





# Cosmic Encounter



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## Special Thanks to Mike Arms

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# INTRODUCTION

*Cosmic Encounter* is a highly social science fiction game for three to six players. Three factors set this game apart from others: plenty of amusing interaction among the players, a different strategy for each player, and frequent surprises. In *Cosmic Encounter*, each player represents a different race of alien beings seeking to conquer the universe in its own way. You must try to defend your native planetary system while sending your troops through the hyperspace cone to conquer other worlds. You may try to make alliances with other players, sharing the risks in hopes of greater gains, or you may try to go it alone. Aiding you in your plans of cosmic domination is a special power unique to your race that may give you the edge, but beware, your opponents have powers of their own, making them equally dangerous and unpredictable.

If most people sitting down to play this game are new to *Cosmic Encounter*, you should play a simplified version to get your feet wet. Choose from the following Alien Powers: Chronos, Filch, Laser, Macron, Mind, Mutant. Do not use Flare cards, and do not use the reverse cone. After playing this simplified version once, you should be ready for all the craziness that is *Cosmic Encounter*.

**This box contains the following parts:**

- 6 planetary system hexes and 1 warp hex. When placed together, these hexes form the game board.
- 120 Tokens (20 each of red, blue, yellow, purple, light blue, and orange)
- 26 Destiny Cards, 72 Challenge Cards, 22 Edict Cards, 48 Flare Cards
- 48 Alien Power Cards
- 6 Planetary Power Cards
- 3 Reference Sheets
- Hyperspace Cone
- Rule Book (you're reading it)

**Challenge Card Breakdown:**

#	17	1	2	2	8	4	8	2	6	2	5	1	2	4	1	1	1	1	2	1	1
CARDS	Compromise	1	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	30	40

If any of these components is missing, please write for free replacement (identifying the missing component) to: *Cosmic Encounter* Parts, Mayfair Games Inc., P.O. Box 48539, Niles, IL 60648.







## SETUP



Place the warp hex, the one with the large black area in the middle, in the center of the table. Each player then chooses a color and attaches the corresponding planetary system hex, five-planet side up, to the nearest side of the warp hex. Toss any extra hexes back into the box. The reverse sides of the warp and planetary system hexes are described in the Optional Rules on page 13.

Each player then takes the 20 tokens of his color, placing four on each of his five planets. Toss any extra tokens back into the box.

Separate the Destiny Cards, those with colors on the face, from the others. Remove any Destiny Cards that show colors that are not in play and toss them, too, into the box. Shuffle the rest, including the two wild cards showing all six colors, and place them face down just out of the reach of the other players. If they complain, you can move the Destiny pile closer. If you are playing with three people, toss the reverse wild card back into the box as well.

Shuffle the Flare Cards and deal one to each player. Players should then rummage through the box to find the Alien Power Cards corresponding to their Flare Cards. Then gather the players' Flare Cards, plus twice that number more Flare Cards chosen secretly, and shuffle them up with the Challenge and Edict Cards to form a Challenge Deck. Deal seven cards to each player, and place the rest of the Challenge Deck any place convenient, like behind the bowl of popcorn. Toss remaining Flare Cards into the box, probably getting them mixed with all the other stuff in there and lengthening setup time for your next game.

Each player reads his Alien Power Card and stands it up behind his planetary system hex, with the picture facing the warp and the Alien Power description facing him. The other Alien Power Cards were probably never taken out of the box in the first place, which is just as well.

Cut the Destiny pile. The color that comes up determines who plays first. Play proceeds clockwise around the warp.

## HOW TO WIN

The object of the game is to establish bases on other players' planets. (A base is one or more tokens on a planet.) The winner is the first player to have his tokens on any five planets outside his own system, called outer or foreign bases. If two or more players gain their fifth foreign base simultaneously, they win jointly.







## OUTLINE OF PLAY

On a player's turn, he is the offensive player. If he has no Challenge Cards (Attack or Compromise Cards) in his hand at the start of his turn, he discards his hand, first playing any cards he wishes that are legal to play, and draws seven new cards. He may then wish to challenge another player by putting a group of his tokens in the hyperspace cone and pointing it at a planet in the defensive player's system. This initiates the challenge process (detailed later), in which both main players ask for allies, play Challenge Cards, use their unique powers, and perhaps play other cards. The offensive player usually gains a base or loses tokens to the warp. The defensive player usually loses tokens to the warp or maintains his position. The use of Compromise Cards, Alien Powers, or Flare Cards can produce many other results. If the offensive player completes a successful challenge and still has Attack or Compromise Cards left in his hand, he may attempt one more challenge. After a second challenge or if the first failed, the offensive player's turn ends, with play passing to the left.

Players are allowed to discuss any and all aspects of the game at any time, including strategy, suggestions, or even offers to gang up on a specific player. Bluffing and deceit are encouraged. Etiquette dictates that such table talk be done openly, rather than in whispers, but that largely depends on who owns this game.

## ICONS

The rule for each stage of play has a small picture, or icon. For example, an icon showing a hand turning a card face up accompanies the rules describing the play of Challenge Cards. These icons also appear on Flare, Edict, and Alien Power Cards, providing a reference to show when those cards or abilities apply. If your Alien Power allows you to affect the play of Challenge Cards, for instance, the icon described above appears on the Alien Power Card. These icons also appear on the Challenge Summary section of the reference sheets.



There are two special icons found on some Alien Power, Edict, and Flare Cards that are not described in the Challenges section. The first one, showing a miniature planetary system hex, applies to your setup at the beginning of the game. The second special icon, an infinity symbol ( $\infty$ ), indicates that the card or power can be used at any time.







## CHALLENGES

**1 .** If the offensive player has any tokens in the warp at the beginning of a challenge, he may retrieve one token and put it on any of his bases, either in his home system or on a planet where he has tokens in an opposing system. If he has no bases, he may place a token from the warp directly onto the hyperspace cone. The offensive player may reclaim a token from the warp for each challenge he makes.



**2 .** Next, the offensive player turns over the top card of the Destiny pile. Used cards form a discard pile beside the Destiny pile. If only one Destiny Card remains, shuffle it together with the discards to form a new Destiny pile. The color on the Destiny Card



indicates the planetary system in which the offensive player must make a challenge. For example, if the offensive player is red, and he draws a purple Destiny Card, he must make a challenge somewhere in the purple player's planetary system. He

can challenge a purple base directly, challenge an empty planet in the purple system, or challenge one that contains other players' tokens but none of purple's. Purple would always be the defensive player, simply defending with no tokens if he had none there. Other players' tokens are not at risk. Once red draws a purple Destiny Card, he cannot challenge any other player. If the defensive player has no Challenge Cards, he plays any eligible cards, discards his hand, and draws seven new cards. Two of the Destiny Cards are wild, containing all six colors, giving the offensive player his choice of naming which color turned up. If the Destiny Card shows the reverse cone, turn over the hyperspace cone so that the reverse cone side is up and follow the challenge resolution procedure for the reverse cone as described later.

If a player turns up his own color from the Destiny pile, he has a choice. He may turn over the next card, or he may attempt to regain a base in his own planetary system. To regain one of his own lost bases, the offensive player must challenge another player's base in the offensive player's own planetary system. The offensive player announces his intention to challenge a certain player who has a base in his system, and that player becomes the defensive player. If one of the offensive player's home







planets is empty, he can regain a base simply by placing one or more of his tokens there after drawing his own Destiny Card. This does count as one of his two challenges for the turn.

**3.** The offensive player now takes from one to four of his tokens from any of his bases and places them on the offensive (oval) end of the cone. He may take tokens from his



home planets, from bases he has established elsewhere, or from any combination of both. Removing all tokens from a planet means the player no longer has a base there. After selecting which tokens to use,

the offensive player then points the cone at the planet he chooses to challenge. The defensive player must defend the planet with all the tokens he has there. Tokens that are on the challenged planet that do not belong to the defensive player do not count toward the defensive total and are not affected by the outcome of the challenge.

**4.** If he wants help, the offensive player can now invite others to become his allies in the challenge. Such an alliance lasts only for the duration of the current challenge. While it may seem as though the offensive player would always want allies, he may want to exclude one or more other players or may want no allies at all.



These situations arise because of the nature of the offensive player's Alien Power, one of his opponent's powers, or because an opponent may stand to win the game through such an alliance. Thus, the offensive player can specify which players he is inviting to become allies. They respond to this invitation in Step 6, below.



**5.** The defensive player may also seek allies. Like the offensive player, he can choose which players to invite, including those already invited by his adversary.

**6.** Starting with the player to the left of the offensive player and proceeding clockwise, each player decides whether or not to ally with one of the main players. If he declines to ally with either, the player so signifies by shaking his head vigorously from side to side. A player may not ally with both of the main players and also may not ally with someone who did not invite him. To accept an alliance invitation, a player places one to four of his tokens, taken from any of his bases, onto the cone. Offensive allies place their







tokens on the oval end of the cone along with the offensive player's tokens, while defensive allies place their tokens on the ring around the pointed end. Defensive allies do not place their tokens on the challenged planet itself. All tokens in the offensive end or on the defensive ring are considered to be on the cone.



**7 .** Once all tokens are in place, each of the main players chooses a Challenge Card (Attack or Compromise) and places it face down on the table. Once both Challenge Cards are played face down, neither of them may be changed. Edict and Flare Cards are never played face down during a challenge.

**8 .** After a long moment of hesitation to build suspense, the main players reveal their Challenge Cards simultaneously. The combination of cards played, plus which side of the cone is used, determines the outcome.



### Both Play Attack Cards

If both players played Attack Cards, each adds the number on his card to the number of tokens on his side (his own plus his allies'). The player with the higher total wins. In case of a tie, the defensive player wins. Note that factors such as Flare Cards or Alien Powers may affect the results.



If the offensive player wins, move all tokens from the oval end of the cone to the planet, establishing a base for the offensive player and for each of his allies. Defensive tokens on the planet and defensive allies' tokens on the cone's ring go to the warp.

If the defensive player wins, he keeps his tokens on the planet.

All the tokens on the oval end of the cone go to the warp. Defensive allies return their tokens from the cone ring to any of their bases. For each token he committed in defense, each defensive ally draws one card from the Challenge pile or retrieves one token from the warp to any base.

### One Plays Compromise Card

If one player plays an Attack Card and the other player plays a Compromise Card, the player who played the Attack Card





wins, with all the same rewards as if both players had played Attack Cards. All of the losing side's tokens still go to the warp, but the player who played the Compromise Card gets consolation because he was willing to compromise and his opponent attacked him. The losing player draws one card from his opponent's hand for each token he lost, not counting his allies' tokens. The allies get nothing, and they're miffed. If the opponent does not have enough cards for full consolation, the losing player takes only the cards that the winning player does have.

### Reverse Cone

When the reverse cone is face up, determine the winner of the challenge in the normal way. The main players get the same rewards for winning as with the hyperspace cone, but their allies' rewards are reversed. If the defensive player wins, his allies get bases on his planet. If the offensive player wins, his allies return their tokens to their bases and draw new cards or retrieve tokens from the warp as their reward. All losing allies still go to the warp.

### Both Play Compromise Cards

If both players played Compromise Cards, all allies on both sides return their

tokens to any of their bases. The two main players have one minute to make a deal. The players have great latitude in making a deal, but it cannot involve other players, tokens in the warp, or their Alien Power Cards. They can, however, exchange any combination of bases and cards from their hands. As part of a deal, a player can share any planet where he has a base, thus allowing his opponent a base there also. This can be a straight trade or part of a deal involving cards. The deal need not be equitable. The players cannot trade nothing for nothing, and no







player can gain more than one base as part of a deal. If the players cannot reach an agreement within one minute, each of the main players loses three tokens to the warp. The reverse cone has no effect on a deal, and allies are never included. The other players do have a major role to play, however. As the main players are trying to make a deal, the other players should keep track of the passage of time, preferably by chanting: "One thousand one, one thousand two, one thousand three," and so forth. If the other players are good at this, the main players may be so annoyed that they are unable to make a deal.

**9.** Discard the two Challenge Cards and any Edicts and Flares that were played.



**10.** The last step, after a challenge is concluded, is an interphase between the offensive player's first and



second challenges or between one player's turn and the next. If the offensive player wins an attack or makes a deal on the first challenge of his turn, he may choose to make a second challenge or he may pass.

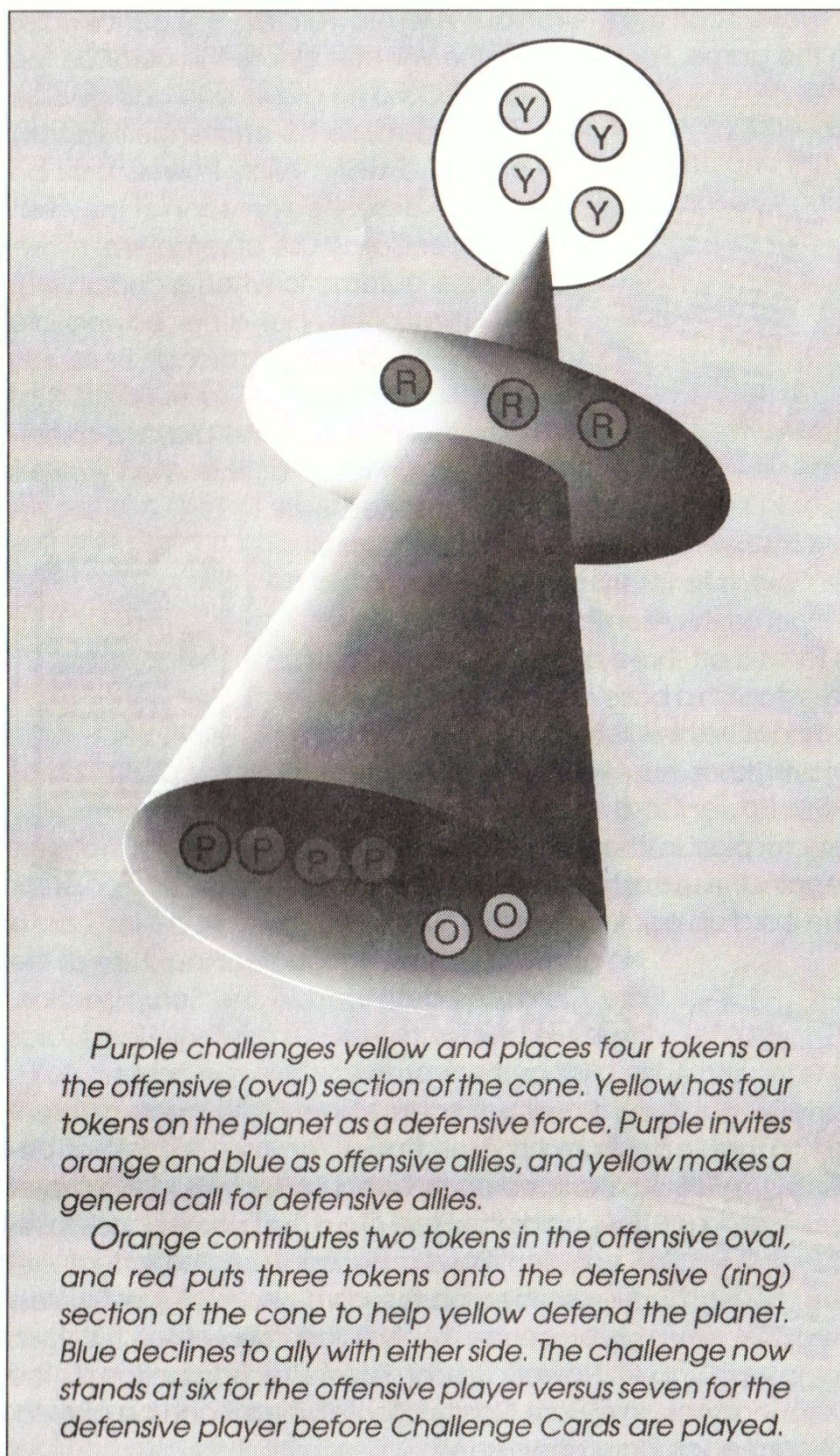
If the offensive player has no more Challenge Cards, he does not draw a new hand, he may not make a second challenge, and his turn ends. If he does still have Challenge Cards and wants to make the second challenge, he follows all of the steps just described (that is, he regains a token from the warp, turns up the top card of the Destiny pile, and so on). When the offensive player loses his initial challenge, fails to make a deal, or completes his second challenge, his turn ends. The player to his left becomes the offensive player and begins his turn. This is the phase to use effects that say "at the start of the challenge," and such effects cannot be used after the offensive player draws from the Destiny pile. Because of this, the player about to begin a challenge should pause momentarily to give other players a chance to play cards. This is also the phase when the new offensive player draws a new hand if he has no Challenge Cards. The offensive player may not draw a new hand in any other phase, and if he runs out of cards in the middle of a challenge, that challenge is aborted, with play passing to the left.







## Challenge Diagram



*Purple challenges yellow and places four tokens on the offensive (oval) section of the cone. Yellow has four tokens on the planet as a defensive force. Purple invites orange and blue as offensive allies, and yellow makes a general call for defensive allies.*

*Orange contributes two tokens in the offensive oval, and red puts three tokens onto the defensive (ring) section of the cone to help yellow defend the planet. Blue declines to ally with either side. The challenge now stands at six for the offensive player versus seven for the defensive player before Challenge Cards are played.*





## POWERS, FLARES, EDICTS

Players can use their unique Alien Powers to break certain rules in the game. For example, the Will can ignore the color on the

Destiny Card he draws and can decide where to make his challenges. Exactly how and when Alien Powers can be used is described on each of the Alien Power Cards. Use of some Alien Powers is automatic when a certain situation arises, but other powers are optional. The optional ones say "may" or "can" to indicate that their use is at the player's discretion. A summary of the Alien Powers

appears on the reference sheets.

If a player has fewer than three bases in his own planetary system, he can no longer use his Alien Power. Thus, if a player is forced off three of his planets, he must re-establish a base on one of them before he can use his Alien Power again. When a player loses his Alien Power, he turns his Alien Power Card face down and continues to play in the normal manner. If he regains the use of his Alien Power, he stands the card up again.

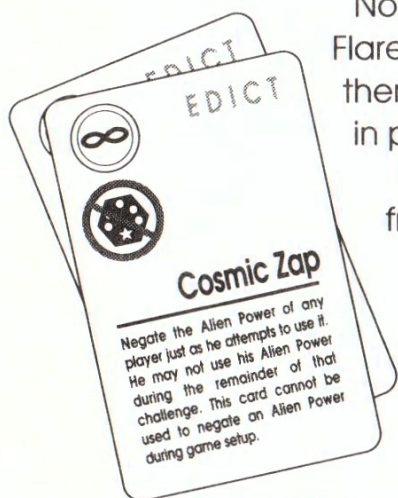
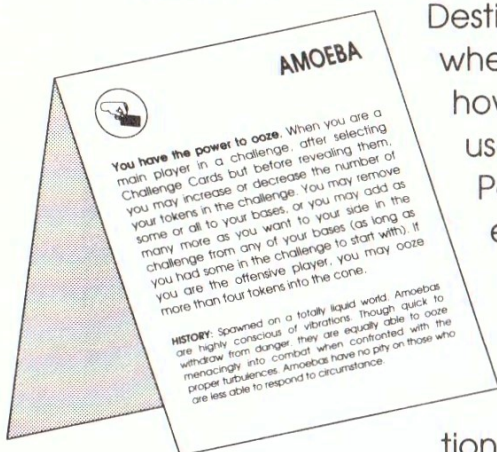
No game of *Cosmic Encounters* should use all the Flare Cards. As described in the Setup section, there are always three times as many Flare Cards in play as there are players in the game.

If a player holds a Flare Card that is different from his Alien Power, he uses the effect described on the card under "Wild." If a player holds the Flare Card that corresponds to his Alien Power, he can use the effect described on the card under "Super," unless of course he has lost the use of his Alien Power. Use of Flare Cards is optional. The

icons on a Flare Card indicate when it can be played.

Discard each Flare after use.

Each Edict Card indicates when and how it is played. Any







player can play an Edict Card, not just those involved in a challenge. Edict Cards are always played face up and discarded after being played. They are never played face down in a challenge. Discard each Edict after use.

Flare and Edict Cards are part of a player's hand until they are used. Thus, they can be traded as part of a deal, they can be drawn as part of consolation or as a result of a power, and they must be played or discarded when a player draws a new hand because he has no more Challenge Cards.

## ***TIMING CONFLICTS***

In all cases of timing conflicts (when two players invoke contradictory special effects simultaneously) between Alien Powers, Flares, Edicts, or so on, resolution takes place as follows. Any players who are not main players go first, starting with the player to the left of the offensive player and proceeding clockwise, then the offensive player plays and finally the defensive player.

## ***OPTIONAL RULES***

It is a relatively common occurrence for players to tire of a game after playing it repeatedly. When the same old thing happens game after game, it's time to find a new game. Therefore, since the Alien Power Cards in *Cosmic Encounter* can come up only about 9 billion different ways, here are some ways to add variety for the 9,000,000,001st time you play.

## ***REVERSE PLANET HEXES***

You've probably noticed by now that the planetary system hexes have something printed on the back. Each is different, with its effect described fully on the accompanying system card. These effects are powerful, and all players should use the reverse side or none should for game balance. However, it is possible to give an inexperienced player a better chance against old pros to let him use the reverse side while the experienced players use the regular system hexes. When using the reverse hexes, choose them before dealing out Alien Power Cards. Use any equitable system for choosing that is agreeable to all players (random, dealing colors from the Destiny pile, largest player chooses first, and so forth).







## REVERSE WARP

On the back of the Warp hex is a hex containing both the warp (the black hexagon) and a multi-colored fan resembling a famous TV network's peacock. You can use the normal warp hex with the reverse planet hexes or the reverse warp hex with the normal planet hexes. Any combination works.

When using the reverse warp hex, the colored fan represents a sort of limbo where tokens go temporarily on their way to the warp. While in this limbo, tokens are inaccessible to the players, immune even from Mobius Tubes and Warp Break. All tokens lost in a given challenge go onto the same fan section, regardless of the colors of those tokens. Use only the fan sections of the colors in play.

First, place a salt shaker or other indicator on the fan section the same color as the player making the first challenge. At the end of the challenge, place all tokens lost to the warp into that fan section and move the indicator to the next section clockwise. On each subsequent challenge, put lost tokens into the next fan section and move the indicator. On each flip of the Destiny pile, some tokens may slide from the limbo fan into the warp itself, and then be available for retrieval. If the Destiny Card shows the reverse cone, no tokens move from the fan to the warp. If the Destiny Card shows the hyperspace cone, however, move all tokens from the fan section of the chosen card's color into the warp. When the wild card comes up, the color the offensive player chooses to attack determines which fan color slides into the warp.

## EDITOR'S NOTES

If this is your first exposure to *Cosmic Encounter*, you can probably find something better to do than to read this section. If you are one of the thousands of devotees who have been playing one version or another of this game for years, read this. If you bought this game in the hopes of getting new components for your decomposing Eon set, we are truly sorry.

Mayfair Games bought the rights to *Cosmic Encounter* to introduce the game we love to a new generation of gamers. The original Eon edition and its nine expansions had a few problems and introduced a number of concepts and rules that have





never been in general use (moons, lucre). Furthermore, the original game spawned so many variants and house rules that there is no generally accepted right way to play *Cosmic Encounter*. Mayfair decided to publish *Cosmic Encounter* as most people play it, using the best aliens and rules, dropping the worst, and fine-tuning others.

Mayfair charged the Game Resource Development Group to study and play everything originally produced by Eon and come up with a synthesis, a *Cosmic Encounter* that retains the flavor of the original and is balanced and playable for new players and veterans alike. The group chewed on it for eight months and regurgitated a proposal for a basic game and expansion, the former containing most of the old game and a few new ideas and the latter containing the advanced bric-a-brac, plus old ideas that were never well received (and new rules to make them work), plus some neat new ideas that have been played as regional variants in various parts of the country.

We sent the new game to the original designers and to playtest groups around the country. And did we get an earful! After carefully considering all the constructive criticism and thoughtful threats, we came up with the best *Cosmic* we could. The changes we ended up with can all be attributed to ease of play, enhanced fun-ness, or game balance, especially game balance.

You probably noticed the first change right away, the icons. This concept is an attempt to head off most of the disagreements that can arise over who can do what to whom when. The timing rule should settle conflicts that the icons don't.

The biggest change from the old game is discarding Flares after one use. This rule prevents a player from becoming almost invincible with his Super Flare. It also boosts the importance of the Alien Powers, because these are the only reusable resource. Thus, each player has a more distinct feeling, unlike when another player repeatedly uses a Flare that is similar to another's power. This change also makes the game more balanced from another point of view. Some of the old Flares were single-use and others were not, making it more difficult for some aliens to get their Super Flare than for others. Changing this rule also necessitated changing some of the Flares themselves, as some were pretty wimpy if they could be used only once.

The greatest divergence of opinion and the source of some of







the strongest feelings on both sides relates to unusual effects like the old Wild Flare of the Filch or the primary power of the Schizoid. Mayfair tried to steer a path through this minefield by analyzing what would be best for the new version. We can't please everybody, especially on such emotional issues. Mayfair endorses any practice that your group enjoys, and the compatible back designs on the cards should help the old guard mix and match.

Some of the most difficult decisions concerned which Alien Powers to include and which to push back to the expansion. We tried to pick the most interesting and balanced powers for the main game. Such longtime favorites as the Virus will appear in the expansion rather than this game because we thought they would throw the game out of balance for new players.

The idea is not to try to get all our customers to go out and buy the expansion. The game in this box is probably all most players will want. To include more in this box would have driven the price above what most people would pay. In the interest of completeness and to satisfy those who want more of a good thing, we are doing the expansion and including in it a cleaned-up version of everything in the Eon package plus a number of fresh new ideas. Further expansions will be based on demand.

Multi-power variations were deliberately delayed to the expansion because of the large number of possibilities that require special consideration. Also in the expansion will be new rules for a two-player game. Longtime *Cosmic Encounter* fans will certainly continue to play the way they have been playing, holding onto their Flares and using multiple powers, and Mayfair has tried to make this product useful by keeping the old card back design to make this game compatible with earlier Eon versions.

The many players who enjoy making up their own Edicts and such will be happy to know they can buy blank 84-card decks with the same back design directly from Mayfair.

