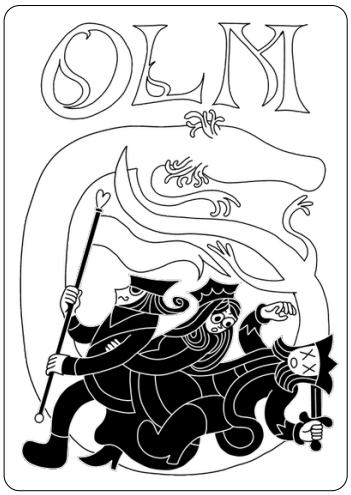
Olm



designed by Ákos Plesznivy
cover by Petra Hahn

A pair of rune-slingers collide to scribe their fate through restless spirits and ruinous runes invoked for survival

2 *25*

Objective

In this two-player combat game your goal is to successfully hit your opponent six times to win. You take turns placing runes, summoning spirits and executing card combos for attacks.

Setup

- Separate *Jacks*, *Queens* and *Kings* and both *Jokers* and shuffle them to form the spirit deck
- Shuffle the remaining 40 number cards (including *Aces*) to form the rune deck
- Deal each player 6 runes face down

Start

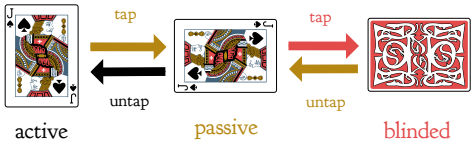
Both players look at their hands in secret then place one rune card into a slot in their rune field face down, then reveal their choice simultaneously. The player with the higher ranked card starts the game (*Ten* being the highest). In case of a tie, you repeat the same thing with another rune card until someone has a higher card.
The cards you have placed stay in your rune fields in active state.

The first round is treated special:

- the second player taps one spirit of their choosing before the first player can summon
- the first player discards a card from their hand *after* their Recharge Phase
- both players skip their Attack Phase

Note, every discard happens face up in this game.

Card States



Cards in your rune field have three possible states, tap and untap actions can change between them.

Phases

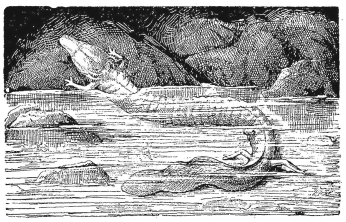
Players take turns to play the game, each turn consists of four phases:

- Recharge ⇒ Rune ⇒ Summon ⇒ Attack

Term	Meaning
suit effect	Each card suit has a corresponding effect you can get by tapping spirits of the suit and executing special attacks or wards.
summon	The middle phase in your turn when you can summon spirits from the spirit realm onto your runes.
tap	Tapping a card means exhausting it by rotating active cards sideways and flipping passive ones face down.
tens	An energizing ward that untaps all cards on the table with matching suit when discarded.
three	Three rune cards with matching rank.
totem	Special power granting runes you can use when having three or more summoned spirits of the same suit.
untap	Untapping a card means charging it by flipping blinded cards face up, and rotating passive cards upright.

Acknowledgments

This game wouldn't exist without taking inspiration from another standard deck combat game High Jinks by Justin Elkan Jones, and the TCG Duel Masters by Wizards of the Coast.



Olms are blind, cave-dwelling aquatic salamanders that can be found in Europe, scientists are still unsure about whether these creatures can play the game Olm when given the chance, such an event has yet to be recorded.

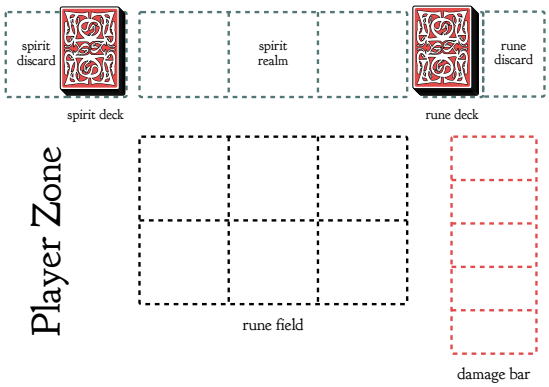
Layout

Create a shared row in the middle of the table:

- In the center, 3 empty card slots will hold the spirit_realm
- Place the spirit_deck and the rune_deck face down on each side
- Leave some space on the outside of these for their respective discard_piles

Each player has a zone on their side of this central row:

- a rune_field of 2 rows with 3 card slots each, 6 spaces in total
- a damage_bar of a column of 5 sideways card slots



The other player's zone above is omitted here for simplicity

Make your rune_field wide enough so that cards can fit both horizontally and vertically, you will rotate them a lot over this game.

It's convenient to have your damage_bar by the hand you use to place cards.

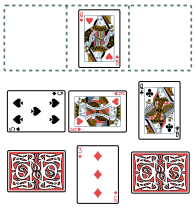
Recharge Phase

Note, this phase allows no player choice and is completely automatic

- Fill up empty spaces in the 3 shared spirit slots from the spirit_deck
- untap all inactive cards in your rune_field and the spirit_realm
  - passive cards become active, rotated from sideways to upright
  - blinded cards become passive, flipped face up, staying sideways
- Draw one card from the rune_deck

If either decks are exhausted when you are about to draw new cards, flip their corresponding discard pile face down to form a new deck.

▼ Recharging Example



Before recharging: two missing spirits, some blinded and passive cards in the rune_field

After recharging: spirits replenished, the player's cards untapped once.

Rune Phase

- You may place one rune card from your hand onto an empty slot in your rune_field face up and upright in active state
- If all six of your slots are occupied, skip this phase

▼ Glossary

Term	Meaning
aces	A suppressive ward that taps all cards on the table with matching suit when discarded.
active	A card in active state is rotated upright and face up. It has a charge that can be spent to pay for summons or attacks.
attack	The last phase in your turn when you can launch attacks with spirits and rune combos.
blinded	A card in blinded state is rotated sideways and face down. It is disabled and cannot be interacted with until being recharged.
chain attack	Attacking with multiple spirits of the same rank and a combo of Three to deal multiple damages at once.
damage bar	A column of card slots for each player to place damage cards into, can be used for summons and attacks.
discard	Both the spirit deck and the rune deck has it's own discard pile where you place cards face up.
draw	Draw a rune card from the rune deck into your hand.
flush	Three rune cards with matching suit.
jack	A mischievous spirit you can summon that can manipulate runes in rune fields.
joker	A wild spirit you can summon that can be sacrificied as other spirits.
king	An angry spirit you can summon that can deal a direct damage without a combo.
matching flush	A Flush combo that has the same suit as the spirit you are attacking with
pair	Two rune cards with matching rank.
passive	A card in passive state is rotated sideways and face up. It is exhausted and can't be used to pay for actions.
queen	A protective spirit you can summon that can defend you and your other spirits from attacks.
recharge	The first phase in your turn when you draw a new rune and untap exhausted spirits and runes to be able to reuse them.
rune	A number card or Ace to be placed in your rune field or used for attacks.
rune deck	The deck of cards containing all number cards and Aces. Used to draw cards to hand, place runes and execute combos.
rune field	The 3x2 grid each player has where they can place runes and summon spirits into.
sixth damage	When dealing the sixth damage to your opponent from a direct attack, you immediately win the game.
spirit deck	The deck of cards containing all Jacks, Queens, Kings and Jokers. Used to fill the spirit realm for summons.
spirit realm	The shared row of 3 slots that holds spirits ready to be summoned.
straight	Three rune cards with ranks that form a continuous sequence like A-2-3.
straight flush	Three runes with matching suits that also form a continuous sequence.

Combo	Example
Pair	5♣ 5♥
Straight	6♦ 7♣ 8♦
Flush	3♥ 6♥ 9♥
Straight_Flush	4♣ 5♣ 6♣
Three	2♣ 2♥ 2♦

Special	Bonus
Flush	suit_effect if spirit matches suit
Straight_Flush	suit_effect
Three	deal extra damage with extra spirits

Attack Target	Result
passive spirit	discard target spirit and rune
active spirit	discard target spirit
opponent directly	add rune(s) to damage_bar

Ward	Effect
Aces	tap all matching suited + suit_effect
Tens	untap all matching suited + suit_effect

Wards

Aces and *Tens* are special runes that trigger two effects depending on their suit and rank whenever such a card is discarded for *any* reason.

- The owner is granted the discarded card's suit_effect
- A global tap or untap effect happens based on the discarded card's rank, affecting all face-up cards with matching suits that are currently inside either rune_fields or the spirit_realm

Aces ♥♠♦♠

tap all face-up cards with matching suit once

Tens ♥♠♦♠

untap all face-up cards with matching suit once

Review the Card States diagram to see how taps and untaps affect cards.

Wards can be surprising when activated from beneath your opponent's passive spirit you just destroyed (as their rune is being discarded).

You can eliminate this memory aspect of the game, by agreeing to place all summoned spirits slid slightly to the right on their rune_card, making it visible at all times, but we recommend playing without this restriction.

Players are only forced to show the underlying rune when tapping Jokers for suit_effects or attacking with Jokers using a combo with matching suits.

Summon Phase

Currently active spirits in the spirit_realm can be summoned onto cards in your rune_field here.

You must have one or two rune cards in your rune_field or damage_bar that satisfy the following:

- not in blinded state
- not already occupied by a spirit
- one card must be active so you can pay for the summon
- one card must match the suit of the spirit you wish to summon

Note, you can use any suit for Joker spirits

Proceed by summoning the spirit of your choice:

I tap the active rune card to pay, turning it sideways to passive
II take the spirit and place it onto one of the two rune cards

Note, you can either summon a spirit on an active or passive card. Usually you want to summon an active spirit, but sometimes preserving an active rune can be more beneficial.

You may continue summoning other spirits this way or move on to the next phase.

Attack Phase

In this phase, you can use your spirits, placed runes and hand to attack any number of times as long as you can satisfy all three requirements for each attack:

I tap an active spirit you control that you are attacking with
II tap one active rune of the combo in your rune_field or damage_bar
III give one card of the combo from your hand to your opponent

The following combos can be constructed:

- Pair of matching rank, like 5♣ 5♥ or 9♠ 9♦
- Straight of three continuous ranks, like 6♦ 7♣ 8♦ or A♠ 2♣ 3♥
- Flush of three matching suits, like 3♥ 6♥ 9♥ or A♠ 4♠ 5♠

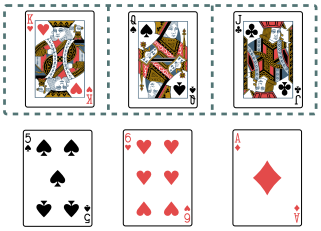
Note, for combos that consist of three cards, you can have the third card passive on your field as long as it's not occupied by a spirit.

An attack must target either a face-up spirit your opponent controls or your opponent directly, you are free to choose either:

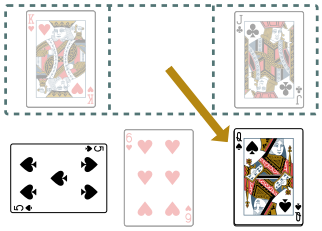
- Attacked spirits go to the spirit_discard, and if they were passive when attacked, the rune card below them is also discarded.
- Directly attacked players must place one card of their choice from their hand into their damage_bar face up. If your opponent would receive their sixth_damage as a result of an attack, you *win the game*.

Cards that are currently blinded cannot be used for combos and cannot be the target of an attack either.

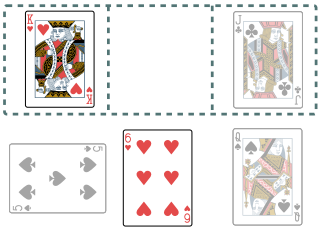
▼ Summoning Example



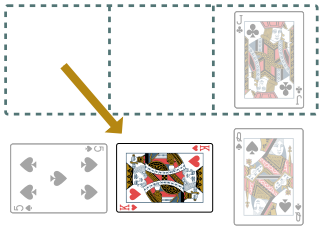
Entering the summon phase the player has three runes, no *Clubs* mean they cannot summon the J♣.



The player taps the 5♠ (satisfying the suit and the pay) and places the Q♠ onto their A♦.



They still have 6♥ as an active rune to summon the K♥ with.



But after paying, the rune becomes passive so they can only summon the *King* in that state.

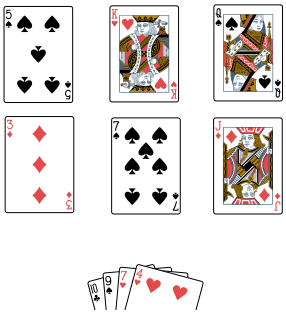
Cheatsheets

Phase	Actions
Recharge	refill spirits, untap cards, draw
Rune	place a rune
Summon	summon spirit(s)
Attack	attack, sacrifice spirits

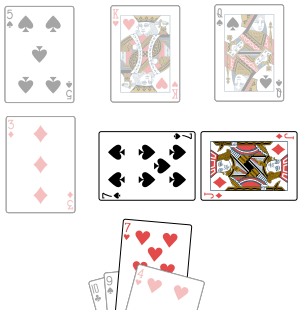
Suit	Effect
♣	force discard from hand
♦	draw two runes, discard one
♠	tap two cards (not *Hearts*)
♥	replace one damage card with draw

Spirit	Sacrifice
Jack	add or remove active runes
Queen	negate an attack
King	deal one damage
Joker	any of the above

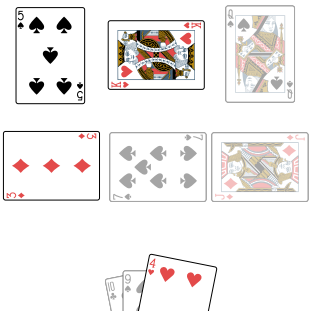
▼ Attack Example



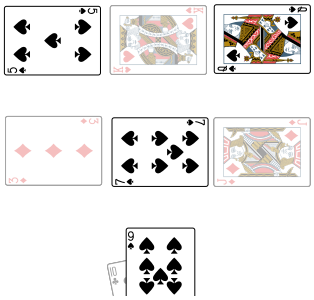
Getting ready for an attack, with active cards in the rune field and a hand



Attacking with a Pair by tapping the J♦ and the 7♠ then giving the 7♥ to the opponent.



Next, a Straight is played tapping the K♥ and the 3♦ and giving the 4♥ to the opponent. The *Five* on the field completes the sequence of 3-4-5



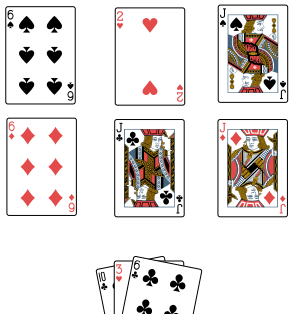
Finally, the Q♠ is tapped alongside the 5♠ and the player hands over their 9♠.The previously tapped 7♠ is used to complete a Flush of Spades.

Chain Attack

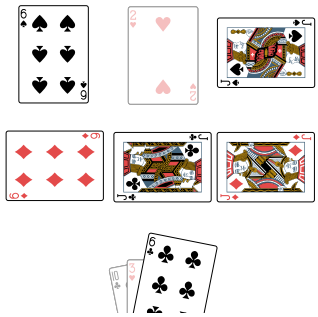
If you have two *or more* active spirits of matching rank, like K♦ K♠, you can tap all of them in a single attack alongside a combo of Three runes of the same rank, like 6♣ 6♥ 6♦, to deal a chain damage to your opponent equal to the number of spirits used in the attack.

- ✶ Executing a Three combo works like other three-component combos, you only need to be able to tap one active rune in your zone, and give one card to your opponent
- ✶ Your opponent must draw the extra damage card(s) from the rune deck into their hand
- ✶ Each damage dealt can be defended with a *Queen* sacrifice separately
- ✶ You can launch a Chain Attack with 2, 3 or 4 spirits of matching rank
- ✶ *Jokers* don't substitute for other characters in chains but two *Jokers* can attack together to deal double damage this way

▼ Chain Attack Example



Multiple active spirits of the same rank and a pair of runes on the field with the third in hand.



Player taps the 6♦ and three Jacks to create triple damage, hands over the 6♣ to complete the Three combo

Kings ♥♠♦♠

- ✶ get a direct attack on your opponent

As you don't give a card from your hand to your opponent when sacrificing a *King*, they must draw one from the rune_deck, then they place a rune from their hand into their damage_bar.

A *King* sacrifice cannot deal the winning (sixth) damage and the damage dealt can be defended with a *Queen*, like regular direct attacks.

Jokers ♥♠♦♠

Use as any one of the other spirits when sacrificing.

Note, if you want a simple introductory game, you can skip the following sections and play with only the rules established above. That said, these are crucial parts of the game and give great depth to the rest.

Special Attacks

Effect Combos

- ✶ Straight_Flush of three runes with ascending ranks *and* matching suit, like 4♣ 5♣ 6♣, grants its suit_effect once for the attacker.
- ✶ Matching_Flush happens when you attack with a Flush combo using a spirit that has the same suit as the Flush, this also grants the suit_effect once.

A Straight_Flush that also matches the spirit grants you the effect twice!

Apply any granted effect(s) *after* the attack has been resolved.

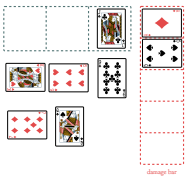
Damage Cards

You can use cards from your damage_bar to pay for summons or attacks, but

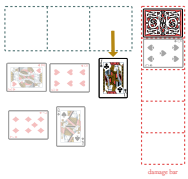
- ✶ paying with them flips the card face down
- ✶ they don't get recharged at the beginning of the turn

It's best to use damage cards as the third component of Flush and Straight combos that you don't tap, this way they stay reusable.

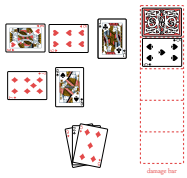
▼ Damage Bar Examples



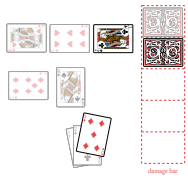
There aren't enough active runes in their rune_field to summon the J♠ in active.



But paying with the A♦ in the damage_bar can get an active *Jack* summoned.



No active runes on the field to attack with, but the 5♠ in the damage_bar can pay for a Pair combo.



Spend the 5♠ from the damage_bar and tap the *Jack*, then hand the 5♦ over to create an attack.

Suit Effects

Each suit corresponds to an effect that you can execute through spirits of the suit.

> *Jokers have the suit of the underlying rune card.*

You can tap an active spirit to trigger its suit_effect at any point during your turn, after the Recharge Phase.

♣ Clubs

Your opponent must discard a rune card that they choose from their hand. If they don't have any, nothing happens.

♦ Diamonds

You draw two cards from the rune_deck, then discard one.

♠ Spades

You can tap two cards currently in a rune_field or the spirit_realm, active cards becomes passive, while passive ones become blinded (see the card states diagram). Summoned spirits are formed by two cards, so you need to spend an entire *Spade* effect to be able to tap them once.

Runes and spirits with *Hearts* suit are *immune* to this effect.

♥ Hearts

You can *replace* one card in your damage_bar with the top card of the rune_deck. Discard the existing damage_card first, then draw a new one face up to replace it.

> *Note, you will be left with the same amount of damage but you get a fresh card to attack or summon with, it is best to replace face-down cards here*

Sacrificing

Any active spirit can be sacrificed to grant an extra effect based on their rank.

- *Jack* and *Kings* can be sacrificed in your Attack Phase
- *Queens* only when your opponent attacks you
- discard the spirit then apply the given effect

> *After sacrificing a spirit, the underlying active rune card stays inside your field and can be used as any other.*

Jacks ♥♠♦♠

Choose one from the following actions:

- place the top card of the rune_discard into your rune_field in active state
- discard an active and unoccupied rune from your rune_field
- your opponent must discard one active rune of their choice from their rune_field

> *Note, one or more of these actions might not be available for you depending on the current game state, for example the rune_discard is empty, or your opponent has no active runes.*

Queens ♥♠♦♠

- negate the result of one attack

Can be used to protect another spirit from destruction or to avoid getting damaged by a direct attack. When you sacrifice a *Queen* you keep the card you got as the attack in your hand.