Ghastly Grimoires

2 – 4 Players, age 10+, 30-45 Mins
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Art Eric York

Components

25 Large Book Cards, 9 Circular Identity cards, 40 Coins, 1 Scrying Skull

Aim of the Game

Be the first player to collect at least 5 symbols matching your secret cult identity and declare yourself the winner without the other players correctly discovering which cult you are in.

Setup

Each player is dealt a random circular identity card which secretly identifies them as a member of one of three cults. These cards are kept face down and secret from their opponents.

Each player is dealt 8 coins each. The remaining coins are considered 'the Bank' and kept in the center of the table.

The rectangular Book cards are shuffled and placed face down in a pile known as 'the Library'. Each player is dealt 1 face down Book card from the Library. This is their hidden Book which only they may look at.

Finally, the Scrying Skull is placed in the center of the table.

Phases

The game has three phases: Income, Action and Auction. These phases run in order continually until someone win the game.

Income Phase. Each player receives 2 coins from the Bank.

Action Phase. Players declare if they want to carry out any actions. If no player wishes to carry out any actions, then the game moves on to the Auction Phase. If just one player declares the intention to carry out an action, then the player with the Scrying Skull nominates the order that all players may carry out actions. Note players are not obliged to say which type of actions they will carry out just that they wish to carry out an action. When it comes to their position a player may perform the following actions as many times as they like and in whatever order they like; Reveal their Hidden Book, Buy a Hidden Book, Steal a Book, Exchange a Book or Lock a Book so long as they have the necessary coins and symbols.

Auctions Phase. In the first auction phase of the game the Scrying Skull is auctioned for each subsequent auction the top card from the Library is revealed and auctioned. The Book cards contain cult symbols, but also a number of other symbols that grant the own certain ability or extra buying power. It is the clever use of these abilities along with the players' bidding strategies that make the game enjoyable.

Victory

Upon winning an auction a player may declare themselves the winner of the game. Before they have won the other players must vote on which cult the self-declared winner belongs to. If the voting players get it correct then self-declared winner must exchange their identity card for a random unused one and then return one of their books to the bottom of the Library, they have not won the game yet. If the players voted incorrectly, or the vote is tied, then the player who declared themselves the winner must reveal their identity card and their hidden Book, if they have 5 symbols from their cult across all the Books cards they own, they have won the game!

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