

AVALON



A College of Wizardry larp
Version 1.4 25th July 2018

What is a design document?

This design document explains what the larp is about, how it works, and which techniques we will use to play it. It is partly a rulebook, partly a guide to the world of the larp, and partly a way of answering questions that you might have about the experience.

We recommend you read this guide before the larp. Although the rules and techniques will be covered during pre-larp workshops, a good general understanding of the design, both the story and the practicalities, will mean you are free to concentrate on playing rather than figuring out how play this larp.

We expect to revise this document and add more detail to it over the coming months, but we are keen not to overload participants with information up front.

This document should tell you everything you need to know to play the game. We will also produce a two-page summary of key facts, practical information, and important safety rules. In addition, we will publish new information to our Facebook group and send out emails to participants who have booked tickets for the larp.

Please ask us questions, via email or on our Facebook group. We look forwards to seeing you in September on Avalon!

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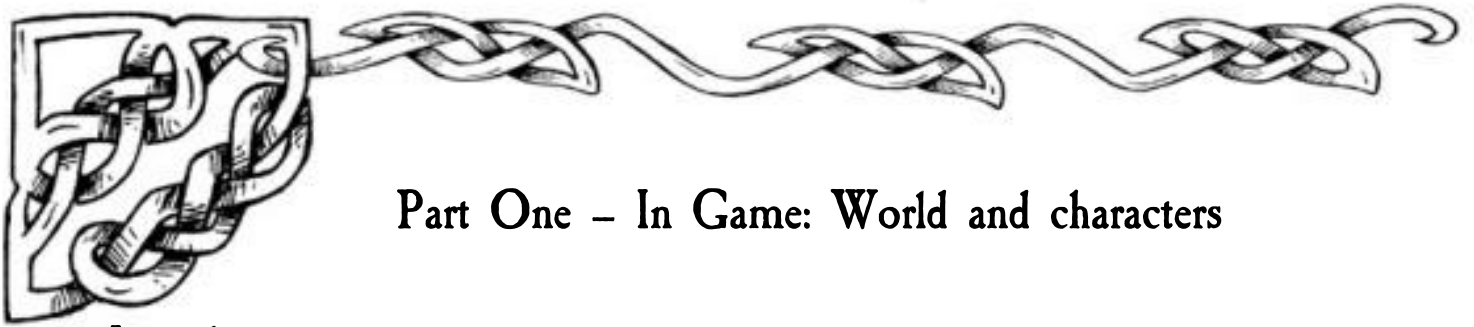
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PART ONE

IN-GAME:

WORLD AND CHARACTERS



Part One – In Game: World and characters

Introduction

Welcome to Avalon, a live action role-playing game (larp) about a magical place of learning; a school where young Witchards (witches and wizards) go to study magic. Avalon is almost two thousand years old. It is an institution with all the trappings of a druidic training camp; it is a bleak and harsh place, rife with dangers, traditions, rivalries, and secrets.

Avalon is designed to forge great Witchards by breaking and rebuilding them in its own image. What this means for your character is up to you, but none who enter Avalon remain the same.

Experience

Avalon is not a kind place. As a student you will certainly be taking classes and learning the old ways of magic, but you will also be fighting for survival in a harsh environment. At Avalon the teachers share their wisdom but they do not run the school. Most students join warbands for protection and friendship. They are your family on Avalon. These small groups plot and compete against each other; a member of one warband caught alone by members of another is likely to be hexed, or hurt, or both.

And yet there is more to Avalon than just lessons and fighting. The island has secrets that beg to be solved, riddles to unravel, and places to discover and explore. Events will unfurl based upon the actions (or inactions) of the players. These events are not pre-planned. We don't know what will happen, but we will interact and react to what you—the players—do.

There will be plenty of time for your own plots and interactions. The stories you tell will be about your character and their time at Avalon.

The world

Avalon is a larp event set in the world of College of Wizardry, a world very much like our own, except that magic is real. The world of magic exists in the shadows of our own mundane world, undiscovered by billions but known to the initiated. It's a world of tradition and old bloodlines, of secrets and mysteries. It is a world of wise sorcerers, powerful witches, and dark-hearted conjurers.

Most of all, it is a world that is slowly changing. From the open practice of magic in ancient times to the completely underground magical world of today, the witching world is a parallel society, linked with and influenced by the mundane world. Of all the places where magic is taught, however, Avalon changes most reluctantly.

Ancient and wild magic is taught on this hidden island. Here students, more used to Netflix and iPhones, are dragged away from their comfortable homes and taught magic the way it has always been taught—the hard way, the Old Way. Here, students live as they did centuries ago, they follow old rites and rituals, and they learn how things are supposed to stay.

The world of magic has its own politics, myths and rules, and is every bit as varied and diverse as the mundane world. But there are three simple rules that are followed by all. These are known as The Traditions:

- The Tradition of Word: You do not speak of magic to Mundanes.
- The Tradition of Action: You do not practice magic around Mundanes.
- The Tradition of Fear: Break these rules and you shall be cast out.

You can find out more about the world of the College of Wizardry at <https://www.cowlarp.com/>

Avalon

“Avalon is not about educating students to go to other colleges, it is about teaching a traditional class of witch and wizard a traditional way of life.”

No one knows the exact location of Avalon. It is connected to the British Isles, but seems to move around, forever shrouded from the outside world. Magical mists prevent Avalon from being discovered by the mundane world and protects it from external threats and influences.

Those students who join Avalon aged 8 or 9 are taught law, herbalism, and various methods of seeing the future and the past. Almost nothing is written down and lessons take the form of discussions and practical exercises. After two years learning these basics, students go on to study healing, poetry and music, politics and warfare. Only when they have studied these to the satisfaction of the teachers are they taught any magic at all.

The community of Avalon at this game will be made up of students age 16-19. Some will have been there for years but only just started learning magic. Others will arrive at the age of 16 without the benefits of this foundation. Some of them are from mundane backgrounds and know nothing of Witchard society or the Traditions. Some are still coming to terms with the existence of magic. Others are the offspring of ancient Hexborn families and attend Avalon out of a sense of tradition. A few students do not want to be on Avalon at all.

Rules of Avalon

There are two kinds of rules and traditions at Avalon. School rules are there to be broken as part of life as a student. Magical rules, however, are an important part of life on the island and cannot be broken. The two should not be mixed.

Avalon School Rules – these can be broken

- Do not go beyond the stones after nightfall
- Do not get caught
- Let the dead rest

Avalon Magical Rules & Traditions – these cannot be broken

Oaths

Oaths sworn on Avalon are magical and binding and cannot be broken. So once a character swears an oath to their Warband they cannot leave it. A character who swears an oath must do everything in their power to keep that oath. Promises can be broken, but oaths are kept.

Avalon is a closed world

In most cases, the only people who may set foot on the island are students, teachers, alumni, and those who have been specifically invited. The mists prevent surprise guests and cut off all communication with the outside world via mundane means.

The Run

The Run is an annual event on Avalon where all students compete in a set of dangerous challenges. The details of The Run change from year to year; sometimes it is a chance to win knowledge, or perhaps your heart's desire. Some years it pits warband against warband, sometimes path against path. Sometimes students hunt one another through the night in packs, sometimes it is everyone for themselves. All that is certain about The Run is that it is dangerous, but the rewards are great.

Dæd-geld

Dæd-geld is the reward given to students and warbands for their actions and performance in lessons. The literal translation of the phrase is *deed gold*. It takes the form of small coins that are given out by the teachers. There are a limited number of *dæd-geld* coins on Avalon and so they must circulate, it is extremely

unlucky to hold on to the coins for more than 24 hours! Teachers will start the larp with *dæd-geld*.

The Lorekeeper (see the section on teachers below) may levy fines against warbands or independents, effectively taking *dæd-geld* from them.

Dæd-geld can be exchanged in certain transactions:

- For advantage during The Run
- For purchase of ingredients held by staff-members
- For certain rituals requiring the sacrifice of daed-geld
- The warband or independent awarded the most daed-geld takes the place of honour at the annual festivals held on Avalon.

There are several important rules about *dæd-geld*, these are magically enforced. You may not break them.

- It is not possible for two warbands to directly trade *dæd-geld* with each other, they **must** go through independents.
- You may not hold on to *dæd-geld* for more than 24 hours before passing it on or using it or you risk drawing the attention of Death.

Gifts and Favours

On Avalon, the value of a favour is significantly higher than any coin. Whilst *dæd-geld* is the de facto currency of Avalon, between students there is a tradition of “gifts, freely given” and “favours owed.” If you accept a gift from another student without them using the phrase “freely given,” then you will owe them an unspecified favour until you can pay back the gift with something of equal or greater value. Favours called in should be of similar value to the gift that was originally given. They can call in this favour at any time.

The Rule of Three

No student on Avalon may benefit from more than three magical effects at the same time. If your character is carrying three charms, or runic protections, or

blessings then they would need to discard one of these in order to benefit from a healing spell.

Characters

"The chaos storm raged around the island of Avalon. The rain fell heavily and the paths and tracks were soon clogged with a heavy mud. Only the mad would be out on a night like this; or the desperate."

The characters at Avalon are either students or teachers. We will write characters for those who want them. You are also welcome to write your own, as long as they follow our guidelines. Avalon is a slightly more gritty experience than some of the other College of Wizardry larps and we want to make sure that characters are balanced and will fit in with the look and feel of this event. When we start the casting, you will get the option to choose if you wish to be new at the school or a returning student, or if you wish to play a teacher. You will also be able to tell us whether you have any particular warbands or paths you're interested in. We will ask you if you want a pre-written character and, if not, tell you where to send your character ideas for review.

Most of the characters will be humans. Whilst were-creatures, part-fae, and demon-born Witchards are a part of the College of Wizardry mythos, any special abilities tied to other bloodlines function barely or not at all on Avalon. Any connections to creatures of power or families of great influence count for nought. The mists ensure that every student stands or falls by their own wits and strength alone.

Students

Whilst some students join Avalon from the age of 8, the larp focuses on the older students who are between 16 and 19 years old. There are other students on the island, but they are not a part of the larp. You do not have to look like a teenager to play a student. Magic has a strange effect on the human body and many of the greatest Witchards look older than their actual age.

We want every student character to be inexperienced. This larp will be more fun if you're playing someone who hasn't seen it all before. Think of it this way: if you're a monster who's been devouring people in the dark for years and years, how scary will it be to meet a faery on your path? Whereas if you discovered that you had strange powers yesterday and was swept away to Avalon to learn magic, how would it feel to meet a sea spirit? That is the student experience we're after.

There are two different kinds of students: *Initiates* and *Pathed*. Initiates have yet to decide the type of magic they will specialise in, whereas pathed students are already studying it.

Teachers

"The closest person I have to a mother once broke my collarbone with the haft of a Dane axe because I 'didn't get out of the way.' She called it 'A lesson that teaches itself'."

The teachers are there to teach; to pass on their wisdom, experience and knowledge, but nothing more. Discipline and the rules of the school are enforced by the students. That does not mean that a teacher cannot punish a student at the school, rather that she or he will get other students to do it on their behalf. That being said, a student or even a warband that directly disobeys a teacher is likely to be in for a world of hurt.

Avalon is led by the Archdruid (the equivalent of the principal) and the Council of Avalon.



The Council of Avalon are three senior staff members. The three of them combined can overrule the Archdruid. This is to ensure that Avalon never becomes the personal fiefdom of one single Witchard.

Under the council are the teachers at Avalon. They don't get along very well and most of them are not interested in getting involved in outside matters or petty student conflicts. Each teacher who is not on the council also takes on a second duty to protect Avalon. These roles represent key functions in running the community of Avalon and maintaining its ethos.

What do you do when not teaching?

Teachers who are not on the council have other jobs to keep them occupied; these roles are assigned by the Archdruid. However, for the purposes of the larp they will be pre-assigned to teacher characters and these are unlikely to change during the course of the larp.

Lorekeeper

The lorekeeper oversees the warband game and keep track of the amount of *déd-geld* awarded. They also set up some of the competitions where warbands fight each other.

Path Wardens

There are five path wardens, one for each path. Their primary job is to select and mentor the students on their path.

Confessor

Even on a place as bleak as Avalon they have realised that sometimes students need to talk. The confessor oversees the emotional well-being of Avalon students.

Watcher & The Dragon's Claw

The Watcher and the Dragon's claw are responsible for organising and overseeing the defence of Avalon.

Truthspeaker

The truthspeaker's job is to ask questions. Of everyone and anyone. To say the things that no one else dares say. To be the voice of truth in a sea of lies.

Paths

There are five different study paths. Each path has different classes and lessons. Some classes are taught to students from several paths at the same time.

Paths are where you are taught the secrets of Avalon. Entering a path is easy, but you are not allowed to graduate until your journey on it is done. New students become initiates to a path and are fully pathed in their final year. The amount of time spent on a path varies from character to character.

In some cases, students are forced to pledge a path. When this happens a mentor (either an older student or a teacher) already walking the path takes you in as their apprentice. The nature of this apprenticeship differs from mentor to mentor.

The five paths of Avalon

Morigenā – The sea-born path



Made famous by Morgan Le Fey: Here students learn magic of water. They learn about illusions, how to call storms, about brewing strange potions, charms, and the secrets of the Whale Road. Their secret lessons deal with “enchantments,” those spells that affect emotion and memory. However, they also learn of the consequences of meddling with such things—one way or another. Thus, they know to appreciate the powers of the mind as well as the heart, and how to combine them.

It is said that Morigenā students are as changing as the tide. Like running water they are destined to shape the world wherever they go.

Sylvestris – The forest path

Made famous by Taliesin, the Bard, students of this path study the secrets of the land and the earth. Here in their secret classes they will learn the languages and forms of the beasts. They also study the only 'written' subject taught at Avalon - the magic of runes – and how even non-magical words have power over others.

Sylvestris is known to produce excellent poets and philosophers as well as Witchards empowered by the very ground they stand on. Students of this path are as good at applying wisdom as they are at gathering it, and change grows like wildflowers in their footsteps.

Tuath – The sinister path of the storm

Students on this path learn the secrets of air and wind. This is the home of tricksters and rogues; they learn subtle manipulations and magic of persuasion; they specialise in the subtle interplay of trades and favours. They consort with spirits, both benign and malevolent.

Advanced students on this path study the properties of certain herbs and mushrooms and their secret classes will show them how to walk into the land of dreams. Tuath students are eminent information finders, and some say the wind itself speaks to them, delivering messages and whispering songs of other worlds.

Taranis – The path of the burning wheel

Students on this path are warriors. They learn the magic of fire and destruction; their secret classes teach them the subtleties of armour spells and the art of war. They wear their scars proudly, as a shining armour is one that is yet to be truly tested. Taranis students believe that fire cleanses the world of what is not meant to remain, and that

something stronger always will rise from the ashes. They are masters at reinventing themselves and overcoming hardships. Taranis values those who choose to learn and grow from loss and failure, rather than let it subdue them.

Wyllt – The wild path



Students of this path are rare, and those who complete it are rarer still. The most famous of these was Myrddin (also known as Merlin). It is a path of madness and darkness. The secrets learned on this path are shrouded in mystery. All that is known is that those who follow it make a long journey, barefoot, across a dozen lands; learning from the witches and wizards of those countries as they go. They learn to speak many languages—both living and dead—and can change their appearance. Often they are mistaken for wise folk, more often they are hunted and haunted and perish along the way. The secrets they learn are not revealed to anyone.





Lessons

Each day at Avalon there will be lessons. Classes start at 10am, but as some classes are taught during the hours of daylight, others during the hours of darkness, there is no start and end to the formal school day and additional classes may take place at any time. Students are taught five or six subjects.

Subjects taught at Avalon

| | | |
|--|----------------|--|
| | <p>Warfare</p> | <p>This is the combat class where students learn to fight with mundane weapons. It is an Avalon tradition that even the most extreme Hexborn supremacists support.</p> |
|--|----------------|--|

| | | |
|---|------------------|---|
|  | Healing | Here students learn how to fix the human body using both magical and (ancient) mundane means. |
|  | Divination | Students learn to predict the future by casting lots and reading entrails. This is a place where Witchards discover how to recognise omens, signs and portents. |
|  | Herbalism | A fundamental class that deals with identifying herbs and brewing potions, tinctures, and poisons. |
|  | Diplomacy | In this class, Witchards learn the art of negotiation. They are taught the secrets of politics and philosophy. |
|  | Dreams & Shadows | This is where students on the Tuath path learn to enter dreams and deal with the fae and demons that lurk within. |
|  | Runes | Runes are a very ancient form of magic. This is the only class at Avalon which deals with the written word. |
|  | Enchantments | Enchantments are the spells that deal with emotions and memory. These are taught only to Morigana. |
|  | Charms | In this class Witchards learn how to create small magic items that can provide a modicum of protection from the dangers of Avalon. |
|  | Megalithics | Megalithics deals with the physical structures of magic. From ley lines to portal tombs; from ghost fences to stone circles. From spirals of woad upon the skin to the runic bridges that allow Witchards to travel halfway across the world. |

| | | |
|---|----------------|---|
|  | Transformation | This class deals with non-human creatures and their magic. Advanced students on the Sylvestris path learn to transform into other creatures. |
|  | Magical Combat | This class deals with both offensive and defensive magic and how Witchards can operate together to make an unstoppable fighting force. This class is taught to Taranis students only. |
|  | Ritual Magic | Here the students learn the art of working with magic in a group to bring about magical change on a large scale. |
|  | Wyllt | No one knows! Students learning the secret magics of the Wyllt path never speak of it. |

Subjects taught by path

(Classes with a ★ are unique to a specific path)

| Subject/Path | Morigenā | Sylvestris | Tuath | Taranis | Wyllt |
|------------------|----------|----------------|-------|---------|-------|
| Warfare | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Healing | ✓ | ✓ ¹ | | | |
| Divination | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Herbalism | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| Diplomacy | | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Dreams & Shadows | | | ★ | | |
| Runes | | ✓ | | | ✓ |

¹ Students on the Sylvestris path learn healing, but will not actually be getting a healing class during the Avalon larp (they do get the same number of classes as other players though). Players of Pathed Sylvestris characters should assume they know a few healing spells and techniques.

| | | | | | |
|----------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| Enchantments | ★ | | | | |
| Charms | ✓ | | | ✓ | |
| Megalithics | | | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Transformation | | ★ | | | |
| Magical Combat | | | | ★ | |
| Ritual Magic | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Wyllt | | | | | ★ |

Timetables – Day 1

| | | | | | | |
|------------------|--|---------------------------------------|--|---|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| Lesson 1 | Welcome to Avalon Initiates | Dreams Tuath | Warfare Morigenā and Taranis and Wyllt | | | |
| Lesson 2 | Diplomacy Taranis and Tuath | Healing Morigenā | Herbalism Initiates | Ritual Magic Sylvestris and Wyllt | | |
| Lesson 3 | Charms Morigenā, Taranis and Wyllt | Divination Tuath | Herbalism Sylvestris | Warfare Initiates | | |
| Lesson 4 | Runes Sylvestris | Wyllt Tests Initiates | Herbalism Morigenā | Megalithics Tuath and Wyllt | | |
| Lesson 5 | Magical Combat Taranis | The Run training* Initiates | Divination Morigenā and Wyllt | Warfare Sylvestris and Tuath | | |
| Lesson 6 (Night) | Defensive spells for Initiates | Transformation Sylvestris | Enchantment Morigenā | Shadows Tuath | Wyllt Wyllt | Ritual Magic Taranis |

Timetables – Day 2

| | | | | | | |
|---------------------|---|--------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| Lesson 1 | Magical Combat Taranis | Herbalism Morigena | Warfare Tuath and Sylvestris and Wyllt | | | |
| Lesson 2 | Healing Morigena | Charms Taranis | Divination Tuath and Wyllt | Ritual Magic Sylvestris | | |
| Lesson 3 | Runes Sylvestris and Wyllt | Dreams Tuath | Warfare Morigenā and Taranis | | | |
| Lesson 4-5 | The Run | | | | | |
| Lesson 6 (Night) | Transformation Sylvestris | Enchantment Morigena | Shadows Tuath | Wyllt Wyllt | Ritual Magic Taranis | |

Warbands and Independents

"She still remembers the feel of nails cutting into skin as she held him down and the smell of scorching flesh. As Emma pushed the branding iron into his shoulder, marking him as one of their own, he didn't make a sound. He would make them proud."

Most students at Avalon join the close-knit groups called "warbands." These are places to find friends, support and safety. Each of the warbands have their own values, rituals, and codes of conduct. All warbands have their own identity, either favouring particular colours or, in extreme cases, having tattoos or scars to represent membership.



Some teachers approve of the warbands and will pit them against each other in tests of courage and applied violence both in and out of class; other teachers are less forgiving.

The warbands play a political and tactical game, making alliances and plotting against the others. All wish to come out on top and take the place of honour at the next seasonal festival.

Some students opt to remain independent of the warband structure. This sets them apart from the other students, eschewing safety in numbers in favour of greater freedom. Often independents need to trade favours in exchange for short term help or protection from one warband or many. There are places on the island where it is not safe to go alone; but there are also places on the island that only independents may go.

Independents also have access to the Sacred Grove, a place of power and sanctuary

on the island where they may rest and talk with one another, share stories, or make plans. The island has also been known to test and challenge independents in the past.

The Riders – Trinovantes

Reputation: Nobility, Courage

Symbol: A black horse on a white banner.

Colour: Bone White



The Trinovantes are possibly the original warband of Avalon. They trace their history back reliably to the 6th century. Ancient stories claim the warband was founded by two students called Brutus and Corineus, originally to defend Avalon against attack.

The Riders stand up for their beliefs and are prone to do what they judge to be “right.” They dislike most immoral actions, and will sometimes even (attempt to) break up a fight between students of other warbands if they deem it to be an unnecessary conflict. Trinovantes usually welcome or protect Independents.

The Ravens – Silures

Reputation: Diplomacy, Cunning

Symbol: A Raven

Colour: Midnight Blue



The Silurian reputation for diplomacy does not mean they are push-overs. Far from it. The warband have taken the wisdom that “war is the continuation of diplomacy by other means” to heart. Sure, they will negotiate and trade, but they’ll also put a knife in your back if you are unprepared or careless.

Historically they have been the warband of Machiavellian schemers, and are known for mastering the system of favours so well they could trick the island itself. They might seem an easy target because of their tendency to keep bloodshed at a minimum level, but cross a Raven and you’ll see your life crumble to dust.

The Skulls – Segovax

Reputation: Ruthlessness and Strength

Symbol: Animal Skull

Colour: Blood Red



Named for an ancient Celtic tribe, Segovax probably derives from the word for Victory. The Segovax are the youngest of the warbands. This is something they hate to be reminded of. They have made up for their lack of history with 1300 years of brutal aggression.

Known for being more than proficient in both magical and mundane arms, the Skulls tend to cut their way through any opposition. They despise weakness and see it as their right to take what they want or need from those unable to protect it. The warband rarely works together as a whole and is usually divided in smaller groups.

The Seventh

Reputation: Loyalty, Determination, Discipline

Symbol: The Roman Numeral VII

Colour: Mud Green



Named for one of the Roman Legions that conquered ancient Britain, the Seventh have always struggled to survive. On more than one occasion they have been down to only a handful of surviving members. And yet they have held on and returned to power. They are known for their tendency to take risks, which has turned out to work to their advantage about fifty percent of the time. For the other fifty percent, they are nearly annihilated.

The Seventh has a code of conduct that states that if one of their number is attacked everyone else from the warband comes to their aid and fights alongside them, no matter the odds.

The Bulls – Legio X Gemina

Reputation: Competence, Intelligence

Symbol: Bull's head

Colour: Sun Gold



Named after one of the Roman Legions that conquered ancient Britain, the Tenth have flourished. They have a reputation for taking the brightest and the best Witchards and being an extremely effective warband in all matters magical. They're less aggressive than some of the others, perhaps, but this lack of aggression comes from supreme confidence in their abilities in matters magical.

You will never catch one of the Tenth off-guard, as they seem to have a plan for everything. They are known for their elaborate strategies and tend to execute them with impeccable accuracy, always sticking to the plan.

Independents

The independents refuse to bind themselves into the warband structure. They survive on their wits and by means of trading favours. Their access to the Book of Avalon gives them the power to provide warbands with answers to questions they would not find otherwise.

Staying independent is dangerous and lonely, but there are secrets at Avalon that only they can learn.

“The monster relished his savage war against them all, keeping the bloody feud alive, seeking no peace, offering no truce, accepting no settlement, no price in gold or land, and paying the living for one crime only with another.”

~ Beowulf





PART TWO

OFF-GAME:

**RULES & IMPORTANT
INFORMATION**



Part 2 – Off-Game: Rules & Important Information

“Fairy tales do not give the child his first idea of bogey. What fairy tales give the child is his first clear idea of the possible defeat of bogey. The baby has known the dragon intimately ever since he had an imagination. What the fairy tale provides for him is a St. George to kill the dragon.”

~ G.K. Chesterton, Tremendous Trifles

Structure of the game

Te will all arrive on site on Thursday. Some will come on the *Avalon Express*—a coach from Prague airport—others will make their own way up the mountain. Once everyone has checked in and we have allocated spaces in tents and huts, we will run through pre-larp workshops.

These will ensure that everyone understands the meta-techniques and safety rules for the larp, and will give people an opportunity to form relationships with other characters.

The larp will begin on Thursday evening and will finish on Saturday night. There will be a break in play each night—between 2am and 8am—so that everyone can get some sleep. When the larp ends we will offer an optional debrief. Then we will throw an after party where you will have the opportunity to socialise with other players who were your staunchest allies or your worst enemies a few hours before.

On Sunday morning we will pack up and leave the site as it was, taking with us only memories. Avalon will, once again, be lost in the mists of legend.

“The mouth of the cave was dark. He stopped, listening to the sound of water dripping slowly from above. Whatever lived down here had not seen daylight for centuries. He whispered a soft incantation, sending a string of ghost-lights to illuminate his way, and then he stepped inside.”

Rules

"Everything I did, I did for Avalon."

The Grey Ones

You may see strange creatures dressed in black hooded robes, looking a little like monks. These are the Grey Ones; creatures of mist. They are a meta-creature used so the organisers and NPCs can move around the place discreetly. They are immune to all forms of magic and cannot be moved physically.

Opt in, not opt out

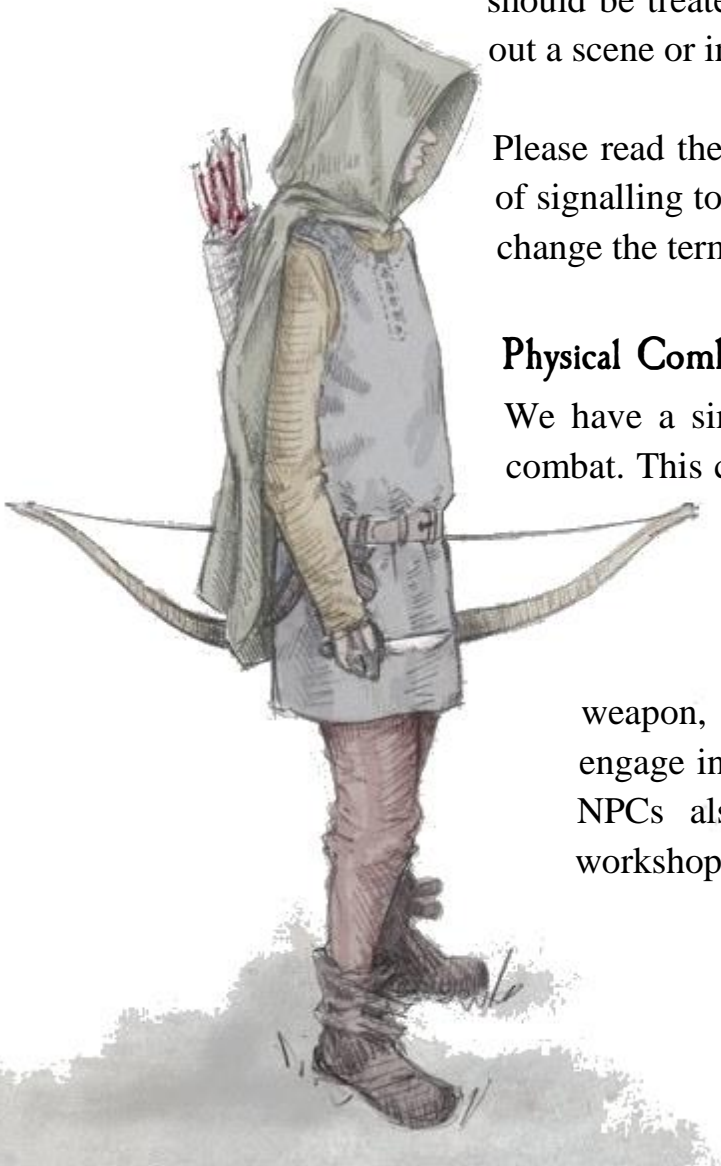
Everything in Avalon is opt in. Sometimes things happen in a larp that we as players just don't want to do. Not for any particular reason, but just that in the here and now they don't work for us. Every interaction at Avalon should be treated as an invitation. You do not have to play out a scene or interaction if you do not want to.

Please read the section on meta-techniques below for ways of signalling to other players when you want to withdraw or change the terms of engagement.

Physical Combat

We have a simple system for both magical and physical combat. This can be summarised as "the target decides the effect."

Physical combat is always opt-in. If your character openly carries a larp-safe *boffer* weapon, then that signifies that you are willing to engage in physical combat with another player. Some NPCs also carry weapons. One of the pre-game workshops will deal with physical combat.



There are escalation and de-escalation mechanics in use to allow everyone to participate and control the intensity of interactions. This means GO SLOW. You can keep the tension running with shouting and taunts but escalate combat slowly.

In a 1:1 fight the results can go either way. You might consider whose character is more experienced, who is carrying a (larp) injury, who is angrier, or just whose loss would create the most larp drama.

We will provide some boffer weapons at this game, but you are welcome to bring your own weapons as well. We will check that your weapons are safe before the larp starts. Please get in touch if you have any questions about this beforehand.

Some players are probably better at fighting with larp weapons than others. Avalon is not a larp where your own real-world ‘hard skills’ should be important (See *fighting for drama*, below).

In a fight where one person faces off against more than one person, the person on their own will *always* lose. Regardless of their martial prowess. Teachers, however, will *always* win against students. Should staff relations deteriorate to the point of combat, the 1:1 / 2:1 rules apply between staff as well

If your character is hit with a weapon in a way that—if the weapon were real and the blow delivered full force—would inflict damage, then they are injured and will require healing (either magical or mundane).

Blows with larp weapons need to be “pulled” rather than delivered full force. Some players may have injuries and we will ask you not to strike at any bandaged location or the head or groin of any player, even with a pulled blow. We will workshop this.

Other types of physical fighting—without larp weaponry—are only allowed between consenting players. Please use the escalation technique “Is that all you’ve got” detailed below and remember to escalate slowly so both parties are

comfortable. We will workshop this before the game. Please do not actually hurt each other!

Always check around you for people who may not wish to be involved before you initiate combat. There should be no fighting (physical or magical) in the tavern or the inner part of the town as there are too many objects, beams, and heavy wooden structures around for this to be safe.

Fighting for Drama—not Glory

"If they closed their eyes they could remember the taste of blood and the sensation of swallowing one of their own teeth, of the loving embrace of oblivion as the cold ground came up to meet them; Avalon taught them this first lesson; they learned it the hard way."

Most one on one fights lead to both characters getting battered and bruised and limping away. Numbers win, so two against one will win a fight. Older students beat younger students, and teachers win against students.

Some of the characters are written to be better at fighting than others; for example, pathed members of Taranis tend to be better at physical combat than others. When fighting against another student or against a teacher or monster please consider the relative skills of the characters to be more important than the real-life skills of the players. Make look amazing rather than trying to win them.

Magical Combat

Magical combat uses the Liveform system of magical combat. We will demonstrate this on location in workshops. Casting spells is simple. Performing gestures and saying a magical-sounding word does it. However, it is 100 % up to the target of the spell to interpret it (and possible effects). So, a “Silencio” might silence someone, but then again, it might not—that depends on the player whose character is the target. After all, spells fail students often!

Remember though, if you are fighting a teacher, or a monster, then their spells work. If the spell they cast was designed to cause injury, and your character is unable to block it, then they are injured.

Here you can see a demonstration of the Liveform magical combat system: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eJ30MzVPcTw>

Spellcasting to lose

Some spells can be too powerful. For example, a charm that will make whoever wears it invulnerable to harm. Or a spell that enchants a sword so that it will cut through anything with a single blow. Most of the characters in this game are students and the spells they create will be limited both in power and duration. No character—be it a student or a teacher—should ever feel invulnerable.

Students should try, as far as possible, to cast spells that are within their path. For example, those on the Taranis path do not learn healing; it is far cooler for Taranis pathed characters, therefore, to need help from a character who has learned how to do healing spells than for them to be able to patch themselves up.



Wands are **NEVER** stolen or removed

A Witchard without a wand is a boring character to play—unless it's been lost on purpose. It is forbidden (off-game, as well as in the fiction) to steal another player's wand.

Signs and Portents

Spells that tell fortunes are spells too. If another character describes an omen or tells your character's fortune, play towards that outcome.

Divination

Sometimes your character might want to do something specific. They might want to explore the far side of the island, to mix a forbidden potion, or to perform a ritual at the stones. For us to react to what your character has planned, we need to know about it. So, if you are planning to do something that might require input from NPCs, or answers from the story team, you should find one of the Grey Ones (see below) and perform a divination that will tell you the best time and place to carry out your plans. This means you will need to include a character who knows Divination in your plans!

In some cases all that we need to know is that you are going to do something, in other cases a Grey One will come and watch (and may advise you as to the outcome). Occasionally we will need to prepare NPCs and scenography ahead of what you have planned and the divination may require you to wait for a while before your activity can take place. This is our technique for making sure we see that what your characters do, and that it makes a difference.

Sex and intimacy

Avalon is a game about living and surviving in a wild, magical world, adventures and challenges of all sorts. Interpersonal relationships between characters are an important part of the game, but the themes we want you to play on are: loyalty, rivalry, love, hate and friendship. Sex should not be a prominent feature of these relations and we do not want play on sex to be part of this game.

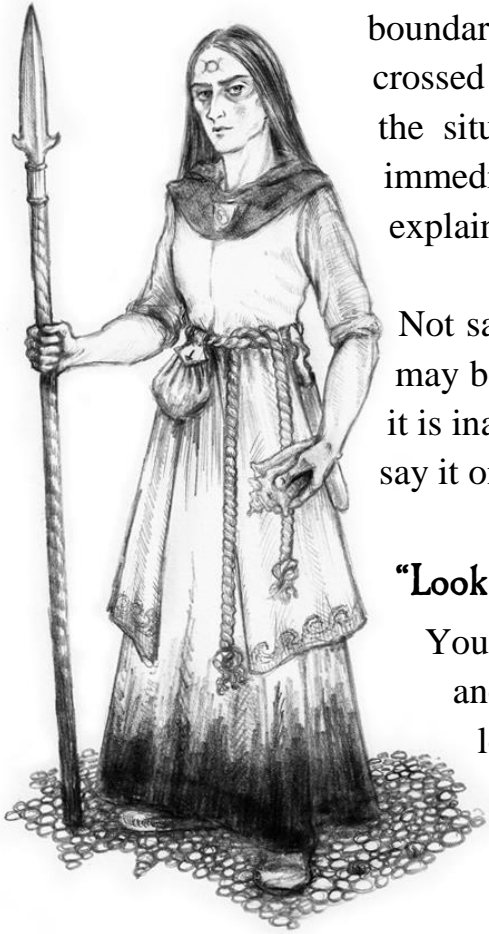
Writing Things Down

Whilst Avalon famously does not write things down, some players may wish to take notes, or have a written copy of their time table. This is absolutely fine. Not everyone has the perfect recall of a 2nd century bard and we'd hate for you to miss out on part of the game because you've forgotten where you are supposed to be. Thus no one will remark upon it if you choose to write something down.

Meta-techniques

"Avalon is cold, a place where you have to fight for who you are, or others will harm you. It's easy to get hurt, and everyone knows this."

Cut



“Cut” is a safe word that signals that the personal boundaries of an individual player have somehow been crossed and the player needs to extract themselves from the situation. If another player uses this word, then immediately cease the scene. You do not need to explain why you're using “cut.”

Not saying "cut" in a situation where it is appropriate may be catastrophic. Saying "cut" in a situation where it is inappropriate has almost no consequence. Better to say it once too often.

“Look down”

You may choose not to interact with a scene or another player at any time by shading your eyes, looking down, and walking away. This is a visual cue that the participant (rather than the character) wants to opt out of a situation. You can use this technique, for example, if you have elected to go out-of-character to go to bed and you want to use the toilet without engaging with other players who might be from an enemy warband. This does not represent invisibility; you cannot use it to avoid being caught somewhere you should not be. If you are using this technique you must leave the area you are in, so you cannot use it to “safely” stand and watch another scene.

“Is that all you’ve got” - The invitation to Escalate

If you want to escalate an interaction, then use the phrase “is that all you’ve got?” in a sentence. For example, if you are being led away by a member of an enemy warband and you’d be comfortable with them dragging you, then you could use the escalation phrase. This is an *invitation* for them to escalate the scene. They may choose to accept the invitation, in which case the game will become more physical, or they might be uncomfortable with taking things further, in which case they will not escalate.

“Lay off” - The call to De-escalate

This phrase means that you as a player would like to reduce the current level of intensity of an interaction. In the example above, you could say to the player dragging you away “lay off” which would signal that you are uncomfortable being dragged. “Lay off” is not an invitation, if someone says “Lay off,” you de-escalate immediately.

Quests / Plots / Story - how it all works

"The building was made from a dark stone. It reached up to the mist like an arm drenched with blood. It was silent. There was a feeling that nothing could be alive here."

Avalon is not a sandbox larp. Although we embrace player-generated stories based on character relations, strife and romance, this is a larp with its own stories for players to breathe life into. What you do on Avalon matters. What happens during the larp will depend on player actions and choices, what characters choose to meddle with and what they leave alone. There is no prescribed route through the mists and there is no set ending; Avalon is a nest of stories.

There will be opportunities for characters to undertake specific quests during the larp. As far as possible we will ensure that each character can attend at least one

quest, although it is the players' responsibility to look out for the opportunity to answer the call to adventure.

Injury and Death

"Mortal lives are so fleeting, if you are going to make anything of them you can't shilly shally. And there are so many mortal lives, it hardly matters if you break a fair few in order to make some that amount to something."

Being killed at a larp is very seldom fun. Dying at one can be, but usually only if it's something chosen by the player for dramatic impact. The same goes for injuries that will ruin a large part of their play. While it's possible to drag off an independent and to brand that character with a warband mark (using make-up, not a real hot iron!), it's not possible to cut off players' arms, blind them permanently or that sort of thing.

While character vs character conflicts will happen, and fights can become quite serious, you cannot kill or permanently maim another student or teacher character at this larp.

Character Death

There are beings on Avalon that are dangerous, however. You may meet some of these in class, or you may find yourself being hunted by one late at night. If one of these characters attacks your character, then your character is in danger! If the enemy repeatedly hits them with a weapon or

continues to cast magic at them once they are injured and out of the fight, then your character is dying.

The exact amount of time a dying character can survive is up to the player, but we suggest no more than five minutes.

It is not possible to instantly kill another character without their off-game permission. No matter how bad the damage from spells and weapons, your character can always be saved if a healer gets to them within five minutes. Your character may be too badly wounded to move, but unless magically silenced, they will be able to cry for help.

Dying is not the end, however. Characters who die at the larp can come back as ghosts seeking justice or vengeance, or desperate allies might attempt to raise their friend from the dead despite the rules? You can even have another character, or join the NPC crew for the rest of the larp.

This will be covered in more detail during workshops. Just remember there are monsters that can and will kill your character. If you get caught alone, or are abandoned by your friends, then your character is at risk.

Healing happens quickly

Healing magic is very powerful on Avalon. No-one wants to spend an entire larp in a sick bed, especially since we don't have a room that can be used as a sick bay. If you've been injured at the larp (in-game, not off-game—if you get injured off-game, we'll deal with that immediately), don't lie around playing injured for any longer than you want to. Find a teacher or another student, and get it taken care of. Make it interesting instead of boring.

Inclusivity

We believe Avalon will be a better experience without sexism, without homophobia or transphobia, without ableism.



and without racism. We ask our participants to respect this decision and to avoid language or behaviours that could be interpreted as breaking this rule.

Some characters may identify as non-binary, be gender fluid, or without gender. In this larp, no character will bat an eye if two men or women show a romantic interest in each other. Students in a poly relationship are not worth remarking about. Your character can be straight, bi, gay, lesbian, queer or whatever you choose.

Likewise, race is not a point of tension in the Witchard world. No matter which country your character is from or which background they have, they will not suffer structural oppression because of it.

We acknowledge that all these issues do affect people in the real world. We have taken the decision to exclude them from the larp because of:

- Inlusiveness—there will be those among our player base who struggle in their everyday lives with these issues. Play on these themes might derail their experience and cause them as players (rather than as characters) to feel marginalised and unsafe.
- Safety—Each of these issues is complex and demanding. While we are not saying they are issues that can never be played on, exploring these issues through larp requires careful design and thorough workshopping prior to play. We must be selective regarding what we can effectively handle within the parameters of this one event.

The themes focused on in this larp do not require the additional stresses of these tensions to be powerful and meaningful.

How does this affect play?

It doesn't! At the larp, gender, disability, sexual preference, and race are not relevant to use as points of conflict or tension. If you need to find a reason to hate

on another character, you can look at their warband, their blood status, or their attitude to mundanes. These tensions will be built into the characters.

Accessibility

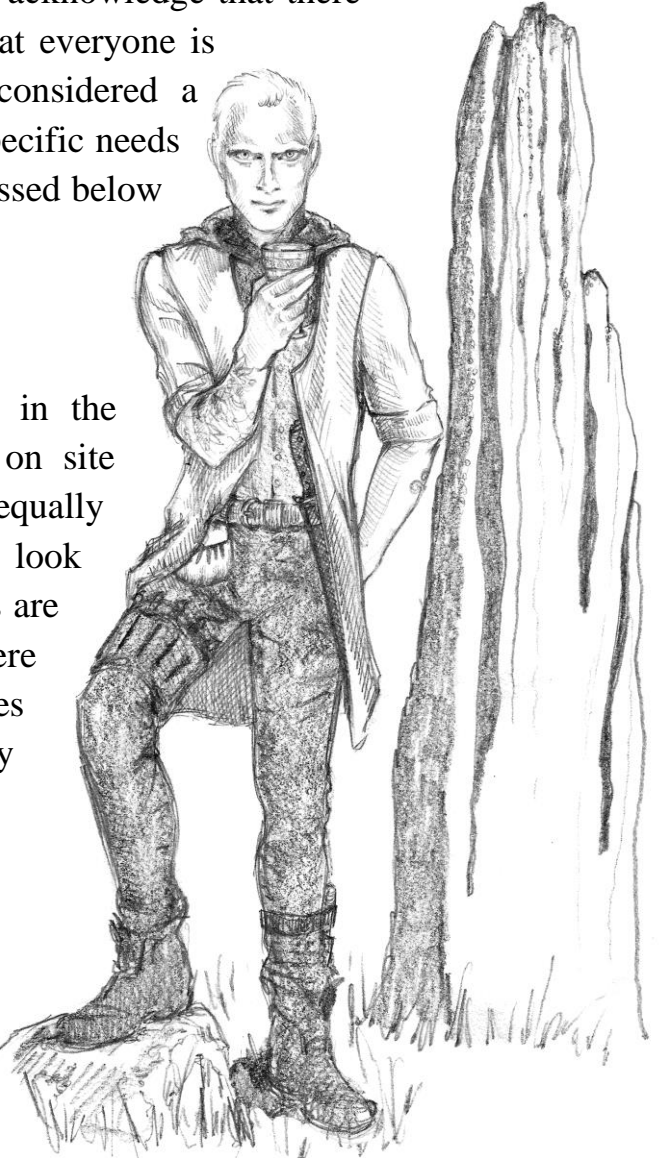
We take accessibility seriously and we are working to make this larp open and available to as many players as possible. We acknowledge that there are many types of accessibility needs and that everyone is unique. The statements below should be considered a starting point not an end point. If you have specific needs or requirements or concerns that are not discussed below we'd invite you to contact us.

Physical access

The site is largely outdoors, on farmland, in the mountains. Whilst most in-game buildings on site have step-free access, they are not all equally accessible. The buildings are designed to look medieval. There are no lifts and the staircases are crude and uneven. If the weather is bad, there may be a lot of mud on site. The site stretches over approximately 3 km including some very steep hills.

Opting in

All events are opt in, not opt out. Participants can go out-of-character at any time and without giving a reason. There will be no in-character penalty for not turning up to an event or activity. It is always possible to avoid any form of physical combat or interaction at any time. This option is available to all players.



Off game space

An out-of-character space is available to all players. You are welcome to enter this space at any time for any reason. You can nap, rest, or decompress whenever you need to.

Practical info

Things we'll provide

- Somewhere to sleep - a bed or a camp bed
- Food you can eat
- Adventure
- Access to drinking water and toilet facilities
- In game peril
- Standard latex larp weapons

Things you'll need to bring

- Your wand. Without it, most magic will be impossible!
- A light source. You should always have a torch with you on Avalon
- Your costume – this should be warm
- Bedding, a sleeping bag, blankets
- It may be cold, so bring warm stuff as well. Remember that most of Avalon takes place outside, so be prepared for all weathers
- Personal stuff (toothbrush, medicine, shampoo, etc.).
- Passport! (Unless you're Polish.)
- Suntan lotion
- Waterproof clothing and boots
- Extra socks
- A water bottle

Things that are nice to have

- Polish money/Euros. You won't need it, but you might want it (to buy stuff at the bar, for example).
- Potion bottles, cauldrons, and other weird stuff that might come in handy during classes.
- More warm clothes. We don't know what the temperatures will be, but it might get cold. (Average temperatures for September is between 2 and 8 degrees Celsius)
- Snacks, juice, alcohol etc. if you're planning on eating/drinking between meals.
- Earplugs. Tents are not quiet at night.
- Larp weapons if appropriate for your character.

Getting to site?

The optional *Avalon Express* will take you from Prague airport, but if you are planning to make your own way to the location you will probably need to drive. We will send out directions to the site nearer to the event.

Sleep, accommodation, toilets, showers, food.

Avalon is a camping larp. There is some limited (shared) indoor accommodation for players who are representing staff members or who have a medical need to sleep indoors. Everyone else will have an assigned bed in a shared tent. It will be cold at night. Please come prepared.

There are a limited number of toilets and hot showers on site. These will be shared between all players and crew so there may be queueing.

Food

Food will be provided by an on-site team.

Costume

We want Avalon to be a mix between the modern world and the endless, unchanging island of myth. Your costume should fit your character background but also be warm and preferably water resistant.

We have produced a Pinterest board to show the look we have in mind (<https://www.pinterest.co.uk/s0b/avalon-students/>) and you are welcome to use the Facebook group for discussing your costume and prop ideas.

Optional further reading:

The College of Wizardry Design Document: <https://www.cowlarp.com/>

Please note, where the Avalon Design Document and the CoW Design Document disagree, the Avalon rules trump those in the standard DD

The student handbook: This is a truly massive tome which contains a great deal of material that is no longer considered canon; however if you really want to immerse yourself in the history and details of the world we're playing in, you might enjoy all 560 pages of this!

http://www.rollespilsfabrikken.dk/cow/handbook/czcoha_student_handbook.pdf

Links and contact

www.avalonlarp.studio/cowavalon

info@avalonlarp.studio

<https://www.facebook.com/AvalonCoWLarp/>

Updates and Amendments

Version 1.1: Updated timetable, confirmed airport location for Avalon Express, added Bring a torch to the items to pack list, clarified physical combat section

Version 1.2: Fixed day one timetable. Clarified not to fight in the tavern or the inner part of the settlement.

Version 1.3: Additional detail on physical combat mechanics

Version 1.4: Changed colour of robes of Grey Ones

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 - Lorc, <http://lorcblog.blogspot.com>
 - Delapouite, <http://delapouite.com>

Team

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Avalon will take place 20-23rd September 2018 at a site in Dolnośląskie, Poland.



*"You know it's been said that
the damaged become dangerous because
we know we can survive"*

~ Professor Green, "Avalon"



