than this "panel".

Your LARP group is the Heroes' Guild; a bunch of you created the Guild last year, after realizing how lame the other LARP clubs in the area are. On the one hand, there's Hroathraat (you haven't even figured out how that's supposed to be pronounced, but it sounds like a bad cough), who spend all their time writing longer and longer rulebooks and histories, and never actually find the time to go kill monsters. On the other, there's the Tygers of Combat, who tie themselves down with so much history that they require everyone to have perfectly-documented costumes. (Well, that's what you've heard, anyway.) And both groups are so **old** – full of these lame-o 30-somethings. It's really sad.

You don't want to start any fights or anything (not that you'd shy away from a fight if someone else started it), but make sure it's clear that the Heroes' Guild is the club for players who actually want to enjoy themselves. Especially if they're cute.

Your friend Greg Harrison has been claiming that he can easily BS his way onto this stupid panel. Now he's up at the front, pretending to be a panelist. Feel free to give him a hard time, but don't actually give the show away.

*Costume hint:* If you have a chance to costume, the ideal costume is dreadful armor. The ideal would be made of plastic or cardboard, maybe held together with duct tape. Hey, you're here to hit things with boffers, not to make fancy outfits...

### **Panel: the LARP Character Sheet**

**[Anti-kid]** Audience – this panel is on “War Stories – Threats and Menaces”. Well, you know what your favorite topic there is: the hassles caused by having to deal with children in games. It’s not that you have anything against children per se (you just prefer to stay away from them), but for heaven’s sake, what kind of parent subjects a poor innocent game to them? They never understand their characters, they screw up other peoples’ plots, and they just cause trouble in general.

Think up a horror story, showing how a child completely messed up one of your games. And let yourself get irritated if any should cause problems during the panel.

### **Panel: the LARP Character Sheet**

**[Killer Kid]** Audience – this panel is on “War Stories”, right? And, like, that’s really cool because, like, people get blown up and killed in war, and that’s really neat. And that’s what games are really good for, right? You like playing in games where you can be, like, a monster or a vampire or a serial killer or something, because that’s the fun part.

You are a 12-year-old who (obviously) loves to kill things in games. You’re kind of shy, but you get really excited when you can talk about playing monsters and stuff. You love to tell stories about that, even though your stories tend to wander a bit pointlessly. You get bored pretty easily, and tend to interrupt people who are telling dull stories. You always want them to get to the exciting action parts.

### **Panel: the LARP Character Sheet**

**[Suggested]** Audience – this panel is on one of your favorite subjects: “War Stories – Threats and Menaces”. It’s a really great topic, a chance for folks to air out their best tales about the dangers you can face in-character. You should know, since you suggested it to the concom in the first place. You’re rather miffed that you weren’t asked to sit on the panel; you’re trying to be big about it, but the fact is that they stole your idea. Well, you can at least tell a story or two yourself about the dangers your characters have faced, and help the panelists (who clearly don’t understand the subject as well as you) explore the idea.



### **Panel: the LARP Character Sheet**

Audience -- you heard that this panel is for war stories. That's really cool. You have a story you **really** want to tell. Make sure you get an opportunity.

### **Panel: the LARP Character Sheet**

**[Beach Ball]** Audience -- you have a beach ball. Sit near the back. When things seem to be getting a little slow, toss the ball up and into the rest of the audience. Hey, everyone likes a beach ball.

### **Panel: the LARP Character Sheet**

**[Ex]** Audience – Melissa Ormand – you have no particular fondness for listening to people drone on and on about their adventures in LARP, so when you heard that this panel was on “War Stories – Threat or Menace?”, you figured it would be a good time. Then you found out that your former boyfriend, Robert Belknappe-Jones, was going to be on it. He loves the damned things; it’s part of what broke you up, having to listen to him for hours on end after every game. (The other part was that floozy Janice.)

Hmm. Maybe it’s time for some really *personal* “war stories” here. Might make for good payback.

### **Panel: the LARP Character Sheet**

**[Current]** Audience – Janice Howard – this panel is on “War Stories”, so it didn’t sound terribly interesting to you; frankly, you find it pretty boring to listen to people drone on and on about their adventures in LARP. But your sweetie, Robert Belknappe-Jones, is on the panel, and he really loves to tell them. (You don’t quite have the heart to tell him how boring he is when he does that.) So you’re here to provide some moral support.

Oh, great – there’s Mel. Melissa Ormand is Bob’s ex, and she can be very spiteful. You may have to rise to Bob’s defense here: the poor dear has never been all that good at confrontations.

### **Panel: the LARP Character Sheet**

[Had Idea] Audience – this panel is on one of your favorite subjects: “War Stories – Threat or Menace?”. It’s a really great topic, a chance to finally discuss why it ruins games when people talk about them too much. You should know, since you suggested the idea to the concom in the first place. You’re rather miffed that you weren’t asked to sit on the panel; you’re trying to be big about it, but the fact is that they stole your idea. Well, you can at least help the panelists (who clearly don’t understand the subject as well as you) explore the idea, pointing out how war stories are not only almost always boring as all get out, they can spoil the game so that folks can’t play it again later.

### **Panel: the LARP Character Sheet**

Audience -- you heard this panel is "War Stories -- Threat or Menace?" That's cool -- you've gotten pretty tired of stupid war stories over the years. But what's this? Some of the panelists are telling war stories themselves! Oh, God -- not more of them! Express your displeasure.

### **Panel: the LARP Character Sheet**

[Vet] Audience -- you're a grizzled old vet who has recently gotten into live roleplaying (on the advice of your shrink, to work through the post-traumatic stress disorder). You heard this panel would be for "war stories", and were curious about what these kids had to say. You can tell them some **real** stories about the horrors of war! Feel free to have flashbacks in the middle of the panel, if appropriate.

### **Panel: the LARP Character Sheet**

[**Confused**] Audience: you think -- you want -- you're sure that all of this stuff makes sense to **somebody**, but you aren't sure quite how. You find yourself needing to ask questions of the panelists. Make sure that you ask the questions in **elaborate** detail, to make sure that they understand that you don't understand, and why you don't understand, and try to understand their answers, so that you can all come to an understanding. Ask followup questions, if you're still not quite clear on what they're talking about.

### **Panel: the LARP Character Sheet**

[**Combat**] Audience -- you're an old hand at LARP, old enough to know that **real** LARP means live combat. None of this wussy nonsense with cards and dice and suchlike; hell, if you're going to use **cards**, then why are you calling it "live"? Be sure to be supportive of any panelists who share your opinions. (And if they're all wusses, feel free to explain to them the difference between "live action" and that pseudo-tabletop crap.)

### **Panel: the LARP Character Sheet**

[**Theater**] Audience – you're an old hand at LARP, old enough to know that **real** LARP means good, plot-rich theater-style games. You're a bit appalled at the number of people here who are into that silly "live combat" stuff. After all, the name of the game is "roleplaying", right? Not beating each other up with fake padded weapons, like psychos in an asylum. Be sure to be supportive of any panelists who share your opinions. (And if they're more of these live-combat loonies, feel free to explain to them what real LARP is all about.)

### **Panel: the LARP Character Sheet**

[**Mute**] Audience -- You have been assigned the job of making sure the panel ends on time. Keep an eye on your watch. The panel is supposed to end at 1pm. At 12:30, tell the Moderator that there are only thirty minutes left; at 12:45, fifteen minutes, and so on. Note that you are also a mute, so you can only communicate with gestures; make those gestures as big and frantic as seems appropriate to you. Feel free to ask questions of the panelists, bearing in mind that you will have to do so through gesture and charades.

### **Panel: the LARP Character Sheet**

**[Security]** Convention Security (1-4 players, as a group) – You are the security people for the con. Your job is to make sure nothing goes too terribly wrong. Basically, if someone gets too far out of line, you take them aside (usually outside the panel) and try to talk them down. In general, you don't do anything until the Moderator asks you to, but if it looks like there's a problem, feel free to volunteer to help. Otherwise, hang out near the back or outside the room.

Note that you are responsible for enforcing convention policies, such as the weapons policy. If someone is found violating those policies, you are empowered to eject them from the convention.

### **Panel: the LARP Character Sheet**

**[Family]** Audience -- Parent and Children (3-5 players, as a group) – One player is a parent who is alone at the convention with several six-year-old children; the rest are the children. Make up names for the children.

The children should occasionally get restless with all this boring talking, and go play. Bring your inner six-year-old, and feel free to be a pain in the ass. Sometime after the kids get out of line, the parent should get them to calm down; yell at them if appropriate. If someone gets in your face about your parenting style, explain to them how difficult it is having children at these things, and complain about the lack of a kids' track (which any *decent* convention would obviously have), and point out that the inability to work with the younger generation is precisely the problem with LARPing today. Whine as appropriate.

### **Panel: the LARP Character Sheet**

**[Board Game]** Audience – Gamers in back (3-5 players, as a group) – You couldn't find a good place for your board game, since the whole convention is full of LARPing. So you figured you might as well set up at the back of this dumb panel. Be quiet about your game, except when you don't feel like it.

### **Panel: the LARP Character Sheet**

Audience – Cell phones (2 players, each of whom has a cell phone they are willing to use) – Only one of you should be in the panel at any given time; the other may hang out in the back iff s/he likes, but should be outside during the action. From time to time, the outside one should call the inside one on his phone. The inside one should pick up the call and talk a bit. If the people around you get too annoyed, apologize and leave the room to continue the call. At this point, switch roles – the outside person should come in, and repeat the process a while later.

If possible, set your phones to silly ring tones, and change them between cycles.

### **Panel: the LARP Character Sheet**

[**Townie Crashers**] Audience (2-5 players, as a group) – You have no idea what this stupid “lerp” stuff is that people keep talking about, but you heard about this club on the news last night, and after enough beers it sounded like fun to come and hang out here.

You are collectively drunk, and **everything** is funny to you. Make fun of anything that seems worth making fun of.

### **Panel: the LARP Character Sheet**

[**Psycho**] Audience – Your life was utterly ruined by James Packard, whose GM’ing style scarred you for life and rendered you incapable of enjoying LARP any more. His patronizing and bad calls soured you forever on the form, and now it’s time for payback.

You heard that he was on this panel; you’ve been carrying a gun around for months, just waiting for this opportunity. Near the end of the allotted time, you should finally crack. Stand up, begin yelling about how he ruined your life, and wave your gun around. (It’s up to you whether to actually shoot: this may be either a desperate cry for help or a full-scale psychotic break.)

You have a gun, but it only has one bullet in it, intended for your target; after all, you wouldn’t want to hurt any innocents. If you **do** shoot, yell “bang!” very loudly, and say whom you’ve just shot.

## **Panel: the LARP Character Sheet**

[**Conspiracy**] Audience – okay, you’ve finally put it together. For years now, they haven’t taken you seriously when you’ve told them all that there was a secret conspiracy actually running the government. But you’ve finally traced a key member of that shadowy group. Obviously, it would have to be someone in the FBI. And through a lot of dogged legwork, and correlating purloined files, you’ve found that a suspiciously large amount of material goes past the desk of Robin Howard. You haven’t quite figured out what he does yet, but it’s clear that every important investigation goes through him, so he’s obviously running the show.

You’ve picked up quite a skill for spying yourself over the years, and you’ve been using that for the past couple of weeks. You’ve stolen his phone bills, to see who he is calling, and tapped his phone. A lot of the discussion was pretty mysterious, but it was clear that he was planning on attending this convention without the knowledge of his superiors, so this must be where he is going to contact others in the conspiracy. And now he’s suddenly been put in charge of this panel? Very convenient – this must be where some important communication is going to take place, probably in code.

Your patience is at an end. It’s time that someone confronted this monster, and showed the world what is really going on. At some point during the panel, get up and tell him that the free people of America aren’t going to put up with this sort of manipulation! Show that you’ve managed to track him down, and that others will follow after! Even if he has you killed, you know that Freedom is worth the price!

## **Panel: the LARP Character Sheet**

[**Trekker**] Audience -- You are a big fan of Star Trek. Not that stupid new stuff, either – you mean *real* Trek, with Kirk and Spock. And the more you get into LARP, the more you wonder why there isn’t more LARP based on Classic Trek. There was an entire universe created there, full of all kinds of alien races, some very much like humanity and others very unlike. There’s so much to explore there – heck, you could even write some pretty interesting games just around the bad episodes like Plato’s Stepchildren!

And yet, people waste their time with things like Vampire games. I mean, there’s Mary Levine up there on the panel, being all gothier-than-thou. It’s so pathetic – it’s such a limiting system. You tried it a little bit a while back, and got really bored: there just isn’t enough *plot* to make the games interesting. Now Trek – that’s all about plot. Describe a good story or two, and show how they would translate really well into LARP.

## **Panel: the LARP Character Sheet**

**[Witch]** Audience – this panel is supposedly about “War Stories”. Well, you can tell them a war story or two. You’re a *real* witch, and you learned the secret ways from your mother, as she did from hers and back through the generations. You can read the cards and cast the bones as well as anyone, certainly better than most of these little players. They don’t understand the real power and majesty of the supernatural.

Oh, they talk about their little battles and such. But what do they really know? After all, the cards showed you last year that your so-called boyfriend was a *real* vampire, and was just waiting for his chance to suck you dry. But you found out in time, and put a good hex on him, and after you told him about why he couldn’t get it up any longer, he didn’t come around any more.

You can tell them all about the real wars that happen, between the fey and the creatures of the night. It’s sad to see them, so wrapped up in their imaginings, never fully understanding the world around them...

## Panel: the LARP Rules

This is a panel, about LARP, held at a LARP convention. You should behave like normal panelists or audience, except as appropriate for your character.

**Combat Rules:** there are no combat rules, since there shouldn't be much combat. If a fistfight occurs, play-act it – if you get punched, go down. The GM will arbitrate the results based on arbitrary whim – consider yourself warned. Convention policy says that no weapons are allowed, so of course no one will have any, since you would get ejected if you had one.

This game is a cooperative entertainment. **Don't be a scene hog.** Most people here have some part or another. Feel free to play off the other characters, but don't interrupt other people excessively.

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Panel

# War Stories

(Panel: the LARP)