CARD HUNTER (base game)

Card Hunter is a cooperative card game for 1 to 3 players (with a 4 players variant), which simulates a fight between a team of hunters and a giant monster, made of… cards.
The cards represent both the monster's life points and its attacks, and they will have to be all removed from the game to bring the hunters's brigade to victory.
The most important rules in this set will be written in **bold**. In *italics* you'll instead find information and tips, not necessary for setting up the game and learning how to play.

GAME OVERVIEW

To play Card Hunter, you'll need these PNP files plus a few tokens, or a standard deck of cards. For the rules on how to play with a standard deck, please make reference to the according set of rules.

The PNP files contain:
- **44 Monster cards**, representing both the monster's attacks and life points.
They are divided into 5 suits: **Tail**  (hits north), **Head**  (hits south), **Claws**  (hits west), **Wings**  (hits east) and **Rage**  (hits everywhere).
Each Monster card, **except the Rage ones**, has different strenght, represented by the number of **Hit**  symbols on the card:
1: Weak (1 Hit symbol).
2: Medium (2 Hit symbols).
3: Strong (3 Hit symbols).

Each card also has four arrows  to remember more easily the direction of each attack.
The small icon on the top is used only to make it easier to setup the game. More on this later.

- 3 **Characters cards**, representing the bold heroes who are trying to fight the monster: the Jack of all Trades  (J), the Queen of Quivers  (Q) and the King of Knights  (K).
- 3 **Life**  and **Potion**  **trackers**, one for each Character.
- 4 **Random cards**. This resemble the Monster cards, but have a different background and no hit symbols. More on how to use them later.

SETUP

1) **Remove the Rage cards from the deck** for now. Use the small icons on the top of the cards as a reference, and divide the Monster cards in 4 piles face down on the table, in cross fashion.

Each pile will represent a **Part** of the monster, and will contain the following cards:

TAIL (heading north)
Tail cards: 2 weak, 2 medium, 1 strong.
Head cards: 1 strong.
Claws cards: 1 weak, 1 medium.
Wings cards: 2 medium.

CLAWS (heading west)
Tail cards: 1 weak, 1 medium.
Head cards: 1 weak, 1 medium.
Claws cards: 2 weak, 1 medium, 2 strong.
Wings cards: 1 medium.

WINGS (heading east)
Tail cards: 1 weak, 1 medium.
Head cards: 2 weak.
Claws cards: 1 weak.
Wings cards: 3 weak, 1 medium, 1 strong.

HEAD (heading south)
Tail cards: 1 strong.
Head cards: 1 weak, 3 medium, 1 strong.
Claws cards: 2 medium.
Wings cards: 1 weak, 1 strong.

These piles will be called **Parts**. The characters will have to remove all of the them from the game to succeed.
You will notice that the Parts aren't made of just one type of card. This means that you'll never know for sure which one is about to be revealed. But after a few plays, you'll be able to make educated guesses and outsmart your opponent.

2) Now reveal one card from each Part, creating four new piles called **Hit Piles**. Put each card perpendicular to the corresponding Part, with no other effect.

3) Take the 4 **Rage cards**. Shuffle one in each Part, then remove one card per Part from the game, **without looking at it**.
The Rage cards will have different effects depending on when and how they will be drawn.

4) Take the Character cards representing the Jack, Queen and King. Each player will control one or more **Characters** according to the number of players:

With 3 players: each player will control 1 Character.
With 2 players: one player will control the Jack and the King, and the other one will control the Queen.
In solo play: the player will control all 3 Characters.
(*For the 4 players variant, please consult the variants rulebook.*)

Each Character then gets his **Life** and a **Potion** trackers.
The number of **Starting Lives** for each Character is always set at **4**, but the number of **Potions** is based on the difficulty level:
Easy: 4 Starting Potions per Character.
Normal: 3 Starting Potions per Character.
Hard: 2 Starting Potions per Character.

To keep track of the number of Lives for each Character, simply rotate the Life tracker 90° clockwise everytime the Character loses one Life. After a full rotation, a **Knockout** will occur: **after 3 Knockouts, the game will be over**.
You can do the same with the Potion tracker (or use some tokens). Just remember the Potion's starting number, according to the difficulty level, and rotate the tracker accordingly, discarding it when the Character is out of Potions.

5) Put 3 tokens at the Parts' center, to count the number of **Knockouts** that the team can stand before losing. Then put aside the small deck of 4 Monster cards without the Hit symbols: this will be the **Random Deck**, and will be used in various situations.

6) In Jack – Queen – King order, draw a card from the **Random Deck** (shuffling it back in each time) to find out the the **starting position** of each Character.
These spaces (next to the Hit Piles) will be called **Positions**. Please note that each Position **cannot ever host more than 2 Characters** at the same time.

GAME FLOW

The game is made up of rounds, during which each Character **will have** to perform **ONE (and one only)** action in J-Q-K order.
After the King's action, the monster will attack with the Part in whose Position, **at the start of the round**, the majority of the hunters was standing.
Monsters in Card Hunter are big but stupid, and can't focus on a single target. Two hunters can exploit this behaviour by luring the monster in a given direction, while a third one attacks from a safe spot.

Please remember that **Characters will alway act in Jack – Queen – King order** during the game.

CHARACTERS' ACTIONS

Each round starts with determining the monster attack's direction.
Put a token on the Part whose Position hosts the **majority** of the Characters: **at the end of turn**, you'll have to reveal a card from this deck, representing the monster attack.
This gives players time to react, and get out of the way!
If at the start of the round all the hunters are in different Positions, the attacking Part is the one that hosts the Character with **fewer Life Points**.
In case of a tie, between two or more than two Characters, the attacking Part is chosen at random with the **Random Deck**.
It's therefore possible in this case (and only in this case) to chose a part with no one next to it from the beginning.

Now it's time to fight!
During his turn a Character **must choose** and execute one of the following actions. **A Character can't remain idle and pass without doing anything**.

1) MOVING

The Character changes Position, making one step from a Hit Pile to another in clockwise or anticlockwise direction. It is possible to move next to an empty Hit Pile, but remember that each Position can't host more than 2 Characters at the same time.

2) LIGHT ATTACK.

The Character attacks the Part connected to his Position, revealing the first card from the deck and discarding it in the corresponding Hit Pile.

This action can't be selected if the target Part is empty (because all the cards are in the Hit Pile, or removed from the game).

The revealed card has no effect, **unless it's a Rage Card**. In that case, the monster enters **Rage Mode.**

RAGE MODE:

If a Light Attack reveals a Rage Card, the monster enters **Rage Mode**. Shuffle each Hit Pile back inside its Part (even the one that has been hit!), and **remove 1 Life Point** from each Character.

When a monster is raged, there's no safe spot to hide.

Remove the Rage Card from the game. Then the round continues as normal.

Provoking monsters with light attacks can be useful to wear them, but it can turn out to be dangerous in the long run.

3) HEAVY ATTACK.

The Character attacks the Hit Pile connected to his Position, and **removes all the cards in that Pile from the game**.

This action can't be selected if the targeted Hit Pile is empty.

A heavy attack is never followed by a rage reaction: the monster is too stunned to get angry! But it will only be effective against an already wounded or exposed part.

4) DRINKING A POTION

The Character loses one of his Potions and:

- gets **back to full health**

OR

- cures **another Character** in the same Position.

Instead of his own, a Character can use a Potion from **another Character** in the same Position to get the same effects, but only if both players **agree** to do so.

This action can't be selected without effectively consuming a Potion.

MONSTER'S ATTACK

After each Characters' actions, it's time for the monster to land its blow.

Reveal the card from the Attacking Part chosen at the beginning of the round: cards revealed this way are called **Attack cards**.
The attack will target the Position shown by the card's suit and arrows – **the Part that's actually attacking doesn't matter**.

Remember that, as depicted by the arrows on each card:
Tail: attacks north.
Head: attacks south.
Claws: attacks west.
Wings: attacks east.
As stated at the beginning of these rules, the attack will also be weak, medium or strong according to the card's Hit symbols:

1 Hit symbol: Weak (1 Life Point).
2 Hit symbols: Medium (2 Life Points).
3 Hit symbols: Strong (3 Life Points).

IMPORTANT: Please note that if the Attack card is a Rage card, **Rage Mode does NOT kick in.**
You'll still have to shuffle the Hit Piles back inside the Parts, and the Rage card will **still be removed** from the game, but the Characters **won't suffer** 1 point of damage each.
On the other hand, the monster will attack **again** with a second Attack card from the same Part.

Also note that, **if there are no cards left** in a Part when it has to attack, maybe because they're all in the Hit Pile or all removed from the game, then **the monster will enter Rage Mode** instead of attacking.
You could think that concentrating on one Part at a time could be a good way to kill a monster, but that's not always true. In fact, there's nothing more dangerous than a seriously wounded beast.

The Characters in the Position hit by the Attack card lose Life Points according to the above value chart.
If at anytime a Character reaches **0 or lower Life Points**, the team loses a **Knockout** token.
If it was the last one, the hunters lose. Otherwise, the knocked Character gets back on his feet with all his Life Points back, and can restart fighting immediately.
Yes, the hunters in Card Hunter are more resilent than they look.

VICTORY

As soon as the last card from the last Hit Pile is removed from the game, **the players immediately win**.

TIPS FROM THE ANCIENT HUNTER

Dear fellows, the beast you're about to fight may look like a simple deck of cards, but it's much more dangerous than that! That's a living creature, my boys, with its own personality, and you'll have to understand it if you don't want to fail.
We call it the "Rattler": it's got a big long tail ending with a rattle, hence the name, two large wings, sharp claws and, most of all, a deadly fiery breath that can incinerate anything on its path.
Don't look at a Rattler directly in the eyes, if you don't want to provoke it. Try to circle around it, dodging its attacks, until it's safe enought to stop and land a blow.
But remember: a wounded Rattler will get enraged much more often. At that point you'll have to guide its attacks, control your movements and never count on the Random Deck, to avoid it entering Rage Mode.
Only with tight teamwork you'll be able to win and slay the monster.

Please download the variant rulebook for:

1) 4 players mode.
2) Expert mode.
3) Deduction mode.
3) Characters' powers.
4) Custom monsters.
5) Score system.

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Helped with the rules: Dimitri Candido Vitale, Gareth Bevan.
Gave feedback: Steven Tu, Graham Muller, Benj Davis.
For any kind of feedback, you can write to: mazzuk@hotmail.com