

# DECKAHEDRON WORLD

GM Guide

V0.86

<http://deckahedron.com>

## GM GUIDE

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This guide is intended for a Deckahedron World Game Master (GM).

Read this guide if you are the volunteer among your friends to run the game. Your responsibilities are:

- pitch the idea of playing Deckahedron World to your friends
- know, teach, and follow the rules
- tell the lion's share of the story
- give Non-Player Characters (NPCs) names, voices, motivations, and behaviour
- confront the players with challenges and dangers
- take some notes
- and...

The last responsibility is so important it deserves its own paragraph:

The players will signal the *kinds* of fun they want to have. It is your responsibility to notice these signals and insert that kind of fun into the game.

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To make your job of teaching the rules easier, this guide has **scripts**. The scripts are written to be read by you to the players at the table.

Before sitting down with your group of players, you should read all the rules. Your players will have questions, you will need to answer them.

## FIRST SESSION

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If there is a player at the table who has never played Deckahedron World before, read the Start Script and play Sarukkan's Chamber.

## START SCRIPT

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Hi everyone! We're going to play Deckahedron World. This is going to be really fun, I'm glad you could join me for this! I'm reading directly from a script that was designed to get us started fast, by going over just enough of the rules for our first session, so please pay attention now so we can get to the fun of the game quickly!

Deckahedron World is a *\*narrative\** game.

It's a storytelling game where we all collaborate and tell the story together.

I'm going to be the GM (it's short for Game Master), so I'm going to be responsible for the events in the world and the side characters (they're called NPCs or Non-Player Characters).

Each one of you is going to play a role, kind of like an actor does. You're going to control one character. You get to tell us everything they think and everything that they say and everything that they do.

Imagine we're making an awesome adventure movie with swords and magic. You're the actors just making stuff up as you go, and I'm a combination of screenwriter and director, trying to fill the story with excitement and drama and also deciding how the scenes go together and where the camera cuts to next.

But let me pause for a minute and get specific about what I mean by "you decide everything your character *\*does\**".

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You can't just say "My character Tyrion runs up to the bad guy and punches him in the head and his head goes flying off".

You *can* say "My character runs up to the bad guy and *tries* to punch his head hard enough to send it flying off". See the difference? When you describe an action where there's some uncertainty like that, It's my job as the GM to say you've *triggered* a move\*. The rules will resolve the uncertainty and tell us if the bad guy's head actually goes flying off.

When a *move* is triggered\*, it's time to use the cards and dice to see what happens next. Triggering moves is a lot of fun. It's fun to succeed and it's fun to fail, because even in failure, new exciting stuff starts happening. When you trigger moves, you impact the narrative, consequences happen, and we're all going to get surprises when cards flip and dice roll.

The game isn't all triggering moves though.

Most of this game is talking. That's why "Say Stuff" is written so boldly on the character sheets. I'm going to be asking you questions, you'll probably have lots of questions for me, and we're going to put everything together to make an epic story. It's gonna have adventure, battles, chases, discoveries, and magic.

It's a fantasy story, so think dangerous, and take risks.

Be true to your character's personality. Remember it's sort of like acting.

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Your character will start out as a scrappy adventurer, and rise in power to become a hero. Or villain. Or maybe they'll just die in the attempt.

And maybe they'll be resurrected after that.

Each session will be about 3 hours. We might spend a long time bouncing ideas off one another and dealing with each consequence in an improvisational way, or we might engage in a long battle with lots of dice rolling and card flipping.

There's no predetermined story, we're all in this together, and we're going to play to find out what happens.

This first session will need about 40 minutes of preparation, though. Ten minutes has already gone by with this speech (it's almost over).

Next, we're going to play Sarukkan's Chamber, a pre-made adventure for you to get the hang of the rules. I'll set a timer for 10 minutes and then end Sarukkan's Chamber when it goes off.

Then we'll take 10 minutes to create a Touchstone List for our game.

Then we'll do 10 minutes of Character Creation.

And then, the adventure begins.

Let's start!

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## SARUKKAN'S CHAMBER

Give each player a Deckahedron.

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Here's a stack of 20 cards, it's called a Deckahedron.

Notice the 4 different colored symbols on the edges. They're named Anchor (red), Bulb (yellow), Crescent (green), and Dart (blue).

When you \*trigger a move\*, I'm going to instruct you to flip the top card of your Deckahedron, and we'll see the result on the flipped-over side. There are 4 possible results:

\* ✓✓ : this means you succeed at the thing you tried

\* ✓ : this usually means something good happens, but maybe with a downside

\* ✗ : this usually means something "ok", or not-so-good happens

\* ✗✗ : this usually means that I get to say what happens and make my own move

When I ask you to flip, I'm going to say something like "flip Anchors" or "flip red" or "flip green". That means you find the result on the edge that has that color or symbol.

When you flip it over, please face that edge towards me, so it's easy for me to read.

Let's try it: everybody put your Deckahedron on the table and flip yellow.

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Step the players through "flipping yellow" using the instructions in the [Player's Guide](#)

Make sure each player understands how to execute a flip before you proceed.

Give each player a Move Booklet

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Here are the basic moves. You don't have to read this booklet unless you want to. I'll point out moves when they're triggered and we can read them together or you can just let me apply them.

It's hard for me to do everything though, so the more you can help me out, the smoother the game will run.

The move you'll be triggering the most will probably be Defy Danger, that's why it's on the first page. The moves in the back of the booklet are "downtime" moves which we won't need until much later.

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Start a timer for 10 minutes.

Next, ask the players these 3 questions. This is an improvisation exercise. Its purpose is to get the creative juices flowing and to signal to the players that they have input over the story.

Ask the players for the name of a medieval fantasy city name. Write down the answer. That will be the name of the setting.

Ask "What's a store where women buy clothing?". Use that to create the female protagonist's name. (eg, "Forever 21" can turn into "Forva", "La Senza" can turn into "Senza")

Ask "What's a city in Europe?". Create the male protagonist's name with that. (eg, "Paris" can just be "Paris", London can be "Donalo")

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This mini-game is a GM tool. Often, the players will look to you to come up with names of characters or places on the fly. Instead of sitting still and thinking for 30 seconds, you can use this technique to keep them engaged. See [Appendix 1](#appendix\_1) for more

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Distribute a player card to each player and ask them to write down the names you just came up with.

Next, instruct the players to fill out the stat boxes like so:

- Both characters have 1 Int (Anchor)
- The female protagonist has 3 Dex (Crescent) and 2 Str (Bulb)
- The male protagonist has 2 Dex (Bulb) and 3 Str (Crescent)

### 3RD PC VARIANT

If you've got a 3rd player at the table, add a guard character.

Ask "What's a domestic brand of beer?". Use that to create the 3rd character's name. The guard can be any gender, has 3 Int, 2 Str, and 1 Dex.

Let them know that they'll get introduced about 5 minutes into the story.

### INTRODUCE SARRUKAN'S CHAMBER

Begin narrating the set-up.

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[Addressing her]

\_ (female protagonist), you are an acrobat.

Your troupe of performers set off on the road to perform in the big city \_ (city name). You were really excited, because your big brother lives there, and you haven't seen him since you were 13, and that was 10 years ago.

But your excitement soon turned to horror and despair. On the road, your troupe was overrun by masked horsemen. They attacked fiercely and without mercy. All the women of the caravan were captured, and by the cries and what you glimpsed through your stained blindfold, all the men were

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slain.

You remember one phrase uttered by the marauders,  
"Deliver them to Sarrukan."

After days of travel shackled in a box, you found yourself imprisoned in a small, dark, musty cellar room. Windowless, the only illumination is whatever lamplight filters through the cracks of the door.

[Dramatic pause]

[Addressing him]

\_ (male protagonist) you are a thief-catcher.

You're not too bright, but your boss, Gandlin, has taken you under his wing and taught you street wisdom. Merchants employ him to recover stolen valuables or they pay for simple retribution against the pilfering scoundrels. You provide the muscle. Gandlin sniffs them out, you beat them up, and each shares in the reward.

That's how it had been. Gandlin has now gone missing.

He was investigating a series of thefts from private homes. There was some pattern to it -- artifacts or books taken, but no smashed windows or doors. The mystery of it had Gandlin obsessed, working sometimes until dawn.

Then one dawn it was he that was taken, with a trail of blood to tell of it. Following the path, you came to the locked gate to the yard behind Sarrukan's estate. Sarrukan was a powerful player in \_ 's (city name) noble circles, but not much was known of him.

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After jumping the wall, you didn't get much farther before you were surprised from behind and knocked out, waking up in a tiny, dirt-floored room in the cellar.

[Addressing both]

But tonight, something changed. It was noisy tonight. Footsteps and conversations could be heard upstairs. It was some kind of party. And there were no guard patrols of the cellars. In parallel, but without bumping into each other, you both used the lapse to escape.

You freed yourself from your cell.

In some dark corner you grabbed a reveler and took their elaborate costume and mask for a disguise. Tonight must be a masquerade ball.

With no easy opportunity to exit, you kept evading attention by going upstairs, until you reached the third floor.

From different doors, you simultaneously enter an empty bedchamber. You turn from the door you carefully and silently closed to see across the room, an apparent party guest in full wardrobe.

[Dramatic pause]

One last thing, with these masks on, you don't know this, but you're brother and sister.

What do you do?

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This last question "**What do you do?**" is very important.

When you describe a situation, always end with this kind of prompt. Portray a situation that demands a response. Always.

As a GM, this is what you will be doing most of the time.

"" **Describe the immediate situation around the players at all times.** This is how you start a session, how you get things rolling after a snack break, get back on track after a great joke: tell them what the situation is in concrete terms.

Use detail and *senses* to draw them in. The situation isn't just an orc charging you, it's an orc painted in blood swinging a hammer and yelling bloody murder. You can leverage a lack of information, too. The sound of clattering armor and shuffling feet, for instance.

The situation around the players is rarely "everything's great, nothing to worry about". They're adventurers going on adventures -- give them something to react to. ""

### 3RD PC VARIANT - INTRODUCE THE RELUCTANT GUARD

After the first to PCs have had a chance to inspect their surroundings, and maybe have a dialogue with each other, introduce the 3rd PC

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[Addressing guard]

— (guard), you are a guard.  
You're the newest hire in Sarukkan's staff, but you're already thinking of changing careers. There's some sketchy stuff going on here. You're not too sure what exactly, since you mostly patrol the yard, but you're sure you heard the sounds of women crying when you patrolled near the cellar door a couple days ago.

You got called into the house just now. Apparently a guest of the ball had been assaulted and stripped of their clothing. The culprit might still be inside, so Yogran, a fellow guard pulled you to help him investigate.

One other thing, Sarukkan is rumored to be a practitioner of dark magic and all staff are forbidden to enter his chamber. You think Yogran is going to use you as a guinea pig to do just that.

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### BUT NOW WHAT SHOULD I SAY?

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Where's the *\*rest\** of the script?

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If this is your first time being a GM, you might feel intimidated. That's ok. Remember, this is not high art, this is improv. You are *playing* to find out what happens.

Here are 3 gems to come back to whenever you don't know what to say next.

- Portray a fantastic world
- Fill the characters' lives with adventure
- Ask the players

Firstly, **portray a fantastic world.**

Deckahedron World is about characters who have decided to take up an adventure in the hopes of some glorious reward. It's your job to participate in that by showing the players a world in which their characters can find that adventure. Without the player characters in the world, calamity would ruin something precious. Maybe even the whole world would fall into chaos or destruction -- it might still even with them. It's up to you to portray the fantastic elements of that world. Show the players the wonders of the world they're in and encourage them to react to it.

**Filling the characters' lives with adventure**

means working with the players to create a world that's engaging and dynamic.

Adventurers are always caught up in some dangerous situation or another -- encourage and foster that kind of action in the game.

Deckahedron World adventures **never** presume player actions. A Deckahedron World adventure portrays a setting in motion -- someplace significant with creatures big and small pursuing their own goals. As the players come into conflict with that setting and its denizens, action is inevitable. You'll honestly portray the repercussions of that action.

Deckahedron World is a conversation. The

GM is the main storyteller, but not the only storyteller. **Ask the players questions** and use the answers. Embrace your curiosity.

The easiest question to use is "What do you do?". Whenever you make a move, end with "What do you do?". You don't even have to ask the person you made the move against. Take that chance to shift focus elsewhere.

The questions that gave the characters flesh during character creation are examples of asking questions and using the answers. You can always revisit that well. If a character is religious, ask them what their gods would have to say. If there's a halfling in the party, ask how hungry the current scene makes them.

TODO

#### **SARUKKAN'S CHAMBER DETAILS - TAKE THEM OR LEAVE THEM**

- Luxurious canopy bed in the middle
- Chamber is full of esoterica - books, sculptures, votives
- Maybe a window at the front of the room - an escape route?
- An alarm triggers when a guard enters the room?

#### **GOALS FOR SARRUKAN'S CHAMBER**

Ideally, Sarukkan's Chamber should demonstrate what kind of game Deckahedron World is.

Deckahedron World provides questions for players to answer:

- Will the brother & sister who haven't seen each other in a decade discover each other's identities?
- Will the brother & sister escape Sarukkan's imprisonment?
- (3rd player variant) Will the reluctant guard choose to obey an evil master, or rebel?

Deckahedron World provides tension and action:

- Potential combat against guards or kitchen staff or Sarukkan himself
- Potential chases involving outsmarting or outmaneuvering pursuers
- Potential to hatch plans and use available resources to set traps or defy traps that been set for them
- Potential to use stealth and social manipulation with guards and party guests

Your group's playing of Sarrukan's Chamber doesn't have to *all of this*, just give players a taste.

It should also help teach the rules of Deckahedron World.

- Get each player to have an opportunity to do a Deckahedron flip
- If a player flips the Critical Success card, that's an opportunity to explain the Critical Flip move
- Ideally there will be a combat scene. Try to get the PCs to attempt *Hack & Slash* or *Volley*
- The brother & sister may trigger *Discern* and *I Know This* moves when they try to reveal each others' identities
- The *Discern* move often comes up when having a look around Sarukkan's Chamber itself.
- If any player-versus-player combat happens, remember to use the PvP combat rules

It should also be a warm-up for your GM skills.

- Remember: "Yes, and..."
- Manage the pace. Let the PCs have some dialogue, but when it feels like they're hesitating, push quickly to the approaching dangers.
- Get the guards into the room for a quick fight.
- As the PCs gain the upper hand, show



signs of another threat (maybe the wizard himself approaches - it's ok to tell the story of what's happening *off-camera*)

- Try to end with a cliffhanger.
- Go back into the rules instruction after no more than 10 minutes.
- Play Sarukkan's Chamber *honestly*. Set the stakes the same as you would when you play a campaign

The players should now understand how the Deckahedron works with character stats to produce results that affect the narrative.

### GET INTO A FIGHT

Playing Sarukkan's Chamber should include some combat, see the [Combat guidelines](#) below.

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## BEGIN A CAMPAIGN

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### ESTABLISH TOUCHSTONES

First, the table needs to get on the same page about the adventure's setting, themes, and tone.

#### STEP 1

Brainstorm some cultural "touchstones". Ask everyone to call out titles of books, movies, games, comics, and TV shows that feel inspiring, and write them all down, no matter how silly. Everyone at the table can add as many titles as they want.

#### STEP 2

Each player gets a chance to circle *one* of the titles on the list.

Remind the players that Deckahedron World has rules for swords and limited magic, and no rules for machine guns or interstellar travel. So choosing sci-fi touchstones might help with themes and tone, but won't have much to offer for establishing setting.

This list of circled titles becomes the "touchstone list".

#### STEP 3

The GM, using their knowledge of the rules, should read the list and call out any potential conflicts between circled titles and the rules of Deckahedron World.

Will the players expect their characters to pull off the same feats and use the same powers of the chosen touchstones?

*Die Hard* is a great touchstone for tone, themes, and relationships, but Deckahedron World doesn't have rules for helicopters or machine guns.

The GM should not *reject* any circled titles, they should just address what's going to be possible.

Everyone will have more fun if expectations are set at the beginning.

### THE TOUCHSTONE LIST

Invite players to imagine what kind of world would be the one where all the circled titles are mashed together. What does this world look like? What are its dominant features? What secrets are hidden away in the small places? Who are the folk that populate it, do their children happily play in the sun? What monsters lurk, what weakness do the ambitious and powerful exploit?

It's not necessary to answer these questions, just to start thinking.

The "touchstone list" may be consulted when the table needs to make a judgement about whether an action should be possible. You can ask the question "Would this kind of thing be possible in \_?" (fill in the name of one of the titles in your touchstone list).

The touchstone list is also an early way that the players can signal to the GM the kind of fun they want to have.

## CHARACTER CREATION

### CREATE A GM SHEET

The GM needs a sheet of paper to make notes and track information.

At the top of the sheet write the headings "Good Bank" and "Bad Bank". Leave enough space to track the points under each of those headings.

### SET EXPECTATIONS

Deckahedron World is a game about a group

of scrappy adventurers who grow to be powers to become reckoned with. Let your players know that. Establish that their characters will start the game with skills and gifts beyond ordinary folk, but they'll still have to work and struggle through adversity to become really powerful.

### CHOOSE CARDS

Lay out the cards with an A, B or C in the corner

Tell the players they can choose 3 cards.

They may only choose 1 A card each.

They may only choose 2 B cards each.

#### Choose cards: Alternative rules for first-time players

If this is your players' **first** experience with a role-playing game, Tell the players to choose only 2 of the A, B or C cards, and have them also choose a "Risk Driver" card.

Place two green tokens on each player's Risk Driver card. When their character first *takes a big risk* by the method or for the reason written on their card, they receive the tokens.

- Expose an embarrassment
- Locate a prize
- Extract a secret
- Become enamored
- Sell your services
- Break down a barrier
- Choose a side
- Be an agent of justice
- Take pity on the desperate
- Start a grudge
- Consort with the unsavory
- Believe an impossible claim
- Get called out on your boasting

## ADD FLESH

As they are choosing cards, ask the questions on this list, one-at-a-time, and make notes from the players' answers. Don't ask each question to each player, address a question to just one player, then move on, asking the next question to the next player. This exercise gets the players thinking about their characters, and gets the table talking, so it's ok for players to blurt out responses out of turn. This conversation might also add details to the world, like what kinds of species and religions exist.

- What species is your character, human, or something else from our Touchstone List?
- Does your character steal things, or do they respect the concept of private property?
- Before the adventure starts, is your character engaged in any kind of profession?
- Does your character believe in gods? Is there some kind of religious practice or religious organization for them?
- Does your character enjoy the outdoors, or city life? Are they extreme in that preference?
- Roughly how old is your character? Have they ever killed a person before?
- What's your character's social standing? When they first walk into a room full of people, do they provoke any reaction?

Even if the players are done picking cards, finish asking all these questions.

Not everyone will get asked every question, but everyone will *start thinking* about how *each* of these questions applies to their character. With some depth and dimensionality in mind, a player will be better able to imagine creative outcomes to the situations their character is confronted with.

As you're asking the players these questions, listen for how the answers signal the kind of fun the players want to have and also measure the expectations they have for the game.

Deckahedron World is a game where characters start off as scrappy adventures. If a player is telling you their character is a fire demon or a ten year old shoe-shine boy or a computer hacker, a conversation is needed to establish how that character can fit into the Deckahedron World rules.

If a player's character reads as too exotic, that might be the player signaling that the fun they want to have is playing a different game.

## HOME / COMFORT

Before the game begins, ask *every* player where their character feels most at home, or what their favourite activity is.

Write down the answers.

Use this information to get your first point in your *Good Bank*, by starting the story out in a place of normalcy, vitality, and comfort. Remember, it doesn't have to be a Hobbit hole. Characters might be most at home in the middle of a bloody battle.

## RISK TAKERS

Ask this question to each player: What about your character's personality causes them to overreach? What makes them take risks a normal person avoids? Are they brave, foolhardy, driven, greedy, curious, grieving? Caught between two worlds? Unsure of who they are? Do they have a deathwish?

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## GM RULES

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These rules are split up into sessions. During the first 3-hour session, the players will probably just be getting the hang of the flow of the game. In session 2, they will probably experience downtime, and be ready to understand how moves interact with each other.

### SESSION 1 RULES

#### THE BAD BANK

When a player flips and *resolves a move* with a **X**, mark a point in the Bad Bank.

##### Moves tagged IMMEDIATE

The exception to this is if the move is tagged **IMMEDIATE**. Do not mark points in your Bad Bank when resolving a move with this tag.

##### Calling for flips during a GM move

Sometimes you will be making a GM move and want to use randomness to decide which direction to take the fiction, and call for a player to flip a card from their Deckahedron. This is not considered *resolving a move* and thus if they get an **X** as a result, you should *not* mark a point in your Bad Bank.

### FICTIONAL ADVANTAGES / DISADVANTAGES

In real life, some actions are more difficult than others. The GM has some tools to reflect this in the game.

There are strict rules. Be realistic *and* work within the boundaries.

#### DISADVANTAGES

Let's say the party of adventurers is in a dark cave at nighttime and no torches are lit. A multi-winged bat creature swoops down at

them, claws slashing. The first player declares they're going to dive out of the way (Defy Danger with DEX). Because of the set-up, it makes sense that this will be more difficult than if the character could clearly see the creature and the cave floor they're diving into.

- You can use 2 points from the *Bad Bank* to create one level of disadvantage

This level of disadvantage should now be applied *consistently* whenever any character attempts to avoid a swooping attack in a dark environment from a bat creature without further expenditure from the Bad Bank.

Consistency prevents players from feeling the game is unfair or that you are especially aiming negative consequences at them.

## CREATING A COMBAT ENCOUNTER

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### BALANCE

Grab a piece of paper and write down the names of each opponent. Beside their name, draw ticks for their Stamina points. Beside that, write their attack power die (d2, d4, d6, d10).

Opponents' Stamina points should be realistically scaled to the "scrappy adventurer" level of the players. This table should help.

	Stamina points	Attack power
Dotards, Children	2	1d2
Civilians	4	1d2 - 1d4
Bouncers, Guards	5-6	1d2 - 1d4
Trained Soldiers, Elite Guards	7-10	1d4 - 1d6

Generally, human opponents will have d2 attack power when unarmed and d4 attack power when armed. Save greater attack powers for monsters and special villains.

## CALCULATE PARTY POWER

Party Power is an easy number to calculate, based on each Player Character (PC) in the scene.

**Party power** = (10 × (# of PCs)) + (# of green tokens the PCs have)

## CREATE YOUR FOES

Create set of enemies that challenge them to the desired degree.

A challenging fight for new players is made by creating foes with Stamina points equal to the Party Power.

You can also use Party Power to give the foes:

	<b>Party Power cost</b>
One armor slot that can absorb Harm	3
One armor slot that can absorb Harm or Wound	6
A weapon that does 1d6 damage	4
One Stamina point beyond the norm	1

You can also augment foes by spending points from the *Bad Bank*. See below.

Sometimes you just want to punctuate the plot with some action by throwing in a quick-and-easy fight. In that case, use half of the Party Power to create foes, but put something else in jeopardy (information, resources, social standing, risk of alarm)

## GIVE HINTS

Don't surprise the players *too* much. Always describe the encounter in a way that hints at the difficulty.

- The two guards *exchange an unsure look and step forward*
- The salty pirate flashes his blade, but *simultaneously takes a step backwards towards his ship*
- The golem is *gargantuan and covered in scars from many battles*

- The *horde* of undead wolves stare at you with *unrelenting hunger*
- The old man with the walking stick is *unfazed by your threats* and, *after looking you up and down, turns away with an air of dismissal*

## THE FEEL OF COMBAT

In combat, it's ok if play gets more formulaic. Some players enjoy the "abnegation" of a tit-for-tat combat scene that lasts tens of minutes. This can be a combination of exciting and relaxing. Give your players opportunities to press their favourite buttons.

That said, some players don't seek abnegation. What kinds of signals are your players giving you? Maybe they want to get through combat faster. If so, when you make your moves, you can think cinematically. Continually raise the stakes for both sides during the scene. Think dangerous. No character or set piece needs to be safe or sacred.

## THE COMBAT SPOTLIGHT

Combat can play out in whatever way feels natural and follows from the fiction. That said, it can be taxing on a GM to come up with new, creative responses in combat because flips are happening frequently. So, to relieve some of that pressure on the GM, here are some formats available to follow to get you through a fight scene.

Deckahedron World doesn't have turns, but it's ok if moving the spotlight during combat makes it feel that way.

### Format 1

This format is simple, and gives the players the most agency.

- Give each player a "turn" where they will probably trigger an aggressive combat move like Hack & Slash or Volley
- Pay attention to IMMEDIATE combat moves that may have triggered
- Execute the moves, make cool stuff happen as consequences
- Go around the table until all the opponents flee or are incapacitated
- Any **XX** results may usually be interpreted as "your enemies attack". Choose some opponents that weren't *just* in a Hack & Slash, and declare they attack one of the player's characters. Apply attack power against that character. Use an attack power die from one attacker, and add 1 attack power for each other attacker

### Format 2

This format makes the opponents more of a threat.

- Give each player a "turn" where they will probably trigger an aggressive combat move like Hack & Slash or Volley, call that a "player round"
- Pay attention to IMMEDIATE combat moves that may have triggered
- After player turns are complete, and the players look to you to see what happens next, execute an "NPC round"
- Identify the opponents that didn't interact during the "player round"
- Describe how all of those opponents team up on one of the player's characters, and call for one Defy Danger flip. (move the "danger" spotlight fairly, but also try to put pressure on any players with more than 3 green tokens)

- Failing the Defy Danger flip results in the player's character suffering the opponents' attack. You can calculate attack power thusly:
  - **XX** : one attack power die from the lead attacker, and add 1 attack power (not die) for each other attacker
  - **X** : no attack power die, but 1 attack power per attacker (so 3 foes = 3 attack power)

### Format 3

This format imagines the opponents as particularly quick and aggressive.

- Give each player a "turn" where they will trigger a move
- Pay attention to IMMEDIATE combat moves that may have triggered
- When describing the outcome of a player's move, also describe how the opponents take aggressive action.
- Keeping the spotlight on that player, have them respond to the actions of their foes, usually by needing to follow their first flip with a Defy Danger flip.
- Allow players to avoid the opponent's aggressive action if their first flip specifically provided for it, and it makes sense in the narrative. (See Backstab, Bum Rush, Volley)

**TODO** This is just guidelines You have power - it's mostly in the narrative What kind of GM move do you do in response to failed flips?

## PREPARE

*Before* your next session starts, you should run through the events of the previous session in your head. Think especially about signals you got from the players. What kind of fun did each player seem to seek out or respond to? Was a player particularly keen to create backstory, to get into combat, to ask a lot of questions about how the world works? Can

you think of things to go into the next session to provide that kind of fun?

Think about the plot and how to get your next couple points in the Good Bank. Do you think the characters will make certain decisions? You might imagine 2 or 3 key decisions the party will be confronted with. For every fork in the road, try to imagine how the world and NPCs will respond when the characters choose either branch.

That's important. Prepare for *either* case.

There is no *correct* answer for the characters. Never punish a player for making a choice you didn't expect.

No game ever goes according to your imagination. The purpose of preparation is to use your imagination to assemble a cabinet of narrative spices. Wait until you play to find out what happens.

## GIVE HINTS

After session 1, your players will be realizing that they fail often, maybe more than they'd like. This is a good time to talk about the odds with your players and particularly to discuss generating advantages.

Some psychological studies have shown that odds feel "fair" only when players get wins 60% of the time. Now look at the Deckahedron statistics reference. You'll see that if your players are mostly doing standard flips (flips without advantage), they are likely to feel the game is unfair.

Explain to your players that getting good at playing Deckahedron World means *creating advantages*. There are built-in moves like Discern, Defend, Do a Flashback, and Good Thing I Brought that can be used to create advantages. In this session, explain each one of these moves. Discern should be particularly

encouraged if you'd like more opportunities to describe the world, environment, and NPCs that you're creating.

## APOLOGIA

After running through the events of last session in your mind, you may realize you're painted into a corner. When the characters are in a situation where you can't imagine a way to keep the game exciting, you need to have a conversation with your players.

Retroactively edit.

Collaborate.

Get consent.

## GOOD BANK

### FICTIONAL ADVANTAGES

Let's say a character encounters two guards who, in an earlier scene, humiliated and bullied him. The player says they're going to use the Go Berserk! move. Because of the narrative set-up, it makes sense that it should be easier for the character to enter an enraged state.

- You can hint to the player they already have sufficient narrative set-up to Do a Flashback
- You can storytell to resolve the situation. Maybe the guards run away or an additional event makes the conflict irrelevant. Make sure your storytelling is fun for the player. They've already indicated that they want to have fun by Going Berserk.
- You can use a point from the *Good Bank* to create the advantage - this gives flip-3-take-best advantage, and you've only got a few points in the *Good Bank*, so make sure it's worth it.

Here is what you can **not** do: you cannot tell

them to flip with an advantage card just because you're the GM and you think it makes sense.

If an advantage is to be had, the price must be paid, either by the GM or by the player.

## LOOT

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Let the characters find whatever you think would be most fun.

Sometimes you don't know what loot is appropriate.

If the characters slay a pack of werewolves, and ask to search the bodies, and you don't immediately have a great idea about what kind of beneficial gear could be found on nearly naked bodies, you can write "What we found on the werewolves" on a blank card, and give it to one of the players. Tell them to place a token from their SPEED pile on the card. Later in the game, when the rules demand either a WEALTH or EQUIP to be spent, the "What we found on the werewolves" card may be spent, if the players can justify it.

[Campaigns](#)

## START OF SESSION

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Ask each player for either a thing they learned about the world or a way they expressed their character's personality. If they can give a reasonably correct answer, give them a green token.

Tell each player about what content you added last session in response to a signal you got from them. If they *all* agree that you correctly interpreted a signal, and added the kind of fun they enjoy, give yourself one point in the Good Bank.

## GM: EXAMPLES FOR SPENDING POINTS FROM THE BAD BANK

### TODO

- Make a "soft" move
- Give a foe an extra starting Stamina point
- Reduce a friendly NPC's starting Stamina points
- Give a foe +1 to the next time they do damage
- Make a cost a bit more expensive
- Make a treasure a bit less valuable
- One of the character's resources gets cosmetically changed

## GM MOVES

### TODO

A GM has many tools to make a decision

- Ask players questions
- Ask players to reveal a card from their Deckahedron (this doesn't count as a flip, this is just the GM using randomness to help make a decision)
- Put on some music
- Use an improv game

### GM Moves:

- The Dungeon World moves
- Player loses confidence in the skill they just tried. Put a white-side red card on it until they use it and flip a ✓ or ✓✓
- "Call for an Ad-Hoc Challenge"
- eg, "Something feels weird about this bridge. Flip Int to notice what the problem is" (It's implied that either ✓ or ✓✓ are needed to succeed)
- eg, "Anyone who wants to race to the edge of the bridge before it collapses must have at least 2 speed and get ✓✓ on a Dex flip" (The GM is allowed to consider other aspects than just Int / Str / Dex)
- eg, "You're all in the moat. Spend a



green token and describe how your character learned to swim, or else begin thrashing and drowning. If you spend the green token, write 'swimming' on your character sheet."

- On a *critical failure* flip, the GM may use 3 banked points to make an additional move

## WHAT TO DO: MOVING THE SPOTLIGHT

### TODO

Never let a player's turn be inconsequential. A player might wait 10 minutes for their friends' moves, so if their whole turn in the spotlight ends with "nothing happens" this game will be very unfun. Give them an opportunity for something. This doesn't mean they have to slay a demon on every turn, merely getting a big laugh can be "something".

Remember, this is a collaborative story. Laughter and excitement are the rewards for everyone.

## IDENTIFYING SIGNALS

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### TODO

- the resources they choose, particularly move cards
- body language - smiling, how animated they get
- when they take a long time to make one decision
- usually a good sign, but also gauge others' reactions to delay
- when they argue amongst each other - and the degree to which they argue
- this one is a tricky balance
- the tone they take when acting out player dialogue
- bored? excited?
- What's a city in Europe?
- What's vegetable did you eat

yesterday?

- Who is the worst Hollywood director?
- Name a one-hit wonder musical group.
- What's a shop where women buy clothing?
- What's something you buy at a hardware store?
- What's my mother's favourite TV show?

## ATTRIBUTION

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