



LS PICK

# A simple game of cards or not!

Playing cards is serious business. Don't believe me? Ask little old Alice stuck in a battle with the red queen and her army of cards who by no means mean fun and games. While it is possible to get a straight answer from Alice, Punja from 'Tasher Dosh' will be right out insulted by your question. If you are lucky, you might even get a reenactment of the famous scene where a ship-wrecked prince first meets Punja and Chakka, proud upholders of the Tash nobility.

*Chakka: You are?*

*Prince: We are foreigners.*

*Punja: Enough. You don't have to say more.*

*It means you have no caste, no house, no race, no clan, no relation, no group, no class, no strings...*

As the prince admits that he has no identity to speak of, Punja reveals the secret of their ancestry. Born from the first sacred yawn that came to Brahma's mouth in the afternoon after a tiring days' work of creating, the Tash Clan got the status of the elites



of the creation deserving a bow every time their name is uttered.

Although in modern times 'tash' or playing cards receive less bows than they used to, their appeal to the collectors remains high as ever. The deck of cards itself has gone through many changes from its birth in imperial China, circa 9th century, through Persia, Egypt, India, and finally Europe. Everywhere the culture of playing cards went, a new and beautiful version of decks emerged. These antique versions, such as the 1820 hand-drawn Spanish deck, are now the jewels that collectors treasure and sometimes sell at auctions for hundreds and thousands of dollars even.

A new addition to the traditional playing cards was made during the 1900s with the release of the 1938 Gum Inc. Horrors of War. The set had cards filled with grotesque pictures set in the Spanish Civil War, Ethiopian War and the Chinese-Japanese War. This set has more historic value than the others. Word has it that when America was still recovering from World War I and the general populace were against getting involved in overseas turbulence, President Franklin D. Roosevelt used these cards to gain public assent for involvement.

Entertainment cards were an integral part of trading cards craze from the beginning. This category has a collection as

diverse as the 1949 Bowman Wild West, 1956 Topps Elvis Presley, 1979 Topps Rocky II (a set was never made from the original film), and 1980 Topps Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back Series 1, 2, and 3. Even now, almost every contemporary movie and series franchise has its own set of trading cards so you that can collect and boast of your collection of Doctor Who, James Bond, Start Trek, The Walking Dead, and Dexter.

While trading cards were used only for collection purposes, the scenario changed completely when "Magic: The Gathering", world's first Trading Card Game, was released. It combined two of the great features of traditional playing cards and trading cards to make an exciting battle game. So, the players had to build their own deck by buying the original sets and adding to their power by buying additional releases or trading among themselves to increase their chances of winning a battle.

The impact that humans had on the cards of 'Tasher Dosh' continues through the barriers of the fantastic. The 1973 Political Playing Card from Spain bears evidence of that impact on the cartoon-y faces of political leaders of that time including prominent leaders such as Dwight David Eisenhower, Muammar Gaddafi, Georges Pompidou and even leaders from the subcontinent.

Speaking of politics, you can now get a shiny card from the ongoing U.S. Presidential election as Topps provides real-time coverage with cards featuring candidates Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton. The release is limited only to a 24-hour sales period. So, hurry! Or play some Cards Against Humanity; your choice, really!

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**Photo: Collected**

