

THE GREAT RETURN

Legends say the guardians shaped the land and then entered a deep slumber. Now they've awoken, and the heroes of the Foxen smallfolk must defeat the guardians to win their rightful place in the world. The first battle in the war between the guardians and the smallfolk will take place in Skulk Hollow.

Everyone in Skulk Hollow knows the legends. The smallfolk recall the ancient times when the turbulent hours of creation coalesced into a tranquil world. They tell and retell stories of the guardians, who carried out the task of creation and then rested when their labors were complete. They celebrate the formation of the land and the birth of the civilized clans of the fox, the hare, the mouse, and the bear.

For generations, the smallfolk have puzzled over the crystal skeletons found among the occasional titanic artifacts and ruins hidden in the wooded world, from the highest peaks to the valley floor and into the caverns below the surface. Each discovery brings new questions, but none with answers.

But there are heroes who hear whispers in the wind, who feel the trembling in the ground. The sleeping guardians are waking. When they do, kingdoms will be crushed by their footsteps, unless the heroes rise to protect their homeland. Only by facing the guardians and climbing across their monstrous forms can the smallfolk hope to be victorious.



OBJECTIVE

In **Skulk Hollow**, one player represents a guardian trying to eliminate the smallfolk who corrupt their once pristine creation, while the other player represents a band of Foxen heroes bent on vanquishing the guardian in order to protect their people and homes.



The guardian player wins the game either by eliminating the Foxen leader or by fulfilling the guardian's unique win condition.



The hero player wins the game by eliminating

COMPONENTS



1 Skulk Hollow Map





Guardians References (4 Cards)

TANTHOS



10 Foxen Hero Figures



1 Grak Board 1 Grak Player Mat Grak Deck (14 Cards) 1 Tribute Token 1 Grak Figure



1 Apoda Player Mat

Apoda Deck (14 Cards)

4 Rune Tokens

1 Apoda Figure

Tokens

1 Tanthos Board 1 Tanthos Player Mat Tanthos Deck (14 Cards) 6 Root Tokens 1 Tanthos Figure



1 Raptra Board 1 Raptra Player Mat Raptra Deck (14 Cards) 2 Status Card 1 Cloud Token 1 Raptra Figure

GAME SETUP

- 1 Decide who will be the guardian player and who will be the hero player.
 - The guardian player first selects a guardian, then the hero player selects a leader. For beginners, the recommended matchup is Grak vs. the King of War.
 - Give the selected **guardian player mat** to the guardian player, then give the **hero player mat** to the hero player. Give each player a **reference card** showing their opponent's possible actions.
 - Carry out any unique setup instructions for the selected guardian (see pages 16–19). For example, with Grak, you would place the tribute token on the "O" space of the Grak player mat. **B**
 - Return components for unselected guardians and leaders to the game box.
- Place the **Skulk Hollow map** between the players in the center of the table, angled so that the LAIR space is in front of the guardian player and the KEEP space is in front of the hero player. **C**
 - Place the selected **guardian board** next to the Skulk Hollow map. **D**
 - On the Skulk Hollow map, place the **hero figures** for the Sentinel and the selected leader on the KEEP space, then place the selected **guardian figure** on the LAIR space.
- Place the **power cubes** and **wound tokens**, along with all of the remaining **hero figures**, near the Skulk Hollow map. This is the supply.
- 4 · The hero player places the unit cards for the Sentinel and selected leader in their play area. **G**
 - The hero player shuffles the rest of their cards to form the **hero deck**, placing it face down in their play area with space nearby for a discard pile. **(H)**
 - The hero player draws from the hero deck a number of cards equal to their hand size, indicated on their player mat. These cards form their **starting hand**.
- The guardian player takes all of the cards for their selected guardian, then shuffles them to form the **guardian deck**, placing it face down in their play area with space nearby for a discard pile.
 - The guardian player draws from the guardian deck a number of cards equal to their hand size, indicated on their player mat. These cards form their **starting hand**.



HOW TO PLAY

In **Skulk Hollow**, two players alternate taking turns, beginning with the hero player, until one player has reached a win condition, at which point that player instantly wins the game.



TURN STRUCTURE

Both players have the same turn structure: a Main Phase followed by a Cleanup Phase.



Game End (when win condition is reached)

MAIN PHASE

During this phase, the active player <u>may</u> take as many actions as shown by the action limit on their player mat. With each action, they may **play one card** or **prepare**. They may also **spend power** to take additional actions. Actions may be taken in any order.

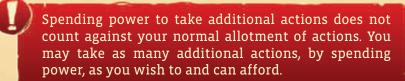
- **PLAY CARD**: The active player plays one card from their hand.
- **PREPARE:** The active player discards one card from their hand, then draws two from the deck. If the player has no cards in hand to discard, they may still take this action in order to draw two cards from the deck.
- **SPEND POWER:** The active player removes one power cube from a guardian or hero unit in order to take an additional action that is available to that guardian or hero unit, without playing a card. Spent power cubes are returned to the supply.



The hero player may spend one power from a hero unit card to take a MOVE action, in any direction, or any other action available to that hero unit.



The guardian player may spend one power from the guardian player mat to take a MOVE action, in any direction, or any other action available to that guardian.





Example: The hero player removes one power cube from the Sentinel unit card to move the Sentinel figure to the guardian's ground space. The hero player may then still take all three of their regular actions.



CLEANUP PHASE

Once the active player has taken all of the actions that they wish to take, or they no longer have any more actions available, they move to the Cleanup Phase of their turn. During this phase, they will **allocate power** and **refill their hand.**

• ALLOCATE POWER: If there are power cubes in the pool on their player mat as a result of taking the GAIN POWER action, the active player now places them in empty power spaces — either on the guardian player mat or on any hero unit cards in play.

Any power cubes that cannot be allocated are then returned to the supply.

Example: At the end of the Main Phase, the hero player has four power cubes in their pool. They currently have the King of War, the Sentinel, and an Archer in play. During the Cleanup Phase, the hero player allocates one power cube to the Sentinel card and two power cubes to the King of War card. The Archer cannot hold any power cubes, so the lone remaining power cube is returned to the supply.



- **REFILL HAND:** From their deck, the active player draws cards **until their hand is full**. Each player's hand size is indicated on their player mat. If they already have cards in hand equal to or more than their hand size (which can happen due to the PREPARE action) then the active player **draws one card instead**.

If their deck is empty when they need to draw a card, the active player shuffles the cards from the discard pile to form a new deck. If there are no cards in their deck or discard pile, they cannot draw or take the PREPARE action.



Example: Grak has a hand size of five cards. On their turn, the guardian player starts with five cards and plays one card to take the GAZE action. They then take the PREPARE action, discarding one card and drawing two. The guardian player now has five cards in hand and has taken all of their actions. When refilling their hand during the Cleanup Phase, the guardian player draws only one card, since they already have cards equal to their hand size.

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THE HERO TURN

The Foxen heroes are attuned to the same power once given to the guardians. While they may not possess it in equal measure, they are nonetheless called to mighty acts, and recognized as the greatest among their clans. Even before the guardians appear on the horizon, the smallfolk can sense the truth in the ancient stories.

PLAYING CARDS

There are two types of cards in the hero deck: **unit cards** and **order cards**.

UNIT CARDS

Unit cards are played to summon new Foxen heroes to help eliminate the guardian.

When a unit card is played, the hero player puts it face up in their play area, then takes that hero figure from the supply. The icon in the upper left corner of the unit card should match the symbol printed on the hero figure. The hero player then adds that hero figure to the Skulk Hollow map, in the KEEP space or any TOWN space. The space must not be occupied by the guardian.

There is no limit to how many hero units the hero player can have in a single ground space on the Skulk Hollow map.

Each unit card stays in play until that hero unit is eliminated. When that happens, the unit card is discarded and the hero figure is returned to the supply.





ORDER CARDS

Order cards allow the hero player to give orders to the various hero units in play.

Many order cards provide the player with multiple actions to choose from. When an order card is played, a hero unit of the player's choice takes one — and **only one!** — of the actions shown on the order card.

Some actions provided by order cards can only be taken by certain hero units. For example, Knights cannot take the MISSILE ATTACK action, while Archers cannot take the LEAP or MELEE ATTACK actions.



HERO ACTIONS

The hero player has a variety of actions available to them: MOVE, LEAP, MELEE ATTACK, MISSILE ATTACK, and GAIN POWER.



MOVE allows one hero unit to move from its current ground space to a **neighboring** ground space. The possible directions of this movement are indicated by the arrows on the card played to take this action. The arrows should be viewed from the active player's viewpoint, relative to the Skulk Hollow map. The unit only moves one space.

DESIRED MOVEMENT

WAYS TO ACCOMPLISH THAT MOVEMENT





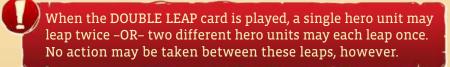




LEAP allows one hero unit to traverse the guardian itself, in one of three different ways:

- If the hero unit is in the guardian's ground space, it may attach to the lowest location on the guardian (indicated by a large arrow). Some guardians have multiple lowest locations. When this happens, the hero figure is removed from the Skulk Hollow map and placed in that location on the guardian board.
- If the hero unit is already attached to a location on the guardian, it may instead leap to another location that is connected to its current location via a dotted white line.
- If the hero unit is already attached to a location on the guardian, it may instead leap off the guardian. When this happens, the hero figure is removed from the guardian board and and placed in the guardian's ground space on the Skulk Hollow map.

Each location on the guardian board has a limited number of figure slots. If all of the figure slots at a guardian location are already occupied, a hero unit cannot leap to that location.





Example: The Sentinel figure is attached to the STOMP location on Grak. The hero player takes a LEAP action to move the Sentinel from the STOMP location to the THROW location.



MELEE ATTACK allows a hero unit that is attached to a location on the guardian to deal one wound to that location. Place a wound token on an empty wound space at that location. If there are no empty wound spaces at that location, the MELEE ATTACK action has no effect.

This action is not available to Archers, because they do not have the corresponding action icon on their hero unit cards.



MISSILE ATTACK allows a hero unit to deal one wound to any location on the guardian. Place a wound token on an empty wound space at any location.

Hero units that can take this action have additional rules about where they must be located on the Skulk Hollow map, in relation to the guardian: Hero units with the FIRE ability must attack from surrounding ground spaces, while hero units with the HURL ability must attack from the guardian's ground space.

This action is not available to Knights, Rogues, or any leader units, because they do not have the corresponding action icon listed on their hero unit cards.



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GAIN POWER allows the hero player to gain a number of power cubes, as indicated on the played card. These power cubes are taken from the supply and placed in the pool on their player mat. During the Cleanup Phase of the hero player's turn, they will then **allocate** these power cubes to empty power spaces on their hero units.

Power cubes, once allocated to hero units, can be spent to take additional actions with those units on future turns. A given hero unit can never hold more power cubes than the number of power spaces on that hero unit card, and some hero units cannot hold power cubes at all (i.e., Knights and Archers).

Hero units cannot take the GAIN POWER action by spending power. It is not considered an available action, because no hero units have the corresponding action icon on their hero unit cards.

Example: The hero player plays an order card that allows them to gain two power cubes, which they take from the supply and put in the pool on their player mat. During the Cleanup Phase, they allocate one power cube to the Princess of Tactics and one to the Sentinel.





Once power cubes have been allocated to a hero unit, the hero player may spend them, on future turns, to take free actions with that hero unit.

THE GUARDIAN TURN

In a time long since forgotten, wizards came together to take on a challenge worthy of the gods: creation itself! Unleashing their greatest magic, they drew together raw materials, shaping them into golems and servitors that would transform their visions into reality. These creatures would one day become known as guardians.

COMPLEXITY RATINGS

Each guardian is played differently, as they each have their own unique set of actions and win condition. Some are easier to play than others. Check the **complexity rating** — indicated by the number of stars next to the guardian's name on player mat — to determine how difficult a guardian is to play. For your first game as the guardian player, it is recommended to choose Grak, who has a more straightforward play style than the other guardians.

ACTION LIMITS

Each guardian player mat indicates the **action limit** for that guardian, which is how many actions the guardian player may take on their turn. This number varies from one guardian to the next. Most guardians may also spend power to take additional actions.



GENERAL GUARDIAN ACTIONS



MOVE allows the guardian to move from its current ground space to a **neighboring** ground space. The possible directions of this movement are indicated by the arrows on the card played to take this action. The arrows should be viewed from the active player's viewpoint, relative to the Skulk Hollow map.



GAIN POWER allows the guardian player to gain a number of power cubes, as indicated on the played card. These power cubes are taken from the supply and placed in the pool on their player mat. During the Cleanup Phase of the guardian player's turn, they will then **allocate** those power cubes to any empty power spaces on the guardian player mat.

Power cubes, once allocated, can be spent to take additional actions with the guardian on future turns.

The guardian player cannot take the GAIN POWER action by spending power. It is not considered an available action.

Some guardians do not have power spaces, so they cannot gain or spend power cubes.



Example: During their turn, the guardian player, who is playing as Tanthos, plays a card with the GAIN POWER action and places one power cube in the pool on their player mat. During the Cleanup Phase, the player allocates the power cube to the open power space on their player mat, for use on a future turn.

DEALING WOUNDS

WOUNDING THE LEADER

If the leader is **banded** with another hero unit, the leader cannot be wounded or affected by any guardian action.

Examples: If the leader and another hero unit are in the same ground space on the Skulk Hollow map...

- Grak's GAZE or SWING cannot target the leader.
- Grak's STOMP affects the other hero unit, but not the leader.
- Apoda's STAB cannot target the leader.
- Tanthos's CRUSH affects the other hero unit, but not the leader.
- Tanthos's PULL cannot target the leader.
- Raptra's CLAW or SHRIEK affects the other hero unit, but not the leader.

Examples: If the leader and another hero unit are attached to the same location on the guardian...

- Grak's THROW cannot target the leader.
- Apoda's SIZZLE or SLAM affects the other hero unit, but not the leader.
- Tanthos's SHOCK cannot target the leader.
- Raptra's FLAP cannot target the leader.







WOUNDING HERO UNITS

When the guardian deals a wound to a hero unit, place one wound token on an empty wound space of that hero unit card. If all of the wound spaces on the hero unit card are now full, that hero unit has been **eliminated**.

If the leader is ever eliminated, the guardian player wins instantly.

When a hero unit is eliminated, return that hero figure to the supply, along with any power cubes remaining on the hero unit card, then place that hero unit card in the hero player's discard pile.

WOUNDING THE GUARDIAN

When a hero unit deals a wound to the guardian, place one wound token on an empty wound space of the targeted guardian location. If all of the wound spaces on that guardian location are now full, the ability associated with that guardian location is **disabled** and cannot be used by the guardian player.

If all wound spaces on the entire guardian board (i.e., on all guardian locations) are now full, the guardian has been eliminated and the hero player wins instantly.



GAME END

The game ends immediately when one player fulfills one of their win conditions!

- The hero player wins by **eliminating the guardian**. The guardian is eliminated as soon as all wound spaces on the guardian board are filled with wound tokens.
- The guardian player wins by eliminating the leader -OR- fulfilling the unique win condition of their selected guardian (see pages 16–19). The leader is eliminated as soon as all wound spaces on the leader's unit card are filled with wound tokens.

PLAYER HANDICAPS

Beginner players may find they are at a bit of a disadvantage against experienced players. To counteract this, you may give the less experienced player up to six ancient relic tokens during setup. Each ancient relic token can be spent during the game to allow the player to take an additional action during their turn. Once spent, ancient relic tokens are removed from the game.





KEY TERMS

These are gameplay concepts in Skulk Hollow and their definitions:

AVAILABLE ACTIONS: The actions available to a guardian or hero unit are those with corresponding icons on that guardian player mat or hero unit card. The MOVE action is always considered to be available.

BANDED: Two hero units in the same ground space on the Skulk Hollow map or attached to the same location on the guardian board are considered to be banded.

CONNECTED: On the guardian board, any two locations with a dotted white line running from one to the other are considered to be connected.

DISABLED: When all wound spaces on a guardian location are filled with wound tokens, that location is disabled and the ability associated with it cannot be used by the guardian player.

ELIMINATED: When all wound spaces on a hero unit card or guardian board are filled with wound tokens, that hero unit or guardian is eliminated.

GROUND SPACES: All nine spaces on the Skulk Hollow map, separated by lines, are ground spaces. (See graphic at right for the names of the individual ground spaces.)

LOCATIONS: All spaces on the guardian board are locations. Each location has a limited number of figure slots, which can hold one hero figure each.

NEIGHBORING: On the Skulk Hollow map, two ground spaces are considered to be neighboring if they share a side or a corner.

SURROUNDING: All ground spaces on the Skulk Hollow map that share a side or a corner with the guardian's current ground space are considered to be surrounding ground spaces.

TOWN MILL TOWN WELL CLEARING

HERO ABILITIES

Many of the hero units have abilities that allow them to make special maneuvers as they battle the guardian.



MOUNT

When a hero unit with the MOUNT ability enters the guardian's ground space, they may immediately take one free LEAP action.

DASH

When a hero unit with the DASH ability takes a LEAP action, they may attach to any guardian location, not just a connected one. This can be done when leaping from the guardian's ground space or from another location on the guardian.



ARCHER

FIRE: From a surrounding ground space. deal one wound to any guardian location.

FIRE

When a hero unit with the FIRE ability is in a surrounding ground space, they may take a MISSILE ATTACK action to deal one wound to any location on the guardian.

HURL

When a hero unit with the HURL ability is in the guardian's ground space, they may take a MISSILE ATTACK action to deal one wound to any location on the guardian.



NO ABILITY

Instead of an ability, the King of War has the most power and health, making it easier to learn how to play.

HEAL

A hero unit with the HEAL ability may spend one power to remove one wound token from any hero unit in play. This includes hero units in ground spaces and attached to locations on the guardian.



RECALL

KING OF WAR

"The legends are true! Our clan must rise up to quell this abomination."

PRINCE of GUILE

RECALL: Spend one power to retrieve any one card from the discard pile.

A hero unit with the RECALL ability may spend one power to allow the hero player to examine the contents of their discard pile, choose one card, and return it to their hand.

COMMAND

A hero unit with the COMMAND ability may spend one power to allow a banded hero unit (i.e., a hero unit in the same ground space or attached to the same guardian location) to *move or* take any available action.



GUARDIAN CHARACTERISTICS

Each guardian has a unique set of special rules and actions, to aid in defeating the smallfolk of Skulk Hollow.

The guardian player can win by fulfilling their guardian's unique win condition, instead of eliminating the leader.

This encourages the players to explore different strategies with each combination of guardian and leader.



SPECIAL

- If Grak has nine or more wounds at the beginning of the guardian player's turn, they may take one additional action.
- Grak cannot hold power cubes.



WIN CONDITION

The guardian player wins if they eliminate eight hero units. Use the tribute token to track this during play.

ACTIONS



GAZE: Deal one wound to any hero unit in a surrounding ground space that shares a side with Grak's ground space. If multiple hero units can be targeted, the guardian player chooses which one to target.



SWING: Deal one wound to any hero unit in Grak's ground space. If multiple hero units can be targeted, the guardian player chooses which one to target.



THROW: Remove one hero unit from Grak and place it in any ground space. The removed hero unit can be placed in Grak's current ground space.



STOMP: Move all hero units from Grak's ground space to other ground spaces. If multiple hero units are affected, the guardian player may move them all to the same ground space or to different ground spaces.



MEND: Remove one wound token from any location on Grak and return it to the supply. This action can make a disabled location active again.



PREPARE: Discard one card, then draw two. This action is always available and does not require playing a card.



UNIQUE SETUP

- Place the Grak figure in the LAIR space.
- Place the tribute token on the "O" space of the Grak player mat.





SPECIAL

Apoda can hold one power cube.



WIN CONDITION

The guardian player wins if they collect all four rune tokens by taking the BURROW action. Place collected rune tokens on Apoda's rune track.

ACTIONS



STAB: Deal one wound to any hero unit in a surrounding ground space that does not share a side with Apoda's ground space. If multiple hero units can be targeted, the guardian player chooses which one to target.



SIZZLE: Deal one wound to all hero units attached to SLAM, STAB, and SIZZLE locations on Apoda. SIZZLE locations cannot be targeted by MISSILE ATTACK actions or DASH abilities.



SLAM: Remove all hero units from Apoda and place them in Apoda's ground space. Foxen leader can not be targeted by this when banded.



BURROW: Collect one rune token from Apoda's ground space, if possible. Then move Apoda to the LAIR space.



MOLT: Remove one wound from any SLAM, STAB, or BURROW location on Apoda.



PREPARE: Discard one card, then draw two. This action is always available and does not require playing a card.



UNIQUE SETUP

- Place the Apoda figure in the LAIR space.
- Place four rune tokens: two in the KEEP space, one in the FARM space, and one in the MINE space.







TANTHOS & 8:4 1:2

SPECIAL

- During setup, one root token is placed in the LAIR space, and the other five are placed in their designated spaces on the Tanthos player mat.
- The guardian player can move root tokens around on the Skulk Hollow map with MOVE actions.
- The hero player can destroy any root token with a MELEE ATTACK or MISSILE ATTACK action. When destroyed, root tokens are returned to their designated spaces on the Tanthos player mat.
- Root tokens do not prevent the hero player from summoning new hero units.
- Tanthos can hold one power cube.



WIN CONDITION

The guardian player wins if all six root tokens are ever present on the Skulk Hollow map at the same time.

ACTIONS



SHOCK: Deal one wound to any hero unit attached to Tanthos or in Tanthos's ground space. If multiple hero units can be targeted, the guardian player chooses which one to target.



TUNNEL: Place one root token in an empty ground space. To be considered empty, a ground space cannot contain any figures or tokens controlled by either player.



CRUSH: Each root token deals one wound to all hero units in its ground space. If there are multiple root tokens in the same ground space, resolve the effects of each separately.



PULL: Move one hero unit from a surrounding ground space to a ground space with a root token.



MEND: Remove one wound token from any location on Tanthos and return it to the supply. This action can make a disabled location active again.



PREPARE: Discard one card, then draw two. This action is always available and does not require playing a card.



UNIQUE SETUP

- Place the Tanthos figure, along with one root token, in the LAIR space.
- Place the five remaining root tokens in their designated spaces on the Tanthos player mat.



RAPTRA : 4 : 2

SPECIAL

- Raptra's status card indicates whether Raptra is on the ground or in the air. The status card begins the game ground side up, but the guardian player can flip it to the opposite side with the LAUNCH action. Give the extra one to your opponent.
- Ground side: If the status card is ground side up, the guardian player may not take the SHRIEK action.
- Air side: If the status card is air side up...
 - Place the cloud token beneath the Raptra figure as a reminder.
 - The guardian player may not take the CLAW action.
 - The hero player may not take the LEAP action.
 - When the guardian player takes the MOVE action, they may move Raptra in the chosen direction up to two times.
 - The hero player may spend an action to discard one random card from their hand in order to flip the status card back to the ground side.
 - Raptra may still be targeted by the MISSILE ATTACK action.
- Raptra can hold up to two power cubes.



WIN CONDITION

If, at any point, the Foxen leader is the only hero unit on the Skulk Hollow map, the Guardian player wins.

ACTIONS



FLAP: Remove one hero unit from Raptra, or from a surrounding ground space, and place it in any ground space. The removed hero unit can be placed in Raptra's current ground space.



CLAW: Deal one wound to all hero units in Raptra's ground space. The status card must be ground side up.



SHRIEK: Deal one wound to all hero units in FOREST and TOWN spaces. The status card must be air side up. When spending power to take this action, the guardian player must spend two power.



LAUNCH: Flip Raptra's status card to the opposite side. Remove or add the cloud token beneath the Raptra figure.



MEND: Remove one wound token from any location on Raptra and return it to the supply. This action can make a disabled location active again.



PREPARE: Discard one card, then draw two. This action is always available and does not require playing a card.



UNIQUE SETUP

- Place the Raptra figure in the LAIR space.
- Place the status card next to the Raptra player mat, ground side up.
- Place the cloud token next to the status card.





