



18 Cthulhu cards



18 Vampire cards



18 Elf cards



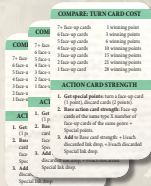
4 Cthulhu
Objective cards



4 Vampire
Objective cards



4 Elf
Objective cards



4 Player Aid cards



Player action marker
(x2 per player color)



1 First Player token



24 Ink drops
(black cubes)



16 Special Ink drops
(x4 per player color)

Credits

Author: Luca Ricci - Game Development: Michele Quondam - Illustrations: Thalia Brückner. A special thanks to Federico Sonzogni, Chiara Spagnoletto, Arianna Formentin, Ken Takacs, Francesco Valenzi and to all playtesters which helped us to improve the game. A big thank you to all participants of Giochistarter.it and Kickstarter campaign.

The game

The Vampire, the Elf and the Cthulhu (VEC) is a strategic card game where players represent writers who are trying to complete a novel together. Each writer competes with the other writers to include in the story his desired plot, settings, and characters.

All those elements are represented by cards on the table: players have to gain them with an auction system, use them (each card has a power which can be combined with other game elements) and try to place some specific cards in a reserved area on the table. This area represent the final plot of the Novel and each player must try to make it identical, or at least similar, to his personal objective.

Each turn consists of **two phases**. In Phase I, each player takes turns placing his two **Quill Pen** markers (action markers) on two **Novel cards**. In Phase II, each player performs actions with respect to the Novel cards with his Quill Pen markers, which he has activated.

Through these actions, the players determines the Novel plot trying to represents their ideas and vision.

Setup

- Put all **Ink drops** (black cubes) in the reserve.
- Separate the **Objective cards** (neutral back) from the **Novel cards**, and shuffle the **objective cards** separately. Each player then takes 1 card from the Objective card deck, keeping it secret from the other players. This is the **player's objective** for the game. If this is a 3-player game, put the Objective cards back in the box; otherwise, set the Objective card deck aside to be used later.
- Divide all of the **Novel cards** into six different decks, one for each color, and shuffle them separately. Then draw 1 card from each Novel card deck and place those six cards in the center of the table. This zone represents the **Ideas Area**. Place each of the six Novel decks face-down,

next to the face-up card of the same color (see the illustration below). In 2-player games, remove 2 random cards (so only 4 cards will remain in the Ideas Area), and in 4-player games add two additional random cards (so 8 cards will be in the Ideas area) using the following procedure:

HOW TO ADD/REMOVE CARDS:

For a **2-player game**, draw a card from the Objective deck and reveal it to all of the players. Note the first two colors at the top of the Objective card: Remove from the Ideas Area the Novel cards of those same two colors. Reshuffle those two cards into their corresponding Novel decks. After removing the two cards, discard the Objective card. There are now only 4 face-up Novel cards in the Ideas Area. A similar procedure is followed at the end of the turn (see End of Turn section) so that only



3 players setup

4 Novel cards are available in the Ideas Area at the start of each turn. For a **4-player game**, draw a card from the Objective deck and reveal it to all of the players. Note the first two colors at the top of the Objective card. Add to the Ideas Area two Novel cards (face-up) of those same two colors by drawing cards from the appropriate Novel decks. After adding the two cards, discard the Objective card. There are now 8 face-up Novel cards in the Ideas Area. A similar procedure is followed at the end of the turn (see End of Turn below) so that 8 Novel cards are available in the Ideas Area at the start of each turn.

Example: if green and red are the first two colors on the Objective card, remove the green and red Novel cards from the Ideas Area in a 2-player game, but add red and green Novel cards to the Ideas Area in a 4-player game.

- Each player **chooses a color** and takes the 2 Quill Pen markers in that color (pawns).
- Each player then **takes from the reserve**: 3 Ink drops (black cubes) and 2 Special Ink drop tokens of his color (colored discs). Put the remaining Special Ink drop tokens in the box for possible use later.
- Next, each player **draws 3 cards from a Novel deck** of his choice; chooses 1 card and places it face-up in his Display (player area) and then reshuffles the other 2 cards in their respective decks.
- Set aside space on the table for the **NOVEL**. The NOVEL, when completed, will consist of 4 cards placed side by side in an upright position. The card in the leftmost position is in position 1, the next card (to the immediate right) is in position 2, etc.
- Randomly determine who will be the **first player** and give to him the First Player token.

Note: Novel cards come in six different colors representing: the main character (red), the secondary character (blue), a place (green), an event (purple), an object (yellow) or an encounter (grey).

Game Turn

Each game turn consists of two phases as described below. The turns continue until the Game End conditions have been met, at which point the players calculate their victory points to determine the winner.

Phase I: Choose ideas

Starting with the first player and continuing in clockwise order, each player **places one of his Quill Pen markers** on top of one of the following cards:

- A **Novel card in the Ideas Area**. A player also has the option of placing one or more Ink drop cubes on that card in addition to his marker (the reason for doing this is explained below). It's possible to place the Quill Pen marker on a card that already contains a marker of another player in order to steal the card from the other player (this is also explained below).
- A **face-up Novel card of his Display**.
- A **face-down Novel card of his Display**.

After all of the players have placed their first Quill Pen marker, they take turns placing their **second marker**, starting with the last player to place the first marker, and continuing in a counter-clockwise order, until all of the players' second markers have been placed. A player may place more than one Quill Pen marker on a face-down Novel card of his Display, because, as discussed below, it takes two markers to activate a face-down card.

In the Ideas Area, a player can **steal** the Novel card on which another player has placed his Quill Pen marker by putting his marker on the card along with a quantity of Ink drop cubes that exceeds the amount of cubes already present on the card.

Example, Leia had chosen the Elf card by placing his Quill Pen marker on it. Luke can steal the card by placing his Quill Pen marker on it along with 1 or more Ink drop cubes.



If his card has been stolen, the robbed player **must immediately move his Quill Pen marker and his Ink drop cube(s)** (if any) to a Novel card that does not contain any markers or to a face-up card of his display. In addition, the robbed player also moves 1 additional Ink drop cube from the stolen card to his new card (that Ink drop cube was one that had previously been placed on the card by the stealing player when he stole the card). If placed on a player Display card, this ink will count for the card next strength verification.

Example: Luke (yellow player) chooses a Novel card in the Ideas Area and places his Quill Pen marker on it plus 2 Ink Drop cubes (1). Leia (blue player), on her turn, chooses to steal that card and places her Quill Pen marker on it plus 4 Ink Drop cubes (2). Luke is now forced to immediately move his Quill Pen marker to a new card not yet chosen by another player. Along with his marker, he also moves three Ink drop cubes to the new card (the 2 Ink drop cubes previously placed by him on the stolen card plus one of the Ink drop cubes placed by Leia). The Quill Pen marker left by Leia remains on the card along with 3 Ink drop cubes (4 previously placed on that card minus the one that had been moved by Luke to his new card) (3).

1)



2)



3)



Phase II: Activations

Each player gathers the cards from the Ideas Area that contain one of his Quill Pen markers, moving them to his Display. Keeps the marker on the card and removes any Ink drop cubes from the card; he places the cubes in the game reserve.

Then, starting with the first player, and continuing in turn order (clockwise and then counter-clockwise), **each player performs a card action**. Only cards with a Quill Pen marker can be activated. Face-up cards in the player's Display require just 1 Quill Pen marker to activate. Face-down cards in the player's Display require 2 markers to be activated. The action available for each card is defined by a symbol on card upper left corner. The same symbol is shown on the right of each action description in this rulebook.

Important Notes

- After an action is completed, the player remove his Quill Pen marker(s) from the card (and put them in his stock) and turn **one of the cards in his Display putting it face-down**.
- The Ink drop cubes held by a player must be **kept secret** from the other players.
- Players always control their own cards, even ones that are face-down.
- A Novel card with a Quill Pen marker cannot be turned face-down or discarded.
- Actions are not mandatory, a player can renounce to perform it losing the action.
- At the end of his turn, a **player can't have more than 7 face-up cards in his Display**. If there are more than 7 face-up cards in his Display, he must turn cards face-down until he complies with this rule.
- At any moment a player **can discard 4 Ink drop cubes** to the reserve and immediately take from the game reserve **1 Special Ink drop token** of his color, if available.

Card Actions

The following actions can be performed by virtue of a card that you have activated: Compare, Research, Re-Activate, Insert, and Retrieve Drops. All of these actions require the determination of the **action card strength value**. To determine that value, follow this procedure in the right order:

1. **Get Special points.** If player has 7 or less face-up cards, he can **turn a face-up card** face-down and immediately gain 1 strength point. In addition of that, he can **discard a face-down card** and immediately collect 2 strength points. It's possible to turn/discard any amount of cards.
2. Count the number of face-up cards in the Display that are of the same type as the activated card (that is, either the Vampire, the Cthulhu or the Elf). This represents value A;
3. Count the number of face-up cards that are of the same genre as the activated card (for example, adventure , comedy , etc.). This represents value B.
4. **Base action card strength value is equal to: $(A \times B) + \text{Special points}$.**
5. Player can discard one or more of his Ink drops to increase the Base action card strength value: +1 point for each Ink drop cube discarded and/or +3 points for each Special Ink drop token. Put discarded tokens in the game reserve. When there is a confrontation between players action card strength, Ink drops used in this way must be placed in player closed hand and revealed simultaneously.
Discard all players' used Ink drops and put them in the game reserve.

Example: look at the set of cards below. The activated card (on the far left) is of the Vampire type (red circle) and is of the Adventure genre  (blue circle). Player renounces to get special points. Then he counts up all of the face-up cards in his Display (on the right) that are of the Vampire type (value A) and multiply that value by the number of cards that are of the Adventure genre (value B). The Base action card strength in this example is 6 (2×3).



Any remaining action card strength points not immediately used are canceled at the end of the action.

COMPARE

The player determines the base **strength of activated action card**. Then chooses an opponent, and chooses one of the **opponents' face-up cards**. The opponent determines the card base strength of that card. The player who has the highest final action card strength has the **winning score**, that is equal to the difference between the two card strengths. If there is a tie, nothing happens.



Winning score is spent to turn face-down opponent's cards. The cost to turn a card depends on opponent face-up card number:

7+ face-up cards	1 winning point
6 face-up cards	3 winning points
5 face-up cards	6 winning points
4 face-up cards	10 winning points
3 face-up cards	15 winning points
2 face-up cards	21 winning points
1 face-up card	28 winning points

- The cost to turn a card must be re-determined for each card to turn.
- First card to turn is always the **compared card**.
- If there is a Quill Pen marker on the card, that card cannot be turned.
- If the winning score is not sufficient to turn any card, nothing happens.

Example: George is the winning player with 17 winning points. His opponent has 5 cards face-up in his Display. The cost to turn the first card face-down is 6. Since he has sufficient winning points to do that, George spends the points, and the compared card is turned over. The cost to turn the next opponent's card over is now 10 winning points (4 face-up cards=10). George still has 11 winning points available. He uses 10 points to turn face-down a second opponent's card of his choice. Now the cost to turn the third card over is 15 points (3 face-up card remaining). George cannot turn another card over because he only has 1 winning point left.

RESEARCH

The player determines the action card strength using the above procedure.

Every 2 points of his final action card strength points spent, **he can draw 1 card from a single Novel deck**. If he draws more than one card from the deck, he can look at all of the drawn cards, and choose one of the cards to keep. He places the chosen card **face-down** in his Display. Alternatively, he can spend 4 points of his final action card strength points in order to place the chosen card **face-up** in his Display. Place any unchosen cards back in his Novel deck, reshuffle it and place it back face-down on the table.

Example: Luke performs a Research action and determines that the action card strength is equal to 8. He can spend those points to draw 4 cards, choose 1, and put it face-down OR draw 2 cards, choose 1, and put it directly face-up.

RE-ACTIVATE

The player determines the action card strength using the above procedure. Every 2 points of his final action card strength spent, **he can turn face-up 1 of his face-down cards**.

INSERT

Only a player whose Display contains cards **with at least 4 different colors** can perform this action, but each of the opposing players can participate in the action, regardless of the number of colors in his Display. The acting player chooses one of his face-up cards and



declare his intent to put it in the NOVEL. Each of the opposing players, in clockwise order, have the option of selecting one of his face-up cards of any color to oppose it with the acting player's card (they can decline to participate). If someone make opposition, the acting player determines his action card strength, and each opposing player, who is participating, determines the action strength of his respective card. If there is a tie, nothing happens. Otherwise, the player who has the highest final action card strength **gets to place his card in the NOVEL in any available position** (1, 2, 3, or 4).

- The winning player can add to the card he placed in the NOVEL 1 or more **Special Ink drop** tokens.
- The winning player can place his card in **any empty position** in the NOVEL; or replace another card in a position, but he may only do the latter if the card he wants to replace contains a lower value of Special Ink drop tokens. If he replaces a card, he then moves the replaced card to any other empty position in the NOVEL.

Example: Leia desires to perform an Insert action with one of her activated cards. Her Display contains cards of at least 4 different colors, so she may perform the action. George and Luke are participating in the action. Leia, George, and Luke calculate the action card strength of their cards, and secretly bid ink drops to raise that strength. The players reveal their ink drops simultaneously, and their final action card strengths are compared. Leia has the highest modified action card strength, so she gets to place her card in the NOVEL. She wants to place the card in position 1 in the NOVEL, and include 1 Special Ink drop token on the card. Position 1 already contains a card. However, since Leia's card has a Special Ink drop token, and the card in position 1 does not, she can move the card in position 1 to any other empty position, and then place her card, with its Special Ink drop token, in position 1.

RETRIEVE DROPS

The player determines the action card strength using the above procedure. Every 2 points of his modified action card strength spent, he **can collect 1 Ink drop cube from the reserve.**



End of Turn

Once a player has completed one of his actions in Phase II, his turn is over, and play passes to the next player in clockwise order. When all players have completed Phase II, the turn is over.

- Remember, at the end of **his** turn, a player **can't have more than 7 face-up cards in his Display**. If there are more than 7 cards in his Display, he must turn cards face-down until he complies with this rule.

After Phase II has been completed, check to see whether the **Game End conditions have been met**. If they have not been met, check to see if any Novel cards need to be added to the Ideas Area:

- For a 3-player game, there must be 6 face-up Novel cards, all in a different color, at the start of the next turn (as in the initial set up). If there are less than 6, draw Novel cards in the missing color from the appropriate Novel deck and add them (face-up) to the Ideas Area.
- For a 2-player game there must be 4 face-up Novel cards at the start of the next turn (as in the initial set up). If there are less than 4, follow this procedure to add more. Draw an Objective card and look at the first color on the card. If there is no face-up Novel card in that color in the Ideas Area, add one in that color (face-up) from the corresponding Novel deck. If there already is a face-up Novel card in that color in the Ideas Area, follow this procedure again, using the second color on the Objective card. Keep doing that until there are 4 face-up Novel cards in the Ideas Area, all in a different color.
- For a 4-player game, there must be 8 face-up Novel cards at the start of the next turn (as in the initial set up). If there are less than 8, follow this procedure to add more. If the Ideas Area does not contain Novel cards in 6 different colors, draw Novel cards in the missing color(s) from the appropriate Novel deck and add them face-up to the table. If there are still less than 8 cards, draw an Objective card and look at the first color on the card. If the Ideas Area already contains 2 Novel cards in that color, look at the next color on the Objective card, otherwise, draw a Novel card in the first color from the appropriate Novel deck

and add it face-up to the Ideas Area. If there are still less than 8 cards, draw a Novel card in the second color from the appropriate Novel deck and place it face-up on the table. The goal is to have 8 face-up Novel cards, all 6 colors, and 2 extra colors (that are not the same).

Note: if a deck finishes his cards, take discarded cards of that color, reshuffle them and re-create the deck.

The player who is immediately on the left of the first player now becomes the first player and takes the First Player Token. Begin the next turn, starting with Phase I.

Game End

The game ends immediately once **4 cards have been placed in the NOVEL**. The players now reveal their objective cards, and calculate the victory points that they have earned. A player earns victory points as follows:

- 1 victory point for each card in the Novel Area that matches a color on his objective card (or 2 points if the card in the Novel Area also contains 1 or more Special Ink drop tokens belonging to the player).
- 2 victory points for each card in the Novel Area that matches a color on his objective card, if that color is in the same position in the Novel Area as it is on the player's objective card (or 4 points if the card in the Novel Area also contains 1 or more Special Ink drop tokens belonging to the player).
- 1 victory point for each card in the Novel Area that is of the same type as the objective card (i.e., either a Vampire, Elf, or Cthulhu).

The player with the **most victory points is the winner of the game**. If there is a tie, the players share the victory.

The winning player(s), using the cards in the NOVEL as a starting point, now have to tell to the other players the story created. Use your imagination!



Example: Scoring

This the NOVEL at the end of the game.



George (red player) scores 5 VP: 1 VP for the gray card (matches a color on his objective card, but is in a different position); 2 VP for the green card (like the gray card, but the VP are 2 because the card contains one or more of his Special Ink drop tokens); 2 VP for the red card (it is in the same position as the color red on his objective card).



Luke (yellow player) scores 7 VP: 1 VP for the blue card (matches a color on his objective card, but is in a different position); 4 VP for the gray card (it is in the same position as the color gray on his objective card and contains 1 or more of his Special Ink drop tokens); 2 VP for the 2 cards of the Elf type in the Novel Area.



Leia (blue player) scores 9 VP: 2 VP for the blue card and 2 VP for the red card (they match colors on his objective card, but are in different positions, and those cards each contain one or more of his Special Ink drop tokens); 2 VP for the gray card (right position); 1 VP for the green card (wrong position); 2 VP for the 2 Cthulhu cards. Leila is the winner of the game!