

False Faces

A game of deception for 4 to 6 players

In False Faces, the goal is to win the favor of a wealthy, powerful or influential person who is looking to transfer some of that influence onto the next generation. This could be an ailing grandparent with a large estate, a retiring corporate executive, the head of a political party seeking a new candidate, a mayor looking to replace his chief of police, etc. All of the players are willing to lie to get that prize by defaming each other and aggrandizing themselves. The trick is to lie so well that the target of your machinations never knows what you are up to.

What you need to play

Each player needs 1 pencil, 1 sheet of paper, 1 6-sided die and 2 index cards.

Definition of terms

Mark: The Mark is the person managing the game and the one roleplaying as the influential person who the other players are trying to win over.

Scuzz: The Scuzz are the players who are roleplaying as the manipulators trying to gain the prize.

Positive Truth: Something truthful about a Scuzz that would curry favor with the Mark

Negative Truth: Something truthful about a Scuzz that would be repugnant to the Mark

Positive Lie: Something untruthful about a Scuzz that would curry favor with the Mark

Negative Lie: Something untruthful about a Scuzz that would be repugnant to the Mark

How to play

The game starts by the Mark announcing who they are, what is at stake and what sorts of qualities they are looking for in someone to pass their fortune on to.

The Scuzz will then take turns announcing who they are and their relation to the Mark. Each Scuzz will write down their name on an index card, fold it in half and place it in front of them for easy reference to the other players. The Mark will write down the name of each Scuzz on a piece of paper in preparation to keep tally of scores made during play.

The Scuzz then take a few minutes to write down 4 Positive Truths and 4 Positive Lies about themselves on their sheet of paper. They may also write down any number of Negative Lies about the each of the other Scuzz (you can come up with more later.) Next, each player should write down 1 Negative Truth about themselves, along with their name, on one side of their second index card.

All Scuzz place their Negative Truth card face down in the middle of the table. The Mark will look at them, write them down on the score tally sheet and hand them back out face down, ensuring that no Scuzz receives their own card.

Each Scuzz will roll their 6-sided die. The highest result will go first (re-rolling any ties). Turns will follow around the table clock-wise. On their turn, the Scuzz will make some sort of schmoozey statement to the Mark which is one of the following:

A Positive Truth about themselves

A Negative Lie about another Scuzz

A Positive Lie about themselves

The one Negative Truth they know about another Scuzz

No specific statement may be repeated.

After the statement is made, all of the other Scuzz may decide to object to it and call that person a liar. What the Scuzz don't realize is that he Mark always knows all of the Truths and Lies about each Scuzz already. What the Mark wants to see is which one of the Scuzz is the manipulator most worthy of their fortune.

If the original schmoozey statement was about themselves and was a indeed a Lie, that player must admit to it. The Mark puts a "-1" in their tally and a "+1" to each Scuzz that originally objected. If the statement was a Truth, the player or players who challenged it get "-1" and the Truth-teller gets "+1." If no one objects to the statement, that Scuzz gets "+1" and does not need to say whether it was true or not.

If the original statement was a Negative Lie about another player, that player may choose to challenge it - in which case each player rolls a die. The Mark most appreciates the case of whomever rolled the highest (re-rolling all ties) and that person gets "+1" while the loser gets "-1." The target of the Lie may choose not to challenge it by making a statement like "I can neither confirm nor deny" or "I cannot recall" or "No comment" , in which case the target gets a "-1."

If the original statement was the Negative Truth about another Scuzz, the target must challenge its veracity and roll off against the accuser. If the target loses, they are shamed in the eyes of the Mark for keeping their secrets so poorly and are out of the running for the inheritance. They still continue to play however, and may relentlessly challenge every statement made by the player who knocked them out (but not the other players) or continuously make up Negative Lies in a campaign of petty revenge (against everyone.) If the revealer of the Negative Truth loses the roll this person receives "-2" to their tally for blowing their best shot at getting rid of a competitor.

The turns continue in this fashion until any of these conditions are met:

One Scuzz acquires 4 points and thereby winning the game. If more than one Scuzz attains 4 points at the same time play will continue. All Scuzz under 4 points are out of the running to win but may still play against those still in. The Scuzz still in the running roll off. The winner goes first. The game ends after each remaining Scuzz have had an equal amount of turns and one of them leads in points or one of the other conditions (see below) is been met, whichever comes first.

All but one Negative Truth has been revealed. The player whose Negative Truth has not been revealed wins (unless they have already been eliminated, in which case the Scuzz with the highest tally wins.)

Each Scuzz has run out of either Positive Lies or Positive Truths (one or the other.) The Mark counts the tallies and the Scuzz with the highest tally wins.

After the winner is determined, all of the losing Scuzz take turns describing what they will do with themselves after losing this crucial bid for power. Then, the Mark will make some pompous public speech about how carefully they chose their successor based on merit. The winning Scuzz then gets to describe what he or she will do with their glorious victory (as gloating or gracious as they wish).

Honesty is the best policy...even when lying.

All players must tell the truth when challenged as to whether what they said on their turn was a Truth or a Lie. If a player has been found to have misrepresented the veracity of their statements during the game (intentionally or not), all of the other players must crumble up all play materials and throw them at the offending player.