

ANCIENT TERRIBLE THINGS

*The history of that doomed expedition
is shrouded in whispered rumour.*

*A group of adventurers set out by riverboat
deep into a remote jungle
in foolish pursuit of fortune and glory.*

*The battered journal of the lone survivor,
said to contain fantastical scribblings of
ancient secrets and terrible things awakened,
was soon consigned to the sanatorium furnace.*

OBJECT OF THE GAME

In Ancient Terrible Things, you play the role of an intrepid adventurer exploring a dark jungle river for Ancient Secrets. The winning player is the one who holds the most Ancient Secrets when the game ends at the Unspeakable Event.

Game Overview

Each turn, you will travel to a Fateful Location and attempt to collect Ancient Secrets (points) by overcoming an Ominous Encounter.

To accomplish this, you will use a combination of rolled dice, as well as tokens and cards.

If you do not overcome the Encounter, you unleash a Terrible Thing, which counts against your score at the end of the game.

After your Encounter, you will return to the Trading Post, where you may purchase valuable Swag cards to help in your quest for Secrets.

COMPONENTS

5 x Focus dice (green)
2 x Luck dice (yellow)
2 x Panic dice (red)
2 x Feat dice (blue)

32 x Courage tokens
26 x Treasure tokens
28 x Feat tokens
30 x Focus tokens
6 x Modifier tokens
16 x Terrible Thing tokens
1 x Map token
1 x Battered Journal token

36 x Ominous Encounter cards
37 x Feat cards
26 x Swag cards
4 x Scenario cards
4 x Achievement cards
1 x Map Card

4 x Quick Reference / Character mats
1 x Gameboard
1 x Rulebook
4 x Character pawns w/ stickers

COMPONENT OVERVIEW

Characters

The Character pawns are used to indicate the positions of each player on the board throughout the game.



Character Mats

The character mats provide convenient placement for tokens during the game, as well as detailing each character's additional starting resource, the character's back story, and quick reference aids of the game turn sequence and the effects of each Location Action.



Resources

There are four resources in Ancient Terrible Things which are used to help you overcome Encounters, acquire and buy resources, and play Feat cards. These resources are represented by the following tokens:



Green **Focus tokens** are spent to re-roll individual dice during an Encounter, improving your chance to overcome the Encounter or acquire resources.



Yellow **Treasure tokens** are spent to buy valuable Swag cards from the Trading Post.



Purple **Courage tokens** are spent to perform a Desperate Act and overcome an Encounter immediately without fear of unleashing a Terrible Thing.



Blue **Feat tokens** are spent to play Feat cards, and they can increase the value of Feat dice by 1.



Grey **Modifier tokens** help manage excess tokens in your stash and represent a quantity of 5 tokens. If required, exchange 5 tokens of a type and place a Modifier token on the appropriate resource space on your character mat.

Dice

There are four types of dice in Ancient Terrible Things that are rolled to overcome Encounters and acquire resources.



Green **Focus dice** are always rolled during an Encounter. They can be re-rolled up to two times for free (you must roll all of the Focus dice), or you can spend Focus tokens to re-roll individual Focus dice equal to the number of tokens spent.



Yellow **Luck dice** are rolled much like Focus dice, except they do not cost Focus tokens to re-roll.



Red **Panic dice** cannot be re-rolled using Focus tokens or card effects.



Blue **Feat dice** cannot be re-rolled with Focus tokens. Instead, you may spend a Feat token to increase the value of a Feat die by one before you re-roll your other dice.

Terrible Thing tokens

Terrible Thing tokens are taken from the Expedition Track when a player fails to overcome an Ominous Encounter. Each Terrible Thing token represents a penalty of zero to three points, which counts against the Ancient Secrets point total of the player possessing it at the end of the game. When the last Terrible Thing token is removed from the Expedition Track, the game ends immediately.



The Map

The player holding the Map token goes first in the current round. In addition, the Map is worth 1 Ancient Secret at the end of the game.



The Battered Journal

The winner of the game briefly receives the Battered Journal before it is loathsome tossed into the Sanatorium furnace.

Card Types

Swag

Swag cards represent the equipment and tools that your character uses on their quest for Secrets. Shown on each Swag card is (A) the cost of the card in Treasure tokens and (B) the benefit of owning that Swag card. Note that some Swag cards provide Ancient Secrets.



Feat

Feat cards represent the leadership, skill, and cunning of your character. Shown on each Feat card is (A) the cost of playing the card in Feat tokens and (B) the effect of the card. When played, the card takes effect immediately and is then placed in the Feat discard pile. When the Feat deck is empty, shuffle the discard pile to create a new Feat deck to draw from.



Ominous Encounter

Encounter cards represent the dangers and hazards of the jungle, whether man, beast, or otherwise. These cards are dealt from the Ominous Encounters deck onto the spaces next to Locations on the board. Each card shows (A) the Encounter Type, (B) the dice combination needed to overcome the Encounter, and (C) the Ancient Secrets value of the Encounter when it is overcome.



Encounter Types

Encounters are categorised into four Encounter Types, each contributing a different resource token to its Location:



Pitfall. (Focus token) - The jungle is full of deadly natural hazards and traps for the unwary.



Villain. (Feat token) - Where evil powers dwell, there will be people who seek to profit from them.



Artefact. (Treasure token) - Mysterious objects can be discovered in forgotten places.



Horror. (Courage token) - Fear for your sanity; these are Encounters with things not of our world.

Some Encounters belong to more than one Encounter Type. These Encounters contribute more than one resource to their Location.

Scenario

Scenario cards describe how various dice combinations may be spent during an Encounter to acquire resources when not used to overcome the current Encounter card.



Achievement

Achievement cards reward Ancient Secrets for achieving a particular game condition, and are available to any player. Each Achievement card is held by a single player, but players can steal an Achievement card from another player by outperforming them. The conditions for claiming and stealing a particular achievement are described on the Achievement card itself. Some Swag cards count as a particular Encounter type for the purposes of scoring Achievements.



SETUP THE GAME

Game Board

Place the game board in the center of the play area within easy reach of all players.

Ominous Encounters

Setup begins by building the Ominous Encounters deck.

Shuffle the Ominous Encounter cards.

Separate the Encounter cards into piles of red, orange, and green backs. and then count out the following number of cards from each stack:

Four-player game: 12 cards from each stack.

Three-player game: 8 cards from each stack.

Two-player game: 6 cards from each stack.

Pile the stacks together (face-down) with red at the bottom, orange in the middle, and green on top. Place the deck on top (A) the marked space on the board. Place the remaining Encounter cards back into the box.

Deal cards from the Ominous Encounter deck face-up onto (B) the numbered slots on each Fateful Location, starting from the lowest numbered Location to the highest. Take resource tokens from the supply matching (C) the Encounter Type shown on each newly-placed Encounter card, and place those tokens on the corresponding Locations.

Swag

Shuffle the Swag cards together and deal three of them face-up onto (D) the slots in the Trading Post. Place the Swag deck in (E) the marked space on the board.

Feats

Shuffle the Feat cards.

Place the Feat deck in (F) the marked space on the board. Place the top card from the Feat deck face up to form (G) the adjacent Feat discard pile.

Achievements

Place the Achievement cards alongside the board, within easy reach of all players.

Dice and Tokens

Place the five green Focus dice in the middle of the board. Place all tokens and extra dice within easy reach of all players.



Expedition Track

Shuffle all of the Terrible Thing tokens face-down, then draw tokens according to the number of players:

Four-player game: 13 Terrible Thing tokens

Three-player game: 10 Terrible Thing tokens

Two-player game: 7 Terrible Thing tokens

Flip the drawn tokens face-up, and place them in ascending order from bottom to top onto (H) the Expedition Track.

Place the remaining tokens back into the box.

Players

Each player, starting with the one who most recently faced arcane horrors in far-flung places (or who wins a die roll), chooses a Character, taking the Character mat representing that character.

If the Captain character is in play, give them the Map. Otherwise, the player who chose their Character last, gets the Map.

Each player starts with one of each token type, Focus, Treasure, Courage, and Feat—and 3 Feat cards.

Each player takes any additional starting resources as listed on their Character mat.



Pawns

Place the Character pawns chosen by each player onto (I) the Riverboat and place any remaining pawns back into the box.

Scenarios

Each player takes a copy of the Scenario card.

The Scenario cards supplied with the game have two different faces representing easy or difficult game environments. Decide with the other players which scenario you want to play with, and then have each player turn their Scenario card to the corresponding face.

Player Set-up (The Prospector)



TURN OVERVIEW

Ancient Terrible Things is played over a number of rounds. The player in possession of the Map token at the start of a round takes the first turn. Each player completes their entire turn before the next player begins their turn. Play continues clockwise until each player has taken one turn, at which point the round ends. The game ends immediately if the Encounter deck is either empty at the end of the round, or when the last Terrible Thing token is removed from the Expedition Track in the Terrible Thing phase.

Turn

A turn consists of seven phases:

1. Riverboat phase
2. Explore phase
3. Desperation phase
4. Encounter phase
5. Terrible Thing phase
6. Trading phase
7. Refresh phase

1. Riverboat Phase

Only perform this step if there are no Encounters on any of the Fateful Locations.

- Deal cards face-up from the Encounter Deck into the numbered slots on each Location, from the lowest numbered slot to the highest numbered slot.
- Take resource tokens from the supply matching the Encounter type shown on each newly-placed Encounter card, and place those tokens on the corresponding Fateful Location.
- If no cards remain in the Ominous Encounters deck at the beginning of the Riverboat phase, the game immediately ends; consult the Unspeakable Event section.



Example: Book of Unspeakable Truth is added to the Accursed Shrine, and a Treasure token is added to the Location, as per the Artefact icon on the Encounter card.

2. Explore phase

- Move your pawn to an active Location (one with an Encounter card).
- Take any resource token(s) on that Location, and add them to your stash.
- You may take the special Location Action shown on the Location. (See the Location Actions section or your character mat for more information about these Location Action effects.)



Example: Player 1 moves to the Accursed Shrine, and takes the Treasure token there. He then has the option to take the Location Action which would allow him to gain an additional Focus or Feat token.

3. Desperation Phase

- You may spend Courage tokens equal to the Ancient Secrets value of the Encounter card at your current Location to perform a Desperate Act. Doing so means you immediately overcome the Encounter, placing it in your score pile.



Example: Player 1 now has the option to spend 8 Courage tokens to perform a Desperate Act, to immediately overcome the Book of Unspeakable Truth, and add it to their score pile.

4. Encounter Phase

In the Encounter phase, you will roll dice and spend combinations of them to overcome your current Encounter and/or acquire resource tokens based on the Scenario card.

If you overcome the Encounter, you add its Ancient Secrets value to your score by taking the Encounter card. If you do not overcome it, you unleash a Terrible Thing in the next phase. If you have already overcome the Encounter by performing a Desperate Act in the previous phase, you roll the dice solely for acquiring resources.

Rolling the dice

- Take the five green Focus dice to form a dice pool.
- You may then play any Swag or Feat cards that allow you to add Luck, Feat and Panic dice to your dice pool.
- Roll your final dice pool.
- You may then re-roll up to two times; each time, you may choose to re-roll all of your dice for free (with the exception of Panic dice, which may never be re-rolled), or spend Focus tokens to re-roll individual green Focus dice equal to the number of Focus tokens spent.

Before or after each re-roll, you may perform the following actions in any order and any number of times:

Perform A Feat. Play a Feat card from your hand, paying the Feat tokens prompted on the card to the supply. These cards immediately take effect and are then discarded. If you cannot take the action on the Feat card, it has no effect.

Use Equipment. Exhaust (turn face-down) one of your Swag cards to use its effect, paying its token cost if prompted. This action applies only to Swag cards that specify they are Exhausted when used.

Note: You may not play Feat or Swag cards that allow you to swap out dice in your dice pool after your initial roll. You may however play cards that allow you to add dice to your pool.

Spending the dice

Once you are finished rolling, you may spend your combinations of dice to acquire resources from the Scenario card and/or to overcome the Encounter card. Once you perform either of these actions, you may not re-roll any of your dice.

You may perform the following actions until you can no longer make any useable combinations with your remaining dice, or choose not to:

- Select dice that match a combination shown on the Encounter card. Remove those dice from the board and overcome the Encounter, adding the Encounter card and its Ancient Secrets to your score pile.
- Select dice that match a combination shown on the Scenario card. Remove those dice from the board, and claim the resources specified on the Scenario card.

Dice Combinations

Encounter and Scenario cards show particular combinations of dice. These come in four types:



High numbers
(single die showing a particular number or higher)



Pairs of dice
showing the same number, (which must be a particular value or higher),



Blocks of 3 or more dice
showing the same number (which must be a particular value or higher)



Runs of 3 or more dice
in a sequence (starting with a particular value or higher),

Cards show the **minimum value** of dice required for a combination. For instance,



represents a combination which can be met with three (or more) 4s, or three (or more) 5s, or three (or more) 6s.

The following example,



represents a set of High number dice, which can be met with any three dice showing 4 or higher.

Note that Runs and Blocks can be made of three, four, five or more dice.

Pairs can only ever be made of two dice.

High numbers are always a single die.

You can't use the same physical die to form more than one combination on your turn.

When you use a combination on a Scenario card, you get one resource of the type shown for every die in the combination.(eg. In Scenario I, a Run-of-Four would reward 4 Courage tokens.)

You don't have to use every die even if you can. You may choose not to collect resources.



Encounter Phase example:

a.) Player 1 is facing an Ominous Encounter with the Jar of Remains, using Scenario Card 1. At the beginning of the Encounter, she rolls the 5 green Focus dice, with a result of:



b.) To overcome the Encounter, she needs 4 single dice showing 5 or higher. She decides to press her luck, and rolls all the dice again, with a result of:



c.) For her final re-roll, she spends 2 Focus tokens, to re-roll the 1 and the 3,



For a final dice result of:



d.) She spends (5) to acquire 1 Focus token, as per Scenario card 1, and spends (5+5+5+6), to overcome the Encounter and adds the card to her Ancient Secrets score pile.



5. Terrible Thing Phase

- If you fail to overcome the Encounter (or choose not to), you unleash a Terrible Thing. Discard the Encounter card to the Rumours space on the board, and take a Terrible Thing token from the lowest available space on the Expedition Track.
- If this is the last token on the track, the game ends immediately; consult The Unspeakable Event section.



6. Trading Post Phase

- Move your pawn to the Trading Post.
- You may buy any of the face-up Swag cards from the Trading Post, paying the cost of each with Treasure tokens from your stash.
- When you are finished buying cards, do one of the following:
 - If any space on the Trading Post track is empty, shift all of the cards on the track to the left. Deal one card onto the rightmost empty slot on the Trading Post track, repeating until all slots are full.
 - If all spaces on the Trading Post track are full, return the leftmost card to the bottom of the Swag deck and move all of the cards on the track one slot to the left. Deal one card onto the rightmost empty slot on the Trading Post track.



7. Refresh Phase

- Draw Feat cards from the Feat deck until you have three cards in your hand.
- Turn all of your face-down (exhausted) Swag cards face-up.

Your turn is now over. If all pawns are on the Trading Post, the round ends. If the Encounter Deck is empty at the end of the round, the game ends immediately; consult The Unspeakable Event section. Before beginning a new round, place all character pawns back onto the Riverboat.

Examples of spending dice:

Scenario



Encounter



You roll:



This can be spent as:



You roll:



This can be spent as:



THE UNSPEAKABLE EVENT

The Unspeakable Event represents the end of the game, as a result of which the winning player Survives the cursed journey, and the other players are Never Heard Of Again.

The Unspeakable Event is triggered when one of the following conditions is met:

- The last Terrible Thing token is removed from the Expedition Track during the Terrible Thing phase.
- The last Encounter card is removed from the board and there are no more Encounter cards in the Encounter Deck to place during a player's Riverboat Phase.
- The Encounter Deck is empty at the end of the round during the Refresh phase.

Each player counts the total value of all Ancient Secrets in their score pile, which includes:

- Overcome Encounter cards
- Swag cards that are worth Secrets
- Achievement cards
- The Map

Each player then subtracts the total penalty value of the Terrible Thing tokens in their stash to arrive at a final score.



The winner of the game is the player with the highest score. If any number of players tie for the highest score, break the tie by comparing Terrible Thing tokens (the fewer tokens the better) and Courage tokens (the more tokens the better) in that order.

The player who wins the game becomes the lone Survivor and briefly receives the Battered Journal token as their reward, before it is loathsomely committed to the Sanatorium furnace.



LOCATION ACTIONS

There are six Fateful Locations shown on the game board. Each of these Locations is associated with a unique special Location Action, as follows:

Accursed Shrine.

When you place your pawn on the Accursed Shrine, you may gain one Focus or Feat token, adding it to your stash.



Ghastly Gorge.

When you place your pawn on the Ghastly Gorge, you may discard any number of Feat cards from your hand, and draw that many fresh Feat cards.



Sinister Chateau.

When you place your pawn on the Sinister Chateau, you may exchange a resource token of any type from your stash with a resource token of a different type in another player's stash. You may not move Terrible Thing tokens this way.



Yawning Chasm

When you place your pawn on the Yawning Chasm, you may perform a Desperate Act against any Encounter card in play. To do this, spend Courage tokens to immediately overcome an Encounter in any other Location and place that card in your score pile, returning any resource tokens on that Location to the supply. The number of Courage tokens paid to activate this Location Action is equal to the value in Ancient Secrets shown on the Encounter you overcome using this Location Action. (You may still perform a Desperate Act at your current Location during the Desperation phase.)



Rusted Gunsloop

When you place your pawn on the Rusted Gunsloop, you may gain a Courage or Treasure token, adding it to your stash.



Crumbling Ruin

When you place your pawn on the Crumbling Ruin, assume control over the Map. You will play your turn first during the next round.





CREDITS

Game Design by Simon McGregor

Art and Graphic Design by Rob van Zyl

Writing by Simon McGregor, Rob van Zyl, John Dunning, Anthony Silverston

Rules Editing by Simon McGregor, Anthony Silverston, Rob van Zyl

Proofing and Copy Editing by Josh Yearsley, Anne van Zyl, Robert Nava, Steve Mott, Kevin Colville

Game Development by Simmy Peerutin, Paul van Kan, Anthony Silverston, Kevin Colville, Rob van Zyl

Concept Art by Paul Painting, Sky Penderis, Juan Coleman

Additional Writing by Joseph Soonsin Lee, Andrew McCurry, Jason Hanchett, Joseph Ryan Van Arsdall,

Neal Hoffman, Steve Mott

Playtesting by Simon Cross, Neil Muller, Jeremy Thurgood, Kevin Colville, Diane Making, Colin Payne, Anthony Silverston, Nathaniel Virgo, Mike Beaton, Greg Cheetham-Slade, Catherine Hill

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