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Cosmic Encounter

GRIFTER (formerly known as Joker) 20111123
PLAYS CARDS FROM DISCARD PILE
You have the power to con. As a main player, after encounter cards are selected but before they are revealed, you may declare a Con. Use this power to exchange the card you played facedown with a "hot" card which you choose from the discard pile. If the "hot" card is not an encounter card, you lose. After the "hot" card is revealed, it is removed from the game. Only you may look through the discard pile.
(Main Player Only | Optional | Planning)
WILD Once per encounter you may pick one the main players and force that player to discard a non-encounter card of that player's choice. Then you may give that player one encounter card of your choice from the discard pile.
(As Any Player | Any Phase)
SUPER Your "hot" cards are not removed from the game, they are stashed and can played normally by you, and then discarded. Your stash is immune from the effects of other powers.
(Main Player Only | Resolution/Planning)
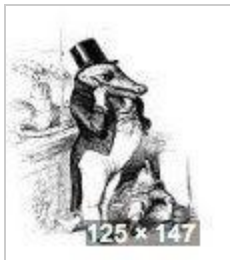
Fan Design Expansion Set
Grifter Alien in progress (formerly Joker)
All content from the Fan Based Cosmic Encounter Expansion Set
By: Cosmic Encounter

People Who Like This

-

Gregory Metzger   Orange Coast

-

Matthew Scrivner

-

Pat Grogan   Slippery Rock

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-

Bob Constans   Brandon University

-

Dawn Olson   California Culinary Acadamy

Discussion

-

Bill Eberle Needs a new history, I think.

Wednesday at 12:51pm · Like

-

Jefferson Krogh Potent! Removing the entire "wild card" aspect makes the entire design much cleaner. I'd be afraid to go up against this guy. I don't see any rules problems when putting this up against Magician, Oracle, Pacifist, etc.

Seems ready for prime time, if you ask me.

Wednesday at 12:57pm · Like

-

Jefferson Krogh History: everything you've ever heard about the Grifters is a lie, especially everything they've told you. Better check your pockets and your planets; Grifter's probably already gone there and taken what they want!

Wednesday at 12:59pm · Unlike · 2

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Peter Olotka Yes we are going to give JOKER a set of real wild cards in the deck!

Wednesday at 1:00pm · Like

Bill Eberle Good, Jefferson Krogh.

Wednesday at 1:00pm · Like

Jefferson Krogh Thanks, Bill! This is almost as much fun as playing Cosmic. Certainly is spurring me to jot down more ideas for future homebrews.

Wednesday at 1:02pm · Unlike · 1

Peter Olotka As Bill was just saying...The ultimate game is to design a game

Wednesday at 1:07pm · Like

Allen Varney Is my "Super" stash part of my hand? Or is it separate? If I'm zapped, is the stash discarded or does it just go inert for the turn?

Wednesday at 1:09pm · Like

Peter Olotka write it up

Wednesday at 1:09pm · Like

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Peter Olotka probably follow MISER as a lead

Wednesday at 1:10pm · Like

Allen Varney "Your stash is not part of your hand. If your Grifter power is zapped, discard your stash."

Wednesday at 1:10pm · Unlike · 2

Peter Olotka Works for me

Wednesday at 1:31pm · Like

Stephen Sloboda ...I hate it. Joker was better. This power doesn't even make sense.

Wednesday at 1:40pm · Like

Jefferson Krogh I'm not too worried about GRIFTER trumping LOSER. That seems thematic, somehow. Also, there's something appealing about GRIFTER having the opportunity to waste an encounter to take a certain Flare or Artifact out of the game entirely. I doubt it would happen often, though.

Wednesday at 1:44pm · Like

Bill Martinson Some suggested tweaks:

1. To avoid confusion vs. Oracle, I would move the "facedown" qualifer off of the original card and attach it to the "hot" card. So it doesn't matter whether your card was faceup because of Oracle — when you replace it with a "hot" card, the

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replacement goes face down. This does help you when facing Oracle, but that's okay because you can't afford to do it every time you face him (and Oracle is a powerhouse anyway).

2. Declarations are generally used for effects that are declared now but have their effect later (Loser, Mirror, etc.). Since Grifter's exchange is resolved immediately, I wouldn't phrase it as a declaration. This will also help bring "may use" together into a single unit for the bold/italics.

3. Other players are allowed to inspect the discard pile at any time, so the prohibition against this should specify a clear duration.

4. Capitalization and wording convention tweaks for FFG standards.

5. Allowing the exchange of a non-encounter card can be problematic, for several reasons. (a) It completely trumps Loser. (b) The game engine is not designed for non-encounter cards to be revealed as encounter cards. There are "binary" effects that say "if you reveal an attack, x happens; if you reveal a negotiate, y happens" and these would be undefined in this case. Thus far it is not possible to reveal a card as anything other than an A or N (since Morph always resolves to one of those two), and this is a line that should only be crossed carefully and for a very good reason. (c) Generates targetability questions such as "can Fido or Filch grab the card I am revealing *as an encounter card*?". (d) Not crazy about an effect that lets you easily remove other players' Super flares from the game. Best not to open this whole can of worms, I think. You could possibly change it to "if there are no non-encounter cards to choose, you immediately lose the encounter" but this still has the cheesy Loser-tump effect.

6. It seems like the second part of the WILD should be a "must" rather than a "may", to support the theme and also avoid running the offense out of encounter cards. Note that the player using Wild Grifter can use it "against" himself to get the best card out of the discard pile.

7. The SUPER can use a bit more explanation about how the stash is managed (per FFG conventions).

Suggested revision:

GRIFTER (formerly known as Joker) 20111123
PLAYS CARDS FROM DISCARD PILE
You have the power to Con. As a main player, after encounter cards are selected but before they are revealed, you [*may use*] this power to exchange the card you selected with a "hot" encounter card of your choice from the discard pile. (If there are no encounter cards in the discard pile, you immediately lose the encounter.) When encounter cards are being discarded, the "hot" card is removed from the game. Other players may not examine the discard pile until after the "hot" card is revealed.
(Main Player Only | Optional | Planning)

WILD Once per encounter, you may force either one of the main players to discard a non-encounter card of his or her choice from his or her hand. Then you must give that player one encounter card of your choice from the discard pile.
(As Any Player | Any Phase)

SUPER Instead of removing your "hot" card from the game, you may stash it in a stack on your alien sheet. You may play cards normally from your stash, but the stash is not part of your hand.
(Main Player Only | Resolution)

@Allen: you can't be zapped when playing from your stash, because this is not a *use* effect of the power.

Wednesday at 1:45pm · Like

Bill Martinson @Jefferson: I agree that artifact/flare removal is kind of cool, but there's also something un-appealing about generating new FAQ entries to support it. :-(Good effect for a different alien, perhaps ... something with a theme of annihilation rather than the ol' switcheroo, maybe.

Wednesday at 1:51pm · Like

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Stephen Sloboda If I were going to design an alien called, "Grifter," it would involve a three-card monte.

As the offense or defense, before pods are chosen, use this power to declare a three-card monte. If you do, either player with less than 3 Encounter Cards discards their hand and draws a new hand. Then each player chooses three Encounter Pods and places them face down. Each player then chooses one of their opponent's three face down cards. Those cards are used to resolve the encounter.

Wednesday at 1:54pm · Like

Bill Eberle Peter's saving the 3-card monte idea for another alien we'll call the Con Artist. It will actually put out 3 cards, etc. For now let's focus on and finalize the GRIFTER as a candidate for the expansion set.

Wednesday at 1:58pm · Like · 1

Peter Olotka @ Stephen Sloboda indeed! We put that on the 'list' this morning while editing Grifter and set it aside as CON ARTIST power to CON for later consideration!! Great minds.....

Wednesday at 2:05pm · Like

Stephen Sloboda Well... save the name Grifter for that alien and we'll give this one a new name, since he has little to do with conning. He just replaces his encounter with a pod that's been used already, if any. That has nothing to do with a grifter.

Wednesday at 2:07pm · Like · 1

Peter Olotka Opps I meant Con Artist power to HUSTLE!

Wednesday at 2:11pm · Like

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Bill Eberle actually it will be the power to hustle . . . but that's for another day. Let's finalize the GRIFTER.

Wednesday at 2:11pm · Like

Peter Olotka So Grifter can be as is with the power to CON   Wednesday at 2:11pm · Like

Jack Reda What about POD (power to replace)? It makes me think of Invasion of the Body Snatchers, the Pod people who replaced real people with pods. It also gives a wee nod to CE Online, where cards are called Pods.

Wednesday at 2:18pm · Like ·   3

Peter Olotka heh

Wednesday at 2:20pm · Like

Stephen Sloboda I like the theme, Jack, but it needs a better name. POD is not only vague, it's also the name of a card type.

Replicant?

Wednesday at 2:21pm · Like

Bill Eberle Bill Eberle Hmmm. That would work, Jack. Steven, perhaps, the tide is turning in your favor and we'll rename this alien "one more time."

Wednesday at 2:27pm · Like ·   1

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- **Bill Eberle** Replicant was used (it's a Matt Stone power in the Warp database).

  Wednesday at 2:28pm · Like

- **Jefferson Krogh** Darn. My history won't fit POD at all.   Wednesday at 2:35pm · Like

- **Stephen Sloboda** I knew it had to be taken.

  Reploid? Wait, that's in a video game.

  Wednesday at 2:40pm · Like

- **Christopher Aurel Oliveira** I think their needs to be a qualification on his auto-loss for swapping in a card from the discard pile. Perhaps it should rule that "non-encounter cards swapped in are treated as Attack 00".

  Wednesday at 2:52pm · Like · 1

- **Jack Reda** I have to echo the opinion that swapping in non-encounter cards is ill-advised. I like the power better when it's just playing an encounter card from the discard pile.

  Wednesday at 3:02pm · Like · 1

- **Matthew Scrivner** Question: why does the power state that only the Grifter may look through the discard pile? (Isn't the discard pile and its contents public knowledge?)

  Wednesday at 3:20pm · Like

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Bill Eberle Our sense is that the Grifter should override that rule. So, "not when the Grifter is in the game."

Wednesday at 3:29pm · Like · 2

Christopher Aurel Oliveira I think the ability for him to swap in a non-encounter card is unique in that a secondary use of his power is to "Void" cards right out of the game, but suffer a loss for it. However I stand by my thought that the non-encounter card has to be TREATED as an Attack 00 for their to be harmony with the rules, much like how Warhawk does his thing.

Wednesday at 3:42pm · Like

Ales Smrdel Name idea: Palterer, have the power to palter, bargin, dicker (I believe the last one is already used on an alien in warp database)

Wednesday at 3:43pm · Like

Matthew Scrivner @Bill - a thought for another day; the idea of discard deck control makes me think there ought to be another power that can exploit the discard pile. Scavenger or Garbage Man...
As far as attack 00 versus auto-lose, if you are designing with the idea in mind that many groups play multiple powers, than an auto-lose condition may be a desirable secondary effect for comboing.

Wednesday at 3:54pm · Like

Jack Reda I think secondary power effects are only worth it for powers that don't have a good primary effect. In this case, being able to take ANY encounter card that has been discarded is pretty good. Keep in mind, you are replacing an encounter card you played. Having it be for a non-encounter card is just weird.

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Wednesday at 4:02pm · Like · 1

Peter Olotka @Matthew Scrivner yes discard is a bit under exploited...

Wednesday at 4:09pm · Like

Bill Martinson @Jack: Exactly! Dumping an attack 04 to re-use a 20 or 30 from the discard pile is HUGE! It doesn't need a secondary, non-thematic ability of vaporizing non-encounter cards.

@Bill E: I don't think the fact that a name is "in use" in Jack's database should mean we can't consider it. There are many names that have three, four, or more different implementations in the database. Just because somebody threw together a homebrew in five minutes with a particular name doesn't mean that name should be off-limits for the rest of all time. Can we agree that the best names should probably go to the *best* designs, not just the *first* ones?

Wednesday at 4:35pm · Like · 2

Peter Olotka OK - it's archived...so is it a consensus that GRIFTER (including Super and Wild) is a BETA wrap? If so, Next up playtesting.....

Wednesday at 4:39pm · Like

Jack Reda Exactly Bill! POD all the way! :)

Wednesday at 4:40pm · Like

Bill Martinson I agree with Stephen ... the "con artist" concept really should be the Grifter. This concept we're working on now is more of somebody who...
* learns from history
* re-uses discarded technology
* jury-rigs a last-minute solution
* upgrades his hardware from a secret laboratory
* has hidden advisors

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... something along those lines. It's not really a confidence game if it doesn't suck the opponent into making a decision based on false information. From the opponent's perspective, this is just Miser or Cryo or a Quark Battery that's getting a card from the discard pile instead of a hoard or cold storage or battery location. Not much of a con.

Don't get me wrong, I really like how the power is developing! But it seems more like a RECYCLER or an ENGINEER or a STRATEGIST (drawing on tactics that were earlier "learned") than a con man.

Wednesday at 4:42pm · Like

Ales Smrdel Sounds to me like he is creating an ad-hoc solution from resources available at hand ... kind of like makeshifting ... Makeshifter; have the power to rig?

Wednesday at 5:05pm · Like

Bill Martinson EXECUTIVE ... You have the power to Belay. (Or the power to Veto.) The idea is that the local commander or diplomat makes his decision, and then at the eleventh hour the leadership back home overrides the local decision and changes it to something else.

Wednesday at 5:38pm · Like

Bill Martinson WORRYWART ... You have the power to Second-Guess. (Panic and change your mind at the absolute last moment before cards are revealed, at the cost of wasting a valuable resource to make the last-minute switch.) I think I like this one the best so far.

Wednesday at 5:43pm · Like

Peter Olotka @Matthew Scrivner re discard pile, because when it is in the game that's part of it's power. It stops others from looking at the discard pile.

Wednesday at 6:05pm · Like

http://www.ideabout.com/fan_design/in_progress/discussions/20111123_fb_fd.html

Gerald Katz I like this power better than the original version. There's less chance of an auto-win but still a good one. Why allow choosing a non-encounter card? You can get rid of a player's Super Flare, sure, but I don't see it so necessary for the power. I'm not thrilled with the Super Flare. It should just allow the card not be removed from the game so can be reused. Play it during Resolution to allow the possibility the Super Flare is taken as compensation to avoid infinite loop of always taking the 40 and winning. Grifter is a good name. I'm biased against Pod since I have my own Pod power.

Wednesday at 6:07pm · Like

Peter Olotka @Gerald Katz We are giving the Joker a bunch of WILD CARDS in the deck when its in the game :) ... we will do a group design of that as well
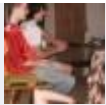
Wednesday at 6:35pm · Like

Christopher Aurel Oliveira Since this guy deals with recycling old card in the discard pile perhaps a name like "Scrounger" or some trash/garbage related thing.

Wednesday at 9:29pm · Like

Bill Eberle We're thinking Grifter is kind of a trashy name. We like it for this power.   Wednesday at 9:40pm · Like

James Albright From a practical perspective, it complicates the game mechanics when you have to have two discard piles: one that's removed from the game and one that's discarded. From a power-level perspective, it's a better version of Filch. The only difference is Grifter can replay his own played cards as well as anyone else's, instead of just the opponent's. From a strategy perspective, I don't really see much skill in the decisions you make with this guy. You just choose the best encounter card in the graveyard, and that's it. What about something like this instead:
Grifter
You have the power to scavenge. As a main player, after encounter cards are played but before they are revealed, you may choose a card in the discard pile. If it's an attack card, add it to your played card if the value is less than your played card, then put the chosen card on bottom of the deck. If it's a negotiate, add zero to your total. If it's not an encounter card, add it to your hand.

This way, it's completely different than Flich. Filch gets what's played against him, while Grifter either boosts his attack power or just draws something from the graveyard. On the power-level side, if he already has good cards (20+) they'll just get better, which is fine since he'd probably win anyway. However, if he has a more mediocre card, then he relies on the existence of a worse card being in the graveyard AND Grifter would want to save his 12's and 14's for the mid-game and use his 08's and 06's earlier on. Also, he could either be really confident and just go for a non-attack card or just throw the encounter all together and grab an artifact from the graveyard.

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What do you guys think? Do you think his similarity to Filch with his super (using played encounter cards) is a problem?

Thursday at 12:23am · Like

Christopher Aurel Oliveira I agree that this power makes Filch obsolete.

Thursday at 12:49am · Like

Peter Olotka Actually not. The Filch continues to get it's opponent's card. Just not the Grifters. If you were playing vs the Filch as any other alien, you would still not play the 40 if could avoid it. It's like saying the VOID makes the Zombie obsolete because VOID eliminates Zombie ships.

Thursday at 7:45am · Like

Peter Olotka Design Alert: Announcing the Parallel Processing FanAssisted Cosmic Encounter Cross-Checking Computer ......I am making a Google Docs spread sheet which will allow everyone to pick an alien, artifact or other listed existing content and be the responsible player who checks it against the content in progress. The acronym is PPFACECCC pronounced faceck (Fun, huh?).. So if everyone can invite a couple of more players into this Design Group we will be well covered. I love this because it goes to the heart of solving the difficulty of adding Cosmic Content.. the dreaded cross-check! Details after Thanksgiving!

Thursday at 7:45am · Like

James Albright It's not about Filch vs. Grifter. Those sorts of alien conflicts happen all the time (like Healer vs. Masochist). The problem is Grifter being exclusively better than Filch. Filch, normally, can only get his opponent's card and only as a main player. Filch with his super can get any other player's card. Grifter, just as a regular alien, can already get anyone else's played card, which is virtually the same as Filch with his super (both get to re-use played cards). Granted, there are some technical differences (like how Filch keeps his hand full, which is usually bad since drawing a new 8 is often good, or how the card can be negotiated out of Filch's hand, or Filch can get handzapped), but almost all the technical differences hurt Filch. Even the zap-timing is generally bad for Filch. If you zap Filch, he'll never get to use that 23 at all. If you zap Grifter, he won't get to use it this turn, but he can use it next encounter. This is what Chris Oliveira meant when he said it makes Filch obsolete, heck, it even makes Super Filch obsolete. This is why I think it would be much more interesting to add a Calculator-esque element, where if the "hot" card is lower than his played card, it gets added to his total, or something like that. Sidenote: PPFACECCC huh? Awesome!

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Thursday at 10:41am · Like

Mark Hawkinson Okay, in that case Grifter needs some sort of drawback. Such as needing to use a non-encounter card for his con perhaps?

Thursday at 12:48pm · Like

Peter Olotka Comparing aliens for the dreaded - "it makes such and such obsolete" -is a slippery slope. If one wants to look at the current FFG 130 aliens compared to one another, any number of obsoletes claims can be made. Many aliens are cousins and their powers can be plotted along a continuum. Aliens are never obsolete because new aliens share characteristics. In general I don't think we need to add artificial drawbacks to an alien before it is tested in game situations. It's rare for an alien that is perceived to be "too powerful" to keep that reputation after a few games. And more often than not the weak underbelly is exposed as a surprise. PS we might want to move the tread up to the Current post.
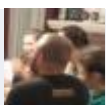
Thursday at 1:11pm · Like ·   1

Jefferson Krogh Peter Olotka -- *130* aliens? There's only 90 in print right now...um, is there a loose cat that belongs in this bag, perhaps? ;-)

Thursday at 2:36pm · Like

Peter Olotka No I counted 90 in basic by mistake

Thursday at 5:53pm · Like

Mark Hawkinson One easy comparison to further explain Peter's point is the difference between Pacifist and Empath. Pacifist is generally perceived to be "better", but it has limitations that Empath doesn't.

Thursday at 11:38pm · Like

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Bill Martinson This comparison is on a completely different level than the other comparisons between aliens. Grifter is what many players would call a "superset" of Filch. That doesn't occur among the other published aliens.

Look at it this way: If Grifter had come first, Filch (as we know it) would NEVER have been published. This makes it clear that Grifter needs to be revised.

3 hours ago · Like