



LEVIATHAN DARK AGE FANTASY - RULEBOOK 2003

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LEVIATHAN  
DARK AGE FANTASY



# LEVIATHAN

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# 1 : CHARACTER GENERATION

Character Generation is fast and easy. Print out a copy of the character sheet from the .pdf file on our web site at [users.whsmithnet.co.uk/leviathanlrp](http://users.whsmithnet.co.uk/leviathanlrp) and fill it in as you go along.

Follow the steps laid out on this page and refer to each section of the rules as required during the process. Each section will explain one aspect of the rules, with the end result being a player who understands the rules system and game world, and no need for those bloody irritating questions I spend every event having to repeat the answers to instead of playing.

- Skills : pages 1 - 3.
- Background : page 4.

There. Easy.

## 1.1 Skills

Each player begins with 12 initial creation points. Use these to purchase skills from the following list. Each skill is described in full in the skill description list over the next few pages. Some skills are termed 'progressive' skills, and are marked Å These are skills which can be advanced during play using development points.

### WEAPON SKILLS

Repair weapon Å 4

### ARMOUR SKILLS

Armour use - light 3  
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### VOCATIONAL SKILLS

Chirurgy Å 6  
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Fortitude 4  
Literacy Å 1  
Numeracy 1  
Perception 3  
Pick Lock Å 5  
Pick Pocket 5  
Slow Poison 4  
Strength 4  
Trade and Commerce Å 8

### Weapon skills

There are no skills dictating which weapons your character can use, except a safety consideration concerning missile weapons explained in the safety section, later. In real life, anyone can pick up anything and hit someone with it. As this is a live role play game, your physical skills will largely mirror your own real world skills. Therefore, your hopeless inability to strike anything more than a tickling blow with a sword will shine through just fine in the game. Anyone can use anything. The only weapon-related skill is, therefore :

#### Repair Weapon

Progressive. The character can attempt repairs on weapons with the following success :

- Apprentice : Will repair a weapon in one hour
- Journeyman : Will repair a weapon in half an hour.
- Craftsman : Will repair a weapon in quarter of an hour.
- Master craftsman : Will repair a weapon in ten minutes.

### Armour skills

Anyone can wear any armour, and receive protection. However, armour is something which provides more protection if you are trained in usage. Armour is available in three broad groups - light, medium and heavy. Light armour includes padded jerkins and furs; medium armour includes leather, studded and padded leather; heavy armour is of metal, and includes chain mail, lorica and piecemeal armours. There is no provision in Leviathan history or rules for full plate mail, which does not exist in Urkat.

Without the armour use skill, armour gives the following protection :

- Light armour - 2 points
- Medium armour - 3 points
- Heavy armour - 4 points

The armour use skill adds two more points to your protection, thus :

- Armour use (light) - 4 points
- Armour use (medium) - 5 points
- Armour use (heavy) - 6 points

#### Armour repair

Progressive. This skill allows the character to repair armour at the following rate :

- Apprentice : Repair 1 point of armour in ten minutes.
- Journeyman : Repair two points of armour in ten minutes.
- Craftsman : Repair three points of armour in ten minutes.
- Master craftsman : Repair four points of armour in ten minutes.

This ten minutes must be spent actively attending to the armour, which cannot be worn during repair.

#### Vocational Skills

These are skills which may be used to earn a living. Some may be advanced by progression later in the game. Use these skills in conjunction with your character history and background to flesh out a well-rounded and interesting character.

#### Chirurgy

Progressive. The chirurgeon is the forerunner of the surgeon. The chirurgeon uses herbs, drugs and sharp, strangely-shaped tools to poke about in near-corpses, sometimes returning them to health, sometimes creating about 120 pounds of burger meat. The call for chirurgy is high in a world where most people appear to hit you with a sword because 'it's a laugh'. Due to the sudden inexplicable absence for ever of healing potions, the chirurgeon is a popular fellow.

Chirurgy works in the following way. The skill level of the chirurgeon is also the number of wounds he can heal in half an hours' ministrations. The patient must lie undisturbed while the chirurgeon applies various herbs and poultices, under bandages. The patient must wear this muck for a further one hour per wound healed, but can move around.

The chirurgeon must begin at level 1. Further advancement involves development points, which see.

#### Concealed blade

The character is able to hide a blade of no longer than 6 inches total length in the folds and lining of his clothing. This will be overlooked during a search, unless the

searcher has Perception.

#### Concealed pouch

The character is able to conceal a pouch of no larger than 4 x 4 x ½ inches in size in the folds and lining of his clothing. This will be overlooked by a searcher or pickpocket, unless the searcher has Perception.

#### Escapology

The character is able, by tensing and relaxing muscles, and clever but stomach-turning intentional dislocation, to slip his bonds within 10 minutes. He may not escape from magical bonds, should such a thing ever be encountered.

#### First Aid

Progressive. The player is able to temporarily heal 1 hit point of another character by applying bandages and herbs to a wound. First Aid may not be self-administered. Any points regained through First Aid are lost after 1 hour. At second level, the first aider can heal 2 points, which are lost after two hours.

#### Forage

The character is learned in plant and wilderness lore, and is aware of those plants and minerals which hold beneficial or financially viable properties. To use this skill, collect a Forage sheet from a referee when you register your character. In play, if actively look for small discs of wood, about 1 inch across, which show an alpha-numeric code. Collect these, checking the code with your sheet to determine the nature of your find. Goods can be exchanged for money or services with other players. When exchanging goods, show the symbol on the back of your lore-sheet to prove you collected the goods in such a way as to preserve their properties. If players with no Forage skill collect these discs, they are unable to do so in such a way as to preserve the item properties, rendering them useless. For example, a flower may have been plucked, when in fact the root was the vital piece.

#### Fortitude

Through years of training and a careful dietary regime, you have managed to increase your body's strength and stamina. Your increased fortitude has given you 2 extra hit points at base level.

#### Literacy

Progressive. You are able to read and write the common tongue. If you should choose this skill a second or third time, you also know other languages. These other languages must be listed on your character card.

#### Numeracy

You can count.

### Perception

You have heightened awareness. You notice when somebody attempts to pick your pocket. You notice the concealed blade as you search the 'friendly' diplomat. You notice the concealed pouch when you search the 'poor wandering shepherd'. Looks like you could get a good job as a brothel doorman.

### Pick Lock

Progressive. You are able to open a lock without using the key. At level 1, you can manage basic locks and medium locks. At level 2, you laugh at basic, medium and heavy locks. At level 3, you spit in the face of basic, medium, heavy and craftsmans locks. At level 4, you have matured past bravado, and quietly open basic, medium, heavy, craftsmans and masterwork locks. However, magickal locks are another thing entirely...

To use this skill your character must carry some lockpicks. I have seen some very good ones in use - well done to those players. Now that's something you might get awarded dev points for. When you encounter a 'lock' lami, read what it says. If it is of a quality you can open, fumble about with your lockpicks for effect, and open it. Otherwise, curse and wander off...

### Pick Pocket

Progressive. To pick someone's pocket, casually rest your hand on their shoulder and quietly say 'Pick pocket'. If they have Perception, they will notice you, and may choose to ram a sword through your belly, or some such. If they do not have Perception, they must hand you an item carried. You may not steal clothing which is being worn, or weapons. If you have Pick Pocket level 2, you may continue unnoticed, even if they have Perception.

### Slow Poison

Your metabolism can be controlled in such a way that you can slow the passage of poison through your body. You are still poisoned, you will still die if not given the antidote, but it may take twice as long.

### Strength

It turned out to be a bit difficult to work this one into a believable games system, so I'm afraid we just cut it out entirely. Ah well. Never mind. There there...

### Trade and Commerce

Progressive. Bit of a career choice, this one. Trade and Commerce gives you some degree of knowledge of the ins and outs of large-scale commerce. However, there's nothing like experience, which is why it can be progressed. At level 1, you receive notional stock and holdings. These can be used to further a trade empire - on paper, because you never get your hands on the goods in the game. This is an attempt to have players really shape the world we play in. Your trading will be affected by wars, weather, plague, hamsters, whatever

we throw at you in a grand world-size scale. War in the north? Ship 'em some swords. Poor grade steel? Ship some in from the south. Ship sunk by pirates? Raise a militia and kill 'em. Militia killed? It's just not your day/week/month/year. In game-time, you might own a small shop in town. Or maybe you're above that, and just want to make contacts. Lots of contacts. Go ahead. Higher levels bring greater resources.

### Progressive skills

As we said, these are skills which can be advanced during play. Here is how they work. To advance a skill, you must already have that skill at Level 1. It costs development points to advance a skill, at the following rate :

$$\text{Next level} = \text{current level} \times 10$$

For example: Munchkin the Player already has First Aid at level 1. Level 2 will cost him 10 development points. He also has Pick Lock at level 2. Level 3 will cost him 20 development points.

To buy a completely new skill, the cost is :

$$\text{Initial cost} \times 10$$

For example: Munchkin the Player forgot to buy numeracy, and the evil games master won't overlook this stupidity and just give him the skill for nothing. Boo hiss. Munchkin therefore must amass 10 development points before he can buy numeracy. But as he can't count, how will he ever know he's ready?

How do you gain development points? I give them to you when I feel like it. Not for good play, or sticking to the rules, because you should do that anyway. Just when I feel like it.

### Background

This is the most important part of the game. Your character background defines who you are playing, and why they are in the gameworld. When you create your character, have a good think about background. Bad backgrounds will not help you, other players, or the gameworld writers. We have seen some excellent backgrounds, and we have written plots based on these. Those players hopefully benefited from that, and enjoyed their game. We have also seen really bad backgrounds, like the orphan of the king (in a game which didn't even have a king) who seeks revenge on yadda yadda yadda. Those are the players who go through four characters in one event, and don't seem to mind. If you can't be bothered with your character background, go play Lorien Trust.

In creating your background, first read through the general history of the gameworld - it's not long.

Consider the geography and history, and your character skills. Think about the following questions :

- What did my mother and father do?
- Which part of the world am I from?
- Do I have siblings?
- What is my education level?
- Why did I leave home?
- How did I learn my skills?
- Where would I like to be one year from now?
- Where would I like to be five years from now?
- Would I like to make lots of money?
- Would I prefer to be remembered for my deeds?
- What will my legacy be?

Now weave the answers to these questions with your skills, the type of character you want to play, and the existing world background. This will form the basis for your

character background. Write this in on your character sheet, and we will use this to colour the gameworld and hopefully present a game which you will feel part of and enjoy playing.



## 2 :

# WORLD BACKGROUND

This world background is not the complete, exhaustive history of the known world. Rather, it is a collection of notes regarding some aspects of the geography and history of the known world, and a few rumours about the unknown world. Treat it as generally trustworthy, but not one hundred per cent reliable. Things will change during play, both with player input and with plot development, but this is largely the current state of the world. The game is played in a world which has yet to develop mass communication, so oral tales get a bit altered in the telling. Imagine a game of Chinese whispers with the start in London, and the end in Sydney, with the players standing one mile apart...

## Geography

The game world will be broadly familiar to those who have played Leviathan Fantasy before. It comprises a single vast continent. In the north is an ice cap, in the south impenetrable jungles probably bordered by sea, and to the east and west great oceans. There may be other continents, but no explorer has yet returned to tell the tale... Offshore islands certainly exist, and legend

and rumours abound of their state. Inland lakes also exist. One or two are as large as small seas, and large islands probably exist within them. It is for brave and adventurous players to find out the truth. What is known is that the south is very hot, even tropical. The north is very cold, polar or at least sub-arctic. The centre lands are largely temperate, but high mountainous regions are alpine in character. The land is divided into countries, tribal territories and unclaimed wilderness.

In the north, the Nordlingen rule. They are warrior peoples, a collection of tribes descended from the Skraeling, Nordlingen and Owenchati of former times. They are enemies of the Picts, a wild tribal race known for their colourful tattoos, who live along the sub-Arctic borders and hunt the great herds of bison and elk. The Skraeling are roughly based on the Viking culture. The Picts are based on the real-world Dark Age Picts.

In the north-east, there is the last enclave of the ancient Duergair people, miners and metalworkers, who have built vast subterranean fortresses. This ancient race keep to themselves, except to trade in their exceptionally fine

metalwork, which includes armour and weapons. Their sword-steel is considered the finest in Urkat. The Duergair and Picts are renowned as ferocious fighters. The Duergair will fight if their home is threatened, and though slow to anger their ferocity is legend. The Picts are warlike from birth, and are known to fight gleefully and murderously amongst themselves if no other enemy is at hand. Duergair are our version of dwarves, and are based on pagan Saxon culture.

The east lands are the home of the Sarmania. This country is known for spices and gems, which are gathered from the high mountain valleys of Sarmania, and traded widely, commanding high prices. The Sarmanians are a new tribe of man, who invaded this land perhaps as recently as a century ago. They claim their lineage retreats into the mists of time, and it is thought that they came from another land far to the east across the ocean. They are also known for their strange religion, which worships the elements identified as their ancestors. Their temples, despite the youth of their culture, are crumbling ruins of obviously great age. It is possible that the Sarmanians are the remnants of a far older culture which formerly dwelt here, and was banished by chosen exile or defeat in conflict. The Sarmanians are based on the historic Sarmatians, and the other Germanic tribes of the fifth and sixth century.

The lands between Sarmania and the southern savannah are home to the tribes of the Elendi, the fair folk of Urkat. Like the Duergair, this race keep to themselves, only mixing with mankind to trade. The Elendi are known to live to a great age, and often remark that mankind will continually stifle it's own development with war and strife, as they have so often done in the past. The Elendi are thought by some to hold themselves above mankind, and to view the young races with disdain. The Elendi are very rare, and are thought to be a dying race. Elendi are a version of elves. Not Tolkein hippy elves, but the elves of Germanic legend. The nasty spiky spiteful ones. If you want to play an elf, don't.

The south is home to the culture of the Kheeros, who grew from the wandering desert tribes and the jungle races. They are renowned for being fearless in battle but superstitious, and will often break off the fight because of some ill omen identified by their priests. They live by tending large flocks, and trade in ivory, animal skins and rare wood and spices. The Kheeros are based loosely on an anachronistic mix of the Romans, Iron Age Spanish, and northern Africans of the time of the Roman Empire.

The western lands are home to a tribe named Jarael. These people claim descent from the 'rulers of Urkat', whoever they were. The Jarael farm and tend livestock, and trade extensively throughout the continent of Urkat. They are a wealthy people, and are renowned for their

fine wines and foodstuffs. The Jarael are another Briton / Roman / Saxon hybrid.

Peoples of Urkat largely dress in similar fashion - the cultural differences are a little blurred in costume, but are strong when beliefs and attitudes are discussed. For costume ideas, take a look at the many websites or the excellent Osprey book series for ideas. We want a Dark Age atmosphere, so look for Viking, early Saxon, late Roman and 'Celtic' styles. No Oriental or hippy-fantasy. The only culture which dresses very differently are the Elendi, and you don't want to play one of those.

The Dark Age atmosphere is definitely what is wanted, so read the Viking sagas, Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburh, Icelandic Sagas, and the Celtic mythology of the Mabinogion, Maelduin, and the Tain bo Culaigne. For modern fiction, take a look at Bernard Cornwell's Winter King series or the Chronicles of Prydain. In tabletop roleplaying, look at the Slaine RPG and the Warhammer Historic wargame Fall of the West. In movies, look at The Thirteenth Warrior (a reworked retelling of Beowulf) and try to ignore the plate mail, the Mel Gibson Hamlet and Gladiator. In computer games, you must play Severance and Morrowind.

## History

In the long distant past, a foolish sorcerer let his pupils summon a great daemon, so powerful that He raised an army of lesser daemons. This horde laid waste to the continent and plunged it into a long pit of despair. Then came a new age, when trade and commerce blossomed, and new countries took the world stage. They, too, became greedy, and man again fell into war, this time against his own kind. These wars saw the use of magick on such a grand scale that they again laid waste to the world, and became known as the Doomsday Wars.

In their wake, trade and commerce again tried to grow, but petty feuding stifled growth. So it was for two or three hundred years. One thing, however, had changed. Magick no longer had any strength. No more could men channel the essence of nature into spells and rituals, no more could magick be used by the hand of man. Some relics of the past times survived - enchanted objects. These were the last home of magick, empowered in the days before Doomsday, before the loss of the essence. They can still perform marvels, and can be used by man, but no longer can new magicks be made. Such objects are very rare, and command high prices. Four great nations have formed, each laying claim to areas of land. Between these lands lie wilderness and marsh, mountain and moor. In these places the offspring of daemons and monsters roam, and only the very brave or very foolish travel.

The nations of Urkat are largely at peace. Certainly, they feud amongst themselves, and squabble over their borders, or their rights to land, but this is never on the annihilating scale of days of old. War is rare, petty battles and skirmishes are common. Trade is the new god, with all tribes seeking out goods which will make them rich. This is the time of the explorer, the risk-taker, the brave and the impetuous.

The world is yours for the taking, history is yours for the making.



## 3 : COMBAT

Okay - so someone handed you a latex sword and said you could hit someone else. Legally. What did you do? You hit them! Don't cry to me when they hit you back.

Live Role Play does give you the unestimable pleasure of wading into someone else with a sword, but it is so much more than that. Of course we want you to fight, but not all the time. Fighting is often the players' favourite bit, but why? Probably because the rest of the game is so poor. Whilst we appreciate that combat is a very enjoyable and essential part of a Fantasy LRP game, we don't want it to be the only thing. Therefore, combat in this game could very quickly see your character dead. And, because that background took you a week to write, and you will be charged real-life money for your replacement character lammi, you maybe don't want to die so quickly this time.

Fighting should be, as in real life (take note Bush you asshole), a last resort. If you have to fight, you have failed somewhere back down the line. Some things (random undead, slug-like bad guys, etc) really should be clubbed to insensibility as a matter of course, but not your fellow man. Especially not when you face up to him and his big blond strapping chums Sven and Oleg decide to join in.

However, being live role players, you will reason that you are not really hurting him, and you won't really die, so you will wade in anyway.

Therefore, here are the combat rules.

- Each player has 3 basic hit points. You can add to these by using the fortitude skill, available at initial character generation.

- Each and every weapon does 1 - yup, one - hit point of damage per successful hit.

- Damage is removed from armour - if any is worn - first. When all your armour points are gone, you take hits from your body total.

- Armour and body hit points are GLOBAL. This means that wherever you are hit you lose one point. This makes for fast and easy combat without having to remember too many numbers, or shouting out some stupid word instead of cursing your enemy and vowing revenge for your broken finger nail, sustained in your last encounter.

- When you reach zero hit points, you fall over. You are unconscious. You let go of your weapon / shield and only move if you are in real danger of either causing an accident or becoming an accident. Otherwise, you stay still. Even if you found the fresh cowpat. Remember those development points, folks. Start counting a slow count to 100, that's one hundred in old money.

- When you reach 100, you die.

- You can stop counting if a First Aid or Chirurgy skill is used on you. In that case, you follow the other players' instructions.

### Safety

There are, of course, serious safety elements to remember. Adhere to the following list, or we chuck you out, sans refund.

- Never put your full force behind a blow.
- Never thrust with any weapon, only slash.
- Never aim for the head or genitals. Sometimes, accidental hits do strike these areas, and a hit must be taken, but never target these areas.
- Only use approved foam and latex safety weapons and shields. They will be checked at the beginning of an event, and randomly during events. Check your own weapons during the event and be responsible - retire unsafe weapons immediately.
- Only coreless foam and latex shields may be used in our system. Therefore you may use them as weapons.
- Only approved coreless foam and latex safety weapons may be used as missiles.
- Bows may only be used by those who hold a valid bow proficiency card. These will be regularly checked.
- Do not use arrows as weapons unless you are firing them from a bow, and you hold a valid bow proficiency card.



## 4 : A COUPLE MORE THINGS...

There are a few more things to consider, largely common sense, but I thought you might like to hear them anyway.

- In and out of character. There will be no 'finger in the air I'm out of character'. At events, there will be a designated camping area. This is out of character. Everywhere else is in character. When you are in an in character area you will be in character. You will be expected to be wearing your costume, and acting in character. All the things you are carrying should be in character. Please do not bring plastic bags, modern drink bottles, cigarette packets - or cigarettes themselves for that matter - into an in character area. If you want to carry your packed lunch, carry it in brown paper or a pouch, or something. If you need somewhere to shelter in character, go into one of the fine in character establishments, like a shop, the tavern, or that other building use unspecified. We will also set up in character tents which can represent your dwelling during in character time. Don't fill it with out of character junk.

- Safety. The only time there will be a 'finger in the air' moment is when there is a real-life accident or emergency. If someone is hurt, shout MAN DOWN and keep shouting it until everyone notices. Everyone then comes out of character and the situation is dealt with quickly and calmly. In the event of fire, follow normal fire safety procedure. Do not attempt to tackle the fire. Alert

those nearby. Alert a member of staff. Fire buckets containing sand and fire extinguishers will be on hand at all times, as will a designated fire safety officer. Use common sense when using cooking equipment, and do not store gas in your tent. If you are concerned about the safety of your cooking equipment, talk to a member of staff please.

- Drink and drugs. No-one minds you having a drink. Just don't have too much. It's not big and it's not clever. Just expensive and potentially colourful. If you are incapable through drink you will be poured into your tent to sleep it off. If you are abusive or unmanageable you will be poured into a police cell. Do not attempt combat if you are having trouble seeing, walking, standing, speaking or controlling your diaphragm or bladder. If you bring any illegal drugs onto my private property I will take you to the police station myself. Gladly. If you have any prescribed medication, you should declare it when you register at an event. Medicines can be stored safely by staff members, should you request it.

- If my neighbours complain about any noise during the night, you will be expelled without refund. If your tent neighbour complains to me about your noise, you will be expelled without refund. If my dogs howl because you are playing god awful music, I will let them off the lead. If I hear any sport commentary on any radio, I will expel you

without refund. If anyone compliments me on my excellent humour and sweet understanding nature under duress, I will plead temporary insanity and I have a very good lawyer.

- Please observe the out of bounds notices and the map on your event guides, you are gaming on working farmland, and there are inherent dangers.
- If you do not appear to be having the time of your lives at all times, you will be questioned at length and probably ridiculed in future rule books.

All joking aside, behaviour on-site has always been excellent in the past, and I would welcome any of our past players back gladly. Please let's keep it this way, or it's no fun for anyone (least of all me, and I'm not in this for the vast riches I collect at the end of each event, oh no).



## 5 : A FINAL WORD...

This chapter is for some odds and ends.

Contact address :  
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E-mail :

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Web site :

users.whsmithnet.co.uk/leviathanlrp

- Where's that?

Our events are held on private land near Helston in Cornwall. When you book your ticket, exact directions to the site will be sent to you.

- Are you insured?

Yes, to the hilt. At every event we display the current details of our insurance, which is a public liability policy covering each ticket holding participant to an individual insured amount of £1 million.

- How old are your players?

In the past, our players have ranged in age from 14 to 50+. Given the slightly darker nature of our new events, we have imposed a minimum age of 17+.

- Props and effects :

We use smoke effects and all manner of lighting, including strobe and intermittent flash lights. These are usually contained in specific areas, but those who suffer from photosensitive epilepsy or similar triggered conditions should be aware of their presence. If you do have such a condition, please let us know on registration for each event you wish to attend.

- What else?

All those attending are asked to declare their understanding of the nature of Fantasy Live Role Playing, and must agree to their using, and having used on them, approved safety foam and latex weapons and props, and to be subjected to the situations presented within the parameters of the game. They also must declare their agreement to comply with the rules and safety regulations of the Leviathan Live Action Role Playing Game system.

These records are held on file, in printed and digital form, for at least three years. These records are subject to the strict confidentiality imposed by our voluntary and willing adherence to the current UK Data Protection legislation.