

ADVENTURES IN KAPHORNIA 02

# The Island of the Piranha Men

A FANTASY MOVIE FOR YOUR GAME TABLE







Barbasco Roteon, the Blood Sucking Scourge of the Sea, has returned and kidnapped the daughter of the Kap-hornian museum's curator. Will the heroes manage to gain the upper hand against zombies, pirates and other monsters and put a stop to the vampire captain's rule?

*The Island of the Piranha Men* 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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# The Island of the Piranha Men

## 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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# The Island of the Piranha Men

*Nazomi stopped for a moment to consider her chances. The situation was hairy, but not hopeless. Gragg and Holm had thrown themselves at the superior number of Vampire pirates with their usual fervor, clearing the way to the cage of all obstacles. The cage holding Karla Staubeheimer. The cage dangling over a thirty-foot wide and endlessly deep abyss. The ability to fly would come in very handy by now! A quick look over her shoulder, however, showed Nazomi that Tamya was occupied in a fiery duel of words with one of the pirates. What's more, Nazomi had the better skill set for opening the cage's lock. For a brief moment the thief cursed herself for not deciding on the Winged Boots back in Kaphornia when they were buying magic items, but it was too late now to have second thoughts. Well then! Mustering all her determination, she launched into a quick run towards the abyss.*

*"Geronimo!"*

"The Island of the Piranha-Men" 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:

*"The Island of the Piranha-Men" 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 “The Island of the Piranha-Men“, 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.kaphornia.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.kaphornia.de**.

## AND NOW?

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





# TIPS FOR THE NARRATOR

Hello there, dear Narrator! In this game you play a special part which is neither more nor less difficult than that of the heroes, but simply consists of a different set of tasks. Your most important task is to handle the adventure from start to finish. Don't worry, the adventure text will not abandon you for even a second, and instead will provide you with clear and comprehensible stage directions that allow you to keep the game running unhindered. It is not even necessary to read the adventure text beforehand, but as you might have already guessed, it cannot hurt either.

## THE MAKEUP OF THE ADVENTURE

Within this adventure there are basically two kinds of text. First, there is the **narrative text**. This is always written in *italics* and is meant for you to read aloud at the appropriate moment. All other texts are **stage directions** for you. One such stage direction could go as follows: "Please read the following aloud", followed by a narrative text in italics.

Another very frequent stage direction is telling you when one or more heroes have to face a specific **challenge**. This is always followed by a text box explaining the result of a success or failure. At no point during the game you are forced to decide on your own what challenges to face the heroes with or what the results of a success or failure will be—this will always be predetermined by the adventure text. Also when you have to jump to the next scene, this will be mentioned as a stage direction. In case there is no such direction, this simply means to read right on.

**Combats** have a special role. They first provide information about the type and number of opponents the heroes have to fight. This is followed by the opponent's game stats and the special actions available to the heroes during this combat as well as special events that might occur during the combat. A combat section is concluded by special rules that may apply during the combat. Special rules could for example describe allies fighting alongside the heroes, or specific tasks that the heroes have to perform in order to win the combat. During combat it is very likely that you will have to flip back and forth through the pages, but don't worry, the information is always presented in the same fashion, so after one or two combats you will have gotten the hang of it.

Another special role are **conversations** with important persons that the heroes meet during the adventure. Those sections usually start with the sentence "Assume the role of XYZ now". This is the one part of the game that is most difficult to anticipate and most difficult to put into rules. It has however also the potential of becoming the most interesting part, once your players have gained some experience with it. This part usually starts with a description of the person you are to portray at the game table. How much you want to get into this role is completely up to you—it is also a matter of experience, personal taste and your actual form of the day. Don't feel sad if it doesn't work out perfectly from day one—skill comes with practice! All conversations are made up in such a way that it is not about the heroes having to persuade the person to do something that she wouldn't want to do anyway, and also not the other way around. Instead it is merely about exchanging information, usually from the adventure person to the heroes. The main part of the conversation text contains the usual questions that can be expected from the heroes, followed by the relevant answer. The questions are arranged in the same order in which the heroes are usually asking them, but be prepared to jump back and forth if necessary. The most important goals of this sequence are to provide the heroes with as much of the available information as possible and to reach the final outcome mentioned after "The conversation should end with ..."



Last but not least the **Narrator actions** are worth mentioning: these are indicated by a header of the same name and provide optional events that make the adventure more difficult but also more diversified. For additional information regarding Narrator actions see below.

## CHALLENGES AND THE USE OF FATE POINTS

When presenting a challenge to the heroes, do not tell them the Target number! This is important to create a sense of tension, as the heroes cannot be exactly sure of what is coming for them. On the other hand it is not a big problem if you do let the Target number slip out accidentally; the heroes still do not know whether they will succeed.

Keeping the Target number a secret from the heroes is not meant to harass them. Instead let them roll for the challenge and get into the habit of reacting in a specific way to each kind of result. If a hero needs only 1 additional success to succeed in the challenge, then tell him: "It would be worth spending a Fate point, if you want to succeed." If there are 2 successes missing, then you could say: "That's difficult, but manageable." With 3 or more successes missing, you should instead say: "This wouldn't warrant spending a Fate point."

Such a statement from you is obviously ambiguous, because you too have no idea whether or not the hero is going to roll the necessary successes. It is entirely possible for him to not roll a single success on three additional dice. On the other hand he might just as well achieve three additional successes on three dice on rare occasions.

In any case you should refrain from trying to fool the heroes by leading them to waste their Fate points without achieving anything. Under all circumstances try to be honest with them! If you are, the heroes will learn to trust you and you will be able to properly share the thrill with them. The end result will ultimately be decided by the dice anyway.

The same guidelines apply to joint challenges, where each hero is allowed to spend 1 Fate point to roll additional dice. Let the heroes know beforehand whether they have a chance of reaching the necessary Target number by spending Fate points or not. Allow each hero to spend his Fate point, roll the dice and add the additional successes to the sum, before the next hero does, so that no Fate points are spent unnecessarily.

During combat the opponent's Attack and Defense values are not withheld from the heroes. This is because they are used very often in a large number of successive dice rolls, which makes it impractical to keep them a secret. Also after the first round of combat clever players would have found out those game stats anyway.

## GAME MARKERS AND CARDS

You can play this game with just the book and the hero documents with no problem, by keeping track of current Stamina and Fate points on a piece of paper and just reading the opponent's stats and other relevant information to the heroes. That said, we strongly recommend using the cards from the appendix and representing Stamina and Fate points with game markers. With some resourcefulness you will be able to find appropriate counters in any board game collection. Handing those game elements out during the game not only speeds it up, the whole game also becomes a lot more tactile.



## NARRATOR ACTIONS AND NARRATOR MERCY

Before activating a Narrator action for the first time, you should play at least one complete adventure, making yourself familiar with the dangers and pitfalls of certain game situations. Once you have gained the appropriate experience you will be able to decide when the use of Narrator actions makes sense and when it doesn't. Excessive use could result in the heroes failing the adventure due to the raised difficulty. Even if the heroes do succeed in a combat with a raised difficulty, they may have spent too much of their resources, especially in the form of Fate points, making the rest of the adventure very difficult for them. One the other hand, when used in moderation, Narrator actions can enhance the game with lots of drama and tension

If you feel like you have overdone it and the heroes are on their last legs (regardless of whether this has been caused by a Narrator action or by pure bad luck on the heroes' dice rolls), you can save the heroes from defeat by reducing the Attack value of one type of opponent by 1. This should usually do the trick. In return you should also discard a Narrator Fate point that you took previously or at a later time activate a Narrator action without taking a Narrator Fate point.

Another option could be to show no mercy and allow the heroes to lose an adventure if they have a bad day and fail at the challenges presented to them. However, if you have young or sensitive players sitting at the table we advise against such an approach! On the other hand, with mature players the constant threat of defeat could be exactly what's necessary in order to keep the game exciting and challenging. Also keep in mind that the more Narrator actions you activate, the more experience points the heroes will gain at the end of the adventure. Especially if the heroes already know the adventure, you could jointly decide to play the game in the "Hardcore mode", in which all Narrator actions are going to be activated, no matter what. This is however only recommended for expert players.

## FRIENDLINESS AND GAME BALANCE

You may already have noticed that in this game you are not really playing against the heroes, but together with them. All dice are rolled by the heroes anyway and there is no secretiveness of any kind. Instead go for it and root for the heroes, provide tactical tips and share the thrill when the dice are rolled. In this way you will create a good sense of community at the game table and also improve your own fun.

As a general rule be nice to the heroes! There is no reason to make their life difficult, that is already done by the adventure. If you feel uncertain of how to handle a certain rule, then there are usually two interpretations: the one that favors the heroes and the one that doesn't. In those cases you can always go for the one favoring the heroes.

But also remind the heroes of the fact that the adventure is only exciting if they manage to succeed at it by a hair's breadth. Cheating at the dice rolls or making up rules exceptions is not going to enhance anybody's fun.





## STRAYING FROM THE PATH

This adventure has a detailed, predetermined storyline. During the story the heroes are presented with a variety of choices on how to proceed, creating a feeling of free choice, but apart from that the adventure follows a clearly marked out route, as you would expect from reenacting a movie. That said, it can sometimes be fun to stray from the well-trodden adventure path, and if the heroes bring up their own ideas not mentioned in the book, the Narrator should allow them to proceed. When doing so, in order for the adventure not to fall apart, please remember the following guidelines:

- ♦ **The Narrator always has the last word.** If he thinks that the heroes' alternative action doesn't suit the adventure, then he is allowed to forbid it without having to explain himself. After all, he knows the adventure best, including which additional ideas make sense and which don't.
- ♦ **Don't destroy the storyline.** Alternative actions that mean a radical change to the story should not be allowed.
- ♦ **Make it depend on a challenge.** Most alternative actions will improve the heroes' situation, so they shouldn't be successful right away. Instead the hero performing the alternative action should face an appropriate challenge. The Narrator chooses a skill that fits the task and secretly decides on a Target number between 3 (easy) and 5 (difficult). A challenge roll resulting in a failure might very well have negative effects for the heroes!
- ♦ **Make it require an action.** If a hero wants to perform an alternative action during combat, this should always require him to spend a regular action, meaning that he cannot perform any other actions in the same turn.
- ♦ **Restrict the reward.** If the hero succeeds at the challenge roll, this should result in a considerable, but not game-breaking advantage. For example, a permanent bonus on a skill value would be far too much. The best suited reward is a temporary dice bonus that allows the hero to roll an additional 2 to 3 dice during a later challenge that fits this specific bonus.



GRAGG



MELISSA



XAM



FLAMELET



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Below you will find a list of questions that your players might ask, with the relevant answers:

### **Are the weapons and armors used by a hero included in his Close Combat, Ranged Combat and Toughness skill values?**

Yes, in order to make the game easier to play, the qualities of those items are already included in the heroes' game stats and so provide no additional game effect. After succeeding at an adventure, however, the heroes may use their earned gold pieces to purchase weapons, armor and other equipment (see page 70) that provide a variety of game effects.

### **Why does Adrenaline boost give a Stamina point to the hero only on the next turn and not immediately?**

The reason for this is that the hero has to spend his action in order to perform the Adrenaline boost. He is therefore not able to act in the current turn, leaving him standing in front of his opponents with only 1 Stamina point. Since he would not be unconscious, the opponents would probably strike him down before he could perform a single useful action. Since he is, instead, unconscious at the end of the current turn, he is ignored by the opponents and is guaranteed at least one action during the next turn (unless all of his companions are also knocked unconscious in the current turn).

### **Does a combat end immediately, when the End of Combat condition is met, or is the current turn completed first?**

As soon as the conditions mentioned in the „End of Combat“ entry are met, the combat ends immediately. The current turn is not continued and the Start Player card remains with the actual Start Player.

### **If a hero is attacked by several opponents during a turn and becomes unconscious by the first attack, what will the remaining opponents do?**

In that situation the remaining opponent's attacks are forfeited.



GIACOMO



TAMYA



BALTASAR



NAZOMI



# ACT I: IN THE MUSEUM

Read out the following:

*At the stroke of midnight the streets of Kaphornia are shrouded in deep shadows. Those active at this time of the night are usually up to no good. Unless of course they are out there to hunt those who are up to no good. Like you. You are the heroes of Kaphornia. A month has passed since you rescued the city from the evil Purple Dragon, a time in which you have rested on your laurels and prepared for coming heroics.*

*This moment seems to have come now: why else would you have been called to the Kaphornia Museum of Natural History in the middle of the night? The captain of the city guards tells you, in short, nervous sentences, that the museum's curator, Alfons Staubheimer, and his daughter Karla vanished without a trace during the previous night. People have been searching for them for the whole day, but without success. And now, as night has returned, the museum is filled with a strange fog and eerie scratching sounds. As he says this, the captain's hair stands on end. Whatever is going on in there, it is by far too creepy for the normal city guards. No, the time has come for real heroes to get to the bottom of things. Your time!*

*With these words and his best wishes for the immediate future the captain hastily retreats, visibly relieved to have found people willing to take on this task in his stead. So, on you go in good spirits, right?*

This question is meant seriously, as the heroes actually do have the choice of whether to enter the museum during the witching hour or wait for the dawn. Waiting could of course result in the heroes missing important information and the missing persons' tracks going cold...

If the heroes decide to show valor and enter the museum without hesitation, read on from "Through the fog". Should they instead insist on waiting until the morning before entering the museum, read out the following:



*You decide to sleep on this whole thing and return fresh and rested in the morning to delve further into the problem. At daylight you will be able to see much more clearly and the ghosts won't be so scary. On the other hand you can kiss your valiant heroes' reputation goodbye. Also unfortunately the museum in the morning turns out to be no less eerie than the museum at midnight.*

Each hero loses 2 Fate points. Read on from "Through the fog".

## THROUGH THE FOG

*Finding your way around the fog-shrouded museum is quite a challenge. Shapes repeatedly emerge from the mist and you draw your weapons, only to realize that it is just a stuffed animal or wax figure of a king or general long passed away. It's not helping that some of these exhibits are fitted with clockworks so that every once in a while a head turns toward you or a sword arm is raised in the air threateningly. Apart from these short heart-stopping moments you find nothing of importance, so you decide to search for the source of the fog. Maybe it is also be the source of the threat?*

The heroes have to face a joint **Perception [Number of heroes x4]** challenge. All of their successes are added together.

**SUCCESS:** *Soon you have found the room where the fog is the densest: the library. Even though you cannot see your hands in front of your faces, you manage to find your way through the rows of bookshelves.*

**FAILURE:** *After a while you find out that the fog seems to come from the library. Awkwardly you advance through the fog-shrouded darkness, before suddenly stumbling over a pile of books left negligently on the floor and hitting a freestanding book shelf. Your weight knocks down the shelf, causing a chain reaction. Shelves and books rain down on you. Ouch! Whoever keeps this place in order is not going to be happy about this.* Each hero loses 1 Stamina point.

## THE SECRET DOOR

*In the rearmost corner of the library you find a wooden wall, behind which you can make out scratching noises. After some trial and error you manage to slide the wall open. A strong wind bursts out, carrying the salty smell of the ocean and blowing away a large part of the fog, which gathers in knee-deep thick white clouds. Behind the wooden wall a new room emerges from the mist, also*





*lined with bookshelves. More important, however, is the scene in the middle of the room. There you can see a totem pole painted with hideous faces and surrounded by an eerie green glow. Around the pole you can make out several figures, now turning around and staggering towards you. Their pale green faces and bloodshot eyes are void of any signs of life, and their hands are deformed into gruesome claws. Are these zombies? As the figures close in on you, you notice that they are surrounded by a stink of alcohol. Drunken zombies?*

The heroes have to fight against **[Number of heroes x2]** Long Tai Zombies.

## LONG TAI ZOMBIES

**Attack** 4 (vs. Toughness, Willpower or Reflexes), **Damage** 1 (Claws) / \* (Drinking Song) / 2 (Burning Alcohol Breath), **Defense** 3, **Stamina** 4

**Maneuver:** The Long Tai Zombies distribute themselves evenly between the heroes, beginning with the Starting player. Every one of them performs a Drunken Attack (see below) targeting one of Toughness, Willpower or Reflexes.

**Drunken Attack:** The drunken zombies' attacks are difficult to anticipate, so a player rolls a single die for every attack his hero is facing. 1 = The zombie is staggering about helplessly, missing his chance to attack. 2–4 = The zombie attacks with his claws (see above). 5 = The zombie tries to incite the hero to sing a drinking song with him (see above, a successful attack doesn't cause damage but the hero may not perform an action during the next turn). 6 = The zombie exhales a breath of alcohol and sets it aflame (see above), losing 1 Stamina point in the process. The heroes may decide which zombie is going to lose the Stamina point, but it has to be a zombie who is able to perform the attack. Zombies who are not allowed to attack during this turn or who have already attacked are excluded.

**Representation:** Place a number of dice in front of you equal to the number of Long Tai Zombies, each die showing the current Stamina value of that zombie. If a zombie is defeated, remove its die. As an alternative the Stamina points can be noted down on a piece of paper. If you are using the cards from the appendix on page 85, put the Long Tai Zombies stat cards and the card with the available special actions in front of the players.

**End of combat:** The combat ends with the destruction of the Zombie Totem (see below).





Read out the following at the beginning of the combat:

*During combat you may choose from the following special actions:*

- 1) *Set the zombies at each other, a Charisma challenge that may be performed once per turn.*
- 2) *Steal the alcohol reservoir, a Stealth challenge that may be performed any number of times.*
- 3) *Damage the Zombie Totem, a Knowledge challenge. This action may be performed any number of times, but only if [Number of heroes] or fewer Long Tai Zombies are taking part in the combat.*

START OF COMBAT