

Dance of Death

A game for two players by Henning Poehl

Contents:

- ◆ 32 cards:
 - 13 death watch cards (with an hourglass on the back): 1 watch face, 1 death house, 1 paradise and 10 people.
 - 10 power cards (same design on both sides marked with text on one side and "A" on the other)
 - 2 score cards
 - 2 fate cards (with three labelled sections)
 - 2 overview cards
 - 2 rule summaries
 - 1 dancing death card
- ◆ 26 chips (13 white and 13 black)
- ◆ 1 plastic base, 1 wooden rod, 1 six sided die

I. Preparation

- Place the watch face card in the centre of the table.
- Shuffle remaining death watch cards and place them face up in a circle around the watch face card in the manner of a clock face (the base of each card nearest the watch face card).
- Place the wooden rod on the watch face card with one end at the centre in the direction of the one (it acts as a hand of the death watch).
- Place the dancing death card upright in its plastic base and stand it outside of the ring of cards in line with the death house card.
- Place the ten power cards face up in a row beside the circle of cards around the watch face.
- Give each player
 - a fate card,
 - a rules summary,
 - an overview card,
 - a score card and
 - 13 chips of one colour.

11 chips serve as death markers, the other two are placed, one on top of the other on the zero of the score card (they serve as score makers) – see also the illustration on page 4.

II. What's it all about?

Death overtakes us all some time, yet precisely when and how is unknown. In this game "Black Death" and "White Death" struggle over the departure of the living. "Black Death" was a synonym for the Plague in the middle ages, and is in this game a symbol for unnatural demise through disease, accidents or murder. "White Death" is his opponent and in this game a symbol for a natural passing through old age – the natural wear and tear that age brings with it. Everyone to whom the "Black Death" does not come, will eventually meet the "White Death".

There is however only one Death (sometimes black and

sometimes white), and so in this game there is only one death card (the "dancing death" card), that is controlled by both players (black and white).

Demise is certain, the players compete only over its form. They gain points for the collection of people (in accord with each persons position on the death watch). The number of victims is also considered in the scoring. At the end there are also penalties for death markers (chips) on paradise!

III. Playing the game

The game is played in rounds. In each round, three phases are played:

Phase 1: Determine the start player:

Each player throws the die. The player with the lower roll is the start player for the round. In the case of a tie, then the start player is that player who was not start player last round.

Phase 2: Place death markers:

Each player **must** now take as many death markers (chips) from their supply as are indicated by the hand (wooden rod) on the face of the death watch. These must be placed on the fate card as desired. In the first round this is always one death marker.

The death watch

The numbers on the face of the death watch have the following function:

- ◆ They show how many points a player receives if the person at that number dies.

Further, the number pointed to by the hand (wooden rod) shows:

- ◆ How many death markers a player must play in this round.
- ◆ How far the dancing death must move (if he moves)

If you have insufficient death markers (chips) in your supply, then you must (!) obtain the remainder by taking them from among those on the cards of the death watch. You **cannot** take any chips from the paradise card. If you cannot obtain enough death markers (because too many are on the paradise card) then the game is immediately over.

The fate card has three areas:

The death house (left): For every chip played in this area you may move the dancing death once in *Phase 3*.

The death watch (center): For every chip played in this area you may move the hand on the death watch (the wooden rod) once in *Phase 3*.

Paradise (right): For every chip played in this area you may move one person in *Phase 3*.

Each player distributes their death markers on their fate card in secret (hide the fate card with one hand while placing chips). After they are played, the fate cards are revealed and play continues with the fate cards in view.

Phase 3: Perform actions

The actions you may perform are indicated by the placement of death markers (chips) on your fate card (one chip = one action). The order in which you play these actions is your choice, but you may play only **one** at a time. The play of actions alternates, with the start player playing the first action, then thereafter each player plays one action and passes play to their opponent again. This continues until both players have used all the death markers on their fate card (and hence have no more actions to play).

These are the actions you may perform:

a) Set the death watch:

Take one death marker from the death watch area on your fate card and move the hand of the death watch (wooden rod) **one** space in either direction. The hand may only move by one space. The following rules apply:

- > The hand may be moved backwards (anticlockwise), except that it may never be moved from the "1" to the "12".
- > After you have moved the hand, you must place the death marker (chip) you used to perform this action on a card determined as follows:
 - If the hand is pointing to a living person then on that person's card.
 - If the hand is pointing to paradise or an hourglass (i.e. a dead person), then on paradise.
 - If the hand is pointing to the death house, then on any living person of your choice.
- > If the hand is pointing at the dancing death card as well, then:
 - If the dancing death stands by a living person then you may attempt a death throw on that person.
 - If the dancing death stands by the death house, then you may attempt a death throw on any living person (of your choice).
 - If the dancing death stands by an hourglass card (i.e. a dead person) or paradise, then you may **not** attempt a death throw (people can die only once, and paradise cannot die).

b) Activate a person:

Each of the people forming the face of the death watch has a corresponding power card which indicates what that person may do and when they may do it.

Take one death marker from the paradise area on your fate card, choose one of the available power cards then place your death marker on the corresponding person (on the death watch). **After** you have placed your marker,

follow the instructions on the power card (see the explanations on page 3 for further information). Now turn the power card over so that the side with "A" (for "Activated") is visible. This person **cannot** be activated again as long as their power card rests with the "A" side up. When all power cards are "A" side up then **all** power cards are turned over again so their text side is showing and can subsequently be activated again. If only one power card is available because all other people have died, then it is not turned to the "A" side, it is **always** available.

c) Dance with death (move the dancing death):

Take one death marker from the death house area on your fate card and move the dancing death card as many places as are indicated by the hand (wooden rod) on the death watch. You can move the dancing death **clockwise** or **anticlockwise** but you must move him exactly as many places as indicated by the hand on the death watch in the chosen direction.

- > After you have moved the dancing death card, place your death marker as follows:
 - If the dancing death stands by a living person, on that person. You may attempt a death throw on that person.
 - If the dancing death stands by the death house, on any living person of your choice. You may attempt a death throw on that person.
 - If the dancing death stands by paradise, on paradise. Reactivate all power cards (turn them so that their text side is face up).
 - If the dancing death stands by an hourglass (i.e. a dead person), on paradise.

When is a death throw possible?

A death throw is always optional and **never** obligatory. If you are given the option of a death throw you may attempt one if you want and if you feel it is useful. You may however decline the option to do so. You may attempt a death throw when:

- ◆ You move dancing death onto a living person or onto the death house.
- ◆ You move the hand of the death watch so that it points to the dancing death **and** at a living person or the death house.
- ◆ You activate a person whose power card states that you can attempt a death throw.

You must always play your death marker **before** you attempt a death throw.

On whom is a death throw possible?

A death throw is always attempted on the person by whom the dancing death stands, on no-one else. Unless the dancing death stands by the death house. Then and only then a death throw may be attempted on any person!

Conducting a death throw

Conducting a death throw is the attempt to kill someone.

Cast the die and compare the result with the total number of death markers (chips) on the person you are attempting to kill (count death markers of both colours). Take into account any person specific modifications. Determine the result as follows:

- ◆ **If you rolled less than or equal to the modified count of death markers**, then that person dies. The card is turned over so that the hourglass side is visible. The player who had the most death markers on that card (this isn't necessarily the person conducting the death throw!), receives the power card for that person and the points for that persons death. In the case of a tie, the player conducting the death throw gets the card and points. The death markers on the card are returned to the supply of the respective player. The points awarded for the death are equal in number to that position of the of death watch on which that person was found (e.g. a person at 1 yields 1 point, a person on 12 yields 12 points). Move the markers on the score card to indicate the award of points.
- ◆ **If you rolled more than the (modified) count of death markers** (of both colours), then that person escaped death this time around. After a failed death throw you must take all of the death markers you had on that person back into your supply.

IV. Game end:

The game ends immediately when:

- ◆ All 10 people are dead
- ◆ In phase 2, a player cannot obtain enough death markers to place on their fate card.
- ◆ In phase 3, a player cannot complete an action chosen on their fate card.
- ◆ At the end of any round, the hand of the death watch is pointing at 12.

V. Final Scoring:

Calculates your final score as follows:

Points for the dead: Multiply the number of people you killed (i.e. whose activation cards you have) by your point score.

Points for the living: Multiply the number of your death markers in paradise by the number at which paradise lies on the face of the death watch.

Subtract the points for the living from the points for the dead.

The result is your final score. The player with the highest score wins.



VI. Imprint

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Interpretation Notes

Glossary

"Neighbors" are always the next living person in the clockwise and counterclockwise direction respectively, ignoring dead people (hourglasses), the death house and paradise. As long as three or more people are alive every person has two neighbors.

"... attempt a death throw." This is always voluntary, never obligatory. You "may" attempt a death throw if you feel it is useful.

Special Card Symbols

Symbol on "Old Lady" and "Runner"



Black player: Minus one to your die roll for a death throw on this card.

White player: Plus one to your die roll for a death throw on this card.

Symbol on "Convalescent" and "Sharpshooter"



Black player: Plus one to your die roll for a death throw on this card.

White player: Minus one to your die roll for a death throw on this card.

Symbol on "Dancer"



Black and white players: Plus one to your die roll for a death throw on this card.

Special Activations

Gambler: If the gambler is activated, roll one die. On a **"1"** the gambler dies and the opponent receives the power card and points. On a **"2 to 5"** you receive that many points (on your score card). On a **"6"** remove one death marker from the gambler and return it to the supply of the respective player.

Hacker: Swap any two cards on the face of the death watch (including the chips on them). You can choose from living or dead people and the death house and paradise, including the hacker himself. The swapped cards now have new positions on the face of the death watch.

Special Cards on the Death watch

Paradise: If the dancing death or the hand on the death watch is moved onto paradise then place your death marker on paradise and all activated power cards are turned face up (again available). If the dancing death is moved onto a dead person, place a death marker on paradise. Death markers (chips) on paradise, can **never** be removed from paradise, they remain there for the remainder of the game.

The death house: If the *dancing death* is moved onto the death house then place your death marker not on the death house, but on any living person of your choice and you may attempt a death throw on that person. If the *watch hand* (wooden rod) is moved to the death house, place your death marker not on the death house, but on any living person of your choice. Death markers (chips) may **never** be placed on the death house.

Translation of graphic texts:

White Death's cards: This player placed four death markers on the fate card because the hand of the death watch was at 4 at the beginning of the round.

The White Death player has no points thus far. Both score markers are still at zero.

Four death markers are on the fate card. This player has decided to move the hand of the death watch twice and the dancing death twice in this round.

The White Death still has one death marker in his supply.

The Black Death moved the dancing death card four spaces in the clockwise direction. Four spaces because the hand of the death watch is pointing to four.

After moving the dancing death card, the black player placed another death marker (black chip) on the dancer.

Because the dancing death was moved to the dancer, the black player may attempt a death throw. There are three death markers on the dancer. Black adds one to his die roll for the dancer however and must therefore roll two or less. But he rolls three. The attempt fails and the player must take both black death markers from the card back into his supply.

This second death marker was placed on the old lady when the dancing death ended its move on this card in the last round.

When the old lady's power card was activated, her card was moved from the 10 to the 9 and the convalescent was moved from the 9 to the 10. The old lady received a black death marker in the process.

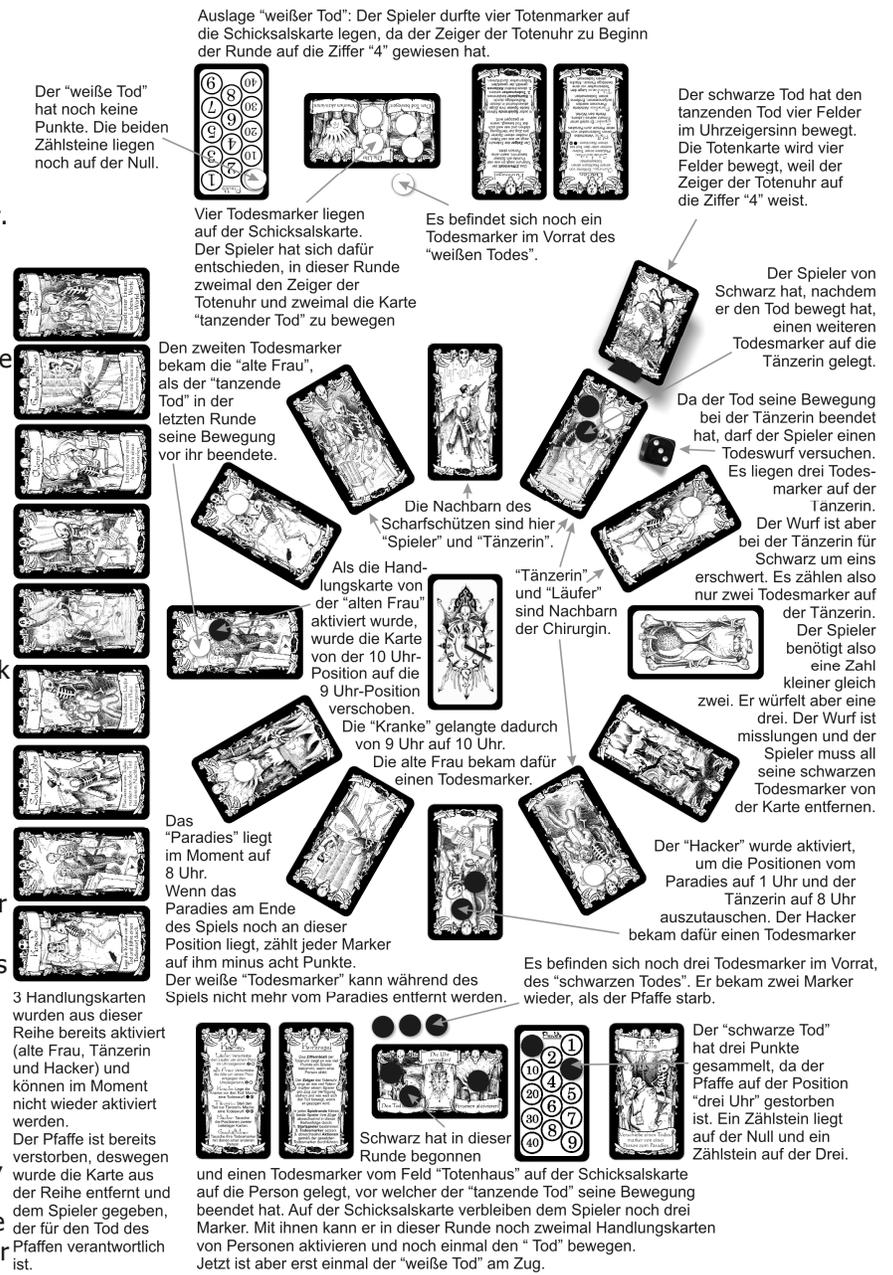
Here, the neighbours of the sharpshooter are the gambler and the dancer.

The dancer and the runner are neighbours of the surgeon.

Paradise is currently at 8 O'clock. If paradise is still here at the end of the game then every death marker on it yields eight minus points. The white death marker cannot be removed from paradise anymore and remains there until the end of the game.

Three power cards have been activated (old lady, dancer and hacker) and cannot currently be activated again. The priest has died so his card is no longer available (it was given to the player who was responsible for his death).

Black started in this round and took one death marker from the death house area on his fate card and placed it on the person by whom the dancing death ended his



move. On the fate card three death markers remain. In this round he can use them to activate two power cards and move the dancing death once. But now it is the White Death's turn to play.

The Black Death has three points on his scorecard, because the priest died at 3 O'clock. One score marker is on the zero and the other on the three.

The Black Death has three more death markers in his supply. He received two of these when the priest died.

The hacker was activated in order to move paradise from 1 O'clock to 8 O'clock and the dancer from 8 O'clock to 1 O'clock. The hacker received one death marker in the process.

Card translations:

Rules Summary

The hand on the face of the death watch indicates:

- How many death markers a player must play
- How far the dancing death must move if moved
- How many points a player receives if a person dies

In every round:

1. Determine who the start player is (lowest die roll)
2. Place death markers your fate cards (simultaneously)
3. Alternate turns to perform one action per death marker

You may attempt a death throw if:

- The dancing death moves to a new person or to the death house.
- The hand of the death watch moves to the dancing death (and he stands by a living person or the death house).
- You activate a person whose power card allows it.

The game ends immediately when:

- All ten people have died, or
- In phase 2, any player cannot obtain enough death markers to place on their fate card.
- In phase 3, any player cannot perform an action to remove a death marker from their fate card, or
- It is the end of a round and the death watch points to 12.

Runner

Move the runner one space in the clockwise direction.

Old Lady

Move the old lady one space in the anticlockwise direction.

Convalescent

Move the convalescent to the dancing death. You may attempt a death throw (on the convalescent!).

Dancer

Move the dancing death to the dancer. You may attempt a death throw (on the dancer!).

Hacker

Swap the position of any two cards on the death watch (people, paradise or death house).

Business Lady

Swap all her death markers with those from any other person.

Surgeon

Remove a death marker from a neighbour.

Sharpshooter

Place a death marker on a neighbour OR move the dancing death to a neighbour.

Priest

Move one death marker from any one person to paradise.

Gambler

Dice with death (see rule on page 3).