



# Elmwood Chronicles

## The Last Summer

### Game Concept

*East Wyrwood Shire, early August. Perhaps the most beautiful time of the year for lavish parties and happiness in love. At the Elmwood Estate of the Wentworth family, the widowed Cecil Wentworth celebrates his engagement to the love of his youth, the also widowed Gladys Jennings. Days full of dancing and joie de vivre are about to begin. But while the family, guests and house staff prepare for the joyous celebration, a Shadow is gathering over the country - the impending outbreak of the Great War. The year is 1914 and this is the last summer of an era that people will soon only remember as a fading dream.*

Elmwood Chronicles - The last summer is a larp inspired by series like The Downton Abbey and Upstairs, Downstairs. The story is set in an imagine English household right before the start of the World War I and focuses on drama, happy summer romance, passions, conflicts, inequality and hopes.

We aim for an immersive dramatic experience in a beautiful historical atmosphere that feels more like a condensed television series rather than a historical simulation.

While we want to play on themes of social hierarchy, position in the society and struggles with gender and class, the game will be very mindful around the topic of racism, allowing only very narrowed focused of it in-game and will not tolerate any form of off-game discrimination.





## Location

The event will take place in the manor house Gutshaus Belitz (and in its lovely garden). The house was used as a filming location for the German reality serie “Abenteuer 1900 – Leben im Gutshaus” and was set back to perfectly fit the 1910s conditions.

This means, Haus Belitz not only looks like a house from around 1900, it also functions (for the most part) like one. The stove in the kitchen is fuelled by wood, there is a laundry room and another room for ironing laundry, food can be transported from the cellar to the ground floor in the hand-operated dumbwaiter, and finally, the whole house is heated by stoves only (which fortunately doesn't matter too much in summer). All these things give us the opportunity to include them in the servants' game. Servants could, for example, exchange rumours and information about the lords while they wash dirty laundry as they did 100 years ago. We, however, do not expect servants to do any actual laundry except for playing with the devices.

While heating, laundry and at least some of the cooking in the house function as it did 100 years ago, the sanitary situation in Belitz is fortunately not quite so antiquated. Even at the time when the house was still used as a film set for ‘Abenteuer 1900 – Leben im Gutshaus’, there were a few ‘normal’ toilets (not shown in the series) and also showers. What Haus Belitz does not offer is hotel-style accommodation, with a shower and bath in your own room. Instead, the participants will have to share the toilets (3) and showers (2). And for a quick face wash in the morning, there will be bowls of water and soap in the rooms.

There are some electricity outlets in the house, but not necessarily in the bedrooms. We will provide a possibility to charge your devices if necessarily. However, if you need electricity in your bedroom for medical reasons, please contact the organisers as early as possible.

The bedrooms will be in-game during the play time. However, the players can have privacy in their bedrooms during the breaks between the acts (e.g. during the night time). Should a player need a break from the game during the act, there will be a space for this.

The player accommodation will be according to the status of their character, with upstairs character players staying in more luxurious upstairs rooms, whereas most of the players of the downstairs characters will stay downstairs in smaller and less comfortable bedrooms.

We hope to be playing in the gardens, so please plan your outfits accordingly. Sunscreens and insect repellent might come handy as well.



# Play Style

## History and historical themes

Elmwood Chronicles is not a historical larp, but a larp inspired by a historical period and a certain time in the year 1914. It's set sometime in the last days of July and beginning of August 1914, but we're not trying to exactly recreate things as they were then. There are some historical events, facts and themes that characters will need to be informed of and have an opinion about. These will specifically be mentioned in player handouts.

We will also have a liberty to let political events develop slightly differently in game as it was in history, if this enhances the dramatic experience. We want to create a feel of "being there", while still allowing for interesting drama filled with passion, intrigue and facades.

Elmwood Chronicles should feel like stepping into a TV drama, not going back in time one hundred years.

## Play for drama

This is a game principle designed to encourage dramatic moments and scenes in the larp. The point is not to "win", but to be able to "enjoy" conflicts with your character. This opens the possibility to experience intense and exciting stories. It does not mean that all characters must fail in all their endeavours all the time. However, each character also has a dark side and dark secrets that can be given space in the game. When making your decisions, just think about what will generate the best game for everyone. So also build failure into your characters and allow for it.

However, it is not a type of larp where all characters end up dead or miserable. We aspire to create a happy and romantic atmosphere with stories full of hope and expectations. So while we expect characters to struggle and have dramatic scenes with each other, we would like the players to build some hopes and possibilities of happiness into the stories.

## Play to lift

While characters can experience drama and conflict with each other, we expect players to co-create the story in a collaborative way. It is important to create opportunities for other players to develop their characters and to create moments for them to experience the stories they are aiming for. We play to lift other players.

For example, playing a character in a position of power, saying the Lord of the household, is only possible when other players show their character's respect or fear to that person. Similarly, playing a young and inexperienced maid is only fun when other players react to these qualities e. g. with the attempts to educate the maid on her duties or to calm her anxiety.



## **Gender roles and class differences**

Though it would be possible to design a historical larp that widely ignores the inequality in terms of both gender and class, we decided to specifically make them important elements of this game. The storylines and the in-game possibilities of a character vary according to both their gender and class, though the players of course can freely choose the roles regardless of their off-game gender.

It is also our goal to give the players a rather equal quality of the experience and fairly equal possibilities to influence the story. If we need to bend the boundaries of historical realism to achieve this goal, then we are happy to accept that.

## **Calibration**

We encourage the players to use the instrument of calibration to ensure the collaborative roleplaying style.

Calibration is an off-game discussion, held in small groups or one-on-one, about character relationships, development of the plot, planning of specific scenes and general player boundaries and expectations.

Before the start of the larp the workshops will offer players the possibility to calibrate about background stories, relationships and expectations. There will be breaks between the acts that are meant to be used for calibration. The players are also encouraged to include short calibrations during the larp, if needed. Please be mindful not to disturb the dramatic and immersive roleplay of other players.

We encourage the participants to ask the co-players what they might need to enhance their experience and openly ask for interactions they might find interesting. However, we find it maybe even more important to tell others if any plot development or interaction makes you uncomfortable. It is perfectly acceptable to opt out of any play elements that a player does not feel comfortable with.

To give some examples of calibration, if two players play roles of spouses, they might want to discuss the way their characters came together, how they address each other in public and private, and how passionate their relationship is. However, discussing the expectation of how much energy players want to put in this connection, how comfortable they are with playing any kind of affection or physical contact or if there are any topics (e.g. infidelity) they are totally uncomfortable with as players can also be a part of calibration. Between the acts the players can continue calibration on how the characters are reacting to the recent plot developments and e.g. plan a dramatic shouting match right after dinner.





## Open secrets

As a part of collaborative roleplay we choose to play on the character secrets openly, by consciously separating what a player off-game knows from what a character in-game is informed of. We encourage you to share your characters secrets with your co-players and to calibrate on how those secrets can be integrated in the story of the larp.

We also encourage you to offer a possibility to learn about your secrets for more than one person. Except of sharing your character background during a calibrations you might consider some of the following suggestions:

- As an upstairs player you should ignore the presence of the household staff during your secret conversations.
- During secret conversations leave doors ajar, even if it's for very personal, confidential one-on-one conversations. Never close the doors completely. This gives others the opportunity to eavesdrop.
- Leave things lying around: You just got a letter with an important message? It might fall out of your pocket or you might forget to take it with you when you get up from the table.
- Don't hoard items: Found an interesting item? Then don't hide it in your (bedroom). Anyway, hiding is not a good idea, rather play with it!
- Spread rumours: You've found out a secret (on the condition that you don't tell anyone, of course), you absolutely need to discuss it with a friend. Secrets are safe with him or her with no doubts.
- Write in a diary: A good way to get rid of all your secrets is to write them in a diary. You can also record your character's experiences. Of course, you can trust your diary to be safe. The servants would never read it (or would they?).
- Write letters to other characters in the house and let them be delivered by the household staff. The downstairs characters should always give a letter to another servant before delivering it.







### **Nationalism and racism**

The politics and social discourse in Britain in 1914 included nationalistic and racist notions. In this game we will actively play on the British imperial attitude and the feeling of superiority to other nations and cultures, e. g. in the political discussions it might come to the notions of how the British ways are superior to those of the French / the Germans / the Belgians.

The game might include active discrimination against Irish characters.

However, we would like you to be mindful of playing on nationalistic and racist topics that are not directly connected to the backgrounds of the characters or relevant for the game. Just because e. g. anti-semitism or discrimination of people of colour was acceptable back then, it does not give us as players a white card for random hate speeches. In fact, we insist on leaving this discrimination out of the game.

Furthermore, we cannot guarantee that historical materials used during the game, e.g. historical newspapers or old books, consist no racist or nationalist themes. We cannot change the world the way it was back then, we can only limit the space we give to the topic during the game.

### **No sexualized violence!**

Sexualized violence is NOT a game topic in Elmwood Chronicles. Neither will we include rape/sexual abuse (or threats of it) in the background of characters, nor will we include such things in game scenes. We expect the same from our participants.

### **No dramatic plot during meals**

Though most of the meals will be happening in-game and allow many possibilities for play and character interactions, we kindly ask you to avoid dramatic plot during meals. If you need to split your drink at your neighbour or dramatically leave the dining room crying, please wait until the meal is served and most players have finished eating out of respect for the logistical complexity of the meals.

# Game Mechanics

## The two rules

The two most important rules in collaborative roleplaying are:

1. When you are being approached, show some coherent reaction. Act in any way, any way at all, but act.
2. When you engage someone, don't expect a specific reaction. Accept what the other person does with your game offer.

For example, a player representing a character's sister breaks into an impromptu argument and angrily accuses the character of having an affair with her fiancé. The player behind the character could now, for example, reject the accusation in an equally indignant voice, speak confusedly of a misunderstanding, break down crying and ask her for forgiveness, or say to her face with a cold smile that he is quite sure that her fiancé never loved her (possibly depending on whether said fiancé is also represented as a role in the game and what the player of the character has agreed with him). Neither should he simply ignore the accusation, nor should the player of the other character expect a very specific answer from him.

## The "Cut!" command

You may know this from movie clichés, when the director shouts "Cut" to interrupt a scene. Well, in this game, we are all directors of our own movie in a sense, and the command word "Cut" is our mechanism to interrupt the game. If something happens that makes you feel uncomfortable as participants, someone oversteps your boundaries, or you sense a dangerous situation, you can call "Cut!" to briefly interrupt the game. (Of course, this mechanic is not used to stop the game if your character feels he or she is in danger or does not agree with another character's reaction!) If you hear someone yell "Cut!", pause the game and check what the reason for the interruption is. Sometimes, after a "Cut!," a quick note is enough ("Be careful, you're about to push your counterpart up against a hot spotlight") or a request to change something ("Being yelled at by five people at once is too much for me right now"), sometimes you just have to escape the situation by leaving. That's all fine. The important thing is: saying "Cut!" is always okay. No one gets mad about it. Even if someone blocks you in a scene with a "Cut!", there should be no accusations or questions about why. A quick question about whether the other person is okay and what they need is fine. Respect their wishes!

## "Really, really"

If you include the phrase "really, really" in a sentence, you are telling the other person that the sentence spoken in the context of the game also communicates real needs and necessities. So, for example, if you confront your lover with your suspicion of them being untrue to you and they say that they "really, really needs to go to the toilet" or that what is happening is "really, really too much" for them, then it is clear that this is not just a strategy of that character to leave an uncomfortable situation. Requests or instructions of this kind must therefore be followed without fail.





### **“Another servant will do it”**

It is obvious that the family and the guests can enquire any favour from a servant and servants will try to do anything to keep them comfortable. However, the players of the servants might not feel like fulfilling a request for any reason, like for example if they are busy or tired, or find the request boring or simply impossible. In this situation a servant can politely answer: “Yes, sir / madam, another servant will take care of it”, which means this issue is taken care of in-game, but in the reality it will not be done and the requesting player might want to take care of it themselves or ask the organisers. Any servant player can use this mechanic any time.

### **Escalation and de-escalation**

It is not always necessary to stop a scene that pushes the boundaries of your comfort zone. Sometimes a short hint that it is now enough and you would like to continue playing at the current or a lower intensity level is more than sufficient. You may also want to discreetly signal the opposite to your opponent, i.e. that you would be happy for your character to escalate the situation further. There are three simple gestures for this: thumbs up, thumbs down, and thumbs horizontal. When you signal "thumbs up" to your opponent, the intensity of the scene may be increased. "Thumbs horizontal" means that you are approaching a limit and the current level should be maintained. If, on the other hand, "thumbs down" is displayed, the intensity level of the scene must be lowered.

### **Playing affection and Ars Amandi**

Though the public demonstration of physical affection in a British household 1914 can be expected to be rather moderate, we can imagine situations in which players in a romantic game would like to indicate certain physical closeness of their characters. However, it definitely does not mean that the players need to get too physical with each other.

If players want to indicate their characters sharing a kiss, the touching of foreheads can be used instead.

If there is a need for a love scene between characters during the game, sex or intimacy in general is only simulated. For this we use a method called Ars Amandi. The participants touch each other's forearms while looking into each other's eyes. We will demonstrate exactly how this works before the game begins in the workshop. The method offers the possibility to exchange played tenderness without becoming too intimate. Here, the forearm stands in for the other person's body and can clarify what the characters would like to do together now, without putting the players in a difficult situation. However, it is indispensable to assess the limits of the other person in advance. If the other players do not want to play a love scene, this should be respected in any case.



### **Violent play and character death**

We don't expect much need for violent play in this romantic larp, but we could imagine players wanting to escalate a conflict with a slap in the face or even a fist fight. We can also see how threatening another character with a revolver might enhance the quality of an in-game argument. In case you want to be involved in a physical violence scene, please make sure of the following:

- The scene is calibrated with the players involved.
- All violence is played and no one gets physically hurt or uncomfortable.
- The player of the victim decides what does or does not happen to their character. Even if another player decides to shoot directly in their face, they may decide that their character is unhurt and the revolver miraculously missed the bullets in the first place.

We don't expect any characters to die during the game. If a player wants their character to die and feels this would make an excellent story, they need to inform the organizers beforehand.

### **Newspapers and telegrams**

The newspapers were an important element of daily life in Britain 1914. Almost everyone in the country was literate by then and reading and discussion of both the daily news and politics, but also popular literature was common.

We will include the in-game newspapers as an element of the game bringing the influence of the outside world and political situation on the game reality.

Additionally, it is possible for the players to send and receive telegrams and with this connect to characters and structures outside the house, influencing the development of the story. This instrument can be used in order to enhance the play, but should not become its main element. The upstairs characters will obviously ask a servant to send their telegrams for them.





# Characters

## Casting and interpretation

In this game all participants take on roles created by the organizers. For each character there is a character description with goals, personality traits, secrets and predefined connections to other roles. All participants will have an influence on which role they receive. There will be a form with which we ask for wishes and ideas concerning the game and the character. We probably won't be able to fulfil all wishes, but we will definitely do our best.

The characters are yours for the duration of the game, and you can play them out however you want. This game will not fail because characters are played differently than "intended by the writing team"; the story will just take a different direction.

Your character is yours. You alone decide how you interpret it.

## Groups

The characters are parts of different groups that give the possibility for connections. The two main defining groups for every character are the downstairs and upstairs groups.

Playing upstairs: As upstairs characters you are enjoying your time in diverse social activities. You stroll in the gardens with your flirt, enjoy a lavish dinner with your family or a game of cards with a friend.

While you are trying to find a way to solve your financial issues or avoid a scandal, you are heavily relying on the assistance of your true servants.

Playing Downstairs: As a servant you have a possibility to play in a house with conditions remarkably close to those of 1910. However, your work is almost always about people and relationships and should add to your play rather than take away from it. This means physical tasks are never performed alone. The family and guests require lots of personal wardrobe assistance giving you a chance to talk and gossip.

We will have some off-game staff and catering, so playing a maid doesn't mean cooking meals, but rather having the possibility of boiling a tea kettle on the wood stove and preparing platters of cookies for the afternoon tea.

Playing a servant will give you the possibility to spread gossip and influence the story. You will tend to the members of the family and guests, performing tasks and chores that are meaningful to you and add to your play.



# Upstairs, female

## **Mrs. Ida Crawford**

Age: old generation

Keywords: eccentric, rich, strong character, traditional

As the wealthy aunt of the Jennings family, Mrs Ida Crawford is a dazzling figure and, as the Grand Dame, presides over the social fabric of Shire society. She has never married and has no children of her own (which makes her an eccentric outsider in some people's eyes), but she has a considerable fortune (which is why her eccentric outsider status is easily forgiven). As a woman of strong character and clear views, she represents predominantly traditional values, while it is an open secret that she has been fascinated by the modern medium of 'film' for quite some time.

## **Mrs. Gladys Jennings**

Age: adult generation

Keywords: bride, committed, modern

Mrs Gladys Jennings, the fiancée of Mr Cecil Wentworth, is a woman who combines grace and determination. A year and a half ago, she was suddenly and unexpectedly widowed by the loss of her first husband, which initially plunged her into deep mourning. But now her engagement to Cecil seems to prove that she is ready to start a new phase in her life. During her period of mourning, she was not idle, but became involved in various social causes. She is rumoured to be campaigning for improved women's rights, although she always seems to take care not to overstep the bounds of social acceptability.

## **Mrs. Eleanor Parker**

Age: adult generation

Keywords: lively, calculating, smart, card player

Mrs. Eleanor Parker, the vivacious wife of Mr. Parker and cousin to her dear youth friend Mrs. Jennings, is a woman of sharp wit and boundless energy. With a fondness for card games and wagers, her quick mind and deep pockets make her a formidable presence at any table, though she always maintains a veneer of genteel propriety. Fiercely ambitious for her son Henry, Eleanor spares no effort in orchestrating introductions and alliances that could elevate him to the heights of politics or diplomacy. Beneath her playful exterior lies a determined strategist, keenly aware of the power of influence and connections. Ever the social navigator, Eleanor blends charm and calculation in equal measure, ensuring that her family's name continues to shine among society's elite.

## **Ms. Norah Rand**

Age: adult generation

Keywords: silent film actress, aging diva

Ms. Norah Rand is an actress who was once celebrated as a shining star of the theatre world and successfully made the transition to the world of silent films some time ago. However, her glory days as a teenage leading actress are behind her, and the roles she is now given are increasingly those of matronly mother figures. Her stay at Elmwood Estate at the invitation of the family is an unexpected but welcome change... and perhaps an opportunity to reposition herself? Behind her charming smile lies the fear of being forgotten – and perhaps the desire for one last chance to impress the world once again.

**The Hon. Eliza Talbot**

Gender: female

Age: young generation

Keywords: spirited, traditionally raised, interested in feminism

Eliza Talbot, a spirited girl from the storied Talbot lineage, stands at the crossroads of tradition and change in the turbulent year of 1914. Raised under the watchful eye of her grandparent, Sir/Lady Talbot, Eliza is torn between the weight of her family's expectations and her own burgeoning passion for feminist ideals. With a keen mind and a restless energy, she dreams of a world where women have a voice as strong as her own. Yet, in her quest for modernity, she struggles to reconcile her identity with the legacy of honor and duty instilled in her by her heritage. Guided by her grandparent's wisdom, Eliza is at the beginning of a journey to find her place in a rapidly changing world.

**Ms. Isobel Wentworth**

Gender: female

Age: young generation

Keywords: young, romantic, art loving, lonely

Ms. Isobel Wentworth is a romantic young lady, who often finds herself immersed in romantic fiction hoping for a love story of similar thrill. Her heart belongs to art, her delicate watercolors capturing emotions she struggles to express in words. Though her talent shines, her father dismisses her creations as frivolous, dismissing her dream to attend an art school. Since losing her mother and sister Emma, she often feels a quiet loneliness, making her long for connection while remaining cautious with others. Her father's plans to remarry leave her feeling uneasy, unsure how it might change the rhythm of their lives.

**Ms. Minnie Jennings**

Gender: female

Age: young generation

Keywords: dutiful, composed, intelligent

Ms. Minnie Jennings, the poised and intelligent daughter of the bride Gladys Jennings, is known for her pragmatic nature and unwavering sense of duty. She devotes herself to charitable causes, finding fulfillment in helping the less fortunate while always maintaining proper decorum. Minnie dutifully supports her mother's progressive efforts for women's rights without fully sharing her enthusiasm for such endeavors. While she seems wholly focused on her responsibilities, there are subtle hints that her heart may not be entirely her own. Even the most dutiful young ladies happen to be involved in secret affairs of the heart.



# Upstairs, male

## **Mr. Arthur Parker**

Age: old generation

Keywords: military, reserved, dutiful

Mr Arthur Parker is a former officer who ended his military service several years ago and has since been struggling to adapt to civilian life. As the husband of Mrs Eleanor Parker, a childhood friend and cousin of the bride, he is a welcome, if sometimes somewhat reserved, guest on the Elmwood Estate. He has a strong sense of duty, but seems to be marked by some experiences during his time in the military. However, when he is sober, he never mentions them, and even after two or three glasses of port, he usually only makes vague allusions.

## **Mr. Cecil Wentworth**

Age: adult generation

Keywords: host, groom, art collector

Mr Cecil Wentworth, master of the Elmwood Estate, is the charismatic host of the weekend party. As a passionate art collector, he is devoted to his collection. However, according to malicious gossipers, this passion has contributed significantly to a financial imbalance from which the Elmwood Estate is currently said to be suffering.

The loss of his first wife and youngest child Emma to diphtheria has left its mark on him and caused him to withdraw from society for a time. It was only the renewed passion for his new fiancée, the love of his youth Mrs Gladys Jennings, that slowly led him out of this self-imposed solitude.

## **Sir Patric Talbot**

Age: old generation

Keywords: moral authority, noble, traditional, well connected

Sir Talbot, a venerable moral authority of the shire, is a figure of unyielding principles and steadfast dignity. Their advanced age, their composed demeanor and piercing gaze command respect from villagers and aristocrats alike. A retired diplomat with close ties to Whitehall, their London connections span ministers, ambassadors, and even the occasional royal confidant. Guided by an unwavering moral compass, they champion the values of duty, honor, and the preservation of tradition. With their spirited grandchild, Eliza, under their care, Talbot is devoted to imparting wisdom and nurturing a sense of integrity and leadership, ensuring the family legacy endures amidst a rapidly changing world.

## **Colonel Fionn O'Sullivan**

Age: adult generation

Keywords: military, irish, charming

Colonel O'Sullivan is a distinguished gentleman of Irish descent, known for his charming demeanor and impeccable manners. Having joined the military in his youth, he spent parts of his career overseas, where he cultivated both resilience and a deep appreciation for adventure. Upon retiring, he returned to his childhood home in East Wyrwood Shire, where his quick wit and knack for storytelling often has made him the center of attention at local gatherings. Despite his affable nature, he remains a bachelor, with whispers suggesting that a youthful heartbreak — being denied the hand of his first love — may have left its mark. He is a loyal friend and neighbor to Cecil Wentworth, the groom.

**Mr. Bertram Wentworth jr. “Bertie”**

Age: young generation

Keywords: careless heir, car racing enthusiast, charming

Mr. Bertram Wentworth, the lively heir of Elmwood estate, spends his days in carefree leisure, far removed from the responsibilities awaiting him. Freshly returned from Cambridge, he prefers the camaraderie of his club mates, indulging in spirited discussions about car racing—a passion fueled by his close friendship with Billy Abel, a dashing racing driver. Despite his charm and easy wit, Bertram remains aloof to the young ladies his father hopes might become his future wife, dismissing arranged marriage as an unwelcome distraction. Even on significant family occasions, his priority seems to be Billy’s company, their shared zeal for speed dominating his thoughts. While his indifference to estate matters raises a few eyebrows, Bertram’s charisma ensures he remains a favorite among peers and young ladies.

**Mr. William Abel “Billy”**

Age: young generation

Keywords: racing driver, German roots, interested in art

William Abel, formerly Wilhelm, is the charismatic and adventurous son of a wealthy German family who grew up in the surroundings of the English gentry. Renaming himself to William to blend seamlessly with his peers, he has become a close friend of young Bertie Wentworth. A connoisseur of beauty and speed, William divides his passions between the art world—where his discerning eye and appreciation for innovation set him apart—and the thrill of car racing as a race driver, where he seeks freedom and adrenaline. With an easy charm and a deep well of ambition, he bridges the worlds of tradition and modernity in this foreign country.

**Mr. Henry Parker**

Age: young generation

Keywords: ambitious, intelligent, career focused, politics

Mr. Henry Parker, an ambitious young man with a sharp mind and polished manners, is determined to make his mark in the world of politics or diplomacy. As the son of the lifelong friend of Mrs. Jennings, he finds himself warmly welcomed into her esteemed circle, where he eagerly cultivates connections that could shape his future. Encouraged by his proud parents, Henry is keenly aware of the importance of charm, intelligence, and strategic alliances in his chosen path. His heart has already set itself on young Miss Jennings, but a more prestigious match could still be on the horizon as his mother reminds him. Balancing ambition with matters of the heart, Henry navigates the delicate interplay of society, career, and romance with all the fervor of youth.



# Downstairs, female

## **Mrs. Hattie Robinson**

Age: adult generation

Keywords: housekeeper, loyal, caring, local, traditional

Mrs. Hattie Robinson, the housekeeper of Elmwood Estate, was born and raised in the East Wyrwood Shire and is deeply connected to the area and people. Determined to make the most of her humble beginnings, she attended the National Training School of Cookery, where she mastered the art of keeping a home. Her dedication earned her a position at the Wentworth house, where she quickly became indispensable. Over the years, she found pride in maintaining the household to her exacting standards while treating the staff with fairness and care. After the tragic loss of Mrs. Wentworth and young Emma, Mrs. Robinson grew deeply connected to the children, often offering them quiet comfort and stability in their time of need.

## **Mabel Hughes**

Age: adult generation

Keywords: enterprising, resourceful, determined

Mabel Hughes, the sharp and resourceful lady's maid to Mrs. Jennings, has served her employer with diligence for years, all while quietly nurturing her own ambitions. Mabel has been discreetly working on her own plans, with the late Mr. Jennings offering her some clandestine encouragement. Though her dreams are admirable, the shadow of her connection with Mr. Jennings lingers, leaving Mrs. Jennings suspicious and occasionally cold toward her trusted maid. This underlying tension makes Mabel's position precarious, forcing her to tread carefully as she balances loyalty and self-interest. Despite the challenges, her determination to build a future beyond service drives her toward independence and a vision of a better life.

## **Ethel Blake**

Age: young generation

Keywords: companion, colonial childhood, new in the Shire

Ethel Blake, born in the untamed beauty of South Africa, grew up amidst the stark contrasts of a colonial world. The daughter of a genteel Englishwoman and a dashing British officer who later abandoned the family, Ethel's childhood was shaped by resilience and resourcefulness. Her upbringing in a land of vast horizons fostered a bold, adventurous spirit, even as her mother's quiet determination instilled in her a sense of grace and propriety. Now in England as the companion to the benevolent Mrs. Crawford, Ethel strives to adapt to the rigid expectations of society while carrying the vibrant, unrestrained energy of her South African roots. Torn between two worlds, she seeks to define her place in a country that feels both familiar and foreign, relying on her charm and courage to navigate this new chapter of her life.

## **Elizabeth "Lizzy" Bennett**

Age: young generation

Keywords: first maid, experienced, local girl, compassionate, singer

Elizabeth "Lizzy" Bennett, the first maid at the Elmwood Estate, is an experienced and hard-working young woman. She was born and raised as the second out of ten children in a rather humble farmer family in the East Westwood Shire. Lizzy is compassionate and kind by nature and she prefers to be civil and professional with other members of household staff. Ever since her childhood she loved to sing. Though she has received no formal education, she is known for her angelic voice and is an esteemed member of church choir.

**Molly Newman**

Age: young generation

Keywords: new maid, city girl, ambitious, modern, entitled

Molly Newman is the new second maid at the Elmwood Estate. She compensates her lack of experience with ambition and entitlement of a modern city girl. She is sure being in service is not that complicated for a sassy girl like her and is probably just a stepping stone on her way to greater achievements. She is well informed about current political events and fashion trends, but is taking the greatest interest in her own well-being.



# Downstairs, male

## **Mr. Albert Wood**

Age: old generation

Keywords: butler, traditional, proud, authoritarian

Mr Albert Wood, the butler of many years at the Elmwood Estate, is a man of disciplined bearing and unwavering loyalty. Before entering the service of the Wentworth family, he served in the military for several years, an experience that shaped his keen sense of order and hierarchy. He leads the household staff with calm authority and knows every corner of the estate and the idiosyncrasies of its inhabitants. Albert is proud of his work, but advancing age is obviously starting to take its toll on him, something he would never openly admit.

## **Herbert West**

Age: young generation

Keywords: valet, art, fashion, new, attractive

Herbert West serves as the valet to Mr. Cecil Wentworth, a role he has fulfilled with dedication for over a year. A dashing young man with impeccable style, Mr. West shares his master's deep passion for art, fostering a strong rapport between them. Despite his diligence and unwavering commitment to his duties, some members of the household remain wary of him. However, his charm has not gone unnoticed, particularly among certain ladies who greatly enjoy his company.

## **Oliver Knight**

Age: adult generation

Keywords: intelligent, loyal, suspicious

Mr. Oliver Knight is Sir Talbot's valet and known for his sharp mind and equally sharp tongue. He is quick to judge others, both staff and guests, and has a ready theory for any behaviour that seems suspicious to him. His loyalty to Sir Talbot seems unwavering, and he sees it as his personal mission to protect his master from possible intrigue or inconvenience.

## **Ian Murray**

Age: adult generation

Keywords: first footman, irish, experienced, ambitious

Mr. Ian Murray, the first footman at the Elmwood Estate, is a talented and ambitious young man of Irish origin. As a Catholic in a Protestant-dominated society, he occasionally faces discrimination and prejudice, even within the household. Nevertheless, he is considered the right-hand man of the butler, Mr Wood. Ambitious and always striving to exceed the expectations of his superiors, Ian also takes on demanding tasks in the daily management of the household.

**Oscar Osborn**

Age: young generation

Keywords: second footman, country boy, friendly, naturally likable

Oscar Osborn, the amiable nephew of Mrs. Robinson, the housekeeper, is a steadfast presence in service, known for his easy smile and tireless work ethic. Though not originally from the village, he has quickly endeared himself to the locals and the household alike, forging friendships with his approachable nature and willingness to lend a hand. Despite his aunt's hopes of seeing him rise in service, Oscar remains content with his steady role, valuing camaraderie over ambition. However, his good standing has sparked a quiet rivalry with the First Footman, whose aspirations clash with Oscar's natural likability. While he harbors no ill will, Oscar often finds himself navigating the subtle tensions of their competition with his characteristic warmth and charm.



# Schedule

## **Thursday**

16:00 – 19:00 Workshops

19:00 – 19:30 Dinner

### **20:00 Act 0**

20.00 – 23.30 Arrival of guests, relaxed soirée

23.30 – Players can retire to bedrooms, the play can continue in common areas

Act 0 ends when the house goes to sleep, no later than 2.00

## **Friday**

8.00 – 9.00 Off-game breakfast, get ready for the game

### **9:00 Act 1**

09.00 – 10.00 Morning dressing hour

10.00 – 11.00 Upstairs in-game breakfast

11.30 – 12.30 Activities (block I)

12.30 – 13.00 Downstairs lunch

13.00 – 14.00 Upstairs luncheon

14.00 – 15.00 Activities (block II)

15.00 – 15.30 Downstairs afternoon tea

16.00 – 16.30 Upstairs afternoon tea

16.30 – End of act 1

### **17:30 Act 2**

17.30 – 18.30 Evening dressing hour

18.30 – 20.00 Upstairs dinner

20.00 – 21.00 The split: men go to the Gentleman's Room / women go to the Ladies Salon / no duty for servants

20.00 – 21.00 Downstairs Supper

21.00 – 23.30 Evening relaxation / Dancing / light duty for servants

23.30 – players can retire to bedrooms, the play can continue in common areas

Act 2 ends when the house goes to sleep, no later than 2.00





## **Saturday**

8.00 – 9.00 Out-time Breakfast, get ready for the game

### **Act 3**

09.00 – 10.00 Morning dressing hour

10.00 – 11.00 Upstairs in-game breakfast

11.30 – 12.30 Activities (Block I)

12.30 – 13.00 Downstairs Lunch

13.00 – 14.00 Upstairs Luncheon

14.00 – 15.00 Activities (Block II)

15.00 – 15.30 Downstairs Afternoon Tea

16.00 – 16.30 Upstairs Afternoon Tea

16.30 – End of Act 3

### **Act 4**

17.30 – 18.30 Evening dressing hour

18.30 – 20.00 Dinner

20.00 – 21.00 The split: Men go to the Gentleman's Room / Women go to the Ladies Salon / No duty for servants

20.00 – 21.00 Downstairs Supper

21.00 – 23.15 The celebration / dancing / light duty for servants

23.30 – end of the game

00.00 – 04.00 Afterparty

## **Sunday**

08.00 – 10.00 Breakfast

10.00 – 12.30 Clear room, departure

## **Activity Slots**

Activity slots are time slots we set apart to allow players to contribute social activities to the game. Players are welcomed to propose any activities suitable for a British household in 1914 that are possible to be played.

Some examples of playable activities:

- a matinée with music
- a poetry reading
- a game of croquet
- a meeting of a charity club
- a spiritual séance
- a bible study circle
- a lesson of Tango, this scandalous new dance from Paris

On the other hand a hunting party with horses might sound as an excellent idea in the context of the game, but is hardly playable.

The activities need to be communicated and aligned with the organizers before or during the game. Especially if you need any specific props, we would appreciate a longer notice.



# Dramaturgy

In order to structure the play and to direct the emotional development of the story we have divided the play into acts. Each of the acts has its theme and a general feeling, which are meant to be a guideline for the co-creative experience, rather than a requirement. However, we would appreciate it if most characters could pick up the mood of the phases and create a dense atmosphere together.

There are no time jumps between the acts, but a short break.

The time between the acts can be used to steer the relationships between the characters.

Act 0 – Happy Returns and New Endeavours

Act 1 – Worry and Quarrel

Act 2 – Escalation and Confrontation

Act 3 – Peacemaking and Hopes

Act 4 – Wishful Thinking

## Costumes

We do not require exact, historically correct costumes down to the smallest detail - the general appearance is more important to us and has the purpose of emphasising the difference between gentlemen and servants and the hierarchy among the servants and to approximate the style of the period.

You can sew your costume yourself, buy it off the rack or put it together from modern items of clothing that you already have in your wardrobe.

### Guidelines for gentlemen

#### For daytime:

- White shirt
- Three-piece suit
- Tie

#### For the evening:

- White dress shirt
- Waistcoat
- Black tailcoat
- White bow tie

### Guidelines for ladies

#### For daytime:

- Ankle-length, long-sleeved dress
- OR an ankle-length skirt with a long-sleeved blouse

#### For the evening:

- Ankle-length dress
- Elbow-length gloves
- Married women: Tiara as a headdress
- Jewellery

### Guidelines for staff

Whilst staff would theoretically wear extremely similar or identical clothing, we are only aiming for a basically uniform look for everyone. Some important things you should be aware of:

Ankle-length skirts and dresses may be too long for servants, as you may trip over your own hemline when climbing stairs and carrying something.

Therefore: As long as possible, but above all as short as necessary!

Servants should refrain from wearing bright or bold colours. Although at that time, the advent of aniline dyes, very bright, bright colours did exist, these were reserved exclusively for the upper classes.

Please take the fabric of your clothing into consideration, as there are open fires and candles the staff will most likely come into contact with. Cotton and Linen are to be preferred as fabric choices, as they are more unlikely to catch fire than polyester fabric.



# Safety

Even though a larp like Elmwood Chronicles – The Last Summer can sometimes get pretty intense, the safety of all participants has to be ensured at all times. Therefore there are some rules and hints, which should help to make a great experience possible for all participants.

## **Communication**

We do our best to create a safe environment for everyone and want everyone to feel welcome. Nevertheless, there might be situations where someone feels uncomfortable. If and when these situations arise, please don't hesitate to contact us so we can talk about it. We will do our best to solve the issues and we are always happy to listen.

## **Harassment and other misconduct**

At Elmwood Chronicles, we do not tolerate any form of real discrimination, whether based on sexuality, appearance, origin, gender, ability or the like. We strongly oppose such misconduct. Respect the boundaries and wishes of other participants, especially (but not only) in physically intimate interactions, and do not question them.

## **Physical Safety**

The physical safety of all players is always paramount. Even if there should be clashes between characters, these must not be taken seriously, but always just played. They should be exciting and create drama for bystanders, but at the same time they must be fun and safe for all participants.

## **Emotional Safety**

The more intense the situations, the stronger the experiences we often undergo. As a result, game situations are sometimes created that involve emotional borderline experiences. However, this can also lead to overstepping of boundaries, emotional injuries, and excessive stress that can tarnish the overall experience.



### **What to do in case of emotional overload?**

An immersive experience like Elmwood Chronicles can evoke strong emotions. This can be a very positive experience, similar to goosebumps when watching an exciting movie or real tears when reading a sad love story. However, it can also sometimes just be a bit too much, such as when an event in the game brings up real bad memories or evokes more emotion than expected. That's absolutely okay and nothing to be ashamed or afraid of. Those who feel they need a time-out in between or simply want to talk to someone about what they've experienced will find peace and quiet in a specially provided off-game area, and a sympathetic ear if needed.

### **Off-game area**

As the bedrooms will be a playing area during the acts, the players who might need some off-game time, a quiet room, a possibility to retire for a moment or a need to talk to someone off-game, can find all these in an off-game area, always available during the game. All participants are welcomed to use this area anytime, no explanations needed.

### **Location**

Safety and careful handling of the location are immensely important. Even if it means that some interesting actions and scenes cannot be played out. Please refrain from crazy and reckless stunts so that nothing is damaged and treat the interior with care. Also, refrain from anything that could stain or damage floors, walls, etc.

### **Open fire**

The location is illuminated and heated by traditional devices such as ovens and candles operated by open fire. Please be extra careful and mindful around open fire. Make sure to take care of your clothes and hair not coming too close to the candles. When choosing your outfits, you do best not to make use of easily inflammable polyester fabrics.

As a player of a servant character you might be required to light an open fire. If you are uncomfortable with doing it, please let the organisers know, they will make sure that another servant (an organiser or a helper) assists you with this work.

### **Alcohol**

Alcohol is allowed during the game. A few glasses of wine for dinner are included in the price. If you want a cognac for a late evening scene, you'll have to bring it along yourself. We do not want to see any visible drunk or intoxicated players at the game.



**Version 1.0.**

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Inspired by Social Season, Fairweather Manor, Immertreu,  
Lynwood Hall and many more games.

Pictures: Gutshaus Belitz

