MiniSkull Caverns
A 9 Card Dungeon Crawler by George Jaros

In **MiniSkull Caverns**, 1-3 heroes will compete to explore the caverns beneath the ruins of MiniSkull Castle and return with riches beyond their wildest dreams. You are one of those optimistic explorers. Are you prepared to risk your life for diamonds the size of a wild boar? Along the way you will encounter monsters, battle other heroes, and recover some priceless gems. Be careful though, the more noise you make, the more you will attract the deadly denizens of MiniSkull Caverns. Before you can escape with your spoils you must battle the affectionately, though unsuitably, named *Tiny*. Dragons don't like it when you try to burgle their baubles.

Object: The object of MiniSkull Caverns is to guide your hero through the maze of caverns, managing your strength while searching for priceless Gems. Once you have acquired two of these Gems you must return to the center space on the map, and battle Tiny in order to escape.

2 Player Variant: When playing with two players you must defeat Tiny and escape with **three gems** instead of two.

Solo Variant: Collect all **four gems** and escape before time runs out. *See detailed rules at the end*.

Easier Variants: For a slightly easier game, include the underlined text in gray throughout the rules.

Components:
- 3 Control cards – showing: Rotate 0, 1, 2 and Flip
- 3 Action cards – showing:
  Search/Heal/Walk/Surprise Attack
  and Search/Hide/Creep/Run
- 2 Dungeon Map cards
- 1 Tiny card
- 1 First Player token
- 1 Battle die
- 3 player pawns
- 3 player Strength dice
- 4 Gems

Setup:
1. Set up two Map Cards to create a 2p (Green/Dark Tiny) or 3p (Red/Light Tiny) map – there are two different configurations for each player count.
2. Give each hero 1 Strength die, 1 pawn, 1 Action card, and 1 Control card.
3. Each hero should place their pawn on any one of the Starting spaces on the map and sets their Strength Die to 4. In a 2 player game, incomplete starting symbols may not be used. Don't worry about who gets which space, they're all balanced.
4. Place 1 Gem on each Gem space on the map.
5. Place the Battle Die and Tiny card to the side.
6. Choose a 1ˢᵗ player and give them the 1ˢᵗ Player Token.
7. Each hero should place their Action card on the table with the Walk action face up at the top.

= 2 Player

= 3 Player

Symbology:
Most of the text on cards is plain text, but there are a couple of symbols used for brevity.

🗣 = Noise – the amount of Noise an Action makes. Too much Noise you'll attract monsters.

💥 = Strength – denotes gaining or losing Strength on the Strength Die.

⇕⇔ = Flip – the direction the card should be flipped when using the Flip Control.

↻ = Rotate – the direction the card should be rotated when using a Rotate Control.

Game Sequence:
MiniSkull Caverns is played in a sequence of 9 Phases that make up a Round.

1. **Place Control Cards** (in reverse turn order)
2. **Reveal Control Cards**
3. **Adjust Action Cards**
4. **Resolve Actions**
5. **Complete PvP Combat**
6. **Complete Tiny Combat – Check for Win**
7. **Check for Disturbed Monsters**
8. **Complete Disturbed Monster Combat**
9. **Pass First Player Marker**

Encounters:
Use the chart on the next page to determine if a Gem is found while Searching, or if Disturbed Monsters are encountered at the end of a round (Phase 7). To determine the Total Noise, add up the Noise values on all heroes' Action Cards.

Total Noise 🗣	Battle Die Value	
	Find Gem: (total is prime *or* = *Total Noise*)	**Disturbed Monsters:** (die is LTE Total Noise)
0	*n/a*	Never
1	*n/a*	1
2	*n/a*	1,2
3	2,3,4	1,2,3
4	1,3,4	1,2,3,4
5	2,5,6	1,2,3,4,5
6	1,5,6	Always
7	4,6	Always
8	3,5	Always
9	2,4	Always

Control Cards:
Control Cards have four sides: top, bottom, left, and right. Control Cards are used to determine both Actions taken and Tactics used during PvP combat. The reverse side of a Control Card shows the possible Controls on the opposite side, so players will have an idea of what their opponents may be choosing to do.

During Phase 1 of a round heroes choose a Control to apply to their Action Card. During Phase 3, heroes will either rotate or flip their Action Card according to the Control they chose. Arrows on the Action Card indicate the direction that cards should be rotated the number of 90° turns, or flipped.

Exerting Strength: When choosing a Control during Phase 1, heroes may also place their Strength Die on the Control Card. This indicates that the hero is going to expend 1 Strength to adjust the Control. 1 Strength can be used to either rotate one additional 90° turn (forward or backward) or flip the card one time (including against the arrows). During Phase 3 the Strength Die is reduced by 1 if Strength was expended.

Action Cards:
Action Cards have eight sides: top, bottom, left, and right for both the front and back of the card. Each side has a different Action that can be taken during the course of the game (depending on the Control and Strength each player chooses to use). Each Action will show the name of the Action, what it does, and the Action available if the card is flipped. Each Action also shows the amount of Noise the Action causes. Too much Noise will attract monsters!

Movement (Creep, Walk, Run):
There are three Movement Actions: Creep 1 Space, Walk 2 Spaces, and Run 3 Spaces. Additionally, when Searching at a location that does not have a Gem, you may move 1 space. When moving, you may move up to the number of spaces for the Action you chose. You may choose to move fewer spaces. When choosing Run you must exert 1 Strength, even when not running the full 3 spaces.

Restrictions: A hero carrying Gems must stop on a space occupied by another hero, unless the other hero is carrying the same or more Gems OR if the moving hero expends 1 additional Strength. E.g. a hero carrying 1 Gem may not pass by an opponent carrying 0 Gems without expending 1 Strength, however the hero may pass by an opponent carrying 1 or 2 gems. Heroes cannot move through walls.

Searching:
When Searching, you must check the Total Noise all the heroes made (the sum of Noise 🗣 for all the selected Actions of all the heroes) and then roll the Battle Die.

If the sum of the Total Noise and the Battle Die is prime *or equal to the Total Noise* you are successful in finding a Gem (see the Encounter Chart for an easy reference). You may remove all Gems on that space from the map and place them near your Action Card.

If the result is not prime you have disturbed a monster with a Strength equal to the Battle Die instead. You must then battle the monster. You should roll the Battle Die to determine the amount of Damage you inflict. If you inflict Damage equal to or greater than the monster's Strength the monster is defeated. You may expend Strength to increase the Damage you inflict in order to defeat the monster 1 Strength = 1 additional Damage.

- If you are successful in defeating the monster you may search for a Gem a second time. Roll the Battle Die again and see if the Total Noise plus Battle Die is prime *or equal to the Total Noise*. This time you do not encounter another monster if you are unsuccessful.
- If you are unsuccessful in defeating the monster you lose 1 Strength.

Exception: If you select the Search action on a space that does not have a Gem you instead **must** move one space (unless your Strength is 0 – see below).

Surprise Attack:
If you choose the Surprise Attack action you **must** move your hero one space and then may attack another hero on the same or an adjacent space (but not through walls). This is a simple attack where each hero rolls the Battle Die. Strength cannot be used to adjust the die roll and Control cards are not used. The victor is the hero that rolls higher. Nothing happens during a tie.

If the Attacker is victorious the Defender must either lose 2 Strength or give the Attacker a Gem, Defender's choice. If the Defender is victorious the Attacker must lose 1 Strength.

If you attack a space that has two other heroes in it you can choose to attack one hero or attack both heroes in separate battles. You may not attack two heroes that are in different adjacent spaces.

Hide:
If you choose to Hide you cannot be attacked (either by Surprise Attack or an opponent moving into your space) that turn and you gain +1 Strength. If an opponent does a Surprise Attack before you Hide (e.g. Hero 1 Surprise Attacks and Hero 2 Hides) the Surprise Attack does happen. But if you Hide first (e.g. Hero 2 Hides and Hero 3 Surprise Attacks) then no Surprise Attack occurs (the Surprise Attacker may still move the one space though). Hiding does not protect you from Disturbed Monster attacks at the end of the round.

Heal:
If you choose to Heal you simply gain +2 Strength. You can still be attacked, however.

Rest:
You always have the option to Rest. You can Rest instead of any selected Action. When Resting you can gain +1 Strength, but you may still be attacked and cannot move. Resting still makes the same amount of Noise as the disregarded Action.

PvP Combat:
If two heroes are in the same space, PvP (player versus player) combat occurs. If one hero just moved into the space they are the Attacker. If both players were in that space at the beginning of the round the Attacker is the first player in turn order.

The Attacker must choose one Tactic on the Control card and play it face down. Then the Defender must choose one Tactic. Once both players have chosen a Tactic, the Tactics are revealed simultaneously. Then each hero rolls the Battle Die, adjusting it as appropriate for the chosen Tactics. The victor is the player with the highest attack value. The loser loses Strength equal to the difference in the values, max 2. If the victor does 2 Damage then the loser must drop one Gem. On a tie nothing happens.

PvP Combat Tactics:
Block: If you chose to Block, the damage you receive is decreased by 2 and you cannot lose a Gem (unless your strength is reduced to 0).
E.g. You choose Block and your attack is a 2. Your opponent's attack after any Tactic adjustments is a 5. The Damage you receive is 1, thus 5-2=3, but 3-2=1 actual damage.
If you Block you cannot inflict damage on your opponent, even if your attack is greater than your opponent's. However, if you are victorious against an opponent that chose Lunge, the opponent must drop 1 Gem.
Parry: If you choose Parry, your opponent's Battle Die is decreased by 1 AND your Damage is reduced by 1 if you lose (e.g. Damage of 2 becomes Damage of 1 or Damage of 4 becomes Damage of 3, which would still max out at 2).
Jab: If you choose Jab, you increase your Battle Die attack roll by 1.
Lunge: If you choose Lunge, you increase your Battle Die attack roll by 2, however if you loses to an opponent that is Blocking, you must drop 1 Gem if you are carrying any.
Three heroes on one space: If there are three heroes on one space, the first hero in turn order is the Attacker (or the hero that last moved onto that space this round). The Attacker may choose one of the other heroes to attack.

Battling Tiny:
After acquiring two Gems (three in a two player game) you must return to the center space on the board. There you must battle the ruler of the caverns, a dragon affectionately named Tiny. As long as you are on the center space with two or more Gems (three or more in a two player game) you must battle Tiny during Phase 6.

To battle Tiny the Battle Die is rolled once for Tiny and once for you, the thieving hero. If victorious, you may expend Strength to increase the value of your Battle Die. Tiny receives Damage equal to the difference between your Battle Die plus additional Strength allocated to the battle and Tiny's Battle Die. Use Tiny's card to track his remaining Strength, starting at 8. This damage is cumulative, and Tiny remains damaged through the rest of the game.

If you are not victorious you must lose Strength equal to the difference between your Battle Dies and Tiny's, max 2. If you lose, you may not spend any additional Strength to damage Tiny.

If Tiny is attacking a hero, any other hero may also choose to fight Tiny. After the initial battle between Tiny and the hero with two or more Gems is complete, other heroes, in turn order, may choose to also fight Tiny to help reduce his Strength.

Note: If a hero battling Tiny no longer has two or more Gems, Tiny will leave immediately and will not attack again until the hero (or another hero) moves to Tiny's space while carrying two or more Gems. Tiny will only attack a hero that is carrying two or more Gems and other heroes may only battle Tiny if Tiny is already out, fighting a hero with two or more Gems.

Two Heroes with Two Gems: In the rare event that there are two players with two Gems in a three player game, both battling Tiny, the battles occur in turn order. See Winning below for more details.

Disturbed Monsters:
At the end of every round there is a possibility that a horde of monsters will attack the entire group – one per hero. Once all Actions, PvP Combat, and Tiny Combat for the round is resolved, roll the Battle Die. If the Battle Die is less than or equal to the Total Noise 🔊, Disturbed Monsters of the strength rolled on the Battle Die are encountered. Note that on a Monster Strength of 1 all heroes will automatically defeat the Disturbed Monsters, unless heroes decide to expend Strength to increase the Monster Strength of an opponent's Monster (see below).

If Disturbed Monsters are encountered all heroes, in turn order, must roll a value greater than or equal to the Strength of the monsters. You may spend Strength to increase your die roll, however your opponents (in turn order from the current player) may also choose to spend their own Strength to increase the Strength of the Disturbed Monster (max 6 Disturbed Monster Strength). If you are unable to defeat the Disturbed Monsters you lose Strength equal to the difference between the Monster Strength (including any modifiers) and your Battle Die, max 2 Strength.

E.g. the Disturbed Monster is Strength 3 and you roll a 2. One of your opponents expends 1 of their own Strength to increase the Disturbed Monster to Strength 4. You may increase your die roll to a 4 by expending 2 Strength.

Losing All Strength:
In the event that you lose all your Strength you immediately drop 1 Gem you are carrying. Place the Gem on the space you occupy on the map. While you have 0 strength you can only choose Heal or Hide as your Action. Any other Actions selected (including Search) do nothing. You can Heal and then be attacked by another hero later in that same round. If you are carrying multiple Gems, have Strength reduced to 0, Heal, and then are reduced to 0 strength again you must drop another Gem.

Winning:
The first hero to reach the center space with 2 or more gems, and defeat Tiny is the winner. The player wins as soon as Tiny's strength is reduced to 0.

In the rare event that two heroes have two gems in a three player game and both are battling Tiny when Tiny is defeated, the hero that defeated Tiny is the winner.

Solo Variant:
The Solo Variant has a few modified rules. Players have a limited amount of time to find all four gems, defeat Tiny, and escape. Begin play on any desired map. Use the other two Strength dice as countdown timers. Begin with 12 turns (6 on each other die). After each turn reduce one die by 1. After falling past 1 on a die that die is discarded.

Noise Adjustments – When calculating Total Noise, roll the Battle Die and add that value to your Action's Noise.

Action Adjustments – the Hide and Surprise Attack adjustments are adjusted as follows.

- **Surprise Attack** – Move 1 space AND increase a Countdown Die by 1 (max 12 or 6) instead of decreasing it at the end of your turn. If a die has already been discarded it cannot be retrieved.
- **Hide** – you may either gain 1 Strength OR (AND) increase a Countdown Die by 1 (max 12 or 6) instead of decreasing it at the end of your turn. If a die has already been discarded it cannot be retrieved.

If your hero's Strength is reduced to 0 or the last Countdown Die runs out, you lose.

Adjusting Solo Difficulty: To make the solo game easier Hide can gain 1 Strength AND increase Countdown Die by 1, allow increasing the Countdown clock past 6 after the first die has been discarded, and/or collect fewer gems. To make the game more difficult reduce the number of turns allowed to start, start with less Strength, or make Surprise Attack move 1 OR increase the Countdown Die by 1.

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