

Chief Herman's

Next Big Thing

Instruction Booklet and Midnight Luxury Guide



Greetings, reader. I am Chief Herman. You have come to this place to read about more games from my collection. I will oblige you.

When you first visited me in the Autumn of 2000, I found your presence cumbersome and tedious. This was my error, benighted as I was under the burden of my own boundless greed.

The Chief Herman you see before you is a reformed and perfect being, joyous in the infinite diversity of humankind. Let this book be the turning point in your struggle to become more like me.

Chief Robert Wadlow Herman (Ret.), 01 Nov., 2003

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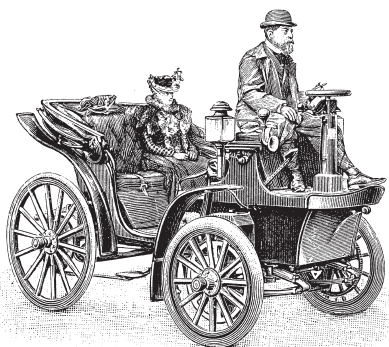
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Chief Herman's Next Big Thing was compiled by **James Ernest**, published by **Cheapass Games**. Typesetting and layout by **James Ernest**, edited by **Elizabeth Marshall** and **Carol Monahan**. All games herein were designed by **James Ernest** and tested on miscellaneous **Cheapass Games Guinea Pigs** except as follows: **10-Die Poker** co-designed by **Joshua Howard**; **7-Handed Poker** designed by **Joshua Howard** and **Evelina Shin**; **Darwinian Poker** co-designed by **Dave Howell**. **King of the Beach** structure idea by **Toivo Rovainen**. Interior art by **Toivo Rovainen**, **James Ernest**, and **Brian Snöddy**. Board layouts by **James Ernest** and Photoshop's blessed suite of **Layer Effects**. Cover by **Brian Snöddy**. **Chief Herman's** likeness is © and ™ 2000 **Cheapass Games**. **Chief Herman's Next Big Thing** © 2003 **Cheapass Games**: www.cheapass.com.

It's been three years since we released the original **Chief Herman's Holiday Fun Pack**, our year 2000 collection of 24 free games and a few Poker variants. In those years we've created a bunch of great new games. We've also discovered a few crusty old ones and given them the polish they richly deserved. On average, the games in this collection are more complex than those in the last collection, with many of them taking up a full 2 pages of really small type. Some of my favorites are **Graveyard Shift**, **Hotel Transylvania**, and **Short Bus to Paradise**. For a shorter game I'd suggest **Seven-Handed Poker**, **Land Grab**, or the nearly instantaneous **Headless in Seattle**.

As before, the games are introduced by the inimitable ramblings of Chief Herman, and as an added bonus we've got the first couple of pages of his unplayable stab at game design, **'The Establishment of the Industrial Proletariat.'**

-James Ernest, 27 Oct., 2003

Dice Games

It astounds me to learn that some designers believe all possible dice game mechanics have already been created.

On a protracted layover during a snowstorm in Copenhagen, I deftly borrowed and perused a fellow traveler's copy of the book **Dice Games, You Idiot** by respected game designer Angus MacBride. MacBride's treatise is singularly hilarious for the manner in which he introduces traditional dice games with no hint of excitement, then describes his own minor variations on those games as thrilling and replete with depth. But the book is overshadowed by an underlying belief that there are no new dice games under the sun.

This is not a defense of the games included herein, as I am sure you will agree they are best described as both derivative and infantile; but I am certain that, given time not permitted by my own harried schedule, even I could invent numerous game mechanics never imagined or compiled by Mister Angus MacBride.

Fight the Power

Players: 3-7

Playing Time: 25 minutes

Equipment: Four 6-sided dice for each player.

Story: In **Fight the Power**, you control factions of uppity elves rallying to overthrow the tyrannical domination of Santa Claus. Unfortunately, you only manage to fight against each other, which is all part of Santa's plan.

To Begin: Each player starts with four 6-sided dice, which represent rebellious Elves. Each player rolls all of his dice to start and arranges his dice so that everyone can read them.

Determine randomly who will go first; play proceeds to the left.

The Object: There are two ways to win. You can **grow** your faction large enough to engage Santa Claus (eight Elves) or **shrink** your faction to the point that you can rat out the other teams without being incriminated yourself (zero Elves). Whoever reaches eight or zero Elves first wins.

On Your Turn: You have two options. You may either **recruit** or **fight**.

Recruiting: Using your dice as they stand, if you have more dice of a single rank than an opponent has, you may steal one Elf of that rank away from that player. For example, if you have three 5's and your opponent has only two 5's, you can recruit one of his 5's. Take that die and add it to your collection, retaining its face value.

Fighting: Choose any player and attack him. As the attacker, you may roll all, some, or none of your dice. The defender must roll all of his dice. After the brawl, whoever shows the single highest number wins. If the highest dice are tied, compare the next highest dice, and so on. For example, (6, 6, 4, 1) beats (6, 5, 5, 2). The winner takes one die away from the loser. (Retain the die's face value.) If all the comparable dice are tied, the fight is a draw and no dice change hands.

Winning: The game continues until one player has eight dice or zero dice. If two people do this at the same time, the active player wins.

Fight The Power was created for a Cheapass Games Christmas card and was also featured in the catalog and Web site. It was charmingly illustrated by Toivo Rovainen.



Ten-Die Poker

Players: 4-7

Playing Time: 3 minutes per hand

Equipment: 10 dice for each player in two colors, and some Poker chips.

Setting Up: Each player needs about \$40 in chips for a \$1 ante game. Your ten dice must be in two different colors; these rules use red and black.

To Begin Each Hand: Each player antes \$1 and rolls his starting hand as follows: Your dice are always locked in pairs, one red and one black, so you can't roll all your dice at once. Instead, you must them one pair at a time.

Arrange your dice so that there is a clear red and black hand. It is helpful to put the better hand on top, so you can more easily compare hands with the other players.

The Value of Hands: The Hands in 10-Die Poker are the same as those in Poker, except that there is no such thing as a Flush. The rank of Hands, from lowest to highest, is: **High Die, Pair, Two Pair, Three of a Kind, Straight, Full House, Four of a Kind, and Five of a Kind.**

The value of your hand is always equal to the better of your two sets of dice. For example, if your red hand is a Pair, and your black hand is a Straight, you have a Straight. If two players have identical high hands, they compare low hands. If both hands match, those players are tied.

What Happens Next: The best hand becomes the "leader." The **worst** hand becomes the active player, and may elect to **fold** or **challenge** the leader.

If you fold, you are out of this pot, just as you would be in in Poker. If you challenge, you put an amount equal to half the pot, rounding up, into the pot. For example, if there is \$5 in the pot, it costs \$3 to challenge.

In a challenge, you may re-roll some or all of your pairs of dice. You select which pairs to roll before you roll any of them; you can't decide piece by piece. You also must re-roll both dice in each pair you roll, not just one or the other.

After your re-roll, if your hand beats (or ties) the leader, you become (or join) the leader. If not, you have lost and you drop out.

This continues until everyone drops out.

Winning: The survivor takes the pot.

Tied Hands: If two players are tied for high, they split the pot. If two players are tied for low, they must choose randomly who becomes active.

Ending the Game: Like Poker, this game is a continuous zero-sum game. Players may enter or leave on any round. If you finish with more money than you started with, you're winning.

Strategy: A Straight probably isn't going to win the game, and it's a very tough hand to improve. When deciding whether to challenge, be aware of the dice in both your hands. If you have a decent hand on both sets of dice, your chances of beating the leader are better. Also, be sure to use the same judgement to figure the chances of the leader coming back to beat you, even if you do win the challenge!

Ten-Die Poker was invented by Joshua Howard and James Ernest on a series of bleak rainy evenings in Essen, Germany. It has appeared on the Cheapass Games Web site.

Break the Bank

Players: 4-8

Playing Time: 10 minutes.

Equipment: Five 6-sided dice and Poker chips.

Setup: Give everyone \$100 in chips. Everyone antes \$2 to create the "Bank," a pile of coins in the middle of the table. After you build the Bank, determine randomly who will go first.

Winning: The game can end in two ways. If someone breaks the Bank, the game is over. Otherwise, when each player has had five turns, the game is over and the Bank is split among the players. The object is to win the most money.

On Your Turn: To start your turn, you must pay \$5 to the Bank and roll one die. This is the only mandatory part of your turn. Depending on what you roll, you might go bust immediately, or you might go on to break the Bank.

Going Bust: If you roll a "1" you go bust, and your turn is over. The turn passes to the player on your left.

Building the Kitty: If your roll is anything but a "1," you take that number of chips out of the Bank and start the "Kitty," a pile of coins beside the Bank. Now you have a choice. You can either keep what's in the Kitty right now, or roll two dice. If you take the Kitty, your turn is over. If you roll again, you pay another \$5.

The Next Roll: When you roll again, roll two dice. If you roll a 1 on either die, you go bust, and the Kitty returns to the Bank. If you don't go bust,

add the amount of your roll to the Kitty and choose again: take the Kitty, or pay another \$5 and roll three dice.

This pattern continues at the four- and five-dice levels until you go bust, take the Kitty, or roll all five dice without going bust. If you roll all five dice without busting, you “Break the Bank” and take the Kitty and the Bank. (You also break the Bank if you put it all in the Kitty, then take it.)

If someone breaks the Bank, the game is over. If every player has five turns and no one breaks the Bank, you split the Bank evenly and end the game. (This is the only way to guarantee that the game will end!)

Example Game: Dave starts by paying \$5 and rolling a 3. This puts \$3 in the Kitty. He decides to roll again, paying another \$5. He rolls a 7, bringing the Kitty to \$10. He could stop now and break even, but he decides to go on. He pays \$5, rolls three dice, and gets a 1, going bust. His turn is over, and the Kitty returns to the Bank.

Break the Bank was invented as a casino-style game and published on a free one-page flyer from Cheapass Games. It also appeared in a couple of game convention programs.

Monster Builder

Players: 3-6

Playing Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: Blank paper, pencils, four 6-sided “Research” dice, and four 6-sided “Combat” dice. It helps if the two sets of dice are different colors.

Story: In *Monster Builder*, players are scientists trying to build the most powerful fighting monsters through **research**, **scavenging**, and **fighting**.

To Begin: Draw five lines on your score pad to represent your Monster, as shown at right. The top line is your giant’s “Head,” the next two are its “Arms,” and the bottom two lines are its “Legs.” Write a “0” on every line.

On Each Player’s Turn: You may do exactly one of the following three actions: **Research**, **Scavenge**, or **Fight**. Each action can improve your Monster, but some are riskier than others.

Research: To do Research, roll all four of the “Research” dice. You may then build one of these numbers into your Monster.

“Building” a value into your Monster means replacing the existing value, **not** adding the two values together. For example, if you build a “4” into a slot which already has a “2,” the slot becomes a “4,” not a “6.”

When you use the number from a Research die, change it to show a “1.” Leave the other Research dice as they are. The dice you leave behind (including the “1”s) can be Scavenged by other players.

Scavenging: Leaving the Research dice as they are, you may build up to two of those dice into your Monster (even the 1s). Again, change any dice you use into 1s.

Fighting: There are three different types of attack, described below. For all three attacks, both players will roll the Combat dice and/or add the values of their creatures’ body parts. The higher score always wins the fight, and ties are always won by the attacker.

Attack #1, Head Smash: Roll one die and add it to the value of your creature’s **Head**. The defender rolls two dice. The winner of this Fight may steal the loser’s Head.

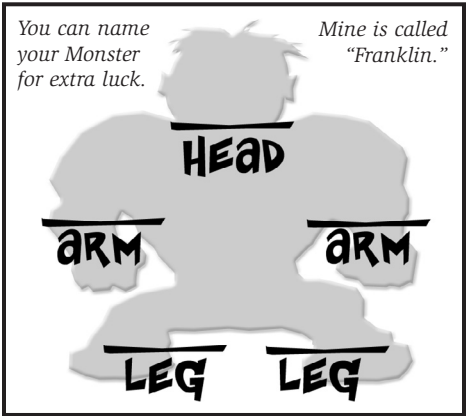
“Stealing” a part means you may build that number into **any** slot on your giant, or you may just throw it away. The giant who loses that piece must change his value in that slot back to a “0.”

Attack #2, Punch: Roll one die, and add the value of both your creature’s **Arms**. The defender rolls three dice. The winner of this Fight may steal either of the loser’s Arms, or his Head.

Attack #3, Trip: Roll one die, and add the value of your creature’s **Legs**. The defender adds the total value of his giant, rolling no dice. The winner may steal any piece from the loser.

Winning: When all five pieces of your Monster have a value of 6, you win the game.

Monster Builder was designed for a client who didn’t buy it, and later became the basis of an 8-sided dice game called “Colossus,” for Dragon magazine.



Card Games

Cajoled into apartment-sitting for a group of well-connected New York socialites, I spent nearly three weeks subsisting on leftover pizza and rain. I was understandably thrilled and relieved when upon his return the ringleader of this colorful clique challenged me to a game of cards.

Assured that this gray-haired patriarch was well acquainted with the finer points of most popular card games, I was pleased to be able to draw on my knowledge of the unique games below to amuse him and pass the time until his quiet, child-like snoring heralded the end of my assignment.

Penniless and Insane

Players: 3-7

Playing Time: 20 minutes

Equipment: A deck of cards without jokers, a score pad, and 20 coins or chips for each player.

***Penniless and Insane** is a simple auction game with a twist: the lowest bid takes the good stuff, but the object is to run out of money.*

Every player is a frustrated artist nearing the end of a wasted life. With no inspiration and a lackluster body of work, your newfound ambition is to die penniless and insane. You believe that this final act will make your work more valuable, which only proves you're already insane.

You will spend your last few dollars buying art from students, apprentices, friends, and even total strangers. The work you collect you then hope to pass off as your own after your inevitable and fast-approaching death. However, since all the best artists are still young and idealistic, they care little for your money. In fact, the less money you offer them, the better the art you will get.

Structure: This game is scored over multiple rounds. Each round consists of three tricks.

Starting Each Round: Every player starts each round with exactly \$20 in chips. Shuffle the deck and deal a hand of three cards to each player.

On Each Trick: To begin each trick, deal cards face up into the middle of the table. Deal one less card than there are players. For example, if there are four players, you deal three cards. These cards represent pieces of art being offered for sale.

To bid on this art, each player chooses one card from his hand and plays it face down. This card is your bid, and determines when you will act in the auction, as well as how much money you will pay for your art.

To act first, you want to play a low card. To spend more money, you want to play a higher card. But be careful: the highest card in each trick often gets nothing!

After all the bids are in, everyone reveals his card. The lowest card on the table acts first. Aces are worth 1 point, and Jacks, Queens and Kings are worth 11, 12, and 13 points respectively.

Suit distinguishes between cards of the same rank, with Clubs being the lowest, followed by Diamonds, Hearts, and Spades. This means the ten of Clubs is lower than, and will act before, the ten of Hearts.

When the play comes to you, you do three things. First, you discard the card you played. Second, you take any card from the pool of art on the table, and put it into your hand. Third, you pay an amount of money equal to the face value of the card you played. This money leaves the game.

If you do not have enough money to afford your bid, you don't get the art. Instead, you must take back your bid card and pay nothing.

If you are the last player to act, it is possible that there will be no cards for you to take (because the pool always starts with one less card than there are players). In this case, you will take back your bid card and pay nothing.

If there are any cards left in the pool after every player has acted, discard them. You will deal a total of three tricks and then take score for the round.

Scoring: After three tricks, score your hands. Each card in your hand is worth its face value.

Penniless Bonus: The player with the least money scores triple points for his cards. This is your bonus for getting as close as possible to penniless and insane. If multiple players are tied for the least money, they each earn triple points.

Insane Bonus: Every player who runs completely out of money earns triple points, as above. In addition, no player with money scores any points. If multiple people run completely out of money, they each score triple points.

Remember to start the next round with \$20 each.

Winning: Record your scores after each round. The winner is the first player to score 150 points or more.

For a gambling variant, put all spent money into a pot instead of removing it from the game, and award the pot to the winner(s) of each round.

***Penniless and Insane** was written as a free game for advertisements and has appeared in various product catalogs and magazines.*



Seven-Handed Poker

Players: 2

Playing Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: Seven coins and a deck of playing cards. (Jokers are optional.)

To Begin: Make a line of seven coins across the middle of the table, as shown in the diagram at the top of the page. You will play a Poker hand at each of the seven spots.

Shuffle the deck and deal a hand of seven cards to each player. Determine randomly who will go first, then take turns.

On Your Turn: Announce to your opponent the number of cards you are playing, then place one to five cards from your hand face down on the table. Your **opponent** then chooses where you must put those cards, on your side of any available coin.

After you play your cards, draw three more cards from the deck. Your hand will grow and shrink depending on how many cards you play.

When both sides of a coin have cards played on them, turn those cards face up immediately. (You don't wait until the end of the game.) The better Poker hand wins. To indicate the winner, move the coin onto the winning hand. If the two hands are tied the coin stays in the middle and the hand counts as a win for both players. When comparing hands, a kicker is better than nothing.

Winning: To win the game, win three adjacent hands or win four hands all together. With tied hands it's also possible to have a tie game.

Variation: For a more difficult game, start with a smaller hand (six or five cards).

Seven-Handed Poker was designed by Joshua Howard and Evelina Shin and was published as a free game in **Wired** magazine.

The Poker Hands, FYI: Five of a Kind (only with wild cards); Royal Flush; Straight Flush; Four of a Kind; Full House; Flush; Straight; Three of a Kind; Two Pair; One Pair; High Card.

Darwinian Poker

Players: 2-6

Playing Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: A deck of cards without jokers.

In **Darwinian Poker**, you will start with a hand resembling primordial ooze, and attempt through successive generations to "evolve" it into something more useful, such as mud or slime. Or even the rats and monkeys of Darwin's imagination.

To Begin: Shuffle the deck, and deal each player a starting hand of four cards.

On Each Turn: Deal four cards face up in the center of the table. These cards are called the "Ooze." Each player "plants" one card from his hand face down on the table. This card is called the "Seed." When all the Seeds are planted, reveal them. They will then be played one at a time, in descending order. Suit determines the order between cards of the same rank, with Clubs at the bottom, then Diamonds, Hearts, and Spades.

When played, each Seed can capture cards from the Ooze. When you play a Seed you pick up all the cards which match it, either by **suit** or by **rank**. The Seed itself falls into the Ooze. For example, if a Queen of Spades is your Seed, you will pick up all the Spades, and all the Queens, and then put the Queen of Spades into the Ooze.

Another Example: On the first round of a three-player game, the following cards are dealt into the Ooze: AH, QC, 9S, 5H. Each player places his Seed face down, and then the Seeds are revealed to be the AS, 10C, and 9H. The Seeds are executed in descending order, so the AS goes first, capturing the AH and the 9S, and then falling in. The new Ooze contains the AS, QC, and 5H. Then, the 10C takes the QC, and falls into the Ooze. Last, the 9H takes the 5H, and falls in.

After the last Seed is played, discard whatever is left in the Ooze and deal four new cards into the Ooze, starting a new round.

Play continues until the deck is empty. After the last round, there is a showdown. The player with the best Poker hand wins.

It's possible, especially with a large number of players, for people's hands to empty. This is just a result of natural competition. If your hand is ever empty at the end of a turn, you go extinct.

Darwinian Poker, by another name, was the very first free game to appear in a Cheapass Games print catalog, and has appeared under other names in various publications of Cheapass Games and elsewhere. It was designed by James Ernest and Dave Howell in about 90 minutes in 1996.

Players: 2

Playing Time: 15 minutes

Equipment: A deck of cards without jokers, and a way to keep score.

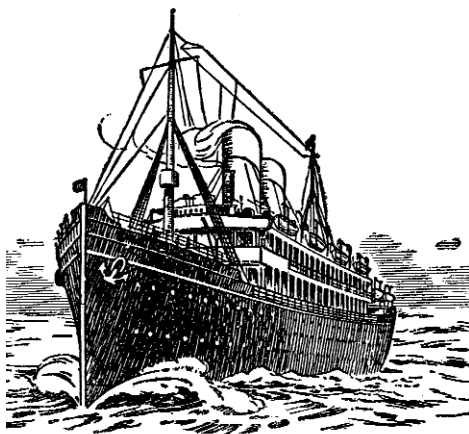
Story: *Welcome aboard the **Caribbean Star**, Caribe Cruise Lines' most luxurious cruise ship. It's chock to the gills with newlyweds and nearly-deads who have ventured to the Caribbean to float into the Panama Canal, buy knickknacks in Jamaican straw markets, and drink Piña Coladas from the source in San Juan. And you have been brought here to entertain them.*

Unfortunately, you and your opponent are magicians, and what's worse, like most magicians you have more or less the same act. The Miami booking office accidentally placed both of you on the same ship, and now you've got exactly one week to prove who's better.

How to Begin: Each player owns one color of cards, either red or black. There is basically no difference between the two colors. Shuffle the deck and deal a hand of five cards to each player. Turns are simultaneous.

On Each Turn: Both players play one card face down. After both cards have been played, turn them over to reveal each player's action for the turn.

Each card has a unique function, described in the list below. Although they are played at the same time, cards always take effect from **lowest to highest**. Deuces are low, and Kings are high. Aces work differently, and are explained later. If both cards are the same rank, suit determines the order. Clubs are lowest, followed by Diamonds, Hearts, and Spades (alphabetical order).



Card Functions:

Magic Tricks, 10-K: Tens and Face cards are Magic Tricks. When you play a Magic Trick, it means you are practicing that trick for your next performance. If you play your opponent's color, he practices that trick.

When you play a Magic Trick in your color, put it in your "Practice" pile, which is a set of cards face up on the table in front of you. If you play a Magic Trick in your opponent's color, you put that card in your opponent's Practice pile.

A perfect show is 15 minutes long. Face cards add 5 minutes to your show. Jacks are worth 2 points, Queens are worth 4 points, and Kings are worth 6 points. Tens add 10 minutes to your show, and are worth 10 points.

Showtimes, 7 and 9: Sevens and Nines are Showtimes. When you play a Showtime of your color, you will perform your act. This means you will discard your Practice pile and convert it into points. If you play a Showtime in your opponent's color, your opponent performs his act. Obviously, you want to convert your own Practice pile when it is worth maximum points, and convert your opponent's pile when it is worthless.

The scoring of the performance is described later. After you perform your act, the Showtime card and all the cards in your Practice pile go into the discard pile.

Dinner Buffet, 8: Eights are "Dinner Buffet" cards. When you play an Eight in your color, you may perform (i.e., discard) one of the Magic Tricks in your Practice pile for half its point value. For example, if you use an Eight to perform a King, you would score 3 points.

You don't have to use your Dinner Buffet. You might play an Eight and then, seeing what your opponent has played, decide to ignore the Buffet. Whether you use it or not, the Eight is discarded.

Similarly, if you play an opponent's Eight, he may convert one of his Magic Tricks or he may ignore it. You can't force your opponent to perform at the Dinner Buffet.

Rehearsal, 6: Sixes are Rehearsal cards. You can rehearse your act before performing it and double its final value. When you play a Six in your color, add it to your Practice pile. If you play a Six in your opponent's color, it goes into his Practice pile.

If you have both your sixes in your Practice pile, your show will be worth quadruple points!

Afternoon Nap, 5. Fives are "Afternoon Nap" cards. When you play a Five of any color, you will swap hands with your opponent. Discard the Five after you swap hands.

Mistakes, 2 through 4: Twos, Threes, and Fours are Mistakes. These are a little like Magic Tricks, but they are worth negative points.

If you play a Mistake of your own color it will go into your Practice pile. If you play a Mistake of your opponent's color, it will go into his Practice pile. Mistakes don't always hurt you: if you perform a show composed entirely of Mistakes, it's called a "Comedy Show" and is worth nothing. Which is better than negative points!

Scoring your Shows: A Practice pile may contain Magic Tricks, Rehearsals, and/or Mistakes. When you perform it, here is how to score the show.

First, evaluate the **Magic Tricks** by the length of the show. The perfect show is 15 minutes. Face Cards are 5 minutes each, and Tens are 10 minutes. If your show is exactly 15 minutes, you will score full value for all your Magic Tricks. If you run long or short by 5 minutes, you must cut the value of your biggest Trick by half (or one of your biggest tricks, if you have two big tricks of the same size). If you run short or long by 10 minutes, you must cut **all** your Tricks by half. If you run 15 or more minutes too long, you get no points for your Magic Tricks. If you run 0 minutes (you have no Magic Tricks at all) you are doing a Comedy Show, which is worth exactly zero points.

Second, subtract the values of your Mistakes. Twos are worth -2, Threes -3, and Fours -4. Mistakes do not add time to your act, and you always lose full value for these cards unless you are doing a Comedy Show. Mistakes can easily result in a negative value for your show.

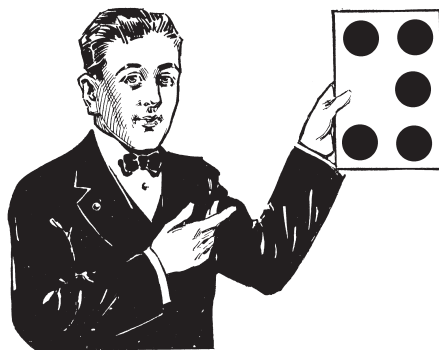
Last, apply the Rehearsal cards. If you have a Six in your Practice pile, double the final value. If you have two Sixes, you double it twice.

Comedy Show: If your act has no Magic Tricks in it, it is always worth exactly zero points. This is true regardless of the number of Mistakes and Rehearsals in your pile; ignore the Mistakes and Rehearsals and just score 0 points for the show.

An Example of Scoring a Show: A Practice Pile has the following cards in it: King, King, Ten, Six, Four, Three, and Two. The Show is 5 minutes too long ($5 + 5 + 10 = 20$ minutes), so the highest Magic Trick, the 10, will be worth only half value. The base value of the Show is therefore $6 + 6 + 5$, or 17 points. The Mistakes are worth $4 + 3 + 2$, or 9. These are deducted from 17, leaving 8 points. Finally, the Show is doubled, making for a final value of 16 points.

Stop Cards, the Aces: Aces are not played like other cards. They are not color-specific and they always work for the player who plays them.

You can play an Ace **from your hand** to cancel the effect of any other card immediately before it is resolved. In other words, once the cards are



revealed, and just before executing a particular card, either player may use an Ace to stop that card from happening.

When you play the Ace, you pick up the card you canceled and put it **in your hand**. You discard the Ace.

You cannot use an Ace to cancel another Ace.

An Example of Playing an Ace: Red has played a red five, and black has played a red 10. Black holds an Ace. Before the five swaps both players' hands, black has the opportunity to play his Ace, but he chooses not to. The five is discarded, and the players swap hands. Now red holds the Ace, and he can play it to cancel the red Ten. He discards the Ace, and puts the red Ten into his hand. (Red has canceled the Ten because it would have made his act too long. He plans to use the Ten in his next act.)

Ending the Turn: At the end of the turn, each player draws one card. Once there are no more cards to draw, players still continue to play cards until their hands are empty, or until one player can no longer play cards because he holds nothing but Aces. At this point, the game ends.

Scoring the Game: At the end of the game, each player gets one "Farewell Show," in which he scores the cards remaining in his Practice pile. The Farewell Show is not optional: you can lose a lot of points in this Show if you're not careful. After the Farewell Show, the player with the most points wins. The other player must disembark in San Juan and become a compulsive gambler and binge drinker.

Caribbean Star was designed in the summer of 2001 by James Ernest and Carol Monahan while they were on an Alaskan cruise. The game was created as an example for the gaming textbook **Rules of Play**, which was released in fall 2003. Look for it in gaming textbook stores everywhere.

Short Bus to Paradise

Short Bus to Paradise

Players: 3-6

Playing Time: 40 minutes

Equipment: A deck of cards, two 6-sided dice, a large bag of stones (or candy), and a score pad.

***The Story:** You and your competitors are rival taxi companies picking up tourists from the cruise ship dock in Montego Bay and taking them to various destinations throughout the island of Jamaica. It is a warm summer morning about half past nine. Birds are singing.*

The Bag of Stones: This game requires a large bag of stones in different colors, between 100 and 200 stones all together. The number of colors doesn't matter, although five to ten is best, and the number of counters in each color doesn't matter either. It's actually better if the distribution is unknown. We suggest using a bag of your favorite multicolored candy. And washing your hands.

Setup: Create a small deck of playing cards with only the 2s through 10s, removing the Face cards and Aces. Shuffle this deck and deal a hand of three cards to each player.

Put the stones in a bag and mix them. Start the "pot," the group of stones in the middle of the table, by rolling two dice and drawing that number of stones at random from the bag. Arrange the pot into groups of the same color. The stones represent groups of tourists waiting on the dock, and their color represents where they want to go.

Decide randomly who will go first. Play proceeds to the left.

On Each Turn: There are four steps in the turn: **adding** tourists, **playing** a card, **filling** your cabs, and **drawing** a card. However, you will never do all four steps in the same turn, because you can't draw a card if you played a card or filled a cab.

Step 1, Adding Tourists: If any stones were taken from the pot during the last turn, which usually happens, you begin your turn by rolling two dice and adding that many new stones to the pot. This is already done for you on the first turn. If the last player took no stones, you do not add.

If you can't draw as many stones as you want, because the bag is empty, the game is almost

over. Everyone, including you, will get one more turn after this one ends, and the game will end.

Sort the stones in the pot into groups of the same color. If a group ever has 11 or more stones, that group becomes impossible to pick up. The cruise line takes care of them, putting them on a bus and taking them out of the game.

Step 2, Playing a Card: Your cards represent empty cabs of different sizes, with capacities of between two and ten people (corresponding to ranks two through ten). When you play a card, you put it face up on the table in front of you. You can play no more than one card per turn.

Step 3, Loading Your Cabs: Take as many complete groups as you wish from the pot and load them into your waiting cabs. One cab can't drive to two destinations, so you can only fill individual cabs with stones of the same color. Groups must always stick together, so you can't ever split up a group. This means you have to fit the whole waiting group into your cab or take nothing at all.

When a cab is filled to capacity, it immediately leaves the dock. Set that card to the side, with its passengers on it. Those passengers will be scored at the end of the game.

Obviously, you would like to simply play the perfect sized cabs and immediately fill them, but this is not always possible and not always the best move. You will therefore leave some cabs waiting half-full, or even completely empty. They will sit on the dock until you can fill them.

Stealing Passengers: If there are other half-filled cabs waiting on the dock, you can sometimes steal their waiting passengers when you are loading cabs. If there is a group of tourists in another partially filled cab (your opponent's or your own) and also at least one more tourist of that color in the pot, you can put both groups together into another cab. For example, if there is a seven-seat cab on the table with three red stones in it, and there is another red stone in the pot, you can load all four of those red stones into your cab (provided your cab can hold them). You can't steal passengers from two cabs in the same move, but you can steal from two cabs on the same turn. You must always include all the matching stones from the pot with the group you steal.

Step 4, Drawing a Card: You may draw one card from the deck, but only if you played no new cabs and loaded no tourists on your turn. When you draw, the pot doesn't change, which means the next player won't add stones to the pot.

If you draw the last card in the deck, the game is almost over. Everyone including you will get one more turn after this one.

Ending the Game: The game can end when the bag runs out of stones or when the deck runs out of cards. Everyone, including whoever caused the game to end, will get one more turn after this one. Then everyone will score all the full cabs that have left the dock, and the player with the highest score wins.

Scoring: Your score is computed as follows: The most remote destinations naturally attract the fewest tourists, so the rarest colors being scored are worth more points.

The most common stones, as represented by color across all players' score piles, are worth 1 point each. The next most common stones are worth 2 points each, the next level are 3 points each, and so on. The more colors in the game, the more valuable the rarest stones will be.

If there is a tie at a particular frequency, all stones at that level are worth the same number of points, and the next color jumps back on track for its frequency. For example, if there is a tie for the second most common color, both those colors are worth 2 points. The next most common color is worth 4 points, since it's the fourth color despite the tie for second.

To compute the score, you must figure out the frequency and values of all the stones, then multiply each player's stones by their point values. It's really a lot quicker than it sounds.

Example of Play: The pot starts with three red stones, one blue, and three green. Player 1 plays a 3 cab, loads it with three red, and sets it aside. It's full and ready to be scored.

Player 2 rolls the dice, adding ten stones to the pot. There are now six red stones in the pot, and he plays an 8 cab and loads it with six red. This cab remains on the table in front of him.

Player 3 adds one more red to the pot (among others). He decides to draw a card rather than playing one. This means Player 4 won't roll the dice because the pot didn't lose any stones. Player 4 plays a 4 cab, taking the single red stone.

When it comes back to Player 2, he'd like to steal the one red off Player 4's cab, but there are no other reds in the middle to allow this. By the time it's Player 4's turn again, there are four reds in the middle. He can't put those on his 4 cab, because it already has one. However, he can play a 5 cab, taking the single red counter off **his own** 4 cab along with the 4 red from the pot. This 5 cab is scored right away, and the empty 4 cab remains on the table. And so on.

***Short Bus to Paradise** is a variation of an in-the-works game, and was published as a free game in **Wired** magazine.*

Headless in Seattle

Players: 2-8

Time: 5 minutes

Equipment: One or two Poker decks without Jokers. Each player starts with all the cards of one suit, so you'll need an extra deck for 5 or more players, and these decks should have different backs.

***Headless in Seattle** is a game of dueling to the death with chainsaws. If you've never dueled to the death with chainsaws, trust us: it's just like this.*

To Begin: Give each player the Jack, Queen, and King of one suit. These cards are their **Fighters**, and start face up on the table. Give each player the remainder of his suit as a deck of Combat cards. Play will be simultaneous.

Players shuffle their decks and hold them in one hand, ready to deal cards with the other. At once, all players start playing their cards as quickly as they like, one at a time. You must play the card in your hand before you can draw the next card. When **one player** has played all his cards, the game is over.

Playing Cards: Cards in your deck are Combat cards, worth 1 to 10 points (Ace through Ten). Cards you play on your own Fighters are **Defense** cards, and cards you play on other Fighters are **Attack** cards.

You can play multiple Attack cards on any enemy Fighter, but you can only play one Defense card on each of your own Fighters.

Scoring: When one player has played his last card, the game is over. Each Fighter is then scored as follows:

If the Defense card on a Fighter is greater than or equal to the **total** value of Attack cards played on it, it survives and can't be killed.

Otherwise, the player who played the most points of Attack cards kills the Fighter and scores its point value.

If there is a tie for most Attack points played, the tied players divide the Fighter's value between them. (Yay! Fractions!)

The point values of the cards are: 2 points for a Jack, 3 for a Queen, and 4 for a King.

***Headless in Seattle** was created for a client who didn't buy it, and was revised and finished exclusively for this collection.*

Shipwreck!

Players: 2-5

Playing Time: 1 hour

Equipment: A deck of cards and a way to keep score. In this game, Aces are worth 1 point, Jacks 11, Queens 12, and Kings 13. All other cards are worth their face value.

Story: *The rats are gone, but you're still here. You and your greedy pals are hustling around the deck of a sinking pirate ship, trying to scoop up as much treasure as you can hold. You'll need a little treasure to buy your way into a lifeboat, and the best lifeboats are the ones with the most treasure already in them. It's kind of complicated—or then again, maybe you're just not very smart.*

Overview: Play consists of several hands, each of which ends when the last card is drawn from the deck, and the ship sinks. At the end of each hand, players will compete to get on the lifeboats in a showdown, and then score points based on which lifeboat they board. If you board no lifeboat, you get no points for the hand. The first player to earn 200 points wins.

To Begin Each Round: Shuffle the deck and deal five cards to each player. If there are only two players, discard five cards face down. These will not be used this hand. Play starts with the dealer, and the deal moves to the left after each hand.

On Your Turn: If you do not have five cards in your hand, draw back up to five. If you draw the last card off the deck, the ship sinks immediately, and you do not take the rest of your turn.

Until the ship sinks, you have two options: **discard one card**, or **pick a fight**.

Discarding: There are four lifeboats, one for each suit. The lifeboats are represented by four discard piles. When you discard a card, place it into the lifeboat of the appropriate suit, and your turn is over.

Fighting: To pick a fight, play a card into the center of the table, and declare whom you are attacking. That player has two options: surrender and lose the fight, or play a card of higher rank than the card you played. (Suit doesn't matter.) If he plays a higher card, you may respond with an even higher card, or surrender, and so forth until one player gives up. The winner draws a random card from the loser's hand. That card goes into the winner's "**board**," a faceup collection of cards on the table.

Board cards aren't part of your hand. You can't fight with them, discard them, or lose them in fights. They only help you in the showdown.

After the fight, all cards which were played in the fight get sorted into the appropriate lifeboats. (Think of it as other pirates picking up all the stuff you threw at each other.)

Important Restriction: You cannot play the last card in your hand, unless that card is a King. This rule ensures that the winner will always be able to draw a card from the loser's hand.

Pointless Restriction: You can't challenge a player who is holding no cards. You'd have nothing to draw from him, and you can achieve the same net result by simply discarding a card.

The Showdown: When the last card in the deck is drawn, the ship sinks. At this point, it's time for each player to bribe his way into a lifeboat. Each player plays one card from his hand, face down. This card is the **Key Card**, and it declares which lifeboat you're running to. If your hand is empty, which is rare, you will go down with the ship and score no points for the round.

Once everyone has played a Key Card, reveal all the cards in everyone's hand.

If everyone ran for a different lifeboat, there's no contest. Each player gets the point value of the cards in that lifeboat. **You do not score the cards in your hand, your Key Card, or your board.**

If more than one person went for the same lifeboat, only one player will get on. The points in the lifeboat will go to the player who is holding more points in the matching suit, including his hand, his board, and his Key Card. If there is a tie, it is broken in favor of the player who has the single highest card in that suit. Remember, you score only the points in the lifeboat.

Scoring Example: It's the end of a four-player hand. Player 1 plays a Spade, Players 2 and 3 play Hearts, and Player 4 plays nothing because his hand is empty. Player 1 gets the points in the Spade lifeboat, and Player 4 gets nothing.

Players 2 and 3 compare all the Hearts they hold: Player 2 has the 6H on his board, played the QH as his Key, and holds no other Hearts. Player 3 played the 2H as his Key, and held only the 3H and the 7H in his hand. Player 2 takes the lifeboat, with 18 points of Hearts vs. 12.

Winning: Play to 200 points. If two players break 200 on the same round, the player with the highest score wins. If two players are tied at the high score, they must engage in the embarrassing Caribbean Plank Walk tied together with a ten-foot rope and clenching sharp knives in their teeth.

Strategy: The cards you play in fights and discards are crucial choices: Every card you play in this manner will wind up in a lifeboat. On the

other hand, every card you win or lose in a fight will wind up in someone's board. Early in the game, it helps to get a few cards into your board, to give yourself some leverage in the showdown. Later in the game, you must do what you can to make sure you have the Key to the right lifeboat. You will notice that the more valuable a lifeboat is, the fewer points it will require to board (the majority of that suit is in the lifeboat, and not in players' hands.) Discretion is the better part of valor: it's better to get into a small lifeboat than to try for a big one and lose. Learn to guess what the other players will probably go for, and play accordingly.

Variation for 6-8 Players: You can play **Shipwreck!** with as many as eight players, using a double deck. Deal eight hands regardless of how many players are in the game, and remove the unused hands from the game. To resolve ties during the showdown, if both players have a card of the same rank as their highest card in their Key suit, compare the second highest cards in each hand, and so on. If tied hands are exactly identical, it's time to set up the plank.

Shipwreck! was designed en route to a gaming convention and published in **Dragon** magazine under the name **Abandon Ship**. Pirates are cool.

★ ★ ★
Particle Stream
★ ★ ★

Particle Stream:

Players: 4-6
Playing Time: 15 minutes
Equipment: One pawn for each player, and a deck of cards without Jokers.

***Particle Stream** is a race, but you'll spend most of it trying to stay in the back. Players are racing through hyperspace, trying to ride the leader's particle stream and jump ahead at the last minute. Anyone who has flown through hyperspace will see quite obviously how this works.*

Before the Game: Shuffle the deck and deal one card face up to each player. The rank of these cards determines the starting order: lower cards will go first. If you deal two cards of the same rank, discard them both and deal new ones.

Build a racetrack out of the cards, with the lowest cards at the front. (Count Aces as low.) Reshuffle the rest of the deck.

Place each player's pawn next to his card, as shown in the diagram.

Now deal each player a hand of five cards, including two facedown cards and three faceup cards. All five of these cards are part of your hand, but only two of them are concealed.

The Race: Each race takes five **rounds**, in which everyone plays one card onto his current space on the track, and the moves. Before the round begins, each player must determine his play order based on his position on the track. Players who start closer to the front act earlier in the round (even if they move before they act).

The card you play goes into the pile you're currently beside, not the one where you started.

Moving: Look for the card(s) of the rank that is **closest above** the card you played (i.e., if you played a 6, look for a 7 first, then an 8, and so on). If there's no higher card, wrap around and look for the lowest card. This card (or cards, if there are multiple cards of the same rank) is your **target space**. You may swap with the player on that space, or you can stay put.

Once everyone has played and moved (if they wished), a new round begins. Remember your play order based on your current position on the track, and play the next round.

Winning: After the fifth round, whoever is in the lead wins the race. Obviously, it's important to act as late as possible in the fourth round, and to be holding just the right card.

This game is best scored over multiple races. Each game, award 0 points to the player in last, 1 to the player next to last, 2 points to the next player, and so on. Award an **extra** point to the player who won the race. For example, in the board above, the scores reading left to right would be 0, 1, 2, and 4.

***Particle Stream** was found in a junk pile and has not been published outside this collection.*

King of the Beach

Players: 3-6

Playing Time: 40 minutes

Equipment: A deck of playing cards, an extra set of 10 marker cards, and one stone.

Story: *King of the Beach* is about being the coolest people on the beach. No, really.

Setup: Each player chooses a personal card from 10 different marker cards (use interesting cards from another game, or make your own). Shuffle all 10 markers and build a pyramid as shown below. This pyramid shows who is king of the beach. The goal is to be on top of the pyramid at the end of the sixth round.

Non-player spots in the pyramid are “robot” players. They’ll play cards at random and it’s even possible for a robot to win. Perhaps too possible.

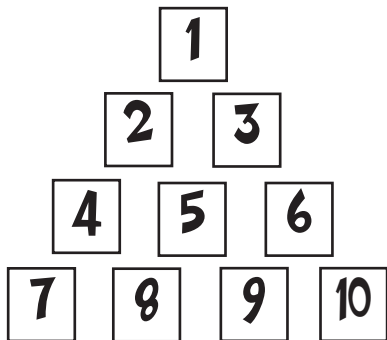
Shuffle the deck and deal a hand of three cards to each player.

On Each Round: There are six rounds in the game. Each round is broken into three phases, the **Auction**, **Aggression**, and **Action** phases.

Auction: Deal out one card for each player, face up on the table. These are the Auction cards. If the deck is empty, recycle the discards.

Starting with the player in space number 10 and proceeding backwards by the numbers, each player takes a card from the Auction cards, and puts it into his hand. The player on top never gets a choice, but that’s life at the top.

Aggression: In this phase, every position in the pyramid (live players and robots) plays a Combat card, face up onto their space in the pyramid. This play starts at the top and goes down by the numbers. Robots play their cards from the deck; live players play cards from their hands. Because of the order, the higher numbers always get to see what the lower numbers have played.



After all the Combat cards are played, each pair of neighbors will attack the position above them, in the following order: from **left to right**, then bottom to top. (Note that this is **not** in reverse numerical order.) The first fight will be spaces 7 and 8 attacking space 4.

The attack value of a card is equal to its rank, with Jacks, Queens, and Kings being worth 11, 12, and 13 points respectively, and Aces worth 1.

If the total value of both attacking cards is **equal to or greater than** the value of the card in the space above, the player (or non-player) who played the **lower value** of the two attacking cards moves up, switching places with the defeated player. If the attacking cards are tied, choose the lower card by **suit**, with Clubs being the lowest suit, then Diamonds, Hearts, and Spades.

After the fight between positions 7 and 8 and position 4, positions 8 and 9 attack position 5, and so on. Note that the card now attacking from position 8 may be the card that was just knocked out of position 4.

Goodies: After every fight is carried out, the Aggression phase is over. Any player who **moved up** after a combat (even if they also moved down) keeps the card they played in a pile of “goodies” in front of them. All other cards, including all those played by robots, are discarded.

Action: If you have particular cards in your goodies, you can take one special action during the Action phase. Only the highest card in each suit is allowed the Action, and each player can take only one Action even if he has multiple high cards. The four Actions happen in the following order:

1: Highest Spade (coolest). This player can switch places with any robot.

2: Highest Heart (sneakiest). This player can force another player to trade one goodie with him. This player gets to choose both cards.

3: Highest Diamond (richest). This player can draw a card.

4: Highest Club (toughest). This player can put a stone on any spot in the pyramid. The next Combat card in that space will be **+5.5** in value.

Winning: The object is simple. At the end of round 6, the game will end. If you’re on top of the pyramid, you win. The winner scores the point values of all the cards in his goodies pile, and the other players score nothing.

Your score doesn’t matter, since you’ve already won, but it’s the principle of the thing.

King of the Beach is a standard-deck variant of an unpublished game about corporate evil (or something), and has never been published. In fact it hasn’t even been playtested very much.

Board Games

Autumn found the author and a host of like-minded adventurers chasing our tracks through the inhospitable backroads of Canyon de Chelly, when to our great delight we happened upon an inadequately secured stash of whiskey and Mexican hardtack.

Nearly overcome as we were with hunger, it was nevertheless all I and my companions could do to prevent ourselves from forming the brittle stuff into a makeshift **Putwoody's Castle** board, and spending our declining hours competing for handfuls of differently colored gravel.

Luckily for the reader, the boards for many of these games are included with this booklet.

Putwoody's Castle

Players: 2-5

Playing Time: 10 Minutes

Equipment: 24 colored stones. The color doesn't matter, but the quantity does: we use 5 red, 8 blue, and 11 yellow stones. You also need the board for **Putwoody's Castle** and a way to keep score.

Setup: The stones start the game off the board. All players have access to the unplayed stones. The winner of the previous game goes first.

On Your Turn: Place an unplayed stone on any empty space on the castle, and score it.

Scoring: When you place a stone, you score 1 point for every stone of the same color that is touching it. For example, if you place a red stone that touches two red stones, you score 2 points.

Winning: The player with the most points wins. If the score is tied, the player who went earliest wins. For complete fairness, keep score over a series of games and rotate the lead so that everyone goes first the same number of times.

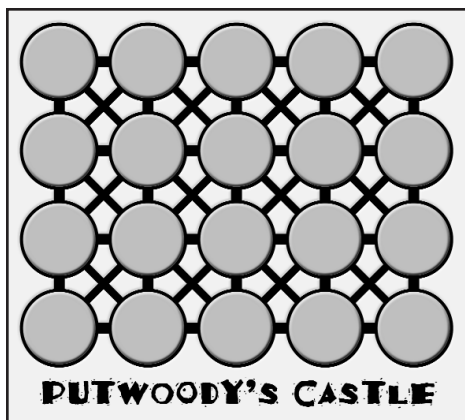
Nickie's Castle

Players: 2-5

Playing Time: 10 Minutes

Equipment: 25 colored stones: 5 red, 7 blue, and 13 yellow. You also need the **Nickie's Castle** board and a way to keep score.

Rules: The rules to **Nickie's Castle** are identical to the rules of **Putwoody's Castle**. The only difference is the slightly more interesting shape of the board and the fact that it's about Nickie instead of Putwoody.



Herman's Castle

Herman's Castle requires more stones and has more spaces on the board than the other two Castle games. The rules are also a little weirder. This version is new to this book.

Players: 2-4

Playing Time: 10 Minutes

Equipment: 30 colored stones: 10 red, 10 blue, and 10 yellow. You also need the **Herman's Castle** board and a way to keep score.

Rules: The rules are similar to Putwoody's Castle, with the following additions:

Home Corners: Each player chooses a different corner of the Castle as his home corner, or "house." Your house includes only the four spaces in your corner of the board.

Home Corner Penalty: When you place a stone in your house, you score **no points**.

Primary Color Bonus: The most common stone color in your house is your **primary color**. When you score stones of that color, you earn two points instead of one. Remember, you score nothing when you play stones in your house.

Ties for Primary Color: When there is a tie for the most common color in your house, you have no primary color and score no bonus points.

*The publication of **Putwoody's Castle** set a speed record for Cheapass Games, taking just three hours from concept to production. **Nickie's Castle** was a variation designed as a free game in a convention program. **Herman's Castle** is new to this book. Invent your own version of **Putwoody's Castle** with the objects in your house.*

Players: 3-6

Playing Time: 45-90 minutes

Equipment: You will need the **Dungeon Crawl** board, one pawn for each player, three six-sided dice, about 20 counters for each player, and six decks of playing cards without jokers.

Story: *Welcome to the Dungeon of No Return. You and your traveling companions have stumbled upon this dungeon through the generosity of your game master. Luckily, you live in a fantasy world where it's perfectly acceptable to kill creatures and take their stuff, so you will win this game by killing some creatures and taking their stuff.*

Setup: Each player starts by building a “character” out of three cards: a **Heart**, a **Club**, and a **Spade**. Each card must be between 2 and 10, and your total starting value must be 16 points or less. The attributes they represent are as follows:

Speed (Spades): Speed helps characters dodge **Traps** and use **Weapons**.

Power (Clubs): Power is your character's basic strength in **combat**.

Health (Hearts): Health represents the amount of damage you can take before you **die**.

After each player builds his character, shuffle the rest of the cards into a single deck. If the deck runs out, which is unlikely, reshuffle the discards and replace it.

Put everyone's pawn on the “Start” space. Determine randomly who will go first; play proceeds to the left.

Movement: To start your turn, roll one 6-sided die and move that far along the path. You must take the entire move unless you choose to join a combat (described below). You react only to the space where you stop. (If you land on False Exit and jump back, you **do** fight the Monster.)

Joining Combat: If you walk past a player who is engaged in combat, you can choose to stop there and join in the combat. If you **start** on a space where a combat is taking place, you can't move and must participate in the combat.

Locked Doors: The track is composed of five segments, or zones. Each zone has a locked door at the end. No player can pass through the door at the end of a zone until all the players are in that zone. If you reach the end of a zone before the entire party has made it into the zone, you take the dotted path back to the start of that zone.

There is no locked door on the End space, so you don't have to wait for everyone to enter section 5. When the first player exits, the game is over and the player with the highest score wins.

Game Definitions:

Experience Points: Experience Points are counters you earn either by **killing Monsters** or **escaping Traps**. You can use Experience Points to upgrade your Skills, or you can turn them in for points at the end. To upgrade a Skill, spend three Experience Points and put a counter on the card, representing a +1 to that Skill. You can upgrade each Skill as much as you like, whenever you like. Even during combat, even after you've rolled the dice. Sure. Why not.

Damage: When you take a point of damage, you put one counter on your Heart card. (Be sure to keep your damage counters distinct from the upgrades to your Health!) If you ever take more damage than the value of your Heart, you die and leave the game. If you're not dead, you can heal damage by finding Food.

Board Spaces: Most spaces are marked with a card. When you land on one of these, draw a card. Drawing cards like this is called finding cards “in the open,” as opposed to finding a card in a Treasure Pile. Other spaces have small Monsters or special instructions written on them. If a space has instructions, you follow them when you land there. **Exception:** You **do not** draw a card if you stop on a card space where a combat is taking place. Instead, you only join the combat.

Cards: You can find cards in two different places: In the open (on the board) and in a Treasure Pile. You will reveal a Treasure Pile after you kill a Big Monster.

Face Cards: Face cards are **Big Monsters**. When you find a Face card in the open, you enter combat with it. (Note that Face cards are often treated as different Monsters based on the rules of the zone you're in.) The Treasure, Health, and Power values of the three kinds of Monsters are printed on the board.

To represent the Monster's health, place counters on the card equal to its Heart value, shown on the board. (Putting the hit points on the card makes tracking combat much easier.)

The player who first discovers the Monster immediately fights the first round of combat with it. Both the player and the Monster roll three dice, and add their Power value. The higher total wins. In a tie, the player wins.

If you win the fight, take one Health counter off the Monster and keep it as an Experience Point. If you lose, add one Damage counter to your own Heart card.

When you are in combat with a Monster, you can't move away. When your turn comes, you will take another swing at it. If there are other players in the same space, they are stuck in the combat and will also fight the Monster on their turn.

When the Monster loses its last Health point, you have killed it. Discard the Monster and draw a Treasure Pile as described below. Whoever killed the Monster gets first pick of the Treasure.

Combat continues until the Monster, or the whole group fighting it, is dead. If everyone in the combat dies, the Monster goes away.

Treasure Piles: The player who kills the Monster turns over the Monster's Treasure pile.

The Treasure Pile includes all Diamonds that were recently found out in the open (see below), plus a number of cards from the deck: 2 cards for a Jack, 3 for a Queen, and 4 for a King.

Reveal the appropriate number of cards from the deck. If any of them is a Face card, discard them and draw replacements. If any of them is a trap (A-10 of Spades), it will hit the player who killed the Monster. He can disarm it for one Experience point, or take one point of damage for each one he can't disarm. Discard any Traps after dealing with them, but don't draw replacements.

The Treasure Pile should now be composed of some number of Small Diamonds, Clubs, and Hearts. The player who killed the Monster takes one card from that pile, then the next player in the combat (proceeding left), and so on around the table until all the cards are distributed. Note that some cards act differently when found in Treasure Piles than when found in the open.

Small Cards: "Small cards" means everything lower than Face cards, including Aces. In this game, Aces are worth one point.

Ace through Ten of Diamonds: Small Diamonds are Gold. Gold is worth points, assuming you live long enough to spend it. If you find Gold in the open, you must set it aside. It will be "deferred" and added to the next Treasure Pile that gets drawn.

Ace through Ten of Spades: Small Spades are Traps. If you find a Trap, whether in the open or in a Treasure Pile, compare it to your Speed. If the Trap is equal to or lower than your Speed, you disarm the Trap and earn one Experience Point. If the Trap is higher, you take one point of damage. For example, if your Speed is 4 and you find a 7 of Spades, you take 1 damage. Whether you disarmed it or not, discard the Trap.

Ace through Ten of Clubs: Small Clubs can be Monsters or Weapons. In the open, Small Clubs are Monsters with no treasure. When you find one, roll three dice and add your Power value. The Monster does the same (the value of the card is its Power value). If your total is equal or higher, you kill the Monster and earn an Experience Point. If your total is lower, the Monster deals you one point of damage and disappears. Clubs printed on the board act the same as ones you draw.

Dungeon Crawl Reference Chart:			
Card	Suit	In The Open	In Treasure Pile
A-10	Spades	Trap	Trap
A-10	Clubs	Sm. Monster	Weapon
A-10	Diam.	Deferred Gold	Gold
A-10	Hearts	Food	Food
J-K	Any	Big Monster	Ignore & Replace

In a Treasure Pile, Small Clubs are Weapons. You can only carry a Weapon if it is less than or equal to your Speed, and you can hold only one Weapon at a time. If you have a Weapon, you add the Weapon's value to all your combat rolls. If you take a new Weapon, you must discard the old one.

If no one is able (or willing) to pick up a Weapon from a Treasure Pile, discard it.

Ace through Ten of Hearts: No matter where you find them, Small Hearts are Food. Food lets you remove Damage Counters, one counter for each point of Food.

You can only carry one piece of Food with you, but you can eat a new one and still hang on to an old one. For example, suppose you are carrying a 10 Food, and have taken 4 points of damage. You find a 2 Food in a Treasure Pile. You can eat the 2 Food, discard it, heal 2 points of damage, and still hold on to your 10 for later.

Food can be eaten at the moment it's needed, so if you will die from a Monster attack, you can discard your Food to repair the damage.

Special Board Zones: For added adventure-like quality, each of the five zones on the board has slightly different Monsters. For example, in Zone 1, since you're just getting started, you treat all Face cards as Jacks. (There's nothing on the board saying what's special about Zone 3 because it's the one that's normal.)

Scoring: The game ends when one player reaches the "End" space. Your score is equal to the face value of your Diamonds, the face value of your Weapon, the number of Experience Points you have, and the total points you've added to your Skills. Note that raw experience is therefore worth 3 times as much as upgraded Skills.

Die and Continue Option: We think if you died early, you deserved it because you built a stupid character. But if you feel that sticking around is the only way to have fun (assuming you don't mind making the game take longer for all the smart people) do this: when you die, you lose all your experience, upgrades, and collected cards, and re-start the game with the same character in the same place you died.

Dungeon Crawl first appeared in the Dork Tower comic under the name "Dork Wanderings."

Hotel Transylvania

Players: 3-6

Playing Time: 1 hour

Equipment: the **Hotel Transylvania** Board; eight 6-sided dice, including six dice of different colors for the guests, plus two white dice for rolling; a score pad and pencil; about 30 Poker chips in a unique color for each player; and a standard deck of playing cards without jokers.

The Goal: *To scare the bejeezus out of tourists in a haunted bed and breakfast.*

The Guests: The six colored dice represent guests of the inn. The guests are running scared around the board, and the number showing on each guest represents his level of agitation. Each guest starts as a “2,” (mildly spooked) but can grow as high as a “6” (completely freaked) before he wigs out and gets smaller again.

The Ghosts: Each Poker chip represents a ghost which can “haunt” a room on the board. Different ghosts belong to different players, which is why they need to be different colors. By the end of the game, every numbered room will contain at least one ghost, and many rooms will contain several ghosts.

Setup: Put one guest (the colored dice) on each of the six doors. Each guest starts as a “2.” Shuffle the deck and deal a hand of four cards to each player. Put the remainder of the deck on the table with space for a discard pile beside it. Determine randomly who goes first; play proceeds to the left.

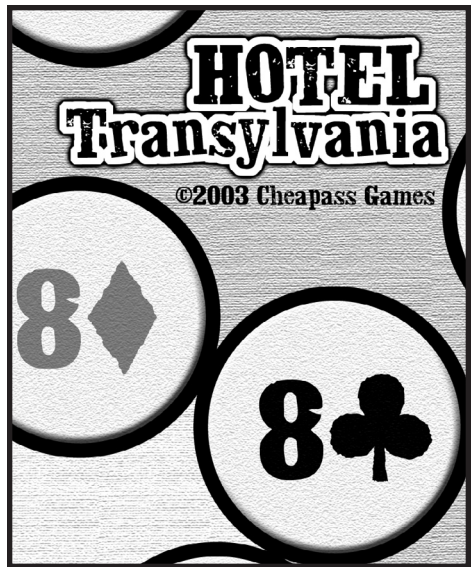
On Each Turn: You will perform three actions, in the following order: Draw, Play, and Move.

1: Draw. Draw cards until you have five, if there are cards left in the deck.

2: Play. Play one card from your hand, and “haunt” the corresponding room. Haunting the room means that you put one of your chips on top of the stack in that room.

Haunting Chain Reactions: If there are haunted rooms to either side of the room you just played, you will haunt those rooms as well. Place chips on top of the stacks in each haunted room in both directions, until you reach a space with no chips. **Exception:** You do not add a chip to a room where you are **already** the top ghost, but you do continue haunting rooms beyond your own chip if they are still part of the same chain.

Playing a card is mandatory, and taking over adjacent rooms is automatic. You cannot choose not to haunt an entire string of connected rooms, even in the rare instance when you might want to.



3: Move one Guest. First, declare which guest you want to move. Then roll two dice and advance the guest by that amount, clockwise around the board.

Knowing that your most likely roll will be 6, 7, or 8, you obviously want to choose a guest that's likely to do you some good, either by landing on a space you already haunt, or by landing on a room for which you hold the card in your hand (see Surprise, below).

If the guest lands on any numbered room, **whether it's haunted or not**, that guest is “scared,” and his rank increases by one point. **Exception:** If the guest is a 6, he “freaks out” instead, as described later. Freaked-out guests are worth negative points.

Scoring: When a guest lands in a haunted room, the players who haunt that room will score a total number of points equal to the guest's rank, before his rank increases. For example, if a level 4 guest lands in a room, the ghosts in that room split 4 points and the guest becomes a 5.

The points are split as follows: The first **two** points go to the top ghost, then one point goes to each chip down the stack. If there are any points left at the bottom, return to the top and continue distributing points one at a time. For example, if a 5-ranked guest lands on a haunted room, the ghosts in that room share the points as follows:

One Ghost: All five points go to that player.

Two Ghosts: Two points go to the top, then one to the bottom, one more to the top, and one more to the bottom, for a total of three/two.

Three Ghosts: Two points to the top, one to

each chip under it, one more to the top, for a total of three/one/one.

Four Ghosts: Two points to the top, one to each chip below it.

Five or More Ghosts: The fifth ghost and below get no points in this situation.

More than one chip in the same stack might be owned by the same player, meaning that he will get points from both ghosts.

Freaking Out: 6-ranked guests are dangerous. If a 6-ranked guest lands in a numbered room, whether it's haunted or not, he **re-rolls** and becomes a random rank between 1 and 6. The ghosts haunting that room lose points equal to the guest's **new rank**, distributed in the same manner as positive points.

So, for example, if the guest freaks out and becomes a 3, then three negative points are distributed. If he rolls a 6, there are six negative points to go around, and the guest is still dangerous!

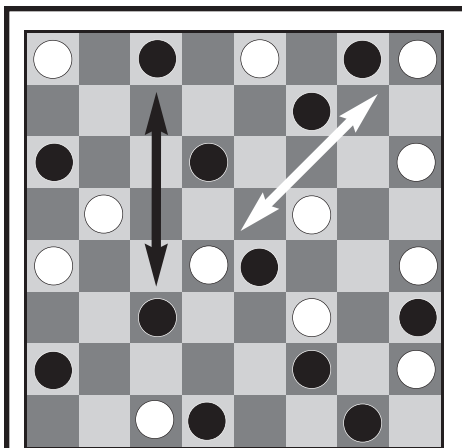
The Surprise: If a guest stops on a room which is not yet haunted, the player who holds the card for that room may play it right away as a "Surprise," and score the points for scaring that guest. Surprise is always an option, whether it's your turn or not, and you might even Surprise a 6 if you're willing to lose a random number of points to capture a particular room. However, when you play a Surprise, you **do not** haunt the neighboring rooms as you would with a normal play.

Ending the Turn: After the Guest moves and the points are scored, the turn passes to the left.

Ending the Game: The game continues until every card is played. This means that several turns will pass with no one drawing cards, and some players may have a turn or two in which they cannot play cards because their hands are empty. After the last card is played, finish that turn, and the player with the highest score wins.

Breaking Ties: This can be a close game, with scores in a five-player game averaging about fifteen points. If the score is tied at the end of the game, then the player whose ghost is on top in the highest ranked room wins the tie, with Spades being the highest suit, and Kings the highest cards. If none of the tied players is top ghost in any room, then the tie is won by the player who can belt out the longest uninterrupted howl.

Hotel Transylvania is the original version of a game published in **Dragon** magazine as "Dead and Breakfast." It has a new board and slightly different rules in this version.



Queensland

Players: 2

Playing Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: The pieces from a Checkers set: an 8 x 8 board and 12 checkers for each side.

To Begin: Clear the board and give each player twelve checkers.

Each Turn: You will do two things. First, you may **move** one of your pieces in a straight and open line, orthogonally or diagonally. This is similar to a Queen's move in Chess, but you don't capture.

Moving is always optional. You will never make a move on your first turn, as you have no pieces on the board.

Second, you will **place** a new piece in any open space on the board. Placing a piece is mandatory. When the last piece is placed, the game is over, and scored as follows:

Scoring: Each player scores points as follows: For every unbroken path that connects two pieces of your color, you score one point for every empty space along that path. For example, the white-to-white path in the figure above is worth 3 points for White, and the black-to-black path is worth 4 points for Black. Score every connection, add up the points, and the player with the high score is the winner!

You'll notice that going first in this game is a slight disadvantage, so you should keep score for two games. To play with more players, reduce the starting checkers so that the total number is still 24 (or, with 5 players, 25). For variety, try playing to lowest score!



Graveyard Shift

Players: 2-6

Playing Time: 1 hour

Equipment: A pawn for each player, a deck of playing cards without jokers, and several colored chips for each player. The chips must be a different color for each player, and you should be able to stack them. Poker chips are ideal.

Story: *Being dead isn't all it's cracked up to be. On most nights you just lie there looking at the inside of your box, wondering whether you remembered to turn out the lights before you left the material world. But every so often, you and your buddies get to dress up and have a little fun.*

*It usually happens on Halloween, during full moons, on the occasional Friday the thirteenth, or pretty much anytime one of the walking dead comes by with a keg of beer. The Graveyard comes alive, the lost spirits start wandering around, and it's time to play **Graveyard Shift**.*

About the Board: You'll have to make your own board for **Graveyard Shift**, because it's so big

and so simple that we couldn't be bothered to include it with this booklet.

Draw 18 card-sized rectangles on a large piece of paper as shown in the mini-board on page 19. Write the game information from that diagram on the spaces in the middle, and you've got a board.

If your memory is good, you really don't even need the board, though you might want to use something to mark the edges of the Graveyard just so you don't lose the outline.

To Begin: The cards in this game represent Lost Spirits who are wandering out of Open Graves. The players are Zombies, Monsters, Vampires, and the occasional Gravedigger, all of whom like to befriend Lost Spirits by singing to them. And by "befriend," what we really mean is "catch in a jar."

To prepare the deck, remove the Face cards (J, Q, and K). They will not be used. Separate the remaining pack into two piles. The first pile contains 2s through 5s, and will be used to create the starting board. The remaining pile contains the rest of the deck: 6s through 10s, and Aces.

Shuffle the pack containing 2s through 5s. Deal these cards onto the board face down, putting one card on each space **except** the two Start spaces in the middle.

Shuffle the remainder of the deck (The 6s through 10s and the Aces) and set it aside. It will be the draw pile.

Determine randomly who will go first. Play will proceed to the left. Put each player's Pawn on the Start space that corresponds to that player's turn order. In other words, players 1, 3, and 5 go on one Start space, players 2, 4, and 6 go on the other.

Objective: During the game you will be capturing Lost Spirits by singing to them. Each card is worth its face value; Aces are worth one point. The first player to reach the target score wins, which varies with the number of players:

2 Players: Play to 40 points.

3 Players: Play to 30 points.

4 Players: Play to 20 points.

5 Players: Play to 16 points.

6 Players: Play to 14 points.

On Each Turn: Each turn consists of six steps in the following order: **Move, Reveal, Sing, Capture, Generate, and Shift**. (If you think that's a lot, check out Chief Herman's **Establishment of the Industrial Proletariat** on Page 25.)

Step 1, Move: First, you **must** move your Pawn exactly one space in any orthogonal direction (i.e., not diagonally). You can move into any

space, whether or not it is occupied by another player or by a wandering Spirit.

Step 2, Reveal: If you move onto a facedown card, you must reveal it by turning it face up.

Step 3, Sing: If you wish, you may place a chip of your color on the Spirit in your space. This chip represents a lovely song you have sung to it, in the hopes of making the Spirit your “friend.” Singing to a Spirit is optional, but is usually a good idea unless someone nearby could steal the Spirit after you’ve sung to it.

Step 4, Capture: Under certain conditions, you will capture your Spirit. Capture happens under the following circumstances:

Method 1, It’s Full. If the Spirit is carrying a number of chips equal to or greater than its rank, you might capture it. For example, if there are five or more chips on a 5. You will capture this Spirit only if you have **at least as many** chips on it as any other player. For example, if you have two Chips on it, another player has two, and a third player has only one, you capture the Spirit. If you only have one and another player has two, the Spirit remains on the board.

Method 2, It’s convinced. If the card has **more than half** of its rank in your color of chips, you capture it. For example, if a 5 has only three chips on it, and they are all yours, you capture it. Note that this number must be more than half, so you would need four chips to capture a 6.

When a Spirit is captured, all the chips that were on it return to their owners. The player who captured the Spirit keeps the card and adds it to his score.

Step 5, Generate New Spirits: When a Spirit is captured, the other players give you a round of applause. This applause wakes other Spirits, who emerge from the Open Graves if those spaces are empty.

New Spirits come from the deck, and enter the board face down.

New Spirits only emerge after another Spirit is captured, not necessarily on every turn.

New Spirits can only emerge in empty Open Graves. In other words, do not deal a new card to a Grave that already has one.

Step 6, Shift the Graveyard: Last, you may move one or more of the Spirits across the board like pieces in a sliding puzzle, by the following rules:

- You can not move Spirits into other Spirits.
- You can move any number of Spirits as long as they are connected in a straight line.
- You can move the Spirit(s) several spaces, as

long as the path is straight and clear.

If you move multiple Spirits, you must move them in the direction that they are joined. For example, if the two Spirits are joined in an east-west line, you can’t move them north or south. If you are only moving one Spirit, you can move it in any direction, of course.

Anything sitting on the Spirits you move (players and chips) travels with them.

Players in empty spaces are picked up by the leading card, and then move along with it.

If the Graveyard is completely full of Spirits, no shifting is possible.

Winning: The first player to hit the target score (or higher) is the winner.

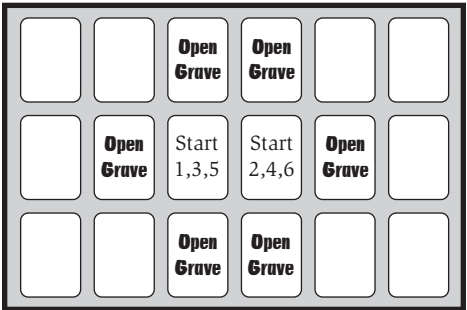
Strategy: It can sometimes be inadvisable to sing to a Spirit, since this can make the Spirit easy for another player to capture. Before you add a chip, make sure no one else is going to jump on that Spirit before you can take it. Also, make sure that other players can’t do too much to drag you away from it!

The endgame usually goes like this: Players will conspire to keep the leader from getting the points he needs. While this happens, other players will slowly creep towards the target score. Eventually, it becomes impossible to keep everyone from going out. By distributing plenty of chips early in the game, you make it harder for other players to shut you out.

Use the Open Graves to your advantage. If you want more Spirits to enter the board, open them up. If you think there are plenty of Spirits already, cover them. If you shift the Graveyard properly, you can lock it up completely!

One last thing: when capturing Sprits, always remember to punch holes in the top of your jar.

Graveyard Shift was originally published (with a board) in **Games Unplugged** magazine, and appears here in more or less its original form. Art by Brian Snōddy from **The Great Brain Robbery**.



The *Graveyard Shift* Board.

Board Game Project #55

Players: 4

Playing Time: 30 minutes

Equipment: A checkerboard, seven Poker chips in six colors (42 chips total), pawns for every player, a score pad, and one 6-sided die. If you have a color die that matches your chips, this is better.

Story: *There is no story to **Board Game Project #55**. Okay, if you must, an army of radioactive and cancer-resistant rats have escaped from a secret underground laboratory near Strategic Air Command in Omaha, Nebraska, leaving behind a detachment of four wiry, intellectual mice to guard the facility and kill anyone who enters. Bored, the mice invent this game.*

The Structure: Players spend several rounds racing from one side of the board to the other. During play, you will spend and accumulate Poker chips that help you cross the board.

Setting Up: You need seven chips in six different colors. If you have a color die, use chips that match the faces of the die. If you have a normal 6-sided die, you'll need to make a chart that correlates the numbers to the chip colors.

Each player starts with one chip of each color. This is your "stockpile," and goes on your starting space (the dotted circles on the outer ring of the board) Distribute the other 18 chips randomly on the 18 black spaces in the interior of the board, as shown here. Place each player's pawn on top of his stockpile.

Movement takes place only on the interior black spaces of the board. The chips are **stepping stones**: you can walk on connected stepping stones as described in the next section. You cannot walk on the white spaces or on the outside row of the board, and you cannot walk onto a starting space (even your own).

On Your Turn: First, roll the die. This determines the color of stones you will be allowed to walk on.

Before you move, you may put chips of this color from your stockpile onto any pile on the board, stacking them on top of the chips that are already there. You can add as many chips as you like in this manner.

Exceptions: You can't add a chip to an occupied pile (one with another pawn on it), or to a pile that's already got that color on top.

Moving: You can now step as far as you like along any path of chips that's the the same as the color you rolled.

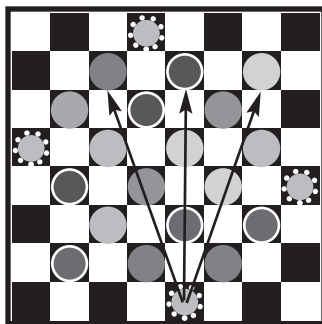
If you land on any of the three spaces opposite your starting space (your "target" spaces), you end the round and score.

Other pawns count as wild spaces, sort of. You can move through them like spaces of any color, but you can't stop on them. **Exception:** You can finish the round by stopping on an enemy pawn that's in one of your target spaces, but if you do this, you do not score any points.

Restocking: After you roll, you can choose not to move, and instead **restock** your stockpile. To restock, take all the chips **beneath** the chip you're standing on, and put them into your stockpile. Leave the top chip on the board. For example, if you are standing on a pile of three chips, you will take the bottom two.

Stealing: If your roll is such that you cannot move to another space, even by deploying new chips from your stockpile, **and** if you can't restock (because you are on a stack of only one chip), you are allowed to **steal** one chip. The chip you steal must be the same color as your roll, and it must come from the board if possible, as follows:

If there are any **buried** chips of that color on the board, take one of those. If that's impossible, you may take a chip of that color from the stockpile of another player. If that's impossible too, you do nothing.



Scoring: When you reach the opposite side of the board, you win the round, and score the number of chips in your stockpile. Record your score and return every pawn to its starting space. The turn continues to the left from whoever ended the round, and the board remains as it is.

As mentioned above, if you finish the round by landing on another player, you score no points. You might do this to prevent another player from going out, because ending the round sends everyone back to the start spaces.

After the round is over, nothing changes but the players' positions. Your stockpiles and the stacks on the board remain the same. The first player to score eleven points wins the game.

Board Game Project #55 was created as a free game for **Wired** magazine and appears here in more or less its original form. It was not, as legend would have it, invented by mice.

Land Grab

Players: 2

Playing Time: 15 minutes

Equipment: A Chess set and board.

Story: *You and your opponent are settlers racing to control your own slice of the American West. While your paperwork languishes in the home-stead office, you play this game.*

Setup: The board starts empty, and each player takes all the Pieces of one color ("Piece includes Pawns). Determine randomly who will go first.

Goal: You are trying to enclose more than half the board, including your home row, with an unbroken line of your own Pieces. Black has just won the example game below.

On Each Turn: You may either **create** a new Piece or **move** an existing Piece.

Creating a Piece: Pieces enter the game in empty spaces on your first row. Creation of a new Piece is based on its point value:

Pawn: 0 Points

Rook: 2 Points

Knight: 3 Points

Bishop: 4 Points

Queen: 5 Points

King: 6 Points

To create a new Piece, there must be a number of Pieces already in that column equal to the Piece's point value. For example, to bring a Bishop onto the board, the column where it enters must have at least 4 Pieces in it. The Piece count includes your Pieces and enemy Pieces. At the beginning of the game, you can create only Pawns.

You can't create more of any Piece than you really have. In other words, you can create only 8 Pawns, 2 Rooks, 1 Queen, and so on.

Moving Pieces: All Pieces move exactly as they do in Chess but, with the exception of the King, they **can't capture**. Pawns can make a

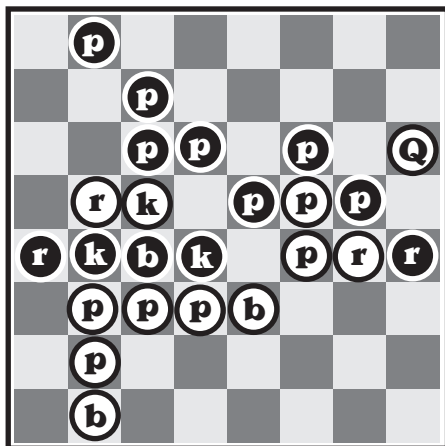
"near-miss" move, which is diagonally forward into a space that was vacated by an enemy Piece on the previous turn. This is similar to the Pawn's capture in Chess, but one turn late.

As in Chess, Pawns have the option of moving two spaces forward on their first move.

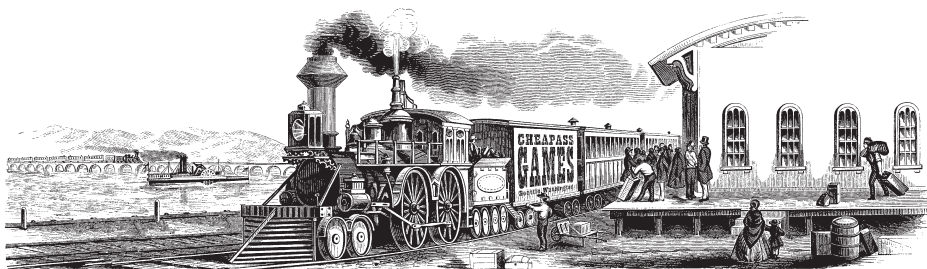
Winning: To win, you must cordon off more than half the board, including your entire starting row, with a line of Pieces that are adjacent either orthogonally or diagonally. Your territory includes the spaces those Pieces are on, as well as all spaces (occupied or not) on your side of the line. Whoever takes over half the board first wins the game.

Land Grab was actually invented by James Ernest in a dream. In the dream it was the far future: a random gamer at a random convention wanted to play this game with him, a game he'd published many years previously and entirely forgotten. If you are that player, please leave him alone when you see him.

Black



White



Pocket Billiards

A confluence of bizarre circumstances including a surge in the dollar, an unexpected flock of birds, and the unfortunate derailment of a passenger train precipitated my arrival in that most unsophisticated of all Earthly places, Kansas.

Deprived as I was of a proper billiard table, yet endowed with an embarrassing wealth of quarters and free time, I was forced to make do with a local tavern's pocket billiard table and its assortment of fifteen miscellaneous balls, many of which were not even intended for the game.

Fortunately I was familiar with no fewer than three pocket billiards variants that do not require a specific set of balls. It was also my good luck that one of these was a game that can be played alone, and that each game among them requires neither a particularly un-warped cue nor the aptitude of a sober and well-rested player.

Magic Hate Ball

Players: 2-6

Playing Time: 10 minutes

Equipment: A pool table and 16 balls.

Magic Hate Ball is a handicap series game, i.e., a game in which players compete to lower their handicaps over a series of short games.

Setup: Write each player's handicap on a white-board or score card. This is your starting score. If you are just starting the game, each player begins with a score of 4.

Rack fifteen balls in any configuration. All balls in this game are the same and there are no called shots.

The break goes to the player with the lowest handicap, or to a random player if there is a tie.

The Opening Break: To start the game, break from anywhere behind the Head String. On the break, it is impossible to either score points or lose points. If you sink any balls, you will continue; if not, the turn passes to the next player.

Scoring: On all shots but the opening break, you earn 1 point for each ball you sink (assuming a legal shot), and you lose 1 point if you sink nothing. Thus, if your inning consists of sinking one ball on the first shot and sinking nothing on your second, your score for the inning is 0.

There are no called shots in Magic Hate Ball. Whatever you sink, however you sink it, is worth 1 point, unless your shot was not legal.

Legal Shot: To make a legal shot you must strike the cue ball so that it hits another ball, and after that, a ball must reach a rail or a pocket.

Fouls: All fouls have the same penalty in **Magic Hate Ball**: You drop out of the game and your handicap goes up by one point.

Fouls include scratching (putting the cue ball off the table or into a pocket), failure to make a legal shot, and other generally accepted fouls like breaking your stick, pouring whiskey on the table, or talking on the phone when it's your turn.

After a scratch, the next player takes the cue ball in hand behind the Head String, and must make first contact either with an object ball that is below the Head String, or with the Foot Rail.

Re-Racking: If only one object ball remains on the table, re-rack the other fourteen balls, leaving an empty space at the top of the rack, and continue shooting. **Do not** move either the fifteenth ball or the cue ball unless it's inside the rack.

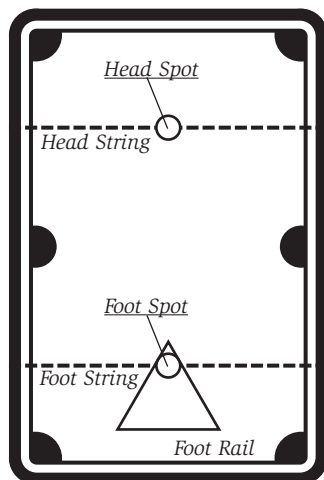
If an object ball is inside the rack, re-rack it with the others. If the cue ball is inside the rack, move it to the Head Spot.

Winning: If you have 10 or more points at the end of an inning, you win. If you have 0 or fewer points at the end of an inning, you lose. Every player who loses adds 1 point to his handicap; the winner subtracts 1 point.

If all your opponents foul out, you haven't won, and your handicap doesn't change.

It's possible to have a negative handicap. You can still stay in the game if, on your first inning, you manage to finish with a positive score.

The overall winner is the player with the lowest handicap when you decide to stop.



Wild Bill

Players: 2-5

Playing Time: 20 minutes

Equipment: A pool table and 4 balls.

*Wild Bill is a variant of a traditional 3-ball game called **Cowboy**.*

The Break: Place a ball on each of these three spots: the Head Spot, the Foot Spot, and the Center Spot (the exact center of the table). You can break from anywhere behind the Head String, and you must make first contact with the ball on the Foot Spot.

Fouls: Legal shots and fouls are the same as defined under Magic Hate Ball. If you scratch, the incoming player places the ball behind the Head String, and must shoot below it.

Scoring: You do not have to call shots. For each ball you sink, you earn a point. For each carom (defined below) you earn 2 points. You earn 5 points for a double carom.

To continue your inning you must make at least **2 points** with each shot. If you make a legal shot that isn't a continuing shot (i.e., if you don't score 2 points or more) you end this inning and pass the turn to the next player. If you foul, you lose your points for the inning.

When a ball is sunk, immediately replace it on the empty Spot that's closest to the pocket where it went in. (If the ball went into a side pocket and only the Center spot is covered, put the ball on the Head Spot.)

Caroms: A "carom" is a shot in which the cue ball makes contact with two object balls (hitting a rail first is not required). If the cue ball strikes all three balls, it's a 5-point "double carom." Striking the same ball multiple times does not count as a carom, and hitting the same pair more than once isn't worth extra points.

Winning: To win, you must score at least 30 points. Also, you must make a finishing shot that is worth at least 2 points. As soon as you make a 2-point shot and have at least 30 points, you win.

Examples of Play: On the break, Mike sinks the ball that was on the Foot Spot, but scores no other points. He gets 1 point and his inning is over. Dave makes a 2-point carom, and continues, but fouls on his second shot, losing his 2 points and passing the turn. At the end of the game, Mike has 29 points, and sinks one ball. He has 30 points, but he doesn't win. Dave has 28, makes a 2-point carom, and wins.

One Ball (A.K.A. Hate Ball Solitaire)

Players: 1

Playing Time: 20 minutes

Equipment: A pool table and 16 balls.

***One Ball** is a solitaire variation of **Magic Hate Ball**. It retains the basic scoring structure, but is otherwise quite different. The challenge is to clear the table before being disqualified.*

The Break: Rack fifteen balls and break from anywhere behind the Head String.

Shooting: Unlike in **Magic Hate Ball**, you must call your shots. "Calling" means declaring ball and pocket only; you don't have to describe the path the ball will take. Each time you miss, you must **spot** a ball, as described below. **Exception:** On the break, there is no calling requirement and no penalty for not sinking a ball.

Aside from the break, if you ever miss four shots in a row, you lose.

Spotting: Spotting means bringing a sunk ball back onto the table and putting it on the Foot Spot. If there's already a ball on the Foot Spot, spot the ball as close as possible directly below the Foot Spot, in contact with the obstructing ball if necessary.

If the entire path to the Foot Rail is blocked, spot the ball above the Foot Spot.

If you have no balls left to spot, you lose. This means that if you don't sink anything on the break, you can lose the game by missing the second shot.

Legal Shots: The definition of a legal shot is the same as in Magic Hate Ball. If you make an illegal shot or otherwise foul, you lose. Balls pocketed by mistake are not penalized.

Winning: You win if you clear the table without missing four shots in a row, without making a foul shot, and without running out of balls to spot.

Notes: To stay even in **One Ball**, you have to sink a ball on every other shot. If you're a pool shark, winning this game is a piece of cake, but it's tough enough for normal people. If you want to make this game harder, you can probably figure out how, but one good way is to keep a **total count** of all the shots you take, and try to beat your lowest total.

All three of these games are part of the gaming repertoire at James Ernest's house. They have never been published.

Unplayable Games

*It gives me great pleasure to present to you these two magnificent unplayable games, one by myself and the other by the pedantic and inexplicably popular **James Ernest**.*

*The first, **Pontifuse**, is at its heart a very simple game, though I think you'll agree that Mister Ernest has gone out of his way to disguise that inescapable fact. The second offering, **The Establishment of the Industrial Proletariat**, is quite the opposite, the beginnings of a sublime game which I hope will one day help individuals like myself realize our true potential through the domination of entire nations of imbeciles.*

Pontifuse:

Players: 2

Playing Time: 20 minutes

Equipment: Pencil and paper.

Story: *You and your opponent represent rich merchants battling over a territory in medieval France. Use Archers, Footmen, Knights, and Princesses to dominate the political and financial landscape, and achieve ultimate power through intellectual combat.*

To Begin: Create a playing field as follows: From any point in the upper left-hand (northwest) quadrant of a sheet of paper, proceed one inch east and create a three-inch line bearing due south three inches. Duplicate this line one inch farther east. These are the “Lines of Versailles.” Then, from the terminus of the second Line of Versailles, proceed 1.41 inches northeast and create a three-inch line bearing due west. Duplicate this line one inch farther north. These are the “Lines of the Commonwealth.”

Determine randomly who goes first. You may do this by any fair means, including the Curtiss-Meade Subjective Randomizing Equation (for two); the Zack and Freshman Mobile Player Sort Algorithm (Steeves, 2nd ed. p. 48-51); or by flipping a coin.

To flip a coin, determine randomly who will flip the coin. Using thumb and index finger, that player must impart both a slight upward push and a reasonable degree of spin to the coin. While the coin is airborne, the player who did not flip the coin must choose either the “Heads” or the “Tails” result and must announce his preference in a stout voice before the coin lands. Next, examine the outcome of the flip: if the coin has landed with its heads side up, and the player called heads, or if the coin has landed with its tails side

up, and the player called tails, then that player will go first. In all other situations, that player will go second.

The player who will go first is called the **Resonade**, or “Loud One.” The player who will go second is known as the **Punchinade**, or “Quiet One.” The Punchinade may decide to play either the English or Basque army; the Resonade must be the other.

On Each Turn: You will attempt to control one aspect of medieval French politics by placing your army's mark in one of the nine territories described by the Lines of Versailles and the Lines of the Commonwealth.

If the Punchinade has declared himself to be English, then the Punchinade's mark is a circle, or hoop, and the Resonade's mark is an inclined cross, or letter “X.” If the Punchinade has declared himself to be Basque, the same is true. This means that regardless of the affiliation of the Punchinade, his mark is always the hoop.

To place your mark on the board, use any writing device or marking tool to make the mark squarely in the middle of any of the nine squares (“territories”) delimited by the Lines of the Commonwealth and of Versailles and an imaginary square circumscribing the board.

You cannot mark outside the board and you cannot mark in any territory already occupied by either one of your own marks or one of your opponent's. You also cannot place your mark on any segment of any line, nor can you mark at the intersection of two lines.

Meanings of the Marks: Marks on the board represent regions under your control, which in turn create zones of power and ultimately decide the winner of the game.

A mark made by the English army in the northwest corner of the board represents a Merchant Family, or “Pontifuse.” This is also true of a mark made in the southeast corner by the Basque army. In general, the definitions of each of the nine territories are mirrored in this fashion along the Northeast-Southwest axis of the board, meaning that marks in the three territories along that axis have the same meaning for both players.

For the English, then, the nine territories starting from the upper left and reading left to right, then top to bottom, are as follows: **Merchant Family** (Pontifuse); **Princess** (Helion); **King** (Dunwoody); **Archer** (Drawbow); **Knight** (Guillaume); **Bishop** (Pontifex); **Cowardly Lion** (Zang); **Footman** (Treadwell); and **Rectory** (Majestic Holiday Destination).

The territories for the Basque are mirrored from these as described above, with the King,

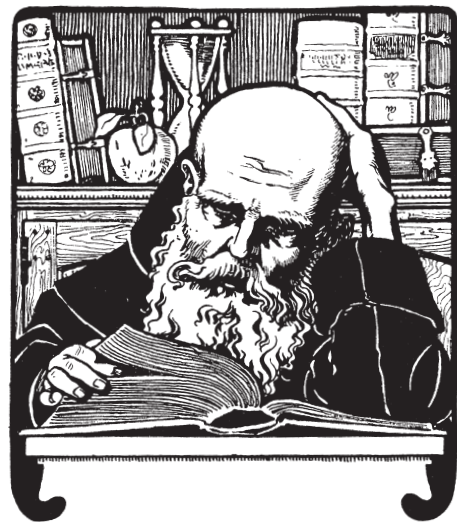
Knight, and Cowardly Lion being the same spaces for both players.

Once you have made your mark on the board, pass the marking instrument to your opponent. This signifies the end of your turn.

Winning: The game ends when all nine territories have been marked, or when no more marks can be made. Then, score the game as follows: If either player controls a territory which is flanked in any two opposite directions by other territories also controlled by that player, that player scores 100 points. Creating a second such territory is worth 50 points, the next 25, and so on. In addition, the player who created the first flanked territory gets an “early bird” bonus of 100 points. If neither player scores any points, the game is a draw and must be replayed.

Strategy: As you can see, both tactical and strategic thinking are required for tournament-quality play. While flanked territory construction is worth striving for, it’s important to make sure that your opponent doesn’t achieve the same situation earlier in the game. Strategy, therefore, is therefore a delicate balancing act between aggression and defense, war and diplomacy, spontaneous insult and calculated courtesy. Literally hundreds of different games are possible with just these basic rules and, by definition, no two of those games are ever the same.

***Pontifuse** was created as a humor column for the last page of **Undeclared** magazine, which is presumably read by people who get things like this. It has been played by countless millions.*



The Establishment of the Industrial Proletariat, by Chief R. W. Herman

Players: 1-10, usually just one

Playing Time: 12 to 80 years

Equipment: **The Establishment of the Industrial Proletariat** deck (2000 cards, not included), 10,000 disenfranchised citizens of an unjust regime, one plague (optional), the constant threat of war, three 6-sided dice, and a way to keep score.

Synopsis: *Players create dogmata relating the course of human events with the rise of a new social class of their own devising. Players set goals relating to personal wealth, social harmony, and the ultimate redemption of Mankind in arbitrary proportions. Players win when their personal victory conditions are met. Thus, more than one player can win.*

How to Begin: Roll the dice to determine who goes first. This can be the most fun part of the game even if there is only one player. Play will proceed to the left. Shuffle the deck and place it face down in the center of the table.

Create an **Auction Line** of N cards, where N is the number of players or 2, whichever is greater, by dealing cards from the top of the deck into a line in the middle of the table. Designate a unique price for each position in this line by asking the opinion of a passing stranger or by contacting a distant relative.

Each player creates a Dogma Document containing a list of two or fewer goals. These goals may be concrete or nebulous at the player’s discretion. Leave room in your document for the addition of more goals during the game.

Section 1: Game Overview

On Each Turn: Each turn consists of twenty steps, or **Phases**. They are the **Roll, Re-roll, Draw, Escalate, Review 1, Play, Action, President, Dogma, Facilitation, Wretched, Sublime, Removal, Retribution, Gastrointestinal, Plot, Harm, Review 2, Discard, and Reset** phases.

Step 1, Roll: Roll three dice and move a number of miles through the countryside. You may move any number of miles up to the number you roll, but you must move in complete miles and you must react only to the location where you stop.

Step 2, Re-Roll: If none of the dice you rolled in Step 1 match, you may re-roll one die only. If two numbers are matched, you may re-roll both of those dice. If all three numbers match, re-roll all three. Take the result (the total of only the re-rolled dice) and add it to your Money in units of the currency of your homeland. Then, roll one die and subtract that

amount from the same fund. If the resulting fund is negative, you must pay your debts immediately or assume a new identity. Both of these actions are covered in detail in Section 2.

Step 3, Draw: Draw cards from the deck until you have five cards. If you have five or more cards, you do not draw.

Step 4, Escalate: If you have any Escalate points, you may spend them now to set allied characters such as assassins and rogues against any number of your enemies. Each bargain for a particular action is called a “contract.” You may establish multiple contracts with the same character, but only one contract per character per turn. Escalate points you do not spend in Step 4 are lost at the end of this step. If there are no characters yet in the game, you may skip your Escalate step and keep any Escalate points you may have.

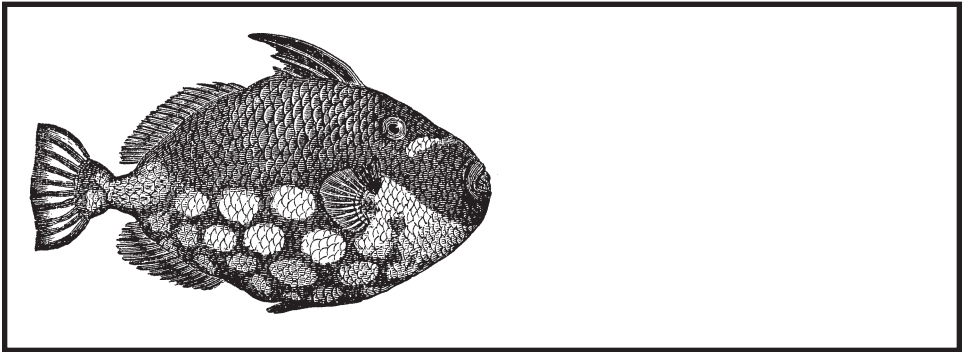
Step 5, Review 1: In the Review 1 Step you examine your goals as dictated by the text of your **Dogma Document**. For every goal you have achieved, add 2 points to your score. For every goal that is soon to be fulfilled, add 1 point. The first player to reach 30 points wins the game. (Note that you will add points to your score in two Review phases each turn. Be sure to account for changes in dogma during Review Phase 2.)

Step 6, Play: Play a game of your choosing with another player in this game. For the sake of simplicity, it is best not to play another game of **The Establishment of The Industrial Proletariat** unless you have a second complete copy. The winner of this game receives six Escalate points, which he can use in his next Escalate phase. **Note:** Because of the impact of losing, it is suggested that you play the game in Step 6 with the player on your immediate right, thereby forestalling any Escalation he might perform as a result of winning. This is strictly a strategy hint and not a fixed rule.

Step 7, Action: You may play one card from your hand as an Action, or take any action described on the cards in the Auction Line. If you take an Action described in the Auction Line, discard that card immediately and replace it. In addition, you must play any cards that were placed in front of you since your last Action phase, either by yourself (in the previous Plot phase) or by enemies in their Facilitation and Action phases.

Step 8, President: If you have enough followers in the proper ranks, you may impose on the President of your homeland in Step 8 to provide you with one **favor**. Roll two dice and compare the roll to the difficulty of the request. If the roll is higher than the difficulty, your request is granted. Consult the chart in Section 4 for a list of benchmark requests, remembering to adjust the roll for political climate and the popularity of the President. For example, Wholesale Discount on Apples is listed as a 2, while War with Larger Foreign Power is an 8. **Note:** If you are already the President, you skip the President phase of your turn.

Step 9, Dogma: Add one line of text to your Doctrine, or remove a line that you now regret having added. Adding a line costs nothing, but removing a line can cost you up to 50% of your followers through **disillusionment**. When you remove a line of text from your doctrine, roll all three dice. For each die that rolls even, cut 1/16, then 1/8, then 1/4 of your followers at random from a rank of your choice. (To randomly decide between multiple followers of the same rank, have each follower roll three dice. The highest roll(s) become disillusioned, with all ties being re-rolled. Re-rolls among tied followers do not reposition those followers in the ranking except with regard to those followers tied with them on the initial roll.) If all three dice are even, remove the followers as described above, and roll again for another rank. This can proceed only until you have lost a maximum of 1/2 of your followers in each rank.



Step 10, Facilitation: If you wish, you can play a card from your hand into the space in front of any other player. This card becomes one of the actions that player must perform during his or her next Action phase, and this is a good place for cards like **Syphilis**, **Starvation**, **Burnout**, and sometimes **Wife** (especially very early or very late in the game).

Step 11, Wretched: Find the most downtrodden of your own followers (if you have no followers, choose from among your adherents. If you have no adherents, choose from among your supporters. If you have no supporters, choose from among your acquaintances. Each of these steps divides the efficacy of the Action by two, so an Action by an acquaintance is only 1/4 as effective as an Action by an adherent, and only 1/8 as effective as an Action by a follower. Disciples are not legal choices for the Wretched phase.) This person may take one Action without retribution, such as publicly slandering an adversary or bringing meat and vegetables on your behalf to a village of starving children.

Step 12, Sublime: Choose the most beloved of your Disciples, if you have any. If you have no Disciples, choose from among your followers, and so on through the hierarchy described under Step 11. Roll two dice, and subtract the Disciple's Wits score. If the result is 10 or higher, the Disciple becomes "fallen" and is treated as an adversary. If the result is 3 or lower, the Disciple recruits a new character, either one more Disciple (to a maximum of 10), two more followers, ten more adherents, or 100 supporters, your choice. Treat these acquisitions as "green," meaning that they cannot perform an Action on this turn unless no non-green characters performed more than one Action on your previous two turns combined.

Step 13, Removal: Use either influence or prestige to attempt to remove one of your enemies from the game. This can be an actual opponent or one you imagine or contrive. Be cautious in removing real players, as their followers may become angry and seek retribution in Step 14.

Step 14: Retribution: Any party who has a grievance against you, including a follower, may seek to denounce, oust, or assassinate you. The ease of success is proportional to the severity of the retribution, and is covered in detail in the chart in Section 5. For example, while public outcry against your philosophy is virtually assured, an assassination by winged monkeys is nearly out of the question. Only one retribution is allowable per party per turn, and parties who seek retribution receive a **Harm Flag** whether their attempt is a success or not.

Step 15 Gastrointestinal: In this step you take nourishment. You can spend any money you have accumulated during the course of play to feed yourself and thus acquire precious nutrients from which you draw life, or you may impose on allies you have acquired to provide sustenance for you. If you rely on allies, roll one die. If the result is odd, add that value to the allegiance of the ally you call upon. If the roll is even, subtract that value. You will see in this case that the allegiance of allies upon whom you impose has an expected average drift of (-0.5).

Step 16, Plot: Play the card that you will reveal and execute in the Action step of your next turn now, face down on the table. If you have no cards in your hand, you may skip the Plot phase or you may play the next card in the deck without looking at it. **Note:** Some characters and the **Extra Hand** Action Card allow you to play more than one card in this step, which is why many cards in the deck have provisions for this exception which make them seem far more complex than they really are.

Step 17, Harm: Any party with a Harm Flag places two stones of his color in a sack. Shake the sack and redistribute the stones randomly, two to each party. Depending on the result, several effects can occur. If a party receives both of his own stones, no harm comes to him but his Harm Flag(s) remain. If a party receives exactly one of his own stones, he is subject to a harm of your choosing. The base difficulty of this harm is the number of flags the party possesses, though you may add levels of difficulty at a cost of 50% failure rate per additional level. For example, if a party holds four Harm Flags but you wish to inflict upon him a Hail of Meteors, which has a difficulty of 10, your success rate will be 1 in 2⁴, or 1.5625%. This is easily modeled using dice and the chart in Section 21.

Step 18, Review 2: This is identical to Review 1. As previously noted, be sure to account for changes in your Dogma.

Step 19, Discard: If your hand has more than seven cards, discard until you have seven.

Step 20, Reset: Add one card from the top of the deck to the Auction line, reset the current values of your holdings due to currency fluctuations that may have occurred during your turn, and determine who goes next by referring to the matrix in Section 19. Do not be surprised if you take several turns in a row, even in a game with more than one player.

Unfortunately, space issues prohibit us from presenting the rest of this fine game. -Ed.

WHICH COMES FIRST?

Back Story and Game Mechanics *An article by James Ernest*

What is a game's "back story"? It's the description of the game world. It tells you who the players are, what they are doing, and why they are doing it. It's not the rules or the mechanics, just a story that helps the rules make sense and makes the players want to play the game.

The back story in Chess, for example, is basically "Players control two kingdoms at war." It's not much, but this simple description makes some of the rules, like the piece names, the board layout, and the victory conditions, easier to grasp. It's also not perfect, but at least it's a better story than "Five gardeners must eat one peach."

A lot of games don't really need a back story: Poker, charades, baseball, tic-tac-toe. Those games are entirely about the pieces or the players or the strategy, and slapping a storyline onto them wouldn't make them any better. "You and your opponents are smooth-talkin' space cowboys tryin' to collect six different 'color crystals' by visitin' mysterious robed hermits who ask trivia questions" wouldn't lend a whole lot of quality to **Trivial Pursuit**.

On the other hand, some games are swimming with back story. Despite all of its charts, tables, and rulebooks, **Dungeons and Dragons** would be pretty meaningless without the story. In most role playing games, the mechanics exist simply to support the storyline, and players have no problems adjusting the rules of the game if it will better serve the story.

Ideally, the back story of a game shouldn't just be an add-on to the rules. It should convey the rules. A back story can explain what you're doing, and it can cut the rule book in half. On the other hand, an incongruous story can be worse than none at all.

Here's an example. Let's say I've written a new fighting game, in which the object is to beat the stuffing out of the other players. The last person left alive is the winner.

Every time you damage somebody, the life points they lose get added to your life points. But you can't hit people directly. Instead, you leave little land mines around the board. Building a minefield hurts you, but once you've made it, it will damage the other players whenever they land on that space.

Land mines have different strengths depending on where you drop them. What's more, you can take a little more damage later on to make

your land mines more potent, but not until you have laid a series of minefields within two or three spaces of each other.

Now, this next bit doesn't make too much sense, but bear with me: if you're nearly dead, and you need extra life points, you can deactivate some of your land mines in exchange for healing a few life points. Or, and this makes even less sense, you can agree to trade control of one or more of your minefields in exchange for a free direct hit on any opponent, if they agree.

You can set up a variety of other combinations of free hits, and/or other exchange of control of land mines elsewhere on the board between yourself and any number of other players. And you can pretty much do that at any time, not just on your turn.

This is only a fraction of the rules, but I hope you're already confused. Or perhaps you've figured out that I'm describing **Monopoly**. Now, if your status is called "money" and not life points, all those ridiculous rules suddenly make a lot more sense. "Land Mines" are called "Properties."

When you pick up **Monopoly** for the first time, you don't have to read a story, much less the rules, to figure out what the game is about. Why? Because it's about money. That stuff everybody wants. If you run out of it, you probably lose. Buying and selling rental properties makes all the garbage I just told you make sense. Mostly.

Is it conceivable that a game designer (or, more likely, publisher) might produce a game that's as counterintuitive as the combat version of Monopoly I just made up? Absolutely.

I recently played a "Pirate" game that was not about Pirates. I won't name it, but if you've played this game you'll recognize it from this description.

In this game, players are trying to capture ships. Arrr. Shiver me timbers. Good so far.

Here's how you capture a ship: you have a handful of commodities, like wheat, beans, rum, and so on. Each ship has a specific list of these things: two rum and three wheat, for example. Each player in turn plays cards next to a ship, until one of them has played the exact list of commodities required to take that ship. At that point, he can roll dice to try to capture it. (There are also actual pirate cards: you can play them beside your commodities, but the number of pirates you can play is limited by the number of commodities you've already played.)

When one player tries to capture the ship, everyone else can play commodities out-of-turn to also try to take the same ship at the same time, as long as they've already placed at least one commodity beside that ship.

Sound good? There's more. You can discard commodities from your hand to try to dislodge the commodities that other players have placed on their sides of ships, to keep them from horning in on your boarding actions. This requires a die roll, so sometimes it works, and sometimes it doesn't. Just like in real life.

There is often a point in learning the rules of a game where I am forced to remark, "Just like in real life." This was it for me.

My interpretation of these rules is that, during the Golden Age of Piracy, the most dangerous scalawags of the Spanish Main were two kegs of rum and a bag of rice. Wild rice.

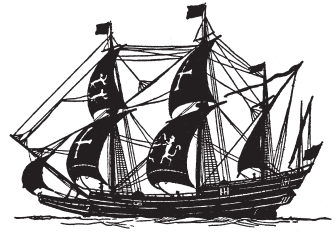
Did the designer of this product write a pirate game? Probably not. This game probably makes sense if you're a stock broker, or a barber, or five gardeners trying to eat a peach. Or perhaps this game was originally about nothing, and had a story applied to it. That happens a lot.

Now, if you're the designer of the Pirate game, you're probably feeling a little defensive right now, and asking me where I get off making games like **Devil Bunny Needs a Ham** and complaining about game themes that don't make sense. Although there are better examples of badly themed games in my ludography (**Particle Stream** leaps to mind), **Devil Bunny** is the one that most people ask me about.

Here's the answer: **Devil Bunny** is about climbing a building. Actually, it's about a cadre of wily sous-chefs racing to the top of a tall building while Devil Bunny tries to knock them off, erroneously believing that this will earn him a ham. Most of that is fluff, but the game is basically about climbing a building and the mechanics actually reflect that. And (this astounds most people) I actually did write the story of that game before I wrote the rules.

I think story is so important to a game that I usually insist on writing the story first. I've made a lot of games, so there are exceptions. The main exceptions in my catalog are the games that are strictly themeless, the ones where I point out the stupidity of the story ("Just like in real life") as I do in **Particle Stream**, and the notable exceptions of the dice games **Diceland** and **Button Men**.

I like themes in games for the same reason that the publisher of the Pirate game does: theme sells. I'm not just talking about getting a player's money. I'm talking about getting his attention. The biggest expense in picking up a new game isn't really the money you pay for it; it's the time you take to learn how to play. Most people would rather not spend half an evening learning a new game. I can get players to invest more time by getting them hooked with a story.



I recently attended a lecture by a famous and prolific game designer whose back stories often seem to fall into the slapped-on-at-the-last-minute category. A member of the audience (not me, I swear) asked him the leading question, how important is theme to your design process?

His answer was interesting: he said it was very important, that he always started with a theme. But he also said that, as the mechanics evolved, the theme often changed three or four times. We all chuckled uncomfortably.

He also gave an example of a game he'd sold to a publisher. When he turned it in, the game was about the Mafia. It was published as a game about teddy bears.

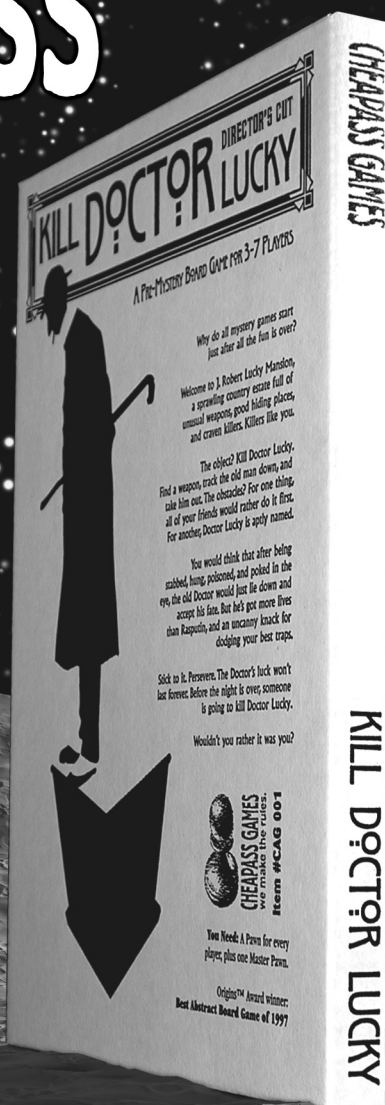
This seems to point some of the blame at publishers, not designers, but it seems like a game that is genuinely crafted to simulate one set of rules shouldn't be so easily perverted into something else. Thinking about it, I can't actually think of anything that makes the rules of the Pirate game make any sense. It's probably what I like to call a "math game," a purely abstract game mechanic that any slapped-on story can't make sensible. The fact that these games emerge with no basis in reality makes adding a theme later on a really tough assignment. Unfortunately, in some game markets, publishers can't distinguish between a genuinely themed game and a math game with a story.

I suppose I have the luxury of being both the publisher and the designer, so when I write a game about lazy adventurers who sneak around London pretending to be voyaging to the South Pole, it's not unexpectedly published as a game about chipmunks holding a bake sale.

If you're a game designer, I hope you take the time to create games where the back story and the game mechanics actually match, or just admit at the beginning that the game has no story at all. That way, when I play it, I won't find myself slapping my forehead and crying out in a stout voice, "Just like in real life!"

*Portions of this article originally appeared at **Envelope Games**: (<http://showcase.netins.net/web/envgames/>)*

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