

A CARD GAME ON A BUCOLIC LANDSCAPE

KEY FLOW

FOUR SEASONS AT KEYDOM

KEY FLOW is essentially a card game that uses the mechanics of "draft" as its base and is obviously a "spin-off" of the game KEY FLOWER of the same designers (Breese and Bleasdale): we come back again on the "County of Keydom" and our task is to help our village to grow and prosper. The game can be played by 2 to 6 gamers and lasts between 60 and 90 minutes (depending on their number).

fect the heart of KEY FLOW and should be divided in six different decks: (a) – Starting buildings (6 cards); (b) – Shops (6); (c) – Spring cards (36, of which 12 are "K" cards); (d) – Summer (42, with 12 "K"); (e) – Autumn (42, with 12 "K"); (f) – Winter (60, with 30 "K"). Their use will be explained later.

We find also the usual "octagonal cylinders" used in near almost the Breese/Bleasdale

of players (some cards must be sorted and placed back in the box), then you have to divide each of them in "standard" and "K" cards (the later showing the available buildings). Then you place all the tokens on the table leaving enough space in front of each player to let him develop his village. See picture 2 - Set up for 4 players..

Pietro Cremona

A change on the "Keydom series": cards and draft are the mechanics used for this game and everything works well, but on a lower level than KEY FLOWER

Then a starting card (Home building) is given to each player, together with 6 Spring cards and 5 "Winter K cards": finally, all the



The box has a lot of components and a few cardboard dividers to keep in order all the materials, but I suggest using some small plastic bags to pack each type separately and therefore to help the storage and the future set-up of the game.

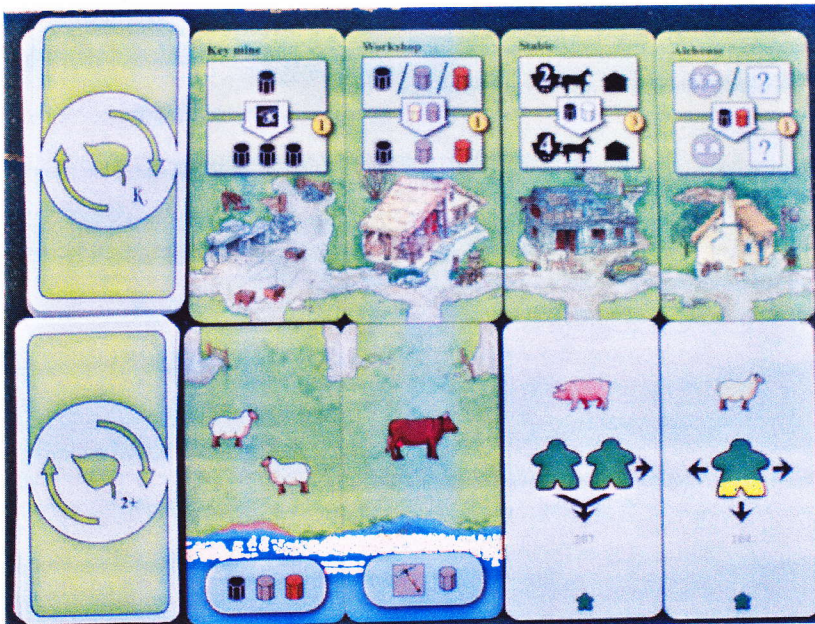
The cards unfortunately are not of standard dimensions (49x93 mm) and it is not easy to find the right transparent sleeves, but it is strongly recommended to find them as they are intensely used. The cards are in ef-

fect the heart of KEY FLOW they represent the different resources: Iron (40 pieces), Wood (40), Stone (40) and Gold (60). Finally, we have some tiles (abilities and improvements) and a bunch of "keyple" tokens (remember that "keyple" means "workers" in Keydom). All the components are of good quality, but try to protect the cards anyway.

The set-up of KEY FLOW is a bit laborious as you have to prepare the different card decks (one per season) depending on the number

"K" cards are added to their season's deck and well mixed. We are now ready to go.

Before starting the game, players should carefully look at the "Winter K Cards" that they received as they are a sort of "objectives" and may be important to direct your game, at least initially. If, for example, you got a "K" card that may give you 7 VP for each couple of "cow and gold" you should try to collect as much cows as possible during the game and to build factories to produce or convert gold, and so on.



Example Spring cards - first row buildings, second row standard cards,

Another important warning: the "production" buildings may be found only in the "Spring" and "Summer" decks, while in Autumn the players will find many "storage" buildings while in Winter most of the cards

are "objectives". Therefore, in the first two turns the players should try to get as many production buildings as possible in order to be able to produce a regular flow of resources during the complete game.

All that said let's come back to the table: we left the time to the players to examine

their "K" cards and we may start the "Spring draft": each player select one of his spring cards and place it (covered) on the table, passing the others to his left. Then the selected cards are turned and added to the village (remember: the first building, Home, was given at the start-up) following some rules:

- Each village is composed of two rows of cards;
- The first row may contain only buildings, and they are connected by the road that is printed on the bottom part of each card. In Summer some cards may also contain a boat, each with a specific bonus;
- The second row is for the other cards that show a river (fields and ports): they must be staggered to assure the "continuity" of the road. In other words, you should be able to reach any card of the two rows using the roads;
- The "keyple" cards must be superposed to the different buildings of the first row (following specific rules that we will see later).

Once that all the six "Spring" cards are played the seven "Summer" cards are distributed and the game goes on with the same rules, with eight cards in Autumn and nine in Winter.

Let's look at picture 4 to comment an example. The first card on the left of the first row is the starting building (received at the set-up) and the other buildings (workshop, stable, smelter and quarryman) were added in spring and summer, while the second row includes three rivers cards (cow, port and pork). The "cow" card, when played, gave a pickaxe tile and a stone token, while the pork one offered an anvil tile and an iron token. Those are one time "bonus" and can be taken only when you play the card.

- (1)- The cards with just ONE worker may be placed over an empty building that will be activated with this move, giving resources or gold;
- (2)- The cards with TWO workers may be placed over empty buildings or on those that already have one (only) card;
- (3)- The cards with THREE workers may be placed on any building (empty or with one or two cards);
- (4)- You may use a ONE worker cards in a building that contain already 1 or 2 cards ONLY if you use a special "keyple" token (that can be obtained with some actions)

may still play those cards, but in the adjacent villages (with right or left arrows): of course, you will benefit of that building bonus (and sometimes you really need one of them), but the "worker" card will remain in the village of your neighbor. Most of those cards have more than one arrow, so you may decide which of them to use.

At the end of each season all the worker cards of your village are collected and placed aside, under a special card (called "Shop") where they rest until the game's end, as we will see. Please note that each season has a different color for the workers, and those colors may be important to fulfil some final objectives.



The most difficult rules to teach and learn are about the use of the "workers" cards (you see them above the buildings in picture 4) and here is a short summary of them:

To keep things more complicated Breese and Bleasdale decided to add some little "arrows" on the workers cards: you may play those cards in your village only if they have an arrow that points to you. Otherwise you

The game goes on without variations until the end of Autumn; and now arrives the moment where you must select your favorite "Winter K" card (remember? You got 5 of them at the set-up) and place it in your vil-



lage, putting the other four into the winter deck that will be again mixed before distributing 8 cards to each player: then the final draft phase may start. It is important to note that the "standard" winter cards contain only workers (blue color) while the "K" ones are all objectives. Let's look at an example in picture 5.

The first card on the left of row gives to the player 5 VP for any group of 5 resources still owned at the end of the game. If that card is improved it will grant 7 VP.

The second card says that for each set of different ability tiles a player receives 7 VP. The third card gives 1 VP for each blue worker in the "shop", and so on.

To "improve" one building (as in many previous games from the two designers) you must use your home card or a stable card: both types allow you to move resources along the roads AND to improve one or two buildings.

The game ends when the winter draft is finished: at this point some calculations should be done:

- (I) Calculate the value of the goods in your storage buildings
- (II) Add the value of your buildings (most of the VP arrive if you improved

them, and some have even two improvement possible, so they may offer many VP)

- (III) Add the VP of the "improvement" tiles (each of them may be "improved" and therefore turned on the back, were it offers 1 VP).
- (IV) Look at the "Winter K" and find those that offer extra VP
- (V) Each gold token has a value of 1 VP

The player with the higher total obviously wins the game.

Let me proceed with some personal considerations: in Spring you should try to take as many buildings as you can, even if you do not place other cards; the winter "K" cards that you got at the set-up are very important and you should select one of them as a guide for the first turns, especially if it will be able to offer many VP if you collect certain resources or animals (that are printed on the cards); you will have plenty of time to set aside what it is necessary if you played the right buildings in Spring and Summer; you also need to place as soon as possible a second "stable" (to get more transport points and the possibility to make more improvements) as you will surely need to move resources from one card to another to produce new resources; remember that each "production" card is specialized and therefore needs a certain type of resource,

and this obliges you to purchase also cards that offer those resources (combos are very powerful); do not forget that you may use the buildings of your neighborhoods, so when you get some worker cards look carefully at their arrows;

KEY FLOW is a good and quite interactive game, even if there is nothing really new and clearly the Company tried to use the popularity of his brother (KEY FLOWER). If you do not know the games of the Keydom series this game is for you: and if you will like it you shall also try some other titles later. ☑

Pietro Cremona

INFORMATION

Designer: Breese, Bleasdale, Vincent

Artist: Vicky Dalton

Price: ca. 40 Euro

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www.hutter-trade.com

PLAYERS:

2-6

AGE:

14+

TIME:

90+

EVALUATION

Cards, drafting
Users: With friends
Version: multi
Rules: de en fr kr
In-game text: no

Comments:

Planning necessary, but make use of any opportunity * Reasonable playing time * Good interaction among players * Rules are a little bit confusing and you need different reading

Compares to:

Key Flower

Other editions:

Angry Lion Games (kr)



My rating:

