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# Royal Cities

*The king is dead. Mourning and without a leader, the kingdom has divided into six provinces. You embody a Noble on a quest for the throne. To reunify the territory and place the crown on your head, you must take control of the provinces by building the most influential Cities... at the expense of your opponents!*



## Goal of the game

Collect cards throughout the Seasons and choose whether to use them to build your Cities - and earn Victory Points (VP) - or use their effects to gain an advantage. But beware, this may mean losing a few majorities... and allies!

Score VP at the end of each Season for every City where you have the most Influence. The Noble with the most VP at the end of the game will be crowned!

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## Content



4 CITIES BOARDS (to assemble)



4 NOBLE TOKENS



4 MARKET TOKENS



4 PEOPLE'S HERO/HEROINE CARDS



85 SUBJECT CARDS

(13 purple, 13 yellow,  
13 pink, 13 red, 13 blue,  
13 green and 7 white)



4 SEASON CARDS



4 HELP CARDS



5 MARKET HALF-SIZED CARDS



1 VICTORY POINTS TRACK

## Setup

- 1 **Place the Victory Points track** near the play area, depending on the number of Nobles (1-3 or 4), and place the Season cards in a stack next to it (only 3 Seasons for games with 4 Nobles). The Seasons are used for counting the rounds.

- 2** **Shuffle all the Subject cards and place them face down to form a draw pile.** Leave a space next to this draw pile for the discard pile.
- 3** **Draw 4 cards and place them face down in a row, without looking at them, below the Victory Points track.** This is the Reserve.
- 4** **Draw 4 additional cards and place them face up below the Reserve.** These cards must all be of different colors (if you draw a card of a color already present, discard it and draw another instead). All the cards placed this way make up **the Market**.

## The Market



5



- 5** Set up the Market half-sized cards at the beginning of each Market's line.



- 6** Each Noble chooses a color and take :

**6a** 1 Noble token (that you place on "0" space on the Victory Points track) and 1 Market token .

**6b** 3 Cities boards that you set in front of you (in the following order: purple-yellow > pink-red > blue-green).

**6c** 1 Help card that you place face up "Before purchase" visible).

**6d** 1 People's Hero/ Heroine that you place face down (monochrome) in front of you.



- 7** Each Noble then draws 3 cards and looks at them without showing them. Simultaneously give 1 card of your choice face down to your left opponent and 1 other to your right opponent. Keep the 3rd card and add the cards you received this way to your hand. In a game with 2 nobles, give 2 cards to your opponent.

- 8** Then choose 1 card from your hand to build. The nobles reveal their cards simultaneously and place them in their City with the corresponding color (without triggering the effect). This card must not be white.

The Noble who builds the card **with the lowest Influence (value)** starts the game.

In case of a tie, priority goes to the card tied that is built furthest to the left. If the tie persists, the youngest noble starts.

# 3 Nobles Setup



Discard pile

1<sup>st</sup> row

2<sup>nd</sup> row

3<sup>rd</sup> row

4<sup>th</sup> row

5<sup>th</sup> row

5

1<sup>st</sup> player



6a



Noble's  
play area



5



8



5

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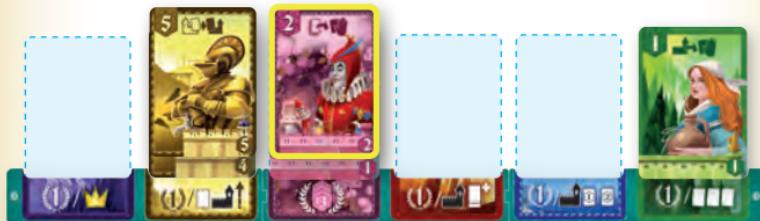


## PHASE 1 : CITIES' FOUNDATION

Play these steps in order, then it's the turn of the person to your left.

### A PLAY A CARD (optional)

Discard a card **from your hand** or the **highest card from one of your Cities** to trigger its effect (see "Card Effects", p. 8)



**Example :** Eloise discards a 2 from her pink City in order to draw 1 card and add it to her hand.



### Card anatomy

**Effect:** *It activates when the card is discarded. All cards with the same Influence have the same effect.*

**Influence:** *It is the purchase cost of the card, but also its value for calculating majorities.*



**Color:** *The City to which it belongs.*

Subject cards range from 0 to 6. Cards with a value of 0 are unique, while cards from 1 to 6 are available in two copies of each color.



*White cards are all unique and can be built in any City (see "Construction Rules", p. 13).*

# Card effects



**0 - Emptiness:** Discard 1 face up card from the Market. There is only one 0 card per color. The 0 cards do not allow control over a majority.

*Remove cards that might interest your opponents!*



**1 - The Villager:** Take the highest card from 1 of your Cities into your hand. You cannot retrieve a covered card.

*Protect your cards by putting them back in your hand!*



**2 - The Jester:** Draw 1 card and add it to your hand.

*Your opponents will not know what is left in your hand!*



**3 - The Assassin:** Discard the highest card from 1 of your Cities or an opponent's City. You cannot discard a covered card.

*Gain majorities by removing opponent's cards!*



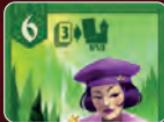
**4 - The Merchant:** Take 1 face up card from the Market without paying its cost and add it to your hand.

*No need to wait to purchase cards to retrieve what you really need!*



**5 - The Knight:** Move the highest card from any City to 1 of yours. You cannot choose a covered card or one that you cannot build. With the Knight, you can move a Wild card (either yours or an opponent's) and build it alone (without needing another card) in 1 of your Cities.

*Gain majorities or prevent your opponents from using card effects... by stealing them!*



**6 - The Astrologer:** Draw 3 cards. Build 0, 1, or 2 of them following the construction rules and discard the others. The effects of these cards are not triggered.

*Speed up the construction of your Cities, at your own risk!*

## B PURCHASE CARDS AT THE MARKET (1×/Season)

You can only buy **once per Season**. You cannot buy cards until the second row is complete (4 cards in the row).

- **Determine your purchasing power.**

Count the number of cards (face down and face up) in the Market. Each card counts as 1, and the total is your purchasing power.



- **The cost of a card is its Influence value.**

A card with an Influence of 6 costs 6. If you do not use all of your purchasing power, the remaining balance is lost.

- **You can buy as many visible cards as you wish** as long as you have enough purchasing power.

- **Retrieve the purchased cards and add them to your hand.**

Rearrange the cards in the Market so there are no gaps in the rows. The order of card placement does not matter.

- **Place your Market token on the current Season's card.** This indicates that you have already purchased during this Season.

Then, flip your Help card to the "After Purchase" side.



Eloise chooses to buy cards, which she can do since the second row of the Market is complete. With a total of 11 cards in the entire Market, her purchasing power is 11. Eloise adds the yellow 4, yellow 5, blue 2, and pink 0 to her hand ( $4 + 5 + 2 + 0 = 11$ ). Finally, she places her Market token on the Season card to indicate that she has already purchased during this Season.



**If you are not the last Noble to buy, your turn ends.**

Do not add a card to the Market; it is the turn of the person to your left.

**If you are the last Noble to buy,** your turn ends and everyone moves to **PHASE 2 : SEASON'S END**.



### ADD ONE CARD TO THE MARKET (mandatory)

Draw 1 card and add it face up to the Market, to the right of the highest row. Each row can only contain 4 cards. When a row is complete, start a new one underneath.

- **As long as you add cards to the 2<sup>nd</sup> row**, nothing happens. Your turn ends, and it is the turn of the person to your left.
- **Starting from the 3<sup>rd</sup> row**, when you add a card, compare the Market's contents with the color of the drawn card.



→ **If there is 0 or 1 card of the same color** as the drawn card, simply **add it** to the Market. Additionally, if you haven't purchased any cards this Season and there is at least 1 set of 2 (or more) cards of the same color in the Market, gain 1 Victory Point (2 VP on the 4th row, 3 VP on the 5th row).



Eloise adds a green 1 to the Market, which only has one green card (6). She earns 1 Victory Point because she added it to the 3rd row and there is a set of 2 yellow cards in the Market.



→ If there are already 2 cards (or more) of the same color as the drawn card, **discard them**, then add the new card. You have just triggered a Revolt!



Eloise adds a yellow 1 to the Market, which already has 2 yellow cards (4 and 5). She discards those 2 cards because she has just triggered a Revolt.

When the draw pile is empty, shuffle the discarded cards and the 4 cards from the Reserve and make a new draw pile and Reserve.

## Revolt

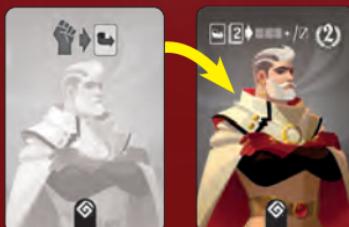
- If you haven't purchased any cards during this Season, each other Noble gains Victory Points based on the row from which you triggered the Revolt. If you added a card to the 3rd row, the other Nobles gain 1 Victory Point (2 VP for the 4th row, 3 VP for the 5th row).

Triggering a Revolt requires you to **PURCHASE CARDS FROM THE MARKET** (see p. 9) if you haven't done so for the current Season. Then, flip your Hero or Heroine card face up. Your turn ends.

- If you had already purchased cards, the other Nobles do not gain any VP.

**Trigger the effect of the lowest card discarded during the Revolt.**

Then it is the turn of the person to your left.



*Note: If you trigger a Revolt and must buy cards, you **must do so** even in the rare cases where discarding would cause the Market to contain fewer than 4 cards.*

## People's Hero or Heroine



Face up  
(colored)



Face down  
(monochrome)

If your People's Hero or Heroine is face up, **when you ADD ONE CARD TO THE MARKET**, you can draw **2 cards** (instead of 1) and choose which one to add to the Market (discard the second card). Then, flip your Hero or Heroine card face down.

If you trigger a Revolt, resolve it. You then put your Hero or Heroine card face up again.

Even if you have already purchased cards from the Market during the current Season, you can still use your People's Hero or Heroine.

*Note: If your Hero or Heroine is still face up at the end of the game, you will earn 2 Victory Points.*

## PHASE 2 : SEASON'S END

This phase occurs simultaneously for the Nobles. It is divided into 2 steps that must be played in order.

### A CITIES CONSTRUCTION (optional)

It's time to build and/or expand your Cities! Remember that **only the Nobles whose Cities are the most influential in each color will earn Victory Points** at the end of the Season.

**Secretly select the cards from your hand** that you wish to build and reveal them simultaneously. Keep your unbuilt cards in hand for the next Season.

### Construction rules

In order to build a card, you must meet the following conditions:

- Each card must be built in your City **of the same color**, except for Wild cards (white), which can be built in any City as long as they are associated with a card of the City's color in which you are building. A Wild card can never be built alone (see "Wild Cards", p. 14);



- Each City can have **only one card of each Influence value** (even if it's a Wild card);






Place it above the column of cards as in the example so that the Influence of the other cards is still visible (at the bottom right);

- You **cannot reorganize the cards** in your Cities, only add them in ascending order.



*Example of construction:*

*Eloise decides to build her yellow 4 and 5, and her red 1 and 6.*

*She cannot build her green 1, as her green City already has a card of higher Influence (2).*

*She chooses not to build her pink*

*6, as she thinks she won't have the majority this round. She prefers to keep her 6 for the next round.*

*She prepares her 4 cards to build face down, reveals them simultaneously with the other Nobles, and builds them in the corresponding Cities.*



## Wild Cards

In Royal Cities, there are 6 colors of Cities, but 7 colors of cards.

White cards are considered Wild cards and can be built in any city. However, they must be built **with another card of the chosen City's color**.

The usual construction rules apply: the colored card can have an Influence value lower or higher than the Wild card. For example, if you want to build a white 4 in your pink City, you must build it with a pink card that is not a 4.



# Scoring Cities



Earn 1 Victory Point for each visible Crown in this City. (Only purple cards have crowns.)



Earn 1 Victory Point for each card in your City that has the most cards.



Divide the total Influence of this City by 3. Earn the resulting amount in Victory Points, rounded down (minimum 1 Victory Point).



Earn 1 Victory Point for each of your Cities that has at least 2 cards, including the red City. If none of your Cities have 2 or more cards, you earn 1 Victory Point.



Earn 1 Victory Point for each of your Cities that has a Villager (1) and/or a Jester (2). A City with both 1 Villager and 1 Jester still only gives you 1 Victory Point. If none of your Cities have a Villager or Jester, you earn 1 Victory Point.



Earn 1 Victory Point for each set of 3 cards across all your Cities (minimum 1 Victory Point).

## B MAJORITIES' CHECK (mandatory)

Compare the total Influence of the Cities of each color to determine who earns the Victory Points.

For each color, **add the Influence of all the cards** in your City to find its **total Influence**.

Compare it to that of the other Nobles. The Noble whose **City has the highest Influence** (minimum 1) **earns the corresponding Victory Points** (see "Scoring Cities", p. 15).

Move your Noble tokens on the Victory Points track by the corresponding number of Victory Points.

**In case of a tie**, all of the tied Nobles earn the Victory Points.

*Scoring example : majorities and Victory Points*



### Purple Cities



Eloise wins the majority with **12** Influence against Will's **3**. She has 4 visible crowns on her cards, so she earns 4 VP.

### Yellow Cities



Eloise has no yellow cards. Will wins the majority with **3** Influence. His largest City is the red one with 3 cards, so he earns 3 VP.

### Pink Cities



Eloise wins the majority with **2** Influence; divided by 3, she earns 1 VP. Will has no pink cards.

### Red Cities



Will wins the majority with **10** Influence. He built his white 3 using his red 5. He has 3 Cities with at least 2 cards, so he earns 3 VP.

### Blue Cities



Eloise and Will are tied with **7** Influence, so they both earn the VP for their blue City. Eloise has 4 Cities with cards valued at 1 and/or 2, so she earns 4 VP. Will has only 1 such City, so he earns 1 Victory Point.

### Green Cities



Eloise and Will are tied again with **6** Influence. There are 10 cards in Eloise's Cities; divided by 3, she earns 3 VP. Will has 9 cards in his Cities, so he also earns 3 VP.

In total, Eloise earns 12 VP for this Season, while Will earns 10 VP.

**The games ends** at the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> Season with 1, 2, or 3 Nobles (or at the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Season with 4 Nobles).

**At the end of a Season**, discard the current Season card to reveal the new one. The Noble to the left of the last person who purchased cards starts the new Season.

Leave the remaining cards in the Market and, if necessary, add cards until the 2<sup>nd</sup> row is complete. All cards must be of different colors (if you draw a card of a color already present, discard it and draw another instead).

**Retrive your Market token.**



**If it was the last Season**, the game ends.

10

## Catch-up Bonus

At the end of the Season, if there is one or more Bonus spaces (black background) between you and the Noble with the most Victory Points, **draw 1 card for each Bonus space**. The distribution of Bonus spaces differs for 1-3 Nobles and for 4 Nobles.

*Example: At the end of the 1st Season, Eloise has 6 Victory Points, and Will is leading with 12 Victory Points. There is 1 Bonus space (the 10) between Eloise and Will. Therefore, Eloise draws 1 card before the start of the new Season.*



## End of the Game

Face up Hero or Heroine card gives their Noble 2 Victory Points.

The Noble with the most Victory Points is then crowned king or queen and wins the game!

In case of a tie, the tied player with the most cards built in their Cities wins. If the tie persists, the tied Nobles form an alliance and share the victory and the throne.



# Solo Mode

Royal Cities also offers a solo mode where you play against a Regent that you will simulate. The basic rules of the game remain unchanged, but the Regent constructs their Cities differently.

The solo mode is played over **4 Seasons**, without **People's Heroes or Heroines**.

Set up your Cities boards and the Regent's. Place your Noble token on the Victory Points track and well as the Regent's token.

## AT THE BEGINNING OF THE GAME

- **Draw 2 cards** and add them to the Regent's Cities.
- **Then draw 4 cards:**
  - construct 1 card in one of your Cities ;
  - construct 1 card in the Regent's Cities (you must choose a card that they do not already have) ;
  - keep the last 2 cards in your hand.

## REGENT'S CITIES CONSTRUCTION RULES

When constructing, the Regent can place cards **underneath** already placed cards, always following the ascending order.

## PHASE 1 : CITIES FOUNDATION

The game is played normally, except that there is no turn for the Regent. You will play a succession of turns **until you purchase cards**. When you **ADD ONE CARD TO THE MARKET**, draw **2 cards**, select one to add to the Regent's Cities, and add the other to the Market.

*Note: You must always choose 1 card that the Regent can construct when possible. If there isn't one, add the card of your choice to the Market and discard the other.*

*Reminder: You cannot purchase cards if there are not 4 cards on the 2nd row, unless you must buy due to a Revolt.*

## PHASE 2 : SEASON'S END

Build the cards in your hand following the usual rules. **The Regent does not build anything** during this phase.

### ROYAL TAXES

After earning Victory Points and before finishing the Season, **the Regent steals the highest card from your City** of the color that earned you the most Victory Points this Season.

### Clarifications

If you did not earn any Victory Points, the Regent steals the highest card from your most Influential City instead.

If the Regent steals a card they already own, discard it.

The Regent does not steal a card at the end of the 4th Season.

If multiple Cities earned you the same number of Victory Points, the Regent steals the card from the City with the highest Influence (in case of a tie, you can choose which one).

10

### Catch-up Bonus



Just like in a classic game, **if you are behind the Regent, draw 1 card for each Bonus space between you and them**. If the Regent is behind, they will draw and build cards directly in their Cities (discarding them if they already own them).

### AT THE END OF THE SEASON

Before starting a new season, discard the cards from the Market of your choice until only 4 face up cards remain.

## GAME'S END

Compare your Victory Points with those of the Regent and check your score in the Legend Table on the next page.

## LEGEND TABLE

Legend level	Results
The Regent beats you by 10 VP or more.	You could do better; not sure folks will remember your name.
The Regent beats you by less than 10 VP.	You'll have a few lines in a history book, so that's something...
Tie between you and the Regent.	Your Cities are talked about in the taverns of the Market. Keep it up!
You beat the Regent by 10 VP or less.	Neighboring Cities envy you—well done!
You beat the Regent by 11 to 20 VP.	There is no greater prestige than yours across the provinces!
You beat the Regent by 21 to 30 VP.	Cities? More like wonders! People will talk about them in 200 years!
You beat the Regent by 31 VP or more.	Your Cities will shine forever. Congratulations!

## MORE CHALLENGE?

For expert Nobles, we present the following challenge.

### ROYAL TAXES

After earning Victory Points and before finishing the current Season, transfer cards from your Cities to the Regent's Cities.

**At the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> Season**, the Regent steals the highest card from your City that earned you the most Victory Points.

**At the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Season**, they steal the highest card from the 2 Cities that earned you the most Victory Points.

**At the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Season**, they steal the highest card from the 3 Cities that earned you the most Victory Points.

*Will you rise to the challenge and defeat the Regent?*

# Rules summary

## PHASE 1 : CITIES FOUNDATION (turn by turn)

### A PLAY A CARD (optional)

Discard a card from your hand OR discard the highest card from one of your Cities to trigger its effect.

### B PURCHASE CARDS FROM THE MARKET (1×/Season)

You can only buy cards once per Season while following the purchasing rules.

- Purchase Power = number of cards in the Market and the Reserve.
- Card cost = Influence of the cards you purchase in the Market.

Once you have purchased, place your Market token on the current Season card. This ends your turn.

When each Noble has purchased cards, skip next step and proceed to **PHASE 2 : SEASON'S END.**

### C ADD ONE CARD TO THE MARKET (mandatory)

If you have not purchased cards this turn, add a card to the Market to end your turn.

Starting from the 3rd row, check the content of the Market:

- If there is up to 1 card of the same color as the drawn card, add it to the Market.
- If you have not purchased yet and...
  - there is at least 1 set of 2 cards of another color in the Market, gain 1 VP (2 VP on the 4th row, 3 VP on the 5th row).
  - there are already 2 cards of the same color as the drawn card, discard them, then add the new card. You provoke a Revolt.

- If you have already purchased and...
  - there is at least 1 set of 2 cards of another color in the Market, nothing happens.
  - there are already 2 cards of the same color as the drawn card, discard them, then add the new card. Then, execute the effect of the card with the lowest Influence that was discarded.

*Reminder: Don't forget to use your Hero or Heroine if needed.*

As long as all Nobles have not purchased cards, return to the beginning of **PHASE 1 : CITIES' FOUNDATION**.

## PHASE 2 : SEASON'S END (simultaneous)

### A CITIES' CONSTRUCTION (optional)

Build cards from your hand in your respective Cities.

The cards constructed must have a higher Influence than the cards already built.

*Reminder: Wild cards can be built in any City if they are constructed with another card of the appropriate color (excluding Wild cards).*

### B MAJORITY'S CHECK (mandatory)

Check the majorities to assign Victory Points to the Nobles.

**10** CATCH UP BONUS : Draw 1 card for each Bonus space between you and the Noble with the highest Victory Points.

Then, discard the current Season card to reveal the next one and start a new Season.

If all Season cards have been revealed **THE GAME ENDS.**

# Scoring Cities



+1 VP per visible Crown visible in this city.



+1 VP per City with at least 2 cards, including red City, minimum 1 VP.



+1 VP per card in your City with the most cards.



+1 VP per City with a (1) and/or (2) card, minimum 1 VP.



+X VP = Total Influence in this City ÷ 3, rounded down, minimum 1 VP.



+1 VP per set of 3 cards, rounded down, minimum 1 VP.

## Card Effects



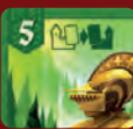
**0 :** Discard 1 face up card from the Market.



**4 :** Take 1 face up card from the Market without paying its cost and add it to your hand.



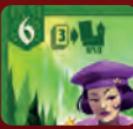
**1 :** Take the highest card from one of your cities into your hand.



**5 :** Move the highest card from any City to one of yours.



**2 :** Draw 1 card and add it to your hand.



**6 :** Draw 3 cards. Build 0, 1 or 2 and discard the rest of them.



**3 :** Discard the highest card from one of your Cities or an opponent's.

## CREDITS

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**ROYAL CITIES** is published by Origames.

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Thank you to all playtesters

that followed Royal Cities

from the beginning and

through all the changes.

Thank you to the CLoBB

to have awarded this

game and to support Game

Creation and authors.

