

VIRTUS: SHORT GAME RULES

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1 - Setup

- Remove and set aside **Fate Cards** and **ID Cards**.
- **Each player is assigned ONE character by dealing each a score Card:** Priest, Scholar, Householder, Guildsman, and Nobleman.
- Give each player the **Recognition Marker** for their character.
- Find a pile of small objects that can be used as counters. We recommend pennies or nickels, but paper clips or small pieces of paper will work too. These will be used as **Honour Point Tokens** (see section 3.1).
- **Shuffle the Main Deck** and place it in the centre of the table. This Deck should contain Honour cards, Recognition Cards, Dishonour Cards, and Counter Cards.
- **Deal EIGHT cards** from the Main Deck to each player. This will be their starting hand.
- Take the **top THREE cards** from the Main Deck and place them face-up in a line near the Main Deck.

2 - Overview

Five medieval characters, each controlled by a player, compete for Honour and Recognition while trying to avoid Dishonour. When someone reaches the highest level of Recognition, the game ends and the player with the most Honour wins (see section 2.3).

The five characters are **divided into two groups** based on what type of cards can apply to them:

- The **Priest and Scholar are Clerics (Book Symbol)**; and
- the **Householder, Guildsman, and Nobleman are Laymen (Shield Symbol)**.

Universal Cards (Sun Symbol) can be played against **both Clerics and Laymen**.

Honour and Dishonour Cards or Points function independently of each other, so each player will maintain a separate running total of Honour Points and a separate total for Dishonour Points. (In other words, Dishonour Points do not negate Honour Points or vice versa).

Whenever a player plays a card, they **must read the card out loud**.

A note on player numbers:

Virtus, both the Full Game and the Short Game, were designed with 5 players in mind. This player count allows for all the roles to be played at the same time and balances the cards in the most even way.

Virtus can also be played with 3 or 4 players. If you choose to play in this way, know that different numbers of Laymen and Clerics will change how the game plays drastically. For example, if you play with only one Cleric and three Laymen then the sole Cleric will have less competition for Honour Cards but also will be the only recipient of Cleric Dishonour Cards. This could make for a very compelling and asymmetric experience, but make sure everyone at the table is aware of this type of change before playing.

For 3 and 4 player games that most resemble the structure of 5 player games, we recommend 1Cleric-2 Laymen and 2 Clerics-2 Laymen respectively. Nevertheless, feel free to try different combinations and think about how these might reflect different contexts in the medieval world.

2.1 - Turns

Play begins with the Nobleman's turn and proceeds clockwise. On their turn, a player may make **TWO actions**. The same type of action may be taken twice on a turn. These actions include:

- **Playing an Honour Card** for themselves or for another player (see section 3).
- **Playing a Recognition Card** for themselves or for another player (see section 4).
- **Playing a Dishonour Card** against another player (see section 5).
- **Discarding** any number of cards from their hand and drawing the same amount from the top of the Main Deck, but not from the 3 face-up cards (see section 2.2).
- Players may also **play Counter Cards** at certain times when it is **not their turn** (see section 6).

2.2 - Drawing Cards

Players **only draw cards to replace cards they have played at the end of their own turns**.

This means that some players may not always have 8 cards in their hand, but should always end their turns with 8 cards. When players draw in this way, they may choose to draw either from the Main Deck or from the 3 face-up cards (see section 1). If they draw a face-up card it is immediately replaced from the top of the Main Deck.

Players may also **discard and draw new cards as an action on their turn** (see section 2.1). This is done by discarding 1-8 cards from their hand and drawing the same number of cards from the Main Deck. These cards may **NOT** be taken from the 3 face-up options.

Whenever a player plays a Recognition card, the three face-up cards are immediately removed and refreshed with three new ones.

If the Main Deck ever runs out of cards, reshuffle the discard pile to form a new Main Deck.

On Chloe's turn she plays a Dishonour Card against Amani. At the end of Chloe's turn she will draw one of the 3 face-up draw cards, which is replenished from the top of the Main Deck. Amani plays a Counter Card to avoid the Dishonour Card. Amani will not be able to draw to replace this card until the end of her own turn.

Jordan discards 4 cards from his hand as an action on his turn. He then draws 4 cards from the Main Deck.

2.3 - Ending and Winning the Game

The short game has a 30-minute time limit. Start the timer when the Nobleman takes the first turn and when the timer finishes end the current turn round finishing with the last person prior to the nobleman.

When the game ends, the player with the **most Honour Points** wins the game, regardless of Recognition Level or number of Dishonour Points. The **Honour Point Total** consists of all of the points from **Honour Cards played in front of a player, the single Honour Points gained from playing Honour Cards for other players, and the Honour Points given by their Recognition Level** (see section 3 and section 4). If two players have equal Honour Points, the player with the higher Recognition Level wins. If a tie still remains, the player with less Dishonour wins. If there is a still a tie in all these components, the two players must fisticuff.

As an action on her turn, Katherine plays a Recognition Card on Cierra, placing Cierra at Level 5 Recognition.

2.4 - Contradictions

If the rules on a card ever disagree or allow a player to do something not outlined in the manual, ***always follow the rules on the card***. These cards are meant to allow players to act counter to the base rules.

3 - Honour

Honour Cards are the most important cards in the game as the player at the end of the game with the most Honour Points wins. Each Honour Card has **two components**:

- a value from 1-5; and
- a recipient (Clerics, Laymen, or Universal).

Cards that apply to **Clerics are indicated by the symbol of a book** in the top right corner. Those applying to **Laymen are indicated by a shield**, and those that apply **universally to anyone are indicated by a sun**.

An Honour Card may only be played **for a character that is a recipient of that card**, i.e., Clerics can receive Cleric Honour Cards, Laymen receive Lay Honour Cards, and anyone can accept Universal Honour Cards.

In any given turn, a player may play an Honour Card **for themselves or for another player** as one of their actions (see section 2.1). If a player plays an Honour Card for another player, they receive **a token worth 1 Honour Point** at the end of the game.

Honour Cards must always be played **in piles of ascending order**, with each pile beginning with an Honour Card valued at 1, with another valued a 2 on top of it, and so on (until 5). A player may have more than one stack of Honour Cards at once, so long as new Honour Card piles are created in the same way (beginning with 1 at the bottom, then 2, 3, ...) In other words, a player may have as many piles as they have 1-point Honour Cards.

Players are **not allowed to hide** their Honour Points and must tell other players their total if asked.

On her turn, Emily plays a value 2 Cleric Honour Card for herself. As she is the Scholar and has a value 1 Honour Card in front of herself with no other value 2 Honour Card already on it, this is a legal action. She now has 3 Honour Points in total.

After drawing a card Emily plays a value 1 Lay Honour Card for Kristen, the Nobleman. For giving an Honour Card to another player Emily receives 1 Honour Point Token. She now has 4 Honour Points.

3.1 – Favours

Once per turn a player may play an Honour Card for another player **without using one of their two actions** to do so (see section 2.2). This functions exactly the same as if they played the card using an action, with the giver gaining 1 Honour Point Token and the recipient gaining the played Honour Card. In this way a player can gain an Honour Point on their turn without using one of their actions.

4 - Recognition

Throughout the game players increase their Recognition Level. Everyone starts at Level 1 Recognition, and increases to Level 5. As an action, players may play a Recognition Card on themselves or on another player in **order to increase their Recognition Level by one level** (see section 2.1). **For each level of Recognition, a player also gains 1 Honour Point.**

A player's Recognition Level also dictates **how much Dishonour they can collect** before they are forced to **Relocate** (see sections 5 and 5.1). At Level 1 Recognition a player can take 8 Dishonour Points before being forced to Relocate. If a Level 1 Recognition player gets 9 or more Dishonour Points, they are forced to Relocate immediately. This Dishonour Cap increases as follows:

Whenever a player plays a Recognition Card, the three face-up cards are **immediately** removed and refreshed with three new ones

Recognition Level	Dishonour Cap
1	8
2	10
3	12
4	14
5	16

Dan has accrued 8 Dishonour Points and only a Recognition Level of 1. If he gains any more Dishonour he will be forced to Relocate, losing all of the Honour Points he gained. To avoid this, he uses one action on his turn to play a Recognition Card for himself, increasing his Recognition Level to 2. Now he can gain up to 10 Dishonour Points without being Relocated.

5 - Dishonour

Over the course of the game players will be trying to avoid gaining Dishonour. Dishonour Cards have **two components**:

- a value from 2-5;
- and a recipient (Clerics, Laymen, or Universal).

A Dishonour Card may be played as one of the actions on a player's turn **against another player** (see section 2.1). If the targeted player cannot play a Counter Card in response, (see section 6), that player is forced to **accept the Dishonour Card** by placing it in front of themselves. **It immediately contributes to their Dishonour Point Total.**

Players are **not allowed to hide** their Dishonour Points and must tell other players their total if asked.

As an action on her turn, Kristen plays a 4-point Lay Dishonour Card against Ben, the Householder, a fellow Layman. Ben does not have a Counter Card to deflect the Dishonour Card, so he places it in front of himself. As this is the first Dishonour Card played against him, Ben now has 4 Dishonour Points.

5.1 - Relocation

If a player's Dishonour Point Total ever exceeds their Dishonour Cap (see section 4), they are forced to 'Relocate to another town', their reputation being too tarnished to recover. This player immediately **loses all of the Honour and Dishonour Points** that they gained and **return to Level 1 Recognition**.

Frank is playing the Guildsman and is at Recognition Level 3. Nicole plays a Dishonour Card against another player who cannot play a Counter Card against it. The Dishonour Card is added to the Rumour Mill queue. As this is the 5th card in the queue, at the end of Nicole's turn, the first card in the Rumour Mill queue is given to Frank, which was paired with Frank's Character Card. By taking this card Frank's Dishonour Point Total reaches 11, going over his cap of 10. Frank is therefore immediately forced to Relocate. His Recognition Level resets to 1 and he loses all of his Honour and Dishonour Points. Frank has failed to defend his masculinity as a Guildsman and must flee to another town in shame.

6 - Counters

Counter Cards are used by players to defend themselves from Dishonour Cards. Counter Cards have **two components**:

- a value range (2-3 or 4-5); and
- a user (Clerics, Laymen, or Universal).

When a Dishonour Card is played against someone, the targeted player may **play a Counter Card to deflect the Dishonour Card**. Deflecting the Dishonour Card sends both the Dishonour Card and the Counter Card to the discard pile. For a Counter Card to work the player playing it must be listed on the card **as a user** and the **value range must match** the value of the Dishonour Card.

On Jack's turn, he plays a 5-point Cleric Dishonour Card against Jonah, the Priest. In order to avoid this Dishonour Card, Jonah plays a Cleric Counter Card to deflect 4- and 5-point Dishonour Cards. This is a legal play as the value and user of the Counter Card match that of the Dishonour Card. Jonah successfully protects his masculinity and both the Dishonour Card and the Counter Card are placed into the Discard Pile.