



AN ERIK'S CURIOSA GAME

# SORCERY

CONTESTED REALM

## RULES

July 2025

# SORCERY

## CONTESTED REALM

Rulebook released July 2025

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# Introduction

In the unfathomable depths of the infinite void, great beings vie for control of fantastical realms, where powerful magic imbues every living thing, and even the land itself. Take on the role of a powerful Avatar in one of these realms, and tap into the arcane energies of the four elements—Air, Earth, Fire, and Water—to summon mythical beasts, conjure ancient artifacts, and cast an array of powerful spells beyond all imagining. Will you claim dominion over this contested realm?

## Using this Rulebook

The goal of this rulebook is to get you up to speed and ready to play your first games of *Sorcery: Contested Realm*. For new players, carry on from here, have someone guide you through a game, or visit [www.sorcerytcg.com/how-to-play](http://www.sorcerytcg.com/how-to-play) where you'll find tutorial videos and more. For experienced players, this rulebook will handle most of your queries, but you can also explore the Codex ([curiosa.io/codex](http://curiosa.io/codex)) for even more detail.

The game uses terms and keywords that are important to know. When these come up, they have been **bolded** to not only help you identify important words and concepts, but to also tell you that you can find more information about that word in the glossary, starting on page 32.

## Gameplay

In a game of *Sorcery: Contested Realm*, you interact with the **realm** as a powerful Avatar. You will have a spellbook, a deck of cards that will allow you to cast spells that summon minions, conjure artifacts, and more. You will also have access to your atlas, a deck of cards that allow you to add wondrous sites to the play area that both expand your domain and empower you to cast even more devastating spells.

## How to Win

Avatars are summoned to a contested **realm** with one goal: to vanquish their opponents and claim sole dominion. In order to win, you must defeat any opposing Avatar by first reducing their **life** total to zero, placing them at **death's door**, and then delivering a final **death blow** to the weakened Avatar. This severs the enemy's connection to the realm and grants you victory!

## Decks

For your first few games, you might want to use preconstructed decks, which will get you straight into the action. Or you can craft your own decks, balancing and tuning their powers to fit your play style (see page 26). The world of *Sorcery* grants you endless possibilities!





# The Four Elements

*Sorcery: Contested Realm* is built around the four classical elements: Air, Earth, Fire, and Water. Most spells in a spellbook are tied to these elements, giving Avatars the power to manipulate the magic of the realms. Each element has strengths and weaknesses. Certain abilities can be common in one element yet very rare in another. The four elements and their characteristics are:



## AIR

Air is the element of *Knowledge and Power*, dabbling in forces beyond mortal control to acquire the magical means to respond to any battlefield situation. An attunement with air grants you both mobility and tactical options thanks to its ability to teleport units around the realm and to increase its available spells.



## EARTH

Earth is the element of *Enduring Strength*, defined by its focus on fielding and enhancing martial forces throughout the realm. An attunement with earth grants you the ability to affect your atlas and minions that can dominate the battle through teamwork and sheer fighting power.



## FIRE

Fire is the element of *Desire and Destruction*, willing to do whatever it takes to secure victory in the realm. An attunement with fire grants you an array of explosive spells and abilities that can create bursts of speed or burn friend and foe alike in great gouts of flame.



## WATER

Water is the element of *Charm and Trickery*, ready to adapt and disrupt the strategies of the enemy as it manipulates all. An attunement with water grants you a powerful homefield advantage that will slowly engulf the realm and the ability to position the enemy right where you want them.

# Cards

In *Sorcery: Contested Realm*, your cards are what allow you to influence the realm and do battle with your opponent. Some cards will bend or even break the rules in this rulebook, in these cases the card's text takes precedence. Before we dig into how cards function in detail, it is important to keep one key rule in mind at all times:

## The Golden Rule

Some text is intentionally informal or necessarily compact. Use common sense and be cool.



## Card Types

There are three main categories of cards: Avatars, sites, and spells. Spells further break down into four card types: minion, artifact, aura, and magic. The following pages will describe each type.

### AVATARS

Your Avatar represents you and your connection to the realm. Though but a pale echo of your true might, everything you do within the realm is done through your Avatar. Avatars have some key characteristics:

- Each Avatar has a name ①.
- Avatars have a starting life ②, which will rise and fall during the game and tells you how much the Avatar can endure before being placed at death's door. This is also the Avatar's maximum life, which cannot be exceeded.
- Avatars also have an attack power rating ③ that tells you how hard they hit in combat.
- Avatars have a game text box ④ that describes their special abilities.

All Avatars are **Spellcasters**, which means they can cast spells, most often from your hand.

Finally, Avatars can never enter a region other than the surface and ignore many negative effects.



### Units

A unit is a collective term that includes both Avatars and minions. Some cards might specify one of these types of units, but most affect units in general.

# SITES

A site is a locus of power within the realm that you may explore and exploit. Sites are usually played by activating your Avatar's ability, though they may enter the realm in other ways.

You and your opponent can also attack each other's sites to cause your Avatars to lose life, so make sure to defend yours.

Sites have some key characteristics:

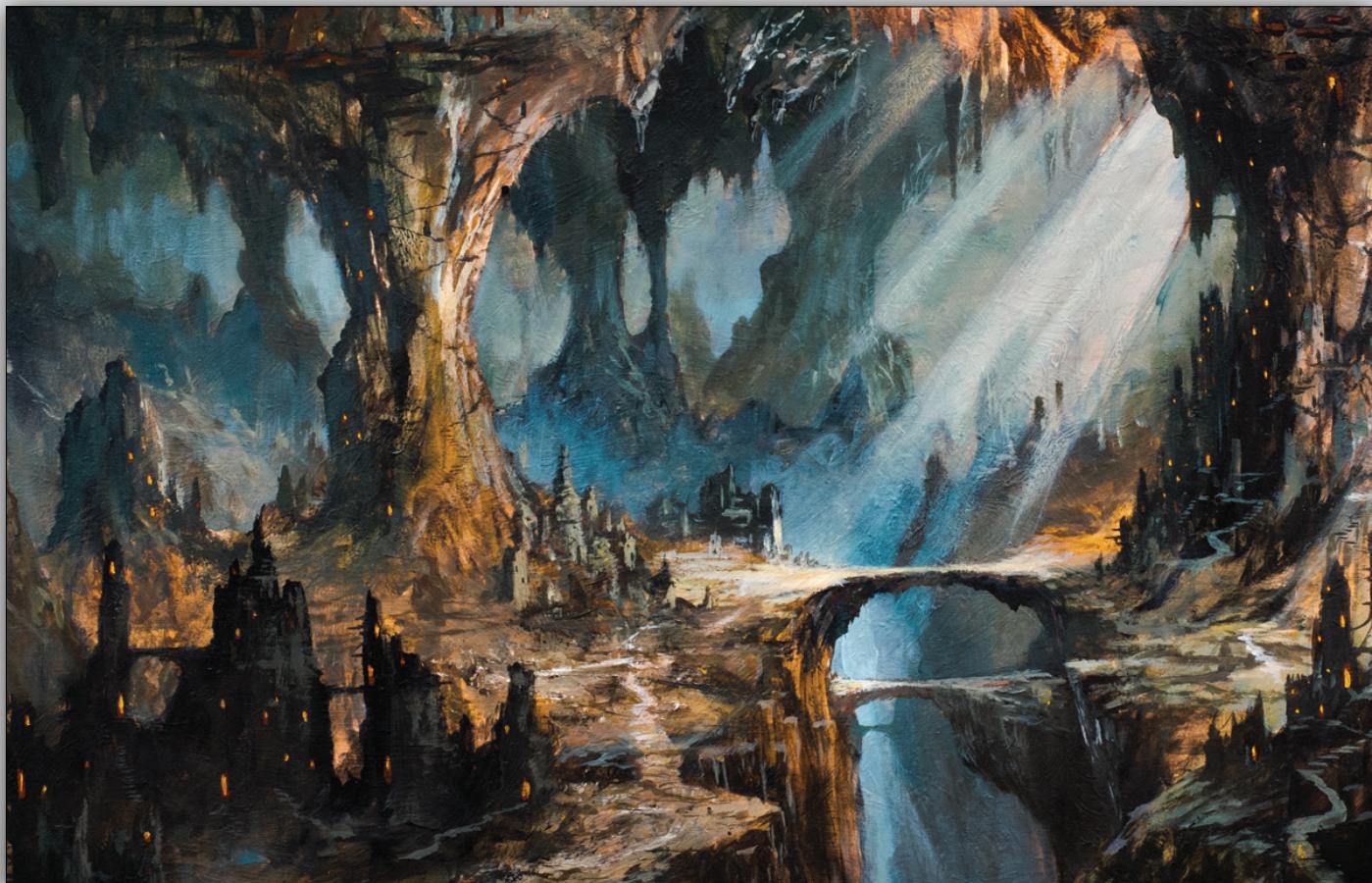
- Sites have a name ①.
- Sites have a typeline ② that describes key things about that card, such as rarity.
- Most sites have elemental symbols that increase your elemental affinity ③, which you will harness to use spells and abilities (see page 18).
- Sites have a game text box ④ that describes their special abilities.
- Sites will provide you with **mana**, an important resource that you will need to play cards and use abilities during your turn (see page 17).
- Sites have two levels: **surface** and **subsurface** (see page 13).

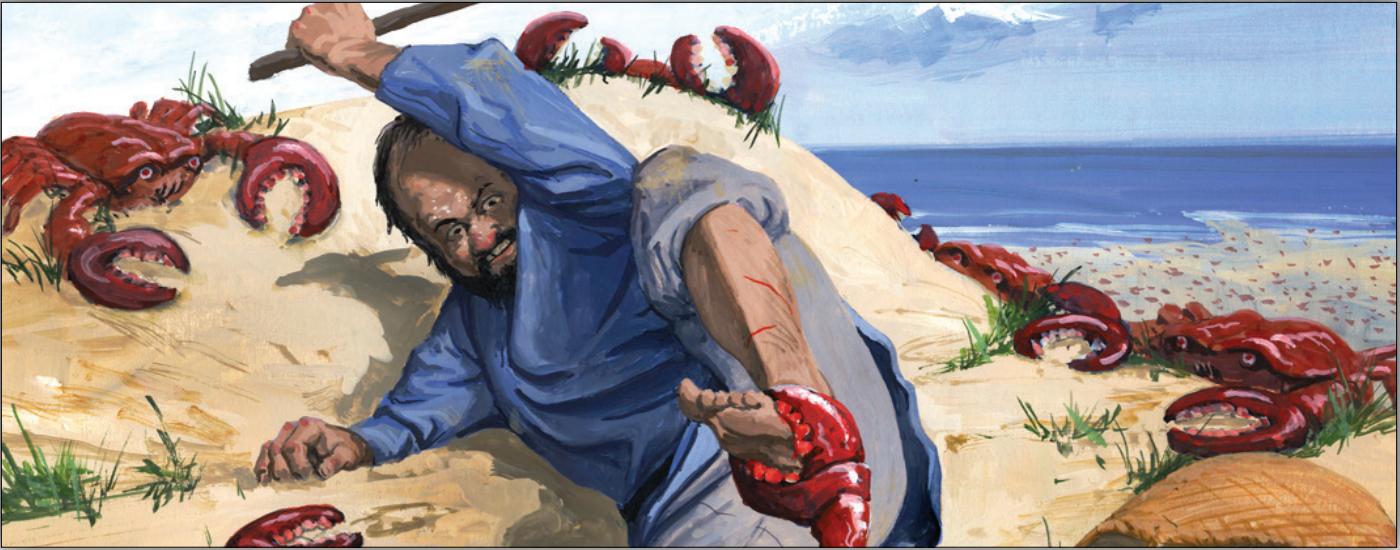


## Rubble

When a site is destroyed it is placed in its owner's cemetery as normal, but rather than creating a new **void**, the site is instead replaced with rubble. Rubble is a neutral **land** site that no player controls, and provides no mana or threshold.

*Note: You can use tokens or a face down site to represent rubble on a square.*





## SPELLS

Spells represent all of the magical might you are able to bring to bear on this realm. These include minions to help you defend your lands and attack the enemy, powerful artifacts that will help you tip the balance of power, magics of channeled energy that will overpower foes, and auras of lasting elemental magic to impose your will on areas of the realm.

## Minions

Minions are your greatest allies, assisting you with myriad unique abilities in offense and defense. Minions have a few key characteristics on their card:

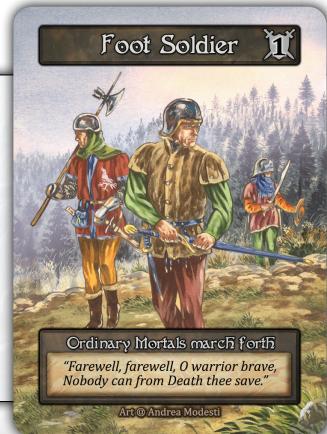
- Each minion has a name ①.
- Each minion has a **mana** cost ② that you must pay in order to play it.
- Minions have an **elemental threshold** ③ that your elemental affinity must meet in order to be played.
- Minions have a power rating ④ that reflects how hard they hit in combat. It also describes how much **damage** they can take before dying. If the minion receives damage equal to or greater than that value, it **dies**.
- Minions have a type line ⑤ that describes key things about that card, such as subtypes and rarity.
- Minions have a game text box ⑥ that describes their special abilities.



## Token Minions

Tokens are small-sized cards that work more or less the same as regular cards while in the **realm**. The major difference between cards and tokens is that tokens are never part of a player's deck, and they can never formally exist in any zone except within the **realm**. If a token would be placed anywhere else, it is instead removed from the game entirely.

**Note:** You are free to use anything you want to represent tokens.



# Artifacts

Artifacts are various relics, edifices, tools, gear, gadgets, devices, and baubles, often charged with lasting enchantments by wizards of old. Artifacts have some key characteristics on their card:

- Each artifact has a name ①.
- Each artifact has a **mana** cost ② that you must pay to play it.
- Artifacts have a type line ③ that describes key things about that card, such as subtypes and rarity.
- Artifacts have a game text box ④ that describes their special abilities.

**Note:** Unlike other spells, artifacts do not typically require an elemental threshold to play.

## Artifact Subtypes

Artifacts have a variety of subtypes, including armor, weapons, relics, devices, documents, automatons, or monuments. While most artifacts are standard objects that can be carried into battle, others such as automatons and monuments have some further characteristics and restrictions.

### Automatons

Automatons are artifacts that are minions. As such, they have a power rating (5), have the same basic abilities as regular minions, and cannot be carried like regular artifacts.



### Monuments

Monuments are an artifact subtype that cannot be carried.





## Auras

Auras are mostly incorporeal, but lasting, manifestations of elemental power. They usually impact a large area within the realm, conferring boons or conditions within their reach.

Auras have some key characteristics on their card:

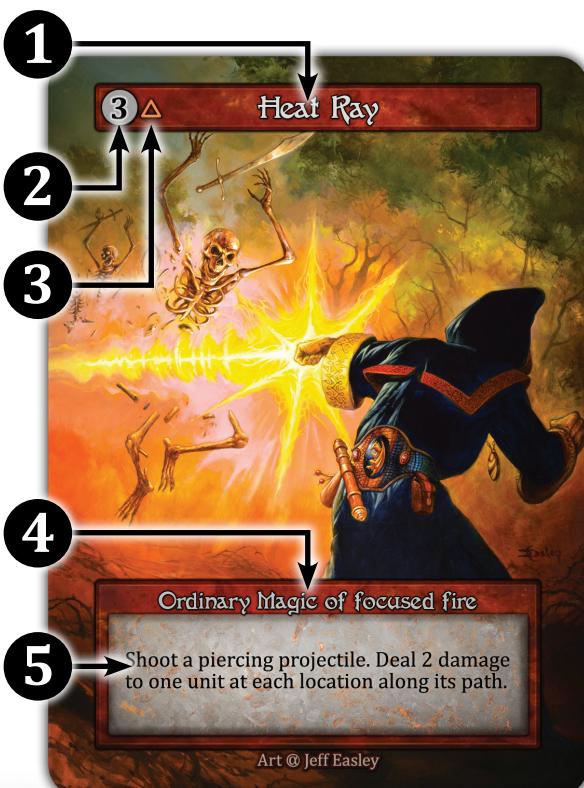
- Each aura has a name ①.
- Each aura has a **mana** cost ② that you must pay in order to play it.
- Auras also have an **elemental threshold** ③ that your elemental affinity must meet in order to be played.
- Auras have a type line ④ that describes key things about that card, such as rarity.
- Auras have a game text box ⑤ that describes their special abilities.



## Magics

Magics are transient spells that have immediate impact and then dissipate as soon as they resolve. Magics have some key characteristics on their card:

- Each magic has a name ①.
- Each magic has a **mana** cost ② that you must pay in order to play it.
- Magics also have an **elemental threshold** ③ that your elemental affinity must meet in order to be played.
- Magics have a type line ④ that describes key things about that card, such as rarity.
- Magics have a game text box ⑤ that describes their special abilities.



# Game Zones

In *Sorcery: Contested Realm*, players share the main and biggest part of the play area—the **realm**. However, each player has their own decks, cemetery, and hand. These are the game's main zones.

## THE REALM

The realm ① is a 5x4 square grid where most cards are played. These twenty squares begin as pieces of the **void** that you and your opponent may fill in with sites as you expand your domains.

## ATLAS AND SPELLBOOK

Each player has two decks of cards—an atlas of at least 30 site cards ②, containing maps to domains waiting to be explored, and a spellbook of at least 50 spell cards ③, filled with all of a player's accumulated magical knowledge. Players will draw cards from these decks over the course of a game. When it comes to these decks, keep a few things in mind:

- The exact order of the cards in these decks is unpredictable, thus whenever you search your atlas or spellbook for a card, you must shuffle it afterward.
- Some effects allow you to place or reorder known cards on the bottoms or tops of decks. After doing so, you do not shuffle it.

## CEMETERY

Each player has a cemetery ④ which represents a record of spent magic, dead minions, and broken artifacts. Whenever any of your cards are discarded, destroyed, resolved, or otherwise expired, place them face-up in your cemetery.

Players may freely examine the contents of any cemetery at any time and the order of the cards in a cemetery is irrelevant.

## HAND

Cards drawn from your spellbook or atlas decks are kept in your hand ⑤. Your hand should remain hidden from your opponents, however the number of atlas and spellbook cards you hold may be observed and asked, due to the card backs being distinguishable.

There is no maximum hand size and the order of the cards in your hand is irrelevant.



# Setup

Now that you're familiar with the components, follow these steps to set up a two-player game of *Sorcery*.

## Step 1: Set Up the Realm

Clear some space in the middle of the table for the **realm** ①.

## Step 2: Place Avatars

Players place their Avatars on the **square** in the middle of their bottom row ②.

## Step 3: Prepare Decks

Players shuffle and place their atlas and spellbook decks nearby ③, leaving some space for their cemeteries ④.

## Step 4: Determine First Player

Players may either decide who has the first turn, or otherwise randomly choose who goes first.

## Step 5: Draw Starting Hand

Each player draws three cards from their atlas and three cards from their spellbook ⑤. If you're not satisfied with your initial hand, you may take one mulligan.

To take a mulligan, return up to three cards from your hand to the bottom of their respective decks in any order. Then redraw the same number of cards you returned from each deck.



# Winning the Game

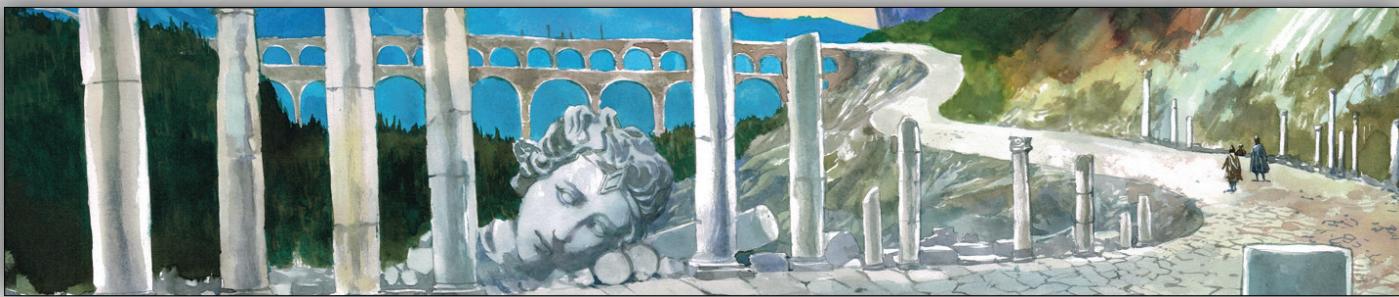
The game ends when a player has vanquished all opposing Avatars, securing their hold on the realm! In order to do this, you'll need to get them to **death's door**, then follow up with a **death blow**.

Alternatively, if either player attempts to draw a card from an empty deck, they immediately lose.

## Death's Door & Death Blow

As an Avatar loses **life**, its connection with the **realm** weakens. When an Avatar's **life** is reduced to 0, they are now at **death's door** and can no longer gain **life**. At that moment, the wounded Avatar becomes immune to damage for the rest of the turn.

After that brief and desperate window, any damage dealt to the Avatar is a **death blow**, finally severing their connection to the realm and signaling their defeat.



# Navigating the Realm

In *Sorcery: Contested Realm* battles are often won or lost in the way you position and maneuver your units. The following pages will cover how to navigate both the square grid and the layers of the realm.

## AREAS OF THE REALM

The **realm** is split into twenty squares. These squares begin as pieces of the **void** that you and your opponent may fill in with sites as you expand your domains.

### The Void

The void is a **region** of incorporeal nothingness on top of which you will build your physical domain. Any minion that somehow finds its way into the void (whether in whole or in part) is immediately **banished** (removed from the game) unless it has an ability that specifically allows it to exist there (such as **Voidwalk**).

### Sites

As you and your opponent expand your domains, you will replace void squares by playing site cards on them. These sites will form up to create bodies of water and land for your units to traverse and conquer.

### Water and Land Sites

Sites can be separated into two main types. **Water sites** are identified by the water threshold icon (marked with ). All other sites are considered **land sites**, including sites with no threshold icons and **rubble**.

### Groups of Water & Land

As sites are played, they will begin to form bodies of water and spans of land. A contiguous cluster of adjacent **water sites** is known as a body of water. Similarly, a contiguous cluster of adjacent **land sites** forms a span of land. It is possible to have more than one of each, or for the realm to be completely land or water.

*For example, the two Spring Rivers and the Aqueduct form a body of water (1). Even though the Aqueduct has a , it also has a , so it is a water site.*

*The Autumn River is a separate, single-site body of water (2), since only adjacent sites are considered and not those placed diagonally.*

*The Steppe and Dark Tower form a span of land (3), and the Arid Desert is its own single-site span of land (4).*



# Surface & Subsurface of Sites

Each site is made up of two levels, above and below the card. A site's upper level is generally referred to as the **surface** and its lower one is the **subsurface**.

## The Surface

The upper level of all sites form a **region** known as the surface. This is where units will typically move and wage war on the enemy. All units above a site are considered to be on the surface.

## The Subsurface

The subsurface is divided into two **regions**, depending on what type of site it is. The lower level of a **land site** is part of the **underground region**. Similarly, the lower level of a **water site**, is part of the **underwater region**. Existing in the subsurface is extremely hazardous and minions that somehow find their way there immediately **die**, unless otherwise allowed to do so with special abilities (see page 38).

## Atop and Under

When cards enter a site's surface level, place it **atop** the site to show that it is on the surface, or slide it **under** the site to show that it occupies the subsurface.

If a card refers to something **atop** a site, it applies to something on the surface of the site, but not anything below it. Similarly, if a card refers to something **under** a site, it applies to something in the subsurface of the site, but not anything above it.

## Regions

Altogether, there are four regions in the game:

- void
- surface
- underground
- underwater

**Note:** Most abilities from cards in the realm affect things within the region where the card is located. Similarly, in the case of spells, their affects typically apply to the same region as its Spellcaster. However, some cards can effect specific areas, regions, or even the whole realm, regardless of the card's own region.

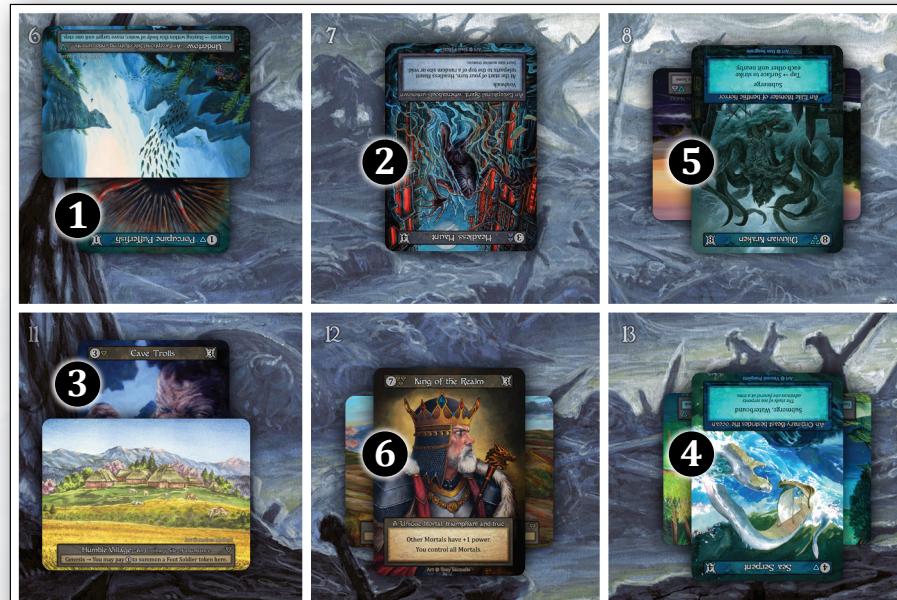
For example:

The Porcupine Pufferfish (1) occupies the **Underwater** region **under** the site in its square.

The Headless Haunt (2) occupies a square in the **Void** region.

The Cave Trolls (3) occupy the **Underground** region **under** the site in its square.

The Sea Serpent (4) and Diluvian Kraken (5) occupy the **Surface** region **atop** the sites in their squares, as does the King of the Realm (6) **atop** the site in his square.





## LOCATING AREAS OF THE REALM

Perhaps the single most important key concept to understand is how to identify areas in the realm relative to your card's position.

### Location

A **location** is defined as one **region** in one **square**.

### Here and There

"Here" and "There" are used to contextually refer to the **location(s)** that a card occupies. For most cards, such as avatars, minions, and artifacts, that means one **location**. For most auras, it means the 2x2 area they occupy. For sites, it means two **locations**, their surface and subsurface.

### Targeting

Sometimes you will need to target things in the realm. Spells and abilities can only target things within the **Spellcaster's** or referencing card's same region.

### Adjacent and Nearby

Sometimes a card will need to identify something in an **adjacent** or **nearby** square.

- **Adjacent:** Refers to the card's own square, and the squares that it shares a border with.
- **Nearby:** Refers to the card's own square, and all squares that surround it, including those diagonally.



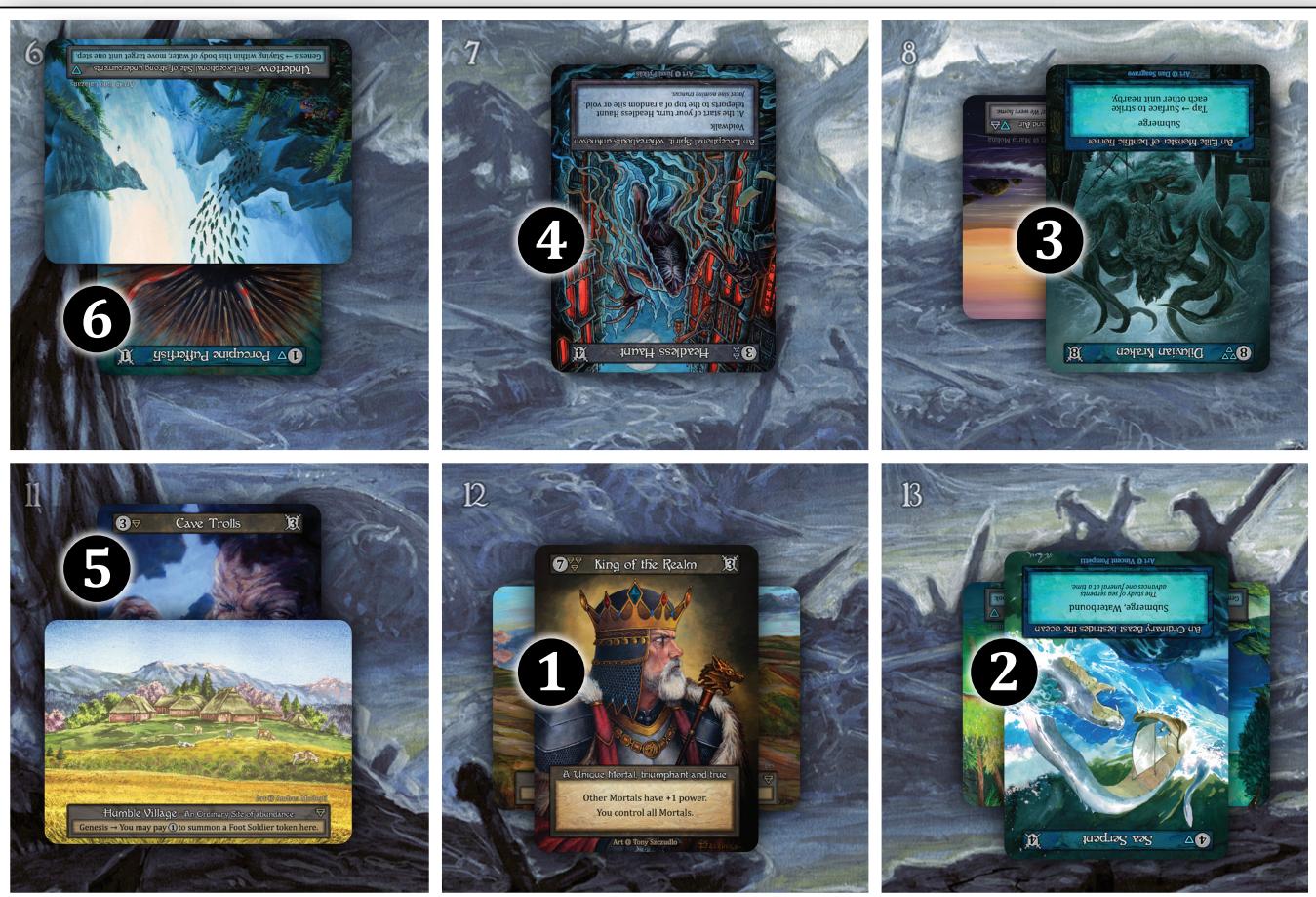
*These five squares are adjacent to the card*



*These nine squares are nearby the card*

# Adjacent and Nearby Locations

Only **locations** that are in the same **region** as the referencing card (or its **Spellcaster**) are considered adjacent or nearby **locations**.



In this example, the King of the Realm ① is beset by enemies on nearly all sides! Some pose a greater threat than others. Let's take a closer look.

The King is **adjacent** to the Sea Serpent ② because it is next to him on the surface of the site and therefore in the same region. Similarly, the Diluvian Kraken ③ is **nearby** the King.

The King is **not adjacent** to the Headless Haunt ④ because the Haunt is in the Void region.

The Cave Trolls ⑤ are **not adjacent** to the King because they are burrowed and are therefore in a different region. Similarly, the Porcupine Pufferfish ⑥ is **not nearby** the King because it is submerged.

The Pufferfish and Cave Trolls are **not adjacent** to each other as they are in different regions, underwater and underground, respectively. Similarly, the Pufferfish is **not adjacent** to the Headless Haunt, nor are the Cave Trolls **nearby** the Headless Haunt.

## Steps

A step is the minimum unit of distance between two **adjacent locations**. Some card abilities will have an effect that will happen a step away or even several steps away from where the card is or its origin point. In these cases, it will say that it happens X steps away.





# Turn Summary

*Sorcery: Contested Realm* is played over a series of turns. Players take their turns, one at a time, following this sequence of phases:

## START PHASE

The start phase is the first phase you complete during your turn. All abilities that last “Until next turn” now end. Then:

- Step 1. All of your cards that are tapped now untap.
- Step 2. All of your sites now provide their **mana** for this turn.
- Step 3. Trigger abilities that happen at the start of the turn.
- Step 4. Finally, draw a card from either your spellbook **or** atlas.

## MAIN PHASE

The main phase is where most of *Sorcery*'s actions and events take place. During this phase, your units can be ordered to do two types of actions. They can:

- Cast a spell from your hand if they are a **spellcaster** (see page 17) or,
- Activate one of their abilities (see page 20)

You may have your units do these as many times as you have resources to do so, and in any order you like. For example, you might move a minion, then cast a spell with your Avatar, and then move another minion.

## END PHASE

The end phase is the last phase you complete during your turn.

- Step 1. Trigger abilities that happen at the end of the turn.
- Step 2. Players remove all damage from their minions in the realm.
- Step 3. Effects that last for your turn now end.
- Step 4. Your turn ends.

**Note:** Avatars do not heal automatically at the end of the turn in the same way as damage is removed from minions, however they can heal using spells and other card effects.

## Your First Turn

### No Card Draw (First Player)

If you are the first player to take a turn in the game, skip Step 4 of the Start Phase.

### Establishing Your Domain

During your first Main Phase, your Avatar needs to establish their domain within the realm. To do this, you must use your Avatar's ability to play a site to your Avatar's **square**.

# Casting Spells

Spells are the main way Avatars and other **Spellcasters** influence the realm. Any card in your hand that is not a site is a spell. You cast these spells to summon minions, conjure artifacts or auras, and invoke magics.

To cast a spell from your hand, you need to identify a **Spellcaster** under your control to cast it. The **Spellcaster** and its **location** are by whom and where the spell is being cast. Once you have identified the **Spellcaster**, spells often have two requirements to play: a **mana cost** and an **elemental threshold**.

## Mana

All of your **Spellcasters** use mana to cast their spells and some abilities may also draw from this power. You can only gain mana during your turn and lose any unspent mana at the end of your turn.

### Gaining Mana

At the start of your turn, all of your sites provide one mana each, forming a mana pool for you to draw from. When one of your sites enters the realm, it immediately provides one mana. If you lose a site, the mana it provided this turn is not removed from your mana pool. If you gain control of an enemy's site during your turn, it does not provide you with mana until your next turn.

Other card types might also provide mana turn-after-turn in a manner similar to sites, or simply increase your pool for the current turn.

### Using Mana

Spells cost mana to cast. This is identified by the card's mana cost in the upper left hand corner. To cast that spell, you must be able to pay the cost from your available mana. You cannot pay a mana cost if the amount required exceeds the mana available.

For example, your sites each provide one mana that you can spend this turn ①.

Currently, that number is **three**. Note that your opponent's Aqueduct does not provide you mana ②. In your hand ③, you have some minions and a site. You could play both the Sedge Crabs and Polar Explorers as their total mana cost is **three**.

You don't currently have enough mana to play Captain Baldassare with his mana cost of **four**. However, you do have a site, Maelström, that you can play using your Avatar's ability ④. Playing Maelström would bring your total available mana up to **four**, allowing you to play Captain Baldassare, saving the Crabs and Explorers for a later turn.



# Elemental Threshold

In addition to **mana**, you will often need to meet an elemental threshold to cast most spells or use some abilities. Spells and some abilities will have one or more elemental symbols ( for fire, for air, for water, and for earth) next to the **mana** cost on spells, or to the left of abilities in text boxes. To play that card or use that ability, you must have at least as many matching symbols on the sites you control, plus any others granted by spells or abilities.

Elemental threshold is not spent like **mana**. It is simply a minimum affinity you must have for the specified elements to use some cards. All artifacts and most abilities have no threshold at all, so you need only to ensure that you can pay any associated costs to make use of them.

*For example, your Floodplain, Autumn River, and Maelström sites each grant you **one** affinity ①, however Boneyard does not ②. So your affinity is currently **three** . Note that your opponent's Aqueduct does not grant you affinity ③.*

*In your hand ④, you have some minions, including Adept Illusionist and Polar Explorers, both of which you want to play this turn.*

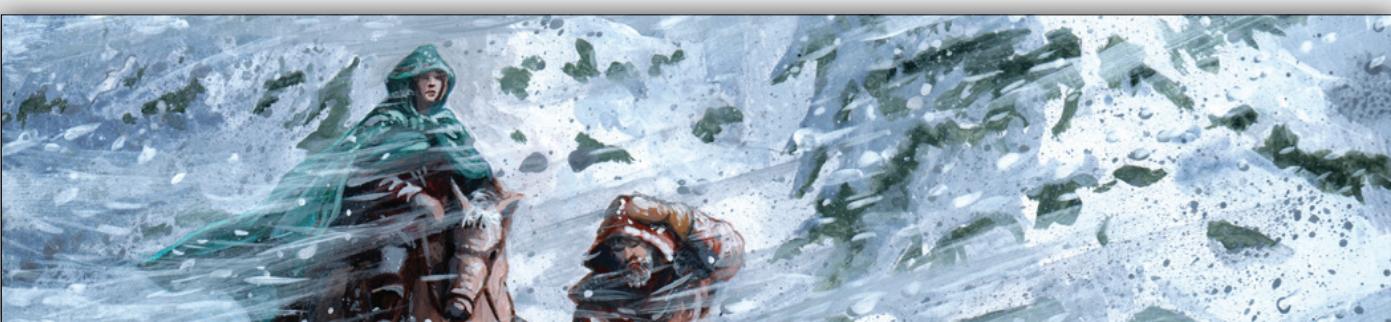
*Because elemental affinity is not spent or lost when playing cards, you just need to check each card's elemental threshold and see if your affinity is equal to or greater than the threshold. This means that you can play both the Illusionist and Explorers this turn since they each only require a threshold of **two** , compared to your affinity of **three** .*



## Mulitiple Element Threshold

*Some spells might require affinity with different elements. Like with other spells, you must be able to meet all of a spell's required threshold in order to cast it. So for example, to cast Sir Pelleas, you'll need to control sites with at least one Air and two Water threshold symbols.*

*Cards that have different element symbols count as a spell of each of those affinities. So Sir Pelleas is both an Air spell and a Water spell at the same time.*





## Casting Minions

When a minion spell has been cast, it summons the minion under your control atop any of your sites, and they remain in the **realm** until something causes them to leave play.

*Note: There is no limit to the number of minions that may occupy the same site, though it's rarely a good idea to concentrate your forces in just one spot!*

## Summoning Sickness

A unit that entered the realm this turn, whether from being cast or from another card's effect, suffers from summoning sickness until the end of turn as it prepares for battle. A unit suffering from summoning sickness cannot tap, or be tapped, to pay for costs associated with any ability. This includes any additional abilities that may have been granted by spells and artifacts.

*Note: When you summon a unit on your turn, it enters play untapped, so you may use it to defend on your opponent's turn.*

## Casting Artifacts

When an artifact spell is cast, it is conjured into the **realm** atop any site you control or directly into the waiting hands of one of your units. A unit can carry any number of artifacts.

## Casting Auras

When an aura spell is cast, it conjures the aura at the intersection of four **squares**, though some specify the border between two, or even just a single **square**. Auras are said to occupy the surface of any sites at those **squares**, as well as any **void**, affecting them (or other things located at those sites) in some way.

## Casting Magics

Magics are the only cards in the game that do not enter play when they are cast, and do not have a lasting presence in the **realm**. A magic spell simply does what it says it does, and then goes to its owner's cemetery.



# Activating Abilities

Avatars, minions, artifacts, and auras may all have abilities that can be activated simply by stating your intention to do so, making any relevant choices (like picking targets), and paying any associated costs. Unlike spells, which use **mana** costs most often, abilities will use a variety of costs including things like tapping, paying **life**, sacrificing a minion, or discarding cards, among other things. Only the controller of a card can use its activated abilities, and only during the main phase of their own turn when nothing else is already happening.

## Tapping a Card

Cards in the realm can be tapped as a resource, spending their energy as a cost to activate various abilities. Tap abilities are usually written as, “Tap → Ability text.”

A player may also need to tap a card as a cost related to other spells or abilities on other cards.

To tap a card, turn it 90° to the right from its upright position ①. A card that has been turned 90° in this way is “tapped,” while an upright card is “untapped.” Cards can also untap at certain points in the game. To do that, simply turn it 90° to the left back into its upright position ②.

**Note:** Players can only tap untapped cards and untap tapped cards.

**Reminder:** Minions that you have summoned this turn have *Summoning Sickness* and cannot be tapped to pay for the costs of abilities.



## Playing Sites

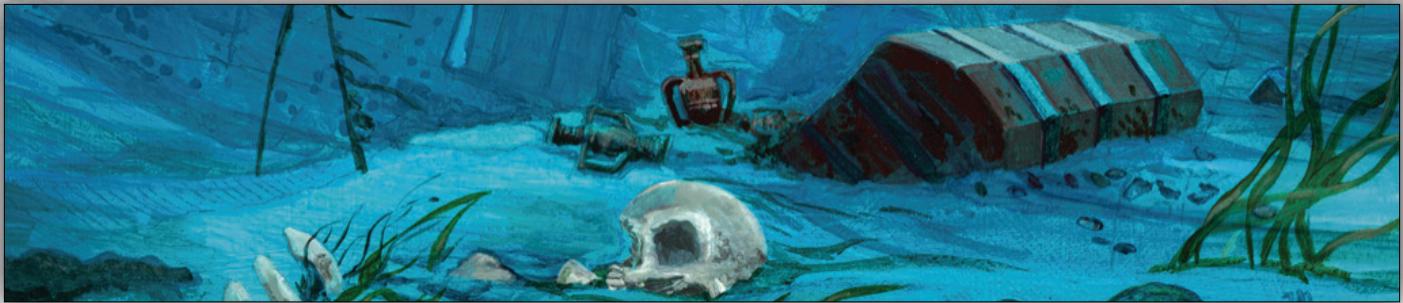
Sites come into play through your Avatar's activated ability: “Tap → Play or draw a site” ①. However, there are some other cards that can bring them into play as well.

When you play a site, it must be placed:

- on **void** ② or **rubble** ③, and
- adjacent to another site that you control ④ or as close as possible to your Avatar if you control no sites.

There can only be one site per grid **square**, which means sites are generally placed on an adjacent **void**, permanently extending the physical boundaries of your domain within the **realm**. Sites can also be played on **rubble**, replacing it entirely.





## Basic Abilities

All units (Avatars and minions) have access to five basic abilities that are not printed on their card. Three are activated abilities that allow them to interact with the realm. These are: Move and Attack, which is the ability you'll use most often; and Pick Up and Drop, which relate to carrying artifacts.

The remaining two are triggered abilities that units can perform during the opponent's turn. These abilities are called Defend and Intercept, and are described below alongside their triggers.

### Move and Attack

Every unit can tap to activate the Move and Attack ability, which allows it to optionally move, then optionally attack something at its location. When using this ability, declare the intended movement path and resolve it. After resolving all the movement, then decide if you attack at that location (see page 22).

#### Moving your Units

When moving a unit, its journey is broken down into individual **steps**. By default, units can move one step. However, some abilities allow units to take additional steps (such as Movement +X) and other abilities allow units to take steps diagonally or even into different **regions** (see page 13).

To move a unit using the Move and Attack ability, you first declare each step the unit will take, and then you resolve the steps in order. When you declare movement, the only restriction is that you may not repeat specific steps.

Normally, this means that you will simply declare a single step, from the surface of one site to the surface of an adjacent site.

*For example, your Amazon Warriors have tapped to use their Move and Attack ability ① and you declare a step from the surface of the Rustic Village to the surface of the Holy Ground ②.*

If your units have movement-enhancing abilities, or there are movement modifying effects in play, you might choose to declare a more complex path. As you resolve each step, you confirm that it is a legal step at that moment. If it is not legal, you do not take that step, and continue resolving anything remaining. If your unit takes at least one step, it has moved; if it takes zero steps, it has not moved.

#### "Take a Step" verses "X Steps Away"

*If an effect instructs a unit to take a step or move one step, the unit may modify its step via abilities like Airborne, Voidwalk, Burrowing, and Submerge.*

*If a card instructs you to pick a target up to X steps away, you cannot apply movement abilities; you simply count one adjacent square per step, without changing regions.*

## Attacking the Enemy

You may only attack enemy units or the surface of enemy sites that are at your location. When using the Move and Attack basic ability, you must resolve any movement before declaring and resolving your attack. As you resolve the attack, you confirm it is a legal target at that moment, and if so, your unit has attacked.



## Attacking Enemy Units

If you attack an enemy unit, either as your original intent, or because your opponent defended (see page 24), the units involved will **fight**. To **fight**, units **strike** each other simultaneously. When a unit **strikes**, it deals damage equal to its power.



## Striking First

Some units may be able to land their blows before their enemy can respond. Units that strike first resolve their strikes before their target can resolve theirs. If multiple units in the same fight are able to strike first, they all strike at the same time. Then any surviving units without that ability make their strikes.

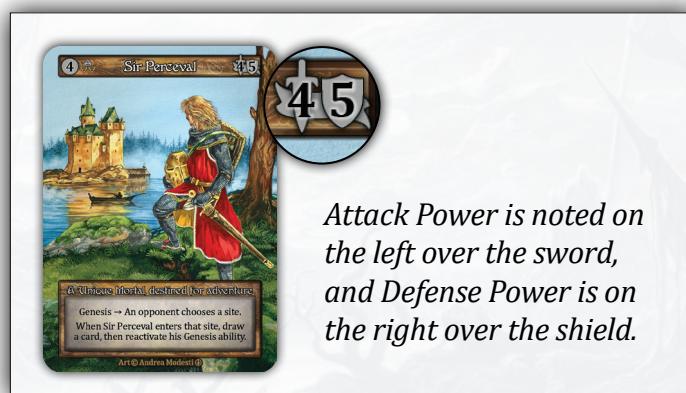
## Multiple Combatants

If more than two units are involved in a fight (usually as a result of intercepting or defending), the controller of each side may allocate their units' damage among the enemy as they wish.

## Minions with Split Power

Some minions have their Power split into an offensive value, or Attack Power and a defensive value, known as Defense Power. When it strikes, use the first one, and when damage is being allocated to them, use the second.

Cards that modify a unit's Power do so to both Attack and Defense Power, so for example Overpower will increase both Attack and Defense Power by two.



## Damage to Minions

Damage dealt to minions persists until the end of the turn. A minion that accumulates damage greater than or equal to its power immediately dies and is placed in its owner's cemetery.

**Note:** Zero damage is not any damage at all, so units with 0 power must take at least 1 damage to die.



Continuing our attack example, the Amazon Warriors suffer two damage from the Rimland Nomads ④. While this does not kill them, if they take three more damage this turn, they will die. On the other hand, the Nomads suffer five damage ⑤, well exceeding its power of two and so it immediately dies.

## Damage to Avatars

Throughout the game, you track your Avatar's life. Damage dealt to an Avatar with one or more life reduces their life by that amount. Damage dealt to an Avatar on **death's door** causes a **death blow** (see page 11) and ends the game.

## Attacking the Surface of an Enemy Site

If you attack the surface of an enemy site and your opponent doesn't defend, simply strike the site, damaging it and causing the controlling Avatar to lose that much life. Importantly, attacking a site cannot deliver a **death blow** because it causes the controlling Avatar to lose life, not take damage directly. You can still attack the sites of an Avatar at death's door, but it will not usually affect them.



For example, the Amazon Warriors attack your opponent's undefended Red Desert ① striking it for 5 damage ②. Your opponent's Avatar of Fire then loses five life ③.

**Remember:** Losing life like this is not damage.





## Defend

Defend is one of two basic abilities that you can use on your opponent's turn, because it is a triggered ability (the other is Intercept, described on page 25).

When an enemy attacks another unit or site in your unit's range of motion, your unit may tap to defend, moving to the attack's location and joining the **fight**. Any number of units may defend against an attacker. During this movement a defending unit may use any of its movement abilities, such as **Airborne**, **Burrowing**, **Movement +X**, **Submerge**, or **Voidwalk**.

If the original target of the attack was a unit, the defender's controller may decide if that unit remains in the **fight**, or is removed. If the original target was a site, it is automatically removed.

**Remember:** Only “attacks” can be defended; attacks are only caused by the Move and Attack basic ability, or very specific card text that uses the word “attack.”



In this example, let's say that your Rimland Nomads are attacked by the Amazon Warriors again. But this time you have an untapped Sand Worm at an adjacent site. You can then tap your Sand Worm ① and move it to the location of the Rimland Nomads ② to defend them.

You can then decide to remove the Nomads from the ensuing fight. If they remain, they will be involved in the battle and your opponent will be able to allocate damage to them. However this may be a good idea since together the Sand Worm and Nomads can take down the Amazon Warriors. If you choose to remove the Nomads, they cannot be allocated damage, but will leave the Sand Worm to take on the Warriors alone.

## Intercept

Intercept is one of two basic abilities that you can use on your opponent's turn, because it is a triggered ability (the other ability is Defend, described on page 24).

When an enemy using the Move and Attack ability finishes its movement and then chooses not to attack, any of your units there may tap to intercept and **fight** that enemy.

Units can not move when they intercept. They must already be at the enemy's location.

**Intercept**

For example, your opponent's *Seasoned Sellsword* minion has tapped ① to use its Move and Attack ability, moving to the *Rustic Village* and then choosing not to attack. Now the untapped *Amazon Warriors* can intercept, forcing the *Seasoned Sellsword* into a fight ②.



## Pick Up or Drop Artifacts

Each unit can activate their Pick Up basic ability once per turn, which allows it to pick up any number of artifacts at locations it occupies.

The Drop basic ability allows a unit to drop any number of artifacts it's carrying. Each unit can activate the Drop basic ability once per turn, as long as it hasn't interacted with the realm this turn. See the Glossary for "interact."

## Carrying Artifacts

A unit can carry any number of artifacts, which will move with the unit throughout the realm. If a unit is carrying any artifacts when it leaves the realm, the artifacts are dropped. If a unit and an artifact it is carrying stop sharing a location due to some effect, the artifact ceases to be carried.

## Controlling Artifacts

Artifacts carried by a unit are controlled by the player who controls that unit. Artifacts that could be carried but are not currently being carried are uncontrolled. Artifacts that cannot be carried normally (e.g. Automatons and Monuments) are controlled by the player who conjured them.



# Building Your Own Decks

*Sorcery: Contested Realm* is a customizable trading card game, which means that you can choose what cards go into your deck. When you're ready to construct your own deck, there are a few rules you must follow to build decks fit for play:

- You need to choose and include exactly one Avatar card.
- Your Atlas must contain at least 30 site cards.
- Your Spellbook must contain at least 50 spell cards.

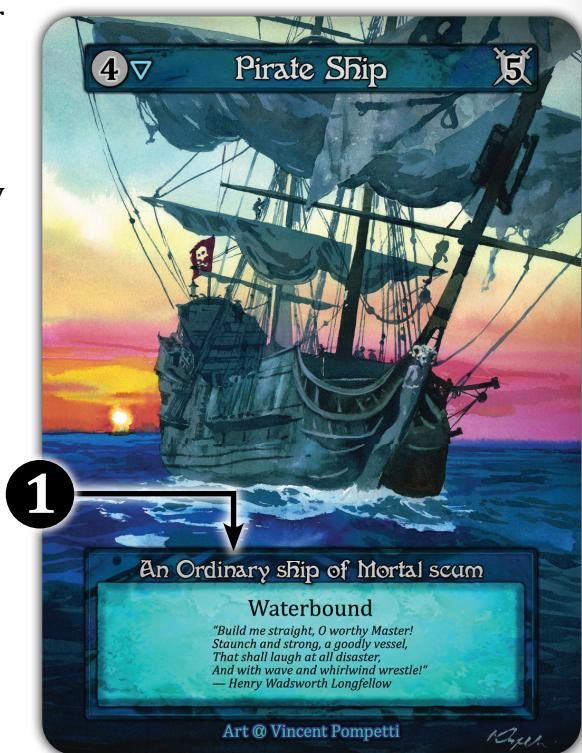
You may have larger decks as long as you can reasonably shuffle them.

## RARITY

The type line of a spell or site describes the card's rarity ①. This tells you how many copies of that card you can have in your deck. Each player may include:

- up to **four** copies of any **ordinary** cards
- up to **three** copies of any **exceptional** cards
- up to **two** copies of any **elite** cards
- only **one** copy of any **unique** cards in a deck

Your Avatar does not count toward any of those totals, and is not in that sense a part of either of your decks.



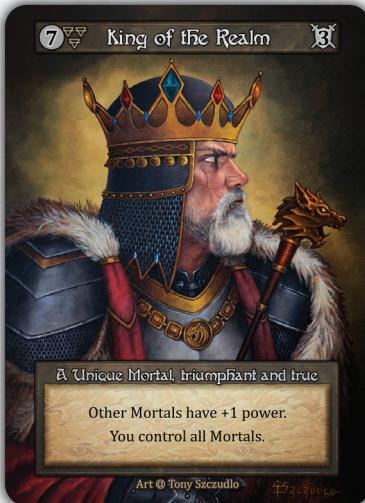
# Advanced Concepts

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

Most cards in *Sorcery* have one or more special abilities printed in their game text box that change the default rules of the game or grant new interactions outside of the basic abilities.

### Passive Ability

A passive ability has an ongoing effect that is always active, as long as the card is in the relevant game zone. Typically, this zone will be the **realm**, but some cards have abilities that specify things they do, or enable you to do, while in your hand, or while in the cemetery, etc.



### Keyword Ability

A keyword is a word or phrase that functions as shorthand for a longer piece of rules text. They are used to communicate concepts that require more text than what will fit on a card. You can find these longer explanations in the glossary on page 32.



### Activated Ability

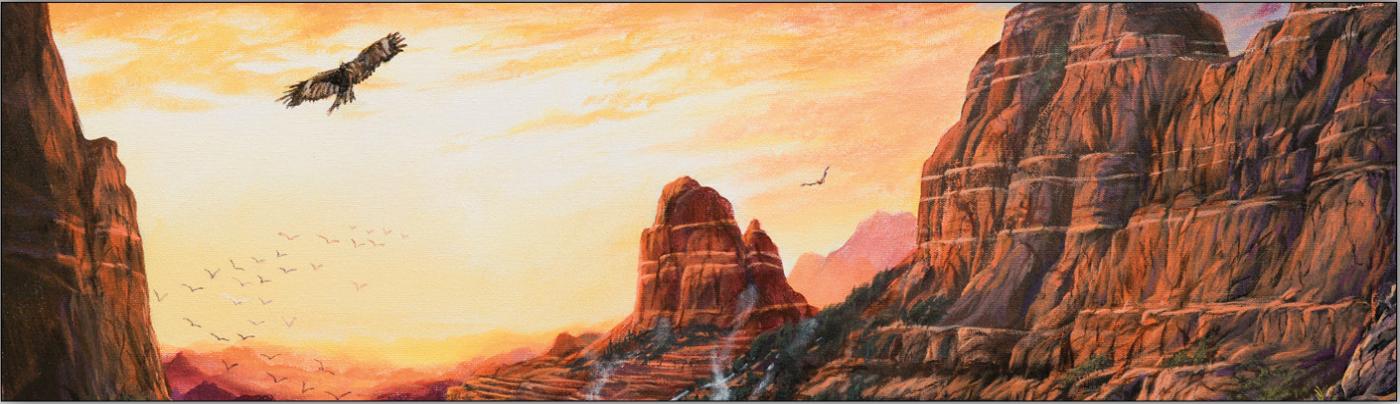
An activated ability takes effect simply by stating your intention to do so and paying any related costs, such as tapping or spending **mana**. By default, only the controller of a card can use its activated abilities, and only during the main phase of their own turn, when nothing else is already happening.



### Triggered Ability

A triggered ability requires that a specified condition is met, or a specified event occurs, to automatically take effect. These abilities can be recognized by their use of words such as "when," "whenever," and "at [a specified moment]," though a few cards have nonstandard wording due to space constraints.





## ADVANCED MOVEMENT CONCEPTS

### Entering a Location, Site, or Void

A unit is said to have entered a location, site, or a void if it was not occupying that particular spot, and now it is (even if just for a moment as a result of Movement +X, for example), or when it was summoned or conjured there.

### Teleporting

Teleportation effects move a unit directly to a specified location without taking any steps in between.

### Moving Freely

Some cards can move freely within the realm or in a defined area. When a unit uses the Move and Attack or Defend abilities they spend no steps when moving, as long as the starting and ending locations of the step satisfy the moves freely condition.

### Special Movement Effects

Some effects will push, pull, or drag things, or simply cause them to be moved. This is forced movement, and is not modified by a unit's abilities, such as **Airborne**, **Burrowing**, **Submerge**, or **Voidwalk**. Units that cannot move by activating their own abilities, can still be moved by other cards and effects.

If an effect causes a unit to 'take a step' or 'take up to X steps' this is not forced movement, and the unit can modify these steps with their abilities. Units that cannot move by activating their own abilities, also cannot carry out any steps granted by these effects.

**Note:** A unit that is made to move, either by a spell's effect or is otherwise forcibly moved does not tap and cannot be intercepted, as it is not moving as part of the Move and Attack basic ability.

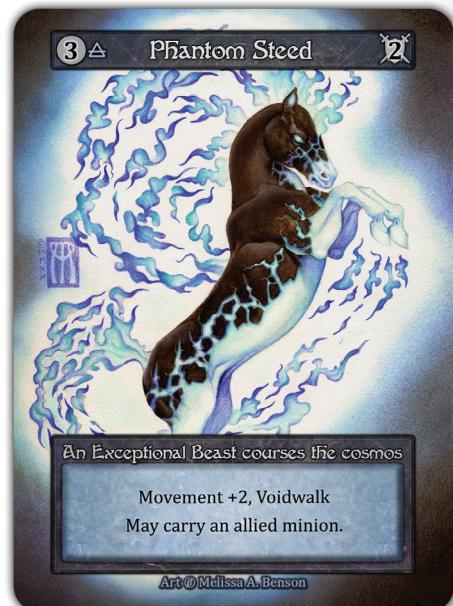
### When Sites Move

If a site moves to another **square**, everything atop and under it moves with it (however, those cards are not considered to have moved). Generally, a site can only move or be moved to a **square** without another site – a **void**. Any cards in that void are now placed atop the site that was moved in.

### Carrying Units

Some units can carry other units. A unit with this ability, picks them up or drops them in the same manner and time as it would artifacts (see page 25). Units that have **Airborne**, **Burrowing**, **Submerge**, or **Voidwalk** confer those abilities to units they are carrying while they are carried.

A unit being carried may still cast spells or activate abilities as normal. If the carried unit moves to a location that the carrying unit doesn't occupy, the unit ceases to be carried.



# DAMAGE GRIDS

Some cards have abilities that deal damage or otherwise affect units or multiple sites over a wide area. To simplify rules text and illustrate the extent of these spells, some cards contain a damage grid in their rules box.

Damage grids may use a bold square to indicate the center of the card's effect, or a dot to show the **Spellcaster's location** on the grid.

By default, a damage grid indicates that the ability deals damage to each unit at **locations** within the area of effect and within the same **region**, though cards may specify otherwise.

# OCCUPYING MULTIPLE SITES

Units normally occupy only one location while in the **realm**, however some units may occupy multiple locations at once due to their enormous size. Such oversized units follow the regular rules for summoning, so you choose a single site you control when you cast the minion spell. As they enter the realm, you choose a 2x2 area that it can legally occupy, which must include the summoning location. To represent the minion's locations, place the card at the intersection of those sites.

An oversized unit is at each of the sites (or void squares) that it occupies, so it can be standing on both land and water sites (or void squares) at the same time. Therefore, if grid damage is dealt to multiple such locations, oversized units take **damage** equal to the sum of the **damage** dealt on all of the locations they occupy.

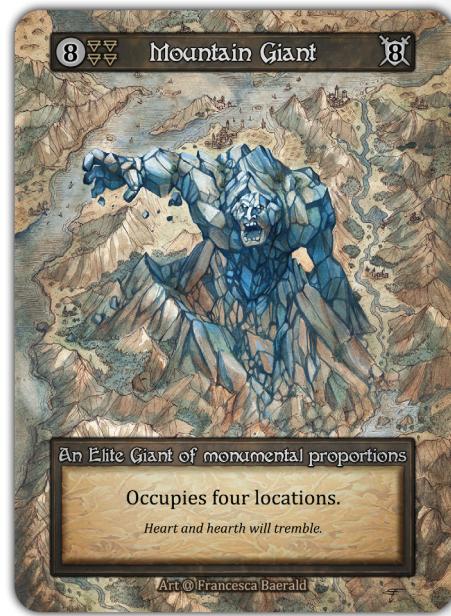
The same applies in general for any effect that checks whether something is true about an oversized unit's site.

When an oversized unit moves, you choose a direction and all parts of it move in that direction. If any part of it can't move in the chosen direction, then it can't move in that direction at all.

When attacking, oversized units still target only a single enemy or site.

## Teleporting Oversized Units

When an oversized unit is teleported, it must be to a **location** or set of **locations** that conforms to its size restrictions and is otherwise legal for that unit to occupy.



# OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL

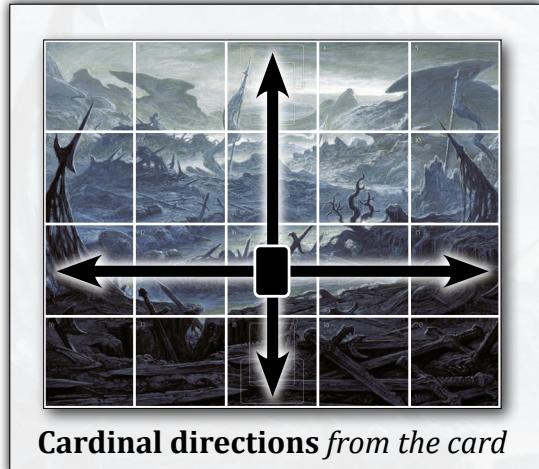
You have ownership of all of the cards you bring to a game of *Sorcery*. You are, therefore, the owner of those cards. The owner of a card does not change during the game. A card is always returned to its owner's hand, shuffled into its owner's deck, or sent to its owner's cemetery regardless of who controls the card when it leaves play.

While the owner of a card is most often its controller, control of cards in play may change over the course of a game. When rules text uses phrases like “your minions” or “your sites,” that refers to those things that you control, and not to those things that you own.

## PROJECTILES

A projectile's flight begins at the shooting unit's location and travels within the same **region** in a **cardinal direction**. Its flight continues until it either reaches the edge of its region or it reaches the first unit (**enemy** or **ally**) along its path, ignoring any allies at the projectile's starting location. Different projectiles will have different effects, but will most often deal damage to the impacted unit.

In the event of multiple valid units, the player that fired the projectile chooses which unit the projectile hits.



Cardinal directions from the card



For example, your Lava Salamander casts a Firebolts spell to the right towards the opponent's House Arn Bannerman ①. Each of the three projectiles travel in the chosen cardinal direction, starting at the Salamander's location and travelling over the Arid Desert, avoiding the burrowed Cave Trolls, which are not in the same region ②. When they arrive at the Rustic Village, you can have the first two projectiles hit the Bannerman, which suffers two damage and dies ③. Unfortunately, the third projectile then hits your own Seasoned Sellsword ④, since projectiles hit friend and foe alike!

## STATIC/ONGOING EFFECTS

Auras and minions with passive abilities will have an ongoing impact on the realm. These static effects should be applied at all times, even while resolving other effects or actions, and take precedence over triggered abilities.

# THE STORYLINE

When the story being told during a game of *Sorcery* starts to get complicated, particularly when multiple abilities trigger at the same time, you can use the Storyline to help resolve them.

A Storyline begins each time a unit casts a spell or activates an ability at which point one or more events are placed at the relevant points on the Storyline and are then resolved in order, one at a time. Sometimes, the resolution of a spell, effect, or event will cause it to split into several smaller events (eg. the individual steps within a unit's movement), which are each placed on the Storyline at their relevant points before the Storyline continues to play out.

Target units or locations must be chosen as an event is being added to the Storyline, otherwise an event only needs more detail when it comes time to resolve it.

For example, your Ghost Ship taps to use the Move and Attack ability ①, adding it to the Storyline. As the ability resolves, you declare and resolve their movement. After movement, you decide to attack the Autumn River ②.

## *Ghost Ship Move & Attack*

*Ghost Ship moves: void 13 to surface 12*

*Ghost Ship attacks: Autumn River*



## Triggered Abilities

If the resolution of one event triggers an ability, a new event will be inserted into the storyline. The new event is added *at the current moment*, temporarily interrupting any remaining events on the Storyline. Once this new event has been resolved, the story will continue.

If multiple events are competing to be added at the same point on the Storyline, the non-active player places their events first, then the active player places their events on the Storyline after them. If either player has multiple events of their own, they can place them in whatever order they wish.

Your Ghost Ship's movement has resolved ③, triggering both its summon ability and the hunting instincts of the opponent's Giant Shark ④.

As the non-active player, your opponent places their ability on the storyline first ⑤.



3

*Ghost Ship moves: void 13 to surface 12*

*Giant Shark moves: surface 11 to 12*

5

*Giant Shark fights: Ghost Ship*

*Ghost Ship summons a spirit*

*Ghost Ship attacks:*

If a card leaves the realm, any of its events stay on the Storyline but are unable to resolve. If any event is unable to resolve when it comes up, simply ignore it and continue to the next event.



# Glossary of Terms and Keywords

## [X]bound

This minion is **disabled** while not occupying a certain type of **location**. For example, a minion with Waterbound is **disabled** while not occupying a **water location**, etc.

## Adjacent

Refers to the card's own square, and the squares that it shares a border with.

## Airborne

This unit may fly while on the surface, gaining the following benefits:

When taking a step this unit may move diagonally and can only be intercepted by other units if they have **Airborne** or Ranged.

This unit cannot be targeted by attacks, unless the attacking unit has the **Airborne** ability.

## Ally/Allied

A unit that you control (including your Avatar).

## Banish

Remove from the game.

## Body of Water

A contiguous cluster of adjacent **water sites**.

## Broken

Broken cards are artifacts that can be found in any cemetery.

## Burrowing

This unit can be safely summoned to, exist in, and operate normally **underground**. When taking a **step**, it can instead move from the surface of a **land site** to the **underground** level there, or vice versa.

## Cardinal Directions

When a card talks about a cardinal direction, it includes all of the squares in the direction indicated on the card to the front, rear, left and right.

## Carrying Units

Some units can carry other units. A unit with this ability, picks them up or drops them in the same manner and time as it would artifacts (see page 25). Units that have Airborne, Burrowing, Submerge, or Voidwalk confer those abilities to units they are carrying while they are carried.

A unit being carried may still cast spells or activate abilities as normal. If the carried unit moves to a location that the carrying unit doesn't occupy, the unit ceases to be carried.

## Charge

This unit can tap, or be tapped, to pay for costs associated with any ability on the turn it is summoned.

## Conjure

When a card is conjured, put it directly into play.

## **Damage and Life Loss**

Generally, units take damage from fighting and from the effects of spells and abilities. Damage dealt to minions accumulates until the end of turn when it is healed, while damage dealt to an Avatar causes them to lose life instead. Sometimes an Avatar will suffer life loss directly from things like a site being successfully attacked.

When a minion has damage on it equal to or greater than its power, it dies.

**Note:** When an Avatar is at **death's door**, only damage will deliver a **death blow**.

## **Dead**

Dead cards are minions that can be found in any cemetery.

## **Death Blow**

When an Avatar is at **death's door**, any damage dealt to them is a death blow, signaling their defeat.

## **Death's Door**

When an Avatar's **life** is reduced to 0, they are now at death's door and can no longer gain **life**. At that moment, the Avatar becomes immune to damage for the rest of the current turn. After that brief and desperate window, any **damage** dealt to the Avatar is a **death blow**, ending the game.

## **Deathrite**

When this unit **dies**, do what is stated before placing it in the cemetery.

## **Dies, Destroyed, & Killed**

When a card dies, is destroyed, or is killed place it in the cemetery.

## **Disable**

While disabled, a minion loses all abilities (including basic abilities like Move and Attack), doesn't strike when fighting, can't cast spells, and can't take any action granted by another card or effect (ie. strike, shoot a projectile, take a step, etc.).

A disabled minion can still be forcibly moved or tapped by effects.

## **Elemental Affinity and Threshold**

Sites and other cards provide elemental affinity (e.g.    ). Elemental threshold is the minimum affinity required to cast a given spell, or to trigger or activate some abilities.

## **Elite**

You may include **two** copies of a card that has the keyword "Elite" in its type line.

## **Enemy**

A unit (including Avatars) that is controlled by an opponent.

## **Exceptional**

You may include **three** copies of a card that has the keyword "Exceptional" in its type line.

## **Fight**

When two units fight, they **strike** each other simultaneously.

If more than two units are involved in a fight, the controller of each side may allocate their units' damage among the enemy as they wish.

## **Flooded**

A flooded site has a minimum of one water affinity , in addition to any other affinities it provides. Therefore, it's a **water site**.

## **Genesis**

When this card enters the **realm**, do what is stated.

## **Ground Movement**

Ground movement is any step that a unit takes between the surface of two sites (except Airborne and teleportation).

## **Here & There**

"Here" and "There" refer to the location(s) that a card occupies. For most cards, such as avatars, minions, and artifacts, that means one location. For most auras, it means the 2x2 area they occupy. For sites, it means two locations, their surface and subsurface.

## **Immobile**

This unit can't take steps.

## **Interact**

A unit interacts with the realm if it strikes, deals damage, casts a spell, or activates a special ability.

## Lance

A minion with the Lance keyword enters play carrying a lance artifact token. They could use it for themselves or give it to another minion. The first time a unit strikes while carrying a lance, it deals an extra damage and strikes first (see page 22) if in a fight. Then the lance breaks.

Lance tokens are artifacts for all intents and purposes. They can be picked up and dropped (and stolen), just like other artifacts. When they are broken, they are removed from the realm like other tokens.

## Land Sites

All sites that are not **water sites** are considered land sites, including sites with no element icons and Rubble.

## Lethal

Any strictly positive amount of damage this card deals to a minion is enough to kill.

## Life

Life represents the amount of damage that your Avatar can endure before it is placed on **death's door**. As your Avatar incurs damage, its overall life will decrease accordingly.

## Location

The exact location of a card is determined by its square and by the region that it occupies.

## Mana

Mana can come from several sources, but sites are the most common. When they first come into play as well as at the start of your turn, sites provide one mana each. Other cards might add to this total.

You use this mana to cast spells or activate abilities. At the end of your turn, any remaining mana is lost, whether or not you used it that turn.

## Movement +X

This unit may move up to X additional steps when using the Move and Attack or Defend basic abilities. To move multiple **steps** at once, choose a destination and a path to it then traverse that path one **step** at a time. You may need to resolve automatic triggers (or apply "always on" passive abilities), some of which may prematurely stop the motion of the unit.

## Moves Freely

When this unit uses the Move and Attack or Defend abilities they spend no steps when moving, as long as the starting and ending locations of the step satisfy the moves freely condition.

## Nearby

Refers to the card's own square, and all squares that surround it, including those diagonally.

## Ordinary

You may include **four** copies of a card that has the keyword "Ordinary" in its type line.

## Projectiles

A projectile's flight begins at the shooting unit's location and travels within the same **region** in a **cardinal direction**. Its flight continues until it either reaches the edge of its region or it reaches the first unit (**enemy** or **ally**) along its path, ignoring any allies at the projectile's starting location. Different projectiles will have different effects, but will most often deal damage to the impacted unit.

In the event of multiple valid units, the player that fired the projectile chooses which unit the projectile hits.

## Ranged X

This unit has "Tap → Shoot a projectile that stops after 1 (or X) steps. Strike the impacted unit".

This unit may also intercept Airborne units.

## Range of Motion

Every location a unit can reach if it used the Move and Attack basic ability.

## Realm

The realm includes all the squares in the game zone.

## Region

There are four distinct regions in the realm: surface, underground, underwater, or in the void.

## Rubble

A site that has been destroyed is placed in its owner's cemetery as normal, but rather than reverting back to the **void**, the site is instead replaced with rubble. Rubble is a neutral **land** site that no player controls, and provides no mana or threshold.

*Note: Use Rubble tokens or a face down site to represent rubble on a square.*



## Sacrifice

Sacrificing is removing something you control from the **realm** and placing it directly in its owner's cemetery. A player may be forced to sacrifice something if an effect instructs them to do so. When a minion is sacrificed, it does indeed **die**, and its **Deathrites** trigger, if applicable. If something is sacrificed to pay the cost of an ability, it is not placed in the cemetery until after that ability has resolved.

A **dying** unit cannot be sacrificed. When a site is sacrificed, it is replaced by rubble. Even **indestructible** things can be sacrificed, if a cost or effect otherwise informs you of the need to sacrifice something.

## Silence

A card that is silenced loses all printed and granted abilities.

Avatars cannot be silenced.

## Span of Land

A contiguous cluster of adjacent **land sites**.

## Spellcaster

This card may cast spells.

Some spellcasters may only cast spells that match a specific element. For example, Fire Spellcasters may only cast spells that have a Fire threshold icon (marked with ).

## Square

One grid square in the **realm**, that includes all cards present there.

## Stealth

Minions with Stealth cannot be targeted by spells or abilities from your opponents (including attacks), they can't be intercepted, their attacks can't be defended, and projectiles cannot hit them. Stealth is tracked with a stealth token, and it's lost after the minion interacts with the realm.

Non-minions cannot have Stealth. If a minion with Stealth becomes a non-minion, remove the Stealth token.

## Step

A step is the minimum unit of distance between two adjacent locations.

## Storyline (see page 31)

A sequence of events that is currently resolving. A unit that casts a spell, or activates an ability will start a storyline and add events to it. Triggered abilities can insert events into a storyline during its resolution, interrupting future events.

## Strike

A unit deals damage equal to its power.

## Strike First

Units that strike first resolve their strikes before their target can resolve theirs. If multiple units in the same fight are able to strike first, they all strike at the same time. Then any surviving units without that ability make their strikes.

## **Stronger, Strongest, Weaker, and Weakest**

Some effects compare the power of two units:

- Stronger: Strictly more power than.
- Strongest: Strictly highest power.
- Weaker: Strictly less power than.
- Weakest: Strictly lowest power.

In the case of ties, the active player chooses.

When comparing a minion with split power, use the average of the two power values, rounding down if needed.

## **Submerge**

This unit can be safely summoned to, exist in, and operate normally **underwater**. When taking a **step**, it can instead move from the surface of a **water site** to the **underwater** level there or vice versa.

## **Summon**

When a card is summoned, put it directly into play.

## **Tapping a Card (see page 20)**

Cards in the realm can be tapped as a cost to activate various abilities. A player may also need to tap a card as a cost related to other spells or abilities on other cards.

To tap a card, turn it 90° to the right, from an upright position. Only untapped cards and tokens in play can be tapped. All of your cards in play automatically (and necessarily) untap at the start of your turn.

## **Target**

Sometimes you will need to target things in the realm. Spells and abilities can only target things within the **Spellcaster's** or referencing card's same region.

## **Transform**

When a card is transformed it is considered the same game object as its previous version and therefore does not suffer from summoning sickness when it comes into play. If one card transforms into another card, the original card is removed from the game after the transformation.

## **Underground**

The lower level of a **land site** is part of the underground **region**.

## **Underwater**

The lower level of a **water site** is part of the underwater **region**.

## **Unique**

You may include **one** copy of a card that has the keyword "Unique" in its type line.

## **Units**

Units are a collective term that includes Avatars and minions.

## **Void**

A **square** without a site is a part of the void **region**. Avatars can never enter void **locations**. Minions there are **banished** unless they have **Voidwalk**.

## **Voidwalk**

This unit can be summoned to any **void** location and safely exist and operate there. When taking a step it can move into an adjacent void, or out of the **void** and onto the surface of an adjacent site (or directly to the subsurface if they can operate there).

## **Water Sites**

Water sites are identified by the water icon marked with . All other sites are considered **land sites**, including sites with no threshold icons and rubble.



# Sorcery: Contested Realm Quick Reference Guide

## THE GOLDEN RULE

Some text is intentionally informal or necessarily compact. Use common sense and be cool.

## THE FOUR ELEMENTS

*Sorcery: Contested Realm* is built around the four classical elements:



Air



Earth



Fire



Water

## TURN SEQUENCE

### Start Phase

**Step 1:** Untap all of your cards in the realm.

**Step 2:** All of your sites provide their mana.

**Step 3:** Trigger abilities that happen at the start of the turn.

**Step 4:** End the Start Phase by drawing a card from either your spellbook or atlas.

### Main Phase

Your units can cast spells and activate their abilities. You may take these actions as many times as you have resources to do so, and in any order you like.

### End Phase

**Step 1:** Trigger abilities that happen at the end of the turn.

**Step 2:** Players remove all damage from their minions in the realm.

**Step 3:** Effects that last for your turn now end.

**Step 4:** Your turn ends.

## NAVIGATION TERMS

**Regions:** Surface, Underground, Underwater, and the Void are all separate regions in the game.

**Location:** The exact location of a card is determined by its square and by the region that it occupies.

**Here & There:** "Here" and "There" refer to the location(s) that a card occupies. For most cards, such as avatars, minions, and artifacts, that means one location. For most auras, it means the 2x2 area they occupy. For sites, it means two locations, their surface and subsurface.

**Target:** Spells and abilities can only target things within the **Spellcaster's** or referencing card's same region.

**Adjacent:** Refers to the card's own square and the squares that it shares a border with.

**Nearby:** Refers to the card's own square and all squares that surround it, including those diagonally.



ADJACENT



NEARBY

**Adjacent & Nearby Locations:** Only locations that are in the same region as the referencing card (or its spellcaster) are considered adjacent or nearby locations.

**Steps:** A step is the minimum unit of distance between two adjacent locations.

## REMEMBER

- If the text of a card contradicts the rulebook, the card text takes precedence (pg 5).
- If you are the first player, you do not draw a card on your first turn (pg 16).
- Cards and abilities add events to the Storyline (pg 31). If multiple events compete to be added at the same moment, the non-active player's events are added and resolved first, and then the active player's.

# Sorcery: Contested Realm

# Quick Reference Guide

## COMMON KEYWORD ABILITIES

Many units have keyword abilities printed in their game text which have rules associated with them. The most common of these keywords are listed below as well as in the glossary (page 32).

### Airborne

This unit may fly while on the surface, gaining the following benefits:

When taking a step this unit may move diagonally and can only be intercepted by other units if they have **Airborne** or Ranged.

This unit cannot be targeted by attacks, unless the attacking unit has the **Airborne** ability.

### Burrowing

This unit can be safely summoned to, exist in, and operate normally **underground**. When taking a **step**, it can move from the surface of a **land site** to the **underground** level there, or vice versa.

### Charge

This unit can tap, or be tapped, to pay for costs associated with any ability on the turn it is summoned.

### Deathrite

When this unit **dies**, do what is stated before placing it in the cemetery.

### Disable

While disabled, a minion loses all abilities (including basic abilities like Move and Attack), doesn't strike when fighting, can't cast spells, and can't take any action granted by another card or effect (ie. strike, shoot a projectile, take a step, etc.). A disabled minion can still be forcibly moved or tapped by effects

### Genesis

When this card enters the **realm**, do what is stated.

### Immobile

This unit can't take steps.

### Lethal

Any strictly positive amount of damage this card deals to a minion is enough to kill.

### Movement +X

This unit may move up to X additional steps when using the Move and Attack or Defend abilities. To move multiple **steps** at once, choose a destination and a path to it then traverse that path one **step** at a time. You may need to resolve automatic triggers (or apply "always on" passive abilities), some of which may prematurely stop the motion of the unit.

### Ranged X

This unit has "Tap → Shoot a projectile that stops after 1 (or X) steps. Strike the impacted unit".

This unit may also intercept Airborne units.

### Spellcaster

This card may cast spells.

### Stealth

Minions with Stealth cannot be targeted by spells or abilities from your opponents (including attacks), they can't be intercepted, their attacks can't be defended, and projectiles cannot hit them. Stealth is tracked with a stealth token, and it's lost after the minion interacts with the realm.

Non-minions cannot have Stealth. If a minion with Stealth becomes a non-minion, remove the Stealth token.

### Submerge

This unit can be safely summoned to, exist in, and operate normally underwater. When taking a **step**, it can move from the surface of a **water site** to the **underwater** level there, or vice versa.

### Voidwalk

This unit can be summoned to any **void** location and safely exist and operate there. When taking a step it can move into an adjacent void, or out of the **void** and onto the surface of an adjacent site (or directly to the subsurface if they can operate there).