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**Peter Olotka**

[http://www.ideabout.com/fan\\_design/in\\_progress/short\\_list.html](http://www.ideabout.com/fan_design/in_progress/short_list.html)

Peruse the lists and offer some directions.



**Fan Designed Cosmic Expansion Set - Current Work**

## People Who Like This

[Jefferson Krogh](#) and [Matthew Scrivner](#) like this.

## Discussion



**Jefferson Krogh** Some of these suggestions may be in Cosmic Alliance, for all I know, but I know for sure that Numerologist is not! (Since Bill dreamed it up very recently.) I am very excited about that power, and think it deserves very serious consideration.

Dipping into the older homebrews, the two that I've been meaning to add to my own set first are Gith and Angler. Perhaps the non-BGG people in the FB group have some new comments, or can add to the playtesting that has been done with them over the years.

December 13 at 8:56pm · Like · 3

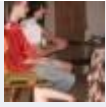


**Bill Martinson** I was thinking Angler is a nice, simple-yet-elegant one that's in pretty solid shape ... shouldn't be too hard to get to playtest/cross-check stage with Angler. (Not that I'm trying to discount Numerologist ... it's just kinda hard to "vote" for your own design.)

December 13 at 10:26pm · Like · 1

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**James Albright** Angler seems too weak and reminiscent of Visionary. It's a shot in the dark (unless they have a flare). I don't like it for the inherent randomness. The only real strategy parts I see are when you're afraid of the winning player having a certain card or someone took something you remember as compensation and want it back.

December 14 at 6:33pm · Like



○

**Stephen Sloboda** I love the Witch idea, but it highlights another reason I think special cards should be typified as Encounter Cards: You discard your hand if you have no Encounter Cards. So whatever the Curse Cards do, if they don't count as Encounters, you're never forced to play them; they'll just get discarded.

Furthermore, Curse Cards should do something unique and/or have their own rules, otherwise Witch is Philanthropist with its own pile of junk to hand out. Granted, Witch can't use its power to draw cards like Philanthropist can, but if Witch is getting its own special cards, I'd them to do something cool.

December 14 at 8:56pm · Like



○

**Bill Martinson** @James: It's interesting how perceptions differ ... I don't care for highly random powers myself (Reincarnator, Trickster) but I always thought Angler seemed fairly focused in its mission. Not so much a random effect as a /searching/ effect. It's basically a re-usable Finder artifact, which seems pretty exciting and powerful to me.

Sure, in the beginning you're playing hide-and-go-seek ... but every miss is valuable. Not only do you get a card draw (and card-hoarding powers almost always do well), but you are gaining important information about what the other player does /not/ have. How many times have I sat there thinking "man, I hope he doesn't still have the 20" or "If she's holding a card zap, I'm hosed". The three things you mentioned (flare, worry card, stolen card) come up a /lot/ for me in this game.

There's also a psychological factor at work on the other players that's easy to underestimate. One you start gunning for certain cards, or certain kinds of cards, you create fear in their minds that you will steal the one they have. This can lead to hasty plays on their part, in an effort to "use it before they lose it". The comfort of knowing they can play their Negotiate if they have to in order to protect that crucial card goes right out the window with Angler in the game.

Plus the opportunities for misdirection ... ask a player for a certain card and then seem genuinely puzzled when he doesn't have it. Ask him if he's really sure. Other players will wonder what happened to the card that you seemed to "know" that he should have had. You can then even check your own hand, subtly roll your eyes, and let out a little sigh that suggests you're beating yourself up for asking a dumb question ... so it appears that you still have the card you asked for. Now you're bluffing with something scary you don't really have, or tempting others to try for compensation from you when your hand's full of crap.

If we only see Angler as a thief, then it can seem fairly random. But I look at it as a flexible combination of a theft power, an information power, and a psych power, so it seems very desirable to me.

December 15 at 10:14am · Like · 3

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**Jefferson Krogh** I'd give Bill's defense of Angler several "likes," if I could. He said it much better than I could (particularly at this time of the morning).

December 15 at 10:47am · Like



**James Albright** Most of the time you hope that someone doesn't have X card, you're wrong, or your worries are overestimated. Remember, there's only 2 or 3 of the cards you'd usually want to fish for. So on average, that gives you about an 80% chance of wiffing or so. Sure, you might be able to bluff, but so you could your opponents. They could easily flaunt a 40 or something else while not having it.

The flare thing is weak too, especially in a game with 5 or more, since you have to be a main player with the player who used the flare that you want. Plus, drawing 1 card as a main player could be more annoying than helpful. When you draw on the defense, you draw 3-4 cards to replenish your hand. When you draw only 1 card, it slows down you're ability to draw a new 8 altogether.

Compare Angler to Sniveler, just for the sake of power level. Sniveler gets to name any attack number he doesn't have and everyone will discard it (unless they give it to you). Would you rather gamble on a small chance of getting a card from their hand, or would you rather have a huge AOE effect like Sniveler, that gives you a major wall of protection? (AKA, you're about to drop a 14. You say, "I don't have anything higher than a 14." Other players discard their 30's and 20's, including your opponent.) Remember, Sniveler can also get free Mobius Tubes or free colonies.

December 15 at 11:10am · Like



**Jack Reda** Sometimes Sniveler doesn't get anything, but Angler always gets something. Angler is optional, so if he is trying to drain his own hand, he doesn't have to fish for a card- but I find that more often I am trying to get more cards, not lose more.

Angler can also target certain powers. Pacifist sees his negotiates go away, Anti-Matter loses his lower cards, etc. Sniveler can't target Artifacts, Reinforcements, Flares, Rifts, Kickers. When you're using the Reward deck, Angler has a lot more potential, especially because he can tell who is holding the Reward cards.

December 15 at 11:33am · Like · 2



**James Albright** True, but when Sniveler's power doesn't give him anything, he hurts everyone else as the back-up. Angler's back-up (which will happen very, very often) is just as bad as Changeling. Visionary has the same kind of random-naming effect, but Visionary can always name "Negotiate" with reasonable certainty for a major benefit. Wouldn't you like Angler better if it was "draw two cards" instead of one?

December 15 at 11:40am · Like

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**Jack Reda** Sometimes Sniveler asks for something no one has, so it doesn't help him or hurt anyone, was my point earlier. I think Angler's got enough going on to be interesting and adequately unique. It's got the same kind of distinction Remora has from Glutton.

December 15 at 11:49am · Like · 1



○

**Bill Martinson** Regarding the Sniveler comparison, I think each power is stronger in certain situations. Even if Sniveler were somehow "better on average", the powers are so different that this doesn't matter. How often will you really be choosing between Sniveler and Angler as your two start-of-game powers? Twice over the next 30 years?

Would I like it better if it said "draw two cards"? No, not at all. That would kill the elegance as well as the game reference. Crafting a good alien in Cosmic Encounter is not just about its power level ... there are a number of other things to consider, such as elegance, whimsy, and how well it evokes its own theme. As long as an alien's benefit is "in the ballpark", the actual power level is probably the least important factor in /this/ particular game.

December 15 at 12:07pm · Like · 1



○

**James Albright** I just think it's too weak. Balance isn't just something you can throw out the window because aliens are different. When you have a choice between two balanced aliens (power level), it's a hard decision. When you have a choice between two unbalanced aliens, it's an easy choice. How about "Draw a card, then discard a card" if your fishing doesn't work? It's only slightly more powerful, but at least the card draw doesn't hurt in case you want a new hand. You might argue that there's strategy in whether or not to use the power at all, but it's a main-player power anyway...so you don't get to use it that often anyway, and even when you do use it, there's only a chance that it'll work.

December 15 at 1:24pm · Like



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**Peter Olotka** As I have long preached, balance is very far down on the list of considerations in adding new cosmic features. The entire structure of the game defies balance by tweaking feature A because of how it interacts with feature B. There are thousands of game combinations which are 'unbalanced'. That is what makes Cosmic Encounter unique and why professional game designers more often than not don't really 'get' how to add features to the game. We threw balance out the window when we started adding more than the original SIX aliens. In fact even those six were unbalanced. The same can be said for us I suppose.

December 15 at 1:33pm · Like · 1

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**Peter Olotka** I think the real reason to compare a potential new alien to existing aliens is to help us create aliens that are as different as possible from existing content

December 15 at 1:40pm · Like · 1



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**Bill Martinson** @James Albright: I think "throwing balance out the window" is an overstatement. In spite of the fact that I understand Peter's longstanding position that "balance is boring", I still think it's an important /consideration/. Angler doesn't actually throw balance out the window; it's more that we just disagree on its relative strength vs. Sniveler. And again, I think your "choice between two aliens" is a false choice, since it will /almost never/ come up. I love both of these aliens, have both in my current play set, and will /always/ want both in my play set. When a proposed power does make an established one obsolete, then the "superset" issue is a very strong argument in favor of changing or scrapping the newly proposed alien. I just don't see how that's the case with Angler. It's been around a long time (as Fish) and this is the first time I've seen anyone say it wasn't good enough because of Sniveler. (And the version that's been in use for decades is even slightly weaker than the one I've proposed; it doesn't have the fish-fish-got-my-wish provision.)

@Peter Olotka: You and Bill are definitely unbalanced. But that's part of your charm.

December 15 at 3:07pm · Like



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**Peter Olotka** SO my wife tells me

December 15 at 3:09pm · Like



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**Peter Olotka** I do think however that we (collectively) need to push ourselves to come up with aliens that are as new as possible and one must by definition at least brows through the existing (soon to be) 110

December 15 at 3:13pm · Like



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**Bill Martinson** Absolutely. Are you saying that Angler is not new enough compared to published aliens? I always thought it was quite novel and carved out its own unique space.

December 15 at 3:30pm · Like · 1

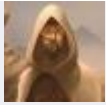
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**Bill Martinson** Speaking of that 110, this is an exciting new milestone. FFG is about to break Mayfair's old record (which, if I'm not mistaken, was 103 published aliens). So let's hurry up and see the 17 we don't know yet so we can do that browsing. ;-)

December 15 at 5:23pm · Like



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**Gregory Metzger** Bill's point is well taken. J.R.'s Power Data Base for example, holds the creative input of alot of veteran players, some who have likely had as many as 34 years to ponder their ideas. It's been along time since Mayfair's entry; probably long enough that alot of people are not even familiar with it. FFG's edition is a "new day" the quality of graphics & artwork give any character (new or old) such a facelift that personally I would consider any worthy Alien that hasn't already joined the soon to be list of 110 "new" and welcome. I would just hope that the original authors wouldn't resent any changes that the FFG team found necessary in order for a power to be ready for prime time.

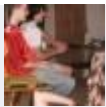
December 16 at 12:59am · Like



○

**Christopher Aurel Oliveira** I don't think you can put Angler and Sniveler in the same category. Sniveler deals with far more than just cards and HAS to be behind in order to be effective in his power usage. Angler will just require attentive players to be effective. However I can see similarity with Visionary, in that the same guessing mechanic of a player's hand is used, with one power forcing the person to play the guessed card, while the other steals the guessed card. However if I understand it correctly Visionary can only ask his opponent as a main player, where Angler can ask anyone as any player, and if successful gets to use his power again and again, even if the deck ends up giing him what he wanted. I'd say they are the same "type" or power but different enough in function, opportunity, and utility.

December 16 at 2:34am · Like · 1



○

**James Albright** Angeler is main player only, and you only ask your opponent, according to the 30 Homebrews topic.

December 16 at 9:41am · Like

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**Jack Reda** And so now is as good a time as any to discuss ways an alien may be adjusted to make it most appealing.

December 16 at 10:18am · Like



○

**James Albright** What if you could ask a question as an ally (only to the main player opponent as usual), but you only drew a card if you were wrong and if you were a main player?

December 16 at 10:25am · Like



○

**Bill Martinson** By altering what prerequisite role Angler has to be in to use his power, and/or what players he is allowed to ask, there's plenty of room to tweak the strength without wrecking the thematic reference. It doesn't hurt the theme to let Angler ask players other than the opponent, since in Go Fish you can ask whomever you want. However, it's possible that would be too strong ... being able to ask the same player over and over again on every encounter seems too much to me, and reduces the potential interesting interactions that could happen with alliances (see below).

Something good about expanding it to work as an ally is that it tends to make the other players want to invite you more, since you can potentially screw up the opposing main player. However, you could also screw up the player who invited you, which is a disincentive for him to invite you. So ... what about this?

As a main player or ally, before encounter cards are selected, you */\*may use\*/* this power to ask any player on the opposing side if he or she has a specific card, such as an attack 12, a regular negotiate card, or the Virus flare. If that player has the card, he or she must give it to you. Otherwise you must draw a card from the deck. If the card you draw from the deck is what you asked for, you may show it and use your power again.

This should strengthen it for James, keep the theme intact for me, and make it more attractive to invite Angler as an ally. There's also an interesting decision point for the other players ... sometimes they might want to decline to join the encounter just to keep their pocket from getting picked!

(I did not see a need to dial back the card drawing aspect. Other players can always throttle your power back a little by choosing not to invite you, or choosing not to ally against you -- if they are willing to make the sacrifice. You still always get to use it as a main player against your opponent or any ally that is bold enough to join him.)

I also enjoy how this makes the potential allies who precede Angler in seating order have to squirm a little about which side to join. ;-)

December 16 at 10:49am · Like · 1

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**Bill Martinson** Yeah, the more I think about that the more I think you are right, [James Albright](#). When in doubt, aliens should err on the side of too good rather than too weak. If a power is too strong, players can always conspire to bring it down. (Indeed, the pressure of adversity forcing clever solutions is a core element of Cosmic's greatness.) But if a power is too weak, it just gets overlooked during game setup, and becomes the topic of "let's fix it" threads on message boards.

Also, to me this now "feels" a bit more like Go Fish, since (in general) you have a choice of player selection. More interesting decisions for Angler \*and\* more interesting decisions for his opponents. Thanks for pushing us to improve this power.

December 16 at 10:56am · Like · 3



○

**Peter Olotka** As long as the history has an interesting angle to it

December 16 at 11:06am · Like · 2



○

**Bill Martinson** See what he did there? ;-)  
 FWIW, here's the history I wrote. It's based on the idea of these things being enormous space anglerfish, and there's a great concept drawing by official Cosmic Encounter artist Felicia Cano here: [https://lh5.googleusercontent.com/-g3UF\\_LikbY8/TXKrmhZUQfI/AAAAAAAAApE/g2glXrn6EKA/s1600/invader-sketch1-Felicia\\_Cano.jpg](https://lh5.googleusercontent.com/-g3UF_LikbY8/TXKrmhZUQfI/AAAAAAAAApE/g2glXrn6EKA/s1600/invader-sketch1-Felicia_Cano.jpg)

(the one on the lower right is how I now picture the Angler)

History:

Developing on a monaquatic homeworld filled with untold prey species, the Anglers learned patience, stealth, and selectivity – disciplines that serve these passive predators well as they now take to the stars. Assessing the aliens they encounter and luring carefully selected victims to an early demise, the Anglers often reel in valuable spoils to satiate their growing needs.

December 16 at 11:31am · Like



○

**Christopher Aurel Oliveira** I still think this power is a \*tad\* weak. Perhaps instead of possibly letting him grab every card available, what if when he successfully guesses a player's card and steals it, he gets to use his power again, but ONLY on a different player if one is available? This heightens the incentive to have him ally and makes him a bit stronger.

December 17 at 1:59pm · Like