

LONGTM
LIVE
THE
KING



Credits

Original Design: Stewart Wieck and Mark Rein•Hagen

Game Design: Dale Cook, John Dashler and Stewart Wieck

Game Development: Stewart Wieck

Text: Stewart Wieck and Dale Cook

Editor: Scott Holden

Character Art: Richard Thomas

Cover Art: Richard Thomas

Layout and Visual Design: Aileen E. Miles

Playtesting: Denise Blackwell, Mark Blackwell, Alex Cook, Dale Cook, Rebecca Cook, John Dashler, Sara Hindmarch, Will Hindmarch, Keith Hollen, Sher Hollen, Linda Sue Longfield-Smith, Todd Lusk, Jay McClure, Leslie McClure, Katherine McGehee, Lanie Rieth, Eva Stotz, Richard Thomas, Mike Tinney and Steve Wieck.

Special Thanks: Dale, thanks for carrying the torch for LLK for the past decade. And sorry for choking you in Middle School, but that was *my* box. —Stewart



1554 LITTON DR.
STONE MOUNTAIN, GA
30083
USA

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PRINTED IN CHINA.



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The Five Commandments

Of course you'll need to know the rules for LLK to play, but below are some rules about roleplaying that you ought to know as well.

Listen to the King (or His Advisor)

One player is the organizer of the game (a *game master* in the parlance of traditional roleplaying games), in charge of running the game session. This person is typically the one who assumes the role of the King, but if there are enough players, then the King might have a "court advisor" who actually oversees the game while the King concentrates on events within the game (such as how much Favor exists for and against a certain petition).

In general (within reason, of course), whatever the King says goes. Trust what he says, and be as accommodating to his needs as possible: the King's job is not an easy one. Though the King's player is an impartial judge, he wants to have fun as well, so play along — treat him with respect and play up your courtly grace.

Roleplay

The whole object of this game is to pretend you are someone else — that is, to *roleplay*. This is not as hard as it might sound: just imagine that you are a kid again, playing "let's pretend." Let yourself go a little, and pretend you really are a sly and cunning member of the King's court (you'll find it's a great way to relieve stress).

The more you get into your role, the more Favor you might win from the King.

Only Pretend

When you roleplay, you may interact with the other characters however you see fit, and they with you, except that you cannot fight in any way, shape, manner, or form.

Fighting is not allowed in the palace (or anywhere else in this game): Weapons of any type are prohibited, as is the picking up of any physi-

cal object for use to threaten another character—just don't get physical. Any who disobey this commandment lose Favor with the King and are likely to be thrown in the Dungeon.

Remember, fighting is dangerous. This is a game, after all.

Get Involved

All stories have conflict, and conflict is what makes up the plot in LLK. The conflict is between characters, and is therefore roleplayed between the players. When court is not in session, don't just sit by the dip bowl or watch TV (which shouldn't even be on!); get involved and continue to play your character.

Even if you don't think you're very good at concocting plots or if you feel you don't really know what you're doing, get mixed up in things and have fun anyway. Even though this game has a winner in the end, the whole point is really just to have fun, among friends, playing your character and watching others play theirs. Long after you remember the winner of the game, you may laugh at how your best friend made an elegant speech in Council only to have the hilariously demented King forget the friend's (i.e., the character's) name.

Respect Status

You've got to obey the unspoken rules of Status (see p. 11). You must humble yourself (or at least seem to do so) and be exceedingly polite when dealing with those of higher Status than yourself—and you can be as rude as you want to those of lesser Status, although they might have their own ways of getting back at you.

When you meet someone, simply show him how many Status cards you have, and look at how many he has. Whoever has more cards has the higher Status. Play up your courtly etiquette — because if you don't, and if the King is around (or hears about it), you'll be certain to lose Favor.

Be especially obsequious to the King (a tip: the King generally appreciates it when his flagon is refilled).

Introduction

Long Live the King (LLK) is a strategic roleplaying game. Or maybe it's a live-action strategy game. Call it either one. It's a strategy game with cards, but instead of sitting at a table in the tradition of typical games, you actually walk around and act the role of a character in the court of a dying king. The goal is to have fun in your role, but also to become the new ruler of the kingdom (you don't really want the king to live very long!).

If you're not used to roleplaying games (or murder-mystery parties), then the acting portion of this game might make you feel a little uncomfortable at first. However, getting involved and letting go a bit makes the game unbelievably more entertaining — and besides, all your friends are in costume too!

Of course, you can play without costumes. You can even play without roleplaying and just sit at the table like you would for any other boring old game. You could also survive on bread and water for a while... but in kingly tradition, why not eat cake?! (And anyway, you might *have to* subsist on bread and water if the king throws you in the dungeon...)

Setting

LLK is set during medieval times in the palace of an old, dying king. He is surrounded by members of his court who are all vying for control of the kingdom upon his death.

The Story

The king is dying!

Historically, in less civilized kingdoms, the reigning monarch had to worry about surviving first, and naming an heir second. However, in larger and more civilized kingdoms, power was often distributed among court nobles and the monarchy was fairly stable. Deciding who would succeed the current monarch was still a matter of great importance, though. Often members of the court would scheme and plan for years in anticipation of the king's demise, mainly for the purpose of attaining as much power as possible, but often aiming to rule the kingdom themselves!



The major players in LLK are doing just that. Through the use of your assumed role's existing abilities and resources, you plot and scheme to ensure that when the king dies, you will be in control of the kingdom!

Players

The players in LLK take on the roles of the dying king and his court. The King is also the “game master”; he runs the game and is responsible for making sure both that everyone follows the rules (yes, there are a few) and that the game progresses smoothly.

Besides the King, there are seven major players: the *Queen*, the *Royal Bastard*, the *Archbishop*, the *Baron*, the *Ambassador*, the *Steward*, and the *Treasurer*. Finally, and optionally, other players may take on one or more minor court characters, such as the Jailkeeper, the Royal Doctor, or the Captain of the Guard. In all, there are over thirty characters available to be played.

Here's a brief summary of the major characters:

- **Ambassador:** The representative of a neighboring king, this character seeks to incite a peasant rebellion and provoke even more trouble at court.
- **Archbishop:** A proud man, the Archbishop seeks to manipulate the other characters from behind the scenes. He will control the kingdom if the one who gains power is under his thumb!
- **Baron:** This brutish lord seeks the throne but has no rightful claim to it. His only chance is to take it by force. Can he trick the King into allowing him to raise the army he needs?

- **Queen:** The unscrupulous young bride of the King, the Queen seeks to put her own son upon the throne.
- **Royal Bastard:** The current heir to the kingdom, the cunning Bastard has many enemies. If he is still heir at the end of the game, he wins — but keeping his place won't be easy.
- **Steward:** In charge of the day-to-day affairs of the palace, this character has high standing in the eyes of the King. If no one else assumes the throne, she wins by being appointed regent.
- **Treasurer:** If he can bribe enough allies away from the other players, he will have enough power to rule the court, and hence the kingdom!

All of these roles are gender-reversible. Even the Queen might become Royal Consort in a game of “Long Live the *Queen*.” On the other hand, as in Shakespeare's day when men filled all the roles on stage, there's nothing wrong with a woman playing the part of the King or a man playing the part of the Queen. It's quite simple enough, though, simply to change the name so the Baron becomes the Baroness, the Royal Bastard is the Bastard Princess, and so on.

Note also that each of the major characters will have the loyalty of one or more minor characters. For example, the Captain of the Guard may be loyal to the Baron, which gives the Baron an advantage in certain situations within the game. (For more information, see the sections on Status and Status cards.)

Rating the Characters

All of the major characters begin the game with ratings in four categories: *Starting Money*, *Allowance*, *Favor*, and *Status*. The latter three values can change regularly during play, although Allowance will usually do so only rarely.



Money and Allowance

Money is an important resource for players. Each player has different uses for his or her money, although generally it's used for bribery, persuasion, and manipulation. The single monetary unit is the gold ducat, as represented by the gold coins included with the game. The platinum (silver) coins are worth 5 gold ducats each. (Of course, you can always substitute poker chips, Mardi Gras doubloons, or chocolate coins for that matter!)

Each player starts with a set amount of money (Starting Money), and thereafter receives an Allowance from the King at the beginning of each turn after the first. There are many ways to gain and spend money in the game, and money may be traded freely among players, usually as part of an arrangement (e.g., "You vote for my petition, and I'll pay you 3 gold").

Note: Money left lying around is fair game for whoever picks it up. Finders, keepers!

While one of the players is called the "Treasurer", don't think that he gets to keep all the money in the game. In the world the game is about, the Treasurer controls the money, but in the world where the game is played, the King (or his assistant) is in charge of the gold ducats. It's from the King's stash that Allowances are paid, and it's to this stash gold ducats go when the Baron buys a Mobilization card, or when a thief keeps ducat "for himself", etc.



Favor

All major players have Favor points. These are a measure of the King's opinion of a player. The most important use of Favor is during the Council phase (see p. 20). In Council,

your vote is weighted based on your Favor — the more the King likes you, the more he cares about your opinion regarding the various petitions presented to him in Council.

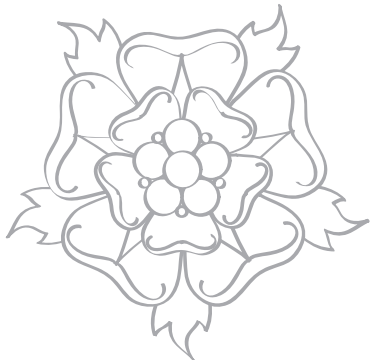
All players begin with a certain amount of Favor. During the game, a player may gain or lose Favor for a variety of reasons, most often because of Intrigue or Status card effects. Also, the King may reward you with Favor during the game for a superlative roleplaying display, or for doing something in the game that was particularly dramatic or cunning or that otherwise added to the story. The King will generally not penalize you for lackluster roleplaying; however, you may lose Favor if he catches you behaving inappropriately to someone with a higher Status than you!

All players begin with Favor of 2 or higher, but you can lose enough Favor to fall below 2, which means the King dislikes you! If your Favor drops to 1 or 2, you cannot meet with the King during the Council phase each turn (see p. 20).

If your Favor drops to 0, the King has you thrown into the Dungeon!

Note: Favor cannot drop below 0, so if a player with 0 Favor is already in the Dungeon and then stands to lose more Favor, she simply remains at 0. (That player's enemies are advised to save more ploys for her eventual release, to prevent a possible return to good graces with the King.)

Your current Favor is nobody's business but yours and the King's (even though the other players would certainly like to know). During each Audience phase, you may inquire as to your current Favor.





Status

All major players also have Status points. Status is a measure of the respect a player wields in the court and the kingdom, and also represents a player's power to affect the game in certain respects.

Specifically, each Status point represents a minor court character that is loyal to that player. These followers are represented as Status cards. Each Status card has a description of a minor character, along with certain abilities or effects that a major player can access using that character.

For example, the Jailkeeper is a Status card character: He has the ability to grant access to players in the Dungeon, and even to let players out of the Dungeon! Therefore, a player controlling that Status character has the same power.

If there are enough people playing the game, the Status characters might actually be played by someone. It is important to note that such

minor players are not completely independent: they continue to take their directions from the major player to whom they are loyal. Otherwise, a player has to do the job of his Status characters for himself. Even a single additional player can have a great time participating in the game by donning the roles of many different minor characters, being effectively “on call” to act out the various minor roles for the game master. This player cannot win (or lose!) the game, but she is likely to have the most fun of anyone.

Status cards cannot normally be traded, bought, sold, or granted among players unless some card or effect allows it. The loyalty of minor members of the court cannot be manipulated so freely (except by the Treasurer). However, there are ways that players’ Status may go up or down during the game.

At the beginning of the game, Status cards are dealt randomly; all players start with a set amount of Status. *At any time during the game, each player controls one Status card for each point of Status he or she possesses. To use a Status card’s ability, a player must reveal that card.*

Status must be respected during the game. Those of low Status must be very respectful to those with higher Status, such as not concluding a conversation until “dismissed” by the higher-Status player. Those of equal Status must be respectful to one another, but need not stand so much on ceremony. A player is not required to divulge the nature of her Status cards (unless she wishes to use a card’s ability), but she must show how many she has if asked; players of high Status may treat those with less



than them with as much contempt as they desire, although caution is warranted: a player with low Status may still have much Favor in the game!

Status also determines the order in which petitions are made during Council: Those with lower Status must petition first because “important matters are left to the end.” Players with a higher Status are always free to interrupt and petition before less respected players, but such an interruption must be made before the King calls for petitions or else the higher Status player must wait until the current petition is resolved.

Similarly, Status determines the order in which the players vote during each petition: Voting occurs in ascending order of Status, so the player with the lowest Status votes first. As with the order of petitions, players with a higher Status can interrupt and vote before less respected players, but such an interruption must be made before the King calls for votes.





Intrigue

Along with Status cards, LLK also includes Intrigue cards. These cards represent a wide variety of things in the game, but they generally stand for events, people, actions, or documents that have some effect during game play. Some are restricted in terms of who can play them, whom they can affect, or when they can be played. Playing a card may result in players gaining or losing gold, Favor, or Status, or it may have some other effect on gameplay.

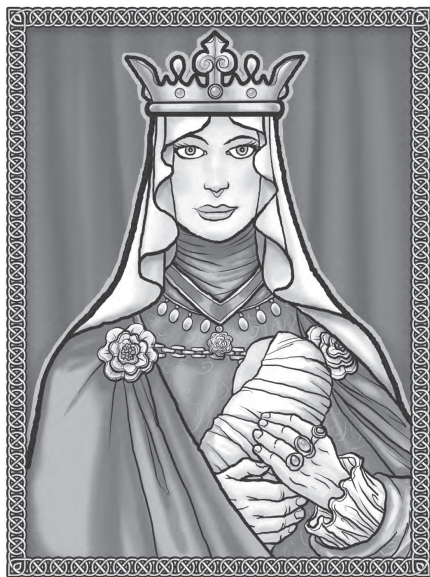
Each player begins the game with 2 Intrigue cards. During Audience with the King, most players gain 1 new Intrigue card on odd-numbered turns (i.e., turns 1, 3, 5, and 7) and 2 cards on even-numbered turns (2, 4, and 6). However, the Queen, who has the King's ear and is well-acquainted with court gossip, gains 2 Intrigue cards per turn. The Archbishop gains one extra card per turn: that is, 2 Intrigue cards on odd-numbered turns and 3 cards on even-numbered turns (so much is learned in confession!).

Intrigue cards may be traded, bought, sold, or simply given away among the players as desired. To use one, simply follow the directions on the card. Some Intrigue cards can be played only during a specific phase, as noted on the card; others can be played at any time. The King does not have to be involved unless a card says so or there's a dispute about how the card is to be interpreted.

As they are used, Intrigue cards are returned to the King. At the King's discretion, some may be re-circulated into the game, though enough cards are included so that this is not necessary.

One word of advice on playing Intrigue cards: *roleplay!* For example, suppose you draw Rumors of Misconduct, which suggests you know something embarrassing about another player's past (resulting in a loss of 1 point of Favor for that player when you play this card). You decide you'd like to play the card on the Steward because she was a real pest to you last turn. While there's nothing wrong with going to the King, handing him the card, and saying, "I know something nasty about the Steward," wouldn't it be more fun to play out the card? Wait until Council is held (see page p. 20), request the King's attention, come forward and hand him the card (so he knows what you're doing), and then, in a suitably shocked tone, address him and the other gathered players:

"Your Majesty, it has come to my attention that the Steward's friends sought to conceal a recent incident from you that, had you known of it, would surely have caused you to reconsider her appointment! She was found in the spring of last year by members of the palace staff... dancing naked on the catwalks, covered in honey, and howling at the moon!"



Now the King can lower the Steward's Favor, the other players can admire your display of wit, and the Steward might think twice before annoying you again unnecessarily. (Or she might fight back with renewed fervor! That's part of the fun of the game, after all....) Also, you might impress the King so much with your roleplaying that he rewards you with a bonus Favor point of your own.

The Dungeon

Some room or area of the playing location — probably the basement! — must be designated as the Dungeon. This space should be clearly defined so that there's no question as to whether a player is in or out, and it should have only one official entrance (even if the room actually has two doors) for the Jailkeeper to guard. The Jailkeeper is responsible for controlling access to the Dungeon, and, hence, those in the Dungeon. The player who holds the Jailkeeper Status card may give him instructions at any time for him to follow.

So how does one end up in the Dungeon? Well, if your Favor falls to 0, the King will have you thrown in immediately! But the most likely reason to be jailed is that someone plays an Intrigue card or uses a Status card in a way that results in your being thrown in.

While in the Dungeon, you do not receive an Allowance, but you still receive Intrigue cards as usual at the beginning of each turn (your fellow prisoners have loose tongues). You may not play any Intrigue cards that require a personal appearance before the King, for he doesn't officially visit those in the Dungeon (he



put you there so he wouldn't have to deal with you, after all...), although you still retain the use of your Status card characters. If the Jailkeeper is willing, he may let you have visitors so you can converse in private, or he may even let you out briefly — although the King should be avoided at all costs in such a case.

If a visitor is not granted admittance, then you may still communicate with him or her, but your conversations with visitors will be rather public since it is required that you practically yell at each other. (Imagine: You are locked in a cell deep inside the Dungeon, and your visitor is standing outside the entrance gate. It's impossible to hear each other without a good, strong voice.)

How does one get out? Really, it's usually easier to get out of the Dungeon than to be put in. If all other efforts fail, every player in the Dungeon is given the chance to be released at the beginning of every Council phase (see p. 20).



Preparing to Play

Ideally, a game of LLK involves the King and seven other players. Roles should be assigned in advance so that players can dress for their parts. One thing to encourage is that everyone bring a coin pouch or purse. Otherwise, players should simply dress up to suit their comfort level. Halloween costumes are now available year-round, so it's easy enough to get a simple wig, crown, robe, plastic sword, or the like to fashion a basic costume. The game is transformed into something else entirely, though, if everyone puts some time and effort into the costumes.

If you are short a player, the Steward may be left out without profoundly unbalancing the game. If you are missing two players, the Treasurer may also be left out, although this does tend to make matters easier on the Archbishop, and it generally removes some of the challenge, not to mention the fun, for the rest of the players.

It is strongly recommended you have at least six players (including the King).



It is also recommended that all players be assigned “quarters” — a room or area of their own for use during the game — especially if you are playing in someone’s house. This makes it possible for players to have a designated place for secret conversations and other dealings. Try to assign rooms that make some sense within the context of the game; for example, give the master bedroom to the Queen, the pantry to the Steward, the deck or porch to the Baron (so he can “walk the battlements”), and so on.

Order of Play

There are 7 turns in a game of LLK. Each turn consists of three separate phases — *Audience*, *Intrigue*, and *Council*.

Audience Phase

During this phase, all the players get together and the King holds Audience. This is really just a record-keeping phase in which the following things occur:

1. Allowance is given out to the players.
2. Intrigue cards for the turn are dealt.
3. Each player may learn how much Favor he or she has currently.

While the King takes care of these onerous housekeeping chores, other aspects of the game should be briefly “suspended”: Those players not currently in Audience with the King can refill their drinks, gossip out of character, etc. The point is that no actual game actions take place during this time, so no Intrigue cards are played, no minor characters use their abilities, and so on.

A player with Status of 2 or less may not have an Audience with the King. She still receives her Intrigue cards (sometimes those not in favor with the king are the ones best able to get the dirt on others who are), but her Allowance is reduced by half.

If the King is ill (see p. 25), then he usually can't hold Audience, so this phase is skipped for that turn. No new Intrigue cards or Allowance is distributed this turn!

Diplomacy Phase

Next comes the Diplomacy phase, which should last for roughly 15 minutes. It is up to the King to decide exactly how long it lasts each time, based upon how much roleplaying is going on. If it's been only 10 minutes and things are already winding down, then end the phase; if at the end of 15 minutes there's still a lot going on, the players should be given another few minutes to play. However, the phase should last no longer than 20 minutes or the game will stretch on for too long. Regardless, the King should make sure everyone is given a 2-minute warning before Diplomacy ends.

During this phase, players may do whatever they wish, but the bulk of their time is likely to be spent making deals and alliances with other players and maneuvering to stymie those who stand in the path of their ascension to the throne. Each player can meet with other players, play Intrigue cards, use Status cards, or anything else within the bounds of the game.

If you find that you've accomplished all of your present business within the first few minutes of Diplomacy, don't just stop playing until the Council phase starts. Instead, wander around, engage others in conversation, or have your Status card characters do something interesting (or do something noteworthy or comical yourself!).

Council Phase

The last phase, Council, is a formal meeting of the major players and the King regarding matters concerning the running of the kingdom. The Queen seats herself to the right of the King, the Royal Bastard sits on the King's left, and everyone else finds a seat on his own (of course, those with high Status generally sit closer to the King, though it's easiest if everyone is assigned a seat for the first Council meeting).

Next, the King calls the Council to order and the petitions begin. Each player may make one petition per Council. The petitions open to a player are determined by that player's abilities (see XX) and by the cards he holds. A player may not make up his own petitions (e.g., "I petition that the King abdicate and crown me now!" or "I propose that the Baron be thrown into the Dungeon").

All players must attend Council unless they are in the Dungeon. At the beginning of every Council, the King (or the Captain of the Guard, if he is in play) reads a list of players in the Dungeon. For each such player, an "automatic" petition is considered to release the player. If the petition is successful, the pardoned player is immediately released; if her Favor is 0, it is automatically raised to 1 (so the King won't just throw her back in on sight!); unless she can somehow increase her Favor to 2 or higher, however, she still can't join the Council this turn.

After the automatic petitions, the player with the lowest Status gets to petition next. It's generally considered an advantage to petition later in the Council, although a player with higher Status may choose to go first, or

may interrupt another player to make a petition. When a petition is made, there is a brief period of general discussion and debate, and then votes are cast, again in reverse order of Status.

Finally, the King tallies the votes *for* and *against* the current petition, recording the Favor of each player (opinions of players with higher Influence have more weight than others) and calculating the net Favor for the petition. Then he shuffles the Decision cards and draws one. These cards instruct him regarding how to decide the matter; most Decision cards make him decide based on the net Favor *for* the petition, but some are more unpredictable, demonstrating the King's continued decline into ill health and madness. The Decision card the King draws is returned to the stack to be shuffled with the others to resolve the next petition.

As long as he is well enough, the King is the ruler of the Council, but he may fall ill for one or more turns during the game. If the King is currently ill, then the current heir to the throne rules the Council. This is often the Royal Bastard, though it might be the Queen (because she may act as regent while her infant son is heir). The heir or regent does not have to tally votes to rule on a petition, but can simply decide based on what he or she prefers. The heir and regent can still make petitions, if they desire, although they don't have to make any pretense of having a discussion—they can just issue the result as a royal proclamation.

If the King is ill and there is currently no heir, then the Council is run democratically, with all votes carrying the same weight (Favor is not a factor), with a simple majority being required for a petition to pass.

At the end of the Council, if the Baron successfully petitioned to Mobilize troops, the Rebellion, if any, must be quelled (see p. 26).

When the Council phase is finished, the turn ends and play proceeds to the next Audience phase.

Sample Petition

During the very first Council of the game, the Treasurer decides there's no harm in trying to get his Allowance increased. As the lowest-Status player (assuming no modifications to Status were made earlier in the first turn), the Treasurer is also the first to petition the King, although a player of higher Status may interrupt. None do, though; everyone decides simply to see which way the winds blow as everyone votes on the Treasurer's petition.

King: My royal subjects, let this Council begin. My bones ache and I would rather walk about the castle or lie in my bed than sit on this most uncomfortable of thrones. Let us begin immediately. Treasurer, what matter do you bring before this Worthy Council?

Treasurer: Your Majesty, I, your humble servant, ever dutiful in fulfilling the honor of service you have bestowed upon me, most regretfully admit that your kingdom is so wealthy that I and my extremely efficient underlings simply cannot count your money fast enough. Therefore, my lord, I beseech you to accept my petition for two additional gold ducats per turn so that I might employ the staff required of this noble office.

Steward: My lord, this is preposterous. The Treas—

Queen: Lord Steward, I was speaking next.

Steward: Uh... of course, Your Majesty. I was simply so incensed that I could not hold my tongue. Please, continue.

Queen: Save your outrage for matters that warrant it, Steward. This is a trifling matter. Our treasury is bursting at the seams, and the Treasurer's plight is a sad one. I am certain my enterprising and brilliant Lord Husband will plainly see it as such.

Steward: I beg to differ with Her Majesty.

Archbishop: As do I, Your Majesty. If the kingdom is so wealthy, then why is the support for the faith of the people so far down the list of entitlements? Nay, I say rather than more accountants, we need to lead more to the glory of our faith. Distribute these excess funds to the

church and there will be less to count, so fewer accountants required, and this absurd increase of Allowance may be wisely ignored.

King: Enough chitchat. I would hear from each of you in turn. Hmmm... who stands smallest in this court? Ah, Treasurer, that would be you. I assume you vote for your petition to pass?

Treasurer: As you say, Your Majesty.

King: Steward, your opinion seems plain as well.

Steward: Correct as always, Your Majesty. I advise against this petition.

King: Ambassador, we have given you standing at this table in honor of our relationship with your homeland. How do you see this matter?

Ambassador: Your Majesty, it is so good to hear that our neighbor is so wealthy! Then our kingdoms may stand as equals in this regard. But what good is money sitting in the treasury? You should spend it! And not on Allowances for toadies. In my country, this kind of petition would never pass.

King: Oh, it would not, eh? So you are *against* this. Hmm. Duly noted. What about you, my son?

Royal Bastard: Oh, Royal Father, would that you decide this in the manner that pleases you most, but if you'd like the opinion of one so naïve in the ways of court as I, then I must agree with the Steward. An additional Allowance seems most worthy.

King: Good boy! Saving for the future! Baron, how do you feel on this matter?

Baron: Dismayed, Your Majesty. Shocked. I seek only to outfit an army befitting of this great nation, and I know this Council will decry my attempts for the costs involved, yet I sit and hear of a boundless treasury that can afford civil servants — yet not martial ones?

Steward: (*coughing*) Your Illustrious Highness, do you forget so soon our conversation about His Majesty's army?

Baron: Uh... why, no, of course not, fool. I was, ah... just saying that it is grand indeed that there is money... for more civilians (*clearing his throat*)... for the backbone of a nation are those who work diligently in the castle. I applaud the Treasurer's petition.

King: I am very confused, but I understand you to support this matter. My dear?

Queen: The Treasurer's heart is a good one, My Lord. If he says he needs more staff, then we should not deny him.

King: And Most Reverend Archbishop? Do you remain opposed?

Archbishop: I do, Your Majesty.

The Tally

While everyone votes, the King makes the following notes regarding the petition:

<i>for</i>	<i>against</i>
Treasurer 1	Steward 5
Ambassador 3*	Archbishop 2
Bastard 5	
Queen 5	
Baron 4	
18	7
Total = 11 <i>for</i>	

* The Ambassador's vote always counts as the opposite of what he actually votes (see XX).

The King comes to the result of 11 votes *for* by using his notes on players' votes to tally the total of votes *for* (in the example, 18) and those *against* (7) and subtracting those *against* from those *for*. If the total of votes *against* exceeds those *for*, then the petition has a very small chance of passing, but sometimes the King will pass a petition no matter the total.

Chances look good for the Treasurer, although it sounds like he owes at least the Baron a favor and probably the Ambassador as well. The King now draws a Decision card and announces the verdict....



Health Cards

LLK includes 10 Health cards. At the beginning of the game, these cards are shuffled, and then six of them are lined up in a central location along with the Mobilization and Peasant cards (see below). Beginning on the second turn of the game, at the start of the Audience phase, a Health card is revealed. This card indicates the King's current health (and mood!) for the coming turn. On the next turn, another Health card is revealed, and so on each subsequent turn.

No Health card is used on the first turn of the game. The King begins the game healthy, and no game effect (the Royal Doctor, etc.) may send

the King to bed on the first turn. This is largely for the benefit of new players who need at least one “normal” turn to grasp how LLK is played. A game featuring entirely experienced players may overlook this rule and use a Health card on the first turn in order to get things wrong-footed from the very start.

In addition, the King cannot be ill for the final Council meeting of the game. If the Health card or some other game effect would make the King ill on turn #7, then he misses the Audience and Diplomacy phases that turn, but makes a miraculous recovery and returns to Council for the final turn.



Troop Mobilization and Peasant Rebellion

During the game, there are two simultaneous situations developing that affect the game for everyone. The peasants are growing rebellious, and the Baron is raising an army (the King's, supposedly) to oppose them. There are Rebellion cards and Mobilization cards that should be displayed prominently for all the players to monitor during the game. They are best placed near the Health cards.

On one hand, the peasants, resentful of their lot in life and of those who rule over them, are being stirred into rebellion. There are 5 Rebellion cards representing the various stages of the rebellion and the effects it has on the game. At the beginning of the game, there is no rebellion, or at least not yet enough of one to affect game play.

Out-of-character, everyone knows that the Ambassador foments the rebellion, but within the game this should not be obvious (at least not in the beginning). Even when her role in the rebellion becomes



common knowledge, it won't matter, because the Ambassador should deny everything, and she has diplomatic immunity anyway. Every time the Ambassador manages to activate a Rebellion card, it is turned face up and its effects take place immediately.

To combat this, and for his own ends as well, the Baron is busy mobilizing troops for the King's army. There are 5 Mobilization cards representing the various stages of this mustering of troops, and these cards detail the effects mobilization has on the game. There are no troops mobilized at the beginning of the game, but as the Baron manages to activate each Mobilization card, one is turned face up and its effects takes place immediately.

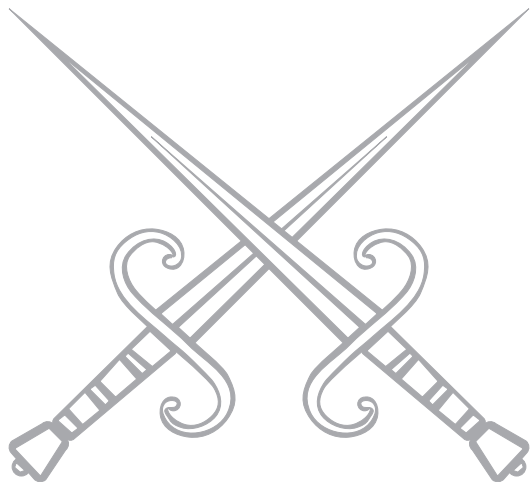
If the Baron has successfully petitioned for Mobilization during a Council meeting (as opposed to purchasing a Mobilization card), then at the end of that Council he must quell the rebellion, if there is one: If there are more active Mobilization cards than Rebellion cards, *deactivate* the highest Rebellion card face (turn it face-down and remove its effects from play). However, if the number of active Mobilization cards is the same as

or fewer than the number of active Rebellion cards, deactivate 1 Mobilization card *and* 1 Rebellion card.

If the Baron manages to get a mobilization petition passed without any Rebellion cards in place (a difficult feat, but not impossible), then his mobilized troops stay active. If his Mobilization petition is unsuccessful, he may not quell the rebellion that turn.

Winning the Game

At the end of the game (i.e., after the 7th turn has ended), everyone compares their game goals and, together, they determine the winner. No matter your role, victory may seem impossible with everyone else striving against you, but *someone* is going to win each game. The winner might as well be you!



Frequently Asked Questions

Q. I want to play the King, but there seems to be so much to do — how will I ever keep everything running?

A. There certainly is a lot to do, so get some help. Get someone to be the “King’s Attendant” or something; have that person help you however you wish. The Attendant can make game rulings when you’re otherwise occupied (or on your deathbed), manage Intrigue cards and the Treasury, or just be at your side to offer advice and remind you of what to do next.

Q. How long does this game last?

A. Allowing seven turns, each with 3 minutes for Audience, 15 for Intrigue, and 7 for Council, in theory you could play a game in just under 3 hours. But don’t bet on it. You’ll be doing well to keep the game under 4 hours, especially if the players really get into it and start making (and breaking) lots of deals. The game may last longer, but the King is responsible for keeping things moving along.

Q. Four hours seems like an awfully long time....

A. It sure does if you’re not having fun!

If 6 or 4 or even just 3 hours seems too long, then play faster. Shorten the Diplomacy phase whenever possible, or allow each player to speak with only one other player on a given turn. Or you could take a 15-minute break in between the fourth and fifth turns for refreshments and out-of-game conversation. Just make sure to suspend the game during such a break—no in-game plotting in secret and such.

Q. Isn’t it easy to cheat?

A. Yes. If you have a propensity to cheat, you shouldn’t play this game (or most others, frankly...). To a large degree, this game works on the honor system: You are expected to play by the rules. If you find yourself in a situation where the rules are unclear, ask the King (or his Attendant) for help. Your fictional self may be breaking all the rules, but don’t taint your inevitable victory by acting that part as well.

Q. I want my Assassin to do a job for me, but I don't want anyone to know I was behind it. How do I do it?

A. If someone is actually playing the Assassin, it might be difficult. Have the King relay your instructions for you, perhaps. If nobody is playing the Assassin, just tell the King what you want to do.

Q. Can I have my Royal Chef poison himself? Can my Assassin kill himself?

A. No and no.

Q. I'm playing a Status card character, and I just got bribed away from the Archbishop by the Treasurer. What if I still want to help the Archbishop in little ways? Or what if I just don't like who I get stuck with—can I help another player when I can? Can I lie to my player?

A. No. You are loyal to your controlling player alone and can't do anything that would help another player (unless your controller has approved such behavior). This should still leave you with lots of room to play your part.

Q. Can I make the player of my Status card character act like a chicken on command? Or make embarrassing gestures? Or fetch me food and drink?

A. You can ask, but you can't really force the issue. You don't *completely* control Status characters. They just have to be "loyal" and perform their special abilities per your instructions.

Q. Two-parter: (1) We have so many people playing Status card characters that we don't know who's who. Help! (2) We have some people who play all the Status card characters for their player. How do we know who they are at any given time?

A. Try having everyone but the major players and the King wear name badges indicating what character they are playing *at that moment*.

Q. I tried to meet with the Archbishop (or someone else) during the Diplomacy phase but he wouldn't talk to me. Is that fair?

A. It may not be fair, but it isn't technically against the rules. The exception is when you are trying to play an Intrigue card on someone. A player has to let you have access to him to do that, although it certainly wouldn't be unreasonable for him to ask you to wait a moment in order to finish another conversation.

Q. I have 0 Favor, 0 Status, no money, no Intrigue cards, and I'm in the Dungeon. What do I do?

A. Wail and moan. If it's only the second turn, keep your chin up. It's possible to make a stunning comeback due to luck and the misfortunes of others.

If it's the last turn, start planning your revenge for next game — because someone has most likely racked up some serious karmic debt.

