**NUTSHELL**

Players are courtiers in the King’s court. They vy for the King’s favor by being the most useful and influential advisor, working to gain influence and power over different parts of society. They also compete with each other to expose the plans and political situation of the other courtiers. When courtiers believe another has lost favor or over reached, they accuse each other to the King in hopes of eliminating their competition. The King cannot abide worthless courtiers who have no influence or overly ambitious courtiers who threaten the throne. Any such courtier is summarily executed!

**Players:** 3 - 6

**Equipment:**

* Blue Beads - Chips
* Yellow Beads - Gold
* Currency Index Cards - Buckets
* Privacy screen for each player
* Event & Secret Cards
* D6s for rolling and to use as counters

**SETUP**

1. Each player fills each Bucket with **10 Chips** and hides their Buckets behind a privacy screen.
2. Each player starts with **2 Gold**.
3. Shuffle the Event Cards and put the deck in the middle of the table.
4. Shuffle the Secret Cards and put the deck in the middle of the table.
5. All players must be **unanimous** on optional rule variations, if any, before the game begins. If unanimity is not reached, losing players are always executed and removed from the game.
6. Roll a D6 to see which courtier goes first. Turns start **clockwise**.

**PHASES OF PLAY**

1. Event - Draw Event Card
2. Intrigue - Play Secret Card (if desired)
3. Deal - Make deals with other player(s) / Purchase Secret Card (if desired)
4. Accusation - Accuse another player to the King (if desired)

**CARDS AND PIECES**

**Chips and Buckets**

Chips sit in a pile in the center of the table.

Chips represent influence players have.

When chips are taken by players they are placed into Buckets behind their screen.

Chips are uniform in appearance so when a player takes them from the center, other players do not know which Bucket they are going into by looking at the “type” of chip. There is no TYPE of Chip.

Buckets represent the influence a player has over the social elites of that ilk. The more Chips a player has in a Bucket the more influence they hold.

There are 4 types of buckets

1. Plebs
2. Banks
3. Generals
4. Clergy

**Event Cards**

Event Cards are common cards drawn from the central Event Deck.

The Event Card is read aloud for all players to hear

Then the drawing player takes the necessary actions to resolve the event, however, they do NOT need to declare how they chose to resolve the event.

Event Cards usually involve taking and/or returning Chips and/or Gold to the center of the table.

Event Card can be declarative and offer no option. For example, “Pay X Gold to the King.” and the player must take Gold from his pile and put it into the middle of the table.

Event Cards can offer an option. For example, “Acquire +2 Generals / -1 Clergy OR +3 Plebs / -1 Generals.”

Once an Event Card has been resolved, it goes into the Event Discard Pile.

If, for any reason, a player is unable to fulfill an Event Card, that player must reveal their buckets to all other players.

**Inventory Cards**

Inventory Cards are a special type of Event Card that persist between turns.

Inventory Cards can be saved and used later for the resolution of an Event Card (during any player’s turn).

Once an Inventory Card has been used, it goes into the Event Discard Pile.

**Persistent Event Cards**

Persistent Event Cards are persist between turns and take effect before the Event Card Draw on the designated turn (ie Before Owner’s Turn, Before Any Non-Owner’s Turn, or During Every Turn).

For example, “Savior Reborn - Before every turn +1 Plebs and -1 Clergy.”

Once an Persistent Event Card has been used, it goes into the Event Discard Pile.

**Secret Cards**

Secret Cards can be purchased with Gold from the Secret Deck for **5 Gold** during the Deal Phase.

Secret Cards need only be read/known by the drawing player.

Secret Cards can be played during the Intrigue Phase, unless the card says that it can be played “at any time” or “when accused” or something else.

**Gold**

Gold is currency available to players to achieve their goals.

Similar to Chips/Buckets, a player’s Gold stash is hidden from all other players, but Gold flowing in or out of it is not.

Gold can be used to resolve Event Cards, Purchase Secret Cards, make deals with other players (including purchasing Secret Cards from them), etc.

**ACCUSATION**

When a player is accused, the King will be influenced to investigate the value of the accused courtier. If any Bucket is EMPTY the King sees the courtier as worthless and unworthy of keeping around. If any Bucket is MAXED, the King sees the courtier as a threat to the throne and threats need to be removed. In either case, the courtier is executed.

During the Accusation Phase, the current player (Prosecutor) may accuse another (Accused) player to the King. The Accused player must reveal her Buckets to the Prosecutor.

The Prosecutor is CORRECT if any of the Accused player’s Buckets are EMPTY (0 Chips) or MAXED (>20 Chips). If correctly prosecuted, the Accused player is executed by the King and removed from the game.

If the Prosecutor is WRONG, the Accused player is validated (all Buckets are safely between EMPTY and MAXED). As punishment, the Prosecutor must reveal his own Buckets to all other players. As recompense, the King allows the Accused to add or remove up to 10 Chips (total) to any one of her Buckets. As per normal Chip/Bucket adjustments, the number of Chips moved is visible to other players, but not the source/destination Buckets. (For example, remove 3 Pleb Chips and put them in the center of the table and take 7 Chip from the center and add it to her Generals Bucket.)

(OPTIONAL)

When revealing buckets, the Accused must reveal all her Buckets to all players instead of only the Prosecutor.

(OPTIONAL - ADVANCED)

When making an accusation, the Accuser must declare the exact Bucket that is out of bounds. They are only CORRECT, if the declared Bucket (not any other) is EMPTY or MAXED. The Accused may only reveal the declared Bucket.

(OPTIONAL - ELITE)

When making an accusation, the Accuser must declare the exact Bucket AND whether that Bucket is EMPTY or MAXED to be CORRECT. The Accused may only reveal the declared Bucket.

(OPTIONAL)

If a player loses, roll a D6. On 5+ the player is not executed by the king, but stays in the game and their Buckets are reset to starting levels. They are unable to win, but they are able to keep playing as normal. “I can't win but I don't want Joe to win either so I'll help Sally!” If they lose again, they… are executed with no recourse OR … repeat the D6 roll.

**ACCUSED BY THE KING**

When a courtier is Accused by the King, they must immediately reveal all Buckets to all courtiers and suffer the King’s judgement if found guilty.

**GAME OVER**  
The game ends when only one player is left standing, blameless before the King. The King declares the player Prime Regent, executes all of the adversaries, and leaves the Regent to rule happily until death.