

Shadow Fire RPG Rules

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Player's rules. Read this first.

Author's note: I switch between the pronouns he and she in these rules. When either word is used, it's meant to include both genders.

1.0 BETA Notes: Dragon Storm and Shadowfire.

Dragon Storm and Shadowfire share a basic RPG engine designed by Susan Van Camp. The primary differences between the games are how Actions, Movements and Independants are handled. Dragon Storm has more Independents than Shadowfire, however, at higher Card Points characters in Shadowfire will gain additional Actions and Movements. Take a close look at these differences.

1.1 Converting Shadowfire cards to Dragon Storm.

Plans are in flux, but Independents in Shadowfire tend to be more powerful than those in Dragon Storm. Our priliminary position is that this would not be allowed for Guild Characters. In private Dragon Storm games the GM has the final word. Using a Shadowfire Independent would use all but one of the characters Independents.

1.2 Converting Dragon Storm cards to Shadowfire.

Plans are still in an early stage, but here are the early plans. In Guild games no transfers would be allowed, except maybe the GM cast and features may be allowed for the GM. In private games the GM has the final authority. Boons and Backgrounds do not transfer. Dual Action, Dual Strike, Slice and Slide and other "Dual" cards do not work well with Shadowfire.

1.3 Number of Players per deck.

We recommend that a ratio of 1 deck of card to two players, although one deck per character is best. Initially as many as 4 characters may be created from a single deck, but they will find themselves limited in the long run.

2.0 What is role-playing? Imagine you are watching a movie being made. A director guides the action, and an actor plays a role. Together, the actor and director are creating the story of the movie. They are role-playing.

Shadow Fire is a role-playing game. One person, the gamemaster, acts as director. All other players take the roles of characters. Together they create a story as exciting as any movie, using pencils, paper, six-sided dice and Shadow Fire cards.

3.0 Getting Started: Sort your cards by the color of

the background on the front. The card types are as follows.

3.0.1 Ability Cards: Ability cards represent the skills and abilities that characters, normal people and demons use throughout the game world.

3.0.2 Power Cards: Power cards represent special powers that come from the Orders training. Unfortunatley the demons have similiar abilities and may use these cards too.

3.0.3 Cast Cards: Cast cards r are used by the Gamemaster. They are the demons and other creatures the characters will be dealing with.

3.0.4 Aspect Cards: Aspect cardsare special cards that grant Demons their mythical aspects.

3.0.5 Item Cards: Items are usually weapons and armor that affect a characters or Cast members characteristics during combat. Items not given cards are written on the character sheet.

3.0.6 Boon Cards: Boon cards are special powers that a character can gain through the Game Master. The Game Master may give or take Boons.

3.1 Rules priority: When rules on cards conflict with the rules book, follow card rules.

3.2 Gamemaster's rule: When any rule conflicts with a gamemaster's decision, the gamemaster is right.

4.0 What is a character? In Shadow Fire, you invent the role of your character. By choosing how he acts during the game, you role play his personality. Other aspects of a character, such as his skills and abilities, are created by choosing cards. How your character acts, and which cards he uses, is up to you.

5.0 How to create a Shadow Fire Knights Character.

5.1 Start by photocopying the Shadow Fire Knight Character sheet. We will be following the character sheet as we explain how to create the character.

5.2 Fill in the characters information as follows:

Characters Name, a name chosen by you.

Players Name, your name.

Date Created, todays date.

Gender, Male or Female, your choice.

Hair, Color of your characters hair.

Eyes, Color of your characters eyes.

Height, your choice, generally between 5'4" and 6'2"

Age, starting characters are between 16 and 20, you choose.

Path, you have three choices: Archer (Best with missles and

scouting), Warrior (Best in Melee), Sage (Best at mental abilities)

Card Points, characters will be starting with 10 card points. Unspent Experience, you do not have any experience, these comes with playing.

Demons Converted: This is the number of demons that you convert to the Knights side during game play. Sorry, none yet.

Demons Killed: This is the number of demons the character has killed. Nope, none yet.

Just below this is, in the box, the chart for converting experience to card points.

5.3 Defining the Characteristics.

A character has a series of stats representing broad natural abilities. These have a numerical value which will be added to different dice rolls in the game. Higher numbers are better and a "0" is considered average. Negative characteristics are below average while positive characteristics are above average. The characteristics, and their abbreviations, are:

Strength (STR) Important in melee combat and strength contests.

Coordination (COR) Important in ranged combat and hand-eye tasks.

Defense (DEF) an individual's natural ability to resist physical damage.

Speed (SPD) Important in determining who goes first and who moves the furthest in a combat round.

Wisdom (WIS) Important in memory and memorization.

Health Points (HP) Determines the amount of physical damage a character can take before being killed. A negative number is likely to be death. Zero is unconscious. Positive numbers are best.

Carry Capacity (CAP) Items in the game have a weight we express in terms of CAP. The character's CAP tells how much he can carry.

Independent Actions (IND) These are "quick" actions that a character, or NPC, can do while in tense situations.

5.4 Determining your character's characteristics.

Each character has 10 points to spend on additional characteristics. The cost of the characteristics varies with the character's chosen path and is listed below:

Warrior Path

STR (Strength) Start at 1. Each additional costs 1 point.

COR (Coordination) Start at 0. Each additional costs 2 pts.

DEF (Defense) Start at 3. Each additional costs 1 point.

SPD (Speed) Start at 0. Each additional costs 3 points.

WIS (Wisdom) Start at 1. Each additional costs 4 points.

HP (Health Points) Start at 30. Each 6 HP additional costs 1 point.

CAP (Carry Capacity) 9 (No adds)

IND (Independent Actions) 1 (No adds)

Archer Path

STR (Strength) Start at 1. Each additional costs 2 points.

COR (Coordination) Start at 0. Each additional costs 1 pt.

DEF (Defense) Start at 3. Each additional costs 1 point.

SPD (Speed) Start at 0. Each additional costs 3 points.

WIS (Wisdom) Start at 1. Each additional costs 4 points.

HP (Health Points) Start at 30. Each 4 HP additional costs 1 point.

CAP (Carry Capacity) 9 (No adds)

IND (Independent Actions) 1 (No adds)

Sage Path

STR (Strength) Start at 1. Each additional costs 3 point.

COR (Coordination) Start at 0. Each additional costs 2 pts.

DEF (Defense) Start at 3. Each additional costs 1 point.

SPD (Speed) Start at 0. Each additional costs 3 points.

WIS (Wisdom) Start at 1. Each additional costs 3 points.

HP (Health Points) Start at 30. Each 4 HP additional costs 1 point.

CAP (Carry Capacity) 9 (No adds)

IND (Independent Actions) Start at 1. Each additional costs 6 points.

5.5 Acquiring Ability and Power cards.

Each character has 15 points to spend on cards. Each Ability and power has a card value in the upper right hand corner. That is the card cost and the card's Card Point Value. Look through the cards you have and pick out a total of ten points worth to add to the character.

*Example a warrior path character chooses Shimmering Reflexes (4)*2, Sneak (2), Dodge (1)*2, Subdue (1) and Look Around (2), for a total of 15 points.*

5.5.1 Path Discounts on cards.

Some cards have a special price in the text which gives a path a discount on that card. The discounted cost becomes the card point value for that character.

EXAMPLE: The Ability card of Look Around has a Card Value of 2. On the card it says that an Archer pays only 1 card point for the card. Therefore for an Archer the Card Value is 1.

5.6 Buying Stuff.

The Character has 400 coins to spend buying equipment. A few cards that influence combat characteristics during combat are on card. The other items (purchased from the list below) are noted on the character sheet and used as needed.

Potion Pouch 5cns / -1 Cap Holds 8 potions.

Healing Plants 75 og -1/4 Cap Heals (2d6+6). May be carried in Potion Pouch

Rejuv Plants 75 og -1/4 Cap Recover 1 card. May be carried in Potion Pouch

Strength Plants 75 og -1/4 Cap +2 STR for 5 minutes. May be carried in Potion Pouch

Coordination Plants 75 og -1/4 Cap +2 COR for 5 minutes. May be carried in Potion Pouch

Coin Purse 5cns / -1/4 Cap These hand purses hold 200

coins.

Waterskin 5 og / -1/4 Cap This waterskin holds 5 rations of water.

Food Pouch 5 og / -1/2 Cap This pouch holds 10 food rations.

Food 1 sb / -1/10 Cap

Normal Clothing 10 og / 1 Cap Everyone starts with a set of these. You only buy replacements

Shoulder Sack 4 og / 1 Cap Holds 7 cap of items.

Backpack 25 og / -1 Cap Holds 10 Cap of items.

Winter Clothes 12 og / -2 Cap Protects against 4 points of cold damage

Bed Roll 15 og / -1 cap Protects against 4 points of cold damage, and you get a better nights sleep

Robes 20 og / -1 Cap A nice set of clothes that are worn by wealthier merchants and others.

Fashion Robes 40 og / -1 Cap Now we are talking stand out in a crowd.

Elegant Robes 200 og / -2 Cap. Priestly garb

Climbing Spikes 50 og / - 1/2 Cap Adds +2 to climbing rolls.

Chocolate Nibble 15 og / -1/4 Cap Adds +1 to WIS for an hour.

Belt Pouch 3 og / -1 Cap Holds 3 capacity of items.

Belt 4 og / - 1/4 Cap Holds up to 4 pouches attached.

Blanket 3 og / -1 Cap Protects from 3 points of freezing damage

Tarp 24 og / -2 Cap Can be used as a 2 person lean to or to protect loads from weather.

Small Tent 40 og / -3 Cap Good for 3 people. Protects from rain etc. and gives 1 point of protection from Cold damage.

50 feet of rope 10 og / -2 Cap Rope. Bonuses for use determined by GM

Coffee Beans 4 og / - 1/4 Cap. Will make 6 cups of coffee.

Coffee Pot 15 og / -1 Cap Will make 6 cups of coffee.

Writing Kit 40 og / -1/2 Cap. Used to make reports, maps and more as imagined by players and GM.

Torch 1 cn / -1/2 Cap. Provides 8 hours of light.

Tinderbox 12 og / -1/2 Cap. Used to light torches and fires.

This list of items is here for the ease of creating initial characters. More items are included in an index to the book.

5.6.1 Capacity: As you're buying stuff, keep in mind that your character can only carry so much. The weight of items is shown as a CAP stat on item cards. If the combined CAP of carried items and supplies comes to more than a character's CAP stat, he is overloaded. He will suffer whatever penalties the gamemaster chooses.

6.0 Playing Shadow Fire: Shadow Fire is about storytelling. The gamemaster describes places, people and situations your character encounters. You tell the gamemaster what your character does in response. There will be times in the game, however, when the story calls for more than talking. In these cases, you will use contest rolls,

cards, and combat.

6.1 Contest rolls Your gamemaster will ask you to make a contest roll whenever your character tries to do something that might fail. For instance, no roll is needed if your character walks down a forest path, but you will have to roll if she tries to scale a cliff.

6.1.1 2D6: When a contest roll is called for, you and the gamemaster each roll 2 six sided dice (abbreviated 2D6), then add up the numbers on the dice. If you have the higher 2D6 roll, your character succeeds at what she is trying to do. If the game-master's 2D6 sum is higher, your character fails. Ties are re-rolled.

6.1.2 Modifiers: Modifiers are numbers added to, or subtracted from, contest rolls. Anytime a character tries to do something especially difficult, the game-master may add a modifier to her roll. For example, when a character tries to climb a cliff with plenty of hand holds, the gamemaster adds no modifier. If the cliff is smooth, the gamemaster may add +2, or more, to the roll. The tougher it is to climb the cliff, the higher the modifier.

6.1.3 Modifier formulas: Many player cards give modifiers to contest rolls. Sometimes this modifier appears as a number (+2, -1 and so on). Other times the modifier is given as a formula, such as 'Success at +1+WIS'. The word 'Success' is short for 'A successful contest roll', which is what the character must win before she can use the ability described on the card. 'At +1+ WIS' means that 1 plus the Character's WIS (or whatever other stat appears in the formula) is added to the player's roll as a modifier.

6.2 Using cards Cards can be played to increase your character's chance of succeeding at something she is trying to do. A character can attempt to do most things without playing a card: She doesn't need a Look Around card to look for concealed enemies. However, some actions do require cards. For example, she needs a Dodge card to dodge.

6.2.1 Timing: Cards take time to play and, in time, they expire. This is shown in timing, which is a number and a letter in the card type line (for instance, 1 / F). The number represents activation: How many actions it takes to put a card into play. Actions are explained in the combat rules. The letter indicates duration: How long an activated card stays in play. The different timing letters shown below each represent a different duration.

F (flash): The card stays in play for an instant.

R (round): The card stays in play for 10 seconds, or 1 combat round.

C (combat): The card stays in play for 5 minutes, or 30 combat rounds.

V (Variable): The card stays in play for as long as the player chooses.

P (Permanent): The card is always in play.

6.2.2 Draining cards: After an ace card's duration expires, it is drained and placed face down to the right of your character stack. Your gamemaster will tell you when your character has a chance to recharge drained ace cards. If an item card has timing, it is used up when its duration expires. Remove the card from your character. She may not use it again until she finds, or purchases, another item like the one that was drained. Anchors cards are never drained.

6.2.3 Combining cards: Cards with the same modifiers may be combined to modify a single roll (for instance, a +1 STR card and a +2 STR card may be combined to give a +3 STR modifier to one roll). Cards with different modifiers may be combined if the gamemaster decides it is reasonable. For example, a gamemaster may allow you to add the modifiers from Scouting, Search and Look Around to one roll when your character is searching an area for ruins.

7.0 Combat: Sometimes a character has to fight to survive or defeat an enemy. In Shadow Fire, combat is deadly and death is permanent. Choose your fights carefully.

7.0.1 The combat zone: The place where a fight occurs is called a combat zone. This area is described by the gamemaster, or shown with model scenery and miniatures.

7.0.2 Combat rounds: Time in the combat zone is measured in combat rounds: Each round represents 10 seconds of a fight. During a combat round, the following things happen in this order.

1. Roll for initiative.
2. Play independent cards any time after initiative.
3. Each combatant gets 1 movement and 1 action when her initiative number is called.
4. Any combatant may react when acted on.
5. When all combatants have moved and acted, repeat the sequence until the fight is over.

Combat is explained in more detail below.

7.1 Roll for initiative This roll tells who acts first during combat. When the gamemaster calls for an initiative roll, all players roll 2D6 and adds their characters' SPD to this roll to get initiative numbers. The gamemaster does the same for each cast member. Next, the gamemaster counts backwards, starting with the highest initiative number and going to the lowest. Each combatant moves and acts when her initiative number is called. Combatants with the same number move and act at the same time.

Characters with negative SPD modifiers subtract them from their initiative rolls. Because of this, it's possible to get an initiative number of 0 or less. If this happens to your character, she may not move or act this round. She does retain one Independent Action.

7.2 Play independent cards Any card with the word 'independent' as the first word of card rules is an independent card. These 'fast acting' cards may be played any time after initiative is rolled.

When more than one independent card is played at the same time, their effects all happen at once. If one independent card is played to block the effects of another, the blocking must be resolved before the blocked card can take effect.

7.3 Movement When her initiative number is called, a character is allowed one movement. Your character may make one of the following moves, or play a card that requires a movement to activate.

7.3.1 Regular movement: When a combatant moves and no one tries to block or avoid her, she is making a regular movement. A character using regular movement may move up to 60 feet. They may move an additional 10 feet per SPD they have.

EXAMPLE: A character with +2 SPD would be able to move up to 80 feet. A character with -1 SPD would still be able to move 60 feet.

7.3.2 Blocking: A combatant blocks by putting herself in the path of an opponent who is making a regular movement. Both the blocker and opponent must make a contest roll and add STR and SPD. The STR and SPD of weapons and played cards are added to this roll. If the opponent wins, she moves past the blocker. If the blocker wins, the opponent uses up her movement, and is stopped face to face with the blocker. A combatant may attempt to block any opponent within 60 feet.

7.3.3 Running away: To flee, a combatant uses both her move and her action (actions are explained in rules section 7.4). Everyone within 40 feet of the runner may use their movement to try to catch her: The runner and all pursuers roll 2D6 and add SPD. Pursuers who roll equal to or less than the runner are left behind. Pursuers who beat the runner's roll may immediately move to the runner, and use their actions to make melee attacks against her. After all attacks are resolved, the runner moves 120 feet. The pursuers may use the remainder of their regular movement to follow.

Example, a combatant with 2 SPD moves 140 feet when running away.

7.3.4 Miscellaneous movement: When a character tries to do something other than regular movement, dodging, running away, or drawing a weapon, the gamemaster decides if what she is attempting requires a movement. Any move that requires a character's full attention uses up a movement. For instance, turning around to face an enemy does not use up movement. Climbing a tree does.

7.4 Actions In addition to a movement, your character gets to make one of the following actions.

7.4.1 Attack an opponent: An attack is a special kind of contest roll made when your character strikes an enemy. You may attack with a ranged weapon (like a bow) or a melee weapon (like a maul).

7.4.1.1 Melee attacks: When your character attacks with a melee weapon, roll 2D6 and add the following modifiers: Your character's STR, the STR of her weapon (she only uses one at a time) and the STR of any item, anchor or ace cards in play which effects STR. The roll and modifiers are added up to get your character's attack number.

Next, add up the following modifiers for the opponent your character is attacking: The opponent's natural DEF, the DEF of his armor (he can only wear one suit of armor at a time), the DEF of his shield (again, just one at a time), and the DEF of any item, anchor or ace cards in play which effect DEF. These modifiers are added up to give you the opponent's DEF number.

By the way, the gamemaster usually doesn't have to add up these modifiers. The STR, COR and DEF shown on cast cards include all the modifiers given by their weapons, armor and shields.

Subtract the defense number from your character's attack number. The result is lethal damage. If damage is more than zero, your opponent loses HP equal to damage. For example, if your character has an attack number of 10, and her opponent has a defense number of 6, the opponent loses 4 HP. Anyone who loses all HP dies. Damage and healing are explained in section 8.0.

7.4.2 Ranged attacks work like melee attacks, except that you roll 2D6 and add the following modifiers: Your character's COR, the COR of his ranged weapon (he only uses one of these at a time) and the COR of any items, anchors or ace cards in play that effect COR.

Your character may not make a ranged attack the same round she makes a melee attack. She may not make a ranged attack against an opponent within 10 feet, unless the gamemaster makes an exception.

The ranges of bows are given in card rules.

7.4.3 Using cards: Many cards are useful in combat. You can play as many cards as you like, as long as timing allows it.

7.4.4 Miscellaneous actions: When a character tries to do something other than attack, defend, or use cards, the gamemaster decides if what she is attempting requires an action. Anything that takes a character's full attention uses an action. For example, breaking down a door is an action, yelling out a warning is not.

7.5 Reactions Sometimes your character does not have to wait until his initiative number is called to move and act. When an enemy does one of the following things, your character may immediately react as shown. Remember that

reactions use up movements and actions.

When an opponent attacks, the defender may react by using cards like Shimmering Reflexes or Dodge.

When an enemy makes a regular movement within 60 feet of an opponent, that opponent may block him (uses 1 movement).

When an enemy runs away, any opponent within 40 feet may pursue him (uses movement).

8.0 Damage and healing: As a result of actions, characters may be hurt. Damage can be healed with spells, items and special abilities. A character also heals naturally, regaining 2 HP of damage for every hour rest (48 points per day).

8.1 Poison damage is difficult to heal. Most healing spells cannot cure this kind of damage. Special spells, items and abilities can heal a poisoned victim. Natural healing also heals poison.

8.2 Disease damage works like poison. A few spells, items and abilities cure diseases and disease damage. Natural healing heals disease damage. Diseases, and their cures, will be included in scenarios by the Game Master.

9.0 Fumbles and Fluffed Rolls: During a game the players and Gamemasters roll 2d6 for contest rolls. When a natural "2" is rolled bad things may happen. Roll 2d6 and apply the results from the chart below:

- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.

10.0 Miniatures rules 25 mm fantasy miniatures can help you to visualize combat and movement. When you're using miniatures, 1 inch equals 10 feet of movement. Two legged characters may move up to 6 inches plus SPD for regular movement. Four legged characters may move twice their two legged rate. Flying creatures move three times their rate of movement while on the ground. For instance, a four legged dog with a speed of 3 would move 12 inches plus 3 inches for speed resulting in 15 inches total move.

11.0 After the game When the game is finished, the gamemaster awards role playing points, which you can

spend to buy more cards for your character. Role playing points may be traded in for cards at a rate based on your characters card points as follows:

01-50 Card Points: 5 experience for 1 card point
51-100 Card Points: 10 experience for 1 card point.
101-200 Card Points: 20 experience for 1 card point.
201 and up Card Points: 50 experience for 1 card point.

11.1 If you spend points to buy more cards, your card points will increase. Be sure you record any change in card points on your character sheet.

You may trade in your character's ace cards for different ace cards between games, as long as the card points come out the same. For instance, you can trade in a 3 point and a 2 point ace card to get a 5 point ace card. Anchor cards cannot be traded in, but ace cards may be traded for new anchors.

11.2 Independent Actions, Actions and Movements increase as your character gains card points. When your character reaches 100 card points you gain 1 Independent Action.

When your character reaches 200 card points you gain 1 action, giving you 2 actions.

When your character reaches 300 card points you gain 1 movement, giving you two movements.

When Your character reaches 400 card points you gain another Independent Action. You have now gained two Independent Actions.

11.3 Characteristics increase as a character gains Card Points.

When your character reaches 100 card points they gain 5 points to spend on characteristics. These may be spent or saved to use with later gains.

When your character reaches 200 card points they gain 5 points to spend on characteristics. These may be spent or saved to use with later gains.

When your character reaches 300 card points they gain 5 points to spend on characteristics. These may be spent or saved to use with later gains.

When your character reaches 400 card points they gain 5 points to spend on characteristics. These may be spent or saved to use with later gains.

Shadow Fire Gamemaster Rules

12.0 What is a gamemaster?

In role playing, players take the role of characters, and the gamemaster plays everything else in the world: Friends, enemies, shopkeepers, places and the weather. Game masters tell players what's going on and who is doing it. They set up the beginning of a story then work with players to role-play the ending.

If you can tell a story, you can be a Shadow Fire gamemaster. It's fun, and we've designed the game to make it easy for you. All you'll need are pencils, paper, six-sided dice and Shadow Fire cards.

13.0 Setting up a game: As the gamemaster, it's your job to set up the game. This is done by combining the following types of gamemaster cards and imagination to create a series of encounters that become stories.

13.0.1 Cast Cards Cast cards are the demons, minions and guards that fill the Shadow Fire world.

13.0.2 Aspect cards Aspect cards give the Demons their mythical descriptions and powers.

13.0.3 Other cards The Game Master may also give Ability and Power cards to the Cast members that the players encounter.

13.0.4 The Setting The setting that an encounter occurs in comes either from the Game Masters imagination or from a written scenario.

13.1 Creating Encounters:

A short story created with cards is called an encounter. You can have one encounter in your game, or many. It all depends on how long you want your game to last. With practice, you will be able to play a single encounter quickly (say, over a lunch break). For a longer game, you can include multiple encounters that take an evening to play out.

Cards for each encounter are placed in a pile called an encounter stack. Encounter stacks are set out to create an adventure. To create encounter stacks and an adventure, follow the steps below.

13.0.1 Determine the challenge number: If you make encounters too dangerous, characters will never survive them. Encounters that are too easy will bore players. To make your encounters just tough enough, use the *challenge number* as a guide.

Add up the card points for all the characters in the game (you will find card points on the character sheets). The sum of the characters card points is the challenge number. As you are picking out cards for an encounter, add up the card value of all the cards you choose. When the combined card value equals the challenge number, the encounter is even. An encounter with less card value will be easier. An encounter with more card points is tough. As characters gain more card points, you will find that encounters which equal their challenge number will become even tougher. Vary the card value of encounters as you see fit. The challenge number is only meant as a guideline.

Example: Sandy is designing an encounter for two characters whose card points are 16 and 17. She adds up

their points to get a challenge number of 33.

13.2 Pick Cast, Aspects and other cards: Cast members are characters played by the gamemaster. The same rules that apply to characters apply to cast members. Create a set of bad guys from the Cast, Aspect and other cards for the characters to encounter that have about the same number of card points as the characters.

13.3 Create or Prepare a Scene: A scene is the setting and circumstances surrounding the encounter. Prepare in your mind how it can be best described to give the players the “flavor” of the situation. Have fun with it.

13.6 Create an adventure map: Once you’ve designed encounter stacks, you can use them to make an adventure map. This map can come from scenarios, the Shadowfire world or the mind of the GM.

13.6.1 Campaign maps: Maps can also be drawn to create permanent campaigns. Such campaigns may be made, purchased or borrowed.

14.0 Running the Game:

You’ve designed encounter stacks and created an adventure map; now it’s time to play. Run the game by following the order of play described below. This order is repeated for every encounter stack the characters travel to. If there is more than one scene in a stack, repeat steps 4 through 6 for each scene after the first.

Example: Sandy has set up a game for two players, The player’s characters, Genna and Praxius, have heard that villagers has been imprisoned in a Ruined Temple. They’ve set out to rescue the captive.

From Sandy’s point of view, she has set up a grid map with 6 encounter stacks. The Ruined Temple is somewhere on the map. Sandy knows where the temple is, but the players do not. Their characters will have to search for it.

14.0.1 The order of play

1. Terrain movement
2. Exploration
3. Daily upkeep
4. Running encounters
5. Acquire loot
6. Repeat the order of play

14.1 Terrain movement: Players choose which direction their characters move on the adventure map. The actual distance will depend on the scale of the map being used.

14.2 Exploration: During the movement characters can use scouting and other skill cards to find their way or

find items like plants.

14.3 Daily upkeep Characters have to eat and drink. They must rest to recharge drained ace cards. All these things happen every day, as part of daily upkeep.

14.3.1 Supply use: During daily upkeep, players remove 1 food and 1 water from their character sheets. Characters who run out of supplies take damage equal to the amount of food and water they lack. Characters who are out of food and/or water do not heal naturally. For example, if today’s supply use is 1 food and 1 water, a character out of supply loses 2 HP.

The game Master will determine if extra supplies are needed, such as hot days requiring extra food and water.

14.3.2 Recharge: This is the rate at which characters regain drained ace cards when they sleep. For example, a character regains 1 ace card every hour she sleeps. Recharged cards are regained by the player picking which cards they want back and in what order.

Although it’s part of daily upkeep, recharge does not happen until characters sleep. Keep in mind that the recharge rate is for peaceful rest. You may rule that fewer cards are recharged if sleep is uncomfortable or interrupted.

Cast members recharge at the same rate.

14.4 Running encounters Once upkeep is taken care of, you can start telling players the story of the encounter. There is a kind of storytelling which works well for Shadow Fire. It is called Description, question and response (abbreviated DQR).

Description: Look over the cards you’ve picked for the encounter and start describing what the characters see. For example, “You see blue and gray rocky mountains, shrouded in clouds.” Tell the players what their characters smell, feel and hear. Is a cold wind howling through the trees? Does a gentle spring breeze carry the sound of bird songs and the smell of flowers? Players who understand what their characters are experiencing do a better job of role playing and have more fun while they’re at it.

Question: To find out how the players are going to react to what you’ve described, you’ll need to ask questions. When players first enter a terrain area, ask them “What are your characters doing here?” If they are slow to answer, ask leading questions. “Are you hunting? Searching for something? Just passing through?” Encourage the players to give you specific answers instead of general ones. The answer “my character is looking around,” is not as good as, “my character is looking for bandits.”

Response: When players answer your questions, they have begun to role-play. You have set up a situation, and they are imagining what their characters would do in response. This is a good time to encourage players to use

cards to support their characters' actions. For instance, a character looking for bandits may want to add their Search card to the roll.

While responding, the players will start questioning you in return, looking for details about what is happening to their characters. For answers, refer back to your cards and describe the next element in the story, repeating the DQR cycle. DQR continues until the encounter is over.

Description: Sandy describes a thick, overgrown forest on a hot, muggy day. The trees are full of life: Birds sing, squirrels chitter and small animals rustle through the undergrowth as characters walk by.

Question: Sandy asks the players what their characters are doing in the forest. She wants to know if they are trying to pass through this place, or carefully searching the area.

Response: Genna wants to attempt to find the ruined temple the characters are looking for, and her player uses a Look Around card to support her action. Praxius is low on food, so he decides to hunt. The player refers to his bow card, which gives a +3 COR bonus to ranged attacks, and tells Sandy that Praxius will try to bring down some squirrels with his bow.

Now Sandy refers to her encounter notes: Prosperous hunters have claimed hunting rights to this area. She continues the DQR cycle with the scene card.

Description: The temple ruins are not in this encounter, so Sandy has to improvise when Genna's player wins the roll for her search. She tells the player that Genna finds several snare traps, one of which contains a live rabbit. Genna also spots runic markings carved into some trees. Next, Sandy makes a contest roll against the other player to see if Praxius can bring down a squirrel. She allows +1 to his roll for his sling, but adds +2 to her roll because the forest undergrowth makes it hard to spot prey. She rolls 6 (+2) to get 8. The player rolls 11 (+3) for a 14. Sandy decides that Praxius has bagged two fat squirrels.

Question: Sandy asks both players what they are going to do next.

Response: Genna decides to free the trapped rabbit. Praxius starts building a fire to cook his squirrels.

The encounter has played out the way Sandy wants. She looks at her cast cards, xxxx Fighter and xxxx Fighter, and continues the DQR cycle.

Description: Sandy asks the players to make perception contest rolls for their characters. They both fail their rolls, so they don't realize anything has happened until someone clears his throat behind them. Turning, they see a short, stout dwarf glowering at them. He is wearing scuffed taur armor and carrying a buckler. A sling and carved cudgel hang from his belt. Beside him, a rat-like demone eyes the characters nervously. The speaker points at the runic markings on a nearby tree. "This is my territory," he says.

"Clear off."

Question: Sandy wants to know what the characters are going to do now.

Response: And so the Battle begins

14.5 Acquire loot Characters who defeat cast members may be able to loot items, money and supplies from fallen foes. Intelligent enemies may carry 1D6 food rations, 3d6 coins, and 1D6 water rations, if the gamemaster allows. Cast members have items that you may allow the items to be looted by characters. However, in combat, weapons break, armor is damaged and magic items fail. To simulate this, a game master will decide what loot is available.

14.6 Repeat the order of play Once all of the scenes in an encounter stack have been resolved, players decide where to go next and the order of play is repeated. This process continues until the players have dealt with all of the encounters in the game.

14.7 Rewarding players As each encounter is resolved, set aside the cards for the encounter. When the game ends, add up the card value of all the set aside cards. These combined card values are role playing points. Role playing points are divided between the players in the game, who can use them to buy more cards for their characters.

14.7.1 Individual bonus: If a player has done a particularly good job of role playing, you may give him 5 to 20 extra role playing points. How many points to give is up to you.

15.0 Improvised role-playing: In the example of running an encounter, the gamemaster used improvised role-playing. Instead of pre-planning the encounter, she jotted down a few notes beforehand and made up everything else during the game. Cards in the encounter stack provided some answers to the players' questions, but most of the answers weren't on cards. Sandy came up with them on the spot.

Improvisational role-playing gives a gamemaster freedom and flexibility. Suppose you create an encounter involving a nasty spy who's planning to betray characters to a demon. Unexpectedly, the characters try to befriend this scoundrel. If you pre-planned the encounter, you may have put in a lot of work ahead of time designing a detailed story dependent on the vermite being an enemy. The friendly characters will ruin all your plans, so it's likely that you'll have the spy betray them no matter how kind they are. On the other hand, if you improvise this encounter, you can be flexible. Since you haven't invested a lot of time creating

the spy storyline it's easy for you to change course. Perhaps the spy turns out to be a reluctant tool of the demon, eager to sell him out at the first opportunity. Now the story can be about characters trying to recruit the spy as a double agent, and the plotline becomes a collaboration between the players and the gamemaster.

Another advantage of this method is how little time it takes to prepare. Because you're not pre-planning, preparing to play is just a matter of laying out cards and reviewing your campaign notebook (explained in section 16.3). If you enjoy role-playing but haven't had the time to pre-plan a campaign, you may find improvisation works well for you.

You can also combine pre-planning with improvisation. For instance, you might pre-plan one encounter stack in a game, and improvise the rest. This gives you the best features of both methods.

The following tips may help you master improvisational role-playing.

15.1 Make up the answers: If you're accustomed to having everything planned out, making up answers as you go along may take some getting used to. Snap decisions can be made easier by using dice.

When a player asks a question and you can't immediately think of an answer, make a contest roll. If the player wins, the answer to the question is favorable to her. For instance, say a character asks an innkeeper about local rumors and information. If the player wins a contest roll, the innkeeper might tell her about a disguised demon living nearby. If she loses the roll, the innkeeper may complain about taxes and the weather.

15.2 Make your own rules: When you run into a situation not covered in the rules, you can either resolve it with a contest roll (the situation is resolved in favor of whoever wins the roll) or make up your own rule on the spot. For example, when a character sneaks up on an enemy, you may decide to allow him to add a +3 STR modifier to his attack, or ignore the opponent's DEF.

Once you're familiar with the rules, you may decide to vary the order of play (for instance, performing daily upkeep after running encounters). This is fine, as long as all the steps are completed.

15.3 Take notes: By jotting down a few notes about things that happen to characters during a game, you can keep track of what's going on, and come up with ideas for future adventures.

16.0 Running a campaign: In role-playing, the stories of the characters are continued from one game to the next. These continuing adventures are called campaigns. The following rules can help you link adventures together within a campaign.

16.1 Returning cast members: When characters make friends or enemies, these people may return to help or

hinder them. Mentors make excellent friends. A campaign needs at least one returning mentor to aid characters and grant favors. Demon can be persistent enemies.

16.2 Goals: It might take more than one adventure for characters to achieve an important goal, such as killing an ancient demon or rebuilding a ruined temple. Long term goals can give characters a sense of purpose.

16.3 Campaign notebook: A campaign notebook is an excellent tool for keeping track of returning characters and long term goals. It's also a good place to record permanent adventure maps. Graph paper works best for drawing maps, and clear plastic card sleeves can hold cards for returning cast members.

CREDITS

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