Fall of the Mountain King

A game for 1-5 players by Adam E. Daulton. Condensed rules for 2-5 players by Eric Postpischil, https://edp.org. These rules are for the base game (no expansions) with the upgraded tokens of the Kickstarter edition.

Introduction

Gain the most honor by defending the trolls' mountain against invading gnomes.

The map board has 7 clan domains (marked by color and icon), each with 3-4 caverns (depending on player count):

- Outside of each domain is a swarm point, marked with an octagonal icon.
- By each swarm point are 1-2 entry gates (depending on player count). The cavern by each is a gate cavern.
- Dark spots about 4 cm across show where players may put their lairs. The spots are paired by matching symbols.
- Circles of red glyphs are Great Halls scored at game end.

Caverns have statuses, relative to the concerned player:

- Lair: One of your special rooms; only your trolls may enter it, not other trolls or gnomes.
  - Your lair is dominated, controlled, and established, regardless of the below definitions for other caverns.
- Dominated: A cavern where you and only you have trolls. A dominated cavern is controlled.
- Controlled: A cavern where you have more trolls than any other single player. A controlled cavern is established.
- Established: A cavern where you have at least one troll.
- Empty: A cavern with nothing in it.
- Overrun: A cavern with one or more gnomes.

Ancestry cards have seven symbols. the first four of which are for actions:

- Green axes for the Advance action (move trolls on board).
- Blue shield for the Bolster action (add trolls to board).
- White hand for the Influence action (gain influence with a champion).
- Red gnome for the Gnome action (move the pawn on the gnome wheel to gain information and benefits).
- Purple spiral for Wild.
- Brown barrel for Supply (extra turn or power).
- Gold glyphs for Elder (game-end points).

Setup

Put the map board in center of table 2-3 or 4-5 player side up (marked at top left). Set up the map:

- Randomly put one Great Hall token face-up on each Great Hall space. Remove the rest from the game.
- Shuffle the gate cards. For 2/3/4/5 players, reveal 3/4/5/6 cards. Put a random gnome in a random gate cavern of each card's domain. (Gnome strengths are uniformly distributed; there are 10 each of 1, 2, and 3.)
- Reveal another gate card and put the swarm token on the swarm point of the card's domain.
- Reshuffle all gate cards. For 2/3/4/5 players, deal 3/3/4/5 cards facedown by the board. (These determine the domains the gnomes will invade at the end of the wave.) Put the remaining gate cards aside.

Put the clan board on the table. Randomly put 1 vote tile face-up on each clank plank of the clan board.

Put the gnome wheel on the table. Put the wheel pawn (red gnome) on the star-marked space of the gnome wheel.

Put the desperation tokens ("+1") and 26 champion tiles (21 square with a notch, 5 starbursts) aside.

Shuffle the regular ancestry cards (square, 2×2 cells) and stack facedown.

Shuffle each of the three champion decks (0, I/II, and III) and stack separately facedown. Set up the champion cards:

- From the I/II deck, for 2/3/4/5 players, deal 3/4/5/6 face-up by the board.
  - For any champion card with a letter, put its matching champion tile on it.
- From the 0 deck, deal each player 2 facedown. Each player chooses 1 to keep face-up. Remove rest from game.
  - For any champion card with a letter, the player inserts the matching champion tile into a champion pawn.

Give each player a mat, a starting ancestry card (2×3 cells), and all pieces of a color: 1 player marker (skull), 1 barrel, 2 lair tiles, 30 ancestry markers (X cross section), 13 influence markers (hands), 25 trolls, and 5 champion bases.

Each player:

- puts their player mat near them, regular side up (black side, 4 space contains "III"; brown side is for solo mode),
- puts their starting ancestry card in front of them (with space around it to grow to a grid of 6×6 cells),
- puts their player marker on score (honor) 0 and their barrel by their mat to count supplies later,
- puts an influence marker on the starred space of the boost track (not main circle) on the gnome wheel, and
- puts an influence marker on the clan board to mark votes as shown at the top-left of their champion card.

Pick the start player randomly and give them the start player marker (hammer).

Clockwise from the start player, each player puts their lair tiles on a pair of lair spaces with matching symbols and puts 3 trolls on each of their lairs and 1 troll in a gnome-free cavern adjacent to each lair (8 total).

- If the player has a champion pawn, they add it to one of the latter two lair-adjacent caverns with its initial troll.

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Notes

Champion influence and clan votes are not track-limited. As needed, stack another marker and wrap around.
Ancestry markers, influence markers, and desperation tokens are not token-limited.
A champion pawn is a troll. (It serves as a troll for cavern status, for defeating gnomes, and for other rules.)
Easily neglected rules are in **purple**.

Play

Play three waves, each with the four phases below: Build Your Ancestry, Battle, Wave End, Refresh.

Build Your Ancestry

At the start of each wave, deal each player 4 ancestry cards. Three times, each player:
- Adds one card to their ancestry with the same rotation as their initial card, covering at least one cell of a prior card, not covering any elder symbol (gold glyphs), and staying inside a 6×6 grid. Adding a card is mandatory.
- Passes the remaining cards left/right/left in wave 1/2/3, or, when only one is left, discards it.

In wave 1/2/3, each player marks their supplies at 6/5/4 plus 1 for each barrel in their ancestry (to a maximum of 8).
- For each 2 wild symbols the player covers with ancestry markers, they increase their supply by 1 (up to 8).

Give each player 1 desperation token for each desperation symbol to the right of their supply counter (the barrel).

The Battle

Take turns clockwise from the start player until all players use up their supplies, passing players who have none left.
On each turn, spend 1 supply (move your barrel 1 space left) and take 1 or 2 weak actions or 1 strong action:
- For a weak action, cover 1 weak symbol (no number) with an ancestry marker and perform its action at power 1.
  - You may spend any number of desperation tokens to boost the action power by 1 per desperation token.
- For a strong action, cover 1 strong symbol or more than 1 connected symbols (weak or strong) of the same action and perform the action at the total power of the covered symbols (unnumbered are 1, others are as numbered).
  - Symbols are connected if they are orthogonally adjacent (not diagonal) or are connected through orthogonally adjacent ancestry markers (from previous plays). (You may choose not to use some connected symbols.)
  - You may spend any number of supplies to boost the action power by 1 per supply.
- Wild symbols may be used with weak or strong actions and serve as any action symbol.
- In the action rules below, p denotes the power of the action.

Seize control: If a cavern starts an action not empty and not controlled by you but ends controlled by you:
- You have seized control. Gain 1 vote in the cavern's clan. (This most often happens with Advance.)
- Gaining control on another player's turn does not qualify as seizing control.

Advance Action (green axes)

Move up to p trolls from any caverns to a single destination cavern, provided intermediate caverns are established.
- (Distance and other players' trolls are irrelevant.)

When you advance into an overrun cavern, do battle. Reveal the strengths of all the gnomes in the cavern, then:
- If the number of trolls in the cavern equals or exceeds the total gnome strength, you are victorious:
  - Score honor equal to the strength of the defeated gnomes and gain 1 vote in the cavern's clan.
  - Put the gnomes by the gnome wheel. Move the wheel pawn 1 clockwise for each gnome (not strength).
    - If the pawn crosses the breach tripwire, process a breach as in the Gnome Action below.
  - **If you seized control (described above), gain 1 vote in the cavern's clan.**
- Otherwise, you are repelled:
  - Return all trolls in the cavern to a single one of your lairs.
  - **If there is only one gnome in the cavern, add another.**

Bolster Action (blue shield)

Add up to p trolls from your supply to a single dominated cavern.
- You are token limited to 25 trolls, plus possible champions. When there are no trolls in your supply, you may move trolls from anywhere on the map to the destination cavern, ignoring intermediate caverns.

Influence Action (white hand)

Add p influence to a single champion in the display, marking it with an influence marker.
- If this is the champion's first influence from any player, gain 1 extra influence.
- If another player already has the same amount of influence, put your marker on top. (Bottom wins ties.)

Gnome Action (red gnome)

Move the wheel pawn clockwise up to p spaces, but never more than a full circuit in a single action. Then, in order:
- Scout. You may peek at 1 facedown gate card (to see where gnomes will invade) **and** at 1 gnome on the map.
  - You may mark peeked-at items with markers of your color and may peek at them again freely.
- If you passed the honor boost tripwire and/or the breach tripwire, resolve them in the order you passed them:
  - Honor: Advance your marker 1 space on the boost track (side of the gnome wheel).
  - Breach: 2 gnomes plus half the number by the wheel, rounded up, will invade.

- The active player may move the swarm up to 2 swarm points in either direction.
- Mix the gnomes by the wheel into the supply, draw the calculated number of invaders, put them by the swarm, and process a **breach** per "Breaches and Invasions" below.
- Carry out the effect of the pawn's new space. Here m is the number of spaces the pawn moved:
  - Blue shield: Bolster at m power.
  - White hand: Influence at m power.
  - Red honor symbol: Gain m honor plus the amount of your current honor boost. (Do not reset the boost.)
  - Grey troll: Move up to m trolls of any players from any single cavern into adjacent gnome-free caverns.
    - **If this causes you to seize control in one or more caverns, gain a vote for each as described above.**

Wave End
Entrenchment
Add one gnome to each cavern with exactly one gnome in it.
Invasions
Process each gate card, from left to right, as a separate invasion (each with its own first-troll-to-fall bonus, below):
- Reveal the gate card. Move the swarm to the domain the card shows. In wave I/II/III, put 2/3/4 gnomes by the swarm. Process an **invasion** per "Breaches and Invasions" below.
Award Champions
Resolve champions left to right. For each champion:
- The player with the most influence on the champion is the victor. The bottom marker of a stack leads.
  - If no player has influence on the champion, remove it from the game.
- The victor gains votes in the champion's clan as shown at the top left of the champion card.
  - A champion with a flag not on the clan board is an outsider. You may apply its wild votes to any single clan.
- In order of decreasing influence, other players with influence on the card choose a vote in the champion's clan or honor equal to the number of yellow lines their influence passed.
- The victor takes the champion card, gaining its abilities. If it has a letter code:
  - In wave I/II, take the matching square champion tile and insert it into one of your champion bases, making a champion pawn. Add it to a cavern you dominate.
  - In wave III, read the card text and put the champion's matching starburst tile into an empty Great Hall.
- If the champion card has an instant symbol (lightning bolt), resolve its ability immediately (all wave III cards).
- Champions with claw symbols are limited use per wave. Cover each claw with an ancestry marker as it is used.
- Ancestry symbols on champion cards may be used as symbols in your grid, neglecting adjacency requirements.
Apply the effects of any champions with the end-of-wave symbol (red sunset).
Score the Wave (waves I and II only)
Score each domain (for orderliness, start with Moss and proceed clockwise):
- Each player with at least one controlled cavern in the domain scores 4 honor plus 2 for each controlled cavern minus 1 for each overrun cavern. Each player with no controlled cavern in the domain scores nothing.
Refresh (waves I and II only)
Gather and shuffle all gate cards. For 2/3/4/5 players, deal 3/3/4/5 facedown by the board.
From the champion deck for the coming wave, for 2/3/4/5 players, deal 3/4/5/6 face-up by the board.
- For any card with a letter, put its matching champion tile on the card.
Each player returns all cubes from their ancestry and from claw symbols on champion cards to their supply.
Each player discards any leftover desperation tokens.
Pass the start player marker (hammer) clockwise.

Breaches and Invasions
Send the gnomes in one by one through a gate of the domain the swarm is at:
- The gnome runs to the easiest non-overrun cavern reachable by moving through only overrun caverns. Easier means fewer trolls (often zero), then, if tied, closer (fewer caverns to go through).
  - In a breach, further ties are resolved by the active player.
  - In an invasion, ties are resolved by the player with the most votes in the current invasion domain's clan. (There are no vote ties; the bottom vote marker of a stack is in the lead. If no player has votes in the clan, look to the next lower clan on the board, continuing to the next and/or wrapping to the top as needed.)
- If the gnome's goal is empty, it stays. If not, it is defeated; mix it into the supply, and a troll in the cavern falls:
  - Randomly select a player in proportion to their trolls (including champions) in the cavern. (Number the trolls and select a number randomly or draw randomly from one ancestry marker for each troll.) That player chooses any one of their trolls in the cavern to fall. A champion jumps to a lair; a regular troll goes to their supply.
- The first troll to fall in **each invasion** scores 3/4/5 honor in wave I/II/III. Each later troll to fall scores 2.
- Trolls that fall in a breach do not score.

End

Score each Great Hall:
- The player who controls the most caverns touching the Great Hall gains honor equal to the hall's value.
  - Gnomes participate in this; if gnomes control the most caverns touching the hall, no player scores.
    - In a tie (including gnomes), split the points evenly, discarding fractions.

Score elder symbols in your ancestry:

Elder symbols	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Honor	0	0	1	3	5	8	12	17	23	30

Score clan votes from top of the clan board to bottom:
- In each clan, players with the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd most votes score the corresponding honor shown on the vote tile.
- There are no ties; the bottom marker of a stack leads.
- Players with no votes do not score.

The player with the most honor wins. Ties are won by most total votes on the clan board. Further ties are shared.

Notes and Tips

Establish some reminder to decrement your supply counter at the start of your turn.

There are multiple invasions at the end of a wave, each giving a separate first-troll-to-fall score.

When invading a domain with no overrun gate cavern, the invading gnome enters the easier gate cavern and immediately stops.