



DISCLAIMER

This game is an early access release of the digital boardgame "Soulless Vessel" for Tabletop Simulator. The game may have occasional flaws or typos, and some content, mostly art, is still missing - but we are doing our best to uphold great quality! The first chapter can be enjoyed in its entirety, with more chapters following over the next few months.

We encourage all of our players to leave feedback, or to even [consider subscribing to our Patreon](#) to get in-depth updates and a voice to steer future updates. We want this game to grow together with an engaged community!

Your support will be used to fund our art-related needs.

Please keep in mind that this **Rule Book** is an early version. An improved book with more examples and a proper layout will follow later during development.

CREDITS

Game Design:

[Marcel Zons](#)
[Manuel Kuczynski](#)

2D Design & Layout:

[Manuel Kuczynski](#)

Illustrations:

[Albert Wijaya](#)

Map Tile Art:

Marcel Zons

Supporting Design:

Dashiel Nemeth

Programming:

Jonah Möller
Dashiel Nemeth

Special Thanks To:

Julian Erhardt
Magnus Linder
Jonah Möller
Dashiel Nemeth
Alexandra Norman
Jennifer Patzer
Florian Rohde
Tobias Rojahn
Patrick Röseler
Naomi Seeling
Adam Taubenheim
Thomas Walther
Andreas Weiß

All icons for items, ability cards and traits are from the [Humble Bundle Game Dev Icons](#). The Map Tiles were created using a pro license from [Inkarnate](#).

<u>Game Summary & Goal</u>	4	<u>Damage & Death</u>	12
<u>Game Components</u>	4	<u>Hero Damage</u>	12
Ability Cards	4	<u>Wound & Scratch Healing</u>	13
Vessels	4	<u>Enemy Damage</u>	13
Items	4	<u>Minion Damage</u>	14
Player Board	5	<u>Status Effects</u>	14
Enemy Reference Cards	5	<u>Bleed</u>	14
AI Cards	5	<u>Cripple</u>	14
Trait Cards	5	<u>Dazed</u>	14
Initiative Tracker	5	<u>Stun</u>	14
Adventure Tracker	5	<u>Weaken</u>	14
Tokens	5	<u>Cursed</u>	14
Coins	6	<u>Terror</u>	15
Soul Shards	6	<u>Keywords</u>	15
Models	6	<u>Nimble</u>	15
Map Tiles	6	<u>Slippery</u>	15
Exploration Cards	6	<u>Bulky</u>	15
Book Of Exploration	6	<u>Knockback</u>	15
Book Of Adventures	6	<u>Pull</u>	16
<u>Game Concepts</u>	7	<u>Retreat</u>	16
Movement	7	<u>Hit Multiple / Additional</u>	17
Red Map Lines	7	<u>Reach</u>	17
Blue Map Lines	7	<u>Toughness</u>	17
Difficult Terrain	7	<u>Straight / Diagonal Line</u>	17
Dice Types & Symbols	7	<u>Blast Template</u>	17
Power	7	<u>Give Up</u>	18
Plus	8	<u>Rule Of Ambiguity</u>	18
Star	8	<u>Game Rounds</u>	19
Fault	8	<u>Reduce Ongoing Effects</u>	19
Botch	8	Events	19
Critical	8	AI Cards & Enemy Initiative	19
Dice Rolls	8	Place Ability Cards	19
Attack Roll	8	Reveal Cards & Hero Initiative	19
Defense Roll	9	Turns	20
Spellcasting Roll	9	<u>Hero Turn</u>	20
Damage Roll	9	Movement	20
Misc. Roll	9	Special Movement Actions	20
Attacking	9	Escape Tests & Attacks Of Opportunity	20
Attacking Without Weapons	9	Ability Cards & Actions	21
Line-of-Sight	9	Revealing Rooms	21
Ability Cards	10	<u>Minion Turn</u>	22
Cooldown	11	<u>Enemy Turn</u>	22
Ongoing Effects	11	<u>Enemy Reference Card</u>	22
Interrupt Effects	11	Activation Order	22
Ability Tokens	11	Target Priority	22
Initiative	11	Movement	23
Items & Item Slots	12	Attacks & Defense	23
Vessels	12	Abilities	23
Exchanging Vessels between Players	12	AI Modifiers	23
		Threat Value	23

<u>End Turn Effects</u>	23	<u>Look at Facedown Card</u>	30
<u>First Game Setup</u>	24	<u>Quick Draw Card</u>	30
<u>Select Campaign Difficulty</u>	24	<u>Rotate Object</u>	30
<u>Default</u>	24	<u>Ping</u>	30
<u>Challenger</u>	24	<u>Take Multiple From Bag</u>	31
<u>Nightmare</u>	24	<u>Dice Roller Tool</u>	31
<u>+1 Mode</u>	24		
<u>Select Starter Deck</u>	25		
<u>Select Soul Token</u>	25		
<u>Select Starter Vessel</u>	25		
<u>Choose Starting Items</u>	25		
<u>Prepare First Adventure</u>	25		
<u>New Adventure Setup</u>	26		
<u>Exploration Deck</u>	26		
<u>Sub-Piles</u>	26		
<u>Enemy Deck</u>	26		
<u>Events</u>	26		
<u>First Room & Starting Position</u>	26		
<u>Story Text</u>	26		
<u>Quest Triggers</u>	26		
<u>Town Phase</u>	27		
<u>SHared Currencies</u>	27		
<u>Repair</u>	27		
<u>Buy Items</u>	27		
<u>Sell Items</u>	27		
<u>Vessel Offers</u>	27		
<u>Peasants</u>	27		
<u>Expand Shopping Options</u>	27		
<u>Buy / Upgrade Ability Cards</u>	27		
<u>Buy Ability Card</u>	28		
<u>Upgrade Ability Card</u>	28		
<u>Retrain Cards</u>	28		
<u>Vessel Synchronization</u>	28		
<u>Retaining Synchronization</u>	28		
<u>Select Next Adventure</u>	28		
<u>Adventure Tracker</u>	28		
<u>Campaign & Tiers</u>	28		
<u>Advancing Tiers</u>	29		
<u>Losing The Campaign</u>	29		
<u>The Soul Shop</u>	29		
<u>Tabletop Simulator Guide</u>	30		
<u>Take A Seat</u>	30		
<u>Shuffle</u>	30		
<u>Flip</u>	30		
<u>Draw Card vs. Move Deck</u>	30		
<u>View Card</u>	30		
<u>Lock / Unlock Object</u>	30		
<u>Draw Line-Of-Sight</u>	30		

GAME SUMMARY & GOAL

Soulless Vessel is a fully **cooperative dungeon crawler** that is all about tactics and building the strongest character, with the best synergies within the party.

Each player assumes the role of a hero's lost soul who returns to fight an age-old evil once more, the Neverwake dragon. Equipped with the power to inhabit a vessel, the body of a former hero, the players will pursue the Neverwake Dragon's tracks and grow strong enough to ultimately face and defeat it.

Over the course of the campaign, which is divided into individual adventures (= game sessions), the heroes will grow stronger in equipment and skills. During each adventure, the party will tactically coordinate to fulfill the individual objective while exploring a procedurally generated area or dungeon. All the enemies act based on clear rules that the players can strategize around to exploit their behavior.

GAME COMPONENTS

This section is providing a brief overview of various game components, to make it easier to grasp the concepts in the rule book chapters after this one.

ABILITY CARDS



Ability cards represent each player's arsenal of actions. The overall ability deck of a player describes what kind of returned hero they embody, for example what their strengths and specialization are.

Each player has their own deck of ability cards that cannot be traded with other players.

VESSELS



In Soulless Vessel, players assume the role of the returned souls of heroes. With no flesh to call their own, they use a ritual to inhabit the bodies of unconscious or willing individuals.

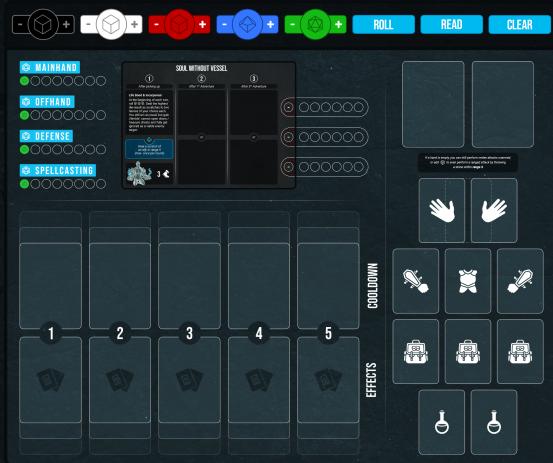
These inhabited bodies are called vessels and are represented with a card and a miniature each. Each vessel provides unique benefits that grow stronger over time.

ITEMS



The party will obtain items through shopping in towns or by finding them during adventures. Items can be equipped to fulfill a hero's designated role or build. They can also break or be lost. The protector (or "tank") might want a sword and a shield to best synergize with their ability cards, whereas a sorcerer would want a magical staff. How many items each player can carry is limited as shown on the player board (see "[Player Board](#)").

PLAYER BOARD



Each hero, and therefore player, has their own player board to record the vessel they currently possess, what items they have, but also to track the status of their ability cards and their vessel's health. The player board is also used to manage the inventory of items, see "[Items & Item Slots](#)".

ENEMY REFERENCE CARDS



Every type of enemy is described by a corresponding reference card. It contains information about that enemy's combat-relevant values and their abilities.

AI CARDS



AI cards are required to describe how individual enemy groups act, and which modifiers or abilities they have available during a given game round. See "[AI Cards](#)" for more details.

TRAIT CARDS



Some circumstances may call for a trait card to be attached to an enemy group. These are applied upon spawning enemies and provide that group with unique abilities, making them more challenging to fight.

INITIATIVE TRACKER



The Initiative Tracker is used each game round to determine the activation order of heroes, minions and enemy groups.

ADVENTURE TRACKER



The Adventure Tracker is used throughout the campaign for the party to see which adventures were achieved so far, and at what point they move to the next campaign tier (more on the campaign structure in "[Campaign & Tiers](#)").

TOKENS

There are various tokens in the game to help track states.

Most notably, **scratch/wound** tokens are used to determine how close heroes and enemies are towards death.

There are several **status effect** tokens (e.g. Cripple, Weaken, Stun), with some being available for both heroes and enemies, and some being unique to heroes.

There is a **Special** token that can be used to mark various special effects like activated upgrades on abilities or enemies that are affected by special ability cards.

There are also **Player** tokens. Each player picks a soul that represents them, choosing it once at the beginning of the campaign. It gets used to mark their position on the initiative tracker.

COINS

By finding treasure, completing adventures or by selling items, the party will accumulate Coins to purchase items with them. They are tracked persistently for the campaign.

SOUL SHARDS

Soul Shards are the secondary currency, but are much rarer, more difficult to obtain, and can only be spent in the “Soul Shop”. The “Soul Shop” only becomes available to the party once they reach the second chapter of the campaign.

MODELS

Each enemy group gets represented by suitable standees.

Heroes are represented by miniatures that are based on the vessel they currently possess.

Early Access Note: Currently, heroes are represented by simple, generic standees, and will later be replaced by something proper (either miniatures or colorized standees).

MAP TILES



During each adventure, the party will explore a procedurally generated dungeon or area. Each time a door is opened, a new map tile gets attached to the current set of map tiles on the game board.

EXPLORATION CARDS

Exploration cards depict map tiles. These cards get drawn whenever a new room is revealed during an adventure. The deck of exploration cards gets assembled for each adventure, and might also contain “quest triggers” that trigger specific events during an adventure.

BOOK OF EXPLORATION

Whenever a new map tile (see “[Exploration Cards](#)”) gets attached to the current game board, the party has to roll an Enhancement Die (graphic) and look up the map tile and result in the ‘Book Of Exploration’. This manual describes how to set up the room with enemies, treasures, vessels, as well as its orientation and available doors.

BOOK OF ADVENTURES

This guide contains all the adventures, including narrative story texts for each, a description about the objective, special rules, layout, an event table and rewards.

It will be used as a reference while playing an adventure.

GAME CONCEPTS

MOVEMENT

The map tiles (which make up the game board) are divided into **tiles** through dark grid lines.

All models can move on the game board by spending movement points.

For each movement point spent, a model can move onto an adjacent tile - diagonal movement is allowed as well.

However, **a model cannot move onto a tile that is already occupied by another model**. If that is the only path for a model, the movement points cannot be used.

Each movement **action** is handled individually, and two movement actions cannot be combined into one.

During each turn of a player, they gain movement points equal to their vessel's speed which have to be executed before any other action.

Another way to generate movement actions is using ability cards that say e.g. "Move (3)" (with the number determining the amount of movement points gained) or "move an ally by 2 tiles" (which is the equivalent of granting an ally two movement points).

It is **not** possible to spend a part of the available movement points, perform a different action (like an attack), and then use the remaining movement points of the movement action. In such a case, these points are lost.

RED MAP LINES

Some map tiles show red solid lines along the grid. These red lines cannot be crossed, and it is not possible to draw a "[Line-Of-Sight](#)" over them.

BLUE MAP LINES

Blue dotted lines along the grid work like red solid lines, with the exception that a "[Line-Of-Sight](#)" can be drawn over them.

DIFFICULT TERRAIN

Dark diagonal lines that cover an entire tile mark "Difficult Terrain". To move onto such a tile, a model needs to spend **double the amount of movement points** to do so.

However, this does not stack with the negative effect '[Cripple](#)'.

DICE TYPES & SYMBOLS

There are five types of dice in Soulless Vessel and many of them share the same symbols with different distributions. Each die has a limited supply. When a hero would have more dice of a certain type than what is available, the surplus dice are simply lost.

Dice Type	Supply Limit	Description
Standard	 (4)	The Standard Die is a green twenty-sided die with the greatest variation of different symbols (good and bad). Heroes always have exactly one Standard Die as a baseline for each attack, defense or spellcasting roll and add any other bonus dice.
Power	 (3)	The Power Die is a red, six-sided die with the highest amount of available "Power".
Enhancement	 (4)	The Enhancement Die is a blue ten-sided die that has a great chance to add special symbols like the "Plus".
Blessing	 (5)	The Blessing Die is a white six-sided die that has a chance to add mild positive effects to a roll.
Cursed	 (5)	The Cursed Die is a black six-sided die that has a chance to subtract "Power" from a roll and is often the result of weaker attacks or other disadvantages.

Below all the symbols on the dice will be explained.

POWER

Power is shown as a raw number. You simply add **up all power values that are shown** from the entire roll (and subtract the negative power from Cursed Dice). The result is the total power of the roll. In many cases, you may activate other symbols to add even more power.

During attacks, power determines the total damage dealt against an enemy. During defense, it determines how much of the incoming damage is mitigated. During spellcasting rolls, the power

determines if the target number was met and consequently, if the spell succeeds.

PLUS



The plus symbol can be used to activate additional effects for the roll called “spending options”. Keep in mind that not all spending options are available to every roll (some can only be used during attack, defense or spellcasting roll).
Each ‘Plus’ can only be spent on one spending option, and each spending option can only be used once per roll.

Some dice show a ‘Double Plus’, which is equivalent to having rolled two individual ‘Plus’ symbols.

Every vessel comes with one generic ‘Plus’ spending option that can be used on either of the three main types of rolls: attack, defense or spellcasting.

As a general note on using spending options:
If the order of the activated spending options matters, the hero can choose the order in which they get applied.

STAR



The ‘Star’ is a rare symbol that can be **used for spending options** just like the ‘Plus’ symbol. It is generally used for more powerful effects.

It is always allowed to **convert a ‘Star’ into a ‘Plus’ symbol if desired!**

FAULT

If this symbol gets rolled, then one piece of equipment that was involved in the roll (any piece of equipment that provided at least one benefit to the roll like a bonus die or a spending option) suffers a fault. **Put a ‘Fault’ token on that item.**

If the item has as many faults as its durability (shown as symbols at the bottom of its card), then it **breaks** and has to be permanently discarded.

Faults can be repaired during the town phase, see “[Repair](#)”.

BOTCH

If this symbol gets rolled, the entire roll is botched and therefore unsuccessful. This **only applies to attack, defense or spellcasting rolls, not to damage or misc. rolls.**

Botching a roll means that **the hero automatically fails and is not allowed to make use of any other symbols** (unless they have specific spending options or perks that would allow them to ignore that botch).

CRITICAL

Rolling a critical shows that the hero (or minion) did something particularly well.

During an attack, each critical deals one wound to the enemy, regardless of their defense. This is in addition to the remaining outcome of the roll.

During a defense, a critical negates the entire attack. The hero (or minion) won’t take any scratches and doesn’t suffer any other repercussions like negative status effects.

During a spellcasting attempt, a critical results in an automatic success for the spell (and it therefore unfolds its effects), regardless of the required target number. Other symbols can still be spent as usual to enhance the spell’s effects.

DICE ROLLS

The outcomes of a hero’s actions are determined by rolling dice. The amount of available dice depends on the type of roll and what bonus dice the hero gets based on abilities and equipped items. There are five types of dice rolls.

ATTACK ROLL

Whenever a hero performs an attack against an enemy, they make an **attack roll to determine how much damage they deal, and what kind of special effects they can activate.**

Attacks are distinguished between two types: Melee and Ranged Attacks. Melee Attacks can only be performed with a suitable melee weapon (like a sword), while Ranged Attacks can only be performed with a ranged weapon (like a bow). See “[Attacking](#)” for more information on attacks.

An attack roll showing a ‘Critical’, a total of 5 power, and a ‘Plus’:



DEFENSE ROLL

Whenever an enemy attacks a hero (or a minion of theirs), they perform a **defense roll** to mitigate the incoming damage. See “[Attacks & Defense](#)”.

SPELLCASTING ROLL

Whenever a hero attempts the major action of a spell (more on major actions later), they **need to succeed at a spellcasting roll to unfold the effects of that spell**.

DAMAGE ROLL

Some abilities ask to just roll for “damage”. These are performed in the same way as other dice rolls, with the exception that only the total “[Power](#)” and “[Crits](#)” are counted, while all other symbols get ignored.

Weapons usually do not provide their bonus dice to such damage rolls.

MISC. ROLL

A few abilities will ask to only roll a specific set of dice, e.g. “roll an Enhancement Die + Blessing Die”, in which case only these dice get used and no other bonuses will be applied. Such an ability will also describe how the outcome can be utilized.

ATTACKING

Whenever a hero or minion performs an attack action, they will do so with a suitable weapon or their fists. For instance, if an ability card explicitly states “Ranged Attack”, then the hero needs to have an equipped ranged weapon to perform it.

In addition, the enemy needs to be within reach for a melee attack or within range for a ranged attack and requires a viable line-of-sight to the target (see below).

Melee attacks can always be performed against any adjacent enemy, either straight or diagonal. **Ranged attacks** have a certain range, measured in tiles. In the latter case, count the distance in tiles between the attacker and the target. As long as it doesn’t exceed the range and has a viable “[Line-Of-Sight](#)”, the ranged attack can be executed. If a **ranged attack** is performed while being adjacent to at least one enemy, that hero has to **add two Cursed Dice** to their roll.

When performing an attack, the attacking hero declares exactly one weapon that they perform the attack with. **They only gain bonus dice and spending options from the weapon they chose to attack with**, and not from a second equipped weapon.

The attack roll will determine all outcomes, most notably the power of the attack to damage the enemy. See “[Damage & Death](#)” for more information.

ATTACKING WITHOUT WEAPONS

It may happen that a hero doesn’t have a weapon equipped when attacking.

Heroes can always perform unarmed melee attacks with their regular pool - usually, this is a single Standard Die.

If a hero has at least one free hand, they can also perform **ranged attacks by throwing a rock**.

This special ranged attack has a range of 3 and adds one Cursed Die to the attack roll.

LINE-OF-SIGHT

Whenever an ability or attack mentions “**range**”, then this implicitly requires a viable line-of-sight from the source to the target!

To measure a viable line-of-sight, draw an imaginary line from the center of the occupied tile of the source model towards the center of the tile that is occupied by the target.

If that line crosses a red line or an outer wall tile, then the line-of-sight is not given.

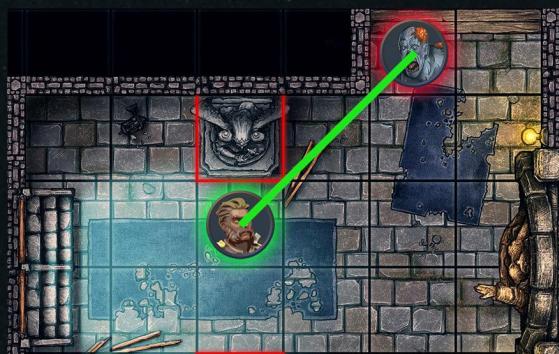
Other models do not impact line-of-sight.

Note: When "Bulky" models are involved, pick any of its four occupied tiles either as a source or as the target.

Example of a regular, viable Line-Of-Sight:



Example of a viable Line-Of-Sight by just touching the corners of non-walkable tiles:



Example of a non-viable Line-Of-Sight as it crosses two tiles that are non-walkable:



ABILITY CARDS



Each ability card consists of multiple key pieces of information.

1. **Card Type** - Determines the type of the card, which may be referenced by other rules.
2. **Initiative** - The initiative value this card provides to determine the activation order during each game round. See "[Initiative](#)".
3. **Card Name** - The name of the card to reference it. Each card exists three times with the same name, but with a different upgrade level as seen based on the "(A)" (=Alpha upgrade variant) or "(B)" (=Beta upgrade variant) extension to the name.
4. **Cooldown / Duration** - Describes how long it takes to get the card back after using it. In case of ongoing effects (see below), the duration describes how long they are active. This value is only relevant for cards that get used as a Major Action.
5. **Card Effects** - Provides a quick overview whether the card has an "[Interrupt](#)" and/or "[Ongoing](#)" effect.
6. **Major Action** - Describes the effects of the card if used as a Major Action.
7. **Spending Options** - If the Major Action has any applicable spending options, these will be listed here. These can be activated within the context of the action.
8. **Minor Action** - Describes the effects of the card if used as a Minor Action.

COOLDOWN



Any card that gets used as a **Major Action** has to be placed on that hero's cooldown tracker with the corresponding duration. This is done after handling the entire action, including its spending options.



There are various effects to reduce the cooldown of cards to get them back into the hand of the hero who owns the card.

The most common way is to perform a **Minor Action**. Not only does the performing hero get the corresponding card directly back into their hand, they also **reduce the cooldown of each card on their cooldown tracker by one**. Any card that would move to the space zero gets taken back onto that player's hand.

Failing Spellcasting & Cooldown:

While spells have a cooldown value like any other ability card, if a player fails a spell by not meeting the required target number, then that card goes to cooldown 1, regardless of what the card normally dictates.

ONGOING EFFECTS



ONGOING

Some ability cards may have a section on their Major Action that is mentioned below an "ONGOING" line. If the player decides to use that effect (instead of potential other effects on the card), then **that card moves to the "Effects" tracker with the corresponding duration**.

As long as that ability card is active on the "Effects" tracker, the benefits of that card apply.

At the beginning of each game round, reduce the duration of every ongoing effect by one. If the effect reaches the end of the "Effects" tracker, they go back into the owning hero's hand.

A player board of a hero with two active, ongoing effects and their remaining duration:

INTERRUPT EFFECTS



INTERRUPT

Some ability cards have a section on their Major Action that is mentioned below an "INTERRUPT" line.

Players can activate the effects at any time, so long as the implied requirements are met, by playing it directly from their hand, regardless whether it is their turn or not. They **briefly interrupt the game flow**, handle their interrupt card, and resume the game where it was left before that effect.

The interrupt card is placed on the "Cooldown" Tracker after usage.

ABILITY TOKENS

Some abilities will ask players to place that ability's token on the game board.

While these tokens **have to be clearly placed onto a specific tile, they do not block other models**.

If it is required to place a token where there is already a model, place the token below it.

There is no limit to how many ability tokens can be on a single tile.

INITIATIVE

The "**Initiative Tracker**" determines the activation order of all entities during each round.

Players will determine their initiative at the beginning of each round (see "[Reveal Cards & Initiative](#)"), and once the round begins, activate entities from highest to lowest initiative value.

In case of a tie, heroes and minions always act before enemies. If heroes and minions share the same initiative, the players may decide the activation order for this activation step.

Once all entities had the opportunity to act once, the round ends.

ITEMS & ITEM SLOTS

Each hero has various slots as displayed on their player board:

Hand - Can equip any type of hand-held item, mostly weapons. Some weapons are two-handed, and have to be put in between the two hand slots to indicate that the item is held with both hands.

Armor - Each hero can have exactly one armor equipped.

Gear - Gear slots are used for additional pieces of equipment, like rings, helmets, gloves, paaldrons and so on. A hero cannot equip more than one item in the same location, like "Back", "Boots" or "Helmet", with the exception of "Rings".

Backpack - A hero can put up to three items in the backpack.

Items in the backpack are stored and not active, and therefore cannot provide any benefit or bonus dice.

Consumable - These two specialized slots can only hold items of the type "Consumable".

VESSELS

Vessels are the physical embodiment of archetypal heroes that the players can possess to survive in this world.

Each vessel is reflected by its own card and corresponding miniature.

They come in four different rarities: Common, Rare, Legendary and Mythical. The rarer the vessel, the stronger and/or more specialized it is.

Players can find and possess new vessels through:

- Finding vessels during the town phase.
- Finding vessels during adventures who succumbed to the eternal slumber.
- As a reward for certain adventures.

Whenever a player obtains a new vessel, they put the corresponding card onto their player board and lock all perks with a "Perk Blocker" token, except for the very first one. These locked perks become available by surviving long enough with that vessel, see "[Vessel Synchronization](#)".

Additionally, the three bars for scratches need to be updated with the corresponding amount of tokens in each row.

If a player changes their vessel, they discard their old one and replace their miniature for the new one.

EXCHANGING VESSELS BETWEEN PLAYERS

In the same way players would possess a new vessel (see "[Vessels](#)"), players who are adjacent to each other can spend two movement points to switch their vessels. Both swap the vessel cards and miniatures, immediately unlearn all perks except for the first one, and also switch all scratches and wounds.

However, they retain all items and ability cards.

DAMAGE & DEATH

Heroes and enemies both accumulate damage and eventually die. However, damage is tracked and calculated differently for heroes and enemies.

HERO DAMAGE

Each hero has **three rows for scratches**. The amount of scratches they can suffer depends on the vessel's toughness for that row. Place as many scratch tokens on the player board with the healthy side up.

Whenever the hero suffers a scratch, flip a scratch token to its damaged side.

If the current row already has the maximum amount of scratches, apply these scratches to the next row.

Whenever scratches overflow into the next row, that hero immediately suffers a wound!

On the row that is now full of scratches, flip all scratches to the healthy side up, and then put a 'wound' token over that entire row.

Each wound adds a Cursed Die (black) to all attack, defense and spellcasting rolls.

As soon as a hero would suffer a third wound (by having their third row of scratches overflow), **they die immediately**. Replace their miniature with the "Vesselless Soul" miniature, and discard their current vessel card (revealing the "Vesselless Soul" reference).

A knight vessel with four scratches:



That knight vessel suffered another two scratches, making the first row overflow and leading to a wound:



WOUND & SCRATCH HEALING

A hero who heals scratches does not automatically heal the wound of the row above.

As long as the wound exists, the hero cannot regain that row of scratches.

There are abilities and effects that specifically remove wounds. In this case, remove the lowest 'wound' token.

Then transfer all scratches to the now available row. If the new row cannot hold the incoming amount (because it exceeds that row's 'toughness'), then these scratches overflow as usual and will bring back the just healed wound.

The knight vessel from the example before got four scratches healed, but because of the wound blocking one row, only one scratch could actually be healed:



Another hero's ability heals the knight's wound, unblocking the row and revealing only tokens with the healthy side up:



ENEMY DAMAGE

Enemies suffer damage in a slightly different way than heroes.

Individual scratches never get tracked for enemies, only wounds.

Whenever an enemy gets attacked, **divide the total power from the attack roll by the 'defense' value of the targeted enemy, then round down.**

The result is the amount of 'enemy wound' tokens you put next to the corresponding model.

Once the amount of accumulated wounds is equal to that enemies 'maximum wounds', it is defeated and removed from the game board.

MINION DAMAGE

The minions of the players (like summoned creatures or hired mercenaries) take damage in the exact same fashion as the vessels of the heroes. But instead of tracking that damage on a player board, put the necessary amount of (damaged) scratch and wound tokens next to the minion's miniature.

Minions only have a single toughness value that is applied for all their rows. How many wounds a minion can suffer before it is defeated is described for each minion separately.

Minions suffer a Cursed Die on their attack and defense rolls just as heroes would for each wound they are suffering from.

STATUS EFFECTS

There are various status effects in Soulless Vessel that can affect heroes and enemies in negative ways.

Keep in mind that the minions of heroes ignore all negative effects by default!

Status effects for heroes are tracked on their corresponding player board. The token of the status effect is placed on the 'ongoing effects' tracker and their duration is reduced by one (1) at the beginning of each round (until they would be in position 0 and therefore end).

Some abilities or vessel perks may also affect the duration of these ongoing effects.
As long as the effects are present on the tracker, their effects apply to that hero.

A hero can have each effect only once. If they would get the same effect again, they only update the duration to whatever is highest (either their existing effect or the new, incoming one).

Status effects for enemies are tracked as small tokens next to their model.

Enemies can have **each status effect token up to two times at once**, with the exception of 'Bleed', which can stack up to four times.

At the end of that model's activation, remove one token of each status effect type.

BLEED

Heroes: Whenever a hero performs a Major Action, including "Interrupt" abilities, they immediately suffer one scratch. Minor Actions are unaffected.

Enemies: Whenever a 'Bleed' token gets removed from the enemy, roll one Power Die (red) and deal the result as damage.

CRIPPLE

For both heroes and enemies, moving by one tile costs two movement points each, instead of one. If a movement action provides an uneven amount (e.g., 3 movement points), then one movement point is potentially wasted.

DAZED

Heroes: They need to treat the cooldown of each Major Action they perform to be one higher, to a maximum of five.

Enemies: They cannot use their 'Bones' or 'Skull' abilities, regardless of what its AI card would otherwise grant.

STUN

Heroes: A hero can only place up to one card from their hand face down at the beginning of the round. They can still use the empty slot for cooldown reduction (see "[Ability Cards](#)").

Enemies: An enemy cannot perform any "[Attacks Of Opportunity](#)".

Additionally, if that enemy's AI card has a threat value of 10 or less, that enemy model will skip its entire turn. It will still remove negative effects as usual at the end of its activation.

WEAKEN

Heroes: Heroes performing a defense roll have to add two (2) Cursed Dice.

Enemies: A hero who attacks an enemy adds +1 Power to their attacks for each 'Weaken' token that enemy suffers from.

CURSED

Only heroes can suffer from this effect.

The hero has to spend a 'Plus' symbol on their attack, defense or spellcasting rolls to avoid the disadvantage of this effect. The player can decide to spend it on 'Cursed' or may make use of it for other spending options.

If no 'Plus' is spent for 'Cursed', that player immediately has to put a hand card of their choice at cooldown 2.

TERROR

Only heroes can suffer from this effect.

As long as a hero suffers from 'Terror', they may not reduce the duration of their other negative effects, be it the automatic reduction at the beginning of each round, or through other abilities or items.

They first have to get rid of 'Terror' before they get to remove their other effects.

KEYWORDS

Throughout the game, recurring key words will be used. Most of them will mostly be found on ability and enemy cards to describe various game mechanics.

NIMBLE

A model that is 'Nimble' can move through/over other models. However, it may not end its movement on the same tile as another model. To move over another model, it will have to cross the occupied space and needs to spend a movement point for doing so as usual.

In most cases, 'Nimble' is only granted for an individual movement action, and does not apply to consecutive movement actions.

SLIPPERY

Heroes who have the 'Slippery' advantage for an individual movement action do not provoke any "Attacks Of Opportunity" (see "[Escape Tests & Attacks Of Opportunity](#)").

BULKY

Models that are bulky are large and always occupy four tiles. However, they only have to stand on at least two walkable tiles at any one time. For example, an Ogre may have two of its tiles standing inside a wall, while the other two tiles of the model occupy walkable tiles.

In addition to that, their movement is performed tile by tile and they displace other models with each movement.

If a bulky model moves into a space that is occupied, the displaced model needs to be placed on any adjacent tile (players' choice). If there is no unoccupied adjacent tile, then that model gets displaced to the closest unoccupied tile instead.

A minotaur boss (which is "Bulky") wants to move onto a tile that is occupied by a hero:



The hero can decide to occupy any adjacent tile:



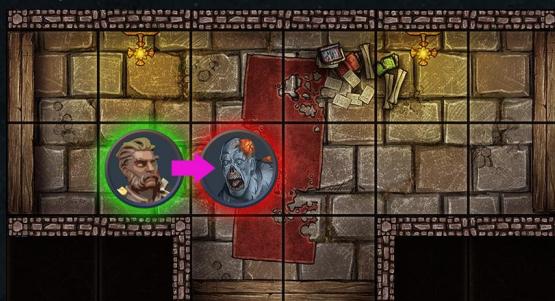
KNOCKBACK

Heroes as well as enemies can perform attacks or actions that cause knockback, however the mechanics differ between heroes and enemies.

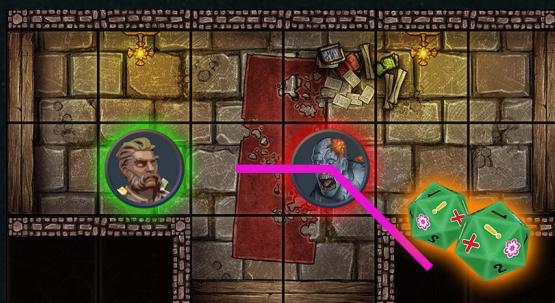
Heroes who cause 'Knockback' move a targeted model away from their position. They move the target away by one tile for each point of Knockback. The hero does not have to make use of the entire Knockback effect and can end the movement at any time. The only key part is that each tile of movement (resulting from knockback) needs to increase the distance to the executing hero, but the hero can decide upon the exact direction.

If a Knockback effect would move an enemy against another model or a wall, then roll one Standard Die for each remaining point of the Knockback effect. Deal the result as damage.

A hero causes Knockback (3) against an adjacent enemy:



The hero decides to knock the enemy away by one tile, and uses the remaining two points from the knockback effect to knock the enemy against the wall. The hero rolls two Standard Dice as damage, both of which show a "Critical"! The hero deals two wounds against the Corrupted Human:



Enemies that cause 'Knockback' move the affected hero away from them. The targeted hero needs to choose a direction that would allow to make use of as much distance gained as possible. But as with the Knockback from heroes, every single tile moved needs to increase the distance. If multiple directions would result in the same distance, the affected hero may decide the direction of the knockback effect.

Heroes do not take damage from Knockback.

PULL

The 'Pull' effect is the opposite of 'Knockback'. **A hero who performs this action can move any model (regardless of distance) one tile closer** towards them - the distance has to decrease. Contrary to 'Knockback', they **can distribute their 'Pull' points freely** and either use it multiple times against the same model or several points on multiple models.

For example, an action that would allow for 'Pull (4)' can be used to pull an enemy model two tiles closer to the hero, as well as an allied hero two tiles closer to that hero.

RETREAT

Enemies with this keyword will **perform another movement action after their default attack** of their activation. However, **this movement has to maximize the distance towards the hero that was attacked** as much as possible. If there are multiple viable locations, the players may decide.

In some cases, the 'Retreat' keyword gets applied in other situations (e.g., at the beginning of their activation). In this case, they move away from whoever is the **closest** hero.

A "Swarm Of Rats" just performed an attack against a hero and now performs "Retreat (5)". It moves in the opposite direction as that will allow the Rats to maximize the distance to the hero:



Although the "Swarm Of Rats" is cornered in this scenario, it will still run past the heroes as this will allow it to maximize the distance to the hero it has just attacked (the one in the middle):



HIT MULTIPLE / ADDITIONAL

Some ability cards allow the player to "hit multiple" or "hit additional" targets.

In these cases, perform the attack or spell as usual. After determining the damage and the effects caused, **all additional targets will suffer from the exact same outcome**, meaning they will take the same damage as the original target, and become affected by the same effects (e.g., 'Knockback', 'Cripple' etc.).

REACH

Some heroes and enemies may get the 'Reach' advantage, for instance through equipment or certain perks.

In these cases, they can perform melee attacks within a range of two tiles (instead of being limited to adjacent targets).

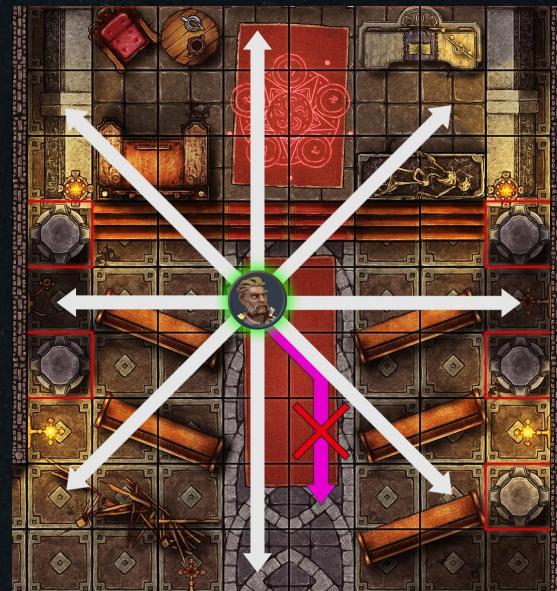
TOUGHNESS

Toughness describes the **amount of scratches a hero or minion can sustain before suffering a wound** on a given bar of scratches. For minions, the toughness value is the same for all bars / wounds. For heroes, the toughness value varies for each row based on their vessel.

STRAIGHT / DIAGONAL LINE

Some enemy abilities, but especially ability card actions will refer to either a "straight line" or a "diagonal line".

If this is the case, the movement or targeting (whichever applies) needs to be performed in a 45° angle, see the following illustration.



In this example, the white directions are all valid, as they all emerge from the hero's tile in a straight or purely diagonal direction. The purple line is not viable.

BLAST TEMPLATE

A few abilities will make use of the 'Blast' template. This tear-drop shaped template will be placed over the executing model, whereas **the tip has to be anywhere within the tile of the executing model**. It may be rotated to any angle. Consider all tiles that are at least partially covered by the template to be affected. Each enemy can only be affected once.

The tiles colored in purple mark the ones affected by the blast token. Any model on these tiles would become a target of this ability:



GIVE UP

There may be adventures that simply go south for the entire party. Maybe a few heroes are already dead, or there are too many powerful enemies to deal with.

The party always has the option to give up on the current adventure.

To do so, **no hero may have an enemy within range 3 of them**. If this is the case, the party can declare a retreat at any time.

When retreating, the adventure is added to the adventure tracker, but the party won't get any of its specific rewards.

They get to keep all treasures that were collected during the adventure, progress towards their "[Vessel's Synchronization](#)" and the regular "[Soul Experience Point](#)".

Proceed to the town phase as usual.

RULE OF AMBIGUITY

There are quite a few cases in Soulless Vessel where rules, especially their order of execution, are open for interpretation, or where the intended priority (as described by the rules) is a tie.

In all these cases, the party should assume that they can resolve it in the most beneficial way.

Afterall, this is a cooperative game where the players are the heroes of the story.

In case of doubt, the player who executes the action can determine how the case should be resolved.

GAME ROUNDS

Each game round is divided into separate steps, as explained below. It is of utmost importance that every player makes their own decisions.

1. Reduce Ongoing Effects
2. Events
3. AI Cards & Enemy Initiative
4. Place Ability Cards
5. Reveal Ability Cards & Hero Initiative
6. Individual Turns for Heroes, Enemies and Minions

As soon as a round starts, the party is not allowed to discuss tactics and strategy. All actions need to be planned with the information that is available at this point. However, it is always allowed to clarify questions about rules.

Once all players have revealed their ability cards simultaneously, everyone is free to discuss their intent and tactics for the round.

Below is the explanation for all steps of a game round in their specific order. Player, Enemy and Minion turns happen dynamically after the "Reveal Ability Cards" phase.

1. REDUCE ONGOING EFFECTS

The first step of each game round is to reduce any ongoing effects on heroes by one in duration.

Effects from ability cards that leave the tracker go back to the hand of the hero who applied the effect.

Status effects (like 'Cripple', 'Bleed' etc.) that leave the tracker get discarded, and the hero won't suffer from their effects any longer.

2. EVENTS

At the beginning of each round (except for the very first one), one player rolls a ten-sided die (d10) and adds the current level of adventure "Threat" to the roll.

Reference the event table of the currently played adventure and follow the rules for that event.

If the event dictates to add "Threat", add the corresponding amount of Threat tokens near the event table for visibility.

When an adventure begins, there shouldn't be any Threat tokens initially.

3. AI CARDS & ENEMY INITIATIVE

For every enemy group that is still alive, draw one new AI card and replace the previous one (if applicable). Start with the group that has the highest initiative on the initiative tracker. On a tie, start with the group that was placed on that initiative step first.

This will determine the enemy group's behavior for the round that players can tactically plan around.

Each AI card also modifies the initiative of the enemy group. Add the initiative modifier to the base initiative of the enemy group, and use the total to place that group in the according initiative slot. If two enemy groups end up with the same initiative, place the enemy groups that got that initiative value below the group that was already assigned to this slot. They will be activated in that order later.

4. PLACE ABILITY CARDS

Now that the players have enough information about the tactical situation, all players can place zero (0) to two (2) cards in the designated slots on their player board.

They have to be placed face down and players are not allowed to make any comments about what they plan to execute.

Only proceed to the next step once all players have finalized their decision (and placed cards accordingly).

5. REVEAL CARDS & HERO INITIATIVE

At this step, all players reveal the cards that they committed to. Now they are free to chat about their intentions and tactics.

The group can collectively agree on their positions on the initiative tracker.

Which positions they can choose depends on the placed ability cards. Each player can pick an initiative position that is equal to either of their two placed ability cards (and the initiative values they offer).

If a slot was left empty, treat this like an ability card with an initiative value of zero.

After each player commits to an initiative value, they place their corresponding soul token on the initiative tracker. Soul tokens are always placed above enemy groups on a tie (and will act before them).

Players who share the same initiative may determine their exact order once they are at that initiative step during the round.

6. TURNS

At this stage, the initiative of all heroes and minions should be clear. All entities now act in an order as outlined under "[Initiative](#)".

Below is the description of what heroes, enemies and minions can respectively do during their turns.

HERO TURN

Once it is a player's turn, they will first perform their default movement action (see below), and then perform the actions of their placed cards.

Keep in mind that many ongoing effects and vessel perks allow for things to happen at the beginning of a turn (or during it), so now would be the time to handle these.

MOVEMENT

Every vessel comes with a default amount of movement points based on their vessel's "speed". **This movement action needs to be performed before any actions** from the placed ability cards, otherwise these movement points are lost. Also see "[Movement](#)".

SPECIAL MOVEMENT ACTIONS

Whenever a hero generates movement points, be it through their vessel's speed or movement actions from ability cards, these can be spent for things other than just moving from tile to tile.

Open Door: A hero who is adjacent to a closed door can spend one movement point to open it. Remove the door and reveal the next room (see "[Revealing Rooms](#)").

Pick Up Treasure: A hero who is adjacent to a treasure chest can spend one movement point to open it. Remove the treasure chest and **draw two (2) item cards** from the pile of available item cards.

The opening hero may move both items to their unoccupied and compatible item slots on their player board.

If they cannot hold one or both of the items, place a 'Dropped Item' token where the treasure chest was, and put the item card(s) near the map tile. It can be picked up by other heroes following the same rules as "Pick Up Treasure" (except that you don't draw items from the pile of item cards).

(Un)Equip Item: By spending one movement point, the hero can move any amount of items around within their own player board's inventory, e.g., to move one weapon to their backpack and a weapon from their backpack to their hand slot.

Exchange Item: A hero who is adjacent to another hero may give or take one item to / from the targeted hero's player board by spending one movement point. Both heroes may perform the "(Un)Equip Item" action for free after exchanging items.

Use Consumable: By spending one movement point, a hero may use one of their items of the type "Consumable". Handle the effects of the item, then discard it.

Assume Vessel: By spending two movement points, a hero who is adjacent to a vessel token can assume the corresponding vessel. See "[Vessels](#)".

Drain Vessel: A hero adjacent to a vessel token can spend two movement points to remove the vessel and drain soul shards from it which can later be spent in the "[Soul Shop](#)". The amount of soul shards gained depends on the rarity of the vessel:
Common = 1 Soul Shard
Rare = 2 Soul Shards
Legendary = 3 Soul Shards

ESCAPE TESTS & ATTACKS OF OPPORTUNITY

Whenever a hero **begins** a new movement action and moves by at least one tile (regardless of direction) while being adjacent to one or more enemy models, they have to perform an escape test.

The affected hero rolls one Cursed Die. The number shown indicates how many enemies would immediately perform a free "Attack Of Opportunity" against that hero. If a "-1" is rolled, one enemy model will attack. On a "-2", two different ones will attack (if applicable).

Handle these attacks as usual. If there are multiple enemies adjacent to the hero, the ones with the highest attack value will perform the attack.

After these attacks are handled, the hero can continue with their movement.

ABILITY CARDS & ACTIONS

During a player's turn, they can **execute their placed ability cards in any order**. For each card, they can **decide if they would like to perform its Major or Minor action**.

It is entirely viable to forfeit an action, or to only use parts of an ability. For instance, a Minor Action that grants a movement action and an attack can be used to only generate the movement action, ignoring the attack entirely.

However, **the instructions of an (Major or Minor) action have to be performed in the listed order!**

If a hero has an **empty ability card slot** for any reason, each empty card slot **reduces the cooldown** of each discarded card (of that hero) by one, akin to performing a Minor Action.

To be able to **attack enemies**, a hero needs to perform an action that allows to do so.

REVEALING ROOMS

Whenever a new room gets revealed by opening a door, the player who performed this immediately **draws the top card from the exploration deck** for this adventure and reveals it to everyone.

Then they **roll an Enhancement Die** (blue) to determine the map tiles layout. Look up the layout in the "Book Of Exploration".

The layout determines how the map tile needs to be attached, or rather where its entrance is. Try to align the entrance with the exit of the current map tile. If it is not possible, the party must use generic connector pieces (either a 2x3 tile straight corridor or an L-shaped corner) to make the placement possible. No more than two connector pieces may be used between two map tiles. The map tile may not overlap with any other map tiles and must perfectly align with the current exit!

If this cannot be done, the map tile cannot be placed at this location. In this case, put the exploration card back into the deck, close off the used exit (with an end cap piece) and add a door to another entrance that was closed (with an end cap

piece) before anywhere in the current adventure map.

After placing a map tile successfully, **place the indicated end caps and new doors**.

Also **place treasure chests and vessels** if the indicated number is at or below the amount of participating heroes. For each vessel token placed, also draw a random vessel card and place it next to the token to indicate which vessel lies here. During this step, ignore "Peasant" vessels and mythical ones.

Lastly, if the layout displays any red or blue sockets, then **enemies will spawn** on this map tile.

Draw one enemy card from the face down pile of enemies for this adventure.

Determine the amount of models based on the number of participating heroes and start filling the red sockets, starting with the socket closest to the hero who was opening that room.

If there are blue sockets present, draw a second enemy card and fill them up similarly, this time only considering the blue sockets instead.

After spawning the enemies, **draw one AI card** for each and adjust their initiative accordingly. If the resulting initiative is higher than the current initiative step of the game round, place them at initiative zero instead!

Notes on spawning enemies:

- If the deck of enemy cards is depleted, shuffle all the used enemy cards of this adventure again, and put them back as a face down pile to draw from.
- If a second card of the same enemy type is drawn, for instance, a second group of Undead, add the amount of models as usual, but all models will act based on the reference card that was on the Initiative tracker first. Discard the second reference card in this case.
- If a spawn slot is already occupied, for example by a bulky model that was placed before the next one, simply place that model as close as possible to the designated spawn slot.

In some cases, the revealed card from the exploration deck is a **quest trigger** and not a map tile. In this case, refer to the description of the current adventure to see what the quest trigger implies.

MINION TURN

The minions of the heroes (if there are any) are **controllable** characters or monsters that aid the party during an adventure.

Minions typically all act at initiative step zero (before enemy groups that are at the same initiative step).

At a baseline, just like heroes, **they can perform attacks and defense rolls using a Standard Die**.

During a minion's activation, it may be **moved according to its speed** and then **performs one free melee or ranged attack**, depending on what type of attack the minion is able to perform. Just like heroes, minions have to perform "**Escape Tests**" when starting their movement adjacent to an enemy.

As a special rule, **minions can spend any amount of 'Plus' and 'Star' symbols to add +1 Power each to their attack rolls**.

The group should discuss collectively what each minion does. The owner of the minion has the last word.

ENEMY TURN

An enemy group acts once all heroes (or minions) on the same initiative step have acted already. If there are multiple enemy groups on the initiative step, start with the one that was placed on that initiative step first and go in that order.

ENEMY REFERENCE CARD



Each enemy is represented by such a reference card. Below the card's name, that enemy's speed, attack value and attacking range are listed. If there is no range, then that enemy performs melee attacks by default.

Above the descriptions for abilities, the defense value is shown.

Next to it is information about the amount of models that enemy spawns with, as well as the maximum wounds they can suffer before being defeated. Both of these values depend on the amount of participating heroes in the adventure.

ACTIVATION ORDER

When an enemy group becomes active, **each of its models gets one individual activation**, one after another.

Start with the model that is closest to the starting position of that adventure (where the heroes began the adventure) measured by walking distance in tiles. In a tie, the players can decide which model acts first.

Then work your way from closest to furthest as seen from that starting position.

TARGET PRIORITY

Initially, **consider all heroes or minions that this enemy model can reach as viable targets**. Consider their speed as well as their attack range (if applicable).

Then narrow the selection down by looking at the first instruction on the AI card. On a tie, use the second and third instruction consequently to narrow the selection down further. If there is still a tie, the players may select which hero or minion that enemy model will go after.

The result is the hero / minion that the enemy model will attempt to attack.

Below, find all the instructions explained further:

CLOSEST: Prefers whatever is closest to that enemy (measure pure distance in tiles).

FURTHEST: Prefers a target that is as far away as possible (distance measured in tiles), but that can still be reached this round.

PREVIOUS: The enemy will attack the same hero / minion that it attacked with its last attack. If it didn't attack anyone so far or that target cannot be reached this round, ignore this instruction.

LOWEST INITIATIVE: The enemy will go for whatever hero / minion has the lowest initiative during this round.

MOST UNWOUNDED: Prefers a target that has the least amount of wounds.

MOST SCRATCHED: The enemy will go for the hero / minion with the most amount of current scratches (not considering wounds).

MOST WOUNDED: The enemy will prefer the hero / minion that has the most amount of wounds.

MOVEMENT

Once the enemy has determined a target, it will move as little as needed to be able to attack that target. Melee enemies will typically move to become adjacent to their target, while ranged enemies only move as much as is needed to get the target within their range and line-of-sight.
If there are multiple positions that would fulfill the criteria, the player party may choose.

Important: If no hero or minion is within reach to be attacked this round, the enemy will simply move as much as it can towards the closest hero or minion, regardless of their Target Priority based on their AI Card.

ATTACKS & DEFENSE

Once the enemy model has been positioned, it will automatically perform an attack against its target. Refer to the enemy's 'attack value'.

This is the amount of scratches that the targeted hero or minion will suffer.

In response, the target may perform a **defense roll**. Consider all bonus dice and spending options accordingly.
Any attack that is performed by a melee enemy or one that is adjacent to the targeted hero / minion is considered a melee attack, even if that enemy has an attack range. Any attack that is performed from a range is a ranged attack. This may be relevant for certain situational bonus dice.

The result of the defense roll (the total power) simply reduces the scratches suffered accordingly, to a minimum of 1.

A hero will always suffer at least one scratch from an attack, unless they have specific effects or rolled a 'Critical'.

Check "[Hero Damage](#)" to re-cap on how damage against heroes gets tracked, and "[Minion Damage](#)" for minions.

ABILITIES

Enemies typically have three abilities:
a passive, a 'Bones' and a 'Skull' ability.
If the AI card shows either (or even both) of these symbols, then that ability is available to that enemy group for the current round.

Follow the instructions or specific rules of that ability.

The **passive ability always applies** to the enemy, regardless of active symbols on AI cards. The **passive ability cannot** be disabled with the 'Dazed' status effect.

AI MODIFIERS

In some cases, an AI card will list an additional **modifier that gets applied to the entire enemy group** for the given round. It may modify their attack value, defense, speed or grant them the 'Nimble' keyword for all their movements during that round.

THREAT VALUE

Each AI card has a unique threat value. It describes the the overall magnitude of that AI card. The higher this value, the more of a threat this AI card can generally pose to the party.

In some cases, enemy groups are required to draw two AI cards each round and pick the card with the higher threat value.

This value is also relevant to see if a 'Stun' status effect on an enemy would force them to skip their turn (see "[Stun](#)").

END TURN EFFECTS

The enemy might perform abilities or trigger effects at the end of their turn.

In any case, it **removes one token from each type of ongoing effect** (Cripple, Stun etc.).

FIRST GAME SETUP

The game is played over a course of 15 adventures, as a persistent campaign, where all participating players keep and develop their heroes from beginning to end.

Before jumping into the fray to fight the army of the Neverwake Dragon, it should be considered what role each hero is going to fulfill. The role is a result of a hero's composition of ability cards (as well as items and their vessel). It is recommended to have each of the below roles be represented at least once:

Tank - The tank of the group will protect the party from harm. They will attempt to position themselves in a way that will ensure that most enemy attacks will be directed at them. With their abilities and heavy armor, they have better odds at defending effectively.

Supporter - The supporter keeps the group alive through the usage of healing or effects that reduce harm (e.g. help remove negative effects). They may also provide other benefits, like applying negative effects on enemies, or aiding the party with more efficient movement and positioning.

Sorcerer - Sorcerers have access to unique abilities that can manipulate combat in expressive ways. A good sorcerer player should combine different ability cards (especially spells) for maximized effect.

Damage Dealer - A damage dealer is specialized in taking out enemies quickly. They may be proficient in taking out one enemy after another, or have means to attack multiple enemies at once (or a combination of both). In larger parties, it is recommended to have one melee and one ranged damage dealer.

Hybrid - With the freedom that comes with the system, every player is encouraged to combine any of the above roles to develop a unique character that complements the group in the best fashion. The smaller the party is, the more players should consider combining two roles.

SELECT CAMPAIGN DIFFICULTY

The party should now **agree on the difficulty of their campaign**. Obviously, nothing will keep you from adjusting the difficulty between adventures (especially upwards). There are four difficulty levels available.

DEFAULT

When you play with the default difficulty, **no additional rules apply** and you simply play the game as described in the rule book.

This difficulty is recommended for parties that want a more relaxed game experience or play this genre for the first time.

CHALLENGER

This difficulty level will ask the party to improvise and discuss tactics more often. This is the recommended difficulty for experienced fans of this genre and those who have already played similar games before.

The simple rule to add is:
Whenever an enemy group spawns, immediately draw a random "Trait" card and attach it to that group. This is in addition to any other Traits it would normally get, for example based on events.
This rule **never** applies to bosses.

NIGHTMARE

This difficulty level makes it a lot more likely for the party to lose the entire campaign. As such, strong decks with steep synergies and comprehensive tactics are advised.

With this difficulty, in addition to the rule from 'Challenger', replace all reference cards for enemies with the ones meant for the nightmare difficulty.

+1 MODE

This difficulty is not recommended when playing the game for the first time, and should only be considered for the most daring after having finished a campaign of Soulless Vessel once.

In this game mode, determine a modifier between 1 and 3.

In addition to the rules from 'Challenger' and 'Nightmare', add one additional 'Trait' card to each spawned enemy group (not bosses), based on the chosen modifier. For example, if the party chooses to play a +2 campaign, each enemy group would spawn with three trait cards (one from 'Challenger' and two more because of the modifier) in addition to whatever other Traits they'd spawn with.

SELECT STARTER DECK

The game offers 15 predefined decks that players can choose from. Each deck fits a certain overarching theme (e.g. 'Protector') and a more specific flavor within it. These decks are tried and tested, and players can still spin these decks in any direction throughout the campaign.

It is entirely viable for two players to choose the same starter deck (simply clone it in this case).

Alternatively, players can assemble their own starter deck. Simply pick any six cards at their base level (without any upgrades).

SELECT SOUL TOKEN

After each player has chosen their initial deck, everyone should pick a soul token that best represents the flavor of their character / deck. Each token has to be unique and will identify the given player on the initiative tracker.

Then remove all other (non-picked) soul tokens.

SELECT STARTER VESSEL

In the beginning of the campaign, every player can pick any one vessel of the rarity 'common'. Keep in mind that each 'common' vessel only exists twice.

After choosing a vessel, the player places the vessel card onto their game board, adjusts their perks and scratches as outlined in the section "[Vessels](#)" and takes the corresponding miniature.

If two players pick the same type of vessel, add colorized rings below each miniature to differentiate the two (or better, use a completely different miniature as a stand-in).

One player of the party must start the game with the "Peasant" vessel and won't be given a choice.

The remaining vessels should be shuffled as a vessel deck.

CHOOSE STARTING ITEMS

To determine the starting items for the party, the players must do the following, and need to ignore

all money item cards (those with a yellow background):

From the pile of items (which should only consist of tier 1 items at the beginning of a campaign), draw one item per hero. These can already be distributed among the party members or after the next step.

Then, draw one row of three cards of items per hero. The party may pick one item per row and discard the other two items of that row.

After these two steps, the party may distribute the items to the heroes. It is not necessary to distribute the items evenly. The players then place their items on their respective game board.

After this is done, each hero may take one item of their choice from the deck of 'Improvised Items' (tier 0). It is viable for a player to pick an item for another party member and give it to them.

PREPARE FIRST ADVENTURE

For the very first adventure, follow all the rules described below ("New Adventure Setup"), but the party has to play the adventure called "The Escape". There is no choice initially, but options will become available once this introductory adventure has been finished.

NEW ADVENTURE SETUP

Whenever the group has determined which adventure they want to play next (within the current campaign tier), follow the below steps to get ready.

Make sure to remove all elements of the previous adventure before setting up a new one (like map tiles, enemy cards and exploration cards).

EXPLORATION DECK

At the beginning of each adventure, an exploration deck needs to be assembled. This will be used as a reference to see which map tiles get added to the adventure as it is being explored by [revealing new rooms](#).

First, take the mentioned deck of exploration cards. Then remove any cards that the adventure calls out explicitly, and put them aside.

Shuffle all **remaining** exploration cards separately (e.g. Nathender, Leyforest etc.) face down.

The adventure will mention a **sequence** in which the cards need to be in the deck, from top to bottom. For each type of card mentioned, draw a **random** card from said deck.

The easiest way to assemble the exploration deck is to put the mentioned types of cards (and sub-piles) from left to right, and then putting them onto each other in the corresponding order (so that the first card / sub-pile mentioned in the adventure is at the top of the deck).

SUB-PILES

If the adventure mentions a set of cards in brackets, then make a mini pile of those cards (draw all face down, without looking) and shuffle them. That sub-pile needs to be in the corresponding position of the entire exploration deck as outlined in the adventure.

ENEMY DECK

Take all enemy cards that are listed in the adventure's description and shuffle them. Put the deck face-down close to the initiative tracker.

EVENTS

Each adventure will have its own table of events in the "Book Of Adventures". Keep the table close by for easy reference.

FIRST ROOM & STARTING POSITION

Each adventure will describe the starting conditions. Most adventures will begin at the "Dungeon Entrance" map tile. Place all heroes and minions as close as possible to the stairs of the map tile (where the light emits from).

Place doors on all possible connections.

STORY TEXT

At this stage, one player should read the intro text out loud to the party to set the scene. There may be additional story descriptions during the adventure (see "[Quest Triggers](#)").

After the adventure is completed, one player will read the outro to everyone.

QUEST TRIGGERS

Most adventures will have one or more quest triggers. Whenever a quest trigger card is drawn from the exploration deck, refer to the quest trigger description in the adventure.

Perform all instructions and read out story descriptions, then proceed as usual.

It's important to remember which quest trigger is the next (the adventure lists them in order), as the order is crucial for adventures to function.

TOWN PHASE

Whenever an adventure is over, be it successful or not, the party gets to visit a town to expand their deck, or to trade with items before they start their next adventure.

When finishing an adventure, all scratches and wounds are automatically healed, and the cooldown and effect trackers get emptied!

Then the below steps can be done in any order.

Remember to grant the party the rewards of the previous adventure, assuming it was completed successfully, before starting the town phase.

SHARED CURRENCIES

During the entire Town Phase, it's worth noting that the currencies "Coins" and "Soul Shards" are a shared resource for the entire party. The group will collectively decide what to do with the currencies.

REPAIR

Items may accumulate 'fault' tokens during adventures for various reasons.

A fault may be removed by paying 5 Coins.

This can be done as many times as the party can afford it.

BUY ITEMS

What items are in store varies each time a town gets visited.

Shuffle the item deck and draw 10 cards, and place them face-up in a row for everyone to see. The party can buy any of these items by paying the displayed costs in Coins.

Note: In the beginning of a campaign, the pile of items should exclusively consist of Tier-1 item cards. The items of higher tiers will be added later, as mentioned in the chapter transitions in the "Book Of Adventures".

SELL ITEMS

During the town phase, the party may sell any number of items that they already own.

When selling an item, the party **gains half the item's displayed value** (round up) of the corresponding currency, be it Coins or Soul Shards.

The value is **not** influenced by the amount of faults it currently has.

VESSEL OFFERS

Whenever the town gets visited, **the party shuffles the vessel deck and draws three cards**, placing them face up.

During this step, **skip any 'Legendary' and 'Mythical' vessels, as well as 'Peasant' vessels**.

Any member of the party **may assume any of the vessels for free** and will get it with just the base perk unlocked, replacing their previous vessel.

PEASANTS

In addition to the above vessels, a party member may always assume a 'Peasant' vessel for free. Simply search for it in the vessel deck and take it, replacing the previous vessel.

Keep in mind that there are only two 'Peasant' vessel cards, so only up to two party members can have a 'Peasant' at any one time.

EXPAND SHOPPING OPTIONS

By paying **10 Coins**, the party can reveal an additional row of items, vessels or soul shop items to choose from. The row is of the same size and limitations as the initial row of the corresponding type of cards - 10 for items, 3 for vessels and 5 for soul shop items.

However, from these expanded rows, the party can only take one item / vessel and then has to discard the remaining cards from that row.

There is no limit as to how often the party can make use of this option.

BUY / UPGRADE ABILITY CARDS

Whenever an adventure is finished (whether successful or not), **each party member obtains one 'Soul Experience Point'** ('Soul XP').

Players don't have to spend it right away and can save them up (make a note in between adventures).

BUY ABILITY CARD

By spending one ‘Soul XP’, a player may add a new ability card in the base version to their deck. It will remain with them for the remainder of the campaign.

However, once a player wants to **add a 10th (or further) card to their deck, they have to spend two ‘Soul XP’ per card added.**

There is no hard cap as to how many ability cards a deck may have.

UPGRADE ABILITY CARD

By spending one ‘Soul XP’, a player may upgrade a base level card that they already possess, by replacing it with either one of the two upgrade variants for that card.

Each ability card comes with an Alpha and a Beta upgrade variant.

RETRAIN CARDS

If a player wants to adjust their play style, or they come to the conclusion that one of their ability cards is simply not satisfying, they have the option to replace it.

By paying 10 Coins, they may replace one of their base level cards for another base level card of their choice.

An upgraded card can also be exchanged, but has to be exchanged for any other upgraded card.

VESSEL SYNCHRONIZATION

As a player continues to survive adventures with a particular vessel, they slowly gain familiarity with that vessel and unlock more of its original potential.

Whenever a player **successfully completes an adventure with a vessel for the first time, they unlock a perk from the second column**. Simply remove the ‘Perk Blocker’ token from either of the two perks.

Once a player **finishes a total of three adventures with the same vessel, they unlock one perk from the third column**.

At this stage, the maximum potential has been reached (except for some rare possibilities like ‘Ambrosia’ from the Soul Shop).

To count an adventure as “finished” (for the sake of synchronization), it is not necessary to start **and** end the adventure with that vessel. Only count whether the player finished the adventure with that vessel.

RETAINING SYNCHRONIZATION

When a player switches vessels for whatever reason, keep track of which perks that player already unlocked with that vessel.

If they get the same vessel again at a later point during the campaign, they will regain their former unlocked perks and must continue the synchronization process where they left off.

SELECT NEXT ADVENTURE

Whenever an adventure has been completed, it is time for the **party to discuss which adventure they want to play next** based on their strengths, preference and most notably, the promised rewards.

The party can **pick any adventure that is part of the current campaign tier and which has not been attempted before**.

ADVENTURE TRACKER

During the town phase, remember to add the adventure token to the adventure tracker.

If a certain amount of token’s has already been added to the current tier, it may be time to move on to the next tier (see below).

CAMPAIN & TIERS

The entire campaign of Soulless Vessel is divided into five distinct tiers. Each tier correlates to a **chapter** within the story where the heroes will fight in a unique region, like Nathender, the Leyforest, the Desert of Shakum and so on.

Each tier will introduce new map tiles, enemies and items, and each has its own set of adventures available to be played while the party is in that tier.

The campaign starts at the first chapter and tier called “Nathender”.

ADVANCING TIERS

Whenever the party has completed three adventures (successful or not), they automatically advance to the next tier.

In this case, read the transition story text (that introduces the next tier).

Additionally, follow the instructions right after the transition story text, which will usually involve introducing new items to the item deck.

For the very first tier ("Nathender"), keep in mind that the introduction adventure ("The Escape") already counts against the limit of three adventures. Also, the fifth tier is an exception as the party will only get to play two adventures during this tier before having to move on.

After the fifth tier, the party will automatically move on to play the last adventure "The Neverwake Dragon" to finish their campaign in one epic finale.

LOSING THE CAMPAIGN

It is entirely possible for a party to **lose the campaign** and having to start over from the very beginning (essentially starting a new campaign).

This is the case **when all players lose their vessel during an adventure** and everyone has become a "Vesselless Soul".

If this is too much of a frustration to the group, you may decide to count the adventure merely as failed, and move on as usual (including getting new vessels in the town phase). Afterall, you should play the game in a fashion that is most fun for everyone!

THE SOUL SHOP

Once the party has moved onto tier 2 ("The Leyforest"), they will unlock the 'Soul Shop' as mentioned by the tier 2 transition text.

This is a special item shop with some unique purchase options, all of which have to be paid using **Soul Shards** as opposed to Coins.

Hint: Soul Shards can be obtained during adventures through certain events, or are sometimes the end reward of an adventure.

During each town phase, shuffle the entire 'Soul Shop' card deck and reveal five cards face up.

Some of the cards have the "Consumable, Immediate" tags. If these get purchased, immediately perform the described text and then discard the card.

Some of the "Consumable" type items in the Soul Shop have the "**Immediate**" tag. In this case, the item's rule gets executed immediately, then the card is discarded.

TABLETOP SIMULATOR GUIDE

In this section we would like to provide you with a brief introduction of specific features that are useful to play Soulless Vessel smoothly within Tabletop Simulator.

TAKE A SEAT

Upon joining a session, every player needs to choose a virtual seat. This will assign them to a specific player board and location for their hand cards, and give them a distinct color (e.g., for their mouse cursor).

At the top right corner, each player clicks on their own name to choose a color. Then you will see orbs at the different locations on the table and simply click on one of them to assume that seat.

SHUFFLE

In many instances, you will need to shuffle a deck of cards. Simply point your mouse cursor at the deck and press "R". The same function works on dice as well.

FLIP

To turn scratches around or to be able to place (ability) cards face down, they need to be flipped beforehand.

While dragging an object or pointing at it with your mouse cursor, press "F" to flip it.

DRAW CARD VS. MOVE DECK

If you quickly "drag and drop" from a stack of cards or stacked tokens, you take the topmost element away from it.

If you want to move the entire stack instead, you need to press and hold the mouse until the stack lifts up. Then you can move the entire stack.

VIEW CARD

If you have trouble reading a card or you don't want to adjust your entire camera view for a quick read, you can hold the "ALT" key while moving the mouse over a card or object to get a zoomed-in view of it. While holding "ALT", you can use your mousewheel to zoom in even further.

LOCK / UNLOCK OBJECT

By pointing your mouse cursor at an object and hitting the "L" key, the object will be locked in place and cannot be easily moved anymore.

In the same fashion, an already locked element can be unlocked again to move it around.

This is useful to fixate placed map tiles, so that players don't accidentally pick them up when moving models on the board.

DRAW LINE-OF-SIGHT

To check for a line of sight, you can simply place your mouse cursor at the origin point (the center of the tile) and then hold the "Tab" key to draw a line between the initial position and your current mouse cursor position. The line will disappear as soon as you release the "Tab" key.

This way you can easily see if the line crosses a non-walkable tile and therefore disrupts the line-of-sight.

LOOK AT FACEDOWN CARD

There may be cases where you have already placed a card face down and want to quickly see what it was (e.g. in case you forgot).

You can hold "ALT" + "SHIFT" while pointing at the card to see its face-up side.

QUICK DRAW CARD

You can conveniently take a card onto your hand by pointing at it with your mouse cursor and hitting the "1" key.

ROTATE OBJECT

In some cases, you may want to rotate an object, for instance a card or a model on the game board. While dragging it around, press the "Q" or "E" keys. The rotation amount can be set at the top hand menu (at the right end of it).

PING

Sometimes you may want to make your party members aware of certain things on your game

board, e.g. to mark an enemy or to show them a card.

By pressing “Tab”, you can create a ping symbol on your current mouse cursor location. It will show an arrow in your own color and make other players aware of it via a sound effect.

TAKE MULTIPLE FROM BAG

When taking an item from a bag, while still holding the item (with the left mouse), more elements from bags can be taken by using the right mouse button. This is especially useful when drawing multiple wounds for an enemy.

DICE ROLLER TOOL

We created a custom tool to assist the rolling of dice in “Soulless Vessel”.

Each player should keep their dice pools up to date by placing the corresponding dice-tokens on their slots for each type of pool (e.g. attack with main hand, defense, spellcasting).

By clicking the name of the pool, the corresponding dice will automatically be placed. The player can now adjust the dice pool with the adjust-buttons at the top of their player board to consider their other circumstances (e.g. bonus dice from an ability). Cursed Dice from wounds will automatically be added to the dice pool.

By hitting the “roll” button, the dice will be rolled and the summary of the result will be shown in the chat!