

A group of disillusioned specimen-actors attempt to escape their confinement in the

Temporal Stereotype Zoo

You Will Need... a GM, three to five players, half a dozen dice, and a few dozen noise counters. Oh, and a few hours to play.

The Setup Phase: Begin by deciding your time bracket. Do you want to play characters from modern decades? The medieval periods? Ancient history? Or maybe you've got a bracket of your own in mind. Next pick a stereotypical character per player, and a couple of spares - brainstorm five or six things that visitors may expect to see each of them do. You'll probably get a feel for the mood of this session while doing so, which will help with the next part.

Individually, each player should write an answer to each of **The Mysteries**, and hand them to the GM. The GM will secretly pick one answer for each question to be the truth. They may want to write this down somewhere the players won't see.

The Routine: In a random order, each player takes a stereotype and plays out their everyday routine. The other players represent the fickle expectations placed on the actor playing that stereotype, and are encouraged to make demands, create obstacles, and so on. The GM will describe the actions of the keepers and the crowd.

Once the scene has played out the player should select from the expectations listed for their stereotype, assigning one to each of the following categories:

I have a talent for... • *They don't expect me to...* • *The crowd love it when I...* • *I can't stand having to...*

Attach each category to one of **The Skills**. Finally, make a note of your character's real name and stage name.

The Skills

- Bodging
- Fighting
- Observation
- Performing
- Sabotage
- Scrounging
- Stealth

The Mysteries

- What is the purpose of the zoo?
- What do the keepers not understand?
- What do the guests want from their visit?
- What makes the keepers strange?
- What happens when you misbehave?

The Escape (Prelude): Here, in the quiet moments when the zoo is closed, the GM will present you with the main challenges you will face - Fences, security cameras, robotic hounds, and so forth - Most will be impossible to overcome without some form of asset - be it a tool, a key, an ally, or information. You'll have to work out what you can get, and how to get it. But you'll only have a limited amount of time.

The Preceding Days: You have at least four days before a suitable opportunity to escape presents itself, but you won't roll the dice until the end of day three! Once day three ends, roll 1D3. That is your remaining time.

Each day, each player character has three action slots. Come up with a vague plan on what you will do in each slot. Multiple characters can team up, but that makes being discovered more of a problem!

Each action slot is a scene to play out - sneaking in to steal a remote, or collecting gossip, for example, or playing along and reducing the suspicion on them - and within each day the actions can be in any order.

Once the day has been completed, the GM rolls a number of dice equal to the Noise each character has generated, docking that player one action on 10+, two actions on 15+, or two actions and adding an extra complication to the escape on 20+.

Playing a Scene: The standard roll is 3D6, with an extra die if this is the skill you have a talent for, one less die if it is the skill you hate. If you are trying to lie low or make a distraction, add one die if the skill is connected to the thing the crowd love you for. Add two dice the skill is connected to the thing they don't expect, but you can only add this bonus once per day. Finally, add one die if people are helping. You may roll a maximum of five dice.

If you aren't lying low or making a distraction, each task in a scene has a difficulty - 10, 15, or 20 - which the character needs to roll equal to or more than to overcome. If you fail, then each character present gains a point of Noise and then makes a Noise roll, on 15+ they are caught and the attempt fails. On 20+ you also gain another skill you are poor at, for yourself and the GM to justify. Another player can sacrifice their character's action to instead make a distraction, taking all the noise you would have gained, proceeding as described below. You may also take a single point of Noise in order to reroll one die, if you still fail you gain another Noise for a total of three.

If you are lying low or making a distraction, make a single roll for the scene, on 10+ you lose one noise, on 15+ you lose two, and on 20+ you lose two from yourself and one from another character, with no penalty for failure.

The Escape: The escape attempt itself uses the same rules as a standard scene, except every character is present, the teamwork bonus doesn't apply, but Noise is only added to the character who made the roll. The GM has a number of dice equal to the highest noise of any character, and can spend these dice to remove one die from a player's roll. If the a character gets caught during the escape then their character is left behind, to suffer the wrath of the keepers.

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