

The Play's the Thing LRP Game Book

(v3.3 - August 2025)



A Shakespeare-inspired LARP

by Cat Prescott

*"for the which supply,
 Admit me Chorus to this history;
 Who prologue-like your humble patience pray,
 Gently to hear, kindly to judge, our play."*
 ~ Chorus, "History of Henry V" (1598)

Title Page.....	1
Contents.....	2
Practical Event Information.....	3
 The Stage.....	 5
The Players.....	6
The Magic of Theatre and Poetry.....	6
The Script.....	7
'Stage Managers' (Refs).....	9
 FAQs.....	 10
Code of Conduct and Safety.....	14
Accessibility.....	17
Gender.....	21
 Magicks.....	 23
Combat.....	30
Calls and Effects.....	35
Starting Skills.....	37
Playable Character Archetypes.....	40
Duelling.....	43
 The Plotholes (Player Briefing).....	 45
Messina.....	47
Verona.....	50
Athens.....	52
Dunsinane.....	55
Illyria.....	58
Elsinore.....	62
Arden.....	66
Rome.....	69
 Contact.....	 72
Thanks.....	73
 Quick Reference Guide.....	 75

*"When shall we three meet again
In thunder, lightning, or in rain?"*

*"When the hurlyburly's done,
When the battle's lost and won."
"That will be ere the set of sun."*

"Where the place?"

"Upon the heath."

~ The Three Witches, "The Tragedy of Macbeth" (1605)

Practical Event Information

Location

[Raywell Park Scout Activity Centre, Riplingham Rd, Raywell, Cottingham HU16 5YL](#)

Dates

Friday 3rd July 2026 - Sunday 5th July 2026

Timings

Everyone can arrive onsite from 5pm, but players but will not be able to access the in-character spaces whilst crew set up, although you can access the out-of-character sleeping areas; players are encouraged to arrive by 6pm.

Briefing will be at 7pm on Friday 3rd July 2026.

Time-in will be 8pm, with a "soft" time-out (no more plot rolling out) at midnight on the Friday, and a "hard" time-out at 1am, before timing in again (after breakfast) at 10am on Saturday, until a final "hard" time-out at midnight at the end of the Saturday 4th July 2026.

On the Sunday, there will be a debrief after breakfast, with epilogues delivered in Sonnet form out of character, but no further roleplay on the Sunday 5th July. Everyone must leave the site by 2:30pm at the latest on Sunday 5th July 2026.

The event is fully catered by **David Proctor of Crucible Catering**, with indoor accommodation provided for everyone (players and crew).

Photography will be provided by **Tom Garnett** - please make him aware before time-in if you would prefer not to feature in any photographs, or if any photos of you should not be uploaded to Social Media.

Player Ticket Cost (Full)

£100

Player Ticket Cost (Concession)

£60

NPC Crew Ticket Cost (By invitation-only)

£30

There are a limited number of reduced-cost concession tickets available - these are primarily for those who have low/no income and/or those who are students, disabled, carers, pensioners or NHS/fire/ambulance workers. No means-testing evidence is required for a concession ticket - if you would be unable to attend on a full ticket price and feel that a concession ticket is the most appropriate for your personal circumstances, that is enough.

Expression of interest forms will open **at 09:00 on 1st December 2024** and close **at 23:55 on 12th December 2024**; this will be a fairly simple form to cover what kind of ticket you would like and some basic details, including accessibility requirements and dietary restrictions. We'll then share a list of names of all possible players and crew who have expressed interest with all respondents - you can get in touch if you have any issues or concerns.

After this, we will send out a casting form, and you will have the opportunity to express preferences about characters and plays that you'd like to be cast in (and any you'd like to avoid), as well as any other players you wish to be paired/placed into a group with, although exact matches of your favourite role etc cannot be guaranteed.

We will send out character offers to 40 players, and a deposit of **£30** will be required to secure your place in the game, with payment details given via email if you are offered a ticket. Deposits must be received **within 30 days of receiving a ticket offer**, or your ticket may be offered to someone on the waiting list. If you are not offered a place immediately, there will be a waiting-list available in case of any drop-outs.

Final payment of the full balance must be received by **5th December 2025** - if you prefer to pay in installments, this can be arranged, as long as the final payment is received by **5th December 2025**. If we are unable to fill your space from the waiting list, then refunds cannot be guaranteed.

*"All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances;
And one man in his time plays many parts"*

~ Jaques, "As You Like It" (1599)

The Stage

A mystical island, "full of noises" - some call it "Cyprus", others "the Isle of Sycorax". It is home to a powerful sorcerer, Prospero, whose magic has wrought a fantastical storm that has shipwrecked an eclectic group of travellers together from far-flung realms across Italy, Denmark, Scotland, France, Greece and more.

Here, amongst the spirits, faeries and strange creatures of this unfamiliar place, the mad magician's home appears to contain scripts of great divination with hauntingly familiar names, depicting each traveller's past and apparently fated future, almost as if they were merely characters in a play. They scour the scripted lines of dialogue for answers, and question if these stories are set in stone or if, perhaps, they might be able to edit the pages and, under their own freewill, change the course they are navigating.

Some of these seemingly "inevitable" endings are hopeful - true love, being reunited with long-lost relations; comic stories of romance and reconciliation that many may wish to protect and preserve - whilst others tell tragic tales of betrayal, murder, heartbreak and calamity, that may not depict a narrative that one may wish to return to unaltered...

Whilst seeking a way to leave the treacherous island, questions hang over each traveller's head: is this my story? Do I want this tale to be my fate? Is my destiny truly written in the stars, or can one write their own fortune?

Note: the setting exists in an abstract theatrical pocket dimension - as such, there can absolutely be anachronistic technology utilised for "magicks", but crucially there is canonically **no signal on the Island**; characters can use phones for music or light, but not for calls, messages or internet searches; you cannot simply Google your character's fate(!)

*"Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more. It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing."*

~ Macbeth, "The Tragedy of Macbeth" (1605)

The Players

Washing up on the shores of the island are a seemingly random cast of characters - royalty and commoners, soldiers and lovers, witches and jesters, in a whirlpool of chaos. However, some appear to be familiar faces, arriving together from Messina, Athens, Illyria, Naples, Arden, Verona, Dunsinane, Venice, Rome and Elsinore. From this amalgamation of unlikely acquaintances, new connections and bonds may well form between people who would otherwise never have met one another...

*"He would drown the stage with tears
And cleave the general ear with horrid speech,
Make mad the guilty and appal the free,
Confound the ignorant, and amaze indeed
The very faculties of eyes and ears."*

~ Hamlet, "The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark" (1600)

The Magic of Theatre and Poetry

You do not need to be a Faerie or a Witch for magic to work on the Isle of Sycorax - a skilled orator can affect their own surroundings with the mere sharpness of their wit, and speeches, monologues and soliloquies can be as dangerous as any blade. Stage Managers (Refs) or NPC plot crew (as briefed) may make mechanical calls or grant boons as a direct result of a character Monologuing - especially those with mechanical advantage from Monologues ("the gift of the gab" archetype).

Likewise, taking the time to write a 14-line sonnet in iambic pentameter (with an ABABCDCEFEFGG rhyme scheme, handed to a 'stage manager', with results usually manifesting about an hour later) is the strongest form of solo spellcasting; second only in potency to collaboratively performing a Masque or "play within a play": a ritual that may be rewarded with mighty boons from whatever Forces are watching and listening..

*"And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover,
To entertain these fair well-spoken days,
I am determined to prove a villain
And hate the idle pleasures of these days"*

~ Richard, Duke of Gloucester, "History of Richard III" (1592)

The Script

If any character from your story dies, you now find yourself in a tragedy. This isn't necessarily entirely bad news - there's great power to be found in death and destruction, but a great deal more danger too. Sometimes, a good death could also be worthwhile, such as a noble or heroic sacrifice, and some may long for a story of glory (no matter how gorey).

Of course, there are also some antagonists that greatly benefit from the existing tragedies as written staying on track towards their scripted ending (for example, Malcolm and Fleance have a lot to gain from Macduff slaying Macbeth as intended), and some others may have a vested interest in shifting a comedy towards the tropes of tragedy (as embodied by much-abused Malvolio's haunting parting promise that he will "be revenged on the whole pack of you").

Further to this, if and when you find a way "home", you may need to consider: is the latest edition of the story one you are prepared to return to? Is there some other land or other companion you would prefer to begin a new story with? And is it better to have loved and lost or to have never loved at all?

You may encounter lammies with black or white ribbons attached - you can only use the powers of black-ribbon lammies if your play is destined for tragedy, and you can only use the powers of white-ribboned lammies if your play is destined for comedy. If a character from your story dies, the play is fated as a tragedy - the only way the play can revert to comedy-status is if there's a Plot Twist that the character who "died" merely appeared to be dead, such as through some alchemical potion that gives the appearance of death without actually killing the drinker (which happens more commonly than you might think, in Shakespeare's plays...).

If a character from your play is **executed**, the only way for you to interact with white-ribboned lammies is to either find some way to change which story your character appears in, or to die yourself and be re-cast into a comic play.

If a play is in tragedy status (with a black banner on display in the main hall) but no one has been killed "onstage", there is still the possibility that it can move towards comedy status, such as via pranks and tomfoolery or a wedding - but any "onstage", confirmed permanent deaths from your cast (whether player character or NPC) will cement the fate of the play as a tragedy permanently.

If any character is dropped to -1HP, their bleed count will start. If the character is not **executed**, there is always the possibility that the death won't stick - a character dropped to -1HP may always be picked up by the invisible spirits of the island if left unattended. Player characters should not rely on this (the spirits of the island are significantly less likely to intervene for player characters on their bleed count than the NPCs, for Plot Reasons) - but your playscript might not be cemented in Tragedy unless it is absolutely certain that a deceased character could not possibly return again as a living character (ghosts still make it Tragedy!)

To execute another character is a very Final decision, not to be taken lightly. Any execution is a definitive Death for that character that cannot be undone, and puts that full playscript into "tragedy-fated" status - merely dropping someone to -1HP makes it *possible* that that death may be final, but there's always room for a Plot Twist...

Death should be something considered to be a serious consequence in this game; you're far less likely to be fighting completely unknown and unnamed NPCs than you are specific and personal threats - thus a character's decision to execute another will have in-game mechanical consequences. However, this does not mean that you cannot or should not execute when it feels appropriate; it's a roleplay-led game, and a peacekeeper like Benvolio pleading to "talk things out as friends" is possibly unlikely to stop Brutus from going ahead and executing his "best friend" Julius Caesar regardless...

*"But who comes here? I am invisible;
And I will overhear their conference."*

~ Oberon, "A Midsummer Night's Dream" (1595)

'Stage Managers' (Refs)

If you see someone all in black, with a radio headset and possibly a clipboard - no you don't. Stage managers are not there in-character, but are there to help the game run (or for you to approach with any out-of-character issues/concerns).

At other times, you may see someone with a finger/hand in the air to indicate that they are *not* there in-character, or with a fist on their head, to indicate that they are there in-character, but they are invisible - you can physically bump into them and hear them, but you cannot see them. Stage managers do not need to use hand signals to count as not-there-in-character.

Only Stage Managers can use the following calls:

- **"Time In"** - initiating/continuing the roleplay
- **"Time Freeze"** - pause the game briefly - this may be to allow something to be magical represented that cannot be done via normal means, or it may be for safety reasons, such as needing to move combat to a less hazardous terrain. Roleplay will only continue when a Stage Manager calls "Time In" again.
- **"Time Out"** - ending the roleplay for the day (either until "Time In" again the next morning, or forever at the end of the game!)
- **"Drop"** - if you hear this call, you must immediately stop what you're doing and fall to the ground, as if you are on OHP, at which point the Stage Manager will brief you - it might be called for safety reasons, or it might be because you have triggered an unavoidable magical trap - this is an OC ref call and cannot be resisted or ignored in any way.
- **"...And Scene"** - this ref call indicates the definitive end of the previous encounter - all MP and HP (if above OHP) are refreshed to maximum.

Stage Managers are also there to facilitate **Sonnets/Alchemy, Monologues, Masques** and **Using Quills**.

*"Therefore, since brevity is the soul of wit,
And tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes,
I will be brief:"*

~ Polonius, "The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark" (1600)

FAQs

How does character "casting" work?

If you are allocated a ticket, you will be invited to fill out a form to give an indication of the sort of character you would like to play or themes you'd like to explore (or avoid!), and then you will be "cast" in a particular role - for example, if you like the idea of playing with genderbending, you might be given a character background for Viola from "Twelfth Night" or Rosalind from "As You Like It"; if you'd like to play someone with magical powers, you might be cast as one of the three witches from "Macbeth" or Puck from "A Midsummer Night's Dream", and if you want to play an entertainer, you might be cast as the Player King or Player Queen from "Hamlet", Feste from "Twelfth Night", or Bottom from "A Midsummer Night's Dream".

There are about twice as many player character sheets available for each playscript as player slots, although not all can be starting roles - if your character dies, you can be "recast" in any of the unclaimed roles, so it is advisable to bring at least one change of clothing! You will also be given information on "understudy" parts in advance, so you know what roles to prepare for if your first character dies.

How much do I need to know about Shakespeare?

Very little! You will be given a brief character background for who that character is and what has happened to them in their story so far at the point of the game beginning, as well as told who else is from the same story as you. Crucially, once the game times in, all of the stories have already deviated from canon - Macbeth never met Hamlet, Cleopatra didn't know Romeo, and Benedick and Beatrice did not encounter the Faeries of the Athenian Woodlands in their stories as scripted. Your Shakespearean character and origin-story playscript is only a starting point - from there, it is highly probable that the known narratives will be entirely unrecognisable by the time we reach "time out"!

Which characters are available for me to play?

There are playable characters (and "understudy" parts if your first character dies) available from four comedies ("Much Ado About Nothing", "A Midsummer Night's Dream", "Twelfth Night" and "As You Like It") and five tragedies squished together to make four ("Romeo & Juliet", "Macbeth", "Hamlet", and then combining "Julius Caesar" and "Antony and Cleopatra" into a singular tragic Roman grouping). There are also NPC character sheets for roles in each of the above plays, as well as from "The Tempest" and "Othello" - those two plays' characters are exclusively available to NPC plot crew, and characters from other works are not playable characters for this game.

Have you made any changes to the characters and plays?

Yes! For example, "The Tempest", "Much Ado About Nothing" and "Twelfth Night" each have a character named "Antonio"; in the lore of "The Play's the Thing LRP", these are all one singular (NPC) individual. Likewise "Sebastian" from both "The Tempest" and "Twelfth Night" have also been merged into a single (NPC) role. As mentioned, the plays of "Julius Caesar" and "Antony and Cleopatra" have been blended into a single cast for a Roman tragedy for the purposes of the game. Other characters have been "blended", like "Prince Paris Escalus" in "Romeo and Juliet", or "Margaret Ursula" in "Much Ado About Nothing". Several characters have been adapted for the game, and more info will be provided in character briefing packs.

What are the costume requirements?

Shakespeare has been performed in every variety of genre and theme - from Early Modern doublets, gowns and ruffs, to Steampunk, Dieselpunk and futuristic productions, to t-shirts and jeans and more minimalist wardrobes. As such, the only restrictions on costume are that there is no nudity, and that any weapons used are LARP-safe swords and melee weapons (no guns for combat use within the system). You are welcome to put in as much or as little time, effort and financial resources as you are willing or able to for your costuming; each character will be given a slight flavour/suggestions for the sort of thing to aim for (eg Hamlet should ideally wear black clothing, although this is not compulsory), but ultimately, all costuming choices (that don't violate the no-nudity rule) are valid; at some point in the past ~450 years, it's likely that whatever costume choices you make could fit into some theatrical production or other!

Do I need to speak in "Shakespearean" English?

The short answer is "no" - we are not expecting anyone to try and maintain Early Modern dialect, and especially not to attempt to spend a weekend speaking in blank verse/iambic pentameter. People in Elizabethan and Jacobean England also did not speak in poetry in their day to day lives, and there is no expectation whatsoever for your characters to attempt to do so. If you want to add particular flavour to your speech, then writing sonnets is a specific magical mechanic within the game (alchemy) and that's an area where you can take the time to think about things like meter and rhyme if you're keen for that sort of thing. It's also up to you if you would like to incorporate any particular "Shakespearean" elements to Masques (magical plays-within-the-play) or monologues, for magical effect - but there is no expectation for your typical dialogue in-character to sound especially "Shakespearean" at all.

What if I really want to use thee/thou/thy/thine all the time?

There will be no mechanical benefit or consequence in-game for choosing to employ usage of this sort of language in your day-to-day encounters in-character. If you are keen to do so, here is a brief guide for how this works (although emphasising that this is **entirely optional and not a requirement of playing this game**):

- Where "thee/thou/thy/thine" are used in place of "you/your/yours", this is typically to either indicate an informal or more intimate relationship, or that the person you are speaking to is of lower status than yourself.
 - Employing "thee/thou/thy/thine" when speaking to royalty (that you are not emotionally close to or of a similar status to) is a way to indicate a deliberate insult of inappropriate familiarity/derision, and speaking to an enemy with "thee/thou/thy/thine" is potentially a way to show aggression/an invitation to fight.
- Similarly, "you/your/yours" is often used for more formal conversations, to show respect to someone of a higher status, or to show emotional distance. Speaking to a family member or lover with "you/your/yours", (*only if you have otherwise been using "thou/thee" rather than default modern "you"*) could indicate some emotional distance/a breakdown or strain on that relationship, but it could also be interpreted as showing respect.

If (optionally) choosing to use "thou/thee/thy/thine", here is a brief linguistics guide:

- "Thou" replaces "you" as the subject - that is to say, if instead of referring to "you" you might use "I" in the first person, or "he/she/they" in the third person, then "thou" is the version you're looking for. If the phrase would have been "you are", then the verb "are" becomes "art"; **"thou art a villain"**
- "Thee" replaces "you" as the object - that is to say to you. If, in a sentence, you might have used "me" in the first person, or "him/her/them" in the third person, then "thee" is the version you're looking for; **"I must tell thee that I love thee"**.
- "Thy" replaces "your" as the possessive, where in the first person you might use the word "my"; **"Give me thy hands"**.
 - However, if the next word begins with a vowel, you use "thine"; **"thine eyes are like stars"**.
- "Thine" replaces "yours" as the possessive, where in the first person you might use the word "mine"; **"My crown is thine"**.
- "Thyself" is the reflexive to replace "yourself", the same way that one might use "myself" in the first person, or "himself/herself/themself" in the third person; **"Look within thyself"**.
- If you are especially keen to utilise early modern grammar, then we recommend looking up other verb forms that are affected: e.g. the verb "to be" includes "art", "be'st", "wast" and "wert"; the verb "to have" includes "hast", "hath" and "hads't"; the verb "to do" includes "doth", "dost" and "did'st" - and that's not even considering modals for "cans't", "wilt", "shalt", "woulds't" and such(!)

No one will penalise you for either not using archaic language, or for slipping up with it - but if you are especially keen to use "thou/thee/thy/thine" etc, it is usually easiest to imagine how the sentence would sound with "I/me/my/mine" if you ever want to "check". However, **simply using 21st century English is the expected "standard"**.

"and we
give express charge, that in our marches through the
country, there be nothing compelled from the
villages, nothing taken but paid for, none of the
French upbraided or abused in disdainful language;
for when lenity and cruelty play for a kingdom, the
gentler gamester is the soonest winner."
~ King Henry V, "History of Henry V" (1598)

Code of Conduct and Safety

The Play's the Thing LRP is an 18+ game that may contain themes of violence and murder, sex and sexuality, gender roles (and breaking out of them), romantic roleplay/"ballgowning", in-character alcohol usage/abuse and addiction, magical manipulation and mind-control (potentially including "love potions"), monarchy and classism, family, revenge, betrayal, madness/mental illness, disguises and lies, marriage, miscommunication, war, faith/religion, witchcraft and faeries, threats and blackmail, profanity/swearing, and other sensitive or adult themes that are found in the works of Shakespeare.

If at any point you are uncomfortable or wish to disengage with ongoing roleplay, you can do so. You do not need to give any explanation - you can either use one of the OC safety calls or, for a non-verbal alternative, simply raise a hand in the air and remove yourself from the situation. If somebody uses an OC safety call or leaves the area, please do not follow them or demand an explanation. If you wish to raise a safety concern, please approach any 'stage manager' (ref) or a Mental Health First Aider. We will ensure that all safety or conduct concerns are immediately addressed and take all reports and feedback seriously. Dangerous or inappropriate behaviour will not be tolerated.

If you are engaging with particularly intense or sensitive themes or roleplay elements and have any doubts as to other players' (or crew's) comfort, please check in with them out-of-character before pursuing this line of e.g. conflict or romance roleplay any further.

Discrimination, bullying or harassment for any out-of-character characteristic will not be tolerated. This

includes racism, ableism, sexism, transphobia, ageism, homophobia, biphobia, or any other unacceptable -ism against the characteristics of any players or crew. Likewise, sexual harassment will not be tolerated. Serious offenders will be asked to leave the site immediately. **Do not interfere with another participant's personal belongings, medications or mobility aids.**

The game being rooted in 16th and 17th century theatre does lend itself towards some less progressive in-character elements/themes, such as some expectations of gendered roles and inherent power dynamics in monarchy and in-character class divides. However, these should be handled carefully, and only rooted in in-character roleplay that all parties consent to, entirely based in the characters and not on out-of-character features; nobody should be e.g. perpetrating misogyny or slut-shaming in a way that is distressing to someone else out-of-character or diminishes their enjoyment of the game. **If in doubt, DON'T.**

Additionally, although the original works are over 400 years old, there are no barriers as to who can play which roles - anyone of any gender can play any character (and there will be no transphobia tolerated; this is not an acceptable theme of roleplay), and anyone from any background can play any role (with the caveat that Othello is a pre-cast NPC role being played by a crew member with Afro-Caribbean heritage, and no racism of any kind will be tolerated either in or out of character).

None of the following are acceptable: "I was drunk", "I was only joking", "Shakespeare used that slur", or any similar "excuse". **No references to rape, sexual assault or child abuse are permitted in the game,** including in storytelling, songs or "jokes". No means no, and we will take action to protect our players and crew from any forms of abuse and unacceptable behaviour. Alcohol is permitted at The Play's The Thing LRP, provided it is consumed in moderation, and that you do not engage in combat whilst intoxicated. Illegal drugs are not permitted, and if found to have brought illegal substances to the event you will be asked to leave the site immediately.

You can always simply put a hand in the air and say "OC: [whatever you need to note out-of-character]" if needed.

However, the following phrases can be used in game to either escalate or de-escalate roleplay or combat encounters accordingly, and can be used by any player or crew member as required:

"Once More, With Feeling!" - this is the call to indicate that you wish to escalate the scenario you're in - whether this is goading an enemy in a combat encounter or proposing to dial up the heat in a flirtatious conversation. **If the other party consents to escalate, they should echo the same phrase, to signal their agreement. Do not escalate unless/until you hear the other person repeat "Once More, With Feeling!"**

"Let's Take Five!" - this is the call to indicate that whilst you do not wish to disengage from the scene entirely, you are veering too close to the threshold of someone's comfort level - either slightly deescalating, changing the conversation topic or similar, (whilst continuing to interact with the person who has made this call) is the appropriate course of action if you hear this call. It is encouraged to echo the call of "let's take five" to signify that you have heard and acknowledged that a boundary has been established, and not to push whatever led to the call any further.

"Cut!" - this is the call to indicate that something is wrong, someone is uncomfortable and whatever interaction that was ongoing must immediately cease, allowing the person who called "cut" to leave the area if needed. If, for any reason, you feel unable to call "Cut!" verbally, you can also hold a finger in the air (indicating that you are now out-of-character) and remove yourself from the situation, finding a "stage manager" (ref), First Aider or Mental Health First Aider as appropriate if required.

"Safety, Safety, Safety!" - this call is for physical injuries and hazards, such as an accidental weapons blow that is unsafe, someone's glasses falling from their face, any unsafe terrain that action needs to move away from, or if someone is in danger of colliding with another player/crew member that they had not seen e.g. lying on the ground in the dark. **If you hear the call "Safety, Safety, Safety!" you must freeze where you are and pause all roleplay and movement until a "stage manager" (ref) calls "Time in" again.**

*"An I cannot, cannot, cannot,
An I cannot, another can."*

~ Boyet, "Love's Labour's Lost" (1594)

Accessibility

Not all disabilities are visible. Please let us know of any adjustments you may need in order to access our game.

The site is on the whole one of the better Scout Campsites regarding accessibility for those with mobility aids and wheelchairs, but there are challenges with any venue:

- [The Nyeri building](#) (the main player base - also where meals are served and most players will sleep) is accessible for wheelchairs, rollators and similar mobility aids, with ramps to the entrance, wide doors, step free access throughout the building and wheelchair-accessible toilets and showers.
 - At least one of the smaller function rooms in this building will be available as an OC quiet space for people to retreat to as needed.
 - There are no bunk beds (only single beds) in this building, and there are five rooms that only have 2 beds in each, for those who need a quieter sleeping room.
 - The maximum sleeping capacity of the Nyeri building is 40 - we are planning to accommodate 30 people in this building, rather than filling it to maximum capacity.
 - It should be noted that this building can get overly warm in the Summer (when our event is running), especially in the main hall (near the kitchen), and whilst there is a large fan available to cool the hall, this can be quite noisy, and the acoustics in the main hall can sometimes be challenging/overstimulating (whether the fan is on or not). There can also be quite a few craneflies and flying insects throughout the site, but particularly in this main building.
- [The B.P. building](#) (which is likely to primarily host indoor non-combat roleplay encounters) is currently undergoing renovations; one of the entrances does have an access ramp. This building has new bunk accommodation

being installed at the time of writing (2024), likely accommodating either 34 or 36 maximum by the time of our event; we are currently planning for 25 people to sleep in this building - again, avoiding filling the indoor accommodation to maximum capacity.

- By the time of our event, this building will also have an accessible toilet and shower, and attached to the hall (that will be an in-character roleplay area) is a kitchenette that can be used freely by players and crew, which is out-of-character at all times.
- The B.P. building is down a relatively steep hill from the rest of the site - there are carparks next to both the B.P. building and the Nyeri building, and (presuming it is safe to manoeuvre), if any large bags, props, or people who feel unable to walk up and down the hill between the buildings need to use a car between the halls, this is possible, but vehicles should ideally only be moved if required to.
- The grassy area between the Nyeri building and the B.P. building is a potential combat area - the hill is steep in places, and the "agility trail" apparatus is not to be used in-game - unlike other activity areas such as the climbing wall, this "adventure playground" type area is not fenced off.
- [The Dormy Cabin](#) accommodates a maximum of 12 people (we are intending to sleep 7 crew members in this room - again, avoiding maximum capacity for comfort). This room is less accessible than the other sleeping areas for those with mobility difficulties and is not advised for wheelchair users or similar - crew members with access needs are able to sleep in either the Nyeri or B.P buildings as needed.
 - Some of the beds in the Dormy Cabin are single beds and others are bunk beds, with no internal toilet or showers - however, there are accessible toilet/shower blocks (with step-free access) adjacent to the building.
- [The Jubilee building](#) is the crew headquarters (and is step-free accessible). This building contains an additional kitchenette for crew usage. It does have a small bunk room with capacity for 2 people attached to the main crew room, but we are not intending to use this

bedroom as anyone's allocated sleeping area (rather, it can primarily function as a useful private changing area attached to the main crew room).

- We are not intending for anyone to camp in tents at this event. The grassy area near the Jubilee building (crew headquarters) is adjacent to the car park outside the Nyeri building and is the primary location for combat encounters. Whilst there is a path next to the grassy area that makes it easier to access, it is a small but steep slope if moving directly from the car park to the combat field. There are trees along one side of this field, so it is important to keep an eye out for potential roots/branches that are tripping hazards, or any fallen/falling fruit.
 - It would be challenging (but not impossible) for those using mobility aids with wheels to navigate some of the grassier areas of the site, which is largely where combat encounters take place.
- [The Cook's Kitchen and Barn](#) will be set up as in-character spaces for non-combat roleplay encounters, including all Masques/Plays Within the Play. This is all a ground floor space - it is possible that there may be a slight lip at one of the doors, but this should generally speaking be an accessible space for those with mobility aids. Although there is another kitchenette in this space, players and crew should use the kitchens in the B.P and Jubilee buildings for any personal snacks and drinks (and caterers will use the kitchen in the Nyeri building), as the kitchen area in this building is open plan into the in-character roleplaying area.
 - This area is only available for specific in-character roleplay encounters, and should not be accessed by players without a stage manager/ref present (as crew may be set-dressing for a specific scheduled encounter in this space).

There will be out-of-character quiet spaces available for people to take a break as and when required. In addition to this, bedrooms and bathrooms are all out-of-character spaces at all times, as are the player kitchen for personal snacks/drinks in the B.P. building, and the crew room and kitchen in the Jubilee building. Players and NPC crew should **not** enter the main kitchen in the Nyeri building unless specifically permitted to/invited by the catering crew.

Non-combatant players are very welcome to join the game and can choose to solely engage in non-combat encounters and roleplay elements of the game. If a player declares themselves non-com, they must remain so for the entirety of the event unless otherwise agreed with a 'stage manager' (ref). Non-com players can arrange to exchange combat-centric starting skills from their archetype for other skills, as agreed on an individual basis with stage managers.

Non-com players should not enter combat areas (grassy regions). If a player who has declared themselves non-com is about to be hit with a weapon attack, they must bring up both hands and declare 'Non-com!' to their attacker. They must then move out of the immediate area of combat, drop to 1HP and leave the combat area. **A non-com cannot be reduced to 0HP or -1HP through physical combat**, however they can still die from magical effects such as cursed items/poisons/alchemy, Masques, or by engaging in non-physical "battle of the wits" style duels, where the loser's consequence is execution.

Although the site has gendered bathroom signage, we will be labelling most bathrooms as unisex, for use by anyone of any gender - we are likely to leave one "male" and one "female" bathroom unaltered, but the majority will be available for all genders. Do not attempt to challenge or police anyone's bathroom usage - people can use whichever facilities they need. Similarly, anyone who needs to use the larger/accessibile toilets and showers is welcome to do so.

The venue will provide bedsheets, pillows and pillowcases, but you will need to bring your own duvet/blanket or sleeping bag and your own towels and toiletries. Smoking and vaping are prohibited indoors in all buildings - however, there is a 30 metre wooden shelter outside the Nyeri building that people can smoke or vape in, provided they dispose of all waste appropriately. Please be mindful of other people around you if you are smoking or vaping. All waste must be appropriately discarded to the correct waste or recycling bins, and any kitchenware should be cleaned and returned to the **correct** building's kitchen. Please help us to clean and tidy the site and leave it as we found it (including vacuuming dorm rooms) so that we can avoid an additional housekeeping charge, and so that LARP groups will continue to be welcome at the site. Thank you!

*"You may light on a husband that hath no beard."
"What should I do with him? dress him in my apparel
and make him my waiting-gentlewoman? He that hath a
beard is more than a youth, and he that hath no
beard is less than a man: and he that is more than
a youth is not for me, and he that is less than a
man, I am not for him"*

~ Leonato and Beatrice, "Much Ado About Nothing" (1598)

Gender

Everyone will have access to in-character name and pronoun badges (and some characters may use several of these, for example if they are in disguise):



Whilst anyone can play any of the available characters, and cross-playing as a different IC gender from your OC gender is definitely allowed/encouraged, some characters may have a relationship with gender that matters to the role, where others simply do not.

The Play's the Thing LRP is a game that inherently changes some elements of established Shakespearean "canon" as part of its core concept; many characters have been changed in some way from the original texts, and none of these different worlds are "supposed" to collide in the plays as written. As such, it is entirely in keeping with the spirit of the game to ignore inconvenient parts of "canonical lore" to enable a more enjoyable player experience, adding unique twists to the Shakespearean-inspired characters and stories.

For many of the characters, if you would prefer to re-imagine them with a different gender/presentation/pronoun set than those traditionally used in the original "canon", you can do so: For example, whilst **Hamlet** is usually portrayed as a he/him man, there are no real intrinsic plot reasons why **Hamlet** could or should not be played as they/she, if the player portraying the character would prefer this.

However, on the other hand, if a player is choosing to play the role of **Viola (disguised as Cesario)**, the character's relationship with gender and gender expression is fundamentally tied to their story's plotline, so this role should only be chosen by someone who actively wishes to engage with gender/genderbending/subversion of gendered expectations as part of their character's plotline/gameplay experience.

Some characters have been listed on the callsheets with the explicit option to blend characters and/or change things around (for example, it could be **Macduff and/or Lady Macduff** that was from their mother's womb untimely ripped; it is possible that only **Lady Macduff** will enter play, as a blended character of the usually distinct **Macduff** and **Lady Macduff**, and **Lady Macduff** can fulfill the prophecy by slaying **Macbeth** if that's the way that things fall out).

You do not need to play **Puck, a Witch** or any other "more traditionally genderfluid character" if you would prefer to portray a character as non-binary. Further to this, if OC you are a man that uses he/him pronouns, there is no reason you cannot choose to play **Cleopatra** as a woman using she/her pronouns IC, if this is the role you want to play, using the traditional gendering of the character.

When you submit your preferences form for pre-casting characters, you will be given the opportunity to choose whether or not you want to play (or avoid) characters where gender particularly matters to their storyline - we will release more information nearer the time for possible options/variations available for each individual character, to ensure that everyone is comfortable with the roles that they receive and how they wish to interpret the character.

Transphobia is **not** an acceptable theme of roleplay within this game.

*"Sirrah, come hither: make no more ado,
But give your pigeons to the emperor:
By me thou shalt have justice at his hands.
Hold, hold; meanwhile here's money for thy charges.
Give me pen and ink. Sirrah, can you with a grace
deliver a supplication?"*
~ Titus Andronicus, "Titus Andronicus" (1593)

Magicks

If you wish to gain additional skills, special powers or magical items, you can do this via the following magical means:

Alchemy - to perform alchemy, you must compose a 14 line sonnet in iambic pentameter, with an ABABCDCEFEFGG rhyme scheme, that makes it clear what you are trying to achieve. Put the poem in a bottle, hand it to a Stage Manager, and about an hour later the magic should settle in the bottle with whatever magical effect has been achieved - usually in the form of a lammie on a potion bottle, which, when applied, either grants an individual (if ingested) or an item or weapon (if anointed) some kind of boon or effect (which can also be negative, such as brewing advanced poisons). This is the most powerful form of solo magic.

Each character can have a maximum of one personal lammie and wield/use a maximum of one magical item.

Masques - a play within a play, performed when the planes align and a window of opportunity opens (note: there will be set timeslots, during which masques can be performed) - a group of at least 3 people can perform a 5 minute ritual/theatrical performance that must be **relevant to the world you are engaging in**, must **clearly demonstrate what it is you wish to gain** from the masque, and must **entertain the spirits of the island** (this does not necessarily mean comedy, but the more engaging and spectacular it is and the more you make the stage managers laugh, cry etc, the higher marks your masque will receive and the more powerful the boon will be). Masques are scored out of 5 and again will likely result in a powerful lammie or game effect about an hour or so after the performance has concluded. Masques should aim to be 5 minutes

long - a 3 minute masque will not be penalised specifically for being too short, but may struggle to include sufficient content in this time. Masques that reach 7 minutes or longer will have immediate negative consequences for those involved, and are highly unlikely to be able to score a 4 or 5/5. Masques of 8 minutes or longer run the risk of killing one or more of the performers.

Monologues - if you give an especially good speech, this can affect the very fabric of reality on the island. Whilst everyone should respond in kind to theatrical performance (and herofighting) being more powerful, you may be given a temporary boost in stats or abilities by a stage manager as a result of monologuing - the island is always listening.

Using Quills - the Scripts can only be edited with the Quills. To give any further information at this stage would be Spoilers, but this is important information about the magic of the game...

Lammies - there is a maximum of one personal lammie and one lammied item "attuned" to each character;

- Once you wield or use a magical object or weapon, it is yours and yours alone until that character either dies or becomes unable to utilise the item (such as a character whose play is fated for comedy not being able to use a lammie with a black ribbon attached). Only if an item becomes unattuned in this way (or a character dies) can this lammie be transferred to another character.
- There is no "theft" of any items allowed, with the exception of looting a lammied item from a corpse; you must remove the lammie and return the item or weapon to a 'stage manager' (ref) within 30 minutes - whilst the new owner gains this item in-character, the physical object will be returned to the original owner if it is personal property, and the person who is now attuned to the lammie must provide an appropriate physrep of their own (i.e. if it is a magical sword, the magical effect is transferred onto a different sword). If it is a game prop, it may be possible to use the same item as the physrep, but only if instructed as such by a 'stage manager' (ref).
- You cannot transfer a personal lammie; this magical effect dies with the character. Personal lammies do not have white or black ribbons attached to them.

Monologuing will sometimes result in a boost from Stage Managers or briefed NPC plot crew - these are usually in the form of an immediate short-term benefit, such as replenishing a character's HP or MP to their maximum capacity, increasing the damage that a character's weapons deal for the rest of the encounter, or empowering a spell to briefly work on a "Mass" effect, instead of towards a single target.

If the character has the "gift of the gab" archetype, due to the unique "inspirational speaker" skill, they are more likely to either have a more powerful effect from monologuing, or the threshold to receive a temporary boost from monologuing may be lowered for these characters.

If it is unclear that you are attempting to Monologue, you can always outright draw attention to it by saying something (in-character) like "Listen to me as I am speaking" to make it more obvious - as a general rule, if someone is on a roll with a cool Monologue, give them their moment before interrupting.

Alchemy will usually result in a lammie - either a personal lammie, if the potion is consumed, or a lammie for an item, if the elixir is applied to a weapon, shield or other object. Lammies from alchemy will normally be the equivalent of a permanent +1-2XP standard skill-spend, or to gain a single mechanical ability that was not available to that character when choosing starting skills.

If the alchemy is performed by a character with the "Mystic Knowledge" archetype, due to the boost by the unique ability "bold brewing", this can potentially grant a more unique ability (not available on any starting skills list), and a well-crafted sonnet can craft a lammie that is equivalent of up to +2-3XP "standard skills" gain if the alchemist has the "bold brewing" boost. **Performing Alchemy never costs MP.**

Masques are the most powerful form of magic in the game, and require at least 3 people to perform (with no maximum). These 5-minute "plays-within-the-play" occur in scheduled timeslots, and the capabilities of a Masque are near-limitless. The effect from a Masque will typically be for something greater than empowering one individual - it could be for the benefit of a couple, a group, one of the realms that the characters arrived from - or it might grant important knowledge, answering questions as from an Oracle, or it may be used to summon or exorcise persistent ghosts and spirits. A Masque can also be used for extremely potent magick via self-sacrifice.

Masques are scored out of 5; if one or more of the performers has the "Show Must Go On" skill (from the Entertainer archetype), their first Masque will be judged more favourably (+1) - if it would have scored a maximum score of 5 without this boost, the Entertainer(s) will also receive a small, personal boost in addition. It is entirely possible that no organic "5"s (without the boost from the "Show Must Go On" skill) will be scored at all across the weekend, and that is totally acceptable and normal; a "5" is for when the bar has truly been raised, and there could be no better performance.

Whilst Masques should aim to clearly stick to the Setting, it is permissible to "perform" feats, including using skills you cannot usually use ("it's part of the act!") when playing in a Masque - you can also use modern technology (e.g. playing atmospheric music through a Bluetooth speaker) as part of "the magick of the theatre" when performing a Masque - anything is possible during those ~5 minutes of performance, although any unusual powers demonstrated for the purposes of the Masque are just a temporary illusion and are not able to be re-created away from that magical stage (unless you receive a lammie or similar effect afterwards). **Performing Masques never costs MP.**

What does a 1 out of 5 Masque look like?

A 1 is pretty impossible to score unless done so *deliberately*. A Masque that scores a "1" will result in curses or advanced poisons, negative consequences, and on some occasions, death of one or more of the performers involved. To score a 1, the Masque must be boring or just downright annoying, likely with little or no effort put into it - the stage manager judging the ritual would likely have little to no idea as to what the performers are actually trying to achieve; some or all performers may have not contributed anything towards the Masque, and the performers may have deliberately made references to things outside of the setting of the world that are not relevant to the game.

A Masque where two people sit in silence and a third talks about what Darth Vader might eat for breakfast for a couple of minutes would score a "1", and any survivors of the resultant effect would likely gain an Advanced Poison lammie that is especially difficult to remove, or they may have their maximum HP and/or MP reduced as an ongoing effect, if they are not Executed outright.

What does a 2 out of 5 Masque look like?

A 2 is a performance that technically engages with the world, characters and plot, but where the stage manager judging the ritual may find it difficult to understand what it is that the performers are trying to achieve. If some of the contributors are less involved/engaged than others, if the stage manager finds that the performance doesn't hold their attention, if the performance is forgettable, formulaic, or seems as though this would have been a more effective use of time and magic if attempted by alchemy - or even a decent monologue - (anything that makes an audience think "this could have been ~~an email~~ a sonnet"), then a Masque might score a "2".

Three people telling a predictable story about how much they each wished they knew the "Fling" spell, as it might have been useful in the last fight they had, is likely to score a "2", and the result may be disappointing (e.g. for this example, each of these three contributors may gain a personal lammie - of which you can only have one in the game - that simply grants the bearer the ability to cast "Fling" for 1MP twice per encounter, hampering their ability to gain a more powerful personal lammie later on).

What does a 3 out of 5 Masque look like?

A 3 is a solidly "good" Masque, that suitably engages with the world and plot the characters find themselves faced with, that makes it clear what it is they are trying to achieve (and how and why the performers of this Masque are especially well-suited to achieve this result, or why it is that they each personally care about this shared goal). It will hold the attention of the audience, and will elicit some sort of audience response - whether this is due to interactive elements, music, use of props, anything that makes a watching audience laugh, cry, emotionally connect or otherwise respond to the piece. All of the contributors should be actively involved in the roleplay, and it should be clear that thought and effort has gone into the ideas displayed.

A group of characters from the Forest of Arden acting out an engaging tale about how important the trees are to them, and how the Forest helps them find their way, in order to empower a branch they found on the ground to be a "Wayfinder" and direct them towards good fortune and away from danger might successfully craft such an item with this Masque.

What does a 4 out of 5 Masque look like?

A 4 is an "Excellent" Masque, that is truly unique, moving, entertaining or breathtaking. A Masque that scores a "4" is likely to be someone's favourite moment of the weekend, where something especially cool or exciting happens, and that participators and witnesses alike will froth about out-of-character, even a month after the event has concluded.

A "4" Masque will clearly have thought and effort put into it, with all contributors engaged in an active/enthusiastic way, resulting in a short production that is of high quality entertainment value to the audience. A "4" will likely involve something unique and creative, and as well as clarity of purpose and fully immersing themselves in the plot and lore of the world and their characters, there should be some element of the performance itself that is remarkably above "average".

If a group of characters with the "Chant of Healing" ability sang an original song together that clearly referenced ongoing events in their stories and the world around them, and made it clear that they wanted to empower a guitar, so that the bearer attuned to the item was immune to the "Silence" call, and/or so that whenever anyone who hears a short refrain and that the musician considers a "friend" would be fully healed to their max HP, this might be a possible effect of a well-performed "4"-score Masque.

What does a 5 out of 5 Masque look like?

A 5 is an "Outstanding" Masque - the kind of performance that other people will still talk about out-of-character for years to come as one of their favourite LARP moments; "5"s should not be awarded lightly, and it is unlikely that more than 1 or 2 Masques, if any, will earn this top score "organically" (without a mechanical boost from the "Show Must Go On" skill granting +1 to a 4 out of 5).

As such, there are almost no limits to what a "5" result can achieve - you can revive characters that were previously executed, you can change the course of Fate in ways that were previously thought impossible, you can craft a Golden Quill as powerful as Prospero's, you can open a Plothole (Portal) to the worlds of any of Shakespeare's plays, or to Stratford-Upon-Avon or London in the 16th or 17th century, if you see fit to do so.

However, if your Masque has the clarity of purpose for a result of this immense magnitude, but does not truly "wow" the audience and stage managers, don't be surprised if you receive a slightly more moderate result, compared to whatever godlike powers you were aiming for with your performance.

To give an example of what a "5" looks like is challenging, as by definition they are highly unique, surprising and each individual one is special. You do not need to use litres of fake blood, magic tricks or flashy choreography, but a "5" should simply be the best possible version of what any 5-minute ritual/theatrical performance can be, with all contributors enthusiastically/actively engaged, making it clear what you are trying to achieve, staying relevant to the plot threads of the setting, and making it clear why each performer is involved, as they perform something unique and memorable that completely captures the attention and interest of the audience and stage managers watching. A "5" will almost certainly evoke a strong emotional response: shock, awe, amazement, laughter, tears or anything that brings people either to their feet or their knees, as they wonder at the high-quality marvel that has been performed.

A "5" is unforgettable, and the only additional descriptor that can really be given is that you know it in your gut when you have witnessed a rare "5 out of 5" performance.

It is anticipated that most Masques will likely score a "3" (organically), although players are encouraged to get creative to try their best, aiming to achieve "4"s and even potentially "5"s if they can!

When signing up for an available Masque slot, you will have the opportunity to write a short sentence ("synopsis") to summarise your intention, such as "to summon and question the ghost of Julius Caesar" or "to empower the Athenian Faeries to turn invisible for 1MP" or "to unbind Mercutio from Verona and instead tie his destiny to the fate of Messina" - it is especially important to note if any particular NPCs will be required to be present for your intended Masque!

*"You fools! I and my fellows
Are ministers of Fate: the elements,
Of whom your swords are temper'd, may as well
Wound the loud winds, or with bemock'd-at stabs
Kill the still-closing waters, as diminish
One dowe that's in my plume: my fellow-ministers
Are like invulnerable. If you could hurt,
Your swords are now too massy for your strengths
And will not be uplifted."
~ Ariel, "The Tempest" (1611)*

Combat

"The Play's the Thing LRP" is a "roleplay over rulesplay" system - whilst there are hit points and damage effects, the "rule of cool" is more important than the numbers; without pushing into the realms of cheating, if someone does some really dramatic/theatrical herofighting or particularly impressive-sounding spell vocals, these should generally have more of an impact - especially if someone **Monologues**.

You can use your intuition a little as to what you think the most appropriate reaction is, which may mean taking a critical hit even if you still had a couple of hit points remaining, or shaking off the effects of a spell with relative ease if your character appears to be in more control of their environment than the spellcaster.

That being said, the following combat mechanics apply to this system:

- Everyone has the ability to wield one small or medium-sized item in one hand AND one additional small-sized item in their other hand (e.g. a sword and a dagger, a sword and a buckler or two daggers are all allowable by default).
 - Casting ranged spells requires your main hand to be free (i.e. you could have a spellcasting hand as your "medium weapon" and a small buckler or dagger in your off-hand).
 - You can gain an additional skill or item to increase your off-hand capability to medium-sized e.g. for another sword, a full-sized shield, or to cast spells whilst holding a medium-sized sword or shield.

- Large (two-handed) weapons such as staves and polearms require an additional skill to use, and strike for "double" (2HP).
- Everyone has the ability to "hold wounds", pausing a bleed count until either they are healed or wounds stop being held, at which point the bleed count will resume from where it paused. Holding wounds requires both hands, and you must be on at least 1HP to do so (you cannot hold wounds on yourself!)
 - You can hold wounds on a target that is being moved, but you cannot simultaneously hold wounds and move someone (unless you have an additional skill or item to do so)
- Everyone has the ability to move an unresisting target (conscious targets on 0HP and unconscious targets on -1HP are always unresisting) - this requires use of both hands, and you must walk with them at a slower pace.
 - If two people move a target together, they can either:
 - move slowly but use their off-hand to defend with a small item such as a dagger or buckler, or
 - Move at normal speed, each using both hands to hold wounds.
 - You cannot use three or more people to move a target together for any additional benefit (i.e. you cannot move at normal speed, holding wounds AND parrying - other people can defend you nearby, but you must hold wounds as above).
- Everyone has 8 global Hit Points (HP) by default - these can be increased with additional skills, lammies or enchanted items.
 - If you are on at least 1HP and rest for 30mins/an encounter (without casting any spells or engaging in combat) then you return to your maximum HP level.
 - If you drop to zero hits, you must fall to the ground and you are unable to fight, defend or perform any actions. You are conscious, and able to scream for help, but you cannot move or cast any spells until you have been healed at least 1 HP.

- If you drop to -1 HP, you fall unconscious and begin your bleed count (this is 3min by default). If you are not healed (or are executed) within this timeframe, your character will die, and you must take a new character sheet to be "recast". You cannot have a lower HP level than -1HP.
 - If you die, any items you had on your person are left with your body - any special skills you had are lost and do not carry over to your new character.
- Everyone can call "**execute**" (either via melee blow for 0MP or as a touch-ranged spell for 1MP) on a target on either 0HP or -1HP after **30 seconds** of appropriate roleplay/**Monologuing**; if this roleplay is uninterrupted and "execute" is called, the target character is permanently killed, regardless of how far they were or were not into a bleed count, and cannot be revived; the Plothole world they were tied to becomes permanently fated for Tragedy. If the execution Monologue is interrupted during those 30 seconds, it has no effect on the target, and the intended executioner must restart the attempt from the beginning.
- Everyone has 6 Mana Points (MP) by default - these can be increased with additional skills or items.
 - Mana replenishes to your maximum level 1 hour after casting your first spell (regardless of how active or restful you are in that time) - you can cast up to your max MP in that hour. There is no other way to regain mana (besides ref calls of "...and scene"); it is not health and cannot be "healed" by player actions.
 - Each standard spell cast costs 1MP and distanced-ranged spells must be accompanied by appropriate spell vocals (eg "by the power of magic, I bind you", "in the name of love, I silence you").
 - Spells can (usually) only target one person, but there is no maximum "range" for single target distanced-range spellcasting other than earshot/eyeline. Spells can never target oneself.
 - For rare "Mass" effects, the maximum range for this is either approx 3m/10ft, with a "Mass" call accompanied by a directional "arc" of the caster's arms of about a 90° angle (affecting anyone in range

in the given direction), or by the caster holding both hands above their head to indicate a 360° effect that hits everyone within a ~2m/6ft radius. "Mass" calls cost 3MP instead of the usual 1MP and are not available as starting player character skills, with the exception of the unique "Uncanny Valley" skill from the "Unnatural Ability" archetype.

- Mana can only be used on spells - other magicks, such as alchemy/sonnets, monologues and masques, do not use MP, although MP may be needed to use some enhanced/magical (lammied) melee weapons (essentially casting a spell as you strike with your weapon).
- All small and medium-sized weapons do a single point of damage, and all large (two-handed) weapons strike for 2HP,. You do not need to call "single" or "double" when striking for melee damage.
 - If another call accompanies the blow, such as "silence"" or "fling", you take both a single point of damage *and* the corresponding roleplay effect, unless you parried - do not take either effect if you used a medium/large shield; if you blocked with a buckler or any-sized weapon, take the RP effect but not the damage.
- Everyone can (if safely prenegotiated with other parties) stagefight grappling/unarmed combat - actual physical contact should be avoided when roleplaying this.
 - No matter how many blows you take via unarmed combat, you cannot drop below zero HP from fisticuffs.
- Everyone can use (coreless, weapons-checked) throwing weapons. Note, no guns, crossbows or other fired projectiles are allowed at "The Play's the Thing LRP". All thrown weapons strike for 1HP/"single" damage.
 - It requires an additional skill (gained via magic in-game, if a player character) to throw explosives - these are rare and powerful; when thrown, the thrower should call "**tick, tick, tick, tick, BOOM**", at which point everyone within a <1m radius of the bomb will drop to -1HP, everyone within 1-3m radius

of the bomb will drop to 0HP and everyone within 3-10m radius of the bomb will drop to 1HP.

- Explosives cannot normally be Resisted.
- If you were already on 1HP or below and are caught in any element of the blast radius, you drop another HP i.e. from 1HP to 0HP at <10m away and from 0HP to -1HP at <3m away.

The head is not a safe target for LARP combat. **Avoid aiming any weapons at anyone's head, face or neck.** Any accidental blows to the head do not count as HP loss (and unsafe blows should be reported). Only 1 hit per weapon per second will "count" - this is to encourage heroic (and safer) fighting.

After you have been offered a player ticket and cast as a particular character, there will be the opportunity to choose additional abilities and personalise your character's starting skillset - each character begins with 3 set skills from their "archetype", and 3 more starting skills of their choice.

*"Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn and cauldron bubble."*
~ The Three Witches, "The Tragedy of Macbeth" (1605)

Calls and Effects

None of these magical calls are free to use "by default", but some may be gained as starting skills - see the starting character skills lists below. Some calls may be gained through magic in-game, or may be primarily used by NPC crew:

- **"Fling"** - target must immediately (safely) move away from the source of the Fling (around 3m/10ft).
- **"Bind"** - target's legs are frozen in place (although you may still move your upper body and fight and speak as normal) for **10 seconds**.
- **"Silence"** - target cannot speak/chant/sing/make any vocal noises or cast any spells (including magical calls by melee blow) for **30 seconds**.
- **"Poison"** - target cannot be healed - including by resting - until the poison is cured, although Holding Wounds will still pause a bleed count for a character on -1HP. If the target receives an "advanced poison" lammie, this will require unique treatment.
- **"Enthrall"** - target must walk towards the caster as though in a trance, unable to strike with a weapon, speak or cast spells. They are suggestible to minor instructions from the spellcaster (eg "bring me this item") but this cannot be used to make them hurt themselves or others. Any instruction in direct contravention of the target's personal code may cause the spell to break entirely (i.e. if you tell a character who greatly values their modesty to take their clothes off, this will not work and they will probably attack you - don't take the piss with enchantment instructions!) **The effect ends immediately if either the target or the spellcaster take any damage; if neither takes damage within 1 minute, the spell wears off (whichever is soonest).**

- **"Resist"** - target of an effect **struck by blow** can ignore the roleplay effect (such as "Silence" or "Bind") for 1MP, although they still take the damage from the strike. Does not require additional spell vocals (but "Resist" cannot be called if under "Silence" effect). **You cannot normally resist a ranged spell vocal effect or a "Rend".**
- **Chant of Healing** - every 10 seconds of appropriate spell vocals heals an unpoisoned target within touch-range **1HP/10 secs**. The chant costs 1MP no matter how many HP it heals, but if it is interrupted for any reason, it will take another 1MP to continue/begin healing again.
- **"Detect Poison"** - a touch-range spell that will tell you if a target is poisoned and, if it is an Advanced Poison, how to cure it.
- **"Cure Poison"** - a touch-range spell that cures ordinary poisons after **10 seconds** of appropriate roleplay.
- **"Rend"** - the only vocalised damage call, not normally available to player characters; target loses **5HP**. **This call cannot normally be resisted.**

Note: "Touch-Range" does not require actual physical contact - hovering your hands within ~30cm/1ft of the target is sufficient proximity. Do not touch people without consent.

The following pages detail the skills that your characters can start with; both the 3 starting skills that your character will begin with based on their "archetype", as well as the full list of potential starting skills.

Some starting skills require knowledge of other skills first as prerequisites. Any abilities that are not on the list of "starter skills" may only be gained by players in-game through boons, usually from magic such as Alchemy or Masques, granting either personal or item-based lammies with special powers and abilities. Some archetypes begin with unique skills that cannot be chosen by other archetyped characters as "starting skills", although they can potentially be emulated with a magical lammie from a boon gained in-game. There are no starter skills that grant player-characters bombs or other such rare items.

*"I stood
like a man at a mark, with a whole army shooting at
me. She speaks poniards, and every word stabs:
if her breath were as terrible as her terminations,
there were no living near her; she would infect to
the north star."*

~ Benedick, "Much Ado About Nothing" (1598)

Starting Skills

Characters begin with 3 skills from their "archetype", and then can choose 3 additional skills from this starting skills list:

Combat Strength

- **"Strongarm"** - You may wield medium-sized weapons/items ambidextrously (such as two medium-sized swords, or a sword and full-sized shield), or cast spells with your off-hand (whilst also wielding up to a medium-sized item or weapon).
- **"Weaponsmaster"** - You may wield large (two-handed) weapons such as a polearm or staff (which always strike for 2HP/"double" damage).
- **"Stunning Strike"** - You may call **"Bind"** for 0MP up to 3x per encounter with any small or medium-sized melee weapon blow.
- **"Forceful Fighter"** - You may call **"Fling"** (for 0MP) up to 3x per encounter with any small or medium-sized melee weapon blow.
- **"Stifling Slash"** - You may call **"Silence"** (for 0MP) 3x per encounter with any small or medium-sized melee weapon blow.
- **"Roll With the Magic"** - after taking any ranged spell effect, your next melee strike (with any weapon) can be accompanied by the same magical call (for 0MP).

Resilience and Defence

- **"Intense Training"** - increases base HP from 8HP to 10HP.
- **"Extreme Training"** - increases base HP from 8HP to 12HP. (Requires "Intense Training" prerequisite).

- **"Exceptional Training"** - increases base HP from 8HP to 14HP (Requires "Intense Training" and "Extreme Training" prerequisites).
- **"Sterner Stuff"** - increases base bleed time from 3min to 5min.
- **"Screaming Dead"** - if knocked to -1HP, you retain consciousness and can talk/scream etc unless under "Silence" effect, though the bleed count still begins.
- **"Artful Dodger"** - can call **"Resist"** for 1MP to ignore the roleplay effect (but not the damage) when targeted by any effect struck by blow.
- **"Stay With Me"** - may hold wounds on a target whilst also moving them. They must still use both hands and move slowly unless assisted in moving the target.

Spellcasting

- **"Expanded Soul"** - increases base MP from 6MP to 8MP.
- **"Enlightened Soul"** - increases base MP from 6MP to 10MP (requires "Expanded Soul" prerequisite).
- **"Curative Charm"** - allows the caster to use **Chant of Healing** - every 10 seconds of appropriate spell vocals heals an unpoisoned target within touch-range **1HP/10 secs**. The chant costs 1MP no matter how many HP it heals, but if it is interrupted for any reason, it will take another 1MP to continue/begin healing again.
 - If the caster has also taken the "Strongarm" skill and is not holding any weapons or items, they may use both free hands as spellcasting hands to heal two targets at the same time (for 1MP per target i.e. 2MP).
- **"Purging Power"** - allows the caster to use the **"Detect Poison"** and **"Cure Poison"** spells at touch-range, for 1MP each.
- **"Forceful Flight"** - allows the caster to use the **"Fling"** spell (at distanced range) once every 30 seconds for 1MP.
- **"Enchanting Presence"** - allows the caster to use the **"Enthrall"** spell up to 3x per encounter (at distanced range) for 1MP.
- **"Dazzling Aura"** - allows the caster to use the **"Bind"** spell once every 30 seconds (at distanced range) for 1MP.
- **"Hushing Hex"** - allows the caster to use the **"Silence"** spell up to 3x per encounter (at distanced range) for 1MP.

Example Character Build:

Claudio begins with the "Lover's Heart" archetype - the "Stern Stuff", "Curative Charm" and "Artful Dodger" skills. In addition, he chooses to take "Purging Power", "Roll With the Magic" and "Forceful Fighter" skills. **His stats are now: 8HP, 6MP, 5min bleed count.**

He uses one hand to cast spells, and wields a small dagger in the other, which he must sheath to either hold wounds or carry someone unassisted. If he is assisted carrying someone, he may redraw his knife to parry and defend, whilst moving slowly.

He can use the spells "Chant of Cure Wounds" (1MP, touch-range, heals 1HP/10sec), "Resist" (1MP when struck by melee combat), "Detect Poison" (1MP, touch-range) and "Cure Poison" (1MP, touch-range - effective on Ordinary Poisons). Each time he is hit by a ranged spell, he can echo the same effect with his next melee strike (with his dagger) for 0MP, and he can also strike for "Fling" up to 3x per encounter (0MP, by melee blow with his dagger).

After some time on the island, he uses **alchemy** to gain a white-ribboned lammie that he applies to his dagger, that also allows him to strike for "Poison" once per encounter for 1MP (as long as his fate - currently tied to Messina - is destined for comedy). His lammied dagger is his and his alone to use, unless he is unattuned (by his fate moving towards tragedy) or he dies (in which case the item is no longer bound to his soul and the lammie can be looted from the corpse, although the personal physrep must be returned to the player).

After he performs a **Masque** with a few friends, he also gains a personal lammie that allows him to call "Mass Cure Poison" (for 3MP, affecting all targets in either a ~2m/6ft radius, or ~3m/10ft if the spell is indicated as cast in a particular ~90° "arc" of direction). If and when he dies, this lammie dies with him - it cannot be transferred.

Claudio now cannot gain any additional lammies, but when facing an opponent on the battlefield, and knocked down to only 2HP, he performs a spectacular **Monologue** - as such, a Stage Manager informs him that, as his words have power, he has just been magically healed +3HP, and as such he is now on 5 of his maximum 8HP again.

*"Knock, knock! Who's there, in the other devil's name?
Faith, here's an equivocator, that could swear
in both the scales against either scale;
who committed treason enough for God's sake,
yet could not equivocate to heaven:
O, come in, equivocator."
~ Porter, "The Tragedy of Macbeth" (1605)*

Playable Character Archetypes

"Gift of the Gab"

Benedick, Beatrice, Mercutio Escalus, Peter Quince, Lady Macbeth, Maria, Sir Toby Belch, Polonius, Phoebe, Jaques, Cassius and Lepidus:

1. "Screaming Dead" - if knocked to -1HP, you retain consciousness and can talk/scream etc unless under "Silence" effect, though bleed count still begins.
2. "Stay With Me" - may hold wounds on a target whilst also moving them. They must still use both hands and move slowly unless assisted in moving the target.
3. Unique ability "Inspirational Speaker": +1 effect to **Monologuing**.
 - o +3 more skills of choice

"Lover's Heart"

Claudio, Hero, Romeo Montague, Juliet Capulet, Benvolio Montague, Lysander, Helena, Viola (disguised as Cesario), Horatio, Silvius, Audrey, Mark Antony and Octavia:

1. "Stern Stuff" - increases base bleed time to 5min.
2. "Curative Charm" - allows the caster to use **Chant of Healing** - every 10 seconds of appropriate spell vocals heals an unpoisoned target within touch-range 1HP/10 secs. The chant costs 1MP no matter how many HP it heals, but if it is interrupted for any reason, it will take another 1MP to continue/begin healing again.
3. "Artful Dodger" - can call "**Resist**" for 1MP to ignore the roleplay effect (but not the damage) when targeted by any effect struck by blow.
 - o +3 more skills of choice

"Noble Might"

Don Pedro, Leonato, Prince Paris Escalus, Lord Capulet, Lady Capulet, Lord Montague, Lady Montague, Hermia, Demetrius, Lennox Ross, Countess Olivia, Duke Orsino, Queen Gertrude, Ophelia, Celia (disguised as Aliena), Orlando, Duke Senior, Brutus and Octavius:

1. "Intense Training" - increases base HP from 8HP to 10HP.
2. "Hushing Hex" - allows the caster to use the **"Silence"** spell (at distanced range) for 1MP 3x per encounter
3. "Roll With The Magic" - after taking any ranged spell effect, your next melee strike can be accompanied by the same magical call (for 0MP).
 - o **+3 more skills of choice**

"Mystic Knowledge"

Friar Francis, Friar Lawrence, Macbeth, Banquo, Hamlet, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, Osric, Rosalind (disguised as Ganymede), Cleopatra and Enobarbus:

1. **Purging Power**" - allows the caster to use the **"Detect Poison"** and **"Cure Poison"** spells at touch-range, for 1MP each.
2. Unique ability "Potion Proficient": Can strike for **"Poison"** (by melee blow with any weapon) once per encounter for 0MP.
3. Unique ability "Bold Brewing": +1 effect to **Alchemy**
 - o **+3 more skills of choice**

"The Entertainer"

Margaret Ursula, Dogberry, Juliet's Nurse, Nick Bottom, Flute, Snug, Snout, Starveling, the Porter, Feste Fabian, Sir Andrew Aguecheek, the Player King, the Player Queen, Touchstone and Lord Amiens:

1. "Enchanting Presence" - allows the caster to use the **"Enthrall"** spell up to 3x per encounter (at distanced range) for 1MP.
2. "Dazzling Aura" - allows the caster to use the **"Bind"** spell once every 30 seconds (at distanced range) for 1MP.
3. Unique Ability "The Show Must Go On": +1 to any **Masques** performed with at least one Entertainer (each Entertainer can only personally boost one Masque per event).
 - o **+3 more skills of choice**

"Unnatural Ability"

Puck, Titania, Queen of the Faeries, Oberon, King of the Faeries, King Duncan, First Witch, Second Witch, Third Witch and Calpurnia:

1. Unique Ability "Uncanny Valley": may call **"Mass Fling"** (3MP for each use; "Mass" spell).
2. "Expanded Soul" - increases base MP from 6MP to 8MP.
3. "Enlightened Soul" - increases base MP from 6MP to 10MP (requires "Expanded Soul" prerequisite).
 - o **+3 more skills of choice**

"Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?"
"I do bite my thumb, sir."
"Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?"
"Is the law of our side, if I say ay?" "No."
"No, sir, I do not bite my thumb at you, sir,
but I bite my thumb, sir."
"Do you quarrel, sir?" "Quarrel sir! no, sir."
"If you do, sir, I am for you: I serve as good a man as you."
 ~ Abraham, Sampson and Gregory, "The Tragedy of Romeo and
 Juliet" (1594)

Duelling

Duelling is a specific mechanic for a 1 v 1 combat encounter. These are designed to be more freeform than mass combat encounters, where mechanics/HP/MP etc can be largely set aside for "rule of cool" dramatic fighting, and can be used to settle personal differences either Player v Player or as a Player v NPC battle. The rules for duels are as follows:

- A challenge must be both issued and accepted. If the other party declines the challenge, there can be social RP around the outrage/shame of this refusal, but no character can be forced to duel against their will. Likewise, if a duel is agreed upon, other parties should not attempt to intervene (they can RP their disapproval from the sidelines and weep and wail over the consequences, but they must let the duel play out to its conclusion).
- The terms of the duel must also be agreed upon, including allowed weaponry (or fisticuffs), or whether it is merely a "battle of wits" (e.g. an IC roast battle), as well as any elements that are "off-limits" (e.g. any particular magical advantages or poisons), and what the final consequence should be (terms for the consequence may be anything from a simple yielding/apology to an Execution).
- A duel is always fought in three bouts (and can be considered to have an "...and scene" effect after each of the first two bouts, to reset the two fighters for the next round). The "best of three" will determine the victor - if it is a 2:1 victory, the agreed-upon consequences are the natural conclusion; if one party defeats the other in all 3 bouts, then the victor may

also gain an additional temporary boon from a Stage Manager, as per an especially potent **Monologue**.

- If someone forfeits the duel before all 3 rounds are completed, they may face some additional negative consequence - if the terms of the duel were that the loser is executed, additional consequences may still apply to the character's canonical *narrative* that has a wider impact on their fated story/epilogue.
- The two duellists may opt to ask a neutral party to adjudicate who has won each bout (especially for non-physical duels, which can be anything from a more [surreal "Sandman-esque" battle](#) to a "battle of wits" - essentially, the **Monologue** equivalent of a rap battle/IC [roast](#) challenge).
- Players can choose whether or not to approach a duel "organically" (seeing who wins the duel as a result of the RP/combat that ensues naturally across the three bouts) or, if they prefer, they can pre-determine the outcome out-of-character (this can be as simple as an OC conversation where someone says "I'd quite like to die and be recast now - it could be dramatic fun if I win the first bout, but you win the second two?") - generally speaking, if both players would prefer to win (or lose!) then duelling is encouraged to be resolved "organically" through the three bouts, but if they both wish for the same ultimate outcome (in this example, one player is looking for their own character to be defeated), then this can be optionally pre-agreed OC between both parties.

*"A play there is, my lord, some ten words long,
Which is as brief as I have known a play;
But by ten words, my lord, it is too long,
Which makes it tedious; for in all the play
There is not one word apt, one player fitted:
And tragical, my noble lord, it is;
For Pyramus therein doth kill himself.
Which, when I saw rehearsed, I must confess,
Made mine eyes water; but more merry tears
The passion of loud laughter never shed."*
~ Philostrate, "A Midsummer Night's Dream" (1595)

The Plotholes (Player Briefing)

Each of the plays below has a cast of several playable characters. To cast each play's starting characters, there should be **5 characters selected from each script**; each setting has **either 3 or 4 roles that must be part of the core starting cast**, and then several options for the other role(s) that *could* make up the cast of 5 depending on players' preferences. Some roles have been blended from 2 or more canonical characters' parts, others have had other details amended from canon, and some script notes leave room for roles to either be blended, played singly or together as a group or double-act.

If not selected at initial casting, the roles that are marked as "potentially understudy" can be picked up later, if a character dies or any role is being re-cast for any reason. Some of these characters are also marked as "potentially NPC" - if no one has picked up an understudy role that it becomes plot-crucial to include at a later point in the game, an NPC may take this character sheet and this role will no longer be available to players as a "re-cast"/understudy role.

If and when a player character dies, or needs to be re-cast for any reason, any remaining **"understudy" characters in black or blue** from *any of the eight playscripts available to the players* - namely, Much Ado About Nothing (the Messina callsheet), Romeo & Juliet (the Verona callsheet), A Midsummer Night's Dream (the Athens callsheet), Macbeth (the Dunsinane callsheet), Twelfth Night (the Illyria callsheet), Hamlet (the Elsinore callsheet), As You Like It (the Arden callsheet) or Julius Caesar, Antony and Cleopatra (the Rome callsheet) -

whether the player's previous character was from that setting or they were previously from an entirely different playscript.

Understudy roles **written in black** are unlikely to enter play unless chosen by a player (these are not designed for NPCs). Characters that are written **in blue** are not generally intended to be in *the starting 5* for each cast - however, they can be picked up as understudy roles if a player character dies and the player re-casts, as long as that character has not been picked up during the course of play by an NPC. Characters that are written **in red** are specifically intended as NPC roles that will make an appearance at some point or other in the game, for plot reasons. Players may not play any characters from the *Tempest* or *Othello* scripts - these are exclusively for NPCs.

Characters that are written **in italics** denote that that character exists in multiple settings, across worlds. Most notably, this happens with **Antonio** and **Sebastian, who are written in dark purple**, to denote their unique, world-crossing character backstories due to character-blending. These characters are NPCs that belong simultaneously to *The Tempest*, *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Twelfth Night*.

Characters that are written **in light purple, whether in bold or not**, represent minor NPCs that may or may not appear across the course of the game - this is either to reference an off-stage NPC that is absent or already dead throughout the course of the game (which does *not* mark a play as a Tragedy, if the death occurs "offstage"), or to acknowledge the existence of minor NPCs which are mostly a mechanic in place to allow the crew to do things like set scenery, deliver in-game letters, or simply eat their food, without requiring large amounts of complex plot or backstory for their generic soldier, servant, messenger, faery, musician, or similar background character - they may well engage in light-hearted roleplay if they so choose, but these minor "characters" are not there for heavily involved plot or to get involved with/escalate any conflicts that are developing in-game.

Each character sheet has a starting "archetype", which gives advantages in certain game mechanic arenas, such as combat, healing or alchemy, as well as the ability to choose additional starting skills to personalise the characters from there.

Messina, Sicily

Cast List:

Benedick

Beatrice

Claudio

Hero

Don Pedro (potentially understudy role)

Friar Francis (potentially understudy role)

Margaret Ursula (potentially understudy role)

Dogberry (potentially understudy role)

Leonato (potentially understudy or can be NPC)

Don John (NPC)

Conrade Boracchio (NPC)

Antonio (NPC)

(misc. Servants, watchmen etc as additional NPC roles)

At the time the Plothole to the Isle of Sycorax opens:

Leonato, a kindly, respectable nobleman, has welcomed friends home from war. He lives with his daughter **Hero**, who is in love with **Claudio** (one of the newly returned soldiers), as well as with his witty and sarcastic niece **Beatrice**, the daughter of his brother **Antonio**, who is the Duke of Milan; **Antonio** is away attending the wedding of Princess **Claribel** of Naples to the King of Tunis, but is expected to join the party shortly - likely joined by his close companion **Sebastian**, **Claribel**'s uncle.

The friends feasting in his house include **Don Pedro**, a prince, and his bastard brother **Don John**, whose attempts to usurp his brother have been thwarted, and whose presence at the party is both as guest and prisoner, with tensions high between the two Dons.

Don Pedro's best friend is **Benedick**, who is as witty and sarcastic as **Beatrice**; the two often playfully and flirtatiously make jokes at the other's expense, but both are too prideful to admit that they have romantic feelings for the other.

Claudio and **Hero** are to be married by **Friar Francis**, and local watchman **Dogberry** is in charge of ensuring that everything goes according to plan.

Meanwhile, **Hero** and her best friend/waiting gentlewoman **Margaret Ursula** hatch a plan to convince **Beatrice** that **Benedick** is in love with her, whilst **Claudio** and **Don Pedro** convince **Benedick** that **Beatrice** is in love with him, each with a series of tricks and jokes.

However, **Don John** is plotting with his companion **Conrade Boracchio** to convince **Claudio** that **Hero** is having an affair; their plan is to trick **Claudio** into witnessing **Margaret Ursula** sneaking her lover **Conrade Boracchio** into her room and to convince him that this was actually **Hero**, sneaking another man into her bedroom the night before her wedding. This plan, of course, requires the diabolical duo not being caught by **Dogberry** and his team of watchmen, as well as requiring **Margaret Ursula's** unknowing assistance to play her part in the ruse.

Note: **Friar Francis** has a particular interest in alchemy and potions - these potions vary from a serum that can allow the drinker to appear as dead, whilst secretly living, as well as actual poisons and a range of other liquids with magical properties. **Dogberry** is often called upon as an entertainer, whether he is aware of what has made people laugh at/with him or not.

As such, before the Plothole opens, the following plans are made but not yet set in motion:

- For **Claudio** and **Hero** to be married by **Friar Francis**
- For **Don John** and **Conrade Boracchio** to convince **Claudio** and his friends that **Hero** is unfaithful; potentially by using **Margaret Ursula** as an unwitting pawn in their game (if **Dogberry** and the watchmen do not overhear to foil these villainous plans)
- For **Hero** and **Margaret Ursula** to convince **Beatrice** that **Benedick** loves her, in order that she might admit her own love for him
- For **Claudio** and **Don Pedro** to convince **Benedick** that **Beatrice** loves him, in order that he might admit his own love for her in turn

At a masquerade ball in Messina, welcoming Don Pedro, Benedick, Claudio and the returned soldiers to [Leonato's](#) house, all of the above characters are feasting, dancing and drinking, when a magical whirlpool appears; the Plathole envelops them all, and when they awaken, they are on the shores of an unknown island, with several others from strange lands that they do not know or recognise...

Verona, Italy

Cast List:

Romeo Montague

Juliet Capulet

Mercutio Escalus

Benvolio Montague (potentially understudy role)

Juliet's Nurse (potentially understudy role)

Friar Lawrence (potentially understudy role)

Prince Paris Escalus (potentially understudy or can be NPC)

Lord (and/or Lady) Capulet (understudy or can be NPC)

Lord (and/or Lady) Montague (understudy or can be NPC)

Tybalt Capulet (NPC)

Rosaline (NPC)

~~**Ethel the Pirate King's Daughter**~~ (NPC)

(misc. Servants, musicians etc as additional NPC roles)

At the time the Plothole to the Isle of Sycorax opens:

Romeo Montague has been pining in love for **Rosaline**. In order to distract him from this lovesickness, his best friends **Benvolio Montague** and **Mercutio Escalus** convince him to crash a party - a masquerade ball being thrown by **Lord (and/or Lady) Capulet**. At this party, he encounters **Juliet Capulet** and is immediately overwhelmed with new love for her, forgetting his previous obsession with **Rosaline**. **Romeo Montague** and **Juliet Capulet** make plans, with the assistance of **Juliet's Nurse**, for **Friar Lawrence** to marry the lovers in secret.

However, **Lord (and/or Lady) Capulet**, **Juliet Capulet's** parent(s), have a long-standing family feud with **Lord (and/or Lady) Montague**, **Romeo Montague's** parent(s). Brawling in the streets is common, and as a result, **Prince Paris Escalus** has declared that anyone caught fighting in Verona's streets will be put to death. In addition to this, **Lord (and/or Lady) Capulet** are keen for **Juliet Capulet** to marry **Prince Paris Escalus**, and would not approve of her marrying the son of their enemy.

Also in attendance at the party are **Tybalt Capulet**, **Juliet Capulet's** hot-headed cousin, who, much like **Romeo Montague's** good friend **Mercutio Escalus**, is often a hair-trigger away from finding any excuse to start a fight. **Romeo Montague's**

other best friend is **Benvolio Montague**, who often tries to act as the peacemaker and de-escalate street fighting if he can. He also relies on **Friar Lawrence** as a surrogate father-figure, with a less strained relationship with the holy man than he has with his actual parent(s); **Juliet Capulet** in turn most strongly relies on **Juliet's Nurse** (a motormouth, fond of bawdy humour) as both a surrogate mother-figure and her best friend, as well as relying on her to relay secret messages to **Romeo Montague**, when she cannot escape the watchful eyes of her parent(s) for her own agency.

Note: **Friar Lawrence** has a particular interest in alchemy and potions - these potions vary from a serum that can allow the drinker to appear as dead, whilst secretly living, as well as actual poisons and a range of other liquids with magical properties. **Mercutio Escalus** is often considered "the life of the party", forever using his wit and bringing laughter and merriment wherever he goes.

As such, before the Plothole opens, the following plans are made but not yet set in motion/fulfilled to completion:

- For **Benvolio Montague** and **Mercutio Escalus** to successfully distract **Romeo Montague** from his love of **Rosaline** (this plan has already succeeded in part, but neither **Benvolio Montague**, **Mercutio Escalus** nor **Rosaline** are aware of **Romeo Montague's** sudden change of heart).
- For **Romeo Montague** and **Juliet Capulet** to be married in secret by **Friar Lawrence**, with the help of **Juliet's Nurse**.
- For **Lord (and/or Lady) Capulet** to instead have **Juliet Capulet** married to **Prince Paris Escalus**.
- For **Benvolio Montague** and **Prince Paris Escalus** to successfully put a stop to the violence in the streets, often started by **Tybalt Capulet**, **Mercutio Escalus**, or any number of citizens of Verona, spurred on by the family feud between **Lord (and/or Lady) Capulet** and **Lord (and/or Lady) Montague** and their respective warring households.

At a masquerade ball in Verona, hosted by **Lord (and/or Lady) Capulet**, all of the above characters are feasting, dancing and drinking, when a magical whirlpool appears; the Plothole envelops them all, and when they awaken, they are on the shores of an unknown island, with several others from strange lands that they do not know or recognise...

Athens , Greece

Cast List:

Puck

Nick Bottom

Hermia

Lysander

Helena (potentially understudy)

Demetrius (potentially understudy)

Titania, Queen of the Faeries (can also be understudy or NPC)

Oberon, King of the Faeries (can also be understudy or NPC)

Peter Quince (understudy or can be NPC)

Flute, Snug, Snout and/or Starveling (understudy or NPC)

Egeus (NPC)

King Theseus (NPC)

Queen Hippolyta (NPC)

(misc. Faeries as additional NPC roles)

At the time the Plothole to the Isle of Sycorax opens:

Hermia is in love with **Lysander**, but her father **Egeus** forbids the match. Instead, he wants his daughter to marry **Demetrius**, whom her best friend, **Helena**, is in love with. In order to avoid this trouble, **Hermia** and **Lysander** intend to leave, to find some other city where they can marry one another, and **Helena** and **Demetrius** follow them; the four lovers are lost together in the woods outside of Athens.

Meanwhile, **Titania, Queen of the Faeries** and **Oberon, King of the Faeries** are having a lovers' spat in those same woods. **Oberon, King of the Faeries**, having witnessed the heartbreak of these four human lovers, tasks **Puck**, a faerie, with employing alchemy and magic to try and untangle it so that two couples; **Hermia** and **Lysander** and **Helena** and **Demetrius** will be happy in love together (but **Puck** does not know which Athenian human is which, and may well get these lovers confused).

At the same time, **Nick Bottom** (an over-confident weaver who considers himself an actor and witty entertainer) and **Peter Quince** (a carpenter and leader of the amateur troupe) are rehearsing a play in the woods, to perform with their friend(s) **Flute, Snug, Snout and/or Starveling** - fellow local

tradesfolk - to perform a play at **King Theseus** and **Queen Hippolyta**'s upcoming wedding reception.

Witnessing their rehearsal, **Puck** decides to intervene - to magically transform **Nick Bottom** to have the head of a donkey as a prank, and at the same time he is brewing a love potion - initially intended to fix the Love Quadrangle between **Helena**, **Hermia**, **Demetrius** and **Lysander**.

As such, before the Plothole opens, the following plans are made but not yet fully set in motion:

- For **Peter Quince**, along with friends **Flute**, **Snug**, **Snout** and/or **Starveling** and **Nick Bottom** to write, rehearse and perform a play to entertain **King Theseus** and **Queen Hippolyta** at their nuptial celebration.
- For **Puck**, under instruction from **Oberon, King of the Faeries**, to magically intervene with alchemy, so that **Hermia** and **Lysander** can be a happy couple in love, without interference from **Demetrius** (her father **Egeus**' choice of match), if **Demetrius** requites the love of her best friend **Helena**. However, crucially, **Puck** does not know which of these human lovers is which, in order to interfere "correctly", although he is brewing a powerful alchemical love potion.
- **Puck** has already transformed **Nick Bottom** to have the head of a donkey as a prank - this is terrifying to **Peter Quince**, along with friends **Flute**, **Snug**, **Snout** and/or **Starveling**, and they will likely be unable to rehearse anything whilst **Nick Bottom**'s appearance is so terrifying to his colleagues, much less perform in front of **King Theseus** and **Queen Hippolyta**.
- **Titania, Queen of the Faeries** and **Oberon, King of the Faeries** are warring with one another, and may plan cruel pranks on the other. **Oberon, King of the Faeries** often uses **Puck** as his lieutenant for such mischief, and **Titania, Queen of the Faeries** may also rely on her **Faeries**, though both are capable of powerful magicks of their own.
- **Hermia** and **Lysander** are determined to elope together, unless any outside interference changes this plan.
- **Demetrius**, although previously in love with **Helena**, is currently pursuing **Hermia**, as this is the match that her noble father **Egeus** approves of. **Helena**, meanwhile, is currently hopelessly in love with **Demetrius**, and is following him (as he follows her best friend, **Hermia**).

As night falls over Athens and the surrounding faerie woodlands, all of the above characters are settling down to sleep, when the Plothole envelops them all. When they awaken, they are on the shores of an unknown island, with several others from strange lands that they do not know or recognise...

Dunsinane, Scotland

Cast List:

Macbeth

Lady Macbeth

First Witch

Second Witch (potentially understudy role)

Third Witch (potentially understudy role)

Porter (potentially understudy role)

Banquo (potentially understudy or NPC)

King Duncan (can also be understudy or NPC)

Lennox Ross (can be understudy or NPC)

MacDuff and/or **Lady MacDuff** (NPC)

Malcolm Donalbain (NPC)

Fleance (NPC)

(misc. Thanes, servants etc as additional NPC roles)

At the time the Plothole to the Isle of Sycorax opens:

The Three Witches have given prophecy to **Macbeth** and **Banquo** on the Scottish moorlands as they return from battle, greeting **Macbeth** first as Thane of Glamis (a title he already has), then also as Thane of Cawdor (a title he believes belongs to someone else, but immediately after this encounter, **Lennox Ross** informs him that the previous Thane of Cawdor has been executed by **King Duncan** for treason, and the title is now **Macbeth's**), and finally greeting **Macbeth** as the future King of Scotland (a title that **King Duncan** still possesses).

Banquo begs the **Three Witches** to tell him something of his own fortune, and they say that **Banquo** will not be King, but that his son **Fleance** and all his descendants thereafter will be a long line of Kings of Scotland yet to come.

Macbeth writes home to **Lady Macbeth** to tell her of this strange, otherworldly encounter, and informs her that **King Duncan** and all of the Thanes and soldiers are coming to feast at their castle that night. **Lady Macbeth** is excited by the prospect of **Macbeth** becoming king, as prophesied, and urges her husband to kill **King Duncan** whilst he is a guest in their home, and to frame **King Duncan's** son **Malcom Donalbain** for the deed, so that he does not inherit the crown, and **Macbeth** can be crowned instead.

The guests arrive for a mighty feast, with the **Porter** guarding the door (albeit drunkenly play-acting with himself as if he is the guardian of the gates to Hell).

Besides **Macbeth**, **King Duncan**'s most faithful friend is **MacDuff** and/or **Lady MacDuff** - and the **Three Witches**, who have powerful magical skill, harbour secret knowledge that "none of woman born" can kill **Macbeth**, but that **MacDuff** and/or **Lady MacDuff** - having been the result of a C-section delivery - would be the perfect loophole and mortal threat to **Macbeth**, if he follows through with **Lady Macbeth**'s plan to murder **King Duncan** and become a tyrant King.

Macbeth is more hesitant to commit regicide, having been recently honoured by **King Duncan** with the additional title of Thane of Cawdor, but **Lady Macbeth** is keen and bloodthirsty. **Macbeth** is also concerned that **Banquo** heard the same prophecy from **The Three Witches**, and also worries that any crown he gains will be temporary, with both **Malcolm Donalbain** (the rightful heir of **King Duncan**) and **Fleance** (as prophesied to be the beginning of a long line of Kings of Scotland after **Macbeth**, rather than his own blood) as threats to any ambitious plans he may have for the crown. He also fears that if he is crowned King under such suspicious circumstances, he will not truly gain the loyalty of other Thanes such as **Banquo**, **MacDuff** and/or **Lady MacDuff** or **Lennox Ross**.

Note: The Three Witches are especially potent at magic concerning fate and death - with a simple Masque, they can summon ghosts of any who die.

As such, before the Plothole opens, the following plans are made but not yet fully set in motion:

- **The Three Witches** have given prophecy to **Macbeth** and **Banquo** that **Macbeth** will be King, and that **Banquo**'s son **Fleance** will begin a line of Kings of Scotland.
- **Lady Macbeth** is keen for **Macbeth** to kill **King Duncan** and frame **Malcolm Donalbain** for the murder, so that **Macbeth** may be crowned King of Scotland, as prophesied by **The Three Witches**.
- If **Macbeth** can be convinced to commit murder, he is also threatened by **Banquo**, who also heard the prophecy, and **Banquo**'s son **Fleance**, apparently fated to begin a line of

future Kings; he may attempt to silence **Banquo** and/or try to kill **Fleance** in order to try to cheat fate.

- **The Three Witches** have not given further prophecy to **Macbeth** that "none of woman born shall harm **Macbeth**", although they possess this knowledge, knowing that **MacDuff** and/or **Lady MacDuff** are prime candidates to be the loophole to this prophecy and represent the few mortal threats to **Macbeth**. Powerful and mysterious, **The Three Witches** may choose to give some, all, or none of this information as and when it suits them, although they cannot directly lie.
- If **Macbeth** believes **MacDuff** and/or **Lady MacDuff** are a threat to him, he may also resort to violence against them.
- The **Porter** is present at the gate, with all the skills of a charismatic entertainer and jack-of-all-trades; there is a chance that any of the Thanes, Kings and such might use the **Porter** as their go-to person they rely on for any and all things.

At a celebratory feast at Macbeth and Lady Macbeth's home in Dunsinane, held in honour of **King Duncan**, the above characters are feasting, dancing and drinking (or, in the case of the Witches and the Porter, lurking just outside the castle gates), when a magical whirlpool appears; the Plothole envelops them all, and when they awaken, they are on the shores of an unknown island, with several others from strange lands that they do not know or recognise...

Illyria, Italy

Cast List:

Viola (disguised as **Cesario**)

Countess Olivia

Duke Orsino

Maria

Feste Fabian (potentially understudy role)

Sir Toby Belch (potentially understudy role)

Sir Andrew Aguecheek (can be understudy or NPC)

Malvolio (NPC)

Antonio (NPC)

Sebastian (NPC)

(misc. servants etc as additional NPC roles)

At the time the Plothole to the Isle of Sycorax opens:

A ship carrying several Italian nobility, royalty and aristocracy crashes on the Illyrian shore, on the Italian coast of the Adriatic Sea; The ship contains twins **Sebastian** and **Viola**, as well as their elder brother, **Alonso**, King of Naples, who once helped **Antonio** (also onboard) to usurp his brother **Prospero** and become the Duke of Milan.

Alonso has two children, and has recently celebrated the wedding of his daughter (**Sebastian** and **Viola's** niece **Claribel**) to the King of Tunis; **Alonso**, **Sebastian**, **Antonio** and **Viola** are all enroute home to Italy, along with **Alonso's** son **Ferdinand** and several others, when they are shipwrecked.

Until this shipwreck in Illyria, it had been **Antonio's** intention to visit his brother **Leonato**, who is raising **Antonio's** daughter **Beatrice** alongside her cousin **Hero** in Messina, Sicily, rather than heading directly home to his stolen Dukedom of Milan.

Separated, and believing both her brothers (including her twin, **Sebastian**), to be dead, **Viola** disguises herself as a young man, calling herself "**Cesario**", and quickly finds work in the household of **Duke Orsino**, as his page and confidante.

Antonio and **Sebastian** also believe themselves to be the sole survivors of the shipwreck, and the two are inseparably close.

No other survivors of this shipwreck are found dead or alive in Illyria at this time.

Viola (disguised as Cesario) falls in love with **Duke Orsino**, who in turn is in love with **Countess Olivia**. **Countess Olivia** had been rejecting **Duke Orsino's** suit - nominally because she was still grieving the death of her own brother, but in reality it becomes clear that she simply has no interest in **Duke Orsino**, as when **Viola (disguised as Cesario)** brings her loveletters on behalf of **Duke Orsino**, **Countess Olivia** swiftly falls in love with **Viola (disguised as Cesario)**, who rejects **Countess Olivia's** advances, having eyes only for her master, **Duke Orsino**.

Countess Olivia's chief of staff is **Malvolio** - a self-righteous man who takes himself very seriously. However, after a prank from **Countess Olivia's** waiting woman **Maria**, he has been tricked into believing that his mistress is harbouring secret romantic affection for him, her servant, and, following instructions in teasing letters left by **Maria** that he believes to be from **Countess Olivia**, **Malvolio** is now making a fool of himself with bizarre behaviour - inappropriately smiling far too much for **Countess Olivia's** liking, and wearing garish and ridiculous yellow clothing in a fashion style that she detests.

Also in **Countess Olivia's** household is **Sir Toby Belch**, **Countess Olivia's** drunken uncle who enjoys loud partying with **Maria**, his friend **Sir Andrew Aguecheek**, and the clown **Feste Fabian**, much to **Malvolio's** chagrin. **Sir Toby Belch** and **Maria** share a boisterous wit and the two work together to make a mockery of both **Malvolio** and **Sir Andrew Aguecheek**; **Sir Toby Belch** and **Maria** both have romantic interest in the other, but neither has ever dared state as such and do not know of each other's requited affections.

Sir Andrew Aguecheek is very wealthy but is an idiot. He is funding **Sir Toby Belch's** non-stop drinking party, whilst fruitlessly attempting to woo **Countess Olivia**. He considers himself a worthy rival to **Duke Orsino** as a suitor, and, upon hearing that **Countess Olivia** is actually in love with **Viola (disguised as Cesario)**, whom everyone believes to be a young man, has challenged **Viola (disguised as Cesario)** to a duel.

Feste Fabian, the clown, is often the go-between between **Countess Olivia** and **Duke Orsino's** households. With great talent as a witty entertainer, he himself is no "fool" and possesses great wisdom. Still, he is a mischief-maker, and is also involved in and encourages **Maria's** plot to make **Malvolio's** life miserable.

As such, before the Plothole opens, the following plans are made but not yet fully set in motion:

- **Viola (disguised as Cesario)** believes herself to be the sole survivor of the shipwreck.
- Likewise, **Antonio** and **Sebastian** also believe themselves to be the sole survivors of the shipwreck; neither has confessed any romantic attraction towards the other, but the two are incredibly close and the tension is a constant undercurrent.
- No other survivors of the shipwreck have been found dead or alive in Illyria before the Plothole opens.
- **Viola (disguised as Cesario)** is in love with **Duke Orsino**, but has not told him that she is, in fact, a woman, and not the pageboy he believes her to be. As such, **Duke Orsino** has not considered **Viola (disguised as Cesario)** as a viable marital prospect, and is instead fruitlessly trying to woo **Countess Olivia**.
- **Countess Olivia**, however, is in love with **Viola (disguised as Cesario)**, believing her to be a handsome young man. If she ever met **Sebastian**, she would likely find said twin equally as attractive, but they have not encountered one another yet.
- **Sir Toby Belch** and **Maria** have not confessed that either is in love with the other, though they continue to constantly tease and spar with battles of wit.
- **Maria** (with the assistance of **Feste Fabian** and **Sir Toby Belch**), has convinced **Malvolio** that **Countess Olivia** is in love with him; she is not. As a result, **Malvolio** is currently making a fool of himself - overly smiling when he is usually sullen, and wearing ridiculous and unfashionable garish, yellow clothing because of this prank. If and when he realises he is being made fun of, **Malvolio** will likely be furious and demand revenge - not just on **Maria**, but on **Sir Toby Belch** and **Feste Fabian** too, at a minimum.

- Likewise, if **Sir Andrew Aguecheek** ever realises that his pursuit of **Countess Olivia** is hopeless, he too may be hurt - he has bought **Sir Toby Belch** and friends a great deal of wine whilst overstaying his welcome in **Countess Olivia's** household with his pitiful attempts to woo her.
- In the meantime, **Sir Andrew Aguecheek** has challenged **Viola (disguised as Cesario)** to a duel - not knowing that **Viola** likely lacks the swordsmanship skills that her twin brother **Sebastian** was trained with - if **Viola** wishes to retain the identity of "Cesario", and is forced to fight this battle herself, her life may be in danger.

In Countess Olivia's household, Maria, Sir Toby Belch, Feste Fabian and **Sir Andrew Aguecheek** are feasting, dancing and drinking as they do every night. Whilst **Malvolio** uncharacteristically grins at Countess Olivia - who only has eyes for Viola (disguised as Cesario), who has accompanied her own crush Duke Orsino to this banquet - not knowing that her twin brother **Sebastian** and his companion **Antonio** have both survived the shipwreck, and coincidentally happen to be passing just outside the party hall... As all these characters are gathered together, a magical whirlpool appears; the Plothole envelops them all, and when they awaken, they are on the shores of an unknown island, with several others from strange lands that they do not know or recognise...

Elsinore, Denmark

Cast List:

Hamlet

Queen Gertrude

Ophelia

Horatio (potentially understudy role)

Player King and/or Player Queen (potentially understudy role)

Polonius (potentially understudy role, or can be NPC)

Rosencrantz and/or Guildenstern (can be understudy or NPC)

Osric (this role has been claimed by the OC Photographer!)

King Claudius (NPC)

Laertes (NPC)

Fortinbras (NPC)

Ghost of Hamlet Sr (NPC)

(misc. Sentinels, Pirates etc as additional NPC roles)

At the time the Plothole to the Isle of Sycorax opens:

Hamlet is greatly troubled, having been visited by **the Ghost of Hamlet Sr**, his recently-deceased father, who tells **Hamlet** that his death was no accident, but that he was murdered by his own brother, **King Claudius**. Since his father's death, **Hamlet's** mother, **Queen Gertrude**, has married his uncle, **King Claudius**, which disgusts and frustrates **Hamlet**.

Hamlet is in a romantic relationship with **Ophelia**, the daughter of **Polonius** and sister of **Laertes**. **Hamlet's** best friend and closest companion is **Horatio**.

Unsure whether or not the **Ghost of Hamlet Sr** is telling the truth or it is some kind of devilish trick being played upon him, to make him murder his uncle, **King Claudius** (who he does not know for sure truly killed his father), **Hamlet** grows more and more distracted, putting a strain on his relationships with his mother, **Queen Gertrude**, his best friend, **Horatio**, and with his lover, **Ophelia**. **Polonius**, **Ophelia's** father, declares that prince **Hamlet** is mad - albeit concluding that this madness is brought on by **Hamlet's** love for **Ophelia**. Hot-tempered fighter **Laertes** is fiercely protective of his sister **Ophelia**, and disapproves of her relationship with prince **Hamlet**.

Hamlet decides to lean in, feigning madness whilst mostly being in control of his wits, although anxious and tormented by this ghostly command to seek revenge. The only person he trusts with his thoughts and plans is **Horatio**, who loves **Hamlet** greatly but does not know what to make of his ravings.

King Claudius summons **Hamlet's** old friend(s) from university - **Rosencrantz and/or Guildenstern** - to spy on **Hamlet**, whilst paranoid by his own guilt, because he did indeed murder **Hamlet's** father to gain his crown and **Queen Gertrude**.

Hamlet, in turn, arranges for the **Player King and/or Player Queen** to come to court, in order to enact a play that depicts a murder much like that of his own father, hoping to elicit a reaction of guilt and shame from his uncle **King Claudius** if he witnessed such a performance.

Whilst **Hamlet** is plotting this in secret, **Laertes** and **King Claudius** concoct a plan to exile **Hamlet** to England - additionally ensuring his ship would be set upon by pirates enroute, to assassinate the prince.

King Claudius asks one of the household staff, **Osric** - often the court's Entertainer, and referee in sporting fencing matches - to start digging graves, although they do not say who the graves are intended for; it is always possible that this is simply preparation for war, as **Fortinbras**, Prince of Norway, is marching his armies towards Denmark, and is expected to arrive with a declaration of war any day now...

As such, before the Plothole opens, the following plans are made but not yet fully set in motion:

- **Hamlet** intends to kill **King Claudius** - but only if he can ascertain **King Claudius'** definitive guilt in the murder of **Hamlet Sr.**
- To help prove **King Claudius'** guilt of regicide/fratricide, he has requested the presence of local Entertainer(s), the **Player King and/or Player Queen**, to perform a powerful Masque.
- **Queen Gertrude** is married to a murderer and apparently does not know it. She would quite probably be horrified to learn this news, if she is indeed unaware of this crime and was not herself party to it.

- **Queen Gertrude** believes her son **Hamlet** to be mad - possibly, as **Polonius** claims, due to his love of **Ophelia**. As such, she has allowed **King Claudius** to make arrangements for **Hamlet** to be sent to England - not knowing that **King Claudius** and **Laertes** intend for **Hamlet's** ship to be set upon by pirates, and for **Hamlet** to be killed.
- **Hamlet's** "madness" - at least partially, although not necessarily entirely being put on for show - is putting a major strain on his relationships with **Ophelia**, **Horatio** and his mother, **Queen Gertrude**. In addition to this, his old university friend(s) **Rosencrantz and/or Guildenstern** will not leave him alone, as they are spying on him, as instructed by **King Claudius**.
- **Hamlet** is slightly manic and paranoid - he is dangerous to those around him, and if someone like **Polonius** (or anyone, really) managed to startle him, it is entirely possible that he might kill someone, even accidentally, whilst he agonises over whether or not kill his uncle, **King Claudius**.
- **Ophelia** is in love with **Hamlet** - as, quite possibly, is **Horatio** - both hope to get through to the Prince, but are disturbed by his obsession with his uncle's recent marriage to his mother, and their frustration may cause either or both to abandon him to his "madness", lest either die of heartbreak, if **Hamlet** were to reject their attentions and affections.
- The **Ghost of Hamlet Sr** is haunting **Hamlet**, as well as sentinels like **Osric**, and is growing impatient to be avenged - he may begin to haunt others to demand they kill **King Claudius**, and seeing the undead can drive people mad, or to do wild and desperate deeds.
- In addition, **Fortinbras** is on his way, likely to kill any Danes he finds living when he reaches Elsinore...

At a feast in Elsinore Castle, where **Hamlet** hopes to confirm **King Claudius'** guilt through the ruse of the Masque he has commissioned, all of the above characters are feasting, dancing and drinking (save for **Ghost of Hamlet Sr** and **Fortinbras**, who are just outside the castle gates, where **Osric** is digging graves):

Ophelia is sat in **Hamlet's** lap whilst **Horatio** rests his head on **Hamlet's** shoulder. **King Claudius**, **Queen Gertrude**, **Laertes**, **Polonius** and **Rosencrantz and/or Guildenstern** take their seats

to watch the Player King and/or Player Queen's performance, when a magical whirlpool appears; the Plathole envelops them all, and when they awaken, they are on the shores of an unknown island, with several others from strange lands that they do not know or recognise...

The Forest of Arden

Cast List:

Rosalind (disguised as Ganymede)
Celia (disguised as Aliena)
Orlando
Phoebe
Silvius (potentially understudy)
Touchstone (potentially understudy)
Duke Senior (potentially understudy role, or can be NPC)
Jaques (understudy role, or can be NPC)
Lord Amiens (understudy role, or can be NPC)
Audrey (understudy role, or can be NPC)
Duke Frederick (NPC)
Oliver Charles (NPC)
(misc. soldiers etc as additional NPC roles)

At the time the Plothole to the Isle of Sycorax opens:

Duke Senior has been usurped by his brother, **Duke Frederick**; **Duke Senior** did not appear to put up much of a fight for his dukedom, but also fled to the Forest of Arden, where he lives like Robin Hood, with a loyal band of followers, including **Lord Amiens**, a jolly Entertainer who loves to sing, and **Jaques**, a much more melancholic and judgemental companion.

Following the recent death of Sir Rowland de Boys, his estate has passed to his eldest son, **Oliver Charles**. Although he was instructed to take good care of his younger brother, **Orlando**, **Oliver Charles** is instead cruel, denying **Orlando** the courtly training and education to be a gentleman. However, following his brother's provocation, **Orlando** defeats **Oliver Charles** in a wrestling match, which is witnessed by **Rosalind**, a lady of the court; **Orlando** and **Rosalind** immediately fall in love, but **Rosalind** does not tell anyone about this except her best friend and cousin, **Celia**. After the wrestling match, **Orlando** is warned that **Oliver Charles**, now humiliated and vengeful, is plotting against his life, so **Orlando** flees to the Forest of Arden, where he joins **Duke Senior**'s pastoral court of lords living in exile among the trees.

Duke Frederick had until now allowed **Duke Senior**'s daughter, **Rosalind**, to stay at court, due to her inseparable friendship

with his own daughter (her cousin), **Celia**. However, **Duke Frederick** suddenly banishes **Rosalind** from his court; she, too, decides to flee to the Forest of Arden. **Celia**, who cannot bear to be without **Rosalind**, goes with her, as does the court jester, **Touchstone**. To ensure the safety of their journey, **Rosalind** disguises herself as a young man and takes the name "Ganymede", while **Celia** dresses as a common shepherdess and calls herself "Aliena".

Duke Frederick is furious at his daughter's disappearance. When he learns that the flight of his daughter **Celia (disguised as Aliena)** and niece **Rosalind (disguised as Ganymede)** coincides with the disappearance of **Orlando**, **Duke Frederick** orders **Oliver Charles** to lead the hunt for all three, threatening to confiscate **Oliver Charles'** lands and property should he fail. **Duke Frederick** also decides it is time to destroy his brother **Duke Senior** once and for all and begins to raise an army.

In the Forest of Arden, **Rosalind (disguised as Ganymede)** and **Celia (disguised as Aliena)** encounter **Silvius**, a young shepherd pining for the love of a disdainful woman named **Phoebe**. When **Rosalind (disguised as Ganymede)** tries to intervene on behalf of **Silvius**, who is being continually rejected by **Phoebe**, instead, **Phoebe** falls hopelessly in love with **Rosalind (disguised as Ganymede)**.

Soon after, they encounter **Rosalind (disguised as Ganymede)'s** beloved **Orlando**, who is equally lovesick. Taking her to be a young man, **Orlando** confides in **Rosalind (disguised as Ganymede)** that his affections are overpowering him, and **Rosalind (disguised as Ganymede)** declares that he is an expert in such matters and can "cure" **Orlando** of his lovesickness, if he agrees to pretend that "Ganymede" is **Rosalind**, and promises to come woo her every day. **Orlando** agrees, and the love lessons begin.

As **Rosalind (disguised as Ganymede)** tries to untangle the messy love quadrangle - intending to match **Phoebe** with **Silvius**, and to potentially end the charade with **Orlando** - **Oliver Charles** arrives, although he does not recognise **Rosalind** or **Celia** due to their disguises. However, although he believes her to be a simple shepherdess, **Oliver Charles** and

Celia (disguised as Aliena) confess their sudden attraction and love for one another.

As such, before the Plothole opens, the following plans are made but not yet fully set in motion:

- An army is coming, sent by **Duke Frederick**, against his exiled brother, **Duke Senior**, who lives in the Forest of Arden with **Lord Amiens**, **Jaques**, and their newest addition to their pastoral court, **Orlando**.
- The usurper, **Duke Frederick**, has also sent **Oliver Charles** to hunt down **Rosalind (disguised as Ganymede)** and **Celia (disguised as Aliena)**; **Oliver Charles** has just found the women and fallen in love with "Aliena", whom he takes to be a simple shepherdess, but does not know their true identities.
- **Orlando** has fled to the Forest of Arden to escape his brother **Oliver Charles**, who has been cruel to him and now potentially intends to murder him.
- **Rosalind (disguised as Ganymede)** and **Orlando** are in love, but **Orlando** now believes her to be a young man, and claims he has only been wooing her each day because he is pretending that "Ganymede" is **Rosalind** (which is true), in an effort to try and get over his lovesickness for her. Explaining the deceptions in a way that leads to love, marriage and a happy ending and not heartbreak and betrayal could prove tricky.
- **Touchstone** the jester and **Jaques** have an odd sort of flirtationship - although local goatherd **Audrey** is also smitten with **Touchstone**.
- **Silvius** is in love with **Phoebe**, who in turn is in love with **Rosalind (disguised as Ganymede)**, who of course is in love with **Orlando**.

As night falls over Arden and the surrounding areas, all of the above characters are settling down to sleep, when the Plothole envelops them all. When they awaken, they are on the shores of an unknown island, with several others from strange lands that they do not know or recognise...

Rome, Italy

Cast List:

Mark Antony

Cleopatra

Brutus

Octavius

Cassius (potentially understudy)

Calpurnia (potentially understudy)

Enobarbus (potentially understudy role, or can be NPC)

Octavia (potentially understudy role, or can be NPC)

Lepidus (potentially understudy role, or can be NPC)

Julius Caesar (NPC)

Pompey (NPC)

(misc. Soldiers and Senators etc as additional NPC roles)

At the time the Plothole to the Isle of Sycorax opens:

Julius Casear is paranoid that his friends, military and political leaders, **Brutus** and **Cassius** are planning his overthrow, and is disturbed by the prophetic dreams of his wife **Calpurnia**, a soothsayer, who has had dreams of a statue of **Julius Caesar** streamed with blood that smiling men bathed their hands in, telling him to "beware the Ides of March" and pleading with him not to go to Senate that day.

Brutus is a strong supporter of the Republic, and although he is **Julius Caesar**'s dear friend, **Brutus** fears **Julius Caesar**'s god-like ascension to tyrannical power, and fears he has ambitions to be a King rather than merely general or senator. **Cassius** shares **Brutus**' fears, and, as a shrewd political opportunist, he manipulates **Brutus** into planning a coup.

Concerned about this foretold bloody fate and potential betrayal, **Julius Caesar** engages his good friend **Mark Antony** to help fake his death. Upon his disappearance, **Julius Caesar**'s successor and adopted son **Octavius** forms a triumvirate - a three-person coalition of leadership - with **Mark Antony** and **Lepidus**.

Brutus and **Cassius** remain terrified that **Julius Caesar** will return - whether as a man or a ghost - to haunt them and be revenged for their planned betrayal.

Mark Antony then travels to Egypt, where he conducts a decadent affair with the country's Queen, **Cleopatra**; however, upon hearing that his wife **Fulvia** is dead, and that **Pompey** is raising an army to rebel against the triumvirate, **Mark Antony** returns to Rome, bringing **Cleopatra** with him, to the scandal of the assembled Senate.

On arrival in Rome, **Mark Antony** quarrels with fellow triumvirs **Octavius** and **Lepidus**, but requiring a united front in order to face **Pompey**, **Mark Antony** eventually agrees to marry **Octavius'** sister, **Octavia**. Naturally, this angers **Cleopatra**, although **Mark Antony's** best friend **Enobarbus** predicts that this new marriage will not prevent **Mark Antony** returning to Egypt with **Cleopatra** to continue their decadent lifestyle away from Rome.

As such, before the Plothole opens, the following plans are made but not yet fully set in motion:

- **Brutus** and **Cassius** were planning to betray their dear friend **Julius Caesar**, but although they have told the world that he is dead, he is in hiding and they greatly fear his wrath if and when he returns. They have been applying pressure to his wife, **Calpurnia**, to use her magical skills as a soothsayer and oracle, in order to find out where **Julius Caesar** is, and whether he is alive or dead.
- Only **Mark Antony** knows that **Julius Caesar's** death was faked, but he does not know where he is now.
- Meanwhile, a shaky coalition has been formed between **Octavius**, **Lepidus** and **Mark Antony**, in order to fight the rebel army led by **Pompey**.
- **Octavius** and **Lepidus** believe **Julius Caesar** to be dead; if he were to reappear, **Octavius** in particular may find it difficult to hold onto power.
- **Mark Antony** and **Cleopatra** are in love, and **Cleopatra**, as a shrewd and intelligent woman skilled in both oration and politics, has great sway over **Mark Antony** - he would command soldiers and ships at her word, and this greatly concerns **Enobarbus**, **Mark Antony's** best friend and close companion.
- **Cleopatra** is, however, furious that **Mark Antony** has agreed to marry **Octavius'** sister **Octavia** - she wishes great harm to **Octavia** - especially if **Mark Antony** also appears to listen **Octavia's** pleas to make peace with not

only **Octavius** and **Lepidus**, but **Brutus**, **Cassius** and **Pompey** too.

- **Cleopatra** is passionate, powerful and bloodthirsty, keen to encourage others to fight and kill. She is hot-tempered and has an insatiable appetite for all things hedonistic, as well as drama and theatrical performance. She is liable to either directly or indirectly act as a catalyst for violence or out-right war.

At a gathering called together by Octavius, in an attempt to make peace with enemies past, present and the potential of emnity on the horizon, all of the above characters are gathered, arguing over the future of Rome (save for **Julius Caesar**, who is silently listening from the nearby shadows), when a magical whirlpool appears; the Plothole envelops them all, and when they awaken, they are on the shores of an unknown island, with several others from strange lands that they do not know or recognise...

"Fair Beatrice, I thank you for your pains."
"I took no more pains for those thanks than you take pains to thank me: if it had been painful, I would not have come."
"You take pleasure then in the message?"
~ Benedick and Beatrice, "Much Ado About Nothing" (1598)

Contact

This document is still a work-in-progress draft.
However, if you have any questions, you can email our game team at theplaysthethinglrp@hotmail.com and we will endeavour to respond as soon as possible.

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Head Stage Manager/Directrix;
Certified Shakespeare nerd

Johanna Stone (she/her)



Stage Manager/Monster Ref;
Competent Crew Coordinator

Daniel Woods (they/them)



Stage Manager/Player Ref;
Adept Arbiter of Action

The Play's The Thing LRP



A Shakespeare-inspired LARP

*"If we shadows have offended,
Think but this, and all is mended,
That you have but slumber'd here
While these visions did appear.
And this weak and idle theme,
No more yielding but a dream,
Gentles, do not reprehend:
if you pardon, we will mend:
And, as I am an honest Puck,
If we have unearned luck
Now to 'scape the serpent's tongue,
We will make amends ere long;
Else the Puck a liar call;
So, good night unto you all.
Give me your hands, if we be friends,
And Robin shall restore amends."*
~ Puck, "A Midsummer Night's Dream" (1595)

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- Any more names that I’ll need to add in here for anyone else helping to write encounters, sense-check docs, giving game-running advice, encouragement and support.
- Any more names that I’ll need to add in here for props and costume commissions or anything that is borrowed from other LARPers and theatre nerds.
- Our Caterers (Crucible Catering), Photographer (Tom Garnett), First Aiders, Mental Health First Aiders, Fire and Incident Marshall, Weapons Checkers and NPC Crew team.
- Raywell Park Scout Activity Centre, Humberside Scouting and the venue team.
- William Shakespeare, whose plays inspired everything for this LARP.
- The players, because there is no game without you! Thank you.

*"Yea, noise? then I'll be brief. O happy dagger!
This is thy sheath; there rust, and let me die."*

~ Juliet, "The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet" (1594)

Quick Reference Guide

OC calls - Stage Manager (Ref) Only

- **"Time In"** - initiating/continuing the roleplay.
- **"Time Freeze"** - pause the game briefly - Roleplay will only continue when a Stage Manager calls "Time In" again.
- **"Time Out"** - ending the roleplay for the day (either until "Time In" again the next morning, or forever at the end of the game!)
- **"Drop"** - if you hear this call, you must immediately stop what you're doing and fall to the ground, as if you are on OHP, at which point the Stage Manager will brief you.
- **"...And Scene"** - all MP and HP (if above OHP) are refreshed to maximum.

OC Calls - Universal

- **"Once More, With Feeling!"** - Call to escalate the current scenario (eg conflict or intense/sensitive RP). Do not escalate unless/until you hear the other person repeat "Once More, With Feeling!"
- **"Let's Take Five!"** - Call to de-escalate the current scenario, without disengaging from it completely. It is encouraged to echo the call of "let's take five" to signify that you have heard and acknowledged this.
- **"Cut!"** - Call to disengage from the current scenario entirely - alternatively, you can always non-verbally hold a finger in the air and leave the area if needed.
- **"Safety, Safety, Safety!"** - Call for OC *physical* injuries/hazards - everyone must freeze where they are and pause all roleplay and movement until a Stage Manager calls "Time in" again.
- **"Non-Com!"** - Call to prevent accidental melee attacks on non-combatant targets.
 - Non-com target is reduced to 1HP and must leave the area of combat immediately.
 - If a player declares themselves non-com, they must remain so for the whole of the event unless otherwise agreed with a Stage Manager".

IC Combat Damage and Skills

- All thrown, small and medium-sized weapons strike for 1HP ("single" does not need to be vocalised).
- All large (two-handed) weapons strike for 2HP ("double" does not need to be vocalised).
- Crafted explosives call **"tick, tick, tick, tick, BOOM"** (even if under "silence" effect, as this is an OC call, not a spell vocal):
 - everyone within a <1m radius of the bomb drops to -1HP
 - everyone within 1-3m radius of the bomb drops to 0HP - if already on 0HP, drop to -1HP.
 - everyone within 3-10m radius of the bomb will drop to 1HP - if already on 1HP, drop to 0HP.
 - Explosives cannot normally be Resisted.
- "Holding Wounds" is a universal skill to pause a target on -1HP's bleed count that does not require MP.
 - requires both hands at touch-range (hovering within ~30cm/1ft of the target)
 - does not require any spell vocals/can be used when under "Silence" effect.
 - if wounds no longer held, target's bleed count resumes.
- Moving an unresisting target (incl any character on 0HP or -1HP) is a universal skill that does not require MP.
 - does not require any spell vocals/can be used when under "Silence" effect.
 - requires use of two hands at touch-range (hovering within ~30cm/1ft of the target)
 - This can either be one person using both hands, or two people using their "main" hand, with the other free to parry.
 - must move slowly (about half-pace) unless two people are each using both hands to move target, in which case wounds are also held and can move normally.
- **"Execute"** is a universal skill - a target on 0HP or -1HP is permanently killed and cannot be revived.
 - Requires 30 seconds of uninterrupted roleplay
 - Cannot be called if under the "Silence" effect.
 - Can be delivered via melee blow for 0MP or as a touch-range spell for 1MP.

IC Spellcasting - Mechanics

- Spells can never target oneself.
- Cannot cast spells if under the "Silence" effect.
- If a spell is accompanied by a weapon blow, this deals both the melee damage *and* the called effect:
 - Spellcasting by blow does not normally cost MP or require additional spell vocals (but still cannot be called if under "Silence" effect).
- If casting at "Touch-Range", hover your hands within ~30cm/1ft of the target:
 - Normally costs 1MP.
 - Should be accompanied by appropriate "spell vocals".
- If casting at "Distanced-Range" for a single target, there is no maximum "range" other than earshot/eyeline:
 - Normally costs 1MP.
 - Should be accompanied by appropriate "spell vocals".
- If casting at "Mass-Range", either target ~3m/10ft in a given direction/indicated "arc", or everyone within ~2m/6ft in *all directions* from the spellcaster:
 - Normally costs 3MP.
 - Should be accompanied by appropriate "spell vocals".

IC Spellcasting - Calls

- **"Resist"** - target of an effect *struck by blow* can ignore the roleplay effect (but not *normally* the melee damage).
 - You cannot *normally* resist a touch-/distance-/mass-ranged spell vocal effect, any melee damage or a "Rend" call.
 - Does not require additional spell vocals (counts as spell-casting by weapon blow).
- **"Rend"** - target loses **5HP**. Cannot normally be resisted.
- **"Fling"** - target must immediately (safely) move away from the source of the Fling (around 3m/10ft).
- **"Bind"** - target's legs are frozen in place (may still fight/speak) for **10 seconds**.
- **"Heal"** - every 10 seconds of appropriate spell vocals heals an unpoisoned target **1HP/10 secs**.
 - Chanting to heal normally costs 1MP at touch-range no matter how many HP is healed, but if it is interrupted for any reason, it will take another 1MP to continue/begin the chant of healing again.

- **"Poison"** - target cannot be healed until the poison is cured.
- **"Detect Poison"** - will tell you if a target is poisoned and, if it is an Advanced Poison, how to cure it.
- **"Cure Poison"** - cures target of ordinary poisons after **10 seconds** of appropriate roleplay.
- **"Silence"** - target cannot make any vocal sound for **30 seconds**.
- **"Enthrall"** - target must walk towards the caster as though in a trance, unable to speak or take offensive action. They are suggestible to minor instructions from the spellcaster, until *either the target or spellcaster take damage*, or **1 minute** passes (whichever is sooner).

Lammies

- Each character may have a maximum of:
 - One personal lammie - this is attached to the character's soul permanently.
 - Personal lammies will never have a white or black ribbon attached and will be clearly identified as personal lammies.
 - Personal lammies cannot be transferred; if the character dies, the lammie is lost.
 - One enchanted item attuned to their soul - these often have white or black ribbons attached.
 - Only characters whose fates are tied to comedy can use white-ribboned lammies; only characters whose fates are tied to tragedy can use black-ribboned lammies.
 - If a character's fate changes and they are no longer able to use that item, they become unattuned from the item.
 - Character death and changes of fate are the only ways to unattune a character from their enchanted personal item.
 - Attunable item lammies will be clearly identified as such on the lammie.
- Any lammies that do not count towards these maximums (e.g. denoting area effects or unattuned consumables) will be clearly stated as such on the lammie itself.