

Keevorn

A single-player dungeon crawler card game by Janusz Pelc.

- Treat each room as a small card puzzle
 - Fight monsters and manage your inventory
 - Read scrolls to face your fortune
 - Master skills to defy the odds
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The adventurer's essentials

You need a standard deck of cards and two Jokers. To track Health, use paper, a life counter, or a d20.

Cards ranked 5–10 are Weapons. Cards ranked 2–4 are Potions. Together, these are the tools of your trade.

Depth

You start at the ground level (Depth 0). Each time you descend Stairs, a Joker is removed from the game and tension increases. The Depth equals the number of removed Jokers. With two Jokers, the Depth progression is 0, 1, 2.

Health

Health determines whether you live or die. It starts at its maximum (20). Whenever you gain Health, ignore any excess. If your Health ever drops below 1, you die and the game ends immediately.

Hands

There are two **Hands** to equip Weapons to:

- Your red Hand holds up to two red Weapons (♥ or ♦)
- Your black Hand holds up to two black Weapons (♠ or ♣)

Equipped Weapons can only fight Monsters that match the color of the Hand. If a Hand is full, first discard any Weapon from it to make room before equipping.

Backpack

At any time while exploring a non-empty Room, you can:

- Pick any Weapon or Potion from the Room and store it in your Backpack. Your Backpack holds up to three cards. If your Backpack is full, you cannot store a card in it.
- Place any card from your Backpack into the Room. The Room holds a maximum of four cards. If the Room is full, you cannot place a card into it.

Piles

Name	Purpose
Floor	Face-down pile from unvisited rooms
Room	Cards you must clear to proceed
Hands	Equipped Weapons you fight with
Backpack	Your Weapon and Potion reserve
Discard	Face-down pile of discarded cards

Example layout



Setup and exploration

1. Set your Health to its maximum (20).
2. Shuffle all cards face-down. This is your first Floor.
3. Prepare empty spaces for the Room, Hands, Backpack, and Discard piles.
4. Draw four cards from the Floor and place them face-up in front of you to form the Room.

The Peddler's trade

You step into a bone-dry antechamber. It smells of dust, ancient paper, and ground stone. Something crunches beneath your boot. A hooded peddler appears, willing to trade Weapons for anything else you don't need.

This step happens once, right after you reveal the very first Room, and before you start exploring it. During the Peddler's trade you do not play cards, equip Weapons, use skills, or move cards to or from your Backpack.

For each non-Weapon card you may wish to trade, place it on the bottom of the Floor, then reveal cards from the top until you find a Weapon. Add it to the Room and put all revealed non-Weapon cards on the bottom of the Floor.

The peddler vanishes. You are on your own now. Time to **Explore** the first Room.

Exploring a Room

While there are cards in the Room, select and **Play** one card. Cards can only be Played from the Room.

When the Room is cleared:

- If the Floor is empty, **you escape**.
- Otherwise, **Enter** the next Room.

Entering a Room

To **Enter** a new Room, draw up to four cards from the Floor (or fewer, if the Floor runs out). Place them face-up in front of you to form the Room.

Playing rank 2–4 cards (Potions)

Potions are mysterious brews that affect your Health the moment you drink them.

To play a Potion, discard it and apply the effect based on its color:

- Red (♥ or ♦) - **Elixir**: Gain Health equal to the card's rank
- Black (♠ or ♣) - **Bane**: Lose Health equal to the card's rank

Playing rank 5–10 cards (Weapons)

You may equip a Weapon only by playing it from the Room. You cannot equip from the Backpack.

Spades ♠ (Attack skill)

An ebon shovel that can be equipped to your black Hand.

Its Attack skill only applies during combat, where Spade Weapons in the Room may join the fight regardless of the Monster's color. If there are no Monsters in the Room, the skill cannot be used.

Clubs ♣ (Probe skill)

A knotted staff of dark wood that can be equipped to your black Hand.

To use its Probe skill, discard the Club Weapon from the Room and peek at the top card of the Floor. You may place the probed card into the Room or return it to the top of the Floor. If the Floor is empty, the skill cannot be used.

Hearts ♥ (Heal skill)

A sanguine scepter that can be equipped to your red Hand.

To use its Heal skill, discard the Heart Weapon from the Room and gain Health equal to the card's rank.

Diamonds ♦ (Bury skill)

A faceted crystalline dagger that can be equipped to your red Hand.

To use its Bury skill, discard the Diamond Weapon from the Room and move another card from the Room to the bottom of the Floor. If there are no other cards in the Room, the skill cannot be used.

Playing Face cards (Monsters)

Jack, Queen, and King are Monsters with strength 11, 12, and 13 respectively. When you play a Monster from the Room, you must fight it.

Combat

1. Select any Weapons from the Hand that matches the Monster's color. You may also select any Spade Weapons from the Room regardless of the Monster's color. Selected cards occupy their slots until combat ends.
2. Sum the ranks of the selected cards to get your attack power.
3. Compare your attack power to the Monster's strength:
 - If your attack power is lower, you lose Health equal to the difference.
 - If your attack power is higher, you win. If selected cards contain any Spade, also gain Health equal to the difference.
 - If they are equal, this is a clean kill.
4. Discard the selected cards and the Monster.

You may choose to fight barehanded, in which case your attack power is 0 and you lose Health equal to the Monster's full strength.

Playing Aces (Scrolls)

Aces are arcane Scrolls that reveal your Fortune. To read a Scroll, discard an Ace, then draw a card from the Floor and place it face-up in the Room. If the Floor is empty, just discard the Ace and skip the Fortune step.

Your Fortune

The drawn card remains in the Room, and determines which Fortune you must face, resolving it immediately. Fortunes are:

- ♠ Spades - **Pain:** Lose Health equal to three times the Depth
- ♣ Clubs - **Loss:** Discard any card from your Backpack
- ♥ Hearts - **Vigor:** Gain Health equal to three times the Depth
- ♦ Diamonds - **Relief:** Discard any Monster or Potion in the Room
- Joker - **Surprise:** Discard any number of cards from the Room

At the ground level (Depth 0), Pain and Vigor do not affect your Health.

Playing Jokers (Stairs)

Jokers cannot be played. They stay in the Room until all other cards are cleared, unless an effect moves or discards them. When only Jokers remain in the Room, you have found the Stairs and the current Floor ends. Possible cases are:

- **One Joker:** Remove it from the game. Shuffle the Floor and Discard piles together to form a new Floor pile, then **Enter** the first Room.
- **More than one Joker:** Immediately proceed to the Secret Floor section below.

Secret Floor

Multiple stairways converge into a gloomy passage. You've found a Secret Floor, a rare detour from the main dungeon.

Take all Jokers from the Room. Choose whichever pile (Floor or Discard) looks larger to you and insert the Jokers into that pile at random places, so they aren't all together.

Shuffle the Floor and Discard piles together to form a new Floor pile, then **Enter** the first Room. A Wishing Well awaits here.

Upon entering the first Room, your number of wishes equals 1 plus the Depth. For each wish, name any Fortune and resolve it.

The end of the journey

The game ends when:

- You clear all Rooms and survive Keevorn.
- You die. The journey is the reward.

And here's the secret of Keevorn: luck deals, skill wins.

House rules

- On a coffee-break? Pick a Depth and play without Jokers.
- Up for relaxed play? Treat Potions as Weapons.
- Feeling brave or fragile? Lower or raise the maximum Health.
- Craving a longer and grimmer journey? Use more Jokers.
- Chasing bragging rights? Brag about your clean kills.

These are just starting points. Make the game your own!

Common questions

About the Room

Can I discard a card I don't want?

No. Cards leave the Room only by playing them, storing them in the Backpack, or through effects like Bury or Relief.

What if I'm stuck with a card I can't deal with?

Treat it as a puzzle. Find a valid option, often one that minimizes the loss. You could equip a Weapon (discarding from your Hand if full), store it in your Backpack if it's a number card, use another card's effect to move or discard it, or accept the cost (drink a black Potion, fight barehanded).

About combat

Can I choose not to use a Weapon I have equipped?

Yes. You select which Weapons to use each fight. Unselected Weapons stay in your Hand for later.

What if I have no matching Weapons?

You fight barehanded (attack power 0) and lose Health equal to the Monster's full strength. Remember that Spades in the Room can join any fight regardless of color. Alternatively, find a way to get rid of the Monster using other cards' effects.

Does selecting a Weapon for combat free up its slot in the Hand?

No. The slot stays occupied until combat ends. You can move the card physically to visualize the fight, but you cannot equip a new Weapon into that slot mid-combat.

About Weapons

Can I use a Weapon's skill from my Hand?

No. Skills only work from the Room. Once equipped, a Weapon can only be used in combat.

Can I equip a Weapon from my Backpack?

Yes, but not directly. Move it to the Room while exploring (if there's space), then equip from there.

Can I discard a Weapon from my Hand whenever I want?

No. You only discard from a Hand when making space for a new Weapon, or when selecting it for combat.

When can Spades in the Room join combat?

Whenever you fight a Monster. Spades in the Room may join regardless of the Monster's color. They get discarded after combat like any selected Weapon.

About Potions

Can I avoid drinking a black Potion?

No. If you play a Potion, you must apply its effect. Store it in your Backpack to delay the decision, or use effects like Bury or Relief to discard it.

About the Backpack

What can I store in my Backpack?

Only number cards: Weapons (5–10) and Potions (2–4). Aces, Monsters, and Jokers cannot be stored.

When can I use my Backpack?

At any time while exploring a non-empty Room. You can store a number card from the Room (if your Backpack has space), or place a card from your Backpack into the Room (if the Room has space).

Can I use the Backpack during the Peddler's trade?

No. The Peddler's trade happens before you start exploring the first Room.

About the Peddler's trade

What can I trade to the Peddler?

Any non-Weapon in the starting Room: Potions, Monsters, Aces, even Jokers.

What happens to Weapons already in the starting Room?

They stay. You don't trade Weapons, and you don't equip anything during this step.

Is the Peddler's trade mandatory?

No. If you like your starting Room or want a harder start, skip it.

About Stairs and Fortunes

Can Jokers be moved or discarded?

Yes, but only through effects: Bury (Diamond skill), Surprise (Joker Fortune), or the Peddler's trade.

What happens if the Floor is empty when I play an Ace?

Just discard the Ace. No Fortune is drawn.

What if a Fortune can't be resolved?

If Loss triggers with an empty Backpack, or Relief triggers with no valid target, nothing happens. The Fortune is simply skipped.

Quick reference

Concept	Rule
Depth	Number of Jokers removed from the game (0, 1, 2)
Health	Starts at 20, cannot exceed 20, you die below 1
Hands	Each one holds up to two Weapons, red and black separately
Backpack	Holds up to three Weapons or Potions

Rank	Type	Mechanics
2–4	Potions	Red heals, black hurts (by card's rank)
5–10	Weapons	Equip to color-matching Hand, or use unique Skills
Face cards	Monsters	Strength: Jack 11, Queen 12, King 13
Ace	Scrolls	Draw a card and face your Fortune
Joker	Stairs	Single leads to next Floor, multiple to Secret Floor

Suit	Skill	Fortune	Resolution	Color
Spades ♠	Attack	Pain	Lose Health equal to three times the Depth	Black
Clubs ♣	Probe	Loss	Discard any card from your Backpack	Black
Hearts ♥	Heal	Vigor	Gain Health equal to three times the Depth	Red
Diamonds ♦	Bury	Relief	Discard any Monster or Potion in the Room	Red
Joker	—	Surprise	Discard any number of cards from the Room	—

Fighting	Room	Hand	Selected	Case	Health
Q♠ (12)	7♠	5♣	5♣ + 7♠	12 = 12	No change (clean kill)
J♠ (11)	—	9♠, 10♣	10♣	10 < 11	Lose 1 (9♠ saved for later)
K♣ (13)	7♣	5♣, 6♠	5♣ + 6♠	11 < 13	Lose 2 (7♣ can't join)
J♣ (11)	—	—	—	0 < 11	Lose 11 (barehanded)
K♠ (13)	—	7♠, 8♣	7♠ + 8♣	15 > 13	Gain 2 (♠ bonus)
Q♥ (12)	9♠	6♥, 8♦	6♥ + 8♦ + 9♠	23 > 12	Gain 11 (♠ bonus)
Q♥ (12)	9♠	6♥, 8♦	6♥ + 8♦	14 > 12	No change (no ♠ selected)