

A Game of Thrones™
Hand of the King



The Great Houses of Westeros have gathered in King's Landing for a lavish tourney and feast. The people of Westeros have traveled from every corner of Westeros to pay tribute to the King and his royal court. You have journeyed far to be among them, for you wish to become the Hand of the King!

In order to be chosen by the King, you will need to garner the support of these illustrious families. You employ Varys, the Spider, to move among the nobles, whispering your name and convincing them to join your campaign and to give you their support. Your power and influence must spread throughout the Great Houses of Westeros if you intend to be named the Hand of the King.

However, nothing comes easy in Westeros, least of all power. One cannot simply make a move and expect it to remain unchallenged. Your enemies are also working to their own ends in King's Landing and are reaching out to gain their own supporters. You must be very clever if you wish to play the game of thrones, but you must also work very quickly.

OBJECT OF THE GAME

During a game of *Hand of the King*, players take turns moving the Varys card among the grid of character cards that make up King's Landing. As players move Varys, they collect character cards to gain banner tokens belonging to the Great Houses of Westeros. At the end of the game, the player with the most banner tokens is the winner!

COMPONENTS



8 House Stark Character Cards



7 House Greyjoy Character Cards



6 House Lannister Character Cards



5 House Targaryen Character Cards



4 House Baratheon Character Cards



3 House Tyrell Character Cards



2 House Tully Character Cards



1 Varys Card



14 Companion Cards



7 Banner Tokens



4 Three-Eyed Crow Tokens

SETUP

1. **Create King's Landing:** Shuffle the 35 character cards and the Varys card together, then place each card faceup onto the center of the table, creating a six by six grid of cards: this is **KING'S LANDING**. Each player should also have space in front of him; this is his **PLAY AREA**.
2. **Gather Banners:** Place the banner tokens near King's Landing.
3. **Prepare Companions:** Shuffle the deck of companion cards. Then, reveal the top six cards from the deck and place them faceup beside the deck.
4. **Determine First Player:** The youngest player takes the first turn.

PLAYING THE GAME

During a game, starting with the first player and proceeding clockwise, players take turns moving the Varys card. To move Varys, a player declares both a direction and a House. The declared direction indicates the path of cards along which the player will move Varys, and the declared House indicates the cards in the chosen direction that the player wishes to take.

A player can only move Varys along the grid of cards in one of the four cardinal directions: up, down, left, or right (Varys cannot move diagonally). Varys must always move to another card in the grid, and that card must belong to the House that the player declared. Each character card belongs to one of the seven Houses in King's Landing, each of which is identified by both the card's background colors and a unique sigil on the upper-left corner of the card.



House Lannister's sigil and colors.

After a player has declared a direction and a House, he moves Varys to the farthest character card of that House in that direction, moving over any other character cards and empty spaces along the way. Then, the player takes the character card that Varys was moved to as well as any other character cards of his declared House that Varys moved over. The cards he takes are removed from King's Landing and placed in his play area. At the end of his turn, if he has an equal or greater number of character cards belonging to a particular House than any of his opponents, he takes that House's corresponding banner token and places it in his play area.

Players continue taking turns moving Varys to collect character cards and House banners until the game ends. The game ends immediately when Varys cannot move because there is not a character card in any direction.

Companion Cards

The six faceup companion cards are the **AVAILABLE COMPANIONS**, which represent people who wish to support your bid to be named as the King's Hand. Each companion card has an ability which grants assistance to the player who acquires it. The six cards drawn during setup are the only companions in play during the game.

Gaining a Companion

When a player takes the final character card of a particular House from King's Landing, he chooses one of the available companion

Player Turn Example

1. Varys can move in any **one** of the four cardinal directions.

- If Varys moves down, he can take Targaryen, Stark, or Lannister.
- If Varys moves up, he can take Lannister or Tyrell.
- If Varys moves left, he can take Stark or Baratheon.
- Varys cannot move right because there are no cards in that direction.



It is Elisa's turn. She decides to move Varys to the left and she declares House Stark.



2. Elisa picks up the Varys card and moves it to the furthest Stark card (Eddard Stark). She takes that character card and all the other Stark cards Varys moved over (Bran Stark).



3. She places the two Stark cards in her play area. The space which previously held the other Stark card remains empty.

Finally, she checks to see if she has a number of Stark cards equal to or greater than any of her opponents.



Play continues with the player to Elisa's left; that player moves the Varys card from its new position in King's Landing.







cards and resolves it immediately by following the instructions on the card. After resolving a companion card, the player discards it unless the card specifically states otherwise.

If a player uses a companion to take the final character card from a House, he immediately chooses another available companion card and resolves it as normal.

Each House has a specified number of characters, shown on the bottom-right corner of each character card.

- House Stark has eight characters.
- House Greyjoy has seven characters.
- House Lannister has six characters.
- House Targaryen has five characters.
- House Baratheon has four characters.
- House Tyrell has three characters.
- House Tully has two characters.



The number of characters in House Lannister is shown on a character card.

Killing and Taking Characters

Many companion cards allow a player to kill or take characters. When a player takes a character, he places it in his play area. When a player kills a character, he discards the character, removing it from the game. If a player kills the final character from any House, he does not choose a companion card.
Note: Shae, Jon Snow, and Gendry cannot be taken or killed.

Example: *During Kevin's turn, he takes Margaery Tyrell, the final remaining Tyrell card. He chooses Hodor from the available companion cards. He immediately resolves Hodor's ability, which allows him to take Bran Stark; the Bran Stark card happens to be the final remaining Stark card in King's Landing.*

Kevin immediately chooses another companion card; this time, he chooses Bronn. He immediately resolves Bronn's ability, which allows him to take Tyrion Lannister. He takes the Tyrion Lannister card in his opponent's play area and places it in his own play area.

If using a companion causes a tie between two or more players for the number of character cards of any given House, the player who used the companion chooses which tied player receives the banner token.

END OF THE GAME

When a player can no longer legally move the Varys card, the game immediately ends. Any character cards remaining in King's Landing and any remaining companion cards are discarded.

To determine a winner, each player counts the banner tokens in his play area. The player with the highest number of banner tokens wins the game. If there is a tie for the highest number of banner tokens, the tied player with the banner token belonging to the House with the highest number of characters wins the game.

Example: *At the end of the game, Elisa has the banner tokens for Lannister, Tyrell, and Greyjoy. Kevin has the banner tokens for Targaryen, Tully, and Baratheon. They are tied for the highest number of banner tokens with three each. Out of the Houses they hold, House Greyjoy has the most characters (7), so Elisa wins the game.*

VARIANTS

Players who wish to increase the complexity of a game of *Hand of the King* can use the variants described in this section.

Four-Player Team Variant

This variant pits the players against each other in teams of two. The two partnered players sit across from each other. The game is played as normal until the game ends. Then, the teammates add their banners together to determine their team's final score; the team with the highest number of banners wins the game.

Note: Banners can move between team members exactly as they would if the players were competing during a normal game.

Three-Eyed Crow Variant

To increase the intrigue and secrecy of *Hand of the King*, players can add the three-eyed crow tokens to their game. These tokens allow players to secretly strategize during the game. When three-eyed crow tokens are in play, table talk is forbidden. Players must use their crow tokens if they wish to converse with their partners…or with their enemies!

The three-eyed crow variant can be used in a three- or four-player game. To use this variant, follow these rules:

Three Players

During a three-player game, each player works to gain banner tokens for himself. In addition to the normal setup, each player takes one three-eyed crow token and places it in his play area.

At the beginning of his turn, a player may discard his three-eyed crow token to choose an opponent. Those two players leave the game area to have a confidential strategy discussion lasting no more than one minute. After they return, the player makes his move with Varys as normal.

When using the three-eyed crow variant, each player acts alone. A player may not converse or strategize with his opponents without discarding a three-eyed crow token.

Four Players

The four-player game pits the players against each other in teams of two. The two partnered players sit across from each other. In addition to the normal setup, each player takes one three-eyed crow token and places it in his play area.

At the beginning of his turn, a player may discard his three-eyed crow token; then, he leaves the game area with his teammate to have a confidential strategy discussion lasting no more than one minute. After they return, the player makes his move with Varys as normal.

When using the three-eyed crow variant, each player acts alone. A player may not converse or strategize with his teammate (or with his opponents) without discarding a three-eyed crow token.

Note: Banners can move between team members exactly as they would if the players were competing during a normal game.

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