Blood Diamonds
A game for the piecepack by
Version 0.0.1α, October 29, 2004
Copyright © 2004,
3 to 6 Players, 60 Minutes
Equipment: one Six Pack (a complete playing cards piecepack plus the sun and moon suits from a conventional piecepack, i.e. the following suits: ☀☾♣♦♥♠), an opaque bag, one reference card for each player, and the score track from the end of this ruleset

BLOOD DIAMONDS

Background

Contrary to popular belief, natural diamonds are not particularly rare. Elemental carbon is abundant in the earth's crust, and the geological conditions necessary for the formation of diamonds are fairly common. In fact, raw diamonds might be as abundant in nature as gold, if somewhat more difficult to mine. So why are diamonds so valuable?

The truth is, the market value of diamonds has been artificially inflated by anti-competitive business practices. One particular company has a virtual monopoly on uncut diamond supplies in the developed world, and they exercise tight control over that supply, releasing uncut stones in a slow trickle. The market effect has been that the raw diamond distributor, the wholesale jewelers and retail jewelry stores can justify outrageous markups, often in excess of 1000%.

But the monopoly isn't quite complete. Many of the most abundant diamond fields are in politically unstable countries along the west coast of Africa, in areas where rival factions aim to sell raw diamonds to fund weapons purchases. This went on unchecked for years, until some of the warlords tried to circumvent the monopoly in order to get higher prices for their uncut stones. Obviously, the monopoly didn't want any new suppliers forcing their prices down, but due to the inherent danger of doing business in this war-torn region, cronies at the top considered squeezing the supply of west African diamonds by traditional economic means to be impractical at best. Unfortunately, instead of taking the high road of working with local governments to stabilize the region and put an end to the fighting, the monopoly took the more expedient low road of political propaganda. Pretending to actually care about the plight of west African people, some marketing genius coined the term "blood diamond." Soon thereafter, the monopoly spread the word about how awful it would be for anyone to buy diamonds from these impoverished nations, implied that blood diamonds fund terrorist groups, and advertised that the only way to buy an untainted diamond is, you guessed it, to buy from the monopoly.

We, the sheeple, believed the propaganda. Economic sanctions were put into place to maintain the west African culture of violent poverty. The bloodshed continues to this day, and the faceless monopoly is at least as much to blame as the war-ravaged people, most of whom are struggling just to survive. Now every diamond bleeds, and nothing says "forever" like a blood diamond.

Well! Now that everyone is thoroughly angered, offended and horrified by these unpleasantries, even a mediocre game should seem delightful by comparison!

Goal

Blood Diamonds pits west African warlords against one another for control of rich diamond fields. Your goal is to acquire as many diamonds as you can and sell them for the highest profits.

Setup

Setup consists of the following four steps:

    1.   **Handouts.** Give each player a reference card, and place the score track off to one side within easy reach.

    2.   **Determine Suits.** Shake all six piecepack dice in an opaque bag. Each player draws out one die, which will determine his or her suit and special bonus power (more on that later). Each player takes the pawn and null tile of the matching suit, then places his or her die onto the zero space on the score track with the null side face-up. Extra dice and pawns will not be used, so put them back into the box.

    3.   **Initialize Diamond Field.** Shuffle the remaining tiles (including any unused null tiles) and arrange them into face-down draw stacks off to one side. Depending upon the number of players, arrange the null tiles matching the players' suits near the center of the play area following the examples shown in Figure 1. Each player's pawn starts on the matching null tile. Note that the suits shown in Figure 1 are examples

only – use the null tiles from the suits drawn by the players in your game. Neither tile orientation nor where each null tile lies relative to the other suits matters. If there is any disagreement, settle it with fisticuffs. All diagrams will be shown with tiles oriented in the same direction for clarity.


Three Players   **Four Players**   **Five Players**   **Six Players**
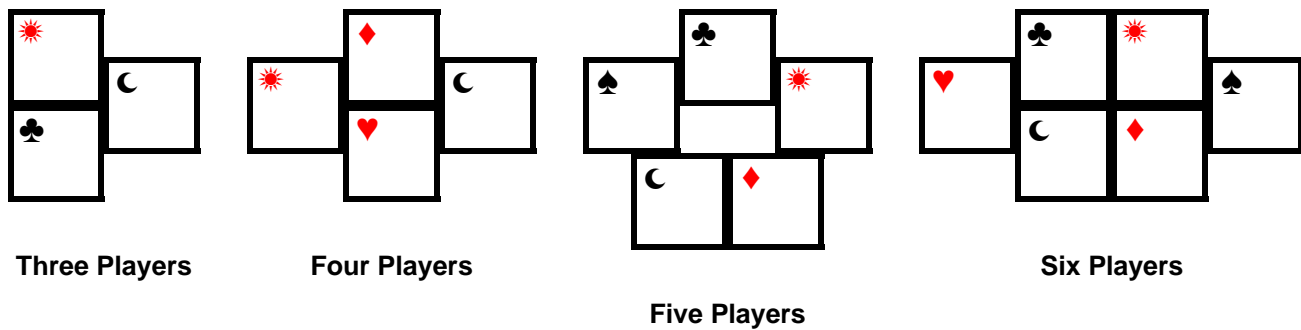
Figure 1. Sample initial setups for various numbers of players.

4. **Initialize Resources.** Sort out all six diamond coins and shuffle them face-down off to one side. Shake all of the other coins in the opaque bag. Each player then draws an initial hand of two coins from the bag. Players may look at their own coins at any time, but they should otherwise be kept face-down in front of them. The numbers of coins held by each player and their suits (but not their values) are public knowledge.

Play

The biggest bully goes first. If there is any disagreement on this point, everyone repeatedly punches each other in the arm until all but one player gives up. Turns proceed clockwise thereafter. Each turn, players do both of the following two things in order, if able:

1. **Explore.** The tableau of connected face-up tiles makes up the contested diamond field, which will sprawl over the course of the game, offering players new opportunities and new dangers. A player explores by drawing one tile from the face-down draw stacks then playing it face-up connected to the tile upon which his or her pawn currently rests. The newly played tile must overlap the occupied tile by either exactly one half or exactly one full tile width. If there is no room to place a tile next to his or her own pawn, that player may not explore this turn. See Figure 2 for examples of legal and illegal of exploring.
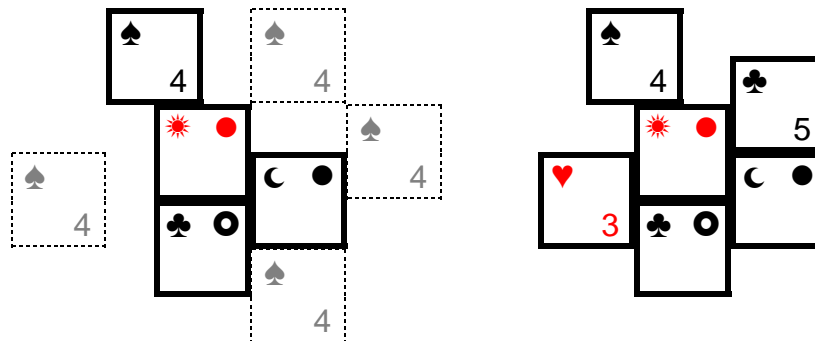
Figure 2. The example on the left shows the beginning of a three-player game. Sun, the biggest bully, is exploring. He or she has just drawn the four of spades tile and legally played it overlapping half of the null sun tile upon which the sun pawn rests. The shaded areas are just a few examples of places where it would have been illegal for sun to explore on this turn. The example on the right shows a possible situation from a few turns later. Now club has explored with the three of hearts, and moon has explored with the five of clubs. Since there's no room for sun to place an adjacent tile, sun doesn't get to explore this turn.

2. **Take Action.** Whether or not a player explored, he or she must always take at least one action, even if the only action available is a step move. The menu of possible actions depends upon the resources available to the player. Available resources may include coins in the hand, the tile upon which his or her pawn currently rests and that player's special bonus power. Any number of actions can be taken, as long as the player can afford to take them. The possible actions are detailed in Table 1 and are summarized on the reference cards.

Table 1. Actions & Associated Resource Requirements

Suit	*Tile Actions (except null tiles – see Black Market Sales below)*	*Coin Actions*	*Special Bonus Powers*
☀	**Market.** *Optional:* Trade a number of non-diamond coins up to the value of the sun tile. Put the coins you want to trade into the bag all at once, shake the bag, then draw as many out as you put in.	**Movement.** *Optional:* Sun coins may be spent to move a pawn several spaces at once, up to the total value of the sun coins played. Loops and backtracking are not allowed, and all intervening spaces must be connected on at least one half of a tile edge. Also, the effects of any tiles passed through or landed upon must be obeyed. Return spent sun coins to the bag after moving.	**Jumpy.** *Optional:* Every time jumpy moves, whether taking a step move or using a sun coin for increased movement range, he or she may jump one extra tile along the way. The jumped tile must be adjacent to both tiles on either side, but the effects of any jumped tile are ignored.
☾	**Oasis.** *Optional:* If there are any heart coins in the bag (i.e., if there are less than six showing on the table), draw coins from the bag one by one until you get a heart coin. Return any non-heart coins that were drawn to the bag before drawing the next coin.	**Rest & Recover.** *Optional:* Moon coins may be spent to replenish resources. Draw a number of coins from the bag equal to the total value of the moon coins you wish to spend or however many are available, whichever is less. Return spent moon coins to the bag after resting.	**Scrounger.** *Optional:* Every time the scrounger draws coins from the bag (including the start of the game), he or she may draw one extra coin.
♣	**War Zone.** *Compulsory:* Any warlord landing on or passing through a war zone takes a beating with the basic attack value equal to the tile value. Heart coins may be played to reduce the attack value as usual. A number of coins equal to the remaining attack value are randomly drawn from the warlord's hand to be lost in the scuffle. Return lost diamond coins to the table and reshuffle; return any other lost coins to the bag.	**Beatings.** *Optional:* If your pawn currently rests on the same space as another player's pawn, you may beat them with a stick and steal their stuff. The basic attack value (before heart coins are spent to reduce it) is the total of the spent club coins' values. The attacker may, without looking at their values, steal a number of coins from the defender's hand, up to the remaining attack value. Return spent club coins to the bag after resolving the attack.	**Thug.** *Optional:* Every time the thug inflicts a beating upon another warlord, the thug's basic attack value is increased by one for every club coin he or she plays.
♦	**Diamond Mine.** *Optional:* You may mine as many diamond coins as either the total value of the spade coins you wish to spend, the value of the diamond mine tile, or however many diamond coins are currently available, whichever is least. Draw that many diamond coins and put them into your hand. Return spent spade coins to the bag after mining.	**Raw Diamonds.** *Compulsory:* Collections of one or more diamond coins must be sold at any black market (null tile) for the product of their values. Return sold diamond coins to the table and reshuffle. See Black Market Sales, and also see Table 2 if your math is rusty.	**Swindler.** *Optional:* Every time the swindler sells collections of diamonds, the swindler's highest-valued diamond coin is worth two more than its face value (before multiplying). This is true even if the swindler is selling the null diamond all by itself.
♥	**Holy Site.** *Compulsory:* No beatings may take place on a holy site, nor may any club coins be carried through a holy site. Any warlord landing on or passing through a holy site must return all of his or her club coins to the bag.	**Health.** *Optional:* Heart coins may be used to defend against beatings from other warlords. The value of the attack may be reduced by the total value of the heart coins spent. Return spent heart coins to the bag after resolving the attack.	**Tough Guy.** *Optional:* Every time the tough guy defends against beatings from other warlords, their attacks are reduced by an additional point for each heart coin you play. No bonus is granted if no heart coins are played in defense.
♠	**Evil Spy's Lair.** *Optional:* Everyone knows that evil spies like to build lairs in out-of-the way places like west Africa. Not only that, they're happy to let warlords use their top secret equipment to spy on other warlords. Any warlord landing on or passing through an evil spy's lair may peek at a number of coins in other players' hands equal to the value of the spade tile or as many as possible, whichever is less.	**Spades.** *Optional:* If your pawn currently rests on a non-null diamond tile, you may mine as many diamond coins as either the total value of the spade coins you wish to spend, the value of the diamond mine tile, or however many diamond coins are currently available, whichever is least. Draw that many diamond coins and put them into your hand. Return spent spade coins to the bag after mining.	**Digger.** *Optional:* The digger always has a virtual ace of spades and may mine one available diamond coin on any non-null diamond tile. This virtual ace of spades does not grant any mining bonus when using spade coins, but it cannot be lost or stolen.

Black Market Sales. *Compulsory:* As soon as a player lands on or passes through any null tile, he or she must immediately sell all of his or her diamonds. That player turns all of his or her diamond coins face-up and scores points equal to the product of all of their values. The mathematically challenged can consult Table 2 for a payoff chart. Scores are recorded by moving the player's die along the score track the appropriate number of spaces. If the die laps the score track (passes the ninety-nine space), turn the die so the next higher face is on top for a new hundreds digit.

Step Move. *Optional / Compulsory:* No matter what other actions are available, a player may always move his or her pawn to any adjacent tile (any tile that shares at least half of one edge with the tile upon which his or her pawn currently rests). Movements over gaps or to nearby tiles touching only at a corner are not allowed. A player need not move if any other actions are taken, but exploring alone does not count. If a player cannot perform any other action, his or her pawn must step move to an adjacent tile. Passing is forbidden.

Table 2. Diamond Sale Payoff Chart

Diamond Coins	Normal Payoff	Swindler Payoff	Diamond Coins	Normal Payoff	Swindler Payoff
○ (alone)	0	2	②⑤	10	14
○ (with other coins)	0	0	③④	12	18
◉ (alone)	1	3	③⑤	15	21
◉ (with other coins)	ignore this coin	ignore this coin	④⑤	20	28
②	2	4	②③④	24	36
③	3	5	②③⑤	30	42
④	4	6	②④⑤	40	56
⑤	5	7	③④⑤	60	84
②③	6	10	②③④⑤	120	168
②④	8	12	☀☾	♣♦	♥♠

Game End & Winning

The game may end in one of two ways. The moment any player's score reaches or exceeds 600 points, that player wins. Alternatively, whoever has the most points the moment the last tile is drawn wins. If there is a tie, settle the matter once and for all with a pistol duel.

Tips & Tactics

- Being forced to make a step move may result in a beating.
- Yes, you may beat someone using a club coin that you just stole from them in a beating earlier on this very turn.
- The null diamond coin is a worthless piece of quartz, so if a player tries to sell it, the diamond broker is insulted, the whole collection is worth zero points and the player is roughly tossed out of the market on his or her butt. But despite the fact that it's worth zero points by itself (except for the swindler), there do exist tactical situations when it is advantageous to sell the null diamond, both by itself and as part of a collection. It's also nice to have it stolen.
- The null club coin is merely an unsharpened pencil, and others will scoff and call you a nerd if you try to use it in an attack. Nevertheless, it's useful to the thug.
- Note that the null heart coin is the same as bawling for your mommy. Of course this is a worthless defense, and others will laugh at you and call you a crybaby if you use it to defend yourself. They may even hit you harder.

Credits

Proofreading:
Play Testing:

Long-time gamers will probably notice elements of several other board games jumbled together in Blood Diamonds. Inspiration was taken from the Eon games Cosmic Encounter and Dune, as well as later tile laying games such as Euphrat & Tigris and Carcassonne. The background information about the history of blood diamonds was assembled from various internet resources. Google "blood diamond" and/or "conflict diamond" for more information.

Revision History

0.0.1α October 29, 2004   First complete draft

License

BLOOD DIAMONDS **Reference Card**

Suit / Tile / Coin / Power

☀ / Market / Movement / Jumpy

☾ / Oasis / Rest & Recover / Scrounger

♣ / War Zone / Beatings / Thug

♦ / Diamond Mine / Raw Diamonds / Swindler

♥ / Holy Site / Health / Tough Guy

♠ / Evil Spy's Lair / Spades / Digger

Number board (numbers 0–99; multiples of 5 shown in red)

Large outer numbers:

0	1	2	3

Grid of numbers (multiples of 5 in **red**):

99	78	77	56	**55**	34	33	**13**	
98	79	76	57	54	**35**	32	14	12
97	**80**	**75**	58	53	36	31		
96	81	74	59	52	37	**30**	**15**	16
95	82	73	**60**	51	38	29	16	17
94	83	72	61	**50**	39	28	17	18
93	84	71	62	49	**40**	27	18	19
92	**85**	**70**	63	48	41	26	19	**20**
91	86	69	64	47	42	**25**	**20**	21
90	87	68	**65**	46	43	24	21	22
89	88	67	66	**45**	44	23	22	

Large border numbers on the right side:

4, **5**, 6, 7, 8, 9, **10**, 11, 12, **13**, 14