



Part Two: The Grand Design LRP System And Creating A Character For It

Here you'll find the rules for the Grand Design LRP system. They have been designed with clarity and speed in mind whilst trying to maintain a rich variety of interest in what characters may achieve. Take the time to look over them as being familiar with them will help the smooth flow of any combat situations you may become involved in.

Combat, Death, Damage and Armour

Locations and Hits

There are six locations on the body that can be wounded there are five that can be aimed for in melee. These are left leg, right leg, body, left arm and right arm. The head is a woundable location but should not be aimed for during combat. If you are hit on the head accidentally then take the hit but if someone is obviously and repeatedly aiming for your head ignore the blows that land there and ask the perpetrator to refrain from doing so.

- All characters with the exception of Storm Born and Stone Born start life with a minimum of 1 **Heath Level (abbrev HL)** to each of the six locations, Storm Born start with 3 HL per location and Stone Born with 4 HL (see **Creating Your Character** for more information about race). If a character is struck on an unarmoured location or a location where all the armour has been destroyed then that character will lose 1 HL to that location.
- When a location reaches 0 HL it stops working. A limb on 0 HL cannot be used. If it's an arm then you should drop anything currently held in that hand and let the arm fall loose by your side. If it's a leg then you should fall down onto one knee. Characters with one working leg may drag themselves along the ground with their working limbs or may be carried by other characters. Hopping is not permissible.
- If the Head or Chest are reduced to 0 HL then the character falls unconscious.
- Any location reaching 0 HL is bleeding and will continue to bleed until the wound is healed by appropriate magic or skill, or is bound by someone with the appropriate skill.
- If a **limb** bleeds for 5 minutes without treatment then the limb becomes crippled. **Crippled** wounds are more difficult to heal than normal injuries. If the limb continues to bleed for a further 5 minutes then the character dies from blood loss.
- If the head or chest bleeds continually for 5 minutes then the character dies.
- Locations may not drop below 0 HL regardless of the amount of damage they take.

Throat Cuts

If a character is unconscious, paralysed or completely restrained **and unable to resist in any way** then their throat may be cut by drawing a dagger or similar small weapon in the air an inch from the neck from ear to ear (please don't actually put the weapon onto skin). The throat cuts are permissible on characters under the influence of "Sleep" or "Freeze" effects. Victims of a throat cut will die in 30 seconds unless the wound is healed or bound (the head is reduced to 0HL and must be healed to at least 1HL or bound to prevent bleeding if bound the victim will not regain consciousness until healed). It is **not permissible** to use throat cuts on targets that could resist the action **even and especially if they can't see you coming**. This rule is designed as a mechanism of administering a swift coup de grace on a beaten foe, not as a means for assassination.





Restoring Health Levels

- Any character may usually recover one hit to one location overnight.
- There are four professions that may be able to heal you: Those with Doctoring skills, those with Alchemical skills, certain Priests, and Natural Philosophers.
- Sometimes Healing is temporary, then at Dusk/Dawn (whichever is sooner) it wears off, leaving you freshly injured.
- If you have been permanently healed of other wounds to that location since the temporary healing, then your old wounds will not re-open.
- Only those with appropriate skills may apply bandages.
- There are two sorts of bandages, normal bandages will only prevent bleeding and will not heal wounds. Medicinal bandages will heal wounds.
- Anyone may drink a Healing potion as long as they are conscious.
- Healing potions may be given to unconscious characters by other characters.

NB for safety reasons please never actually drink or give someone else a potion to actually drink. Tip the contents away after miming drinking it.

Armour

Armour protects characters by absorbing damage that would otherwise have caused them to lose Health Levels. Armour can be bought in pieces to cover the six body locations. The protection provided by the armour only counts to the parts of the body actually covered by it. An entire location need not be entirely covered to claim protection for that location as long as a good effort has been made to cover the majority of it.

For example Sven is wearing a chain mail shirt that covers his body and upper arms down to below his elbows. If a blow strikes him on his arm his armour will protect him even if it lands on the non-armoured parts of his lower arms.

Every piece of armour has a number of **Armour Levels (abbrev AL)** and every time a blow strikes the armour then it loses an AL. At the point where the armour has 0 AL the protection from the armour is gone and the character will lose Health Levels instead when next struck to that location. It is worth noting that some blows can go through armour and deliver damage directly to the Health Levels of the person struck.

- **Light Armour:** Must be represented by light leather armour, furs or quilted or padded material. The phys-rep must look like it is intended to function as armour (and not just a pair of leather trousers). Light armour provides 1 AL of protection. **Any character may wear light armour; no skill is required to do so**
- **Medium Armour:** Must be represented by heavy leather, studded leather or leather scales. Medium armour provides 2 AL of protection and may only be worn by characters with the Wear Medium Armour Skill.
- **Moderate Armour:** Must be represented by metal chain mail, splint mail, ring mail or good quality latex plate armour. Moderate armour provides 3 AL of protection and may only be worn by characters with the Wear Moderate Armour Skill.
- **Heavy Armour:** Must be represented by metal plate armour. Heavy armour provides 4 AL of protection and may only be worn by characters with the Wear Heavy Armour Skill.

Characters with the appropriate skills may layer Armour. However only two layers are permissible and they must be of different armour types. Please ensure that if you decide to play a character wearing armour that you carry lots of drinking water with you and remember to drink lots of it, especially if the weather is hot or you have been boozing.

Storm Born and Stone Born may not wear armour.

For example Sven has both the Wear Heavy and the Wear Moderate Armour skills. He may wear a quilted armour jacket under his chain mail and gain 4 AL of protection. He may also wear his quilted armour under his plate armour for 5 AL or his chain mail under his plate armour and gain a whopping 7AL of protection. However he may not wear all three layers.

Repairing Armour

Armour can be repaired by characters with an appropriate Artisan - Armourer or Artisan - Leather Worker skill or by magical means. See the Skills lists for details.





Shields

Shields do not have AL values and may simply be used to parry blows. They can do so indefinitely without losing effectiveness, however it is possible for certain special calls to break shields (see **Special Damage Calls**). Characters can repair broken shields with the Artisan Armourer skill or by magical means. Shields offer no protection if they are not actively used as a parrying device (if they are strapped to a character's back for example). **Any character may use a shield: no skill is required.**

Causing Damage

Dealing Damage With a Melee or Ranged Weapons.

Any character **with a weapon proficiency** in the weapon type they are using scores a single hit with each strike of that weapon on a target. The target will lose one Armour Hit or Health Level unless they have some skill or magic that will prevent them from doing so. No call needs to be made when striking a normal blow. Therefore if you are struck by a weapon and no call is made you should take one hit to the appropriate location.

Any character **who does not have the appropriate weapons proficiency** for the weapon they are using will still deal damage with that weapon as described above. However in this case the character **must** swing their weapon slowly telegraphing their blows upon the target and strongly role-playing the fact that they cannot use that weapon in a competent manner.

Special Damage Calls

The damage calls listed below may only be used by characters with appropriate skills. **You should try to remember these calls and react appropriately if someone calling one of them strikes you.** Any two of the listed calls may be strung together in a single blow e.g.: "*Mighty Through*", "*Rune Through*", etc. If a character has the ability to inflict more than two calls (highly unlikely!) then they must choose which two to use.

- "*Double*" A heavy blow that will cause great damage to the target. A location struck by double will lose two health or armour levels if possible.
- "*Rune*" - This blow is magical in nature and as such will affect things that cannot be hurt by normal damage. Other than that it behaves like a normal blow.
- "*Through*" - This blow will ignore armour and cause a single hit to the target's Health Levels. It is not magical in nature. Any armour worn by the victim of this call will not be damaged by it. Shields block the damage in the normal way preventing harm to the target.
- "*Mighty*" - Knocks the target to the floor if struck. If parried the target must stagger visibly or be knocked to one side under the weight of this enormous blow. If parried with a shield then the shield breaks and should be dropped immediately. Does a single hit to the location struck if not parried.
- "*Poison*" or "*Poison x minutes / seconds*" Poison will affect the person struck only if the blow connects with an un-armoured area or an area where the armour has been reduced to zero hits or if the poison has been ingested. A victim of poison is immediately reduced to unconsciousness and will remain so until the poison is purged in some way or wears off. Whether or not the victim will die from the poison and how long the process will take varies from one poison to another. If a target is the victim of a simple "*Poison*" then the venom is not fatal and the target will recover from unconsciousness in 5 minutes (regardless of whether or not the location has been healed if it hasn't then they may be dead or crippled anyway!). If a time is stipulated after the call then the poison is fatal and the time stated is the time the victim will die in if it is not purged. When curing a poisoned wound the player should check with a referee to see if they are in time to prevent the victim's death. A call of "*Poison - Through*" or "*Poison Through x minutes / seconds*" will carry a venom through armour straight to a location.
- "*Freeze x seconds / minutes / hours / permanent*". If struck the victim loses a Health Level and is paralysed and may not move or speak at all. The victim is still conscious and aware of what is going on around them. Armour will prevent the victim from losing a Health Level to this blow but will not prevent the target from being paralysed.



- "*Mortal*" Removes all hits (armour and Health Levels) from the location struck.
- "*Strike*" Causes a single hit to every location on the target regardless of the location struck. Does not affect the target if parried or *blocked*.



Dealing Damage With Spells

Any spell that causes damage to another character will have a descriptive call listed with it. This call should be made loudly and clearly indicating the target of the spell. These descriptive calls are designed to make it obvious to the target of the spell what has just happened to them and use the damage calls described above. Damage caused by spells does is not automatically runic damage (see below) nor does it necessarily go through armour, although some spells may do one or both of these.

Example spell calls are:

- *"Rune Hit to the Chest"*- Target takes one hit to the chest damaging the targets armour or Health Levels if unarmoured. The damage is runic in nature.
- *"Strike"*- Target takes one hit to each of the six locations damaging each locations armour or Health Levels if unarmoured.
- *"Double to the chest"* Target takes two hits to the chest damaging the targets armour or Health Levels if unarmoured.
- *"Mighty Strike"* Target takes one hit to armour or Health Levels if unarmoured on every location and is struck to the floor.
- *"Rune Through Head"* - Target takes one hit directly to his Health Levels on the head. Any head armour is not affected. The damage is runic in nature.
- *"Double Strike"* Target takes two hits to each of the six location's damaging each locations armour or Health Levels if unarmoured.
- *"Mortal Strike"* Target's armour and Health Levels are reduced to zero on every location. Nasty.

Other Calls To Listen For During Combat

- *"Resist"* The damage, effect or spell has been resisted by some defence available to the caller and as such will not affect them.
- *"Block"* The character has just used a skill or spell to prevent themselves being damaged by a blow. Block calls are usually the result of some physical force stopping the incoming damage.
- *"Dodge"* The character has just used a skill or spell to avoid a blow or missile.
- *"Sleep x seconds / minutes"* Target is put into an unwakeable sleep for the duration specified. After that time has elapsed the character is still asleep but will waken if any loud noises occur around him or if deliberately roused in some other manner.
- *"Fear x minutes / hours"* The target becomes terribly afraid of the caller and if possible must flee from them until they are no longer in sight. If this is not possible then the target must retreat from the caller as far as possible and may not make any hostile action against (such as hit them or cast spells at them) but may take defensive actions (such as parrying and casting defensive spells). The effect lasts the time indicated and should be role-played fully for the duration.
- *Dispel Effects"* All spells / mysteries currently active on the target with the exception of Blesses, Curses and Healing effects are immediately removed. This call will end the effects of *"Fear"*, *"Sleep"* or *"Freeze"* calls currently active on the target. Beneficial effects are also removed.
- *"Time-freeze"* Do not call this unless you have just heard it and other people are ignoring it or haven't heard it. When you hear it freeze in position, shut your eyes, hum quietly to yourself and do whatever the referee tells you please.
- *"Time-stop"* Do not call this unless you have just heard it and other people are ignoring it or haven't heard it. When you hear it stay in position, you may keep your eyes open but should do whatever the referee tells you please.
- *"Time-In"* Be in Character. Please.
- *"Time-Out"* Be out of Character. Please.
- *"Man Down"* This means someone is hurt, or suspected to be. Call this yourself if it is needed. If you hear it stop immediately whatever you are doing, be silent and get out of the way. Please.





Hand Signals

The following hand signals are also used to indicate the following.

Hand raised clearly in the air fist closed: Invisibility.

The character making this signal is present but is invisible. Although they cannot be seen they can be detected with other senses or struck. Characters that cannot be seen cannot be targeted with spells. Players should do everything they can to ignore the presence of invisible characters if they have no means of detecting them. Referees will take a very dim view of anyone failing to do so.

Hand raised clearly in the air with palm open: Not Present.

The character making this signal is not physically present in the game and as such cannot be detected by any physical means.

Ribbons and Laminates

Laminates

Some objects and people have special powers or abilities that are beyond the realm of mundane skills. Such objects or characters receive laminated cards printed by the organisers detailing exactly the effects of the object or person. If you receive a laminated card for your character or for items your character may possess then keep this with you whenever you are IC, but please note that the Laminate itself is an OOC item. Laminated cards are designed to remind you of special rules but also to allow referees to check what special rules govern your character or item when required. You may show the Laminate to another player only if they have an appropriate skill, mystery or spell to allow them to find out what is written on it if in doubt ask a ref

Ribbons

Magically enchanted, divine, master crafted, alchemical ingredients and other special objects all look *different* to other items in the world. To allow players and referees to easily identify unusual objects all such things must have ribbons attached to them (or their containers). The organisers will issue ribbons to players with such things with their player packs.

- Blue - Enchanted
- White - Divine
- Green - Alchemical
- Red - Mastercrafted
- Yellow - Special

Ribbons are all colour coded as shown above and will have a reference number written on them corresponding to any laminated card which details the effects or powers of the object. Ribbons should always be attached to the objects they are intended for while those objects are in game. Laminates should not be attached to objects.

Trading Items

When unusual items move from player to player on a permanent basis (by whatever means) a referee should be informed immediately. In most cases where an item has been freely given from one player to another both the ribbon and the laminate that goes with it will be given to the new owner. In some cases however (via theft or inheritance for instance) the new owner may not know what the powers or effects of the item they have acquired are. In these cases the new owner will only receive the ribbon for the item and the laminate will instead be retained by a referee until the new owner has taken steps to determine what its effects are.

Downtime

Experience

At the end of every weekend long event you will receive five experience points that may be spent in the same manner as starting character points (see **Creating Your Character**). Details of experience points expenditure should be included in your downtime submission bearing in mind that characters may need to spend some time in study or training before expending experience points on certain skills (see **Character Skills** later).





Downtime Submissions

After participating in an event a player is entitled to take part in the downtime campaign running between the event they played and the next one. This will entitle the player to make one or several downtime submissions depending on gap between events. The number of downtime submissions that can be made and the deadlines for them to reach the organisers will be announced shortly after an event. Downtime submissions allow players to have their characters perform actions "offstage". Some skills and virtues are specifically designed for use in downtime, as is the mercantile system described in **Trade in the Archipelago**. The organisers will dictate how successful players downtime actions were and inform players of the results before the next event. It is possible for player characters to die during downtime. Although it is possible for anything to occur in downtime that could occur during time in the organisers greatly prefer to see significant action being carried out in the flesh. Dramatic occurrences and daring plans are generally best left for time in moments wherever possible. Two types of downtime options are available:

Simple Downtime Submissions requires little or no response from the organisers and should be summarised in a few sentences. A sample simple downtime could be: *"I employ my artisan skill for three months to generate income, I then travel to Saran-Gasai and try and purchase as many pieces of heavy armour as I can with 500 thrones. I spend my experience points on five points of will"*

Detailed Downtime Submissions will require some form of detailed response from the organisers describing the effects of your downtime actions. A detailed downtime submission can be as long and as detailed as required but players should remember that their characters can only be in one place at one time and that there is only so much they can get done in any downtime period. When submitting a detailed downtime it is very important to relay clearly what you are doing, approximately when in the downtime period you wish to undertake the actions concerned, where you are conducting those actions and if appropriate who you are conducting those actions with. A nominal charge will be made for the processing of detailed downtime submissions usually a few pounds.

Character Concepts



Long before any points are spent or stats are put down, there must be a character concept, and a background. No-one exists in a vacuum and this is as true of your characters as it is of real people. If you are coming as part of a group of players, then establish a background for your group and places in that background for your characters; the more coherent and solid your background story, the more the referees will work with it and you to weave you into the overall story.

Creating a Realm or playing Realm Lords

It is entirely possible to begin the game as a Realm Lord. There are a number of geographically smaller realms available for players to rule, should they choose the virtue of Realm Lord for their character. However, we need to see your background for your Realm and approve it. If we need to make changes to your background we will make them but rest assured we will only do that with good reason. You will also need to be able to look the part; we will expect a serious retinue, in character tents, and other such trappings of nobility.

Non-Realm based Characters

Not everyone can be an Imperial Herald. But they aren't the only group independent of the Realm structure; officers in the Imperial Sea Guard, members of the Chancellery Staff or the various offices of the Imperial Court (there is even an official Court Poet) are all available to play; the requirement in each case is the same as for a Realm Lord walk the walk, and talk the talk. Again, these characters are all viable, but solo backgrounds must be cleared with the referees just as much as group ones.





Creating Your Character



Step One: Race

The first thing you should do when designing your character is choose your race. Each has its own advantages and disadvantages to offer. Look over the racial descriptions found earlier in **The Races of the Imperial Archipelago** and decide which of them you would like to role-play, then have a look at the minimum phys rep requirements and compulsory flaws for each race as shown below - see the Virtues and Flaws section for details. Characters from races with minimum phys rep requirements must meet those minimum requirements whenever they are in play. Make sure before you choose your race that you are comfortable with the minimum phys rep requirements you will have to meet and the flaws you will have to deal with. If you are playing a Stone Born or Storm Born consider finding someone to play your birth partner.

All starting characters have a base of one Health Level per location with the exception of Storm Born who have three and Stone Born who have four. Additional Health Levels may be acquired by purchasing the relevant character skills.

- **Imperial Humans** No minimum phys-rep requirements.
- **Giants** Phys-rep requirements: Must be 6'+ (5'8 for women) or able to carry off such.
- **Wind Dancers** Phys-rep requirements: Complex facial tattoos. Maximum height 6' men, 5'9 women.
- **Children of the Moon** Phys-rep requirements: White face makeup with clear or white gems (diamond, moonstone, quartz) protruding from the skin. Long white or silver hair preferred, but dark brown, black or pale blonde also okay. Must take the Aversion to Pain and the Intolerance of Extreme Light Levels flaw.
- **Whisperers** Phys-rep requirements: White face makeup with a tattoo pattern in silver or black. Long white or black hair preferred. Must take the Aversion to Sunlight flaw.
- **Storm Born** Phys-rep requirements: Metallic (gold or silver but if silver make sure not confusable with a Stone Born!) skin, real metal armour minimum as a physical part of the character - chain or ring mail, flexible scales, etc. Note, this is a physical part of the character, and cannot be removed! Must take the Life Linked Duality flaw. Storm Born may not wear armour.
- **Stone Born** Phys-rep requirements: Grey or brown skin, heavy armour minimum as a physical part of the character - non-metallic plate armour or leather cuir bouilli, or stone-effect body cladding. Must take the Life Linked Duality flaw. Stone Born may not wear armour.
- **Scatterlings** Phys-rep requirements: Green and brown wood or leaf based makeup. You will receive a mantra given to you by the organisers but you may suggest one that you feel appropriate.
- **Corpse Moss** Phys-rep requirements: Pale skin with purple bruise marks and dark green mossy patches. Corpse Moss only melds with humans (Imperial Humans, Giants or Wind-Dancers). Must take the Corpse Finder flaw.
- **Imperial Tritons** Phys-rep requirements: Blue /green eye blaze with white makeup over the top, green or blue lips. Some Tritons have vestigial webbing on fingers and toes.



Step Two: Character Skills

Once you've picked your race you can then move onto select your character's skills. Character skills represent the things your character has learnt during his or her life before they enter the game. Choosing carefully is important for all characters but particularly for those who want to get involved in combat. We also advise that you have a look at the virtues and flaws section while selecting your skills. Some virtues will complement some character skills very nicely whilst some flaws may cripple the use of others.



You have twenty starting character points to spend on skills. You may choose not to spend them all if you wish and save those you have not spent for later. A table showing prices of character skills is presented at the end of this section. **Bear in mind that any skill with a ✖ symbol next to it has prerequisites, that is you must buy another skill before you can purchase that one.** Full details of prerequisites and what character skills allow you to do can be found in **Character Skills, Virtues and Flaws listings.**



Step Three: Virtues and Flaws

Virtues and flaws help to define characters by adding their strengths and weaknesses. Often a character can be defined by his or her virtues and flaws and their personality can really come to life when their particular gifts or stumbling blocks become apparent. Full details of all virtues and flaws available can be found in **Character Skills, Virtues and Flaws listings**.

Characters may choose up to five points of flaws. These points must be allocated during character creation and cannot be saved for later. For each point of flaws taken the character may spend an additional point on their starting character skills or take a point of virtues. No character may ever take more points of virtues than they have in flaws, therefore it is not possible to take more than five points of virtues. Characters need not take any virtues or flaws should they choose not to do so. Virtues and Flaws cannot be purchased with experience and can only be allocated during a characters creation or gained by appropriate circumstances during play.

In order to take **any** points of virtues and flaws players **must** submit to the organisers a character background describing how (where appropriate) the character came by that particular gift or weakness and any other specifics required by the individual virtue or flaw. The organisers reserve the right to change player character backgrounds subject to consultation with affected players before an event. Any special item or ability laminates / ribbons resulting from virtues and flaws will be supplied to players in their packs prior to an event.

If you start a new character during an event (for example after your old character dies) then you will not be allowed to take any virtues or flaws.



Step Four: Starting Equipment and Money

Characters begin with a basic 500 thrones starting money (thrones are the unit of Imperial currency) although some virtues and flaws can alter this. You are free to purchase whatever starting equipment you like from the typical prices list shown in **Trade In the Archipelago**. This section also contains much more information on money and its uses. Any items you purchase must be fully physrep'd if they are to appear during time in. If you purchase Alchemical Preparations, Alchemical Ingredients or Magical Supplies then you will be provided with a ribbon and laminate for those items in your pre event pack. If you have purchased Astral Magic or Natural Philosophy then you will start the game with an Ephemeris or Phylactery at no cost. Purchasing some of the more advanced Alchemical knowledge skills may result in you starting the game with alchemical ingredients or preparations for free.

Characters do not have to expend money on weapons or clothing. Generally speaking you may assume that your character has access to any piece of equipment that you can phys rep and which is not listed on the typical prices list. However if you want your character to have some unusual item please check with the organisers before bringing it to an event.



Step Five: Write your Background

Now's the time for your to fill in the background of your character and explain what they have been doing with their lives thus far. Be sure to pick a name for your character if you've not done so by now. Names vary greatly from place to place and race to race within the Archipelago so feel free to choose as you wish.

Your character background is an excellent way not only for you to give real shape and identity to your character but also a fine way for the organisers to get you involved in appropriate plot lines. Feel free to make your background as simple or as complicated as you like: however, you should at least say whether you are a citizen of one of the Realms and if so which one. If you have taken any Virtues or Flaws you **must** where appropriate include in your character background how you acquired them.

The organisers reserve the right to change or add to your character background for the good of the game, we will of course consult with you first where appropriate.



Step Six: Choose a Religion

If you're playing a character with any of the skills of the divine then you must (if you haven't already) choose a religion to follow. Most people in the empire may choose to follow the teachings of at least one religion even if they are not a devotee of any faith. Descriptions of the most popular religions in the Empire can be found in **Religion in the Archipelago**, players may even choose to invent their own religions following the guide lines presented there.





Part 2

Step Seven: Pledge your Allegiance to a Noble or Realm Lord

Some virtues allow characters to start as Nobles or Realm Lords of the Empire. However in order to do this those characters must bring with them a retinue of other player characters. If you intend to join the retinue of another player character who wishes to be a Noble or Realm Lord then you may do so by indicating your choice in the appropriate space on your character design sheet.

Alternatively if you are playing a character from a non player created Realm you may chose to pledge your allegiance to an NPC Realm Lord. Simply state your chosen Realm on your character design sheet. You are not obliged to pledge your allegiance to anyone.



Step Eight: Fill in your Booking Form

Finally based on the decisions you've made in the above steps detail your character on your booking form. You can find one of these at www.granddesign.org.uk. Once submitted to the organisers you'll receive a full character sheet along with any ribbons, laminates and changes to your character background in your pre event pack.



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