



SWORDS & SOULS

WELCOME TO THE
UNDERWORLD.

- Ἅδης

YOU WERE SO CLOSE.

Your party was one adventure away from reclaiming the stolen Amulet of Morgoth and returning it to the rightful king of Riverwood. But none of you were prepared for the elder dragon waiting at the end of the dungeon, nor its fiery breath that did you in at the last second.

And now you're all stuck in the Underworld: dark, damp, and packed with more ghosts than you've seen in any ancient tomb during your adventuring days. You're just another one of those ghosts now, and those days are over.

OR ARE THEY?

It turns out that Hades, Lord of the Underworld, is bored with his work, and he's offered you and your heroic friends the chance of a lifetime: entertain him by fighting one last epic battle, and you can return to the world of the living. But here's the catch—there's only one ticket back. And you're going to have to fight your friends for it.

For one last time, take up the shield of the valiant Guardian, employ the Assassin's sneak attack, or crack open the Arcanist's dusty book of tricks to prove your worth in free-for-all combat. Earn Hades' attention by inflicting pain and he'll throw some new weapons and spells your way. Only the most aggressive hero will earn passage to the surface and the life they've left behind.

**BLOOD WILL BE SHED.
LEGENDS WILL BE BORN.
FEELINGS WILL BE HURT.**

OBJECTIVE

Swords & Souls is a card game for 3-6 players. You and your opponents will take turns drawing and playing attack cards against each other. If your opponent can block or dodge your attack with a card of their own, they're safe... for now. If not, they'll take damage and you'll earn obols, the silver currency of the dead, which you can use to buy more cards from the arsenal. Finish an opponent and you will earn a soul fragment. Collect 3 soul fragments to become a hero of legend, return to the world of the living, and win the game!

CARDS AND TOKENS

Before you begin, separate the game cards and tokens based on their type.



Hero cards (6) come in various colors, have a gold or silver border, and show 5 small icons in the description box. The colorful side of these cards is the front, and the gray side is the back.

Starter cards (30) are the cards each hero starts the game with. There are 5 for each hero, and you can tell which hero the card belongs to by looking at the icon in the bottom right corner.





Arsenal cards (35) include everything else. These make up the equipment, techniques, magic spells, and other tools you'll need to achieve victory. These cards are shuffled together to form the arsenal, and their obol cost is displayed in the bottom right corner.

Small heart/obol tokens (36) are red with a small heart on one side and silver with Hades' profile on the other. Each hero begins with 2 of these, flipped to the heart side.



Large heart/soul fragment tokens (18) are red with a large heart on one side and black with a fiery skull and crossed swords on the other. Each hero starts with 1 of these, flipped to the heart side.

SETUP

First, players must choose their **hero**. For each of the 6 heroes, gather their 5 starter cards and place the hero card on top. Choose a player to go first. Starting with that player and moving clockwise, choose a stack until all players have chosen. Put any unused hero stacks away; they will not be used for the rest of the game.

Shuffle the arsenal cards together and place them face down in the center of the table. Then draw 3 cards and place them side by side, face up, next to the deck to form the **arsenal**.

COMPONENTS AND SETUP - 3

Place the small and large tokens in a pile near the center of the table to form the **vault**.

Each player should place their hero card face-up in front of them, then shuffle their starter cards and place them face-down to form their own personal **deck**. Draw 3 of these cards to form your starting **hand**. Each player also needs to collect 2 small tokens and 1 large token, placing them heart-side up near their hero card.

When everyone's ready, the first player begins their first turn.



4 - SETUP

ON YOUR TURN

Each player's turn follows 3 basic steps:

1. **Draw** cards.
2. **Play** cards.
3. **Buy** cards.

Additionally, as soon as a player's turn is over, any player (including the player whose turn just ended and the player whose turn is about to begin) can play **instant** cards before the next player's turn begins. These cards are resolved in the order they are played.

1. Drawing Cards

Start your turn by drawing cards from your deck until you have **3** in your hand.

If you ever need to draw a card but you have no cards left in your deck, shuffle your discard pile and place it face-down to become your new deck, then continue drawing. It is important that you do this only when you need to draw. Reshuffling at other times may affect which cards get shuffled and can change game balance.

If you already have 3 or more cards in your hand at the start of your turn, do nothing during this step. You do not need to discard your additional cards.

2. Playing Cards

Playing a card from your hand is simple: put it face-up on the table and follow its instructions. After the effects of the card and any reactions to the card are finished, move the card to your **discard pile**.

TURN BASICS - 5

It is important that you discard the cards you play only **after** their effects are completely finished. For example, the Fortune card allows you to reshuffle your discard pile. The Fortune card itself should not be included in the reshuffle because it is still in play at the time.

All cards have one or more icons in the top left corner. These icons tell you when and how you can play the card.



Action: These cards can be played during your turn. Many of these are used to attack other players.



Reaction: These cards can be played when you are attacked by another player. These are used to block or dodge attacks.



Instant: These cards can be played in between other players' turns to catch your opponents by surprise.



Special: These cards have special instructions for when to play them.



Delay: After playing one of these cards, do not discard it immediately. These cards have special instructions for when to discard them.

6 - TURN BASICS



Treasure: When you acquire one of these cards, play it immediately and leave it on the table next to your hero card. These cards are never discarded and can be used every turn as long as they are yours, but they can be stolen by other players when they attack you.

Hero Talents

Each hero has a unique **talent** listed on the front of their card. These talents can be used as if they were a card in your hand. After using your talent, flip your hero card to the gray side. You will regain the use of your talent when you **respawn**.

3. Buying Cards

When you have finished playing cards, you can buy cards from the arsenal. **Obol** tokens are needed to buy cards. You can earn obols by using Favor cards or by attacking other players.

You can choose from the 3 face-up cards in the arsenal. The cost of each card is shown in the bottom right corner. To buy a card, return the appropriate number of obol tokens to the vault and add the card to your **hand**. During this step, you can buy as many cards from the 3 available as you can afford.

Note that buying cards is the final step of your turn; you cannot play action cards on the same turn that you buy them because the play step of your turn is already over.

After you finish buying cards, flip over new cards from the deck to replenish the arsenal. When you are done, your turn is over and play moves clockwise.

TURN BASICS - 7

Combat can become a flurry of action when players respond to each other with the right cards. Follow the action carefully one step at a time and always fully resolve one attack and its results before starting another.

If the target of your attack can't block or dodge it, they take **damage**. One of two things can happen when dealing damage to your opponent.

If your opponent has small heart tokens:

1. Your opponent must give you one of their small heart tokens, which you flip over to acquire an **obol**.
2. If your opponent has any **treasure** cards, take one of your choice and set it next to your hero card.
3. Your opponent recovers by **drawing a card** from their deck. This step is vital for protecting against multiple attacks.
4. Cards used during the attack are discarded to their owners' discard piles and play continues.

If your opponent has NO small heart tokens:

1. Your opponent is **defeated!** They must give you their large heart token, which you flip to reveal a **soul fragment**. You are one step closer to victory!
2. If your opponent has any **treasure** cards, take one of your choice and set it next to your hero card.
3. Your opponent takes the card that defeated them into their hand. It belongs to that player now.
4. Any remaining cards used during the attack are discarded to their owners' discard piles and play continues.

COMBAT - 9

Discarding Cards

At any time during the play or buy steps of your turn, you can freely discard any cards from your hand that you don't want to keep. This does not count as playing them. However, keep in mind that you will not be able to draw replacement cards until your next turn.

For each card that you discard this way, you may choose to move all of the displayed arsenal cards to the bottom of the arsenal deck and draw 3 new ones. You may continue buying from the new cards if you do this during your buy step.

COMBAT

Many cards tell you to **attack** a player. The player you attack can try to **block** or **dodge** by immediately playing a reaction card from their hand. Blocking an attack simply stops it from having any effect, while dodging an attack will send it along to the next player in the same direction.

For example, if the player to your left attacks you with a Sword card and you dodge it with a Dodge card, the player to your right would be the new target of the Sword attack.

If an attack comes to you from directly across the table and you dodge it, the attack moves clockwise. If a dodged attack ever reaches the player who started the attack, the attack fails.



8 - TURN BASICS AND COMBAT

Some cards inflict **double damage**. This means that you take one more heart token than usual, but you can still only take one of their treasure cards. Similarly, the opponent still only draws one card OR, if they are defeated by the attack, takes the card that defeated them.

RESPAWNING

If you were defeated by another player, you cannot play cards or be targeted by attacks until your next turn, when you respawn. Any attacks that would normally target you pass to the next player, as if you had dodged. However, other non-attack cards, such as Steal or Tax, can still affect you.

If you are defeated during your own turn, you cannot play any more cards or make more attacks that turn. However, you can still buy cards as normal.

To respawn, you will first recharge your hero talent by flipping your hero card to the colorful side (if needed), then refill your hearts by taking 2 small hearts and 1 large heart from the vault.

You can then begin your turn as normal.

WINNING THE GAME

As soon as any player collects **3 soul fragments** by defeating opponents, the game is over. The winning player gets to ascend to the mortal realm, free to return to the life they once lost!

10- COMBAT, RESPAWNING, AND WINNING

FAQ

Q: Can I attack myself with a card like Bow or Bolt?

A: No. You can only attack other players.

Q: Can I use a treasure card in the same turn I buy it or take it from someone else?

A: Yes. Feel free to steal the Gauntlet and immediately punch its previous owner.

Q: If an attack does double damage, does my opponent need to block or dodge twice?

A: No. One block or dodge will prevent the full attack.

Q: If a player Shatters my block, can I block again with another card?

A: Yes. Shatter only negates one block.

Q: If I defeat a player with the help of Shatter or Aim, do they get to keep that card, too?

A: No. They only keep the attack card that defeated them.

ABOUT US

Fridgecrisis Games is me, Jaron Frost, and my wife, Rachel. Thanks for buying our game! Your support means a lot to us.

We'd love to see you around online. Visit our website at www.fridgecrisis.com to find out about our other projects and shop for games and hand-painted miniatures. We're on Twitter at [@FridgeGames](https://twitter.com/FridgeGames), I stream on a regular schedule at twitch.tv/fridgecrisis, you can play Swords & Souls with players across the world on [Tabletop Simulator](https://www.tabletopsimulator.com), and we have a thriving Discord server at <https://discord.gg/k3gvHyJ>.

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