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DARK
FANTASY
CARD
GAME



DARK venture®

CORE RULE BOOK



SECOND EDITION
GSL3530

TABLE SETUP FOR A TWO-PLAYER GAME



- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Hero Dashboards | 10. The Day Track |
| 2. Follower Dashboards | 11. Quest Point Track |
| 3. Rule Books | 12. Card Decks |
| 4. Quick Reference Card | 13. Players' Hands |
| 5. The Map (Location Cards) | 14. Health Tokens |
| 6. Side Quests | 15. Token Supply |
| 7. Heroic Quests | 16. Standee Supply |
| 8. Played Characters | 17. Game Dice |
| 9. Character Discard Pile | 18. Dropped Items |

DARK VENTURE

CORE RULEBOOK

Introduction	2
1. Hero Selection	3
2. Play Area Setup	6
3. Turn Phases	9
4. Paid Actions	10
5. Free Once, Then Paid Actions	11
6. Free Actions	12
7. Other Characters and Enemies	13
8. Aggressive Characters	14
9. Followers	14
10. The Day Track	15
11. Combat	17
12. Items and Fleeing in Combat	18
13. Winning Combat & Defeat	18
14. Consciousness Roll	19
15. Solo Games	20
16. Cooperative Game	21
17. The Ancients	23
18. Tokens	24
19. Character Faction Icons	25
20. Item FAQ	26
21. Combat FAQ	29
22. Character FAQ	31
23. Other Questions	34
24. Contents	36

INTRODUCTION: VENTURE INTO DARKNESS

When looking back, a catastrophic event like the one that changed our world must have been inevitable, but on that day, it was not expected. The first wave of the Cataclysm hit quickly, transforming most living creatures in some way. Many were killed instantly. A short time later, another wave struck, altering all life once again. Our reality has been distorted in ways we could never have imagined.

Learned warlocks who studied the Cataclysm discovered that our land had been encircled by restrained primordial forces referred to as "arcane magiks." In the distant past, these magiks were readily accessible, but a curse later held them at bay, keeping them dammed and building for millennia. Somehow, the curse was broken, and it is this, they write, that unleashed the great change upon our land.

We heroes have become the new rulers of the Earth. We manage the repercussions of civilization having spun backwards, guiding its remaining inhabitants through various inconceivable, diverse refractions of space and time. We venture into darkness and uncertainty, moving among the ruins of progress. The world has unquestionably become a peculiar and merciless place. Explore it with us as we struggle to survive!



DARK VENTURE: GAME SETUP

The object of DARK VENTURE is to send one's HERO on a journey to complete perilous QUESTS. These quests are fulfilled by traveling a map that is built while interacting with other characters. **The winner is the player whose hero gathers the most quest points by completing quests over 12 game rounds in a LONG GAME, or 6 game rounds in a SHORT GAME.**

NOTE: Additional SOLO & COOPERATIVE game rules can be found later in this guide, pp. 20-22.

1. HERO SELECTION: Players draw all HEROES from the CHARACTER DECK. Each player chooses 1 hero to carry out their quests then places their hero card onto a HERO DASHBOARD. Unused heroes are shuffled back into the character deck.

CHARACTER NUMBER: The number in the upper left hexagon of the card is the character's number. After choosing a hero, players find their heroes' 2 numbered character tokens, 1 character standee, and 1 plastic standee base, and hold on to them.

FACTION: The icon in the circle below the character's number is that character's faction (see p. 25). Some factions restrict specific items from use or grant characters special bonuses.

SCROLL: On the scroll, below the portrait, each card lists the character's name, the distinction "HERO" for heroes, and "FOLLOWER" for followers (see Followers, p. 14).

CHARACTER ITEMS: There are 3 categories of item cards in the game: WEAPON (⚔), ARMOR (🛡), & OBJECT (📦). Weapons can add to a character's ATTACK BONUS (⬆) and ATTRIBUTES, while armor and shields can add to a character's

ARMOR BONUS (🛡️) and **ATTRIBUTES**. Equipped items provide characters with any special abilities listed below the scroll on their card. Objects have various uses, as noted on their cards.

At the beginning of play, each player draws the **WORN** and **HELD** items listed on their **HERO CARD** (below the scroll) from the **ITEM DECK**, automatically equips them to their hero, then shuffles the **ITEM DECK**. For quick retrieval, **HERO ITEM** cards are marked with a **STAR** (★) on the upper left corner of their card. Weapons and armor may either be equipped to a character by placing them on a **BLUE SPACE** at the bottom edge of the hero dashboard or held in a character's inventory by piling them on the **PURPLE SPACE** at the bottom edge of the hero dashboard.

EQUIP & HOLD CAPACITY: Each character may have 1 **HEAD** (👤), 1 **BODY** (👤), and 1 **JEWEL** (💎) item equipped. All weapon-holding characters have 2 **HAND** slots (👤) that can either each hold a 1-handed item or together hold a 2-handed item. If an item requires an attribute score to wield in one hand, the necessary score can include the stat bonuses of that item.


All characters may hold a maximum of 8 **ITEMS**, equipped or in their inventory. To reduce inventory, a hero or follower may drop an item by placing a **NUMBERED ITEM TOKEN** (see p. 25) onto the character's current location and a corresponding token onto the item card.


NOTE: **BEAST FACTION** characters and **ORPAL WANDERERS** are not "weapon-holding." They can keep items in their inventories but cannot equip or use them (others may use consumable items on them). All other characters, unless noted on their cards, are considered "weapon-holding."


SPECIAL ABILITIES: The special abilities of a character are listed below the scroll on their card with their **HELD** and **WORN ITEMS** (if any). Read them carefully so you will know how and


when to use them. Usually, abilities can be used only once per battle or turn and must be announced to be used; however, some heroes have special abilities that are always active.

BASE ATTRIBUTES: The left side of each character's card displays their 4 BASE ATTRIBUTES (POWER, SPEED, MIND and LUCK) and BASE HEALTH.

 **POWER** is a representation of the brute strength and physical might of a character. The POWER attribute is used during combat to modify the damage a character inflicts.

 **SPEED** is a representation of the ability to react quickly to a situation or a physical challenge. The SPEED attribute is used in battle to calculate turn order (FIRST STRIKE).

 **MIND** is a representation of the intellectual ability and mental acuity of a character. When searching locations for items, the MIND attribute is used as a modifier.

 **LUCK** is a representation of the effects of unexplainable, universal odds that govern the actions of a character. Characters may be required to make a LUCK ROLL during events and when gaining a follower's loyalty.

ATTRIBUTES ON THE HERO RECORD DASHBOARD: Add any ITEM ATTRIBUTE bonuses to the hero's BASE ATTRIBUTE scores then track these totals by placing cubes of each corresponding color onto the attribute tracks on the dashboard. Place a BLACK CUBE onto the HEALTH (♥) track on the dashboard to represent a hero's BASE HEALTH (it stays there for the duration of the game unless modified by an item or action) and a RED CUBE nearby to track a hero's CURRENT HEALTH (it starts equal to their BASE HEALTH and moves on the track as health is lost or gained).

NOTE: The max value of an attribute is 10; max BASE HEALTH is 50; CURRENT HEALTH can never exceed BASE HEALTH. The "♥" icon can be used to denote BASE HEALTH.

If equipped items provide an ATTACK or ARMOR BONUS,

add the corresponding numbered attack and armor bonus tokens to the dashboard in the appropriate spots.

Place 3 orange ACTION POINT (AP) cubes in a 1-2 PLAYER game and 2 AP cubes in a 3-4 player game in their positions on the dashboard. As they are spent on a player's turn, remove them from the dashboard. They are returned to their positions at the beginning of each round.

2. PLAY AREA SETUP: Choose to play with either LOCATION GUIDE A and ACTIONS A (Books 2 & 3) or the "B" versions of these books (Books 4 & 5) for the entire game (unless a book specifies otherwise). Place the chosen books in the play area, accessible to all players.

Place the 4 SIX-SIDED DICE, CHARACTER TOKENS, STANDEES, HEALTH TOKENS, SEARCH TOKENS, NUMBERED ITEM TOKEN PAIRS, and ATTACK AND ARMOR BONUS TOKENS near the play area (see TOKENS on p. 24 for more information).



TRACKS



HERO DASHBOARD



PLAY AREA



CHOOSING FIRST PLAYER: Players roll 4d6; the highest roller is the FIRST PLAYER, the next highest roller is second and so on (rerolling in the event of a tie).

MAP STARTING LOCATION: Place location 1, THE CROSSROADS, (it has a unique card back) in the center of a large, open play area as the starting location. The map will expand out from it. The players then place 1 of their hero's tokens (or their hero's standee) onto this location.

QUESTS: Heroes must earn as many QUEST POINTS as they can in a game by completing HEROIC and SIDE QUESTS. The hero with the most QUEST POINTS at the end of 12 game rounds in a LONG GAME, or 6 game rounds in a SHORT GAME, is the game winner.

At the beginning of the game, the FIRST PLAYER shuffles the HEROIC QUEST and SIDE QUEST decks, places the decks facedown, draws 3 HEROIC QUESTS, chooses and reveals 1, then shuffles the rest back. Next, the first player draws 3 SIDE QUESTS and accepts them all; they may be revealed or kept secret. The next highest roller does the same until all players have 1 HEROIC QUEST and 3 SIDE QUESTS.

COMPLETING A QUEST: If, on any player's turn, the conditions on a HEROIC or SIDE QUEST card are met by the HERO (or their FOLLOWER) of the player holding the quest, that quest is complete. The player holding the quest card immediately discards it to earn the QUEST POINTS noted on the card (see Tracks, p. 8).

NOTE: Requirements completed before receiving a quest are not counted toward the completion of that quest.

TRADE 3 SIDE QUESTS FOR A HEROIC QUEST: Once per game (on their turn and at no cost) each player may DISCARD 3 SIDE QUESTS to draw 3 HEROIC QUESTS, choose and reveal 1, then shuffle the rest back.

SIDE QUEST RENEWAL: When beginning their turn, a player may choose to discard 1 SIDE QUEST to draw a new one, or they may draw 1 additional SIDE QUEST to a maximum of 3. If the SIDE QUEST deck runs out, shuffle the SIDE QUEST discard pile and reuse those cards.

NOTE: A hero may have MULTIPLE HEROIC QUESTS active at one time.

DECK POSITIONS: Separate CHARACTER, ITEM, and LOCATION cards into 3 decks, shuffle each, and place them facedown onto their designated spots on the DECK MAT beside the play area. Leave room for character and item DISCARD PILES (locations are never discarded). Place the HEROIC QUEST and SIDE QUEST decks nearby, facedown.

TRACKS: Place the QUEST POINT TRACK and DAY TRACK on the edge of the play area. Each player then sets 1 of their hero's tokens on the start area of the Quest Point Track. A player moves their hero's token along this track to keep a record of the Quest Points they earn. Next, place the SUN TOKEN onto the "1" on the Day Track, at SUNRISE.



STARTING HAND: Each player draws 1 CHARACTER CARD, 1 LOCATION CARD, and 2 ITEM CARDS into their starting hand. These cards are hidden from the other players. A player's hand can have a MAXIMUM OF 6 CARDS. At that limit, a player may still draw a card at the beginning of their turn. However, they must (immediately) either discard 1 ITEM into the item discard pile, place an ITEM into the inventory of one of their characters, play a LOCATION, or play a CHARACTER.

NOTE: If the CHARACTER or ITEM deck is ever depleted, shuffle their discard pile to create a new deck.

3. TURN PHASES: A GAME ROUND begins when the FIRST PLAYER starts their turn and ends when all players have completed their turns. There are 3 PHASES to each player's turn:

PHASE 1 - CARD DRAW: A player draws 1 card from either the ITEM, CHARACTER, or LOCATION deck at the beginning of their turn. A player may choose to discard 1 SIDE QUEST to draw a new one at this time, or they may draw 1 additional SIDE QUEST to a MAXIMUM OF 3.

PHASE 2 - ACTIONS: In a 1-2 PLAYER game, players have 3 ACTION POINTS (AP) each. In a 3-4 PLAYER game, players have 2 ACTION POINTS (AP) each. Players spend AP on their turns to complete ACTIONS (p. 10). Players can end PHASE 2 without spending all their action points, but upon spending all ACTION POINTS, PHASE 3 of that player's turn immediately begins.

PHASE 3 - CHECK QUEST POINTS: Check all HEROIC QUEST and SIDE QUEST cards, making sure that all points from completed QUESTS have been scored on the Quest Point Track, then discard all completed quest cards.

Once a player completes all 3 PHASES, their turn ends and the next player's turn begins.



BEGINNING A NEW ROUND: When all players have completed their turns, the SUN TOKEN moves 1 hour to the right on the DAY TRACK, and the next round begins. At this time, all players' heroes and their followers REPLENISH their AP and all characters that have sustained damage gain 2 HEALTH.

4. PAID ACTIONS: During their turns, players may spend their ACTION POINTS on the PAID ACTIONS below. 1 AP is spent for each action (multiple times, if desired). Action Points may also be spent on PAID ACTIONS noted in location guide rules, actions, and on character or item cards. A player may end their turn without spending any or after spending all of their AP.




**MOVE 1
LOCATION**

For 1 AP, a player may move their HERO or FOLLOWER 1 location.

A hero or follower entering a location with a NUMBERED GREEN HEXAGON for the first time will trigger an ACTION described in the ACTION guide. Refer your chosen guide (A or B) for more information on actions.



**SEARCH A
LOCATION**

Players may use either their heroes or their heroes' followers to search a location that is in play. While a player's character is in an unsearched location, they can spend 1 AP to score 8 or more on a roll of 1d6 +  (MIND) to draw 3 ITEM CARDS. Choose 1 to place into the searching character's inventory (if possible, or it is dropped) and discard the others. After a location has been searched, successfully or not, place a SEARCH TOKEN onto it; it cannot be searched again. NOTE: BEAST FACTION characters may not search locations.



**DRAW
A CARD**

For 1 AP, a player may draw 1 card from the ITEM, CHARACTER, or LOCATION deck into their hand. A player who is at their hand limit of 6 must discard an ITEM, place an ITEM in their character's inventory, play a CHARACTER, or play a LOCATION before drawing a card this way.



**INITIATE
COMBAT**

For 1 AP, a player may have their hero or follower engage another character in combat who is in their location. It does not cost an action point if an *AGGRESSIVE* character automatically engages a hero or follower in combat.

5. FREE ONCE, THEN PAID ACTIONS: Once per turn, players can take each of these actions once for free then can then spend 1 AP to take the same action again (spending multiple times, if desired).



Location cards can be positioned **ADJACENT** to a location your character is in. They can be placed horizontally or vertically, but must be placed so that at least 1 of their entrances meets the entrance of another location. A **LOCATION CARD** cannot be placed if it closes off the last open map entrance or overlaps another location card. When a location is played, review the number in the **BLUE CIRCLE** and follow the rules for that location as described in the **LOCATIONS GUIDE**. Refer to that guide for more information on locations.



A player may play a character from their hand into a location **ADJACENT** to their hero's location. First, the character's card is placed in the play area and 1 of their character tokens (or their standee) is placed onto the location where they are being played. A played character's **♥ (CURRENT HEALTH)** may be tracked using **HEALTH TOKENS** placed on the character's card. The attributes of the character may be referenced on their card as necessary. As an alternative, 2 **CHARACTER RECORD** cards may be used with **ATTRIBUTE CUBES** and **ATTACK/ARMOR BONUS** tokens.

Next, players holding items that are noted as **EQUIPPED** or **HELD** on the played character's card must show these items to all players, then return them to their hands after.

Finally, the character's **EQUIPPED** or **HELD** items that are not currently in any players' hands are drawn by searching the **ITEM DECK**, then the deck is reshuffled. The person playing the character equips that character in a way that is **MOST FAVORABLE TO THE CHARACTER**. Slide equipped items

under the left side of the character's card, leaving the **ATTRIBUTE ICONS** of the items showing (for reference), and place the character's other items into an inventory pile on the right side of the character's card. **ATTACK** and **ARMOR BONUS** tokens can be placed on the character's card to track those bonuses.

NOTE: Characters who enter a game out of a player's hand or through other means cannot move or take actions, unless noted otherwise in a core rule (see "FOLLOWERS", p. 14), on the character's card, a quest card, or in a location rule or an action.

6. FREE ACTIONS: Players do not pay **ACTION POINTS** to take these actions and may perform them repeatedly on their turn.



**TRADE/GIVE
AN ITEM**

The current player may have their hero or follower trade an item or give an item to any player-controlled hero or follower who is in the trader's/giver's location. In some cases, a player can trade or give to other characters who have been played or have appeared on the map previously. When interacting with other players, trading and giving must be consensual.



**EQUIP/USE,
PICK UP, OR
DROP AN ITEM**

Weapons, armor, and objects that are in a player's hand of cards are unequipped and cannot be used by characters. However, weapon, armor, and object cards that are in a player's hand can be played into their hero's or follower's inventories (by piling them on the **PURPLE SPACE** at the edge of the hero dashboard) at no AP cost. **EQUIP** a weapon or armor card from a character's inventory pile by moving it from the **PURPLE SPACE** to a **BLUE SPACE** at the edge of the hero dashboard at no AP cost (to **UNEQUIP** an item, move it from a **BLUE SPACE** to the **PURPLE SPACE**).

Once in a character's inventory, **USE** an **OBJECT** or **ACTIVATE** the special ability of an equipped **WEAPON** or **ARMOR** for

no AP, unless noted otherwise on the card of the item. **PICK UP** a dropped item into your character's inventory (or **DROP** an equipped item or an item from their inventory into their location) for no AP cost.

For the special rules on **USING**, **EQUIPPING**, and **PICKING UP DROPPED** items while engaged in combat, see "Using, Equipping, and Picking Up Items in Combat" on p. 18.

NOTE: Only **EQUIPPED** items change a character's attributes. If an item requires an attribute score to equip, the necessary score can include the attribute bonus of that item. Cards that are equipped or in a character's inventory cannot be moved back into a player's hand. See "**CHARACTER ITEMS**" on p. 3 for more information on character inventory and equipping items.

7. OTHER CHARACTERS and ENEMIES: At the beginning of a round, **HEROIC QUESTS**, **LOCATION RULES**, or **ACTIONS** might require players to place characters onto the map (See the section "**PLAY A CHARACTER**" on p. 10 for more information regarding the placement of new characters onto locations). Under these circumstances, characters are placed in player order and combat, as necessary, will be resolved when each character is placed.

Some placed characters will remain at the location where they are played; others will require players to move them. In the latter case, the player who **PLACES A CHARACTER** is in charge of moving them (unless stated otherwise in a rule or on a card).

Characters who enter a game out of a player's hand or through other means cannot move or take actions, unless noted otherwise in a core rule (see "**FOLLOWERS**", p. 14), on the character's card, a quest card, or in location rules or an action.

8. AGGRESSIVE CHARACTERS: Some characters are labeled as *AGGRESSIVE* on their character cards. If another character enters the map location of an aggressive character, or vice versa, combat begins immediately. Aggressive characters of the same type WILL NOT attack one another (see p. 31, Q14) . Also, characters that engage in combat with one another will remain *AGGRESSIVE* towards each other for the rest of the game.

9. FOLLOWERS: A follower roll is made by the current player when their hero enters the location of an unclaimed follower, if the unclaimed follower enters their hero's location, or, if their hero starts their turn in a location with an unclaimed follower, during the ACTIONS phase of that turn. Each follower has specific FOLLOWER ROLL requirements (found on each character's card). Once a follower is allied with and following a hero, players are no longer required to make follower rolls for that follower (unless attempting to INFLUENCE the follower; see below). The card of a claimed follower (and their items, if any) is placed near the dashboard of the hero they follow. Players can choose to use a FOLLOWER DASHBOARD to track their attributes and bonuses.

Heroes may have only 1 FOLLOWER at a time. If a player would like their hero to claim a different follower, they may attempt the requisite follower roll; switching the old follower for the new if successful. A hero may switch or recruit a previous follower without a roll for 1 AP, except when INFLUENCING a follower that is currently allied with another hero (see p. 15).

Beginning on the turn they become a follower, followers have 2 AP they can use to take actions and move independently, controlled by the followed hero's player. Also, they may MOVE and engage in COMBAT along with the hero they've joined at NO AP COST. A follower's AP is replenished along with the hero's AP at the beginning of each round.

INFLUENCING a FOLLOWER: A hero can attempt to

planet. At this point in a LONG GAME (not in a SHORT GAME), at the beginning of the 6th round, each hero experiences a TEMPORAL EVENT. Players alternate, drawing 2 HEROIC QUEST CARDS each. Each chooses 1 and the others are shuffled back into the deck.

SUNSET: After the 12th round in a LONG GAME, the sun sets. During this round, the heroes complete their actions as normal then head for home.

GAME END: After all players have finished their turns in the 12th round of a LONG GAME or the 6th round of a SHORT GAME, the hero with the most QUEST POINTS is the victor!

If no hero has gathered any QUEST POINTS by the end of their game, the game ends with NO WINNER. Broken and bewildered, the heroes leave this harsh land. On another day, they must return and attempt to complete their quests.

QUEST POINT TIE: In the event of a tie, create a VICTORY SCORE based on items held by a player's hero and follower: WEAPON = 3pts; ARMOR = 3pts; OBJECT = 2pts. The player with the highest VICTORY SCORE wins. In the event of a VICTORY SCORE tie, the tied player with the highest number of completed HEROIC QUESTS wins. If players remain tied, the tied player with the highest number of completed SIDE QUESTS wins. If players are still tied, their heroes regale one another with wondrous tales of their escapades while rejoicing in a shared victory over this harsh land!



11. COMBAT: Combat occurs if a player chooses to have their hero or follower attack another character, if in a location with an *AGGRESSIVE* character, or if directed by a location event.

One player calculates rolls for their hero and/or follower; another player calculates rolls for the opposing combatant(s), doing so in the way MOST FAVORABLE TO THE CHARACTER!

Combat involving 2 or more characters is resolved in 2 PARTS as follows, unless otherwise specified:

PART 1: FIRST STRIKE (Determining Battle Turn Order)

At the beginning of combat, all involved characters roll to determine battle turn order as follows:

🌀 (SPEED) + 2d6 + FIRST STRIKE BONUSES

The highest scoring character has the first battle turn, the next highest scoring has the next battle turn, and so on. Reroll on a tie.

PART 2: ATTACK DAMAGE (The Damage Dealt)

Next, the attacking character chooses an enemy to target and damage is calculated:

👊 (POWER) + 2d6 + ⚔ (ATTACK BONUS)


SUBTRACT the 🛡 (ARMOR BONUS) of the defending character, then reduce the ❤ (CURRENT HEALTH) of the defending character by this score.

NOTE: When attacking first, a played character (see p.11) or a character brought onto the map through a HEROIC QUEST, a location rule, or an action that engages in combat will target the enemy combatant with the HIGHEST ATTRIBUTE TOTAL (👊+🌀+💡+🍄) (on a tie the highest roller of 4d6). When not attacking first, this character will target the last character to attack them or, if not yet attacked, the enemy combatant with the HIGHEST ATTRIBUTE TOTAL (as above).

After damage is dealt, the next character in the turn order may begin their battle turn.


12. ITEMS & FLEEING in COMBAT: Before doing damage on a battle turn, a character may USE and EQUIP items, or, as their battle turn, a character may attempt to FLEE.

USING, EQUIPPING, and PICKING UP ITEMS in COMBAT: To USE, EQUIP, or PICK UP an item in combat, before damage is calculated, roll 2d6. If the roll is **2**, use, equip, or pick up the item, but reduce attack damage by 2d6 (to a minimum of 0). If the roll is **3 - 6**, use, equip, or pick up the item, but reduce attack damage by 1d6 (to a minimum of 0). If the roll is **7 - 12**, use, equip, or pick up the item and attack as normal.

FLEEING FROM COMBAT: As their battle turn, a character may attempt to FLEE from the conflict. All involved combatants will roll 2d6 +  (SPEED), but a player controlling their fleeing HERO or FOLLOWER may choose to spend 1 AP to ADD 1 DIE to their roll to a maximum of 4 total dice. On a tie, reroll with the same number of dice.

If the fleeing character has a higher score than each of their enemies (the characters they are attacking and defending against), this character is successful: They leave the conflict (COMBAT ENDS for them) and may move up to 2 adjacent locations. The current player's turn continues. If the roll fails, a player can SPEND 1 AP to roll again with the same number of dice, attempting to flee another time, or the battle turn ends.

NOTE: If it is not currently a player's turn, and they are attempting to flee from combat, the player can spend AP from a previous or upcoming turn to add dice and reroll the flee attempt.

13. WINNING COMBAT & DEFEAT: Characters who are engaged in combat may alternate turns until the  (CURRENT HEALTH) of one combatant is reduced to zero, meaning that

character has been defeated (COMBAT ENDS for them). Defeated player-controlled heroes cannot die; they fall UNCONSCIOUS (see CONSCIOUSNESS ROLL). Other characters DIE when defeated, unless noted otherwise on their character card.

If a DEAD CHARACTER has items, place 1 of the fallen character's tokens, flipped, at the location where they died. When in a location with a dead or unconscious character, a player's character can LOOT 1 ITEM PER ROUND from the fallen character. A dead or unconscious character may be dragged, moving along with a player's hero at NO AP COST.

The dead character's token remains on the map until all of their items have been taken from them. Then, the fallen character's token is removed from the map and their character card is laid to rest in the character discard pile.

14. CONSCIOUSNESS ROLL: For 1 AP, on their turn, a player controlling an unconscious hero can roll $3d6 + \text{MIND}$ (MIND) to attempt a consciousness roll for the hero.

If the roll total is **15 or greater**, it is successful: the character restores 10♥ (HEALTH), can immediately move 1 location (ignoring any *AGGRESSIVE* enemies in their current location), and their player continues their turn.

If the roll total is **14 or lower**, it fails, and the character remains unconscious. Their controlling player can attempt another consciousness roll for 1 AP, with a +3 bonus to their roll (cumulative with each roll). If the player controls other characters, they can be played before ending the turn.

GOLDEN RULE: Should one encounter RULE CONFLICTS or INCONSISTENCIES between the cards and the CORE RULES, LOCATION GUIDES, or ACTIONS BOOKS, what is written in the BOOKS always overrides what is written on the CARDS.

15. SOLO GAMES

The following cards should be removed when playing ALL SOLO GAME MODES:

HEROIC QUESTS 1 (NOBLE PACT), 7 (FIND THE CURE), 16 (CATASTROPHIC INCIDENT). Also, the DIMENSIONAL JEWEL item, THE HAMMER OF THE BURNLANDS item, and the PRIME EVIL Ancient Hex card.

NOTE: When playing as HAGLOR the GHOSTLY in a SOLO game, he wears the CRYSTAL HELM instead of holding the DIMENSIONAL JEWEL.

All rules outlined in the CORE RULES, with the exception of the revised rules below, apply in all SOLO MODES. The revised rules for all SOLO MODES are as follows:

1. At the beginning of a game, a player draws 4 HEROIC QUESTS, chooses 2 and shuffles the rest back. Then, the player draws 3 SIDE QUESTS and accepts them all.
2. Instead of drawing 1 LOCATION, CHARACTER, or ITEM card at the beginning of each turn, draw 2 cards instead, each from a different deck.
3. A player's hand can have a MAXIMUM OF 7 CARDS (instead of the standard 6 cards).

MODE 1: SOLO QUESTING GAME

The WIN CONDITION in the QUESTING GAME is based on gathering a set number of QUEST POINTS before a set TIME OF DAY. At the beginning of the 6th round in a LONG GAME (not a SHORT GAME), a solo player draws 2 HEROIC QUEST CARDS, chooses 1 and shuffles the other back.

In a SHORT GAME, a player must gather **15 QUEST POINTS** by MERIDIAN, after completing 6 ROUNDS, to win the game. In a LONG GAME, a player must gather **30 QUEST POINTS** by SUNSET, after completing 12 ROUNDS, to win the game.

MODE 2: SOLO RANKED GAME

A player must gather as many QUEST POINTS as possible, completing HEROIC QUESTS and SIDE QUESTS, by SUNSET, in 12 GAME ROUNDS. At SUNSET, the player is ranked based on the number of QUEST POINTS they have earned on this day using the chart below.

QP	TITLE	QP	TITLE
0 - 1	HOPELESS CASE	17 - 19	CLOAKED OUTLAW
2	LOST SOUL	20 - 22	HIGHWAYMAN
3	SURVIVOR	23 - 25	RANGER
4	WASTELANDER	26 - 28	REVERED ADVENTURER
5	WILD WANDERER	29 - 31	CAVALIER EXPLORER
6	BANDIT	32 - 34	LEGIONNAIRE
7	TRADESMAN	35 - 37	LONE KNIGHT
8	APPRENTICE SQUIRE	38 - 40	LORD PROTECTOR
9	SQUIRE	41 - 42	FABLED WARRIOR
10	STUDIED TRAVELER	43	MYTHIC CHAMPION
11 - 13	GUIDED PATHFINDER	44	BANISHER OF THE UNLUCKY
14 - 16	HEROIC HUNTSMAN	45	LEGENDARY HERO

16. COOPERATIVE GAME

When playing cooperatively, players must gather 20 QUEST POINTS EACH in a LONG GAME (12 ROUNDS), or 10 QP EACH in a SHORT GAME (6 ROUNDS), before the end of the round, to WIN THE GAME. All rules outlined in the CORE RULES, with the exception of the revised rules below, apply in a cooperative game. Setup for a cooperative game is similar to the setup for a competitive game, except that each cooperative player draws only 1 SIDE QUEST and accepts it. Players' hands and side quests are REVEALED, available for all to see.

In order to win, the heroes must help one another to complete

their quests in any way possible! Therefore, trading items between characters and cooperatively defeating enemies is strongly encouraged.

TURN PHASES and ROUNDS: Rounds in a cooperative game play similarly to a competitive game. Each player has 3 PHASES and is granted 3 ACTION POINTS each in a 2 PLAYER game, 2 ACTION POINTS in a 3-4 PLAYER game, for their turn. Players may use their actions outside of their turn if they wish. When all players have ended their turns, the round ends and the SUN token is moved.

SHARED MOVEMENT: Players may agree to move all their heroes (and their followers) that share the same location TOGETHER as a party, spending 1 AP to move the whole group 1 LOCATION. Alternatively, a player may choose to move their own hero (or their follower) as an individual, separately.

SHARED COMBAT: All involved characters roll FIRST STRIKE to determine attack order. The highest scoring character has the first battle turn, the next highest scoring has the next battle turn, and so on. Reroll on a tie.

Players state their characters' targets each battle round. An enemy will target the player-controlled character with the HIGHEST ATTRIBUTE TOTAL if they attack first (lowest roller of 4d6 on a tie). If not attacking first, an enemy will target the last player-controlled character to attack them.

NO PVP COMBAT: In this mode, a player's heroes and followers may NEVER engage in combat against one another unless specifically directed to in a game instruction or action.



17. THE ANCIENTS: Stories tell of eons past when humankind communed with the deities of Darkgrange who, although now hidden, influence the very currents of existence. Through the Cataclysm, these beings of incomprehensible power have revealed themselves to a chosen few. They direct the paths of their followers, whispering to them in their daydreams and tormenting them in their nightmares.



These OPTIONAL COMPONENTS, 6 large HEX CARDS, can be used in any game type. When used in a game, players choose their Ancient by rolling 4d6, rerolling in the event of a tie. The highest roller chooses their Ancient first, the next highest chooses second, and so on.

Players place the hex card of their selected Ancient face-down next to their HERO DASHBOARD. Players now control their Hero through the eyes of this deity...

When a player meets the conditions listed under WIN HIS FAVOR on their Ancient's card, the card is flipped. The player can then utilize the DIVINE POWER of that Ancient at any time (unless noted otherwise on their card, a location rule, or an action).

APPENDICES

18. TOKENS

CHARACTER TOKENS AND STANDEES: These are used to represent the positions of characters on the location cards that create the map. Tokens and standees are interchangeable. There are 2 tokens for each Hero: 1 for use on the Quest Point Track, to track a player-controlled hero's Quest Points, another to represent the hero's map location (if tokens are being used for this purpose). Other characters have 1 token per character card.



STANDEE BASES: Character standees are slid into the clear plastic clips, Standee Bases, so they stand unassisted. There are 20 Standee Bases included in the game as, ordinarily, there are no more than 20 characters in play at any given time.

HEALTH TOKENS: A character's CURRENT HEALTH (♥) may be tracked using HEALTH TOKENS, depicting a number corresponding to their character's ♥, placed onto the character's card.



SEARCH TOKENS: After a location has been searched, place a SEARCH TOKEN onto it; it cannot be searched again.

THE SUN TOKEN: At the beginning of a game, the SUN TOKEN is placed onto the "1" on the Day Track, at SUNRISE. At the beginning of each new round, the Sun token moves 1 hour to the right on the Day Track.



NUMBERED ITEM TOKEN PAIRS: A hero or follower may DROP AN ITEM from their inventory (see. p.12) by placing a numbered ITEM TOKEN onto their character's current location card and a corresponding token onto the ITEM CARD in the play area, near the location.



ATTACK AND ARMOR BONUS TOKENS:

If an equipped item provides an attack or armor bonus to a hero or follower, add the corresponding numbered ATTACK BONUS (green) and ARMOR BONUS (blue) tokens to the dashboard of that hero or follower, in the appropriate spots. Place them on a character's card to track temporary bonuses.

RHORGONKRUL TOKEN: Place the wood RHORGONKRUL token on a player's HERO DASHBOARD during their turn to track the CURRENT PLAYER. This token can also be used to represent the Rhorgonkrul on the map (instead of a token/standee) if it appears in your game.



19. CHARACTER FACTION ICONS



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

20. ITEM FAQ

Q1: Are a character's HELD and WORN items automatically EQUIPPED to them?

A1: Yes, all of a character's HELD and WORN items that are noted on their character card are automatically equipped to them, as available.

Q2: Do EQUIPPED items change the character's attributes (as printed on their cards)?

A2: Yes, the stats of equipped items are added to a character's base attributes. A player tracks their HERO'S changed attribute values using cubes on a HERO DASHBOARD. The equipped items of a PLAYED CHARACTER can be placed under their character card and spread out to the left so that the item attributes are visible, easily added together while playing. Alternatively, 2 Character Record cards and cubes can be used to track their attributes instead. Inventory items of played characters are placed to the right of their character card.



GARGAND

EQUIPPED WITH:

YEW BOW (2-HANDED)

CRYSTAL HELM (HEAD)

INVENTORY:

MARSH APPLE EXTRACT

POWER = 4 ATTACK BONUS +1

SPEED = 4 ARMOR BONUS +1

MIND = 6 HEALTH TOKENS

LUCK = 1 are being used to

HEALTH = 26 track his HEALTH

Q3: When a character wearing/holding more than 1 WEAPON or ARMOR is added during gameplay (i.e. out of a player's hand onto a location, see p. 11, or through a HEROIC QUEST, a location rule, or an action), what are they equipped with?

A3: If there are more items than can be equipped to a

character, the person playing that character must choose which items to equip to the character in a way that is **MOST FAVORABLE TO THE CHARACTER** (that will provide the character with the best survival options, optimized to the situation the character is in). Items (**OBJECTS, WEAPONS, ARMOR**) that are not equipped are placed into the character's inventory, in a pile to the right of the character's card.

Q4: If a **HELD** or **WORN** item isn't available for a played character (for example, if the item is in another player's hand, it has been discarded, or another character is holding it), what happens?

A4: If a character's **HELD** or **WORN** item isn't available, the character enters the game without the unavailable item(s). If they don't have a weapon equipped, consider them "bare-handed."

Q5: For **WEAPONS** or **ARMOR** that require a certain **STAT TOTAL** to equip them, do you need the required stat total before equipping the item or is the attribute bonus of an item included?

A5: If an item requires a certain attribute score to equip, the **ATTRIBUTE BONUS** of an item can be used to reach the stat total requirement of that item.

Q6: Does using an item (consuming or using an **ITEM SPECIAL ABILITY**) cost 1 AP?

A6: This depends on the item. If an item card doesn't say that you need to spend AP, there is no AP cost. Some items have a roll that may grant additional AP (see Marsh Apple Extract), while others grant an AP without a roll (see Medical Pack). Some items cost AP to use: the Vision Beacon costs 1 AP; Gorgon Berry Tonic costs 2 AP. If you have not spent AP on your turn and an item grants you more than 3 AP, you can take more orange cubes to help track the additional AP.

Q7: How many items can be EQUIPPED to a character? If I'm equipping my HERO, where do I put their EQUIPPED and INVENTORY items?

A7: Five items can be equipped to a single character at one time, in these slots: 2 hands, 1 body, 1 head, and 1 jewel. A HERO'S equipped items can be stacked or lined-up below the 2 blue spaces on the HERO DASHBOARD, inventory items are stacked or lined-up below the purple spaces.



One item can be equipped to the head, 1 to the body, 1 jewel, and 2 to the hands.

Q8: When a character gains BASE HEALTH does their current health also increase by that amount?

A8: No, a character's current health does not increase when their base health increases. For example, if you were to start the game with Kroshel, who is equipped with The Barking Stick, his base health increases by 10 (because of the Barking Stick special ability MIGHTY AURA) to 46, but his current health stays at 36. NOTE: characters heal for 2 at the beginning of each round, so Kroshel would start a game with 38 health.

Q9: What if a character is RESTRICTED FROM EQUIPPING a weapon that they are holding?

A9: If a character does not have the required attribute total to equip an item (the necessary score can include the attribute bonus of that item), it is held in their inventory and does not add bonuses to the character's attributes. They may save it for use in a quest, trade it, or drop it onto the ground.

21. COMBAT FAQ

Q10: How does the COMBAT ACTION work and what can I do for 1 ACTION POINT?

A10: 1 ACTION POINT is paid for a HERO (and/or their FOLLOWER) to complete 1 full COMBAT ACTION: Roll FIRST STRIKE, then complete COMBAT ROUNDS until there is a combat victor.

FIRST STRIKE



SPEED + DICE = 15 ◀ **PLANTMAN** (+1 SPEED & +1 SPECIAL (+1 FROM WEAPON) STRIKES FIRST ABILITY FROM WEAPON)

The COMBAT ACTION takes place in 2 parts, FIRST STRIKE and ATTACK DAMAGE. For FIRST STRIKE, (SPEED + 2d6 + any weapon FIRST STRIKE bonuses) is rolled for each character involved in combat to determine battle turn order, highest attacking first, then the next highest, and so on.

Then, the first attacking character takes their combat turn, choosing an enemy to target (see NOTE on p.17 on how a played character or a character brought onto the map through a heroic quest, a location rule, or an action chooses their target) and determining their ATTACK DAMAGE (POWER + 2d6 + ATTACK BONUS), minus the ARMOR BONUS of the defending character. The HEALTH of the defending character is reduced by the final value.

ATTACK DAMAGE



POWER(5) + ATTACK BONUS(2) + DICE(8) = 15 DAMAGE!

All involved characters take their turn to deal damage, use/equip items, or flee, then the next combat round begins. The character who attacked first attacks (or uses/equips and item, or flees) again, and so on. Characters follow turn order, based on the initial **FIRST STRIKE**, dealing damage, using/equipping items, or fleeing until there is a combat victor: only 1 character (or allied group) has **HEALTH** remaining or is left after others have fled the battle.

Q11: How does using, equipping, and picking up an **ITEM DURING COMBAT** work?

A11: It is possible for characters to **USE**, **EQUIP**, or **PICK UP** an item and **DEAL DAMAGE** on the same combat turn. However, the character using, equipping, or picking up the item must make a **2d6 DAMAGE REDUCTION** roll to see if the damage they inflict on that turn is reduced: If the roll total is **2-3**, their damage for that turn is reduced by 2d6; if **4-7** their damage is reduced by 1d6; if **8-12** there is no damage reduction at all. Next, roll for their **ATTACK DAMAGE**: **POWER + 2d6 + ATTACK BONUS**. From that total, subtract the **DAMAGE REDUCTION**, if any, to determine the final damage inflicted (never less than 0).

NOTE: An item that is **PICKED UP** in combat, cannot be **USED** or **EQUIPPED** on the same combat turn.

22. CHARACTER FAQ

Q12: Do I pay 1AP to engage an *AGGRESSIVE* character in COMBAT?

A12: No, when your hero or their follower enters into the same location as an *AGGRESSIVE* character, combat begins immediately without paying AP.

Q13: When moving my hero and/or follower into a location with MULTIPLE *AGGRESSIVE* enemies: who attacks first and who will the enemies attack?

A13: All *AGGRESSIVE* enemies would initiate combat against your hero and their follower simultaneously. Each character rolls FIRST STRIKE ($2d6 + \heartsuit$) to determine battle turn order, highest attacking first, then the next highest, and so on (rerolling any ties).

If an *AGGRESSIVE* enemy attacks before a player's hero or their follower based on their FIRST STRIKE score, they will target the opposing combatant with the HIGHEST ATTRIBUTE TOTAL ($\heartsuit + \heartsuit + \spadesuit + \clubsuit$); if tied, the highest roller of 4d6. When not attacking first, this character will target the last character to attack them or, if not yet attacked, the enemy combatant with the HIGHEST ATTRIBUTE TOTAL (as above).

Q14: *AGGRESSIVE* characters of the same type WILL NOT attack one another. What characters are considered "the same type"?

A14: *AGGRESSIVE* characters with the exact same card are not *AGGRESSIVE* toward one another. Also, *AGGRESSIVE* characters of the OVOID FACTION are not aggressive toward one another. The DIRT TWINS (DHAIN and RHAIN, characters 16 and 17) are not *AGGRESSIVE* toward one another. All BOHMERK types (characters 25, 26, and 27) are not *AGGRESSIVE* toward one another. DHARGON COLLECTORS (character 28) are not

AGGRESSIVE toward DHARGON EGGS (character 24).
BEAST FACTION characters are usually ***AGGRESSIVE*** toward one another (unless they have the exact same card).

NOTE: These rules hold true if (by some twist of fate) these characters are being played as player-controlled characters.

Q15: What are "PLAYER-CONTROLLED" characters?

A15: A player's HERO and their FOLLOWER should be the only characters that are considered "player-controlled" (PC). All other characters are considered "non player-controlled" (NPC).

Q16: If an ***AGGRESSIVE*** character is played into a space with another NPC, will combat be initiated?

A16: Yes. This can even be used strategically to complete quests, whittle down the health of an enemy that your hero must engage, etc. Note that in a multiplayer game, whoever played the character calculates their rolls in combat.

Q17: When a card, a location rule, or an action says "ON EACH TURN" (for example, "FOLLOWER: On each turn in his location...") when on my turn do I resolve this action?

A17: Make the roll immediately after the action that triggers it occurs. For example, when a character enters the VARPEN EFEK SOLDIER'S location, or if the soldier enters another character's location, make the SHIFTY LOOK roll immediately (roll for each character in his location). (cont.)



These are examples of characters that have "on each turn in their location" card actions.

On a player's turn, if they are starting their turn in a location where the action will trigger, it triggers during the ACTIONS phase of the turn. The roll should be made before spending any action points.

Q18: What actions can a FOLLOWER perform using their 2AP?

A18: Once a FOLLOWER is following a HERO, they can spend AP to perform the same actions as a hero (play a location or character, trade/give/equip/use/pick up/drop an item, move, search, draw a card, initiate combat, and pay for location actions).

Q19: How are "non player-controlled" HEROES used in a game?

A19: NPC heroes have many game uses: (a) The NPC hero may become "activated," performing activities in the game themselves, through HEROIC QUESTS, location rules, or actions; (b) quests may require your hero to interact with an NPC hero in a particular way; (c) NPC heroes can be played out of your hand for a strategic reason (to combat an *AGGRESSIVE* enemy in a location adjacent to your hero, or if they happen to be holding an item your hero requires).

Q20: When a quest or action says "have your hero TRAVEL" to a specific location, what does that mean? What about when a character travels "UNSEEN" or "UNNOTICED"?

A20: Quests and actions can direct characters to travel in several specific ways. If a character travels "ON FOOT" or the travel mode is not defined it implies that the character must travel through locations while walking, thus triggering combat with *AGGRESSIVE* enemies and triggering location rules or actions. This includes any "checks" that a character might need to make upon entering a location with another character, like a FOLLOWER roll or the VARPEN EFEK SOLDIER'S "Shifty Look".

If a character travels "UNSEEN" or "UNNOTICED" they

would trigger location rules or actions but not *AGGRESSIVE* enemies or character "checks". If they "TELEPORT", they do not trigger location rules or actions, *AGGRESSIVE* enemies, or character "checks" in the locations they travel through to get to their destination.

23. OTHER QUESTIONS

Q21: Can QUEST POINTS be earned by either a HERO or their FOLLOWER completing HEROIC or SIDE QUESTS?

A21: Yes (unless stated otherwise on a card, location rule, or action), a player's HERO or their FOLLOWER (not any other character) can complete the requirements of that hero's HEROIC QUESTS and SIDE QUESTS in order for the hero to gain the specified Quest Points noted on the quest card.

To earn Quest Points from quests that involve killing a specific character: either your hero or their follower must have engaged in combat with the enemy and have contributed (dealt damage) to the character's death. It is not required that they deal the killing blow.

Q22: Do the KOSS KNIFE and SURVIVAL KNIFE count as "swords" for quests that require a "sword"?

A22: The current weapons in the game fall into 6 categories: STAFF, BOW, SPEAR, HAMMER, KNIFE, and SWORD. The Koss Knife and Survival Knife aren't SWORDS, they are KNIVES.

Q23: In what order do players choose their HERO?

A23: There is no mandated order for HERO SELECTION. Players must decide amongst themselves who selects first.

If you'd like to base selection on luck, players can roll 4d6, rerolling in the event of a tie. The highest roller chooses their HERO first, the next highest chooses second and so on.

Q24: If playing CO-OP and the party as a whole moves into a new area, do you decide WHICH CHARACTER TRIGGERS

the location rule or action (encounter)?

A24: In a multiplayer game, the character (hero or follower) of the player whose turn it is **IS THE CHARACTER WHO ACTIVATES THE ENCOUNTER** (the hero/follower of the current player). If playing solo co-op, or if a hero enters with their follower (the hero is riding a horse, for example), you must decide which character activates the encounter before the party moves into the location.

Q25: When an action requires a dice roll, what if there is no outcome written for the result (roll total)?

A25: After a dice roll is made, if the outcome for the roll total is not defined (not written in an entry, a rule, or on a card), the action produces no results and the current game turn (or combat turn) continues.

Q26: What if I think that two rules are conflicting?

A26: While Dark Venture has a "procedural world generation system" that should dictate how its moving parts affect one another, they will interact in different ways every game making it entirely possible that an unanticipated scenario could arise that does not have a clear rule to resolve it. Fill in any blanks logically, make compromises, challenge your imagination and, most importantly, have fun exploring this weird world!



24. CONTENTS

The **DARK VENTURE CORE GAME** includes a Quick Setup Card, a Core Rule Book, 2 Location Guides, 2 Actions Books, 24 Location Cards, 36 Character Cards (11 Heroes, 5 Followers, and 20 Enemies), 23 Weapon Cards, 20 Armor Cards, 19 Object Cards, 27 Heroic Quest Cards, 36 Side-Quest Cards, a Day Track, a Quest Point Track, a Deck Mat, 4 Hero Dashboards, 4 Follower Dashboards, 8 Character Record Cards, 36 Character Standees, 20 Plastic Standee Bases, 160 Tokens (see below), 60 Wood Cubes, 4 Six-Sided Dice, 6 Prime Ancients Hex Cards, and 1 Prime Ancients Rule Card.

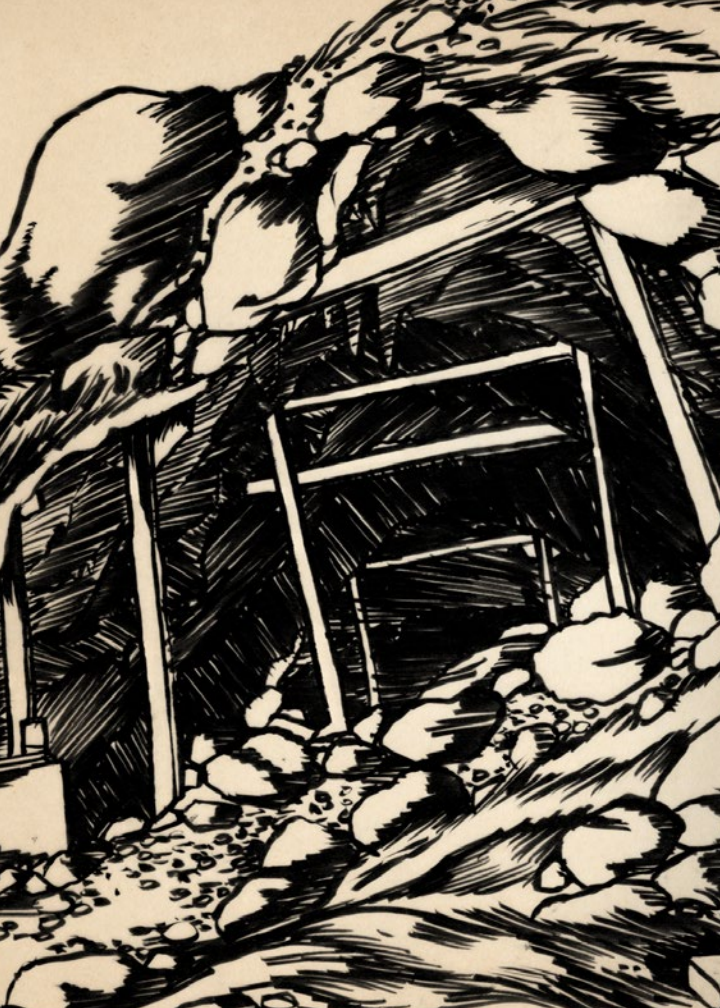
Character Tokens (x1): 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 16, 17, 19, 20, 33, 34, 35, 38; (x2): **1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 14, 18, 21, 22, 31, 36, 37 (HEROES IN RED)**; (x3): 12, 15.

Other Tokens: 20 1/5 Health Tokens, 20 10/20 Health Tokens, 16 Numbered Item Tokens, 16 Search Tokens, 10 +1/+2 Attack Bonus Tokens, 10 +3/+4 Attack Bonus Tokens, 10 +1/+2 Armor Bonus Tokens, 10 +3/+4 Armor Bonus Tokens, 1 Sun Token.



CREDITS

Created by Rob Lemon. **Edited by** Erica Velis, Jennifer DeValue, and Jaroslaw Kowalczyk. **Additional contributions by** Daniel Davis. Thanks to Lisa, John, Adam, Ed, Craig, Gregg, Byron, and the many people whose support and feedback made this game possible.



DARK VENTURE QUICK REFERENCE



PLAYER TURN PHASES:

1: CARD DRAW 2: ACTIONS 3: QUEST POINTS

PAID ACTIONS: PLAYERS HAVE 3 ACTION POINTS EACH IN A 1-2 PLAYER GAME, 2 ACTION POINTS IN A 3-4 PLAYER GAME, TO USE ON THEIR TURN. 1 ACTION POINT MAY BE SPENT TO:



**MOVE 1
LOCATION**



SEARCH LOCATION
1d6 + : 8 or MORE TO
DRAW 3 ITEMS, CHOOSE 1



**INITIATE
COMBAT**



**DRAW A
CARD**



**ONCE PER TURN, 1 LOCATION AND
CHARACTER MAY BE PLAYED FOR
FREE, THEN 1 ACTION POINT PER
LOCATION OR CHARACTER MAY BE
SPENT TO PLAY MORE.**



FREE ACTIONS: PLAYERS DO NOT PAY ACTION POINTS TO
TAKE THESE ACTIONS ON THEIR TURN:



**TRADE / GIVE
AN ITEM**



**EQUIP / USE / PICK
UP / DROP AN ITEM**

COMBAT PART 1: FIRST STRIKE (Battle Turn Order)

At the beginning of combat, all involved characters roll

(SPEED) + 2d6 + FIRST STRIKE BONUSES

COMBAT PART 2: ATTACK DAMAGE (Damage Dealt)

(POWER) + 2d6 + $\frac{1}{2}$ (ATTACK BONUS)

SUBTRACT the defending character's (ARMOR BONUS)
then reduce their (CURRENT HEALTH) by this score.