

# ORACLE

A Game Designed by Stefan Dorra

-  3-5
-  30 min
-  10+

## Game Idea

The players try to collect **mythical animals** by skillfully playing cards from their hand of cards to **win or not win** certain **tricks**. The player who wins a trick takes one Chip with a mythical animal (Phoenix, Pegasus or Hydra) on it. At the end of the game, these chips will count for 2, 3 or 5 victory points. However, whoever takes the **Loser Chip** of any animal species (this is the last chip of that animal type), must return all the chips of that animal species in their collection. **So you need to avoid taking the Loser Chip.** In addition, all players are trying in the course of the game to fulfill the prophecies of their two oracle cards in order to get more victory points. Whoever has the most vitory points after a certain number of rounds wins the game.



# Game Contents



60 Playing Cards

(5 different colors each  
with values 1 to 12)



16 Wooden Discs  
(Apply the enclosed  
stickers before the  
first game)



40 Oracle Cards

1 Scoring Pad

5 Player Aids

## PLAYING CARDS

Every playing card has one animal on it. Each animal is combined with a certain card value

- **Hydra** with values **1 to 5**
- **Pegasus** with values **6 to 9**
- **Phoenix** with values **10 to 12**

During the game, so called tricks are played in which each player plays a playing card from his hand. Based on the card values, the winner of the trick is determined.



Example: Phoenix

with Value 11

## BEAST CHIPS

Each chip has 1 of three animals. Chips **with Stars** are called **Victory Point-Chips**:



6 Phoenix-Chips with 2 Stars



4 Pegasus-Chips with 3 Stars



3 Hydra-Chips with 5 Stars

Chips that have been **crossed out** are called **Loser-Chips**, of which there is **1 for each species**:



Victory point chips score points at the end of a round based on the number of stars depicted on them.

**BUT BEWARE!** If a player also has any **Loser-Chips**, he loses all the victory point chips of this type before any points are scored.

## GAME PREPARATION

Each player takes an player aid. Depending on the number of players, there will be different numbers of chips and cards used:

### 3 PLAYERS:

All 16 chips are used and 12 cards of any color are removed.

### 4 PLAYERS:

All 16 Chips are used and all 60 cards are used.

### 5 PLAYERS:

Only 13 Chips and all 60 Cards are used.

Remove 1 Phoenix, 1 Pegasus and 1 Hydra Victory Chip.

## GAME PLAY

ORACLE is played in Rounds.

Each round consists of 6 Steps:

- 1) Lay out the chips
- 2) Distribute the playing cards
- 3) Distribute the oracle cares
- 4) Play the cards and take chips
- 5) Score the round
- 6) Start a new round

## **1) LAY OUT THE CHIPS**

Place all the chips face up in the middle of the table.

## **2) DISTRIBUTE THE PLAYING CARDS**

In the first round, a dealer is chosen. He/She shuffles all the necessary playing cards and distributes them evenly and face down to all players. The number of cards each player receives depends on the number of players

**3 PLAYERS:**

16 Playing cards

**4 PLAYERS:**

15 Playing cards

**5 PLAYERS:**

12 Playing cards

## **3) DISTRIBUTE THE ORACLE CARDS**

The dealer shuffles **all 40 Oracle cards** and deals the required number of cards **face down to all the players**. Any remaining cards are put aside for the next round.

**3 PLAYERS**

10 Oracle Cards

**4 PLAYERS:**

10 Oracle Cards

**5 PLAYERS:**

8 Oracle Cards

Each player **chooses exactly 2** Oracle cards that he/she wants to keep. In making the decision, he/she can also look at their playing cards. The choice of oracle cards should be based on the cards in your hand, since fulfilling your own prophecies during the subsequent tricks of the game will bring you additional victory points.

After a player choose 2 Oracle cards, he/she places the remaining oracle cards aside for this round. This card distribution phase ends as soon as each player has chosen their 2 oracle cards.

The chose oracle cards will be used during the game. They can be viewed by the owner at any time, but they should be kept hidden from other players

#### **4) PLAY THE CARDS AND TAKE THE CHIPS**

The player to the left of the dealer become the starting player and can play any card.

Play continues in a **clockwise** direction. A player chooses one card. If possible, he/she must play a card of the **same color** as the one first played. If you cannot, then you can play any other card.

The player who played the card with the **highest value** (the color does not matter) **wins the “trick”**. He takes a **chip with the same creature** shown on the card which won the trick.

The played cards are then placed face down in a discard pile and the **winner opens the next trick**. Tricks are played until **all the cards in the hand have been played**.

Stefan



Uwe

Beate



→ Beate

**Example:** Stefan opens with Blue-7. Uwe sees the opening color and plays a Blue-10. Beate doesn't have any Blue cards and plays Red-11. Beate wins the trick and takes a Phoenix chip because the card with the 11 (Phoenix Card) won the trick. Because she won the trick, Beate opens the next trick.

## SPECIAL RULE: 1 BEATS 12

If there is a card with the **value 12** in the trick, it is always beaten by a card with the **value 1**, regardless of which card was played first.

Beate

Stefan



Uwe



→ Stefan

**Example:** Beate opens with Red-12. Stefan sees the opening color and plays Red-1. Uwe cannot play a Red card and plays Blue-2. Stefan wins the trick and takes a Hydra chip because he won the trick with the 1 (Hydra Card). Stefan would also have won the trick if Beate had played the Red-12 after him.

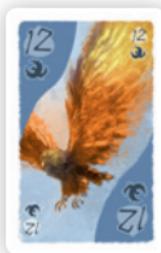
## BREAKING A TIE:

If several cards with the highest value (or value 1) have been played, the highest value corresponding to the opening color wins.



**Example:** If Blue-7 opens and it was followed by Red-10 and then Blue-10, Blue-10 wins.

If several cards with the highest value (or value 1) have been played and none of them match the first color played, the first high card played always wins.



**Example:** If Blue-12 opens and it was followed by Green-1 and then Red-1, Green-1 wins.

## SPECIAL RULE: WHEN TO TAKE THE LOSER-CHIP

If, after winning a trick, there are no victory point chips of the winning type, the player has to instead take the Loser Chip of that animal type.

A player can get rid of a loser chip in one of two ways:

- 1) If another player later wins a trick with a card of the animal type shown on that loser chip, the chip is transferred to the other player.
- OR
- 2) If the player later wins another trick with a card of the animal type shown on that loser chip, he/she may put the loser chip back in the middle!

**Example:** Thomas won a trick with Blue 11 (Phoenix card). Since there were no Phoenix victory point chips in the middle, he had to take the Phoenix Loser Chip. Marc wins the next trick with Red-12 (Phoenix Card). Thomas passes the Phoenix Loser Chip to Marc. Marc later wins another trick with a Phoenix playing card. Now Marc can put the Phoenix Loser Chip back in the middle.

## **5) SCORE THE ROUND**

At the end of each round, each player receives victory points as shown on each of the chips they have won and, if applicable, for their two oracle cards. These points are recorded.

## **EVALUATING ANIMAL CHIPS**

After the last trick has been played, the player who possesses the Hydra Loser Chip must put all their Hydra victory point chips back in the middle. The loser chip remains in front of the player.

Similarly, the same applies to the players who own the Pegasus Loser Chip and the Phoenix Loser Chip. The victory points (VP) are the number of stars shown on the remaining chips. These are now counted.

## SCORING ORACLE CARDS

If a player fulfills the prophecy shown on his chosen oracle cards by the end of the round, he also receives the printed victory points (VP).



**Example:** At the end of the round, Stefan has exactly one 3-star Pegasus victory point chip in his possession, so he receives an additional 5 VP from this card. The prophecy has come true. It is irrelevant for this card whether he has any other victory point or loser chips. If he has no or more than one Pegasus victory point chip, he does not receive the 5 VP.  
**Note:** The Pegasus Loser chip does not count as a Pegasus chip for this card!

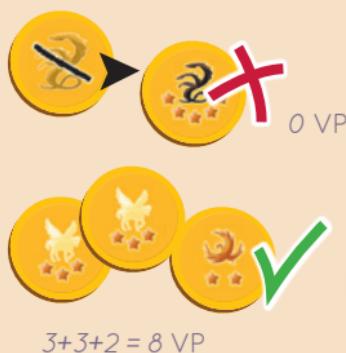
## 6) START A NEW ROUND

All the required chips are placed back in the middle of the table (step 1) and the player to the left of the last dealer now becomes the new dealer. The new dealer shuffles and then distributes the playing cards and then does the same with the oracle cards (These are Steps 2 & 3). Continue with Step 4.

# WINNING

There are as many rounds as there are players in the game. The player who scores the most points after three (3 player), four (4 player) or five (5 player) rounds wins the game.

## A SCORING EXAMPLE (End of a Round)



Chrisly has the Hydra Loser Chip at the end of the round, so she had to return any Hydra victory point chips (5 VP). For the two Pegasus Siepunkt-Chips (3 + 3 VP) and the Phoenix-Siegpunkt Chip (2 VP) she receives a total of 8 VP.

The oracle card "Exactly Two Pegasus Chips" was fulfilled. She receives 9 VP for this.

The oracle card "At least 1 Phoenix, Pegasus and Hydra chip" was not fulfilled. So, she receives no victory point for this card. In total, Chrisly earned 17 victory points in this round (8 + 9 VP). If she hadn't received the Hydra Loser chip (and had at least one Hydra victory point chip), she would have fulfilled both prophecies and she would have earned at least 28 points (13 VP for the tier chips + 15 VP for the oracle cards).

# GAME VARIANTS

## VARIANT OF "DISTRIBUTE ORACLE CARDS"

1. The dealer shuffles the 40 oracle cards and then counts 16 cards which he removes from the deck unseen. Then he deals 2 oracle cards face down to each player, and places the remaining oracle cards as a face down pile in the middle of the table. Each player now picks up their oracle cards.
2. The player to the left of the dealer becomes the starting player for this round and takes 2 more oracle cards from the face down pile and thus holds 4 oracle cards in his hand. He must then pass 2 of these 4 cards to the player on his left. He also chooses 2 cards from his 4 cards, which he passes on to the player on his left. The dealer, as the last player in the round, decides which 2 of his 4 cards he places on an open discard pile. The cards move from player to player, so to speak, until they are kept or discarded.
3. Then the player to the left of the starting takes 2 cards from the face down pile and passes 2 cards to the player on his left again. This happens until the face down pile is empty. After the last round, each player chose 2 oracle cards, which he will hopefully be able to fulfill.

## SPARE PARTS SERVICE



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Designer: Stefan Dorra

Illustrator: Christian Opperer

Editor: Dominic Büttner

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**SKELLIG GAMES**

Parkweg 6  
35452 Heuchelheim  
Germany  
[www.skellig-games.de](http://www.skellig-games.de)