

Seizing the Crown: Instructions

Welcome to the playtest instructions for Seizing the Crown. This document has everything you need to run a playtest. I recommend that at least one player read the rules in advance but you can certainly read the rules during play. If you run the game, I'd deeply appreciate you filling out [this survey](#).

Key Info






Time: under 60 minutes

Player count: 2-5 players, no facilitator

Themes: political fantasy, civil war, intrigue

Style: writers' room

Designed by: [Randy Lubin](#), [Diegetic Games](#)

SEIZING THE CROWN						
	Faction	Flaw	Diplomacy	Military	Economy	Arcane
1	 Leader Breath of the Dragons	Flaw Impatience			Economy The Great Bank	
	Ideology					
2	 Leader Prophet of the Grand Temple	Flaw Cruelty	Diplomacy Financing			Arcane Force Fields
	Religion					
3	 Leader Speaker of the Low Witches	Flaw Fanaticism	Diplomacy Wedding	Military Scorched Earth	Economy Smugglers	Military Assassins
	Blackmail					
4	 Leader Jester of the Faeries	Flaw Arrogance	Diplomacy Broken Alliance		Economy Caravans	Arcane Teleportation
	Tradition					
5	 Leader Index of the Archivists	Flaw Indecision	Diplomacy Embargo	Military Siege	Economy Beggars	Arcane Automatons

Pitch

Seizing the Crown is a collaborative storytelling game in which you create a political fantasy epic of rival factions vying for control of a kingdom. We'll start by establishing our factions, their leaders, and their relationships. Then we'll tell the story of how they strive to consolidate power and eliminate rivals until only one remains. Meanwhile, a realm-wide crisis is accelerating and we'll see if any of the factions act to stop it and if they succeed.

Safety

There's an X-Card on the bottom right of each player's screen. If any player wants to edit content out of the story, they can flip the X-Card to pause and make clear what they want to remove. For more about using an X-Card, read this [write-up](#).

Playing via PlayingCards.io

You can run a draft of the game via PlayingCards.io – only one player should:

1. Download the game file:
 - a. [Fantasy playset](#)
 - b. More to come...
2. Upload the file at playingcards.io/import
3. Share the room URL with your fellow players and have each open it

Story setup

Genre Calibration

Check in with each other about the level of fantasy you want in the game. Should it be more grounded like Game of Thrones or “kitchen sink” like Dungeons & Dragons?

The Ruler is Dead

The past ruler of the Kingdom has died, leaving a power vacuum in which five factions are vying for the crown.

Establish the Leaders and Factions

Click the LEADERS button to flip over five sets of Factions and their leaders. These are the five Factions vying for power in the kingdom. To the right of each Faction is its Flaw which is most embodied by the faction’s leader and colors every action they take. Read through each Faction and Flaw pair aloud.

There are plenty of Factions and Flaws in the deck so redraw any that don’t meet your preferred type of fantasy or tastes.

Define Faction Relationships

Take turns drawing Relation tiles and placing them in between the Faction cards, starting with the first two factions. For each Relation, draw two tiles and pick one to place. When you place a tile, summarize the relationship between the Factions and if it unites or divides them.

Explain Initial Crown and Revolt Status

The top Faction has a crown to its left. When the ruler died, this leader claimed the crown. How did they justify doing so? Decide together.

When the top Faction claimed the crown, the bottom Faction went into open revolt. This is indicated by the crossed swords to its left. What drove them to enter into open revolt? Decide together.

Choose your Crisis

While the Factions vie for power, there is a bigger crisis growing in the background. Draw three Crisis cards and pick one to use this session. Feel free to draw additional options if none excite you. Put the other options back in the deck and the one you picked face up on top of the deck.

The crisis will escalate over the course of the story. To start, it's just a legend and some don't believe it to be true. What is the legend people tell about this crisis?

Draw Action Cards

Each player should now draw five Action cards into their hands; players' hands are along the bottom of the screen. You are now ready to move the story forward.

Actions

Most of the game is focused on the factions taking bold actions that advance their interests, consolidate power, and increase their chances of ending up with the crown.

The action grid

At the center of the play area is the action grid. Each faction has their own row and there are four types of actions they can take: Diplomacy, Military, Economy, Arcane. These match the categories on the top of the Action cards.

Structure of play

The game is divided into four rounds. In each round, you'll describe each Faction taking a significant Action. At the end of each round, you'll eliminate one Faction from contention and, potentially, change who has the crown and who is in open revolt. After the final round, you'll discover who ends up with the crown and the impact of the growing Crisis.

On each turn

One player takes a turn at a time. On your turn, do the following:

Place and narrate an Action

Play one Action card from your hand onto the action grid according to the following rules:

- Place the action in the column matching the card type (e.g. arcane)
- The spot must be empty (e.g. you can't give one faction two arcane actions)
- Place it in the row of a faction that has not yet received a card this round
- The faction must not have been eliminated yet

Narrate the action

Once you place the Action, describe how the **leader** of that Faction takes the Action to advance their Faction's chances of ending up with the crown. The description should take under a minute and feel like a pivotal scene from a prestige television show. You're always welcome to ask the other players for their suggestions.

Note: toward the end of the game, you might not have any cards which match the open spots on the action grid. If this is the case, keep drawing new evidence cards until you find one that matches. You can also ask another player to give you a matching card. If you have a card that you desperately want to play but the faction already has a card of that type, feel free to play that card in an open space that doesn't match the column.

Draw a card

Draw a card so you have five cards in your hand. If you have four players, only draw back up to four cards. If all of the Factions have received an Action card this round, follow the 'End of Round' instructions; otherwise, the next player should take their turn.

At the end of each round

Eliminate a Faction

At the end of each round, reveal the top token from the Skull pile below *Elimination* on the right side of the board. The number of the back of this token corresponds to which Faction is eliminated; place the left of that Faction card. The Factions are numbers 1-5 from top to bottom.

As a group, decide how that Faction gets eliminated from contention. There might be remnants of the Faction, but there is no way that they are ending up with the crown. If that Faction had the crown, move the crown token to another faction and decide how they ended up with current control of the crown.

Advance the Crisis

As a group, describe how the Crisis intensifies. After each round, the Crisis gets worse according to the next description on the bottom of the card: Legend, Rumor, Incident, Escalation, Panic. As the game progresses it will likely make sense to incorporate the crisis into some of the Factions' Actions.

Check for Open Revolt

If there are no factions in open revolt, draw a Revolt token (the crossed swords) and place it next to the matching Faction. As a group, say why that faction goes into open revolt against the crown.

Continue

If there are at least two Factions remaining, start a new round and continue with the next player's turn.

If there is only one Faction remaining, they are the victor; proceed to the final confrontation.

Confrontation

When you're down to just one Faction, they're the ones who will end up with the Crown. As a group, describe the confrontation between them and the last faction to be eliminated; how do they triumph?

As a group, describe the final state of the Crisis. Is the victorious Faction able to overcome it? Is there any Kingdom left to rule?

Feel free to add any epilogue details that you'd like. Congrats on finishing the story!

Playtest feedback

Hope you enjoyed the game! Randy would love to hear feedback so please fill out this playtest form after you've run the game:

<https://airtable.com/appzHcYjUtF4MRvYH/shrqUrON8bEfSnOhX>

If you're interested in hearing updates about the game, including a possible physical version, leave your email in the playtest form or sign up for the [Diegetic Games newsletter](#).

Credits

Designed by [Randy Lubin](#), [Diegetic Games](#)