

# Introduction

*The following section on the nature of live role playing was originally written by Allen Stroud who has kindly allowed us to use it to add some basic information and a few suggested answers to common questions. There have been some minor edits to reflect the situation in this particular game.*

## What is Live Role-playing?

Live role-playing, or LRP / LARP, is about inventing a character, dressing up and going out and playing him or her, in the same way actors play parts in the theatre or on television. The only difference is that, in live role-playing, there isn't a set script. Instead, participants improvise with what information they have, and react as they see fit. This creates an evolving interactive story between players that changes the more you play.

Live role-playing draws its origins from a variety of sources, but is generally accepted to have been developed from the fusion of historical re-enactment ideas with the imaginative scope of tabletop role-playing and war-gaming.

## How do I play?

To make the game structured and safe for everyone, a set of rules are agreed upon by all players. This is called the game system, and covers everything: from weaponry, to the types of character that you can play. As an example, all characters have the ability to use a sword or similar weapon in *The Vale*. There is, however, no reason for any player to consider using a real sword to strike anyone else as it would be dangerous. Therefore, rules are provided, both for the safe construction of fake weapons, and for the effects that they have when used on other characters.

The rules can change<sup>1</sup>, and are really only written to enhance the quality and safety of the game for the players<sup>2</sup>. If you are ever in doubt about what to do, then please speak to a referee either in the field or by asking at the Games Desk who will be happy to help you have the best possible game.

## How do I get started?

The starting point with *The Vale* is to go ahead and generate your character. This is a simple system, that allows you to keep track of what game skills and advantages your character has. However, all characters are much more than simply numbers and skill picks and only really come alive when you begin to play. In addition to this, you can add your own unique back story and behavioural quirks for your character.

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<sup>1</sup> The rules may be altered by the organisers if they feel it has become necessary or desirable but we will do our best to minimise disruption and uncertainty by only doing this between games and carefully advertising the changes.

<sup>2</sup> The rules are also important to ensure that players are treated fairly particularly where players come into conflict with each other (for example when a player enters combat with another player) so it is important that all the players try their best to obey both the spirit and letter.

## Can I hit people with weapons?

Yes, you can, but not real ones! When you book to attend a Majestic Oak event, you consent to allow latex and projectile weapons that have passed a weapons check to be used upon you. This is not just an indiscriminate opportunity to hit people; detailed within this guide are rules that determine the effects of combat. If you are new to live role-playing, then please read these rules thoroughly. Referees and Marshals will monitor combat during the game to manage the correct application of rules and the relative safety of its participants (although ultimately you are responsible for your own safety as well as the safety of your fellow players). As a combat participant you are required to pull your blows. This means modifying your weapon swings so that you do not unintentionally hurt other participants. If you are not confident about your ability to do this, please ask a referee, who will go through the process with you.

## What should I wear?

Some live role-playing games can be played without the need for costumes, others require a great deal of costume to get the right look. Although *The Vale* is recommended for people who are prepared to make an effort with their costume (in keeping with the spirit of the event), there is no expectation of a large financial outlay.

We ask that you avoid wearing obviously modern clothing (e.g. trainers and jeans) and do not display any brand labels. The setting of the world is semi-medieval, so anything that could be worn in this environment is appropriate. Further costume guidance is included with each of the racial descriptions and culture guides which you can obtain through our website. If you are still unsure of what the “look” for any racial or cultural type is, then please contact us and we will give you advice.

Many people make their own costumes with a high degree of success; visits to charity shops and so forth are often very productive. If you feel that this is beyond you there are specialist traders to make and sell all sorts of LARP costume. We hope to have the company of some of these at our events.

## Can I steal things?

The basic rule is “NO”. All items that are permissible to be “stolen” in the game have been provided by the game organisers. These include: (1) the special small in character scrolls which are found loose or attached to people’s items in order to make them special; (2) the ammunition for in character firearms; (3) the coins for both the Duke’s and the Khan’s Camps; (4) the raw materials found in the game area (sand bags of gravel and so forth); and (5) the ingots, resins, crystals, oils and so on which form the game resources.. When you place a scroll on the item you intend to use to represent something (“phys rep”), you are agreeing to that phys rep being part of the game and that other players may handle it in order to remove the scroll. It is the scroll itself, however, which is the item to be stolen, and need only be attached to your own item by a short, role-played ritual for it to activate. Scrolls are in-character items and can be either active on an item, or inactive as an unattached scroll. Scrolls can be stolen in both of these states. It is improper to place hands on a person without their permission so you should be ready to hand these items over if asked to rather than expect others to actually search you; you need only do this if your character is incapacitated and unable to resist the removal.

## What happens if die?

You go to the Games Desk and start a new character. Character death at live role-playing events can be a really good thing, as it can be quite flattering that other players have decided you are enough of a threat to them that they have to kill you! Players are generally quite sympathetic in helping other players re-integrate themselves with a new character. You should remember, however, that you are playing a completely different being, and try to avoid associations with your previous dead character as part of your new background. *The Vale* is a game involving players coming into contact with other players in combat situations. We hope that this will be fun and if you are unfortunate enough to get your character killed we at games operation hope that we will be able to get you back up and running as soon as possible.