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# **Cooperative Comic Hunters Documentation**

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## INTRODUCTION

You and your friends have been collecting comics together for years! You love to go to the comic store, conventions, and flea markets together, looking for some rarities. Sure, there have been some friendly rivalries for comics along the way, but you and your friends love comics. If only your allowances were bigger, but that makes you appreciate the comics you do have a little more . . .

Then one day the Insufferable Jerk comes into your life: he's a jerk who just ruins everything! He thinks he knows everything, he thinks his way is the only way, and he puts down everything about you and your friends. He just happens to be rich and inserts himself into your groups. He tells everyone his collection of comics is the best! He is so annoying!

Your job in cooperative Comic Hunters is to get bragging rights over the Insufferable Jerk (sometimes referred to as IJ)! By "Bragging Rights", that means you and your friends are cooperatively trying to beat the IJ in every aspect of Comic Collecting! To do this, at least one of the cooperative players must outdo the Insufferable Jerk in each aspect of the game:

- a) Size of Collection: From size perspective, at least one player must have more comics of a hero for each hero!
- b) Variety: Combined, your collections must have more variety than IJ!
- c) Highlight: For each highlight, at least one player must beat IJ!
- d) Secret Stash: At least one player must have more Secret Stash points than IJ!

As a group, if you can outdo the Insufferable Jerk in each of these aspects of comic collecting, you can shut him up! You hope to teach him collecting comic is supposed to be fun, not some sort of power play.

### 1.1 Philosophy

Cooperative Comic Hunters is a different kind of game: you will have to operate the Insufferable Jerk *as a group* the best you can. The Whims will govern what the IJ does (see more discussion of Whims in the next chapter), but as a group, you must decide what the IJ will do. There will be a LOTS of discussion as you and your friends figure out how to operate the IJ! That's part of the game! But, the players will also need to talk to strategize together for their benefit: figure out how to block the IJ or set-up situations to help each other . . . there will be *much much* more discussion than there would be in the competitive game.

In general, all obtained player cards will be face up. Since you are all working together, you need to see what all your friends are doing! That's the only way to beat the IJ! (The Store Phase is the only phase where you might keep your hand hidden, see the next chapter).



**GAMEPLAY**

Cooperative Comic Hunters gameplay is very similar to competitive Comic Hunters. Each player is still collecting his/her own individual collection. Each player still participates the same in each stage (except for the Store Phase, that's a little different), obtaining comics on the way to organizing (buying and selling) in the Organization Phase.

What's different is that there is now an extra player: the Insufferable Jerk. He starts off randomly between two characters (whomever can deal with jerks the best). The IJ will have his own collection of comics and he will need space.

NOTE: The Insufferable Jerk is not a real person in the game! The cooperative players operate him or "play him" according to his rules. The Insufferable Jerk is still collecting comics, just like all other players, but he has his own collection. Unfortunately, he's rich and doesn't have to worry about buying his comics! All the comics he gets, he keeps!!!

The *Insufferable Jerk Whims* govern how he plays.

## 2.1 Insufferable Jerk Whims

There are 5 Insufferable Jerk Whim cards dealt out in a line at the start of the game: these represent the Insufferable Jerk's current preferences for obtaining comics. The IJ is mercurial and his whims change, but you always have a sense of what he's doing. The leftmost Whim card represents his current cominant preference, followed by the next Whim card in line to be his next highest preference, and so on.

Whenever the first player marker moves, the leftmost IJ Whim card goes to the end of the line (all the way to the right) and now the newest leftmost card is the current dominating whim. The Whims rotate as play progresses.

The Whims rotate ONLY when the First Player token moves (thus, it doesn't move during Store Phases).

## 2.2 Ordered Preferences

The Insufferable Jerk Whims represent his current ordering of preferences. The leftmost is the most dominant (position 1), the next left is the next most dominant (position 2), etc. When trying to figure out what the Insufferable Jerk will do on his turn, players consult the Whims, with the leftmost Whim dominating the IJ's preferences.

For example, during a Convention phase, "Most Comics" is the leftmost Whim with "Most Expensive" Whim being next in line. After players look at the moves for the IJ, if there is clearly one move that gives more comics, the IJ must take that move! Say, one move clearly gets him 4 comics, and all other moves get fewer comics, then the IJ will take the 4 comics! If, however, there are two moves that give him 4 comics, which move would the IJ take? In that case, you refer to the next Whim card in line: the "Most Expensive" card. If one move gives the IJ 4X\$3=\$12 worth of comics and another move gives him \$11 worth of comics, he will clearly take the \$12 worth.

Remember that the Whim track rotates whenever the First Player token moves, so IJ's Whims do change as the game progresses.

**NOTE: The Whims are ambiguity resolution. If a Whim indicates some** equally valid alternatives, then the next Whim to the right should resolve that ambiguity. If that Whim doesn't clear it up, then keep going right. It should always be clear what move the Insufferable Jerk will take based on his preferences.

If there's ever ANY question of what the Insufferable Jerk would do (if you traverse all his Whims left-to-right and it's still unclear), then the IJ would do the jerkiest thing possible. Even though the Insufferable Jerk is a jerk, he's not stupid. He will always make the best move (per his Whims) he can. Players cooperatively operate him as best they can.

Note: you aren't playing against yourself: the IJ Whims dominate! If there is "a better move" for the IJ against his Whims, the Whims will still dominate his play. You, as players, just must perform the best play for the IJ given his Whims.



## WINNING

To win, at least one player must do better than the Insufferable Jerk at each aspect (collectively) of comic collecting. If the Insufferable Jerk beats you and your friends at ANY aspect, players lose! If you and your friends (as a group) can best the Insufferable Jerk at each and every aspect, then you win!

Cooperative Comic Hunters doesn't tally Victory Points like the competitive game! Players are trying to beat the IJ (collectively) in each aspect of collecting. What are the aspects of Comic Collecting?

- Size of Collection: At least one player must do better (have more comics of that hero) than the IJ for each Super Hero. Tabulate each Super Hero separately: at least one player must beat the IJ for each hero.
- Variety: For purpose of variety, consider "all player" collections as a combined single collection. The IJ will get every comic without paying for it, so his collection will be massive. The only way the players can compete is to combine their collections as one against the IJ (for this aspect only). Like normal competitive Comic Hunter, to count a group towards variety, you or the IJ must have at least 3 comics for that hero!
- Highlights: At least one player must beat the IJ in every active highlight.
- Secret Stash: The IJ starts with with 15 Secret Stash points like everyone else. At least one player must have more Secret Stash points than the IJ at the end of the game!

There are two types of victory: Major Win and Minor Win. A Major Win happens if the players (as a group) beat the IJ at every single aspect! If you tie on one or more aspect (still beating the IJ on everything else), it's still a win, but a Minor Win (it's just not quite as decisive).

If the IJ beats the players on ANY aspect, all players lose.

A Major Victory is very hard to get!

**If you want, you can also have different gradations of a win:**

- All aspects win: Excellent!
- All Aspects Win, but one tie: Pretty Good
- All Aspects Win, but two ties: meh
- All Aspect Win, but three ties: ugh
- 4 ties: Well, at least you didn't lose.
- Any losses: you all lose, and the IJ won't shut up about it.

NOTE: When figuring out how to arrange the Insufferable Jerk's comics at the end of the game, play the Insufferable Jerk optimally: he may be a jerk, but he's not stupid! Thus, if he can arrange his cards so as to win (say, making sure he always has more Spidey's than anyone else), assume he will do that. Play the Insufferable Jerk as if he wants to win!



## DIFFERENCES

### 4.1 Set-Up

Set-up stays the same but remember that the Insufferable Jerk counts as a player! So, if there are two player characters, then set-up the game as a three player game (with the Insufferable Jerk sitting between the two players).

To be clear, in all phases the Insufferable Jerk has a position at the table and will be participating! The Whims will govern how he takes his turn (except the Store Phase).

Shuffle the 5 Whim cards and place them in a line above the board. The leftmost Whim is the current dominant Whim.

### 4.2 Store Phase

In this phase, The IJ is at the table and gets cards sent to him, but he DOES NOT take part of the draft: only the real players participate and choose cards to pass.

The Store Phase uses a style of drafting called Flourish Drafting, based on the cooperative drafting game “Flourish”. The idea is that you will choose a card for yourself, as well as a card for each of your two neighbors, then pass the rest of the cards in the direction of drafting. Continue until there are no more cards to pass. (There are only two Store Phases: In the first Store Phase, the direction of drafting is to the left. In the second Store Phase, the direction of drafting is to the right).

Sometimes your neighbor is a friend, so you “love draft” and pass him the best card you can. Sometimes, your neighbor is the Insufferable Jerk, so you “hate draft” and pass the worst card you can! It really depends on your position around the table.

In “Flourish”, you are not allowed to discuss what cards you can choose, but we allow some discussion without showing any cards. As you get better at the game, you may choose to forego this conversation to make the game harder.

When you choose a card for yourself or your neighbors, the card goes face up, so everyone can see it!

For the Store Phase, each player (NOT the IJ) is given 6 cards from Price 1 deck which is their hand. Each player picks a card for themselves and a card for each of their neighbors: these cards go into the players tableau. Each player should have 2 cards in their tableau after the first round (but see below), and 3 cards in hand to pass. Pass the remaining 3 cards in hand (in the direction of the draft) to the next player (NOT the IJ) and repeat. There will be only 2 rounds of drafting.

By the time this round is over, every player should have 4 cards (including the IJ).

In a 2-player game (run as a 3-player game because the IJ is the 3rd player), everything works out perfectly.

In a 3-player game (run as a 4-player game because the IJ is the 4th player), one player will end up with 6 cards instead of 4: he must choose two to discard. Those 2 cards go back to the Price 1 deck.

## 4.3 Flea Market

The Insufferable Jerk participates in this phase like any player: the Whims will determine the IJ choices.

The Whims dominate the Flea Market phase: each Whim will have very specific directions on it on how to operate in the Flea Market phase. The IJ's first choice will be to take a row if he can (that's why it's listed first), otherwise he will take and place a card. If the result of "Take Row" would fire based on the first Whim, but there are multiple equally good rows, move to the next whim for "Take Row" resolution.

- Take Row? If there is a row that satisfies the Whim, take it!
- **Place Card? Otherwise, place the given card in a way that will** maximize the current highest Whim.

## 4.4 Auction Site

The Insufferable Jerk participates in this phase like any player: the Whims will determine the IJ choices.

Given the current lots of comics out, the IJ will choose one lot to focus on (based on his Whims). If that lot is ever taken, he will re-assess and focus on the next one. The IJ is pretty single minded: he only wants one lot at a time. If you bid on other lots he isn't interested in, he just doesn't bid or participate in that.

If the IJ starts the bid, he will always starts the bid at \$1 per comic (in the lot). When bidding against other players, he will bid against other players only if they are going after the lot he wants most (based on his Whims). In any bid, the IJ will never pay over \$2 per comic, and he will always increase the current bid by 1\$ (if he can, he may run our of money early).

It's not in the rules per se, but the spirit is that you must always pay at least \$1 per comic if you get a lot. It's too easy for the players to cheat if they don't always pay at least \$1 per comic when they get a row.

## 4.5 Convention Phase

The Insufferable Jerk participates in this phase like any player: the Whims will determine the IJ choices.

Essentially, the Whims direct which cards the Insufferable Jerk should take. When it is the IJ's turn, the players should collectively look over the board and choose the best take for the IJ (including moving a card to get a better take), based solely on the order of the Whims.

The IJ is a jerk but not stupid.

NOTE: In a 2-Player Game, the Insufferable Jerk ONLY GETS ONE TURN during each Convention Phase!!!! Thus, the IJ will get his first turn, but will skip his second turn. (This is for balance: in the 2-Player game, it's much harder for players to get a better collection, as they have fewer comics collectively).

## 4.6 Organization Phase

As each player finishes paying for their comics, they are allowed to pass up to 2 comics total (that have been paid for) to other players: ignore the notion of neighbors ... you are all friends and can share a few comics with each other.

Remember, the Insufferable Jerk doesn't have to do anything in this phase: he just "gets" all his comics.

## ELABORATION OF WHIMS

### 5.1 Most Comics

The Insufferable Jerk tries to get the most comics possible.

Flea Market:

Take Row? Only if a row has all cards out

Place Card? On a row to make it the longest

Auction: Wants the lot with the most comics!

Convention: Takes for the most comics possible!

### 5.2 Most Highlights

The Insufferable Jerk tries to get the most active highlights. Because some comics have multiple highlights, it's possible that he may go for fewer comics. The IJ goes for only the "active" highlights: the three highlights that are being used this game.

Flea Market:

Take Row? Only if contains 3 or more active highlights

Place Card? On row to give most highlights

Auction: Wants the lot with the most active highlights!

Convention: Takes for most active highlights!

### 5.3 Most Expensive

The Insufferable Jerk goes for the lot of comics that are worth the most. Sum up the prices of the comics, and try to get the lot with the biggest sum.

**Flea Market:**

**Take Row? Only if that row has the maximum possible value it could have** (this means waiting until the very end)

**Place Card? Balances the rows: only places the last card on a row** if he has to

Auction: Wants the lot of comics that are worth the most (optimize sum of prices)!

Convention: Takes the row/column of comics that are worth the most!

## 5.4 Highest Heroes

The Insufferable Jerk is trying to get as many heroes as possible in the upper tiers (“the highest heroes” in Trending Heroes chart). The trending heroes dominate this whim: he wants only the most popular!

It’s a little harder to notate this one: You create a “Highest Hero Score” and try to make that score as big as possible: This score represents preferring the most popular heroes! You compute this Highest Hero Score by adding together the Highest Hero Values:

### Highest Hero Value:

- 3 pts: each highest hero is worth 3 points
- 2 pts: each of the heroes in the second tier is worth 2 points
- 1 pts: all other heroes are worth 1 point.

Highest Hero Score: Add up all the Values of the current lot!

Flea Market:

Take Row? Only if a row has Highest Hero Score of 6 or more!

Place Card? on row such that he maximizes the Highest Hero Score!

Auction: wants the lot with Highest Hero score!

Convention: Take the group that has the Highest Hero score!

## 5.5 Most Variety

The Insufferable Jerk is trying to get a group of comics with the most variety of heroes, i.e., the most different kinds of heroes. Since some comics have multiple hero symbols, make sure you take those into account!

**NOTE: Remember, a group of heroes only counts towards variety in the** end game if the IJ has at least 3 of them!

Generally, the IJ will prefer groups of comics with the greatest variety, but if there are multiple groups with the same variety (same number of hero symbols), the IJ will prefer the groups with heroes he has the least of.

Flea Market:

**Take Row? Only if  $\geq 3$  different heroes (in a tie, prefers lots with** heroes he has the least of)

Place Card? on row that would give the most variety

**Auction: Wants the lot of comics with the greatest variety of heroes.** If there are multiple lots with the same variety, the IJ will prefer those lots with heroes he has the least of.

Convention: Takes the group of the hero he has least of

## INDICES AND TABLES

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