

READ THIS FIRST



# GUIDEBOOK

4.0



# TAKE HEED, EXPLORERS...

*I can feel the dread that creeps into every fabric of our world. I failed. Decades of research into the occult, expeditions around the world that gave me the insight of our collective unconsciousness, but nothing could prepare me from the horrific realization of our fragile existence.*

*It started to manifest itself as unrelated acts of madness, murder and ritual sacrifice, but as time progressed I realized the obscured hand of Horror scheming behind the facade. We really tried, we were so determined, but considering how it turned out, it clearly wasn't enough. The ritual was not stopped in time and later that night an ominous blue meteor travelled across the sky.*

*After that event the subtle changes began to emerge in people's behaviour and perception, changes that promote the psychological archetypes of fear and isolation. The sudden awareness of the plot that threatens our world gave me the needed strength to organize the expedition and follow the path of the falling meteor, across known lands and into the forlorn and frozen continent.*

Machina Arcana is a cooperative horror adventure board game for 1-4 players. The most crucial rule is: survive. Players take the role of explorers who are investigating an ancient subterranean complex of unknown origin. They face monsters inspired by the works of H. P. Lovecraft in a steampunk setting. Explorers will collect gear, interact with and utilize their environment, fight with monsters, and immerse themselves into the rich narrative elements.

The complete story is broken down into different scenarios that represent a self contained game. Every scenario contains chapters, each with its own narrative and specifics. The goal of the game is to progress through the story and face the endgame as the finale of each scenario.

The main goal behind Machina Arcana is to provide players with a horror game which can never be played the same way, mechanics that enables different strategies and approaches, and a rich setting that combines everything together smoothly. The game is scalable by default; there is no need for special conditions based on the player count. As the story progresses, so does the gear. But beware! If you are too slow, Horror might very well prevail and devour you whole.

*This booklet has been designed to give you an easier understanding of the game's mechanics, and is meant to be your guide to your first steps into the Mythos. If you have played previous versions of Machina Arcana skip this booklet and dive into the Manual!*

Game playthrough written by Konstantinos Lekkas.  
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[www.machinaarcana.com](http://www.machinaarcana.com)



# THE EXPEDITION TO THE FORLORN ICY CONTINENT

Any moment now and we will see it: our feared, yet necessary, destination. I have spoken with the crew and it seems that all of us occasionally get flashes, glimpses of where we are going. Sometimes it happens in our dreams, and at other times when our minds freely wander, eyes staring into the distance. What we fear most is the possibility that these visions of the mountain are accurate, for snow and sleet are not the only views we spy. There is something waiting below, under the layers of ice; things so horrible that any sane man would descend into utter hysteria if confronted by them.

The ship descended below the cloud line and revealed the vista we all knew so thoroughly already.

«*This all has a purpose,*» I muttered to myself, gazing at the landscape. «*It must.*» I clenched my fists and resolutely began to plan, as I studied the unnervingly familiar surroundings. The giant scar in the enormous, frigid mountain can be seen from miles around. The meteor shattered into one of its sides and is now a massive, black rift, exposing its murky bowels. A one-eyed pyramid, it murmurs balefully amidst the chilling winds.





As our airship brought us nearer, we perceived the remnants of a huge avalanche beneath the point of impact. This snowslide had revealed the unusually dark surface of the mountain, which we hastened to inspect closer with the aid of our telescopes. The peculiar lines and abrasions on the exterior were impossible to explain with any seismic theories. Furthermore, there was a foreboding opening at its base. A doorway into an alluring trap, it seemed to us, and it was this place that defined our landing location and base of operations.

It is a blessing that we did not dwell on or connect all the signs and simply went on with the proceedings, focusing on the little things to keep ourselves occupied. Perhaps it was a type of self-induced hypnosis to cope with the stress; or are the strings connecting us to that gaping darkness now simply more pronounced?

While most of the crew commenced setting up camp, a few of the explorers prepared to scout around the shadowy entrance. There were some obscure remains buried in the snow ahead and I ordered the men to assist with the excavation.


# GAME PLAYTHROUGH





During the following section, we will be the spectators of an example two-player game that will guide us through all the basic functions and mechanics of Machina Arcana.

## INTRODUCTION

At the start of the game, players choose one scenario to experience, this will indicate which cards to shuffle together to create the various item, monster and event decks required. The chosen scenario will also dictate the order of the chapters to be played as players work their way towards the scenario's victory condition and story conclusion. One to four players will control explorers, whom they will move onto the game's tiles, interact with the tile's action spaces and fight monsters controlled by artificial intelligence. The players win if they complete the scenario's 'endgame' objective, and they lose if they fail to meet this objective or all of the explorers' health reaches zero.

## SETUP

Josh and Mary agree to play the scenario *Horror in the Ice* marked with this symbol . They set up the scenario by placing the chapter cards face down on the bottom section of the chapter board in ascending numerical order, but setting aside the 'endgame' chapter card. The exposed chapter card is the cover card with the scenario symbol and the title.

Subsequently, they take all the core item cards (having no chapter-specific symbol), then separate them by type (weapon (), apparel (), artifact ()) and consumable () and also by level (1-3).

They then shuffle each level 1 item deck






DESTROYED ITEMS



DESTROYED  
EXPLORER  
EVENTS

DESTROYED  
HORROR EVENTS


separately to create the four item decks, and place them near the chapter board.


The explorer and horror event decks similarly contain core cards (no symbol) and scenario-specific cards (with the scenario symbol, in this case ). They combine, and thoroughly shuffle the core explorer event cards with the  explorer event cards. Also they shuffle together the core horror event cards with the  horror event cards, and place these two decks near the chapter board, leaving enough room for 3 destroyed piles for the horror event, explorer event, and item decks (the four item types use the

same destroyed pile).


Finally, they place the horror markers near the horror event deck.


## BASIC SYMBOLS


 This is the **armor** attribute, which is the number that has to be reached or surpassed in order for the target to lose 1 health from a physical attack.

 This is the **will** attribute, which is the number that has to be reached or surpassed in order for the target to lose 1 health from an arcane attack.

In resolving all attack rolls, remember the maxim 'meets beats!'



 This is the **essence** attribute, which is used to pay for special abilities or critical actions during the game. Each point can also be consumed to either increase an explorer's attack roll by one, or to sacrifice in place of losing 1 point of health.

 This is the **health** attribute, which is used to track the amount of damage a unit can sustain before dying.

 This is the **stamina** attribute, which is used to pay for most actions during the explorer phase (for explorers) and monster phase (for monsters).

Next, they each select an explorer. Josh selects *Hank Horden* while Mary selects *Kim Richards*; they then take the respective




figures, card, player board, its respective explorer markers (, ) and three wooden tokens for essence, health and stamina, placing them on the corresponding slots of the player board.

Health and stamina will be set to the maximum indicated by the explorer card, while essence is initially set to 0.

The players then place all game tokens within reach and separate all monster cards and figures by level, shuffling the level 1

monster cards to create a monster deck and placing the level 1 monster figure on their plastic stand. Place them near the chapter board, leaving enough space for a destroyed/discard monster pile and for the monster queue.

After flipping the first chapter card to the top chapter board space, they also place the chapter wooden tokens  (spawn rating - left and horror rating - right) into their respective slots as indicated on the first chapter card (*Chapter 1 - «The Entrance»*).



MONSTER DECK



MONSTER QUEUE



Following that, they set the monster threat (top of the chapter board) on the leftmost slot and the monster level to number «1».

Some scenarios include an 'endgame' map tile designed for the conclusion of the scenario, including *Horror in the Ice*. Separate all your 'endgame' tiles (including those from other scenarios) and set aside the tile specific to *Horror in the Ice* next to the endgame chapter card (place the other 'endgame' tiles in the box). Josh and Mary now shuffle the remaining map tiles to form a stack, occasionally turning some over. Finally, players draw the bottom tile and place it on the table.

Once the map tile has been placed, players flip the exposed chapter card, and place it on the top section of the chapter board. Then they follow the instructions from the newly exposed chapter card (*1-The Entrance*), and resolve its «enters play» ability (D), which is to place the entry token on the map tile's direction symbol, indicated by (◆).

Place the game dice within easy reach.

The explorers are placed on or adjacent to the entry token and the game is now ready to begin. (Tip: You can even place explorers adjacent to the entry token that would result in Kim and Hank gaining one free movement!)

The players begin at chapter 1 and will need to resolve the conditions of each chapter, evolving the story and completing chapters until they reach the final entry; only then will the explorers have gathered enough clues to figure out how they can defeat the evil that lurks therein.



EXPLORER'S  
INVENTORY

EXPLORER'S  
INVENTORY



DESTROYED  
MONSTERS



MONSTER QUEUE >



WOUND/COUNT TOKENS



HIGH ATTACK DICE



LOW ATTACK DICE



GAME DIE



RECHARGE DIE

DESTROYED ITEMS



DESTROYED/LIGHT TOKENS

DESTROYED EX-  
PLORER EVENTS



DESTROYED  
HORROR EVENTS



CLOSED DOOR FIGURES



DESTROYED DOOR TOKENS



HORROR MARKERS



ENTRY/EXIT TOKEN

# ROUND 1

## GAME PHASES

While the game does not have a limit to the number of rounds to be played, each round is comprised of four distinct phases that the players will go through:

- ◆ The **explorer phase**, where the players will activate their explorers and use their abilities until all explorers have passed or run out of stamina
- ◆ The **spawn phase**, where the players will roll to see if new monsters are spawned and added to the queue
- ◆ The **horror phase**, where the players will roll to see if a horror event is invoked
- ◆ The **monster phase**, where all the monsters in the queue activate.

## EXPLORER PHASE



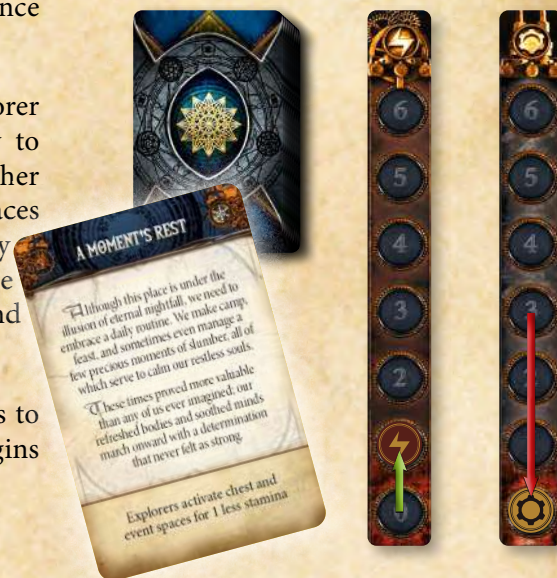
Play starts with the explorer phase. The players decide that Mary will play first. Mary moves her explorer 3 spaces, paying one stamina for each space moved, ending her movement adjacent to the event space shown on the tile (highlighted purple).

Then, Mary decides to activate the adjacent event space. She pays the activation cost, which is 2 stamina, draws the top card of the explorer event deck, resolves all of its «enters play» abilities, and places it on the destroyed explorer event pile making it the «current explorer event» (this essentially is the *invoke explorer event* effect). Activating an event space also restores 1 point of essence, and Mary increases her essence count to 1 on her player board.



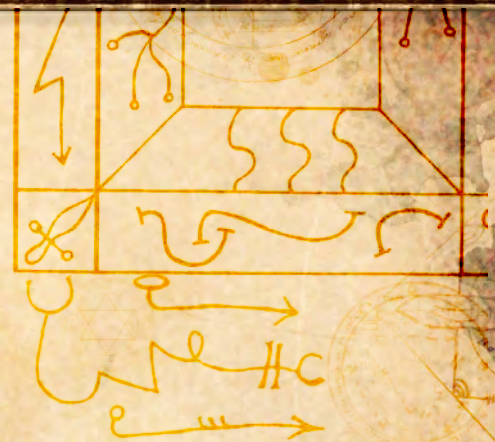
She revealed the *A Moment's Rest* explorer event, which provides a passive ability to the explorers; from now on, until another event is revealed, all event and chest spaces will cost 1 less stamina to activate. Mary places a destroyed token on top of the event space to indicate it has been used and can no longer be interacted with.

Mary has one more stamina, but decides to end her turn adjacent to a chest. Josh begins his.





Josh moves his explorer diagonally paying 1 stamina per space moved just like Mary, and ends adjacent to the chest. He decides to activate the chest, however due to the passive ability of the current explorer event he only loses 2 stamina instead of the normal 3. Activating a chest restores one essence, and Josh marks it on his player board. He subsequently resolves the *gain item* effect; and can draw two item cards from the top of any decks (even two from the same deck).



Josh decides he wants to be better armed for what's coming, and decides to draw two weapon cards. He draws a *Heavy Javelin* and a *Jagged Karambit* and decides to keep the *Heavy Javelin*. He now has a chance to choose whether to place the other card back on top of the weapon deck or discard it, and he opts to discard the card to the destroyed item pile.

Normally, he would add the new item to his inventory unequipped, placing it vertically to indicate this (he would usually need to lose 3 stamina to equip it before using it); however, as *Hank Horden* is a **bruiser**, he has the option to immediately equip it as a main item, placing it lengthways next to his character board (each class may equip a specific main item type as a bonus during the *gain item* effect). Josh then places a destroyed token on top of the chest.

Josh has 1 remaining stamina to lose, and he uses it to move one space further. As both explorers have finished their actions, the explorer phase ends.



## SPAWN PHASE

Each explorer must now roll to see if any monsters appear.

Josh rolls first using the D10 die (0 denominated 0, instead of 10) and rolls a 3, which is lower than the current spawn rating of 7 as shown on the chapter board. He subsequently lowers the spawn rating by 1 point and it is now on the slot «6».

Mary then manages to roll a 2 so she too lowers the spawn rating to the 5 slot. The explorers were lucky this turn; no monsters were spawned.



## HORROR PHASE

Regardless of the number of explorers, only one die is rolled for the horror phase and the players decide amongst themselves who is going to roll; Mary rolls a 5, which is equal or greater to the horror rating and triggers an *invoke horror event* effect which also raises the monster threat track by one.

After raising the monster threat one point, Mary draws the top horror event card, and places it on top of the destroyed horror event pile, making it the current horror event.



The card drawn is *Trapping the Halls*, which has a conditional effect; as its condition of any explorer being adjacent to an exploding barrel is met by Mary - the barrel is hit, triggering a physical attack on all adjacent spaces by rolling 3 black dice.







Josh follows next, losing one stamina to move between the two event spaces. He loses 1 stamina to activate one event space (as the current explorer event still has not changed), restoring 1 essence and placing a destroyed token on it. He draws the event card *Acquired Habit*.



As it is a binding explorer event, indicated by the (⚙️) symbol, Josh places it next to *Hank*; it provides *Hank* with a passive ability, as well as an active one - but that's enough for now.

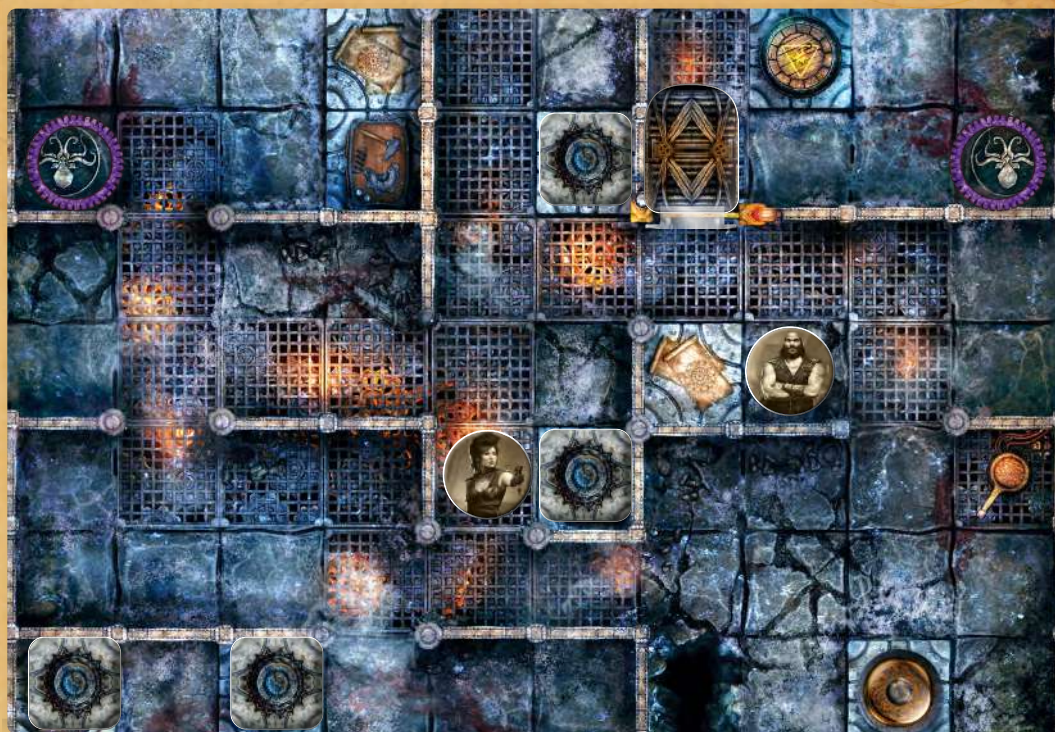


Josh decides to close the door, which costs 2 stamina and places a closed door figure on the tile. He then loses one point of stamina to move one space further, and decides to end his turn. The explorer phase is over.



## SPAWN PHASE

Josh decides to go first and rolls a 5, which is equal to the spawn rating. As such, Josh resolves the *spawn monster* effect and also resets the spawn rating to the chapter's initial setting (which is 7).



To spawn a new monster, Josh draws the top card of the monster deck, and reveals a *Moonbeast*. Josh places the *Moonbeast's* card in play to form the monster queue, and places its figure on the map tile upon the nearest spawn space. Mary also rolls in the spawn phase and ends up having a monster spawned, which is a *Sarall*. She places it at the end of the monster queue and performs the same actions as Josh, selecting the spawn point to the far left, as this space is nearest to *Kim*.





## HORROR PHASE

One of the players now rolls 1 for their horror test, luckily avoiding any unpleasant events. Since they didn't invoke a horror event, they lower the horror rating by 1 point, bringing it to «3».



## MONSTER PHASE

It is now the monsters' turn to move. You will notice that they have the same attributes as the explorers, except for essence; these work in the exact same way.

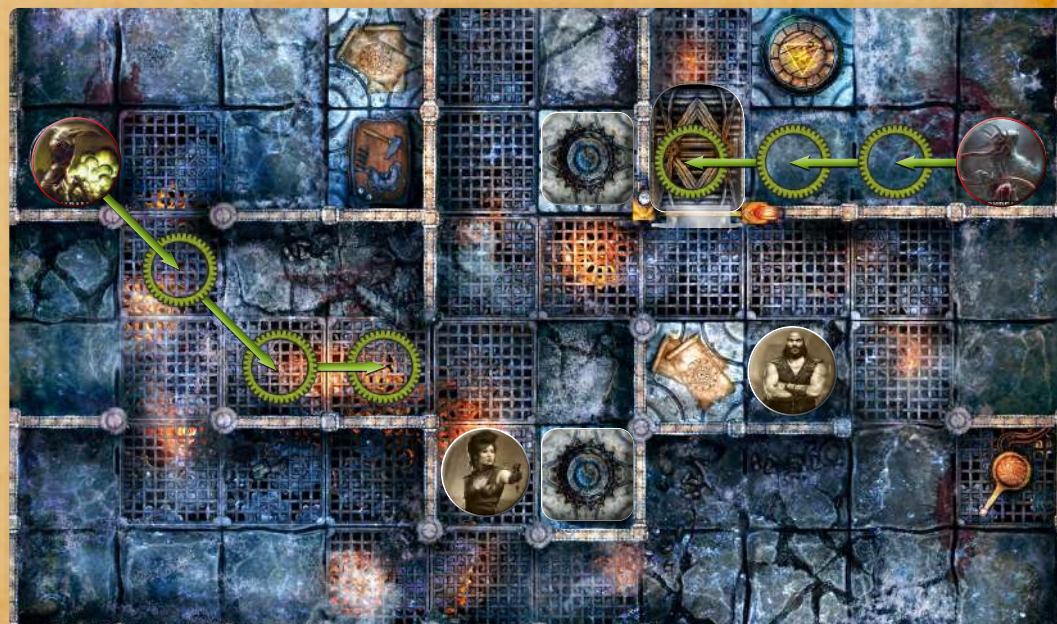
The players activate the first monster in the queue, the *Moonbeast*. It has 5 stamina, and loses its stamina to get closer to the explorers so it can use its abilities.

However, despite the *Moonbeast* having a ranged ability, there is no line of sight to any explorers due to the wall and closed door. Therefore, it continues to move by losing 3 stamina to get adjacent to the door. As its remaining 2 stamina are not enough to interact and destroy the closed door, the *Moonbeast* ends its turn.

Next is the *Sarall*, and it loses 3 stamina to get adjacent to *Kim* by using the shortest path. As it does not have enough stamina to use its attack ability, it ends its turn. Since there are currently no more monsters in the monster queue, the round ends and it is now the explorers' turn.



MONSTER QUEUE ▶



# ROUND 3

## EXPLORER PHASE

Mary acts first with *Kim*, and decides to use the active ability on her card, which is an attack with 1 white die against an enemy within 3 range, for the cost of 2 stamina. As this does not indicate «arcane», the attack is considered physical and is resolved against the *Sarall's* armor attribute.

Mary rolls a 2, which is not enough to hit the *Sarall's* armor of 3; however, *Kim* also has a passive ability that increases her attack rolls when she is adjacent to a wall. As she is currently adjacent to a wall the total is now enough to wound the *Sarall*. Mary places a wound token on top of the *Sarall's* monster card to indicate the wound.

Regardless of the result of the attack, the ability also has a lasting effect that reduces the target's range by 1 for the remainder of the round and Mary will need to place one of her explorer markers on *Kim's* card as a reminder (*Sarall* has no ranged abilities which means that *Kim's* lasting effect will not make any difference).

Mary then loses her remaining 4 stamina to move *Kim* further away from the *Sarall*.

Josh moves *Hank* so that he is adjacent to the chapter space and the trap lever; He decides to activate the trap lever by losing 2 stamina and placing a destroyed token on it. When the trap lever is activated, all units on trapped spaces on *Hank's* map tile are attacked with one roll of 3 black dice.

As both the *Moonbeast* and *Sarall* are both located on trapped spaces, Josh rolls once for both, and manages to meet or exceed both monsters' armor attributes.



Since they both had 1 health left, they are destroyed and both their figures and cards are removed from play to the destroyed monster deck. *Hank* triumphantly receives 1 essence for each destroyed monster.



Note that, despite being ethereal - as it is adjacent to a wall (and may not be targeted), the *Moonbeast* is still affected by indirect abilities such as the *trigger traps* effect (which does not have a target). The *Sarall* has a trigger effect to attack adjacent units when it is killed, but luckily *Kim* has already moved away and is now out of range.

Josh then decides to pass, not using his last stamina and foregoing the rest of his turn.

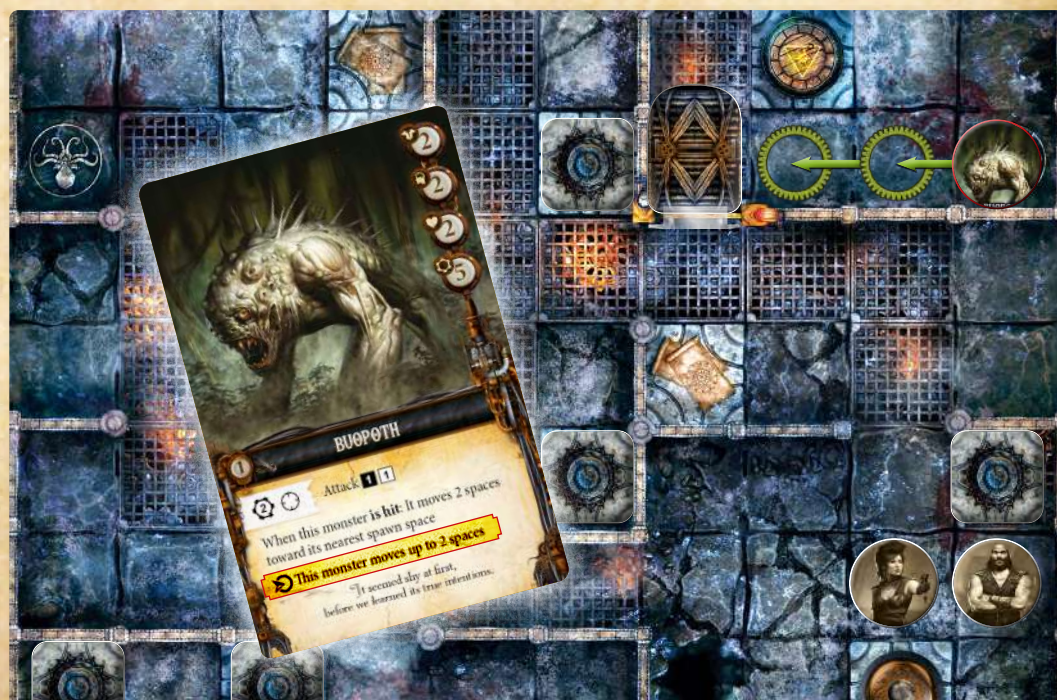


## SPAWN PHASE

Josh passes the test with a 3, and lowers the spawn rating by 1 point.

Mary rolls a 0 which counts as a 10, failing the test. Mary draws a new monster - a *Buopoth*, and places it on her nearest spawn space. She also resets the spawn rating on the chapter board.

The *Buopoth* activates its «enters play» ability, and moves 2 spaces closer to the explorers.



## HORROR PHASE

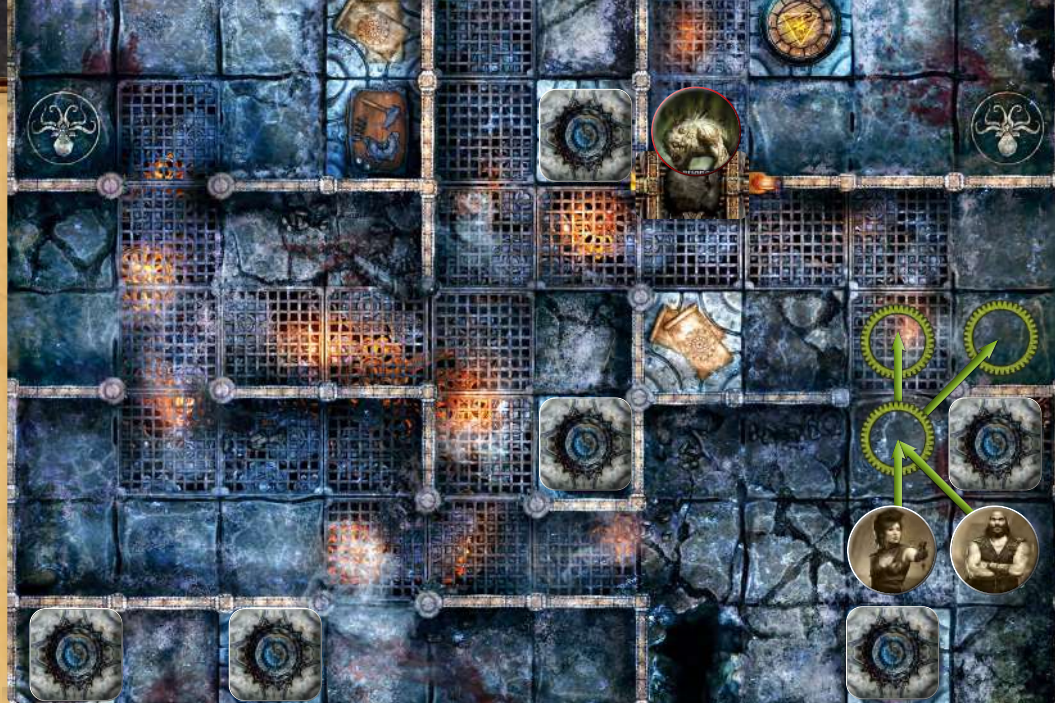
The players fail their horror test, so they increase the monster threat level and a new horror event is drawn. The new event replaces the previous one as the top destroyed horror event (current horror event), giving all monsters the new ability *Abominable Blast* which they can use for 3 stamina: an arcane attack with 2 black dice against any explorer within 3 spaces.



## MONSTER PHASE

The *Buopoth* moves one space so that the door is on one of its space's borders as the door cannot be interacted with diagonally.

Opening the door only costs explorers 2 stamina, but as the *Buopoth* is following the mindless monster rules, it needs to destroy it by losing its remaining 4 stamina. The closed door figure is then removed and replaced by a destroyed door token.



# ROUND 4

## EXPLORER PHASE

At the start of the phase, *Kim's* explorer marker token is returned from her card to her player board as her previous round's special attack effect is no longer in play.

*Hank* plays first, activating the chapter space which costs 3 stamina and 3 essence. As *Kim* is adjacent to *Hank* or the chapter space, either or both explorers can pool their resources to pay the essence cost. *Hank* pays 2 essence and *Kim* pays 1 as a contributing explorer.

They place a destroyed token on top of the chapter space, and *Hank* flips the current chapter card to the top side, entering the next chapter. They mark the new spawn and horror ratings for this chapter.



As the new chapter has an «enters play» ability, both *Hank* and *Kim* choose to move 2 spaces towards the map tile edge, and the game continues.



Hank still has 3 stamina left. He loses the 2 required to explore a new map tile. The players draw a new map tile, and place it so that the direction symbol is adjacent to Hank. He then loses his last stamina to move onto the new map tile, delving further into the labyrinth.



Kim moves adjacent to the chest on the new map tile, and activates it for 2 stamina (remember the current explorer event) restoring one essence and placing a destroyed token on it. She decides to draw both cards from the apparel deck, and draws *Caligamuris* and

*Leather Holster*.

When explorer activates a chest, they can equip the kept card as their main item if it's of the item type based on their explorer's class. If they already have an equipped main item, they can first unequip it (which would also unequip its upgrades and augments).



As upgrade/augment action is not part of the *gain item* effect, Kim keeps *Caligamuris* in her inventory and decides to place *Leather Holster* back on top of the apparel deck for later use.



*TIP:* As Kim's class is a gunman, she could equip *Caligamuris* immediately as her main apparel, but in that case, she would need to unequip *Displacer Vest*.



## SPAWN PHASE

With both players rolling high numbers, *Kim* spawns a *K'Thun* and *Hank* spawns a *Mi-Go*. If *Hank* had remained on the previous tile, then the *Mi-Go* would have spawned on that map tile. Now, they both spawn at the nearest spawn space on the new map tile.

The *K'Thun* spawns first and is placed on *Kim's* nearest spawn space. Then *Mi-Go* spawns on the same spawn space. As that space is currently occupied, players choose any passable space adjacent to the *K'Thun* to place a *Mi-Go*.

## HORROR PHASE

For better or for worse, the players roll low enough to not trigger a new horror event, so they decrease the horror rating by 1 point.

## MONSTER PHASE

With 3 monsters now on the board, there is plenty to be done. The first monster to play is the *Buopoth* as it was first in the queue. The *Buopoth* loses one stamina to move closer to *Hank*; normally it would lose more, as its active ability is a melee attack and therefore it would need to be adjacent to an explorer



to attack them. However, monsters prioritize horror events, and as such it can take advantage of the event and play the *Abominable Blast* ability.

The *Buopoth* rolls a 2 which is equal to *Hank's* will attribute (as it is an arcane attack), therefore the attack is successful and *Hank* loses 1 health. As the *Buopoth* does not have enough stamina to play other abilities, it loses its remaining stamina to move towards *Hank*.

The *K'Thun* acts next, losing 1 stamina to use its active ability as it does not have enough stamina to activate the *Abominable Blast*. As the *K'Thun's* ability does not specify range, it affects its entire map tile. Because there is no wounded monster on the tile, the *K'thun* attacks both *Kim* and *Hank* (who happen to be on *K'thun's* map tile). It rolls once for the attack, applying the result to each explorer.

The attack results in a 1 and both explorers luckily escape unharmed, as both have a higher will attribute (*Hank* has 2 while *Kim* has 3, increased from her apparel).

The *Mi-Go* acts next, and as it is equidistant to both explorers, it will attack *Kim* as she has the lowest remaining health, using the *Abominable Blast*.

*Kim* loses a health point as the roll is high enough to meet or beat her will attribute (remember, *meets beats!*). Since its remaining stamina does not suffice for an attack, it then moves towards *Kim* as she has the lowest remaining health and ends its turn. It's time for our explorers to retaliate!



# ROUND 5

## EXPLORER PHASE

The players agree to try and progress the story by meeting the chapter requirements that were revealed when they flipped the chapter card; *Kim* plays the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter's active ability twice, by losing one health point for each activation, and placing 2 count tokens on the chapter card.



As she is now down to 1 health, she will try to wound the *Mi-Go*, but first moving one space for better position. She is using her explorer's active ability to attack the monster.

As she is adjacent to the wall, she also increases her roll by one, being able to change her lucky roll of 2 to a 3, thus causing one hit to the *Mi-Go*.

When the monster loses health, place a wound token on its card, unless monster is destroyed from the attack.

Deciding that her luck cannot continue, she decides to count on *Hank* and loses 3 stamina to resolve the *use inventory* effect. She can now freely upgrade her *Displacer Vest* with the *Caligamuris*, thus allowing her to add up all the attribute symbols on both cards, increasing her armor and will totals. She is now also able to use all the abilities on both cards.

She decides to lose her last remaining stamina to move 1 space.



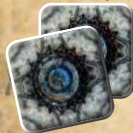
+1





Now it's *Hanks'* turn. He decides to lose 1 health to use the chapter's 1<sup>st</sup> active ability, allowing him to move adjacent to the *Mi-Go*. He loses 3 of his stamina to resolve the *seal spawn space* effect. As *Hank* is adjacent to *Kim* and the spawn space, they can pool their resources, and *Kim* contributes to the required 4 essence to perform the action.

By sealing a spawn space the monster threat is decreased by 1 and the *K'Thun* is destroyed as it is on top of that space. Destroying the *K'Thun* restores 1 essence to *Hank*. Then 2 destroyed tokens are placed on the spawn space, and finally the *light chapter* effect is resolved (by placing a light token on the chapter space).



Now that it has been lit, activating that particular chapter space only costs 1 stamina instead of 3 stamina and 3 essence, plus monsters cannot spawn on the sealed spawn space!

*Hank* now decides to use his *Heavy Javelin* to attack the *Mi-Go*. He could either lose 2 stamina to roll 3 white dice, and as it is a melee attack add 1 to the roll due to his explorer's ability, or he could choose to play the second ranged ability, however this would force him to unequip and return the *Heavy Javelin* to his inventory.

Throwing caution to the wind he finally decides to use the second ability by losing 2 stamina and unequipping the item, rolling 2 white and 2 black dice.

Unfortunately, he manages a very low roll of 2 which is lower than the *Mi-Go's* armor of 3.

*Hank* decides to lose his last essence to increase his roll by 1, thus managing to kill the *Mi-Go* and restore 1 essence. When the *Mi-Go* is destroyed, its passive ability to invoke an explorer event occurs.



+1



Josh draws *Heart to Heart*, which has an «enters play» ability to restore 2 health to one explorer. *Heart to Heart* is placed on top of the destroyed/discard pile and is now the new current explorer event. Since it has no active or passive ability, the explorers would be wise to hunt for a new one! The players choose *Hank* to receive the health boost, as he does not have any apparel to boost his defences.

Now, *Hank* decides that it would be a good idea for them to sacrifice his newly restored health to advance the chapter; *Hank* loses 2 health points and places 2 count tokens on the chapter card.



As the chapter card indicates that the 4<sup>th</sup> time this requirement is played the *go to the next chapter* effect is resolved, the explorers can now advance to chapter 3!

Players flip the chapter card, reset the spawn and horror ratings, and then resolve the new chapter's «enters play» ability, adding level 2 items to their corresponding decks.

The players first remove half of the existing cards from all item-type decks. Then shuffle all the new item cards of the indicated level into their corresponding item-type decks. The game then continues as normal.

*Hank* loses his last stamina to move towards the chapter space, and the explorer phase ends.



# THE END?

*Kim* and *Hank's* first five rounds are over, but their descent does not have to end here.

You now know the basic flow of **Machina Arcana**: activating explorers, spending stamina, resolving attacks, invoking events, spawning monsters, and surviving the Monster phase.

From here, you can continue this scenario with the full **Manual** at hand, or begin a new expedition of your own.

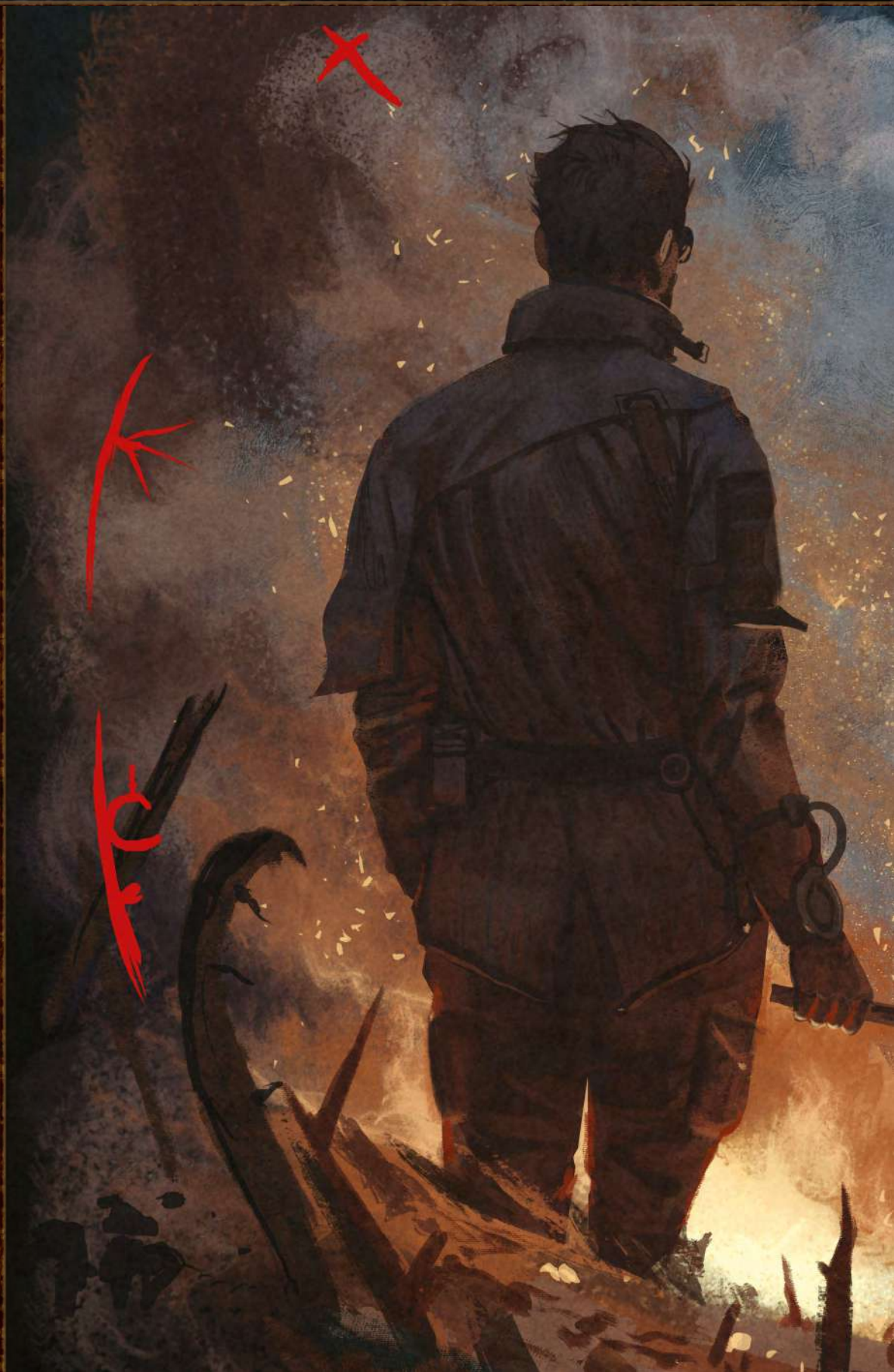
## FIRST FULL GAME TIP

This guided playthrough was prepared using the **FULL** variant of *Horror in the Ice*, so you can continue from here if you want the complete scenario. For your first few full games, we strongly recommend setting up *Horror in the Ice* with its **SHORT** variant instead.

The complete **Manual** explains every rule in detail, including pits, workbenches, recharge stations, push and pull effects, ability timing, difficulty adjustments, and the edge cases that appear once the ruins begin to unfold.

The rest of this **Guidebook** gives you more ways to shape what comes next:

- ◆ choose a scenario and duration variant
- ◆ add machinations to change how the game plays
- ◆ track achievements across your sessions
- ◆ use **Adreama Forge** to prepare and record games
- ◆ check overlooked rules before they become mistakes





ON, THEN,  
TO NEW ADVENTURES  
WITHIN  
THE MACHINA ARCANA!

# SCENARIO COLLECTION

The ruins offer many ways down. Across the Core box and its expansions, each scenario has its own setting, rhythm, special rules, and ending. This section gives a spoiler-light overview of every scenario so you can choose one for the table and decide which version to play.

## HOW TO READ AN ENTRY

Every scenario is laid out the same way:

**Overview:** what kind of descent it is, without spoiling how it ends.

**Duration:** roughly how long it runs at Full length.

**Duration variants:** which cards to remove if you want a shorter version.

## DURATION VARIANTS

No scenario has to be played at full length. Each one is built as a complete deck, then offers one or more variants that remove specific cards to shorten the session.

- ◆ **FULL:** the complete scenario deck. Nothing is removed.
- ◆ **REDUCED:** a trimmed version for a shorter session.
- ◆ **SHORT:** the briefest version, suited to a single sitting.

Not every scenario offers all three variants. Some scenarios are already compact and list only Full and Short. In scenarios where item

levels rise as the story advances, a shorter variant can also mean lower item levels by the end. Follow the scenario's own card effects for item progression.

## PREPARING A VARIANT

Set up the scenario deck as usual: the title card on top, followed by the chapters in numerical order, with any endgame cards kept in their printed sequence. Then remove the cards listed by your chosen variant and return them to the box. Restack the remaining cards in the same order and play. Full removes nothing.

To make a scenario more forgiving or more dangerous, use **Machinations** rather than changing the scenario deck further. In **Adreama Forge**, choosing a scenario and duration variant is the first step of building a session. Adding machinations comes next.

## CORE

The Core box begins with a polar expedition into an ancient ruin buried beneath the ice. The House of Bliss is already inside, and the first scenarios follow that discovery from breach to aftermath. *Horror in the Ice* and *The Beast* form one continuous descent. *Statue of Despair* follows a separated group into a darker side passage of the same catastrophe.

## HORROR IN THE ICE

### DURATION — LONG

The descent that begins the saga. An expedition breaks into a vast ruin sealed beneath a frozen mountain and finds the House of Bliss already at work inside. Strange architecture, blood trails, and a madman's journal lead the explorers deeper, toward whatever the cult has come to awaken. A slow, investigative scenario built on dread, pursuit, and the first contact with the ruin's purpose.

### DURATION VARIANTS

- ◆ **FULL:** the complete deck. Nothing removed.
- ◆ **REDUCED:** remove chapters 4 and 5.
- ◆ **SHORT:** remove chapters 3 to 6.

## STATUE OF DESPAIR

### DURATION — SHORT

A splinter of the first expedition is cut off and forced into unmapped halls. Exhausted and hunted, the explorers follow a grisly relic deeper into the complex in search of any path back to the surface. An isolated, oppressive descent through fog, ruined galleries, and desperate escape.

## DURATION VARIANTS

- ◆ **FULL:** the complete deck. Nothing removed.
- ◆ **REDUCED:** remove the first endgame card.
- ◆ **SHORT:** remove chapter 4 and the first endgame card.

## THE BEAST

### DURATION — LONG

The direct continuation of *Horror in the Ice*. The cult's work has broken something open beneath the mountain, and what first looks like a hunt becomes a fight to survive the thing the ruin was built to contain. A long scenario about pursuit, containment, and the cost of waking what was buried. Duration variants

- ◆ **FULL:** the complete deck. Nothing removed.
- ◆ **REDUCED:** remove chapters 3 and 7, and the first endgame card.
- ◆ **SHORT:** remove chapters 2, 3, 6 and 7, and the first endgame card.

## FROM BEYOND

These two scenarios follow the survivors of the first expedition into stranger territory. *Recurrence* stands on its own. *Geometry of the Void* closes the first expedition's story and gives shape to what has been waiting behind it.

## RECURRENCE

### DURATION — MEDIUM

Explorers wake in the dark with no names and no memory. Their bodies feel newly made, the corridors seem already familiar, and a voice insists it knows them better than they know themselves. A standalone scenario about identity, repetition, and the fear of returning to a place you have never been.

### DURATION VARIANTS

- ◆ **FULL:** the complete deck. Nothing removed.
- ◆ **REDUCED:** remove chapters 4 and 6.
- ◆ **SHORT:** remove chapters 3, 4, 6 and 7.

## GEOMETRY OF THE VOID

### DURATION — MEDIUM

The closing descent of the first expedition. The explorers pass through impossible realms, each marked by the same name and each closer to the source of the ruin's design. Dreamlike and cosmic, this scenario turns the journey inward and outward at once, revealing the pattern behind the saga.

### DURATION VARIANTS

- ◆ **FULL:** the complete deck. Nothing removed.
- ◆ **REDUCED:** remove chapters 6–9.
- ◆ **SHORT:** remove chapters 2, 4 and 6–9.

*Reduced and Short:* in chapter 1, the first active ability cannot be played because the chapter 6 card it relies on is no longer in the deck.

## TO ETERNITY

A second expedition is mounted by *Sentinel*, now backed by the *House of Bliss*, on the strength of the first expedition's legend. Its three scenarios form a connected arc that returns to the frozen ruin and brings both expedition stories to their end.

### GENESIS

#### DURATION — SHORT

The second expedition's first descent. Drawn south by *Sentinel's* infamous call for explorers, a wary group of misfits returns to the polar ruin to recover what the first expedition left behind. The ice has changed, the old damage remains, and the opening of a new arc begins under the shadow of the last one.

#### DURATION VARIANTS

- ◆ **FULL:** the complete deck. Nothing removed.
- ◆ **SHORT:** remove chapters 4 to 6.

### PARABIOSIS

#### DURATION — MEDIUM

The middle of the second expedition's arc. Fire, infection, and shared wounds turn the ruin into a place where bodies are pushed past their limits and boundaries begin to fail. A harsh, intimate scenario about contamination, endurance, and the danger of being made into something joined.

#### DURATION VARIANTS

- ◆ **FULL:** the complete deck. Nothing removed.
- ◆ **SHORT:** remove chapters 3 and 4.

### ANASTASIS

#### DURATION — LONG

The saga's resurrection and conclusion. Both expeditions converge in one final descent, and the ending is not fixed in advance. At its turning point the explorers choose the path the story takes, and the finale follows from that choice.

#### DURATION VARIANTS

- ◆ **FULL:** the complete deck. Nothing removed.
- ◆ **SHORT:** remove chapters 3 to 8 and endgame card A1.

## VIVARIUM

*Vivarium* is an anthology. Each scenario is self-contained, with its own world, threat, and ending. They can be played in any order. What connects them is not chronology, but the deeper logic of **Machina Arcana**: arcanic ruins, human ambition, and the things waiting where those two meet.

### RUINS AMONG THE VOID

#### DURATION — SHORT

Constructed bodies are sent into an asteroid mining colony built around a buried arcanic ruin. *Sentinel* is extracting crystal ore from the site, but the ruin treats every intruder as an infection and every machine as another wound. A compact deep-space scenario with an industrial, claustrophobic tone.

#### DURATION VARIANTS

- ◆ **FULL:** the complete deck. Nothing removed.
- ◆ **SHORT:** remove chapters 4 and 5.





## CONTAMINATION

### DURATION — SHORT

A quarantine crisis aboard the orbital platform *Crius*. High above a gas giant, a storm pulses like a living signal, and one infected survivor brings something back to the station. The threat spreads through alignment rather than sickness, turning crew, systems, and orbit into parts of the same collapse. A standalone scenario of containment, pressure, and hard choices.

### DURATION VARIANTS

- ◆ **FULL:** the complete deck. Nothing removed.
- ◆ **SHORT:** remove chapters 6 and 7.

## SHAPE OF GOD

### DURATION — LONG

The explorers are summoned to shut down an arcanic reactor before it consumes a nearby city. Beneath it lies a ruin shaped by experiments in suffering, where human pain was treated as data and something vast learned from the pattern. A long standalone scenario about consequence, sacrifice, and the final choice of how far to go in order to end a disaster.

### DURATION VARIANTS

- ◆ **FULL:** the complete deck. Nothing removed.
- ◆ **REDUCED:** remove chapters 8 to 10.
- ◆ **SHORT:** remove chapters 5, 6, 8 to 10 and 12.

## FEATHER OF THORNSMOUTH

### DURATION — MEDIUM

A gothic descent beneath a fog-bound port. An aristocrat's granddaughter has vanished, leaving behind a letter and a white feather, and following that sign leads into drowned tunnels below Thornsmouth. The town has been feeding strangers to something old for generations. A self-contained scenario about family secrets, bargains, and the difference between ending a horror and keeping it leashed.

### DURATION VARIANTS

- ◆ **FULL:** the complete deck. Nothing removed.
- ◆ **SHORT:** remove chapters 7 to 9.

# MACHINATIONS

Machinations are optional modules you can add to any scenario to change how it plays. They do not change the scenario's win or loss condition. Instead, they adjust rules, setup, combat, events, monster behavior, campaign structure, or other parts of the session.

Choose machinations before setup. Everyone at the table should know which ones are active, because a machination stays in force for the whole game unless its own rules say otherwise. You may use one machination or combine several.

Each machination includes a short description and its rules. Read the rules in full before using it, especially when a machination changes setup, monster control, event decks, item levels, or campaign continuity.

## USING MACHINATIONS

### CHOOSE AT SETUP.

Decide which machinations are active before the first tile is placed. Some machinations change setup directly, such as Campaign and Overseer, so they must be chosen before cards are drawn or decks prepared.

### COMBINE FREELY.

Machinations can be used together unless their rules clearly conflict. If two machinations affect the same part of the game, agree how they interact before play begins.

### TUNE THE DESCENT.

Use machinations to adjust the kind of challenge you want. Some make combat more dangerous, some make the map or event decks behave differently, and some change the structure of the whole session.

## THE MACHINATIONS

Fifteen machinations are organized into three groups: combat-focused modules, environment-focused modules, and system-level modules that change the wider structure of play.

### BLADE AND CLAW

Combat-facing machinations that make position, pressure, and decisive strikes matter more. These sharpen the moment-to-moment violence of the descent.

#### 1. CRITICAL HIT

*A blow that lands true does not merely wound — it shatters. When force overwhelms armor and ward alike, flesh gives way and bone follows after. With this machination, strikes that land far beyond their target's defenses cut twice as deep — for explorers and horrors both.*

When an attack roll exceeds the blocker's blocking attribute by 3 or more, the blocker loses 2 health instead of 1.

Check for a critical hit after all attack roll modifiers, spent essence, rerolls, and reductions have been applied.

A critical hit is still a single hit. Effects that trigger when a unit is hit trigger once.

For attacks with multiple blockers, compare the same attack roll against each blocker separately. The attack can be critical against one blocker and normal against another.

#### 2. FLANKING

*Numbers are their own kind of weapon. A creature hemmed in on every side cannot guard each angle at once, and every claw or blade that joins the press lands a little truer. With this machination, both explorers and horrors strike harder against a target their allies have surrounded.*

A monster's attack roll is increased by 1 for each other monster adjacent to the blocking explorer.

An explorer's attack roll is increased by 1 for each other explorer adjacent to the blocking monster.

For attacks with multiple blockers, calculate the bonus separately for each blocker.

#### 3. HIGH GROUND

*The collapsed stone that bars the way can also lift you above it. From atop the wreckage an explorer finds clear sightlines and firm footing, striking down at the horrors that scabble below while their claws fall short. With this machination, rubble becomes a vantage to be climbed — a hard-won perch that turns broken ground to your advantage, and leaves you exposed upon it.*

An explorer adjacent to rubble can lose 3 stamina to move on top of that rubble (2 stamina instead of 3 if they have a leg apparel equipped).

While an explorer is on top of rubble:

- ◆ treat that rubble as a passable space
- ◆ their attack rolls and range are increased by 1
- ◆ monsters' attack rolls and range are reduced by 1 when targeting them
- ◆ they ignore walls adjacent to their space when ranged targeting
- ◆ other units ignore walls adjacent to their space when ranged targeting them
- ◆ they can leave by losing 1 stamina to move to an adjacent passable space, as normal

## STONE AND SPARK

Environment-shaping machinations that let the ruins break, reopen, detonate, and turn against anything moving through them. These make the map feel more volatile and physically alive.

### 4. BLEEDING SEAL

*Some seals do not close the wound. They only cauterize it for a moment, buying the explorers time before the ruins bleed horrors back into the world. With this machination, spawn spaces are no longer permanently destroyed — they become temporarily suppressed, then slowly reopen.*

### DESTROYING A SPAWN SPACE

When a spawn space would be destroyed, whether by destroying the map space or by sealing it, resolve all other effects of that action as normal.

Then, instead of the destroyed tokens, place 3 wound tokens on the spawn space. It is now a wounded spawn space, and is treated as an obstacle.

Each time a monster would spawn from a wounded spawn space, remove a wound token instead of spawning a monster.

Once the last wound token is removed, the spawn space is no longer wounded and becomes a fully functional spawn space again.

If a wounded spawn space is refreshed, remove all wound tokens from it.

### SPAWN PHASE

During the Spawn phase, explorers always roll a game die, even if all spawn spaces on their map tile are wounded.

### 5. BREACH

*Some walls will not be reasoned with — only broken. With a weapon turned to wrecking tool, an explorer can blast a passage straight through ancient stone, trading hard steel for a path that was never meant to exist. With this machination, explorers can tear new openings through the walls of the ruins, reshaping the map at the cost of their arms.*

An explorer can lose 4 stamina and destroy 1 weapon to destroy an adjacent wall (map tile borders cannot be destroyed).

Place a destroyed door token in place of the destroyed wall, and treat that border as a standard passable space border.

Removing that destroyed door token refreshes the wall, restoring it.

### 6. DEMOLITION

*Why strike a single spark when you can light them all? With a wrench of the lever, an explorer sends a charge through the chamber and every volatile barrel erupts at once — the ruins themselves turned into a single roaring weapon. With this machination, an explorer can rig a trap lever to detonate every exploding barrel on the map tile in one catastrophic instant.*

An explorer can lose 2 stamina and 1 essence to activate an adjacent trap lever.

Instead of the trigger traps effect, they hit all exploding barrels on their map tile.

### 7. TRIPWIRE

*A length of wire, a hair's tension, and patience. The barrel waits in silence until something strays too close — and it does not care whether claw or boot trips the line. With this machination, an explorer can rig an exploding barrel to detonate the moment any unit steps into its reach.*

An explorer can lose 2 stamina to prime an adjacent exploding barrel, placing a count token on top of it.

Any unit that enters a space adjacent to a primed exploding barrel — whether by moving or teleporting — immediately hits it.

When the exploding barrel is hit, remove the count token from it and place a destroyed token on top of it.



## FATE AND WILL

System-shaping machinations that bend the larger structure of play: dice odds, event flow, monster will, and scenario continuity. These change the character of the whole expedition rather than a single tactic.

### 8. CRUEL FORTUNE

*The deeper the descent, the more the odds curdle. Where the turning die once showed an empty face, that same throw now flares with dreadful certainty — the ruins waste no chance to wake, and every wager with the dark carries one more way to turn against the explorers. With this machination, the game die's hollow face becomes its highest result, making spawn and horror rolls far less forgiving.*

Whenever the game die (D10) is rolled, treat a 0 result as 10 instead of 0.

This applies to every game die roll alike, including spawn, horror, and effect rolls.

### 9. SLUMBERING DARK

*Not every ruin wakes hungry. Some lie so deep in their long sleep that the descent barely stirs them, and the horrors gather only when fortune finally tips against the explorers. With this machination, the ruins stay drowsy — failed spawn and horror rolls no longer draw the dark closer, and each awakening must come by a high roll alone.*

During the Spawn phase and the Horror phase, when a roll is less than the current rating, do not lower that rating slider.

### 10. AMORPHOUS EVENTS

*The ruins do not remember which nightmare belongs to which descent. Terrors from every corner of the mythos bleed together, surfacing without rhyme or allegiance. With this machination, explorer and horror events are drawn from a single shuffled pool spanning every scenario — a smaller, stranger deck that never unfolds the same way twice.*

#### SETUP

Combine all core and all scenario explorer events into one deck, then shuffle all the cards.

Take only the top 20 explorer events, and return the rest to the game box.

Do the same for horror events.

### 11. RESONANT EVENTS

*Every ruin hums to its own dark, and the deeper you descend the more it sings of the place you chose to enter. The common terrors thin until the scenario's own nightmares answer back in equal measure — a shorter, stranger deck, but each card truer to this descent. With this machination, the event decks are pared down so a scenario's signature events surface as often as the common dark.*

#### SETUP

Prepare each event deck : explorer and horror - separately.

Shuffle the core events, then take only the top cards equal to the number of scenario event cards of that type. Return the rest to the game box.

Add the scenario events to those core cards and shuffle them into a single deck.

### 12. OVERSEER

*The ruins have found a will to guide them. With this machination, one player becomes the Overseer, directing the monsters with purpose from the very beginning and turning the expedition into a fully adversarial struggle.*

One player is the Overseer. Their goal is to destroy the explorers.

Monsters are scheming from the start of the game.

The Overseer:

- ◆ Reorders the monster queue at the start of each Monster phase.
- ◆ Controls all monster movement, plays the monsters' active abilities, and uses monsters to interact with the map tile: open/close a door (-3), destroy a door (-4), or activate a trap lever (-3).
- ◆ When invoking a horror event, draws two horror event cards, invokes one of their choice, and places the other on top of the horror event deck.
- ◆ When an explorer would spawn a monster, draws two monster cards, chooses which one is spawned, and places the other on top of the monster deck.

Destroyed explorers join the Overseer.



### 13. ESCALATION

*Every advantage is met with another. Arm the explorers with deeper relics and the ruins do not simply yield — they rouse more of the dark to meet the greater force walking their halls. With this machination, the explorers begin a tier better equipped, and the ruins begin that much hungrier.*

A scenario that already starts at item level 3 cannot take this machination — there is nothing deeper to draw on.

#### SETUP

If the scenario starts at item level 1, resolve Add items level 2.

If the scenario starts at item level 2, resolve Add items level 3.

Then increase the monster threat by 5 plus the number of explorers. This can trigger a monster level increase.

#### ADD ITEMS LEVEL

An Add items level 2 effect resolves as Add items level 3 instead.

An Add items level 3 effect is ignored.

### 14. AUSTERITY

*Power has a scent, and the ruins know it. Bring deeper relics into the dark and the place wakes hungry; descend with humbler tools, and its vast attention drifts elsewhere. With this machination, explorers are confined to item level 1, and every higher tier the scenario would have granted is traded for a quieter ruin.*

Only item level 1 is used with this machination.

#### SETUP

Ignore each setup effect that would resolve Add items level 2 or Add items level 3.

For each ignored effect, reduce monster threat by 5 plus the number of explorers.

During setup only, this can reduce monster level: when the reduction would move monster threat below the first position, reduce monster level by 1, set monster threat to the last position, and continue counting the remaining reduction. Monster level cannot be reduced below 1.

After all setup reductions, use the monster deck that matches the final monster level.

#### ADD ITEMS LEVEL

An Add items level 2 or Add items level 3 effect is ignored.

Then reduce monster threat by 5 plus the number of explorers, to a minimum of the first monster threat position. This cannot reduce monster level after setup.

### 15. CAMPAIGN

*No expedition ends at a single threshold. The survivors press on, dragging their salvaged relics deeper into the dark — and the deeper they carry them, the more the ruins hunger to take them back. With this machination, explorers chain scenarios into a campaign, keeping hard-won gear at the price of a darkness that grows ever more eager to meet them.*

If the explorers survive a scenario, they may continue into another one.

After completing a scenario, each surviving explorer:

- ◆ Decides which items and bound events to keep.
- ◆ Adds the values of the kept cards to determine their **campaign threat number**

ITEM LEVEL 1	ITEM LEVEL 2	ITEM LEVEL 3	BOUND EVENT
1	2	3	2

Once the game is set up for the new scenario:

- ◆ Explorers begin with their kept cards in their inventory.
- ◆ Explorers are at 0 essence and max health.
- ◆ Resolve all «enters play» abilities of the new chapter.
- ◆ Increase the monster threat by the total campaign threat (the sum of every explorer's campaign threat number), divided by the explorer count and rounded up. This can trigger a monster level increase.

Which ever Machinations you settle on, **ADREAMA FORGE** (the companion app covered in the final section of this guidebook pg. 37) lets you switch your chosen machinations on as you build a session and notes them on the **PRINTABLE SHEET** you bring to the table.

# ACHIEVEMENTS

Achievements are optional goals that can be added to any scenario. They do not change whether the scenario is won or lost; they give the group extra objectives to pursue during play and a way to track progress across sessions.

Each achievement rewards a specific feat or a self-imposed restriction. Some are marked by doing something, such as pushing monsters into pits or destroying several monsters with one effect. Others require winning while avoiding certain actions, such as opening chests or restoring health. Each achievement has a point value based on difficulty.

Every achievement has three parts:

- ◆ **Name** - the title of the achievement.
- ◆ **Condition** - what must happen, or what must be avoided.
- ◆ **Points** - a value from 1 to 5.

Achievements are tracked by the party as a whole, not by individual explorers. If one explorer completes a feat, the group marks it. If an achievement requires restraint, the whole group must follow that restriction. Marked achievements are earned only if the session is won.

There are two achievement types:

- ◆ **TRIGGERED** and
- ◆ **FINISH WITH A CONDITION**.

## TRACKING YOUR ACHIEVEMENTS

Choose the achievements you want to track before setup. Triggered achievements can be marked when their condition happens, but they count only if the session is won. Finish with a Condition achievements must be known from the start because they restrict how the whole scenario is played.

Adreama Forge, described in the final section, can prepare a printable session sheet and track completed achievements between games. You can also track them manually using the list below.

## HOW ACHIEVEMENTS WORK

### TRIGGERED

A **TRIGGERED** achievement is marked as soon as its condition is met, but it is earned only if the session is won.

### FINISH WITH A CONDITION

A **FINISH WITH A CONDITION** achievement is earned only if you win the scenario while following its restriction for the entire game. Choose these before setup. If the restriction is broken, that achievement cannot be earned in that game.

### SCORING

If the session is won, add the points from every achievement you earned. That total is your session score. If the session is lost, no achievements are earned. There is no required score to beat; use it to compare sessions, set challenges, or track long-term completion.

### READING THE LIST

The name gives the achievement its theme. The condition is the rule. If the condition is met exactly as written, mark the achievement; it counts only if the session is won.

## THE ACHIEVEMENT LIST

Across six categories, the ruins offer 49 achievements worth a combined 110 points. Each category is split into its **TRIGGERED** and **FINISH WITH A CONDITION** entries.



## THREAT

*Holding back the tide of monsters and the ruins' rising menace.*

## TRIGGERED

NAME	CONDITION	POINTS
Warden	Seal at least 3 spawn spaces.	2
Quieting the Machine	Reduce monster threat at least 5 separate times.	3
Buried Alive	Seal a spawn space while a monster stands on it, destroying it.	2
Banisher	Banish a monster with a card ability, not by scrolling map tiles or exiting through an exit token.	1
Puppeteer	Resolve control monster in at least 2 separate instances, affecting a different monster each time.	2

## FINISH WITH A CONDITION

NAME	CONDITION	POINTS
Spawn Limit Tax	Win the game without increasing monster threat due to the spawn limit.	2
Sealed Fate Refused	Win the game without sealing any spawn space.	2

## INVENTORY

*What you carry into the dark, and what you refuse to.*

## TRIGGERED

NAME	CONDITION	POINTS
Blessed Junk	Destroy at least 6 items during the game.	2
Man at Arms	Have one explorer equipped with 2 augmented weapons.	2
Master Artificer	Have one explorer equipped with at least 9 items.	3

## FINISH WITH A CONDITION

NAME	CONDITION	POINTS
Unarmed Resolve	Win the game with no explorer having any weapon equipped.	5
Empty Chambers	Win the game without playing an active ability from a weapon.	4
Sober Descent	Win the game without playing an active ability from a consumable.	3
Stock Gear	Win the game without upgrading or augmenting any item.	2

## HAZARDS

*Turning the ruins' own traps and barrels against their makers.*

## TRIGGERED

NAME	CONDITION	POINTS
Pit Offering	Push at least 2 monsters into pits.	1
Dragged Below	Pull a monster into a pit.	2
Trapmasters	Trigger traps at least 5 times.	2
Sprung Trap	Resolve one trigger traps effect that hits 3 or more monsters.	2
Barrel Sermon	Hit at least 3 monsters with one exploding barrel.	2

## FINISH WITH A CONDITION

NAME	CONDITION	POINTS
Tread Lightly	Win the game without any explorer triggering traps or causing an exploding barrel to be hit.	2

## COMBAT

*Feats of how, and how fiercely, you fight.*

### TRIGGERED

NAME	CONDITION	POINTS
<b>Giant Slayer</b>	Kill a level 4 monster.	3
<b>Desperate Overload</b>	Lose at least 3 essence to turn a would-be miss into a hit on a monster.	2
<b>Ghost Touch</b>	Hit an ethereal unit with an attack that does not target it.	1
<b>Many Bodies, One Roll</b>	Resolve one attack roll from an ability against at least 3 blockers, excluding attacks from traps and exploding barrels.	2
<b>Cleaving Blow</b>	Destroy at least 2 monsters while resolving a single ability from an item.	2
<b>Bloodgorged</b>	Destroy 4 or more monsters during a single explorer's turn.	3

### FINISH WITH A CONDITION

NAME	CONDITION	POINTS
<b>Candleblack</b>	Win the game without losing essence to increase attack rolls.	3
<b>Close Quarters</b>	Win the game without playing an active ability that targets a non-adjacent unit.	3

## EXPLORATION

*How far, how fast, and how thoroughly you press into the ruins.*

### TRIGGERED

NAME	CONDITION	POINTS
<b>Into the Dark</b>	Explore at least 6 map tiles.	1
<b>Cartographer's Reach</b>	Have all four tiles of a 2x2 playing area placed at once.	1
<b>Doorbreakers</b>	Destroy at least 4 doors.	1
<b>Relentless Advance</b>	Advance to the next chapter twice in the same round.	2
<b>Light, Then Run</b>	Resolve a light chapter effect, then activate that same lit chapter space in the same round.	2
<b>Repaired Blasphemy</b>	Refresh at least 3 action spaces.	2
<b>Closed in Their Face</b>	Mindless monsters destroy at least 3 closed doors.	2
<b>Trading Places</b>	Switch positions with at least 2 different monsters.	1

### FINISH WITH A CONDITION

NAME	CONDITION	POINTS
<b>No Easy Loot</b>	Win the game without activating any chests.	4
<b>No Omens Invoked</b>	Win the game without activating any event spaces.	3
<b>The Lit Path</b>	Win the game without ever activating an unlit chapter space.	2
<b>Off the Grid</b>	Win the game without any explorer activating a workbench or recharge station.	2

## ENDURANCE

*What the explorers survive, what they refuse to spend, and how much of themselves they can carry to the end.*

### TRIGGERED

NAME	CONDITION	POINTS
<b>Field Dressing</b>	Explorers restore at least 5 health to other explorers.	1
<b>Apex of Dread</b>	When monster level is 5, have each explorer destroy 1 equipped item instead of being destroyed.	4
<b>Three Marks in Blood</b>	Have all 3 of one explorer's markers on cards at the same time.	2
<b>Bound by Fate</b>	Have at least 3 bound explorer events in play at once.	3
<b>Untethered</b>	Have an explorer be ethereal during at least 5 separate rounds.	2

### FINISH WITH A CONDITION

NAME	CONDITION	POINTS
<b>None Left Behind</b>	Win the game without any explorer being destroyed.	1
<b>Flesh Over Steel</b>	Win the game without any explorer losing essence instead of losing health.	3
<b>Scars Untended</b>	Win the game without any explorer restoring health; effects that set explorers to max health are permissible.	4
<b>Markless Pilgrimage</b>	Win the game without placing any explorer marker on a card.	3

# ADREAMA FORGE

**Adreama Forge** is the web companion for **Machina Arcana**. It brings the guidebook tools together in one place: a searchable card database, a session builder for scenarios, variants, machinations, and achievements, and a session log for the games you complete.

You can find it at [machinaarcana.com/forge](http://machinaarcana.com/forge)

Use the Forge before play to prepare a printable session sheet, during play to check card text, and after play to record what your group completed.

## THE CARD DATABASE

The **Forge** includes the full **Card Database**: every card from the Core box and each expansion. Items, monsters, explorers, chapters, explorer events, and horror events are all shown with their printed artwork and available game languages.

Use it whenever you need to check exact wording, look up a monster, review an item, compare cards, or browse the collection without searching through the box.

## BUILDING A SESSION

When you are ready to play, start a new session in the **Forge**. It guides you through the choices that shape the game:

### PICK A SCENARIO

Choose any scenario from any box. The Forge shows its overview, duration, difficulty, and player count so you can match the game to your table.

### CHOOSE A VARIANT

Select the scenario length or difficulty variant you want to use, or play the scenario in its full form.

### ADD MACHINATIONS

Turn on any machinations you want to include. Their rules are carried onto the session sheet, so the table has one clear reference.

### CHOOSE YOUR ACHIEVEMENTS

Select the achievements you want to chase. By default, the **Forge** can show achievements you have not yet earned, and you can adjust the list for the session.

Once these choices are set, the **Forge** generates a printer-friendly session sheet. It gathers the scenario, variant, machinations, and selected achievements into one document that can be printed or kept open beside the board.

The session sheet is meant to make table use simple:

- ◆ achievements are grouped by category;
- ◆ *Triggered* achievements and *Finish with a Condition* achievements are kept visually separate;
- ◆ each achievement shows its point value;
- ◆ the sheet shows the total points available in the session;
- ◆ completed achievements are distinguished from achievements still open across sessions.

During play, mark achievements as their conditions are met. For *Finish with a Condition* achievements, choose them before setup and keep them visible, since they shape decisions from the start of the game.

## LOGGING YOUR SESSIONS

After the scenario ends, return to the **Forge** and record the session. Save the result to your account, mark the achievements you earned, and keep the session in your history.

Over time, this creates a record of what your group has played: which scenarios you have completed, which machinations you have used, which achievements you have earned, and which goals are still open.

The **Forge** will continue to grow, but its current purpose is straightforward: help you find cards, prepare sessions, and track progress across your **Machina Arcana** games.

# OVERLOOKED RULES

**Machina Arcana** is full of short rules that reach further than they first appear. A single word like target, any, nearest, spawn, or place can decide whether an effect catches one unit, every unit in a chamber, or something that seemed untouchable a moment ago.

This section collects the rulings most often missed at the table. These are not optional modules and they do not replace the rule-book. They are the places where the existing rules are easiest to misread, gathered into one reference so a strange interaction can be settled quickly and played the same way next time.

## READING ABILITIES PRECISELY

Ability text is deliberately compact. Do exactly what it says, and just as importantly, do not add limits it does not state.

### PASSIVE ITEM ABILITIES APPLY WHILE THE ITEM IS EQUIPPED.

If an equipped item says *When you hit*, *When you kill*, or gives a general bonus such as increasing attack rolls, that passive ability belongs to the explorer who has the item equipped. It can apply even when the triggering attack or kill came from another weapon, another ability, a trap lever, an exploding barrel, a pit, another monster, or some other indirect source.

### ITEM EFFECTS DEFAULT TO THEIR OWNER.

Unless an item ability names another target or scope, it affects the explorer who has that item equipped. Increase attack rolls by 2 increases your attack rolls, not another explorer's rolls and not monster rolls.

### BINDING EVENTS BECOME PART OF THE EXPLORER.

When an explorer takes a binding event, its passive and active abilities are treated as though they are printed on that explorer's card.

### INVENTORY INCLUDES MORE THAN EQUIPPED ITEMS.

Consumables and unequipped items are still in an explorer's inventory. If a monster or effect takes, destroys, or otherwise chooses an item from an explorer, consumables and unequipped items are valid unless the effect says otherwise.

### WOUNDED MEANS MISSING HEALTH.

A unit is wounded if it has lost at least 1 health from its maximum. It does not need to be near death; one missing health is enough.

### COSTS MUST BE PAYABLE.

If an effect prevents a resource loss, that resource cannot be paid as a cost. For example, while units cannot lose health this round, an explorer cannot play an active ability that requires losing health.

### AUGMENTS CAN CHANGE ATTACK TYPE.

If an augment gives or modifies arcane attack rolls, the augmented weapon's attack can become arcane even if the weapon itself was not originally arcane.

## ATTACKS AND TARGETS

The targeting symbol, or the lack of one, matters.

### A BARE ATTACK CAN HIT THE ATTACKER.

An active ability with an attack effect but no target affects the activating unit by default. Attack **2** with no targeting symbol means the unit playing the ability attacks itself. If the cost includes ☹, ☠, or ☢, that symbol supplies the primary target for the attack.

### A SCOPE CATCHES EVERYTHING IN IT.

If an attack affects monsters, adjacent units, target's adjacent units, units in a line, or another defined group, the attacker does not choose which units inside that scope are spared. Every explorer, monster, or exploding barrel inside the written scope is affected unless the ability uses a limiting phrase such as any or up to.

### ONE ATTACK ROLL CAN HAVE MANY BLOCKERS.

When one attack affects multiple units, roll once and apply that same result to every blocker separately. A modifier or special result can matter differently for each blocker, but the roll is still one roll.

### EVERY ATTACK HITS MEANS NO ROLL IS NEEDED.

If a present effect says every attack hits, the attacker does not need attack dice to score the hit. Even a weapon or ability with 0 attack dice can hit while such an effect is active.

## **MELEE IS THE MINIMUM ATTACK RANGE.**

Attack range cannot be reduced below 1. If an effect forces an explorer's range to 1, bonuses do not raise it unless the effect explicitly allows that.

## **ETHEREAL UNITS CANNOT BE TARGETED, BUT THEY ARE NOT IMMUNE.**

An ethereal unit cannot be chosen as a target unless a present effect allows it. It can still be affected by anything that does not target it directly: traps, exploding barrels, attacks against adjacent units, attacks against any or all units in a scope, or other indirect effects.

## **WITHIN X SPACES USES DIRECT COUNTING.**

Count spaces directly from the source, ignoring obstacles and barriers. This is the same style of count used for nearest, not the movement-path count used for closest.

## **SEVERAL ATTACKERS STILL RESOLVE ONE AT A TIME.**

If an effect makes multiple explorers attack, resolve one explorer's attack completely, including applying its one roll to all affected blockers, then resolve the next explorer's attack.

## **MONSTERS AND MOVEMENT**

Mindless monsters are not trying to be clever. They follow priority, legality, and written instructions, even when a player sees a stronger tactical move.

## **A SPECIFIC MOVEMENT INSTRUCTION OVERRIDES THE USUAL HUNT.**

If a monster ability tells it to move toward a particular thing, such as rubble or a spawn space, it follows that instruction instead of moving toward the closest explorer.

## **LEGAL MONSTER ABILITIES ARE PLAYED IN PRIORITY ORDER.**

A mindless monster first tries active abilities from the current horror event, then active abilities on its monster card in printed order. If an ability can be played and has a legal target, the monster plays it even if the final effect will be weak, wasteful, or partly null.

## **ABILITY PRIORITY BEATS TACTICAL VALUE.**

A mindless monster does not skip a legal first ability just because its second ability or a different move would be more dangerous. It follows the order it is given.

## **DEFAULT ABILITY SCOPE IS USUALLY THE CURRENT MAP TILE.**

If an ability has an owner or activating unit and does not define a target or wider scope, it applies on that unit's current map tile. Effects that say on any map tile, all map tiles, within X spaces, or targetable by override that default.

## **IMMOBILE MONSTERS DO NOT MOVE.**

An immobile monster does not move because of a monster move effect from an event, chapter, or other ability. It also follows the normal immobile restriction against being pushed or pulled.

## **MINDLESS MONSTERS DO NOT MOVE THEMSELVES INTO PITS.**

A mindless monster's path never deliberately enters a pit. Scheming monsters, controlled monsters, and effects that let players move a monster can move it into a pit unless another rule prevents it.

## **MOVEMENT TRIGGERS COUNT EACH ENTERED SPACE.**

A trigger such as *When this monster moves* resolves once for each space the unit enters.

The starting space does not count. Push and pull count as movement for this purpose; teleport does not.

Explorers resolve ambiguity. Whenever the rules leave a genuine ambiguity, including ambiguous mindless monster behavior, the explorers choose the resolution. Use that choice to the explorers' advantage.

## **SPACES, SPAWNS, AND TELEPORTS**

The map has only a few kinds of spaces, but several of them look more complicated than they are. Treat the printed terrain by its rules category, not by the artwork around it.

## **PITS DESTROY UNITS THAT ENTER THEM BY MOVEMENT EFFECTS.**

A unit moved, pushed, pulled, or teleported into a pit is destroyed. This applies to explorers and monsters alike, even if the figure, card art, or equipped item seems capable of flight.

## **TELEPORT DESTINATIONS MUST BE PASSABLE.**

You cannot choose an obstacle or barrier as the destination space for a teleport. You may choose a passable occupied space; after doing so, place the unit on the nearest passable, unoccupied space from that chosen space.

## **SPAWNING ONTO AN OCCUPIED SPAWN SPACE USES THE NEAREST OPEN SPACE.**

If the nearest spawn space is occupied, the explorers choose the nearest passable, unoccupied space from that spawn space. If there is a tie, they choose among the tied spaces. This can be a pit space; spawning is not the same as a mindless monster moving itself into a pit.

### «PLACE» IS NOT «SPAWN».

If an effect tells you to place a monster, do not check the spawn limit. Place the monster as instructed and resolve its «enters play» abilities. If an effect tells you to spawn a monster, use the normal spawn rules, including the spawn limit.

### DECORATIVE MAP ART IS NOT TERRAIN.

Decorative lines, lava, color bands, or printed ornamentation on a tile are not walls, pits, barriers, or obstacles unless the map tile rules identify them as such.

### MARKERS, EVENTS, AND CARD ORDER

Lasting effects and event cards often cause confusion because their physical markers make them feel different from ordinary abilities. The timing is still exact.

### THE NUMBER IN (X) IS THE STACK LIMIT, NOT THE DURATION.

A lasting effect lasts until the normal reset point: explorer lasting effects until the start of the next Explorer phase, and monster or horror lasting effects until the start of the next Horror phase. The number only says how many times that effect can be stacked at once.

### MARKERS SIT ON THE ACTIVATING CARD.

Explorer markers are placed on the card that created an explorer lasting effect, and return to their player boards at the start of the Explorer phase. Horror markers are placed on the monster or horror event card that created the effect, and return beside the horror event deck at the start of the Horror phase.

### «ENTERS PLAY» MEANS THE CARD WAS ACTUALLY INVOKED, SPAWNED, PLACED, EQUIPPED, OR PLAYED.

For event cards, «enters play» abilities resolve when the event is invoked or reinvoked. If an effect merely places an event as the current event, or moves it into position without saying to invoke or reinvoke it, its «enters play» abilities do not resolve.

### REORDER DOES NOT REQUIRE A CHANGE.

When an ability says to look at cards and reorder them, the resolving explorer may put them back in any order, including the order they were already in.

When a rule feels too broad, check whether the card actually narrows it. If it does not, let the broad reading stand. Machina Arcana's strangest interactions usually come from the rules doing exactly what their shortest words say.

## PLAYING SPECTRUM OF MACHINA ARCANA

To understand **Machina Arcana** is to learn that a card is rarely only what it first appears to be. A simple weapon can be read as an attack, then as a timing tool, then as a way to bend targeting, markers, essence, and turn order.

Take the *Circular saw*. It looks like a plain melee weapon, but the same card opens differently at each level of rules understanding.



### THE SPECTRUM

1. Spend 2 stamina to attack a melee target with 2 high attack dice.
2. After that attack is resolved, whether it hits or misses, reduce the target's armor by 1 until the start of the next Explorer phase.
3. To track that lasting effect, place an explorer marker on the *Circular saw*.
4. While the marker is there, you can remove it to play the second ability: the armor reduction ends, but you attack any adjacent unit with 2 low attack dice.
5. You can lose essence to increase the attack roll from either ability.
6. With 6 stamina, you can make six attacks: play the first ability, remove the marker for the second ability, and repeat that cycle three times.

7. The second ability costs no stamina, so it can be played outside your turn, between actions. If a monster moves adjacent, remove the marker and strike before its next action.

8. The second ability can hit an ethereal monster, because it does not target that monster.

9. If the monster you care about is ethereal and cannot be targeted by the first ability, you can use the first ability on another melee target, even yourself, another explorer, or an exploding barrel, to place the marker.

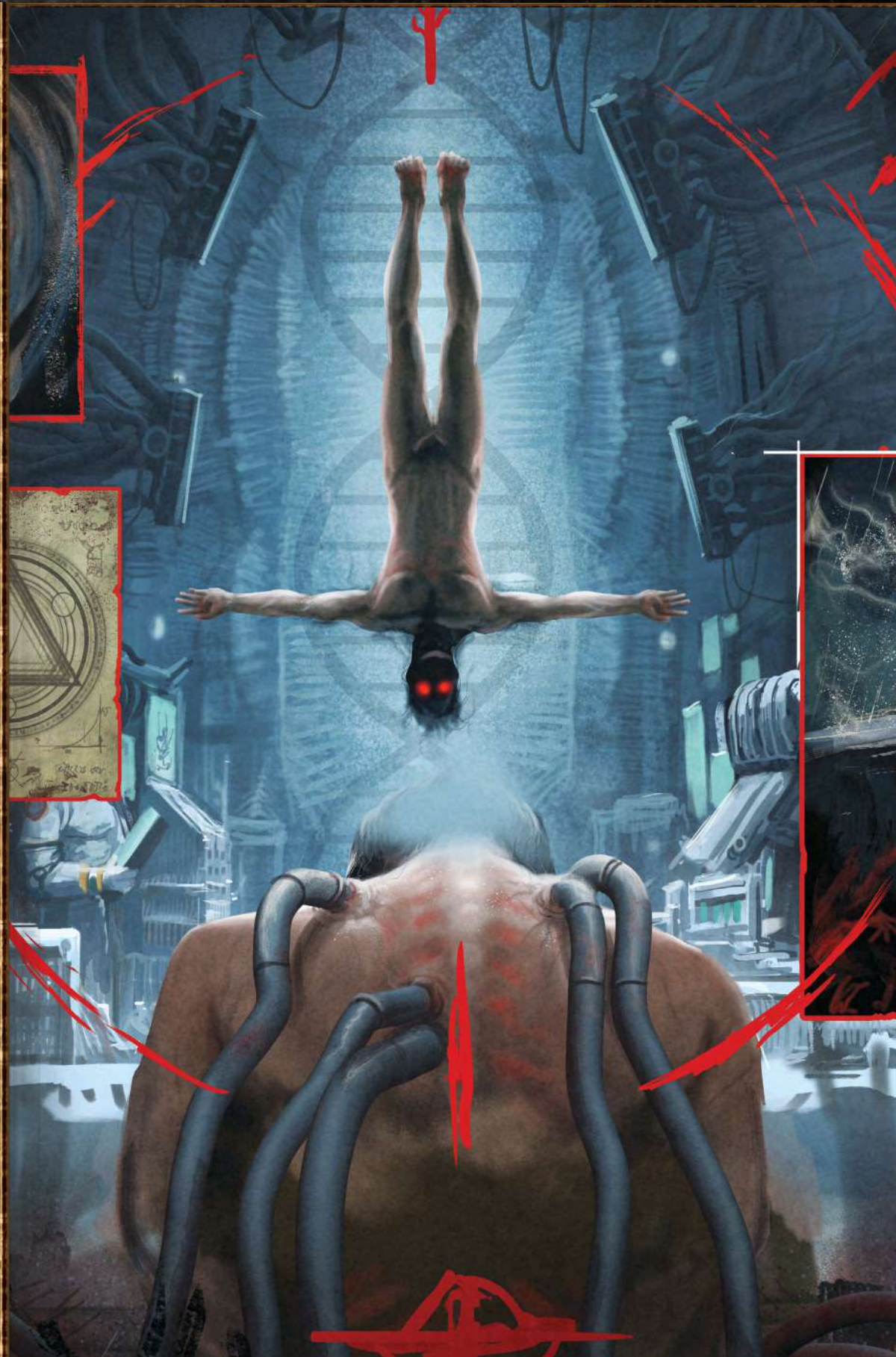
10. You can even attack any adjacent map space, passable or not: you won't hit anything, but the marker is still placed. If you use the second ability on another explorer's turn, both you and that explorer can spend essence to increase the roll: you because it is your attack roll, and they because it happened on their turn.

### COMMON MISTAKE

The armor reduction from *Circular saw's* first ability applies after that attack is resolved. The first attack does not benefit from its own armor reduction; later attacks that round can.

### MARKER REMINDER

If you remove the marker to play *Circular saw's* second ability, the armor reduction ends immediately.





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