

# Gloom of Thrones



*The sky is on fire. The tea is frozen. In Gloom of Thrones, it's your job to tell the story of the most miserable family to ever seek the porcelain throne.*

## OVERVIEW

In *Gloom of Thrones*, each player has a **FAMILY** of five **CHARACTERS**. Players try to make their own families the most miserable, while cheering up the other players' families.

Characters become sad or happy primarily by having **MODIFIER CARDS** played on them. Each Modifier affects the Self-Worth score of the Character it's played on. Players also play and discard **EVENT CARDS** for various immediate effects.

As the game continues, the Characters are killed off one by one, as **UNTIMELY DEATH CARDS** are played on them. When one entire family has succumbed to Untimely Deaths, the game ends. Self-Worth scores are then tallied, and the most miserable player wins the game.



Character cards have full-color portraits.

## SET-UP

**1. Choose Families:** Each player chooses a family and takes the 5 Character cards with that family's sigil in the top corners. Place your chosen Character cards face up on the table in front of you, where the other players can also see and reach them. Return any unused families to the box.

**2. Deal the Cards:** Set aside the Porcelain Throne card and Reference cards. Shuffle the rest of the cards into a deck. Deal each player five face-down cards and put the rest of the deck in the center of the table. A discard pile will form next to it during play.

### 3. The Porcelain Throne:

Lay the Porcelain Throne card face up where everyone can easily see and reach it, but where it won't be confused with the discard pile.



The Porcelain Throne is unique and not shuffled into the deck.

**4. Begin!** Each player briefly summarizes the misery of their day so far. The player with the most horrible story will take the first turn. The game's owner chooses which terrible tale is most miserable, if there's a disagreement.

## QUICK-START RULES FOR TAKING TURNS

*The rules in this section will get you started playing Gloom of Thrones right away. Refer to the rest of the rules (starting at "The Cardinal Rule") as questions come up.*

On your turn, you take two actions. An action is almost always used to play a card from your hand. How that works depends on what kind of card you choose. Generally speaking (and with some exceptions)...

- **Events** have some immediate effect, and are then discarded.
- **Modifiers** are stacked on top of a Character and remain there. They alter that Character's Self-Worth score, may have additional effects as described on the card, and may bear **STORY ICONS**. You can play Modifier cards on anyone's Character, not just yours, as long as that Character doesn't have an Untimely Death yet.
- **Untimely Deaths** are played on a Character and bring that Character's tale to an end. You can only play an Untimely Death on a Character with a negative Self-Worth score. *An Untimely Death can't be played as the second action of your turn; it has to come first.*

After taking two actions, the player whose turn it is finishes by drawing back up to five cards. Play continues clockwise around the table.

That's it! Turns continue until one player's whole family has Untimely Deaths, and the game comes to a close. See "Winning the Game."

### But That's Not All!

*Gloom of Thrones* is the most fun when the player taking an action tells or continues a brief story with each action.

How is it that Kelly C came to be Sentenced to a Sky Cell? (Did she set the wrong person ablaze with her dragons? Perhaps she flirted with someone's sibling?) Why and how was Shamey Bannister Manipulated by a Maieaster? (examples go here) *You decide*, and then tell the other players in an interesting way!

There are no formal rules for *Gloom of Thrones* storytelling, and no right answers, but that doesn't mean it's not important. Quite the opposite: Many *Gloom* players think of telling tales as very best part of the game!

## THE CARDINAL RULE

*Gloom of Thrones's* cards are transparent in some areas and opaque in others. As the game goes on, cards are often stacked squarely on top of each other. For example, Modifier cards are placed on top of Character cards. (As well as on top of previous Modifiers, as the game continues.)

As Modifier cards stack up, different Self-Worth values, card effects, and story icons will be covered up, sometimes replaced and sometimes simply concealed. **The cardinal rule of *Gloom of Thrones* is that you only pay attention to what you can see.**

If Self-Worth points are concealed, they no longer affect that Character's score. If a story icon is covered, that Character no longer has it. If an effect is hidden, it no longer does anything.



## ANATOMY OF CARDS

Each area on a card has a particular use.

**Name:** What the card is called.

**Self-Worth Points:** Up to three point values in circles. Each Character's Self-Worth score is the sum of the point values currently showing in its stack.

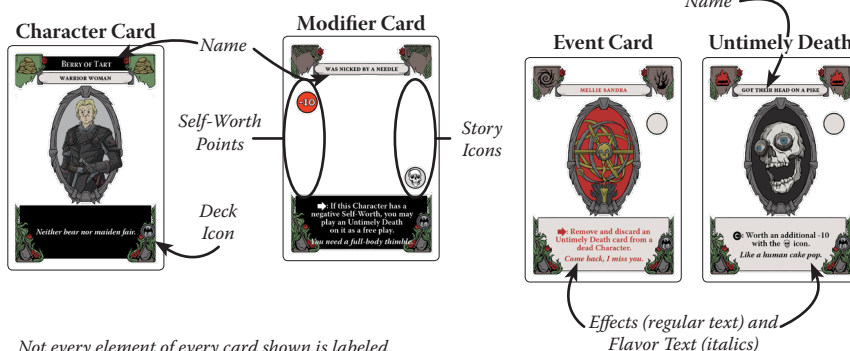
**Story Icons:** Up to three icons that have no effect on their own, but which frequently trigger or interact with the effects of other cards.

**Deck Icon:** The small dragon on every card indicates it is from *Gloom of Thrones*, to help you sort it out from your other *Gloom* games if you wish.

**Effects:** Special rules that do whatever they say. There are four categories of effects: immediate, ongoing, persistent, and response. See "Effect Categories" for more information.

**Flavor Text:** Delightful or dreadful bits of story and commentary that provide entertaining ambiance. Flavor text is distinguished from effect text with italics.

**Portrait:** A disturbing, entertaining, or comic image, delightful to behold. Some illustrations make it easy to tell cards apart by type. For example, Modifiers never have illustrations, so it's easy to tell what they are. Other pictures make it easy to tell living Characters from dead ones: All Untimely Deaths bear the same image, of a skull with eye stones, so any Character showing that signature picture at the top of its stack must be dead.



Not every element of every card shown is labeled. Character cards have flavor text, and Modifiers have effects, for example.

## TYPES OF CARDS

### Character Cards

Character cards have names, portraits, and flavor text. Character cards lack innate Self-Worth points or story icons. Rather, they're the basic foundations of your stories, where Modifiers stack up.



### Event Cards

Event cards have names and effects, and all share a common portrait image showing [a pair of winged boots]. These single-use cards are played from your hand, do what they say, and are discarded immediately.



### Modifier Cards

Modifier cards always have names, and one to three Self-Worth values. Most Modifiers have one or more story icons, an effect, and some flavor text. But some Modifiers omit story icons, effects, and/or flavor text.

Playing Modifiers is how you inflict misfortune on your own family and bring cheer to your enemies. Generally speaking, you'll want to play Modifiers with negative Self-Worth on your own Characters and positive Self-Worth on other players' Characters, but sometimes a card's effect will make you want to do something else.



When you play a Modifier on a Character, stack it squarely on top of the Character you've chosen, and on top of any Modifiers previously played on that Character. **You can only play Modifiers on living Characters** (that is, Characters without Untimely Deaths) unless a card's effect specifically says otherwise.

Modifiers with effects affect the player who owns the Character that the Modifier was played on, and not (necessarily) the player who played the card. So if you play a card that says "Draw two cards" on another player's Character, that player is the one who gets to draw.

Some unusual Modifiers — those with persistent effects — have portraits. These cards represent momentous changes in their Character's life. Their effects persist even when their effect text is covered up, which is the only exception to the cardinal rule of *Gloom of Thrones*. See "Effect Categories" for more detailed information about persistent effects.

### Untimely Death Cards

Untimely Death cards have names, effects, and flavor text, and all share a common portrait image showing the final page of a book. An Untimely Death brings a Character's tale to a close, transitioning that Character from **LIVING TO DEAD**.

You can play Untimely Deaths on your own Characters or the Characters of others. However, there are two restrictions:

- **You can't play an Untimely Death as your second turn action, and**
- **You can only play Untimely Deaths on a Character with a negative Self-Worth score.** (That is, the sum of all of that Character's visible Self-Worth scores must be negative *before the effects of the Untimely Death are applied*. This is *Gloom* after all — you can't finish a tale unless its hero is miserable!)

Once a Character meets its Untimely Death, set it aside in a way that makes it clear that it's dead. A few Event cards can affect dead Characters, but not many.

### The Porcelain Throne

**THE PORCELAIN THRONE** is a unique card with its own set of rules. It is never shuffled into the deck.

The Porcelain Throne card begins the game uncontrolled — in the center of the table, not claimed by any Character.

In the course of play, anytime a card with a 👑 icon is played, the Throne transfers to the Character with the newest 👑. That Character is now the **MONARCH** and is worth -30 Self-Worth points. The player who controls the Monarch may play Untimely Death cards as their second action, but only on opponents' Characters, not their own.

For example, you play Learned a Lineage on Ceriously Bannister. Ceriously is now the Monarch and she now has -60 Self-Worth points (-30 from Learned a Lineage, and -30 from The Porcelain Throne).

Place the Throne near the Monarch so everyone can see to whom it belongs. You enjoy its effects for as long as you control it.

If the Monarch is killed, return the Throne to the center of the table. If that death ends the game, however, that Character is the final Monarch and retains the Throne and the -30 Self-Worth points.

If the Monarch is still alive when the game ends, that Character scores -30 points for the Throne, but does not score the rest of its Self-Worth points, as usual.



Because of the transitory negative points, The Porcelain Throne can result in dead Characters with positive scores.

The Porcelain Throne card is optional: A less complicated version of *Gloom of Thrones* can be played by leaving it out entirely. If you do play a game without the Throne, discard and replace any card you might draw — like Played The Game, Did Not Win — whose effect refers to the Throne or Monarch.

## SPECIAL ACTIONS

In addition to the typical card-play actions (playing a Modifier, an Event, or an Untimely Death), two special actions are available to players on their turns.

**Discarding Your Hand:** If you don't like your cards, you can discard your entire hand. But keep in mind that you don't get new cards until the end of your turn, so if you discard your hand as your first action, you won't have any cards to play on your second action.

**Passing:** You can always do nothing.

## DRAWING CARDS

Some effects change your **DRAW LIMIT**. Your draw limit is simply the number of cards you draw up to at the end of your turn. If your draw limit is five (which is the default), you draw cards at the end of your turn until you have five cards in your hand.

If you somehow have more cards than your draw limit at the end of your turn, your turn simply ends without any drawing of cards.

## FREE PLAYS

Some card effects let you play additional cards as **FREE PLAYS**. Free plays don't count toward your two-action limit. If a card allows you to play an Untimely Death as a free play, you can do it whether the free play came from your turn's first or second action.

## EFFECT CATEGORIES

There are four types of effects, which are identified by icons. An effect's category determines when it's resolved.

➡ **IMMEDIATE EFFECTS** are conclusively resolved right away when played. Example: "Draw one card."

🕒 **ONGOING EFFECTS** continue to affect the game for as long as their effect text is visible. When it's covered by another card, the effect ends. Example: "Your draw limit is increased by one card."

➡ **RESPONSES** can only be played during another player's turn in response to some action that player has just taken. Response cards are the only cards that can be played during another player's turn. Example: "Cancel an Event card as it is played."

## WINNING THE GAME

The game ends immediately when all of the Characters in one family are dead — that is, when they all have Untimely Deaths on them.

When the game ends, each player adds up the Self-Worth scores of all their dead Characters. (Each Character's individual Self-Worth score is the sum of the point values currently showing in its stack.) The player with the lowest total — the one whose family is the most miserable — wins!

## CREDITS

**Gloom Design:** Keith Baker  
**Design and Production:** Kyla McT  
**Illustrations:** Brian Patterson  
**Publisher:** John Nephew  
**Playtesters:** Crystal, Paul Ference, Jacklyn, Mark Redacted, Jeff Tidball, Steve Warzeha, Matthew Wyatt  
**Special Thanks:** Justin Alexander, Cam Banks, Jessica Banks, Bob Brynildson, Phil Campbell, Jerry Corrick, Nicolas Gluesenkamp, Jenae Pederson, Amelia Rengo, Jeff Tidball, and Travis Winter.

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