

Monster Faire Card Game

© 2009 Scott Wylie Roberts

Introduction

The Monster Faire Card Game is a card game (obviously). In it, the players take on the roles of Mad Scientists. They live in crumbling old manors near the town of Beastly Vale, and compete in building Monsters from parts of dead bodies and bringing them to life.

About this Game

The Monster Faire Card Game is (at present) a free PDF game that may be distributed freely and played by anyone, provided no one (other than the creator) makes any profit from it.

Beastly Vale

The town of Beastly Vale lies in a forested valley. It is a simple rural woodland town that never has anything interesting or important happen to it – or so they say. For there are plenty of dark and scary stories told around town about the Mad Scientists who live in manors outside of town, and nobody likes to be caught outside after nightfall.

Mad Scientists

A number of Mad Scientists live near Beastly Vale, experimenting in their manors and not keeping healthy hours. Strange lights are seen at night, and paths leading from the manors to the local graveyard are kept in suspiciously good repair. Oh, whatever could they be up to?

The Monster Faire

Being in correspondence with each other, as members of the New Prometheus Society, the Mad Scientists have decided to hold a Monster Faire. They are going to compete in creating hideous new life! Whoever's monster is the last one standing wins. If their monster is especially fearsome, they may even win the Promethean Scholarship.

What You Need

You will need two decks of cards to play. They ought to be full decks, with the Jokers and everything. They also need to be different in some way, such as the colour on the back, so you can tell them apart during play. For the purposes of these rules, the decks will be referred to as the Villagers Deck and the Body Parts Deck; these are assumed to be coloured red and blue, respectively, on the back of the cards.

You will also need some people to play with. Imaginative people who like having fun and making things up are probably best. Three to six players total are recommended.

Play Time

Setup time is minimal: gather round a table, shuffle the decks, and begin!

Actual playing time is (if you'll pardon the pun) something we're still experimenting with.

Basics of Game Play

These are the basics of the game, and all you need to know to get started.

Be a Mad Scientist

To get the most out of this game, take a leaf out of a role-player's book and "get into character". You are a Mad Scientist, so act like one! You won't enjoy this game nearly half as much if you don't cackle, accuse other players of stealing your secrets, talk in funny accents, proclaim "It's alive!" when your monster lurches forth to do your bidding, and so on.

Taking Turns

Play proceeds around the table in whichever direction whoever goes first decides upon. Each player goes through the steps given below, one at a time. Upon completing a player's turn, play passes to the next Mad Scientist around the table.

The First Turn

There are two ways to determine who goes first: drawing cards, or competitive cackling.

If you want to draw cards to determine who goes first, then each player selects a face-down card from the Villagers deck. Whoever has the highest value goes first. All the cards are then reshuffled back into the deck. This is the boring way to do this.

Competitive cackling is much more fun. To determine who goes first, everyone must boast about the monsters they are going to make, laugh like they belong in a straitjacket, talk in silly voices, do impressions of actors from classic horror films, and generally behave in a manner sure to draw funny looks from anyone else nearby. Whoever cackles the longest, creepiest, or funniest is the winner and gets to go first. If you're not sure why this is more fun, read the Be A Mad Scientist section again.

Whoever gets to go first has the task of dealing out the cards: one card from each deck, to each player. Once all the players have their starting cards, the first player must draw one card each from the decks and lay them face up on the table. Then they can take their turn.

The Town

The card drawn from the Villagers Deck and played face up represents the good folk of Beastly Vale, going about their daily business. This card is called the Town Card, and is used in a number of situations described further below. Note that sometimes there may be more than one card in the Town, depending on events during the game, and sometimes there may be none. If there are additional Town Cards, they are stacked into a pile, face up, with the earliest played cards at the bottom.

If at any time the Town Card is an Igor, he may be claimed by the next player during their Igor phase without having to play a card.

The Graveyard

The card drawn from the Body Parts Deck and played face up represents the dearly departed of Beastly Vale. This card is called the Graveyard Card, and is used in a number of situations described below. As with the Town Card, there may be a number of cards in the Graveyard, depending on events in play, and they will also be stacked face up. Similarly, if the Graveyard Card is an Igor, it may be claimed by the next player on their turn.

On Your Turn

On your turn, you play through five phases in order: Draw, Igor, Laboratory, Monster, and Housekeeping. These are described as follows.

On the Draw phase you may draw one card and place it in your hand (or Manor, if you want to be pompous about it). The card may be drawn from either deck. Once drawn, it must go into your hand; otherwise you can't use it during play. You may draw additional cards if you wish to sacrifice some of the other phases of your turn. If you skip the Monster phase, you may draw one extra card. If you skip the Laboratory and Monster phases, you may draw two extra cards. Finally, if you skip the Igor, Laboratory, and Monster phases, you may draw three extra cards. The extra cards may be drawn from either deck; before you can draw them, you must announce how many phases you skip (and thus how many cards you draw).

On the Igor phase, you may do one of three things (assuming you have an Igor). If you have lost your Igor, the only thing you can do this phase is to pick an appropriate card from your hand and put it into play as your Igor. The card representing your Igor is placed face up on the table in front of you. If you have an Igor, you can Send Igor to Town, Send Igor to the Graveyard, or Send Igor to Visit another Mad Scientist. If you send Igor somewhere, move the

card representing Igor across the table to near the Town, Graveyard, or another Mad Scientist. Once Igor's business is complete, bring Igor back to you.

On the Laboratory phase, you can work on building your monster. You can build your monster in one of two ways. You may play a Villagers card as Laboratory Equipment, or you may play a Body Parts card as Monster Parts. Any cards used to build a Monster are placed face down in a pile on the table in front of you. Any cards used as Laboratory Equipment are placed face down in a separate pile on the table in front of you.

On the Monster phase, you can bring your Monster to life, if it has enough body parts, or send it into town if it is already alive. If you send your monster into town, move the pile of cards representing your monster across the table to near the Town and turn the pile face up. Once your monster has finished scaring villagers in town, bring it back to you.

On the Housekeeping phase, you and Igor get out the buckets and brooms and clean the place up. Move any cards that have been played or used up to their respective discard piles, including ruined body parts and broken equipment.

Elements of Game Play

The following information expands upon the basics given above. You need to know this stuff to get the most out of the game.

To Start

The cards in your hand and the space immediately before you on the table represent the Manor in which you reside. It is a reclusive existence, and you only have Igor for company. Don't worry, though; you can build yourself a new friend in your laboratory.

Igor and You

Igor is your friend. Igor is the best help you can find. Igor is also, shall we say, a bit odd.

Take a look at his card to find out why Igor has been kicked out of town. If it is Diamonds, Igor was the village idiot. If it is Hearts, Igor has a hunched back. If it is Clubs, Igor is clumsy and always dropping or breaking things. If it is Spades, Igor has a club foot or shuffles about on crutches. If it is a Jack, he also has a habit of stealing things. If it is a Queen, he also spends most of his time drooling over a portrait of a pretty girl who will never love him. If it is a King, he also has a tenuous grip on reality and is always playing with his imaginary friends. If it is the Red Joker, he doesn't seem impaired – but he does match the description of a certain cannibalistic patient escaped from an insane asylum, doesn't he? If it is the Black Joker, he is a wanted criminal – how do you know he isn't trying to steal your work?

As you can see, Igor's life is rather tragic and somewhat amusing.

If you Send Igor to Town, he might be able to recruit a villager to crafting Equipment for your Laboratory. Or, he might get chased out of town. Draw one card from the Villagers deck, and place it in the Town. If the suit on Igor's card is the same as one of those in Town, that Villager taunts Igor – and the other Villagers join in. If the value of any of the taunting Villagers is higher than the value of Igor's card, he is chased out of town. If Igor is not taunted, he can pick any one of the Villagers to come back to your Manor with him. Since you are a paranoid Mad Scientist who doesn't like anyone seeing your Laboratory (except Igor, of course), Igor helpfully disposes of the body afterwards. If you play that Villager card as Equipment in your Laboratory phase this turn, draw one card from the Body Parts deck and add it to the Graveyard. If not, Igor is more careful about hiding the body.

If you Send Igor to the Graveyard, he will be able to dig up a body and bring back a body part for you. Draw one card from the Body Parts deck, and place it in the Graveyard. Igor can pick any one body part from the graveyard to bring you. The higher the number of the body part card, the less decayed it is and the better for sewing onto your monster. However, Igor has a fixation with certain types of body parts. If there is a body part in the Graveyard that is the same suit as Igor (Diamonds for Diamonds, Hearts for Hearts, etc), Igor grabs that with glee

and proudly shows it off once he gets home. On Igor's way home, draw a card from the Villagers Deck. If the value of the card is higher than Igor's number, mourners or guards notice him body-snatching and chase him out. Either Igor drops the body part he is carrying, and both it and the villagers are discarded, at your decision, or the villagers go into Town. If Igor brings back a body part, place it in your Manor (hand).

If you Send Igor to Visit another Mad Scientist, he might be able to trade a piece of Laboratory Equipment or a Body Part. Or, he might get attacked by that Mad Scientist's Igor or monster. You may choose one card from your hand for Igor to take with him. Whether the other Mad Scientist agrees to trade will have to be negotiated between you. They can always attack your Igor of course (they're as paranoid as you about their Laboratory). If your Igor is defeated by their Igor, he drops what he was carrying and runs back to you. If your Igor is defeated by their Monster, he is killed and whatever he was carrying is destroyed (discard both cards). The other Mad Scientist can always send your Igor back without seeing him.

Building your Monster

To build a monster, you need a Laboratory and a supply of body parts. Your Laboratory must have at least one of the four basic items of Equipment, before you can bring your monster to life. The values of the Laboratory Equipment cards represent the maximum value of a body part that can function properly. If a body part is attached to a monster and it is of higher value than the matching item of Laboratory Equipment, the body part flops about uselessly and cannot be used by the monster when terrorising or attacking (rotate useless cards in the pile so they are at an angle). Note that there is nothing to stop you from having a laboratory inadequate for your needs, and consequently building a monster that is completely useless. Mad Scientists like to experiment, after all.

If you have two or more of the same item of Equipment, use the higher value. As Equipment is fragile and a Laboratory could be trashed by a mob of torch-waving villagers, or raided by another Igor, it is worth having spares. Diamonds indicates lightning rods (to spark life into a monster), and are needed for a monster's head. Hearts indicates operating tables (to bring the monster to life on), and are needed for a monster's body. Clubs indicates surgical tools (to attach the body parts), and are needed for a monster's arms. Spades indicates bubbling chemicals (to preserve decaying flesh), and are needed for a monster's legs.

The face cards and jokers have special values if played during the Laboratory phase, and are used for defending your Manor instead of building your Laboratory. They are still played face down into the Laboratory, however, so as not to spoil the surprise. A Jack represents a vicious guard dog, and can kill any one member of a mob of Villagers or rip off any one body part of a monster before it reaches you. A Queen represents a saucy wench, who can distract an Igor or any one member of a mob and cause them to miss their action. A King represents a stern butler, who counts as a second Igor for the purpose of defending the Manor. The Red Joker represents the patronage of a wealthy businessman, who can order a mob back to town. The Black Joker represents the patronage of a powerful noble, who can have a mob sent to the gallows for rioting; all cards in the mob are discarded, and an equal number of Body Parts are drawn and placed into the Graveyard. Once used, these defensive cards must be discarded.

When you are ready to bring your monster to life, simply turn over all the cards in your Laboratory pile face up. Cackle and mime throwing a big lever if you like – your monster is alive! Oh, your monster still sits there face down doing nothing for now, but it is alive. You can turn your monster pile face up, and send your monster into town, on your next turn.

Torch-waving Villagers

Sometimes villagers take exception to Igor and Monsters. Sometimes they form into mobs. Villagers may attack your Igor, your Monster, and even your Laboratory. Fortunately for you, they must do it in that order. If you have a tough monster, they might not get to burn your manor down. However, you do need to know how to put out fires.

In order to make a coordinated attack, the Villagers must form a mob (see below). If unable to form a mob, a group of individual villagers can still cause disorganised trouble. The basic difference is that a successful mob will cause you to discard a card from your hand. Also, depending on how they attack you, villagers may be driven off, terrorised, or killed.

When villagers attack Igor, they gang up on him. Assuming they are not taunting Igor (see above), the villagers have a chance of killing Igor. As Igor is a bit of a wimp, the most he can do is drive them off. In a fight, Igor automatically drives off any and all villagers with a value less than his; these return to Town. You can give Igor some help by playing a card from your hand, and adding its value to his own; this card is then discarded. If the remaining villagers are of greater total value than Igor's total, he is killed and must be replaced on your next turn.

When villagers attack a Monster, they gang up on it. If your monster has not been brought to life, you may activate your Laboratory in an emergency by drawing one card from the Villagers deck and adding it to the Laboratory Equipment; this card is discarded at the end of the fight. While your monster usually attacks villagers to cause terror, if they attack your monster it may also attempt to kill them. Compare the total values of the Monster's body parts to the villagers. If the Monster's total is greater, it causes terror (see Attacking Town below). If the Monster's total is greater, and a village mob is attacking you, it kills a villager; discard whichever villager card is at the top of the pile. If the villager's total is higher and they have not formed a mob, they drive the Monster into hiding; place the Monster to one side, and draw a card from either deck. If the value of the card is higher than the value on the Monster's top card, the Monster is injured and cannot use that body part. Whether injured or not, the Monster spends the remainder of the turn in either Town or the Graveyard, according to the deck the card was drawn from, and returns to the player's side at the start of their next turn. In Town, the Monster may terrorise villagers on each of the other Mad Scientist's turns and be attacked by their Monsters. In the Graveyard, the Monster may drive off any Igor attempting to dig up body parts. If the villager's total is higher and they have formed a mob, they injure the Monster. Turn over the body part on top of the Monster's pile, and draw a card; if the total is higher than the next body part's value, turn over that body part too. Body parts that are turned over are still attached but unusable, and do not count towards the Monster's total. They may be repaired if the Mad Scientist has in their Laboratory a corresponding item of Equipment capable of reanimating the body part. If at any time all the cards of a Monster are turned face down, the Monster is killed and all its cards are discarded.

When villagers attack a Laboratory, they automatically destroy equipment. You can prevent this by playing cards from your hand. Since your home is at stake, you can also kill villagers. For each card you play from your hand, you may kill one villager if the value of the card played is equal to or greater than the villager. Otherwise, each villager destroys one item of Laboratory Equipment apiece. If all your equipment is destroyed, and the villagers are formed into a mob, they may attack you if you choose to stay and defend your manor. Discard your entire hand, and draw one card; you kill one villager for each card you discard. If there are any villagers left over, you kill all those that are of less value than the card you drew; this card is then discarded. If there are still any villagers left over, they kill you and you are out of the game. If you choose to run away, discard your entire hand; you may re-enter play on your next turn, having found a new manor to operate from. However, if you do run away the villagers are emboldened; draw one card from the Villagers deck and place it in town.

If a group or mob of villagers is defeated, they are usually driven back to town. However, if any cards were discarded from the villagers they are dead. For each dead villager, draw one card from the Body Parts deck and place it in the Graveyard. For each dead Igor, draw one card from the Body Parts deck and place it in the Graveyard. Lastly, for each Laboratory trashed or Monster destroyed, the villagers become emboldened; draw one card from the Villagers deck and place it in Town.

Dealing with other Players

The other players are Mad Scientist too. Are you sure you want to deal with them? That's what Igor is for! What, you really want to deal with your rivals in person? Well okay then, here's how it works – but don't say we didn't warn you.

On any other Mad Scientist's turn, you can play one card from your hand to affect them.

If you play a numbered card, you pay a surprise visit and give an impromptu scientific lecture full of gloating and smugness (the other Mad Scientist is obliged to offer you dinner and your choice of wine or cigars). This causes the Mad Scientist to become flustered, and question their work; they must discard all pieces of Laboratory Equipment in play that are of less value than the card you played. To counter your argument and avoid dismantling their Laboratory, they must play a numbered card of higher value than the card you played. Numbered cards played in this manner are discarded once used.

If you play a face or joker card, it has a special effect and returns to your hand unless countered. A Jack (or Knave) represents a hired thief who can sneak into a Mad Scientist's Manor, stealing one card from the player's hand at random, and is countered if a Jack (guard dog), Queen (distracting wench) or King (stern butler) is played or is already in play (turn face up). A Queen represents a fair maiden who can befriend an Igor or Monster, causing the player to lose their Igor or Monster phase for the turn, and is countered by a Queen (picture or other token of a love interest for Igor or Monster) or King (stern butler). A King represents a traveller from afar who pays the Mad Scientist an unexpected visit, causing them to lose either their Laboratory or Monster phase (as chosen by the Mad Scientist who plays the card), and is countered by a King (stern butler). The Red Joker is a troubadour who can incite villagers to attack the Mad Scientist, causing all villagers in Town to form into a group and attack the Laboratory directly, and is countered by a King (stern butler) or another Joker. Finally, the Black Joker represents an inquisitor who persecutes the Mad Scientist, causing them to either dismantle their Laboratory or Monster (as chosen by the Mad Scientist who plays the card) for fear of more personal retribution, and is countered by another Joker or if the Mad Scientist offers up their Igor to be burnt at the stake (Igor is discarded); all cards in either the Laboratory or Monster pile are discarded. Counter cards played in this manner are not discarded when they are played, and remain in play until the start of the owning player's next turn.

When Mad Scientists attack, the following rules apply.

If a Mad Scientist has their Igor attack a visiting Igor, each player draws a card from the deck of their choice and adds its value to their Igor. Face cards and jokers may be added directly to the player's hand, and further cards drawn until a numbered card is drawn. On a tie, the two scuffle ineffectually and nothing comes of it. The Igor with the higher total wins. If the visiting Igor wins, they knock the other Igor unconscious; that Igor is turned face down until the start of the owning player's turn. Alternately, Igor may choose to trash the Laboratory; the top card in the Laboratory pile is discarded, but the resident Igor is not turned face down. If the visiting Igor loses, he runs back to your Manor and hides; turn his card face down until the start of your next turn. As noted above, your Igor also drops anything he was carrying.

If a Mad Scientist has their Monster attack a visiting Igor, only the visiting Igor draws a card to add to their total. The Monster uses the total of all their cards. If the visiting Igor is defeated, he is killed by the Monster. If the Monster is defeated by Igor, it loses whichever body part is on the top of its stack (the card is discarded) and Igor runs off home.

Instead of playing cards at each other, Mad Scientists can invite each over for dinner and gloating. A Mad Scientist may send out one invitation per turn, during their Housekeeping phase. If accepted, the invited Mad Scientist must forgo either their Laboratory or Monster phase. The visit occurs on their Igor phase, as Igor accompanies them (move Igor to near the host's Manor) as if they were visiting. The host gains one free action, either activating their Laboratory Equipment or bringing their Monster to life. The visitor gets to critique the host's work by playing a card from their hand; if the value is greater than the top card on either the

Laboratory or Monster pile, that card is discarded. Otherwise, the played card is added to the host's hand. Note that the critique card must be played before the cards are turned face up.

When a Mad Scientist visits, they may order their Igor to attack the host's Igor; however, the host may draw two cards instead of one, and add the higher total to their Igor.

Send Your Monster to Town

When you want to terrorise the townsfolk of Beastly Vale, send in your monster!

When in town, your monster can go on a rampage and cause villagers to flee in terror. For each body part, a monster can cause a villager of the same suit to be discarded if the value of the body part is greater than the value of the villager. Simply go through the pile of cards one at a time, and if there is a matching Villager card in Town check to see if it is discarded. If terrorising town causes all villagers to flee, the monster brings back some loot to your Manor; draw one card from the Villagers Deck and add it to your hand.

The Discard Piles

When a card is discarded, during Housekeeping for example, it is placed face up on the top of the discard pile next to the deck it came from. When all the cards in a deck are in play, the discard pile is turned face down and shuffled, becoming that deck. Keep the decks and their discard piles away from the Town, Graveyard, and Manors, to avoid any confusion.

If there are no cards in either the decks or their discard piles, each player must discard their current hands to form new discard piles, and reshuffle them as decks.

The Monster Faire of Beastly Vale

When all of the Mad Scientists have built and brought monsters to life, and if all of these monsters are alive at the end of a turn, and the Town is empty of any villagers, the Monster Faire occurs and the game ends. All of the Mad Scientists send their monsters into town to fight each other, and the last monster left standing is the winner.

There are other ways of ending the game sooner, of course.

The Villagers Deck

The Villagers Deck represents the common folk who live in and around Beastly Vale. The cards in this deck are used for Laboratory Equipment, Igor, and the Town.

Values of Cards

The number of a card, from 1 to 10, represents one of four things depending on the suit of a card. Diamonds indicates leadership (village elders), Hearts indicates courage (the village tavern), Clubs indicates strength (village militia), and Spades indicates speed (running away).

The face cards and jokers all have special values and powers outside of the 1 to 10 scale. Some of these have been touched on above, under Building your Monster and Dealing with other Players. The most important fact, however, is that these cards are used for Igor. If you draw a face card or joker from the Town deck and play it as your Igor, then you hired Igor from town. Similarly, if your Igor came from the Graveyard deck, you met him in the Graveyard. When used for Igor, the value of a card is 3 for Jacks, 5 for Queens, 7 for Kings, and 9 for Jokers. This is particularly relevant when Igor goes to Town.

Village Mobs

In order to form a village mob, there must be at least one villager of each of the four types in Town. Any time there are sufficient villagers to form a mob, the player whose turn it is must draw one card from the Villagers deck. If it is higher than the highest value of the villager cards in town, the mob does not form; discard the card. If it is of equal or lower value, the mob forms; the card is added to the mob. If a mob forms, put all the villagers in Town into a pile, face up, and move them towards the player they are attacking.

Once a mob forms, it attacks the player whose turn it is. If the mob is successful in trashing that player's Laboratory, draw a card as above. If it is higher than the highest value of the villager cards in the mob, the mob is swept up by passion and immediately attacks the next player; add the card to the mob. If it is of equal or lower value, the villagers head back to town; discard the card. If the mob somehow manages to sweep across the land, trashing all the Laboratories, it heads back to town – and the game is over, with no winners.

The Body Parts Deck

The Body Parts Deck represents the body parts that can be scavenged for use in building your monster. The cards in this deck are used for Monsters, Igor, and the Graveyard.

Values of Cards

Similar to the Villagers Deck, the number and suit of a card represent different things. Diamonds represent heads (hideous growling), Hearts represent torsos (hideous resilience), Clubs represent arms (hideous strength), and Spades represent legs (hideous speed). The higher the value, the less decayed the body part is and thus the better your monster can use it for terrorising townsfolk. A monster terrorises townsfolk by growling down their leaders, crashing through building walls, beating people up, and chasing after people.

The face cards and jokers may not be used to build a monster. All body parts must have a rating from 1 to 10.

Body Parts

A monster needs at least one of each of the four basic body parts. It can always have more of course. If attacked by a mob, it may lose body parts.

Heads

A monster needs at least one head. Without a head, a monster can't coordinate its body parts. A monster can have more than one head, of course. The total value of multiple heads attached to a body must be equal to or less than the total value of the body sections.

Torsos

A monster needs at least one torso. Without a torso, a monster can't come to life. A monster can have more than one torso, and will need more than one torso to have extra limbs. Each additional torso can support two pairs of limbs and either one head or the connection to the rest of the body. Note that these torsos need not be sewn neck to trunk directly; they may represent a reworking of a torso for greater girth and strength.

Arms

A monster needs at least one pair of arms. Each arms card is a pair of arms. Without arms, a monster can't break things; like furniture, walls, or villagers.

Legs

A monster needs at least one pair of legs. Each legs card is a pair of legs. Without legs, a monster can't chase villagers or move around.

The Monster Faire

The Monster Faire represents the endgame. The winner of the Monster Faire is the winner of the game. While there are other ways to win, they do not carry the prestige of winning the Monster Faire. Nor are they as satisfying. There are, of course, many ways to lose.

Monsters versus Monsters

Monsters attack each other in a series of one-on-one rounds. During each round, each Mad Scientist plays a card from their hand and adds its value to the total value of their Monster. Once their hand is depleted, they must draw a card from the deck of their choice. Once the decks are depleted, no more cards may be drawn and only the total values of the Monsters are

used. The monster with the highest value in each round is the winner of that round. The top card from the pile of the losing monster is discarded. When all cards have been discarded, the monster has been destroyed and the Mad Scientist can no longer compete.

To determine which opponent a Monster attacks, go round the table in the order of play. Start with the player whose turn it was on which the Monster Faire was declared. Each Mad Scientist picks an opponent for their monster in turn. If a Mad Scientist wants their monster to fight a different opponent, or sit out a round, they must discard a card. If there is an uneven number of monsters in play, one of them will be forced to sit out that round (perhaps they trash some of the buildings in town). If a monster sits out a round, the controlling Mad Scientist may play a card in favour of any other monster (perhaps part of the building they are fighting in falls on one of the monsters).

A Mad Scientist is free to send their Igor into town to assist their Monster. Igor will not attack a monster on his own, but may be attacked by a monster or another Igor. When assisting a Monster, Igor adds his value to the total of the monster. However, if Igor and the Monster are defeated in a round Igor will be killed and discarded first.

Other Ways to Win and Lose

If torch-waving mobs trash everyone else's laboratories, the last Mad Scientist left with an intact Manor is the winner if they are able to bring their Monster to life on their turn.

If a Mad Scientist ends their turn with no cards in hand, no Laboratory, no Monster, and no Igor, and they have been subject to the gloating or critique of another Mad Scientist at any time after the beginning of their previous turn, they are overcome with despair. The player is out of the game. Before leaving, they may mime shooting or hanging themselves. If events in play cause a succession of players to quit in this manner, the last Mad Scientist left is declared the winner if they have a Monster and an Igor at the end of their turn.

If a player elects to leave the game during play, the Mad Scientist is assumed to pack up and flee the country. If they had a Monster in play, it becomes rogue and moves back and forth between Town and the Graveyard at the start of what is now its turn. If they had a Laboratory in play, one piece per turn can be stolen by Igor on each remaining Mad Scientist's Igor phase. If they had an Igor in play, he too moves back and forth between Town and the Graveyard, attempting to avoid the rogue Monster; this Igor can be recruited by any remaining Mad Scientist without an Igor, as per normal.

The New Prometheus Society

All of the Mad Scientists are members of the New Prometheus Society. This fellowship, with the mutual goal of advancing knowledge, prevents them from attacking each other directly. According to the society charter, intellectual achievement is far more satisfying – even when it manifests as gloating, cheating, sabotage, cutting critiques, poor hygiene, and vile slander.

The Promethean Scholarship

The winner of the Monster Faire, and thus the game, is granted the Promethean Scholarship. This prestigious award ensures fame and fortune in the academic world, and is sponsored by the Victor Frankenstein Memorial Fund. While there are other ways to win the game, only the winner of the Monster Faire qualifies for the Promethean Scholarship. Upon receiving the scholarship, the winner is lauded by his peers at a celebratory dinner.

Strategies and Tactics

A number of strategies and tactics may avail players of this game.

Skipping Phases

Early on, it is worth skipping phases to draw extra cards. The more cards you have in hand, the more options you have. Note that there is no maximum hand size in this game.

The Care and Feeding of Igor

Abuse and berate him to your heart's content if you must. Igor is your contact with the outside world, and is your best means of acquiring the cards you need to build your Laboratory and Monster. Try to keep Igor alive and safe as best you can.

Building a Monster

Do you hold off and try to build the biggest, toughest Monster you can? Or do you throw the big lever on your creation as soon as you can? While the Monster Faire may go to the strongest entrant, there are lesser threats to be dealt with along the way.

Optional Rules

A number of optional rules may be used to enhance play.

The Rule of Morbius

If on the first turn a player draws a Head from the Graveyard deck, they may announce "I have the Brain of Morbius" and place both their body part and piece of laboratory Equipment into play immediately. Both cards are played face up, in a separate pile, and the Equipment card does not necessarily have to be a diamond; it is used to keep the disembodied brain alive. The player may then draw one card from either deck; if it is an Igor card, they may announce "I have Condo" and play it immediately. In any event, the first Igor of the player who has the Brain of Morbius must be called Condo. Furthermore, all other Mad Scientists must refer to this player as Doctor Solon. The disembodied brain may be attacked as if it were a monster at any time, and cannot retaliate (except through the playing of cards in its defence, as if Dealing with other Players). However, it may be attached to a monster body at any time. Lastly, Condo is missing an arm; he can be lured away to serve another Mad Scientist, or persuaded to destroy one piece of laboratory Equipment, if any other player gives him an arm card.

The Rule of Renfrew

If an Igor is a Red Joker, he may be called Renfrew. If sent to the Graveyard, Renfrew can draw one extra card from the Body Parts deck. Instead of taking their favourite body part back to the Mad Scientist, Renfrew eats it (discard). If sent to town, Renfrew cannot be taunted.

The Rule of Berk

The first player to announce "Berk, feed me!" when playing their first Igor is referred to thereafter as The Thing Upstairs, and their Igor is called Berk. Any time they say "Berk, feed me!" they may draw one extra card from the Graveyard deck per turn. However, the first body part that Berk finds each turn must be discarded (The Thing Upstairs eats it).

The Rule of Many Hands

Many hands make small work of a task. So, if you have a third deck of cards, add all of the face cards and jokers to the Graveyard Deck.

The Rule of Many Cooks

Many cooks spoil the brew. So, a Mad Scientist can have more than one Igor at their beck and call. However, they must use or send out their weakest Igor first. If they wish to play more than one Igor at once, they must discard one card from their hand for each additional Igor. A spare Igor can always be kept in reserve.

The Rule of Igor's Revenge

Mad Scientists tend to treat Igor poorly. On a Mad Scientist's turn, any other Mad Scientist may stir up Igor by playing a card. If it is of higher value than Igor, one piece of Laboratory Equipment or one Body Part of an inactive Monster is trashed and discarded. If it is of the same suit as Igor, the Igor phase must be missed while Igor runs off until the start of the player's next turn. If villagers attack the Manor, Igor may side with them (play another card).

The Rule of Prometheus

In their next game with the same players, the winner of a Promethean Scholarship begins play with a distinct advantage. In order to gain this benefit, however, the Promethean Scholar must make a short speech upon acceptance before his peers. The Promethean Scholar must be offered the choice of taking the first turn. If they accept, they may inspect all cards as they deal them out, and choose who starts with which cards. If they graciously decline, the Promethean Scholar is dealt two hands of cards and may choose which hand to start with.

The Rule of the Wine Cellar

At the start of play, one card is played face down into each Mad Scientist's Manor. Whenever a Mad Scientist or their Igor visits another Mad Scientist, the Wine Cellar may be used in one of two ways. The visitor may use it as an excuse ("looking for the wine cellar, old chap"), to sneak a look at one card of the Laboratory or Monster, assuming they are still face down. The visitor must play one card from their hand, and the host may turn the Wine Cellar card face up. If the played card is of higher value, they get away with it; otherwise, they are led on a tour of the Wine Cellar. The host may use it as an excuse to get the visitor drunk. If the value of the Wine Cellar is higher than Igor, or a card played by the visiting Mad Scientist, the visitor is inebriated. A drunk Igor leaves whatever he was carrying at the host's Manor, and wanders back home. A drunk Mad Scientist babbles out the secrets of their work; he must reveal his hand to the host, who can pick one to add to their own hand.

Contact and Distribution

This is Version 1.0 of the Monster Faire Card Game.

Contacting the Creator

The twisted genius behind this game may be contacted at ysgthru-mundi@yahoo.com.au using the subject line "Monster Faire Card Game". Feedback and suggestions are welcome, and may influence further development of the game.

Distribution and Additions

The Monster Faire Card Game is, at present, a free PDF game.

You may distribute this document file freely and unaltered, print it out for your own use, email it (or an appropriate link) to your friends, demo it at conventions, make up house rules, and write about it for the purpose of review. You may not make money from this game.

If you have any house rules you use regularly when playing this game, and would like to see them added to the game, feel free to contact the creator. Your contribution, if used, will be acknowledged in future versions of the game.

Grassroots Support

The success of the Monster Faire Card Game is in your hands now. Whether it spreads like wildfire or sinks like a stone is up to you, your friends, and how much fun you have with it.

Copyright Notice

The concept and related material of the Monster Faire Card Game are copyright © 2009 Scott Wylie Roberts, All Rights Reserved. Permission is given to distribute this game freely, as noted above. While significant contributors will be acknowledged as aiding in the development of this game, copyright (including any profit) resides with the creator.

Characters named in this game appear under fair dealing and in parody.

Contributors

Significant contributors will be acknowledged here.