



ABSOLUTE DESTINY APOCALYPSE

ABOUT THIS GAME

Absolute Destiny Apocalypse is a solo LARP written by Rebecca Maxfield for Golden Cobra 2023 as an adaptation of the multiplayer “Pilgrimage to the Center of the Earth” (Golden Cobra ‘21), substituting *Revolutionary Girl Utena* inspiration (Golden Cobra ingredient ‘20) for the original’s theme of minority religious experience, and adding the theme of the Holy Grail quest. It is about traversing dangers and obstacles, via the medium of strenuous physical exercise and the thoughts of people who inspire you to keep going, in search for the thing that will let you revolutionize the world. Or, it’s about being a Black Rose duelist competing for the Rose Bride, also being a knight on a quest for the Holy Grail, and climbing a whole bunch of stairs. This game is fairly heavy on theatre-of-the-mind; costumes, props, and settings are in the player’s imagination.

SAFETY/ACCESSIBILITY

- The activity in this game is self-guided/self-designed and can be calibrated to different ability levels, but it is intended to be physically strenuous – that is the point. Please know your limits, stay hydrated, and use any proper gear or devices you need. The game is intended to be played in one continuous session, with breaks as specified, but if you need to pause or quit, please do so. The runtime of the game is however long it takes you to do the things in it.
- You may make your own decisions about the presence of any difficult topics within the world of the game. As designed, the game does not inherently include the themes of Christianity which are present in the Arthurian mythos or abuse and sexual assault which occur in the *Utena* story, or the gendered roles and assumptions present in either.

BEFORE PLAYING

- Create your character using the guiding questions under Character Background and any other details you choose. Read over the rest of the materials in case there is anything else you want to decide in advance before beginning to play.
 - Give a name to your character, and to the other characters who are important to them. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Arthurian_characters can serve as a quick source of Arthurian names, or you can choose another source of any kind, or call them anything you like.
- Make any other advance decisions you wish about the setting/world of your story.
- Decide what sort(s) of exercise or physical activity you will do during the parts of the game where your character is traveling and fighting, and make sure you are properly equipped for those activities. Choose a color or colors that you would like



to be your character's signature color or coat of arms, and if you can, wear/have something of that color. (You can imagine that your costume in general is whatever it would make sense for it to be in the story.)

- Pick out some music to listen to as the soundtrack of your game! (The [Utena duel music playlist](#) is an option; I like Nightwish for this.)

CHARACTER BACKGROUND

Build your character using these questions (pick answers or roll a die). You're not limited to these if another option leaps out at you that you're interested in playing.

Where did you get your sword?

- It's a family heirloom that has now been passed down to me.
- It was bestowed upon me by my liege.
- I won it in a fair fight, or as the culmination of another quest.
- I won it in an unfair fight or by guile.
- It was supplied by the armory.
- It was supplied by an order or society I belong to.
- I forged it.
- It was a gift from someone close to me.

Why do you serve your liege?

- I believe in the goals they're fighting for/working towards.
- They have been chosen to lead by spiritual or divine powers.
- They've proved themselves in battle.
- They're my friend.
- They're the head and the heart, and I'm the hand – they're not a fighter, but their wisdom and judgment needs fighters.
- It's better for everyone if my sword is wielded at the discretion of someone other than myself.
- They've been an inspiration for my whole life, or remind me of someone who was.

How often do you see your courtly love?

(Your courtly love is the person you romantically idealize and dedicate your deeds to. Strictly, they are not your partner; if they are, this is a violation of a taboo for both of you, and is probably an illicit relationship.)

- Often. I marvel at their presence in the same spaces as myself.
- Often. I struggle to reconcile their existence as a person and as an ideal.
- Sometimes, when I have returned in triumph from a great deed or when they see me off at the start of one, or when I fight wearing their favor in a tournament.
- Sometimes. Time with them is a respite from my life of fighting.
- I have met them only once, and my life was changed forever.
- I have never met them – I only know of them.

What have you lost?



- My family.
- My lover.
- My hopes.
- My friends.
- My place in the world.
- My honor.
- My faith.

In what way are you an unlikely or unexpected knight or duelist?

Why do you want the power to revolutionize the world? What would you do with it?

PLOT BACKGROUND AND GAME STRUCTURE

You are a knight on a quest for the thing that will let you revolutionize the world. The game materials will refer to this as the grail, but it need not necessarily be a cup (in *Utena*, it's a person, the Rose Bride!), although it should be something tangible. You should have an idea of what sort of thing it is at the time you set out on your quest, but it's fine if you turn out to be incorrect in the end, just not vague or purely conceptual.

When playing the game, you will alternate periods of strenuous exercise (running, boxing, climbing stairs...) during which you will imagine yourself fighting enemies that stand between you and your goal, with periods of rest, when you will gather inspiration to continue on your quest. As you begin your exercise in each action section, envision the different setting(s) through which you are traveling towards the ultimate end of your quest, before encountering your enemy (whether another swordsperson/fighter or a monster). During each action section, you should exercise until you feel you've reached your limit, then stop, having eked out a victory by the skin of your teeth.

There are two rest periods, and the content in them can be played in either order:

- Remind yourself of your liege, the trust they place in you and you in them. Recall the day you swore your oath to them: the circumstances, how you felt, what you promised. Repeat the oath to yourself, and gather the strength to go on.
- Remind yourself of your courtly love. Recall when you told them that, in their name, you would seek the grail to revolutionize the world. What did they say (affirming or otherwise), and how was it a perfect reflection of what you love most about them? Repeat their words to yourself, and gather the strength to go on. If you have never met them, met them only once long before you took this quest upon yourself, or otherwise have not told them, recall a dream in which you met them and told them.

GAMEPLAY

Wash your hands and face as a ritual purification before you begin your journey. (If you then have to travel, as a player, from where you're able to wash to where you're going to exercise, that's fine.)



Travel towards your goal, and battle a fearsome enemy. What illusion does this fight shatter for you?

When you can no longer continue, remind yourself of one of the people important to you as a knight, and gather the strength to go on.

Travel towards your goal, and battle a fearsome enemy. In this battle, you will attain victory, but your sword will be lost or broken at the very last.

When you can no longer continue, remind yourself of one of the people important to you as a knight, and gather the strength to go on.

Travel towards your goal. This time, when you encounter the enemy, you will also see a vision of your liege or your courtly love. Recall a time they hurt or betrayed you, or you them. From this vision, you will gain a magical sword: you will pull it from their heart, or they from yours. Battle your enemy with this sword.

THE END OF THE QUEST

Once you have completed your final battle, you will arrive at the end of your quest. Do you attain the grail? What is it like? Take note of the difference between your worldly, sweaty, flawed, tired body and the mystical grail.

If you do not attain the grail, you will catch a glimpse of it afar off. What can you make out through the numinous mist, or the retinue surrounding it? What stops you pushing onward and coming closer?

FINAL SCENE

Now you are a different character, in the future, on the site of that final struggle and revelation. Do you know that that's what happened here? How is the world different – in large or small ways, for everyone or for only one or a few – as a result of your previous character's journey? Give yourself a moment to take in the place. Whatever the place is now, or is like now, take a memento of it – a photograph or sketch, a stone, a flower, a relic, some kitsch, anything – home with you. (As the player, you can simply imagine doing this if you feel that is better than taking a photo of or a random object from, say, the gym.)

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