

Tactics of the Successful Adventurer

Dragon Warriors house Rules Reference

Player characters will have spent a lifetime in Legend, growing up and generally absorbing information about the game world. By contrast, the players might have had a brief introduction to the game world from the GM, but no matter how much information the GM gives the players, it will never be as much as the character will have. This section aims to give players a little insight into the kinds of considerations they should make when ejecting their characters into the harsh wastes in search of adventure.

Equipment

Characters like to be warm, well-fed and prepared for any eventuality so the first thing to consider is the equipment the character is carrying – does the party have sufficient tents, bedrolls, food, water and cooking equipment? Each tent will sleep 2 characters (3 at a push!) and each party will generally need one set of cooking utensils. Then there's exploring – if the players want to draw a map, they will need quill, paper and ink (the lot count as one item and consists of plenty of paper, a couple of quills and a couple of vials of ink) and if they want to see in the dark, they'll need at least one lantern, plenty of oil and maybe some torches as backup. If the players plan their character's tactics for certain

circumstances (for example, combat, exploring underworlds, setting up camp for the night, et cetera) in advance, they may realise there is an item of equipment they should take with them before they are in the situation and find themselves without it.

Forewarned is Forearmed

Knowing the enemy will help characters exploit their weaknesses. Characters should always do as much research and exploring as possible before putting themselves in danger. Until they know what it is they can expect to face, they cannot know how to prepare for it. Of course, some adventures may have time constraints that make this impossible, so players should keep notes of what they have learned about creatures and situations they have encountered in the past, just in case they face them again and do not have the time to think back and prepare the tactic that worked so well the last time – relying on the GM to remind a player how they defeated that last gorgon is just asking for their character to be turned to stone!



Combat

Combat is dangerous and risky, even for highly-trained fighters. However, there are a few simple principles that may help an adventurer survive combat.

1. Only engage in combat when absolutely necessary – lucky dice rolling can fell even the healthiest and most experienced knight.
2. Attack at range where possible – ranged attacks cannot easily be returned, especially when made from good cover.
3. Outnumber opponents, even if this means ignoring another opponent – this will decrease the time it takes to despatch the current enemy and then gang up on the next one. Similarly, use walls, corners, doorways, trees and any other terrain/obstacle to keep from being surrounded by enemies.
4. Know the combat manoeuvres and use them – for example, when outnumbering an opponent, they may only be able to strike back at one character, so the rest could use the Full Attack manoeuvre to increase their chances of hitting and the damage caused.
5. Enemy magickers are powerful and unpredictable. Given the opportunity, engage them in melee, where they are relatively weak, as soon as possible. For the same reason, party magickers should be protected from melee opponents.

Combat can take many forms and characters should ensure they have a strategy for dealing with opponents that swarm them, opponents that can only be attacked at range (or are flying) and other, less obvious, combat scenarios. Characters should also remember that combat is deadly and having a retreat planned just in case the battle turns sour will save many a character's life.

Magic is Rare and Precious

Magic is a flexible tool for accomplishing many extraordinary feats in a hurry. However, it is a limited resource and needs to be managed wisely:

1. Never use magic for anything that can be accomplished safely through more mundane means unless time is short.
2. Use deception in place of magic. Fake potions, sleight of hand and/or good acting (a Presence skill) may be all it takes to convince an NPC that the magicker has just cast a spell or has the capability to cast a spell, saving the real magic for when it is required.
3. Sorcerers should write scrolls of spells they know they are going to use in an adventure (assuming they have the preparation time) – for 2MPs, the sorcerer can have to hand any spell of circle 3-10. Note that it takes longer to unfurl and read a scroll than it takes to cast a spell, so wise Sorcerers leave some MPs for those spells that must be cast in a hurry!

With this in mind, though, a character that dies with Magic Points remaining, charges in a ring, and/or potions filling vials in his backpack dies a fool. Characters should not revere magic to the point that they do not use it – when it comes to saving their life, a character should be prepared to spend their last silver coin, cast their last spell and collect on every favour owed.

Save Something for the Retreat

Delving through the underworld until the characters have shot their last arrow, used their last MP and are down to their last HP leaves the party with nothing to survive an unexpected encounter on their way back to their camp to rest. An ambush on the road, a wandering monster in the underworld or even a simple trap the characters failed to spot (and trigger) on their way in could finish off even a powerful party in such a weakened condition. Always keep enough in reserve for one more fight or encounter than you think – even if you plan to flee from combat, a couple of lucky arrows or even a single strike in the surprise round of combat might be all it takes for a party that pushed themselves too deep into an unexplored wilderness or underworld to fail in their quest.

Always do *Something*

There is much that can be accomplished in combat that does not involve fighting. A magicker without magic may not want to engage in melee, but that is not the only useful action in combat. At the very least, use the Distract Opponent manoeuvre. However, there are usually many other things a non-combatant can perform to assist the combatants:

1. Be on the lookout for sneak attacks, ambushes, flankers and other surprise opponents.
2. It takes a full round action to prepare and unstopper a potion ready to drink the following round. Non-combat characters could get much needed potions ready to drink and hand them to the combatants, freeing them up for an additional round.
3. Pass useful equipment and spare ammunition between party members.
4. Some creatures, like trolls, can regenerate, so non-combat characters can keep 'hurting' unconscious or dead opponents to keep them from rejoining the battle.
5. Securing a route to retreat (or blocking a route for the opponents to retreat) by moving obstacles or otherwise changing the terrain to be more favourable for the party.

And, of course, passivity is not just useless in combat – when exploring a labyrinth, hunting for clues or listening for rumours in a tavern, characters with nothing to

do will not accomplish anything. Even the *least* useful action is still a step up from doing nothing!

There's no Place Like Home

Mighty knights may dwell in fortified castles on the borders of civilisation and powerful sorcerers will have their towers in which to conduct their blasphemous experiments, but early in their career, an adventurer will need somewhere to call home, be it a private room in an inn, their parents' farmhouse or even a ramshackle ruin close to the wastes they risk their lives to explore.

Also consider that characters can carry an average of 10 encumbrance of equipment and will want to keep a few slots free to be able to carry away the spoils of adventuring so at the very least will need somewhere to store their spare equipment, but more than that, the characters will need somewhere safe to rest and recuperate between adventures, stable their horses and perform various duties or other activities.

Living is not the same as Winning

Unlike other kinds of game, there is no way to win at a roleplaying game. Your character can rescue a thousand princesses, kill a hundred dragons and escort a million caravans safely to their destination and still be no closer to winning. A 19th rank character with more money than the collected kings of Legend combined has *still* not won. Players should know that there is always *something* next.

The satisfaction from playing roleplaying games can come from the sense of pride as you skilfully guide your character to triumph in the face of overwhelming adversity, a sense of achievement as you develop your character's abilities and/or the sheer gratification of being involved in the creation of the exciting story your character carves as he adventures. None of which is necessarily dependent on the character you play as a player, so be bold, be adventurous and take risks, because even if that character dies in the heroic pursuit of greatness, he will have lived a memorable and heroic life that will give you, as a player, something to remember. A character that makes it to 100 years old by hiding at the back of the party will give a player few anecdotes over which to reminisce, but a character that lives only half as long trailing a glorious blaze of heroic achievements (and failures!) to his grave will provide a wealth of memories for the player.

Dragon Warriors is not as 'safe' as other role-playing games and characters will die more easily in Dragon Warriors than in other role-playing games to which you may be used, so prepare and give your character a legacy worthy of a hero. Of course, conversely, do not just throw your character's life away by charging every manicule across which your character stumbles – there is little satisfaction in dying unnecessarily!