RANDLESHACKLE
A FiM themed board game
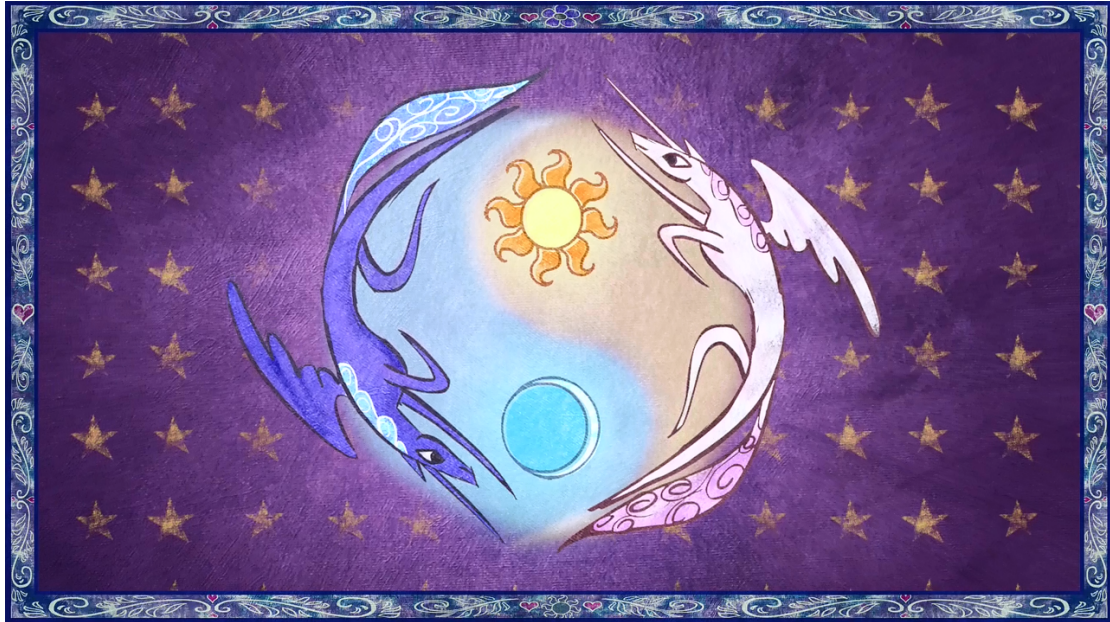### Rules v0.51

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Introduction

Just as Earth has many variants of Chess like games such as Shogi and Xiangqi, Equestria has it's own range of board games. Many of these were influenced by the folklore of the world, with games such as *Sun and Moon* and *Randleshackle* being inspired by the banishment of Luna. This here is a rulebook for the latter.

Story

There were once two princesses who ruled the pony races. Taking on elements of all three races, the alicorn sisters were the most powerful ponies in all of Equestria. Their names were Celestia, the elder princess of the day, and Luna, the younger princess of the night. Together the ruled the land in harmony, each raising and setting their celestial body, but all was not well. While the ponies played through Celestia's day, they slept through Luna's beautiful night, and the younger sister grew jealous. One day her jealousy overpowered her and she turned into a demon known as Nightmare Night, blood thirsty for revenge. The corrupted princess refused to lower the moon, plunging the world into eternal night. Celestia was forced to fight her sister, so together the two sisters and their closest followers gathered and prepared for their final battle, a battle that will determine the fate of Equestria. This is that battle.

Preparation

This is a 2 player game, though it could potentially handle 3 players.

Contents

To play the game you will need the following:

1 Hex Board (needs to be 9 cells from any side to the opposite)

1 Celestial Alicorn (Celestia)
3 Celestial Unicorns
3 Celestial Pegasi
3 Celestial Earth Ponies
9 Celestial Mules
1 Lunar Alicorn (Luna)
3 Lunar Unicorns
3 Lunar Pegasi
3 Lunar Earth Ponies
9 Lunar Mules

With the exception of the mules, all pieces (from
hence forth these pieces will be referred to as
ponies) must have a distinct front and backside.
These sides are referred to as the empowered and
unempowered sides. Also, if you wish the play 3
players an additional set of pieces is required. (And
possibly a larger board, the rules are not finalized
yet, expecially for 3-player)

Figure 1

Setup

For a two player game set the board up as shown in
Figure 1. Here white represents Celestia while Blue
represents Luna, and mules are brown, earth ponies are green, pegasi are cyan,
and unicorns are purple. All pieces should be empowered side up.
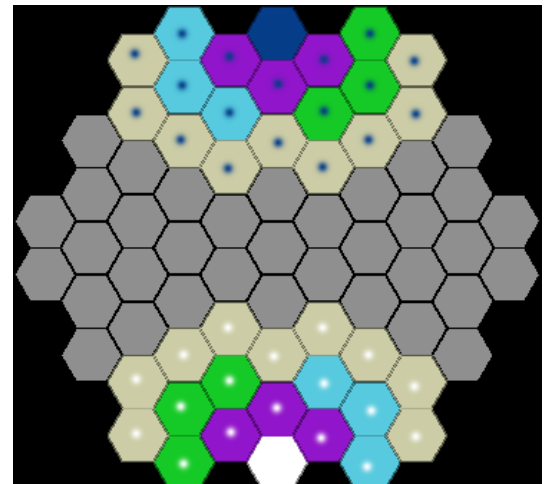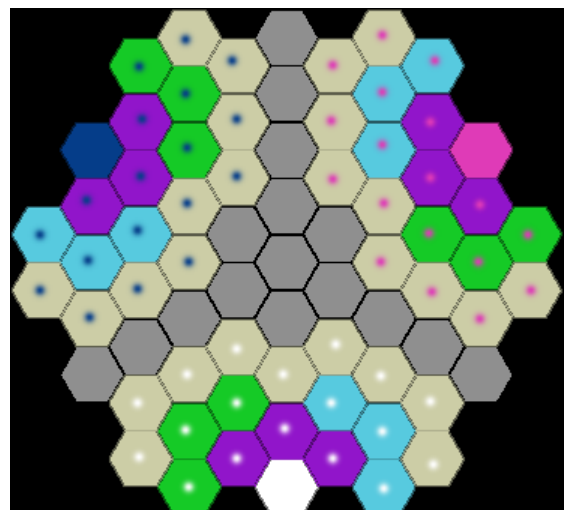For a three player game see Figure 2.

Figure 1

Gameplay

Randleshackle is in the chess family of board games, but it is significantly different.

Objective

The objective of the game is the *capture* the opponent's alicorn. This differs from Chess where the king must be *checked.*

Rules

The game is divided into turns for each player. After one player's turn ends the next player's turn immediately begins. During each player's turn they must make one action, which well be defined below, and then his or her turn immediately ends. In a three player game play passes to the left.

An action consists of one of the following:

- Moving a piece
- Capturing a piece
- Empowering a pony
- Casting a spell

Rules governing the use of each action will be detailed below.

Movement

Any piece can move in any path of up to two cells. A piece cannot be moved onto a cell that is already occupied by another piece, and if a path is blocked by other pieces it cannot be moved along. A piece cannot be moved to it's current position. Figure 3 shows the potential places a selected mule (circled) can move to. It can move to any of the dotted cells, and the lines show the path. The x-ed cells cannot be accessed because other mules block the path.
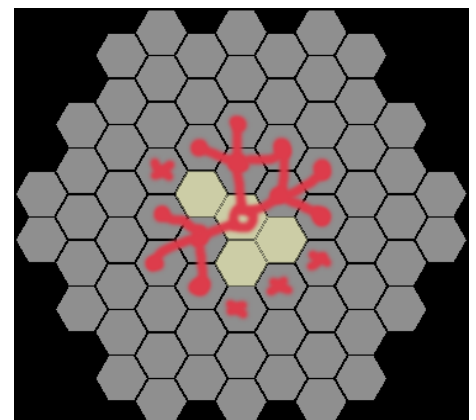

Figure 2

Capturing

Capturing a piece is when a you move one of your

pieces to a cell containing an enemy piece and remove your opponents piece from the board. The rules for capturing are similar to the rules movement, the difference is that movement prevents you from moving to an occupied space, while capturing requires it. Also, sometimes the state of a piece prevents it from being captured, this will be detailed latter on. Finally, ponies are only allowed to capture after they have moved at least once.

Empowerment

Pony pieces come in two states: powered and unpowered. Ponies have additional abilities while powered. While ponies start out in their powered state, various moves that the pony or other pieces may do will bring them into their unpowered state. While in their unpowered state ponies are identical to mules, but instead of moving or capturing they can turn into their powered state. Figure 4 shows the powered and unpowered state of all the ponies, with the powered state being in the middle row.
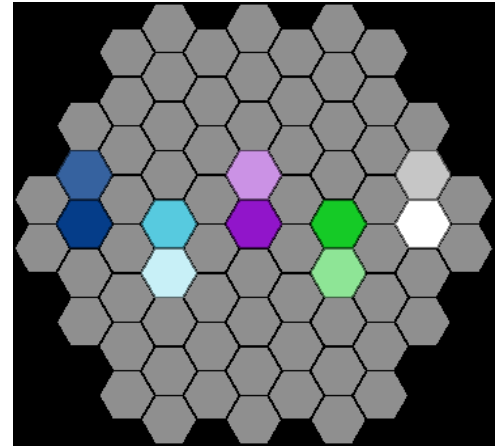
Casting

Empowered unicorns have the ability to cast spells. This will be detailed in the "unicorn" subsection of "Pony Powers".

Pony Powers

As mentioned previously all ponies have a power up version, which gives them special abilities. These abilities alter the rules surrounding actions relating to them. Each pony race has it's own ability, while alicorns possess all three simultaneously.

Earth Ponies

Earth ponies have a special power called *resilience.* This ability enables them to avoid being captured. When a capture move is performed on an empower Earth Pony the action will be alternated so now the only effect is that the pony reverts to it's unpowered state. The attacking pony does not move. Earth ponies may not be empowered on the turn immediately after they were attacked.

Pegasi

Pegasi are gifted with the power of *flight.* Flight essentially puts pegasi on a higher layer enabling them to evade capture and fly over other ponies. While flying pegasi can only be captured by other empowered pegasi, though they are

not immune to magic. Flying pegasi can capture, but when capturing piece on the ground they can only move one space. They must also go to their unpowered state after attacking a piece on the ground. Flying pegasi are not blocked by other ponies, though other ponies aren't blocked by flying pegasi, and flying pegasi block each other. Also, even though they aren't blocked a flying pony cannot move to the same place as another pony and visa versa. Pegasi can land instead of moving.

Figure 5 demonstrates how flight affects movement and capturing. Here the red pegasus can access the green spot by flying over the unicorn, but cannot access the orange spot because the yellow pegasus is blocking it. However, the earth pony can access the orange space by running under the yellow or blue pegasi. The unicorn could capture the unpowered pegasus or the earth pony, but it cannot attack any of the empowered pegasi. The red pegasi can capture every piece except for the unpowered pegasus. It can flyover the earth pony to reach the blue pegasi, but it cannot capture the unpowered pegasi because being on the ground it is out of range. If the red pegasi captures the unicorn or the earth pony it will become depowered, but it will stay in flight if it captures the yellow or blue pegasi.
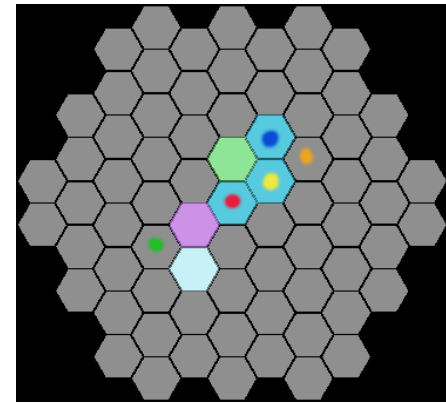

Figure 5

Unicorns

Unicorns are endowed with *magic*. This allows them to cast one of two spells, *missile* or *teleport.* Missile allows a unicorn to remove a piece in it's capturing range without moving. It can even be used to take out flying ponies up to two spaces away. Teleporting allows unicorns to travel to spaces that would normally be blocked, though a unicorn cannot capture on a teleport. After a unicorn casts either spell it will revert to it's unpowered state.

Alicorns

Alicorns possess all three powered simultaneously. That means when empowered the powers of *resilience*, *flight*, and *magic,* are all active at once. This also means that if an alicorn does anything which will send it into it's unpowered state than it will temporarily loose all of these powers. Because flight is one of its abilities it means all the restrictions that apply to powered pegasi also apply to powered alicorns. This means that empowered alicorns must use *missle* in order to capture ponies on the ground that are two cells away. It also means that if it captures any ponies on the ground it will loose its *resilience,* so be cautious with using the alicorn.

In Figure 6 Luna is able to capture any of the opposing pieces either directly (the pegasi and the mule) or with her *missile*, but she will be vulnerable to attack afterwards from either the unicorn, the earth pony, or the mule after she
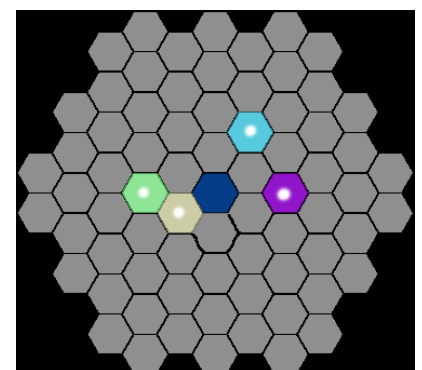

Figure 6

attacks. Therefor attacking would be suicide. However, if she captures the pegasus she will be save because of her *resilience*. While the unicorn and the pegasus are threatening her, she does not need to move this turn because her resilience protects her.

End Game

As stated previously the objective of the game is to capture that opponent's alicorn. This will instantly end the game. A player may also forfeit the game at any time, causing the other player to win. If it becomes determined that the game cannot be won (eg. the game ends up repeating itself without progress or all the unicorns and pegasi are killed) than the game is ended and score is tallied according to this rule:

*Captured mules are worth 1 point
*Earth ponies are worth 3
*Pegasi are worth 4
*Unicorns are worth 5

The player with the most points wins.

Strategy and Tactics

As the game has not been play tested yet there hasn't been much of this developed. However, it so happens that the game was developed with a rock-paper-scissors aspect going on with the ponies, creating the *challenging* tactic

Challenging

Normally in a one-one one confrontation between two pieces the defender will win as in order to for the attacking piece to get the other piece into it's range it will need to move into the other pieces range. However, the abilities give each pony an advantage of a certain pony race, giving them the tactic known as challenging. Unicorns trump pegasi, pegasi trump earth ponies, and earth ponies trump unicorns.
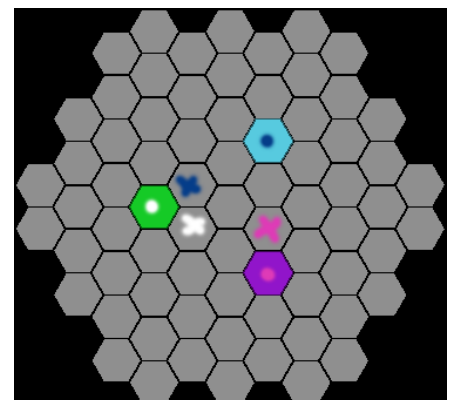
Figure 7 shows where to move to challenge another pony.

Figure 7

Challenging Earth Ponies

As earth ponies cannot fly nor cast spells they have no way to capture flying pegasi. Thus pegasi can get one space away from an earth pony and remove the it's first hit without fear, leaving the earth pony unpowered and unable to immediately empower itself. If no defensive measures are taken then next turn the pegasi will be able to capture the earth pony, but this will force it to land.

Challenging Pegasi

While flying pegasi are immune to earth ponies, mules, and all unpowered ponies, they are still vulnerable to ponies with the *flight* or *magic* abilities. Unicorns can attack pegasi with *missile* for up to two cells away, while the pegasi will only be able to capture the unicorn if it's one cell away as the unicorn is on the ground. This means the unicorn can move two spaces away from the pegasi, placing the pegasi in danger without placing itself in danger.

Challenging Unicorns

Unicorns' missile ability makes them a pretty formable defense, allowing them to remove offending pieces without loosing their safe ground, but they are not invincible. Earth ponies' *resilience* allows them to survive a unicorn's missile attack. If an earth pony moves into a unicorn's range the unicorn can attack it and remove it's *resilience,* but this leaves the unicorn vulnerable and the next turn the earth pony will be able to immediately capture the unicorn.

Future Changes

As this is not the final version of the game there will probably be various changes. Eventually a proper board and piece set will be designed, the actual rulebook will probably be rewritten for more clarity and aesthetics, but there will probably be some changes to rules themselves. This is likely as the game has not been playtested.

Here on some ideas for rules changes:

Mule Substitution

This allows mules to be substituted with unpowered pony pieces that have been captured from the opponent as a special move. This is similar to pawning in chess. An extension may allow any pony to be substituted for a mule.

Piece Dropping

A method for adding pieces to the board may be added. This may be restricted to just mules, especially if combined with mule substitution.

Sudden Death Mode

This rule will require that after a set number of turns that if a piece can be captured than a piece must be captured. This might include alicorn's *missile* as well. This will enable a team of mules and earth ponies to be able to capture an alicorn and pegasi.

Alternate Rule Sets

Any game can have house rules, this would be alternate rules included with the official rule book that will be decided upon before a game starts.

Fairy Pieces

Some alternate versions of the game might include additional pieces, such as dragons, griffins, and changelings.

Notice

The characters of Luna and Celestia described in the introduction as well as the episode "Mare in the Moon" from which the story and artword is taken was created by Lauren Faust, though the copyright is owned by Hasbro Inc.

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