

A man with a beard, wearing a dark, heavy winter coat and a fur-lined hat, stands on the deck of a ship. He is holding a framed document in front of him. The background shows the ship's rigging and a cloudy sky. The text 'EREBUS' is written in large, red, stylized letters across the middle of the image, and 'PLAYER'S GUIDE' is written in white, stylized letters below it.

# EREBUS

## PLAYER'S GUIDE

Version 2.2



Sailing 4  
Adventure 4

# CREDITS

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Player's Guide Version 2.2 CC-BY-SA 2022 by Stefan Deutsch.

All game material by David Pusch, Mareike Zerpner, Maren Duda & Stefan Deutsch.  
Original game idea by Stefan Deutsch and Karsten Dombrowski.

*The Three Golden Rules* were introduced by proximat.it.

The text on *Tap Out*, *OK-Checkin* and *Lookdown* was taken from Johanna Koljonen's blog **Safety in Larp** and Maury Brown's post **Safety and Calibration Design Tools and Their Uses** on Nordiclarp.org.

*Ars Amandi* was originally developed by Eliot Wieslander for the larp **Mellan himmel och hav**. Further reading on *Ars Amandi* in **Rules of Engagement** by Eliot Wieslander in the anthology for Solmukohta 2004, **Beyond Role and Play** and on the website of the **Ars Amandi** collective. Documentation for the **Ars Amandi workshop** is available in PDF.

The text on **Play to Lift** was taken from Susanne Vejdemo's article in **Shuffling the Deck**, the anthology for Knutpunkt 2018.

The Fell Types are digitally reproduced by Iginio Marini. [www.iginomarini.com](http://www.iginomarini.com)

One last mention goes out to Victoria Chatfield for her invaluable feedback, great ideas and infallible enthusiasm concerning this larp. THANK YOU!

# IMAGE CREDITS

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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Welcome to Erebus!	4
What this Larp is about	5
Our Gaming Philosophy	5
Themes	7
Chapter 1 - On a Ship	13
Participants & Crew	14
The Hart	15
Luggage	16
Tasks	16
The Packing List	17
Travel information	19
Chapter 2 - Structure	20
Event Phases	21
Acts	22
Chapter 3 - Rules	25
Style	26
Player with Player	27
Safety	28
Black Box	31
Combat & Conflict	31
Weapons	32
Violence & Injuries	34
Chapter 4 - Character	35
Your Character - a buffet	36
Costume Guide	37
Further Inspiration	39

A black and white photograph of a man in a heavy, dark coat and a flat cap, standing on the deck of a ship. He is holding a white mug with the initials 'A.S.' on it. The background shows the ship's rigging and ropes. The text 'WELCOME TO EREBUS!' is overlaid in a white, distressed font across the center of the image.

WELCOME TO  
EREBUS!

In the year 1845, two ships, HMS Erebus and HMS Terror headed towards the Arctic to reveal the last unknown section of the Northwest Passage. They disappeared forever. For years, Lady Jane Franklin, widow of the commander of the expedition, Sir John Franklin, sponsored or otherwise supported several expeditions to determine his fate. This is the story of one of these expeditions.

It is the year 1847, and the steam yacht "The Hart" heads towards King William Island to find traces of the lost Franklin Expedition.

Will they find any trace of Sir John or the ships? Or will they instead, they find something far, far worse...

## WHAT THIS LARP IS ABOUT

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*Erebus* is a 3 day nordic-inspired horror larp on the schooner Pippilotta, moored in a harbour on the Schlei. There will be no sailing during this larp. The ship will move from Kappeln to Maasholm harbour only and stay there for the duration of the larp.

## OUR GAMING PHILOSOPHY

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This event has participants from many different countries and playing cultures. In this document, we will lay out our game design in all aspects, how we imagine this game and the interaction to take place. This will help to understand beforehand what will be happening during the event and what makes this event exciting and entertaining for every participant. We believe design transparency is key to this. Larp is co-creative. We may set the stage, but in the end it's up to all of us to make this happen. *Together* we will create an amazing experience *for everyone*.

## TRANSPARENCY

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Many games with scripted roles expect you to keep your role's secrets. We leave this decision to every individual participant. You can hide or share as much of your role descriptions as you like - assuming other participants want to know anything at all. You should accept other participants' desire for secrecy as well.

# RULES

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If you cannot remember all the details or you're afraid to confuse things during the game, don't worry: for this game, atmosphere is far more important than rules are. When in doubt, try to check in with fellow participants to find out what the best solution for all parties involved could be. Also, we will give you the opportunity to ask questions before the game and read everything up whenever you feel the need.

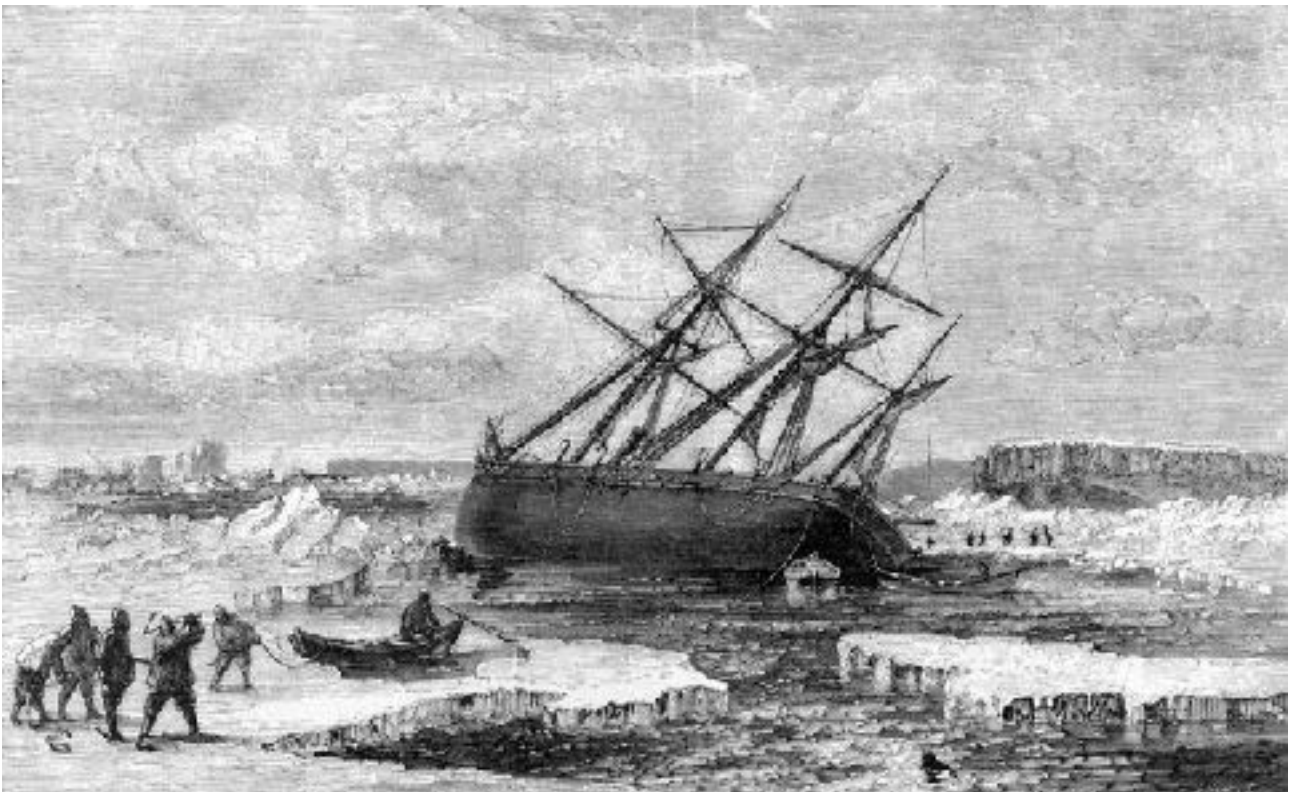
# QUESTIONS?

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If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact us.

You can find us on the web at **Erebus Larp**.

There is also the **Erebus Facebook Group** and our **Discord Server**.



# THEMES

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As a larp, *Erebus* is heavily influenced by Dan Simmons' horror novel *The Terror* and the AMC TV series of the same name. Not of all of *The Terror's* themes will be relevant for this game though and some may be more important here than in the series or book.

Depending on your character, some of the themes may be more or less important for your experience. You can always choose to opt out of any aspect of play or part of your character if you do not feel comfortable with it.

See also **Chapter 4 - Character** for more information.

These are the themes *Erebus* touches upon in one way or another:

- ◆ Civilisation vs. nature
- ◆ Sexism
- ◆ Cannibalism
- ◆ Insanity
- ◆ Deprivation
- ◆ Sickness
- ◆ Religion and the Supernatural

## CIVILISATION VS. NATURE

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Like the expedition before them, the player characters come from what is considered a civilised country into an environment that is alien and hostile to them. They enter this domain of their own free will, but will not be able to leave as easily.

A lot of civilisation's constructs and infrastructure is built to keep "the wilderness" on the outside. This is true on a psychological as well as a physical level. But nature - and also their own nature - doesn't simply stop on the brink of society - it gnaws away at the edges and tries to find a way in.

For the characters in this game, these forces will seem irreconcilable and ultimately they will have to decide for one side or be torn apart by the conflict.

## WHITE SUPREMACY

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The whole colonial era and the struggle to “discover” is overshadowed with racist concepts and ideas of white supremacy. The real-life models for some characters in this game have also made clearly racist statements: e.g. Charles Dickens and Lady Jane Franklin were explicitly racist against Inuit.

We have decided to keep this part of “exploration” and “discovery” out of the game, not because we don’t consider it important, but because we lack the background to do it justice. We consider it more important to treat these themes in a respectful manner than to include them at all costs.

This also means that we will not present the Netsilik-Inuit side of the exploration. The native people of King William Island have played a major role in the discovery of the remains, the reconstruction of the probable course and even lastly the finding of the wrecks of both Terror and Erebus.

The experience works well without these themes and we focus instead on the hubris of (primarily) white explorers and their ignorance against nature and the arctic wilderness.

## THE SUPERNATURAL

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The 19th Century is an era where common superstition and the belief in a Christian god clash with a firm belief in science and progress.

The supernatural will be present in this game through a number of different effects and methods. All of these are designed to offer incentives to play with the supernatural. We strive to give agency to all participants to allow their own interpretation of the events that unfold.

## SHADOW PLAY

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An organiser or NPC wearing mostly black clothes and a hooded, black mask hiding their face will sometimes represent otherwise inexplicable effects. This could be voices or sounds, objects that move or other events. Your character will not be able to perceive these shadows directly, but if they touch you, you can hear them or perceive images projected by them. The characters (and their players) will ultimately decide which of these events they consider to be of supernatural origin and which might simply be tricks of the mind (see also *Mental Illness*).



## SEXISM

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Sexism is a strong force in 19th Century England, even more so than today and a lot more obvious. In this game, strong female characters collide with society's and their own ideas about what their roles should be. The whole expedition would not be possible without Lady Jane Franklin and Lady Sophia Cracroft. On the other hand, the ship's crew consists mainly of men (or people dressed up as such) and they are not used to women in power or even aboard a ship.

There will be no open rebellion against these women, but subliminal sexism can be part of the experience.

## OFF-GAME SEXISM IS NOT ACCEPTABLE

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This is very important to us. Usually in our games, we strive to eliminate all signs of sexism. For *Erebus*, we have consciously decided to include sexism as a voluntary game element.

Having said that, we still will not accept any off-game sexist behaviour or remarks.

## SEXISM MARKER

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To make sure participants are willing to engage with the sexism theme at a certain point in play, there will be special markers that can be worn and easily be removed. If participants want to engage in this theme, they should look out for the marker on their play partners. If they do not wear the marker, leave any sexist remarks or behaviour out of your interaction towards these participants. If they do wear the marker, this signals a basic willingness to engage in the sexism theme. In addition, please calibrate with your co-participants if you want to play on the sexism theme to make sure this is mutual and be especially aware of safety mechanics.

## CROSS-GENDER PLAY

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We do not limit your choice of in-character gender. Participants of any gender can e.g. play a male ship crew character by wearing the in-game appropriate uniform independently of their own gender identity. In addition, we use pronoun markers to indicate in-game gender identities.

## PRONOUN MARKERS

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Gender will be played as we understand the historical situation in the game world. No third gender or non-binary option is offered on purpose (we do so in other games) as they were not present in the public consciousness of the time. We use neckerchiefs as in-game pronoun markers:

- ◆ dark for he/him and
- ◆ light for she/her.

There will be no non-binary pronoun markers in this game.

## MENTAL ILLNESS & INSANITY

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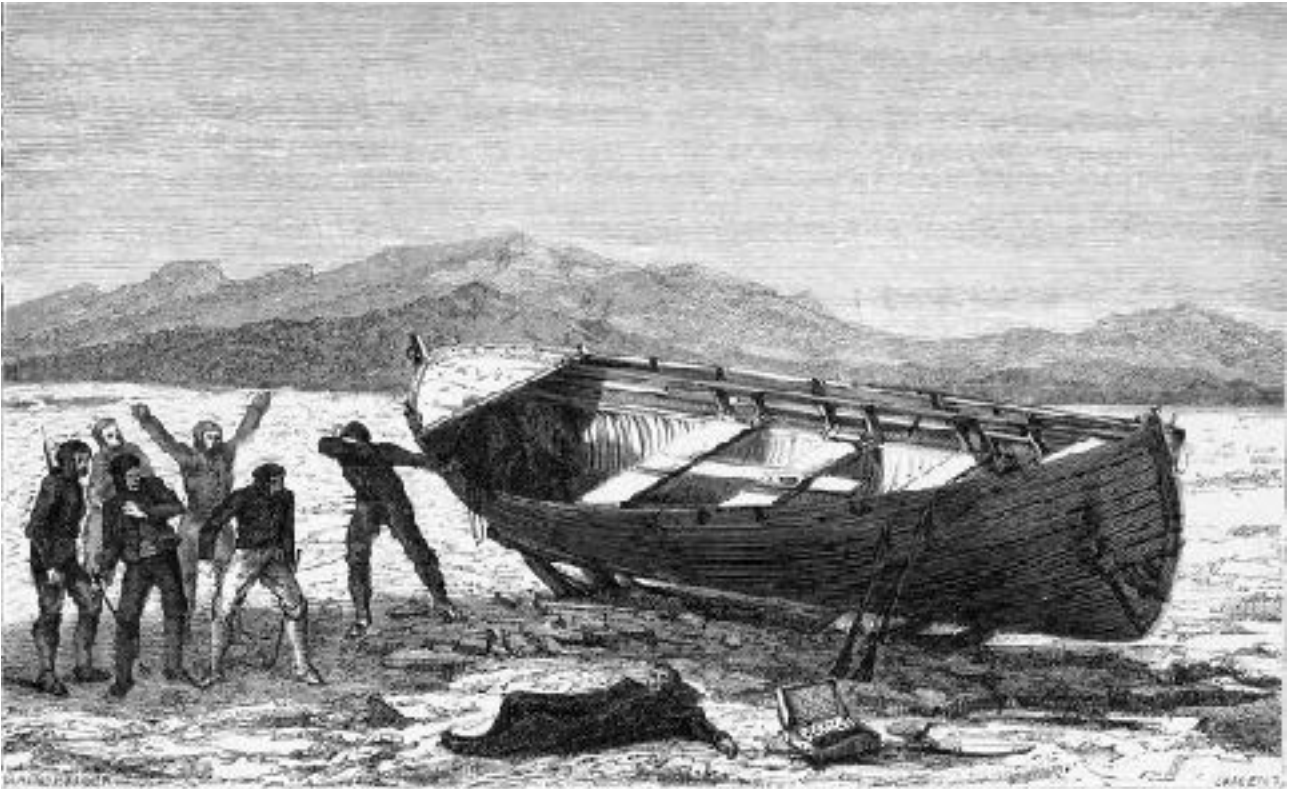
Another effect of deprivation and the stress of the situation the characters will be in, can be psychological trauma. This will be reflected by using a number of different techniques, some character based, others through special effects e.g. *Shadow Play*.

Every character will come with their own “hope” and “delusion”. In situations of stress the delusion will come out stronger and more extreme. Their hope could possibly save them, but can also destroy them if lost.

The exact nature of any irrational fears, anxieties and other social or mental disorders will be left to the participants own discretion in coordination with the game organisers.

Effects could include:

- ◆ Extreme versions of existing anxieties and other attributes
- ◆ Audible or visible hallucinations (represented through *Shadow Play*)
- ◆ Social anxieties
- ◆ Loud noises
- ◆ Choleric behaviour
- ◆ Claustrophobia (fear of small places)
- ◆ Agoraphobia (fear of open spaces)
- ◆ Basophobia (fear of falling)
- ◆ Compulsive behaviour
- ◆ Poor impulse control
- ◆ Dissociative disorders



## DEPRIVATION & SICKNESS

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An important part of the experience of real-life explorers in the historical era consisted of deprivation and sickness. Some of these were caused by bad planning, others by the uncertainty of the exploration itself and others for reasons of ignorance, arrogance and general hubris.

We will be playing on these themes by using more concrete deficiency syndromes than nausea or vomiting e.g. because those would either lead to lethargy or paralysis on the participant side. Instead we want to create visible and tangible effects for these symptoms including

- ◆ Bruises (makeup)
- ◆ Snow blindness (partial blindfolding)
- ◆ Part deafness (using earplugs)
- ◆ Fractures (using triangular arm-slings e.g.)

## FOOD

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Food will reflect the different stages of deprivation as well. There will be times when the food supply will not be as abundant and tasty than at other times. We will, however, always offer additional food in a dedicated safe off-game area.

# CANNIBALISM

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Historically, many cultures around the world have been accused of practising anthropophagy (*cannibalism*). As a behaviour civilised people were considered incapable of, this was part of the racist rhetoric of a cultural superiority of the civilised vs. the uncivilised world - and people.

In 1854, John Rae, one of the explorers searching for the expedition, has submitted a report to the Admiralty stating that:

“From the mutilated state of many of the corpses and the contents of the kettles it is evident that our wretched countrymen had been driven to the last resource—cannibalism—as a means of prolonging existence.”

This triggered a hostile reaction, mostly towards Rae for stating such an inconceivable accusation.

The reality for many explorers, and sailors, was quite different. Cannibalism was an ever-present horror as well as a last survival effort for many shipwrecked and lost explorers. This of course appeared horrid to those at home who had not been in that situation, and tried to distance themselves from these base instincts of survival by blaming the acts of cannibalism by their countrymen on the influence of the wilderness and the natives in the region (see also the section on **White Supremacy**).





CHAPTER 1  
ON A BOAT

# PARTICIPANTS & CREW

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*Erebus* is played on the traditional sailing ship Pippilotta. This means its main purpose is to teach traditional sailing. There have been more than a thirty larps on this ship by now, and they have been teaching sailing for nearly 40 years.

On board the ship, there are three distinct groups of people:

## 1. PARTICIPANTS

Everybody playing in the game - from explorers to *Erebus* crew.

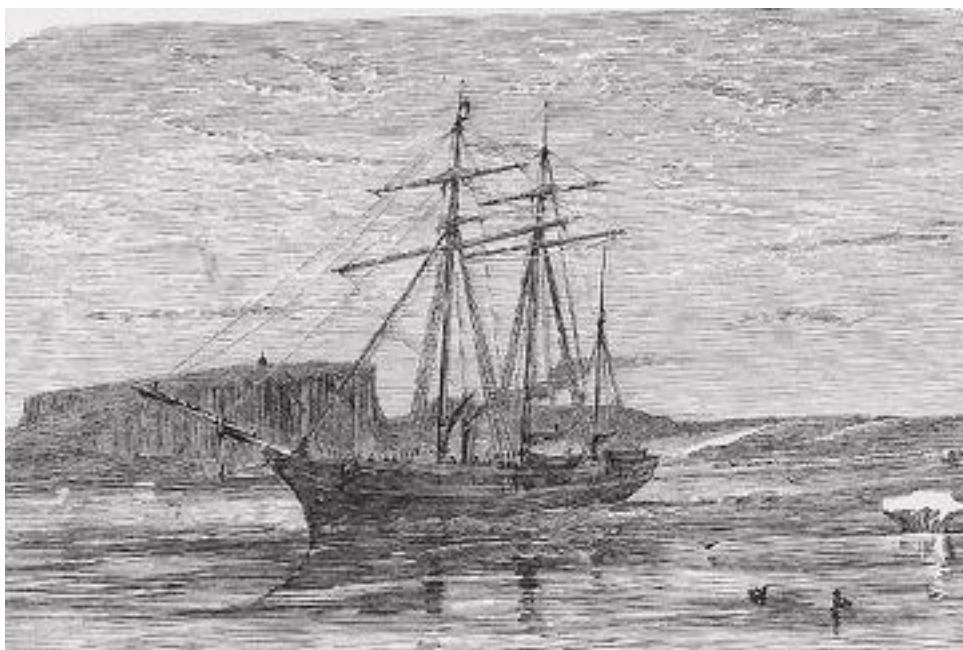
## 2. ORGANIZERS & HELPERS

We, the organisers, will mostly *not* be playing. From an in-character point of view, we are more like the infamous Star Trek redshirts - somehow important for the proper functioning of the ship, but of no importance.

There can be helpers e.g. for the kitchen. Whether they play or not, they are always the top dogs in the kitchen.

## 3. OUT OF CHARACTER (PIPPILOTTA) CREW

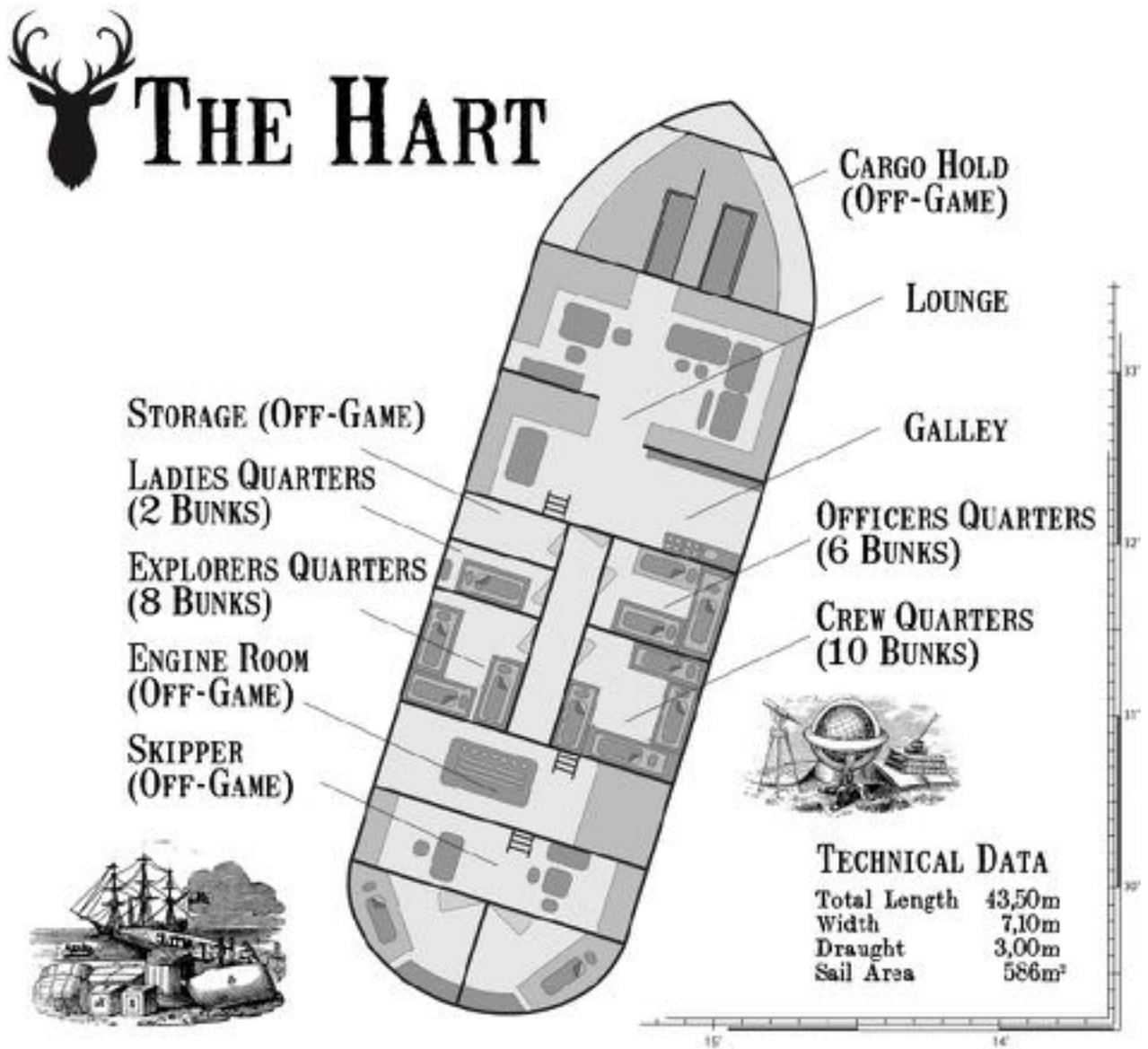
Since the ship is only moving off-game to our play location, only a skeleton crew will be present during the larp. Still, safety always comes first which is why they are to be obeyed *in any situation*. Their word is law aboard the ship, no matter what is happening, but especially when matters of safety are concerned.



# THE HART

During the game, characters will be staying on the 3-mast gaff-schooned steam yacht *The Hart*<sup>1</sup>. The ship has room for 26 passengers and crew and a spacey “lounge” area next to the galley as a social hub for characters (and players alike). Characters will sleep according to their social status as depicted in the deck plans:

- ◆ Ladies in a 2-bunk cabin
- ◆ Officers in a 6-bunk cabin
- ◆ Explorers in an 8-bunk cabin
- ◆ Sailors in a 10-bunk cabin



<sup>1</sup> The historical expedition was on a ship of identical size, rigging and crew.

# LUGGAGE

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Space in the cabins is very limited. There is no way to really “hide” your luggage. Therefore we recommend to bring something to cover “modern” luggage (rags, cloths or a bag). A cheap and very authentic piece of luggage is the classic duffel bag which you can get at any army or camping shop. There are even ones available with a covered up zipper.

We will hand out a small (50x40cm) in-game bag to you to "hide" personal items of your character that may be searched and/or „stolen“. These can only be taken for the duration of the game; once it is over, you will get them back from the player of the „thief“. This bag is marked with a large compass (wind rose).



Luggage without such a mark must not be searched. If something should be missing from such a bag, please inform an organiser immediately.

# TASKS

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All work aboard the ship is shared among participants. Work includes: preparing meals, washing dishes, sweeping floors, taking care of trash, and cleaning toilets. These tasks are assigned to the participants by a work schedule provided by us. This means every participant has to help.



# THE PACKING LIST

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Stuff that will prove useful on a ship during the larp.

## IN-CHARACTER & PERSONAL PROPS

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- ◆ **Warm costume.** Ideally many layers and possibly an outer layer that can withstand rain. Warm is more important than watertight, though.
- ◆ **In-character Nightgown and slippers.** we will be playing at night. Also: the toilets are above decks. So you will need something to leave the room at night. It would be nice for you to have some kind of night shirt, dressing gown or something similar. If you can't find anything else, a coat is also suitable.
- ◆ **Light Source without open flame.** LED lantern, candles etc. are very useful. Its is not required as we will provide some as well and not everybody needs one.
- ◆ **Bag, possibly squashy.** You will receive a small (50x40cm) bag for searchable in-character items. Your out of character luggage should be stored separately. We recommend military duffel bags with a hidden zipper or some kind of cover if you have a more modern-looking suitcase.
- ◆ **Pen & paper, Notebook or similar.** These can be used as a diary aboard or to take notes in character. Maybe you just want to take tabs on card game scores?
- ◆ **Watch, e.g. a pocket watch.** Not required, but nice if you have something fitting your character.

## OUT OF CHARACTER

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- ◆ **Warm Underwear.** Don't bother with period stuff, go for high tech if you can. This will make any costume better or at least more comfortable.
- ◆ **Warm Underwear.** We really mean it. It can be very cold on the ship, especially when you get wet.
- ◆ **Bed cover, pillow, sleeping bag.** Bring a nice cover or blanket to make it more authentic/atmospheric, especially during daytime.
- ◆ **Towel and wash bag.** Depending on where we will stay with the ship, showers could be in the harbor, so you will need some kind of bag to transport stuff. It doesn't have to be special, but maybe cover up stuff so you don't look like too modern while moving through the ship. Flip-flops are a nice to have if we can use the public showers.
- ◆ **Personal ID or passport.** This might be required if you travel internationally to the larp. We will not be crossing borders between Denmark and Germany.
- ◆ **Personal Medication.** Whatever you need for your personal health. Don't forget to pack enough.

# TRAVEL INFORMATION

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We would like to give you some more information how to get to the ship.

The address you want to point your sat nav to is

Am Südhafen 4  
24376 Kappeln (Schlei)  
Germany

The GPS coordinates are 54.657912, 9.934951 or MW5P+46 Kappeln

## PUBLIC TRANSPORT

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Süderbrarup is the closest station, around 10km or 10min by car. From there, take Bus 1624 to Kappeln Central bus station (ZOB), but if you don't want to wait for that you can also take a taxi (around 25€). From Central bus station, you can walk to the harbor or take Bus 3010 (just 1 stop).

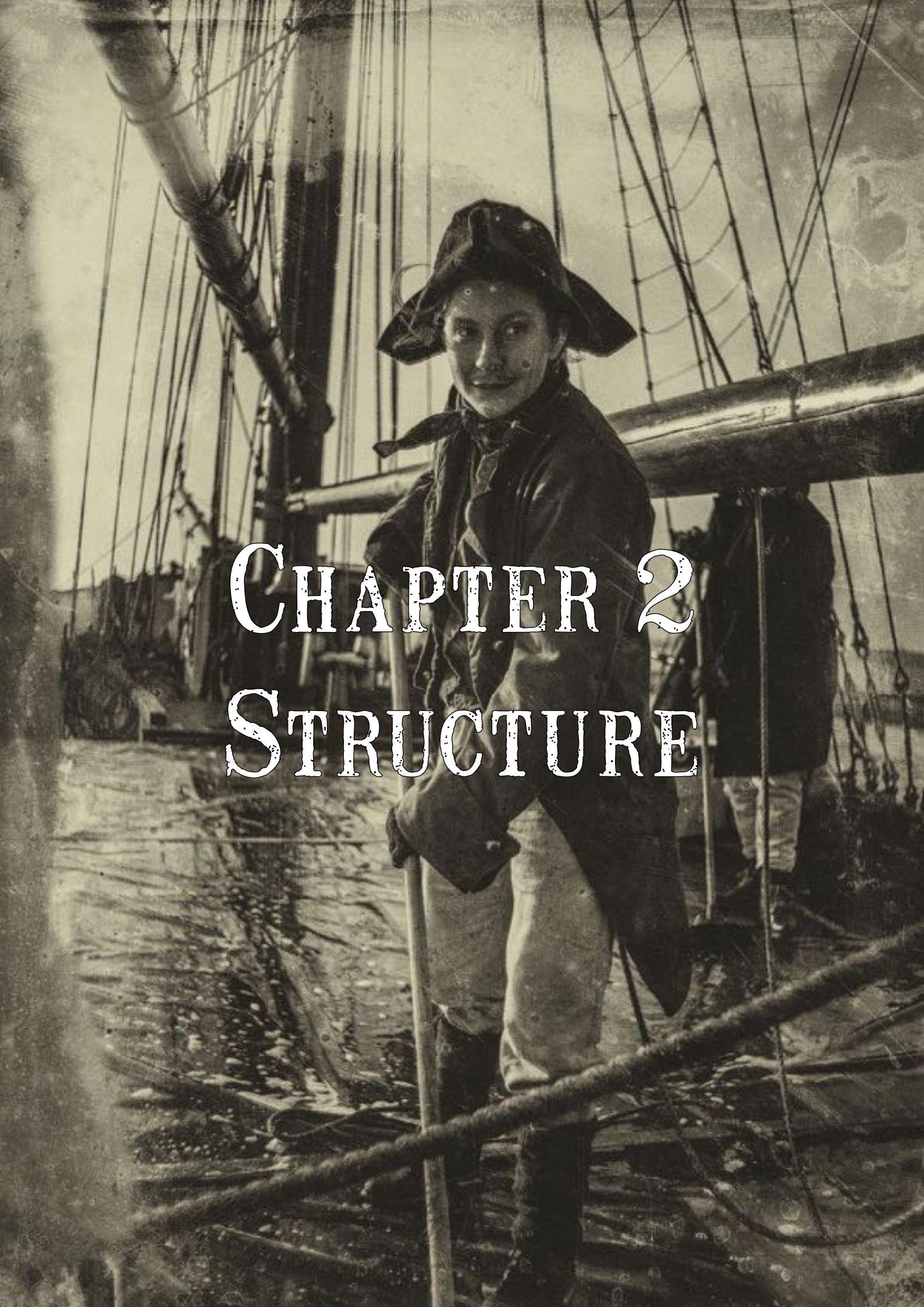
Eckernförde is an alternative, around 30km away. From there, take Bus 3020 direction ZOB, Kappeln (Schlei) and get off at Hafen, Kappeln (Schlei).

## PARKING

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You might find a parking spot right opposite of the ship, but if not, there's parking in walking distance. You can unload your car at the ship and then drive to the parking. Please be aware that the red parking area is paid parking. The free parking is the one slightly further away.





CHAPTER 2  
STRUCTURE

# EVENT PHASES

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The whole event consists of the following phases:

1. Arrival
2. Introduction & Workshops
3. Game Acts
4. Game end and afterparty
5. Return & Cleanup

## ARRIVAL

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Participants should arrive between 13:00 and 15:00 on the Friday of the larp at the location of the ship (see ***Travel Information***).

Early arrivals cannot be guaranteed access to the ship as the organising team will be finishing the game setup. Please accept our apologies if you have to wait for access.

Late arrivals will possibly be not able to board until a proper point in time if the game has already started. We also ask you to be on time to enable a collective start of the game.



# INTRODUCTION & WORKSHOPS

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Before the game starts, you will be able to move into your cabin and get changed. When everybody is ready, there will be a welcome by the organisers followed by group workshops on game mechanics. Next, there will be a security briefing by the skipper. During this time, a buffet dinner will be available.

The game will start approximately 20:00 on Friday.

# ACTS

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*Erebus* consists of one prelude and four acts, each with its own, specific atmosphere. Each act typically takes around 3-5 hours. There are breaks between acts and they take place in different points of time.

# OFF GAME SCHEDULE

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<b>Day</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Phase</b>
<b>Friday</b>	13:00-15:00	Arrival
	15:00-20:00	Briefings & Workshops
	20:00-23:00	Prelude
	23:00-23:30	Break
	23:30-End	Act I
	End-7:00	Night Break
<b>Saturday</b>	7:00-12:00	Act II
	12:00-13:00	Lunch
	13:00-18:00	Act III
	18:00-19:00	Dinner preparation
	19:00-End	Act IV
	ca.23:00	End of Game
	23:00	Optional Debrief & Afterparty
<b>Sunday</b>	8:00-10:00	Breakfast
	10:00-13:00	Ship Cleanup
	Before 14:00	Return to Kappeln

## GAME BREAKS

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We all need sleep, but we still want to make the most out of the time we have on board. Therefore, we will break the game for sleep between 2:00 at night and 7:00 in the morning. During this time, we will not be offering any events and we recommend you catch some sleep - you will need it.

Other game breaks will be between act changes. These take between ½ and one hour. You have the opportunity to take a breath and discuss events. During some breaks, we might also be offering workshops to deepen some of the techniques and methods in use.

## WEATHER & NATURE

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You are welcome to let the weather and the light reflect in the atmosphere: if there is snow, dark clouds, or stormy weather, maybe your character will react in their mood to this. If there are any other natural effects, like clear skies and moonshine, you can use this as well. Make use of all these effects for good or bad omens, stories to tell or philosophical musings.

## THEME MUSIC

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We are using theme music that will be played at the beginning and end of each chapter. We will introduce the music to you during the Briefings.

## OPTIONAL DEBRIEF & AFTERPARTY

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After the game has ended, we will be offering an optional, structured debrief in groups. You can opt out of this part, but if you do we would like to ask you to leave the room(s) while debrief is taking place.

After that, the afterparty will start and you are welcome to share all the great stories you experienced.

# CLEANUP

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Sunday, the ship will return to Kappeln. The main task will be to pack your gear and clean up. This includes all areas, cabins, kitchen, lounge and upper decks with toilets et.al. You are expected to help in the cleanup - this is again, teamwork. Your first responsibility is to clean up your own cabin. After that is finished, there will be plenty of more work to do. If you are able to help us clean up, we will be very happy to give you some further things to do. Again, if we all work together, it will be finished in no time at all. Helpers and organisers will be there to coordinate the whole process.

**We will be back in the port of Kappeln before 14:00 on Sunday.**





CHAPTER 3  
RULES

# STYLE

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There are many different larp playing traditions. *Erebus* is inspired by the Nordic Larp movement, but also influenced by many other larp traditions. We have a few guidelines that we expect all participants to follow. These are described below.

## THE THREE GOLDEN RULES

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1. Stay in character.
2. When someone interacts with you, show some plausible reaction.  
Play something, no matter what, but play.
3. When you interact with someone, do not expect any specific reaction.  
Accept what your counterpart makes out of it.

## PLAYING FOR DRAMA

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Let your character fail. Do not try to win. Play for the drama and to intensify the experience for everybody, not to „be successful“. Enjoy going into a conflict knowing that your character will lose. We will play together to co-create an amazing experience for everybody, even if our characters are opponents or deadly foes. It's player *with* player, not against each other.

Of course, in most cases your *character* will not want to lose - even though that is possible as well. But if everybody tries to set their own ambition aside and instead create a dramatic story together it will be an amazing experience for everybody instead of just one person „winning“.

## PLAY TO LIFT

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Play to Lift means that the responsibility for your drama and your character also rests on all your co-players. You have to *lift* each other. You don't, off game, have to worry about delivering the best speech ever just because everyone knows that your character is the best orator in the country. The reason that you don't need to worry is because the other players will lift your character up, and applaud loudly – they will give you a win. An alternative name to Play to Lift might actually be: “Play to Let Others Win”.

# PLAYER WITH PLAYER

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Conflicts in this game will happen mainly between characters controlled by players. This is a co-creative game - as participants, we play with each other and not against - even (and especially) if our characters are mortal enemies. Approach other players and come to agreements, either verbally or non-verbally. You can use the game breaks to do this on-site and during the course of the event or you can already start using the Facebook groups and email to get in contact with other participant in order to coordinate certain storylines.

## ALIBI

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You are not your character. Roleplaying games give us an alibi to do things we usually wouldn't. Use this alibi: be as nasty or lame as your character needs to be, and don't worry too much about being disliked. We expect everyone to treat each other as their characters in-game, and as peers off-game. Naturally, this doesn't mean you should break the rules, play to win, block initiative, screw up the game for other players, or engage in other odious player behaviour hidden behind the mask of the character. You are still in control and responsible for the consequences on other participants.

## SEX PLAY

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The story of this larp happens in 1847-1849. Sex was not a subject a decent person would ever talk about or admit to have. We will use the *Ars Amandi* method to simulate sex and intimacy during this game. In *Ars Amandi*, sex is portrayed by touching each others arms while looking each others eyes.

For *Erebus*, *Ars Amandi* is used as a *diegetic* method. This means that the actions the characters undertake are identical to the ones the participant use to portray said actions. In this case this means, touching each others arms in the *Ars Amandi* way is actually considered "having sex" for the characters. More specifically, it represents an extreme level of intimacy. Of course people are aware of the difference between touching and e.g. penetrative intercourse, but from the characters' points of view, the level of intimacy does not differ a lot. Witnesses will never go into more details, at most saying something like "they were intimate", which is scandalous enough as such. The era was very prude indeed, innuendos of intimacy were often enough to cause faints. We will workshop *Ars Amandi* before the game.

# SAFETY

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## OK CHECKIN

The OK Check-in is a tool allowing for players to communicate with each other out of character about their well-being without pausing the flow of play around them.

Like its use in Scuba diving, the OK Check-In is a “demand-response signal”, meaning that the other person needs to give a response; the lack of a response indicates trouble or distress. Since some physical role-play is extremely convincing, this is a useful tool to separate role-play from reality in situations such as acting out drunkenness, a physical injury, or a seizure. The technique is used when a person notices another person who appears distressed, sad, upset, lonely, etc. Person 1 may be unsure whether Person 2 needs assistance, or whether their distress is role-play or real. Person 1 uses the Check-In to determine if assistance is needed and to show that they care about the other person’s well-being.

One person makes the “OK” hand sign at another one. This indicates the question “are you ok?”

The other player responds in one of three ways.

- **Thumbs up** – means they’re OK and play can continue.
- **A level hand** – means the player doesn’t quite know how they feel, or that it’s neither very good or very bad. This should be treated as a thumbs down by the person doing the asking.
- **Thumbs down** – means the player is actually not OK, and should be extracted from the situation.



The OK Sign



Thumbs up



Level hand



Thumbs down

## LOOKDOWN

The Lookdown gives players an alibi to leave a scene without requiring an in-game or off-game explanation. Most importantly, the technique gives players a way to set a boundary and take care of themselves without making a disturbance, interrupting a scene, or requiring that others get involved. This tool empowers players to choose their own experiences, and makes opt-in/opt-out design more tangible.

The Lookdown is a Calibration Technique for exiting a scene or conversation without causing disruption. It consists of placing one's open hand across one's forehead, as if shading one's eyes from the sun, then stepping back and walking away. An important part of the technique that makes it a safety and calibration tool is how other players react when someone uses the Lookdown. Since it is used by the player for off-game reasons to exit a scene, there should be no questions asked, no explanation needed or demanded, and no consequences given — in-game or off — for using the tool. This helps the player feel that their needs and choices are valid and valued, and allows them to choose their level of experience and engagement.

To perform the Lookdown: Person 1 shields their eyes and walks away. Person 2 (and all other people in the scene or immediate area) ignore Person 1's exit and continue as usual.

## CUT

If you want the game to stop for any reason, you can use the *Cut* command. This can be because of a situation endangering physical safety or it could be for personal reasons - it does not matter. The situation should be resolved and only when all involved parties agree, the game can continue. You don't have to explain yourself if you don't feel like it. It's totally enough to say *Cut* and leave the situation if you prefer it.

*Cut* will be workshopped before the game.

## TAP OUT

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In some situations, especially when it's personal or even intimate or the atmosphere seems very delicate, using *cut* or other „stop words“ will sometimes be hard for participants, because they might fear to disturb the atmosphere. Even though it is perfectly ok to do this, we offer an alternative method to „check out“ of a situation

more subtly. The method is called the *tap out*, because, this is simply what you do. It's a mechanic to communicate to another participant about your limits.

To perform this method, you tap your co-player's arm (or another part of their body) twice, and repeat this action as long and as hard as you need to get their attention. (Typically, once and quite softly is enough). Please be aware of your co-participant's limits as well. Escalate if necessary, but escalate slowly.

The tap-out stops the action for everyone involved. If you are holding someone, you release them; if you are screaming, you take a break from screaming; if you are blocking someone's path, you make sure they are free to go, and so on. Please note that not all situations have an "active" or a "passive" party, and even when they do, the active party is as free to tap out as the passive party.

In this tiny break, the person who tapped out can choose to either stay or go. There will be no questions asked, whatever they choose to do. If they stay, it means they'd like to continue the scene, but with a little less of whatever was going on.

When someone taps out, you do not ask them why, and they should not tell you why. This is to protect both of you and all other players. Not talking about why has a double function. It avoids the creation of a hierarchy of differently valid reasons for self-care. It also creates protection for people who tap out for very private reasons.

HOWEVER – the player who taps out may offer suggestions on play style as long as they don't say why they have that preference. For instance, "can we continue but without you blocking me in physically? The screaming is fine, you can scream more if you'd like".

*Tap out* will also be workshopped before the game.

## ALCOHOL

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We would like to ask you to keep off from alcohol during the course of the game. We will offer beer and possibly other alcoholic drinks during the afterparty only.

Whatever you do, do *not* use the sea as an Ersatz-toilet. Most casualties on sailing ships are males at night falling overboard, intoxicated or not, where no one hears them. Don't do this.

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# BLACK BOX

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A black box is a room with black walls, no windows, flat floor and no furniture. Scenes in the black box work with few and simple props. In our case, it will also be equipped with some special effects, such as lights and an audio system.

The events of this larp will happen mostly on the ship “The Hart”. To represent other locations, we will be using a black box on the ship.

We will give you instructions how and when to use the black box in the briefings and workshops before the game.

# COMBAT & CONFLICT

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In many larps, armed conflicts play an important role. Although there will be weapons aboard and there will be hostilities, we do not expect this to be a combat-focussed larp. We would still like you to get acquainted with the rules for combat though.

The characters descriptions will sometimes mention that you have a weapon; others can be found aboard. If you want to bring a weapon not mentioned in your role description you can either contact us beforehand or check with us when you arrive on the ship.

# BEFORE YOU FIGHT, SETTLE WHO WILL WIN.

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This may seem counter-intuitive, depending on the larp culture you are used to. The fighting skills of characters will differ: some will be able fighters, others will not know at which end to pick up a weapon. They might even differ from you own skills. If it is not mentioned in your role description, you have to decide for yourself how well your character is in matters of combat. Then find out who’s going to win the fight. If you cannot decide, the battle will end undecided. As always, you decide for yourself what the consequences for your character are. Fight dramatically and not to win.

# WEAPONS

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Whenever a character draws a weapon, that character will determine what happens. The whole room is responsible for representing how dangerous the weapon is. If and when the person got what they wanted, the weapon will be holstered again or otherwise removed from the situation. This does not mean that there should be no resistance - but everybody involved knows that resistance is futile in the end.

## A WEAPON CONTROLS A SITUATION.

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In reality, a lone person with a weapon in a room full of people could probably be disarmed quite easily. But that would be boring. Why? On a ship, space is so limited that everybody will be caught sooner or later once the situation is over. If that person would not even get anything out of that specific situation, there won't be many incentives to escalate any conflict.

## THE SIDE WITH MORE WEAPONS IS IN CONTROL.

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This means:

- ◆ One melee weapon dominates one or more unarmed combatants.
- ◆ A gun dominates one or more melee weapons.
- ◆ A second weapon of the same or a higher category trumps the first.
- ◆ When equipment is equal, the side with more persons is dominant.

It's more important to have a dramatic scene than following the letters of the rule, but still try to make this as sensible as possible.

## MELEE WEAPONS

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Many weapons aboard will be melee weapons. Only safe "boffer" weapons will be used for this.



## GUNS

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All fire arms aboard are secured in the weapons locker. They will only be handed out by officers when they are “needed”. Officers may carry hand guns when required.

## UNARMED COMBAT

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This is only possible after agreement with all involved participants and only very, very carefully. On a ship, there’s too many things to hit your head on to count them and falling into the Schlei at this time of the year is no fun either.

If there are the same number of people (e.g. 1:1) on both sides, the side that has their back to the wall or the floor is controlled. The inferior party can be bound or otherwise held.

Hits should always be taken seriously except if you’re the toughest guy aboard and you proclaim something like „Impressive punch, my friend!“.

**Note:** Especially in unarmed combats, be careful, settle before the fight who’s going to win and act dramatically, but play it safe.

## ARRESTING SOMEONE

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For handcuffing or binding, we use a simple and safe method: the person that should be bound, takes a rope or scarf, wraps it around both wrists and holds the ends in each hand. This looks convincing, but can be opened at any time by the “prisoner” just by opening the hands and letting go.

If you arrest someone or bind them you are responsible for taking care of them. This is true for their out-game safety as well as their entertainment. There’s nothing more boring than sitting for hours somewhere where nobody can go and you cannot escape. Don’t do this. If play becomes boring and/or stalled, find an excuse to release the detainee or back down.

# VIOLENCE & INJURIES

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The effect of violence can differ severely depending on the atmosphere of the act.

## **White Atmosphere**

Violence is suppressed and mostly threatened at. Guns will not be fired, melee weapons not used to hit someone.

## **Gray Atmosphere**

Violence can lead to injuries, but these injuries should not be not severe or even fatal. Characters fighting each other will not be fatally wounded. Guns shot will not kill, but injure. When fighting, one or two blows will usually resolve the fight.

## **Black Atmosphere**

All violence will lead to bloodshed and can even escalate in a deadly manner. In any case, you are the final arbiter about your character's fate.

## YOU CANNOT BE KILLED - BUT YOU CAN CHOSE TO DIE

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On *Erebus*, you are the one who decides if and when your character dies. Ideally contact an organiser before you end your character's existence. If that is not possible, find one after your character's death.



# CHAPTER 4

# CHARACTER

# YOUR CHARACTER - A BUFFET

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We see the role description as a kind of „buffet meal“: you, as a participant, choose, what and how much of it as you like and leave the parts that are not to your taste virtually untouched. If you choose to change your role, keep in mind how this will relate to other participants. It is now your role, not ours anymore.

## CHARACTER SKETCHES

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Each character sketch consists of the following information:

### 1. BASICS

Includes name, nationality, occupation, gender and a few tagline words. The character's initial is set, but not the first name. This is chosen by the participant. If the role does not have a gender assigned yet, the participant also decides which gender the character will have.

### 2. DESCRIPTION

The main role description. This includes the background story, important events from the past and their motivation, sometimes also hopes, dreams and fears.

### 3. HOPE & DELUSION

The light and dark side of the character. What keeps them going, what is their biggest fear or lie?

### 4. RELATIONS

Relations will be written as short references to other player characters. There will also be Facebook groups and workshops before the game starts to give you opportunity to get acquainted with other characters.

### 5. INSPIRATIONS & REFERENCES

These are provided to give more background to understand the role and also to provide with ideas and material to further develop it. This can include movies, books, websites and other media. Again, this is not mandatory.

# COSTUME GUIDE

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## HISTORICAL ACCURACY

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We do not aim for historical accuracy. Most of us are not versed enough to tell the difference and the costs and effort would be very high plus the usefulness for just one event is very limited.

What we do aim for is the right atmosphere. A costume that gives the feeling of being from a different century, a time when clothes were not mass-made and class made a lot of difference to the quality of clothes you could afford.

E.g. zippers were invented in 1851, but they still can be used for your costume. As an example, the troyer (pictured to the right), a classical German sailors garment, is not historically correct, but will work in the setting. On the other hand, if you wear zippers all over your clothing, it will not look right.



We would also like you to wear clothes that seem historically correct for the gender of your character. E.g., wearing trousers would not be appropriate for a female character in this setting.

For inspiration, “The Terror” (Season 1) AMC series is highly recommended.

## TEMPERATURE

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We will use heaters to make the ship as comfortable as possible. One of the central play areas will be the mess hall, where the galley is also located so there will be cooking as well. With up to 30 people, temperatures in the mess can be pretty warm.

When and if you should go outside, expect very cold weather. Average temperatures are expected to be around the freezing point (from +3 to -2 ° Celsius). Once per decade, the Schlei freezes over, so this is also a possibility.

What this means is that you will need two very different sets of clothing for outside and inside scenes. We expect you to spend most of the time on the inside of the ship,

though. The best solution to this is to use multiple layers of clothing plus thermal underwear for longer scenes on the outside. We will give you a heads-up should these be expected.

## SAILORS & OFFICERS

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We will provide part of the costume for sailors in this game. It consists of:

- ◆ a blue and black uniform jacket
- ◆ white cotton trousers
- ◆ white cotton shirts
- ◆ a black tricorn.

NB: The uniform is not in any way a correct Royal Navy uniform mid-19th Century, but it will convey the feeling of uniformity we strive for.

You should bring yourself

- ◆ a warm coat (e.g. peacoat)
- ◆ headwear or earmuffs
- ◆ scarf
- ◆ warm gloves
- ◆ warm socks
- ◆ good shoes or boots
- ◆ thermal underwear.



## OTHER CHARACTERS

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You will have to take care of your own costume. As we said above, it does not have to be historically correct, but it should convey a feeling for the time.

### MEN

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If available, gentlemen could wear some sort of frock coat, but more informal wear (morning dress or similar) could be worn as well. A black lounge suit (or *Stresemann* in German) are another option. The lower the status of your character, the less formal your clothing could be.

## WOMEN

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Trousers were completely unthinkable for women before the end of the 19th century, so for female presenting characters, options are mainly skirts and dresses. Since we're on a ship (although not sailing), you should also look for practicality, but it does not have to be your highest priority, so we do not recommend hoop skirts, but crinoline is a possibility. High necklines are recommended for temperature reasons and as day dresses. If you want to bring an evening dress with décolleté, there will be a possibility to wear it as well.

## FURTHER INSPIRATION

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### INVENTIONS

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Things that did already exist in 1847:

- Coffee houses (1673)
- Steam ships (1783)
- Tin cans (1810)
- Cable Telegrams (1833)
- Revolver (1835)
- Rubber (1839)
- Postage stamps (1840)
- Zippers (1851)

### WEBSITES

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A few links to websites for costumes and other relevant information:

- [\*\*The Cutters Practical Guide to the Cutting of Ladies Garments\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Information on clothing in the Victorian Era and the 1900s\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Duffel bag with covered zipper\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Victorian Etiquette\*\*](#)

Christmas  
Carols

