Royal Haunts

By
Legend

Story:

You are an ex-cat burglar turned private detective with a special interest in all things dealing with the occult and alchemy.

Of particular interest to you is Infirerra Castle. First built by the Agen family and taken over a century later by the Le'Marchand family after the last of the Agen bloodline fell to a bloody murder suicide by Charles Agen IV.

After Le'Marchand's wife, Elizabeth, was mysteriously murdered, Philip married the Lady De L'Isle. An odd woman with a strange taste for magic and the occult.

Not long after Lady De L'Isle took her place within Le'Marchand's keep did reports of strange occurrences begin travelling throughout the surrounding area by the frightened whispers of the paranoid locals. Reports of shadowy figures appearing at night and a strange stone circle that cannot be seen in the daylight. The faint sounds of strange whispers, cries, and howlings. Most locals stayed clear of the caste for fear of their souls.

As time wore on, the Le'Marchand family eventually started to perish. All under some strange circumstances. First to go was Le'Marchand's oldest son from his first wife, Elizabeth. Then his youngest daughter a year later, and eventually, Philip Le'Marchand himself exactly one year after that.

Only the Lady De L'Isle and her only son with Philip remained until about a decade later when Infirerra Castle mysteriously burned. When the ash had settled, Lady De L'Isle and her son were nowhere to be found.

Most locals continue to stay clear of the castle. But some have dared to trespass and their bodies usually discovered sometime later not far from the ancient home.

It is rumored that the castle remains haunted by the ghosts the Agen family, Le'Marchand and his kin, and Lady De L'Isle and her son. But, it is also rumored that there are priceless treasures hidden within the castle's great libraries, walls, chambers, and dungeon. In particular, four strange ancient talismans that the Lady De L'Isle had been seen holding in her nightly ceremonies.

Such a grand tale is just too much for you to pass up. You enter the castle with greed, curiosity, and a touch of fear in your heart. You may come out with priceless treasures in hand, or it may be your last night in this world. But as they say, "Nothing ventured. Nothing gained."

Equipment Needed:

- 1 deck of standard playing cards including Jokers

Set-up:

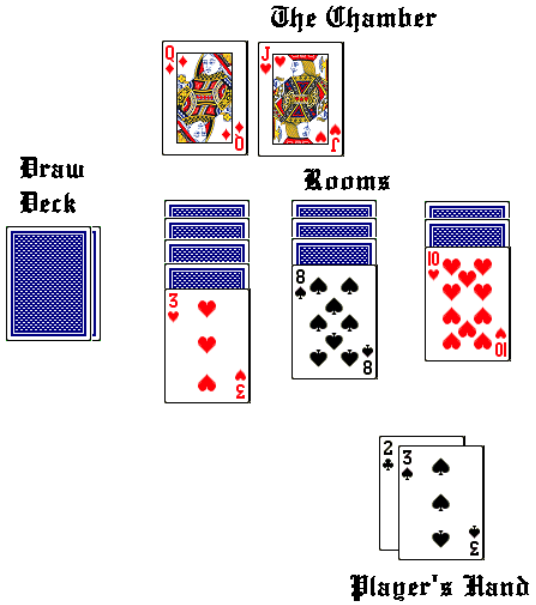
Shuffle the cards with two Jokers in the deck.

Then deal three tableaus. The tableau consists of three columns, with the first column containing five cards, the second column four cards, and the third column three cards. The top card of each column is face-up; the remainder of the cards that were layed down before it are face-down. *These tableaus represent the **rooms** of the castle.*

Then draw two more cards from the deck and place them face up to the side. This is your hand. *This represents your arcane knowledge of occult magic and alchemy.*

If any Aces appear when dealing the face up cards on the tableaus or in your hand, re-shuffle them into the deck and draw a new card.

If any face cards appear when dealing the face up cards in the rooms or in your hand, place them above the rooms in a row , from left to right, in the order they are revealed. Then draw a new card. *This row of face cards above the rooms is the **Chamber**.*



Gameplay:

During the game, you use the cards in your hand and/or the revealed cards in the rooms to make 5-card poker hands. *These represent the **spells** you use to fend off the spirits of the castle and search for ancient artifacts.*

The cards in your hand can also be used to perform specific actions depending on the suit of the card. *These also represent **spells** at your disposal.*

You may move a single face up card from one room to place in another as long as that card can be used to create a spell in the room it is being moved to and as long as it is not part of a spell already in progress in the particular room it is starting on.

You may move a group of cards from one room to another as long as the entire group of cards can be used in the room it is being moved to and it would not result in there being more than five face up cards in the room it is being moved to.

If moving cards from a room results in there being a face down card on top of the room, it may either be turned over, or left face down and a face up card or group of cards may be placed on top of it from another room or the players hand.

When a complete set of five face up cards are on top of a room, all cards that are used to create the spell are placed in a separate pile. *This is the **Arcane Pool**.* Any leftover cards that were not actually part of the spell are placed in the discard pile. *This is the **Grave**.*

Note: Even if the spell you are making requires less than five cards, like a pair, or 3 of a kind, you still need to play a total of five cards in the room in order to complete the spell.

For example: A flush consists of five cards all in the same suit. So all five cards are used in making the hand and they would all go into the Arcane Pool. A pair of cards only consists of two cards with the same value. So those two matching cards would go into the Arcane Pool, but the remaining three cards would go into the Grave.

The player may make as many legal moves as possible until there are no more possible moves left. When there are no legal moves left to make or the player simply does not wish to make any more moves, the turn is over. If there are any cards left in the players hand at the end of the turn, they are discarded into the Grave and two new cards are drawn for the player's hand.

When dealing a new hand, if any Aces or face cards are revealed, they are resolved immediately and a new card is drawn until the player has two cards in their hand. (this also applies for when an Ace or face up card is revealed from within the rooms).

The Cards:

Ace:
The Aces represent the ancient talismans of Lady De L'Isle's that you are so eagerly willing to risk your life for.

When an ace card is revealed, the player must group any face cards in the Chamber that are of the same suit together starting from the left.

For Example: If there is a King of Spades, Jack of Hearts, Jack of Diamonds, and a Queen of Spades, in that order when an Ace is drawn, the Queen of Spades is moved behind the King of Spades and in front of the Jack of Hearts.

After the cards in the Chamber are grouped together, reveal the top three cards of the deck one at a time. If another Ace or any face cards are revealed then resolve them immediately. Any other cards revealed at this phase are discarded.

If the player has at least one card of a spell in a room that could result in a Flush of the same suit of the Ace or a 5-high straight, the player may put the Ace in that room. Otherwise, it is discarded.

When the player captures an Ace, all spells cats from the players hand that are of the same suit as the captured Ace only cost half of the normal cost (rounded down for odd numbered cards).

When all four Aces are revealed, the Grave is shuffled and becomes the new draw deck. If there are any cards left in the current draw deck when the fourth Ace is revealed, it becomes the new Grave.

If the player captures two of the four Aces by successfully using them to create a spell, the game has been won.

The Face Cards:
The royal face cards of the deck represent the tormented spirits of Agen, Le'Marchand, and the Lady De L'Isle who haunt the castle and reap the souls of all who enter.

When a face card is revealed either when drawing a new hand or when turned over from a room, it is placed in the Chamber to the right of the last card in the Chamber. The player must then remove any cards from their hand or on the top of any rooms that are the same suit as the face card that just appeared.

Face cards may not be used to make any poker hands except for the following:

***Jacks** may be used to make a Jack-high straight.

***Queens** may be used to make a flush.

If there is an Ace, Jack, or Queen in one of the rooms when a face card of the same suit is revealed, then the entire spell in progress is discarded.

If all three face cards of the same suit are grouped together in the Chamber, then the game is over. If all four of the same face cards are in the Chamber, the game is over.

Joker: (*Playing with Jokers is optional*)
The Joker simply represents either your good luck or grave misfortune.

When a Joker appears while drawing a new hand or turned over in one of the rooms, the player may use the Joker as a wild card for creating a spell in one of the rooms or use the Joker to cast any one of four possible spells from the players hand for free.

When a Joker is used as a wild card to create a spell in one of the rooms, it is placed in the Grave instead of the Arcane Pool.

If a Joker appears as a result of discarding the top three cards because an Ace was revealed, then the Joker is placed in the Chamber. When the Joker is placed in the Chamber, it acts as a wild card. So only three of one particular face card needs to be in the Chamber or two of a specific suit needs to be in the Chamber to end the game. If both Jokers are in the Chamber, the game is over.

The Poker Hands:

The poker combinations you create and cards you play from your hand represent your use of arcane knowledge and alchemy to cast spells in order to defend yourself from the ghastly spirits within the castle and scribe clues to locate the talismans.

Whenever the player completes a spell (5-card poker hand), they are granted one specific action to be used immediately. They are as follows:

Flush: - Shuffle one face card in the Chamber that is the same suit as the flush back into the deck.

Straight: - Can be held in the room to cancel the effects of an Ace or face card. If used to cancel an Ace, that Ace may not be added to a Flush or Straight and is discarded. If it is used to cancel the effects of a face card, the face card is shuffled back into the draw deck.

Full House: - The player may look at the top five cards of the draw deck and discard two of the cards. The remaining 3 cards may be placed back on top of the deck in the order the player chooses.

3 of a kind: - The player may take any three cards from the Arcane Pool and place them on top of the draw deck in any order they wish.

2 Pair: - The player may look at the top four cards of the draw deck and choose to discard two and put the other two both at either the top or bottom of the deck.

4 of a kind: - The player may shuffle the Grave back into the draw deck minus 3 face cards.

Pair: - The player may discard one face card from the Chamber and shuffle one other face card from the Chamber back into the deck. The chosen face cards must each match the two suits of the Pair.

Straight Flush: - Place all face cards of a single suit, of a single type, or a Joker into the Grave.

5 of a kind: - Place all current face cards in the Chamber into the Grave.

***Jack High Straight & Queen High Flush: -** Can be used as a normal Straight or Flush but can also be used to discard a King from the Chamber or discard a Joker from the Chamber.

Using Cards in Your Hand:

Each of the four suits can be used to perform a different action depending on the suit. To play one of the cards from your hand in this way, you must remove a number of cards from the Arcane Pool equal to the value of the card. The cards discarded from the point pile are removed from the game.

♠Spades: - Discard one face card from the Chamber.

♦Diamonds: - Look at a number of cards from the top of the deck that are equal to the value of the Diamond card and place them back on top of the deck in any order you wish.

♣Clubs: - Clubs let you take one of 3 actions.

- You may re-organize the face cards in the Chamber any way you wish.
- You may discard the top card from one room.
- You may move the top card from a spell in progress to another spell in progress.

♥Hearts: - You may use one card from the Grave for every two points of the value of the card you are playing. You may use the cards that you take from the grave to either place into a room or play immediately as a spell from your hand. You may not take an Ace from the Grave this way.

For Example: a 4 of Hearts would let you use 2 cards from the Grave and a 7 of Hearts would let you use 3 cards from the Grave.

***Pair in Hand: -** if the two cards in the players hand are of the same value, then the player may perform both actions for the single cost of the value that is paired.

For Example: if the player has a 5 of Spades and a 5 of Diamonds, then the player may discard one face card from the Chamber and look at the top five cards of the deck and re-order them by just removing 5 cards from the Arcane Pool instead of 10.

***Suited Hand: -** If the two cards in the players hand are of the same suit, then the player may perform that action twice for only the cost of the card with the highest value.

Winning the Game:

The player wins the game if they have successfully captured two of the four Aces by using them each in a Flush or a 5-high Straight.

It seems that Lady De L'Isle's strange talismans were the key to releasing the restless souls within the ancient stone walls of the ruined Infirerra Castle. As well as the key to your new found fortune.

Losing the Game:

The player loses the game if:

1. There are 3 face cards of all the same suit grouped together in the Chamber.
2. There are 4 of the same face card in the Chamber.
3. There are 2 Jokers in the Chamber.
4. If there are absolutely no more cards to be played or actions to be taken.

All of your years studying magic and arcane knowledge could not help you this night and you have become another victim of the grisly phantasms within Infirerra Castle.

Alternate Rule Variants:

For an easier game:

1. A Flush lets you discard a face card from the Chamber instead of shuffling it back into the deck.

2. Four of the same face cards in the Chamber need to be grouped together in order to lose the game just like the 3 suited face cards need to be grouped together. A red Ace would group together the face cards that are of the same suit and a black Ace would group together face cards that are of the same type.

3. The cost of playing a suited hand is equal to the card with the lowest value instead of the highest.

4. Any face cards that are revealed during the set-up phase are placed back into the deck instead of into the Chamber.

5. When discarding the top three cards of the deck because an Ace is revealed, any other Ace cards that are revealed are simply shuffled back into the deck instead of being resolved in addition to the original Ace and another card is drawn.

6. Only use Jokers as wild cards and do not place them in the chamber for any reason.

For a harder game:

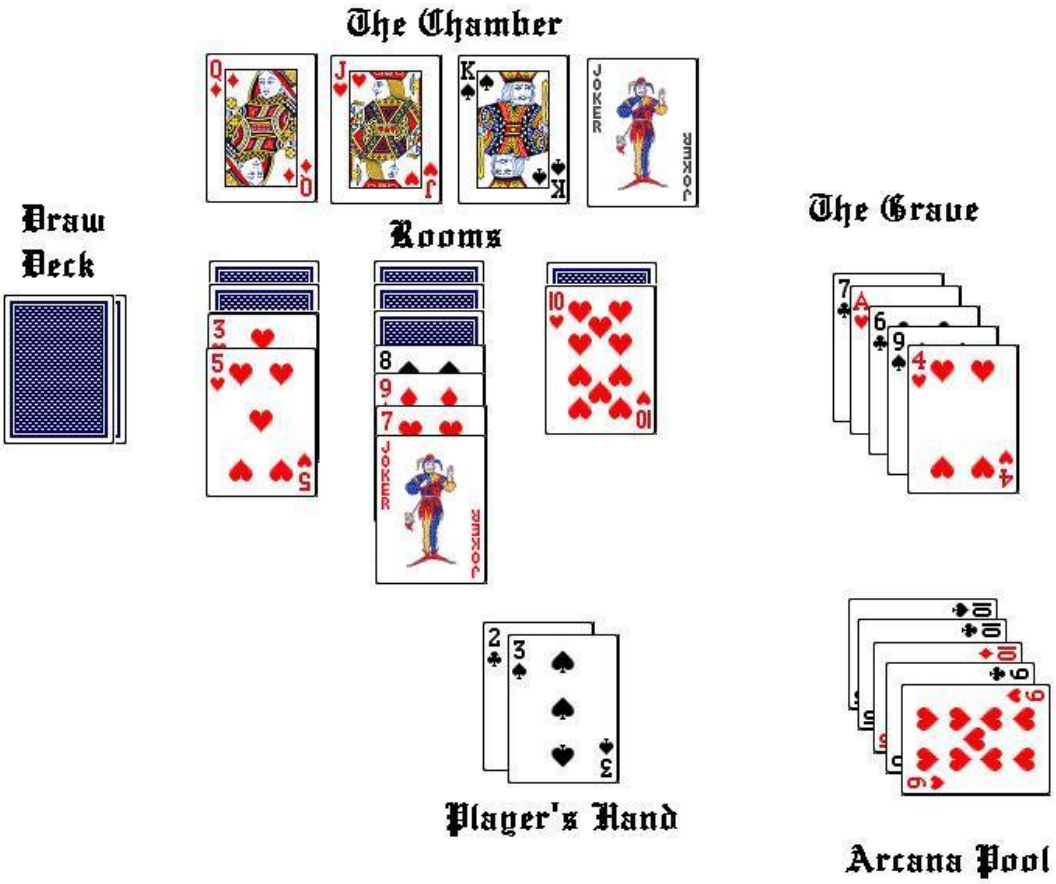
1. The player must capture all four Aces to win the game.

2. The three Face cards of the same suit do not have to be grouped together to end the game.

3. When an Ace is resolved, discard the top five cards from the deck instead of three.

4. When an Ace is resolved, group the face cards together after the top cards are discarded from the top of the deck instead of before.

Example of a Game in Progress



Arcane Knowledge

Spells in Rooms:

❖**Flush:** - Shuffle one face card in the Chamber that is the same suit as the flush back into the deck. *(A **flush** is a poker hand such as **Q♣ 10♣ 7♣ 6♣ 4♣**, where all five cards are of the same suit, but not in sequence.)*

❖**Straight:** - Can be held in the room to cancel the effects of an Ace or face card when revealed. Discard the hand when it is used. Aces are discarded and face cards are shuffled back into the draw deck. *(A **straight** is a poker hand such as **Q♣ J♠ 10♠ 9♥ 8♥**, that contains five cards of sequential rank in at least two different suits.)*

❖**Full House:** - Look at the top five cards of the draw deck and discard two of the cards and place the remaining 3 cards back on top of the deck in the order the player chooses. *(A **full house** is a hand such as **3♣ 3♠ 3♦ 6♣ 6♥**, that contains three matching cards of one rank and two matching cards of another rank.)*

❖**3 of a kind:** - Take any three cards from the Arcane Pool and place them on top of the draw deck in any order. *(**Three of a kind** is a poker hand such as **2♦ 2♠ 2♣ K♠ 6♥** that contains three cards of the same rank, plus two cards which are not of this rank nor the same as each other.)*

❖**2 Pair:** - Look at the top four cards of the draw deck and choose to discard two and put the other two both at either the top or bottom of the deck. *(A poker hand such as **J♥ J♣ 4♣ 4♠ 9♥**, that contains two cards of the same rank, plus two cards of another rank (that match each other but not the first pair), plus any card not of either rank.)*

❖**4 of a kind:** - Shuffle the Grave back into the draw deck minus 3 face cards. *(**Four of a kind** is a poker hand such as **9♣ 9♠ 9♦ 9♥ J♥**, that contains all four cards of one rank and any other (unmatched) card.)*

❖**Pair:** - Discard one face card from the Chamber and shuffle one other face card from the Chamber back into the deck. The chosen face cards must each match the two suits of the Pair. *(A **pair** is a poker hand such as **4♥ 4♠ K♠ 10♦ 5♠**, that contains two cards of one rank, plus three cards which are not of this rank nor the same as each other.)*

❖**Straight Flush:** - Place all face cards of a single suit, of a single type, or a Joker into the Grave. *(A straight flush is a hand that contains five cards in sequence, all of the same suit, such as **Q♣ J♣ 10♣ 9♣ 8♣** (a hand that meets the requirement of both a straight and a flush).)*

❖**5 of a kind:** - Place all current face cards in the Chamber into the Grave. *(Same as Four of a Kind, plus one Joker.)*

***Jack High Straight & Queen High Flush:** - Can be used as a normal Straight or Flush but can also be used to discard a King or Joker from the Chamber.

Spells from Hand:

♠Spades: - Discard one face card from the Chamber.

♦Diamonds: - Look at a number of cards from the top of the deck that are equal to the value of the Diamond card and place them back on top of the deck in any order you wish.

♣Clubs: - Choose one of the 3 following actions.

- You may re-organize the face cards in the Chamber any way you wish.
- You may discard the top card from one room.
- You may move the top card from a spell in progress to another spell in progress.

♥Hearts: - Use one card from the Grave for every two points of the value of the card you are playing to either place in a room or play immediately as a spell from your hand.