

## Set Up

- You need a deck of **THIEF AND AGENT CARDS** (standard playing card deck). Red = Thief (caught red handed); Black = Agent (men in black). Each player gets one red and one black to start. Later in the game, you'll need a number of black cards equal to the twice the number of keys (see below) and the same number of red cards, so you may need more than one deck if you're playing a long game with more than 13 keys.
- **POLYHEDRAL DICE.** Each player will need up to 10 d6's, up to 5 d8's, up to 3 d10's, and up to 2 d12s (no d4's or d20's necessary).
- **KEY OBJECT CARDS.** If you don't have a deck, you can print up the six sheets and do a "lookup" using a d6 and a d10. If using this method, you'll need index cards so folks can write them down.
- **CHARACTER SHEETS.**
- **PENCILS.**
- **PAPER FOR TAKING NOTES.**
- **"NAME CARD"** for people to put in front of themselves, noted like this: Jacob / Winters.
- **POKER CHIPS.** Long games may need denominations, but there's only one type of currency here.

## Character Creation

- Pick names
  - Your **THIEF** gets a **FIRST NAME** *only*
  - Your **AGENT** gets a **LAST NAME** *only*
- Determine your **DIFFERENCES.** Choose one Violence, one Knowledge, and one Intimacy for your Agent; then do the same for your Thief. These don't need to directly contrast with each other, but they can. They're what sets your Agent apart from the suspect Thief.
  - **VIOLENCE** memories focus on the moments and methods of violence you have experienced either as perpetrator or victim.
  - **KNOWLEDGE** memories focus on the moments and methods of competency, insight, and perception from your experiences.
  - **INTIMACY** memories focus on social interactions, important relationships, and personal vulnerability.
- The **OVERLAP** area remains blank, at least at the start.
- Rate your **APTITUDES.** For each character, divide 7 points among the three aptitudes. Note that aptitudes are more an indicator of the intensity and frequency of such experiences in a character's life than it is an indicator of how capable the character is that that sort of thing. They also indicate the degree of control you will have over outcomes when in a conflict of that aptitude's type; higher numbers mean greater control. The possible combinations are: 1-1-5, 1-2-4, 1-3-3, 2-2-3.

## Structure of Play (Overview)

- Each **ROUND** is once around the table, with each player taking one **TURN.**
- The game is divided into two parts. The first part is called **FLASHBACK** and the second part is called **ENDGAME.**
- Once both parts are concluded, then there is a single final round called the **FINAL RESOLUTION**, at the end of which the story of the game is done.
- During flashback, each turn consists of the player playing one scene from out of the memories of his thief, and one scene from out of the memories of his agent, in either order. These scenes need not connect to one another, and do not need to proceed linearly.
- At any given time, the **ACTOR** is the player whose turn it is.
- Whenever the actor has a scene, he must invite one other player to be a part of it. The invited player is called the **VISITOR.**
- All others at the table are called the **CONTRIBUTORS.**
- Scenes build up to an interesting **QUESTION**, which gets answered by rolling the dice (see below).
- Flashback lasts as long as there are cards left in the key deck (see below). Once that deck runs out, play moves to endgame, with each player holding the same number of key cards in his or her **HAND.**
- Each round in endgame follows a similar structure, but each player's turn consists of just one scene, so it is half as long as flashback.

## Questions & Answers

- "Conflicts" take the form of a question that does not predetermine outcomes—i.e., never "Does he shoot the bank teller?" but instead "What happens with the gun?"
- Questions should only be posed when there are two or more exciting outcomes potential in a scene.
- The actor has ultimate authority to choose the question, but it must be met with consensus by the visitor and contributors.

## Rolling Dice

- As the actor or visitor, whatever aptitude you're using determines the number of d6's you start with.
- Additional d6's may be gained by the person who controls the key object for the scene (see below) so long as the relevant aptitude is used.
- Dice may be upgraded as follows:
  - 2d6 trades in for 1d8
  - 3d6 trades in for 1d10
  - 4d6 trades in for 1d12
- Dice may be downgraded as well after an upgrade, before rolling.

- Each contributor may give 1d6 to either the actor or the visitor, once per contributor per scene. But to make such a contribution, they must explain how either their Thief or their Agent peripherally touches upon the details of the scene.
- Once dice are settled and upgrades are locked in, the dice are thrown, and both the actor and the visitor determine what their highest die and lowest die is. Ties on highest or lowest are resolved by a “run-off” next-highest or next-lowest method until someone is clearly highest and someone is clearly lowest.
- The player with the highest die becomes the **NARRATOR** and gets to determine how the question is answered.  
*But...*
- The player with the lowest die becomes the **JUDGE** and gets to determine the **PRICE** (consequences or silver lining) to the answer.
- **NOT IN THE RULES:** If the same player wins both narrator and judge, he must choose one and give the other role to a **CONTRIBUTOR** of his choice.
- With rights determined, the narrator may answer the question however he sees fit, within the rules (see below).
- The judge may, at any time during the narrator’s narration, interject the price into the story.

## Starting Play (Preamble)

- Cover the Thief section of your sheet. What you see is your Agent’s identity; get familiar with it and get some ideas going in your head.
- Cover the Agent section of your sheet. This is your suspect Thief’s identity; get familiar with it as well, since you’ll be taking it on throughout your flashback cycle.
- Remove the cover. Look at both and see if you can start to feel out how the characters *might* be similar. Think about how to highlight both the similarities and differences in play.
- Look at all the other players and say **THIS IS WHO I AM**. This signifies you’re ready to being play.

## General Ground Rules

- All Thieves must be referred to by first name only.
- All Agents must be referred to by last name only.
- **NEW RULE:** No PC, be it thief or agent, may die as a result of narration during either flashback or endgame. (Story Characters incidental to the scene may die or not as suits those in control of narration.)
- The same player’s Thief and Agent cannot appear together in the same scene.

## Flashback Ground Rules

- All scenes must take place prior to the theft of the keys to PALACE.

- The theft of the keys to PALACE may not be definitively resolved (in fact there’s no obligation to address the theft directly with your scenes).

## Starting Flashback

- Deal one card per player off the top of the **KEY DECK** to the center of the table, face-up. This set of face-up cards is called the **CHAIN**.
- Select one player to act as the **STARTER** and with each turn concluded proceed clockwise.

## Flashback Turns

- Each turn has an **ACTOR**. The actor chooses whether to do a scene with his Thief or his Agent first.
- The actor chooses one other player from around the table to be the **VISITOR**.
- The visitor chooses a key card from the **CHAIN**, replacing his choice with a new card from the deck.
- During the scene, the actor determines which **APTITUDE** he will exercise in the scene. The actor is also responsible for framing (starting) the scene.
- He must then choose a **MEMORY TRIGGER** (from the character’s sheet) that must figure prominently in the scene. This is called the **ACTIVE MEMORY**.
- When an active memory is selected, the square box next to the memory must be checked off.
- Any checked off memory cannot be selected for a scene. If no unchecked memory is available, a new one must be introduced (written in).
- The visitor gains the benefits of the key during the scene, and *must* integrate it into the scene as he plays.
- Once a question is posed and resolved, the key object is integrated, and the active memory is covered, the scene may wrap up.
- The same procedure is followed for the actor’s other character (Agent if Thief was first; Thief if Agent was first) picking a *different* visitor than the first half.
- The first visitor passes the key object to the second visitor.
- The second visitor, when the second scene is done, passes the key object to the actor, who adds it to his hand for endgame.

## Finishing a Turn in Flashback (Closing Vote)

- With both scenes done, before play passes clockwise, the **CLOSING VOTE** must be passed. Every player (both visitors plus any other contributors) votes, but the actor’s vote only counts if there’s a tie (so he needn’t vote if there’s an odd number of voters besides himself).
- Each voter must pick either a Thief (red) or Agent (black) card and put it in front of them, face down.

Then turn it all over at once. The winning vote determines which persona was “strongest” in that turn.

- The stronger persona (the **BLEEDER**) **BLEEDS** into the other one (the **RECIPIENT**).

## Bleed Procedure

- The bleeder’s aptitude used in her scene increases by one, up to a maximum of eight.
- Visitors and contributors examine the bleeder’s memory triggers, and must select one memory *without* a filled in circle, and fill in that circle, indicating that it is bleeding into the recipient’s memories. If all memories on the bleeder’s side have filled circles, the actor must supply a few new ones. The visitors have the final authority to determine what bleeds if a consensus isn’t reached.
- The actor then copies the bleeding memory into the **OVERLAP** section of the sheet.
- If the bleeding memory contradicts any of the **RECIPIENT’S** memories, those memories must be crossed out on the recipient’s side—that part of the recipient persona is lost, overridden by the bleeding persona.
- Regardless, the actor invents a new memory for the recipient related to the bleeding memory, and writes it down on the recipient’s side in the appropriate area.

## Preparing Endgame

- Flashback concludes when the key deck has run out.
- Gather up all agent and thief cards.
- Take the size of the key deck. Add the number of players to this number if they divide into the key deck an even number of times. Then divide this number by two, rounding up. This is the number of thief cards to put into the **ALLEGIANCE DECK**. Put the same number of agent cards into the allegiance deck. Shuffle the deck and place it in the center of the table.
- Example: a 3 player game with a 6-card key deck: start with 6, but add 3 because 3 divides into 6 an even number of times (2). Your number is 9. Divide that by 2, and round up, for 5 thief, 5 allegiance cards.
- Each player must conduct an **INTERLUDE** before proceeding.

## The Interlude

- Each player contemplates their overlap section. The overlap is the only reliably true thing. One of the personas is a lie. The other is a truth. You won’t find out which until it all plays out in the end.
- In each section of the overlap, write down the *lower* of the two aptitude numbers for each category in the circle provided (so if you had Violence: 3 and Violence: 2, you would write down Violence: 2 for the overlap).

- Combine the first name of the thief and the last name of your agent. This is your name. This has *always* been your name. When you’re ready to proceed with Endgame, speak it aloud: **I AM [FIRSTNAME] [LASTNAME]**.
- When everyone has named themselves aloud, Endgame begins.

## Endgame Ground Rules

- You may not use a memory trigger from outside your overlap without turning over one of your face-down allegiance cards. The revealed card must reveal an allegiance to the persona whose memory trigger you want to use. If you can’t reveal, you can’t use a trigger outside the overlap area.
- All scenes take place in “the present”, after the theft of the keys to **PALACE**, in the twelve hours between sundown and sunrise.
- No player may *force* another player to reveal one of her allegiance cards.
- The security gates to **PALACE** may not be definitively compromised nor definitively protected as a result of narration (though “set up” for that in the final resolution—below—may occur).

## Shifting Allegiances in Endgame

- At the beginning of the first and each subsequent round, the **STARTER** deals one more card from the allegiance deck to each player (so with the beginning of each round, each player’s allegiance cards increase by one).
- Each player must keep these cards face down to start. The “winning color” (majority rules) of the card indicates which of the two personas is taking control. On a tie, the player may act towards the goals of either persona (or both!).
- If the character is pulled towards Thief, then he believes he’s a Thief, working to compromise **PALACE** and tear the whole system of government down. Otherwise, he’s an Agent, working to stop them. But everyone *appears* to be an Agent to one another, so the games of cat and mouse must commence.

## Turns in Endgame

- Turns in endgame function like turns in flashback, except each player does only one scene instead of two, as the ostensible “agent” character.
- The actor must pick a memory and a visitor and an aptitude, as always.
- This time, the actor must choose a key object from his hand and must integrate it into the scene, potentially gaining its stated benefits.

## Payout and Betting in Endgame

- Players may earn coin during a turn in Endgame.
  - Any contributor who makes a contribution earns one coin.
  - Any player who wins judge role earns two coins.
  - Any player who wins narrator role earns three coins.
- At the conclusion of the scene all players must use all their coin to bet on either the actor or the visitor's allegiance. The actor can't bet on himself, and the visitor can't bet on herself, so they must bet on each other.
- Bets indicate which allegiance you *hope* the player will be—so which allegiance you bet on may end up revealing something about you.
- Place your coins on one or both sides of your target's sheet, indicating which way you hope their allegiance is pulling.
- When all coins are bet, play proceeds to the next player, etc, etc.

## Benefits of Revealing an Allegiance Card

- When you reveal an allegiance card, going to use a memory trigger from a matching side of your sheet that doesn't have its circle (overlap indicator) filled, you gain +1d6 to your dice when rolling to answer the scene's question.
- In addition, you may use that memory trigger's full aptitude score from that side of the sheet.
- Declaring a minority (non-dominating) alliance may gain the trust of those who oppose you, though it may cause your allies to distrust you.
- Declaring a majority (dominating) alliance may gain the trust (and coin!) of allies, etc.
- But you can't say whether it's minority or majority, or really talk about any of your face-down ones at all.

## Final Resolution

- When all key cards are used up, **FINAL RESOLUTION** begins.
- Player character death is now on the table as an option.
- Each player takes one final turn.
- As each player takes her turn she must turn over all unrevealed allegiance cards. These cards reveal her **TRUE ALLEGIANCE**.
- The coins placed on each side of her sheet by the other players must be tallied up. The side which has the most coins indicates her **PREFERRED ALLEGIANCE**. If this is a tie, then the preferred allegiance is whatever the true allegiance *isn't*.
- If true and preferred match, proceed with **IDENTITY CONFIRMATION**. If they do not match, proceed with **IDENTITY CRISIS**.

## Identity Confirmation

- The actor chooses another player to be the visitor.
- No dice are rolled. The actor is automatically the narrator, and the visitor is automatically the judge.
- The question is set: "Who am I?" and must be answered in a way compatible with the indicated allegiance.
- The judge (as always) sets the price for this answer.
- Once the actor is done with the scene, he must say **THIS IS WHO I AM**.
- The actor then adds the coin from the side matching his allegiance to that allegiance's overall score (below).

## Identity Crisis

- The actor chooses another player to be the visitor.
- The visitor revealed allegiance (if any) must not currently appear to match the actor's true allegiance.
- The question is set: "Who am I?"
- ... But dice will be rolled.
- The actor uses a memory trigger and aptitude from the side matching her *true allegiance*.
- The visitor uses a memory trigger and aptitude from her side matching the *actor's preferred allegiance*.
- No dice bonuses come from the trigger; this is pure aptitude. No keys either. Any character (actor or visitor) who is dead already due to how things have played out may only use his overlap's aptitude score.
- All other players at the table may make die contributions as usual.
- Narrator and judge work together to determine how the question is answered.
- The answer must clear up the allegiance question. If no consensus results, the narrator has final authority to determine the allegiance of the actor, but must face the price set on that by the judge.
- Once the actor is done with the scene, he must say **THIS IS WHO I AM**.
- The actor then adds the coin from the side matching his allegiance to that allegiance's overall score (below).

## The Tally and Result

- Each allegiance has a score composed of the coins from that side of the sheet for each player claiming that allegiance (as may be surmised from the above).
- Compare the tallies. The allegiance with the greater coin wins the day.
- If it's the Thieves, the government collapses, society's thrown into chaos. The Thieves may describe how this plays out.
- If it's the Agents, then the government wins, capturing them all and enacting a hugely oppressive, big brother style society. The Agents get to describe this.