



DARK DEALINGS

Rulebook Second Printing

Being an overlord...

For masters of dark arts, life is not fair. After a few singed villages and poisoned wells, the locals have hired stout heroes of the land to bust down your gates and evict you from your castle of horrors.

Luckily, you are in contact with the Dark Masters, beings man was not meant to know. They are ready to provide you dastardly traps, potent spells, and monstrous minions to help defend your castle, if you can demonstrate your bravery by facing the toughest heroes.

Now it's a competition to see which overlord can withstand the siege. Well... you never liked your neighbors that much anyway.

Card Anatomy






Hero Card



Defense Card



A **Armor Value**
The value your total strike needs to equal or exceed.

B **Vulnerabilities**
The types of defenses you can defeat the hero with.
   Traps  Spells  Minions

C **Challenge Value**
The higher this value, the better defenses you'll get from the Dark Masters.

D **Combat Ability**
Special abilities the heroes use against you.

A **Strikes**
Vulnerability icons indicate the type of strike. The numbers indicate how devastating the strike is. Each time you strike, rotate the card clockwise.

B **When the trash can icon is on the current strike, discard the card after striking.**

C **Rank**
The relative strength of a card. Also, used during solo play.

Game Overview

In Dark Dealings, each player controls an evil overlord, desperately trying to fend off attacking heroes.

The players first use illusion and trickery to determine which heroes will attack each of them. They then brag to the Dark Masters about the heroes coming to attack, earning defenses in exchange. Finally, they fight off the invading heroes using these defenses, striving to last as long as possible.

Victory

When all overlords have faced all of their incoming heroes, the overlord who defeated the most heroes wins.

If more than one overlord defeated the same number of heroes, the winner is the overlord with more Defense Cards remaining. If still tied, the winner is the tied player who defeated the hero with the highest challenge rating during the game.

Hardcore Mode has a different Victory condition. See page 7.

Set-Up

1. Shuffle the Hero Cards and Defense Cards separately, placing each deck facedown within reach of all players.
2. Deal nine Hero Cards to each player.
3. Randomly determine a first player, giving them the dark tower first player marker.

You're ready to play!

Sequence of the Game

The game is played in three phases: the Hero Phase, the Defense Phase, and the Combat Phase.

Hero Phase



During the Hero Phase, the overlords use illusions to send some heroes to their neighbors, while luring others to their own door. They can either strive to draw in weak heroes who are easily defeated, or they can take a risk with stronger heroes to impress the Dark Masters.

Each player takes their nine Hero Cards in-hand. Players simultaneously choose two heroes, placing these cards in a facedown pile in front of them. They then simultaneously pass the remaining Hero Cards to the player on their left.

Repeat this process until each player is down to three Hero Cards left in-hand. They again choose two cards to place in their pile. The final remaining card is discarded to a face-up discard pile beside the deck of hero cards.

Players may look through their facedown pile of Hero Cards as much as they like during the Hero Phase.

Defense Phase



During the Defense Phase, the overlords contact the Dark Masters. These frightening beings have a collection of powerful defenses perfect to fend off invading heroes. But they are only impressed by strength and fearlessness; overlords who lured weak heroes will earn weak defenses in return.

The players take the eight Hero Cards from their pile in-hand.

The first player draws a number of Defense Cards from the deck equal to twice the number of players in the game, laying them face-up.

Each player chooses two of their Hero Cards and places both facedown in front of them. When all players are ready, they simultaneously flip their two cards face-up.

The player who played the revealed Hero with the highest Challenge Value selects one of the available Defense Cards and places it in front of them face-up. Then the player who has the hero with the second highest Challenge Value selects a Defense Card.

Players continue taking Defense Cards in descending hero Challenge Value order until all have been taken.



In the above 2-player example, Jenny's hero's Challenge Value (54) is the highest, so she will pick a defense first. Ken's Challenge Values (30 and 24) are the next two highest, so he will pick second and third. Jenny will get the last card.

As Hero Cards are used to pick Defense Cards, those heroes are placed in a facedown pile in front of the player, in the order they were used to draft.

When all of the Defense Cards have been taken, another set of Defense Cards equal to twice the number of players is drawn, and the process is repeated. This continues until players have played all of their heroes, and have earned eight Defense Cards.

A note about expansions: *Expansions add new Hero Cards, some sharing Challenge Values. If two or more Hero Cards are played with identical Challenge Values, the tied players look at their OTHER heroes played that turn. The player who chose the hero with the higher challenge value goes first.*

Combat Phase

When all players are ready, the first player flips up the topmost Hero Card from their pile. They must either **FIGHT** this hero, or let them rampage through their castle, **DISCARDING** them immediately (*ignore hero abilities*). Keep in mind, a player may look at the heroes in their pile at any time, but must keep them in order while looking.

Heroes are vulnerable to one, two, or three defense types, as indicated on the left of their card. Possible defense types are Spell, Minion, or Trap. A Defense Card's type is defined as the type indicated on its current side.



Traps



Spells



Minions

Players may strike with one or more Defense Cards whose current type matches one of the hero's vulnerabilities. The total Attack Value of striking Defense Cards must equal or exceed the Armor Value of the Hero Card. If a player achieves this, the Hero Card is defeated and placed in a Defeated Hero Pile. Each

In the below example, the hero to defeat is a Halflings card vulnerable to minions and traps, with a defense of 1. Halflings are tricky because they must be defeated twice!

Struck for 2
with a type
of minion!



Struck for 1
with a type
of trap!

This hero isn't
vulnerable to
spells!



This Minion defense is
turned to its second side.



The trash can icon
means this defense
has no more strikes
after this one.



This defense
cannot be
used.

player creates their own such pile.

Each striking Defense Card is rotated one turn clockwise. If this would turn it to a side that does not have any icons, the Defense Card is instead trashed and placed in a discard pile near the defense deck.

Each Defense Card may only strike **ONCE** against a given hero (unless it is a Knight -- see **Knights**).

Players may strike with as many Defense Cards as they like, as long as each defense type matches a vulnerability of the hero. It may be useful to strike with an additional Defense Card in order

to rotate that defense to a more advantageous side.

If a player defeats their current hero, they set it aside to form their Defeated Hero Pile.

If a player is unable to, or chooses not to, defeat their current hero, they discard it, forming a common discard pile for everyone's undefeated heroes. The hero's ability is ignored if it is discarded.

When each player has faced one hero, that combat round is completed. Begin a new round, again starting with the first player.

These steps are repeated until all heroes are defeated or discarded.

Victory (a reminder)

When overlords have faced all of their pesky heroes, the player with the most defeated heroes wins!

If more than one overlord defeated the same number of heroes, the winner is the overlord with more Defense Cards remaining. If still tied, the winner is the tied player who defeated the the hero with the highest challenge value during the game.

Hardcore Mode

Hardcore Mode is for those experienced players who want to increase the difficulty a bit. You like to sweat. We get it.

No Peeking

Overlords cannot look at their hero pile **for the rest of the game** after using the hero cards to draft defenses. The last hero they drafted with will be the first hero they face, and so on.

Player Elimination

During the Combat Phase, **if a player is unable to defeat their current hero**, they are evicted from their castle. Evicted players are skipped during the remaining combat rounds. **Don't discard the hero that defeats you.**

Victory

When heroes have evicted all other overlords, the overlord left standing is the winner, the sole master of evil in the land. If more than one overlord survives all the attacking heroes, or if all remaining overlords are evicted in the same combat round, the winner is the overlord with more Defense Cards remaining. If still tied, the winner is the player whose last hero had the highest challenge value.

Solo Play

Deal out five Hero Cards in a top row, and five Defense Cards in a bottom row (*you may deal 3-4 cards instead for a faster game, or 6-7 for more strategic choices*). Order each row (heroes by Challenge Value, defenses by Rank), high to low from left to right, leaving tied cards in the order they were dealt. You will end up with the strongest hero paired above the strongest defense, and the weakest hero paired above the weakest defense.

Now, choose one hero, AND a defense that is below that hero OR further to the right of its position (lower ranked). Turn the Hero Card face-down to start your hero pile and place the Defense Card in front of you as normal. Repeat this for a second hero and defense. Discard the remaining three cards from each of the two rows.

Repeat this process three times, giving you 8 defenses and 8 heroes by the end. Proceed to the Combat Phase as normal. Defeat as many heroes as you can! Try hardcore mode for an extra challenge.

Ability Clarifications

Hero Cards

Thief

Cannot be defeated by strikes whose Attack Value total exceeds their Armor Value. The total Attack Value **must equal their Armor exactly**.

Halflings

Must be defeated twice. Each Defense Card may still only strike once, so players will need at least two Defense Cards to defeat them.

Wizard

When flipped, **trash one of your Defense Cards BEFORE striking**, placing it on the discard pile.

Berserker

After defeating this hero, **trash every striking Defense Card**, placing it on the discard pile, even if that card has strikes left.

Knight

When striking this hero, **individual Defense Cards can strike more than once**, using some or all of their sides.

Ranger

No special ability, but higher than average armor.

Defense Cards

Heavy Hitter

Before this defense strikes, the player **must rotate a DIFFERENT defense**. The other defense is not considered to be striking, so it may still strike.

FYI: A Berserker would not cause you to destroy a Defense Card that's rotated for this reason.

Detour

Place a flipped Hero Card on the bottom of your Hero Pile **and flip a new Hero Card**. This occurs before Hero abilities are activated (*i.e. Wizard or Dragon Warrior*)

Booster

This card gains a +1 Attack Value bonus per **OTHER Defense Card of the same current type** you control, including cards with multiple types.

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Quick Reference

Hero Phase

Each player receives 9 Hero Cards. Pick two to keep and pass the rest to your left. Continue until all players have 8 heroes. Discard the last one.

Defense Phase

A number of Defense Cards equal to twice the number of players is revealed. Players choose two of their heroes and reveal simultaneously. Players choose defenses according to their chosen heroes' Challenge Value (highest to lowest). As heroes are used, they are placed facedown to form a pile.

Combat Phase

Starting with the First Player, each player reveals their topmost Hero Card, which they must now either fight or discard. If a player cannot defeat their hero, it is discarded.

Game End

When all heroes have been faced, the overlord who defeated the most heroes wins!

