

CORVASSA

The Royal Scroll

OFFICIAL RULEBOOK — REVISED EDITION

A game of shifting alliances and silent knives.

2–4 Players • 10–20 Minutes • Ages 12+ • 54 Cards

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1. The Realm of Corvassa

Long ago, the land was known as Corvassa — “The Crown’s Land of Vassals.” Four mighty kings ruled the kingdom, each desperate to seize the throne, for whoever held the crown ruled the world. They clashed in fierce battles, forging alliances and betraying one another in a deadly fight for power. The land trembled under their war, and only the strongest survived. When the dust settled, a single king stood victorious, crowned ruler of all Corvassa.

Now, through this game, you enter the battle as one of the four kings. Every move is war — and only the last king standing will claim the crown and the kingdom forever.

Betrayal is currency, loyalty is weakness, and in the end... only one King will stand.

2. At a Glance

Players	2–4 (see Section 9 for mode variants)
Playtime	10-20 minutes once players know the Card Hierarchy (Section 6)
Age	12+ years
Cards	54 total — see full breakdown in Section 3
Goal	Be the last player still holding a King

3. Components & Icons

3.1 The Deck

Card	Copies	Category	Rank
King	4	Neutral	—
Queen	4	Diamond	5 (highest)
Rook	8	Diamond	4
Bishop	6	Diamond	3
Knight	6	Diamond	2
Pawn	12	Diamond	1 (lowest)
Shadow	2	Attack-only	—
Check	2	Attack-only	—
Defender	2	Defense-only	—
Footpad	2	Attack-only	—
Favor	2	Neutral	—
Decoy	2	Defense-only	—
Faceless	2	Wild	Becomes the rank of whatever it converts into
TOTAL	54		

3.2 Icon Legend

Every card carries a small icon in its corner that tells you, at a glance, what you may legally do with it.

Icon	Meaning	Cards
Clover — Neutral	Cannot be played to attack or defend.	King, Favor
Diamond	May be played to attack OR to defend, resolved by the Card Hierarchy (Section 6).	Queen, Rook, Bishop, Knight, Pawn
Triangle ▲	Attacking card. Can only be played to attack.	Shadow, Check, Footpad
Triangle ▽	Defending card. Can only be played to defend.	Defender, Decoy
No icon	Wild card. Has no identity until converted — see Section 8.5.	Faceless

4. Setup

1. Shuffle the four King cards and deal one face-down to each player. Whoever receives King I plays first; play then proceeds clockwise.
2. Shuffle the remaining 50 cards together to form the Draw Pile.
3. Deal 4 cards from the Draw Pile to each player. Together with their King, every player begins with a 5-card hand (the maximum hand size — see Section 8.3).
4. Place the remaining cards face-down as the Draw Pile.

Seating (4-Player Main Mode)

Players sit alternately around the table so that teammates sit opposite, not beside, one another:

A — B — C — D (A & C are allies; B & D are allies)

5. Anatomy of a Turn

Play proceeds clockwise. Each attack passes to the next player in turn order:

A attacks B → B defends → B attacks C → C defends → C attacks D → D defends → D attacks A → cycle repeats.

5.1 On Your Turn

1. Play exactly one attack-eligible card (Diamond or Triangle-▲) from your hand.
2. Choose your target, if the card requires one. Diamond-card attacks always target the next player in turn order — this is what drives the basic attack chain. Footpad, Check, and Shadow may instead target any opponent of your choosing; Shadow's Betrayal option targets your own ally instead of an opponent (Section 8.8).
 - **Diamond cards (Queen, Rook, Bishop, Knight, Pawn)** → fixed to the next player in turn order. This is what actually drives the basic chain (A attacks B → B attacks C → ...).
 - **Footpad and Check** → free choice of any opponent. Both are printed with "any opponent's hand/King," not just "an opponent" — that's the textual tell.
 - **Shadow** → free choice of any opponent too, *or* — instead — your own ally for Betrayal. It's already exempt from Round 1 and built to reach outside the normal flow, so giving it free targeting (like Check) rather than chain-locked targeting (like the Diamonds) is the consistent read.
3. The target may defend (see Section 6 and Section 7).
4. If the attack is not fully blocked, resolve its printed effect.
5. Draw 1 card from the Draw Pile so your hand returns to 5 cards.
6. End your turn.

5.2 If You Are Attacked

You may immediately play one legal defending card in response, even though it is not your turn. This is the only time you may play a card outside your own turn.

5.3 Edge Cases

- **No legal card to play:** If nothing in your hand can be played as an attack on your turn, discard one card of your choice, draw one card, and end your turn.
- **King is your only card:** Before acting, draw one card immediately (this does not count as your end-of-turn draw). If that new card cannot legally be played as an attack, discard the newly drawn card — never the King — and end your turn.
- **Empty Draw Pile:** Shuffle the discard pile to form a new Draw Pile and continue.

6. Card Hierarchy & Combat Resolution

This section governs every Diamond-class card (Queen, Rook, Bishop, Knight, Pawn) — 36 of the deck's 54 cards.

6.1 Ranks

Card	Rank
Queen	5 — Highest
Rook	4
Bishop	3
Knight	2
Pawn	1 — Lowest

6.2 How a Diamond Attack Is Resolved

When a Diamond card is played to attack, the target player chooses one of three responses:

- Defend with a Defender card — the attack is cancelled outright (see Section 7).
- Defend with a Diamond card from their own hand — a rank duel takes place (below).
- Defend with nothing — the attack succeeds automatically and its effect resolves.

When a rank duel takes place, compare the two cards' ranks:

Comparison	Result
Defender's rank is HIGHER	The attack is fully blocked. The attacking card is discarded. The defending card returns to the defender's hand — it is not discarded, because it won. The attacker's printed effect does not occur.
Ranks are EQUAL	Both cards are discarded. The attack is blocked. Neither card's effect occurs.
Defender's rank is LOWER	The defending card is discarded - The attack succeeds: resolve the attacker's printed effect normally.

6.3 The Queen Exception

The Queen's printed text overrides the rank duel: when played to defend, a Queen auto-wins against any Diamond attack *except* another Queen, where both are discarded as a mutual tie. The only attack a Queen cannot stop is Footpad (Section 6.4). A Queen that successfully blocks is not discarded; she remains in the defender's hand.

6.4 The Footpad Exception

Footpad's theft can only be cancelled by a Defender card. No Diamond card — not even a Queen. Also, Footpad targets any opponent's hand. You can't steal from Ally.

WORKED EXAMPLE #1

Mira plays a Rook(Rank 4) to attack Tomas: “Force an opponent to discard a random card; look and rearrange the top 2 cards of the Draw Pile.”

Tomas holds a Bishop(Rank 3) and a Knight(Rank 2). He doesn't have any higher rank card then Rook.

Now Mira’s Rook effect resolves in full: Tomas randomly loses one card, and Mira looks at and rearranges the top two cards of the Draw Pile.

Had Tomas instead defended with a Queen, Mira’s Rook attack would have been fully blocked and discarded — and Tomas would have kept his Queen in hand.

WORKED EXAMPLE #2

Mira plays a Queen(Rank 5) to attack Tomas: “Strongest of them all; Make an opponent discard one random card (attacker picks blindly); Blocks all attacks except Footpad.”

Tomas holds a Queen(Rank 5) and a Pawn(Rank 1). He defends with his Queen

Now both Queen's are of the same Rank and priority. So, both Queen's gets discarded and Mira’s Queen effect doesn't resolves.

7. Defending Reference

Triangle-▲ attacking cards (Shadow, Check, Footpad) do not carry a rank and are never resolved by rank duel. Each blocks only against the specific defenders printed on its own card, as summarized below.

If you are attacked by...	It can be stopped by...
A Diamond card (Queen, Rook, Bishop, Knight, or Pawn)	Any Diamond card via rank duel (Section 6.2); a Defender (auto-cancel); Queen auto-wins against any Diamond attack <i>except</i> another Queen, where both are discarded as a mutual tie
Shadow	Queen or Defender only.
Check	Queen, Defender, or Decoy. (See Section 8.6 for the cost of blocking with Queen/Defender.)
Footpad	Defender only.

8. Special Rules & Official Rulings

8.1 Crown's Command

Each King carries one free, once-per-game ability:

OFFICIAL RULING

Once per game, when you are personally targeted by an attacking card other than Check or Shadow, you may activate Crown's Command instead of resolving the attack normally: redirect it to a different player of your choice.

- You cannot redirect the attack back at the player who played it.
- In team modes, you may redirect the attack onto your own ally.
- A redirected attack cannot be redirected again, by anyone.
- Crown's Command costs nothing to use beyond the one-time-per-game limit — you do not discard your King or any other card to activate it.
- Crown's Command cannot be used against Check or Shadow. Both attack the King too directly to misdirect.
- A player whose only remaining card is their King may still use an unspent Crown's Command.
- Not available in 2-player mode (there is no third player to redirect to).

8.2 Promotion

Collecting enough Pawns lets you trade them in for a Queen:

- 4-Player games: reveal 4 Pawns from your hand.
- 2–3-Player games: reveal 3 Pawns from your hand.

Discard the revealed Pawns face-up, then take a Queen: from the discard pile if one is available there, otherwise from the top of the Draw Pile (reshuffle the Draw Pile afterward if you drew from it). Draw 1 additional card. Performing a Promotion uses your entire turn — you do not play an attack card that turn.

8.3 Hand Size & Overflow

OFFICIAL RULING

Hand size may never exceed 5 cards. If any effect — Shadow's Betrayal reward, Favor's bonus draw, or any future card — would push your hand above 5, immediately discard down to exactly 5 cards of your own choosing before your turn (or the triggering action) ends. This applies even when the overflow happens outside your own turn.

8.4 Random Discard & the King

OFFICIAL RULING

Unless a card explicitly excludes it (Footpad does), a “random card” selected by an attack is drawn from the target’s entire hand — including their King. This is intentional: it is the primary way a King falls outside of a direct Check or Shadow strike.

To select randomly: the targeted player fans their hand face-down, backs toward the attacker. The attacker points to or draws one card without seeing its face. That card is revealed and discarded.

8.5 Faceless: Conversion Timing

Faceless carries no icon because it has no fixed identity. While unconverted, it cannot be played to attack or defend — treat it as Neutral.

OFFICIAL RULING

You may convert a Faceless card into any other named card (except King or Queen) at one moment only: the instant you play it, either as your attack on your turn or as your defense in response to an attack. Declare its new identity aloud as you play it.

Once declared, it becomes that card — with that card’s full rules, rank, and icon — for as long as it remains in play. The moment a converted Faceless card is discarded, for any reason, it reverts to a blank, unconverted Faceless card. If it is drawn again later, by you or by any other player, it may be freshly converted again, to any card of that player’s choosing (except King or Queen), under the same play-it-to-declare-it timing rule.

You cannot convert a Faceless card while it is simply sitting in your hand, and once declared, no one (including you) can change it.

8.6 Check: Who Pays the Cost

OFFICIAL RULING

Check attacks any opponent’s King directly. The defending player may block it with Queen, Defender, or Decoy.

If the block comes from a Queen or a Defender, the blocking player must also discard one additional card of their own choosing as the cost of defending.

If the block comes from a Decoy, there is no extra cost — the Decoy absorbed the strike for free.

8.7 Decoy vs. Shadow — A Deliberate Asymmetry

DESIGNER’S NOTE

Decoy can save your King from a Check — a public, telegraphed strike — but it cannot save your King from a Shadow’s Betrayal. Only Queen or Defender stop a Betrayal.

The fiction: a Decoy fools an outside challenger. It can’t fool your own ally, who already knows which throne is real.

8.8 Alliances, Betrayal & Team-Only Cards

- Favor can only be played in modes with active alliances (4-Player Main Mode and 3-Player 2-vs-1). It is never legal in any Free-for-All mode or in 2-Player mode.
- Shadow's Betrayal option (attacking your own ally's King) is only legal while you have an active ally. In any Free-for-All mode, Shadow may only be used in its other mode: forcing an opponent to lose two cards.
- Playing Betrayal immediately and permanently ends your alliance for the rest of the game, whether the Betrayal succeeds or fails.
- If the Betrayal is blocked (by Queen or Defender): you must discard one additional card of your own choosing. (Punishment.)
- If the Betrayal succeeds: you immediately draw 2 bonus cards from the Draw Pile, then apply the Hand Size & Overflow rule (Section 8.3) if needed. (Reward.)
- Check and Shadow cannot be played during Round 1 (the first time the attack order reaches each player once).

9. Game Modes

9.1 4 Players — Main Mode

Teams of 2 vs. 2, seated diagonally (Section 4). All cards and all rules in this book apply in full.

9.2 4 Players — Free-for-All

All alliances are broken; every player competes individually. Remove both Favor cards from the deck before shuffling, and Shadow loses its Betrayal option (Section 8.8).

9.3 3 Players — Two Allies vs. One

Two players form an alliance against a single solo player, using the full rule set. The solo player may choose either ally as the target whenever they attack. Remove King IV.

9.4 3 Players — Free-for-All

Every player competes individually; no alliances exist. Remove King IV, and remove both Favor cards.

9.5 2 Players — Classic Duel

Alliances are broken by default — both players fight solo, with no alliance mechanics in play at all. Remove King III and King IV. Crown's Command is not available in this mode (Section 8.1).

10. Elimination & Victory

A player is eliminated immediately if any of the following occurs:

- Their King is defeated.
- They fail to defend successfully against a Check or a Shadow attack.
- An effect requires them to discard or lose more cards than they currently hold, not counting their King.
- Their King is their only remaining card at the moment they are successfully attacked.

The last player still holding a King wins the game and claims the crown of Corvassa.

WORKED EXAMPLE

Priya holds only her King and one Pawn. Shadow attacks her for “lose two cards: one of your choice plus one the attacker picks.” Priya can only supply one non-King card (her Pawn). She cannot meet the cost — she is eliminated immediately, per the third condition above.

11. Full Card Index

Clarified rules text for every card type. Each entry applies identically to all numbered copies of that card.

Card	Copies	Type	Clarified Effect
King	4	Neutral	Your life card. Lose it and you are eliminated. While you hold it, you have one free, once-per-game use of Crown's Command (Section 8.1).
Queen	4	Diamond · Rank 5	Attack: force an opponent to discard one random card (Section 8.4). Defend: automatically blocks any attack except Footpad, regardless of rank (<i>except</i> another Queen, where both are discarded as a mutual tie) (Section 6.3).
Rook	8	Diamond · Rank 4	Attack: force an opponent to discard one random card; then look at and reorder the top 2 cards of the Draw Pile. Defend: resolved by rank duel (Section 6.2).
Bishop	6	Diamond · Rank 3	Attack: the target reveals their entire hand to you, the attacker, only. Defend: resolved by rank duel.
Knight	6	Diamond · Rank 2	Attack: the target reveals one card of their own choice to the whole table. Defend: resolved by rank duel.
Pawn	12	Diamond · Rank 1	Attack: force an opponent to discard one card of their own choosing. Defend: resolved by rank duel. Pawns also fuel Promotion (Section 8.2).
Shadow	2	Attack-only	Not playable in Round 1. Choose one: Betrayal (attack your own ally's King — team modes only), or force any opponent to lose two cards (one their choice, one yours, picked blindly). Blocked only by Queen or Defender. See Section 8.8 for Betrayal's Punishment/Reward.
Check	2	Attack-only	Not playable in Round 1. Attack any opponent's King directly. Blocked by Queen, Defender, or Decoy. If blocked by Queen or Defender (not Decoy), the blocker discards 1 additional card of their choice (Section 8.6).
Defender	2	Defense-only	Play in response to any attack to cancel it completely, regardless of what it is. Discard the Defender and the attacking card; the cancelled effect never occurs.
Footpad	2	Attack-only	Steal one random card from any opponent's hand. The King can never be targeted by Footpad. Only a Defender can stop it (Section 6.4).
Favor	2	Neutral	Team modes only. On your turn, instead of attacking, give one card from your hand (except King or another Favor) to your ally, then draw 1 card.
Decoy	2	Defense-only	Play in response to a Check to cancel it completely. Cannot be used against a Shadow's Betrayal (Section 8.7).
Faceless	2	Wild · No icon	No fixed identity until played. At the instant you play it — to attack or defend — declare what card it becomes (anything except King or Queen). It is permanently that card from then on (Section 8.5).

12. Quick-Reference Player Aid

Photocopy or reprint this page as a player aid card.

YOUR TURN

1. Play one attack card. 2. Choose a target. 3. Target may defend. 4. Resolve the effect if not blocked. 5. Draw back up to 5 cards. 6. End turn.

CARD HIERARCHY (Diamond cards only)

Queen (5) > Rook (4) > Bishop (3) > Knight (2) > Pawn (1)

Higher rank wins, loser discarded · Tie = both discarded, attack blocked.

WHAT BLOCKS WHAT

Diamond attack → any Diamond card (rank duel) or Defender

Shadow → Queen or Defender only

Check → Queen, Defender, or Decoy (Queen/Defender block costs the blocker 1 extra card)

Footpad → Defender only

ELIMINATION

Your King is defeated · You fail to defend a Check/Shadow · You can't pay an effect's cost in non-King cards · Your King is your only card when attacked successfully