



10 WAYS to INTRODUCE *your* PLAYER CHARACTERS



Introduction

Every great adventure begins before the first die is rolled!

How Player Characters are introduced sets the emotional tone of the session, builds party cohesion, and helps players step fully into their roles. Too often, introductions are rushed or reduced to statistics and gear lists.

Here you are, ten simple, narrative-first techniques to introduce PCs in a way that sparks imagination, deepens relationships, and gets everyone roleplaying immediately. These ideas are system-agnostic, quick to use, and flexible for both new and experienced groups.

Pick one, mix several, or rotate them between sessions to keep your table fresh, personal, and alive!



JUSSI



Jussi Löytökorpi

EXAMPLE

Go around the table and ask each player in their turn.

OK, PLEASE, DESCRIBE A CHARACTER NEXT TO YOU USING ONLY ONE WORD.

A HERO.

UNRELIABLE.

TREACHEROUS

FUNNY.

ONE WORD.

Go around the table and ask each player to describe a fellow adventurer using only one word.

Not their own character—someone else's. The word can reflect personality, reputation, appearance, or even a private joke.

“*Reckless.*”

“*Gentle.*”

“*Haunted.*”

After everyone has spoken, give players a moment to react in-character if they wish. This idea is surprisingly revealing. It immediately establishes how characters are perceived by their peers and creates strong emotional hooks. Often, a single word says more than a full backstory—and invites the player to live up to it or rebel against it.



ONE SENTENCE *relationship*

Ask each player to describe the relationship between their character and one other adventurer in a single sentence.

Encourage specificity: not “we’re friends,” but “*I trust her with my life, but never with the truth.*”

This method quickly weaves connections across the party and prevents the “strangers in a tavern” problem. Limiting the description to one sentence keeps things sharp and evocative. Once all sentences are shared, the table gains an instant web of loyalties, tensions, and shared history. These relationships can evolve naturally during play, but this moment gives them a strong, memorable starting point.



THE LINE THEY WILL NEVER CROSS.

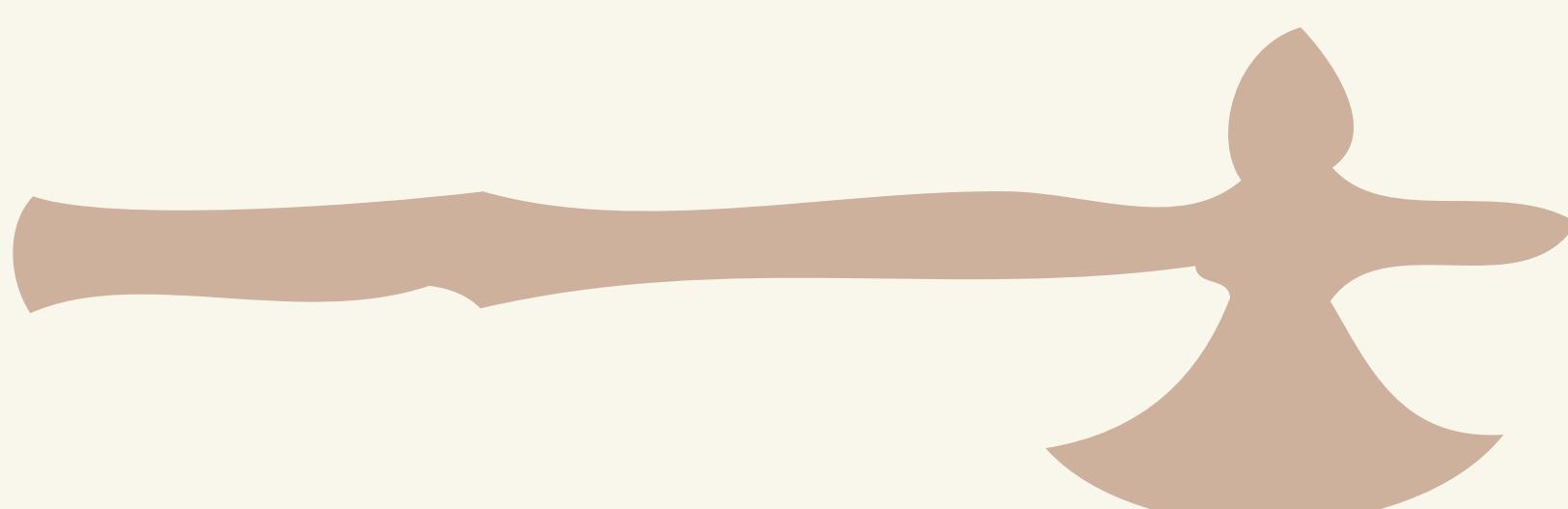
Ask a player to describe one thing that character would never do—no matter the cost.

This isn't about alignment labels or rules, but personal boundaries. *"He would never abandon a child."* *"She would never beg."* *"They would never forgive a betrayal."* This idea reveals moral anchors and inner conflicts, giving the GM excellent story fuel. It also creates dramatic tension: once a line is drawn, everyone wonders *what might happen if it's challenged*. This introduction works especially well for darker or character-driven campaigns where choices matter more than combat.

LIKE A FRIEND

Ask players to forget classes, abilities, and mechanics entirely. Instead, describe the PC in the way you would describe a real-life friend to a stranger.

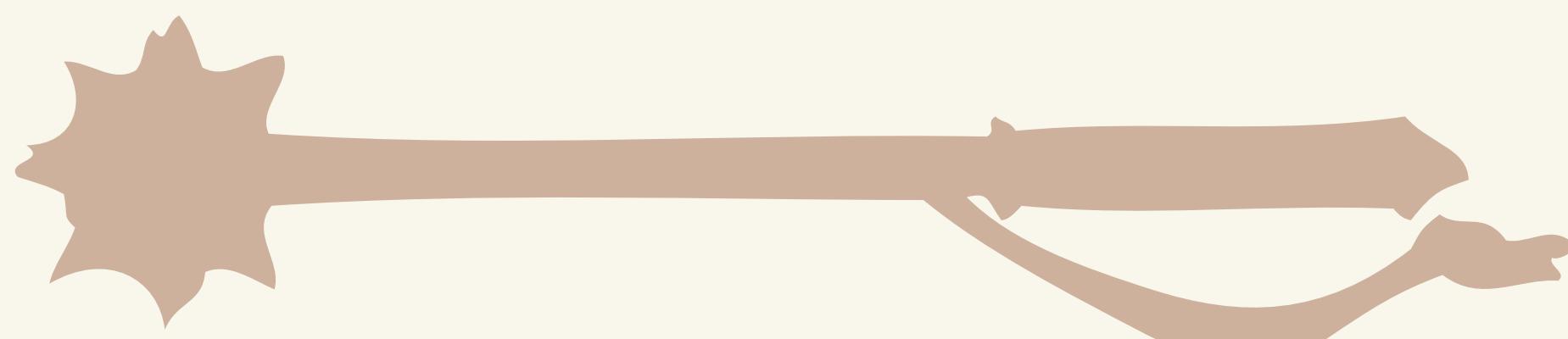
Focus on habits, quirks, tone of voice, and small human details. “*She laughs loudly*”, “*He avoids eye contact*” or “*She always arrives late*” This approach grounds fantasy characters in relatable reality and helps other players picture them as people, not stat blocks. It also encourages more natural roleplay, as players begin to think in terms of personality rather than optimization. The result is a party that feels lived-in from the very first scene.



KNOWN FOR *Something*

Ask each player to share one thing their character is well-known for—locally or widely.

It could be a deed, a rumor, a skill, or even a mistake. “*She’s known as the duelist who never draws first.*” “*He’s famous for baking amazing cakes!*” This instantly places the character in the world beyond the party. Reputation implies history, consequences, and expectations. Other players can react in-character, and the GM gains ready-made NPC reactions. This method is excellent for campaigns that start in populated areas or established settings, where fame and infamy can shape future encounters.



FAVORITE THING TO DO

Ask players to describe their PC's favorite activity when no danger is present.

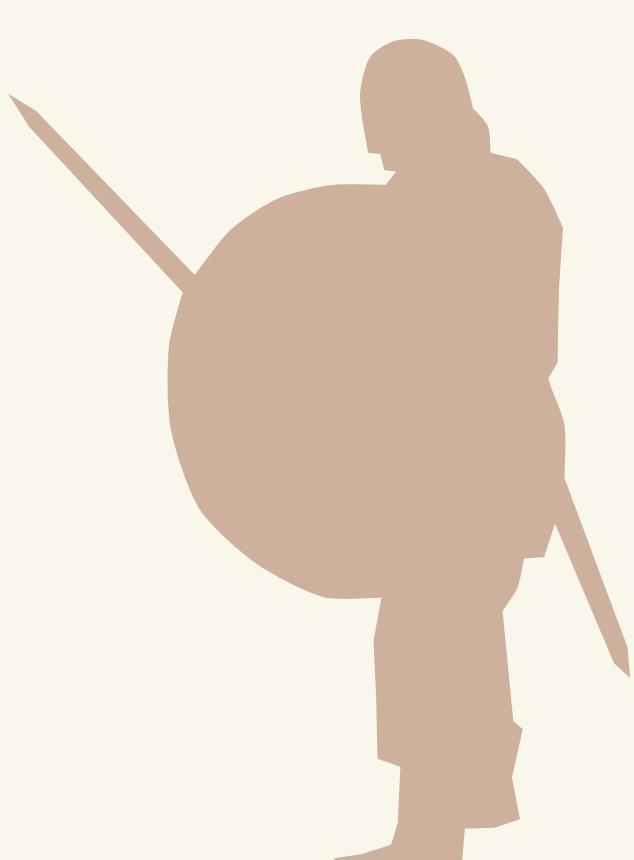
Not what they're best at—what they enjoy most. *Cooking, gambling, repairing gear, telling stories, praying, carving wood.* This small, peaceful detail adds warmth and contrast to dangerous adventures. It reminds everyone what the characters are fighting for and who they are when the swords are sheathed. These preferences can later become bonding moments, downtime scenes, or emotional callbacks. A character who loves quiet mornings or lively taverns suddenly feels more real—and more worth protecting.



Beloved WEAPON

Ask a player to describe PCs's favorite weapon in loving detail, as if it were a cherished toy or heirloom.

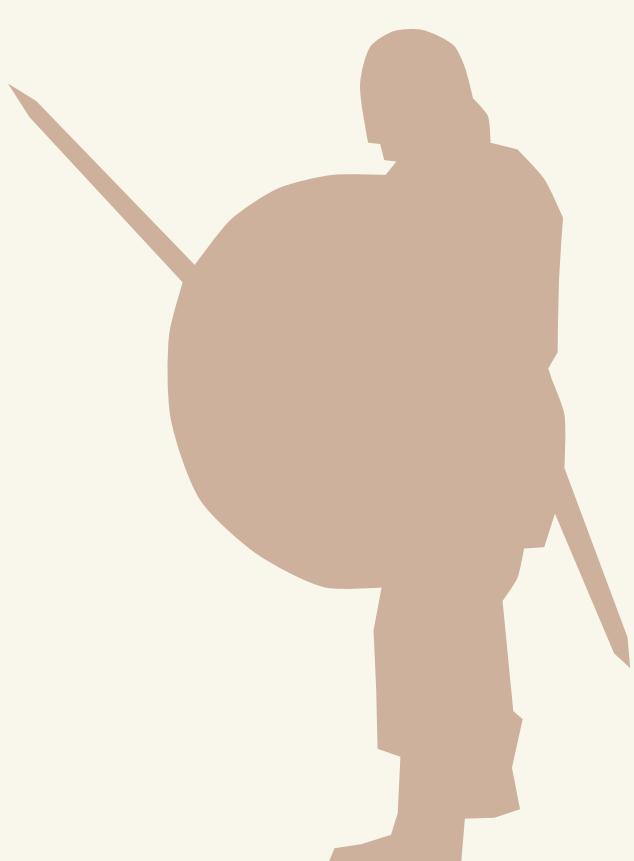
Focus on texture, weight, marks, and memories attached to it. This shifts attention from *damage numbers* to *emotional significance*. A blade nicked from old battles or a bow polished nightly tells a story of care and history. Let the weapon reflect the wielder's personality. This introduction strengthens visual imagery and creates instant attachment. Later, when that weapon is lost, damaged, or upgraded, the moment will carry real emotional weight.



ASK ANY QUESTION

Let one player ask a random question to another character—about anything, as long as it's in-character.

Encourage curiosity: *fears, habits, secrets, preferences*. The chosen player must answer honestly, or honestly dodge the question in-character. This creates spontaneous roleplay and reveals unexpected layers. The randomness keeps things fresh and prevents rehearsed backstories. It also establishes conversational dynamics within the party. This method works best in a relaxed table atmosphere and can be repeated multiple times. Each question is a door—some open easily, others creak, and a few stay firmly locked.



A PROUD ACHIEVEMENT

Ask a player to describe an achievement their PC is genuinely proud of.

Not necessarily the greatest feat, but the one that still matters to them. This reveals values: *what the character considers success*.

Saving a village, mastering a craft, keeping a promise, surviving something terrible. Pride can be quiet or loud, humble or boastful.

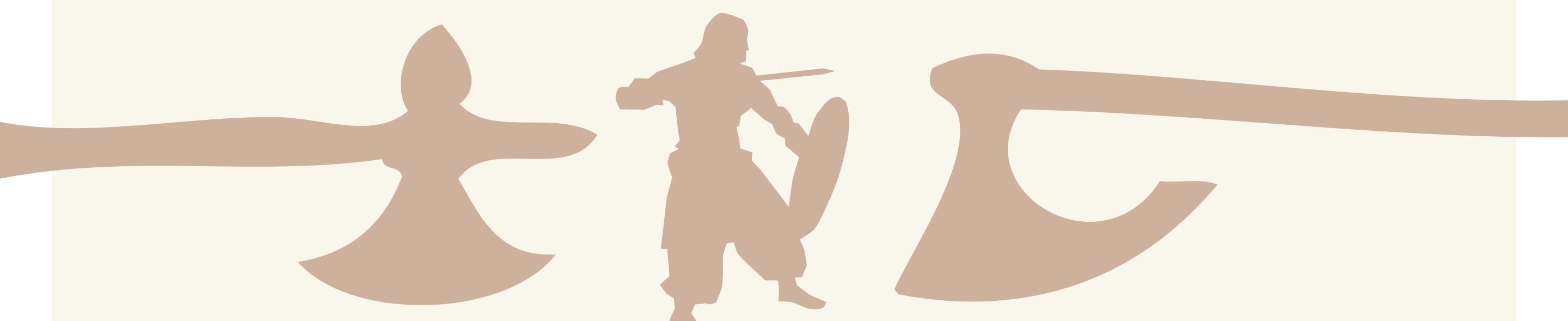
Sharing these moments gives the party insight into each other's motivations and emotional scars. It also provides hooks for future stories—threaten what they value, or give them a chance to surpass that achievement in unexpected ways.



PRIDE IN POSSESSION OR BLOODLINE

Ask a player one of the following: something from their family history they are *proud of*, or an item they possess that carries deep meaning.

Family pride reveals legacy, expectations, and unresolved pressure. A treasured item—ring, letter, tool—anchors the character emotionally in the world. Either choice adds depth without requiring a full genealogy. These details are powerful because they can be taken, challenged, or honored during play. They also give the GM tangible story elements to weave into the campaign.



COMPONENTS of GAMEMASTERING



The Plot

Writing the Plot
Directing the Scenes

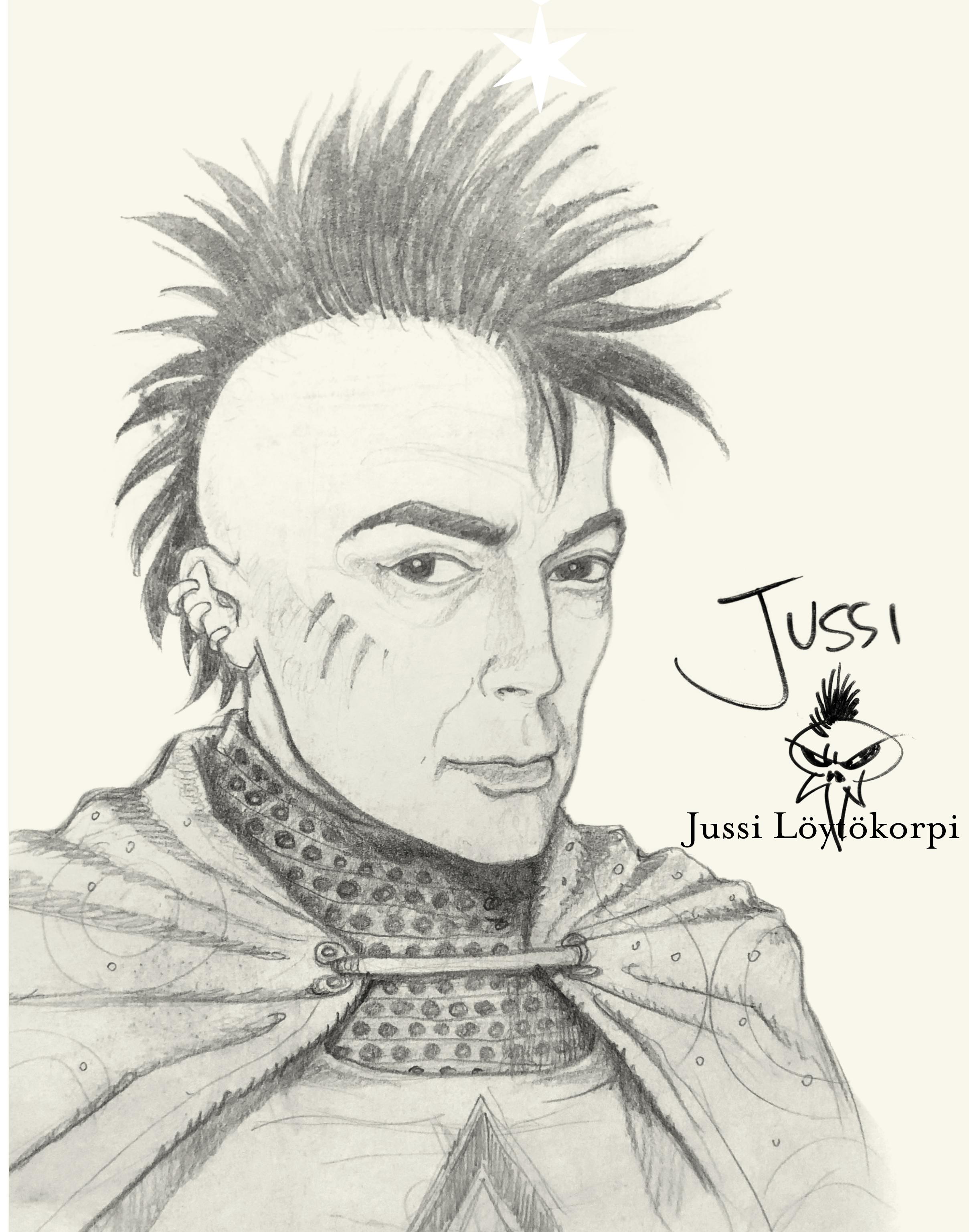
Narrating

Setting the Mood
Describing the Surroundings
Actings as NPCs

Mechanics

The Rules
Application of the Rules

Thanks
for reading!





FOR MORE

INSPIRATION *and* CREATIVE TECHNIQUES



GET THE BOOK >



DIRECTING *the* GAME

*Your game will never
be the same again.*