ASCENSION

Curse of the Golden Isles

Be ye brave or be ye foolish, the race to reach the cursed treasure of the Golden Isles is a perilous one. The waters are home to ancient horrors. On the islands, monsters stalk the caves and marshes. But, the true terror of the Golden Isles haunts the mists and the storms – the cursed crew of the Crimson Askara.

Long before the discovery of the Valley of the Ancients, an Enlightened ship called the Crimson Askara, left Vigil for the Severed Seas and never returned.

They set sail in search of vast hordes of treasure, hidden away by the elder gods on the Golden Isles. The natives warned the captain, but with greed in his heart, and sharpened steel on his belt, he ventured forth to claim the prize. The crew traversed each of the islands, and indeed they found treasure. They carried chest after chest of gold to the Crimson Askara and set sail for home – a place they'd never see again.

For the elder gods had cursed the gold. No matter what direction the compass pointed them, the islands were always just ahead. With food running low, they returned the treasure to each island and begged the gods for mercy, but still, they could not leave the isles. The crew went mad, and desperate for escape, they burned themselves and their ship to ash. However, not even death kept the islands from their sights. The Crimson Askara still sails along those dreadful coasts, hunting explorers who enter their domain, striking from the mists with thunderous cannons and hateful groans of a long-dead crew, the eternal unwilling guardians of the treasure they once desired.

So, brave adventurers, gather your crew, kiss your loved ones goodbye, and take a swig of your strongest rum, because once again it's time to set sail. Prepare yourselves for gold and glory, or a fate worse than death, as you try to unravel the Curse of the Golden Isles and claim its treasure as your own.

Getting Started

Cleanse the curse and restore the Severed Seas in *Ascension: Curse of the Golden Isles*™! All players begin with a starting deck of loyal but untrained followers and a pirate ship, ready to conquer and plunder. Use these tools to acquire mighty Heroes and powerful Constructs to aid you in your quest to defeat Monsters and achieve victory!

Each turn, you will play cards to gain resources. These resources will allow you to acquire new Heroes, Constructs and Treasure. You will also face terrifying Monsters and Raid enemy ships on your path to gain Honor. At the end of the game, the player with the most Honor from acquired cards, Treasure and Monster rewards is the winner.

Setup

Ascension: Curse of the Golden Isles™ can be played with 2-4 players.

Each player has a white-bordered starting deck consisting of six Apprentices, two Militia, a Buccaneer and a Navigator. Everyone shuffles their starting deck and draws five cards (leaving five cards in their deck). Each player selects a ship dial and sets it's Crew (⚙). The first player will begin with ⓪, the second player begins with ①, the third player begins with ② and the fourth, fifth, and sixth players begin with ③.

Take the silver-bordered Heavy Infantry, Mystic and Cultist cards and place them on their designated spaces on the game board. These cards represent characters that are always available to be acquired or defeated on your turn.

Shuffle all of the black-bordered cards face down to form the Center Deck and place it on it's designated space on the game board. After forming the Center Deck, flip three cards onto the spaces on each side of the board to form the six card Center Row. Next, put all of the Cursed Treasure coins into the Treasure Bag. Randomly select a coin from the bag and place it on the space of the board matching its color. Lastly, place **The Ghost Pirate** in the Deep. Ships will move on the spaces between the Center Row cards and The Deep to interact with them. In *Ascension: Curse of the Golden Isles*™, the center row is arranged in a circle around the Map. When a Monster in the center row is defeated or any other card is banished, it goes to The Void. (See "Game Layout" on Page 3).

Number of Players	2	3	4
Total Honor Tokens	60 ★	90 ★	120 ★

Place 30 points worth of Honor tokens in the Honor pool for each player. Randomly determine which player goes first and proceed clockwise from there.

On the following pages, we'll go over the types of cards in *Ascension*™ and basic gameplay.

Game Layout

Honor Pool

Ship Dial

Ship Spaces

Cursed Treasure

Center Row Spaces

Starting Hand (5 cards)

Starting Deck (remaining 5 cards)

Personal Deck
10 cards:
6 Apprentice
2 Militia
1 Buccaneer
1 Navigator

Always Available Cards, Center Deck & Void

3

Hero Cards

Heroes are the allies you acquire to aid you in your quest to protect the realm of New Vigil. You can play any number of Hero cards from your hand each turn. When you play a Hero from your hand, gain the effect listed on the card. It stays in front of you until the end of your turn, and then it goes to your discard pile.
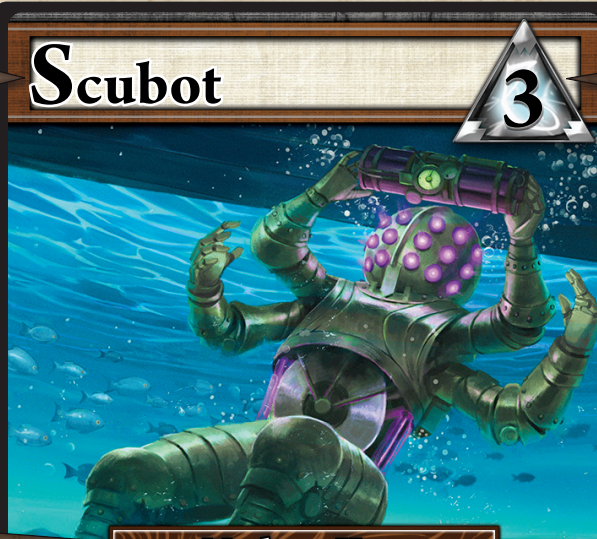
Name

Cost
Number of Runes you must spend to acquire this card.

Scubot

3

Mechana Hero

Faction
There are four different factions:
- Enlightened
- Lifebound
- Mechana
- Void

Effect
What the card does when played or in play.

Gain 2 and Raid.

"I hate swimming. I built a bot for that."
~Emma Ironheart

Flavor Text
Flavor text has no game effect.

Honor
How much Honor this card is worth.

2

Rarity & Set Icon
Each ● represents a copy of the card in the center deck.

Construct Cards

Constructs are the many weapons, magical items, and fantastical devices you may acquire to use in your battles. Unlike Heroes, when you play a Construct, it stays in play and continues to help you turn after turn. However, they can also be destroyed by card effects (usually on Monster cards). When a Construct is destroyed, it is placed into your discard pile from play.

Name

Cost
Number of Runes you must spend to acquire this card.

Faction
There are four different factions:
- Enlightened
- Lifebound
- Mechana
- Void

Piratron
5

Mechana Construct

Once per turn, when you play a Mechana Construct or gain a Treasure, gain 1 .

"Where did he find that hat?"
-Emma Ironheart

Effect
What the card does when played or in play.

Flavor Text
Flavor text has no game effect.

Honor
How much Honor this card is worth.

5

Rarity & Set Icon
Each ● represents a copy of the card in the center deck.

Monster Cards

Monsters represent the forces of evil that are trying to destroy the world of New Vigil. Whenever you defeat a Monster, banish it to the Void and you get its reward immediately.

Defeating Monsters gives you rewards, including Honor, which is the victory condition of *Ascension: Curse of the Golden Isles*™. When you earn Honor for defeating a Monster, simply collect the appropriate number of Honor tokens from the Honor Pool and place them in front of you.

Name

Cost
Amount of Power you must spend to defeat this card.

Enchanting Selkies

5

Monster

Reward: Gain 5 and take a Cursed Treasure from the Treasure Bag.

They seem friendly!

©2019 Stone Blade Entertainment, Inc. All rights reserved.

Reward
What this monster does when defeated.

Flavor Text
Flavor text has no game effect.

Rarity & Set Icon
Each ● represents a copy of the card in the center deck.

Gameplay

General Rules

When you acquire a Hero or a Construct, they are placed into your discard pile.

Whenever a card leaves the center row, replace it immediately from the Center Deck. This happens before anything else occurs. Any time a player is making a decision, the center row should be full.

Hero cards played during your turn go into the discard pile at the end of your turn.

At any time, if your personal deck is empty and you need to draw a card or reveal a card from the top of your deck, shuffle your discard pile to replenish your deck. You should not reshuffle Hero cards you've played this turn if you need to reshuffle your discard pile in the middle of your turn. If the Center Deck runs out, reshuffle The Void to replenish it.

Many cards will have text that contradicts these rules. If card text ever contradicts the rules, follow the card text instead.

Turn Breakdown
1. Play cards from your hand to gain Runes (⧊), Power (🗡), Crew (⚙), or Honor (★). Acquire Heroes and Constructs, and put them in your discard pile for future turns. Defeat Monsters for rewards and Honor. Spend ⚙ to acquire Heroes or Constructs or to defeat Monsters on your ship's space.
2. Once per turn, you may move your ship to an adjacent space. For more information on moving your ship and using ⚙, go to Page 10.
3. Place played Hero cards and unplayed cards in your hand in your discard pile at the end of your turn.
4. Draw five cards from your personal deck.

To play a Hero card from your hand, simply place the card face up in front of you, announce its effect, and follow the instructions on the card. Any choices required by the card must be made at that time and any conditionals must be met for additional effects, though any ⧊ or 🗡 generated can be spent until the end of your turn. You do not have to pay any costs to play Heroes from your hand.

Example: Scubot says, "Gain 🗡2 and Raid." When you play Scubot, you gain the 🗡2 immediately, but you do not have to spend it immediately. At the time you play it, you will need to share a space with an enemy ship in order to Raid.

Constructs are played just like Heroes, except Constructs remain in play and can be used every turn. If a Construct has multiple abilities, each one may be used.

Example: The Abyssal Spear says, "Once per turn, gain 🗡2. Once per turn, you may Acquire a Void card for ⚙0." You may choose to gain 🗡2 at the beginning of your turn and still use the second ability later in the same turn.

Acquiring Heroes and Constructs

You need Runes (⟁) to acquire Heroes and Constructs. Runes come from Heroes played from your hand or from Constructs you have in play. You may acquire any number of cards as long as you have enough Runes. To find out how many Runes you get from a card, look in the text box of the card. If a card provides Runes, there will be a Rune icon with a number.

Cache Crab costs 3 Runes to acquire.

Gain 2⟁.
If you control three or more Treasure, gain 1⟁.

You gain 2 Runes when you play it.

You may acquire any Hero or Construct in the center row as well as Mystics and Heavy Infantry, which are always available. When you acquire a card, place it in your discard pile and replace the card in the center row with the top card of the center deck.

Defeating Monsters

To defeat a Monster, a player must have enough Power (generated by cards with 🗡 in their text box— e.g., Heavy Infantry). The amount of Power a card generates is found in its game text box represented by the Power icon with a number.

The defeat cost of a Monster is listed in the upper-right corner of the card. This cost has a Power icon behind it.
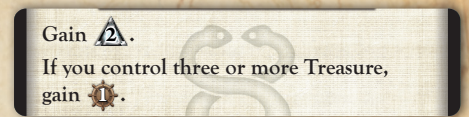
When you defeat a Monster, you gain a reward. Most rewards include Honor, and how much Honor you gain is equal to the number indicated on the Honor symbol (⭐). If the Monster has another effect as part of its reward, that effect occurs immediately after the card is replaced in the center row.

After defeating a Monster, place it in the Void and replace it in the center row. You may defeat any number of Monsters as long as you have enough Power.

The Cultist is always available to defeat and is never banished to the Void. There is no limit to how many times you can defeat the Cultist in one turn.

Moonstalkers requires 4 Power to defeat.

Heavy Infantry generates 2 Power.

Banishing Cards

Some cards allow you to banish cards in either the center row or your own deck. When a card tells you to banish from the center row, put the card into the Void, then place the top card of the center deck into the center row. If a card instructs you to banish multiple cards from the center row, place all of those cards into the Void, then put that many cards from the center deck into the center row.

When a card tells you to banish a card in your hand and/or your discard pile, you may put a card from that zone into the Void. If a card allows you to banish a card in your hand, you may not banish a card that you've already played that turn, as that card is no longer in your hand. Banishing your weaker cards allows you to draw your more powerful cards more frequently, so make sure to banish your Apprentice and Militia cards whenever you get the opportunity.

Ending Your Turn

After you are done playing cards from your hand, acquiring Heroes and Constructs, and defeating Monsters, place any remaining cards in your hand and any Heroes played during your turn into your discard pile. You lose all unspent △, and ◐.

Draw five cards to replenish your hand. If you run out of cards in your deck and need to draw more, simply reshuffle your discard pile into your deck. When you end your turn, play passes clockwise around the table.

Game End

The game ends when a certain amount of Honor has been earned, based on the number of players.

Number of Players	2	3	4
Total Honor Tokens	60★	90★	120★

Set this much Honor aside in Honor tokens before starting the game. When the final Honor token is earned, the game ends at the end of the current round (after the last player to start the game takes a turn). Thus, each player will play the same number of turns during the course of the game. Players can still gain Honor even when the set number of Honor tokens is gone. Use additional Honor tokens left over to track any Honor earned by players before the game ends.

Cards in each player's deck are also worth Honor, indicated by the number in the Honor symbol (★) on the bottom left corner of the card. When the game is over, count the Honor from Heroes and Constructs (this includes your hand, deck, discard pile, and played Constructs), Honor tokens acquired during the game, Coins and other Treasures you control when the game ends. The player with the most total Honor is the winner!

If multiple players have the same number of Honor Points, the last player to start wins (i.e., the starting player loses all ties, the second player loses to third and fourth, etc.).

New in ASCENSION
Curse of the Golden Isles

Ships & Movement

In *Ascension: Curse of the Golden Isles™*, each player controls a mighty pirate ship, represented by a ship dial. Ships will move around the board and use their Crew (⚙) to acquire and defeat cards they encounter. Each space on the board is connected to one of the center row cards, or The Deep.

Ship Token

Ship Spaces

On your first turn of the game, you must place your ship on any ship space. Once during each of your following turns of the game, you may move your ship to any connected ship space at any point during the turn. The Deep space is considered to be adjacent to the two spaces on the end of the center row. Ships can move to The Deep, but cards in The Deep are not considered to be in the center row.

Crew Dial

A ship's crew dial increases whenever you gain ⚙. Increase the dial accordingly whenever you gain ⚙. Your ship can't exceed ⑨ . When your ship is on the space of a card that has a cost equal to or less than it's ⚙, you may spend ⚙ equal to the card's cost to acquire or defeat that card. Do this by reducing the dial by the appropriate amount.

Crew Dial

You may use your ship's ⚙ as many times as you want during the turn. Note that ⚙ can be used for both defeating Monsters AND acquiring cards, so spend it wisely!

Anchor

When you acquire or defeat a card with Anchor in the center row, if your ship is on the card's space, gain that Anchor effect immediately. Anchor has no effect when the card is not in the center row.

Raiding

Some cards give you the ability to Raid! If you Raid an enemy ship, you may take a Treasure of your choice from in front of them and place it in front of you. If a Raid effect allows you to Raid twice, you take two Treasures of your choice. To Raid a ship, your ship must be in the same space as the ship being Raided.

10

Cursed Treasure

Cursed Treasure coins are a new type of Treasure in *Ascension: Curse of the Golden Isles* that players collect throughout the game. All coins have a game icon on one side and a color that matches one of the spaces on the board.

At the start of the game, place all Cursed Treasure coins into the Treasure bag. After filling the Center Row with cards, draw a random coin from the bag and place it on the space of the board matching its color with the game icon side face up. Whenever a Cursed Treasure leaves the board, add a new one in the same way so there is always one Cursed Treasure on the board.

To acquire Cursed Treasure, move your ship to its location, then acquire or defeat whatever card is there. When you acquire Cursed Treasure, place it in front of you with the game icon side face-up.

Each Cursed Treasure coin has one of the following game icons on it: △, 🧭, ⚙, or ▯. During your turn, if you have two coins in front of you that have matching game icons (the coin colors don't need to match), you may turn over both coins to gain two of whatever game resource indicated by the icon. For example, if you were to have the two coins pictured below in front of you, you may turn them face-down to draw two cards!

If a Cursed Treasure coin changes hands because of a Raid effect, the coin will remain in whatever state it was in when the Raid effect was played. Cursed Treasure coins, regardless of being face-up or face-down are worth ⭐2 each at the end of the game.

The Ghost Pirate

The Ghost Pirate is an evil force that is doomed to sail the Golden Isles for eternity hunting for Treasure. Be wary of The Ghost Pirate, as it will reduce your ship's ⚙ if it comes into contact with you. At the start of the game, place The Ghost Pirate in The Deep after filling the Center Row and placing the first Cursed Treasure coin.

If a player's ship ends its turn on or moves onto the same space as The Ghost Pirate, that ship's ⚙ dial is reduced by one. During any player's turn, if The Ghost Pirate moves onto the same space as a ship, that ship's ⚙ dial is reduced by one. A ship can only have its ⚙ reduced by The Ghost Pirate one time each turn.

Whenever a new Cursed Treasure coin is placed onto the board, The Ghost Pirate moves one space towards it, always taking the shortest path available. Some Fate effects move The Ghost Pirate. If a Fate effect happens at the same time that a Cursed Treasure coin is placed, first move The Ghost Pirate one space towards the coin, then resolve the Fate effect.

F.A.Q.

Q: Can I use ⛰ and ⚔ to acquire and defeat cards in any space or just the space where my Ship is?
A: You can acquire Heroes and Constructs and defeat Monsters on any space, regardless of your ship's location. Only ⚙ is restricted to being used to acquire and defeat cards in the same space as your ship.

Q: What do I do with cards like Navigator after I've already moved my ship one space for the turn?
A: You may use these cards to move your ship before or after you move your ship additional spaces.

Q: Do I need to match two or more of the same color locations to use a pair of Cursed Treasure coin or just the game icons?
A: No, you only need to match the game icons in order to gain those rewards. For example, you may turn two ⚔ coins face down to gain ②.

Q: Can I turn a ⚙ coin and a ⚔ coin face down to gain ① and ①?
A: No. You can only pair coins with the same game icons to use their effect.

Q: Can you run out of coins to gain from the Treasure Bag?
A: Yes. If you run out of coins to gain when prompted, you gain nothing.

Q: Can I use Relentless Skipper to banish an Apprentice, or another card that is worth ☆0 to Acquire a card worth ☆1?
A: Yes, you can banish any starting card and acquire a ☆1 card from the Center Row or from the Always Available cards.

Q: If I'm also playing with Ascension: Skulls and Sails, how does Thukal, The Kraken work with Curse of the Golden Isles?
A: Skulls and Sails can be played with Curse of the Golden Isles. Thukal, The Kraken will still lurk in The Deep and take Treasure from players who go there. If a Cursed Coin is taken by The Kraken, set it on top of the Kraken card. Any player who defeats it, regardless of where their Ship is when they do so, get all the Coins on the Kraken.

Q: If I take a Cursed Treasure from the Treasure Bag directly, is it placed icon side up in front of me?
A: Yes.

Q: If I stop an opponent's Raid attempt with a card that prevents Raid, can I stop a second Raid attempt with a different Raid prevention card?
A: Cards that prevent Raid can only be used against the first Raid attempt each turn. The second Raid effect can not be prevented.

Glossary

Anchor: When you acquire or defeat a card with Anchor in the center row, if your ship is on the card's space, gain that Anchor effect.

Banish: When a card is banished, it is placed in the Void. Always available cards and starting deck cards do not go to the Void when banished. Starting deck cards are set aside outside the game and always available cards are put back in their appropriate always available zone when banished.

Cursed Treasure: A Cursed Treasure is a token type that counts as a Treasure worth 2 ⭐ at the end of the game. Cursed Treasure does not take up spots in the center row. Whenever a player acquires or defeats a card in the center row with a Cursed Treasure and their ship at its space, that player also acquires that Cursed Treasure and places it in front of them. When a Cursed Treasure is acquired from a space, replace the card that awarded the Cursed Treasure, then immediately place a new Cursed Treasure from the Treasure bag onto the board.

Constructs: Constructs are the many weapons, magical items, and fantastical devices you may acquire to use in your battles. After you play a Construct from your hand, you can gain an effect from it every turn it remains in play.

Crew (☀): Crew is your ship's resource. When your ship is on the space of a card that has cost equal to or less than it's Crew, you may spend Crew equal to the card's cost to acquire or defeat that card.

Destroy: Destroy means to put into the discard pile from play and generally refers to Constructs.

Echo: Cards with **Echo** have additional effects that occur if the player has cards in their discard pile that share the same faction as the **Echo** card.

Fate: Fate effects take place immediately when a card with Fate enters the Center Row.

Heroes: Heroes are the allies you can acquire to aid you in your quest to save the realm of New Vigil. When you play a Hero from your hand, you gain the effect listed on the card, and then it goes to your discard pile at the end of your turn.

Honor (⭐): Honor is the key to victory in Ascension. Whoever earns the most Honor wins the game.

Monsters: Monsters are the terrors of the Severed Sea. Defeating Monsters gives you rewards, including Honor that wins you the game.

Power (🗡): Power is one of the two main resources in the world of Ascension. Power is used to defeat Monsters and earn rewards.

Raid: When you Raid, take control of a Treasure another player controls. Unless otherwise stated, Raid effects can only be used to take Treasure when your Ship Dial is on the same space as the opposing player.

Runes (△): Runes are one of the two main resources in the world of Ascension. Runes are used to acquire Heroes and Constructs so you can add them to your deck.

Unite: Cards with the **Unite** keyword have additional effects that occur if you play them in the same turn as other Heroes that share the same faction.

Contents

180 Cards
- **99 Black-bordered center deck cards**
- **4 Personal 10-card white-bordered starting decks:**
  - ⟨ **6 Apprentice (24 total)**
  - ⟨ **2 Militia (8 total)**
  - ⟨ **1 Buccaneer (4 total)**
  - ⟨ **1 Navigator (4 total)**
- **41 Silver-bordered always available cards**
  - ⟨ **1 Cultist**
  - ⟨ **20 Mystic**
  - ⟨ **20 Heavy Infantry**

50 Honor Tokens
- **25 Red 5-Honor Tokens**
- **25 Clear 1-Honor Tokens**
- **36 Cursed Treasure Tokens**

4 Ship Dials

1 Game Board

1 Treasure Bag

1 Ghost Pirate Token

Credits