

Gloom™ IN SPACE

Space is a cold, dark, depressing place. In Gloom in Space, it's your job to create the most miserable sci-fi tale of all time.

OVERVIEW

In *Gloom in Space*, each player has a **CREW** of four **CHARACTERS**. Players try to make their own crew the most miserable, while cheering up the other players' crews.

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' individual stories end, one by one, as **UNTIMELY DEATH CARDS** are played on them. When one entire crew has succumbed to Untimely Deaths, the game ends. Self-Worth scores are then tallied, and the most miserable player wins the game.

SET-UP

1. Divide Into Crews:

Spread the twenty Character cards out on the table where everyone can see them. Each player chooses four. All chosen cards are laid face up on the table in front of their owners, where the other players can also see and reach them. Return any unused Characters to the box. They won't be used.



Character cards have full-color portraits.

2. Deal the Cards:

Set aside the 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. Begin!: Each player briefly recaps 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 in Space 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)...

- **Event cards** have some immediate effect, and are then discarded.
- **Modifier cards** 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 card yet.
- **Untimely Death cards** are played on a Character and turn a useless living Character into a valuable dead one. You can only play an Untimely Death on a Character with a negative Self-Worth score. *An Untimely Death can never 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 crew has Untimely Deaths, and the game comes to a close. See "Winning the Game."

But That's Not All!

Gloom in Space is the most fun when the player taking an action tells or continues a brief story with each action.

Think of it this way: You're creating a sci-fi movie plot with the cards you play. How is it that The Robot came to be Marooned on Mars? (Was it abandoned there after a failed space mission? Or did its navigational data get corrupted and it lost its way?) Why did The Kid Start Self-Destruct? (Was he making a daring last-minute escape? Or was he just curious what that big red button does?) *You decide*, and then tell the other players in an interesting way!

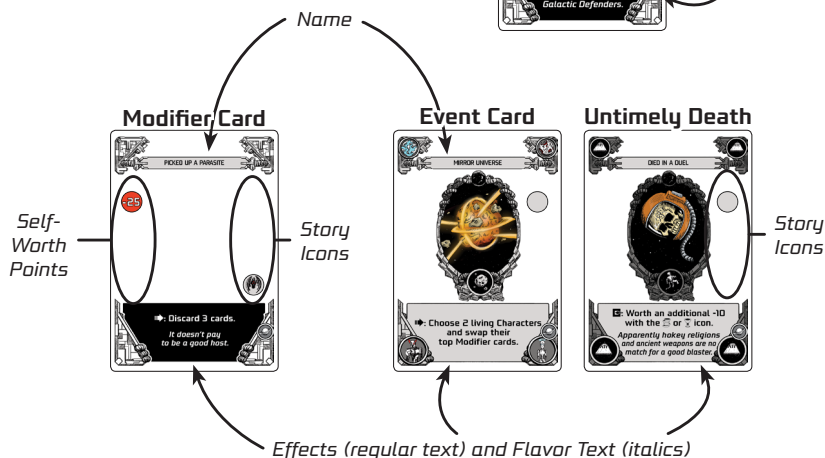
There are no formal rules for *Gloom in Space* storytelling, and no right answers, but that doesn't mean it's not important. Quite the opposite: Many *Gloom* players think of telling tales as very best part of the game!

THE CARDINAL RULE

Gloom in Space'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 Modifier cards, 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 in Space* 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. (Persistent effects are the single exception to this last. See "Effect Categories" for details.)



THE 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 Icons: The ringed planet on every card indicates it is from *Gloom in Space*, 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, Modifier cards almost never have illustrations, so it's easy to tell what they are. (Modifier cards with persistent effects are the exception.) Other pictures make it easy to tell living Characters from dead Characters: All Untimely Death cards bear the same image, so any Character showing that signature picture at the top of its stack must be dead.

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 Modifier cards stack up.

Choose Characters you think it would be fun to tell stories about. You could assemble a crew that mirrors an existing tale, like The Captain, The Doctor, The Counselor, and The Engineer. Or, you could decide that in *your* story, The Dark Lord, The Traitor, and The Nemesis are the evil minions of the unlikely dictator known as "The Kid." It's up to you!



Event Cards

Event cards have names and effects, and all share a common portrait image showing an exploding planet. 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 crew 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 another player's Characters, but sometimes a card's effect will make you want to do something else.

When you play a Modifier card 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, *your opponent* 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 in Space*. See "Effect Categories" for more detailed information about persistent effects.



Persistent modifier cards have portraits

Untimely Death Cards

Untimely Death cards have names, effects, and flavor text, and all share a common portrait image showing a helmeted skull. An Untimely Death transitions 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 — only miserable Characters can die!)

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.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

In addition to the typical card-play actions (playing a Modifier card, playing an Event card, or playing an Untimely Death card), 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 Modifier cards and Event cards 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 card 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."

PERSISTENT EFFECTS represent a long-term change to a Character, such as being assimilated. All persistent effects have new portraits that cover a Character's normal portrait. As long as the new picture remains visible, the effect continues. Typically, the only ways to end a persistent effect are to play a different one above it, or play an Untimely Death card on that Character.

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's played."

WINNING THE GAME

The game ends immediately when all of the Characters in one crew are dead — that is, when they all have Untimely Death cards 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 crew is the most miserable — wins!

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Publisher's Special Thanks: Cam Banks, Jessica Banks, Bob Brynildson, Jerry Corrick, Nicolas Gluesenkamp, Jeff Tidball, and Travis Winter.

Designer's Special Thanks: Douglas Adams, Gene Roddenberry, George Lucas, Joss Whedon, and the many, many others who have made our galaxy a more interesting place.

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SOME ALTERNATE RULES

Assigning Characters: If you're having trouble figuring out which players can have which Characters, you can either deal each player four random Characters, or go around the table letting each player pick one at a time until everyone has four.

Very Simple *Gloom in Space*: To play an extremely simple version of *Gloom in Space*, ignore every card's effect text. This can be a good way to learn the game for the first time, or to play with younger children.