

## ***"Mirror, Mirror"***

### A Dragonlance: FIFTH AGE Game Demo

This demo, which premiered at the 1996 GEN CON game fair, takes place during the Fifth Age of Krynn. It assumes that you and your group are fairly unfamiliar with the Saga game rules and it reflects the demo style TSR staff members use at conventions. Feel free to adapt this adventure to suit your own group and gaming style! Allow for a lot of roleplaying, and don't get bogged down in mechanics, but try to explain the rules to new players as you go along.

- The demo is broken into three scenes—the Inn of the Last Home, the Darken Wood, and the Lair. Each scene contains an encounter that revolves around a couple different types of hero actions. These actions are identified in each scene.
- The full demo takes about two hours to run. You can shorten it as needed by cutting out scene one entirely, by running only scene one, or by trimming the encounters in scenes two and three.
- All we give you in this demo is a rough outline of the scenario. The success of the adventure relies on your ability as a Narrator, so feel free to elaborate and make the story your own!

### ***BEFORE THE DEMO***

As you're getting started, you may want to introduce the following points about the game:

1. The Dragonlance: FIFTH AGE roleplaying game uses the Saga rules system, not the AD&D game.
2. The game is tailor-made to reflect the drama and storytelling of the Dragonlance Saga.
3. You play cards, not roll dice, to determine the success of your heroes' actions. This removes the randomness of die-rolling and gives players more control over their heroes' fates.
4. The cards are not collectible—there are 82 cards in the Fate Deck.
5. The game is designed to give the players more to do in the game; they'll see that actions are always attempted from the heroes' point of view, for instance. This style frees up the Narrator to enhance the storytelling.
6. The storyline picks up about thirty years after the conclusion of *Dragons of Summer Flame*.

Use the accompanying basic rules as reference during the demo (although the scenario requires the Fate Deck and hero cards from the Dragonlance: FIFTH AGE boxed set).

This adventure was designed for six players, but you can allow more or fewer if you like. Before the start of the demo, let each player choose a hero card from the deck. As people are deciding which heroes to play, pick up one of the hero cards and point out the various stats on it. Start by identifying the eight abilities on it and their links with suits from the Fate Deck (show cards) as follows:

1. Agility - Suit of Shields - Dodging/shield use.
2. Dexterity - Suit of Arrows - Fine work/missile fire.
3. Endurance - Suit of Helms- Stamina/armor.
4. Strength- Suit of Swords - Physical power/melee weapon .
5. Reason - Suit of Moons - Intellectual power/sorcery use. (Mention schools.)
6. Perception - Suit of Orbs - Using your senses/scouting. (Mention acute senses.)
7. Spirit - Suit of Hearts - Strength of will and emotion/ mysticism use. (Mention spheres.)
8. Presence - Suit of Crowns - Ability to command respect and lead others.

Also mention the Suit of Dragons (affiliated with "mishap" not an ability) and show one of those cards.

Explain that scores represent natural ability and codes represent training in skills related to that ability.

Explain demeanor vs. nature on the back of the card.

Show them their weapons and shields, on the back of the card.

Tell players you will explain more about performing actions during the demo.

When all the players are ready to begin, deal out their Hands of Fate (a number of cards equal to the "Hand" number on the backs of their hero cards) and answer any questions they may have.

## **DURING THE DEMO**

- Encourage the players to refer to the reference card from the Dragonlance: FIFTH AGE boxed set as needed.
- Let players learn the game as they go along. Explain rules and mechanics (such as combat) as they arise in play rather than lecturing about them ahead of time. Promoting the easy, storytelling style of the game is key.

## **SCENE ONE: INN OF THE LAST HOME**

### **Tell players:**

The adventure starts at the Inn of the Last Home in the vallenwood tree-city of Solace. Serving maids are bustling about, the common room is filled with people of good cheer, and this treetop inn is as cozy as ever. The heroes are enjoying their morning meal--spiced potatoes and fried eggs. They met last night, during the annual Festival of Last Heroes, devoted to remembering those who fell in the battle against Chaos thirty years ago.

**Have players make an *average Perception* action (8).**

### **EXPLAIN HOW TO DO ACTIONS AND THE CONCEPT OF TRUMP HERE.**

Suddenly, an elf crashes through the window that opens up onto the treetop catwalks outside the inn. He lands on the heroes' table in a shower of glass, flopping like a rag doll and sending their food and drink into their laps and onto the floor.

**Allow actions**

Three figures enter the Inn and approach you. One of them snarls, "Stop your futile efforts to evade us. Now, give us the map, and we'll kill you quickly. Give us further grief, and we will cut you to pieces." The three bandits appear to be elves.

The wounded elf, battered and exhausted, looks imploringly at the heroes and begs them to protect him.

**Allow actions**

*If the heroes protect the elf*, the five bandits attack them.

*If the heroes try talking to the bandits*, the leader might have a word or two with them, saying that they should mind their own business, the elf is a Qualinesti traitor... and then the bandits attack the heroes.

*If the heroes wash their hands of the whole mess*, the elf dies right there on their table, and the bandits take the map and depart, ignoring the angry shouts and challenges from an aging, yet still spry Tika Majere who arrives from the kitchen toward the end of the fight. Tika and the other guests at the inn are so disgusted by the heroes' inaction that they throw them out of the inn and drive them from Solace.

One of the two first eventualities is the most likely one.

**Allow more actions.****PROBABLY INTRODUCE COMBAT HERE, PERHAPS MAGIC.**

The heroes can fight the bandits using magic or melee. Should spellcasters ask how magic works, this would be a good time to help them construct a spell (consult the charts on the reference screen). Let the bad guys fall relatively easily in this fight--but make sure you make it dramatic. Don't pull any punches against the heroes, either. If someone dies, there's room for another player in the demo's next act. Tika with her skillet can bring down a bandit, if needed.

In attacks, Strength score + card value = action score (Swords are trump).

A normal hero needs an action score of 13 to hit a bandit.

If hero hits, figure damage: Strength score + damage rating of weapon = potential damage points.

The bandits can deflect 2 damage points of each attack and die after suffering a total of 6 damage points.

In the heroes' defense actions, Endurance score + card value = action score (Helms are trump)

A normal hero needs an action score of 13 to defend against a bandit.

If hero fails to defend, 6 potential damage points - hero's defense rating (armor/shield) = actual damage.

Player must discard points of actual damage from his or her hero's Hand of Fate.

**Wind things up.**

Once the bandits have been defeated, the elf introduces himself as Araji and reveals that he is an agent of Speaker of the Sun Gilthas of Qualinesti. The land is still under the yoke of the Green Dragon Overlord, Beryl, but Gil is secretly fighting back. It has come to the attention of the elven resistance that there is a magical mirror that dates back to the days of the Kinslayer War-it was once owned by Kith-Kanan's wife, Suzine.

The mirror gives the viewer the power to spy on anyone they want, just by looking in it. This would be a valuable asset to the elven resistance movement. The problem is that the mirror is located in the lair of one of Beryl's dragon minions. The elf intends to sneak in, using a map showing the location of the traps that guard the lair and steal the mirror. He promises the heroes an ample reward if they help him get safely through Darken Wood and into the dragon's lair.

## **SCENE TWO: DARKENWOOD**

**Tell players:**

The heroes are traveling along a path in the Darken Wood with Araji, an elven rebel.

The Darken Wood is a forest of deep shadows and gnarly trees. The heroes feel like they're being watched and catch movement out of the corner of their eye-could it be the *trees*?-but when they turn to look, nothing is there. Suddenly, they hear a woman scream off the path to the right. The scream is followed by the sounds of men laughing.

**Allow actions. Investigating is an *average Perception action (8)*.**

The scream marked the beginning of a test staged by the Forestmaster-the unicorn master of the Darken Wood-to see whether the heroes are worthy to cross through her woods.

*If the heroes follow the sounds of the laughter*, they come to a grove where they see an elf maiden in a tattered dress crumpled on the ground. Six men in leather armor, partially hidden in shadows, are menacing her. If the heroes challenge them, they turn and are revealed as undead: They have no faces, merely grinning skulls yellowed with age. The skeletons move to attack with their swords, then a loud voice booms from the shadows:

**Voice of Soth:**

"Hold, my loyal minions. These fools know not what they face here. There is no honor in slaying babes in the woods."

A pair of tiny fires bursts into life, and then the hulking form of a tall, broad-shouldered man in blackened, partially melted Solamnic armor steps out of the shadows and into a shaft of light. The flames are his eyes. It looks like the infamous death knight Lord Soth.

"Valiant warrior," he says in a relaxed tone to the leader of the heroes, "what occurs here is no concern of thine. Begone, and live to complete the noble quest thou hast embarked upon. Remain in this glade, and thou wilt surely be cast into the Abyss."

As Soth speaks, the elf maid weeps and urges them to run for their lives.

**Allow actions.**

*If the heroes hesitate*, Arajai charges at Soth, who gestures and destroys him with a ball of fire.

*If the heroes move to attack*, allow each one a melee attack, followed by one counterattack.

In attacks, Strength score + card value = action score (Swords are trump).

A normal hero needs an action score of 12 to hit a skeleton or Lord Soth.

If hero hits, figure damage: Strength score + damage rating of weapon = potential damage points.

Skeletons can deflect 2 damage points of each attack and die after suffering a total of 4 damage points.

Soth can deflect 5 damage points of each attack and dies after suffering a total of 4 damage points.

In defense, Endurance score + card value = action score (Helms are trump)

A normal hero needs an action score of 12 to defend against a skeleton or Lord Soth.

If hero fails in his defense, 6 potential damage points - defense rating (armor/shield) = actual damage.

Hero must discard points of actual damage from his Hand of Fate.

**Tell players:**

Once the heroes have attacked, Soth, the elf maid, and skeletons, etc. all vanish as the Forestmaster appears.

*If the heroes fought well*, this unicorn says, "You have proven yourself to be valiant and selfless in the face of overwhelming evil. You are worthy to pass through my forest. Good luck on your quest, and may the absent gods watch over you." The heroes may proceed unimpeded through the wood to the cave that is the dragon's lair.

*If the heroes ignored the screams or fled, this unicorn says, "You have proven yourselves selfish (or cowardly) through your acts. And you want to visit a dragon's lair? Good luck!"* The heroes suddenly find themselves transported to right in front of the cave that is the dragon's lair.

### **SCENE THREE: THE LAIR**

#### **Tell players:**

According to Araji's map, the heroes have reached the dragon's lair.

#### **Have the players make an *easy Perception* action (4)-success is automatic for those with acute eyesight**

Those who succeed can see a magical eye, ear, and mouth built right into the stone of the cave entrance. It's even noted on the elf's map. This face is giant sized and appears to be completely organic, though fused with the stone. An *average Reason* action (8) tells the heroes they must neutralize this guardian before entering the cave.

#### **Attempt actions.**

*If the heroes cast a spell* to stop the mouth from shouting once the eyes see them or the ears hear them, they can continue. Likewise, any spell that prevents the eye and/ear from working will work as well. Spells that turn the heroes invisible must also make them move silently, or they will be detected. A challenging *Dexterity* action also lets them to move silently while invisible.

*If he heroes try to sneak past the guardian, each one must perform a challenging Dexterity or Reason action* to move silently and hide in the shadows.

*If anyone fails, the mouth will start screaming when they try to enter the cave: "Thief, thief! Your final moment is at hand!"* The dragon within the cave awakens and readies his chlorine breath.

*If anyone succeeds, the heroes all move forward into a wide cavern.*

*If no one can think of something to do, give Araji geomancy and let him magically seal the mouth shut.*

#### **Everyone attempts an *aura* action-white succeeds, red and black fail.**

A few steps ahead, those who succeed see an odd reddish patch of moss covering the floor. This moss is magical. Heroes who see it may go around it unimpeded. Any hero who steps on the moss must play a white aura card or lose all memories of who he is and why he is here. Amnesiac heroes who wander aimlessly around the cave eventually stumble into the dragon's lair.

Heroes who get past the moss may enter the dragon's lair.

**Tell players:**

The lair is a huge cave. The massive bulk of a green dragon can be seen in the very back, and he is sleeping. His eyes are closed and his breathing is regular and deep, as wisps of chlorine gas play around his nostrils. Treasure is heaped everywhere. The mirror lies on a pedestal; the map calls it a "dancing post."

**Attempt actions.**

*If the heroes touch either the mirror or the pedestal*, a magical effect causes it to begin teleporting around the room. Heroes who watch the post for a bit and succeed in an *average Reason* action can discern that the pedestal keeps teleporting to the same five places, although the sequence in which it does so is random. The way to get the mirror is to position heroes at some of those places, and then have them make successful *challenging Dexterity* actions to grab the mirror when it appears.

Once they have seized the mirror, the pedestal tumbles-making noise that wakes the dragon. If the heroes don't flee immediately with *average Agility* actions, they will die. If they begin looting the treasure piles, they need to make *impossible Agility* actions to flee with their loot and their lives.

Araji urges heroes NOT to attack the dragon. Such attacks wake the dragon but don't hurt him.

Heroes who leave safely can deliver the mirror to the elven resistance-and go on to further adventures!