

A woman with short blonde hair and a serious expression is shown from the chest up. She is wearing detailed medieval-style armor, including a metal collar, gauntlets, and a chainmail coif. She is looking upwards and to the right. The background is a wall of vertical wood panels. Large, semi-transparent red text is overlaid on the image.

THE KING IS DEAD

D. VINCENT BAKER
MEGUEY BAKER
A ROLE-PLAYING GAME

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THE KING IS DEAD



The king of Banteave, Eyvard III, high prince of House Dillestone and Sovereign of the Seaward Coast, has died without heir. Civil war is certain.

You're a young warrior prince or warrior princess of one of the royal houses of Banteave. You're caught up in this looming war of succession. To see your house exalted, you'll have to fight and scheme, allying with your rivals and betraying your friends, falling in love with your enemies, daring danger, adventure, romance, and war.

You were born for this.

HOW TO PLAY

You'll need 3–5 players. Set aside at least an hour to play, more the more players you have. Each player needs their own copy of this playbook.

You'll need a deck of cards. Shuffle it and deal each player a hand of 3 cards. Your hand represents your house's Muster: its blood claim to the throne, its wealth, its serfs and vassal nobility, its ready warriors.

To start, introduce your characters.

To play, take turns around the table. On your turn, choose a game to play. Turn to that page of the playbook and follow the rules you find there.

Go around the table at least once, and then keep going if you want to.

Start with a game of *Intrigue and Muster*, and end with *Endgame: The Coronation*.

THE OBJECT OF THE GAME

The object of the game is to exalt your house and ascend to the throne.

When you play *Endgame: The Coronation*, you'll use your hand of cards to assert your claim to the throne and judge your house's fortunes.

You're trying for face cards (including Aces) and cards of many suits.

Jacks and Twos are also significant in the endgame. If you have one, look ahead and decide whether you prefer to hold onto it or discard it.

INTRODUCING YOUR CHARACTERS

To introduce your characters, turn to page 5 and follow the rules there.

ROUNDS

Take turns around the table.

To decide who goes first, everyone reveals their highest card. The player with the highest card goes first. *Aces are always high. In case of a tie, for purposes of taking the first turn, Hearts are higher than Diamonds are higher than Clubs are higher than Spades.* Return your cards to your hands.

On your turn, choose one of the games. Turn to that page in the playbook and follow the rules there.

On the very first turn of the game, choose *Intrigue and Muster*. Turn to page 14 and follow the rules for that game.

After you've played *Intrigue and Muster*, it's the next player's turn to choose. Choose any game you want, except *Endgame: The Coronation*. Keep taking turns around the table until you've been all the way around.

If you ever have fewer than 2 cards in your hand, draw up to 2 cards.

If you ever have more than 5 cards in your hand, discard down to 5 cards.

If the deck ever runs out of cards, reshuffle the discards.

THE GAMES

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THE GENERAL RULE

You can always just *read out* what's written, verbatim. Fill in any *blanks* from your own imagination. You can *ad lib* instead, if you like. You should *convey the thrust* of what's written, and *try not to contradict* what's written. Either way, you can always *elaborate* freely.

YOUR DUTIES

Play easy, play fair, and always let the other players make their own decisions for themselves.

If you don't know which game to choose, *Intrigue and Muster* is a good choice. It's quick and you can use it to set off the next round of action.

Whenever anyone asks you a question about your character, or about the current situation, answer it. If you don't know the answer, make something up. You can ask for suggestions if you're stuck.

When you don't happen to be playing the current game, you can flip through the games and think about which one you might want to play next. Some games call upon you as audience or potential ally, though, so keep at least one ear open to the game at hand.

If you find that you've missed a rule or played a game incorrectly, just try to go along with the other players and do what seems most fair. You can work out what should have happened later, when you aren't playing.

GETTING KILLED

It's possible to get your character killed during play. It won't happen by accident, you'll be able to see when your decisions are leading up to it, but it can happen.

Keep playing without a character. You still represent the same house. Participate fully in the games that call for an audience or allies, and on your own turns, choose *Intrigue and Muster*.

ENDING PLAY

When you've been once around the table, from then on, any player can end play. Simply choose *Endgame: The Coronation* as your game.

INTRODUCING YOUR CHARACTERS



YOU ARE A WARRIOR PRINCE OR A WARRIOR PRINCESS OF YOUR HOUSE.

Your families are enemies on the verge of war, but you might not be. You have more in common than separates you. You know one another well. You travel freely. You can — usually — rely on the good hospitality of whomever you visit. Even in battle, you can expect — usually — to be treated with courtesy, and, if taken, ransomed honorably.

Take turns introducing your characters. On your turn, announce your house and your name, and go around the table to find out your attractive qualities. Write your details on a tent card so that everybody can see them and remind themselves who you are.

THE NOBLE HOUSES

House Antyre, the ancient crown.

House Dillestone, the royal house.

House Luneste, the foreign power.

House Oake, the loyal retainers.

House Sandoreale, the usurpers.

Flip to the end of this book, pages 38–39, for descriptions of the houses.

Pay attention to the houses that the other players choose. You can be a rival from the same house, or from a different house; choose intentionally.

YOUR NAME

Choose a name that will be easy to remember. You can use your own real name, changing a letter or two, if you like.

ATTRACTIVE QUALITIES

Choose one attractive quality for yourself, then go around the table.

Everyone in turn chooses an attractive quality for you. Duplicates are fine.

You are: accomplished at arms, athletic, beautiful, bold, brash, brooding, cheerful, courageous, courteous, devout, educated, energetic, good-hearted, graceful, gracious, handsome, kind, light-hearted, musical, patient, practical, resourceful, shy, steadfast, tall, thoughtful, widely-traveled, witty.

AN ANIMATED DISAGREEMENT



SETUP

Choose one other player to be your opponent in the argument. Decide together what the matter of your disagreement is, where you are holding your discussion, and who else is present.

You and your opponent each draw a card.

Ask each other: How do you look to me? What's your mood?

You and your opponent each state your position. Everyone else takes the part of your audience, whoever they are.

Before you begin, agree to stakes:

- The winner gets to draw a card.
- The loser must discard their highest card.
- Neither.
- Both.

Aces are always high. For this game, in case of a tie, Diamonds are higher than Hearts are higher than Spades are higher than Clubs.

During the discussion, anyone can ask anyone for details about the setting, occasion, and circumstances.

CONDUCTING THE DISAGREEMENT

The audience conducts the disagreement.

Audience members, you take turns posing challenges to the position holders. Both of them must answer each challenge. You decide who goes first, or let one of them volunteer.

Once both have answered the challenge, each of you awards 1 point to the one who you think gave the best answer. You have to choose.

If either position holder goes on too long, you can cut them off (with hisses and jeers, if you like) and award 1 point to their opponent, or else just ask them to kindly wrap it up. They are also not allowed to interrupt or rebut one another. Cut them off at once and award 1 point to their opponent.

ENDING THE DISAGREEMENT

After three challenges, compare points. Whoever has more, has the acclaim of the audience, whoever they are.

If you agreed to stakes, the winner draws a card and/or the loser discards their highest card now.



CHALLENGES

- Please express your position in the form of a slogan, easily remembered and repeated.
- Please explain how your position is best for the kingdom.
- Please explain how your position carries the weight of tradition, law, and social order.
- Please explain how your position is the most urgent and expedient.
- Please explain how your position best serves the will of the gods.
- Please express your commitment to your position, even in the face of the truth or rightness of your opponent's.
- Please explain how your position is the most noble and honorable.
- Please threaten to go to war over your difference in opinion. After you answer, show your highest value Club. Whichever of you has the higher Club, yours is therefore the better answer.
- Please explain how your opponent's position has merit and is worth real consideration.
- Please make a personal attack on your opponent's character.
- Please challenge your opponent to trials by contest or to single combat. They don't answer. Instead, if they decline your challenge, yours is the better answer. If they accept it, theirs is.

A CHASE



SETUP

Choose one of the other players to be your counterpart in the chase. Decide together which of you is the hunter and which is the quarry, and how the chase began. Decide together whether you're on foot or on horseback, and conduct the chase accordingly.

You and your counterpart each draw a card.

Ask each other: How do you look to me? What's your mood?

The other players together conduct and judge the chase.

During the chase, anyone may ask anyone for details about the landscape, what's ahead, what's behind, and what course the hunt might take.

CONDUCTING THE CHASE

The other players conduct the chase.

First, ask the quarry where they are now and where they're going.

Then take turns leading the quarry and the hunter through a series of four challenges and setbacks. On your turn, choose 1:

- Tell the quarry to choose a challenge for the hunter.
- Tell the hunter to choose a setback for the quarry.

If the hunter or the quarry can and does show the required card, award them a point. Otherwise, award the other player a point.

End the chase after the fourth challenge or admission.

ENDING THE CHASE

Compare the quarry's and the hunter's points.

If the quarry has more points, they finally break away and escape.

If the hunter has as many points as the quarry, or more, tell the quarry to choose one of the endings.



CHALLENGES

- I know this ground well. Show a Heart to keep up.
- I race along a high, perilous ledge. Show a face card or an Ace to keep up.
- I press through a thorny brier. Ruin your clothing and show a Diamond to keep up.
- I scramble up a steep incline. Show a Spade to keep up.
- I reach open ground and leap away. Show a card you haven't shown before now to keep up.
- I lead a dizzying course through switchback and blind. Show your highest card to keep up.
- I leap out over nothing and make a hard, precarious landing. Show a Club to keep up.

SETBACKS

- You don't know this ground well, and at a turning you hesitate. Show a Heart to break away again.
- You slip on treacherous ground and scramble to keep your footing. Show a face card or an Ace to regain your footing and break away again.
- You steal a look back at me, and I'm nearer than you thought. Show a card you haven't shown before now to break away again.
- You risk leaving the trail and standing quiet while I race past. Show a Spade to make me fall for it.
- You've led yourself into a dead end, and have to dash past me to win free. Show a Spade to do it.
- There are other people ahead of you, and you must slip through among them. Show a Diamond to do it.

ENDINGS: THE QUARRY CAUGHT

- I've come to some temporary security: a warren, a tree to climb, a door I can lock behind me. This is where I go to ground.
- You've driven me into a blind way and have cornered me.
- Your allies have cut me off, and I'm brought to.
- I'm exhausted and you overtake me.
- You've proven yourself and I let you catch me.

A CONVERSATION OVER FOOD



SETUP

Choose one of the other players to be your partner in the conversation. Decide together how you came to be eating together, and who else you've invited. Those players can accept or decline to join in.

Everyone present draws a card.

Ask each other: How do you look to me? What's your mood?

Take the highest card from your hand and show it. Notice whose card is the lowest, then pool all the cards together, face down. *Aces are always high. For this game, in case of a tie, Hearts are higher than Clubs are higher than Diamonds are higher than Spades.*

During the meal, anyone can ask anyone for details about the setting, occasion, and circumstances, whether they're present in person or not.

CONDUCTING THE CONVERSATION

That done, proceed to take turns with the other players present. The player who showed the lowest card goes first.

On your turn, choose one or more of your conversational partners and choose an action:

- Ask a topical question.
- Engage in verbatim, impromptu conversation.
- Pass, saying instead something about the food.
- Leave the conversation, or signal that you'll no longer be taking part.

If your conversation substantially includes the house of one of the players who isn't present, signal that player. They can choose to contribute the highest card from their hand to the pool now, if they want to.

ENDING THE CONVERSATION

End the conversation when any player declares that the conversation's over, and any other player affirms it.

Take the pool of cards, shuffle it, and deal it out again. Everybody who contributed a card gets a random card back.



TOPICAL QUESTIONS

- I make an ignorant social or diplomatic blunder. Do you let me recover gracefully, or do you hold it against me?
- I'm feeling expansive. What do you want to know about me?
- I'm feeling generous. What favor do you ask me?
- I hope you don't bring — up. Do you?
- I need you to come clean about —. Do you?
- I accidentally spill the secret that —. I cover it gracefully, but do you pick up on it anyway?
- Something gives you away to me. What?
- I'm trying to keep you occupied while —. Am I able to?
- I hope to find common ground with you about —. Is there any? What?
- I need you to reassure me about —. Can you? Do you?
- I hope to convince you that —. Can I?
- I hope to get you to commit to —. Can I?
- I hope you don't hold me to account for —. Do you?

POSSIBLE TOPICS

Bring any of these topics into the conversation, or else invent your own:

- The events of a recent play of *Intrigue and Muster* or any other game.
- The brutal and terrifying battle tactics of the Untamed Tribes.
- House Antyre's preposterous worship of backward, forgotten gods.
- The dangers of crowning a baby, even if it is the lawful heir.
- The advisability of House Dillestone's long reliance on House Oake.
- The influence of foreign money and mercenaries upon events.
- The alien and unfathomable customs of House Luneste.
- The virtues of honor, loyalty, a passionate heart, and a strong arm.
- House Oake's long-held commitment to law, peace, and wise rule.
- Recent acts of treachery, murder, ambush, and assassination.
- The invalidity of House Sandoreale's legal claim to the crown, but the undeniability of its military power.
- Whether winter is coming.

A DANCE



SETUP

Choose one of the other players to be your partner in the dance. Decide together how you two came to be dancing with one another.

Other players can join freely, if it makes sense for their characters to also be present at the dance.

Everyone present draws a card.

Ask each other: How do you look to me? What's your mood?

Take the highest card from your hand and show it. Notice whose card is the lowest, then pool all the cards together, face down. *Aces are always high. For this game, in case of a tie, Diamonds are higher than Spades are higher than Hearts are higher than Clubs.*

During the dance, anyone can ask anyone for details about the setting, occasion, and circumstances.

CONDUCTING THE DANCE

Take turns asking each other questions. Each of you gets to ask the other two questions, taking turns, and then the dance ends.

If other players have joined the dance, you each get to ask two questions in total, choosing which dancing partner for each question. Take turns around the circle as the figures of the dance bring you from partner to partner.

The player who contributed the lowest card takes the first turn, choosing their first partner and asking their first question.

ENDING THE DANCE

Once every dancer has asked two questions, the dance ends.

Take the pool of cards, shuffle it, and deal it out again. Every dancer gets a random card back.



QUESTIONS

- My hair has fallen in front of my ear. Do you touch my face?
- Your mouth is close to my ear. What do you say?
- The dance's figures separate us. When they bring us back together again, do you blush?
- I lose my place in the dance. Do you let me stumble, or do you draw me back into place?
- Something about me catches your eye and your look lingers. What is it?
- You have the opportunity to draw me close and hold me for a moment. Do you take it?
- My face is close to yours. Do you turn subtly toward me, or subtly away?
- You may, at this moment in the dance, place your hand upon my elbow, my shoulder, my waist, or my hip. Which do you choose?
- When the dance ends, will you stand with me or rush away?
- At this moment in the dance, you laugh. At what?
- The dance's figures bring you to dance with someone else. Whom? When the dance brings you back to me again, are you pleased or disappointed?
- This moment in the dance allows me to step close to you and linger very near. Am I welcome?

INTRIGUE & MUSTER



SETUP

Only you draw a card.

CONDUCTING INTRIGUE AND MUSTER

Choose another player's house's list, not your own. You represent your house, but you don't command it.

Choose an event from the list and read it out. Choose at random or with forethought, but don't deliberate.

Whichever option you choose, follow its instructions.

UNREPRESENTED HOUSES

Don't deal or keep cards for the houses that nobody's playing. Don't discard cards from their hands. They don't have any!

If someone should pull a card from the hand of an unrepresented house and keep it, instead they just draw a card from the deck.

Otherwise, you act for the unrepresented house yourself.



HOUSE ANTYRE, THE ANCIENT CROWN

- The Scion of House Antyre places her foot on the sacred crowning stone and declares her investiture. *Deal 2 cards from the deck to House Antyre.*
- The high priestess of House Antyre invokes the Blood-goddess of Vengeance to stand in war. *Deal 2 cards from the deck to House Antyre.*
- House Antyre musters support from all of the Untamed Tribes. *Deal a card from the deck to House Antyre.*
- House Antyre invokes blood anathema upon house Luneste, the foreign power. *Tell House Antyre to pull a random card from House Luneste's hand and discard it.*
- House Antyre denies House Oake its traditional right to hunt the highland hills and fish the highland waters. *Tell House Antyre to pull a random card from House Oake's hand and discard it.*
- House Antyre raids and ravages House Luneste's ships at sea. *Tell House Antyre to pull a random card from House Luneste's hand and discard it.*
- House Antyre launches ambushes and raids all up and down the Seaward Coast. *Tell House Antyre to pull a random card each from Houses Dillestone's and Sandoreale's hands, to choose one to keep, and to discard the other.*
- House Antyre retreats into the highlands to regroup and marshal their strength. *Deal 1 card from the deck to House Antyre.*
- House Antyre marries a great tribal chieftess to a prince of House Sandoreale. *Deal 1 card each from the deck to Houses Antyre and Sandoreale.*

INTRIGUE AND MUSTER



HOUSE DILLESTONE, THE ROYAL HOUSE

- House Dillestone imprisons and executes several masters of House Oake, hoping to scare the rest into obedience. *Tell House Dillestone to pull a random card from House Oake's hand, reveal it, and discard it.*
- House Dillestone marries a secondary prince to a powerful princess of House Sandoreale. *Tell House Dillestone to pull a random card from House Sandoreale's hand, reveal it, and keep it.*
- House Dillestone marries an aging general to a young prince of House Sandoreale. *Deal 1 card each from the deck to Houses Dillestone and Sandoreale, face up.*
- The high priests of House Dillestone submit to study under the seeresses of House Luneste. *Deal 1 card each from the deck to Houses Dillestone and Luneste, face up.*
- House Dillestone prays the overseas enemies of House Luneste for succor and support. *Deal a card from the deck to House Dillestone, then tell House Dillestone to pull a random card from House Luneste's hand, reveal it, and discard it.*
- House Dillestone launches a brutal campaign of repression and enslavement against the Untamed Tribes. *Tell House Dillestone to pull a random card from House Antyre's hand, reveal it, and discard it.*
- House Dillestone demands that the tribal chieftains present themselves and perform rituals of submission. *Tell House Dillestone to pull a random card from House Antyre's hand, reveal it, and keep it.*
- House Dillestone demands that House Oake impoverish itself in their defense. *Tell House Dillestone to pull a random card from House Oake's hand, reveal it, and keep it.*
- House Dillestone fortifies the towns and villages all along the Backbone of Banteave. *Deal 1 card from the deck to House Dillestone, face up.*



HOUSE LUNESTE, THE FOREIGN POWER

- House Luneste imports hardened war-legions from the Dunefalle and unleashes them upon the countryside. *Tell House Luneste to pull a random card each from Houses Dillestone's and Oake's hands, reveal them, and discard them both.*
- House Luneste imports elite cavalry from Resshe. *Deal 1 card from the deck to House Luneste, face up.*
- House Luneste undertakes a missionary campaign of conversion, swaying many to the worship of their bloodless alien gods. *Deal 1 card from the deck to House Luneste, face up.*
- House Luneste funnels foreign money and iron to the usurper House Sandoreale. *Tell House Luneste to choose 1 card from their hand, reveal it, and give it to House Sandoreale.*
- House Luneste raids and ravages villages all up and down the Seaward Coast. *Tell House Luneste to pull a random card each from Houses Dillestone's and Sandoreale's hands, reveal them, and discard them both.*
- House Luneste lands a fleet of laden warships at their stronghold at Enstane. *Deal 1 card from the deck to House Luneste, face up.*
- House Luneste sends its master warriors to teach warcraft to the Untamed Tribes. *Tell House Luneste to choose 1 card from their hand, reveal it, and give it to House Antyre.*
- House Luneste establishes a new stronghold at Curvel, choking the movements of House Oake. *Tell House Luneste to pull a random card from House Oake's hand, reveal it, and discard it.*
- House Luneste establishes a new stronghold at Risevar, choking the movements of House Dillestone. *Tell House Luneste to pull a random card from House Dillestone's hand, reveal it, and discard it.*

INTRIGUE AND MUSTER



HOUSE OAKE, THE LOYAL RETAINERS

- House Oake openly defies House Dillestone, allowing their fortress at Bridemare to fall. *Tell House Oake to pull a random card from House Dillestone's hand, reveal it, and discard it.*
- House Oake publicly submits to House Dillestone while courting House Sandoreale's favor in private. *Tell House Oake to pull a random card from House Dillestone's hand, reveal it, and give it to House Sandoreale.*
- House Oake fortifies the Seaward Coast, denying shipping and passage to both House Antyre and House Luneste. *Tell House Oake to pull a random card each from Houses Antyre's and Luneste's hands, reveal them, and discard them both.*
- House Oake marries their greatest war-leader to a shining princess of the Untamed Tribes. *Deal 1 card each from the deck to Houses Antyre and Oake, face up.*
- House Oake fosters several young princes and princesses overseas, in the households of House Luneste. *Deal 1 card each from the deck to Houses Luneste and Oake, face up.*
- House Oake calls upon the priestesses of House Antyre to recognize its noble antiquity. *Deal 1 card from the deck to House Oake, face up.*
- House Oake stands strong in defense of the infant Dillestone heir. *Deal 1 card each from the deck to Houses Dillestone and Oake, face up.*
- House Oake goes to war against House Sandoreale, at the behest of House Dillestone. *Tell House Oake to pull a random card from House Sandoreale's hand, reveal it, and discard it, then tell House Sandoreale to pull a random card from House Oake's hand, reveal it, and discard it in return.*
- House Oake goes to war against House Antyre, at the behest of House Dillestone. *Tell House Oake to pull a random card from House Antyre's hand, reveal it, and discard it, then tell House Antyre to pull a random card from House Oake's hand, reveal it, and discard it in return.*



HOUSE SANDOREALE, THE USURPERS

- House Sandoreale ambushes the royal household, murdering several retainers, including a high princess of House Oake. *Tell House Sandoreale to pull a random card each from Houses Dillestone's and Oake's hands, reveal them, and discard them both.*
- House Sandoreale besieges House Dillestone's fortress at Tull, while House Oake, bought off, stands by. *Tell House Sandoreale to pull a random card from House Dillestone's hand, reveal it, and discard it, then to choose a card from their own hand, reveal it, and give it to House Oake.*
- House Sandoreale swears alliance with House Luneste, and publicly adopts its fashions in clothing and food. *Deal 1 card each from the deck to Houses Luneste and Sandoreale, face up.*
- House Sandoreale hires mercenaries from overseas. *Deal 1 card from the deck to House Sandoreale, face up.*
- House Sandoreale calls upon the support of House Antyre against their shared ancestral enemies. *Tell House Sandoreale to pull a random card from House Antyre's hand, reveal it, and keep it.*
- House Sandoreale assassinates a powerful general of House Oake in her own home. *Tell House Sandoreale to pull a random card from House Oake's hand, reveal it, and discard it.*
- House Sandoreale assassinates the high priest of House Dillestone while he is at worship, a terrible outrage. *Tell House Sandoreale to pull a random card from House Dillestone's hand, reveal it, and discard it, then tell House Dillestone to pull a random card from House Sandoreale's hand, reveal it, and discard it in return.*
- House Sandoreale besieges house Dillestone's fortress at Northvalled, letting starvation and disease decimate its people and putting its surrendering warriors to the sword. *Tell House Sandoreale to pull a random card from House Dillestone's hand, reveal it, and discard it.*
- House Sandoreale ranges freely through the countryside, conscripting all they can. *Deal 1 card from the deck to House Sandoreale, face up.*

MEETING SWORD TO SWORD



SETUP

Choose one of the other players to be your enemy in combat. Decide together how you came to be standing alone sword to sword.

You and your enemy each draw a card.

Ask each other: How do you look to me? What's your mood?

Take the highest card from your hand and place it face down in front of you, without revealing it. *Aces are always high. For this game, in case of a tie, Spades are higher than Clubs are higher than Diamonds are higher than Hearts.*

During the combat, anyone can ask anyone for details about the location and circumstances.

CONDUCTING COMBAT

Agree together which of you is better with the sword. If you can't agree, ask the other players to judge as impartially as they're able.

The worse with the sword begins combat by asking a leading question.

Thereafter take turns asking leading questions, back and forth.

After the third leading question, the closing questions come into play. Thereafter, you can ask a closing question instead of a leading question, whenever you choose.

ENDING COMBAT

Keep asking questions back and forth until one of the answers ends combat.

Notice that while the leading questions and closing questions are different in character, some of the leading questions' answers might end combat, and some of the closing questions' answers might allow it to continue.

When combat ends, judge for yourself:

- If you were wounded or killed, discard your face down card.
- If you submitted or fled, give your enemy your face down card.
- If you were cleanly victorious, return your face down card to your hand.



LEADING QUESTIONS

- You get your sword inside my guard and cut me across the ribs. Do you press your attack or give me a moment?
- I get my sword's edge to you throat. Do you submit, or do you twist away to rejoin the fight?
- We lock swords and your mouth is near my ear. What do you say?
- I get my sword inside your guard and cut you across the ribs. Do you withdraw and run, or do you rejoin the fight?
- I pretend to falter and lower my guard. Do I draw you out, or do you recognize the ploy and hold steady?
- I launch a sustained attack with my weight behind it. Do you give ground readily or grudgingly?
- I overreach and you have the opportunity for a dirty little blow, a kick to the knee or an elbow to the ear. Do you take it?
- We circle, guards up, swords between us. What do you say?
- I catch your wrist in my hand and draw you close to me. Do you let your sword drop, or do you shove me away and fight on?
- I hammer into your guard and you barely hold it; a fraction less and you'd been laid open. Does it fire you or chill you?
- I throw a high swing, wild but powerful. Do you duck quickly back, or do you stand unrattled?

CLOSING QUESTIONS

- You get your sword well between us, inside my guard. If you drive it home, you kill me. Do you drive it home, or do you allow me to step back and recover myself?
- I get my sword's edge across your throat. Do you submit or flee?
- You smash my sword rattling out of my hand. Do you allow me to recover it, or must I submit?
- I carve a terrible wound into your side, but in so doing leave myself open to a return stroke as serious. Do you deliver it?
- I seize momentum and initiative and drive you backward. Do you stand, or do you allow yourself to be driven? If you stand, we show our face-down cards. If yours is higher, you stand me off; if mine is, I kill you.

A REUNION



SETUP

Choose one of the other players. You're meeting each other now, after having not seen one another for some time.

Decide together where you're meeting. Choose 1 by agreement:

- We're in an estate of my family or your family, meeting as host and guest.
- We're in an estate of another family, meeting both as guests.
- We're on the road, in a town, or in the countryside, meeting by chance.
- We're in military camp, meeting as allied war-captains.
- We're in military camp, meeting as enemies under truce, and we're taking some time aside together to catch up.
- I came to you in secret, against my family's warnings, or you came to me in secret against yours.

Ask each other: How do you look to me?

During the liaison, anyone can ask anyone for details about the location and circumstances.

CONDUCTING THE REUNION

You go first. Ask your counterpart the opening question.

They answer freely, then choose one of the reunion questions to ask you.

You answer freely, and based on your answer, your counterpart chooses and makes one of the closing offers.

ENDING THE REUNION

If you and your counterpart agree to continue with another game, play it now. The reunion ends, but your turn continues with the new game.

If you don't agree to continue with a game, choose 1 by agreement:

- We talk comfortably together for many hours.
- We talk politely but soon our affairs call us apart again.
- We interact with unfriendly chill and part quickly.

Whichever you choose, you and your counterpart each draw a card, and the reunion ends.



THE OPENING QUESTION

- When did we last see each other?

REUNION QUESTIONS

- We were so close then and I'm happy and eager to see you now. Do you greet me warmly or coolly?
- We parted on bad terms and I'm nervous to see you now. Do you smile?
- I was so in love with you then and I wonder if I'll still feel it. Are you still as [*here name an attractive quality*] now as you were then?
- In those days we fought and gibed, but I always trusted you, and I wonder whether I can trust you still. Do you give me the old secret look?
- I used to worship you and dog your heels, and I'm concerned you'll still see me that way. Do you greet me as an equal now, or subtly dismiss me?
- It's been so long that I'm sure you'll hardly remember me. Are you surprised by what you see?
- I remember you fondly but much has come between us since then, and I greet you coolly. Do you try to reach out to me, or do you respond in kind?
- Since those days I've been hard-pressed by war and care, and I'm eager to see a friendly face. Does your face offer me friendship?
- When we parted there was an unsettled matter between us. I'm prepared to let it go, unless you raise it again. Do you, even inadvertently?

CLOSING OFFER

- Let's continue with *An Animated Disagreement*. Shall we?
- Let's continue with *A Conversation Over Food*. Shall we?
- Let's continue with *Meeting Sword To Sword*. Shall we?
- Let's continue with *Stealing Time Together*. Shall we?
- Let's continue with another game. Which do you suggest?

STEALING TIME TOGETHER



SETUP

Choose one of the other players to be your partner in the liaison. Decide together how you two came to be stealing time.

Also decide together whether your liaison is illicit in any way, and if so, what might happen if you're discovered.

You and your counterpart each draw a card.

Ask each other: How do you look to me? What's your mood?

During the liaison, anyone can ask anyone for details about the location and circumstances.

CONDUCTING THE LIAISON

Converse as you like, naturally. During the conversation, either of you may, whenever you like, begin an exchange by making an overture. The other then answers the overture to conclude the exchange. Return to conversation or advance into the next exchange as you like.

ENDING THE LIAISON

Continue your conversation and exchanges until you part, you draw a curtain upon what follows, or you're interrupted by someone.

There are two ways that you might be interrupted by someone.

- First, if one of you chooses either of the answers saying, "at this moment we're interrupted instead."
- Second, at any time after the third exchange, any player may interrupt you by declaring that someone else enters the scene.

And then:

- If you part, show one another the highest card in each of your hands.
- If you draw a curtain, show one another your entire hands.
- If you're interrupted, show everyone the highest card in each of your hands.

Aces are always high. For this game, in case of a tie, Hearts are higher than Diamonds are higher than Clubs are higher than Spades.



OVERTURES

- I touch your hand. May I?
- I touch your fingertips. May I?
- I touch your wrist. May I?
- I touch your cheek. May I?
- I touch your hair. May I?
- I touch your ear. May I?
- I touch your lips. May I?
- I touch your thigh. May I?
- I touch your —. May I?
- I loosen your armor. May I?
- I loosen your clothing. May I?
- I loosen my own armor or clothing. May I?
- I do not only touch, but kiss you, as above. May I?

ANSWERS

- You may.
- You may, but first I want you to do —. Will you?
- You may, but first I want to do —. Do you mind?
- You may, but only for a moment.
- You may, but only for a moment, and then I withdraw to a less charged distance.
- You may, but only for a moment, and then I break off and depart.
- You may, but at this moment we're interrupted instead.
- You may, and let's draw a curtain upon what follows.
- We'll never know, because at this moment we're interrupted instead.
- You may not, but instead I [make an overture]. May I?
- You may not, and I withdraw to a more comfortable distance.
- You may not, and I break off and depart.

TRIALS BY CONTEST



SETUP

Choose one of the other players to be your counterpart in the trial. Agree together the nature of your dispute, how the trial came about, and which of you will undertake the first contest. If there's no dispute already between you, look to page 11, under "Possible Topics," for ideas.

Each of you, state your own position, and the position that the other must accede to if they lose the trial.

Flip a card face up from the deck. This is the reward for endurance.

Ask each other: How do you look to me? What's your mood?

During the trials, anyone can ask anyone for details about the setting, occasion, participants, audience, outcome, and circumstances.

CONDUCTING THE TRIALS

Take turns back and forth until the trials end. On your turn, ask your counterpart to admit that you have proved your position and they'll no longer dispute it. If they do, they accede and the trials end. Otherwise, choose 1:

- Choose a trial and demand that your counterpart undertake it. After the first player's first turn, you must always escalate, so always choose one further down the list. Flip another reward card from the deck.
- Choose a trial and declare that you will submit yourself to it. After the first player's first turn, you must always escalate, so always choose one further down the list. Have your counterpart put your chosen challenge to you. Flip another reward card from the deck.

Aces are always high. For this game, in case of a tie, Spades are higher than Clubs are higher than Hearts are higher than Diamonds.

ENDING THE TRIALS

Whoever met the last challenge, they choose the highest card from the reward cards and add it to their hand. In case of a tie, they choose which one to take.



TRIAL 1: BY OATH

Declare the bloodcurdling oath that your counterpart must swear to prove their position. If they do, they've met the trial and it's their turn. Otherwise, they must accede.

Example: *Cross my heart and hope to die, stick a needle in my eye!*

TRIAL 2: BY ORDEAL

Tell your counterpart what ordeal they must endure to prove their position. It can't constitute torture, and it can't be something that might prove fatal.

Example: *If you're so sure about this, eat a cockroach to prove it.*

Once you've pronounced the ordeal, they decide whether they'll undertake it, or accede after all.

If they decide to undertake it, they flip a card from the deck:

- A Spade, Club, or Heart: They endure the ordeal and they've met the trial. It's their turn.
- A Diamond: They flinch and can't endure the ordeal, and must accede. The trials end.

TRIAL 3: BY FEAT

Declare the feat of great strength, endurance, or skill that your counterpart must accomplish to prove their position.

Example: *If you can shoot an arrow so hard and true that it rings the bell in the tower, then I'll believe you.*

They flip a card from the deck:

- A Spade, Club, or Heart: They accomplish it and they've met the challenge. It's their turn.
- A Diamond: They undertake it but can't do it. They must accede, a laughingstock, and discard their highest card. The trials end.

TRIALS BY CONTEST



TRIAL 4: BY RANSOM

Declare that your counterpart's house must stand behind their claim with a ransom of great wealth. They declare the wealth that their house will devote to it.

Example: *You still don't believe me? My house will throw an enormous feast of roast peacocks, finest white bread, spiced gravy, and sugar confections to change your mind!*

They reveal and discard a card from their hand:

- An Ace or a face card: Their house ransoms them admirably and they've met the trial. It's their turn.
- A rank card: Their house ransoms them only meagerly and they must accede, embarrassed. The trials end.

TRIAL 5: BY DIVINATION

Demand that your counterpart submit themselves to a priest or a priestess to divine the truth of their position. You choose whether they must submit to a priest or priestess of your gods, whether you will allow them to submit to a priest or priestess of their own gods, or whether you will allow them to choose which they prefer.

Example: *Bring forward your oracles and have them read the rising smoke! Your own gods will tell you that you're in the wrong.*

They flip a card from the deck:

- A Spade or Club (your gods), or a Spade, Club, or Heart (their own gods): The gods pronounce in their favor and they've met the trial. It's their turn. If you made them call upon *your* gods, though, and then you deny that they've proved their position, you're contradicting your own gods and it's an act of blasphemy. When they ask, you must accede or else discard your highest card.
- A Heart or Diamond (your gods), or just a Diamond (their own gods): The gods pronounce against them, and they must accede. The trials end.



TRIAL 6: BY COMBAT

The trials end unresolved. Discard the reward cards; no one wins them. As a future game, you and your counterpart should meet sword to sword.

Example: *I strike you in the face with my gauntlet. Name the time and place.*

TRIAL 7: BY EXTREMITY

If you choose this trial for your counterpart to undertake, your counterpart may always, with no loss of face or honor, insist upon trial by combat instead.

Have your counterpart choose 1:

- I submit myself willingly to torture, to make myself an example to all who follow me.
- My enemies — you? — send an assassin to murder me, to shut me up.
- My enemies — you? — march on me to imprison me, to force me by torture to recant.
- I'm to be imprisoned by my own house as a dangerous radical, and tortured into silence.
- My followers push me into an absurd and doomed demonstration, and in the aftermath I'll surely fall into my enemy's hands.

Then ask your counterpart whether they will accede after all, or will they face torture and death for their position?

If they accede, they escape this last ordeal unharmed, and the trials end.

If they refuse to accede, though, they flip a card from the deck:

- A Spade: They endure their ordeal, survive despite the odds and every effort of those who would silence them, and the only possible conclusion is that their position is true. They've met the trial and the trials end.
- A Club or Heart: They don't survive this ordeal, but they hold to their position to the very end. They've met the trial and the trials end, but they're dead.
- A Diamond: They can't endure such suffering, and their faith breaks. They choose whether they live or die in the ordeal, but either way, they must accede, and the trials end.

WAR



SETUP

Choose one of the other players to be your enemy in the field. Decide together how this war came about.

You and your enemy each draw a card.

Ask each other: How do you look to me? What's your mood?

Take your highest card, reveal it, and discard it. Draw new cards into your hand for your army, depending on the suit of your high card:

- A Club: draw 4 cards into your hand for your army.
- A Diamond: draw 3 cards into your hand for your army.
- A Heart: draw 2 cards into your hand for your army.
- A Spade: draw 1 card into your hand for your army.

During the war, anyone can ask anyone for details about the setting, the circumstances, or the conduct or appearance of the armies.

CONDUCTING THE WAR

The other players conduct the war.

Take turns leading the combatants through a series of bids and vignettes.

On your turn:

- Choose and name a company, site, or stronghold. This is the “thing at risk.” Begin by choosing from the lists for the combatants’ houses, but as the war progresses you can have it spill out to threaten the others too.
- Have the combatants bid, as below.
- Whichever combatant wins the bid, have them choose the fate of the thing at risk.

ALLIANCES

Over the course of the war, other players can join in freely, provided that there's at least one player left to conduct the war.

When you choose to join in, discard your highest card to draw an army, and enter into the bidding as normal. No special rules apply.



ENDING THE WAR

There are three ways that the war might end:

- *One of the combatants is reduced to one card without ceding the field.*
- *You, conducting the war, choose to demand an end.*

In either of these cases, choose “terms of peace” to be the thing at risk. Whoever wins the bid, therefore, gets to choose the terms upon which the war ends.

Or:

- *One of the combatants (and all of their allies) has ceded the field, leaving their enemy unopposed.*

In this case, have the now unopposed side choose whatever they want to be the thing at risk, and then have them choose its fate as well.

Take turns around the circle until one of these three possibilities develops. When it does, the war ends.

BIDDING

To bid, choose one of your cards and commit it face-down. You and your enemy reveal your bids simultaneously.

Whoever bids the higher card, wins the right to choose the fate of the thing at risk.

Aces are always high. For this game, in case of ties, Clubs are higher than Diamonds are higher than Hearts are higher than Spades.

Discard your bid cards.

Bidding “no card”: If you have fewer cards in your hand than your enemy has, you can announce that you’re bidding “no card.” Your enemy automatically wins the bid, but must still discard a card from their hand.

Ceding the field: Instead of bidding, you can choose to withdraw from battle, ceding the field. If you have allies left, they can continue to fight, if they choose. Otherwise, you leave your enemy’s army unopposed.

You might choose this option to preserve the cards in your hand.

WAR



THE FATES

When you win the bid, you choose the fate of the thing at risk.

Choose 1:

- Briefly tell of its inexorable destruction at the hands of its enemy.
- Briefly tell of its valiant, but doomed, final struggle to survive.
- Briefly tell of its cruel mistreatment by its enemy, but its salvation at last.
- Briefly tell of its abandonment by its supposed defenders, and its conquering enemy's forbearance and mercy.
- Briefly tell of the desperate threat it faced, but its ultimate triumph.
- Briefly tell of its fearless indomitability, and how its enemy couldn't overcome it.

TERMS OF PEACE

If any combatant has been reduced to one card without ceding the field, or if you, conducting the war, have decided to demand an end to it, choose "terms of peace" to be the thing at risk.

Conduct the bid as normal.

Instead of choosing from the Fates, though, the player who wins the bid does this:

- Deal a number of cards from the deck, face down, equal to the number of players who participated in the war as combatants, in total.
- Decide whether to look at them, reveal them to everyone, or leave them face down.
- Decide which and how many to award to yourself and your allies, and which and how many to award to your enemy and their allies.
- Hand the cards around as you've decided.

Consider these cards to be restitution, terms of surrender, a show of good faith, retribution, or the spoils of war, as appropriate.



AT RISK: HOUSE ANTYRE

Companies:

- The Swords of Antyre, the rowdy, boasting honor guard of the House.
- A roaring force of Untamed warriors, led by their great clan chieftain.
- A straggling company of conscripted farm kids and herders, half-trained.
- The Death, murderous devotiates of the Blood-goddess of War.

Sites:

- The sacred crowning stone and its temple complex on Crag Ayl.
- The Treaty Hall at Farran, ceremonial meetingplace of Antyre and Oake.
- The Stones of Trurall, under which the three Blood-goddesses sleep.

Strongholds:

- The crannog fortress of Lake March, ancestral refuge of House Antyre.
- Farlany Castle, a border fortress hard on Ostamber.
- Castle Urre, a fortified hunting lodge ceded by right to House Dillestone.
- Echen Crag, the famous impregnable castle of Loyal Clan Echen.

AT RISK: HOUSE DILLESTONE

Companies:

- The Champions of the Ash, Banteave's most honored warrior order.
- A disciplined company of heavy infantry, under Dillestone command.
- A company of war-archers, unequaled under the sun or moon.
- A force of fifty heavy cavalry, with lances brightly apennant.
- A bold fleet of ten longships, newly made and now asail.

Sites:

- The Garden of Valor, temple and mausoleum to Banteave's past heroes.
- Tatchers Pass, an unwalled market town up in the Backbone of Banteave.
- Risevar Town, wealthy, long since overspilling its useless walls.

Strongholds:

- Redehall Castle, seat of Dillestone power, throne and capitol of Banteave.
- The "Summer Palace," a grim fortress warding war-torn Northvalled.
- Galeste, a fortified Dillestone shipyard on the Seaward Coast.



AT RISK: HOUSE LUNESTE

Companies:

- The *Tempeste*, House Luneste's dashing elite light cavalry.
- A Luneste landing fleet, ships tipping with the soldiers aboard.
- A siege company, hammering together their engines of war.
- Dunefallei mercenaries, war-hardened and sunbaked, under Luneste hire.
- A riverine raiding fleet of six low longboats with muffled oars.

Sites:

- The shipyards on the sea isle of Estos, now under Luneste control.
- A wooden pillar shrine to the bloodless Resshei gods, hastily erected.
- The ships' landing at Knife Bay, near Curvel and the Oake heartland.
- The Gannets, sheltering sea islands between Banteave and Resshe.

Strongholds:

- The stronghold at Enstane, House Luneste's first foothold in Banteave.
- "Castle" Siarque, House Luneste's palisaded headquarters-in-theater.

AT RISK: HOUSE OAKE

Companies:

- The Crownwall, House Oake's loyal, disciplined, reliable honor guard.
- A veteran foot company, the Red Dog, much bloodied, much lauded.
- A unit of heavy horse, led by a bold and aspiring daughter of Oake.
- The Grey Deer, a unit of scouts and rangers, weary from long duty.
- A company of war bows, capable of magnificent feats of archery.

Sites:

- Castle Ninetaver, seat of House Oake, now a welcoming country palace.
- The Troth, the high sea-bluff hall where House Oake swears its fealties.
- The War-College, where generals retire to raise up the next generation.

Strongholds:

- Brauden Castle, originally a pele tower on the border of Northvalled.
- Ashendarrow, guarding the high passes in the Backbone of Banteave.
- Castle Cole, an ancient and crumbling fort on the Seaward Coast.



AT RISK: HOUSE SANDOREALE

Companies:

- A high prince of Sandoreale, traveling under arms with his elite corps.
- A veteran unit of heavy cavalry, inspired by ambition and blood honor.
- Ranks of infantry, swelling with new muster, eager to prove themselves.
- A mounted force, armed for ambush with short bows and lances.
- A company of light infantry, quick and skilled with sword and spear.
- A mixed cavalry unit, Resshei mercenaries, under Sandoreale command.
- A Sandoreale impressment gang, with conscripts in chain collars.

Sites:

- Calleire Shrine, a magnificent temple to the gods and the Honored Dead.
- Barreste, a trade town, sparking with resentment against Dillestone rule.

Strongholds:

- The Old Manor, the retreat and seat of power of House Sandoreale.
- Holthen Keep, a powerful fortress warding the Seaward Coast.

ELABORATING & IMPROVISING

When you choose what's at risk, always be sure to say which House's list you chose from, so that player knows to pay attention.

Elaborate further as you like. You can say that a company is on the march, for instance, or that it's taken position at —. If the combatants ask, you can explain how a site has come under threat, or else you can ask the winner of the bid to explain how their army came to threaten it.

You also aren't limited to the lists above. You can improvise new things to put at risk, if you prefer. Draw on earlier events in play, and refer to the descriptions of the Houses on pages 38–39 and to events in *Intrigue and Muster* on pages 16–21.

ENDGAME: THE CORONATION



SETUP

This is the last game of play. Everyone plays.

Everyone draws one last card.

If you choose, pass one card from your hand to an ally. Don't discuss it.

Reveal your hands, and:

- Find the player with the most face cards, including Aces. This player is the **Heir Assumptant**. In case of a tie, go by highest card. (If no one has any face cards or Aces, consider it a tie and go by highest card.)
- Of the other players, find the player with the most suits represented in their hand. This player is the **House Ascendant**. In case of a tie, all tying houses are ascendant.
- Find the players holding Twos or Jacks, if any. These are **Doom Cards**.

Aces are always high. For this game, in case of ties, Hearts are higher than Spades are higher than Clubs are higher than Diamonds.

THE CORONATION

The Heir Assumptant is crowned. Heir Assumptant, answer these questions:

- *What is the nature of the ceremony?*
- *Which houses are invited to attend? Which are forced to attend?*

Anyone can ask for further details.

Other players, answer by show of hands:

- *Which of us personally attend the ceremony?*
- *Which of us personally support the new crown?*
- *Which of us will personally fight, or continue to fight, against the new crown?*

THE HOUSE ASCENDANT

House Ascendant, answer this question:

- *Do you serve the new crown, support the new crown, call the new crown to heel, or openly oppose the new crown?*

Heir Assumptant, answer this question:

- *Do you honor and glorify them, look to them for leadership, grant them due respect, defy them to do their worst, or outlaw them and try to break them?*



THE DOOM CARDS

If you have a Doom Card in your hand, play it now.

Within one year of the new crown's coronation:

- **The Two of Clubs:** The new crown can't command the peace and Banteave falls into civil war.
- **The Two of Diamonds:** The towns and cities of Banteave begin to assert the power of their wealth, defying the ancestral rule of the noble houses.
- **The Two of Hearts:** An outlandish new faith takes hold among the common people of Banteave, who abandon in great numbers the gods and their ancestors.
- **The Two of Spades:** Famine ruins the harvest and the people of Banteave face a desperate, killing winter.
- **The Jack of Clubs:** The new crown falls ill and can no longer rule.
- **The Jack of Diamonds:** The new crown bankrupts their house and must go begging to the other noble families for support.
- **The Jack of Hearts:** A rival heir discovers a new and undeniably legitimate claim to the crown.
- **The Jack of Spades:** The new crown is assassinated on the throne.

Anyone can ask for further details. Whoever played the card, you answer the others' questions.

ONE YEAR LATER

Take turns around, one last time. On your turn, answer this question:

- *Given all this, one year later, where are you?*



THE END



THE NOBLE HOUSES



HOUSE ANTYRE, THE ANCIENT CROWN

House Antyre leads the “untamed tribes,” the ancient clans who have resisted every invader’s effort to subjugate or conquer them.

- Your people used to rule Banteave, before it was even called Banteave, back to the dawn of time. The most ancient laws and the most ancient gods support your claim to the throne. If you’re crowned, your house expects you to restore the rule of the clans.
- The armies of House Antyre are undisciplined, democratic, lax, and absolutely terrifying in war. They know neither reserve nor half-measure.
- House Antyre holds you to antiquated customs and ritual, and expects from you an unslakeable blood-thirst, and an eagerness to answer every insult, no matter how slight, with ready violence.

HOUSE DILLESTONE, THE ROYAL HOUSE

You’re a prince or princess of the ruling house of Banteave. You’re a sibling or cousin of the infant heir. Your family has ruled for three generations.

- If the infant heir is crowned, you’re in position to serve as regent until his majority, and then it will be a fourth generation of Dillestone rule.
- The armies of House Dillestone are wealthy and well ordered, with companies of foot, bow, and dashing cavalry both light and heavy.
- House Dillestone holds you to high formal standards of honor, grace, chivalry, and faith.

HOUSE LUNESTE, THE FOREIGN POWER

You’re a prince or princess of the royal house of Resshe, an overseas kingdom with a strong claim to the throne of Banteave.

- Your claim to the throne is legal, not traditional. To ascend, you’ll need to assert your claim with wealth, with force, and by winning over your most recalcitrant enemies. If you’re crowned, Banteave will become the second most important province of Resshe.
- The armies of House Luneste are powerful, but they must be carried over by ship, and are vulnerable on the sea.
- House Luneste expects you to hold yourself above all of Banteaven, and to remain true to Resshe in language, culture, and worship.



HOUSE OAKE, THE LOYAL RETAINERS

You're a prince or princess of a house of bodyguards, knights, and counselors steadfast to three generations of Dillestone rule.

- Your claim to the throne rivals that of the infant Dillestone heir, but it's a controversial matter within your house. If you're crowned, for the first time in the history of Banteave, House Oake will step out of its role as the crown's guard and advisor and take up kingship itself.
- The armies of House Oake are well disciplined and well tested. They are Banteave's mailed fist and sharpened sword.
- House Oake holds you to ancient and noble customs of loyalty, honor, and nobility of purpose. It hates cowardice, inconstancy, and deceit equally, as the worst sins of human capability.

HOUSE SANDOREALE, THE USURPERS

You're a prince or princess of the second great house of Banteave, of high noble name and royal lineage. Four generations ago, your house wore the crown, and House Dillestone must submit to you.

- With the Dillestone succession in turmoil, you see the opportunity to seize the crown. If you're crowned, though, you might plunge Banteave into civil war.
- The armies of House Sandoreale, already large, are swelling further with new muster. The generals who serve under you are knights of exalted honor and nobility.
- House Sandoreale, formerly patient and content, is now fanning the embers of resentment and impatience to rule. It expects you to rise to the challenge, to rally around the house's cause, and commit yourself passionately to battle.

DESIGNERS' NOTES & CREDITS



PUBLIC PLAY

You are expressly permitted to play this game live, streaming, recorded, or in any other public format, with no obligation to us as its creators.

THEMES, CONTENT & SAFETY

The King Is Dead includes themes of romance, sexuality, violence, and war.

It's designed with the informed consent and emotional well-being of the players in mind. Its design allows you to engage with the other players at your own level of comfort, to safely establish your own boundaries, and to play unguardedly without crossing the boundaries of others.

Still, don't intentionally introduce themes or imagery that other players will find troublesome.

There are a number of player support and safety tools designed for use while playing games, including Brie Sheldon's *Script Change*, Taylor Stokes' *Support Flower*, and John Stavropoulos' *X-card*. The King Is Dead wasn't designed to require one of these, but it was designed to be compatible with them, so if you prefer to bring one to the game with you, please do.

PREVIOUS VERSIONS

Versions of these games appear in Asbjørn Olsen's *Faye* and in Meguey & Vincent Baker's *Spin the Beetle* and *Mobile Frame Zero: Firebrands*.

PLAYTESTING & SUPPORT

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THE KING IS DEAD

A Role-playing Party Game

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a lumpley game



POWERED BY THE
APOCALYPSE
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A young man with short, light-colored hair and a serious expression looks upwards and to the right. He is wearing detailed medieval armor, including a chainmail collar and a large metal breastplate. The background is a wall of vertical wood paneling. The title 'THE KING IS DEAD' is overlaid in large, red, serif capital letters.

THE KING IS DEAD

D. VINCENT BAKER
MEGUEY BAKER
A ROLE-PLAYING GAME