

# Realm Builder

a Game by Derek Croxton

## Introduction

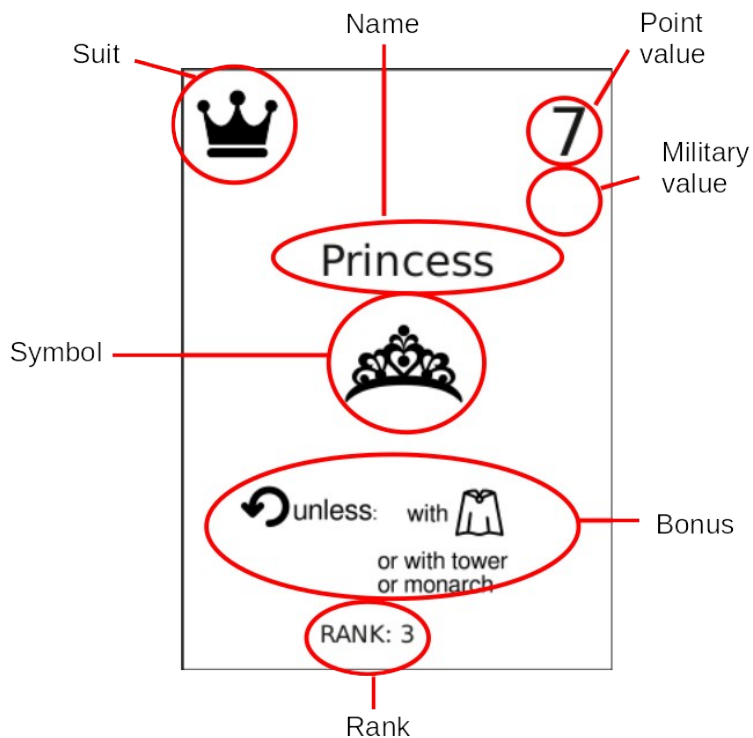
Acquire lands – assign them rulers – accumulate treasures – and build the greatest realm!

## Course of Play

Realm Builder is a card-drafting game for 2 to 4 players that takes place over three hands, each involving four rounds of drafting. (The 2 player game has different drafting rules; see the end of the rules for details.) Players take cards into their tableaux to accumulate the highest score. Many cards have a printed value that they always score; many have, instead or in addition, a bonus that the score if some condition is met.

## The Cards

Cards in Realm Builder have the following information:



Name: The title of the card

Suit: The suit (one of leaders, lands, characters, and things)



Leader



Land



Character



Thing

Point value: Points scored for having this card face up in your tableau

Military value: Military points given by this card for fighting a war

Symbol: The card's symbol (sometimes used on other cards to explain bonuses)

Bonus: Any special conditions attached to the card, usually giving extra points

Rank: Provided for leaders only; higher numbers represent higher ranks

## The Hand

Each hand begins by the start player (chosen randomly at the beginning, then rotating) dealing six cards to each player. Players then play four rounds with the following parts:

### a) The Offer

The player to the dealer's left then begins the round by playing a card face up to the middle of the table. The next player to the left follows by playing a card from his hand. The card must follow the suit of the lead card if possible; if the player has no card in the lead suit, he may play any card that he wishes. The other players follow clockwise around the table, each playing a card.

When all cards have been played, the dealer flips a card from the deck and adds it to the middle of the table.

### b) The Draft

Now players go back around the table, starting to the left the dealer, and each select one card from the offer. The start player may *not* select the card he played. However, he may choose to pass his selection and allow the player to his left to go first. Play proceeds clockwise as usual, with the start player selecting a card last, at which time

he can take any card left in the offer (including his own).

## Pass the Round

After all cards are chosen, there will be one card left in the offer. Discard it, and pass the first player marker to the left.

## End the Hand

After four rounds have been played, the hand is over. Players will have two cards left in their hands. Discard those cards and take all the discards (which includes the cards not selected in each round) and shuffle them back in the deck. If there is another hand to be played, repeat this procedure.

## End of Game Procedure

When all three hands are completed, players perform the following steps in order.

### a) Monarchy Phase

Each player chooses his highest-ranking leader as his monarch. (Rank is the number printed at the bottom of leader cards.) The monarch may be a married couple. All other leaders of the same rank as the monarch must be flipped over. *Thus, you could have a king and a queen as your monarch, but any other kings or queens in your tableau would have to be flipped. If your monarch was an emperor or empress, you could have multiple kings and queens – only the monarch is limited to a single ruler or married couple of their rank.*

Note that the prince and princess may not be married (they are brother and sister), so only one may be your monarch. If you have both, you may choose which to flip. If the prince is your monarch, the princess can still avoid being flipped if she meets one of the other conditions on her card (see below).

The player with the highest-ranking monarch scores one point. If there is a tie, no players score.

## b) War Phase

Players now add up their military values and announce the total. The player with the highest military wins the war and scores 2 points. If there is a tie, no points are scored, unless one of the tied players has the marshal (in which case the player with the marshal wins the tiebreaker and gets 2 points).

Any players who did not have the highest military value calculate their loss value, which is equal to the difference between the highest military value and their own military points. For example, if the leader has 3 military points and you have 1 military, your loss value is 2. Players must flip over cards equal to their loss value, subject to some restrictions.

The first cards you must flip are lands (Counties, Duchies, and Towns). It is your choice which lands to flip. Each castle you have protects one land from being flipped. Each town prevents itself from being flipped – in other words, you never have to flip a town from losing a war.

*Example one: you have two lands and you are two points behind the leader in military. You would normally have to flip both of your lands. However, if you have a castle, you only have to flip one land; the other is protected. Example two: you have three lands and you are two points behind the leader in military. You have one castle. You still have to flip two lands, because your castle only protects one land (it is not much use in this case). Example three: You have one land and you are behind the leader by 3 points in military. You have one castle, so you do not have to flip your land.*

If you cannot flip the entire loss value in lands, either because you don't have that many lands or because one or two of your lands are protected, you proceed to make up the remainder by flipping treasures. There are six cards that protect treasures (two castles, two towns, and two ships), which is handled the same way as protecting lands. It is possible that you may not have to flip the full loss value, either because you lack sufficient lands and treasures, or because your lands and treasures are protected. You never flip any cards other than lands or treasures for losing a war.

## c) Largest Realm Phase


Players now see who has the most land cards that are not flipped. The player with the highest number scores four points for having the largest realm. If there is a tie for largest realm, all tied players score 2 points.

## d) Scoring Phase


Players now score the points showing in their tableaux. Each card scores its face value, and many cards have potential bonuses as well. Here are the meaning of the symbols:

+x: A card with a colon scores points if it is paired with a single card of the type to the right of the colon. For instance, a Count scores +3 points if he is paired with a County. A card may only be paired with once, so two Counts couldn't both get the +3 points for a single County. On the other hand, you can chain card pairs, so a Count can pair with a County, and a Countess can pair with the same Count.

+x/ A card with a slash scores x points for each card in your tableau of the specified type; you do not need to pair them. For instance, a Marshal scores +1 point for each knight in your tableau.

 These two symbols together indicate a "ruled land": a land that has a ruler paired with it.

A count paired with a county constitutes a ruled land. A count and a duchy together do not constitute a ruled land because a count cannot rule a duchy, so they cannot be paired. Although not explicitly indicated on the cards, a countess may rule a county by pairing with it, and a duchess may rule a duchy. They score no direct points for pairing this way, but they may score bonus points for making a ruled land. A prince may rule either a county or a duchy if he is not your monarch.

 This symbol indicates that a card must be flipped face down. It occurs on the following cards:

(a) Dragon – the dragon will flip one of your own treasures. You may protect a treasure in

the usual way (but all of your treasures must be protected, or he will flip one that is not).

(b) Hero – the hero flips the dragon. This occurs before the dragon flips a treasure.

(c) Princess – the princess is *always* flipped unless she meets one of the three conditions on her card; either she is your monarch; or she is paired with the tower; or she is paired with the hero. A princess paired with the tower or the hero is *not* flipped even if the prince is the monarch.

Before scoring, be sure to pair up all your cards the way you want them, as different pairings could lead to different scores.

Each card in your tableau that is face down at the end of the game subtracts one from your score.

## Winning

The player with the highest score wins the game. In the case of a draw, victory goes to the player with the highest-ranking monarch, then the player with the highest military. If still tied, the game is a draw.

## 2 Player Game

When playing with only two players, the regular drafting system is replaced by a different method. To create the offer, turn over the top 8 cards from the deck. The start player for that round will select one card of his choice. The, the

other player will select two cards; and finally, the start player will select a second card. Rotate the start player and conduct another hand. After two hands, and again after four hands, shuffle the discarded cards back into the deck.

Wars work different with two players. A player must have one military point for every land in his tableau, or else he will have to flip a land for every military point he lacks. For determining who wins a war, only military points above and beyond the minimum to cover lands count.

*Example one: A player has 1 county and no military. He must flip his land unless it is protected by a castle. Example two: A player has 2 lands and 2 military. He does not have to flip any lands, but he has zero military points to fight a war. Suppose his opponent has zero lands and 1 military. His opponent would win the war.*

A player must have at least one military point more than the number of lands in order to win a war. *Example: Player A has 2 lands and 2 military, for a net of zero military. Player B has 1 land and zero military, for a net of -1 military. Neither player wins the war, because neither has more than zero net military value.*

When a player wins a war in a two-player game, his opponent must flip treasures to make up the difference. There is no need to flip any lands, as this is already covered in the requirement to have one military per land. (He will, of course, have to flip a land if he did not have at least one military per land; but this is separate from losing the war.) Players can protect treasures as usual.