

❧ To her majesty ❧

the one true heir to the imperial throne, a gift
You will find within this game treacherous mercenaries,
cunning spies, dastardly priests, bloodthirsty knights,
and nobles whose loyalty extends no further than the
reach of her majesty's sword. It is very much like the
land you must rule when your mother passes the crown
to you, and it is her hope that its play will prepare you
for that day. Gather up the playmates. Put a sword in
this dolly's hand, and a pope's miter on this other.
Choose one of your playmates to take the role of the
hated Pretender Heiner and another the Pretender
Breimar. In a few hours you will have settled the fate of
Lyssan. Will the land be unified under you as the one
true ruler, or will a pretender seize the throne and
plunge the land into an age of darkness?

Lyssan



Table of Contents



INTRODUCTION	i
TABLE OF CONTENTS	ii
OVERVIEW	1
PRELUDE	3
SPRING - TROPHIES & WINNING	5
SUMMER & AUTUMN - PLAYER TURNS	7
WINTER - REORDERING	11
ARMIES - KNIGHTS, NOBLES, AND CASTLES	13
INFILTRATORS - PRIESTS AND SPIES	15
CREDITS AND THANKS	BACK COVER

Overview

The Empire of Lyssan has been at war with itself for two centuries, since the fall of the old order. Reuniting it under your rule will require you to triumph over your rivals in whatever manner the nobles and people of the land are prepared to respect.

WINNING

Win Lyssan by claiming the most triumphs. Each triumph demands a different strategy to claim it, and each game will see different triumphs deciding the fate of the land. Will you win by espionage or military might?

LOSING

If Her Majesty is ever stripped of her last castle, she has been ousted from the game. She must also mind the regard with which the empire holds her. If she ever has shame that she lacks the influence to be rid of, she is ousted as surely as if by a rival army.

TIME

Once players are familiar with the game, a kitchen timer can be used to keep play brisk. Since nothing interrupts another player's turn in Lyssan, it is fair to give each player the same amount of time to take their turn. Five minute turns assure a game that completes in under 3 hours. New players will need extra time as they learn the game.

Three Thrones

Three Thrones is the standard game of Lyssan for 3 or 4 players.

SET-UP

Set out the board, shuffle each deck, and put it in its place. Deal out a row of five triumphs along the bottom of the board, the first one face up. Return the remaining triumphs to the box. For longer games, players may agree to deal out additional triumphs. Give each player a coin, a faction board, and the pieces that share the color of that faction.

For a three player game, add a sixth triumph to the row. The island provinces are out of play in a three player game.

Master & Puppet

Master & Puppet is Lyssan for two-players.

Master and puppet is identical to Three Thrones, except that each player controls two factions. Each player secretly hides a "Master" card under one of their two faction boards during set-up, and the "Puppet" card under the other. Play then proceeds as normal, with each faction taking its turn as if it was controlled by a completely separate rival player in a four player game. When a winning condition is reached, the winning faction reveals its Master/Puppet card. If it was the Master, then its controller wins the game. If it was the Puppet, then their opponent has won!

Introduction

Influence cards have all different uses. Some are one-shot surprises. Others make lasting alliances.

Coins are needed to recruit agents.

Conscripts are also used for hiring agents. Unused conscripts go home!

Knights siege castles, claim provinces and make short work of enemy knight and nobles.

Nobles fight less skillfully than knights, but have other more subtle uses.

Priests manipulate players' positions through both Shame and gifts of Influence.

Spies can eliminate priests, as well as steal valuable Courtiers from other players.

Lesser nobles will bail you out after a setback, but this incurs a Debt..

Castles protect Knights and Nobles, provide places for agents to enter play, and claim Provinces.

Whoever wins the most Triumphs will be the final rules of Lyssan!

Prelude

Once set-up is complete, deal a random player order counter to each player. (1st, 2nd, etc.) Deal 4 influence cards to each player.

PLACEMENT

Next, each player takes two castles, two knights, two nobles, one priest, and one spy from their supply and places them like so:

- Each player takes a turn placing a piece on an empty province.
- The first province a player puts a piece on must be on the outer ring of provinces, or on an island province. It must be at least 3 spaces away from all rivals' pieces in a 4 player game, or 4 spaces away in a 3 player game.
- Players continue in order, placing one piece each. After the last player places, return to the 1st and continue.
- Pieces after the first must be placed on a province neighboring one the player already occupies.
- When each castle is placed, that player's spy or priest is placed in the same province with it.
- If a player is walled in with no free province to place in, she may place on a space occupied by a rival piece. That rival loses their influence hand.
- It should take 6 complete rounds to place all the starting pieces.

Note: The restriction on stacking pieces is only for the prelude. Once the game has begun, pieces may be stacked freely.

INFLUENCE

Next, each player has a chance (in player order) to play as many influence cards as they wish. To play an influence card, discard its cost (the number in the upper right corner) in other influence cards.

Discards are face down. If the card is a "surprise" it has a one time effect. If the card is a "courtier" card, it stays out in front of the player and has a lasting effect.

Some courtiers are Vassal cards, allowing players to ally with powerful factions. After playing one of these, the player takes the counters associated with the vassal from the supply and places one in the same province as one of her castles.

REORDER

Courtly intrigues distract her majesty from time spent with her generals. You can curry influence or tactical initiative, but not both. Once each player has taken their chance to use influence cards, reset the player order in order from fewest to most influence remaining. Players tied for fewest cards break the tie randomly.

Example: Karla has 1 card remaining, Gregor kept 4, and Vasili is tied with Karla at 1 card. Gregor is definitely the slowest since he has the most cards in hand, and takes the "3rd" order marker. Karla and Vasili are tied for 1st/2nd place, so they shuffle the "1st" and "2nd" player order markers and take one each at random. Karla gets the "1st" player order marker and Vasili draws the "2nd".

Prelude



In a three player game, Island territories are not used at all in play.

Your first piece must be placed at the edge of the map.

In a four player game, your first piece must be played at least 3 spaces away from rival pieces.

In a three player game, it must be placed at least 4 spaces away.

Your remaining pieces must be played in spaces that neighbor provinces you already occupy.

Red is dealt a starting hand of "Listen to the People", "Friends in Low Places", "Covert Operations" and "Cavalry".

She chooses to play "Listen to the People" and "Friends in Low Places".

"Listen to the People" is a 1 cost surprise card, so she selects "Covert Operations" as the card to discard as payment for it.

"Listen to the People" takes effect and then she discards it.

"Friends in Low Places" is a Courtier card with zero cost.

She places it on the table in front of her, leaving her with "Cavalry" as the last remaining card in her hand.



Game Rounds

Each round of the game represents a year of time, divided into 4 seasons. In spring, triumphs are awarded, determining who will win the game. In summer, players gather taxes, command their armies, engage in intrigues, hire new agents, and cope with embarrassments from prior turns. Each player takes a second turn in autumn, but rather than collecting taxes a second time, they gain a modest amount of influence. In winter, the player order changes. Players who were late in the turn order might jump ahead now, stealing a march on their rivals. Many of the most powerful tactics are sprung by jumping ahead in the turn order.

SPRING: TRIUMPHS

Players need triumphs to win the game, and triumphs are awarded in spring. **Each triumph that is already revealed and also has a revealed triumph after it in the row may be awarded.** Each triumph specifies who wins it: the player with the most spies, or played courtiers, or whatever else the card says. Break ties in favor of the player with the fewest debts. Triumphs that are still tied wait. They may be awarded on the next spring.

A few triumphs specify that they are awarded the moment a player fulfills a certain condition, rather than during spring. For example, the triumph "A Show of Force" is awarded immediately to the next player to sack a castle.

Triumphs are awarded in order, from first to last. If a player is awarded the last triumph they need to reach the goal number, they win immediately, before any remaining triumphs are awarded.

Once all triumphs that can be awarded have been, flip up the next triumph in the row to reveal it. If there are no triumphs left to reveal, award all remaining triumphs (except for tied and instant triumphs) and the game ends!

ENDING

The game ends immediately when any contender wins by earning the goal number of triumphs: Two in a standard game, three in a three player game. If the game ends without any player having the goal number, then the player with the most triumphs is the winner. Break ties in favor of the player with the fewest debts. Remaining ties favor the player with the most unplayed influence cards in hand.

Alternatively, if any contender is ever the only player left in the game, they have won.

Spring



Immediately after set up, only the first Triumph is revealed.



During the first Spring, no Triumphs are awarded. The second Triumph is revealed.



In the second Spring, the first Triumph is awarded, then the third Triumph is revealed. For this example, this particular third Triumph is special: the Blackmail Triumph is awarded the moment its condition is met during the Summer or Autumn phases.



During the third Spring, the second Triumph would normally be awarded. But the instant Triumph that was revealed last Spring was awarded during the same Summer or Autumn. Since there is no longer a revealed Triumph after it, the second Triumph stays put. The fourth Triumph is revealed.



In the fourth Spring, the second Triumph is awarded. The final Triumph is revealed.



During the fifth Spring, the fourth Triumph is awarded. Since there is no new Triumph to reveal, the final Triumph is also awarded. The player with the most triumphs wins!



If players are tied for triumphs, the player with the fewest debts wins. Remaining ties are broken to favor the player with the most Influence cards in hand.



"Seize the Advantage" is an Influence card that can reveal the next Triumph.

Doing so will shorten the game, since this causes an extra triumph to be awarded next Spring!

Summer & Autumn: Player Turns

Players do all their actions during summer and autumn: playing cards, moving agents, and so on. But first, they ready their units, resolve any shame from the last turn, and collect taxes. These steps can be taken simultaneously unless a player wishes to observe the shame-clearing choices of a rival ahead of them in the player order before making their own decisions.

1. READY AGENTS

Each player flips any of agents that are showing their white-bordered "exhausted" face to their black-bordered "ready" face, showing that those units can be used again in the coming turn.

2. RESOLVE SHAME

Shame is the opposite of influence, and as dangerous to her majesty's prospects for unifying Lyssan as any rival army. Shame is most commonly gained by having agents in the field killed, or by being denounced by the clergy. A player must resolve all the shame acquired since their last turn or be ousted from the game.

Shame is marked with counters on a player's faction card; either by the agent counters for the agents that were slain since her last turn, or by special shame markers for shame from other sources. For each shame the player has acquired, they must clear that shame by discarding one influence. If they cannot or do not wish to do so, they may be deserted by one of their courtiers: One discarded courtier takes the place of a discarded influence. Resolved shame is removed from a player's board.

Instead of losing influence or courtiers, a contender may accept support from outside: Draw the top card of the debt deck. There is an advantage to being bailed out: If the shame was from a slain agent, that agent is immediately re-hired at no cost. This loan is not without its costs, however. First, having the fewest debts is the tie-breaker for triumphs. Ties are broken in favor of the player with the fewest debts when triumphs are awarded, and also when triumphs are counted to determine a winner at the end of the game. Debts also slow a player down when the new player order is set in winter.

Even the credit of a would-be emperor is limited. A player may not deliberately take on new debts after their third. Once a player has reached three debts, they cannot take on additional debts until they have cleared one or more of their existing ones.

3. LEVY TAXES

For each province a contender controls, they collect taxes in summer. Each province pays either conscripts, coin, or influence. Golden farmland provinces provide a conscript each summer. Grey mountain provinces generate a coin each. Green forest provinces provide an influence card. The red province of Elbingen is the seat of the Aloric Church, and can provide any single resource: coin, conscript or influence. The player who controls Elbingen chooses which resource to claim from it before examining their new Influence cards from taxation.

A PLAYER CONTROLS A PROVINCE IF THEY ARE THE ONLY ONE TO CLAIM THAT PROVINCE.

Knights, nobles, and castles claim the province they occupy. Priests and spies never claim provinces or contest claims. The fickle gentry of each province has no lasting loyalty. If her majesty does not keep an army in a province, its populace will conveniently forget to pay the taxes she is due. However many oaths of fealty the local populace swears, in truth their loyalty extends no further than the reach of her majesty's sword. Likewise if a province is contested by a rival's castle, knight, or noble then neither player controls the province.

There is no taxation in autumn. Instead, each player collects a flat two influence.

Summer and Autumn Preparations

READYING AGENTS



The first thing that happens every summer and autumn is all agents are flipped back to their black-bordered "ready" side.

ABSOLVING SHAME

Blue starts their turn with 3 Shame: two from agents that were killed since their last turn, and one that was given by a priest or card play.

Blue decides to discard an Influence from their hand to lose the Shame token.

For the slain Noble, Blue takes a Debt and returns the Noble (exhausted) to a castle on the board.

Blue cannot take any more Debts and does not want to discard more Influence from their hand, so they discard a Courtier and return the Spy to their pool.

TAXATION

Knights, Nobles and Castles claim Provinces.

This Province is contested, so Blue collects no Influence here.

Spies and Priests do not claim Provinces so Blue player cannot claim resources here.

Spies and Priests don't contest Provinces so Blue collects a Coin here.

In total this Summer, Blue collects 2 Coins, 1 Conscript and an Influence card. He'll collect 2 Influence in Autumn, like all other players.

Summer & Autumn: Commands

Each player now takes a turn issuing commands. Commands are the lion's share of Lyssan, and will decide the fate of the empire. **A player may issue as many or few commands as they choose on their turn, in any order they choose, until they are satisfied or have no legal commands left.**

THERE ARE SIX TYPES OF COMMANDS:

1. Use a ready agent.
2. Hire a new agent. (Or start or finish constructing a castle.)
3. Play an influence card.
4. Clear a debt.
5. Trade with the bank: 2 coins for 1 conscript or 2 conscripts for 1 coin.
6. Any other command that a card provides as an option.

USING AN AGENT

Each player can use each agent they control once in summer, and again in autumn. Agents are flipped back to their ready side at the start of the season to show that they haven't yet taken their actions. After an agent has completed its actions, it is flipped to its exhausted side to show that it is done for the turn. **If an agent becomes readied again during the turn, it may be used again.** The actions available to agents are detailed in the next rules section.

HIRING NEW AGENTS AND BUILDING CASTLES

Newly hired agents appear at her majesty's castles, exhausted. New construction sites must be placed in a province her majesty presently controls. Construction sites cannot be completed the same season they are begun, but construction sites started in a previous season may be completed whether or not her majesty controls the province presently. All units cost coin, conscripts, or both. The costs are:

For a knight, 1 coin and 3 conscripts.

For a noble, 1 coin and 1 conscript.

For a priest, 1 coin and 1 conscript.

For a spy, 2 coin

To start a construction site, 2 coin.

To upgrade from a construction site to a castle, 2 conscripts.

PLAYING INFLUENCE CARDS

Each influence card has a cost in the upper right corner that must be paid for the card to be played. This cost is paid in influence: To play one influence card, a player must discard others. Out of a hand ripe with options, only a few may be chosen. For example, if her majesty has four cards in hand and wishes to play one with a cost of 3, her hand will be empty afterwards.

Some influence cards are surprises, which take effect once and then are discarded. Others are courtiers who offer lasting support to their player. Courtiers remain face up in front of their player after being played. They provide their benefit for the rest of the game, unless lured away by a rival's spy or lost to shame.

Vassal courtiers are representatives from powerful factions within the empire. Having one in your court gains you the support of their followers. Each vassal allows its player to collect the associated agents from the supply and then hire one at no cost. So long as she keeps this courtier these agents are her agents. If the courtier is discarded, then the agents are removed from the board. If it is lured away to another player's court, then that rival now controls these agents! Whenever a vassal is lured away, all of the agents on the board associated with it become exhausted.

Summer and Autumn ∞ Commands



As a rule, influence cards break the rules presented in this text. If an influence card contradicts the core rules of Lyssan, the influence card takes priority. Most every rule in Lyssan can be broken by the application of influence.

TRADE 2 COIN FOR A CONSCRIPT OR 2 CONSCRIPTS FOR A COIN

Since unspent conscripts are discarded each season, this is usually the only way to hire an agent or finish a castle in autumn.

CLEAR A DEBT

Each debt gives a condition on its hidden face that only the player holding it can see.

The condition might be a cost to be paid, or a special command the player can perform. Once a player has fulfilled a debt's condition, the debt is returned to the bottom of the debt deck. **Debts may only be cleared so long as there are unrevealed triumphs in play. Once all triumphs have been revealed, contenders are stuck with their debts.**

NEW COMMANDS

Some influence or debt cards give a player new options for commands. For example, a debt might instruct a player that it can be cleared as a command, by gifting an influence to each other player.

Commands are never interrupted. Each must be completed before moving on to the next command. All commands, including surprise cards, happen on a player's own turn. Nothing interrupts another player's turn. If a card instructs a player to perform an action then that action simply happens. For example, the influence card Covert Operations instructs the player to "Take an action with one of your spies" when it is played. The spy need not be ready, nor is it exhausted if it was ready. The action is a bonus provided by the card. Another example: A player holds 3 debts, two of which say "Repay at no cost when you have three debts." It is not possible to clear both these debts in the same turn, since each command must be completed before the next can begin. Once the command to clear the first debt is complete, the player no longer has 3 debts and cannot clear the second.

Once a player has declared that they are done with commands for the season, they discard any unspent conscripts and the next player starts their turn. Once the last player has taken their turn, flip the season marker to the other face and continue with the next season.

Winter ∞ New Player Order

Each winter, a new player order is set. The new first player will be the contender with the least influence in hand: The more time her majesty spends with courtly intrigues, the less she may spend with her generals. Debts also drag on a contender at this time: Each debt a player holds counts as one influence in hand when determining the new player order. If two players are tied for influence in hand, they keep their relative play order; whichever was earlier in the old play order stays ahead of the other in the new play order. The player order markers should be exchanged to show the new order.

As many advantages as there are to going first, it can be exceptionally powerful to move from behind a player in sequence to ahead of them. Stealing a march on a rival makes some of the greatest upsets in the game possible: castles may fall, courtiers may be lured away, and whole armies may be crushed without mercy.

After winter, play then continues with spring of the next year.

Winter

The turn order for the next year is set in winter. The player with the least Influence in hand goes earliest. Debts are also counted as Influence, slowing players down.

Red has 2 held Influence and 1 Debt. She effectively has three cards in hand.

White has no Influence and 3 Debts. He effectively has three cards in hand.

Blue has 2 Influence cards and is Debt-free, for an effective total of two cards in hand.

Green has no cards in hand and 1 Debt. His effective total is one card in hand.

Red and White are currently tied for number of cards in hand. Since Red was before White in the old turn order, they remain ahead in the new.

The order of play for next year is Green, Blue, Red and White.

Agents and Castles

All players have access to four different kinds of agents: Knights, Nobles, Priests, and Spies. Additionally, all players have castles in play. (If not, they have been ousted from the game.) Each type of agent is useful for different purposes. **Agents can only affect the province they currently occupy; an agent cannot act on an agent in a distant province without first moving there.**

KNIGHTS

Knights get two actions each time they are activated, chosen from the following list:

- Move to a neighboring province. Only one of a knight's two actions can be spent to move.
- Kill a rival knight or noble. The slain agent becomes a shame for its former controller:
Place it on their faction sheet to mark this.
- Destroy a rival castle. This is a double action: it requires both of a knight's actions for the activation. The ruined castle becomes a shame for its former owner: Place it on their faction sheet to mark this.

NOBLES

Nobles get two actions each time they are activated, chosen from the following list:

- Move to a neighboring province. Only one of a noble's two actions can be spent to move.
- Kill a rival noble. The slain noble becomes a shame for its former controller:
Place it on their faction sheet to mark this.
- Ready a priest.
- Kill a rival knight or destroy a rival castle. This is a double action: it requires both of a noble's actions for the activation. The slain knight or ruined castle becomes a shame for its former owner. Place it on their faction sheet to mark this.

CASTLES

- New hires start at castles, exhausted.
- Knights and nobles in a province with a friendly castle cannot be killed.
- Castles are not agents. They do not take actions and cannot be rebuilt with debts.

CONSTRUCTION SITES

- A new construction site can be placed in any province you currently control at a cost of two coins.
- A construction site can be replaced with a castle at a cost of 2 conscripts.
- A construction site cannot be placed and converted to a castle in the same season.
- Effects that destroy castles can also destroy construction sites. (Example: A noble can destroy a rival construction site as a double action, converting it to a shame.)
- Construction sites are not agents. They do not take actions and cannot be rebuilt with debts.
- Construction sites have no further effects on the game. They do not shield friendly agents, act as targets for spies, or act as hiring locations.

ARMIES

KNIGHTS



This knight could spend both of its actions to kill the enemy knight and noble waiting in its space...

...or it could move to Marville and kill the enemy knight there...

...or to Stännich, to kill the enemy Noble there.



NOBLES



This Noble could spend both of its actions to kill the enemy Knight in its space...

...or it could move to Marville. But it would be a sitting duck there. With only one action remaining, it cannot kill the waiting knight.



The Noble could spend its first action to move to Stännich...



The Noble could spend one action to kill the enemy Noble in its space, leaving it with an action remaining.

...then spend its remaining action killing the enemy noble there.



CASTLES

Castles are a player's anchors on the board. They're difficult to destroy, and create new agents.

Expecting an incoming attack, Blue hires a new knight.

Red's three armies are vulnerable as they move in. They can't kill the knight because the castle protects it. They can't kill the castle because none of them have a double action left.

Blue's knight can take out two of the three attackers when it readies next turn. Red's last army can then kill the castle. Since killing a castle takes its entire turn, that army will be vulnerable to counter-attack from Blue's knight afterwards!

Red can still destroy the castle, but only at tremendous cost.



PRIESTS

Priests get a single action per activation, chosen from the following list:

- Make diplomatic offerings to a rival who controls the province they are in. Gift an influence card of your choice from your hand to that player, then draw a new influence card from the deck. In a two player game, do not redraw influence after gifting with a priest.
- Move to a neighboring province. This may be combined with diplomatic offerings (above) into a single action.
- Denounce the the rival who controls the province where they are. Place one shame marker on that player's faction sheet.
- Ready a spy.

SPIES

Spies get a single action per activation, chosen from the following list:

- Move to a neighboring province.
- Kill a rival priest or spy. That agent becomes a shame for its former controller. Place it on their faction sheet to mark this.
- If in a province with a rival castle, a spy may lure away one of that rival's courtiers.
 - Move one of their played courtiers to your control.
 - You now have the benefit of the stolen courtier. The other player loses that benefit.
 - If the stolen courtier was a vassal, take its unused agents from the rival you stole the courtier from and exhaust all agents associated with the vassal currently in play; you now control those agents.
 - After completing this action, the spy is retired. Return them to your supply. They do not become shame.
 - Triumphs are NOT courtiers. Spies cannot steal triumphs.

Being Ousted

A player is ousted from the game if they lose their last castle or cannot rid themselves of all their shame at the start of summer or autumn.

When a contender is ousted, all their agents and castles leave the board, and all their influence and debts are discarded. They award any triumphs they hold, one to each player in turn, starting with the player to their left and continuing clockwise.

INFILTRATORS

PRIESTS



A Priest only gets one action. It can spend that action to move.

Priests freely invade rival-controlled territory, since none of the controlling agents can kill Priests.

Red's Priest could instead spend her action readying this spy.



It appears that Red's Spy had spent its turn sneaking up to the Castle. Now it has the extra action it needs to wreak havoc there.

Or Red's Priest can denounce Blue, giving him a shame.



Shame from Priests is particularly unpleasant, since unlike Shame from dead units, you don't get a unit back if you take a Debt to erase it. Many a contender for the throne has found priestly Shame to be the final straw that ousted them from the game.

In this example, Red now gifts an influence to Green, since her priest is in the Knight's space.



This might be a friendly gesture: the card Green needs to take down Blue, perhaps. Or it could be bloating Green's hand, so Red can jump ahead in the turn order come Winter. Red could have instead gifted a card to Blue before moving, or without moving, or to no one at all.

SPIES



Red's spy could assassinate the Priest it shares a space with.



...or the Spy.

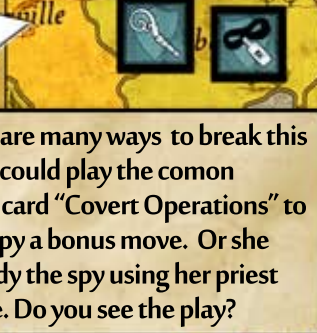


Normally a Spy can't kidnap a courtier from a rival the same turn it reaches a Castle, since its action has already been spent.



..or move closer to an enemy Castle.

But there are many ways to break this rule. Red could play the comon Influence card "Covert Operations" to give her Spy a bonus move. Or she could ready the spy using her priest and noble. Do you see the play?



In any case, the Spy is retired. It is returned to Red's supply with no Shame.

