



## *Welcome!*

**Introduction:** *On the continent of Carrisor, Vines is a popular group of card games dating back more than a century. Some historians believe that the name “Vines” is a corruption of “Divine Secrets,” a complicated dice game played in Old Sierin. Others believe “Las Vides,” as the title translates in Ennish, means both “Vines” and “Nothing,” and is a pun on the irrelevance or trivial nature of games. Still others claim that Vines is a derivative of “Viarum,” the ancient Lis word for “roads,” which is also the root of the word “trivia.”*

**A History of Cards:** *Card games in general became popular more than 200 years ago, with the advent of low-cost precision block printing. Like almost all new technology, this process was pioneered in the Free city of Meere. Frisian wizard-artisans from across the Flatwater engineered the first multi-color block presses, which proved ideal for the manufacture of modern playing cards. Before that, players generally gambled with wheels, lots, or dice.*

*Early card decks contained many assortments of ranks, suits, and special cards. It’s uncertain which games were original to the modern five-suited deck, or whether the five-suited deck was created specifically for an early version of Vines.*

*Whatever its origin, the Vines deck is now the most common playing card deck in Carrisor. It is central to dozens of interesting games all over the continent, some of which are collected below, and more of which are being discovered every day. If you are familiar with the rules of trick-taking games, you will find much in these rules that is familiar. But there are interesting wrinkles everywhere, creating several of the best-loved games in the Nine Kingdoms.*

**About the Art:** *The Cerevalo Deck is based on a design that originated in Meere shortly after the Cottage War, roughly year 785 in the common era. The cards were designed by Jacopo Cerevalo, an engraver from Kingsgate, and were manufactured in Meere. The deck is also known as the Artisan Deck or the Meere Deck.*

*Although Cerevalo’s characters were based on contemporary historical figures, his depictions were swayed by his own personal biases and tastes, and therefore are not always accurate or flattering. Nevertheless, Cerevalo’s iconography and character designs have become standard for decks manufactured in Meere to this day.*



### About the Vines Deck:

The Vines deck has five equivalent suits. They are Anchors (brown), Crowns (red), Cups (purple), Locks (blue), and Trees (green). These suits were selected to represent five major regions of Carrisar and their ruling families. Those regions are The Free City of Meere (Anchors); The Kingdom of Iona (Crowns); The Burning Tower at Mikoren (Cups); The Principality of Baronet (Blue), and the Principality of LeBâton (Green).

There is typically no order to these suits. The modern suits correspond roughly to the suits in some older five-suited decks, which were, in ascending order, the *Plebes*, represented by a green fruit; the *Soldati*, represented by a brown sword; the *Mercantes*, represented by a blue lock, the *Reali*, represented by a red crown, and the *Clero*, represented by a purple chalice. The archaic order of suits placed Trees (the Plebes) on the bottom, then Anchors, Locks, Crowns, and finally Cups at the top. However, modern players rank these suits in alphabetical order by the suits' common names, with the familiar rule being "Anchors at the bottom, Trees at the top."

Each suit has eleven ranks, for a total of 55 cards. The highest rank is the Ace. Although the Ace is technically value 1, it plays as the highest card in most games. Below the Ace are the four face cards, which are in descending order: Knight, Bishop, Farmer, and Tar. Below these are the numbers seven through two. Twos are commonly called "deuces," and threes are sometimes known as "treys." Most of this will be familiar to players of modern card games.

Aside from the Knight, which ranks second below the Ace, the rank order of the high cards is reverse-alphabetical. This order descends from the Ace at the top, past the Knight, then to the Bishop, Farmer, and Tar. "Tar" is slang for a sailor, and the Tar cards often depict a traitorous or duplicitous historical character. The Tar rank are also sometimes known as "Jacks," and also by many derogatory nicknames which won't be repeated here.

Players often erroneously call the Knights "Kings." This is understandable since they occupy the same position in the rank order as the modern King, and they start with the same letter. This misnomer is perfectly acceptable, although not technically correct. The royals in Iona have a gender-neutral word for the monarch, "Kind," which would also be appropriate for this rank.

## Fundamentals of Trick-Taking Games:

Most of the games in the Vines collection are trick-taking games, which all share a number of common rules. This section provides a deep dive, for players unfamiliar with the genre.

**Structure:** In a trick-taking game, players start with hands of cards, and they play these cards one at a time in a series of rounds called “tricks.” A complete set of tricks is called a “hand,” and a complete series of hands is called a “game.” The role of dealer generally passes to the left after each hand, and the bidding round (if there is one) starts on the dealer’s left.

**Bidding:** In nearly all of these games, each hand begins with bidding. A bid is a declaration that the bidder (or their team) can score a certain number of points, if they win the bid. Rewards for succeeding at the bid, and punishments for failure, vary from game to game. In nearly every case, only the highest bid is binding; all others are forgotten. The winning bidder gains some sort of advantage, such as opening the first round and/or declaring trump.

**Trump Suit:** In nearly all of these games, one suit can be designated as “trump” for the hand. All cards in the trump suit are higher than all other cards. For example, if Crowns is trump, then even the Two of Crowns is higher than all cards of any other suit.

**Tricks:** To play a trick, players choose one card from their hand, and lay it face up in the center of the table. This proceeds in turn order, moving to the left around the table. The first player in each trick is the “leader,” and their card is the “lead.” Generally, the highest card played on each trick (see definition below) takes that trick, and that player leads the next trick.

**Following Suit:** Players must “follow suit,” which means that they must play a card of the same suit as the lead, if they are able. If they are unable, having no cards of that suit, then they are allowed to play any card. This rule is the same whether or not the lead was trump. For example, if the lead is a Lock, but Anchors are trump, everyone must play a Lock if they can. If not, they may play whatever card they like, including an Anchor.

**Highest Card:** Generally speaking, on a specific trick, the suit of the lead is considered higher than all other suits, except for trump. All non-lead, non-trump suits are lower than the lead. This means each trick will be won by the highest trump, or if no trump is played, by the highest card in the lead suit. (Some games have exceptions to this general rule.)

**Scoring:** Often, players score a point for each trick. In some games, there are other ways to score. A shorthand for displaying your score during the hand is to stack each trick on the table in front of you, face down. Special point cards, if there are any, are arranged face up, but generally speaking, no one can look at the contents of prior tricks. Round by round, scores are recorded on paper. Some games are scored with coins instead.

**Sokis:** Many players use a “bidder’s cube,” or “soki,” which is a small wooden or ivory cube engraved with the five suits, plus one blank side. This is a handy accessory for indicating trump.



## ***Game 1, Coralón***

**Summary:** The game of Coralón contains perhaps the simplest version of the basic rules, and is widely considered the first Vines game that new players should learn. Many other games follow the same basic format. It is also the game most commonly known simply as “Vines.”

**Alternate Names:** Coralón is named after Dockmaster Gordel Coralón, architect of the canal that also bears his name. The game is known by many other names including Vines (in Meere and points south); Marshal (in Sierin); and Cinamon (in Lowgale and LaForêt).

**Players:** 3 to 6, best with 4 or 5.

**The Deal:** Shuffle the deck and deal out all the cards. If some players receive an extra card (this will happen unless there are exactly five players), those players must look at their hands and then discard one card, face down.

**Bidding:** Starting on the dealer’s left and proceeding once around the table, players must make a bid, or pass. You are bidding on the number of tricks you can take, if you win the bid. The minimum bid is two, and each player may either pass, or bid higher than the current bid. If no one else bids, the dealer must bid at least two.

**The High Bidder:** The player who made the highest bid will lead the first trick. Their first lead becomes trump. All other bids are forgotten.

**On Each Trick:** The leader plays the first card of each trick. Starting on the leader’s left, each player in turn must play one card. Players must follow suit if they are able. If you cannot follow suit, then you may play any card you wish.

The highest card in the trick takes the trick. “Highest” means the highest card in the trump suit, or if no trumps are played, the highest card in the led suit.

The player who takes the trick will lead the next one. Continue until all the cards have been played out, and then score the hand.

**Scoring:** Each trick is generally worth one point. However, there are rewards and penalties based on whether the bidder was successful in making their bid:

- **Matching Exactly:** If the bidder collects their bid *exactly*, they score points for their tricks, but all other players score *nothing*.
- **Exceeding:** If the bidder takes more than their bid, then all players (including the bidder) score normally, one point per trick.
- **Missing:** If the bidder fails to accomplish their bid, then they score zero points. All other players score one point per trick.

**Winning:** After each round, pass the deal to the left. Continue until someone has reached the winning score, which varies based on the number of players:

<b>Number of Players:</b>	<b>3P</b>	<b>4P</b>	<b>5-6P</b>
<b>Winning Score:</b>	60	40	25

**Ties:** If two players tie with a winning score, the advantage goes to the bidder. If neither was the bidder, then it goes to the player who, on the last round, was closest on the dealer’s left.

**Variant Rule: Bidding “Zero” and “Less.”**

**Bidding Zero:** A player can bid “zero.” This doesn’t interrupt the usual order of increasing values, so the next non-zero bid must still be higher than the last positive number.

If the *last* bid is zero, that player wins the bidding. Two scoring options are now possible:

- **The bidder takes zero tricks.** In this case, they score the total number of available tricks in the round (that is, the number of cards dealt), and their opponents score nothing.
- **The bidder takes one or more tricks.** The bidder scores nothing, and all other players score normally. Note that because of this, once the bidder takes a trick, they should try to take as many as they can, to keep those points away from the other players!

**Bidding Less:** After a bid of zero, a subsequent player can bid “less” which means that they can not only take zero tricks, but also that all the previous zero bidders will *not take zero*. In this case, they only qualify if they take zero tricks, and if all other zero bidders take at least one. House rules vary as to whether a “zero” bid can be followed by another zero, or must be followed with “less.”



## ***Game 2, Coralton (Partners)***

**Summary:** Coralton can be played as a team game with exactly four players. Because this game requires teams to bid without knowing each other's hand, trump is not chosen by the bidder. Instead, a random card dictates the eligible trump suit.

**General Partners Rules:** In a team game, partners sit across the table from each other. Teams are not allowed to communicate anything about the contents of their hand, except what can be gleaned from the bidding, and the play. Enforcing this rule can be practically impossible in a hostile environment, but players are encouraged to keep to the spirit of the game.

**Players: 4 players in two teams**

**The Deal:** Shuffle the deck and deal 13 cards to each player. Set aside the remaining 3 cards in the center of the table. These cards are "in the box."

Turn over one of the boxed cards. This card designates the available trump for the hand.

**Bidding:** Starting on the dealer's left and proceeding once around the table, players bid the number of points they think their team can take. Each trick is worth a point, and the minimum bid is two. If no one else bids, the dealer must bid at least two.

**The High Bid:** The player who made the highest bid has two options: They may pick up the three cards in the box, and then discard any three cards. This decision confirms that the suit of the faceup card is trump. Instead, they may declare "no trump," and leave the cards in the box, turning the faceup card back down.

This player leads the first trick. They may lead any card, because trump is already set.

**Sequence of Play:** Tricks proceed normally, with the winner of each trick leading the next trick. Partners can help each other through card play, but they can't communicate about strategy or the contents of their hands.

**Scoring:** The scoring depends on whether the bidding team succeeded in making their bid. They get the best result for hitting their bid exactly.

- **Matching Exactly:** If the bidding team collects their bid *exactly*, they score points for their tricks, and the other team scores zero.
- **Exceeding the Bid:** If the bidding team takes more tricks than their bid, then all teams (including the bidders) score normally, one point per trick.
- **Missing the Bid:** If the bidding team *did not* take at least as many points as they bid, they score zero points, and the other team scores one point per trick.

**Winning:** The target score is 60 points.

#### **Variant Rule: Bidding Zero and Double Zero.**

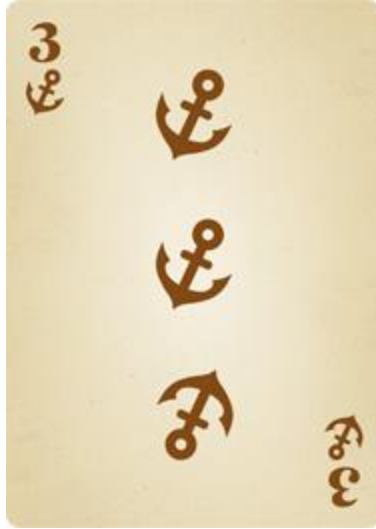
Any player can make a bid of zero. This bid doesn't interrupt the usual order of increasing bids, but it does count as "higher" than any number that came before it.

When one player wins the bidding with a bid of zero, their teammate sits out of the hand. In the ensuing three-player hand, the bidder must take zero tricks, or suffers the penalty, as follows:

- **The bidder takes zero tricks.** In this case, their team scores ten points, and their opponents score nothing.
- **The bidder takes one or more tricks.** In this case, they score nothing, and the other team scores their tricks normally.

**Double Zero:** After a bid of zero, the zero bidder's partner may make a bid of Double Zero. In this case, both players play in a 4-handed game, and the entire team must take zero points. In this case, their reward for succeeding is 25 points.

**Note:** The zero and double zero bids are borrowed from Ducks and Geese, a popular partners game that scores point cards (Deuces and Farmers) in addition to tricks. Rules for Ducks and Geese are below.



## ***Game 3, Thief***

**Summary:** The game of Thief is based on the game of Coralon, above, but adds a second key suit, called the *thieves*. This new key suit behaves very differently from trump.

**Key Suits:** “Key suits,” also called “prestige suits,” is a category that includes all suits with a special behavior, such as trump. Ordinarily there is only one key suit, so there’s no need to name the category. But in Thief, we have two.

**Alternate Names:** Thief, and its partners variation below, are some of the most widely-played Vines games. Regionally the game is known by many names including Jesters, Cowards, Rogues, or Turns, each being a different nickname for the thief suit.

**Players:** 3 to 6, best with 4 or 5.

**The Deal:** With 4, 5, or 6 players, shuffle the deck and deal out all the cards. If some players receive an extra card (this will happen unless there are five players), those players look at their hands, and then discard one card face down. With three players, deal hands of 12 cards. In this case, the rest of the deck will not be used.

**Bidding:** Starting on the dealer’s left and proceeding once around the table, players must bid a number of points they think they can take, or pass. Each trick is worth a point, and each thief is worth a point. Because there are more points to be scored, the minimum bid is three.

**Available Points:** The number of tricks is equal to the number of cards in the starting hand, but the number of thieves that will be scored is unknown. It could be as few as zero, or as high as eleven, with most games falling somewhere in between.



**The High Bidder:** The player who made the highest bid will lead the first trick. They may declare their lead to be either the trump suit or the thief suit. Whichever they choose, the other key suit will be determined through card play.

**The Second Key:** If the opener declared their lead to be trump, then the second key suit is thieves, and vice versa. In either case, the second key suit is determined by the first card that is played *out of suit*, i.e. that is neither the led suit, nor the known key suit. This can happen at any time: on the first trick or the last, or never, depending on the flow of the hand.

For example, assume that Locks are trump, and there is no thief suit yet. If a Crown is led, then the first card played on this trick that is neither a Lock nor a Crown will become the thief suit. If that doesn't happen, then the thief suit is not yet known.

**Scoring Thieves:** Whenever a trick includes a thief, the player who played the *lowest* thief on that trick keeps that card as a point. Any higher thieves played on the same trick are collected with the trick, and *not scored*. Arrange your captured thieves face up, and your tricks face down, to make your score easier to count.

**Note:** If any cards in the thief suit were played prior to the identification of the thief suit, those cards are not scored.

**Scoring the Hand:** Each trick is worth one point, and each thief is worth one point. The bidder's rewards and penalties are as follows:

- **Matching Exactly:** If the bidder matches their bid *exactly*, then they score points for their tricks and thieves, but all other players score nothing.
- **Exceeding the Bid:** If the bidder takes more tricks than their bid, then all players (including the bidder) score normally, one point per trick and one per thief.
- **Missing the Bid:** If the bidder did not collect at least as many points as they bid, then they score zero, and all other players score one point for each trick and each thief.

**Winning:** The winning score varies based on the number of players:

<b>Number of Players:</b>	<b>3P</b>	<b>4P</b>	<b>5-6P</b>
<b>Winning Score:</b>	60	40	30

**Ties:** If two players tie with a winning score, the advantage goes to the bidder. If neither was the bidder, then it goes to the player who, on the last round, was closest on the dealer's left.

**Scoring Variation:** In some regions, players bid only in tricks, not total points, and thieves are scored regardless of success. This is borrowed from the partners version, explained below.



## ***Game 4, Thieves (Partners)***

**Summary:** Thief can be played as a team game, “Thieves”. The important wrinkle is that because thieves are so unpredictable, teams bid only the number of *tricks* they will take. Thieves are always scored, and they do not affect whether a team succeeded at their bid.

**Alternate Names:** This game is commonly known as Walop in Laforêt and points south. Elsewhere it bears the usual name variations mentioned above.

**Players:** 4 players in two teams

**The Deal:** The dealer gives each player 13 cards, then leaves the last three cards on the table, or “in the box,” with one card revealed.

**Determining the Key Suits:** The revealed box card dictates the available trump suit. Therefore, the bidder cannot choose *either key suit*, though they may still declare “no trump” and refuse the boxed cards. In the team game, the thief suit is always established through card play.

**Bidding:** Players bid on their team’s potential *tricks* only (*not* their Thieves). Thieves are always scored, whether bidders make their bid or not.

**Scoring:** The scoring penalties are based on whether the bidding team scored the correct number of tricks, and are the same as Thief, above. Regardless of any rewards and penalties based on tricks, thieves are always scored.

**Winning:** Play to a combined score of 80 points.



## ***Game 5, Ducks and Geese***

**Summary:** Ducks and Geese is primarily a four-player partners game. There are some cutthroat variants, but they are essentially just versions of Coralon with point cards. Ducks and Geese is a beloved and storied card game with variations in every corner of the world.

**The Name:** This game takes its name from the point cards, the Deuces and the Farmers. As with many aspects of the Vines deck, it's unclear whether the Cerevalo deck was designed to fit the name Ducks and Geese, or whether the game was previously known by a different name, until Cerevalo drew every Farmer with a goose. It is also known as "Deuce and Goose."

**Players: 4 players in two teams**

**Arrangement:** As in most partners games, teammates sit across from one another. The role of dealer starts with a random player, and passes to the left after each hand.

**The Deal:** Shuffle the deck and deal a hand of seven cards to each player. Traditionally these cards are dealt as a block of three cards, and then a block of two, and another block of two. But in a well-shuffled deck the blocking should make no difference.

The dealer sets aside the remainder of the deck, turning over the top card. This card is called the "open card."

**The Bid:** Starting on the dealer's left and going once around the table, players bid the number of points they think their team can score. Each player in turn must either raise the standing bid, or pass. For the bidding team, tricks are worth points. Twos and Farmers (Ducks and Geese) are worth points for everyone.

The minimum bid is 3, and if no one else bids, the dealer may bid at least 3, or they may forfeit the hand and grant 3 points to the other team.

**Taking the Open:** The high bidder has the option to “take the open.”

- **Taking the Open:** The winning bidder picks up the open card, and then discards one card facedown. The suit of the open card becomes trump.
- **No Trump:** The player does not take the open, turning it back down and leaving it on the deck. There is therefore *no trump*.

**Play of the Hand:** The winning bidder leads the first trick. There is no requirement to lead any particular suit, because trump is already established. Players must follow suit if they can, and if not, they can play any card. The winner of each trick leads the next.

Collect your tricks face down, and your point cards face up. Play seven tricks, and then score the hand.

**Scoring:** The team that won the bid will score one point for each trick. Both teams will score one point for each Deuce and each Farmer. However, if the bidders did not accomplish their bid, there are penalties as follows.

- **Making or Exceeding the Bid:** If the bidders achieve their bid, they can score only the amount of their bid, no more. For example, if they collect 7 points on a bid of 5, they score only 5 points.
- **Falling Short:** If the bidding team fails to make their bid, they score *nothing*. In addition, the opposing team gets a bonus (called a “bump”) equal to the bid. For example, if the bid was 5, but the team scored only 4 points, then the bidding team scores zero, and their opponents get a bump of 5.

Regardless of the success of the bidding team, the non-bidding team does not score points for their tricks, only for their Ducks and Geese.

**Winning:** Play to a total of 30 points. If both teams go out at the same time, and their scores are tied, then the bidding team wins.

**Bidding Strategy:** Note that the maximum possible score in one hand (and thus the maximum bid) is 17 points: That accounts for all seven tricks, all five Ducks, and all five Geese. However, since nearly half the deck is out of play, there is no guarantee that these points will be available. Typically, 3-5 points is considered an easy bid, 6-7 is average, and 8-10 is hard.

As with any partners game, communication about the contents of your hand is strictly forbidden, save what can be gleaned from the strength of your bids. It’s reasonable to ask players to keep to the spirit of this rule, even though it can be difficult to enforce completely.



## ***Ducks and Geese Variants***

**Summary:** The nine Kingdoms play dozens of variants of Ducks and Geese. The ones below are the most widely known. Tavern players typically play with blind and double-zero bids.

**Dog:** An older, related game is called “Dog” or “Straight Draft.” In this game, only the Tars are worth points, and the minimum bid is 2. There are no other changes. This game is probably a forerunner of Ducks and Geese, now less popular because of its fewer point cards.

**Zero Bid:** A player can bid “zero” if they think they can take no tricks. “Zero” is always a legal bid, and the next legal bids are zero again, or something higher than the previous normal bid. If multiple players bid zero, the last bid takes precedence.

When a player takes the lead with a bid of zero, their partner sits out of the hand. The game is played three-handed, and scored as follows:

- **Success:** If the zero-bidder takes no tricks, their team scores 5 points, and the opposing team scores nothing.
- **Failure:** If the zero-bidder takes any points, then the opposing team scores double: two points for each Duck and Goose (still nothing for their tricks).

**Strategy:** The zero bid can sound like a desperate option. Taking zero points is harder than it seems, especially when the opposing team is *trying to feed you at least one point*. If you break your bid, you must then struggle to take as many point cards as you can, just to steal them away from the other team!

**Double-Zero:** When a player bids “double zero,” they are committing that *both teammates* will play the hand, and take no points. The reward for succeeding at this bid is 12 points.

**Blind Bidding:** If blind bidding is allowed, players can bid *without looking at their cards*. This is risky, but the rewards can be worth it. If your team succeeds with a blind bid, the opposing team scores nothing.

To make a blind bid, *neither partner can look at their cards*. Therefore, if you intend to bid blind, it's wise to warn your partner before they touch their cards. (This warning is perfectly legal, since it can't give away any information about your hand, only your intentions!)

The blind bid follows the same rules as normal bidding. It must be a number higher than the current bid, with a minimum starting bid of three.

If the first partner makes a blind bid, the second may look at their hand and make a non-blind bid. Once the bidding has completed, the blind bidder can look at their hand before deciding whether to take the open.

If the blind bidding team makes their bid, they score normally, but the opposing team scores *no points for the round*.

Blind bidding sounds reckless, but it's actually a decent option when your opponents are close to winning. It's typically the only way to keep the non-bidding team from scoring something.

**Note:** You could blind-bid zero, if zero is allowed, but there's not much point. The rewards for succeeding at either gambit are the same: In both cases, the opposing team scores zero.

### **Cutthroat Variant:**

Ducks and Geese can be played "cutthroat," which means everyone playing alone. This game is essentially Coralon, but with Ducks and Geese as point cards, with new rules as follows:

- The game supports 4 to 6 players.
- Deal 8 cards per player.
- The point cards are Twos and Farmers. Tricks count for the high bidder only.
- The minimum bid is 2.
- There is no open card. Instead, the high bidder sets trump by their first lead.
- If you play a Deuce that follows suit, or if you play one as a lead, you keep it. If you play a Deuce out of suit, even if it is trump, it follows normal rules of play.
- If the bidder fails at their bid, they score no points for the round, and they also subtract their bid from their score (this is done instead of giving a bump to everyone else).
- Zero bids are never allowed, but blind bids can be.
- The winning score is 21 points.

These rules are similar to other adaptations from partners to cutthroat rules. With each player bidding their own hand, there is no need to establish a trump suit until the first lead. Note the rule that lets players save their own Deuces, since they can't be thrown to a partner!



## Game 6, Bishop

**Summary:** Also called “War and Peace,” Bishop is a five-player game using ad-hoc, temporary teams. Like Ducks and Geese, this game uses point cards. In this case, there are two blocks: “War,” which includes the Knights and Tars, and “Peace,” which includes the Bishops and Farmers. In each round, one of these blocks will be worth points, and the other will not.

**Alternate Names:** Originating in Baronet, this family of games is sometimes called Southern or Sierin Vines. It is also known as “Knights and Bishops,” from which it derives its common name, simply “Bishop.”

**Players:** 5

**Basics:** In each hand, the five players are divided into a team of two, who are trying to achieve the bid, and one team of three, who are trying to prevent them from doing so. The teams are variable, and are chosen through bidding and card play.

**Point Cards:** The points in Bishop are the cards only, *not tricks*. There are always 10 points in play, either the War cards (Knights and Tars), or the Peace cards (Bishops and Farmers).

**The Deal:** Shuffle the deck and deal it out completely, 11 cards to each player.

**Bidding:** The bidding starts on the dealer’s left, and can go multiple times around the table. Players bid the number of points that they think they can take, along with one partner who is not yet known. Bidding proceeds until everyone has passed. Then the high bidder “sets the game,” and all other bids are forgotten.

**Setting The Game:** The winning bidder now declares the trump suit aloud, and also calls “Knights” or “Bishops.” For example, their declaration might be “Bishop of Cups” or “Knight of Crowns.” This statement indicates trump for the hand, and also whether the point cards will be the War block or the Peace block.

**Note:** A trump *must* be declared; there is no option for “no trump.”

**Identifying the Partner:** The player, other than the leader, who holds the *lowest card in the trump suit* must now play that card to lead the first trick. If this card is the Deuce, it can be played automatically. If the bidder holds that card, they must announce the lowest trump that they do not hold.

Play proceeds with the bidder and the partner trying to achieve the bid as a team, and the other three players working together to prevent it.

**Scoring:** If the bidding team achieves their bid, they each score exactly that amount of points, and no more. If they fail, the opposing side scores the same amount. In either case, the play of the hand can cease as soon as one of these conditions is met.

Because teams are fluid, each player keeps an individual score. When your group scores points, each member of the group collects that full amount.

**Winning:** Play to an individual score of 21 points. Tiebreaking starts with the bidder first, then their teammate, and then the opponent closest on the dealer’s left.

### **Playing with 4 Players:**

Though it’s best with five, Bishop can also support four players. The only changes are to the deal, and the winning score.

**The Deal:** Deal out the entire deck. Three players will receive an extra card. They must discard one card before play begins, but they *cannot discard a face card*.

**Winning:** Play to an individual score of 25 points.

### **Variation: Jasper City Partners**

By the Jasper City rules, the bidder’s partner is identified not by *holding* the lowest trump card, but by *playing* the lowest trump card on the first round.

In this game, the high bidder leads the first trick, and they must take as partner whoever plays the lowest trump (aside from the lead). This gives the other players a small degree of control over whether they join the bidding team. It’s also standard in the Baronet rules, below.





## ***Game 7, Baronet***

**Summary:** Despite being original to Sierin, or perhaps because of it, Bishop is played differently in the Sierin peninsula than anywhere else. Along with always using the Jasper City Partners rule, above, this game is scored with money instead of points.

**Setup:** As in any gambling game, players use coins to keep score. When playing “just for fun,” it’s suggested to start each player with 100 coins, and see who finishes with the most. If players run out of coins in this environment, they should be allowed to borrow more.

**Gameplay:** Play is identical to Bishop, using Jasper City rules. The only difference is scoring.

**Scoring:** The “bet” is equal to the bid. For example, if the bid is 6 points, the bet is 6 coins.

**5 Players:** In the five-player game, each round is settled as follows:

- If the bidders make their bid, then the losing team each pays one bet into the pot. The bidder takes 2/3 of this, and the partner takes the remaining 1/3.
- If the bidders fail, the penalty of three bets is paid by the losing team: 2/3 by the bidder, and 1/3 by the partner. This is distributed equally among the winners.

**4 Players:** In the four-player game, each round is settled as follows:

- If the bidders make their bid, the losers each pay the bet, and this amount is divided 2:1 between the leader and the partner, with any odd coins going to the leader.
- If the bidders lose, then the same amounts *as would be collected above* are paid by the losers, and then divided evenly between the winners.



## *Game 8, Chevalier*

**Summary:** Chevalier is a partners game that introduces a Poison rank, the 7s. Poison cards can render a trick worthless, but they can become bonus points instead, if you collect them all.

**Background:** The name “Chevalier” or “Cavalier” is a politically charged reference to the knights of LaForêt, who are held in low esteem by the rest of the continent, especially in the North. Though the game originated elsewhere, it is now a favorite in LaForêt, where the knights see it as an object lesson in solidarity: The poison 7s are redeemed when they unite under a single banner.

**Alternate Names:** Chevalier is also known as “Poison,” or “Poison 7s.” In Sierin it is sometimes played as “Buccaneer,” and in that version, the poison cards are the Tars. Players in Meere call this game “Sweep.”

**Players:** 4 players in teams of 2.

**The Deal:** Shuffle and deal a hand of ten cards to each player. 15 cards will remain in the deck. Flip the top card of this remaining pack. This card is the “open card” and it designates the only available trump suit for this round.

**The Bid:** The bid passes once around the table. Each player may either pass or make a bid, stating the number of points they think their team can score. The high bidder will have the bidder’s option, below, and the other bids are forgotten.

**Bidder’s Option:** The high bidder may “take the open,” which means taking the open card into their hand, and discarding one card face down. This establishes the suit of the open card as trump. Their other option is to refuse the open card, and thus declare “no trump.”

**Tricks:** Play ten tricks. Tricks are worth one point each, unless they are poisoned.

**Poison Cards:** The 7s are *Poison*. If a trick contains at least one 7, that trick is worth nothing. However, if one team takes *all of the 7's*, this is a “sweep,” and it negates the poison effect.

A sweep scores differently depending on whether it was made by the bidding team or the non-bidding team.

- If the bidding team sweeps, their poisoned tricks are worth double: 2 points each.
- If the non-bidding team sweeps, their poisoned tricks are worth 1 point each (normal value).

Note that a “sweep” is not necessarily all five sevens, just all those that were dealt in this hand. Note also that the scoring of Poison tricks is done based on the number of *tricks*, not the number of *poison cards in the tricks*. Therefore if several 7s are in the same trick, that trick still counts as just one poisoned trick.

**Displaying Tricks:** As you collect them, stack your normal tricks face down, and stack each poisoned trick face up, with one 7 on top.

**Rewards and Penalties:** If the bidders make or exceed their bid, both teams keep their points exactly as collected. If the bidders fail to make their bid, they score zero points, and the opposing team scores their own tricks plus a “bump” equal to the bid.

For example, suppose one team bids five points, but they collect only three. They chalk up zero points, and the opposing team scores their tricks, as well as a five-point bump.

**Winning:** A full game is played to a total score of 31 points.





## ***Game 9, Up and Down***

**Summary:** Up and Down is a 5-player game with ad-hoc teams. This game is typically scored with coins instead of points. Tricks are divided into two parts, “high” and “low,” and each can be taken by a different player.

**Playing for Coins:** If you are playing “just for fun,” start each player with the same stake. About 30 coins is enough, though players should be allowed to borrow more if they run out.

**Background:** Up and Down is descended from a Tieran wagering game called Butcher Street. It is the Vines game best known in the sister cities of Corvide and Sera, in northern Tiris on the Coralon Canal. The elder game, Butcher Street, uses a three-suited deck and divides each suit into three blocks: up, down, and middle. (We know this game better as Fairmarket.)

**Alternate Names:** Up and Down is played almost exclusively in northern Tiris, and most players in that region simply refer to it as “Kew,” meaning “the game.”

**Players:** 5 players in ad-hoc teams

**You Need:** Coins for keeping score

**Two Halves:** In Up and Down, the cards in each suit are divided into two groups: the *high* (which is the letter cards, including Ace) and the *low* (which is the number cards, 2 through 7). Most tricks will have both a high and low half, and these halves will be taken by different players, though this is not always the case.

**The Deal:** Shuffle the deck and deal it out entirely, 11 cards to each player.

**Opting In:** There is no bid. Instead, the lead goes to the first player brave enough to take it. Formally, the option passes once around the table starting on the dealer's left. However, many households allow any player to make the first open, with the speediest player earning the lead.

If you're new to the game, you should play the formal way: Starting on the dealer's left, each player may either *knock* or *lead out*. To "knock" is to pass the option. To lead out simply means playing a card to start the hand. (But if you find yourself in a tavern in Corvide, be prepared to take the lead with no regard to the turn order.)

When you lead out, you are asserting that you and your partner, who is yet to be determined, will take more than half of the tricks. The total number of tricks is unknown. If every trick is divided, there will be 22 points, of which the leader's team would have to take at least 12 (*more than half*). However, some tricks may not be split, in which case the target will be lower.

**Taking Back:** Under the formal system, if everyone passes to the dealer, that player may either lead out, or "take back," paying one coin to every player and ending the hand. Should that player lead out and lose, they would lose six coins instead, so taking back is slightly cheaper than losing, and should be chosen to bypass an inevitable defeat.

Under the informal system, when it is clear that no one will take the lead, players must put a coin into the pot to show that they are not leading. This can also happen in any order, and any player who has not yet paid their coin may interrupt this process and take the lead. In that case, those players who have already paid can retrieve their coins.

However, the last player to understand that this is happening must pay an extra coin (or they may still take the lead). This pot of six coins becomes part of the prize for the next hand.

**Trump:** The first lead establishes trump. All basic rules of following suit are identical to other Vines games. However, the tricks are divided up and down, as described below.

**Choosing the Partner:** The leader's partner is determined through card play. The partner is the first player who splits a trick with the leader. Note that this might not happen on the first trick (or indeed ever).

**Playing it Red:** A player may "play it red," meaning that he will play the hand *without a partner*. You must make this announcement (say "red") when you lead the first trick. If you do this, you must now collect more than half the tricks, *all by yourself*.

**The Divided Trick:** The cards in each trick are divided into two groups, the high and low. High cards are the letter cards: Ace, Knight, Bishop, Farmer, and Tar. Low cards are the number cards, Deuce through Seven. The highest card in each group will take that group, and the player who takes the high group will lead the next trick. Each trick or partial trick is worth one point.

**Dead Cards:** Only those cards that match the lead, or are trump, are “live” in the trick. All other cards (those non-trumps that do not follow the lead) are “dead,” and can’t take *or be part of* either group. Dead cards can be collected by whatever card(s) take the trick, but they can’t form a partial trick by themselves.

**Trump Cards:** Trump cards are still the best cards, but high trumps cannot take the low part of the trick, and vice versa.

**The Next Lead:** When a trick is divided, the player who took the high group plays the next lead. If it is not divided, then the player who took the entire thing leads the next trick, as usual.

**Rewards and Penalties:** If the leader’s team succeeds, taking more than half the tricks, then the losers pay 2 coins each, and the winners divide it equally, 3 coins each.

If the leading team fails to make more than half the tricks, then the leader alone pays 6 coins, which are divided equally, 2 each to the three opponents. Their partner pays nothing.

If a player goes Red (plays alone), then that player collects 2 coins from each opponent for a win, and pays 2 coins to each opponent for a loss.

### **Point Scoring:**

If you are not playing for coins, use the following changes:

In this version, there is a more traditional bidding round. Going multiple times around the table, players may pass, or bid the number of points they think they can take. The minimum bid is three, and if you pass, you may not re-enter the bidding. The bid continues until all players pass.

Partners are determined by the same method as above. You may still call “red” when playing the first lead, and then try to make your bid without a partner. (This is more plausible when your de facto bid isn’t “more than half of the tricks.”)

As in any ad-hoc team game, each player has an individual running score.

The rewards and penalties under this system are:

- **Make the Bid Exactly:** The opposing players score nothing, and the bidding team scores their tricks (each teammate scores the full number).
- **Exceed the Bid:** All teammates score points equal to the tricks their team collected.
- **Fall Short:** The opposing players score their tricks, and the bidding team scores nothing.

Play to an individual score of 60 points.

## Still To Come:

This rulebook is still a work in progress, with doubtless a few errors in the games above, and more games yet to be added.

## CREDITS

**Design and Development:** Vines was invented by James Ernest, with Ryan Macklin, Jeff Wilcox, Julie Haehn, and Jessica Blair. Playtesters included David Cornwell, Bob DeDea, Joshua Howard, Link Hughes, Derek Mantey, Colleen McGaughey, Nora Miller, Cathy Saxton, Tom Saxton, and many more.

**About Crab Fragment:** Crab Fragment Labs is a small tabletop design studio, dedicated to bringing good games directly to customers with a minimum of fuss. You can print and play our games completely for free, or buy the decks from DriveThruCards. If you'd like to support us, consider backing us on Patreon. Every pledge helps keep James Ernest and his family from begging on the streets.

**Crab Fragment Labs Main Page:** <https://www.crabfragmentlabs.com/>

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## Appendix A: The Rank of Poker Hands

We do not yet have any poker-type variants for the Vines deck, but those are certainly a possibility. In the meantime, if you'd like to play any standard form of poker with this deck, please do. We think it's great, because five of a kind becomes a natural hand!

The only new things you have to know about the hand rankings are:

- **Five of a Kind:** This is a real hand now, and it's still the best.
- **Flush:** This hand now ranks above four of a kind. Five suits makes it super hard.

All the other hands have the same order as normal poker hands. (Getting no pair is actually harder than getting a pair, but we still rank it as worse.)

## Appendix B: More About the History and Artwork

Each card in the Cerevalo Deck represents a contemporary figure from the period of the Cottage War, and the subsequent construction of the Coralton Canal. More details on all of this history are at the Library at Crab Fragment Labs:

- [The Cottage War](#): A history of the time period of the Cerevalo Deck
- [The Vines Characters](#): More details on the characters pictured in the deck.



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