



A children's roleplaying system,  
developed by Richard Law For use at



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Hello!

Welcome to the wonderful world of running RPG's for children.

The game contained in this document has been developed over the last ten years at The UK Games Expo. It is designed to be ran in convention setting with each game taking just under an hour to run, including explaining the rules.

It has been designed to be a first taste of playing an RPG. The hope has always been that players in these games graduate to more advanced systems once they grasp the basic rules contained within.

Along with the basic rules, I will also be including character sheets, some monster stat blocks and some of the past adventures me and my team have run at the UK Games Expo over the last ten years.

In these difficult times, it's important that you stay home and keep everyone safe; I have provided 5 character sheets, but this game will play just as well with one or two players. Please keep your social distance and only play with people in your household or in larger groups using online software.

- Richard



## Rules

These are the basic rules used to run the games. These are only meant to serve as a guideline for play, as playing an RPG is suppose to be a creative, collaborative game. Follow the Rule of Cool: if your players want to pull off an awesome unexpected stunt, or come up with a ridiculous unexpected way to end the combat, bend and break the rules to make it work.

**Turn Order:** Baddies go first. Then heroes go in clockwise order. If more than one baddie is in play, they go in the order they appeared in.

After the baddies and all players have gone, start a new round, baddies first!

**Hero Turns:** On each hero's turn, a player can move his or her hero, make an attack and use a special power (if possible).

**Monster Turns:** On each monster's turn, the Games Master can move a monster, use its attack power and use its special power (if possible).

**Movement:** Every token can move 5 inches per movement action, or if you are using a gridded RPG Board this is 5 squares.

**Attack:** A d20 dice roll is made against the defence score of the target, if successful it deals one point of damage to the target.

Heroes have a plus to the attack roll, this is added to the dice total after it is rolled.

**Critical:** If a 20 is rolled on an attack roll, instead of dealing 1 point of damage, roll a D6, the attack deals damage equal to the result rolled. Monsters do not deal critical damage (unless you are feeling particularly nasty)

**Fumble:** If a 1 is rolled on an attack roll, the attack misses regardless of any plus to the attack.

**Line Of sight:** To make a ranged attack, the target must be within line of sight, this means that nothing is blocking the view between the attacker and the target.

**Falling over:** If a player falls to 0 hit points, they fall over until healed, once they have more than 0 hit points remaining they can stand back up but are unable to move that turn. Baddies don't get back up after falling over.

**Skill check:** Roll 1d20, a result of 11 or more is a success, at the Games Master discretion add +2 or a -2 to the result if the character might be better or worse at something ( or example a barbarian will be better at smashing down a door but worse at carefully rebuilding it afterwards). A skill check is used anytime a player wants to make a check for anything other than an attack roll. For example a perception check, a check to pick a lock or an attempt to try and lift a bolder.



### **Running the Baddies:**

Baddies like a challenge! In general, baddies like to attack whichever character has the most hit points, as they find characters with few hit points to be less of a challenge. They also almost never attack the same character twice in a row, as that would be boring.

### **If a baddie drops to half its hit points:**

Every time a baddie drops to half hit points, and there is only one baddie on the board, bring in the next baddie. If there are two baddies on the board, wait until one falls down before summoning another.

### **Advanced damage rules.**

The hit points used while running this game at The UK Games Expo is designed so every child can understand it easily. If your children want a slightly more advanced damage system please use the following variation on attacking. Each health box on a Character or monster stat sheet represents 5 hit points. Change every reference to “one point of damage” as “roll a d10 to determine damage or healing”

### **Critical Healing**

If Player characters have fallen over, and the cleric is not available to heal, have any other player adjacent to the fallen character roll a d20, on a roll of 11 or higher the fallen player heals 1 hit point.

### **Adventure length**

When running the games in an hour block, we aim for 4-5 waves of baddies, followed by the boss monster. If you are running the game without these time constraints, feel free to throw in as many baddies as your players can handle before bringing out the boss.

### **No d20s?**

I would highly recommend using 20 sided dice to run this system, but if you don't have any D20's, this game can be ran using regular six sided dice. In this case please make the following adjustments to the rules: on 3d6, a critical is a roll of 18 and a fumble is a roll of 3 and for skill checks a success is a roll of 9 or higher.

### **Generic baddies**

When you get to the part of this document with the baddie stats, you will notice that apart from the Boss monsters, the baddies only have generic types, rather than individual baddie names. This is to allow you to use any miniature you may have on hand to represent any creature that might fit the setting.

### **Game Board and minitues**

For UK Games Expo games , we use custom laser cut game boards, but this is not in any way necessary, you can have just as much fun with your children drawing a map on some A2 paper, or even by not using a map at all and using a table with toys scattered around for scenery. For miniatures I have a tendency to steal pieces from board games to represent my creatures, but you could just as easily use anything you have to hand. Why not use Lego men to represent your players and sweets for all the baddies that you get to eat when you defeat them?



## Character sheets

Over the next few pages you will find the character sheets for player characters, I would suggest printing these, and if possible laminating them.

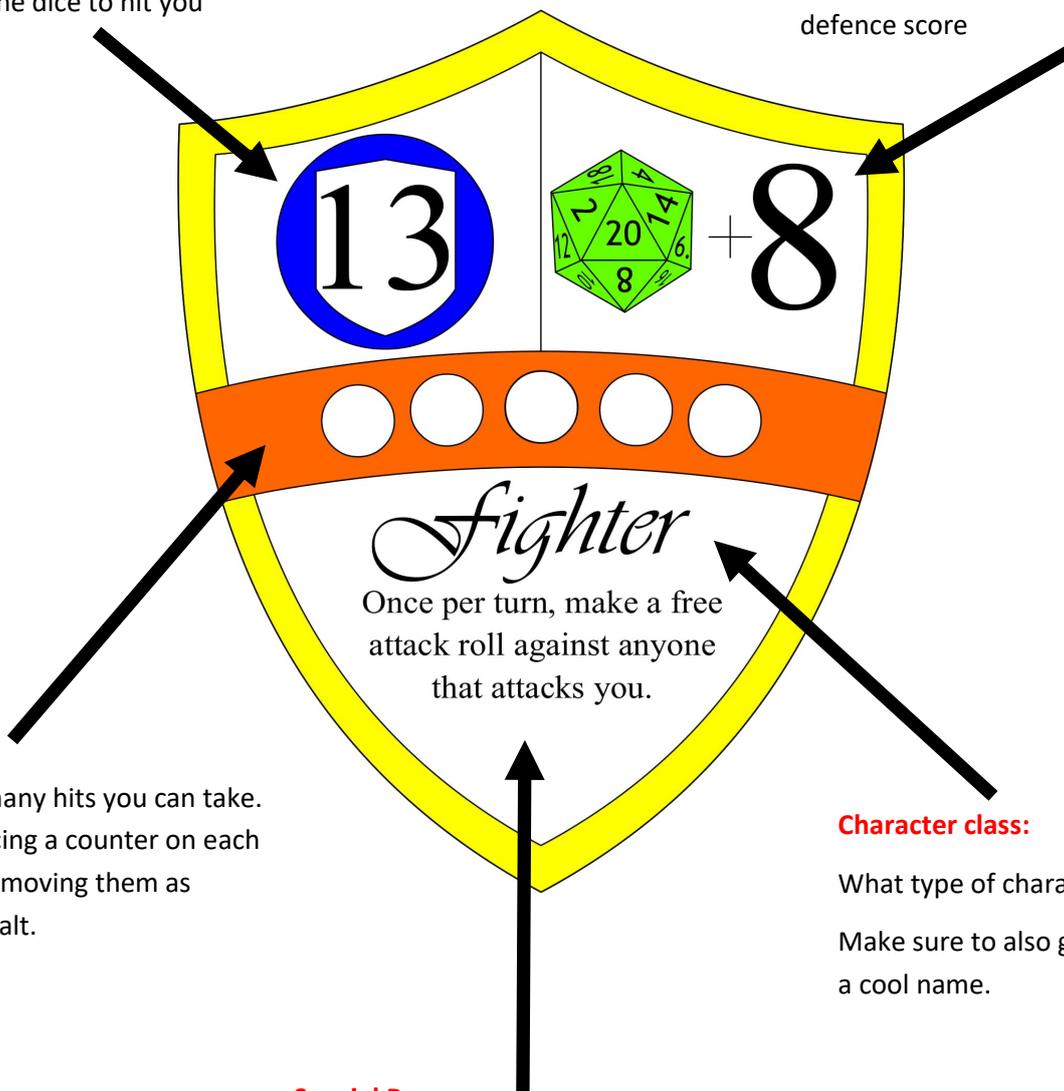
Tokens, or glass beads work great to keep track of damage, however if you do laminate them you will be able to colour in the hits with a dry erase marker.

### Defence Score:

This is what needs to be rolled on the dice to hit you

### Attack Roll:

This is what you add to your dice roll when rolling to hit a baddies defence score



### Hit points:

This is how many hits you can take. I suggest placing a counter on each space, and removing them as damage is dealt.

### Character class:

What type of character are you?  
Make sure to also give your character a cool name.

### Special Power:

Each Character has a special power, these can be done once per turn in addition to an attack roll.











## Baddies

Over the next few pages you will find the baddie character sheets, these work in a similar way to character sheets.

Sometimes you may want to bring in more than one baddie at a time. The swarmers in particular work well when you bring in a whole group of them together, so I have included an additional stat block for them to help with printing.

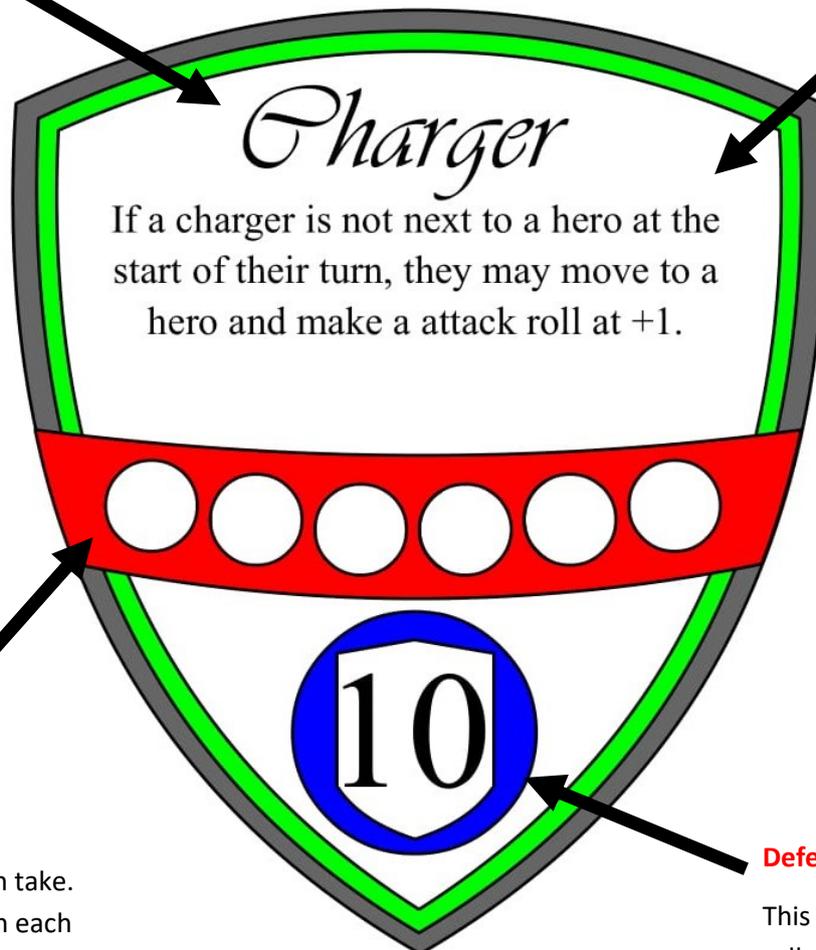
You will also notice the brawler is a bit of a beast. This is meant to serve as a sort of mini boss, and works well if you bring it in early in the adventure, letting it hang around with other baddies for a while.

### **Character class:**

What type of Baddie is it?

### **Special Power:**

Each baddie has a special power, these can be done once per turn in addition to an attack roll.



### **Hit points:**

This is how many hits you can take. I suggest placing a counter on each space, and removing them as damage is dealt.

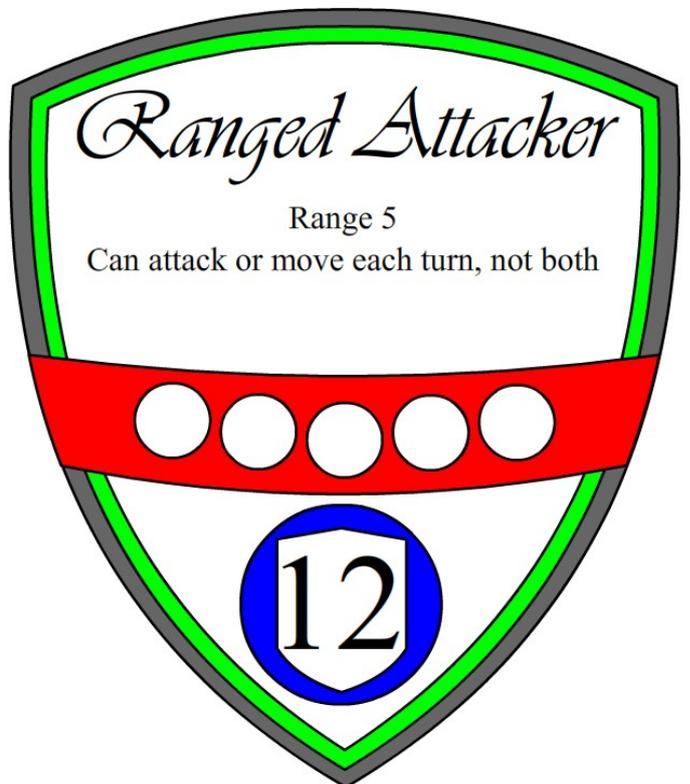
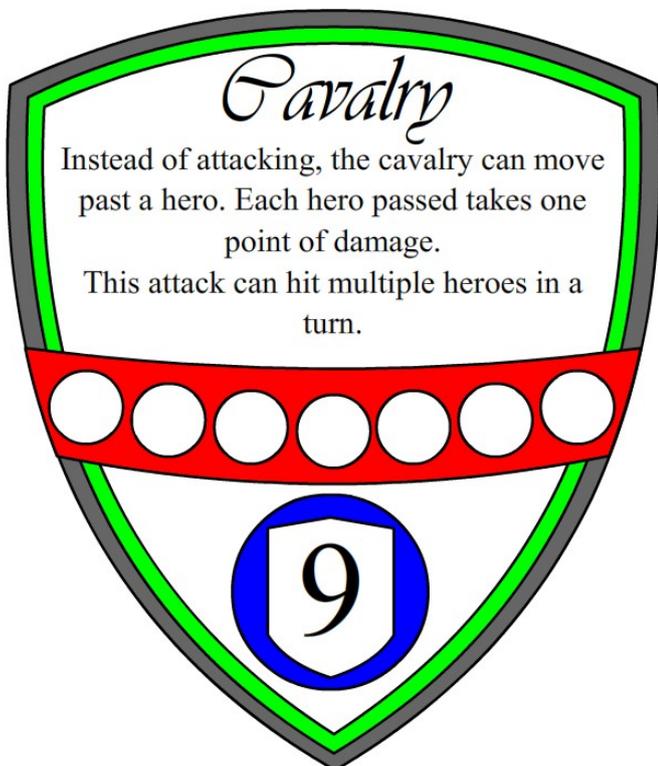
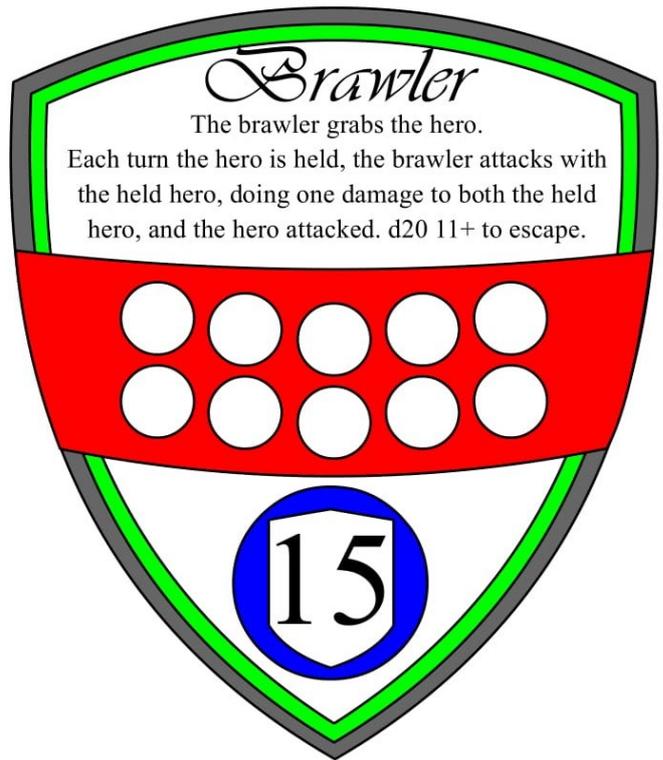
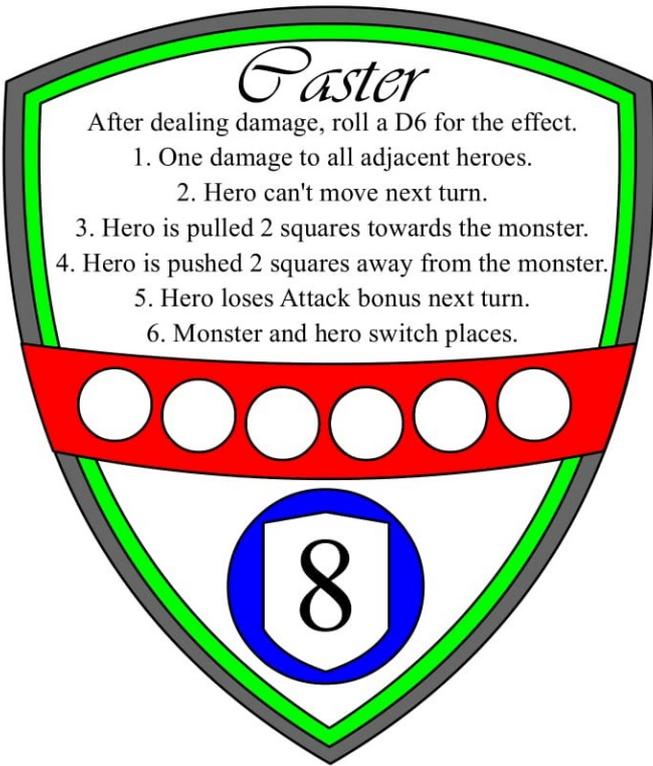
### **Defence Score:**

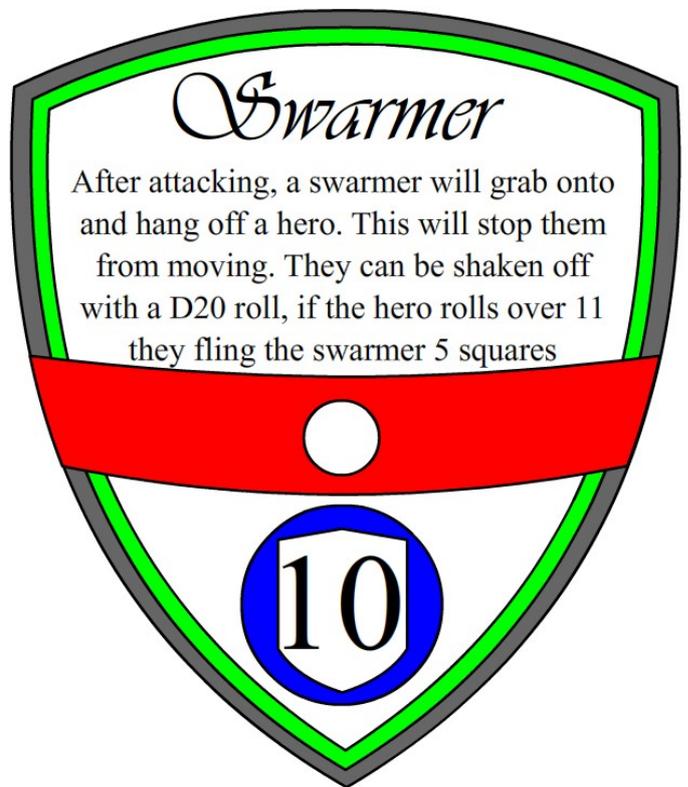
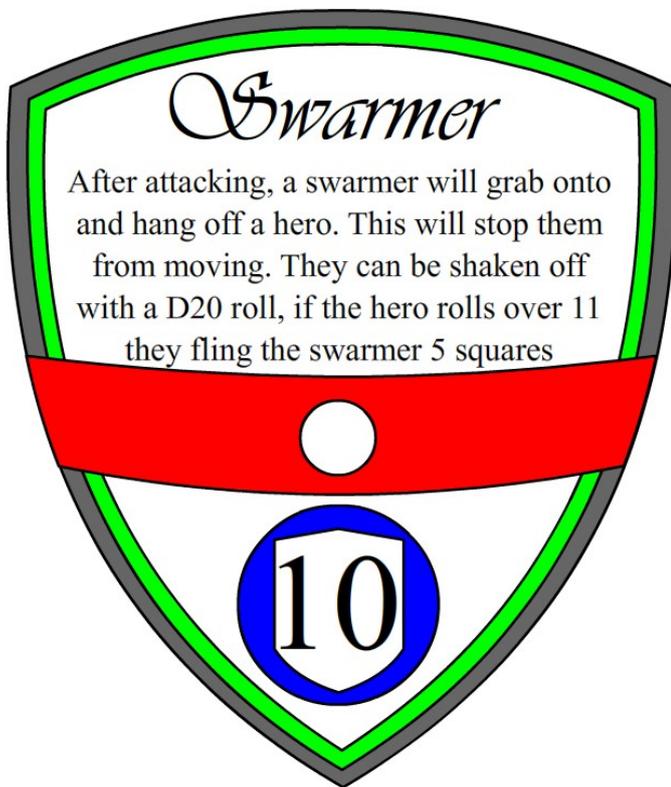
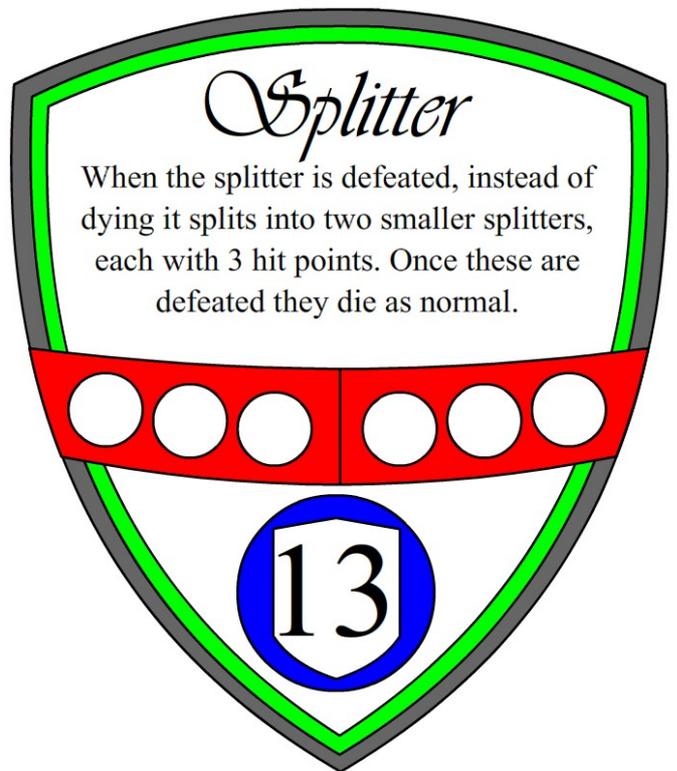
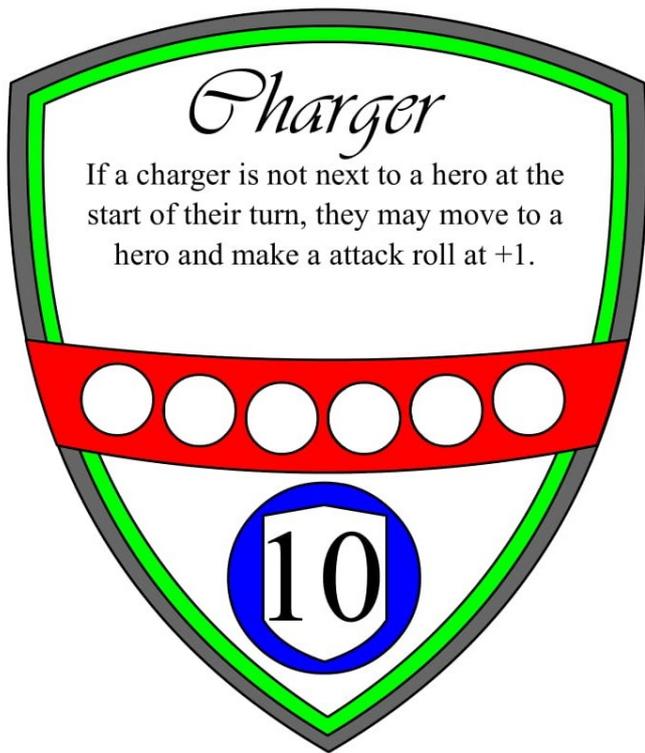
This is what needs to be rolled on the dice to hit the baddie

### **Attack Roll:**

Baddies don't get a plus to attack rolls, they just roll a D20 straight against the player's defence.







## *Air Elemental*

Instead of attacking, the elemental can pass through a hero, causing one point of damage. This attack can hit multiple heroes in a turn.

11

## *Fire Elemental*

Any hero ending a turn next to a fire elemental takes one point of damage.

8

## *Ice Elemental*

Instead of attacking, the ice elemental can blast every hero adjacent to it, making a separate attack roll for each hero.

12

## *Water Elemental*

The first time each turn the elemental causes damage, make an attack roll against any heroes adjacent to the first hero hit, any hits also cause damage.

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## Adventures

What follows are two complete adventures ran at the The UK Games Expo 2019.

These are as complete as when I present them to my GM's

They have the text to be read as an introduction to the adventure, pictures of how the game was set up and a big boss creature for each.

As part of the experience at the UK Games Expo we give each player a badge as a reward for completing the adventure, but feel free to reward your players anyway you see fit.

After these two adventures I have also included some adventures from my archives from past years. Hopefully these serve as inspiration for further games. They will only be the adventure text and will require some more work on your part to run.



*Heave! Ho!*

*and up she rises*



A year ago, almost to the day, in a place very close to here the King of Storms suffered a humiliating defeat.

His fleet of ships were sunk, and a band of plucky adventurers sent his fearsome flagship to the depths of the ocean with him still on board.

However, The King of Storms survived.

With his final breath he incanted a deadly spell, taking him and his ship through a portal to the Demonic dimensions. There he made a deal with an ancient, deadly creature, and traded his control of storms for new demonic powers.

His potential return would be threat enough, but the King of Storms now going by a new name, The King of Flames had a final trick up his sleeve.

He caught and imprisoned the spirit of the Seven seas, bound her into human form and locked her away aboard his ship. Now he is using her link to the ocean as a channel for his will, sending demons to raid and pillage towns, dragging unsuspecting ships under the waves and making the very surface of the sea boil.

The kingdoms of men, dwarves and elves formed a special council to deal with this threat, and gathered from across the kingdoms the bravest adventurers who have ever walked the land, heroes of such skill and renown that stories of their deeds are told in taverns all across the world.

They gathered the greatest smiths, the wisest wizards and the most powerful alchemists and set them all to solve this problem.

In the port city of Silvercrest, a new band of adventurers have gathered to deal with this deadly threat. All of the city's resources have been poured into this effort, the smiths working day and night using the wreck of the very ship that defeated the storm king the last time to create a new vessel for their use.

This wonder of a ship is not only heavily armoured and enchanted to protect it from the flames of the underworld, it's capable of sailing the gaps between dimensions and taking the fight directly to the self-proclaimed King Of Flames.

This Ship is now ready to sail, you are that band of mighty heroes, your weapons are primed and the battle awaits you. You must find victory and help the spirit of the oceans rise from the underworld and regain control of the sea the fate of the world depends on it!



# Demon King

After dealing damage, roll a D6 for the effect.

1. One damage to all adjacent heroes.
2. Hero can't move next turn.
3. Hero's defence is reduced by 5 until next turn.
4. Storm king's defence is raised by 2 until next turn.
5. Hero loses Attack bonus next turn.
6. Deal one addition point of Damage

## Split Body

The Demon king can attack twice per turn, and can be hit on his body, or his demonic projection.



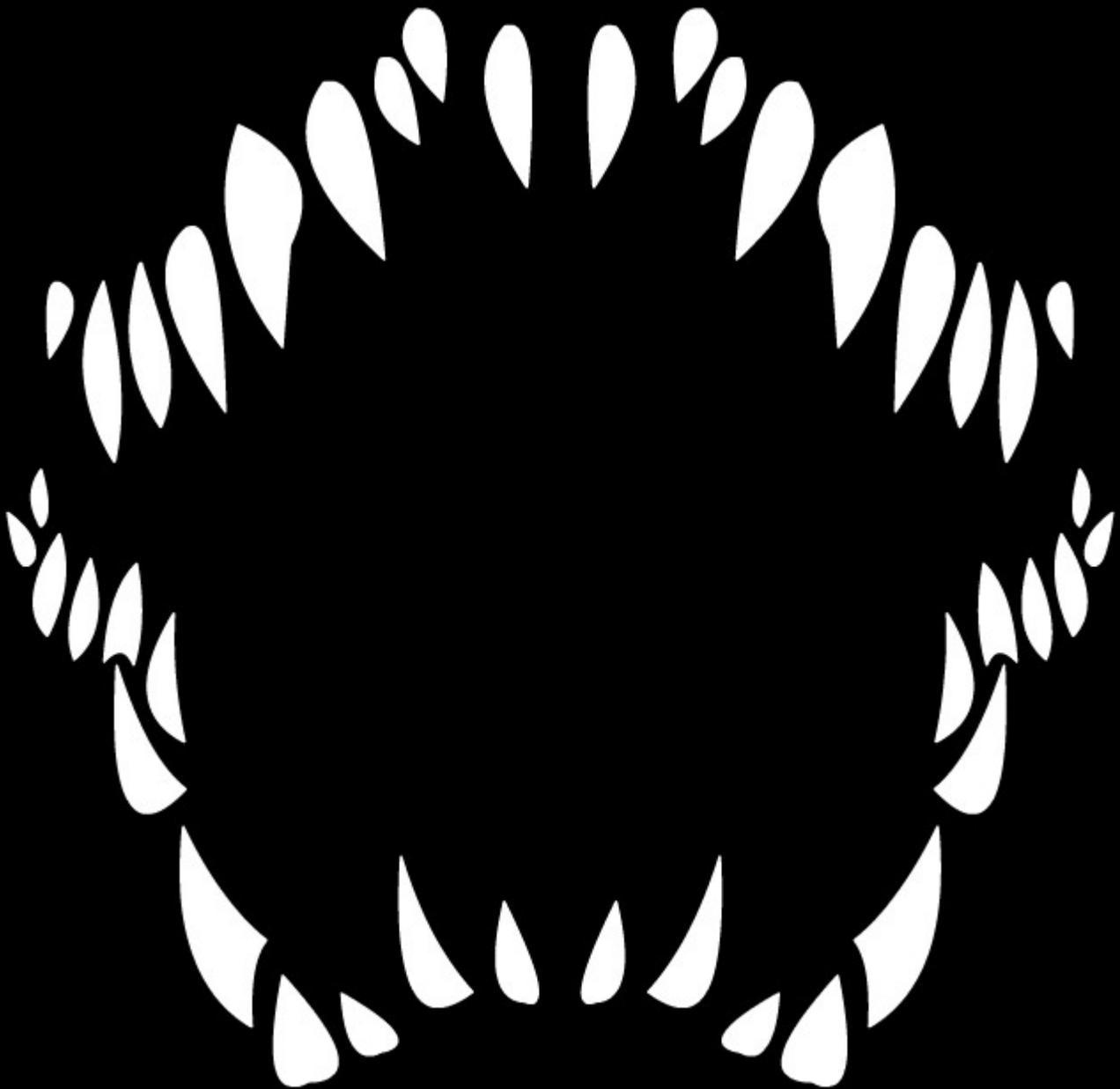
The Demon King uses two bodies, his regular form, and a large demonic projection. Each share one pool of hit points, one should be the same size as the players. One much larger.

He can take two sets of actions each turn, one for each body.



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*How doth the little  
Crocodile*



This adventure is written in verse, read down the left side first, then read the following sections when you reach each part of the adventure.

When you walk alone at night

Beware that noise that gives you fright.

For at the source of nasty sound

Something evil may be found.

The night is dark and full of terror

You coming here was quite the error.

For something lurks beneath the mud

Something that can smell your blood.

The ghosts that haunt this ghastly place

Will soon begin to show their face.

A thousand fell to this beast's claw

And soon you all will raise that score.

So ready weapons, and be brave

For in the deepest darkest cave,

A yellow eye has opened wide

Thick green scales adorn its hide.

But before you face the beast,

His ghostly friends will want to feast.

They come from down and left and right

Each one preparing for the fight

So grab your weapons, wipe your brow

The time for action is right now!

*(When ready to start the boss fight)*

The battle ends, it's quite the thrill.

The air is cold, the water still

When suddenly there comes a sound

So loud it starts to shake the ground

Something is coming deadly fast

A giant from the ages past!

This Crocodile fights to the death.

So brave adventurers, hold your breath.

It's time to face your greatest foe.

And strike that deadly killing blow!

*(After the fight)*

The battle's over, the Foe is slew.

There's one last thing that you must do.

You take his hide and with some flair.

You make a glove that you can wear,

A tooth makes a fine addition

To prove your victory in this mission

That's it, we're done, this game has ended.

And I must say that you were splendid

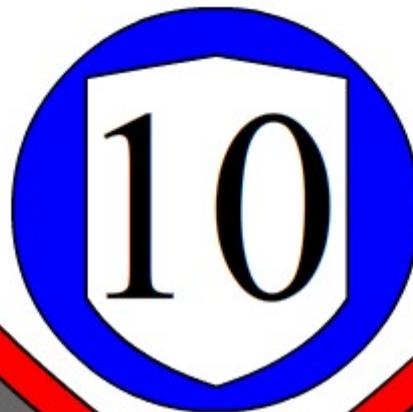
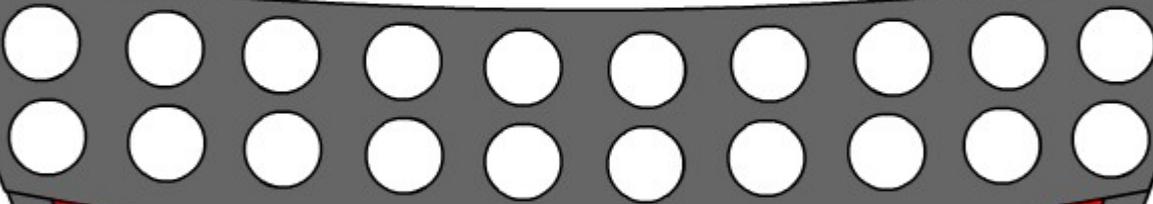


# *Procodile*

Can make both below attacks each turn;

**Attack:** deal 1 point of damage. If it hits with the first attack, make an attack roll for another hero. Repeat this attack until it misses, or all hero's have been hit.

**Secondary attack:** Roll an attack roll for each hero, if hit the hero is knocked over and must spend the next movement phase to stand up.





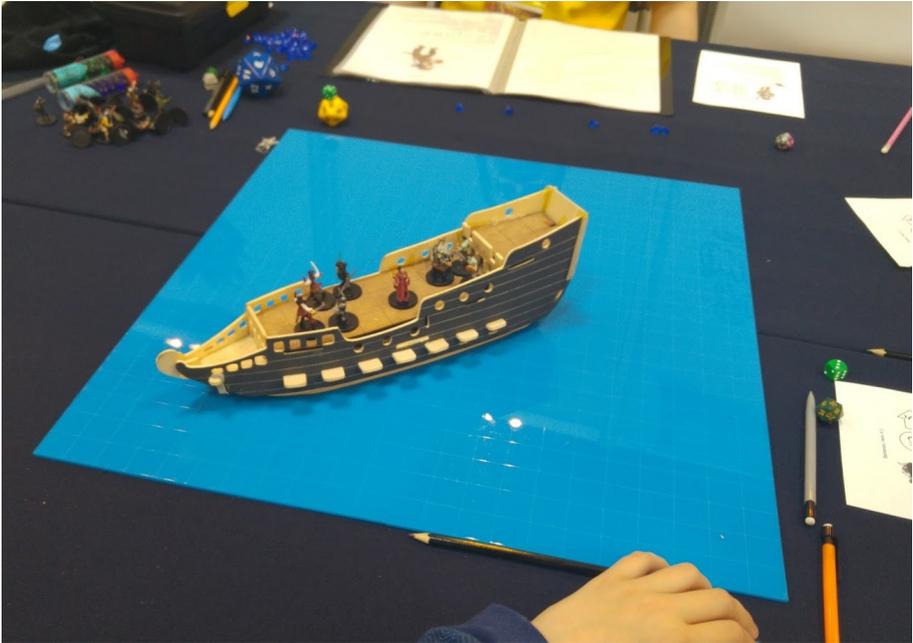
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## Adventure Archive

What follows are a few adventures ran at UK Games Expo in years past, along with a few pictures of the games set up.

These are presented as is, they are missing a lot of the required information to run as is, but I hope they will help serve as inspiration for your own games.





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## Knight at the Museum

Today, is a special day. Finally your class trip has come around, and this time you're going someplace extra special. The natural history museum has a brand new exhibit "Treasures of the volcano" or so they tell you... All you know is that the museum has real dinosaur bones, much better than some crusty old volcanic rock.

The bus journey to the museum was the same old boring trip it always was, the teacher tried to get you to sing wheels on the bus, and other equally lame songs, but you and a couple of friends had a much better time, you snuck one of the games you got that year at the UK Games Expo onto the bus and spent the whole journey playing it while trying to ignore your teachers off key singing.

Eventually you got to the museum, walking in through the main entrance door the first thing to greet you was the huge T-rex skeleton standing in the entry, totally awesome, but your teacher soon had you off looking at the strange Ruby rocks that had been found inside the mouth of an inactive volcano.

The rocks looked pretty, no doubt about that, but at the end of the day they were just rocks, nothing special, you quickly stopped listening to the lecture your teacher was giving you on the difference between magma and lava and looked around the room for something better to do. Spotting the large crystal rock at the back of the room, was something moving inside the crystal? It looked that way from over here but you needed to move closer to be sure.

As you walked towards the crystal all hell broke loose, the crystal shattered before your eyes throwing rock and shards of broken crystal everywhere in its place stood what looked like a giant turtle, only it was made of rock and seems to be dripping Magma... or was it lava? (maybe you should have listened after all) onto the floor.

As you stood there, mouth agape something else rocketed out of the stone towards you, a bird, made out of pure fire zipped through the air towards you.

The bird stopped in the air in front of you and much to your great surprise, it spoke "I knew this day would come!" Its voice was soft and melodic, not at all what you expected from its fiery appearance "I managed to seal myself and this creature in the flames ten thousand years ago, but now the seal is broken, and the monster once again walks the earth... it won't be long until it awakens its brethren... here!" Before you can object the bird flew directly at you all, but when it passed over you instead of burning you felt power being passed into your body... in your hands appeared weapons and you realized you knew exactly how to use them.



## ***Knight at the Museum Continued***

“The creature is impervious to harm in its current state, but it also can’t hurt you” The bird shouted to you from above you, “If you can destroy enough of its brethren it should take on its battle form... that’s when you need to strike at it, destroy it here and now before it leaves this place and destroys the world.” With these ominous words the bird started to circle the room, driving your class mates and fellow museum visitors out of the door. “Good Luck!”

Suddenly the other rocks around the room started to shake and fall off their pedestals, you readied your weapons, bracing for the fight ahead... good luck? You might just need it!

**Began the first encounter “turtles” here** (*Return when all creatures, except for the Fire beetle have been defeated*)

You looked around the room, but nothing else was coming, it was just you and the big guy now. As you watched the creature opened its mouth wide and roared, the sound shaking your bones and knocking the t-rex to the ground.

The creature split along its back, slowly at first, but then aggressively firing its shell off like a shot from a cannon, the creature stood before you now, ready for battle as a Giant fire Beetle!

**Run the final encounter here** (*Return when the beetle is defeated*)

The bird descended from its vantage point landing it on the ground at your feet “thank you my friends, at last the terror of the last ten thousand years is over.” He surveyed the room, looking at the damage your battle had done to the room “I think its best, if I put this all back where it belongs.” Quickly the bird took flight, growing in size and brightness until you had to close your eyes to shield it from the light. When you opened them again everything was back as it was before. Your teacher standing where he had been before all this had started finishing his lesson “So you see, Magma is found underground, while Lava is on the surface” you looked around for the bird, but it was nowhere to be seen, had you imagined it all?

You realized you were holding something in your hand, opening it you realized it was a badge emblazed with flame, a voice echoed around your mind while you looked down at it “This is the mark of the Phoenix, a gift only given to the bravest of warriors, and the greatest of friends. Take it with you were ever your next adventures take you, it might come in handy someday.”

With that you smiled, looking up to the ceiling, more adventures await.

**The end**



## The Feast of giving.

The Festival of giving has come around again.

Every year on this day all the villagers come together to celebrate the day that evil was banished from the land. This is done by giving gifts, hosting parties and having fun.

In the small, sleepy village of Willowdale, the Town mayor throws open his home to every resident of the village for a giant feast!

You are all members of the city guard, standing guard at his house, making sure nothing untoward is going on.

One of the revellers takes pity on you, slipping you a plate of food to share, you know you shouldn't while on duty, but everyone should at least try to enjoy the festival, so you happily tuck into the food, its wonderful but soon gone, leaving you wishing for more.

As the sun starts to go down, you notice a funny feeling spreading over you, and a loud shut from inside the hall. You rush into action weapons drawn, but it doesn't do you any good, everyone in the room is transforming before your eyes turning into small creatures, mice, rats, insects and birds. A mouse runs up to you, its speaks in a high-pitched voice "it's me! Fitcher! The Mayors wizard! Someone has slipped some sort of potion into the food! I can undo it, but I need time! None of you have eaten the food so its up to you to defend us while I do, no one would go to this much trouble unless they were planning an attack!"

You look at each over, worried looks on your faces as you start to transform, you knew you shouldn't have been eating while on duty! Luckily as you have not eaten as much as anyone else you find yourselves turning into bigger creatures. Flexing your new muscles, you take stock of your new form. But your reverence doesn't last long, it seems that potion didn't just affect the people, the food on the table seems to be coming to life and you're the only people with any chance of defending Fitcher until he can finish his counter spell!

### **After the spell is finished**

"FINITE!" a voice calls from somewhere under the table, and with a loud POP everyone is returned to their normal state!

You look around for the attacking monsters, but find only a small pack of goblins looking sheepish instead "we're sorry..." the first one says shyly "we only wanted to join your party..." the mayor walks over, picking a large carrot out of his hair. "You silly Goblins, All are welcome at the Festival of giving!" he puts his arms around them, and leads them towards the table, as he does Fitcher approaches you and leads you back outside "you did good work tonight, you probably saved a lot of lives" he walks with you back to your post outside "take these" he reaches inside his robes, taking out a small bag filled with badges "they are magic, they will protect you from transformation spells in future." He hands one to each of you, then pulls a large hamper of food seemingly out of thin air "Now you can enjoy the rest of your feast without worry!" He winks and returns to the party, leaving you and your fellow guards to enjoy the feast he has left you.

The End.



## Second star to the right

You were quite rudely awoken this morning, by your mother rapping on the door. At least that's what you thought it was but when you opened your eyes to tell her you needed a minimum of 10 more minutes in bed you realised the knocking was not coming from the bedroom door, as you had first thought, but from the window.

This seemed most peculiar, as your bed room was on the second floor... still being a most adventurous youngster, you awoke the friends who had arrived that evening for a sleep over, headed over to the window, and flung open the curtains.

What greeted you was a strange sight indeed, for floating in the air outside your window, was a boy, no older than you, dressed all in green with a smile on his face. You opened the window quickly, and whispering so as not to awake the old folk asked the boy why exactly he was at your window, and how on earth he was flying.

"There is no time for all that now!" he replied, "I need you all to come with me. Something terrible has happened, and I have it on good authority that you are the only ones who can help." Never one to turn down an adventure, you and your friends quickly gathered your coats and gloves and headed to the window. As you were wondering just how you would follow this boy when he spoke again "normally we would all fly... but that's not possible right now, so this teleportation spell will have to do. Only two small problems with it, I have to stay behind to cast it, and it will teleport you right into danger, so you'd better all take these and put them on." He reached into a small bag he was carrying and pulled out a selection of weapons and armour, handing them to each of you (this is a good point to have the players look over there character sheets)

"The spell will teleport you right onto the deck of his ship, once you have departed, I'll fly at top speed to catch you up and meet up with you. The most important thing is as soon as you arrive, free the fairy, she will tell you what to do!" and with that he waved his hands.

The spell was instantaneous, one second you were looking up at the boy, the next you were standing on the deck of a ship, waves rocking it from side to side. Pirates all around you, you noticed two things at once, a fairy in a glass bell jar at one end of the ship, and the pirates approaching you, swords drawn.

**[Run the fight against the pirates now. Once the heroes free the fairy, return here for the next part of the story]**

Now free and looking angry the little fairy speaks quickly and in a very high pitched voice. "We have to act fast! Hook has found this magical orb, if he manages to figure out how to use it he will be able to control all manner of horrible things!" "I'm afraid you're too late my dear" A cool voice comes from behind you, as a tall man with a hook for a hand emerges from below deck, "The secrets of the orb are mine!" He raises his good hand, showing the glowing orb he is holding. "First the force field." At his words a magical barrier springs up around him, giving him an otherworldly glow. "Now the monsters!" You hear a terrifying sound as something big approaches.



## *Second star to the right Continued*

The fairy, looking panicked speaks quickly again “Oh no, oh no, oh no! This is terrible, terrible! There is only one way to bring that force field down, you need to defeat the monsters he has called, weaken his power!” She flies off towards the side of the boat, looking down into the water “but how will you ever fight them all on this little boat... nothing for it I suppose...” She flies around above you, sprinkling fairy dust down upon you “all you need to do, is think of a happy thought, then you will be able to fly out and face the monsters head on!” (take a moment here, to ask the children what happy thought they will use to gain the power of flight. Once they have done so, move onto the creature section, and run all the monsters, once all but the storm titan has been defeated return here)

### **Hook’s return**

You look around for another approaching monster, but none appears. You turn back to the ship and notice two things in quick succession, firstly Hook’s force field is down, and secondly the boy from your bedroom window is dropping what appears to be a crocodile onto the deck of the ship. Hook looks terrified, backing away from the crocodile, when it lunges, swallowing him whole, in one big bite.

You return to the ship, happy in your victory, but the look on the fairy’s face tells you it might be a little early to celebrate... she looks downright panicked, pointing at the crocodile her mouth hanging open. You turn to look, only to see the crocodile expanding like a balloon, the same otherworldly glow you saw before shining out of it. Before you know what has happened the crocodile is gone, and in its place Hook is laughing and growing bigger and bigger, until he is a terrifying storm titan!

### **After defeating the titan.**

The battle finally over, you land back on the ship, your new friends beaming at you. “I told you they would be the right bunch for the job didn’t I?” the fairy says, beaming at you. I think after all that adventure, it’s time to get you all home. But don’t worry, you will be welcome back here whenever, and as often as you’d like.” It is the boy’s turn to speak now, a large grin on his face “And maybe next time you come, we can have some real fun... fighting pirates is all well and good, but there is plenty more adventure to be had!” The fairy gives him a nudge in the ribs at this point and he flounders a little “right... right I almost forgot, here...” he reaches into his pocket and pulls out some small badges, passing them to each of you “Now you’re all flyers, you’re going to need these, anytime you want to come back, just head for the second star on the right, and it’s straight on till morning”

You suddenly find yourself back in your bed, your weapons and armour gone, was it all a dream? It had to be, right? Children can’t fly... and there is no such thing as monsters and a magical orb... right?

You lay your head back down on your pillow, maybe if you get back to sleep right away, you could continue the dream, but that’s when you felt it... under your pillow, the badge the boy had given you. Not a dream then, after all.

The end



## Final thoughts

There you have it, grab some mini's, draw out a board and sit your children down to a game or two.

I hope you enjoy playing, and a big thank you to my team of dedicated GM's who return each year to help me run this insanity.

If you have any further questions, you can contact me at [Gamesrlaw@gmail.com](mailto:Gamesrlaw@gmail.com) and If you do end up running the games at home, I would love if you sent me a few pictures.

A few years ago, I wrote an article for the UK Games Expo programme, with a few thoughts and tips for running games for children, so I've included it as a final section. Hope it helps.

Stay Safe, Keep playing.

-Richard



Back in 2010, when every gaming table was still playing 4<sup>th</sup> Edition Dungeons and Dragons, Wizards of the Coast put out a small adventure module Called "Monster Slayers, The Heroes of Hesiod". A simplified version of 4<sup>th</sup> edition designed specifically for children. I was in the process of emailing over the "Grown Up" 4<sup>th</sup> edition adventures I was planning to run that year at the Expo and I made mention of Heroes of Hesiod and asked if there were any plans to run it at the Expo. That simple question sealed my fate, 2010 was the last year I ran any "Grown Up" Adventures at the Expo. By the very next year, The Children's RPG had taken over my entire expo experience and now it has grown to 3 different adventures being run simultaneously over the entire Expo weekend and requires a team of 5 people to run it.

I'd like to share with you some advice from my time running the Children's Role Playing At the Expo.

### **Keep it simple**

One of the biggest challenges that we face during our games, is keeping the games simple enough that they are easy to pick up, regardless of the age of the child, but challenging enough for the older children to still enjoy the game. The best way to do this, is to be flexible with your rule set. It's a common practice while running many RPG's to rigidly stick to the rules, but flexibility is key with children. Every child is different, they have different skill sets, different levels of education and a different approach to problem solving. For example if one child's math skills are not really developed enough to work out modifiers, a simple solution is for you to work out the minimum roll they need to hit, "you need more than 14 on your dice" is the same as telling another with better math knowledge that they have +3 to hit, +2 for flanking, and the monster has an armour class of 19. It's equally important to be flexible with the way you run your adventure. The adventure modules we bring to the Expo each year are essentially extended combat encounters, but that has not stopped some groups coming up with non-violent ways to get through them, from befriending the clearly misunderstood Dragon, to deciding to throw a tea party that the main villain was not invited to.

### **Characters, not Character sheets**

When I first started running games for the children, I approached the characters like you would for any other game. Character sheets with stat blocks, descriptions of moves and hit points to keep track of. It quickly became apparent that the children were instead focusing on the miniatures and completely ignoring the character sheet. Since then I have stripped away almost everything on the character sheet. Now they get just big circles to fill in to represent the health and brief descriptions of the way the character attacks. This allows the children to fill in the gaps, making the character come alive to them. Ask them to describe the way they attack, or the way they move and you will be surprised the detail they go into and how quickly a child can fill out a character's backstory. One of my favourite moments every year is asking the character playing the barbarian what battle cry they are going to use as they rush into battle, I'll never forget the little girl who had a barbarian shouting "You smell like Daddy's socks!" every time she swung her axe!

### **Visible progress**

Children can have short attention spans and I've found over the years that they can lose interest in a fight quickly if they feel they are having no effect on what they are fighting. End bosses with huge pools of hit points quickly turn into "is it dead yet?" and rather than the epic battle for the ages you had planned, you have a group of children who no longer care if the dragon eats the princess. Combatting this is fairly easy, however, first things first, throw away your Dungeon masters screen, don't keep monsters hit points and damage secret. I've found laying out a number of glass beads to represent the monsters health works much better than keeping track of it on paper. Each time they score a hit on the monster they can see the beads being taken away and know they made a difference to the fight. This method of keeping track of hit points can also help you ramp up a big fight, they have been happily knocking down the monsters with four beads each, but every one of them will open their eyes wide when you slowly lay out the twenty beads for the final boss. If you are using miniatures for your game, I would also suggest you don't clear away the defeated enemies leaving them laying out on the game board lets them know just how epic a fight they have just overcome. In one game, a few years ago, an enterprising archer built himself a wall of cover out of defeated zombies.



## Preparations

Doing a little preparation is something I would recommend no matter what the age of your group, but there are a few additional steps I would recommend for a children's game.

Make all your characters in advance, especially if you are planning on using an actual system to run your games. If you are running a game for your own children, get them to tell you about their character in advance, but do the work of actually creating it yourself. When the children sit down at the table your game should be ready to go: you will lose them quickly if they sit down and then have to wait while you get a character rolled up for them.

Visuals matter, but not as much as you might think. The games we run at the Expo are good to look at, with plenty of miniatures to play with. But that's not as important to the children playing. They are more than capable of using their imagination; if you're running a game on a budget, folded paper miniatures and hand drawn maps work just as well, if not better in some cases.

Have a stock of monsters to fight, but keep your story as loose as possible. The children are going to take the adventure you have given them, and run with it in ways you have never imagined. The beauty of a role playing game is being able to take the story where you want it to go, don't try to keep them on track; they will have much more fun exploring than they will being told a story, but it's a good idea to have a bunch of monsters in reserve for when they need something to fight.

## Your take away

One of the most surprising aspects of running these games over the years has been the effect it has had on me. I was running games before I started doing this, and I still run weekly sessions with my regular gaming group. However the Expo has become a way for me to recharge my batteries every year. Games masters work very hard to create their games, and even if you have the best gaming group in the world, it's hard not to burn out when your players are walking through every dungeon with a 10 foot pole, checking for traps every 20 seconds, or when you finally reveal the epic Dracolich fight you have been planning all week and instead of running in fear your party knows exactly what it's capable of and instead argue about marching order and who gets the magic sword it's guarding. Children can give you back the joy of the game, and make you remember why you starting running games in the first place, when you pull out the Dracolich they are not going to ask you what resistances it has, they are going to tell you how cool it is, and worry about how they will survive it. I've been running these games a while now, and I promise you, I get just as much from it as the children do. Role playing games are all about imagination and nobody does imagination like a child, so if you need me, I'll be trying to work out how to get my weekly gaming group to agree to roleplay a tea party with a troll.

