



Social Season: Two Households Both Alike In Dignity

A Regency larp



Game Concept





Social Season: Two Households Both Alike In Dignity - Game Concept
Version 1.0

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





Welcome to the England of the 19th century

West Wyrwood Shire, 1817: The Napoleonic Wars are over, and life for the well-to-do families in the countryside has returned to normal. People compete for influence, recognition, and the most advantageous matches of the season. Young hearts hope for true love (or at least a promising future). Experienced souls try to gently steer their charges in the right (?) direction while simultaneously avoiding the reopening of long-forgotten wounds. Two old houses are at the center of it all: rivals since the Wars of the Roses, whose feud continues to this day. As the ladies and gentlemen flock to balls, picnics, and tea parties, old alliances are rekindled, new hopes arise, and all the small and grand dramas unfold.

At first glance, England at the beginning of the 19th century does not seem to offer the best setting for romantic stories. Although the kingdom had just emerged from a long war against the powerful Napoleon, it was still in the midst of a veritable government crisis, as the reigning King George III was suffering from a serious illness and was no longer of sound mind. 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.





One larp, two locations

Playing at two locations instead of one presents some logistical challenges. But it also allows for a richer atmosphere and new gameplay possibilities.

With two locations, we have the opportunity to create different game scenarios with different hosts. For example, the layout of Poggelow Castle allows us to stage a morning calling hour there, during which the young gentlemen are “permitted” to pay their respects to the young ladies (under the watchful eyes of their families) at their family estates. This allows us to incorporate an important aspect of classic Regency romance. The balls on Friday and Saturday also take place each in a different house. And while the event is underway at one location, the next setting can already be prepared at the other.

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 questions, 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

Wednesday

from 16:00 pm Early arrival (optional)

Thursday

until 16:00 pm Arrival
 16:00 – 18:00 Workshops part 1
 18:00 – 18:30 Dinner (off game)
 18:30 – 19:30 Getting dressed
 19:00 – 19:30 PG to GM
 20:00 – 22:00 Workshops part 2
22:00 – 00:00 Act 0: Prolog
 00:30 – 01:00 GM to PG

Freitag

08:30 – 09:30 Breakfast (off game)
 09:00 – 10:00 Getting dressed
 10:00 – 10:30 PG to GM
 10:30 – 11:00 Family and group photos
 11:00 – 11:30 Calibration Act 1
11:30 – 17:00 Act 1: Big plans and little romances
 11:30 – 13:30 Mass
 13:30 – 14:30 Lunch
 14:30 – 16:00 Activities
 16:00 – 17:00 Teatime
 17:00 – 17:30 GM to PG (wave 1)
 17:00 – 18:30 Dressing hour in the families
 18:00 – 18:30 GM to PG (wave 2)
 18:30 – 19:30 Calibration Act 2
19:30 – 01:00 Act 2: Constraints and opportunities
 20:00 – 21:00 Art (exhibition, performances)
 21:00 – 00:00 Dancing
 21:00 – 22:00 Buffet
 00:00 – 01:30 PG to GM





Saturday

08.30 - 09.30	Breakfast (off game)
09:00 - 10:00	Getting dressed
10:00 - 10:30	GM to PG
11:00 - 11:30	Calibration Act 3
11:30 - 17:00	Act 3: At the crossroads
11:30 - 13:00	Calling Hour
12:30 - 14:00	Lunch
14:30 - 16:00	Activities
16.00 - 17:00	Teatime
17:00 - 17:30	PG to GM (wave 1)
17:00 - 18:30	Dressing hour in the families
18:00 - 18:30	PG to GM (wave 2)
18:30 - 19:30	Calibration Act 4
19:30 - 23:00	Act 4: The last dance
19:30 - 20.00	Announcements (engagements, etc.)
20.00 - 23.00	Dancing
21:00 - 22:00	Buffet
23.00 - 23.15	Closing speech and end of game
23.30 - 02.00	Cozy get together
00:30 - 02:30	GM to PG

Sunday

09.00 - 11.00	Breakfast
11.00 - 13.00	Clear room, departure

Legend

In Groß Markow (GM)

In Poggelow (PG)

Transfer between locations

In GM and PG parallel





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.

Calling Hour

On Saturday morning, the individual apartments and salons in Poggelow Castle become part of the private estates of the families. In this semi-public setting, they receive guests for formal visits. The focus is on young gentlemen who present themselves to the daughters of the house (and may also discreetly express their interest).

Dressing Hour

The evening dressing period is intentionally designed as a time for interaction within the families. In their private rooms, they can prepare for the ball together, make family arrangements, and discuss expectations.

Activities

Whether it's a dance class, a game of croquet, a liqueur tasting, or a card game—the game's structure intentionally leaves room for various social activities throughout the day. Some activities are planned by us in advance and scheduled. Others arise spontaneously from the game itself and can be suggested by the participants.





Transportation between venues

The two venues are about a 20-minute drive apart. We will arrange transportation between the venues. However, if you prefer to make your own way, you can use your own car or carpool with other participants.

The Acts

We have divided *Social Season: Two Households Both Alike In Dignity* 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: Big plans and little 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.





Characters

In *Social Season: Two Households Both Alike In Dignity*, all participants take on roles created by the organizers. For each character there is a 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.

Costumes

The costumes provided will serve as the characters' basic attire. For female roles, there will be a light-colored dress and a short sleeveless jacket (spencer). For the gentlemen, a dark tailcoat, a cravat, and a top hat are planned (you must bring your own shirt, pants, and vest). You are, of course, free to decorate and personalize your costumes—for example, with ribbons, accessories, or jewelry inspired by shared family colors or club motifs—and this will undoubtedly greatly enrich the LARP.

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.



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.

Somerton

Respected, but frozen in their ways

The Somertons are among the oldest and most respected families in West Wyrwood Shire. For generations, the Earls of Wyrwood have borne responsibility for the land, its people, and its traditions—and hardly anyone in the Shire doubts that they intend to continue fulfilling this role with absolute certainty. The family is considered unwavering in its principles and places great value on honor, duty, and the preservation of old alliances. The Somertons sometimes display clear condescension toward up-and-coming families or new money.

Ashford

Up-and-coming, but ruthless

The Ashfords look back on a long and eventful history. Once, as the Earls of Wyrwood, they held the county's most prestigious title, but during the Wars of the Roses they sided with the wrong side of history—and lost a large portion of their lands and influence and—even more humiliatingly—their title. It was not until centuries later that the family managed to laboriously work their way back up. For three generations now, they have held the title of Baronet. Their current prosperity is based on trade, overseas ventures, and a series of shrewd investments during the Napoleonic Wars. Some neighbors accuse the Ashfords of pursuing their social (re)ascent with excessive ambition.

Wetherby

Respectable, but threatened by poverty

The Wetherbys have been part of the gentry of West Wyrwood Shire for generations. While other houses increased their fortunes through trade, politics, or risky ventures, the Wetherbys steadfastly clung to the way of life of their ancestors. Today, the family is regarded as morally irreproachable, devout, and decidedly conservative—yet at the same time somewhat out of step with the times. Their good name still commands great respect, but behind the venerable facade, money is becoming increasingly scarce.



Harrington

Proud, but threatened with extinction

The Harringtons are a family whose name in the Shire is inextricably linked to the military. For generations, their sons have entered the service of the Crown, and scarcely a generation has passed without officers, campaigns, and tales of distant theaters of war. Some returned with medals, others with visible or invisible scars—and still others did not return home at all. Now a shadow once again hangs over the family estate, for the only son and heir, the young naval officer Robert, has not returned from a voyage. His ship is considered lost by the Admiralty, and he, like the rest of the crew, is presumed missing.

Hartwell

Distinguished, but divided

Their family tree is impeccable, their name melodious, and for generations the Hartwell family has possessed enough land and income to maintain their place in society without much effort. Yet a crack has recently appeared behind the venerable façade. Following the far too early death of the last head of the household, the family fortune passed to his younger brother in accordance with the line of succession, while his young widow and her daughters were left with almost nothing. The new head of the household did, at least, prove generous enough to grant them the right to reside on the family estate and to pay them an annual allowance.

Montford

Modern, but viewed with suspicion

The Montfords are known in the Shire for one thing above all else: their tireless enthusiasm for all things new. New music from London, furniture from Paris, exotic goods from overseas, or the latest philosophical ideas—while other families take pride in old furniture, old recipes, and old customs, hardly anything seems to remain unchanged for long at their country estate. But not everyone in the tradition-conscious West Wyrwood Shire considers such enthusiasm for innovation harmless ...





Fairchild

Wealthy but scandal-ridden

The wealthiest but also the most scandal-prone family in the county is undoubtedly the Fairchilds, even if the members still living today are themselves beyond (known) reproach. Timothy Fairchild, the older brother of the current head of the family, brought shame upon the family nearly twenty years ago when he left his wife and children in the dead of night to flee to the New World with his mistress. His brother, who subsequently took over the family estate, never married himself, but took in the children of his sister-in-law—who died of grief shortly thereafter—as wards.

Social groups

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.

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 ...



SOCIAL SEASON

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.



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.

Allow happy endings

Social Season is a larp where happy endings are not only allowed, but strongly encouraged. This does not mean that you have to force a happy ending for your own character. If you want, he can emigrate to America with a broken heart, prepare for certain death in a duel, move to another shire embittered and ostracised, die of consumption or end up in prison as a traitor against the crown.

BUT (!): With all love for such developments, please make sure that your dramatic and tragic endings do not make the happy endings of your fellow players' characters impossible. When everyone around you is celebrating life (for example in the form of newly announced engagements), the secret farewell of two lovers who are no longer allowed to see each other will feel all the more bittersweet. When a desperate character breaks up loudly with his family on the last evening in public and announces his own death, whatever comes next will not feel like a real happy ending for anyone. And we don't want that. Therefore, the more dramatic and tragic you want your ending to be, the less you should impose it on those not involved.





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's clear who produces content and who consumes it, things are a bit different in LARP. Every LARP is created through a large collaborative process. The organizers provide the setting, themes, and usually also conflicts and tasks, and the participants bring the story to life together. While everyone is the protagonist of their own experiences, they also bear the responsibility of involving their fellow players and giving them the opportunity to contribute their characters. Ideally, all participants approach the LARP cooperatively, are motivated and well-prepared, and ensure that it becomes a great experience for everyone. Don't worry: the game scenarios you create don't necessarily have to be profound or elaborate. After all, it's not as if scandalous affairs can be uncovered around the clock, sinister conspiracies against the crown brought to light, or heirs to the family fortune—believed dead for years—suddenly reappear. But you're more than welcome to come up with nice, little events and bring them to life. How about a literary circle where the latest, as-yet-unpublished works of that snob Byron are read aloud and discussed, joint drawing sessions in the park, or a tasting of delicious family specialties? We can't wait to hear 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.

Playing love scenes

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. We will demonstrate exactly how this works before the game begins in the workshop.

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.





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.

