

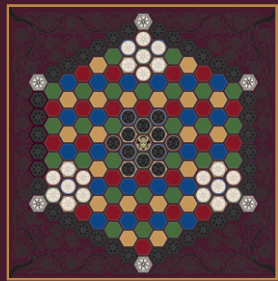
DEMONS

STRATEGY • CHANCE • DUALISM

DESIGNED BY NIALL ROPER

THE SET UP OF THE BOARD, AND EACH PLAYER'S GOALS

As illustrated, place the golden Asmodee piece at the centre of the temple hexagon surrounded by a coven of twelve Demons. The Magisterium's cadre of Slayers are in three groups of seven, blocking three of the six doorways.



The Slayers have three goals:

to trap and banish Asmodee, kill as many Demons as possible before achieving that, and avoid being possessed.

The Demons have three goals:

to aid Asmodee in escaping the temple through one of the six doorways, possess as many Slayers as possible before achieving that, and avoid being slain.

THE PREMISE OF MOVEMENT AND ACTION



To trap the Demons, Slayers have marked the black walls and white doors of this temple of Asmodee with The Magisterium's heptagrams. These magical symbols prevent movement and action within their perimeter unless a player has the keys that can temporarily break the spell.

HOW THE DICE KEYS ENABLE MOVEMENT AND ACTION



Three six-sided dice can grant temporary release from the Slayers' spell of entrapment. When players cast these, their colours are keys that enable movement and action: each key can only be used **once** in each turn.



Using the colour keys, up to three Slayers or Demons can move **once** each turn to adjacent floor tiles of the same colour. In the same turn, they could also or instead use these keys to slay or possess: see the following two sections on these topics.



The white keys also enable movement to or actions upon adjacent tiles of any of the four colours. However, they do not open the temple's white doors. Instead, these open only for Asmodee using a black key: see *How Asmodee Escapes and Demons Win a Battle*.



The black keys can enable Asmodee to escape: see *How Asmodee Escapes and Demons Win a Battle*. Other than that, their only purpose is to thwart plans and relieve and amuse the opponent.

HOW THE DICE ENABLE THE SLAYING OF DEMONS



To kill one or more Demons, Slayers **must** be on tiles on either side of a Demon or group of Demons **in an unbroken straight line**. Then, in the same turn, or one after, the Slayers **must** have keys to move to the tiles their opponents are on. Lastly, the Slayers using keys to kill and remove the Demons **must** take their place.



In the action of killing and removing Demons, one Slayer can move up to **three** tiles each turn, if they are already in position and have the keys to do so.



The heptagrams on the white temple doors are both barriers and tools of exorcism. Slayers can use these to kill Demons and banish Asmodee as if they were another Slayer. However, the heptagrams on the walls are only barriers and **cannot** be used to slay.



Slayers can kill parts of rows of Demons but **cannot** pass over one to another without first killing those between, as contact is essential.

HOW THE DICE ENABLE THE POSSESSING OF SLAYERS



To possess one or more Slayers, Demons **must** be on tiles on either side of a Slayer or group of Slayers **in an unbroken straight line**. Then, in the same turn, or one after, the Demons **must** have keys to the tiles their opponents are on. Finally, instead of advancing to kill and remove them, they turn the Slayers into fellow Demons: this transformation is irreversible.



Demons can possess up to **three** Slayers each turn, if they are already in position and have the keys to do so.



Demons can possess parts of rows of Slayers but **cannot** pass over one to another without first possessing those in-between, as contact is essential.

Once turned into Demons, former Slayers can immediately move and possess.

THE IMPERATIVE TO USE ALL DICE KEYS

Players **must** use all the keys the dice present in their turn unless all options for movement or action are unavailable. Players **cannot** ignore unwanted dice or cast them again. This rule applies in **all** situations: if Demons have a black key in their turn and can use it for Asmodee's escape with the others they have cast, they **must**.

HOW SLAYERS BANISH ASMODEE AND WIN A BATTLE



Slayers banish Asmodee in the same manner as they kill and remove Demons: either by capturing the deity **in an unbroken straight line** between two Slayers or between one and a door heptagram. Then in the Slayers' same turn, or one following (providing the line remains unbroken), they have keys to advance to the tile occupied by Asmodee.



Nothing can kill the deity, but banishing Asmodee disempowers and imprisons all surviving Demons. **Moves and killings end**, as the Slayers have won this battle.

HOW ASMODEE ESCAPES AND DEMONS WIN A BATTLE



Demons win if Asmodee escapes the temple through one of its doors: they need three things to achieve this. Firstly, the deity must move to or already be on the tile in front of a door. Secondly, to provide the necessary power, they must have a Demon move to or already be on a tile adjacent to Asmodee. Lastly, in the same turn or one following, they have a black key to open the door.



Asmodee's escape liberates all surviving Demons. **Moves and possessions end** as they have won this battle.

EACH GAME IS A MATCH OF TWO BATTLES

After each battle, to avoid disputes over who wins the match, players **must** count the surviving Slayers, the living and dead Demons, **and note these numbers**. After banishment or escape, Asmodee manifests in the temple of another coven of Demons to fight another cadre of Slayers. **Players must swap roles for this second battle**.

THREE WAYS OF WINNING MATCHES AND ONE WAY OF DRAWING*

1. Players score three points when they win both battles in a match: this must be one as Slayers and one as Demons.
2. When both players have won a battle in a match, whoever had more survivors in their victorious cadre of Slayers or coven of Demons scores two and their opponent scores one.
3. If the numbers of survivors on the winning sides are the same in both battles, the victor that slayed the most Demons or had the least slain scores two and their opponent scores one.
4. If all numbers are the same, it's a draw, and each player scores one.

RESIGNING A BATTLE GIVES THE OPPONENT ALL MATCH POINTS

Players who resign battles score zero, and their opponents score three. This rule prevents players from unfairly winning matches by resigning while momentarily ahead. For example, without this rule, after winning the first battle as either Demons or Slayers, if a player could quit as soon as their opponent had fewer pieces than they had in the previous battle, they would win the match on points.

BEGIN A MATCH WITH A COIN FLIP TO CHOOSE THE FIRST ROLES

Slayers always cast the dice first in battles as they are the attackers.

WAYS TO AVOID POSSESSION, DEATH OR BANISHMENT



To achieve victory in battles, in addition to having a strategy of attack, players need to consider where their cadre or coven is vulnerable and weigh the advantages of moves and actions with their risks.



Where, within one or two casts of the dice, might their opponent be able to surround groups of Slayers or Demons?



How might their plans to slay or possess expose them to a counter-attack?

To avoid multiple slayings or possessions, players should leave spaces between their team members. This tactic is crucial when guarding Asmodee at a temple door, as a pursuing Slayer can use the door's heptagram as an accomplice to kill along an unbroken line of Demons.

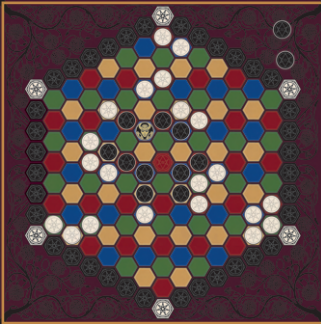
BALANCE OF POWERS, STRATEGY AND CHANCE

Initially, the Slayers' numbers and surrounding positions are an advantage, but this is lost as the Demons possess and multiply. Winning in either role results from strategic thinking, weighing probabilities, mitigating risks, and recognising opportunities. As the dice enable or frustrate plans throughout, winning or losing a battle rarely becomes inevitable, and until Asmodee is banished or escapes, tenacious players can often snatch victories from near defeats.

*If desired, scoresheets can be downloaded from www.schemata-games.co.uk



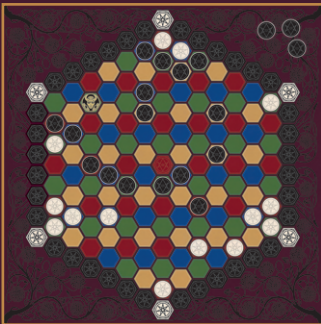
STRATEGIES TO WIN A BATTLE AS SLAYERS



Slayers should first aim to move in and surround the Demons closely. Trapping them tightly together in the centre of the temple should create opportunities for multiple slayings and, when attempting to escape, opportunities to catch Asmodee. Then, once sure of victory, the Slayers should hunt and kill more Demons before banishing the deity.

Players might choose to block all the doors first, then move to kill Demons and banish Asmodee. However, the more Slayers disperse, the more vulnerable they are to possession. If the cadre suffers too many losses, Slayers moved to guard doors must move back to join the battle. This strategy wastes keys better used for attacking and usually fails.

STRATEGIES TO WIN A BATTLE AS DEMONS



Demons should first aim to possess a group of slayers. If they achieve this, with few slain in the process, the number in the coven will approach that in the cadre, Demons will control a third of the temple, and Asmodee should have safe passage to a door. Then, once sure of victory, the coven should pursue and possess more Slayers before their deity escapes.

Players might prioritise Asmodee's escape and direct the Demons to create a path to one of the three unguarded doors. However, if the coven attempt this while surrounded and outnumbered, Slayers can easily trap and kill them and banish their deity. Consequently, this strategy has a high risk of failing.

TACTICS TO WIN THE MATCH

To improve their chance of achieving an overall win through a higher margin of victory, players should apply four principles to each battle:

- **As Slayers** - avoid possessions, as every loss is a gain for Demons.
- **As Demons** - avoid slayings, but consider how some strategic sacrifices may enable a higher number of possessions.
- **If losing a battle** - minimise the opponent's victory by slaying or possessing as much as possible before its end.
- **If winning a battle** - maximise the victory by delaying its end to slay or possess as much as possible.

THE MEANINGS OF THE SYMBOLS ON THE GAME PIECES



Unicursal Heptagram and the Power of 'Seven'
In occult practices, this seven-pointed star is a tool of exorcism for trapping and banishing demonic spirits. Some beliefs use the number seven to represent their God of Light and Order: the creator of all structure and hierarchy in the universe.

Believers in this god claim the number has the power to create order and defeat disorder, and that this exponentially increases when repeated as 777. Consequently, The Magisterium sends its cadres of Slayers into battle as three groups of seven.



Asmodee
Names, stories and purposes of divinities change over time. The oldest myths cast *Aēšma-daēva* as the Persian god of Lust and Wrath. The dualistic religion of Zoroastrianism demoted the deity to archdemon serving the god of darkness and chaos, *Ahriman*, in an eternal war with the god of light and order, *Ahura Mazda*. Much later, in Judeo-Christian tales, *Ashmedai/Osmodeus/Asmodeus*:

- Designed and built King Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem then usurped, banished and impersonated Solomon to rule in his place
- Reigns over the nine levels of Hell, as first of its seven princes
- Embodies Lust, the third of the Seven Deadly Sins.

However, in other folklore, Asmodee is variously a rebellious fallen angel, a charming trickster who is horned but handsome, and a shapeshifting libertine who loves to oppose all authoritarian order.



Unicursal Hexagram
In ancient Egyptian and Babylonian occultism, this symbol represents the union of life with spiritual forces. Called *The Horns of Asmodeus* it was used in this form, with a flower at its centre, in the philosophical and magical practices of the *Hermetic*

Order of the Golden Dawn: a secret society of mystics formed in London in 1887. Alleged members included many famous figures in bohemian society: Nobel-prize-winning poet William Butler Yeats; women's rights activist, actor and director Florence Farr; Irish republican revolutionary Maud Gonne; authors Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (Sherlock Holmes) and Bram Stoker (Dracula); notorious occultist Alistair Crowley.

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