

DEMETRA

PLAYER'S
HANDBOOK



TERRE SPEZZATE LARP



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INTRODUCTION

DEMETRA IS -A **LARP** - LIVE ACTION ROLEPLAY.

TAKING PART IN A LARP IS LIKE BEING ON A MOVIE SET. THE EVENTS ARE REPRESENTED IN A CREDIBLE LOCATION, SET UP WITH FAITHFUL SCENOGRAPHY, WHERE THE PLAYERS INTERACT, LIVING AND BUILDING THEIR OWN HISTORY WITHOUT A SCRIPT, MAKING CHOICES AND ACTIONS THAT INFLUENCE THE OTHER PLAYERS, THE STORY THAT IS TOLD, AND ITS FINALE.

THE THREE GOLDEN RULES OF LARP

STAY IN GAME:

1] WHILE YOU'RE PLAYING, ALWAYS STAY IN CHARACTER: with your words, deeds, thoughts. Refrain from going off game: deal with everything in character, avoid chatting of non-game topics, pay attention to expressions and personal objects which may be mismatched for the setting. The game is nice and catching if everybody makes it real and alive for everyone else.

2] REACT TO OTHERS' ACTIONS: Every action requires a reaction. If another character reveals a secret, beats you up, stabs you, appoints you head of the servants...react. It doesn't matter what you say or do, but DO something, possibly appropriate, funny, dramatic. In a larp no action should remain unreacted upon.

3] DON'T EXPECT A SPECIFIC REACTION, GO WITH THE FLOW: Accept other people's actions because in a larp everyone is their own director. Never question another player's choices, and never expect specific reactions from them: accept what happens as the best they can do, and pick up from there to add your touch to the story. In a larp there's no script, no rehearsals and no reshooting. It will not be perfect, but it will still be convincing, if you're willing to roll with it.

"PLAY TO LOSE"

In a larp there are no winners or losers. Through interactions between players a story is built. Don't be scared to reveal your secrets, to confess, to get "hurt" or even to die!

"PLAYING FOR OTHERS"

In larp it means sustaining and supporting their actions in order to build the game on them, involving as many players as possible in our plots, distributing the game to the players around us, without centering it on ourselves.



THE EXPERIENCE

Demetra is a larp which strives to turn around, taking to the extreme, social relationships typical of 1950ies USA, founded on an extensive patriarchy where women had as their best aspiration to be the perfect housewife. This larp wants to focus, in a politically incorrect way, on all imbalances and inequalities of gender which come from an imposition by society and tradition. Demetra narrates a fictional reality, inspired by a world which hardly still exists, but wants to push a reflection on nowadays facts.

We'd like to encourage participants to portray unusual characters, subverting traditional social roles thanks to this extreme dystopia. Demetra aims for this: a challenge!

OVERTURNING CLASSICAL ARCHETYPES

All characters in Demetra are written to be interesting and pleasing to play, as any other larp. What Demetra is peculiar on, however, is that classical gender archetypes are overturned, giving therefore a unique experience to the players of any gender.

The rich heir courted by many, the seductive Mata-hari style spy, the young idealist which fights against conventions, the rookie trying to prove his value in an all-female misandrist environment, the sly advisor who influences all decisions of his powerful wife, the "desired by women and hated by men" star, the apparently idiotic but secretly all-knowing secretary, the Homme-Fatale, the men-rights activist, the lover or son of the criminal boss, the "bond boy", the intellectual trying to reach a position... are all characters which will be available to male players.

On the other hand, the rich heir who needs to keep the family name intact, the poor but ambitious woman who rises to lead a company, the military officer, the political or religious leader, the hotheaded policewoman, the criminal boss, the ruthless killer, the 007, the bodyguard who needs to choose between duty and love, the flirt, the unsuccessful alcoholic penniless, the cynical detective, these will all be characters available to female players.

FEMALE CHARACTERS

Female players, without giving up their womanliness, will explore public roles of command, power: company leaders, spiritual or religious guides, finance sharks, influential thinkers. Their physical and social dominance is a status quo. Their responsibilities are both carried out in the public world - work, politics, competition - and in the private world, as head of the family and source of income in their households. They will portray themes such as ambition, political intrigue, dominance, social pressure, ethics and the protection of their family name.

MALE CHARACTERS

In this dystopia, male characters are physically weaker due to a genetic illness; therefore, they are deprived of most of their economical and social independence. They will experience unusual themes for them, such as housekeeping, private wellbeing, affectivity, interiority, as well as



opportunism, scheming, seeking social justice and equity. They will use seduction to pursue their objectives; they will manipulate, but also show their weaknesses, and their willpower. They will take advantage of their social role to investigate behind the scenes.

In Demetra, as men get old quickly and die young, more mature players can challenge themselves playing a much younger character, as well as younger players can portray an older character. Basically, player's and character's age are unrelated for male characters, it is on the contrary a subjective choice by the player.

CONFLICTS

In Demetra, secrets, investigation, intrigue and conflicts both of an ideological and of a physical nature will be of great importance. The purpose of conflicts is not victory, but the construction of a common history and relationships between characters. These scenes must be imagined in a "cinematographic" way and therefore must be interesting and involving even for those who do not directly take part in them.

Conflicts between characters and groups help to explore and develop relationships. The goal is to create an event that is immersive, choral and fun through the most emotionally realistic scenes achievable both for the characters directly involved and for those who are involved as spectators. We expect all participants to feel comfortable with the kind of verbal and physical intensity you would experience in a movie with action, dramatic, romantic or violent scenes. Perhaps not all players will want to take part in some of the strongest conflicts, so it is good to remember that it will always be possible to get away from a scene, if you do not want to take part in it, even just by physically leaving it, walking out of the room or stepping away.

POLITICALLY INCORRECT - A THOUGHT

All participants in this action larp, full of investigation and politics, will be pushed to take highly questionable decisions. As authors of Demetra, we'd like to point out this event doesn't wish to give any judgement, but to ponder about prejudices: reflections on the concept of social disparity, whatever it is or wherever it comes from. It's not just an event about discrimination of those parts of society which are seen as weaker, but also about the social pressure on those who are deemed stronger.



THE SETTING

Demetra is set in a dystopian world in which, after an environmental cataclysm and the spread of an illness related to the Y-chromosome, the political and social power has entirely shifted into the hands of women, especially to those who are heading "Demetra", the private company which has conquered the control of the food industry in just a few years.

THE EVENT THAT CHANGED EVERYTHING

January the 31st 1958. The secular pillars of society collapsed miserably, thus beginning a new era and opening the doors on a universe, completely alien and unknown till that moment. Radios and newscasts worldwide broadcast a tragic announcement: the probe Explorer I, launched by the United States, exploded midflight causing what is known today as the "Van Allen's Disaster." The blast caused an alteration of Earth's magnetosphere by covering its surface with Omega-radiation. The California Institute of Technology, perhaps in order to disguise a human error, affirmed that the fault could be attributed to a Russian sabotage. Whether it was sabotage or an accident, the consequences were devastating: soon the crops of cereals such as rice, wheat and corn began to deteriorate. The famine that followed was inevitable and devastating.

The first countries to collapse in the political and social chaos were the technologically backwards countries, whose economies were based mainly on agriculture. The roads were soon filled up with the hungry and the poor, and the mass graves were filled by dead bodies, buried hastily to avoid the spread of epidemics. Meanwhile, the more developed countries found themselves overwhelmed by tumult and protest demonstrations carried out by a terrorized population, facing the starvation of their children. The alternative foodstuffs, in addition to their exorbitant costs leading them to become exclusively available to the wealthy segment of society, were not enough to make up for the loss of the world crops of rice, wheat and corn. The increasing violence very soon brought the governments to employ the army against civilians, in an attempt to maintain the illusion of control. In the midst of this chaos, a company named Demetra gave the world a glimmer of hope.

DEMETRA

“GOOD SEEDS, GOOD HARVEST”

Demetra was a small military entrepreneurial company founded in 1939. Thanks to the Second Worldwar, Demetra blossomed and grew rich; it also expanded into the sector of food-production by exploiting the vast agricultural properties of the Rothschild family to meet the two principal needs of the moment: supply the soldiers with weapons and feed the population. It was not unusual for women to be called to work in time of war, since there was a high request for workers in the industry and in the fields. However Demetra was not only known for employing mainly female workers, but also for promoting women to the administration of the production departments.

At the end of the world war, the company invested the huge amount of accumulated resources in technological research: when the Disaster of Van Allen destroyed the greatest part of the crops, Demetra began to look for a solution. Strengthened by Rosalind Franklin's discovery of Dna,



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Demetra succeeded in producing a cereal that was resistant to the "Van Allen Virus". The company quickly obtained funds from all the governments and world powers, so that, at the beginning of the 1960s, Demetra already controlled the food market. Being the hand that feeds the world allowed Demetra to have a such an important social weight that it could keep the governments of the whole world in check. Basically, every word from Demetra assumed the value of a command. Even if there are a few who describe Demetra managers as vulgar profiteers, most of the world's people see Demetra as the saviour of humanity and are thankful that its careful eye keeps loving watch over them so that further similar catastrophes won't happen anymore.

Yet, it is known that there's nothing more fleeting than power itself, and even if Demetra is now the one who determines the actions of the governments and rules the international political game, a new and fierce Russian company, the Mokoš (Мокoш), is drawing attention to itself and seems to be willing to take over the dominant role on the market, like a modern David versus Goliath.

THE ILLNESS: "MARTHA CHASE-SYNDROME"

"IF MEN WERE BEAUTIFUL AND INTELLIGENT,
THEY WOULD BE CALLED WOMEN"

(AUDREY HEPBURN)

It was only by the end of 1962, when a limping and wounded world was moving towards a more serene future, that all of humanity faced a new and upsetting revelation. The WHO (World Health Organization) announced that unfortunately the consequences of "the disaster of Van Allen" had never stopped affecting the population. There turned out to be numerous, non-isolated cases, in which male individuals experienced a rapid senile dementia, deterioration of their physical condition and premature death. In less than one year, 200.000 deaths were linked to the new pathology. All victims were men older than 40 years. Thousand of families were deprived of fathers, uncles and grandparents, those who were until then the foundation of the family hierarchy. Consequently, leaving the new generations to grow up without elder male role models. As time went on, the incidence of the pathology increased instead of decreasing: about 90% of men under thirty suffered from incurable infertility, which caused a crash in the world demographic growth, and within 10 years their dramatic physical and mental decadence led to the consequent death.

Since the beginning of the crisis, Demetra allocated funds and high-skills personnel to study the pathology striking men. Thanks to this research, they discovered that the disease was a genetically transmissible illness: the electromagnetic waves derived from the blast of the Explorer 1 damaged the human Y-chromosome, generating a serious and permanent alteration. It was named the "Martha Chase syndrome" after the researcher that isolated the defect in the genome.

As a mother feeds and cares, so Demetra focused again on research in order to find a cure, but this time without success. The only result of the experimentation was a medicine based on androgenic hormones, a palliative which had only the effect of slowing down the impact of the illness. The "Martha Chase syndrome" upset the deepest nature of humanity, forever changing the social and cultural order.

No man now had the physical strength to accomplish heavy working, neither did they live long enough to fulfill any roles of authority, and the first symptoms of senile dementia often manifested well before the final phases of the syndrome.



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SOCIETY

"IN POLITICS, IF YOU WANT ANYTHING SAID, ASK A MAN.
IF YOU WANT ANYTHING DONE, ASK A WOMAN."

(MARGARET THATCHER)

The consequences of Martha Chase's syndrome were as devastating as they were fast. Suddenly a generation of women found themselves having to cover all the leadership and authority roles that were previously the prerogative of men. At the same time, in the imagination of society in the following years, an image of a weaker male took hold, a male who somehow needed to be protected from the world and above all controlled. The decrease in births and the early male infertility soon brought men to be considered a precious commodity, available only to those women who were able to keep them safe and provide an adequate living standard. This meant that only women with a solid career or a significant economic stability could afford the luxury of a husband by their side, while women from the less wealthy classes found themselves having to share a partner, forming alternative family units. Men were allowed just a few non-strenuous occupations, because of their physical fragility, and in positions subordinate to women; their main task was to raise children and spend as much time with them as possible before the first signs of physical and mental decay would make it dangerous for the men to take care of children. The most resourceful could try, for a few years, to fulfill jobs such as teacher, secretary, assistant, but a virtue was made of necessity, and the most appreciated virtues for a man resided in his being husband and father, destined to a comfortable and safe life as a new "domestic angel". Not only were men to be safeguarded and protected to guarantee the survival of the species, but a collective feeling also arose of wishing to grant the weaker sex ease, comfort and lack of worry in their short period of life. On the other hand, the decrease in available men led to the onset of new social unrest, brought on by those women who had failed at their careers and who showed their dissatisfaction with continuous protests.

Now, in the '80s, the transformations in the construction of male and female identities, the imposition of new technologies simplifying domestic work and the progressive increase in wages thanks to the economic boom has allowed many men to devote themselves totally to their homes and to the enhancement and elevation of the paternal role. By now the radicalization, in the collective imagination of the figure of the masculine homemaker and the female "bread winner", is a standard everyone adapts to.

In a world that applauds the "perfect" man, good husband and father, there are also figures who, with their ideas, deviate from these unwritten laws. These are dangerous libertines, who attract the resentment and dissent of the most vigorous and radical supporters of this new social state.

RELIGION

"BLESSED IS INDEED THE MAN WHOM GOD CORRECTS!
DO NOT DESPISE THE DISCIPLINE OF THE ALMIGHTY;
FOR HE WOUNDS, BUT ALSO BINDS;
HE STRIKES, BUT HIS HANDS ALSO HEAL."

(5, 17 – 18; 1994)

As every change evolves through chaos and suffering, even the one faced by the world could only create new clashes and give birth to new orders. Those who suffered the most were the ones who, immovable and strong of their old convictions, set themselves against change as rocks placed to stem the flowing of a river. If traditions could be a strong link with the past, soon they were no



longer enough to counteract the change, especially with the fall of the most conservative men and the pressing need for a new spiritual reference in those people who had experienced the tragedy on their skin.

These events soon led the Church to the need of renewing itself, opening its doors to the Prioresses, who flanked the Bishops in their councils, until they almost completely replaced the Bishops, leading to the great election of 17 February 1970 in which a woman became the first Popesse with the name of Benedetta I. If there are women and men who have found faith in God during those years of pain and suffering, it is also true that new trends of thought spread within the same Church. Where once women were seen as pernicious temptresses, now many are wondering if it hadn't been the Divine hand itself punishing men for their arrogance, sending the illness as a new terrible plague to teach those presumptuous sons a lesson about their mistakes and to show them their terrible fault.

TIMELINE

- ★ **JANUARY 31, 1958:** The Explorer I probe, launched by the United States, explodes during its flight causing the Van Allen disaster. The California Institute of Technology claims the accident is due to a Russian sabotage. Following the explosion, the charged particles of the Earth's magnetosphere undergo an alteration and invest the Earth's surface in the form of omega radiation.
- ★ **MARCH 1958:** The first effects of radiation are evident in a famine of cereal crops: first were wheat, rice, corn and oats.
- ★ **MAY 3, 1958:** the United Nations Organization raises the alert and declares the World Crisis while the poorest countries are the first to be torn apart by the Famine.
- ★ **OCTOBER 1958:** it's discovered that the main cause of death of cereal crops is a virus that has mutated due to omega radiation.
- ★ **DECEMBER 1958:** famine has a global reach, causing millions of deaths.
- ★ **JANUARY 1959:** the US company Demetra announces having found a disease-resistant wheat variant, thanks to Rosalind Franklin's DNA studies. National funds are diverted to the company and its research laboratories, in order to stem the crisis.
- ★ **SPRING 1960:** Demetra begins to distribute flour at cost price mainly to the populations of the United States of America, where the rationing of the resources is still enforced: people praises Demetra as their savior.
- ★ **SUMMER 1960:** Europe, Russia and Japan are indebted to Demetra, that in exchange for its contribution, requires to be able to manage the research funds for the assisted countries.
- ★ **SEPTEMBER 11, 1961:** the World Food Program (United Nations Food Assistance Agency) is born, headed by Demetra managers themselves.
- ★ **OCTOBER 15, 1962:** a warning is issued - the omega virus has also had repercussions on the human race by altering the Y chromosome and weakening men.
- ★ **JANUARY 1963:** Kennedy dies of complications. News that the disease led him to dementia and insanity spread. He had been hospitalized, dying after a few month.
- ★ **SPRING 1963:** the world faces a crisis due to the increasing cases of male dementia and physical weakening. The first women appear in the governments of many countries and many male political figures "disappear" from the public scene.
- ★ **DECEMBER 4, 1963:** Pope Paul VI announces that following a consultation with the Council of Bishops, the Prioresses of the female monastic orders are admitted to the Council itself. He will be remembered as the "enlightened" Pope.
- ★ **JUNE 1965:** The first female American President is elected.
- ★ **FEBRUARY 17, 1970:** the first Popesse with the name of Benedetta I gains the papal throne.



- ✿ **SUMMER 1987:** Mokoš, a new import-export company of Russian origins, appears on the market.

AUGUST 1989: THE DEMETRA MEETING

This year's International Congress is also Demetra's 50th anniversary party and the brave motto is: "Making changes is key in achieving goals". The nature of the event is both frivolous and serious, as the program features light and funny activities for men, such as the Debutants Ball, but also the long-awaited launch of Demetra's new revolutionary product. Prestigious guests, politicians and religious personalities, along with renowned entertainers will contribute to the atmosphere of this unmissable event.

Demetra was, is and forever will be the beacon of hope in the middle of the storm. Are you ready for change? Are you ready for the future?

GOOD SEEDS, GOOD HARVEST.

CHARACTERS

DEMETRA is designed for 90 characters, all of them pre-written by the authors. The full descriptions will be secret, for the player's eyes only, while a subset of "public information" will be published for each character to allow an informed choice. Such public info will consist of:

- ✿ a motto, a sentence describing the character;
- ✿ a teaser, a short description of the character as it is perceived from others;
- ✿ a list of their "public" social ties (i.e. the ones everyone can know about, several more will be secret).

Once the character is assigned, the full character sheet will disclose the true nature of the character, their motives, secrets, and the complete list of their social ties.

Your adventure in **DEMETRA** starts with your character.

The complete private info on each character will include:

- ✿ a brief description of the character written in first person and revealing glimpses of background, personality, problems, secrets, life goals and aspirations
- ✿ a description of their social ties and relevant relationships
- ✿ a short paragraph about moral, religious or political point of view
- ✿ additional paragraphs about private or common info and goals, possibly describing secret knowledge about relevant events or people involved in the story
- ✿ a common "group" description for those character who attend the Meeting because they are part of a specific work group, ie. the Demetra Management or ESS.



GROUPS

Demetra's 50th anniversary party is almost ready and the guest list is pretty long. Some participants are of course the ruthless elite of the **DEMETRA MANAGEMENT GROUP**, holding the company flag high in this important meeting; but there will be also some sharks from their rising merciless competitor, the Russian company named **MOKOS**.

The **EMPLOYEES AND LABORERS OF THE YEAR** will be welcome as well, for their efforts are the emblem of Demetra's success. Obviously this joyful occasion must be accurately covered by **THE JOURNALISTS OF THE PRESS**.

PRESTIGIOUS GUESTS from the showbiz and their personal staff are not going to miss this one.

Rumors are spreading about what kind of **ENTERTAINERS** will be invited this year. Models, escorts and gladiators accurately chosen for their fresh charm.

The names of the most influential **EMINENCES OF THE NEW REFORMED CHURCH** are on the list as well, because Demetra believes it's unwise to disregard the spirit in worldly occasions, Faith must be held in the right place and bless the wheat that feeds the Earth.

The safety of the powerful people invited is a top priority, and it's guaranteed by the most efficient security guard corp available on the market, the **ELITE SECURITY SERVICES**.

INTENSITY AND SAFETY

As a participant in Demetra, you agree to avoid performing any action which could be dangerous or excessively annoying for you or other participants.

At the same time you agree to:

- ✿ be generally comfortable with the kind of verbal intensity and body contact you would experience if you were acting
- ✿ tune the intensity of the game to your own accord, using the safewords described in the next paragraph
- ✿ avoid or walk away from in-game situations you find uncomfortable as a player, before they become unbearable
- ✿ respect other players and their choices, and care for their experience
- ✿ use physical contact to create interesting larp moments, not to assert yourself on other players
- ✿ Remember the Golden Rule #0: always take care of your physical and emotional well-being



During the game you could be hugged, grabbed, insulted, carried, kissed, frisked, threatened, tied, hit with rubber replicas of batons and knives.

Still, all of the above shall always be performed with appropriate caution and respect for everyone's safety and dignity. And most importantly, you can opt-out of anything you find uncomfortable. Actually, **YOU HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY TO DO SO.**

SO PLEASE: NEVER BE AFRAID TO USE SAFEWORDS, NEVER QUESTION OR JUDGE OTHERS WHO USE THEM.

SAFEWORDS

There are two safewords every participant needs to know and respect. They will be used to call for a reduction or an increase of intensity, without breaking off character.

"LAY OFF!"

This means "Slow down, be careful, you are acting or speaking in a way that I feel may soon become unpleasant or dangerous". The other participant stays in character, but scales down: interrupts physical contact/changes topic/gives some space to the person who called the safeword.

"IS THAT ALL?"

This means: "I'm enjoying what you are doing or saying, feel free to escalate a bit. Let's make this scene more realistic, as it is turning out interesting and/or fun". The other player, in this case, is not required to comply if they don't feel like. This safeword is a suggestion, not a request.

OFF-GAME STUFF

HOSTS AND HOSTESSES

Each Demetra player will be in-game for the entire duration of the larp. Still, our staff will need to move through the area to tend to food, SFX, and other stuff. To do so without breaking the illusion, they will wear distinctive gear and they will act like anonymous hosts and hostesses of the Meeting. Those people, in the fiction, take care of the most humble jobs and they're usually busy moving stuff, cleaning, etc.

Let's take it as a convention that nobody cares about Hosts and Hostesses, as they have no part in the story at all. They are not "real characters" and they will be dressed as anonymous waitress and waiters, white shirt, black trousers, black vest and a **YELLOW ROSE** on the chest; if you see somebody dressed like this please ignore them and keep playing. If you need to talk with an organizer for off-game matters, you can ask the Concierge.

THE CONCIERGE

You will always find the Concierge in the ground floor of the Hotel. You can recognise him/her by the same attire as hosts and hostesses but with a **BLUE ROSE** pinned to the chest.. Like them, (s)he



is not a real character; but unlike the hosts and hostesses, the Concierge is available for any questions, clarifications and explanations, and for a friendly talk.

If you need to talk with the Staff during the game, for any reason, look for the Concierge, and talk to him/her discreetly. If you see any other characters already talking, don't eavesdrop: they are talking about off-game matters. The Concierge is there to help with any in-game or out-of-game doubt, question or problem you might have.

NO ENTRY ZONES - "HIGH VOLTAGE"

Doors, items, rooms and places marked with a **"DANGER - HIGH VOLTAGE"** sign are not part of the game. Players are forbidden from entering those room/places, and/or any interaction with those items must be avoided. Simply ignore them and move on!



SLEEPING

Sleeping hours will be guaranteed with no animation by the STAFF from 2 AM to 9 AM at least. It is forbidden to make noise on the floors where people sleep during those hours.

"SENSITIVE" ACTIONS AND MUTUAL RESPECT

FRISKING AND SEARCHING

We expect players to avoid touching intimate areas like breasts, groin or bottom during frisking actions. And to never search inside offgame bags in the Rooms.

Correspondingly, don't hide game objects in those areas! Game objects are to be carried inside pockets, briefcases, in-game bags or other similar and easy accessible places.

What bags are off-game?

You will receive some "High Voltage" sticker to apply on the bags in your room to be considered offgame. Do not put any in-game items inside; you can hide it in your room, or place it openly visible on the top of your baggage.

RESPECT FOR OTHERS' PROPERTY

If your character steals, for example, a weapon or a piece of clothing of another character, you will find yourself in the hands of a prop which belongs to another player, or to the Staff. In that case, always remember to have the utmost respect for others' property and use it with special care.

Common sense dictates not to lose or destroy the costumes and objects of the other players, and to prevent people from thinking they have been robbed "for real". Find a way to get them back to the owner in a few hours, or at least show that they are safe.



TYING, BLINDFOLDING, CARRYING

Any potentially risky action is governed by the safewords shown above. However, regardless of what a player might say, or not say, you should never indulge in objectively dangerous or disrespectful actions.

Never restrain someone's hands behind their back, never involve the neck in any bound and avoid tight knots. If you want to blindfold someone, you will be responsible for their safety as long as they are blindfolded.

Be careful not to strain yourself when carrying someone (e.g. a 'wounded' character): share the burden among a few people or even better, use one of the stretchers provided.

In any case, never carry someone down a staircase or on slippery ground. Remember: safety comes first!

CAPTIVITY & TORTURE

Arresting or kidnapping a character is an appropriately dramatic way to further a conflict. Should you detain a character, please follow these guidelines:

Never leave a prisoner alone, unless you are trying to allow their escape: playing alone is mostly boring. Also make sure to provide food and water to your prisoner.

If a scene with a captive is becoming dull or boring, it is time to end it: make up a plausible excuse for their release or give them a chance to escape. As a prisoner, you can call for an end to the scene by giving in to your captor's requests or trying to bargain your release.

If the captor simulates employing torture, the victim will always break after one or two minutes, and they will comply with everything asked by the interrogator, disclosing information or taking (true or false) responsibilities.

SEX SCENES

Scenes involving sex and intimacy are particularly delicate and should be approached with responsibility. Intimacy scenes, like a hug, are normally acted out, while sexual acts are simulated, usually by miming them in a softer way.

We expect and encourage a frequent use of safeword when sexual scenes are concerned: anyone should have the possibility to play them in a way as abstract as they deem fit.

In any case, touching or caressing genitals, chest, bottom, the inner thigh, etc. is not part of the game, please let's behave like adults about this.

SOME GUIDELINES:

- ✿ Intimacy scenes like holding hands, stroking hair, whispering, hugging and similar actions do not require any kind of simulation and are simply acted out as you would do with any other action.
- ✿ A kiss on the cheek or on the lips represents a passionate kiss. Accompanied by a hug, sighs and moans may represent passionate foreplay
- ✿ A hug with caress on the back or numerous kisses on the cheek accompanied by sighs and moans represent passionate foreplay
- ✿ Taking off or unlacing in an evocative way one or more piece of clothing from your partner represents sexual intercourse. Of course, this doesn't mean you can strip other players naked, use your common sense to create decent and pleasant scenes. A small gesture, like removing a



tie or slowly unbutton a jacket will be more than enough when accompanied by hugs, moans and other appropriate actions.

- ✿ Sex scenes are just a tool to further develop your character. After taking part in one, lovers should play a meaningful scene together. There can be a bitter farewell, a promise of eternal love, a last moment of tenderness before the coming storm, or a cop sharing some inconvenient secrets with her favorite sex worker...

ABUSE

Finally, we ask you to **AVOID SCENES OF SEXUAL ABUSE OR VIOLENCE** completely: their mere presence can be inappropriate for many participants and they are in no way necessary to the event..

On the other hand, objectification, verbal harassment and episodes of domestic violence could be part of the experience for some characters, but all the players involved should be extra careful and use the safewords during such scenes. Even in that case, always remember that: no one is compelled to play those scenes, victims and abusers alike.

Take care of yourself and take care of the fellow players, if something doesn't feel completely right and safe, step away from the situation and possibly talk to the Concierge. It doesn't matter what the character sheet says, your well being always comes first.

GETTING DRUNK

Light alcoholic beverages will be available during the event. Please, drink with moderation. Should you find yourself tipsy, please avoid any situation where physical contact and/or combat is involved. Drunk players won't be allowed to take part in the game and, if any staff member finds you in such a state, you will be sent to the off game area to clear your head for a few hours as needed.

UNARMED VIOLENCE

All fighting in Demetra is self-regulated by each player through common sense, care for other players' well-being and fun, and the "rule of cool". We trust everyone to improvise fights safely and cooperatively, while respecting a few conventions.

Fights will not be staged in advance, but they should be played out as if they were happening on a stage. Thinking about "What do onlookers think of this fight? Is it cool to watch? Is it believable?" is a very effective guideline for creating physical confrontations that are playable and run smoothly.



BRAWLS

Unarmed fights are mostly for show: they should rarely have consequences but for a momentary headache. Also, Demetra is a larp about espionage, not street fights, so we expect brawls to be very rare. Still, unarmed fights might occur, therefore during the pre-game workshop we'll try out some "stage fighting" to make everyone comfortable in safely simulating unarmed fights.

IN SHORT, THE MAIN PRINCIPLES ARE:

- ✳ Play along with your opponent, like in a dance rather than in a sport. Think ahead of how they will "hit" you and how you will react.
- ✳ Use common sense and be believable: if you're outnumbered, less trained, worse equipped, significantly smaller than your opponent, your character should probably "lose" the fight
- ✳ Grabs, slow fake punches to the body, slow fake kicks to the legs are way easier and safer to represent than fake punches to the head. Better avoid those. Weak slaps are acceptable if you're careful.
- ✳ Start slowly and safely (minimal, and not annoying, physical contact), then gradually step it up if the other player seems OK with that.
- ✳ Be aware of safewords, and don't be afraid to use them, both **"LAY OFF"** and **"IS THAT ALL?"**
- ✳ If you get a severe beating, you will need to see a doctor. Seek for medical assistance.

PHYSICAL STRENGTH: MALE AND FEMALE CHARACTERS

In the Demetra dystopian reality, women are always stronger than men due to the Martha Chase Syndrome. Act on it! The only exception to this rule is when a man is drugged with Testosteroid, in that case, the physical strength of the characters is the same.

GLADIATORS' FIGHTS

Gladiators shows are always one vs one fights and they are handled pretty much like brawls.

A fight is won when the opponent stays on the floor for 5 seconds or if he surrenders. Those fights are purely for show and the outcome is decided by the cheering of the crowd. It's the audience that influence and determine who wins by cheering, supporting and shouting the name of their favourite gladiator.

There is an exception though, because some characters might have a special skill meaning that they are more trained or strong. When a character with this special skill enters the ring for a fight, he can say out loud a "key phrase" to let the opponent know, the phrase must always be about the strength of his fists.

For example: "when you'll meet my mighty fists you'll wish you'd never been born" or "behold my iron fists!!" are typical ways to say the "key phrase" before a gladiator fight.

If the opponent doesn't have the special skill, he will lose the fight; if he does have it, he will pronounce a similar claim about his fists in response, and in that case the outcome of the fight will be determined by the audience.

It's important to address the crowd and say the gladiator's name before the fight, fueling their enthusiasm in order to make them shout the gladiator's name for support during the show.



ARMED VIOLENCE

MELEE WEAPONS

Melee weapons accepted in Demetra include: latex replicas (the typical “larp weapons”) and a few more harmless props, such as retractable plastic knives and cutting tools with the blade replaced with tin foil.

We will provide players (and the location) with some weapons.

Off-game, be careful when using melee weapons: never hit with your full force (a mere touch is enough), never hit to the face or groin, never swing your weapon wildly.

Using melee weapons should carry in-game consequences. Even a single blow will injure your character until they receive medical attention; please play accordingly! You might scream in pain, try to flee, pretend you can’t use your arm or leg, that blood loss is making you feel weak, and so on.

If you receive more than one blow, your character should be defeated: exhausted, begging for mercy, in too much pain to act, or anything else you feel is cool. We advise against having your character become unconscious: since being unconscious is boring and does not create much play in a larp, there are better and more dramatic alternatives.

If you got hit by Melee Weapons, you need to go to a doctor who can tell you when and how you will get better.

FIREARMS

Demetra is not a shoot-em-up kind of larp; moreover, the larp is mostly indoor and inside the hotel, and the respect for the mountain environment prevented us from using blank-firing weapons as we often do. But guns are cool and they are also very appropriate for some of the characters involved in an espionage story. So in Demetra we will use electric airsoft guns **WITHOUT PELLETS**, which look as cool as a real gun, but make a very muffled sound as if there were silencers on the weapons.

- ✿ Electric airsoft guns are pretty easy to handle. Nonetheless, we will have a specific workshop on the use of firearms. The few rules to remember are:
- ✿ Ordinary people are scared by firearms.
- ✿ A character wounded by a gunshot needs immediate medical assistance
- ✿ If someone with a firearm threatens you, you **MUST** concede the scene. (the mechanic **HELD AT GUNPOINT** is described in the following paragraph).



HELD AT GUNPOINT

This rule has been designed to encourage using fake guns to perform movie-style high-tension scenes involving gun threats, like taking hostages and forcing decisions, rather than “dull” gunfights, which in the end are much less dramatic.

If someone is pointing a firearm against a character or is threatening them with a knife, they are said to be "held at gunpoint". The character cannot react, run away or start a physical struggle, and has to comply with every demand instead.

An armed character can hold at gunpoint all characters in the same room (or small glade, or any other small area). All demands coming from an armed character must be reasonable and should make it possible for the others to comply and the story to progress. Such scenes should never be dragged on for too long. As long as they are present, armed characters have “the room under their control”, and this kind of situation resolves when they see their demands satisfied or they decide to move away.

Armed characters can find themselves held at gunpoint by other armed characters entering the area after them and so on, until the situation resolves.

The last armed character entering the scene has the area under their control, but keep in mind it is impossible to take control of a scene from clearly superior opponents.

Example: if Peter is holding a character at gunpoint using a pistol, knives won't be enough to intimidate him and obtain control of the room. If there are two characters using pistols to hold other characters under gunpoint, at least two guns will be necessary to intimidate them, as one won't be enough. This is just for plausibility, please don't get into fine accountancy: if the situation looks confused, avoid further intervention.

JUST GO FOR PLAYABILITY AND DRAMA AND EVERYTHING WILL BE FINE.



GAME MECHANICS

WHITE ROOM

The White Room is a particular room where the character can get hints and suggestions to convey the game and the setting of Demeter. The White Room is a symbolic space, while players physically step into the room, characters live an inner experience. In particular, within the W.R. a character can listen to the representation of social conscience, of those unconscious convictions that are instilled by an unequal society and that justify a series of social attitudes of stigmatization and guilt.

If players find hard to live or convey such a different environment from that in which we live, they can book a session in the W.R. by asking for a "Blue Lagoon" to the Concierge. It is a cocktail that was popular in the '80s and it's the code phrase to ask to go to the White Room.

Players might go to White Room right away if it's available, or they could be called afterwards by the Concierge, personally or by a hostess, always using a key phrase: "The Blue Lagoon is served": at which point the player must go to the entrance of the W.R. or give up their turn.

The Staff might summon players inside the W.R. to give cues or precise indications that may influence their character.

THE MARTHA CHASE DISEASE PROGRESSION

Players of male characters can freely decide how the disease affects them, and possibly get sick during the event even if the character sheet does not give instructions on the matter.

Characters who have Psychiatric qualifications (characters and npcs) have the power to diagnose the progress of the disease both on a psychiatric and neurodegenerative level and to remove the few civil rights granted to the patient. If it happens, a man is completely under the authority of the closest female relative / wife, or under the medical authority represented by the psychiatrist herself. Once officially declared sick, the character receives a medical bracelet on his wrist that highlights his status as a subject sick and deprived of all rights.

NEWS AND RUMORS

Intel is key in a spy story, and sensitive information might destroy or blackmail any opponent. There is a difference between solid intel and rumors: the latter can only affect the reputation of weak individuals, such as men or women with no power and money, but rumors cannot influence the public opinion or compromise a wealthy or famous woman, or a huge company. In order to blackmail or ruin the image of those subjects who have the power to destroy the credibility of nearly any accuser, you need proof.

Only by having evidence such as documents, tapes or witnesses one can threaten the reputation of powerful people and institutions. Specific characters working for the Press have the power to spread accusations supported by facts, and therefore influence the public opinion.

DRUGS

TESTOSTEROID

Represented by blue crystals (it's sugar and food colouring), Testosteroid is a drug developed by Demetra for slowing the effects of the Martha Chase Syndrome on men. A dose of 2 or 3 crystals can temporarily stop the aging process caused by the disease. Each player can freely decide (for dramatic purposes) both the disease progression and the effects of Testosteroid on himself.

ARES' POTION

It's an illegal drug probably derived from testosteroid. Represented by a syringe filled with blue liquid, once injected (not for real, just empty the syringe making a plausible scene) Ares' Potion effects are: aggressive behaviour and a considerable increase of physical strength. For a short time (a scene or a fight) a man drugged with Ares' Potion become as strong as a woman. It is highly addictive.

COCAINE

Cocaine is represented by powdered sugar. Getting high on cocaine does not have particular effects on the game, except for the emotional instability that goes with the drug. It could cause euphoria, overactivity and/or paranoia. Feel free to portray the effects that look more fun to play or supportive for your personal story.

TRUTH SERUM

It is represented by specific syringe filled with water. A character can dose another with the truth serum only after a pressing interrogation of at least 10 minutes. The victim will feel numb, disoriented, and will answer truthfully to questions. The drug lasts a scene.

CHLOROFORM

Chloroform is represented by a small bottle of a coloured liquid with a strong smell (mouthwash). If someone put a mouthwash scented cloth on your mouth you have been drugged and you must quickly act dizzy, and then pass out. Since a prolonged blackout is not than funny, after a couple of minutes you can regain conscience and still act dizzy, mild and confused until the drug's effects are gone. The drug lasts a scene, after that you will slowly recover but you will suffer a severe headache and memories of what happened will be blurred for at least a couple of hours.



NERVE GAS

Nerve Gas is represented by white smoke. Poisoning by a nerve agent acts quickly and in few seconds leads to blurred vision, difficulty breathing, nausea, convulsions, fainting. Death by asphyxiation or cardiac arrest will follow in few minutes due to the loss of the body's control over respiratory and other muscles. A quick exposure is enough to be poisoned: if you see smoke close to you or you can smell, run or die!

DEATH

Demetra is not a larp focused on death or tragedy, but there must be a chance to kill in every good spy story. Characters can assassinate each other, but death can happen only during **THE THIRD DAY OF THE LARP**. It's important that everyone can fully live their personal story, that's why death is handled by the victim, a lethal wound should always leave the possibility for the character to say the last words and have a good ending.



PRACTICALS

WHERE

The venue is La Baita della Luna Hotel, in Località Sagnalonga, 22, 10054 Cesana torinese TO.

The Meeting Point for the larp is:

[Ponte Tibetano di Claviere](#)

[Coordinates: 44.940996, 6.756493](#)

This location serves both as Parking Lot for players coming by car, and as a departure point for the shuttle taking luggage and (if you don't feel like walking) people to the actual venue.

The Baita della Luna Hotel is in Sagnalonga, and can be reached walking on a beautiful mountain trail. It's 4.4 km and the walk is approximately 1 hour, there is a nice plateau to stop for a while and rest, in the middle of the route.

TRANSPORTATIONS

For the International Run we booked a Larp Bus.

LARP BUS - FROM TURIN AIRPORT TO THE LARP VENUE

Leaving the Airport, Caselle Torinese TO on Thursday, August 1st, at 11:30AM
- there will be the possibility to catch the Bus from Turin subway station Fermi.

LARP BUS - FROM LARP VENUE TO TURIN AIRPORT

Leaving the Larp Venue on Sunday, August 4th, at 10:00AM
Arriving at the airport at 12:00AM
- there will be the possibility to stop at Turin subway station Fermi.

Cost: 20€ for a round trip, to pay directly on the Bus.

WHEN

The Italian run starts on Saturday the 27th and ends on Monday the 29th.

From Monday to Wednesday the 31st players can stay at the venue to enjoy some summer mountain days on the Alps.

The International run starts on August, Thursday the 1st and ends on Saturday the 3rd. All international players can stay at the hotel also Saturday night and leave on early Sunday morning, either by car or with the Larp Bus.



TERRE SPEZZATE LARP



WWW.GRV.IT/DEMETRA-EN

SCHEDULE



Program and Schedule

Thursday August 1 ...

| | |
|--|-------------|
| Larp Bus Departure..... | 11:30 ca |
| (Turin Airport - Caselle) | |
| Larp Bus stop..... | 12:00 ca |
| (FERMI Subway Station) | |
| Larp Bus Arrival..... | 13:30 |
| (Packet Lunch: sandwich & soft drinks) | |
| Trasfer to the hotel..... | 13:30-15:30 |
| (shuttle for luggage & people, nice walk is optional) | |
| Check-In..... | 13:30-15:30 |
| Workshop..... | 16:00-19:00 |
| Getting ready..... | 19:00-20:00 |
| Time-in and Dinner..... | 20:00 |
| Sleep Time..... | 02:00 |
| (The nights are in-game, but silence is mandatory in the room floors) | |

Friday August 2 ...

| | |
|--|-------|
| Breakfast..... | 10:00 |
| Sleep Time..... | 2:00 |
| (The nights are in-game, but silence is mandatory in the room floors) | |

Saturday August 3 ...

| | |
|-----------------------|-------|
| Breakfast..... | 10:00 |
| Time-Out & Lunch..... | 14:00 |
| After Pary..... | 18:30 |

Sunday August 4 ...

| | |
|---------------------------------|-------|
| Breakfast & Check Out..... | 07:00 |
| Larp Bus Departure..... | 10:00 |
| Larp Bus Stop - FERMI Sub..... | 11:20 |
| Larp Bus Arrival - Airport..... | 12:00 |



ACCOMMODATION

The venue for the larp is the Baita della Luna, in Località Sagnalonga, 22, Cesana Torinese. A charming and full comfort hotel in a breathtaking plateau among the mountains, surrounded by nature. Besides the bedrooms, all with private bathroom included, the resort has a huge restaurant room with fireplace, a sun terrace, a game room with a pool table, a functioning bar, a restaurant terrace and several lounge areas. The hotel is the only touristic venue in the area and therefore also the amazing surroundings will be available during the larp for strolling, sun bathing and, of course, playing.

Accommodations are going to be in beds or bunk beds.

You will need to bring along towels, while linen and blankets will be provided by us.

Rooms are assigned in-game, so characters who are married with each other, or colleagues, will be assigned a room to share.

You will receive the check-in instructions and room number at the Meeting Point, right after your arrival, or during the trip on the Larp Bus.

You will find the envelope containing all the in-game material directly in your room.

FOOD

The larp price includes all the meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner) and beverages served during the game and the after party. Food will be cooked and served according to the posh and sophisticated attire of the larp, there will be both vegetarian and vegan options and a moderate amount of alcohol such as wine, cocktails, spirits and beer. We expect all the participants to behave as adults: drunkenness will not be tolerated and the staff members will impose out of game breaks to anyone who might overindulge in drinking; furthermore, troublesome behaviour will lead any participant to their immediate removal from the event. There is also a bar in the hotel where you will be able to buy extra beverages, coffee and tea if you want to.

Before the larp you will receive a google form asking to point out food allergies. The Kitchen is one ambient only, therefore it will be impossible to meet the requirements for severe intolerances due to contamination such as celiac disease. We suggest the players to provide their own food that will be carefully kept separated by the kitchen staff and served in-game.

MEALS INCLUDED IN THE TICKET:

- ✿ a packet lunch at your arrival (or on the Larp Bus).
- ✿ all the in-game meals;
- ✿ refreshments during the after-larp party



PERSONAL BELONGINGS

What you should bring:

- ✿ a fresh and light outfit for the day
- ✿ something really warm for the evening and late night*
- ✿ toiletries (and hairdryer if you need one)
- ✿ towels
- ✿ linen (only Italian players)
- ✿ [optional] beach towel and swimsuit for sunbathing

*Mountain weather and temperatures can, and probably will be, tricky.

It can be really hot during the day and temperatures can drop when the sun goes down. Also summer storms come and go quickly on the Alps. Diurnal temperature variation is quite extreme, for example: in the first days of July, peak daily temperature is 22° while minimum daily temperature is 8°.

COSTUMES

CLASS, CHARME, ELEGANCE

The Demetra costumes are based on the 50s and 60s taste.

After the “Van Allen” disaster and the resulting social drift many facts hadn’t happened in this history: no sexual revolution shook the 1968 and no miniskirt changed the feminine dress code. Once the wealth got stable again, the sense of fashion pointed to that time full of hope that were the ‘50s: knee-length skirts and frill fabrics for a celebration of femininity. Women don’t feel like changing outfits that make them feel beautiful and comfortable. The male dress code goes along, elegance and taste are glorified: the classy Cary Grant’s style coexist with the sensual and transgressive Marlon Brando and James Dean looks.

Considering the dystopian nature of this event and the return of the vintage among trends, it will be very easy to set up a beautiful outfit made with “historically incorrect”, and yet larp appropriate, garments for both men and women.



WOMEN'S CLOTHING

Femininity is the keyword. You can wear a flared dress with petticoat, an elegant pencil skirt or whatever highlights your best assets. Pants will be fine as well: fitted with a pois print or cushy in monochrome - maybe in a cream white color. The evergreen "capri" pants were born during this corner of time. You can easily find affordable 50s garments in a lot of webshops. Also, designers and maisons often relaunch old lines and vintage fabrics in their collections. Dare to stand in a crowd wearing bright colors, floral prints and the pois - a true must from the 50s! You can also use belts, lace gloves, pochettes, foulards, and hats that emphasize your face.

MEN'S CLOTHING

Style, charm and elegance are the basic '50s male fashion diktat. A polo and comfy pants or shorts for the barbecue, an elegant suit for the restaurant and the movies. Hat, blouse, coat and tie are a must for important events. Cuffed jeans and t-shirt or sporty blouse are good for casual wear, best if matched with a cardigan or a leather jacket. The aggressive Danny Zucco style is very representative. Remember: men dress to make the best impression in every way!

The details are always looked after: elegant shoes, boots and loafers will be fine. A nice hat can enrich every outfit and don't forget to give yourself some more retro touch adding straps, bow ties, watches and cufflinks to your setup. It's so easy you might even have something useful in your wardrobe... if not, you can have a look at flea markets and clothing chain hipsters collections, but don't forget to search fathers and grandpas closets first: they can be a true goldmine for a full retro outfit!



TERRE SPEZZATE LARP



WWW.GRV.IT/DEMETRA-EN

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