The Blood of an Englishman

A two-player strategy card game based on the timeless fairy tale
by Dan Cassar • Version 83 • August 20, 2016

Overview

The Blood of an Englishman is a random-setup, open-information card game for two players aged 10 and up that takes about 30 minutes. One player plays Jack, and his opponent is the Giant, who is trying to capture Jack before he steals his gold, harp and the goose that lays golden eggs.

Object

Jack must complete three Beanstalk Stacks to win the game. The Giant is trying to catch Jack by arranging his Fe, Fie, Fo and Fum cards to corner and finally trap him.

Components

A 50-card play deck, including:

- 36 black **beanstalk** cards (4 copies of each numbered 1 through 9)
- 6 blue **treasure** cards (2 each of Gold, goose and harp)
- 8 red **giant** cards (2 each of Fe, Fie, Fo and Fum)

In addition, there are 4 **player aid** cards, 2 summarizing Jack's moves and 2 summarizing the Giant's moves. Players may want to refer to these during the game.
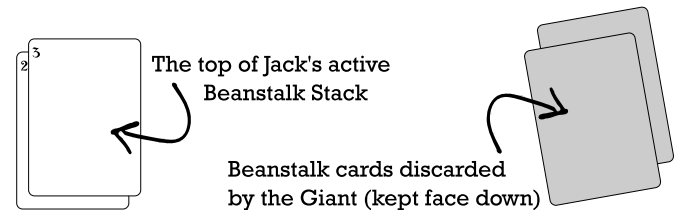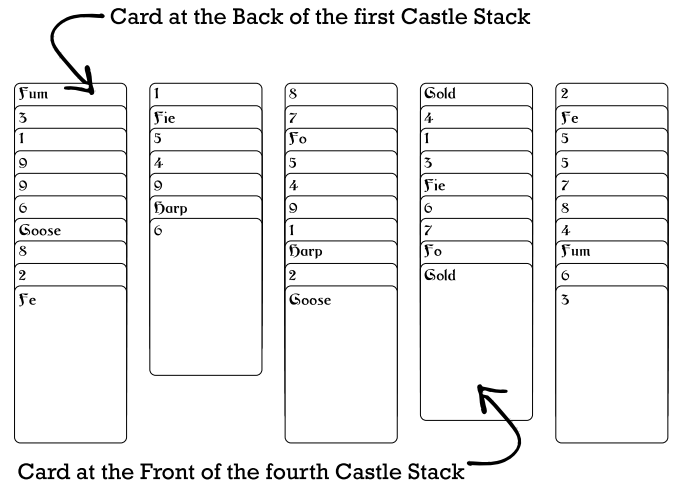
Setup

Shuffle the play deck and deal out cards face up to create five (5) face-up Castle Stacks of ten (10) cards each. Cards should be fanned down, meaning they should be arranged such that each card only partially covers the card beneath it so that one can see the titles of all the cards in play.

The Giantess' Protection

After dealing out the cards, the Jack player may select any single card and move it to any position anywhere within the Castle Stacks.

If you're not sure which card to move, a good choice is always to take the frontmost Giant card and move

it to the back of the stack. This makes sure that the Giant has to work harder to bring that card forwards during the game.

Card at the Back of the first Castle Stack

Card at the Front of the fourth Castle Stack

The top of Jack's active Beanstalk Stack

Beanstalk cards discarded by the Giant (kept face down)

Gameplay

Each player in the game has different options available to him or her. The Jack player has a nimbler feel, whereas the Giant player has slower, but more powerful options.

Jack always takes the first turn and play alternates thereafter.

Playing as Jack

On Jack's turn, he makes **three moves**. Each move can be completed in one of four ways:

- From the front of any Castle Stack to the front of any other Castle Stack,
- From the front of any Castle Stack to the top of Jack's current Beanstalk Stack,
- From the back of any Castle Stack to the front of the same Castle Stack, or

- From the back of any Castle Stack to the top of Jack's current Beanstalk Stack.

Even if a Castle Stack has no cards in it, cards may be moved to that stack normally thereafter.

Jack may never move cards from the front of the stacks to the back. Only back-to-front.

Beanstalk Stacks

Jack builds Beanstalk Stacks one at a time, by moving black Beanstalk cards from the Castle Stacks to his play area. Cards in a Beanstalk Stack are stacked on top of one another as they are collected.

To complete a Beanstalk Stack, Jack must collect six (6) Beanstalk Cards in **ascending, but not necessarily sequential order**. Each card must have a number that is higher than the card beneath it, but Jack may skip numbers, as long as he is still able to play the cards he needs to complete the stack. For example, he might start with a 2, follow with a 4, then a 5, 7, 8, 9. Or he might play 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 9.

Once a beanstalk stack has six (6) beanstalk cards on it, Jack may then use a move to play a Treasure Card from the front or back of a castle stack to complete it. Once Jack has claimed one of each of the 3 different treasures (Gold, Goose and Harp), then he is declared the winner.

Jack may only have **one active Beanstalk Stack** at a time. A Beanstalk Stack may only be started once any previous Beanstalk Stack is complete.

Playing as the Giant

The Giant has three options for how to take his turn. He may:

- **Discard** any single black Beanstalk Card from any position in any Castle Stack,
- **Move the frontmost four cards** at the front of any Castle Stack to the front of any other Castle Stack, or
- **Make two moves.** Each move, he takes the frontmost card in any Castle Stack and moves it to the front of any other Castle Stack.

The Giant may not use his four-card movement option if there are not at least four cards in the stack he wants to move from.

The Giant may never move cards from the back of the stacks like Jack does, although discards can be from anywhere within the castle stacks.

Winning the Game

Winning as the Giant

The Giant can win 3 different ways:

(1) **Horizontally**: If one of each of the four different Giant cards is shown at the front of four of the five castle stacks at the completion of any move (by either player), the Giant wins immediately. Order is not important.

(2) **Vertically**: If one of each of the four different Giant cards is adjacent in a single, unbroken group within a single castle stack, the Giant wins immediately. Order is not important.

(3) **Discard**: If the Giant discards enough cards that Jack cannot complete his three beanstalks, then he wins immediately.

Winning as Jack

Jack wins by **completing three beanstalks** with six (6) beanstalk cards each and one of each of the three (3) different treasure cards: the goose, the harp and the gold.

Strategy Tips

Strategy for Jack

- It's important that Jack focus on both offense and defense. Often, especially while he is building his third beanstalk, Jack will have to spend just as much time preventing the Giant from winning as he does trying to advance his own goals.
- Remember that since the Giant can't discard Treasure cards, they are good cards to use for blocking his Giant cards.
- The less sequential the numbers in your beanstalk stacks, the more vulnerable you are to a discard-heavy strategy.

Strategy for the Giant

- The Giant's position gradually gets stronger over the course of the game, so be patient and wait for opportunities.
- The Giant's third movement option (two single moves) can be undone by Jack on his turn, but sometimes he can't or won't choose to respond this way.
- Since you need to have one of each type of Giant card in position to win, it's important to pay attention if one of those types is buried further back in the stacks than the others and try to move cards in front of them out of the way.