



**Fight for the legacy of a criminal empire and enjoy an
extravagant weekend in the 1920s of Germany!**

**October 25th to 27th 2024 (English)
Haus Schnede near Hamburg, Germany
Version 3.0**

Germany, 1926: Dr. Mannhart had many faces for the public. A well-known scientist. A successful building tycoon. A highly honoured hero of the Great War. A patron of the fine arts. But all those who gather this weekend in his mansion know that he was one thing above all: the undisputed ruler of the Berlin underworld. Away from the hustle and bustle of the city, criminals, artists, and social figures have come together to mourn his death, celebrate his life, and reorganise his shady businesses.

Follow us on a fascinating journey through time to a place, where the splendour of the Roaring Twenties is only superficially able to cover the abyss of human nature.

In this extraordinary experience you will become part of one of the infamous 1920s gangs in Germany, the Ring Clubs, and fight for the legacy of a criminal empire.

Or, as an honoured guest of the criminals, you will enjoy the thrill of a society where every wrong word can have grim consequences.

The Setting is inspired by movies like Godfather, The Great Gatsby and M, but also by the true stories of 1920s Gangsters of Berlin.



Immertreu should feel like stepping into a movie inspired by a historical era. It might be set in the autumn of 1926 but it isn't a historically correct re-enactment event. We aim for a feeling of the era, but during the game, the focus is on drama, passion, intrigue and the clash of different personalities.

Themes of the game will be:

Honour among thieves

Old sins and revenge

Greed and betrayal

Love and jealousy

Murder Mystery

Political turmoil

The Great War

The Russian Revolution



Historical Background

The new political structure that formed in Germany after the First World War, often called the Weimar Republic, lasted only fourteen years. During its short-lived existence, it faced several crises, like hyperinflation, political extremism and conflicts with the allied victors of the war.

But in between these periods of struggle, from around 1924 to around 1929, there was a time that was later called the Golden Era of Weimar. The situation in Germany calmed down again. People recovered from the horrors of war, famine and revolution. New jobs were created and new money was flowing. Incredible breakthroughs in science took place. Art, culture and architecture also experienced a new heyday.

Immertreu is set right in the middle of this era!



The Ring Clubs

The 1920s Ring Clubs in Germany are a fascinating topic. All over the world and during all times criminals have been forming gangs to support each other and enhance their "business". But seldom did organised crime act so openly and as much respected by authorities and society as in interwar Berlin.

When the first ring clubs were formed in the 1890s, as associations of released prisoners, they were actually intended to lead their members on the path of virtue. Former criminals had hardly any opportunity to regain a legal foothold in society. Even if they wanted to earn their living in an honest way, they were faced not only with the mistrust of the righteous citizens, but also with an authority that put obstacles in their way (as described for example in Carl Zuckmayer's well-known drama "The Captain of Köpenick", loosely based on the true story of Friedrich Wilhelm Voigt).

Their new associations offered financial help, a community and assistance in finding jobs. They mostly arranged employment for their members in the gastronomy and red light milieu. The idea quickly spread throughout the entire German Reich. Just as quickly, however, they changed from social aid associations to networks of well organised professional criminals.

For a brief period in time, these "guilds of gentleman criminals" (as they would think of themselves) ruled the underworld of the city.



In order to be accepted as a full member, an earlier prison sentence was usually a prerequisite. The conviction, however, must have been made for a "respectable" crime, such as theft, fraud, smuggling or burglary. Murderers and rapists were not admitted, the ring clubs valued "decent crooks".

Although there were always disputes between police and ring clubs, one can speak of more than a mere toleration of the ring clubs by the authorities. How small the distance was is shown by the fact that high-ranking police men visited the festivities of ring clubs officially.

Nowadays the Ring Clubs and their members are almost forgotten, as are their - often brutal and horrible, non-gentleman-like - crimes. But in their heydays, they gathered great fame and inspired numerous works of fiction, glorifying or condemning them.

One of the most well-known early depictions of the Ring Clubs of Berlin might be the 1931 film "M" by Fritz Lang, about a child murderer, hunted by police and gangsters. It is based on a true story and has several real-life Ring Club members as extras. Lang was also "convinced" by the leader of the Ring Club Immertreu to hire him and other Immertreu members as "bodyguards and advisers", to make sure "nothing bad happens to the production".



Characters

Immertreu has pre-written characters that are created by the organisers. Everyone will receive a detailed character description with ambitions, personality traits, friends and enemies. Each character also has a certain number of social groups it is part of. Each group comes with benefits and connections but also bonds and conflicts. For instance, the boss of the Ring Club Ironhard is for sure part of the faction “Ironhard”, but she might also be part of the groups “Communists”, “Former Inmates of Barnimstraße Prison” or “Horse Racing Enthusiasts”. The ambitious lawyer of Immertreu might be part of groups like “Immertreu”, “Berlin High Society”, “Former Front Soldiers” and “Frequent patrons of House Vaterland” (a lavish event location).

Every character can be interpreted in many ways. The larp will not fail because a certain character is played differently than it was “intended by the writers”; it will just mean that different stories are created.

Your character is your own. Your personal interpretation.

Players have some influence on what characters they will play, however. You will fill out a form stating what your game and character priorities are. We will probably not be able to fulfil everyone’s wishes, but we will do our best.

Each participant is responsible for his or her own costume. The organisers provide items relevant to the game, weapons, play money and a few accessories.



Factions of Immertreu

Each character at the Immertreu larp is part of one of four factions. Three of them are gang syndicates, consisting of several ring clubs each. The fourth group is made up of various public figures from Berlin society. All characters, whether ring club members or public figures, will have influence on who will succeed the deceased criminal genius.

The Mannharts

A Berlin gangster family that has made a steep ascent and is now possibly standing in front of the abyss. Their previous head, the late Dr. Augustus Mannhart, brought various traditional ring clubs under his control in the post-war turmoil. Thus he became the undisputed ruler of the underworld of Berlin within a very short time. Other ring clubs had to pay him tribute, but otherwise had far-reaching freedom in their businesses. He settled disputes, set limits and rules and made sure that gangsters and authorities did not get in each other's way. While Augustus was primarily concerned with plans for really big operations, much of the day-to-day business has been in the hands of family members and confidants for some time now. They are eager to ensure that smuggling, counterfeiting, burglaries, blackmail and gambling regularly generate profits. After Augustus' death, it remains to be seen whether the family will remain in control. On the one hand, there are disputes within the family as to who should take his place. On the other hand, the old-established ring clubs that have been booted out by Augustus are only waiting for their chance to take the power back into their hands.

Great Ring of Berlin

The Great Ring of Berlin was founded in 1910 as a merger of the then five largest ring clubs in Berlin. Until the end of the First World War, it represented the dominant power in the Berlin underworld. None of the smaller ring clubs could oppose the concentrated power of these groups. With Augustus Mannhart's entry into the ring club business, everything changed. Thinned out, since many members had fallen at the front or been captured as prisoners of war, Augustus had an easy game - especially since he early on succeeded in convincing the most powerful club from the ranks of the federation to defect. After initial "adjustment difficulties", the remaining member clubs quickly came to terms with the new situation and accepted the new structure. Under the leadership of Augustus, who proved to be a criminal genius, business was better than ever. Now, after his death, it remains to be seen whether the Great Ring of Berlin will continue to be satisfied with its place in the second row.

Free Alliance of Berlin

The Free Alliance of Berlin is a loose alliance of some of Berlin's smaller ring clubs. Scattered all over the city and repeatedly involved in territorial disputes among themselves, they were never able to stand up to the ring clubs organised in the Great Ring of Berlin. Their situation also changed when Augustus Mannhart took control of the Berlin underworld. He recognized early on the potential that lay in the small, very differently positioned gangs. Unlike the often arrogant leaders of the big ring clubs, Augustus always gave the bosses of the small clubs the feeling of taking them seriously as (approximately) equals. With his death, many members of the Free Alliance fear that the small clubs will once again fall into insignificance.



Public figures

The 4-million metropolis Berlin, now the third biggest city of the world, celebrates a dazzling, frivolous and rampant "dance on the volcano". Artists and journalists are inspired by wicked criminal stories. The city's up-and-coming film industry, the largest in Europe, turns gangsters into celebrated screen stars. Stars and starlets enjoy being seen in the company and at the parties of the mobsters. The city administration is also corrupt through and through. All in all, there are ideal conditions for the ring clubs, which have always sought the proximity to public figures in order to harness them for their purposes. The representatives of this faction may not be criminals (except perhaps the corrupt politicians), but they nevertheless have a say in the question of Augustus Mannhart's succession. Perhaps they might even tip the scales?



Gender and Sexuality

Berlin of the 1920s was a place, where for a short period of time people who did not fit into the rigid pattern most of the German society requested for gender and sexuality could experience some freedom (at least compared to the decades before and after this time). We will exaggerate this even more for the purpose of Immertreu.

However, even though gender and sexuality will not be the main themes of this larp, we will not erase all conflicts about them from the game and the game background. Those conflicts have been very important for this era and historically this short period in Berlin (and other big cities) would soon end in a very tragic and brutal way.

In our game a non-binary gang boss would be as much “business as usual” and accepted in the criminal underground of 1920th Berlin as a lesbian killer or a trans male lawyer. Outside of this social circle all of them might have been (or still are) in trouble because of their identity, inside it is not a big deal.

A lot of the characters can be played as male, female or non-binary (with some exceptions like catholic priests, characters that are explicitly mothers or fathers of other characters etc.). Every player can play a character of the gender he/she/they likes to play.



The five Acts

Immertreu is divided into five acts, each with its own dominating theme and different rules regarding in-game violence. This way we want to regulate the speed of the game and create a certain mood in each phase of the game. There are no breaks between the acts and they are to be understood more as guidelines than as strict laws. However, we would appreciate it if most characters could pick up the mood of the phases and create a dense atmosphere together.

Act 1: Memories and Foreshadowing (Friday evening)

The game starts on Friday evening around 8pm with a festive dinner in honour of the deceased criminal genius Dr. Augustus Mannhart. This phase is supposed to be marked on the one hand by good and bad memories of past events (whether in connection with the deceased or with other guests present). Heroic war experiences can be exchanged as well as melancholic thoughts about earlier, better times. On the other hand, the foundations for future events can and should already be laid in this phase. Different characters will explain their claim to the succession of Mannhart and conflicts will cast their shadows ahead.

Violence between the characters is not allowed in this phase and even verbal disputes should be conducted in a highly civilised manner.

The phase ends when the guests go to bed sometime after midnight.

Act 2: Changes and Challenges (Saturday morning)

In the course of the morning, even the last nostalgic should realise that the good old days will never return. Only those who dare progress will rule the future. There is still a feeling of hope and confidence in the air, but the first seemingly insurmountable contrasts and conflicting interests are becoming apparent. At the end of this phase of the game, a first ballot will reduce the number of candidates for Mannhart to five people.

Should violence occur in this phase, it may only be in the form of very light forms, such as a slap in the face, a slight push. Intense threatening behaviour and attempts at intimidation are permitted.

Phase 2 ends on Saturday after lunch.

Act 3: Negotiations and Confrontation (Saturday afternoon)

This phase should initially be shaped by the struggle for a balance between different, seemingly insurmountable interests. In the course of the afternoon, however, the mood also begins to boil slowly. Discussions become heated, disputes turn into harsh word battles. New and unexpected opponents reveal themselves. Conflicts are fought out openly.

At the end of this phase, in a second ballot, the field of candidates is narrowed down to two persons.

In addition to emotional injuries, this phase can also lead to serious physical disputes (which, however, must not end with serious injuries or even death).

Phase 3 ends on Saturday after dinner.



Act 4: Alliances and Escalation (Saturday evening)

In this phase it must be decided whether, despite all the conflicts, old alliances will be consolidated or finally dissolved, and what new, perhaps unexpected alliances will emerge. Whether revenge for the murdered brother or revelation of scandalous family affairs - now is also the right time to throw everything on the table. In the overflow of emotions, hearts will be broken, and friendships will fall apart.

Any violent confrontation in this phase is bitter and will be accompanied by severe injuries or personal humiliation. Some conflicts may even be fatal.

Act 5: Resolution and End of game (late Saturday evening)

All turbulence should be finished around 23.00 o'clock, when the final decision about the succession of Mannhart is due. The present members and guests of the ring club have to declare their allegiance to one of the two remaining candidates. Arguments, especially violent ones, are no longer allowed at this point.

The game ends with a final speech by the new ruler of the Berlin Underworld.



Event schedule

Friday

12.00 - 15.30	Arriving at Haus Schnede
15.45 - 19.00	Workshops
19.00 - 19.45	Changing into costume / last preparations
19.45 - 20.00	Group photo(s)
20.00 - 21.00	Dinner
20.00 - 02.00	Act 1: Memories and Foreshadowing

Saturday

08.00 - 13.30	Act 2: Changes and Challenges
08.00 - 09.30	Breakfast
12.30 - 13.30	Lunch
13.30 - 19.30	Act 3: Negotiations and Confrontation
15.00 - 16.00	Coffee
18.30 - 19.30	Dinner
19.30 - 23.00	Act 4: Alliances and Escalation
23.00 - 23.15	Act 5: Resolution and End of game
23.30 - 03.00	Afterparty

Sunday

08.30 - 10.30	Breakfast
09.30 - 11.00	Clearing the rooms, Goodbye



Location and Scenography

Built as the family estate of a rich merchant in 1907, Haus Schnede today is a beautiful event location close to the German city of Hamburg. Revealing the charm of a bygone era, the ensemble consists of the magnificent main mansion and a smaller cottage by its side.

We are aiming for a game, where our participants feel like they are stepping into a historical drama. For this purpose we will use all our scenography skills to turn Haus Schnede into the lair of a criminal mastermind of the Golden Era of Weimar. Also, we will use a lot of material (books, documents, money, newspapers, maps, pictures etc.) from Germany in the 1920s – sometimes originals, sometimes reproductions.



Safety

Physical Safety

The physical safety of all participants is important at all times. Even though there will probably be violent fights between characters in Immertreu, these fights are of course not really serious, but always just simulated. They should be exciting and create drama for bystanders, but at the same time they have to be fun and harmless for everyone involved.

For this purpose, we only use harmless deco weapons and special game mechanics for confrontations.

Emotional Safety

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

At Immertreu, we therefore have a set of rules and mechanics to help participants avoid boundary crossings and make these experiences as safe as possible.

Harassment and Misconduct

At Immertreu, we don't tolerate any form of off-game discrimination, may it be due to sexuality, appearance, heritage, gender, ability, or anything the like. We take a firm stand against related behavior.

We also work with strict policy of enthusiastic consent, especially but not only for physically intimate interactions. Respect people's boundaries and preferences and do not question them.

Location

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

Communication

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



Credits

Idea: Karsten Dombrowski

Plot und characters: Maren Duda, Mareike Zerpner, Arne Pöhls, Karsten Dombrowski

Photos: Karsten Dombrowski (S. 2), Picture Times (S. 3, 7, 9, 10, 12, 16), Haus Schnede (S. 14), unknown

Fotograf (S. 4, 5), M (S. 6)

Logo design: Wolfrum Graphics

More information:: www.immertreu-larp.com

The company responsible for the game is Dombrowski Event UG (haftungsbeschränkt)

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