



Conclave Variant

The high tension stakes of Liar's Poker, in a Conclave gathering all the great Earls of the land.



No Lord is a castle unto themselves. Feudal society is based on traditions, privileges and ties that are both based in time immemorial and also constantly under renegotiation, only sustained by regular face to face interaction.

How will you fare... when seated around the conference table, facing off against the other great Earls of the Kingdom. Will they trick you? Will you trick them? Or will you simply walk away with fond memories of a rousing good visit, with ample mead and well cooked pheasant shared amongst you?

Conclave

This is a fairly simple variant addition, a little game within a game, that brings more flavor and drama than one might expect.

Conclave is a new **Action** that players may take on their turn.

When you call a Conclave, as your Action, the **Joust deck** will be used to create a quick game of Liar's Poker.

All Earls can earn a small boon from this "gathering," but depending on their choices in the Conclave they can leave with nothing or achieve an even greater boon, by perhaps outmaneuvering their peers and winning the Conclave.

Conclave set-up - Liar's Poker

The Earl who chooses to call a Conclave will deal out 3 Joust deck cards - face down - to all Earls in the game. Dealing first to the Earl to their **left**, and then proceeding around the table.

All Earls may look at their own 3 Conclave (Joust) cards.

This is not a Joust. There are no Champion wild cards, and no Tilting cards. **Princes** are high, **Vassals** are low, and **No Luck cards** have no value. Thus the best possible hand is 3 Princes. High card status does matter, so for example a pair of Vassals with a Prince would beat a pair of Vassals with a No Luck card. And a Prince alone would beat a Vassal alone, etc.

Once all the cards are dealt, all Earls will **declare** what is in their 3 card Conclave hand. This starts, again, with the Earl to the **left** of the Conclave caller and proceeds around the table. Thus the Conclave caller is last to declare their hand.

Earls need **not** tell the truth. This is Liar's Poker. No hands are revealed unless they are Challenged. Only your declared hand matters to win a Conclave, not what is actually in your hand.

Resolving a Conclave

Once all Conclave hands are declared there is one more round in the Conclave. Each Earl, again starting with the Earl to the Conclave caller's left, may **Challenge** the declaration of one other Earl.

This proceeds around the table. You do not have to challenge another Earl. But you do already know, at this stage, what all the declared hands are and thus who will theoretically win the Conclave if there are no Challenges at all.

The Earl who called the Conclave is again the last to be able to Challenge.

Challenging is risky. If you Challenge the veracity of another Earl's declaration, that Earl must **reveal** their 3 card Conclave hand to the table. If you were right, and they were **lying** about their hand, they are out of the Conclave, and their hand is discarded. But if they were telling the **truth**, you are out of the Conclave, and your hand is discarded (but not revealed).

Once all Challenges are done you know who has won the Conclave. Of the **remaining** Earls in the Conclave the one with the highest declared hand wins the Conclave!

All cards are shuffled back into the Joust deck, without revealing any unchallenged hands. Only the declaration matters.

A case of tied hand declarations, at the end of the Conclave, is resolved like a tied Joust. With a single Joust deck card dealt face-up to each tied Earl, with the high card winning. Repeat, with a new single card draw, if any Earls remain tied.

Conclave Rewards

Simply for completing a Conclave, staying in until the end, each Earl can immediately **draw** 1 card from their Earl deck when the Conclave is resolved. Earls do **not** have to draw this free card from their Earl deck.

If an Earl has been removed from the Conclave, either by failing a Challenge or by being caught lying, they do **not** get to draw this free Earl deck card.

The Earl who **wins** the conclave not only gets to draw 1 card from their Earl deck but can also go to their oak tray and draw 1 card, left behind in their full Earl card set, into their hand. Thus the winner of a Conclave can

pull 2 cards into their hand; 1 from their deck, 1 from their tray.

Gameplay Notes:

An Earl can guarantee that they walk away from this gathering of nobles with an extra card from their Earl deck simply by telling the truth. Even if you are Challenged you cannot lose if you were honest! And if do not Challenge another Earl's declaration you cannot remove yourself.

However, the temptation to outmaneuver other Earls, or to naturally distrust them, are powerful motivations.

You may find that it is pleasant to share a jug of mead with your rivals, but do you really want them to walk away with more spoils from the party? No... that is not what makes a great Earl. You did not become a feudal leader by letting others trick you.

Unchallenged hands are never revealed, even in Conclave resolution, so you might never know if another Earl has pulled the wool over your eyes!

Tactically, a player lacking a Banquet card may call Conclaves simply to draw an extra card, faster than they otherwise would. As with Jousts, an Earl whose bid for the Kingdom is weakening may also call a Conclave in a bid for good luck. Finally, Earls who simply enjoy outfoxing other great nobles may call Conclaves, and rely on their poker faces to win an almost spiritual victory over their peers.

In a world where honor and duty are held in high esteem... is there any honor among the great and good when they face each other across the banqueting table? Perhaps :)

