

ASCENSION™

SKULLS & SAILS

Avast me hearties! Rouse ye shipwrecked scurvy bones. Out of yer bunks, and yer dreams of gold n' plunder. Tis' Thukal the Kraken that pursues us! Bearing down on us three-point off the starboard, not more but a mile yet. She comes to protect her treasures, with tendrils flailin' and teeth tearin' at the hull. Get ye bones up and ready the ship for battle! What're ye watin' for?!

The Age of Sail Has Come to New Vigil.

The tropical lands that surround the Valley of the Ancients are up for grabs. Gold enough to make yourself king, but also the legendary crystals of command: an artifact rumored to give the wearer power to control the land, the seas, and the skies.

The explorers who first discovered the islands returned with stories of the terrors that lurk across the Severed Sea. Creatures like the Wraith Squid who drag sailors to the dark below without making a sound or ancient horrors like Thukal and Xoata who can tear a fleet to pieces and swallow whole crews if their domain is disturbed.

Despite these dangers, the factions of the old world have built their ships, readied their crews, and loaded up the rum. Prepare to explore the Severed Seas and the lands that lie beyond.

Emma Ironheart, the genius Mechana engineer, has lifted her fleet into the skies. Guns blazing, her airship, The Indomitable Ironheart, leads the charge into the unknown.

The infamous pirate captain, Naka Blackblade, has stolen the Void faction's fleet. Aboard her newly "liberated" flagship, The Scorn of Emri, Naka and her Black Scale pirates cut through the waves in search of power and plunder beyond their wildest dreams.

Arha's Bounty is the most powerful ship the Enlightened have ever constructed, from bow to stern the ship glimmers with magic. Under the command of Admiral Parker and his Navy of the Eye, the ship sails to glory on the open seas.

The journey will be perilous, and the explorers will need to ally themselves with the Lifebound natives that they meet along the way. Heroes like Ettux the Slayer and the Hurricane Shaman who protect this new world with the strength of nature itself beating in their hearts.

Take command of your ship and join the adventure. Find gold and glory on the Severed Seas!



Getting Started

Rule the Severed Sea in *Ascension: Skulls and Sails*™! 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 (including Thukal, The Kraken) 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 and Monster rewards is the winner.

Setup

Ascension: Skulls and Sails™ can be played with 2-4 players.

Each player has a white-bordered starting deck consisting of seven Apprentices, two Militia and one Buccaneer. Everyone shuffles their starting deck and draws five cards (leaving five cards in their deck). Each player selects one ship and sets their Crew (☛). First player will begin with 0, the second player begins with 1, the third player begins with 2 and the fourth player begins 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. Finally, place Thukal, The Kraken at its space on the board, The Deep.

Shuffle all of the black-bordered cards face down to form the Center Deck and place it on its 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. Ships will move on the spaces between the Center Row cards and Thukal, The Kraken to interact with them. In *Ascension: Skulls and Sails*™, the center row is arranged in a circle around The Severed Sea. 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).

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.

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

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

If you are familiar with *Ascension*'s basic rules and only want to see what is new in *Ascension: Skulls and Sails*™, turn to page 10.



Game Layout



Always Available
Cards, Center
Deck & Void



Starting Hand
(5 cards)

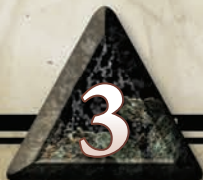


Starting Deck
(remaining 5 cards)

Personal Deck

- 10 cards:
- 7 Apprentice
- 2 Militia
- 1 Buccaneer

The Deep
Starting spot for
Thukal, The Kraken



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

Vine Slingers

1

Cost

Number of Runes you must spend to acquire this card.

Faction

There are four different factions:

- Enlightened
- Lifebound
- Mechana
- Void

Lifebound Hero

Gain **3** and **1**.
Banish this.

Effect

What the card does when played or in play.

Honor

How much Honor this card is worth.

1

You never know what lurks below.

Flavor Text

Flavor text has no game effect.

Rarity & Set Icon

Each ● represents a copy of the card in the center deck.

4

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

Arha's Bounty

5

Cost

Number of Runes you must spend to acquire this card.

Faction

There are four different factions:

- Enlightened
- Lifebound
- Mechana
- Void

Enlightened Construct

Effect

What the card does when played or in play.

Once per turn, if you control three or more Treasure, draw a card.

Honor

How much Honor this card is worth.

3

Flavor Text

Flavor text has no game effect.

We must go on, because we can't turn back.

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• ⚓

Rarity & Set Icon

Each ● represents a copy of the card in the center deck.

5

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: Skulls and Sails™*. 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

Xoata, The Sea Breaker

7

Cost

Amount of Power you must spend to defeat this card.

Reward

What this monster does when defeated.

Monster
Reward: Gain **6** . Choose a player. Take all the  from their ship and destroy all of their Constructs.

Nature's creative power is far beyond man's instinct for destruction.

Flavor Text

Flavor text has no game effect.

Rarity & Set Icon

Each  represents a copy of the card in the center deck.

6

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: *Talons of Amaruk* says, "Gain ▲ and Raid." When you play *Talons of Amaruk*, you gain the ▲ immediately, but you do not have to spend them immediately.

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: *Hakua* says, "Once per turn, gain ▲." When you play a *Lifebound Hero*, gain ⚔." You may choose to gain ▲ 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.

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.



Talons of Amaruk costs
3 Runes to acquire.

Gain ▲ and Raid.

You gain 2 Runes when you play it.



Diamondbeaks
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, and 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.).

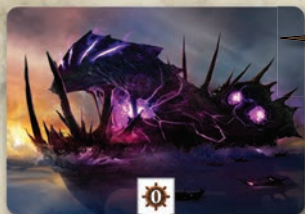


New in

ASCENSION™ SKULLS & SAILS

Ships & Movement

In *Ascension: Skulls and Sails*™, 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 Kraken.



Ship Token

Ship Spaces

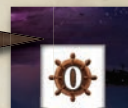


On your first turn of the game, you must place your ship on any ship space. On each following turn, you may move your ship to any connected ship space. Thukal, The Kraken and his corresponding space are considered to be adjacent to the two spaces on the end of the center row. Ships can move to The Kraken's space (though they do so at their own peril!), but The Kraken is 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 its ⚙️, 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.

Thukal, The Kraken

Thukal, The Kraken is a special Monster that begins the game on the board in its designated space, The Deep. Thukal will take Treasure from ships in The Deep until he is defeated.

Thukal, The Kraken may be defeated with  or  just like any other Monster. If you defeat The Kraken, place it in front of you. You may use its ability for as long as it remains in front of you. Cards that refer to "The Kraken" now refer to your ship. Unlike other Monsters, The Kraken is not replaced by a center row card when defeated (since it is not in the center row), but ships may still move to its space.

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 Treasure cards of your choice. To Raid a ship, your ship must be in the same space as the ship being Raided.

Watch out, as Monsters can also Raid you! If a Monster (like Thukal, the Kraken) Raids you, you must place a Treasure of your choice underneath that Monster. Whoever defeats that Monster will thus be able to take your hard earned Treasure!


Treasure

Whenever a Treasure card is flipped into the center row, continue flipping cards off the center deck until you reveal a non-Treasure card. All Treasure cards revealed this way are placed underneath that card in the center row. Whenever a player acquires or defeats a card with Treasure cards underneath it, they acquire those Treasure cards.



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 Wave Walkers, Tempest Turbine, The Indomitable Ironheart, and Hurricane Shaman 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: What happens when cards like Call of the Deep or Spawn of Thukal move a ship towards Thukal, The Kraken if they are already on its space?

A: Ships already on a space they are moved towards do not move and are not affected by Thukal's Raid ability.

Q: What happens when cards like Call of the Deep or Spawn of Thukal move a ship towards Thukal, The Kraken if a player has defeated Thukal?

A: Enemy ships move towards the ship of the player that has Thukal, The Kraken in front of them.

Q: Can I use cards that only affect Monsters in the center row on Thukal, The Kraken?


A: Thukal is not in the center row, and is not affected. Also, defeating Thukal does not count towards the Plunder requirement of defeating a Monster in the center row.


Q: What happens when you defeat a Monster like Shallownoose and Diamondbeaks that grant a reward if you have three or more Treasure, and it has enough Treasure under it to give you the bonus? Do you get the Treasure bonus, or does the defeated Monster reward resolve first?


A: You would gain the Treasures first, then resolve the Monster's reward, granting you the bonus.


Q: Does Big Red Button work for all players, or just me?

A: Big Red Button's ability to give Mechana Constructs Anchor is only active on your turn.

Q: When I play Naka, Blackblade, can I use  to defeat Monsters in The Void?

A: No. Only  may be spent to defeat Monsters in The Void with this effect.

Q: When do I get the  from cards like Crystals of Command?

A: At the end of the game, when counting up your total .

Q: Do I need to discard Hai's Waveblade and Fleet Reinforcements if I use them to prevent Raid?

A: No. Return the cards to your hand after revealing them. They may be played as normal on your next turn.

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.

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 its 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.

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.

Ongoing: After a card with **Ongoing** is acquired or defeated, it remains in front of you and its effect is permanent unless banished.

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.

Treasure: Treasure is a card type that doesn't take up spots in the center row. When a Treasure card enters the center row, it remains in that spot and the next card from the center deck is flipped on top of it. Repeat this process until a non-Treasure card enters the center row. Whenever a player acquires or defeats a card in the center row, that player also acquires all Treasure cards underneath it.

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

200 Cards

- 118 Black-bordered center deck cards
- 4 Personal 10-card white-bordered starting decks:
 - ↳ 7 Apprentice (28 total)
 - ↳ 2 Militia (8 total)
 - ↳ 1 Buccaneer (4 total)
- 42 Silver-bordered always available cards
 - ↳ 1 Thukal, The Kraken
 - ↳ 1 Cultist
 - ↳ 20 Mystic
 - ↳ 20 Heavy Infantry

50 Honor Tokens

- 25 Red 5-Honor tokens
- 25 Clear 1-Honor tokens

4 Ship Dials

1 Game board

Credits

Ascension: Skulls & Sails Lead Design

Justin Gary

Design & Development Team

Gary Arant, Jason Zila, Ryan Sutherland,
Mataio Wilson

Project Management

Mataio Wilson, Gary Arant

Graphic Design

Ryan O'Connor

Creative Direction

George Rockwell III

Public Relations

Bryan Hughes

Card Art

Aaron Nakahara, Eric Sabee, Rod Mendez,
Nguyễn Huy Thiện, Thomas Verguet

Cultist Program Testers

Luke Anderson, Mayot Arthur, James Bruner,
Parrish Danforth, George Gastelum,
Katie Schneider Kramer, Erwin Leijenhorst,
Kieren McCallum, Kyle Oliver, Glover Parker,
Randall Parker, Nathan Revere, Vanessa Shields,
Utsarga Sikder, and Joseph Summa