

## The Last Adventure: Volunteer's Guide

THANKS FOR volunteering to play The Last Adventure with me! Here are the rules.

### **1. Your Goal in the Game:**

You're doing me a favor just by playing, so you don't have to worry about winning or losing the game. Your goal is just to say things that you, personally, find honestly entertaining.

### **2. Your Main Job:**

Almost your only job is to get with the other volunteer and make up answers to my questions.

I'll ask things like "I'm set upon by raiders. What are they like?" You and your fellow volunteer can imagine any raiders you want, exactly the raiders you find most fun, and tell me about them together.

If you want to ask me any clarifying questions, please do! I'll be more than happy to answer them.

Sometimes the answer to one of my questions will be obvious, or you'll already know it from what somebody's said before. In that case, just give the obvious answer, no need to second guess.

Sometimes one of my questions will be way out, weird, maybe contextless. You can always ask me clarifying questions, but you can also just say whatever pops into your head and let me be the one who has to make sense of it.

Sometimes I'll show you one of my sheets and have you choose something from a list, too. Always choose whichever option seems best to you at the moment.

On the reverse, see also "A Bestiary," which includes some ideas that you can use and build on.

### **3. In the Land of Death:**

Be sure that I hand "In the Land of Death" over to you. Get with the other volunteer, take a look at it, and follow the rules you find there. I'll direct you to refer to it when I need you to.

### **4. You and the Other Volunteer:**

In order for anything to really count, you and the other volunteer have to agree on it. If you don't agree about something, it's not true until you do. Talk it over until you're both satisfied. I'll wait!

The reason there are two of you, by the way, is that this way you can trade off and build on each others' ideas. Neither of you has to do all the work.

If you have any trouble coming to agreement and you want to use some kind of system to decide, like R-P-S or flipping a coin or dibs or something, that's none of my business. Whatever works for you. Just let me know what you've decided.

I have a 6-sided die you can borrow if you want to roll it.

### **5. Ending the game:**

Any of us can end the game whenever we want, for any reason or none at all. It doesn't matter how abrupt it might be.

If, at any point, it seems impossible to entertain yourself, or not worth it, or anything like that, don't hesitate, just call an end.

### **6. Thank you!**

You're the best! I'm lucky to have you.

## The Last Adventure: A Bestiary

### 1. The World:

It's the Ancient World, before the Age of Empires.

It's not Earth, probably, although it has a single yellow sun and a single white moon and three stars in a row in the winter sky that everyone recognizes. It has summers and winters, forests and deserts, great various continents and unmeasured salt seas. It has horses, dogs, cats, birds, cattle, lions, hyenas, camels, llamas, marsupials, mustelidae, primates, pachyderms.

If you went there you could breathe the air but the language would be unknown to you and the food and fashions unfamiliar.

### 2. Human Nature:

Human beings love to have full bellies, warm rugs, sweet sad music, and their loved ones nearby.

They hate violence, hunger, fear, cold, injustice, and their friends who have wronged them.

They work stone, clay, wood, metal, cloth, fur, glass, horn, sinew, bark, leaves, leather, and reeds. They cook their food, brew their drink, bury their pickles, eat fruit in season, eat fish when it runs upriver to spawn, and eat salt when they have it. They hold their nose when the healer makes them swallow their pungencies.

Human beings create polities no bigger than city-states, usually, and usually no longer-lived than dynasties. The greatest and the least usually eat grain from the same fields and hunt ducks on the same rivers.

### 3. Religion:

Human beings create every kind of art, including religions.

In the cities, they create urban, cosmopolitan religions. The divinities are glorified versions of human endeavors: the goddess of writing, the goddess of war, the god of bronze-smelting, the god of city planning. Their priests glory in the ordering and functioning of the

city. Render unto the temples one sixth-part of your year's prosperity, or one fifth-part if you want the gods and the priests to bless your house.

In the villages and farmsteads of the countryside, they create agricultural religions — though of course if they are allied with a nearby city, they take pains to create their religion in alliance with the city's. Now she is the goddess of writing and also of the calendar, and on her days we plant, on her days we harvest. Now she is the goddess of war and also of land-clearing, and the workers with their small axes are her devoted soldiers too. Now he is the god of bronze-smelting and also the champion of the makers and menders of tools of every kind.

In the wilderness, the priests are less concerned with ordering human endeavor, and more concerned with the role of human beings in the natural workings of the world. The divinities teach us when to hunt, and how to face our fear. They teach us when to keep still, and how to survive a drought or a winter. They teach us which trees we must leave and which we may take, how best to live, and how best to make our way in the land of death.

### 4. Wizards:

A wizard is a person who, by diligent study and a brash willingness to cheat fate and nature, learns to perceive and manipulate the spiritual and mystical energies that suffuse the world.

There are many kinds of wizards: mystics, exorcists, necromancers, arcane scientists, ceremonial priests, witches, sorcerers, and more. All, as they become powerful, risk becoming alienated from human life, including their own. Their power can depend upon them to regard life and all its processes as resources, not as values.

### 5. Death:

In this world, death is a land, and the dead dwell there. There is no disputing it.

## Your Name:

& Your Pronouns:

## Your Qualities

	Tally	Final Tally		Tally	Final Tally
Kind		<input type="text"/>	Unafraid		<input type="text"/>
Strong		<input type="text"/>	Weary		<input type="text"/>
Called		<input type="text"/>			

## Exerting Yourself

### Exerting Your Compassion:

**To offer peace and understanding to someone.**

= Your Kind + Your Unafraid

### Exerting Your Experience:

**To navigate a dangerous situation.**

= Your Strong + Your Weary, max 4

### Exerting Your Memory:

**To Reminisce.**

= Your Unafraid

### Exerting Your Physical Strength:

**Upon the mass and momentum of a physical thing.**

= Your Strong + Your Unafraid

### Exerting Your Resolve:

**To stand against a monster or an enemy.**

= Your Unafraid

### Exerting Your Restlessness:

**To leave a place of peace, comfort, companionship, and beauty.**

= Your Called + Your Highest Tally, except Weary

### Submitting to Circumstance:

**Instead of exerting yourself.**

= Your Strong + Your Unafraid

## Your Tools

### ● Your old arms & armor:

- A short sharp sword.
- A spear.
- Javelins.
- A shield
- A breastplate.
- A helmet.

If you're bearing your arms and armor, then when you exert your...

**Compassion:** Before you roll, ask your volunteers whether your bearing arms and armor makes your counterpart think that you're their enemy or a threat.

Or you exert your...

**Resolve:** When you roll, hit or miss, you get an additional chance. For any of your chances, in addition to those listed, you can choose:

- I'm ready with my sword and shield. If my enemy won't back down, I strike them, not as quick as I once would, but sure and deep.
- I hold my enemy off with spear and shield. If they won't back down, I thrust them through.
- Before my enemy moves on me, I'm ready with a javelin, and though I don't throw as strong as I once did, I won't miss my mark. If they won't back down, I can put it through their heart or their eye.
- I'm ready with my shield, my breastplate, and my helmet to turn my enemy's blows. If they won't back down, they must strike again and again to drive me back.

### ● Your old axe, hoe, or sickle, or any tool you ever held in life. When you exert your...

**Compassion:** Before you roll, if your counterpart is willing, you can choose to work together side by side, and talk as you work. Add +1 to your rating for the roll.

### ● The old ship in which you used to sail. When you exert your...

**Restlessness:** Before you roll, tell your volunteers that you're thinking back to your life as a sailor, remembering the roll of the ship on earth's seas, the call of the sea birds, and the freshening breezes of evening.

When you roll, treat a miss as 1 hit instead.

After you've rolled, instead of giving your volunteers chances, tell your volunteers that you rouse yourself, find and travel the road to death's sea, and ultimately set sail upon it in the memory of your old ship. Refer to "Spawning Circumstances" under "Islands in Death's Sea" to continue.

### ● Your favorite meal in life. When you exert your...

**Memory:** Before you roll, tell your volunteers what your favorite meal in life was. You need not make it always the same one, but sometimes the best meal you ever ate, or a meal you ate once when you were in love, or the meal you ate every morning when you were a soldier, or the meal you loved best to prepare, or a meal you ate once when danger had passed, or a meal you suddenly remember for no reason at all. Add 1 to your rating for the roll.