

Granny's Great- Grandmothers Tiara

*A tale of six generations of
women*

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- *Do you mean that Granny's Great-Grandmother's past is more important than your future?*
- *No. I mean that Granny's Great-Grandmothers's past is a part of my future!*

Quote from the original 2012 production.

Susanne Vejdemo & Daniel Armyr: Granny's Great-Grandmother's Tiara

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Granny's Great-granny's Tiara

About the game

Granny's Great-Grandmothers's Tiara is a low-key nordic larp¹ about Swedish² femininity, traditionally female concerns and the relationships between mothers and daughters. It involves six generations of women from the same family, three living and three dead, deciding on weather to sell their greatest family heirloom or not. The larp takes place in Stockholm in the year 2020.

This larp makes use of the ghost³ meta technique in a very literal version where the ghosts of the three dead generations have both personality and agendas. They will make use of any and all influence they have on their descendents to achieve their goals.

A single production of the larp takes about 3.5 hours, including preparation and post-larp reflections.

Basic larp concepts

If you are new to Larping, here are a few concepts and terms you need to be aware of.

Character

The in-story characters that you play. These are the six generations of women.

Player

The real-world person paying one of the characters.

Raised fist / Cut

If a user raises their fist and/or calls out "CUT" you immediately stop where you are and fall silent. Either the person will continue with giving an instruction that is directed to you as a player which shall be followed, or something serious has gone wrong and the game must take a break until the serious issue has been resolved.

Do not hesitate to call CUT if the game has to stop for a short period to sort something out, for example an accident where a player got hurt. Safety first.

Brems

Brems is Norwegian for "break" and is used as a code word to tell another player to dial things back a bit, but otherwise continue the game. Many Nordic larps, including this one, deal with intense emotions and things can get heated. There is no shame in using the "Brems" word. Trust that your fellow players back down if tell them to, but also trust that they will tell you if you go too far. Make sure they can also trust you to do the same.

Swedish cultural and geographical context

For players unfamiliar with some of the locations or cultural contexts mentioned below, here is a quick summary of the local concepts relevant to this game. These concepts have counterparts in very many cultures, so they should be easily replaceable with your local equivalents.

Sweden

Up until the end of the first world war, Sweden was an extremely poor country. Life for the majority consisted of small family farms on rented land, hard labour, and starvation.

Unlike the poor pre-war times, Sweden of today is prosperous and has a significant public safety net. This means that all people are guaranteed free university education, free healthcare, and a basic retirement plan. But an apartment in Stockholm is very costly and a hurdle for a young person wanting to set up a life in the city.

Vasastan

Vasastan is a part of northern downtown Stockholm. It has been a decidedly middle-class area for a long time.

Södermalm

Södermalm is the southern half of downtown Stockholm. Up until a few decades ago, it was the poorer half of Stockholm . Recently, prices have rocketed but due to rental control those who have lived there for a long time can still afford a reasonable apartment on a modest income.

Gnesta

Gnesta is a small town a full day's travel by horse and carriage from Stockholm. It represents the southern edge of the greater Stockholm of today and the edge of civilisation from a downtown perspective.

Germany

For most of history before the second world war, Germany was a very rich country compared to the much poorer Sweden. Germany has been a go-to country for higher education and job opportunities except for the last two generations.

Fika

"Fika" is a tradition that is deeply engrained in Swedish culture. It is an informal social event consisting of sitting down and drinking a hot beverage and eating biscuits or sandwiches. It shares many similarities with the well-known British Afternoon Tea, but can be held mid-morning, mid-afternoon or late evening and preferably at all of these times of day. Coffee is the traditional hot beverage it is based on, but tea works as well.

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Preparation

Players needed

This larp requires exactly six players. There are only female characters, but the larp deals more with traditional feminine concerns and less about female expression. As such the larp works well regardless of the gender of the players.

The larp works well for beginners. It can make sense to assign any more experienced players to the ghost roles.

The larp does not strictly require a separate game master⁴. However, no one who plays a character may have read any character descriptions except their own, complicating the preparations a bit. This is a larp where secrets play a significant role.

If there is a separate game master, this person is responsible for the pacing and handles the act breaks described on the character sheets. See the Game Master appendix for a summary of what the Game Master should keep track of during the game if one is present.

Preparations before the event

Review the list below to make sure all is prepared.

- » A location. An open kitchen in an apartment is recommended but not required. You will need a table with exactly three chairs, and at least three other seats close to the table. A clearly visible wall clock also simplifies the game.
- » Prepare six name tags – for example by using index cards and safety pins.
- » Print out the character descriptions and the smaller character notes.
- » Prepare some form of manual and timeless task that the women can work together on. The descriptions below assumes they will prepare something simple to eat, for example a fruit salad. Make sure there is enough for the ghosts as well, including the coffee/tea below.

- » Prepare "Fika" as well which will be needed for Act 5: The day after / Resolution.
- » Ensure that the player playing Mother E has a working cell phone. Unless there is a clearly visible wall-clock in the space you are playing, make sure all characters have watches or some other way to check the time.
- » Those playing ghosts shall be dressed in as much black as possible. Those not playing ghosts shall preferably be dressed in colors other than black.

Voluntary preparations

Arrange a symbolic item for each of the characters. Some suggestions:

- » **Granny's Great-Grandmother, The Viscountess A:** An envelope symbolising a letter she never wrote.
- » **Granny's Granny B:** A kitchen implement.
- » **Great-Grandmother C:** A fine broach.
- » **Granny D:** A pastille box to offer from when she wants to broker peace.
- » **Mother E:** The above mentioned cell phone.
- » **Daughter F:** A novel, preferably an old classic.

On location

Warmup

When everyone has gathered and the preparations are done, do a warm-up to get the creative juices flowing.

One suggestion is provided below:

The Coat Hanger

The point of this whimsical exercise is to get into a spontaneous and creative state of mind. So there should be as little after-thought and structure as possible to it. This is how it goes:

- » Everyone gathers in a ring and one person holds a coat hanger.
- » The person holding the coat hanger mimes an activity. The coat hanger may be used as an abstract prop if appropriate, or not at all.
- » The others guess what the person with the coat hanger is miming. As soon as someone guesses the right answer, the mime will hand over the coat hanger to the person who guessed the right answer.
- » The person now holding the coat hanger now mimes another activity and the others guess.
- » The game goes on for about 10 minutes.

Introductory text

Read the following introductory text aloud:

Welcome to the Granny's Great-Grandmother's Tiara!

This larp has six characters: Six generations of mothers and daughters from the same family. It takes place in the small flat of Mother E. Mother E is an energetic self-employed in the catering business. The company keeps her busy, but just barely carries its costs. Her daughter F, who has not quite come of age yet, also lives here.

Once upon a time, when the Viscountess A arrived from Germany and married a nouveau-rich Swede, the family had large apartments, horses, wagons and servants. At that time, the women of the family had neither the need, nor the opportunity to work. As the generations have passed, the family's circumstances have become simpler and simpler; from palaces to today's tiny flat. But the level of education and available options for the women have grown steadily. Hopefully Daughter F will be the first woman in her family to start at the University!

All that remains of the once glamorous life of the Viscountess is the family heirloom: The Tiara. All else has been lost. The Tiara has passed from mother to daughter; each generation has inherited it on their wedding day and the Tiara has stunned all who laid eyes on it. For some it specifically symbolises the wedding, the happiest(?) of all days. Others see the Tiara as a symbol of vanity and greed that keeps the women of the family down. But it also symbolises the family legacy and the inherited bond between women, both symbolically and in a very tangible way. All the rest has been lost or has been inherited by the sons. Because Swedish tradition is that only jewellery is reliably inherited down through the line of women.

Today Granny D is invited for afternoon "fika". And the ghosts of Great-Grandmother C, Granny's Granny B, and Granny's Great-Grandmother the viscountess A herself have found themselves drawn to their small living family this very day...

The first three acts take place on the first day. Act 4 takes place in the dreams of the living characters later that same night. Act 5 takes place during the following day, when Granny D comes back for a mid-morning fika.

Character handouts

Shuffle out the characters, or put some thought into it. If you have any experienced larpers, it can perhaps make sense to give them the ghost characters. Give everyone 10 minutes to read their character descriptions, at least twice.

How ghost characters work

Read the following:

Outside the dream sequences the ghosts are, frustratingly enough, limited in their interaction with the living. They can whisper and try to influence, or even occasionally scream out loud, but the living do not always hear and often misinterpret. In general, ghosts can also perform physical acts if these represent something non-physical. Examples: Put pressure on someones shoulders. Support someone. Beat a rhythm on someones chest to increase or decrease their heart-rate. The exception is eating and drinking which the ghosts can do freely at any time.

The ghosts can also interact and speak freely with each other. They have complex relationships between themselves and very much enjoy commenting on the actions of both the living and the dead.

This is a larp where silence is important. Very important. The living characters must include silence as a natural part of the way they interact with each other. Otherwise the ghosts will have a hard time getting heard. Before you say something, feel free to take a long and deep breath, in case a ghost wants to say anything.

Optional preparation

Play the following test scene to get a feeling for how ghosts can work in a larp. Let two of the living characters play mafia leaders who have challenged each other to Russian roulette⁵.

They each sit quietly in a chair, facing each other with a single gun between them (Any item can substitute). They send the gun back and forth and pull the trigger each time. Each time they raise the gun to their head they can die.

The game ends when one of the characters decides that this time their luck ran out and the gun kills them.

Each mafioso has two ghosts standing behind their back. They will try to influence the mafioso with whispers and light touches. One of the two is vengeful and hopes the mafioso dies. The other is loving and caring.

As ghosts, experiment with how you can both raise the intensity of the situation or calm things down. After the scene, discuss what worked and what was difficult.

Dream sequences

Read the following:

Being a ghost is hard. But in the dream world, the ghosts are allowed to shine. As a ghost, you can hold a dream sequence with a living character who is asleep. In the dream sequence you can talk directly to the living character and they can answer you back. As a ghost, you control the entire plot of the dream sequence.

To hold a dream sequence you start by leading the dreamer into the middle of the room and then placing them where you want them. You then describe the environment you both are in. You can also describe other characters who are present and may even use the other ghost players as extras. They can either play themselves or someone else. You control the dream world completely, so everything you say will be true for the dreamer.

Your goal with the dream sequence will be to make the dreamer understand something that is important to you. It is up to the dreamer to then interpret the dream afterwards as they see fit.

Reread the characters

Let each player reread their character so they remember the details.

Speed-dating!

Pair off all the players. Each pair then gets 60 seconds to have a quick talk. Do not reveal any big secrets at this time. Introduce your character in two sentences and say one sentence about how you see the

relationship between the two characters. Both characters do not need to agree on the nature of the relationship. Then switch until everyone has talked to everyone else.

Summarise the acts

Read through the act descriptions in the chapter below. If there is a game master, it is sufficient to read out the parts in bold to everyone.

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Game start!

Game start!

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Act descriptions

The larp is played as a sequence of shorter acts. Each act has a clear starting point, theme, and a clear signal when it ends. For each act, there is a section called "Game Master Instructions". These are for games that have a Game Master. For games without a game master, these instructions are repeated in the character descriptions for the respective character who is responsible for starting/ending a given act.

Starting the game

To start the game, everyone should decide what their first action is going to be and then stand in an action pose as if they were just about to start that action. One player, or the game master, says "The game begins" and everyone performs that very first action they had planned.

Act 1: Relationship building

20 minutes. Find your character. Find your relations. Ended by Mother E.

In this act the players shall become comfortable with their characters and their character's relationships with all of the other characters. No significant development of the characters or their relationships shall happen in this act. It is OK to make small changes to how you view your character or her relationships during this act. The goal is that you at the end of the act have a clear picture of who your character is and your starting relationships. This is also a time for the ghosts to get the hang of how they can interact with each other and the living characters in a constructive way.

During this act, the characters will prepare the last of the food. Towards the end of the act all will take their seats around the table and start

eating. Once everyone has started eating, Mother E will reveal that she intends to sell the Tiara. As soon as she has said this, and before anyone else can say anything, the act will end.

Game Master Instructions

Remind Mother E that she is to make sure all are properly served and seated after about 20 minutes and then end the act by saying "I have decided to sell the Tiara".

Other characters will probably catch their breath and want to speak, but they may not. Raise a fist above your head and say: "Cut. We now go in to act 2. We shall now, one by one, have a short monologue about what our characters feel."

Act 2: Monologues

5-10 minutes. What does your character really feel? Started by Mother E and ended when all have spoken.

This mini-act starts directly after Mother E has informed the others that she plans to sell the Tiara. One at the time, in any order, the players let their characters have an internal monologue about how they feel at this exact moment about the decision to sell the tiara. An internal monologue means that the player lets their character speak completely from the heart, as if no-one was listening. However, do not reveal any story-altering secrets at this time. No other characters are allowed to comment or react to what is said. Once everyone has had their turn, there is a short pause in silence where any who may have stood up are given time to sit down. Then begins:

Game Master Instructions

Inform the players that they shall each in turn do a monologue, no longer than 60 seconds about your their thoughts on the matter of the

Tiara. When all have had their turn and all are sitting down, raise your fist again and say: “Act 3, conflict, starts now and continues for 20 minutes. Mother E, please repeat your last line.”

Act 3: Conflict

30 minutes. Clarify the conflict lines between characters. Started by Mother E and ended by Granny D.

In this act, each character pushes their agenda and listens to the opinions of others. It is OK for your character to nuance their view on any given topic, but no disagreements shall be resolved in this act.

The act begins with a jump back in time. Mother E once more announces that she has decided to sell the Tiara. After this, all characters are free to act as they wish. However, no-one may leave the table until each character, ghosts included, have had the chance to speak up.

After about 30 minutes, Granny D’s booked taxi will call and announce that they are waiting outside. At this time, Granny D will say good bye and leave the apartment ending the act. Both Daughter F and Mother E can also end the act early by leaving the apartment.

Game Master Instructions

Finish the act by nudging Granny D that she has received a message/call from the booked taxi that is now waiting outside. Once Granny D has left the apartment, raise your fist and say “This ends act 3. Act 4 consists of 3 dream sequences. We move away the table and chairs to get an open space and then we give the scene to Granny’s Granny C”.

Act 4: Dream sequence

10-30 minutes. Takes place during the night between day one and day two. In this act, and this act only, the ghosts are completely free to do whatever they want. Started by Great-Grandmother C and ended by Viscountess A.

This act has three short scenes, one per ghost. Before the first scene, all will participate to clear an area where the dream sequences can be played out. Ahead of each scene, the responsible ghost player gets a minute to gather their thoughts and talk to any extras they wish to recruit. They then lead their assigned living character to the center of the room, explain the premise of the scene and start it.

Game Master Instructions

When the last dream sequence is complete, tell the players to put the table and chairs back and to sit down. Start the act once everything is in order. Inform Daughter F that she should start the act by saying whatever is on her characters mind.

Act 5: Resolution / The Day After

20 minutes. Granny D is invited back for mid-morning "fika". This act resolves the conflicts from previous acts. Started by Daughter F and ended by Mother E.

The last act takes place on the following day. All, both living and dead, have gathered for a mid-morning "fika". During this act, the characters try to find a resolution to their relationships and conflicts with the other characters, both living and dead. This resolution can be either negative (Meaning the characters agree to disagree) or positive (Meaning the characters find common ground and understanding). In this act, it can make sense for living characters to address their dead relatives directly, but unfortunately the living still have a hard time hearing any responses from the dead.

The scene, and the game, ends with Mother E being called on her phone by the auction house and asking about her final decision regarding the Tiara. Alternatively, Mother E calls the auction firm to inform them about her decision. During this phone call, all other characters must listen in silence. When Mother E hangs up, the game has ended.

Game Master instructions

After about 20 minutes, or when you feel the act has come to a natural end, make a phone call to the cell phone of Mother E and ask her for a decision on the Tiara. As soon as you get the Yes/No, hang up. Immediately, raise your fist and say "This ends the act and the game. Thank you all for playing!". After this everyone stops playing their characters.

Post-game reflections

When act 5 has ended, leave a few minutes for free and spontaneous reflections and reactions from all players of the game. Then gather the players two-and-two, if possible pairing up players that have interacted less during the game. Each player tells the other player how they experienced the game.

Then, gather everyone present in a circle, and allow each person to tell the larger group about their thoughts and their experiences. It is encouraged to comment on fun and interesting things other players did during the game that improved your experience. Respect your fellow participants by only asking short clarifying questions and not starting any discussions until everyone has had their turn.

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Characters

Unless you are the Game Master, do not read anything beyond here except your own character description.

Granny's Great-granny's Tiara

Daughter F

You were born in 2003 in this rental apartment in Södermalm in downtown Stockholm and you are now 17 years old. Your father left you and your mother when you were seven to move back to Australia and you never forgave him for that.

You do not have any particular interest in your fathers family background but you do feel all the more about your connection to your ancestresses and their fantastic legacy. You are fascinated by the past and want to study history or archeology at university.

At some point in the future, when you get married, you will inherit the Tiara as the next in line of your family. The Tiara came to Sweden with your granny's great-grandmother, a german noblewoman. As a school project, you have done research into the women of your family five generations back. Your ancestress, the Viscountess of Holstein-Kiel, whose entire family was killed by a mob during a food riot in 1872, fled all by herself through Europe and had many adventures in both Paris and Milano. She finally arrived in Stockholm where a rich industry magnate fell head over heels for her and they had a magnificent fairytale wedding — with the Tiara glittering on the head of the Viscountess. The Tiara is an important symbol of your background and your identity.

You want a strong connection back to your ancestresses and the strongest connection you have is the idea that you will one day get married wearing the family Tiara.

Feel free to improvise anecdotes about past events you have uncovered when studying your family history, including adventures the Viscountess had while traveling Europe. She escaped in a hay wagon! She was rescued by the Crown Prince, later Emperor, Franz Joseph of Austria who fell madly in love with her and would have given up his throne for her, had she only wanted him! Elaborate freely as these are all rumours you picked up and stories you have found in old diaries.

Player instructions

You start act 5 (Resolution / The day after) after all have sat down at the table. When everything seems to be in order, you start the act by simply saying anything that comes to your characters mind.

Voluntary accessory

A novel. Preferably an old classic.

Mother E

You were born in a simple apartment in Södermalm in downtown Stockholm in 1967 and you are 53 years old. You have a practical mind and like getting things done. After high-school, you started a catering business that you have run since then. It has slowly grown, and you now have a solid network of chefs and can take on rather large events. Unfortunately, profitability is a bit of a challenge meaning you make ends meet, but not a lot more. The job means long hours and late evenings, but you are proud of what you have achieved. Your only concern is that you have not been able to give your daughter the financial security you would have wanted.

You were married for a few years to your daughter's father, a charming Australian bartender, before you split up and he moved back to his native country. You do not actively dislike each other, but you have very little contact these days. Your daughter has not wanted to meet him after he left, and it has simply not happened.

There are two things you would like to do for your daughter. One is to travel a month or two around Australia so that she can reconnect with her Australian heritage. The other is that you would like to give her enough money for a downpayment on an apartment when she will need one in a few years. These are things you have heard that other parents do for their children but it has simply not been possible for you.

When you got married, you inherited the fantastic family heirloom, the Tiara. The idea is that your daughter will get it when she gets married, but in your opinion this is a somewhat stale family tradition. You have thought about this for many years and have now made up your mind. You will sell the Tiara. You have been in touch with an auction firm that has valued the Tiara to 150 000 SEK which would cover both a trip to Australia and a downpayment for a small city apartment.

The auction firm will call you tomorrow to confirm the sale. But you want to inform your daughter and your mother about the decision before you take that call and in person. You are not sure what kind of reaction you will get, but since you know deep down that this is the right thing to do it is important that they understand why.

Player instructions

Act 1: Relationship Building

You will finish act 1 by saying, after about 20 minutes, "I have decided to sell the Tiara".

Other characters will probably catch their breath and want to speak, but they may not. Raise a fist above your head and say: "Cut". We now enter act 2. We shall now, one by one, hold a short monologue about our characters feelings."

Act 2: Monologues

Do a monologue, no longer than 60 seconds, about your own thoughts on the matter of the Tiara. When you are done nod to another player who can take over. When all have had their turn and all are sitting down, raise your fist again and say: "Act 3, conflict, starts now and continues for 20 minutes."

Lower your fist and repeat your last line: "I have decided to sell the Tiara"

Act 4: The Dream Sequences

Act 4 ends with the Viscountess A telling everyone to put back the chairs and tables. While others do this, set an alarm on your cell phone so that it will ring 20 minutes after the start of act 5 (The day after / Resolution).

Act 5: The Day After / Resolution

Act 5 and the entire game will end when your cell phone rings. It is the auction house calling to get the final OK to sell the Tiara. Clearly tell them your decision. When the call is over, you will raise a fist above your head and say that the game is over.

Voluntary accessory

A cell phone that rings occasionally. You do not answer except at the end of act 5.

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Granny D

You were born in 1933 in a middle class apartment in Vasastan in downtown Stockholm and you are 87 years old. You grew up in the shadow of a principled matriarch of a mother and never required much space or attention. You want people to agree and like each other, and you dislike conflict of all kinds.

Only once in your life did you ever stand up to your mother and that was the day you applied to go to teachers collage to start your own career. Your grandmother B, in whose large country house you spend many fantastic summers, helped you finance your studies. You became a teacher and thereby the first woman of your family with her own professional income. You later married a fellow teacher from the school in Södermalm in downtown Stockholm where you worked. He passed away a few year ago.

Regarding the Tiara, you don't have particularly strong feelings for it. You wore it when you got married, but you could'nt really find much other use for a large and sparkling piece of diamond jewellery. You do, however, know how much it meant to your mother.

In your life, what matters most is the happiness of your daughter E and your granddaughter F.

Your secret wish is to free yourself from your mother, whose opinions and (non-)approval have always loomed over you.

Player instructions

You will finish act 3 (Conflict). This is the act that starts with Mother E repeating her line "I have decided to sell the Tiara". End the act by pretending to receive a message/call on your old cell phone saying your booked taxi has arrived. You end the act by saying good by and leaving the apartment. Wait a second and then walk back into the room with

your fist raised above your head, saying “This ends act 3. Act 4 consists of 3 dream sequences. We move away the table and chairs to get an open space and then we give the scene to Granny’s Granny C”.

Voluntary Accessory

A pastille box to offer from when brokering peace.

Great-grandmother C

You were born in 1902 in Gnesta, a small village on the countryside far outside of Stockholm. Your childhood was simple but comfortable in a spacious but unassuming house filled with the smell of freshly baked cinnamon rolls. But your family legacy promised you so much more.

You are the descendent of a fantastic family line, whose history was filled with both adventure and glamour. Never was this more pronounced than in the life of your grandmother, the Viscountess A, whom you always looked up to. Losing her when you were just a teenager was a hard blow. Some years later when your childhood home burned down to the ground in a fire, almost everything that connected you to your family history and financial security was destroyed. The only remnant was the Tiara, which you inherited when you got married. The Tiara was your most prized possession and your only connection with your ancestresses. You have never even considered the idea that it could ever be sold.

You married a bank clerk when you were young and moved back with him to Vasastan in downtown Stockholm, fleeing the suffocating country life and ruling your new household with an iron fist. You value a conservative, but active, lifestyle. You participated in several causes taking care of the moral of society. You arranged meetings and sewing bees in your apartment. You conducted cultural outings to the theatre. You did not care much for the fight for the right to vote, which was in full swing during your teenage years. You have tried to lead your daughter with a firm hand and make her understand feminine heritage and duty, and the value of the old housewife ideals. If women try to be like men, they lose their feminine power and greatness. You try to balance your disappointment with your daughter for going against you when she went to teachers college with a secret admiration (So far never spoken out loud to living or dead) that she actually did it...

You do not want your descendants to lose their link back to their ancestresses and the Tiara is the last and foremost remaining symbol of the family legacy.

Despite your differences, you have a mostly positive relationship with your mother B. But you do think that her decision to go around you to financially support your daughter's collage tuition was equal parts helping her and sticking it to you.

You never understood your mother B's bitterness to her mother, the Viscountess A, and the fantastic life that A gave her. You sometimes get angry with B that she does not appreciate A.

You will not tell anyone about your grief connected to the house fire, and what truly happened there, until you hold a dream sequence with Mother E in act 3 where you will visualise/tell exactly what happened and how you felt about it. During the dream sequence you will communicate how important you consider continuity and family to be and how disappointed you would be if she were to get rid of the last family heirloom.

Player instructions

You start act 4 (The dream sequences) when Granny D, with her fist raised above her head, tells you to do this.

You will have the first dream sequence together with Mother E. It may take anywhere between 2 and 10 minutes. Bring her to the middle of the room. Explain how/where she “wakes up” in the dream. This is your chance to explain your perspective on the Tiara and its legacy. Tell your story. You control the game world completely and everything you say becomes reality. Borrow other players as extras if you wish, but you will not have time to give them particularly detailed instructions.

End the scene by saying “I now leave your dream. Come with me” and take Mother by the hand to the edge of the room.

Voluntary Accessory.

A fine broach

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Granny's Granny B

You were born in a grand apartment in central Stockholm in 1880. You grew up surrounded by nannies, governesses and girl schools. What you lacked in your childhood, was a mother who was present. No matter how hard you tried to get close to her, she always kept her distance. Your clearest memory of her, the Viscountess A, was of her sitting at her dressing table getting ready to go out to yet another party. Next to her was always the great Tiara, the last remnant of her life in the German nobility. As such, it always represented everything wrong with your childhood.

As an adult you found a good man, the postmaster of Gnesta, and you moved as far from the city as you could. There you raised your daughter with baking and crafts and all the love you never got. But she was a stubborn one and it was clear from an early age that she idolised her grandmother, the Viscountess A, and the fast life in the city. As soon as she was grown, she married a city man and moved back to that life.

Your beloved granddaughter, D, was with you most summers and when your daughter was not prepared to help out financially, you pitched in and gave D the money for tuition for teachers collage.

You do not think your mother could have missed how disappointed you were with her, but even so she has never apologised; she was always too self-centred. But even so, you feel a respect for her deep down, for a reason you have never told anyone, living or dead.

Regarding the Tiara, you think it might as well be sold off and the money invested into something useful. It is a bad symbol of decadence. You inherited it when you got married, but then let it rest in the bank vault and never touched it. Today, you regret not selling it yourself when you had the chance. Instead you followed the family tradition and handed it to your daughter on her wedding day.

You will play passively aggressive and not speak plainly about how you feel about your mother until you have a dream sequence with your granddaughter D in Act 4. There you will tell her in detail what sort of person Grannys's Great-Grandmother the Viscountess A really is! In the final act, you will speak freely about it with both living and dead.

Player instructions

In act 4 (The Dream Sequence) you will have the second dream sequence together with your grand-daughter, Granny D. It may take anywhere between 2 and 10 minutes. Bring her to the center of the room. Explain how/where she “wakes up” in the dream. This is your chance to explain your perspective on the Tiara and its legacy. Tell your story. You control the game world completely and everything you say becomes reality. Borrow other players as extras if you wish, but you will not have time to give them particularly detailed instructions.

End the scene by saying “I now leave your dream. Come with me” and take Granny D by the hand to the edge of the room.

Voluntary accessory

A kitchen implement.

Granny's Great-Grandmother, Viscountess A

You were born into a poor farmer's family in Småland on the Swedish countryside in 1853, but you always had an appetite for the good things in life. When your brother got the opportunity to go down to the shipyard in Lübeck in Germany and work there, you followed him to get a chance to see the world.

Once in Lübeck, you managed to get a job in the kitchen of a lesser noble family, which was not quite the glamour you were looking for. With some charm and one or two somewhat less than moral acts, you managed to rise to the position of chambermaid which was more to your taste.

Because of local unrest, the family you worked for with had to depart to America on short notice. You stayed behind to pack up the last of the possessions. But rather than accompany the luggage across the ocean you put a sum of money, some jewels, and a fantastic Tiara in your pocket and disappeared.

Back in Stockholm, you introduced yourself under a new name and title. With the money you had, and the Tiara more specifically, you were quickly accepted into society. Everyone in Stockholm, including your children and grand-children, think you are a Viscountess from Holstein-Kiel whose entire family was murdered by a mob in a food riot of 1872. It is said that you fled through many adventures in both Paris and Milano before finally arriving in Stockholm and settling there.

An industrial magnate of humble origins but with with massive resources fell for you and a fairy-tale wedding later you had the life you always dreamed of. Parties, social functions and no more scrubbing of floors.

Together you had a daughter and a son, and you made sure that they were given a first-rate upbringing with nannies and good schools, all of which you could not even dream of as a child. You know that your daughter is angry with you for being what she considers an absent mother, but she cannot even imagine how good she had it. Your motto has always been "Carpe Diem" and you are a bit sad that your daughter did not adopt the same perspective on life. Your grand-daughter, however, showed more grit but unfortunately you did not live long enough to see her become a grown woman.

Concerning the Tiara, it was a practical item and a means to achieve your dreams, but you have always been a pragmatic person. You sometimes find that your descendents are just a bit too sentimental and focus way too much on family history rather than getting to where they want in life.

You will not tell anyone your true story or how you came by the Tiara until you are doing your dream sequence with your great great grand-daughter F. In it you will show/tell in monologue form the entire story with all of the details.

Player instructions

In act 4 (The Dream Sequences) you will have the third and last dream sequence together with Daughter F. It may take anywhere between 2 and 10 minutes. Bring her to the center of the room. Explain how/where she "wakes up" in the dream. This is your chance to explain your perspective on the Tiara and its legacy. Tell your story. You control the game world completely and everything you say becomes reality. Borrow other players as extras if you wish, but you will not have time to give them particularly detailed instructions.

End the scene by saying "I now leave your dream. Come with me" and take Daughter F by the hand to the edge of the room. As it is the last of the dream sequences, once it is over, raise a fist above your hand and say

"Now we move on to Act 5: The day after. We put back the table and chairs and start the scene as soon as Daughter F begins to act."

Voluntary Accessory

An envelope symbolising an important letter you never actually wrote. Perhaps a letter to your parents, or maybe your older brother?

Granny's Great-granny's Tiara

Notes

1. Larp refers to a type of interactive game or storytelling in which the players assume a role and act as a character within the set fiction. It can be described as theatre without an audience or script. What sets the Nordic larp traditions apart from others is a strong emphasis on collaboration and collective creation, unobtrusive rules, [...] sometimes including heavy themes." Definition taken from https://nordiclarp.org/wiki/Nordic_larp
2. None of the players familiar with Swedish culture? Not a problem. Approximate with generalised western culture and go with it as Swedish culture is not particularly sensitive to the problems of cultural appropriation. There is a section below spelling out cultural references necessary to properly interpret the character and act descriptions that should be translateable to many other locations around the world.
3. A ghost character is traditionally a character that does not represent a real physical being. They have traditionally been used by game masters as tools to interact with the subconsciousness of the player characters. In this game, however, the ghosts represent actual dead people.
4. "A Game master is the person running the game. It is sometimes synonymous with Organizer." Definition taken from https://nordiclarp.org/wiki/Game_Master
5. "Russian roulette is a lethal game of chance in which a player places a single round in a revolver, spins the cylinder, places the muzzle against their head, and pulls the trigger." Definition taken from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_roulette

Granny's Great-granny's Tiara

Development background

Granny's Great-Grandmothers Tiara was written during the spring of 2012 as an experiment in doing a high-quality LARP with minimal effort. We wrote the original version of the larp during two evening sessions and then set up a double-run during a single day in an apartment kitchen. The total effort to design and run this larp came in at around 24 hours of total work split between the two of us.

It was originally written in Swedish under the name "Mormors Mormors Mammars Tiara". Since that original double-run, it has been arranged in several other locations, including Prolog and Stockholm Scenario Festival. There have also been runs outside of Sweden which prompted the translation to English.

There has also been a companion larp written called "The Ancestral Farm" about the equivalent male traditional concerns of inheritance and duty. This larp has yet to be translated to English.

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