

Virtue

A game of evil, and the souls that face it

Goal of the Game

In Virtue, you play as knights of Camelot, charged with a holy duty to defend the honor of your realm. If the knights are a just and heroic lot, the noble and mighty deeds will earn the kingdom more honor and dishonor, and the righteous will rejoice. If they are cowards and villains, the kingdom will collapse, and only the most wicked (and wealthy) will prosper.

Like any mortal sinner, you have capacity for good and evil. It's possible to win whether or not Camelot survives these times, and you will not begin the game as either a loyal or disloyal team member. Just don't get caught playing for the losing side.

Getting Started

First, each player picks a color, and takes all cubes of that color. Now separate the four decks (Virtue, Treasure, Quest, and Trial) and place them between all players.

Then deal 4 (or five, if you desire an easier game) virtue cards and one treasure card to each player. Virtue cards are secret to other players: you may *tell* other players what cards you have, but you may not actually *show* the



cards to prove that you aren't lying. Your treasure cards are public information, and are always placed face-up on the table in front of you.

Finally place the honor/dishonor track (the piece with two grooves in it) between all players. During the game, players will either gain honor or dishonor, placing one cube on the appropriate groove. Honor and dishonor from the same player always cancels out; if you already have dishonor and you gain honor, remove a cube from dishonor instead, and vice versa. If all of your cubes are on one track and you need to place another, pick any cube of another player's color to remove from the opposite track.

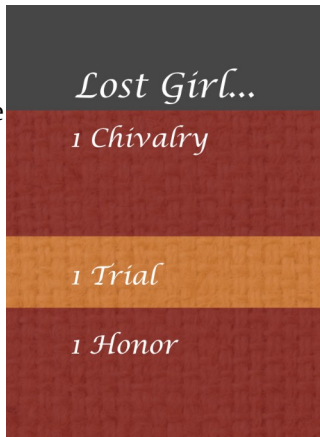
Finally, draw one quest card from the top of the deck, and place it face up between all the players.



Quests and Virtues

Take a look at this quest. In the first section are one or more virtues. These are the virtues that a knight will require to complete this quest. You may (or may not) see the word “trial” on the orange section of this card. If so, the quest contains a trial: an additional unknown virtue that a knight will need to prevail. There is no way to know ahead of time what the trial will require, and there is danger to not being ready. Finally, the bottom of the card will describe the quest reward: either honor or treasure.

When embarking on quests, you will use your virtues to demonstrate you have what it takes to prevail. Simply show the appropriate cards and return them to your hand, without discarding them.



If the quest has no trials, simply showing the needed virtues completes the quest. If there is a trial, you must first show the listed virtues, then draw a trial card. A trial card will show one or more additional virtues, and you must show the additional virtues immediately. Virtues you already used on this quest can't be used in the trial, and other players may not contribute to either the trial or original quest.

The quest and trial decks are never exhausted. If you run out of quests or trials to draw, simply shuffle your discard deck and replace the deck.

Taking a Turn

The first player to offer to let someone else go first goes first. On your turn, you must perform one action.

Quest

If you think you can complete a quest, you may use your action to start a quest. Declare which quest you are attempting and show the appropriate virtues from your hand. You may start a quest with a trial without knowing if you will pass the trial, but you may NOT “half start” a quest when you don’t have all listed virtues.

If you complete a quest and any trials, you now claim the quest’s reward. Honor is represented by placing one cube of your color on the “honor” side of the track. Treasure comes in the form of treasure cards. If a quest earns you treasure, draw one from the deck and place it face up in front of you; unlike the virtues in your soul, the contents of your hoard are known to all. In either event, discard the quest card.

If you cannot provide the virtues needed to pass a trial, one of two things happen, based on the trial card. If you **fail this quest**, you must also discard the virtue cards you showed to start

the quest. Additionally, you take one dishonor. Note that this might result in adding TWO dishonor in one turn if you fail a quest, resulting in taking a new quest, resulting in too many quests being on the table.

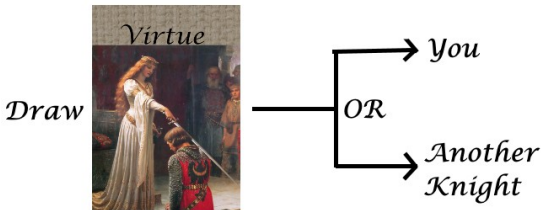
Dead

If you **die**, you are dead. Take a token with the “dead” side facing up. You will take no more turns (and draw no more quests) for the rest of the game. The game isn’t over for you: you can still win if Camelot prevails, and your spirit is free to guide others, and urge them to the path of righteousness.

In either event, the trial card stays on that quest. Any future player attempting that quest will always face that trial.

Pray

Pray Action



If you don't think you are strong enough to complete a quest, you may instead **pray** for yourself, or someone else. Draw a virtue card from the deck, and give it to any living player. Only the player who receives the card (which can be yourself) is allowed to look at it.

Ending your Turn

After your action, if you did not successfully complete a quest (which includes the trial), you draw a new quest card, placed face up in the middle of the table just like the first quest. If there are now more quests out than players, you also take one dishonor: place one of your cubes on the “dishonor” side of the track.

Winning the Game

As honor (or perhaps dishonor) accumulates, align the lines of cubes. When the difference between total honor and total dishonor is greater than the number of players (including any players who become dead or banished), the game immediately ends.

3-player game example



Honor and
Dishonor tied



Honor almost
wins



Honor wins!

If honor wins over dishonor, that means Camelot has won! All players win together, even any knights who died a noble death defending the realm.

You now know enough to start playing! Start taking turns, and see if you can beat quests and win a couple games. Don't worry about the points you may notice on treasure cards; they don't matter right now.

Of course, it is possible that the DISHONOR is the higher number, or you run out of virtue cards before saving the kingdom. On the off chance you notice your game is getting close to that unfortunate state, you may need to take a look at the later pages...

The Tome of Despair

Collapse (dishonor winning)

So the kingdom is falling apart. The so-called “Knights of the Round Table” aren’t able to stand up to the troubles facing the realm, and soon the realm will be beyond repair. What can you do about it?

First, you could give up and enjoy the decline. In the event the game ends in dishonor, only one knight can win, determined by the following rules:

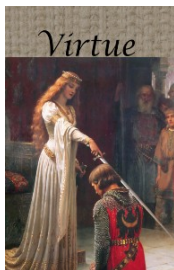
If there are any living knights with treasure, the most points of treasure wins. This event is also the only use of the “Sin” card: any player may now reveal sin cards, and place each of them on one treasure card, doubling the point value. A sin may only be placed on one treasure, and treasure may only be modified by one sin.

If there is a tie for points among living knights, each knight’s honor minus dishonor is used for determining a winner.

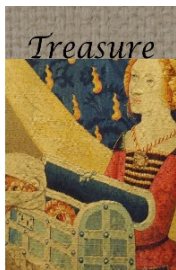

If this is also a tie, the game continues until a previous condition is met to find a winner, either by a knight gaining treasure, dying on a quest, or gaining honor or dishonor.

If all knights have died, no knights win.

Tax



Tax Action



If you have given up on Camelot and want to ensure you are the one knight who wins, you may choose to **tax the peasants** as an action. Discard one virtue card from your hand, placing it face down, and draw a treasure card in exchange.

Banish

If, instead, you wish to prevent this dreadful ending, you may attempt to **banish** an

unworthy knight. As your action, pick one living knight who has not already been banished, and show one virtue with the crossed-swords icon (swordplay, courage, or guile). The knight being banished may then show a virtue with the same icon (this does not need to be the same kind of virtue) to resist banishment. The player attempting to banish may show another virtue (of one of those three types), against which the defender must show another to resist, and so on. If the defender is ever unable to respond, the banishment succeeds.



Banished

If you are banished, take a token with the “banished” side up. Remove all tokens of your color from both honor and dishonor. You will take no more turns (and draw no more quests) for the rest of the game. A banished

knight can still win if Camelot falls (in fact it might be handy to not be affiliated with the kingdom after it's fallen into such dishonor) but banishing a dishonorable knight may raise the overall honor of Camelot enough to save the kingdom.

If the attacker does not show more cards than the defender, the banishment fails and nothing else happens. The attacker is allowed to choose to not show another card, giving up the attempt, and the defender is allowed to not respond to a card, voluntarily choosing banishment.

Note that there is no prerequisite to start using tax or banishment actions. These rules are simply being introduced later to better teach the game. In games where things are going well, it is common for no player to ever do either of these, but if you think that it serves your purposes, you may tax the peasants or attempt to banish as early as the first turn. Since neither of these actions can result in completing a quest, you will always end your turn by adding a new quest.

Crisis (out of virtue cards)

In the event that the virtue deck is out of cards, the kingdom has truly entered the end times. Starting with the next turn after the last virtue card was drawn, knights no longer take normal actions. At the start of their next turn, all living, non-banished knights must declare a final allegiance:

Knights who chose exile are immediately banished, *but without removing any cubes from honor or dishonor*, and take no more turns.

Knights who choose loyalty must draw a quest card from the top of the deck, and attempt to complete it, every turn. Completing the quest always results in taking one honor, while failing to complete the quest or any trials always results in death, regardless of the quest.

Play in crisis continues until all loyal knights have died, or honor finally wins over dishonor. In either case, winners are determined as normal.

Optional Rules

It would be wise to discuss with other players which rules you want to use before starting a game. It would also be wise to not use these rules for your first couple games. Once you have some more experience with the game, these rules can help to balance out some unusual situations.

Special Actions

1) When a knight completes a quest or taxes the peasants, any banished knight may show **AND DISCARD** two cards of the same virtue, other than sin, to **mock** the knight. The knight being mocked must show one virtue of that type, or the action is blocked and the knight does not get any treasure or honor, and any quest is not completed. The virtue card shown to block the mockery may not be the card being discarded for the tax action, or any of the cards used to complete the quest or the trials for the quest action.

Note that a blocked action does **NOT** count as failing a quest, but it does count as taking a turn without completing a quest, and therefore results in drawing a quest.

2) A truly selfless knight may, after completing a quest, discard 4VP worth of treasure to draw another quest from the quest deck and immediately attempt it. Drawing this quest never adds dishonor, despite the normal rules. Virtues shown for the first quest may be re-used on the second quest. Failing a quest with a trial still suffers the usual penalties, but even if the second quest is not completed, a quest was still completed on this turn, meaning that you don't have to draw *another* quest.

The Devil and the Holy Ghost

If you wish to play with more than 6 players, want to make it easier or harder for the kingdom to win, or just want a different experience, a player may play as the Devil or the Holy Ghost. Neither the Devil nor the Holy Ghost takes normal turns, and neither count as “knights” for the purpose of any other rules. The Holy Ghost only wins if Camelot survives, and the Devil only wins if Camelot falls.

The Devil starts the game with 1 trial card, 1 treasure card, and 1 virtue card, all kept

secret from other players. The Devil may, at any time, do one of the following:

- Add a trial to a quest that any knight is attempting to complete, and draw one treasure card.
- Trade a treasure card with any knight in exchange for a virtue card. This requires the knight's consent, but neither party is required to be honest about which card is being traded.
- Place a virtue card on top of the virtue deck, and draw a trial in exchange

The Holy Ghost *may not speak during the game*. The Holy Ghost starts the game with 1 quest card, 2 virtue cards and 1 quest card, all kept secret from other players. The Holy Ghost may, at any time, do one of the following:

- Place a virtue card on top of the virtue deck, and draw one quest in exchange.
- Place a quest from your hand in the center of the table, as if a knight had drawn a quest at the end of the turn. This never adds any dishonor, but does counts towards the number of quests.
- Draw a virtue card any time a knight completes a trial.

Art

Trial back: The Torment of Saint Anthony - Michelangelo – c. 1487-1488

Quest back: illustration from "The Boy's King Arthur" – N.C. Wyeth - 1922

Treasure back: The Lady and the Unicorn – unknown – c. 1500

Virtue back: The Accolade – 1901 - Edmund Leighton

Sin front: Adam and Eve, the fall of man – ca. 1300-1310

Guile front: Kiss of Judas – Jean-Bourdichon – c1500

Chivalry front: God Speed - Edmund Leighton – 1900

Piety front: Earl Johann II of Saarbrücken (?) as Donator – ca. 1360/1365

Courage front: St. George and the Dragon – Martorell - 1435

Swordplay front: illustration from "The Boy's King Arthur" – N.C. Wyeth - 1922

Honor/Dishonor Track: The Fall of the Rebel Angel - Luca Giordano – 1660

Box: The Book of Hours, Use of Paris – 1405

Shameless Self-Promotion

This is a prototype edition of Virtue. Please pass it around to as many tables as this box can reach. If you want to be notified when the full game goes into crowd sale, email virtuecardgame@gmail.com or visit the shop page directly at <https://www.thegamecrafter.com/games/virtue3>