

Kings Court

An investigation and bluffing game for 6 to 12 players, aged 14 and up. Duration: 10 to 20 minutes.

OVERVIEW

The player who takes on the role of the King will pass their royal box from player to player. Each player will take that chance to steal some of the diamonds or a character cards it contains. The King will interrogate them afterwards to identify the Thieves and recover the diamonds.

Components

- 13 diamonds (All Diamond cards)
- 10 character cards: 5 Loyal Peasant(2-6 Spades), 2 Usurpers(Queen/Jack of Clubs), 2 Apprentices (2 Black Aces), 1 Guard (Joker/Ace of hearts), 1 Princess (Queen of Hearts)
- 2 Kings Gift cards (Black Kings)
- 1 game box

SETUP

The most experienced player becomes the King. They place the 13 diamonds and the character cards indicated below into the box. The available Kings Gifts are to be placed in front of them.

- The King chooses to secretly remove 0-3 diamonds from the box and keeps them hidden. There are therefore between 10 and 13 diamonds in the box.
- The remaining contents are removed from the game area.

Number Of Players	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Peasants	1	2	3	4	4	4	5
Usurpers	1	1	1	1	2	2	2
Apprentices	1	1	1	1	1	2	2
Kings Gifts.	0	0	1	1	1	2	2

GAME OVERVIEW

The game is divided into two phases: the Diamond Theft and the Investigation.

I. Diamond Theft

During the "Diamond Theft", the box is passed around the table clockwise, player to player, starting with the first player. Each player, when they receive the box, must: **(1)**,secretly examine the contents under the table(or hidden some other way) **(2)** help themselves, **(3)** and then pass the box along.

1 - The player opens the box and removes the cards in a way such that the other players cannot see the cards when removed, they then memorizes the number of diamonds and the remaining character cards. This information is critical to accurately testify or lie believably!

2 - The player **MUST** take, discreetly: as many diamonds as they wish (1 minimum) OR 1 character card of their choice. The player keeps their "take" hidden in their pocket (or their hand, or bag...). Of course, they can't reveal their "take" before the King demands it. **IT IS FORBIDDEN TO TAKE NOTHING!**

EXCEPTIONS

- The first player can secretly dismiss a character card of their choice by turning the card backwards in the stack, The players then help themselves normally. It is not allowed to dismiss diamonds. A dismissed card cannot be taken by anyone.

- Each player who gets a totally empty box automatically becomes a Street Urchin. They treat it as if it wasn't empty and pretend to help themselves.

- The last player can decide to not take anything in order to become a Street Urchin. However, they must still pretend to take something.

Note: At any moment during the game, if a player has not respected the requirement to help themselves, in the permitted quantities, that player will be Exiled immediately. **AN EXILED PLAYER CANNOT SPEAK NOR PARTICIPATE IN THE INVESTIGATION.**

3 - Once their share is hidden, They place all cards back in the box and pass it to the player to their left.

II. Investigation

The King recovers the box, checks its contents, and then freely interrogates the players, in the order of their preference, to recover the stolen diamonds. These players are free to be truthful or to lie, keep quiet, talk without being interrogated...

Note: the King's success is ensured if all of the players have stolen diamonds.

Good questions to ask?

- "When you received the box, how many diamonds were in it?"
- "When you received the box, which character cards were in it?"
- "When you passed the box along, what was left in it?"
- "What did you take?"

The King must vary the questions from one player to the next, resume the debates and spot the reliable people from among the contradictions! The game is much more amusing and interesting when the player acts out the King's character in a believable manner.

When the King believes they have found a Thief, they must accuse them by ordering them to: "empty your pockets!". This is the only valid way to force a player to immediately disclose his take.

- If the player has stolen any diamonds, the diamonds are placed in front of the King.

The Thief is **Exiled**, and **CAN THEREFORE NO LONGER TALK!** The King continues the investigation until they have recovered all of their diamonds.

- If the player hasn't stolen any diamonds, the King has made a mistake! As an apology, the King must give a Kings Gift to the unjustly accused player. That player isn't Exiled and the investigation continues normally. If the King no longer has any Kings Gifts left to give during an unjust accusation, the King is Exiled and the investigation immediately ends.

- If the accused player is a Usurper, the investigation ends and the Usurper wins the game.

As the Usurpers are only interested in becoming the next King, the King can't give them any Kings Gifts.

In case of an error?

If a player makes a mistake while helping themselves, in all cases they are Exiled. If the mistake is revealed when the player is accused, the King doesn't give them a Kings Gift. The investigation continues normally.

III. END OF THE INVESTIGATION

-If the King recovers all of their stolen diamonds, they will share the victory with their Loyal Peasants.

-If the King has accused a Usurper, that Usurper wins the game alone.

-If the King is Exiled, the Thieves still in play reveal their take. The Thief who has stolen the most diamonds wins, as well as all of the Street Urchins.

-The Apprentice wins if the player to their right is one of the winners.

-The winners choose a new King to begin a new investigation.

VARY THE GAMES

It's recommend that players change places between games.

Experienced players can change the distribution and roles of characters while following the number of cards initially identified and while keeping enough Loyal Peasants.

It's possible to change the difficulty of a game by changing the number of Kings Gifts available, if you're playing with kids, for example. Adding Kings Gifts makes the investigation easier for the King; by removing them it improves the chance of victory for the Thieves.

ABOUT THE CHARACTERS

The King: (No cards/Hidden Diamond cards/Black Kings)

They've sacrificed much to become the leader of this Kingdom. And they intend to stay there!

The King wins if they recover all of their diamonds. They referee the debates, makes sure everyone has their say, and demands absolute respect from their Subjects!

Note: The King must only accuse the Thieves to avoid losing their Kings Gifts and being Exiled.

The Thieves: (Stolen diamond cards)

If they can get away they'll be set for life.

If the King is Exiled, the Thief who is still in play with the greatest number of diamonds is declared the winner. In case of a tie, the tied Thieves will share in the victory.

The Loyal Peasants: (2-6 Spades)

Their loyalty to the King will secure them a steady income.

These Loyal Peasants will win if the King recovers all of the diamonds. They must convince the King that they are telling the truth and help find the Thieves.

The Usurpers (Queen/jack of clubs)

An Heir to the throne waiting for the king to make a mistake and claim the throne themselves.

The Usurper immediately wins if they are accused by the King. If two Usurpers are present, the accused one wins alone.

The Apprentice: (Black Ace)

Their goal is to protect their Master, even though they are not always aware of their intentions.

The Apprentice wins if the player to their right is victorious.

THE STREET URCHIN(No cards or Fake Diamond)

Wants to become a thief, and helps the Thieves by attracting the suspicions on themselves.

The Street Urchin wins if a Thief wins. They must therefore help the Thieves by being accused, for example.

Note: a player becomes a Street Urchin if he receives an empty box, If they take the Fake Diamond(If it's in play) or if he is the last player and decide to take nothing.

Alternate Roles

The Guard: (Joker/Ace Of Hearts)

Protects the king at any cost.

Set up: this character replaces a Loyal Peasant card. We suggest that you avoid using the Guard during the first few games. The Guard acts like a Loyal Peasant, however, they use their "special" skill when the King says "empty your pockets!" to someone, the Guard can shout "HAULT!" before the accused reveals their take.

- If the accused is a Usurper, the Guard immediately WINS ALONE.

- If they aren't a Usurper, the Guard and their victim are Exiled. If the Exiled player was a Thief, the King retrieves the diamonds; and if it was another character, the King doesn't give them a Kings Gift.

The Fake Diamond(Ace Of Diamonds)

Such a pretty Stone, surely no one will mind if I take it...

Setup: the Fake diamond replaces a Usurper card.

The player who takes the Fake diamond can steal it by itself(they become a Street Urchin) or with other diamonds (they become a Thief).

-When accused, the player only reveals the Fake diamond (be careful not to mix it with the diamonds when stealing). The player isn't Exiled, still takes part in the investigation, and the King does not give them a Kings Gift. *However*, the King can accuse them a second time if they think they are a Thief.

Note: The fake diamond doesn't count as a diamond when counting riches.

The Princess(Queen of Diamonds)

Is loyal only to the Diamonds.

Setup: the Princess replaces 1 Loyal Peasant card.

The Princess immediately wins when she's accused by the King. She shares her victory with the player who has the most diamonds: either the King (only the diamonds recovered during the investigation count), or the richest Thief still in the game. In case of a tie, the Princess listens to her heart and chooses her co-winner.

Be careful: the King cannot give a Kings Gift to the Princess. When she wins, she doesn't share her victory with the Peasants or the Street Urchins!