

Compactly Packaged Fantasy Scenario

Sometimes it is better not to search the internet for opinions on games you currently focus on. More than once, DRACHENHERZ has been associated with LOST CITIES and the playing experience described as similar – an assessment which doesn't meet the facts, however, and raises false expectations. There is nothing like your own playing experience.

DRACHENHERZ is set in the fantasy world. And there, we encounter the usual suspects. Fire-dragons are in pursuit of treasure chests and, in turn, are being hunted by dragon huntresses. The treasure chests also have caught the eye of the princesses who, at the same time, want to capture the stone dragon's heart. The princesses are the center of the heroes' and trolls' attention, though, while the latter have to also beware of the heroes. Everybody against everybody – so who are the good guys here?

Of course we, the players, are! Each of us has his own set of cards. Both sets are identical and are, separately, well shuffled. On your turn, you play one of your five hand cards – or more, provided they belong to the same kind – and refill your hand of cards afterwards. The card effects are described on the game board on which they are placed. Designed in an extremely clever fashion, the board depicts a fantasy panorama in which all kinds of cards are integrated. Arrows indicate which cards affect what other cards and how many copies are necessary for the effect to

take place. This doesn't need much more explanation.

If I play a fire-dragon, I take all treasure chests, provided there are any laid out. If I play a princess, I may do the same, but alternatively I can take stone dragons. If I play a troll, I catch the princess. If I play a hero – nothing happens for now; only with a second hero card can I loot

princesses or trolls. Nice, if I have two heroes in my hand; bad, if I can only play one, because then I provide my opponent with a great opportunity. For the dragon huntresses, I need three cards before they give me

loot. And some cards don't provide any loot at all: Treasure chests and stone dragons are played only to serve as eventual loot.

Most of the cards that provide loot remain on the gameboard until they get looted themselves. As for the heroes and the dragon huntresses, things are more complicated. After fulfilling their task, they wait for a ship to take them home. But, again, this requires several cards. And these ships eventually govern the end of the game.

I Leftover-recycling

The value of the loot results from the fame points printed on the cards – mostly one or two, rarely three and in very few exceptional cases, four. Unfortunately, nobody tells you in advance – that is to say that the instructions are mute about the card distribution and the numbers of points, though this is one of the first questions you seek an answer to when starting the game. In view of that, we have compiled the missing information for you (see box).

Besides the cards, you can also find a relic from the BLUE MOON card game series in the DRACHENHERZ box: a small red plastic dragon. It comes into play whenever the princess captures the stone dragon's heart, and indicates



The Cards in Detail

Unfortunately, the game instructions are mute about how many cards of which kind and with what values a set contains. Therefore, we did the math. The order is the same as in the instructions; the values are set in parentheses:

Treasure chest: 7 (1-1-2-2-3-3-4)
Fire-dragon: 4 (2-3-3-4)
Stone dragon: 5 (2-2-2-2-2)
Princess: 4 (1-1-2-2)
Troll: 3 (1-2-3)
Dwarf: 10 (1-1-1-1-1-1-2-2-2-3)
Hero: 5 (1-1-1-1-2)
Dragon huntress: 6 (1-1-1-1-2-2)
Ship: 6 (0-0-0-0-0-0)

that its owner may hold an additional card in his hand.

So both opponents are hunting for fame points, both are equally equipped for that, and each of them knows that the other one has the same cards. But does that help in any way? Not at all! The selection you shuffled into your hand includes only some of the nine different kinds of cards. Therefore, let's make the best of the situation and trust in our luck of fresh cards from turn to turn. You play what gives you points immediately. If this is not possible, you lay a card that, hopefully, your opponent won't collect promptly. But of course, this works only if your opponent doesn't have any matching card in his hand.

There is not much you can plan. At best it concerns the cards that require duplicates to get points. For instance, hoarding



Rule Clarification

Almost automatically, the question comes up whether a player can also claim the dragon figure if he plays a princess to take the stone dragon, but no dragon card is lying out there.

The official answer from the Kosmos editors: No! Without a stone dragon card, you can't win the dragon figure

ships appears to pay off because it helps you earn a whole pile of cards at once. Nevertheless, this amount is relative, since most of those cards are only worth one fame point, whereas others are more valuable.

Luck plays an important part in the outcome of the game – a too important one for me, personally, to be enthusiastic about DRACHENHERZ. Others may see this differently. Anyway, it is beautifully designed, the theme fits, the mechanisms are well balanced, the rules quickly explained. If you look for an entertaining pastime, you will be well served.

KMW/sbw



Title: Drachenherz
 Publisher: Kosmos
 Designer: Rüdiger Dorn
 Artist: Michael Menzel
 Players: 2
 Age: about 8 and up
 Duration: about 20 minutes
 Price: about 17 €

Reviewer	Playing appeal
KMW	6
Udo Bartsch	6
Christwart Conrad*	7
L. U. Dikus	7
Matthias Hardel**	8
Wieland Herold	7
Edwin Ruschitzka	6
Harald Schrapers***	6
Joseph Weigand	6

* Lives from the suspenseful speculation as to which cards your opponent doesn't have. The luck factor is generally appropriate but a bit too high in some respect (especially regarding the appearance of the princesses).

** Miserable game of luck, I hate it!

*** Too shallow to be really captivating; too vague to like it.