



1630

Tales from the Plague

DESIGN DOCUMENT

V. I.I



WELCOME TO THE DESIGN DOCUMENT FOR 1630!

Here you will find all the necessary information to play 1630, the new international larp by the Chaos League



FOREWORD: IT'S OK TO FEEL A BIT CONFUSED.

Don't worry, everything's just fine. Here's all you need to know right now.
There are some pages to read and if you're new you might feel a little overwhelmed, but it's okay.

You're not the first to jump on board this crazy game and feel that way. Even if you're not sure what to do and how things will go, we can promise you that playing will be easy. Take half an hour for yourself, and calmly read this guide, enjoy it.

Then, if you still have doubts, we'll be there for you. You can contact us for any reason on our website chaosleague.org, on our [facebook page](#), or via [mail](#).

RECENT CHANGE

v .1.1

Some misprints removed

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CHAPTER I

Introduction



THE SETTING

*You are a villager.
You are part of a family, a society, a circle.
You have a profession, ambitions, obligations, friends, blood ties and enemies.
You have secrets.
And you have a lot to lose. That's why you want to survive.*

A.D. 1630 . An outbreak of bubonic plague is ravaging the population of Europe; famine and diseases hit northern and central Italy, paving the way to the terrible epidemic. Illness triggers violent instincts, it destroys people's lives and the social fabric of entire communities.

Far from the greater cities lies Ravenwood, a fortified village secluded among the Umbrian hills, in the territory of the Papal States in Central Italy. Small and isolated, the village is far from the main commercial routes so when the plague strikes the region, it quietly slides into oblivion. Now its inhabitants would go to any lengths for things to stay that way.



The Three Laws

Because of the plague, travellers, merchants and papal envoys who ordinarily maintain relations between the various settlements are no longer able to keep the territory under control. So, with time, contacts between Ravenwood and the outside world have become progressively sparse, until they have ceased completely.

The population has realised this is a great opportunity and has made a momentous decision: to disappear from the map, interrupting any relationship with the outside world. This, they believe, is the best way to survive. As a consequence, in January 1628, three laws are promulgated:

First Law: Never leave the village
Second Law: Protect the Village and its Secret
Third Law: Entrust your soul to God

The isolation in which Ravenwood finds itself is the best defense against the disease. So far none of the inhabitants have experienced any symptoms, and even though there are many difficulties, the village is still a safe place. The three laws actually work.



The Stranger

A strange event has occurred, though. Something that might have endangered the village but that has been solved at a high price.

In the backstory, exactly three weeks prior the beginning of the game, a man, a stranger, dressed in rags and heavily distressed, is found at dawn inside the village walls, asleep on the church steps. No one knows who he is, how he has found the village, and how he has eluded the Village Keepers on the outer walls. Has someone helped him?

He has nothing with him but his own clothes. At that point it becomes clear that we cannot send him away because he knows about the village, and he might compromise its isolation by revealing our existence. Nor is it possible to give him shelter, food is scarcer day by day and although he has no obvious signs of illness, he still might be contagious.

So the stranger is questioned, but doesn't reveal any useful information, perhaps because of fear or contempt. But as he doesn't say a word to save himself, it is resolved he has to be killed. The decision is taken unanimously during an official gathering in the village main square. Although not lightly, we assume this is the only way to act in order to protect our families. A stranger isn't worth their lives. We're going to share the blame and responsibility of such a callous act. We'll pay the price even if we know our conscience will suffer greatly.

The herbalist prepares the poisonous potion and then each villager, none excluded, pours a drop of poison in a jug of water, so all and nobody are guilty at the same time.

When the stranger drinks, it takes some minutes for the spasms to begin. After a few endless instants, death finally arrives. The body of the stranger is burned and his remains are buried in a nameless grave in the village cemetery.



Today

From that day on, the physician has constantly tested everyone's health. So far no sign of infection has been found among the villagers. So, since three weeks have passed without any case of plague occurring, the physician and his fellow Searchers are self-confident that the danger of an epidemic has been avoided.

The annual celebrations for the patron Saint Christopher, which will take place from the first day of the game, might bring new hope and joy to all the villagers, being an opportunity to leave behind the latest terrible events.

THE VILLAGE ANNALS

March 28th, 1625

A terrible church fire is miraculously tamed.

January 1st, 1628

The village establishes the three laws and moves toward complete isolation, fearing the worrying news about the rapid spread of the epidemic and its calamitous repercussions. All ties with the outside world are cut off, the village gradually slides into oblivion.

May 11th, 1628

Arcadia, the current Mayor's wife, leaves the village for her daily work and never returns. Nobody has seen her since.

August 28th, 1629

The Digbys win the annual Log Race. Not everyone is convinced it's a well-deserved victory.

July 25th, 1630

A terrible brawl explodes at the Inn.

August, 6th 630

A stranger is mysteriously found on the church steps and after much debate he is collectively killed.



INFO

1630 is a live action role-playing game about the struggle faced by the inhabitants of a small village against the threat of plague. The story takes place in a charming medieval hamlet in Italy.

DATE: May, 4th-6th 2018

LOCATION: Near Perugia, Region of Umbria, Italy

KEY WORDS: Intense, harsh, thrilling, and confrontational.

COST: From 150€ to 265€. Food and accommodation included in the price. Special Tickets for New Players, Groups (3 or more) and Bring-a-Friend.

PARTICIPANTS: 45 ca.

COSTUME RENTAL: 45 € (optional, included in some Tickets)

TRANSPORT: A shuttle from Rome will be available for international players. Stay tuned for more detailed info.

LANGUAGE: English.

1630 International Run is produced for an international audience in the English language.

If English is not your first language, don't worry! Our participants come from all over the world, so you will be in good company! Your English doesn't have to be perfect!

FIG I



THEMES



The Plague is the Enemy

The plague in 1630 is the danger coming from outside. It represents an invisible enemy creeping in the dark. It's the most horrible death. Mankind's supreme fear.

No one has contracted the disease so far in Ravenwood, but because the epidemic spreads so rapidly its inhabitants have decided to isolate themselves from the outside world anyway.

Terrible outbreaks of bubonic plague have been terrorising Europe for decades now and people are understandably scared to death: no one has yet understood how the disease spreads, while many are genuinely convinced it is divine punishment for men's sins. What is most alarming is the rapid propagation of the disease and its inescapable progress: once infected, most people die within three days.

Before the fear of death people unleash their innermost animal instincts: looting, theft, violence. The world outside the safe walls of Ravenwood has become a dreadful and dangerous place.

But even though the village has been spared so far, its inhabitants fear things may fall apart any time soon. Be it wayfarers, plague-spreaders, or divine wrath, the pestilence may appear under various forms. So suspicion is the best defense: death has never been so real and it may hit at lightening speed. The villagers of Ravenwood have nothing left but take extreme measures to prevent the worst from happening.



Ravenwood is your Home

The main location in which the game takes place is a charming medieval village in the Italian countryside. The village is divided into areas, or districts, where the families live. In each district there are several independent houses, workshops and facilities. You will have your home, your workshop, your personal space, your straw mattress to rest and sleep on, and a fireplace to cook.

Each home has at least one or two fully functioning bathrooms. The village is protected by imposing walls that are guarded by the Keepers night and day. The village is your home, it's the place where you were born and have lived all your life.

It's here that your family has lived for generations and you would do everything you can to defend it from the threats coming from outside. Outside the village there is no hope. Ravenwood is your home and you will defend it no matter the cost.



Superstitions are Real

1630 is a game inspired by historical facts and **NOT** a historical reconstruction, so it's a world where superstitions are real. In the 17th century people saw the world in a very different way from how we see it today. They believed in different things but all these things were **REAL** to their eyes. Today, the scientific vision of the world is dominant and seems to be the only reliable paradigm even though it hasn't always been so.

In the world of 1630 **GOD** works miracles, while the **DEVIL** corrupts souls, nestles in the woods, and has a thousand forms to deceive. **WITCHCRAFT**, traditionally linked to the Devil and the female world, is also capable of performing sorcery and curses. **SCIENCE**, on the other hand, is looked at with suspicion by everyone except for very few scholars and educated people.

When someone gets sick, in fact, the only remedy everyone agrees on is **PRAYER**, not a medical concoction. Medicine is feared as a subversion of the natural order designed by God. **ATHEISM** doesn't exist, and everyone, no one excluded, believes in God.

In 1630 these aspects that we now consider as superstitions are perfectly real and operate in mysterious ways. Everything can really happen, even what seems impossible to our "modern" eyes.



The 17th Century is NOT a Politically Correct Century

1630 also explores some of the negative aspects of 17th century society. We believe that this may help develop a critical point of view on sensitive issues such as racial discrimination, social inequality, and gender roles that are still fundamental to our culture and society today.

Take the Jews, for example. Since the Middle Ages, anti-Semitism in Europe was mainly due to religious motives. Jews were then seen as wicked creatures, were treated unfairly, and judged inferior simply because they were not Christians and because they were thought collectively responsible for killing Jesus. In society Jews were forced to grin and bear it not to be imprisoned or worse, as Shakespeare shows in *The Merchant of Venice*.

The poor and in general the people of low social ranks were treated with contempt and condescension by those who were considered socially “superior”. At that time social status was much more pronounced than it is nowadays; a nobleman or a prelate could never be insulted or even contradicted by a commoner otherwise he or she would end up in fetters or in prison.

In 1630 the relationship between men and women is one of the most important aspects of the overall game design. And for that it's treated with great care and consideration. The role of women in the 17th century is tendentially subordinate to that of men, especially in the public sphere. Behind closed doors women could contradict their husbands or brothers, but couldn't do it in front of other people.

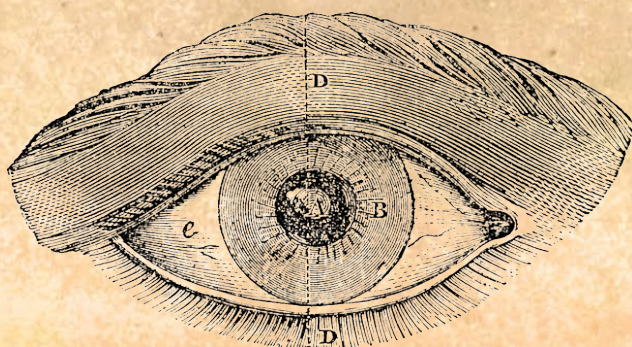
As a matter of fact, women were forced to resort to clever and elaborate methods not to be humiliated and abused by men. Acting secretly was for them the only viable strategy to deal with male brutality and control, and to achieve a tiny trace of freedom and independence without endangering their own lives. For this reason, the women of Ravenwood often meet under the pretense of communal tasks to share anxiety and problems related to their condition.

In order to create a more playable game design, the women in 1630 work as their fellow men, a thing which was highly unusual at the time. Yet, for all the remaining domains of life, we have decided to keep the patriarchal structure of the family unvaried. So, in public, women must always pay attention to maintain a modest and decent demeanour to safeguard the honour of their family, even if they can behave slightly differently among themselves or in their homes.

In 1630 you will have a first-hand experience of all these aspects and your character will be called upon responding in the most realistic way possible. Occasionally you will have to play out behaviours and attitudes that seem politically incorrect or hostile towards other players, but they are an essential part of the game and one of the main goals of our larp.

We believe, in fact, that personal experience of prejudice and discrimination, even if only through playing, may help us develop a more clear understanding of such detestable approaches towards life and diversity, and, most importantly, it may open up spaces of debate and reflection on pressing issues such as racism, sexism, and abuse which still exist in our modern and liberal society.

It goes without saying that the Chaos League as a collective in no way validates or encourages such behaviours; on the contrary, we strive to promote social inclusion, equality and multiculturalism through a series of initiatives called Larp For Change which support projects of socio-economic growth and development in the poorest areas of the globe.



GAME EXPERIENCE

The game experience of 1630 is based on three main themes: *realistic and immersive experience of village life, relations, action and intrigue.*



Immersive Experience of Village Life

During the game you will live the daily life of a villager of Ravenwood and you will have to carry out your character's tasks and obligations with great care and consideration.

You will have to go to Mass, to dedicate time and effort to carrying out the profession you have chosen, you will have to do your housework, earn your living (food, clothes and everything else you may need) and make ends meet in order to survive these hard times. In Ravenwood all must do their part for the village to survive and prosper.

So your trade is your profession, your active contribution to the life of the community. Then, after a hard day's work, you can pop into the Inn for glass of wine or have a chat with some friends, you can spend the evening with you family in front of the fireplace and play cards. During the day, you will enjoy the celebrations for the feast of St. Christopher: the Church Ceremonies, the Log Race, the Banquet. Village daily life will set the rhythms of play: work, religious functions, preparation for the celebrations for St. Christopher and so forth: together they will create a great collective performance.



Relations

1630 is a game in which relations between people are paramount. Your character will be tied to different social networks that constantly cross and overlap, prompting you to play and connect with the other characters. Family, Club, and Society will provide you with the impulse and motivation to intertwine your character's personal story to that of others.

And this will affect you deeply: there will always be difficult choices and decisions to take. You will have to balance your personal relationship with your family members, with your friends and enemies, and with the people in your community in general. Conflict and rivalry among families and societies will animate and inspire the game by adding the emotional depth of interpersonal relations to the daily routine.



Action and Intrigue

In 1630 there are different plotlines which give players a whole range of game experiences. Without spoiling the surprise, it's good for you to know that our larp will be full of intrigues, subterfuges, deceptions, mysteries, and artifices; enigmas to solve, choices to take and dangerous missions to accomplish.

Some quests will be more physical, while most will be based on role, interpretation, interaction and personal choices. You will always be able to choose what to do: throw yourself into audacious quests or dedicate your time and effort to interpretation, building relationships and the village life.



THE 17TH CENTURY

The 17th century is undoubtedly a period of sharp contrasts. On one side stand unrivalled discoveries which mark the beginning of the scientific revolution, on the other are enormous difficulties and profound uncertainties: famines, religious controversies, conflicts and the terrible pestilence shake society to the core.

Suspended between modernity and tradition, between the shadows and the light, obscurantism and new ambitions, the 17th century is the century of transformation which marks a step towards what we are today. It is a time of complexity and change: a perfect scenery for a Southern Way/New Italian larp style game.



A Time of Regression

The 17th century is so characterised by a profound social and cultural crisis especially in Italy and in the south of Europe that we can easily describe it as a time of regression. The reasons for such a downfall are to be ascribed primarily to the religious repression stemmed from the Counter-Reformation and the Council of Trent.

While the north of Europe is relatively favoured by a time of cultural progress and religious tolerance, Italy is dominated by the restrictive control of the Inquisition: this makes all sorts of scientific and progressive thinking to be severely obstructed by the Catholic Church.

To make things worse, the living conditions of the less well off are very bad and infant mortality is alarmingly high.



The Plague

Throughout the 17th century Europe is repeatedly haunted by the threat of plague. During the second half of the century the most violent outbreaks especially concern Italy (1629-31) and the Mediterranean area, killing more than 40% of the population. Political and socioeconomic conditions of the time do not allow for a rapid and timely intervention in order to restrict the areas of contagion. On the contrary, in most cases they contribute greatly to the spread of the epidemic (the later outbreaks in

Italy are often associated with troop movements during the Thirty Years' War).

As regards the bubonic plague, usually from one to seven days after exposure symptoms begin to emerge and they include fever, weakness, and headache. The characteristic buboes associated with the disease are due to the swelling of the lymph nodes: the bacterium *Yersinia Pestis* spreads through the lymphatic vessels where it stimulates haemorrhagic inflammation causing the lymph nodes to expand.

Once contracted, the disease progresses very fast: most people die within a few days.

For the first time, towns and villages begin to take preventive measures to avoid contagion: the houses of the infected are isolated and their belongings – furnishings, mattresses and clothes – are burnt. Soon, lazarettos begin to be established: inside the sick are quarantined and taken care of until they die.

The great majority of people look at the plague as a divine punishment for the sins of men. God in person decides upon life and death and in these times of despair faith is the only refuge where people could find solace. As a consequence, renewed religious fervour and fanaticism bloom in the wake of the bubonic plague epidemic.

In some cases, the powerless European populations often address their anger and frustration to those who are regarded as “the true responsible” for the spread of the disease and so target various minority groups such as Jews, witches, foreigners, beggars, pilgrims and so forth. The hunt for the guilty often results in a real collective hysteria: lynching, beating, stoning are often the cruel and inhumane ways in which people give vent to their fear and anger.



The Inquisition

With the sharpening of debate and of conflict between the Protestant Reformation and the Catholic Counter-Reformation, two worlds begin to collide: the more open and forward-thinking countries of Northern Europe promote and support the evolution of sciences, while in the reactionary Catholic South religious tolerance is absent and all forms of progressive scientific thinking are strongly opposed.

As a reaction to the schism, the Church of Rome puts into action repressive measures in the attempt to restore control. The institution of the Inquisition is appointed to eradicate heresy and all forms of pagan cults (especially Witchcraft), to fight against the degrading of social and moral values, and to prevent the circulation of the newest scientific disciplines (above all Medicine and Astronomy).

It is during this period that the Index of Forbidden Books is published: it comprises a list of volumes whose reading and dissemination is punished with death.

The story of Galileo Galilei is a classic example. The inventor of the modern scientific method is in fact forced to recant his theories on heliocentrism to avoid death during the trial established by the Inquisition.

CHAPTER 2

Design

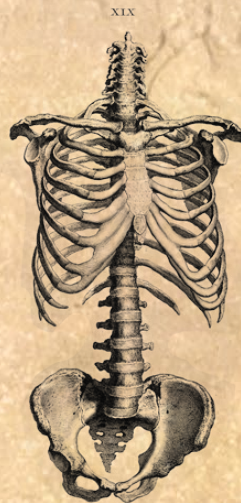


THE CHARACTERS

In 1630 there aren't 'minor characters', each character is unique and plays an important and specific role in the community. Characters are defined by four main aspects: the Family, Trade, Society and Club they belong to. Each of these domains influence the characters' background, inner questions and ways of being. When the registration phase is completed, you will be sent a form where you can express your preferences for the character you wish to play.

Your character sheet for 1630 will include the following information:

1. ***Character Name***
2. ***Family***
3. ***Background***
4. ***Relations***
5. ***Trade***
6. ***Society***
7. ***Club***



I

CHARACTER NAME

All the members of a family have forenames starting with the initial letter of their family name. So, for instance, all the Axtons have forenames beginning with “A”.

II

THE FAMILIES

The extended family is the underlying element of Ravenwood. The village has always been divided into five families, each with its manners, traits and trades. Traditionally in Ravenwood marriages may be performed only in the family of origin (only people with the same family name) and upon permission of the Head of the Family.

The Social Status

The initial letter of the family name indicates the status of the family in the village. The higher in the alphabet, the higher in the hierarchy: so, for example, the Beckwiths are better known and respected than the Elfers, yet less affluent and illustrious than the Axtons.

The Heads of the Family

Each family is represented by the older male adult who is the head of the family. For this role, he has special duties and responsibilities: for example he is called to decide upon the convenience of marriages within the family, he runs the household finances and has the final word on family arguments and disputes. He is a highly respectable figure who must always keep the composure befitting his status. For the other family members, to contradict their head of the family in public is a sign of very bad manners punishable by the Mayor with a fine or, in the worst cases, with the slanderer put in fetters.

The Family Trait

Each family has a distinguishing quality of character, the trait, that is shared by all its members.



House Axton

House Axtons is the richest and most influential family of Ravenwood. In accordance with a Pontifical Mandate, they have been ruling over the town with skillful hands for years. Naturally conservative, the Axtons oppose change at all costs. They believe that for the good of the village things must stay as they are. These are harsh times and sudden political instability might be disastrous.

FAMILY TRAIT

Conservative [do whatever you can to preserve the status quo]



House Beckwith

House Beckwith is the most religious family of Ravenwood, and one of the most educated as well. Traditionally traders and prelates, the Beckwiths are fervent Christians who lead an obstinately modest and law-abiding life.

FAMILY TRAIT

Cautious [do not face dangers head on]



House Copeland

The Copelands are great craftsmen and shopkeepers, and the owners of the village inn as well. They are known to be reliable people who keep their promises. In town everyone knows that once they make a commitment, they will do whatever it takes to honour it.

FAMILY TRAIT

Trustworthy [when you make a commitment, you do whatever it takes to honour it]



House Digby

The Digbys are the biggest but also the poorest family in Ravenwood. They take care of all the hardest and most humble works, and for this reason they may be considered to be the true backbone of the community. Renowned for their resentful character, the Digbys take vengeance for all the grave insults they suffer.

FAMILY TRAIT

Resentful [you repay all the insults you suffer]



House Elfer

The Elfers are the only Jewish family of Ravenwood. They carry out ordinary tasks and petty trades usually related to the handling of money. They are not as poor as the Digbys, yet they are almost regarded as a foreign body to the village. Rumour has it that for them everything has a price and that they always find a good opportunity to make a profit. They manage trades and transactions with the outside.

FAMILY TRAIT

Greedy [make a profit out of every good opportunity]



III

BACKGROUND

Your character's background consists of all the events, experiences and features that make it the way it is. It also describes your character's way of being, ambitions and motivations so when the game begins you will be able to play a credible and round role.

IV

RELATIONS

You will find indications, anecdotes and tips about the relationships going on between you and the other characters in the village. You might hate or love someone special, you might have a close relationship with some member of another family or you might have made a solemn plea to your brother or sister. The prompts we have dispersed in the characters' backgrounds will help you go deeper into your role and into your interaction with the other players.

V

THE TRADES

In Ravenwood all must do their part for the village to survive and prosper. Your trade is your profession, your active contribution to the life of the community. Your trade also establishes your daily routines and way of living. If you find an asterisk beside the name of your trade, it means you can read.

FIND HERE THE COMPLETE LIST OF TRADES

We have prepared tutorials for all trades so that you may learn and practice the basic principles of your profession.

VI

THE SOCIETIES

The societies represent groups of people who share a common philosophy or vision of the world. When you are a member of a society, you are extremely committed to its cause and challenge its detractors. Being member of a Society comes with specific Tasks. Society tasks are known only to its members.



The Servant of Christ

The Servants of Christ are a lay confraternity characterised by a profound religious faith. The Servants believe that penitence, self-abnegation and the rejection of earthly vanities are the means to atone and to obtain the cessation of divine punishment.

The most fervent members of the movement practice bodily mortification and self-flagellation to ward off wars, famines, and plagues. Their adherence to the principles of Catholicism borders on fanaticism, their intransigence towards the degrading of social and moral codes creates discomfort towards the more liberal society of searchers.

The Servants of Christ's vision is strongly based on the mystical doctrine of Joachim of Fiore who prophesied the coming of the Apocalypse and the final struggle against the Antichrist. They are also convinced that most of the clergy is now corrupted and too interested in earthly matters. However they are not in open contrast with the Catholic Church so they can neither be accused of heresy nor officially condemned.



The Searchers

The Searchers are individuals intrigued by the emergence of modern science. They seek to understand the world around them through a proto-scientific analysis. They are fascinated by man's ability to fathom God's project in nature and try to decipher the mysteries of knowledge through an ongoing avid research.

The group formed around the figure of the village physician who is also the founder and main supporter of the Society. The Searchers work with the physician as assistants and nurses, helping him in his research duties and during the medical examinations of their fellow inhabitants. They are specifically in charge of the prevention of illnesses and of the monitoring of personal hygiene.



The Moderates

Of all the various societies in Ravenwood, the moderates are those who figuratively stand in the middle. Always aware of the power forces in the village, the Moderates try to keep harmony and order among the various groups (Servants of Christ, Searchers and Jews) through compromise and agreements.

As silent observers, they listen to disputes and debates without taking sides: they represent the impartial and unbiased voice of the village. Depending on the cases, they may join another society when sharing their point of view on a specific public matter. Once the choice is made, they become members to all effects and purposes of that society and take on themselves rights and obligations.



The Jews

The Elfers have lived in Ravenwood for several generations and are quite integrated in the community, even if some villagers are still distrustful because of their different creed. They have kept all the traditions of their religion and their customs about food and festivities. In other parts of Italy, Jews are restricted into ghettos, notwithstanding the favours of the Signorias who use them as creditors for financial enterprises.

The Jews of Ravenwood live a similar situation: they loan money, manage the pawn shop and run the trades with the outside. Because they know the laws of the market and know how to handle money, they are considered the backbone of Ravenwood, even if with a certain amount of circumspection.



VII

THE CLUBS

In Ravenwood, people with common leisure interests meet in Clubs. Clubs basically represent hobbies and activities that entertain Ravenwood villagers after a hard day's work. Being member of a club comes with specific tasks.



Club of the Crafty Artisans

Share ideas and practices with your fellow
artisans
Strike deals and do business and trades

Club of the Boules Players

Organise a match
Teach someone the game



Club of the Laborious Women

Share recipes and tips
Criticise your husband
Invite your friends home
Embroider and mend
Gossip about your fellow villagers

Club of the Chess Players

Organise a match
Teach someone the game



Club of the Wise Traders

Share ideas and practices with your fellow traders
Strike deals and do business and trades

Club of the Village Keepers

Carry out the Mayor's orders
Act as a peacemaker



Club of the Enthusiastic Frequenters of the Inn

Pop into the Inn from time to time
Chat with the other guests at the Inn

Club of the Gifted Artists

Rehearse a tune or a play
Perform for the audience



Club of the Notable Dignitaries

Organise a dinner
Discuss the problems of the village with your fellow dignitaries

THE TASKS

The tasks are indeed assignments and duties linked to your profession that must be carried out daily. They also help you define your character's personality and goals.

As a matter of fact, the Tasks assigned to each profession serve only as model: so don't limit yourself to the actions suggested, but rather use them as stimulus and inspiration for better understanding and defining your character's role in the village.

Some examples of Tasks:

Sharpen at least a few blades a day;

Make small repairs;

Take a tour of the village to see if anyone needs your services;

Find a good marriage prospect and ask for his or her hand.



THE FEAST OF SAINT CHRISTOPHER

The feast of Ravenwood Patron Saint Christopher (which starts on the first day of play and ends on the last) is the most important and most awaited for time of the year in the village. The celebrations contemplate a series of rituals whose origin is embedded in the village ancient history.

All, including the Elfers, concentrate their energy for the celebrations to take place in the best way. In this period of fear and uncertainty, the hopes of the villagers of Ravenwood are all pointed towards the final ritual, the Revelation, which, it is believed, decides upon the fate of the following year. Legend says that the last time Ravenwood had an inauspicious Revelation, the Black Death of the 14th century seeped through the thick village walls.



The Feast

Traditionally, the feast of the Patron Saint lasts three days during which various practices related to the worship of St. Christopher take place: the Exposition of the Cross and the Announcement of Vows, the Passion (which consists of The Gathering of Flowers and the Gathering of Stones), the Log Race, the Banquet, the Procession and the Revelation.



The Exposition of the Cross and the Announcement of vows

On the first evening of celebrations, the faithful gather in the church at the sound of bells. The parish priest fetches the statue of the Saint from the sacristy (where it has remained all year covered by a canvas) and brings it in front of the altar; he uncovers and blesses it.

The Mass follows. After the religious function, the youngest members of each family announce publicly their House's vows in honour of the Saint. The vow is decided in advance by the whole family and lasts throughout the festivity (that is until the end of the three days).



The Passion

Traditionally, during the Passion, the women of Ravenwood are in charge of collecting two symbolic items:

1) THE GATHERING OF FLOWERS

On the first night of celebrations, all the women of Ravenwood leave the village to collect flowers to adorn the logs of the race the following day. Tradition forbids men to go with them and to look at them as the women choose the finest flowers in the meadows and woods around the village walls.

This is the only exception made to the Three Laws because the flowers represent the Miracle of Blossoming of St. Christopher's Rod.

2) THE GATHERING OF STONES

On the second night of celebrations, all the women of Ravenwood leave the village to collect stones which represent the martyrdom of St. Christopher.

The stones must be as big as a fist, and once collected, they must be taken to church and blessed by the parish priest. The following day the head of the family who will perform the Revelation will choose without looking two stones to hold during the ceremony.



The Log race

To represent symbolically the legend of St. Christopher, the men of Ravenwood compete in a Log Race every year. The race takes place as follows:

1) THE ELECTION

On the first day of celebrations, just before sunset, the heads of the families choose the log of a tree to be carried on their family members' shoulders during the race. The logs are previously selected and cut down by the woodcutters. To secure what they believe to be the best log, the families may bargain for almost anything but money. Favours, objects or promises can be accepted only if they are fulfilled by the end of the feast.

If no agreement is reached, logs will be assigned by drawing lots. Choosing the best log may determine the Log Race winner, so assessments are a delicate phase which may even take hours, even though agreements must be done by midnight of the same day (logs can be touched and tried). Once the log

has been chosen, it may never be changed, nor is it possible to tamper with it in any way since log weight, dimensions and quality of the handle are all decisive factors.

2) THE EVALUATION

Always on the first day of celebrations, right after the Election, one or more dry runs take place, re-creating the same conditions of the actual race of the following day.

This is an important moment to evaluate and understand one's own strategy and that of the adversaries so much so that a good Evaluation is considered an excellent starting point to win the actual race.

3) THE RACE

On the second day of celebrations, the actual Log Race finally takes place. Four men of each family run around the village outer walls for three rounds, carrying the log on their shoulders. At the end of the third round, they enter the village.

The first family to cross the threshold is the winner of the race and its head will have the honour to perform the Revelation. While the runners carry the log on their shoulders, their family members cheer and encourage them. If runners are injured or exhausted, they may be substituted by other male members of their own family, although the race has no breaks.

The Elfers compete in the race like every other family even if they are not allowed to win. In case they should be the first to cross the village threshold, the win will be attributed to the family who placed second. No Elfer head of family is ever allowed to perform the Revelation.

In the run-up to the actual race, it is so customary to make agreements to hinder a common adversary that under the counter arrangements among families are the rule. However, such agreements are not regulated by any law so they can be broken and made anew at any time.



The Banquet

After the Log Race, a banquet is held to which all the inhabitants of Ravenwood are invited. Traditionally, each family prepares food to offer to the other guests, and the Axtons usually make a gift of some culinary delicacies to all the fellow diners.

Before being put on the table, plates are blessed by the parish priest who also says a prayer before they begin to eat. All eat at the same table, except for the Elfers who are allowed to the banquet but at a separate table.

The families sit at the table following the order of arrival of the race, the winners sit at the head of the table. The banquet represents the most jovial moment of the celebrations. Wine and music are allowed although excesses must be avoided.



The procession ant the revelation

In the early afternoon of the last day of celebrations, all the faithful gather for the Procession and the martyrdom of the Revelation. The head of the victorious family is called to the greatest honor: he will interpret the Saint in the most important ceremony of the Feast.

The procession moves along the village outer walls (retracing the path of the Log Race): at the head of the long line walks the Parish Priest holding St. Christopher's cross in his hands. The faithful follow reciting the Saint's prayer. At the end of the procession, a bonfire is ignited with the cut down pieces of the victorious log.

When the bonfire is aflame, the head of the victorious family takes in his hands two stones from those collected by the women the night before and places himself open-armed (as Jesus Christ on the crucifix) in front of the bonfire. If he can stand in the position until the flames in the brazier turn into white smoke, the verdict of the Saint, the so-called Revelation, will be a year of prosperity and happiness for the village. Otherwise, an inauspicious Revelation will signify a year of great misfortune.

THE ECONOMIC SYSTEM OF THE RAVENWOOD

The economic system of Ravenwood depends on the state of emergency determined by the crisis and isolation caused by the plague. In this system, some workers are employed and paid by the Treasury, others are free traders or self-employed, a third group is employed and paid by private enterprises.

The public figures who supervise the economic system are: the Mayor (in charge of management and legislation), the Notary (in charge of inspection and control), and the Scribe (in charge of registration, verification and control).

You may find all the information concerning the economic system of Ravenwood on the Economy Decree where salaries, incomes and cost of food are stated.

A DAY IN RAVENWOOD

First Day

15.00	Mayor's Speech for the Inauguration of St. Christopher's Feast
15.30 - 17.30	Trades and Tasks
18.00	Evening Mass, Exposition of the Cross and Announcement of Vows
18.45	Election and Evaluation
20.00	Supper time (in the family or at the Inn)
21.00	Gathering of Flowers
21.00	Society and Club Meetings

Second Day

9:00	Morning Mass
10:00	Trades and Tasks
13:00	Lunch Break and Rest
15.00 - 17.30	Trades and Tasks
18.00	Evening Mass
18.45	Log Race
20.00	Banquet
21.00	Gathering of Stones
22.00	Society and Club Meetings

Third Day

9:00	Morning Mass
10:00	Trades and Tasks
13:00	Lunch Break and Rest
15:00	St. Christopher's Procession
16:00	Revelation

CHAPTER 3

Practicals



SOUTHERN WAY NEW ITALIAN LARP

1630 is a live action role-playing game in the Southern way / New Italian Larp style. It's based on the principles of our Manifesto that was published a year ago and that you can read [HERE](#). Basically, it means that we have some principles in mind:

1630 is a great shared narrative, a story created by playing TOGETHER, NOT AGAINST. When there's competition and antagonism, it's always between characters and NOT between players. So tune in to other players and have fun with them.

1630 is a game where each character can make a difference and be a vibrant part of the whole narrative. It doesn't matter if you're the Mayor or a peasant, the story revolves around you anyway. There aren't minor roles, all characters are just equal. Just stick to yours and the rest will follow.

1630 is based on historical facts that actually occurred in the 17th century, yet it's NOT a historical reconstruction, so you don't need to study history. All you need to know is in this guide.

1630 is a 360° illusion inspired by the great atmospheres of the epics and by the heroic deeds of peoples throughout history. It tells the story of a secluded village which becomes the crossroads of destinies. You will have to make some painful and decisive choices when all your sins will find you out.

1630 is about us: what we were, what we are and what we will be.



THE ONE AND ONLY RULE

The Chaos League does not use complex rules. In fact, we have one and only rule that you always must respect during the game:

use your Common Sense.

Common sense is your compass, follow it. Act wisely.

Never put yourself or others in unpleasant or dangerous situations. The location will be full of REAL objects, DO NOT use them improperly. DO NOT jump off a cliff or into a ravine, DO NOT smash the table. In short: do nothing that might be really dangerous. Use your judgment.

1630 is not a larp based on combat or physical violence, in fact these two aspects are completely absent. In addition, the game is supervised by masters so if you need a break you will be escorted to our safe room. There you can find food, drinks, someone to talk to and, if you like, a hug.



SAFWORD

The game design of 1 6 3 0 allows you to opt-out at any time from situations you deem unsafe. Therefore, you needn't use safewords or complex rules, just simply get out of the scene.

Phrases like "I'm done here, I'm leaving" or "I'm not interested" will be more than fine to get out of a potentially unpleasant situation.

Keep in mind, though, that all the game is designed to be as inclusive and respectful as possible.

PRE-GAME WORKSHOP

Before the beginning of the game, workshops will be held to help you improve your knowledge of the game environment and style.

You will also have plenty of time to get to know the other players, especially those that are part of your family, club and society.



SOME BASIC RULES TO FOLLOW FOR PLAYING CREDIBLY IN THE 17TH CENTURY

1- *Always respect your Head of the Family.*

He works for the good of the family. So if you find something is wrong or you simply don't agree with his choices, first try to establish a dialogue and then follow your heart but NEVER be disrespectful, especially in public.

2- *Be courteous and have good manners when speaking to people, even with your closest relatives.*

3- *Don't swear or utter profanities.*

The swear words we use nowadays are anachronisms, so don't use them, especially blasphemies which at the time weren't tolerated at all, on the contrary they were punished severely also by death.

4- *Cover piercings and tattoos.*

They're obviously anachronistic and also quite annoying, so cover them for fun's sake.

5- *Respect and honour your Religion.*

In the 17th century religion dominated every aspect of society. Atheism was not common let alone openly proclaimed since it could be punished by death. The Jews were always regarded with suspicion, prejudice and contempt.

In order to play a good Christian of the time, confess yourself to the parish priest at least once during the game and remember to always take part to the daily Mass. Be God-fearing because in a time of great fear and uncertainty, the only true refuge is God.

Even cultured people, scholars and "scientists" firmly believed in God, at the time. Galileo Galilei himself was a fervent Catholic. So have faith in God and take part to all religious ceremonies. Never act sceptically.

6- Believe in what people believed at the time.

Rationalism WASN'T a better vision of the world, it wasn't even considered an official vision. Today, the scientific view of the world is dominant and seems to be the only reliable paradigm even though it has not always been so. What we ask of you is to suspend your judgment and put yourself in the shoes of a 17th century man or woman. So believe that God works MIRACLES and that superstitions are perfectly REAL. Everything can really happen, even what seems impossible to our "modern" eyes. In a few words: don't consider science as more effective than religion or any other world visions.

7- Respect your family and your trade.

Your family is your heritage, your job tells who you are and how you earn your living. If you don't do your job you will soon find yourself having to beg for food and everything else you need. You will become a burden to society. Notables won't allow it because everyone in the village has to do their part to survive and prosper. Or they can have serious consequences.

8- Respect family status.

In the village, families have a status based on the alphabetical order of their House names. So, the Axtons, who are highest in the hierarchy, deserve much more deferential treatment than the Elfers, who, apart from being Jews, are also at the bottom of the social ladder. If you disrespect a member of a higher family, you might end up in trouble because you are going against God's will. It was, in fact, God who decided to give to that family more than others, they're neither exploiters nor usurpers since social hierarchy is something right and accepted by everyone. Even if someone can sometimes take advantage of it.

9- The laws of the village are above everything else.

In order to survive, the villagers of Ravenwood have established three basic laws and ALL are obliged to respect them. Everyone's life depends on it. So remember: 1) Never leave the village 2) Protect the village and its secret 3) Entrust your soul to God.

10- Smoke the pipe.

Tobacco is an addiction and we understand that doing without for three days can be difficult. On the other hand, cigarettes (even hand rolled ones) didn't exist at the time. So if you want to try smoking the pipe it would be great. We suggest the terracotta type because wooden smoking pipes weren't used yet. You can find terracotta smoking pipes at really low prices (5-10 euros) online. As an alternative, you can buy some small Toscanelli cigars.

11- Don't use flashy spectacles.

Sight-glasses were very rare and expensive at the time. If you can not use contact lenses or if you have the chance, we would ask you to use simple metal frame spectacles.

COSTUMES

If you don't have enough time to find a costume for 1630, you can rent one from our costume shop. It's tailor-made and coloured according to the family your character belongs to. Just send us your body size and measurement and our exceptional costume designer will think about everything.

If you prefer to make your own costume, you will find some useful tips on our website 1630larp.com. Each family is characterised by a predominant signature colour which must be repeated in at least one item of clothing like shirt, trousers, skirt, or waistcoat.

The colour should be well visible, but pay attention not to dress yourself in the colour from head to toe! Colours will help anyone understand and distinguish characters and the family they belong to much more rapidly, thus facilitating and improving the whole game experience.



WHAT TO BRING (COMPULSORY)

- + A single (or double for couples) white and unprinted cotton pillowcase and sheets set and a pillow. For the sensitive to the cold: an indoor blanket.
- + Comfortable and resistant shoes (historically accurate).
- + A heavy garment to wear in case of cold weather such as woolen sweater, shawl, cloak, or warm underwear to wear under your costume (historically accurate).
- + A sandwich or anything else to eat for lunch before the game starts.
- + A small jute or cotton bag to hold small off-game objects (toothbrush, toothpaste, pills or other meds, contact lenses, etc...).
- + FOR MEN who rent the costume: a pair of knee-length white dress socks (avoid sports and athletic performance socks).
- + FOR WOMEN a handkerchief or a bonnet to cover the head (historically accurate).
- + Luggage must be in-game, i.e. it is not allowed to bring off-game backpacks and suitcases in the locations of play. A simple jute bag or a sackcloth will be just fine.



WHAT TO BRING (OPTIONAL)

If you want to personalise and enrich your workshop, your atelier, your costume (remember that it only includes a shirt and a pair of trousers or a skirt), your trade, or your home to make them unique, you're welcome to bring with you all the items you deem appropriate (anyway we will provide you with the essential tools to allow you to carry out your duties).

DON'T BRING

In order to avoid a lack of balance in the "village system" and to be historically accurate, we ask everybody to refrain from taking in:

- + Any food (apart from the sandwich above mentioned)
- + Any alcoholic drinks
- + Any objects or jewelry that is not consistent with the social status of your character.



MEETING INFO

(INTERNATIONAL RUN)

When, what time and where is the meeting point? At 10 a.m. on May, 4th 2018 in Piazza Carlo Marx, Tavernelle (PG). Please be punctual so to respect the other players and allow the game to start on time.

+ THOSE who have rented their costume will receive it on site;

+ DON'T show up already dressed up;

The game ends on the afternoon of May, 6th.

The event will be followed by a mind-blowing end-of-live dinner, soon you will be asked if you intend to take part so to arrange things at best..

[GOOGLE MAP](#)





1630larp.com

chaosleague.org