

Chicks With Disks

A card game with storytelling for 3-4 players.

by David Berg

The Card Game

Set-up Phase

Using a standard deck of playing cards, get rid of the jokers and shuffle.

This game is played on a grid of 9 cards by 3 cards, all starting face down.

After the grid is created, each player draws a card from the remaining deck. Everyone shows their cards. These are then returned to the deck, and the deck is re-shuffled.

The player who drew the highest card gets to go first. Play proceeds clockwise from there. In addition the players are awarded the following ranks:

Player 1: **Spades:** Superhuman, **Hearts:** Motif, **Clubs:** Neutral, **Diamonds:** Bane

Player 2: **Hearts:** Superhuman, **Clubs:** Motif, **Diamonds:** Neutral, **Spades:** Bane

Player 3: **Clubs:** Superhuman, **Diamonds:** Motif, **Spades:** Neutral, **Hearts:** Bane

Player 4: **Diamonds:** Superhuman, **Spades:** Motif, **Hearts:** Neutral, **Clubs:** Bane

Taking Turns

On their first turn, each player places their Token on a card at a corner of the grid, and then flips that corner card face-up.

In subsequent turns, players flip cards in the grid face-up and leave them face-up for the rest of the game. This happens in the course of either a Raid or Evade action, which must be declared before a Token is moved or a card is flipped.

Raid

Flip face-up either the card your Token is on or any card adjacent to it (no diagonals). Move your Token onto the flipped-over card and try to beat its value by drawing a card from the deck and adding your relevant rank. Ranks refer to the suit of the card you are Raiding; the suit of the card drawn from the deck is irrelevant.

Superhuman: +10 • Motif: +3 • Neutral: 0 • Bane: -3

If you lose or tie, your turn ends there, and your Token stays on the card you lost to. You can try to Raid it again next turn if you choose.

If you win, you move to any adjacent card, and you can choose to get either a Mission Point or one Upper Hand over a player of your choice. Keep a tally of both of these, and make them accessible to all the other players. Make sure to include the identity of the player for each Upper Hand you assign (you may have several for a given player). Mission Points are used to get the Disk, and Upper Hands are used to win Duels.

The card drawn during the Raid is placed face-down in a discard pile next to the deck.

Evade

Flip face-up any card adjacent to the card your Token is on (no diagonals). Then move your Token to any card adjacent to the newly-flipped-over card.

Duel

If a Raid or Evade places your token on the same card occupied by another player's token, you must Duel that player. This works the same as the contest in a Raid, in that players draw cards and modify the numbers with their rank corresponding to the suit of the relevant card in the grid. The differences are that:

1. The players try to best each other, with no reference to the number of the card in the grid.
2. Any player who has one or more Upper Hands over their opponent can play as many of these as desired. Each Upper Hand played reduces the opponent's value by 5. The player whose turn initiated the Duel gets first opportunity to play an Upper Hand post-draw. The players alternate turns thereafter, until someone admits defeat. You can always play an Upper Hand on your turn in a Duel, even if you previously passed on a chance to do so.

Either player can play an Upper Hand pre-draw (there's no strategic advantage, but it could mesh well with storytelling).

The winner of a Duel:

1. Takes the Disk from the loser if the loser had it.
2. "Takes a suit" from the loser. This means that the winner upgrades a Neutral suit to Motif, or upgrades a Bane suit to Neutral. The loser must do the reverse, downgrading a Motif suit

to Neutral or a Neutral suit to Bane, accordingly (if impossible, simply downgrade whatever can be downgraded). Superhuman suits cannot be achieved or lost unless the winner already has 3 Motif suits or the loser already has 3 Bane suits.

Note: if you Raid a card that is occupied by another player's token, resolve the Raid contest first, and then the Duel contest. A Duel does not effect your Token's final placement; the usual Raid rules apply.

Special movement rule: in the grid, cards of the same number are considered to be adjacent for purposes of moving Tokens according to Raid and Evade rules. For example, on an Evade action, you could flip over a 4 of Clubs and then instantly move your Token to the 4 of Hearts that was already face-up.

The first player to 3 Mission Points gets the Disk and places it on their Token. The Disk moves with them as they move their Token across the grid.

The first player to get the Disk to the center of the grid wins.

The Storytelling

The premise:

The movement of your Token across the grid represents your dangerous, effective, female character breaking into a fortified complex, overcoming its defenses, and absconding with the computer disk it houses. All characters desire the disk, whether for personal reasons or simply at the behest of their employers.

You'll want to define your characters before starting. See below. At this stage, you can define why they are undertaking this mission, or you can wait until the complex is defined.

As you move through the complex, you'll be defining its rooms one by one. If you'd like to form a general concept for the complex, disk, and means of entry and escape before you start defining rooms, do this as a group before the first player takes their first turn.

For characters, suits are correlated with certain themes:

Spades: Violence, especially excessive, merciless violence.

Hearts: Love, lust, seduction, and any strong emotion.

Clubs: Determination, willpower, endurance, overcoming odds & suffering.

Diamonds: Intellect, strategy, orchestration, organization, learned skills.

Once you have been assigned your suit ranks, expand on your primary (Superhuman) suit to create an overall picture of your character. Do this by defining your Superhuman capabilities and your personal Motifs (ignore the suit connected to Motif in your ranks). Also, define a general source of weakness, referring to your character's Bane suit. Here are some examples:

Spades:

The Bride (Kill Bill)
Superhuman: Martial arts mastery, esp. katana
Motif: Spider, mantis, torture, shadows, fear
Bane: Security systems w guns

Medusa (Greek myth)
Superhuman: Black magic
Motif: Storms, snakes, withering death
Bane: Man-made alloys

Hearts:

Number Six (B.S. Galactica)
Superhuman: Entrancement
Motif: Blood, sex fetishes, servants
Bane: Sudden violence

Carrie (Carrie)
Superhuman: Pyrokinesis / telekinesis
Motif: Amnesia, insanity, speaking tongues
Bane: Persistent attack

Clubs:

Tank Girl (Tank Girl)
Superhuman: Attitude overcomes all odds
Motif: Bad manners, scars, homemade gear
Bane: Acceptance & belonging

Elektra (Daredevil)
Superhuman: Undead
Motif: Possession, cloning, reincarnation
Bane: Former loves

Diamonds:

Lara Croft (Tomb Raider)
Superhuman: High-tech gear
Motif: Gadgets, badges, connections, style
Bane: Drudgery, painstaking tasks

Lilu (Fifth Element)
Superhuman: Cyberware
Motif: Precision, robotics
Bane: Moral doubt

Events in the card game trigger storytelling as follows:

Initial Token placement:

Once you flip the corner card face-up, narrate how you entered the complex.

Flipping over a card:

This means seeing what's in a room. Use the suit of the room's card to help define it:

Spades: Vicious opponents

Hearts: Men

Clubs: Painful or strenuous physical obstacles

Diamonds: Technology

When you Evade, you move past the room to another one without engaging it. When you Raid, you enter the room, looking for info on the disk (Mission Points) or demonstrating your superiority to your competitors (Upper Hands).

Moving your Token from one card to another card of the same number:

If this is the first time this particular pair of cards has been used this way, narrate how the complex connects these two far-apart rooms. Examples: tunnels, air vents, teleporters.

In a Raid, preparing to draw a card:

Narrate how your character approaches the challenges the room presents, referring to your Superhuman, Motif, or Bane character descriptions, according to the suit of the room's card. If the card matches your Neutral suit, describe how the room forces you to use an approach other than your forte.

Winning a Raid:

Narrate how your character overcomes the obstacles, concluding the attempt you described before drawing.

Losing a Raid:

Narrate how the obstacles stop your character's progress. Examples: they can be stunned, discouraged, confused, hideously injured, or suffering moral inner crisis.

Choosing to gain a Mission Point:

Narrate what you find in the room that will help you acquire the Disk. Examples: a key, a code, a map, a disarming or identification mechanism.

In a Duel, preparing to draw a card:

Instead of using the room as an obstacle itself, explain how the room impacts your attempt to best your opponent. A room that matches your Bane suit will get in your way, but a room that matches your Superhuman suit will actually help you.

In a Duel, playing an Upper Hand:

These characters have met before. Narrate how a previous encounter has given you an upper hand. Use the suit of the room card for inspiration, to determine if this encounter was a trouncing, a seduction, an outwitting, etc.

Winning a Duel:

Narrate how you take the Disk, if applicable. Narrate a personal improvement to explain your suit upgrade.

Losing a Duel:

Narrate a personal setback to explain your suit downgrade.

Winning the game:

Narrate how you exit the complex with the Disk, and what happens to the complex. Feel free to blow the place to bits.

After the game is won:

If they feel like it, losing players can narrate what happened to their characters as the winner escaped with the Disk, or thereafter. Once all the losing players who wish to narrate have done so, the winning player gets the option to narrate the effects of their character's victory.