

# DARK SOULS

## THE ROLEPLAYING GAME

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**DARK SOULS**  
THE ROLEPLAYING GAME

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Download a free *DARK SOULS: The Roleplaying Game* character sheet from our website: [www.steamforged.com](http://www.steamforged.com)

For Greg Stafford, and Hidetaka Miyazaki  
- in thanks for giving us whole worlds to play in.

Thanks to all who offered feedback and helped make this game better. Your patience and assistance was invaluable.



# INTRODUCTION

The world is occluded, choked with fog and darkness. The men and women around you, empty husks of what were once breathing, laughing human beings. The gods who gave fire to the world merely demiurges, their hubris bringing down the most terrible of afflictions on those lacking their power. And, with the hideous inevitability that life follows death, uglier and more powerful things lumber out of the shadows, lusting after souls, flesh, warmth... anything to ease their existence.

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Welcome to *DARK SOULS: The Roleplaying Game!* Based on the best-selling video game franchise, this book contains everything you need to play immersive roleplaying games (RPGs) set in the sinister and crumbling world of DARK SOULS. From innovative combat mechanics, endlessly customisable character design, and a host of unique spells and abilities, this book enables players to experience the strange and ethereal atmosphere of this unique world, while crafting their own story of inevitably doomed heroism.

This chapter offers a brief introduction and overview for those who are familiar with RPGs on their console or computer screen, but have yet to experience them on a tabletop.

If you know your way around a set of polyhedral dice, you can fast travel to the next bonfire—*Chapter One: Character Generation*, but keep an eye out for some new rules. Check page 70 and page 107 for rules on Position, and Bloodied conditions, as well as *Chapter Three: Magic & Miracles* for a brand new magic system.

For those who are new, prepare yourself for a world of infinite adventure, limited only by your imagination and how long your luck might hold...





# WHAT IS A ROLEPLAYING GAME?

As with the original DARK SOULS video games, a tabletop roleplaying game involves a player taking on the part of an individual character, guiding them through a fictional world. As they do so, their character will grow and improve, becoming more skilful as they hone their abilities, learn new talents, and gain new weapons and equipment. Where a tabletop roleplaying game differs from a video game is in the other players around the table; your friends get to play their own characters, with whom you form a band of protagonists, encountering danger and challenges as you attempt to achieve your objectives.

There is another player at the table, but, unlike everyone else, they aren't playing an individual. They are the Game Master, or GM. While other players concentrate on deciding and describing the actions of their individual, the GM describes everything else going on around them, from the reactions of enemies to the weather above.

The GM creates and sets the scenes in which the players have their characters act. Think of the GM as a cross between a film director, a set designer and all the character-actors and extras needed to make a cinematic masterpiece work. Yes, they are the ones nominally running the show, but it's all to make sure their stars look good—and your protagonists are the stars. Except, of course, this is DARK SOULS. While you may be the star, you'll have to be clever, cautious, and skilful to survive.

Below is a short illustration of how play can unfold:

**Game Master (GM):** So, you're approaching a series of gnarled, misshapen trees that cast strange shadows on the ground. Ahead, there is a flickering light. What are you doing?

**Hidetaka:** I ready my sword, holding it in two hands and stowing my shield on my back. Then I slowly creep towards the light.

**Carli:** I follow, my bow at the ready.

**GM:** Excellent. The light, through the trees, merely accentuates the sinister shadows creeping around you. Suddenly you are confronted by a clearing, in which three Hollows stumble around the fire.

**Carli:** I fire my bow!

**GM:** Okay, make me an attack roll.

**Carli (rolling a d20):** 5. Plus 2. For a total of 7. That's not going to hit, is it?

**GM:** I'm afraid not. But the thrum of the bow string and the thunk of the arrow striking a tree nearby has attracted the Hollows' attention. They turn toward you, dead eyes gleaming red.

**Hidetaka:** I heft my sword and charge!

During each gameplay session the players progress through a story or adventure. These can be played individually or as part of a grand, overarching narrative campaign made up of several stories. Think of adventures as events taking place in an individual dungeon or location, and a campaign as your journey across the entire world. This is not to say that playing a single adventure or a campaign is better or worse. They're simply different.

Playing a single adventure can be an exhilarating ride, where you can push your character to their limits, unconcerned about consequences. A campaign offers something different, however, and presents an opportunity to delve deep into the lore and narrative you and the GM have created between you. Your characters can grow, developing new facets to their personalities, and find new perspectives and understanding of the world around them. The story can be straightforward or have multiple twists and head in strange directions, wrong-footing both you and the GM!