



## A GAME OF NATURAL CYCLES

v 1.0 Rules  
For 2-8 Players

### CONTENTS:

- 9 Game board pieces
- 8 Character cards
- 36 Equip Item cards
  - 12 Weapon Item cards
  - 12 Armor Item cards
  - 12 Boot Item cards
- 12 Trinket Item cards

### ADDITIONAL PIECES REQUIRED:

- 8 Character pieces
- 1 Six-sided die (ideally there should be a die for each player)

### THE STORY (SO FAR):

A long time ago, in a far away land where magic and fantastic creatures still ruled the land, there were two opposing forces: the Summer Court, who prided themselves on warmth and the light, and the Winter Court, who dwelt in cold and shadows. These forces could not coexist peacefully, and so they regularly engaged each other in an endless cycle of warfare to decide who shall rule the land, like two snakes eating each other's tails. This is not a tale of good valiantly challenging an evil presence, but rather of natural forces in a dichotomous struggle over the state of the land.

### OBJECT OF THE GAME:

In Solstice, there are two factions: the Summer Court and the Winter Court. Each faction is vying for control of the game board. The game ends when the board is entirely dominated by one season. Whoever has the most Victory Points at the end of the game is the winner.

### GAME MODES:

There are two game modes: Team Play and Free-for-All.

#### TEAM PLAY:

In team play, players divide into two equal groups. Each team works together to transform the game board for Summer Court or Winter Court.

#### FREE-FOR-ALL:

In free-for-all, it's everybody for themselves, so hoard everything you can, make alliances, and stab your friends in the back!

## **GETTING STARTED:**

Place the game board pieces in such a way that four consecutive pieces are Summer (beginning with the Summer start piece) and four are Winter. Make sure that the Summer and Winter start spaces are placed on opposite sides of the game board. Place the members of the Summer Court on the Summer start space, and the members of the Winter Court on the Winter start space. Every player chooses a character card. Any leftover character cards are set aside and the remaining item cards are shuffled and placed face-down on the center square (leave space on the square for a discard pile). Depending upon the time of year, play starts with either the Summer or Winter Court. If it is closer to the Summer solstice, then the Summer court begins play (or the Winter Court begins play if it is closer to the Winter Solstice). Roll a die to determine who goes first within the dominant court. Turn order then goes counter-clockwise from the starting player.

## **TAKING YOUR TURN:**

Begin your turn by rolling the die. Move your character piece the rolled amount in the counter-clockwise direction.

### **IF YOU LAND ON A DRAW SPACE:**

Draw a card from the pile. If it is a trinket card, hang on to it—it will be important later. If it is an item card, equip it to your character (note: your character can only have one of each type of item equipped at any time). The item must be set to the same season as the board piece it was obtained from. If you already have an item equipped, you may equip the new item and place the previously with your Trinkets. If you do not wish to equip the new item, you may immediately place it in your Trinket pile.

### **IF YOU LAND ON A FLIP SPACE:**

You can do one of two things. You can either a) flip the board piece you're currently on to another season, or b) flip an item to another season. If you flip an item, it can be any item currently in play, whether it be an item that your character has equipped, or an item that another player has equipped to their character.

### **IF YOU LAND ON A DISCARD SPACE:**

Shuffle all of your items (including any equipped items) and fan them out, face-down, to another player. Whichever card the other player picks is placed face up in the discard pile on the center game board piece. If there are no more cards in the draw pile, the discard pile is shuffled and placed face down in the draw pile.

### **IF YOU LAND ON AN OCCUPIED SPACE:**

If you land on a space that is occupied by another character, you can battle them.

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## **BATTLE:**

On the first lap around the game board, you cannot attack. Only after *passing* your character's respective season start space can you attack another player—regardless of whether or not the other player has finished their first lap. There are three character statistics involved in battle: Attack, Defense, and Speed. Any items that a character has equipped add their respective enhancements to the character's scores in these statistics, provided that the items equipped are the same season as the character, otherwise they have no effect (unless otherwise stated on the card). In Team Play, you cannot attack a player of the same alignment as your character (Summer characters can only attack Winter players, and vice versa). The attacking player ignores any instructions on the game space (i.e., “Draw” or “Flip”) until the battle is over. To begin, the defending player must decide whether they want to defend, or try to escape.

#### IF THE DEFENDER WANTS TO ESCAPE:

If the Defender wants to escape, then both the Defender and the Attacker roll a die, and add the amount shown on the die to their total Speed score (which is their base speed score, plus any additional speed increase from equipped Boots of the same alignment). If the game board is the same alignment as the player, then the player receives an additional point to the relevant character statistic. If the Defender wins, then he or she successfully escapes by moving one space ahead ignoring any directions from that next space. If the Attacker wins, then both players *must* battle.

If the Defender fails to escape, or chooses to defend, then the Attacker and Defender both roll a die. The attacker adds their rolled amount to their total Attack score (which is their base score, plus any additional Attack increase from equipped Weapons of the same alignment, as well as any seasonal alignment bonuses), and the Defender adds their rolled amount to their total Defend score (which is their base score, plus any additional Defense increase from equipped Armor of the same alignment, as well as any seasonal alignment bonuses). Whoever has the higher score wins.

#### IF THE ATTACKER WINS:

If the Attacker wins, then they get to steal an item of their choice from the Defender, whether it be a Trinket or an equipped item. If the Attacker steals an equipped item, then they take it as whatever alignment it was when the Defender had it. If the Defender doesn't have any items, then he or she loses their next turn. The Attacker then follows whatever instructions are on the game space (i.e., “Flip” or “Draw”).

#### IF THE DEFENDER WINS:

If the Defender wins, then the Attacker ignores the instructions on the game space. The Defender now has the option to either again try to escape or attack the Attacking player. If the Defender chooses to escape, then he or she simply moves their character to the next game space, ignoring any instructions on the space (i.e., “Flip” or “Draw”), unless the space is a Discard space—then they *must* discard an item. If the Defender chooses to attack, then another battle is initiated, except the roles are reversed—the Defender is now applying their roll to their attack score, and the defeated Attacker is applying their roll to their Defend score. If the new Attacker (previously the Defender) wins in this scenario, they steal an item from the Defender (previously the Attacker). If the Defender in this scenario doesn't have any items, then he or she loses their next turn. If the new Attacker loses, then they must escape to the next game space, ignoring any instructions on the space (i.e., “Flip” or “Draw”), with the exception of the Discard space, and the turn ends.

#### ENDING THE GAME:

The game is over when the entire game board has been fully transformed by either the Summer or Winter Court. Whichever Court transformed the board is the winning team. For Free-for-all play, a ruler must be selected. At this point, winning Court players add up their Victory Point scores. Each diamond on the Trinket cards represent one Victory Point. All Battle items are worth one Victory Point. Whoever has the highest amount of Victory Points is the ruler of the Court and wins! You may choose to either revel in your victory with a flagon of ale, or play a new round (the battle is endless, after all...)!