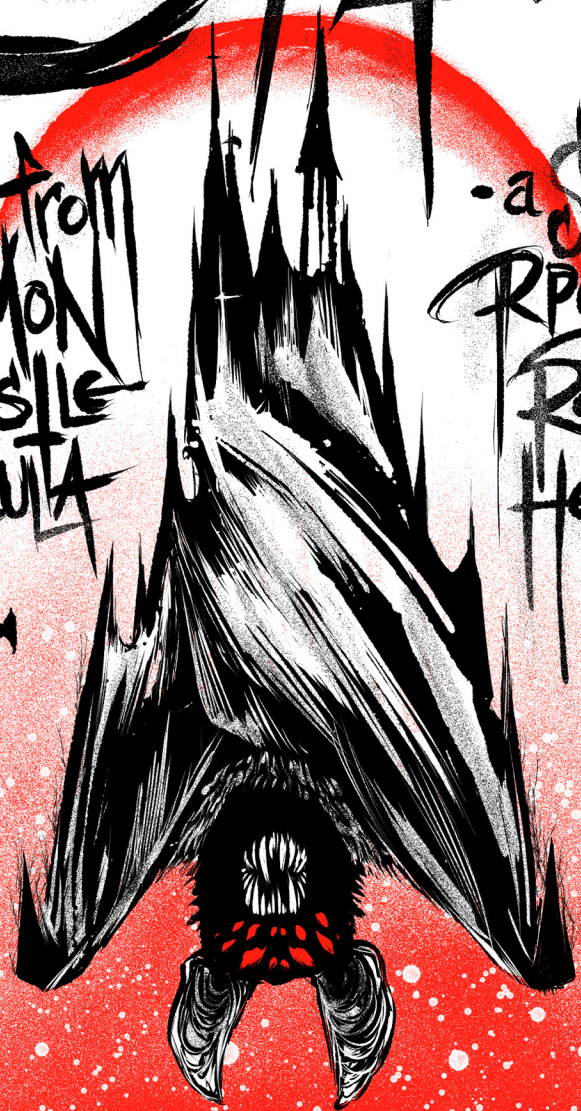


SCAPE

from
DEMON
CASTLE
DRACULA



- a solo-
RPG by
Rob
Hebert



ESCAPE FROM DEMON CASTLE DRACULA

Art, Layout, and Game Design
by
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This is v20.10.18 of this game

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Special Thanks to DAN PHIPPS and everyone at Foundry 58

This game is dedicated to
AYAMI KOJIMA



CONTENT WARNING

Among other things, this game contains references to and descriptions of violence, gore, body horror, imprisonment, torture, enclosed spaces, loss of sanity, and loss of agency. This is a solo game, and you are the best judge of your own safety. If a prompt doesn't work for you (for whatever reason) just skip it, rewrite it, re-roll it, or take a break. It's just a game! Your comfort and safety is more important.

You Awake in Terror...

...your entire body is a bundle of sweat and nerves.

HOW DID YOU GET HERE?

You don't remember. You can't remember... anything. Not even your own name.

But you know you must GET OUT.

You must

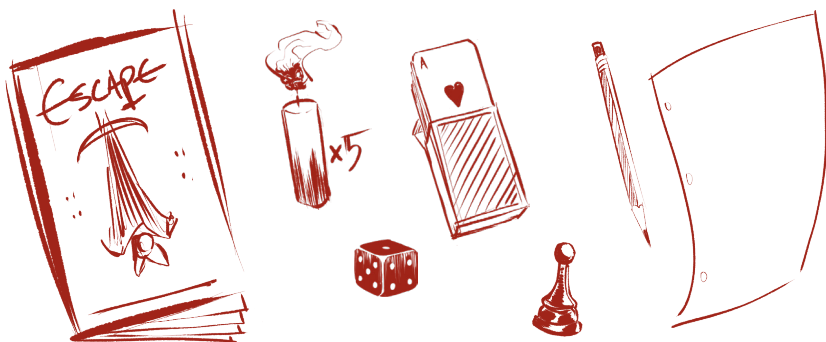
Escape from Demon Castle Dracula



ESCAPE FROM DEMON CASTLE DRACULA is a solo dungeon-crawling RPG designed for a dark and stormy night. You take on the role of Dracula's latest mortal victim, who was kidnapped in the night and left in the dungeon for a future feeding. To escape, you must find your way out of his castle, a shifting labyrinth of haunted chambers and nightmare corridors.

To play, you'll need:

- †A printout of this book (you can use a digital tablet or computer if you want, but paper is better as it doesn't give off extra light)
- †Five candles to track your Life (you can use fake candles if open flames are an issue)
- †One six-sided die
- †A deck of playing cards with the Jokers included (one red, one black)
- †A coin, figure, or other token to represent your character
- †A piece of paper and writing implement





Imagining Scenes

As you play this game, you will encounter story prompts. Enjoy these scenes however you wish. You can write them as journal entries, act them out, talk through them, record voice memos, draw comics, or simply imagine them. Immerse yourself in the narrative in whatever way works for you.

Ask yourself questions to flesh out the scene:

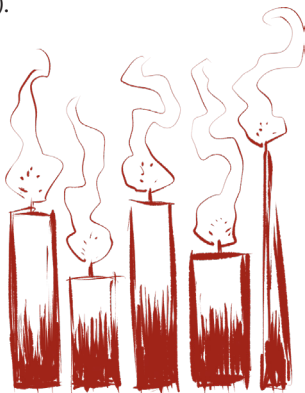
- † Is this location hot or cold? What does it smell like? What sounds do you hear?
- † How large is the location? Is it inside or outside?
- † What is its layout? What evidence is there of its common uses?
- † What makes it strange, unholy, or otherworldly? How does it affect you?

If you use an item, factor it into your description. If you gain a memory, relish in the details. Don't think too hard about the events that transpire. Stick with your first idea and follow it to its conclusion; you'll surprise yourself!

Set Up Your Playing Area

Find a quiet place with a large table or other playing surface.

Arrange your candles on the table in whatever pattern you wish, then light them. Turn off any additional or artificial sources of light (to the extent allowed by safety and common sense).



The candles that burn before you represent your Life, your will to survive. When the final candle is extinguished, **YOU ARE DEAD**.

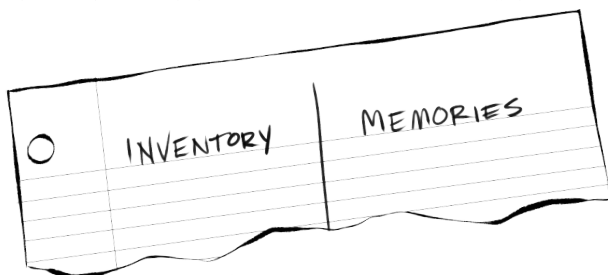
Your death may come from injury, insanity, or despair--whatever the case, you now belong to Dracula, body and soul.

Shuffle the deck of cards (including both Jokers) and set it aside.

Each card in the deck represents a location you might encounter on your search for the castle's exit. As you explore, you'll lay the cards on the table in front of you to form a visual representation of the castle's layout.

Divide your paper into two columns: **INVENTORY** and **MEMORIES**.

As you explore the castle, you may find new items and reclaim lost memories of your past; but you begin every game with both columns empty.



The Dungeon

Every game begins in **THE DUNGEON**.

You have just awoken, head aching and heart pounding, but your will to live drives you to escape—no matter how hopeless it may seem.

When your eyes adjust to the darkness, you find yourself in a cramped cell, nothing but brick walls and fetid pools of water.

You test the door to your cell and discover that the mortar has rotted away where the iron meets the wall. With some doing, you may be able to work the bars loose and squeeze your way out.

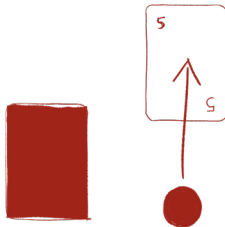
ROLL THE DIE:

- † *On a 1-2:* You move the bars enough to wriggle through, but the extreme effort tires your already weakened body. Extinguish one candle and EXPLORE your first location (see below).
- † *On a 3-5:* It takes time, but you finally work the iron loose enough to escape your cell. EXPLORE your first location.
- † *On a 6:* You wrench the iron bar away from the wall and the gate itself. The weight of it in your hand gives you a fleeting sense of security. Add “iron bar” to your inventory and EXPLORE your first location.



EXPLORING THE FIRST LOCATION

Draw the first card from the top of your deck and play it face up in front of you. Place your character token on top of it to indicate that you’ve entered the location.



Find the card’s entry in the **CODEx SANGUINORUM** to determine which location you’ve entered. Read the entry to learn how to EXPLORE the location. After you explore the location, CHECK FOR DOORS.

CHECK FOR DOORS

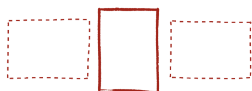
When a room is cleared, roll the die to determine how many doors the location has in addition to the one you entered through.

- † On a 1-2, there is only one additional door. Place a new card face up and in line with the current location (short sides touching), then move your token onto it.
- † On a 3-4, there are two additional doors. Place two new cards face down, each one with a short side touching one of the current location's long sides. Decide which location to explore next, then flip it over and move your token to it. Leave the location you didn't choose face down.
- † On a 5-6, there are three additional doors. Place three cards face down: one in line with the current location (short sides touching), and two each with a short side touching one of the current location's long sides. Decide which location to explore next, then flip it over and move your token to it. Leave the locations you didn't choose face down.

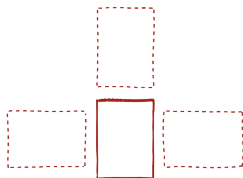
1-2



3-4

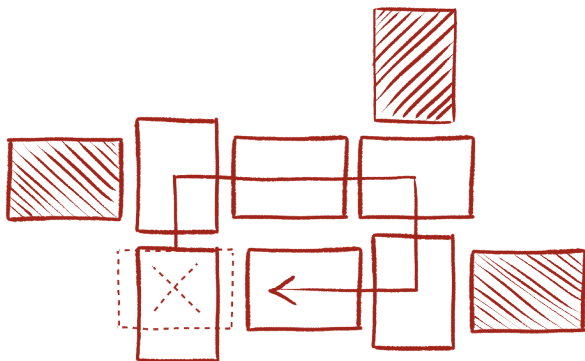


5-6



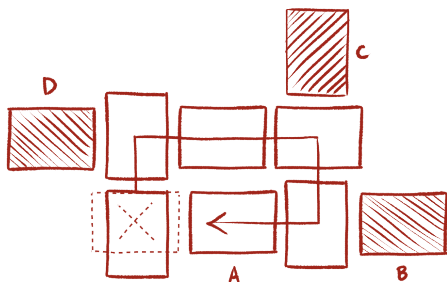
DEAD ENDS

As you explore rooms, the castle layout will expand and split and turn back in on itself. If a card's placement would put it over the edge of the table or on top of another card, don't place it. That is a dead end. Place whichever cards you can and continue exploring. If you cannot place *any* cards, then you will have to BACKTRACK to an unexplored location.



BACKTRACKING

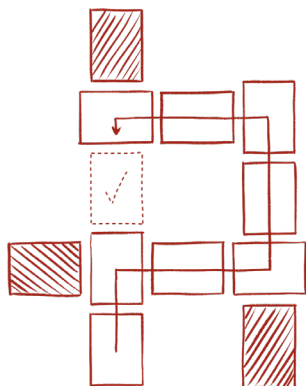
If you want to explore a face-down location (or are forced to by fate or misfortune) in another part of the castle, you can backtrack. Count the number of locations between your token and an unexplored location to determine the **DISTANCE**, then roll 2d6. Whatever your result, you get to reveal the location, place your token on it, and explore it as normal. However, if your result is less than the distance between your token and the unexplored location, you get lost on the way and must extinguish a candle; if this is your final candle, your adventure ends here. If you are forced to backtrack but there are no unexplored locations to explore, then your adventure ends with you trapped in the castle.



Example: The distance between locations A and B is 2. Between A and C, 3. Between A and D, 5.

NEW CONNECTIONS

As you lay down new locations, you may end up reconnecting your current location to a location that's been laid down previously. This only happens if the cards fit exactly. It doesn't matter whether the older location's already been explored. Treat the new connection as a newly discovered secret passage or hidden door. New connections are helpful for backtracking because they can significantly shorten the distance between two locations.



USING ITEMS

If you don't like the outcome of a roll, you can **MARK** an appropriate item in your inventory and re-roll the die. The first time you mark an item, put a check next to it; it's damaged or drained, but still usable. The second time you use an item, put a strike through it; it's broken, lost, or otherwise worthless. Some items are marked as **FRAGILE**; a fragile item enters your inventory already marked with a check, meaning that it is lost, destroyed, or otherwise rendered useless after a single use.

✓ SILVER DAGGER
HOLY WATER
✓ ~~STEEL HELMET~~

The Codex Sanguinorum

When you explore a room, check its entry in this book.

Clubs (♣) are monsters and minions that serve Dracula and attack you on sight.

Spades (♠) are traps and tricks that test your reflexes.

Diamonds (♦) are puzzles and horrors that challenge your wits and sap your sanity.

Hearts (♥) are locations where you reawaken your own memories.

Red court cards represent the potentially friendly Denizens of Demon Castle Dracula. They tend to be quite helpful if you can meet them on their own terms.

Black court cards represent Bosses. These are Dracula's most powerful servants; they take three wounds to kill, but drop extremely powerful items when defeated.

The Jokers represent the castle exit (red) and Dracula himself (black).



♣ Clubs ♣

Clubs (♣) are monsters and other minions that serve Dracula and attack you on sight. When you explore a Clubs location, check its entry and roll the die:

- † *On a 1:* You are injured and driven back; describe how and then extinguish a candle. This location is now a dead end.
- † *On a 2:* You are injured; describe how and then extinguish a candle. Then roll again.
- † *On a 3:* You slay the monsters within, but at great cost to yourself; describe how, then extinguish a candle. This location is clear; you may now look for doors.
- † *On a 4:* You fight the monsters to a standstill, neither giving nor gaining ground; describe how and then roll again.
- † *On a 5:* You slay the creatures within; describe how. This location is clear; you may now look for doors.
- † *On a 6:* You slay the creatures within and find a useful item in the location. Describe the fight and then add the item to your inventory.

A: You enter a long hallway patrolled by crimson skeletons clad in rusty armor and wielding dull weapons.

2: You enter a gallery filled with beautiful stone sculptures; severed heads with snakes for hair and serrated teeth float between the statues.

3: You enter a toymaker's workshop filled with the discarded remnants of half-formed porcelain playthings that have gathered themselves into patchwork dolls to scuttle over your feet and crawl into your clothes.

4: You enter a room seemingly made of muck and excrement. As you slide through the filth caking the floor, sections of it rise up like angry sores and spew forth vaguely humanoid sludge creatures.

5: You enter a forge where malformed hunchbacks leap between the catwalks above and the gratework below to operate a series of bellows and gears.

6: You find a bridge guarded by a pair of winged demons with aquiline beaks and razor-sharp claws, each wielding a weapon from a faraway land.

7: You enter a tiled columbarium with recesses built into the walls, each holding an urn filled with cremains; as you pass, you awaken the vengeful spirits of those interred within.

8: Inside the dilapidated aqueducts, you come face-to-face with human-like gill-creatures with armored scales and razor-sharp fins.

9: The aviary is home to a race of harpies, carnivorous birds of prey with the faces of beautiful women.

10: As you walk the ramparts, the gargoyles and grotesques keeping watch come alive and harry you upon wings of stone.

—For Jack, Queen, or King, see **BOSSSES** on pages 11 & 12—

♠ Spades ♠

Spades (♠) are traps that test your skill and dexterity. When you explore a Clubs location, check its entry and roll the die:

- † *On a 1-2:* You trigger the trap and it bars the way, getting injured in the process; describe how and then extinguish a candle. This location is now a dead end.
- † *On a 3-4:* You trigger the trap, injuring yourself, but the way is now open; describe how this happens, then extinguish a candle. This location is clear; you may now check for doors.
- † *On a 5-6:* You disable or avoid the trap; describe how. This location is clear; you may now look for doors.

A: You come across a narrow hallway filled with swinging blades.

2: The stairs to the landing above are made of pillars of bone, the skulls embedded within spewing forth eldritch flames that dance through the air.

3: You enter a tower of churning clockwork gears, with exhaust valves that spew scalding steam at irregular intervals.

4: You enter a graveyard where a choking, glowing miasma rolls across the ground but never quite dissipates; a single sniff sends your senses reeling.

5: You find yourself wandering inside a labyrinth of waste pipes, slick with human putrescence; one slip and you will be flushed out with the rest of the refuse.

6: You find yourself on a crumbling bridge that collapses as you cross it. Do not roll but, rather, choose:

- † Push on; flip this card over and look for doors. You can never backtrack through this location.
- † Turn back; flip this card over and backtrack. You can never return to this location.

7: A literal thunderstorm rages inside the greenhouse. Do not roll but, rather, choose:

- † Push through; extinguish a candle and check for doors.
- † Turn back; keep this card face up and backtrack. You can return to this location later if you wish.

8: The floor is trapped; any pressure upon it, and the ground falls beneath you, sending you plummeting into the corpse-filled spike pit below.

9: You enter a room with a tiled floor etched with eldritch symbols. Stepping on the wrong ones sends arrows raining from the ceiling.

10: You enter the furnace room, where a network of chains zigzag over an open pit of sulfurous flame.

—For Jack, Queen, or King, see **BOSSSES** on pages 11 & 12—

♣ Bosses ♠

BOSSSES are Dracula's most powerful minions and monsters. They are difficult to kill, but drop RELICS after dying. Relics are extremely useful items that grant you long-term bonuses or let you break the rules of the game in some way. Just like normal items, relics can be marked to re-roll your die, but you lose their bonus if they are destroyed or lost.

When you face a boss, check its entry and roll the die:

- † *On a 1-2:* The boss uses one of its attacks on you; extinguish a candle.
- † *On a 3:* You inflict a wound on the boss, but get injured in the process; describe how, then extinguish a candle and roll again.
- † *On a 4:* You trade blows with the boss, but neither gain nor give ground; describe how. Roll again.
- † *On a 5:* You inflict a wound on the boss; describe how.
- † *On a 6:* You inflict two wounds on the boss; describe how.

J♣: SPECTRAL KNIGHT

You enter a haunted armory filled with cursed weapons and armor. A suit of armor sized for a giant and powered by a restless spirit awakens and attacks!

Attacks: Triple-Corpse Hammerblow, Death Beam, Cleaving Strike, Ramming Speed

If defeated, drops Gram, a legendary great sword that adds +1 to your roll in all combats.

Q♣: THREE SISTERS

You enter a boudoir with silk tapestries hanging from the rafters. A three-headed succubus arises from the mess of textiles on the floor and beckons you into its arms.

Attacks: Seductive Glare, Energy Drain, Prehensile Hair, Silken Noose

If defeated, drops the Cloak of Shadows; so long as it remains in your inventory, you may backtrack without rolling or extinguishing candles.

K♣: DRACOLICH SERPENT

You enter a vaulted treasure room piled high with cursed gold and jewels. From the hoard emerges the Dracolich Serpent, an enormous skeletal snake that swims through gold.

Attacks: Bone-Crunching Bite, Rib Slash, Drown in Gold, Ear-Splitting Roar

If defeated, drops the Oracle's Eye; so long as it's in your inventory, keep the top card of the deck face up.

J♣: SHADOWBORN HELLHOUND

You enter a large pit with an earthen floor. Barring your way is a Shadowborn Hellhound, a lupine beast of smoke and flame.

Attacks: Bite and Shake, Savage Scratch, Breath of Fire, Spiked Collar

If defeated, drops the Morningstar, a spiked chain whip that grants +1 against traps.

Q♠: ARACHNID CANDELABRA

You enter a large foyer with an enormous chandelier hanging from the center of the ceiling. As you approach, it unfolds into the Candelabra Spider.

Attacks: Burning Wax, Razor Legs, Encase in Cocoon, Envenomate

If defeated, drops the Hand of Glory, a single-use relic that allows you to pass through one location without rolling (check for doors as normal).

K♠: GRIM REAPER

You enter Dracula's family crypt, along the wall of which runs an intricate frieze depicting his clan's bloody rise to power. From the darkness, the Grim Reaper materializes brandishing a scythe that radiates necroplasmic energy.

Attacks: Miasmatic Breath, Chill Touch, Necro Slash, Shadow Phase

If defeated, drops the Death Scythe; whenever you defeat a Boss, you absorb its soul and re-light a candle.



◆ Diamonds ◆

Diamonds (◆) are puzzles and horrors that challenge your wits and sap your sanity. When you explore a Diamonds location, check its entry and roll the die:

- † *On a 1:* You get frustrated trying to figure out a way through or are driven nearly mad by the horrors within; extinguish a candle and flip this card over. This is now a dead end, and you must backtrack.
- † *On a 2:* You lose your nerve or can't figure out a way through. Either roll again or backtrack.
- † *On a 3-4:* After struggling for a while, you finally figure out a solution or find the strength within to push through; describe how, then extinguish a candle. This location is clear; check for doors.
- † *On a 5:* You figure out a solution or steel your nerves; describe how. This location is now clear; check for doors.
- † *On a 6:* You easily devise a solution or draw upon your inner emotional reserves to push through unscathed, plus you find a useful item along the way; describe how you get through and then add the item to your inventory.

A: You enter a perfectly cubic room cut from perfectly smooth stone, with no obvious seams or exits.

2: It takes you a very long time to realize that this staircase truly does go on forever. When you turn back, the landing is still only a few steps away. Do not roll; this location is a dead end. Backtrack or your escape attempt ends here.

3: This labyrinth of antediluvian caverns filled with stagnant water twists and turns with no rhyme or reason.

4: When you pull the book from the shelf, the wall slides away to reveal a labyrinthine passage within.

5: You find an ornate mirror inscribed with an ancient language.

6: You enter a non-Euclidean forest of doorways where gravity and direction hold little sway.

7: You enter a confusing hall of mirrors; in each reflection, you see yourself dying in a different way.

8: You stumble upon a banquet hall with a smorgasbord of food too enticing for your hungry body to pass up. With each bite, however, you grow even hungrier.

9: You find yourself in a torture complex where the howls of Dracula's subjects echo through the halls.

10: You enter Dracula's curse-locked treasure vault.

—For Jack, Queen, or King, see **DENIZENS** on pages 15 & 16—

♥ Hearts ♥

Hearts (♥) are locations where experiences and images reawaken your lost memories. You do not roll the die in these locations, you simply add a Memory to your character sheet and then check for doors.

A: As you wander amongst the seemingly endless rows of cracked and broken headstones, you see a name that strikes a chord; this person had the same name as you... what is it? Add it to your Memories.

2: The portrait gallery bears a thousand faces. One of them bears an uncanny resemblance to your beloved; write a Memory describing them.

3: The desecrated chapel bears the marks of black sabbaths and dark rituals. You remember a time when you would gather with others to Write a Memory about your induction into an organization or group that you belonged to, such as a church or guild.

4: You find a scale model of Dracula's childhood home. Where do you live? Write a Memory about a time you felt safe there.

5: You come upon a pile of exsanguinated bodies, and their pale, lifeless flesh reminds you of the terror of your own embrace by the Dark Lord. Write a Memory outlining where you were when Dracula claimed you.

6: You come upon a shrine that appears to be dedicated to someone named Radu. Perhaps a friend of Dracula's? Does a creature such as Dracula have friends? You did, back home. Write a Memory about the person you were closest to in your old life.

7: At the end of the hallway you find a floor-length mirror, but you know the face staring back at you is not your own. Write a Memory describing your true face.

8: In your journey through the castle, you come upon a statue of the Dark Lord himself, its immaculate craftsmanship a testament to the skill of its builder. You are reminded that you were celebrated for your own skill, once. Write a Memory about the time you learned your most praiseworthy trade.

9: The frieze shows Dracula's conquests throughout the ages, a river of blood flowing through innumerable lifetimes. The sight jolts you back the time war touched your own life. Write a Memory of that time.

10: The tapestry on the wall shows Dracula's family tree, his human lineage weaving up through branches that touch the sky and his vampiric lineage crawling like roots into the earth below. The memories of your own family come flooding back. Write a Memory of the last time you were all together.

—For Jack, Queen, or King, see **DENIZENS** on pages 15 & 16—

♦ Denizens ♥

DENIZENS are the residents and wanderers one can find within the walls of Demon Castle Dracula. They are potential allies, and if treated with sympathy or fairness will grant you special bonuses. You don't need to roll; simply describe your interaction, and do what the entry tells you to, then check for doors.

J♦ THE MADMAN

He was sane, once, but now he is just a pet; serving Count Dracula's evil will has bent his mind beyond the breaking point. If you can convince him that you serve his dark lord as well, he will help you bypass the next three Spade (♠) cards you encounter. Keep track on your character sheet.

Q♦ THE LOVER

A beautiful woman, her skin gossamer-like, floats as a dream through the room. She is Dracula's lover, cursed to roam his castle as an undying wraith. If you share a Memory of life outside the castle walls with her, she gives you her locket; add it to your inventory. If you encounter Dracula with the Lover's locket in your inventory, you can cross it out and immediately drive him off.

K♦ THE MERCHANT

A stooped old man wrapped in moth-eaten clothes hobbles into view, a tower of bric-a-brac perilously balanced on his shoulders. He offers to trade you for his wares. If you have an item in your inventory, you may cross it out and replace it with anything you can convince the Merchant is of equal value.

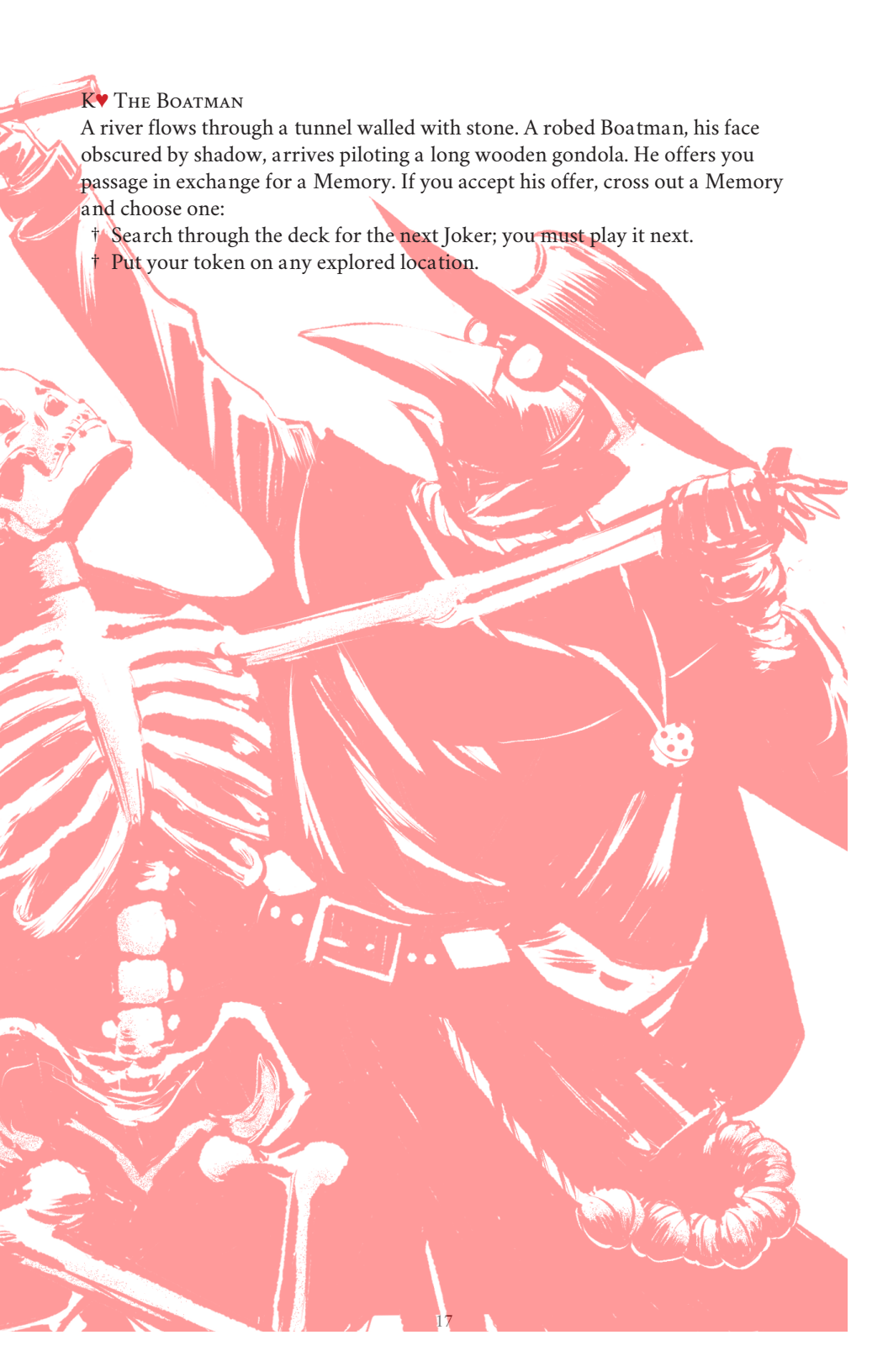
J♥ THE DOCTOR

The laboratory is filled with wonders and technology beyond your mortal ken. There, against his will, a wild-eyed man conducts Dracula's evil experiments. If you converse with him, he thinks of you as a friend and offers you an experimental concoction; roll the die:

- † On a 1-2: You get a Healing Elixir (fragile); add it to your inventory.
- † On a 3-4: You get a vial of Universal Solvent; add it to your inventory.
- † On a 5-6: You get a Wolfskin Potion (fragile); add it to your Inventory.

Q♥ THE MOTHER

You find an unassuming stone chapel filled with glowing candles. Something about this place tells you it is safe. An old woman in a nun's habit appears and tells you that she has been trapped here by Dracula, but that his evil cannot breach the walls of the chapel. She offers to let you rest as she prays. If you accept her offer, you may re-light a candle.



K♥ THE BOATMAN

A river flows through a tunnel walled with stone. A robed Boatman, his face obscured by shadow, arrives piloting a long wooden gondola. He offers you passage in exchange for a Memory. If you accept his offer, cross out a Memory and choose one:

- † Search through the deck for the next Joker; you must play it next.
- † Put your token on any explored location.

† Jokers †

JOKERS are the most important cards in the game because they represent salvation and destruction.

If you draw a **RED JOKER**:

You see the exit! Roll the die twice:

If the combined result is *equal to or less than* the number of locations you have already cleared...

...it is the true exit!

You have ESCAPED FROM DEMON CASTLE DRACULA! As the sunlight hits your face, you know in your heart that you are safe. Now what will you do? Reclaim your old life or prepare to bring the fight back to Dracula?

Write one final Memory to record how your story ends.

If the combined result is *higher than* the number of locations you have already cleared...

...this is a false exit, an illusion!

Extinguish a candle as the revelation drains your hope. If you are still alive, draw a new card to explore immediately, then shuffle this joker back into the deck.

If you draw a **BLACK JOKER**:

Dracula himself appears! If you have an item in your inventory that could harm Dracula, roll the die--otherwise, your escape attempt ends here.

† On a 1: Dracula feeds on you; *heal all wounds on Dracula*.

† On a 2-3: Dracula uses one of his attacks on you (roll below); describe how, then extinguish a candle.

ATTACKS: (1) Weave Illusion, (2) Inhuman Strength, (3) Command the Unclean, (4) Shapeshift, (5) Hypnosis, (6) Black Magic

† On a 4: You inflict a wound on Dracula, but get injured in the process; describe how, then extinguish a candle.

† On a 5: You inflict a wound on Dracula; describe how.

† On a 6: You inflict two wounds on Dracula; describe how.

Keep rolling until you extinguish your last candle or you inflict three wounds on Dracula; if you inflict three wounds on Dracula, you drive him off. Draw a new card to replace this one and explore it immediately; then shuffle this joker back into the deck. Dracula lives to strike again!



THANKS FOR PLAYING!