

Viking Raid

Defend your village. Plunder the countryside.

Rules v1.2 · A cut-throat poker game

Overview

One player commands the **Viking Raider**. Every other player is a **Villager** who battles the Raider independently.

The Chronicle lasts one year of four Seasons. The richest player after Winter wins.

PLAYERS	DECK	ALSO NEEDED
2–6	One Hard Times Face Deck (60 cards)	Ducats

1 The Year Begins

Components

- **Hard Times Face Deck:** two copies of each of the 30 face cards (ranks 0–9 in all three Estates). Faceless cards (Knight, Flock, Serf) are not used.
- **Ducats.**

Setup

Every player starts with **20 Ducats**. Randomly choose the first Viking Raider.

> Play time scales with player count; a 6-player Chronicle has up to 24 Raids.

The Four Seasons

A Season ends once every eligible player has served once as Viking Raider. After Winter, the Chronicle ends.

SEASON	VILLAGER ANTE	SECOND MORNING RAID COST
Spring	1 Ducat	2 Ducats
Summer	2 Ducats	3 Ducats
Autumn	3 Ducats	4 Ducats
Winter	4 Ducats	5 Ducats

Player Status

STATUS	CONDITION	MAY	MAY NOT
Prosperous	Can pay the full Season Ante	Make Blind Boasts (if the full Ante is still affordable afterwards); buy Protection; offer one Mercy Pact per Chronicle (if not holding or sharing the lead); serve as Raider **if able to cover the full Raid Stake**	—
Impoverished	Cannot pay the full Season Ante	Ante all remaining Ducats; make optional payments only if still affordable after the Ante	Make Blind Boasts; serve as Raider; offer a Mercy Pact
Destitute	0 Ducats	Ante 0 and keep playing; receive one Mercy Pact per Chronicle	Buy Protection; make Blind Boasts; serve as Raider; choose protected cards (see step 7)

Raider eligibility: you may serve as Raider only if you hold at least the Season Ante × the number of Villagers when the role reaches you. If no one who hasn't raided this Season is eligible, the Season ends (in Winter, the Chronicle ends). Check every player's status at the start of each Raid, before Blind Boasts.

2 Poker Hands

Hands rank from rarest to most common in the 60-card Hard Times Deck. The Raider wins any tie that survives the tie-breaks.

RANK	HAND	DEFINITION
1	**Five of a Kind**	Five cards with the same rank
2	**Royal Flush**	9–8–7–6–5, all one Estate
3	**Straight Flush**	A Straight, all one Estate
4	**Four of a Kind**	Four cards with the same rank
5	**Full House**	Three of a Kind + a Pair
6	**Flush**	Five cards of one Estate
7	**Straight**	Five consecutive ranks, any Estates
8	**Three of a Kind**	Three cards with the same rank
9	**Two Pair**	Two different Pairs
10	**One Pair**	Two cards with the same rank
11	**High Card**	No other hand; highest-ranked card wins

Straights: rank 0 is always low and straights never wrap (Page–Emperor, Beggar–Bailiff and Sinner–Pope are not straights). Royal Flush exists in every Estate: Emperor–Empress–King–Queen–Duke, Pope–Cardinal–Archbishop–Bishop–Abbess and Bailiff–Reeve–Blacksmith–Miller–Carpenter.

Six of a rank: with six copies of each rank, a player may hold six matching cards; only the best five count.

Tie-breaks (standard poker)

- Pairs, Three of a Kind, Four of a Kind: the higher set wins, then the highest remaining cards (kickers).
- Two Pair: higher pair, then lower pair, then kicker.
- Full House: the three-of-a-kind, then the pair.
- Straight, Flush, High Card: compare the highest card, then the next, and so on.
- Estates never break ties.

Remaining Ties

Raider vs Villager: the Raider wins.

Villager vs Villager for the Spoils of War: they split the Spoils evenly; any odd Ducat stays in the Spoils.

3 How a Raid Works

Every Raid follows the same twelve steps. The Raider's hand stays hidden until the Final Battle.

1. **Choose the Viking Raider.** Next eligible player in rotation (see Raider eligibility).
2. **Blind Boasts.** Before cards are dealt, a Prosperous Villager may pay 2 Ducats into the Spoils of War, but only if they can still pay the full Season Ante afterwards. It makes them eligible for the Spoils.
3. **Villager Antes.** Each Villager pays the Season Ante. Impoverished players ante all remaining Ducats; Destitute players ante 0.
4. **Launch the Expedition.** The Raider matches the total Antes actually placed, forming the Raid Stake.
5. **Deal.** Each Villager receives five cards. The Raider receives none.
6. **Mercy Pact** OPTIONAL See page 5.
7. **Protect Valuables.** Choose two cards to keep for free. Buy more if you like (table at right), paid now and held until the Final Battle. All unprotected cards go to the hidden Raider Pool. **Destitute players** do not look at their cards: shuffle them face down, keep two at random, and send the other three to the Raider Pool unseen.
8. **First Raid.** Shuffle all unprotected cards face down and take 9 at random (if fewer than 9, add cards from the draw deck). The Raider privately builds the best five-card hand from those 9. Shuffle the rest into the draw deck.
9. **Nightfall.** Each Villager draws five more cards, builds and locks their best five-card hand. Unused cards form the hidden Village Discard Pool.
10. **Mercy Pact Resolution.** See page 5.
11. **Second Morning Raid** OPTIONAL The Raider pays the Season cost into the Spoils of War, draws five random cards from the Village Discard Pool, and rebuilds the best five-card hand from those plus their current hand.
12. **Final Battle.** The Raider reveals; all Villagers reveal at once. Resolve each Villager separately.

Protection

PROTECTED CARDS	EXTRA COST	CARDS TO RAIDER POOL	CARDS AFTER NIGHTFALL
2	0	3	7
3	1 Ducat	2	8
4	3 Ducats	1	9
5	6 Ducats	0	10

4 Resolving the Raid

Each Villager's battle is an even-money bet of their Ante against the Raider's matching share of the Raid Stake.

Villager Survives (beats the Raider)

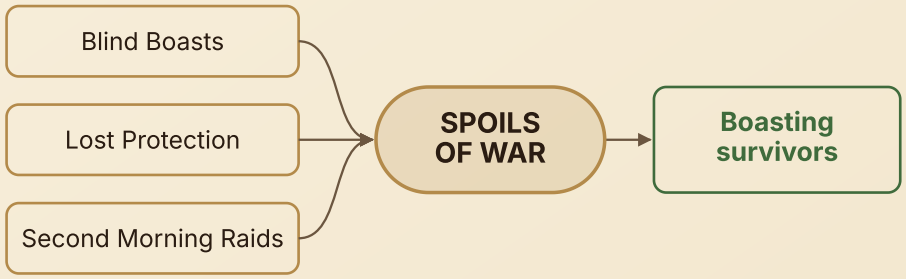
- ✓ Keep your Ante.
- ✓ Receive your Raid Stake share (equal to your Ante).
- ✓ Recover all Protection Ducats spent.
- ✓ Eligible for the Spoils of War if you made a Blind Boast this Raid.

Raider Wins

- ✓ Raider takes the Villager's Ante.
- ✓ Raider keeps its Raid Stake share (equal to that Villager's Ante).
- ✓ Raider gets half the Villager's Protection Ducats (rounded up).
- ✓ The rest of that Protection goes to the Spoils of War.

Spoils of War

The communal prize pool, funded by Blind Boasts, lost Protection and every Second Morning Raid cost.



- Only Villagers who made a Blind Boast **and** survived may claim it.
- One eligible survivor takes it all. Several: the strongest hand wins; exact ties split evenly, any odd Ducat staying in the pool.
- No eligible survivor: the Spoils carry over to the next Raid.
- Unclaimed after the final Raid of Winter: the Spoils are lost to the sea and count for no one.

5 Mercy & the End of the Chronicle

Mercy Pact

A one-time card deal with a permanent claim attached: the benefactor buys a Destitute player's cards now and half their fortune at the end.

- **Who:** a Prosperous Villager not holding or sharing the lead may offer it to one Destitute Villager, after the deal (step 6).
- **Cost:** 4 Ducats, paid immediately to the Destitute player. It doesn't change their status until the next Raid.
- **Limits:** one Mercy Pact per benefactor and one per Destitute player, per Chronicle.
- **Resolution (step 10, this Raid only):** both privately combine their locked hands into ten cards; the benefactor chooses any five as their final hand and the partner gets the other five. Both stay hidden until the Final Battle.
- **Permanent alliance:** the pact cannot be dissolved. The partner keeps playing independently but cannot win the Chronicle. At the end of Winter the benefactor adds half the partner's remaining Ducats (rounded up) to their Chronicle Score.

End of Raid

Resolve outcomes, Raid Stake, Antes, Protection and Spoils of War. Pass the Raider role to the next eligible player. When every eligible player has raided once (or no one left is eligible), advance to the next Season.

End of Chronicle

After Winter, count each player's Ducats, then add Mercy Pact bonuses. **The highest Chronicle Score wins.**

Quick Reference

Starting Ducats	20 per player
Blind Boast	2 Ducats
Extra Protection (3 / 4 / 5 cards)	1 / 3 / 6 Ducats
Antes (Spring / Summer / Autumn / Winter)	1 / 2 / 3 / 4 Ducats
Second Morning Raid	2 / 3 / 4 / 5 Ducats
Mercy Pact	4 Ducats
Raider must hold	Season Ante × number of Villagers
Raider Pool	9 random unprotected cards

> **Official · Open Playtest.** These rules are complete and ready to play. Tell us what you find, and share your house rules in the LOG Tavern at ludicoathgames.com. House rules are welcome at every table.