

◆ ANNIVERSARY EDITION ◆

Cutthroat CAVERNS™

by **Curt
Covert**



**Without teamwork... you'll never survive.
Without betrayal... you'll never win.**

**smirk
& dagger
games**

Watch Your Back!

Yesterday it was fun. Amusing even. Whoever landed the most killing blows of the day got bragging rights and the first pick of treasure; a jeweled dagger, a sack of opals, an arcane scroll. The evening's ale tasted all the sweeter for it.

But today, you've unearthed The One Relic, an all-consuming artifact of unspeakable power... and everything's changed. Now the first pick of treasure is the only pick that matters. Or will ever matter again. It sings to you. It claws at your mind. And you'll do anything to get it. But be careful. You'll still need their help to get out of the caverns alive.

Remember well these words –

Without teamwork, you will never survive. Without betrayal, you'll never win.

Welcome to Cutthroat Caverns.

Game Components:



6 Character Boards

6 Life Point Pegs



67 Attack Cards



19 Action Cards



8 Item Cards

1 token sheet



2 Encounter Cubes

1 for Life Points
1 for Encounter Number



28 Encounter Cards

6 Initiative Cards



Encounter Tracker Board



Object of the Game

To win, you must both escape the caverns alive AND have the most Prestige Points when the game ends, thereby earning "The One Relic of Power." To do so, you must *work together* to defeat all the creatures in the Encounter deck AND *work selfishly* to land the most killing blows, which is the primary way of gaining Prestige Points. The game ends when all the Encounters have been defeated or when all players have been killed.

Note: This is a nasty game of "kill stealing." Round to round, players will jockey for position to land the most killing blows. But eventually you will all succumb to The Relic's corrupting influence, betraying one another, even in the face of death. You will trip your fellow adventures, edge them out, place them in harm's way, all in hopes that the creatures live long enough for *you* to be able to kill them personally. But beware, the longer the creatures live, the more damage they do and the closer you all get to death. Fail to work together and you might ALL perish with no winner at all, so take care not to lose any players too soon. That said, a crafty player like yourself, who finds themselves woefully behind in Prestige towards the END of the game, may devise a way for their friends to meet a sticky end, leaving YOU as the new Prestige leader.

TRUST NO ONE.

Set Up:

- Create the **Initiative Deck**. Use only the Initiative Cards matching the number of players. *For example, in a four-player game, use "Player 1" through "Player 4," placing Initiative 5 and 6 back in the box.* Shuffle the Initiative Deck and fan them out face down on the table, so the numbers cannot be seen.
- Place the **Encounter Tracker Board** on the table. One yellow **Encounter Cube** tracks the number of Encounters faced. Place that cube on "Encounter 1" to begin the game. The other tracks the Life Points of creature. Place this cube on the Skull icon for now, until you reveal your first Encounter.
- Shuffle the 94 **Main Deck Cards** thoroughly and place them face down to form the **Draw Deck**.
- Decide upon game length. The 'classic,' standard game is approximately 90 minutes and is recommended, but you can create shorter games if time is limited.
90 minutes / 9 Encounters / 100 player Life Points, maximum
60 minutes / 6 Encounters / 70 player Life Points, maximum
40 minutes / 4 Encounters / 50 player Life Points, maximum
- Each player takes a **Character Board** and places a green **Life Point Peg** on the number of Life Points listed for the selected game length above. *(Characters are functionally identical in the base game, so choose your favorite art.)* The Life Points listed for the game lengths are maximums and cannot be raised higher than their starting totals.
- The punched cardboard tokens can stand-by inside the box or to one side of the table. They will not be used until called for by specific Encounters.

IF THIS IS YOUR FIRST GAME: Search the Encounter Cards for a card called, "Ripper" and place it aside. This is a fairly simple Encounter that will highlight many of the key game concepts and will be referenced in the Encounter rules shortly. Keep it ready as an example to show players.

• Create the Encounter Deck & Finisher:

The **Encounter Deck** represents the horrors of the caverns. To ensure that every game ends with an epic finish, we have added a new mechanic / keyword to the game, the **FINISHER**.

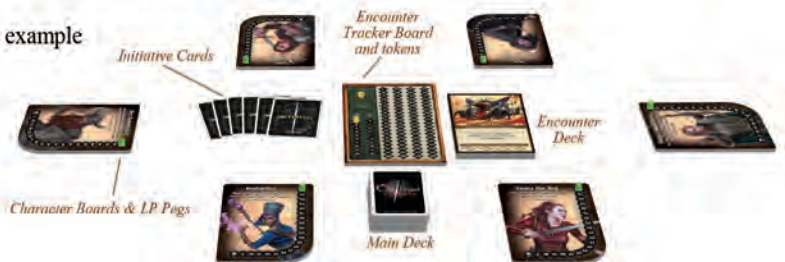
The Finisher is the final Encounter of the game, the Big Bad, so you'll want to make sure it's a tough one. The term "FINISHER" is also a new keyword found on certain Encounter Cards that tend to be more interesting or more challenging, making for more dramatic endgames. *Note: this keyword will be retroactively applied to some of your favorite Encounters from previous expansions in future reprintings as well.*



1. Choose a Finisher: As the first step in creating the Encounter Deck, players will help select the Finisher to be faced at the end of the game. Have each player look through and choose a favorite creature from the owner's collection of Encounter Cards (from this base game or any expansion). We recommend Encounters that are marked as Finishers, but a player may select ANY Encounter regardless of whether it has the FINISHER keyword or not. Shuffle the selected cards together and then choose one at random, secretly placing it face down on the table. Recollect the unused portion and all the other Encounters and shuffle them.
2. Deal a number of Encounters face down on top of the Finisher you selected. The final number of Encounters in the deck you create is based on the total listed in the game length chart above.
Example: a 90-minute game will have 1 random FINISHER and 8 random Encounter Cards, for 9 Encounters total.

IF THIS IS YOUR FIRST GAME: Deal one less face down Encounter Card and place the Ripper face up on the Encounter Deck. You will face the Ripper as your first Encounter.

Set Up example



GAMEPLAY FLOWCHART

Begin a New Encounter:

1. Reveal the top Encounter Card from the Encounter Deck.
2. Players wishing to drink (use) Potions must do so.
- (3). Draw Initiative for the first Round of the game.
(This step is only for your first Round. Thereafter, draw Initiative in step 9C or 10A/D)

Begin a Combat Round:

Player Attacks

4. All players “Set” Attack Cards.
5. Player Turns begin in Initiative Order:
 - Player #1 reveals/resolves Attack Card
 - Successful Attack(s) added to the Damage Stack
 - Check if Encounter is dead
 - Player Turn ends
6. Repeat until all players complete a Turn.
7. Party’s Combat Round ends.
8. Adjust the Life Point Cube on the Encounter Tracker LP Track

Encounter Strikes

- 9A. Resolve Encounter’s strikes against “Specific” targets.
- 9B. Discard Attack Cards on the Damage Stack.
- 9C. Draw Initiative for the next Round
- OR —
- 10A. Determine the target of an Encounter’s “Initiative-based” strike.
- 10B. Resolve Encounter strikes against “Initiative-based” targets.
- 10C. Discard Attack Cards on the Damage Stack.
- 10D. Keep your Initiative Cards as your new Initiative Order

Round Ends

11. All players draw one card from the Main Deck
(not to exceed max hand)
12. Begin a new Combat Round - until Encounter is defeated.

Ending an Encounter:

13. Award Prestige
14. Discard unwanted cards (optional) and draw up to max hand size.
15. Advance Encounter Number Cube along the Track.
16. Begin a new Encounter.

(all steps explained in greater detail on the following pages)

Cutthroat Caverns Main Deck Cards

There are three types of cards in the Draw Deck, **Attacks**, **Actions** and **Items**.

ATTACK CARDS:

Attack Cards represent a player's attacks and tactical maneuvers in combat and there are four types: *Standard, Protected, Enhanced and Tactical Maneuvers*.

Standard Attacks: These are the most common type of Attack Card. Most simply have an Attack Value on them, which is the damage you deal when you **wound** an Encounter. Attack Values range from 0 to 100 points of damage. You will quickly discover, cards with lower or zero Attack Values are *not* worthless. They have a critical role in jockeying for position to set up the final blow. For example, if you can't reliably kill the creature this turn, you may instead choose to do very little damage, so that it will live long enough for you to kill it next turn. A 'good hand' is a mixed one.

Along each edge of an Attack Card are gemstones, with smaller numbers printed on them. These numbers help track any modifications to the attack. For example, if an Attack Card is modified by another card or effect, you may need to rotate it to a new side to reflect the adjusted Attack Value.

In game terms, "Half" or "Halving" damage means rotating your Attack Card to the next lower Attack Value on the card. (This is sometimes not exactly half. The trickier values have been rounded.) As you can see in the example, the gemstones make viewing all the attack values on the Damage Stack easy.

"Double" or "Doubling" damage means rotating the Attack card to the next higher Attack Value. If there is no higher Attack Value, it cannot be "doubled" further. (Note: The 2X modifier on "Slip Behind" is an exception as it does not rotate the card it modifies. See "Riders")

Protected Attacks: These are identified by the character portraits at the bottom of certain Attack Cards. In fact, each character has four such cards, a 10, 20, 25 and 30 point attack with their picture on it. If the face shown is not your character, ignore it and treat it as a Standard Attack. However, if your character's face *does* appear on the card, it is considered a **Protected Attack** for you and has two great benefits. They may be played for double damage. Simply rotate the card to show the doubled Attack Value.

Doubling is never mandatory. More important, *once revealed*, a Protected Attack cannot be the target of "unwanted" Action Cards, making the revealed Attack card immune to being spoiled by other players.

Enhanced Attacks: These Attack Cards have additional abilities that trigger when you attack with them. For example, "Stab & Grab" allows you to steal any one Item from an opponent. "I Think he Called You Ugly, Too!" allows you to redirect a creature's strike to a new target.

Attack Modifications

Normal Attack Value

Half damage
Attack Value



Zero
Attack Value

Double damage
Attack Value

Previously
played
Attack Cards
are layered
over to show
the damage
"on the stack"



Attack 30 Rotated to "Half Damage"
on the Damage Stack. The damage total
"on the stack" is now 140 LP.



Protected Attack
for Nephredia only



ATTACK Cards:

Tactical Maneuvers

These Attack Cards are 'non-combat' cards that represent other more strategic moves in a combat. As such, they do not **wound** an Encounter, neither hitting nor inflicting damage.

"Feint" is the simplest of these, and the others are of two general types:

Stand In: (Double Strike and Opportunity Fire)

These cards are only placeholders for the actual attacks to be played this Turn. When revealed, they immediately replace themselves with new Attack Cards from your hand, per the rules on the card. Only the actual Attack Cards resulting from playing Stand In-type Attacks can be countered or affected by Action Cards or other game effects.

Example: "Critical Miss" (an Action Card) may not target a "Double Strike" card, but may target the Attack Cards put into play by "Double Strike," spoiling them both.

Note regarding interactions with the Action Card, "Edge Out": "Edge Out" must be played on a Set Attack Card **before** it is revealed. This includes Stand In cards like "Double Strike." However, once revealed, the two replacement Attack Cards resulting from "Double Strike" are not targetable by "Edge Out." This is because those cards are never Set. They simply play from the hand. Whereas the 2nd replacement Attack Card for "Opportunity Fire" specifically says that it will be Set face down, and therefore that 2nd card may be targeted.



Riders: (Focus Strength and Slip Behind)

These Attack Cards are not attacks, per se, but cause subsequent Attack Cards to be modified and enhanced. When revealed from their Set position, **Riders** are placed beside that player's Character Board. They will enhance that player's (first) Attack Card in the following Round.

(Note: Attack Cards played outside of a player's regular Turn, such as those played through the Action Card "Counter Strike" cannot have a Rider enhance it, even if one is standing-by beside your Character Board. Riders will only join together with an Attack Card in the following Round.)

When a Rider modifies an Attack Card, it is joined together with that card, 'riding' along with it, as it is placed on the Damage Stack. An Attack Card with a Rider or Riders is always considered a single attack. Should an Attack Card with a Rider be further modified, say by a "Not So Tough" Action Card, both the Attack Card AND the Rider Card would be rotated together.

"Focus Strength" is an 'additive' effect to the base attack, where "Slip Behind" is a 'multiplicative' effect. A single Attack Card may have multiple additive Riders, but only one multiplicative Rider. *Example: Two turns in a row, a player plays "Focus Strength," which will add both to their Attack next Round. But a second "Slip Behind" would only replace the first, multiplying the attack in the following Round only once.*

If a multiplicative Rider and an additive Rider modify the same attack, apply the effects in the order played. *Attack 50, Slip Behind, Focus Strength = 130*
Attack 50, Focus Strength, Slip Behind = 160.



Slip Behind 'rides' with Attack 40 as a single attack of 80 damage.



Riders are modified as a unit.

ACTION Cards:

Action Cards represent underhanded tricks to help you gain the advantage. Action Cards are always played directly from your hand – they are not “Set” face down as Attack Cards are. Action Cards play at ‘instant’ speed and may be played on another player’s turn and/or interrupt other Attacks and Action Cards.

Resolution Order: A string of Action Cards resolves in ‘last card played’ to ‘first card played’ order. Should more than one player wish to act at the same time, (for example, “Counter Strike”), and cannot be resolved otherwise, the player with the Initiative closest to “1” takes priority.

These cards will often make the difference between you scoring a kill – or robbing an opponent of one. Use them wisely.



This card is special, in that it can be played for either of its effects. State which you intend when played.

ITEM Cards:

Item Cards represent Potions and other Items you find in the caverns. As soon as you draw one from the Main Deck, it is immediately placed into play, face up beside your Character Board. It does not count as a card in your hand and may stay there indefinitely, until you are ready to use it. Items may be stolen, so wait only as long as you deem wise to use them.

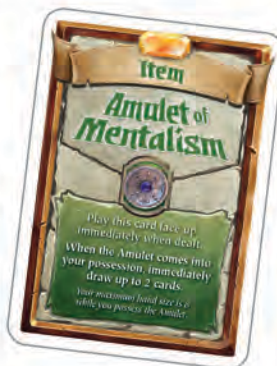
With only two exceptions, Item Cards can only be used BETWEEN Encounters, not during one. The window of opportunity to use an Item Card begins as soon as an Encounter is over, but before the first attack is revealed for the following Encounter. This means you can ‘find’ a Healing Potion by drawing it during combat, but still die during the Encounter, unable to use it. But you are able to (and should) see the next Encounter Card before making your decision.

The two exceptions are “Amulet of Mentalism,” which has a continuous effect, and “Alchemist Fire,” which states it can be used on your Turn during an Encounter.

To use an Item, simply state you are doing so. Potions will direct you to “Tip to Drink.” Rotate the card 90 degrees in a clockwise direction from “Corked” to the first gemstone on the side of the card.

Once tipped, it may not be stolen or affected by other game effects. Many Potions have a limited two-round duration, after activation.

Track the duration by rotating the card another 90 degrees at the start of each subsequent Round, until the card prompts you to “Remove” it from play. Potion effects do not carry over to the next Encounter, even if the Encounter is defeated before its effect is due to end.



Ready to use



Round 1



Round 2



Effect ends, remove from game.

IMPORTANT:

- Used Items are never shuffled back into the deck, but are removed from the game.
- You may barter or trade Items in negotiations with other players if you wish.
- Healing Potions have an added benefit. You can heal yourself – or other **willing** players. If used to aid another player, you gain 2 or 3 Prestige Points for your “generous” act. Keep the card, rotated to show the Prestige, in your Prestige pile. If your offer is rejected, the card remains unused and is immediately available to offer again or use.

Encounter Cards

Encounter Cards represent the dangers of the caverns, especially the deadly creatures you will face in combat. Each card has its own set of special rules that governs the Encounter. This makes each Encounter very unique and will require a different strategy, both as a group and an individual, to overcome. Where these rules contradict the base rules, follow those printed on the card.



Encounter Type: An Encounter's type is a keyword that may cause it to be affected by certain cards or game effects.

Set / FINISHER: This is where the FINISHER key word appears, as a recommendation for your final Encounter. This gemstone will also remind you what set the Encounter came from. All in this box are from the Base Set.

Prestige Points: These are the points awarded for landing the killing blow and ending the Encounter. Typically, 1 to 6 points. The Encounter Card can be kept by this player and placed into their Prestige pile, near their Character Board.

Encounter Stats: This chart has all the Life Point and combat details, which scale up with the number of players that *started* the game.

Starting Number of Players: Just to emphasize the point, this is not the number of players remaining in the game, but the number you started with. So, if you lose players early, you will still be facing Encounters scaled for a larger group. This is a significant danger and could lead to everyone dying with no winner.

Creature Life Points (LP): As soon as the creature takes the listed damage (or more), the Encounter is over.

Strike Matrix: This details which player(s) will be struck and for how much damage.

Tokens: Some Encounter Cards will call for the use of tokens. In this set, the Encounters "Boogens" and "Wolf Pack" have specific Creature Tokens to represent the multiple targets in the Encounter that can be targeted by Attack Cards. Other Encounters, like "Fear" and "Shift," add Prestige Tokens to show an increased threat level and richer reward.

When facing a Creature Token-based Encounter, spread out the tokens on the table and have players place their Attack Cards in front of the specific token they wish to hit. A player may choose which token to attack, as they reveal their Attack Card(s). If not sufficient to kill it, leave the card to form a Damage Stack for that Creature Token.



Playing the Game

At the beginning of the game, each player draws cards from the Main Deck to fill their hand to maximum hand size (normally 7 cards).

BEGIN A NEW ENCOUNTER

1. Reveal the top Encounter Card from the Encounter Deck

Have one player read the Encounter Card to all players. Check the Encounter Stats for the Life Point total appropriate to the number of players who *started* the game and place the Life Point Cube on this number on the Track.

2. **Players wishing to drink (use) Potions must do so.** This decision must be made before the Combat Round begins. Once an Attack Card is revealed, the window of opportunity is closed.

(3). Draw Initiative to begin the first Round of the game. Thereafter, this procedure occurs at step 9C or 10A/D.

Shuffle and fan out the Initiative Cards face down and have each player draw one at random. Place that card face up beside your Character Board so that all players can see the Initiative Order for the Round.

BEGIN A COMBAT ROUND

Player Attacks

4. All players 'Set' Attack Cards

Each player selects one Attack Card from their hand and places it face down next to their Initiative Card. This card remains secret until it is revealed on your Turn. A Set Attack Card may be rethought and switched before the first Attack Card is revealed in a Round, but not afterwards.

Because only the killing blow will award Prestige, plan your attack carefully to increase the odds that your attack will kill the creature - or sets you up for the opportunity to do so on a following Turn. Swing too hard and you may hand the kill to another player. Swing too light, and the creature will brutalize you all. Remember that Action Cards may change things for the better or worse during game play, so plan as best you can as you jockey for position.

If during the course of play, you end up without any Attack Cards in your hand, you must Set an Action Card instead. You may Set an Action Card *only* if you have no Attack Cards. Note that an Action Card cannot legally be played from this position and is discarded without effect when revealed.

Likewise, if a Set Attack Card does not get played for any reason, discard it at the end of the Round.

5. Player Turns, in Initiative Order

Each player will take their Turn in order of the Initiative Card they drew, starting with Player #1.

On a player's Turn, they flip over their Set Attack Card(s) and deal the damage to the Encounter - and/or resolve any other effects of that Attack Card.

"Successful" vs "Unsuccessful" attacks. A *successful attack* occurs when a player reveals their Attack Card and **wounds** the Encounter, by both hitting and dealing damage to it. An *unsuccessful attack* is one that has been prevented by an opponent's use of an Action Card like "Edge Out" or cancelled by Action Cards like "Critical Miss" or "Trip". Such attacks are considered **spoiled** and are discarded immediately. If the Encounter is not wounded by a player's attack, the creature effectively ignores the attack as though it was never played.

Remember that certain Attack Cards, Riders like "Focus Strength" and "Slip Behind," are ignored by the Encounter but will add bonuses to your attack next Round. These cards should be placed face up beside your Initiative Card until they are joined with your next Attack Card in the following Round.

Attacks that successfully wound the Encounter are placed in a line beside the Encounter Card, forming a Damage Stack. Layer these cards so that the top gemstone of the previously played cards remain visible. In this example, 105 damage has been dealt to the Encounter. Stacking the cards, as opposed to moving the Life Point token on the Tracker, is important because certain cards and creatures can affect and modify attacks on the Damage Stack.



Check to see if the player's attack has reduced the Life Points of the Encounter to zero (or below), killing the creature, or has otherwise defeated the Encounter per the special rules on the Encounter Card. If so, skip to **Ending the Encounter**. If not, the player with the next highest Initiative will take their Turn.

6. Repeat until all players complete a Turn.

7. When all players have had a Turn, the party's Combat Round is over.

8. Adjust Encounter's Life Point Cube. Total the damage of all the Attack Cards on the Damage Stack and move the Encounter's Life Point Cube on the tracker accordingly. *Do not discard the Attack Cards yet.*

Encounter Strikes:

If the Encounter has not been defeated, after all players have had their Turn, the Encounter will **strike** and /or otherwise act per the special rules on the Encounter Card. *Creatures never miss.* When an Encounter strikes the party, consult both the special rules on the Encounter Card and the Stats on the bottom of the card. This information will outline who will be struck and for how much damage. Some Encounters will strike a player (or players) at random, in an **Initiative-based Strike**. Others use a **Specific Strike** targeting a certain player (or players) based on a known criteria in their rules text.

9A. Resolve Encounter's strikes against "Specific" targets: The Encounter text will specify who will be targeted, based on a player's behavior that Round. For example, "FEAR strikes the player who wounded it the most in the Round." As the conditions are known, this foreknowledge may adjust how you play, allowing you to avoid the attack or otherwise influence who will be targeted. If players **tie** for an Encounter's targeting conditions, both tied players are struck - and may mean additional targets are struck as well. If the text says something like "strikes the top 2 players who wounded it the most," tied players are both considered the first 'most,' leaving the player of the second 'most' damage a target for the second strike.

Example: In a 5-player game, Vasha and Orn are tied for "most" damage, having both played Attack 40 cards. The second highest attack came from Nyx, who did 25 LP damage to FEAR. Talon played Attack 10 and Edaiyn did not wound FEAR at all. // Vasha and Orn share "the most" and are both struck. Nyx is "2nd most" and is also struck.
Note: all damage comparisons (most, least, first, last) refer to the damage done **this Round**, ignoring previous Rounds.

9B. Discard Attack Cards on the Damage Stack and place them in the Discard pile.

9C. Draw Initiative for the next Round. Shuffle and fan out the Initiative Cards face down and have each player draw one at random. Place that card face up beside your Character Board so that all players can see the Initiative Order for the upcoming Round.

— OR —

10A. Determine the target of an Encounter's "Initiative-based" Strike

Many Encounters target players based on their Initiative number. For example, "Strikes Player #1 for 10 LP." This is also referred to as a 'random' strike. Unlike a Specific Strike, the target of the strike is unknown during a Round. Shuffle and fan out the Initiative Cards face down and have each player draw one at random to determine who will be hit by the Encounter's strike.

NOTE: Beginning players commonly misinterpret the targeting text in the strike matrix, thinking that "Player #1," refers to whomever holds that Initiative Card **during** the Combat Round. Make a special point of reminding players of this when you read the targeting details for your first Encounter with an Initiative-based Strike. "Ripper strikes Player #1 for 10 damage... but not THIS Player 1 (pointing to current Initiative). We will be redrawing Initiative, so it will be random."

10B. Resolve Encounter strikes against "Initiative-based" targets: Resolve the damage and any additional effects.

10C. Discard Attack Cards on the Damage Stack and place them in the Discard pile.

10D. Keep your Initiative Cards as your new Initiative Order for the next Round.

ROUND ENDS

11. All players draw one card from the Main Deck.

Players only draw a single card at the end of a Combat Round. They do not refill their hands. Depending on how many cards they played during the round, they may not have a full hand of 7 cards.

12. Begin a new Combat Round.

ENDING AN ENCOUNTER

13. Award Prestige

When the Encounter has been killed or otherwise defeated, the player who defeated it gains the Prestige Points listed on the card. The range is typically from 1 to 6 Prestige Points. The Encounter Card is placed into a Prestige pile near their Character Board, as would any other sources of Prestige from Creature or Prestige tokens.

14. Discard any unwanted cards (optional) and draw cards up to your maximum hand size (normally 7).

Just remember, low cards are not 'bad' cards.

15. Advance the Encounter Number Cube along the Track.

You will note that Encounters 7 and higher have Bonus Prestige listed. After all, as the exit draws nearer, the kills become more meaningful. If the Round calls for Bonus Prestige, place a Prestige token of the value shown beside the Encounter to be awarded in addition to the Prestige listed on the Encounter Card.

You will also note that the Encounter Number goes to "10+". This is because Encounters can be added to the game via various means, including a Tie Breaker Round (see below).

16. Begin a new Encounter.

ENDING THE GAME

When the last Encounter in the Encounter Deck is defeated, the game is over. The player with the highest number of Prestige Points wins the game!

However, if there is a tie, the party is waylaid by an additional Encounter, lurking near the exit. Draw an Encounter Card at random from the unused cards in the box and Begin a New Encounter. Continue until, at the end of an Encounter, one player has broken the tie and possesses the most Prestige Points. That player walks away with untold power and glory in the palm of their hand... leaving the rest of you in a smoldering heap.

Dealing with Dead Players:

If a player loses all their Life Points, they are dead and out of the game. Their Prestige is lost.

Remove the highest Initiative Card from the game to reflect the new number of players.

If that player held any Items, their body may be looted. At the end of the current Encounter, draw Initiative.

In Initiative Order, players may choose an Item from the dead player, starting with Player #1.

REMEMBER: Killing players early is dangerous. The Encounters will continue to have stats based on the number of players who started the game. They don't get weaker when you lose a player. And if you all die, you all lose.

Table Talk: Goading, smack talk, negotiation and formation of loose alliances can be as important as skillful card play. That said, players may not discuss the specific cards they have (or do not have) in their hand. You may only speak in broad general terms. For example, facing the Arc Mages, you can (as Player #1) that you are doing the best possible Attack for the party in first position (and we might assume 0 or 5LP). Someone else might say, "I wish I could do better, but it isn't horrible" (and we assume 30 perhaps).

OPTIONAL RULES

The Treasure Trove / Relic Cards: Included in the Anniversary Edition of the game are 12 Relic Cards. Relic and Event Cards were introduced in Expansion 2, Relics & Ruin. Event Cards change the nature of Encounters you face, making them harder, and provide a way to earn Relic Cards. We decided not to add the complication of Event Cards to the base game, but created this simple, optional rule to bring the fun of the Relic Cards to the game in a new way.

During Set Up, shuffle and deal out a number of Relic Cards equal to the number of players, plus 1.

Then, after the first Encounter is defeated, the adventurers discover a treasure room. Have the player with the highest Initiative Card (6, or next highest) draw 2 cards, examine them and keep one. Place the other face down, back on the stack. The next Initiative (5, or next highest) repeats this process, until all players have chosen one Relic. Discard the remaining card and place the chosen Relics face up on the table next to your Character Boards. They are public knowledge.

Relics are Items. Unlike the Item Cards found in the Main Deck, Relics tend to remain in play indefinitely. As Items, Relics can be stolen by "Stab & Grab." NOTE: Two Relic Cards in this set are marked by star icons. These cards have much more of an impact on game play and are not recommended for your first game.

More Relics and Event Cards can be found in expansions 2 through 5 (as well as roughly 100 other Encounters to face). Once your collection includes Event Cards, discontinue use of the Treasure Trove rule.

GLOSSARY / FAQ

Engaged: A player is engaged with an Encounter when that player has played any Attack Card (other than a Rider) on the creature in question, even if the Attack Card was rendered unsuccessful. This terminology is particularly important during Encounters like The Boogens, where the Chieftain will not strike a player until they have engaged him.

Wounded: Players and Encounters are wounded when they are hit and dealt damage successfully.

Sacrifice / Lose Life Points: This is a loss of Player Life Points that cannot be prevented or redirected to another target.

Set Attack: This is an Attack Card placed face down next to an Initiative Card, in preparation for the coming Combat Round.

Separate Attacks: When a player may play multiple Attack Cards in a Round that are "treated as Separate Attacks," they are treated individually in all respects. Examples: In a Token Encounter, you may select different targets for each attack. When facing the Arc Mages, the damage done must increase in value for each of the Attack Cards you play.

Turn, Out of Turn, Lose a Turn, Can't Attack this Turn: It is your "Turn" when it becomes your Initiative in the Combat Round. During your Turn you reveal Set Attack Cards to attack the Encounter and as well as any activity that specifically says it is to be played on your Turn (Alchemist Fire, as an example). Most Action Cards and certain Attack Cards, like "Counter Strike," are considered "Out of Turn" because they do not need to be played when it is your Initiative. All "Out of Turn" cards can therefore still be played even if you "Lose a Turn" or "Can't attack this Turn."

Creature Strikes: A strike from an Encounter refers to all effects of that attack; damage and otherwise. An effect is connected to the damage. So by redirecting the damage, you also redirect any additional effects the strike may have. When a player is wounded, damage and their effects must resolve completely before playing a response. Example: When hit by the Ripper, you must take the damage and discard a card at random BEFORE you could play "Counter Strike," assuming you still hold it.

Creatures always get the full number of strikes they are due. If for some reason a creature with an Initiative-based strike tries to strike Player #3 in a three-player game and that player is dead, assign that damage to the next logical player (Player #2). It also means that if you are the last surviving player and the creature strikes Player #1 and #2, you will be hit twice!

Token Creatures: Clarifications. 1. If your attack does more than lethal damage to a Token Creature, the excess damage does not spill over to an additional target. 2. In the case of Boogens, when the Chieftain dies, the remaining tokens are discarded.

Double Strike: When playing your two replacement Attack Cards, if one is a second "Double Strike" you would play a total of three Attack Cards this Round. If one of those was a Rider ("Focus Strength" or "Slip Behind") it would modify your attack next Round, not one of the Attack Cards played Out of Turn through "Double Strike."

Plan 'B': You may not avoid a creature's Initiative-based strike with this card. You can switch Initiative Cards only after any Initiative-based strike. This card is intended for offensive planning, not defense.

I Think He Called You Ugly, Too!: Example: If the Encounter would have struck Player #1 and #2, it instead strikes the named player and Player #2. If the named player happens to also be Player #2, they are struck twice. In a Specific Strike where two players have tied for "most" or "least," you may choose one of the tied players to be spared from the strike.

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