

Left Darkling

Here is where we put a nice big picture, that exemplifies the feel of what we want.

An attempt at a coherent, first edition rulebook.

V.0.8

A game of building something greater from the pieces left behind, of learning from the mistakes of the past, and of rising above the circumstances of the world you are born into.

*“For, you know, nuncle,
The hedge-sparrow fed the cuckoo so long,
That it’s had its head bit off by its young.
So, out went the candle, and we were left darkling.”
William Shakespeare, in King Lear, Act 1 Scene 4*

By Philip Baxter and Emma Pratt

Social Contract

Left Darkling is a game for Adults Only, and as a result all players must be 18+.

While we approach the subject matter with all the decorum and care we can, it is assumed that the majority of the characters in this game come from incredibly unpleasant backgrounds – many are seen as Property, with all the terrible repercussions this can have.

We appreciate that this opens up incredibly sensitive subject matter, which will never be directly addressed in this book, or an enforced part of a character's background. However it is possible that it will be a part of other character's background, and it *is* a part of the world the game takes place in.

In light of this, Left Darkling works under three core rules that we expect all players to adhere to at all times:

1: Humans Respect Bodily Autonomy

Regardless of background, upbringing and circumstance, all humans share the understanding that the terrible things that happen are something that Humanity is Better Than – your knowledge of this is what separates you from the monsters who Enslave and Hunt you, and a central tenet of all Human Society.

Specifically, characters that endorse any form of abuse are not appropriate characters for this setting.

N.B. We appreciate that violence is inevitable (and as a full-contact system, something that is likely to happen relatively often) and that torture is often a go-to with regard to getting information. Sometimes Humans (and players) may need to do unpleasant things to ensure their survival, but it should not be gratuitous. Ultimately we are the final arbiters of what constitutes "gratuitous"

2: "I do not want to know about that" is Sacrosanct

The Phrase "I do not want to know about that" is to be used as a IC phrase to indicate the person you are speaking to is having OOC issues with the topic you have brought up. Once this is said, you should stop speaking, and do your best to work around this (everyone here is an adult and we expect everyone involved to handle the situation maturely), you should also do your best not to broach this topic with that player again.

As a result, we'd ask that players avoid using the phrase to reflect a IC stance, to avoid confusion.

N.B. This exists as an RP aid for you, as a means of smoothing over the risk of OOC disruption to the game, and to ensure everyone enjoys the event as much as possible. We appreciate that you may forget someone has vetoed a conversation, so while we ask that you don't, accidents are expected to happen.

In addition, we expect people who expect to use this phrase, to consider this when involving themselves in plot – if it is a topic that is an important part of plot, the responsibility is ultimately on yourself to avoid it: If you cannot talk about Disease, you should not try to involve yourself in Medical Tent plot.

3: Discrimination based on Gender/OOC Race/Disability etc is not acceptable in the setting.

The World Before

There was once a time when Humanity lived in peace with its neighbours – the borders between nations was respected and adhered to, and while relations were rarely friendly, they were comfortable enough to warrant trade.

In the mountains to the North lived the Coblynau, a broad, short race of people whose bones were crystal and skin was stone. They lived deep in underground fortresses, mining rare minerals and ores for sale and trade with the other nations. Their cities were home to great fighting pits, for their people were clever trappers and explorers, and would bring back great and terrible monsters from across the land, to battle for their amusement.

They decorated their bodies with jewels and ornamentation, and in all things attempted to respect their ancestors – they saw themselves as the distillation of their family lines, and their every word or action a reflection on those who had come beforehand.

In the forests to the East lived the Fae. Aloof and beautiful, they held themselves as greater than any of the other nations, their skin was pale and many were born with the features of birds or insects – plumage and wings of all colours, they wore clothes that rivalled or exceeded their beauty – every item hand-crafted and stitched to the exacting specifications of it's wearer, and drank wine and ate food that was likewise the result of a lifetime of perfecting a single craft.

They lived in great families, feuding and bickering between each other over forgotten slights and insults, in a constant chase to prove themselves the most perfect example of the most perfect race.

In the sea to the West lived the Mer. Less like the humans than any other species, they returned to the surface only to trade with the other races, and made it clear that, even if they *were* able to survive the journey to them, none would be welcome in their underwater cities. Alien and Aquatic, their skin was scaled and their faces snouted and gilled. Many dressed in fine silks and cloths on the surface, to show their wealth and, either to absorb the heat of the sun, or to hide their sensitive skin from its rays.

They travelled in clutches, familial units of those born at the same time, in the same pool, often as trade convoys, each with their defined role, and each sure of the other's support and backing.

On the planes to the South roved the Capra. Following migratory routes, some so long that a Capra would be born and die and still not have walked the same soil twice, they moved like Locusts, stripping the land bare as they passed, but unlike locusts, they left the land behind them cultivated and planted, so that when they might pass by again, it was even more fertile than the last time they passed. Great horns sprouted from their bodies, and their skin sprouted a coarse fur, they wore leathers and furs, owning only what they could carry, and what could be made on the road, or taken when their paths brought them through another settlement.

They lived as communities, where an individual's worth was only what they had claimed themselves, in their lifetime. Violent and aggressive, the Capra settled all matters through violence.

In the centre of these lands, lived Humanity. Broad and diverse, they spread over the vast swathe of land that was claimed by no-one else. With a different nation on every border, their nation was the centre of all trade in the land, and this wealth, combined with humanity's natural aptitude to build, meant they quickly outshone every other nation in technology, growing and developing, constructing machines that allowed a single person to mass

produce fine fabrics, or an entire warehouse to clothe an army in a matter of days, wheels that pulled energy from the rivers and the wind, and engines that ran using the power of boiling water, protected by weapons which harnessed fire to fire balls of lead that could pierce through the thickest armour, and their studies refined Magic to an art-form, mastering even death itself.

But as their population swelled, and their demands on resources grew, their eyes turned to the raw materials outside their lands, and eventually, secure in their technological superiority, humanity declared war one by one, on their neighbours.

Pride, was humanity's downfall. To fight a war on four fronts, against enemies who were revealed to be far stronger than they had imagined, and had no qualms in working together against a common foe. The war was brutal and short, and the human lands were shattered. Villages were razed, towns pulled down and entire cities of people captured as slaves. For the offence of raising a hand against its neighbours, humanity was driven into servitude - claimed as property by the old races. The free humans who survived went into hiding, tiny isolated villages that survived by being lost and forgotten, or ensuring they never appeared strong enough to be worth the cost of being captured.

For two hundred years, humanity has been enslaved by its neighbours. In the Coblynau mines, children have been born, grown old, and died, without ever seeing the light of day, in the Fae castles, families have been rebuilt and shaped by their Fae masters, in complicated vanity breeding programmes. In the Capra herds, men and women have grown aggressive and feral, fighting to hold their own against brutal masters, and in the Mer plantations, communities have formed over servitude and sacrifice to the creatures that watch them from the Sea.

Humanity is broken, shattered and repressed. The wild itself reclaims the ruins of their cities, and the times of freedom are becoming little more than myth and legend.

But times are changing, Necromancers are building armies that are capable of holding back raids against their villages, Scavengers are finding and stockpiling ancient technology, and rumours abound of a Golden Woman, who has appeared to lead humanity back into Glory.

The World Now

The Village of Keleia is a small outpost – little more than the estate of a minor, border-lord Coblynau and his retinue and his Colliers (farmers and woodsmen). There are only two things that make it even vaguely remarkable – its placement, which makes it an ideal stopping-point for convoys and traders from all four of the Old Races, and its history - the woodland is littered with the tattered ruins of human buildings and fallen statuary, and the roads that lead to it are far wider and better built than those around it.

That it was once a human city is undeniable, as is that it was once so prominent that it was almost entirely wiped from existence when humanity fell.

Keleia wasn't meant to be anything more than a stop along the way, a chance for your masters to rest and eat, or to sell you on to somewhere else, far away from your homes and families. But opportunities rise to claim your freedom, to claim Keleia as your own, and

perhaps from there to help it grow – from an outpost to a town, perhaps even a Capital, but if nothing else, to claw back a measure of safety and security for yourself and for your people. The night will be long, the struggle difficult – danger lurks outside in every direction and some of your fellow humans have ways more alien and dangerous than your ex-masters, but if you do not find a way to work together, you'll be torn apart and broken. If you fight hard enough for your freedom, you may be able to build a world where your children don't need to. And then maybe humanity will rise to see a new dawn.

Character Creation

Left Darkling is a Closed System, which means a lot of information is not available to all players during character creation. Before you create a character, we ask that you contact the Refs (via [Email address]) to discuss your concept and request an Origin Brief – every Race has its own information sheet, which contains details on what life is like for those who have lived there. It may contain extra skills, or factors that will affect the generation of your character.

Because of this, we advise you to read both the text in the introduction and the text below, to get an indication of backgrounds before requesting a pack, as we would rather not have you change your mind after you have received one! We are also willing to discuss concepts before your request.

Name:

Your name is likely to be a result of the culture you grew up in. As a result although we've included it first, you likely want to wait until you've settled on an Origin, and read the naming guidelines in their individual brief.

Group:

While it is not essential to come in as a group, we believe your experience may be heightened if you and several people agree to come from the same place, and to have known each other previously. An official Group (for system purposes) consists of 3-5 people.

Backgrounds:

You're encouraged to send us background - if we need the name of a village, or NPCs, we'd rather take them from player backgrounds than make them up, so giving us Background is going to increase your chance of being directly connected to any plot we generate. It also means we can ensure that the world *you're* envisioning and the world we are, line up correctly. Those of you coming from the same place are also going to want a shared heritage and history too, and you should share it with us.

Goals:

We appreciate that some characters may not have lived eventful lives up until this point - they may be a Collier who've spent their entire life mining for ore in the dark. It's entirely possible that the most important parts of your character aren't what they've done, but what they're *going* to do (we'd hope so, in fact) - so knowing the goals and aims of your character are appreciated - this is going to inspire us as much as background while writing plot.

We are happy to discuss this with players in advance of the game, to ensure that your goals are in synch with the direction we plan on taking the campaign.

Origin:

All characters come from *somewhere*. Following are the seven possible origins for a character. Each one of these has a secondary Secret Document that you will be sent, which will contain extra skill options and background. We advise reading this document before building your character.

A note on costume: The game is likely to begin with the players still under the control of the Old Races, having had little-to-no contact with any of the other Origins and knowing nothing other than the world they grew up in - the others will seem strange

and alien, and this will be emphasised through Dress. Over time, characters may take on styles and influences from those around them, but we'd strongly encourage starting characters to stick to the costume brief.

Coblynau

Humans owned by Coblynau are called Colliers. Many are miners but some may work in underground farms, or fight for their owner's glory in the fighting pits. Colliers live a hard life, often entirely underground, they eat, sleep and die in shifts, shoulder-to-shoulder with their fellows, their one luxury the light of the passing Lamplighters, who bring solace and compassion to their fellows in the dark.

Collier clothing is robust and practical, designed to endure harsh conditions working underground – thick leather and coarse linen are common base elements over which is worn the 'uniform' of the collier's particular vocation. Items are frequently passed down through family lines and so many bear the marks of generations of maintenance and repair; age and provenance are both highly valued, while new items may be considered almost worthless until they are tested. Those few raised to fight in the pits tend to be favoured with the best looking and most ornately decorated equipment to enhance the Theatre of the fights; these heirlooms may be passed from champion to champion, and the current bearer is expected to know the stories of the previous wielders. Outside the arena ornamentation is a rarity in the dark, although specific Coblynau craftsmen will 'sign' their work with carvings / embellishment (tactile as well as visual) and some colliers mimic this when they make something they're particularly proud of; instead, colliers favour things that are shiny. Gems are considered especially beautiful, and those colliers not fortunate enough to own jewellery will instead polish their metal to a mirror-shine. Otherwise, block colours and simple patterns are favoured, and specific teams / groups may mark themselves out with symbols picked out in white or another light colour.

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Fae

Humans owned by the Fae are called Changelings. Personal property of a noble house or individual, Changelings are valued only when they excel. Those who do so are coddled and treated like favoured pets, while those who do not, or just whose novelty is exhausted, are often beaten or killed. Rivalries and One-Upmanship are common amongst Changeling groups, as there is never more than one favourite, and another's success only hurts your own standing.

Better beautiful than comfortable, so say the Fae; as a result, Changeling clothing tends to be extravagant to the point of impracticality, regardless of how difficult this makes tasks other than their designated role or whether it may cause lasting damage to the wearer. It is not merely clothes that must be perfected; makeup and coiffure receive almost as much attention regardless of gender. Outfits are designed to look good from all angles, and so strong structures such as rigid collars, puffed sleeves and hooped skirts are common; visual references to the changeling's role and status are considered especially witty notes to incorporate into a design (cage motifs are popular) as

are elements emulating the distinctive insectoid, avian or otherwise bestial attributes of their specific masters. Vivid colours and high contrast are preferred; a changeling gifted something drab or dull would do well to watch their back, as it suggests their master's interests and affection are waning. The changelings are expected to treasure and celebrate these gifts, and maintain them to an immaculate standard.

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Mer

Humans owned by the Mer are called Cottari. Living together on beachfront farms, Cottari are given unprecedented levels of freedom compared to the humans owned by the other races, so long as the tithes for the Mer are met. These tithes are often high, and require all members of the villages to pull their share; punishment for disobedience or failure is rarely levelled against a single cottar but rather at the entire village, leading to an environment of self-policing and scrutiny.

Cottari clothing emulates the styles favoured by the Mer who, when they must venture above water, tend to swathe themselves in light fabrics that protect from the sun without inhibiting movement. Silks and similar flowing textiles are popular, and a village will often draw upon the palette displayed by their masters, be they the jewel tones of the coral reef, the browns and greys of the rockpool, or the inky blues and blacks of the deep sea. Ornamentation mimicking scales (e.g. sequins and beads) is common, as are sashes replicating tails. Where protective clothing is required the Cottari tend to eschew heavy metals and furs (both due to scarcity and the fear of drowning) and instead use leather or, more occasionally, scale.

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Capra

Humans owned by the Capra are called Wethers, and are held to the same laws and expectations as the Capra hold each other. Being weaker, hornless and starting from the bottom, means that the Wethers live in a state of constant fear, taking what they can from the battles so as to climb higher in their personal power struggles, but always careful of growing too strong in case one of the Capra decides they may be a threat to their own power.

Wethers clothing is tough and hard-wearing, composed entirely of armour stripped from the fallen and not claimed by anyone stronger, or crafted and repaired by the wearer. Decoration and Colour are a strong indicator of strength and respect, as anything with appeal must be defended through violence or intimidation. As a result, jewellery is incredibly rare, but tattoos and piercings (often bone or stone) are common. Almost all clothing is practical, thick leather and offers a degree of protection from violence, but heavy armour is frowned upon, as it is unnecessary weight while travelling, and few Wethers are strong enough to hold onto Chain or Scale, unless it's especially run-down or sparse. Due to the issues with moving forges, the majority of metal items are trophies with inflated value – leather, fur and bone make up the majority of Capra possessions, often crudely dyed.

As Capra use their horns to settle disputes, symbolic or artificial horns are incredibly rare, as wearing them massively increases the chances of being expected to use them.

Some Wethers are equipped with less even than that – those tribes that use their Wethers as suicide troops often barely allow them armour at all, and wear leather and fur just thick enough to protect them from the elements and nothing more.

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Free Human

Free humans are scattered amongst many myriad villages and camps, each one isolated and unique, there are three large categories that most fall under however

Technological: Scavengers and Salvagers, these villages dig through the remains of old human society, finding and maintaining lost technology with a attitude closer to Faith than Science

Religious: The Golden Woman or her followers have come to many villages, preaching that by fighting against the Other Nations, those who support them, and Necromancy, she will lead them to freedom and glory.

Necromantic: Necromancy is not traditionally a taboo, and those villages that run on it are often prosperous and educated, the living spend their lives learning and playing, as the dead are responsible for manual labour and military service.

Small and often isolated, no Free Human village appears exactly the same as even its closest numbers. That said, there are a number of prevalent trends; wool and cotton are common, supplemented with trapped furs, and leather armour is predominant for those who can fight, while metal is sparse (as mining and smelting operations risk attracting attention) and reserved for weapons or essential tools. Free Villages find themselves in the awkward situation of not wishing to look like Owned Humans while often possessing little in the way of skills or resources; as a result, clothing is often utilitarian in style and drab in colour, drawing on natural dyes. Only the strongest, richest and most stable villages have the luxury of working on aesthetics and these may feature brighter colours and more detailed decoration; villages that focus on being a threat rather than passing unnoticed may produce well-maintained military uniforms, but these settlements are a rarity compared to those which rely on subtlety for protection.

[**Pintrest Board**](#)

Skills:

New characters begin with 3 Skills, new skills may only be learnt through training in Downtime.

Tradeskill: Surgeon

Read the “Skilled” section on Medical Lammies. Begin with 3 sets of Medical Supplies

Tradeskill: Artisan

May repair and produce armour, shields and weapons with Ores

Tradeskill: Leader

Once per day and with appropriate 3-minutes of uninterrupted rabble-raising, may grant all participants a single temporary Hit that will last until sunrise, or until lost. *You may only be affected by this once at a time. If this is cast in combat, you should end the rousing with the phrase "Humanity's Not Dead Yet"*

Tradeskill: Ketcher

May spend 10 minutes searching bodies to claim items of value and Ores. This may be done multiple times on larger battlefields.

Once a day, may spend 10 minutes searching an area of Wilderness which may reveal Herbs instead of Ores.

(Note: without this skill you must spend 10 minutes to search a single body, and may not find everything of value).

Weapons and Armour carried by the corpses will generally be considered too damaged to be of use as anything other than raw materials.

Tradeskill: Storyteller

May spend 10 minutes examining an item to determine anything of interest about it. *You're encouraged to pass this information on in the form of a story, however this is not mandatory.*

Tradeskill: Herbalist

May spend 10 minutes to produce potions from Herbs, with a variety of effects

Tradeskill: Marlinspike

May spend 5 minutes trying a knot (or binding a person's arms and/or legs). This may only be undone by someone other than the tied up character. If someone's limbs are bound in this way, they cannot use them.

Short Weapons (Free)

Short Weapons are between 8" and 18"

May use Short weapons

Knife

Once per hour, may call Bleed with a Knife

Medium Weapons

Medium Weapons are between 18" and 42", they may be used one-handed. If your weapon is not one of the below types, or somewhere between the two, you must confirm with a Ref what it counts as before the game begins.

May use One Handed Weapons

Sword

Once per hour, may call Wound with a Sword

Axe

Once per hour, may call Maim with an Axe

Mace

Once per hour, may call Crush with a Mace

Long Weapons

Long weapons are over 42". Weapons over 60" are discouraged, and if you plan on using one, we advise you to speak to a Ref in advance.

May use Two Handed Weapons

Spear

Once per hour, may call Wound or Bleed with a Spear

Stave

Once per hour, may call Stun or Knockback with a Stave

Great-Weapon

Once per hour, may call Maim or Crush with a Great-Weapon

Weaponmaster

If you are carrying the same type of weapon in either hand, or carrying a two-handed weapon, you may make that weapon's call twice without needing to rest (if it is a two-handed weapon, you do not need to make the same one), you may only make one call per swing.

Shield

May use Shields, a shield can block 4 points of damage before becoming Crushed

Armour

May gain extra hits by wearing armour

Ranged Weapons

Characters using Bows or Crossbows must pass a competency check before being okayed for use, and cannot have more than 30lb draw strength.

We do not allow Tear-drop arrowheads.

Thrown weapons must be coreless and throw-safe.

May use ranged weapons

Bow

Once per hour, may call Wound with a Bow

Crossbow

Once per hour, may call Maim with a Crossbow

Thrown

Once per hour, may call Knockback with a Thrown Weapon

Sigilcraft

Know two randomly determined Sigils, begin with 1 Mana per day

Advanced Sigilcraft

Know three randomly determined Sigils, begin with 2 Mana a day

Expert Sigilcraft

Know four randomly Determined Sigils, begin with 3 Mana a day

Teaching

When you teach someone a skill, only you need to spend a DT action on it.

(Note: Without this skill both the trainer and the trainee must spend an action)

Endurance

Gain +1 Base Hitpoints (To a total of 3)

Great Endurance

Gain +2 Base Hitpoints (To a total of 4)

Equipment:

You begin with **Only** the equipment necessary to use the skills you have chosen to in your skill-picks. Additional equipment must be earned or claimed in-game. Any equipment you gain IC during a session, you must be able to supply OOC, as the NPC pool does not contain enough equipment to keep up with looting or crafting. Scarcity is an important feature of our game, and we believe this is lessened through large amounts of equipment and supplies. characters should not have more equipment than they could comfortably carry on their own.

Rules

Calls:

The following are the recognised Calls of Left Darkling. We expect all players to be familiar with their effects and durations.

A player who can make a call, must (unless otherwise specified) rest for at least 1 Hour in a safe location before making the call again. A player may only make a maximum of two calls granted from Weapon Skills without resting (regardless of how many weapon skills they may have).

With the exception of Through and Strength, a blow made with a call does not cause damage.

Bleed

Unless someone else covers the wound (Roleplaying holding it closed), Dying time is halved

Burn

Every 30 seconds, take 1 point of damage, unless 30 seconds is spent putting you out (minimum 1 damage). While Burning you are incapable of doing anything but thrashing and screaming. If you spend 30 seconds rolling on the floor, you can put yourself out, but will take a minimum of 2 damage.

Crush

Any item struck with this blow cannot be used until Repaired. If it is armour, that armour is Crushed and no longer has any affect

Diseased

The character loses 1 hitpoint every 30 minutes, until cured

Dodge

The character should roleplay dodging, and move at least a step back. This call is made in response to an attack, and is considered a miss.

Knockback

The character must stagger back five steps, or be knocked to the ground/their knees and be unable to rise for 5 seconds

Maim

The limb struck with this attack may not be used until treated through Surgery. This is incredibly painful.

Poison

The character loses 1 hitpoint every 10 minutes, until cured

Strength

This blow does 2 points of damage.

Stun

The character may do nothing but dither on the spot for 5 seconds – they may not attack or defend.

Through

This attack ignores any and all armour, including Natural Armour

Wound

The target of this attack may not make Calls or use Skills until they have Rested.

(OOC Call) Man Down

If this call is made, all players must immediately cease what they are doing and drop to their knees, unless a qualified first-aider. This call is only to be made if someone is injured and needs medical treatment.

(OOC Call) Time Freeze

This call is only to be made by Refs. If you hear it, stop what you are doing and Listen. We may tell you to hum or close your eyes, but if we don't tell you to, don't.

Sigilcraft

Magic in the world of Left Darkling is performed via the use of Sigils - magical runes which are painted on the face of the person being affected.

Sigils have a wide variety of effects, most will only enhance or alter the abilities of the person marked - there may be a sigil that allows someone to call Burn when they strike with a weapon, but not to launch fireballs. Some sigils may affect other people - such as one that repels the undead away from the person who has been marked, but even this does not require activation - it becomes an inherent quality so long as the sigil remains in place.

Sigilcraft must be taught, and requires long periods of study and understanding - it takes time and training merely to understand the methods and magics behind the process, before even learning the exact brushstrokes and words for painting an actual Sigil.

In addition, while all Sigils function in the same way, as they must be taught, there are some Sigils that are found in some places, but not in others - Necromancy is rarely known outside those Free Villages that are built around its use, for example, as the Old Races are loathe to give their servants the abilities that would let them raise their own armies, and the adherents of the Golden Woman have been taught it is a hinderance in the freedom of humanity.

Sigilcrafters begin with a number of randomly determined Sigils, which they know and may teach to others as individual skills (*note: being taught a level of the Sigilcraft skill also teaches 1 sigil known by the teacher, of their choice*).

Knowledge of Sigils are often hoarded, and unknown to those who do not practice them. If there are sigils that a player needs to know about due to a facet of their character, they will be alerted in advance, otherwise we expect players to understand the Sigil they have been marked with, and explain as-and-when it becomes relevant.

As a result Sigils are a Closed part of the system - if this is something your character begins with, you will be given further information.

Sigils that directly affect creatures other than the person they are painted on are vision-based - if someone cannot See the sigil, they are not necessarily affected by it.

System

Safety

Left Darkling is a full-contact LARP. We expect all players to adhere to basic LARP Safety, and will be running an overview for those players new to full-contact LARP before time in, to ensure everyone is suitably briefed.

In short:

- 1: Pull Your Blows - if you hit an opponent hard enough to bruise, you're hitting them too hard.
- 2: Avoid hitting the groin, neck or head if possible; accidents do happen, but deliberate shots to these areas are Not Cool
- 3: Have your weapons checked pre-game, stab only with stab-safe weapons.
- 4: Don't rest your weapon on its tip, or use it to strike walls, the ground, or other hard inanimate objects
- 5: Obey the Man Down call
- 6: No grappling, unless the person you're grappling has agreed to grapple
- 7: If something looks dangerous, don't fucking do it.

Ultimately, everyone here is an adult, and we trust that you are responsible enough to know what's safe and what isn't.

Non-Combatants: Any non-combatants will be highlighted to PCs and NPCs before the game begins. They are under no circumstances to be struck. If a situation arises where a non-combatant *would* be struck, they must either immediately Surrender, or step to the edge of combat and begin their death-count.

Surrender is to be treated at face-value - if the person the character surrendered to was to safely withdraw from the area, the person who surrendered is to accompany them (as the situation may entail).

Non-Combatants are expected not to enter combat or attempt to strike anyone else. Ultimately it is considered the responsibility of the non-combatant to avoid situations where they may be struck.

Lights: Lighting is a major theme of the game, a lot of the game will take place at night or in the dark, and torches and candles will be important.

Each group may begin with a single source of light, individuals may not begin with any. Lights should have the appearance of being natural, and natural lanterns/candles are encouraged in non-combat situations (real flames must Not be taken into combat situations, and if a combat appears to be moving towards a stationary real flame, effort must be taken to redirect it).

It should be noted that non-natural lights are likely to be seen in-play (specifically the colour-changing LED ambient lights. These may be touched and handled as they give off no IC heat, and are connected to the art of Sigilcraft. White LED lights are specifically prohibited IC, as they ruin night-vision, and are obtrusively anachronistic.

Fighting and Dying

All Hits cause a single point of damage (excluding "Strength" and "Double" which cause two), and every character begins play with 2 hitpoints. If you are hit on any location, you lose a hitpoint. If you are reduced to 0 hitpoints you begin your Death Count. You cannot take more than 1 hit per second and we do not expect you to make more than 1 hit per second - blows should be Heroic in style - we encourage fighting at approximately ¾ speed.

Your Death Count lasts for 10 minutes (600 seconds), if you do not receive surgery in this time, your character dies. (Characters with the Bleed condition will die in 5 minutes (300 seconds), if they do not have someone holding their wounds closed). When your Death Count begins your character is Unconscious - you should be prone and unmoving, and are unable to speak or otherwise communicate. If someone assists you (surgery, holding your wounds closed or otherwise interacting with your character, you are able to communicate, but still cannot move unaided).

(If you have fallen somewhere unsafe, you are encouraged to stagger back to safety before falling)

Once someone has started Surgery on you, your Death Count continues, but you will not die when it runs out so long as the surgery is completed (assuming the surgery itself does not kill you)

Once you have received surgery, you return to 1 hitpoint and become Wounded.

Surgery

Note: We would like to run a visceral, bloody-looking surgery, so players should expect surgery to be Messy.

Characters on their Death Count may only be saved through Surgery. To perform surgery, someone must spend 5 minutes (300 seconds) roleplaying treating your injuries (in order to aid this, we recommend explaining your injury in RP terms - "my ribs have been caved in through a single massive blow" rather than "I'm on 0 hits", and be willing to be gratuitously covered in fake blood).

(If nothing else, you should know the location and weapon that struck the blow, and whether a call was involved. If you're not sure, best-guess it)

Anyone who has a Medical Kit may attempt surgery, but the chances of survival are significantly higher if the surgeon is trained, and if they are doing their work in an area designated for surgery.

If you are uncertain if an area counts as designated for surgery, assume it doesn't.

Once the five minutes has passed, the surgeon may tear open their Medical Supplies, to check the outcome of your operation. The inside will look something like the following:

| | | |
|---------|---------------|---------------|
| | Unskilled | Skilled |
| Field | DEAD | COMPLICATIONS |
| Surgery | COMPLICATIONS | SUCCESS |

In the result of Complications, you should immediately find a Ref, who will tell you what complication you are suffering from. You can gain multiple complications, gaining multiple complications to the same limb can result in more serious complications.

Once Surgery has been started, you will not die when your Death Count reaches 0. However your Death Count does not stop, and if they stop treating you, you are once again able to die. If your Death Count reaches 0 while being treated and they stop, you immediately expire. Once Surgery has begun, you cannot be moved without stopping Surgery.

Another surgeon may take over your treatment, but there must be a point where they are both working on your simultaneously (even if it's just a moment).

When checking the result inside the Medical Supplies, you check the box for the Worst condition that you have been treated in.

Maimed Limbs: Do not require the use of Medical Supplies, but requires someone with the Surgery Skill to treat, and take 10 minutes.

Resting: To Rest, a character must spend 1 hour performing non-strenuous (or no) activities in a place of relative safety. (Skills may grant other ways to Rest, but this will be covered in the appropriate briefs).

Resting grants the following effects:

Characters below maximum hitpoints are restored to full health.

Wounded characters are no longer wounded.

Weapon Calls are recharged, and may be made again.

Armour

Characters with the relevant skill may own and wear Armour. Armour comes in three tiers - Light, Medium and Heavy. Armour grants additional hitpoints, if you are hit with the Crush call, you immediately lose all armour Hitpoints.

Light Armour - Leather. +1 Hitpoint

Medium Armour - Chain and Scale: +2 Hitpoints

Heavy Armour - Plate: +4 Hitpoints

So long as you are wearing armour on your chest and have not been Crushed, you gain this bonus.

You are considered Armoured if you are also wearing armour (of any level) on two other locations from the following list: *upper arm/shoulder, lower arm, upper leg/hip, lower leg* and you have Armour Hitpoints remaining.

Armoured Characters are immune to the following calls: **Maim, Bleed, Poison**. If you are also wearing a helmet, you become immune to the **Stun**.

You cannot begin the game in anything heavier than Medium armour.

Some creatures and players may have Natural Armour. It functions as per worn-armour, but may have extra caveats that affect the wearer only.

Ranged Weapons

(For Firearms, see below)

Bows, Crossbows and Thrown Weapons must all be represented by LARP-Safe projectiles. Bolts and Arrows may have rounded or flat heads (*n.b - this may change before final release*), and thrown weapons must be coreless.

In order to hit someone with the weapon, you must hit them with the physrep. Ranged weapons may be blocked with shields, but not parried with weapons.

Use of Ranged Weapons is situation dependant - weather, lighting and environment may mean there are situations where Ranged Weapons are not safe to be used, at which point their use will be suspended.

We appreciate that it can be difficult to tell if you have been shot with an arrow (if you're already in Melee, or wearing Armour), if someone does not appear to have noticed, shout their name (if you know it, or a vague description if not), and "Ranged".

If you are making a call with a ranged weapon, you will Always need to shout their name and the call.

Firearms

While Firearms are likely to be incredibly rare, they Will turn up in-play. Firearms are cap-firing abstract weapons, which means they do not launch a projectile. To fire a firearm, you point in the direction of the target, and fire, banging a cap. The person you are pointing at is automatically hit. If they don't appear to have taken the hit, shout their name (if you know it, or a vague description if not) and the type of weapon used.

If you have been shot with a firearm, they do the following damage:

Pistol: Through, Knockback

Rifle: Through, Strength, Knockback

You cannot use a shield to block Firearm damage, you cannot call Dodge on a firearm.

The Village

There are 5 badges of office, for the village of Keleia. The holders of these badges will be able to make decisions that determine how the village grows and develops (this will be based on Majority Vote), but someone may have more than one badge (and therefore get more than one vote). These badges must be openly worn by the bearers, and while they cannot be stolen, they may be taken from the dead or via coercion.

During an event, Badge-Holders will be called upon to decide which (if any) construction projects the village embarks on, allowing it to build structures that will affect future events or remedy ongoing issues, along with deciding where the village will focus over the coming months (whether mercantile or military or domestic). The way the village develops will shape the problems it faces and the enemies and allies it makes as it grows, along with its strengths and weaknesses, and will have a strong effect on the direction the game takes as it becomes larger and more influential.

While the ultimate call is made by the badge-holders, they will often be made aware of their options or the problems that need dealing with well in advance of needing a final decision, during which time they may choose to discuss the issues with others or bring it to the floor (but this is ultimately in their hands. If one person has all the badges and decides to run a dictatorship, they may decide not to consult anyone). The form of government, along with the decisions it makes, is ultimately in the hands of the players.