

Claus Raasted

THE PEDRO EFFECT

The king of the Elves has gone missing, and only by finding the Four Elemental Stones of Power can he be freed and the land of Normagiloreon be saved. One Stone rests with the Dwarfs of Gardiviurum, another with the Orcs of Skarfbevarig, and the last two are with the two Human nations of Emyrillio and Bemyrillio, who have been at war since the days of old. The question now remains – who will unite the Stones and will they be in time to stop The Great Evil that wants to conquer all?

Yaaaaaaaaaaaaaawn ...

I've been part of the larp scene for 15 years now, and though this intro couldn't fit all of the larps that I've participated in or heard about, it still fits way too many. The same boring old shit packaged in different ways and re-told by different people. And mind you, I don't mind clichés – I love them. I loved playing ConQuest of Mythodea in the summer of 2008 and meeting Spartans, undead by the hundreds and weird cat-girls. I might have enjoyed it even more if the weird cat-girls had enjoyed meeting me too ...

But what does this rant have to do with Pedro? And who is he by the way? That's what I'm here to tell you about ...

For a moment, let's step back from the larp scene and forget all about latex swords and elf ears.

Let the mind's eye fly to Hollywood and on to the set of an up-and-coming action movie, where the director is ripping his hair out trying to get a scene just right. On the set are actors, cameramen, lighting crew, stage hands, make-up artists, stuntmen and maybe even a dancing bear or two

just to complete the feeling of freak show. Oh, and there, in the corner – on a little chair that’s a lot less fancy than the others – sits a small, smiling Mexican in a big Sombrero, who’s really the most important person on the set. This is Pedro, and if you don’t know about him, I’m here to tell you.

Pedro’s job is quite simple. He’s here to make sure the movie is interesting.

Because in Hollywood action movies, it’s always a competition about doing something new and exciting, while on the other hand you’re not allowed to do something that’s ridiculous. Directors and writers are always trying to get something new in there, while maintaining the storyline and avoiding being cheesy. *Let’s have a big fight where he throws fruit at the natives while still tied to a pole* one might say to the others, and they’ll shake their heads and say *Nah, they already did that in Pirates 2*. Lines like *Let’s have some of those weird French guys who jump from buildings be the bad guys! That’ll be cool* will be answered by *But Taxi 2 did that back in 2000*.

And then the guy who wants to have the Parkour dudes star in the film shuts up, because while he wants to suggest that Taxi 2 didn’t have 200(!) Parkour bad guys, he knows that’ll just be considered lame, and in Hollywood, nobody wants to be considered lame.

So this is where Pedro comes in ... but who is he, anyway?

Well, you see, it’s like this: Pedro is a simple Mexican peasant who’s been taken from a small Pueblo somewhere out in the jungle – where there’s a single rusty TV set in the village drinking hole, and where everything’s so day-to-day that nobody thinks of anything silly. And now he’s been taken away from all of that, and put smack in the middle of a Hollywood production and everytime a scene is about to be filmed, Pedro will be asked for input.

Why, you ask? Because Pedro has never been told what a cliché is and wouldn’t know *over-the-top* if it came up and sold him marijuana in the street. So every time a director is concerned that it’s not wild enough, or weird enough or crazy enough – but hasn’t got the guts to suggest something crazier himself – he’ll turn to Pedro.

And – in his outrageous Mexican accent – Pedro will say things like: *But, Señor, what if they got MARRIED during the fight in Maelstrom?*, *But, Señor, what if the bad guy was actually HIS FATHER?* or *But, Señor, what if one of them had TWO GUITARS?* and will look each other in the eyes and for a moment they will all be thinking the same thing ... that nothing that far-out will ever be accepted, and that everybody will laugh at them. But then one of them will nod his head slowly and say to the others *It just might work ... trust me on this one* and then another will nod her head in agreement. And before long they'll be filming it and all doubts will have been forgotten.

But when asked about it after the premiere, whose idea it was to have them fight both on top of and inside the waterwheel (and while it was rolling!) they'll just give a secret smile and no names will be mentioned.

Because the first rule about Pedro is: *You do not talk about Pedro.*

The second rule about Pedro is: *For Pedro, nothing is too outrageous.*

Now, let the mind flick back to Europe and to the larp scenes of the old countries, where larp is a serious business and good larping is when it isn't funny. But in the shadows, Pedro is lurking, and he's dying to be let out. Because every larp should have somebody asking questions like:

But Señor, what if the bar was in a ... PIRATE SHIP?

But Señor, what if the bad guys were ... NAZIS?

But Señor, what if we actually ... BUILT THE DRAGON?

Somebody who's willing to ask why an idea isn't taken totally over the top and out on the other side. That's what I loved as a player during *ConQuest of Mythodea*: that so many of the groups had remembered to bring a Pedro along when they came up with their ideas.

So I salute you, Pedros of Germany. And remember, next time you're creating the story for *yet-another-fantasy-larp*, if you write it like this instead ...

The Immortal Pirate King of the Fire Elves has gone missing, and only by finding the Two Hundred Daemon Skull Stones of Ultimate Power can he be freed and the land of Normagiloreon be saved. One set of Skull Stones rests

with the Three-legged Lava Dwarfs of Gardiviurum, another group with the Two-Headed Ninja Orcs of Skarfbevarig, and the last hundred are with the two Possessed and Undead Human nations of Emyrillio and Bemyrillio, who have been at war since the days of The Great Skull War. The question now remains – who will unite the Skull Stones and will they be in time to stop The Nazi Zombies that want to conquer all?

... then you'll have me signing up. Because if you're just going to do the same used crap everybody else is doing, at least do it in ways that would make Pedro proud.

Because the third rule about Pedro is: *Trust me on this one ...*



The author is considered by many to be not only one Pedro, but several, occupying a single body.

Karsten Dombrowski (Hrsg.)

LARP: HINTER DEN KULISSEN

AUFSATZSAMMLUNG ZUM MITTELPUNKT 2009

Welchen Bezug hatten Lord Byron und Mary Shelley zum Thema LARP? Wieso unterstützt die Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung Live-Rollenspiel? Und was macht man, wenn auf einer Veranstaltung unangemeldet die Presse vor der Tür steht? Mit diesen und anderen Fragen beschäftigen sich die Autoren der Aufsatzsammlung LARP: Hinter den Kulissen. In elf ausgesuchten Beiträgen wagen sie philosophische und historische Betrachtungen des Hobbys, geben hilfreiche Tipps und Anregungen für Organisatoren und stellen Beispielprojekte vor. Ein Buch für Veranstalter und Interessierte, die der Blick hinter die Kulissen des Live-Rollenspiels reizt.

Zusammengestellt und aufbereitet anlässlich der Live-Rollenspiel-Konferenz Mittelpunkt 2009.



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