Dark Minions

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A variation for 2-players by Alan M. Newman
V 1.0 **(UNOFFICIAL – this is a test version _only_)**

OBJECTIVE (MAJOR CHANGE, THE ADDITION OF "ALDIE"):

We're going to set up a third entity that both players can utilize either for their advantage or to the opponent's disadvantage. Since we have already immortalized one of BGG's owners in the game ("Lord Solko"), we're going to immortalize another and our entity will be named "Aldie" (equally evil and nefarious, of course).   The objective will not necessarily be to win in the traditional sense, but to avoid finishing behind the other human player and thus win, for this variation of Dark Minions. Aldie is not likely to stand even a remote chance of garnering the most VPs, only interfering with or aiding humans and thus creating additional interaction.

SETUP:

"Aldie" starts the game with a game board and a horde of 50 minions placed on the board, which is only a place holder for his minions and Towers.

Each human player receives the same components as in the 3 to 5 player versions.

The remainder of the normal setup is much the same except for the following; 3 Towns begin in play but for this version, there will never be more than 3 Towers (one each of White, Grey & Black) in play at any Town, even if the town shows that a 4th Tower should be placed there. As is, 3 Towers may wind up as a bit of overkill, so we'll need another use for Towers (more about that later).

Each of the starting Towns (marked "A") is seeded with 1 minion from Aldie's board. All Towns drawn and placed in play later in the game are also seeded with Aldie's minions. "B" Towns = 2 minions. "C" Towns = 3 minions. "D" Towns = 4 minions. "E" Towns = 5 minions. "Game Over" Towns = 6 minions.

If Aldie does not have enough minions remaining (very unlikely) to seed a new Town, just use what is available.

As usual, the meanest player takes the first turn and if that's in some doubt, the player who can make the scariest face should go first (highly suggested as a variant for the 3 to 5 player version as well).

PLAY: *Unless otherwise noted below, the game plays exactly like the 3 to 5 player version.*

Take the first move of the game as you ordinarily would, assigning your dice to attack Towns, capture Towers or to purchase the services of Overlords (or not, if you are content to just play the basic version).

However, _after_ this first move for each human player, <u>players will begin every subsequent turn</u> by doing the work of Aldie before taking their normal turn, using Aldie's supply of minions.

Aldie's turns: roll 1 Black die. Then;

1) place Aldie's minions equal to the die roll to attack any Town.
2) use the value of the die to take any available Tower (Aldie also may not hold more than 2 of any color or 4 overall) and place on Aldie's board.
3) use the value of the die +2 to purchase any Overlord or Overlords (for example: a 4 may be used to purchase the Black Knight, which ordinarily costs 6).
• 	If Aldie has minions in the Graveyard, they are re-spawned per the Overlord.
• 	If Overlords are not being used, ignore #3 entirely.
4) use the value of the die x2 to move that number of minions from the graveyard back to Aldie's board. In other words, a 5 may be used to re-spawn 10 of Aldie's minions.

Note: many Overlords cannot logically be used by Aldie, so the only purpose of purchasing them is to keep them away from your opponent. For instance, since Aldie cannot level up, he has no use for Dread Skeleton, but purchasing the Overlord means your opponent cannot use it. More on this later…

Your task as Aldie (before you take your own turn) is to interfere with your opponent as best you can OR to help your own cause. Each of the options should afford an opportunity for screwage or self help. Perhaps you will grab the sole White Tower remaining and your opponent will then have to wait for a new Town to enter play before being able to level up. Perhaps you will place 4 of Aldie's minions enabling you to win an 8 VP Town, giving Aldie 2nd place and triggering the vanquish. While Aldie gets 3 VPs (2+1), you get 8 VPs plus 2 skulls (worth 2 VPs). *Awesome*. Plus, you can now use your own dice roll to do more mean stuff.

Human player's turns proceed normally.

PROVINCES (MAJOR CHANGE):

Here's the rub: there are two major changes. Aldie's presence is one, the other is how we're going to score this version. Three Towns are always in play. The players sit opposite each other with one on Town to the left, one in the center and one to the right.

Imagine these Towns are in the three Provinces of **Gizaster**, **Helacious** *and* **Ignominia**. *If Gizaster is on Robert's left, it will be on Carol's right (opposite). Therefore, the center Province is always Helacious. If Ignominia is on Robert's right, it will be on Carol's left (opposite).*

At the beginning of the game, the player who goes first allocates each of his starting VP chips face down to any of the Provinces, followed by the opponent, who does the same. The chips can still be discarded out of the game for a re-roll or to re-spawn minions.

When you vanquish a Town or collect any rewards (2 VP chip, 1 VP chip or skulls*), you must immediately allocate them to the same Province (all awards are placed face <u>down</u> with the exception of the skull tokens). Thus, when the game ends, you will have points to score for all three Provinces (hopefully). Getting shut out on a Province is not too snappy.

*skulls acquired from different Provinces may always be combined to re-spawn minions from the graveyard.

If there is a tie for a particular Province, the tie is resolved in the following order:
1) most Towns vanquished
2) VPs for just those Towns (not the 2 or 1 VP chips)
3) highest Experience level.

The player who wins any two Provinces wins the game. If each player has won one Province with the third being an unbreakable tie or all three Provinces end with an unbreakable tie, use the same tie-breaker as above for all three Provinces combined.

If a tie still exists, the players ought to be furious with themselves because Aldie has now won the game.

TOWERS:

Since Aldie does not have the capability to level up (nor any rationale to do so), we need another use for Towers captured by Aldie.

White Tower: send 1 minion from the opponent's stock to the Graveyard.
Gray Tower: send 2 minions from the opponent's stock to the Graveyard.
Black Tower: send 3 minions from the opponent's stock to the Graveyard.

Aldie's Towers are only turned in with complete sets; one White, one Gray & one Black.

NOTES ON OVERLORDS (here's where this test version may get tricky):

When a player "purchases" an Overlord for Aldie, they place it on their side of the table near Aldie's board. Only that player may use the Overlord's power (on Aldie's turn, although it may be for the player's own benefit).

Hopefully, this will either have a beneficial effect for that player or hinder his opponent.

Players will not be able to use some of the Overlords for their benefit, so there is always the possibility of just grabbing an Overlord for Aldie simply to keep the Overlord away from the opponent. For example, Overlords with Turn costs can be purchased for Aldie but cannot be used.

Since the powers of some Overlords are never going to be used*, we need to recycle them. **Every time a new Town group enters play, ALL of Aldie's Overlords are discarded**. Thus, when the first of any of the group of Towns labeled "C" comes into play, all of Aldie's Overlords are discarded.

*For example: Aldie has The Witch & The Lich ("purchased" by Player A) and Dread Skeleton (purchased by Player B). Aldie does not pay Turn costs associated with any of the Overlords and cannot use their abilities.

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NOTE: It is possible that there are huge problems with this rule set and that is why testing is required, along with feedback. This is a first iteration.

I have undoubtedly overlooked a some tricky instances or situations with this "beta" test version. I'm positive questions will come up and criticisms as well. Please direct them to the two-player thread at Boardgamegeek (http://www.boardgamegeek.com/thread/743696/dark-minions-for-2-players).

Thanks for your help. Let's make this work!

Regards,

Alan Newman