

Six Winters

Playtest Rules

V20.2

Six Winters is a cooperative fantasy campaign game for two players based on the *Wrath of the Autarch* tabletop role-playing game.

Players control **Red Bank**, a society under threat from the **Empire of the Autarch**. The Autarch is working to achieve a sorcerous apotheosis, rendering The Empire unstoppable and spelling certain doom for Red Bank. The players have six winters to stop this from happening. Each game of *Six Winters* is 90-150 minutes long and plays out one year in the chronicle of Red Bank. A series of six games is called a **campaign**.

During a session of the game, players select from a rotating cast of characters to make progress against the Empire. Each character has their own unique capabilities and limitations. Effectively managing these characters over the six winters is critical to successfully stopping the Empire!

As this document is very much in progress, designer thoughts and notes are captured using this highlighted format.

These notes help provide context, but are not essential to understanding the game. The playtest version number matches that used in Tabletop Simulator and gitlab. All of the graphic design and layout is only for prototype purposes and will change at production time.

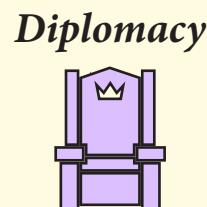
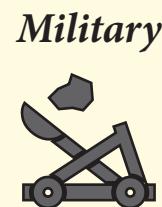
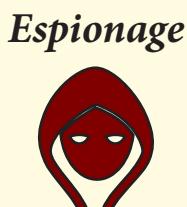
The first few games will take closer to the 150 minute mark as you learn the rules. Two experienced players can finish a game in around 90 minutes.

Since this is a playtest version of the game, feel free to reach out with any questions: phil@ziapeltagames.com. You can also create issues at <https://github.com/ziapeltagames/six-winters> if you're comfortable using github. At some point I'll create an entry on BGG, which will become the best way to communicate. The most recent rulebook, character sheets, and (eventually) a sample playthrough will also be at <https://github.com/ziapeltagames/six-winters>.

I'm not yet at the stage of completely blind playtesting. Feedback will go towards clarifying the rules and tuning the game. Current focus areas for playtesting are noted at the end of these rules.

Resources

The conflict against the Empire is fought over six **resources** depicted with the following icons. Victory is achieved by maximizing Support, Espionage, or Diplomacy before the end of the sixth game.



Progress

Red Bank's **progress** in each resource is marked using a red cube **progress marker** on the associated twelve space **resource track** on the **trade board**. Markers move clockwise around the resource track.

Threats

Threats against Red Bank in each resource are tracked using a gray cube **threat marker** on each resource track.

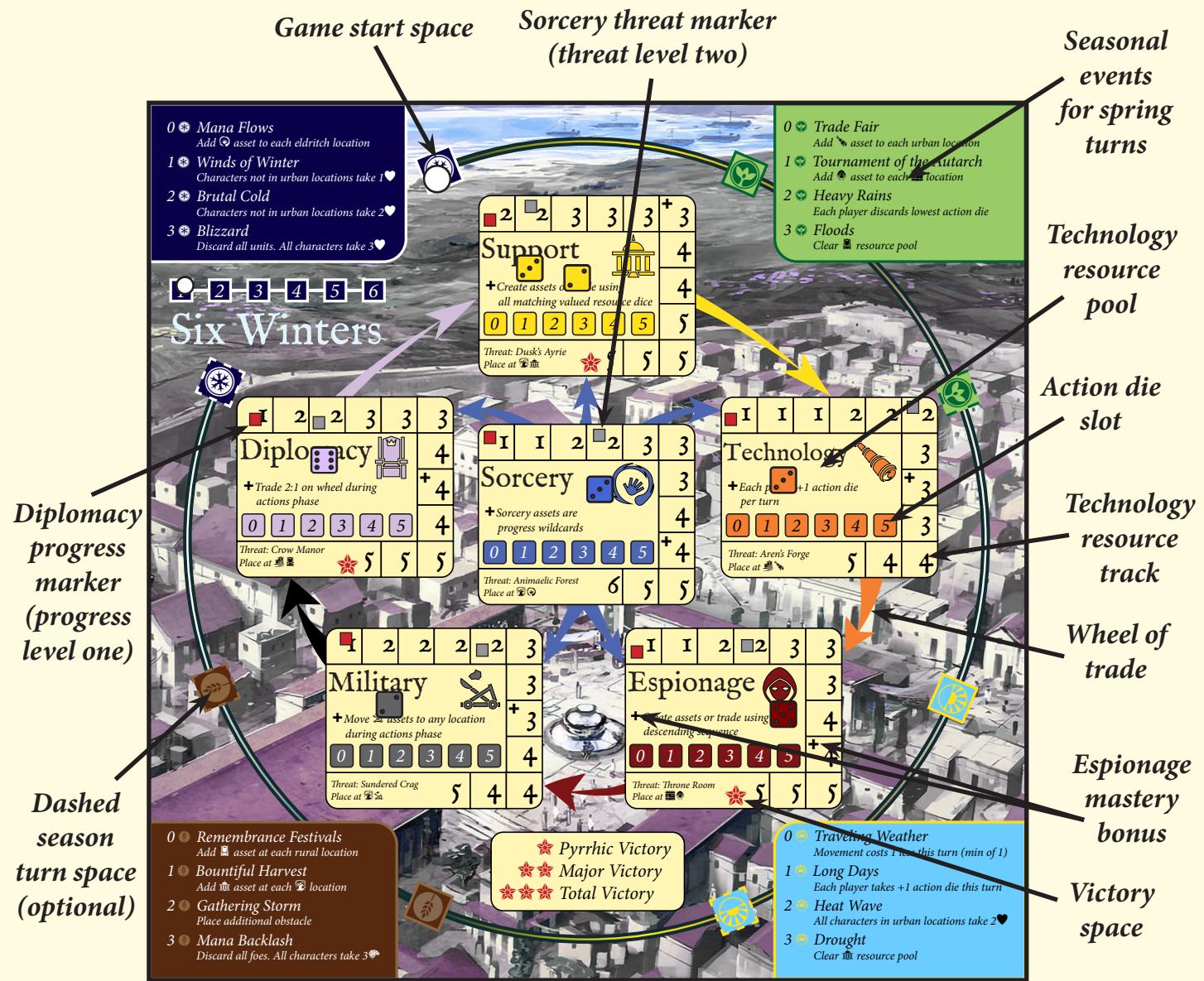
Lowering threats after they have advanced is much more difficult than trying to slow the rate of advancement in the first place.

Progress and Threat Levels

Each resource track has numbers on it between 1 and 6. The number under the progress marker's position is called the **progress level** for that resource, and the number under the threat marker is called the **threat level** for that resource.

Victory

If a Red Bank progress marker is **alone** (not shared with a threat marker) on the last space of the resource track (the 12th space), that resource track is **complete**. After the sixth game, if either Diplomacy, Espionage, or Support are complete, the players win.



Starting Trade Board

Resource Dice Pool

Red Bank's raw capability in a resource is represented by a **pool** of resource dice. This pool of resource dice fluctuates in size and value over the course of a game, as capabilities are used for different effects. At the end of each turn, players **refresh** these pools with a number of dice equal to the current progress level. This is normally 1 to 6 dice, depending on the resource.

Asset Dice

If resource pools are raw capabilities, **assets** are specific creations. For instance, an espionage asset could represent anything from a helpful spy or contact to thieves tools or gear.

Assets are created by moving resource dice from resource pools on to **location cards**. Some game effects, particularly seasonal events, may create assets directly on location cards.

Assets are much more useful than dice in resource pools.

Components

Resource Dice

Resource dice match the color of the resource icons shown on the trade board. There are 12 resource dice of each color, for a total of 72 resource dice.

Resource dice are finite, if they run out for some reason, new resource dice may not be put into play until some become available again. As mentioned above, resource dice on location cards are called assets.



Resource Dice (12 x Resource)

One of the goals of playtesting is to determine how many of each type of resource dice are needed to avoid running out except in rare circumstances.

Action Dice

Each player has a pool of ivory action dice available each turn. These dice are spent to perform actions in the game. For some actions like movement, the value on the action die doesn't matter, but for most actions the values are important. There are 18 action dice included in the game.



Action Dice (18)

Action Dice are like action points in many boardgames.

Trade Board

The trade board tracks time, progress, threats, resource dice, and shows seasonal events. There are six resource pools on the trade board.

Action Die Slot

On each resource pool are numbered action die slots from 0 to 5. Action dice are placed in these slots to create assets or trade.

Resource Mastery Bonus

When Red Bank's progress for a resource is at or beyond the + symbol on the resource track, Red Bank gains **mastery** in that resource, and players gain the mechanical benefit described in the resource box.

Character Sheets

There are separate character sheets for the seven characters in the game. At the start of the campaign Fuscus, Thea, Menas, and Keel are unlocked and available.

You can find new character sheets at <https://github.com/ziapeitagames/six-winters>. Eventually, the characters will probably be cardstock mats or boards with counters or tokens for tracking skills and achievements. Currently, the sheets are paper, and you will mark skill and ability advances directly on the sheet during play.

Skills

The upper left of the character sheet describes how proficient the character is at a set of eight *skills*.

Skills are ranked from 0 to 6. Starting skills for each character are marked. Skills may be improved further during play. A character with a skill of rank 6 has *skill mastery* in that skill, which gives additional benefits.

Command



Disguise



Lore



Rapport



Combat



Tactics



Thievery



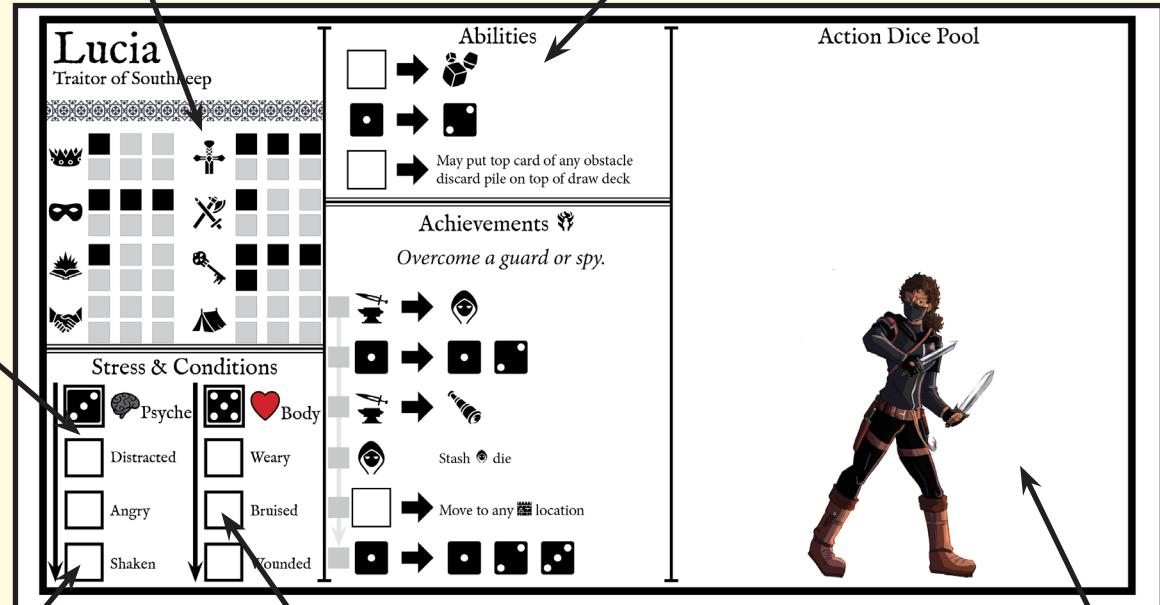
Survival



Skills (initial skill levels are marked)

Starting abilities

Psyche stress track



Psyche condition

Body condition

Space for unspent action dice

Stress

Each character has two stress tracks: one for *psyche* and one for *body*. Psyche is tracked with a *gray die*, and body is tracked with a *red die*. At the start of a game, each *stress die* is set at the top of each track to the value shown. These dice function as counters. As a character takes stress, the die is lowered in value.

If a character takes stress such that the tracking die would go to zero or lower, it is set back to the maximum for that track, but moved down to the next *unmarked* box on the stress track.

Conditions

The stress track boxes below the starting position are called *conditions*. When a stress die moves on to a condition, it is marked off. As the campaign progresses, characters may need to recover conditions instead of making progress that year.



Knocked Out

If either stress die drops to zero or below while on the lowest condition box (Shaken or Wounded), the character is **knocked out** for the rest of that game. Remove the character token from the board, and that player doesn't take actions for the rest of the game.

Abilities

Abilities are available at any time while players take actions during their turn. Typically abilities are fueled by using a type of dice: action dice, asset dice at the character's location, or resource dice from the location's associated resource pool.

These dice remain on the ability until the end of the turn, effectively limiting most abilities to one use per turn.

Achievements

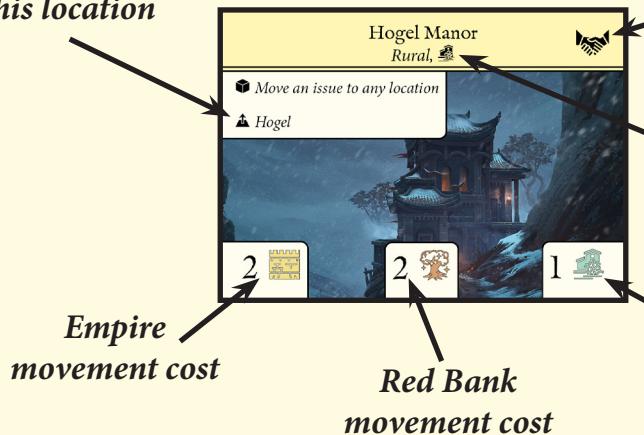
Characters have advanced abilities called achievements that may be unlocked during play. Achievements are listed under the achievements section of the character sheet. Achievements are gained in order, from top to bottom.

Character Stand-Ups

There are stand-ups for each character in the campaign. These are moved around the nine different location cards during play.

Tabletop Simulator uses character miniatures.

Hogel comes into play attached to this location



Resource skill



Location belongs to Settled Lands region

Location Cards

During play, characters move to different location cards. Each location is assigned to one of the following regions:

■ The Empire

▲ Red Bank

▲ Settled Lands

There are nine location cards in play, three for each region.

Location Tags

Location cards have a variety of tags used by other game effects. All locations have one of the following tags: urban, rural, or wilderness. Some locations have the ▲ icon, which indicates the location starts the campaign in play.

Resource Skill

The upper right of each location card shows the character skill used to create assets or trade at the location. Creating assets moves resource dice from resource pools onto location cards, and trading moves resource dice between pools.

Movement Costs

Along the bottom of each card are movement costs for each region. A player spends the listed number of action dice to move their character to any location in that region. The value of the action dice don't matter for movement.

Movement Costs

Along the bottom of each card are movement costs for each region. A player spends the listed number of action dice to move their character to any location in that region. The value of the action dice don't matter for movement.

Location Effect Icon (Optional)

The upper left of each location card contain optional icons indicating various effects.

▲ **Port:** A character may move from this location to another port for the cost of one action die.

✿ **Magic Gate:** A character may take stress to move from this location to another magic gate.

✖ ☰ ☱ ☳ ☴ **Resource:** Location generates assets of indicated type when activated.

Location Text (Optional)

Locations may have a variety of effect text as well. This text applies to any character at the location, or in some cases moving to the location.

▲ **Starting Obstacle:** When this location is put into play, attach the listed obstacle(s) to it.

❖ **Action:** By spending an action die (value doesn't matter), players may apply the indicated effect.

➔ **Activation:** This text takes effect if this location is activated during the activation phase.

Progress Cards

Completing progress cards advances the progress tracks for Red Bank. Progress cards are completed by placing asset dice on them, creating an unbroken path from the starting space (the square with the diamonds on top) to the ending space (the square with diamonds on the bottom). From the starting space, dice are placed either orthogonally or diagonally in a chain towards the ending space. Typically there are many such paths from beginning to end which may be taken.

Asset dice may be moved from the character's location onto the controlling player's progress card. This does not require an action (asset dice are always free to use). Most progress card squares have restrictions on dice that may be placed there. These restrictions are depicted by colors and symbols on each square.

Any: Any asset die.

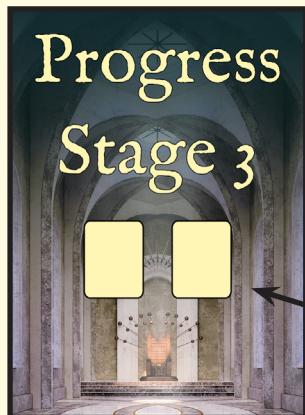
Any Value: Asset must match the resource type (by color), but may be any value.

Any Type: Asset must match the value, but may be any resource type.

Type and Value: Asset must match both the resource type (by color) and value.

Region: Asset die must be taken from location in listed region. If the region symbol is colored, the resource type must match as well.

+1, -1, =: The asset placed must match the given relation to the previous die in the path. The +1 die must be one higher in value than the previous die in the path, the -1 die must be one lower, and the = die must be equal.



Reward

When a progress card is completed, the resource progress track listed on the bottom middle of the progress card is increased by one. Some progress cards have more than one resource symbol, in which case corresponding progress tracks are increased by one for each symbol.

Finally, some progress cards have the ★ wild card symbol, which allows players to increase any progress track by one.

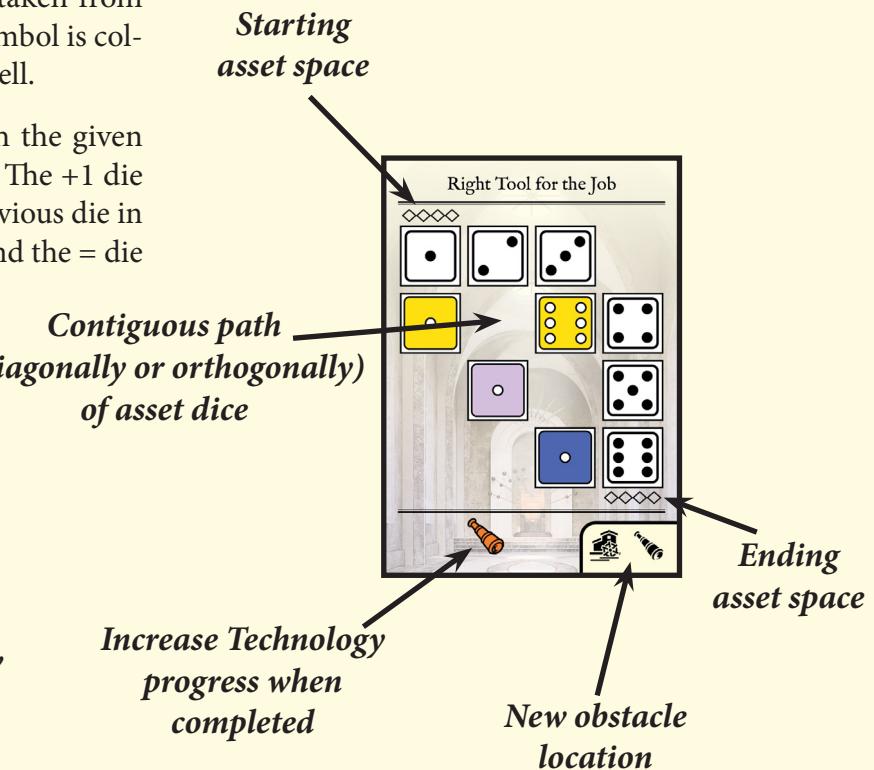
Obstacle Location

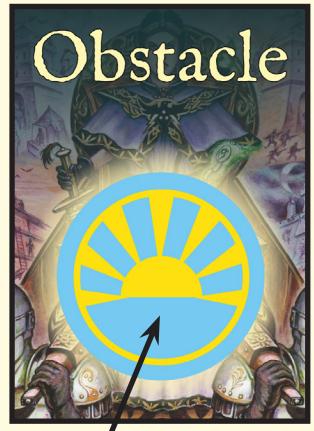
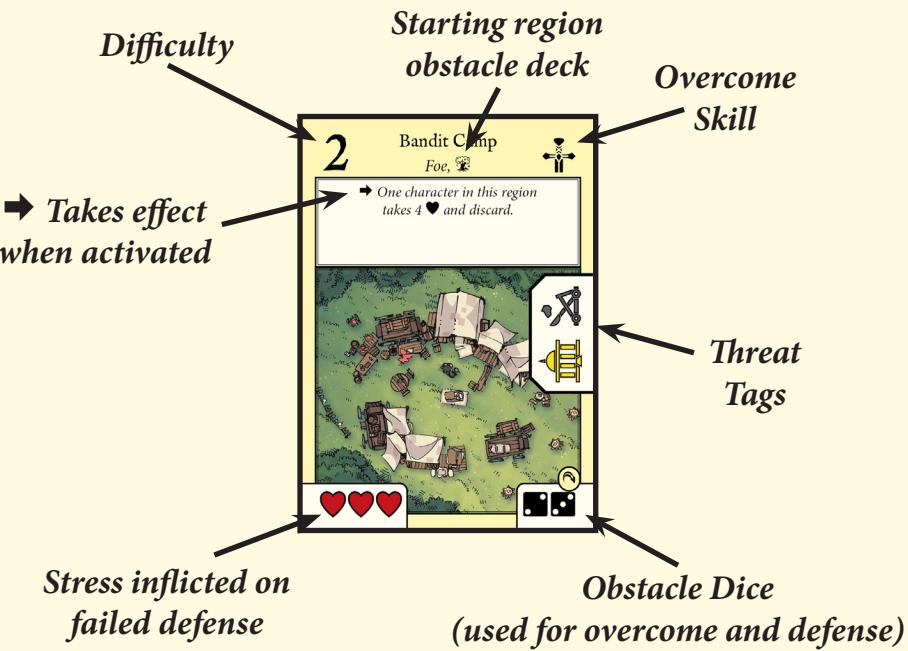
The lower right section of each progress card shows a location position, used to place new obstacle cards.

Stage and New Obstacles

The back of each progress card shows the progress card's **stage** and between one and three card icons. Progress cards are organized by stage: all stage one cards are shuffled together, then all stage two, and so on. As the campaign progresses, some of the lower stage progress cards will be removed from the game.

The number of card icons determines how many new obstacles come into play during the turn.





Obstacle Cards

Obstacle cards represent adversaries, challenges, but also opportunities for Red Bank. There is one deck of obstacle cards in each region: The Empire, Red Bank, and the Settled Lands. Over the course of the campaign, obstacle cards may move between decks, and decks may grow or shrink based on campaign events. Obstacle cards come into play at locations during the new obstacles step. An obstacle at a location is *attached* to it.

Obstacle Tags

Below the name, as for location cards, are a set of text tags and icons for each obstacle. Similarly to locations, these tags may interact with other obstacle cards, location effects, and character abilities. The , , and  tags indicate which region's obstacle deck the obstacle starts in.

Additionally, some obstacles feature a starting location  icon, indicating they come into play when the associated location comes into play.

Difficulty

The upper left of the obstacle shows its difficulty from 1 to 6. This comes into play when overcoming (discarding) the obstacle, and can also impact when the obstacle is unlocked (as threats increase, new and more difficult obstacles come into play).

Threat Tags

Along the right side of the obstacle are one or more threat symbol, showing one of the six resources in the game. If there are **more than two** of the same symbol in play during the threats phase, the related threat track will increase by one for each resource symbol beyond two. Usually obstacles only have one of any particular symbol.

These threat tags are also important for unlocking obstacle cards and putting them into play. As the threat levels increase, more difficult obstacles with matching icons are unlocked as part of the unlock new threat obstacles step.

Occasionally, game effects will refer to an obstacle by the threat icons. For instance, “a military obstacle” or “a sorcery obstacle”. An obstacle qualifies if any of its threat icons match the listed type.

Obstacle Text (Optional)

Many obstacles have text that details game effects while the obstacle is in play. Text may be preceded by the following symbols:

↖ **Overcome:** Takes effect when the obstacle is overcome.

→ **Activation:** Takes effect if the location where the obstacle is at is activated.

Overcome Skill

The upper right of the obstacle indicates the character skill used to remove the obstacle from play.

Obstacle Damage

Each obstacle may inflict psyche stress, body stress, or both. Each symbol in the lower left of the obstacle indicates one stress of the particular type. This occurs when a character fails to defend during the overcome obstacle action.

Obstacle Dice

To remove an obstacle from play (overcome the obstacle), players need to spend specific dice matching the listed dice in the lower right of the obstacle during the overcome obstacle action.

Season Symbol

The back of each obstacle card shows one of four season symbols: ☽, ☾, ☺, and ☻.

The season symbol affects which locations get activated during the activation phase, which seasonal event occurs during the seasonal event phase, as well as how many turns players get each season.

Region Boards

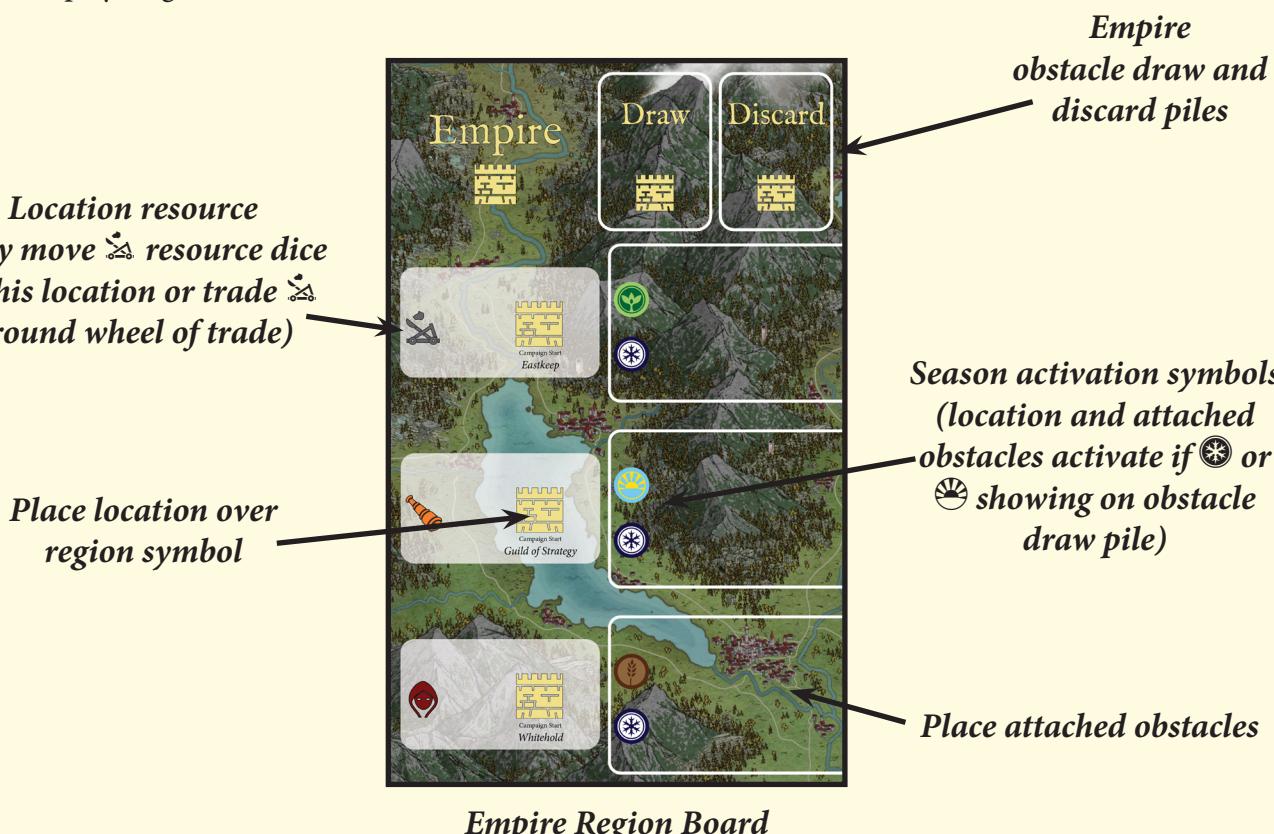
There are three region boards, one for The Empire, one for Red Bank, and one for the Settled Lands. Each region board has space for three locations, obstacles **attached** to those locations, and the obstacle draw and discard pile for the region.

Location Resources

Each location space has an associated **location resource**. When placing locations on the region board, cover the region symbol and leave the resource symbol showing. The location resource shows which type of asset may be created at the location.

Activation Symbols

In the space where obstacles are played are season symbols used during the activation phase. Locations and attached obstacles are activated if a season symbol matches the top obstacle draw card in the region.



Campaign Setup

Perform the following steps when undertaking a new campaign. The campaign may be played more than once, although it is not possible to play multiple campaigns at the same time.

1. Set Starting Progress
2. Set Starting Threat Levels
3. Choose Starting Locations
4. Assemble Starting Obstacle Decks
5. Assemble New Character Sheets

Starting Progress

The red cubes are used to track Red Bank's progress on each resource track. At the start of the campaign, the red cubes are placed on the first space of each track (the space in the upper left surrounding each resource pool). All resource pools start at size 1 except , which is at size 2.

Starting Threats

The gray cubes are used to track threats for each resource type. Place one gray cube on the *final* 2 space (the space right before level 3) on each resource track.

Alternative Difficulties

Play the campaign on *easy* mode by placing the threat markers on the *first* 2 space on each resource track. Or on *hardcore* by placing the threat markers on the *final* 3 space on each resource track.

At the standard difficulty, there's a very high chance of at least a pyrrhic victory. The game at this level is more about what happens to characters along the way and the degree of success than it is losing. At the difficult level, there's a chance you will not succeed at all.

Starting Locations

Each region board indicates the starting location cards for each location slot. Find the matching locations and put them into play as indicated. The starting location cards also have the  icon below their name.

Alternative Starting Locations

Alternatively, shuffle the location cards by region. Then draw four cards from each region, and choose three to put into play as desired. If any locations have attached obstacles, as indicated by the  icon, find and put those obstacles into play at the location now.

The first time playing the campaign, it is suggested players use the standard starting locations. These are basic locations with no special effects text or symbols. They also cover a wide range of character skills, thus allowing any of the starting characters to have success.

And don't worry! Locations will change during the campaign, so you still see other interactions. The random method can be very chaotic, potentially making the starting game either much easier or tremendously difficult.

Assemble Starting Obstacle Decks

In the standard and easy difficulties, gather all obstacle cards of difficulty 1 or 2 that *don't have* the  icon (, , and 

Set aside all of the  obstacle cards into a separate deck. These will be searched through when new locations come into play that have  icons.

Assemble New Character Sheets

Get new character sheets for the seven characters in the game. At the start of a new campaign Oniri, Yasmnia, and Lucia are locked and unavailable.

New character sheets are available at <https://github.com/ziapeltagames/six-winters>.

Session Setup

Perform the following steps at the start of each session.

1. Restore Locations and Obstacles
2. Build Progress Deck
3. Draw Starting Progress Cards
4. Create Progress Staging Area
5. Choose Characters
6. Set Tracks and Fill Starting Dice Pools
7. Place Characters at Locations
8. Place Season Time Marker

Restore Locations and Obstacles

Retrieve the stored obstacle decks, location cards, and attached obstacles from the end of the last game. Starting with the last region stored (), put location cards into play, starting with bottom location slot in the region and working up to the top of each region board. Any obstacles stored with a location card should be put into play at the attached location. Then put the region's obstacle draw pile into play.

Ignore this step when starting a new campaign.

Build Progress Deck

Gather all of the lowest stage progress cards available and shuffle them to form the current progress deck.

At the start of the campaign, all of the stage one progress cards are available.

Draw Starting Progress Cards

Each player draws one starting progress card and places it face up next to their character sheet.

New Campaign Obstacles

During year one only (the start of a new campaign), each player puts **one obstacle** into play at the new obstacle location in the lower right of their progress card. For instance, if the progress card shows in the new obstacle location, draw the top obstacle card and place it at the location in the Empire.

This seeds the board with starting obstacles, since there are no obstacles in play from previous games. After year one, other obstacles will most likely start in play (both from obstacles that weren't removed from the previous game as well as obstacles attached to new location cards).

Create Progress Staging Area

Draw **four** progress cards and place them face up in a column next to the Trade Board to form the **progress staging area**.

Choose Characters

Each player chooses one character from all unlocked characters. Take the chosen character's sheet, five action dice, and a die to track psyche and body. Place the psyche and body dice at the start of each stress track using the indicated starting values.

At the start of a new campaign, Menas, Keel, Thea, and Fuscus are available.

Set Tracks and Fill Starting Dice Pools

Place progress and threat markers at locations recorded from previous game (or at start positions). Roll and place a number of resource dice for each pool equal to the current progress level.

Additionally, each player rolls five action dice for their starting action dice pool, placing these dice on their character sheet.

Unlocking the mastery bonus gives players one extra action die each turn.

Place the rest of the resource dice and action dice in an easily accessible location near the trade board.

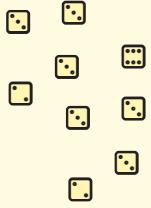
Place Characters at Locations

Each player places a token for their character at any location.

Place Season Time Marker

One of the white time markers is placed on the first winter space (the winter space with a solid outline).

For the first game of a new campaign, set the year marker to Year 1.



Action Dice Pool:

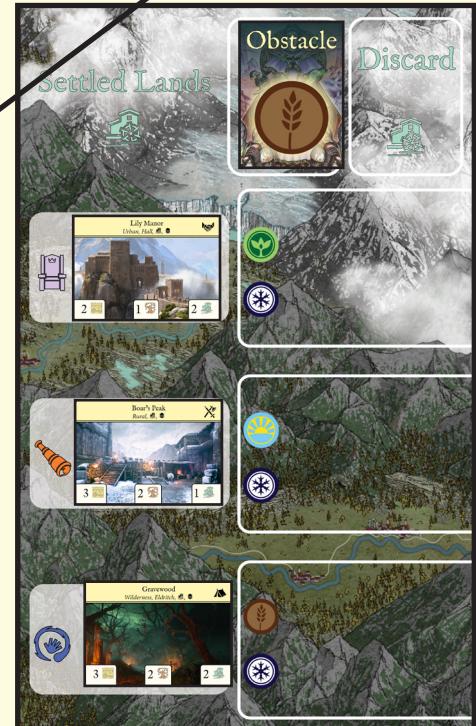
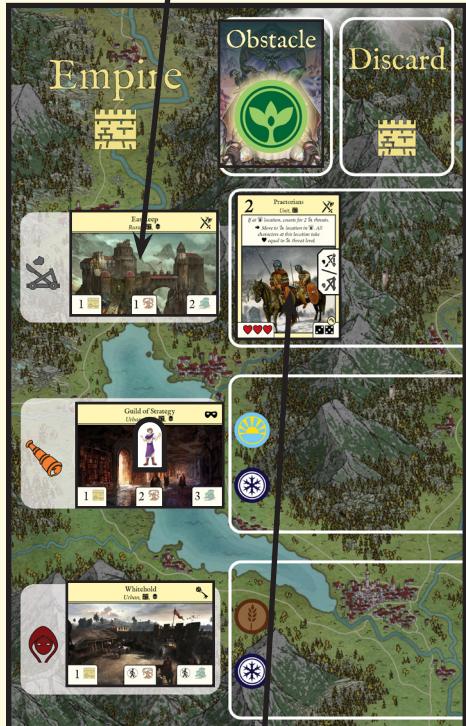
- Ability: $\square \rightarrow \square$
- Ability: $\square \rightarrow \square \square$
- Ability: $\square \rightarrow \square - 1$
- Achievement: Overcome a diplomat.
- Stress & Conditions:
 - Psychic: \square (Red)
 - Body: \square (Red)
 - Wary
 - Bored
 - Angry
 - Shaken
 - Wounded

Action Dice Pool:

Character holding dice.



Standard starting locations



Starting obstacles for year one only



Year One Game Setup (Standard Difficulty)

Set aside locked  obstacles



Set aside locked , ,  obstacles of difficulty 3 or higher



**Standard difficulty
(threats set to last level 2 space
on each track)**

Year one



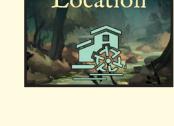
**Later stage progress
cards set aside
until needed**



**Current stage 1
progress draw pile**



**Locked region
location decks**



**Bottom progress card
in staging area**

Progress staging area

**Top progress card
in staging area**

**Set aside locked threat
locations (when threat
marker reaches last space)**



Turns

Each turn is composed of the following steps.

1. Seasonal Event
2. Actions
3. Refresh
4. Activate or Move Obstacles
5. Place New Obstacles
6. Threats
7. Advance Time

Seasonal Event

Add up all the season symbols on the obstacle draw piles matching the current season (between 0 and 3). In the current season's event text box, apply the effect that matches this number.

Actions

During the actions step, players spend their action dice to perform actions. Players may freely use character abilities and resource mastery abilities during this step.

Actions may be taken in any order by any player. When all players are done spending action dice and using abilities, the actions phase is complete. See the Actions section for a detailed explanation of all possible actions.

Refresh

Remove any dice on character abilities and resource action slots.

Resource dice are rolled and added to each resource pool until there are a number of dice matching the progress level. Do not reroll any resource dice already in the pool, and do not remove any dice if there are more dice in the pool than the progress level.

Next, five (six if player's have mastery) action dice are rolled and placed in each player's unspent action dice pool.

Activate or Move Obstacles

For each region, starting with , then , and finally , activate locations and obstacles as indicated on the season symbol on the region's obstacle draw pile.

The symbol activates the top location card and any attached obstacles, the symbol activates the middle location and attached obstacles, the symbol activates the bottom location and attached obstacles, and the symbol activates all locations and obstacles in the region.

Follow any effect text on activated locations and obstacles. Make sure to check for resource effect icons on location cards, which create an asset at the location.

Note: *obstacles may never activate more than once* in the same turn. Rarely an obstacle may move to a different location that also activates. In this circumstance, the obstacle does not activate again.

Moving Obstacles

If the season symbol is , , or and the *activated location has no attached obstacles*, move the highest difficulty obstacle in the region to this location. If there are multiple obstacles with the same highest difficulty in the region, players may choose which to move. This obstacle *is not activated*, it is only moved.



Fall location activates, but is empty, so highest difficulty obstacle moves

Place New Obstacles

Draw and place new obstacles equal to the number of card icons on the current stage draw pile (1, 2, or 3).

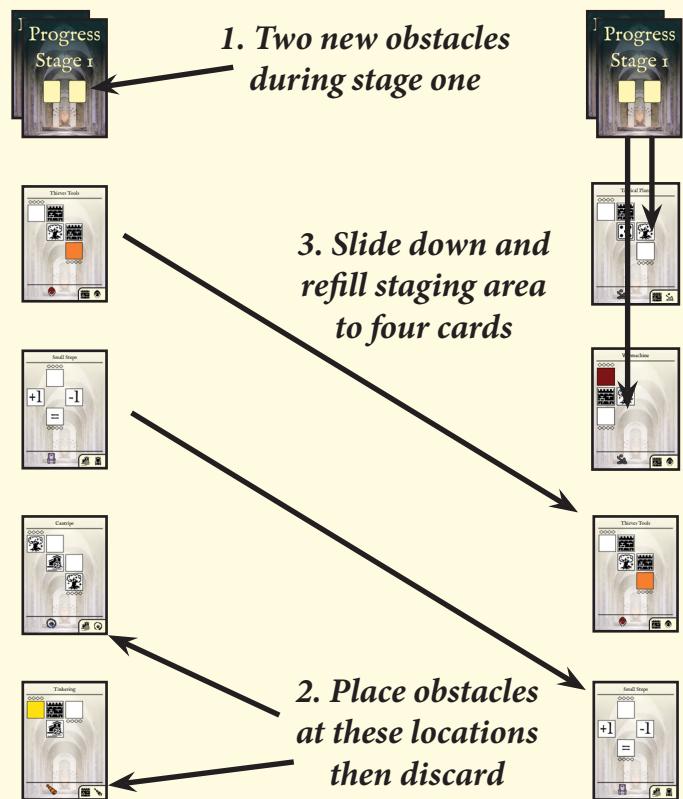
For each obstacle to place:

1. Look at the bottom progress card in the staging area
2. Place one obstacle at the obstacle location (in the lower right of progress card)
3. Discard the bottom progress card

After placing obstacles, slide down remaining progress cards (there will be 1 to 3 remaining progress cards) and draw new progress cards at the top of the staging area to refill the staging area to four face-up progress cards.

If a region's obstacle draw deck is ever emptied, shuffle the discard pile and create a new draw deck. It's okay if some cards in the discard pile did not start in the region, as obstacle cards may move between regions.

If the current stage's progress deck empties, immediately shuffle and put into play the next stage's progress deck. Additionally, if the progress deck is in Stage 5, and there aren't enough Stage 5 progress cards to refill the staging area, shuffle all of the discarded Stage 5 progress cards and form a new deck.



Threats

Add up all matching threat tags for each obstacle in play. Increase each threat track by one for every matching threat symbol **beyond two**. For instance, if there are 4 ⚡ threat tags on obstacle cards in play, the ⚡ threat marker will move 2 spaces around the resource track.

If a threat track **is already at** the highest position (step 12 on the track), increase the next threat track in trade order. For instance, if the 🌱 threat track is maxed out, increase the 🌸 threat marker instead. If 🌸 is maxed out, players may choose which track to increase.

Unlock More Difficult Obstacles

If **increasing a threat track increases the threat level**, unlock all non-location obstacles (no 🏠 icon) with a difficulty equal to the new threat level that have a matching threat tag. So, if the 🌸 threat level increases to 3, unlock all difficulty 3 obstacles with a 🌸 threat tag (and no 🏠 icon).

Place these newly unlocked obstacles in the indicated region's discard pile and immediately reshuffle those discard pile(s) back into the obstacle deck.

Unlock Threat Locations

Additionally, **when a threat marker reaches the final space on the track**, immediately unlock and put into play the related threat location. The threat location is listed on the final space for each track on the Trade Board. Burn the current location in the space where the threat location should go (leave any attached obstacles), and put the threat location into play at the indicated space. Unlock and attach any obstacles as indicated on the threat location card.

Advance Time

Advance the seasonal time marker to the next box clockwise around the wheel of seasons. Only advance to the second turn of a season, as indicated by a dashed box around the season symbol, **if at least one season symbol matching the dashed box** is showing on the obstacle draw piles. If there is no matching season symbol, skip the dashed box and move on to the next season on the wheel. If the time marker advances past the second winter turn, the game is over.

Actions

Spending action dice to take actions makes up the bulk of a turn. Character abilities and resource mastery abilities may be used at any time during this step.

The available actions are:

- Move
- Create Asset
- Complete Progress Card
- Trade
- Overcome
- Location Action
- Rest

Move

Every location card lists action dice costs for traveling to each region in the game. To move to a different location, spend the indicated number of action dice for the destination's region. The value of the action dice don't matter.

Regions with the  symbol may not be moved to directly. For instance, characters can only move from Whitehold to other Imperial locations.

Special Movement

Characters may move between two  locations by spending one action die. Characters may move between two  locations by spending one stress (either  or ). Many character abilities have reduced movement costs to move to particular locations.

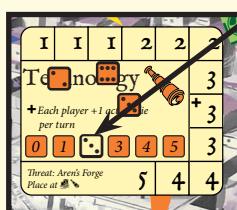
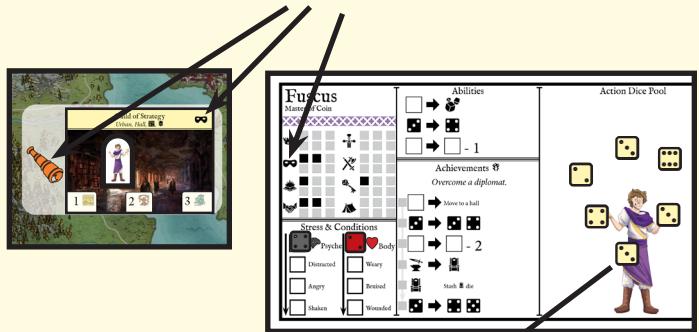
Create Asset

This action moves a resource die matching the location's resource from the resource pool to the location the character is at. This turns the resource die into an asset.

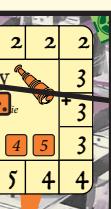
Asset dice are used for filling in progress cards, as well as overcoming obstacles, so this is a very common action. The steps to create an asset are:

1. Place an unspent action die on an open action die slot for the pool matching the location's resource. The action die must be placed in an open slot with a number **less than or equal to the character's resource skill** for at this location.
2. Move a resource die from pool that is **less than or equal** to the value of the placed action die.

At The Guild of Strategy, Fucus must use  skill (2) to Create  Asset or Trade  Resource Dice



Place action die in 0, 1, or 2 action die slot (less than or equal to )



Value 3 action die placed, may move value 2 or 3  resource die to location



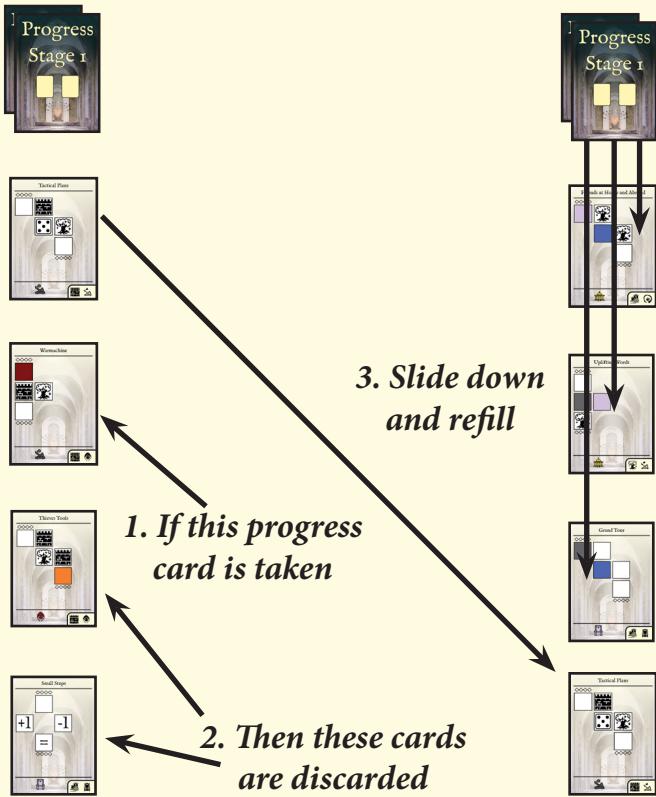
Complete Progress Card

Players may freely take any asset dice at their character's location and place them on their current progress card. Dice are placed on a path from the beginning space to the end space of the progress card, subject to the constraints on the card, as described under Progress Cards in the Components section.

When an asset die is placed on the end space of the current progress card, it is completed. Players immediately gain the progress track reward(s) indicated. Additionally, when a progress track increases, ***immediately fill the resource dice in the improved pool*** up to the progress level.

The asset dice and progress card are discarded, and a new progress card is taken from any of the four in the progress card staging area. The progress cards ***below*** the chosen progress card are discarded.

After discarding progress cards, slide down remaining progress cards, if any, and draw new progress cards at the top of the staging area to refill the staging area to four face-up progress cards. If the current stage progress deck is emptied, move on to the next stage (or reconstruct the Stage 5 deck) and continue refilling.

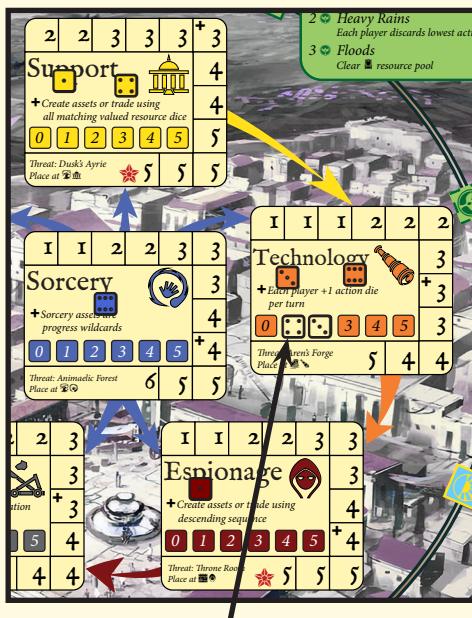


Trade

Trade allows players to move resource dice between pools, as indicated by the arrows on the trade board. The steps to trade are:

1. Place an unspent action die on an open action slot for the pool matching the location's resource. The action die must be placed in an open slot ***less than or equal to the character's resource skill*** for at this location.
2. Move a resource die into or out of the chosen pool. The resource die must be less than or equal to the value of the placed action die. The die is traded one step along the wheel of trade as indicated by the trade arrows (\rightarrow , \rightarrow , etc.). When a die is moved from one resource pool to another, it changes type. Dice from the \diamond pool may move into any other resource pool, but no resource may be converted to \diamond dice.

At \rightarrow location, may trade \rightarrow , \rightarrow , or \rightarrow



Value 4 action die placed, may trade \rightarrow or \rightarrow into \rightarrow , or \rightarrow into \rightarrow . The \rightarrow and \rightarrow are higher than the value of the action die placed. Die resource type is changed after trade, but value is the same

Overcome Obstacle

Overcome allows players to discard obstacles from the location where their character is located. To overcome an obstacle, dice must be placed on the obstacle matching the obstacle dice. This is done by:

1. Approach
2. Defend
3. Overcome

Before starting the overcome process, determine if any characters are **skilled**. A character is skilled if the character's skill is **greater than or equal to** the overcome skill for the obstacle.

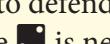
Approach

During approach, skilled characters may place any number of their unspent action dice or assets at their location on the obstacle card.

If the obstacle has dice on it matching its obstacle dice pattern, it is immediately overcome! Skip defense and move on to overcome. If the obstacle dice pattern is incomplete, continue on to the defending, leaving the dice on the obstacle.

Defend

All remaining action dice not used on the approach are rerolled. To successfully defend, at least one of each **unique** value on the obstacle dice pattern must be rolled on the action dice. **Assets may not be used for defense.**

For instance, if an obstacle has  for the obstacle dice pattern, a character needs at least one  and one  on their rerolled action dice to defend. If the obstacle dice pattern is , only one  is needed.

It's much easier to defend against an obstacle with only one value of obstacle dice! Note that **none of the rerolled dice are spent** to defend. The character only needs the dice values showing in their pool.

If the character doesn't successfully defend, they take the amount of stress listed for the obstacle's damage.

Remember, character abilities may be used at any time during the player's turn. Using character abilities to manipulate action dice after a defense reroll is common.

Overcome

Any unspent action dice or assets at the character's location may be placed on the obstacle to overcome it. If, after this step, the obstacle has dice on it matching the obstacle dice pattern, it is overcome. When an obstacle is overcome, it is discarded to the current region's obstacle discard pile.

This could be in a different region's obstacle deck than where the obstacle card started! Many obstacles move around the board outside of their starting region when activated or by other means.

Some obstacles have other effects when they are overcome, as indicated with an  icon in the effect text section.

Finally, when an obstacle is overcome, characters who aren't skilled **increase their overcome skill by one**.

If the obstacle doesn't have enough dice on it to complete the pattern, leave any dice on it. Further dice may be placed on the obstacle with more overcome actions on the same or future turns.

If a character's skill improves, fill in the next box for that skill on the character sheet. Characters skills will never decrease.

Teamwork

Multiple characters may work together to overcome an obstacle, provided they are at the same location with the obstacle. In this case, all skilled characters may add dice and check for success during the approach.

All characters successfully defend if **between** them they have the right set of dice values. If the team fails to defend, the stress may be split between characters overcoming the obstacle.

If the obstacle is overcome, any characters who are not skilled increase their skills.

It's significantly easier to overcome obstacles as a team, although it's not very efficient to move around the board with another character. A skilled character can overcome an obstacle on the approach, and another unskilled character may improve their skill. Essentially, the lower skilled character has learned by watching a competent character in action!

Assets and Obstacles

Assets may be spent on approach (if character is skilled) and to overcome, but not for defense. No dice are spent during defense. Rather, successful defense depends on the dice showing in the character's action dice pool.

Skill Mastery

Finally, in the rare case a character has skill mastery for the obstacle (the character's obstacle skill is rank 6), the values of dice on the obstacle are ignored for the purposes of overcoming the obstacle! That is, only the number of dice on the obstacle matter, not the values.

Location Action ♦

Some locations allow characters there to spend an action die to perform the listed effect. The value of this action die doesn't matter.

Rest

Spend one action die to add one to either of the character's stress dice. No stress die may be increased beyond six and it is impossible to recover conditions (move up the condition track) via rest.

Once a stress die moves down the condition track, it is impossible to recover those conditions until the end of the year during the recover conditions step.

1. Keel's is not high enough to use approach

2. Reroll action dice for defend. Defend failed (needed at least one and one). Could use → to reroll some action dice, but player chooses not to. May not use assets () to defend. Keel loses and takes condition. Action dice are not spent to defend

3. Keel splits asset into and using → + and places the action die on the obstacle along with the technology assets. This matches so the obstacle is discarded

4. Keel's improves to 3 since the obstacle difficulty is higher than Keel's current

Session End

At the end of games for years 1 through 5, complete the following steps. At the end of the year 6, move on to the campaign end instead.

1. Clear Unfinished Progress and Assets
2. Burn Progress Cards
3. Shuffle Obstacle Decks
4. Burn Locations
5. Unlock New Locations
6. Recover Conditions
7. Achievements for New Characters
8. Advance Year
9. Store Game

Instructions to burn cards refer to placing them out of play for the remainder of the campaign. There is no effect that brings a burned card back into play.

Clear Unfinished Progress and Assets

Remove and discard any asset dice currently on location cards. Discard asset dice on currently unfinished progress cards and discard the progress cards to the appropriate progress card deck by stage.

Burn Progress Cards

Gather and shuffle all of the progress cards for the lowest stage, then randomly burn twice as many cards as the current year.

For instance, after the first game, when it is year one, 2 random stage 1 progress cards are burned. After the second game, in year two, 4 random stage 1 cards are burned. After the third game, the rest of the stage 1 cards are burned. The fourth game will start in stage 2.

Burned cards are set aside and removed from the current campaign. Once a card of any type is burned, it is never used in the current campaign again.

This changes the pacing and difficulty of the campaign as the years advance. There are different strategies in play depending on what stage players start in.

Shuffle Obstacle Decks

For each region, shuffle the obstacle discards with the draw piles to form new draw decks in each region.

Burn Locations

In each region, burn the location card with the most attached obstacles. If there is a tie, the players choose the location card (this includes the case when there are no obstacles in the region - players still choose one location card to burn).

Place any attached obstacles from the burned location on top of the associated region draw starting with the outermost (most recently placed) obstacle and moving inward.

Boar's Peak has the most obstacles and is burned (unavailable for the rest of the campaign)



Discard attached obstacles to top of draw pile, starting with most recently placed (outer) obstacle

Obstacles at locations that aren't burned stay in play and will start in play next game

Unlock New Locations

For each region, shuffle the region's location deck and draw two locations. Choose one card from each region deck to put into play, placing the location in the appropriate region. Players may look at all six cards before making decisions on what locations to use for next session.

Some location cards will unlock new location obstacles at this time. If the location has a starting obstacle icon, look through the locked obstacle cards and put any matching named obstacles into play with the location.

Locations to Unlock New Characters

There is one location in each region that allows players to unlock a new character: Undari's Tomb (不死 / Oniri), Pearlescent Marsh (水月 / Yasmina), and Guild of Secrets (秘密 / Lucia). **Instead** of drawing locations randomly for a given region, players may choose the region's unlock location instead (provided it isn't burned). Any number of character unlock locations may be chosen for the end of the year.

The attached obstacles specify how to unlock the characters.

Instead of drawing two and choosing one, players put Pearlescent Marsh into play



Forager's Tome starts in play at the Pearlescent Marsh, as directed by the ↑ icon

Obstacles at locations that aren't burned stay in play and will start in play next game

Recover Conditions

Each **unlocked** character recovers the highest (the one closest to the starting stress position) marked condition box on each track. Erase the mark on this condition. More severe conditions, like Wounded, could be difficult to clear if character's are frequently marking multiple conditions!

Note that **all unlocked** characters recover one condition on each stress track, even if they weren't active for this session. This is a way to let badly stressed characters have some extra recovery.

For instance, if a character is both weary and bruised, the weary condition is erased. Bruised remains.



The two highest conditions on each track are erased for all unlocked characters (whether they were selected for the previous game or not)

Achievements for New Characters

Fill in achievements equal to the current year for characters unlocked this session. For instance, if Lucia was unlocked in year 3, fill in the first 3 achievements.

Advance Year

The year advances by one. If this is year six, the campaign is over, move on to campaign end.

Store Game

For Tabletop Simulator, this is probably straightforward. In the real game, locations and obstacle decks will have to be stacked in such a way that they are easy to recover again.

Starting with the region, place the top location card in the region onto the obstacle draw pile. Then put any attached obstacles face up onto the location card. Next place the middle location card onto this pile, along with attached obstacles. Finally, place the bottom location card and attached obstacles onto this pile.

Do this for each region, starting with the and ending with .

Finally, record the current position of threat tracks and progress tracks.

I'll try to create a sheet to record the positions of each track and upload it to <https://github.com/ziapeitagames/six-winters>, but for now will have to record them on a piece of paper or back of a character sheet.

Campaign End

Check for victory as follows:

- **Pyrrhic Victory:** One of Diplomacy, Espionage, or Support are complete.
- **Major Victory:** Any **two** of Diplomacy, Espionage, or Support are complete.
- **Total Victory:** Diplomacy, Support, **and** Espionage are all complete.

Players get 1 point for a pyrrhic victory, 3 points for a major victory, and 6 points for a total victory.

Additionally, players get 1 point for every non-victory (Technology, Military, and Sorcery) resource track in which Red Bank's progress marker is higher than the threat marker.

Finally, multiply the total points by the difficulty to find your score:

- Easy: x1 (1-9 points)



Store obstacles and locations for next game



Stack of cards is placed on top of similarly stacked and cards



- Standard: x2 (2-18 points)
- Difficult: x3 (3-27 points)

Results

Score	Title
1-3	Novice
4-8	Adept
9-14	Initiate
15-20	Master
21-26	Grand Master
27	Champion of Red Bank

The plan is to eventually have some fiction and character epilogues around these different win conditions. There are seven possible victory states (3 pyrrhic, 3 major, and 1 total) as well as seven characters. So each victory condition will map to one character.

The back of the character sheets will have a short intro for the character, as well as one of the seven possible endings.

Resource Mastery Abilities

Unlocked resource mastery abilities are free to use at any time during the actions step.

Support

May create assets or trade using all the resource dice **matching the value** of the action die used. This makes sets of the same value in resource pools particularly easy to move around.

For instance, if the  pool has the following dice: , and a value  action die is used to create assets in that pool, all four of the value three dice are placed at the location as assets!

If a value  action die is used to trade in that pool, all four of the value three dice may be traded into the  resource pool, etc.

Espionage

Similar to what the  ability does with sets of the same value resource dice, the  ability does with sequences.

May create assets or trade using a descending sequence

of resource dice. This descending sequence must decrease by one at each step. The action die used to trade or create assets must be **greater than or equal** than the first die in the chain.

For instance, if the  pool has the following dice: , and a value  or  die is used to create assets, the  dice may be placed at the location as assets! The  die is left behind because it is two lower than the 

Only one die at each step in the sequence may be used. For instance, if the  pool has the following dice: , and a value  or  die is used to create assets, the  dice may be taken as assets, but the additional  is left behind.

Similarly, if players have both the  and  resource mastery abilities, they may only apply one for any give create asset or trade action (either taking a set or a sequence, but not both).

Military

May move any  assets from a location to any other location. This may be done by any player freely at any time during the actions step.

Technology

All players get one additional action die at the start of each turn.

Diplomacy

May trade 2 resource dice for any 1 resource die along the wheel of trade. The 2 dice are discarded and a new die is rolled.

That is, 2  resource dice may be spent to roll and place new  resource die, 2  resource dice for a  resource die, 2  resource dice for any other resource die, etc. This may be done by any player freely at any time during the actions step.

Sorcery

Sorcery assets may be treated as any resource type or die value when playing onto progress cards, effectively making them wildcards. The , , and  region restrictions still apply.

Character Abilities

Character abilities are used at any time during the action step. Most of them require spending a die, and placing it on the activated ability.

Once an ability has a die on it, it can't be used again this turn. These dice are cleared during the refresh step.



This ability allows players to reroll dice. Every character starts with this ability.

Many abilities feature the **□** symbol. These abilities are activated *by spending a die and placing it on the □* during the actions step. The die spent comes from one of three places: an *unspent action die*, an *asset* from the character's location, or a *resource die* from the location's resource pool where the character is at.

After a die is placed on **□**, the action to the right of the arrow is performed. The **🎲** ability lets the player reroll *any* dice in *one dice pool*. One of the following dice pools is chosen: the character's remaining unspent action dice, asset dice at the character's location, or resource dice from the location's resource pool.

To reiterate: players may choose which dice to reroll from the selected pool, they do not have to reroll all the dice.



Every character has abilities of this type, which allow players to convert a die of the specified value into one or more dice with the value listed.

For this ability, turn a **■** die into a **■■** die. As with **□**, the **■** can be an *unspent action die*, an *asset* where the character is located, or a *resource die* from the location's resource pool where the character is at.

The chosen value one die is placed on the **■**. This generates a value **■■** die, which is of the *same type* as the die placed on the **■**.

That is, if an asset of type **■■** is placed on the **■**, a new asset **■■■** is placed at the character's location. Unspent action die generate unspent action dice and a resource pool die generates a die that is placed into the same resource pool.

Thea



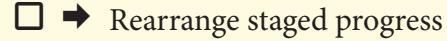
Spend a **■■** asset or resource pool die at Thea's location to explode all value **■■** dice in a chosen pool. Place the spent **■■** die on the **■■** icon.

One of the standard three dice pools may be exploded: Thea's unspent action dice, assets where Thea is located, or the location's resource dice pool where Thea is located.

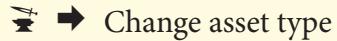
Gain one extra die of the appropriate type for each **■■** in the selected pool and roll them. If any of those newly rolled dice also roll a **■■**, take additional dice and roll those. Continue gaining new dice every time a **■■** is rolled.

For instance, if Thea has **■■■■■■■■** in her unspent action dice pool, and uses a **■■** asset or resource die at her location to explode fives in that pool, the player gains 3 new action dice and rolls them (one for each five). These dice result in **■■■■■■■■**, so the player takes one more action die and rolls it (for the five). This die results in a **■■**.

Thea's unspent action die pool now has **■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■**!



The player may rearrange the four staged progress cards in any order desired. This is frequently beneficial right after a progress card is completed or at the end of the action step.



Select an asset at Thea's location, and place it on the **■■** symbol. Place a new asset of any type at Thea's location. The value is the same as the spent asset die.



Spend a **■■** asset or resource pool die at Thea's location to take two **■■** dice and roll them, placing them at Thea's location (creating two **■■** assets).



Roll a new **■■** die and place it at Thea's location.

Menas



$\square \rightarrow$ Flip die

Generates a die of the same type as placed in \square , but the die is flipped, changing its value. A \blacksquare is flipped to a $\blacksquare\blacksquare$, a $\blacksquare\blacksquare$ to a $\blacksquare\blacksquare\blacksquare$, etc.

$\square \rightarrow$ Add \diamond to resource pool

Roll a die and add it to the \diamond resource pool. Menas does not need to be at a \diamond location to use this ability.

Keel



Spend a \diamond die, either an asset or resource pool die at Keel's location, and gain two \diamond dice of the same type (asset or resource). The two dice must sum to the spent die.



Spend a \diamond die, either an asset or resource pool die at Keel's location, and gain two \diamond dice of the same type (asset or resource). The two dice must sum to the spent die.

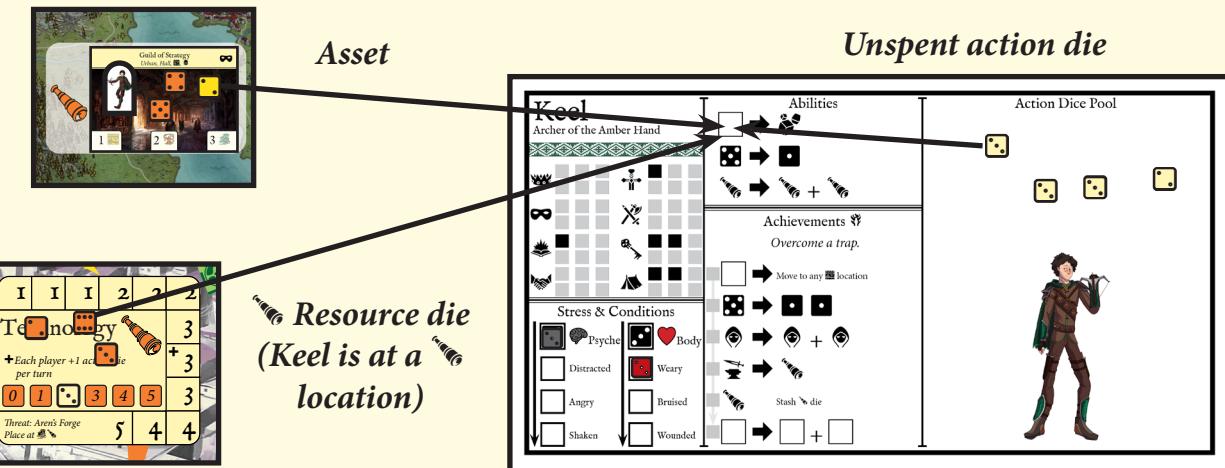
Select an asset at Keel's location, and place it on the \diamond symbol. Place a new \diamond asset of any at Keel's location. The value is the same as the spent asset die.

\diamond Stash \diamond asset

May place a \diamond asset at Keel's location onto the \diamond symbol. Unlike most character abilities, the \diamond asset may be taken off at any time during the actions step (or even the actions step of a future turn) and placed at Keel's location. This allows Keel's player to move the asset around to a different location.

$\square \rightarrow \square + \square$

Gain two dice of the same type as placed on \square (unspent action die, an asset, or location resource). The two dice gained must sum to the spent die.



$\square, \blacksquare, \blacksquare\blacksquare, \blacksquare\blacksquare\blacksquare, \blacksquare\blacksquare\blacksquare\blacksquare$, and $\blacksquare\blacksquare\blacksquare\blacksquare\blacksquare$ may come from three sources: an unspent action die, an asset from character's location, or a resource die from the location's resource pool

For $\blacksquare, \blacksquare\blacksquare, \blacksquare\blacksquare\blacksquare, \blacksquare\blacksquare\blacksquare\blacksquare$, and $\blacksquare\blacksquare\blacksquare\blacksquare\blacksquare$ the generated die is of the same type as the spent die, for \square follow the specific ability directions

Fuscus

□ → □ - 1

Gain a die of the same type as placed on □, but one value lower.

□ → □ - 2

Gain a die of the same type as placed on □, but two lower in value.

Yasmina

□ → □ + 1

Gain a die of the same type as placed on □, but one higher in value.

♥ → Discard top obstacle card
from any obstacle draw pile

Yasmina takes one ♥ stress (lower the ♥ die by one) to discard the top obstacle card from any draw pile. Remember: character abilities may only be used during the action step of the turn.

Oniri

♥ → Move to any ♀ location

Oniri takes one ♥ stress (lower the ♥ die by one) to move to one of the two ♀ locations.



□ → Convert ♀ resource pool die to action die

Oniri spends one ♀ resource pool die (in addition to the □ die) and takes an unspent action die of the same value as the resource pool die. Oniri doesn't have to be in a ♀ location to use this ability.

□ → Convert an unspent ac-
tion die to a ♀ resource pool die

Oniri spends an unspent action die (in addition to the □ die) and places a ♀ resource pool die of the same value as the action die.

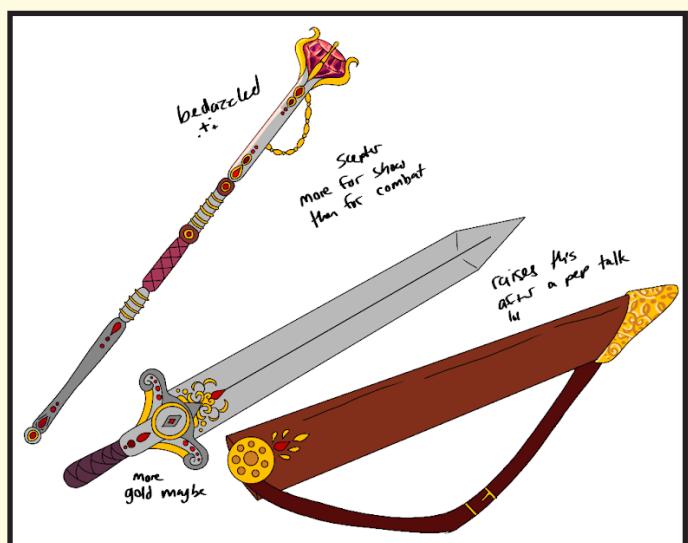
♥ → For each ♥ spent, from an-
other character's stress

Oniri takes one ♥ stress (lower the ♥ die by one) in place of the other character in play. Any amount of ♥ stress taken by the character may be given to Oniri's character instead (as decided by Oniri's player).

Lucia

□ → Put top card from any obstacle
discard pile onto top of draw pile

This is essentially the opposite of Yasmina's discard ability. Lucia may take a discarded obstacle and place it on top of the obstacle draw pile (in the same region).



Playtest Guidance

The general structure of the game is set at this point. I'm interested in specifics surrounding pacing and ability interactions, with an eye towards the following questions:

- Did any characters get knocked out during a session? When and what session? Did it feel arbitrary, or was the risk fairly well understood?
- How many conditions do characters usually take in a given session?
- Did any resource dice ever run out? When? How often? How many resource dice are needed so they don't run out? This question is driven by the cost of including dice in the game. (I think 12-15 dice per resource is somewhere in the right ballpark.)
- Which character abilities are the most fun? Which character abilities aren't? Is there a place for each character in the campaign? Was there a favorite character?
- How much progress was made in each session? Was it easy to win?
- Were there any particularly memorable interactions between characters and obstacle cards? Any obstacle cards with confusing and/or not very interesting text effects? Any obstacles that were particularly interesting?
- The game is mainly about the puzzle of filling in progress cards. Any particularly interesting progress cards?

Characters and Conditions

It's important to the game that characters take some conditions each session or there is no incentive to swap them out.

Potential rule change I've been considering: only characters who **did not go** on a mission for that year recover conditions. This means even one condition could pressure players to hold a character out for a year and have them rest up.

But it's too punitive if characters are taking many conditions in one game.

Obstacle Decks

Currently new cards get added to decks, and they can move between decks, but they really never get burned or come out. The game world changes as the game goes on, but there's no question that decks can become watered down.

I've tried many approaches to burn/get rid of cards from obstacle decks after each game, but I haven't found any of them very interesting. It's another area I keep thinking about, though.

Obstacle and Location Effects

As with character abilities, there are tons of options for obstacle and location effects. That kind of tuning can go on forever, but it's good to find the cards that really aren't working, and lean into the ones that are.

Intentionally, most obstacle cards are fairly straightforward and similar, as they mostly are used to build up threat tags. However, it's nice to have some obstacle cards with more unique abilities.

Credits

The following people made this game possible.

Game Concept and Design:

Phil Lewis

Character Concept Art and Design:

Jack Mitchell

Narrative Development:

Alhana Lewis

Legal

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