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FIRST EDITION

**DARK**  
venture

# BATTLE OF THE ANCIENTS™

CORE RULES

# DARK VENTURE BATTLE OF THE ANCIENTS

## CORE RULES

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## INTRODUCTION

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In a dark, destroyed world ruled by chaos, hordes of otherworldly creatures battle against one another for dominance and survival. Amidst the shrill call of battlehorns, the ground rumbles as squadrons of mutated abominations rush into combat!

**DARK VENTURE: BATTLE OF THE ANCIENTS** is a tactical strategy game set in the **DARK VENTURE** universe where players control asymmetric factions engaged in brutal conflict. It can be played **SOLO**, **COOPERATIVELY**, or **COMPETITIVELY**.

Choose a side! Take control of marauding **VARPEN** demons, a pack of wily **DHARGON** aliens, a frenzy of gene-splicing **ALDERKANG** horrors, an ever-hungry **BOHMERK** plague, or a legion of undead **ORPAL**!

**CONTENTS:** The **DARK VENTURE: BATTLE OF THE ANCIENTS CORE GAME** includes 1 Core Rule Book, 1 Scenario Book A, 1 Faction Guide/Scenario Book B, 1 Underground Adventure Book, 1 Double - Sided Map Game Board, 5 Faction Dashboards, 1 Victory Point Track, 3 Hero Cards, 1 Alderkang Ability Card, 1 Fence and Wall Reference Card, 1 Hero Unit Rules Card, 7 Victory Point Objective Cards, 50 Auto-Enemy Cards, 57 Item Cards, 63 Action Cards, 7 Genetic Memory Cards, 3 Large Die-Cut Buildings, 2 Die-Cut Stairs, 1 Die-Cut Fallen Star, 1 Fallen Star Miniature, 10 Fence Miniatures, 10 Wall Miniatures, 1 Cloth Orpal Draw Bag, 6 Action Dice (red), 8 Attack Dice (yellow), 8 Defense Dice (black), 32 Wood Cubes. **358 TOKENS:** 116 Unit Tokens, 3 Hero Hex Tokens, 5 Ancient Tokens, 1 Rhorgonkrul Token, 4 Large Portal Tokens, 3 Small Portal Tokens, 3 Banner Tokens, 9 Alderkang Control Tokens, 64 Action Dice Tokens, 12 Numbered Event Tokens, 22 Double - Sided Event Tokens, 30 Resource Tokens, 4 Fungus Tokens, 4 Rift Crystal Tokens, 10 Egg Tokens, 16 Item Card Draw Tokens, 8 Action Card Draw Tokens, 24 Equipped Item Pair Tokens, 10 Fence Tokens, 10 Wall Tokens.

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



## GAME SETUP

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There are **3 WAYS** to play DARK VENTURE: BATTLE OF THE ANCIENTS – SCENARIO GAMES, ADVENTURE GAMES and VICTORY GAMES. For all three, place the map board in the center of the play area. The MAIN MAP side of the game board is used for Scenario games, the UNDERGROUND MAP side of is used for Adventure games, and either side can be used for Victory games.

Place the 6 ACTION DICE, 8 YELLOW ATTACK and 8 BLACK DEFENSE DICE (used in combat and when rolling six-sided dice is required), the FENCE and WALL MINIS or TOKENS, the FALLEN STAR MINI or DIE-CUT (used in some SCENARIOS), the faction AUTO-ENEMY DECKS, the RULE BOOKS, as well as the ACTION and ITEM CARD DECKS (face down), within reach of all players.

Separate all the FACTION UNIT TOKENS into their factions, and place them near their corresponding FACTION DASHBOARDS or HERO DASH CARDS. Separate the various other token types (EVENT, ACTION DICE, RESOURCE, ACTION and ITEM CARD DRAW, FUNGUS, EGG, BEAST, EQUIPPED ITEM PAIRS), and place them within reach of all players. Next, decide the type of game to play.

**1. SCENARIO GAME (1-5 PLAYERS, COMPETITIVE):** A Scenario provides a story setup with unique VICTORY CONDITIONS, which are objectives that must be met in order for a specific faction to win a game. Faction units and game components, such as CARD DRAW TOKENS and EVENT TOKENS, are set up on the map differently in each Scenario. In this game type, all factions (unless stated otherwise) are enemies.

**SCENARIO BOOK A** contains 13 unique Scenarios that can be played sequentially as a CAMPAIGN or non-sequentially, in any order. **SCENARIO BOOK B** (the second half of the FACTION GUIDE) contains 6 additional unique Scenarios that can be played non-sequentially.

Review the “SCENARIO RULES” section, on p.2 in both SCENARIO BOOK A and SCENARIO BOOK B, for more detailed play instructions and setup information.



**2. ADVENTURE GAME (1-5 PLAYERS, COOPERATIVE):** The Underground Adventure included in the core game is an open-world, narrative adventure to be played COOPERATIVELY. EVENT TOKENS, that are scattered across the map, are activated by a player's units, allowing them to read linked passages from the UNDERGROUND ADVENTURE BOOK. Review the "Underground Adventure: Rules" section, on p.2 in the Underground Adventure book, for more detailed play instructions and setup information.

**3. VICTORY GAME (2-5 PLAYERS, COMPETITIVE):** The objective in a VICTORY GAME is to collect a set number of VICTORY POINTS, or to control the only faction with units left on the map. Each FACTION DASHBOARD outlines a BASIC SETUP for that faction when playing a VICTORY GAME that determines the units a faction will start with and their positions on the map. In this game type, all factions are enemies.

**SETTING UP A VICTORY GAME:** At the beginning of a Victory Game, once per game, all players and Auto-Enemies (see AUTO-ENEMY ACTION DECKS, p. 19) roll 4 six-sided dice (4d6). The highest roller is the first player, the next highest is the second player, and so on. Reroll on a tie. The first player chooses 1 of the 5 FACTIONS or 1 HERO (see HEROES, p. 22) to play. Then the second player chooses their faction or Hero, and so on. Review the FACTION GUIDE for more information on each faction.

Each player takes their FACTION DASHBOARD (see p.8), 4 cubes in a color representative of their faction, a faction UNIT SPECIAL ABILITIES CARD (if playing the ALDERKANG faction), and all of their faction's TOKENS (plus the DRAW BAG if playing the ORPAL faction). Next, players place 3 of their cubes near their dashboards to track their ANCIENT FAVOR OBJECTIVES. If playing a HERO, review their setup on p.22.

Once all players have collected the necessary pieces, they can set up their FACTION DASHBOARDS around the edges of the map board (Main or Underground), placing their units onto this map (or into their draw bag, if this component is included as part of their faction's tools) according to the BASIC SETUP noted on their FACTION DASHBOARDS.

Place red ACTION CARD DRAW TOKENS on D10 and I6, and blue ITEM CARD DRAW TOKENS on B5, B15, C3, E11, J8, L13, and N3 (see p.7, The Map, for info on map spaces).

Players can choose to play either a 10, 20, or 30 Victory Point (VP) game, and place the VICTORY POINT TRACK with the side showing their choice near the main map board. Each player places 1 of the cubes corresponding to their faction's color near the track (to be used to track their VP in the game). Distribute 1 "VICTORY POINT OBJECTIVES FOR ALL FACTIONS" reference card to each player. As players complete the objectives listed on this card, or any of the BONUS VICTORY POINT OBJECTIVES that are listed on their FACTION DASHBOARDS, they instantly gain the associated point values and move their faction's cube along the VICTORY POINT TRACK by that number of spaces.

## TOKEN TYPES



ACTION  
CARD  
DRAW  
TOKEN



ITEM  
CARD  
DRAW  
TOKEN



EQUIPPED  
ITEM PAIR TOKENS



EGG  
TOKEN



HERO TOKEN  
STRENGTH 4  
DEFENSE 3



EVENT  
TOKENS



FUNGUS  
TOKEN



UNIT TOKEN  
STRENGTH 1  
DEFENSE 1



ACTION  
DICE  
TOKENS



BEAST  
TOKENS



ANCIENT TOKEN  
STRENGTH 6  
DEFENSE 3



RESOURCE  
TOKENS

**NOTE:** On their turn, a player's unit sharing a space with an EGG TOKEN can collect it. Discard it to add +3 to 1 of their COMBAT rolls.



**VICTORY GAME IN PLAY:** (1) Main Map Board, (2) Victory Point Track, (3) Faction Dashboards, (4) Item Deck, (5) Action Deck, (6) Action Dice, (7) Victory Point Reference Cards, (8) Genetic Memory Card, (9) Die-Cut Fallen Star (interchangeable with Fallen Star Miniature), (10) Attack Dice, (11) Defense Dice.

**WINNING A VICTORY GAME:** A player wins when, at the end of a round, they have earned the set number of Victory Points (or more), or by being the only faction with units on the map. When multiple players have gathered the winning number of Victory Points, or more, the player with the highest point value over the set number wins. If there is a tie, add up the STRENGTH and DEFENSE of each tied player's units that are on the map. The player with the highest S+D total wins. If there is still a tie, the player who has the highest number of saved cards wins. If there is still a tie, the tied players rejoice in a shared victory.



## THE MAP

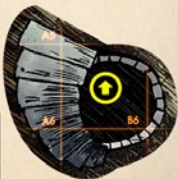
The HORIZONTAL map spaces are marked from west to east with the letters A-P, while VERTICAL spaces are marked from north to south with the numbers 1-16. Individual map spaces are referred to by their letter and number demarcation (e.g., "B4" is 2 spaces from the western map edge, and 4 spaces south). Arrows on the map indicate the spaces where units can travel in/out of buildings or rooms, or up/down stairs or ladders.

**2ND AND 3RD FLOOR MAPS:** Some SCENARIOS require the use of additional maps that depict the second floor of the DESTROYED LABORATORY or the second and third floors of the OMINOUS TOWER. When playing in a VICTORY game, you may choose whether or not to use these maps.



When using additional building floor maps, place them close to the MAIN MAP in a position close to the buildings they represent. The building floors share the same alphanumeric demarcations as the main map; however, they are differentiated by floor number. For example: 2G6 means "space G6 on the 2nd floor."

**STAIRS:** When using the 2nd floor maps, place the STAIR TOKENS on the main map: Set the small stair token on D13 and the larger staircase token on A5/6-B6/7 (the arrows on the tokens point NORTH). **NOTE:** Horses cannot travel up and down stairs or ladders.



It costs 1 MOVE DIE to travel from one floor to another.

# FACTION DASHBOARDS

## THE ALDERKANG

THE ALDERKANG, first king of Darkgrange, was deposed and murdered in a coup that brought the current ruler of Darkgrange into power. The Alderkang's former "Chief Advisor," DELOK THE COLLECTOR, will stop at nothing to bring The Alderkang back to this world. Delok intends to resurrect him using technology and forbidden Warlock and Celestine magiks!





**BASIC SETUP:** Place DELOK THE COLLECTOR (Hero) onto B5 or B13. Place 1 S2/D1 SUUK on a space adjacent to him.

**EXTRACTION:** If a faction that has not been successfully extracted from, spend 1 MOVE DIE to roll 2d6. If the roll total is 6 or higher, the EXTRACTION is successful. Move the prisoner onto the ALDERKANG faction dashboard. Units of an EXTRACTED FACTION (taken from THEIR FACTION'S DASHBOARD) can now be created using a FABRICATOR. If 5 or lower, nothing happens.

**REVIVE:** When an ALDERKANG-controlled unit is KILLED in combat, spend 1 saved card to roll 2d6. If the roll total is 8 or higher, the unit is revived.

**BONUS VICTORY POINTS:**  
Use TEMPORAL SHIFT 2 1 POINT  
Use WHEEL OF SPARKS 2 1 POINT

**ANCIENT: THE ALDERKANG OBJECTIVES TO WIN HIS FAVOR:**

- ☐ Attempt to REVIVE 2 units
- ☐ FABRICATE 4 units
- ☐ Draw 5 CARDS

Once these objectives are complete, his favor has been won. THE ALDERKANG can be FABRICATED for any combination of 6 SAVED CARDS or SKULL DICE.

**DIVINE POWER: INDUCTION:** After he defeats an enemy unit, roll 2d6. If the roll is 10 or higher, the enemy unit joins the ALDERKANG faction (the Alderkang player takes control).

- 1. TOKEN POSITIONS:** Place the available faction unit tokens onto the corresponding spaces.
- 2. BASIC SETUP AND FACTION SPECIAL ABILITIES:** The BASIC SETUP for a VICTORY GAME is listed here on the dashboard (the units and items a faction starts with, their positions on the map, and any units to be placed into a "blind draw" bag). There are SPECIAL ABILITIES associated with each faction, most of which are listed under the BASIC SETUP.
- 3. BONUS VICTORY POINTS:** Bonus victory points that can be earned by factions in VICTORY GAMES.
- 4. ANCIENT, OBJECTIVES TO WIN THEIR FAVOR:** Place the ANCIENT of this faction in the space provided. Once the noted OBJECTIVE is complete, place a CUBE onto the square next to it. Once all 3 CUBES are placed, an Ancient is brought onto the map as instructed, then the CUBES are removed from the dashboard.
- 5. DIVINE POWER:** A player with their Ancient on the map may perform the DIVINE POWER of the Ancient as described.
- 6. EDGE TRACKS:** Track various game objectives and requirements using CUBES along the edges of the dashboards.

## PLAYING THE GAME

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The first player takes their turn following this **ORDER OF ACTIONS**:

### 1. ROLL THE ACTION DICE.



2. **MOVE** units, **ACTIVATE** faction or unit abilities, **ENGAGE** enemies, and **DRAW CARDS** by spending **MOVE** and **SKULL DICE** (costs vary depending on the faction or unit ability):

- (a) **MOVE** units by spending **MOVE DICE** (variable cost).
- (b) **ACTIVATE** faction or unit abilities by spending **MOVE** and/or **SKULL DICE** (see individual faction dashboards for costs).
- (c) **ENGAGE** enemy units in **COMBAT** (1 **MOVE DIE** per combat to engage up to 2 enemy units with up to 2 of your units).
- (d) **DRAW** 1 **ACTION CARD** per unit on a red **ACTION CARD DRAW TOKEN** (1 **MOVE DIE**).

3. Check **ANCIENT REQUIREMENTS** to determine if an **ANCIENT** can be summoned.

4. Use the **DIVINE POWER** of an **ANCIENT**, if possible.

5. **END** the turn. The next player begins their turn.

Once all players have taken their turns, the round ends. The first player starts their next turn, beginning a new round.

**NOTE:** Some actions can be taken at **ANY TIME** on a player's turn. For example, when a unit is moved onto an **ITEM CARD DRAW TOKEN**, an **ITEM CARD** is drawn. Further, items can be **USED** and **EQUIPPED** to units, **ACTION CARDS** can be played, **ACTION DICE TOKENS** can be spent, and so forth. See additional rules in the various rule books for specific case scenarios.



## UNIT MOVEMENT

To move their units, a player rolls the 6 ACTION DICE then "spends" them to move individual units. Players can choose to move 1 unit using all the dice, or they may spread out the movements to all or some of their active units. Unused dice can be ignored or saved in GENETIC MEMORY (p.11).

### MOVE AND SKULL DICE KEY



**MOVE DIE - 2 ORTHOGONAL:** MOVE 1 UNIT UP TO 2 SPACES NORTH, SOUTH, EAST, or WEST (DIRECTION CAN CHANGE MID-MOVE)



**MOVE DIE - 1 ORTHOGONAL:** MOVE 1 UNIT 1 SPACE NORTH, SOUTH, EAST, or WEST



**MOVE DIE - 1 DIAGONAL:** MOVE 1 UNIT 1 SPACE DIAGONALLY



**SKULL DIE:** NO MOVES IN ANY DIRECTION

**NOTE:** "SKULL DICE" are not "MOVE DICE" and vice versa.

**MOVEMENT EXAMPLE** – A player rolls:



With this roll, 1 unit could be moved 2 diagonal spaces and 2 spaces orthogonally; 3 units could be moved using 1 die each; or a combination of dice could be used to move 2 different units. Skull Dice cannot be used to move.

**NOTE:** Any number of units can share the same space. Units other than PRISONERS (see p.15) cannot be moved off the map (unless noted otherwise in an event, faction ability, or on a card).

## MAP TERRAIN

**TRAVERSING WATER SPACES:** For all units other than BOHMERK faction units, moving a unit INTO a space with WATER in it (see Appendix 1, p. 26), even if it's a small amount of WATER, costs 1 ADDITIONAL MOVE. For example: A single 2-MOVE DIE or 2 1-MOVE DICE can be used to move into a space with water; 2 DIAGONAL MOVE DICE are necessary to move 1 space diagonally into a space with water.



**TRAVERSING ROADWAY SPACES:** If a player spends 1 MOVE DIE to move a unit from a space depicting ROADWAY (see Appendix 2, p. 26) into another space depicting ROADWAY, movement is increased by +1 MOVE. If moving diagonally, the +1 MOVE must be diagonal; if moving orthogonally, the +1

MOVE must be orthogonal (the direction can change). Thus, a 2-MOVE DIE can move a unit 3 spaces if 2 (or more) adjoining spaces of the 3 are ROADWAY. **NOTE:** Bridges and walkways outside of buildings are considered ROADWAYS.



**BUILDING WALLS, UNDERGROUND ROCK WALLS, MAP EDGE:** Unless specified, units cannot pass through the light-gray interior or exterior walls of buildings, the dark rock walls in The Underground, or off a map edge.



**BRIDGES:** Units may “jump” the guardrails of bridges and travel under bridges, but then WATER SPACE rules apply.

## GENETIC MEMORY

The magik of the CATAclysm has left a temporal imprint within the cells of the creatures in this land. When accessed, this "GENETIC MEMORY" can grant spectacular powers.

Place a **GENETIC MEMORY CARD** near the dashboard/card of each player-controlled faction or Hero. Set the supply of **ACTION DICE TOKENS** near the edge of the play area.



GENETIC MEMORY CARD



ACTION DICE TOKENS

On their turn, players can trade their ACTION DICE for DICE TOKENS, placing up to 3 DICE TOKENS onto their GENETIC MEMORY CARDS to "bank" them for use on subsequent turns.

ACTION DICE TOKENS are considered substitutes for ACTION DICE, and can be spent in the same way that ACTION DICE can be spent: SKULL DICE TOKENS are substitutes for SKULL DICE; MOVE DICE TOKENS are substitutes for MOVE DICE.

On their turn, if a player receives extra ACTION DICE TOKENS (more than 3) they must spend or discard tokens, down to 3, before the end of their turn. Outside of their turn, if a player has 3 tokens saved/banked and receives more, they must choose which tokens to keep and which to discard (down to 3).

**NOTE: Heroes that are played along with another faction, by a single player, do not have their own GENETIC MEMORY.**

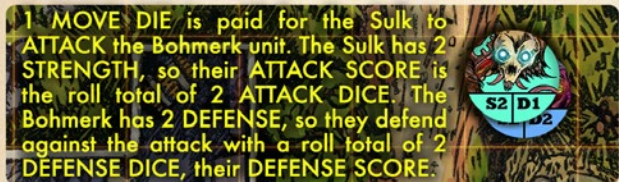


## COMBAT

If a player moves 1 of their units into the same space as a unit of an enemy faction, they can choose to have their unit engage the enemy unit in combat at a cost of 1 MOVE DIE.

**NOTE:** A unit can move into a space containing an enemy unit without engaging them in combat.

When ATTACKING, the STRENGTH (S) of a character, noted on their token, represents the number of YELLOW ATTACK DICE that are rolled to determine their ATTACK SCORE. When defending against an attack, the DEFENSE (D) of a character represents the number of BLACK DEFENSE DICE that are rolled to determine their DEFENSE SCORE.



If the ATTACKER has the higher score (roll total), the DEFENDER is defeated. The defeated defender is either KILLED (returned to their faction dashboard), taken PRISONER, or utilized in a faction SPECIAL ABILITY (see the FACTION GUIDE for details).

If there is a tie, or if the DEFENDER has the higher score (roll total), the unit has successfully defended. The defender might make a DEFENSE COUNTER ATTACK (see next page).

**NOTE:** An attacker may spend multiple MOVE DICE to attack multiple times in a turn.

**COMBAT RESOLUTION:** The Sulk has 2 **STRENGTH**, so they roll 2 six-sided **ATTACK DICE**, receiving a 4 and a 1 for an **ATTACK SCORE** total of 5.

4+



The defending Bohmerk has 2 **DEFENSE** and must roll 2 six-sided **DEFENSE DICE** to defend. They roll a 1 and a 3 for a **DEFENSE SCORE** total of 4.



3

The attacker's score of 5 beats the defender's score of 4, so the attacker wins. The Sulk player chooses to **KILL** the Bohmerk unit. The token of the Bohmerk unit is returned to their faction dashboard.

**DISTANT (RANGED) ATTACKS:** Ranged **ITEMS** and **ABILITIES** can be used to attack enemies on any space within their range, diagonally or orthogonally. However, a ranged attack **cannot be made** if a line between the center of an **ATTACKER'S** space and the center of the **DEFENDER'S** space crosses through a **BUILDING/BUILT WALL**. Units killed by ranged attacks cannot be taken **PRISONER** (p.15). **NOTE:** Unless specified otherwise, it still costs 1 **MOVE DIE** to attack with a ranged item or ability (even when the item is discarded after attacking).

**DEFENSE COUNTER ATTACK:** After ALL defense rolls, if half (or more) of the dice a player rolls to **SUCCESSFULLY** defend roll a 6 (naturally, without bonuses), the defender can make a **DEFENSE COUNTER ATTACK**, rolling to **ATTACK** against their attacker. **NOTE:** Defense Counter Attacks cannot be performed against ranged attacks unless the defender is also using a ranged weapon, item, or ability.

**COMBAT WITH MULTIPLE UNITS:** Players may choose to attack or defend with up to 2 **UNITS** at a time. Both units of the same faction that engage in combat together must be on the same map space. The sum of the 2 attacking units' **STRENGTH** represents the number of dice that they roll to attack; the sum of the 2 defending units' **DEFENSE** represents the number of dice that they roll to defend. The attacking faction pays 1 **MOVE DIE** to perform an attack with both units. (cont.)

The defeated defenders are either KILLED (returned to their faction dashboard), or 1 can be taken PRISONER (see below) or utilized in a faction SPECIAL ABILITY while the other is KILLED.

**NOTE: AUTO-ENEMIES (p.19)** may attack multiple enemy units in a slightly different way than outlined on p.14, sometimes choosing a single enemy unit to attack. Refer to a faction's AUTO-ENEMY ACTION DECK and follow their combat specifics.

**PRISONERS:** After defeating enemies in combat, if units of the attacking faction are in the same space as defeated enemy units, the player controlling the attacking faction can choose to have their units take 1 defeated enemy unit prisoner. Prisoners move with their captors at no movement cost. Also, prisoners cannot take actions (i.e., they cannot engage in combat, move, upgrade, draw cards, gather, build walls, or use any special unit abilities), but can try to escape (see PRISONER ESCAPE below). Ancients cannot be taken prisoner, but HEROES can.

**PRISONER EXCHANGE REWARD:** Upon moving a captor with a prisoner to an open map edge (not an edge blocked by the wall of a building, a built wall, or a fence), spend 1 MOVE DIE to return the prisoner to their faction's supply, replacing them with AN AVAILABLE UNIT OF THE CAPTOR'S FACTION THAT HAS THE LOWEST (STRENGTH + DEFENSE) TOTAL (use RULE OF CHOICE, p.25, if tied).

In VICTORY POINT games, players earn 2 VP for CAPTURING a prisoner and 1 VP for EXCHANGING them.

**PRISONER ESCAPE:** The player controlling a captive prisoner may choose to spend 1 MOVE DIE on their turn to roll 1d6. If a 6 is rolled, the prisoner escapes capture. Upon a successful escape, the former prisoner may move up to 2 spaces in any direction at no cost.

If a captor with a prisoner is killed or taken prisoner, their captive prisoner automatically escapes and can move up to 2 spaces in any direction at no cost.

After combat is resolved, the game resumes.



## ACTION AND ITEM CARDS

**SAVING CARDS:** Each player can save up to 5 ACTION and ITEM CARDS (placed near their controlling players' faction dashboards). However, once this limit is reached, in order to save a new card, 1 of the saved cards must first be discarded. Unequipped saved cards can be traded between players as they see fit.

**NOTE:** Once all Action or Item Cards have been drawn, their discard pile may be shuffled and the cards used again.

**DRAWING AN ACTION CARD:** Each player-controlled unit on an ACTION CARD DRAW TOKEN (red) may be used to draw 1 ACTION CARD on their controlling player's turn at a cost of 1 MOVE DIE per drawn card (1 ACTION CARD can be drawn per unit, per turn). An unlimited number of Action Cards can be drawn this way, as the token is not removed when cards are drawn. **NOTE:** Whenever a space with an Action Card Draw Token is entered by a unit, the unit stops moving (even if they have moves left to take, those moves are lost).

Unless noted otherwise, an Action Card may only be used by a player on their turn. Action Cards may be shown to all players or kept hidden. There are 4 types of Action Cards:



**1. DISCOVERY CARD:** Discovery Cards are "instant action" (follow the directions on these cards when they are drawn, then discard them immediately).



**2. ALL-PLAYER ACTION CARD:** VARPEN, ORPAL, DHARGON, and BOHMERK players ALL follow the directions on these cards when they are drawn, then discard them immediately. If an All-Player Action Card is drawn by a faction that is not listed on the card (Alderkang or Heroes, for example) the factions noted on the card follow the card directions, then the drawing player may choose to save or discard it.



**3. TACTIC CARD:** Tactic Cards are saved near a player's faction dashboard until needed, and then discarded once used. All factions can use and save Tactic Cards.

**4. FACTION BONUS CARD:** VARPEN, ORPAL, DHARGON, and BOHMERK players follow the directions on these cards when they are drawn, for THEIR FACTION ONLY, then discard them immediately. If a Faction Bonus Card is drawn by a player whose faction is not listed on the card (Alderkang or Heroes, for example), the drawing player may choose to save or discard it.



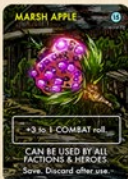
**DRAWING AN ITEM CARD:** When a player-controlled unit moves onto (or through) a space with an ITEM CARD DRAW TOKEN (blue), the token is removed from the map and the controlling player draws 1 ITEM CARD, at no cost, and reveals it. Some Item Cards are used INSTANTLY, some are SAVED near the player's FACTION DASHBOARD until needed (then discarded when used), and others can be SAVED and EQUIPPED to a unit to give them statistical bonuses or special actions. All unequipped, SAVED Item Cards can be traded between players.



EQUIPPABLE



SAVE FOR A SINGLE USE



INSTANT USE

**FACTION RESTRICTIONS:** Some Item Cards can be used or equipped by all factions and Heroes, but most Item Cards depict the icons of the factions that can use or equip that item. A player cannot use or equip one of these items if the Item Card does not have their faction's icon on it. However, even if a drawn item cannot be used by the drawing player's faction, it must be saved.



## FACTION ICONS

**NOTE:** To dispose of unusable items, trade them with other players, or discard them after drawing an additional card, when your limit of 5 saved cards is reached.

**EQUIPPING AN ITEM:** At any time on a player's turn, at no cost, that player can equip their saved, unrestricted items to their own units (unless stated otherwise in a rule or on a card). To equip an item to a unit, an EQUIPPED ITEM PAIR TOKEN is placed onto the saved Item Card. A corresponding Equipped Item Pair Token is placed onto the token of the unit to be equipped to denote that the item is equipped to that unit.

Each standard unit, HERO, or ANCIENT can be equipped with a maximum of **2 ITEMS**, unless noted otherwise on an Item Card, the faction dashboard of the equipping unit or ANCIENT, the dash card of the equipping HERO, or by an EVENT.

Outside combat (not during combat), items can be traded between units of the same faction on their player's turn if they are traded between units sharing the same map space.

**NOTE:** Equipped items still count as "saved" cards.

If an equipped unit is removed from play (killed, taken prisoner, etc.), the Equipped Item Pair token representing their equipped items remains on the space where they were removed from play, and the cards of their previously equipped items are moved to a neutral space, near the map. These items can be claimed by a player with a unit on the same space as the Equipped Item Pair Token, on their player's turn. When claimed, the Item Cards are moved near their controlling player's dashboard to **SAVE**.



## AUTO-ENEMY ACTION DECKS

In any game, enemy factions can be controlled using AUTO-ENEMY ACTION DECKS. These decks, one for each faction, give step-by-step instructions that lead a player through each turn of an automatically-controlled enemy faction.



### BOHTMERK AUTO-ENEMY ACTION CARDS

At the beginning of an Auto-Enemy turn, start by reading the first card in the deck corresponding to the enemy faction ("BUILD UP"). Follow the instructions on the card, and complete the actions for that faction as outlined, if possible. Then, flip that card and follow the instructions on the next card in numerical order.

If some actions on a card cannot be performed, complete the actions that can; then flip the card and continue on to the next card in sequence. Once the final card in the faction's deck has been flipped, the turn of that Auto-Enemy is complete.

**NOTE:** Auto-Enemy actions should be executed by a different player for each faction, when possible.

**ADDITIONAL AUTO-ENEMY RULES:** These additional rules govern the use of Auto-Enemies in a game.

**ACCLIMATE:** Newly arriving Auto-Enemy units cannot take actions (BUILD UP, MOVE, etc.) on the same turn in which they come into play.

**TURN ORDER:** Determine Auto-Enemy and player turn order in a Victory Game, once per game, by rolling 4d6 for each faction. The highest rolling faction activates first, the next highest activates second, and so on (reroll on a tie).

**UNIT ORDER:** Auto-Enemy units activate WEST to EAST. If there is a tie, simply choose which unit to activate.

**DEFENDING IN COMBAT:** Auto-Enemy units DEFEND against player-controlled units in pairs, when possible, using the 2 units with the highest combined DEFENSE. If attacking one another, the Auto-Enemy faction initiating combat determines the defending units (see AUTO-ENEMY ACTION CARDS, "COMBAT").

**PATH OF OPPORTUNITY:** Auto-Enemies always prioritize moving towards (and ATTACKING) a PLAYER CONTROLLED unit over an AUTO-ENEMY unit. However, if an Auto-Enemy can take several paths to their target, and one of these paths crosses a space with another enemy, the Auto-Enemy will prioritize this path.

**VICTORY POINTS:** In games played for VICTORY POINTS, Auto-Enemies gain Victory Points for faction "Bonus Victory Point Objectives" and "Victory Point Objectives for all Factions," in the same way that player-controlled factions do.

**ITEM CARDS:** Auto-Enemy units do not collect Item Cards when landing on or traveling over blue ITEM CARD DRAW TOKENS.

**AUTO-ENEMY ANCIENTS:** Auto-Enemy Ancients cannot be brought onto the map with the SPAWN action.

**AUTO-ENEMY PRISONERS:** Auto-Enemy units that have been taken prisoner do not take actions and cannot become Ancients.

**AUTO-ENEMY ELIMINATION:** When an Auto-Enemy has no remaining movable units on the map, they are ELIMINATED from the game (unless noted otherwise).

**STAIRS AND LADDERS:** If the closest player-controlled enemy unit to an Auto-Enemy faction unit is on a different floor from them, the Auto-Enemy will take the closest stairs/ladder to get to the player-controlled enemy. Changing floors costs them 1 MOVE.

**FENCES AND BUILT WALLS:** When an Auto-Enemy unit attempts to move through a fence or wall, roll 2d6: If 7 or higher for a fence, or 8 or higher for a wall, the fence or wall is removed from the map and the unit stops moving (they do not move through it). If the roll is 6 or less for a fence, or 7 or less for a wall, the fence or wall remains and the unit stops moving.

**BREAK FREE:** At the end of an Auto-Enemy turn, remove any Vine or Action Dice Tokens that are restraining their units.

## THE ANCIENTS

Each faction has an ANCIENT that can be summoned onto the map after a player completes 3 OBJECTIVES, different for each faction, to WIN THEIR FAVOR (see p.8 of this book for more info). While an Ancient is on the map, it grants a DIVINE POWER (a special action or passive power) to the player who is controlling them. The favor conditions, summoning rules, and divine powers are outlined for each Ancient on their FACTION DASHBOARD.

**NOTE:** After they have been defeated, the Ancient's favor must be won again for a player or Auto-Enemy to re-summon them. However, if the 3 OBJECTIVES TO WIN THEIR ANCIENT'S FAVOR are completed again while their Ancient is IN PLAY, the 3 TRACKING CUBES are spent (immediately) to ignore 1 instance of that Ancient being KILLED.



**MANTUS MARTURUS** (Varpen) is the ANCIENT OF WAR. Their DIVINE POWER is WARSONG: Whenever he engages in combat, roll 2d6: If 7 or higher, place a new S1/D1 unit on a map edge, at least 4 spaces from any other unit.



**KARDERUT** (Orpal) is the ANCIENT OF MAGIK. Their DIVINE POWER is ANCIENT SIGHT: Once per turn, on your turn, reroll up to 2 SKULL or MOVE DICE, or 1 COMBAT DIE.



**SETERNATUS** (Dhargon) is the ANCIENT OF NATURE. Their DIVINE POWER is ABUNDANCE: When a DHARGON unit would GATHER 1 resource, they GATHER 2 instead.



**DHOREGAT KELT** (Bohmerk) is the ANCIENT OF DEATH. Their DIVINE POWER is TO THE EARTH: Any 1 of your units may instantly win combat against 1 non-Ancient unit. This power can only be used TWICE in a game.



**THE ALDERKANG** (Alderkang) is the UNDEAD, DEPOSED KING. His ANCIENT POWER is INDUCTION: After he defeats an enemy unit in combat, roll 2d6. If the roll total is 10 or higher, the enemy unit joins the ALDERKANG faction (the Alderkang player takes control of the unit).



## HEROES

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In VICTORY games and some ADVENTURE SCENARIOS, players can choose to play as a HERO instead of playing a faction. Each HERO has a unique HERO DASH CARD that outlines their SPECIAL ABILITIES and lists the requirements necessary for them to earn bonus VICTORY POINTS (VP).

**HERO SETUP:** A Hero player takes their Hero's DASH CARD, 6 orange cubes, and their Hero's token (in Victory game BASIC SETUPS, their token is placed on any map edge road space).

**VICTORY POINTS (VP):** In all game types, VP are tracked for heroes. Heroes begin all games with 1 VP. An orange cube is placed on the first box of the VP ABILITY UNLOCK TRACK on each Hero's dash card (and the main VP TRACK if necessary). The cube is moved 1 space along the Ability Unlock Track for each VP earned by completing VP objectives for all factions (listed on the "VP OBJECTIVES FOR ALL FACTIONS" card) and bonus VP objectives (listed at the bottom left of each Hero dash card).

**HERO SPECIAL ABILITIES:** Hero-controlling players choose 1 SPECIAL ABILITY as their STARTING ABILITY, and then place 1 orange cube on the box adjacent to it on their dash card. Other Special Abilities, if available, can be unlocked when a Hero earns 4, 7, and 10 VP. Heroes may only use their Special Abilities during their player's turn, unless stated otherwise.

**NOTE:** DELOK is an exception, having only 1 Special Ability.

**HEROES AND CARDS:** Hero-controlling players can save any ACTION and ITEM CARDS (that are not Instant Action or that do not resolve immediately, up to their saved card limit of 5 cards) which can then be used to perform these actions:

- (1) REROLL: Discard 1 saved card to REROLL ANY DIE;
- (2) UNLOCK A SPECIAL ABILITY: Discard all 5 saved cards to UNLOCK 1 HERO SPECIAL ABILITY.

**HERO PRISONER REWARDS:** Upon moving a Hero with a

PRISONER to a map edge, the Hero-controlling player can pay 1 MOVE DIE to discard the prisoner and receive a reward:

(1) If a Hero is not allied with another faction, draw 1 ACTION CARD.

(2) If the Hero is allied with another faction, replace the discarded prisoner with a unit from the allied faction (see p.15), or draw 1 ACTION CARD.

**NOTE:** Heroes take their own turns and have their own GENETIC MEMORY, unless they are played along with another faction (by a single player), in which case they do not take their own turn or have their own GENETIC MEMORY.

## COLLECTING RESOURCES

The VARPEN, DHARGON, and BOHMERK factions, as a FACTION ABILITY, can collect resources that can be used by these factions in various ways (e.g., to build walls, create units, and physically grow). For a resource to be collected in a particular space, players must agree that the space could contain, within reason, the particular resource to be collected.

WOOD can be collected in spaces that contain TREES or SHRUBS and inside of buildings (from chairs, desks, barrels etc.). ORE and GOLD can be collected in spaces with ROCKS, including rock paths and buildings with stone floors. WATER can be collected in spaces with PONDS and RIVERS. MEAT is collected by units of the DHARGON faction from defeated enemies (see FACTION GUIDE p.8).

1 MOVE DIE or 2 SKULL DICE are spent to roll 1d6. In order for a unit to collect WOOD, WATER, or ORE successfully, a player must roll a 2, 4, or 6. Any other roll is a failure. The token representing the collected resource is placed under the collecting unit's token.

To collect GOLD, a player must first announce that they are collecting GOLD, and then (for 1 MOVE DIE or 2 SKULL DICE) must roll a 6 on 1d6 to collect it successfully.



ORE



GOLD



WOOD



WATER



MEAT

**NOTE:** Resources are finite. Once all tokens representing a particular resource are gone, no more of that resource may be collected (until those tokens are spent and moved back to the token supply). A unit can carry any number of collected resources, and the resources move with them at no cost. When on the same space, units of the same/allied faction can trade resources; however, units of an enemy faction must be **KILLED** to take their carried resources.

## **FENCES AND WALLS**

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**BUILDING:** A player controlling the **VARPEN** or **DHARGON** factions can place a **WALL** or **FENCE** (token or miniature) on the edge line of a space or diagonally across a space occupied by 1 of their units, if that unit has the necessary resources. Resource tokens are moved back to the token supply after the wall or fence is built.

**A FENCE COSTS 1 WOOD and 1 MOVE DIE**  
**A WALL COSTS 1 ORE and 2 MOVE DICE**

**CROSSING:** Units cannot easily pass over a wall or fence. A unit must spend **+1 MOVE** to cross over a fence and **+2 MOVES** to cross over a wall. A diagonal wall or fence splits a space into 2 PARTS. A unit can move into either of the 2 parts but must pay to move to the other side of the space, over the fence/wall: 1 MOVE if a fence, 2 MOVES if a wall. **Review the FENCES AND WALLS REFERENCE CARD** for illustrated examples.

**DISMANTLING:** Any unit on the same space as a fence (a diagonal fence or a space with a fence along one of its edges) can spend 1 MOVE DIE and 1 SKULL DIE to dismantle it (remove it from the map) and gain 1 WOOD. A unit can spend 2 MOVE DICE and 1 SKULL DIE to dismantle a wall and gain 1 ORE.

**NOTE:** Spend **+1 MOVE** to diagonally cross over the point where a fence meets another fence, a wall, or a map edge; **+2 MOVES** where a wall meets another wall or a map edge. Fence/wall tokens are interchangeable with fence/wall miniatures. Units cannot usually perform ranged attacks through constructed or building walls (as noted in unit abilities and card details), but can perform ranged attacks through fences.



## ADDITIONAL GAME RULES

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**SIX-SIDED DICE ROLLS:** When asked to roll six-sided dice (1d6, 2d6, 3d6, 4d6, etc.), use ATTACK or DEFENSE dice.

**RULE OF CHOICE:** If a situation must be resolved by making a choice, roll 1d6 for each option. Prioritize, resolve, or select the choice with the highest roll, then the next highest, and so on (reroll on a tie).

**NOT ENOUGH TOKENS:** If a player (or Auto-Enemy) wishes (or is required) to add a new token to the map, or if they wish to complete a unit action and their faction has run out of the token(s) necessary to do so, they cannot add a token.

**ADD THE LOWEST UNIT AVAILABLE TO THE MAP:** If required to add "the unit with the lowest S+D total" to the map, select from the units that are available within the faction's pool of tokens. If there is a tie, use the RULE OF CHOICE.

**ELIMINATION:** When a player has no remaining movable units and is not able to bring new units onto the map, they are ELIMINATED from the game (unless noted otherwise). Resources and other items accumulated by the units of an eliminated player remain on the map. Their saved Action Cards are DISCARDED. Their faction components, Special Ability Cards, if used, and dashboard/card are returned to the game box unless being utilized by another player.

**FORFEITING A GAME:** In a MULTIPLAYER game, when all hope is lost, a player, at the beginning of their turn, can choose to announce that they are FORFEITING their game. Non-forfeiting players can choose to keep the units of the forfeiting player on the map, utilizing them as Auto-Enemies (see AUTO-ENEMY ACTION DECKS, p.19), or can remove all of the units belonging to the forfeiting player from the map. Resources and other items accumulated by the units of the forfeiting player remain on the map. Their saved Action Cards are DISCARDED. Their faction components, Special Ability Cards, if used, and dashboard/card are returned to the game box unless being utilized by another player.

In a SOLO game, if all hope is lost or there is a stalemate, a player can choose to FORFEIT their game, ending it.

**REROLLS:** Unless noted otherwise, when performing a REROLL, the outcome of the initial roll is replaced by the outcome of the new roll.

**EXTRA ACTION DICE TOKENS:** Any extra ACTION DICE TOKENS that cannot be held in a player's GENETIC MEMORY must be discarded at the end of the current player's turn.

**DISTANCES:** If "1 space away from a unit" is written, that means a space adjacent or diagonal to that unit; "2 spaces away" means a space adjacent or diagonal to that unit, and the next orthogonal or diagonal space from that, and so on.

#### **APPENDIX 1 – WATER SPACES (MAIN MAP)**

A2, A3, B2, B3, C2, C3, C4, D2, D3, D4, E2, E3, E4, F16, G3, G4, G11, G12\*, G13 (if not on bridge), G15, G16, H3, H4, H11, H12, H13-H15 (if not on bridge), H16, I3, I4, I11, I12, I13, J3, J4, J10, J11, J12, J13, J14, K3 (if not on bridge), K4, K10, K11, K12, K13, K14, L2-L3 (if not on bridge), L10, L11, L12, L13, L14, M2, M3, N2, N3, N4, O3, O4, O5 (if not using planks), O6, P6, P7.

#### **APPENDIX 2 – ROADWAY SPACES (MAIN MAP)**

E1, E14, F1, F2, F3, F4, F8, F9, F10, F11, F12, F13, F14, G1, G2, G8, G9, G10, G12\*, G13 (if on bridge), G14, H13-H15 (if on bridge), I14, I15, J1, J15, J16, K1, K2, K3 (if on bridge), K5, K15, K16, L1, L2-L3 (if on bridge), L4, L5, L14, L15, L16, M4-M16, N6-N13, O9, O10.

#### **APPENDIX 3 – BLOCKED SPACES (UNDERGROUND MAP)**

C8, E9, H9, K3, K5, O2.

#### **APPENDIX 4 – WATER SPACES (UNDERGROUND MAP)**

A1-H1, A2-H2, A3-H3, A4-G4, K11-P11, K12-P12, K13-P13, K14-M14, K15, L15, L16-N16.

#### **APPENDIX 5 – ROADWAY SPACES (UNDERGROUND MAP)**

There are no roadway spaces on the Underground Map. On this map, PRISONERS can only be EXCHANGED on A6-C6 and A7-C7. In all Victory games, HEROES start on A7 or J1.

\* If traveling to this space from a road space, it does not count as a water space; there is no water terrain penalty.

## ORDER OF ACTIONS (Core Rules, p.9)

1. **ROLL THE ACTION DICE.**
2. **MOVE** units, **ACTIVATE** faction or unit abilities, **ENGAGE** enemies, and **DRAW** cards by spending **MOVE** and **SKULL DICE** (costs vary depending on the faction or unit ability):
  - (a) **MOVE** units by spending **MOVE DICE** (variable cost).
  - (b) **ACTIVATE** faction or unit abilities by spending **MOVE** and/or **SKULL DICE** (see faction dashboards for costs).
  - (c) **ENGAGE** enemy units in **COMBAT** (1 **MOVE DIE** per combat to engage up to 2 enemy units with up to 2 of your units).
  - (d) **DRAW** 1 **ACTION CARD** per unit on a red **ACTION CARD DRAW TOKEN** (1 **MOVE DIE**). The token is not removed.
3. Check **ANCIENT REQUIREMENTS** to determine if an **ANCIENT** can be summoned.
4. Use the **DIVINE POWER** of an Ancient, if possible.
5. **END** the turn. The next player begins their turn.

**NOTE:** Players can take some actions at any time on their turn. For example, items can be equipped or used; Action Cards can be played.

## COMBAT (Core Rules, p.13 and p.14)

When **ATTACKING**, the **STRENGTH (S)** of a character, noted on their token, represents the number of six-sided dice (d6) that are rolled to determine their **ATTACK SCORE**. When defending against an attack, the **DEFENSE (D)** of a character represents the number of d6 that are rolled to determine their **DEFENSE SCORE**.

If the **ATTACKER** has the higher score (roll total), the **DEFENDER** is defeated. The defender is either **KILLED**, taken **PRISONER**, or utilized in a faction **SPECIAL ABILITY**. If tied, or if the **DEFENDER** has the higher score (roll total), they have successfully defended. If a 6 is rolled on half (or more) of the defender's rolls, they make a **DEFENSE COUNTER ATTACK**.  
Players may choose to attack or defend with up to 2 **UNITS** at a time.