

# HOUSE OF HORRORS

*A haunted card game best for 4-5 players*

## SETUP

Shuffle the House Deck (which includes Room and Room Item cards) and divide it evenly into 3 piles. Shuffle the Dawn card into one pile. Shuffle the Midnight card into another. Now combine the piles so that the Dawn card is in the bottom third of the deck, and the Midnight card is in the top third of the deck.

Shuffle the Horror Deck (which includes Explorers, Monsters, and Items) and deal 6 cards to each player. The oldest player starts as the *Butler*... though players will take turns being the Butler throughout the game.

## GAMEPLAY SUMMARY

*House of Horrors* is played in rounds. During a round, a room is revealed and each player will play on the side of the evil, lurking Monsters or the brave Explorers. After every player has played a card, the round ends, and the strongest side wins, taking the losing side's cards as its spoils. At the end of the game, the player who has collected the most points wins!

## STARTING A ROUND

The Butler draws and reveals cards from the House Deck until he gets 2 Room cards. Any Room Items drawn stay on the table to be used later during this round.

The Butler picks one of the two Rooms for this round's encounter to take place in. The other Room is discarded and out of the game.

The Butler then specifies whether it will be a battle of Strength, Terror, or Psychic combat. She may also declare it a "bloodbath," in which case all of those values are added together on Monster and Explorer cards!

*Hint: The Butler should choose the type of encounter based on the strength of her hand. If she has a Ghost with a high Terror 4, it's a good idea to declare it a Terror encounter.*

The Butler begins the round by playing **one** Explorer or Monster from her hand. The Explorer or Monster must be able to go to the floor of the Room that was picked by the Butler (as indicated on its card).

*Example: Ginger is the Butler and picks the Catacombs for the round's encounter. All Explorers and Monsters played during the round MUST be allowed in the Basement of the house. This means Dan's "Colours from Space" card, which is an Attic-only card, cannot be played this round.*

The Butler may also play any number of appropriate Item cards from her hand with her Monster or Explorer. If any Room Items on the table can be used with her Monster or Explorer, she may take and play them as well.

If a player cannot or does not want to play a card, a player must discard 1 card instead.

Once the Butler has played, play continues clockwise with each player performing the same actions. Table talk, pleadings, and bargains are strongly encouraged!

## RESOLVING THE ENCOUNTER

After every player has played (or discarded), the encounter is immediately resolved. A Monster or Explorer with a ? in the chosen combat category rolls a die to determine its value. A ?? rolls two dice.

*Example: Dan has picked a Terror battle and plays a Necromancer (Terror ?). At the end of the round, he'll roll 1 die to determine the Necromancer's Terror value.*

The side (Monster or Explorer) that has the highest combined total in the Butler's chosen battle type (Strength, Terror, Psychic; a "bloodbath" means add *everything* up!) wins the battle.

*Example: Jon and Ginger have played on the side of the Explorers in a battle of Terror in the Clock Room, with a Bartender (Terror 3) and a Country Doc (Terror 1). Dan and Ella have played on the side of the Monsters with a Shadow Slink (Terror 2) and a Poltergeist aided with a Dark Moon item (total Terror 3). The Monsters win since they have a combined total of 5 to the Explorer's 4.*

## THE SPOILS

The Room card, any unused Room Items cards, and all the cards on the losing side with hourglasses (points) are displayed. These are the spoils for the victors.

Cards without hourglasses, along with the winning side's cards, are recycled to the discard pile.

The player with the largest combat total on the winning side gets first choice of a spoil card. In the case of a tie, the player who played first wins. She must then hand out a spoil card to each allied player before taking another one for herself. Players who had no cards showing at the end of the round (or one with a value of 0) are not eligible for spoils.

*Example: After the combat above, the Clock Room, Bartender, and Country Doc are placed on the table for spoils; all the other cards are discarded. Since Ella played the cards with the highest Terror (the Poltergeist and the Dark Moon for a total of 3), she gets to divide the spoils. She takes the Clock Room for herself, gives the Country Doc to her ally Dan, and then takes the Bartender for herself.*

The spoil pile is only used to track points (as shown by the hourglass symbol); these cards are out of the game. For every 3 *light bulbs* a player collects in her spoil pile, her hand size increases by 1 (maximum 10 cards).

After spoils are taken, the player to the right of the Butler becomes the new Butler. Players draw up to their hand size (typically 6 cards), and a new round begins with the new Butler drawing new Room Cards.

*Hint: Lure other players into playing high valued cards on the opposite side that you know you can defeat. Tell your friends that you don't have any Monsters to play so they think their Explorers are safe... then play a powerful Monster to defeat those Explorers and take them as spoils!*

## WINNING THE GAME

The Dawn card indicates the final round of play. The player with the most hourglasses (points) in their spoils pile after this final round wins! In the unlikely case of a tie, the  **tied**  player with the most light bulbs in their spoils pile will win.

## SPECIAL CASES

**End of the Deck:** If the Horror deck runs out of cards, reshuffle all the discarded Horror cards and form a new deck. This does NOT include any cards in spoil piles!

**Encounter Ties:** If both Monsters and Explorers tie in a round, all cards are placed under the Room card in the center of the table. Players draw up to their hand size. The next Butler chooses the type of combat it will be (he does not draw Room cards) and begins a new round. Players are not limited to playing cards from the same side as before, but the side that wins this round gets the appropriate spoils from both rounds!

*Example: Jon and Ginger again play on the side of the Explorers in a battle of Strength in the Cistern. Jon plays a Gangster (Str 3); Ginger plays a College QB (Str 4). Dan and Ella play on the side of the Monsters with Crawling Hand (Str 1) and a Vampire (Str ??). Ella rolls the dice and gets a 6, meaning both sides have tied with a total of 7!*

*All those cards are now placed under the Cistern card. Everyone draws up to their hand size and a brand new battle (of the new Butler's choice) begins in the same Room.*

**Midnight and Dawn:** These cards are always played with another room card. In the case of Midnight, players may play two Explorer or Monster cards.

**Claiming Cards:** If a card says to *Claim* another card, you may *immediately* take it out of play and add it to your pile of spoils! You may only claim cards on your turn. Thus, if you've just played the Vampire Hunter, and the next player plays the Vampire, you cannot claim that card.

## STRATEGY

- Take advantage of being the Butler by playing powerful cards that are specialized to certain floors of the house, but be careful that if you play too good of a card, other players may team up against you!

- Calling a Bloodbath may *seem* like a good way to win a fight, but this kind of combat is hard to control; there are many more cards that can compete in all categories.

- Remember that even if you play a weak card that has no chance of winning the battle, you may get to partake in the winner's spoils if you pick the winning side.