

Ice Fortress

cooperative 3D tower building and defense
for 1-4 players, age 10+, 45 minutes

Your family has long defended the icy pass between the northern reaches and the heartlands. As the swirling winds of winter gather, so too do the Night Sorceress' forces. She marches upon the pass and it's up to your family to once again defend the realm.

In Ice Fortress, you and your fellow players are working together, building a 3D fortress out of elemental ice room cards and pillar dice to protect against an incoming army of magical beings.

All players win together if they can build a stack of four rooms, called a beacon, of each of the four elements.

All players lose if their ice shield is broken through.

Components

112 room cards

- 12 jumbo rooms
- 26 large rooms
- 32 medium rooms
- 36 small rooms

38 character cards

- 4 name cards
- 22 ability cards
- 10 class cards

8 Invader/Beacon cards

40 elemental figures, used as both enemies and elemental shards

10 clear ice shield cubes

1 bag to hold the elemental crystals

50 dice

1 difficulty card

1 difficulty token

1 tower foundation board



Setup

1. Put the tower foundation board in the middle of the table. Deal one random Invader/Beacon card, Invader side up, of each of the four elements on the matching elemental symbol on the bottom of the board. (You won't need the other Invader/Beacon cards during the game.)
2. Shuffle each of the four room card sizes into their own face-down decks, placing them next to the board. Deal the top card from each deck face-up to another side of the board. This area is the supply. Rooms and elemental shards will be added to and taken from the supply during the game.



3. Shuffle the character decks: name, ability and class. Deal each player one name, three abilities, and one class. Each player chooses one of their three abilities to discard and lays the rest out as below, with the name card showing the side with the title ending in “the” and the “After you build a beacon” bar on the bottom:



4. Put all the elemental figures in the bag.
5. Choose your difficulty and use the difficulty token to mark the space on the board's track. The standard introductory game uses difficulty 7, so you place the marker on number 7. You can make it higher or lower as desired. Difficulty 5 is good for an experienced player, but a difficulty of 3 or less is almost impossible to win at. Take that many ice shield cubes and make a pile near the board. This is your ice shield.

A Round of Play

During a round, each player takes a turn rolling dice and building up the fortress. They are trying to build stacks of rooms of the same element within the fortress. A stack of four rooms of a single element is called a **beacon**. When the players have completed a beacon of each of the four elements – water, fire, air and earth – they collectively win! However, after each player's turn, the Night Sorceress sends invaders that will occupy rooms in the fortress, making it harder to build up. If invaders completely fill the available rooms of an element, they start attacking the ice shield, and if they break through, the Night Sorceress wins (and the players lose).

The order of steps to be taken on a turn are listed on each player's name card, and explained here:

Step 1: Roll Dice

The character cards for name and abilities depict some number of dice on them – 1, 2 or 3. Roll all the dice depicted on your character cards. If you ever don't have enough dice to roll, just roll as many as you can.

If your Name card has 2 dice, your two Ability cards have 1 and 2 dice respectively, and your Class card has 0 dice, you roll 5 dice total.

Step 2: Build the Fortress

During step 2, you can add pillars and rooms to the fortress, and use your special powers. You can build (add pillars and rooms) as often as you want to and are able to during your turn, and you can optionally use each special power once any time during the building – before, between, and after pillar and room placements.

To build, you can place dice as pillars on open pillar squares, and place rooms on completed room sections of the same size. These actions are described below.

Pillars

Many pillar squares will have a limitation on what dice can be on top of them. **If a square contains a ? symbol**, any die can go there. If it has a **single number**, the die placed there must show exactly that number. If it has a **range** (e.g., 4-6), the value of the die placed there must lie in that range.

If the pillar square is black, it **has a line connecting to another pillar square**. That other square must already be filled, and the die placed on this square must obey the modifier. (If it's connected to a square with a pillar of value 4 and the modifier is +1, a 5 must go on it.)

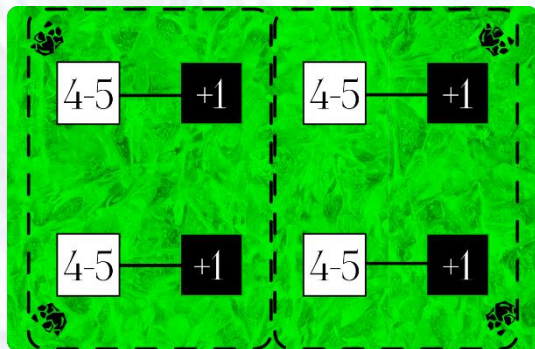
You cannot place a pillar on a square that contains an invader. You have to repel or crystallize that invader, using one of your abilities, in order to use that pillar square.

Rooms

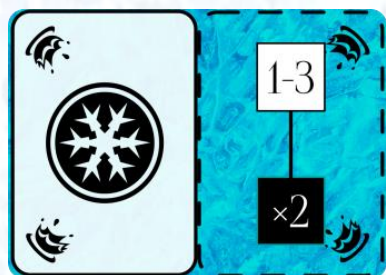
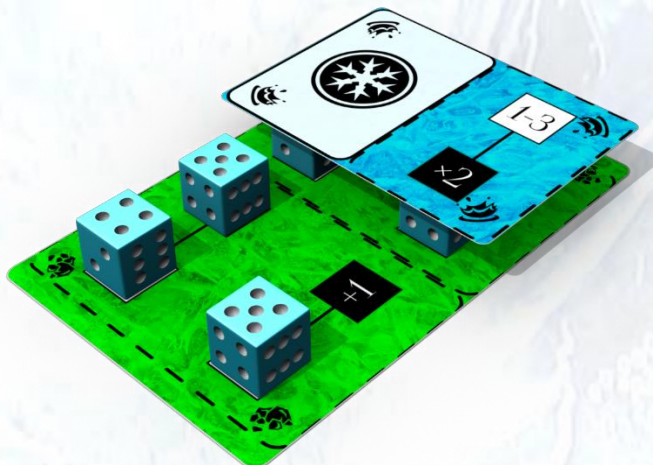
To place new rooms on existing rooms, the new room must be the same size as one of the dotted-outlined pillar groups on the base card, and all pillars within that area must be filled. Pillar squares outside of that area can be either empty or filled - they're not relevant. Building on the bottom of the fortress does not require any pillars; jumbo rooms can go directly on those spaces.

You cannot build a room on a pillar group if any of the pillars (or the group itself) has an invader on it.

When you build a new room that has an ice crystal icon, **boost the ice shield**. To do this, add a clear ice shield cube to your ice shield pile.



Here is an example room. This is a jumbo earth room, with spaces for two large rooms on top of it. The white "4-5" pillar squares can hold pillar dice valued 4 or 5 each, and after they're filled, the connected black "+1" pillar square can hold a die of a value one higher (5 or 6). Once all four pillar squares of either of the pillar groups is completely filled, any large room can go on top of it, as seen below.



This is a large water room. It has a pillar group that can support a medium room, after a die showing 1, 2 or 3 is placed, then another die with double that number (2, 4 or 6). Because this has an ice crystal icon, when this is added to the fortress, you add an ice shield cube to the ice shield pile.

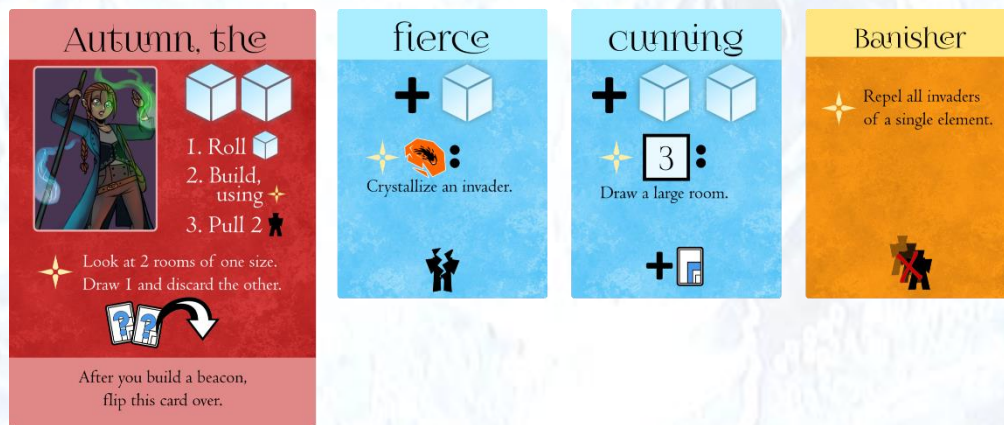
Once both pillar squares are full, any medium room can go on top, as shown below. (The ice crystal section will never have a room on top of it.)



Powers

Each character card (name, ability, or class) has one or more powers you can use, signified by the ✨ symbol. Each one can be used once a turn, and each one is optional. Many powers have some cost associated with them. This is shown by icons of shards or pillar squares with an arrow pointing to the power text. In order to use these powers, you must first place onto the card the depicted shard(s) from the supply or a valid die from what you rolled, to show you used it. After your turn, the spent shards will go to the bag and the spent dice will go to the unused pool.

Powers can be used before, during, and after building. The glossary at the end of the rules will explain some of the in-game terminology.



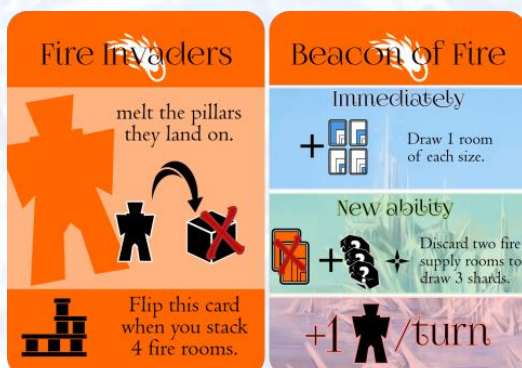
Autumn, the fierce cunning Banisher, has four different powers at her disposal. Each can be used up to once a turn. Two have no cost: the Autumn power (“Look at 2 rooms...””) and the Banisher power (“Repel all invaders...””). The Cunning power can be used by placing a die of value 3 on the card. The Fierce power can be used by spending a fire shard.

Shards

Some powers cost shards to use. You get these either from crystallizing invaders or from certain powers that let you draw shards directly into the supply. See the **glossary** sections on crystallizing and repelling invaders.

Beacons

After building a room, check to see if you’ve just completed the first beacon of an element. A beacon is a vertical stack of four or more rooms, each of the same element. Directly after you complete the beacon, flip over the Invader card of that element.



The beacon cards have three sections:

- Execute the text on the “Immediately” effect immediately when you draw the card – it will be a one-time bonus.
- The “new ability” can be used once per turn by all players, starting immediately.
- The “+1 Invader / turn” section shows that in **Step 3: Pull Invaders** on every turn from now on, each player will pull one extra invader per completed beacon.



For example, above is a Fire beacon – four fire rooms, one stacked on top of another. When that fourth room is placed, flip over the Fire Invaders card. You reveal this Beacon of Fire. Fire invaders no longer melt the pillars they land on. Immediately draw 1 jumbo, large, medium and small room into the supply. Each character has a new ability they can use once a turn now.

Each name card says “After you build a beacon, flip this card over.” on the starting side. Once you complete your first beacon, all players flip their card to the advanced side for the remainder of the game. This side contains a second ability that can be used once per turn, in addition to the ability that was listed on the starting side.

Step 3: Pull Invaders

To end your turn, pull two invaders from the bag. (For each completed beacon, you’ll draw one additional invader.) These invaders will try to block progress on your fortress. Based on the element of each invader, it will try to enter a room of the matching element. They can only enter rooms that have no other rooms on top of them – rooms fully covered by other rooms cannot be invaded.

The invader enters the highest possible location of its element. Find the highest room of that element (most levels away from the board). If there is an empty pillar (that is, a pillar die with no invader on it), place the invader on that pillar. If there is no empty pillar, place the invader on an empty pillar square in that room. If there is none, then the invader goes to the next-highest room with an empty pillar or pillar square.

Whenever there are multiple valid places for an invader to land, the current player chooses which option it takes.

If no matching rooms have empty pillar squares or pillars, or if there are no matching rooms, then the invader attacks the ice shield. That invader goes back into the bag, and you remove one ice shield cube from your ice shield pile.

Invader Abilities

Each invader will cause some extra harm when it enters the castle, unless its elemental beacon is built:

Fire invaders melt (destroy) the pillars that they land on. If they land on a pillar square, there is no extra effect.

Water invaders flood (destroy) one supply room when they enter the fortress. The current player chooses which one.

Earth invaders occupy pillar groups, rather than pillars or pillar squares. Place new invaders on the room card itself, one per pillar group. These do not block new pillar placements, but they do block new rooms from being built. After

the Beacon of Earth is built, the earth invaders already on pillar groups stay in place until crystallized or repelled, but new earth invaders act normally (landing on pillars/pillar squares). An earth invader already in a pillar group does not block post-Beacon invaders from landing on pillars/pillar squares.

Air invaders have no special effect when they enter the fortress, but each turn, the number of dice that a player rolls in **Step I: Roll Dice** is reduced by 1 per air invader in the fortress.

End of the Round

After you've pulled all invaders, you may have to discard some shards and rooms from the supply. Your chosen difficulty level (see **Setup**) is also the maximum number of rooms and shards you may have in your supply at the end of the round. If you have more than that many rooms in your supply, discard rooms until you're at that amount. If you have more than that many shards in your supply, discard shards until you're at that amount.

Victory and Loss

Immediately when the fourth beacon is built, the elemental defense system is complete, and all players collectively win the game! You don't have to finish the turn, or resolve the "Immediately" effect of that final beacon.

On the other hand, if you lose all your ice shield cubes, the shield is breached, giving the Night Sorceress the opening to destroy the last bastion of defense, and the freedom to continue her reign of terror. All players collectively lose when this happens.

Solo Play

You can play this game by yourself by playing as two different characters. When dealing ability cards at the start of the game, draw six and assign two to each character, discarding the remaining two. During the game, alternate turns between the two of them, as if playing a two-player game.

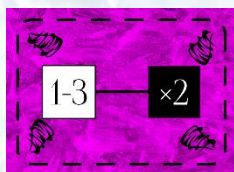
Glossary & Clarifications

A **room's element** is shown by both its color and the icon on each corner of the room. These always match; for instance, every fire room is orange and has a fire icon. White rooms, which only have ice crystal icons, have no element. An **invader's element** corresponds to its color: orange is fire, green is earth, blue is water, purple is air.

Drawing a room means adding it from the room deck to the supply. **Drawing a shard** means pulling it from the bag to the supply.

Crystallizing an invader means removing it from a room and placing the crystal into your supply. From then on, it can be used as a **shard** to pay for powers. **Repelling an invader** means placing it directly back into the bag.

Destroying a pillar means taking a built pillar that currently has no room or invader on top of it and returning it to the unused supply. When a pillar is removed from a white pillar square, and a black pillar square connected to it is still full, a newly placed pillar on the white square only has to obey restrictions on the white square.



Example: On this air room, a 2-valued pillar is placed on the white square and a 4 on the black square. Then, the 2 on the white square is destroyed. A newly placed pillar on the white square can now house any number 1-3.

Destroying a room, whether from the fortress or the supply, means putting it on the bottom of its room deck.

Destroying a built ice room does not remove an ice shield cube. When you destroy a built room, repel any invaders on it and destroy any pillars on it. You cannot destroy a room that has another room built on top of it.

When you **boost the ice shield**, add an ice shield cube to the ice shield pile. You can have a larger shield than you started the game with.

When you **search for a room**, look through any room deck and add any room there to the supply. Then shuffle that room deck.

When you **neutralize an invader ability**, choose any element. Invaders of that element no longer have that Invader Ability for the remainder of the game. You can signify this by sliding the Invader card partially under the board, so that only the “Flip this card when you stack...” portion shows.

Credits

Game design: Tim Mierzejewski

Game development and graphic design: Geek Fever Games

Icons: Lorc, at game-icons.net

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Kaitlynn Peavler (Autumn, Eve), Crystal Frasier (Scarlett), Brian Patterson (Rose)

