

*Remember, any Boss can kill adventurers. The real challenge of the game comes in outwitting and outbidding your fellow players. Only you can decide who will be the ultimate Boss Monster!*



### Contents:

- 75 Room Cards ♦ 30 Spell Cards
- 8 Boss Cards ♦ 41 Hero Cards

# How To Play

*Boss Monster* is the fast-paced card game of strategic dungeon building! As a Boss Monster, your goal is to lure hapless adventurers into your dungeon and consume their souls. But beware! Your dungeon must be as deadly as it is enticing, or the puny heroes can actually survive long enough to wound you. More importantly, you have competition. Adventurers are a hot commodity, and other Boss Monsters are all trying to outdo you with more precious treasures and more nefarious traps. Are you a bad enough dude to become the ultimate Boss Monster?

## Getting Ready



To play *Boss Monster*, you just need 2-4 players, the cards included with this game, and enough space to spread out your cards.

The first time you play, allow yourself at least 45 minutes. Once players are familiar with the cards, a game will typically take 15-20 minutes.



## Object of the Game

The goal of *Boss Monster* is to lure Heroes into your dungeon and kill them. Heroes who die in your dungeon are turned face down and count as "Souls." Heroes who survive give you "Wounds."

-  A player wins if he ends a turn with **10 Souls**.
-  A player loses if he ends a turn with **5 Wounds**.

A turn is not complete until all players have had a chance to act. In the case of a tie, the Boss with the lowest XP value wins (see p. 11).

# Quick Start Guide

If you're eager to get started and willing to learn as you go, start with these basics:

- **Set Up:** Start off by following the steps described in "Set Up" on page 6. The most important step is to make sure you're playing with the right number of Hero cards.
- **Take Turns:** Once the game is set up and everyone has built a Room, the first turn begins! Follow the "Sequence of Play" (on this page).
- **Spells:** To play a Spell card, just make sure it's the correct phase by checking the hammer (Build) or axe (Adventure) icon on the card. You may play any number of Spells each turn.
- **Rooms:** When building Rooms, keep in mind that an "Advanced" Room can only be played on a Room with a matching treasure type. An ordinary Room can be played on any Room type.
- **Heroes:** When luring Heroes, count up all the treasure icons in each dungeon. The dungeon with the most matching icons lures that Hero.

The first player to 10 Souls wins, but if you get 5 Wounds, you're out of the game!

# Sequence of Play

After setting up the game (see "Set Up" on p. 6), players participate in a series of turns. Each turn consists of five phases.

**Beginning of Turn:** Reveal Heroes (one per player), then each player draws a card from the Room Deck.



**Build Phase:** Each player may build one Room. Players take turns placing their Room cards face down. At the end of the Build phase, newly built Rooms are revealed.

**Bait Phase:** Heroes move to the entrance of the dungeon with the highest corresponding Treasure value (or stay in town, if Treasure values are tied).



**Adventure Phase:** Heroes travel through dungeons, and players acquire Souls or Wounds.

**End of Turn:** The turn ends and a new turn begins.

The following pages describe the card types, provide set up instructions, and detail each of these phases.

# Gameplay at a Glance

The heart of Boss Monster is dungeon-building! Your Boss card (1) sits at the right end of a side-scrolling dungeon, and each turn you can strengthen and refine it with Rooms (2). A Room's Treasure value determines what type of Heroes it attracts, while its Damage value determines its ability to destroy Heroes (by depleting their Health).

2. Each turn you can expand your dungeon by building a MONSTER ROOM or TRAP ROOM

1. Your Dungeon builds out from your BOSS card

3. HEROES enter your dungeon each turn. Defeated Heroes are turned face down and are worth Souls. Heroes who survive deal Wounds.



Each room has a TREASURE value that lures Heroes...



And a DAMAGE value that kills Heroes



An ADVANCED ROOM can upgrade an existing room



You must gain 10 Souls before you take 5 Wounds!



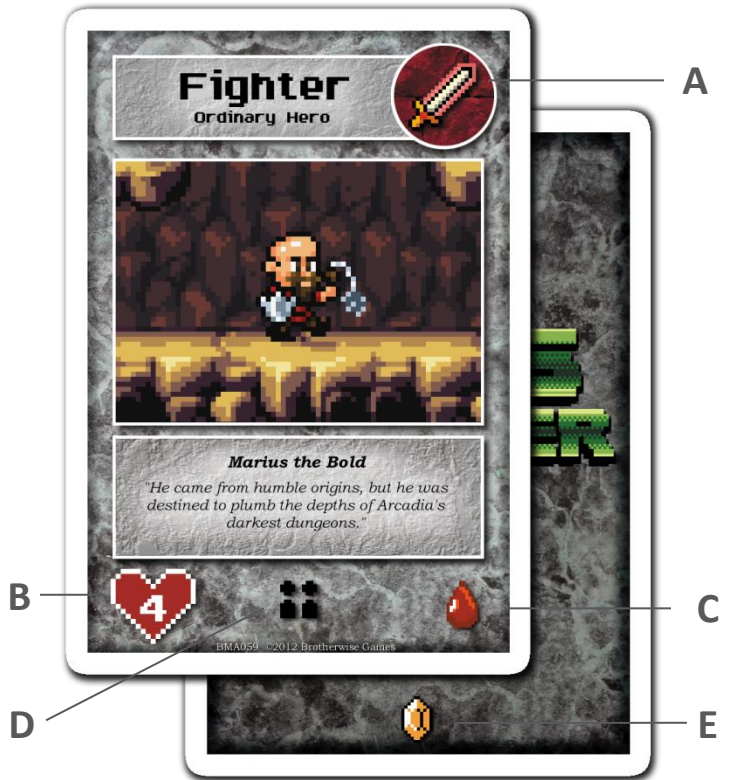
Your scorekeeping area (3) sits off to the side of your dungeon, where face-down Heroes add to your Souls (gold crystals) and face-up Heroes add to your Wounds (blood drops). You may only have a maximum of five visible Rooms in your dungeon. The first time you hit five Rooms, apply your Boss card's "Level Up" effect!

# Card Types

## Heroes

Heroes are the key resource of Boss Monster. Heroes appear “in Town” every turn, waiting for adventures.

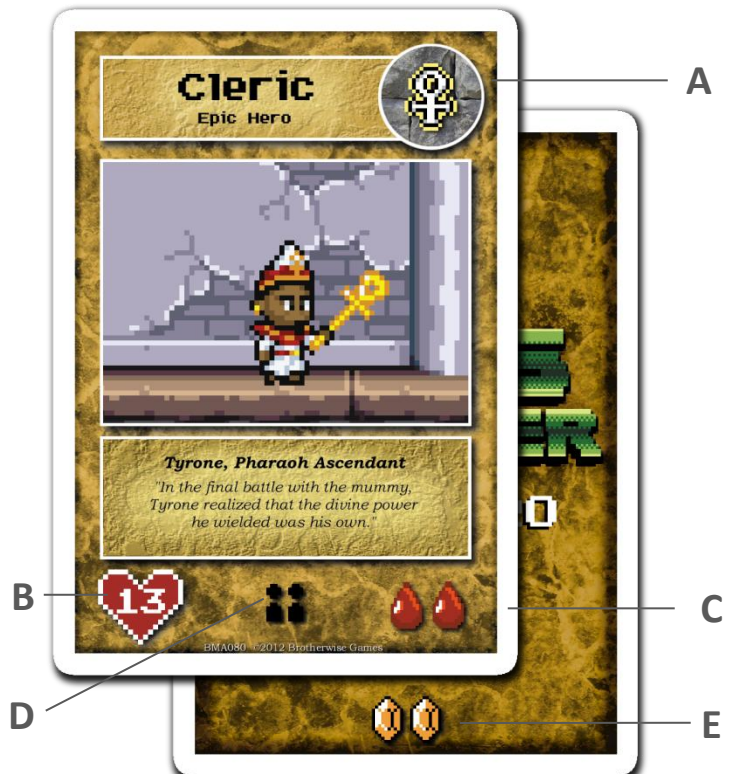
- A. **Treasure Icon:** The type of treasure that lures this Hero.
- B. **Health:** The amount of damage this Hero can resist before dying.
- C. **Wound:** If an ordinary Hero survives your dungeon, it remains face-up and counts as one Wound.
- D. **Player Icon:** This indicates whether the card should be used in a two-, three- or four player game.
- E. **Soul:** When an ordinary Hero dies in your dungeon, turn it face-down. It counts as one Soul.



## Epic Heroes

Epic Heroes bring twice the risk and twice the reward! Epic Heroes come into play after all ordinary Heroes are claimed.

- A. **Treasure Icon:** The type of treasure that lures this Hero.
- B. **Health:** The amount of damage this Hero can resist before dying.
- C. **Wound:** If an Epic Hero survives your dungeon, it remains face-up and counts as two Wounds.
- D. **Player Icon:** This indicates whether the card should be used in a two-, three- or four player game.
- E. **Soul:** When an Epic Hero dies in your dungeon, turn it face-down. It counts as two Souls.



# Card Types (cont'd)

## Rooms

Your dungeon consists of Rooms, which lure and damage hapless Heroes. Each turn, you can build a new Room in your dungeon, up to a maximum of five visible Rooms.

- A. **Monster Icon:** This icon indicates that this is a Monster Room.
- B. **Ability:** The rules text of the card is active as long as it is in play.
- C. **Damage:** Each time a Hero enters a Room, it takes the listed damage. When the damage exceeds its Health, that Hero dies.
- D. **Treasure:** The Treasure icons indicate what kind of Heroes this Room can lure. When players compare treasure totals, every visible treasure icon counts.



## Advanced Rooms

Advanced Rooms are "upgrades" that can only be built on existing Rooms with which they share at least one Treasure type. They have powerful abilities and are marked with gold Monster or Trap icons.

- A. **Trap Icon:** This icon indicates that this is a Trap Room.
- B. **Ability:** The rules text of the card. This text is an example of an activated ability, which a player can trigger by paying a cost.
- C. **Damage:** Each time a Hero enters a Room, it takes the listed damage. Advanced Rooms usually have higher damage values.
- D. **Treasure:** The Treasure icons indicate what kind of Heroes this Room can lure. An Advanced Room must be placed over an ordinary Room with at least one Treasure icon that matches this.



# Card Types (cont'd)

## Spells

Spells reflect the power of your Boss Monster to affect what happens in your dungeon... and beyond. There is no limit to the number of Spells you can play in a turn. Once you have played a Spell, place it in the discard pile.

- A. **Text:** The rules text of the card describes its effects.
- B. **Phase Icon:** This icon indicates the phase when the card can be played. (Hammer = Build, Axe = Adventure, Both = Either)

You can play a Spell during your own Build or Adventure phase, or during an opponent's. When you're the "active player" (when you're building a Room, or Heroes are moving through your dungeon) your Spell effects are resolved first. Other players' Spells and effects are resolved in XP order.



## Bosses

Your Boss card represents the boss monster waiting at the "end" of your dungeon. While it is your card, it is not a Room. It cannot deal damage, be deactivated, or be destroyed.

- A. **Boss Icon:** This icon indicates that this is a Boss card.
- B. **Boss Ability:** Most Boss monsters have a "Level Up" ability, which triggers once per game when your dungeon first reaches five Rooms.
- C. **XP:** A monster's XP value determines which player goes first, and is used as a tiebreaker when priority is in question.
- D. **Treasure:** A Boss card's treasure icon adds to its player's total.



# Set Up

## Prepare the Decks

To play, you will just need the following:

- 75 Room Cards
- 30 Spell Cards
- 8 Boss Cards
- 21-41 Hero Cards (see below)

The number of players determines the number of Hero cards that should be used in a game:

**Two Players:** 13 Heroes, 8 Epic Heroes

**Three Players:** 17 Heroes, 12 Epic Heroes

**Four Players:** 25 Heroes, 16 Epic Heroes

If you are playing a two-player game, remove all cards with the “Three Player” or “Four Player” icons. If you are playing a three-player game, just remove the “Four Player” Heroes. Then shuffle all decks thoroughly.

## Starting Hand

Each player draw 5 Room cards and 2 Spell cards, then chooses and discards 2 cards. Players make these choices simultaneously, and keep the discarded cards face-down until all players have discarded.

## Build Your First Room

Before the first turn begins, each player can build one Room.

To “build” a Room card, place it face-down on the table to the left of your Boss card. Once all players have placed their cards, simultaneously reveal the newly built Rooms. If a Room has a “when you build this” effect, it takes effect immediately. In case of a conflict, the Boss with the highest XP value goes first.

At this point, Set Up is complete and the first turn begins.

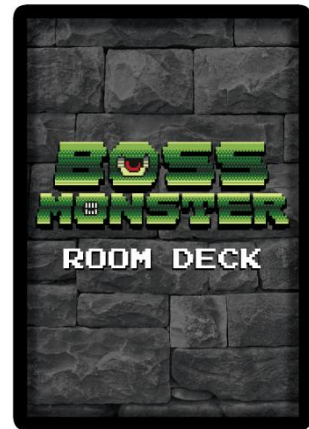
## Boss Select

Shuffle all the Boss cards and randomly deal one Boss card to each player. Players reveal their Boss cards, and the player whose Boss has the highest XP value goes first. (The player with the next highest XP goes next, and so on.)

## Prepare the Play Area

All players place their Boss cards on the table. All Room cards will be placed to the left of the Boss card, while acquired Souls and Wounds will be placed to the right.

Set up the Hero, Epic Hero, Dungeon and Spell decks as shown on the back cover (“Play Area”).



### Pro Tip: Face Down

Why play Room cards face down? Because before it's revealed, your Room card is hidden information. Let's say there's a Fighter in town, and you and an opponent each have one Fighter treasure. Until your cards are revealed, no one knows who's going to break the tie. Playing face down means it's not too important who builds first, and there's usually someone surprised or thwarted when the newly built Rooms are all revealed.

# Sequence of Play

## Beginning of Turn

During the Beginning of Turn phase, the following occurs:

- **Heroes Appear In Town:** Reveal one Hero card for each active player in the game. In general, all ordinary Heroes must be revealed before an Epic Hero is revealed.
- **Each Player Draws a Card:** Each player draws one Room card.

Spell cards, Room cards, and activated abilities cannot be used during the Beginning of Turn phase.

Once each player has drawn a card, the Build phase begins.

## Build Phase

During the Build Phase, players have the option to build one Room card. To do so, place a card face-down in your dungeon.

A Room can be placed in one of two locations:

- **To the left of your leftmost card.** During Set Up, place your first Room to the left of your Boss card. Afterward, build additional new Rooms to the left. You may build a maximum of five visible Rooms in your dungeon.
- **On top of an existing Room card.** Ordinary Rooms can be built on top of any Room. Advanced Rooms can only be built on top of a Room that shares at least one Treasure type.

The player with the highest XP value goes first, the next highest XP goes second, and so on. While you are placing a Room, you are considered “the active player.”

## Build Phase (cont'd)

During the Build phase, you may play Spells or abilities marked with the Build (hammer) icon. The active player’s effects are always resolved first, with other player’s effects resolved in XP order.

Once each player has had the chance to place a Room, during the “end of Build phase,” players simultaneously flip over their Room cards. These Room are now considered “built,” and any “when you build this Room” abilities take effect. In case of a conflict, Room abilities are resolved in XP order.

### Pro Tip: Building Over

Keep an eye on your treasure types as you’re building Rooms, because they will limit the Advanced Rooms you’re allowed to play. Multi-treasure Rooms (with gold borders) tend to be low-Damage, but they give your dungeon versatility.

Also keep in mind that ordinary Rooms can always be built over any Room, regardless of treasure type!

Can we build it?

Yes, we can! Dark Altar is a Cleric treasure Room.

Yes, we can! Torture Chamber includes a Cleric treasure.

No, we can't! Golem Factory contains no Cleric treasure.

# Sequence of Play (cont'd)

## Bait Phase

During the Bait phase, players have the chance to lure Heroes to their dungeons. Take the following steps:

- **Compare Treasure Values:** Count the amount of Treasure that corresponds to the Hero in each dungeon. Add any modifiers from room abilities or Spells.
- **Lure:** The dungeon with the highest relevant Treasure value lures the Hero. The Hero moves to its entrance. (Place the Hero beside the leftmost Room in that dungeon.)
- **Tie:** If no player has Treasure of that Hero's type, or if two or more players are tied, the Hero stays in town.

Spell cards and room abilities cannot be used during the Bait phase.

If multiple Heroes move to a player's dungeon, they arrive in the order that they were revealed from the Hero deck. Once all Heroes are accounted for, the Adventure phase begins.

### Pro Tip: Bottlenecked Heroes

If no player has the highest treasure value for a given Hero, either because all players have zero or all players are tied, that Hero stays in town. On the next turn, new Heroes arrive as normal. If a tie is not broken, Heroes can really start to stack up in town! When the tie is broken, all relevant Heroes go to the "winning" dungeon, which means the stakes just keep getting higher. Manipulating the Bait phase to make sure Heroes come your way is the key to success in Boss Monster!

Player 1's Dungeon



Town



Player 2's Dungeon



## Bait Phase Example

Here we see a snapshot of the play area for a two-player game, focused on the ordinary Hero deck and the players' dungeons. (For a full game layout, see the back cover of this manual.) As this turn's Bait Phase begins, there are three Heroes in town.

Player 1's dungeon contains:

- 1 Cleric treasure
- 2 Mage treasures
- 0 Fighter treasures
- 2 Thief treasures.

Player 2's dungeon contains:

- 3 Cleric treasure
- 0 Mage treasures
- 1 Fighter treasure
- 2 Thief treasures

The **Mage** is lured to Player 1, the **Cleric** is lured to Player 2, and the **Thief** stays in town. Next turn, two new Heroes arrive in town.



# Sequence of Play (cont'd)

## Adventure Phase

During the Adventure phase, Heroes “attack” dungeons and players take turns contending with them. Players with Heroes at their dungeons take turns, following these steps:

- **Heroes Enter:** Starting with the first Hero to arrive at an entrance to a player’s dungeon, that Hero begins to move through that player’s dungeon.
- **Rooms Deal Damage:** As the Hero enters each Room, the Room deals its Damage. (All Rooms deal damage, not just those that match the Hero.)
- **Death:** If the Hero takes damage equal to or exceeding its Health, it dies. Move that Hero to your scorekeeping area and place it face-down, adding its Soul value to your total.
- **Survival:** If you are not able to sufficiently damage the Hero (or kill it by other means), place it face-up in your scorekeeping area, adding its Wound value to your total.

During the Adventure phase, players may play Spells or abilities marked with the Adventure (axe) icon. The active player’s effects are always resolved first.

All defeated or surviving Heroes are placed in players’ scorekeeping areas. Once all Heroes are accounted for, the turn ends.

### Pro Tip: Tracking Heroes

Sometimes, Hero sequence can be important. Heroes obey a “first in, first out” rule. To keep track of this, place each newly revealed Hero to the side of the deck. The closest to the deck should always be the one that has been in play for longest. Once it heads to a dungeon, slide the newer cards toward the deck to take its place. Remember, new Heroes continue to arrive in town at the beginning of each turn!

## End of Turn Phase

At the end of the turn, any “until end of turn” effects are resolved. Any deactivated Rooms are turned upright.

In the event that a Hero takes damage during the Adventure Phase but is returned to town or the entrance of a dungeon by a card ability, damage to that Hero does not carry over to subsequent turns.

Spell cards and activated abilities cannot be used during the End of Turn phase.

### Pro Tip: Multiplayer Games

In a game with more than two players, when one player loses, that player’s cards are set aside and “removed from the game.” They do not go to the discard pile, and no effects can interact with those cards until the game concludes. The number of Heroes entering town does not change, so the pressure is on!

## End of Game

The game does not end until a full turn is complete and every eligible player has had a chance to resolve an Adventure phase. Once every player has had a chance to act, determine the following.

- If a player ends the turn with 5 or more Wounds, that player loses the game (regardless of Soul count).
- If a player ends the turn with 10 Souls (and less than 5 Wounds), that player wins the game.
- If two players meet the victory or loss conditions above, subtract each player’s Wounds total from his Souls total. The player with the higher result wins.
- If the result above is still a tie, the player with the lowest XP value wins.

Now shuffle the decks, deal Boss cards, and play again!

# Glossary

**Activated Ability:** An activated ability is any effect that requires the player to declare its use or pay a cost. (For example, “destroy this Room” abilities are always activated abilities.) Ongoing abilities and “when you build this Room” abilities are not considered activated abilities.

**Build:** Abilities that say “When you build this Room” trigger only when a Room is built, not if it is revealed for other reasons (such as a Room above it being destroyed). You may build one Room per turn, you may not rearrange Rooms in your dungeon when building (unless a card states otherwise), and you may only build a maximum of five visible Rooms in your dungeon.

**Cancel:** Once you declare a target for a Spell, you cannot change the target. If the target is destroyed or otherwise rendered moot, the Spell is canceled. A canceled spell is wasted and must be placed in the discard pile.

**Damage:** Rooms deal Damage (marked in the lower left-hand corner of each Room as a number in an empty heart).

**Entrance:** The “entrance” to your dungeon is the area to the left of your leftmost Room. (If you build new Rooms, Heroes at the entrance to your dungeon are moved to the left.) At the beginning of the Adventure phase, Heroes enter dungeons in the order that they arrived.

**Face-Down:** Cards are played face-down in order to conceal information. Rooms are played face-down during the Build phase before being revealed during the Bait phase. Additional Rooms cannot be built over face-down cards.

**Heal:** If an effect allows you to “heal” a Wound, you may flip over one face-up Hero in your scorekeeping area. Instead of counting its Wound value, you now count its Soul value. If you have a face-up Epic Hero in your scorekeeping area, you may use one “heal” effect to change its two Wounds into two Souls.

**Health:** A Hero’s Health is its ability to sustain Damage. As soon as its Health is reduced to zero, it dies (see “Dead” above.)

**Hero:** Whenever a card refers to an “ordinary Hero,” it means a non-epic (silver-bordered) Hero. When it specifies “Epic Hero,” it only refers to a gold-bordered Epic Hero. If a card does not specify “ordinary” or “epic,” it can refer to either.

**Deactivate:** A “deactivated” Room is turned sideways until the end of the turn. (Ignore any damage, Treasure, or abilities usually associated with the Room while it is turned sideways. Effects that trigger off the number of Rooms in your dungeon do not count it as a Room while it is deactivated. Treat it as a “blank” space in the dungeon, so cards on either side are not adjacent to one another. At the end of the turn, it is reactivated.) Rooms cannot be built over deactivated cards.

**Dead:** Heroes can be killed by damage, Spells, or Room effects. Any Hero that does not survive a dungeon is considered ‘dead’ and is placed in that player’s scorekeeping area face-down. The Room in which a Hero is reduced to zero Health is the Room in which it “dies.”

**Destroy:** A Room that is “destroyed” is sent to the discard pile from play. If there is a Room under that Room, it is revealed (not destroyed or built).

**Discard:** By default, an effect that forces a player to discard a card allows the player to choose which card is discarded. When a card says “discard a card at random,” the player does not get to choose. An opponent randomly chooses.

**Level Up:** When your dungeon first reached five rooms in length (not counting the Boss card itself), your Boss card’s “Level Up” ability is triggered. The ability takes effect when you reveal your fifth room, before that room triggers any other “when you build this room” effects. If multiple Bosses level up in one turn, the effects are resolved in XP order. Your Level Up ability triggers only once, and is not re-triggered by later re-building.

**Monster:** A Monster Room is a Room with a Monster icon in the upper left-hand corner. Certain cards have effects that specifically refer to “Monster Rooms.”

**Search:** Whenever an effect allows a player to search the Spell or Room deck, the player must shuffle the deck afterward.

**Trap:** A Trap Room is a Room with a Trap icon in the upper left-hand corner. Certain cards have effects that specifically refer to “Trap Rooms.”

**XP:** A Boss card’s XP (“experience point”) value determines which player gets to go first in the game, and who goes first during each phase of the game. In any situation where priority is unclear, priority is given to the player whose Boss has the highest XP value.

# FAQs & Advanced Rules

## Building Rooms

**Does an Advanced Monster Room need to be built over an existing Monster Room, and an Advanced Trap Room over a Trap Room?**

No. When playing an Advanced Room, all that matters is the treasure type. Make sure that at least one icon on the existing Room matches the icon on the Advanced Room. (The color of a card's border is also a reminder of this. Each type of Room has its own color, and multi-treasure Rooms have gold borders.)

**What happens if you run out of cards in the Spell deck or Room deck?**

If one of the decks is depleted, immediately separate the Room and Spell cards in the discard pile and re-shuffle the cards back into their respective decks. No effect can interrupt this process.

**When an effect allows you to swap the placement of Rooms in a dungeon, how do you deal with Rooms built on top of other Rooms?**

You can rearrange any stacks of Rooms, but you cannot change the order of Rooms within each stack. The visible Rooms do not change.

## Other Questions

**Is there a "mulligan" rule?**

Yes. If you draw all Advanced Rooms or all of one treasure type, you may shuffle your entire hand back into the decks and draw a new hand.

**What is the exact process for discarding a card "randomly"?**

Simply hold up your cards to your opponent (keeping the face of the cards concealed) and allow your opponent to choose the card to be discarded.

**Can you look at an opponent's face-down cards?**

You may always look at the face-down cards in an opponent's scorekeeping area. However, you may not look at an opponent's face-down Room cards.

**When are Room abilities active?**

Room abilities are only active when a Room is visible and in play. When you build a Room, any abilities of the Room beneath are no longer in effect. For example, you do not draw a card when you build a monster Room over Monster's BallRoom.

## Hard Mode

Boss Monster is designed to be accessible to a wide range of players. It is primarily a game of competition among players, where victory is determined by racing to acquire the most Souls, and death by Wounds is less likely.

However, more advanced gamers may enjoy the added tension of tougher Heroes. To play a game in "Hard Mode," simply remove all ordinary Heroes with a Health value of 4. This makes it difficult to avoid a Wound in early turns, and brings Epic Heroes into play a turn earlier.

## Pro Tip: Play Variants

Want to find more ways to play Boss Monster? Join the active community of Boss Monster fans online at [boardgamegeek.com](http://boardgamegeek.com) and [bwisegames.com](http://bwisegames.com) to learn more! Fans are developing homebrewed cards, variants like single player or expanded multiplayer, and other ways to play. Join the discussion!

## Credits

*Boss Monster* is dedicated to John & Sandra O'Neal.

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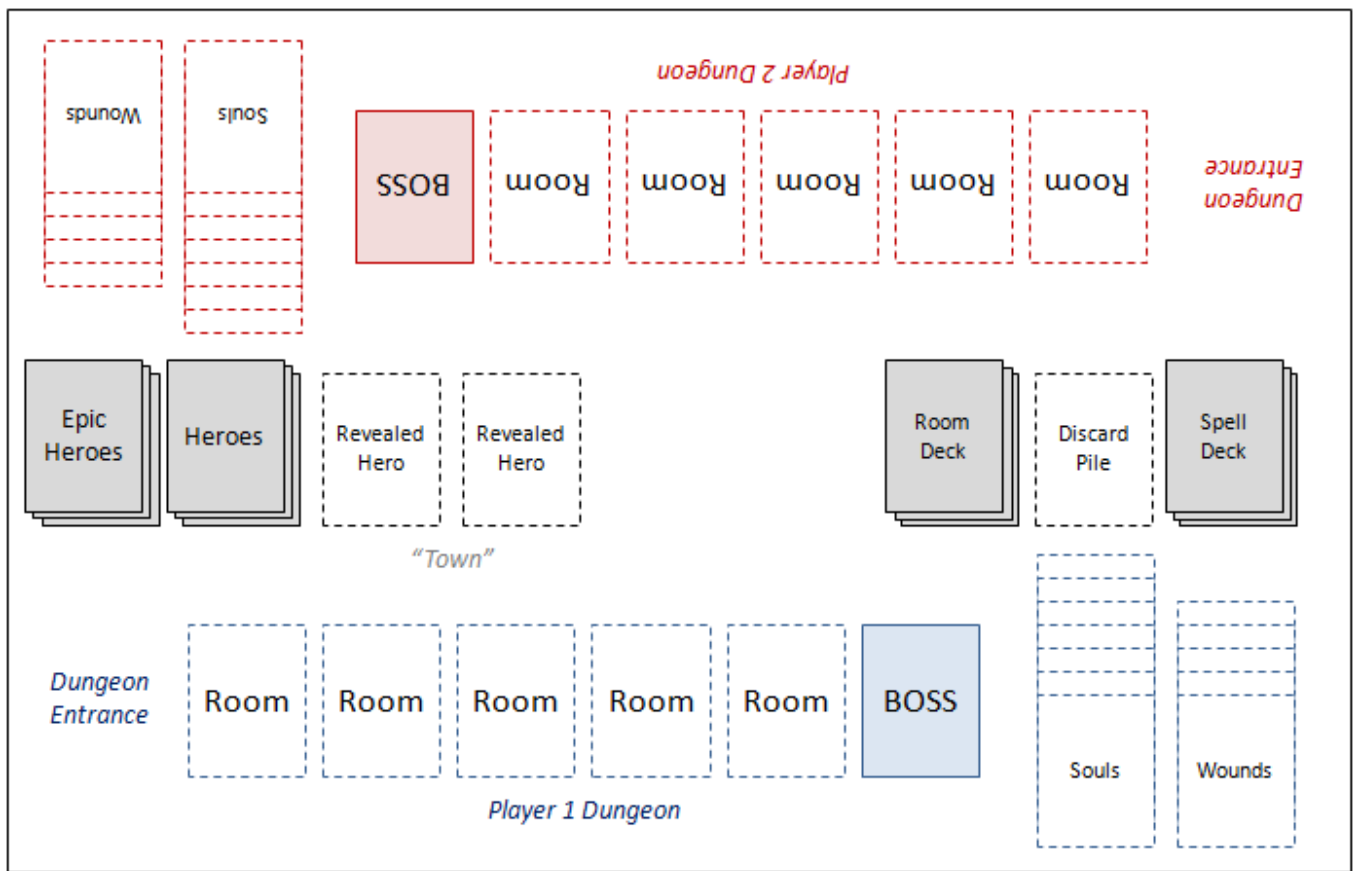
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...and many, many more! Full producer credits coming in the final version of the game instructions!

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To all of those who have supported Boss Monster...



-- The Brothers Wise