

INSCRIPTION

RULEBOOK



Contents

About the Game	4
What's in the box?	4
Setup	5
Types of Cards	6
Normal Creature cards	6
Rare Cards	6
Other Cards	6
Dealing the Cards	7
Gameplay	8
Card Costs	10
Blood	10
Bones	10
Free	10
Scale / Damage	11
The sigils	11
Card Health & Damage	12
Further Rule Details	13
Squirrels	13
Over Damage	13
Player death	14
Death Cards	15
The Items	16
Upgrades and Swaps Piles	17
Card Details	18
Extra / Unused Cards	19
Sigils Detail	20
Items	23

>About the Game

Want to watch a video tutorial? Head to:
www.crypticcrafter.com/videos

Inscription is a two player game, where you battle your adversary using creature cards.

These creatures have different strengths and weaknesses, symbolised by *sigils*.

At the start of the game, you'll choose which creatures you want on your side. But don't get too attached... They may need to be *sacrificed*.

Both players have 2 lives (signified by candles). When a player loses all their lives, the game ends.

But even in death, players are re-born into a powerful *death card*, which can be played with in all future games.

What's in the box?

- 80x30cm Printed Play Mat
 - Card box with 204 cards
 - ◊ 20 Squirrels
 - ◊ 94 Normal Creatures
 - ◊ 23 Rare cards
 - ◊ 17 item cards
 - ◊ 4 Smoke cards
 - ◊ 7 Upgrade cards
 - ◊ 31 Swap cards
 - ◊ 5 Blank Death Cards
 - ◊ 3 Bonus Cards
 - Wooden Scale
- Magnetic Golden Tooth
 - 4x LED Candles
 - Bone Tin
 - 50x Bone Tokens
 - Heart Tin
 - 50x Heart Tokens
 - Brass Bell
 - 20x Card Sleeves
 - Skull coin
 - Rulebook (you're reading it)
 - 2x Sigil Reference Guides
 - Wooden Storage Box

Setup

Here's a diagram of how to lay out the board:

Player A's Side



Player B's Side

- ① Player A's personal card piles.
- ② Player A's play spaces.
- ③ Player B's personal card piles.
- ④ Player B's play spaces.
- ⑤ Space for heart tokens behind each card.
- ⑥ Side Card spaces for additional shared cards.
- ⑦ Arrow to signify order the cards take action. (Highlighted green)

- ◊ Deal each player 10 Squirrel cards in their squirrel space. ① ③
- ◊ Place the item cards, swap cards, upgrade cards and smoke cards in their shared spots on the right side of the board. ⑥
Note: The back design of the cards is different for each card category.
- ◊ The remaining cards can be placed in the shared draw pile. ⑥
Note: Some bonus and unused cards have been printed. Details on page 19
- ◊ Place the Scale to the left side, and place the magnetic tooth on the zero space.
- ◊ Place the bell near the scale, or where both players can comfortably reach.
- ◊ Place two candles at either end of the scale, to represent each players lives. Remember to turn them on!
- ◊ Place the bone and heart tokens to the right side of the board, or where both players can comfortably reach.
- ◊ Give each player a Sigil Reference Guide.

Types of Cards

There are three types of cards:

Normal Creature cards

These take up the majority of the cards, and have various abilities, denoted with Sigils (more about Sigils on Page 11 & 20)

Rare Cards

Less common cards with stronger or more powerful abilities. Shown with a Golden background and ornate border.

Other Cards

Other cards have a grey background, and the symbol shown to the left. They can not be sacrificed as they are not 'alive'. These cards are often picked up as an item, or are the result of a creature card's sigil effects.

Examples



Creature Card



Rare Card



Other Card

Dealing the Cards

Each player has 20 cards of their own, made up of a selection of creature cards. Choosing the cards is done out in the open, so both players know what their adversary has.

Note: If rare cards are not already shuffled in, make sure you add them and shuffle well.

- ◊ From the communal draw pile, 3 cards are laid face up.
- ◊ **Player A** chooses 1 card. **Player B** then chooses 1 card. The remaining card is put to the side.
- ◊ This is repeated until both players have 10 cards.
- ◊ The order of picks is switched and **Player B** now has first choice.
- ◊ Repeat this process until both players have 20 cards.
- ◊ Each player shuffles their selection and places it on their draw pile.

You have now created your creature decks!

All the remaining cards are returned to the communal draw pile, and are no longer used in this game.

On the rare occasion a player runs out of cards, play continues and no additional creature cards are given to that player.

Tip for new players!

The first time you play, don't worry too much about your choices. You'll start to learn and understand more about the game as you play.

It's a good idea to get a mixture of card costs. Eg a selection of one blood, two blood and several bone cards is a good start.

(See Card Costs on page 10 and Card Health & Damage on page 12 to help understand the card design)

Gameplay

The board is a 4x2 grid represented by paw symbols. Each player owns the 4 spaces on their side of the board.



Inscription is a turn based game. Flip the provided coin to determine who goes first!

On your turn, the order of play is as follows:

1. Draw

- On the first turn for each player, draw 3 creature cards, and 1 squirrel.
- On all other turns, you must draw either a creature card from your draw pile, or a squirrel.

2. Play Cards

- Play as many or as few cards as you want in any of your spaces, provided you have the required resources available
- Only one card is allowed in each space at a time

TIP! Don't forget to collect your bones! (see Card Costs, pg 10)

3. Ring the bell

Signify your turn is over with a ring of the bell.

4. Attack / Deal Damage

- Following the arrow on the board, your cards attack and deal damage one by one to the card directly opposite*, removing their wooden heart tokens. (see Card Health & Damage, pg 12)
- If there is no card opposite, deal damage directly to your adversary and measure it on the scale. (see The Scale, pg 11)

TIP! Don't forget your card's sigil and its effects!

Important Note: On the first turn for both players (*including the first turn after either player has lost a life*) no matter how much damage would be dealt, a maximum of 3 can be counted on the scale. This is to avoid players being killed immediately before they've had a chance to defend themselves.

5. End of Turn

- Your adversary begins their turn.
- Each time the Scale lands on 4 for either player, that player receives an item card (see Items, pg 16 & 23)
- When the Scale has reached 5 for either player, that player dies and one of their candles is extinguished.
(See Player Death, pg 14)

Each player has two lives, so you can expect to play either 2 or 3 rounds per game. Approx 40-60 minutes total.

Card Costs

All cards come at a cost. Whether it is blood, bones, or simply space on the board.

In order to play a card, you must first examine its cost, which is shown in the top right. There are three options:

Blood



- ◊ To play a card you must sacrifice your creature cards, corresponding to the number of blood drops shown in the top right corner.
- ◊ To sacrifice a card, it must already be in play on your side of the board. You 'kill' the creature you want to sacrifice and remove it from the board into your dead pile. Squirrels go back to their pile.
- ◊ Sacrificing always grants 1 blood per card, no matter the card's cost*.
- ◊ This is repeated for as many blood drops that are required.
- ◊ Blood drops must be used immediately on a single card, and can not be stored or transferred onto multiple cards.
- ◊ All cards must already be on the board before the sacrificing begins.

Bones



- ◊ Upon any creature's death a single bone token* is given to the card's owner, and stored next to the board on the owner's side.
- ◊ When a card that costs bones is played, the corresponding amount of bones shall be removed from the player's pile.
- ◊ A bone is also granted for each creature sacrificed*.

No cost

- ◊ The card is free to play. Eg, squirrels.

*May be affected by a sigil

The Scale / Damage

Damage is kept track of by using the scale, which starts at zero.

When a player deals damage to their adversary, they move the tooth towards their adversary, indicating the amount of damage dealt.

The tooth constantly moves back and forth each round.

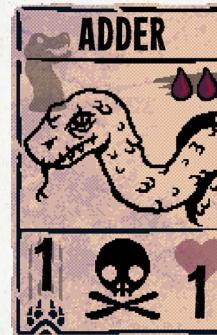
If the tooth reaches the end of the scale (equal to 5 damage), the player loses a life. (See Player Death, pg 14)

The sigils

What is a sigil? - It's the symbol in the middle bottom section of the card that modifies the card's behavior in a major way.
Not all cards have a sigil, some have multiple.

Please see the index at the end of this rule book for all details. (page 20)
Also provided on a separate sigil reference guide for each player.

Examples



Touch of Death



Airborne



Sprinter & Fledgling

Card Health & Damage



Each card has a health value, which you can find in the bottom right corner of the card.

To keep track of a creature's health when you play it, simply place the number of wooden heart tokens behind that card equal to its health value.

At the end of your turn, your played cards will attack the card directly opposite them. The amount of damage they deal is determined by the number shown in the bottom left corner of the attacking card.

To calculate the effect of the attack, subtract the damage dealt from the health of the opposing card. Adjust the number of heart tokens behind the attacked card to reflect its remaining health. Return the removed heart tokens to the tin.

When a card's health reaches 0, it perishes*, and goes to the dead pile. The owner receives a bone. (see Over Damage, pg 13)

If there is no opposing card, deal damage directly to the other player and move the tooth on the scale. (see Over Damage, pg 13)

Further Rule Details

Squirrels

By default, squirrels are returned to their pile after being sacrificed, this essentially means they are infinite.

For a more challenging version of the game, limit each player to 10 squirrels per round. If you're out of squirrels, you're out of luck.

Return all 10 squirrels to both players each time a player dies.

Over Damage

If a card does more damage than the opposing card's remaining health, all excess damage is forfeited. Damage from a card can only be dealt directly to your adversary when there is no card opposite the attacking card.

Optional Overdamage Rule for advanced play!

For a more challenging version of the game, you can include over damage.

In this variant, all damage points are counted for. First, the damage is applied to the card opposite, and then any remaining damage hits the player directly.

(Note: This option is significantly harder and not recommended for standard play.)

Player death

Each player has two lives, represented by two lit candles. When a player extinguishes both of their candles, they lose, and the game ends.

When a player's damage reaches 5, they lose a life. Extinguish one of the dead players candles to signify this.

On either players death, several things occur for **both** players:

- ◊ The cards in your hand and all bones are kept for the next round.
- ◊ Cards currently in play are removed from the board into the dead pile.
(However they do not die, no bones are awarded and cards with the ☩ sigil are removed from play)
- ◊ Both players draw 3 additional cards from their decks and 1 squirrel.
- ◊ The losing player receives a special card named 'the greater smoke' from the 'smoke' pile of cards.
- ◊ The damage scale is reset to 0.
- ◊ The next round begins, with the losing player going first.

Death Cards

After a game ends, the losing player can create a Death Card. Death cards function like regular cards, and are shuffled into the deck for future games.

There are 5 blank cards included. You can add more or less to the initial draw pile to adjust how likely it is for either player to pick up a death card. I'd recommend starting with two.

Either player can use a death card.

Creating a Death Card

Place a blank card into a plastic sleeve, and write on it with a permanent marker.

- ◊ Shuffle the player's dead card pile from the game and reveal three cards.
Note: If there are fewer than 9 cards in the dead card pile, you can shuffle the player's entire hand of cards in addition.
- ◊ Choose the cost of one of these revealed cards and write it on the new death card. Discard the other two cards.
- ◊ Reveal three more cards, and choose the power and health values from the selected card.
- ◊ Repeat this process for choosing sigils.
- ◊ Draw a portrait and give your creation a name.

Using a Death Card

- ◊ Remove the sleeve and place it to the side.
- ◊ Shuffle the blank card into the draw deck.
- ◊ When either player picks up the blank card, put on the plastic sleeve and use it as normal.
- ◊ If multiple death cards are in play, shuffle the plastic sleeves before applying them.
- ◊ Show your adversary which death card you have picked up.
- ◊ You can either play with the death cards from the current play session, or use all previous death cards ever made.

The Items

Playing with items is optional but recommended!

Items can help players claw back from near death, introduce unexpected twists, and extend the game's duration.

Item Basics:

Items are different from normal cards.

- ◊ They can be used at any point during your turn.
- ◊ Items without health do not need to be placed on the board.
- ◊ Items with health must be placed on the board.
- ◊ They typically have no cost to play, with the exception of the caged wolf item.
- ◊ They can not be sacrificed.

Using Items:

- ◊ Shuffle the item card pile well.
- ◊ Each time a player experiences a disadvantage of **exactly 4 damage**, they draw an item card.
- ◊ Once an item is used, it is returned to the bottom of the item card pile.

Upgrades Pile

Upgrade cards can be found in the shared card spaces on the edge of the play mat.

Sometimes, a sigil will require new cards to be played.

You must manually search through these piles to find the required card.



A Fledgling card has a stronger version of itself, marked with this symbol on the back of the card.

When a Fledgling card changes form or 'grows up' its health is replaced as if it was a brand new card.

Stronger versions are as follows:

Raven Egg -> Raven

Wolf Cub -> Wolf

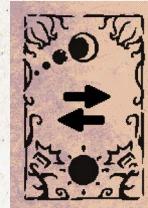
Elk Fawn -> Elk

Strange Larva -> Strange Pupa -> Mothman

Frozen Opossum -> Opossum

Caged Wolf -> Wolf

Swaps Pile



Some sigils have special effects, most of which are self-explanatory. These cards can be found in the swaps pile.

The sigils that require additional cards are: Fecundity, Loose Tail, Ant Spawner, Rabbit Hole, Bees Within, Trinket Bearer, Bellist, Dam Builder.)

Eg: Loose Tail sigil will grant you a wriggling tail card.
Dam Builder sigil will grant you up to two dam cards.

Card Details

Further information for if you are unsure what a card does!

Long Elk Rules

- ◊ Drops a vertebrae card in it's previous space whenever it moves.

The Daus Rules

- ◊ When played, a Chime card is placed in both neighboring spaces unless occupied.
- ◊ If a chime card is damaged, The Daus will deal two damage to the attacking card no matter its position.
- ◊ Chime cards can not be sacrificed.

Cat - OPTIONAL additional rule to normal use

- ◊ After being Sacrificed 9 times, it turns into the undead cat.
(Unlikely to occur in regular play)
- ◊ Keep track by adding a bone behind the card as a temporary tracking measure.

Amalgam

- ◊ If you've played the video game, you might be confused about this card. It is included for use, but the original tribe mechanic is not present in this board game. So it has no added benefit as you may have expected.

Extra / Unused cards

For completion reasons, almost all act 1 cards have been printed from the video game. During playtesting, many of these cards abilities did not translate well to a balanced two player board game, so these cards are printed but not used.

The cards and the reason for their omission are listed below.

Of course, feel free to play with the cards if you want to try them out!

Too hard to counter

- Great White
- Grizzly
- Mothman (All 3 stages)

Mothman Rules

- ◊ Can not pick up by default, must start with the Strange Larva Card
- ◊ Strange Larva -> Strange Pupa -> Mothman

Cards that are too complicated

Ouroboros Rules

- ◊ Each time it dies, it returns to your hand and gains +1 health and +1 attack.
- ◊ This mechanic is too complex to keep track and can become unfair quickly.
- ◊ You may sleeve the card and draw the upgrades on if you'd like.

Child 13 Rules

- ◊ Each time it is used for a sacrifice, it alternates between a Sleeping version and a Flying version.
- ◊ If it is sacrificed 13 times in a row (extremely unlikely) it turns into Hungry Child
- ◊ Too complicated to keep track of both of these rules simultaneously.

Printed for aesthetic reasons

- ◊ Leshy Card
- ◊ Standard Smoke Cards
- ◊ Sexy Black Goat

Sigils

Airborne

This card will ignore opposing cards and strike your adversary directly.

Active on attack



Mighty Leap

This card blocks opposing Airborne creatures, making them hit this card instead of the player directly.

Always Active



Fledgling

After surviving for 1 turn, the card grows into a stronger form.

Active at start of next turn

Stronger forms found in Upgrades Pile



Touch of Death

This card instantly kills any card it damages.

Active on attack



Many Lives

When this card is sacrificed, it does not perish.

Always Active



Stinky

The creature opposing this card loses 1 damage.

Always Active



Sprinter

At the end of the owner's turn, this card moves right relative to the owner, after it cannot move right, it switches directions, this repeats.

Active after attack



Hefty

The same effect as the sprinter card. (Seen above) However this card pushes all other cards along with itself.

Active after attack



Corpse Eater

If a card that you own dies by combat, this card may be played from your hand on its space for free even during your adversary's turn.

Always Active



Waterborne

On your adversary's turn, this card flips upside down. Anything attacking this card's space attacks the owner directly.

Active on adversary's turn



Worthy Sacrifice

This card counts as 3 Blood rather than 1 Blood when sacrificed. Excess blood is not stored for later.

Always Active



Bone King

When this card dies, 4 Bones are awarded instead of 1.

Active on card death



Leader

Creatures adjacent to this card on the owners side gain 1 damage.

Always Active



Unkillable

When this card perishes, it returns to your hand.

Active on card death



Fecundity

When this card is played, a copy of it enters your hand. The copy does not have this sigil.

Active when first played

Copies of card found in Swaps Pile

Trifurcated Strike

This card will deal damage to the opposing spaces left, right, and opposite of it.

Active on attack



Sharp Quills

Each time this card is struck, the striker is dealt 1 damage.

Active on damage



Burrower

This card will move to any empty space that is attacked by an enemy to block it.

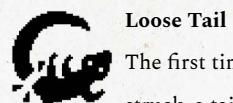
Always Active



Guardian

When an opposing card is played opposite an empty space, this card moves to that space.

Always Active



Loose Tail

The first time this card would be struck, a tail is created in its place and this card moves to the right (or if no space, the left). The tail is struck instead and can be sacrificed.

Active once only during adversary's attack

Wriggling Tail card found in Swaps Pile



Ant Damage

The damage dealt by this card is equal to the number of ant cards you own that are currently in play.

Always Active



Ant Spawner

When this card is played, an Ant enters your hand.

Active when first played

Ant cards found in Swaps Pile



Rabbit Hole

When this card is played, a rabbit enters your hand.

Active when first played

Rabbit cards found in Swaps Pile



Bees Within

Each time this card is struck, a Bee card enters your hand.

Active during adversary's attack

Bee cards found in Swaps Pile



Hoarder

When played, choose any card from your deck to add to your hand. Your adversary has to be shown the card.

Shuffle the deck.

Active when first played



Trinket Bearer

When this card is played, you will receive an item.

Active when first played

Item cards found in Items Pile



Bellist

When this card is played, Chimes are created on adjacent empty spaces.

See page 18 for more info.

Active when first played

Chime cards found in Swaps Pile



Dam Builder

When this card is played, Dams are created on adjacent empty spaces.

Active when first played

Dam cards found in Swaps Pile



Ringer

This card's damage is dependent on how close it is to the bell: From 4 at the space closest, to 1 at the furthest.

Always Active



Handy

This card's damage is dependent on the number of cards you are holding in your hand.

Always Active



Rorrim

This card's damage is equal to the card opposing it or 0 if there is no card.

Always Active

Items

Can be used any time on your turn and are single use.



Pliers

Use the pliers to rip out a tooth. You gain one point on the scales.



Scissors

You may (figuratively) cut up one of your adversary's cards. It is killed.



Hourglass

Your adversary will entirely skip their next turn.



Harpie's Birdleg Fan

All your creatures will attack as though they have the Airborne Sigil this turn.



Fish Hook

Hook one of your adversary's cards and take it as your own. You must have an empty space on your side to receive it.



Magpie's Lens

Single-use version of the hoarder sigil.



Squirrel in a Bottle

Add a Squirrel to your hand and return this item to the bottom of the item pile.



Black Goat in a Bottle

Add a Black Goat to your hand and return this item to the bottom of the item pile.



Frozen Opossum in a Bottle

After this card is destroyed, an Opossum is created in it's place.

Opossum found in the Swaps Pile



Hoggy Bank

You will immediately gain 4 Bones.



Adapted to real life by



Cryptic Crafter