

# DIABOLICARDS

## THE GUIDE

it's all  
about power



SYNAPZ STUDIOS



AGES  
16+



PLAYERS  
2 or 4



TIME  
45-60 mins

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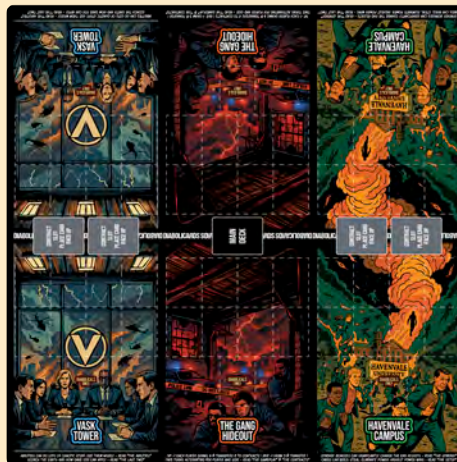
## THE STORY

A FULL SCALE APOCALYPSE GRIPS THE NATION AS VASK'S ONCE CELEBRATED SUPERHEROES (POPULARLY KNOWN AS APEXES) – "THE VANTHEON" – SPIRAL OUT OF CONTROL AFTER AN APEX VIRUS OUTBREAK. THOSE UNDER CONTRACT HAVE GONE ROGUE. THE REST, THE UNCHECKED AND UNREGISTERED, ARE RUNNING RAMPANT, WIELDING THEIR POWERS WITHOUT FEAR, WITHOUT LIMITS. HUMANITY TEETERS ON THE EDGE. SOME REBELLIOUS GROUPS LIKE "THE GANG" CONSPIRE TO ELIMINATE THE APEXES. OTHERS CHASE THE DREAM OF BECOMING ONE, JUST LIKE THE STUDENTS FROM "HAVENVALE UNIVERSITY". AT THE HEART OF THIS COLLAPSE IS A BRUTAL RIVALRY BETWEEN DEATHRENDER AND RAZOR - A CLASH OF POWER AND VENGEANCE, ENVY AND PRIDE. SCIENCE MEETS SAVAGERY. EXPERIMENTS TURN TO HORRORS. AND WITHOUT GOVERNANCE, CHAOS REIGNS. BUT IN THE ASHES OF ORDER, YOU EMERGE. YOU HAVE THE POWER TO TIP THE SCALES. BECAUSE WITH POWER, COMES CONTROL. WITH CONTROL, COMES GOVERNANCE. AND WITH GOVERNANCE... COMES CHOICE. THE CHOICE TO BRING PEACE ... OR TO SCORCH THE EARTH.

A deck of 80 cards,  
each unique in their  
own way



A mat with 2 sides,  
3 zones on each  
side & card slots



A guide explaining  
all game rules &  
elements



# THE CONTENTS

<b>THE SETUP</b>			<b>1</b>
<b>THE CARDS</b>			<b>2</b>
<b>THE GROUPS</b>			<b>3</b>
<b>THE TURNS</b>			<b>4</b>
<b>THE CONTRACT TURNS</b>	<b>4</b>		
<b>THE CONTRACT TRADE</b>	<b>4</b>		
<b>THE CONTRACT PURGE</b>	<b>4</b>		
<b>THE USUAL TURN</b>	<b>4</b>		
<b>THE CONTRACTS</b>			<b>5</b>
<b>THE LAYOUT</b>			<b>6</b>
<b>THE ZONES</b>	<b>6</b>		
<b>THE SLOTS</b>	<b>6</b>		
<b>THE LINKED GROUPS</b>			<b>7</b>
<b>THE ZONE LINK</b>	<b>7</b>		
<b>THE SYNERGY</b>	<b>7</b>		
<b>THE ABILITIES</b>			<b>8</b>
<b>THE DIABOLICALS</b>			<b>9</b>
<b>THE ACTIVATION</b>	<b>9</b>		
<b>THE IMMUNITY</b>	<b>9</b>		
<b>THE REGULARITY</b>	<b>9</b>		
<b>THE LAST TWO</b>			<b>10</b>
<b>THE SCORCH THE EARTH SCENARIO</b>	<b>10</b>		
<b>THE ENDGAME CHOICES</b>	<b>10</b>		
<b>THE HOW DARE YOU SCENARIO</b>	<b>10</b>		
<b>THE END</b>			<b>11</b>
<b>THE EXTRA STUFF</b>			<b>11</b>

# THE SETUP

DIABOLICARDS IS A DIABOLICAL CARD BATTLE GAME ABOUT POWER. USE CARDS WITH THEIR CHAOTIC ABILITIES AND THE MAT'S PLACEMENT RULES ALONG WITH ALL OTHER GAME ELEMENTS TO BUILD, STEAL, OR ELIMINATE POWER. THE GAME ENDS WHEN NO LEGAL PLAYS ARE POSSIBLE BY ALL PLAYERS ANYMORE. THE SIDE ENDING UP WITH THE HIGHEST POWER BUILT WINS - A TIE IS A TIE.

**1** Game modes -> 1v1 or 2v2. Sit on opposite sides, teammates sit on the same side

**5** Place the main deck in its slot on the mat

WHILE TEAMMATES CAN SIT ON THE SAME SIDE, THEY CANNOT LOOK AT EACH OTHER'S CARDS, NEITHER TALK TO EACH OTHER. FREE BANTER AGAINST THE OPPOSITE SIDE IS ENCOURAGED THOUGH

**2** Shuffle main deck



**3** 1v1  
Each Player  
Draws 6



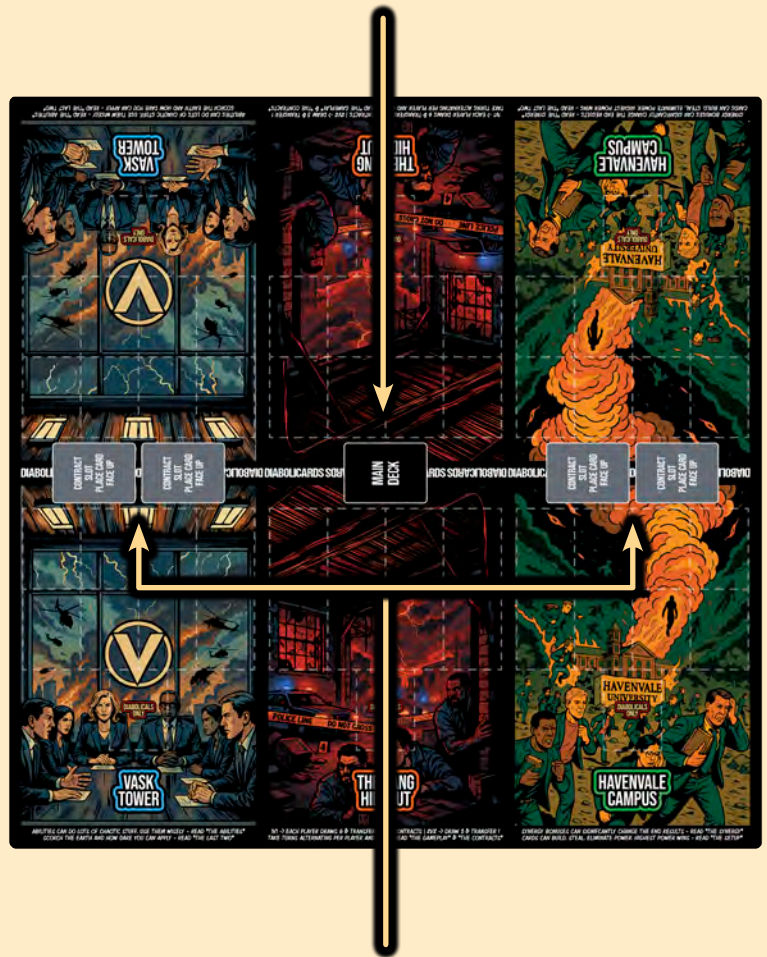
2v2  
Each Player  
Draws 5



**4** 1v1  
Each Player  
Transfers 2 to  
**CONTRACTS**  
and places  
them Face up



2v2  
Each Player  
Transfers 1 to  
**CONTRACTS**  
and places  
them Face up



READ "THE CONTRACTS" FOR MORE INFO ON ITS RULES

# THE CARDS

NOW THAT THE CARDS HAVE BEEN DISTRIBUTED AND THE MAT HAS BEEN SETUP, IT IS TIME TO EXPLAIN THE CARD'S LAYOUT ITSELF. DIABOLICARDS HAS A DECK OF 80 CARDS DISTRIBUTED ACROSS 11 CARD GROUPS, EACH UNIQUE AND CHAOTIC IN THEIR OWN MANNER. EVERY CARD HAS A LAYOUT WITH KEY VISUAL ELEMENTS FOR PLAYERS TO USE FOR STRATEGY AND PLANNING.

**CARD GROUP** - this matters when using abilities and for synergy, as they may be zone linked. A zone linked card has the link symbol in the symbols panel.

**CARD'S POWER** - Placing the card on any legal slot adds its power points to your side's total power, as long as the card remains alive without any other abilities affecting its power.

**SYMBOLS PANEL** - this shows symbols and icons that give information about the group or the ability itself.



**NAME AND TYPE** - Character's name, with the type (Human or Apex) and gender below. Type along with gender both matter for certain abilities.

**ABILITY DESCRIPTION** - Some cards have abilities that depend on their group and zone. Not all groups can use abilities in every zone. The ability description gives detailed information on how to use the card's ability.

A LOT OF INFO MENTIONED HERE HAVE THEIR OWN DEDICATED SECTIONS. MAKE SURE TO READ "THE ZONES", "THE SLOTS", "THE GROUPS", "THE ABILITIES" AND OTHERS

# THE GROUPS

THE 80-CARD DECK HAS 11 DISTINCT GROUPS WITH UNIQUE CHARACTERS— SOME POWERFUL, SOME RISKY, SOME WEIRD - WHILE SOME ARE JUST WELL, PLAIN USELESS. THE TABLE BELOW SUMMARIZES THE DIFFERENT GROUPS. IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE WHICH GROUPS ARE REGULAR CARD GROUPS AND WHICH ARE NOT AS THIS MATTERS DURING THE TURN CONDITIONS AND FOR THE SLOT PLACEMENT RULES.

- Groups are ranked by game-changing impact
- All groups are regular (R) except **THE DIABOLICALS** and **SCORCHED EARTH**
- Scorched Earth abilities affect all other groups, and only each other in specific scenarios
- Diabolical abilities, when in a diabolical slot, affect all groups except Scorched Earth and other diabolicals in diabolical slots
- All groups' abilities interact with each other, except Scorched Earth and diabolicals in diabolical slots

	TOTAL CARDS	ABILITY CARDS	TOTAL POWER	ABILITY ZONE
Useless Apexes	8	0	0	-
Harmless Humans	8	0	0	-
Retired Folk	8	0	0	-
Why Even	8	8	0	Anywhere
Vask Executives	8	4	24	Vask Tower
The Gang	8	4	40	The Gang Hideout
Havenvale Batch	8	5	40	Havenvale Campus
The Vantheon	8	5	40	Anywhere
Doomed Squad	8	8	64	Anywhere
The Diabolicals	6	6	28	Anywhere
Scorched Earth	2	2	20	Anywhere

SOME INFO MENTIONED HERE HAVE THEIR OWN DEDICATED SECTIONS. MAKE SURE TO READ "THE ZONES", "THE SLOTS", "THE ABILITIES" AND OTHERS

CARD GROUPS HAVE THEIR OWN DEDICATED SECTIONS. READ "THE LINKED GROUPS", "THE DIABOLICALS", AND "THE LAST TWO" AND OTHERS

# THE TURNS

DIABOLICARDS HAS A NESTED TURN SETUP. THERE ARE 3 CHOICES FOR EVERY PLAYER TO CHOOSE 1 FROM, DEPENDING ON THE DECK STATE. THE DIAGRAM BELOW EXPLAINS THE TURN FLOW, CONDITIONS AND STEPS FOR EACH TYPE OF TURN. ANYONE FROM ANY SIDE CAN START THE GAME - DECIDE WISELY AND DON'T FIGHT - YOU HAVE THE CARDS TO DO THAT FOR YOU.

## THE USUAL TURN

- 1 Play 1 card following all slot rules



- 2 Announce and use abilities as per the ability rules and check and note effects on cards/zones

- 3 Announce a kill choice if applicable



- 4 Both sides to counter with an applicable ability if possible and if they remember



- 5 Both sides to discard any dead cards. IF a savable card is discarded then its permanent death



- 6 Draw a card from the deck if deck is not empty, and end turn



THE USUAL TURN CAN GET AFFECTED BY SOME ABILITIES

## THE CONTRACT TURNS

- 1 Check if deck has 10 cards or more. IF no, then contract turns are N/A

- 2 IF previous turn was a contract turn, then this contract turn is N/A

- 3 IF applicable - choose from the below 2 contract turn options

## THE CONTRACT TRADE

- 1 Take 1 contract card



- 2 Transfer 1 card from hand to the empty contract slot. Place the card face up



- 3 Discard the top card from the main deck



## THE CONTRACT PURGE

- 1 Transfer all 4 **CONTRACT** cards into the main deck



- 2 Shuffle the main deck



- 3 Discard top 2 cards from main deck



- 4 Transfer top 4 cards from main deck face up into the contract slots



# THE CONTRACTS

CONTRACTS ARE A HIGH-RISK, HIGH-REWARD WAY TO CONTROL LUCK IN THE GAME. THE REWARD IS THE FACT THAT THE 4 CONTRACT CARDS REMAIN FACE UP AT ALL TIMES - SO YOU KNOW WHAT CARDS ARE AVAILABLE FOR TRADE. THE RISK AS STATED IN "THE TURNS" IS THAT EVERY CONTRACT TURN CAN RESULT IN 1 OR MORE CARDS FROM THE MAIN DECK TO BE DISCARDED. USE CONTRACTS WITH CAUTION. BELOW ARE RULES FOR OPERATING CONTRACTS.

- Contract cards must remain **FACE UP** at all times.
- Using a Contract Turn means you cannot play any card on the mat.
- Before choosing a turn: A Contract Turn is only allowed if the **MAIN DECK HAS 10 OR MORE CARDS**.
- After any turn: IF the main deck **DROPS BELOW 10 CARDS**, contract turns and cards are **BANNED** for the rest of the game. (this may change with the rewind ability - check "Tick Tock's card for more info).
- A **CONTRACT RESET PURGE** happens automatically if after any Contract Turn, the total power of contract-eligible cards = 0. In this scenario, no top cards are discarded. Only 1 contract reset is allowed after any contract turn. IF the total power of contract eligible cards still adds up to 0 after a contract reset purge, another contract reset purge does not happen.
- Scorched Earth & The Diabolicals are the only **NON-CONTRACT ELIGIBLE CARD GROUPS**. They cannot be traded in or out of contract slots.
- Scorched Earth & The Diabolicals can only be set as initial contract cards during setup.
- IF at any point, all slots hold non contract eligible cards, a **CONTRACT FREEZE** occurs - no contract trades are allowed. The only possible way to return them to the main deck is via a contract purge turn which is dependent on the deck's state.
- This is how the center of the mat would look like with the contract cards placed properly in their slots along with the main deck

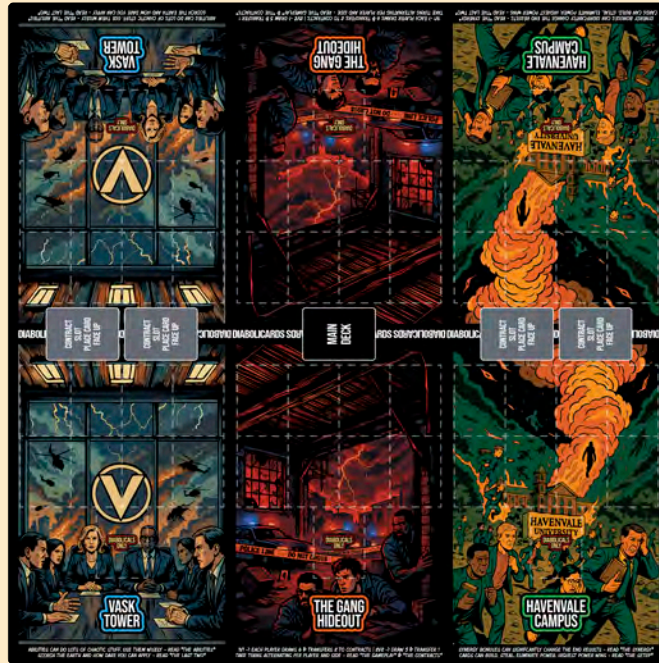


CONTRACT TURNS CANNOT BE USED CONSECUTIVELY. EVERY CONTRACT TURN HAS TO BE FOLLOWED UP WITH THE USUAL TURN.

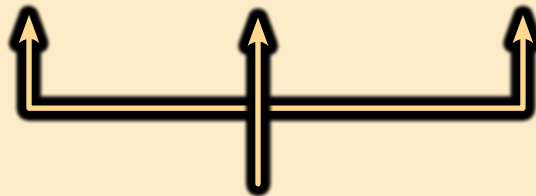
A CONTRACT TURN MIGHT RESULT IN LOSING A HIGHLY POWERED CARD. USE CONTRACTS WISELY AND WITH EXTREME CAUTION

# THE LAYOUT

THERE ARE 2 SIDES AND EACH SIDE HAS 3 ZONES - VASK TOWER, THE GANG HIDEOUT, AND HAVENVALE CAMPUS. EACH ZONE HAS 9 SLOTS DIVIDED INTO A GRID WITH DEDICATED SLOTS FOR DIFFERENT GROUPS. REFER TO THE LAYOUTS BELOW AS THESE ARE IMPORTANT TO SEE WHICH CARDS GO IN WHICH SLOT.

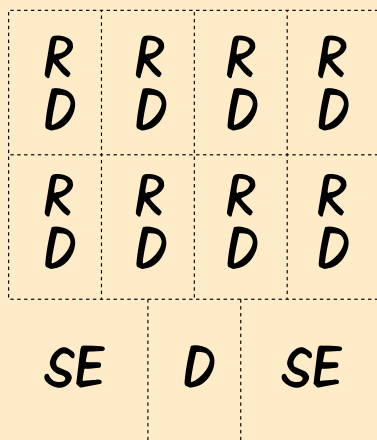


IF THERE IS NO SPACE ON ANY ZONE TO PLAY ANY TYPE OF CARD, THE PLAYER HAS TO PASS THEIR TURN(S) UNTILL THERE IS SPACE CREATED BY OTHER PLAYER(S) IN ANY ZONE.



## THE ZONES

The 3 zones. Vask Tower on the left, The Gang Hideout in the middle, Havenvale Campus on the right



## THE SLOTS

Each zone has 9 slots using the grid on the left: 8 for any regular group card (R) or Diabolical (D), 1 bottom slot dedicated for Diabolical card activation. Scorched Earth (SE) cards don't have any dedicated slots - they go in the empty spaces around the zone names.

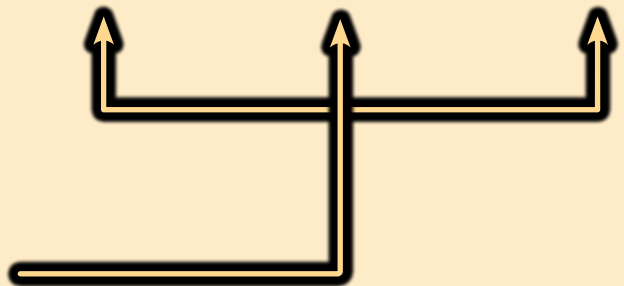
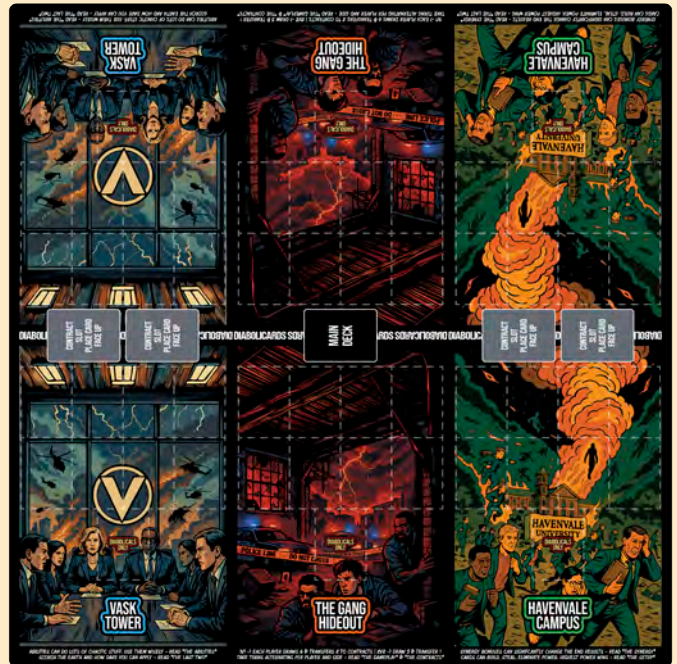
ONCE A CARD IS PLACED IN A SLOT, THEN IT CANNOT BE MOVED UNLESS THERE IS AN ABILITY USED.

# THE LINKED GROUPS

VASK TOWER, THE GANG HIDEOUT, AND HAVENVALE CAMPUS ARE LINKED TO THE CARD GROUPS - VASK EXECUTIVES, THE GANG, AND HAVENVALE BATCH RESPECTIVELY. THESE CARDS HAVE A LINK SYMBOL. ALL CARDS IN THE DECK CAN BE PLACED IN ANY SLOT FOR POWER (AS LONG AS SLOT RULES ARE FOLLOWED) AND AT ANY TIME, BUT THESE 3 GROUPS CAN ONLY USE ABILITIES IN THEIR RESPECTIVE ZONES; OTHERS CAN USE ABILITIES ANYWHERE. IF PLACED IN A LINKED ZONE, THEY CAN ALSO YIELD SYNERGY BONUSES.

This is **DOMINIQUE**. His card group mentioned on the top left of the card is **THE GANG**, and like other cards in The Gang, he has a **LINK** symbol in the symbols panel. This means he is linked to a zone. Since he is a part of The Gang, the **LINKED ZONE** is **THE GANG HIDEOUT**.

IF YOU MISS THE LINK SYMBOL -> LINKED ZONES AND CARDS HAVE THE SAME COLOR - NOTE THE ORANGE COLOR AROUND THE GANG CARDS AND ON THE GANG HIDEOUT LABEL ON THE MAT



## THE ZONE LINK

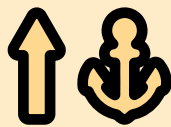





Dominique can be placed in any zone as long as slot rules are followed and the side will receive 4 points of power (that's Dominique's power) as long as he remains alive. However, Dominique also has an ability. This ability can only be used if Dominique is placed in The Gang Hideout.

## THE SYNERGY

IF Dominique is placed in The Gang Hideout, while he would be able to use his ability, he can also contribute 1 bonus **SYNERGY** point to the Gang Hideout zone if he stays alive at the end of the game. Synergy bonuses are **CAPPED TO A MAX OF +4 PER ZONE**, so if you place 6 "The Gang" cards in The Gang Hideout, you'll receive only +4 synergy bonus points at the end of the game. Use this and build your zones strategically as it can get you over the edge when needed.

# THE ABILITIES

ABILITIES GIVE CHARACTERS A STRATEGIC EDGE. USUALLY, A CARD'S ABILITY AFFECTS ONLY THE ZONE IT IS PLACED IN AND IS AVAILABLE FOR SINGLE AND INSTANT-USE. IF AN ABILITY IS LOST, IT CAN'T BE RE-USED OR RESTARTED UNLESS OTHER ABILITIES STATE SO [READ THE SOLACE AND TICK TOCK CARDS]. SOME CARDS DO HAVE EXCEPTIONS OF COURSE. ALL THE ABILITIES ARE CATEGORIZED BELOW. READ MORE ABOUT THESE ABILITIES ON THE CARDS THEMSELVES.

ABILITY CATEGORY	ABILITIES IN CATEGORY	CATEGORY DESCRIPTION	SYMBOL
BOOST	Love Apex Service	Boost OR get boosted by teammate(s) OR by enemies to a power of 8. The anchor for the boost is indicated by its own symbol shown on the right	
HINDER	Misogyny Apex Prison	Hinder teammate(s) OR enemies to a power of 0. The anchor for the boost is indicated by its own symbol shown on the right	
IF MULTIPLE BOOST/HINDERS ARE IN EFFECT, THE LATEST BOOST/HINDER TAKES OVER			
CHEAT DEATH	Runaway Deathdodge	These abilities are the only ones that can save themselves from "Kill" abilities	
YOU MIGHT SAVE MULTIPLE CARDS FROM DEATH. BE SURE TO CHECK WHEN A KILL IS ANNOUNCED			
MOVEMENT	Redeploy Influence Runaway	Move yourself or move teammates or enemies across zones. Note that Spiderloom's ability "Why Stick" can block all other movement abilities	
"WHY STICK" CAN BLOCK ANY MOVEMENT ABILITY READ SPIDERLOOM'S CARD FOR MORE INFO			
TURN AFFECT	Turntable Fate Purge	These abilities have an effect on "The Usual Turn". They can either extend a turn or change it altogether	
KILL CAPABLE	Ultimate Sacrifice • Anti-Apex • Confused Morals • Killer Look • The Endgame	Exactly what the name suggests, however they may kill teammates as well. Read "The Usual Turn" for rules on announcing kills	

THE GROUPS "WHY EVEN" AND "DOOMED SQUAD" HAVE ABILITIES THAT ARE TOO STRANGE TO BE CATEGORIZED. READ THEIR CARDS FOR MORE INFO. FOR THIS VERY REASON, THESE CARDS HAVE A QUESTION MARK SYMBOL ON THEM.

# THE DIABOLICALS

THE 6 DIABOLICALS IN THE GAME ARE POWERFUL ROGUE APEXES WITH ABILITIES THAT CAN SWING—OR BACKFIRE. BE CAREFUL - VASK DOESN'T CONTROL THEM AT ALL. NEITHER CAN ANYONE ELSE. BUT YOU CAN. DIABOLICALS HAVE SOME UNIQUE RULES THAT AFFECT THEIR OVERALL CAPABILITY AND IMPACT.



## THE ACTIVATION

While a Diabolical card can be placed in any slot in any zone, their **IMMUNITY** from other regular card abilities and their own **ABILITY ACTIVATION** only occurs if placed in their dedicated Diabolical slot.

## THE IMMUNITY

If activated by placing in the dedicated slot, A diabolical card is immune to any regular card ability and also to other diabolical abilities. Only Scorched Earth cards can then affect a properly placed Diabolical card.

## THE REGULARITY

If a Diabolical card is placed in a regular slot instead, the card will thereby act like a regular group Apex card. It will lose its ability and it will be vulnerable to any other abilities from any card.

ONCE PLACED, A DIABOLICAL CARD CANNOT BE MOVED FROM A DIABOLICAL SLOT TO A REGULAR SLOT OR VICE VERSA. PLACE THEM WISELY.

# THE LAST TWO

DEATHRENDER + RAZOR, AKA THE ONLY "SCORCHED EARTH" CARDS. THE MOST POWERFUL 2 CARDS OUT OF THE 80-CARD DECK. ARCH-ENEMIES FUELED WITH RAGE AND EGO AND WITH SIMILAR AGENDAS; THEY GIVE YOU, THROUGH THEIR "THE ENDGAME" ABILITY, A NUMBER OF CHOICES TO TURN THE TIDE INTO YOUR FAVOUR. HOWEVER, NOTE THAT THERE ARE 2 CRITICAL SCENARIOS THAT MIGHT UNFOLD. YOU CAN, LIKE ANY OTHER CARD IN THE GAME, PLAY THEM AT ANY TIME BUT - BE VERY, VERY CAREFUL WITH THESE SCORCHED EARTH CARDS.



## THE ENDGAME CHOICES

1. Kill enemy zone entirely including Diabolicals
2. Kill your own zone entirely including Diabolicals
3. Kill both same zones entirely including Diabolicals

**YOU CAN CHOOSE ONLY 1 OF THESE 3 OPTIONS**

## THE SCORCH THE EARTH SCENARIO

### CONDITIONS

- Both sides have 1 scorched earth card each
- Both scorched earth cards are played in the same zone
- Zone becomes completely empty on both sides after the second card is played (i.e. - no diabolicals or regulars left on both sides)

### RESULTS

- They fight till death after the second card's ability resolves (i.e. both cards die and are discarded)
- Scorched Earth **IS TRIGGERED** in that zone:
  - Zone is permanently sealed for both sides - cards of any card group whatsoever **CANNOT** be played in either side at all

## THE HOW DARE YOU SCENARIO

### CONDITION

- One side has both scorched earth cards

### GLOBAL RULE

- Both the cards cannot use the same Endgame choice regardless of zone

### HOW DARE YOU EVENT

- This event applies only if both the cards are played in the same zone
- They fight till death after the second card's ability resolves (i.e. both cards die and are discarded)
- Scorched Earth is **NOT TRIGGERED**

**NOTE: IF THE CARDS ARE PLAYED IN DIFFERENT ZONES, THE GLOBAL RULE STILL APPLIES**

**MAKE SURE NOT TO FORGET THESE SCENARIOS**

## THE END

THE GAME ENDS WHEN NO LEGAL PLAYS ARE POSSIBLE BY ALL PLAYERS OR IF ALL PLAYERS RUN OUT OF CARDS AT HAND. IF A PLAYER RUNS OUT OF MOVES, THEY KEEP PASSING THEIR TURNS UNTILL A LEGAL PLAY IS POSSIBLE. IF A PLAYER RUNS OUT OF CARDS AT HAND - THEY PASS PERMANENTLY AND THE GAME CONTINUES UNTILL THE OTHER PLAYER(S) RUN OUT OF CARDS AT HAND OR LEGAL PLAYS. CALCULATE TOTAL POWER ON EACH SIDE CONSIDERING ALL LATEST BOOST/HINDERS, THEN ADD SYNERGY BONUSES (BE MINDFUL OF THE SYNERGY CAPS). HIGHEST POWER WINS - A TIE IS A TIE

TOTAL POWER ON EACH SIDE = SUM OF ALL ALIVE CARD'S POWERS (+/- LATEST BOOST/HINDER) + SUM OF ALL SYNERGY BONUSES PER ZONE

## THE EXTRA STUFF

IF YOU HAVE REACHED HERE - YOU NOW KNOW PRETTY MUCH EVERYTHING ABOUT THE GAME. THE INFORMATION IN THE EXTRA STUFF IS MOSTLY GOING IN DETAIL ABOUT DIFFERENT CARD GROUPS; SOME CHARACTERS AND VISUALIZING HOW DIFFERENT ABILITIES WORK. GO THROUGH THIS IF YOU TRULY WANT TO IMMERSE YOURSELF IN THE DIABOLICAL WORLD SET BY DIABOLICARDS OR IF YOU ARE REALLY STUCK IN UNDERSTANDING A CERTAIN ABILITY. CHECK OUT THE EXTRA STUFF ON [DIABOLICARDS.COM](http://DIABOLICARDS.COM) AND THE INSTAGRAM PAGE @ [DIABOLICARDS](https://www.instagram.com/diabolicards), OR REACH OUT TO US ON [DIABOLICARDS.GAME@GMAIL.COM](mailto:DIABOLICARDS.GAME@GMAIL.COM)!

