University of HUDDERSFIELD
University of Huddersfield Press

Journal of Play in Adulthood
Available open access at: www.journalofplayinadulthood.org

Journal of Play in Adulthood

Leader Forge: A Leader Creation Guide

Kirsten Reid, Janet du Preez, Kieran Reid

Two Name Games, Johannesburg, South Africa
Engagement Dynamics, Johannesburg, South Africa
Two Name Games, Johannesburg, South Africa

KEYWORDS

leadership development
play-based learning
tabletop role-playing games
leader identity
organisational change
experiential learning
fictional frames
self-awareness
narrative identity
playful leadership

ABSTRACT

Leader Forge is a game-based leadership development experience that uses tabletop role-playing mechanics to help participants explore their leadership identity through play. In response to traditional leadership development's reliance on reductive frameworks and static competency models, Leader Forge invites leaders into a fictional African-futurist setting where they create versions of themselves as characters navigating challenges of Change, Complexity, and Conflict. This article takes the form of a playable provocation: readers experience an abbreviated round of the game while accompanying commentary situates the design within leadership and play theory. By working within an "as if" space (a temporary fictional frame that enables experimentation without professional or personal risk), participants surface insights into their strengths and vulnerabilities that are often difficult to access in routine organisational contexts. Drawing on research in leader identity formation, narrative identity, and play-based learning, the article demonstrates how structured play can function not as escapism but as a method for honest reflection and conscious leadership development. The experience challenges the assumption that leadership development requires prescription, offering instead a practice of exploration, improvisation, and meaning-making suited to the complexity of contemporary organisational life.

Leader Forge: A Leader Creation Guide

The leader who plays does not escape the world; they reimagine how to impact it more effectively.

Leadership Development loves prescription. Competency frameworks, models, and assessments seek to provide clarity and predictability that is increasingly unrealistic as the world grows more dynamic, complex and conflictual. These tools reduce human challenges into tick-box exercises. Traditional leadership training often assumes stability and tends to be built on principles like linear progression and promotion, measurable

Published under Creative Commons License 4.0

outcomes, and a controlled context. In contrast, contemporary work life is marked by unpredictability and competing priorities.

Leader Forge emerged in response to this tension. Developed in collaboration by Engagement Dynamics and Two Name Games, it is a game-based leadership experience designed to help individuals and teams to deepen their self-awareness and to rehearse leadership decision-making through play. Participants enter a fictional African-futurist world, *Kuzuka City*, where they encounter challenges representing Change, Complexity, and Conflict - the three recurring terrains of leadership. Within this world, players embark on a character-creation process with guided reflection, scenario play, and collaborative storytelling. Instead of creating a fictional character as they normally would during a tabletop role-playing game (TTRPG), we invite players to create a version of *themselves* that lives and leads in Kuzuka City. The process guides participants through a playful, metaphorical exploration of their own leadership identities.

To embrace the qualities of play that allow for gaining of understanding and mastery (Eberle, 2014), players must face challenges. So, some of the design choices we needed to make honed in on the structure and nature of these challenges. To ensure contextual relevance, we opted to focus the challenges on Change, Complexity and Conflict, as these are three primal forces that leaders must navigate in the context in which organisations operate. The complicated and evolving nature of business challenges can make problems difficult to accurately define and contain, rendering simple decision-making and resolution impossible. Large stakeholder systems and relentless change mean that actions may have far-reaching consequences. Sometimes in the time it takes to conceive an action plan, the situation and needs have changed, making constant feedback vital. Opposing forces, conflicts and tensions emerge as a result of differences and constraints. But, despite these challenges, organisations remain central to the economy, because these highly connected, moving systems are imbued with the diversity and potential to foster progress, growth and innovation (du Preez, 2022).

The game was created to address three core questions:

1. How might play, as both mindset and mechanism, allow participants to access different ways of knowing?
2. How might we help leaders explore uncertainty and ambiguity in a safe, bounded way?
3. How might we shift leadership reflection from abstract self-assessment toward embodied experimentation?

Our approach is grounded in the idea that playfulness is not the opposite of seriousness or the opposite of work (Brown & Vaughan, 2009), but a mode of engagement that enables learning, creativity, and adaptation (Bateson & Martin, 2013). Inspired by the work of C. Thi Nguyen (2020), we view games as "temporary agencies" - structured environments in which participants adopt new value systems and perspectives and then carry out actions accordingly. By playing with their leadership identity, players can test and observe how their actions, values, and vulnerabilities interact in systems of change.

Leader Forge positions play not as a tool for simplifying leadership, but rather as a medium for surfacing its individuality and complexity. Within the fictional boundaries of the game, participants are able to encounter and practice relational dynamics that mirror organisational life (Kark, 2011). This includes decision-making under ambiguity, negotiation between their ideals and frailties, and making use of their leadership characteristics. The safety of the fictional world allows for experimentation that would be professionally or personally risky in real life. Play is not a retreat from reality but a way of engaging with it differently, a space where we act "as if" things could be otherwise. We use the "as if space" as a complementary idea to that of the "magic circle" (Huizinga, 1955). Existing within the magic circle enables and empowers the play to act *as if* things were different: as if they lived in a futuristic African city, as if they were the kind of leaders they wished they were, and as if their actions were free from consequence. In this temporary fictional world within the real world, players can test values, confront tensions, and imagine alternative responses to complexity without the social or organisational cost of failure.

We have established why we have used play to explore leadership, but it is worth discussing why in particular we have used play through role-playing mechanisms. While studies on make-believe play almost always focus on children, we believe there are similar workings at play when adults make believe. Children and adults alike must "define and communicate who they are in the play event and who they are as real people" (Kendrick, 2005, p.7). While the magic circle may afford some protection from who we know ourselves to be, the act of play cannot wholly separate us from ourselves. Rather all we can do is listen to the "story the players tell themselves about themselves." (Geertz, 1973, p.237 (cited in Kendrick, 2005)). This is the approach we've taken with *Leader Forge*. Instead of telling people what kind of leaders they are after answering a series of questions, we let them tell themselves what kind of leader they are - and what kind of leader they would like to be in the future. We trust that guided by the *Leader Forge* system, the stories our players tell themselves will surface insight, revelation, and action.

This paper takes the form of a playable provocation rather than a traditional academic article. By presenting an abbreviated "character creation guide" from the game itself, it invites readers to play through a single round of reflection — the *Round of Change* — while offering accompanying commentary that situates the design within leadership and play theory. The piece thus operates on two levels: as an experience for the reader, and as an exploration of how playful design can be used to provoke reflection on Leadership identity and practice.

What follows is not a description or explanation of *Leader Forge*, but rather a guided experience of one round of the game. We ask you to set aside 20 minutes, find a pen and paper, print out Appendix A, and join us to play *Leader Forge.*

Create Your Leadership Character

This section invites you to experience an abridged version of Leader Forge. The full version is made up of four rounds, while this version is just one round. It has been designed so you can play along.

How to Play This Section

In Leader Forge, you will create a leadership persona within a fictional setting to explore how different qualities shape how you show up as a leader in the real world. You should make the selections with intention. They are not random or personality quiz outputs. You choose the qualities that best express how you tend to lead in moments of disruption. Each choice you make should mirror how you operate as a leader.

These elements are not permanent labels. They are tools that help you enter the 'as if' space with clarity and intention. When you choose thoughtfully, the scenario becomes richer, the dilemmas feel more nuanced, and the reflections are more meaningful.

It is important to note that while this is a character in a fictional setting, the character is meant to represent you and your leadership in reality. It is our intention that the fiction acts as a way to provide distance to allow you to 'look at yourself'.

In the full Leader Forge experience, choices act as an accumulating, composite reflective mirror. The choices offered draw on leader identity theory (Morgan, Braun & Epitropak, 2025) , narrative identity research, and play-based learning principles that emphasise agency, meaning making, and contextual leadership practice.

Entering the Forge

Welcome to Kuzuka City, a futuristic African city borne of flames.

As you look out over the city, you see the sky rails winding with the mountains and forests and lakes, and the towering skyscrapers wrought artfully with chrome and decorated with vibrant Adinkra patterns. All of these magnificent structures and artistic details encircle the beating heart of the City: The Forge.

You arrive at the Forge, and it is immediately obvious why it is the City's beating heart. Centuries after the first stone was laid, the Forge is now more than a factory. It is a place of teaching and being taught; a place of collaboration where medicine, technology, art, and academics interact to blaze a trail through adversities.

You step inside. The metal floor vibrates under the rhythm of distant machinery. Around you, screens pulse with maps, diagrams, and translated voices from across the city. Engineers, artists, planners, and community leaders cross paths in an easy flow, united by a shared purpose. This is a place where leaders are shaped.

To lead well in Kuzuka, you must know the forces that shape you. Begin by constructing your character.

Step 1: Choose Your Name and Role

Begin by grounding your leadership character with two primary choices: your Name and Role. These choices will help you step into the fictional setting while remaining connected to your current context.

Select a Name that feels like a version of you who could exist within the world of Kuzuka City. You may choose from the list below or create your own. Think of a name that represents how you show up as a leader, or how you wish to.

Table 1. List of Names

Name	Meaning	Name	Meaning	Name	Meaning
Amara	Merciful, kind	Diallo	Bold	Kellan	Powerful
Amogelang	Welcoming	Enzokuhle	Do good	Liam	Protector
Annika	Grace	Eshe	Life, energy	Limbikani	Work hard
Ayo	Joy	Friedrich	Peaceful ruler	Nia	Purpose
Chike	Strength	Hasina	Good	Omari	Chief
Chipiliro	Perseverence	Kali	Energetic	Zia	Calm, peace

Then select a Role. In *Leader Forge,* Roles represent occupations within the Forge. Select the one that most closely resembles your current experience as a leader. You may select from the list below or create your own.

Table 2. List of Roles.

Role	Description
Apprentice	The Apprentice is a trainee who learns the trade under the guidance of an experienced blacksmith.
Cyber Analyst	The Cyber Analyst protects The Forge's digital infrastructure from cyber threats, by using their foresight to prevent future disasters.
Forge Operator	The Forge Operator oversees the functioning of the forge, including managing the heat, machinery, and working conditions.
Holistic Healer	The Holistic Healer integrates traditional African healing practices with modern medicine, looking after those working in the forge.
Inventor	The Inventor integrates traditional and modern knowledge to create new technologies and solve problems.
Lab Director	The Lab Director leads an innovative team dedicated to developing new technologies and solutions, managing both people and ideas.

Write your Name and Role in the allocated space on your character sheet. Then answer on the sheet what you often experience in this role. This may be an obstacle or opportunity, pleasure or frustration.

A Note on Play: *Choosing your Name and Role in Leader Forge is the moment where the real and the imagined meet. It is designed that you step into the magic circle of Kuzuka City while keeping one foot firmly in your lived experience. This blend of fiction and reality allows you to explore leadership with curiosity, without losing sight of who you are and how you work.*

Step 2: Choose Your Affiliation

In Leader Forge, your *Affiliation* describes your fundamental relationship or natural orientation to the three disruptors of engagement: Change, Complexity, and Conflict. In this mini version, you will choose your Affiliation to Change. These relationships may shift as your context changes. When selecting your Affiliation we encourage you to choose the one that feels most resonant to your context.

Read each one and choose the one that feels most like you, in this season of your leadership journey.

Table 3: List of Affiliations

Affiliation	Description
Consistent	Consistent characters create and maintain stability and predictability. They tend to resist contextual variability. Sometimes they continue to do things the same way they did even after conditions have changed which may yield unsatisfactory results. They expect and promote a return to "normal" after any disruption. These characters may not notice that the context is changing and amid turmoil will help to maintain the status quo and remind others of what is unchanged.
Flexible	Flexible characters are relatively open to change. They are open to new ways of doing things and new opportunities but need time and reason to adjust. They generally need support to navigate change processes. This support may take the form of additional information, the opportunity to talk through what they are experiencing and the implications of the change, encouragement and inspiration or help developing a plan of action.
Turbulent	Turbulent characters love change, volatility, pioneering and disruption. If there is insufficient transformation in their environment, they may drive or even force uncomfortable change. They deliberately avoid the familiar, stable and predictable and do not work towards or create static systems. Nothing is cast in stone for Turbulent characters. Everything is open for alteration, reinterpretation, reimagining and reinvention. They are generally highly creative and imaginative, and they do not let logic or comfort get in the way of progress.

Write down your Affiliation in the relevant space on your Character Sheet.

A Note on Leadership: *As long ago as 1994, Heifetz (1994) introduced the notion that leaders have different tolerances for profound change. Some are comfortable navigating high levels of disequilibrium and discomfort. Others prefer greater levels of predictability and stability. Snowden and Boone (2007) explain and differentiate between levels of complexity, articulating how ordered and unordered systems operate and by implication how different leaders respond within these systems. Edmondson (2018) challenged leaders to create psychological safety, highlighting their ability to foster or navigate differing levels of task and relational conflict. In Leader Forge we recognise the value that leaders can add irrespective of how they affiliate with change, complexity and conflict. For each of these challenges we offer participants 3 alternative affiliations. All are equally valid. But for leaders, understanding their affiliations helps them to choose where and how they engage with challenges.*

A Note on Play: *Affiliations give players an immediate anchor for how their character meets disruption. In the design of Leader Forge we used them to create quick differentiation without heavy backstory. This reduces cognitive load and speeds up immersion. While the Affiliation does reflect the "mundane reality" of the player, we have seen that the immediate identification between the player and their character (a fictionalised version of themselves) can indeed produce "engrossment" (Fine, 2002)*

Step 3: Choose Your Special Trait

Special Traits are capabilities, tools, or advantages your character draws from their leadership toolkit. You might compare them with superpowers that influence how you lead uniquely. They shape what you notice first and how you choose to act. Some traits highlight strengths you rely on. Others introduce quirks or unusual abilities that impact how you interpret and respond to different situations.

Choose one of the following traits. Pick the one that feels most aligned with the trait you can rely on during times of change.

Table 4: List of Special Traits

Special Trait	Description
Contagious Courage	Your limitless boldness and courage tends to inspire others. When you display these traits, one other character can do the same.
Charm	Your words make you friends wherever you go, open doors that have been shut, and bring people to your side.
Well-Read	You crave mastery over a variety of subjects and that has led you through mountains of books. All of that knowledge is vital for assisting others.
Guide	When other characters are lost or overwhelmed, they look to you for the clear guidance and next steps you intuitively discern.
Insightful	You see patterns where others see chaos and have an uncanny ability to see how things and characters fit together and connect.
Optimist	Your hope in the future is unshakeable. No matter the circumstances, your eyes are focused on a good outcome.
Order Master	Your systems and databases make you skilled at organising people, resources and talents. You bring order wherever you go.
Steadfast Service	You feel called to serve others with dedication and dependability. You are ready to help.

Write down your Special Trait in the relevant space on your Character Sheet.

A Note on Leadership: *Mohamed (2021) defines a special trait as a "highly tailored, personal approach." In Leader Forge a special trait is the unique and personal way that individual leaders show up. They may reflect how leaders think or relate to people, how they get work done or how they impact and influence others.*

A Note on Play: *Special traits were designed to introduce playable, actionable prompts that players could draw from and respond to. We know that "the role-playing game is a performance system that requires improvisation for its completion" (Mackay, 2017, p.49). However in the context of workplace learning and development, it would be unreasonable to expect players to naturally and comfortably improvise in this way. As such, this type of light differentiation encourages players to express personality through action that can be taken rather than feelings. Special Traits provide a subtle prompt without prescribing behaviour. This helps players lean into the improvisational aspect of the play experience because they*

suggest a way of moving through the scenario. Including special traits draws on the long tradition of tabletop design where small narrative nudges unlock richer choices and deeper identification (Cover, 2010).

Step 4: Choose Your Ideal

Ideals reveal what guides your sense of purpose. They are the internal principles your character protects above all else. They are the values you carry into moments of tension or uncertainty. Ideals are the compass points that guide your judgement.

Choose one of the following:

Table 5: List of Ideals

Write down your Ideal in the relevant space on your Character Sheet.

IDEALS
Excellence
Boldness
Creativity
Purpose
Unity
Coherence
Structure
Service

A Note on Leadership: *We use the word "ideals" to simplify the concept of aspirational values. Haslam et al (2020) demonstrate that people are looking for something to be part of, a shared social identity. A leader's ideals are what they want to be a part of, the world that they are choosing to create with others.*

A Note on Play: *Ideals function as a narrative compass. They represent what players may aim for without turning the experience into a win or lose situation, or being puritanical. The intention in our design was for this kind of soft direction to increase agency by letting players decide what success looks like for their character and thus themselves (Murray, 1997). They allow players to test values within a fictional frame, which is one of the core powers of role based play. With ideals in place, even small actions feel connected to a larger purpose.*

Step 5: Choose Your Frailty

A frailty is not a flaw. It is the tension that shapes your leadership. Frailties are the vulnerabilities, blind spots, or pressure points that make your character human. They are not failures. They are the cracks where tension, discomfort, and learning enter the story. Frailties shape how your character might misjudge situations, overreact, hesitate, or misread someone's intention.

Choose the one that feels most familiar to you in moments of transition.

Table 6: List of Frailties

FRAILTIES
Control
Perfectionism
Nitpicking
Imposter Syndrome
Compassion Fatigue
Conflict Avoidance
Obsessiveness
Unspontaneous

Write down your Frailty in the relevant space on your Character Sheet.

A Note on Leadership: *In Leader Forge a frailty is a vulnerability. Contrary to how leaders are often positioned, Dick (2021) proposes that infallible leaders are designed for failure. They argue that embracing vulnerability is essential to optimise effectiveness. When leaders acknowledge their frailties, they are more open to negative feedback and improvement, they create a safer environment for others and are more flexible in collaborative engagements.*

A Note on Play: *Frailties introduce productive constraints. We see constraints as crucial to play, the boundaries and limitations that force creativity* (Salen & Zimmerman, 2003). *In the context of Leader Forge, we use Frailties to add friction and emotional realism without making the experience punitive. A named frailty helps players avoid the trap of playing an idealised version of themselves and instead invites them into a more nuanced and honest performance of themselves, as well as creative approaches to Scenario challenges. They make the character more interesting to play and the story more interesting to inhabit, much like in real life.*

Step 6: Select Guild

Your Guild is the community of leadership practice your character naturally belongs to. It is the collective that shares your way of leading and responding to disruption. This is the distinctive presence you bring to Kuzuka City. Choosing your Guild is the moment where your qualities come together.

Read each Guild description and choose the one that feels most affirming and resonant in this season of your leadership journey.

Table 7: List of Guilds

Guilds	Description
Pathfinder Guild	The Pathfinder Guild is home to explorers, inventors, and quick movers. Its members are energised by possibility and progress, and they take pride in venturing ahead so others can follow with confidence.
Thinker Guild	The Thinker Guild is a collective of analysts, researchers, and careful observers. Its members value insight and understanding. They help make sense of complexity before choosing a direction.
Bridgemaker Guild	The Bridgemaker Guild brings together diplomats, collaborators, and people who thrive in social connection. Its members focus on building relationships, resolving tensions, and creating spaces where different voices can work together.
Taskbearer Guild	The Taskbearer Guild is formed by builders, organisers, and those who enjoy steady progress. Its members are recognised for reliability, structure, and commitment. Their work ensures that plans turn into concrete results.

Write down your Guild in the relevant space on your Character Sheet. Take a moment to sit with why this Guild feels right for you before moving into the scenario.

A Note on Leadership: *In Leader Forge, Guilds might be thought of like tribes or communities. Because there are only a few Guilds, the differentiations between them are very high level. Research on leader identity formation shows that in addition to their personal awareness, leaders gain personal insight through the groups and practices with which they align. They see themselves reflected in their chosen communities. Further to this, Haslam, Reicher and Platow (2020) demonstrate that shared social identity is central to effective leadership. Identifying with a Guild, allows participants to locate their sense of self within a collective narrative, to see themselves as dynamic, responsive beings who are choosing how to participate and contribute in line with their preferences.*

A Note on Play: *Guilds do not exist in the full version of Leader Forge. Without spoiling the experience, the full design utilises a Calling mechanic which is automatically determined by previous choices the player has made. That is not possible in this abridged version. But we felt the experience needed a summative, climactic moment. Guilds are our answer to that. The intention behind the design of the Guilds is to equip the player to experience a synthesising action*

that turns earlier choices into a coherent identity. Our focus here is not on immersion, but rather on recognition and inspiration.

Your character is now assembled. Before moving to the next step, take a moment to look over your character sheet. Does the sheet feel like an authentic, if limited, representation of who you are as a leader? If something feels wrong, change it to something that fits better. Feel free to doodle a symbol/crest for your guild.

Step 7: The Scenario

Read the Scenario below, then follow the instructions.

For generations, the Forge has relied on an intricate and established system known as The Lattice Framework. It provided clarity and structure, and people trusted it to guide their work and decision-making.

But while Kuzuka City has continued to advance at a remarkable pace, building new technologies and new communities, The Lattice Framework has become outdated. Tools that were built for an older era no longer match the pace of today's work. Teams spend hours solving problems. Repairs pile up faster than they can be completed.

Chief Architect Nala Kanene has requested your help. She greets you at the entrance of the Operations Hall with a datapad in hand and exhaustion on her face. Morale is at all-time low, confusion at an all-time high. It is no longer a question of whether change is needed, but rather how best to guide the Forge through this shift.

She gestures to three doors leading from the Operations Hall:

***The Workshop**, where teams are struggling with outdated tools and growing frustration*
***The Council Chamber**, where senior leaders are debating whether to proceed slowly or move quickly*
***The Community Hub**, where workers and citizens are sharing concerns and competing visions for what should come next*

Your task: Choose one door and describe your first action.

Consider:

- How does your Affiliation to Change shape which space you're drawn to?
- What does your Special Trait allow you to offer in that space?
- How might your Ideal guide what you say or do first?
- Where might your Frailty create difficulty or hesitation?

Write a short paragraph (3-5 sentences) describing:

1. Which door you choose
2. What you do when you enter
3. One specific thing you say or one action you take

Step 8: Reflection

The final step in a round of Leader Forge is to Reflect. This is an opportunity to step back and make meaning from the experience. Reflection helps you notice patterns, clarify intentions, and ground your leadership in conscious choice.

In the space on your character sheet, write a sentence or two for each of the Three As:

1. **Aha**

   What insight surfaced as you combined your choices?

2. **Affirm**

   What strengths do your choices highlight?

3. **Action**

   What small shift or intention will you carry forward into your real leadership practice?

These three reflections together form your next steps. They are not prescriptive. They simply surface the identity you are shaping.

A Note on Leadership and Play: *In the full experience of Leader Forge, players join Connection groups (virtual or in-person) at the end of each round to discuss and reflect. This moment of the game is the most similar to a facilitated workshop that one would traditionally expect in a training session.*

Leader Forge sits at the intersection of play and leadership practice. Players step into an as if space that invites exploration and experimentation without the pressure of real-world consequences. Within this frame, leaders can examine their identity and surface insights that are often harder to access in routine work settings. As the round concludes and players return to their everyday environment, the reflective process helps translate that playful inquiry into conscious leadership practice. In this way, the game becomes more than an activity. It

becomes a method for examining how you lead and then the kind of leader you are actively shaping yourself to become.

Conclusion

This abbreviated round can't capture everything Leader Forge makes possible. But it does something important: it shows that leadership isn't fixed. It's built through the choices we make, again and again, in contexts that keep shifting. The fiction of Kuzuka City gives you permission to experiment: to be bolder than usual, or more honest, or simply different. When the scenario ends, you return to your actual work. But you return changed, carrying questions you didn't have before and insights you couldn't quite reach from inside your usual role. Leader Forge does not result in a fixed identity, but a call for ongoing sensemaking. It positions leadership as a force continually shaped by choice, imagination, and reflective action. It doesn't offer answers. It offers practice: a way to keep understanding leadership in a world that won't slow down, and an invitation to approach that work with imagination intact.

References

Bateson, P. P. G., & Martin, P. (2013). *Play, playfulness, creativity and innovation*. Cambridge University Press.

Brown, S., & Vaughan, C. (2009). *Play: How it shapes the brain, opens the imagination, and invigorates the soul*. Penguin.

Cover, J. G. (2010). *The creation of narrative in tabletop role-playing games*. McFarland.

du Preez, J. (2022). *A sense-making framework to improve stakeholder engagement in the context of wicked problems* (Doctoral dissertation). The Da Vinci Institute, Johannesburg, South Africa.

Eberle, S. G. (2014). The elements of play: Toward a philosophy and a definition of play. *American Journal of Play, 6*(2), 214-233.

Edmondson, A. C. (2018). *The fearless organization: Creating psychological safety in the workplace for learning, innovation, and growth*. John Wiley & Sons.

Fine, G. A. (2002). *Shared fantasy: Role playing games as social worlds*. University of Chicago Press.

Haslam, S. A., Reicher, S. D., & Platow, M. J. (2020). *The new psychology of leadership: Identity, influence and power* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

Heifetz, R. A. (1994). *Leadership without easy answers*. Harvard University Press.

Dick, Scott (2023). Weakness is the New Strength: How Vulnerability Makes Leaders Stronger. *Transform*: 1(1). https://digitalcommons.umassglobal.edu/transform/vol1/iss1/4

Huizinga, J. (1955). *Homo ludens: A study of the play-element in culture*. Beacon Press.

Kark, R. (2012). Games managers play: Play as a form of leadership development. *Academy of Management Learning & Education, 10*(3), 507-527. https://doi.org/10.5465/amle.2010.0048

Kendrick, M. (2005). Playing house: A sideways glance at literacy and identity in early childhood. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy, 5*(1), 5-28. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468798405050592

Mackay, D. (2017). *The fantasy role-playing game: A new performing art*. McFarland.

Mohamed, E. S. A. (2021). The impact of social intelligence and employees' collective self-efficacy on service provider's performance in the Egyptian governmental hospitals. *International Journal of Disruptive Innovation in Government, 1*(1), 58-80. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJDIG-07-2020-0003

Morgan, R. H., Braun, S., & Epitropaki, O. (2025). Pursuing a future leader self: A multi-study investigation of leader identity and its motivational and behavioural outcomes. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, 98*(1), e70014. https://doi.org/10.1111/joop.70014

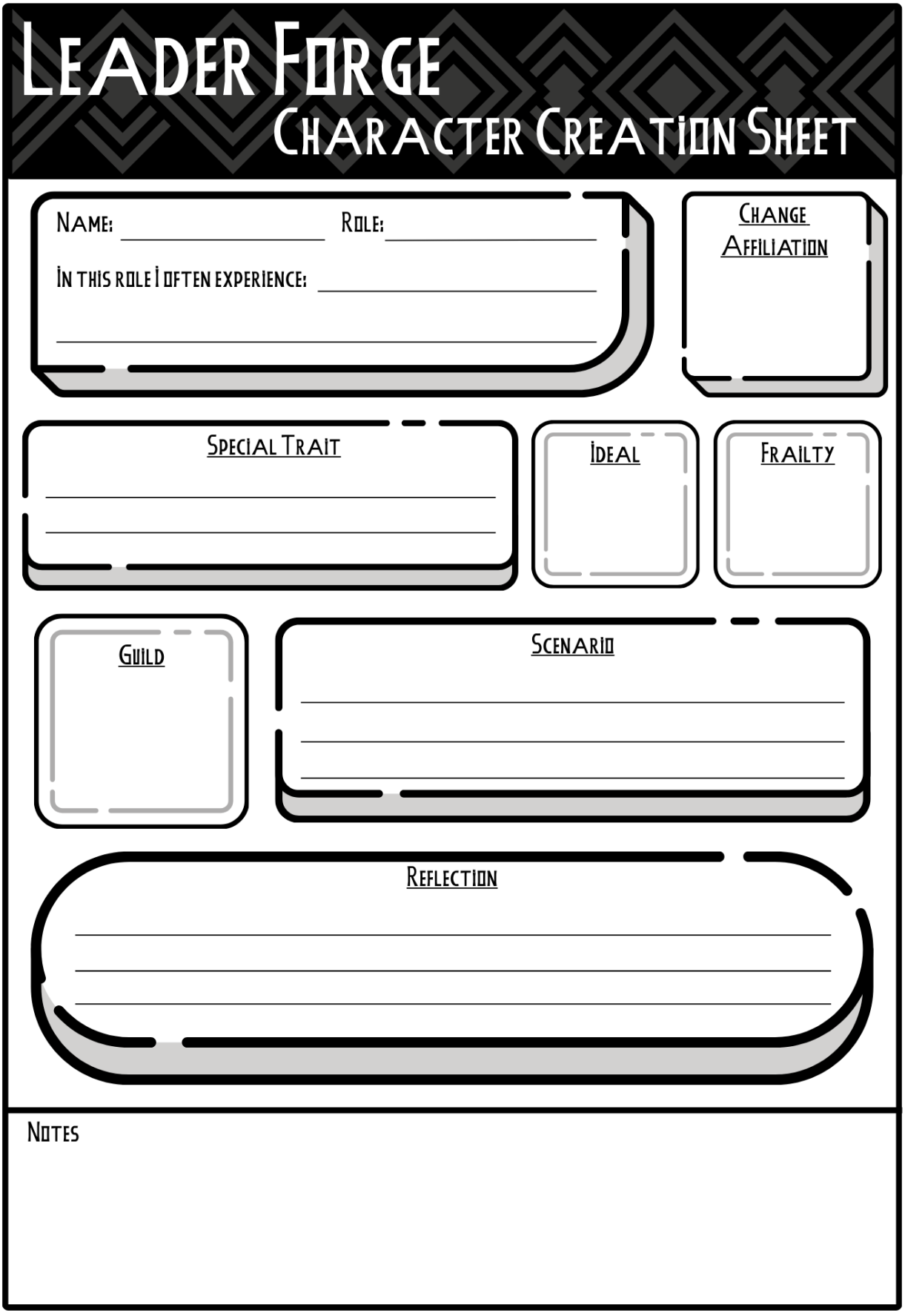
Murray, J. H. (1997). *Hamlet on the holodeck: The future of narrative in cyberspace*. Free Press.

Nguyen, C. T. (2020). *Games: Agency as art*. Oxford University Press.

Salen, K., & Zimmerman, E. (2003). *Rules of play: Game design fundamentals*. MIT Press.

Snowden, D. J., & Boone, M. E. (2007). A leader's framework for decision making. *Harvard Business Review, 85*(11), 68-76.

Appendix A


LEADER FORGE
CHARACTER CREATION SHEET
NAME:
ROLE:
IN THIS ROLE I OFTEN EXPERIENCE:
CHANGE AFFILIATION
SPECIAL TRAIT
IDEAL
FRAILTY
GUILD
SCENARIO
REFLECTION
NOTES