

WITCHER SCHOOL

BECOME A WITCHER
AND LIVE AN ADVENTURE OF A LIFETIME!

ORIGINAL PROJECT OF 5 ŻYWIÓŁÓW AGENCY



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1. Witcher School – overview

1.1. Great adventure awaits

Imagine, that you can live – really live, not only read about, watch or play – the fantastic adventures you know from The Witcher game series by CD Projekt Red and the fantasy books by Andrzej Sapkowski.

For four days you will become the hero you've always wanted to be and experience the thrill of the monster hunt, the grueling witcher training, breathtaking feats of magic, love, loss, friendship...

All of this in beautiful castles in Poland, turned into real witcher's abodes with elaborate scenography, and you'll be able to meet the characters you know and love and this is only the beginning.

1.2. Live in the Witcher world

Witcher School is a 360° illusion – you will fully immerse yourself in the world that so far you've known only from the books, computer screen or from TV:

- ◆ Instead of imaging a described scene, you will experience it
- ◆ Instead of pressing buttons, you will really swing a sword
- ◆ You will have unlimited dialogue options with the NPCs
- ◆ Instead of a soundtrack, you will be amazed by a bard concert in the tavern
- ◆ A sword's hilt can give you calluses after a whole day of training
- ◆ You will taste an elixir handcrafted on your own
- ◆ A ghoul's nest will really stink

We also have means of making the impossible possible: you will hunt monsters, experience the effects of a sorceress' spells, witcher signs and elixirs. This will be an opportunity to immerse yourself and live your own unforgettable adventure.

1.3. How does it work

- ◆ It's like a plot of a good movie – but it's you who decides how it'll develop
- ◆ It's like a role in an improv theatre – without a director, script or audience
- ◆ It's like playing cops and robbers – but with much cooler toys
- ◆ It's like vehicle to another world – and a short getaway from reality

This kind of entertainment is called larp (live action role-playing game). The participants physically act out their characters' actions. By improvising the deeds and reactions of their characters they create their own stories and experience them together with other players. Usually the participants will also use costumes and props.

If you've never encountered this form of entertainment and still have some doubts, watch **this short movie** prepared by the Court of Moravia group from the Czech Republic. It should explain a lot.

1.4. It's easier than you think

We want this experience to be an opportunity for every witcher fan to live an adventure of their lifetime:

- ◆ You don't have to be a Witcher universe expert – we will adjust your character to your knowledge.
- ◆ You don't have to be in great shape – you will adjust the level of exercise to your physical capabilities.
- ◆ You don't have to possess any particular skills – the workshops will prepare you for the game.
- ◆ The only thing to worry about is having great fun – we provide costumes, props and decorations.

1.5. You are the hero

- ◆ Before the game you will fill out a form which will help us prepare for you an exciting adventure tailored to your expectations and limitations.
- ◆ From the character sheet you will learn about their story and why they decided to become a Witcher, but it's you who'll decide about their future.
- ◆ With a group of peers and supervised by a master you will learn about the witcher trade, go through an initial training, face monsters and defeat them!
- ◆ You will encounter characters who will lead you to hidden quests and mysteries. You will make difficult moral decisions and face their consequences.
- ◆ In the end you will have to decide if you want to undergo the Trial of Grasses and continue your story in the next episode of the Witcher School saga.

1.6. The emotions are real

- ◆ Although it's just a game, the feelings and emotions accompanying it are real: the adrenaline rush during a monster hunt, being exhausted after a full day of training, happiness in face of success, bitterness of defeat.
- ◆ Background characters have different motivations and personalities, they can treat adepts gently, or be hostile toward them, and in emotional moments it's very easy to mix-up the characters with people playing them.
- ◆ In every moment you can adjust the physical and mental contact intensity thanks to safety words and gestures described later on.
- ◆ During the whole event you can find trained organizers to whom you can go if there's any problem – both connected to physical matters, as well as those caused by an overabundance of emotions.

1.7. Is it for me

Witcher School is for any adult person who wishes to become a witcher – regardless of their gender, personal beliefs or background. Read through this document and make an informed choice. We have included all the necessary elements of the game here – however, if you don't find an answer to your questions, contact us via witcherschool@5zywiolow.com.

2. Game Theme

2.1. The School

The game takes place **around 200 years before the events of The Witcher video game** (second half of 11th century) in Temeria in the mysterious Kaer Tiele, built a long time ago by the elves.

The castle was claimed by the witchers after they fulfilled the contract with the Temerian king, Geddes – they were to kill an evil sorcerer who dabbled in dark magic, necromancy, and summoned monsters that terrorised the area. As a reward for a task, the witchers had been given the palace, where they decided to establish a school. 30 years have come to pass since those times and Kaer Tiele has become the greatest training grounds for witchers on the whole continent.

Today, old king Geddes still rules Temeria and eagerly finances the school. After all, the witcher's work is never over – monsters not only wander around forests and sacred groves, but also often trespass human territories and wreak havoc whenever they do.

At the same time the last flames of a bloody elven uprising, led by Aelirenn, the White Rose, are dying out. The remaining, disorganised rebel forces roam the kingdom, hunted relentlessly by the royal army. The rumours are that Redania has just started a war with Kovir. Slowly, but steady, the wind of unrelenting change is coming...

2.2. The Adepts

All participants will play apprentices of the witcher school. These apprentices will come from different social backgrounds: one might be a miller's child, orphaned after a particularly bloody elven raid; a young, independent woman who is trying to find a way out of the patriarchal system; a bastard of a rich and influential noble house, who has no alternatives; or an unwanted and unexpected child who was destined to be a monster killer.

These are but few examples of roles the gamers could choose to play. Whatever their roots and knowledge of the world are, they have one thing in common - after going through the gates of the school, everybody becomes equal. Their past and social standing means nothing. Their ability to survive a harsh and exhausting training means everything.

New apprentices come from a variety of different places and most probably have not had the chance to meet each other beforehand. You can sign up together if you have someone you'd like to experience Witcher School with – there is the possibility for instance, siblings attending the school together. If you'd like you can also tie your character to the non-player characters and background characters pre-existing in the game. The signup form is the best place to mention what types of relations to others you'd like to have.

2.3. The Masters

The goal of the witcher masters is to pass their knowledge and skills to their adepts and to introduce the players deeply into the setting of the game. They also impersonate the characters within the game, but they possess greater knowledge about the world and can act as guides to experiencing the best adventure possible. Following their advices or fulfilling the tasks that they assign will help the players to find more challenges and adventures.

Wanting to keep the original tone of the Witcher world, dirty and morally unclear, we decided to create characters with complex personalities, possibly as far from simplicity or archetypes that we could. The mentors have different motivations and values. They can treat the adepts with both kindness or superiority. Thanks to that you can be sure that you will definitely experience their capricious humours, but also appraisal for getting the job done.

The relations between the school adepts and the mentors aren't easy. You need to remember, that most of the people beginning their training doesn't survive the first year or die during one of the trials (e.g. Trial of Grass). Emotions aren't the strong side of the witchers, and attachment or making an intimate relation with someone could be considered as a weakness.

2.4. Important Questions

As every good adventure, it is all about overcoming one's own limits and self-improvement. The players will need to answer themselves questions like: How hard can I push myself to become the best? How much effort can I put into completing a given task?

It is also a story about the most characteristic quality of The Witcher setting – about moral dilemmas and choices which are never purely good or bad. The questions the game asks are for example: Am I able to take someone's life? Where my loyalty lies? Are the beasts roaming the surrounding forests the only creatures deserving to be called monsters?

3. Game Structure

3.1. The Timetable

The adepts are divided into groups, who live and train together. Each group will have a dedicated tutor nominated from the group of masters. The tutor is a crew member and players' first contact for ingame and offgame issues.

There will be four 1,5-hour long lessons for each group on the second and third day accordingly. As an adept your character is expected to attend all of them, but that does not mean that you have to. Like in real life you can skip classes, but you must be ready to face the consequences.

Below you can find a typical schedule of a witcher adept. It may change depending on the outcomes of the game plot:

- 7:00 – wake-up call
- 7:30 – warm-up and roll call
- 8:00 – breakfast break
- 9:00 – classes (two blocks)
- 13:00 – dinner break
- 14:00 – classes (two blocks)
- 18:00 – supper break
- 19:00 – meeting with tutors
- 20:30 – hunts, trials, tavern time
- 1:00 – end of the day, curfew

3.2. *The Classes*

- ◆ Fencing – with the use of safe swords as well as real replicas. Basic strikes and steps. Trials with mannequins and duels between players.
- ◆ Archery – correct posture, putting on a bowstring, drawing a bow and aiming at a static and moving target, shooting from different positions.
- ◆ Monsters Knowledge – encyclopedic and practical classes on various beasts, their habits, weaknesses and ways of handling them.
- ◆ Witcher signs – basic knowledge of ancient witcher magic. Spectacular and with special effects. Power gathering and meditation.
- ◆ Alchemy – practical lesson on brewing potions, witcher oils and elixirs such as Swallow or Cat in a specially prepared laboratory
- ◆ Craftsmanship – creating simple outfit elements (pouches, pendants, belts etc.) under a tutelage of real craftsmen; everything you manage to create will be yours to take home.
- ◆ Survival – Surviving in natural environment, ways of tracking monsters and gaining advantage in any kind of situation.

Knowledge and skills you will acquire during classes will be useful during challenges you will have to face in-game. We're constantly updating and upgrading these classes to make the game as attractive and interesting as possible!

3.3. *The Quests*

There might be a surprise, a mystery or an intrigue waiting around every corner of the castle. The surrounding forest is full of dangers – monsters, dark riddles and lost artifacts. Apart from the masters, the world will be brought to life by other characters as well. For what is a witcher without any sorceresses, bards and elves? In this dangerous universe adventure just waits for you to grasp it at every step.

Instructors and other inhabitants of the castle and the surroundings will send the adepts to do special tasks and the carefully crafted realities will never make you bored.

4. *Technical Issues*

4.1. *The Time*

The first day will be devoted to accreditation, lodging, workshops and other organisational issues. Starting from 5 pm, participants will take part in pre-game workshops. The proper game will start around 8-9 pm and will last for the next two days and it will end with a party for all the participants. The last day will focus on conclusions and leaving the gaming area.

The game will last for around 52 hours without any breaks. However it will encourage the participants to have their daily dose of at least 6 hours sleep. There will be a clock bell announcing the end of a school day around 1 am. Which means the plot, events, and game activities prepared by the organizers for that day are over.

4.2. *The Space*

The event will take place in the castle as well as its surrounding parks, meadows and forests. The whole area (apart from specifically marked locations) will become the game world and all characters met there will be part of that world.

The area will be divided into special locations - dining room, tavern, classrooms, bedrooms, masters rooms etc. Players who have only started their education might be forbidden to go into specific locations (plot-wise), but nothing would physically stop them, if they truly wanted to get there... and are ready to receive punishment if caught.

4.3. *The Illusion*

Witcher School is a simulation of the Witcher universe. We want to use the **360° illusion** system – which means that everything the players will be able to interact with will be an actual element of the game world, and the modern world elements that shouldn't exist in the fantasy world will be diminished to the absolute minimum.

To achieve that we will ask for the cooperation of all the participants. We will encourage the use of stylised language or dialects, and discourage references to modern world phenomena (such as technology). If the players spot any person or element which does not fit the game world, they are obliged to report it to the organizers who will take care of the situation as soon as possible.

Obviously enough, the castle where the event will take place, functions normally as a 21st century building. It is equipped with elements that will stand out from the world depicted. We will try our best to hide their existence, but we know it is impossible to do that completely. In such cases, players will have to apply the so-called 'suspension of disbelief'.

4.4. The Off-game

On the game area there will be some off-game areas – that is areas where the game becomes paused. Going inside those rooms you will for a moment (as long as you are inside them) cease to participate in the game. You can rest a moment, relax or make a phone call.

The off-game areas will always be properly labelled, and the info about their location will be revealed before the game. The private rooms of the players can gain an off game status, if the players themselves want so and put a specific sign on the door.

4.5. Personal Belongings

Your personal belongings, that don't fit the fantasy world, will be locked out in your rooms. Thanks to that you will be able to experience the world in which there are no phone rings and nobody will check their social media (trying to hide it under an antique table). You will live your adventures without the feeling of faking it.

4.6. No Pain

The game assumes the possibility of intense physical and psychological contact between all the participants. The border of pain should never be overstepped. That is why all participants are obliged to restrain themselves from doing anything that could directly (or by accident) cause real physical or psychological pain in other players. Additional control mechanism (in form of the safety mechanics described in section 5.2 and 5.3) is to be used by players themselves and everybody is required to respect it.

4.7. Physical Contact

Physical contact between player characters will be mainly possible during controlled practice sessions or during tests. Of course, this does not exclude contact during free time (which obviously will be frowned upon by the officers). In such cases **the rule of 'accepting defeat'** should be applied, which assumes that the defeated person should admit their defeat (e.g. they should fall down unconscious after a feigned hit in the back of their heads, etc.).

Physical contact between the players and the NPCs is based on the same rules. They should be dynamic, but also safe. In-game fighting will entail the use of larp safe weapons – as new recruits, the players are not to bring in their own weapons. Instead, they will be provided with ones when the situation demands it (for example during one of the lessons).

4.8. Ingame Items

The concept of personal property, inseparable to the current owner, does not exist in the game – everything can be stolen, broken or taken away, with the exception of special elements of costumes that the players have been allowed to bring into the game (such issues will be resolved individually and thoroughly discussed at workshops before the game). All personal belonging from „the real world” will be locked away safely in their rooms, and access to them will be very limited during the game.

Issues of permanent damage to expensive equipment owned by the organizers, castle decorations as well as other issues are regulated by official event regulations.

5. Mechanics and Meta-techniques

5.1. You Can Do Whatever You Can Show

One of the main assumption in terms of mechanics is that ‘you can do whatever you can show’, which means that only your true skills and their realistic presentation matter in-game. If you do not hit a target from a bow, it means you miss and nothing can change that.

Magic is another matter, though, which the Witcher world is full of. Backed by the usage of special effects, will be greatly limited but when it shows it’s spectacularly real. You may encounter magic during some lessons and when used by some NPCs and only by them – your characters will not be able to use any kind of magical powers.

The organizers and game crew that stay in the area impersonate characters as well, and follow the same rules other players do. Situations where these rules do not apply are: using mechanics to substitute or control the actions ingame, being in the ‘off-game’ areas, and unexpected events, such as real accidents.

5.2. Safety Words

For the comfort of our players we have introduced safe words and gestures mechanics. First of all, during the play, each player can say (in English) one of these words and everyone who hears them should act accordingly:

◆ **Red – I don’t want it, that’s enough**

A scene during which a player uses this word is too intense or, for some reason, they do not want to take part in it any longer. The reason of using the word should be eliminated. Unlike the ‘opt-out’ gesture (in which case the player using it takes a step back from the scene but does not stop it), this safe word adheres to the whole scene which should be stopped

immediately. It can also be used in case of a player perceiving (or experiencing) a real physical danger.

Example 1: During a fierce fight with Anna, John has called her a whore. Anna uses the word red. John cannot use any other offensive language of such sort during their argument.

Example 2: Kate grabs Paul's shoulder and starts shaking him strongly, causing him pain. John uses the word red. Kate has to let Paul go immediately and stop interacting with him on the physical level.

◆ **Yellow – let's keep this level**

A scene during which a player uses this word has reached the highest acceptable level of intensity for a given player, and should not become more intense. What it means in practice is that you should not delve deeper into the subject being discussed, or should not escalate the conflict any more.

Example 1: During a fierce fight with Anna, John has called her a whore. Anna uses the word yellow. John can still use similarly vulgar and offensive words during their argument. However, he should not use any stronger words.

Example 2: Kate grabs Paul's shoulder and starts shaking him strongly, causing him pain. Paul uses the word yellow. Kate can still shake him, but she should avoid doing more intense moves which could cause John further pain or interfere with his privacy.

◆ **Green – give me more**

Using this safety word a player signals that they are ready to escalate the scene's intensity further. It is more of a suggestion and has to be confirmed by all the parties taking part in the scene. It can also be ignored (by simply not giving a confirmation or using the word yellow).

Example 1: During a fierce fight with Anna, John has called her a whore. Anna uses the word green and Paul confirms it. It means that from now on John can use even more expletive phrases in that scene.

Example 2: Kate grabs Paul's shoulder and starts shaking him strongly, causing him pain. Paul uses the word green and Anna confirms it. It means that Anna can not only keep on shaking the other player, but can also, for example, toss him to the ground.

5.3. Safety Gestures

Moreover, a participant (and an NPC) can also use gestures mechanics to indicate their well-being (or lack of thereof) and ask about the well-being of others.

To ask such a question, we make an „ok?“ gesture (bring tips of your thumb and index finger together, into the shape of a circle).

Example: We see that Marzena, hit by Jack with a latex sword, falls with a scream to the ground, grasping her face. Not knowing whether this is a great acting or a real injury, we ask with a gesture if everything is all right and wait for an answer.

Three answers are possible:

♦ **„I'm all right" gesture – a thumb pulled up**

We continue the scene. This gesture can also be shown without asking, to let others know that we are only playing out our condition and no real harm is happening to us.

Example: Marzena, moaning and writhing on the ground, shows her thumb raised up - she's fine, it's just a great way to play out the injury.

♦ **„hard to say" – we tilt our hand vigorously open with our fingers spread.**

When asked, the person can't say if he/she feels good or bad. It is good to approach him/her and ask discreetly if we can help somehow.

Example: Marzena, moaning and writhing on the ground, shows a gesture „difficult to say". Maybe she actually felt Jack's hit, but it wasn't strong enough for her to decide to stop the scene. We can, while remaining a character, approach Marzena on the ground and whisper to ask if everything is all right and if we should continue the play.

♦ **„I'm not okay" – thumb pointed down**

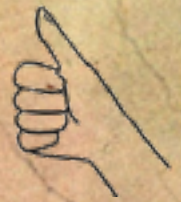
Stop the game immediately and take this person to a doctor or a person responsible for emotional safety. We also show this gesture without asking, to signal that we need help.

Example: Marzena, moaning and writhing on the ground, shows her thumb facing down. The blow was probably too strong or it hit the sensitive part of the body. We immediately stop the scene and help Marzena get to the doctor who will take care of her injury.

If we are sure that the person has noticed our gesture and still does not answer, we should also stop the game and take him/her to the person responsible for safety.

5.4. Sex Cards Mechanics

Witcher School is a game for adults only and includes romantic relations. That's why we decided to introduce a sex cards mechanics, to enable the willing participants to incorporate them in their character stories without pushing any personal boundaries. It is inspired by the The Witcher video game and substitutes the intimate scene with a card exchange between willing players. It will be explained during the workshops.



6. Practical Issues

6.1. Dates and Tickets

Witcher School events take place in spring and autumn. The tickets are released around six months before the events. We announce the dates beforehand as the sale goes quite fast. You can find the dates, check the tickets availability and/or the sale launch dates on our website witcherschool.com.

The total cost of participation is covered by the ticket price, which differs depending on the castle and room standard. The prices of the ticket varies from around 450 to around 550 EUR. You can check the exact prices in 5 Żywiołów online store. The ticket includes:

- ◆ three nights in an atmospheric castle (Grodziec, Moszna, Czocha – depending on the event) available exclusively to the participants 24h/day
- ◆ full board (breakfast, dinner, supper) during the game, a breakfast day after
- ◆ a basic adept costume (pants, shirt, gambeson) rented out for the game and possible to buy afterwards
- ◆ 12 hours of practical classes, conducted by experts in their field
- ◆ a chance to encounter and fight monsters known from the witcher bestiary
- ◆ a team of actors and animators, playing background characters (witcher masters, sorcerers, bards etc.)
- ◆ a chance to create equipment during some classes and take it back home
- ◆ mementos: a witcher medallion and a character sheet printed out in a large format given to you before the game start
- ◆ a commemorative portrait and a group photo taken by our photographer post-game
- ◆ an incredible adventure set in the Witcher universe that you will never forget!

6.2. Signup and Character Creation

After purchasing a ticket to the event, all participants will receive an access to a signup form. In that form one will be able to provide both personal information needed for the event, as well as preferences regarding the character (their background, personal traits, possible connections to other players). With that information, our professional writers will prepare an individual character sheet for every player.

6.3. Players' Group and Help Pad

Beside the signup form all the participants will receive more practical info regarding the event directly via email. One of them will be players' help pad covering the most important practical issues connected to the event as well as trip to Poland. Participants will be also invited to join a dedicated players' group on Facebook to meet each other before the game, discuss any game related topics and stay in touch after the event.

6.4. Shuttle from the Airport

Ticket does not cover the costs of transportation to castle, as some of the players drive by car. For willing participants the organizers provide a shuttle from and to the Wrocław International Airport for an additional fee.

Players can decide on that option in the signup form and will get all the details in the players' help pad via email so they can arrange their flights accordingly.

6.5. Additional Questions

If you have any questions concerning Witcher School, you didn't find the answer in this document, feel free to contact us via one of the e-mail addresses:

- ◆ **witcherschool@5zywiolow.com** – plot, characters, organisation questions
- ◆ **sklep@5zywiolow.com** – tickets and financial questions

See you on the Path!

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