DELVE

A SOLO MAP-DRAWING GAME

CREATED BY ANNA BLACKWELL
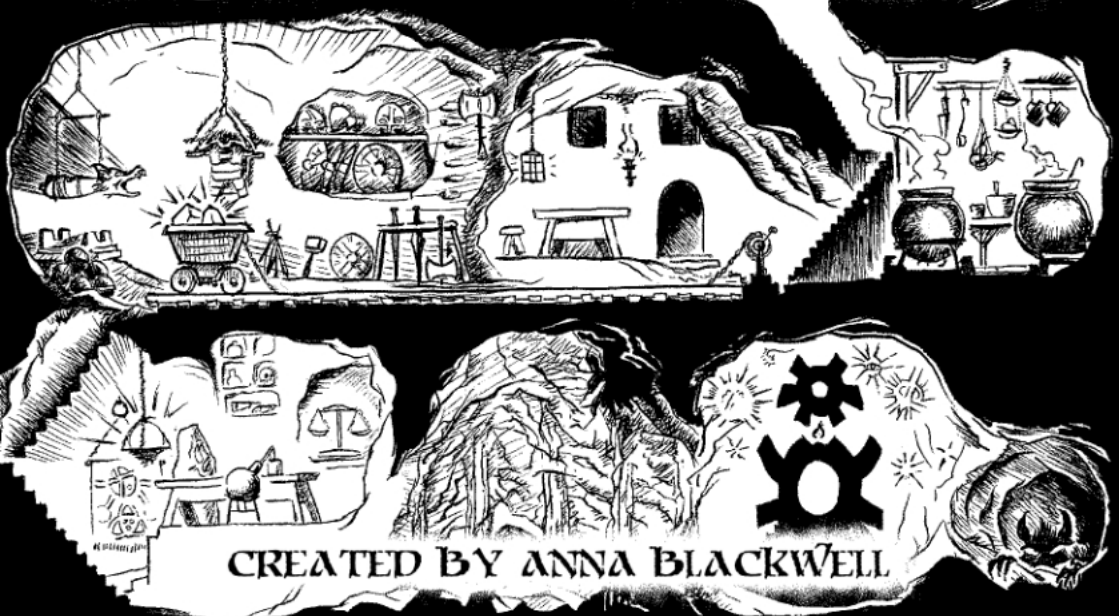
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INTRODUCTION

DELVE is a map-drawing game about building a dwarven hold and exploring a vast world beneath the ground.

You are the Overseer of one such hold. Your goal: to find the Void Crystal, a mysterious gemstone that the Under-King has tasked you with retrieving. If you manage to find it, your hold will be granted riches beyond compare, and tales of your exploits will be told across the realm.

As a map-drawing game, the focus in DELVE is on the creation of your hold, and chronicling the story of its success...or destruction. Each turn, you'll use a standard deck of cards to randomly determine what you find as you dig for the Void Crystal. You'll come across gas-filled caverns, lava lakes, ancient ruins, nightmarish horrors, and much more. Once you find out what you've discovered, you'll draw it on your map.

DELVE is intended to be a relaxing experience, and you are the arbiter of its rules. You can draw your hold however you like; if anything in this book makes you uncomfortable or doesn't fit your vision (like using grid paper), don't be afraid to change it up.

Future expansions will expand upon certain game mechanics such as hold management, happiness, farming, etc, but for this core zine, just enjoy the simplicity, and let your creativity run wild.

After you've finished a game of DELVE, I find that the hold you have at the end makes for an excellent pre-prepared dungeon for any fantasy RPG. This is especially true for ruined holds, so don't go tossing them in the bin!

You will also notice a couple of references to the games RISE and UMBRA. These sister games take the DELVE system into the worlds of dungeon building and space colony management. And while each game is playable on its own, they can be combined to expand the world you make.

HOW TO PLAY

What you need to play

- Pencil & eraser

- 1" grid paper (you may freehand on blank if preferred)

- Notepad (for chronicling your hold, or just taking notes)

- Deck of standard playing cards

- A bunch of tokens (or coins, dice, buttons, scraps of paper, etc.)

Starting the game

1. To start your hold draw a stairwell at the centre of the top row of your grid paper. This is the Entrance of your hold.

2. Create a section in your notepad for your Resources ♥ and Trade Goods ♦, and note that you have 20 of each to start. These are capped at 50 each until you build a Treasury (♦) or Stockpile (♥)

3. Create a section in your notepad to track your units, and note that you have five Soldiers (page 6) at the Entrance.

4. Remove the Jokers from the deck of playing cards and put them aside. When you reach depth 5, add them to the deck and refer to Legendary Finds on page 33.

5. Shuffle your deck of cards thoroughly.

Rolling with cards

Throughout this zine, you will see instructions to Roll 1D4 or 1D2. This is a roleplaying game term that means roll a four sided die or flip a coin, both of which you can do if you have them available. However, you can easily mimic this with a deck of cards.

Wherever this zine says Roll 1D4, draw a card and refer to its suit.

<div align="center">

♠ – 1   ♣ – 2   ♦ – 3   ♥ – 4

</div>

For anywhere it says Roll 1D2, draw a card and refer to its colour.

<div align="center">

Black – 1   Red – 2

</div>

TURN STRUCTURE

DELVE takes place over a series of turns. Each turn, you will choose a new adjacent grid on your map to explore, and discover what lies within. You will also get to build new areas of your hold, which will help increase your chances of finding the elusive Void Crystal.

Each turn follows this structure:

1. Explore by drawing a card to determine what you find, then drawing it on your map.

2. Resolve **combat** if it occurs (see page 7).

3. Trade some of your Resources for Trade Goods, or vice versa.

4. Build new features in your hold, including **rooms**, **traps**, and **barricades**.

5. Recruit new **Units**.

Exploring

The first thing you'll do on your turn is choose an adjacent unexplored grid space (or blank space, if you aren't using grid paper), which you will explore. You can mine to the left or right of any room in your hold, as well as upward or downward!

Next, draw a card from the playing card deck. The card you draw will tell you what you've found:

♥ – Resources
(Used to build rooms and traps)

♣ – Natural Formations
(Caves, rivers, etc. – see pages 19 - 20)

♦ – Trade Goods
(Used to buy units)

♠ – Remnants
(Ruins and foes — see pages 21 - 22)

The result may be impacted by your depth, which is a measure of how deep you are in your hold. The row with your Entrance is depth 1, the row below that is depth 2, and so on.

If you draw a ♥ or ♦, add the value of the card, plus your current depth to your Resources (♥) or Trade Goods (♦). Once you do, feel free to draw an empty cavern in the space you chose, to represent what you've just mined. Or if you prefer a slower pace, leave the space blank so it can be explored again.

Finding the 3♦ on depth 3 would let you add 6 to your Trade Goods.
3 points for the card and 3 points for the depth.

If you draw a ♣, you have found a natural formation. Check the table on page 19 to see exactly what you've discovered, and then draw it on your map in the space you chose to explore.

If you are exploring in depth 1 and draw a ♠, ignore that card and draw again; this will allow you some time to build up your hold, recruit Units, and prepare your defences. Otherwise, you will encounter a remnant. Check the table on page 21 to find out what you've stumbled upon, and then draw it on your map in the space you chose to explore.

If you encounter an enemy, you may be forced into combat. Combat rules are found on page 7.

After you've resolved a card (i.e. drawn the discovery on your map, and dealt with any combat), shuffle it back into the deck.

Regardless of what type of card you drew, you will now have the opportunity to trade.

Trading

Once per turn after exploring, you may trade: choose any amount of either your Resources or Trade Goods, and exchange them as follows:

One unit of Trade Goods (♦) is worth two units of Resources (♥).

One unit of Resources (♥) is worth half a unit of Trade Goods(♦).

After trading, you may then proceed to building (and repairing) rooms, preparing traps, setting up barricades, and recruiting new units.
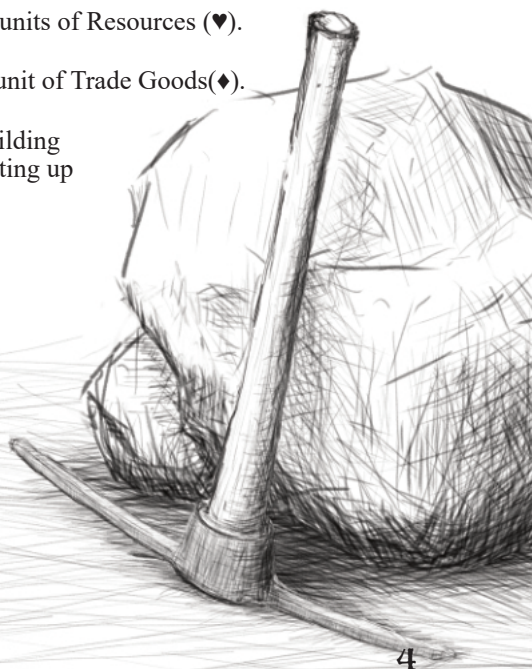
BUILDING

Starting at your Entrance, your hold will expand as a series of rooms. The rooms that you build, as well as the caverns, lairs, and ruins that you clear, all become part of your hold.

Rooms provide your hold with a function that provide various special abilities and effects, and will usually cost an amount of Resources (♥) and / or Trade Goods (♦).

Rooms will lose their function and no longer spawn units if they are either damaged through a game effect, or disconnected.

> *A room is considered disconnected if your units would not logically be able to reach it from the Entrance (e.g. a damaged drawbridge or a flooded layer.).*

You are limited to building one room per turn. The full list of available rooms can be found on pages 11 – 16.

To build a room:

1. Choose an unexplored space (one you haven't drawn in) or an empty cavern.

2. Consult the room list on pages 11 – 16, and choose the room you want to build.

3. If the chosen room has a cost, reduce your supply by the amount of ♥ and / or ♦ listed.

4. Draw the room in your chosen space, making sure it connects it to at least one adjacent explored space.

Whether or not you build a room on your turn, you can also build as many traps and / or barricades as you can afford. See 'Traps and Barricades' on page 17 for a full explanation of how they work.

You may also repair damaged rooms during this part of the turn. To repair a damaged room, pay ½ of the room's cost (rounded down) from your supply. You may repair as many damaged rooms as you like on a turn, as long as you can afford to do so.

Rooms filled by liquid or gas can be drained at a cost of 5♦. Lava can be drained for 20♦, but treat that room as damaged after it is drained.

RECRUITING

Aside from building rooms, traps, and barricades, you can also improve your hold's defences by recruiting new units. Units are the various types of dwarves that work in and defend your hold.

Every unit has a strength **(STR)** value that determines its health, as well as the amount of damage it will deal each turn when in combat.

When you recruit units, they are housed in an appropriate room in your hold. Certain rooms house certain unit types. Each room's description (pages 11 - 16) will describe what units may be housed within, and the maximum number of units it can house.

After you finish any building you do on your turn, you may recruit as many units as you are able to house and afford, by referring to the table below.

When you recruit units, make note of how many you recruited, and where they are housed.

While not in combat, recruited units stay in their room and can be affected by things like liquid or magic.

At the start of combat, units spawn from whichever room they have been allocated to (a Barracks for Soldiers, a Kennel for Hounds, etc.) and will group up with others from that room to form a **Troop**.

During combat, a Troop moves as one unit and its STR is the total of all units in that Troop. For example, a Troop of three mages would have 12 STR.

UNIT	STR	COST	POWER
Soldier	5	5♦	
Gunner	3	5♦	Ranged
Hound	3	5♦	Moves 2 spaces per round
Cleric	1	8♦	Shields adjacent units (5 STR per Cleric)
Mage	4	7♦	Ranged
Prisoner	1	Free	Hostile to both sides. See Prison (page 13)
Alchemist	2	8♦	
Golem	7	15♦	Immune to liquid and gas
Cannon	30	30♦	Ranged. Can fire once per combat
Skull Dwarf	1	5♦	On defeat, roll 1D4: 3+ revive after combat

COMBAT

With a cunning hold layout, devious traps, and a strong force of dwarves under your command, you should have little to fear from the dark. But be under no illusion, Overseer: when swords are drawn, dwarves will die.

Starting combat

Combat occurs when you discover an enemy in the space you are exploring, or when one or more of your units or Troops becomes hostile. This pauses your normal turn until combat ends.

To begin combat, spawn the enemy you discovered by placing a token on the space you explored to represent it. A coin or piece of paper will suffice. Your rooms that spawn units at the start of combat do so now. Again, coins or little drawings of dwarves, whatever helps you track them is fine.

The discovery that triggered combat will give you the enemy's starting STR value, but as you go deeper under the ground, they will get stronger. When spawning an enemy, add 5 to its STR for each level of depth.

Example: you draw a 2♠, discovering a forgotten crypt at depth 3. The undead that spawn there will have a starting STR of 35, based on their base STR of 20, plus the depth bonus of 15 (depth of 3, multiplied by 5).

Resolving combat

Combat progresses in rounds. Each round, every unit and Troop will move one grid space, and then attack.

All enemies move first. You choose the order in which all units and Troops will move, but make sure you resolve both the move and attack for each before moving to the next.

Enemies will, unless otherwise stated, move one grid space per round towards your Entrance, taking the shortest possible route. Enemies with this icon ◉ can use your Secret Passages (Page 18).

If a unit or enemy's move would cause it to enter the same grid space as an opponent, it triggers an attack. Both sides deal their STR damage at the same time, weakening or defeating each other at the end of the round.

If a 30 STR enemy met a 10 STR Troop of soldiers, the soldiers would be defeated but the enemy would have its STR reduced by 10.

If multiple Troops engage in combat at the same time, deal the enemy's damage out among them as you see fit. The only rule is that if the damage would be enough to defeat a unit in that Troop (i.e. 6 damage in a Troop of soldiers), then a unit is defeated.

You choose which direction your own units and Troops move. Multiple units / Troops you control that are of different types may share a space during combat.

When a unit or Troop you control would move into the same grid space as an enemy, or starts a combat round in the same grid space as an enemy, it triggers an attack.

If it would be impossible for an enemy to progress towards your Entrance, a **takeover** occurs (see page 10).

Combat ends once all enemy units are defeated by reducing their STR to 0, and your turn resumes.

If an enemy manages to reach your Entrance and escape, your hold has fallen. The game is over. Chronicle the hold's fall and remember their valiant efforts.

Special combat abilities

Ranged units can fire up to 2 grid spaces away, but cannot move and fire in the same combat round.

Shields are temporary buffs provided by Clerics and Temples. When resolving damage, Shields take the damage instead of your Unit. Shields are not a boost to STR and do not increase the damage dealt to an enemy.

Clerics can only apply shields to units / Troops that are in the same grid space or directly adjacent.

Creatures that have just been defeated can be revived in an empty Kennels (page 12). These creatures have their full STR and are under your control.
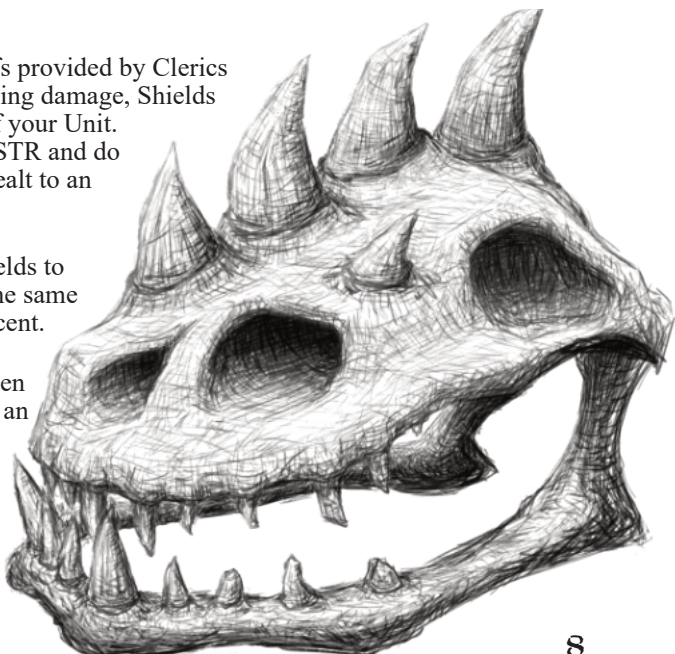
ADDITIONAL RULES

Rule #1

If you can't find a rule for what you want to do, or you get stuck, just do what makes for the best story!

Running out of room

There may not be enough space to fit a particular room or discovery in the grid space you chose to explore (for example, if there are rooms on either side). If you can, choose a nearby grid space that will work. If no such grid space is available, place an empty cavern instead.

If you would ever reach the edge of a page, go ahead and start another page! Go as deep, or as far off the side of the page as you like!

Burrowing

Burrowing enemies that reach the top of the hold will turn around, and dig back downwards in an adjacent column of grid spaces. Roll 1D2 to determine which column: on 1 – left, on 2 – right. The path a burrowing creature takes is opened up, update your map with the burrowed tunnel.

Barricades can be built horizontally over openings like these or to close off stairs.

Liquids and gases

Liquids and gases flow from their source grid space when they are first discovered. After they've travelled as far as they can, they stop. The only rooms that can be built on water are Corridors and Drawbridges.

Units in rooms affected by liquid or gas are immediately defeated.

Liquid flows up to two grid spaces from its source, and as far down as it can reach via stairs or vertical shafts.

Liquid spills out and flows if it is discovered by exploring to the left or right, or if you dig up into it. Digging down into a liquid source has no effect.

Gas flows to the nearest two grid spaces from its source, and then as far up as it can reach. Gas always spreads, regardless of how you discover it.

Flammable gas explodes if it reaches a forge, inn, or barracks. When an explosion occurs, every grid space containing the gas is engulfed in fire, instantly defeating all units within . All rooms within the gas are damaged.

Takeovers

A takeover happens when it is when it is impossible for an enemy to reach your Entrance. Instead of trying to escape, the enemies will spread their influence.

During a takeover, enemies will claim every room they can reach until they are defeated by Traps or no unclaimed rooms remain. At this point, each claimed Unit room will spawn enemy versions of the type of unit normally housed there (i.e. spear-throwing goblins in a Gunner barracks, vampire warlocks in a Library, spider-cannons in a Forge). Be creative, feel free to make up whatever enemy unit that makes sense to you. Their base STR and abilities will be the same as their dwarven counterparts with the usual depth bonus enemies receive.

Any Monstrosities that are unable to progress will damage every room they are able to reach, and then randomly decide upon one of those rooms as its lair. If you reconnect with the part of the hold that contained the Monstrosity, roll 1D4 for each room, starting from the lowest room and working upward; on a 4, the Monstrosity's lair is in that room. If no 4 is rolled, the Monstrosity has mysteriously vanished.

ROOMS

The rooms you can build are listed below, along with their cost in Resources ♥ and / or Trade Goods ♦, and their function.

Rooms fill one grid space unless otherwise stated.
If you build a room adjacent to another room of the same type (e.g. a Barracks next to a Barracks), you may choose to draw a larger version of the room instead. It will still have the same effect as having two separate versions of the room (i.e. a Barracks that takes up two grid spaces can hold 20 Soldiers or Gunners).

CORRIDORS AND STAIRS

Corridors and Stairs can be built for free, though they still count towards your room-building limit of once per turn.

Corridors are rooms that have no effect other than to expand the size of your hold, or potentially connect two disconnected rooms. They may be built in an unexplored space to the left or right of an existing room or empty cavern.

Stairs are flavourful Rooms that provide vertical paths for your Units and Enemies. Stairs can be built inside existing Rooms to connect two rows together.

UNIT ROOMS

These rooms will allow you to recruit certain types of units, and serve as the starting rooms for your units at the start of combat.

BARRACKS — 8♥

Soldiers, the meat of your hold's army, need somewhere to live after all.
A Barracks allows you to recruit Soldiers and Gunners.
Each Barracks can hold 10 Soldiers or 10 Gunners. (They cannot share a grid after an ancient smear against rifles).

CANNON OUTPOST — 10♥

Somewhere for the beautiful metal beasts to rest and feast.
Each Cannon Outpost can house up to 2 Cannons.

FORGE — 15♥ + 7♦

With molten steel and pounding hammers the smiths create devious traps.
A Forge allows you to build traps.
Each Forge can house 1 Cannon.

MASON —20♥

With stone, lumber, and steel, the mason can create incredible defences.
A Mason allows you to build barricades (page 18)

INN — 30♥ + 10♦

Adventurers need somewhere to relax; where better than an inn?
When building an Inn, draw a card and consult the Adventurers table to see which adventurer takes residence in your inn (pages 23 - 24)
Each Inn can hold one Adventurer, who hides in a dark corner booth.
If that Adventurer is defeated, pay 10♦ to hire a new one at the start of the next turn.

KENNEL — 5♥

Some creatures can be trained, if you're patient and brave enough.
A Kennel allows you to tame creatures. (See page 8)
Each Kennel can hold a single creature or 5 Hounds.

LABORATORY — 5♥ + 10♦

Mostly a hub for alchemists to argue about the best way to make gold.
Each grid worth of Laboratories can house 10 Alchemists.
At the start of every turn in which you have 50+ Alchemists, draw a card.
If you draw the A♠, a laboratory explodes, killing all Units within, and damaging the nearest two rooms.
If you get the K♦, your dwarves have learned the art of transmutation: for the rest of the game, you may trade one Resource (♥) for three Trade Goods (♦).

LIBRARY — 15♥

Towering bookcases house the history of your hold, and the secrets of arcana.
After building, draw a card and consult the Good Magic table (pages 25 - 26)
Each Library can house 5 Mages.

PRISON — 30♥

Lawbreaking dwarves will be sent here from the hold above.

Each Prison can hold 20 Prisoners.

Each turn, add 2 Prisoners to an available Prison grid.

Prisoners can be let out in times of dire need, but they will act as enemies to both sides.

At the start of each turn, gain 20♦ for each full Prison in your hold.

At the start of each Combat, roll 1D4. On a 1 – the Prisoners escape and move towards your Entrance. They will attack your Units and Enemies.

If a Prison ever becomes disconnected, the Prisoners escape and begin combat or a takeover.

BUFFING ROOMS

These rooms give bonuses towards income, combat, etc.

DORMS — 5♥

Basic sleeping quarters for your dwarves.

Increases the maximum number of Units each adjacent Room can house by +50% per grid of Dorms.

HOSPITAL — 10♥ + 10♦

Do you know how many dwarves would be walking around without hands if it weren't for modern medicine?

A Troop of your choice defeated while on the same row as a Hospital is revived at full STR after combat.

KITCHEN — 8♥

Great stewpots prepared in the hold above and lowered on chains, carefully foraged mushrooms from the caverns, or just Grunhild making sandwiches.

Units house in a room adjacent to a Kitchen get 50% STR during combat.

MUSEUM — 50♥ + 50♦ (2 Grid Spaces)

History must be recorded if you are to avoid its mistakes.

Roll 1D4 after defeating an enemy. On a 4, draw an object in the museum to commemorate your victory and gain +10 STR against that enemy type (i.e. goblins, vampires, golems, etc.) in future combats.

Each Museum can house four of these trophies.

OVERSEER'S OFFICE — 15♥

A well-organised half dozen is worth a hundred clueless apprentices.

Any ♦ cards revealed when exploring in the same column as an Overseer's Office are worth double.

SHRINE –- 20♥

A monument to the ancestors, the mountain spirits, or the gods.

When building a Shrine, you must also choose its purpose:
Defence or Fortune.

A Shrine of Defence counts as a passable level 3 trap (page 17).

A Shrine of Fortune increases the value of all ♦ cards by 3.

Shrines can house a single Cleric and need a Cleric to activate their effects.

STOCKPILE — 20♥

Heaving resources back and forth through the hold is backbreaking; this eases that ache.

Increase your maximum Resource supply by 50.

If you have more than 100 Resources in your supply, and you draw the J♣, pests have targeted your hold: roll 1D4.
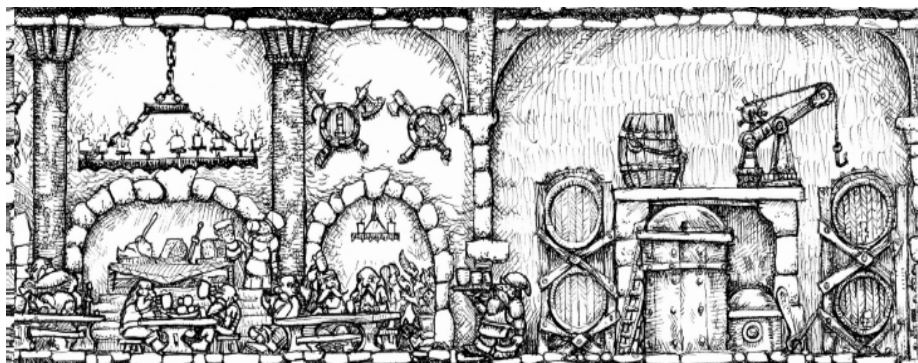
On a 1, stone mites have eaten ½ your Resources, rounded down.

On a 2+, spawn a displaced elemental (60 STR) at your Stockpile at the lowest depth, and enter combat.

STOREHOUSE — 15♥

How many tools do dwarves lose in a project? Less with a storehouse.

Rooms built on this floor cost ½ ♥.

TEMPLE — 20♥ + 20♦ (2 Grid Spaces)

An amazing place of worship to the gods and for a quick snooze.

When building a Temple, you must also choose its purpose:
Protection or Purity.

A Temple of Protection allows you to pay 5♦ and place a Shield with 20 STR on a unit or Troop.

A Temple of Purity allows you to ignore a Bad Magic result by trapping it within the temple.

Temples can house three Clerics and need at least one Cleric to activate their effects. If all the Clerics of a Temple of Purity are defeated, the trapped Bad Magic is released on the hold.

TREASURY — 20♥

Diamonds are a dwarf's best friend, treat them well.

Increase your maximum Trade Goods supply by 50.

If you have more than 100 Trade Goods in your supply, and you draw the J♠, thieves have targeted your hold: roll 1D4.

On a 1, a group of thieves steal ½ of your Trade Goods, rounded down.

On a 2+, spawn a group of thieves (40 STR) at your lowest Treasury and enter combat.

Thieves do not trigger traps and can use your secret passages.

If they reach the stairwell, you lose ½ your Trade Goods but the hold does not fall (combat ends if they are the only enemies in the hold).

INFRASTRUCTURE ROOMS

Rooms that make movement easier throughout your hold.

DRAWBRIDGE — 15♥

The best way to win a fight is to not get in one.

During combat, you may close the drawbridge to prevent enemies from crossing. It takes 2 Turns to close a drawbridge. Enemies fall if on the bridge when it closes. They lose 50 STR x the number of Grid Spaces they fall.

While closed, the Drawbridge becomes a level 1 Defensive Barricade.

♣ Enemies can crawl or fly across the open space to attack the Barricade.

♠ Enemies hesitate for a Round before finding a way to attack the Barricade.

Ancient Monstrosities can cross the open space to attack the Barricade.

ELEVATOR — 5♥

Sometimes the depths are best left to their own business.

Instantly move units up or down the elevator's length.

Enemies take 2 rounds per grid to ascend an Elevator shaft. If it does not make sense for them to be able to ascend, they instead start taking over rooms. See Takeover (Page 29)

PUMP — 8♥

I hate water. It's cold and wet and it gets everywhere.

Liquid cannot move through or damage this room.

A Pump can be activated to flood if desired; follow the liquid rules (page 9), with this room as the source.

TRACKS — 5♥

There is a need for speed in times of war; tracks fulfil that need.

Instantly move units along the length of the tracks. Tracks can be placed through other rooms.

ADVANCED ROOMS

These rooms cannot be built without having certain prerequisites.

INVENTOR'S LAB — 100♥ + 50♦ (Requires a Forge, Library, and Stockpile)

By studying the works of engineers and mages, your inventors are able to make great improvements to your hold.

While you have an Inventor's Lab, you may pay 50♦ for an Invention: draw a card and consult the Inventions Table on pages 31 - 32.

Inventions are permanent unless otherwise stated.

BREEDER — 80♥ (4 Grid Spaces - Requires the Pheromones Invention)

It takes a special kind of dwarf to dedicate their life to raising a creature that could kill them with a single breath.

After using a breeding pheromone on a large creature, you may place a younger version of that creature in this Breeder room.

The young creature has ½ the STR of the parent.

This Room can house 2 young creatures.

TRAPS & BARRICADES

Once you have built a Forge, you may build traps.

There are many different types of traps available to the cunning fortress builder; too many, in fact, to list. So, to keep things simple, they fall into two categories: Damage Traps and Stopping Traps.

You can decide exactly what your trap looks like and does but the mechanical effect will always be one of the options below.

DAMAGE TRAPS — 20♥

Simple and straightforward, like the spear trap itself.

Any trap that does STR damage falls under this category. Deals 10 STR damage per level.

Starts at level 1, upgraded at a cost of 20♥ per level to a max level of 3.

STOPPING TRAPS — 15♥

Glue, ice runes, cages; these traps stop enemies in their tracks.

Stops an enemy's movement in the room containing the trap for a number of rounds equal to the trap's level.

Starts at level 1, upgraded at a cost of 15♥ per level to a max level of 3.

Once a trap has been activated by an enemy, it is considered spent and will not activate again unless you pay its reset cost, which is 5♥ per level of the trap.

Each room can hold either one trap or one barricade. When you build a trap, make a note in that grid space of the type of trap (using 'D' for Damage or 'S' for Stopping), as well as its level, to help you remember its effects.

Barricades and traps have a few limiting factors. Barricades can be upgraded to level 3 and are still passable. While any Room with a level 3 trap becomes impassable for dwarves and any room thereafter is considered disconnected from the hold. To allow your dwarves free movement around the hold, you'll need to make clever use of secret passages (Page 18).

A level 3 defensive barricade would have 150 STR.

A level 3 damage trap would deal 30 STR of damage.

Once you have built a Mason, you may build barricades.

Barricades are built inside rooms, and also come in two flavours: defensive and offensive. Both of which can be upgraded to level 3.

DEFENSIVE BARRICADES — 10♦

Your huge stone doors, your metal deadbolts, and the like.
Each level of a defensive barricade has 50 STR.
Barricades cannot attack,but enemies must destroy it to pass through.
Starts at level 1, upgraded at a cost of 10♦ per level.
Defensive Barricades block line of sight for ranged units and can be used to stop gas and liquid from spreading.

OFFENSIVE BARRICADES — 20♦

Spiked walls, aggressive architecture, murder holes, etc.
Each level of an offensive barricade has 20 STR.
Like defensive barricades, enemies must destroy it to pass through but take damage equal to the barricade's STR.
Starts at level 1, upgraded at a cost of 20♦ per level.
Offensive Barricades do not block line of sight for ranged units and do not stop gas or liquid.

Barricades can be repaired for 15♦ per 20 STR of damage.

Lastly, secret passages are a special type of barricade that most enemies cannot see. Mark these with some sort of identifier, like an 'S' or an eye.

SECRET PASSAGES — 50♦

Perfectly crafted illusions, these passages are indistinguishable from the wall around them.
These special barricades will allow your dwarves to pass through the hold while keeping your enemy's options limited.
However, be aware that enemies with the ◉ symbol can use these passages.
These barricades only have 10 STR and cannot be upgraded.

If enemies cannot see a way out of your hold because of secret passages, they start a takeover (page 10).

♣ NATURAL FORMATIONS ♣

A♣	If depth 1–4: an underground forest. Cut down for a free room, or keep for 2♥ per turn. If depth 5+: consult the Wyrd table (pages 29 – 30).

2♣	Gas-filled chamber. Roll 1D4:
	  1 — Poison gas: instantly defeats units in affected grid spaces
	  2 — Flammable gas: explodes if lit, damages rooms and defeats units
	  3 or 4 — Blinding gas: blocks Ranged.

3♣	Natural magic in cave plants, crystals, or the air itself. Roll 1D2:
	  1 — Draw a card and consult the Good Magic table (pages 25 – 26).
	  2 — Draw a card and consult the Bad Magic table (page 27 – 28).

4♣	An underground river. Draw the river all the way to the closest page edge. Liquid.
5♣	Cavern. 1D4 grid spaces in size.
6♣	Crystal cavern. 1D2 grid spaces in size. At the start of each turn, draw a card before exploring. Gain ♦ equal to its value + cavern's depth. If the A♦ is drawn, the cavern is destroyed. The grid space cannot be built in but can be passed.
7♣	Magma flow. Same as the underground river above (4♣), but most likely doesn't have fish. Liquid.

8♣	Underground lake, thankfully monsterless. 1D4 grid spaces. Liquid.
9♣	A hive of creatures! 1D2 grid spaces in size. Creatures' STR is equal to hive size x 10. See page 42 for creature prompts.
10♣	Volcanic shaft, dormant...for now. Draw this all the way down to the bottom of the page.
J♣	Cavern housing a small, tamable creature (10 STR). Attacks the nearest room, then retreats back to its home cavern, ending combat unless you wish to follow and attack.
Q♣	Environment suitable for a large creature (40 STR). Four grid spaces. Creature will not leave here unless attacked but will attack anything entering its lair.
K♣	Burrowing beast (20 STR). Digs a tunnel straight up from this space. When it reaches one of your rooms, combat starts and it moves normally towards the Entrance. Can be tamed, does not burrow

Defeated small creatures can be tamed if you have an empty Kennel. They return to full STR and will spawn from that Kennel at the start of combat.

Liquid flows two grid spaces horizontally and downward as far as it can reach.
Gas flows two grid spaces horizontally and upward as far as it can reach.

A♠	Monster village. 1D4 grid spaces in size. Monsters' STR is equal to the village size x 10. If monsters enter a room with no units in it, lose 10♦ as they break and steal what they can. Ideas for monsters can be found on page 42.
2♠	Forgotten crypts, containing 20 STR of undead. Once cleared, you may summon Skull Dwarves (1 STR) here for 5♦. Crypts can house 20 Skull Dwarves.
3♠	Wishing well. Once per turn, you may pay 10♦ to roll 1D2 and draw a card: On 1, consult Good Magic (pages 25 – 26). On 2, consult Bad Magic (pages 27 – 28).
4♠	A sealed room with an evil creature or object inside. If this room is opened, draw a card. Consult the Bad Magic table (pages 27 – 28) to determine what you find.
5♠	Abandoned mine. 1D2 grid spaces in size. Others have left behind their haul. More for us! Gain 20♦, plus 2♦ multiplied by the depth of this room.
6♠	Buried temple. Recruit a cleric here to Roll 1D4 and draw a card. On 1–3, consult Bad Magic (page 25 – 26). On 4, consult Good Magic (page 27 – 28). Usable once.
7♠	An abandoned room. Looks like you weren't the first...choose a room and place it here.

8♠	Ancient library. 1D2 grid spaces in size. For the knowledge contained herein, roll 1D2 and draw a card: On 1, consult Good Magic (pages 25 – 26); On 2, consult Bad Magic (pages 27 – 28).
9♠	Demon portal. Roll 1D4 at the end of each turn. On 1, spawn Demons with 20 STR. To destroy the portal, pay 20♦ and sacrifice one of your Clerics, killing them.
10♠	Golem forge, with 40 STR of Golems, who won't attack unless you try to claim the room. If the Golems are defeated, this room allows you to recruit Golems at Forges.
J♠	Long lost artefact. Ancient magical weapon or armour. Choose a unit room to house this artefact, it adds +15 STR to any Troop housed there.
Q♠	Slumbering Wyrm. An ancient dragon sleeps upon its hoard. Once per turn, you may steal 20♦, and roll 1D4. On 1, the Wyrm awakens, destroying the hoard. The Wyrm has 100 STR and Ranged, and rooms it attacks through are damaged.
K♠	The desolate halls of a lich king, a vampire queen's coterie, or a skeletal court:1D4 + 2 grid spaces in size. Enemy STR equal to room size x 20.

♥ ADVENTURERS ♦

A	Drunkard (5 STR): A cowardly drunk, this adventurer won't fight and won't leave the inn during combat.
2	Witch Hunter (15 STR): Ranged. Their first attack during each combat stops an enemy from moving / attacking for two rounds.
3	Saboteur (5 STR): Automatically places a temporary level 2 Damage Trap in its grid space at the start of combat. This trap is removed at the end of combat.
4	Pathfinder (5 STR): Choose any grid space. The Pathfinder, and any one unit or Troop of your choice may start combat in that space.
5	Shieldbearer (100 STR): The Shieldbearer is treated as a Defensive Barricade, except it can move as if it were a normal unit. Does not block line of sight of units with Ranged.
6	Druid (5 STR): Can tame a Large Creature (Q♣) without fighting it. Once tamed, your dwarves may pass through its lair but you no longer control the Druid. Inn is empty.
7	Barbarian (20 STR): Once per combat, in a fit of rage, the barbarian can rush forward 4 grid spaces, dealing their STR damage to every enemy and friend they pass.

8	Field Surgeon (10 STR): Any Units / Troops defeated in the same grid space as the Field Surgeon are returned to full STR after combat.
9	Bard (5 STR) After entering combat with an enemy, roll 1D4. On a 4, the enemy is charmed: they are under your control unless taken over by another source. On 1 - 3, the bard is defeated.
10	Witch (5 STR): Choose a Unit/Troop and roll 1D2. On a 1, the chosen unit / Troop can no longer move for the rest of this combat. On a 2, double the STR of the chosen unit / Troop.
J	Jester (1 STR): Enemies will chase the nearest Jester instead of targeting the Entrance.
Q	Greedy Hero (60 STR): Ranged. If you do not pay them 5♦ per turn, they turn hostile.
K	Monster Slayer (25 STR): Draw one less card for the Ancient Monstrosity to a minimum of 1 card.

Draw on this table whenever you build an Inn or when you need to replace a defeated adventurer.

The Inn can be found on page 12.

♥ GOOD MAGIC ♦

A	Passage to the Deep. A magical portal that allows you quick access to the depths. Draw a card, and create the other end of the portal a number of grid spaces directly below this room equal to its value.
2	Protective Wards. Magical sigils, floating lights, or another form of magic entirely protects a room of your choice. Counts as a Level 3 Damage Trap but does not block your units.
3	Living Metal. This spell counts as a unit, but cannot attack or be attacked on its own. During combat, spawn this from any Forge. When it moves into the same grid space as a friendly unit / Troop, it grants that unit / Troop +40 STR.
4	Clone. Choose a Troop and gain an identical clone copy of it. Just don't look directly into their unblinking eyes...
5	Pawrtal. An elvish wizard's pocket realm, filled with lovable cats. Once per turn you may pay 5♦ to roll 1D4. On a 4, gain a friendly Sabretooth (20 STR, 2 grid space movement). Spawns from a Kennel during combat.
6	Fleet Forest. Green liquid pours from this grid space, growing thick bamboo shoots and massive trees in every grid space it touches. You may cut down the growth in each grid space for 20♥. Does not need to be drained, and does no damage.
7	Blessing. The gods have smiled upon you, sealing any revealed demon portals (9♠), or Circuses of Chaos (page 29).

8	Siren Song. A magical instrument that draws enemies to it. Choose a room to place the Siren Song in: enemies will try to reach this room instead of your Entrance. If an enemy reaches this room, the siren song is destroyed.
9	Nurse's Sigil. Red heart engravings surrounded by floating lights. Choose a grid space. Units and Troops that move through this space are returned to full STR.
10	Gills. A blessing, though from what source, you do not know. Dwarves are now unaffected by liquids (excluding lava).
J	Valkyria. Ethereal dwarves wander the halls of your hold, attending to the sick and dying. Hospital rooms no longer need adjacency, but are still limited to 1 Troop per combat.
Q	Hudrak's Chains. Choose a room. If an Ancient Monstrosity enters the chosen room, it is permanently trapped by Hudrak's Chains. Once one is trapped, dwarves can no longer pass through this room.
K	Charming Colours. A living spell that will make friends of your enemies. Charming Colours moves as though it were a unit, and when it reaches a grid space with an enemy, you gain control of it, and may treat it like one of your own units. Cannot affect Ancient Monstrosities. Charming Colours disappears once an enemy has been charmed.

♣ BAD MAGIC ♠

A	The Greedy King's Touch. A cursed dwarf touches everything in a room of your choice, turning it, and themselves, to gold. Gain 30♦ for each grid space of the room, then it is destroyed.
2	Grozin's Garish Gaze. Double the cost of the next room you build. The room must be decorated awfully: bright pastel colours, outrageous decor...just plain terrible.
3	Diamond Dust. The next ♦ you draw while exploring turns to dust in your hands: you gain no benefit from it. If the card is drawn for a Crystal Cavern (6♣), the cavern is destroyed.
4	Contagious Cowardice. The nearest Troop is affected by a magical terror. The Troop moves to the Entrance to escape, taking the shortest possible route. If the Troop passes through any Unit Rooms, all units in those rooms leave with them.
5	Mortek's Magma Drill. A pillar of lava melts through 2D4 grid spaces below the room where this spell is discovered, destroying any rooms in those spaces. Liquid.
6	Circus of Chaos. A Circus appears in the nearest empty grid space. This acts like a Demon Portal (9♠), except it spawns Creepy Clowns with 30 STR ◉ instead.
7	Worm. Using the grid space this spell is discovered in as its source, the Worm burrows through 1D4 grid spaces, destroying any rooms it moves through, leaving a tunnel in its wake. Roll 1D4 to determine direction: 1 – Up, 2 – Left, 3 – Down, 4 – Right.

8	Swampify! A swamp spawns in this grid space. Treat as liquid. At the end of your next turn, spawn Murder Toads (10 STR) in each grid touched by the swamp's liquid.
9	Mimic. The nearest room becomes a Mimic. Its door hides a mouth; its furnishings cover wicked teeth. This room has 100 STR, and cannot move. Your units cannot pass this room until it is defeated.
10	Doomed. Remove the Red Joker for 5 turns. Shuffle the Black Joker into the deck if it is not already in.
J	Possession. The nearest unit / Troop is possessed by evil spirits and becomes an enemy.
Q	Outbreak. Roll 1D2. If there are any Units / Troops within that many grid spaces, they become hostile Undead (10 STR), and you repeat this process from the grid space with the newly created Undead. This does not affect Golems, Cannons, or Skull Dwarves.
K	Monstrous Form. Spawn an Ancient Monstrosity with only 25 STR. Draw only once for a single trait.

A	A cavern supported by the bones of an ancient beast. 1D4 grid spaces in size. Rooms built here automatically get a special Level 5 Defensive Barricade.
2	Uh oh...slime cave. Spawn Slimes (32 STR). Whenever these pesky creatures are killed, coat the current grid space with slime which costs the same as lava to drain.
3	Meat cave. No stone, just meat and organs, in a twisted parody of life.
4	A portal. Choose a space within 5 grid spaces and spawn a second portal there. Units can travel between these two portals as if they were adjacent.
5	Nuts?! A preposterous amount of acorns, and squirrels. Treat as a liquid (a river of nuts), followed by a Hive (9♣) of Squirrels.
6	This cavern is filled with the hyphae of a God Mushroom. It spreads 1 grid space per turn unless touched by fire or lava. Any Units / Troops in a space affected by the spread become infected: they gain +5 STR and become hostile.
7	Time Crystals. Roll 1D2 whenever a unit / Troop enters this room. On 1, they are safe. On 2, they are aged to dust. Optionally, you can now build rooms from the game UMBRA at 10x their written cost.

8	Glacially slow, living fossils that crave the sun's embrace. If you have (or find) Time Crystals, they come to life with 100 STR and are hostile. Tamable once they come to life.
9	Behold, a village of mole people! These peculiar creatures walk and talk like us, and can be hired for 10♦ each. Moles have 7 STR and can travel through walls and floors.
10	A dwarf encased in crystal clutching an artefact. Mine them out to draw on the Legendary Finds table (pages 33 - 34) and receive a free Soldier.
J	A knowledgeable creature resides here, offering wisdom of the depths. Once per turn, you may pay the creature 5♦ to look at the top card of the deck and choose whether to keep or discard it. If you choose to discard, you must play the next card. Jokers cannot be discarded.
Q	Whistling Caves. Any unit / Troop that moves within 2 grid spaces of this room must roll a 4 on 1D4 to resist getting lost in its depths. If they fail they enter the cave and are defeated. Does not affect Ancient Monstrosities.
K	The Realm of Lost Things. 2 grid spaces in size. Filled with junk. Each turn, draw a card. If it is a numbered card, gain ♦ equal to its value. Face cards give you one free unit: J – Soldier, Q – Golem, K – Cannon.

♦ INVENTIONS ♥

A	A Monster! Your inventors have created a monster. A twisted amalgamation of flesh and machine. It seeks to escape. 200 STR. Any time the monster passes through a Forge, it gains 100 STR.
2	Musical Golems. A concert hall centred around these wonderful musical machines will make your hold famous. It attracts monsters similar to the Siren Song (page 26), unless the Concert Hall is destroyed. Draw the Concert Hall somewhere in your hold.
3	Secret Brew. Using a special blend of mushrooms and cave goat milk, your inventors have made a potent ale that will empower your Adventurers. All Adventurers now have double STR. Draw a Brewery somewhere in your hold.
4	Pheromones. Monsters are simple things. Using these vials you can calm them or encourage them to breed. Pay 30♦ to use one of these vials on a Large Creature (Q♣). If calmed, you may pass its grid space. You can now build the Breeder room (page 16)
5	Cave Rain. Fire and lava are some of your biggest threats. With these handy devices, you can summon rain indoors to quench fires and cool lava before they become an issue. Cannot be used in Forges. Lava now solidifies in the grid it was discovered in, making it impassable but no longer flows.
6	Orefinder. By feeding all manner of resources into this temperamental machine, your inventors are able to discern what lies below. When exploring, you may draw a card but choose to not explore that Grid Space. If you do not explore, mark the grid space with the suit and value of the card you drew and explore elsewhere. Can be used once per Turn. All Jokers must be played. Draw this special machine somewhere in your hold.
7	Burglar Alarms. Thieves no longer instantly steal ½ of your Trade Goods (♦). Whenever a thief event (page 15) happens, treat it as though you rolled a 4.

8	Weaponized Minecarts. A little dwarven ingenuity can see your Tracks turned into a trap of their own. Once per combat, you may pay 10♥ and choose a grid space with Tracks on which to place a minecart. It travels instantly along the length of the Tracks (in the direction you choose) until it hits an enemy, dealing 5 STR of damage for each grid space it travelled through before hitting.
9	Mining Songbirds. Canaries for poison gas, phoenix chicks for flammable gas. Some might see it as cruelty, but it is a necessity in these dangerous spaces. Ignore all gas effects.
10	Dragonfire. We have discovered the secret of dragonfire. Gunners and Cannons are upgraded to dragonfire variants. Dragonfire Gunners gain +5 STR, Dragonfire Cannons gain +20 STR. Draw a special 2 grid space Dragonfire Forge somewhere in your hold.
J	Mad Science. One of your inventors has gone mad and disappeared into the hold, screaming something about "destroying us all". At the start of combat, roll 1D2. On a 1, Traps also affect your own units and Troops this combat. Effect ends when the J♥ is drawn.
Q	Trap Master. A renowned trap craftsdwarf from the far holds has set up a workshop. Draw this 2 grid space workshop somewhere in your hold. You may now build Traps to level 4.
K	Ender's Gate. Your inventors have found a way to see beyond the veil of death, and use this to your advantage. You can flood the hold with vengeful spirits, killing all enemies... and all your units. Draw this mysterious device somewhere in your hold.

Any invention that says "draw somewhere in your hold" follows the same placement rules as rooms. Empty caverns or adjacent unexplored grid spaces can be used.

You can still build a room on the same turn as you make an invention.

Inventions that get Damaged can be Repaired at a cost of 100♥

LEGENDARY FINDS

Once you reach depth 5, shuffle the two Jokers into the deck. These two special cards have the ability to bestow great power upon your hold, or to unleash horrific creatures. When you draw a Joker, keep it out of the deck for the next 5 turns, before shuffling it back in.

The Black Joker represents a terrible find. You have officially delved too deep and uncovered an Ancient Monstrosity. This is your Balrog of Morgoth, your forgotten beasts from Dwarf Fortress, the sort of entity best left forgotten. Unleashing one of these monstrosities will, at the very least, cause massive devastation and could mean the end of your hold altogether. See 'Ancient Monstrosities' (page 35).

The Red Joker, however, represents a miraculous find. To determine what form it takes, roll 2D4 and refer to the table below. To see what powers it has, draw two cards and refer to the table on page 34.

If both cards are face cards (J, Q, K), regardless of suit, then you discover the Void Crystal, the treasured gem the Under-King tasked you to find. Upon finding it, your hold is immediately granted a special Treasury containing 1,000♦, that ignores the normal thieves rule. Congratulations! Your task is accomplished...

...However, if you wish to continue exploring, the Under-King has a second task for you: Reach depth 30 (or the Nightmare Layer; see page 37) and rescue Hudrak, the trapped god of wishes from his prison. Hudrak's prison is found using the same method as the Void Crystal, except you must be at depth 30 or lower (or in the Nightmare Layer) to discover it. If you find him, he grants you a wish. With this you may do as you please. Infinite wealth, transport to a forest moon, the powers of a god, the possibilities are endless.
The Void Crystal and Hudrak can only be found once.

You may further test your mettle by using this special rule: for each Red Joker you find, the forces of darkness grow greedier. Increase the STR enemies gain per depth by 2 per Red Joker. Good luck, Overseer...you'll need it.

2D4	1	2	3	4
1	Gem	Fountain	Spirit	Shield
2	Mushroom	Tool	Skeleton	Axe
3	Artwork	Invention	Statue	Sword
4	Instrument	Speleotherm	Tome	Armour

A	Legendary. Dwarves flock to see and protect this artefact. All units cost ½ the usual ♦ cost.
2	Blessed. Build a Shrine around this artefact and get double its usual effect.
3	Lucky. Whenever you roll 1D2, you may re-roll once to try for the result you want. Good luck.
4	Guidance. This artefact gives the hold visions of the depths. When exploring, draw 2 cards, picking the one you want. Jokers must be played.
5	Valuable. A collector offers you 300♦ for this artefact.
6	Animated. This artefact may move freely. Its STR is 20 multiplied by the number of the column you rolled (e.g. Sword = 80 STR; Gem = 20 STR).
7	Resurrection. The recently deceased are revived by this blessed artefact. After combat, revive a Troop of your choice with full STR.
8	Inspiring. Units at the same depth as this artefact have +50% of their usual STR.
9	Purposeful. Choose a room. This artefact counts as a copy of that room, except it does not spawn units at the start of combat.
10	Creation. Place this artefact in an empty grid space to create 2 grid spaces of fast-growing cave trees (20♥ per turn).
J	Dealmaker. Pay 100♦ to immediately banish an Ancient Monstrosity, removing it from your hold. The next Ancient Monstrosity gets 4 cards for its traits.
Q	Vengeful. If this artefact is destroyed, 120 STR of allied units arrive at the Entrance to help. They depart after this combat.
K	Old Soul. The spirit of a legendary hero resides in this artefact, and can project into the grid space the artefact is in. 120 STR. It cannot leave its grid space without the Animated trait.

ANCIENT MONSTROSITIES

Ancient Monstrosities begin with 100 STR, and damage every room they pass through, heading towards your Entrance.

Each Ancient Monstrosity is unique. To find out what particular horror you've unleashed, draw three cards, and refer to the table on the next page to determine its traits. Traits do not stack, so if you draw duplicate cards, increase the Monstrosity's STR by 50 for each duplicate.

To hammer home just how special an Ancient Monstrosity is, it requires a name. A name that dwarves will whisper about in centuries to come. A name that can be carved upon the tombstone of your fallen hold, or upon the axe of its slayer. If you can think of a name yourself, go for it! Otherwise, use the three cards you drew for the Monstrosity's traits to consult the table below. Add connecting words (the, of), and re-order the words as needed to make a logical name.

A	Orbos	Groundshaking Beast	Stone
2	Acras	Glutton	Undying / Devouring
3	Sânge	Prince/ Princess	Gore
4	Enrom	Sultan	War
5	Kos	Sisters/Brothers	Bonded / Bound
6	Manegokk	Assassin	Night / Shrouded
7	Donir	Dancer	Quiet / Silence
8	Samri	Prophet	Doom
9	Ild	Warrior	Fire / Untouchable
10	Skyde	Deliverer	Spikes
J	Lokrum	Master/ Mistress	Lies
Q	Partus	Brood Mother	Horde / Many
K	Metus	King/ Queen	Patience / Fear

A	Burrowing. This Monstrosity, now awoken, will tunnel straight up, destroying all rooms in its path. It takes two turns per unexplored grid space it needs to dig through.
2	Regenerating. Each round, instead of moving, this horror may eat the dead. If no damage is dealt to it while eating, it regains 50 STR (but cannot gain more than its starting STR).
3	Black-blooded. At the end of each round, treat this monstrosity as a source of Liquid. Follow normal liquid rules.
4	Hulking. This horror is larger than the others. Its STR is increased by 100.
5	Twinned. Two monstrosities. As long as one still lives, the other revives at the start of the next combat round. They will take different routes where possible. Each starts with 50 STR. ◉
6	Dark. This monstrosity obscures itself from sight. Cannot be attacked by units with Ranged if it has moved this turn.
7	Nimble. Somehow, this monstrosity is able to slip past your Traps without setting them off.
8	Omen. When this monstrosity is awoken, all open demon portals (9♠), sealed rooms (4♠), and unattended buried temples (5♠) activate.
9	Burning Armour. Units without Shield that use a non-Ranged attack on this Monstrosity are immediately defeated before dealing damage (except Golems and Skull Dwarves).
10	Spines. Through some biological or technological mechanism, this Monstrosity can attack from a distance. Bone spikes, bolts, fire breath...or worse. Ranged.
J	Hypnosis. The minds of the nearest unit or Troop (excluding Golems, Cannons, and Skulldwarves) are controlled by this Monstrosity, making them hostile to you. Only one unit or Troop can be controlled at a time.
Q	Brood Mother. Every four rounds, this Monstrosity spawns a hive (9♣) to defend itself. This Monstrosity does not leave its lair.
K	Mastermind. This Monstrosity immediately disappears. The next time you draw a King card, it reappears; replace Mastermind with a new trait and begin combat. Repeat this effect if the new trait is Mastermind.

WORLD LAYERS

Outlined across the next few pages are a couple of optional mechanics that may help to make your hold feel more unique (and make the game more difficult). They are not recommended for a first playthrough.

You start the game on the "All Normal" layer. Every time you draw the K♣, you break through to the next layer on the list below. Moving into a new layer activates its effect for your current depth and below. Once you move to a new layer, the previous layer's effect is no longer active.

ALL NORMAL — No effect. Everything is normal.

MAGMA — All liquid on this layer (excluding any spawned by Good or Bad Magic) is now lava.

GRAVEYARD — Any of your units (aside from Golems and Cannons) defeated in this layer are revived after combat ends as Skulldwarves. Enemies defeated in this layer are revived with ½ STR (rounded down). Drawing bones in the walls will help you remember this layer.

SKITTER — Ignore all ♦ results; your miners are too nervous to excavate gems. When you draw the 9♣ in this layer, double the STR of the creatures in the hive.

LEYLINES — Whenever you draw for Good or Bad Magic, draw twice and use both results.

RICHES — Brilliant gemstones adorn every surface. Double the value of all ♦ cards drawn while on this layer.

DUNGEON — Whenever you draw a ♠, draw from the deck until you draw a second ♠ and resolve both cards. Optionally, use the ♠ table from RISE.

NIGHTMARE — You went too deep… Ancient Monstrosities get an additional trait.

Nothing exists below the Nightmare layer. If you draw the K♣ after reaching the Nightmare layer, you are unfortunately still in the Nightmare layer. Enjoy!

BLOODRUNES

Salvaged from a ruined and forgotten hold, the Bloodrunes are ancient stones imbued with a strange and powerful magic. Even the maddened berserkers in the frozen north speak in hushed voices about them. Housing even a single Bloodrune is inviting death, destruction, and doom upon yourself...but they are not without their rewards…

The Bloodrunes are optional challenges that can be undertaken to make DELVE more difficult. Each Bloodrune you choose to take must be placed in a free grid space on the first row of your hold before you begin play.

Great risk comes with great reward though and each rune has an associated boon that will help you in your trials. Each boon is preceded with a + symbol.

RUNE OF NIGHTMARES

This blackened stone feeds on the fears of your dwarves.

At the start of the game, you are immediately transported to the Nightmare layer (page 37) and progress upwards through the layers.

+ Defeating an ancient monstrosity grants you 30♦

PRIMAL RUNE

Formed by a fossilised serpent, this ancient rune detests modern inventions.

You cannot use Gunners or Cannons

+ Soldiers are empowered by primal energies, and have a base STR of 7.

GORE-SPLATTERED RUNE

Caked in layers of irremovable gore, this rune thirsts for blood.

Whenever a unit or enemy is defeated in a grid space, treat that space as a source of liquid.

+ Ignore the effects of Contagious Cowardice (page 27)

TOMBSTONE RUNE

Death itself frowns upon this rune, avoiding it as long as possible.

Defeated units and enemies respawn immediately at ½ their original STR (rounded down), but are corrupted versions of their original forms, hostile to you.

+ Skull Dwarves are immune to this effect, and now have 3 STR.

RUNE OF DROUGHT

Usable resources are scarce, as if the very earth around you were dying.

All ♥ cards drawn while exploring are now worth ½ their value (rounded down).

+ Underground Rivers and Lakes are dried up, and have no liquid.

RUNE OF GREED

Your love of gold might be the death of you, and never has that been more true than with this glittering rune.

If you would ever end a turn with more Trade Goods (♦) than the capacity of your Treasuries, spawn a Dragon with 100 STR and Ranged at your Entrance. It moves toward your deepest Treasury. If it reaches its target, it melts all the gold inside.

+ Double the trade good value of all ♦ cards.

RUNE OF DOOM

A cracked stone humming with dark energy, this rune promises doom.

Never remove the Black Joker from the deck.

+ Never remove the Red Joker from the deck.

WOLF RUNE

The rune contains the worst of the worst: an adorable puppy who just wants to help!

At the start of any combat, spawn an Adorable Puppy from this rune (treat it as a Hound with STR 1). Each round, the Adorable Puppy moves towards the nearest enemy, taking the shortest possible route. If it is defeated, a ferocious wolf monstrosity spawns in its place: draw two cards, consulting the Ancient Monstrosity table. It also gains the Feral trait (it can move three grid spaces per round). The wolf monstrosity follows the normal rules for Ancient Monstrosities.

+ Your units in the same grid space as the Adorable Puppy have double STR.

RUNE OF WAR

Forged from broken blades and shattered shields, this rune is meant only for overseers seeking glory and death.

All ♥ and ♦ face cards are replaced with the Siege discovery:

A ramshackle siege camp. Spawn a band of Skirmishers (40 STR). The Skirmishers have a siege engine allowing them to immediately destroy any barricades.

+ Each time you defeat an enemy, gain your choice of 5♥ or 5♦.

SHUNNED RUNE

Windblasted and defiled, this rune turns kin against kin.

Merchants spit at you: Trade Goods may only be traded for Resources at 1♦ for 1♥, and Resources cannot be traded for Trade Goods at all.

When recruiting Units, you must pay twice any printed cost (except for Golems, Cannons, and Skull Dwarves).

+ Your seclusion makes your hold a prime spot for prisons.
Full prisons generate 40♦, and Prisoners have 10 STR. However, when you draw a ♣ or ♠, roll 1D4: on a 1, all Prisoners break out.

CHALLENGES

While the main goal is to find the Void Crystal and rescue Hudrak, there are some optional achievement style challenges for you to undertake. These do not need to be done in a single hold.

DWARVEN DOMINANCE — Kill an Ancient Monstrosity with only Soldiers and Gunners ☐

BEASTMASTER — Tame 10 Large Creatures ☐

YOU SHALL NOT PASS — Trap an Ancient Monstrosity with Hrudak's Chains ☐

DRAGONS ARE OUR FRIENDS — Befriend a Slumbering Wyrm using Charming Colours ☐

WHAT IS A GOD TO A NONBELIEVER? — Kill a God Mushroom by pouring lava into its source ☐

ENDLESS TREASURY —- Have 5,000 Trade Goods (♦) ☐

HITTING THE GYM — Increase a single unit's STR to 200 ☐

MIND YOUR STEP — Kill an Ancient Monstrosity using nothing but Damage Traps ☐

LOOKING FOR GROUP — Have one of each Adventurer in your hold at the same time ☐

ARCHMAGE — Cast every spell over the course of a single hold ☐

WELCOME TO THE HOLD OF TOMORROW! — Build 3 UMBRA rooms ☐

RUNE MASTER — Find the Void Crystal while having a Bloodrune active ☐

DELVING TOO DEEP — Reach the Nightmare layer ☐

PROGRESS AT ALL COSTS — Discover every Invention, and the power of Transmutation over the course of a single hold. ☐

THE ONE THEY FEAR — Find the Void Crystal with every Bloodrune active. ☐

♣ MONSTER & ITEM PROMPTS ♠

DELVE's events are kept purposefully vague so that you are able to decide for yourself what kinds of monsters and items you might want to discover. If you find yourself bogged down by infinite choice, or unable to come up with a good idea on the spot, here are some tables that might help. You can pick the option you want, or roll 1D4 if you'd prefer some randomness.

MONSTER VILLAGE A♠
1 - Goblins
2 - Kobolds
3 - Frog People
4 - Pixies

LARGE CREATURE Q♣
1 - Cave Kraken
2 - Basilisk
3 - Living Shadow
4 - Elemental

SMALL CREATURE J♣
1 - Feral Dwarf
2 - Troll
3 - Huge Bat
4 - Angry Cave Goat

HIVE 9♣
1 - Black Wasps
2 - Giant Ants
3 - Clockwork Spiders
4 - Snakes

MONSTER COURT K♠
1 - Wizard's Study
2 - Cthonic Cult
3 - Elvish Oubliette
4 - Demonic Fortress

BURROWING BEAST K♣
1 - Sabre-tooth Mole
2 - Stone Worm
3 - Undead Owl
4 - Nesting Lizard

TRAPPED EVIL 4♠
1 - Burning Orb
2 - Chain Bound Soul
3 - Skull Topped Staff
4 - Arcane Machinery

Feel free to let your imagination run wild. Make your hold as weird, wonderful, fun, or dark as you like. If you want candy golems and luchadors, go for it!

If you want to share your hold then please tag me on Twitter (*@BlackwellWriter*) or in the DELVE Discord (*https://discord.gg/d5Gr76J*) as I'd love to see what you come up with!

QUICK REFERENCE

Depth is your current row down from the stairwell. Your stairwell counts as depth 1.

Jacks are worth 11, **Queens** are 12, **Kings** are 13, and **Aces** are 1

Liquid spreads to the nearest 2 open grid spaces before stopping. If liquid can go downwards, through stairs/ladders/holes, it will go down as far as possible.

Gas spreads to the nearest 2 open grid spaces before stopping. If gas can go upwards, through stairs/ladders/holes, it will go up as far as possible.

Flooded rooms must pay 5♦ to drain and become usable again. Non-immune units (i.e. Golems) in rooms that get flooded are defeated.

Magma flows like liquid but any rooms it floods are damaged and cost 20♦ to drain.

Damaged rooms can be repaired for ½ the rooms cost.

Resources are represented by ♥ and are worth ½ ♦ when trading.

Trade Goods are represented by ♦ and are worth 2♥ when trading.

Trade Goods and Resources increase in value as the depth increases. Whenever you discover a ♥ or ♦ add the current depth to its value.

STR is the measure of a Unit's health and how much damage they deal to enemies.

Wherever this zine says **Roll 1D4**, draw a card and refer to its suit.

<div align="center">

♠ – 1   ♣ – 2   ♦ – 3   ♥ – 4

</div>

For anywhere it says **Roll 1D2**, draw a card and refer to its colour.

<div align="center">

Black – 1   Red – 2

</div>

Ranged units can fire up to 2 grid spaces away and cannot fire and move on the same turn.

Shields do not add to the damage dealt by a unit or Troop, only reducing incoming damage.

TURN OVERVIEW

START OF TURN
Draw a card for any Crystal Caverns in your hold.
You may draw a single card and multiply it by the number of Crystal Caverns.

EXPLORING
Pay the Orefinder or Knowledgeable Creature
OR
Choose an adjacent grid space that hasn't been explored and draw a card.

TRADING
Make a single trade.
One unit of Trade Goods (♦) is worth two units of Resources (♥).
OR
One unit of Resources (♥) is worth half a unit of Trade Goods(♦).

BUILDING
You may:
Repair as many damaged rooms as you can afford to.
Build as many traps or barricades as you can afford to.
Build a single room in an available empty cavern or unexplored grid space.

RECRUITING
You may:
Hire as many units as you can afford and can house.
Units stay in whichever room they are assigned to.

END OF TURN
Check for any events such as:
Demon Portal (Remnants – 9),
Circus of Chaos (Bad Magic – 6),
God Mushroom (Wyrd – 6),
Realm of Lost Things (Wyrd – K),
Pawrtal (Good Magic – 5)

FAQ

Q) What values are Jack, Queen, King
A) Jack = 11 | Queen = 12 | King = 13

Q) Do I need to build Stairs to explore downwards?
A) Stairs are used to create paths through your Hold but are not necessary to explore downwards. Imagine your dwarves laying down ropes and ladders while exploring, stairs are built later to provide easier passage

Q) Do I need to build Stairs in order to continue my Hold downwards?
A) No. You can connect a Room to a Room above by drawing some stairs in it (or a little elevator, catapult, rope pulleys, etc). As long as you know that they're connected then that's alright. Enemies will use this as path.

Q) What does Adjacent means?
A) Adjacent means that it is directly touching by a side or corner.

Q) Do Units get the Kitchen bonus from entering a Kitchen?
A) Units only get the Kitchen bonus if they are housed in a Unit Room that is Adjacent to a Kitchen. This represents them being well fed.

Q) Does Gas need to be pumped out or do I pay to remove it?
A) Neither, once a Gas event has happened, the gas disappears.

DELVE: A Solo Game Of Digging Too Deep is a solo tactical drawing game that puts you in control of a dwarven hold as you dig deep into the world.

Along the way you'll draw a unique stronghold with the rooms you build and locales you discover. But the world isn't quiet beneath the ground and you will be forced to defend yourself in lightweight tactical combat.

DELVE is great for world building and creating organic feeling locales for your RPG or novel.

BLACKWELL GAMES

Credits

Designed and Written by Anna Blackwell
Edited by Mark Butt (Ironclad Writing)
Artwork by Aaron Howdle, Dominik Lobkowicz, Ed Lynden-Bell
Moria Citadel font by Russ Herschler
Eye Icon from Icons8.com

Also check out my other solo drawing games

RISE: A Solo Game of Spreading Evil
and
UMBRA: A Solo Game of Final Frontiers

All of which can be found online at https://blackwellwriter.itch.io/ or
blackwellwriter.com