

The Night Cage: Keep the Useful Maze Alive

A spoiler-free turn rhythm, first-night teach, route check, and expansion ladder for prisoners who would rather learn from one bad candle than three bad sessions.

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The candle clock

Perform these in order. A discovered passage is temporary until a candle still reaches it.

- 1. Move or stay**
Choose the active prisoner's legal action; staying can preserve a junction.
- 2. Let darkness erase**
Remove every passage no prisoner's candle illuminates.
- 3. Reveal the new light**
Add passages reached by the active candle and orient them exactly as the rules require.
- 4. Reassess the escape**
Check keys, the gate route, Wax Eater lines, and who becomes stranded by the next move.

The three-question route check

- ☐ **Which passage disappears?** — Name the useful tile that will lose its last light.
- ☐ **Who loses access?** — A safe move for one prisoner can isolate the keyholder.
- ☐ **What new failure line appears?** — Read Wax Eaters and straight corridors before celebrating a reveal.
- ☐ **Can the group still reach the gate?** — Finding it is not enough; preserve a route everyone can use.

First-night table plan

MOMENT	DO THIS	AVOID THIS
Teach	Demonstrate one move, darkness discard, and reveal cycle	Reading the full rulebook aloud
Atmosphere	Use black cloth, readable warm light, and the official score	Open flame or components too dark to read
Discussion	Active player names the danger; one person offers an option	One veteran issuing every movement order
After a loss	Identify the first route the group failed to preserve	Blaming only the final tile draw

Expansion ladder

Shrieking Hollow requires the base game. Add it when the group understands why its old habits work.

- 1. Play the base game two to four times**
Learn illumination, wrapping, key movement, the gate, and Wax Eater lines first.
- 2. Add the Hollow's core geography**
Make the connected side board and pit transitions legible before stacking threats.
- 3. Add Shrieks**
Let the group learn the new timing pressure as a distinct problem.
- 4. Add advanced monsters and events last**
Use the module instructions; do not assume every threat changes setup the same way.

Sources. The Night Cage official rulebook and turn reference; Smirk & Dagger's current product record; the official Shrieking Hollow product record and 2025 catalog; Dized clarifications.

Accuracy. Every figure on this sheet was read from the sources above on August 11, 2026. Prices and availability change; rules do not. Where this sheet and the rulebook disagree, the rulebook is right.

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