

# King of the Valley



*A strategic and tactical game for 2-4 ambitious players*

*A long time ago in a land far, far away there was a thriving valley with various inhabitants. Wandering aimlessly in need of a true leader to guide them. Are you the king who will lead them the way? Do you have a strategy to acquire their trust and are you cunning enough to challenge other “would be” kings who will do anything to claim the crown you deserve? No sacrifice is too big or small for those imposters! They may think being king is as easy as summoning a few subjects to their side, squeezing the gold from their pockets and arranging some marriages. But beware, as only a true king will be able to keep up the morale and lead the inhabitants through the chaos of the ever-changing circumstances in the valley and the hills.*

## Objective

To become the true **King of the Valley**, you must obtain the highest reputation at the end of the game. Your reputation is determined by influence, bonuses and gold. Summon potential subjects from the valley to become your followers. You may also recruit them from the hills for a fee. Lead them to your castle and their influence will contribute to your reputation. On top of that you can obtain bonuses by building a kingdom with a variety of subjects and by acquiring the support of the majority of knights from the various Orders of Knights. You can also gain bonuses by finding suitable wives for the numerous farmers and form couples. Last, but not least, your gold supply will also support you in ruling your kingdom and thus increase your reputation. All these accomplishments determine who is the one true king of the valley.

## Summary

### Set up

1. Determine starting player
2. Take king pawn and castle board
3. Each player receives 2 gold
4. Split tiles in piles ‘I’ ‘II’ and ‘III’
5. Create 5x5 valley
6. Place characters on hill
7. Players choose starting positions

### Game play per turn

1. Recruit subject from the hill (optional)  
Note: no recruiting in round 1
2. Summon character(s):  
A) Obtain subject(s) OR  
B) Activate specialist(s)
3. Claim kingdom bonus (optional)
4. Replenish valley and hill

### Game end & winner

- ◆ As soon as the hill cannot be replenished in full, the end of the game is triggered.
- ◆ Player with the most reputation points becomes the true King of the Valley.
- ◆ When multiple players have the same reputation, their influence points break the tie.

## Game materials

- 4 King pawns
- 4 Castle boards
- 1 3D hill
- 90 Character tiles
- 1 Starting player token
- 6 Kingdom tokens
- 6 Tax Collector tokens
- 45 Golden coins  
(25x1, 10x5 and 10x10)
- 1 Notepad



## Preparation

1. Determine the starting player: the last player who visited a castle receives the **starting player token** and places it on his\* **castle board**. He will keep this token for the remainder of the game.  
*\*we use the pronouns he/him in the rules to keep it simple*
2. Each player chooses a color and takes the **king pawn** and the **castle board** of the corresponding color.
3. Each player receives two **gold**.
4. Form a general stock of **gold**, the six **kingdom tokens** and six **tax collector tokens** within reach of all players.
5. Set up the **3D hill** by folding the sides of the hill and slide the crossbar as an anchor in the slots on the back side of the hill.  
You can adjust the steepness of the slope if you prefer.
6. Split the 90 square **character tiles** into three face-down piles:
  - I. a pile of tiles with "I" on the back side (29 tiles).
  - II. a pile of tiles with "II" on the back side (30 tiles).
  - III. a pile of tiles with "III" on the back side (31 tiles).Shuffle each pile separately and place them face-down next to the hill.
7. Use the tiles of pile "I" to build the valley. Place the first 25 tiles in random order in the center of the table to form a 5x5 grid of 25 tiles face-up, showing the images of the characters.
8. Cover the hill: place the rest of the "I" tiles face-up on the four bottom positions of the hill. Now continue with filling up the hill with tiles from the "II" pile. Take the tiles from the top of the pile and start filling the hill from row with "4" gold and up, per row, until the hill is fully covered. Now there are two tiles per row and six tiles per column on the hill. Make sure to place the tiles on the right and left side, so the gold 'prices' in the center are clearly visible.
9. Beginning with the **starting player**, followed by the other players in a clockwise order, each player chooses a starting position in the valley (5x5 grid) by placing his **king pawn** on a tile of his choice. **Important: only one king pawn per tile. This restriction only applies for the preparation of the game.**

## Game play

The starting player takes the first turn. The other players follow, taking turns in clockwise order until the end of the game condition is met. Each player has exactly the same number of turns in a game. A player's turn is divided into four different phases, to be executed in strict order.

### Phase 1: Recruit one subject from the hill (optional, starting from round 2)

You may recruit one subject from the hill by paying gold to the general stock. Pay the amount of gold as indicated on the row and lead the subject to your castle: place it under the column with the same portrait. If you have obtained a jester, place the tile in a column of your choice immediately. His portrait is missing, but the jester can be placed in any of the columns, since he can impersonate a subject with great ease.

**Important rule: recruiting a subject is only allowed starting from the second game round!**

There are two types of characters: (potential) subjects and specialists. Only subjects can be recruited. It is **NOT POSSIBLE** to activate specialists from the hill. They can only be summoned and activated from the Valley.

### Phase 2: Summon character(s) from the valley (mandatory)

#### Moving through the valley

To summon characters you must move your king pawn in a straight line - diagonally is also allowed - through the valley with as many steps as you like. You obtain the character tile you end on OR the two or three tiles with an identical character which you have passed. If you have picked up two tiles with an identical character, you must end on the tile directly behind the second tile you have summoned (see example 2 below). Exception: with the priest you can adjust your path. See how the priest works in more detail in **CHARACTERS**.

*Examples of moving your king pawn and obtaining tile(s)*



In the starting position the king pawn of the red player is in the bottom right position (first image). The player has multiple options to choose from:

- ✓ **Option 1:** he moves his pawn to the duke and summons him as a subject.
- ✓ **Option 2:** he passes two knights and summons them as subjects. **Note: he ends on the tile behind the last knight he took as explained earlier.**
- ✓ **Option 3:** he crosses the valley towards the top left position and passes a farmer, a farmer's wife and another farmer. He may only summon the two farmers, since these are identical characters. He lands on the tile behind the second farmer. He may pass another player's king.

*These three examples are with subjects only, but it is possible to activate identical special characters as the wizard and the tax collector in the same way. The priest works just a little bit different: see CHARACTERS.*

## What to do after you have picked up tile(s) by summoning the character(s)?

### A. Obtain subject(s):

if you have summoned one or more subject(s), pick up the tile(s) and place them below your castle board in the column with the same portrait. Exception: the jester, as explained earlier in phase 1 recruiting subjects. If you have summoned several jesters, you must place the tile(s) in a column of your choice immediately. You can either place them in the same or different columns.

### B. Activate specialist(s):

if you have summoned one or more specialist(s), you MUST activate their special ability immediately and discard the tile(s) after use. There are three types of specialists: wizards, priests and tax collectors. You cannot activate them if you do not meet the requirements for their services (see CHARACTERS).

### Important rules when summoning characters (subjects or specialists):

- 1) It is not allowed to summon a character if another player's king pawn is standing on that tile, but you are allowed to end your turn on an occupied tile. This only applies when you have picked up several tiles.
- 2) It is not possible to summon the character you start your turn on, except if you use the priest (see CHARACTERS).

### Phase 3: Claim kingdom bonus (optional)



If you have succeeded in acquiring a complete collection of five subjects with different influence values, you may claim the kingdom bonus of five gold and a kingdom token. This is explained in more detail in KINGDOM BONUS.

**Note: claiming your kingdom bonus is optional, but you are only allowed to claim one kingdom bonus per turn and you are not allowed to claim the bonus after the last player has finished his turn. It is not an END-OF-GAME bonus.**

### Phase 4: Replenishing the valley from the hill (mandatory)

- ✓ The open position(s) in the valley must be replenished with tiles from the hill. The active player decides from which of the two columns the open position(s) will be replenished: left or right. Start replenishing the valley from the bottom of the hill. Take these tiles from only ONE column. Replenish the valley in the same order as you have passed the now empty spots with your king pawn.
- ✓ After replenishing the valley, replenish the hill with new tiles from the character piles. First use the tiles of the "I" pile. When this pile is depleted, use the III tiles. Place them face-up on top of the hill. The slope of the hill causes the tiles to descent automatically. Adjust the slope of the hill: increase the steepness by choosing the slots on the crossbars closest to each other. If you increase the space between the slots, the hill flattens.

## Characters

We identify two different types of characters: subjects and specialists.

**Subjects** increase your influence, are potential targets for your tax collectors and can be used for bonuses. They have influence values up to 5, which is indicated by the shield icon on the bottom-left position on the tile.

**Specialists** provide you with a variety of options. With a priest you can adjust your path through the valley. The wizard allows you to exchange a less desired subject with a more interesting replacement from the hill. The tax collector helps you to obtain gold from your subjects.

## Subjects

In the valley and the hill you will find seven different type of subjects. The number of available subjects per type can also be found on your castle board.

### 77 Subject tiles with different ranks

3	Queens	– 5 influence
6	Dukes	– 4 influence
9	Countesses	– 3 influence
20	Knights	– 2 influence
24	Farmers	– 1 influence
12	Farmer's Wives	– 1 influence
3	Jesters	– 0 influence



## Jester

The jester is a subject with zero influence, but fortunately he has one special ability. As a true entertainer he can impersonate any subject. The player who obtains the jester decides immediately which subject he becomes by placing the jester tile in a column of his choice below the castle board. Important: once you have made your choice, it is not allowed to move the jester to a different column. The jester may help you in completing a kingdom set for a bonus or to collect taxes. This will be explained in detail in TAX COLLECTOR and KINGDOM BONUS. Important: the jester only “copies” the influence value of a subject temporarily. At the end of the game, he has no influence whatsoever.

**Note: it is also possible to obtain several jesters. In this case you are allowed to place them in identical or different columns.**

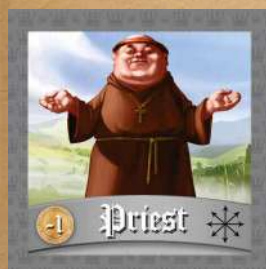


## Specialists

Three different specialists (13 tiles total): the priest, wizard and tax collector can be used to perform specific actions. They do not count as subjects. When you activate one or more specialists, you must use their effect immediately and discard the tile afterwards. You can only summon a specialist if you can fulfill the requirement for its services. Specialists cannot be activated from the hill.

**Note: it is easy to distinguish the specialists from the subjects, since all specialists have a grey border around the tile.**

## The Priest [3 tiles, stages I, II and III] - requirement: one gold to pay the priest



The priest allows you to adjust the path of your king. This clergyman provides you with the opportunity to “find the right path”. When you summon the priest, you pay him one gold and decide in which direction you would like to continue your journey from the open position. The priest helps you to become a better person, but he also helps you to reach tiles which seemed unattainable at first. It is even allowed to go back to your original position on which you started your turn. Important: if you are using the priest to change your path, act as if you started your turn on the position of the priest. So, you can only summon characters from your new position. It is also possible to visit (and pay) several priests, but only in your last move can you obtain tiles. Leave the gold coin you have paid to use the services of the priest on the position the priest (or priests) was standing on. When replenishing the valley, place the gold coin on the new character tile. When a player summons this character, he also receives the coin on the tile.

## The Wizard [2 tiles, stages II and III] - requirement: at least one face-up tile in your castle



The mystical powers of the wizard allow you to exchange one of the subjects in your castle for a (more interesting) subject from the hill. When you activate a wizard, swap the position of a face-up subject in your castle with a potential subject from the hill. You do not have to pay any gold. After using his services, be sure to show some gratitude for his work...if you do not want to risk being transformed into a frog. It is also possible to activate two wizards in one turn. This allows you to do perform this trick twice in one turn.

## The Tax Collector [8 tiles, stages I, II and III] – requirement: none / 3 / 4 / 5 identical subjects



Use the tax collector and his little friend to obtain gold. This clerk seems to have a pretty boring task, though as a king, you are delighted that he helps to squeeze all the gold from your subjects' pockets. There are various tax collectors. Some are resourceful: obtain 3 or 4 gold instantly without any requirements. Other tax collectors are specialized in obtaining gold from identical subjects: choose the indicated number of identical face-up subjects from your castle. Collect the gold and place the utilized subjects face-down on your castle board. Their influence still provides points at the end of the game and possibly an end-of-the-game bonus. You will receive the amount of gold indicated on the used tax collector tile(s) immediately. These amounts vary from 5 to 10 gold. It is allowed to activate several collectors in one turn.



## Tax Collector tokens



Unfortunately, it is not wise to collect taxes multiple times from the same type of subjects...They might revolt and you cannot risk that. To make sure you don't make a mistake in your administration, use a tax collector token to show which type of subjects you have already plundered. Place the token on the portrait on your castle board. You are not allowed to collect any taxes from this type of subject again.

## Kingdom Bonus



If you have succeeded in completing a collection of five subjects with different influence values, you may claim a kingdom bonus. You receive a bonus of 5 gold and a kingdom token (with a value of 5 bonus points at the end of the game). Place the utilized subjects face-down on your castle board. Their influence still provides points at the end of the game and possibly provide you with an end-of-the-game bonus. You can only choose to collect one kingdom bonus during game phase 3. The jester can be used to obtain the kingdom bonus set or to collect taxes. For this purpose, he will “copy” the influence value of the subject he is impersonating only to claim the bonus. At the end of the game however the jester has an influence value of zero. You may use multiple jesters to complete one kingdom bonus set. Note: it is not allowed to use both a farmer and a farmer’s wife to complete a kingdom bonus set, since they both have the same influence value.

## End-of-game Bonuses

At the end of the game, players will turn all their subjects in their castle face-up. So, all knights, farmers and farmer’s wives could bring additional end-of-game-bonuses, regardless if they have already been used to claim a kingdom bonus or to collect taxes during the game.



### Order of the Knights bonus: up to eight bonus points

You have probably noticed that the twenty knights in the game carry different colors and symbols. They are divided into four different Orders, each with five knights. Acquiring the majority of an Order can be beneficial for your reputation. If you succeed in obtaining three knights of the same Order, you receive three bonus points at the end of the game. If you obtain four knights you receive five bonus points. If you have succeeded in obtaining all knights of the same Order you are rewarded with eight bonus points in total. Players can obtain a bonus from several Orders.



### Couple bonus: two bonus points per couple

Isn't it a lovely couple? Your bonus for bringing a farmer and his lovely wife together, rewards you with two bonus points for each couple.

## Gold

At the end of the game one gold equals one reputation point. Players can use gold during the game in two ways:

- ✓ Recruit a subject from the hill.
- ✓ Pay the priest to use his services to find the right path.



## End of the game

As soon as the hill cannot be replenished in full, the end of the game is triggered. Two situations may occur:

- A. If the starting player would take a new turn now, the game finishes immediately.**
- B. If it's another player's turn, the round is completed.**

As a result, every player has exactly the same number of turns in a game.

## The winner of the game

Each player turns all his subjects face-up. Sort them by type and take the handy notepad to write down the influence, bonus points and amount of gold. These values combined sum up to the total reputation points. Do not forget to count the value of the kingdom bonus tokens. The player with the highest total reputation has succeeded in his quest and will be declared as the only true King of the Valley!

When multiple players have the same reputation, their influence points break the tie. If this is not decisive...it is time for a rematch.

## Tactics

Let us introduce you to a few tactical options, which might enlighten you in times of distress:

- ✓ In need of money? It is allowed to activate several tax collectors in one turn if you are able to meet the requirements and you can pass a few collectors in one straight line at once.
- ✓ Always ending second? You hate this feeling. You think you will never win this game and you are quite certain that you have done everything you can. What to do? Maybe you should go for (influence) value. Don't pay too much for your subjects, it might not be worth it. Especially the Jester is tricky to use.
- ✓ Queen fight? If you have the feeling that the queen (and the kingdom bonus as a result) becomes unattainable for you, maybe it is time to lower your standards and try to get as many wives or farmers (depending on your personal preferences of course). Make sure to send the tax collector to the fields once in a while, to make sure your amount of gold exceeds others and maybe, maybe, you can reclaim the crown through recruiting new subjects from the hill in each following turn. Make sure to balance the number of farmers and wives to claim the lucrative couple bonuses.
- ✓ A true king knows when to change his strategy. Does your rival always seem to beat you in the same way? It might be time for a change of plan. By strategically influencing the offer on the hill, you can opt to double cross your opponent's plans, especially if you know what their next move is (likely) going to be!

## A word of thanks

The designer would like to thank everybody who has worked hard to make this game so enjoyable. First of all, Mark, who has helped developing the game and has proven to be very resourceful in terms of game ideas, variations and balancing the game. Secondly, my wife Ester. She challenged me on several occasions, by simply winning the game. It did motivate me enormously to find alternative ways to win. As a result, we have eliminated a dominating strategy and the initial starting player advantage. Due to the numerous games we have played and the alterations made, the game gives you this great 'epic feeling' that you can make a 'historic' move, which brings you the victory. Even in the very last round.

On top of this, I would like to thank David for his fabulous art work, which helped us to form an image of the journey and quest which takes place during the game. And our graphic designer on this project, Alex. I want to thank him for his patience and of course the excellent graphics. I want to thank Sabina and Darek for thinking with us to find the best way to create the 3D hill. Especially I would like to thank Louise Hordijk for helping us to organize the test nights during covid-19 times in her game shop. Also I would like to express my gratitude to Hans, Erwin and Michelle, who helped us to improve the rules.

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Hans van Tol



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