

# Heir Apparent

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Playtest Rules v2.0

In Heir Apparent, you take on the persona of a Prince in a Fantasy Kingdom where political intrigue rules the scene. The King has a relatively large family and has never chosen an Heir. As he grows older the sense of urgency that the succession be clear and unequivocal becomes greater and greater. He has made it clear that soon he will announce his choice as to who will succeed him.

Naturally, you're going to want that to be you. You need to ensure the loyalty of important persons in the realm, by promising them boons once you become King in exchange for their support in the constant intrigues that surround the Palace.

## Materials

Heir Apparent includes 4 decks totaling 120 cards. There are 5 Prince cards, 30 Character cards, 30 Event cards and 55 Action cards.

Additionally, players will need some kind of counter or token to track Favor and Support during events.

## Card Types

There are four types of cards in Heir Apparent: **Prince**, **Character**, **Event**, and **Action**. **Events** have two subtypes (**Contest** and **Challenge**) and **Actions** have three subtypes (**Effect**, **Spell**, and **Enchantment**).

### The Prince Deck

The first type is the **Prince** card. Each player will have exactly one Prince. Princes are Characters, with the following special rules:

Princes may not be involved in a **Melee**. Princes are not affected by anything that would cause them to be discarded or killed.



All princes may, as an action, provide 2 support or opposition of any type to an event, without turning, whether or not they are already turned. This ability may only be used once per **Event**. This ability is not used during **Melee**. Using this ability does not prevent the Prince from turning to participate in an **Event** or perform some other effect.

### The Character Deck

At the beginning of the game, players will compete in an auction to select from a pool of characters. When the auction is complete, every player will have 5 characters.

Each player can only have up to 5 characters, not including their Prince. If at any time a player controls more than 5 characters, the player must discard characters until there are no more than 5.

If a player loses characters, they can be replaced from the character deck during the draw phase.

Characters have two primary statistics: Politics, represented by  and combat, represented by . These two statistics describe how much influence a character can bring to a given event. Most characters also have keywords associated with them, such as **Noble**, **Palace**, **Wizard**, **Wealthy**, etc. Keywords may or may not have a special effect in and of themselves; some of them exist simply to be affected.

Characters must **turn** to participate in an event, or to perform an action. Cards are ordinarily played such that the title and text are horizontal. When a card is **turned**, it is rotated 90 degrees, to represent that the character's action has been used. **Unturn** means to return a turned card to its horizontal state. Unless a card specifically says otherwise, you may only turn characters you control.

If the Character deck is exhausted, reshuffle the discarded (but not killed) characters into the deck.

### The Event Deck

Each turn during the Event phase, an event card will be turned face up, and players will have a chance to support or oppose the event. There are two kinds of events: **Contests**, where each Prince is supported individually, and **Challenges**, where the event is either supported or opposed. Either way, events will have an outcome that will usually positively affect the winner and may negatively affect the loser.

Each event has an icon in the upper right or upper left corner that dictates which ability may be used to support the event. Some events will have keywords that restrict who may partake in the event or give bonuses to some characters.

If the game has not ended due to victory conditions being met, the game will end on the turn in which the last Event card is drawn.

When the Event deck is exhausted, the game ends during the Victory Phase of that turn. (See the Turn Phases).

Some Events can give a character lasting bonuses; if these bonuses affect just one character, put the card under the character much like equipment; if the event affects more than one character, put the card in the middle of the table.

### The Actions Deck

The actions deck represents the cards that players will have in their hands. Each turn, a player will be able to draw 1 card from the deck and may draw additional cards by turning characters or having empty character slots. In the Actions deck there are **Effects** and **Equipment**.

Each Action card will state which phases the card may be played in: **Action**, **Event**, **Melee**, or **Reaction**. For the first three, they may only be

played on your turn, but **Reaction** actions may be played when the conditions in the card text are met.

When **Effect** cards are played, do what the card says and then discard it.

When **Equipment** cards are played, tuck the card under the character it affects, so that the bottom may still be seen. The character then gains whatever bonus is provided.

No character may be the subject of more than one **Equipment** with the same title; however, Enchantments with different titles may all add their bonuses or penalties.

If the Actions Deck is exhausted, reshuffle the discarded Actions into the deck and continue.

## Setup

The setup consists of placing the decks, choosing a prince, bidding on your characters, and drawing **Action** cards.

### Set up the decks

Shuffle and place the **Actions** deck and **Character** decks face down in the middle of the table. Randomly draw 4 **Events** for each player and place this deck face down in the middle of the table.

### Choose a prince

At the beginning of the game, each player chooses a Prince by whatever method seems most appropriate. Randomization is suggested.

Princes are seated clockwise in order of descending popularity; in other words, Princes with a lower popularity will sit to the left of Princes with a higher popularity, except for the Prince with the highest popularity who will sit to the left of the Prince with the lowest popularity.

Each Prince takes a number of tokens equal to their starting favor. This favor is used to bid on characters; but it is also victory points at the end of the game, so unspent favor may be advantageous. It is usually easiest to keep those tokens on the Prince card itself. A player can never have negative favor.

### Bid on characters

In the final setup phase, there are five auction rounds allowing each Prince to choose a coterie of characters.

To begin, the most popular **Prince** gets the Right of First Bid.

- Turn up six characters (five in a three player game).
- Starting with the player who has the Right of first Bid each player may bid an amount of favor (minimum 0) or pass.
- Proceeding clockwise, each player who has not yet passed this round may then bid a higher amount of favor greater than the current high bid, or pass.

- Once all players have passed, the high bid spends the bid favor tokens and chooses a character.
- Proceeding clockwise from the winner, each player chooses a character. The remaining characters are discarded.
- The last player to choose a character gets Right of First Bid.
- Repeat until all players have five characters.

### Draw cards

Each player draws 3 **Action** cards and places them into their hand.

The game now begins, starting with the Prince with the highest Favor remaining. In the case of a tie, the highest popularity Prince goes first.

## The Turn

A player's turn begins with the Draw Phase, and proceeds through each phase in order. Once all phases are complete, if the game has not ended, play will pass to the left.

### Draw Phase

At the beginning of the turn, each player may draw one card from either the character deck or the action deck. For every character slot that is open, the player may draw an additional card, also from either deck. Players may also choose to turn characters in order to draw additional cards; again, from either deck.

Cards drawn from the action deck go into a player's hand.

Cards drawn from the character deck must be immediately played or discarded. Characters that come into play this way come into play turned. If playing this character causes the player to have more than 5 characters, one must immediately be discarded to make room for the new character; it does not matter if the discarded character was turned or not.

Note that if a player is missing characters, the first card drawn should be an action, as drawing a character and playing it will fill the open slot before a card may be drawn for it.

You may only discard one character per Draw phase; if you then draw another character, you must put it into play.



### Actions Phase

Players may play actions or turn characters for special effects in this phase.



During the **Actions** phase, you may turn a character to draw a card (except for your **Prince**).

### Melee Phase (Optional)

When a player initiates a melee using an **Action** card or by turning a **Fighter** character, the attacking character is always turned. The attacker creates a

stack of tokens, one for each  the attacker has. The defender starts a similar pile, using the defender's .

Starting with the defender, each player may take one of the following actions:

- A character may be turned to assist the attacker, adding the character's  to the attacker's stack.
- A character may be turned to assist the defender, adding the character's  to the defender's stack.
- A player may play an **Effect** that is valid during the **Action** phase.
- A player may pass.

Note that the character being attacked cannot turn to lend assistance to the attack. If somehow the attacker is unturned, it cannot turn to lend assistance a second time. However, a character who is assisting the melee could be turned to assist a second time, if unturned by an effect.

Once a player has acted the player to the left may now act, or pass. Play continues until all players consecutively pass.

Once all players have consecutively passed, the melee is resolved. If the attacker's total is greater than the defender's total, the attacker wins and the defender is **killed**. If the defender's total is greater than or equal to the attacker's total, the defender wins and the attacker is **killed** by the defender.



Note that a Prince's free support from the **Event** Phase is not valid here.

Once the **Melee** phase is completed, the player returns to the Action Phase.

**Event Phase**

Once a player has decided not to play anything else during the action phase, the current player reveals the top card of the Event deck. The text of the Event will be read. Some events will require the current player to make a decision, such as to choose a character who will be the subject of an inquisition.

Starting with the current player, each player will have a chance to act. One of the following actions may be performed:

- A character may be turned to support or oppose the event. In order to do so the character must have a positive rating in the skill the event uses. For example, if the event uses , the character must have a rating of at least one . See **Participating in an Event** below.
- The Prince may, without turning, add 2 support or opposition to the event, once per Event, regardless of event type or restrictions.
- A player may play an **Effect** that is valid during the **Event** phase.
- A player may pass.

Players are allowed to perform only one of these actions. Then the player to the left is allowed to act.

Play continues to the left until all players have consecutively passed for the **Event** Phase to end and resolve. As long as players continue taking actions, the phase will continue.

**Contests**

If the event is a **Contest**, each player is supported individually and there is no single opposition pool. Thus, there will be one support pool for each player in the game.

To participate in a Contest, a player turns a character and chooses a player. The player may be any player at the table, including the player who turned the card. (i.e., a player may support themselves and in fact is likely to, but does not have to). A number of support tokens are then added to that player's support pool. In this scenario, the Princes are struggling against each other in order to achieve dominance. This is where the diplomatic aspect of the game shines. It is rare that a single Prince can outmatch all of the opponents together, because characters are not required to support the player who controls them. Any player can use these resources to support any other player!

Players are not required to participate in a Contest unless it is **Mandatory**. If a player does not feel capable of winning an Event, and the Event has a negative condition for being the loser, not participating can spare a player the risk of that negative consequence.

If a Contest is not **Mandatory**, and another player has not yet participated, only that player's resources may support that player. Which is to say that a player can only participate voluntarily! This only matters if the Event has a negative consequence for losing. Once a player has participated, support can be provided from any player.

A Contest Event is resolved when all players have passed in succession. To resolve a Contest Event, determine which player has the most support. That player wins. If there is a tie, the Prince with the highest Popularity amongst the tied players wins.

To determine the loser of a Contest, the Prince with the fewest support tokens is the loser. Unless the event is Mandatory, Princes with no tokens at all are not considered to be participating and cannot lose. If multiple players have the least tokens, the tying Prince with the least popularity is the loser. If only one Prince is participating in a Contest that is not **Mandatory**, there is no loser.

**Challenges**

If the event is a **Challenge**, there are only two participation pools in the Event: The Support Pool and the Opposition pool. Those who want the Event to succeed use the Support Pool, and those who want the Event to fail use the opposition pool.

Players who do not participate in the Event are neither supporting nor opposing the event.

A challenge succeeds if there are more support tokens than opposition tokens. If the number is equal, or the support is fewer, the challenge fails.

The text on the card will explain the consequences of the challenge succeeding or failing.

**Discard Phase**

All players must now discard down to 5 cards.

**Unturn Phase**

During the final phase, the current player may unturn all controlled characters.

**Victory Phase**

The game ends at this point if the Event deck is exhausted. The winner is the Prince with the highest favor, using popularity to break any ties.

If the game continues, play passes to the left.

**Definitions**

**Fighter**

A Fighter may turn during the Action phase to initiate a melee with another character. See the **Actions Phase** and **Melee Phase** sections for more specifics.

**Consecutively Pass**

Each player must pass in succession until all players have passed. If two players pass, and a third player performs an action, then the players who passed will have an opportunity to act. If a player performs an action, and all other players pass, that player may perform another action. But if a player passes, and then all other players pass without performing an action, that player will not get another chance to act.

**Killed**

A character that is killed is removed from the game, and not shuffled back into the deck when the discard pile is exhausted.

**Mandatory**

An Event with the keyword Mandatory requires that all Princes participate, meaning everyone risks the penalty of losing.

**Participating**

A character is participating in an Event if that character has turned and is lending support to a player (if it's a Contest) or lending support or opposition to the Event (if it's a Challenge). In order to participate in an Event, a character must turn. Unless stated otherwise on a card, a character who is killed or discarded while participating in an Event is no longer participating, and that character's support is removed from the Event.

**Turned**

A character who is turned has been rotated 90 degrees, and may not be turned again until the character is unturned.

**Wealthy**

Characters with Wealthy gain an additional *bb* while participating in **Money** events. There is no benefit from having the Wealthy keyword multiple times (which could be gained from an Event or Enchantment).

**Wizard**

A player must control an unturned Wizard in order to cast a spell. A Wizard may turn to

counter a spell, or to counter a counterspell. See the **Actions Deck** section for more specifics.

***Example of Play***

An example of play needs to go here.

## ***Phase Summary***

### **Draw Phase**

Draw 1 card; turn characters for more cards; discard 2 spells or enchantments for 1 card.

### **Actions Phase**

Play effects or equipment that may be played in the Action Phase. Use a **Fighter** to initiate a Melee.

### **Melee Phase (Optional)**

Starting with defender, each player may do one thing until all players consecutively pass, then resolve melee.

Possible actions:

- Play Action Card (Effect, Spell or Enchantment).
- Turn to Assist Attacker.
- Turn to Assist Defender.
- Pass.

Playing a Spell or Enchantment will create a Spellcasting Phase.

### **Event Phase**

Reveal one event card; starting with current player, each player may do one thing until all players consecutively pass, then resolve event.

Possible actions:

- Play Action Card (Effect, Spell or Enchantment).
- Turn to Participate.
- Apply Prince's 2 free participation (once per Event).
- Pass.

Playing a Spell or Enchantment will create a Spellcasting Phase.

### **Discard Phase**

All players must discard down to 5 Action cards.

### **Unturn Phase**

Current player unturns all Characters.