LARPBook LARP Rules

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Contents

The objective of this part of the book is to assist you in creating a fictional world that your LARP events will exist in. It is very important that all players understand how the game world works. If you do not brief players about the game world they will not understand how to behave and you will not get a satisfying game.

Checklist: Things You Need To Include

1. A world name - establish an identity
2. Establish magic - key points here are
   a. Does magic exist at all
   b. Is it rare or common?
   c. Is it complex to cast magic or easy?
   d. Is it related to religion?
   e. How does the game society feel about magic
3. Establish technology - key points are
   a. What can technology achieve in your world?
      i. Even in a fantasy world there is technology - swords, armour, milling, wood-turning, tailoring, weaving etc.
   b. What are the limits of technology? In the modern world - instant communication is pretty much easy. Bringing the dead back to life or travelling to other worlds - not so much. This can be as simple as a basic list
   c. Compare your world to something in fiction. For example let people know if it is similar to Earth in Star Trek or Arrakis in Dune, or Westeros or Middle Earth.
4. How does money work (if it even exists)
5. How does religion work - one god or a whole pantheon? Does religion exist? Are there forbidden Gods? Do the Gods walk the world?
6. What's the social structure like?
   a. Is it a democracy?
   b. Is it a monarchy?
   c. Is there are class system?
   d. What are the most trusted professions?
   e. What are the least trusted professions?
   f. Is there some form of underclass?
7. Are there historical events the players need to know about?

Don't overdo it

Creating a vast and complex document detailing every aspect of your world will take a long time and may be a wasted effort. As a general rule of thumb a good number of your players will never read it. However something that is slim, and easy to understand will help everyone.

A good idea is a simple checklist or introduction to new players and to establish a world reference that can be added to overtime. A game wiki or website is a good way of handling this task.

The Players Are Your Friend

LARPers are largely creative people. They will come up with new ideas and extrapolate from material you give them. Allow the players to come up with ideas for your world. Don't be a world creator - be a world editor. You will probably end up with a richer experience for everyone.

History is your Friend

Placing a game in an historical context instantly gives you and the players a common reference point that everyone can work from. Tell people the game is set in 17th Century France or 1980's England will immediately set the standards for roleplay.

Use a Character Workshop

This is a simple but cool idea from Nordic Larp. Before the game starts work with your players to help them understand who they are playing and what the world is like. Workshops can be done in groups; with different character archetypes demonstrated so everyone knows what to expect. Or one on one to address individual concerns and needs. What matters is that the workshops take place before the game starts.

Suggestion - if your players are spread out over a wide area try tools like Skype or Google Hangouts to workshop remotely.

This part of the rules focuses on character creation. It's based on unexceptional human characters. That makes it ideal for realistic games. This also means it can be used as a reference point for creating more heroic characters or non humans in SF or fantasy worlds.

All you need to is adjust the skills section accordingly.

The Character Concept

This is the underlying truth of the character. It is what they are all about and its from here that we should be able to work out how to role-play their actions. A character concept might be something like

"Ex-Army, with a strong moral compass when it comes to right and wrong, but so much when it comes to doing illegal activities he considers not to have victims. Now a jewel smuggler"

It's a quick description that includes the past, morality and what the character is doing now.

It's a quick reference guide to the character.

The Characters History (Biography)

It is what it says on the tin - biographical information for the character. Where does the character come from, information on past relationships and past activities.

It can be as long or as short as you like

It must however be able to explain the characters skills.

The Characters Skill Set

These rules use a system of Assumed Skills. What that means is that given the society the character lives in and the life the character has lived that character will have the skills expected of them.

For example if the character is a journalist living in modern day London you can assumed that this person would be well educated, well read, know how to operate computers, have a good understanding of culture (pop and classical), have a good knowledge of London and have excellent research skills.

This character would not have Ninja level martial arts skills or be a dead shot with a gun because that doesn't fit in.

Or does it.

All of us carry skills outside of a simple discussion of profession and where we live. To account for this we have additional skills. These are skills that the character has taken time to personally develop over the years. These can be gained from hobbies, personal training or something in the characters background that drives the person to maintain these skills.

The characters additional skills are rated as

- **Poor** - not very good but better than no skill
- **Ordinary** - what you would expect a person to have given the age and other abilities of that character.
- **Extraordinary** - An out and out expert. Way above normal. In ordinary to have an extraordinary skill the character must have taken at least 10,000 hours to achieve it and must spend time maintaining the skill. The characters biography must be able to explain this skill level.

Personal Traits

All of us have habits, expressions of speech or phrases that we use a lot, foods we like to eat and drinks we like to drink. These are the details to put into Personal Traits. The point here is to make note of things that will help you play the character consistently.

Costumes and Props

What does the character like to wear and what does the character have on them at all times. It's a useful guide for consistency and continuity. Its also useful as a packing list. Refer to it before going to a game and you are less likely to forget something..

This covers rules for fighting with LARP Safe weapons.

This system uses the counting of hits scored against a target to designate damage.

A hit is simply a blow being landed on a target.

Number of hits

Different weapons score different numbers of hits per blow

Unarmed - No Skill	0.25 hit
Unarmed - skilled	1 hit
Unarmed highly skilled	2 hits
Single handed weapon	1 hit
Double handed weapon	2 hits
Bow, Crossbow or spear	3 hits
Handgun	3 hits
Rifle or assault rifle	4 hits
Explosion (in proximity of)	4 or more hits

What is a hit?

A hit is a blow scored against an opponent . In most cases this will be with a weapon. In the event of unarmed combat it will take multiple blows to have an effect against an opponent unless the attacker has some martial training.

How many hits per Person

Under this system a human being can withstand:
1 hit per limb before that limb is useless
2 hits to the torso before collapsing.

Becoming Unconscious

This happens

When it is dramatically appropriate according to the scene that has just been played

When any part of the body reaches -1 hits. For example hitting a leg with double handed sword turns that leg from 1 hit to -1 hits. The person collapses into unconsciousness.

Death

This happens

When it is dramatically appropriate according to the scene that has just been played

When any part of the body receives 3 times its maximum number of hits

That's -2 for a limb

-4 for a torso.

At these settings this is a deadly combat system. If you need something that allows more injuries to be incurred please increase the number of hits allowed before death

Roleplay

This is a live roleplaying system. Therefore at any time the numbers can be overruled by

Exceptional roleplay that makes sense
Circumstances within a role-playing scene or game logic that override these rules.

In armed combat participants are expected to roleplay the giving and taking of blows

In unarmed combat it is recommended that participants move slowly and mime out the blows to avoid injury.

If nonphysical (i.e. a theatrical) system is being used then role-playing of the effects of combat are still expected providing the environment allows for it.

Skill resolution is defined as this

The character attempts something with an ability, talent or learned skill and needs to know how successful the action was.

Skills include things like

Driving a car
Using a computer
Reading
Writing
Researching
Using Medical Skills
Mathematics
Reading a map
Making a map
Speaking another language

Or if your games are of a more medieval bent

Making armour
Repairing armour
Reading
Cooking
Healing wounds
Woodworking
Making clothes

In both cases the list goes on and is almost inexhaustible.

In order to be able to resolve any skill in a reasonable fashion we use a ruleless system based on the idea of If you can show it - You can do it

In practical terms this means that most of the time most skills will be resolved by role-playing out what you are trying to achieve.

Providing you act out what you are trying to achieve, and it is in the commensurate with your level of expertise then you will succeed

Failure to roleplay the skill or taking on a task beyond your abilities will lead to failure.

Based on the principle that failure is a learning experience on Referee's discretion you may learn something useful. This has to be discretionary as it has to depend on what the player is attempting and how the task has been approached.

Combat Skills

The success of combat is discussed in the combat section but a couple of guidelines will help but combat into perspective.

Anyone can use any melee weapon such as a knife, club, and piece of wood, sword or spear. Against an unknowing or unskilled opponent there is a good chance of success. Against a skilled opponent this is unlikely. In melee situations it is very important to play according to the characters ability.

Guns and firearms are a different matter. There is a mechanism to master and also the ability to aim and take the shot. A skilled gun user can just do it. Unskilled users must have time to understand the mechanism, or be taught how to use it. On firing close range shots from an unskilled user have a reasonable chance of hitting, long range fire would be very unlikely to be a success.

Levels of expertise are judged as being

- No Skill
- Sub Average
- Average
- Expert
- Exceptional

This means that when designing a game tasks need to be set a level.
For example if the game needs a lock to picked if the lock is set as needing an Expert to pick it and the character only has an Average ability then they will fail. This means the players will need to figure out a solution that they can role-play out.

Name: Jiří Novotný

The Character Concept: An analytical and hard-working accountant in his early 50s, willing to do what's necessary to support his family in which he's the only breadwinner.

The Character History: Jiří was born in a small and poor Moravian village. His parents sent him to school in Prague, where he remained as he immediately got a job as an accountant in a state-owned shoe factory. It is there where he met Dominika, a fellow worker. They fell in love and soon married, getting two children. After the fall of communism, the factory got privatized and several jobs got cut - the number of workers was reduced, and accounting was outsourced, so they both found themselves without work. Jiří got himself employed in a small accounting company, while Dominika was left jobless - she soon picked up tarot and other occult skills, trying to earn some money by telling fortune. Jiří didn't like it, but he did pick up a few things over the years... and money is money. Nothing changed in years. Jiří inherited the property in Moravia, where he would still go for a vacation or on some weekends, to maintain an orchard and go fishing.

Skills:

- Accounting (Extraordinary)
- Agriculture (Poor)
- Computers (Poor)
- Driving (Normal)
- Fishing (Normal)
- Occult (Poor)

Personal traits:

Jiří's favorite food is beef in cream sauce with dumplings. He prefers drinking Starobrno beer, much to the horror of his colleagues in Prague who drink local brands. He is nostalgic for the long-gone era of communism, and in his heart he's still a communist. --

This character has been created for book by Ivan Zálac. Ivan writes in Diary of Croatian larper. You his work at http://www.crolarper.com

Character Concept: A man who is not living the life he planned and who has left his home far behind. He strives for a good life and yearns for community. He is a loyal friend

Character Biography: Leofwin comes from a line of blacksmiths and metal workers and was brought up in the North. Arguments and dissension within in the family caused him to leave home and travel further south. As such he has no real strong ties to an area. His objectives in life are simple, to be happy, well fed and to find good company. He is typically religious according to his period but he is no zealot. During his time looking for a stable place to work he acted as a jobbing blacksmith for several lords – mostly working on horses and repairing weapons. He never found happiness there. Now though he has found the sense of family he has lost. He works with the cathedral builders of a major town. It's going to take another 10 years to finish the cathedral off and in that time there will be lot of iron that needs working and tools that need making or mending. It's a close knit community of artisans and he has found his place amongst them. Perhaps he'll find someone to start a family with

Skills

- Ironworking (exceptional)
- Reading (none)
- Singing (average)
- Living off land (average)
- Religious Practices (average)
- Combat - with axes – (expert)
- Managing Fires (expert)

Personal Traits: Leofwin loves to sing at any opportunity. In his mind he sings the tales and poems like a great bard. In reality he is strictly an average drinking singer.

This character supplied by Rob Davies – editor of Larpbook.com