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In Crimson Company two opposing players take on the roles of adventurous noblemen in a cut-throat fantasy world. In a battle of wits they assemble armies of sellswords – from hardened warriors, to shady merchants, to mythical creatures as old as time. Who will outsmart their rival and gain control over the castles of a forgotten kingdom?

Overview



Your goal in a match of Crimson Company is to conquer two of the three castles in the center. You conquer a castle by amassing more strength than your opponent in the castle's lane by the time when that lane is scored. A lane is scored once a player owns at least four cards in it.

Cards represent a large variety of characters, all of which have specific strength values and unique effects. The latter are either one-time instant effects that happen when a card is played, or they are triggered in specific phases of the game.

Four randomly drawn cards from the character deck are "on offer". You may only bid coins on one of those at a time. Then your opponent decides to either pay you off, doubling the coins you bid, or pass and let you play the card.

Setup



Place the three *castle cards* representing the three *lanes* between both players. Lanes are separated into two *sides* (your side and your opponent's side).

Put the *coin supply* next to the three lanes.

Shuffle the *deck* of all the character cards and place it next to the three lanes, facing up (so the *upcoming card* is always visible at the top).

Draw four cards from the deck and place them down next to the three lanes. Those cards are *on offer* initially.

Flip a coin to decide who goes first. The first player starts with ●3 coins. The second player starts with ●4 coins.

The starting player may now begin the game in the **Income** phase (see "Phases").

Phases

Phase 1 – Income

Gain ●3 coins.

Be aware that some cards' effects can generate additional income in this phase.

Check: In the first turn, the starting player should have ●6 coins in total after this phase.

Phase 2 – Recruitment

Put at least one of your coins on exactly one card currently on offer.

Your opponent then chooses one of two options:

- **Match:** Your opponent has to put as many of their coins on the card as you did. In this case you get **all** the coins on the card (i.e. twice the original amount). Your opponent however recruits the card, placing it in front of them (but not yet playing it into one of the lanes).
- **Pass:** The coins you put on the card go back into the coin supply. You recruit the card, placing it in front of you (but not yet playing it into one of the lanes). Afterwards you continue with phase 3.

Important: Whenever there are less than 4 cards on offer, draw from the deck to refill the offer immediately.

Phase 3 – Deployment

Play all the cards you have in front of you (i.e. the ones you recruited previously) into a lane of your choice (see “Playing a Card”).

Check: Players can have a maximum of two cards in front of them at a time.

Phase 4 – Score

Check all lanes from left to right (from the view of the player whose turn it is). If any player has 4 or more cards in a lane (including face-down cards), **score** that lane (see “Scoring and Winning”).

It is then your opponent’s turn, starting with the **Income** phase again.

Playing a Card

When playing a card, you are free to choose which active lane you want to play in, but you can only play cards on your own side of a lane.

Cards are always played below all other cards in a lane.

Playing a card activates its effect (see “Card Effects”).

Card Effects

There are five types of effects on cards:

- **Deployment effects** happen *once* when a card is **played** (in the **Deployment** phase), and *each time* a face-down card is **flipped**, i.e. turned face-up again. If no phase is specified in a card’s text, it’s always a **Deployment** effect.
- **Income effects** on cards in any lane happen *every turn* at the beginning of the **Income** phase of their owner’s turn, as long as the card stays in play.
- **Recruitment effects** on cards in any lane apply *every turn* during the **Recruitment** phase of their owner, as long as the card stays in play.
- **Destruction effects** happen every time a card is destroyed (either via another card’s effect or after a lane was scored).
- **Score effects** on cards in a lane only apply when that lane is scored (*not before*).

Note: Card effects have to be resolved if at all possible (even to the player's own detriment).

Keywords: Destroy / Flip / Move / Swap

Destroy:

- Remove a card from the game.
- Put destroyed cards onto a separate discard pile.

Flip:

- Turn a face-up card face-down, or a face-down card face-up. Players may freely look at face-down cards anytime.
- Face-down cards have **0** strength and no effect.
- **Important:** Whenever a face-down card with a **Deployment** effect is turned face-up, the effect is resolved again *immediately*. Phase effects are active again.

Move:

- Change a card's lane. Your own cards are always moved to the bottom of a lane and opponent's cards to the top (furthest from castle).
- You can only move cards between *lanes* on their side, but not change which *side* the card is on.
- Moving a card does not trigger its effect.

Swap:

- Exchange the positions of two cards. This does not trigger effects.

Order of Resolution

If multiple card effects trigger in the same phase for a player, resolve them in this order (from their owner's point of view):

1. From top (close to castle) to bottom (far from castle) in the **left** lane
2. From top to bottom in the **middle** lane
3. From top to bottom in the **right** lane

Note: This includes flip effects happening at the same time (e.g. Clumsy Ogre).

Scoring and Winning

To score a lane, follow these steps:

1. Resolve any **Score** effects of cards in this lane from top (close to castle) to bottom (far from castle). The player whose turn it is resolves the Score effects of all cards on their own side of the lane first.
2. Add up all the strength values on each player's side. Face-down cards have **0** strength (unless affected by other cards' effects).

3. The player with the higher strength total wins the lane, gaining the castle card in its center.

After a player won a lane, all the cards in the lane are *destroyed* (triggering **Destruction** effects). The lane is then *removed* from the game.

As soon as one player owns **2** castle cards, that player immediately wins the game.

Resolving Ties

In case scoring a lane results in a tie, the lane stays in the game for now. Continue to play out the next turn as usual. **Score** effects do *not* apply any longer.

FAQ and Special Rules

Now you know everything you need to play the game. Should you have any questions during play about card effects or special situations, refer to the sections below.

Card Effect Clarifications

- **Alchemist:** Can destroy self (and has to if it is the only card on the board). Destroying face-down cards is worth **0** coins.
- **Berserker:** Can never reduce a card's strength below **0**.
- **Blood Priest:** The opponent chooses which card to destroy (if there are multiple).
- **Bully:** Can destroy face-down cards (since they have **0** strength).
- **Demon:** Can flip self (and has to if it is the only card in the lane).
- **Dodgy Dealer:** The "leading player" is determined by adding up base strength values in the lane (without **Score** effects). In case of a tie, nothing happens.
- **Fairy:** Only doubles the strength of *one* card on each side. If multiple cards have the same strength on a side, their owner chooses which one to double.
- **Fanatic:** If destroyed by a card effect and there is only one lane left, the effect cannot trigger (so the card is simply destroyed).
- **Fortune Teller:** If a player put coins on the upcoming card, the opponent can match (but not initially place coins on the upcoming card themselves).
- **Monk:** First you flip a card (and resolve any follow-up effects), then the opponent. If only one player has cards in the lane, only the flip on their side happens.
- **Plague Doctor:** If it triggers last during a scoring phase, any previous strength changes to face-down cards are negated. They then simply have **3** strength.
- **Sellsword:** Coins paid for the scoring effect are put back into the coin supply.
- **Siren:** The opponent chooses which cards to move. If the opponent has less than 2 cards in other lanes, the effect is not triggered.
- **Slinger:** Flips *all* the strongest cards on both sides separately (i.e. potentially multiple cards on a side). Can flip self if there is no stronger card on its side.
- **Summoner:** The card put into play face-down does not trigger its effect.
- **Undead:** If destroyed by a card effect and there is only one lane left, the effect cannot trigger (so the card is simply destroyed).

What if the deck runs out of cards?

If the deck ever runs out of cards, re-shuffle all destroyed cards to build a new deck.

What if the coin supply is empty?

If the coin supply runs out, no more income is distributed. Whenever a player would gain coins from the supply, that player does not gain coins.

Coin Handicap

If one of the two players is more experienced, gaps in skill can be countered by increasing the starting coins of the less experienced player. Try a bonus of one additional starting coin and increase it from there if necessary.



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