



# ROYAL BASTARDS

## THE COMPLETE BASTARD'S GUIDE TO BECOMING KING







## nce upon a time in the year 647...

The lands of Joda had never been more peaceful and prosperous. The Orcs, Goblins, and Trolls of the Orkland put down their weapons of war and began peace talks. The residents of the Treasured Valley, Humans and Halflings, ascended from farmers to philosophers. The Dwarves and Giants of the Twin Spires forged strong bonds. Elves, Gnomes, and Centaurs frolicked in the Ancient Grove. Even Demons, Dragon-Kin, and the Lycans lived in fantastic times of abundance and fortune in the Dark Hallows.

This unprecedented era was brought to Joda by good King Richard “Dick” Greathart. A benevolent ruler and a fierce defender of his people, King Richard brought peace to the world through compassion and caring for every single citizen on Joda. The King spent his days in friendly discussions with each race’s leaders and his nights in friendlier discussions in the bars and taverns.

King Richard was so beloved by his kingdom that all the races gathered together and bestowed a longevity potion upon him, further extending his life. But at the ripe old age of 186, his body could take no more.

The King summoned his harem of trusted advisors to his bedroom for one last “meeting...”

Richard died peacefully in his sleep in the spring of 647, surrounded by friends. Having never taken a wife, King Richard Greathart left no legitimate heir to his crown.



During his miraculous 152-year reign, the good King loved ALL his subjects. Illegitimate sons and daughters of every race sprung up from all over the lands of Joda declaring they had the right to ascend to the throne. The elders from each region gathered to determine how a new king was to be crowned.

They decreed that each Firstborn Bastard must gain the support of the citizens of each Territory to become king.

Each Royal Bastard now asserts his or her case and gathers followers and support throughout Joda to be the one to claim the crown!

# WARNING: POLITICALLY INCORRECT

**Royal Bastards is a game of intrigue, corruption, and backstabbing where every Royal Bastard wants to be King!**

Since the beloved and now dearly departed King Richard did not leave an heir, you, as one of his many descendants, are racing to gain control of the now empty throne. You'll have to contend with MANY other Bastards doing the same.

Will you earn enough support in the Territories that King Richard ruled for so many years? Or will the skeletons in your closet be discovered by the populace, sending you to ruin?



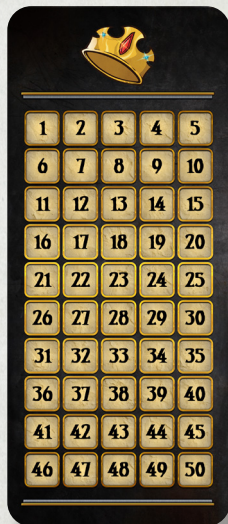


# Contents



## 12 Bastard Minis

(Included miniatures are unpainted)



## 1 Score Tracker



## 1 Turn Tracker



## 11 Territories

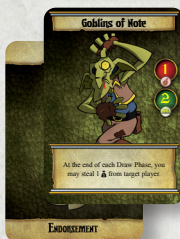




**5 Velvet Bags • 300 Plastic Chips + 8 Player-Colored Rings**  
**12 Dice: 4 D10s, 4 D8s, and 4 D6s**



**12 Bastard Cards**



**20 Endorsement Cards**



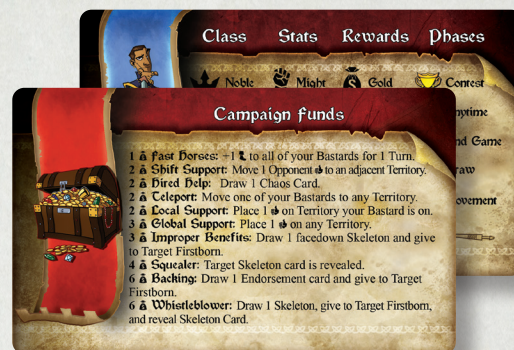
**80 Chaos Cards**



**20 Skeleton Cards**



**25 Contest Cards**



**4 Reference Cards**



**4 Battle Flags**



**1 First Player Marker**



**1 Turn Marker**



# Game Setup

1. Separately shuffle the Bastard, Skeleton, Endorsement, Contest, and Chaos decks.
2. Select a color and take the corresponding bag containing matching chips, dice, and stands.
3. Deal three Bastard cards face-down to each player. Each player picks a Bastard from the cards they were dealt and places that card face up on the play area. This Bastard is your **FirstBorn**. Return the rest of the cards to the Bastard deck and reshuffle it.
4. Draw one Skeleton card from the Skeleton Deck and place it face down to the right of your **FirstBorn** as indicated. Do not show Skeleton cards to anyone!
5. Shuffle and deal out all Territories face-down. Players can look at the Territories they are dealt. The player that has the “Joda City” Territory becomes the First Player and places the “Joda City” Territory first.



1



2



3



4



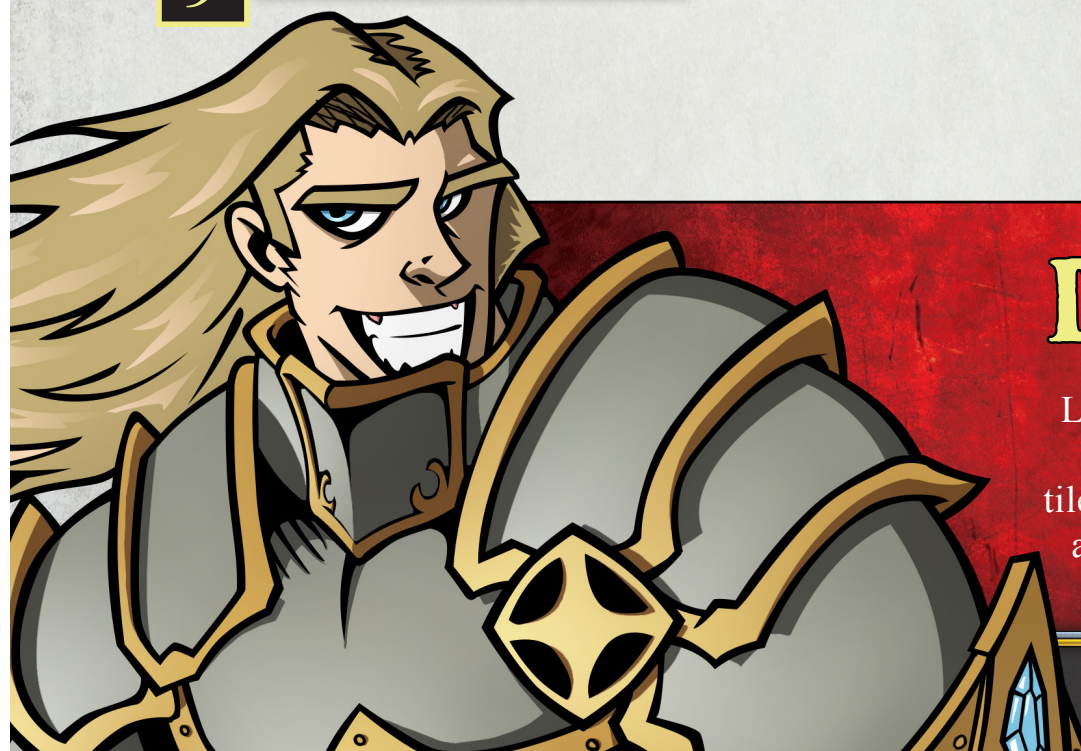
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6



6. Going clockwise, players lay down one Territory at a time until all Territories have been placed. Territories may be placed in any configuration, but must be placed adjacent to another on at least one side.
7. Place the First Player marker in front of the First Player.
8. Put the mini representing your chosen Bastard and place it on their Hometown Territory (located on the bottom middle of the Bastard card).
9. Place the Turn Tracker marker on Turn 1 of the Turn Tracker board.
10. Place the Bag of Gold on the table. You're now ready to play!



## Dick's Tip:

Look where your **Firstborn's** Hometown is when placing tiles...Strategic placement may assist in attaining the throne!



# The Goal

Players compete to have the most Support on each Territory by the end of the game. The player with the most Support on a Territory wins its Royal Approval points; the player with the most Royal Approval points wins!

# Taking Turns

A game of Royal Bastards consists of eight Turns. Each Turn consists of the following three phases in this order: **Draw**, **Movement**, and **Contest**.



## Draw Phase

The First Player passes the First Player marker to the player on their left, and moves the Turn Tracker marker to the next Turn on the Turn Tracker board. (*Skip this step on the first turn.*)

Starting with the First Player, and proceeding clockwise, each player draws Chaos cards until they have three in hand.



## Movement Phase

Starting with the First Player and going clockwise, each player may move their Bastards up to the number of Territories indicated by that Bastard's **Movement** attribute. You may move fewer spaces if you wish, or even choose to not move at all.

# Champion Bastards

At the end of the Festival on turn 4, you'll get a **Champion** Bastard to help you take the throne. It's like having another player on your team!



- During the Movement Phase, you'll move both your Firstborn and **Champion** Bastards, with their own independent Movement attributes.
- During the Contest phase, they can gain Gold and Support on Uncontested territories, and can participate in Contests.
- Your **Champion** and **Firstborn** add their totals together when contesting the same Territory.
- Instead of rolling a d10 in contests like your **Firstborn**, **Champions** roll a d8.









## Contest Phase

Each Territory with rival players' Bastards on it is Contested; each territory with only one player's Bastards on it is Uncontested.

For each Bastard on an Uncontested Territory, their player either places 1 Support Token  on that Territory OR or gains 2 Gold .

Contested territories trigger Contests between the rival Bastards occupying them. Place a Battle Flag on each Contested Territory. The First Player decides the order that Contested Territories are resolved. To resolve a contest:

1. Draw a Contest card.
2. Check which Attribute is being contested: **Might** , **Magic** , **Mastery**  or **Movement** .
3. All players may play Anytime or Contest Chaos cards at this time (even if they're not involved in the contest!).
4. Roll dice! **Firstborn Bastards** roll a d10; **Champion Bastards** roll a d8. Most Contests have a bonus die in the lower left corner; if your Bastard matches the listed Race or Class, roll a die of that type too and add it to your result. Each participating Bastard adds their contested Attribute to their roll.
5. The player whose Bastards had the highest total result is the Winner and receives a reward; all other Bastards are Losers and suffer a penalty.
6. Remove the Battle Flag and proceed to the next Contest.

## Festivals

Festivals are happy times for the citizens of Joda: a time for feasting and celebrating the kingdom's abundance. They're also your best opportunity to spread your word more widely to the populace!

**Festivals occur on turns 4 and 8. After the Draw Phase, replace the rest of the turn with the following steps:**

### Turn 4 Festival

1. Deal out Bastard cards equal to the number of players face-up. Move all Bastard minis to the Hometown of the first card dealt this way.
2. Draw a Contest card and resolve it as a Contest phase (see previous column). Ignore its winner and loser effects; instead, rank each player's total result from first to last.
3. In the order they placed in the Contest, each player distributes a number of Support tokens according to the numbers on the Turn Tracker among any Territories they wish.
4. In the order they placed in the Contest, each player selects one of the dealt Bastard cards as their **Champion**. That player takes that Bastard's mini and places it on that Bastard's Hometown.

### Turn 8 Festival

As above, except skip steps 1 and 4. Instead, move all Bastards to Joda City in step 1.

## Players Turn Order

All players may play during each phase during each turn, beginning with the **First Player**, then moving to the left until all players have played all phases in each turn.



# Cards & Pieces

## Bastards

Bastard cards are the heirs to the throne. **Firstborn Bastards** are the first Bastard you pick. On turn 4, you'll be able to select a second Bastard, your **Champion Bastard**.



1. **Name:** The name of the Bastard.
2. **Class:** The Bastard's job, before running for King. Adds a Bonus Die to some Contests.
3. **Race:** The Bastard's species. Adds a Bonus Die to some Contests.
4. **Attributes:** The Bastard's skills, used for deciding Contests and moving around.
5. **Hometown:** Which Territory this Bastard comes from.
6. **Ability:** An effect unique to this Bastard that changes the rules for their player.

## Territories

Eleven different Territories make up Joda. The Bastards must traverse the Territories in Joda to gather the support of the local citizenry.



7. **Name:** The name of the Territory.
8. **Royal Approval Points:** The value of this territory at the end of the game; the Bastard with the most Approval on this territory is awarded this many points when the game ends on turn 8.
9. **Color:** There are many Chaos and Skeleton cards that apply to color. The outer 6 points of the Territory is a specific color used by those cards.





# Chaos Cards


Chaos cards allow players the ability to bolster their Bastard or hinder their Rival as they 'campaign' for support from the local citizenry. They can also be sold in a pinch!

Each player has a maximum hand size of 3 Chaos cards. During the Draw Phase, you'll draw back up to your maximum hand size.


Chaos cards may be played at specific times depending on their Type:

 **Movement:** Only during the Movement phase.

 **Contest:** Before rolling dice in the Contest phase.

 **Anytime:** Any time except for the Draw phase.

Chaos cards are always resolved immediately when played. The only exception is Chaos cards that specifically cancel other Chaos cards.

In addition to their effect, Chaos cards also have a Value that they may be sold for. That value is written along the bottom of the card. When you sell a card, you get that much Gold . You may sell a Chaos card as an Anytime play.


Once the effect of a Chaos card has been resolved, place it face-up in a discard pile. If the Chaos card deck runs out of cards, reshuffle the discard pile and make a new deck from it.



**10. Name:** The name of the card.

**11. Type:** When this card may be played.

**12. Effect:** What the card does when played.

**13. Value:** The amount of Gold  you'll gain if you sell this card.

## What is a "Target?"

Most Chaos cards have a target. The target is the thing you choose when playing the card. For instance, if a card says "target player," it means that you'll pick a player when you play this card and apply the effects to that player. You can even pick yourself!



# Skeletons

Skeleton cards are scandals and dirty little secrets that each Bastard may have. Skeletons are something you do NOT want the citizenry to know about as their support for you will quickly be lost.

Skeletons are drawn face-down and placed on the left side of the Player Mat. While they're face down, they don't do anything; you only suffer their effects if something turns them face-up.



# Endorsements

Endorsement cards are promises of support from one of the many guilds, clubs, and cliques of Joda. They provide useful benefits to your Bastard.

Endorsements are drawn face-up and take effect immediately. Players may purchase Endorsements for 6 [gold coin icon]. Endorsement cards are placed face up next to your **Firstborn** Bastard card.



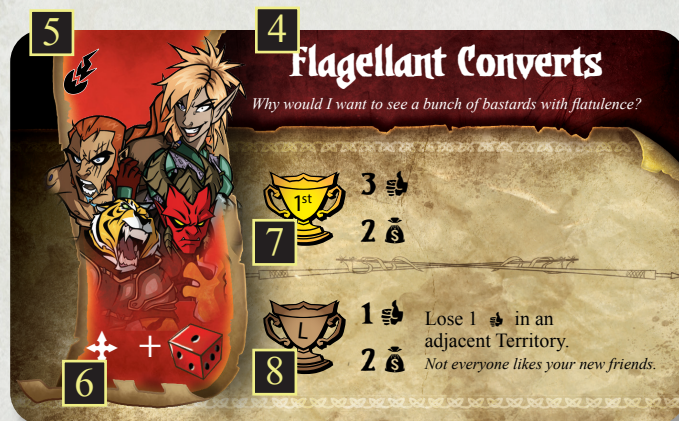
1. **Name:** The name of the card.
2. **Attribute Modifier:** Skeleton cards reduce the Bastard's indicated Attributes by this much; Endorsements increase it instead.
3. **Effect:** In addition to the attribute modifier, most Skeletons and Endorsements have an effect on the Bastard who holds them.











# Contests

Contest cards are used to determine who will win over the populace in a Territory.

Each Bastard involved in the Contest will roll their appropriate die (d10 for **Firstborn**, d8 for **Champions**) and add the Attribute indicated on the Contest card. The highest total is the winner, all other participants are considered losers!



4. **Name:** The name of the card.
5. **Contested Attribute:** Either **Might** , **Magic** , **Mastery**  or **Movement** . This Attribute is added to the Bastard's roll during the contest.
6. **Bonus Die:** If your Bastard has this race or class, roll a die of this type and add it to your total in this Contest.
7. **Winner Rewards:** The player who wins the Contest gains the listed amount of  and  on the contested Territory. Some contests also have additional effects!
8. **Loser Rewards:** All other players who participated in the Contest get the Loser Rewards: they gain  and  on the contested Territory, plus an additional effect if one is included on the card.



## Battle Flags

There are 4 Battle Flags included in the game. Battle Flags mark when there is a Contest in a Territory. Remove the flag when the Contest is resolved.

## First Player Marker



The First Player Marker is used to determine who the First Player is. After each round of play the First Player token is then shifted to the player on the left who then becomes the First Player.

## Support and Gold



Support Tokens are the player-colored plastic

chips in each player's velvet bag. Support is always gained on Territories; place these tokens on a Territory to mark your Support on that Territory.

Gold is represented by the yellow plastic chips. Keep any Gold you gain next to your player mat.



## How do I spend Gold?

You may spend Gold to buy any of the effects listed on your Reference card. Buying something uses the same timing rules as an Anytime Chaos card.



# Sample Contest

**Red's** Barry and **Blue's** Da' Donny and **Big Ron** have all ended up on Treasured Valley after their movement. Time for a Contest!

1. They draw a Contest card: *The Not So Great Debate*. They check the upper left corner of the Contest card and find that this Contest will be decided by the **Mastery** attribute. **Barry** currently has a **Mastery** of 5. **Blue** adds **Da' Donny's** 2 to **Big Ron's** attribute of 3 for a total **Mastery** of 5. They're evenly matched so far.
2. Time to play Chaos cards. **Blue** plays *Lore Games* to give himself an extra d8 to **Mastery**; he rolls and gets a 5.
3. **Red** plays *Bag of Extra Closet Space*. Extra Magic won't help here, so she chooses the mode that just gives +1 to this Contest.
4. **Black**, who is not in the Contest but wants to get in on the fun, decides to play Hecklers on **Red's** team to help them lose. That's a -3.
5. Nobody else wants to play Chaos cards, so it's time to roll some dice. **Blue** rolls a d10 for **Da' Donny**, his **Firstborn**, and a d8 for **Big Ron**, his **Champion**. He gets an 8 and a 3. Between his rolls and his bonuses, he ends up with a total of 21 ( $3 + 2 + 5 + 8 + 3$ ).
6. **Barry** the **Firstborn** rolls a d10 and scores a 10. Critical hit! That means he'll roll again and add the result; that roll is a 5. **Barry** also gets a bonus die for being a Priest; that roll is a 2. Added together, that brings his total to 20 ( $5 - 3 + 1 + 10 + 5 + 2$ ). That critical hit really did some work, but not enough!
7. **Blue** has won this contest (barely!), and receives the winner's prize: he'll place two Support Tokens here, and pick up a Gold for each adjacent Territory.
8. **Red** is the loser, so he'll perform the loser's effect: he gets to place a Support Token here, and gain 2 Gold, but he'll remove a Support Token from each adjacent territory.

## We Tied!

Ties suck, but we know they happen; here's how we resolve them.

Look at the participating Bastards' base scores in the contested Attribute. The "base score" is the number written directly on the Bastard card; ignore any Chaos, Skeleton, or Endorsement cards.

The team with the highest total base score in the contested attribute wins Contest.

In the event these scores are *still* equal, tied players each simultaneously roll a d10 until one player has the highest number; that player wins the Contest.









# Endgame



After Turn 8 is complete, the game is over and the Endgame begins! Players will total up their hard-earned Support and see who won the most Territories.

1. Flip the Turn Tracker over to the Score Tracker side.
2. Each Player places one of their unused Support Tokens at 0 on the Score Tracker.
3. Choose a Territory; each player counts their Support Tokens on that Territory. The player with the most Support Tokens wins that Territory: they pick up its tile and score Royal Approval Points equal to its Royal Approval value on the bottom of the tile.
4. In the event of a tie in Support on a Territory, the tied players draw a Contest card and resolve it using **ONLY** their **Firstborn** Bastards. Ignore its winner and loser effects; instead, the winner wins that Territory.

5. Repeat steps 3 and 4 until all Territories have been won.
6. Starting with the First Player and proceeding clockwise, each player has one final opportunity to buy effects and play or sell Chaos cards. **This is the last action you'll take in the game, so make your plays wisely!** If you have any Chaos cards that reward you at the end of the game, now is the time to reveal them.

If a player's score exceeds 49, place another Support Token on their Score Tracker ("King Me!") to indicate an extra 50 points and adjust its position to reflect that.

**The player with the highest total number of Royal Approval Points on the Score Tracker is crowned the king!** In the event of a tie, follow step 4 to determine the winner. The winner of that Contest is awarded both the crown and some major gloating rights!

## Advanced Timing

Chaos cards take effect in the order they were declared. Disputes may be settled by coin toss.

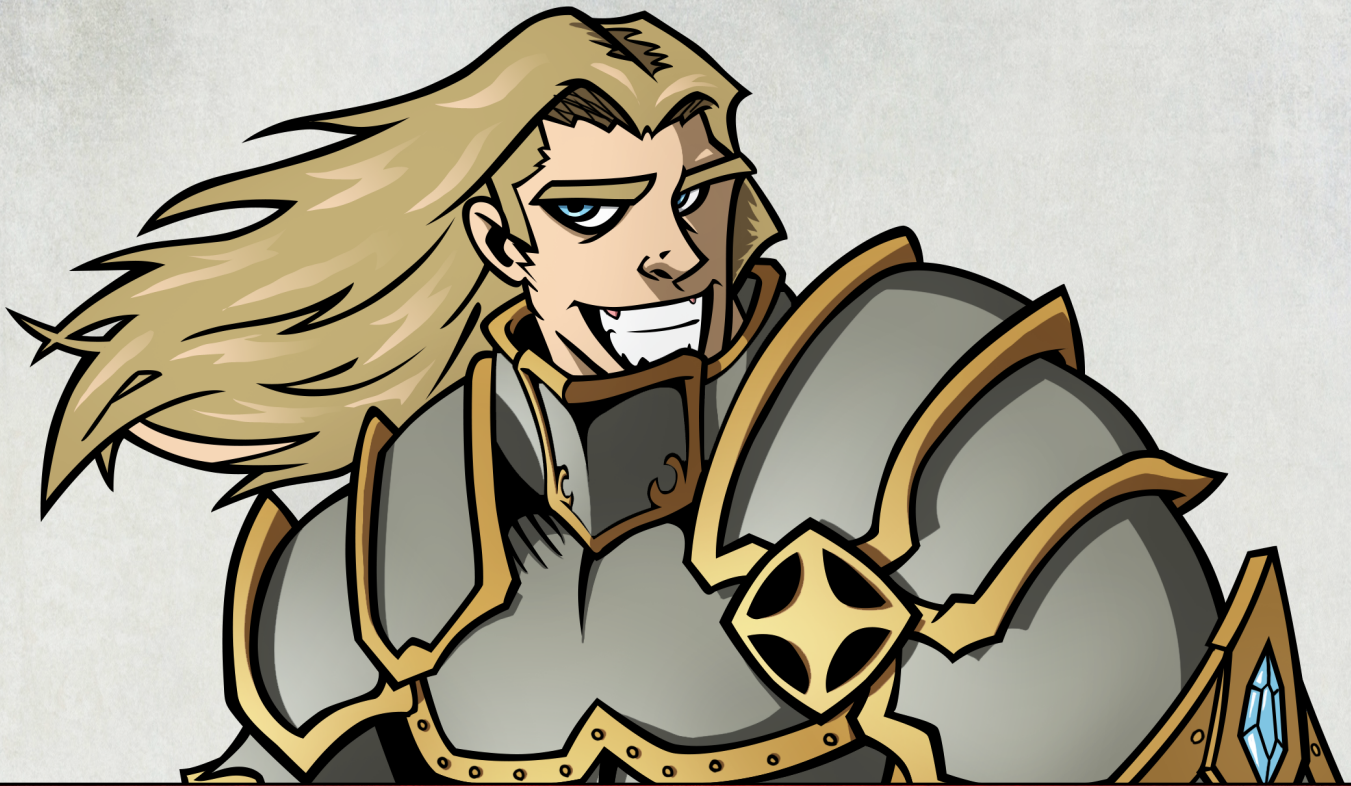
A Chaos card's effect must fully resolve before another Chaos card may be declared. Chaos cards that say "cancel" are the only exception to this rule.

Buying and selling using Gold is performed as an Anytime Chaos card, and uses the same rules described above.

During step 6 of the endgame, no other player may declare actions other than the current active player.







## Dick's FINAL Tip:

It's just not cool to count the Support Chips already placed in any territory, ***SO DON'T DO IT!*** You'll have to count on your saavy game play and intuition to know if you have enough support in any territory. When the game ends, the counting will begin, no hanging chads, no corrupt machines, just a good ol' thumbs up or down to see whose king!

# MAY THE BEST BASTARD WIN!!!





# Glossary

<u>Anytime</u>	<u>Chaos Cards, 11</u>	<u>Firstborn</u>	<u>Bastards, 10</u>
<u>Attribute</u>	<u>Contests, 13</u>	<u>First Player</u>	<u>First Player Token, 13</u>
<u>Bastards</u>	<u>Bastards, 10</u>	<u>Hand</u>	<u>Chaos Cards, 11</u>
<u>Battle Flags</u>	<u>Battle Flag, 13</u>	<u>Hometown</u>	<u>Bastards, 10</u>
<u>Buy</u>	<u>How do I Spend Gold, 13</u>	<u>Movement</u>	<u>Movement Phase, 8</u>
<u>Champion</u>	<u>Champion Bastards, 8</u>	<u>Royal Approval Points</u>	<u>Territories, 10</u>
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<u>Festival</u>	<u>Festivals, 9</u>	<u>Turn</u>	<u>Taking Turns, 8</u>



## FAQ

- What does rolling a 10 on a d10 do for me? When rolling the dice for a contest with your Firstborn, you will roll a d10. If the result of the roll is a 10, you roll the dice again and add the result to the previous roll. Do this every time a 10 is the result.
- Why are there phases in the game? The game is structured to 'stab your buddy in the back' but we need a structure in place to ensure the game flows properly. There are still plenty of chances to 'stab your buddy in the back'.
- What do the symbols on the cards mean?



Draw Phase. No cards may be played during this phase.



Movement Phase Cards can be played during the Movement phase only.



Contest Phase Cards can be played during the Contest phase only.



Anytime Cards can be played during Any phase, except the Draw phase.



Endgame Cards can be played during the End of Game counting only.



**Might:** A Bastard's raw strength, used in Might Contests.



**Magic:** A Bastard's adeptness at the magical arts, used in Magic Contests.



**Mastery:** A Bastard's natural ability to master difficult tasks, used in Mastery Contests.



**Movement:** A Bastard's fleet of foot skill, used in Movement Contest.

- Should I sell my Chaos Cards? Yes and No. Yes, if you really want to enhance your Bastards with Endorsements, or do dastardly things to your opponents by revealing a Skeleton Card. No, if you want to wait until the very end and try to steal the hard fought game from your opponent.

There are no right or wrong ways to win, just be ruthless, be a Dick, like your father!



# Game Credits

Game Design: Aaron Detmar, David Jordan, Joe Sibert

Artist: Giulio Fanfoni

Graphic Design: Scott Nicely

Rules Editing: Morgan Lair

We at Flamestryke games have so many people to thank for their enduring support of this wonderful game, without them, this game would not exist, so thank you to all who have supported us. Below are some of those we'd like to call out with a HUGE thank you and love!

--Flamestryke Games Fall, 2021

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Jakson, Stacey, Taylor, Tanner & Teanna, Marlene & Bruce Sibert

Will Donovan, Bill Doty, Dominick Ciraco, Bruce Delaney, Austin Townend

