

# MASQUES™

*The new Doge has invited you to attend a prestigious masquerade ball at his palace during the Carnival of Venice! It's the perfect escape from the boredom of noble life, and it provides an ideal opportunity to conspire your way to a position of power! While the various guilds mingle under the moonlit arcades of the ducal palace, you must utilize every means at your disposal to gain their support. Can you forge alliances that will pave your way to the throne?*

## Game Overview

In **Masques**, two to four players each control a noble family attending a masquerade ball. Each family is vying for power, attempting to win the favor of the various guilds. To do so, the families must use their influence and hire crafty agents in an attempt to gain favor in the guilds.

The first player to gain either four favor in a single guild or at least one favor in each guild wins the game.

## Game Components

This section describes the components in detail.

### 1 First Player Card

The first player card indicates which player takes the first turn at the start of each action phase.



### 4 Family Cards

Family cards indicate which of the four major families (Contarini, Dandolo, Morosini, and Venier) each player controls during the game.



### 16 Guest Cards

Guest cards represent the guests attending the masquerade ball. Each of the four major families has three guest cards. Each guest card has an influence value (2–4) printed in the upper-left corner. The Foscari family is neutral and is not controlled by any player.



## 18 Agent Cards

The agent cards represent agents that families can hire to disrupt other guests at the ball in various ways. There are six types of agents—assassin, courtesan, gondolier, guard, thief, and trader—each with a unique ability (see “Agent Card Abilities” on page 12).



### Agent Card Anatomy



1. Influence Value
2. Ducat Token Cost
3. Ability

## 16 Palace Cards

Palace cards represent the various sections of the palace. These cards show one of two icons: either a ducat icon (1) or a favor icon (2).



## 20 Favor Cards

Favor cards track the number of favor tokens a player gains in each guild (see “Favor Card Example” on page 7). Each favor card corresponds to one of the five guilds—clergy (1), vintner (2), merchant (3), military (4), and scribe (5).



## 15 Favor Tokens

Favor tokens represent the favor that players wish to gain from each guild.



## 35 Ducat Tokens

Ducat tokens represent the currency used to hire agents.





## Setup

Set up the game as follows. (For a game with two or three players, see page 10.)

1. **Determine First Player:** Give the first player card to the youngest player.
2. **Distribute Family Cards:** Randomly deal one family card to each player. Each player places his family card in his play area.
3. **Distribute Favor Cards:** Give each player one favor card of each type: clergy, vintner, merchant, military, and scribe. Players place their favor cards in their play area with the lion's head side faceup and the "0" oriented at the top of the card.
4. **Build the Palace:** Place the palace card with the door icon in a corner of the central play area. This is the first corner of the palace.



*Door Icon*

Proceeding clockwise from this corner, place the remaining palace cards in the central play area forming a square. Start with a palace card with a ducat icon and alternate between palace cards with favor icons and palace cards with ducat icons (see "Setup Diagram" on page 4).

On either side of each palace card, leave a card-sized space to represent a vacant **HALLWAY**. Each side of the palace has five palace cards and four hallways.

5. **Create the Ducat Token Supply:** Place the ducat tokens in the middle of the palace to form the ducat token supply.
6. **Distribute Ducat Tokens:** Give one ducat token to each player.
7. **Create the Favor Token Supply:** Place all favor tokens facedown (icon side down) in the middle of the palace and mix them together to form the favor token supply.
8. **Create the Agent Card Supply:** Separate the agent cards by card type into six piles of three cards. Arrange each pile in order of ducat token cost; place the most expensive card on bottom and the least expensive card on top.

The cost of each agent card is equal to the number of ducat symbols printed along the top of the card (see "Agent Card Anatomy" on page 2).

Place the agent card piles in the middle of the palace to form the agent card supply.

# Setup Diagram (4-Player Game)





## The Game Round

*Masques* is played over a series of game rounds. Each round consists of three phases that are resolved in the following order:

1. **Preparation Phase:** Place ducat or favor tokens on vacant palace cards. Shuffle, deal, and draft guest cards.
2. **Action Phase:** Play guest and agent cards.
3. **Resolution Phase:** Resolve palace cards and collect tokens.

After completing all three phases, a new game round begins. The game continues in this way until one player gains enough favor tokens to win the game.

### The Preparation Phase

During the preparation phase, the first player places one ducat token from the ducat token supply on each vacant palace card with a ducat icon. Additionally, the first player **randomly** takes one favor token from the supply and places it **faceup** on each vacant palace card with a favor icon.

The first player shuffles all guest cards and randomly deals four cards to each player.

Then, players simultaneously draft cards by repeating the following steps until each player has four cards in his play area:

1. Choose one guest card and place it facedown.
2. Pass the remaining cards to the player on the left and take the cards from the player on the right.

After drafting, each player takes the four cards in his play area into his hand.

### The Action Phase

During the action phase, starting with the first player and proceeding clockwise, each player takes his turn by performing one of the following actions:

- **Play one guest card**
- **Hire one agent card**
- **Pass**

When playing cards, players place them in vacant hallways (see “Action and Resolution Phase Example” on page 8). After **all hallways** are occupied, the action phase ends and the resolution phase begins. Guest cards remaining in a player’s hand have no effect this round.

## Play One Guest Card

The player chooses one guest card from his hand and places it faceup in a vacant hallway.

## Hire One Agent Card

The player hires one agent card following these steps:

1. The player chooses which agent type he wishes to hire.
2. He pays the cost of the top card on that agent pile, returning that number of his ducat tokens to the ducat token supply.
3. He takes the top card in that agent's pile and places it in any vacant hallway.
4. He **may** resolve the agent card's ability (see page 12).

## Pass

If a player has no more cards in his hand and chooses not to hire an agent card, he must pass. The next player in clockwise order takes his turn. A player who passes may hire and play an agent card during a later turn in the action phase.

## The Resolution Phase

During the resolution phase, starting with the palace card with the door icon and proceeding clockwise, the first player resolves each palace card. Then, players clean up the central play area and begin another game round.

## Resolve Palace Cards

To resolve a palace card, compare the influence values on each card occupying the two adjacent hallways.

The adjacent guest card with the higher influence value wins. The player who controls that guest card's family collects the faceup token on the palace card as follows:

- If it is a ducat token, the winning player takes it and places it in his play area.
- If it is a favor token, the winning player orients his corresponding favor card to the next higher number (see "Favor Card Example" on page 7). Then, he returns the token facedown to the favor token supply.

If a token is facedown, it remains on the palace card and players cannot collect it during this round.

The token remains on the palace card for the next round if any of these conditions apply:

- Both cards have the same influence value.
- A Foscari guest card has the higher influence value.
- An agent card has the higher influence value.

### *Favor Card Example*

1



2



The Venier player collected two military favor tokens during the first round of the game.

1. He flips his military favor card to the side showing 1–4, orienting the “1” at the top of the card.
2. Then, he rotates his military favor card 90° clockwise, orienting the “1” at the top of the card.

## Clean Up Play Area

After resolving all palace cards, the first player returns all agent cards occupying hallways to the game box, flips any facedown tokens faceup, and gathers all guest cards—including any guest cards still in players’ hands. Then, he passes the first player card to the player to his left.

## Winning the Game

If a player gains either four favor in any one guild or at least one favor in all five guilds, that player immediately wins the game.



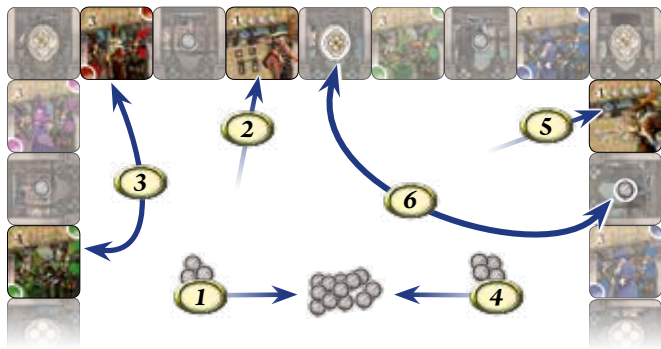
## Action and Resolution Phase Example



1. During the final turn of the action phase, the Venier player plays a “Foscari 3” guest card in this vacant hallway.
2. The Dandolo player plays the “Dandolo 2” guest card in this vacant hallway.
3. The Contarini player plays the “Venier 2” guest card in this vacant hallway.
4. The Morosini player hires a thief and places it in this vacant hallway. To resolve the thief’s ability, he flips the favor token on the adjacent palace card facedown.
5. Now the resolution phase begins, starting with this palace card. The Venier card has the higher influence value. The Venier player collects the merchant favor token.
6. The Foscari card has the higher influence value. The ducat token remains on the palace card.
7. Both cards have the same influence value. The favor token remains on the palace card.
8. The Dandolo card has the higher influence value. The Dandolo player collects the ducat token.
9. The Contarini card has the higher influence value. However, the favor token is facedown so the Contarini player cannot collect it.



## Agent Card Example



1. The Dandolo player chooses to hire a gondolier. To pay its cost, he returns three of his ducats to the supply.
2. He places the gondolier in this vacant hallway.
3. To resolve the gondolier's ability, the Dandolo player chooses one guest card from either of the two hallways **closest** to the gondolier. He chooses to take the "Morosini 3" and exchange it with the "Dandolo 4" card from another area of the palace.
4. The Venier player chooses to hire a trader. To pay its cost, he returns four of his ducats to the supply.
5. He places the trader in this vacant hallway.
6. To resolve the trader's ability, the Venier player chooses one token from an adjacent palace card. He chooses to exchange the adjacent ducat token with a scribe favor token from another area of the palace.



## Three-Player Game

Before the game begins, return the following components to the game box:

- One family card and the three guest cards corresponding to that family card.
- Five favor cards (one of each type: clergy, vintner, merchant, military, and scribe).
- Four palace cards (two with ducat icons and two with favor icons). Be sure to keep the palace card with the door icon.
- One “Foscari 3” guest card.

### Three-Player Setup

During step 4 of “Setup,” apply the following change:

- Build the palace so that each side of the palace has **four** palace cards and **three** hallways.



## Two-Player Game

Before the game begins, return the following components to the game box:

- Ten favor cards (two of each type: clergy, vintner, merchant, military, and scribe).
- Eight palace cards (four with ducat icons and four with favor icons). Be sure to keep the palace card with the door icon.
- Five favor tokens (one of each type).
- Three courtesan agent cards.

### Two-Player Setup

During steps 2 and 4 of “Setup,” apply the following changes:

- Deal **two** family cards to each player.
- Build the palace so that each side of the palace has **three** palace cards and **two** hallways.

### Additional Two-Player Rules

The two-player game uses the standard rules with the following exceptions:

**Odd-Numbered Rounds:** Shuffle all 16 guest cards and deal four of them to each player. These four cards make up each player’s hand of cards; there is no draft. Set aside the remaining eight guest cards. Play the round as normal, but do not pass the first player card at the end of the resolution phase.

**Even-Numbered Rounds:** Take the remaining eight cards set aside during the previous odd-numbered round and deal four of them to each player. These four cards make up each player's hand of cards; there is no draft. Play the round as normal, and this time pass the first player card at the end of the resolution phase.

**Resolution Phase:** When resolving palace cards, the token remains on the palace card for the next round if the two cards have the same influence value—even if the **same player** controls both families.



## Credits

### Dust Games Team

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## Agent Card Abilities

**Thief:** When a player places a thief, he takes one token (ducat or favor) from either of the two palace cards **adjacent** to the thief and flips it facedown. If a token is facedown, it remains on the palace card and players cannot collect it during this round.



**Trader:** When a player places a trader, he takes one token (ducat or favor) from either of the two palace cards **adjacent** to the trader and exchanges it with any token (ducat or favor) in the palace. The icons on the palace cards do not affect this ability.



**Guard:** When a player places a guard, he takes one guest card (faceup or facedown) from either of the two hallways **closest** to the guard and places it in any vacant hallway in the palace.



**Assassin:** When a player places an assassin, he takes one guest card from either of the two hallways **closest** to the assassin and flips it facedown. A facedown guest card has an influence value of "0."



**Gondolier:** When a player places a gondolier, he takes one guest card (faceup or facedown) from either of the two hallways **closest** to the gondolier and exchanges it with any guest card in the palace.



**Courtesan:** When a player places a courtesan, he states aloud the family and influence value of any one guest card that does not already occupy a hallway in the palace (even a card in his own hand). Between the two hallways **closest** to the courtesan, he chooses one, which must be vacant. The player holding the stated card must immediately place it in the indicated hallway.

