Chrono Scion Campaign

Chrono*Currents*

Next Session

Our next session will be on Sunday, April 30 at 2:30 pm. How will our heroes handle their unsavory dilemma? What will the rest of the team do when they find their friends missing? Find out… next time!

Campaign Notebook

New campaign policy! Get your character figurines and other materials when you arrive, so we don't scrounge for these later, all at once.

Official Chrono Scion CDs are coming soon! Look for Chrono Scion—Unoriginal Soundtrack, and Chrono Scion—Music for Battle, coming soon to a session near you!

Do you have everything you need in your official Chrono Scion binder? Check: Skill System, Character Sheet, Maneuvers List, Region Notes, Circle of Time, ChronoCurrents from issue 4-32…? If you're missing something, order a replacement from the GM!

Nefarious Intentions

Session 4-38: When we last left our heroes, Cregor, Gareth, Escalon and Ayla were taking in Desarian culture for a day. After some considerable shopping around, Ayla found excellent new Desarian clothing—now she could blend in! Well, maybe. During the shopping, Cregor asked Gareth why he commissioned a new ano-chi. Gareth evaded the question, saying that he couldn't find it, and that he didn't think he was going to get it back. Cregor cast suspicion on Lot's servants, but Gareth didn't want to talk about it.

Across town, Lot, Judai, and Kirby were just leaving Rilta's house, and on her suggestion traveled to the docks to speak with the harbormaster. It was a long shot, but Lot wanted to know if anything suspicious had happened there lately. Along the way, they saw a guild shop constructing expensive jobian torches. Ever interested in alternative fuel sources, Kirby questioned the Desarians about what these lamps burned, and he learned about sleiosen and alther.

Lot's visit confused the harbormaster, especially when he insinuated that islanders were sneaking in by way of the docks. Alarmed that these things were happening, and unruffled by Lot's reiteration that these were just rumors, the harbormaster instituted sweeping new importation security measures.

Garbed in chic Desarian outfits, the group around the old guilds was having more fun. Escalon took them to a fancy restaurant, where they feasted and continued to run up Lot's tab. During the meal, Cregor asked Escalon to which guild he belonged, and Escalon talked with Cregor about how some time in the Wastes can really improve one's appreciation for society. Ayla fascinated herself by mixing various drinks until she arrived at a bubbly concoction, and Gareth took the opportunity to sulk by making himself sick. The group questioned him about his missing weapon, but Gareth deflected interrogation. After the meal, they decided to go swim in the river.

Lot led his team back home after the dead end at the docks. He proclaimed that he was sick of pursuing the Pythas matter—he didn't enjoy jumping this way and hat over a single note from his nemesis. As they ate lunch, Lot expressed his frustration with the situation, while Judai

summarized it quite concisely: "we have no leads." Balan had the answer, suggesting as he delivered a bit of extra mail: "perhaps you have been away from your element for too long—and have forgotten how to think like your enemy." Judai, missing the context of Balan's suggestion, advocated Lot's return to being an active dragan. Lot mulled over the idea and asked Kirby if he would be interested in joining the war effort. But Kirby was emphatic about his lack of desire to become embroiled in local politics, especially a war. Lot replied that this wasn't *his* war either—and that any effort on his part would be spent to bring it to an end. Lacking further insights into Pythas' nefarious plan, Lot decided to "remain passive." He passed the time training with Duncan, his master-of-arms. Judai and Kirby attended after Kirby vented his gas.

By the river, Gareth's team was having fun—except for Gareth, that is. Depressed by yet another loss to Drayson, thoughts of conceding to Drayson's demands wriggled through his mind. When Escalon chased Ayla underwater, Cregor asked Gareth politely if he really wanted to hide the reason for his gloom. Being an excellent judge of human character, Cregor was not fooled by Gareth's weak efforts at lying, a skill with which he was unaccustomed. Finally, Gareth told Cregor what happened with Drayson the night before. Cregor felt that Gareth should tell the others, but promised that he wouldn't say anything himself. Gareth was more than happy to join Escalon and the others at Desaria's bars in an attempt to feel better. As Ayla put on her clothes again after getting out of the river, she thought that her earlet might look nice with her new apparel, so she wore it. She excitedly sent thoughts to Lot about her new clothes. Lot was happy to hear from Ayla, and asked if anything important had happened— but they were just having fun. Lot told Ayla that she should probably take the earlet off and wear it only when something important happened.

After hours of training, Lot, Judai, and Kirby sat down for supper. They conversed about the silver-clad thief who interrupted supper the night before. Remembering Judai's interrogation, Kirby pointed out that it had a computer-like quality. Kirby further speculated that their former

"The first time I met Faris, I took his staff and whopped him upside the head." "Why **did** I do that?"

"The ancient Desarians didn't bother to file these things under 'silver.'"

"Umm… Lot… Lot?"

Session Summary *(Continued from page 1)*

captive's memory might have been "erased." His hosts had some trouble with that concept at first, but caught on in a bit. Lot dismissed Kirby's approach—too many variables were floating around, such as Judai's mind working differently from theirs, and this man coming from a distant culture. Kirby asked what Lot meant by Judai's mind being "different," but Faris suddenly returned.

Faris eagerly ate dinner after his day of research. Now that they had new information from their captive, he had been scrounging for references to "the master" or sparking silver-clad men. Unfortunately, all he was able to turn up so far were some references to a "master of trade" from the days of the Etryphor, and some ambiguous and unhelpful notes about men wearing silver from Desarian pre-history.

Having spent a good part of the day training and letting his mind rest from the nerve-rattling issue of Pythas, Lot relaxed and remembered how to think like his enemy. Instead of concerning himself with *how* Pythas got into town, he focused on *why* he would want to be here. Pythas wouldn't go to such a great length just to unsettle him, or as Lot's companions had suggested, to make a grand entrance at either the caders' tournament or the council meeting—such plans were silly, there was nothing to be gained. Pythas was a master pirate, and if he were in New Telagosia, it was because there was something here important to the war and of help to Pythas himself. But the capital, nestled in the southeast of the country, was far from being an important center for the war effort.

Lot questioned Faris about the fore-cannon. What had he heard about it? The invention was a remarkable one, Faris answered—without requiring a cannonballoon, without producing recoil, and with incredible firepower, the invention could be mounted on the fore of a vessel and would provide great tactical advantages in naval combat. The Desarian Mages' Guild secretly produced 12 of the machines, including a novel turret-mounted variant, in Bryshia over the last two years. They had been shipped into town recently for the pre-council demonstrations and were stored in an underground vault at the guild hall itself. Lot realized that the fore-cannons were one of the few things Pythas could want in New Telagosia, so he suggested that they go check on them after dinner.

Few people wandered the streets this late at night, and virtually no one was at the guild hall. Faris opened one of the magically-sealed towers of the old guild and took the group underground. Several stories beneath the tower, they entered a large circular hallway and then walked around to the vault doors. Faris opened them and stepped inside—but he was shocked to see Pythas standing at the far side of the room! He was in the middle of supervising the extraction of the fore-cannons through a tunnel breaching the opposite wall.

The group rushed inside and discovered that only 6 of the 12 fore-cannons remained. Two pirate warriors flanked Pythas on either side. When Pythas saw Lot, he exclaimed, "Lot! What kept you?" Lot responded only by drawing his sword and saluting him with an engagement flourish. Kirby immediately disappeared, armed himself with his shotgun, and reappeared with a ***shick-shk!*** Judai moved behind a cannon. Kirby moved for cover but was surprised to find another warrior lurking in the corner. He fired on him immediately as the warrior merely brandished his sword and gave Kirby a warning not to move. "What the…!?" passed the lips of the startled pirate as a resounding boom filled the room. He wasn't prepared to dodge Kirby's shotgun blast, but either his instinctive cowering from the noise or Kirby's over-excitement must have made the shot miss wide.

The warriors flanking Pythas advanced. Judai leaped over the cannon before him, only to be surprised by a pirate hiding behind the cannon. The pirate lunged at him with intent to cover, but Judai dodged backwards—placing pirates before him and behind him. Faris looked to Lot for guidance. Pythas taunted Lot: "It's about time— I've been expecting you!" Lot quickly scanned the situation, enumerating important factors in the battle: Pythas' confidence, the non-lethal tactics of his opponents, the hidden warriors… Lot ordered, "Faris, go back—see if there are any behind us!" Lot contemplated a spin lunge on nearby warriors, but they were affording Lot's swordsmanship respect, halting out of range of any surprise maneuvers.

Kirby re-pumped his shotgun and prepared to fire another shot at the warrior he had just missed. This time, though, his ready opponent stepped in for a buccaneer's disarm. Kirby responded by simultaneously firing point blank at the poor man. Fortunately for the pirate, his shield absorbed some of the impact, his armor some more— nevertheless some of the shot broke through, causing bleeding. It wasn't enough, however, to stop Kirby's shotgun from being dislodged from his grip and thrown through the air behind his opponent. Kirby raised his arms into the air.

Judai raised his arm into the air too—but to level it at the pirate who had just lunged at him. His arm became a blur for an instant, and a muffled sound filled the room as the swordsman flew back into the wall and onto his butt. There were still two pirates behind him, but they seemed more concerned with Lot. Faris called from the circular hall, "Umm…. Lot?" Pythas again addressed Lot—"I see you have picked up some interesting new companions… too bad they have to see this." Lot stayed focused on the battle, scanning for any more hidden warriors. Judai sent another blow to the pirate on his butt. Nothing but short attempts at whimpers came from his lips.

Faris returned to Lot's side, tapping him briefly… "Lot…." Behind him, two more warriors arrived. The fore-cannon that was being dragged from through the tunnel opening was now gone, and another warrior appeared from the tunnel. The

Character Acting

Being Your Own Director

One of the many hats of the GM is the director hat, where he manages the pacing and flow of play on the fly in an effort to keep things interesting and ensure that everyone is having fun. Players share in this responsibility, of course, so in a live game it's important to realize that every player is a mini-director in addition to being an actor.

What are the things you can do to make play more interesting for everyone, including yourself? One of the simplest director responsibilities is knowing when to call "cut!" In practice, that means identifying when a scene has gone on Too Long. This is a subtle skill, but if you find yourself with nothing new to add and an urge to repeat yourself—or even clarify yourself without real need, then the scene is probably ready for an

end. You call for a scene end by telling the GM what your characters will do off-stage after the scene. The GM will either perform a camera shift, engage the players in high-level or "administrative" play for a bit, or tell you the next opportunity for high-resolution play (a fast-forward). High-resolution play is meant to be interesting—if it turns out not to be, think about ending the scene instead of working immersively.

Additionally, characters who are not in the scene can call for a cut, if they've been out of action for too long and are becoming restless. What we *don't* want are sighs and rolling of eyes; before it comes to that, tell the GM that you're ready for action. Don't be rude, but don't be shy—if the scene were interesting, you probably

> *One of the simplest director responsibilities is knowing when to call "cut!"*

Session Summary (Continued from page 2)

pirates seriously outnumbered our heroes. Faris waited for Lot's guidance. Lot moved for cover behind a cannon and saw Faris' precarious position, surrounded by four combatants and unable to begin a spell. Another warrior arrived and covered Kirby while the first retrieved his gun. Judai raised his arm again at some of the warriors covering Faris, but the closer pirate dodged and the distant one felt the blast, but only superficially.

"Give it up, Lot…. I have you," urged Pythas. Lot analyzed the odds. So far, their enemies had not made lethal attacks—if the battle were turned bloody, Faris' life would be in serious danger. Kirby was safe because he could disappear at any time, but he might not be able to re-engage the battle. Lot could try to appeal to Pythas' pride and force a fair duel, but even if the duel were won, it was unclear if his friends' lives would be spared. The risks were too great. Lot spoke: "Damn you, Pythas. You've won." He put down his sword; warriors moved in to collect it. Faris followed Lot's example, handing over his staff. Judai did not want to give up so easily and kept his arm trained on the wary pirates before him. "Judai… it's over," said Lot. Judai reluctantly lowered his arm. Pythas smiled broadly.

The pirates tied up the group and led them into the tunnel. Pythas enjoyed tying Lot up himself. "Come now, don't look so glum," he said. "You knew this would happen eventually." "And it only took outnumbering me by more than two to one," Lot replied. Pythas smiled. "I've learned not to take chances when I face *you*. I've missed you, Lot. Since you left, my encounters with Desaria's fleets have been most disappointing. It's almost a shame to prey on the helpless children running your ships these days. What made you leave? This tedious old city doesn't suit you." Judai answered for Lot, "the government required his skills." Pythas tested Lot's bonds. "If you ask me, they should have left him where he was *really* needed."

Pythas took no chances with his captives. He

placed all of the weapons in a chest and ordered four alert guards to watch over the prisoners while the rest evacuated the remaining fore-cannons. Pythas told Kirby, "I don't know the details behind your disappearing act, but try it and one of your friends dies." Kirby bristled. Pythas then addressed the group and laid down the conditions of their captivity. He gave his word that no one would be hurt so long as no one forced his hand. Attempts to escape would not be tolerated. If someone did manage to escape, someone else would be terminated. Lot knew that Pythas was not a bluffing man.

Once all the pirates had removed the fore-cannons and all other items of value from the vault, they collapsed the man-made tunnel with Cormethean tar and led the into some natural caverns via a joining ramp. An underground stream flowed nearby. The pirates' torches flickered in the stuffy air, reflecting off the dank walls of passages long thought buried. The caves were hot, and the group began to sweat. Mephitic smells occasionally washed over them. "You know this place?" Pythas asked of Lot. "No," Lot replied. Pythas elaborated, "These are the caverns of the vethaish, used to invade your country in its last war. The main passages were collapsed, of course, and forgotten. No one has checked up on anything down here in a long while." Later, he asked, "You've been around, Lot. Did you serve in the Vethaish War?" "I did not," replied Lot. "It was before my time." "It's too bad," said Pythas. "You should learn more about the history of your country, as I have."

After half an hour of navigating the caverns, the pirates loaded the prisoners onto a sail-less vessel afloat in the stream. The fore-cannons were already aboard, and the prisoners were placed two to a cabin—Kirby and Faris in one, Judai and Lot in another. Two guards kept vigil over them, and Pythas arranged a round-the-clock guard rotation. Elsewhere, oblivious to these events, the rest of the adventurers enjoyed the later stages of intoxication. What a predicament for our heroes!

> *"Give it up, Lot… I have you."*

Hi, I'm just a talking head. Don't be like me!
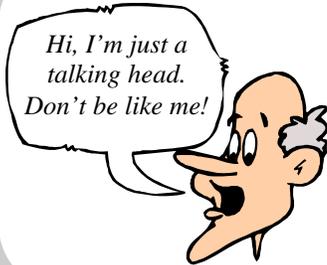
We all, including the GM, spend most of our play time in the audience role.

The solution is to treat being an audience member as an active role.

Character Acting (Continued from page 3)
wouldn't be so eager for a scene cut.

Another director's duty is scene description. Just as a director can choose camera angle, lighting, and ambience for a scene, so can you as an actor take control over the presentation and setting of your character's dialogue. Your character is not just a talking head, and your directorial skills can breathe life and action into your character on the stage of our imaginations. Between lines of dialogue, tell us what your character is doing, how he is standing, where he is looking. Tell us more about the manner of his actions. One good trick is to start sentences by addressing the other characters' senses directly: "You see Cregor's eyes narrow." "You can barely hear Cregor snort under his breath." "As Cregor talks, you get the feeling that he is not happy with the situation."

Obviously, if you can pull off great subtle acting on the fly, all the time, then that's superior to just telling us your character's stance and mood. But it doesn't hurt to do both, and narrative scene description can go a long way towards making your character seem more *real*. Don't just talk your way through a scene, take up the director's mantle and paint it, vividly!

Player Respect

The issue of player respect can be a touchy one, but it's an important one that we must address. It is nearly impossible to have a good time if the people around you are showing you disrespect, and receiving respect can turn an ordinary experience into an extraordinary one. Now, none of us are at each others' throats, leveling personal attacks at each other, or mixing character and player feelings freely (and these are problems in many other campaigns, trust me)—so you may wonder if this issue is really important. The truth is that we do all right, but we could do better.

Just as players are actors and mini-directors, they also serve as an audience—in fact we all, including the GM, spend most of our play time in this role. Although this time may seem less important, behavior during time spent as an audience member probably has the most dramatic impact on everyone's enjoyment of the campaign!

First, let's look at some of the "bad" audience habits that show up from time to time. The first is heckling, commonly known as the "peanut gallery." Heckling usually shows up as a result of being *too active* an audience member, and ranges from interfering with the scene with excessive out-of-character comments and jokes, to sticking your nose in where it doesn't belong, telling others how to run their characters and stealing their thunder. The good side of it is that it shows that you're interested in the scene, and occasionally remarks from the peanut gallery are hilarious and truly add to everyone's fun. Like with many issues, the difference is one of degree. The solution is to think a little more before heckling, considering whether your interruption will be an intrusion or a welcomed sideshow addition to the scene.

On the flipside, another bad audience habit is indifference. It is hard, really hard, to put effort into a scene that no one seems to be paying attention to. Indifference is a result of being *too passive* an audience member, and its signs range from staring into space and letting out bored sighs to leaving the room or even falling asleep! The problem with indifference is that it can perpetuate itself—if the actors don't have an active audience, then there won't be enough energy in the room to motivate them to *make* things interesting. Being an audience member is not an entirely passive role—being actively attentive makes a tremendous contribution to the ability of whomever is in the spotlight to keep up the excitement. Everyone has more fun for it.

Now, we know that sometimes players don't get enough sleep before the session and they like to "rest their eyes" during play. We know that sometimes you need to go to the bathroom and don't want to interrupt play. But you should be cognizant of the effect your actions will have—just because you aren't in the spotlight doesn't mean your behavior doesn't have an impact. We all try to make scenes interesting using body language, expressions, acting, and directing, and even if you are passively listening, you can unwittingly show disrespect for the efforts of other players by being a poor audience member.

The solution is to treat being an audience member as an active role—show interest and attention, contributing energy to the current performers. The Chrono Scion system also allows players to act as the creativity of other players, so you can also take an active part in suggesting courses of action to the players (just be reasonable when you do this—you don't want to steal another player's thunder). And if a scene really is boring you to tears, you can move for it to stop. The key to this process is feedback—if we don't have it, we can't make the adjustments that make sure you have a good time. But if you are giving unconstructive negative feedback, it just makes things worse.

A final point on the issue of player respect is appreciation. Everyone loves to receive shows of appreciation, but most people are a little shy about giving them. Showing that you noticed and appreciated someone's effort makes it all the more worthwhile for that person, and makes it more likely that he will put in that kind of effort in the future. If you thought a particular handling of a scene was neat, or you liked a certain characterization, or respected a cool idea—let the person responsible know! No simpler thing we can do adds so much to the role-playing experience as showing a little appreciation. I'll run the risk of sounding pedantic and tell you to read that last sentence again.

I don't mean showing fake appreciation or lavishing it recklessly everywhere—that devalues the whole thing. I mean that if you are an active audience member, you'll think some things are impressive or cool every session. At the end of the

Ask the GM

Why can't we read the region notes of other players?

You can't read them because the knowledge they contain is part of what makes each character special. Region notes represent an infusion of knowledge about a character's homeland to the *player*—that's important because characters know a great deal about their homelands and home cultures, and the players are often handicapped in their acting because they lack that knowledge. In that respect, they are more than just a packet of starter information for a new player—they are the means by which players can keep their character's portrayal interesting and fresh. If the other characters were to read the packets in advance, then the interest and freshness would be gone, and I would have to make more notes.

That's right. When the players use up the "freshness" of the region notes, I make more. This ensures that the players always have a supply of knowledge unique to their characters that they can use to wow you during play. Interactions between character and character are the most common, and if everyone had the *exact* same knowledge then things could get stale. New, expanded region notes are currently in the works for Kirestron; the Desaria region notes are in a constant state of growth; even the Post-Apocalyptic Narcota notes will eventually be expanded.

Another type of handout I want to write more of is expert notes—sheets that give you an overview of a field your character is supposedly an expert in. But these are a lot of work, and they don't often contribute strongly to the play experience. Nevertheless, they can give you a stronger sense of identification with your character, and give you the confidence to speak openly on subjects your character is rated highly in—without having to look meekly at the GM for answers. I'll currently provide this kind of

handout *by request*, so get in the queue with one of your knowledge skills if you want them.

What's the deal with Terra and Earth?

Terra is not Earth. Terra has two moons, weeks of 9 days, and twice the diameter of Earth. Its human inhabitants use a base 12 numeric system, ridiculously large base units of currency, and can live up to 200 years.

What this means to you, as a player, is that a lot of your Earth-knowledge doesn't apply. Not only does it not apply, it can and will mislead you. When you think about all the things in our everyday life that are dependent upon arbitrary artifacts of history, it boggles the mind. Now add to that all the things that could be different if the planet had slightly different characteristics, and the possibilities become truly staggering. If you take a step back, you can look at Earth from another vantage point and see just how quirky and strange it really is. Think about all the *weird* creatures that live there and all the habits and survival mechanisms they have (just watch an animal show on one of the learning channels). Think about the weirdness of, say, the shape of the human nose. From the thick of things, living on Earth, most things seem natural and they flow from one another logically. From another, they seem arbitrary; from yet another, they're just odd.

The Chrono Scion world can be misleading. It can seem a lot like Earth. It doesn't help that we speak our peculiar dialect of English, full of all kinds of arbitrary words, metaphors, and connotations based upon everyday life for us here on Earth, today. We assume that some sort of magical translation occurs—if you use some idiom peculiar to us, in the game world your character speaks some phrase with the same meaning in the appropriate language.

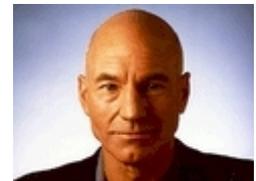As a GM, I interject enough "foreign" stuff

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Character Acting (Continued from page 4)

scene or whenever the opportunity presents itself, just say so. That's it. Everyone likes to be genuinely appreciated, and you'd be surprised how often the people you genuinely appreciate feel unappreciated, just because you haven't kept up with telling them when and how you do appreciate their efforts. Even GMs can feel unappreciated, sometimes. (Sniff).

Sentence Patterns

A sentence pattern is a combination of inflection, pitch, volume, pause points, and other expression tools that convey additional meaning in a sentence. In our role-playing exercise, we took turns trying to find as many different ways of saying a sentence as possible. We found that there are lots of ways to say the same words, and they can convey very different statements!

One great way to become a better character actor is to expand your library of sentence patterns. If you find yourself in the same

communication situation frequently, you've probably found yourself speaking with the same patterns to express yourself. What is a "communication situation"? Some common examples from the campaign include: explaining a future concept to characters from the past, coping with unfamiliar stuff like magic and technology, telling someone about things your character did, and acting surprised when your character learns something new to him.

These are common, so to keep things interesting, you should have several different ways of expressing yourself when these communication situations come up. Actively changing your sentence patterns is the first step. You can practice on your own by finding any sentence, perhaps even this very one, and trying to say it as many different ways as you can. The goal is not to take on different personas—but to convey different meanings with the same sentence and the same persona.

This one knows the value of varying sentence patterns.

This one does not.

*I have access to the same library of stereotypes you do, and **I am specifically avoiding them**.*

Freedom!
Awful,
Awful,
Freedom!

into the campaign to give it distinctive feel, but not so much that we can't relate at all. Most of the time, mixing up Earth and Terra isn't all that serious. The time you have to be on guard is when you start adding up premises to form conclusions. If any of your premises are based upon carryover assumptions, you should get them verified before setting your conclusion in stone.

Another area of Earth contamination that can find its way into your play is the vast library of sci-fi and fantasy stereotypes, plot lines, and giveaway signals that we all have access to. The genres have had a good century to get worked over, and it is rare nowadays to find something completely new. Moreover, it's hard to see something in those genres without jumping to one conclusion or another based on all that we have seen before. We know the rules of the genre, as it were. This leads to a style of play which can become tiresome, that of leaping from the first giveaway signal to the genre-dictated conclusion, then acting your character (predictably) through the motions of reaching the conclusion.

So throw this into your mix of premises: I have access to the same library of stereotypes you do, and *I am specifically avoiding them*. Even if I weren't aiming for originality, I would naturally come by it. As a simulationist, I engage in event and world design that flow from each other, not plot design. It makes a difference—the fictional shows and books out there generally work from the basis of plot, using the world to advance the plot. Very few build a detailed world first, then let the plot expose the world.

On the other hand, the Chrono Scion world includes whole "imported" concepts, like vampires and elves. But these are tributes to the genre, brought in during the initial world design for their potential to excite our imagination through the juxtaposition of familiar with alien—and they rarely make the trip completely intact and without receiving several decisive twists, just so they can fit logically into the world. So don't be misled, and don't stink up your play by struggling to give your character access to stereotype knowledge that won't help him anyway. When your stereotypes *are* accurate, make no mistake—I'll save myself time by referring to them openly, highlighting only the differences and juicy details.

How do we know what to do?

By this question I assume you mean that you're having trouble guiding your character's actions in the world—or, at least, are afraid that the actions you would perform would lead to a rousing bout of boredom. Never fear—help is at hand.

By now you've probably realized that this isn't the sort of campaign where the characters are grabbed by both nostrils and led by the nose through an adventure. There isn't a "plot train," so there isn't any "railroading." What there is, though, is an interesting world, just waiting to see what you turn up. You players drive the plot; I, the GM, drive the world. Ah, freedom! Awful, awful freedom!

Well, I suppose that doesn't really answer the question. If you want some help deciding what to do, I have some good advice. Do something cool. Do something that looks like it would be fun to watch. Investigate this and that. A common mistake made by new players in a simulationist world is that they are excessively immersive—that is, they ask themselves "what would my *character* do?" Often this simplistic approach leads to drab results and party conflict. Characters are complex creatures. Like us, at any given moment they have hundreds of things that they are inclined to do, that they might as well be doing, given the opportunity. We assume that you made an interesting character, so that means that among the things he might want to do right now are all sorts of interesting things! Instead of the simple immersive approach, ask yourself, "what's the most interesting thing my character would do?"

Remember that you are also part of a team. Excessive party dissent drags everyone down and is decidedly un-fun. The same trick works there—instead of asking yourself "would my character want to do what the party is doing," ask yourself "how could my character be motivated to do this?"

You'll quickly find that as long as your character is "proactive," there will be no shortage of adventure to keep him occupied. However, sometimes players get the feeling that their character's adventures are arbitrary and meaningless, perhaps because it isn't in line with some overall goal that they are inching towards. Perhaps they are under the impression that the less epically-scaled adventures are less worth telling. The idea that you need a measurable progress to feel worthwhile isn't always healthy, but it is entirely human. And it isn't just limited to role-playing. If you find yourself asking "why am I doing this?" or "what is the point of all of this?"—well, those questions might apply just as much to you personally as they do to your character.

There are a number of home-brewed remedies I can offer. The first, and most effective, is a perspective shift. Instead of focusing on goals, focus on character. Work on developing your character's demeanor and deepening his personality. See the adventures as a means to the end of the character instead of the character as a means to the end of the adventure. You'll find that by doing so, those troublesome questions become both easier to answer and more irrelevant. But that kind of perspective shift can be hard—as hard as it is to pull off in real life, anyway. If it's not coming easily, there are some stop-gaps. The first is relatively obvious—pick a goal, or several goals, for your character, perhaps with the GM's help. Realistic characters have professional and personal goals, as well as dreams and aspirations. They get sidetracked and lost, and those goals tend to change over time—but they are usually there. Another approach is to see your character's skill improvement as a sort of benchmark; yet another is to be motivated by adventure and exploration itself. But finally, if you are still feeling that goal-deprived ennui, talk to me… we'll have lunch and rap out your character's options.