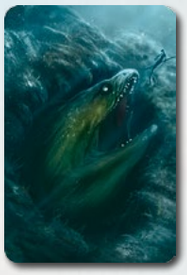
Contents & Setup

1 Place the game board in the middle of the table (A).

2 Shuffle the Exploration cards and form a face down deck on the Exploration Track (B).

71 Exploration cards (65 Allies & 6 Monsters):

Back of the Exploration cards



Front of the Monsters

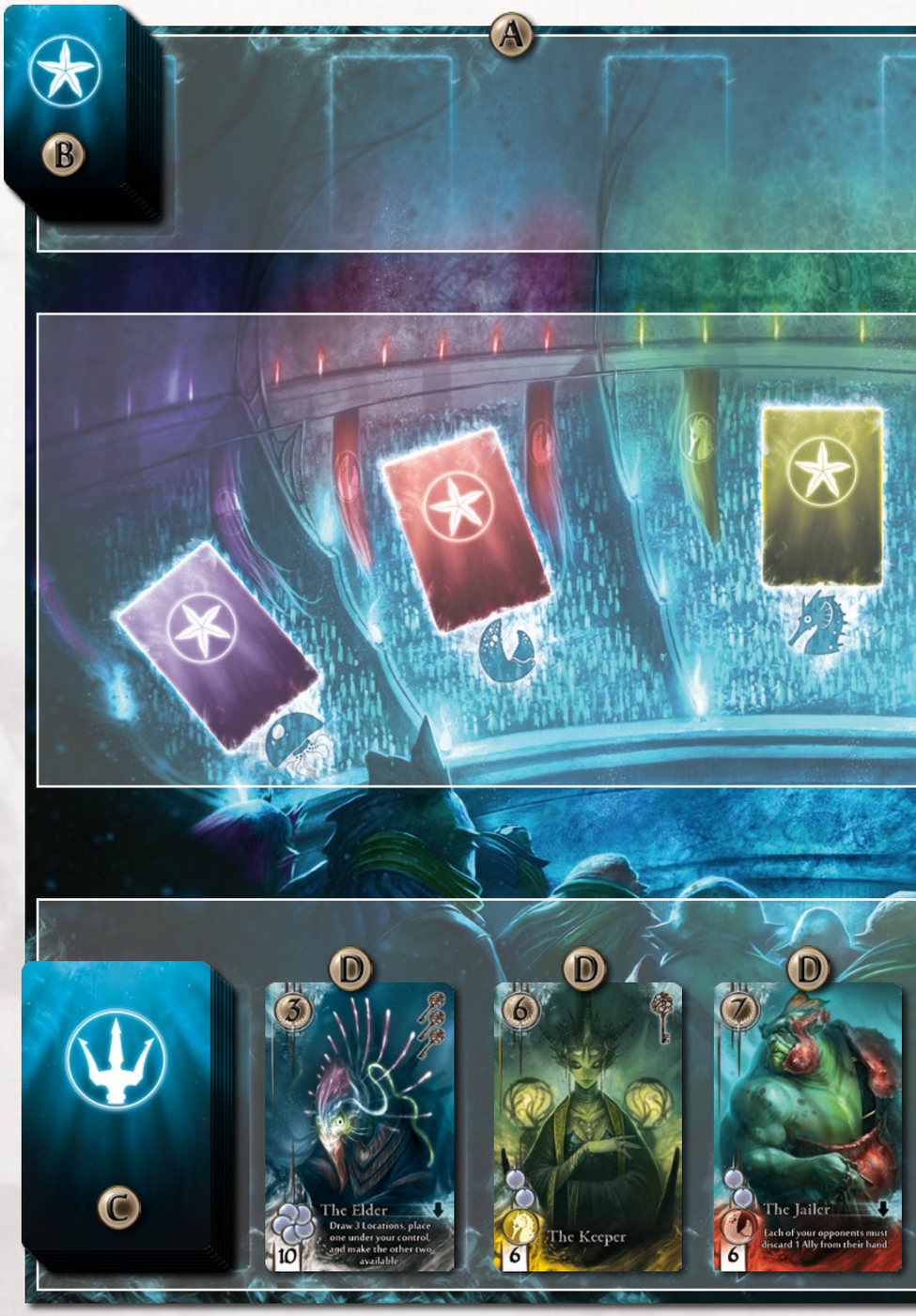
Front of the Allies

3 Shuffle the Lord cards and form a face down deck on the Lords space (C). Then, turn over the top six cards and place them in the Court (D).

35 Lords:

Back of the Lords

Front of a Merchant Lord



4 Shuffle the Location tiles and form a face down stack to the side of the game board (E).
Then, turn over the top tile from the stack (F).

20 Locations:

Front of a Location

Back of the Locations

5 Shuffle the Monster tokens and place them, face down, by the game board (G).

20 Monster tokens (2 of value 4, 9 of value 3, and 9 of value 2):

Back of the Monster tokens

Front of the Monster tokens

6 Place the Threat token on the Threat Track as shown (H).

7 Place the ten Key tokens in a pile near the board (I).

8 Each player takes one Pearl from the supply, storing it in one of the plastic cups. The remaining Pearls are placed in the leftover cups and set beside the board to form a «Treasury».

9 Randomly determine the starting player.

Object of the Game

To be crowned King of Abyss you must have the most Influence Points ("IP") at the end of the game.
Influence Points are mainly gained by affiliating Allies, recruiting Lords, and controlling Locations. Also, each Monster you slay during the game will earn you the gratitude of your peers—and an Influence Point bonus.

Game Overview

The players take turns, going clockwise.
On your turn, you must take the following steps, in order:

1 **Plot at Court** (Optional) : You may spend one or more Pearls to bring new Lords to Court.

2 **Take One Action** (Mandatory): You *must* choose one of the following three actions:

- Explore the Depths
- Request Support From the Council
- Recruit a Lord

3 **Control Locations** (Mandatory): When you gain a third Key, you must take control of a Location.

1 Plot at Court

At the beginning of your turn, you *may* choose to pay one Pearl to the Treasury to add one Lord to an empty space in the Court (the furthest away from the Lord deck). You may perform this action as many times as you want (as long as you can pay and there are empty spaces). If there are no empty spaces at Court or if the Lord deck is empty, you may not Plot at Court.

2 Take One Action

On your turn, you *must* perform one of the following actions:

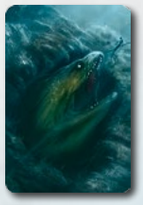
- Explore the Depths

The Exploration card deck is made up of:

- **The Five Allied Races**: Squids in blue, Shellfish in green, Crabs in red, Seahorses in yellow, and Jellyfish in purple.

Each Race is made up of 13 cards as follows: one value 5 card, two value 4 cards, three value 3 cards, three value 2 cards, and four value 1 cards.

- And 6 Monsters!



When you explore, you reveal cards from the top of the Exploration deck one by one and place them on the Exploration Track of the game board, starting with the space closest to the deck, and continuing to the right. Each time you reveal a card, you must follow this procedure:

- If the revealed card is an Ally:

You MUST first offer the other players the opportunity to buy this Ally from you: ask each player in turn, going clockwise. Each player can either pass or purchase the Ally.
The first player who chooses to purchase the card pays its cost to you. Then, they add the Ally card to their hand.
The cost to purchase an Ally increases during your turn. The first Ally purchased costs 1 Pearl. The second costs 2 Pearls, and the third costs 3 Pearls. It doesn't matter which player purchases the Allies!

Important: Each of your opponents can only purchase one Ally during your turn!

If none of the other players want to buy that Ally, you must either:

- add it to your hand for free, which immediately ends your turn or
- leave it in its space on the board and reveal the next card. You must then offer the new card for sale, and so on.

If all the spaces on the Exploration Track are filled with Allies, and none of your opponents wants to buy the last Ally you revealed, you *must* add that Ally to your hand. You then gain one Pearl (as shown on the board).

If the revealed card is a Monster:

You must either FIGHT THE MONSTER or KEEP EXPLORING.

If you decide to fight, victory is automatic and the Monster is discarded.
You win the reward shown on the Threat Track, which may include:

- Pearls taken from the Treasury;
- Influence Points from a randomly drawn Monster token (kept face down);
- Keys .

Some spaces on the Threat Track offer a choice between multiple awards. After defeating the monster, return the Threat token to the first space of the Threat Track. Your turn now ends.

If you decide to keep exploring, move the Threat token one space up the track and continue revealing cards, as above.

Important: When a Monster is revealed on the last space of the Exploration Track, you must fight it. In addition to the reward shown on the Threat Track, you also receive one Pearl (as shown on the board).

Depending on the position of the Threat token on the Threat track, the player who fights the Monster will win lesser or greater rewards:

On the 1st space, they win 1 Pearl OR 1 Monster token.

On the 2nd space, they win 2 Pearls OR 1 Monster token + 1 Pearl OR 2 Monster tokens.

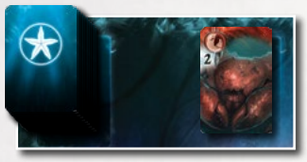
On the 3rd space, they win 1 Key token.

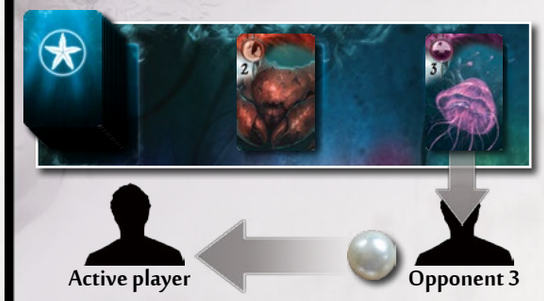
On the 4th space, they win 1 Key token + 1 Pearl OR 1 Key token + 1 Monster token.

On the 5th space, they win 1 Key token + 2 Pearls OR 1 Key token + 1 Pearl + 1 Monster token OR 1 Key token + 2 Monster tokens.

On the 6th space, they win 2 Key tokens.

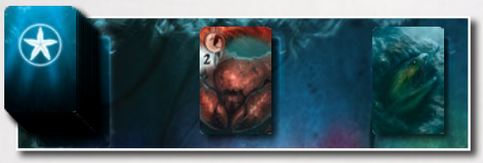
The active player reveals the 1st card and offers it to their opponents who do not wish to buy it. The player can then take it for themselves but would rather continue Exploring.

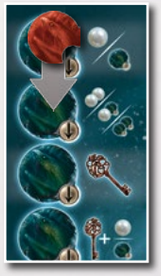


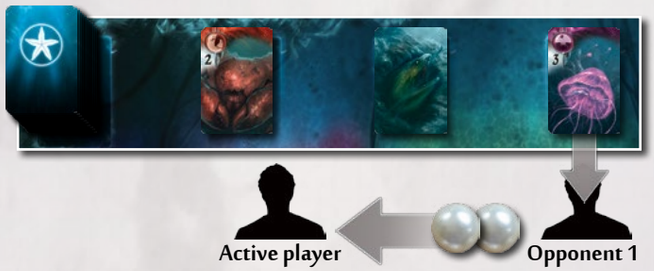


They thus reveal a 2nd card. This time, the next two opponents turn it down, but the 3rd pays a Pearl to the active player to add this ally to their hand.

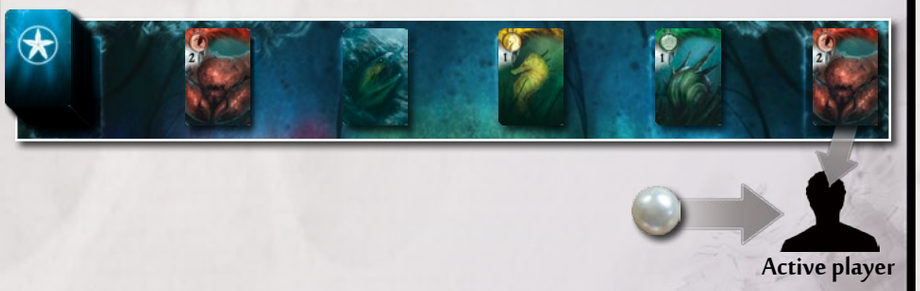
The active player reveals a 3rd card which is placed on the 2nd space. It's a Monster, which they decide not to fight in order to continue their Exploration. The Threat token therefore moves up one space on the Threat tracker and the Monster remains in place.







Then, they reveal a 4th card, which is bought by the 1st opponent for 2 Peals, as it's the 2nd Ally purchased this turn.



Then the active player reveals 3 more cards that their opponents turn down or can no longer afford and which does not interest the active player either. But the 7th revealed card is placed on the last space of the board. The player is thus forced to add it to their hand and takes a bonus Pearl from the Treasury. Their turn ends.

End of Exploration:

Once you have decided to either add an Ally to your hand or fight a Monster, your turn ends. All Allies that remain on the Exploration Track are placed, face down, on the spaces matching their Race in the part of the board called the "Council". Any Monsters are placed in the Exploration discard pile.

Note: If the Exploration card deck runs out, form a new face down deck by re-shuffling all of the cards in the discard pile.

Request Support From the Council

When you request support from the Council, take all of the cards from one stack in the Council—without looking at them beforehand!—and add them to your hand.

Recruit a Lord

Depending on race, the Lords each belong to one of the 6 different guilds, each with their own specialty:

Soldiers are not very popular and are worth fewer Influence Points, but their Powers are useful against your opponents.

Mages are gifted at obtaining favors from the Allied Races.

Farmers have no Powers, but are worth many Influence Points as they grow the Sargasso—the nourishing algae sought by all.

Merchants will give you precious Pearls, without which you will find it very hard to master your destiny.

Politicians are widely disliked and have few scruples. They're very useful to sway the control of Lords.

Ambassadors will allow you to more easily gain control of the most sought-after Locations.

On the Lord cards, you will find:

(A) The **name** of the Lord.

(B) The **cost** required to recruit it:

- The total number of bubbles indicates the exact number of different Race types required.
- The large bubble indicates the mandatory Race. For the smaller bubbles, the choice of Race is left up you.
- The number under the bubbles indicates the total value of Allies you need to play to recruit that Lord.

Example: To recruit the Master of Magic you must spend at least 10 Ally points from three different Races, one of which must be the Jellyfish Race.

(C) The **Lord's Power**:

If the Power is marked with an arrow, it is applied only once, when the Lord is recruited. If there is no arrow, this Power is semi-permanent: it lasts until this Lord is used to control a Location (in which case the Power is hidden by the Location).

(D) Some Lords have a **Key** symbol, which can be used to control a Location.

(E) Finally, each Lord you recruit will grant you a certain number of **Influence Points**!

On your turn, you may choose to recruit one of the Lords available at Court. To recruit a Lord, you must play enough Allies from your hand to pay the costs shown on that Lord card (see inset).

Paying Lord Costs:

- You <u>must</u> play the <u>exact number</u> of different Races required (no more and no less).
- You may play multiple Allies from the same Race.
- The total value of the Allies you play may be more than what is required, but no "change" is given: the extra Ally "points" are lost.
- You may spend Pearls to help recruit: you must still play at least one Ally from each of the required Races, but if the sum of the card values is not high enough, you can spend one Pearl for each missing point (Pearls are paid to the Treasury).

All Ally cards used to recruit a Lord are placed in the Exploration discard pile except for the one with the lowest value. This ally becomes "affiliated" with your cause: place it face up in front of you. If you discard multiple Allies with the same lowest value, you choose which one to keep.
Affiliated Allies remain in front of you for the rest of the game. They cannot be used to recruit Lords, but they are counted in the final tally of Influence Points.

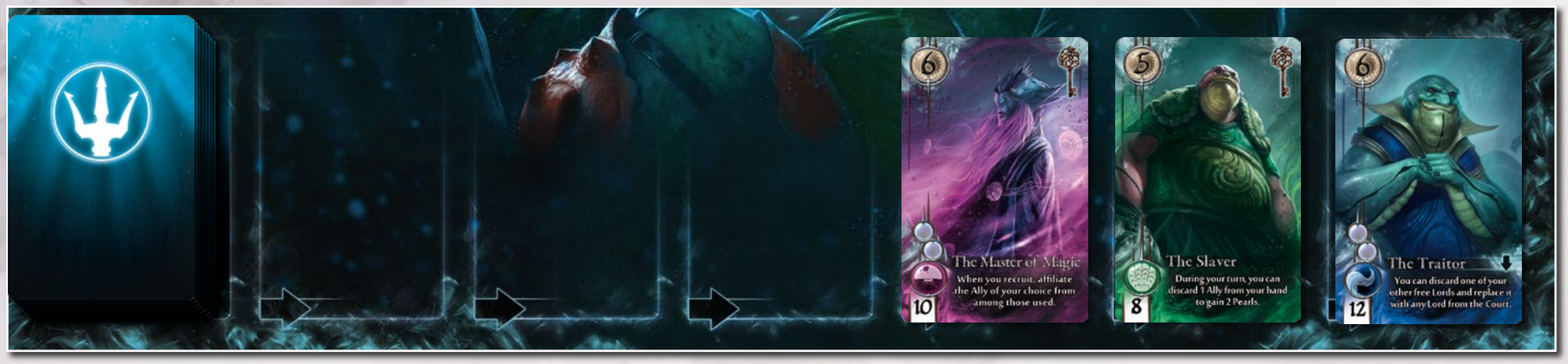
Lord Powers:

After paying the recruitment costs, place the Lord face up in front of you. This Lord is said to be "free" and is available for use.
Most of the Lords have a Power that is applied immediately when the Lord is recruited, and only once. These Powers are marked with an arrow.
Some Lords have a "semi-permanent" Power that remains in effect until that Lord is used to control a Location. These Powers are not marked with an arrow.

<u>Note:</u> A player who controls a Lord decides at which point during their turn the Lord's semi-permanent Power is applied.

Refill the Court:

After you recruit a Lord, slide the remaining Lords in the Court to the right, so that any empty spaces are all as close to the deck as possible. If there are *at least* <u>three</u> Lords left in Court, the recruited Lord *is not* immediately replaced. But, if there are only two Lords left, you gain <u>two Pearls</u> (as shown on the board), and you must fill *all* empty spaces in the Court by turning over Lord cards from the top of the deck.



In the current situation, the active player can recruit:

- The Master of Magic by using their jellyfish Ally of value 3, plus their crab Ally of value 2, and their shell Ally of value 5, for a total of 10 with 3 different Races, a minimum of one of which was from the jellyfish Race. He'll then AFFILIATE the value 2 crab Ally;
- The Slaver by using his two shell Allies for a total value of 6 and by completing with the use of two Pearls. He'll then AFFILIATE his shell Ally of value 1.

However, he can't recruit the Traitor as he has no squid Ally in his hand.
If he decides to purchase the Master of Magic or the Slaver, he'll also gain two Pearls and the Court will then be refilled.

Active player's hand

3 Control Locations

As soon as you gather <u>three Keys</u> (Keys are gained when you recruit a Lord with a Key symbol or by fighting a Monster while Exploration) you ***must*** immediately take control of a Location.

On Location cards, you will find:

- (A) The **name** of the Location
- (B) A **symbol**:

  Which gives an indication on how to win influence points with this Location.

  In the example below, the starfish (symbol for Allies) on a yellow circle (the color of the seahorse Race) shows that you'll win Influence Points through Allies of the seahorse Race.
- (C) The **Influence Points** gained will be totaled at the end of the game.

When you take control of a Location, you may:

- Take one of the available face up Locations (remember: at the beginning of the game, there is only one face up Location available); *or*
- Draw 1, 2, 3, or 4 Locations and choose one from among those drawn. Then, place the rest face up beside the board, making them available for later turns. In this way, the more options you give yourself, the more choices you provide for your opponents!

Place your chosen Location in front of you. Any Lords used to control that Location must be slid underneath it so that their Powers are covered—these Powers are no longer available for the rest of the game.

Also, the Key(s) on that Lord is used, and cannot be used again. A Lord beneath a Location is no longer "free", and cannot be the target of any Power of another Lord. These Lords are still worth the Influence Points indicated on their cards at the end of the game.

Any Key tokens (gained by fighting Monsters) that you used are simply discarded and returned to the pile. If you gain multiple Key tokens at once, and you end up with more than three Keys in your possession (including any provided by Lords), you may choose which Keys you will use to take control of a Location.

<u>Note:</u> Some Lords (the Ambassadors) have 3 Keys, which allow them to control a Location all by themselves. In this case, remember to slide the Ambassador under the Location so its Power is hidden.

The End of your Turn

When you have finished your mandatory actions, your turn is over. The player to your left now begins their turn, following the same steps as above. Players continue taking turns until one of the end-of-the-game conditions is met.

The End of the Game

The game ends when *either* of the following occurs:

- Any player recruits their 7th Lord;

  OR

- Any player recruits a Lord and the Court needs to be refilled, but there are not enough Lord cards left to completely fill the Court.

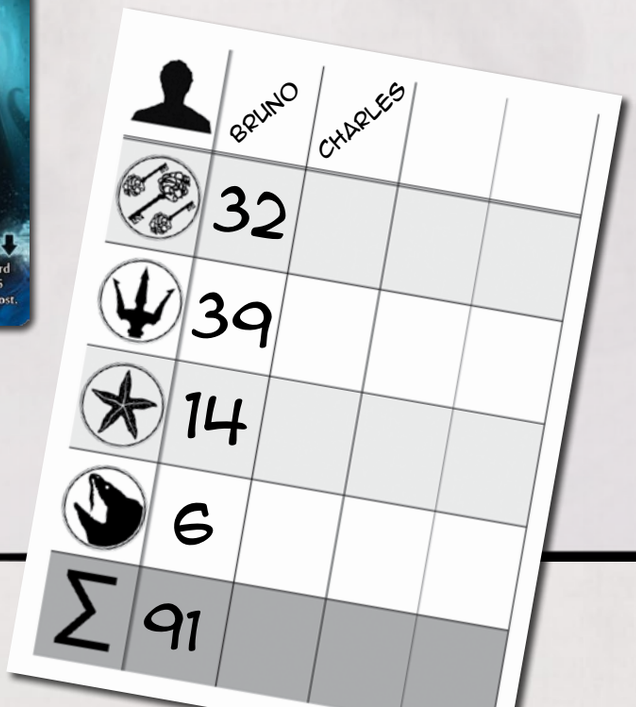
In either case, the active player completes their turn normally. Then, each of the other players gets to take one last *turn*.

Finally, each player places (affiliates) the lowest-value Ally of *each* Race they still hold in their hands. Any other Allies in hand are discarded.

Now each player adds up their Influence Points. You get points from:

- (A) The Locations you control;
- (B) The Lords you have recruited;
- (C) The *strongest* affiliated Ally from *each* Race; and
- (D) The Monster tokens you hold.

<u>The player with the highest Influence Point total wins the game!</u> If there is a tie, the tied player with the most Pearls win. If they are still tied, the one with the highest value Lord wins.



A With their locations the player wins 32 Influence Points:

- due to the Parliament, the player wins 6 IP, plus 2 IP for each politician Lord they've recruited. They have two politician Lords, for a total of 10 IP.
- due to the Sanctuary, the player gains 4 IP, plus 3 IP for each Ally of the jellyfish Race they've affiliated. They have two Allies of the jellyfish Race, for a total of 10 IP.
- due to the Abyss, the player gains 2 IP for each Guild from which they have a Lord. The player has at least one Lord of each of the 6 Guilds (1 farmer, the Keeper, 1 merchant: the Slaver, 1 mage: the Master of Magic, 1 military: the Jailor, 2 politicians: the Traitor and the Corruptor, and 1 ambassador: the Elder. The player thus gains 12 IP.

B With their Lords, the player wins 39 Influence Points:

- 6 IP for the Keeper,
- 5 IP for the Slaver,
- 6 IP for the Master of Magic,
- 3 IP for the Elder,
- 7 IP for the Jailor,
- 6 IP for the Traitor, and
- 6 IP for the Corruptor.

C With their Allies, the player gains 14 Influence Points:

- 3 IP for the highest Ally of the jellyfish Race,
- 3 IP for the highest Ally of the squid Race,
- 2 IP for the strongest Ally of the crab Race,
- 1 IP for the strongest Ally of the seahorse Race, and
- 5 IP for the strongest Ally of the shell Race.

D With their Monster tokens, the player gains 6 Influence Points.

In total, by adding A+B+C+D,
the player ends up with 91 Influence Points!

Lexicon

Affiliate: keep in front of you the weakest Ally used during a recruitment.

Ally: card from the Exploration deck which represents a squid, a seahorse, a shell, a jellyfish, or a crab, with a value of 1 to 5.

Council: area of the board where, Race by Race, the Allies who were not kept during the Exploration of the depths phase are gathered.

Court: area of the board where Lords waiting to be recruited are placed.

Explore: reveal one at a time the cards from the Exploration deck on the corresponding area of the board (Exploration track) to try to find the Ally best suited for your purpose.

Free: any Lord present in front of a player, and not used to take control of a Location is considered to be "free".

Guild: all of the Lord cards of the same specialty. There are six Guilds: the military in red, the merchants in green, the politicians in blue, the mages in violet, the farmers in yellow, and the ambassadors which are multicolored.

Influence Points: victory points.

Key: token gained by fighting a Monster or from a symbol printed on a Lord. A player must have three keys to take control of a Location.

Location: tiles representing the various strategic points of the Abyss. They offer Influence Point bonuses to those who take control of them with their Lords.

Lord: card representing a major creature of the Abyss, with incredible Powers.

Monster:

- Monster: card from the Exploration deck which represents a monster.
- Monster token: token gained after having fought a Monster, and which is worth two, three, or four Influence Points.

Pearl: game currency.

Power: advantage granted by a Lord when a player recruits it.

Race: all of the Ally cards of a given type. There are five Races: the crabs in red, the shells in green, the squids in blue, the jellyfish in violet, and the seahorses in yellow.

Recruit: to pay the required cost to put in front of you one of the Lords currently at the Court.

Threat:

- Threat token: token moving on the Threat track. Its position determines the rewards a player earns when they fight a Monster.
- Threat track: track on which the Threat token moves.

Treasury: reserve of Pearls used as a stockpile.

Clarifications

Commander: when recruited by a player, each of that player's opponents checks the number of Allies they have in hand. All players who have more than 6 discard the excess (they choose which cards to discard).
As long as the Commander is free in front of its owner, opponents can continue to add Allies to their hand (by exploring the depths, of requesting the Council's support). But, at the end of their turn, they will have to choose which Allies to discard if they've gone over the limit of 6 Allies in their hand.

Assassin : the Lords targeted by the Assassin are rotated 90° to show that ONLY their Influence Points are taken into account at the end of the game, as their Power and any Keys they may have no longer have any effect.
However, Lords thus attacked by the Assassin remain free, and can be discarded by the effects of the Traitor or of the Schemer. The Lord which then enters play as a replacement is no longer affected by the Assassin, and can therefore use any Powers or Keys it may have.

Trainer: when a player chooses to fight a Monster while the Threat token is on the first space of the Threat track, that player still gets the reward linked to that space.

Master of Magic: when recruited:
1- The conditions of the recruitment are fulfilled. As a consequence, the weakest ally is affiliated.
2- THEN the Lord comes into play and can use his Power.
This Power therefore only has an effect on FUTURE recruitments, as the Ally affiliated during his recruitment was affiliated before the Master of Magic came into play.

Traitor and Schemer: when a player recruits one of these two Lords, that player can use their Power on any one of their other free Lords, meaning one not already used to control a Location. Specifically, Lords affected by the Assassin can also be targeted by the Traitor and the Schemer (see Assassin). The player can immediately use the Power of the new Lord which has come into play as a replacement.

Authors: Bruno Cathala and Charles Chevallier.
Artwork: Xavier Collette.
English translator: Eric Harlaux.
English revision: Eric & Stephanie Franklin.
English editing: William Niebling.