



THE NIGHT CAGE

YOU AWAKE IN THE DARK.
YOUR BODY NAKED. YOUR MIND BLANK.
YOU HAVE NOTHING BUT YOUR FEAR,
YOUR CANDLE,
AND A QUESTION...

HOW LONG WILL YOUR LIGHT LAST?



rulebook
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CHRIS CHAN, CHRIS McMAHON, ROSSWELL SAUNDERS

OVERVIEW

You awake to discover that you and several others are prisoners inside a pitch-black labyrinth. Equipped with nothing but dim candles, you must work together to explore the maze and escape. Unfortunately, the weak candlelight only illuminates your immediate surroundings. Worse still, you're beginning to suspect something else is moving in the suffocating darkness.

The Night Cage is a cooperative, tile placement game that pits 3 - 6 players against a procedurally-generated prison of eternal darkness. To win, players must each collect a Key, find a Gate, and escape as a group.

But escape won't be easy. Each player's visibility is limited by the weak light of their candle. They can only illuminate a small area of the maze at a time. As players move, new pathways are revealed while old ones disappear into the darkness, creating an ever-changing play space that requires teamwork and collective strategy to navigate.

To win the game, each Prisoner must first collect a key. Then all Prisoners must stand on the same Gate tile at the same time to open The Night Cage.

The Prisoners lose if:

- *All Gate Tiles have been lost.*
- *The Prisoners cannot each collect a Key.*
- *The Prisoners cannot all bring their Keys to a Gate before the darkness isolates them.*

What's in the Box

- *96 Tiles*
- *6 Meeples*
- *6 Player Status Cards*
- *6 Player Status Tokens*
- *1 Play Board*

TILES AND TOKENS



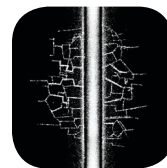
START TILES

A Prisoner's initial location in the maze. Start Tiles Collapse into Pits. They are never included in the Draw Pile



GATE TILES

The Maze's exits. Multiple Prisoners may occupy a Gate Tile. All Prisoners must use Keys on a single Gate at the same time to escape. They act like normal pieces otherwise.



CRUMBLING TILES

Any tile marked with Cracks surrounding its Pathways will collapse into a Pit after a Prisoner has spent a turn on it. Flip the tile over to reveal the Pit.



WAX EATERS

Motion-sensitive monsters that will attack in all directions as far as they can reach. Wax Eaters cannot be fought, only evaded.



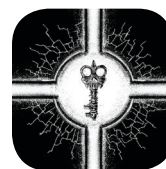
KEY HOLDERS

Advanced Rules Only: Motion-sensitive monsters guarding Keys in their bellies. They do not disappear in the darkness and can only be removed by obtaining their Key.



MAZE TILES

Sprawling passageways that Prisoners must Place, Orient, and explore. Only one Prisoner may occupy a maze tile at a time.



KEY TILES

Tiles that hold Keys. Prisoners move onto the tile to collect the Key. Only one Key can be collected per Key Tile before it collapses into a Pit.



PITS

The back of every tile is a Pit. All Pit tiles are 4 way tiles, regardless of their previous geography. Jumping into a Pit takes Prisoners to parts unknown.



KEYS

Prisoners get these tokens when they collect a Key. Each Prisoner can only carry one. Keys cannot be transferred.



PIT MONSTERS

Advanced Rules Only: Monsters that attack instantly in a diagonal pattern and are not stopped by the darkness. Any Tile hit by their attack immediately becomes a Pit.

LIGHT & DARKNESS

What you see is what you get.

As Prisoners of The Night Cage, your only defense against The Darkness is your candle. Unfortunately, its light is very weak. You can each only illuminate connected Pathways in a one-space radius around your current location (Fig. 1). Diagonal spaces are not illuminated. When you Move, the radius of your candlelight moves with you, revealing new Pathways. Tiles too far away are lost to Darkness and Discarded.

Adjacent tiles not connected by a Pathway should also be Discarded. However, adjacent tiles that are blocking a Pathway remain since you can still see the wall they create (Fig. 2). When all the tiles have been drawn from the Draw Stack, you will no longer have enough light to illuminate new pathways and no new tiles can be added to the board.

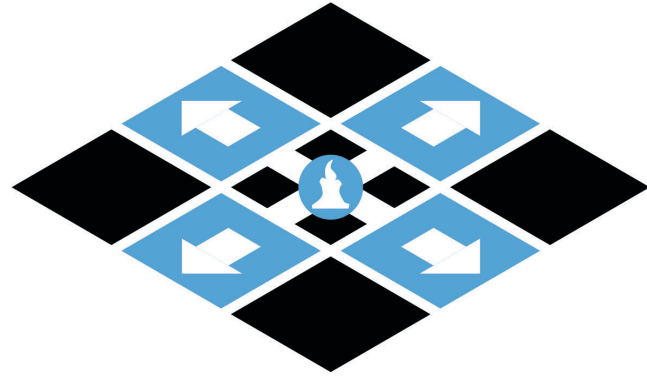


Fig. 1

Your candle lights a 1 space radius. No diagonals.



Fig. 2

This tile was originally lit by another prisoner, but BLUE's Candle still illuminates it as a blockage to their pathway.

The Impermanence of Light

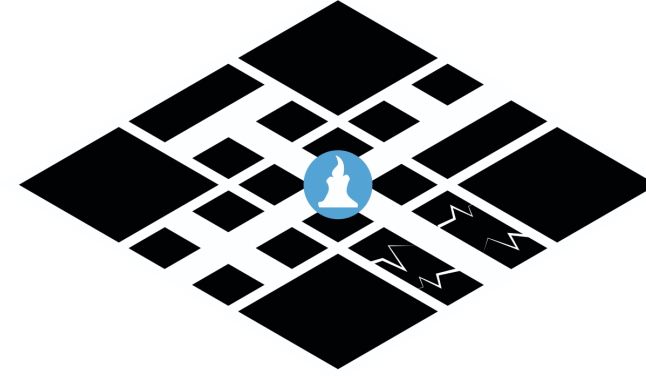


Fig. 3

BLUE observes a pathway in each connected direction

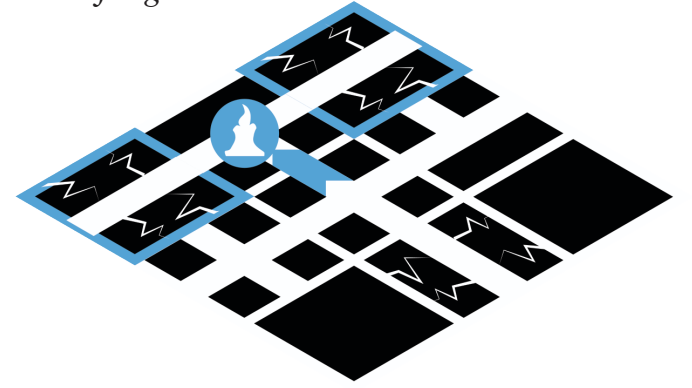


Fig. 4

BLUE moves down a pathway and observes two new pathways.

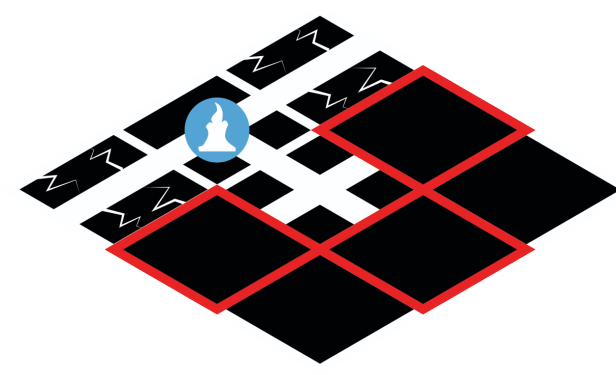


Fig. 5

The pathways outside of BLUE's radius of light disappear forever.



Fig. 6

If BLUE returns to that spot, they will observe new paths.

SET - UP

STARTING POSITIONS

For each player's first turn, do the following:

1. Choose any unoccupied spot on the board (Fig. 1).
2. Place your starting tile on that spot and orient it (Fig. 2).
3. Place pawn on your start tile (Fig. 3).
4. Draw, orient, and place tiles for any newly illuminated adjacent spaces, one at a time (Fig. 4).

Play begins after all players have completed these actions

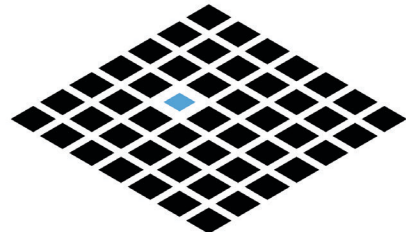


Fig. 1

BLUE selects a dark, unoccupied space to start.

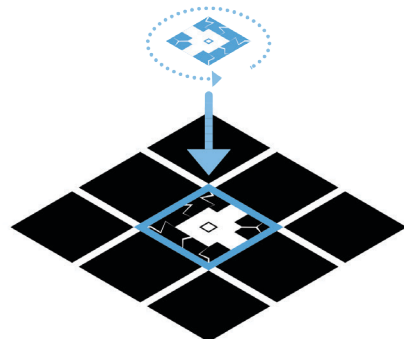


Fig. 2

BLUE Orients and Places their Start Tile.

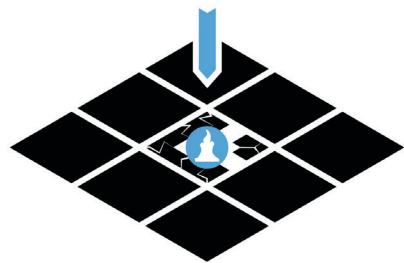


Fig. 3

BLUE places their Prisoner pawn onto that tile.

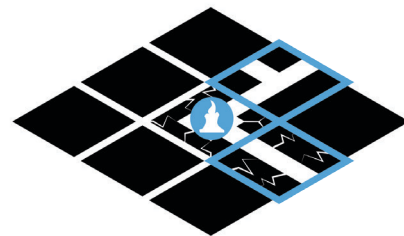


Fig. 4

BLUE Draws, Orients, and Places tiles on any dark, adjacent spaces. Their turn is now over.

2-3 PLAYER GAMES:

Each player controls two Prisoners.

4-6 PLAYER GAMES:

Each player controls one Prisoner.

An Example Set-Up

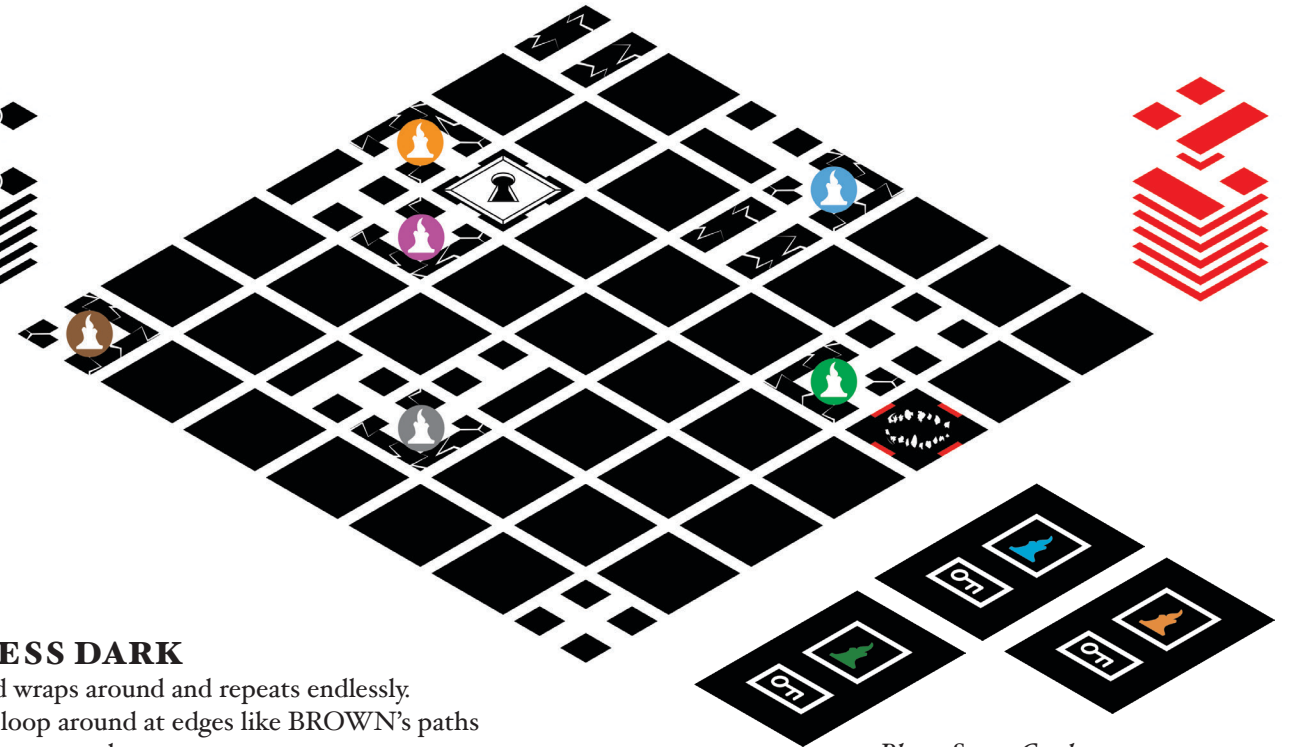
DRAW PILE

Facedown stack representing remaining candlelight and maze left to explore. When all the Tiles have been drawn, you can no longer illuminate new Pathways.



DISCARD PILE

Tiles removed from the board by Darkness. These Tiles can be referenced and counted throughout the game.



ENDLESS DARK

The board wraps around and repeats endlessly. Pathways loop around at edges like BROWN's paths in the above example.

FAQ

Can I connect my starting tile to another player's corridor(s)?
Yes, you can place your start tile in any unoccupied space.

Can I place a monster/lock/key next to my start tile?
If you draw it, you must place it.

Can I place my start tile next to a dead end?
No one is stopping you.

Can I start completely dead-ended?
Yes. You will fall through a pit on your first turn. See **Pits**.

THE WAY OUT

To escape, each Prisoner must recover a Key from a Key Tile. Key Tiles are drawn and placed like ordinary maze tiles. When you move onto a Key Tile, you receive a Key. Key tiles become Pits the turn after you move onto them. If a Key Tile is lost to the Darkness before the Key is retrieved, the Key is lost too.

Prisoners are carrying their candles, so they can only carry 1 Key at a time in their off hand. If you are holding a Key already when you step on a Key Tile, you cannot recover the other Key and it is lost when the tile becomes a Pit.

You can only escape The Night Cage through a Gate. Gate Tiles are drawn and placed like normal. Any number of prisoners can occupy a Gate Tile. If all Gates are lost to the darkness, then there is no escape from The Night Cage.

All Prisoners must gather on the same Gate at the same time with their keys to escape



EXPLORING THE MAZE

Each turn you may choose to **Move**, **Stay**, or **Pass Your Turn** to another Player.

MOVING

Advance one space along any visible Pathway to a connected tile. Pathways are too narrow to have more than one Prisoner on the same tile. However, multiple Prisoners can occupy a Gate at the same time. After moving, Illuminate any new pathways.

ILLUMINATING THE MAZE

- Draw 1 tile from the Draw Pile for each open Pathway leading from your new space.
- No tiles are Drawn for any Pathways already illuminated by another Prisoner.
- Tiles are Drawn and Placed one at a time.
- Tiles may be Placed in any orientation as long as they connect to your current tile (see Fig.1).
- Draw and Place until all Pathways extending from your current location have been illuminated.
- If there are no more tiles in the Draw Pile to Draw, skip Illumination.

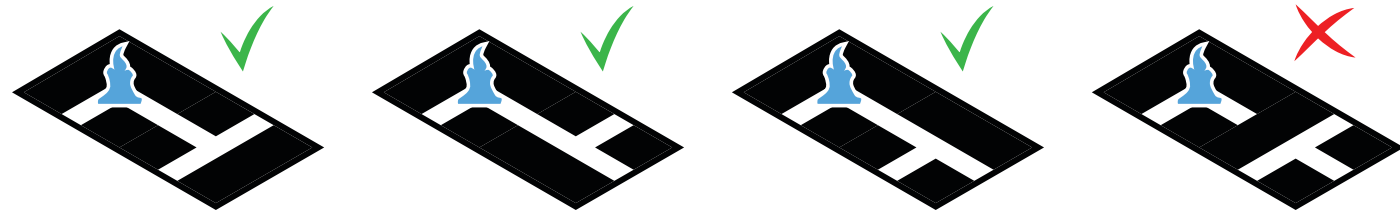


Fig.1
Legal tile orientations.

STAYING

Discard 1 Tile from the Draw Pile.

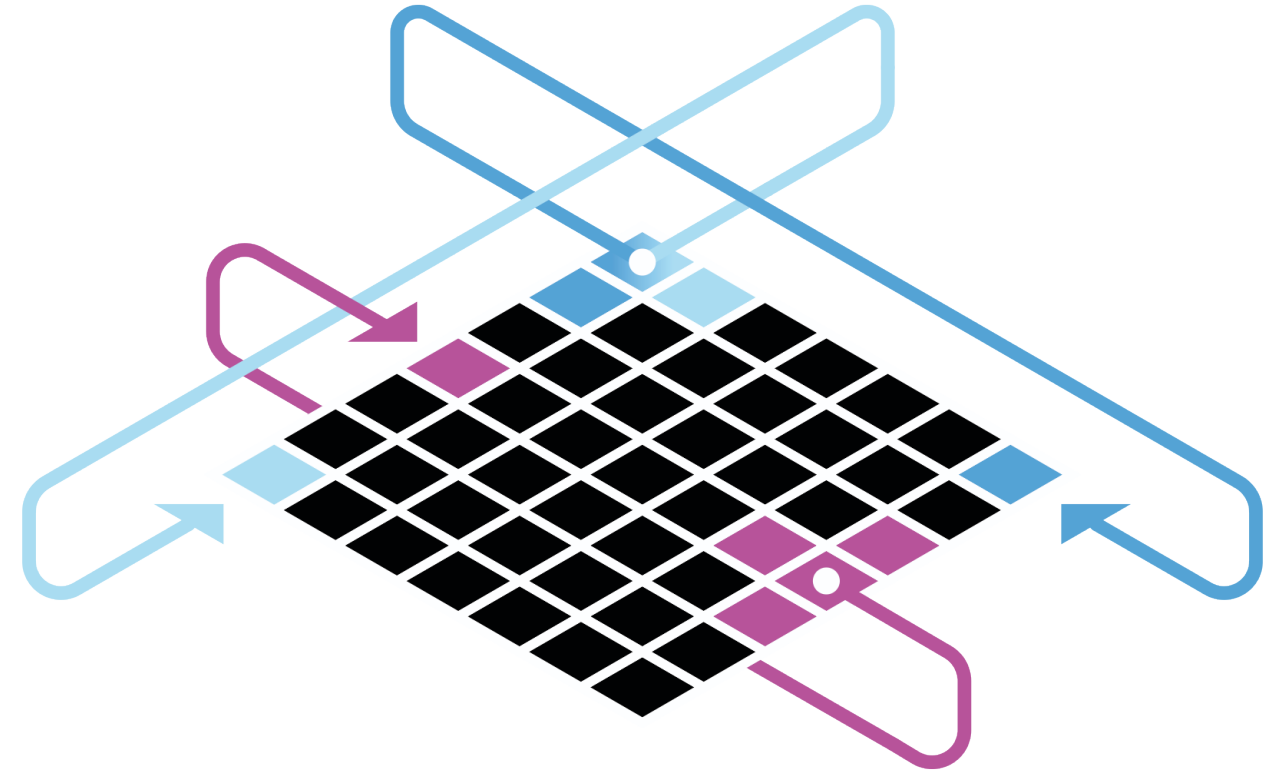
Staying does not trigger Monsters attacks. If you the Tile you would discard is a Monster, replace one of your connected tiles with it. If you Stay on a Crumbling Tile, you fall when it crumbles this turn.

PASSING

Discard 2 Tiles from the Draw Pile.

Choose another Prisoner to take their turn in place of yours. They will still have their regular turn. All rules about Staying apply to you this turn.

A CAGE WITHOUT BARS



The Darkness wraps continuously and does not end at the edge of the board. If you arrive at an edge, illuminate any relevant tiles on the opposite side. Prisoners and Monsters can freely travel from edge to edge. You are never far from the other Prisoners, or the dangers they may discover.

PITS

Cracked tiles collapse into Pits the turn after you step on them (Fig. 2). If you Move, it collapses behind you (Fig. 3). If you Stay, you fall into it this turn (Fig. 4). To indicate the Pit, flip the tile over to reveal the Pit on the backside. Once a Tile becomes a Pit, it can be accessed by any connecting Pathway.

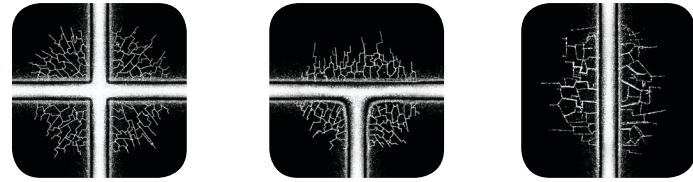


Fig. 1
Cracked tiles

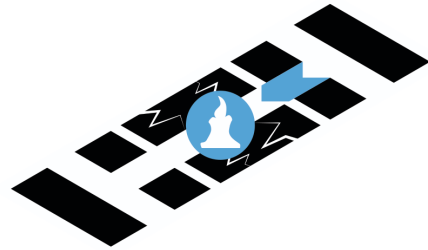


Fig. 2
BLUE moves onto a cracked tile. It will crumble on their next turn.

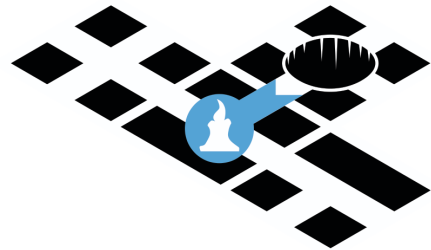


Fig. 3
When BLUE Moves off of the cracked tile on their next turn a Pit will be created behind them.

OR

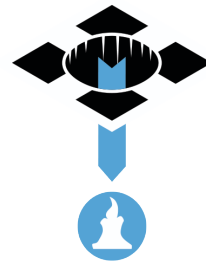


Fig. 4
If BLUE Stays on the cracked tile on their next turn, they jump into the Pit.

PIT JUMPING

Prisoners may choose to jump into a Pit (Fig. 5). To Pit Jump, move your pawn onto the pit you wish to jump through. Select either the row or column that intersects the pit (Fig. 6), then place your pawn on the edge of the board to indicate your selection (Fig. 7).

At the start of your next turn, choose an open, unlit space on the row or column you picked (Fig. 8). Place your Pawn on that space, & Draw the Tile you land on. Illuminate any unlit connected spaces around, then take your turn as normal.

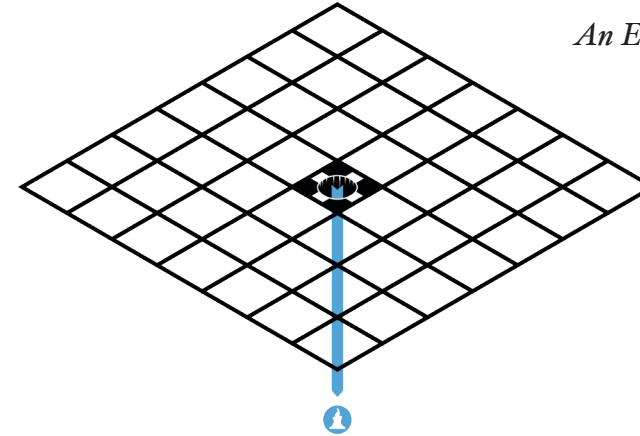


Fig. 5
BLUE has chosen to Jump.

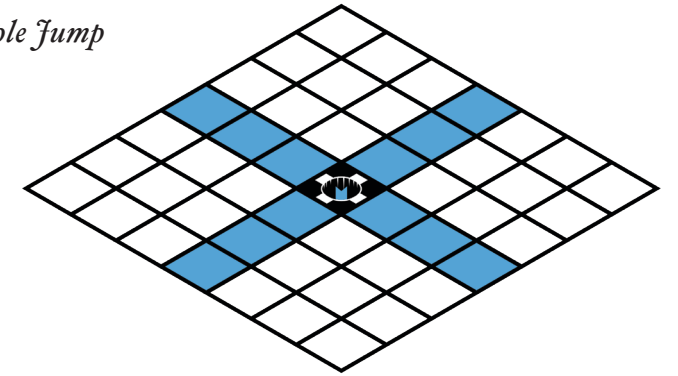


Fig. 6
BLUE may now choose either intersecting row to land in on their next turn.

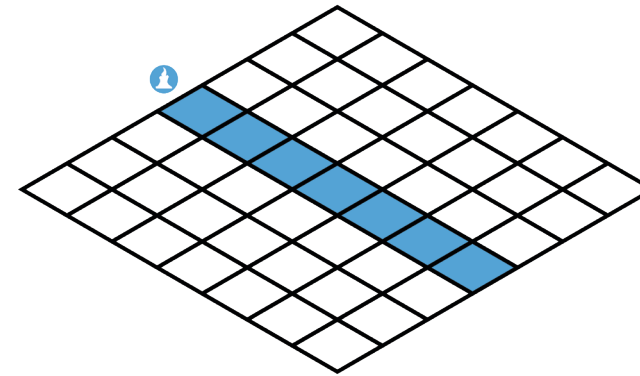


Fig. 7
Once BLUE chooses a row, they set their Pawn off the board by their selected row until the next turn.

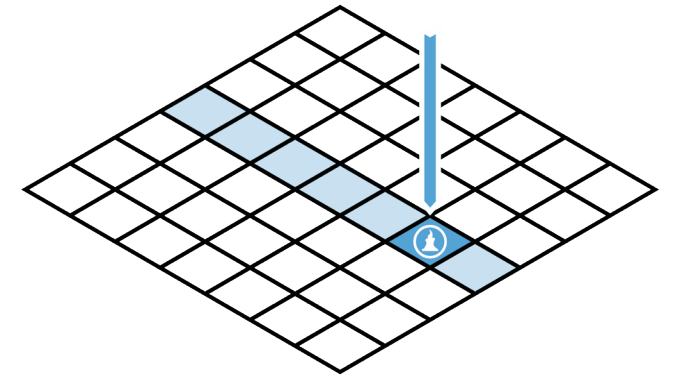


Fig. 8
On BLUE's next turn they pick an empty space to land on in their chosen row.

WAX EATERS

Wax Eaters are Drawn and Placed like normal. Once placed, Wax Eaters are motion sensitive. They will attack anytime a Prisoner moves along, into, or out of a pathway connected to them in a straight line. Wax Eaters attack in all 4 directions simultaneously as far as they have a connected line, including around the edge of the board (Fig. 1).

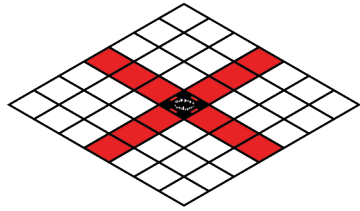


Fig. 1
A Wax Eaters potential range of attack.

Moving out of their line of attack evades the attack (Figs. 2 - 4).

If a Wax Eater's attack hits another Monster, that Monster also attacks, (Fig. 5).

Wax Eaters attack before any Tiles are discarded. If a Wax Eater is no longer Illuminated, it is discarded after it attacks.

Things that set a Wax Eater off:

- Prisoner movement
- Dropping a Prisoner on a Wax Eater
- Another monster's attack
- Revealing a new passageway in it's line of sight

Penalties

If a Wax Eater attacks you or you step or Jump onto one, you go Lights Out and discard 3 tiles from the top of the Draw Stack.

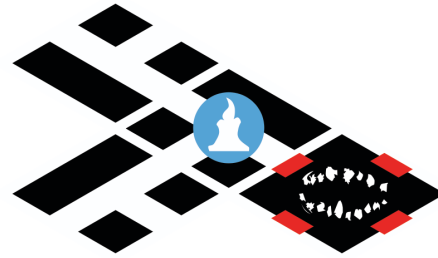


Fig. 2
BLUE has discovered a Wax Eater
The monster will attack when they move.

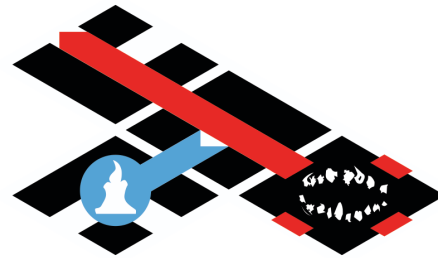


Fig. 3
If BLUE moves to the side, they avoid the attack.

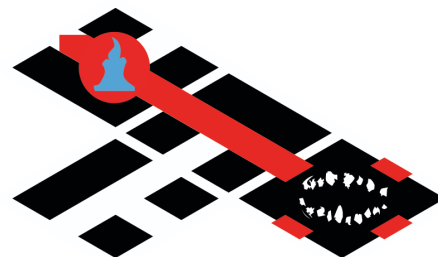


Fig. 4
If BLUE moves in a straight line, the attack will reach them before the Darkness swallows the Wax Eater.

Chain Reactions

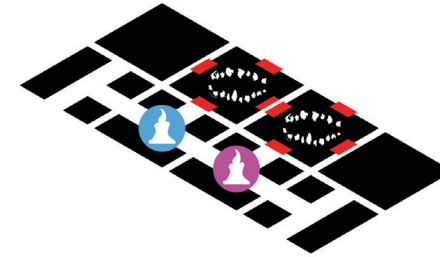


Fig. 5
In each of these scenarios, only the first Prisoner that moves can avoid getting attacked, no matter who moves first.

Wax Eaters and Pits

Creating a Pit or Pit Jumping will block a Wax Eaters' attack (Fig. 6). Wax Eaters do not trigger across Pits that already exists in the maze.

If you Pit Jump onto a Wax Eater, it immediately attacks, then becomes a Pit. You take all penalties, then immediately Pit Jump again (Fig. 7).

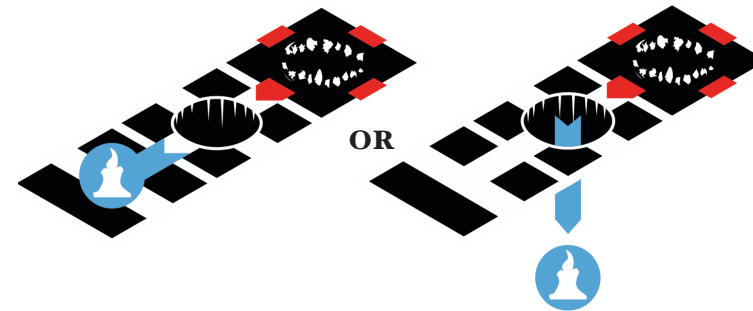


Fig. 6
BLUE can avoid an attack by putting a Pit between them or by Pit Jumping on their turn.

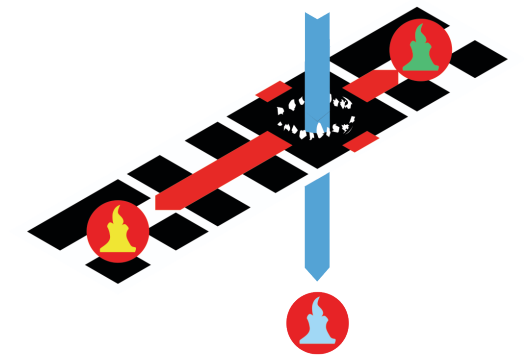


Fig. 7
If BLUE Lands on a Wax Eater it triggers. YELLOW, GREEN, and BLUE are all attacked. Then BLUE Pit Jumps again.

LIGHTS OUT

Nothing is more terrifying than Nothing.

If you are attacked by a Wax Eater, they extinguish your candle. While your light is out, you can no longer perceive anything beyond your current tile. Remove all connected Pathways only illuminated by you (Fig. 1), and lay your Token flat to denote the Lights Out status (Fig. 2).

You are now panicking and compelled to Move every turn to keep The Darkness from consuming you. When you move, Draw a tile only for the space you move to and Remove the tile from the space you leave if no one else Illuminates it. Your new tile must be Oriented so that it connects to your previous location (Fig. 3).

If you encounter another Monster before your candle is relit, the Monster attacks immediately, hitting you and any connected Prisoners. Monster attack tile penalties still apply to Lights Out Prisoners.

RE-LIGHTING

When a Lights Out Prisoner becomes adjacent and connected to a Prisoner with a lit candle, the Lights Out Prisoner relights at the end of that turn. Draw tiles normally to fill in pathways that become Illuminated (Fig. 4).



Fig. 4

VIOLET Moves adjacent to BLUE and completes their turn. BLUE then Re-Lights, illuminating their surroundings.

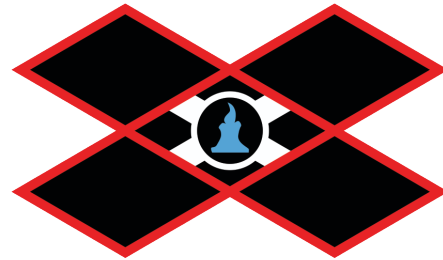


Fig. 1

When Lights Out, you can only perceive your current tile.

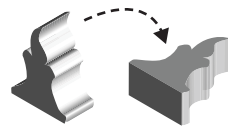


Fig. 2

Lights Out status indicator



Fig. 3

New tile must still connect to your previous location



FINAL FLICKERS

No candle burns forever.

When the Draw Stack is empty, Prisoners have only the final flickers of their light to make their escape. No new Maze Tiles can be added to the board. However, Prisoners may use any tiles still on the board. (Fig. 5 + 6)

At the end of every turn, after removing Tiles that no Prisoner is Illuminating, you must also remove one additional

Tile from anywhere on the board. This is the Darkness closing in as your candles burn down (Fig. 7 + 8).

The encroaching Darkness may cut off all available pathways for a Prisoner, preventing them from bringing their Key to the same gate. If this happens, the game is over and the Prisoners are trapped in Darkness.

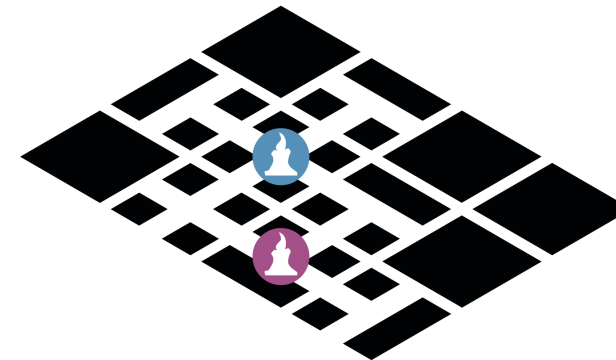


Fig. 5

There are no tiles left in the Draw Pile. It's BLUE's turn.

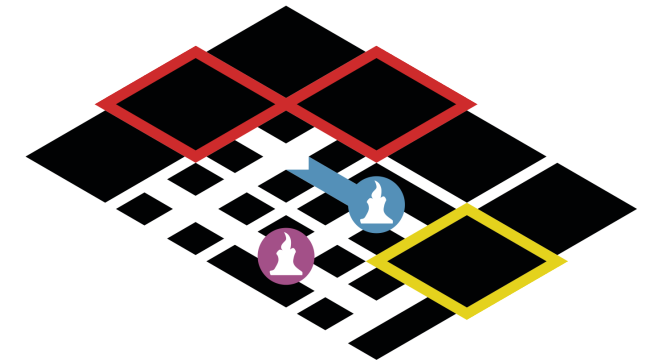


Fig. 6

BLUE moves. They remove the tiles they would normally, but cannot draw.



Fig. 7

BLUE must now also select an additional illuminated tile to remove from the board



Fig. 8

BLUE removes the additional tile.

ADVANCED RULES

For advanced play, Prisoners must face multiple monster types that create different challenges and obstacles.

To set up, remove all key tiles and 8 Wax Eaters.

Then add all Key Holders, Pit Monsters, and additional maze tiles (2 Ts, 1 Cross, & 1 straight) to the Draw Pile.

Key Holders

Key Holders have Keys inside of themselves and are the only type of Monster that defies the Darkness to remain on the board even if they are not Illuminated.

When placing a Key Holder, the Front always faces you (Fig. 1).

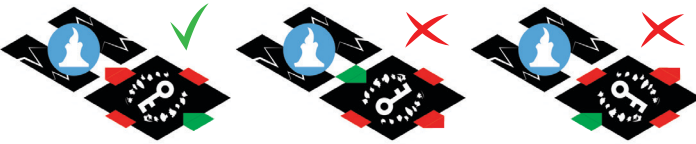
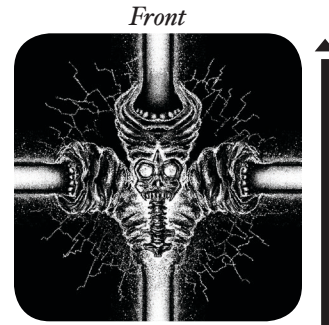


Fig. 1
Legal Key Monster Placements

Each of them only attacks in 3 directions instead of 4, but otherwise attack like Wax Eaters. (Fig. 2)

Moving onto the Key Holder grants you a Key, just like a Key Tile would. Once the Key is collected, the defeated Monster retreats and the Tile becomes a Pit. If you Move onto it from any direction other than the unprotected rear, you go Lights Out and discard 3 tiles from the Draw Stack. If you approach from the rear, you take no penalties. (Fig. 3)

Being hit by a Key Holder at range forces you to discard 1 Tile from the Draw Stack instead of 3.



A Key Holder Tile.

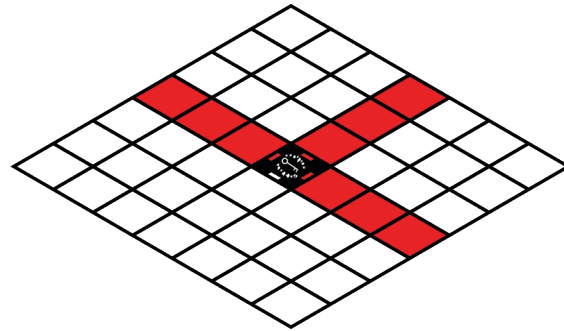


Fig. 2
A Key Holder's attack Range



Fig. 3

Any player can collect a key on their next turn, but only GREEN can collect it without getting attacked or triggering the Key Holder.

ADVANCED RULES, CONT.

Pit Monsters

Pit Monsters do not attack Prisoners directly, but instead create Pits. Prisoners place a Pit Monster like any other Tile.

Once placed, Pit Monsters immediately attack diagonally in both directions, turning every Tile (including Key, Gate, and Monster tiles) into a Pit. (Fig. 4)

The Pit Monster itself also becomes a Pit after attacking. Pit Monster attacks do not wrap around the Torus board.

Any player who has a Pit created beneath them by a Pit Monster must immediately begin their Pit Jump out of turn. (Fig. 5 + 6) Normal turn order then resumes.



A Pit Monster Tile.

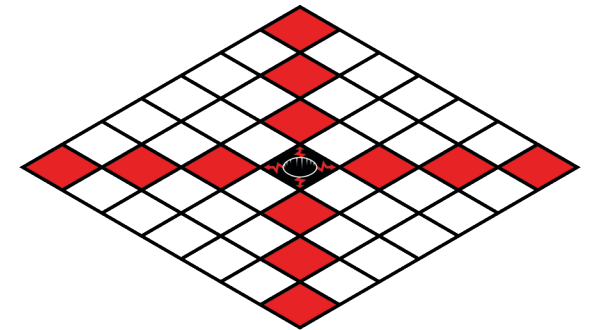


Fig. 4
A Pit Monster's attack range.

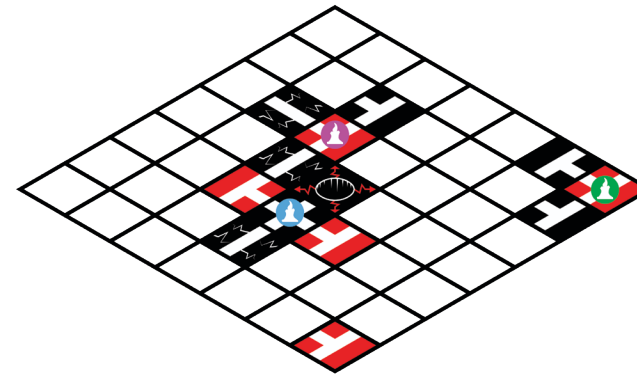


Fig. 5

BLUE has placed a Pit Monster in the center of the board. It will affect all the highlighted spaces.

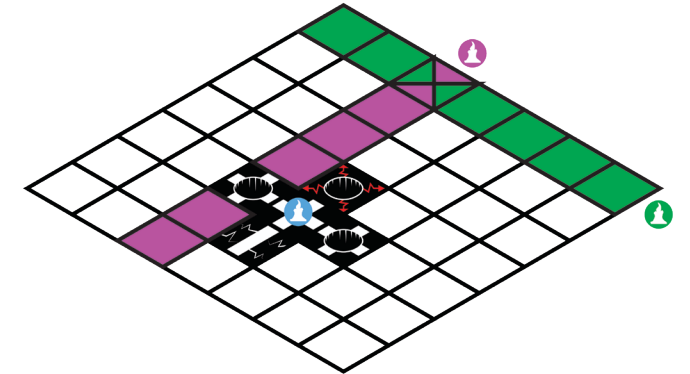


Fig. 6

VIOLET and ORANGE are forced to Pit Jump as the Pit Monster attacks.

YOUR TURN

On your turn, you will take the following actions in this order:

1. **LAND**
2. **MOVE/STAY/PASS**
3. **DRAW, ORIENT**, and **PLACE** tiles
4. **MONSTERS ATTACK**
5. **COLLAPSE/JUMP**
6. **REMOVE** and **DISCARD**
7. **RE-LIGHT**

1. LAND

If you Jumped into a Pit on you previous turn, select an Unlit space in your landing row. Draw/Orient/Place the tile you land on and then illuminate any additional applicable spaces.

2. MOVE/STAY/PASS

Move Move to any adjacent unoccupied tile connected by a pathway. You may move only one tile per turn.

Stay *Discard 1 tile from top of Draw Stack.* Remain in place. If you discard a Monster, you must replace an adjacent connected tile with it.

Pass *Discard 2 tiles from top of Draw Stack.* Designate another Prisoner to take your turn. If you discard a Monster, you must replace an adjacent connected tile with it.

3. DRAW/PLACE

Draw 1 tile from the Draw Pile for each open Pathway leading from your new location that does not already have a connected tile. Each tile is Drawn, Oriented, and then Placed before the next one is Drawn. Continue until all open Pathways have tiles connected to them.

4. COLLAPSE/JUMP

If you Move onto a Pit tile or Stayed on a Crumbling Tile, you Jump and remove your pawn from the board. If you Moved Off or Stayed on a crumbling tile, it now becomes a Pit.

5. MONSTERS ATTACK

If you've moved into or out of a Monster's line of sight or Landed on a Monster, it Attacks. Any player on a Pathway connected in a straight line to the Monster tile is immediately Hit and penalized. Tiles are discarded and Hit Prisoners go Lights Out.

6. REMOVAL

Any tiles that are not 1.) adjacent to a prisoner and 2.) connected to a Prisoner's via pathway are Removed from the board and placed in the Discard Pile.

7. RE-LIGHT

If you or another prisoner is Lights Out and adjacent to a prisoner with a lit candle, their candle is relit. The Relit Prisoner then Draws and Places tiles for spaces illuminated by their candle.

