

DAMNATION: THE GOTHIC GAME

Damnation: The Gothic Game takes place on a plane of hell where Count Dracula holds dominion. Here, a particular group of villains from the Victorian era find themselves damned for all eternity.

Each day, the damned are resurrected with no memory of where they are or how they arrived, they find themselves cursed to hunt and be hunted by one another for all eternity, as punishment for the pain and suffering they inflicted in life.

As you explore the rooms and locations of Dracula's castle, your encounters and experiences will cause you to draw cards that will help or hinder you in your ultimate goal: to be the last remaining survivor.

1. OVERVIEW

Damnation: The Gothic Game is a gothic horror themed battle royale for 2 – 6 players, where the final surviving player is declared the winner.

Each player will take control of a Victorian era inspired villain, each one with their own unique skills and playstyle. Players will take turns exploring the rooms of Dracula's Castle in search of powerful cards that can be used to help them in their goal to survive.

Each game will generally last somewhere between 45 – 60 minutes.

2. THE CHARACTERS

In Damnation: The Gothic Game, players take control of one of the damned. Each character has access to unique talents that can be used to help them survive the night. Introducing our cast of villains:

The Gentleman

Dashing, refined, but is this gentleman all that he seems?

The Wanderer

Poet or madman? A nomad from the east approaches the castle.

The Aristocrat

Her beauty and charm belies a cruel and calculated determination.

The Collector

Judge, jury and executioner. A relentless and terrifying foe.

The Mystic

A mysterious traveller, driven from her homeland...

The Stranger

A dark stranger from a foreign land.

3. THE DECKS

The game includes a number of decks that players will draw from at different stages. They are:

Room Decks

Each room in The Castle has its own unique deck, made up of the encounters and items that can be found there while exploring.

Heirloom Deck

Each player begins with three Heirloom cards – this deck is made up of a variety of trinkets and other curiosities.

Deathknell Deck

A Deathknell card is drawn whenever a player is eliminated from the game. Each card will alter the rules of the game while it is in play.

Castle Deck

The Castle deck is filled with random encounters that take place as you move around the board.

The Vampire Deck

On becoming The Vampire, that player will draw cards from this deck, granting them unique and powerful abilities.

4. SETUP

To set up the game, follow these steps:

1. Lay out the game board, shuffle each deck and place next to the board.
2. Randomly place one Deathknell card face down in each of the Deathknell spaces located at the top of the board. The remaining cards can be returned to the box.
3. Randomly place the trap tokens face down on the spaces of the board marked with the trap icon. The remaining traps tokens should be placed face down near the board.
4. Set aside the Vampire Sheet and shuffle Vampire cards. Place these, along with the vampire time tracker to the side of the board. Place The Vampire standee in The Vault.
5. Players should then take turns to roll 2d6 to determine who goes first, with play going clockwise round the table from the player with the highest score.
6. Players should then take turns to choose a character, starting with the player who goes first, and continuing in turn order.
7. Once every player has chosen their character, they should then receive:
 - Their character's standee, which should be placed at The Gate.
 - A Health tracker, Soul token and three Talent tokens.
 - Three random Heirloom cards.
8. Place the Decent tracker on 'The Arrival'

Play begins...

5. THE TURN

A player's turn is broken into four phases, structured as follows:

1. Movement
2. Resolution
3. Other Actions
4. End Turn

1. MOVEMENT

At the beginning of each player's turn, that player rolls the Movement Die and the Darkness Die together to determine their character's movement for the turn.

Movement Die:

- Players must move the exact number of spaces shown on the Movement Die without changing direction.
- A player entering a room ends the movement phase.
- A player's roll can never be reduced to less than one.
- A corridor space can only hold one character. If a player would end their movement on a space containing another character, they must move in a different direction. A room may hold any number of characters.
- If no legal move is possible the player must suffer 2 damage and roll the movement die again.
- When starting a turn inside a room players must move their characters out of the room, if able.

Darkness Die

The Darkness Die represents the lighting conditions for the part of the castle the player is in. Depending on what is rolled, additional rules for the player's turn are applied as follows.

Darkness

The player must stop on, and trigger the first trap they pass for the duration of their movement phase.

Candlelight

The player may add or remove 1 from their movement total this turn.

Castle Event

Before moving, the player should immediately draw the top card from The Castle deck and follow the rules indicated.

2. RESOLUTION

After a character has finished moving apply the appropriate action below:

Land on a space that's adjacent to another player

On landing next to another player, the player may choose one of the following:

Unless otherwise indicated, players may not gain Power of Adjacency, or attack while inside a room.

1. Declare you have Power of Adjacency

You control the adjacent player's movement on their next turn.

- The adjacent player rolls their movement die as normal, but you decide the direction they move.
- The adjacent player does not roll the Darkness Die during this movement phase.
- If the player has cards or talents that affect movement, for example the Fate talent that allows a player to re-roll, these can be played as normal.
- If more than one player declares Power of Adjacency over a single player, then the most recent player to have declared Power of Adjacency is responsible for controlling that player's movement.

2. Attack a player

A Weapon card may be used to attack another player.

- The target player suffers damage equal to the damage number specified on the Weapon card, and must reduce their Health accordingly.
- Players may choose to play Action or Protection cards that enhance or affect an attack.
- Some Weapons have a range greater than 1. These Weapons can be used to attack a player from the number of space equal to, or less than the range value. When a player attacks from range, the targeted player must be in line of sight (See section 8.9 for more information on establishing line of sight).
- A player cannot attack a player that's inside a room from outside a room.
- A player can only attack once per turn, even if they have multiple Weapon cards in their hand.

Unless otherwise indicated, players may not gain Power of Adjacency, or attack while inside a room. On the occasion a player may attack a player in a room, the player must decide whether to attack or to explore and draw a room card.

Enter a room

There are various rules to follow depending on which Room the player has entered. The majority of rooms in The Castle will require players to simply draw a card, but there are some that feature additional rules – see Section 6.

Land on a secret door

The player may move immediately to any other empty Secret Door space on the board. Players may attack or gain Power of Adjacency after moving through a Secret Door.

Land on a trap

If the player lands on trap they must follow the rules for the type of trap they have landed on. These rules are explained in Section 11.

Land on an arrow space

If the player lands on an arrow space they are then pushed to the adjacent space indicated by the arrow. There are occasions where this would result in a player re-entering a room, in which case they should follow the instructions for entering that room.

Land on an empty corridor space

There is nothing to resolve. Advance to the next turn phase.

3. Other actions

Following the Resolution phase outlined above, the player may then play any number of actions or talents they have access to.

4. End phase

Once the player has finished playing their cards and abilities, take the following steps:

- Discard down to the player's hand limit, which is typically 6. Place any discarded cards face-down at the bottom of their respective decks.
- Play passes to the next player.

6. ROOMS

The various locations of Dracula's Castle are represented as rooms upon the board. Each room will have different rules for the players to follow upon entry.

Rooms are divided into two general categories: Standard rooms and Special rooms. Standard Rooms are displayed on the map with a door symbol next to the name, while Special Rooms will feature various symbols relating to additional rules for that location.

STANDARD ROOMS

6.1 The Great Hall

The scene of countless feasts, this is one of the most accessible rooms in The Castle.

Upon entering this room, the player should draw the top card from The Great Hall deck.

6.2 The Master Bedroom

Once the resting place of choice for the master of Castle, it has long been abandoned.

Upon entering this room, the player should draw the top card from The Master Bedroom deck.

6.3 The Torture Chamber

Beware the horrors of this room. Home to The Iron Maiden, which if drawn will result in instant death. Enter at your own risk!

Upon entering this room, the player should draw the top card from The Torture Chamber deck.

6.4 The Dungeon

Rat infested cells are typically best avoided, and this section of The Castle is no exception.

Upon entering this room, the player should draw the top card from The Dungeon deck.

6.5 The Kitchen

The Crone has made the kitchen her own. This room is at the heart of the castle, which might leave the unwary exposed.

Upon entering this room, the player should draw the top card from The Kitchen Chamber deck.

6.6 The Cemetery

A haunted cemetery spans almost the length of The Castle, making it a quick, if somewhat risky means of travel.

Upon entering this room, the player should draw the top card from The Cemetery deck.

6.7 The Courtyard

A large rubble strewn courtyard with all manner of useful items left abandoned. The perfect location for an ambush...

Upon entering this room, the player should draw the top card from The Courtyard deck.

Unlike other rooms, players can attack when entering The Courtyard. As per the rules stated in Section 5, if a player chooses to attack in The Courtyard, they do not draw a card.

6.8 The Trophy Room

The home of countless trinkets and artefacts 'acquired' over many centuries. Beware the traps!

Upon entering this room, the player should draw the top card from The Trophy Room deck.

SPECIAL ROOMS

6.9 The Vault

Resting place to the master of The Castle. Players can "donate" blood to temporarily become The Vampire at this location.

On entering The Vault, if no player is currently 'The Vampire,' they suffer 3 damage and become 'The Vampire,' at which point their turn ends. Follow the rules for The Vampire [Section 8.1 of this rulebook].

If another player is currently active as The Vampire then the player entering draws the top card from The Vault deck.

The north easterly door of The Vault is a one way exit – players cannot enter The Vault through this door.

6.10 The Dark Tower

The master of The Castle hatches his plots and schemes from this tower. Entrance is barred unless you come bearing gifts...

A player can only enter The Dark Tower if they are in possession of a Soul (see Section 8.5 for rules concerning Souls) token. On entering, the player must discard a Soul token in exchange for drawing the top 2 cards from The Dark Tower deck. The player may then decide which card to keep, returning the other to the bottom of the deck.

The following turn, after rolling to move, the player chooses an empty secret door space to leave from.

- Players may discard multiple Soul tokens in this room. If players discard multiple Soul tokens, they may draw and keep an additional card for each Soul discarded.
- Players cannot discard their own Soul token.

6.11 The Gate

Abandon all hope, ye who enter here.

This is the starting area of the players. Once a player leaves this room they cannot return for the remainder of the game. There is no deck for this room.

6.12 The Moat

A dark moat protects The Castle. Beware the strong currents as well as the creature who calls it home.

Unlike other rooms, The Moat cannot be entered directly. It is generally entered after landing on a trap. Upon entering The Moat, the player suffers 2 damage and misses the rest of their turn.

On the player's next turn, instead of rolling to move, they must roll to try and escape The Moat. Roll a D6:

- 1-3: The player is unable to escape The Moat and suffers 1 damage. Roll again. If a player has been unable to escape The Moat after 3 attempts, they must miss their turn and try again next turn.
- 4: The player escapes The Moat and is placed in The Cemetery
- 5: The player escapes The Moat and is placed in The Vault

6: The player escapes The Moat and is placed in an empty Secret Door space of their choice

Players may never attack one another in The Moat, regardless of the effects of any cards.

6.13 The Great Spiral Staircase

Madness consumes those foolish enough to enter this place – perhaps the most fearful location in The Castle.

Players entering The Great Spiral Staircase must continue to move down towards the centre with every move. After reaching the bottom of the staircase, the player is eliminated from the game.

In order to reverse their decent and travel up The Great Spiral Staircase, the player must roll a 6 on the movement die.

- Players do not roll The Darkness die while in this room
- Players cannot be targeted by other players while in this room
- Players can enter the same space while inside The Great Spiral Staircase

7. CARD TYPES

The game features four different types of cards that can be encountered while exploring The Castle. Each card can only be used once, unless otherwise indicated, after which they should be discarded to the bottom of the deck from where they were drawn.

The four card types are:

Equipment

Equipment cards will either be Weapons, or Protection cards. These card are generally used to initiate, and respond to attacks. These cards will include symbols to represent the various properties of the equipment. These are:

Weapon

Damage [Skull]

How much damage a weapon inflicts.

Range [Crossbow]

The distance from which the weapon can be used.

Relic [Crown]

Relics are powerful weapons. Unlike standard weapons, these cards are not discarded after use.

Visible [Eye]

A weapon that features this icon must remain revealed for as long as the player possesses it. Keep it face up on the table.

Protection

Armour

Using this card reduces damage inflicted by this amount.

Relic

A protection relic can be used multiple times, but not more than once per turn.

Visible

As with weapons, a protection card displaying this symbol should remain face up in front of the player for as long as they possess it.

Both protection and weapon cards will generally include additional rules to be followed.

Action

Action cards are flexible, in that they can be used at various points in the game. These cards will explain how and when they can be played.

Unless otherwise stated, Action cards can only be played during that player's turn.

Event

Event cards represent the random encounters that will be experienced by the players as they explore the rooms of the castle. Upon drawing an Event, it should be placed face up and read out immediately.

Vampire

On becoming The Vampire, the player should draw three cards from The Vampire deck. These can only be played by The Vampire, and should be shuffled back into the Vampire deck once The Vampire returns to The Vault.

8. ADDITIONAL RULES

8.1 The Vampire

On becoming The Vampire, the player should set aside their character sheet and standee. Instead they take possession of The Vampire's character sheet, and placing the Vampire standee in the location where they became The Vampire. At this point, The Vampire is active in the game.

Shuffle The Vampire deck and draw the top three cards. These represent abilities and powers that The Vampire can use. The Vampire may play any number of these cards during their turn, discarding each one after use unless otherwise indicated.

The Vampire has the unique ability to Bite a player that they land on – eliminating them from the game.

However, The Vampire will only have six turns to achieve this and must return to The Vault on their final turn. If they fail to do so, the player is eliminated from the game.

At the beginning of their first turn as the Vampire, place the Timer token on the 6th space of the turn tracker. This will decrease by one at the end of each of the Vampire's turns.

While active as The Vampire, the player should follow these rules:

- The Vampire rolls two dice for movement. Do not roll the Darkness die.
- The Vampire may discard a Vampire card to reroll any or all of their movement dice rolled that turn.
- The Vampire is immune from damage and from Power of Adjacency. He may not be targeted by actions or Talents unless otherwise stated.
- The Vampire may not enter secret doors and does not activate traps.
- The Vampire may not use their primary character's Talents or cards.
- The Vampire may not typically enter rooms, with the exception of The Vault on their final turn.
- There are rare occasions when The Vampire may enter a room. If there are multiple players inside that room, the Vampire must choose which player to Bite.
- If The Vampire has sufficient movement to land on, or pass a player, they may end their turn on that player's space and perform a Bite, eliminating that player from the game. In this event, The Vampire does not gain the eliminated player's cards or Soul. These should be placed in The Cemetery face down. The Vampire then adds two to their turn tracker and draws the top card from The Vampire deck.
- On The Vampire's final turn, the player may return to The Vault. If they fail to make it back and the turn tracker reaches its final space, they are eliminated from the game. Place the player's cards and soul face down in The Cemetery.
- If another player is present in The Vault when The Vampire enters, that player is eliminated from the game. No Protection, Actions or Talents can save them from this fate.
- If The Vampire does make it back to The Vault, the player leaves on their following turn, resuming play as their original character.

- For clarity, if a player is inside The Vault when another player becomes The Vampire, they are not eliminated from the game.
- The Vampire can never be permanently eliminated from the game. If destroyed for any reason, he returns to The Vault.
- If a card is played that grants protection from The Vampire, The Vampire must end their turn on the closest adjacent space to the player from the direction they moved.
- If a card is played that 'Repels' The Vampire, the Vampire must roll a D6 and move that many spaces in the direction of the attacked player's choosing. The Vampire may not enter a room or Bite another player during this movement.

8.2 Talent Tokens

Each player in the game begins the game with three Talent tokens which can be used to activate the specific talent that it's linked to. Talent tokens cannot be moved, and the maximum number that can be held is three. Any additional Talent tokens are immediately discarded.

8.3 Character Talents

Each character in Damnation: The Gothic Game has access to four Talents. Two of these will be unique to the character, while the other two are shared by every character in the game. The character sheet will explain the rules for how Talents can be used and the effects that they have.

In order to activate a Talent, the player must have a Talent token (see 8.2) placed in the corresponding slot on the character sheet. Once used, the Talent token is discarded. If a player gains additional Talent tokens these can be placed in any empty slots on the character sheet.

- If there are multiple empty slots then the player chooses where to place Talent tokens as they wish, but once placed, these cannot be moved.
- Passive Talents do not require Talent tokens to activate.

8.4 Eliminating a Player

A player will generally be eliminated from the game in one of two ways:

1. Their Health is reduced to '0'.
2. They are instructed that they have been 'eliminated' – for example, reaching the final space of The Great Spiral Staircase, drawing The Iron Maiden card, or being Bitten by The Vampire.

If another player is directly responsible for eliminating a player they receive:

- That player's Soul token, and any other Souls that were held by the player.
- That player's cards.

Responsibility for eliminating a player can be claimed when:

- They have attacked a player, which results in that player's Health reaching 0.
- They have used the Power of Adjacency to move a player into a Trap, which directly results in a player's elimination or Health reaching 0.
- They have used a Talent that directly results in another player's elimination.

If no player is directly responsible for a player's elimination then their cards and any Soul tokens they possess should be placed in The Cemetery. A player who enters The Cemetery can collect these instead of drawing a card.

When a player is eliminated, they should turn their Health tracker token upside down to display the 'Grave' and place this on the space where they were eliminated. They should then reveal a Deathknell card if possible (see 8.5), and follow the rules for 'Haunting' and 'The Decent.'

8.5 Deathknell Cards

Whenever a player is eliminated, that player selects a facedown Deathknell card to reveal. These cards will introduce new rules to the game.

On occasions, it's possible for multiple players to be eliminated at the same time. If this happens, each player reveals a Deathknell card in turn order.

When the game is down to two players, the player who is eliminated does not reveal a Deathknell card.

8.6 Souls

Soul tokens can typically be used in one of two ways:

1. Soul tokens may be discarded at any point during the active player's turn to gain 1 Talent token.
2. A Soul token may be traded at The Dark Tower (see Section 5.9 for rules on The Dark Tower).

Players cannot trade their own soul.

8.7 Discarding cards

Discarded cards are returned face down to the bottom of the deck they were drawn from.

8.8 Hand Limits

Players in Damnation: The Gothic Game begin the game with a hand limit of 6. It is possible for players to exceed this amount, but players must ensure that they must not exceed their hand limit at the end of their turn.

8.9 Line of Sight

Line of Sight is established when a straight line can be drawn between the corridor spaces separating two or more players. Line of Sight is also assumed when two players are present in the same room.

If there are three players in a straight corridor, line of sight is blocked by the middle player.

8.10 Miscellaneous Rules

If instructed to discard a card at random, the card to be discarded should be chosen by the player who is next in the turn order.

Some cards state that they cannot be voluntarily discarded – these cards should be included when discarding a card at random.

The lowest roll of a die is '1.' If an effect would reduce a die roll to below that number, it should be considered a '1.'

Rule Contradictions

If the rules written on a card contradict those in the rulebook, the card takes precedent.

9. The Decent

The Decent tracker is located on the right hand side of the board and reflects the passage of time in the Castle. There are four 'Acts,' each of which introduces new rules to the game as follows.

9.1 Act 1: The Arrival

This is the starting point for the game. Once players have determined the play order, each player takes four consecutive turns. During these turns:

- The player doesn't roll the Darkness die
- May add (but not remove) up to three to their movement roll
- Cannot attack, or target another player
- Cards cannot be played unless it is that player's turn
- The Torture Chamber and The Vault are both locked and cannot be entered directly.
- If a player becomes The Vampire during this Act, they immediately lose any remaining turn and play progresses to the next player.

Once all players have taken their four turns, advance the tracker to Act 2: Nightfall.

9.2 Act 2: Nightfall

As night falls, the hunt begins. Ignore all the rules introduced as part of Act 1: The Arrival.

Once the first player is eliminated, advance the tracker to Act 3: The Decent.

9.3 Act 3: The Decent

At the beginning of each player's turn, move the tracker down by one space. If the tracker enters a space that contains a Deathknell icon, that player reveals a Deathknell card if possible.

Once the tracker reaches the bottom of The Decent, advance the track to the final act, Act 4: Damnation.

9.4 Act 4: Damnation

The end is nigh. While the tracker is placed in Damnation, the following rules apply:

- Each player suffers one damage at the end of each of their turns. This can be prevented by discarding a Talent token.
- Players cannot gain health
- Players who aren't The Vampire who enter The Vault are eliminated.

10. Haunting

When a player is eliminated, they should reverse their character sheet to reveal the Haunt side. From that point onwards, that player may choose one of the actions listed to play during their turn.

11. TRAPS

The rules for landing on the various traps found in Damnation: The Gothic Game are explained below:

Trapdoor

The player falls into The Moat. Follow the instructions for entering The Moat [Section 5.11]. The player's turn is immediately ended.

The Oubliette

The player is eliminated from the game.

Secret Door

This space acts as a secret door for the remainder of the game.

12. Game Variants

Damnation: The Gothic Game features additional modes of play with rule variations tailored to provide new and exciting ways to enjoy the game.

10.1 Gothic

A game variant that is closer in spirit to the original, hardcore 1992 version.

- On elimination, players do not 'Haunt' the game (see 9).
- The Decent is not used (see 10).

Other variations are currently in testing, including a 2 player variant and a semi-cooperative, team based variant. The rules for these will be added in the future.

FINAL NOTE:

Damnation: The Gothic Game is still in development. These rules may not reflect the rules implemented in the final version of the game. If you have any feedback on your time playing Damnation: The Gothic Game, we'd love to hear any ideas or recommendations you might have. Please complete our survey at: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/Z369TGT>

Alternatively, you can contact us directly as info@blacklettergames.com