



I'M NOT DISSOCIATING, I'M LARPING



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## **Fabricated Identity, Worn with Conviction**

You arrive dressed as someone else because you've grown tired of justifying your own face.

You become the elf, the pirate, the courtesan, the dystopian drifter with a backstory and impeccable boots—not to escape, but to qualify for attention.

You speak in character because your real voice no longer lands without context. This is not fantasy. It's structure. It's permission. It is **performance as social acceptability**. And it works. For a while.



## **Establish the Archetype**

You begin with something familiar. A class. A trope. A category. You do not build from selfhood. You build from recognition.

You are not becoming real. You are becoming legible. Which, these days, is safer.



## **Infuse Just Enough Sincerity**

The key is emotional calibration. Too much detachment, and you're just a prop. Too much honesty, and you break immersion.

So you offer sincerity with theatrical precision. A character arc with plausible depth. A wound that mirrors your own—but isn't labeled.

You don't overshare. You monologue. People clap. This is communion.



## **Repress the Suspension of Disbelief**

Eventually, someone calls you by your real name. You do not hear it.

Eventually, someone asks, *"What do you do outside of this?"*

You feel the floor thin beneath your boots.

Because the truth is: you don't want to answer. For the moment, the default version of you feels strangely harder to inhabit without a script and a synthetic wig.

You are not pretending. You are rehearsing.



## **The Fantasy Is More Bearable Than the Feedback**

In the costume, you are graceful. You are confident. You are loud in the right places and soft with intention.

Out of costume, you are subject to *interpretation*. To critique. To algorithms. To mirrors. But in the role, you control the lore.

And for two sacred days a year, that is enough.



## **Safe Words & Foam Swords**

Conflict without consequence. Catharsis without cost.

You wanted a fight. But not the kind that bruises. You wanted stakes. But not the kind that linger. You wanted to confront betrayal, power, violence, revenge—but without blood, without silence, without side-eyes on Monday morning.

So you picked up a sword made of insulation tubing and screamed in iambic pentameter at a man named Colin dressed as a necromancer.

This is not absurdity. This is safe aggression. And you are finally heard.



## Construct a Conflict Loop

In LARP, the violence is consensual. The power is performative. The outcome is reversible. You negotiate your dominance with eye contact, story beats, and pre-cleared choreography.

And when you fall, it's in slow motion, to applause. You are not mistaken. You are *narratively compliant*.



## Catharsis in Controlled Environments

You scream because you're allowed. You cry because it fits the arc. You monologue because the script gives you airtime.

Here, emotionality is not punished—it is *revered*.

But only if it stays within bounds. Only if the scene allows it. Only if you wrap it up before the time skip.

You are not processing. You are *role-justifying*. Which is often more satisfying.



## **Violence Without Aftermath**

You get to kill the king. You get to betray the party. You get to hex the priestess and steal the book of blood.

And in the morning, you eat bagels together in sweatpants and talk about how good it felt to stab someone who deserved it—with zero real-world consequence.

**This is not fantasy. This is what justice might feel like if it had better props.**



## **You Are Not Avoiding Conflict—You Are Staging It**

In the world you inhabit nine-to-five, you cannot always say what needs to be said. You cannot always win. You cannot die dramatically and re-enter with new makeup.

But here? You write the climax. You die in character. You resurrect in comfort. And for once, you do not lose yourself—you schedule your redemption. You are loud in the right places and soft with intention.

Out of costume, you are subject to interpretation. To critique. To algorithms. To mirrors.

But in the role, you control the lore. And for two sacred days a year, that is enough.



## **De-Role: The Return to the Uncostumed Self**

The quiet panic of being unthemed in a world that demands branding. You pack the costume carefully. Not out of reverence, but because you know that without it, you are undecided.

There is no character sheet for being yourself. No dialogue tree. No visual shorthand to make you legible to the people you pass in line, or in conversation, or in expectation.

You leave the con, and the world doesn't ask who you are. It asks what you're projecting. And without your armor? You're just guessing.



## **Reacclimation Without Applause**

In the costume, you were seen—even if inaccurately, even if only as a reference. Out of costume, you are interpreted.

You don't receive praise. You receive data: raised eyebrows, vague silence, misread tone. And suddenly you remember why characters were easier than presence.



## Personality Without Lore

You try to speak plainly. It sounds like paperwork. You try to make eye contact. It feels like surveillance. You try to *"be yourself."*

You discover you've overwritten yourself with better dialogue and clearer intention than you've ever had in your original form.

It's not that you can't return. It's that you're no longer certain what was waiting in the space you left behind.



## Accept the Drop

Post-event collapse isn't always fatigue. Sometimes, it's grief.

You miss the structure. You miss the arc. You miss knowing when your entrance was coming and when your death scene was allowed.

Now, the days blur. The script is gone. The lighting is unforgiving.

You are no longer playing. You are now *available*. And you don't like what shows up.



## **The Real World Is Not Unscripted. Just Uncoordinated.**

You were never merely escaping reality. You were rehearsing it—in a version that gave you elegance, emotional continuity, and a reason to speak.

Now you are back in the real world. No tags. No armor. No backstory.

Just implication, interruption, and the ache of being seen *only in fragments*.



## **Lore as a Survival Strategy**

Backstory as armor, myth as identity, narrative as self-defense.

You don't just play a character. You build one. With scars. With secrets. With events that never happened but somehow explain everything.

This is not fantasy. This is preemptive coherence.

**A world may misunderstand you—but it cannot argue with a backstory.**



## **The Biography of the Invented Self**

Your real story is scattered. It happened out of order. It includes months you can't remember and conversations you wish you couldn't.

So you write a different one. Not a lie. Just a curated arc—with formative betrayal, noble trauma, and an enemy you haven't forgiven but will, right before the final battle.

In this version, you don't need to explain why you recoil. It's in the lore.



## **Myth as Clarification**

You're not "*quiet*." You are a cleric, sworn to silence. You're not "*bad at eye contact*." You were cursed at birth by a jealous seer. You're not "*lonely*." You were chosen for exile to protect those you loved.

This isn't avoidance. It's symbolic translation. You're not escaping truth. You're rendering it in a language people actually pay attention to.



## **Keep What Protects, Burn What Binds**

Eventually, the boundary between myth and memory begins to blur. You don't always know whether the grief came first or whether the backstory simply gave it somewhere to live.

You cry at a scene you wrote six months ago and wonder whether you accidentally wrote something true. This isn't necessarily dangerous. It's just immersive.

But eventually, you have to ask: Which parts were sacred? And which were scaffolding for being bearable? The difference matters.



## **Lore Is a Spell You Cast Until You No Longer Need the Protection**

You do not owe anyone the "*real story*." But you do owe yourself the ability to put down the sword when no one is chasing you.

Your legend served its purpose. You were understood, even if not quite accurately. And that's better than silence.

But you may take off the cloak now. The room is warm. The scene is over.

And you're still standing. Unscripted. Unnarrated. Finally.



## **Conventions of the Dead (but Make It Weekend-Friendly)**

A temporary resurrection of the unreal, merchandised and timeboxed.

The hall is full of ghosts. None of them mourned. All of them monetized. They smile, sign, sparkle. You recognize them from another life—or a streaming service.

Everyone is dressed like grief never happened. And maybe it didn't.  
Maybe the grief was optional this time.

That's the beauty of the con: you resurrect the identity, but leave the pain  
in your hotel room.



## **Glamour Without Guilt**

You are radiant. Not because you're healed—but because the  
lighting is flattering and your badge has your chosen name on it.

This is low-risk transcendence. Aesthetic presence. Spiritual  
drag. You're not faking it. You're wearing it. And it fits.



## **Temporary Community, Permanently Longed For**

Everyone here knows the script. No one breaks immersion. You can quote  
entire story arcs and never reveal anything personal.

It feels like friendship. Sometimes, perhaps, it is.

But you'll still feel the loss when you leave, because even temporary  
coherence can make casual reality seem strangely chaotic by comparison.

This place has rules. Your office does not.



## **The Collapse**

By Sunday afternoon, the enchantment begins to fray. The glitter itches. The boots ache. The dialogue feels recycled.

The moment you break character, someone walks past you—still in theirs—and it feels like betrayal.

You want to go home. You also want to stay here forever. So you pack your things and tell yourself you'll return. Stronger. Shinier. Less porous. You won't.

You'll return exactly as human as before, because you were never the costume. The costume simply gave shape to something the ordinary world left unnamed.



## **Let the Dead Rest. Let the Living Unmask.**

The convention was beautiful. Not because it was real, but because it let you rehearse being someone without the weight of being *yourself*. You will leave tired, touched, slightly dazed. Like any good haunting.

But now, you return to the world where identity isn't color-coded, and no one claps when you monologue. This, too, is a kind of performance. But the lighting is worse. And the lore is unwritten. Proceed anyway.



## Keep the Wig. Burn the Script.

Not every character must be discarded. But the script? That was never yours.

You may keep the wig. The armor. The accent that made you easier to listen to. You may keep the wounds, if they gave you vocabulary. You may keep the lore, if it gave you coherence.

But the script? That was written by need, not by truth. And it has served its purpose. Burn it.

Without mourning. Without spectacle. With just enough ceremony to remind yourself that even beautiful illusions must be released before they turn rigid.

You are not being watched now. There are no applause cues. There is no enemy onstage. There is only you. Unarmored. Unnamed. Still standing.

You may return to the world. **And this time, you do not need to dress like anyone to survive it.**



🌀 ***About The Mindlight Pen:** Where sacred cows make excellent fodder for foolery, and unexamined identities are gently incinerated in full costume. We don't mock the mask, we just ask who keeps wearing it after the con ends. Because sometimes the deepest self is the one you only meet when no one's clapping anymore.*

*No fantasy characters were harmed in the making of this publication, though several egos did spontaneously de-role. *

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