

# Drachenfest<sup>U.S.</sup>



Play Guide v2.0

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# WHAT ALL IS IN HERE, ANYWAY?

This document is designed to teach you how to play, not just to the letter of the rules, but to the spirit of them too.

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## BASED ON

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## SO... IT'S A FESTIVAL?

DrachenFest is a potluck event where everyone brings their best; showing off their costumes, roleplay, and fighting skills. During the festival, everyone pretends they're at war, but it's really about making stories and having fun together. It's also a larp, which is an acronym that stands for Live Action RolePlay. 'Larpers' become a character, including looks and behavior, and play or improvise cool scenarios. Basically, it's just 'let's pretend.' Something you've almost certainly done before as kids, and if it's been a while, it'll come back to you, we promise.





## **IT'S A GAME...**

DrachenFest is a Character vs Character (CvC) event with a competition at its core. The only way that works is if everyone plays by the same rules. Visibly and dramatically reacting to hits isn't just good manners - it's good sportsmanship! Loss shouldn't just be expected, but embraced. If everyone shrugs off hits, fudges their skills, and prioritizes winning over playing, then a fight can get aggressive, never conclude, and result in bad feelings all around.



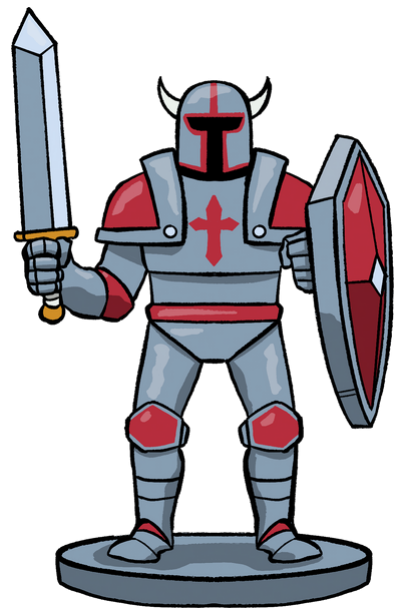
## **IT'S ALSO A STORY!**

The DrachenFest is a contest between primordial Dragons that send out a call to arms that reaches countless worlds. You play a character that feels this call— and champions whichever Dragon's aspects match their philosophy, religion, or lifestyle. They go on a mundane journey that mysteriously culminates in their arrival in the Dragon World, ready to compete in the DrachenFest.



# THE DRAGONS & THEIR ASPECTS

Each Dragon has positives and negatives and is a part of the eternal cycle of the Dragon World; A metaphysical concept detailing the beginning and end of both mortal life and the cosmos. The characters below are just examples. Any type of character can be called by any dragon! Members of the Bazaar are also called by the dragons, but do not champion a specific one.



## SILVER DRAGON

- Creation & the beginning of the Eternal Cycle
- Chivalry & mercy
- Pride & decadence



## GREEN DRAGON

- Keeper of the Eternal Cycle
- The Hunt
- Merciless survival of the fittest



## RED DRAGON

- Action & the driver of the Eternal Cycle
- Valor & honor
- Battle & bloodthirst



## SHADOW DRAGON

- The End Of All Things (death, destruction & the end of the Eternal Cycle)
- Cunning & subterfuge
- Thirst for power



## BLUE DRAGON

- Freedom
- Discovery
- Self-determination at any and all costs
- Greed

## **ARE THERE RULES?**

Yeah, but we don't want to talk about them here. You should definitely give the rulebook a look before you attend though. They let us play through things that we can't do safely: things like bleeding to death, or having your heart exploded by a magical spell.

You can also ignore them entirely under the right circumstances; specifically when it lets you reward an opponent or make the scene cooler for others.

## **OK... SAY MORE?**

Ugh, fine. Opportunities for ignoring the rules will arise in big, showy fights, or with powerful magic spells. Ie: "That was such a good move, it looked like it should kill me... so even though I have two hit points left, I'm gonna fall down."

This "reward your enemy" attitude is also a big part of magic. If someone casts a spell in a really cool way, reward them by letting their spell have a big effect - maybe that awesome Fear spell terrified you so badly that it's permanent and you're afraid of that guy in the wizard's hat forevermore!

## **IS THAT IT?**

If you insist on hearing some rules outside of the rulebook, here are the two big ones that you absolutely must follow, no matter what.

### **ALWAYS REACT...**

- When something happens to you, accept it and show a reaction which you feel is appropriate.

### **ACCEPT REACTIONS...**

- When you do something to another player, accept their reaction and keep playing.

## **BECOME SOMEONE ELSE**

You'll be reacting as a character that you make up and become for the period of the DrachenFest. You can be anything you like that fits into a high fantasy aesthetic. That covers everything from Lord of the Rings and Skyrim to Medieval France.

You can even find characters from the Witcher universe, or Xanxia and cultivation stories. The Dragon's call for champions reaches many worlds.

## **JUST ONE THING...**

You can't be native to the Dragon World, and unless you've been to a DrachenFest before, this is your first time taking part in the contest.

Whether your character is from your D&D game, another larp, or a world featured in popular video games- you just need to adapt them for DrachenFest using our 2023 Rulebook! Notably, their potions and magic items stop working once they arrive in this world, and depending on how you costume and characterize yourself, you may also need to make some adaptations to meet our costuming and genre requirements. We expect you to be fully dressed!





## HELP CREATE THE ILLUSION

We want to create the illusion that you've stepped into a medieval fantasy world. The most crucial way that participants contribute to the ambience and illusion of DrachenFest is with their costuming and kit.



You don't have to look like you've walked off the set of Lord of the Rings... But at least try not to look like you've been thrown off of it.

...JAMIE SNETSINGER, PLOT COORDINATOR

## **COSTUMING REQUIREMENTS?**

We have a few costuming rules we take pretty seriously.

- No existing characters from media or costume recreations.
- Modern clothes (t-shirts, jeans, zippers, sneakers, etc) can't be visible!
- Avoid stretchy or synthetic modern fabrics wherever possible.
- No race painting- don't be in poor taste!

## **RACE PAINTING?**

We're not looking for debate, simply put, we don't do that here. Never paint your face or skin the same color as a real world ethnicity. Yes, that includes jet black for Dark Elves.

Don't dress or act in a way that evokes racist stereotypes and caricatures and don't wear stuff that isn't "open source".

Be prepared to take it in stride if you're told a costuming element is tacky or in poor taste.

## **POOR TASTE?**

Let's say you're not super well versed in this stuff- and you're not sure what constitutes appropriation vs "open source". A very simple guideline to follow is to double check if the costuming element or clothing item or jewelry belongs to a group of people that you aren't part of and is currently discriminated against in the country you're larping in. Be doubly careful with stuff that has spiritual or religious meanings and isn't openly shared. If you're still not sure, write to us and ask!



## **DRESS FOR THE JOB!**

A basic costume like a tunic, medieval pants, belt, and some boot covers works just fine. However, your costuming communicates your character concept and how people will perceive and respond to your character. Without finery, no one is going to believe you're the scion of a wealthy house of nobles. When someone needs to be stitched up after a battle, the first person they'll approach is the one with bandages, ointments, and a jar of leeches.

## AT WHAT COST?

Spending a ton of money on costuming, or weeks sewing by hand, is not a prerequisite to play. Just be prepared to adapt your character concept to match what you can plausibly portray. DrachenFest is a collaborative enterprise. Your fellow players, particularly the other players in your camp, may have tips and tricks, or maybe even costume to share. Check out the forums to make connections! Lean on them to bring your concept into alignment with the aesthetic of DrachenFest.





## **HOW ABOUT SET DRESSING?**

Our aspirational goal is for 360 degrees of immersion: When we look around, we want to only see the high-fantasy game world.

We know that's impractical, and not everyone is going to be able to buy medieval spectacles. But we do expect everyone to hide personal belongings or camping gear that will break the illusion we're all trying to create. So... pour your Pepsi bottle into a mug, please.

## **LIVE THE LIFE**

It's a good idea to have your own genre appropriate plates, drinking vessels, and utensils. We recommend wood, cast iron, or plain steel. There are a lot available on Etsy or Medieval Collectibles. Merchants in the bazaar also offer a variety of items every year.

You'll also want to be able to carouse with your camp. Aluminum cans, styrofoam cups, and other modern liquid containment solutions might get you shooed out of the play area. A genre-appropriate drinking bladder, wineskin, or flask is ideal, but you can carry a modern plastic water bottle on you. Just make sure it's appropriately hidden.

## **DISGUISE THY STUFF**

Modern stuff shouldn't be in the play area unless they're appropriately hidden or disguised. Do what you have to do in an emergency, but a ref may ask you to stow it otherwise. Likewise, conceal modern sanitary or cosmetic items when you are making your way to and from the showers or bathrooms.

Generally, only genre-appropriate tents, chairs, tables, and storage containers are permitted in shared play spaces. Sheets and canvas are your best friends here, and the other players in your camp may also have tips and tricks to share. You might even be able to buy things to help from merchants at the event itself!

## **IT'S ALSO HOW YOU ACT.**

Maintaining the illusion isn't just how we look. It's also about how we act.

Avoid OOG (Out of Game) conversations that strongly affect the atmosphere of the game. Avoid modern jokes and cultural references - including insults.

Try calling people stuff like milksop or lout- and never insult a player's physical gender, sexuality, or appearance.

## **SELF MODERATE!**

Always be sensitive to others and take care to ensure everyone is still having out-of-game fun with your antics.

DrachenFest has the 'Oh Mother' call to help players calibrate their experience and signal that they want to opt-out of play.

However, we expect players to be mindful of how their roleplay can affect the fun of others. Be flexible in your choices because everyone goes at their own pace.

## **ENGAGE!**

If you see someone sitting by themselves in the tavern, writing poetry and audibly searching for the right word, don't let that moment die in a vacuum. Consider engaging that person, and play along with what they're presenting. Ask to hear more!

But also, Read the Room... Your ruffian might want to physically corner and intimidate anyone who questions your authority. Don't insist "that's my character would do" if people aren't having fun playing with you.

## **IS THERE A CURRENCY?**

There is! But keep in mind, any DrachenFest coins that come into your possession are yours to keep and take home with you after game.

No one (whether they're staff or a player) can ever make you give your coins away. Even if they've 'robbed' you for other game items or are 'looting' your dead body. If you do give someone a coin, it's theirs now, whether they've swindled you or not!

## **IT EXISTS TO SPEND**

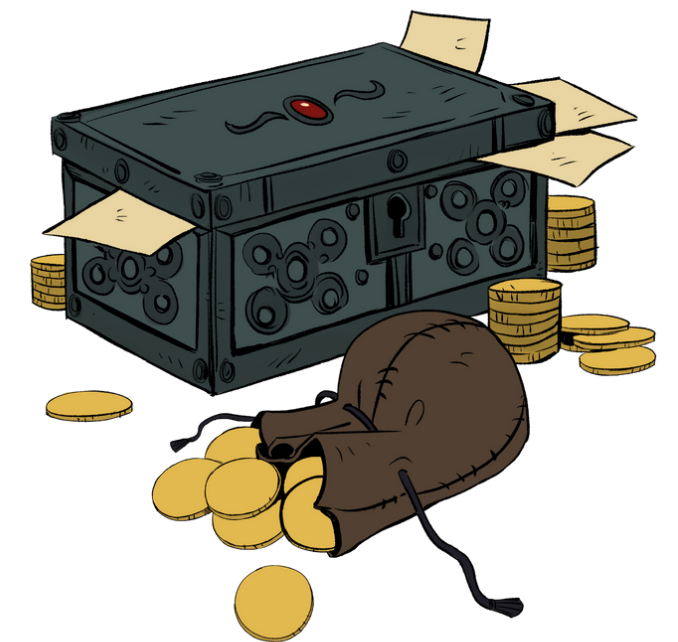
Coins are often used as a 'tipping' mechanism in the game and as a way to express appreciation or gratitude for fun roleplay or added ambience. For example, it's customary to give coins to someone who has found a creative or entertaining way to rob you. Coins can also be spent at the bazaar at 'Enterprises', player run in-game businesses, services and guilds. These are identified by an odd number on their address plaque.

## **MERCHANTS...**

Must be paid with actual money (USD). All merchants and vendors have even numbers on their address plaque.

## **HOW MUCH?**

Everybody gets 3 complimentary copper coins and can purchase more for a small fee. Silver coins are rare, and are worth 10 copper coins. Gold coins, worth 10 silver, are incredibly rare.



## **IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO DO IT ALL.**

Try new things and enjoy them fully by accepting that you might miss out on other stuff, and that's ok. Much of DrachenFest (like class schedules) has to be discovered at the game.



DrachenFest is like a huge potluck. Focus on the dishes or bits you really like, because you definitely can't eat it all.

...SAMMY STONE, DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS



## **SERIOUSLY. TAKE IT EASY.**

Take time to explore the world and enjoy learning how everything works while in-character. Use that knee brace, take breaks, drink water, treat your body well. Try to rest before you hit your limit, and remember- the site doesn't have tree cover everywhere, so plan for sun. Bring sunscreen and or canvas sunshades, and prepare for rain and mud too.



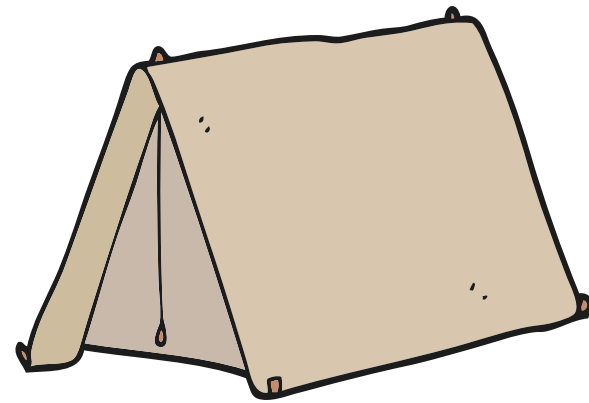
# PACE YOURSELF: THE FOUR PILLARS

DrachenFest has four unique domains of play. You can focus on one or two pillars, doing your favorite activities- or you can bounce between all of them, exploring the DrachenFest and trying out new things. There's no wrong way to play.



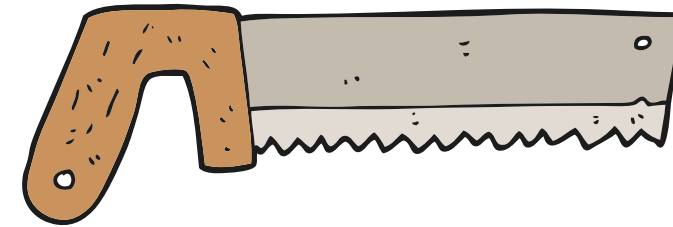
## THE CONTEST

Sieges. Diplomacy. War. The battlefield of soldiers, politics & information warfare. Gearing up for battle, bracing for a siege. Chanting war cries. Intrigue & spying. Defending the gates. Winning Dragon Eggs. Acts of cunning and bravery. Using steel and spell to prove your Dragon deserves to rule.



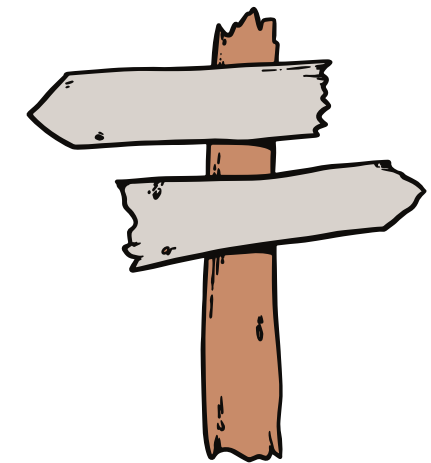
## CAMP LIFE

The camp is YOUR town, to shape as you wish! Camp institutions, internal camp politics, plots with the Avatar. Contributing to a shared environment. Maintaining the herb garden, using the ritual circle. Supporting your teammates. Sharing meals. Parties. Traditions. Chilling out together!



## THE SANDBOX

Making your own goals. Bringing your character to life. When something happens to you, make it into a story by working with Refs and other players to craft personal quests and emergent adventures. The entire game is an opportunity space to build and tell whatever story you want!



## CITY LIFE

The Bazaar. Festivities. Shopping, drinking, merriment. Guilds, secret societies, a colorful tapestry of organizations. Characters who work for a living. High society, but also rats and filth. You can find anything in the Bazaar, so make sure to explore and talk to everyone!

## **BE SAFE.**

Our goal is to mitigate risk and create a safer environment. We do this in collaboration with you as a participant. This requires trust that goes both ways. You trust us to create policies and procedures to encourage a culture of safety, to investigate and respond to safety concerns, to give you the tools to measure and manage your own risk, to communicate your boundaries to other players, and to opt-out of play that feels uncomfortable or unsafe to you.



## **SAFETY INVOLVES EVERYONE**

We trust you to be aware of your own limits, to bring safety issues to your attention, to use the tools that are available to take ownership of your own safety during game, and to opt-out of play that feels uncomfortable or unsafe to you.

However...

If you are caught not respecting others stated boundaries or opt outs, you may be removed from the experience.

## **OPTING OUT**

If you want to excuse yourself from an uncomfortable situation, you are free to go out of game and leave. When someone does this, don't object or follow, just give them space and let them leave. If things get tense with another player, don't escalate. Opt out. If someone says you're swinging too hard, or if you're upset by someone not taking hits, back off and cool down rather than call them out or start an argument. Be nice.

## **CHECKING IN**

Good larp etiquette includes being sensitive. After something intense happens, it's ok to break character to make sure everyone is still having fun- Just make sure the scene's over first!

## **SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

Do not under any circumstances bring or use illegal substances at DrachenFest and always take care while under the influence to opt out more often than not. Consent can't be given while under the influence, so if someone is under the influence, never engage in roleplay that requires it. Taking part in combat while under the influence of alcohol or drugs is strictly prohibited and will result in your immediate expulsion from the event.



## **WHAT ABOUT KIDS?**

We know that it can be sticky to have kids at an event. That's why kids under the age of 16 have to stay near their guardians at all times. They don't have a character sheet and cannot independently interact with any game mechanics.

When supervised, the child can use their guardian's magical or crafting skills (often roleplayed as training). Children cannot carry in-game items or participate in battle, even as a healer.

## **BE MINDFUL**

The spirit of these rules is to avoid circumstances where the child may become a target. -Under no circumstances should kids engage with combat or mechanics at this event. Be mindful of children and try to keep it PG-13 if they're around. If you have a problem with how a kid is behaving, talk to their guardian.

Guardians should proactively keep their kid(s) out of situations where they're not appropriate. Children can watch battles but cannot participate in any way that could make them a target. There are areas in the Bazaar designated as 18+ so that bloody special effects can be used, or seedy characters can act like scumbags - keep children away from there!

## **BE RESPONSIBLE**

If you leave your kid with other trusted adults, be sure that a specific adult has agreed to be responsible while you're gone.

If you're heading to a battle, don't just leave your children in your camp and assume someone is paying attention to them (no matter how independent your kids are)



## **LATE NIGHT PLAY**

From 1am until 9am, Referees aren't on duty, camp sabotage is off limits, and the Limbus is closed. If you die, your body reappears at your camp. When the Limbus opens again, you'll become a spirit and be drawn into it. However, while banners and Dragon Eggs can't be moved after competition hours, it doesn't mean that it's safe out there!

## **WHAT DO YOU MEAN, NOT SAFE?**

Bandits and the like may lurk between camps, as well as those out to hunt them. Late-night cat-and-mouse play can be very exciting! These late night encounters should be aimed at making fun for each other. After all, game coins can't be taken unless the victim decides to give them to you so if you want to be a bandit for monetary gain, make sure to deliver a FUN experience so your targets tip you with coin!



## **BE SENSITIVE, ESPECIALLY AT NIGHT.**

People may be drinking, so don't block people if they're on their way to the showers or bed. If you need a Referee after hours, we have at least one person on duty in the bazaar at all hours (mostly for safety-related things) Finally, don't wake anyone up unless you have express permission to do so.



Like a dragon awakened from its slumber, waking me without consent at a LARP event can unleash a fiery wrath.

....CARISSA DONKER, PRODUCTION OVERSIGN, DE LIASON.

## KEEP IT FUN & EASY!

When you play against other players, things can heat up. But our personal goal should always be to make fun, interesting play for each other. Rivalry should always be tempered by respect for the player and desire to share a fun experience.

In the end, it's especially important to remember that this is just a game. The contest is fictional, it is a form of story. If you win or lose, it doesn't actually mean anything. As players, we shouldn't be overly invested in winning.

## CHECKING IN?

If you're not sure whether someone is upset in real-life or not, it's okay to break character to check-in with them. Always listen for "Oh, Mother!", which indicates an OOG problem. If someone isn't enjoying playing a conflict with you, please de-escalate it or drop it.

Some groups add a lot to the game by playing like "heels"--acting treacherously or dishonorably, provoking big reactions. This makes for exciting and intense gameplay, and can lead to some really fun experiences. Don't get mad at them OOG!

If gameplay makes you feel bad in real life, we call that "bleed". It happens sometimes. Recognizing bleed is a great opportunity to take a break. Tap out, go get some space. Talk through it with a friend if you need to, but try not to escalate anything or cause further damage while affected. You can also talk to a Ref to check if a conflict has gone too far. They can mediate if necessary.

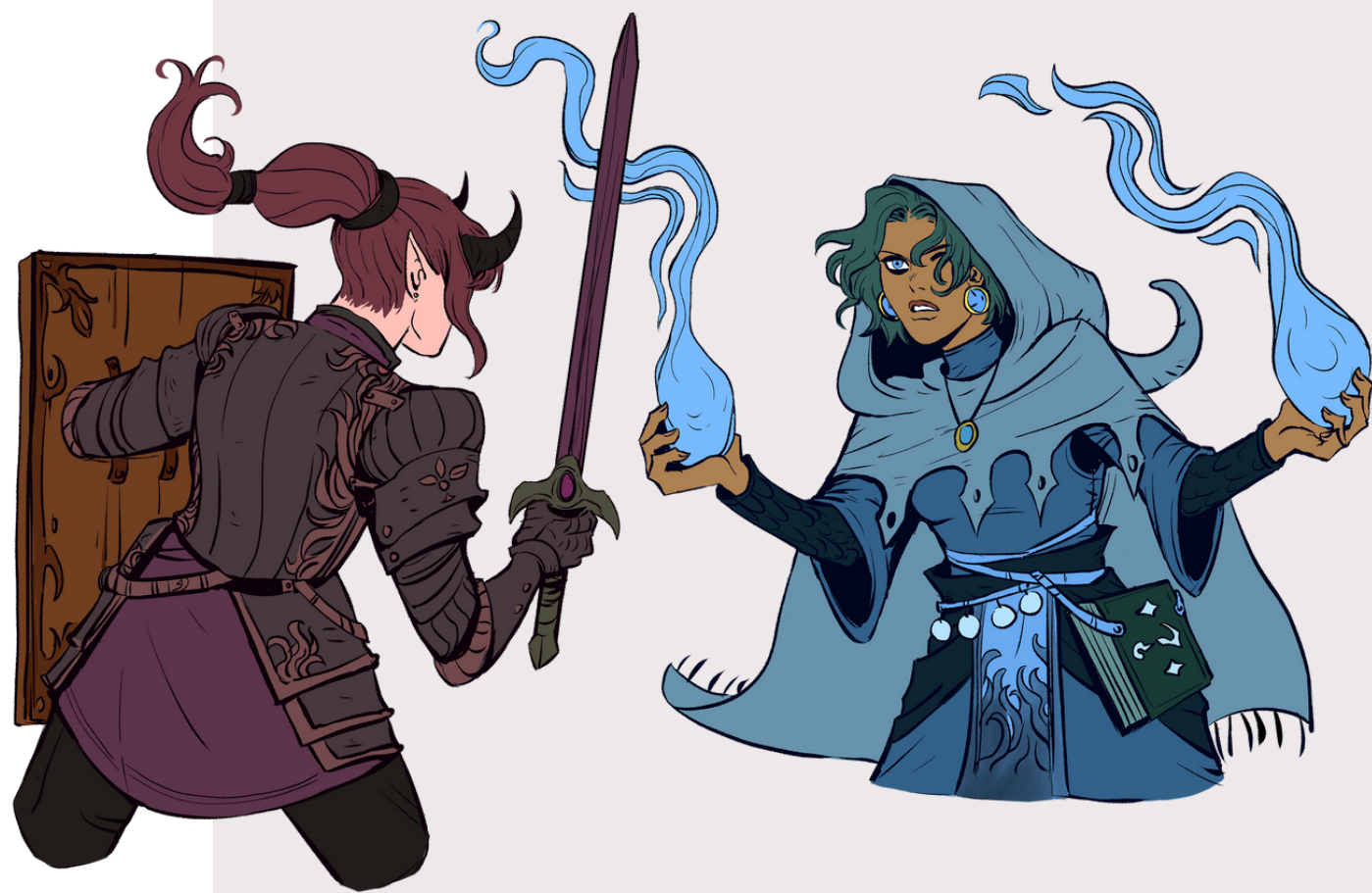




## HOW DO I FIGHT?

While you don't have to participate in the faction vs. faction competition, that conflict is the engine that keeps the game turning and battles occur regularly. They can often be chaotic and crowded. Being in a tightly packed crowd and fighting in close quarters can be intense! With the loss of personal space, it can easily feel that you are no longer in control. This can be uncomfortable and even panic inducing. This is why we have to have safety in mind at all times.





## **YOU CAN OPT OUT AT ANY TIME!**

The battles of DrachenFest are both sport and theater. Simulated aggression is awesome, actual aggression is a problem. When striking another player with a weapon, never use more force than is necessary for them to recognize they've been hit. Remember, you don't have to move slow or sacrifice technique- but you do need to maintain control of your swings while you fight. Repeated instances of unsafe combat will see you barred from participating in battles, or the event entirely.

## WHAT IF I FALL IN BATTLE?

Taking hits and falling creates the “battle vibe” for everyone around you and promotes fair play by validating your opponent.

- Overall fairness depends on the honor system, not Refs. They focus on safety, and won't always catch people not playing by the rules.
- If someone is playing unfairly, your best bet is to disengage and play with others.

## IT DOESN'T STOP AT O

If you fall in battle you are still a part of the “scene”. Healers and injured characters play up the gritty consequences of battle: agony, anguish, vulnerability, nervousness as they become one of the battle's stakes... a foe could execute or rob them. Finishing off an enemy isn't necessary - it's mostly done out of spite, to prove a point, or to add extra sting to a defeat.

If you're killed... Now you get to go to the Limbus! Yaaay! Yes, your character might not return [insert dramatic piano chord], but you're about to have an adventure. We're excited for you. What happens in the Limbus stays in the Limbus—don't spoil it for others!

## HEALING SCENES

Add to the atmosphere during and after the battle. It's exciting to clean and dress a wound while a battle rages around you. A plastic shot glass can be crushed to make a convincing bone-crunch noise. Bloody bandages and other medical props help bring the grim aftermath of a battle to life. If you're being healed? React! Respond with screams of pain, or demands to see their chiurgeon's license!



## **WHAT ABOUT TIMERS?**

Many abilities involve five minute timers. That's a long time— longer than most battles and if a timer can impact the outcome of a battle, it's wrong to rush through it.

We know it's hard to measure time in the heat of battle, but be sure that the full time has passed before you consider the timer over. Consider a sand timer, or something else to help you track time effectively.

## **TELL A STORY WITH IT**

Rather than counting out every second of a timer, think about what roleplay and activities fill that time. For example, treating a wound with First Aid could involve five 1-minute-long roleplay activities: asking the patient questions, examining their wound, cleaning it, stitching it up, and dressing the wound.

Likewise, if a siege engine requires 30 seconds to reload, each member of the crew could practice their own 30-second "reloading" roleplay: tightening knots, adjusting trajectory, sanding splinters off the trough, oiling metal parts, etc...

## LIFE IN THE DRAGON CAMPS

Most players belong to one of the Dragon Camps. What most people don't realize is that the Camps have their own “camp enterprises”- Just like Bazaar. These are businesses run by players— like a tavern, casino, newspaper, or even a theater.



Each camp is its own little town, and you don't have to be a soldier or fight to enrich the shared experience.

...BELA TURK, BAZAAR COORDINATOR



## **FIND WHAT'S NEEDED.**

These institutions and organizations typically serve a purpose and often emerge out of need. At some point in the event, someone might say:

“Our spies and scouts aren’t sure who to report information to... I’ll start an order of scribes, and centralize information on scrolls. People who join my order of scribes will help collect information and make it available to camp members.”

This can be the start of a multi-year journey that culminates in epic quests, and friendships that last a lifetime.

## **OPPORTUNITY SPACES?**

These groups may have their own themes and self-created plot. Ie. an order of paladins searching for a magic book.

The group leader secretly brings a magic book prop and plants it in a way that the group will have fun discovering it (your camp referees would love to help you set this up!).

In fact, the camp refs have been trained explicitly to help enable and support your stories, and to help bring the fantasy to life. Use their expertise!

"Throughout the week, my group will try to locate an ancient book using dowsing, asking ancient spirits, searching for rumors in the bazaar... I've got the book prop, and could let my friends 'discover' it after they make proper efforts. Or I could ask a ref to seed it with a player in another camp, unknown to us. That could even spark some interesting contact between our groups."



## **YOU CAN ALSO BE A LEADER**

Each camp also has several leadership positions occupied by players. Several are standard, others are unique to their camp.

There is no universal method to select leaders. Blue camp might choose leaders using a free democratic election, whereas Shadow camp may choose by seeing who can perform the bloodiest ritual. The methods can vary from year to year, and the final decision is usually made by the Avatar.

## **IT HAPPENS ON SITE**

The leadership selection process begins before the "opening ritual". Each camp has its leadership team in place before the Great Contest starts on Wednesday.

Leaders are never selected online. Camp leaders don't have unilateral authority and can't force other players to do anything. They lead through persuasion and inspiration. There will be many subgroups within a camp; those groups should work together. No one really "owns" the camp, and a single group of players shouldn't be "in control", even if they're the biggest group in the camp.

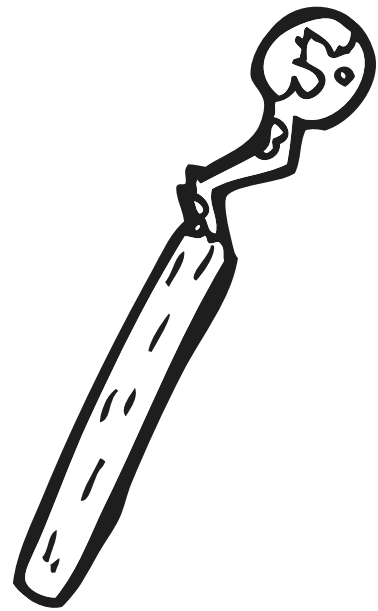
## **THE AVATAR**

The Avatar is more of a spiritual leader than a functional leader. They avoid making decisions for the group, but will give advice and empower players to make decisions.

The same can be said for the avatar's second, (They are characters in the world, so your character can ignore their advice—at your own peril!)

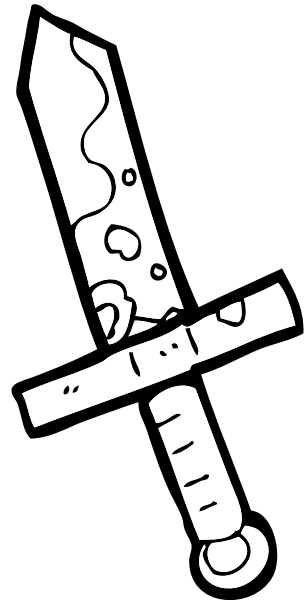
# BEING ELECTED AS A LEADER

If you're elected as a leader it only lasts for that event, and next year you must vacate the position for someone else to take the title. You can still serve as an advisor and are encouraged to found camp institutions to better serve the camp's theme and needs.



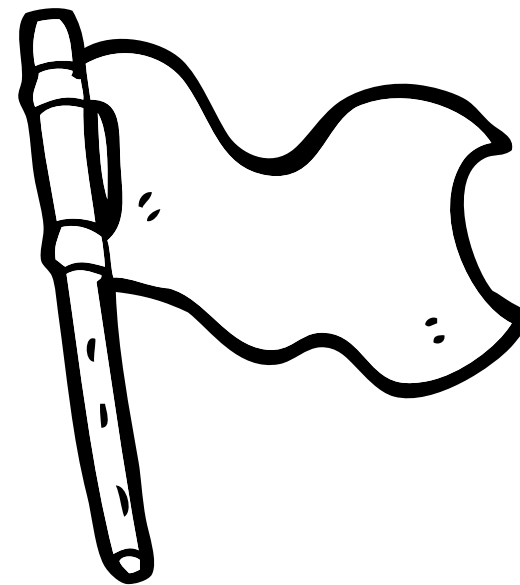
## THE COUNCIL

They make high level camp decisions and communicates the camp's direction and needs. They also monitor the mood of the camp and communicate it to the Camp Refs.



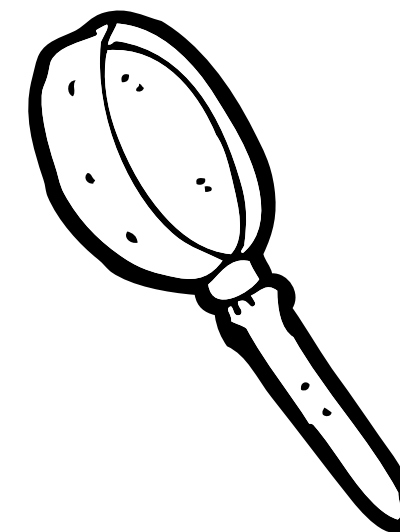
## COMMANDERS

They train and command the army. Their role is also logistical, as they must also inform Camp Refs of battle plans and war moves.



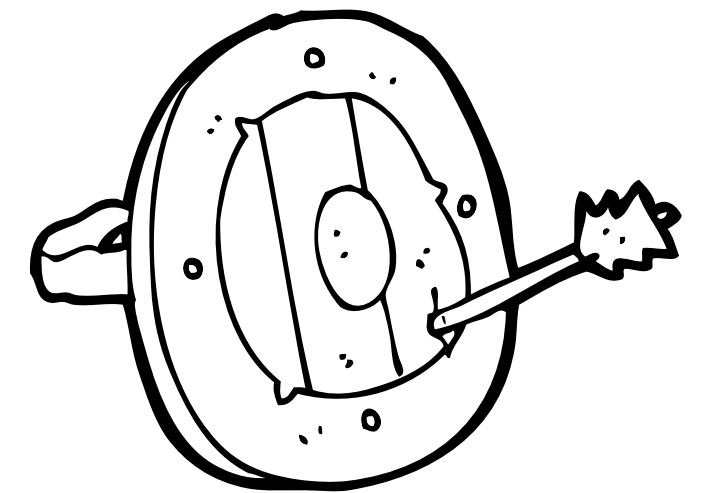
## HEAD DIPLOMAT

They politic with other camps to seal temporary defensive alliances or join forces in battle. They must keep their Camp Refs looped in about the camp's diplomacy and relationships.



## THE SPYMASTER

They form a network of rogues & spies, forming back-channels for diplomacy, sabotage, & intrigue. They also inform the Camp Refs what's going on with their sketchy actions.



## THE CHAMPION

A warrior with a knack for theatrical combat, they are called on to fight duels and honor combats for their camp and to represent their camp in the Fighter's Guild tournament.

## **GUILDS OFFER POWER UPS?**

DrachenFest does not presume characters will gain new abilities every year. If you want character power, developing relationships with other characters will make you more formidable than any number of Guild skills (or magic items).

A united group of adventurers with little more than their wits can turn the tide of the contest. If you are still interested in taking part in a Guild class, we suggest going to the Guild right after game-on.

## **THEY'RE LIMITED.**

Guild schedules will be available to members when the game starts (not before). To join a Guild, introduce yourself (with good roleplay) as soon as possible. Guild skill classes require significant preparation by the trainers, and can never be moved to accommodate individual needs. Access is not guaranteed and there are limited slots. Some classes have entry requirements, like quests or puzzles to complete beforehand. Don't beg trainers if you can't get in. If you missed an opportunity, you can try again next year. You can only learn one rank of one Guild skill per event. Guild Trainings (which teach smaller abilities) don't block you from gaining a Guild skill.

## **WHAT'S A CLASS LIKE?**

You'll learn how to roleplay some aspect of the game like theatrics, delving into shared lore, or practicing a historic or real-life craft. You'll also learn to navigate the Skill's rules, safety, or fairness. While Guild skills may take a lot of training to acquire, you don't need to understand it to have them used on you. They use a common vocabulary of verbal calls (detailed in the rulebook) or have some other method of explaining how you should react (ie. if scorpions are planted in your camp garden, your camp's Ref will explain the effects). If you get confused by something another player does, don't sweat the details, stay in the moment, and react as your character would.



## **DON'T TREAT THEM LIKE NPCs.**

The bazaar has a mix of real-world vendors and in-game guilds and enterprises. As a faction, they're neutral in the contest, but bazaar members are players, not NPCs, and can ally with or betray whoever they please.

It's best not to antagonize them unless you're okay with being shut out—especially if you want to join a guild and are interested in roleplaying training and participating in a guild's shared culture.

## **COME TO LEARN.**

Approach a Guild like a character who wishes to learn. People who don't want to dive into the roleplay and are clearly just looking for the fastest way to add a new power to their character sheet may be turned away. Worse, they are missing the best part!

Spending time in your Guildhall means sacrificing time doing other things. That is, Guild play has an opportunity cost. There's a lot going on at DrachenFest, so you'll always be missing something. Try not to let it bum you out!

## **CAN I ONLY JOIN ONE?**

Technically, you can join as many Guilds as you like, but you're at risk of spreading your time and focus too thin. And you can't gain extra Guild skills by joining multiple guilds.

Some characters may focus on Guild play, spending most of their time at DrachenFest unlocking their Guild's secrets, cavorting with their Guild cohorts, and maybe even teaching a couple of classes! Others will learn a Guild skill or two, and then focus on camp life and the great contest.

And many characters will never join a Guild and be just fine.

## **SO... CAN I LEVEL UP?**

It's not like an RPG where you gain levels- You can only ever have two Roles. While you can't get more, like we said, you can gain extra abilities by taking Guild classes in the Bazaar. It's an open secret that the Guild skills are really a hook to get people engaged in rich lore and roleplay, forming groups based on shared concepts and motivations, and to learn real life and historic crafts- Doing stuff for real, not with points or numbers.





## **PLOT IS ABOUT COLLABORATION.**

At DrachenFest, the story and 'truth' of the setting emerges from choices you and the other players make during the game. Want a hack for “winning” at larp? People who make fun for others (also know as 'plot') always have the most rewarding time doing it.

This is our “play to lift” mentality; where the object of the game is to make each moment cooler and more fun for the people in it (Even our enemies. Especially our enemies.)

## PLAYING TO LIFT OTHERS' STORIES

We lift allies by validating their character concept and choices, and including them in our adventures. We lift rivals by treating them as worthy instead of incompetent. Give big reactions to their hits, and don't get hung up on giving someone else a win: Good defenders make their attacker feel awesome.



A great player is able to sense and give 'what's needed' in any given situation.

...DAN COMSTOCK, GAME DIRECTOR



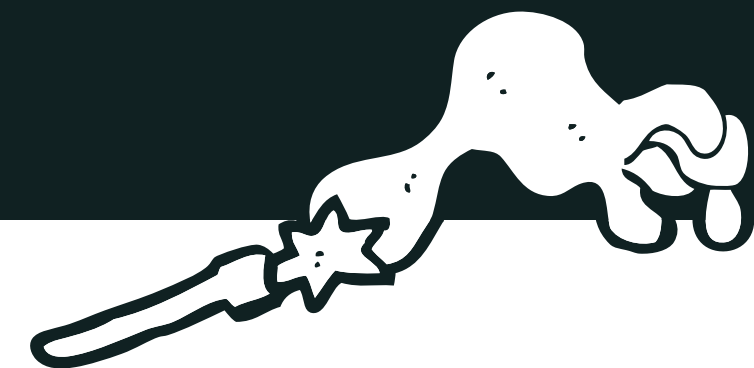
## FIND WHAT'S NEEDED.

Any camp or guild can develop little groups based around shared identity or story. Sometimes these groups appear to fill a need or serve a purpose. “Plot” emerges from the group’s actions and how others react. The group’s inner dynamics and relationships are also a form of plot. Are there ranks to climb? How would your character impress the leader? How does the group explore their concept together? As a participant in any plot, validate what’s been established, and feel free to fill in the blank spaces. (“Yes, And!” for the improv nerds.) If your camp doesn’t have an organization you think should exist, start it! Make interesting and fun play for each other. Many domains of the game are blank canvases everyone collaborates on to fill. That's why most of the camps are decorated with props, lights, and art supplied by players. We call these, Opportunity Spaces.

## OPPORTUNITY SPACES?

Each camp's Ritual Altar is full of magic tools with unique histories lent by the spellcasters of that camp. Each camp also has a garden, and its Herbalists bring faux and real plants to make it look good. The better it looks, the more it produces! Each Dragon has a “way”, or religion, which is fleshed out by the characters in that camp. By exploring this philosophy, or emphasizing a certain aspect of your dragon, you may influence campmates, and in turn, the religion itself. Camp enterprises also add to the vibe and internal plot of a camp. Furthermore, the Bazaar is filled with player-run enterprises, and Guilds are cauldrons of player-created lore and intrigue! Referees help your plot come to life. If you check-in with them about it, it'll be on their radar, and they'll steer you towards success. However, if a plot is causing a lot of OOG friction, Referees may steer it in a new direction.

Maybe you're a Fire mage, and you want to do more with it. You could seek out other Fire-themed characters, and try to form a group. Once assembled, do some activities together. You could hold initiations, have conclaves and debates about magical theory, write magical texts together, plan group rituals, establish traditions, or plot against those misguided Ice Mages. Over time, your group will develop a presence and identity, and the festival will be better for it as it now includes a cool group of Fire Mages.



# REFEREES

A Referee, or Ref is a DrachenFest staff member trained in the DF-US rules and procedures. They have the authority to make rule calls and moderate unsafe situations. At times, they may remove individuals, weapons, or props from play. Once a Ref takes action, there's no debate or haggling.



With great power comes great responsibility.

...WEIRDLY, NOT UNCLE BEN.

## **WE HAVE BOTH KINDS OF REFS.**

OOG Refs, like Battle Refs and some Camp Refs, wear DrachenFest t-shirts & hats, and have walkie-talkies. In-Game Refs are characters in a costume, like the Avatars, their second in command, and the Guild leads.

Each camp has at least four Refs between the IG and OOG Refs. Battle Refs show up at big fights. A Ref's first job is safety. If it's safe, they can handle stuff like logistics, plot, game mechanics, staff comms, and fairness.

## **SEE A REF WHEN...**

- You get an item card, or stamped prop. They'll log the item, and brief you on how to use it.
- You want to cast a Camp Ritual at your camp's ritual altar. They'll tell you what you need to do. Just have a rough idea of what you want to accomplish, what you would do in the ritual, and what kind of props and magical power you would use.
- You want to Sabotage a Camp. Talk to the Ref at the target camp for a briefing on your next steps. Rarely, the Ref may pivot you away if their camp is having a terrible time OOG. (e.g. if they have been continuously sabotaged all day, and can't get anything done because of it).

## **OR IF...**

- You are doing Alchemy or Herbalism. The Alchemy Guild will teach you how to work with Camp Refs, who manage garden & potion mechanics.
- You are going to battle, siege, or fight with 25+ players. Always tell a Ref about your battle plans, even if you're just going for a walk with your group and looking for trouble. They'll inform the target camp's refs so they can be ready for the coming attack and or request the presence of a battle ref. (don't worry, they won't alert the players of that camp).
- You have sealed a diplomatic alliance. Check in with a Ref to stamp the document. This makes it official.

## **REFS ENABLE PLOT.**

The plot of DrachenFest is whatever happens in-play. The game staff doesn't author the plot; you do. Making cunning plans to get ahead in the competition, exploring your character background, casting a creative ritual – that's all plot!

When you have a plot idea, or when you want to do something but aren't sure how, you can talk to either OOG refs or IG refs. You are also free to just go ahead and roleplay with the IG refs!

## **IN GAME REFS**

The IG Refs are characters in the world. Seek them out if you want that character's perspective on accomplishing your goal. Be careful however, if they don't like your idea (ie. you tell your Avatar you want to betray your camp), don't be surprised if they react poorly!

If you don't want an IG character's advice, or if you have out of game questions or plot needs, the OOG Refs can help. They are especially the right people to talk to if you want to try something sneaky that other people in your camp might disapprove of, or some other, bizarre plot...

## WANT SOME EXAMPLES?

### THE SKULL

If a creepy skull shows up in camp and you want to learn more with a ritual, the Ref can help you work out what tools and components you'll need to cast that ritual. If you were trained by a necromancer, or have some other tool to help you deal with the dead, make sure to let them know! Once you've got everything, the Ref will tell you the results of the ritual. Then you'll cast it at your camp ritual altar, and you'll know how to roleplay the outcome.



### THE DECEPTION

If you want to offer Blue camp free drinks, but they're really sleeping potions, and then seize their Banner while they're asleep, a Ref can talk through your plan with you. They won't give you any secret info, or tip off your enemies, but they will come up with a list of tasks and activities which will make the attempt fun, whether it succeeds or not. Knowing what deceptions you're working will help us understand what's happening when the cookies hit the fan.



### THE SEARCH

If you're looking for a mentor to help you develop fire magic skills, a ref might be able to point you towards the right characters or institutions. Maybe you want to ask the spirits for advice about the tournament later. The Ref will help you work out what tools and components you'll need to conduct that scene. They won't provide advice from the spirits—you'll have to decide what advice your character receives—but they will help you build the gameplay for this scene.





## **ARRIVING AT DRACHENFEST...**

After you arrive, you'll wait in line to check-in and receive a wrist band. Then you'll move your gear to your tent, and park your car in the parking lot. Try meeting other people, and begin getting into character- Start by using your character name, and gradually get into your character's headspace.





## **IF YOU NEED HELP...**

Our camp referees will be there to assist you with questions or directions. Later on Wednesday, there will be an Opening Ceremony which kicks off the DrachenFest. After that point, the contest starts: Battles can take place, and banners can be captured. You should come cheer for your team's avatar, and then escort them back to your camp.

## **THAT'S ALL FOLKS!**

There are blog posts to read, and rules to check out, and you can find them on [our website](#). We also have people keeping watch over the chat function Monday-Friday, and we're available for questions whenever! Please don't hesitate to reach out!



**See you in June!**

**...THE ENTIRE DRACHENFEST US TEAM**