

## [Sara Williamson](#)

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[#MiddleAges](#)

**TW: Rape**

**PSA**

If you're going to write a game set in a Medieval Europe/Fantasy setting and include content about how prevalent rape is, using history as a justification, please make sure to include the same content in your next game in a modern setting. Because it still happens all the fucking time.

8 comments



[Ron Edwards](#)

Mar 26, 2014

Fair point.



[Ron Edwards](#)

Mar 26, 2014

You might not have heard of my game in Kickstart at present, called Circle of Hands. <https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/847190685/circle-of-hands>. The 23 people who've plussed the lead post as of this writing might be interested, for two reasons.

1. It is a medieval-fantasy, or pre-medieval to be picky, in which rape is one of the many features of the setting. Since the text does not feature **historical justification**, anywhere, it presents a counter-example to the case you're describing. That material is present because I put it in there, for reasons that are open to discussion for anyone who's interested. External justifications ("because ... historical! realistic!") are lame excuses to dodge responsibility.

2. I published a supplement to my game Sorcerer in 2003 called Sex & Sorcery, in which rape was briefly included along with many other things, and the default setting for Sorcerer is modern. Since 2003 precedes the publication date for Circle of Hands, this provides a counter-example to the **next game** suggestion. As my above post indicates, I do agree with the suggestion, because when writing or playing regarding evils of the present, that material definitely belongs. Sex & Sorcery shows that I agreed over a decade ago.

If by any chance you were already aware of Circle of Hands, thank you for the opportunity to describe its position relative to your point.



[Sara Williamson](#)

Mar 27, 2014

Thanks (sincerely) for providing some additional context, and for being willing to engage on this issue.

Just to clear up any confusion: this post was inspired by some conversations I've been having that were prompted by Circle of Hands, but I wanted to make a more general point for a few reasons--the main one being that this is hardly the only time it's come up.

Anyway, it appears to not be particularly relevant in this case, for the reasons Ron has pointed out.



[Jay Dugger](#)

Mar 27, 2014

Kudos to you both for providing an example of civil discussion of a controversial topic.



[Dymphna C.](#)

Mar 27, 2014

Y'know, I'd be willing to bet that more people died of diarrhea than were raped in the middle ages. But some for reason, nobody includes that in their games, and you don't see sidebars called *Should Lancelot Eat Those Eels?* in books, weirdly enough.



[Ron Edwards](#)

Mar 27, 2014

+[Dymphna C.](#)

It's in Circle of Hands - almost! The current draft focuses on smallpox and influenza, but it also has many margin notes at the moment, one of them saying "dysentery."

As a request to anyone and everyone, this draft is wide open for comments and suggestions.

+[Sara Williamson](#) You have really knocked it out of the park. I think the text needs your initial post in it, attributed, with your permission.



[Sara Williamson](#)

Mar 27, 2014

+[Ron Edwards](#): thanks for being so receptive to what was (admittedly) a post that was at the more inflammatory, rather than constructive, end of the discourse spectrum.

If you'd like to include the original text of my post, I think that would be really cool (and initially said so), but I'd like to see the context it's placed in first before giving my approval.

As you might imagine, I have a lot more thoughts on the subject! I intend to follow up with a longer post on how I think game designers can engage with the subject matter well (and maybe some specific feedback for Circle of Hands), but that will take some time to put together.



[Sara Williamson](#)

Mar 27, 2014

Also: just in case it's not clear, I actually think the answer is less rape in games of all genres and settings, not more.

While there are some games that have explored rape, assault, and associated issues thoughtfully, it's a pretty high bar to clear and I think most games would be best served by leaving it out.