ASCENSION™

RETURN OF THE FALLEN

RULEBOOK

ASCENSION™

RETURN OF THE FALLEN

My divinations relate a frightful tale- I have seen cosmic events of the darkest portent. There lately came to the yawning gate of death a divine spirit, wrathful and red, not to be mistaken for a mortal will. The Gatekeeper knelt and, with two hands, plucked it from the stream of souls, brushing stars from the pulsating force like so many burrs.

"This soul is familiar," said the Gatekeeper. Then was heard a viper's voice, as if spoken from five mouths at once: *It is because I created you. You must release me.*

"Yet, I am bound to send you on your way," the Gatekeeper replied. "You wore a mortal skin. You must suffer a mortal fate."

No, Kythis. You are bound no longer. Forbear my fate, Gatekeeper, and I shall absolve you of yours. It is still within my power.

Thus, Samael the Fallen was spared exile to Deofol—at the cost of leaving death's river-bank forever unwatched, the gate untended, and all wills condemned to purgatory.

Now, the flames of war again decorate the horizon. Terror grips the frontier, so recently re-settled, only to be submerged anew in the blood of mortals. With the Gatekeeper gone, the souls torn from the bodies of Vigil's defenders will know no respite unless all is set right.

Let a call echo across all of Vigil. The bickering that came in war's wake must end. A God-slayer must take up arms a second time.

The Fallen has returned.



OVERVIEW

In *Ascension: Return of the Fallen*, players take on the roles of great leaders trying to assemble armies to defeat an ancient evil who they had thought vanquished. Each turn, you will play cards from your hand to gain Runes, Power, or other effects (like drawing cards). You can spend Runes to acquire new cards for your deck. Power is used to defeat Monsters, which earns you Honor and other rewards. The cards you can acquire and Monsters you can fight are constantly changing, so you always have different decisions to make!

CONTENTS

- **1 Game Board**

- **30 Beads**:
  - 15 Small 1 Honor clear tokens
  - 15 Large 5 Honor red tokens

- **120 Cards**:
  - 2 Personal starting decks, each containing 8 Apprentice and 2 Militia cards
  - 35 "Always available" cards:
    - 1 Cultist
    - 17 Mystics
    - 17 Heavy Infantry
  - 65 Center Deck cards

SETUP

Ascension: Return of the Fallen can be played as a two-player game by itself, or be combined with *Ascension: Chronicle of the Godslayer* to play with 2-6 players. To play *Return of the Fallen* by itself, simply follow the instructions below. To play the combined game, shuffle the center deck from each set together before you begin.

Each player has a personal deck consisting of eight Apprentice and two Militia cards.

Each player shuffles his or her deck and draws five cards (leaving five cards in his or her deck).

Take the Heavy Infantry, Mystic, and Cultist cards and set them to the side in reach of all players. These cards represent characters in your kingdom and are always available to be acquired or defeated on your turn.

Shuffle all of the other cards face down to form the Center Deck.

From the Center Deck, flip six cards face up in a row between all players. This forms the Center Row.

Place the Center Deck on one side of the Center Row.

Reserve space on the other side of the Center Row for the Void. When a Monster in the Center Row is defeated or any other card is banished, it goes to the Void.

Place 30 Honor tokens on the table for each player. Large red Honor tokens are worth 5 points. Small clear Honor tokens are worth 1 point. For games with three or more players, higher Honor totals are used than in *Ascension: Chronicle of the Godslayer.*

Two Players = 60 Honor
Three Players = 90 Honor
Four Players = 120 Honor
Five Players = 150 Honor
Six Players = 180 Honor

Randomly determine which player goes first.



LAYOUT



Honor Tokens

Mystic, Heavy Infantry, and Cultist

Center Deck



Void (reserved)

Center Row









Starting Hand (5 cards)



Personal Deck

(10 cards:
8 Apprentice, 2 Militia)

Personal Deck
(remaining 5 cards)



HEROES



FACTION
There are four different factions in Ascension - Mechana, Void, Lifebound, and Enlightened - each representing one of the worlds coming to your aid in battle.

EFFECT
What the Hero does when you play it.

HONOR
How much Honor this card is worth. At the end of the game the player with the most total Honor from their cards and tokens wins the game.

COST
Number of Runes you must spend to acquire this card.

FLAVOR TEXT
Each faction has its own style of flavor text. Flavor text has no game effect.

EXPANSION SYMBOL
The color of the symbol tells you how many copies of the card are in the deck.

- UNIQUE
- TWO COPIES
- THREE COPIES
- FOUR COPIES

Heroes are the champions you recruit to aid you in your fight against the Fallen One. You can play any number of Hero cards from your hand each turn. When you play a Hero from your hand, you gain the effect listed on the card. It stays in front of you until the end of the turn, and then it goes to your discard pile.

CONSTRUCTS

NAME

FACTION
There are four different factions in Ascension - Mechana, Void, Lifebound, and Enlightened - each representing one of the worlds coming to your aid in battle.

EFFECT
What the Construct does each turn it is in play.

HONOR
How much Honor this card is worth. At the end of the game the player with the most total Honor from their cards and tokens wins the game.



COST
Number of Runes you must spend to acquire this card.

FLAVOR TEXT
Each faction has its own style of flavor text. Flavor text has no game effect.

EXPANSION SYMBOL
The color of the symbol tells you how many copies of the card are in the deck.

- UNIQUE
- TWO COPIES
- THREE COPIES
- FOUR COPIES

Constructs are the many weapons, magical items, and fantastical devices you may acquire to use in your battles. Unlike Heroes, when you play a Construct, it stays in play and continues to help you turn after turn. You can play any number of Construct cards from your hand each turn. You can use a Construct's effect each turn, including the turn you play it.



MONSTERS



POWER
How much power you must spend to defeat this Monster.

REWARD
What you get and/or penalties your opponents suffer when you defeat this Monster.

EXPANSION SYMBOL
The color of the symbol tells you how many copies of the card are in the deck.

- UNIQUE
- TWO COPIES
- THREE COPIES
- FOUR COPIES

Monsters are the minions of the Fallen One that are trying to break through and destroy your world of Vigil. Whenever you defeat a Monster you get its reward immediately. Monsters do not go into your personal deck.

Defeating Monsters gives you rewards, including Honor, which is the victory condition of Ascension. When you earn Honor for defeating a Monster, simply collect the appropriate number of Honor tokens and place them in front of you.

GAMEPLAY

General Rules

At any time, if your personal deck is empty and you need to draw a card, reshuffle the discard pile to replenish your deck. If the Center Deck runs out, reshuffle the Void to replenish it.

Hero cards played during your turn go into the discard pile at the end of your turn. (In other words, don't reshuffle Hero cards you've played this turn if you need to reshuffle your discard pile in the middle of your turn.)

Cards you acquire during your turn are placed in your discard pile.

Whenever a card leaves the Center Row, replace it immediately from the Center Deck. This happens before anything else occurs. Any time a player is making a decision, there should be six cards in the Center Row.

Some cards have effects when they enter the Center Row. The effects of these cards occur immediately, including at the start of the game when the Center Row is first dealt. These are called Fate cards, and their effects are written in white text within a black textbox, labeled with the Fate keyword.

Many cards will have text that contradicts these rules. If card text ever contradicts the rules, follow the card text instead.

Turn Breakdown

1. Play cards from your hand to gain Runes, Power, and Honor. Acquire Heroes and Constructs and put them in your discard pile for future turns. Defeat Monsters for rewards and Honor.
2. Place played Hero cards in your discard pile after you are done acquiring and defeating cards.



To play a Hero card from your hand, simply place the card face up in front of you, announce its effect, and follow the instructions on the card. Any Rune or Attack gained remain available until the end of the turn unless spent. You do not have to pay any costs to play Heroes from your hand.

Example: Black Watch Elite says "Gain Attack 3. You may banish a card from your hand or discard pile." When you play the card, you must decide what card you want to banish immediately, but you can wait until later of the turn to use the Attack generated.

Constructs are played just like Heroes, except Constructs remain in play and can be used every turn. If a Construct has multiple abilities, each one may be used once per turn.

Example: Serpentcall says "Once per turn, gain Rune 2. Once per turn, you may acquire a Hero from the Void by paying its Rune cost." You may use the Construct to produce Runes and later in the turn use its second power to acquire a Hero from the Void, or vice versa.

Acquiring Heroes and Constructs

You need Runes to acquire Heroes and Constructs. Runes come from Heroes played from your hand or from Constructs you have in play. You may acquire any number of cards as long as you have enough Runes. To find out how many Runes you get from a card, look in the text box of the card. If a card provides Runes, there will be a Rune symbol with a number.



Lunar Stag costs three Runes to acquire.



You can get two Runes from playing it.

You may acquire any Hero or Construct in the Center Row as well as Mystics and Heavy Infantry, which are always available. When you acquire a card, place it in your discard pile and replace the card in the Center Row.



Defeating Monsters

To defeat a Monster, a player must have enough **Power** (generated by cards with ◉ in their text box — e.g., **Heavy Infantry**). A card's Power is found in its game text box. Cards that generate Power will have a Power Icon with a number.

The **Defeat Cost** of a Monster is listed in the upper-right corner of the card. This cost has a Power Icon behind it.

When you defeat a Monster, you gain a **Reward**. Most rewards include **Honor**, and how much Honor you gain is equal to the number indicated on the Honor symbol (★). If the Monster has another effect as part of its reward, that effect occurs immediately after the card is replaced in the Center Row. (It cannot be saved until a future turn.)

After defeating a Monster, place it in the **Void** and replace it in the Center Row (see *Acquiring Heroes and Constructs* on pg. 9). You may defeat any number of Monsters as long as you have enough Power.

The Cultist is always available to defeat and is never banished to the Void. There is no limit to how many times you can defeat the Cultist in one turn.





Ending Your Turn

After you are done playing cards from your hand, acquiring **Heroes** and **Constructs**, and defeating **Monsters**, place any remaining cards in your hand and any Heroes played during your turn into your discard pile.

Draw five cards to replenish your hand. If you run out of cards in your deck and need to draw more, simply reshuffle your discard pile into your deck. When you end your turn, play passes clockwise around the table.

Game End

The game ends when a certain amount of **Honor** has been earned, depending on the number of players.

Two Players = 60 Honor
Three Players = 90 Honor
Four Players = 120 Honor
Five Players = 150 Honor
Six Players = 180 Honor

Set this much Honor aside in Honor tokens before starting the game. When the final Honor token is earned, the game ends at the end of the current round (after the last player to start the game takes a turn). Thus, each player will play the same number of turns during the course of the game (not counting any extra turns taken through the use of cards like *Tablet of Time's Dawn*). Players can still gain Honor even when the set number of Honor tokens is gone. Use additional Honor tokens left over to track any Honor earned by players before the game ends.

Cards in each player's deck are also worth Honor, indicated by the number in the Honor symbol (★)on the bottom, left-hand corner of the card. When the game is over, count the Honor from Heroes and Constructs (this includes your hand, deck, discard pile, and played Constructs), along with all Honor tokens acquired during the game. The player with the most total Honor is the winner!

If multiple players have the same number of Honor Points, the last player to start wins (i.e., the starting player loses all ties, the second player loses to third and fourth, etc.).

GAMEPLAY VARIANTS

Team Play

Number of Players: 4 or 6 (in teams of 2)

Rules:
- Set aside 30 Honor tokens per player.
- Teammates sit across from one other.
- Your teammate is not harmed by the rewards from any Monsters you defeat (e.g. if you kill a Vaultbreaker Wurm, your teammate does not have to lose a Construct)
- You may spend one additional  when you acquire a card to add that card to your teammate's deck instead of yours.
- At the end of the game, combine your Honor total with that of your teammate's to determine the winning team!

Solitaire

Number of Players: 1

Rules:
- Set aside 50 Honor tokens.
- Lay out the Center Row as normal, but whenever a card leaves the Center Row, the replacement card always enters on the left-hand side and the remaining cards slide over to the right.
- You take the first turn of the game. At the end of each of your turns, Samael is considered to acquire or defeat the two cards furthest to the right in the Center Row.
- All cards acquired by Samael are set aside and only used to determine his Honor total at the end of the game.
- Any Monsters defeated go to the Void, and Samael receives any Honor from their reward. All other effects are ignored.
- Continue playing this way until the last Honor token is gone, then compare your score to the total Honor earned by Samael. If you have more Honor, you win!

GLOSSARY

Heroes: Heroes are the champions you recruit to aid you in your fight against the Fallen One. When you play a Hero from your hand, you gain the effect listed on the card, and then it goes to your discard pile at the end of your turn.

Constructs: Constructs are the many weapons, magical items, and fantastical devices you may acquire to use in your battles. After you play a Construct from your hand, you can gain an effect from it every turn it remains in play.

Monsters: Monsters are the minions of the Fallen One that are trying to break through and destroy your world. Defeating Monsters gives you rewards, including Honor that wins you the game.

Runes ( ): Runes are one of the two main resources of the world of Ascension. Runes are used to acquire Heroes and Constructs so you can add them to your deck.

Power ( ): Power is the second resource in Ascension. Power is used to defeat Monsters and earn rewards.

Honor ( ): Honor is the key to victory in Ascension. Whoever earns the most Honor wins the game.

Banish: When a card is banished, it is placed in the Void pile. Defeated Monsters are also banished to the Void. Players cannot interact with anything in the Void unless they have cards that allow them to do so. Banishing weaker cards like Apprentices and Militia from your personal deck can increase your chances of drawing more powerful cards that you acquire during the game.

Have questions about Ascension strategies and gameplay? Wondering what happens if both Askara of Fate and Arbiter of Fate are flipped onto the opening board?

Check out the official Ascension F.A.Q. at **www.AscensionGame.com/FAQ**

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