Print the poker cards

A complete card-based adventure for one Guide and 2–4 Heroes. Match six relics, open the Vault, defeat its final Guardian and escape.

1 Choose one color edition

Use all three PDFs from either COLOR or BLACK AND WHITE. Do not print both editions. These cards use the simplified Vault rules; do not mix in the larger Hero kits.

CARD DECK • 34 pages

Print US Letter, portrait, Actual Size / 100%, double-sided, flip SHORT EDGE. Keep page order.

There are 101 cards, not 102: the last paired sheet has one empty position. Test pages 1–2 first; every cut card must measure 2.5 × 3.5 inches.

No double-sided printer?

Print fronts (odd pages) and backs (even pages) separately at 100%. Cut individual cards first, match fronts and backs by title, then join their blank sides. All Defense backs are identical. Back-sheet positions are reflected: do not glue whole sheets in same-cell orientation. Use the same opaque backing, thickness and feel for every Defense card.

1 inch
test square

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Prepare the Guide and Heroes

THIS GUIDE • 20 pages

Print SINGLE-SIDED on ordinary paper. Pages 1–13 are the rules and Guide reference, including the sample layout on page 3; pages 14–19 are the six whole clue paintings. Cut only the six relics on page 20. Keep relics flimsy, with no card backing or lamination.

THROW TARGETS • 31 pages

Print SINGLE-SIDED at 100%. Follow its two-page assembly guide. Print the Guardian plus only the Heroes you are using, or all five targets for a complete set. Preserve landscape tiles and all original dimensions.

2 Choose Heroes and gather supplies

Two Heroes: Pippa and Orin are a useful starting pair. Add Mara for three, then Virnoc for four; other combinations are allowed. Give each Hero their identity, Skills and listed ordinary Defense.

Guardian gets N+1 of each ordinary Defense type (N = Hero count). Start PWR 0, reusable Skills READY and use checks clear. Keep TEMP aside until granted. Mara starts with her shield.

What is in the deck?

5 Hero/Guardian identities • 8 Hero Skill blocks • 1 Half-Orc grant • 5 item/equipment cards • 2 linked Advance cards • 12 shared/Guide references • 68 Defense cards = 101 cards.

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GUIDE SETUP • Sample layout

Six paintings • Six paper relics • Example setup, not a new sight rule

Painting + pedestal | Cup + paper relic | Vault | Start | Exit

Guardian patrol route

Illustrative spotting area along patrol

Plastic cups base-to-base, paper in upper cup

Use actual line of sight and agreed cover. Keep real exits and carrying paths clear.

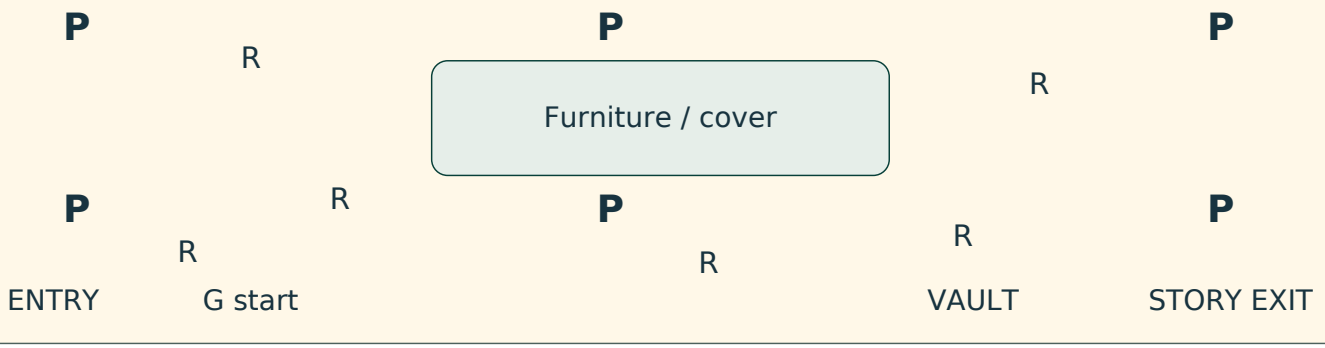
Adapt this example to your room. Keep walking routes and real exits clear.

Set up your real space

3 Mark the scene

Prepare six safe reachable pedestal surfaces. Put a whole painting beside each. Scatter the six loose relics away from their correct matches; record starts on page 12. Choose entry, Vault, fictional exit, cover and a slow Guardian patrol. Keep actual exits clear.

P = painting + pedestal. R = relic start. Adapt the room; leave clear walking paths. These are layout marks, not puzzle answers.



4 Prepare targets and rehearse

Use the full-size illustrated floor targets, a hula hoop, or five blank sheets taped into a cross for each target. Put a name at the center of each whole target; that center is the creature’s game position, not the player’s body. Every sheet in a cross is HIT, including its center; a toss inside a hoop or touching its rim is HIT. Move the whole target with its creature. Agree one shared Step; about 3 feet is optional. Support/trigger distances run from your target center to the other target’s nearest edge.

Supplies: pencils/erasers, scissors, tape, one rolled sock or loose paper ball, a safe household treasure, and two 16 oz plastic cups per active carrier. Rehearse one soft toss and carry. Anyone may call Pause. Never run, climb or physically push anyone.

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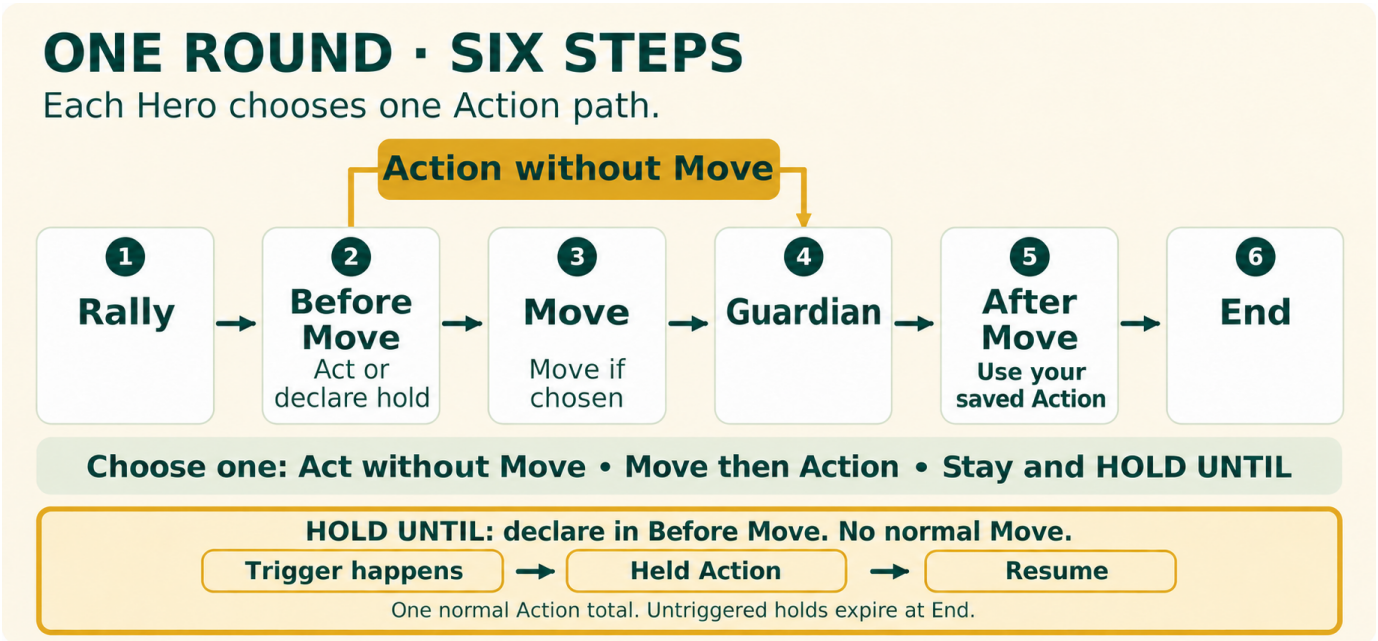
Take a round together



Before the Guardian spots someone, explore freely. In combat, use this six-part order.

1 Each creature chooses: gain 1 Power (PWR), OR return one eligible USED reusable Skill to READY. Normal Rally never restores Defense. Clear once-per-round checks.

2 A Hero may spend their normal Action now and stay, or declare HOLD UNTIL and stay. You cannot take a normal Action and then normal Move.

3 Heroes who saved their Action for AFTER MOVE may move up to 2 shared Steps, including choosing not to move.

4 The Guide moves the Guardian up to 1 Step, then uses one normal Action. After the Vault opens its normal Move is up to 3 Steps. Advance has its own separate movement.

5 Heroes who saved their normal Action for this phase may use it now. Each Hero still gets only one normal Action this round.

6 Finish end-of-round effects. An unused held Action expires. There is no extra Action, healing or Defense reset.

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Held Actions and recovery

HOLD UNTIL • a Hero option

Before Move, name a specific observable trigger, the Action and its target or target-selection condition. Commit your normal Action and do not take normal Move this round. When the trigger happens, pause and check all the Action's requirements. If legal, resolve it immediately, then continue the interrupted activity if possible. Pay costs and apply the actual READY or USED rule only when it executes. No execution means no cost or state change. Lose an unused hold at End unless an explicit rule says otherwise. Holding gives no extra Action and is not automatically a Response. The Guardian has no held Action.

Your Action, responses and Power

A basic attack or an ACTION Skill spends your one normal Action. A RESPONSE or FOLLOW-UP uses only its printed trigger, cost and limit; it is not a second normal Action. Picking up or placing a relic costs no Action. Record your current PWR in pencil; gain or spend it only when a rule says. Start at 0 PWR. To use a Skill you need its legal trigger and target, an available use and enough PWR to pay. READY alone is not enough; PWR cannot go below 0.

When a Guardian is defeated

That fight ends. Restore all Heroes' ordinary Defense to starting totals, ready reusable Skills and renew once-per-combat uses. Set PWR to 0 and remove leftover TEMP. At the next fight, add only the TEMP each Hero card says to add then. Hiding, search, patrol and opening the Vault do not earn this reset. See page 13 for the final transition. Pippa's Full Rest retry does not refresh.

Declare the target before a legal Interpose, then toss at the actual defender. On HIT, allow legal Stack the Odds before resolving the draw. Once-per-adventure rewards do not refresh on defeat.

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Attack and defend

Make one attack

All basic attacks are HARM 1, cost 0 PWR and use one normal Action. HARM means damage.

Choose a visible enemy and declare a melee or ranged attack. Never attack through cover or target a hidden creature. No attack distance is listed in this starter. Both use one underhand soft toss at the enemy’s floor target from the agreed safe place beside your own target. A toss resting in or touching a marked target is HIT; outside is MISS. Pause to retrieve it; retrieving does not move your Hero in the game. A MISS still spends the Action and committed costs.

On a HIT draw one Defense piece

The defender draws one eligible READY piece at random, without seeing or choosing it. Resolve that piece below. Keep READY and USED separate; each player manages their own supply, and the Guide manages the Guardian. Mix well. Multi-draw replacements follow the Skill’s exact return instructions.

Life, Armor or Dodge: Move that drawn ordinary piece to USED. It takes HARM 1.

Wild: Move it to USED for this fight. It prevents ordinary HARM.

Granted TEMP: It prevents ordinary HARM, then is removed instead of going to USED.

TEMP and Knocked Out

Add a granted TEMP piece to that creature’s READY draw supply. TEMP is not ordinary Life. A Guardian with no READY ordinary Life is defeated. A Hero with no READY ordinary Life is Knocked Out, even if TEMP remains: no Actions, Move, Responses or self-healing. An ally can restore ordinary Life with a legal healing Skill. The Hero resumes only opportunities still available this round; no extra Action or turn. Healing never exceeds starting ordinary Life.

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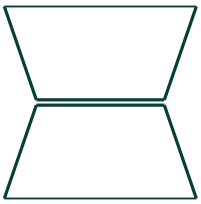
Guide the carry challenge

Say: “Each picture hides a shape. Carry the matching relic to its pedestal. Match all six to open the Vault. Then defeat its final Guardian and escape with the treasure.”

5 Teach the carry test

Recommended: put two plastic cups bottom-to-bottom, lower cup upside down and upper cup upright. Put one flimsy relic in the upper cup. Balance the lower cup on your palm, or hold only the lower cup for an easier test. Touch neither the upper cup nor the relic while carrying. Set the equipment down safely to load or unload. Pickup and placement cost no Action.

No cups? The Guide may use another tested household balancing challenge, such as a loose paper sheet on an unbreakable plate. Demonstrate it first and agree what counts as a touch or drop. No glass, breakables or sharp utensils. Use the same agreed challenge for everyone.



A carry mistake alerts the Guardian

Touching the upper cup or relic, dropping the relic, or the upper cup falling: pause and reload safely, without recovery. The Guardian investigates that place. The alert does not reveal hidden Heroes or start or reset combat by itself. Use normal spotting.

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Patrol relics and early reform

Spot pursue search patrol

Use the Guardian’s actual view, not the Guide’s private knowledge of hidden Heroes. Before combat, players move freely while the Guardian slowly patrols. Spot a Hero and start rounds. Before a new fight begins, each time Pippa is spotted, look away for one second, then back: hidden now, let her go; still visible, start rounds. This chance does not renew during patrol or search in the same unfinished fight.

Pursue and attack only on legal turns; spotting grants no extra attack and hiding grants no extra move. Lose sight of everyone? Check the last place a Hero was seen, then scan in a full circle. Spot someone: resume pursuit. Nobody: return to patrol and pause rounds. Resume free movement and exploration. Combat rounds are paused, but the fight has not reset. Next spotting resumes at the next round’s normal Rally. No extra Rally income or recovery while paused. Pausing does not add TEMP.

Return a misplaced relic safely

Before the Vault opens, retrieve a visible moved relic only when no Hero is visible. Leave correct matches alone. First reach it; retrieval uses the Guardian’s normal Action during rounds, or resolves during free patrol. Pause while the player sets down the equipment safely, then return the relic to its recorded start. Never grab from a player. Correctly matched relics stay locked; incorrect placements follow the Guide’s choice.

When a relic is placed correctly, the Guide says it locks into place. Leave that relic on its pedestal. If the placement is incorrect, the Guide may return it to its recorded starting location or let the Heroes carry it to another pedestal using the agreed carry test.

An early defeat

After Heroes receive the page 6 reset, reform at the original start with N+1 of each ordinary Defense type (N = Hero count), PWR 0, Advance READY and normal Move 1 Step. At the next fight, add only the TEMP each Hero receives then. Final reform: page 13.

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The Guardian and Defense draws

One Guardian only. Starting and maximum Life, Armor, Dodge and Wild each equal Hero count + 1. Do not count the Guide.

2 Heroes	3 Heroes	4 Heroes
3 L 3 A 3 D 3 W	4 L 4 A 4 D 4 W	5 L 5 A 5 D 5 W
12 ordinary pieces	16 ordinary pieces	20 ordinary pieces

Start and Rally

Start with 0 PWR and Advance READY. Normal Move is up to 1 Step before the Vault opens, up to 3 Steps after the final reform. At Rally gain 1 PWR OR ready Advance. Rally does not restore Defense. Write current PWR: _____ Advance: ☐ READY ☐ USED

Normal Action choose one

Basic attack: one melee or ranged attack, HARM 1, 0 PWR. Make one soft toss at a Hero’s floor target; it can MISS. No listed attack distance. Or use Advance on page 11. Returning a misplaced relic is another Action when its conditions on page 9 are met.

A fair Defense draw

Use identical opaque backs, size, thickness and feel for all 68 Defense cards. Bags are optional. Use a large-enough container or a well-shuffled face-down READY stack, with a separate USED place. Never draw from the Skill, item or Guide cards.

Remix the READY supply whenever a piece is returned or added: Stack the Odds, healing, TEMP grants and resets. A returned piece may be drawn again. Do not put a known card on top for the next draw. TEMP stays aside until granted and is removed when drawn, not placed in USED.

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Advance and deck stock

Advance • 1 Action • 1 PWR • becomes USED

1. Check. Choose an unbroken legal path exactly 1 Step long, ending where the Guardian can make a legal melee attack.

2. Commit. Spend its one normal Action and 1 PWR; mark Advance USED. This movement is separate from normal Move.

3. Move. Go exactly 1 Step. Then check that the Guardian can still act and the chosen target is alive and a legal target.

4. Attack. Make one basic melee HARM 1 attack. Mara may Interpose; resolve the attack against its actual defender.

5. Push on HIT. Unless the defender is Orin, move them 1 Step directly away, respecting obstacles. Never physically push a person or automatically move a newly Knocked Out defender.

Keep the interruption rules

A movement stop or defeat cancels unfinished Advance without a refund. A defeated Guardian cannot act; reforming gives no extra turn or attack. A MISS does not push. Wild or TEMP does not stop the push. Orin is immune; Mara is not when she Interposes. The push adds no HARM. Finish Advance before resolving Skills triggered by completing its movement; a declared held Action still resolves when its declared trigger occurs.

Defense stock and printed materials

Defense stock: 21 Life, 17 Armor, 13 Dodge, 14 Wild, 1 TEMP Life and 2 TEMP Armor. Enough for any included party of 2–4 Heroes plus the Guardian. TEMP reminders never grant a second copy of the same effect.

The six clue paintings and six flimsy relics stay off poker stock. Targets stay full-size. This edition keeps the simplified rules and selected Skills; extra abilities from the larger kits are not included.

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Guide answers and card handling

Record original relic starts. Never label pedestals with answers. Offer an area hint, then a detail, before giving the answer.

Guardian start: _____ Vault: _____ Exit: _____

Goat → Triangle Start: _____
Triangular rock patch on the upper-middle mountain.

Owl → Square Start: _____
Rear window high in the middle of the stone wall.

Bee → Hexagon Start: _____
Large honeycomb cell at upper right in the hollow tree.

Feather → Rectangle Start: _____
Full book cover at lower right of the desk.

Fish → Circle Start: _____
Complete stone rim around the central garden pool.

Moon → 12-point star Start: _____
Small inset on lower-left pedestal beneath the armillary sphere.

Keep details visible

Each Hero has an identity with PWR space, two Skill blocks, and any separate grant/equipment card. Keep both faces accessible. Record READY/USED in pencil or turn a USED reusable Skill sideways; do not hide needed details by treating every card back as a state. Advance has two cards for one Skill: keep Advance Details visible; only the main card tracks its use.

Relic handling reminder

Use the agreed careful-carry test on page 8. A relic can rest on any pedestal, but only its hidden-shape match counts. The Guide keeps all original starts on page 12.

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The Vault finale and rewards

All six match: open the Vault

The Vault stays open. Reveal one matching reward per participating Hero (see the reward section below); let them equip and read it. Continue only when everyone understands their item and is ready. This teaching pause grants no Action, movement, healing, Rally, recovery or item activation. Put the household treasure safely beside the Vault.

Form the final Guardian

Reform one fresh Guardian at the fictional exit whether the old one was active or defeated. Restore N+1 of each ordinary Defense, PWR 0, Advance READY and normal Move 3 Steps. Only one Guardian; no extra turn or attack. Never block a real exit.

Fight still underway: Heroes keep current Defense, TEMP, Skill uses and PWR. No reset; do not add their starting TEMP again.

Last fight ended and none restarted: Heroes already reset; add only the TEMP they receive at a new fight.

No fight began yet: add only the TEMP each Hero receives then.

Win: final defeat ends reforms. Take treasure and escape. All Heroes Knocked Out? Pause, record the result and agree any retry; no automatic free reset. Once-per-adventure items never refresh.

Give the right Vault reward

Virnoc: Second-Swing Knot. Pippa: Borrowed Footfall Anklet. Orin: Twin-Dawn Pendant. Mara: Far-Reach Clasp. Prepare only rewards for participating Heroes. Mara’s Shield is starting equipment, not a fifth treasure reward.

All four rewards are once per adventure: turn the item card face down after use. A Guardian defeat never refreshes them. Keep each related Skill’s normal trigger, cost and limits except the exact change printed on the item.

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Clue painting 1 of 6

Keep this page whole. Place beside one safe pedestal. Keep the entire picture visible.

Clue painting 2 of 6

Keep this page whole. Place beside one safe pedestal. Keep the entire picture visible.

Clue painting 3 of 6

Keep this page whole. Place beside one safe pedestal. Keep the entire picture visible.

Clue painting 4 of 6

Keep this page whole. Place beside one safe pedestal. Keep the entire picture visible.

Clue painting 5 of 6

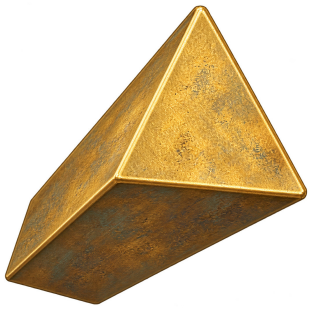
Keep this page whole. Place beside one safe pedestal. Keep the entire picture visible.

Clue painting 6 of 6

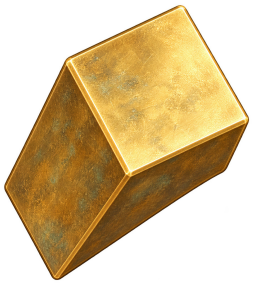
Keep this page whole. Place beside one safe pedestal. Keep the entire picture visible.

Six flimsy relics

Cut the six dashed outer rectangles. Ordinary paper only: no backing, laminating or stiffening.

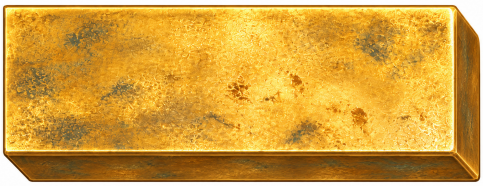


Triangle



Square

Hexagon



Rectangle

Circle

12-point star

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