

# GAME CONCEPT

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MANOR HOUSE GROSS MARKOW, GERMANY



  
**SOCIAL SEASON**  
A REGENCY EXPERIENCE  




Social Season - Game concept  
Version 2.0

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Inspired by College of Wizardry, Fairweather Manor, Fortune & Felicity, Immertreu,  
Demeter, and many more games.

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# Content

<b>Welcome to the England of the 19th century</b>	<b>4</b>
Info for beginners	6
Info for experienced role-players and live-action role-players	6
Notes on history	6
<b>Game structure</b>	<b>10</b>
Schedule	10
Optional early arrival	11
Workshops	11
Dramaturgy	11
<b>Game philosophy and design</b>	<b>14</b>
Play for Drama	14
High School- vs. Shakespearean Drama	14
Cooperative gaming	14
Gender Roles	15
All sins are of equally serious	15
No sexualized violence!	16
No racism!	16
Secrets in the game	16
Ignoring mistakes	17
Co-creative approach	17
<b>Game mechanics</b>	<b>20</b>
The two rules	20
The “Stop!” command	20
Escalation and de-escalation	21
Ars Amandi	21
Character death	22
Duels	22



<b>Characters</b>	<b>24</b>
Design and interpretation	24
Age	24
The families	27
Riverton	27
Crawford	30
Ackermann	33
De Bourgh	36
Bingley	40
Fitzwilliam	43
Social circles	46
Education	46
Society	47
Sports	48
Clubs and Salons	49
Secret Societies	51
<b>Safety rules</b>	<b>53</b>
Communication	53
Harassment and other misconduct	53
Physical Safety	53
Emotional Safety	53
What to do in case of emotional overload?	54
Location	54
<b>Appendix 1: Power or How to influence the game world</b>	<b>55</b>
Tradition	55
Wealth	55
Political Power	56
Social power	56
Reputation	56
Prestige/Fame	57
<b>Appendix 2: About the elections</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>Appendix 3: About the dear money</b>	<b>59</b>





## Welcome to the England of the 19th century

***England, 1811. While mainland Europe is in the midst of the Napoleonic Wars, a very different battle is raging within English high society: the ball season is approaching and old enmities must be fought out, new bonds are to be forged, and the wealth and prestige of one's own family needs to be protected and increased.***

At first glance, England at the beginning of the 19th century does not seem to offer the best conditions for romantic stories. The kingdom was in the midst of a long-lasting war against the mighty Napoleon, as well as a veritable government crisis, since the reigning king, George III, was suffering from a serious illness and was no longer mentally sane. The living conditions of the less well-off classes of the population also certainly offered little cause for romantic delight.

Nevertheless: Whether literary classics such as Jane Austen's "Pride and Prejudice", countless modern romance novels with a historical touch or, most recently, the lavishly produced hit series "Bridgerton" on Netflix - the Regency period is still closely associated with romantic notions of splendid balls, intricate love stories and strict social rules (... and people who rebel against these rules).

Our Larp Social Season is also inspired by various examples of this genre. It is not meant to be a historical simulation or even a mixture of reenactment and larp, but a larp inspired by a historical era. It is not about an exact re-enactment of that time, but about the playful experience. The emphasis is on drama, passion, intrigue and the clash of different personalities in conflict. We want to give a broad sense of the era, but it's meant to feel more like you're participating in a dramatic, romantic television series than a time travel experience.

In this document you will find a collection of important information about the game concept. It should answer basic questions and convey the rules of the game, but also introduce you to the world of this larp and give you ideas for your game.





## Info for beginners

This experience is beginner friendly. Even if you have little or no experience with larps, role-playing games, or similar forms of gaming, Social Season can be a great experience for you - you just need to approach everything with an open mind and get into the flow of the game. Feel free to contact us if you are unsure or if we can help you in any way. We can't solve every problem, but there are no stupid questions, so feel free to ask! This document should clear up a lot of confusion, and there will also be an introduction and some workshops before the game starts.

## Info for experienced role-players and live-action role-players

This experience will bring together participants who are used to different play styles and have different play preferences. So you might have to deal with approaches that are not like your own. Behavior that is considered interesting or "good" in some roleplaying and/or live-action roleplaying circles may seem strange or "bad" in others. Since we want to have fun together, empathy and understanding of other styles is essential. It can be extremely enriching to learn about other styles, if you remember to tolerate each other and always assume that no one means any harm. It is important, however, that you agree to the framework that we outline in this document and that we will also teach in the introduction and in the workshops before the game begins.

## Notes on history

Regency, in the narrower sense of the word, refers only to the short period from February 1811 to January 1820, when George III, who had fallen ill, was replaced by his son George as Prince Regent. This period ended with the death of the old king, which allowed his son to take the throne as George IV and rule independently.

In a broader sense, Regency refers to an era that, depending on interpretation, lasted roughly from about 1800 to about 1830 (the death of George IV) and was characterized by social changes and significant developments. It also overlaps with Romanticism, an era in which famous English poets and writers were active, such as the scandal-ridden Lord Byron, the creator



of the Frankenstein story Mary Shelley, and Sir Walter Scott, whose novel *Ivanhoe* can be considered the first representative of the modern knight novel.



Probably the author most closely associated with the Regency period is Jane Austen. Although she died more than 200 years ago, her novels, especially *Pride and Prejudice*, *Emma* and *Mansfield Park*, are still popular today and some of them have been made into films several times. Thematically, Austen took her inspiration primarily from the novels of manners that were popular at the time, each of which focused on the social conventions of a particular social class.

With a keen sense of observation, she portrayed in her stories the behavior and social interactions of the higher social classes in her country. At the same time, she included criticisms of these mores in her work, or subtly poked fun at them.

Not to be neglected as an important factor for this period was the emerging newspaper business. With the steam-powered high-speed presses introduced by the *London Times* in 1814, more than a thousand sheets could be printed per hour. The newspaper was thus able to produce five times its previous circulation. In addition, the new possibilities ensured the rise of society magazines, which presented fashion and art and printed commentaries on politics and society, but also spread rumors about the rich and aristocratic - similar to the gossip magazine *Lady Whistledown at Bridgerton*.





Speaking of fashion, the clothing of the upper classes in the past opulent rococo period had still been dominated by heavy brocade and velvet, richly decorated and, in the case of the ladies, supported by constructions of cushions, hoops and straps. In addition, there were elaborate wigs, feathers and huge hats. In the Regency, however, starting from revolutionary France of all places, a radical change took place towards a much simpler elegance, which in its forms, in the eyes of the time, was based on the fashion of Greek and Roman antiquity.

For women's dresses, light fabrics such as linen, muslin or cotton in light colors with floral patterns were preferred, often decorated with lace. The tight-fitting empire silhouette was characteristic. This was often accompanied by free arms and a low neckline.

Lace, embroidery and other embellishments disappeared from men's fashion and knee breeches were replaced by long trousers, which still characterize our clothing to this day. Other elements of Regency gentlemen's clothing - tailcoat, vest, shirt and tie - still have their place in formal menswear today.

In addition, there was the top hat, which had already been imported from the United States at the end of the 18th century, but only now became popular in Europe. The male part of English society was influenced not only by a new style of dress, but also by a new lifestyle: the dandy, who also had his origins in the French Revolution and whose passion was to dress immaculately and fashionably at all times.







# Game structure

## Schedule

### Thursday

until 14.30	Arrival
15.00 – 18.30	Workshops Part 1
18.30 – 19.30	Dinner
20.00 – 22.00	Workshops Part 2
<b>22.00 – 00.00</b>	<b>Act 0: Prologue</b>

### Friday

08.00 – 09.30	Breakfast
10.30 – 12.00	Group and family photos
<b>12.00 – 18.00</b>	<b>Act 1: Summer romances</b>
13.00 – 14.00	Lunch
16.00 – 17.00	Garden picnic
<b>19.00 – 01.00</b>	<b>Act 2: Constraints and opportunities</b>
20.00 – 21.00	Dinner
21.30 – 23.00	Dancing

### Saturday

08.00 – 09.30	Breakfast
<b>10.00 – 17.00</b>	<b>Act 3: At the crossroads</b>
12.00 – 13.00	Lunch
16.00 – 17.00	Teatime
<b>18.00 – 23.00</b>	<b>Act 4: The last dance</b>
20.00 – 21.00	Dinner
21.30 – 23.00	Dancing
<b>23.00 – 23.15</b>	<b>Closing speech and end of game</b>
23.30 – 02.00	Cozy get together

### Sunday

08.00 – 10.00	Breakfast
10.00 – 12.30	Clear room, departure





## Optional early arrival

If you're traveling a long way, it's nice not to be totally rushed and join the game at the last minute (or later). Besides, romantic games are often easier if you already know your fellow players a little bit. Therefore we offer you the possibility to arrive the evening before the actual game starts.

## Workshops

Before the game there will be some workshops, which are obligatory for all participants. On the one hand, important rules and game mechanics will be introduced and tried out together. On the other hand, they serve to define the relationships of the characters within their various social environments, to make agreements and to forge plans for the game.

## Dramaturgy

We have divided Social Season into several acts in order to regulate the pace and to create a certain gameplay feeling in each one. The themes of the acts are to be understood as guidelines rather than hard requirements. Nevertheless, we hope that as many of you as possible will pick up the mood of the acts and thereby create a dense atmosphere together. Nevertheless, we hope that as many of you as possible will pick up the mood of the acts and thereby create a dense atmosphere together. Between the acts there is a time jump of a few weeks and a short break, in which you can determine together with your fellow players what has happened during this time and how the game will continue.

### **Act 0: Prologue (Thursday evening)**

The first act takes place shortly before the start of the ball season. Its primary purpose is to settle into the game together and lay the initial groundwork for later play.

### **Act 1: Summer romances (Friday day)**

The first act takes place at the beginning of the ball season. It is a time when many characters are in a kind of upbeat mood and/or looking forward to future events. Romantic and personal ideals are still at the forefront. Characters fall in love, are infatuated with ideas that are actually inappropriate, or are simply enjoying life.





Whether romantic relationships, deep friendships, or grand plans for the future ... things can be built here that you can tear down and destroy with delight in the next act.

**Act 2: Constraints and opportunities (Friday night)**

In the second act, the ball season is already somewhat advanced. Now the difficulties of the real world come to the fore. This is no longer the hour of romantic folly, but of harsh reality, where background and fortune count for far more than a beautiful smile or a tender poem. Secrets are passed on in whispers and the smallest insult leads to conflict. Whatever tender affection or deep friendship was initiated in the first act is shattered in one way or another in this act - at least for the time being. At the same time, however, it is also the time when useful but loveless connections and profitable but morally unsound business deals are arranged.

**Act 3: At the crossroads (Saturday day)**

Romance and lightness make a comeback. Whatever was shattered in Act 2 struggles for a second chance in this act - but what has taken its place is unlikely to be easily cast aside. Conflicting interests collide and decisions are difficult. Does one have to decide at all? If so, then not in this act ...

**Act 4: The last dance (Saturday evening)**

The final act heralds the end of the ball season. It can be a time of red-hot passion, new plans, secrets revealed publicly, hearts healed or broken for good, or hot tears. Use it to figure out where you want your characters to go and find proper endings for your stories.







# Game philosophy and design

## Play for Drama

This is a game principle designed to encourage dramatic moments and scenes in the larp. The point is not to "win", but to be able to "enjoy" conflicts with your character. This opens the possibility to experience intense and exciting stories. It does not mean that all characters must fail in all their endeavors all the time. However, each character also has a dark side and dark secrets that can be given space in the game. When making your decisions, just think about what will generate the best game for everyone. So also build failure into your characters and allow for it.

## High School- vs. Shakespearean Drama

Social Season is not meant to be the kind of larp where many or even all characters end up dead or insane. It is about meanness, nasty blasphemies, duel challenges and intrigues to steal each other's marriage lots with the highest status and the greatest fortune, not about dastardly poison attacks, wiped-out families and revenge killings. Still, the game is allowed and intended to feel dramatic - it's just going to be high school drama rather than Shakespearean drama ("The shy nerd girl who gets bullied by the popular football players and still ends up with the head cheerleader").

## Cooperative gaming

In this game, we want to tell and experience a story together. In doing so, it is important to also provide a stage for the other participants and support them in developing their character. In theater there is a principle that is also important in this game: "the others play the king".

The grouchy duchess, for example, who can bring about social ostracism at court with a single word, can only be convincingly portrayed if as many participants as possible share the status of this role - for example, by playing fear of the duchess' possible wrath. If, on the other hand, everyone ignores the fact that the duchess is a dangerous figure (because they know that it is not necessary to face the queen in the course of the game), it quickly becomes boring.





## Gender Roles

While we usually try to create larps and characters where we interpret historical gender roles quite freely (and often just generously ignore them) we do it differently in this game.

A Regency larp in which all roles are completely equal would to us feel too much like a modern story in pretty costumes - possibly appealing, but far from the feel we want to convey with our larp.

In keeping with literary and cinematic inspirations, Social Season will therefore focus very much on the genders of the characters (though participants can, of course, choose the roles regardless of their off game gender).

However, even though the roles and their possibilities will not be exactly the same play-wise, they are intended to be of equal quality. It is our goal to allow male and female, young and old roles to each have their own interesting options for action. If this sometimes means bending the boundaries of historical realism, then we are happy to accept that.

## All sins are of equally serious

In real Regency society, it will certainly have made a difference in the eyes of public opinion whether a young girl is pregnant out of wedlock, a young man runs away from a duel, two married people cheat on their partners, a gentleman fails to pay his gambling debts, or a head of a family has a secret homosexual love affair. For our game, we will not handle it that way. Instead, all behaviors defined as sinful by society will be on the same level. In this way, we want to avoid creating a "hierarchy of sins" that reduces the fun of the game, where some things can be swept under the rug with ease, while others seem so unforgivable that the resulting conflicts cannot be resolved in any case.

A secret homosexual love affair should generate just as much tension and gut-wrenching excitement as a clandestine heterosexual rendezvous in the park. Both can lead to family problems and social dramas but should not create the feeling of committing such a serious crime that it must be covered up at any cost.





## No sexualized violence!

Sexualized violence is NOT a game topic in Social Season. Neither will we include rape/sexual abuse (or threats of it) in the background of characters, nor will we include such things in game scenes. We expect the same from our participants.

## No racism!

Other topics we do NOT want to play on are racism and anti-semitism. This may seem strange at first glance, especially in relation to racism, because the period we are covering was in reality strongly influenced by colonialism and slavery and a number of so-called "racial theories" were developed there.

For this game, however, we want to follow the approach of the television series *Bridgerton*, which in this respect simply doesn't care about historical correctness and paints the picture of a society largely free of racism, in which a queen or a duke with dark skin color is just as natural as nobles with light skin tones.

To make this very clear once again: we don't want to hear the infamous N-words in the game, nor characters ranting about Jewish people poisoning wells and murdering Christ - no matter how historically accurate that might be.

Conversations about slave plantations in the New World or the lucrative human trafficking that you or your imaginary friends engage in are also undesirable.

## Secrets in the game

Many abysses lurk beneath the surface of noble society. Among them are probably things your characters have done or are involved in that they would prefer to forget forever. But, if they were to succeed in doing so, these would be secrets that might not even exist in the game. However, it is not so easy to present secrets in such a way that they are still secret, but also offer fun for more than just one person.

A few suggestions and ideas for this:

- Leave things lying around: You just got a letter with an important message? It might fall out of your pocket or you might forget to take it with you when you get up from the table.





- A secret conversation for two: Leave doors ajar, even if it's for very personal, confidential one-on-one conversations. Never close the doors completely. This gives others the opportunity to eavesdrop.
- Don't hoard items: Found an interesting item? Then don't hide it in your (bedroom). Anyway, hiding is not a good idea, rather play with it!
- Spread rumors: You've found out a secret (on the condition that you don't tell anyone, of course), but you can tell your best friend or one of your siblings. Secrets are safe with him or her for sure.
- Write in a diary: A good way to get rid of all your secrets is to write them in a diary. You can also record your character's experiences. And here the same applies as with letters: you get up from the table and just leave it. Who would dare to read someone else's diary?

## Ignoring mistakes

The magic of our game lies in the power of the moment. There is no way to rewind and repeat what has happened once - at least not without interrupting the game. This also means that goofy mistakes will happen. Facts will be misrepresented. Characters will forget important things, like the name of their best friend, because the people they are playing with have forgotten them. Misunderstandings will lead to unexpected and unplanned situations. For once, the "play for drama" principle does not apply here. If you notice that your counterpart makes such a lapse, do not make it a drama, but just ignore it. And if you yourself notice that you have made such a mistake, then just pretend that it never happened. Chances are pretty high that no one noticed it anyway.

## Co-creative approach

While in most media it is clear who produces content and who consumes it, in larp it is somewhat different. Every larp is created in a large collaborative process. The organization provides the setting, themes, and usually also conflicts and tasks, and the participants bring the story to life together. Each person is the main character of his or her own experiences, but is also responsible for involving the other players and giving them the opportunity to bring their characters to life. Ideally, all participants approach the larp cooperatively, are motivated and well prepared, and ensure that it is a great experience for everyone. With Social Season we want to go a





bit beyond this approach and share the creativity but also responsibility for the conflicts and tasks with you.

What do we mean by that? We write the roles and the background for Social Season, but the plot and the storyline can and should be created by the participants - you! We will build approaches for conflicts, dark secrets and mutually exclusive goals into your characters. But in addition, we want to create a framework for you to offer and realize your own stories. The reason we want to do this is relatively simple: 30 people have more ideas and a wider range of gaming preferences than five. Our inspirations are the larp series "College of Wizardry" and "Fairweather Manor", where we had very good experiences with this approach.

Before the game you can tell us your ideas via a form and we will help you with the realization. Also during the larp you can come to us with ideas and we will try to implement your wishes as good as possible. The earlier we know about a planned event, the easier it is for us to support you! And don't worry: The game ideas you create don't necessarily have to be deep and sophisticated. After all, you can't spend all your time uncovering unseemly affairs, bringing to light sinister plots against the crown, or stumbling upon heirs to the family fortune who have been thought dead for years. Alternatively, you can just think of nice little events and put them into action. How about a literature circle, in which the newest, still unpublished writings of this rascal Byron are read and discussed, joint drawing lessons in the park or the tasting of delicious family specialties? We are looking forward to your ideas!





# Game mechanics

## The two rules

The two most important rules in this game are:

1. When you are being approached, show some coherent reaction. Act in any way, any way at all, but act.
2. When you engage someone, don't expect a specific reaction. Accept what the other person does with your game offer.

For example, a player representing a character's sister breaks into an impromptu argument and angrily accuses the character of having an affair with her fiancé. The player behind the character could now, for example, reject the accusation in an equally indignant voice, speak confusedly of a misunderstanding, break down crying and ask her for forgiveness, or say to her face with a cold smile that he is quite sure that her fiancé never loved her (possibly depending on whether said fiancé is also represented as a role in the game and what the player of the character has agreed with him). Neither should he simply ignore the accusation, nor should the player of the other character expect a very specific answer from him.

## The “Stop!” command

You may know this from movie clichés, when the director shouts "Cut" to interrupt a scene. Well, in this game, we are all directors of our own movie in a sense, and the command word “Stop” is our mechanism to interrupt the game.

If something happens that makes you feel uncomfortable as participants, someone oversteps your boundaries, or you sense a dangerous situation, you can call "Stop!" to briefly interrupt the game. (Of course, this mechanic is not used to stop the game if your character feels he or she is in danger or does not agree with another character's reaction!)

If you hear someone yell "Stop!", pause the game and check what the reason for the interruption is.

Sometimes, after a "Stop!," a quick note is enough ("Be careful, you're about to push your counterpart up against a hot spotlight") or a request to change something ("Being yelled at by five people at once is too much for me right now"), sometimes you just have to escape the situation by leaving. That's all fine.



The important thing is: saying "Stop!" is always okay. No one gets mad about it. Even if someone blocks you in a scene with a "Stop!", there should be no accusations or questions about why. A quick question about whether the other person is okay and what they need is fine. Respect their wishes!

## Escalation and de-escalation

It is not always necessary to stop a scene that pushes the boundaries of your comfort zone. Sometimes a short hint that it is now enough and you would like to continue playing at the current or a lower intensity level is more than sufficient. You may also want to discreetly signal the opposite to your opponent, i.e. that you would be happy for your character to escalate the situation further. There are three simple gestures for this: thumbs up, thumbs down, and thumbs horizontal. When you signal "thumbs up" to your opponent, the intensity of the scene may be increased. "Thumbs horizontal" means that you are approaching a limit and the current level should be maintained. If, on the other hand, "thumbs down" is displayed, the intensity level of the scene must be lowered.

## Ars Amandi

A shy flirtation between two lonely hearts that slowly turns into something more. A hot night of love to get secret information. Or the forbidden love for the fiancée of one's own brother, during which one is "accidentally" caught in the act. There are plenty of good reasons why characters want to exchange intimacies with each other in the game. Of course, this doesn't mean that the participants behind the characters also want to do so.

Therefore, if there is a love scene between characters during the game, sex or intimacy in general is only simulated. For this we use a method called Ars Amandi. The participants touch each other's forearms while looking into each other's eyes. We will demonstrate exactly how this works before the game begins in the workshop.

The method offers the possibility to exchange played tenderness without becoming too intimate. Here, the forearm stands in for the other person's body and can clarify what the characters would like to do together now, without putting the players in a difficult situation. However, it is indispensable to assess the limits of the other person in advance. If the other players do not want to play a love scene, this should be respected in any case.



## Character death

First of all, you cannot kill other characters. You can theoretically decide to let your own character die ... but we would prefer it if you wouldn't do that. Character death is not supposed to play a central role in this larp.

Dying during a game can be interesting, but usually only if it is something the player chooses for dramaturgical reasons. Therefore, in this game, it is impossible to kill other characters without the consent of the person involved. The same goes for injuries, which would affect or even interfere with a large part of their game. So while it is perfectly possible to attack your sister in a played affect and disfigure her face with a big scar (using make-up of course, no real scars!), this is only possible with the explicit consent of the player. If the other person would rather not play on the emotions of such a permanent disfigurement, they can simply be decided that the injury was fortunately only superficial. This rule is reinforced by the second of the two rules mentioned earlier, according to which the objective of an action always determines its effects.

## Duels

To prevent this problem, and still be able to give room for impulsive demands, tragic scenes between good friends (who have to compete against each other for the sake of family honor) and last-second interruptions, there will be a schedule for two men's duel dates on Saturday in the organizer's area. Interested opponents can sign up there during Friday. If there are too many entries, it will be negotiated on Saturday morning during the break between the acts who can duel, in case of doubt by drawing lots. Excess duels must then take place "on Sunday" (i.e. in the off-game after the end of the game).

There is also a tradition in Shire society for ladies' duels, which have always been used to settle irreconcilable feuds of the opposite sex. These duels are fought at the gaming table of the white saloon with cards, where the stakes can be financially or socially ruinous. Analogous to the men's duels, over which ladies have little influence, men will hardly be able to prevent the worst. Again, there are two dates on the duel notice board of the orga.

There will still be a cheat sheet on the details of the dueling rules for both genders.







# Characters

In Social Season, all participants take on roles created by the organizers. For each character there is a character description with goals, personality traits, secrets and connections to other roles. Each character also belongs to at least one other social environment besides his or her family, which brings interesting connections, but also obligations and conflicts.

All participants will have an influence on which role they receive. There will be a form with which we ask for wishes and ideas concerning the game and the character. We probably won't be able to fulfill all wishes, but we will definitely do our best.

## Design and interpretation

The characters will be created by us and coordinated with each other in order to bring a coherent and interesting Regency setting to life. However: it's your character. Each character has a background story and some traits designed by us, but these can be interpreted quite differently. The characters are yours for the duration of the game, and you can play them out however you want.

This game will not fail because characters are played differently than "intended by the writing team"; the story will just take a different direction.

Your character is yours. You alone decide how you interpret it.

## Age

We want to create the feeling that generation and age matter, without putting too much emphasis on numbers - just as little as on the real age of the players.

Therefore we divide the characters into three age categories. All three generations are important for the larp to work, and all three will be provided with social and romance game impulses. Our goal is to have characters of all generations equally involved in both scandalous secrets and romantic affairs.

Just like gender, of course, the age category of the roles may be chosen regardless of one's real age.







### **The young generation**

Characters of the young generation make up the largest share of the game characters on Social Season. They are usually between 17 and 25 years old on this game. They are at the beginning of their adult life, are unmarried and still have to figure out what place they will take in the world. An important step on this path (at least from a social point of view) is to enter into a proper marriage without being "ruined" by a scandal beforehand.

Young characters often have great expectations and romantic dreams that may well be disappointed. In the vast majority of cases, they are financially dependent on their parents and the pursuit of self-determination is often one of their main driving forces. But even young people are not immune to the power of traditions. They are part of a complex network of social groups and circles of friends in which things are rarely harmonious. Time and again, emotions bubble over as they try, with and against each other, to find loopholes for their own dreams and feelings in the corset of social obligations.

### **The parent generation**

The second largest share of the roles are characters from the parents' generation, usually between 35 and 50 years old. They have usually found their place in life, are (or were) probably married and have learned many lessons about life. Their social responsibilities are, on the one hand, to help their children get the "right" marriage match, and on the other hand, to protect the family's reputation. In doing so, they are under the pressure of this responsibility, but often also exert a lot of pressure on their children. Always for their own good, of course.

But whether they devote themselves entirely to these tasks or get involved in scandalous events remains to be seen. For while they probably observe the possible and impossible emotional confusions of their offspring with growing horror, their own love lives are marked by the collision of reality with the dreams of their youth. Unforgotten hurts, missed opportunities, and the perpetual attempt to find success and fulfillment after all determine the actions of many characters.

### **The grandparent generation**

The smallest group are the characters of the grandparents' generation. They are usually between 60 and 75 years old on this game and were (presumably) married at some point in their lives. Whether overly strict or mildly protective, concerned with good manners or eccentric, characters in this category have greater social freedom than characters of the young or parent generation. The experience of a long life





gives them a certain composure in dealing with the constraints of society, at least when it comes to their own affairs.

They have great authority in their families and in the community, but make sparing use of it. Depending on their personalities, they can both play a mediating role between parental roles and the younger generation and drive a wedge between them. And of course, even in old age, one is not immune to affairs and scandals ...

The Shire's grandparents are well connected among themselves, having known each other for decades, and reliably manage to give younger people the impression that they know everything that goes on in the Shire.





## The families

The characters are mostly members of various influential families of the same county, who gather on various occasions during the ball season at the estate of one of these families. In addition, there are a few individuals with no established family ties.

### Riverton

The Rivertons have always been able to secure political office and gain influence in this manner over the last few generations. It has long been known that without their organisation and vision, chaos and unrest would break out in East Wyrwood Shire. But they also know how to play their part in London. A Riverton has been sitting in Parliament for many years, and the family has built up a network of contacts from the House of Lords to Downing Street and even to the Royal Court, which the Rivertons know how to use for themselves and their family friends. There is one thing only in particular that the family has trouble with: change. The effects of the French Revolution on English society are as much a thorn in their side as new fits of fashion. Others scornfully call their thinking old-fashioned, but they themselves prefer the term traditional.

#### **W. Riverton**

Gender: male

Age: grandparent generation

Keywords: diplomatic, forward-thinking, political, born leader, problem solver, congressman

Social Groups: Golden Stag Club, Croquet Club

The old, diplomatic landlord of the Riverton family has been sitting in the House of Commons for the Tories for quite a few years. His popular style and political foresight have earned him the nickname "Riverton the Peacemaker." Surprisingly, however, it is his own family where W. cannot always appear as the accomplished diplomat he is known throughout the country. Too often he rubs up against his son O., who holds more conservative views than he does. He almost dreads the day when O. will follow him in Parliament.





### **O. Riverton**

Gender: male

Age: parent generation

Keywords: local government, conservative, ambitious, ruthless

Social groups: Golden Stag Club, Friends of the Equestrian Sports

The heir to the Riverton family currently serves as chief magistrate in East Wyrwood Shire. However, he has long aspired to reach higher, to achieve fame at the national level. For a long time he has wanted to do the same as his father W. and move into the House of Commons. Whether he takes his father's place, whose politics are far too liberal for him, or the second, which is available to East Wyrwood Shire, is all the same to him. To realize his plans soon, any means seems to be acceptable to him. In his wife J. Riverton he has a loving supporter who knows how to use her own network for his purposes.

### **J. Riverton**

Gender: female

Age: parent generation

Keywords: conservative, religious, caring, penitent, committed, political

Social Groups: Reverend Riverton's Parish, The Good Ladies Circle

The caring mother of G. and A. and loving wife of O. Riverton is known throughout the Shire as a religious philanthropist. That she skillfully holds the strings of church politics in her hands and presides over the refined ladies of the Shire shows that she is in no way inferior to the rest of her family in organizing or political matters. She is clear about her role as a Riverton and contributes her share of contacts to the family network. Some would call her religious zeal almost fanatical, as if she were praying for forgiveness for a serious sin.





### **G. Riverton**

Gender: male

Age: young generation

Keywords: lawyer, diplomatic, determined, impatient, strong sense of justice

Social Groups: Wandsfield College, East Wyrwood Shire Reel

The lawyer G. Riverton has already earned a positive reputation in the Shire. No one doubts that he will one day follow in the footsteps of his grandfather, W. Riverton. Until then, he serves as chief prosecutor in the county and advisor to members of the Ton on legal matters. This is a role that appeals to the purposeful young man, as it allows him to actively do some good and help make the Shire safer. He likes to think of himself as a well-educated gentleman. Unfortunately, sometimes he gets carried away. Then he makes rash decisions on impulse, some of which he regrets afterwards.

### **A. Riverton**

Gender: Male

Age: young generation

Keywords: progressive, pastor, determined, down-to-earth

Social Groups: Reverend Riverton's Parish, Homeschooled, Roundtable for Literature & Science

The priest of the local parish is the fledgling A. Riverton. He has only been in the post for a short time, but in that time he has already been able to implement some of his modern ideas and get younger people excited about active roles in the parish again. His biggest supporter is his mother, J., but she doesn't always agree with his progressive style. He has never been in competition with his older brother G., who aspires to a political career as a lawyer. The two brothers are simply too different.





## Crawford

The Crawfords are an old and considerably rich noble family with Welsh roots they always like to emphasise. They are considered somewhat stubborn, but also warm-hearted and sociable, and are essential cornerstones of the upscale rural community of East Wyrwood Shire. Whether it is church festivals or hunting parties, a Crawford is sure to be involved in the organising committee. City life, on the other hand, seems to be out of favour for the head of the family - to much dismay of some of the young ladies. While most respectable families are drawn to London during the political and social summer season, the Crawfords' townhouse has remained mostly deserted for years. The impossibility to take part in London's society is a much mourned fact of the daughters of the house, so the old Crawford tends to send out big rounds of invitations to all neighbours to keep peace in his home. The family tends to be overly hospitable on those occasions, as no one likes to upset the neighbours. Whether the members of the family are aware that they are ridiculed in social circles as country bumpkins is uncertain - in any case, they do not seem to take offence.

### **C. Crawford**

Gender: male

Age: grandparent generation

Keywords: benevolent, caring, loving, impatient

Social Groups: Friends of the Equestrian Sports, Golden Stag Club

C. Crawford is a bustling cornerstone of rural society; in no small part due to his ability to breed prize-winning horses. He loves his daughters and, persuaded simply by their smiles, lets them get away with almost any fancy. The only thing he is too familiar with are the perils of the London streets, which is why he makes a point of keeping them around and safe at all times. The death of his much younger wife a few years ago affected him deeply. Now, however, rumor has it that he wants to get back into the matchmaking game, so that he won't be left alone for the rest of his days. In addition, the question of his inheritance troubles his mind. After all, someone will have to keep his estate going one day.





### **L. Crawford**

Gender: female

Age: young generation

Keywords: curious, enthusiastic, nature-loving, stubborn, day-dreaming, reckless.

Social groups: Homeschooled, Friends of the Equestrian Sports, The Ghost Light Poets

L. Crawford is known throughout the neighborhood for her love of nature and for being somewhat wilder, more hot-headed and boisterous than is expected of a young woman of her standing. She does not like to be taken for a fool. Especially not by men who want to tell her what to do and what not to do. She loves her family and country life, but wants nothing more than to break out of her golden cage and explore the world. As the eldest of the Crawford sisters, however, she is expected to marry well to ensure the family's good reputation. A responsibility she would gladly escape.

### **R. Crawford**

Gender: female

Age: young generation

Keywords: intelligent, funny, straightforward, curious, self-interested, know-it-all, mediating

Social groups: Roundtable for Literature & Science, Homeschooled, The New Ladies Circle

Since her childhood, R. Crawford has been deeply deeply devoted to science and literature with all her heart and soul. Her passion, though always supported by her parents, was not really taken seriously by the grown-ups of her family. She is only a woman after all and will surely become a devoted, loving wife and mother one day soon. But in truth, nothing would be further from R.'s active mind than to live a boring, limiting, oppressed life as a pious lady. In family conflicts she usually acts as a mediator, but she is not afraid to speak uncomfortable truths even in those situations.





### **B. Crawford**

Gender: female

Age: young generation

Keywords: reliable, well-behaved, smart, prejudiced, calculating, proud

Social groups: Miss Howl's Esteemed Ladies' Seminary, The Good Ladies Circle

The youngest of the Crawford sisters, B. is a beacon of pride for her father. A perfect daughter, always well-mannered and always polite. The fact that she was sent to the girls' boarding school anyway - as the only Crawford daughter on top of it - is completely incomprehensible to her. Why didn't her father see how much she loves her home and family? How homesick she was all this time? Her introduction to society came as a freeing salvation from the strict boarding school life. Now, she is not only finally back with her family, but she can also pursue her passion for matchmaking all those around her. But beware, as you should not be deceived by her perfect facade. Behind it, the youngest of the Crawfords is tough as nails and determined to get her own will.

### **H. Crawford-Cunningham**

Gender: male

Age: young generation

Keywords: resilient, flexible, hot-tempered, cocky, immoderate, cowardly

Social groups: Corinthian Society of East Wyrwood Shire, Wandsfield College

H. Crawford-Cunningham spent several years in the Cape Colony and has recently returned to England at the urging of his parents. However, staying with his uncle in rural England is a real punishment for H.. He misses the carefree, open life he knew from South Africa, but for the time being there are circumstances that make a return impossible. He takes comfort in the fact that his parents once told him that, as the nephew of the head of the household, he could inherit part of the Crawfords' large fortune.





## Ackermann

The Ackermanns are new to the county of East Wyrwood Shire and, to the general displeasure of their new neighbours, they only joined high society a few years ago. They made money with their publishing house for sophisticated literature and the most widely read newspaper east of London, but to truly be part of society, they need a lot more, of course. For example, a dignified country estate, such as the one the family has recently acquired. And so the elders of the family are eager to make a connection in their new home now. The family undoubtedly has everything it takes to do so: excellent education, diligence, the best manners and the most exquisite furnishings money can buy. But it remains to be seen whether they, as representatives of modern entrepreneurship, will manage to convince the old-established society of the Shire to accept them as their equals. Especially since the offspring of the family have set their minds on taking as much of their urban lifestyle from London to the countryside as possible.

### **N. Jennings**

Gender: female

Age: grandparent generation

Keywords: conservative, eloquent, great life experience, a bit snobbish

Social Groups: The Good Ladies Circle, Croquet Club.

N. Jennings is known for her conservative, at times somewhat snobbish manner, but also for her sharp tongue. Unlike her nouveau riche son-in-law, she has always been part of the society. The widow of landowner Arthur Jennings, who died a few years ago, has recently moved out of the widow's cottage on the Jennings estate and into the new country home of her daughter's family. She apparently wants to keep an eye on her grandchildren and stand by them as they transition into adulthood and enter high English society. The fact that she is said to have left her previous place of residence in a very hurried, almost flight-like manner, is, on the other hand, surely only a completely exaggerated rumor.





### **R. Ackermann**

Gender: male

Age: adult generation

Keywords: conservative, ambitious, proud, stubborn

Social Groups: Roundtable for Literature & Science, East Wyrwood Shire Reel.

R. Ackermann embodies more than any other the opportunities for advancement opened up by the Industrial Revolution. Originally from a middle-class German family, he was stranded in London nearly 25 years ago - with little money, but big ideas and an unmistakable sense for business. Technical skills, but also a talent for dealing with people and selling his ideas, have catapulted him to unimagined financial heights. As the editor of one of the most important magazines for art, culture and society, he is now a welcome guest in London's better circles. It certainly helps that he makes no secret of his politically conservative stance.

The fact that his wife comes from a respected family of landowners may also have opened one or two doors of high society for him. However, due to her failing health, she will be spending this year's ball season at an English seaside resort to recuperate.

### **E. Ackermann**

Gender: male

Age: young generation

Keywords: charismatic, self-confident, fun-loving, demanding, vain

Social Groups: The Ghost Light Poets, Wandsfield College.

E. is a very emotional person who sometimes displays a somewhat morbid sense of humor. While his father spent years doing everything he could to acquire a nice estate away from the city, E. apparently has little use for country life. His world is the balls and salon parties of London. This is where his life takes place, in the midst of artists, dandies and salon ladies, who together revel in romantic literature and indulge in daydreams. The fact that he, as the eldest son, would actually have to take over his father's business one day is probably already causing both of them sleepless nights.





**S. Ackermann**

Gender: male

Age: young generation

Keywords: loyal, smart, ambitious, calculating, stubborn

Social groups: Wandsfield College, Reverend Riverton's Parish.

While his brother shows little inclination to take over the family business, S. Ackermann aspires to follow in his father's footsteps. After a somewhat wild adolescence, he has transformed himself into a serious young man in recent years. In doing so, he devotes himself enthusiastically to precisely those commercial virtues that made his father so successful, but which are still frowned upon in fine society as a sign of low status.

**K. Ackermann**

Gender: female

Age: young generation

Keywords: persistent, demanding, self-confident, proud, stubborn

Social groups: Miss Howl's Esteemed Ladies' Seminary, Corinthian Society of East Wyrwood Shire, Roundtable for Literature & Science

The Ackermanns' youngest child, daughter K., is also hardly inferior to her father in terms of ambition and determination. From time to time, the two clash, for example when it comes to her, from his point of view, much too close contact with the young men of the East Wyrwood Shire Corinthians, of which K. is the only female member. In the end, however, she usually succeeds in getting her way. What her father always encourages her in, however, is her desire for more knowledge and education than English society provides for young ladies of her class.



## De Bourgh

Emerged from old Norman knighthood there is no other name that is as deeply connected to the shire as the name “de Bourgh”. Like the ancient oaks in the woods they shaped the land for centuries. There is no written historic document of the area without their name in it - and no guest list without the de Bourghs on it. Even if the stories around the family with French branches have changed to wild rumours of their decadence and arrogance. Their old established name has made them bold and reckless over the course of generations. They like to use and live with the benefits of untouchability. Open relationships, drugs, illegitimate children - problems others try to hide desperately to create at least a semblance of grace and decency weren't even regarded worth a second thought by the de Bourghs as they considered their standing in society impenetrable. Until now.

When the Royal Family announced that the family de Bourgh would not be welcome during London's next social season, most members of the family thought it to be a tasteless joke.

Only to be openly shunned and thrown from their established clubs and salons mere hours later, and even have to bear witness to the loss of their beloved box in the opera house! But the worst is yet to come, a fate so gruesome none of the de Bourghs are sure they will be able to bear it: A season in the countryside!

### **M. de Bourgh**

Gender: female

Age: parent generation

Keywords: eccentric, fun-loving, outgoing, argumentative, affectionate, self-promoting, forward-thinking

Social Groups: Roundtable for Literature & Science, The New Ladies Circle

M. de Bourgh is a former theater actress in her prime who grew up in middle-class circles. Her marriage to the now deceased Sir de Bourgh Sr. nearly twenty years ago provided plenty of fuel for the gossip mongers of the Shire for the longest time. She has a taste for grandiose appearances, eccentric fashionable accessories, and is not averse to wine or the gentlemen of the Shire. At home she is not afraid to openly settle disagreements with her stepson N., but shows her warm, maternal side not only to her daughter T. but also to her step-grandson J.





**Baronet F. de Bourgh**

Gender: male

Age: parent generation

Keywords: bon vivant, lover, socialite, independent, self-doubting, procrastinating, philosophizing

Social Groups: East Wyrwood Shire Reel, Golden Stag Club.

At first glance, it appears that Sir F. de Bourgh is enjoying life to the fullest. He rarely attends to his business as a Whig Member of Parliament, and family matters are tossed back and forth between him and his wife like a hot potato. What matters instead is the opera program, pretty young bedwarmers and his antique collection. Stupidly, his last affair involved a distant member of the royal family, which promptly resulted in the family's "banishment" from the capital. With the almost unnerving quiet of the countryside and without his usual opportunities for distraction, old pain and doubts now resurface for F.

**Lady D. de Bourgh**

Gender: female

Age: parent generation

Keywords: dissolute, partying, liberal, cosmopolitan, fearless, elegant, responsibility displacing

Social Groups: East Wyrwood Shire Reel, Friends of Equestrian Sports.

D. is a French noblewoman who had to flee the revolutionary reign of terror in Paris and is notorious throughout the Shire for bringing French (un)manners with her when F. de Bourgh took her as his wife. The conservative stiffness of the English is completely foreign to her dissolute and urbane nature. She soaks up every bit of news from the continent like one dying of thirst and loves fashion as much as dancing. In view of the family's precarious social situation, however, she must now decide whether it would not be better for her to take the family fortunes into her own hands.





### **Duc B. de Gramont**

Gender: male

Age: parent generation

Keywords: monarchist, nostalgic, resentful, globetrotter, inventive, clever, charming

Social Groups: Reverend Riverton's Parish, Croquet Club.

B. de Gramot is the unmarried older brother of D. He had to flee France, lost everything but his now worthless title, and drifted around Europe from court to court for a few years before coming to live with the de Bourghs a year ago. Even after all these years, he has not gotten over the loss of his old life and has never forgiven the revolutionaries. He is a proud, charming man who loves to tell stories of his youth in France or of his travels. His melancholy mood has improved considerably in recent months, however, and purchases such as a new wardrobe and a new carriage indicate that better times are now dawning financially as well.

### **J. de Bourgh**

Gender: male

Age: young generation

Keywords: instigator, fashionable, witty, etepete, loyal, lonely, hard-drinking, precocious, creature of habit

Social Groups: Corinthian Society of East Wyrwood Shire, Wandsfield College.

The young heir to the de Bourghs is as dandy as they come. His heart is set on the smallest details of the latest men's fashions and all forms of merrymaking. He is often mischievous and many an old lord has left the hall in a huff because of him. But the whole thing is only half as much fun when you're alone, because your best friends have been lost on the edge of the world. In the last two years, even the most outlandish mischief could only temporarily fill the inner and outer emptiness in his life. The fact that his father now expects him to marry doesn't make things any better at all.





**T. de Bourgh**

Gender: female

Age: young generation

Keywords: munificent, clueless, demanding, possessive, vulnerable, spoiled, caring

Social Groups: The Good Ladies Circle, Croquet Club, Miss Howl's Esteemed Ladies' Seminary.

T. considers herself the "conservative black sheep" of her family. Her relatives' eternal dramas and delusions of grandeur make her feel as if she has been left alone. In her search for attention, family peace, and emotional stability, she has turned to the ideal of classical marriage. The fact that she is the child of scandal, however, makes it anything but easy for her to build the reputation necessary for it. It was T. Bingley who, despite this taint, made her a most welcome proposal two years ago. Now the question is whether she will hold on to the union despite his social decline or leave in search of a safer haven.



## Bingley

The Bingley family has been haunted by misfortune for a while now. It all began with the departure of their late father, who in his life as a member of parliament for the Whigs spent years of his life more concerned for the fate of the Shire than the finances of his family. This led to the loss of their beloved family home and left their name's former prestige and riches in ruins. So, with their last drop of determination the family has clung to their last and unshakable anchor in society: their artistic genius. Their music fills the high-ceiled ballrooms of cultural salons and their written words the heads of all those who desperately wish to flee the boundaries of the shire. No event of the season and off-season that claims itself part of elegant entertainment can be held without their skills. The younger members of the family are especially well liked and courted for their many talents. But soon they'll have to decide: Will they be brave enough to take a leap of faith, to make themselves financially free and independent with the skilled labour of their hands? Or will they take the more secure path in life and marry rich? Time's of the essence, as uncertainty rises and no one knows if they will be able to acquire the means for the next months and season.

### A. Bingley

Gender: female

Age: parent generation

Keywords: strict, protective, painter, pragmatic grasping

Social Groups: East Wyrwood Shire Reel, Reverend Riverton's Parish.

A. Bingley is a young widow who, a while back, endured a social and community decline. After the far too early death of her husband and her move to the cottage, not only have the colors of her paintings become more subdued, but the once fun-loving woman now seems more strict and controlled. She tries to do everything in her power to make a living for her children. To her great relief, at least her portraits are more in demand than ever.





**T. Bingley**

Gender: male

Age: young generation

Keywords: responsible, traumatized, sober, loyal, draw, realist, disillusioned, yearning

Social Groups: Corinthian Society of East Wyrwood Shire, Wandsfield College.

His family's impending financial ruin forced T. Bingley to give up his sculpting dreams and trade them for an officer's commission; after all, as head of the family, he now has responsibility for his mother and sisters. Following two years of service on the Iberian Peninsula, the level-headed and competent lieutenant is now on recuperative leave in his homeland. Whether he has missed his fiancée, T. de Bourgh, as much as he has missed his family or the blissful tranquility of the Shires, the young realist has yet to let it be known.

**V. Bingley**

Gender: female

Age: young generation

Keywords: diva-like, unwilling to adapt, under pressure, modern, pianist

Social Groups: Reverend Riverton's Parish, The New Ladies Circle, Miss Howl's Esteemed Ladies' Seminary.

V. Bingley is a coquettish young girl who seems to miss her old lifestyle and seems to have difficulty coming to terms with the poverty into which the family has fallen. Having to replace her beloved grand piano against an old table piano nearly broke her heart and, according to rumors, led to an unglamorous fit of raving madness. After all, as a sought-after pianist, she needs a decent instrument to further her talent. Perhaps that is why she has so enthusiastically taken up the task of bringing more modern, and in her eyes better, music to the Shires Parish.





### **C. Bingley**

Gender: female

Age: young generation

Keywords: seeking authentic experience

Social Groups: Roundtable for Literature & Science, The Ghost Light Poets, Homeschooled

The Bingleys' youngest daughter, C., has been an avid author since she was able to write. She has always preferred to incorporate things she has experienced herself. Emotions such as fluttering and broken hearts, profound grief, and even the sudden upheaval in her life find their way into her works. She explores these feelings and sensations almost scientifically. On some days, one could almost think that she would hardly mind the social decline of her family, as long as she can fill her notebook with it. It seems that her happiness depends only on the next favorable review of the Literature & Science Circle, which unfortunately still prefers her serious works to her poems.



## Fitzwilliam

The Fitzwilliams are impossible! Incurable! Intolerable! Much has been criticised of the eccentric family over the years, but it is their unusual mannerisms that have enabled them to carve out a unique position in society. The family is led by a venerable older duo of women who, decades ago, had already shaken the foundations of fine society through their shared husbandless lifestyle. And being refused invitations into the established circles, they have enriched the cultural landscape of East Wyrwood Shire with countless salon evenings and controversial discussions of their own ever since.

It has become a tradition in the more sedate parts of the neighbourhood to tell each other scary stories about the latest absurd expansion of Fitzwilliam's sprawling private collection, to spread fear about their next public-science experiment and to get excited about the ideas currently being negotiated in the salon. The liberal circles of the community, on the other hand, are always eager to attend the events of the lively family. Through their promotion of the arts and the extraordinary, a colourful network has formed around the two women and their wards, which runs through all professional groups and reaches all the way up to the Queen's own heart.

### **E. Fitzwilliam**

Gender: female

Age: parent generation

Keywords: well-read, charismatic, bold, brusque, experimental, rebellious, determined, politically committed, strong

Social Circles: The New Ladies Circle, Croquet Club

The chaotic Fitzwilliam household is ruled by the motherly, but stern matriarch E. The charismatic, though rather stubborn genius won't leave a path once chosen, no matter how many challenges await her there. She couldn't be dissuaded from taking in her female friend S. and her foster child N. - even when the whole Shire ran their mouths and she didn't budge and continued her research and wild experiments despite being a woman. One of her greatest achievements though was the founding of her new liberal Ladies Circle, which she could shape to her liking. E. is a force to be reckoned with, a determined woman with a hard shell, but a soft protective spot for her kindred and everything abnormal.



### **S. Fitzwilliam**

Gender: female

Age: parent generation

Keywords: cheerful, curious, absentminded, idealistic, guarding, collecting, delightful, balanced

Social Circles: The New Ladies Circle, Friends of the Equestrian Sports

S. doesn't mind violating social conventions as long as she stays true to her own moral compass. It helps that most people have a hard time holding grudges against S. for long, with her absent-minded and cheerful nature. She is able to see the shimmer of light even in her darkest hours, sees value in the strangest whatsit and whatnot, and finds the hidden angle in everything. Her great passion is to expand the family's collection, even though opinions differ as to whether it may be counted as art, curiosities, or demonic constructions. Lastly there's something to know: S. is actually not a Fitzwilliam at all, but carries, still being an unmarried woman, the name S. Wentworth. The name, however, was put aside many years ago, when she and her ward N. were lovingly taken in by E. Fitzwilliam and so the old name became unused and unwanted by her.

### **O. Fitzwilliam**

Gender: female

Age: young generation

Keywords: proud, stubborn, calculating, mature, controlling, nostalgic, vulnerable

Social Circles: The Good Ladies Circle, Miss Howl's Esteemed Ladies' Seminary

O. is generally regarded as the last bastion of sanity within the Fitzwilliam family. The widow's older child holds surprisingly conservative values for her age and especially for her family. She has her father's alert mind, her mother's prideful stubbornness, and a hard shell of control and longing for stability that is truly hers alone. Her desire to bring order to her family's chaos makes her a restless presence, but it also makes her a pillar of support for the Fitzwilliams, helping her grudgingly accepted step-aunt S. in particular in managing the family collection.



### **D. Fitzwilliam**

Gender: male

Age: young generation

Keywords: fearless, loyal, adrenaline junkie, opposing, turbulent, intense, loving, traumatized

Social Circles: Corinthians, Homeschooled

The youngest in the Fitzwilliam household is a tempestuous, brash man who formally presides over the family as their oldest male member, but is all too happy to leave that task to his strong-headed mother that he so very much resembles. Instead, he throws himself gladly, fiery and head first into adventures and fantasies with his friends. Whereas in the past it was wild pranks and childish tests of courage, two years ago he took it as far as joining the war against Napoleon to challenge his own courage. But now that he has returned, he actually makes a somewhat more sober impression than before. Whether that is merely exhaustion or a genuine sign of willingness to take on familial responsibilities remains to be seen.

### **N. Wentworth-Fitzwilliam**

Gender: male

Age: young generation

Keywords: attentive, friendly, quirky, disoriented, warm/kind, empathetic

Social Circles: Rev. Riverton's Parish, The Ghost Light Poets, Homeschooled

N.Wentworth is a gentle soul, but a bit of an oddball who can discover the special and otherworldly in even the most mundane and trivial - and he is more than happy to tell others about it. His friends appreciate his politeness and helpfulness, even if his advice can be rather strange at times.

He has tried many professions, but nothing seems to have been the right fit for him. The unwavering support of the Fitzwilliam family gives him a lot of freedom in his search for his profession, but as an orphan raised by S.

Wentworth, he is still searching for himself and his future. At the moment, his aspirations are focused on a career in the church. However, his family's reputation makes his acceptance into the pastoral seminary anything but easy.



## Social circles

The characters are not only members of a family but also involved in other social groups (some open, some secret) and are drawn into the action through them. These can be people who share the same preferences for dancing, equestrian sports or croquet, the church parish in which one is involved, fine salons and venerable clubs or even associations of an extremely questionable nature.

## Education

### **Miss Howl's Esteemed Ladies' Seminary**

The main objective of this school for superior daughters, the "Miss Howl's Esteemed Ladies' Seminary", is quite clearly not to cultivate the mind and broaden the intellectual horizon of its young female pupils, but to prepare for the core purpose of every young woman's life: marriage. It encourages and demands demure behaviour, not critical thinking, and teaches those skills that will enable a young lady of proper standing to catch a good match. From posture to conversation in the common foreign languages, from dance and music to the admired art of needlework, from the fine arts to the management of a respectable household. The strict and formative educational methods of the old maid Howl, who runs the institute, are feared, and yet even the strictest everyday school life also always teaches one thing: how to circumvent rules, find loopholes and, despite scrutinising eyes, find happiness in secrecy. Many friends and foes were found here and memories were created that would last a lifetime.

### **Wandsfield College**

Higher mathematics, the latest marvels of modern science and, last but not least, the great questions of politics and classical philosophy - the families of the English upper class appreciate giving their sons a classical education and letting them spend a few years at a renowned boarding school. The traditional Wandsfield College on the edge of Dartmoor is exactly such an institution. A small but much appreciated side effect of this lifestyle are the terrific contacts formed to other young souls of high society that can be oh so helpful in later stages of a young man's life. Founded in 1553, Wandsfield College has always been a perfect starting point for deep friendships (but also bitter enmities) among its students. Even those who aspire academically to higher things, are perhaps even eyeing at studying at Oxford or Cambridge, are ideally prepared for their path here.



## Homeschooled

Oh, how exciting it must be to be taught in a boarding school! To be out of reach of chaperones and concerned parents! So the poor young souls think who were taught at home by lines of governesses and tutors at the wish of their guardians. It is so much harder to escape watchful eyes when there are no classmates to hide behind! In the Shire they know every nook and cranny, every stone, every person. And that can get so very very boring, especially when compared to the exciting stories of the boarding school pupils. So to no one's surprise, it's those left at home that push their boundaries to their limit and are tempted to incredible heights of mischief. And who could overlook the one great advantage offered by staying at home? The advantage of being allowed to make acquaintances with the opposite sex even before being introduced to society! Those days in the countryside form the deepest friendships and, so it is rumoured, sometimes even more.

## Society

### Reverend Riverton's Parish

After the old and now deceased priest had failed to perform essential tasks in the organisation of his congregation for far too long, the young and newly installed Rev. Riverton was finally able to restructure the Shire's Anglican Parish. Since then, the young man has proven to be a passionate shepherd, with the choir welcoming several new members, and its Bible study group now having a younger age range as well.

Needless to say, not everyone likes this. To some of the long-established and deserving members of the congregation, the new reverend is all too progressive, the new voices sing off-key, and there is too much discussion about the Song of Solomon.

### Roundtable for Literature & Science

It's shocking, but more and more often, young ladies seem to show an interest in serious literature and the latest scientific research. These kinds of ladies of the Shire have established a discussion group in the private libraries of the countryside, where they are able to discuss contemporary world literature and the philosophies of ancient scholars. Even their own works are recited in their Scientific Reading Circle, and one or two young gentlemen who like to take up the pen themselves can be found here as well nowadays. Some older semesters are showing their support



for these young literary and natural scientists, so at the moment valuable sponsorships and even journeys to the ancient places could be in reach. The older folks see a most welcome source for exciting stories and informative news in this circle of creative minds. A wonderful way to dispel the boredom of the Shire.

### The Ghost Light Poets

Set aflame by German poets and painters, the artistic movement of Romanticism has led many an innocent soul astray in the Shire, igniting a longing for passion and freedom in many young hearts. The self-proclaimed Ghost Light Poets, a wild band of young people, passionately throw themselves into every emotional and fantastical aspect of the soul. Willingly they abandon the stiff rule of a rational-governed society, and explore their emotions in the form of poetry, literature and painting. The young people do not shy away from the grotesque in their conversations, celebrate it in their self-invented horror stories, and defy fine conventions in a mood between revolt and resignation.

## Sports

### **Croquet Club**

This French precision sport spilled over to the British Isles a few years ago and has enjoyed great popularity ever since. The members of the croquet club are enthusiastic players who are constantly exchanging information about the rules, different placing patterns and the perfect balls and racquets, and they are not afraid to share this knowledge with other uninvolved people. They regularly organise tournaments where they invite anyone who shows interest in this wonderfully sociable sport to participate.

### **East Wyrwood Shire Reel**

What would be a ball without dancing? As soon as the music starts up to Cotillion, Quadrille, Scottish Reel, La Boulangere or other country dances, the feet begin to tap and those who love to dance start to add to the exhilarating fun. The most enthusiastic dance lovers have joined together to form the East Wyrwood Shire Reel. They are not only the first on the floor and motivate the rest to follow their good example, no they also study closely the reports of the balls held in London and the neighbouring counties and keep an eye on the latest figures and trends. But just because they are familiar with the latest developments in the dance world does not





mean that they approve of them. After all, this waltz brought in from the continent is really outrageous! Gentlemen putting their arms around ladies, hugging them to their chests and twirling in circles in a shameless manner with far too much familiarity! It's a good thing that the East Wyrwood Shire Reel is also there to help and advise those families that decide to host.

### **Friends of the Equestrian Sports**

No hour of life is wasted that is spent in the saddle. Horse lovers would certainly agree that true happiness can only be found on the back of a horse. Be it the freedom that sweeps over you on a horseback ride, the perfect interaction between horse and rider during a fox hunt, or the joyful excitement of watching a horse race. Who has the best horse? Who has the best technique and the best jockey? Questions that provide fertile ground for full-length discussions. These disagreements were also the cornerstone for introducing and organising betting in all areas of equestrian sports. One or another has already won a fine sum of money with it. In order to be able to directly rub the betting success or failure under each other's noses, group visits to the Epsom Derby, the most prestigious of the 5 British Classic races, or the Royal Ascot are mandatory events that everyone is only too happy to attend.

## Clubs and Salons

### **The Good Ladies Circle**

Be it house concerts, flower shows, garden awards or dances - the members of the Good Ladies Circle traditionally and masterfully orchestrate the cultural life of East Wyrwood Shire. One also has a big heart for the Shire's poor and unfortunate in this circle (at least for the good God-fearing ones who have fallen into their plight through no fault of their own). Somebody must take care of the adherence to manners and morals in this Shire as well, if necessary by social pressure towards the offenders in question. And although most of the events are open to all socially relevant inhabitants of the Shire, membership in the inner circle is tightly regulated. Needless to say, only ladies of impeccable character and lifestyle are welcome in the organisational committee. So who, if not this association of the most respectable ladies might be better appointed to determine who is to be struck by the banishing sword of social exclusion.





### **The New Ladies Circle**

It's been well over twenty years now that the Ladies Fitzwilliam took their removal from the established Good Ladies Circle as a personal inspiration to overthrow the cultural life of the Shire completely and add a whole new angle of their own design. Their own salon began as a small group of ladies enjoying informal controversial discussions to the pleasing sounds of chamber music, but over time it developed into the thriving cultural guiding star of the Shires' modern spirits. The ladies of the Salon Committee organise exciting exhibitions, concerts, and lectures on anything interesting and unusual enough to provide sparkling conversation. The topics are presented to the interested salon society, sometimes knowledgeably, sometimes quirky and fun, and then discussed at length over the best tea that can be found in the Shire. Many young talents have found excited new buyers or generous patrons of their art in this circle of the weird and wise.

The salon's closed evening events, which no gentlemen has ever been allowed to attend, are notoriously known to be furious gambling nights, blurred by alcohol and the smoke of cigars. Nothing but rumours, obviously.

### **Golden Stag Club**

When the Shires' gentlemen reach a certain age, they need a place where they can debate amongst themselves in privacy. For many years now this place has been the back room of the Golden Stag Inn within the Shire. It is there that the more seasoned gentlemen can meet and discuss what might be best for the Shire.

This established noble round is quite exclusive. Needless to say, one may only attend the meetings at the personal invitation of one of the gentlemen. Over hearty food, good wine and local beer, foreign tobacco is enjoyed and forward-looking matters are discussed with the honest discretion of true English gentlemen. It is only a rumour of course, that the gentlemen of this group may be big but only empty talkers, and that the round is full of gossip heads much more vocal than the ladies in their salon on their worst days.

### **Corinthian Society of East Wyrwood Shire**

Further, farther, higher, better - this is the motto of the Corinthian Society of East Wyrwood Shire. Bare knuckle boxing, sword fighting, fierce hunting trips with the purpose of always being the first behind the hounds, but also a normal game of croquet at a picnic played with furious vigour. The members of the Corinthian Society of East Wyrwood Shire can create a contest out of each and every circumstance, which they then pursue in a friendly but ambitious manner to win it.



While defeat may not be an embarrassment, it is only victory that is truly enjoyable. In addition to these highly athletic aspects, the (almost) all-male club is also notorious for various (mostly) harmless pranks in the county, which its members have been rumoured to have committed, but were only rarely proven to have done so.

## Secret Societies

### **The Whispering Willow**

Finally! A new season is about to begin and months of social events and excitements are on the horizon! Not that these haven't been happening throughout most of the remaining time, but the Season is just different! Everyone dresses up, new neighbours meet old ones, friends and enemies are all but forced to spend evening after evening together. Additionally, daughters and sons will be returning from their boarding schools or come to visit and, even more so than usual, will be on the lookout for a suitable match. The best time, therefore, for secrets, rumours, feuds, scandals and secret love affairs! And yet, what value would these hold if they were really kept secret? Don't you worry, dear reader, because a small group of people from the shire will be more than delighted to help and keep you informed. Those who write the "Whispering Willow" have eyes and ears everywhere and know all the best sources for gossip. However, there is one secret they intend to keep to themselves, which is that of their own identities. This being the reason why the tabloid keeps getting published anonymously. Neither is it known how exactly they manage to spread their publication among the residents of the county.

### **The Coast Couriers**

The East Wyrwood Shire's smuggling ring is a proud tradition that can be dated back centuries. After all, His Majesty's customs were always designed to be circumvented. Whereas in the past it was fabrics for clothing and alcohol that travelled through cellars and tunnels along the coast, these days it is mainly colonial goods such as tea, tobacco and opium that are traded to make life for the people easier. And the fact that for the last couple of years it has been possible to kick the shins of Napoleon himself, the most powerful man in Europe, by undermining the Continental Blockade, has given the black marketeers even more reason to be proud of their profession. Besides, their customers are plentiful, and there is hardly a social event that does not depend on a shipment or two of Chinese tea or French wine.



### **The Anonymous Republicans**

"God oust the King!" Since the American and French Revolutions, frustration and anger against royalty in England have, for the first time, a joined cause and direction. But naturally, even among the most die-hard admirers of the ancient democracies, there is not one, but many opinions on which aspects and innovations of the revolutions should be implemented in England and which of the bloody manifestations of the French should be avoided at all cost. Similarly, the reasons put forward for rejecting the king are as varied as the illustrious members of this somewhat threadbare secret society.

Nevertheless, for conservative circles, the discussion of revolution alone is already treasonous, and so our would-be republicans can only meet in cheap pub back rooms or private libraries to mentally toss around more or less realistic plans for Royal overthrowals.

### **The Masked Vigilante**

Smugglers and revolutionaries haunt the Shire! Thankfully, one brave soul has taken up the good fight against these terrible scoundrels. Very much similar to the plot of a trashy novel, this man roams the forests at dusk, masked and equipped with a pistol and a rapier. But he can hardly lead the fight alone, many people are certain. There must be a ring of supporters who provide him with information and financial resources!

Nevertheless, there are not only voices of approval for his actions. According to others, he is nothing but a thug who robs law-abiding citizens at night and poses a threat to the honour of any good family's daughter. Therefore, the investigators have long since picked up his trail and are trying to apprehend him. Vigilante violence must not be allowed in the Shire!





## Safety rules

Even though a larp like Social Season can sometimes get pretty intense, the safety of all participants has to be ensured at all times. Therefore there are some rules and hints, which should help to make a great experience possible for all participants.

### Communication

We do our best to create a safe environment for everyone and want everyone to feel welcome. Nevertheless, there might be situations where someone feels uncomfortable. If and when these situations arise, please don't hesitate to contact us so we can talk about it. We will do our best to solve the issues and we are always happy to listen.

### Harassment and other misconduct

At Social Season, we do not tolerate any form of real discrimination, whether based on sexuality, appearance, origin, gender, ability or the like. We strongly oppose such misconduct.

Respect the boundaries and wishes of other participants, especially (but not only) in physically intimate interactions, and do not question them.

### Physical Safety

The physical safety of all players is always paramount. Even if there should be clashes between characters, these should not be taken seriously, of course, but always just played. They should be exciting and create drama for bystanders, but at the same time they must be fun and safe for all participants.

### Emotional Safety

The more intense the situations, the stronger the experiences we often undergo. As a result, game situations are sometimes created that involve emotional borderline experiences. However, this can also lead to overstepping of boundaries, emotional injuries, and excessive stress that can tarnish the overall experience.





## What to do in case of emotional overload?

An immersive experience like Social Season can evoke strong emotions. This can be a very positive experience, similar to goosebumps when watching an exciting movie or real tears when reading a sad love story. However, it can also sometimes just be a bit too much, such as when an event in the game brings up real bad memories or evokes more emotion than expected. That's absolutely okay and nothing to be ashamed or afraid of. Those who feel they need a time-out in between or simply want to talk to someone about what they've experienced will find peace and quiet in a specially provided lounge area, and a sympathetic ear if needed.

## Location

Safety and careful handling of the location are immensely important. Even if it means that some interesting actions and scenes cannot be played out. Please refrain from crazy and reckless stunts so that nothing is damaged and treat the interior with care. Also, refrain from anything that could stain or damage floors, walls, etc.



## Appendix 1: Power or How to influence the game world

While we, the players, are usually very aware of the constraints women had to bow to in the past, and we can play them on the fly in a larp, we often have a tendency to underestimate the social constraints that have affected men. At the same time, we have little idea of what strategies were open to women to get their way.

It is important that all players on a larp are aware of how they themselves can influence the game and give game impulses to other players, so that no one has to sit around "helplessly". At the same time, it is also important to know what reactions the society in which we play expects to certain impulses. There will be a workshop on this topic. The necessary background information is available in advance.

In our game world, there are a number of forms of power that can be exploited in the game

### Tradition

"We've always done it that way!" is by far the best reason to do something in the Shire. Rational arguments may be in vogue right now, but when it comes to the really important things in life, the vast majority of people continue to adhere to the traditions of their ancestors.

But what the traditions of the community, families and clubs look like in detail is up to the players. Even seemingly crazy ideas like "I want to dip my face in a cake!" can be implemented quite easily in the game, for example, if they are declared a birthday tradition. All players are welcome to join in and get creative. (Attention! It is not possible to force other players into traditions against their will).

### Wealth

Wealth is of course the most obvious of all means of power and with a lot of money one's own will can be enforced damn well. However, the following must be kept in mind: only inherited wealth and wealth based on land ownership is considered fully legitimate and worthy of respect. Those who have acquired their wealth through



trade or even their own business must resist exclusion from elitist circles as upstarts. It is also important to note that the management of the money of a household, estate or entire clan is often in the hands of the wife of the head of the family, especially if the husband is not engaged in farming but in a political, commercial or military profession.

## Political Power

In Great Britain, the division of political power among many shoulders has a long tradition. With the House of Commons of Parliament, there is even an institution that allows non-nobles to share in the power of the monarchy. Provided, of course, that they are wealthy and influential enough. These deputies are elected by the upper class, just like officials in the cities and towns. This in turn gives all those who can influence public opinion (e.g., clergymen, salon ladies or journalists) a degree of indirect political power that should not be underestimated. No politician can afford public thunder as long as he wants to keep his position,

## Social power

Having social power means being able to determine the unwritten laws of human coexistence. This begins with the dictates of fashion, continues with rules of conduct, and can even extend to young people's choice of partners.

These social rules and constraints are usually enforced either by triggering shame or guilt. Any form of exclusion is shaming, and with any punishment comes blame. It is the fear of such consequences that makes people abide by the rules of the group they want to belong to or depend on. Thus, to have social power is to be able to control the behavior of the members of a group.

## Reputation

Reputation is the sum of all the qualities that the public attributes to a lady or gentleman. On it depends what events they can attend, what business they can do, and even whom they can marry. For example, a fling may not threaten a man's existence, but having the reputation of being disloyal to one's wife and family will







make it impossible for him to gain political office or make long-term business deals. Loyalty and constancy are indispensable qualities of a gentleman. A good reputation is essential to wield political or social power in society.

## Prestige/Fame

Prestige, on the other hand, is gained by a person through his or her works and deeds, be it in a profession, sports or art. Only a few achieve great fame, and because it is rare, it is coveted. Those who cannot acquire it themselves try to share in that of others, for example, by joining highly respected groups or buying prestigious objects. The most desirable thing, however, is to build prestige within one's own family, either in the form of talented (or well-drilled) children or by unceremoniously marrying it off.





## Appendix 2: About the elections

For some roles the election system in East Wyrwood Shire plays a significant part, so I would like to provide relevant information here.

Historically, a region like East Wyrwood Shire had two MPs, called "Knight of the Shire", at the beginning of the game these are W. Riverton and F. de Bourgh. All males with land holdings that brought in at least 40 shillings per year in rent were eligible to vote. Converted, this is 2 pounds. We extend this to include all persons who are the heir to such a landholding for better playability. This means that at the start of the game we have the following persons eligible to vote: D. Fitzwilliam, C. Crawford, H. Crawford-Cunningham, F. de Bourgh, J. de Bourgh, R. Ackermann, E. Ackermann, W. Riverton and O. Riverton. Explicitly not eligible to vote are the Bingleys as they have no lease income. If anyone else wishes to be included on this list, land must be purchased which brings in at least £2 rent p.a..

In our game, any individual eligible to vote is generally electable. In the case of election to the House of Commons, there is no remuneration; the office is a service to society. However, the office can give one other titles that can bring remuneration. For example, deserving members of Parliament often have positions in the King's Court that they do not exercise, but for which there is remuneration. These titles can bring a few hundred, if not thousands, of pounds per year.

Elections are held openly. The two candidates with the most votes are sent. Each person has two votes. For ages a Riverton and a Bingley were always sent to London. It was unthinkable that this situation would change, accordingly no one else stepped up and the election was quickly decided. The sale of the Bingley's land holdings means that this is no longer possible. Since the last election, therefore, F. de Bourgh has been in the House of Commons. The election is organized by the current MPs, they set the rules that candidates, including themselves, must meet in order to be put up for election. Bureaucratic hurdles can therefore be set up to exclude certain people and make them ineligible.



## Appendix 3: About the dear money

The most important thing right from the start: we do not play a simulation! Money is one of many toys you can work with. Its main purpose is to represent a social gradient within a privileged class, which you play. Some are rich, others are richer. It is only the first group of the two that has the feeling of being poor. Despite this, they are still without a doubt in the top 5% of English society.

Essentially, a pound is worth what a pound was worth around 1810. However, we have adjusted some values to make them more manageable or to create incentives to play with them. One example is lieutenants' pay, which we have generously rounded up, or the selling price of officers' patents, which we have doubled.

So what is a pound actually worth? Based on pure inflation, 1 pound from 1810 would be worth about 84 pounds today. So if you add about 2 zeros to your character's available budget, you'll get a sense of how much money your character has available. But a few prices to clarify.

For 1 pound you get about 46 KG of apples, a good horse costs about 100 pounds and the Bingleys' estate did cost R. Ackermann about 20,000 pounds.

200 pounds p.a. are needed to barely support a family and perhaps have a poorly paid maid. Not worthy of a gentleman.

With 700 pounds p.a. one can afford a reasonable life, a few servants, a carriage. With 4000 pounds p.a. one has actually no more money worries. One can easily make longer and more unusual trips, for example to Greece, if only there were no continental blockade...

And some things are worth what they are worth to the buyer. Smugglers have possibilities to get certain things that normally would not be possible. French wine cannot be legally imported into the kingdom, tea is in short supply. If one wants a barrel of Bordeaux, it will cost more in these times than it did a few years ago.

A firstborn is usually lucky enough to inherit his father's land and estate and live only on the rental income. Whoever marries one usually does not have to worry about whether income will always flow. Other sons will have to pursue a gainful occupation or marry cheaply so that they can live off their wife's dowry and then hopefully not have to work.

What influence will your money have in the game? In the game we won't have pound notes, coins or anything like that. Instead, there will be blank bills of exchange that you can fill in however you want. You can fill in amounts, favors,





whatever you need. Each character has a budget that they shouldn't go over, but we don't control those amounts. If you want to play with it, let us know.

Then there's the matter of dowries. A dowry is paid to a woman upon marriage if the father has saved accordingly. Usually this is invested and earns 5% interest. So a dowry of 10,000 pounds means annual interest of 500 pounds after the wedding.

These dowries are actually intended to provide for the wife after marriage, including in the event of the husband's death, and belong to her and are passed on to the daughters after the mother's death, who usually inherit nothing from their fathers. Some dowries, however, may be so large that an otherwise penniless man can live on them well enough to give up his job. If a woman never marries, she usually eventually receives the dowry from her parents to live on as an "old maid."

Money is a public thing. The neighbors just know how much rent you earn from your land. As an example, 5 minutes after Mr. Darcy arrives in "Pride and Prejudice", the whole room knows how much annual income he has. The amount of a potential dowry is also usually known. Money is part of everyone's, well, almost everyone's daily life. Money is only unimportant to those who have too much of it.

