






# DYNASTY

WHO WILL RULE  
THE EMPIRE?



STORYBREWERS ROLEPLAYING

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## HEY! CARDS ARE FUN, BUT


Cards take a lot of time to create and print out. If you haven't got time for this, see the card-free variant at the end of the PDF.

## GAME CREDITS

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# WHO WILL RISE? WHO WILL FALL? AND WHO WILL RULE?

*Dynasty* is a GM-less tabletop RPG where players compete to see who will rule an empire. Each player takes on the role of an entire faction, struggling for power and domination. *Dynasty* is a one-shot system, designed to tell sweeping stories, but zoom in on significant individual moments. As the story of your *Dynasty* unfolds you will find out who will seize the throne, and who will die trying.

### When you play *Dynasty* you will:

1. Create the Empire.
2. Create Dynasties within the Empire.
3. Plot, scheme and fight to see who will rule.
4. Then finally, crown a ruler. Long live the Emperor.

### What you need to play:

- 4 to 6 players ready to rule or die.
- A whiteboard or piece of paper to keep track of the Empire you create.
- One *Dynasty* sheet per player.
- All 48 scheme cards. You can either print these, or write them out on coloured index cards.
- Lots of d6.

- Where is the Empire?
- When did it start?
- Who are the subjects or members of this Empire? How did they become such? Are they united and homogenous or fractured and antagonistic?
- What does the Empire prize over all other things, and what does it hate?
- What is honourable or virtuous and what is despicable?
- Who are the winners and losers in this Empire? Are there classes or ranks?
- How does this Empire see their ruler, and what does it want from them? Are they a God, a genius, a profiteer, a mighty warrior, or something else entirely?
- Describe some important traditions, rites, and special days in this Empire.
- Describe the Empire's food, clothing, architecture, technological level, religion, etc.
- Anything else?

## CREATE THE EMPIRE

Work together to create the Empire. Don't worry, you won't have to work together again.

### 1. Empire Type

Pick an Empire type from the list or choose your own: *Fantasy Empire, Sci-Fi Empire, Historical Empire, Record Empire, Corporate Empire, Mafia Empire, Animal Empire, Supernatural Empire, University Empire, Combine Two.*

### 2. Decide on Tone

As serious or as silly as your group agrees, but you better decide now before you start creating your Empire.

### 3. High Concept

Each person suggests a high concept for the Empire. Pick the one you like best. *E.g. A Sky Pirate Confederacy, An All Death-Metal Record Label, A Chicken Nugget Fast Food Chain.*

### 4. Name the Empire, The Throne, and the Ruler

Name your Empire: *E.g. The Illonian Flight, Rusty's Records, McChicken's Chicken Chickens.*

Name the seat of power, and the ruler's title. *E.g. The Iron Throne: The King, The Symphony: The Conductor, CEO: CEO.*

Name the current ruler and describe what they're like: *E.g. Morlan Tyn: Tyrannical, Opulent, Bloodthirsty.*

### 5. Breathe Life Into Your Empire

Take turns answering the questions below, until you agree your Empire is fully fleshed out. Add any other details you all agree on. Record your answers on a whiteboard or piece of paper for easy reference during play.

## UNSURE HOW TO PLAY? LEARN THE EASY WAY

Watch our how to play video, and learn the rules in just a couple of minutes: [bit.ly/storybyyoutube](http://bit.ly/storybyyoutube)

## DYNASTY SHEETS

Can be found in the appendix.

The image shows a 'DYNASTY SHEET' form. At the top, it says 'DYNASTY NAME: \_\_\_\_\_' and 'Bound by: \_\_\_\_\_'. Below this are three columns for 'LEADER 1', 'LEADER 2', and 'LEADER 3'. Each column has fields for 'Name', 'Role', 'Description', and 'Status'. To the left of these columns are four questions: 'I want the throne because...', 'I am known for...', 'I care too deeply about...', and 'I would never...'. At the bottom of the form, there are four icons representing different roles: a crown, a sword, a spider, and a book.

# CREATE YOUR DYNASTY

A Dynasty is a group of people:

- Who are linked by a crucial binding trait. This trait could be their family, clan, religious sect, core belief, or anything else that makes sense in your Empire; and
- Who desperately desire to rule.

Each player fills out their Dynasty sheet as follows:

### 1. Name and Binding Trait

*E.g. The Lin Cho Family: Bound by Blood, The Spider Elves: Bound by Race, The Chem Mechanics: Bound by Profession.*

Share this information so all players understand the political landscape.

### 2. Motivations and Beliefs

Answer the questions on your sheet to flesh out the nature of your Dynasty.

### 3. Leaders

Create three leaders who are key members of your Dynasty:

- **Name:** Their name. *e.g. Fred.*
- **Role:** The function they fulfil within your Dynasty. *E.g. Strategist, Strong-Arm, Diplomat, Publicist, Priest, Spy.*
- **Description:** How do they appear to others? What makes them special or interesting?
- **Status:** Leave this blank for now. This is used to track what happens to the leader during the game.



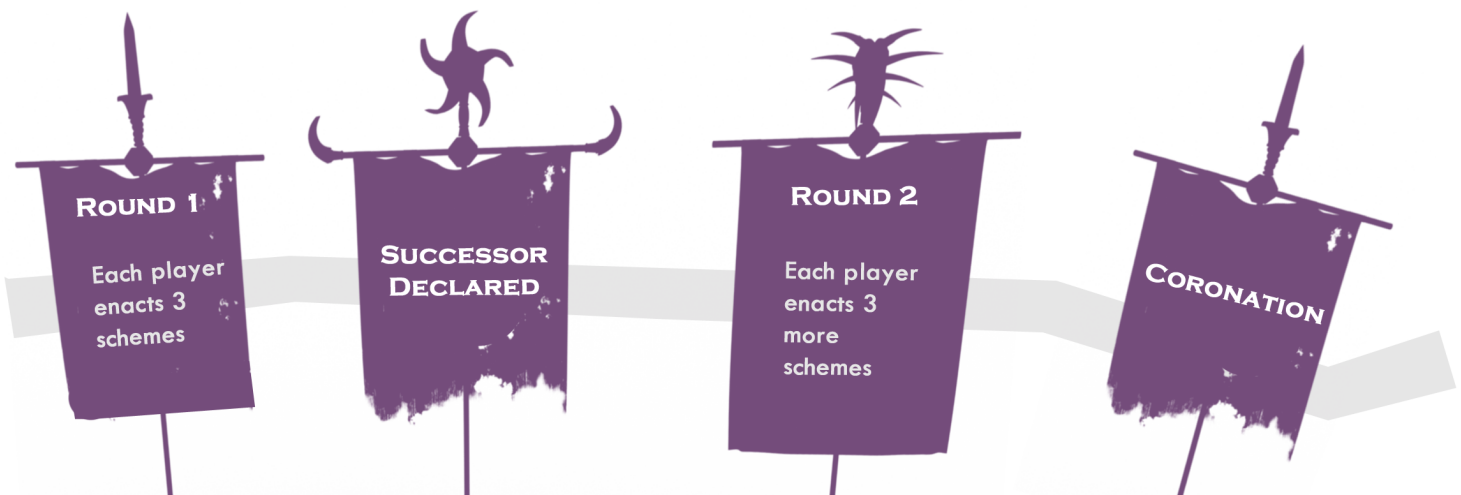
# FIGHT FOR THE THRONE

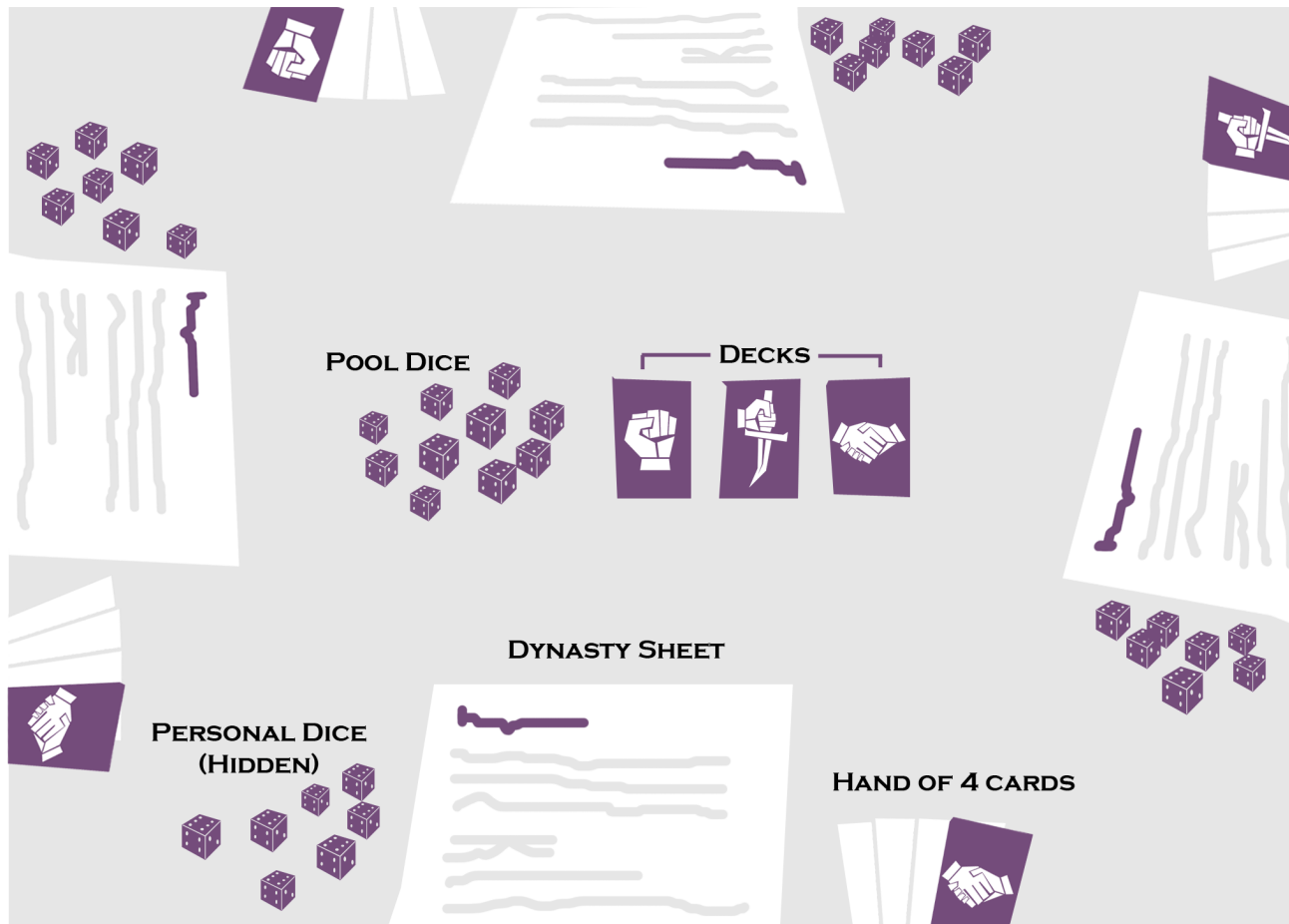
The fight for the throne takes place over two rounds. After the first round, the front runner will be declared the current ruler's successor. But those who expect power do not always survive to claim it. After the second round is finished, it is the overall winner who will rise to claim the throne.

The game takes place in a series of scenes. During each scene, players will attempt to enact a scheme from one of their scheme cards to advance the agenda of their Dynasty. They will then bid and roll dice to see whose scheme succeeds. The Dynasty with the most successful schemes is the new ruler. May their reign be long and prosperous and certainly not short lived and bloody.

Read out loud, adapting for your Empire as necessary:

*"The current ruler of \*Empire Name\* is sickly, frail and weak. They cannot maintain the seat of power. The wolves claw hungrily at the throne room door, licking their lips. Fearing the forces stacked against them may prove fatal, your ruler \*current ruler\* has announced that they wish to name a successor. In six months, they will utter the name of the Empire's new ruler. If they live long enough to do so."*





### SCHEME CARDS

Scheme cards should be interpreted loosely. They can be literal or metaphorical. It's up to the player holding the card to decide what it means to them.

### READING SCHEME CARDS

**You:** Refers to your Dynasty.

**They/Their:** Refers to the Dynasty of the player you are using the scheme card against.



## SETUP

### To setup each round:

- Each player draws four scheme cards. Players may select to draw these cards in any combination from the strength, sway, or subterfuge decks, to reflect the modus operandi of their Dynasty. Don't show the others.
- Each player receives 7 d6, to place somewhere secret. There should also be a pool of d6 in the middle.

## PLAY

The player who has most recently ruled an Empire is the first active player.

### The active player:

- Chooses the scheme card they will enact, and places it face down on the table.
- Chooses the Dynasty they will enact their scheme against (the opposing player).
- Chooses which of their leaders will be present in the scene. At least one leader must be present.
- Sets the scene. *E.g. "As night falls on the camp of the Kothaki warriors, they do not notice a mysterious figure slip unseen into their camp. Balif, the diplomat, makes his way to the commander's tent, and enters silently."*

### Then, the opposing player:

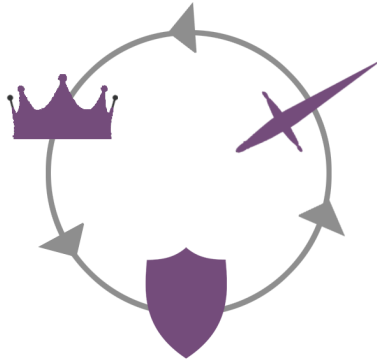
- Chooses the scheme card they will enact, and places it face down on the table.
- Adds any details to the scene they wish. *E.g. "As Balif enters the commander's tent, what he does not realize is that he has been seen entering the camp by the Kothaki mage, Talus, who is approaching the commander's tent and listening in, ready to leap into action."*
- The active player then starts the scene.
- The scene may involve any other Dynasties or non-player characters as necessary. Dynasties other than the opposing player will not play a scheme card.
- The scene continues until the players are in conflict. This may take a few minutes, or happen immediately.





# CONFLICTS

## THE SYMBOLS



## DEADLY

Some scheme cards are marked *deadly*. When a deadly card is played, one of the leaders of the player who loses the conflict is taken out.

They may flee, be imprisoned, change sides, or actually die, but one way or another they are no longer useful to the Dynasty. Change their status as appropriate.

## IF A PLAYER LOSES ALL 3 LEADERS

If a player loses all three of their leaders, their Dynasty is no longer a power, and they cannot win the round. However, they can still contribute a pool die during conflicts.

## When the players are in conflict:

- The active and opposing players flip their scheme cards, revealing their true plans and intentions.
- The players compare the symbols on their scheme cards. If one symbol beats another, that player gets a free die from the pool for this conflict.
- The active and opposing players secretly place any number of dice into their hands from their hidden dice. They do not reveal these yet.
- Each other player must give a die from the pool to the Dynasty they support, either the active or the opposing player. They may also add any extra dice they wish from their hidden dice. They then explain why their Dynasty's support lies where it does.
- The active and opposing players:
  1. Reveal the number of dice they bid, and add these to any dice given to them by other players.
  2. Roll all these dice.
  3. Count the number of successes (4+).
- The player with the most successes is the winner. Their scheme succeeds, and the other person's scheme fails. Play out the rest of the scene to determine how this takes place.
- The winning player collects both scheme cards and places them in a victory pile. All dice used in the conflict are discarded.
- In the unlikely event of a tie, both players get what they want in the scene. They will then both place their own scheme cards in their victory pile at its conclusion.

- The active player then moves clockwise to the next person in the circle. Repeat until each player has used three out of four scheme cards. You cannot target a Dynasty with only one card remaining.
- The player with the most scheme cards in their victory pile is the winner of the round. Cards are kept from the first round to the second. They are not discarded.

## After the first round:

- The first round winner is crowned the successor. Or, if the current ruler is dead, they are crowned the new one. Ask this player to describe how and why this took place.
- Each other Dynasty must swear their loyalty to the first round winner. I'm sure they will be completely sincere.
- Repeat the set up, and play a second round.

## After the second round:

- The second round winner is crowned the ruler. Ask them to describe how and why this took place.
- Each other Dynasty must perform a spectacular display of loyalty at their coronation. Ask them what it is.
- Each Dynasty gives an epilogue, ending with the new ruler.







## CARD-FREE VARIANT

If you don't have time to print or create all 48 cards, we've made a card free variant you can use. If you have time, the cards provide a smoother play experience – but if you don't, this variant can be just as fun.

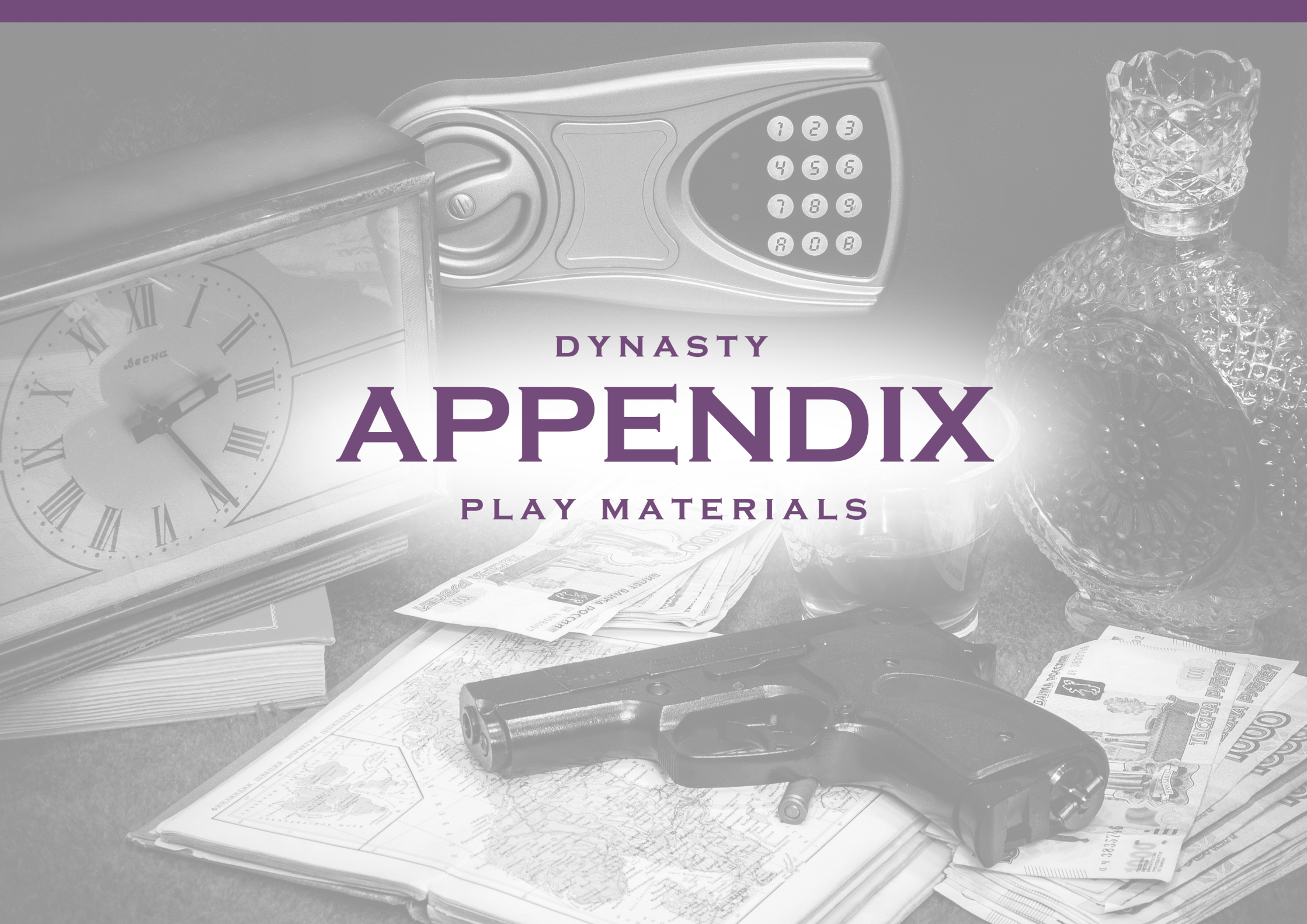
### How it works:

- All players take one of the four scheme sheets included in the appendix, at random (doubles are fine).
- When it comes time for a player to select a scheme, they will:
  - Roll a d4.
  - Pick whether they wish to use strength, sway, or subterfuge.
  - Place the d4, showing the number rolled, on the empty box of the category they have chosen.
  - The player's scheme for this scene will be the one, in the category they have chosen, whose number matches that on the d4.
- When the time comes to reveal scheme cards, players reveal their sheet instead, showing the number (on their d4) and category of the active scheme.
- Instead of keeping scheme cards after a scene, players keep a tally of how many conflicts they have won. They score 2 points for a victory, and 1 for a tie.
- The round ends after each player has participated in exactly 3 conflicts (or as close as possible). Any players who participated in less than 3 conflicts add the difference to their scores. Players switch to a new scheme sheet between rounds (but keep their victory tally).
- The player with the most points is the winner.

SCHEME SHEET 1		
STRENGTH	SWAY	SUBTERFUGE
1. Build impenetrable walls 2. Set an ambush: <i>Deadly</i> 3. Confiscate their weapons 4. Interrogate their subjects for intel	1. Create an alliance 2. Gain popular support 3. Marry into their dynasty 4. Accuse their leader of a crime: <i>Deadly</i>	1. Steal their greatest asset 2. Pretend to be weak injured, or foolish 3. Set them up to take the blame: <i>Deadly</i> 4. Encourage and exploit their flaws

Only use these sheets for the card-free variant.





DYNASTY

# APPENDIX

PLAY MATERIALS



**DYNASTY NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**BOUND BY:** \_\_\_\_\_

We want to rule because...

We are known for...

We care too deeply about...

We would never...

We always...

 **LEADER 1**

Name:

Role:

Description:

Status:

 **LEADER 2**

Name:

Role:

Description:

Status:

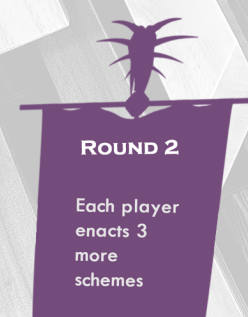
 **LEADER 3**

Name:

Role:


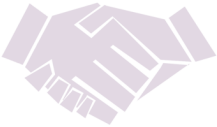













Description:

Status:


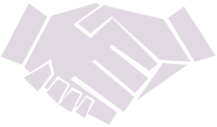


















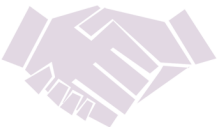













# SCHEME SHEET ①

STRENGTH	SWAY	SUBTERFUGE
		
 1. Build impenetrable walls	 1. Create an alliance	 1. Steal their greatest asset
 2. Set an ambush: <i>Deadly</i>	 2. Gain popular support	 2. Pretend to be weak injured, or foolish
 3. Confiscate their weapons	 3. Marry into their dynasty	 3. Set them up to take the blame: <i>Deadly</i>
 4. Interrogate their subjects for intel	 4. Accuse their leader of a crime: <i>Deadly</i>	 4. Encourage and exploit their flaws


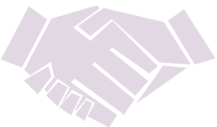













# SCHEME SHEET ③

STRENGTH	SWAY	SUBTERFUGE
		
 1. Challenge them to a duel: <i>Deadly</i>	 1. Buy up everything they want	 1. Assassinate their leader: <i>Deadly</i>
 2. Threaten what they hold most dear	 2. Question their legitimacy	 2. Provide false information
 3. Protect them, for a price	 3. Bribe a leader to switch sides: <i>Deadly</i>	 3. Spend their money, drink their wine
 4. Leave a terrifying warning	 4. Turn the current ruler against them	 4. Pretend to help or aid them

# SCHEME SHEET ②

STRENGTH	SWAY	SUBTERFUGE
		
 1. Intimidate them into obedience	 1. Convince one foe to attack another: <i>Deadly</i>	 1. Dress a weak army up as a mighty threat
 2. Capture their leader	 2. Offer them what they value most	 2. Create a distraction: <i>Deadly</i>
 3. Conscript their subjects	 3. Paint your cause as righteous or holy	 3. Spread doubt among their followers
 4. Unleash the super weapon: <i>Deadly</i>	 4. Humiliate them in public	 4. Plant someone up on the inside

# SCHEME SHEET ④

STRENGTH	SWAY	SUBTERFUGE
		
 1. Cut off their supply	 1. Incite rebellion against them: <i>Deadly</i>	 1. Let them believe they're safe: <i>Deadly</i>
 2. Outnumber them, many times: <i>Deadly</i>	 2. Promise them favours and status	 2. Blind them w/ good times & pretty things
 3. Lead them into unfamiliar territory	 3. Prosecute them for immoral acts	 3. Sabotage their equipment
 4. Hit them where it hurts	 4. Impress them with a show of wealth	 4. Expose their greatest secret



STRENGTH



---

Build impenetrable walls.

STRENGTH



---

Conscript their subjects.

STRENGTH



---

Confiscate their weapons.

STRENGTH



---

Interrogate their subjects for intel.

STRENGTH



---

Challenge their leader to a duel of honour.

STRENGTH



---

Threaten what they hold most dear.

STRENGTH



---

Protect them, for a price.

STRENGTH



---

Leave a terrifying warning.

**DEADLY**



STRENGTH



---

Intimidate  
them into  
obedience.

STRENGTH



---

Capture their  
leader.

STRENGTH



---

Set  
an ambush.

STRENGTH



---

Unleash the  
super weapon.

**DEADLY**

**DEADLY**

STRENGTH



---

Cut off their  
supply.

STRENGTH



---

Outnumber  
them, many  
times over.

STRENGTH



---

Lead them into  
unfamiliar  
territory.

STRENGTH



---

Hit them where  
it hurts.

**DEADLY**



**STRENGTH**



**STRENGTH**



**STRENGTH**



**STRENGTH**



**STRENGTH**



**STRENGTH**



**STRENGTH**



**STRENGTH**





**STRENGTH**



**STRENGTH**



**STRENGTH**



**STRENGTH**



**STRENGTH**



**STRENGTH**



**STRENGTH**



**STRENGTH**



SUBTERFUGE



---

Steal their  
greatest asset.

SUBTERFUGE



---

Pretend to be  
injured, weak,  
or foolish.

SUBTERFUGE



---

Set them up to  
take the  
blame.

SUBTERFUGE



---

Encourage and  
exploit their  
flaws.

**DEADLY**

**DEADLY**

SUBTERFUGE



---

Assassinate  
their leader.

SUBTERFUGE



---

Provide false  
information.

SUBTERFUGE



---

Spend their  
money, drink  
their wine.

SUBTERFUGE



---

Pretend to  
help or aid  
them.

**DEADLY**

**DEADLY**



SUBTERFUGE



---

Dress a weak army up as a mighty threat.

SUBTERFUGE



---

Create a distraction.

SUBTERFUGE



---

Spread rumours and doubt among their followers.

SUBTERFUGE



---

Plant someone on the inside.

SUBTERFUGE



---

Fool them into believing they are safe.

SUBTERFUGE



---

Blind them with good times and pretty things.

SUBTERFUGE



---

Sabotage their equipment.

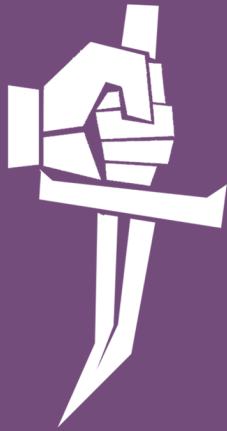
SUBTERFUGE



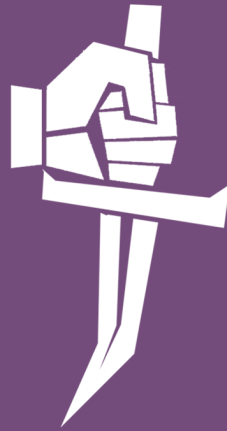
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Expose their greatest secret.

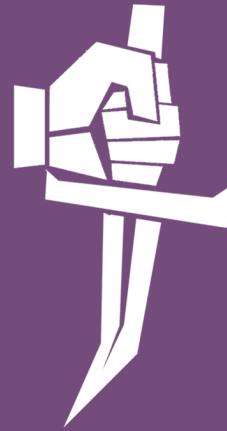
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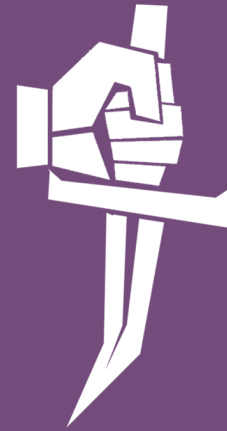
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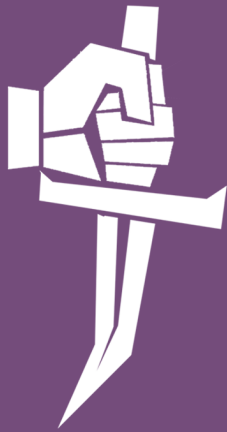
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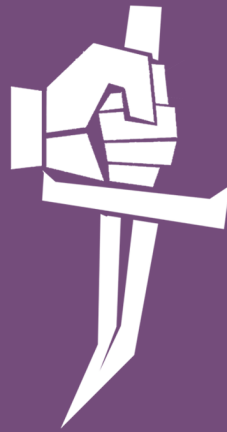
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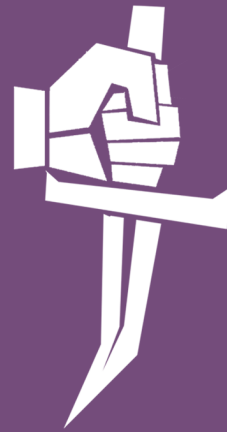
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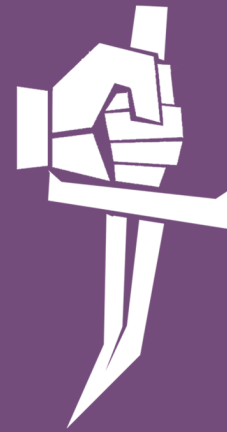
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**SUBTERFUGE**

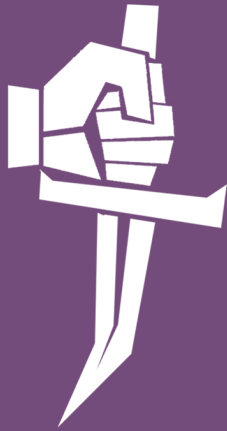


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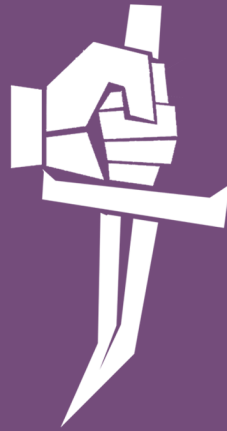




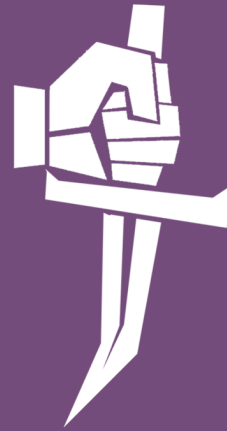
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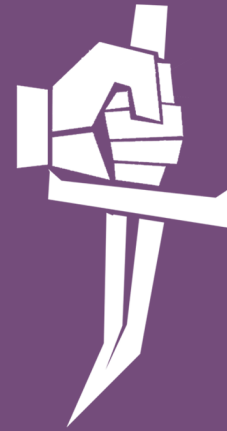
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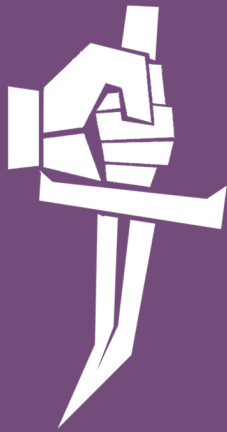
**SUBTERFUGE**



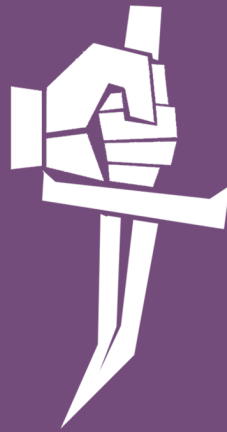
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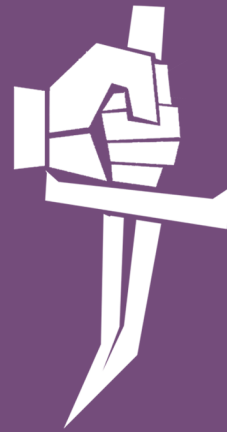
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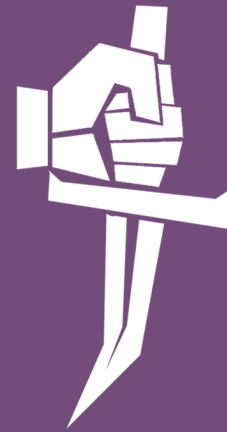
**SUBTERFUGE**



**SUBTERFUGE**



**SUBTERFUGE**



SWAY



---

Create an alliance.

SWAY



---

Gain popular support.

SWAY



---

Marry into their dynasty.

SWAY



---

Buy up everything they want.

SWAY



---

Accuse their leader of a terrible crime.

SWAY



---

Question their legitimacy.

SWAY



---

Bribe their leader to switch sides.

SWAY



---

Turn the current ruler against them.

**DEADLY**

**DEADLY**



SWAY



---

Convince one  
foe to attack  
another.

**DEADLY**

SWAY



---

Offer them  
what they  
value most.

SWAY



---

Paint your  
cause as  
righteous or  
holy.

SWAY



---

Incite rebellion  
against them.

**DEADLY**

SWAY



---

Humiliate them  
in public.

SWAY



---

Promise them  
favours and  
status.

SWAY



---

Prosecute them  
for immoral  
acts.

SWAY



---

Impress them  
with a show of  
wealth.

**SWAY**



**SWAY**



**SWAY**



**SWAY**



**SWAY**



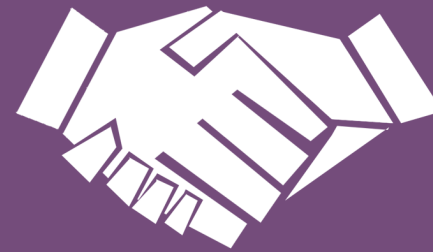
**SWAY**



**SWAY**



**SWAY**





**SWAY**



**SWAY**



**SWAY**



**SWAY**



**SWAY**



**SWAY**



**SWAY**



**SWAY**

