

PART 10: THE ANATOMY OF ADVENTURE

DON'T TELL: SHOW!

This maxim is at the heart of every good Storyteller and you should memorize it: Don't *tell* your story to people; *show* it. It's why so many experienced writers out there beg new writers to "write about what you know." Because if you cannot show what's in your mind to other people, down to the smallest detail, to make it real for them, you simply do not succeed as a storyteller.

A good way to start good storytelling is to try to imagine your story as a movie. Where are the character? What props are they using? How are they dressed? Is the wind blowing their hair? Does the wind have a nice or putrid smell? Are their noses wrinkling back in disgust if it's the latter? And so on... If you can picture the scene in your mind like a scene in a movie, you'll be able to describe it that much better to others.

Another way is to increase your vocabulary by reading. Get to know words, adjectives, adverbs; learn how to compare things using similes and how to make descriptions funny by using hyperbole.

In short, make it interesting to your audience, the players.

In role-playing games, you have a storytelling advantage, because the players themselves add (sometimes very rich) substance to the scene you're describing.

Anatomy of Adventure

Here are some tips on how to create a good Adventure for an Immortal Empires story that is interactive with your players.

DECIDE ON A STORY. A story has to have a beginning, middle, and end. The beginning should be about something special about to take place, and the adventurers just happen to be there. The middle should have some type of plot twist or extra hurdle the adventurers must overcome in order to resolve a problem or reach their goal, only to discover that there may be much bigger problems ahead of that! The end should be how the adventurers either overcome these bigger problems as

the story reaches its climax or succumb and fail to emerge victorious.

DETERMINE THE GOAL OF YOUR STORY. You must do this from your Storyteller point of view (in advancing your own general world history) and from the player's point of view: will the players even want to take part in this story...does it have the possibility of increasing their character's power, wealth, or social standing?

Perhaps your goal is to introduce another part of your world (say a new continent), or a new major personality (such as an archlich). Keeping your goal in mind will help create a unifying theme.

The adventurers' goals should be promised at the beginning of the story, and become more clearly defined by the middle. It might change with a plot twist, but you should always increase the rewards to be commensurate with the risk involved.

DECIDE HOW DIFFICULT THE ADVENTURE SHOULD BE. Is this an adventure for noobs, or experienced players with pre-immortal characters? Or are the characters immortals with several layers of Immortal Power Levels protecting them from death? Each level of play will require interactions with level-appropriate story Personalities. An ORank1 or 2 Patrician is not going to be summoned by the Empress for a special assignment; but, a Master Arval might do so, to test the new Arval's prowess. Populate your Story with appropriate Personalities.

REVIEW YOUR STORY THROUGH LOGICALLY. Do this before you start playing, to see if your story even makes sense. Why would the Tribune suddenly get mad and betray the empire? You'd better have a good reason; otherwise the players won't care, and it shouldn't be some stupid illogical thing like "because his daughter got killed in battle." Too many times, new Storytellers expect their players to follow a lead when it doesn't make any sense for them to do so. "The Empress has a secret lover..." Well, so fucking what. But if you make it logically connected to some goal or another that your players have, something like that might work. "The Em-

press's secret lover happens to be the merchant you've just been assigned by your Gang Leader to rob and kill!" Now that is something to consider, because it logically creates a conflict and a hurdle your players must overcome.

DECIDE ON A SETTING. Your story has to take place somewhere. Where will that be? Start small and expand. Your story starts in...one of the character's kitchens, he's having a dinner party, and all of the city officials have been invited but only two showed up... The city is Maximillian's Client City, Gades, in Hispania, one of the Imperial Provinces far away from Rome, the seat of power. As such, it is prone to various rebellions by the locals who resent Rome's iron hand. Gades is on the island of Erytheia, northwest from the Gates of Heracles...and so on, until you get a solid picture of your surroundings in case the players want to leave the kitchen!

Perhaps there will be portals to other Dimensions or Realms. Where can you expect your adventurers to use magic to Travel? Are you prepared for them to do that? You should be! A serious mistake beginning Storytellers make is to try to channelize their players along a certain path, instead of giving them the open world. Your "channelizing" must be more subtle: you must lead your players along in your story with story leads and story hooks, not with inhibitions that make them feel like their characters are powerless.

POPULATE YOUR MAPS WITH TRAPS THAT MAKE SENSE. No one would put a trap out in a desert unless there was some need for it. And, the person would be arrested for putting a trap out in the middle of a busy street. Be ingenious with traps (especially weblike traps spun by wily Personalities), and give your players every opportunity to escape. They should never really blame you for sticking it to them with traps that kill their players.

Adventurers usually kill themselves. Don't make the mistake of doing everything you can to kill off your players' characters in the name of "making it challenging." Usually, players cause their char-

acters to make mistakes on their own that cost them dearly, from trusting the wrong major personality to forgetting to put on a Defensive spell vs. fire when knowingly going up against a Phoenix.

FINALLY, GIVE THE ADVENTURERS THE TOOLS THEY NEED. (Or allow them to earn them). Adventurers should be able to discover new, useful items (and perhaps a couple cursed ones, just to keep them honest) that they can use to enhance their power and increase the likelihood of their success. Don't be such a tightass. You can always make your monsters or Personalities more powerful to match how powerful the players' characters have become.

So, spend some time making MenH-L, MenH-g, and artifact level items that your players may be likely to find in your story. Perhaps these items will be first used against them in a fight, and your players will win them as booty.

Remember this: if your story fails, it is NOT because of your players, who are there to give you every benefit of the doubt. Why? Because your players want to have fun! Do your diligent duty to build a good story, and you can rest assured your players will love it.

Example of a Story Outline

BEGINNING: The queen goes missing, and the adventurers (mid-level) are hired by the King, at the behest of his trusted Captain at Arms, to investigate her disappearance.

MIDDLE: They find her, only to be told by her that she fled the king who is a Marune Minion trying to kill her. (Now the adventurers must decide who to believe!)

GOALS: To choose the right ally. To rescue the queen/depose the king or to support the king and bring the queen to him in chains... The Storyteller goal is that this leads into a larger story where a Marune has indeed infiltrated the Royal House, but it is not the king...

DIFFICULTY: ORank 5-8.

VILLAINS: The King's twin brother who is a Marune Minion.

MAPS NEEDED: City, catacombs, castle maps, and battle Hex-map of Royal Gardens where battle against the Marune Minion is expected to take place.

TRAPS: Magical & Mechanical traps are everywhere in the castle that leads to the catacombs where the Marune Minion is hiding his small army by which he plans to overthrow his brother. They must be kept secret until the proper time.

ITEMS: Adventurers are given small MenH items to help them investigate. They also discover some items the Queen has dropped in her haste to escape (and thus identify a path). These items are magical and can help against the final battle. There are also some MenH-g items in the catacombs, held by the captains of the infiltrating force.

CONSIDERATIONS: While there is really no need for the players to venture out of the city, if they do they will hear that the whole countryside is gossiping about the missing queen and the murderous king. Others resent that they weren't hired by the king to investigate, and may start a fight with the players (this is a subtle nudge to get the players back into the city... and back to the story!).

One Last bit of Advice: Enjoy!

Your duties as the Storyteller are profound and myriad. Do not let this weigh you down. Remember to have fun! You are just as much a player as your players are, if not more so, because you have so many personalities to role play and keep track of.

You have to make sure that you aren't outwitted by the players, who may very well write down much of what you say, or what your Personalities say, so as to corner you in to a "reality" they can manipulate (you can't keep on saying everything was a dream), as well they should!

It's a challenge for you, it's a challenge for them. When you feel it's time, have an Admin Session, and award experience and Fortune Points, laugh with them about all the stupid things they (and you) did in the story. Years later, you might still be talking about the significant ones as old friends.

EPILOGUE

Great! You've made it through this book to the last part: our Appendix section that is filled with all manner of helpful story-making information and charts that help you manage your Personalities.

They are in no certain order, and all of the Appendix items may be copied for personal use for your game.

Other resources can be found online at immortalempires.com and/or the game website: subrosa.games. If there comes a time where you cannot find us online, then our dream of Immortal Empires will have died before we could achieve great things.

In any case, here's our game, and we sincerely, hope you like it and become an avid supporter!

If not, then f%ck off! (No, we wouldn't say that, would we? But Optimus Verus, Ophelia Hadriana, Albanaeus Rufus, and especially Thascius Gildo would...)

On a more personal note, we were wanting to name the game Subrosa, but found that other people have already capitalized on that awesome name. Our thanks goes out to all our playtesters, our artists, our draft writers, historians, our writers and editors, and especially our original genius who came up with the idea (hi, Optimus!), who have made our dreams a reality.

Now we hope to build the empire of players, and that all depends on you!

Enjoy it, friends, and thank you for purchasing this awesome game that took us over 20 years to build.

Sincerely,

B.J.