GOING MEDIEVAL
THE EMPEROR'S PATIENCE

LEARN TO PLAY v1.3

Restore the Realm by arranging its ranked cards and completing the three Estates before every path closes.

1. Build the Deck

From the standard 54-card Going Medieval deck, keep all 30 ranked Face Cards (ranks 9 through 0 in each Estate) and exactly three Faceless cards: one Nobility Knight, one Clergy Flock, and one Peasantry Serf. Set the other Faceless cards aside.

33-CARD DECK	**30 ranked Face Cards + Knight + Flock + Serf = 33 cards.**

2. Set Up the Realm

Shuffle the 33 cards. Deal three face-up Realm Columns of five cards each. Overlap cards vertically so every card remains visible. The card nearest you is the bottom card; new cards are added beneath it. Place the remaining 18 cards face down as the Fate Deck.

AREA	WHAT IT IS FOR
Realm	Three five-card columns for rearranging cards and uncovering Buried cards.
Fate Deck	18 cards, dealt into the Realm three at a time.
Foundations	One for each Estate: Nobility, Clergy, Peasantry.
Lost to Time (LTT)	Space for Faceless cards removed from play.

3. Realm & Accessibility

Ranked cards connect when adjacent ranks differ by exactly 1. A Realm sequence may ascend, descend, or reverse direction; Estates may mix. Faceless cards have no rank and cannot continue a ranked sequence.

Start at a column’s bottom card and work upward while each next card is ranked and differs by exactly 1. Those cards form the Accessible Region; cards above it are Buried. If the bottom card is Faceless, that Faceless alone is Accessible.

Ordinary move: Select any Accessible ranked card and move it together with every card beneath it. You cannot pull one card or a smaller group from the middle while leaving cards below behind.

Place the group beneath another column’s bottom card, keeping its order. The destination bottom card and the moving group’s top card must both be ranked and differ by 1. A Faceless bottom card accepts nothing. You may instead move the group into an empty Realm Column.

Recalculate accessibility whenever cards enter, move within, or leave a column.

4. Estate Foundations

Each Estate has its own Foundation, containing ranked cards of that Estate only. Begin with rank 9 and build downward to 0, or begin with 0 and build upward to 9. Once started, the direction is fixed.

START	SEQUENCE
9 first	9 → 8 → 7 → … → 1 → 0
0 first	0 → 1 → 2 → … → 8 → 9

A normal Foundation move follows the same rule as an ordinary Realm move: select an Accessible card and take every card beneath it. Every moved card must be of the Foundation's Estate and legally continue its sequence. For a group, place cards from the top of the moving group toward its bottom, in that order. Foundation moves are permanent.

Example: A Nobility Foundation has 9. An Accessible group of Nobility 8, 7, 6 (top to bottom) may move together, entering the Foundation as 8, then 7, then 6.

Why it matters: If an Accessible Region is Nobility 8 / Clergy 7 / Nobility 6 (top to bottom), you cannot move the 8 alone to its Foundation: an ordinary move must take the 7 and 6 too.

5. Faceless Cards

Knight (Nobility), Flock (Clergy), and Serf (Peasantry) never move within the Realm or enter a Foundation. An Accessible Faceless card may stay where it is, provide its Helping Hand, or be sent directly to Lost to Time as one move.

6. Helping Hands

An Accessible Faceless card grants one Helping Hand move targeting a Buried ranked card of its matching Estate.
The chosen card may move alone or with any number of the cards directly beneath it, as long as each card differs by exactly 1 from the card above it. Unlike an ordinary move, you need not take every card beneath the selection.

The moved card/group must still satisfy its destination: for a Realm Column, the top card of the moved group joins the destination's bottom card by ±1 rank (Estates may mix); for a Foundation, every card must match the Estate and continue its sequence in order; an empty Realm Column is also permitted.

Cards left above and below the extracted selection close the gap without changing order. After the Helping Hand move, send the enabling Faceless card to Lost to Time and recalculate affected Accessible Regions.

7. Fate

Instead of moving, reveal the next three Fate cards. Place the first beneath the left column, second beneath the center, and third beneath the right, without rearranging. Empty columns still receive their Fate cards. There are exactly six Fate Turns.

Warning: Fate can bury an Accessible Faceless card. While Buried, it cannot provide a Helping Hand or go to Lost to Time until uncovered. Use it or discard it before Fate if you want to avoid that risk.

8. Taking a Turn

Choose one of the following actions each turn:

ACTION	WHAT YOU DO
Realm move	Move an Accessible ranked card with every card beneath it to a legal Realm destination.
Foundation move	Move an Accessible ranked card with every card beneath it to its matching Foundation, if all cards fit.
Helping Hand	Use an Accessible Faceless to move one matching-Estate Buried ranked card or valid group; send Faceless to LTT.
Faceless to LTT	Send an Accessible Faceless directly to Lost to Time without using its Helping Hand.
Fate Turn	Reveal three cards and place them left, center, right.

9. Winning & Losing

Win: Complete all three ten-card Estate Foundations. Faceless cards are not part of Foundation completion.

Lose: Once the Fate Deck is empty, the Patience is lost when no move can place a card in a Foundation, use a Helping Hand, or make a Buried card Accessible. You may concede at any time.

Quick Reference

RULE	REMEMBER
Setup	33 cards; three columns × five; 18-card Fate Deck; three Foundations; LTT.
Accessible	From the bottom upward while ranked cards connect by ±1; cards above are Buried.
Ordinary move	Select an Accessible ranked card and move it with ALL cards below it.
Destination	Join bottom destination card to top moved card by ±1; or use empty column.
Foundation	One Estate; begin at 9 descending or 0 ascending; groups enter top-first.
Faceless	Never move within Realm. While Accessible: stay, use Helping Hand, or LTT.
Helping Hand	Move a matching-Estate Buried card alone or valid downward group; close gap; Faceless to LTT.
Fate	Three cards left / center / right; empty columns receive cards; six Fate Turns.
Victory	Complete all three ten-card Foundations.
Lose	Fate Deck empty and no move can reach a Foundation, use a Helping Hand, or uncover a Buried card.

Three Estates. One Realm.