



QUICK START RULES v1.1

NOTE: When learning to play, it is best to limit the number of players to 2-4 and save 5 to 6-player games for experienced players.

COMPONENTS

- Deck of 30 Room Tiles
- Deck of 103 House of Whack Cards (or simply “Whack Cards”)
- Deck of 80 Drama Cards
- Deck of 20 Guest Cards
- 1 Whack Track Board
- 24 6-sided Dice (6 Red, 6 Blue, 6 Green, 6 Black)
- 1 Sheet of Playing Pieces and Letter Markers
- Plastic Stands – Use these to hold up the playing pieces
- Tediously Complex Grimoire of Rules
- These Quick Start Rules

You will need a collection of tokens (pennies, gems, plastic chips, etc.) to keep track of certain game elements. Each player should have their own set of tokens, associated with them by color, shape, etc.

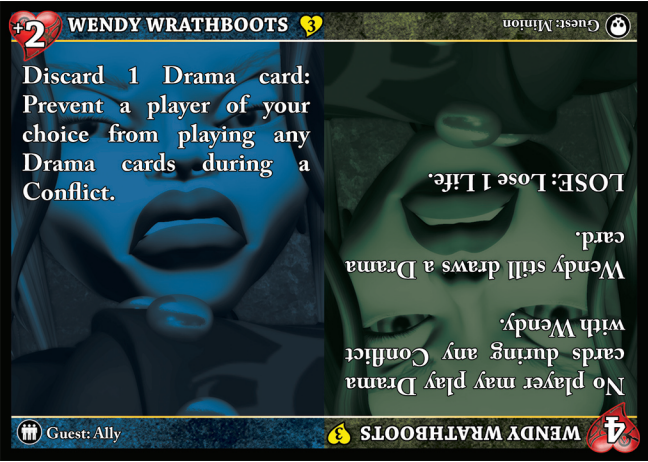
OPENING THE BOX FOR THE FIRST TIME

- Separate all the cards and tiles into stacks: Room, House of Whack, Drama and Guest.
- Take the Room deck and set aside the “Start” tile and the “The End” tile.
- Remove all cards with the word “House Rule” in the lower left-hand corner from the Whack deck. Set these aside. You will not use them in the Quick Start game.
- Carefully cut out the playing pieces and markers with the letters A-F. Fold each in half so that it can slide into a plastic base or stand on its own.

GUEST CARDS

The Guest cards can be used in four ways: As a playable character (the front “Player” side), as an Ally who joins your character (the blue “Ally” half of the back), as a Resident who remains in a room in the House (the orange “Resident” half), or a Minion that attacks you (the green “Minion” half).

A Guest always has an Ally version. Some Guests have a Resident version while others have a Minion version instead. Guest Minions are treated just like Minions drawn from the Whack deck.



Designate whether the Guest is an Ally, Resident or Minion by turning that side of the card right side up.

The example to the left shows Wendy Wrathboots as an Ally. Were the card rotated 180 degrees, she would be a Minion.


SETUP


- Place the Start room tile in the center of the table. Shuffle all of the “Room” tiles and cut the deck roughly halfway down. Place the “The End” tile face down on top of the lower half of the deck and place the upper half on top of it. Shuffle the Whack deck, Drama deck and Guest deck, placing them within easy reach. Place the Whack Track nearby.
- Each player chooses a playing piece and a set of tokens (not included). Each player places one of their tokens on the Whack Track at zero, indicating their starting score.
- The pairs of folded markers designated A-E are used to indicate the contents of a room without cluttering up the board with the cards themselves. Whenever a Minion, Resident, Prop or Ally is placed in a room, set the cards off to one side with a letter marker on them. Place the matching marker on the room tile to indicate the room’s contents.
- Each player randomly draws one of the Guest cards and uses the side marked “Guest.” This is the Guest the player will control. Each player should introduce their Guest and describe their Power (the purple side panel). Players should familiarize themselves with what their power does and if it requires an Action to use. You will learn about Actions later.
- The card displays three hearts which represent a player’s initial stats: Strength (red heart), Spirit (blue heart) and Life (green heart). If a stat ever changes, use a die counter of the same color to reflect the change.
- Deal three Drama cards face down to each player. These cards represent each player’s hand and are kept hidden from the other players.
- Everyone should roll a die to see who goes first. The high roller places their playing piece on any square of the Start tile, followed by the remaining players, going clockwise. The high roller then takes their turn and play proceeds clockwise from the first player.


HOW TO WIN

 **The goal of the game is to collect Gold Hearts.** Gold Hearts are primarily obtained by redeeming cards with a heart value printed on the upper right of the card. At the end of the game, the player with the most Gold Hearts wins. Players move their tokens forward and backwards along the Whack Track to keep track of their Gold Hearts.

GUEST STATS

 **The red heart on the Guest card represents that Guest’s Strength.** This stat is used to resolve Conflicts with opponents who attack with Strength.

 **The blue heart represents Spirit.** If a player’s Spirit is reduced to zero, their Spirit has been crushed. A player should turn their Guest card upside down to remind them of their crushed Spirit. While in this state, a player must drop at least one Ally or Prop at the beginning of every turn, during their Housekeeping phase. Players may not pick up any Props or Allies while their Spirit is crushed. If a player manages to raise their Spirit to at least 1, their Spirit is no longer crushed. A player may restore their Spirit to the original value shown on their Guest card if they move to Start and then lose their next turn.

 **The green heart is Life.** If a player’s Life is reduced to zero, they die and must start over on their next turn. The player must drop all Props and Allies in their current room. They also discard all other cards and lose *all* of their Gold Hearts. The player then moves to Start and begins again on their following turn.

DRAMA CARDS



Every player starts the game with 3 **Drama cards** which form a player’s hand. Any time something refers to a player’s “hand,” it means their unplayed Drama cards and nothing else.

House of Whack currently only has one kind of Drama card: Arcana. Other types of Drama cards will be made available later.


Arcana are “one shot” effects that can be played on a variety of targets and in many situations. Arcana cards can be played any time during any player’s turn. Read the card to determine an appropriate time to play the card.

Arcana have a Strength (red), Spirit (blue) or Wild (purple) modifier in the top corner. Strength and Spirit modifiers are typically used to affect Conflicts as described in Conflict Resolution.


Wild modifiers can be used in a Conflict as described later, or they can be used to modify *any* die roll by *any* player. A player must play the modifier immediately after the die roll to affect it.

An Arcana card can either be played for the special ability described on the card OR for the modifier, but never both.

TURN SEQUENCE

 **1. Housekeeping Phase** – If a player activated a Trap last turn and that Trap has a Housekeeping icon, the player reduces the number of turns they have left before the Trap goes away. Also, if a player’s Spirit is crushed (see the Spirit section above), then they must drop at least one Prop or Ally at this time.

2. Draw Phase – If a player has less than 3 Drama cards, they draw enough cards so that they have 3.

 **3. Take Action!** – Players get 2 Actions per turn which they can spend to do various things. **The two most common things players will do are move and draw a Whack card (see the sections below).** Some Guest, Ally, Resident, Prop and Room powers will require an Action to use. The card will have an Action icon beside the power. The Whack Track displays a list of the most common uses of Actions.

4. Discard Phase – There is no limit to how many Drama cards a player can have in their hand during other players’ turns or earlier in their own turn. But when a player reaches this phase of their own turn, they need to discard down to 3 Drama cards. Players may discard more if desired in order to draw new cards on their next Draw Phase.

The player’s turn is now over and play proceeds clockwise to the next player.

MOVEMENT

Movement is optional; a player need not move each turn. But moving is the only way to explore the House and discover interesting things. Movement costs 1 Action and a player may spend multiple Actions to move several times. When moving, a player may **either** move 3 spaces **or** roll one die and move that many spaces (they **must** move the number rolled if they choose to roll). When a player exits a room through a door, they must draw and place a new room tile if there isn’t one there already. At least one door on the new tile should be lined up with the door the player just exited. The player then continues their movement into the new room.

Things which may affect movement:

Secret doors come into play via Twists (a kind of Whack card). A black die is placed to represent each secret door. Players can move from one secret door space to another of the same value (both dice show “3” for example), as though they were side by side.


Stairs work just like secret doors, only instead of placing the second matching die on an existing room, a player draws a new tile and places the other die there. This new tile is the beginning of a whole new floor of the House and is not connected to the original floor except via the stairs.

Locked doors are represented by a red or blue die placed on a door. Players may not move through a door until the lock is removed via a Conflict (see the Conflict section later). A player may use an Action to attempt to remove one locked door in their current room (or one adjacent to their current room). Consult the Grimoire to learn more about Secret Doors, Stairs and Locked Doors.

ROOMS

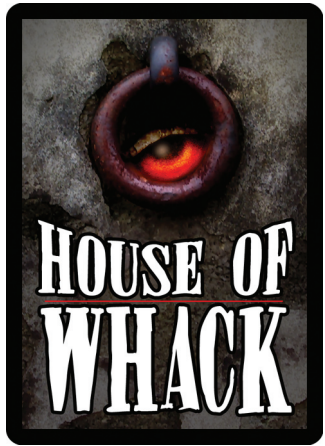
Read the instructions printed on the room tile. Most rooms have optional effects that can be used if a player spends an Action in the room during their turn. Some effects are mandatory. Some effects are persistent as long as the room is in play.

If a room has a player token target icon, it means that if a player has one of their tokens in that room, they gain that ability no matter where they are. Tokens are placed when a player draws a Whack card in a room.

 Some rooms have a charge icon indicating that a die is placed in the room to keep track of the remaining charges. Every time the room’s ability is used, one charge is deducted. If the room is out of charges, its ability can no longer be used.



WHACK CARDS



The heart of the game is drawing Whack cards. These cards represent the dangers and wonders players will encounter as they explore the House.

1. If there is already a player token (even one belonging to the current player) in the current room, then a player cannot draw a Whack card. The room has been, in a sense, claimed.

2. If there is a Minion in the current room, then the player must either face it or evade it if they wish to use any further Actions (other than movement) in the room, including spending an Action to draw a Whack card. See the section on Minions and Conflict later.

3. If there are no player tokens in the room and the player has faced all Minions, then they may spend an Action to draw a Whack card. The player immediately places one of their tokens in the room.

They do this regardless of what happens due to drawing the card.

4. The player reveals the Whack card to everyone. Whack cards are never kept secret and never go into a player's hand. They are dealt with immediately.

Possible Whack Cards:

Twist: This card may affect the current player or all players. Follow its instructions.

Prop: Props grant new powers, bonuses in Conflicts and Gold Hearts towards winning. There are three types of Prop: Weapon, Wearable and Artifact. Players can carry one of each type. Picking up or dropping any number of Props is considered a Free Action.

Arrival: A new Ally or Resident has appeared in the House. The player draws a Guest at random and uses the Ally or Resident/Minion side of the card. Residents must remain in the room where they arrived, but a player may pick up an Ally if they wish.

Unless otherwise stated, Residents will not attack players. A player may attack a Resident, though, in which case a Conflict is resolved just like a Conflict with a Minion (see later).

Allies grant new powers and bonuses in Conflicts. Players can also redeem Allies for Gold Hearts. A player may pick up or drop an Ally in their current room as a Free Action.

Minion: Minions are agents of the House and will attack players on sight. When a player draws a Minion, they must face it immediately. If a player has an Action left, it may be spent to try to move out of the Minion's room and thereby flee to safety. A player ending a move in a room with a Minion or wishing to use Actions in the Minion's room must either evade or face the Minion. A player may only evade if they have a card which grants that ability, otherwise the player must face it in a Conflict (see below). Whether a player wins or loses the Conflict, they may now continue their turn, having faced the Minion.

Trap: Traps work much like Minions except that they typically leave the room whether defeated or not. If a Trap defeats a player in a Conflict, it has been activated and the player must follow the LOSE instructions. Many Traps' effects will last for several turns.

CONFLICT

Conflicts occur when a player fights a Minion, a Resident or another player; a player tries to remove a locked door; or a player encounters a Trap. If a player's opponent has Strength (a red heart on their card), then it is a Strength Conflict. If the opponent has Spirit (blue heart), then it is a Spirit Conflict.

Strength and Spirit Conflicts work exactly the same way, so, for the sake of clarity, the instructions below will describe a Strength Conflict. For a Spirit Conflict, use Spirit/Blue Hearts in place of Strength/Red Hearts.

Conflict Resolution

1. The player takes their current Strength score and adds any bonuses granted by Allies, Props or Powers. These bonuses are shown on the card in a red heart.
2. The player can then use Arcana modifiers (on their Drama cards) to affect their Strength score. If they have any Strength modifiers or Wild modifiers, the player can play them now by putting those cards face down in front of their Guest.
3. In a Conflict between players, both players place zero or more Drama cards face down. If the Conflict is with anything other than a player (Minion, Trap, Resident, etc.), another player draws from the Drama deck and, without looking at the card, places it face down next to the opponent's card as the opponent's modifier.
4. Any player who is not an opponent in the Conflict may then play Arcana modifiers to help or hinder either opponent. These are also played face down, on either opponent's existing face down cards.
5. Both opponents simultaneously reveal their cards and total the result of all modifiers, adding them to their existing Strength. The total of an opponent's Strength, bonuses and Arcana modifiers is called their Conflict Score.
6. Any player may then play Wild Arcana modifiers on either opponent. This continues until no one wants or is able to play additional Wild modifiers.
7. The opponent with the highest Conflict Score is the winner.
8. If the scores are equal, the result is a draw. Neither side is penalized or rewarded. The player may use an Action to resolve the Conflict again as a brand new Conflict, starting from the first step. **Exception:** In a Conflict with a Trap, a draw still counts as a LOSE.

Conflict Aftermath

9. All Drama cards played during the Conflict are put in the discard pile.
10. If a player defeats a Minion, Resident, or Trap, they keep the card to redeem later for Gold Hearts.
11. If the player loses against a Resident, they lose 1 Life if it was a Strength Conflict or 1 Spirit if it was a Spirit Conflict.
12. If a player loses against a Minion or Trap, they follow the "LOSE" instructions.
13. If a player wins against a locked door, they remove the locked door. There is no penalty for losing a Conflict with a locked door.
- 14a. If the player's opponent was another player and it was a Strength Conflict, the loser loses 1 Life OR the winner takes a Prop card of their choice from the loser's hand.
- 14b. If it was a Spirit Conflict, the losing player loses 1 Spirit OR the winner may take 1 Drama card of their choice from the loser's hand.
- 14c. If the losing player has a player token in the current room, the winner may swap that token for one of their own *instead of* the above.

A player then continues their turn, whether they won or lost the Conflict.

REDEEMING CARDS

Props, Allies, Traps, Residents and Minions have a **heart value** inside the Gold Heart icon in the upper right corner of their card. If a player is in a room which displays a gold heart icon, they may spend an Action to **redeem** cards in their possession for Gold Hearts.

The Whack Track depicts the default exchange ratio for Gold Hearts. The ratio tells how many value points (on the left of the ratio) must be redeemed to gain a certain amount of the attribute in question (on the right of the ratio). So for each point of value redeemed, the player would gain 1 Gold Heart. **Redeemed cards are removed from the game. They are *not* discarded.**

Remember that the player with the most Gold Hearts at the end of the game wins.

THE END

Play continues until the "The End" tile is revealed. The player who drew The End finishes their turn and then a scoring round takes place. Each player collects all of their tokens placed in rooms in the House and adds the number of tokens to their Gold Hearts.

All players then move their playing pieces back to Start. Any cards remaining in any rooms are discarded. All room tiles except Start are gathered up and set aside, out of play. They will not be used again for the rest of the game. If there are any rooms in the discard pile, these are shuffled back into the room deck.

Play resumes with the next player and continues until the remaining room tiles are gone (including any in the discard pile). Return "The End" to the bottom of the room deck (it will now be the last room tile). As above, the player to place The End for the second and final time finishes their turn. Then there is a final scoring phase where player's tokens are scored as above. The player with the most Gold Hearts at this point is the winner.

Once familiar with the Quick Start rules,
consult the Grimoire to learn more
detailed rules and play options.

An Example of a Conflict: Ryan, Dave and Monica are playing House of Whack. It's Ryan's turn and he spends an Action to draw a Whack card, encountering a Minion, the Dire Frog. He used his last Action to draw the card, so he can't try to move out of the room and flee. He has no Powers or special cards that would allow him to evade, so he will have to face the Minion in a Conflict. Since the Dire Frog has Strength (4, to be exact), this will be a Strength Conflict.



1. Ryan is playing D'Kayne Dreadcloak, a Guest with a Strength of 3. He also has Harn as an Ally, so he adds 2 to his Strength. He also happens to be carrying the Vampire Bat, a Weapon Prop that grants a +2 Strength bonus. Ryan is looking pretty good with a total Conflict Score of 7. If nothing else happened, Ryan would win against the Dire Frog's Strength of 4.

2. But, of course, this is where the Drama cards come in. Dave draws a Drama card on behalf of the Dire Frog, placing it face down. No one gets to see what the card is. It could be a huge Strength bonus, or a worthless Spirit bonus. It could be anything.

3. Ryan decides not take any chances and plays an Arcana with a +3 Strength bonus face down in front of him.

4. Ryan had annoyed Monica on her previous turn, so she decides to give the Frog a boost and slaps a card face down on the Frog's side.

5. The face down cards are flipped over. Ryan already had a 7 and his +3 Arcana gives him a Conflict Score of 10. It turns out that the Frog drew a +2 Spirit Arcana, worthless in a Strength Conflict. Monica had put down a hefty +5 Strength, but that only brings the Frog's Conflict Score total to 9.

Looks like Ryan is going to win this one, unless...

6. Dave pulls a card from his own hand and slaps down a +3 Wild Arcana on the Frog, bringing its Conflict Score to 12. Ryan looks at his hand and finds no Wild Arcana, the only modifier he could play at this point.

7. Dave and Monica chuckle as Ryan loses the Conflict and is swallowed by the Frog (according to the LOSE instructions on the Minion's card)!