



WHAT'S NEW AND HOW TO PLAY IT

You already know **Machina Arcana**. Vivarium changes nothing about how you move, fight, equip, or survive. Everything in this leaflet is an addition on top of the rules you already use, the Manual remains the final word on everything else.

Read this once before your first Vivarium game. It takes five minutes and will save you a dozen table arguments.

WHAT VIVARIUM ADDS

PLAYS EXACTLY AS BEFORE: NO NEW RULES NEEDED

New explorers • New monsters • New items • New explorer and horror events

NEW: EXPLAINED IN THIS LEAFLET

Four scenarios told through a new chapter format • Three new decks used while exploring: terrains, environments and encounters • Chapter tokens • Step abilities.

THE FOUR SCENARIOS

RUINS AMONG THE VOID

A mining colony carved into a drifting asteroid, built above an arcanic ruin whose ore sings inside the skull.

CONTAMINATION

An orbital station where the crew has been retuned into something patient and wrong, and the orbit is already decaying.

SHAPE OF GOD

A House of Bliss facility, a cave that should not open where it opens, and an arcanic reactor that must be shut down.

FEATHER OF THORNSMOUTH

A fogbound port town, a vanished woman, and a white feather that pulls at your senses like a hook.

Each scenario supports several lengths and variations. **The Guidebook** lists them all. **Adreama Forge** lets you tailor a session before you sit down.

<https://machinaarcana.com/forge/>

CHAPTERS IN VIVARIUM

Vivarium chapters use no new ability rules. What changes is the shape of the chapter itself.

BOTH HALVES OF THE BOARD ARE IN PLAY

Until now, the chapter board's top section carried the illustration and the bottom section carried the chapter. In Vivarium, a chapter occupies both sections, and either one may carry illustration, lore, or abilities.

When a new chapter is played:

- ◆ Resolve all «enters play» abilities on the top card, in the order printed.
- ◆ Then resolve all «enters play» abilities on the bottom card, in the order printed.

PLAYED CHAPTERS AND READ CHAPTERS

Standard Vivarium chapter

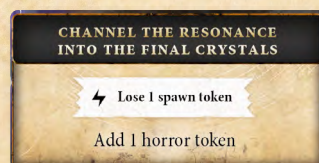
If either card shows a spawn rating or a horror rating, you play that chapter as normal. Progress by activating a chapter space, or, if the chapter is blocking, by fulfilling the condition printed on its top or bottom card (see «Progress to the next chapter», Manual p29).

Pass-through Vivarium chapter

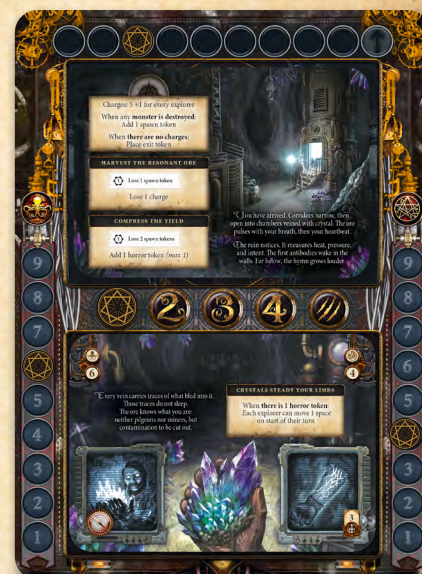
If neither card shows a rating, the chapter is there to be read. Read the lore on both cards, resolve any «enters play» abilities, and advance to the next chapter immediately. These chapters are intermissions in the story, not stretches of play.

ABILITY PANELS

Several abilities may be grouped together under a heading. The heading is flavour. It names the moment; it does not bind those abilities together, change their timing, or make them resolve as one. Read every ability inside a panel exactly as you would read it alone.



Panel with one active ability



Standard Vivarium chapter



Pass-through Vivarium chapter

CHOICE PANELS

Some panels present two or more options and ask the group to pick one. The explorers decide together, the chosen option applies to everyone, and the options not chosen are simply ignored for the rest of that chapter.



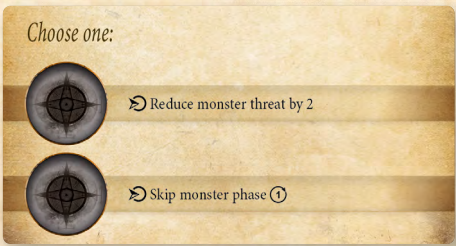
COUNT TOKENS ON CHAPTER AND ENCOUNTER CARDS

Some panels are printed with a count token space:

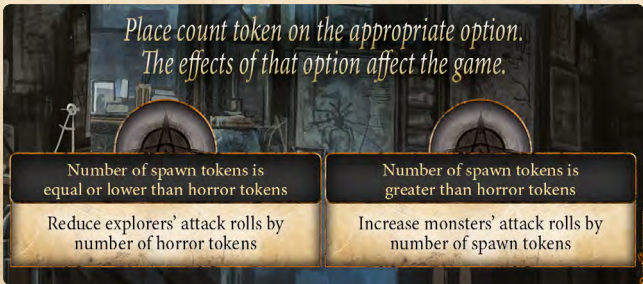
- Charges: track a chapter's charges on the card itself



- The chosen option: mark the option the group selected



- The determined option: mark the option whose condition is met



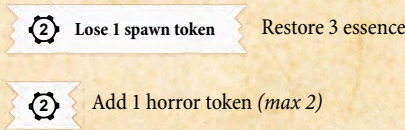
- Locked options: options unlock in printed order. Each time an ability unlocks the next one, place another count token on it. An option is available only while it carries a token



CHAPTER TOKENS

Vivarium chapters track their own pressure with **SPAWN TOKENS** and **HORROR TOKENS**, kept beside the chapter board.

They are a resource, not a rating. Chapter abilities add them, spend them as a cost, and can define how much can a current chapter hold:



They are placed next to the spawn (spawn token) and horror (horror token) rating sliders, and remain there even when the chapter changes.



EXPLORING A NEW MAP TILE

Vivarium adds three decks that come into play whenever an explorer explores a map tile (see *Manual p34*) (the 2-stamina action at an unexplored edge).

Keep the three decks together beside the playing area.

After the new map tile is joined to the playing area, the exploring explorer resolves all three, in this order:

- ♦ **TERRAIN:** draw the top terrain card, flip it to either face, and place it on one of the four edges of the new map tile.
- ♦ **ENVIRONMENT:** draw the top environment card and connect it to any unexplored edge of the new map tile.
- ♦ **ENCOUNTER:** draw the top encounter card, place it face up next to the encounter deck, and resolve it. It is now the current encounter.

This is not resolved during setup, or when placing a map tile through resolving a *place entry token* effect.

TERRAINS

A terrain card is a small map tile of its own, six spaces long and four deep, that overwrites the edge of the map tile it is placed on.

- ♦ Two of its sides carry a printed wall edge, so there is only one way to orient it against a map tile edge. Place it flush with the edge you chose.
- ♦ It may not be placed where it would cover a chapter space or a spawn space. Choose a different edge.
- ♦ Once placed, a terrain is permanent. It cannot be moved, removed, or replaced, and it is treated as an override of the map spaces beneath it.

Because it overrides, a terrain rewrites the layout it lands on. Walls and doors printed on the terrain are added; walls and doors on the two shared borders (the 6-space border and the 4-space border it shares with the map tile) are removed unless the terrain prints its own on those borders. A corridor can become a room, and a sealed room can open.



ENVIRONMENTS

An environment card is connected to an unexplored edge of a map tile and describes the character of that place.

- ♦ It affects its connected map tile only, and it affects every unit on that map tile (explorers and monsters alike).
- ♦ If that edge is later explored, move the environment to another unexplored edge of the same map tile. It may be placed on an edge holding an entry or exit token.

- ♦ An «enters play» ability on an environment resolves for each unit that enters that map tile, and that unit is the activating unit. This includes monsters, and includes units arriving by teleport. Some effects will do nothing for a monster; resolve what applies and ignore the rest.

COUNTDOWN ENVIRONMENTS

A few environments carry charges and lose one on each new round. When the last charge is lost, that map tile is destroyed: monsters on it are banished, the tile is flipped and placed on the bottom of the map tile deck, and the environment card and any terrain on that tile leave play with it (see «Scroll map tile», *Manual p34*). Explorers still standing on that map tile are destroyed (see «Explorer death», *Manual p19*).



ENCOUNTERS

An encounter is a single dramatic moment: a machine, a bargain, a wounded thing in the dark. It behaves like a chapter or explorer event, not like a room.

DECK AND PLACEMENT

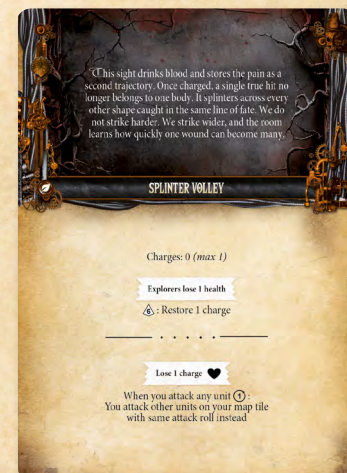
The encounter deck is face down. The current encounter sits face up beside it, on top of the previously destroyed encounters (the same arrangement you already use for events). Drawing a new encounter covers the old one, and the old one's abilities end.

EVERYONE IS IN REACH

An encounter is never local to the map tile that triggered it, and may be resolved by any explorer in play, whatever map tile they stand on. An effect on explorers or monsters reaches every one of them, across every map tile. For the length of an encounter, treat all units as though they shared a single map tile.

ACTIVE ABILITIES

Active abilities on the current encounter work exactly like those on the current explorer event: any explorer may play them, from anywhere, for as long as that encounter is the current one.



STORED CARDS

Some encounters let the group set a card aside for later:

☞ Take top 4 explorer event cards, reorder them, then for each card: Explorers can lose 2 health to store it on this card instead of on top of destroyed explorer event deck

Place stored cards on top of the encounter card. They are not in play and have no effect while stored.

A second ability uses them:

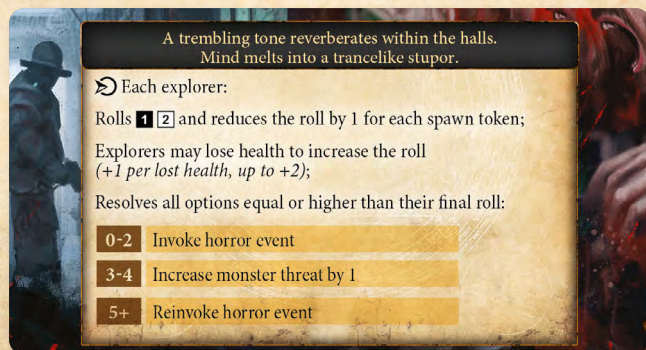
If there is stored card ☞
Choose one, then place it on top of destroyed explorer event deck;
Reinvoke explorer event

STEP ABILITIES

Some Vivarium «enters play» abilities (on chapters and encounters) resolve as a short sequence rather than a single effect. They are always the same three steps.

- ♦ **ROLL** One explorer rolls the dice the ability names.
- ♦ **ADJUST** Any explorers, across all map tiles, may improve that roll by paying the printed price (usually health or essence). The allowance is always printed in full: (+1 *per lost health*, up to +2). Several explorers may contribute to the same roll, up to the printed maximum.
- ♦ **RESOLVE** The rolling explorer resolves the option matching the final, adjusted roll. Read the option carefully: most abilities resolve the single matching option, but some resolve every option above or below the result, and some resolve options by a count rather than a roll.

Once, or once each. «*Any explorer*:» means the sequence happens a single time. «*Each explorer*:» means it repeats in full (roll, adjust, resolve) for every explorer in play, one after another. The other explorers may help adjust every one of those rolls.



QUICK ANSWERS

Q: We placed the first map tile and drew three cards. Was that right?

No. Setup places an entry token; it does not explore. The three decks are used only when a map tile is explored.

Q: An encounter says «any explorer». Does it mean anyone, or explorer who explored the new map tile?

Anyone in play, on any map tile. Encounters ignore map tile boundaries.

Q: Can a terrain cover a chapter space or a spawn space?

No. Pick another edge of the new map tile.

Q: Our terrain removed a wall we were counting on. Is that a mistake?

No. A terrain overrides what is under it, including walls and doors on the two borders it shares with the map tile.

Q: We explored the edge our environment was on. Now what?

Move the environment card to another unexplored edge of that same map tile. An edge with an entry or exit token is a legal home for it.

Q: A monster walked onto the environment's map tile. Does its «enters play» ability trigger?

Yes. Any unit entering the map tile is the activating unit.

Q: A panel heading groups three abilities. Do they resolve together?

No. The heading is flavour. Each ability keeps its own type, timing and cost.

Q: Can I spend health to improve someone else's roll?

Yes, if the ability allows adjustment by losing health. Any explorer on any map tile may contribute, but the total adjustment from all explorers combined can't exceed the maximum printed on the card.

Q: Can we play a stored card straight out of storage?

Only through the ability from that encounter. A stored card is out of play until an ability on that encounter uses it.

Q: Two contradictory effects are in play. Which wins?

The same principle as always: the explorers resolve all ambiguity.

