

DEAD MONEY

RULES

• For 3 to 5 Players •



Welcome back to the Old West, where men are dead, women are dead, and money is particularly dead.

You're a Zombie. You walk the Earth, covet Brains, and work part-time at Friedey's, the Saloon and Gambling Hall of the Damned.

Poker is the newest fad, and Friedey's will not be left out. The establishment runs a tournament every Sunday. Employees are forced to play in the game, to fill up empty seats, but they aren't allowed to win.

Your problem: Zombies make pretty good poker players. In fact, by the end of the day, there's nobody but you Zombies left at the final table.

Your goal is to run out of money, and fast. Unless you're the next player to drop out of this tournament, you're going to suffer a fate worse than death.

Whatever that is.

Dead Money is a quick-playing card game based on the Cheapass classic, **Give Me the Brain**. In this game, Brains are represented by cards (there are eight of them in the deck), so even if you've played **Give Me the Brain**, you'd best take a gander at these rules.

because some cards let you take cards out of the discard pile.

Determine randomly who will play first. Turns usually move to the left (clockwise) around the table. However, sometimes the turn will skip around as a result of a *Showdown* (a bidding round). Those are described later.

On Each Turn:

On your turn, you must play at least one card, or draw one. When you play a card, follow its instructions. If you're not clear on what a particular card does, there is a glossary of "fine points" at the end of this rules sheet.



Spending Hands: Each card has a "cost" in hands. You have two hands each turn. This means you can play one two-handed card, or up to two one-handed cards (one at a time).

If you don't play anything on your turn (either because you can't, or because you don't want to), you must draw one card. That ends your turn.



Needing a Brain: Some cards can't be played *unless you have a Brain*. These cards are marked with a shiny pink Brain like the one above.

"Having a Brain" means having at least one Brain card sitting on the table in front of you. Like this one:



Brain Cards: When you play a Brain card, it *stays on the table in front of you*. It's probably going to move around later (lots of cards can move it), but for the moment it's yours.

Playing a Brain takes two hands (your whole turn), but when you play

Materials:

This game includes 112 **cards** and this **instruction sheet**. In addition, you will need a **6-sided die**. Steal it from a game you never play. Or buy a pretty pink one.

The deck contains two complete poker decks, plus eight Brain cards.

How To Win:

Cards represent money, specifically chips in a poker tournament. To win the game, you must run out of money by *emptying your hand*.

Setting Up:

One player shuffles the deck and deals a hand of 7 cards to each player.

Put the deck in the middle of the table, with space for a discard pile beside it. If the deck runs out, shuffle the discards and replace it.

Note: You should *not* reshuffle the discards until you absolutely have to,

Rank
5

Title
Down the Rabbit Hole

Suit
Clubs

Hands
Playing this card takes two hands.

Coins
These can make you draw cards in a Showdown.

Brain
You need a Brain to play this card.

Funny Text
Black text doesn't matter.

Effect Text
White text tells you what the card does.

Color
The color of brain-related cards is based on suit.

It takes a genius to lose money this fast.

Starting with you, everyone with a Brain discards one card.

it, you draw two cards and immediately *take another turn*.

There are eight Brains in the deck, two of each suit. You will often find yourself in possession of more than one Brain at a time. This is usually good.



Dropping a Brain: When you play a card that requires a Brain, you run the risk of *dropping* one of your Brains. That's because holding Brains takes lots of concentration, and so does playing those tricky cards.

After you follow through the instructions on the card, you must make a "skill roll." (That's what the die is for.) To succeed, you must roll *equal to or higher than* the rank of the card you played. For example, if the card was a 4, you must roll a 4 or higher, or you will drop a Brain.

If you succeed in your skill roll, your turn continues (if you have a hand left), or it ends (if you're out of hands).

If you fail the roll, your turn ends immediately, and you *drop the Brain of your choice*. Everyone then scrambles to pick it up, by playing a Showdown, a bidding round described below.

Note: You choose which Brain to drop *after* you fail the skill roll. This has the same net effect as deciding before you roll, but you do it less often.



"Why do Brains Have Suits?": You'll notice that Brains have suits. You *don't* need the matching-suit Brain to play a brain-requiring card. However, Brains do give you *+1 on all skill rolls* when you play cards of the same suit. That's how you can actually play a 7 without fumbling a Brain.

Note: If you have both Brains of the correct suit, you get +2!



Showdowns:

When a Brain is dropped, the normal turn order is broken. Players must bid to pick up the wayward Brain, and the winner of the bid takes the Brain *and the next turn*. Turns will proceed to the left from that position.

Bidding is settled by the order of poker hands, so if you don't remember those, take a refresher from the inset at right. Remember, any collection of cards is a poker hand. *Exception:* You *can't include a Brain card as part of a bid*.



Bidding starts on the left of the player who dropped the Brain, and goes once around the table. In turn, players may either bid or pass. If *every-one* passes, the Brain is discarded.

To bid, you may play up to five cards from your hand. Your bid must be a *better poker hand* than the current bid (you can't underbid).

When the bidding is over, all the bid cards are discarded.

Whoever wins takes the dropped Brain and the next turn. This player must also *draw cards*. The number of cards he draws is equal to the number of *coins* on all the cards in his bid.

For example, the bid pictured above is a pair of Kings with a 9 kicker.

If this bid is the winner, the player who played it must draw four cards, one for each coin.

Players who bid, but don't win, do not draw cards. Since the object of the game is to get rid of cards, it's great to bid, ditch terrible cards, and then be outbid and draw nothing. But don't get too greedy. If you play too many coins, players *will* let you draw!

Note: If a player plays his entire hand as a bid, it is wise not to outbid him. If you do, that player draws no cards and thus *wins the game!*

Winning:

To win, you must empty your hand. You must complete all card instructions before you can win, so (for example) if a card tells you to discard your hand and draw six cards, you don't win just because your hand is briefly empty.

Fine Points:

Like we said, the cards describe what they do. However, if you're prone to confusion, here are a few pointers.

"I Can't Do That!": It's possible that you'll be given an instruction you just can't follow, like taking a card from the discards when there are none. If this is the case, you can just ignore the impossible part of the instruction.

"Having a Brain" means having a Brain on the table in front of you, not necessarily in your hand. In general, cards that refer to Brains mean those in play, not in people's hands.

"Passing Cards" means passing cards from one hand to another.

"Steal" and "Grab a Brain" both mean taking a faceup Brain from one player, and putting it in front of yourself (not into your hand).

"Draw" means taking cards from the top of the deck and putting them into your hand.

"Counting": Some cards tell you to find a particular player by counting. This is done in normal turn order, to the left around the table. Where you start counting depends on the card.

"Discard" means putting a card into the discard pile, which is different from **"Drop,"** which means dropping a Brain. Dropping a Brain causes a Showdown. Discarding one does not.

Turn Order: The turn order doesn't change as a result of cards that move the Brain around; it *only* shifts after a Showdown, or after a card explicitly changes it.

Color: The color boxes on some cards remind you that they require (or are) Brains, and are based on the suits.

POKER HANDS

Any set of cards is a poker hand. You need five cards to make hands like straights and flushes. In case you are rusty, here is a quick and dirty list of poker hands.

High Card (No Pair): Any hand that doesn't make one of the better hands.

One Pair: Two cards of the same rank, such as two 9s.

Two Pair: Two pairs.

Three of a Kind: Three cards of the same rank, such as three 4s.

Straight: Five cards in sequence, such as 3-4-5-6-7. Straights are compared by their highest card; A-2-3-4-5 is a 5-high straight. 10-J-Q-K-A is an Ace-high straight.

Flush: Five cards of the same suit, such as five spades.

Full House: A pair plus three of a kind.

Four of a Kind: 4 cards, same rank.

Straight Flush: A hand that is a straight and a flush. The highest of these, 10-J-Q-K-A, is called a **Royal Flush**.

Five of a Kind. This hand is typically only possible with wild cards, but it's also possible when you're playing with two decks. That's the way all the professionals are playing these days. No, really.