

A LONG-EXPECTED GATHERING



A Hobbit-Inspired LARP
By Lost & Found Studios, LLC

Design Document

What it is: *A Long-Expected Gathering* is a one-shot, freeform-style LARP inspired by the hobbits of Tolkien's *The Hobbit* and *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, as well as the halfling race of *Dungeons & Dragons* and other fantasy role playing games.

Setting: The story of this LARP will take place in a high fantasy world within a familial halfling community.

Story: This game is a freeform LARP, and the main goal of the game is for the players to engage in collaborative storytelling together. NPCs will be played by Game Managers (GMs). The main plotline of this game is that all characters are halflings attending a family event, complete with a potluck meal, yard games, singing, dancing, and merry-making. Additional plot hooks will be offered to/coordinated with players before and at the beginning of the event by the GMs, but it will be entirely up to the players and their characters which hooks are followed through the end of the game. The story will explore the motivations of individual characters, the relationships between these characters, and working towards a common goal as a family unit, touching upon themes of cooperation, teamwork, community building, and what makes a good party!

Characters and Factions: All players will select a role within a halfling family for this game.

Registration and Gameplay Details: *A Long-Expected Gathering* will be a one-shot LARP, and will take place over the course of an 8 hour event with 6 hours of immersive gameplay. The gameplay will include resource gathering, interpersonal conflict, and both individual and community-focused goals. The gameplay will take place at Greensfelder Park on May 3, 2025.

This is a free-form LARP, meaning there will be no combat, death, or healing mechanics for this game. Character building will be done by selecting a role upon the family tree, filling out a character card, and establishing relationship hooks with other players prior to the game date. Characters will not receive any information such as classes, skills, or stat values as this is a social-based game.

Because roles are assigned before the game date, players will need to RSVP by April 25, 2025. After registering, players will receive an email with their role confirmation and a link to the Discord server. On Discord, players will be asked to introduce their characters by name and role, along with any additional details they would like to share about their characters. Players can then establish the nature of relationships their character has with other characters and sign up if they would like to participate in the potluck portion of the game.

Players will supply their own costumes, character names and details, and potluck entry and are free to bring any yard games, decorations, instruments, songs, or dances they would like to share with the group. Players are highly encouraged to coordinate with others both before and during the game to create an atmosphere of community and sharing. Suggested kit pieces for characters include mid-length or long skirts in earthy shades and fabrics, flowy or button-down blouses, trousers with suspenders, pointed ears, cloaks, and aprons. *Yes, we know that halflings/hobbits normally go barefoot, but we highly recommend wearing some form of shoe on-site for safety purposes!* Other suggested props or accessories include belt pouches, leather bags, books, arts and craft supplies, simple instruments, flower crowns, simple jewelry, and/or feastware.

Safety and Consent Mechanics: Lost & Found Studios is dedicated to providing a safe environment for roleplaying experiences. *A Long-Expected Gathering* is intended for an 18+ audience and gameplay may depict scenes of substance use or general debauchery. *It is the responsibility of all players to communicate their boundaries and needs, as well as respect the communicated boundaries and needs of others.* If you are roleplaying and a situation arises in which you feel upset or unsafe, you always have the option to remove yourself from gameplay without your character suffering in-game consequences. Players can use the meta-techniques listed below to communicate their comfort level and check on the comfort level of others.

You OK?: If you see another player get uncomfortable, or you are uncomfortable during a scene, call “You OK?” with a hand over your head, to alert other players that you notice not all players are comfortable with what’s happening in the situation. This gives all

players a chance to adjust the roleplay to allow all players to remain interactive in the scene.

Bow Out: A player may bow out of a scene by putting their hand in front of their face and bowing their head forward. This leaves the character physically present in the scene, but non-interactive. Players may not be retaliated against, or their characters interacted with during a scene in which they have bowed out.

X-Out: If a scene has gotten to be too much, or you are simply not comfortable with yourself or your character being present, you may X-Out of a scene by making an X with your arms in front of your face and immediately leaving the area. Your character is considered to never have been present in the scene at all, and other characters do not remember them being there. You may return to play when you are ready in another in-play area.

Fade to Black: If two or more players X-Out of a scene, the scene immediately ends, and the remaining present players agree on a resolution to the situation without further roleplay. Players may rejoin the game from their current location after the agreement has been made. Fade to Black can also be used if players would like for their characters to engage in sexual contact/activity. The players will discuss what happens and go back into the game once they reach an agreement of how the scene went.

Players are generally responsible for bringing anything they may need to take care of themselves to the game site on the day of the event. This can include things like prescription medications, food, water, bug spray, and sunscreen. Players also need to follow all of Lost & Found Studios guidelines regarding infectious disease spread, including masking and vaccination recommendations. If you are planning on participating in the potluck, an ingredients list should be provided upon request to ensure no player is unknowingly being exposed to dangerous allergens. All GMs are first aid and CPR certified and in the event of a medical emergency, EMS may be called.

More information about safety and consent guidelines can be found in Lost & Found Studios' Community Guidelines, which all players must abide by when attending a Lost & Found Studios organized event and interacting in Lost & Found Studios online spaces. Failure to abide by the rules of the game site or the Community Guidelines can lead to a verbal warning, written warning, removal from an event, or a temporary suspension or permanent ban from all Lost & Found Studios spaces and events, generally in the listed escalating order. Additionally, for severe infractions, such as inappropriate touching or intentionally harming another player, the proper authorities may be called and the offending player may face legal prosecution.

Lost & Found Studios' Gaming Principles: Lost & Found Studios is dedicated to providing a variety of safe, inclusive, and fun immersive gaming experiences that allow players to be creative and involved at every step of the way. We are able to provide these experiences by: 1) having extensive Community Guidelines, 2) staying up-to-date regarding bleed management and debriefing techniques, 3) prioritizing diverse, informed storytelling and consent in order to promote player agency, and 4) evaluating our events using qualitative and quantitative techniques in order to improve future player experiences.

Safety: All players must agree to abide by the Lost & Found Studios Community Guidelines in order to participate in Lost & Found online spaces and gaming events. As a privately-owned company, please note that Lost & Found Studios' event organizers reserve the right to refuse entry to any participant who shows themselves to be unsafe, abusive, or otherwise detrimental to the event(s) being run or the community as a whole. This may include removal from live events and/or removal from online spaces. These choices are at the discretion of the business owners and will be made in compliance with local, state, and federal law. All community members are held to the same standards and guidelines, regardless of status or role at an event, from new player to GM. The full community guidelines are available on the Lost & Found Studios website, and will also be made available on all Facebook pages and Discord servers associated with games hosted by Lost & Found Studios. Put simply, the main takeaways of these guidelines are:

- All players must treat each other with dignity and respect.
- All players will do their best to communicate their own needs and boundaries and respect the needs and boundaries of others.
- Players will refrain from hateful, harassing, and bullying behavior, including but not limited to: aggressive language; name-calling; unwelcome comments or touching; threats of violence; physical violence; condoning or promoting violence against members of the community or against others, especially based on race, ethnicity, (dis)ability, gender, age, nationality, or sexuality; encouraging suicide or self-harm; etc.
- Players (real people) always take priority over characters (made-up people).

Inclusivity: Lost & Found Studios prioritizes the safety and wellbeing of players from marginalized identities and communities. We are dedicated to telling diverse stories that promote personal and collective agency and explore systems of oppression without seeing those systems as necessary to telling interesting stories. Lost & Found Studios takes great care to maintain a culture that is accepting of all people, including those of all sexualities, gender identities/expressions, religions, races, ethnicities, (dis)abilities, and body types. We believe in spaces that are inviting, engaging, and supportive, in which all people feel comfortable behaving genuinely and participating in gameplay. All players

are required to treat each other with dignity and respect, which includes using preferred names and correct personal pronouns, avoiding “outing” others’ identities without their consent, and refusing to engage in any harassing or bullying behavior. We strive to create an environment that encourages discourse and learning about those who are different from ourselves, without putting pressure on marginalized individuals to take on the emotional labor of educating their peers, and encourages learning about different cultures without tolerating outright appropriation. We also want our games to be as accessible as possible, so if you have any particular accessibility needs due to mental, physical, or other disability, please let a GM know so we can work with you to make sure you have a fun and safe experience with us!

Involvement: We get it - LARP can be an intimidating hobby and it can be hard to jump right in. If you are unsure of how to get your character involved, we encourage you to discuss this with other players or a GM if you are comfortable. While metagaming for cheating purposes is frowned upon, ‘steering,’ planning scenes or reveals outside of the game, or coordinating links and relationships with other players’ characters before the game can make it easier for players to get involved in our games and are thus encouraged. Lost & Found Studios takes pride in cultivating a community where players enjoy engaging with others, regardless of whether they are a seasoned LARPer or brand new to the hobby. GMs are always available to answer any questions you may have.

Have Fun: LARP is meant to be a fun hobby. When going to an event, become your character and allow yourself to fall into the game world, but never forget that your choices affect others’ experiences as well. React as your character would in the situations you find yourself in, or react in a way you think others might enjoy. Say "yes" once or twice just to see where that takes you. Occasionally take a risk for no good reason. Play to win. Play to lose. Above all, we want to give our players a space in which they can tell a story, be creative, and have an enjoyable experience.

Is this the game for you?: *A Long-Expected Gathering* is a one-shot, freeform, high fantasy halfling LARP that aims for medium immersion. It is a good LARP for players who want a game that explores family ties, community building, cooperation, teamwork, and interpersonal relationships, and that prioritizes cooperative storytelling, roleplay, and a relaxed/friendly atmosphere. This LARP may not be the best fit for players who prefer highly detailed game mechanics as opposed to freeform mechanics, who want to primarily engage in combat scenarios, or don’t enjoy high levels of roleplay.