

# Social Contract for Role Playing Games

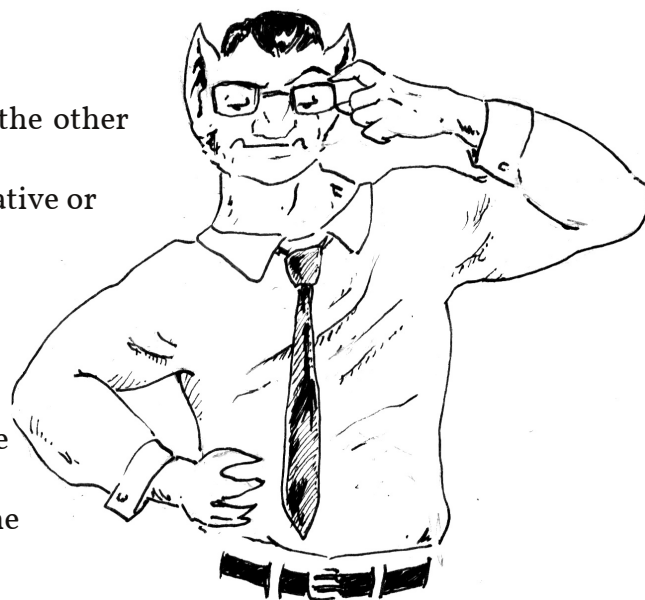
We the undersigned, for the purposes of having a pleasurable and consistent gaming experience, hereby ratify this contract. The purpose of the “contract” is to lay ground rules and procedures for both players and the game master (hereinafter the “GM”) or GMs, if any. This document is intended to be filled out / modified / scribbled on as needed by the group utilizing it. It was written by Freeman Faust and edited, illustrated, and layed out by Matt Bohnhoff for The Shrieker Podcast using the Vollkorn typeface and is released into the world under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International license. This contract is not intended to be enforceable by law, and is merely an exchange of promises without consideration.

1. We agree, upon signing this contract, to respect the other players, and not treat anyone in an unpleasant, negative or abusive way.

2. We agree that the purpose of this game is to have fun, to be respectful, supportive, and nice to one another to achieve this goal.

3. We agree that we will act as a team, together, as players – regardless of what our characters might be up to in the game – to foster a good and meaningful play environment where the GM(s) and players will all gain a pleasurable and amusing gaming experience.

4. We will respect the boundaries of our fellow players and GM(s), and will peacefully and without rancor withdraw from the group if we find we cannot, or would prefer not to, respect boundaries.



If a player or GM cannot have fun if certain boundaries are respected, the other player(s) will respect that person(s)' decision to leave.

5. We are open to new experiences, within limits, and will strive to explore and grow as gamers. We will not whinge and cry, but will endeavor to play the game in a fair manner, reacting in a game progressing way even to negative events, setbacks, or unexpected happenings. If our character loses a leg, we will endeavor to remain the Black Knight, and threaten to bite Arthur's kneecaps off, and not rage quit or roll a new character immediately. Nor will "Rocks Fall, Everyone Dies" or similar come from a GM.

6. We will be playing the following game(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

7. We expect to play them for \_\_\_\_\_ . (insert time here)

8. The game(s) we play and their termination will be determined by: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

(insert language here on how the game will be determined, i.e. "by a majority vote / 2/3rds vote / by the GM)

9. We will discuss, before the first session, what kind of game we would like to play, and how important (if at all) certain elements might be, such as mystery, investigation, horror, humor, combat, and such will be to us. We will accept the possibility of failure, and set a reasonable challenge level for all parties. We will endeavor to compromise and ensure that each player and the GM(s) play a game they will enjoy.

10. Once we have decided what type of game we will play (i.e. serious horror with occasional bouts of dark humor) the GM(s) and players will try to ensure the mood and play style remains as such. Changes will have to be voted on by the group with a [unanimous / 2/3rds majority / simple majority] allowing the style to change. Players or GM(s) who violate this on more than an occasional basis will have to engage in a discussion about changing behavior as noted below, or may be voted on to leave the group, as decided by the group.

11. This is a campaign expected to last \_\_\_\_\_.

12. This game, or these games, will be played in a [serious / lighthearted / beer & pretzels] manner.

13. Bathroom breaks will always be granted at anyone's request. If bathroom breaks become excessive we will discuss how to mitigate any disruption at the next opportunity.



14. There will not be [drinks / phones / computers / meals / pets / snacks / \_\_\_\_\_] at the table.

15. There will be [drinks / phones / computers / meals / pets / snacks / \_\_\_\_\_] allowed at the table.

16. \_\_\_\_\_  
will be responsible for snacks, if any.

17. \_\_\_\_\_

will be responsible for meal(s), if any.

18. If we agree to all chip in for meals/snacks/drinks/etc. then we will make sure to contribute. IOUs will be granted on the following basis \_\_\_\_\_.

We will not mooch or scam from our fellow players. If a party is having money issues they will make this clear in advance of the game and the group will work on a solution to include this player or GM in the communal consumption of whatever item(s).

19. Alcohol will be permitted during gaming in the following quantities:  
\_\_\_\_\_.

20. Tobacco [cigarettes / chew] will be permitted during gaming in the following quantities:  
\_\_\_\_\_.

21. Marijuana (for states where it is legal) will be permitted at the table in the following quantities  
\_\_\_\_\_.

22. We agree to remain generally sober throughout the game unless we are playing a drinking game, in which case we are probably wasting our time filling out this contract.

23. We will meet to game \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ [a.m. / p.m]. (fill in date(s) or frequency – i.e. “every other Saturday at 5 p.m.”)

24. \_\_\_\_\_ will send a [reminder email / phone call / text / telegram / singing telegram / demonic messenger] at \_\_\_\_\_ before the game.

25. We will be playing for \_\_\_\_\_ hours, unless there is agreement beforehand to decrease or increase the amount of time, this agreement being [unanimous / by a majority].

26. If a player is late we will wait \_\_\_\_\_ before starting without them.

27. We will meet at: \_\_\_\_\_.

28. [Kids / Significant others / Visiting friends / Curious observers] will be allowed as follows:  
\_\_\_\_\_.

29. Players will generate their characters [individually before the first session / collaboratively during the first session].



30. We commit to come to all games unless some emergency or important life event interferes. We commit to playing with one another. If my schedule, ability to commit, etc. changes in the future I will let the group know at the beginning of the next session, and we will work together to allow the game to continue.

(THE GAME MUST GO ON!)

31. If a player or GM misses \_\_\_\_\_ consecutive sessions without good cause a vote will be held to remove them from the game. Good cause is defined as sickness, injury, birth of a child, deployment on a military mission, \_\_\_\_\_.

32. Even with good cause, \_\_\_\_\_ consecutive or nonconsecutive absences will result in a player's removal from the game, whether expected or already having occurred.

33. The characters of absent players will be handled [as NPCs by the GM(s) / as if they were busy on their own business / \_\_\_\_\_].

34. If a player or GM misses \_\_\_\_\_ non-consecutive sessions, a vote will be held to remove them from the game.

35. If more than \_\_\_\_\_ players are missing at a given session, this session will be cancelled.

36. There will be a minimum of \_\_\_\_\_ GM(s) and \_\_\_\_\_ players in the game. There will be a maximum of \_\_\_\_\_ GM(s) and \_\_\_\_\_ players in the game.

37. Players will be added to the group only with [unanimous / majority / GM only approval].

38. Players may add to the setting background in the following manner(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

39. If a GM and player disagree on background/setting, the following process will be used to determine how to proceed and what will be "canon": \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

40. Character sheets will be held by \_\_\_\_\_  
between gaming sessions.

41. The following behavior will not be tolerated and will result in a discussion among the group to mitigate or abstain from the behavior in the future, if a vote to remove such party is not held:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

42. The following subjects will not be discussed at the table by parties: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_. (i.e. politics, religion, the weather, rape, incest, child murder, the Cleveland Browns, etc.)

43. The GM(s) (if any) will not bring the following topics/story elements or arcs into the story without UNANIMOUS approval by the group: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

Additional topics/story elements may be added to this list through the use of [ the X card / private discussion with the GMs / \_\_\_\_\_ ].

We will respect all players or GMs particular triggers or taboos and will not cajole, threaten, attempt to persuade, mansplain, etc. in order to get a minority to allow these topics. Respectful discussion is allowed, but we will be wary of inadvertently crossing any lines. We know that each person in the group has their own personal history and issues, and we know that crossing certain lines might make the game more fun for one or more players while simultaneously ruining the experience for others. As such, we agree to work as a team to find a way to play the game in a way pleasurable for all parties.

44. Player-characters will not engage in the following in game behaviors, either due to player/GM discomfort, or because it would be disruptive to the game: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(i.e. no in-party stealing, no casting mind control spells/psychic powers on other players, no raping PCs/NPCs, no graphic torturing of NPCs, etc.).

45. Players will read the following sections of the game book (or background fiction) prior to the first session of play: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

and will not read or watch the following pieces or inspirational media during the duration of the game: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

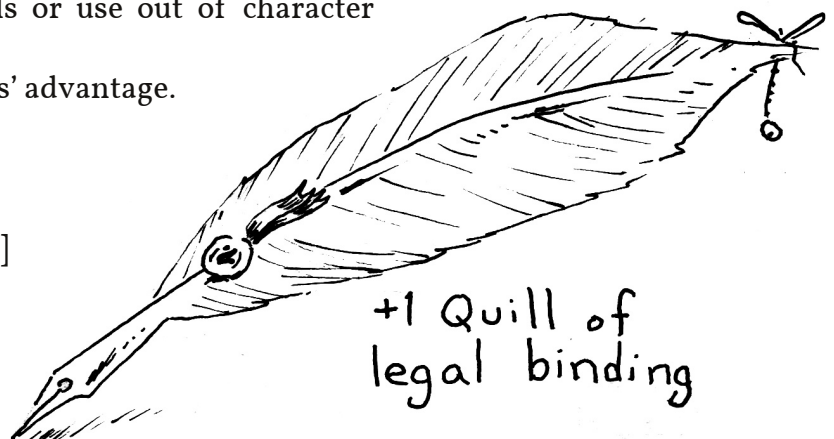
and game resources [will / will not] be allowed from the following game supplements: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

46. Players will endeavor to ensure they do not use or share game character knowledge in a meta context.

47. Players will not cheat on dice rolls or use out of character information to their or the other players' advantage.

48. Character death [is / is not] acceptable.





49. New characters will be introduced to the game at the [same level / one level less / \_\_\_\_\_]  
as the old, dead, or retired character.

50. Players and GMs will not touch another person's [dice / possessions / \_\_\_\_\_]  
without prior permission.

51. No player will be left out of the action for more than \_\_\_\_\_  
before getting some play time, preferably of equal length.

52. Out of character discussion will [always / never / at the following times: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_] be tolerated.

53. We will ensure in character and out of character speaking is differentiated by  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

54. Players [will / will not] offer tactical advice during combat or PC to NPC interactions.

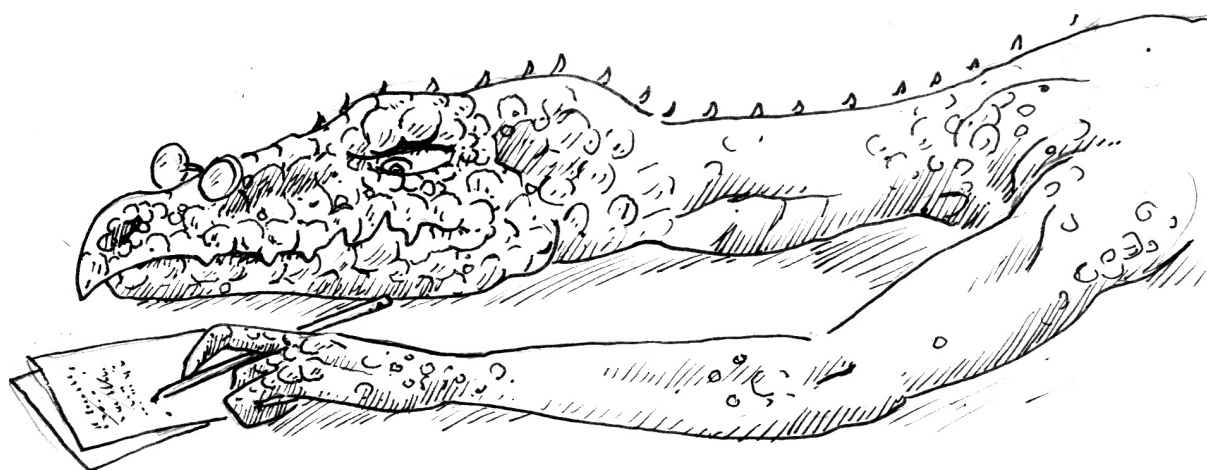
55. The GM(s) [may [at discretion / only under the following circumstances: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_] / may not] fudge dice rolls.

56. House rules we agree to accept [unanimously / by 2/3rds majority / by simple majority / by GM  
decree]: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

57. Future house rules will be ratified by [unanimous / by 2/3rds majority / by simple majority] after being proposed by any person in the group.

58. Players will be removed from the group for any reason not outlined elsewhere in the contract, including but not limited to, poor behavior, negative comments, abusive behavior, poor play, failure to keep up with obligations, etc., by [unanimous (minus the player being voted upon) / 2/3rds / majority] vote.

59. At the end of any session, this contract may be revisited at the request of any party.



Signatures: \_\_\_\_\_

(print name): \_\_\_\_\_

Signatures: \_\_\_\_\_

(print name): \_\_\_\_\_

Signatures: \_\_\_\_\_

(print name): \_\_\_\_\_

Signatures: \_\_\_\_\_

(print name): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_