

Royal Secrets

Conspiracy and betrayal are widespread in the royal court and spies from all over the world fight in the shadows to sway the decisions of the realm.

In *Royal Secrets*, you play as a spy of a foreign power in the French court. Your goal is to cunningly influence the decisions of the realm in favor of your country. For that purpose, you will have to send your team of allied courtiers to audiences with the king and queen where only the most influential will be heard. You will be forced to bluff but also to pool resources with your opponents. But only the most cunning will win.

COMPONENTS



1 game board in two parts
a King area and a Queen area



5 player markers



5 writing cases



1 Parley tile



70 Fleur-de-lys tokens
50 of value 1 and 20 of value 5



55 Courtier cards
11 of 5 different colors



18 Audience cards



10 Valet cards



14 Cardinal cards



5 Reference cards

BEFORE THE FIRST GAME

Assemble the writing cases as shown below:



7 Player Courtier cards

The Courtier cards represent your team of allied courtiers. You must use them sparingly over the course of the game during audiences.

Each Courtier card has an influence value. 

Each player takes the Courtier cards of their color:

- 2 × 0-value cards (*These cards are the only ones that can be used multiple times*) 
- 3 × 10-value cards
- 3 × 20-value cards
- 1 × 30-value card
- 1 × 40-value card
- 1 × Excuse card (*See "The Excuse card" on p. 8*)

 In a 4-player game, each player must remove one 20-value Courtier card from their hand.

  In a 5-player game, each player must remove two 20-value Courtier cards from their hand.

These cards won't be used during the game.

1



8 The Valet cards

The Valet cards also have an influence value and can be played during audiences. However, they have a special effect compared to Courtier cards (*see "Valet cards" on p. 8*).

Shuffle the Valet cards and deal one face down, at random, to each player. Create a pile with the remaining cards and place it face down near the game board.

Distribution of Valet cards:

- 2 × -10-value cards
- 4 × 0-value cards
- 2 × 10-value cards
- 2 × 20-value cards

9 The Cardinal cards

The Cardinal cards also have an influence value and will be used when a player ends up alone on an audience with a sovereign (*see "Cardinal cards – One-to-one audiences" on p. 9*).

Shuffle the Cardinal cards and place the pile face down next to the game board.

Distribution of Cardinal cards:

2 × -10-value cards • 4 × 0-value cards • 6 × 10-value cards • 2 × 20-value cards

GOAL OF THE GAME

The game is played in 7 rounds corresponding to the 7 audiences to which players will send Courtiers and Valets in order to influence the king and queen and gain their favor. Players will have to pool resources with their opponents to gather enough influence to succeed in the audiences and gain ♣. But only the most cunning will win. The player who has gathered the most ♣ after 7 rounds wins the game.

A GAME ROUND

At the start of each round, the first card of each pile of Audience cards is revealed. Every Audience card contains 3 elements:



- **Influence:** the value needed to succeed in the audience using players' Courtiers and Valets. This value depends on the mood of the sovereign.
- ♣ : the victory points that you can win or lose, depending on the outcome of the audience.
- **Favor:** the special ability you gain if you are the majority player during the audience (see "Favors" on p. 10). You can use this favor once during the upcoming audiences.

A game round consists of 3 phases:

- 1 CHOOSE AN AUDIENCE
- 2 BET 2 CARDS
- 3 COUNT POINTS

TURN ORDER

« And the next player to speak is... »



In *Royal Secrets*, **the game has no set turn order:** after a player performs an action (*chooses an audience, bets the 1st card, bets the 2nd card*), they pass the Parley tile to the player of their choice, who will then do one action, and so on.

NOTE: You must always choose a player among those who haven't played the current phase yet.

EXAMPLE: *you cannot give the Parley tile to a player who has already chosen an Audience if there are still players who have not.*

FIRST PLAYER

During the first round, the first player is chosen at random. The last player to be in possession of the Parley tile will start the following round.

1 CHOOSE AN AUDIENCE

On their turn, each player chooses an audience (with the king or the queen) and places their player marker on a free space of the audience of their choice. More than one player can be on the same audience.



EXAMPLE:

The blue player is the first player. He decides to go to the king's audience ① and gives the Parley tile to the red player.

The red player also decides to go to the king's audience ② and gives the Parley tile to the yellow player.

The turns continue until all players have chosen an audience; the yellow player ③ and then the green player ④ have decided to go to the queen's audience.

2 BET 2 CARDS

Now that all players have chosen an audience, they have to send their Courtiers and/or Valets to gather enough influence to succeed in the audience.

To succeed in an audience, the total value of the Courtier and Valet cards bet by all players must be equal to or higher than the influence value of the audience.

Following turn order (see "Turn order" on p. 4):

- ① Each player bets a card face down or face up in front of their player marker.
- ② Each player bets a 2nd card face up or face down (the opposite of the first one).

EXAMPLE: : If a player bet their 1st card face up, their 2nd card must be face down, and vice versa.



During this phase, you must discuss with the other players in order to know which card to bet. Everything is permitted: negotiations, bluffs, even lies. You will have to be the most cunning to win ♣ and favors at a low cost or to trick the rest of the players in your audience.

EXAMPLE

Players start the first round of betting.

- The green player, who was the last to choose the audience, gives the Parley tile to the yellow player, who is on the same audience, to make him speak first.
- The yellow player bets their first card face down ❶ and gives back the Parley tile to the green player.
- The green player bets a card face up ❷ and gives the Parley tile to the blue player.
- The blue player bets a card face down ❸ and gives the Parley tile to the red player, who bets a card face up ❹.
- The red player then gives the Parley tile to another player for another round of betting following the same rules until all players have bet two cards (one face up, one face down).



3 COUNT POINTS

Once all players have bet two cards, all face down cards are revealed and the count begins...

CASE 1: THE AUDIENCE SUCCEEDS

If the total value of the cards bet by all players on the audience is equal to or higher than the influence value of the Audience card, then:

- ☛ Each of the players at that audience wins the ♣ on the Audience card and places them in their writing case.
- ☛ The player who has bet the most wins the favor and places the Audience card face up in front of their writing case. This favor can be used during the future audiences.

TIE

In case of a tie among players, each of them chooses a third card and reveals it face up at the same time. The player who has bet the highest valued Courtier or Valet wins the favor. Next, each of the players passes their cards to the player on their right. In case of a tie among 2 players, players simply exchange their cards.

If there is still a tie, no one receives the Audience card and it gets discarded.

A player can bluff by choosing one 0-value Courtier card, but this card always comes back to the player's hand.

CASE 2: THE AUDIENCE FAILS

If the total value of the cards bet by the players in the audience is lower than the influence value of the Audience card, then:

☞ Each of them loses the ♣ marked on the Audience card.



EXAMPLE

In the audience with the king, the blue and red player have bet a total of 30 influence. They fail the audience because they needed 50 to influence the king. Each of them loses 5 ♣. Nobody wins the favor and the Audience card is discarded.

In the audience with the queen, the yellow and green player have bet a total of 70 influence. The audience succeeds and each of them wins 3 ♣. The green player wins the favor as they have bet the most. They place the Audience card face up in front of their writing case.

CASE 3: 7TH AND LAST AUDIENCE

During the last round, players will go all in because it's important to leave a good impression.

IF THE AUDIENCE SUCCEEDS: only the player who has bet the most will get the ♣.

IF THE AUDIENCE FAILS: all players in the audience will lose the ♣.

This is the last round to use the favors. The favors gained at this last audience will not be used.

THE EXCUSE CARD

The Excuse card is a special Courtier card!

The effect of the Excuse card is resolved during phase 3 "COUNT POINTS."

When a player has bet their Excuse card:



- They withdraw from the audience and discard their 2nd bet card (it won't count).
- They draw a Valet card and add it to their hand (unless the Valet pile is empty).

IF THE AUDIENCE SUCCEEDS: the player who used the Excuse card gains no ♣.

IF THE AUDIENCE FAILS: only players who stayed at the audience lose the ♣.

It's a good way to put your opponents in a difficult position.



You can never stand a sovereign up! If all the players present at the audience have used their Excuse cards, they all lose the ♣ of the audience.

However, if a player is alone with the Cardinal in an audience, they can still use their Excuse card.

VALET CARDS



Valets spread rumors that can be damaging to players.

Valet cards are unique compared to other Courtier cards.

IF THE AUDIENCE SUCCEEDS: all players that participated in the other audience lose the ♣ on the Valet card played.

⚠️ Players that have used an Excuse card don't lose any ♣.

IF THE AUDIENCE FAILS: only the player who used the Valet card loses the ♣.



EXAMPLE

In the audience with the king, the red player has bet two Courtier cards for a total of 40 influence out of the 50 needed to succeed in the audience.

The blue player has played a 0-value Courtier card and an Excuse card. They withdraw from the audience and will not be affected by its outcome. Since the audience fails, the red player loses 5 ♣.

In the audience with the queen, the yellow player has bet two Courtier cards for a total of 30 influence. The green player has played a 20-value Courtier card and a -10-value Valet card. Since the audience succeeds, both players win 3 ♣ and the yellow player wins the favor because he has bet the most. And because the audience succeeded, the green player makes players of the other audience lose 4 ♣ (as indicated on the Valet card). The blue player is not affected because he has played an Excuse card. Therefore, only the red player loses 4 ♣.

CARDINAL CARDS - ONE-TO-ONE AUDIENCES

You can never be left alone with a sovereign as the cardinal is keeping an eye out.

If there is only one player at an audience, the cardinal takes part in the audience in the following way (but always following turn order):

1st round of betting: the player bets their 1st card and then reveals a Cardinal card face up and places it in front of a free space of the audience;

2nd round of betting: the player bets their 2nd card and then draws a 2nd Cardinal card and place it face down next to the first one.

The count works as in the other audiences:

IF THE AUDIENCE SUCCEEDS: the player wins the ♣ of the audience.

If the player has bet the most or the same as the cardinal, they win the favor and put the Audience card in front of their writing case.

IF THE AUDIENCE FAILS: the player loses the ♣ of the audience.

EXAMPLE

The yellow player is alone in the audience with the queen. Let's move to phase 2 "BET 2 CARDS."

When the yellow player receives the Parley tile, they bet their 1st card face down and then draw one Cardinal card of the pile and place it face up in front of a free space of the audience. Then they give the Parley tile to another player.

When the yellow player receives the Parley tile again, they bet a 2nd card face up, in this case a 20-value card. Then they draw another Cardinal card and place it face down.

Once all players have bet two cards, the face down cards are revealed and they move to phase 3 "COUNT POINTS."

The yellow player and the cardinal have bet a total of 40 influence. The yellow player wins 3 ♣ and the favor because they bet the most (30) compared to the cardinal (10).



END OF THE ROUND

At the end of each round, the following cards are permanently discarded:

- Audience cards that no player has won.
- All bet cards (Courtier, Excuse and Valet cards) **except for 0-value Courtier cards**, which always come back to the hand and can be used as many times as needed. ↻

The Cardinal cards that have been played are left face up near the Cardinal draw pile.

Then the next round begins and so on until the 7th and last audience.

GAME END

After 7 audiences, players proceed to count their points:

- 1 Each player sums the ♣ tokens they gathered in their writing case.
- 2 Every unplayed Courtier or Valet card gives the player 1 ♣ for every 10 influence points, up to a limit of 6 ♣.

The player with the most ♣ wins the game.

FAVORS



Every Audience card gives a favor, which is an ability granted by the sovereign to the player who has bet the most with their two cards during the audience. This ability can be used only once during the game.

When a player wins a favor, they place the Audience card in front of their writing case.

There are 9 favors in total, each present twice.
Each favor can be used during a specific phase of the game round:

During phase 1 CHOOSE AN AUDIENCE

CORRUPTION



Draw a new Valet card.

PLANNING



At the start of the round, you can split players between the 2 audiences.

- If 2 players use this favor on the same round, it is the card with the most influence value that takes preference.
- The player that uses the Royal Dinner favor will still be able to participate in both audiences.

ROYAL DINNER



You can be present in both audiences at the same time.

- Every Courtier or Valet card played will count for both audiences at the same time. The player plays their cards in the middle.
- The player can't be affected by the Valet cards of the other players.
- The effects of the player's Valet cards don't apply. Only their influence value counts.
- If the player uses an Excuse card, it will be for both audiences.

During phase 2 BET 2 CARDS

ESPIONAGE



Look at the cards bet face down in both audiences.

STABBING



Discard one card bet face down from any audience.

MEDAL OF MERIT



Double the value of a bet card.

Only one Medal of Merit favor can be played per bet card.

During phase 3 COUNT POINTS

RECRUITMENT



Recover a card bet by another player on the same audience at the end of the round.

- Before revealing the face down cards, the player must designate one card (either face up or face down) that they want to recover at the end of the round. This card will still count during scoring.
- Players' 0-value Courtier cards can never be recovered by another player.

ROYAL PARDON



Cancel all your ♣ losses this round (including the Valets).

MASTER STROKE



Transform your ♣ losses into ♣ gains this round (excluding the Valets).

Royal Secrets



10 +



3 - 5



35 min

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