

DAEMON

Dust, sin, and the soul



US RUN DESIGN DOCUMENT

A NARRATORS INC.
LARP



Journeys
& Tales



DAEMON LARP

“Daemon” is a collaborative, vintage style steampunk’ish larp that focuses on the connection between a human and their manifested inner self or soul – the Daemon.

The core vision for this larp is experiencing how it is to play the same character as someone else and be in symbiosis with them. You don’t sign up in pairs to be family, lovers or anything of the sort – but two parts of the same being.

Concept

The larp is set in a world inspired by the trilogy of novels “His Dark Materials” by Phillip Pullman. The setting for the larp is a free interpretation of what could happen after the author’s trilogy ended. The storylines in the books are not important in this larp; the human-Daemon connection is the important concept to understand.

“Daemon” is designed to be an experience where you don’t need to remember an abundance of historical or setting material to participate – all relevant information and background can be found on this website – so there is no need to know the details of the original novels. The larp itself is all about the emotional connections between humans,

their daemons, and their peers. You will sign up in pairs where one plays the human and the other their Daemon.

The themes of the larp are: free will, desires, existentialism, human connection, the meaning of (what the church described as) “loss of innocence”, disillusionment, morality and the nature of the human soul.



STORY IN THE GAME

The Authority – this world’s God – is dead. He has been killed by bold and visionary people, including some of you. Others of you were on his side. You will play scholars, low nobility, scientists, nomads, people formerly of The Church, or people identifying as witches to celebrate the victory, mourn your losses, and explore the possibilities under the new world order. Soldiers are returning from the war on The Authority, and the world has sunk into a state of disillusionment for some and euphoria for others. Imagine the divine entity that was as natural a part of your life as breathing the air around you – gone.

Some of you helped bring down the frail, pathetic being holding humanity in his grasp with false teachings and zealots doing his bidding. The Magisterium, the harsh church of The Authority, is no longer and you will be forced (more or less willingly) to question all its teachings. But now, another problem has occurred. The Magisterium dropped bombs filled with powder many places in the country as a last, desperate act. Some scientific instruments are measuring strange phenomena and there are rumors that the power affects the bond between human and Daemon. Therefore, Parliament

has asked some of you to come to the Blackett estate and remain there until further notice so they can ensure everything is alright. There is probably nothing to worry about, so you have all accepted the invitation and have come to investigate.

Lady Philippa Blackett has welcomed everybody with open arms since she had already planned a marvelous weekend to celebrate the war heroes. Her brother Lord Edward was an officer that was killed in the war, and she is overjoyed to offer a free space to look into matters never previously investigated. She has also insisted that you celebrate the victory of science and free will with some of the returning war heroes. They will certainly need help processing the horrors of the war, and perhaps their own actions, so a little party should be a good start to help with that. Also, there is a sense of ecstasy amongst those of you who are ready to enjoy a new regime, toast to the fallen, and have important discussions regarding the new world order.

*You've accepted your invitation.
Some of you crave conciliation.
Some come seeking answers.
And some come to start a new world.*

WHAT THE LARP IS ABOUT

The core vision for this larp is experiencing how it is to play two parts of the same character with someone else and be in symbiosis with them.

Together, you are a whole human being. This also means that it is physically impossible to be too far away from each other at all times during the larp. There is no exception from this offgame, so be aware that you sign up with someone where you feel comfortable that you will need the same amount of breaks. If one party needs a nap – the other one will have to be out of the game as well. Energy level is an important calibration topic when choosing a partner.

In the fiction, separation will bring you both excruciating pain. The specific distance in practice is something we will try out in the workshops, but it is approximately ten feet. How to be aware of each other at all times is something we will practice in the workshops before the game.

You will play characters that have or are trying to come to terms with the fact that they have been lied to for all their life, but many are still unsure of how they want to shape their life after the church.

The characters are former Magisterium people, experimental theologians (physicists in our world), witches, nomads, soldiers, writers, adventurers, students at the university, politicians, natural philosophers and the like. The characters more or

less know each other before the game starts – some only superficially.

You have in common a great curiosity about what this state of things will mean for you personally and how the view possibilities of understanding have and will affect your understanding of your Daemon. Scientific experiments might help you learn more about your connection to your Daemon and thereby – the world.

Examples of what you can do at the larp:

- Experiment with the symbiotic relationship between human and Daemon
- Have a passionate romantic interest where the Daemons show the true feelings while the humans aren't allowed to show them
- Have fun by making great toasts to the world of science for winning the war.
- Have an existential crisis over losing your deity and seemingly gaining free will
- Question the nature of the human soul
- Explore what place desire can have in your life
- Relive traumas from the war through your Daemon to heal
- Threaten a former friend who was on the other side of the war
- Be shocked and horrified by radical experiments taking place between Humans and Daemons



...AND WHAT IT IS NOT ABOUT

The larp is not a ‘His Dark Materials’ reenactment.

There will be no dangerous adventures in this or other worlds like the ones the main characters in the books experience. No known characters will be in the larp or be known personally to the characters. This is only a world inspired by the novels.

What exists in the fiction outside of the setting and location we will be playing at.

Yes, armored bears exist, and some might have seen one in the war, but they are not relevant to the story. The same goes for specters and other elements of the original material that are not on this website.

Daemon restrictions and behaviors that humans cannot replicate.

In His Dark Materials, Daemons don’t eat, can fly, and act as actual animals. But as players, we need to eat, can’t fly, or be as small as a moth, so we will never be able to do a 1:1 representation of the animals. Thus, the Daemon players will eat at the table and sleep in a bed like their human counterparts. They will represent the animal form they have with body language, costuming, and makeup.

A sexual or nudity-filled experience. Along with the loss of innocence and the gaining of free will, desire is an important theme of the event. While sensuality or eroticism can be a part of this experience for some, the liberation that the death of “The Church” brings is not limited or focused on sexuality or eroticism. Therefore players are advised to interpret ‘desire’ as broadly as possible.

A strict plotline for the overall larp. There will be plenty of character relation options and possible storylines for individuals and there will be plenty of time to play these out to experience the bond between human and Daemon. All players are invited to create stories in game and create play for each other.





THE SETTING IN THE LARP

The Magisterium held you and everybody else in its iron grasp for so long that even now a dance or a light touch still seems bold.

But they all tell you that things are changing. A wave of festivities and a sense of freedom is sweeping the world which is loosening up the straining bands of self-control and physical distance. However, you have only just started to live in this new world and nothing has really changed yet.

One of the core Magisterium's beliefs was the concept of Dust, which they believed to be sin. For ages, it has been strictly forbidden to even talk about Dust, which is why so few people even heard of it. Of course, we are not talking about your everyday "dust" that swirls around in your house. Instead, Dust is a certain particle that is only observable through specialized instruments.

Generally, Dust particles seem uninterested in clinging to children. However, when a child (in the words of the Magisterium!) "loses their innocence" around puberty, Dust starts to latch on to a young person's body.

This is also the time when the Daemon settles into its final animal form. Before this, the Daemon can change to any animal form it wants.

The Magisterium linked Dust to Original Sin and took many different measures, including deadly ones, to "protect" children from this loss of innocence. But new ideas have arisen. Dust seems... sentient. Like it has a mind of its own and is attracted, and connected to, awareness and consciousness.

And at the core of the confusion of the new world order, exciting new perspectives arise: What else was the Magisterium wrong or lying about?

Why do we have Daemons when people from other worlds don't?

What are Daemons really? Are they our souls – or something completely different?

What is the state of the human soul without representatives of a divine power to tell about it?

Can you separate yourself from your Daemon? And what does Dust have to do with any of it?

WHAT ARE DAEMONS?

A Daemon looks like an animal and represents the soul or inner self of the human – so in this world the soul exists very literally, and it lives outside the human. A Human-Daemon pair can hear each other's thoughts, and if one feels pain so does the other. If the human is in conflict with itself, the relationship with the Daemon might be harsh or even abusive. If the human is balanced and at peace, it might be the perfect symbiosis.

A Daemon will often represent either a part of the personality that the human suppresses or is a more accurate representation of the human's inner world. Together, they are a whole person. Usually, the Daemon will take the form of animals ranging in size from a moth to a wolf. Larger animals are very rare. Before puberty, the Daemon will be able to change into most kinds of animals, but when the human becomes approaches adolescence and begins "losing their innocence" as the Magisterium would say, it will settle on one specific form for the rest of its life.

Daemons can speak just like humans. Many discussions a human would normally have internally become conversations between the human and Daemon. Often, when humans talk or do things together, the Daemons will show how the humans actually feel about each other. They do this either by talking between themselves or acting out their human's emotion.

Because of this, the Daemon players have a lot of agency in deciding the inner workings of the human. A human can talk to another person's Daemons as well, but that is considered intimate. If you know a person's Daemon well, it likely means that you know the inner workings of that person or have an intimate relationship with them. It is normal to talk between humans and Daemons in four way conversations between two couples, but we will practice how that works at the workshop.

It is an absolute taboo for a human to touch another person's Daemon and it feels very wrong. It would represent almost putting your hand through someone's chest and touching their innermost soul.

In the fiction, the Daemons ARE animals and have the form as such – cat, parrot, rat, snake, dog. Players will get an option of 3 different Daemons they can choose from for their role.

How Daemons work in the larp

Since players are humans who need to eat and sleep, and different Daemons come in different sizes, we can't truly emulate Daemons being actual animals.

When it comes to practically playing a Daemon, you are welcome to use animal body language at all times, but no one is expected to eat off a plate on the floor or... you know... fly.

As a Daemon player, you will sit at the table and eat and have conversations just like your human counterpart. In this larp, you play a representation of an animal off-game even though it is an animal in-game. This also means that no full body animal costumes or make-up are wanted at this larp.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

The larp is set in a “vintage steampunk” era. That means that both human and Daemon will be dressed in costumes from an ahistorical past that fits the description “vintage steampunk”.

This can entail fashion from the late 19th century to the middle of the 20th century. Feel free to mix and match any clothes, styles, and accessories from these decades for your outfit. This is all about creating the right look and feel that suits your character, rather than recreating any particular era. Think for instance dark academia, light academia, or history bounding.

As far as the steampunk part of the larp is concerned, this applies mainly to the sciences, tech, and gadgets.

The Daemon player will additionally wear make-up and costume parts so it’s clear what animal they are representing, but no full animal-makeup or costume is relevant or wanted in this larp. Body language and representation are the most important. The representation can be done with prostheses, make-up, wigs, costume parts like fur, feathers, tails and the like. Avoid any full suits or masks.

THE HUMAN-DAEMON BOND

For this larp signup will take place in pairs. The Human and Daemon player in a couple are expected to sign up together and will receive the same character sheet as their knowledge and experience is completely transparent – sharing each other’s thoughts has its perks!

In the fiction the human and daemon are connected, and in the larp it is meant quite literally that you can’t move physically far away from your counterpart, so if you need to go to the bathroom, they need to be right outside the door. If you need an off-game break, they will have to go with you. This means it is imperative for people to sign up with someone with whom you are comfortable and have calibrated expectations for the experience. There will be no exceptions during the larp.

Finding a Partner

It can be very straining to find a partner. We recommend that you do this yourself, since it requires a lot of trust.

If you are interested in this game, but do not have a partner, there will be a post in the General Interest group for people seeking someone to sign up with.



CREATOR

Daemon is a larp created by Katrine Wind, and initially run twice in Denmark.

Katrine has earlier created and run the larp Spoils of War, as well as numerous other larps in Danish.

Her focus as a larp designer and game runner over the last 15 years has mainly been on interpersonal drama and relations, deep world-building, as well as positive and cohesive management of crew and staff at the events.

Katrine has also created most of the workshops surrounding the Daemon experience, and she will be present and facilitating them at the US runs.

Outside Larp, Katrine has a political science background and works with project management in the analysis industry.



PRODUCERS

The US runs of Daemon are produced by Journeys & Tales. We are a larp production company created with focus on Nordic Style larps run in the US. We strive to create events with a keen emphasis on adventure, excitement, and commitment.

J&T primarily consist of the husband and wife team of Meredith and Christian Christensen, but regularly bring in various staff, helpers, and creative consultants in both the idea generation, design, and execution phase of the larps and event.

Journeys and Tales have earlier designed and produced the noir style family drama, Fatal Bonds, and the regency romance larp, Hartwood.



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