

# A Parliament of Rooks



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At the hour of dusk the Rooks meet in the high tree tops to hold their Parliament, passing judgement on the events of the human world. Those people who the Parliament decides against are fated for death, and those that voted against them will feast happily on their corpses.

The Rooks are cruel birds indeed.

A Parliament of Rooks is a dice and storytelling game for three or more people. You will need ten dice for each player (all the same size), a deck of normal playing cards (no jokers), and (ideally) a container like a cup or bowl.

Each player takes the part of one of the Rook Senators, arguing for the punishment of one or more foolish humans. If you win your case then the human will be yours to punish (that is eat, rob or otherwise bedevil), and the Rook who wins the fattest prizes will be elected the next leader of the Parliament.

## Preparation

Shuffle the deck of cards and place it in the middle of the table face down, this represents the many cases awaiting judgement by the court. Place the empty bowl in the middle of the table too, and give ten dice to each player. The dice represent your votes in the Parliament. Leave space by the cards for two discard piles, one for innocents and one for suspects.

Choose a Speaker for the parliament. If this is your first game the oldest player is the Speaker. Otherwise it is the winner of the last game.

The Speaker takes an extra dice and puts it in the bowl.

Players will now take it in turn to put a case before the Parliament, describing a human fool that may be up for punishment. Other Rooks then argue for the human's innocence or guilt, pledging their own votes for or against the current player. Finally the vote is held and the human found innocent or guilty. Play continues until all the votes are spent.

Begin with the youngest Rook, because it is like the young to be impetuous and hasty.

## Prosecute your Victim

### *Choose a Victim*

On your turn flip over the top two cards of the deck and look at them, these are your potential victims. Pick one and place it in the middle of the table; this card represents the victim whose case you are prosecuting. The other card is added to the *suspect pile*. The higher value the card the more valuable the victim.

If you do not like the look of either victim (i.e. their values are too low for your tastes) then you may take one of your remaining dice and drop it in the bowl to draw another card. You can keep on doing this till you like one of the cards or run out of dice, but remember, when you are out of dice you are out of votes. Passed over cards go into the *suspect pile*.

## *Describe the Victim*

Now, describe the victim, and why they are being punished by the Parliament. The suit and value of the card you have drawn will influence this description as follows

<b>Clubs</b>	Describe a person who has committed sins of violence and anger
<b>Spades</b>	Describe a person who has committed sins of indolence and omission
<b>Hearts</b>	Describe a person who has committed sins of love and lust
<b>Diamonds</b>	Describe a person who has committed sins of greed and avarice
<b>Odds</b>	Describe a woman
<b>Evens</b>	Describe a man
<b>Jacks</b>	Describe a young person in the flush of youth
<b>Knights</b>	Describe a warrior or soldier at arms
<b>Queens</b>	Describe a married person, committing sins against family
<b>Kings</b>	Describe a noble or respected person, committing sins against strangers
<b>Aces</b>	Describe how another Rook has led to this crime

If you describe an Ace, then you must describe how one of the other Rooks is involved in this crime. If that Rook has at least two dice, take one. If you cannot, then you must describe how you yourself are involved in the crime. You must use an extra dice in the next step.

## *Incriminate*

Now you argue your case to incriminate the victim. Briefly say why they deserve punishment. As you do commit one or more of your dice to the case. The more dice you commit the better your chances of winning the case. The more dice the more persuasive your accusation.

When you do this, the Speaker takes one dice from the bowl and adds it to the defence.

## *Take a Stance*

### *Objection!*

As the current Rook presents their case, the other players may act to support or defend the accused. Starting with the player to the left of the prosecutor, each Rook may commit one or more of their own dice to the current case, either for or against. They may also choose to pass, making no comment. Play continues in this way — with each Rook objecting, supporting, or passing — until no Rook wishes to commit more votes.

Keep each Rook's dice separate as you do this.

When you vote on the case you put forth your own evidence that might prove the victim innocent, guilty, or not deserving of punishment. Describe some further piece of incriminating evidence, or some extenuating circumstance that helps find the human innocent. Perhaps the crime was committed by someone else, perhaps the human has done some good deed that means they should be spared. Perhaps another innocent loves them. You can present any evidence you like.

Each time you vote you choose which side all your dice are applied too, you don't have to be consistent. Feel free to change your argument.

### *Spread the Blame*

When you vote you may *spread the blame*. Take one of the cards in the suspects pile and place it beside the current accused, explaining how that suspect is involved; both are now on trial. When you do this you may take a dice from the bowl at the centre of the table and add it to your pool of votes.

### *Shift the Blame*

Instead of spreading the blame you may choose to shift it, presenting evidence that one of the current accused is innocent of all crimes, and someone else is in fact guilty. Take one of the current accused and move it to the innocents pile, replacing it with a card from the suspects pile. There must be at least one card in the suspects pile to do this. When you do this you must drop one of your dice in the bowl at the centre of the table (in addition to your vote).

### *Argue the case*

Continue as long as you wish, spreading and shifting blame, adding more facts and more dice to the case, until all players pass. When all Rooks have said enough, it is time to vote.

## **Vote**

Finally it is time for the parliament to decide the victim's fate. Each player rolls the dice they have committed to the case, and totals them. Then add together the scores for all of the prosecution (the prosecutor and allies) and the defence (all the other dice).

**If the prosecution has the highest total :** the victim is to be punished. Put the victim card with the highest value in front of the prosecutor, he will score points for it at the end of the game. If there is more than one accused the second highest card goes to the ally with the highest total, the third to the third ally and so forth. If allies tie, the card goes to the nearest ally left of the prosecutor. If there are more victims than prosecutors, repeat the process.

**If the defence has the highest total :** all the accused are found innocent and will not be punished. Put the victim cards into the *innocents* pile, no one will score points for them at the end of the game.

**If the scores tie :** the Speaker must adjudicate. He may declare either side the winner. If he declares the victim innocent then the prosecutor may take a dice from the bowl. On the other hand if the Speaker finds the victims guilty, then he may take a dice from the prosecutor.

Finally all the committed dice are put into the bowl; these votes are cast and spent.

Continue with the Rook to the left

## **Ending the game**

When all players have run out of dice the game is over. Count the total values of cards in front of each player (counting face cards as 10s). The Rook with the highest total has the most valuable victims, and will be the speaker the next time the parliament meets.

*Eat well ...*