NEFARIOUS™
THE MAD SCIENTIST GAME

By Donald X. Vaccarino

OVERVIEW

Your genius could have been such a boon to humanity. Your death ray had wonderful pest control applications, and your volcano activator was perfect for fighting global warming. But the fools at the institute, they wouldn't listen. They called you mad! You built a monster to rend them limb from limb, which your minions assured you was the very worst way to be rended.

When it became clear that the only hope for the world was your own benign leadership, you took control of TV to announce this fact. But your broadcast was interrupted by someone else taking control of TV, announcing his own plan for world domination; and then that broadcast was interrupted by yet another interloper. So. Competition. Well the world will never be as scared of these upstarts as it will be of you.

Archimedes once said, "Give me a long enough lever and a place to stand, and I will move the world." You will be the most terrifying lever the world has ever seen.

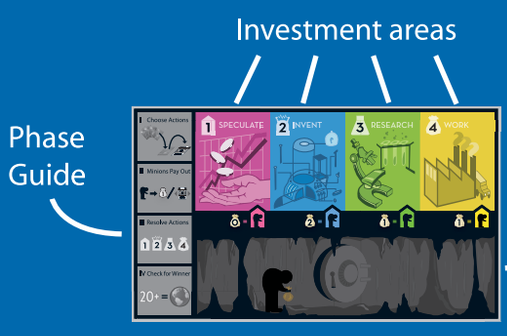
Nefarious: The Mad Scientist Game is a fast 2-6 player game that gives you a new puzzle to solve each time you play. It's also a game of investing in what you think the other players will do. You determine the best way to build your income and the relative value of inventions you can build, based on rules that change each game.

COMPONENTS:

6 Lair playmats (1 each in 6 player colors) with Phase Guide, Investment Areas, and Vault.
30 Wooden Minions (5 each in 6 player colors)
24 Action cards (4 each in 6 player colors)
64 Invention cards
36 Twist cards
90 Bags of Money in denominations of 1, 5, 10
1 Rulebook

Minion

Bags of Money



Lair

Invention cards

Action cards

Twist cards

SETUP

Each player receives a Lair and places it face up in their play area. They also receive 5 Minions and 4 Action cards in their player color. A player's Minions are placed to the side of their Lair as their Minion reserve. Each player takes Bags of Money with a total value of 10 and places them at the bottom of their Lair on the Vault. The remaining Bags of Money go into the middle of the table and become the supply. Shuffle the Invention cards and deal 3 face down to each player, to form their private hand of Invention cards. The remaining Invention cards are placed face down in the middle of the table and become the Invention draw pile. Leave room on the table for a face up Invention discard pile. Randomly draw 2 Twist cards and put them face up in the middle of the table. These Twists will affect the current game. Put the remaining Twist cards back in the box.

OBJECT OF THE GAME

At the end of a round, have at least 20 victory points and have more victory points than any other player.

ROUNDS

Nefarious is played over several rounds. Each round consists of 4 phases in this order:

I) Select and reveal Action cards
II) Collect Bags of Money from investments
III) Resolve Actions
IV) Check for a winner / retrieve Action cards

EXPLANATION OF PHASES

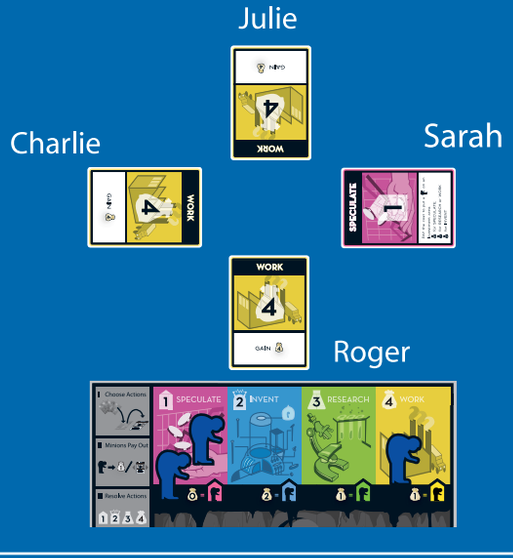
I) Select and Reveal Action Cards.

All the players secretly choose one of their 4 Action cards and place it face down above their Lair.

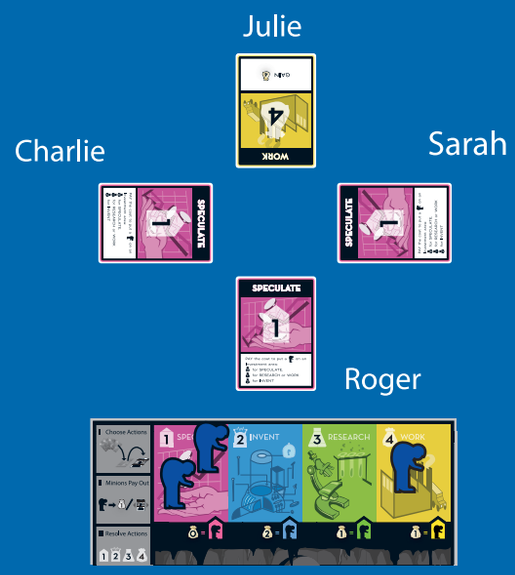
Once all the players have chosen their Action cards, everyone simultaneously reveals their chosen Action cards, leaving them face-up above their Lairs.

II) Collect Bags of Money from investments

For each Minion that a player has in an investment area of their Lair, that player gains 1 Bag of Money from the supply for each adjacent player who chose the matching Action card this round. In the first round of the game, no one will have any Minions placed. You'll learn later how to place Minions in investment areas.



Example 1: Roger has 2 Minions in the Speculate area of his Lair, and 1 Minion in his Work area. After everyone selects their Action cards, they reveal them to show that Julie, Charlie and Roger have all chosen Work for this round. Sarah has chosen Speculate. Roger receives a total of 3 Bags of Money from the supply (1 from his Minion matching Charlie's Action and 2 from his 2 Minions matching Sarah's Action). Roger does not receive Bags of Money from Julie's Action card because she is not one of Roger's 2 adjacent neighbors, nor does Roger receive any Bags of Money from his own Action card.



Example 2: Roger has 2 Minions in the Speculate area of his Lair and 1 Minion in his Work area. In the same round, Charlie, Sarah and Roger all play their Speculate cards. Roger receives 4 Bags of Money from the supply (2 as a result of Charlie's Action, and 2 as a result of Sarah's). Again, Roger does not receive income from Julie's Action card because she is not an immediate neighbor, nor does he receive income from his own Action card.

In a 2-player game, each player receives double the payout they normally would get from a single neighbor whose Action matched their investments. For example, in a 2-player game, if your opponent played Work and you had 3 Minions in your Work area, you would receive 6 Bags of Money from the supply as your investment income.

III) Resolve Actions

The players resolve their Actions in numerical order. First, all the players who chose Speculate as their Action simultaneously take their turns. Then all the players who chose Invent simultaneously take their turns. Next, all the players who chose Research take their turns. Finally, all the players who chose Work take their turns.

The different actions are:

SPECULATE - Pay the appropriate investment cost and place one of your Minions from your reserve into one of the 4 investment areas on your Lair playmat. Placing a Minion in the Speculate area costs 0 Bags of Money; placing a Minion in the Research or Work areas costs 1 Bag of Money; and placing a Minion in the Invent area costs 2 Bags of Money.

Note: A player may not use the Speculate action to move a Minion that is already on their Lair playmat. A player only invests one Minion each time they play Speculate.

INVENT - Choose one Invention card from your hand that you want to build and place it face down above your Lair.

Simultaneously, all players who Invented this round reveal their Inventions and announce them to the other players. Then each Invention builder pays the cost printed on the upper left-hand corner of the card to build their Invention. Next, all the effects from the Inventions(see page 4) are resolved, with each player resolving the effects of their own Invention on themselves first, then progressing clockwise around the table to resolve the effects on themselves from Inventions that other players built.

If a player does not have enough money to build the Invention they revealed, they simply return the Invention card to their hand, and no money is spent. If a player does not have any Invention cards in their hand when playing Invent, nothing happens.

After everyone has built their respective Inventions and all Invention effects have been resolved, the players should move their newly built Inventions below their Lairs, so the victory point values in the lower left corner of all built Invention cards are visible.

Resolving Invention Effects

If an Invention has any effects, they will appear in the box in the lower right corner of the Invention card. Some Inventions have no special effect. Some have effects that affect only the player who built the Invention; these effects are denoted by a green arrow pointing downwards to the player ( ). Some Invention cards have effects that target all the other players in the game; these effects are denoted by a red multi-arrow ( ).

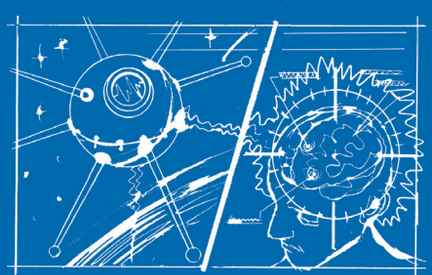
The effects indicate the items that are given to (denoted by a +) or taken from (denoted by a -) the player(s). There are only 3 things that can be given or taken away: Invention cards ( ), Minions ( ), and Bags of Money ( ). More specifically:

+ = draw an Invention card from the draw pile.

− = discard an Invention card from your hand, if you can, to the face-up Invention discard pile.
(The player discarding chooses the card)

+ X = gain X Bags of Money from the supply.

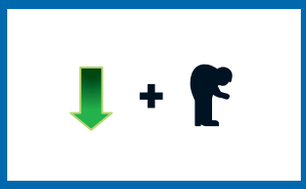
− X = lose X Bags of Money to the supply.
(The player cannot go below 0 Bags of Money)



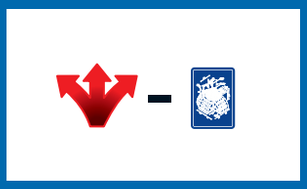
+ = place 1 Minion from your reserve on an investment area for free.
(The player placing the Minion chooses where)

− = remove 1 Minion, if you can, from one of your investment areas and place it in your reserve.
(The player losing it chooses which one to remove)

Effect Examples



Hypnotic Ray: You move a Minion from your reserve to one of your investment areas for free.

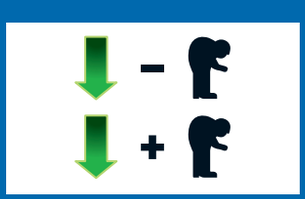


Slime Ray: Each other player discards an Invention card from their hand to the discard pile.

Doomsday Machine: All the other players draw an Invention card, receive 1 Bag of Money from the supply, and move a Minion from their reserves to one of their Investment areas for free.

Anti-gravity Suit: You gain 4 Bags of Money. All the other players must discard an Invention card from their hands to the discard pile.

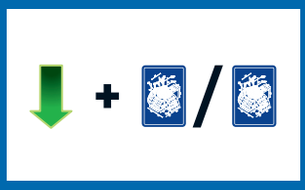
The order of resolution of Invention effects is important. If there are multiple lines of effects that are directed at the builder of the Invention, then these effects are resolved from top to bottom.



Time Machine: You remove a Minion from one of your investment areas to your reserve and then add a Minion from your reserve to one of your investment areas.

Some effects have a slash. These give the player bonuses depending on their current resources. (/) gives you something per card in your hand; (/) gives you something per Minion you have in investment areas; and (/) gives you something per Invention you have built (counting the new Invention).

Helpful Robot: You draw an Invention card for every Invention you have built (including Helpful Robot).



Sentient AI: You draw as many Invention cards as you have Invention cards in your hand.

Time Viewer: You receive 1 Bag of Money for each Minion you have in your investment areas.

Additional Invention card notes can be found on page 8.

Effects from an Invention only matter at the time when an Invention is built. After resolving the Invention's effects, ignore the effects for the rest of the game.

If multiple players Invent in the same round, you first resolve the effects of your own Invention(if you built one). Each individual player then independently resolves any other Invention effect that applies to them, starting with the player on their left and going around the table in clockwise order. So if you build an Invention that makes you draw a card and your left-hand neighbor builds an Invention that makes you discard a card, you first draw and then discard a card. The resolution of effects is then different for each player depending on where he is seated at the table.

Example 3: Wendy is at the table with Sam on her left, Nick on her right, and Jessie across from her. In this round, Wendy, Sam and Nick all play Invent as their actions. Sam builds the Shrinking Ray(which causes him and all other players to lose a card), Wendy builds the Hypnotic Ray(which causes her to place a Minion), and Nick builds the Space Elevator(which causes him and all other players to gain a card). Jessie does not build an Invention this round.

All effects that target the builders of the Inventions happen first and then the effects that target other players happen. So simultaneously, Sam discards an Invention card, Wendy takes a Minion from her reserve and places it in one of her investment areas, and Nick draws an Invention card from the draw pile.

Now each player resolves the effects of Inventions that affect other players, going clockwise from their position at the table. Jessie draws an Invention card (from Nick's Space Elevator) and then discards an Invention card (from Sam's Shrinking Ray). Nick discards an Invention card (from Sam's Shrinking Ray). Wendy discards an Invention card (from Sam's Shrinking Ray) and then draws an Invention card (from Nick's Space Elevator). Sam draws an Invention card (from Nick's Space Elevator).

RESEARCH - Take 2 Bags of Money from the supply and draw an Invention card from the Invention draw pile.

WORK - Take 4 Bags of Money from the supply.

IV) Check for a Winner / Retrieve Action cards

All the players check to see how many total victory points they have. If one player has at least 20 victory points and has more points than any other player, the game ends and that player wins. If 2 or more players have 20 or more victory points but are tied for the most, everyone continues playing.

If there is no single winner, the players take their played Action cards back into their hands and begin a new round.

Repeat phases I - IV until one player wins.

ADDITIONAL RULES

If a player can't fully do something that they have been directed to do, they simply do as much as they can. For example, if you have to discard 2 cards, but you only have 1, you discard that 1. If you need to dispatch a Minion to an investment area but you have already allocated all 5 of your Minions to your Lair, you don't move any. If you are directed to lose Bags of Money and you don't have enough, you simply lose what you have.

At any time in the game, if an effect or Action prompts you to draw cards and there are not enough in the draw pile for all players to draw the cards they need, then shuffle the discard pile and add it to the bottom of the draw pile. At this time, if there are still not enough cards for everyone who needs to draw cards, then no cards are drawn, and no more Invention cards can be drawn for the rest of the game.

The cards in your hand are private, but the number of cards in your hand is public knowledge.

When Bags of Money are given to players, they always come from the supply. The amount of Bags of Money a player has is public knowledge. Bags of Money are not limited in the game. If there are not enough Bags of Money in the supply, you can use a substitute item.

Variant: In phase III, if the players who chose Speculate want to simultaneously reveal their decisions of where they will be allocating their Minions, they can use their Action cards to indicate this decision. The players who chose to Speculate take their Speculate cards back into their hands and then choose the Action card corresponding to the area where they want to place their Minion. The players place their chosen Action card face down in their play area, reveal them simultaneously, and then move their Minions to the appropriate areas. Afterwards they take their Action cards back into their hands and replace their Speculate cards back above their Lairs to show that they have completed their turns.

TWISTS

There are 2 Twists in every game that modify the rules of the game. Make sure that everyone understands them before you begin playing. Twists can change many things about the game, such as the set-up, the ending conditions, or what the Actions or Inventions do, etc.

If both Twists do something at the same time, resolve them in the order they were turned over.

A Twist card that counts Minions only counts Minions that are dispatched to investment areas on the Lair board.

Twist Card Notes:

Age of Boredom: To avoid confusion for players collecting on investments, pick up your old Action when revealing your new Action.

Alien Contact: You resolve your Invention's abilities - and any other players' Inventions that affect you - before discarding and drawing. The number of cards you draw is the number you discarded.

Animal Rights Activists: When you play Research, you draw a card, but don't gain 2 Bags of Money. You can still gain Bags of Money from speculating on Research.

Bigger and Better: If it's a tie, you don't get the 2 Bags of Money. Your first Invention gets you 2 Bags of Money. Secret Lair counts your just-played Invention, and counts itself when played.

Cheap Fusion Power: For example, an Invention that usually costs 9 Bags of Money would cost 5 Bags of Money.

Embezzling Minions: For example, 14 Bags of Money would round down to 10 Bags of Money, but 15 Bags of Money would stay 15 Bags of Money.

Focused Research: You draw both your normal card and your extra card before discarding.

Hyperinflation: This happens before resolving abilities due to playing Inventions. This happens even if the Invention you are paying for costs 0 Bags of Money.

Lingering Evil: If you build 2 Inventions in a row with no effects, the second one won't do anything. If all Inventions have gained an effect, due to Forgotten Epiphanies, Recycling, or Stolen Parts, then no Inventions have no abilities and Lingering Evil won't do anything.

Long-term Plans: This Twist makes you pick what to Invent ahead of time. You now have a face down Invention card, which you are committed to building the next time you choose the Invent Action. You pick the Invention card at the start of the round when you don't have an Invention card already face-down in front of you. When you Invent, you must build that Invention card. When you have to discard, you can't choose to discard that card, and if it's your only card, you keep it.

Mad Broker: For example, if you have 3 Minions on Research and play Research, you'll add another Minion to Research, prior to collecting for investments. If you played Invent instead, you'd remove all three Minions from Research and put 1 on Invent.

Mob Influence: This includes players that aren't adjacent to you.

Overpopulation: You discard even on the first turn, before picking your first Action. You do not discard if you have only 1 card in hand.

Parallel Universe: With Parallel Universe, normally, Speculate means you place 2 Minions, paying for each; Invent means you build 2 Inventions; Research gets you 2 cards and 4 Bags of Money; and Work gets you 8 Bags of Money. If you Speculate, place Minions one at a time, and if you Invent, play the Inventions one at a time, at the same time as other players Inventing. The first Invention you or another player plays could cause you to discard your last card, leaving you unable to play a second Invention. You can choose Invent or Speculate even if you only have 1 Minion left to invest or 1 card left to Invent. Investments still just pay off once per time a card is played, even though the card is doing twice as much. If an Action behaves differently than usual - such as Work making 6 Bags of Money due to Blood, Sweat & Mice - it's the modified Action that's doubled - Work would make 12 Bags of Money if both Blood, Sweat & Mice and Parallel Universe were being used.

Perpetual Motion: Actions still resolve in order by number.

Philanthropy: On any given turn, you might get either, both, or neither benefit.

Quantum Relativity: For example, if you play Nanobots, you'll draw 2 cards, discard 2 cards, draw 2 cards, and discard 2 cards.

Rigged Investments: This works no matter how the Minion gets on the investment - whether due to playing Speculate, or an Invention ability, or the other Twist. You count all Minions on that investment for all players; if between all players there are 5 Minions on Invent, and you put a Minion on Invent, you'll get 5 Bags of Money. If multiple players place Minions at once, they'll get the same quantity of Bags of Money – the bonus is based on how many Minions were invested at the start of the turn.

Security Measures: This includes abilities added by Twists; with Security Measures and Stolen Parts both out, Stolen Parts doesn't do anything.

Subliminal Advertising: Round down; if you have 14 Bags of Money, that's +2 Victory Points.

Unions: Removing a Minion is not optional. You can play Invent intentionally with no Minions invested. If you play Invent but don't play an Invention, investments on Invent will still pay off. However other things that care about playing Inventions won't trigger; for example you didn't pay for an Invention, and so Hyperinflation doesn't trigger.

Invention Card Notes:

Brain Swapper: You first draw an Invention card for every Invention you have built (including Brain Swapper), then discard the same number of Invention cards from your hand.

Delicious By-products: You receive 1 Bag of Money per Invention you have built (including Delicious By-products).

Moon Base: You receive 3 Bags of Money per Invention card in your hand and then discard your hand of Invention cards.

Robot Doubles: You place as many Minions from your reserve into your investment areas as you have built Inventions (including Robot Doubles).

Secret Lair: Secret Lair is worth 1 victory point per Invention that you have built, including Secret Lair.

X-Ray Specs: You receive 1 Bag of Money per Invention card you have in your hand.

CREDITS

Author: Donald X. Vaccarino

Art Design: Terrence Tong, Scott Tepper
Cover art: Glenn Gustafson, Jason Flack.
Component art: Karl Diaz, Terrence Tong, Michael Livingston

The author would like to thank his long-time playtesters: Josephine Burns, Billy Martin, Destry Miller, Bruce Scanlon, Molly Sherwin.

The publisher would like to thank Roger Lowe, Terrence Tong, Jinny Lowe, Ray Lowe, Nona Tepper, Mike Livingston, Heidi Downing, Tony Downing, Beth Heile, John Knoerzer, Court Funke, Mike Holmes, Paul Imboden,Paul Monday,Greg Sorenson, Linda Schmidt, Peter Chun, Aline Kim, Rochelle Weiner, Michael McClory, Michael Boone, Rick Thornquist, Emily Hartman, Michael Thompson, Chris Early, Andy Daglas, Serena Wheeler, Jacob Cleary, Benjamin Merbitz, Mark Goetz, and Liz Aderhol for the many ways they all contributed to Nefarious.

For any questions about this or any other Ascora games, please email info@ascoragames.com

ASCORA GAMES™