



Pacs Set I: Heroes for Hire

The following pages are the rules for
PACS Set I: Heroes for Hire.

The rules are formatted as cards. This allows a player to add the rules to their set of PACS to have them available for reference at all times.

Rules of Play : Overview I

What is PACS?

PACS (Pocket Adventures Card System) is a full RPG (Role Playing Game). Unlike typical tabletop RPGs, PACS includes everything you need to play with a single deck of cards and a pocket of loose change. There is no need for extensive character sheets, voluminous rule-books, or even sets of dice.

What is a RPG?

A RPG is a type of game where players describe their actions to one another, while a DM (Dungeon Master) controls the world around those players. It is up to the collective imagination and storytelling of the group to construct an engaging narrative full of heroic adventurers, nefarious villains, and devious plots.

Sounds fun. How do I play?

The 'Rules of Play' cards will describe the game system to you. Once you and a group of friends are familiar with the game system, each player selects a Hero while another selects the DM card. The DM begins their narrative, and the players interact with the world the DM generates for them. If you are familiar with RPG systems, then you'll be right at home with PACS. If you are unsure, please visit dorkmengames.com for more information.

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Rules of Play : Overview II

Deck Makeup

8 Heroes	24 Foes
20 Loot	12 Lairs
7 Rules of Play	1 Dungeon Master

Main Card Types

Hero: A character for a player.

Foe: A monster or villain for the DM to oppose the Heroes with.

Loot: Treasure and rewards the Heroes gain as they overcome threats and obstacles.

Lair: Play options for the DM who doesn't want to run an impromptu adventure. See Variant Play I for play options utilizing the Lair cards.

Dungeon Master: This card identifies the DM. It may be selected, drawn randomly, passed at intervals, or handled however a group sees fit.

Where can I get more information?

'Like' PACS on [facebook](https://www.facebook.com/dorkmengames), where you can contact us with any specific questions or comments. Please visit dorkmengames.com where you can find extended 'Rules of Play' and be sure to visit the store where expansions are available for purchase.

PACS Set I: Heroes for Hire by Ben Kanelos

I would like to thank Daniel Britt, Rob Lorentz, Jeff Borger, and all the members of BOGADAP

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Rules of Play : Gameplay I

PACS Gameplay at a Glance

PACS plays like a typical tabletop RPG with the following changes:

You flip coins instead of rolling dice.

For most actions in PACS you flip three coins, count the number of 'heads', add that to the appropriate Aptitude Score, and determine whether your result is a success or failure. If you want to roll dice, determine a way to divide the numbers on your die into a 50/50 chance. Common options are evens/odds or high/low.

There is no battle-grid.

It is assumed each Hero and Foe is in range of each other. The DM can adjudicate differently as they see fit.

There are no hit-points.

A Hero or Foe has three statuses: Uninjured, injured, and defeated. The card's orientation represents what state the Hero or Foe is in.

There are no experience points, but Heroes can still become more powerful.

Heroes have a number of options available to them to become more powerful. Heroes who gain Loot will be more powerful. Class Specialization cards (may or may not be included in Set) allow for characters to level up as their Dungeon Master sees fit.

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Rules of Play : Gameplay II

Game-play in PACS breaks into two main categories: Combat and Role-Playing.

Role-Playing

During Role-Playing, each player narrates what they wish their character to do. The DM (and other players) interact with this players decisions. Sometimes the DM may call for an 'Aptitude Check' to determine whether or not a player's chosen action is successful.

Example: The Barbarian wishes to climb a cliff. The DM determines it will take a Might check of 4 to do so. The Barbarian flips a Might flip, and is successful on a 4 or higher.

Sometimes the player may be interacting with another character. In these cases, the DM may call for an 'Opposed Aptitude Check'.

Example: The Rogue wishes to sneak past a guard. The DM determines the guard has an Awareness of 2. The Rouge flips an Agility flip and the DM flips an Awareness flip. If the Rogue beats the DM's result, he sneaks past the guard.

See Rules of Play : Aptitude Scores for more information.

Combat

When players come to a junction where they need to fight their enemies, initiate combat. See Rules of Play : Combat for more information.

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Rules of Play : Aptitude Scores I

The Aptitude Scores

Each Hero and Foe has 6 Aptitude Scores, representing their skill, ability, and training. Below is a small list of examples of what a character can do within each Aptitude. If a character wishes to do something not on the list, it is up to the DM to determine which Aptitude is appropriate.

Might

A measure of physical strength and endurance. Climbing, Jumping, Running, Throwing, Lifting

Agility

A measure of dexterity and reaction time. Contorting, Sneaking, Balancing, Disarming

Magic

A measure of magical ability and training. Any magical spell or effect (within reason)

Awareness

A measure of perception and intuition. Sensing, Finding, Appraising, Spotting

Influence

A measure of force of personality. Negotiating, Lying, Intimidating, Performing

Knowledge

A measure of studied learning and lore. Any information on a subject (within reason)

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Rules of Play : Aptitude Scores II

Making Aptitude Checks

When a Hero attempts an activity that requires some skill, the DM may ask for an Aptitude Check. The DM determines the appropriate Aptitude and sets a difficulty from 1 (easy) to 6 (hard). The player flips 3 coins and adds their 'heads' to their Aptitude Score. If they meet or beat the DMs difficulty, they succeed. If they are less than the DMs difficulty, they fail.

Difficulty

1 - Incredibly Simple : A check any character should succeed at.

2 - Simple : In the right conditions, a check most characters should be able to succeed at.

3 - Somewhat Difficult : A check that is still within reach of most characters, while a character with some training in the activity should succeed.

4 - Difficult : A check most characters would fail at, while a character well trained in the activity should succeed.

5 - Very Difficult : A check nearly all characters would fail, while a character highly trained in the activity still has a chance to succeed.

6 - Nearly Impossible : A check only the most trained character in the best of conditions can succeed at.

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Rules of Play : Combat I

Building a Combat

When the DM determines combat is necessary, they select Foes. Each Foe has a value. To balance combat, the total value of Foes should equal the total number of players. Harder combats have a higher total value, easier combats a lower total value. If a DM wishes to duplicate a Foe, they can use an additional Foe card placed face down next to the Foe they wish to duplicate. Some Foes have a symbol after their value. This symbol denotes the type of foe (which may interact with other cards). This symbol does not count towards or against a Foe's value for the purpose of building a combat.

Turn Order

Once all of the Foes and Heroes are set, combat begins. Heroes with Agility 3 (if any) take their turn first. If two Heroes are tied, they can determine who acts first. Once all Heroes with Agility 3 have taken their turn, Foes with Agility 3 (if any) take their turn. Repeat this process for Agility 2, Agility 1 and then Agility 0. All Heroes and Foes will have had a turn. The round ends, and a new round begins with Heroes with Agility 3 once again. Combat continues until all Heroes or all Foes are defeated (although the DM can adjudicate differently as they see fit by having Foes flee, surrender, etc.)

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Rules of Play : Combat II

Anatomy of a Turn

A Hero or Foe has 1 action per turn. Minor things such as opening a door, drawing a weapon, making a Knowledge check may not count as an action (per DM adjudication). Other, more time consuming actions such as climbing a ladder, swinging on a chandelier, lighting a torch may count as your 1 action (per DM adjudication). An attack always counts as a character's 1 action. *Remember: If you can think it, you can try it.*

Action Types

Effect: Unless otherwise specified, an Effect never uses an Action.

On-Turn Action: An On-Turn Action happens on a character's turn. This counts as the character's 1 action for that turn. If the Action has (*Flip #*), the character must flip that number (#) of coins to determine the effect of the Action.

Off-Turn Action: An Off-Turn happens on another character's turn. Each Hero and Foe has 1 Off-Turn Action per round. Once the character uses their Off-Turn action, they must wait until the next round before they can use it again. If a character has more than one Off-Turn action, they must choose which one to use. If the Action has (*Flip #*), the character must flip that number (#) of coins to determine the effect of the Action.

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Rules of Play : Combat III

Anatomy of an Attack

An attack has two phases: Attack then Counter.

Attack: The attacker chooses which **red** Aptitude Score to attack with and who they are attacking. The attacker and the character being attacked flip 3 coins and add it to the chosen Aptitude Score. If the attacker beats the result of the character being attacked, the character being attacked is damaged. If the attacker matches or does not beat the result of the character being attacked, the attack fails and the character being attacked is not damaged.

Counter: Regardless of whether or not the attack was successful, the character being attacked may now counter. The counter is performed in the same way as the attack, except now the character being attacked is the attacker and chooses which **red** Aptitude Score to attack with. A defeated character cannot counter.

Example: The Cleric attacks the Goblin using Might. The Cleric flips 2 heads + 2 Might for 4. The Goblin flips 1 head + 1 Might for 2. The Cleric beats the Goblin's result so he damages the Goblin. The Goblin then counters using Agility. The Goblin flips 1 head + 2 Agility for 3. The Cleric flips 1 head + 2 Agility for 3. The Goblin does not damage the Cleric, because it did not beat the Cleric's result.

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Rules of Play : Combat IV

Being Damaged

Unless otherwise specified, all Heroes and Foes begin combat uninjured. All cards should be in an upright orientation. Once an uninjured Hero or Foe is hit by an attack, they are damaged and become injured. Turn the card 45 degrees (diagonal) to indicate that the Hero or Foe is damaged. Once an injured Hero or Foe is hit by an attack, they are damaged and become defeated. Turn the card 45 degrees (completely sideways) to indicate that the Hero or Foe is defeated. A defeated Hero or Foe cannot take any actions except attempt a Recovery flip on their turn. Typically, once all Heroes or Foes are defeated, the combat ends with the side that was completely defeated losing.

Recovery

Being defeated does not put a Hero or Foe completely out of the combat. At the beginning of their turn, they make a Recovery flip. The Hero or Foe flips three coins. If all are 'heads' the Hero or Foe returns to being injured and may take their turn as normal. If not all are 'heads' the Hero or Foe remains injured and their turn is over.

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Rules of Play : Combat V

Criticals and Fumbles

Critical: If a Hero or Foe flips all 'heads' on an attack (or check) they automatically succeed, even if they would not have otherwise.

Example : The Cleric attacks the Lich with Might. The Cleric flips 3 heads + 2 Might for 5. The Lich flips 2 heads + 4 Might for 6. The Cleric still damages the Lich because he flipped three heads for a critical.

Fumble: If a Hero or Foe Flips all 'tails' on or attack (or check) they automatically fail, even if they would not have otherwise.

If two characters critical or fumble at the same time (usually during an attack), you compare scores as normal to determine success or failure.

Points to Remember

All characters can make 'basic' attacks with any of their red Aptitude Scores (Might, Agility, or Magic), although they usually get special bonuses with their On-Turn Action attacks.

When two characters tie in an attack, the character that would be damaged 'wins' the tie.

Characters can still use their 'non-combat' Aptitude Scores in combat: intimidating Foes to surrender, begging for mercy, etc. It's up to the DM to adjudicate the action and result.

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Rules of Play : Loot

Gaining Loot

The DM may distribute Loot as rewards to Heroes as they see fit. Loot may be found in treasure chests, given by grateful townsfolk, purchased at a marketplace, stolen from a noble, or given by any means the DM wishes to utilize.

Loot Type

There is no limit to the amount of Loot a Hero can have, but there is a limit to how many they can utilize at once. If a Hero has two Loot of the same type, they can only benefit from one.

Example: A Cleric has the Staff of Power and the Jagged Weapon. Both are Weapons, so the Cleric can only use one of them at a time. If the Cleric also had the Belt of Recovery, he could use it and the Jagged Weapon because they are different types of Loot.

Additionally, no Hero can increase an Aptitude score twice using different Loot.

Loot Value

Sometimes it's appropriate for a DM to give a reward, but not necessarily Loot. The DM can say you found some gold, gems, or anything else of value. The DM sets the value for that treasure (usually between 1 and 4) and allows the Heroes to purchase Loot from a vendor at a later time. Loot Value also gives the DM and player a clue to how powerful a Loot card is. The higher the Value, the more powerful the Loot.

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Rules of Play : Variants I

Using the Lair Cards

Sometimes it's difficult to spontaneously generate an adventure. At these times, it's nice to use the Lair cards. Shuffle the Lair and Foe cards into two separate, face-down stacks. Draw a single Lair. The instructions read from top to bottom. Foes are drawn at random from the deck until a total value determined by the number of players is reached. If a Foe's value is too large, it is discarded, and drawing continues. The effects of the Lair are applied and combat begins. If the Heroes are victorious, they gain the Loot specified. If the Heroes fail, the game ends.

Lair Variants

Predetermined Order: A DM selects their favorite Lair cards and stacks them in the desired order.

Lair of the Lich: The Lich and Lair of the Lich cards are removed from the Foe and Lair decks. Once all of the Lairs have been played, the Lair of the Lich is played.

Random without a DM: Instead of having a DM, the each player takes turns drawing Foes and runs their Hero and Foes simultaneously.

Rotating DM: The Lair deck is passed with each new Lair. Whichever player has the Lair deck acts as the DM for that Lair before passing.

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Rules of Play : Variants II

Variant Ways to Play

Typically there are 4 to 7 players with one acting as the DM. However, PACS allows for numerous ways to use the system. Feel free to invent your own. There's no wrong way to play.

Rotating DM: Sometimes no one wants to be the DM for an entire session, or maybe more than one player wants to be the DM. In these cases have the Dungeon Master card switch between players at some pre-determined interval.

Multiple Heroes: If you have only a few players, you can let each player control 2 or more Heroes so that the group is better rounded. If there are only two players, one can act as the DM while the other controls an entire group of Heroes.

Play as Foes: Sometimes it's a lot of fun to be a villain. Set a value and let players control Foes up to that value (even let players play multiple Foes whose total adds to the desired value). You can even have them fight against a rampaging Hero. (Consider Heroes to have a value of 3)

Foe vs. Foe: Instead of having the DM control Foes and the players control Heroes, set a value and let each player draft Foes up to that value. Then run combat normally, with each player trying to defeat each other player. Last player with undefeated Foes wins.

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