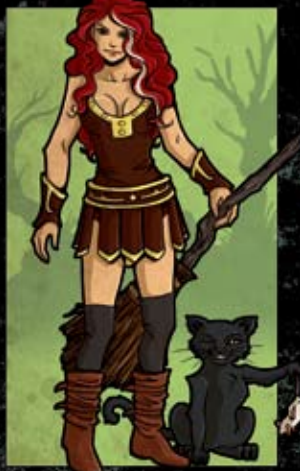
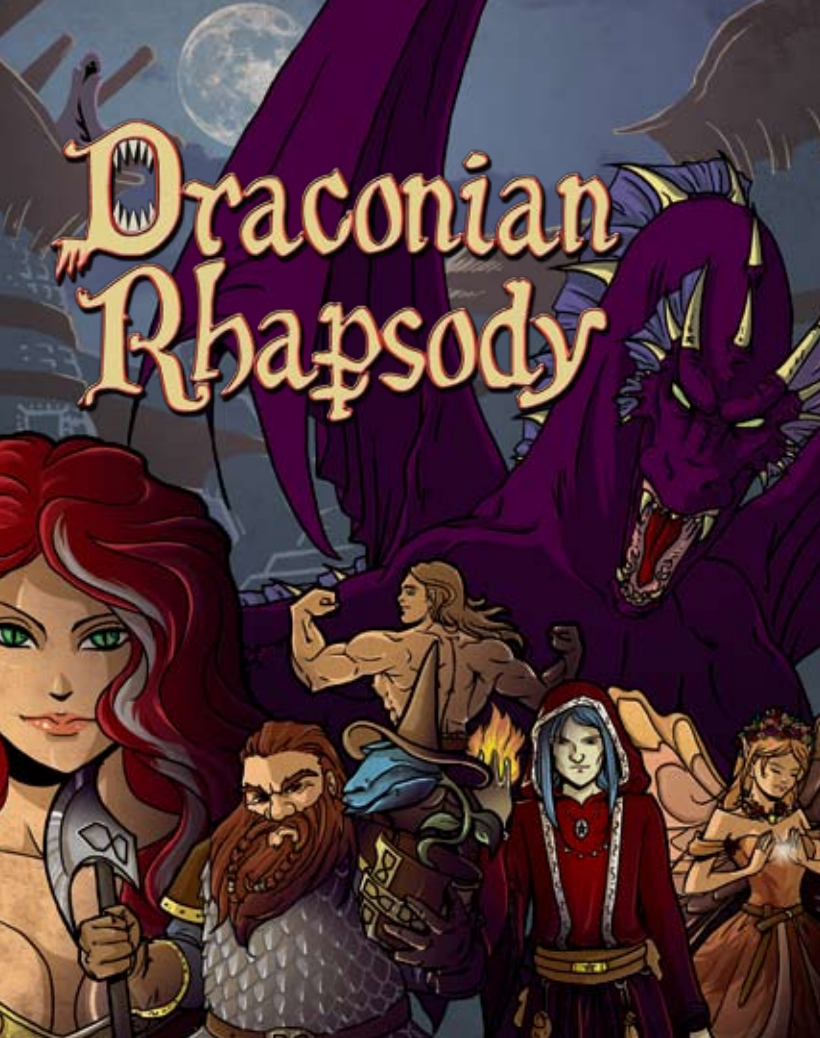


ADVENTURES IN KAPHORNIA 01

Draconian Rhapsody

A FANTASY MOVIE FOR YOUR GAME TABLE





Countess Esmeralda of Belzheim has a problem: She needs a dragon, alive and within 7 days. Are the heroes who have just arrived in Kaphornia brave enough to face this dangerous challenge?

Draconian Rhapsody is a complete game providing 3 hours of humorous, adventurous entertainment for you and 3 or 4 friends for the price of just one movie ticket.

With simple rules, and all the preparation done for you, you can jump straight into the adventure. You will be playing within half an hour of opening the book.

MAKE YOURSELF AND YOUR FRIENDS
A NICE EVENING FOR THE PRICE OF
JUST ONE MOVIE TICKET!



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Draconian Rhapsody

A FANTASY MOVIE FOR YOUR GAME TABLE

**Make yourself and your friends a nice evening
for the price of just one movie ticket!**

based on the Ulisses Adventure Game Rules by Markus Plötz

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Draconian Rhapsody

Xam son of Xom dodged out of the way at the last moment, as the huge purple dragon struck out at him. The Dwarven dragon hunter rolled across the ground with an elegance that belied his squat figure, brought his crossbow to bear... and the dragon had already moved out of sight around the next street corner. *Darn, that beast is fast!* Xam's heart pounded in his chest, his feet hurt and he was about to faint from exhaustion, but he was as happy as can be. His whole life he had imagined what it would be like to meet a real dragon, and within the last few days this wish had come true several times. But now was not the time for contemplation, but to dash forward into battle. The dragon hunter stood up, strapped his crossbow to his shoulder and drew his axe. *I just have to get onto the dragon, he thought, starting to jog, then I won't have to run around all the time. He grinned. Clinging to the dragon! Sounds suicidal, but might actually work!*

"Draconian Rhapsody" is a fantasy movie brought alive at your game table. Instead of leaning back into a cinema seat and watching passively, you now have the chance to **be the hero yourself!** You can crawl through moldy dungeons, fight terrifying monsters, and return from your adventures laden with precious gold. Only through your hero's eyes of course, but in the comfort of your game table, with some fantasy and a sprinkling of poetry, soon you will be immersed in the images, sounds, and smells of a strange world, and you will root for your hero as if you are going into the adventure by his or her side.

WHAT KIND OF GAME IS THIS? HOW DOES IT WORK?

This is probably going to be the most important question you, as the one having bought the book and suggested it to your friends, are going to hear. And here is the answer you can give to your fellow players before the game begins:

"Draconian Rhapsody" is a Fantasy movie reenacted at a game table. I am going to be the "Narrator", so I will narrate a lot during the game. You are the "heroes". Every one of you will choose one of the eight available heroes and then the game begins. I will explain everything else during the game.

IS IT NECESSARY TO READ THE RULES FIRST?

The Narrator should have read the rules of the game from pages 4 to 19 through once before starting the game. The heroes may also read these rules if they want, but they don't need to. They only have to choose a hero; everything else is best explained during the game. If you have never played a game like this, we also recommend reading or even reenacting the gameplay example starting on page 79.



PREPARATIONS FOR THE GAME

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

In order to play “Draconian Rhapsody”, you need at least 3 participants. One of you will be the **Narrator**, the others will each take on the role of one **hero**. There are 8 different heroes to choose from, shown on page 20 to 35. While you could have eight heroes, we recommend group sizes of about three to five heroes and one Narrator. If there are more than four heroes, the game will take about half an hour longer per additional hero. In a game with two players each of them plays with two heroes.

We recommend that each hero is only chosen once. If two players insist on playing the same hero, then they may do so, and in this case the two heroes are considered twins. Keep in mind, though, that the effects of special abilities like “Combat Blessing” or “Battle Song” are not added up, if used by two or more heroes at the same time.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

To play the game, you are also going to need...

... a **game table**. This should be a table at which the narrator and the heroes can all sit comfortably. All of the stuff not necessary to play the game should be removed from the table beforehand.

... a photocopy of each of the eight **hero documents** on page 20 to 35, so that every player can choose one. The hero documents are also available on **www.ulisses-spiele.de**.

... a **pen** for your heroes, to allow them to make changes to their hero documents. (This will be extremely rare.)

... a large number of **dice**. You need regular, six-sided dice. Around 15 dice per hero would be perfect, but you will also be okay with a much lower number if the heroes take turns at rolling the dice.

... **stones** or **coins** to use as game markers during the game. You can also look through your board game collection for suitable candidates. Ideally, you need two different types of marker, one for representing Stamina points, the other for representing Fate points (see page 6).

... drinks and junk food. Or healthy food, if you're that way inclined.

You can enhance the game by photocopying the cards in the Appendix starting on page 74 and handing them to the heroes at the relevant points, thus allowing them to look up their opponents' game stats at any time and keep track of the game effects that are currently in play. The cards are also available on **www.ulisses-spiele.de**.

AND NOW?

Now the game begins. Turn to page 36 and take your heroes to a realm of fantasy!



GAME RULES

A HERO'S ATTRIBUTES

Apart from his background and personality, a hero is defined by his **Attributes**. With their help he is going to face the **Challenges** (see page 8) presented to him by the Narrator.

Attributes are...

... **Skills**. These stats show what the hero has learned in his youth, both his areas of expertise, and also his weaknesses. The higher a skill value, the more adept the hero is at this particular skill. A hero has twelve skills: Close Combat, Ranged Combat, Toughness, Reflexes, Charisma, Climbing, Knowledge, Perception, Running, Strength, Stealth, and Willpower.

... **Special Abilities**. These describe a hero's special talents. Specific items in the hero's possession as well the spells of magic users are also described as Special Abilities.

... **Stamina points**. These represent a hero's tenacity. When the hero is hit by an enemy's attack, those points keep him from going down.

... **Fate points**. These points measure a hero's mental and spiritual reserves, his luck, his karma and that certain something that made him a hero in the first place. Fate points allow a hero to tip the scales in his favor by providing him with additional dice or allowing him to activate Special Abilities.

THE SKILLS

The skills cover all areas of expertise in which a hero is tested as he faces the obstacles and adversities of an adventurous lifestyle. Obviously a hero cannot be perfect in all of these areas; there will always be skills in which he doesn't excel.

Heroes begin their careers with skill ratings between 8 and 13. A value of 8 means that the hero's ability is below average for this skill. With a value of 11 he is considered talented or well trained, while a value of 13 represents an outstanding ability.

Close Combat

At short range, in the hands of a skilled close combat fighter every weapon becomes a deadly tool. Whether with sword, axe or barehanded, when he can see the white in his enemy's eyes, the close combat fighter is in his element. Every hero has the ability to fight in close combat if he wants to, but some heroes are a lot more adept in it than others.

Ranged Combat

Some heroes specialize in attacking their enemies from a distance. Bows and crossbows are especially effective in this kind of combat. Every hero has the ability to fight in ranged combat if he wants to, but some heroes are a lot more adept in it than others.

Toughness

In combat, Toughness is the counterpart of the Close Combat skill. With it the heroes defend themselves against their enemies' close combat attacks, using blocks, parries or evasive maneuvers. Heroes with high toughness also find it easier to shrug off the damage caused by accidents or falling from great heights.



Reflexes

While Toughness is used against close combat attacks, a hero's Reflexes help him defend against ranged combat attacks. Outside of combat Reflexes can save a hero by allowing him to get out of the way of traps, falling stones or other dangers. In some situations the Reflexes skill represents a hero's sleight of hand when handling tiny objects.

Charisma

If a hero wants to persuade, encourage or sound somebody out, or even wants to make a good impression, he uses this skill. And even when a silver tongue is not getting a hero anywhere and he has to intimidate an opponent with a threatening gesture, this also requires the Charisma skill.

Climbing

Moving up or down, using either hands and feet or just the hands, and with or without the help of climbing gear, as quickly as possible while avoiding a fall. All of this makes a good climber.

Knowledge

The hero's book learning and general education. Knowledge is required to analyze a situation or make a good decision. It also helps in searches for a specific information, because the hero already has an idea where to look. The Knowledge skill is also used when handling or repairing technical equipment.

Perception

Perception encompasses all of a hero's senses including his intuition. With a high Perception score he not only notices more details but is also faster in recognizing what he is faced with and how to react to it. In the wilderness, Perception is essential in finding a safe passage to your destination.

Running

Running represents not just a hero's mobility and speed, but also his balance and endurance. The Running skill helps in keeping up with a fleeing opponent as well as getting away from all kinds of dangerous situations.

Stealth

This skill allows a hero to remain undetected when necessary. Apart from moving silently the hero is able to find good hiding places and remain there for an amount of time without betraying his presence by sudden movement or an uncontrolled cough.

Strength

When faced with tasks that require nothing but pure brawn, this skill is called for. Bending bars, lifting heavy weights or arm wrestling an opponent into submission? No problem for a hero with a high level of Strength.

Willpower

A strong-willed hero is not easily frightened nor controlled. He can hold the gaze of an enemy wizard as well as withstanding the manipulative charms of a beautiful nymph. This skill is used to defend against enemy spells and supernatural attacks. In frightening situations it enables the heroes to show their heroic courage.



STAMINA POINTS

Real heroes are distinguished not only by their talents, but also by the fact that they never quit. Where others give up or turn tail and flee, they just get their act together and continue onwards. This heroic level of endurance is represented by Stamina points.

During the game a hero's Stamina points are subject to constant change, so they should be represented with game markers.

Losing stamina

Heroes lead a dangerous life. Vines are trying to strangle them, wild beasts are trying to tear them apart and there's a constant threat of avalanches, floods and walls of flame. All these dangers may result in the loss of Stamina points. Should a hero's stamina go down to 0, he falls down unconscious and can no longer take part in the action. There are three ways to get him back on his feet.

Adrenalin boost

Good old adrenalin! A unconscious hero may spend 1 Fate point (see below) at any time to raise his Stamina points from 0 to 1 and get back into the game. During combat an Adrenalin boost also requires an action, so the hero may take no other action during the same turn and counts as unconscious until the beginning of the next turn, when he wakes up with 1 Stamina point.

Healing spell / Healing potion

When a hero doesn't want to or is unable to spend a Fate point, he has to cast himself into the trustworthy hands of a healer. Heroes with the special ability "Healing spell" or in possession of a healing potion are able to give Stamina points back to their fellow heroes, thus bringing them back onto their feet immediately—the hero regains consciousness at once and is allowed to act normally. During combat the application of healing requires an action. Healing is also able to raise Stamina points above 1, but never above the value noted on the hero document.

Time heals all wounds

If nobody is helping him, an unconscious hero wakes up at the end of an act with 1 Stamina point. As has already been mentioned, heroes are tough. However, should **all** the heroes of the group fall unconscious at the same time, then the adventure is over and the heroes have failed, unless the adventure text says something different.

At the end of an adventure Stamina points are returned to their original value, as noted on the hero document.

FATE POINTS

The heroes have been chosen by fate to perform great heroic feats. This is represented by Fate points, which allow a hero to succeed even against insurmountable odds when necessary. However, a hero should use his Fate points sparingly and with caution, because he hasn't got an unlimited supply of them available.

At the beginning of an adventure every hero starts with a specific number of Fate points noted on his hero document. As a hero's number of Fate points is constantly changing, they too should be represented by game markers.



When a hero spends a Fate point, it is being used up and discarded.

At the end of each act each hero receives 3 additional Fate points, and their total number may surpass the starting value noted on the hero document.

At the end of an adventure Fate points are set back to the starting value noted on the hero document.

Fate points may be spent in one of the following ways:

Activating a special ability

Some special abilities (see below) can only be used when the hero invests one or more Fate points. The Fate point cost of an ability is given in its description.

Raise the ante

After a hero rolled for a challenge and is being told by the Narrator that he hasn't achieved enough successes, he is allowed to spend 1 Fate point to immediately roll another 3 dice and add all successes from that roll to his previous result. Each hero is allowed to do this **once** per challenge.

Adrenalin boost

By spending 1 Fate point an unconscious hero may get back onto his feet, see page 6.

NARRATOR FATE POINTS

A real adventure distinguishes itself by the level of tension. Will the heroes be able to overcome the seemingly insurmountable challenges placed before them or will they fail miserably? When the heroes act smartly and have luck on their side, then their heroics come more easily to them than on other days. To enable the Narrator to maintain tension for highly successful heroes, he can make heroic tasks even more difficult and dangerous. In return, a higher reward waits for the heroes at the end of the adventure, if they get there. All of this is represented by **Narrator Fate points**.

Narrator Fate points work in a completely different fashion to hero Fate points. At the start of an adventure the Narrator has no Fate points. However, at specific points during the adventure he is allowed to take one or more Fate points to activate special Narrator events which are aimed at making the game more difficult for the heroes. For every Fate point collected by the Narrator the heroes receive additional 5 experience points at the end of the adventure, so it is actually in the heroes interest to present themselves as being as fit and tough as possible in order to have the Narrator activate as many Narrator events as possible.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Special abilities allow a hero to stand out from his fellow adventurers. It may be a special talent, a specific training, access to mystical powers, or a special item in the hero's possession—all these things are called special abilities. What special abilities a hero has available and how they work is noted on his hero document.



CHALLENGES AND HOW TO FACE THEM

During an adventure the heroes are faced time and again with situations whose outcome is not predetermined but depends largely on the heroes' abilities and a touch of luck. This section describes the most important set of rules in the whole game, and fortunately they are very straightforward.

1) ISSUING THE CHALLENGE

The Narrator asks the hero(es) to roll on a specific skill. The skill is determined by the adventure's text: "The hero has to face a **skill name [Target number]** challenge." The narrator only reads the contested skill aloud; he must not tell the Target number to the heroes!

2) CALCULATING THE NUMBER OF DICE

The hero takes his hero document and looks up his hero's value in the contested skill. In some cases additional dice are added to this number, due to special abilities or specific adventure situations. In some cases the number might be reduced. The result of the skill value and these positive and negative modifiers is the number of dice to be rolled for the challenge.

NUMBER OF DICE = skill value +/- modifiers

3) ROLL THE DICE AND COUNT THE SUCCESSES

The hero rolls the number of dice calculated in the previous step; this is called "**facing a challenge**". Only the dice showing a result of 5 or 6 have an effect. The hero counts them—each of them is considered a "Success"—and tells the Narrator how many successes he has scored.

SUCCESS = A die showing a 5 or 6

4) RATE THE OVERALL SUCCESS

The number in square brackets after the contested skill is called the **Target number**. This number equals the number of successes the hero has to achieve with his dice roll in order for his hero to be successful. After the dice have been rolled, the Narrator compares the achieved successes with the Target number. If the hero has rolled at least as many successes as necessary, he has succeeded at the challenge. If he has rolled fewer successes, then he has failed.

But wait! Even if a hero has failed, not all is lost! In this case the Narrator lets the hero know that he hasn't scored enough successes. The hero may now choose to spend a Fate point (more on this on page 6) or activate Special abilities to roll additional dice in the hope of eventually getting to the necessary number of successes.



5) THE OUTCOME

The outcome of a success or failure always depends on the situation. In combat it is usually about defeating enemies or avoiding taking damage (more details on combat are provided later). Outside of combat the adventure explains in detail how to proceed in case of a success or failure. If the hero was successful, the Narrator reads the narrative text listed under “**Success**” and applies the game effects specified below the narrative text. If the hero has failed, then the narrative text listed under “**Failure**” is read and the relevant game effects applied. In some cases there are no specific game effects, just some text to read.

*Example: Gragg the Barbarian faces a **Strength [5]** challenge. The player looks up the “Strength” entry on Gragg’s hero document (page 20) and sees that it is followed by the number “13”. So he picks up thirteen dice and rolls them. Now he looks at the dice results: He has rolled the “1” three times, the “3” four times, the “4” two times, the “5” one time and the “6” three times. Altogether four dice are showing either the number “5” or “6”, so Gragg has achieved four successes. He tells the Narrator: “I got four successes.”*

The Narrator now tells him that those successes are not enough to succeed at the challenge, so Gragg decides to spend a Fate point to roll three additional dice. These are showing the numbers “2”, “4” and “5”. The “5” means an additional success, so Gragg has now a total of five successes. The Narrator reads the narrative text listed under “Success” and applies the relevant game effects.

TERMINOLOGY OF CHALLENGES

To ensure that the game runs smoothly, the adventure text provides clear stage directions for the narrator. Part of that is the description of who is going to face a specific challenge. There are three basic wordings for this:

- 1) “**One [or The] hero has to face a XYZ challenge.**” In this case a single hero faces the challenge. In the case of a special action during a combat (see page 12) this is the hero performing the special action, unless the special action’s text indicates something different. In case of a non-combat related challenge the heroes have to choose one of their group to face the challenge before rolling the dice. Only the chosen hero is allowed to face the challenge. If he fails, then the challenge is a failure for the whole group.
- 2) “**Each hero has to face a XYZ challenge.**” In this case every hero in the group has to face this specific challenge. Each hero rolls separately and applies the result of a success or failure separately. In these cases it is likely that some of the group’s heroes will be successful, while others fail.
- 3) “**The heroes have to face a joint XYZ challenge.**” In this case every hero in the group has to roll a challenge on the contested skill and all their successes are added up before comparing the sum with the Target number. The result affects the whole group, so the heroes are successful together or they fail together. During a joint challenge each participating hero is allowed to use 1 Fate point in order to roll additional dice and raise the sum of successes accordingly. The heroes may freely choose the order in which they make additional rolls, but no hero is allowed more than one additional roll per challenge.



OPPONENTS AND HOW TO FIGHT THEM

During an adventure the heroes are faced with a variety of opponents who have to be defeated for the adventure to go on and ultimately come to a successful conclusion. Such combat is a tension-packed succession of challenges: on the one hand the heroes have to wrestle down and defeat their opponents, while on the other they have to prevent the opponents from striking them down.

OPPONENTS' GAME STATS

Like the heroes, opponents have a number of skill values. Those are Defense, Attack, Damage and Stamina. An opponent's description is completed by his maneuvers and special abilities, tips for the narrator as to how to represent the opponent's Stamina values, and the conditions under which the combat ends. All this information is available to the heroes at all times during the combat, usually because the narrator has photocopied the stat cards from the appendix and presented them to the heroes for the duration of the combat. The only exception is the conditions for ending the combat, to preserve the tension and keep the combat exciting.

- ◆ The **Attack** value is what a hero has to defend against, when being attacked by that enemy. The value shows the number of successes the hero has to achieve in order to avoid taking damage. The attack value is followed by a skill name in brackets. This skill has to be used by the hero to defend against this attack. It is either Toughness, Reflexes or Willpower.

Some opponents have more than one attack. In these cases all attacks are shown, each followed by the skill with which to defend against it.

- ◆ The **Damage** value shows how many Stamina points a hero loses when hit by this attack. The value is followed by a description in brackets indicating what kind of attack it is, so the heroes know what they are defending themselves against.

Enemies with more than one attack have their Damage value noted down for each separate attack, in the same order as the Attack values.

- ◆ The **Defense** value is the number of successes a hero has to achieve with his attack dice in order to wound the enemy.
- ◆ The **Stamina** value indicates how much damage an enemy can endure before he is defeated.
- ◆ **Maneuver** describes in detail how the opponent acts in combat, who he attacks, whether he is using special abilities, and so on.
- ◆ **Representation** suggests ways to represent the enemies' Stamina values by using dice. (As an alternative those values can also be written down on a piece of paper.) At some points there are references to the cards in the appendix. Those may be photocopied and placed on the game table when relevant, to make it easier to remember game effects in place.



- ♦ **End of combat** explains when the combat against this opponent is over, usually by defeating the opponent or causing it to flee. Some combats might end under completely different conditions, however.
- ♦ An enemy's **Special Abilities** may include resistances, special attacks or other game effects.

AT THE START OF COMBAT

The time has come. The heroes are faced with a horde of dangerous monsters. And more often than not a confrontation like this will result in only one side leaving the battlefield victorious—and alive.

Before the start of the combat the Narrator tells the heroes the game stats of their opponents and how many of them are attacking the heroes. He is not revealing what determines when the combat ends.

The heroes are also told which **Special actions** are available to them during this combat. A fierce battle like this isn't a static business where both sides hit each other until one of them goes down. Instead it is full of action and drama, with many different situations that the heroes can exploit to their advantage. This is achieved by special actions. Most of these actions involve a challenge of a specific skill. The heroes are told which skill is going to be contested, but not the Target number or the consequences of a success or failure.

DURING COMBAT

The weapons have been drawn, the enemies and special actions been considered, and now the battle can start. But what happens now? Who acts first and what can you do? All this is explained in this section.

Turn by turn

Combats are resolved in turns. First the heroes act, then their opponents. If the heroes are supported by allies, their description indicates when and how they act. After everybody has acted, one turn ends and the next turn begins, continuing until one side is defeated.

One after the other

At the beginning of the adventure the hero sitting immediately to the left of the Narrator becomes the **Start player**. He receives the Start player card from the appendix (also available to download from the website), or any other object being used as the Start player marker—a chess piece, a paperweight, and so on.

The Start player acts first. After he has completed his hero's action—including the use of Fate points and Special Abilities—the other heroes follow in a clockwise order. After that the opponents take their actions.

On the following turn the Start player card is passed to the next hero to the left who is not unconscious, and at the end of each following turn the card is also passed to the left, so that the Start player changes each turn.

After a combat is finished the Start player card remains with the current Start player. In the next combat, it is passed around the table once more.



It's my turn, what now?

When a hero's turn has come, he can take exactly one action. He may ...

- ... **attack**. In order to do this he makes an **Attack roll**. This is explained in the next section.
- ... **use a special ability**. This takes effect immediately, unless the ability says something different. Some activations are not considered a separate action but are part of an attack or defense.
- ... **perform a special action**. All combats come with what are called “special actions”. They could be an attack against an enemy's vulnerable spot, the opening of a locked door to allow the heroes to escape from an overwhelming horde of monsters or any other action imaginable. Sometimes the combat situation changes, making new special actions available—those are immediately announced by the Narrator. Performing a special action always requires an action and is usually followed by the hero facing a skill challenge, which is handled in the normal way. A special action may be performed any number of times per turn by any number of heroes, unless its description says something different.
- ... **tease the enemy with a cool remark**. This does not give you a game advantage but is never a bad idea nevertheless. Also it's not using up an action.

ATTACK

It is time for the ultimate moment of truth. The hero has cornered his opponent and hits him over the head with his weapon or strafes him from a distance. Well, at least he is now allowed to try. First however he has to announce which opponent he is going to attack. This is important in combats with more than one kind of enemy, but even when faced with identical enemies a hero might want to choose whether to attack an unscathed enemy or one that has previously been injured by him or another combatant.

After announcing the target, the hero makes an **Attack dice roll**. This works in exactly the same way as any other challenge, with the contested skill being “Close Combat” or “Ranged Combat”, depending on the kind of attack.

Some Special Abilities provide special attacks (usually in form of combat spells). Instead of relying on the hero's Close Combat or Ranged Combat skill, they provide him with a fixed number of attack dice. Apart from that those attacks are being handled similar to a normal attack.

The attack value might be modified by Special Abilities or specific combat situations. This works in the same way as normal challenges. Eventually the hero has a number of dice to roll for his attack.

ATTACK VALUE = Skill + Special Abilities +/- modifiers

The hero now takes a number of dice equal to the attack value and rolls them. This is called the attack roll, and every 5 or 6 counts as a success. In order to hit the opponent, the hero has to get a number of successes at least equal to the opponent's Defense value.

If the hero rolled successfully, he has caused damage to his opponent. If the roll is unsuccessful, things aren't over right away. By using Special Abilities or Fate points, or both, a hero might still be able to hit his enemy after all.



Damage

A successful attack roll causes the enemy to lose one of his Stamina points. To account for an enemy's Stamina points, the Narrator places a number of dice equal to the number of enemies in front of him, the number shown on each die representing the current Stamina of that enemy. Every time an opponent loses Stamina the Narrator turns the die accordingly so that the current Stamina points are shown. If the Stamina goes down to 0, the die is removed, indicating that this opponent has been defeated.

Any number of heroes may attack and wound the same enemy in the same turn.

Severe hits

If a hero rolls several times the successes necessary to hit the enemy, he has scored a severe hit: an arrow hits the enemy directly between his eyes, a blade struck a vital organ, and so on.

Successes equal to or exceeding twice the opponent's Defense value means a loss of 2 Stamina points, three times as many successes means a loss of 3 Stamina points, four times means 4 lost Stamina points, and so on.

As with a regular hit this damage is marked on the die representing the enemy. If this causes the Stamina to sink to 0, the enemy is defeated.

***Example:** Gragg attacks a wood golem that has a Defense value of 3 and a Stamina value of 5. Gragg manages 8 successes for his mighty blow. This is more than twice the Defense value, so the golem loses 2 Stamina points. If Gragg had managed to roll 9 successes, the golem would have lost a staggering 3 Stamina points.*

The horde rule

If a hero is fighting a horde of enemies with Stamina 1, then a severe hit means that more than one enemy is defeated. Twice as many successes as the opponents' Defense value means that two enemies are taken out at the same time. Three times as many successes means that a total of three enemies are defeated by one giant strike. However, it is not possible to defeat more than three enemies with a single attack.

***Example:** Gragg attacks a group of zombies with a Defense value of 2, a Stamina value of 1 and the horde rules. Gragg pulls off 6 successes, which is three times the Defense value, so Gragg destroys 3 zombies with one attack. If he had rolled 8 or more successes, this wouldn't have destroyed any more zombies, because 3 is already the maximum.*

Changing between Close Combat and Ranged Combat

A hero is allowed to change his attacks from ranged combat to close combat and vice versa at any time without having to use up an action or suffer from any other drawbacks. After all he's a hero.

Weapons have no separate game stats

The skill values for "Close Combat" and "Ranged Combat" already include the weapons used by the heroes. Thus, the kind of weapon does not provide extra dice for the roll. Later in the game heroes may obtain magic weapons (see page 71) which provide special advantages in combat.

Ammunition is not a problem

The heroes bring enough ammunition for their Ranged Combat weapons, so they are able to use them without ever running out of ammo. Therefore it is not necessary to count the number of projectiles that have already been fired.



DEFEND YOURSELVES!

After the heroes have performed their actions it is their enemies' turn. In the enemies' description you will find the "**maneuver**" entry, which describes how the enemies act during combat. Here the Narrator can find out which heroes they attack or whether they have entirely different plans in mind.

Often the maneuver entry states that the enemies "distribute themselves evenly among the heroes, starting with the Start player". This means that the number of enemies is divided by the number of heroes to determine the number of enemies each hero is facing. Fractions are dealt out from left to right, starting with the Start player. If there are fewer enemies than heroes it means that those heroes sitting to the far left of the Start player are spared during this turn.

***Example:** A group of 4 heroes is faced with 10 enemies, who "distribute themselves evenly among the heroes, starting with the Start player". This means that the Start player and the hero sitting to his left have to defend against 3 enemies each, while the other two heroes have to defend against 2 enemies each.*

Fighting monsters is dangerous. Depending on the way in which they attack, a hero has to defend himself with a dice roll on Toughness, Reflexes or Willpower. In the same way as for the attack dice roll, modifiers by Special Abilities or situations might apply. The resulting value is the number of dice the hero is allowed to roll for this challenge.

DEFENSE VALUE = Skill + Special Abilities +/- Modifiers

The hero has to succeed at a challenge against the enemy's attack value in order to withstand the attack without taking damage. In case of a failure (the hero is allowed to back himself up with Fate points and Special Abilities as usual, see page 6) the enemy causes damage as indicated by his Damage value. The hero's Stamina points are reduced by this amount.

If this causes the hero's Stamina to drop to 0, he falls down unconscious and no longer participates in this combat unless he uses an Adrenalin boost (see page 6) or is healed. As long as a hero is unconscious, opponents do not attack him. The opponents instead distribute themselves among those heroes who are still conscious.

If at the end of a turn all heroes are unconscious, then they suffer a group defeat at the hands of their enemies—the adventure ends in failure and tragedy.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

If the heroes have succeeded at the challenges set before them, defeated their opponents and protected the innocent from a grim future, then they are rewarded for their heroics with Experience Points. Those points may be spent to raise the heroes' abilities, so they can go into their next adventure invigorated. How all of this works is explained to the heroes once they have managed to actually get to the end of an adventure. So what are you waiting for? It's time to jump right into the fun!



ACT I: WELCOME TO KAPHORNIA!

“Welcome to Kaphornia, pearl of the Copper Sea, fountain of prosperity, gate to the boundless riches of the Crimson Strait.”

Those are the words that greet you from the large metal plate marking the entrance to the biggest trading town of the south. All around you is the bustle of the docklands. Dozens of sounds and smells sweep around you: the gull’s mew, the smell of salty sea air, scraps of conversations in strange languages you have never heard before, glowing charcoal fires with roasted meat, the fine flavors of exotic spices, tobacco and attars, mixed in with the less appetizing emissions of civilization.

The sheer quantity of impressions is completely overwhelming for you. You are strangers in this town, having just arrived. But already you are certain of the unlimited opportunities this city has to offer people of your profession. You are adventurers, always ready to risk your lives on daring enterprises and in return be loaded with fame and wealth. In a place like Kaphornia you probably won’t have to wait long before the first opportunity to show your talents will present itself.

As you are ascending the steep stairway towards the Upper Town, you suddenly hear a turmoil above you. People scream, horses whicker, and you make out the sound of bursting wood and stone. Then a huge shadow is cast over you, when an iron wagon appears at the stairhead, tumbling down the stairway. A variety of attachments on the wagon suggest that it is supposed to look like a dragon. How anybody could come up with the idea of constructing such a monstrosity is completely beyond you. You also don’t miss the fact that the metal automaton is holding a very lively figure in its claws—a screaming, shouting woman in the valuable clothes of the local aristocracy. Considering her precarious situation, she doesn’t seem to be terrified but rather indignant about this impertinence.

“Let go of me, you hellish creature! How dare you?!? Hey, you!”, she points at you, “Help me ... Watch out!”

The warning rouses you from your surprised stupor and you realize that the Automatic Dragon is heading right towards you at increasing speed!

Each hero has to face a **Running [4]** challenge.

SUCCESS: *You manage to jump out of the way just in time, and the wagon speeds past you, missing by a hair’s breadth.*

FAILURE: *You jump out of the way as quickly as possible but lose your footing on the steep stairway and painfully tumble down the stairs. The hero loses 1 Stamina point.*



The wagon hits the lower end of the stairway with a loud bang. It must be quite sturdily, because it continues ahead, unaffected by the impact. It also seems to be imbued with demonic power, as it does not tumble out of control right into the dock, but makes a sharp left turn and heads along the quay, forcing people to jump out of its way. All the while it is holding the screaming lady in the firm grasp of its claws.

From behind you hear loud gasps that turn out to belong to an old but sprightly man in the robes of an alchemist. The man is completely out of breath, trying to run down the steep stairway. You barely manage to keep him from stumbling over his own feet and breaking his neck.

“Hurry ...”, he tells you, “You have to ... stop my dragon automaton, ... before ... before someone gets hurt. Everyone ... everyone helping out ... gets a free healing potion. What ... what are you waiting for?”

A dragon, a rich damsel in distress, healing potions? Sounds good!

Stopping this machine will probably turn out to be quite difficult, so it might be a good idea to grab this alchemist, who seems to be responsible for the monstrosity's construction, and take him with you. Maybe he will have some hint or other to offer?

If the heroes choose to take the alchemist with them, up to two of them have to face a **Strength [8]** challenge. Their successes are added up.

SUCCESS: *With the alchemist on your back you reach your destination.* The alchemist takes part in the combat.

FAILURE: *Looks like you bite off more than you could chew. You reach your destination exhausted and after a considerable delay.* The heroes who faced the challenge may not perform an action during the first turn of the combat and lose 1 Stamina point each. The alchemist takes part in the combat.

FACING THE DRAGON

The animated dragon has cut a swath of destruction through the port facilities, so it's not difficult to follow its trail. You find it in the small market place at the city's east gate. As the day is drawing towards its end, the gates have already been closed, so the dragon automaton is trapped. The flattened market stalls and the crowd fleeing the place in panic are a clear indication that the automaton is still a formidable opponent. To make things worse, a handful of confused and hurt citizens are stumbling all over the place, on the brink of being run over.



The heroes have to fight the **Automatic Dragon**.

AUTOMATIC DRAGON

Attack 5 (vs. Toughness), 5 (vs. Toughness), 4 (vs. Reflexes), **Damage** 2 (Dragon maw), 1 (Dragon claw), 1 (Dragon tail), **Defense** 5, **Stamina** Number of heroes x3

Maneuver: The dragon attacks the Start player with his dragon maw. The hero seated to the left of the Start player is attacked by the dragon claw. The hero seated to the right of the Start player is attacked by the dragon tail.

Representation: Place one or more dice in front of you to represent the dragon's actual Stamina. If you are using the cards from the appendix on page 74, put the Automatic Dragon stat card and the card with the available special actions in front of the players. Place the other Automatic Dragon cards face down beside the Stamina dice. When the dragon is suffering from an effect that changes his combat values turn the relevant card face up.

End of combat: The combat ends when the Automatic Dragon's Stamina reaches 0.

Read out the following at the start of the combat:

During combat you may choose from the following special actions:

- 1) *Rescue the lady, a Strength challenge*
- 2) *Rescue the wounded, a Charisma challenge*
- 3) *Set a trap, a Knowledge challenge*
- 4) *Be swallowed, a Close Combat challenge that only the actual Start Player may perform*

RESCUE THE LADY

Rescuing the lady from the dragon's claw is not just the right thing to do, it also would give you more leeway in tearing apart the automaton piece by piece. However, in order to rescue the lady you will have to get dangerously close to the dragon.

The hero has to face a **Strength [5]** challenge. This special action may be performed until the challenge meets with success once; after that it is no longer available.

SUCCESS: *You grab the dragon's claw and pull hard enough that the lady can wiggle free from the apparatus' grip. With a not very ladylike curse she lands in the market place's dirt and hurriedly crawls to safety.* The dragons Defense value is reduced by 1 for the remainder of the combat, but the dragon claw's Damage value is raised to 2 for the remainder of the combat, because the dragon is now able to use both claws.

FAILURE: *You tear at the dragon's claw without success. Either it is too strong or you are too weak.*





RESCUE THE WOUNDED

Defeating the dragon automaton is a task worthy of heroes, but risking one's life to distract the dragon from the wounded citizens so they can get to safety is equally heroic.

The hero has to face a **Charisma [4]** challenge. This special action may be performed until the challenge meets with success once; after that it is no longer available.

SUCCESS: *You succeed in catching the the dragon's attention while the wounded are being carried out of the danger zone. However, in doing so you catch much more of the dragon's attention than you had hoped for.* The hero receives 1 Fate point and the special advantage "The citizen's trust". At the end of the turn he automatically becomes the target of the dragon maw, even if he's not the Start player.

FAILURE: *The automaton doesn't notice you and whirls about unhindered—the wounded are still in danger.*

