

# DANIEL NEWMAN'S REAPERS

Necromancy isn't all fun and games, which is why once a month that deadly cabal gathers to blow off steam. Most popular with these nefarious ne'er-do-wells is a card game known as **Reapers**. And, naturally, the stakes with which they wager are the souls of the damned acquired through their dark dealings.

## Game Overview

Rooted in traditional trick taking games like Hearts or Spades, **Reapers** has some major differences that set it apart:

1. Every hand is drafted from face-up piles of 3 cards, rather than dealt to players.
2. Winners of tricks score the lowest value card in the trick, rather than the trick itself as a point.
3. There are four suits (daggers, poison, plague, and

pistols - each related to the method by which the damned souls died) as well as two different special cards, called "Reapers" and "Demons."

4. Players will place a wager as to how they think they will do in each hand, giving options for scoring the fewest points, scoring the second most points, or not trying to predict - all of which can be viable strategies.

## Components

64 Cards (2-10 and 1 Demon in each of 4 suits, 4 Reapers, 15 wager cards [3 in 5 player colors], rules, reference card)

## Round Setup

Give each player a set of wager cards in one color. Setup varies depending on player count.

*3p/4p*

Remove the 10s from the deck (place them back in the box, they are not needed) and shuffle the remaining cards. Flip the top card of the deck face up, which will be the trump card for that hand (if it is a Reaper, shuffle it back into the deck and flip

another card for the trump - Reapers cannot be trump). Deal out 13 piles of 3 cards each face up, fanned so that each card can be seen. Starting with the player to the left of the dealer and continuing clockwise, each player chooses 1 pile of three in order until it gets to the dealer. The dealer then takes a second pile and drafting continues in reverse order until the first player who drafted. Continue in this fashion until everyone has 12 (3p) or 9 (4p) cards in their hand and one pile remains on the table. This final pile is the Graveyard, and should be splayed in numeric order (Demons counting as 11), with the lowest value on top. Place the Graveyard next to the trump card. Players now choose which wager token to play, face down next to the trump card (the different wagers are explained later in the rules). The player to the left of the dealer leads the first card.

*5p*

Shuffle all of the cards. Flip the top card of the deck face up, which will be the trump card for that hand (if it is a Reaper, shuffle it back into the deck and flip another card for the trump - Reapers cannot be trump). Deal out 11 piles of 3 cards face up and 5

piles of 2 cards face up, fanned so that each card can be seen. Starting with the player to the left of the dealer, each player chooses any pile (of 2 or 3). Each player may only take one pile of 2, and when they do so they leave one of their cards in its place to show they've drafted one of the pairs. The dealer then takes a pile and drafting continues in reverse order until the first player who drafted, who takes an additional pile, etc. Continue in this fashion until everyone has 8 cards in their hand and one pile remains on the table. This final pile is the Graveyard, and should be played in numeric order, with the highest value on top. Place the Graveyard next to the trump card.

Players now choose which wager token to play, face down next to the trump card (the different wagers are explained later in the rules). The player to the left of the dealer leads the first card.

## **Gameplay**

On the first trick of the round, the player to the left of the dealer will choose a card from their hand and place it face up in front of them. The next player in clockwise order must play a card from the suit led. If

they cannot follow suit, they may play a trump card or any other card.

Reapers may not be led but can otherwise be played at any time, whether a player can follow suit or not (see *Reapers* section).

Play continues with each player playing one card in order. The trick is then evaluated.

- If only the led suit was played, the highest card of that suit wins the trick. If the high card was a Demon in that suit, the player who played the Demon takes the Demon into their score pile. Otherwise the player who won the trick takes the lowest value card and adds it to their score pile. The rest of the cards in the trick are discarded.

- If any trump was played, the highest trump card wins the trick. If there was a Demon played (whether or not it won the trick), the player who wins the trick takes the Demon into their score pile. Otherwise the player who wins takes the lowest value card and adds it to their score pile (this may or may not be the trump card played).

- Any cards that were played off-suit (as long as they are not trump), no matter their value, cannot win the trick.

- Any Reapers that are played have no impact on the trick (and no value for determining the lowest card), but follow their own rules (see below).

The winner of the previous trick leads the next. Any card can be led at any time, aside from Reapers (which can only be led if you have no other cards in hand - see *Reapers* section below). Play continues until all cards have been played, completing the Hand. The wagers are revealed and players score bonuses from their wagers if applicable, adding those bonus points to the values of the cards taken. All players retrieve their wager cards and the player left of the dealer for that hand becomes the dealer for the next round.

## **Demons**

Demons are the highest value card in each suit. If a Demon is involved in a trick (whether it wins the trick or not) a player takes the Demon into their score pile instead of the lowest value card from that trick. If there is more than one Demon played in a trick, the player still only takes one of them. At the end of the hand, a Demon will double your highest value card in your score pile.

If you have more than one Demon in your score pile, a second one will double your next highest card. If you only have Demons in your score pile and no other cards, they score zero points.

## **Reapers**

The first Reaper to be played in a trick must take the lowest value card from the Graveyard and add it to their scoring pile. If additional Reapers are played in a trick, they have no effect and are discarded.

There are 4 Reapers in the deck. They do not belong to any suit, have no point value, and can be played at any time, though not led with unless a player has no other cards. In this case, the lead is passed to the next player in clockwise order, whose card sets the lead suit. If a Reaper is led, it is ineligible to take from the Graveyard. In the rare occurrence that all players have only a reaper in the last trick, no players are eligible to take from the graveyard and no points are scored for the trick.

If there are one or more Reapers in the Graveyard, they are discarded and the Graveyard just has fewer scoring opportunities available (there will obviously

also be fewer Reapers in play).

## **Wagers**

The wagers at different player counts are the same, but the values are different. The cards are noted with 3/4/5 dots on them which tell you how many points that wager is worth at the respective player count.

**<** (Least points) - If you have scored the fewest number of points in the hand compared to the other players, you gain an extra 20/15/10 points.

**2nd** (2nd most points) - if you have scored the second highest number of points in the hand compared to the other players, you gain an extra 9/7/5 points

**No Wager** - No matter how many points you score, you gain an extra 4/3/2 points

## **Game End**

Play a number of hands equal to the number of players (or in the case of 3 players, 6 hands), at which point the player with the most points is declared the winner. If there is a tie, play additional hands until a winner is determined.