

Renato de Rosa
HELL
a devilish swapping game
for 2 to 6 players

The players are devils who have come to market to barter some of the worst and most famous bad souls in history. Each devil has brought with him a mixed bag of these and also a secret list on which he has ranked them according to value - meaning badness. But opinions differ greatly, and what is high on one list may be low on another and vice versa - which makes for strange transactions - and to add to the confusion, there are special cards with unexpected effects that players can throw in at opportune moments... At the end, the devil who gets away with the most valuable bagful of souls - according to his own ranking - is the winner.

Contents

- 2 decks of 18 cards (backs with devils): 17 pictures of famous bad souls plus 1 of a nameless bad soul (player's choice)
- 8 special cards (plain backs): pictures of devils holding signs
- 1 pad with lists of 18 badies
- 1 2min. sand timer

Preparations

1. Lists. Each player receives a sheet from the pad with a list of bad souls in alphabetical order. Write down secretly the value you give to each of these from 1 to 18. The higher the number, the higher the value the body will have for you during the game. Each number may appear only once. Every player will then have a body worth 18, another worth 17, and so on down to 1. Since the lists are compiled secretly, each will be different - for example, you might give Nero (Nerone) a high value and Herod (Erode) a low value, while another player may have it the other way round. Don't let any opponent see your list!
2. Cards with the badies' pictures. Shuffle these and deal them out face up to the players. In games for 2 or 3 players, use only one deck, in games for 4 to 6, both decks. If 5 are playing, discard the last card. Each lays out his cards before him for all to see.
3. Special cards. Shuffle and deal two face down to each player when 2, 3 or 4 are playing, one to each when 5 or 6 are playing. These cards are held in hand until put to use (see below).
4. The sand timer. When all is ready, and after a pause so that everyone may examine the cards displayed on the table, set up the sand timer. (The timer is set up 3 times in the course of a game - see below).

Play

There is no order of play: just a lot of swapping, and a lot of noise, too, since trades are of course made aloud. "What do you want for Dracula?" "You don't have anything good enough." "Come on, I'll give you Jack the Ripper." "Nothing doing." "I'll give you Jack the Ripper plus Gengis Khan!" "OK." Naturally, good deals will tend to be good for both players - the question is, good by how much?. This is what counts in the end. For example, on one

player's list Torquemada might be worth 3 and Attila 16; on another player's list, Torquemada 12 and Attila 5; if the first offers to swap his Torquemada for the other's Attila, both will gain, but the first will gain 13, the second only 7 - which is of course not bad, and so on.

If both decks are used, players may end up having 2 cards of the same body. When this happens, one has the value indicated on the player's list, the other has value 5, regardless of the value on the list.

Special cards

If 2, 3 or 4 are playing, each player gets 2 such cards, if 5 or 6 are playing, only one. These cards are held in hand and may be played at any time, interrupting the trading for a moment. There are 3 different kinds of special cards:

SCAMBIO OBBLIGATO cards (4) (*Forced Swap*). By playing this card you can compel an opponent to swap one of his bad souls for one of yours (forcing perhaps an exchange which he had previously refused), or compel two opponents to make a swap (hoping thereby to damage them both). But in the course of a game a bad soul may be forced into only one such swap - and to signal this, after the swap the two cards involved should be turned upside down. (The *Forced Swap* card is then discarded.)

GRANDE SCAMBIO cards (2) (*Great Exchange*). If you play this card, each player must immediately pass a face up card of his choice to a player next to him, either left or right. (The *Great Exchange* card is then discarded.)

BUONA AZIONE cards (2) (*Good Deed*). Even the worst character in history may have done one good deed in his life. But in Hell this diminishes his value. If you play this card on an opponent's body, you lower his value instantly by 7 points! The *Good Deed* card is then not discarded but remains attached to the card it devalued, even if this card is subsequently swapped or passed on to a neighbour.

Timer

As explained above, the 2min. sand timer is set up at the start of play. After it runs out, any player may set it up again, but this need not be done immediately. After it runs out a second time, any player may set it up one last time and announce: "Last two minutes!" - at the end of which the game is over.

Final count

When time has run out, figure out what your score is: tally the values of all the bad souls you have bagged (naturally according to your own list) and subtract 7 for any good deed card you may have been stuck with. (Let an opponent verify your count.) Highest score wins.