



STORY

When heroes are slain, their treasure-filled storage vaults are abandoned and put up for auction. As an aspiring hero, you must outbid your opponents to win these auctions and acquire the gear you need. Will you triumph by collecting a chest of gems and artifacts, or go home with a trunk full of junk? Outbid, out-bluff, and master the auctions to be victorious in Vault Wars.

OVERVIEW

Each round players will take turns as the Auction Master, setting the opening bid and guiding the rules for the auction. The other players gain some (but not all) information about the items in the vault before bidding begins. Between rounds, players may sell items for gold. The game ends after all vaults have been auctioned off -- players then earn victory points for items they kept, and bonus points for items their aspiring hero is looking for. The player with the most victory points is the winner!

STOP

You can learn how to play from our video here:
FloodgateGames.com/Vault-Wars



COMPONENTS

VAULT CARDS - Vaults determine how each auction runs. Most Vaults call for the Auction Master (the player whose Vault is being auctioned off) to draw Items (📦), reveal (📦) some of those items to all players, then allow players to randomly peek at (🔍) some of the remaining items. Vaults are auctioned off in increasing order of their Vault Priority (🏰).




ITEM CARDS - Each player bids on Items during an auction. Most items are worth Gold (👑) when sold between rounds or Victory Points (💎) at the end of the game.






- Items have specific types such as Weapon and Dwarven that may be referenced by other Items, Vaults, or Aspiring Heroes. Symbols in the bottom right such as 🔪 and 🏰 are a reminder of each Item's type(s)
- Items may be sold at the end of each round or kept through to the next round
- Artifact Items may be equipped to provide new abilities
- Many items are Junk -- normally not worth 👑 or 💎



ASPIRING HERO CARDS -

Each player begins with two Aspiring Heroes who are looking for specific types of Items. At the end of the game, players gain bonus  for Items that satisfy one of the two Heroes demands.



LOAN SHARK - Players who are low on  may visit the Loan Shark to help get them back in the game. However, each visit to the Loan Shark gives the player a Corruption Token () , which is worth negative  at the end of the game.




COINS - Three denominations of coins represent the Gold that players will use to bid on auctions and earn from selling Items.



CORRUPTION TOKEN - These tokens are gained each time a player visits the Loan Shark. They will be worth negative Victory Points at the end of the game.



WORKER EXPANSION (Optional)

WORKER CARDS - An added layer of strategy and complexity, workers can be hired for  to give players a variety of rule-breaking advantages.



SETUP

1 Give each player 20 🟡 (five 1-Gold coins and three 5-Gold coins). The remaining coins form the bank.

NOTE: *Players may keep their Gold hidden from others.*

2 Shuffle all Item Cards together, placing them face-down to form the Item Deck.

3 Shuffle all Aspiring Hero Cards and deal 2 to each player face-down. Players may look at these cards.

4 Shuffle all Vault Cards together and deal them to each player as follows:

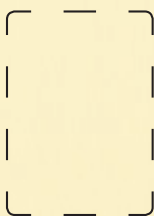
3 PLAYERS - 5 Vaults each

4 PLAYERS - 4 Vaults each

5 PLAYERS - 3 Vaults each



Item Deck



Item Discard
Pile / Trash



Worker Deck



5 🟡

Bank



Player Area

1 Gold



3 Aspiring
Hero Cards



5 DRAFT VAULTS - Players simultaneously select 1 Vault to keep and pass the remaining Vaults to the left. Repeat the process until all Vaults have been drafted.

NOTE: First-time players may agree to skip the Vault Draft.

6 WORKER EXPANSION - Shuffle all Worker Cards together and place them face-down to form the Worker Deck. Place 5 Worker Cards face-up to form the Worker Market.

Set aside any remaining Vaults and Aspiring Heroes without revealing them; these will not be used during the game.

6 Worker Market (Worker Expansion)

 <p>VERSATILIST Selling DISCARD: Buy one Item being sold by another player, paying its cost to the bank</p>	 <p>APPRENTICE Before Selling DISCARD: Exchange 1 non-Junk Item from your Item Pile with 1 Item from the Trash</p>	 <p>BOUNCER Before Bidding DISCARD: Players must raise their bid by at least 5 to outbid you during this Auction</p>	 <p>BREWMASTER After Revealing Vaults DISCARD: Exchange your Vault for another player's Vault</p>
4	3	2	1

4 / 5 Vault Cards




Item Pile




5




GAMEPLAY

Each game is played in a series of rounds where each player auctions off a single Vault or bids during other players' auctions in order to gain Items. Between rounds, Items may be sold or kept by paying storage fees. Victory points are tallied at the end of the game for Items, remaining , and for 1 of the 2 Aspiring Heroes of each player's choice.


Phase I - Prepare the Vaults

1. Each player secretly selects 1 of their Vaults, placing it face-down.
2. Simultaneously, all players reveal those Vaults.
3. **WORKER EXPANSION** - In increasing order of Vault Priority () , each player may hire 1 Worker of their choice from the Worker Market. These Workers may be used for their ability as indicated during the game.


The player will...

- A. Place the Worker into their hand with their Vault cards.
 - B. Pay  equal to the Worker's position in the Market. The worker furthest from the Worker Deck costs 1 , the next 2 , etc.
 - C. Discard a Worker card from their hand if they have more than two Worker cards.
 - D. Slide down the remaining Workers and refill the Worker Market from the Worker Deck in the position closest to the Worker Deck.
4. Discard the Worker furthest from the Worker Deck, slide down the remaining Workers and refill the Worker Market. If no Workers were hired this round, instead discard the two furthest Workers from the Worker Deck.
 - If there are ever too few Worker Cards to refill the Market, shuffle the Worker Discard Pile to form a new Worker Deck.

Phase II - Auction



In increasing order of Vault Priority () , each player will become the Auction Master while all other players are Bidders in that Auction.

NOTE: All players will be the Auction Master exactly once per round.

The player with the lowest Vault Priority () becomes the first Auction Master for the round. Each Auction proceeds as outlined below:


Draw and Reveal Items

The Auction Master will...

1. Draw Items Cards as indicated by the  on the Vault Card.
2. Look at those Items and choose the number of Items indicated by the  to reveal. Placing the revealed Items face-up in the middle of the playing area.
3. Shuffle the remaining Item Cards together. These are now referred to as the Secret Items.
4. Pass the Secret Items to the player to their left.

Peek at Secret Items

When a player is holding the Secret Items, the player will...

1. Randomly select and peek at the number of Items indicated by the  on the Vault Card.
2. Shuffle all Secret Items together, keeping them face-down.
3. Pass all Secret Items to the player to their left.

These steps are repeated for each player until the Secret Items are returned to the Auction Master. Place the Secret Items face-down in the middle of the playing area.

Bidding

1. The Auction Master announces their opening bid amount for the Auction.

NOTE: A player's bid may not exceed their own total 🟡.

2. Bidding continues with the player to the left of the Auction Master.

3. Each Bidder may choose to raise the bid by at least 1 🟡 (announcing their total bid amount) or pass.

4. The choice to bid or pass continues to the left until no players choose to raise the bid.

- After the opening bid, the Auction Master may not bid again
- A bidder who passes may bid again when the choice to bid or pass comes back to them

If no Bidders choose to raise the highest bid, the player with the highest bid is the Winner of the Auction! The Winning Bidder pays the highest bid amount to the Auction Master.

If no Bidders raise beyond the opening bid, the Auction Master is the Winner of the Auction! The Auction Master pays the opening bid amount to the bank.

NOTE: The Winner of the Auction is the only player to pay. All other players pay nothing.



Auction Winner

Once the Auction is won, the Winner...

1. Places all Item Cards (secret and revealed) face-down in front of them to form their own Item Pile.
2. Places the Vault Card face-up near the Trash.

NOTE: *The Winner does not need to reveal Items from the Auction before placing them in their Item Pile.*

Gameplay continues with the next Vault in increasing Vault Priority (🗡️) order at **Phase II - Auction**. If no Vaults remain, continue to **Phase III - Get Paid**.

Special Auction Rules


Several Vaults introduce new rules and variations to how the Auction proceeds. Changes to the number of Items drawn (📦), revealed (📦) or peeked at (🔍) are indicated by a * symbol. While the Auction steps outlined in Phase II give the framework for a standard Auction, players must always follow the rules and variations listed on the Vault Card.



Phase III - Get Paid

Equip Items


Players may now equip Items that have the **Equip** keyword. To equip an item, a player simply places the item face-up in front of them. Equipped Items...


- may be used for their abilities at the time indicated
- are not worth their  value at the end of the game
- may not be sold, Trashed or unequipped
- do not incur Storage Fees.




NOTE: *There is no limit to the number of Items a player may have equipped.*


Items without the Equip keyword (such as Armor, Gems and most Weapons) cannot be equipped.

Sell Items

Simultaneously, each player secretly chooses up to 4 Items to sell from their Item Pile. After revealing them, players gain these Item's  value from the bank.

- Any Items sold this way are placed face-up in the Trash, next to the Item Deck
- Junk Items may be placed in the Trash, but are not worth any  and don't count toward the selling limit
- Equipped Items and Vaults may not be sold or Trashed
- When Selling Items, be sure to consider set bonuses (such as Armor) and bonuses from equipped Items

Armor Set Bonus: When selling, each piece of armor is only counted toward 1 set. Example: Selling 2 Shields and 1 Helm will yield 10  (8  for the set of 1 Shield and 1 Helm and 2  for a single Shield)

NOTE: *When choosing which Items to keep, remember only 1 Aspiring Hero will give bonus  at the end of the game.*

Players may not buy Items from the Trash, or from other players.

All Items in the Trash are public information.

Visit the Loan Shark

Players who are short on Gold after selling Items may visit the Loan Shark, but it comes with a price.

Each Player with fewer than 12 🟡 after selling Items may reveal their total Gold and visit the Loan Shark. They must then:

1. Gain 12 🟡 from the bank.
 2. Gain 1 Corruption Token (🔴). These are worth negative 💎 at the end of the game. Players who visit the Loan Shark must take a Corruption Token.
- Each player may only do this once per round
 - Corruption Tokens cannot be Trashed, Removed or "Paid Back"

NOTE: See *End of Game - Scoring* for details about Corruption Token penalties.

Players may instead visit the Loan Shark later in the round, but may only visit once per round.

If players are keeping their Gold hidden, checking the 12 🟡 maximum is "on your honor". Please don't play games with cheaters.



Phase IV - End of the Round

Storage Fees

For each Item a player chooses to keep in their Item Pile, that player must pay a Storage Fee of 1 🟡 per Item to the bank.

- If a player is unable to pay in full, that player must Trash 1 Item for each 1 🟡 they could not pay
- Players may reveal Junk Items to keep them, at a rate of 3 Junk for 1 🟡 (rounded up)

NOTE: *Players do not pay Storage Fees for Equipped Items, unplayed Vaults, Aspiring Heroes or Workers.*

The game ends when each player has played all of their Vaults -- proceed to **End of Game - Scoring**. Otherwise, gameplay continues with **Phase I - Prepare the Vaults**.






Visit the Loan Shark


If a player has not yet visited the Loan Shark (during Phase III), they may now visit the Loan Shark observing the same rules described above.





END OF GAME - SCORING


At the end of the round after each player has played all of their Vaults, players tally their Victory Point totals from:

- Items in their Item Pile (be sure to consider Collection bonuses, such as those from Gems)
- Bonus  given from 1 Aspiring Hero of the player's choice (any others do not supply )
- Remaining  at a rate of 1  for each 10 .


NOTE: Equipped Items are not worth .


Players lose Victory Points from:

- Dragon Eggs that are not in a set of 3 (-1  each for only having 1 or 2 Dragon Eggs)
- Corruption Tokens () , based on how many they have:

1: -2 

2: -3  each

3 or more: -4  each

The player with the highest  total has won the Vault Wars and is victorious! Ties are broken by the player with the least number of Corruption Tokens, then by descending final Vault Priority.

ARTIFACT & WORKER ABILITIES

Many Artifact Items have special abilities that can be used once equipped. Similarly, Workers provide special abilities that can be used by discarding the Worker card.

The timing for when these abilities can be used is indicated on the card and must be used during that phase or step.

Artifact abilities with the **Trash** keyword are one-time use only, and the Item Card is placed in the Trash when used.

2 PLAYER VARIANT

This two-player variant introduces a Mysterious Bidder who uses a randomized Bidding Deck to bid during the auctions... Setup and gameplay are similar to a three-player game, with the following changes.

Setup

- Build a Bidding Deck of Items for the Mysterious Bidder: 6 Junk, 3 Dragon Egg, 1 Ruby, 1 Emerald, 1 Diamond, 1 Ornate Bow, 1 Broad Axe, 1 Obsidian Sword, 1 Dwarven Helm, 1 Dragon Chestplate, 1 Elven Shield, 1 Spyglass, 1 Whetstone, 1 Rune Forge
- Remove Vaults with Vault Priority 10, 11, 13, 14. They will not be used
- Shuffle the remaining Vaults together and deal 4 to each of the two players and the Mysterious Bidder
- Each player and the Mysterious Bidder begin with 20 Gold
- Shuffle the Aspiring Hero cards and deal 2 to each player and the Mysterious Bidder
- Place the Mysterious Bidder's Aspiring Hero cards face-up for all players to see
- Form an area off to the side for the Mysterious Bidder's Aspiring Heroes, Gold, Item Pile and Bidding Deck
- **WORKER EXPANSION** - The Mysterious Bidder does not need help and hires no Workers

Gameplay

I. Prepare the Vaults - Players select their Vaults as normal. Randomly select 1 Vault from the Mysterious Bidder's Vaults.

II. Auction - Auctions proceed as normal based on increasing Vault Priority.

Auction Master - When the Mysterious Bidder is the Auction Master...

- randomly select which Items are revealed (🎲)
- set the opening bid with the Bidding Deck, using steps 1 & 2 below.

Bidding - When the option to bid comes to the Mysterious Bidder...

1. Reveal Item Cards from the top of the Bidding Deck equal to the number of Items in the Vault (🎲). If any of the revealed Items matches the bonus for either of the Mysterious Bidder's Aspiring Heroes, reveal 1 additional Item Card
2. Count the total Gold Value of those Items (including Armor Set bonuses)
3. Stop revealing cards as soon as the Gold total becomes the highest bid
4. If the Gold total exceeds the current bid, then the Mysterious Bidder is now the highest bidder and the bid option passes to the next player

If the bid comes to the Mysterious Bidder again, reveal 1 additional Item from the Bidding Deck and add its Gold Value to the previously revealed Items' total (including Armor Set Bonuses). Repeat this each time the bid returns to the Mysterious Bidder.

If the Mysterious Bidder's bid total (after revealing all Items) is ever less than the current highest bid, then the Mysterious Bidder passes for the rest of the Auction.

If the Mysterious Bidder wins the Auction, the Auction Master is paid from the Mysterious Bidder's Gold and the Items are placed face-down in their Item Pile.

The Mysterious Bidder can only raise the bid if they have enough Gold.

Set aside all Items revealed from the Bidding Deck. If there are ever too few Items remaining, shuffle the previously revealed Items to form the Bidding Deck.

III. Get Paid

Equip Items - The Mysterious Bidder does not require the assistance of tools and equips no Items.




Selling - The Mysterious Bidder sells half of the Items in their Item Pile (selected randomly), rounded down.

IV. End of the Round

Storage Fees - The Mysterious Bidder mysteriously does not pay storage fees.

Loan Shark - The Mysterious Bidder always visits the Loan Shark if possible.

End of Game - 2 Player Scoring

Players tally their  totals as normal. Tally  for the Mysterious Bidder's Items, including bonuses from the Aspiring Hero that supplies the most . Players must defeat the Mysterious Bidder to be the winner in Vault Wars!

Two-Player Vault Clarifications

- Gilded Cupboard - Players Peek at Items as normal
- Guild Master's Workshop - Randomly select the 4 Items
- Thief's Safe - Randomly select the Revealed Item
- Troll Cave - Randomly select the card to shuffle into the Item Deck

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- Jonathan W. Gilmour



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GAMEPLAY QUICK SUMMARY

I. PREPARE THE VAULTS - Players secretly select 1 Vault, simultaneously revealing them

II. AUCTION - In increasing order of Vault Priority, 1 player becomes the Auction Master

- Draw Items
- Reveal some Items
- Proceeding to the left, all players Peek at some randomly selected items

Auction Master - Set the opening bid

Bidding - Bid (raising by at least 1 Gold) or Pass

Winner - The highest bidder is the Winner, paying the Auction Master and gaining the Items. If no players bid, the Auction Master wins — paying the bank and gaining the Items. The Vault card is discarded

III. GET PAID

Equip Items - Equipped Items do not incur storage fees



Selling - All players may sell up to 4 Items to gain Gold from the bank. Junk may be Trashed

Visit the Loan Shark - After selling or after storage fees, players with fewer than 12 Gold may gain 12 Gold and take 1 Corruption Token (limit once per round)

IV. END OF ROUND

Storage Fees - Players pay 1 Gold per Item in their Item Pile to continue to keep them

Visit the Loan Shark - Limit once per round

Continue or Game End - If there are no Vaults left to play, the player with the highest total  from Items, 1 Aspiring Hero, and Gold (10 for 1 ) is the winner. Otherwise, gameplay continues with Phase I

SYMBOL LEGEND



Gold



Victory Points



Vault Priority



Items in the Vault



Revealed Items



Peeked Items