

# the accursed tomb

~ Dungeon crawling with playing cards ~



## INTRODUCTION

The Accursed Tomb is a unique dungeon crawling RPG. It can be played in quick spurts or for hours on end, by one to four players. The best news? You probably already own it! The Accursed Tomb is played using only a standard set of playing cards. The perfect game when stranded on an airport or stuck inside on a rainy afternoon.

This document explains the rules to the base game, as well as the expansion sets **Classes of Ironvale** and **Mines of Goldpeak**. However, these are merely guidelines. Feel free to expand, alter and roleplay to tailor the game to your experience.

## STORY

The town of Redbrook had been a peaceful place for hundreds of years. Now crops are failing, livestock have fallen ill and children have gone missing. The village elders grow weary. They remember whispers from times long past, exchanged only in the darkest hours. Murmurs of demons and monstrosities, hidden in the nearby mountains.

A daring adventurer, you arrive in the town of Redbrook with little more than a few provisions and your wits to guide you. You venture into the mountains and after several days you discover the stone entrance to a hidden tomb. You hear deep rumblings as the door closes behind you.

~ YOU HAVE ENTERED THE ACCURSED TOMB ~

## Goal

You explore the accused tomb by traveling through its layers of increasingly difficult domains. Each domain is represented by playing cards laid out on a grid. Players progress to the next domain by defeating the Arch Daemon guarding that domain. Winning the Accursed Tomb means slaying all four Arch Daemons roaming its halls.

## Quick start

- ❖ Clear a space of 8 by 8 cards lengthwise.
- ❖ Keep one 6 (player card), one queen (blessing) and one jack (weapon) separate.
- ❖ Divide the deck in shuffled stacks of 2-6 and 7-ace.
- ❖ Place the stacks on the edges of the field, the player card in the bottom center and the weapon and blessing in the inventory near the player card (see “Game setup” figure).
- ❖ Players can explore or fight. On the first turn, players can only explore from the starting position at the player card.
- ❖ Exploring (see “Game start” figure):
  - Players explore from played cards (imagine these as hallways).
  - To explore, place cards from the 7-ace stack in each cardinal direction at the end of the card (imagine this as the explored room), as long as it isn’t limited by the playfield, it already contains a card, or if the 7-ace stack is empty.

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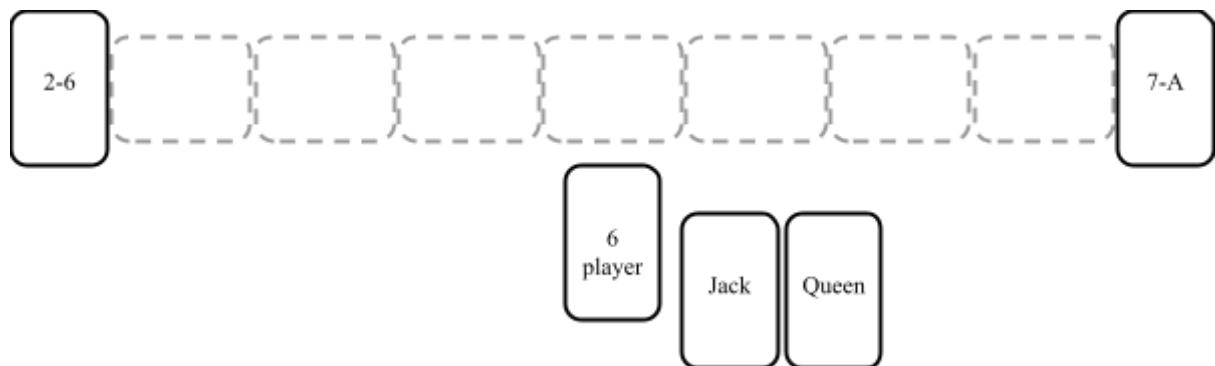
- The explored card is turned face down to indicate the accessed room cannot be explored again.
- Players can explore freely at Kings or Aces (safe hallways).
- Weapons and blessings (items) are placed like the other cards, but can be picked up and added to the inventory after all cards have been placed (see “Game start” figure).
- An empty section of an explored room can be broken through to explore another room, by placing a weapon card face down in that direction (see “Breaking through walls” figure).
- The 7-10 cards represent enemies that must be defeated before players can explore in that direction (see “Combat victory” figure).
- The first 10 drawn represents the domain’s Arch Daemon. This card is placed at the far end of the playing field. Players must defeat the Arch Daemon **twice** to clear the domain. The suit of the Arch Daemon represents the domain’s aligned element.
- ❖ The aligned element of the domain has the following effects:
  - Each enemy of that element acts as 1 level higher (but not the player).
  - Each item of that element can be used twice.
  - Exploring a safe hallway (king or ace) of that element lets the player shuffle used items back into the 7-ace stack.
- ❖ Combat:
  - Players can engage in combat with any enemy at an explored room.
  - Combatants draw cards from the 2-6 stack. Whoever draws the highest card wins that round of combat.
  - The number of cards drawn is equivalent to the difference in level (their card’s number) between combatants, where each draws at least one card. The player draws 1 extra card (see “Drawing combat cards examples” table).
  - Before initiating combat, players may use any number of weapons to draw one extra card during combat. Used weapons are placed on a discard pile after combat.
  - If they lose, players place one blessing in a discard pile. Losing combat with no blessings left means losing the game.
  - If they win, players replace their card with the enemy’s and use their old player card to explore the enemy’s hallway (see “Combat victory” figure).
- ❖ See “Multiple players” section when playing with multiple players.
- ❖ These steps are enough to start playing the game. After clearing the first domain, see the “Progressing domains” section. If you’d like to increase the tactical depth of the game, see the “Classes of Ironvale” and “Treasured mines” expansion sets.

## Setting up

The accursed tomb is played by laying out cards on a playing field. You'll need a space of approximately 8 by 8 cards (measured using the length of the card) to play. The game can also be played on a smaller playing field, resulting in a shorter and more difficult game.

While playing, feel free to play music to set the mood. A recommended playlist can be found at: <https://soundcloud.com/kees-sommer/sets/the-accursed-tomb-ambience>

To start the game, divide one deck of cards into two stacks (do not include the jokers). One stack should contain all cards from 2 to 6 and the other cards from 7 to ace. From these, take one 6, one jack and one queen and shuffle both stacks. Place the stacks at the left and right ends of the playing field, at a horizontal distance of approximately 7 playing cards. Place the reserved 6 on the bottom of the playing field, centered between the two stacks, with the jack and queen placed next to the 6. The 6 represents the player starting at level 6, while the queen and jack represent the player's inventory, containing one blessing (queen) and one weapon (jack).



Game setup

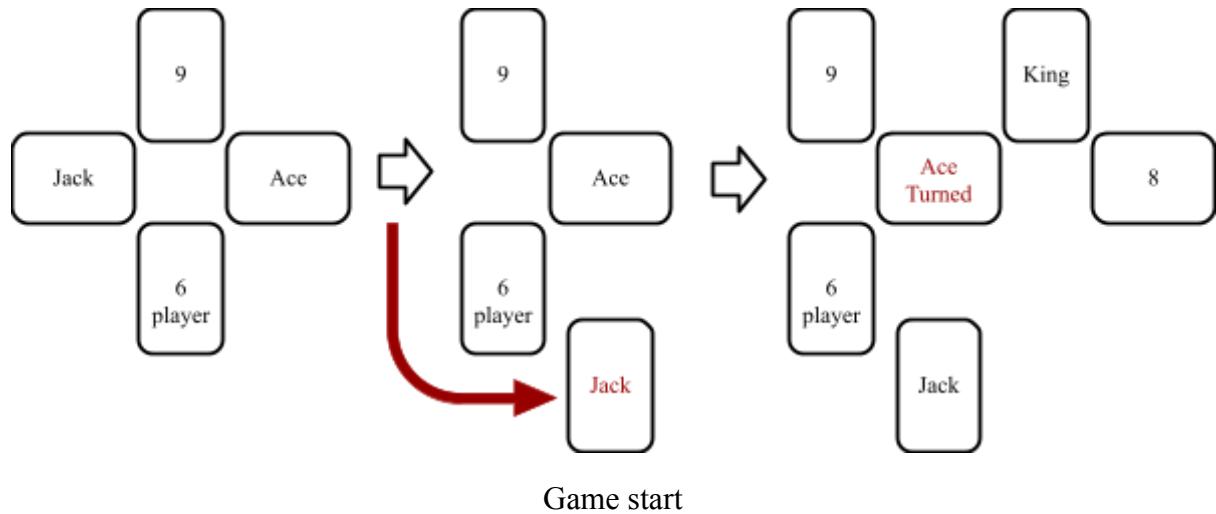
## Exploration

Players explore the tomb using cards from the 7-ace stack. Starting the game, players explore at the position of the player card. Drawing from the 7-ace stack, players take three cards and place them above the player card, aiming to the left, the right and the top. Imagine the player card as the entrance of the tomb, and the drawn cards as hallways branching from the entrance hall. Depending on the cards laid out, players may explore further (as illustrated in the "Game start" figure).

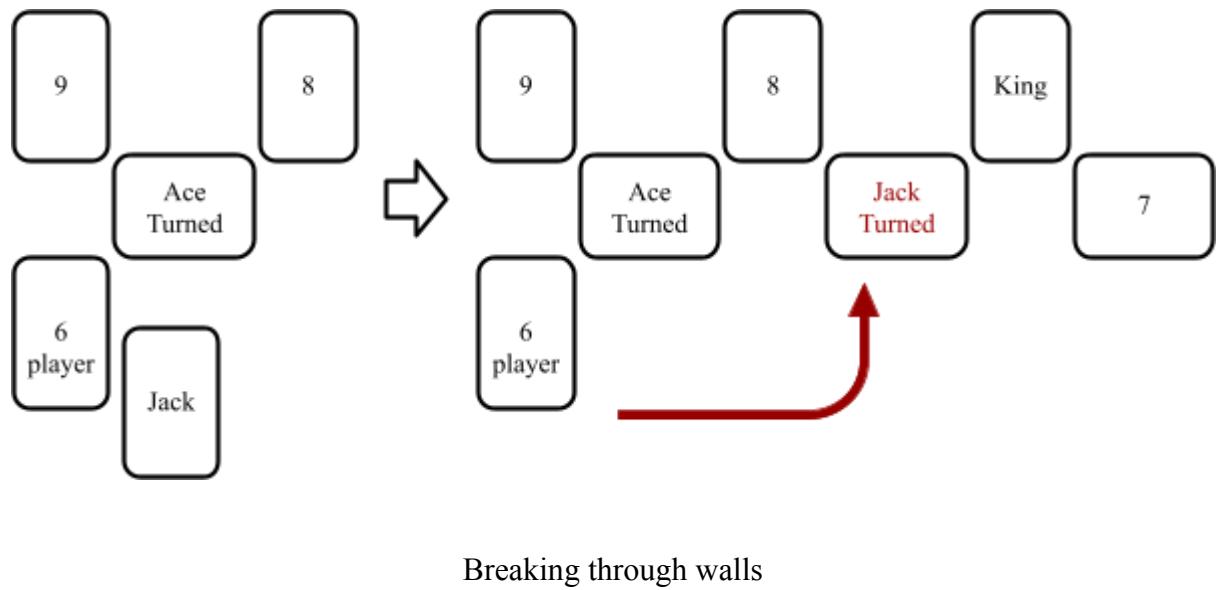
If a card is an **ace** or a **king**, it represents a safe hallway. Players can explore freely in the direction the card is pointing. If a player chooses to explore a hallway, they must turn the card face down to indicate that the room ahead has already been explored and cannot be explored again from a different direction. When exploring a room, the player places cards from the 7-ace stack in each available cardinal direction. If the player reaches the end of the playing field, they cannot explore any further in that direction.

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If a card is a **jack** (weapon) or a **queen** (blessing), the player places these at the sides of the room, as they would any other card, and once all cards have been laid out, picks these up and places them as items in their inventory.



While exploring, players may choose to use a weapon to break through a wall. From a previously explored room, they pick a side that currently has no card, but isn't on the edge of the playing field. The weapon card is then placed face down on the playing field in the direction the player wishes to explore.



If a card is a **numbered card**, it represents an enemy. This enemy must be defeated before the player can explore in that direction. **Important:** The first time the player draws a 10, this is not placed at the tile that the player is exploring. This card represents the Arch Daemon of the current domain and dictates the aligned element of the current domain. See

the sections on **combat**, **defeating the Arch Daemon** and **aligned elements** for more information.

## Combat

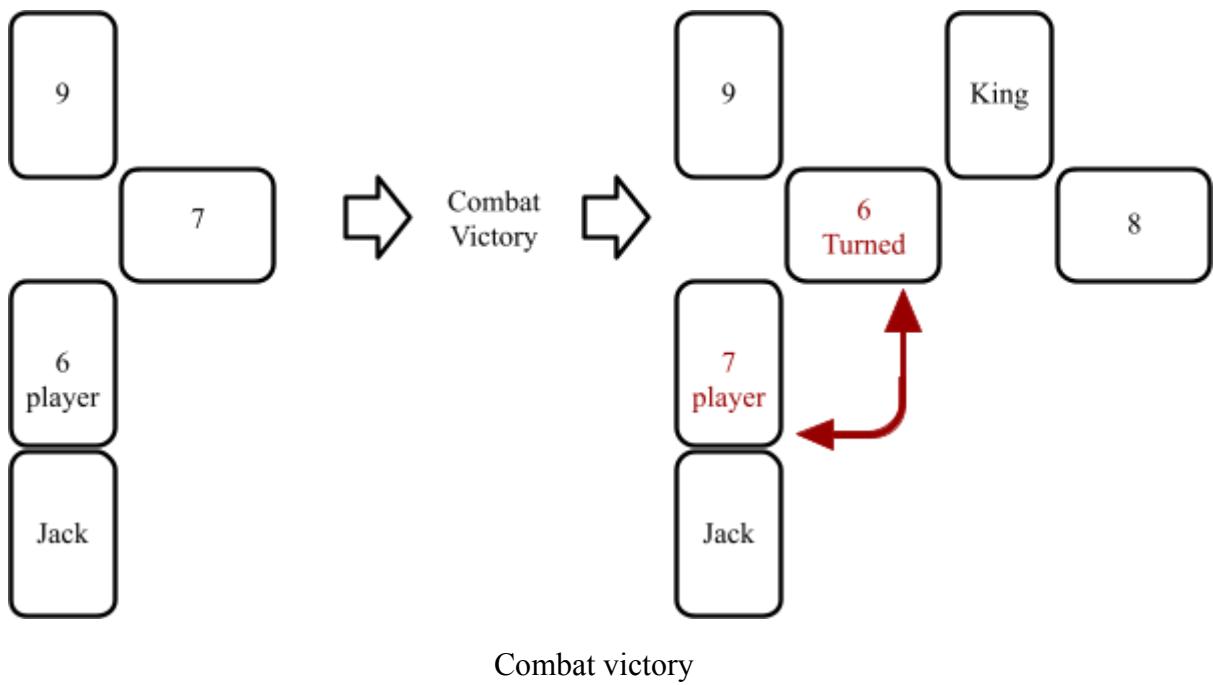
Players can engage in combat with any enemy that touches an explored room (this usually includes all enemies, except for the Arch Daemon if their room has not yet been explored). After the player chooses to engage an enemy, combat is conducted as follows. The player and enemy both draw cards from the 2-6 stack. Whoever draws the highest card wins the encounter. The number of cards drawn is equivalent to the difference in level (determined by the number on their card) between the player and the enemy, where the lowest level combatant has one card. The player then draws one extra card (see “Drawing combat cards examples table”).

Before engaging in combat, players can choose to use any number of weapons from their inventory. Each weapon used lets them draw one more card in combat. After each combat encounter, used weapons are placed in a discard pile.

Player level	Enemy level	Player card amount	Enemy card amount
6	7	$1 + 1 = \textcolor{red}{2}$	2
7	7	$1 + 1 = \textcolor{red}{2}$	1
10	7	$4 + 1 = \textcolor{red}{5}$	1
<b><math>7 + 2 \text{ weapons}</math></b>	7	$1 + 1 + \textcolor{red}{2} = \textcolor{red}{4}$	1

Drawing combat cards examples

**If the player loses the encounter** they lose one blessing (queen) and it is placed in the discard pile. If the player loses an encounter with no more blessings left, they die and the game is over. **If the player wins the encounter** and the enemy was of a higher level than the player, they swap the player card with the enemy card, indicating that they have adopted the enemy’s level. Either the old player card or the enemy card (if the enemy was of a lower level) is placed face down on the enemy’s location. Within the same action, players explore the room behind the enemy.



### Defeating the Arch Daemon

To clear the domain and progress to the next one, the Arch Daemon must be defeated. However, rather than falling immediately, the player must defeat them in combat **two times**. After a first win, the card is turned 90 degrees, to indicate the Arch Daemon is weakened.

### Aligned elements

The suit of the Arch Daemon dictates the aligned element of the current domain. This has the following implications: All enemies of the same element as the Arch Daemon behave as though they were one level higher in combat (including the Arch Daemon). **Except** for the player. Their level is never boosted by the domain's element. Furthermore, all items of that suit can be used twice (items matching the element are turned 90 degrees on an initial use and placed in a discard pile on a second). When the player explores a safe hallway of that suit (ace or king), the discard pile (of jacks and queens) is shuffled back into the 7-ace stack.

## Multiple Players

Entering the accursed tomb with multiple players adds the following rules:

- ❖ Each player takes their own player card and maintains their own level and inventory.
- ❖ Players enter the tomb from the same spot and take turns exploring or fighting.
- ❖ Outside of combat, players can trade goods and discuss their approach.
- ❖ Before engaging in combat, players can choose to assist one another in the coming combat encounter. The active player can then draw one extra combat card for each player assisting, but upon defeat, all players engaged in that encounter lose a blessing.
- ❖ If a player dies another player can revive them by defeating the enemy that killed them.

## PROGRESSING Domains

After defeating the Arch Daemon, the player continues to the next domain. The card representing the Arch Daemon and the player's current items are kept separately while all other cards are reshuffled into the two stacks. One 6 is again reserved as a player card and one blessing and one weapon are added to the player's inventory.

After resetting the initial game state, the card representing the defeated Arch Daemon is added to the player's inventory. This represents a dark gift, a special item that may be used once per domain (turn the card 90 degrees after using it in a domain, turn it back upright upon defeating an Arch Daemon). Each Arch Daemon bestows its own dark gift upon defeat, as illustrated in the overview below. Now that they have traveled to the new domain, players once again explore the domain as they did the previous one. However, this time, the level of each numbered card is multiplied by the level of that domain. For example, on the second domain, a 7 card represents level 14, while at the fourth domain it represents level 28.

### DARK GIFTS:

- ❖ **UR-ZHULAH's arm** (10 of clubs): Once per domain, choose an explored room on the map. All cards on the board are reshuffled into the 7-ace stack. The player can re-explore the domain from the selected room.
- ❖ **UR-IO's eye** (10 of diamonds): Once per domain, take the three cards from the top of either stack and see what they are. Return the cards to the top of the stack.
- ❖ **UR-AMON's heart** (10 of hearts): Once per domain, **either**: ignore the previous combat encounter (weapons and blessings are returned) **or**: reuse a dark gift
- ❖ **UR-VIVEH's brain** (10 of spades): Once per domain, change class (players will have to play the Classes of Ironvale expansion).



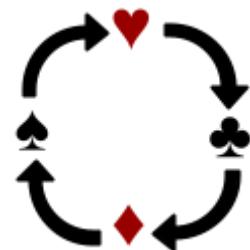
10  
heart eater ~ blood wyrm

## Expansion: Classes of Ironvale

*Strange people have been traveling through the nearby town of Ironvale. Heroes from all corners of the continent and its many walks of life. Mystical fighting monks, powerful magic users and wildlings from nature now walk the humble roads. All attracted by the same call: to defeat the ancient evil residing in the mountains.*

When playing with this expansion the starting player card determines the class played. Each player can choose a card, or pick one at random. Each class changes the way the game is played.

- ❖ **Martial artist** (6 of clubs): Hailing from the temples of the Ivory Mountains, the martial artist has sworn off any weapons, but is able to interrupt the enemy's attacks and assault them with a flurry of blows. The martial artist can only use weapons to break through walls. Whenever an enemy draws clubs, they cannot draw more cards that encounter. When the player draws clubs, they draw an extra card.
- ❖ **Rogue** (10 of spades): Sneaking through the streets of Nightsborough, the rogue has become a master of stealth. While exploring, the rogue can initiate a “sneak encounter” with an enemy. This works similar to combat, however, the number of cards drawn based on level is switched, while the player still draws one extra card (see “Drawing combat cards examples”). For example: a level 6 player sneaking past a level 7 enemy draws  $2 + 1 = 3$  cards, while the enemy draws 1. On a successful sneak encounter, the room behind the enemy is explored, but the enemy card is not turned over and no level is gained. On a failed sneak encounter, the player is forced into a combat encounter where they cannot use any weapons.
- ❖ **Elementalist** (6 of diamonds): Studying alchemy at the prestigious Moonsgrace academy, the elementalist aligns themselves with the elements during combat. As an elementalist, the suit of the player’s level card represents the element they are aligned with. During combat, certain elements are dominant over others, letting the combatant with the dominant element draw one extra card. The dominance of elements is illustrated in the elemental wheel, where elements of the same color act neutral towards each other.
- ❖ **Beastmaster** (6 of hearts): Surviving in the Rustwood wilds, the beastmaster has learned to tame the creatures of nature. After winning a combat encounter, the beastmaster can tame the defeated enemy. In that case, the player doesn’t grow in level, but places the enemy card next to theirs. The top card of the 7-ace stack is placed face down on the former position of the enemy. Before engaging in combat, the beastmaster can send their beast into combat instead. The beast cannot use weapons, but upon defeat, the beastmaster can use a blessing to revive them. Upon victory either the player or the beast can adopt the enemy’s level. The beastmaster can only have one tame beast at any given time.



## Expansion: Treasured Mines

*While exploring the mountains near Redbrook, adventurers discover an ancient abandoned mine. Untouched by humans for many aeons, it's filled with dangerous monsters, ancient treasure and a mysterious merchant...*

This expansion adds the following rules:

- ❖ Items are no longer shuffled back into the 7-ace stack.
- ❖ Every time the player defeats an enemy they draw an attack card. The first time this happens, they place the attack card in their inventory. It represents the amount of gold in the player's satchel. Every time they defeat an enemy, the player draws an attack card. If the attack card is higher than their current gold card, it replaces the gold card in their inventory.
- ❖ Every time the player explores a king card, they can purchase items from a mysterious merchant. For 3 gold, they can take a weapon from the discard pile. For 5 gold, they can take a blessing from the discard pile. All gold is discarded upon purchase.