

THE DADLANDS

An RPG by



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Lore

Welcome to a world populated solely by Dads. Dads from across the gender spectrum, Dads from all walks of life, Dads with unique and varied skill sets. All hunting for the most storied and iconic tool of Dadhood, an ancient artifact of immense power: The Remote. A rich tapestry of myths surround The Remote, telling tales of its power and those chosen few who are strong enough to wield it. It is said that The Remote could be anywhere, in any Dad Clan's domain, just waiting to be found deep in the seat cushions of the world. Are you ready to join the search? Do you think you are capable of being the Dad to control The Remote? Then welcome, friend, to The Dadlands.

1 Introduction

With the Dadlands RPG system, the party plays as a group of dads from separate clans in a post-apocalyptic setting, searching for a mythical, long-lost ancient artifact—The Remote—in an unfamiliar land. The GM (Game Mom) decides the best and most fun way to guide the dads through the adventure.

2 Character Creation

The heroes of the game are the dads that the players create. Consider what kind of dad your character will be. Your dad may have whatever age, appearance, gender, and personality traits you choose.

All Dads belong to a Dad Clan. An example Dad Clan phylongeny might be:

- Grill Dads
- Sports Dads
- Car Dads
- Vacation Dads
- Handyman Dads
- Science Dads
- Outdoor Dads
 - Hunter Dads
 - Camping Dads
 - * Boy Scout Dads
 - * REI Dads
- Religious Dads

With the aid of the GM, players can also create their own Clans.

Character creation includes a name, clan, brief backstory, Law and Chaos stats, two moves provided by the character and agreed upon with the GM ahead of time, and some fun facts about the Dad.

2.1 Stats- Law and Chaos

The only two stats in The Dadlands RPG are Law and Chaos.

These stats correspond to the number of Law and Chaos tokens each Dad has in their fanny pack, and thereby the probability of drawing either in order to match the stated alignment of a narrative-appropriate move or action.



A Dad with a high Law stat will be more successful at planning, organizing, and discipline. A dad with a high Chaos stat will be more successful at improvising, partying, and empathy. The sum of your Dad’s starting Law and Chaos stats should be 7, and your dad must have at least one point in each stat. If you’d rather leave things up to chance, you could determine a stat by rolling a six-sided die, and then deciding whether that value represents law or chaos.

Think about what kind of Dad you are going to play. Think about the way they would handle the situations likely to face them on their journey, and what sort of tools or skills they would have to solve problems. Use that to inform the sorts of moves they might have ready for both Law and Chaos.

Oftentimes a move can be justified to either alignment, and this is totally expected to be utilized to a player’s advantage when making a case to the GM. For example, if a Grill Dad sears a steak, is it a Law move because of the precise science of cooking, monitoring the heat of the grill, the distance from the flame, the time over the fire and most importantly the control to only flip when absolutely necessary? Or is time spent on the pit all about Chaos—fire and passion, just wild intuition and instinct reflexively conjuring the most delicious flavors?

3 Moves

The protagonists of Dadlands are all spellswords, wielders of magic influenced by their clan. Although possibilities are limitless, tapping into these forces always comes at a cost— the danger of losing balance. Dads must always consider the risk when employing their abilities to overcome obstacles they face.

Everything you do in Dadlands falls into roughly one of three categories: Persuade, Fight, or Do A Thing (something that isn’t persuading or fighting).

The delineation of Persuade, Fight, or Do a Thing is used only by the DM to inform players what they can and cannot do in a specific situation. Although actions in Dadlands are mainly a free-form improvisation, a GM may specify that a character can only take certain types of actions (for instance, not allowing a player to fight an NPC that is pivotal to the narrative, or restricting actions to persuading in certain scenes) to maintain the “rails” of the story.

Aside from specific situations described above, *You can do anything in Dadlands!!!* Whether it is a craft dad building a catapult out of twigs, a science dad hacking an orbital laser using his TI-86, or a particularly compelling dad befriending the main adversary of a campaign.

More ridiculous moves, if they are not outright restricted by the GM, will naturally require more difficult pulls. Don’t be afraid to go for maximum retcon. If things get too off the rails,

a dragon will fly in and fix things... or just tell you “no”.

You can, and should, make up your own moves with the GM as the game progresses, based on the situation at hand.

Each dad will start the game with six predefined moves- four from the GM and two provided by the player during character creation.

Moves can be one of the 3 generic actions, or can be a pull that will influence said actions (Meta-Moves) for your character (or an ally or enemy).

Meta-Moves that influence the mechanics of pulls themselves (give advantage, prevent the loss of tokens, restore tokens, etc) should typically be agreed upon before a session, but can be argued for on the fly with particularly benevolent DMs. Players are encouraged to make the two moves they create be Meta-Moves, since they could just do anything else they wanted to at any time anyway.

In order to facilitate character involvement, improvisation, and new move creation, most moves will be able to be used only once during a session or campaign, unless they are “re-stored” at the GM’s discretion.

Some example moves for Grill Dads and Camp Dads are shown below. Note that some of the moves are just regular moves, intended to provide the player with ideas and inspiration for the campaign. Other moves like “That Looks About Done” and “Pitch a Tent” are Meta-Moves, as they affect tokens and token pulls:

Table 1: Grill Dad Law and Chaos Moves

Law Moves	Chaos Moves
That Looks About Done- pull to read the difficulty (the number of successful draws required to defeat) an enemy	Meat Smoke Vision Looking- pull to commune with the spirits of fire and divine advice and insight from the infernal spirits of the flames (Ask the GM a question).
Smokescreen- pull to use the beautiful aromatic scent of the smoke from soaked fruit tree chips to shroud and disguise your party in a delicious fog of war in order to slip past foes	Beef Strength- pull to eat a piece of perfectly seared beef and go beef crazy, gaining terrible strength. Your mustache grows two sizes, and you are also horny as hell.

3.1 Playing the Game

Each player should have a fanny pack with chaos and law tokens inside. The number of starting law and chaos tokens should equal the character’s law and chaos stats, respectively.

Table 2: CampDad Law and Chaos Moves

Law Moves	Chaos Moves
Badges (scout dad subtype)- pull to see if you are proficient in anything imaginable	Pyromancy- pull to start a fire, blow on it, and then proceed to mold the very essence of flame itself
Pitch a tent- pull to set up a “pocket spa,” providing much needed rest and healing your off-kilter allies (restoration of lost tokens), or to set stakes and weather a storm	Pocket Knife- pull to see what this Swiss Army thing has on it. Could be anything ...

The GM will guide the dads through the adventure and determine the specifics of each encounter, such as how the remote got where it is, how the Dads need to get there, and what it takes to retrieve the remote.

When the GM presents a challenge to the group or specific dad(s), the GM will first describe the situation, and whether it is limited to Persuade, Fight, Do A Thing, or if it is open-ended how the party can act. Once the challenge is known, Dad(s) declare their action(s), and the type of alignment (Law or Chaos) that the move is. The GM then states the difficulty rating of the move¹ (if at all- trivia, talking without persuading, or simple actions in line with narrative and character may not require a pull, or may require 1 pull without risk of losing a token).

The Dad taking action draws a number of tokens equal to the difficulty stated by the GM. Pulling a token that is the same as the stated alignment of the move (Ex. doing something stated to be chaotic and pulling a chaos token) is considered a success.

An easy move may require 1-2 successful pulls. A harder one may require 3-4 pulls. The GM always determines the difficulty of a pull, unless it was a move with a defined pull, or the stated difficulty was agreed upon in advance. Players can debate the difficulty of a pull with the GM, if they have good narrative justification or a funny reason a pull should be easier.

The “ difficulty ” of a challenge or enemy will often be a set number of the total pulls Dads must succeed on in order to overcome it. For example, an enemy with a difficulty of 5 would require 5 successful pulls. The 5 successful pulls can be arrived at through any combination of actions. For example, it could include five successful pulls of 1 difficulty each. Or one successful pull of 2 difficulty, combined with a mixed success of 3 pulls on a 4 difficulty move (totaling $2 + 3 = 5$ successful pulls).

¹Friendly debate is encouraged here.

Sometimes, the GM may ask players to make a pull (similar to a saving throw). Failed defensive pulls may result in the loss of a token, negative consequences for the player, or change the narrative.

3.2 Pulls

- If all tokens drawn on a pull of difficulty 2 or greater match the stated affinity (Law or Chaos), the Dad succeeds and adds one token of that type.
- If no tokens drawn match the chosen approach, the Dad fails and must discard one of the tokens drawn.
- On a mixed result, the Dad succeeds, but must explain how a little bit of balance helped them succeed. They may have to discard one of the tokens drawn at the GM's discretion²; the player always chooses which type of token to discard.
- Assisting with pulls- Other Dads can assist players on pulls to meet the required difficulty or prevent a total failure.
 - Players can assist another Dad at any time, but assisting removes the assisting Dad from the turn order for the rest of that round if they are in combat.
 - Assisting involves drawing two tokens of the stated type.
 - If both pulls are unsuccessful, the assisting player loses a token and is unable to help.
 - If both pulls are successful, the assisting player helps the Dad achieve his goal and prevents the loss of a token for the original drawing dad.
 - On a mixed success, either the original or the assisting dad still loses a token (this can be decided by players, or by a 50/50 pull by the DM), and has to come up with some bullshit as to how things went wrong but why they still ultimately kind of worked.
- Wild Pulls- Rather than set a difficulty, the GM may allow a player to pull as many tokens as they wish to perform an action, with each successful token exponentially increasing how well they perform.
 - During wild pulls, any tokens that are pulled of the incorrect variety are immediately lost.
 - Usually, 4 successful pulls on a wild pull results in a complete, over-the-top, undeniably awesome success, complete with positive externalities.

²This is a useful way to titrate difficulty.

- Bosses cannot defend against wild pulls in combat.
 - Going Deadbeat or Hardass during a series of wild pulls immediately ends the player’s move.
- Defining Moments- The GM can also establish the task as being a Defining Moment, in which case ALL the tokens in the draw will be lost if the action fails.
 - Pivotal Challenges- Certain challenges which are integral to the story may be considered “Pivotal”. These challenges will typically be the final boss or trial in a session, and will always result in the loss of a token on a failed pull. The player will choose which token to discard.

The DM can choose to award Dadspiration for particularly in-character narrative contributions or actions, or particularly good dad jokes. Dadspiration can be saved by a player until needed, and awards one token of the player’s choosing, or a mulligan on a future pull.

The total of a Dad’s Law and Chaos tokens cannot exceed 10.

If a Dad’s Law or Chaos stat reaches zero, they become a Deadbeat or Hardass and will now be an albatross to the rest of the Dads until they have their balance restored.

4 Combat

Combat will consist of rounds, where each player can move once per round. Enemies can move once per round, or more than once per round if there is a large number of players.

Turn order will be decided by dice rolls at the beginning of combat, but Dads with ideas can always volunteer to go whenever they like in the turn order.

Players can assist other Dads at any time as outlined in the “Pulls” section, but it removes them from turn order for the rest of that round.

Dads can choose to use their move to defend against an attack by an enemy just like they would make any other move (state a move, alignment, and pull according to difficulty determined by the GM), but it will also remove them from the turn order for that round. Other Dads can assist in defending the same way they would assist with any other action, but it will also remove them from the turn order for that round.

5 Deadbeats and Hardasses

While relationships between clans may vary, Deadbeats and Hardasses are the only true villains of the Dadlands. They are universally reviled. They do not respect the most important aspect of Dadhood: balance.

Deadbeats and Hardasses experience the full power of the Dadlands' magicks, but at a terrible cost. Near-immortal and immensely powerful, they lack all control and reason. They can be fought or incapacitated, but never truly defeated. The only true way to deal with a Deadbeat or Hardass is to restore their balance...or run.

5.1 Deadbeat and Hardass Mechanics

Players automatically become a Deadbeat or Hardass if they lose all of their law or chaos tokens, respectively.

- Deadbeat and Hardass Dads will continue to play as normal, but at the beginning of each round, the GM will roll a die to determine a random effect for that round. The effect will not be revealed by the GM until it is relevant to the round.
- Effects are mostly harmful, but should include the chance of helping the team if the unintentional help mechanic described in the section on remedying Deadbeat and Hardass status is being used. For example, when rolling 1d6 to determine effects for the round, 1 may represent a boon, 2 may be nothing different about the player's normal turn, and 3-6 could be harmful effects.
- Possible harmful effects should **not** be revealed to players beforehand.
- Harmful effects should be determined by the GM before the game starts. Possible examples for a d6 roll could be:
 1. Ultimate Power- The Dad's unbridled magic makes his move a complete success, regardless of what he pulled.
 2. No effect/nothing changes for the round.
 3. PITA- adding another 50/50 pull (essentially more difficulty) to one (or all) player's actions that round. The number of players affected can be determined by another dice roll.
 4. Mancave- Transport a player to the Deadbeat Dad's dingy basement to listen to stories about how cool and tough he used to be for one or more rounds. The Dad that has been spirited away may have to pull to persuade the Dad to remember and return them to the quest for the remote.
 5. Let me Show You How to Do That- Interrupting another player's move and proceeding to completely bungle it and make it a failure for the player
 6. Fed Up- the deadbeat dad loses his patience and forces a pulling dad to perform a wild pull.
- Deadbeat and Hardass status can be remedied in the following ways:

- Dad jokes. Particularly good ones made by the player who has lost his balance may bring him back to the Tao of Dad. Success of these jokes will be determined by the GM, but usually require a collective groan, or a genuine laugh out loud from players. Other players may assist the Deadbeat/Hardass Dad in this endeavor, but bringing another Dad back to balance is notoriously difficult. It requires 3 successful dad jokes from players other than the Deadbeat/Hardass Dad to break through the delirium of extremes and stoke the near-extinguished spark of the former Dad within.
- Unintentional Helping- adding to player's draws (instead of hindering) a total of 3 times will restore a dad to their natural balance.³
- Going Deadbeat or Hardass multiple times in a campaign may increase the difficulty of returning a Dad to balance (Ex. the first time requires 3 successful Dad jokes, and the second requires 5, etc).
- The GM may also restore balance to Dads at their discretion, via narrative devices, long rests (usually between sessions) or, as mentioned before with reeling in moves that are borderline lunacy, with the use of a magic dragon. There is always a magic dragon.

If the entire team goes Deadbeat, Hardass, or some combination thereof, all hope is lost and the game is over.

6 Everyone's OK

In order to maintain the jovial, improvisational humor aim of Dadlands, the "Everyone's OK" Rule can be invoked. When active, no matter what happens, Everyone's OK. Even if an NPC is somehow yeeted into a woodchipper, the tiny bits coming out the other side will briefly coalesce into a thumbs up and knowing smile that lets you know that's its all good, they'll walk it off and wake up feeling fantastic tomorrow.⁴

7 Difficulty Mods

Dadlands should be fun for all involved. The GM should strive to make sure dramatic tension is maintained, and players are not asked to improvise more than they are comfortable with or able to⁵. The following rules can be invoked to increase or decrease difficulty of each Dadlands game.

³This can be combined with the number of successful Dad jokes to titrate difficulty at the GM's discretion.

⁴See the The Adventure Zone podcast, Balance Arc, Petals to the Metal.

⁵If someone has trouble thinking of what to do and only wants to punch people, let them punch. But encourage creativity beyond punching in a supportive manner. Maybe a Grill Dad pours some sauce on his knuckles first? Help where it is needed, when you can.

- Safe Single Pulls- single pulls no longer carry the risk of losing a token- only pulls of 2 or more (or 3 or more) will risk losing a token on failure.
- Boss Resistance- bosses can only be affected by pulls of 2 or more
- Boss Defense- in addition to defensive moves bosses should already have in their move set, each boss can do a 50/50 pull to mitigate successful pulls against it (negating one successful pull of "damage" they would otherwise receive). For example, a player has complete success on a 3 pull move against a boss that has a difficulty of 8 pulls. The boss then succeeds on a 50/50 defensive pull. The player would only succeed on 2 pulls against the boss, bringing its remaining difficulty to 6 pulls (instead of 5, as the 3 successes normally would have).
- Tokens for Success- Normally, on a complete success of difficulty 2 or more, the successful Dad will receive of an extra token of their choosing. This can be increased to only complete successes of 3 or more, or decreased to success on single draws to titrate difficulty.