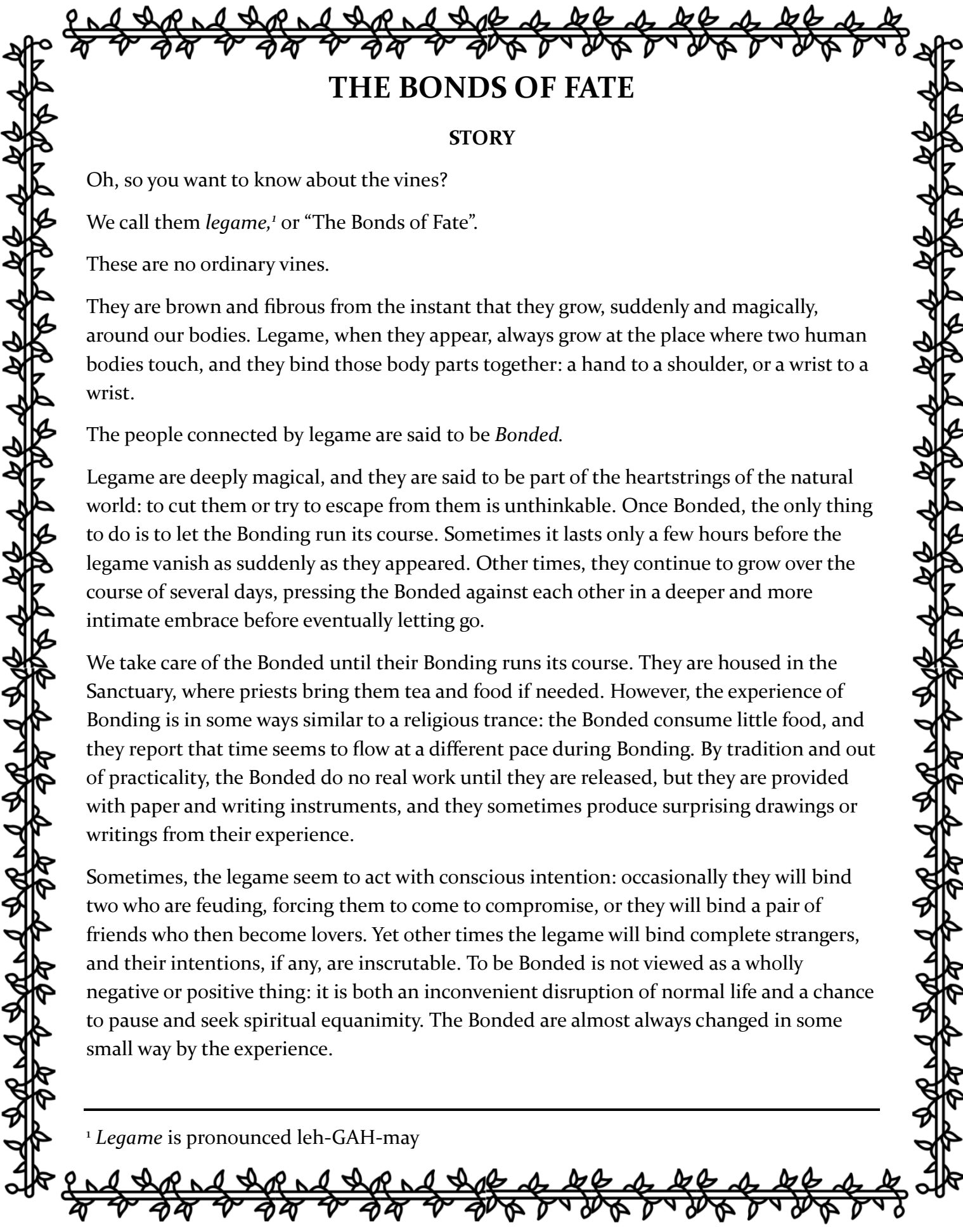


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THE BONDS OF FATE

STORY

Oh, so you want to know about the vines?

We call them *legame*,¹ or “The Bonds of Fate”.

These are no ordinary vines.

They are brown and fibrous from the instant that they grow, suddenly and magically, around our bodies. Legame, when they appear, always grow at the place where two human bodies touch, and they bind those body parts together: a hand to a shoulder, or a wrist to a wrist.

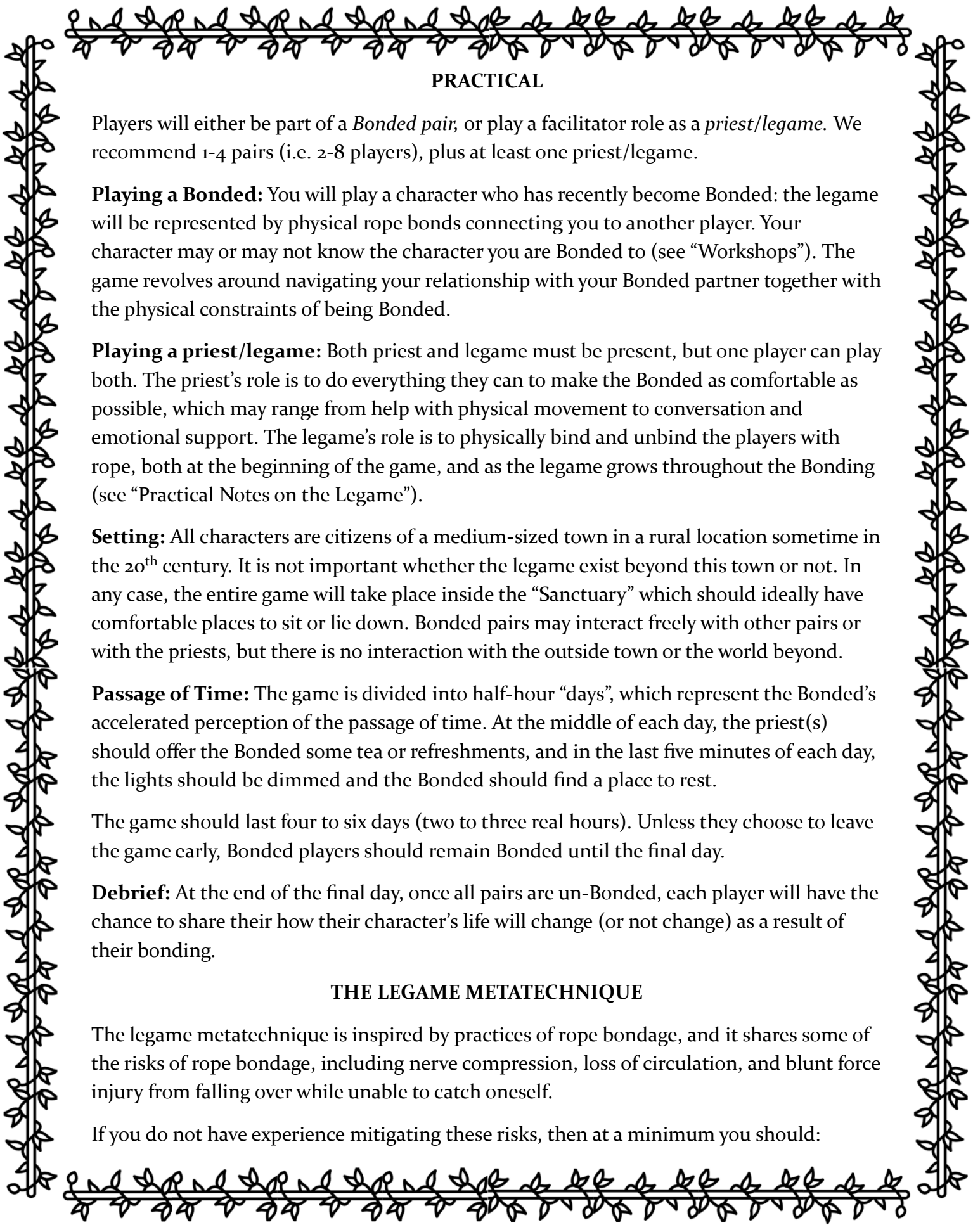
The people connected by legame are said to be *Bonded*.

Legame are deeply magical, and they are said to be part of the heartstrings of the natural world: to cut them or try to escape from them is unthinkable. Once Bonded, the only thing to do is to let the Bonding run its course. Sometimes it lasts only a few hours before the legame vanish as suddenly as they appeared. Other times, they continue to grow over the course of several days, pressing the Bonded against each other in a deeper and more intimate embrace before eventually letting go.

We take care of the Bonded until their Bonding runs its course. They are housed in the Sanctuary, where priests bring them tea and food if needed. However, the experience of Bonding is in some ways similar to a religious trance: the Bonded consume little food, and they report that time seems to flow at a different pace during Bonding. By tradition and out of practicality, the Bonded do no real work until they are released, but they are provided with paper and writing instruments, and they sometimes produce surprising drawings or writings from their experience.

Sometimes, the legame seem to act with conscious intention: occasionally they will bind two who are feuding, forcing them to come to compromise, or they will bind a pair of friends who then become lovers. Yet other times the legame will bind complete strangers, and their intentions, if any, are inscrutable. To be Bonded is not viewed as a wholly negative or positive thing: it is both an inconvenient disruption of normal life and a chance to pause and seek spiritual equanimity. The Bonded are almost always changed in some small way by the experience.

¹ *Legame* is pronounced leh-GAH-may

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PRACTICAL

Players will either be part of a *Bonded pair*, or play a facilitator role as a *priest/legame*. We recommend 1-4 pairs (i.e. 2-8 players), plus at least one priest/legame.

Playing a Bonded: You will play a character who has recently become Bonded: the legame will be represented by physical rope bonds connecting you to another player. Your character may or may not know the character you are Bonded to (see “Workshops”). The game revolves around navigating your relationship with your Bonded partner together with the physical constraints of being Bonded.

Playing a priest/legame: Both priest and legame must be present, but one player can play both. The priest’s role is to do everything they can to make the Bonded as comfortable as possible, which may range from help with physical movement to conversation and emotional support. The legame’s role is to physically bind and unbind the players with rope, both at the beginning of the game, and as the legame grows throughout the Bonding (see “Practical Notes on the Legame”).

Setting: All characters are citizens of a medium-sized town in a rural location sometime in the 20th century. It is not important whether the legame exist beyond this town or not. In any case, the entire game will take place inside the “Sanctuary” which should ideally have comfortable places to sit or lie down. Bonded pairs may interact freely with other pairs or with the priests, but there is no interaction with the outside town or the world beyond.

Passage of Time: The game is divided into half-hour “days”, which represent the Bonded’s accelerated perception of the passage of time. At the middle of each day, the priest(s) should offer the Bonded some tea or refreshments, and in the last five minutes of each day, the lights should be dimmed and the Bonded should find a place to rest.

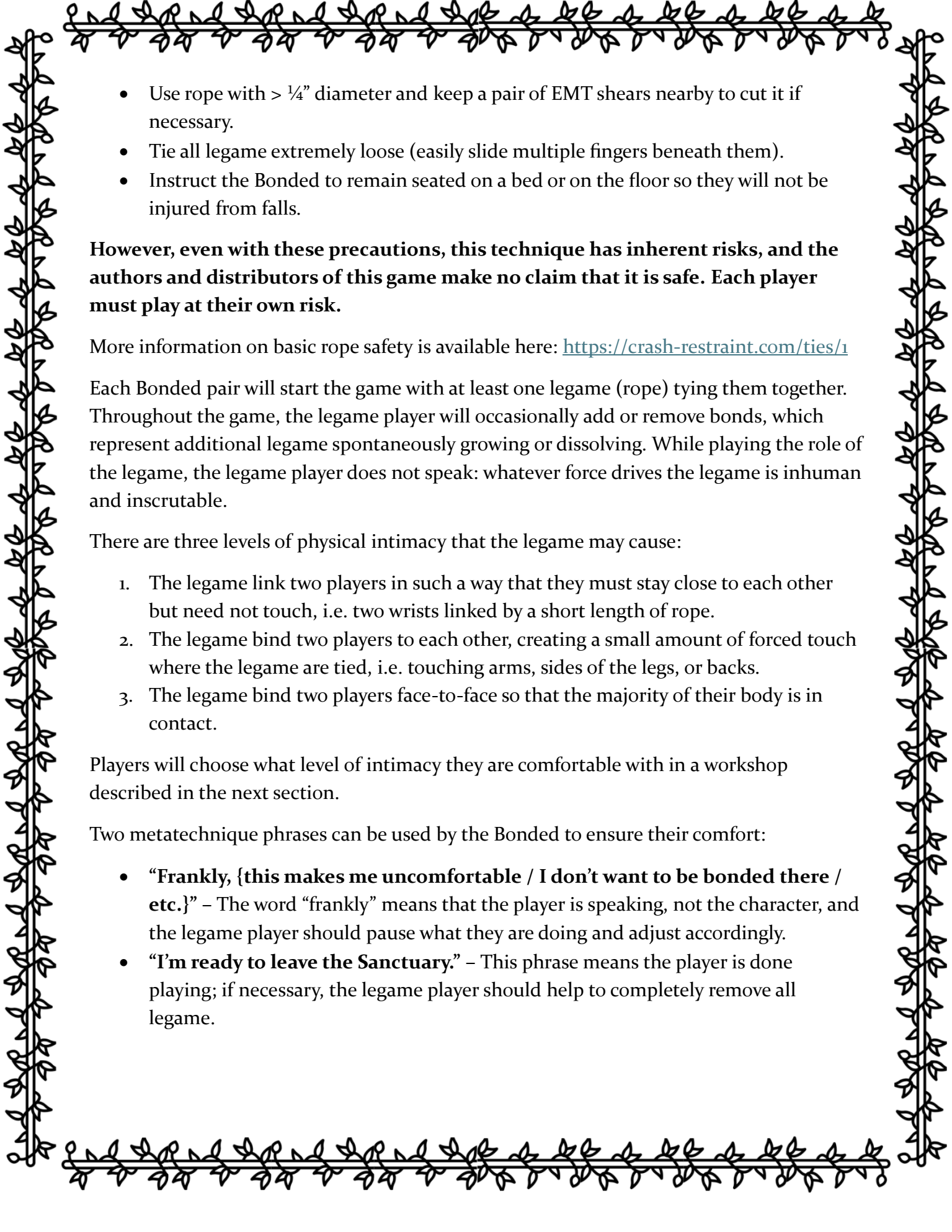
The game should last four to six days (two to three real hours). Unless they choose to leave the game early, Bonded players should remain Bonded until the final day.

Debrief: At the end of the final day, once all pairs are un-Bonded, each player will have the chance to share their how their character’s life will change (or not change) as a result of their bonding.

THE LEGAME METATECHNIQUE

The legame metatechnique is inspired by practices of rope bondage, and it shares some of the risks of rope bondage, including nerve compression, loss of circulation, and blunt force injury from falling over while unable to catch oneself.

If you do not have experience mitigating these risks, then at a minimum you should:

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- Use rope with $> \frac{1}{4}$ " diameter and keep a pair of EMT shears nearby to cut it if necessary.
 - Tie all legame extremely loose (easily slide multiple fingers beneath them).
 - Instruct the Bonded to remain seated on a bed or on the floor so they will not be injured from falls.

However, even with these precautions, this technique has inherent risks, and the authors and distributors of this game make no claim that it is safe. Each player must play at their own risk.

More information on basic rope safety is available here: <https://crash-restraint.com/ties/1>

Each Bonded pair will start the game with at least one legame (rope) tying them together. Throughout the game, the legame player will occasionally add or remove bonds, which represent additional legame spontaneously growing or dissolving. While playing the role of the legame, the legame player does not speak: whatever force drives the legame is inhuman and inscrutable.

There are three levels of physical intimacy that the legame may cause:

1. The legame link two players in such a way that they must stay close to each other but need not touch, i.e. two wrists linked by a short length of rope.
2. The legame bind two players to each other, creating a small amount of forced touch where the legame are tied, i.e. touching arms, sides of the legs, or backs.
3. The legame bind two players face-to-face so that the majority of their body is in contact.

Players will choose what level of intimacy they are comfortable with in a workshop described in the next section.

Two metatechnique phrases can be used by the Bonded to ensure their comfort:

- **“Frankly, {this makes me uncomfortable / I don’t want to be bonded there / etc.}”** – The word “frankly” means that the player is speaking, not the character, and the legame player should pause what they are doing and adjust accordingly.
- **“I’m ready to leave the Sanctuary.”** – This phrase means the player is done playing; if necessary, the legame player should help to completely remove all legame.

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WORKSHOPS

Before the game, the following workshops should take place:

[5 minutes] Form Bonded pairs among players and select a level of intimacy for each pair. Players can choose their partner ahead of time if they wish; if any unpartnered players remain, do the following:

1. Describe the three levels of intimacy. Players should separate to stand in three different places based on the highest level of intimacy they wish to have in the game.
2. Players look for a partner within their level. If a player cannot find a partner in their level, they move one level lower until they can find a partner.

Once partnered, each player will tie a piece of colored string around their wrist to represent the level that they and their partner ended up at (One = blue, two = yellow, three = green). This colored string is not a legame; it is just for other players' reference.

[10 minutes] Each Bonded pair should answer the following questions, or choose an answer from the provided list (see "Appendix: Workshop Answers")

1. What is something you had in common before being Bonded?
2. Why is it difficult to be Bonded to this person in particular?
3. For each character separately, what's something you need to do in your life that's been disrupted by Bonding?

APPENDIX 1: WORKSHOP ANSWERS

What is something you had in common before being Bonded?

- You live in the same building.
- You are siblings.
- You went to the same school.
- You met at a special event, like a concert or a convention.
- You are close to the same age.
- You have a close mutual friend.
- You have a common hobby / niche skill.
- You work or volunteer in the same organization.
- You both spend most of your time outdoors.
- One of you saved the other's life.

Why is it difficult to be Bonded to this person in particular?

- You have not spoken to them since a past falling out.
- You are attracted to each other, but you are afraid to acknowledge / express it.
- One of you feels unrequited attraction toward the other.
- You don't know almost anything about each other.
- You are former lovers.
- You have a large power or professional status difference (i.e. manager/employee).
- You are on opposite sides of a local political issue.
- One of you is keeping a serious secret from the other.
- Your parents (or your children) have a dispute.
- You are in a relationship, but it is a secret.

What's something that you need to do in your life, which has been disrupted by Bonding?

- You need to find some money to pay your rent.
- You need to take care of your child. (You are a single parent.)
- You need to settle your parents' estate.
- You need to finish a piece of art.
- You need to write an important letter to someone.
- You are on the brink of a scientific discovery.
- You have a job with responsibilities to specific people, i.e. teacher/counselor/lawyer.
- You need to find your lost pet.
- You have a hot date coming up.
- You need to make amends with someone.

APPENDIX 2: CHECKLIST OF GAME MATERIALS

- Rope (>1/4" dia.) to represent legume
- EMT shears or similar cutting tool
- Three colors of colored string (blue/yellow/green) to mark comfort level
- Printed copy of Appendix 1: Workshop Answers
- Drawing and writing materials (pens, pencils, paper)
- Tea and/or refreshments

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