

MAESHOWE

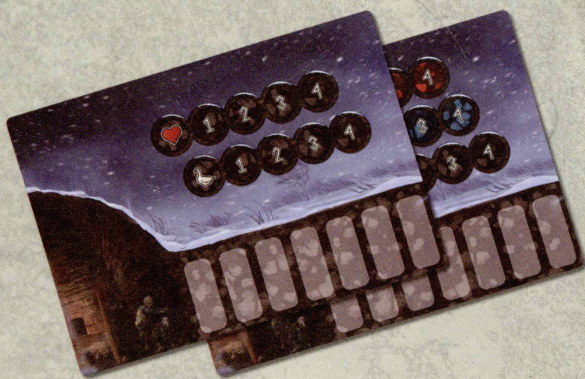
by Lee Broderick



30 minutes of desperation and madness for 1-2 Viking survivors

V110

COMPONENT LIST



1x Double-sided game board



36x Core game cards



4x Wooden Health tokens
(blue)



4x Wooden Health tokens
(red)



18x Expansion cards



4x Wooden Food tokens



7x Passage tokens



1x Wooden Jarl token

THE STORY

According to the Orkneyinga Saga, Jarl Rögnvald Kali Kolsson broke into the chambered tomb of Maeshowe, on Orkney, in AD1150. In AD1153, Jarl Harald Maddadsson and a group of his men sheltered there during a snowstorm. The sagas tell us that Rögnvald found treasure there and that two of Harald's men went mad. When the Victorians opened the tomb in 1861, they found runic graffiti demonstrating that both of these episodes were based on real tomb-breaks. This game combines the two events and casts you as Harald and Rögnvald. Jarls Harald and Rögnvald had landed in Orkney less than an hour ago but the suddenness and ferocity of the snowstorm caught them by surprise.

As they stumbled forwards, head bowed against the wind, they were suddenly aware of a house looming before them. They circled the house looking for a door, but found none. Fearing death from the weather, in desperation they climbed the roof of the house and used their swords to prize apart the stones that roofed the building. Without hesitation, with no room in their minds for anything but the need for shelter, they dived through the hole they'd made and fell twenty feet to the floor. Groping around the dark interior, they quickly realized that there would be no way out the way they had come. They would survive the storm but if they weren't to die in this cell, they would have to dig their way out with their hands and swords...



SETUP

(See the “2-Player co-op” section of this rulebook for a 2-player setup)

1. Place the **game board** in front of you with the 1-player side facing up.
2. Shuffle the 36 core game cards and place them face down as your **draw deck**.

The 18 expansion cards are split into 6 sets (Gluttony/Garner, Crumble/Conservation, Horror/Hope, Spurn/Sacrifice, Haste/Hurry, Ruin/Reclaim). Those sets are marked with a small symbol in the lower right corner and can be shuffled into the draw deck to your liking. It is recommended to only use the core game cards for your first game. For future games, it is recommended to use only one of the 6 expansion sets at a time, but it is possible to play several or even all of them at the once.

3. Place four health tokens in the color of your liking on the game board filling up all four spaces of the **health track**. Four is your maximum health at the start of the game.
4. Place one food token on the game board filling up the leftmost space of the **food track**. Four is your maximum amount of food throughout the game. Keep the rest of the food tokens nearby.
5. Place the **passage tokens** on the game board, filling up the empty spaces from left to right. Depending on your chosen difficulty you will need a different number of passage tokens (3=Easy, 4=Medium, 5=Hard, More than that? Good luck!). Put the rest of the passage tokens back in the box. You can never have more passage tokens on the game board than the amount with which you started the game.
6. Dedicate some space for the **card row**.
7. Dedicate some space for a **discard pile**.
8. Draw the top five cards of the draw deck. This is your starting **hand of cards**.

You are now ready to play.

GAME OVERVIEW

In real life, it took Harald three days to break out of Maeshowe. You have little more than this before you succumb to weakness, thirst and starvation.

- Each turn, you *must* play one card and discard another card from your hand.
- You *may* choose in which order you discard and play a card.
- When you play a card, place it face up in front of you to the right of any previously played cards, making sure that all previously played cards are still visible. This is called the card row and playing a card here is called playing to the row.
- When you play a card to the row perform the effect next to the  icon (if any).
- When you discard a card, place it face up into your separate discard pile.
- When you discard a card, perform the effect next to the  icon (if any). If a card effect forces you to put one or more additional cards into your discard pile from anywhere, do not perform the  effect of those cards.
- You *may* always play and discard any card from your hand, even if it doesn't have an effect.
- After playing and discarding, draw cards from the draw deck to replenish your hand back to five cards. If the draw deck is depleted at this point, you cannot replenish your hand back to five cards.
- Now check the rune icons of your hand of cards. If all five cards have the same rune icon in the top corners ( or ) you go mad (see below). If you have less than five cards in your hand (e.g. because the draw pile is depleted) you cannot go mad.
- Whenever you go mad, perform the following steps: Discard your hand of cards. Shuffle your discard pile into the draw deck to form a new draw deck. Draw a new hand of 5 cards. Lose 1 health permanently by putting the rightmost health token from your health track back in the box. Your current health will be reduced by 1. Your maximum health will be reduced by 1 for the rest of the game. Note: Even if all cards drawn have the same rune icon, you do not go mad a second time.

GAME END

If you successfully remove all passage tokens from the game board, you instantly win. This is done by playing four Excavate Passage cards in a consecutive row several times.

Harald and Rögnvald have escaped from the tomb alive and their names will live on in the Sagas.

If you are unable to both play and discard a card during your turn or you lose your last health, you lose.

Harald and Rögnvald have failed to exit Maeshowe before they lost their strength. Their bones will join those already there and, one day, confuse archaeologists.

2-PLAYER CO-OP

1. Place the **game board** in front of you with the 2-player side facing up.
2. Set up and shuffle the **draw deck** as usual.
3. Deal five cards to each player.
4. Each player chooses a color (red or blue). Place three health tokens each on the game board filling up the spaces 1 to 3 of the **health track** of the matching color. Your maximum amount of health is four each at the start of the game. Keep the fourth health token nearby.
5. Place 1 food token on the first space of the shared **food track**. Your maximum amount of shared food is four throughout the game. Keep the rest of the food tokens nearby.
6. Place the **passage tokens** on the game board applying the rules of the general setup. The difficulty level is adjusted to a 2-player game (4=Easy, 5=Medium, 6=Hard, 7=Ridiculous).
7. Choose one player to be starting player. That player receives the **Jarl token**.

The gameplay proceeds as described in the single player rules, with each player taking turns to play and discard a card. The following adjustments apply to the 2-player co-op game:

- Both players play to the same row but each player has his **own discard pile**.
- If a player is in possession of the Jarl token, they *may* choose to pass the Jarl token to the other player instead of playing and discarding cards during their turn.
- If either player is unable to play and discard a card during their turn or loses their last health, both players lose.

VARIANTS

SOLO/2-PLAYER CO-OP VARIANTS

Players can opt to use one or more of the following setup rules to alter their game. Each setup rule is associated with a specific expansion set. It is recommended to only use one of the setup alternatives - the one associated with the expansion set used.

- After shuffling the draw deck but before drawing your starting hand, put the top 5 cards of the draw deck into your discard pile (Crumble/Conservation).
- Start the game with 3 health and 3 food if playing solo and 2 health each and 3 food if playing 2-player co-op (Gluttony/Garner).
- Start with 1 more passage token than normal (max. 7) (Hope/Horror).

2-PLAYER CO-OP VARIANT "FEAR OF THE DARK"

In this variant players are not allowed to talk or communicate about the game state or the cards in their hand. They do not use the Jarl token in this variant.

During their turn players *may* choose to not discard a card but instead pass one of their hand cards to the other player. That player *must* immediately discard a card from their hand to bring the number of cards in their hand down to 5. The player receiving the card *may* discard the card just received.

CARD EFFECTS



DISCOVER TREASURE

When played to the row, lose two health.

When discarded, lose 1 health.

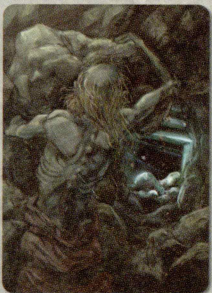
Something glints in the darkness. It's gold. What if you're the only one who makes it out alive? Then all the treasure's yours. Let him wear himself out digging, then you'll act.



EAT

When played to the row, you *may* choose to lose any amount of food and gain 1 health for each food lost this way.

A little nourishment helps keep your strength up.



EXCAVATE PASSAGE

Whenever you play the fourth Excavate Passage card consecutively (without other types of cards in between), you *must* remove the leftmost passage token (two if all 4 have the same rune icon) from the game board. Once a set has been used to remove passage tokens once, those 4 cards do not count towards future sets.



GOOSE

When played to the row, gain 1 food.

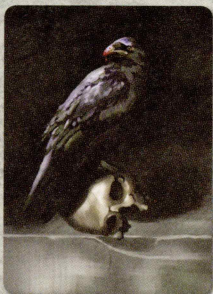
Whether a blessing from Frig, or an exhausted animal trying to escape from the same storm you were, you don't know. Whatever the reason, a goose flies into Maeshowe through the hole you made in the roof.



PASSAGE COLLAPSE

When played to the row, lose two health and add 2 passage tokens back onto the game board up to your maximum chosen at the start of the game.

When discarded, lose 1 health.



RAVEN

When played to the row, gain 2 health.

A raven flies into Maeshowe through the hole you made in the roof. You take heart from the knowledge that Odin's watching over you.



RUN OUT OF FOOD

When played to the row, lose all food.

When discarded, lose 1 health.

You weren't prepared for this. You've eked out the last morsel but it's all gone now.



SLEEP

When played to the row, gain 1 health.

Rested, you're ready to get back to work now.

EXPANSION CARD EFFECTS

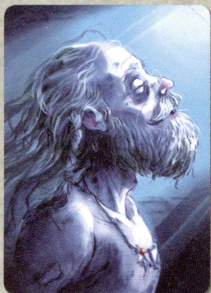


HORROR

When played to the row, go mad.

When discarded, lose 1 health and 1 food.

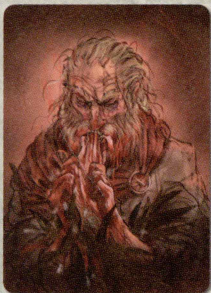
This card counts as both  and  when checking if you go mad after drawing up back to your hand size.



HOPE

When played to the row, Hope counts as an Excavate Passage card of any rune type.

When discarded, look at the top 2 cards of the draw deck. For each card you *may* choose to put it in your discard pile or back on top of the draw deck. If you put both back on top you *may* choose the order. This card has no rune icon on it and so it never counts when checking your hand for going mad.



GLUTTONY

When played to the row, lose 2 health.

When discarded, lose all food. You *must* have at least 1 food to discard this card.



GARNER

When played to the row, spend any amount of food, return up to twice that number of cards from any discard pile to the draw deck and shuffle the draw deck.

When discarded, gain 1 food.



CRUMBLE

When played to the row, put the top 5 cards from the draw deck into your discard pile.

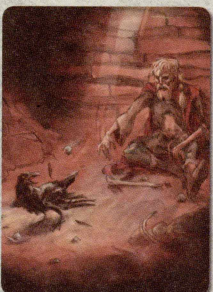
When discarded, put all cards in your hand into your discard pile. Do not trigger the discard effects of these cards.



CONSERVATION

When played to the row, you *may* return another card of your choice from the row to your hand.

When discarded, you *may* return another card of your choice from any discard pile to your hand.



SPURN

When played to the row, search the draw deck, then any discard pile for a Raven or a Goose card. Add the first one found to the beginning of the row. Then shuffle the draw deck. When discarded, draw 2 cards from the top of the draw deck and add them to the beginning of the row. If these are the first two cards of the row, then apply the “when played to the row” effects of both cards.



SACRIFICE

When played to the row next to a Goose card, you *may* lose 1 food to move 2 cards of your choice from the row to your discard pile and shuffle it. If the rune icons of the Sacrifice card and the adjacent Goose card match, you *may* lose 1 food to move 4 cards of your choice from the row to your discard pile and shuffle it OR move 2 cards of your choice from the row to the draw deck and shuffle it.



HASTE

When played to the row, lose 1 food. You *must* have at least one food to play this card. Rearrange the cards in the row in any order. If the row now ends with 4 Excavate Passage cards, apply the effect as if they had just been played to the row.

When discarded, lose 2 health OR add 1 passage token.

This card counts as both  and  when checking if you go mad after drawing up back to your hand size.



HURRY

When played to the row, lose 1 food. You *must* have at least one food to play this card. If you have three or more Excavate Passage cards in your hand at the beginning of your turn, you *must* play this card.

When discarded, lose 1 health.

This card has no rune icon on it and so it never counts when checking your hand for going mad.



RUIN

If you have both the Ruin and the Reclaim card in your hand at the beginning of your turn, you *must* discard both and lose 1 health.

When discarded, lose 1 health.



RECLAIM

As long as the Reclaim card is in your hand, you *may* lose 1 health to play the top card of any discard pile to the row instead of a card from your hand.

HINTS & TIPS

- If you would play the Horror card before discarding a card for the round, perform all the actions for go mad and continue the round normally by discarding a card and then draw up to five and check if you go mad again. You could potentially go mad twice in a round this way.

It's dark in here. And cramped. Outside you can hear the howling wind and the crashing waves. That is the wind that's howling and the waves that are roaring, right? What about your friend? Is he really helping you or is he just looking out for himself? Maybe you should do something about him, first... What's that noise? Maybe it's safer just to sit in the corner...

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BACKGROUND

Nobody knows what "Maes" means, but "Howe" derives from a Norse word for a mound or cairn, so the Vikings gave us the name by which we've come to know Maeshowe today and they clearly knew what it was. What they were unsure of was its antiquity - some of the sagas suggest it was built by followers of Ragnarr Loðbrók, although some contemporaries clearly knew it was older than that, as we'll come to in a moment.

Maeshowe is, in fact, a Neolithic chambered cairn, similar to others known across the British Isles - and especially in Atlantic Britain and Ireland. Its story begins as a small, low mound on the flat coastal plain next to the Loch of Harray. The mound was levelled and covered with a thin layer of clay to create a floor, upon which a house was built. The monument we can see today was constructed around 5,000 years ago.

In each corner of the chamber of Maeshowe is a large standing stone. A casual glance may suggest that they are integral to the structure but they're not. They may have been removed from a nearby stone circle, suggesting a symbolic significance. In fact the masonry of Maeshowe is as impressive as its size and architecture - recent work has suggested that the flat, even stones and perfect joins reflect sound as well as any modern acoustically engineered structure and there are indications that some of the areas may have been painted. Those so inclined can imagine powerful shamanic rituals taking place involving sound, light and color.

The mound stands 23' (7 meters) high. It has a long passageway, 29½' (9 meters) long and aligned on the midwinter sunset, leading to the square central chamber which measures almost 15' (4.5 meters) across and the same in height. The passage is just 4½' (1.4 meters) high, forcing you to bend over as you enter the tomb - and tomb it is. Chambered cairns were communal resting places where the bones of some individuals may have been grouped and sorted, playing a role in the lives of the living.

Surrounding the mound of Maeshowe is a henge - a circular bank with an interior ditch - which was added to by the Vikings. The monument is mentioned several times in the sagas, as a prominent landmark, but two stories stand out.

In AD1150, Jarl Rögnvald Kali Kolsson set out on a crusade to Jerusalem. Before departing, he and his men broke into Maeshowe and found treasure, which they buried nearby for recovery on their return. In AD1153, Jarl Harald Maddadsson was leading a group of his men from Stromness to Firth, when a violent snowstorm blew up suddenly and forced them to take shelter there. Trapped inside, the sagas tell how two of his men went mad there and how they had to dig themselves out, having entered through the roof, high above.

The structure was first excavated in modern times by the Victorian antiquarian James Farrer in AD1861. He found the tomb empty but with clear evidence that he wasn't the first there since the Neolithic. Inscribed on the walls inside the chamber of Maeshowe is the largest collection of runic graffiti outside Scandinavia, alongside abstract and pictorial designs. Among these, "This mound was raised before Ragnarr Lothbrock" suggests some awareness of its great age, as suggested at the beginning of these notes. That also illustrates the proto-historic, semi-mythical nature of the sagas. So what to make of the two stories mentioned here? Another piece of graffiti reads:

"Crusaders broke into Maeshowe. Lif the jarl's cook carved these runes. To the north-west is a great treasure hidden. It was long ago that a great treasure was hidden here. Happy is he that might find that great treasure. Hakon alone bore treasure from this mound."



SYMBOLS



Effect when played to the row.



Effect when discarded.



Add a passage token.



Remove a passage token.



Gain health.



Lose health.



Gain food.



Lose food.



All.



Shuffle.



Play to the beginning of the card row.



Rearrange the card row.



Red rune icon.



Blue rune icon.



Wildcard (rune icon of any color).



Discard pile.



Draw deck.



Hand of cards.



Card row.



Check the number of consecutive Excavate Passage cards in the card row.



Go mad.



Search.



Play to the end of the card row (next to a Goose card).



Shuffle cards from any discard pile into the draw deck.



Put cards from any discard pile into your hand.



Put cards from your hand into your discard pile.



Put the top cards from the draw deck into your discard pile.



Look at the top cards of the draw deck, choose for each whether to put it into your discard pile or to put it back on the top of the draw deck (you may put both back on top in any order).