



Dark Hearts

4 (or 3) Players

Summary:

The classic trick taking game where you avoid taking Hearts, but the player who leads decides if each Trick is Light or Dark.

The Object:

Keep the lowest score by taking the fewest point cards.

Overview:

In this game the player who leads decides if the Trick is using the Light or Dark sides. Just remember that when you play a card from your Light Hand you are giving up a card from your Dark Hand too!

The Deck:

Remove the Jokers from the deck. You will also need a score sheet and a score keeper.

The Deal:

Each player chooses a card at random, the player with the highest ranking Light card is the first dealer. Deal out all of the cards. 4 players will get 13 cards.
(3 players get 17 with one left over. Leave that card face down, it will be used later.)

The Pass:

After examining their cards, each player will choose three cards from their hand to pass to another player. On the first hand of the game pass to the player on your left, on the second hand pass to your right and the third hand pass to the player across from you. On the 4th hand all players hold their cards without passing. On the next hand start from the beginning again. (With three players skip the pass across and hold instead.)

Point Cards:

Each Heart in a Trick is worth 1 point and each Queen of Spades is worth 13 points. In this game points count against you so you want to avoid taking Tricks with points. The points only count when they are in the shade of the Trick. In other words when you take a Dark Hand Trick, any Light Hand Hearts on the cards won't count towards your score. Arrange the Tricks you take so the point cards are visible to help score each hand.



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Tricks:

A "Trick" is a set of cards, one from each player.

In this game there is no trump suit, so the highest ranking card in a suit that matches the lead card AND shade takes the Trick.

You must play a card in the same Shade and Suit as the Lead Card if you have one in your hand. If you don't you can play any card.

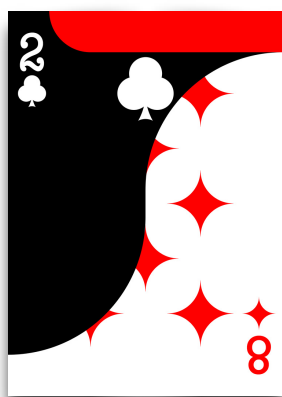
Aces are High, 2s are low.

The Play:

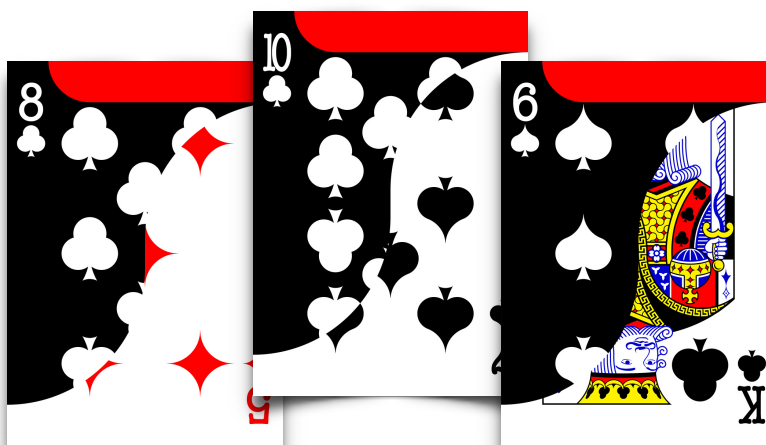
The player holding the Dark 2 of Clubs will play that card face up in the center of the table. This is the Lead card for the first Trick. The first Trick will be Dark Clubs. (With three players if no one has the Dark 2 of Clubs, lead with the Dark 3 of Clubs)

The player to their left plays the next card, then continue clockwise around the table until everyone has played a card face up. The person who played the Highest Ranking Dark Club takes the Trick. You can not play any point cards on the first Trick.

After a player takes a Trick, that player leads the next Trick and decides if the shade is Light or Dark.



Lead Card



In this Trick, Dark 2 of Clubs is led. The Dark 10 of Clubs takes the Trick because it is the highest ranking Dark Club. Notice that one player did not have any Dark Clubs, so they played the Dark 6 of Spades instead. The Light King of Clubs is ignored because this is a Dark Trick.



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Breaking Hearts:

The first time a player takes a Trick with any Point Cards, Hearts are “Broken”. You can not lead Point Cards in a shade until Hearts have been broken in that shade.

In other words, you can not lead with a Light Heart until someone has played a Heart in a Light Hand, and you can not lead with a Dark Heart until someone has played a Heart in a Dark Hand.

(In a three player game there is one card left over after dealing. In the first hand where Hearts are broken the player who takes the Trick also takes the left over card and any points in the same shade.)



Lead Card

In this Trick, Light 4 of Hearts is led. Be sure to announce that the lead card is the Light 4 of Hearts and not the Dark 10 of Diamonds. The Light 7 of Hearts takes the Trick because it is the highest ranking Light Heart. One player did not have any Dark Clubs, so they played the Light 4 of Diamonds and another played the Light Queen of Spades (worth 13 points). This Trick is worth 15 points to the player who takes it.

Notice that the Dark Jack of Hearts and the Dark 2 of Hearts are ignored in this trick. These cards will not be scored in this hand.

(In a three player game if the Light Queen of Spades is the left over card, the player takes 13 points if the trick that broke hearts was Light but only 1 point for the 2 of Hearts if the Trick that took it was Dark.)



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Scoring:

In this game, players take two scores, one for their Light Hand and one for their Dark Hand. At the end of each hand, players count how many Light points and Dark points they took. Each Heart is worth 1 point, the Queen of Spades is worth 13 points. Some point cards will not be counted if they were played in Tricks of the opposite shade.

“Shooting the Moon”: If only one player took Light points (or Dark Points) in one hand, they have “Shot the Moon”. That player takes zero points for that shade for the hand. Instead, their points (for that shade) are added to all of the other player’s scores.

After the hand is scored, the player to the left of the dealer becomes the new dealer.

The End:

The game ends when a player reaches a total of 100 points in either shade. The winner of the game is the player with the lowest score in either shade. Note that a player can reach 100 points in one shade and still have the lowest score in the other shade!

Variations:

In the game Double Hearts you play your Light Hand and Dark Hand at the same time! Find the complete rules for Double Hearts at JankenDeck.com/Dark.

Hints:

It helps to remember what cards have been played and what cards are still in waiting. There are no cards with the same suit on both the Light and Dark sides. Every Ace is joined with another Ace. There are only four Aces. Every card Ranked 8 and over is joined with a card Ranked 7 and under.