



Papers is a playful and surreal experience about a company visited by management consultants. The larp caricatures corporate culture in a fast-paced way, using music and rituals in a cartoonish manner to energize the participants. Are you ready to go from good to great?

#### THIS IS **TOTALLY NORMAL** IT'S JUST **SOMETHING YOU DO AT THE OFFICE**

## Facts

Genre: Playful and surreal everyday office Total time use: 1,5 hours Number of participants: 6-60 Number of organizers: 2 Workload: Medium Type of location: Open space with clean flat floor

Designed by Petter Karlsson and Martin Rother-Schirren 2014-09-30 - Version 1.0

## Play this larp!

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This means that you can play Papers with your friends or organization, adapt it, and remix as much as you want. However, you are not allowed to use Papers for commercial purposes without the consent of the designers. Please contact us if you want to play Papers for such occasions:

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Web page

paperslarp.wordpress.com

#### Facebook page

facebook.com/paperslarp

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# INTRODUCTION

Papers is a quick and surreal larp about working in an office. The larp is a playful exercise with characters that the participants create themselves. The goal is for the participants to have a good and energetic fun time without necessarily developing their characters or story arcs too deeply.

# Setting

The setting of Papers is the office: a surreal, generic workplace that consists of the entire playing area. Nothing is known about the owners of the office or the consultants that the organizers are playing. It is not stated if the characters work at a private company or a government facility.

All participants are employees working on The Project. The only time you don't work on The Project is when you're taking a break.

## **Playing style**

Papers is inspired by performance art and playful workshops. It is meant to be played at a high pace set by the organizers. At all times, the organizers will be highly energetic. This energy is meant to spread to the participants.

A major part of the setting is the surrealness of the office. Participants are instructed early in the game to treat everything that happens as a normal part of life at the office. The total playing time symbolises a day at the office.

Papers is seamless apart from the debrief at the end. This means that the entire experience in the participant's view is a continuous series of interactive events. There is no need to do any warm up exercises before the game.

The participants should not be given information about Papers in advance other than facts on how long it is and that it is a playful larp. When communicating about your run of Papers, you could also give players a short description such as this:

"Papers is a playful and surreal experience about a company visited by management consultants. The larp caricatures corporate culture in a fastpaced way, using music and rituals in a cartoonish manner to energize the participants. Are you ready to go from good to great?

This is totally normal. It's just something you do at the office."

For the participants, no preparations are needed. As soon as they are at your location, you can start Papers.

## Gamemastering style

Papers is preferably organized by two or more gamemasters. The organizers take the roles of nameless consultants visiting the office. Since the consultants have no name, you don't give your name while greeting the participants. The consultants are always positive and always energetic. They know that their methods are powerful and life changing.

As an organizer of this game, you are assumed to "suit up" in nothing less than business casual. If you don't have a suit and a tie, at least put on a white shirt and perhaps black slacks.

You don't need to remember everything to run this larp. Papers is made with a walkthrough of the game that tells you what to say and what to do. You should have the walkthrough with you at all times while running the game. You divide among yourselves which instructions each organizer gives.



# LARP DESCRIPTION

## Preparations

To play this Papers, you will need to have prepared the following things in advance:

#### Music

The music in Papers is essential. It it used to manage the speed and pacing of the larp and enhance the surreal feeling. Usually, every phase has it's own song, which plays in a loop until you change phase. It is good to be able to quickly shift to the correct song either using playlists or more advanced audio software. The audio needs to be quite loud in the room, so the bigger audio equipment, the better. However, keep the volume at a level where [they] players can still hear you and themselves when talking.

In Papers, you will use four songs, which are written by *Georg Pommer*. See links in Larp Materials.

#### Location

Papers needs to be played in an open room with at least enough space for everyone to sit in a circle on the floor. The floor should also be clean and flat, so that you can sit down on it and write on a paper on the floor underneath.

#### Stations

You will need to prepare a number of stations in the playing area. Each station consists of one set of posters plus one water cooler on a wall or other surface. Use different water coolers for the different stations. They should placed in the room as far away from each other as possible. If playing next to chairs and tables, make sure there is room enough for a group to stand next to the station. You will need to have at least 3 stations for Papers, but you could have more depending on how many participants you have. Here is a suggestion.

Participants	Stations
6-15	3
16-25	4
26-35	5
36-45	6
46-60	7

#### Posters & water coolers

There is a set of different water coolers and a set of 3 posters:

- Do's and Dont's
- FROM GOOD TO GREAT
- THIS IS TOTALLY NORMAL...

You can print them in A4-size (21cm x 27,94cm), but print them as A3 (43,2cm x 29,7cm) or another larger paper size if you have the possibility. You need one water cooler poster for each set of three posters.

If it's a large space, you may also put up a few extra "FROM GOOD TO GREAT" posters in various places in the room.

#### Water coolers

You will need an image of a water cooler to set up at each station.

#### Wrinkling Papers

For Wrinkling #1 phase, you need a set of 15-20 pages. These can be blank or with text. We suggest the 18 pages Wrinkling #1 pdf.

For Wrinkling #2 phase, you need a set of 8-15 pages. These can be blank or with text. We suggest the 12 pages Wrinkling #2 pdf.

The text in the pdf's for Wrinkling #1 & #2 is from the book *The Coming Insurrection*.

#### Blank A4 papers

Have at least twice the number of papers as the number of participants. If you can, use A3 papers instead, but be prepared for awesomeness.

#### **Coloured** pens

Bring colored crayons or other colour pencils, offering at least one for each participant.

#### **Optional: Rubber stamp**

If you have a rubber stamp, you can use it during the Wrinkling phase. In this case, hand the rubber stamp to the employee of the month.

#### **Optional: Paper shredding machine**

A paper shredding machine will enhance one of the final phases. We've used a cheap, simple shredder that makes a lot of sound and doesn't take care of its own paper waste. For maximum effect, make sure that the participants don't see the shredder until it is used.



## Larp Structure

#### Phases

The game consists of a number of exercises. You as the organizer play a key role in the game as it is you who will instruct the participants what to do at each moment. The phases are meant to be played tightly and seamlessly. You introduce the different phases as a constant change of game paces. For instance, you will say "Now back to The Project!" and after that, the phase ends and a new phase starts.

The first phases of Papers introduces key concepts to the participants and contains character and group identity creation. When the organizer says that "*it's time to start the larp*," every even phase will be a break and every odd phase will be a Project.

The phase after the end of the game is a debrief. The debrief is not seamlessly connected with the other phases. The end of the debrief is the end of Papers.

#### Answering questions from participants

At key moments during the game, the participants will ask you to clarify or explain stuff for them. This mainly happens when working with The Project. Some of the exercises are made to not work - for example, there are only so many times you can fold a paper - and this game works best if you ignore questions that are connected with this issue. When a participant asks you a question you don't want to answer, instead repeat your last instruction to highlight the absurdity.

There may be times when you feel that you must clarify or correct something you've just said. Before you do this though, take a short second and decide if it's necessary. Sometimes participants come up with marvelous things when they don't know what to do.

## Walkthrough

These are the phases that make up Papers and the order in which they should be played. If you decide to shorten and lengthen your game, please make sure you understand what each phase does so that you understand the basic flow of the game.

#### Instructions on what you should do are marked with arrows:

• Ask the employees to place themselves next to their water cooler.

#### Predefined lines that you should say are marked in italics:

This is totally normal - this is just something you do at the office.

#### Instructions on music are marked with brackets:

[PLAY MUSIC: Three Little Piereottes]

#### 1) Welcome

 As soon as people enter the venue, or at least a few minutes before the larp starts, the organizers are in-character. This means you already act as superpositive management-consultants.

[PLAY MUSIC: Three Little Piereottes]

- Greet all participants and welcome them by shaking their hands. When a
  participant greets you with their name, don't say yours. Instead, greet them
  enthusiastically.
- If you go outside of the room to see if there are any other participants arriving, stay in character.

This is a larp about play, work, and people. We are not aiming for bad moods and anxiety instead we want to you to create a playful and surreal experience.

So today we will all go from **GOOD** to **GREAT**. And whenever I say from **GOOD** - I want you to join in! Let's try it. **FROM GOOD TO GREAT**.

 Always do "FROM GOOD TO GREAT" with the movement described in Methods & Rules.

We will begin in just few moments and the larp ends when my colleague and I walk out of the room. We will enter shortly afterwards, and then we will all do a short debrief.

We have one rule here in the office and that is that "This is totally normal - this is just something you do at the office." And when I say "This is totally normal," I want you all to follow up by saying "It's just something you do at the office."

#### So THIS IS TOTALLY NORMAL, IT'S JUST SOMETHING YOU DO AT THE OFFICE.

Always do "This is totally normal..." as described in Methods & Rules

Just follow our instructions and together we will go **FROM GOOD TO GREAT**.

#### 2) Paper and Stapler

- Do the exercise Paper and Stapler described earlier.
- After the exercise, the employees are divided into groups. Place every group next to a water cooler station. It is okay to have a station with no group, but have at least groups at two stations.

#### 3) Characters

Welcome to the office. Today we will focus on your character development.And remember:**THIS IS TOTALLY NORMAL**,

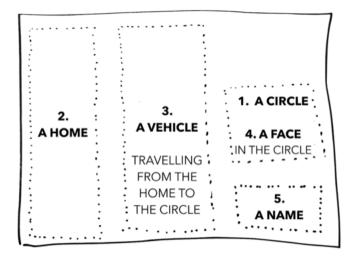
#### IT'S JUST SOMETHING YOU DO AT THE OFFICE.

Now we will try something new. Every time we say SWITCH, you will pass your paper to the right.

- Do the Drawing exercise, with the following instructions:
  - 1. On the right side of the paper Draw a circle
  - 2. On the left side of the paper Draw a home SWITCH!
  - 3. In the middle of the paper Draw a vehicle travelling from

the home to the circle - SWITCH!

- 4. In the circle Draw a face SWITCH!
- 5. Write a name under the circle SWITCH!



Now, we have created the real you! **This is YOU**. This concludes your character development.

#### 4) Group culture

- Ask the participants to place themselves next to their water cooler.
- Ask each group to come up with a group identity. You can give the following or other examples:

The ones that always bring a lunch box

- The super-salespeople
- The gossipers
- Give them a few minutes to think and then make sure all groups have reached a decision.
- Tell the groups now to form a theatre statue of how their group looks in the office. Make them do it quickly without talking.
- While everyone stands in posture, make one person from each group present their group culture.

## 5) Breaks

[PLAY MUSIC: Hippopotamus on the Road]

• Introduce the concept of breaks.

"There are rules to follow during breaks. We will now introduce them..."

- As you say this, point at the "Do's and Dont's" poster that is at every station.
- Introduce the items by saying, "do talk about..." and continue with the first item on the Do-list.
- Then, the second consultant can follow saying, "but do not talk about..." and then name the first item on the don't-list.
- Alternate between first and second consultant, going through both lists. Since the Do-list contains one more item than the Don't-list, the first consultant will have the last word.
- Introduce the water coolers in each corner by walking up to one and presenting it.
- For a high quality water cooler:

"This water cooler is refilled several times a day, the temperature of the liquid is pleasingly cold and refreshing, and if you hold in a button, you will get sparkling water"

• For a normal water cooler:

"This is just a normal water cooler. There's nothing special about this one."

• For an empty water cooler station:

"This is a water cooler with perfectly good water that nobody uses."

Sometimes, there can be moments of awkward silence by the water cooler. This is acceptable behaviour. If silence reigns for more than 5 seconds, someone can say "Remember to use subjects from the Do list!"

Now, you pair up in groups of two (or three if needed) and ask each other questions using the Do's and Dont's.

• Let the employees talk for about 1 minute before stopping them.

### 6) Employee of the month #1

[STOP ALL MUSIC]

And now, the larp will start!

Get as close to each other as possible, but bring YOU (your paper) with you. Now close your eyes.

This is totally normal - this is just something you do at the office. When the music starts, you will open your eyes and follow our instructions.

- Get an object that the participants can aim at, such as a paper bin, something shiny or just a blank paper.
- Put it on the floor a few meters away from the participants.
- As soon as you start the music, the larp starts.

[PLAY MUSIC: Une Minute Part III]

Wrinkle your paper into a small ball. Prepare to toss it as close as possible to (the object you have chosen). Now start.

• Check which paper-ball that came closest. Unfold it and read the name.

This is (NAME), and (NAME) went **FROM GOOD TO GREAT**. Everybody, **FROM GOOD TO GREAT**. (NAME) is employee of the month!

Now back to The Project!

#### 7) The Project: Wrinkling #1

[PLAY MUSIC: Three Little Piereottes]

• Do the Wrinkling exercise with the Wrinkling #1 set of pages.

Thank you! You have all gone **FROM GOOD TO GREAT.** Now, it's time for a break!



### 8) Break

[PLAY MUSIC: Hippopotamus on the Road]

- Instruct the employees to which water cooler station they shall go.
- The Envelopers will go to a water cooler on one side of the room and the Developers will go to a water cooler on the other side of the room.

#### And remember: THIS IS TOTALLY NORMAL, IT'S JUST SOMETHING YOU DO AT THE OFFICE.

- Take the employee of the month aside:
  - Instruct the employee that during the next project, they will have drawings in front of them.
  - The employee of the month shall only sign each drawing with his or her name when it passes, instead of drawing something.
- If necessary, remind the employees of the Do's and Dont's.
- Let the employees talk for about 1 minute before stopping them.

Now, back to The Project!

#### 9) The Project: Drawing #1

[PLAY MUSIC: Three Little Piereottes]

- Do the Drawing exercise.
- Instruct the employee of the month not to draw anything; instead, that employee just signs the paper.
- At the beginning of the exercise, ask the employees to draw concrete items (triangles, bikes, a cloud), but towards the end of the exercise, be more abstract (a journey, an ocean).
- Stop right before the employee of month receive the papers it has already signed.

Remember everyone:

#### FROM GOOD TO GREAT.

Super work by everyone! Now, it's time for a break!

### 10) Break

[PLAY MUSIC: Hippopotamus on the Road]

- Ask each employee to choose a water cooler. Each employee may choose freely.
- Tell them to start their breaks.
- Let the employees talk for about 1 minute before stopping them.

Now back to The Project!

#### 11) Employee of the month #2

[PLAY MUSIC: Une Minute Part III]

• Make everyone stand in a circle and close their eyes.

Point at someone still with eyes closed who has done great effort for The Project.

- You now decide which employee you think has the most hands pointed towards him or her.
- That person is now the employee of the month.
- The previous employee of the month is now only an ordinary employee.
- Walk up next to the new employee of the month and ask everyone to open their eyes.
- Ask the new employee of the month about it's name.

This is (NAME), and (NAME) went **FROM GOOD TO GREAT** and is now employee of the month.

Instruct them on how to do the "200% MORE GOOD" and do that method with the employees as described in Methods and Rules.

Now back to The Project!



#### 12) The Project: Wrinkling #2

[PLAY MUSIC: Xylophon Galopp]

- Do the Wrinkling exercise with the Wrinkling #2 set of pages. If you think that the employees understand what they are going to do, you can skip some of the explaining.
- It doesn't matter whether an employee was Enveloper or Developer during Wrinkling #1.

Can you feel it? We're going **FROM GOOD TO GREAT**! Now, it's time for a break!

### 13) Break

[PLAY MUSIC: Hippopotamus on the Road]

- Ask employees to stand with the others that has the same group identity and to start their breaks.
- Take the employee of the month aside.
- Instruct the employee that the next Project work is Drawing again.
- Each time a paper comes to the employee of the month, she/he has to do one of two things:.
  - Take the top drawing from the old pile and send it down the line, then destroy the new paper.
  - Sign the new paper and send it away. Then, destroy the top drawing from the old pile.
- Tell the employee to rip the paper apart to destroy it.
- Optional: If you have a paper shredder, instruct the employee on how to use it and use this method instead of ripping the papers apart.
- Let the employees talk for about 2 minutes before stopping them.

Now back to The Project!

## 14) The Project: Drawing #2

[PLAY MUSIC: Xylophon Galopp]

- Do the Drawing exercise.
- The employee of the month sits next to the pile of drawings from Drawing #1.
- Optional: The employee of the month also sits next to the paper shredder.
- When drawing, ask participants to draw things inside of other things. At the start of the exercise ask the participants to draw concrete things and at the end abstract things.
- If needed, remind the employee of the month to start to take papers out of the loop.
- The exercise becomes more and more impossible for the other employees. This is intentional.
- Stop right before the employee of month receive the papers it has already signed.

Fantastic work everyone, you are really going from **FROM GOOD TO GREAT.** Now, it's time for a break!

#### 15) Break

[PLAY MUSIC: Hippopotamus on the Road]

• Ask the employees to move to the water cooler where they have had their best experience and to start their breaks.

And remember:

THIS IS TOTALLY NORMAL, IT'S JUST SOMETHING YOU DO AT THE OFFICE.

• Let the employees talk for about 3 minute before stopping them.

Now back to The Project!

### 16) The Project: Folding

Make sure every employee has a paper.
 This may be a blank paper or a paper that has been drawn upon.

#### [PLAY MUSIC: Xylophon Galopp]

We will now begin to fold The Project. Every time we say FOLD, you will FOLD the paper. FOLD.

• Start in a normal pace to then go faster and faster.

SWITCH - FOLD -SWITCH - FOLD -

#### [STOP ALL MUSIC]

Thank you everybody. Today, you went **FROM GOOD TO GREAT**. See you in the office tomorrow.

- Leave the room.
- Wait for at least half a minute.
- Re-enter the room.

#### 17) Debrief

- Calmly thank the participants for playing Paper & tell them that larp now is over.
- Ask them to sit on the floor or use chair to form a circle.
- Explain that you now will do a sharing round.
- Ask the participants to share a word or a sentence about what they are feeling or thinking of right now.
- Thank the participants again.
- Now tell the participants that want to leave that they are welcome to leave.
- Open up for questions and discussion if you have time.

# **METHODS AND RULES**

In Papers, we have several methods that you will use. Unless they are described in the walkthrough, you will find them here.

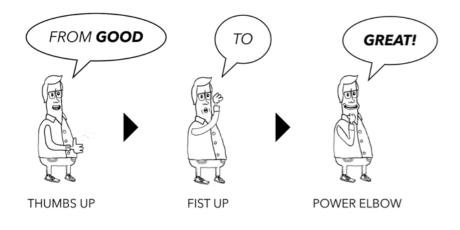
#### "This is totally normal..."

- 1. Say "This is totally normal!"
- The participants are expected to say,
   "It's just something we do at the office!"

### "FROM GOOD TO GREAT"

- Loudly say the words "FROM GOOD!" while making a thumbs up with your hand.
- 2. Then say the words "*TO GREAT*!" louder while first reaching with your hand into the air and then clenching the hand into a fist and pulling down, like pulling an emergency break or similar.
- The point of this action is that when you've said the first line, the participants are expected to say the second line together with you loudly. If they don't say it loudly enough, say

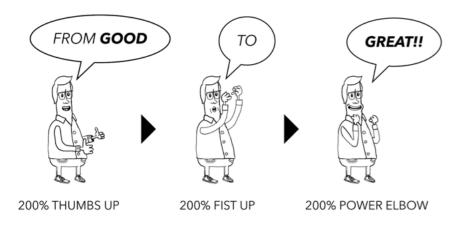
"Ok now, one more time...from good...".



### "200% MORE GOOD"

This is an enhanced version of FROM GOOD TO GREAT.

- 1. While doing the FROM GOOD TO GREAT, use both hands simultaneously.
- Directly after"...TO GREAT," say with a loud voice "double power elbow, 200 percent more good!" Say it like you've just had a power boost like lightning. (The "more" is a Swenglish reference).



## Paper and Stapler

This exercise is a renamed variant of Friends and Enemies.

 The participants are told to stand in a circle and each secretly choose two of the other participants, one being a Paper and another being a Stapler.
 When you tell the participants to begin, everybody shall start walking.

2. The objective is to move so that they have the Paper in between themselves and the Stapler. Instruct the participants and then begin. As soon as the exercise has started, everyone is moving around and after a while, you stop it. You can now form groups depending on how people are standing. We suggest at least 3 participants in each group.

3. Except for the minimum group size, groups can very a lot in numbers. As an example, you can create two smaller and one bigger group. There might even be fewer groups than there are water coolers.

### Drawing

This is one of the exercises that makes up The Project. It is also used as a part of the character creation process.

#### Preparing the exercise

1. Instruct the participants to take a pen in their "special color." Offer each participant several colors so that the participants can actually make some sort of choice.

- 2. Now instruct the participants to sit in a circle.
- 3. Hand an empty piece of paper to each participant.

#### The exercise

1. Instruct the participants to draw a specific thing (specified in the Walkthrough) in a specific place on the paper (also specified in the Walkthrough).

- 2. After about ten seconds (or a time that feels right to you), say SWITCH.
- 3. Each participant sends its paper one step clockwise.

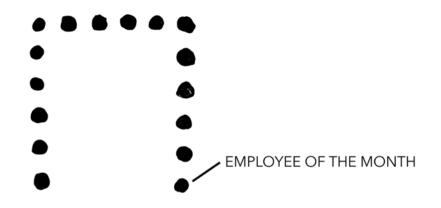
The consultants can alternate giving instructions. In this case, make the change so that when a consultant says "SWITCH," that consultant then gives the next instruction before handing leadership over to the other consultant.

#### Wrinkling

This is one of the exercises that make up The Project.

1. Ask participants to stand in the form of the letter U. Tell the participants that this is the production line.

2. Place the employee of the month at one of the ends of the U.



3. Explain that you will give papers, one at a time, to the employee of the month, who either signs the paper with his or her name or stamps the paper (depending if you use the stamp or not). This instruction should be done discretely.

4. Tell the participants that The Project needs both *Envelopers* and *Developers*.

5. Explain that when an Enveloper receives a paper, the Enveloper wrinkles the paper and gives it to the next person in the queue.

6. When a Developer receives a paper, it is wrinkled. The Developer unfolds the wrinkled paper and gives it to the next person in the queue.

7. Tell the first person after the employee of the month to be an Enveloper, the person after that to be a Developer, and so on.

8. Send away the first paper of the set of pages. For the first time, use Wrinkling #1 and the second time, use Wrinkling #2.

9. Keep sending the papers in a steady pace. Try to avoid bottlenecks in the production line at this early stage - they will occur naturally after all papers have been sent out to the production line anyway.

10. If this process takes too much time, skip sending a few of the pages.

#### Sharing round

During the debrief, we suggest doing a very short sharing round. A round is a method used for group feedback and discussion.

1. Have the participants sit down in a circle on the floor or use chairs.

2. During the sharing round, the right to speak is passed along to everyone in turns and everyone gets to talk without interruption.

3. If someone wants to pass, they can pass.

4. Participants will not comment on or give answers to each others' statements, even if they are made in the form of questions

5. Ask the participants to share a word or a sentence about what they are feeling or thinking right now.

6. When everyone has either passed or shared something, the round is over.

# LARP MATERIALS

These are the downloadable materials you should use to play Papers:

#### Links to PDF files

Papers - Appendix 1 - Cheat sheet.pdf Papers - Appendix 2 - Items for Drawing.pdf Papers - Walkthrough script.pdf Papers - Poster set.pdf Papers - Water coolers.pdf Papers - Wrinkling 1.pdf (18 pages) Papers - Wrinkling 2.pdf (12 pages)

#### Music

You will need these four songs by Georg Pommer:

Three Little Pierrots Hippopotamus On The Road Une Minute Part III Xylophon Galopp

They can all be found on his album *Edition Roncalli - Circusmusik 2*, which you can find on several services online: <u>Spotify</u> | <u>ITunes</u> | <u>Amazon</u>

# CREDITS

Papers was written for the larp conference Knutepunkt 2013 in Norway and has been played on numerous occasions since. We would like to thank everyone who has contributed with feedback either by playing, hosting or co-hosting Papers. An extra mention to Elin Gissén who was the first one playtesting the mechanics.

Two works by the group <u>NYXXX</u> gave inspiration to the cornerstones of Papers. The first was the workshop *Dance, movement, scores* at Knudepunkt 2011 in Denmark and the other was the play *Avatarvaro* held in Sweden during 2011. For this we would like to aim an extra round of thanks to Tova Gerge, Ebba Petrén & Gabriel Widing.

For feedback and proofreading we would like to thank Teresa Axner, Karl Bergström, Sarah Lynne Bowman, Martin Nielsen & Anders Östlund.

The lovely illustrations are made by the great <u>Jesper Wallerborg Almerud</u>.

## About the designers

**Petter Karlsson** is a larp producer and designer. He is one of the owners of the educational larp production company LajvVerkstaden. He is also one of the producers of the annual Swedish larp conference Prolog and The Nordic Larp Talks. He has produced and co-organized numerous larps from small to big. <u>petter.karlsson@gmail.com</u>

**Martin Rother-Schirren** is a game designer and larpwright that has designed several black box larps and been involved in various gaming communities. He is part of the Jeepform collective of larp designers and currently works for LajvVerkstaden.

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Now, we really hope that you GO FROM GOOD TO GREAT!