

INTRODUCTION

It has become an unfortunate trend amongst the ruthless aristocracy of Otravia to assassinate their rivals by poisoning during the toasts at their formal functions. In an attempt to discourage this, an elaborate and bizarre etiquette has been developed around these toasts. However, this has only succeeded in weeding out the less cunning, ruthless and lucky, with those that remain being true masters of this deadly sport.

In a round of play, goblets are arranged in a circle in the middle of the table, one in front of each player, such that players can't see their contents. Players take turns in either secretly placing wine, poison or antidote tokens into the goblets, or switching the goblets around. Each player has a target, and their aim is to ensure that, when the round is ended by someone calling the toast and the players all 'drink', their target's goblet is poisoned and theirs is safe.

Players earn Victory Points for poisoning their target and avoiding being poisoned themselves, and the player with the most VPs after three rounds wins the game!

IMPORTANT SAFETY NOTE:
AT NO POINT SHOULD PLAYERS ATTEMPT TO IMBIBE OR INGEST THE GLASS BEADS OR ANY OTHER GAME COMPONENT. THE GAME IS NOT SUITABLE FOR YOUNG CHILDREN.

THE PRELIMINARIES

At the start of the game, players choose a Master or Mistress of Ceremonies (MoC). The MoC starts the round, and at the end of the round the MoC passes to the next player clockwise.

1. Arrange the goblets, one per player, in a circle in the middle of the table.
2. Take a napkin each, which is used to hide your wine tokens.
3. Put all wine tokens *except the Deadly Poison token* in the bag.
4. Draw 4 tokens each, and place them under your napkin. If you draw only clear wine tokens, you may return them and draw again.
5. Finally, the MoC draws random tokens from the bag up to the number of players, and places one in each goblet without looking.

NOTE THAT GUESTS MUST KEEP THE GOBLETS AT ARMS LENGTH AT ALL TIMES UNTIL THE TOAST.

No peeking! The Royal Guard are deadly serious about breaches of etiquette

THE AIRING OF GRIEVANCES

The first order of business is 'The Airing of Grievances'. Should any guests bear a grudge against another, they should state their grievance now, lest any ill feeling be carried forwards into the occasion.

All nice and civilised. And utterly pointless.

The MoC places a target card (face-up) pointing at another player of their choice. That targeted player then does the same, but cannot target a player who has already chosen their target this round. Continue in this way for all players, with the final player targeting the MoC.

IN THIS WAY, EACH PLAYER HAS EXACTLY ONE TARGET AND IS THE TARGET OF EXACTLY ONE OTHER PLAYER.



THE POURING

Starting with the player to the MoC's left, players may perform *up to two* actions from the following:

1. POUR. Place one of your tokens into any goblet.

But make sure you're subtle about what you're putting in!

2. PEEK. As an exception to the 'arm's length' rule, look into your own goblet to see which tokens are in it.

Testing the bouquet of your wine is a great way to take a sneaky peek!

3. ROTATE the goblets one place clockwise or widdershins.
4. SWAP the goblet in front of you with that of another guest.

5. TOAST! If you have used all your tokens, you may call the Toast (see 'The Toast', below). You may not call the Toast after a Peek or Pour action.

But be careful! If your goblet contains more poison than antidote, you're toast...

CLARIFICATIONS

- You CAN perform the same action twice in a turn
- You CAN perform zero actions
- You CANNOT Toast in the same turn as a Peek or a Pour
- You CAN Pour into any goblet
- You can only swap the goblet in front of you with any other
- You can only Peek into the goblet in front of you
- Character abilities override the rules

THE TOAST

The toast will generally be to the King, another member of the Royal Family, or the health of a fellow guest. As such, it would be an unthinkable breach of etiquette to refuse to drink, and would become an immediate matter for the attention of the Royal Executioner.

When the Toast is called, the MoC should invite each player to use their ability if they wish (starting from their left, in clockwise order). Each player then takes the goblet in front of them.

In the unthinkable event of an unfortunate incident, guests should remember to always conduct themselves with the dignity befitting their station.



That's a laugh...I've seen it all – vindictive ranting, pathetic blubbing, lofty last words, interminable speeches, and that's just what's printable!

TAKE ONE VICTORY POINT IF YOU SURVIVE, ONE IF YOUR TARGET IS POISONED, AND A BONUS ONE IF YOU MANAGE BOTH. IN THE THIRD/FINAL ROUND, DOUBLE ALL VPs SCORED.

WINNING THE GAME

After the Toast, return to 'The Preliminaries' to start the next round. At the end of 3 rounds, the game is over, and the player(s) with the most Victory Points is the winner! The number of 3 VP tokens earned (before doubling on the final round) can be used as a tie-breaker.

BREACHES OF ETIQUETTE

Guests are cautioned against any deliberate or accidental breaches of this etiquette, which are treated most seriously by the Royal guard.

And they're not kidding!

Should a player make a mistake which can't be immediately rectified, they are given an 'Etiquette Breach' token, which counts as -1 VP at the end of that round (minimum zero).



HOSTING LARGER FUNCTIONS

(6-12 Players)

In larger games, players play in pairs as a noble and their wine-taster. The rules are mostly the same as normal, with the following changes:

- The noble sits to the left of their wine-taster.
- Only the noble gets a goblet and a target (another noble).
- Each player gets only one action per turn.
- The taster can only peek, rotate, swap, or pass.
- The noble can only pour, toast, or pass.
- The taster may look under their noble's napkin.
- Character abilities can be used, and can be triggered by the noble or taster.

Etiquette demands that noble guests must not converse or engage in meaningful communication of any kind with their wine-tasters.

...although you might like to see what you can get away with!

With an odd number of players, the extra player can participate on their own as normal. The only exception is that they cannot pour twice in the same turn.



HOSTING AN INTIMATE GET-TOGETHER

(2-3 Players)

Their Majesties wish it to be known that the uncivilised form of duelling known as the 'Russian Toast' is expressly forbidden, and will not be amused if any nobles are found to be settling their differences in this manner.

- Set up the goblets as if for six players.
- Split 6 poison and 6 antidote tokens between the players.
- Prime the goblets with 5 normal wine and the Deadly Poison token.
- Players take turns in performing a single action of Peek or Pour, or Toast (only when all tokens have been played).
- At the Toast, the player who makes the Toast picks any goblet. If it is poisoned, they are eliminated. The next player then choose a goblet, and so on, until there is an eventual winner.
- Play a number of rounds of your choice to establish the overall winner.
- Do not use character abilities.

