

## A LARP For Kids

### *Overview*

I ran this LARP for my daughter's sixth birthday, for her and three of her friends. It's easy to run, and takes less than a couple of hours (could be far less, if they hurry through encounters).

It's pretty tightly scripted, but the idea is to give the kids starring roles in a fantasy story. This serves as a good introduction to LARPing for kids, although in my experience, LARPing is a very natural way for kids to roleplay.

### *Adults Needed*

We ran the game with three adults, but it could also be done with just two.

### *Combat System*

We used boffer weapons for combat, and had the simple system of playing your hits. If an arm got hit, you dropped what was in it. If a leg got hit, you dropped to one knee. If your torso got hit, you dropped to the ground until healed.

### *Setting*

The king of Andalusia has sent out the call for adventurous souls to help him recover the Goblet of Prosperity. The Goblet was stolen by a pirate, and without the Goblet the kingdom has fallen on hard times. The king offers a chest full of treasure (also stolen by the pirate) to whoever can recover the Goblet.

### *The Characters*

We wanted to allow each player to feature once in the story, so we gave them each special abilities.

The Pure Of Heart: one character could dispel some sorts of magic by touch.

The Swift: another was the fastest runner in the land.

The Woodsman: this character could track and never got lost.

The Dragon Scholar: this character knew more about dragons than anyone else.

### *The Dinner*

We ran our LARP around lunch-time, so feeding the kids was a must. We worked that into the story by providing chicken drumsticks and roasted vegetables, all served on wax paper and using skewers as utensils. This gave it a medieval feel, and fit in with the theme of a kingdom down on its luck.

The meal was the opportunity for the king to tell the group of the missing Goblet, and to appeal to them to recover it. He can also tell them about the other dangers they may encounter in the kingdom.

-The magical labyrinth: the king warns the group that nobody has ever found their way to the center of the labyrinth, but people have gotten close enough to see that a healing fairy is trapped in the

center. If the group can free her, perhaps she'd be willing to help them on their quest.

-The troll: the troll is made of rock, and cannot be hurt by weapons, so you have to play his games to get past him.

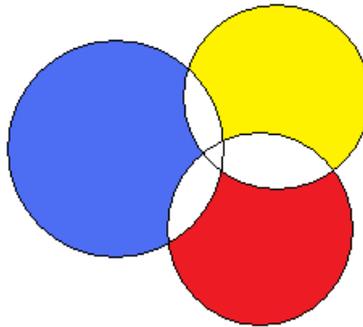
-The dragon: the dragon raided the kingdom's sheep recently, so should be safely sleeping off his meal in his cave. The king advises the group to stay well away.

-The pirate: the pirate Blackbeard (or whatever name you want to use) has never been defeated in battle. His ship is anchored off the coast.

### *The Labyrinth*

The first place that the woodsman follows the pirate's trail to is the magical labyrinth in the forest. We were constrained for space, so we had marked off a path around the outside of a room. There was one way to get into the center of the room, and the GM told each of the players except for the woodsman that they had to stay to the outside path unless they were led by the woodsman. They did great at following the outside path and acting like they were lost, until the woodsman led them into the center.

In the center we had the trapped fairy. A magical lock kept her trapped there. The lock looked like this:



Each player had to correctly identify the color that would result from mixing in the intersections. The center was the hardest, but the oldest player (a 9 year old) correctly identified that as brown.

Once all the colors were correctly identified, the fairy was freed.

### *The Troll*

The trail next leads to the troll. If operating with just two adults, the GM can get set up as the troll while the fairy directs the woodsman on a winding path through the forest.

The troll is a very poor sport. He gloats when he wins, and throws a fit when he loses. And he's invulnerable, so they can't get past him except by playing his games.

He starts out asking a riddle, saying that if they answer it correctly they can pass (pick riddles simple enough for the kids to get with some thought). When they answer it correctly, he offers the best two out of three.

When they answer two out of three correctly, he switches to playing a dice game. We used big

foam dice, and the kids had fun rolling them. The troll tries to cheat, but eventually the kids should win the game (to roll two dice and get a higher total than the troll).

He then switches to a racing game, and challenges them each in turn to a race. He leaves the Swift until the last. Each player is instructed to lose the race...the troll has laid down magic that slows anyone who isn't the swiftest in the land. So everyone loses, but when it comes to the Swift, the troll loses.

He finally lets them pass, and tells them how to get to the pirate's ship.

### *The Pirate*

The pirate fights with two swords (each of the kids should have only one). If asked, he says that pirates don't play fair. He'll accept challenges from the characters, and will beat each of them in turn. If they notice that the pirate is getting hit but not hurt, he'll boast that he has protective magic that can only be broken by the touch of a True Heart.

The sword battle should go on long enough to give the kids a good workout. The fairy can keep healing them and sending them back into battle as needed.

Once the protective spell is mentioned, they should realize that the True Heart must actually touch the pirate. This will require one or more people to distract him so the True Heart can sneak up behind him. As soon as the touch happens, the pirate is weakened, and probably pummeled by a couple dozen sword blows.

The pirate reveals that he did steal the king's chest of treasure, but the dragon stole it from him. He leads them to the dragon's cave.

### *The Dragon's Cave*

The dragon's cave has a network of trip wires designed to alert the sleeping dragon to intruders. If woken sufficiently, he flaps his wings and blows everyone out of the cave. Only the Dragon Scholar can avoid this effect, since he knows what to expect (don't tell him that until it happens, though, you still want him trying to avoid waking the dragon).

To create the network of trip wires, we put two lines of folding card table chairs about two or three feet apart, and about seven feet long. Between the legs of the chairs we strung twine. The GM used one of the play microphones that amplifies your voice to generate the sound of the sleeping dragon. The first time that a player hit a line of twine, the dragon roused slightly. If they froze, he went back to sleep. If more than one line was hit at a time, he woke and used his wings to blow everyone out of the cave.

The king's chest is inside the cave, and can be retrieved once they're past the trip wires.

### *The Goblet*

We used a locked box for the chest, so they had to return it to the king to open it. Inside was the Goblet of Prosperity (a gold looking goblet we had as a prop for other LARPs), a ton of treasure, and some creepy looking bugs.

Once someone gave the Goblet to the king (he wasn't reaching in with those bugs there!), he gave the rest of the treasure to the group. We'd hit the dollar stores to get fake gold coins, noisemakers,

jewelry, etc. Enough to make a sizeable pile of treasure for the group to divy up.

### *Adjusting For Larger Groups*

I wouldn't recommend running something like this for too many kids, because the intent is for each to have their starring moment. But you could expand it by a couple of encounters to add a couple more kids.