Pathfinder® Adventure Card Game™

Skull & Shackles

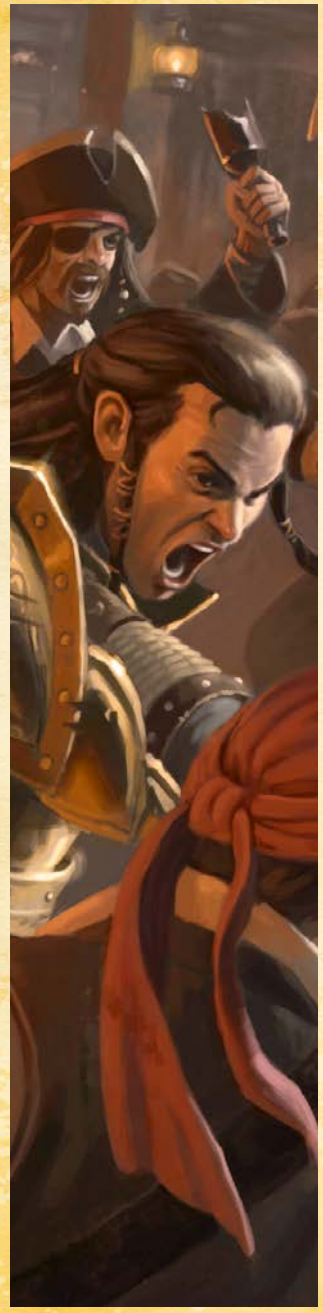
Base Set Rulebook



Welcome to the Shackles.

The shipping lanes of Golarion are filled with fat merchant vessels laden with trade goods... and the swift pirate ships that prey upon them. Under the banner of the Hurricane King, buccaneers sally forth from the Shackles, an archipelago of lawless pirate ports. Scoundrels plunder the shipping routes of countless countries before vanishing into the maze of islands they call home.

Now a crew of press-ganged strangers has seized their own ship. Soon, they'll be embroiled in the plots and politics of the Shackles, where rival scalawags, enemy navies, and legendary sea monsters await... and the infamous Hurricane King is ready to watch them walk the plank.



OBJECT OF THE GAME

In the Pathfinder Adventure Card Game, your party of adventurers races against time on a quest to defeat a dangerous villain. Each player has a deck of cards representing a character. In most scenarios, your characters explore a variety of locations as you try to hunt down the villain. You'll need to clean out or protect these locations so you can corner the villain and defeat him before time runs out. As you play more games, you'll complete scenarios, improve your deck, customize your character, and take on more and more powerful challenges.

CARD SETS

The *Skull & Shackles Base Set* is one of several Pathfinder Adventure Card Game products. This box contains everything that 1–4 players need to begin the game, including the base card set for *Skull & Shackles*. Included in the same box is your first Adventure Deck, *The Wormwood Mutiny*, which provides the cards needed to tell the first chapter of the *Skull & Shackles* story. Other Adventure Decks, available separately, continue the adventure by adding new locations to explore, new villains to fight, new loot to acquire, and much more. The *Skull & Shackles Character Add-On Deck*, also available separately, adds new characters, monsters, and other cards; it also increases the maximum number of players to 6.

Each Skull & Shackles card is marked with a pair of set indicators: the top of each card features the logo of the Adventure Path, and a letter or number in the upper-right corner identifies the specific product that the card came from. This might be a letter, such as **B** (indicating the card is part of the base set) or **C** (indicating that it's from the *Character Add-On Deck*); adventure deck numbers from **1** to **6** indicate that the card is part of one of six Adventure Decks for Skull & Shackles.

Also available separately are a variety of Class Decks. Each one includes several different versions of a specific character type (for example, the *Fighter Class Deck* has four different fighter characters) and a variety of cards that are useful for those characters. Since Class Decks are designed for use with any Adventure Path, Class Deck cards are marked with the name of the Class Deck instead of the logo of an Adventure Path. Class Deck cards are also marked with the letter **B** or numbers from **1** to **6** in the upper right.

To the left of the letter or number, you'll find the card type. There are more than a dozen different card types in the Pathfinder Adventure Card

RULES SIDEBARS

Throughout this rulebook, you'll find a number of sidebars that look like this one. These sidebars explain general rules that deserve special attention. Make sure you read them all!

STRATEGY SIDEBARS

You'll also find a variety of sidebars that look like this one. These offer advice about game strategy. If you prefer to develop strategies on your own as you play, feel free to skip these sidebars—you won't miss any rules!

EXAMPLE SIDEBARS

Sidebars that look like this provide examples. Don't miss the example of an entire turn on page 26!

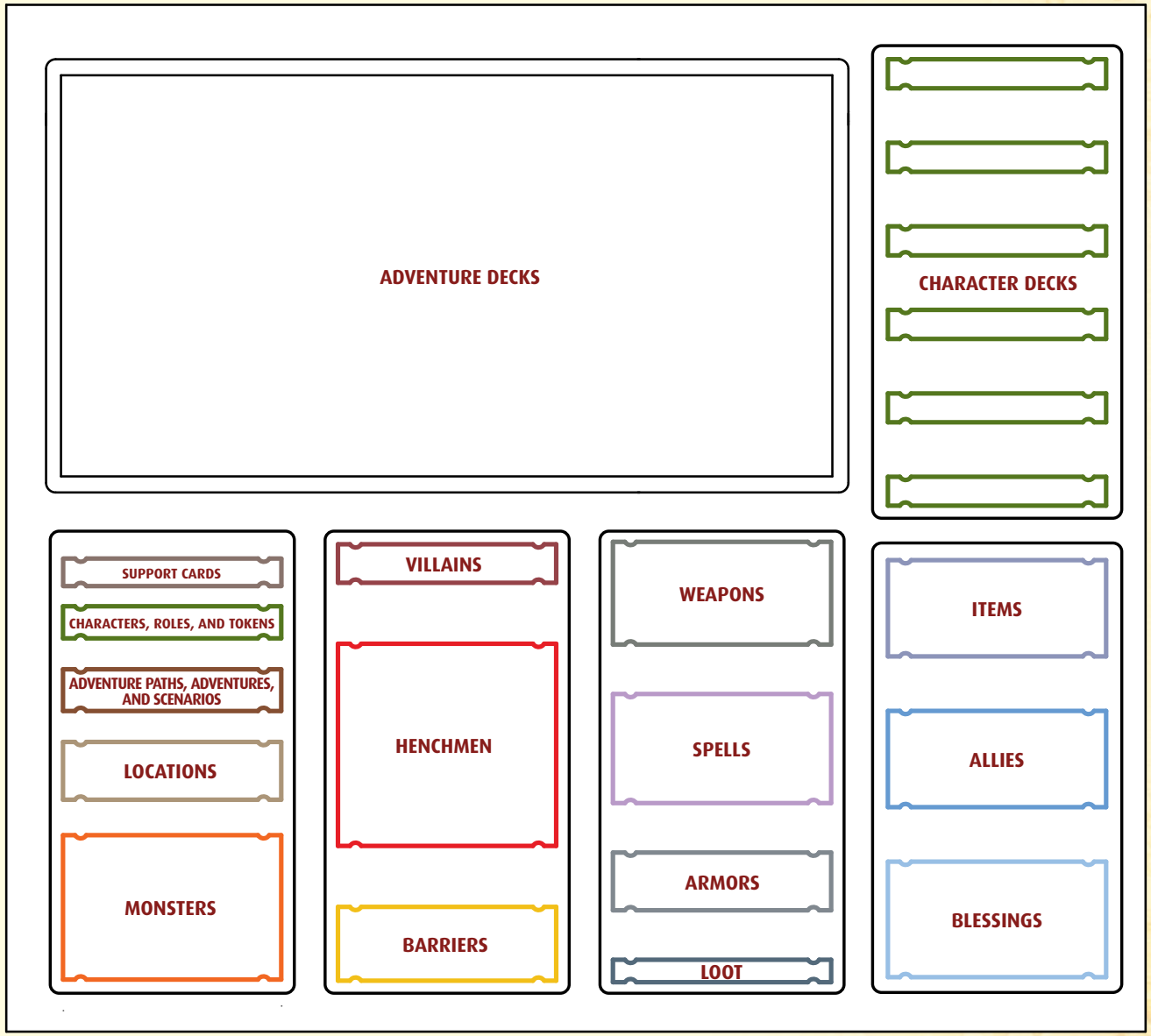
NEW SIDEBARS

If you already know how to play the Pathfinder Adventure Card Game, but you haven't played Skull & Shackles, keep an eye out for sidebars that look like this. They spotlight noteworthy changes to the rules for this Adventure Path.

RULES: THE GOLDEN RULE

If a card and this rulebook are ever in conflict, the card should be considered correct. There is one exception to this: When the rulebook uses the word "never," no card can overrule it. If cards conflict with one another, then Adventure Path cards overrule adventures, adventures overrule scenarios, scenarios overrule locations, locations overrule support cards, support cards overrule characters, and characters overrule other card types. Despite this hierarchy, if one card tells that you cannot do something and another card tells you that you can, comply with the card that tells you that you cannot. If a card instructs you to do something impossible, like draw a card from an empty deck, ignore that instruction.

TRAY LAYOUT



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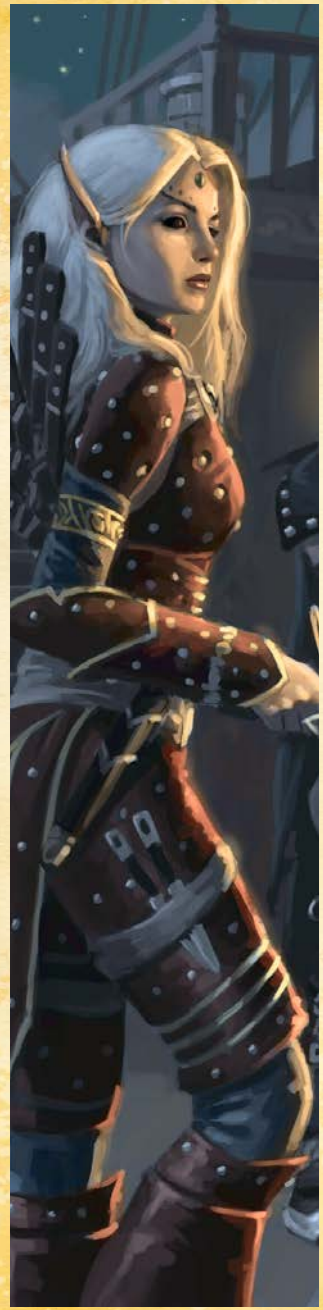


Game. Among them are character cards, roles, and tokens; story cards, which include an Adventure Path, adventures, and scenarios; locations; support cards, which include a fleet card and ships; banes, which include villains, henchmen, monsters, and barriers; and boons, which include weapons, spells, armors, items, allies, loot, and blessings.

On story cards, location cards, and ships, the side with the more colorful version of the artwork is the face; the less colorful side is the back.

For your first play session, you'll need only the base cards, so leave *The Wormwood Mutiny* sealed for now. If you own the *Character Add-On Deck*, go ahead and combine that set with the cards in the base set as described in Organizing Your Cards (see below). If you own any Class Decks, you may also add any cards from them that have a **B** in the upper-right corner.

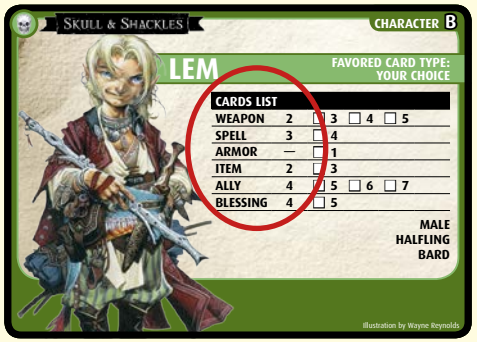
We have also published a number of promotional cards; these are marked with the letter **P** in the upper-right corner. If you have a character promo card, you can use it right away, but you shouldn't add other promo cards to the game until you begin the first chapter of the Adventure Path. If you have a ship promo card, as soon as you have checked off any ships of the same class on your fleet card, you may treat the promo card as if it has been checked off as well (see Place Your Party's Ship on page 7).

ORGANIZING YOUR CARDS

The way you organize your cards is important, since there are times when you'll need to quickly locate specific cards during play. The box includes a special tray to keep all of the cards organized. It has room for the cards from the base card set, the *Character Add-On Deck*, and all six Adventure Decks.

Each type of card has its own place in the box, so you'll need to divide up the cards by type as shown in the illustration. For now, leave the character deck slots empty. You'll build your first decks soon. Note that there are no loot cards in either the base card set or the *Character Add-On Deck*; they're found only in Adventure Decks.

When you use adventures, scenarios, locations, ships, villains, henchmen, and loot, you'll often be asked to locate specific cards. You may wish to alphabetize the cards within each type to help you find them quickly during play. Group the character, token, and role cards by character. The other card types should have their cards shuffled, as you will often be asked to draw random cards from those groups.



Lem's deck includes 2 weapons, 3 spells, no armors, 2 items, 4 allies, and 4 blessings. (The checkboxes are for card feats he'll gain later.)

SETTING UP

Preparation is essential to a successful voyage. If your crew and your ship aren't supplied with the things you need, you'll just have to find them along the way... or take them by force.

Choose Your Character. Each player chooses one character card; this represents the character you'll be playing in the game. Characters have skills, which tell you which dice to roll when you attempt a check; powers, which are special things you can do before, during, or after the game; and other details that make them different from one another (see Character Cards on page 20). You might use some of your character's powers at the start of the game, so read them right away.

Locate the token card that matches your character card. Then place both on the table in front of you.

Build Your Character. Each character needs a character deck; if you don't already have one, you'll need to build one. If you'd like to start playing quickly, use the suggested deck for your character provided at the back of this rulebook (see Suggested Deck Lists on page 28). Alternatively, you can choose your own cards to create your deck. The Cards List on your character card indicates the exact quantity of each card type that you must choose from the box to make up your character's deck. You may choose only cards with the word "Basic" in the list of traits underneath the card name.

Trade Cards If You Like. Before starting a scenario, players may freely trade cards from their character decks. After trading, each character deck must still conform to the list of card types specified by the character card.

CARD SETUP


ADVENTURE PATH
ADVENTURE
SCENARIO
SHIP
THE WORMWOOD MUTINY
CAT AND MOUSE
SHACKLES PIRATE SHIP
DISCARD PILE
LOOKOUT
CHARACTER DECK
CHARACTER CARD
TEM
PISTOL
BURIED CARDS
LOCATION DECK
LOCATION CARD
HOLY ISLE
BLESSING OF THE GODS
BLESSINGS DISCARD PILE
BLESSINGS DECK
CANNIBAL ISLE
LOCATION CARD
LOCATION DECK
BURIED CARDS
HEARTBREAK HINSIN
ALAHAZRA
CHARACTER CARD
CHARACTER DECK
CONCH SHELL
DISCARD PILE
TOMB-BORN
LOCATION CARD
SHIPWRECK GRAVEYARD
LOCATION CARD
TEMPEST KEY
LOCATION CARD
LOCATION DECK
TOKEN CARD
LOCATION DECK
TOKEN CARD
LOCATION DECK
TOKEN CARD
CUTLASS +1
DISCARD PILE
CHARACTER DECK
BURIED CARDS
MAGIC CHAIN SHIRT
JIRELLE
CHARACTER CARD



RULES: ROLLING DICE

The game comes with five dice: a 4-sider, 6-sider, 8-sider, 10-sider, and 12-sider. When you roll the 4-sider, use the number that's upright.

The game uses a shorthand form describing the number and type of dice to roll: Xd#, where "X" represents the number of dice to roll and "d#" represents the number of sides on the dice. For example, if you're asked to roll 2d6, that means to roll 2 6-sided dice and add their values together. Sometimes the shorthand includes a "+" or "–" and a number listed after the die, meaning that you add that number to, or subtract it from, the total of the roll (not each individual die rolled). So 2d4+2 means to roll 2 4-sided dice, total them together, and then add 2. No matter how many penalties are applied to a die roll, the result can't be reduced below 0.

Sometimes, the type of die that you need to roll is determined by your skill. If you're told to use your Strength skill + 1d8, and your Strength die is a d10, roll one 10-sided die and one 8-sided die and add them together to determine your result.

If a card calls for a die roll that affects multiple characters or situations (for example, if it says that each character at a location is dealt 1d4 damage), roll separately for each.

Decide Whether You're Playing a Standalone Scenario, an Adventure, or the Skull & Shackles Adventure Path. A scenario is intended for a single play session, an adventure consists of a number of linked scenarios, and an Adventure Path is a series of linked adventures. We recommend you begin with the base set scenario Island Hopping; you can play it either by itself or as the first of five scenarios in the Plunder and Peril adventure. We suggest you complete that adventure and then move on to the Skull & Shackles Adventure Path.

If You're Playing the Adventure Path, put the Skull & Shackles Adventure Path card faceup on the table. It lists the adventures that make up the Adventure Path, starting with The Wormwood Mutiny, as well as the reward you'll get for completing the Adventure Path. Whenever you start a new adventure in the Adventure Path, add all of the cards from that Adventure Deck to the box, sorting all of the cards by type and combining them with the cards you already have in the box.

If You're Playing an Adventure, put the appropriate adventure card faceup on the table. It lists the scenarios that make up that adventure, along with the reward you'll get for completing that adventure. (If you're playing the Plunder and Peril adventure, put that card on the table; if you're beginning the Skull & Shackles Adventure Path, use the adventure card The Wormwood Mutiny from that Adventure Deck.)

RULES: COMPATIBILITY WITH OTHER SETS

Cards in the Skull & Shackles set are intended to be compatible with cards from other sets. Certain cards from one set may not be as effective in another one; for example, the gunslinger Lirianne will not be as useful in an Adventure Path that doesn't have firearms.

When the same character appears in different sets, they are represented with different cards having different abilities and powers. For example, among other differences, the rogue Merisiel has the Craft skill in Skull & Shackles and the Perception skill in Rise of the Runelords. To distinguish between them, we add the Adventure Path name to the card name. For example, "Rise of the Runelords Merisiel" is a different card than "Skull & Shackles Merisiel," so you may not exchange feats or role cards between them.

Choose a Scenario. Put the scenario card faceup on the table. The scenario card describes the goals and any unusual rules for this particular game session. (If you're playing Island Hopping, put down that card; if you're starting Skull & Shackles, put down Press Ganged!, the first scenario listed on the adventure card The Wormwood Mutiny.)

Set Out the Locations. The back of a scenario card lists the locations the scenario uses; a required number of players is listed next to each location. Use all of the location cards listed up to the number of players you have. For example, if you have 3 players, you'll use all of the location cards listed for 1, 2, and 3 players, but you won't use any of the location cards listed for 4, 5, or 6 players. Put the location cards you're using faceup in the middle of the table.

Build the Location Decks. Each location card has its own list of card types that are used to build a location deck, in much the same way that a character card has a list of card types that are used to build a character deck. Shuffle each card type and deal the correct number of cards of each type to form the basis of each location deck. Don't look at these cards; set them facedown in a stack next to their location card.

RULES: SKILLS, DICE, AND MODIFIERS

If your character card says "Strength d10," and the "+1" box next to that has been checked, your Strength skill is d10+1, and your Strength die is d10. (The "+1" is called a "modifier.") If your character card also says "Melee: Strength +3," your Melee skill is d10+4, your Melee die is d10, and the modifier is +4.

Add Villains and Henchmen. Each scenario card lists one or more villains and one or more henchmen. Make a stack of cards starting with the villain(s) and then add henchmen, working from the top of the list down, until your stack has as many cards as you have locations. Use multiple copies of the henchman at the bottom of the list as needed. For example, if you have 5 locations and your scenario card lists Adaro Barbarian as the villain and Enemy Ship and Hammerhead Sharks as henchmen, you'll make a stack of 5 cards: Adaro Barbarian, Enemy Ship, and 3 Hammerhead Sharks. If your scenario card listed Master Scourge as the villain and Aretta Bansion, Fipps Chumlett, Jaundiced Jape, Maheem, Owlbear Hartshorn, and Slippery Syl Lonegan as henchmen, you'll make a stack of just the first five, leaving Owlbear Hartshorn and Slippery Syl Lonegan in the box. Shuffle this stack and put 1 card on top of each location deck. Then shuffle each location deck.

Create the Blessings Deck. Draw 30 random blessing cards from the box. Shuffle them together to form a deck and place it facedown on the table.

Place Your Party's Ship. In Skull & Shackles, your party always has a ship. Choose one ship that's been checked off on your party's fleet card; that becomes your ship. When you play your first scenario, only the ship Merchantman has been checked off, but you'll gain additional ships as rewards for completing certain scenarios and adventures. Usually, you'll put your ship next to the scenario card. In some scenarios, your ship is anchored to a specific location; this information appears under the list of locations on the back of the scenario card. For these scenarios, put your ship next to that location card. After you place your ship, stash 1 plunder card (see Plunder Cards on page 18), placing it facedown under the ship.

STRATEGY: SHOULD YOU SPLIT THE PARTY?

There's an old saying in roleplaying games: Never split the party. Is that true for the Pathfinder Adventure Card Game? This isn't an RPG, so the answer is, "It depends."

Sometimes, it's a good idea to have multiple characters at the same location; at other times, it makes more sense to split the party. A lot of your strategy depends on which characters you're playing. If you're playing Valeros and Lem, staying together makes sense; if you're playing Lirianne and Merisiel, you may want to spread out.

The best strategy also depends on where you're going. Valeros can handle Cannibal Isle, but Lem might not be able to close it if someone else runs into the villain. Sometimes you want help for whatever perils await you; another time, there might be a dragon that blasts everyone at the same location. Pay attention to where you are in the game. If you know where the villain is, splitting up so you can temporarily close open locations is a good idea... unless it isn't. Every situation is different, and thinking before you move is always wise.

Arrange Yourselves around the Table. Use any order you wish.

Place Token Cards. Each player chooses a location and puts her character's token card near it. Multiple characters can choose the same starting location. If your ship is anchored to a specific location, all characters start at the ship's location.

Draw Starting Hands. Each character card includes a hand size for that character. Draw that number of cards from your character deck. The character card also lists a favored card type; if more than one is listed, choose 1 type before drawing. If you didn't draw at least 1 card of that type, discard that hand and draw again, repeating as needed until your hand contains at least 1 card of the specified type. If you discard so many cards that you can't draw up to your full hand size, draw all of the remaining cards, then shuffle your discard pile into your deck, draw the rest of your hand, and shuffle any discarded cards back into your character deck.

Decide Who Goes First. Starting with whichever player the group chooses, take turns proceeding clockwise (see Your Turn on page 8).





ALAHAZRA, THE ORACLE

This blind oracle can light up a room with fire when a monster surprises her, but she's rarely surprised. Her ability to see into the future lets her know what's in any location, what's in any character's deck, or even what the blessing deck bodes. Alahazra can use her Divine spells with versatility, and she's ready with a Cure at any moment.

PLAYING A SCENARIO

We've got rough seas ahead. Your crew must hunt villains, vanquish the minions who serve 'em, and punish the scurvy scum who would threaten your lives... or your plunder!

YOUR TURN

Take your turn by going through the following steps in order. The only required steps are Advance the Blessings Deck, Reset Your Hand, and End Your Turn; the other steps are optional.

Advance the Blessings Deck: At the start of your turn, flip the top card from the blessings deck faceup onto the top of the blessings discard pile. You never acquire this blessing, though some cards may refer to it during your turn. If you have to remove one or more cards from the blessings deck for any reason and there are not enough cards to do so, the players lose the scenario (see Ending a Scenario, Adventure, or Adventure Path on page 18). After advancing the blessings deck, apply any other effects that happen at the start of your turn.

Give a Card: You may give 1 card from your hand to another player at your location. (Other players cannot give you cards on your turn.)

Move: You may move your token card to another location. Moving then triggers any effects that happen when you enter or leave a location. (If you do not move, your character is not considered to have entered or left a location.) If you are commanding a ship that is not anchored, other characters at your location may be able to move with you (see Commanding and Moving Ships on page 17).



Explore: You may explore your location once each turn without playing a card that allows you to explore; this must be your first exploration for the turn. You may never explore on another player's turn. When you explore, flip over the top card of your current location deck. If it's a boon, you may attempt to acquire it; if you don't, banish it. If it's a bane, you must try to defeat it (see Encountering a Card on page 10). Many effects allow you to explore again on your turn, and there is no limit to the number of times you can explore.

RULES: TRACKING THE BLESSINGS DECK

It's very easy to get excited about starting your turn, so much so that you might forget to advance the blessings deck. Unfortunately, once you realize you've skipped it for the last few turns, it's often not so easy to figure out how many cards you need to flip to catch up. We recommend that when each player advances the deck, she should orient the card she turns over so that the text is right-side up to that player. Sure, it makes for a messy-looking blessings discard pile, but it makes it easy to see who remembered and who didn't.

STRATEGY: SHOULD YOU BE SELFISH?

Throughout the game, your friends will ask you for help. They might even beg for it. Should you ever tell them no?

Probably not. This is a cooperative game, so sharing information and setting goals as a group is wise. Think about ways you can help each other, such as Alahazra recharging a card to examine the top card of another character's location deck. You might spend a blessing to get a boon that you can't use and give it to someone else who desperately wants it. Some groups even play with their hands faceup on the table so everyone can help make choices.

Other players do not share as freely, and there's a good reason for it. Your character is a living, growing entity. Your choices will determine whether your character succeeds and improves. If you let your friends make decisions for you, you might not be looking out for yourself.

STRATEGY: SHOULD YOU ALWAYS EXPLORE?

The blessings deck is a countdown timer, and it's very unforgiving. More exploration leads to more success, but there are times you just want to hang out for a while.

One reason might be the state of your hand or character deck. Going to the Floating Shipyard, even when it has no cards, could be a good move if your ship is wrecked.

Another reason to slow down is to realign your party toward the end of the game. If you just need someone at Holy Isle so you can temporarily close it when you find the villain, don't risk finding a monster there prematurely and upsetting your whole closing scheme. Take the time to get your strategy set, especially if you have plenty of turns to burn.

Of course, the biggest disasters often occur shortly after someone says, "We've got plenty of turns left."

However, during a single exploration, no matter how many different effects allow you to explore again, treat them as granting one additional exploration, not a series of additional explorations. For example, Seltyiel's Spellblade role has a power that allows him to explore again if he acquires a spell or weapon on his turn, and the location Coastline has a power that allows any character who acquires a boon with the Pirate or Swashbuckling trait at that location to explore again. If Seltyiel were to acquire a weapon with the Swashbuckling trait at the Coastline, he would get one additional exploration from those effects, not two.

Close a Location: If your character is at a location that has no cards remaining and has not been closed, you may make one attempt to close it at this time (see Closing a Location on page 15).

Reset Your Hand: First, apply any effects that happen at the end of the turn; if a power allows or directs you to not reset your hand, you must still apply any effects that happen at the end of the turn. You may play cards and use powers unless a power directed you to reset your hand and end your turn. After resolving these effects, you may no longer play cards or use powers for the rest of the turn.

Next, you may discard any number of cards. Then, if you have more cards in your hand than your hand size specifies, you must discard until the number of cards in your hand matches your hand size. Finally, if you have fewer cards than your hand size, you must draw cards until the number of cards in your hand matches your hand size.

RULES: DRAWING CARDS

Unless a card says otherwise, drawing means taking a card from the specified source and adding it to your hand. If no source is specified, draw it from your character deck.

End Your Turn: When you're done, the turn passes to the player on your left.

PLAYING CARDS

Anyone can play a card whenever the card allows it. Playing a card means using a power on that card by revealing, displaying, discarding, recharging, burying, or banishing that card or by performing another action specified by that card. If a power says using it counts as playing a boon, it counts as playing a card. Doing something with a card that does not use a power on that card does not count as playing that card. For example, when Alahazra discards a card to use a power on her character card, the discarded card does not count as being played (meaning she also can't recharge it). When a card has multiple powers, you must choose one of them. A specific card's power may only be used once per check or step. Any paragraph in the power section of a boon that doesn't involve playing the card for a particular effect is not itself a power—it's a mandatory action you must take when you play the card.



Example: The ally Fox has 2 different powers: you may recharge the card to add 1d4 to any Intelligence or Wisdom check, or you may discard the card to explore your location. You can do either, but you can't do both, because once you play the card one way, it's no longer in your hand for you to play it the other way.



JIRELLE, THE SWASHBUCKLER

Jirelle is the pirate's pirate, a woman capable of wielding any weapon from a rapier to a cannon. When she's in command of a ship, she can steer it through the most dangerous waters with ease. Prone to feats of derring-do, she has die-rolling powers that can turn possible failures into surprising acts of heroism.



Lem, the Bard

Lem is the master of all challenges on the open seas. He's handy with weapons and ready to use any spell he discovers. Lem is a blessing to his friends, whether they're fellow pirates or allies he meets along the way. His ability to shuffle cards into his deck means that whatever he wants to do, he can do it again and again.

When you play a card, it will usually require you to take one of the following actions.

- **Reveal**: Show it from your hand then put it back in your hand. You may not reveal the same card for its power more than once per check or step.
- **Display:** Place it faceup in front of your character, unless stated otherwise; the card's powers function until it's discarded. When a character displays a card, it is not part of that character's hand, deck, or discard pile, but it still belongs to that character.
- **Discard:** Put it into your discard pile—a stack of faceup cards next to your deck.
- **Recharge:** Put it facedown at the bottom of your character deck.
- **Bury:** Put it under your character card (likely losing access to it for the rest of the scenario).
- **Banish:** Put it back in the box, shuffling it in with the other cards of the same type (thus losing it for good).

If you are instructed to play, reveal, display, discard, recharge, bury, banish, or otherwise manipulate a card, that card must come from your hand unless otherwise specified. You may not activate a power that doesn't apply to your current situation. For example, you may not play a card to reduce damage when damage is not being dealt, and you may not play a card to evade a monster when you are not encountering a monster.

If a card in your hand does not specify when it can be played, you can generally play it anytime you can play cards, with the exception that during an encounter you may only perform specific actions at specific times.

You can look through your displayed, discarded, and buried cards at any time, but you may not change the order of cards in your discard pile. You may not look through your character deck unless a card specifically allows it. Don't shuffle any stack of cards unless you're instructed to do so. A deck is a deck, a hand is a hand, and a pile is a pile whether or not it has any cards in it.

Encountering a Card

When you encounter a card, you—and only you—can go through the following steps. No one else can perform these steps for you, though other players might be able to play cards to help you deal with the encounter's challenges. During each of these steps, you and the other players may perform only the specified actions. Players may only play cards or use powers that relate to each step (or relate to cards played or powers used in that step). Each player may play no more than 1 card of each type during each step; for example, no one player may play more than 1 blessing while attempting a check, though multiple players could each play 1 blessing during that check. Each player may activate any power no more than once during each step. Players may not play any cards or activate any powers between those steps.

NEW: Details of Encountering

We've added a bit more detail to the rules for encountering a card. We've also renamed several steps for clarity. If you're using Rise of the Runelords cards with these rules, treat any cards that say "before the encounter" as if they say "before you act," and treat "after the encounter" as "after you act."

If the card you're encountering states that it is immune to a particular trait, players may not play cards with the specified trait, use powers that would add that trait to the check, or roll dice with that trait during the encounter.

After you flip over the top card of the location deck, put it on top of the deck and read it. Then go through the following steps in order.

Apply Any Effects That Happen When You Encounter a Card. If any powers on the card you're encountering say they're triggered when you encounter the card, they take effect at this time. You may also use powers or cards that state they can be used when you encounter a card.

Apply Any Evasion Effects. You may use a power or card that lets you evade the card you're encountering. If any powers on the card you're encountering relate to evading the card, they take effect at this time. If you evade the card, do not activate any other powers on it. Shuffle it back into the deck; it is neither defeated nor undefeated, and the encounter is over.

Apply Any Effects That Happen Before You Act. If any powers on the card you're encountering happen before you act, they take effect at this time. You may also use powers or cards that state they can be used before you act.

Attempt the Check. If the card is a boon, you may try to acquire it for your deck; if it's a bane, you must try to defeat it (see Attempting a Check, below). If you choose not to acquire a boon, it counts as failing to

STRATEGY: SHOULD YOU BURN THROUGH YOUR DECK?

Playing a character such as Alahazra or Merisiel gives you ways to churn through your deck faster, discarding cards quickly to get to the cards you want. While this makes you far more likely to defeat your enemies and acquire what you need, it comes with a cost: you might kill off your character.

This game is all about trade-offs. Should you press your luck or hold off a bit? Not taking risks will make you lose as often as taking too many risks, but at least your character will be alive after you lose.

One of the toughest choices involves shedding cards as you reset your hand. You're allowed to discard any number of cards before you draw up, but that means you're closer to death. There are few things more humiliating than dying because you forgot how many cards you needed to draw at the end of your turn.

When you have too many cards in your hand, that's a different problem. If you can play some cards that can be recharged—even though you might have used them much later—it's still worth playing them. Discarding cards for no gain is more painful.

acquire it. If a card's check section says "None," look at the card's powers and immediately do whatever it says there. After you attempt the check, deal with any effects that were triggered by the check. If any cards played while attempting a check include their own checks, resolve the current check in this step and the new checks in subsequent steps.

Attempt the Next Check, If Needed. If another check is required, resolve it now. For example, some boons allow you to attempt a check to recharge them after you play them, and some banes require a second check to defeat. Repeat this step until you have resolved all such checks.

Apply Any Effects That Happen After You Act. If any powers on the card you're encountering happen after you act, they take effect at this time. You may also use powers or cards that state they can be used after you act. Do this whether or not you succeeded at your checks.

Resolve the Encounter. If you succeed at all of the checks required to defeat a bane, banish it; if you don't succeed, it is undefeated—shuffle the card back into its location deck. If you succeed at a check to acquire a boon, put it in your hand; otherwise, banish it.

NEW: TASKS

Rise of the Runelords had a couple of barriers that stayed faceup on the location deck if you failed to defeat them. Skull & Shackles has several task-oriented barriers that do similar things, so we've expanded the rules for faceup cards in the sidebar below.

RULES: FACEUP CARDS

Sometimes a card is left faceup on the top of the location deck (for example, most barriers with the Task trait work this way). The card is still in the deck, but it can only be shuffled into the deck when the condition that caused it to be left faceup on the deck has been resolved. If such a card tells you that you must encounter it on your first exploration on a turn, then after that exploration, ignore it for the purpose of additional explorations that turn; however, it still counts as the top card of the deck for any other purpose. If multiple cards are left faceup on the same deck, you may place them in any order and encounter them in that order.

ATTEMPTING A CHECK

Many times during the game, you will need to attempt a check to do something, such as acquiring a new weapon or defeating a monster.

Each boon card has a section called Check to Acquire. This section indicates the skills that can be used in checks to acquire the boon and the difficulty of the checks. If you succeed in acquiring the card, put it into your hand. If you fail, banish it.

Each bane card has a section called Check to Defeat. This section indicates the skills that can be used in checks against the bane and the difficulty of the checks. If you succeed in defeating the bane, it is usually banished. If you fail to defeat a bane, it is usually considered undefeated, and it is shuffled back into the location deck. If you fail to defeat a monster, you are dealt damage (see Take Damage, If Necessary on page 13).

NEW: CHECKS AGAINST

We've introduced a new term: checks "against" cards.

If a card refers to a check against another card, that refers to any check required by that card, whether it's a check to defeat, a check to acquire, a check to recharge, or any other check.

If multiple checks are listed on the card with "or" between them, choose one of them. If there's a "then" between them, you'll need to succeed at both checks sequentially; you must attempt both checks,



LIRIANNE, THE GUNSLINGER

A pirate's best friend is her trusty sidearm... or in Lirianne's case, her five trusty sidearms. Guns may be unstable, but she can manipulate her cards to keep her Pepperbox holstered. A great ship's captain, Lirianne helps her friends with her vigilance. Many a combat ends with her precise shots from afar.



MERISIEL, THE ROGUE

The graceful Merisiel enjoys her privacy: When she's alone, no monster is safe from her backstabbing ways. A brilliant combatant with both guns and rapiers, Merisiel can also handle nearly any barrier. Her greatest skill might be picking her fights, as her ability to evade means she rarely gets into a situation she doesn't control.

even if you fail the first, because failure often has consequences. "Or" takes priority over "then," so if a card says "Wisdom 10 or Combat 13 then Combat 15," you must first attempt either a Wisdom check with a difficulty of 10 or a Combat check with a difficulty of 13; after that, you must attempt a Combat check with a difficulty of 15.

Only the character who encounters the card may attempt the check, save for one exception: if a card requires sequential checks, the character who encountered the card must attempt at least one of the checks, but other checks may each be attempted by any one character at the same location.

Many cards also require checks to use powers or to recharge the cards after playing them.

Attempting a check requires several actions that are explained below. Remember that each player may not play more than 1 card of each type or use any 1 power more than once during each check.

Determine Which Skill You're Using. Cards that require a check specify the skill or skills you can use to attempt the check. Each check to defeat or acquire a card lists one or more skills; you may choose any of the listed skills for your check. For example, if a check lists Dexterity, Disable, Strength, and Melee, you may use any one of those skills to attempt your check. Even if your character doesn't have any of the skills listed for a check, you can still attempt the check, but your die is a d4. Any skills you use are added as traits to the check. (For example, if your character has the skill Melee: Strength +2, and you use your Melee skill, both the Strength and the Melee trait are added to the check.)

Some cards may allow you to replace the required skill for a check with a different one. As part of this action, you may play only 1 card or use only 1 power that defines the skill you are going to use. When you play a card that does this, add that card's traits to the check; for example, revealing the weapon Dragon Pistol for your combat check adds the Firearm, Ranged, Piercing, and Elite traits to the check. (This isn't the same as giving you a skill; for example, playing the spell Fireblade adds the Divine trait to your check, but it does not give you the Divine skill.) A few cards that can be used on checks don't use any of your skills; they instead specify the exact dice you need to roll or the result of your die roll.

Most monsters and some barriers call for a combat check. Weapons and many other cards that can be used during combat generally tell you what skill to use when you attempt a combat check; if you aren't playing one of those cards, you must use your Strength or Melee skill.

NEW: DICE VS. SKILLS

In Skull & Shackles, we're increasing the distinction between "dice" and "skills." We've renamed the step below and added the Rules: Skills, Dice, and Modifiers sidebar on page 7. The last paragraph of Play Cards and Use Powers That Affect the Check is also new.

Determine the Difficulty. To succeed at the check, the result of your die roll and modifiers must be greater than or equal to the difficulty of the check. In checks to defeat a bane or acquire a boon, the difficulty is the number in the circle under the skill you've chosen. In other checks, the difficulty is the number in the text that follows the skill you've chosen. (For example, where a card's power instructs you to attempt a Fortitude 7 check, the difficulty is 7.) Some cards increase or decrease the difficulty of a check; for example, if a card says that the difficulty is increased by 2, add 2 to the number on the card you encountered; if it says the difficulty is decreased by 2, subtract 2 from the number.

Play Cards and Use Powers That Affect Your Check (Optional). Players may now play cards or use powers that affect your check. Players may not do things that modify a skill unless you're using that skill, and players may not do things that affect combat unless you're attempting a combat check. Do not add traits from these cards to the check; for example, playing the spell Aid on a check does not give the check the Divine trait.

Some cards and powers affect only specific types of checks, such as Dexterity checks, Acrobatics checks, or non-combat checks. If, on your character card, the skill you're using refers to another skill, both skills count for the purpose of determining the type of check. For example, if you're using the Arcane skill on a combat check, and your character card says that your Arcane skill is Intelligence +2, the check counts as both a combat Arcane check and a combat Intelligence check. Traits also determine the type of check; for example, if you're attempting a combat check and you played a weapon that added the Ranged trait, it counts as a Ranged combat check.

Some cards may allow you to replace a specific die with a different one. For example, Emerald of Dexterity allows you to roll your Dexterity die in place of the normal die for a non-combat check—this means you'll replace the die (not the skill) you would normally use with your Dexterity die (not your Dexterity skill).

STRATEGY: SHOULD YOU HOARD BLESSINGS?

Blessings are among the most versatile cards in the game. Most can be used to add to checks or to explore again, but you can't use one blessing to do both at the same time. So when you're trying to decide whether to play a blessing on your companion's check to acquire a wand, you might be wondering, "Did I just cost us a turn?"

What is the opportunity cost of not exploring? Do you need that sword more than you need to find the villain? The risk-reward analysis requires some thought.

Early in the game, you might be willing to spend a blessing on a check, but when the clock is ticking down, conservatism is often the wiser course. If it's your combat check and you think you might lose without the blessing, it's likely worth playing the blessing on that check. Fail badly enough, and you might lose the blessing to damage anyway.

This analysis is worth going through, but don't let it stop you from acting. There are always more turns—at least, until there aren't.

Assemble Your Dice. The skill you're using and the cards you played determine the number and type of dice you roll. For example, if you're attempting a check using your Strength skill, and your Strength die is d10, you'll roll 1d10. If another player played a blessing to add a die to your check, you would roll 2d10.

Attempt the Roll. Roll the dice and add up their value, adding or subtracting any modifiers that apply to the check. If the result is greater than or equal to the difficulty of the check, then you succeed. If the result is lower than the difficulty, then you fail. No matter how many penalties are applied to a die roll, the result cannot be reduced below 0.

Take Damage, If Necessary. If you fail a check to defeat a monster, it deals an amount of damage to you equal to the difference between the difficulty to defeat the monster and your check result. Unless the card specifies otherwise, this damage is Combat damage. For example, if the difficulty to defeat a monster is 10 and the result of your check is 8, the monster deals 2 Combat damage to you (see Taking Damage, below). Remember that players may not play more than 1 of each card type during a check, so if you previously played a spell to affect the check, you may not play a spell to reduce damage.

Example: Alahazra and Merisiel are at the Docks. Alahazra encounters the ally Besmaran Priest. The check to acquire is Divine, Charisma, or Diplomacy 6. Alahazra's Charisma skill is d12, and her character card says "Divine: Charisma +2," so her Divine skill is d12+2; since she does not have Diplomacy listed on her character card, she would roll a d4 for that. She chooses Divine. She rolls a 3 on her d12 and adds 2 for a result of 5; that's 1 less than she needed to acquire the ally. Unable to acquire him, she banishes the Besmaran Priest.

On the next turn, Merisiel encounters the monster Dire Rat. She has a power that says she could evade it, but chooses to fight. The Dire Rat has 3 possible checks to defeat: Combat 8, or Dexterity or Stealth 6. Combat checks use Strength or Melee (unless a card changes that); Merisiel's Strength skill is d6, and since she doesn't have the Melee skill, she would roll a d4 for that. Her Dexterity skill is d12, and her Stealth skill is Dexterity+2, so if she picked Stealth, she'd roll d12+2 and would only need to a 6 or better to defeat the monster. However, she has a Cutlass +1 in her hand, which she could reveal to use Strength or Melee + 1d6+1 for her combat check. Better still, Merisiel has a special power that gives her the skill Melee: Dexterity +1 when she plays a weapon with the Finesse trait. Since the Cutlass +1 has that trait, that makes her Melee skill d12+1, and the weapon adds another 1d6+1 for a total combat check of 1d12 + 1d6+2. She needs an 8 or higher, and she rolls two 5s for a total of 12. She defeats that pesky Dire Rat, banishing it.





SELTYIEL, THE MAGUS

Others choose between spells and swords. Seltyiel is masterful with both, often combining a weapon and a spell into a powerful one-two punch. His spells come flying back into his deck after he plays them. This magus combines speed, smarts, and strength to take down any monster that stands in his way.



VALEROS, THE FIGHTER

A heavily armored warrior on a pirate ship? Sure. Valeros is ready for hand-to-hand combat at any minute, recycling his weapons into his deck and never once considering whether to use them for maximum effect. His friends appreciate him, too. If he's around when they get in trouble, they get out of trouble.

TAKING DAMAGE

When you are dealt damage, you and other players may play cards and use powers that reduce or otherwise affect the specific type of damage you're being dealt. If you're being dealt Fire damage, for example, you may play cards that reduce Fire damage or cards that reduce all damage, but you may not play cards that reduce only Electricity or Combat damage. Each player may play no more than one of each card type to affect damage to the same character from the same source. If a card says it reduces damage with no type listed, it reduces all types of damage.

When you are dealt an amount of damage, choose that number of cards from your hand and discard them. If you don't have enough cards in your hand, discard your entire hand and ignore the rest of the damage.

DYING

If, for any reason, you are ever required to remove one or more cards from your deck and you don't have enough cards, your character dies. Bury your deck, hand, and discard pile. You cannot take turns, play cards, move, or do anything else for the rest of this scenario. Certain powerful cards allow you to return from death; if this doesn't happen before the end of the scenario, your death is permanent. The other characters may use the dead character's cards when they rebuild their decks after the scenario; any cards they don't keep are then banished.

If all of the characters are dead, the players lose the scenario (see Ending a Scenario, Adventure, or Adventure Path on page 18).

If your character dies, start a new character for the next scenario. Choose a character card (it can be the same character who just died, though you do not get any of the feats that character previously earned) and build a new character deck as described in Build Your Character on page 4, choosing only cards with the Basic trait. If your party has begun the adventure Tempest Rising, you may ignore the Basic trait restriction; instead, you may use any cards in the box from the base set and the *Character Add-On Deck*, as well as any cards from an Adventure Deck with an adventure deck number at least 2 lower than that of the adventure you're currently playing.

EXAMINING AND SEARCHING

Sometimes a card allows you to examine one or more cards—that means looking at the specified card and then putting it back where it came from. If a card tells you to examine a deck until you find a particular card type, begin with the top card of that deck and stop when you have found a card of the correct type. Put the cards you examined back in the same order you found them, unless instructed otherwise. If you don't find a card of the specified type, ignore any directions related to that card. (This does not count as exploring, though it may happen during an exploration.)

Sometimes a card allows you to search a deck and choose any card of a particular type; that means you may look at every card in the deck and choose any card of that type. Unless instructed otherwise, shuffle the deck afterwards.

STRATEGY: SHOULD YOU LOOK AHEAD?

Alahazra and cards like Spyglass let you look at cards in location decks before you must encounter them. This can be a tremendous help as you race the ticking clock that is the blessings deck.

Finding the villain early can mean the difference between success and failure. A card like Buoyancy can strand a villain on the top of a deck, leaving him waiting for you to return while you loot and lock down other locations.

Of course, all that peeking ahead comes at an opportunity cost: those Spyglasses could instead be cards that help you defeat banes and acquire boons. If you can't actually beat what you find, there's no point in finding it.

SUMMONING AND ADDING CARDS

Sometimes you will be told to summon cards or to add cards to a deck. When this happens, retrieve the cards from the box. However, if you're told to summon a card that's already in play, just imagine you have another copy of that card for the new encounter; this summoned copy ceases to exist at the end of the encounter. Summoned cards cannot cause other cards to be summoned.

If you're told to summon and encounter a card, this immediately starts a new encounter. If you're already in an encounter, complete the encounter with the summoned card before continuing the original encounter. After evading a summoned card or resolving the encounter with it, banish it unless you're instructed otherwise. If an effect causes multiple characters to summon and encounter cards, resolve the encounters sequentially in any order you like, including banishing the card at the end of the encounter. If the summoned card is a villain or henchman, defeating it does not allow you to win the scenario or close

a location deck—ignore any such text on those cards. Cards that you summon are not part of any location deck.

The When Closing section on some locations requires you to summon and defeat (or summon and acquire) a card. Summon and encounter it; if you do not defeat (or acquire) it, the location is not closed.

If you're told to summon and build a location, retrieve the location card from the box and build the location as usual; the location and its deck remain in play for the rest of the scenario.

If you're instructed to add a card to the top or the bottom of a deck, do so; otherwise, any cards added to a deck are shuffled into it.

If you're told to add a random card of a particular type with some additional requirement, such as "having the Human trait" or "non-Basic" (shorthand for "not having the Basic trait"), draw cards of that type from the box until you find a card that fulfills the requirement. Then add that card and put the rest back in the box.

Closing a Location

You may earn the opportunity to close a location in a number of ways. Usually you get the opportunity to close a location after defeating a henchman from that location deck (the henchman card will indicate if this is the case) or after that location deck runs out of cards (see Your Turn on page 8).

When you have the opportunity and want to close a location, do whatever the location's When Closing section says. Locations often require specific checks to close them; otherwise, they list specific tasks you must perform. (If a location says you may close it automatically, you don't need to do anything else.) If the When Closing text offers multiple options separated by "or," you must make your choice of options before you make any rolls or play any cards. If you succeed at meeting the When Closing requirement, search the location deck for villains. If you find any, banish all non-villain cards from the location deck. The location is not closed—but at least you know where the villains are!

If you didn't find any villains, perform the When Permanently Closed effect: First, apply any effects that say "before closing." Then banish all of the cards from the location deck; it is now closed. Finally, apply any effects that say "on closing" and flip the location card over. The location stays closed for the rest of the scenario, so villains may not escape to that location (see Encountering a Villain on page 16). Characters may move to closed locations, and if there are cards there, they may explore and encounter those cards as normal. (Most closed locations don't have cards to explore, but some effects can put cards there.)

NEW: SUMMON AND BUILD, ACQUIRE, OR DEFEAT

Skull & Shackles has a few new things to do with summoned cards. You'll even build some locations during play!

NEW: HENCHMEN AND CLOSING LOCATIONS

In Rise of the Runelords, the rules stated that defeating a henchman would allow you to attempt to close that henchman's location. In Skull & Shackles, if defeating a particular henchman allows you to attempt to close a location, it will say so on the henchman card. If a particular henchman card does *not* say that defeating it allows you to attempt to close a location, then defeating it does not allow you to attempt to close a location. (As always, summoned henchmen *never* allow you to close a location, because they are not part of any location deck.)

Example: Jirelle defeats the final card in the Coastline location deck. She may now attempt to close the location. In its When Closing section, Coastline gives two options: Jirelle can succeed at a Wisdom or Perception 6 check, or she can banish a card with the Swashbuckling trait. Her Wisdom skill is d8. That's a much better choice than Perception; since it's not listed on her character card, she would roll only a d4. She could banish her Old Salt's Bandana, but she wants to keep it. She considers rolling her Wisdom die, but still doesn't like her odds. She reveals the Bandana to give her check the Swashbuckling trait, then rolls the die, getting a 3. That's not enough, but she has a power that allows her to reroll a die on a check if it has the Swashbuckling trait. This time, she rolls a 7, which closes the Coastline, so its When Permanently Closed power is activated: each character at that location gets to recharge a card with the Swashbuckling trait from his or her discard pile. After they do so, she flips the Coastline card over to show that it's closed.





From the Character Add-On Deck

Damiel, the Alchemist

Handling explosives all day can make a man a little unpredictable. Damiel is no exception. He can turn any card into a bomb, and he can turn his bombs into bigger bombs. By mixing spells and potions into recipes, Damiel can keep resources that other characters would banish without a thought. And if you need a drink, he's your man.



FROM THE CHARACTER ADD-ON DECK

FEIYA, THE WITCH

Even the biggest dragon fears an encounter with Feiya, who can reduce its power with a powerful hex. When she comes across a spell that seems out of reach to most, she'll make it trivial to acquire. Feiya's familiars, such as her fox Daji, can retrieve her spells for her, meaning the next dragon she meets is going to fear her, too.

ENCOUNTERING A VILLAIN

Most scenarios have a villain—a big bad bane for the players to fight at the end. Villains work a lot like other monsters, but since defeating them is the goal of many scenarios, some special rules are used.

Unlike monsters and henchmen, a villain doesn't just need to be defeated. A villain also needs to be cornered: you need to make sure there are no open locations the villain can escape to.

Attempt to Temporarily Close Open Locations. When a character encounters a villain, each character at any other location may immediately attempt to fulfill the When Closing requirement for his location. If any character at a location succeeds, his location is temporarily closed and the villain cannot escape there this encounter (see Check to See Whether the Villain Escapes on page 16). Temporarily closing a location does not trigger any of the other effects of closing a location; the location opens again immediately after the encounter.

Characters may attempt to close locations in any order they wish.

Encounter the Villain. This encounter works exactly as it does with other banes, but be careful to look for any special rules listed on the villain card or the scenario card.

If You Defeat the Villain, Close the Villain's Location. You do not need to fulfill the When Closing requirement. Examine the location deck; if there are no additional villains in it, banish all of the cards. The location is permanently closed, and the location's When Permanently Closed effect is triggered. Flip the location card over. If any villains remain in the deck, banish everything except the remaining villains and shuffle the deck; the location is not permanently closed, but it is temporarily closed, and the defeated villain cannot escape to it. If a scenario has multiple villains, the scenario card will usually list additional conditions for winning.

Check to See Whether the Villain Escapes. If any locations are not closed, the villain escapes. If you defeated the villain, count the number of open locations, subtract 1, and retrieve that number of random blessings from the box. Shuffle the villain in with those blessings, then deal 1 card to each open location and shuffle those location decks. If the villain is undefeated, do the same thing, but retrieve the blessings from the blessings deck instead of from the box. (Note that if you did not defeat the villain, there is always at least one open location: the one in which it was just encountered.)

If the Villain Has Nowhere to Escape to, You Win! See After the Scenario below.



Example: Seltyiel and Jirelle are Island Hopping. Seltyiel is at the Floating Shipyard. Jirelle is at Shark Island. Lonely Island and Tempest Cay are also open. On Jirelle's turn, she encounters the Adaro Barbarian, this scenario's villain. Seltyiel now has a chance to temporarily close the Floating Shipyard, using his Craft skill of d8+1. He rolls a 7 for a total of 8, succeeding at the Craft 8 check to temporarily close the Shipyard. Jirelle needs a Combat check of 15 to thwart the villain and pulls out a Dragon Pistol, which she buries to get enough dice to bring her combat check to 1d10 + 3d6. She gets a total of 19, which defeats the Adaro Barbarian and closes Shark Island. Sadly, Lonely Island and Tempest Cay are still open, so the villain can escape. Jirelle's player shuffles together the Adaro Barbarian and a random blessing from the box. She deals 1 of those 2 cards into each of the open, unclosed locations—but not the Floating Shipyard, since Seltyiel temporarily closed it. Somewhere on the open seas, the Adaro Barbarian lives to fight another day.

Ships and Plunder

Avast! Enemy ship off the starboard bow! Run out the guns before those bilge rats get out of range! 'Tis a time for murder and mayhem. Full speed ahead!

NEW: SHIPS

The biggest change in Skull & Shackles is the addition of ships. In addition to the Ships and Plunder section, see Place Your Party's Ship on page 7.

Commanding and Moving Ships

Whenever it is your turn, if your ship is not anchored at a location, you are commanding your party's ship. All characters at your location are on the ship; characters at other locations are not on the ship. If you move or are moved while commanding the ship, other characters on the ship may choose to move with you. Effects that restrict movement still apply—if something prevents you from moving, you can't move; if something is preventing another character at your location from moving, that character cannot move with you. Any character who does not move with you is no longer on the ship.

Whenever it is your turn, if your ship is anchored and you are at the ship's location, you are commanding your party's ship; all characters at your location are on the ship. You may not choose to move an anchored ship. If your character moves or is moved from the ship's location, you are no longer on the ship or commanding it, and other characters may not choose to move with you.

Encountering Ships

While you are commanding a ship, you may encounter other ships. If you are not commanding a ship, banish any ship you would encounter.

Even though a ship is neither a bane nor a boon, encountering a ship is much like encountering a bane: if you don't evade it, you must attempt a check to defeat it. If you succeed at all of the checks required to defeat a ship, and your ship is not wrecked, stash a plunder card (see Plunder Cards below). If you fail a check to defeat a ship, it does not deal damage to your character; instead, it deals Structural damage to your ship (see Structural Damage below). Whether you succeed or fail to defeat a ship, unless you seize it (see Seizing Ships below), return it to wherever it came from.

RULES: DEALING WITH CARDS

Whenever you're instructed to randomly choose cards, shuffle the cards you're drawing from and draw from the top.

If you're told to do something with a certain number of cards and there aren't that many cards available, use as many as there are. For example, if you're told to draw 4 cards from a deck that has only 3 cards, draw the 3 cards. (Regardless, if you need to remove any number of cards from the blessings deck and don't have enough, you lose the scenario; if you need to remove any number of cards from your deck and don't have enough, your character dies.)

Seizing Ships

Some cards allow you to seize a ship you defeat. If you seize a ship, it replaces your current ship, which is banished. Take any plunder cards that were under your original ship and put them under your new ship. Seizing a ship does not allow you to check it off on your fleet card.

If your ship is anchored, and you seize another ship, that ship is now anchored.

Structural Damage

Structural damage is a special type of damage; it does not affect characters, and it is the only type of damage that affects ships. Cards that reduce damage only to characters do not affect Structural damage. If you fail a check to defeat a ship, it deals an amount of Structural damage to your ship equal to the difference between the difficulty to defeat the ship and your check result.

When your ship is dealt Structural damage, first apply any powers on the ship card or other cards in play that reduce or increase that damage. Then characters may play cards or use powers that affect Structural damage. Finally, any character may discard any number of cards from his hand to reduce Structural damage by 1 for each such discarded card. If the Structural damage is reduced to 0, the ship is unaffected.

If a ship that is not already wrecked is successfully dealt any Structural damage, it is wrecked (see Wrecked Ships below); you do not need to discard cards equal to the amount of damage—the effect is the same regardless of the amount of damage that is dealt. If a ship that is already wrecked is successfully dealt any Structural



FROM THE CHARACTER ADD-ON DECK

LINI, THE DRUID

Lini is one with the animals, especially her faithful snow leopard Droogami. She's a decent spellcaster who's ready to help as a healer, since her hand isn't cluttered with Attack spells. There's a reason for that: she can turn into a shark to bump up her Strength and Dexterity considerably, especially against the baleful creatures of the sea.



FROM THE CHARACTER ADD-ON DECK

OLOCH, THE WARPRIEST

This massive half-orc can marshal blessings and weapons as reservoirs of power, helping others succeed while retaining the cards he needs to help himself. Should any friend need a healing word, Oloch can turn his armors and blessings into aid for others. And if that's not enough, he can crush a bear with his hands.

damage, discard a number of cards from the blessings deck equal to the amount of damage successfully dealt to the ship.

WRECKED SHIPS

When your ship is wrecked, flip it facedown to indicate its wrecked state. When commanding a wrecked ship, at the start of your move step, you may attempt the check to repair the ship listed on the ship card; if you succeed, the ship is no longer wrecked, so you turn the ship card faceup. If you move while commanding a wrecked ship, other characters cannot choose to move with you. When a ship is wrecked, you can never stash more plunder cards under it (see Plunder Cards below). At the end of any turn, if your ship is wrecked, banish 1 random plunder card from under the ship.

PLUNDER CARDS

Plunder cards commonly represent potential rewards carried on your ship. When you stash a plunder card, roll 1d6 on the table below, draw 1 card of the corresponding type from the box without looking at the card, and unless otherwise instructed, put the plunder card facedown under your ship.

PLUNDER TABLE

d6	Card Type
1	weapon
2	spell
3	armor
4	item
5	ally
6	choose 1 of the above 5 card types

If you win the scenario, treat any plunder cards under your ship as you do loot; if you lose the scenario, put them back in the box. You don't get to use plunder cards while they're under your ship card, so do your best to keep them safe until the end of the scenario.

You stash 1 plunder card when you set up a scenario (see page 7). You also stash 1 plunder card if you defeat a ship while your ship is not wrecked (see Encountering Ships on page 17).

If you are instructed to add a plunder card to your hand or to a deck, roll on the Plunder Table, draw the corresponding card from the box, and add it as you would any other card. (This does not count as stashing a plunder card.)

STRATEGY: SHOULD YOU SEEK OUT DANGER?

When you're adventuring, you can go wherever you want... but not all locations are created equal.

Start by looking at the text on all of the location cards. At the Docks, you could recharge an ally to explore again, but when you need to close that location, will you have an ally to bury?

A location's When Closing requirement can guide your path as well. If you can't close the location when the henchman pops up, you'll have to burn through the whole deck to try again.

Sometimes you'll want to leave a location open until the villain appears and you can temporarily close it.

All else being equal, more exploration yields more fun.

AFTER THE SCENARIO

As the suns sets on another day of adventure, your weary crew returns to their ship. After trudging below decks, they'll heal their wounds, guzzle some grog, and admire the plunder they've looted. Rest while you can, lads and lasses, for there's always danger over the horizon.

ENDING A SCENARIO, ADVENTURE, OR ADVENTURE PATH

If, at any point, you need to advance the blessings deck but there are no cards remaining in it, the scenario ends immediately and your party of adventurers loses. You also lose if all of the characters are dead at the same time (see Dying on page 14). You do not earn the reward on the scenario card, and if you're playing an adventure, you didn't complete that scenario; you will need to replay it successfully before you can attempt the next scenario in the adventure.

If the players defeat the villain and prevent him from escaping, or they achieve a different condition for winning listed on the scenario card, your group defeats the scenario and earns the reward listed on the scenario card. You may be rewarded with loot cards, each of which can be given to any player in the group. If you're rewarded with a feat, choose an appropriate checkbox on your character card (or your role card, if you have one) and check it. That feat now applies to your character until she dies. If you're rewarded with a feat of a specific type and your character has no unchecked

feats of that type, you do not gain a feat. Your party may be rewarded with a ship; check off an appropriate ship on the party's fleet card. You may not gain the reward from a given scenario, adventure, or Adventure Path more than once.

Once you've played a scenario, whether you won or lost, rebuild your character deck (see Between Games, below). Put all other cards back into the box.

If you're playing an adventure and you successfully complete a scenario, you may proceed to the next scenario on the adventure card. If you've successfully completed all of the scenarios on the adventure card, you earn the reward on the adventure card.

If you're playing an Adventure Path and you successfully complete an adventure, you're ready to move on to the next one. Add all of the cards from the next Adventure Deck to the box; if you own any Class Decks, you can add any cards from them that have the same adventure deck number as the Adventure Deck cards you just added. Begin with the first scenario of the new adventure.

If you're playing an Adventure Path and you successfully complete all of the adventures, you earn the reward on the Adventure Path card. At this point, you can build your own adventures using the cards you have, or you can create new characters and start over.

STRATEGY: ADVICE FOR SOLO PLAY

Solo play is particularly good for quickly completing scenarios to advance your character if you want to catch up to other players.

Not all characters should be considered equal for solo play. Valeros is particularly helpful to other characters' combat checks, but that skill doesn't help when there are no other characters. Merisiel, on the other hand, is great for solo play, because she gains bonuses when no one is at her location.

You can also play multiple characters if you like; we suggest you try solo play with 2 characters. Treat each character as if he were being played by a separate player (so if you're playing Seltyiel and Valeros, advance the blessings deck at the start of Seltyiel's turn and at the start of Valeros's turn).

Some cards are particularly difficult in solo play. If you're playing Feiya by herself, and you're hit by a Drowning Spikes Trap, you might be caught on the spikes until you drown. When you encounter a card your character just can't deal with, remove it from the game and replace it with another card of the same type that roughly matches its power level but isn't quite so impossible to overcome.

BETWEEN GAMES

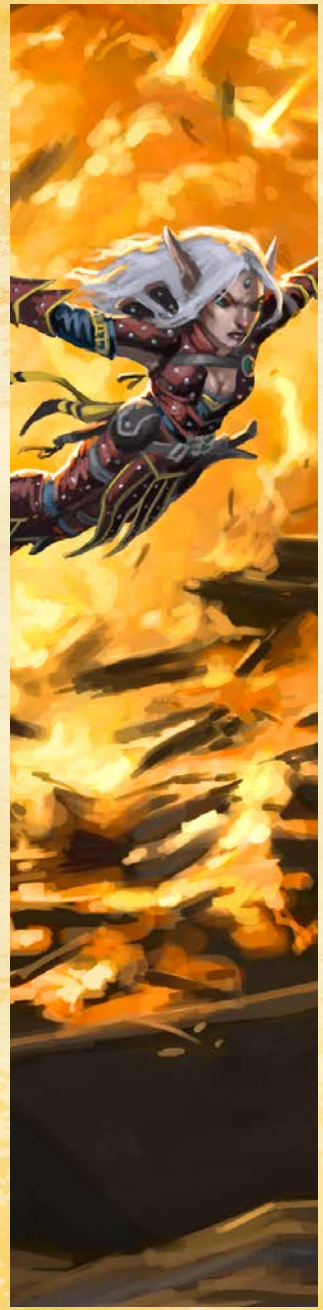
After each scenario, you must rebuild your character deck. Start by combining your discard pile with your hand, your character deck, any cards you buried under your character card, and any cards you displayed; you may then freely trade cards with other players. Your deck must end up meeting the Cards List requirements on your character card, along with any deck adjustments on your role card, if you have one. Loot cards count as cards of their type. For example, if your character's Cards List specifies 3 items, and you keep 1 loot card with the item type when your rebuild your deck, your deck must contain exactly 2 other items.

If you can't construct a valid deck from the cards your group has available because you don't have enough of certain card types, choose the extra cards you need from the box, choosing only cards with the Basic trait. After you begin the adventure Tempest Rising, you may ignore the Basic trait restriction; instead, you may use any cards in the box from the base set and the *Character Add-On Deck,* as well as any cards from an adventure whose adventure deck number is at least 2 lower than the adventure you're currently playing. If you have cards left over after rebuilding all of the surviving characters' decks, put them back in the box.

If you want to start a new character, you may, but it's important that you do not keep decks for characters you're not actively playing. Doing so would use up cards that you should be encountering during play. The base set is designed to have no more than 4 character decks built at one time; the *Character Add-On Deck,* available separately, expands the maximum number of concurrently built decks to 6. If you switch characters for some reason, it's best to write down the cards in the previous character's deck (or use the free character sheets posted online at **paizo.com/pacg)** and return the cards to the box until you want to play that character again.







CARD TYPES

Look at all this beauteous booty! The rewards of adventure are yours. Herein, you'll find wonders from land and sea alike: dangerous missions, perilous challenges, deadly monsters, and treasures galore!

CHARACTER CARDS

Each character card includes the following information.

Skills: Skills tell you what type of die to roll when you attempt a check (see Attempting a Check on page 11). Normally, you roll 1 die of the appropriate type for a check, but other cards can add to that.

Powers: Each character has powers you can use to affect the game.

Hand Size: This is the number of cards you draw to form your hand at the beginning of each scenario. Near the end of each of your turns, you will discard or draw cards so you have exactly this number of cards again.



Proficient With: If your character is proficient with weapons or specific types of armors, they're listed here. Some weapons and armors are more useful for characters who are proficient with them.

Favored Card Type: Your character always begins a scenario with at least 1 card of this type in hand (see Draw Starting Hands on page 7).

Cards List: At the start of each scenario, your character deck must contain exactly the listed quantity of each card type. As you play through a scenario, you will add and remove cards from your deck, so it may vary from this list during play. At the end of the scenario, you'll rebuild your deck to conform to the list again, although you might not end up with exactly the same cards you had before.

FEATS

Character cards include a number of items with checkboxes; these are called feats. After successfully completing a scenario or adventure, you might be instructed to gain a feat of a specific type. After you check a box of that type on your character card, your character may use that feat in future scenarios. You may not use feats that are not yet checked off. If there's more than 1 checkbox associated with a skill, power, or card type, you must check the unchecked box farthest to the left before you can check immediately adjacent boxes. For example, if a skill has boxes labeled +1, +2, and +3, you must check the +1 box before you can check the +2 or +3 box, and you must have checked +1 and +2 before you can check +3. These boxes aren't cumulative—that is, "+2" *replaces* "+1," so they do not add together to make +3.

We recommend you use a pencil to lightly check the feat boxes, or you can track your character with the free character sheets posted online at **paizo.com/pacg**.

There are three types of feats.

Skill Feats: When you gain a skill feat, check 1 new box in the Skills section of your character card. Skill feats add a bonus to a skill of your choice: you'll add the number next to the box you selected to any check attempted with that skill. So if your Charisma die is d10, and you've checked the "+2" box for your Charisma skill, you'll roll 1d10 and add 2 when you attempt a check that uses your Charisma skill (see Attempting a Check on page 11).

Power Feats: When you gain a power feat, check 1 new box in the Powers section of your character card. Some power feats give you new powers, such as increasing your hand size or making you proficient with weapons or specific types of armors. Other power feats improve your character's existing powers. If your character has a power that allows him to add 1d4 to another character's combat check, and you've checked the "+1" box next to it, you'll add 1d4+1 to the other character's check. These bonuses apply only when using the power on your character card; if you instead play a card with a similar power, the feat bonus doesn't apply.

Card Feats: When you gain a card feat, check 1 new box on the Cards List on your character card. Each card feat allows you to put one more card of the type you choose into your character deck. After you choose a card feat, use the new number on your Cards List whenever you rebuild your deck.



Role Cards

Each character card has a corresponding role card, though you won't use it right away. Role cards are part of the reward you get for completing the third adventure of the Skull & Shackles Adventure Path. Role cards offer new feats for you to choose; these feats apply to your character as if they were part of the original character card, and your role card counts as part of your character card.

Each side of the role card presents a different specialization for your character, allowing you to choose one of two different paths for your character's continuing advancement. For example, one side of the role card for the oracle Alahazra presents feats that let her specialize as a visionary stargazer, while the other side offers feats to advance her as an offense-oriented tempest.

When you are told to select your character's role card, select one of the two roles. From then on, whenever you gain a feat and choose to check a box on your role card, you must always choose feats from that side of the role card.

Your role card is designed so you can place it directly over the Powers section of your character card. When you first get the role card, check any boxes for the role you've chosen that match boxes you've already checked on your character card. For example, if the "Light Armors" box was checked on your character card, check the "Light Armors" box on your role card.

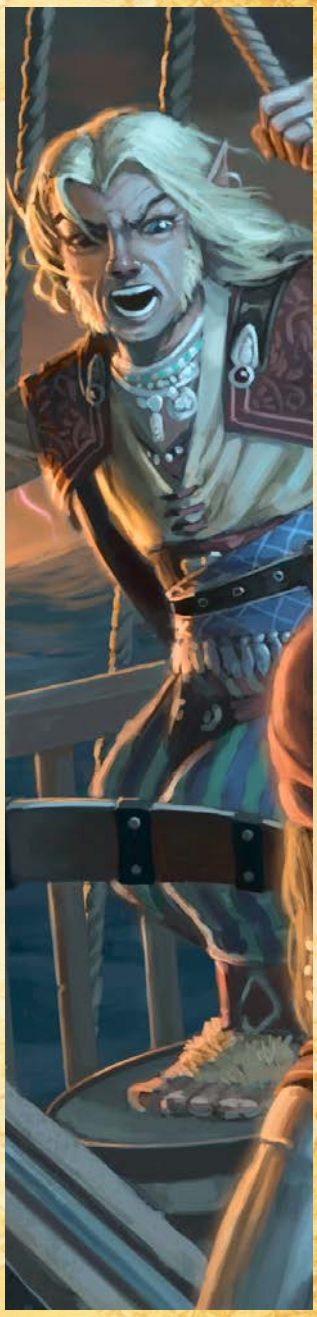
Token Cards

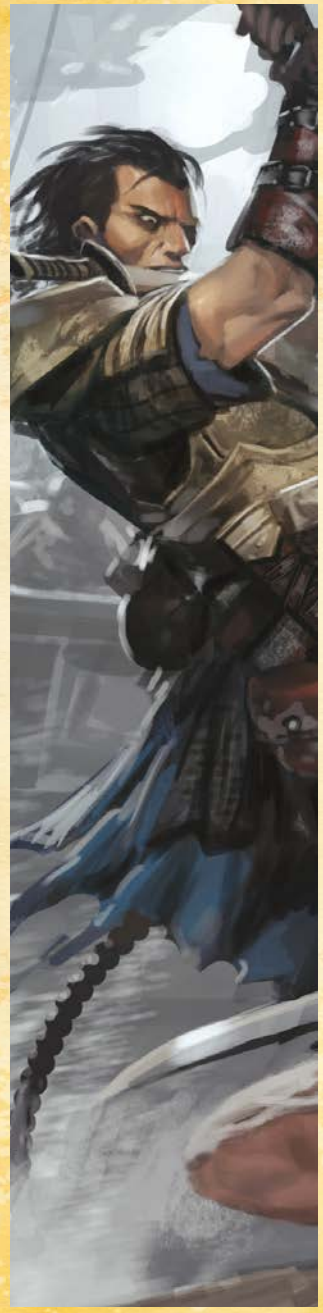
Each character has a corresponding token card, which you'll move to keep track of your character's current location. Each token card also includes a brief character biography.

Story Cards (Adventure Path, Adventure, and Scenario)

Story cards define the game session you'll be playing. You always have a scenario card, which tells you what to do and where to go in the current game session. You may also have an adventure card, which lists the scenarios you must finish to complete the adventure, and perhaps an Adventure Path card, which lists the adventures you need to finish to complete the Adventure Path.

The front of each story card includes powers for playing it. Some are used during play, and some are used as you set up a particular scenario, so make sure you read them right away. Story cards also





list a reward—something you get to do once you complete the task provided by the story card (see Ending a Scenario, Adventure, or Adventure Path on page 18).

The front of each scenario card lists the villains and henchmen in the scenario; the back of each scenario card includes a list of locations used in the scenario (see Set Out the Locations and Build the Location Decks on page 6). If your ship is anchored at a specific location during the scenario, this is listed on the back of the scenario card (see Place Your Party's Ship on page 7).

Location Cards

Location cards represent the places your characters will visit during the scenario. If any character is at a location, it is considered occupied. The front of each location card has the following features.

Deck List: This tells you the quantity of each card type you need to set up the location deck (see Build the Location Decks on page 6).

At This Location: These are special powers that are in effect while the location is open. Some of these remain in effect when the location is permanently closed; in that case, they also appear on the back of the location card.

When Closing: When you have the opportunity to close a location and want to do so, you must perform this task. Usually you get the opportunity to close a location after a henchman is defeated there (when this is the case, the henchman card will say so) or after the location deck runs out of cards (see Closing a Location on page 15). When you close a location, flip it over. The villain can no longer escape to this location, though characters can still move there.



When Permanently Closed: When a location is permanently closed, the powers listed here go into effect.

NEW: SUPPORT CARDS

Skull & Shackles introduces two new card types: fleet and ship.

Support Cards (Fleet and Ship)

The fleet card belongs to your party of adventurers, not to an individual character. It provides a list of ships that your party may use as you progress through the Adventure Path (see pages 7 and 19).

Ship cards represent seagoing vessels that you may pilot or encounter on your adventures. Ships enter play faceup. The front of a ship card contains the following information.

Class: When you complete a scenario or adventure, you may be rewarded with a ship of a particular class.

Check to Defeat: This is the skill check needed to defeat the ship. If you fail a check to defeat a ship, your ship is normally dealt Structural damage (see Structural Damage on page 17).

When Encountering This Ship: This power is triggered as soon as you encounter a ship; this occurs before you have the opportunity to evade it.

When Commanding This Ship: If the ship belongs to your party, this power is in effect during your turn (see Ships and Plunder on page 17).

When a ship is wrecked, it is placed facedown. The back of a ship card contains the following information.

Check to Repair: This is the skill check needed to repair the ship when it is wrecked (see Structural Damage on page 17).

When Commanding This Ship: If the ship belongs to your party, this power is in effect during your turn.

Boon Cards (Weapon, Spell, Armor, Item, Ally, Loot, and Blessing)

Boons are cards you may be able to acquire and put into your hand or deck for future use. Weapons, spells, armors, items, allies, loot, and blessings are all boons. Each player may play only one of each type of boon on a single check. The following information appears on boons.

Type: This is the boon's card type.

Traits: Many effects use a card's traits for some effect; for example, some monsters become harder to defeat when you play weapons that have the Piercing trait.

Check to Acquire: If you encounter a boon while exploring a location, you may attempt a check to acquire the card. If you succeed at the check, put the card in your hand; if you fail or choose to not attempt the check, banish the card (see Playing Cards on page 9). You only attempt the check to acquire when encountering a card in a location deck, not when drawing it from your deck or playing it from your hand. Loot cards do not have a check to acquire; instead, you earn them as a reward for completing a scenario.



Powers: Powers are special rules for a boon. In general, if a card lists multiple powers, you can do any of them; however, if you play a card in such a way that it leaves your hand, that action can trigger only 1 power. For example, if a card says you may discard it to add to your die roll or discard it to explore your location, you may discard it to trigger either effect, but not both.

The following are general descriptions of each type of boon.

Weapon: Weapon cards often require you to do something (such as reveal the card) to modify your combat check. If a weapon's power refers to characters who are proficient with weapons, look in the Powers section of your character card to see if you're proficient.

Spell: Spell cards have a wide variety of effects. Spells always have the Arcane or Divine trait or both; characters with a matching trait will be able to make the best use of a given spell.

Armor: Armor cards help you by reducing damage. Armor powers specify which types of damage they reduce; if a power refers to "all" damage, that applies to all damage of all types. If the armor doesn't reduce the type of damage you're being dealt, you can't play it to reduce the damage. For example, if you're dealt Fire damage, and an armor card doesn't say it reduces Fire damage or all damage, you can't play it to reduce the damage.

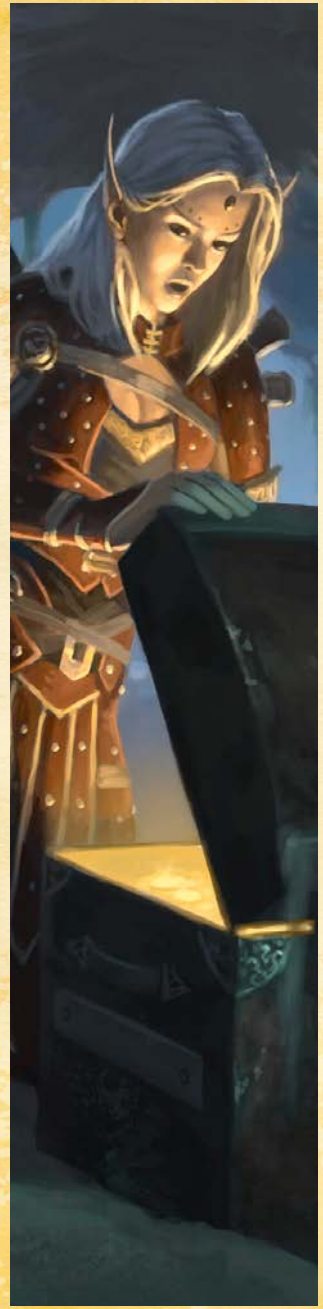
Item: Item cards have a wide variety of effects. Many of them help with barriers and non-combat checks.

Ally: Ally cards often help you with checks you attempt, and many let you discard them to explore again on your turn.

NEW: NO MORE RECHARGE BOX

In Rise of the Runelords, many boons had a Recharge section that explained how you could recharge the card after playing it. In Skull & Shackles, the necessary information appears in the Powers section.





Loot: Loot cards are unique in a couple of ways. The other boons can be found by exploring locations, but loot cards are only given out as rewards for completing scenarios. They are automatically acquired, and so they have no check to acquire. Also, loot cards list a type, such as "weapon"; apart from the way loot cards are acquired, they behave just like other boons of that type and count as cards of that type. If a loot card is returned to the box, put it back with the other loot cards. If a loot card ends up in a location deck, you automatically acquire it when you encounter it.

Blessing: Blessing cards often allow you to explore or add dice to checks attempted by any player, including yourself, at any location. The dice added are normally of the type associated with the skill the character is using for the check; if a card instead specifies the exact dice to roll for the check, the added dice are of the type specified by that card. For example, if Merisiel is making a Charisma check with her Charisma of d8+1, Blessing of the Gods adds a d8.

STRATEGY: SHOULD YOU ACQUIRE BOONS YOU WON'T USE?

The short answer is "absolutely." At minimum, a boon is something you can give up as damage when some pirate cracks your skull open. But there's another reason: your fellow adventurer might want you to give it to him.

This is sometimes trickier than it looks. To give a card to someone, you must start your turn at that character's location. That character might have to come to you to get it, assuming you even still have it in your hand when he does. Coordinating a timely rendezvous can lead to a villain's untimely demise.

This situation is a lot easier, of course, if a character who's good at acquiring a type of boon gets it herself. If you're able to look ahead in the location deck or evade cards, you can tell another player about a useful card. Then she can spend her turns trying to get it, and you can get on with your own goals.



Bane Cards (Villain, Henchman, Monster, and Barrier)

You must defeat bane cards or suffer their consequences. Barriers and monsters appear randomly in location decks, while most scenarios call for specific villains and henchmen.

Type: Most banes are either monsters or barriers. Most villains and henchmen have the "monster" type and count as monsters; a few henchmen have the "barrier" type and count as barriers.

Traits: Many effects use a card's traits for some effect; for example, the Shackles Pirate Ship is easier to defeat if your check has the Swashbuckling trait.

Check to Defeat: This is the skill check or combat check needed to defeat the bane. If the check is listed as "None," the bane cannot be defeated. You normally take damage if you fail a check to defeat a monster (see Take Damage, If Necessary on page 13).

Powers: These special rules apply when you encounter the bane.

STRATEGY: JOIN THE COMMUNITY

To get the most out of the Pathfinder Adventure Card Game, please visit **paizo.com/pacg**. You'll find FAQs, rules updates, character sheets, links to videos of people playing the game, the latest Pathfinder Adventure Card Game news, and more. You'll also find the Pathfinder Adventure Card Game messageboards, where you can interact with other players and the people who made the game.

RULES: MAKING YOUR OWN CARDS

You can make your own story cards—simply follow the format on the ones in the box, choosing villains and henchmen that are appropriate for the power level of your characters. Be careful when setting rewards; you don't want to give out too much for success.

You can also make your own character and role cards. To balance them with the ones in the box, each character should start with 15 cards on her Card List, no more than 1 d12 in her skills, and no more than 5 different skill bonuses. She should have 15 skill feat checkboxes, 10 card feat checkboxes, 4 power feat checkboxes on her character card, and 12 power feat checkboxes on her role card. Expanded guidelines can be found at **paizo.com/pacg**.











Example of Play

Setting Up

Lily, Sam, and Amber are playing Lirianne, Seltyiel, and Alahazra in the scenario Dangerous Waters. After setting up locations, adding the villain and henchmen, and creating the blessings deck, they're placing the party's ship. The only ship checked off on their fleet card is the Merchantman, so they put that card next to the scenario card. Next, they stash a plunder card, so Lily rolls on the Plunder Table and gets a 2. She draws a random spell from the box without looking at it and places it facedown under the ship.

Lily puts Lirianne's token card at Cannibal Isle. Sam and Amber choose to put Seltyiel and Alahazra at the Fog Bank, leaving Raker Shoals, the Shipwreck Graveyard, and Tempest Cay unoccupied.

They all draw starting hands. Lirianne's 4 cards include a Pistol, so she has the weapon her favored card type demands. Alahazra's 6-card hand contains a blessing, her favored card type. For Seltyiel's favored card type, Sam can choose either weapon or spell. He chooses spell, but doesn't get one in his starting draw. He discards them and draws another 5, getting a Force Missile. He shuffles his discards back into his deck, and everyone is ready to go.

Lily's First Turn

It's Lily's turn, so Lirianne is commanding the ship. Lily discards the top card of the blessings deck: a Blessing of Abadar. She decides to move Lirianne to Raker Shoals. Raker Shoals damages any ship there at the start of the turn; since it's not the start of the turn, the ship isn't dealt damage.

Lirianne explores and encounters Dead Man's Chest, a barrier that can get her some swag. For her check to defeat the barrier, she can choose Dexterity or Disable 11 or choose Strength or Melee 13. Her Strength skill is d4, and since she has neither the Disable nor the Melee skill, choosing either of those would mean rolling a d4 as well. That leaves Dexterity, which is a d8. She can't roll 11 on a d8.

But Amber plays a Blessing of Abadar from Alahazra's hand to help Lirianne. It gives 2 additional dice to a character making a check to defeat a barrier, so now Lily has 3d8, and reaching 11 is possible. She rolls a total of 16, defeating the Dead Man's Chest, so she gets to draw a random weapon, item, and spell from the box: Cat-o'-Nine-Tails, Rum Bottle, and Speed. That's a fine haul.

Normally, Amber would have to discard the Blessing of Abadar she played, but because the top card of the blessings discard pile is also a Blessing of Abadar, she recharges it, putting it at the bottom of her deck.

Lily has 7 cards and her hand size is 4, so if she chose to reset her hand and end her turn now, she'd have to discard 3 cards. Instead, she discards the ally Master Gunner to explore her location. Lirianne encounters a Buccaneer henchman, and the Dangerous Waters scenario card has a nasty shock in store for Seltyiel and Alahazra: since Lirianne encountered a Buccaneer, and they're not at her location, they must each summon and encounter one as well.

Alahazra encounters her copy of the Buccaneer. She plays the spell Fear to evade it. Normally, Fear would shuffle an evaded monster into an open location deck, but the summoned monster didn't come from a location deck, so it's banished instead.

Next, Seltyiel encounters his copy of the Buccaneer. He has a Force Missile and a Longsword in his hand, so he activates a character power that lets him use both cards. He uses the Force Missile for his combat check, which adds 2d4 to his Arcane skill of d8+3, and recharges the Longsword to add 1d6. Now Sam rolls 1d8+3 + 2d4 + 1d6, but manages a measly 7, which doesn't beat the Buccaneer's difficulty of 8. Sam must now discard 1 card (the difference between the 8 he needed and the 7 he rolled). He discards the ally Quartermaster, and the Buccaneer he summoned is banished. Now he must succeed at an Arcane 6 check or banish the Force Missile instead of recharging it; he beats that handily and puts the card under his deck.

Now Lirianne encounters the original Buccaneer. She has to make a combat check, which would normally mean she rolls a d4 for either Strength or Melee. But she has a Pistol, so for her combat check, she rolls her Ranged skill, d8+3, plus 1d6. She chooses not to bury the Pistol and rolls her dice, getting a 10. That's enough to beat the Buccaneer's difficulty of 8, so she defeats it. Since she's proficient with weapons, the Pistol requires her to roll better than 2 on 1d12 to avoid shuffling it into her deck; she rolls a 9, so it stays in her hand.

Because the henchman she defeated came from the location deck, Lirianne can now attempt to close her location. Raker Shoals doesn't require a check to close; instead, her ship is dealt 4 points of Structural damage. To mitigate the damage and stop her ship from being wrecked, Lily discards the Rum Bottle, Speed, Cat-o'-Nine-Tails, and Pistol, closing the location—and Raker Shoals makes her discard yet another card. She discards her Leather Armor. The remaining cards in the location deck are put back in the box, and Raker Shoals gets flipped over. Lily resets her hand, drawing 3 cards to get back up to her hand size.









Sam's First Turn

Now it's Sam's turn, so Seltyiel is commanding the ship. First, Sam advances the blessings deck, revealing a Blessing of Cayden Cailean. Alahazra is at Seltyiel's loctaion, and he decides to give her a Blessing of the Gods.

Then he moves to the Shipwreck Graveyard. Since he's commanding the ship, Alahazra can move with him, which she does. He explores the new location, encountering a Cutlass +1. The check to acquire it is Strength or Melee 8. His Melee skill is d8+3, which is okay, but not great. So he plays the last card in his hand, a Blessing of the Gods, using its power to copy the Blessing of Cayden Cailean's power to add 2 dice to any non-combat Strength check. (Because his Melee skill uses Strength, his Melee check is also a Strength check.) Rolling 3d8+3, he gets 14 and acquires the Cutlass +1, putting it into his hand. With no other options, he draws 4 cards to bring his hand back to 5 cards, and he ends his turn.

Amber's First Turn

Amber takes her turn, so Alahazra is commanding the ship. First, she advances the blessings deck, discarding a Blessing of the Gods from it. Because she's starting her turn at the Shipwreck Graveyard, she must make a Wisdom or Survival 5 check to avoid the ship being dealt 1d4 Structural damage; she rolls a d8 and gets a 2, failing the check. She rolls a 3 for the damage, which everyone agrees is important enough that each player discards a card to reduce it to 0.

Then she uses her power to recharge a spell with the Divine trait in order to examine the top card of the Shipwreck Graveyard. It's a Sea Drake, something she does not want to deal with right now. She puts it back, then moves to Cannibal Isle—Seltyiel chooses to stay behind—and Alahazra explores the new location.

It's Jemma Redclaw, the villain! This means everyone else has a chance to temporarily close their locations to narrow Jemma's paths of escape. Lirianne's location is already closed. Seltyiel, though, can temporarily close the Shipwreck Graveyard. He rolls a 4 on the Plunder Table and must summon and acquire a random item. He pulls a Pearl of Wisdom from the box, and he has to make a Wisdom check of 7 to acquire it. This is not Seltyiel's strong suit, as his Wisdom die is a d4. He does have a Topaz of Strength, though. He recharges it to substitute his Strength die, rolling a d8 and getting a 7. He acquires the Pearl of Wisdom and temporarily closes the Shipwreck Graveyard.

Now Alahazra begins her encounter with the villain. Before Alahazra acts, Jemma requires her to recharge a card, so she recharges the ally Jinx Eater. Then Alahazra must summon and encounter the Shackles Pirate Ship.

To defeat this ship, Alahazra must succeed at a Dexterity or Disable 8 check or a Wisdom or Survival 6 check. The only one of those that isn't a d4 for her is Wisdom, which is a d8. She rolls a 4, failing the check by 2, so her ship is dealt 2 Structural damage. The group could discard 2 more cards to reduce it to 0, but they need those cards to beat Jemma, so the Merchantman is wrecked. Amber flips the Merchantman over.

At last, it's time to fight Jemma. Alahazra unloads an Inflict spell that adds 1d6 to her Divine skill of d12+2, and one of her character powers adds +2 because Inflict has the Attack trait. Lily decides to use one of Lirianne's character powers as well, so she shuffles her Light Crossbow into her deck to add 1d4 to Alahazra's combat check. Alahazra discards the Blessing of the Gods she got from Seltyiel to give herself another d12. Now she's rolling 2d12+4 + 1d4. Alahazra gets a 21, vastly more than Jemma's difficulty of 11.

This has a number of effects. First, Cannibal Isle closes, and its cards are banished to the box. Since Cannibal Isle, Raker Shoals, and (temporarily) the Shipwreck Graveyard are closed, Jemma has only two potential destinations: the Fog Bank and Tempest Cay. Amber takes a random blessing from the box, shuffles it with Jemma, then shuffles one of the two cards into the Fog Bank; the other is shuffled into Tempest Cay. The Shipwreck Graveyard reopens. The players now know the villain is in one of only two locations.

Because it's the end of the turn and the ship is wrecked, Amber must banish the plunder card underneath it. Amber peeks at the plunder the party lost: a Find Traps spell that she sorely wanted. She draws back up to her hand size and ends her turn.

Lily's Second Turn

It's Lily's turn again, so Lirianne is once more commanding the ship. After she advances the blessings deck, she tries to repair the Merchantman. She needs a Craft check of 6, and since she doesn't have the Craft skill, she'll roll a d4. She does have the ally Carver, though, so she plays it to add 1d8. She rolls a fortuitous 8, repairing the ship and restoring its ability to stash plunder cards and transport characters.

With two locations permanently closed and the villain in either Tempest Cay or the Fog Bank, the party of seafarers is ready to rid the oceans of Jemma Redclaw. Time to set sail!

Suggested Deck Lists

Here are optional starting card lists for the seven characters in the base set and the four characters in the Character Add-On Deck. All of these characters start with only cards that have the Basic trait. Note that while all of these characters are buildable with any others, they can't all be built at once because you might not have enough cards left in the box to play the game.

Base Set Characters



Spell: Black Spot, Cure, Fireblade, Inflict, Strength
Item: Caltrops, Rum Bottle
Ally: Captain, Jinx Eater, Swab
Blessing: Blessing of the Gods (5)



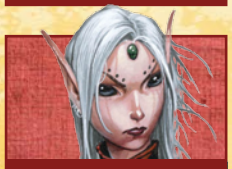
Weapon: Cutlass (2), Rapier (2)
Armor: Leather Armor
Item: Conch Shell, Eye Patch
Ally: Boatswain, Master-at-Arms, Sailor
Blessing: Blessing of the Gods (5)



Weapon: Dagger, Shortbow
Spell: Arcane Armor, Cure, Force Missile
Item: Bracers of Protection, Potion of Fortitude
Ally: Lookout, Quartermaster, Sailor, Swab
Blessing: Blessing of the Gods (4)



Weapon: Dagger, Pistol (2), Sap
Armor: Buckler, Leather Armor
Item: Potion of Glibness, Powder Horn
Ally: Deckhand, Lookout, Master Gunner
Blessing: Blessing of the Gods (4)



Weapon: Dagger, Pistol, Shortbow
Armor: Leather Armor
Item: Amulet of Life, Conch Shell, Eye Patch, Thieves' Tools (2)
Ally: Cabin Boy, Master Gunner
Blessing: Blessing of the Gods (4)



Weapon: Boarding Axe, Cutlass, Longsword, Mace
Spell: Buoyancy, Force Missile, Frostbite, Magic Weapon
Armor: Chain Shirt
Item: Eye Patch
Ally: Carver
Blessing: Blessing of the Gods (4)



Weapon: Boarding Axe, Boarding Pike, Longsword, Mace, Short Sword
Armor: Buckler, Chain Shirt
Item: Potion of Fortitude, Potion of Glibness
Ally: Boatswain, Captain, Master-at-Arms
Blessing: Blessing of the Gods (3)

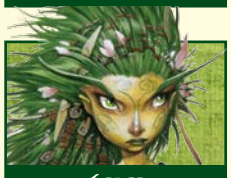
Character Add-On Deck Characters



Weapon: Pistol
Spell: Cure, Phantasmal Minion
Armor: Leather Armor
Item: Alchemist's Fire, Blast Stone, Noxious Bomb, Potion of Lucubration, Powder Horn, Rum Bottle
Ally: Quartermaster
Blessing: Blessing of the Gods (4)



Spell: Arcane Armor, Buoyancy, Confusion, Detect Magic, Frostbite, Phantasmal Minion
Item: Potion of Lucubration, Rum Bottle
Ally: Carver, Sailor, Turtle
Blessing: Blessing of the Gods (4)



Weapon: Quarterstaff
Spell: Cure, Detect Magic, Fireblade, Strength
Armor: Wooden Armor
Item: Noxious Bomb
Ally: Dwarf Caiman, Fox, Master-at-Arms, Turtle
Blessing: Blessing of the Gods (4)



Weapon: Belaying Pin, Boarding Axe, Boarding Pike, Longsword
Spell: Cure, Magic Weapon
Armor: Buckler, Chain Mail, Wooden Shield
Item: Potion of Fortitude
Blessing: Blessing of the Gods (5)

Things to Keep in Mind

If you've played other card games, board games, or roleplaying games, you may find a lot of familiar concepts in the Pathfinder Adventure Card Game. However, bringing in assumptions from other games—including the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game—can potentially trip you up. Here are some guidelines you might want to keep in mind.

Cards Do What They Say. Read any card as it is encountered or played, and do what it says as soon as it makes sense. Let the card tell you what to do, and don't impose limitations that aren't there. You can play an armor card even if there isn't one in your deck list. You can play a Cure spell even if it's not your turn. You can play a blessing on a check even if someone else has played one. Cards say everything they need to say.

Cards Don't Do What They Don't Say. Each card's powers reference specific situations, and if you're not in those situations, you can't play it. If a card says it works on "any check," you can play it on anyone's check, but if a card says "your check," it only works on yours. You can't play a Cure spell to reduce the amount of damage you're taking, because Cure isn't about reducing damage. You can't play Spyglass to examine a deck that has no cards. Your weapon doesn't help you acquire new weapons. Each card tells you what it's for, and you can use it only for that.

No One Else Can Take Your Turn for You. Whenever you encounter a card or make a check, you—and only you—must resolve it. No other character can evade it, defeat it, acquire it, close it, decide what to do with it, or fail at doing any of those things. If Seltyiel encounters a monster, Merisiel can't evade it for him. If Alahazra encounters a Zombie, Valeros can't attempt the check to defeat it. If Lini encounters a Large Chest, Merisiel cannot use Thieves' Tools against it. If Lirianne defeats a henchman at the Sea Fort, Valeros can't banish an armor to close the location. If the game tells you to do something, you have to do it.

Cards Don't Have Memories. Cards forget they've been played after they've done whatever they do. So if you reveal an item to reduce damage dealt before an encounter, you can reveal that item again during the encounter. A monster isn't affected by anything you did in a previous encounter with it. Even though you've played a card to explore again, after that exploration you can play another. Don't ask your cards to remember what happened, because they're just cards.

Finish One Thing Before You Start Something Else. You do many things in a specific order, and you need to finish doing each thing before you do the next thing. You move before you explore, not after. If a spell used in a check can be recharged, finish the first check before you attempt your check to recharge it. If a villain requires two sequential combat checks, finish the first before starting the second. Don't start a new process until you've finished the last one. (That said, if the game doesn't specify an order for things, you decide the order.)

If It Isn't Called Something, It Isn't That Thing. Every term described in the rules and on cards has a specific definition. The armor Buckler Gun can be used as a weapon, but it is not a weapon. A Potion of Healing may sound like it's magical, but it doesn't have the Magic trait. A Ghost deals Combat damage when it damages you, even if you failed a Divine check to defeat it. Don't make assumptions—just read the card.

Add Only What You Are Told to Add. If a card adds another die, that's all it gives you: a die. It doesn't give you your bonuses again. It doesn't give you the skill associated with that die. It doesn't give you the ability to recharge an Arcane spell if you don't have the Arcane skill. When you play a Longbow to add your Strength die to a Combat check, you don't get to play a Blessing of Gorum to add 2 dice, because you're not attempting a Strength check. You just get a die.

Allow for Abstractions. Sometimes the story you imagine can get in the way of playing the game. Despite their aquatic nature, Bunyips can be encountered in the House of Stolen Kisses. Caltrops work against Skeletons, even if they don't have flesh on their feet. Jirelle can fire a Pistol from Shark Island to Pinnacle Atoll. Don't force the cards to fit your story; let the cards tell you their stories.

Choices Matter. Your choices have consequences. Once you choose cards for your character, you can't trade them for other cards whenever you like. If a location makes you choose between attempting a check or banishing a card before closing it, you can't attempt the check and then banish the card if you fail. If you roll too low on a Combat check, it's too late to play a Strength spell to improve your result. Once you choose a side of a role card, you can't switch to the other side. If something kills your character, your character dies. Every choice matters—take your choices seriously.





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REFERENCE SHEET

TURN OVERVIEW

Advance the blessings deck.
Give a card to another character at the same location (optional).
Move to another location (optional).
Explore the top card of the location deck (optional).
Try to **close a location** if it doesn't have any cards (optional).
Reset your hand—apply end-of-turn effects, then discard any number of cards; finally, discard down to or draw up to your hand size.
End your turn.

ENCOUNTERING A CARD

Apply any effects that happen when you encounter a card.
Apply any evasion effects.
Apply any effects that happen before you act.
Attempt the check.
Attempt the next check, if needed.
Apply any effects that happen after you act.
Resolve the encounter.

ATTEMPTING A CHECK

Determine which skill you're using.
Determine the difficulty.
Play cards and use powers that affect the check (optional).
Assemble your dice.
Attempt the roll.
Take damage if you fail a check to defeat a monster.

PLAYING A CARD

Reveal: Show it, then put it back in your hand.
Display: Place it faceup in front of your character, unless stated otherwise; the card's powers function until it's discarded.
Discard: Put it faceup into your discard pile.
Recharge: Put it facedown at the bottom of your deck.
Bury: Put it faceup under your character card.
Banish: Put it back in the box, shuffled in with the other cards of the same type.
Draw: Unless otherwise specified, take it from your character deck and add it your hand.

ENCOUNTERING A VILLAIN

Attempt to temporarily close open locations.
Encounter the villain.
If you defeat the villain, close the villain's location.
Check to see whether the villain escapes.

A FEW RULES THAT ARE EASY TO FORGET

- While encountering a card, each player may play no more than 1 card of each type during each step.
- When blessings add dice to a check, the dice are of the same type that the character is already using for the check.
- If your character doesn't have a skill listed for a check, you can use a d4 for that skill.
- In the case of a bane that requires sequential checks, any character at that location can attempt one or more of the checks, as long as the character who encountered the bane attempts at least one of them.

