

# Writing Blurbs

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*V2.1 - February 18, 2017*

v2.0 – February 26, 2014. v2.1 has significant updates to the presenter’s notes, by Jeff.

# Pirates of the Serius cluster

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The alianse of space pirages is meeting today for the last time before the Empire sweeps across boarder of contested space. Each of you a stake in what happens to your tiny empires and the few stations that stand out like presious jewels between them. some of you want to run and abwndon what you've built others want to stand together and fight. But when have pirates wever been good at working together?

Its the first in a series of new games by the new Serius writer team and only the first 50 player will get in so youd better sign up fast!

Presentation, spelling, and grammar are important. So are details. If you're referring to the large blue white star not far from the Sun, it's Sirius, and it's not in a cluster. It's a new game with a new team, aiming for a really big game – and that raises all sorts of red flags.

# The Darkness Over Jannaric

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There's trouble in the lands of Jannaric. Dark forces gather in the Mountains of the Upper Moon. The Oracle of Phoebe insists that sinister portents from the Book of Tyme are coming true. Heroes are needed - will you step up to the fight and save the world? Can you stop the world of Jannaric from sinking into the depths of Darkness?

The fantasy world of Jannaric and all its lands are a rich environment supported by the unique Jannaric Rule System. Choose from sixteen different character classes, fleshed out with a revolutionary skill system and innovative live-combat resolution. Build a hero to bring a new Age to the World of Jannaric.

There's no focus here. A setting, by itself, is not enough.

Unique? Revolutionary? Innovative? Forgive me if I have my doubts about that.

Build Your Own Character? When is that done? Beforehand, with the GM team? At the door, before game start? In the middle of the game? (A very bad sign.) Does this mean that there will be a big line with the GMs before the start of the game? If this is the case, how are characters going to be interconnected?

# Mysterious Island

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The survivors looked around the beach of the desolate island. Under the full moon, the jungle was full of odd howls. The foliage quivered, and the professor pointed to odd tracks in the sand. The air was tense, with a magnetic energy, and the beautiful young woman looked about nervously, an unusual reaction. The ship's officer, in his sweat-stained uniform, with rolled-up sleeves, stared out quietly at the ocean, knowing that he would be blamed for this, if they somehow managed to live until rescue came.

Come explore the unusual and fantastic, when all you have are coconuts and questions...

It sets a scene, but is this Mysterious Island by Jules Verne? The Island of Dr. Moreau? Lost? Gilligan's Island? When is it set?

# Deep Fryer Nine

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On the edge of a space-time anomaly that leads to the far side of the Galaxy, space travelers come to Deep Fryer Nine in all shapes, sizes, and metabolisms. The one thing they have in common is...

...they're hungry.

There's always a crowd at the last fast-food restaurant in the Upsilon Sector!

Pretty generic, and no details.

# Deep Fryer Nine

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On the edge of a space-time anomaly that leads to the far side of the Galaxy, space travelers come to Deep Fryer Nine in all shapes, sizes, and metabolisms - and they're HUNGRY.

Unfortunately, the sentient AutoChefBot is on strike, demanding a pay raise. The ever-logical manager seems to be slipping into *pon farr*. Whatever burst from the chest of the cashier is scuttling on top of the condiments table. The Cardassian Sisters are capturing it all on vid for their reality pilot. There are Colors From Space in the drive-through, and the *spoo* has gone bad.

It's just another day at the last fast-food restaurant in the Upsilon Sector!

Good details, with genre connections. There's a sense of the tone of the game.

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*Deep Fryer Nine* is a frenetic Horde game set at the last fast-food restaurant in the Upsilon Sector! Play one of the staff or many of the strange and alien customers who just want it *their* way.

Tells the players what to expect - the style of game

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Deep Fryer Nine: Our last, best hope for grease!

And with a good tag line, riffing off Babylon 5!

# Death Side Story

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"When you're a Jet, you're a Jet all the way - from your first cigarette, to your last dyin' day." That's how it used to be, but ever since Riff turned all of you into vampires, dyin' is just the real beginning. If only those damned Sharks hadn't found their own Sire. Now that undead punk Bernardo is angling to take control of the whole West Side with his army of Zombies. After what Maria and the other Ghouls pulled at the old gym, the tension's even higher. There's a rumble coming, with just a hint of the nec-romantic!

An interesting blurb, but clearly there's a big twist. What are the ground rules? Combat is clearly going to happen in game. How is it resolved?

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What do I need to know about the setting? What is RPSLS? And it has a Cooper variant? (Rock-Paper-Scissors-Lizard-Spock. Sheldon Cooper always throws Spock. It's a "Big Bang Theory" thing.)

Interpretive dance?

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*Death Side Story* is an entirely new Vampire setting, using the Cooper variant of RPSLS for combat resolution and interpretive dance for casting rituals. All the necessary setting information will be provided in bluesheets before the game. RPSLS combat will be demonstrated during game briefing. No RPSLS experience or actual dancing skills are needed.

Now we know about the game and how it runs.

# Sunnyland

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Paolo the Unicorn is missing from his favorite spot in the Grassy Dell. Misty, the Blue Fairy, can't find her slippers, so she hasn't been able to gather the Pixie Dust collecting on the dandelions. Hoppy Bunny is late preparing Kittykat's birthday picnic lunch, and everyone is wondering when they're going to be able to eat. There's a cloud on the horizon of Sunnyland. Whatever will we do?

Come play the citizens of Sunnyland on a less-than-sunny day.

This sets up some expectations...

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Come play the citizens of Sunnyland on a less-than-sunny day, as they descend into Lovecraftian madness and horror. There will be plenty of fake blood and gore, so be prepared to be splattered. No one gets out alive!

And that's not what I expected.

Players come into a LARP with expectations. If you break those expectations, you can end up with a group of very unhappy players. If there's going to be a big twist in the game, you don't have to give the twist away, but you have to clue players that there will be one – to set expectations in advance.

# Cats

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The cats have gathered again for a Jellicle Ball. Tonight is a night of mystery and secret names. It's also a night of celebration, as all cats revel with joy under the moon and exalt their grey-furred elders. But not all cats are beautiful, sleek and lithe on this most jellicle of nights. Old Grizabella is lurking ominously in the shadows, and no one trusts what she might do.

And when the revels end, it will be time for the Elders to choose. Which cat will be chosen for the greatest honor of all, to go to the Heaviside Layer and be reborn to a new Jellicle Life?

This game contains dark themes intended for mature players. 18+ only

So... would dark mean gloomy, creepy, or backstories full of violence? Who knows?

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Based on the Broadway musical, this game includes some themes and subject matter that are much less family-friendly than the original. Please do not sign up for this game if you would rather not play a character in a polyamorous romantic relationship, take part in overt sexist and racist behavior, or explore themes of autocracy and deliberate emotional destruction of others by social shunning. This game is restricted to 18+ only.

This is a completely different game all of a sudden. It has very specific triggers like non-mainstream romantic patterns, social power balance, sexism and racism. Not so much the themes the original musical was trying to explore!

# What do the good blurbs do?

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- \* Blurbs set expectations about the game.
- \* If a blurb is poorly written, it suggests (rightly or wrongly) that the game may be poorly written.
- \* Blurbs give a player some idea about whether or not they might enjoy the game.
- \* **WARNING:** You can have a great blurb, but if the expectations it sets doesn't match the game experience, you can have some very upset players.

# A Good Blurb Does Four Things

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- ❖ The first half describes what the *characters* can expect - the setting, the genre, an idea of who will be in the game and what they might be up to.
- ❖ The second half describes what the *players* can expect - the kind of LARP, whether it's mechanics-heavy or light, a "normal" LARP or something different (horde, tale-telling, etc.)
- ❖ The overall text defines the setting and the tone of the LARP
- ❖ The overall text sizzles, enticing players to play the LARP.

Other things the blurb might include, or that should be findable in a game FAQ or website with the blurb:

Who is this LARP aimed at? Is it for adult audiences over 18? Can teenagers play? Is this a LARP that a younger player might enjoy?

Woo level – is there magic, fantastical elements? Is this something that might break expectations, like a London Victorian tea that breaks out into Lovecraftian horror, or a WW II game that contains spell casters?

Blurb has to say "Don't play this game if you don't like X"

Trigger warnings vs. content warnings: a tough call. In Jeff's experience, most of those people triggered were triggered by elements of the LARP that were completely unexpected and thought safe. This means you have to be up front about the content elements and obvious triggers (e.g. sexual violence, child abuse), but you have to be open to questions from players. You can ask "Is there any particular trauma you'd be upset to have in your game?"

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Are there things in the LARP that might legally/ethically/morally prohibit someone from playing? (e.g. expected alcohol consumption, explicit sexual references)

Are there things in the LARP that might prevent someone from playing? (e.g. physical accessibility issues, physical demands on players) This includes things like the need for a service animal, deafness, and even colorblindness.

Are there elements of the game or mechanics that might include touching? Close spaces? Kissing? How are they handled? How can a player opt out if they are uncomfortable?

Are there things in the LARP that might offend players? (e.g. racism, sexism, other isms.)

Are there strictly gendered characters? Are there gender neutral characters playable by a wider audience? Are there nontraditional gender roles in the game?

Is sexuality important to some characters? Are there homosexual relationships in game? Are there other sexualities in game?

(continued yet again, on next slide)

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How much reading is required for the game? A couple of pages? 20 pages? 100 pages? Is it available in a format that players with vision impairments can use? How much do I have to memorize for the game?

How much costuming is expected for the game? What kind of costuming is appropriate?