



**Create dynamic role-playing
adventures without preparation**

**For use as a stand-alone game or
as a supplement for other systems**

Mythic™

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Attributes are used to decide the outcome of some tasks and help in the development of skills and abilities.

Abilities - These are statistics that describe what a character can do. Usually, this is a list of skills. These can also be powers and supernatural abilities.

Strengths & Weaknesses - Many characters will have specific strengths and weaknesses beyond their attributes and abilities. This usually takes the form of bonuses and penalties for performing certain tasks. For instance, a character with Eagle Eyes may gain a bonus when firing a ranged weapon. A character with Sea-Sickness may acquire a combat penalty when fighting on a ship.

Details - “Detail” is a catchall word for any statistic, attribute, or ability of a character or item within a Mythic adventure. “Strength” is a detail for a character. “Breakability” is a detail for a window. “Password Complexity” may be a detail of a computer firewall. Details in Mythic are decided as you go along an adventure. For instance, a window’s Breakability detail is not important until a character tries to break one.

Ranks - Every detail in Mythic has a corresponding rank. A rank is a description of potency ranging from weak to strong. The higher the rank, the more potent the detail. A character with a high ranking strength detail is very strong, for instance. A task with a low rank difficulty is easy to accomplish.

Non-Player Character - Non-Player Characters (or NPCs) are the other denizens of the game world besides the player characters. They have attributes and statistics just like the player characters have. These are the bad-guys and supporting cast that the players will encounter in the course of an adventure. If you are playing Mythic with a GM, the GM will control the NPC’s actions. If you are playing without a GM, the players and Mythic will determine what the NPCs do.

Dice - Mythic uses only ten-sided dice (referred to as D10). These can be purchased at any game store that sells RPGs (such as the one you bought Mythic at!) Generally, you

will be asked to roll 1D100. This is done by rolling two D10, with one die acting as the ten’s digit and the other as the one’s, resulting in a number from 1 to 100 (double 00 is 100). You may want to get different colored dice to tell them apart.

How MYTHIC DIFFERS FROM OTHER RPGs

Most RPGs operate under the principle that there are players and there is a GM. The GM prepares all the details of an adventure, and then “runs” the players through that adventure. This usually requires a great deal of preparation on the part of the GM and the handling of many details.

Mythic is different in that it requires no preparation from the GM. Mythic adventures are meant to be played off the cuff, with perhaps a few minutes of brainstorming to come up with the initial setup.

Mythic can also be played entirely without a GM. The same mechanics in Mythic that allow a GM to run an adventure without preparation also allows a group of players to do without the GM.

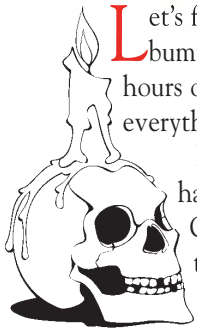
There is more on this in Chapter 1. I just wanted to give you a heads-up.

NOTES ABOUT THIS BOOK

In each chapter you will find shaded boxes and “torn paper” boxes. The shaded boxes provide examples and clarifications, while the paper boxes offer useful rules. At the back of this book you will find a summary of most of these rules, and other bits of useful information collected for you to find easily. There are also blank character sheets, adventure sheets, and other forms that you are free to copy for personal use.



Mythic Adventures



Let's face it: The life of a gamemaster can be a bummer. There's the weight of responsibility, hours of preparation, and keeping track of everything. And I mean everything!

It's no mystery why most gaming groups have one poor schmuck who acts as the GM every single time. No one else wants to do it. And who would? Actually playing is so much more fun.

With Mythic, you can do away with the GM entirely, if you wish. Or, if your GM enjoys playing God, Mythic can make adventures more fun for the GM by eliminating all of that nasty preparation. In a Mythic adventure, the GM (or players sans GM) can start an evening's entertainment with about five minutes of preparation. As the adventure unfolds, the GM is just as surprised by the twists and turns as the players are.

Fun for everyone.

No GM? What you talkin' 'bout Willis!

Mythic is a gaming system that automates the functions of a living, breathing GM. It works through interpretation and logical principles. (We'll get more into that later. For now, trust me.) The upshot is, with Mythic acting as your GM, that poor schmuck can finally roll up a character and get his hands dirty. It also means you can play solo if you wish (and who hasn't wanted to do that, just once?).

How can such a system be used?

I'm glad you asked.

No GM, multiple players

Everyone whip out your character! Players decide on an opening scenario, and perhaps a few details or two, and Mythic takes it from there. All action is decided through the asking of yes/no questions and the application of logical principles. By answering questions, the adventure moves along, with the occasional random event throwing players a curve ball. The action is broken into scenes, just like in a movie, to keep everything straight.

No GM, one player

As stated above, Mythic can be used to go solo. But let's be honest, none of them are truly satisfying. How many variations of "Choose-Your-Own" can you go through before you start longing for something more? Solo play in Mythic works the same as in group play. You're just alone.

One GM, any number of players

For those who like to be a GM, we have something for you, too. The same tools that allow Mythic to automatically generate adventures on the fly without a GM also work with a GM. This means very little to zero preparation, if you don't want to prepare. Simply create an opening scenario (hey, you can come up with that on the drive over!) and follow Mythic as it guides you along. Mythic will throw in its own twists and turns, so the GM will be just as shocked as the players.

This is not to say, though, that total control is taken out of the hands of the GM. The GM is free to break away from the structure that Mythic puts together. If nothing else, Mythic will generate an adventure skeleton that the GM can work with. At the most, Mythic will spin the entire adventure for the GM, whose only job will be to administer the whole process.

Mythic, stand-alone

Mythic can be played as a complete role-playing game. The same logic-based tools that guide an adventure along can also answer other questions, such as "Did Boltar's sword hit the goblin?" On its own, Mythic is a free-form and interpreted system. Much of the details defining a campaign world will come up as the adventure proceeds.

The rules presented in this book will present Mythic as a stand-alone game. That way, you can take what you like and leave the rest, or use the whole enchilada.

Mythic with other RPGs

Mythic's main strength is the ability to generate dynamic, unfolding adventures on the fly. Mythic can replace the game master even if you're playing another role-playing game and not using Mythic rules as the core rules for your campaign. Mythic takes the place of the

GM, but the main RPG's rules still handle character creation, combat, task resolution and everything else. Questions that players would normally ask the GM are now asked to Mythic, instead.

The write stuff

Finally, Mythic can be used as a writing tool. The architecture that creates dynamic adventures is really an automated story-telling system. It will work just as well without any games or formalized characters attached. Just set the scene, ask some questions, and start writing.

Pick and choose

It's been stated before in this book, and will be stated again, but this point is important: Mythic is meant to be used in whole, or in part. The rules in this book accomplish two, separate tasks: generate impromptu adventures and provide rules for general role-playing. Using nothing more than this book, you can go on as many role-playing adventures as you can imagine. Or, you can choose to ignore the adventure generating aspect, or ignore the general role-playing aspect. Then again, you could use only part of the general role-playing portion to supplement an existing RPG.

Not to beat you over the head with this too much, but the idea is that Mythic provides a stable foundation for you to do whatever you want. It provides the necessities: the ability to generate adventures, and the rules to play out those adventures. Beyond this, you have complete freedom to adjust and modify. This is possible with Mythic because the general role-playing rules are based on logical concepts and everyday language. This allows you to have Mythic interact with other RPG's you own with a minimum of conversion fuss.

Let's go on to something else.

THE IMPORTANCE OF LOGIC AND INTERPRETATION

There are two concepts that are central to successfully running a Mythic adventure: logic and interpretation. The entire mechanic for generating adventures on the fly, running without a GM, and making it all work hinge on the proper application of logic and interpretation.

Where logic comes in

Logic is used in Mythic usually to figure out what happens next. This is done by considering what has already happened, applying whatever new twists have popped up, and deciding what the most logical outcome will be. The final outcome, if important, will be tested on the Fate Chart and will go one of several directions.

The general rule is, whatever is most logical, that is what is expected to happen. Notice, I say "expected." The story will rarely proceed exactly where you think it will and unexpected events will crop up that will turn your logical adventure on its ear. However, we need a basis to work from and logic provides it.

This harping on logic will make more sense later in this book, but I wanted to hook your mind on it now while you're fresh.

Where interpretation comes in

Just as all things are logical in Mythic, all answers to important questions are arrived upon through interpretation. Most information in Mythic comes through the asking of simple yes/no questions. Mythic provides a framework for providing general answers to these questions. These answers must be interpreted, logically of course.

This, too, will make more sense later in this book.

Improvisation

In addition to logic and interpretation, improvisation is Mythic's third linchpin that makes it all work. Think about our claims for a moment: you can play without any preparation and without a GM. Huh?!

Logic dictates what happens next, interpretation decides the answers to questions, and improvisation is the glue that fills in the holes and keeps it all together.

Improvisation comes from the players and usually in the form of questions. A player can ask any question, and the answer will change the course of the adventure, perhaps in ways the player hadn't even guessed. But it's the asking of questions that moves events along, and those questions are derived improvisationally.

For instance, the players' characters are standing in the foyer of an ancient, abandoned, mansion. They know only that the place is musty and decayed, but must have once been a very spacious and beautiful house. A player asks, "Are there stairs going up to the second floor?" Using the rules set forward here, they answer "yes."

Thus, a new detail about the gameworld has been established (there are stairs in the foyer leading up to the second floor). This detail did not exist until the player asked the question, and the question was out of his imagination, improvised.

All details in Mythic are generated in just this way. The answers to these improvised questions are determined using logic and interpretation, which maintains the world's consistency and gives it the same logical solidity as it would possess if there were a living GM with sheets full of data running the show. The only difference is that this detail of the world did not exist until a player specifically asked for it. The end result, however, is the same.

Once again, how all this works without a GM

Perhaps the hardest concept in Mythic is the idea of playing a role-playing game without a Game Master. It sounds like taking a flight on a plane without a pilot.

If you follow the guidelines in Mythic, it all works out. These rules become your virtual GM, an artificial intelligence that can answer all of your questions (yes/no questions, that is).

This works by combining improvisation, logic and interpretation to guide everything. As long as the players are honest with themselves, you never have to assign GM tasks to another player again.

DETAILS AND RANKS

For gaming purposes, everything in a Mythic adventure, from characters to objects, are described in terms of details and ranks. A detail is just what it sounds like: an important aspect of the character or object. For instance, Intuition would be a detail for a character. Skills and abilities are also details. For an object like a computer, a detail may be its complexity, or password protection.



Character Creation

As stated in the introduction, Mythic can be used as a stand-alone role-playing game or as a gamemaster emulator for another RPG. If you are using it as an emulator, then you don't need to worry about creating a Mythic character. However, you should still read this chapter as it contains important concepts about Mythic adventures.

Characters are composed of details, as discussed in Chapter 1. The details of your character decide how strong she is, how smart, and what she can do. Every detail has a corresponding rank that determines that detail's potency. Before you decide what your character details and ranks are going to be, you need to make a few decisions.

CHARACTER CREATION CHOICES

There are two ways to make a character in Mythic: Freeform and Point-Based. Freeform characters are only sketched out in the beginning with details added as you adventure. Using the Point System creates a complete character from the start that will be more balanced with the other players. Which method is right for you? Let's see the benefits:

Freeform characters

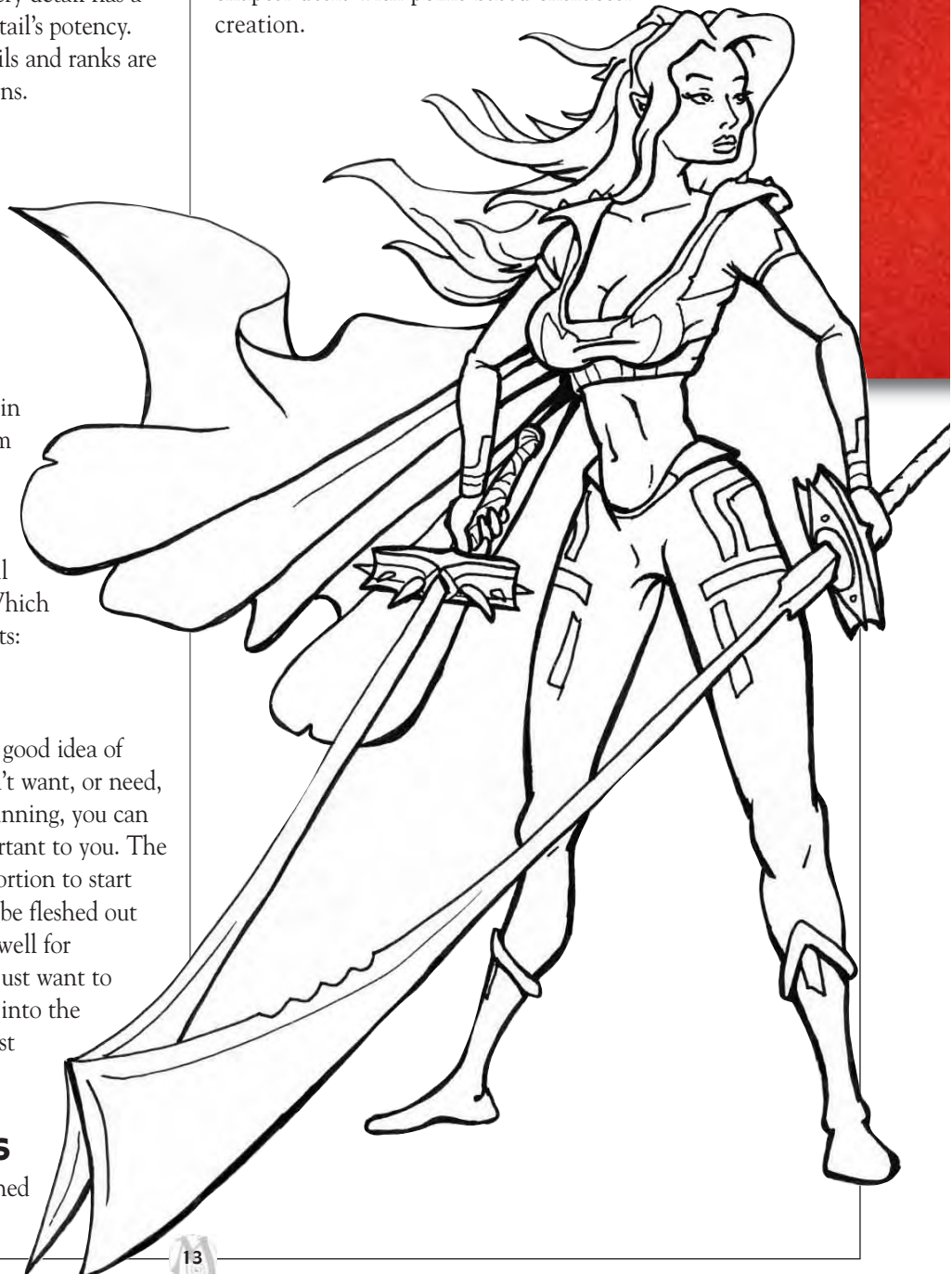
This is the best option when you have a good idea of who it is you want to role-play, but you don't want, or need, to record every detail right now. In the beginning, you can just record those details that are most important to you. The character summary is the most important portion to start with; the rest of this character's details will be fleshed out later during adventures. This option works well for impromptu role-playing sessions when you just want to come up with a character fast and get right into the action. This is also the best option if you just don't like point-based systems.

Point-Based characters

This is the best option if you are concerned

with characters being balanced with each other. Point-based characters will be much the same power level. Also, this is a good option if you like more structure in your character creation process. Point-based characters are far less fluid than freeform characters, but more fully realized from the start.

The main portion of the character Creation Chapter will deal with freeform characters, since this information is central to character creation anyway. The end of the chapter deals with point-based character creation.



The Fate Chart



The Fate Chart is the heart of Mythic. Everything that happens in a Mythic adventure is resolved by forming a yes/no question. The logic of that question is then applied to the Fate Chart, which gives a percentage probability of a “yes” answer. The results are either yes, no, exceptionally yes or exceptionally no. The players then interpret the results to fit logically into the adventure. All action, and all situations, can be resolved in this manner, from determining the contents of a room to resolving the outcome of a combat.

QUESTIONS, QUESTIONS

All action is moved along in Mythic by asking yes/no questions. Are there monsters in the room? Does my car jump the chasm? Can I successfully cast this spell? Does my sword kill the troll? Did I persuade the cop to let me go?

Normally, such questions would be asked to a game master who is keeping track of such details. In a Mythic adventure, the GM can be replaced; the rules of Mythic are designed to answer all questions put to it and in a logical manner, as long as they are phrased as a yes/no.

A glance at the next page will show you the Fate Chart. Along the left side and bottom you will find the ranks that we discussed in the last few chapters. The ranks that help define your character, and everything else in Mythic, are compared on the Fate Chart to find the odds of the answer to your question being “yes.”

On the right you will find a range of “odds” in everyday language. These can be used when you are trying to arrive at an answer for a more general question.

Also along the bottom are a string of numbers from 9 to 1. These represent the chaos factor, which will be discussed a little bit later. These values are usually compared against the odds along the right of the chart.

There are two types of questions in Mythic: odds and resisted.

Examples of Questions

Exactly how a question is worded is up to the players. Following are some examples.

“Does my sword strike the goblin?”: This is a resisted question, pitting the swordman’s rank with a sword versus the goblin’s rank with his shield.

“Is the wizard successful in casting his fireball spell?”: This is a resisted question between the wizard’s rank at casting fireballs versus the rank of the difficulty of the spell being cast.

“I am going to steal this car. I look in the glove compartment for a spare set of keys. Do I get lucky?”: This is an odds question, with the players coming up with the odds of this being yes and comparing that against the chaos factor.

Odds questions

An odds question is a question that doesn’t involve ranks competing against each other. The question is just a straight query of probability. For instance, “Does the roulette wheel come up with my number?” Or, “Is it still raining?” In these cases the gambler is not pitting his gambling skill against the table, and the questioner has no chance on changing the outcome of whether it will rain or not. These are straight questions of odds, the kind that players normally ask a GM to gain further detail about the game world. If there is no GM, however, or if the GM doesn’t know the answer, then players can use the rules for an odds question.

To answer, the players must decide what the chances are that the answer to the question is yes. To do this, use the common language odds descriptors on the right of the Fate Chart and use your best judgement as to what you think the chances are. Are the odds of the roulette table turning up black 50/50? Is it likely to rain? Is there just no way that a key would be under the doormat?

If you are playing with a GM, she makes this determination. If you are not, then the group of players must come to a consensus. If you cannot decide, then the group should average their opinions and take the closest

Randomness

Logic is poor at one thing: coming up with surprises. Taking this into account, Mythic builds random events into the adventure so everything doesn't make too much sense. In an adventure that is guided by players' questions and expectations, randomness will add extra dimension to the action, spinning plot twists you may never have thought of before.

Random events can occur at two times during a Mythic adventure: when a scene is first generated (see the next chapter) and when a question is asked on the Fate Chart.

Scene random events

These are unexpected twists that derail the characters' assumptions and create new, surprise scenes. As you will find in the next chapter, Mythic adventures are broken into scenes, just like a movie, and scenes are generated from the player's expectations. After the players express what they think the next scene will be, however, they must roll to see if that concept is altered. Sometimes the scene will begin as expected, sometimes it will be changed slightly, and sometimes a random event will create an entirely new, unexpected scene.

This is described more fully in the adventure chapter.

Fate Chart random events

This is the most common type of random event. Whenever a question is asked on the Fate Chart there is the possibility of a random event occurring. The event does not have to be linked to the question in any way. In fact, the question should be resolved first, and then the random event generated, just to keep everything straight.

When a fate question is asked, and 1D100 is rolled, if a double number is obtained (i.e. 11, 22, 33, 44, etc.), then a random event may have occurred. If this number (the single digit, 1 for 11, 2 for 22, etc.) is equal to or less than the chaos factor (another mechanic covered in the next chapter), then something random happens.

For instance, if the player rolled a 55 to a question, and the chaos factor was 8, then a random event takes place. If chaos was below 5, however, nothing would occur.

adventure, keeping the adventure fresh and exciting. Mythic adventures are guided by logic, which maintains the structure and continuity of events, but random events will lead the adventure places that logic cannot. This is where surprises pop up and the story can take twists that no one would have expected.

Once it has been determined that a random event has occurred, you must figure out what happens. There are three components to a random event: context, focus, and meaning.

Event context

"Context" is everything that has gone on in the adventure up to this point. The adventure itself, and all that has happened in the adventure, is the context. When generating a random event, the focus and meaning of the event should be shaped by the context of what has already happened. The random event isn't happening in a vacuum; all that has already occurred is the stage on which this new event takes place.

For instance, if the characters are spies sneaking through a Russian castle, looking for stolen plans to a military satellite, any new random events generated will have some relation to this adventure scenario. If they generate a random event that implies something negative happens to one of the characters, perhaps he is spotted by a guard or he drops his gun down a stairwell.

To say that you must consider the context of the adventure before judging a random event may seem like common sense, but sometimes even good sense bears repeating. Keeping the context of the adventure in mind will help you make the logical leap to a satisfying resolution of the random event.

Event focus

Keeping the context of a random event in mind helps frame the possibilities of what can happen. Next, you establish where the action of that event is focused. This is done by using the event focus table.

Roll 1D100 on the event focus table. This tells you what aspect of the adventure the random event directly impacts. For instance, the event may directly effect a player character or it might introduce a new, non-player character. Apply the

RANDOM EVENTS

Random events can throw unexpected twists into the

The Adventure

This section provides the structure for running a Mythic adventure. You've got the basics on how to ask Mythic questions and how to answer them using the Fate Chart. Now, it's time to put it all together.

The structure outlined in this chapter is designed to generate a dynamic, and improvised, adventure. These rules can be used by a game master to help come up with adventures off the cuff, offering as much surprise to the GM as to the players. Or, players can do away with the GM and use these rules to generate their own adventures.

Improvised means "free-form," right? Not necessarily. Mythic is designed to move the adventure along based on improvised ideas, but it provides a structured framework to guide and shape those ideas. This isn't "making it up as you go along" so much as hopping from one idea to the next with rules to navigate the way. The current idea is the current scene, the action of the moment. You may have some clue as to what the next idea is, but you won't know what happens for sure until you get there.

This may sound confusing right now. But it all makes sense in the end.

To start, let's take a look at how Mythic views time.

SCENES

Mythic gameplay is visualized like a movie with an adventure session broken into scenes. Just like in a movie, a scene takes place at a certain location, involving certain characters, and covers a certain segment of action. Usually unimportant stuff is left out of a scene and only the good stuff gets shown. When the action is over and the characters are ready to move on the scene ends and we proceed to the next scene.

Mythic works the same way. A scene setting is envisioned, the characters resolve conflicts within the scene then it wraps up and everyone moves on. A scene is a discrete unit of time within an adventure, but it can be of any length. The scene, in game time, can last a few minutes or many years. The important thing is that each scene must have a purpose. Perhaps the characters have come across a room while exploring a dungeon. They pause to check the room out. This is a scene. When they are done, and all actions have been resolved, the scene is over.

The simplest way to move from scene to scene is for the characters themselves to physically move. However, they

The End is Near ...

Below are some example scenes emphasizing where they begin and where they end. The important concept to keep in mind is that a scene begins with a setup and ends when action and conflict have been resolved.

Scene 1

Setup: A band of superheroes is breaking into the stronghold of a villain. They discovered an airduct in the previous scene. This scene begins with the heroes crawling inside, entering the building. The scene proceeds with the heroes making their way inside and searching.

Ending: Since the point of this scene is the heroes getting into the stronghold, once they've accomplished this, the scene is over. The players may stretch the scene out with some preliminary exploration of the stronghold to get some flavor for what it's like ("the halls are made of chrome and strips of light glow dimly from the ceiling"), but the next scene will likely deal with initial encounters.

Scene 2

Setup: Earlier in the adventure of a mecha/military game, the players discovered that the alien Battle Pods were staging an attack. This new scene begins with the characters jumping into their War Mechs and charging onto the battlefield. The action for this scene is straightforward: combat.

Ending: The scene ends when the battle ends. Either the aliens are beat back or the players stage a desperate retreat.

Bottom line

There are no hard and fast rules for what constitutes the beginning and ending of a scene, there are just guidelines. The scene structure is designed to help give the adventure shape. The most important rule of thumb is simply to end a scene where it seems natural, and that usually means when the main activity of the scene is concluded.