

DARK MINIONS

A FANTASY DICE GAME BY ALAN M. NEWMAN

FOR 3-5 PLAYERS (BEST WITH 4) - AGES 10 TO ADULT - 45 TO 60 MINUTES

HORDES OF DARK MINIONS HAVE DESCENDED UPON THE COUNTRYSIDE, EAGER TO SECURE THEIR REPUTATION AS A SCOURGE ON MANKIND. THE DESPICABLE EVIL MARAUDERS ATTACK EVERYWHERE IN SEARCH OF CONQUEST. THE CITIZENS ARE HELPLESS AND WILL SOON BE OVERWHELMED. DEATH AND DESTRUCTION AWAITS ALL THOSE IN THE PATH OF THE EVIL ONES...

IN THE ADVANCED GAME, THERE ARE ALSO 15 MINION OVERLORDS, EACH WITH A UNIQUE SPECIAL POWER THAT MAY AFFECT THE PLAY OR THE OUTCOME OF THE GAME. THEY PATIENTLY WAIT TO ENTER PLAY AND WREAK THEIR TERRIBLE HAVOC. USING THEIR ABILITIES WISELY IS ONE OF THE MANY KEYS TO VICTORY.

WHAT'S IN THE BOX:

- 18 Town (pentagon) tiles
- 15 Skull tiles
- 44 VP tiles (22x 1VP, 22x 2VP)
- 3 Black dice
- 3 Red dice
- 1 White die
- 21 Tower tiles in three colors (White, Gray & Black)
- 5 Experience card & Player Aid Tiles
- 5 Black disks
- 20 small cubes in each of five colors
- 6 large octagons in each of five colors
- 1 large Graveyard tile
- 15 Overlord cards (NOT used in the basic game)

Also included Demon Lords expansion with:

- 3 Overlords (red border),
- 1 Town tile (red border)
- 1 Yellow die.

cubes (each=1 minion) and octagons (each=5 minions) in the chosen color and two special starting VP tiles, a 1 VP and a 2 VP.

Town tiles are placed face down in a stack on one side of the playing area. First, shuffle the tiles marked "The End" and place them face down. Then, shuffle the tiles marked E and place them face down on top of the tiles marked "The End." Repeat this procedure with the tiles marked D, C, & B.

For a three or four player game, take the 3 Town tiles marked A and place them face up in the center of the table (in any order). For a five player game, add the first Town tile from the stack. With three or four players, there will be 3 Towns in play. With five players, there will be 4 Towns in play.

FOR 3 PLAYERS - use 5 of each color Tower tile.
FOR 4 PLAYERS - use 6 of each color Tower.
FOR 5 PLAYERS - use 7 of each color Tower. If there are any Tower tiles not in use, put them back in the box.

The small square on each Town has a number, usually a "3." In that case, place 1 White Tower tile, 1 Gray Tower and 1 Black Tower next to each of those Towns. If the number shown on the Town is a "4," place 1 White Tower, 1 Gray Tower and

PREPARATION:

Each player receives an Experience card in his choice of color. Place a disk to indicate level 1 on the Experience card. Players receive a supply of



Although these special starting tiles are worth 1 & 2 VPs respectively, they may be discarded to Respawn minions from the Graveyard or to re-roll dice.

1 Black Tower and an extra Tower, which will be the same color as the number in the circle (not the color of the circle the number is in).

The Graveyard is placed nearby. The small VP tiles are placed near the playing area.

OBJECTIVE:

The players represent the forces of evil and attempt to vanquish medieval towns, gaining Vanquish Points (VPs). Most VPs wins.

AN OVERVIEW OF PLAY:

The most evil player takes the first turn. If the player who is the most evil cannot readily be determined, the oldest player is assumed to be the most evil and takes the first turn. Players

begin their turn by rolling the number of dice to which they are entitled. At the start of the game, each player is at Level 1, which allows the roll of 3 Black dice. However, at any level, players may elect to roll the White die *instead* of either a Black or Red die (*see section titled "Rolling the White die"*). Results are interpreted as "up to" whatever number is rolled, so that a "6" may represent a +1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6. As the game progresses, the players may "level up" experience by capturing and then turning in complete sets of Towers (1 White, 1 Gray & 1 Black) to earn the right to roll the more valuable Red dice and even the White die as a bonus extra die. Although each die is typically considered separately in an attack on a Town or Tower, a roll of +1 may be added to any other die (note: 1s are marked as "+1").



DIE ROLLS MAY BE USED IN THREE WAYS.

1. Attacks on Towns - minions are placed at Towns

After rolling the dice, the player may place as many of his minion cubes next to (not on) any Town tile(s) as the dice separately allow. For instance, a player controls 2 Black dice and a Red die. He rolls a 3, a 4 and a 7. *Each die can attack only one Town (exception: a +1 or +2 on the White die can always be added to a Black or Red die).* The player might place 3 of his minions next to any Town tile, 4 next to any other Town tile and 7 next to yet another Town tile. The cubes (x20) each represent 1 minion and the octagons (x6) each represent 5 minions, thus the player controls the equivalent of 50 minions at the start of the game.

When Towns are finally captured, all minions attacking the Town die and are sent to the Graveyard.



2. Respawn minions in the Graveyard - minions are returned to the player's supply

Dice rolls may also be used separately or together to respawn minions that have gone to the Graveyard. For instance, a player rolls a 3, a 4 and a 7. He might use the 4 and 7 to attack two Towns or capture a White and Black Tower (see next paragraph) or use the 4 to respawn 4 minions from the Graveyard back to his supply or he might use the 3, 4 and 7 together to respawn 14 minions.



3. Capture Towers to level up Experience - minions die and go to the graveyard

A player may elect to use a single die roll of 4 or higher and 4 minions to capture a White Tower in any town. A single die 5 or higher and 5 minions may be used to capture a Gray Tower and a single die roll of 6 or higher and 6 minions may be used to capture a Black Tower. Remember a +1 may always be added to another die. If a player rolls a "6" and chooses to capture a White Tower, she need use only 4 minions for that purpose. *Only the number of minions actually required for the capture need be used.*



Note: a player may not capture a Tower from any Town he has attacked on the same turn and may not attack a Town from which he has just captured a Tower.

When a player has a complete set of Towers (1 White, 1 Gray & 1 Black), the Towers are discarded immediately to level up and progress is noted on the Experience card by moving the disk. On subsequent turns, the player may roll the dice according to the new experience level. *Note: a player may never hold more than 4*

Towers or 2 of any single color. Hoarding is not a good idea. If the supply runs low and a Tower is not available to place on a new town, it will be taken from a player who has 2 Towers in the needed color. If more than one player has 2 of the needed color, they roll the dice according to their experience level. The player with the low roll loses the Tower.

Once a player commits to his attacks, captures or respawning, the move is considered to have taken place. Players may not take back any part of their commitment.

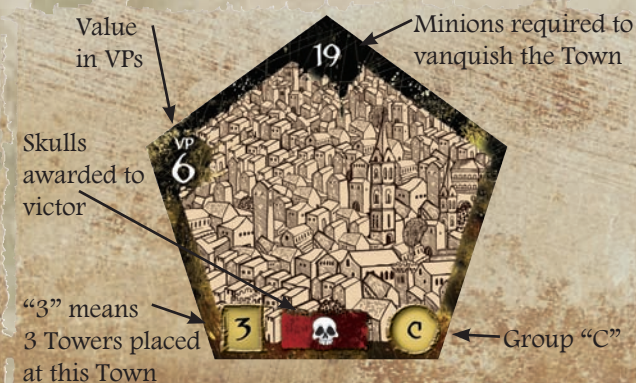
VANQUISHING TOWNS:

Each Town has a value listed at the top of the tile representing the total number of minions needed to vanquish the Town. As soon as this number is equaled or exceeded by all minions attacking the Town, any remaining Tower tiles are returned to the supply and the Town tile is awarded to the player that committed the most minions to the attack.

The winner also receives the number of skull tiles shown. The second place player receives a 2 VP tile and the player that triggered the event (even if he was in last place) receives a 1 VP tile. *Ties for 1st and 2nd place are ALWAYS resolved by the tied players rolling at their current Experience level.*

TOWN TILE:

All minions used to vanquish the Town are then sent to the Graveyard but may be respawned later. AT THE END OF THE TURN, the next Town tile on the stack is then turned face up and placed next to the others. Place Towers next to the Town according to the circled number on the new tile.



RESPAWNING MINIONS FROM THE GRAVEYARD:

Since each player's supply of minions is limited, minions that have died and gone to the Graveyard must eventually be retrieved (respawned). Minions can be respawned from the Graveyard back to the players supply either by using die rolls or by discarding Skulls previously won. The value of any die roll will send that many minions back to a player's supply from the Graveyard and the player may use any or all of his dice to respawn minions if he wishes.

OR

- If a player discards 1 Skull tile on his turn, 10 of his minions are returned to the player's supply.
- If a player discards 2 Skull tiles on his turn, 20 of his minions are returned to the player's supply.
- If a player discards 3 Skull tiles on his turn, all of his minions are returned to the player's supply.

OR

The 1VP and 2VP tiles each player received at the start of the game can also be discarded as if they were single Skulls but the player will also be discarding 1 or 2 VPs!

ROLLING THE WHITE DIE: (OPTIONAL)

Players may always elect to roll the White die INSTEAD of one of the dice their level typically affords. If a number is rolled, it may be added to the number rolled on one of the other 2 dice. If a Skull is rolled, the player may respawn up to 10 minions from the Graveyard. Why use this option? Using the White die increases the chances of capturing a Black Tower or to respawn minions.

However, when a player reaches level 5, the White die may be rolled as a *bonus* in addition to all 3 Red dice. At level 5, the +1 and +2 may be added to one of the other 3 dice *or* used alone as a 4th die. If a Skull is rolled, the player may retrieve 10 minions from the Graveyard *or* take a Skull tile, which is worth a VP at the end of the game.

WHAT IF I DON'T LIKE MY DICE ROLL?:

Remember those 1 and 2 VP tiles each player received at the beginning of the game? There are also dice symbols on the tile. If a player doesn't like his dice roll, he may choose to re-roll any or all dice by discarding either of these tiles but bear in mind, the player will be discarding VPs!

EXTREMELY IMPORTANT!

Once a player has committed his dice to any attacks, captures or purchase of Overlords (see advanced game for all references to Overlords), the commitment should be stated and there is no turning back. The attacks, captures or purchases are considered to have occurred!

It is suggested that players get used to placing the dice at the Town(s) being attacked, at the Tower(s) being captured, at the Graveyard or near the Overlord cards to show his intent and to finally declare all commitments by saying "Done."

Once any Overlord's abilities are announced, the ability is considered to have occurred and cannot be taken back.

WAYS TO SCORE VPS:

- Towns = face value of VPs
- Experience level = VPs according to legend
- 1 VP and 2 VP tiles = face value
- Each skull remaining in a player's possession = 1 VP

END GAME CONDITIONS:

The game ends immediately when a player announces correctly that he has achieved the required end game total. VP totals are NOT public knowledge!

- In a 3 player game the required end game total is 50 VPs
- In a 4 player game the required end game total is 40 VPs
- In a 5 player game the required end game total is 35 VPs

The player with the most VPs is declared the most evil and wins the game.

- If there is a tie, the tied player who has vanquished the most Towns wins.
- If there is still a tie, the tied player with the highest Experience level wins.
- If there is still a tie, the tied players split the victory.

OPTIONAL—FOR A LONGER GAME:

Instead of the usual requirement for a set number of VPs to trigger the end of the game, play that if one of the Town tiles marked "The End" is in play and any Town is vanquished, the game ends immediately. As before, the player with the most VPs is declared the most evil and wins the game.

Ties are resolved as previously stated under 'End Game Conditions.

DARK MINIONS:

THE ADVANCED GAME

We suggest that the basic game be played until players are thoroughly familiar with the basic game mechanics. The Advanced game adds 15 Overlord cards and many new strategies.

During the setup, the 15 Overlord cards are shuffled face down and the top four are dealt out face up beside the face down stack. On a player's turn, he may return any one Overlord to the bottom of the stack face down and draw another to place face up as a replacement.

BRINGING AN OVERLORD INTO PLAY:

An Overlord can only be brought into play by paying its cost, not with minions, but with the dice. If the player's roll is sufficiently high, multiple Overlords may be purchased. When an Overlord is purchased, minions are re-spawned from the Graveyard corresponding to the number in the gray circle. Once in play, the card can be ACTIVATED by announcing the Overlord's ability at anytime, however, the ability of certain Overlords are triggered as soon as they enter play.



Number of minions respawned from the Graveyard

Dice roll cost to “purchase” Overlord

Overlord’s special power is used once and then card is discarded.

This Overlord remains in play as long as the “turn cost” is paid.



Turn cost: additional minions must be placed on the card each turn. When the player chooses to stop placing minions, or can no longer place minions, the Overlord is discarded and all placed minions return to the player’s supply.

Three cards in the basic set also have a “Turn Cost” as shown above the card’s descriptive text and icons. “Turn Cost” is an upkeep cost that must be paid at the beginning of the player’s turn by placing X number of minions next to the card. These cards may remain in play for many turns. Although the upkeep may be high, the continuing effect of the Overlord may be well worth the turn cost. However, if the turn cost is not paid, the card is discarded. At that time, the minions used to pay the upkeep return to the players supply.

The lower portion of the overlord cards have an iconic description of their power and possibly a small amount of explanatory text. A list of the Overlords follows:

DESCRIPTION OF OVERLORDS

(Name - Purchase Cost, Minions Respawned; Power)

THE GARGOYLE - 4, 1; Any one Town the player chooses requires 5 less minions to vanquish. *The Gargoyle remains in play until the end of the current player’s turn.*

THE GHOUL - 4, 2; All Towns require 3 additional minions to vanquish. *The Ghoul remains in play until the player’s next turn begins.*

THE BLOOD ELF - 3, 2; The player may send up to 5 minions from each other players supplies to the Graveyard. Announce anytime.

THE DARK WIZARD - 3, 1; The player may choose to re-roll any or all of their dice.

THE LICH - 5, 0; The player may respawn up to 10 minions from the Graveyard.

THE WITCH - 5, 3; The player may turn in any 3 towers for a level up.

THE INEXPLICABLE - 4 , 2; The player chooses a Town and returns 5 minions from each other player at that Town back to their supply.

THE SCOURGE - 6, 1; Subtract 1 from every die rolled (1s become zero). *The Scourge remains in play until the player’s next turn begins.*

DREAD SKELETON - 6, 2; (Turn cost: 4) The player moves to the next higher Experience level. *Dread Skeleton remains in play.* If the player cannot place 4 minions on Dread Skeleton or chooses not to place 4 minions, Dread Skeleton is discarded and the player loses an Experience level. Minions placed on Dread Skeleton are returned to the supply.

G’RAHL - 5, 2; The player may add 1 to every die he rolls on his turn.

THE WEREWOLF - 3, 2; (Turn Cost: 2) The player may reroll 1 die each turn. *The Werewolf remains in play.* If the player cannot place 2 minions on the Werewolf or chooses not to place 2 minions, the Werewolf is discarded. Minions placed on the Werewolf are returned to the supply.

THE WYVERN - 7, 0; The player may move up to any 5 minions from any Town(s) to any other Town(s).

THE BLACK KNIGHT - 6, 2; The player chooses an opponent, who skips his next turn. *The Black Knight remains in play until the turn is skipped.* The Black Knight is then discarded.

THE MINOTAUR - 7, 0; The player sends 5 of his minions to the Graveyard and takes another turn after this one.

THE UNDEAD - 8, 3; (Turn Cost: 5) At then end of each turn, you may respawn up to 3 minions from the Graveyard. *The Undead remains in play.* You must place 5 minions on the Undead each turn. If the player cannot place 5 minions on the Undead or chooses not to place 5 minions, the Undead is discarded. Minions previously placed on the Undead are returned to the supply.

Overlords are “purchased” with die rolls only. Unlike attacks on Town and captures of Towers, minions are neither committed nor sent to the Graveyard. Any amount not used on the dice is lost, thus a 6, 7 or 8 may be used to pay for The Black Knight, any roll of 3 or more may be used to pay for The Blood Elf and any two dice totaling 7 or higher may be used to pay for The Wyvern.

With the exception of Overlords that have a “Turn Cost,” Overlords are not actually in play until their ability is announced and activated. Abilities may be announced and activated AT ANY TIME.

Overlords with “Turn Costs” are considered active as soon as they are purchased. Turn costs are not paid on the turn the Overlord is acquired but are paid at the beginning of all succeeding turns or the Overlord must be discarded. To pay the Turn Cost, the player need simply place the required number of minions on or near the Overlord card. The Turn cost must be paid before the dice are rolled but it is the player’s choice to pay or not. When the Overlord is finally discarded, all minions used to pay the Turn Costs are returned to the player’s supply. Certain cards may remain in play for more than one player’s turn. These cards should remain visible to all.

Some situations involving the resolution of powers may appear complex. *Always choose the easiest or most logical resolution.* The resolution of either the capture of a Tower or the successful vanquishing of a Town does not occur until all effects have been tallied and completed. For example; Player A rolls a 5, a 3 and a 4. He retrieves 5 minions, places 3 minions next to one Town and places 4 next to another Town, triggering the exact number of minions required to vanquish the Town. But Player B then announces his use of The Ghoul to require that the Town require 5 additional minions to vanquish. And then Player A responds by announcing the use of The Wyvern to move 5 of his minions from another Town to the Town where he triggered the event. The event takes place just as Player A planned.

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Publisher: Z-Man Games, Inc.
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DARK MINIONS: FAQ

Q: Can I recruit more than one Overlord on my turn?

A: Yes, in theory, it is possible to recruit all four on display.

Q: Can I vanquish a Town and immediately put a new Town into play and attack it?

A: No, the new Town is not placed until the end of your turn.

Q: Can I use both the starting 1VP and 2VP tiles to respawn minions and/or reroll the dice on the same turn?

A: Yes.

Q: Does Dread Skeleton increase my VP total as well as Experience?

A: Yes, as long as you pay the turn cost.

Q: Can I hold on to a complete set of Towers until my next turn or must I turn them in right away.

A: Complete sets of Towers are turned in immediately for a higher Experience level.

Q: I rolled an 4 and 5 and used 7 “pips” to recruit The Wyvern. Can I use the leftover 2 “pips” for any other purpose?

A: No. The leftover portions of dice rolls used to buy Overlords evaporate with the ill wind that blows across the kingdom.

Q: I just captured a Town and I am the only one who attacked. Do I get everything?

A: You get the Town tile, any skull(s) and the 1VP tile for triggering the event. If there is no one in second place, no one wins the 2VP tile.

Q: As soon as I captured a Town tile worth 8VPS, I hit 40VPS, enough to win the game. Can I claim victory immediately?

A: You can claim the end game condition, but if others were involved in the vanquishing, they get their rewards as well. If Johnny's second place 2VP tile puts him at 41VPs, he wins.

Q: When do I pay “Turn Costs,” like for the Dread Skeleton or the Undead?

A: All “Turn Costs” MUST be paid before you roll the dice or you lose the Overlord.

Q: Can either the Gargoyle or Ghoul take preference in resolving?

A: It won't matter, since both must be resolved. The end result is that the chosen Town will require 2 less minions to vanquish.

Q: Does the Scourge also reduce the White die totals?

A: Yes, it reduces all dice, including any used in subsequent expansions.

Q: Can I use G'rahl's power in a tiebreaker rolloff after a Town is vanquished?

A: NO! G'rahl, the Werewolf and any other Overlords with dice modifiers are used only for the primary roll on a player's turn!

Q: Can I use a skull to respawn minions to pay a Turn Cost before rolling the dice?

A: Yes. You could also use one of your starting VP tiles or the Lich's ability to respawn minions.

Q: Can I use my Minotaur to get back the turn another player wants to take away with his Black Knight?

A: No, but you can use it next turn.

Q: I use my Minotaur and another player plays his Black Knight.

A: You still have to pay the 5 minions but will receive only one of the two turns.

Q: I used my starting 1VP and 2VP tiles to take an additional roll and to respawn 10 minions. Can I use other 1VP and 2VP tiles to do the same?

A: No. The starting tiles are specially marked so they can be used for that purpose.

Q: What if we run out of skulls?

A: Use any marker as a substitute, including real skulls, if any are near by.

Q: Are VP totals public knowledge?

A: NO! Never. Be mean. Scowl. Say “Grrrr” if another player asks.

Q: Can I make “change” with minions?

A: Yes, at anytime.