

# **KING'S MATE: THE ANCIENT GAME OF KINGS**

**Rulebook & Game Board**  
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**ROBERT STANEK'S  
KING'S MATE: THE GAME**



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**A STRATEGY GAME where  
creative thinking can be rewarding!**

**Created by ROBERT STANEK**

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## King's Mate: The Ancient Game of Kings



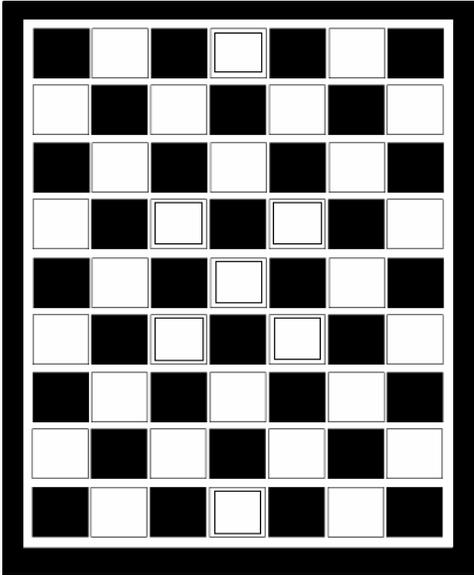
In an age of Ruin Mist long since lost from the memory of the living, the kings of old played the game of King's Mate as a way of settling their differences. The board itself and the players were very real, consisting of soldiers, scholars, and even commoners who acted as the kings' champions.

Swordmasters, priests, priestesses, and keepers were the essential champions. They had special places of honor on the board. The champions also included fools, whose value was never discounted, and a player who acted in the role of the king. It was a matter of high honor to play the king on the board.

These champions of old moved on the game field, each in their turn, according to their king's bidding. When opposing champions met, they clashed and the victor claimed his or her place on the board. To win the game, one of the two kings had to capture the other's king piece. Before this could be done, however, both of the defending swordmasters must be eliminated, for only the swordmasterless king can be captured.

The game of King's Mate is played throughout the kingdoms to this day. In the books, Vilmos learned the game from the troant, Edward Tallyback. Edward Tallyback gives a bit of bad direction when he instructs Vilmos on the setup of the board and the rules of the game, but what else would you expect from a troant? A troant must be true to his nature after all.

## The Game Board



Through the millennia, many versions of the King's Mate game board were created. The one most commonly used in Great Kingdom sets as rivals kingdoms and elves.

The standard game board has nine rows and seven columns from the player's perspective. On each end of the play field is a raised square in the center of the last row. This is the place of honor for the opposing kings. In the center of the board

is a grouping of five raised squares. These raised squares form an 'X'. Giving a total of 7 raised squares on the board.

## The Raised Squares on the Board

The raised squares have special significance. In normal play only a king or one of the swordmasters may pass through or stop on the raised squares.

The exception is this:

- If a player's king occupies any one of the five raised squares at the center of the board, any of the pieces of his color may cross or stop on the raised squares, but only for as long as the king remains on that space.
- If the king is moved off a central raised square, his pieces can no longer move across or stop on the central raised squares. Any pieces occupying a central raised square may remain where they are, but if they move off the raised square, the normal rules of play apply.

The two raised squares on either end of the board are called the King Squares. They serve to denote where the opposing kings start the game. In

the expanded rules version of the game, however, there is a move called Fool's Gambit. Here how Fool's Gambit works:

- If a player's fool occupies the King Square for his color, other fools of his color can cross or stop on any of the other raised squares on the board, regardless of the placement of the player's king. If a player moves his fool onto his opponent's King Square, play stops and he or she wins the game.

## Pieces on the Board

<b>Kings</b>	The white king has an oversized, jeweled crown on its head and a sheathed sword in its right hand. The black king wears a dark cape with a singlet for a crown and holds a scepter in its left hand. Placed in the raised square in the center of the last row on each end, the king moves one space at a time, in any direction.
<b>Swordmasters</b>	Swordmasters are knights with a sword raised into the air. They revolve around the king and rotate around his moves, moving always in direct lines. One must always be in an adjacent square to the king and the other may be adjacent to the king or the other swordmaster. Swordmasters move diagonally, vertically or horizontally in one direction only, any number of spaces each turn.
<b>Priests</b>	The priest wears a long, collared cape with white or black insignia and is placed next to the left Swordmaster. The priest moves diagonally in one direction only, any number of spaces each turn.
<b>Priestesses</b>	The priestess wears a long, hooded cloak of black or white and is placed next to the right Swordmaster. The priestess moves diagonally in one direction only, any number of spaces on a given turn.
<b>Keepers</b>	Keepers carry a thick, bound book above their heads as if a shield. Keepers are placed on the last squares on the end to the left and right. Keepers move vertically or horizontally, any number of spaces on a given turn.
<b>Fools</b>	Five fools are placed in the row in front of the king. From the left, they are placed in the 1st, 2nd, 4th, 6th and 7th columns, leaving empty spaces in front of the swordmasters. "This gives swordmasters extra space to maneuver around the board." Fools move one space at a time, either forward or backward.

## The Rules of Play and Setup

King's Mate is a game, played by two players. One player plays with the white pieces, and the other player plays with the black pieces. Each player has twelve pieces in the beginning of the game: one king, two swordmasters, one priest, one priestess, two keepers, and five fools. In the most common version of the game, the white pieces represent the kingdoms and the black pieces represent the elves.

The game is played on a kingboard, consisting of 63 squares: nine rows and seven columns. With the exception of seven raised (special) squares, the squares are alternately light and dark colored.

The board must be laid down such that there is a raised square in the center of the row in front of each player. To facilitate notation of moves, all squares are given a name. From the view of the white player, the rows are numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9; the frontmost row has number 1, and the uppermost row has number 9. The columns are named, from left to right, A, B, C, D, E, F, G. A square gets a name, consisting of the combination of its column-letter and row-number, e.g., the square in the lower left corner (for white) is A1.

Alternately, the players make a move, starting with the player that plays with the white pieces. A move consists of moving one of the pieces of the player to a different square, following the rules of movement for that piece.

A player can take a piece of the opponent by moving one of his own pieces to the square that contains a piece of the opponent. The opponents piece then is removed from the board, and out of play for the rest of the game.

At the start of the game, the position of the pieces is as follows:

1. Place the king in the raised square in the center of the last row on each end.
2. Place one swordmaster on either side of the king.

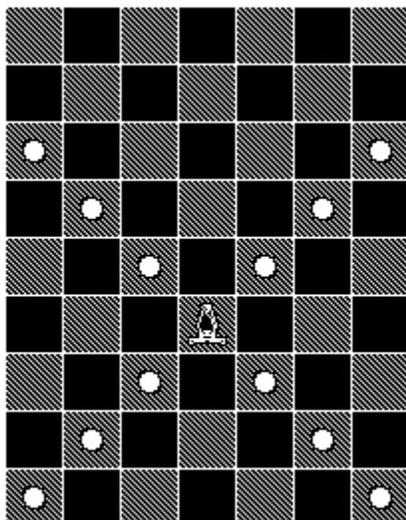
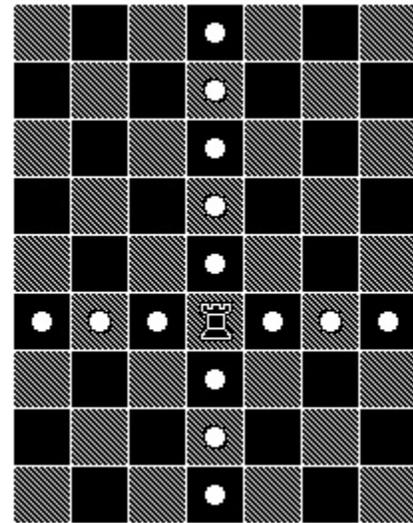
3. Place the priest in the first empty square to the left of the left swordmaster.
4. Place the priestess in the first empty square to the right of the right swordmaster.
5. Place one keeper in the first square on the left and one keeper in the last square on the right.
6. Place the fools in the 1st, 2nd, 4th, 6th and 7th columns of the next row.

Thus, for each player, at the first row, from left to right, you have a: keeper, priest, swordmaster, king, swordmaster, priestess, keeper. At the second row, you have five fools in the 1st, 2nd, 4th, 6th and 7th columns.

## Movement of the pieces

### Keeper

The keeper moves in a straight line, vertically or horizontally. The keeper may not jump over other pieces, that is: all squares between the square where the keeper starts its move and where the keeper ends its move must be empty. (As for all pieces, when the square where the keeper ends his move contains a piece of the opponent, then this piece is taken. The square where the keeper ends his move may not contain a piece of the player owning this keeper.)

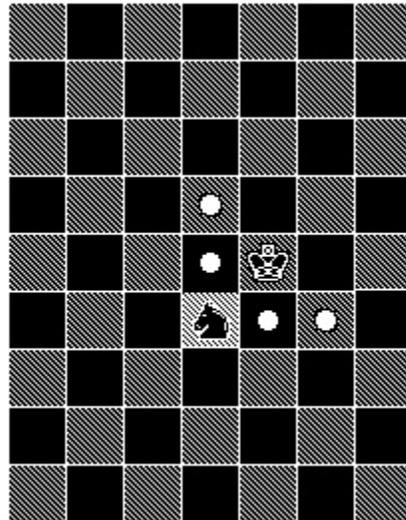


### Priest/Priestess

The priest and priestess move in a straight diagonal line. The priest and priestess may also not jump over other pieces.

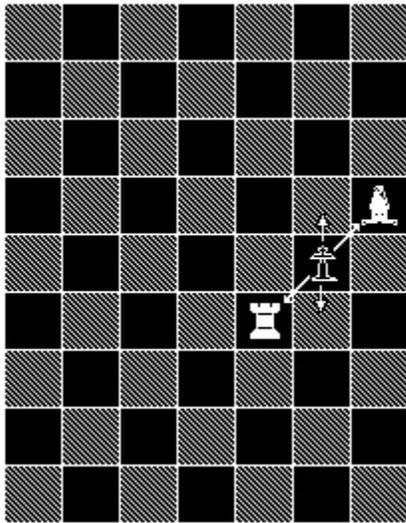
## Swordmaster

The swordmaster may move in any straight line, horizontal, vertical, or diagonal. The movement of swordmasters revolve around the king and rotate around his moves. One swordmaster must always be in an adjacent square touching the king and the other may be adjacent to the king or the other swordmaster.



The king cannot be attacked or captured until both his swordmasters are taken from him. So you must take both swordmasters first in order to capture the king and win.

## Fools



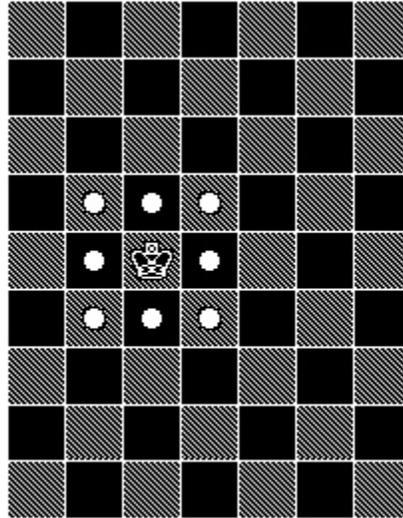
The fool moves differently regarding whether it moves to an empty square or whether it takes a piece of the opponent. When a fool does not take an opponent's piece, it moves one square straight forward or backward. When taking an opponent's piece, the fool goes one square diagonally forward or backward. There is a special move for fools: see "Fool's Gambit."

Fools that reach the last row of the board promote. When a player moves a fool to the last row of the board, he replaces the fool with a keeper, priest, or priestess (of the same color). It is required that the fool is promoted to a piece previously taken. Thus, it is not possible, for instance to have two priestesses.

## King

The king moves one square in any direction, horizontally, vertically, or diagonally. In the expanded rules, there is one special type of move, made by a king and two swordmasters simultaneously, called Defense of the Crown: see "Defense of the Crown."

The king is the most important piece of the game, and moves must be made in such a way that a defenseless king is never in check. See special move: "Defense of the Crown."



## Special Rules

Any special rules that apply during game play must be declared prior to the start of the game.

### Active Play

Players cannot automatically take an opponent's game piece. Instead, on his turn, the player must declare: the piece he plans to move and the piece he wants to try to take. The attacking player must then roll a die. The defending player then rolls a die. If the defending player's roll is equal to or greater than the attacking player's roll, the attack fails and the player must move another game piece. If the player has no other pieces to move, his turn ends.

### Fool's Gambit

In the expanded rules, there is a special move called the Fool's Gambit. If a player's fool occupies the King Square for his color, other fools of his color can cross or stop on any of the other raised squares on the board, regardless of the placement of the player's king. If a player moves his fool onto his opponent's King Square, play stops and he or she wins the game.

## Defense of the Crown

Under certain, special rules, a king can move to an open space on the opposite side of his swordmasters. The following conditions must be met:

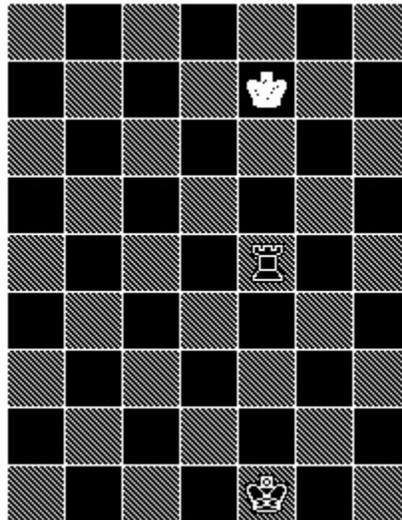
- The king that makes the Defense of the Crown move has not yet moved in the game.
- The swordmasters are in a straight line horizontally, vertically, or diagonally from the king.
- Only one swordmaster can be adjacent to the king.
- The second swordmaster must be adjacent to the first swordmaster
- The space on the opposite side of the second swordmaster must be empty.

When defending the crown, the king moves three squares towards and over the swordmasters. This move must be along the line formed by the three pieces, either horizontally, vertically, or diagonally. For example, the white king is on D1 and has not yet moved. One white swordmaster is on E2 and the second swordmaster is on F3. The king may move to G4, providing this space is empty.

Once a player moves his king, the player can no longer use the Defense of the Crown move.

## Winning the Game

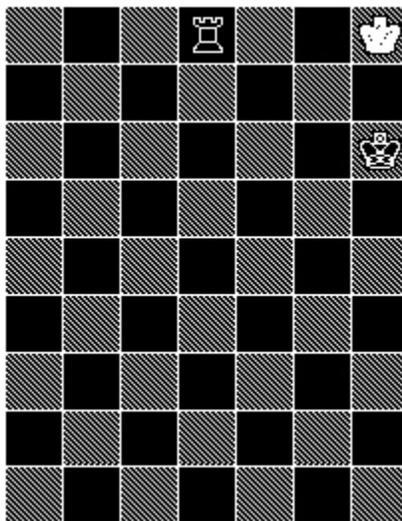
The king cannot be captured until both his swordmasters are taken from him. So you must take both swordmasters first in order to capture the king and win. When the king of a player can be taken by a piece of the opponent, one says that the king must counter or succumb. For instance, the black player moves his keeper to a position such that it can attack the defenseless white king, i.e., if white doesn't do anything about it, the keeper could take the white king in the next move. The black player must say to the other player "counter or succumb". The king is only considered defenseless when both of the player's swordmasters have been removed from play.



**White King is under attack.**

If a player's king is under attack, he must make a move to counter the attack, either by moving the king or taking the piece attacking the king. A player cannot make a move that puts his king under attack. If a player accidentally tries to make such a move, he must take the move back and make another move.

When a player's king is defenseless and the player cannot make a move such that after the move, the king is not in danger, then the king is conquered. The player that is conquered lost the game, and the player that conquered him won the game.



**White king cannot move and white player has lost.**

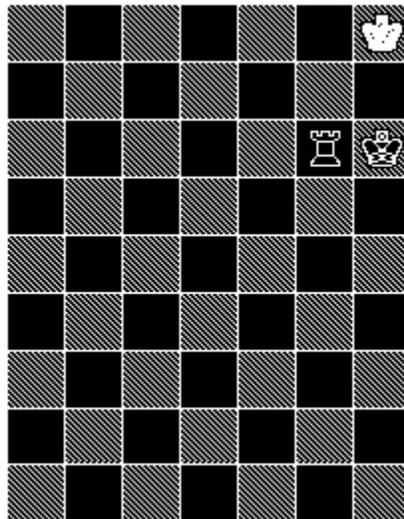
Note that there are four different possible ways to remove a king from danger:

- The player may move the king away to a square where he is not in danger.
- The player may take the piece that would otherwise attack him.
- The player may move a piece between the attacking piece and the king, such as might be possible if a keeper is attacking a king from a distance.
- If the player has not moved the king and his swordmasters are aligned correctly, he may use the Defense of the Crown move.

## Stalemates and Draws

When a player cannot make any legal move, but he is not in check, then the player is said to be stalemated. In a case of a stalemate, the game is a draw. A player can resign the game, which means that he has lost and his opponent has won.

After making a move, a player can propose a draw: his opponent can accept the proposal (in which case the game ends and is a draw) or refuse the proposal (in which case the game continues).



**White player is at a stalemate and has lost.**

## Touching pieces

When a player touches one of his own pieces, he must, if possible, make a legal move with this piece. When a player touches a piece of the opponent, he must, if possible, take this piece.

## Print & Play Rules

In the sections that follow, you'll find game pieces and a game board. If you print this rulebook, you can cut out the game board and the game pieces to play the game.

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## Game Pieces



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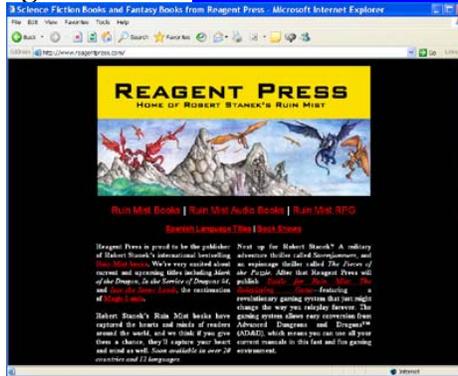
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