RICHARD LAWTON

Crown
of Ash

Rulebook

Back Story

For decades the Kingdom was ruled over by the watchful eye of the king from his central citadel while his lords maintained the outer lands in a peaceful partnership, keeping stability and prosperity within the realm.

As the popularity of the lords grew, so did their power. The king became envious and bitter. With every report of their success, he imagined their greedy hands reaching further for his crown. The idea of it consumed him, poisoning every thought, shadowing every pleasure until finally he vowed to bring an end to the coalition.

With a network of spies and undesirables, he turned the lords against each other. Before long, war swept across the kingdom, the destruction greater than the king ever anticipated. With embers in his eyes he watched from his great tower as the land burned to ash and destitution spread. The lords were left in ruin.

Desperate, the lords met to discuss a truce. Under their tattered tents, as sour wine flowed and talk turned to the start of the war, the king's treachery was uncovered.

It was too late for them to take revenge. Their treasuries were emptied and their armies decimated. Instead, to give the land time to heal, they turned to the forbidden arcane arts. An alchemist was called to prepare a vial, made to an ancient recipe. It promised to give the lords a silent, death-like slumber for a hundred long years. Once they returned, the kingdom would be made anew.

As each took their drink and fell into sleep, the true effects of the vial revealed itself; the king's last betrayal. It gave them nightmarish dreams and pain so torturous that their minds were turned in torment. When they finally awoke, the once benevolent lords were gone, replaced by violent creatures in hideous forms, with one single desire, to take the land for themselves.

Unbeknownst to the king, the vial had given them a dark knowledge: Long-forgotten alchemy that would allow them to raise armies from the dead; bringing new life to the buried corpses of the first war and marching them into a second. They would re-build the strongholds of the kingdom and drain the lands to feed their power.

The Citadel awaited them.
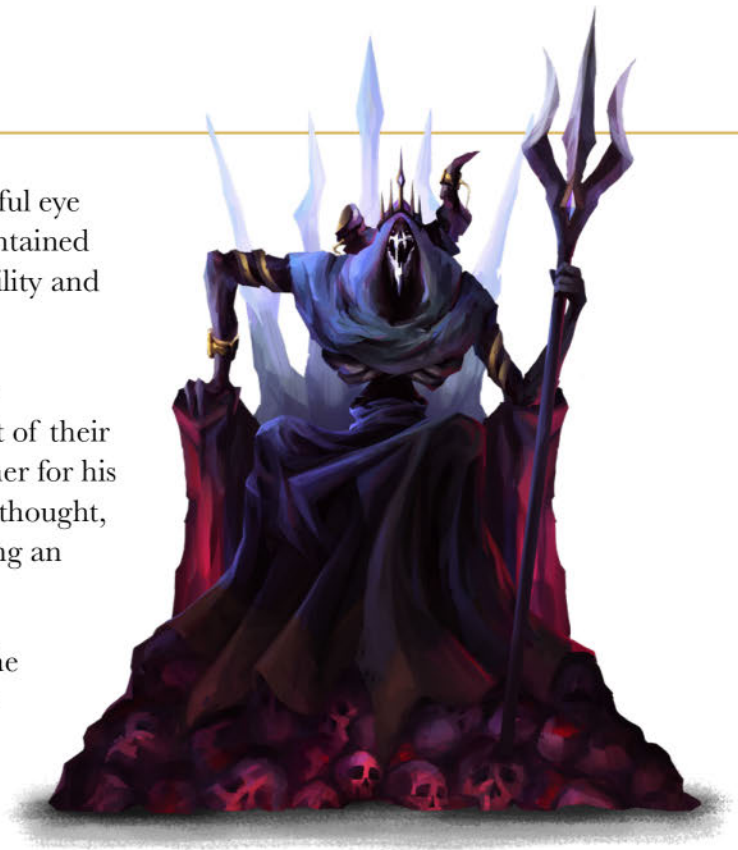
Visio
The Watcher

Before the great fall, there wasn't a decision made or deal done without Visio knowing

Nox
The Nocturnal

Once the sun set on the Kingdom of Ash the corrupt and wicked filtered into the streets. They answered to only one... Nox

Mors
The Magistrate

Once keeper of law and administrator of justice among the kingdom. To meet Mors was to meet death herself.
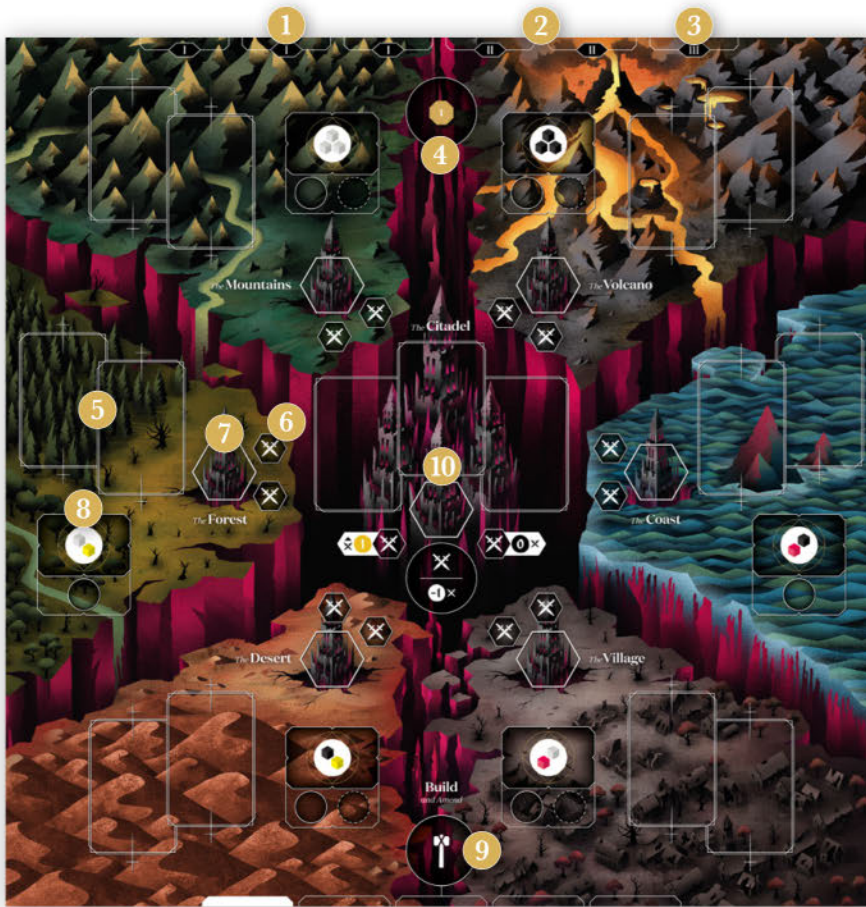
Fortis
The Defender

The ancient labyrinth of ramparts and traps that ensured peace in the Kingdom for centuries would be nothing but dust without the work of Fortis.
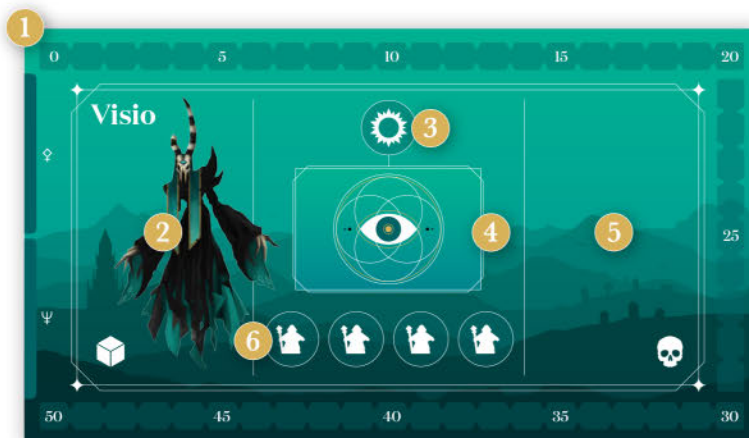
Components

Game Board

1. Raisable Fighter Tier I
2. Raisable Fighter Tier II
3. Raisable Fighter Tier III
4. Gold Resource Space
5. Defending Fighter Positions
6. Initiate Combat Worker Space
7. Region Control Indicator
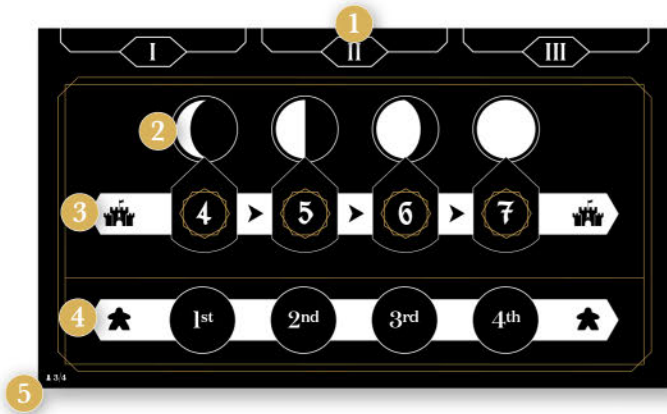8. Structure Location
9. Build Structure Worker Space
10. Citadel

Player Mat

1. Victory Point (VP) Track
2. Resource Storage Area
3. Combat Card Refresh Space
4. Combat Card Discard
5. Fighter Graveyard
6. Available Minions

Round Tracker

1. Tiered Fighter Decks
2. Round Marker Track
3. Citadel Victory Points
4. Player Turn Order Track
5. Player Count Indicator

1 Round Marker

2 Dice

4 Bulk VP Tokens

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36 Fighter Cards
(24 Raisable, 12 Starting)

1 King Card

6 Fate Cards

6 Solo Mode Cards
(5 Action & 1 Fighter Track)

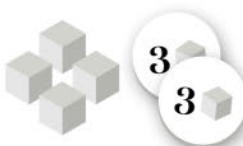**20** Combat Cards
(5 Per Player)

16 Minions
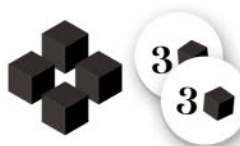(4 Per Player)

28 Control Tokens
(7 Per Player)

4 Turn Order Tokens
(1 Per Player)

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20 Bone Cubes
2 Bulk Bone Tokens

20 Ash Cubes
2 Bulk Ash Tokens

12 Blood Cubes
2 Bulk Blood Tokens
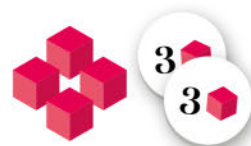
12 Sulphur Cubes
2 Bulk Sulphur Tokens

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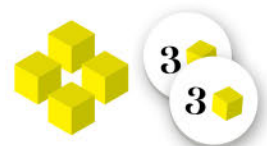
24 Structure Tiles
(4 Starting, 12 Tier 'I' & 8 Tier 'II')

24 Gold Coins

8 Bolster Tokens

1 Active Player Marker

Setup

1. Place the game board centrally in reach of all players

2. Give each player a player-mat and the corresponding Control Tokens, Minions and Combat Cards

3. Place a Score Tracker Cube on '0' of each player-mat

4. Place the Round Tracker next to the board clearly visible to all players showing the side indicating the correct amount of players

5. Separate the Fighter cards into three decks by the Roman numerals at the base of the cards I, II, III. Set aside the Starting Fighter cards (Cards without Roman numerals) for later

6. Shuffle each deck and place them face-down next to the indicated area of the Turn Tracker, creating three tiered Fighter decks, low (I), mid (II) and high (III)

7. Populate the raisable Fighter areas on the board with cards from the corresponding tiered decks

8. From the Starting Fighter cards previously set aside, deal 3 to each player matching their player colour with the indicator at the base of each card. Return any unused cards to the box

9. Place the King Card centrally in the citadel (Central Region) of the game board

10. Shuffle and deal a single Fate Card face-down to each player and return the rest to the box

11 Remove the 4 Starting Structure Tiles (indicated with a star) and deal one to each player

In a **2 player game** deal two to each player

In a **3 player game** return the spare tile to the game box

12 Divide the remaining Structure tiles by the I & II shown on the reverse. Shuffle each set separately and place face-down in a single stack next to the corresponding area at the base of the board with the Tier II tiles at the bottom. Draw 4 tiles and place face-up alongside the stack

13 Each player places their Starting Structure Tiles onto the matching location on the board

They then place Control Tokens into the region to show ownership and place a single strength '1' Starting Fighter from their hand to defend it

14 Take a Turn Order Token for each player and randomly distribute them onto the Round Tracker to determine the player order for the first round

15 Place the Round Marker onto the 1st (left-most) round indicator of the Round Tracker

16 Place the Resources, Gold, Dice and Bolster Tokens in reach of all players

17 Deal 2 Gold to each player

18 Give the Active Player Marker to the first player

Gameplay Overview

On a players turn, they assign a single minion to do their bidding;

They perform the action associated with the assigned worker space, then at the end of their turn they (optionally) can raise a single Fighter.

There are 4 actions that a minion can trigger, these are:

GATHER

Gain the resources needed to recruit powerful undead Fighters

(See Resources p8)

BUILD

Build and improve Structures to offer better resources and earn additional Victory Points (VP)

(See Structures p10)

BATTLE

March Fighters into battle to take control of other players' Structures

(See Combat p14)

REFRESH

Immediately take all used Combat Cards back into the player's hand

(See Combat Cards p16)

At the end of their turn (before passing the active player marker), a player can raise a single Fighter from the 6 available by spending the resources shown on the card.

(See Fighters p9)

Pass to next player

How to win

Crown of Ash takes place over 4 rounds.

A round ends after all players have completed assigning all of their minions. Victory points (VP) are then gained based on each players' controlled Structures and for the central citadel if occupied.

The winner is the player who has earned the most Victory Points, proving themselves the most worthy Lord and seizing the crown to the Kingdom of Ash.

In the result of a tie, the tied players add VP for the other two kinds of Fighters not shown on their Fate Card.

Players then retrieve all their minions from the board, resurrect any Fighters from their graveyard back to their hand and clear the buildable Structure tiles, ready to begin the next round.

At the end of the 4th and final round, in addition to the controlled Structures and citadel, players also score VPs for their Fate Card and any resources on their player mat. (See End Game Scoring p18)

Resources

Basic Resources

Through the art of Alchemy the dead will rise.

There are 4 basic resources in the game. These are used to raise undead Fighters to join your forces.
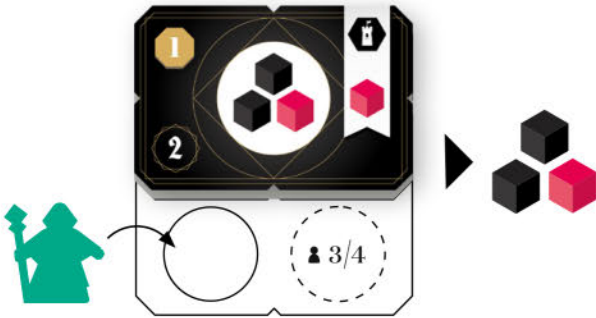
| Bone	Ash	Sulphur	Blood

How to Gather Resource

To gather resources a player places a minion onto a vacant space at the desired Structure. They immediately take the corresponding resources offered by the Structure from the supply and place them onto the storage area of their player mat.

Dashed spaces only available in 3 and 4 player games.

Owner's Tax

If using a Structure controlled by another player, the owner immediately gains the Owner's Tax shown on the right side of the tile, from the supply.
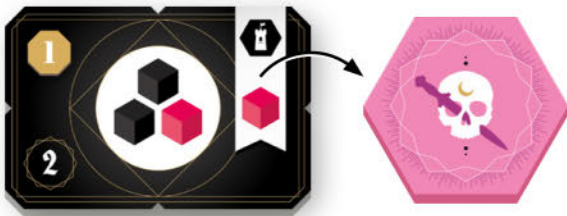
If a player uses a Structure that they control, they DO NOT get the Owner's Tax but instead can amend the defending Fighters.

(See Amending Fighters p11)

Special Ingredients

Combat cards and some Structures offer Special Ingredients. These allow the recipient to choose any basic resource from the supply.

Gold

The noblest of the seven metals with the power to create and corrupt.

With gold the ruins will be rebuilt and the land will provide once again.

Gold is an incredibly valuable resource in the Kingdom. It's primarily used to build or improve Structures but can also be used in-place of any other resource to raise Fighters to your cause.

How to gain gold

Gold is always available by placing a Minion onto the large resource space at the top of the board. There is no limit to the amount of Minions that can use this space.

But the most effective way to obtain gold is through participating in combat. (See Combat Cards p16)
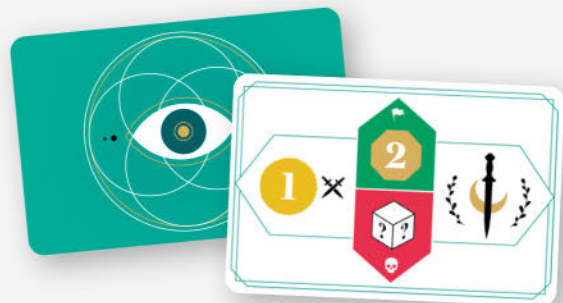
Fighters

1. Fighter Kind
2. Attack Value
3. Required Resources
4. Fighter Tier

Attack Value ✕✕

All Fighters have an Attack Value displayed on the top left of the card ranging from 1 to 6. The higher the score the more powerful the Fighter is in combat.

Raising Fighters

To fight and die in the service of your lord was a great honour... An honour that no-one expected to experience more than once.

At the end of a player's turn if they have the necessary resources they may raise a single Fighter from the 6 available at the top of the game board.

The player returns the resources shown on the base of the desired Fighter card to the supply and takes the card into their hand.

Fighter Kinds

There are 4 'Kinds' of Fighters corresponding to each of the basic resources in the game. For each of the Kinds; the matching resource always forms a large portion of its resource requirements.

Grouping Fighters of the same Kind is not required but matching Fighters in combat adds additional Attack Value. +1 for a pair, +2 for a set of three.

$1 + 3 + 1 = 5$ ✕✕ $1 + 3 + 6 + 2 = 12$ ✕✕

Replenishing Fighters

Once a fighter is raised the empty position is immediately replenished with a new Fighter from the tiered deck that matches the symbol at the space on the board, I, II or III.

If there are no Fighters left in the correct tiered deck, replenish from the neighbouring deck of the lowest available value.

If I is empty replenish from II
If II is empty, replenish from I
If III is empty, replenish from II

If two decks are empty replenish from the remaining deck.

Once all decks are empty the spaces are left empty.
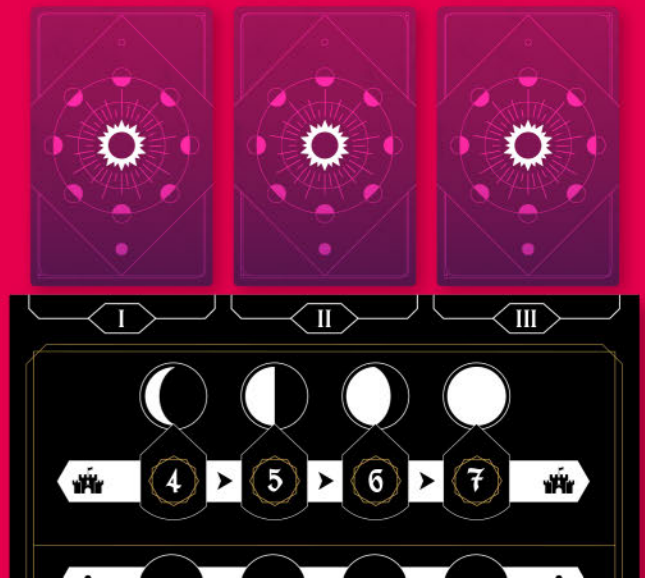
Structures

What are Structures

Mighty towers once stood looming over the land like loyal knights in full plate armour. Now long abandoned and fallen to ruins, the process of rebuilding will be costly.

Structures determine what resources are available to gather from the game board and the Structures a player controls will determine how many VPs they will receive at the end of each round.

|	
1	Gold Cost
2	VP value
3	Resource offered
4	Owner Tax
5	Structure Tier
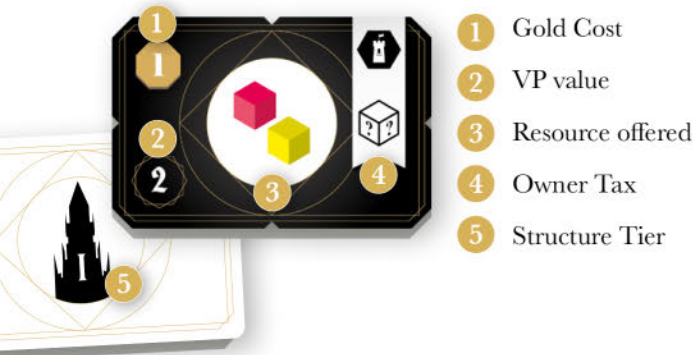
Building a Structure

To build or improve a Structure, a player places a minion into the building space location at the base of the game board. The player then pays the amount of gold displayed in the top left corner of the desired Structure from the 4 face-up available Structures tiles.

There is no limit to the amount of minions that can use the build space.

Immediate Gain

Upon building or improving a Structure that player immediately gains the resource offered by that Structure.
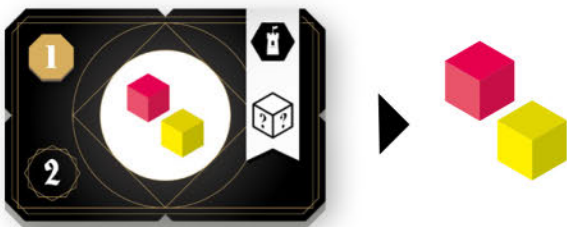
Placement

Purchased Structure tiles are placed in uncontrolled regions or on top of any Structure already controlled by the player.

Uncontrolled

If previously uncontrolled, the region immediately becomes controlled and the player places one of their Control Tokens to show this. The player may then add up to 2 Fighters from their hand to defend the Structure.

Controlled

If the region is already controlled, the player places the new Structure tile on top of the existing Structure and may amend any Fighters defending the Structure. (See Amending Fighters Section p11)

Immediately replace the purchased Structure with a new tile from the stack.

Note: Players cannot build in regions controlled by other players.

Defending Structures

Throughout the game players will attempt to attack and gain control of other player's Structures.

Only fighters already placed into a region when attacked can defend it, so players should ensure that structures are appropriately defended in advance.

Defending fighters can only be changed by Amending (See Amending Fighters Section p11)

Players may choose to leave a region undefended. Undefended Structures have a Attack Value of 0. Defending players must still use a Combat Card and retain the advantage of winning on a tie if attacked. (See Combat on p14)

Structure Tiers

Buildable Structures come in 2 tiers I & II. At the start of the game only tier I tiles will be available which offer fewer resources and less VP than tier II.

End of Round

At the end of each round the face-up buildable structure tiles are cleared and set aside and new tiles are drawn from the stack eventually revealing tiles from tier II.

If there are no tiles left in the stack shuffle the set aside tiles and create a new stack to draw from.

Unique Structure

The resurrection Structure doesn't offer resources but allows a player to immediately return a single Fighter from their graveyard to their hand.

Upon being built the player can immediately return a single Fighter from their graveyard to their hand. They may immediately amend using this Fighter. (See Amending Fighters Section)

Victory Points

At the end of each round, players score the VP value of all the Structures under their control shown on the bottom left of the tile.)

In addition to the face value, 1 VP is scored for each Structure tile covered over by the top tile.

3pts   **4pts**   **5pts**

Amending Fighters

When a player builds on, or gathers resource from a Structure they control they can amend the Fighters defending that region.

The player can add or exchange Fighters with ones from their hand or remove the existing Fighters entirely returning them to their hand.

Example

The player places a minion at a Structure they control to gain a blood and bone resource.

They then take the opportunity to amend the defending Fighters adding in another from their hand.

The Citadel

What is the Citadel

The once beating heart of a thriving kingdom the Citadel now stands as a monument to its destruction.

The Citadel is at the centre of the game board and is occupied a the start of the game by the King.

The Citadel doesn't offer any resources but instead awards a significant amount of VP at the end of each round to the player occupying it.

The amount of VP depends on the round as is shown on the turn tracker.

Conquering the Citadel

The first player to conquer the citadel must defeat the King. The attacking player must use a single Combat Card and up to 3 Fighters to beat the King's Attack Value of 5.

The King does not use a combat card.

The player resolves their Combat Card as normal and if victorious, returns the King to the game box and moves all attacking Fighters into the Citadel to defend, adding one of their Control Tokens to show control.

At the end of the round, the player controlling the Citadel gains the VP shown under the round marker. In this case 5 VP.
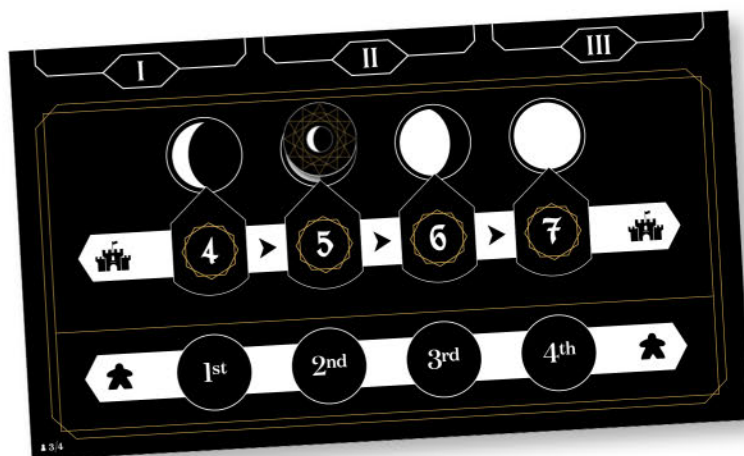
Defending the Citadel

Retaining control of the Citadel is difficult.

Unlike other regions of the board, there is no limit to the amount of times the Citadel can be attacked and no way for the occupier to amend the defending Fighters. So a player must commit the Fighters knowing they will only return once defeated.

Attacking the Citadel

There is no limit to the amount of times the Citadel can be attacked. But the location of the attack affects the total Attack Value.

The left and right flanks of the Citadel are more vulnerable but can only be attacked once per round.

1. +1 to attacker's Attack Value
2. +0 (No modifier applied)
3. -1 to attacker's Attack Value

The front of the Citadel can be attacked any number of times per round.
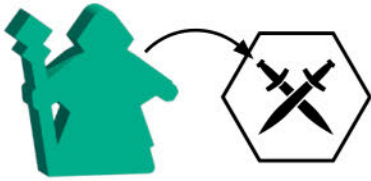
The Citadel

Combat

Initiating Combat

To initiate combat a player places a minion onto a vacant combat space in an area controlled by another player and announces their intentions.

Combat can only be initiated if the attacker has at least one Fighter in their hand to participate.

The attacker selects up to 2 Fighters from their hand (up to 3 for the Citadel) and plays them **face-down** on the table for the defender to see.

Note: The defender cannot add additional Fighters to the combat from their hand.

Both attacker and defender then select a single Combat Card from their hand and place it **face-down** on the table.

Both players then simultaneously reveal their cards and compare the combined Attack Value of the Fighters and Combat Card.

The winner is the player with the highest combined score, **defender wins on a tie.**

Combat Outcome

Defender Wins
If the defender wins, the attacker discards the attacking Fighters to their graveyard.

Attacker Wins
If the attacker wins, they gain control of the area. The defender discards the defending Fighters to their graveyard. The attacker **must** move all attacking Fighters into the newly controlled area and exchanges the Control Token with their own to show control.

After battle both players resolve their Combat Cards gaining the reward based on whether they won or lost the battle (See Combat Cards p16). Used Combat Cards are discarded **face up** in the middle of the owners player mat.
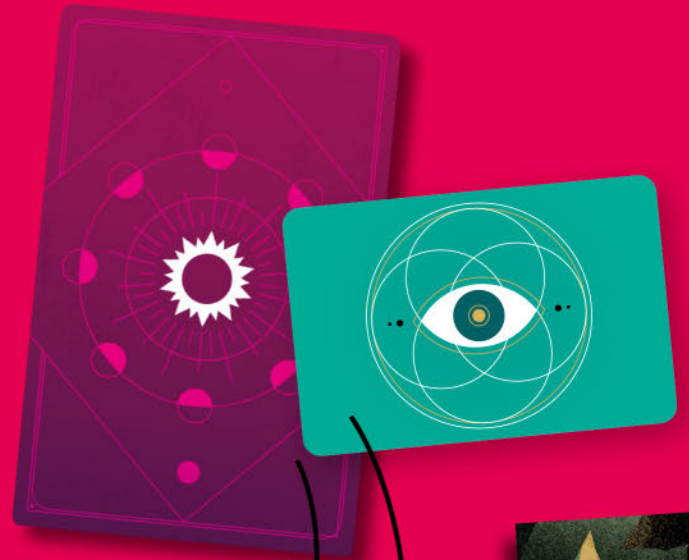
Offensive Attack Value
6 + 2 = 8

('6' from the Fighter + '2' from the rolled dice of the Combat Card = '8')

Player wins control of Structure and gains a Victory Point

Defence
Attack Value
$3 + 1 + 1 + 2 = \mathbf{7}$

('3' + '1' from the Fighters' base Attack Value,
+ '1' as the Fighters are a matching 'Kind' and
+ 2 from the Combat Card = '7')

Player loses control of the region but gains 1 Gold

The **Mountains**

The C

Combat Cards

Using Combat Cards

Combat Cards represent the player's own influence as a powerful Necromancer on a battle. Each player has an identical set of 5 Combat Cards with values of 0,1,3,4 and a dice that bolster the Attack Value in battle.

1. Attack Value
2. Winning Reward
3. Losing Compensation
4. Flavour Graphic
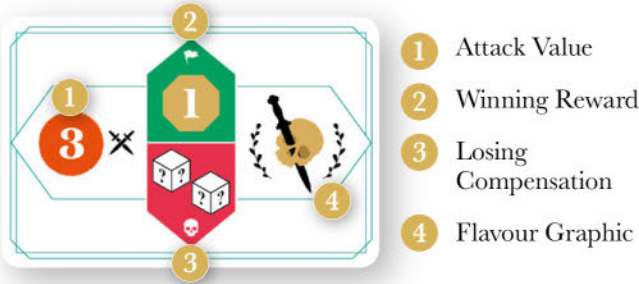
Once battle has been initiated both attacker and defender must select a single Combat Card from their hand to use.

If using the Combat Card featuring the dice: (After the card is revealed) The player rolls a single dice and the added Attack Value is equal to the amount of pips shown. From 1 - 6.

Rewards

Depending on the outcome of the battle each player receives the reward or compensation shown on **their own** Combat Card.

They gain the reward shown in the top green section for winning and the bottom red section for losing.

All Combat Cards reward players with either Gold, Resources or Victory Points.

The only exception is the bottom black section on the 0 card that offers no compensation upon losing but instead, the winner is forced to discard a single Fighter **of their choice** from those involved in battle to their graveyard, even if this means a region is left undefended.

Discarding Combat Cards

After battle, the used Combat Card is discarded face-up on the centre of the player's mat.

Only the most recent Combat Card is visible and players are **not allowed** to look through opponent's discarded Combat Cards.

Once all Combat Cards have been used the player immediately takes all 5 back into their hand.

Players can refresh their Combat Cards early by placing a minion onto the Combat Card refresh space on their player mat.

End of round

Once all players have assigned their minions, the round is over.

At the end of the round players:

❶ Score for each of the areas they control.

   Adding the points earned from the Structures with an additional VP for each covered tile in the stack. If the Citadel is occupied that player gains the VP displayed on the turn tracker

❷ Retrieve all their minions back to their player mat

❸ Return any Fighter cards from their graveyard to their hand

❹ Clear and redraw the 4 buildable Structure Tiles

❺ Progress the turn tracker to the next round

❻ Allocate the turn order for the next round

Turn Order

Going sooner in Crown of Ash allows players preferential access to worker spaces and raisable Fighters.

Going later gives advantages to conquering and building.

For the first round, turn order is decided by shuffling the player turn tokens and randomly placing them onto the turn tracker.

Subsequent rounds are decided by the player with the lowest VP at the end of the round.

If the lowest scores are tied, the player with the lowest potential VP from currently controlled Structures determines order.

If scores are still tied a high dice roll between the tied players determines the player who decides.
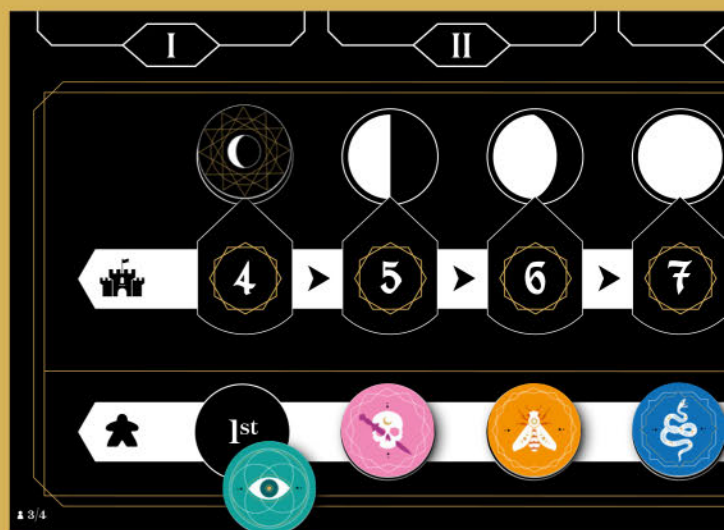
Accessibility

Some players may find changing turn order difficult to track. In this case it might be beneficial to keep the turn order in a clockwise direction and the player with the lowest VP chooses the starting player.

End Game Scoring

When to score

At the end of the 4th round the game is over and final scoring begins. Players score for the areas they control as with each of the previous rounds but also score VP for resources in their storage area and for their Fate Card.

Resource Points

Players gain 1 additional VP for every 3 matching resources and for every 2 gold they have in their storage area at the end of the game.
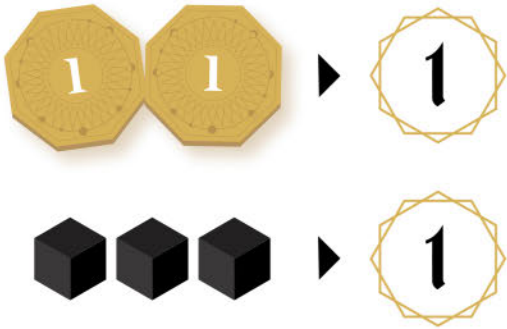
Fate Card

At the start of the game each player is dealt a secret Fate Card that offers additional VP at the end of the game.

Each player's Fate Card displays 2 kinds of Fighter that award additional VP at the end of the game when those kinds of Fighters are raised.

Players gather all their Fighters raised throughout the game from the board, graveyard and their hand and separate them by kind.

The Fighter kinds not displayed on the player's Fate Card can be set aside. The Roman numerals displayed at the bottom of each card that indicate which tier of deck they are drawn from are totalled and added to that player's VP score.

The player with the highest VP wins the game and claims the Crown of Ash.

In the result of a tie, players also score for the 2 kinds of Fighters not included on their fate card.

Example
Fate Card Scoring
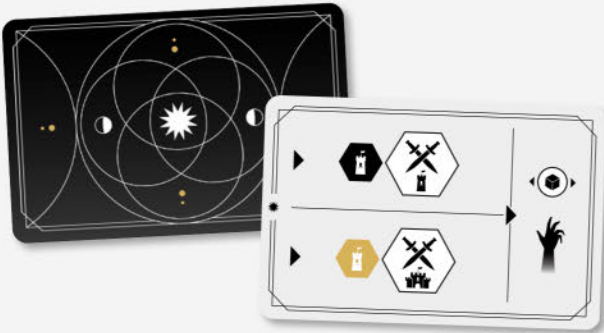I + I + III + I + I = **7VP**

Solo Mode and AI Players STILL IN TESTING

AI Deck

Crown of Ash includes an AI deck that can be added to 2 and 3 player games or used to play solo.

The deck consists of 5 action cards that when revealed dictate what action the AI will take and 1 Fighter track card.

Setup

- Setup the game as you would for the desired amount of players (including AI) but without the King. Do not give gold or a Fate card to the AI

- Shuffle the AI action cards and place them face-down beside the AI player mat

- Shuffle the AI's combat cards and place them face-down beside the AI player mat

- Place the Fighter track card onto the storage area of the AI player's mat

- Place a resource cube onto the top square of the track of the Fighter track card

- Place one of the AI players Control Tokens into the Citadel and select a random Fighter from one of the tiered Fighter decks in to defend it, according to the desired difficulty level. (Right side of this page)

Non-Solo AI

The AI can be added to 2 or 3 player games. In this scenario the AI is unlikely to win, but instead acts as a buffer between players.

This is recommended for new players playing against experienced players or for players that want less direct conflict.

Easy
1x tier I Fighter

Medium
1x tier II Fighter

Hard
1x tier III Fighter

Solo Mode and AI Players STILL IN TESTING

How does the AI work

The AI closely mimics a human player; placing minions, raising Fighters, attacking, building and scoring victory points. But the AI's actions are determined by a deck of action cards that instruct the AI what to do.

How is the AI different

The AI player:

- starts occupying the Citadel

- does not gain or use resources, instead any time the AI would gain resources it gains a VP per item instead.

- plays its Fighters open for all players to see and always attacks and amends using the strongest possible combination available.

- always takes its turn last.

- does not use a Fate Card

AI Turn

On the AI's turn roll a dice to determine what region the AI interacts with, then flip an Action card to determine what action is taken.
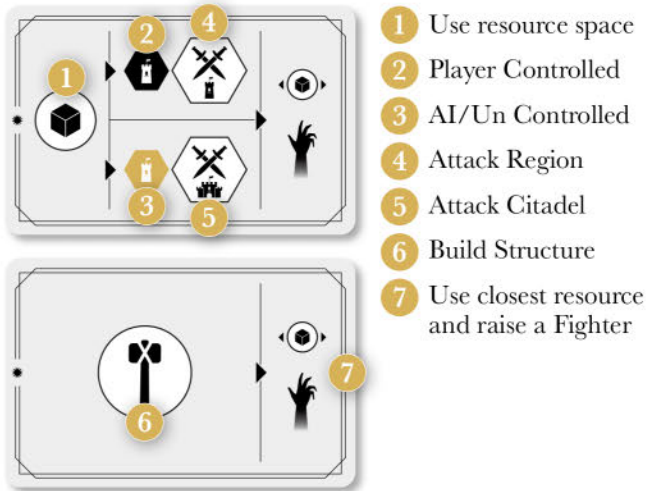
Determining Region

Each of the 6 outer regions correlates to a face of the dice from 1 to 6 clockwise around the board. Whichever region the dice shows will become the region the AI interacts with.
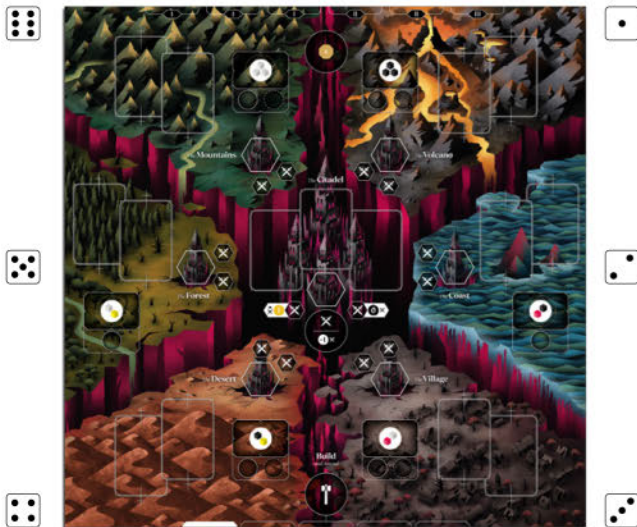

Action Cards

The AI action cards determine what action the AI takes on its turn. Each turn after the region is determined, the top card of the action deck is revealed and the AI attempts to perform a single action from left to right until it is successful.

1 Use resource space
2 Player Controlled
3 AI/Un Controlled
4 Attack Region
5 Attack Citadel
6 Build Structure
7 Use closest resource and raise a Fighter

Once all action cards have been used, reshuffle the cards and place face-down ready to be drawn from again. This will happen 4 times in total per game.

Fighter Track

The Fighter track card is placed into the resource storage area of the AI's player mat. It is used to indicate which tier Fighter the AI should raise when prompted. (See Raise Fighter action p21)
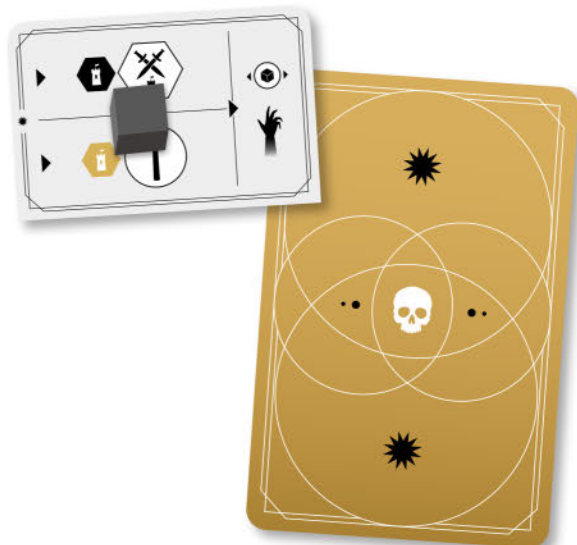
AI Actions STILL IN TESTING

The AI takes a single action on the revealed card from left to right. If not possible, it attempts the next in the sequence.

The actions are:

⬢ Use resource space

The AI places a minion onto a vacant resource space in the determined region. It gains 1 VP for each resource it would have gained.

If the structure is controlled by another player they gain the Owner's Tax.

If controlled by the AI, amend the defending fighters with the strongest possible combination available.

⬢ Player Controlled

If the region is controlled by another player the AI performs the action in this section of the action card

⬢ AI/Un Controlled

If the region is controlled by the AI or is unoccupied the action in this section is performed instead

⬡ Attack Region

The AI places a minion onto a vacant combat space. They then use the strongest possible Fighters (up to 2) and the top combat card to attack.

⬡ Attack Citadel

The AI places a minion onto a vacant combat space. They then use the strongest possible set of Fighters (up to 3) and the top combat card to attack.

⬡ Build Structure

If the region is owned by the AI or is unoccupied, the AI places a minion onto the build space and builds the right-most available Structure tile for free.

It then amends the defending Fighters with the strongest possible combination from their hand and gains VP for each resource it would have gained.

◆⬡ Use Closest Resource

If none of the previous actions could be taken the AI places their minion on a vacant resource either in the determined region or closest available clockwise resource space. If none are vacant, place the minion onto the gold resource space.

The AI then gains 1 VP for each resource it would have gained and then raises a fighter.

✋ Raise Fighter

After placing a minion on the closest resource space, the AI raises a Fighter for free. The Fighter raised will depend on which tier the Fighter track indicates.

Each time a Fighter is raised the tracker cube is moved down until it returns to the top of the track.

The Fighter raised is the right-most available fighter that matches the tier on the Fighter track.
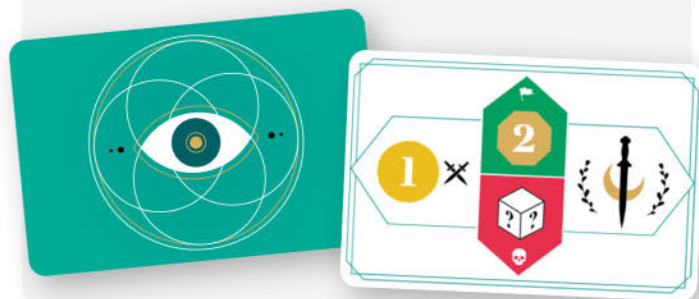
Resurrection Structure

If the AI builds or uses the resurrection Structure tile, it resurrects the most powerful Fighter in its graveyard. If tied for most powerful pick between them at random.

AI Combat Cards

During combat the top card from the shuffled AI combat cards is placed face-down on the table and is only revealed once the player has chosen theirs.

Combat cards are discarded as usual. Once all combat cards have been used the deck is reshuffled and placed face-down next to the AI player mat.

Instead of resources the AI receives 1 VP for each item it would have gained from its combat card.

Glossary of Iconography

Worker Spaces

◯	Resource
⚷	Building
⊗	Initiate Combat
⚙	Refresh Combat Cards

Fighter Kinds

🜍	Sulphur
🜂	Blood
🜔	Ash
🜨	Bone

Structure Tiles

3	Gold Cost
1	Victory Points (VP)
🎲	Wild Resource
⚰	Owner's Tax
💀▸🖐	Resurrect Fighter

Combat Cards

1✖	Combat Score
🏷	Winning Reward
🏷	Losing Compensation
3	Gold Reward
1	Victory Points (VP)
🎲	Wild Resource
☠	Inflict Casualty