

# *CHARACTER DEFINING*

**A library journaling game about creating characters from the unexpected connections between books.**

## **The game**

In *Character Defining* the player works towards the creation of a unique central character via a selection of randomly discovered sources from the UAL library collection. Using chance, imagination and inventive associations they will use these elements to form a narrative for their central character and the significant people in their life.

At the end of the game, the player will have described their central character and four important individuals who mean something to them.

## **How to play**

The game is played across three rounds, where players select books from the library and assign them to different attribute slots on their character sheet.

## **Character sheet**

The character sheet is split into 5 sections.

1. A space to describe the central character.
2. Four spaces each relating to four significant individuals who have had an important impact on the central character's life. They are: (1) a family member, (2) a romantic interest, (3) a mentor, (4) a rival.

## **Dealing the cards**

The first part of the game runs over three rounds. On each round the player will deal themselves four cards from a standard deck of playing cards. Each suit relates to a theme: *hearts* = places, *diamonds* = people, *spades* = objects, *clubs* = events. Each of the 13 cards in each suit relates to a unique sub-topic – details of these are provided in the prompts lists on the reverse of the character sheet.

## **Selecting the books**

The player uses their four cards to find the appointed books from the shelves. Each card relates to a run of books on the shelves. The player selects from these randomly by rolling a six-sided dice and taking the corresponding numbered book.

## **Assigning the books to the important individuals**

Once obtained, the player allocates the four books to the four important individuals, making sure one is assigned to each, and writing the topic and any other information relating to it into one of their attribute slots (additional information is of the player's choosing).

The dealing of cards, collecting of books and assigning of books to important individuals is repeated two more times (three in total). After which the three attribute slots for each of the four important individuals will be filled.

## **Trading**

At the end of each of the book assigning rounds players may trade a book. All players who wish to do this can hold up a book and trade it with another player. If no other player wishes to trade, they may make the trade with another book randomly selected from the collection by drawing a fresh card.

## **Describing the important individuals**

The player now takes their time to explore the books assigned to each of the four individuals, using them as prompts to write a short narrative that explains who they are. The player should feel free to make unexpected and even fantastical connections if they want. The description need only be 3 or 4 sentences; the important thing is for the player to feel happy with their descriptions and have fun doing so. Once all four have been described the player can move onto their central character.

## **Who is the central character?**

To find out who the central character is the player needs to answer four questions. Each question needs to be framed with respect to one of the four important individuals.

1. How did this individual impact on the central character when they were growing up?
2. How did this individual impact on the central character's ambitions in life?
3. How does this individual relate to a crisis the central character faced?
4. How does this individual relate to regrets the central character holds?

Having answered these four questions, the player can now write a short 4-5 sentence synopsis of their main character.