

# VIKING FUNERAL

A card game for 2 players by Rob Daviau

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## Viking Funeral – Backstory

*Everyone's been asking me what my first game was going to be when I started my own company. I really didn't expect it to be this one. It came around through a long chain of silly thinking, including ruminating on the fact that a lot of people find Risk Legacy to be a destructive game or a consumable game. I almost see the point about it being destructive. After all, you do destroy things, but that wasn't the intent. But I really don't like it being called consumable as I went way out of my way not to make it that.*

*I started thinking about what a consumable game might be, a game that takes the components and just destroys them. I didn't want to be a jerk about the whole thing, so I needed to destroy components that you don't care about; components that you are already going to throw away.*

*The result is Viking Funeral.*

*This game requires an old deck of cards. Maybe it is missing a card. Maybe some are marked. Perhaps it is just old and sticky. It had a good run but now it is time to go away to the great card house in the sky.*

*I thought that this deck of cards, filled with so many good memories of games played and card tricks performed, deserved better than an unceremonious trip to the garbage can or recycling bin. This deck gave its all for you. You should repay the favor.*

*This game is the way to send this deck of cards out with some dignity and pomp – a Viking funeral.*

Thanks to James Ernest, who helped define the basic structure of this game over a plate of eggs in October, 2012.

# VIKING FUNERAL

## A destructive game for 2 players

### Needs:

An old card deck.  
A permanent pen.  
Scissors or a lighter or anything else you want to use to show a card is dead. Ripping cards with your hands is fine.

### Story:

A card in the village has died and is ready to be sent out to sea in proper Viking fashion. Some members of the village come together to say a few words about the deceased.

*In some cases, this will cause other villagers to tearfully agree and they will both go off to the mead hall to have drinks.*

*In other cases, there will be violent opposition to what is being said and a fight will break out. Cards will get injured. Some may even die. But the survivors will agree it was a good fight and go off to the mead hall to have drinks.*

Once everyone in the village has come to the funeral and all the dead have been sent out to sea and all the mourners are drinking, the game is over and the player with more drinkers in his/her mead hall wins the game.

Over the course of several games, more and more people will die until, eventually, the village doesn't have enough people to stage a proper funeral. At this point, the deck has run its course and the story of this village is over.

### Set-Up

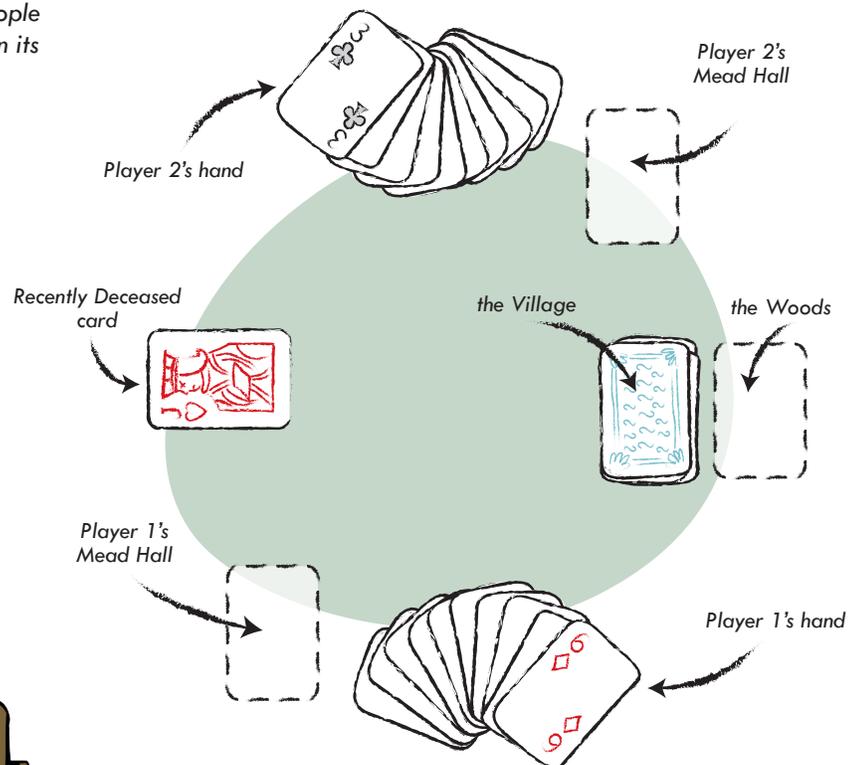
Shuffle the deck and pull out one random card. This card is now dead. Mark it is such – rip it, cut it in half, burn it lightly. Basically kill it. But it still needs to be readable as the card it was. Don't turn it to ash.

Put the Recently Deceased off to the side of the table. If you want to get fancy, put a trash or recycling bin under it so you can sweep the card into it when it's time to go out to sea. This trash can is called Valhalla.

Deal out ten cards to each player. These are the Mourners. They form your hand and should be private from the other player. Place the deck to the side. This is the Village, where more people will come to be Mourners.

There are other implied areas that don't have cards now—each player has a mead hall where mourners will go to drink and there is a discard pile near the village called the Woods, where cards will occasionally run off to.

The person who said “let's play Viking Funeral” gets to go first. If playing a bunch of games back to back, then the person who lost the last game goes first in the next one.



## On Your Turn

The lead player takes a card from his/her hand and places it on the table. As he/she (you know what, I hate to do this, but it's going to be 'he' from here on out. Stupid English) plays this card, he says something about the recently deceased. It really doesn't affect gameplay but it makes it a hell of a lot more fun.

Examples:

*"Poor 8 of spades, he never got out from the 9 of spades shadow."*

*"Good riddance. Three of hearts slept with my wife."*

*"Too bad about the Jack of Diamonds. Had a thing for the clubs, he did. But forbidden love."*

If you really aren't the creative type, you can just say *"I'm glad he's dead."*

The other player now has a choice.

## He can agree with the lead player.

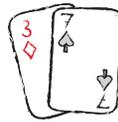


He plays a card from his hand that matches in color the card that was played. He says something agreeable such as *"yeah, I agree"* or *"I hated him, too"* or *"everyone has a thing for clubs."*

The two cards then go to a mead hall to have a drink. Whoever played the higher card takes both cards and puts them facedown in his mead hall. The player that played the lower card draws three new cards from the village and adds them to his hand of mourners. So one player gets points and the other gets cards.

What about a tie? You can't play a card that makes it a tie. Vikings don't do ties. You either beat the card or lose to the card. You don't tie. Got it?

## He can disagree with the lead player.



He plays a card from his hand that is a DIFFERENT color as the first card and either higher or lower than it. He says something really confrontational, such as *"Everyone slept with your wife"* or *"The 8 of spades did weird things to my goat"* or *"I never cared much for a Jack with one eye"*.

At this point a fight breaks out.

## FIGHTING

A fight will always be between the two different colors. The defender is the card that was played first. **The attacker was the card that started all this nonsense.**

The defender can play cards of either suit of the same color to the fight. After all, he didn't start the fight so his family plus his extended family will both help out.

The attacker can only play cards of the suit that he played first. If you start a fight at a funeral, only close family is going to back you up. Make sure you have a lot of that suit.

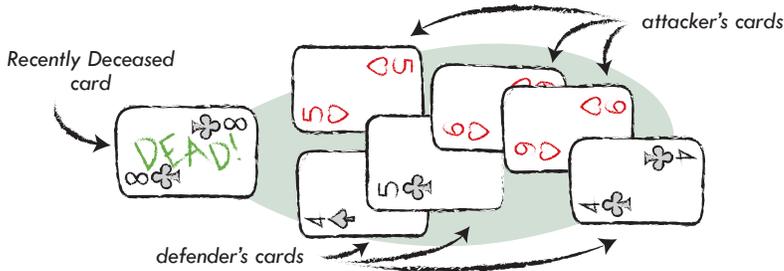
The cards are going to be played in a big chain so you can see what each side's strength is and which was played last.

Once a fight breaks out, evaluate which side is winning. This is the side with a higher strength, which is the value of all the cards on that side. As always in this game, you cannot create a tie – I really don't want to say this again.



## FIGHTING, cont.

**Important:** The value of the Recently Deceased is added to the total of the side playing that suit. For example, if the 8 of clubs is the Recently Deceased and the defender is playing black, as long as he plays at least one club, then the strength of his side goes up by 8, the value of the Recently Deceased. Playing further clubs does not add it again. Playing only spades does not allow this bonus.



10s, Js, Qs, and Ks all count as 10 for strength.  
Aces count as 1.  
All other cards count as their number regardless if they are wounded or not (wounding is coming up real soon).

The player that is losing has a choice. He can give up and lose the fight or play one or more cards to get his side's strength to be higher than his opponent's.

In most cases, you just play the card or cards and announce the new total. The only time that something Fancy happens is when you play an Ace.

Aces are the shamans of the village and, although they don't add much to a fight, they scare the unholy crap out of someone when they show up. When you play a shaman, add 1 to your strength and remove one card from the fight (from either side). Remove the card from the fight, who runs off into the woods and is no longer seen in this game. Basically it goes in the discard pile but it's funnier to picture the card in the woods, hiding behind a stump. Perhaps crying.

Eventually one side will be unable or unwilling to add cards to the fight. When this happens the fight is over. The side with the higher strength wins.

## WOUNDS & DEATH

When the fight is over the card that was played last is the one that deals the whoop-a\$\$ to the other cards. The number of big symbols on the card is the number of damage this card deals out. In most cases this is the same as the number. So the 7 of diamonds would deal out 7 damage. But face cards only have two symbols. They're royalty so they are impressive when they enter the battle but really don't know how to fight so only do two damage.

Also, wounded cards will have fewer symbols so will deal less damage. (Yes, we're just about to get to wounding). Let's say that the 7 of diamonds had been in a fight in an earlier game and had taken 3 damage. Three of the symbols would be crossed out. It would still be worth 7 in strength but would only deal out 4 damage at the end of the fight.

So the last card in assigns damage to the whole pile, wounding cards. The person who won the fight decides how to allocate this damage. In most cases, he'll want to spread out the damage as much as possible since wounded (but not dead) cards will all return to his mead hall to be points at the end of the game. But maybe you really, really hate the 3 of spades. This is your chance to finally do something about it.

Take the pen and cross out one symbol for each point of damage. If you cross out all the symbols on a card, it is not wounded, it is dead. Destroy the card in the same way you did at the start of the game. Or do it differently. Vary the means of death. That's fun too, if not a little creepy.



## WOUNDS & DEATH, cont.

If there are any dead cards in the fight, these will replace the Recently Deceased card, which should be nudged off the table and go into Valhalla, otherwise known as the trash can. If more than one card dies in the fight (always the sign of a good fight) then the loser of the fight decides which card becomes the Recently Deceased. Take the other cards and unceremoniously dump them in Valhalla. They die unmourned.

The loser of a fight draws exactly one new card from the village into his hand.

## NEW TURNS

The person who got the cards to go to his mead hall plays the first card of the next turn. This is true whether a fight broke out or the cards were amiable.

## END OF GAME & FUTURE GAMES

The game ends when the last card is taken from the Village into someone's hand. Do not play out the hands.

The person with more cards in his mead hall wins. In the case of a tie (VIKING'S HATE TIES!) add up the number of wounds in each hall. The mead hall with more wounds is the winner because, you know, chicks dig scars.

If, by Odin, there is still a tie then have a giant fight with all the cards in the mead hall until that fight is resolved.

For future games, get rid of all the dead cards. Shuffle up the deck and play again. But future games will have fewer cards in the deck and many will already be wounded. Shamans will not make it long. Royalty tends to go quickly. It's...ugly.

When you get down to 22 cards, then you can't play with that deck any more. In this case, a giant landslide kills the whole village and everyone goes to Valhalla.

## EDGE CASES AND WHAT IFs

### • Do I have to play a card?

Each player must play one card per turn – the lead card and the responding card. After that, if there's a fight, no one has to play any more cards.

### • What if I have to play a card and don't have any in my hand or it would cause a tie?

You immediately shuffle up your mead hall and draw three cards from it to form a hand. You have taken away your victory points to form a new hand so this is generally Not Good.

### • What if I have to play a card and don't have any in my hand AND don't have three cards in my mead hall.

You've really screwed up this game. You lose. The other person wins. Shuffle the deck and start a new game. Feel a little bit of shame.

