INTRODUCTION

The Dance is a game for two to six players. Each player controls a vampire clan attending a grand ball at a palace in the late 19th century. Each vampire family is represented in play by an avatar, a game piece representing the family member selected to move about the dance floor and attempt to gather support from dancers to expand influence and solidify power.

COMPONENTS

THE MAP

The map is a 22" x 17" graphic display of the ballroom, the central section is the dance floor. Around the dance floor are each family's table, a safe space outside of the meddling influence of other players.

THE PLAYING PIECES

Avatars

Each family has an Avatar. During a player's turn, the player moves her Avatar around the dance floor with the intention of moving adjacent to a Dancer she wishes to Influence.

Tatiana Saar

Thorne Balaz

Dancers

Dancers are playing pieces representing participants at the ball. They are represented by playing pieces and move by automatic rules. Players maneuver their Avatars to positions adjacent to Dancers they wish to Influence. The game begins with many Dancers in play.
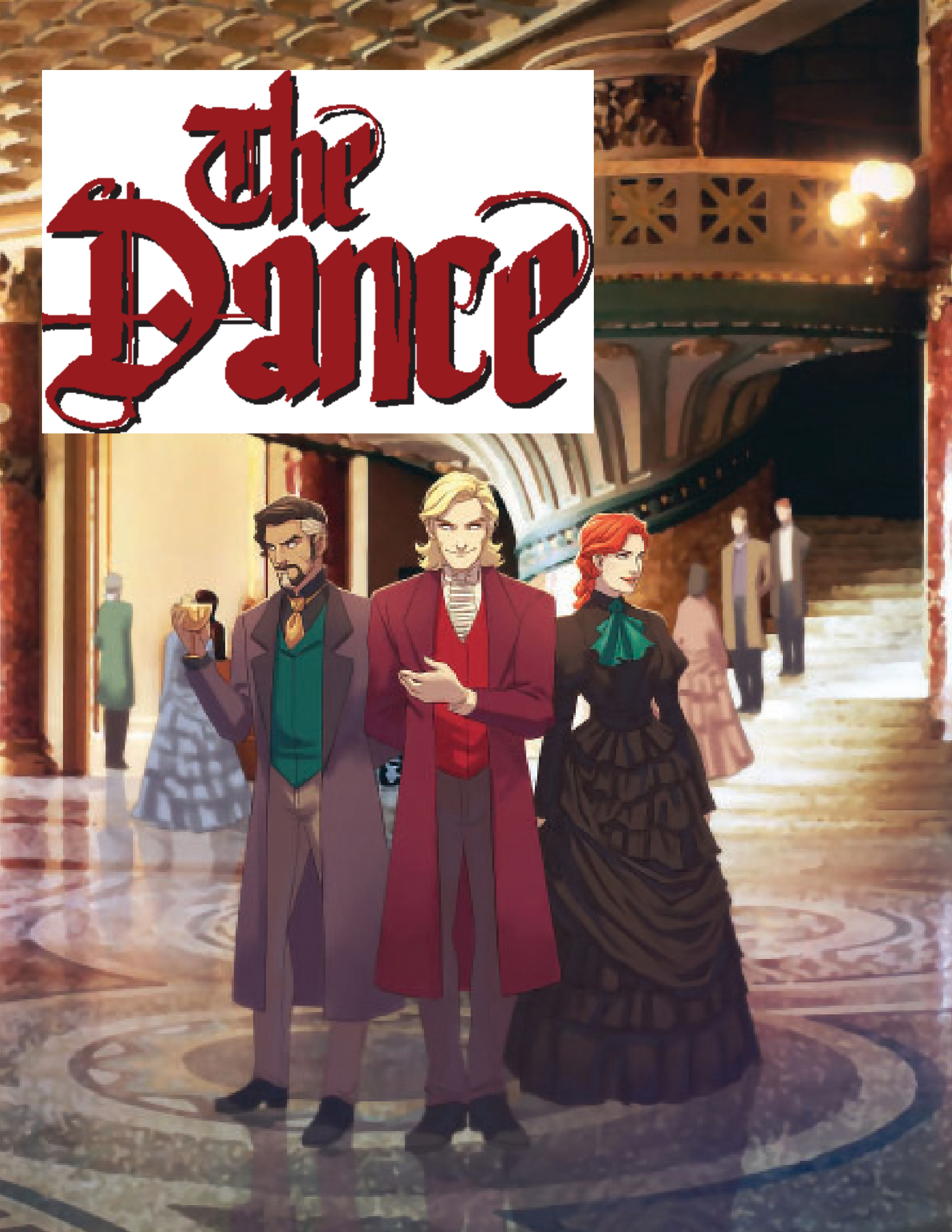

Contessa Marta

Rev. Mother Anna

Captain Lupei

As the game proceeds, the dance floor slowly empties as Dancers come under the Influence of players and move to their respective Influencing family's safe area.

Powers

Powers are markers, each of which bestows a capability to the possessing family's Avatar. Each family begins the game with one random Power.

Plans

Plans are markers that contain a pattern of colored symbols that act as the victory conditions for each Family. When a family has Influenced enough Dancers to fill the selected pattern of colored symbols, that player wins the game. Each vampire draws a random Plan at the beginning of the game.

Refreshments

Refreshments represent evidence, money, mental powers, and political capabilities that the player can forfeit to modify die results. Each vampire family begins with four randomly drawn Refreshment markers. One marker may be used each die roll.

DICE

Players will need at least one six-sided die.

TERMINOLOGY

AVATAR

An invitee to the Grand Ball. An Avatar is a member of one of the families and is controlled by the owning player. Each player moves her family's Avatar around the ballroom during her turn. Each turn, each player tries to Influence Dancers, Servers, or other Avatars.

BALLROOM

The Ballroom is the area of the map where movement takes place. It is composed of a grid of hexagons, called hexes, that are used to regulate movement.

DANCER

A Dancer is an invitee to the Grand Ball. A Dancer is typically a person of wealth or a locus of political power. Dancers are represented by markers and begin the game on the dance floor. Dancers are not members of the six vampire families.

Players use their Avatars to Influence Dancers. An Influenced Dancer moves as the Influencing player desires, usually towards the influence-holding vampire family's table.

Dancers that are not Influenced are not controlled by players but are instead controlled the game rules.

FAMILY

Play is competition between two to six influential vampire families. Each family is represented in play by an Avatar (usually the eldest or most trusted adult child) and a Sanctuary table just off the ballroom floor.

INFLUENCE & DOMINATE

Influence indicates control of an unaligned citizen. Each Dancer begins the game outside the Influence of any of the six families. During the game, players try to Influence Dancers. A successful effort to Influence a Dancer results in the player taking temporary control of the Dancer.

Dominate means the same as Influence, except that the Dominated Dancer cannot be affected by another Avatar's Influence. A Dominated Dancer can be affected by another Avatar's Dominate effect.

SANCTUARY

Each family has a table at the edge of the Dance Floor called a Sanctuary. When a Dancer is brought to the Sanctuary, they are free from the influences of other Avatars for the remainder of the game.

SERVER

The hosting family has a servant patrolling the dance floor to provide refreshments and minor favors to the many guests.

SETTING UP THE GAME

MAP

Lay the map face-up on the playing surface. Players seat themselves so that all can reach all areas of the Ballroom.

PLAYING PIECES

Gently remove all the playing pieces from the chipboard sheet. Separate them into piles based upon their respective types.

COMPOSE FAMILY

Select Family

In order of ages from youngest to oldest, each player selects one Avatar. Each Avatar represents a specific Family and has ratings in all four of the fields of Influence.

Declare Sanctuaries

Each player declares which of the six Sanctuaries she will use. Ideally, each player uses the Sanctuary table closest to where she sits at the table.

Draw Powers

Flip all Powers markers face-down. Mix them thoroughly. Each player randomly draws two, selects one, and returns the unselected one to the pile.

Each players' Power remains secret until the player uses it.

Draw Refreshments

Flip all Refreshment markers face-down. Mix them thoroughly. Each player randomly draws four.

Leave the remainder face-down for future draws.

Draw Plans

Flip all Plans markers face-down. Mix them thoroughly. Each player randomly draws one.

Secrecy

Each player may examine the face-down sides of all of her markers at will. A player need never reveal the face-down side of a marker until she intends to use it.

PLACE DANCERS

Flip all Dancer markers face-down. Mix them thoroughly. Place one dancer on each hex with a white circle. When all dancers are placed, turn them face up in their present positions.

Rotate all dancers so that all are oriented with their names at the side that is closest to Table 1.

Place the Tempo marker in the Tempo track on the game map in the "1" (top) box.

PLACE SERVER

Roll one die. Place the Server in the hex with the number corresponding with the die result.

PLACE AVATARS

Players place their Avatars on their respective Sanctuary hexes.

WHO GOES FIRST?

The oldest player goes first. Play proceeds counter-clockwise around the map.

HOW TO PLAY

Each game turn is composed of two phases, a Player Phase and a Waltz Phase. Phases may not be skipped, executed out of order, or saved for later use.

PLAYER PHASE

Players take turns counterclockwise around the table, oldest player first. Each player's turn is composed of two steps. Steps may not be skipped, executed out of order, or saved for later use.

Dance Step

The current player moves her Avatar up to its full Movement allowance in hexes. Avatars usually have a Movement of two. Some game effects may alter an Avatar's Movement.

The current player moves her Avatar by picking up the Avatar marker and counting adjacent hexes, one at a time, from the Avatar's starting position to its ending position. Each hex border crossed counts as one Movement.

A player is under no obligation to use all her Avatar's Movement.

A player may move Dancers under her Influence up to two hexes.

Avatars and Dancers may not enter occupied hexes. Occupied hexes contain Avatars, Servers, or Dancers.

The owning player may Move her Influenced Dancer to her Sanctuary table from the nearest hex at the cost of one Movement. When an Influenced Dancer enters a player's Sanctuary, the player moves that Dancer to one of the empty seats. Sanctuary tables have five seats, so a player may have no more than five seated Dancers. A sixth Dancer may enter the Sanctuary hex, but the Avatar may only enter the hex if it completes the player's Plan. Only Influenced Dancers may enter the family's Sanctuary.

The owning player may Move a Dancer from her Sanctuary table to the adjacent hex for the cost of one Movement. Such a Dancer is not Influenced when she enters the Dance Floor. She moves from that point as a regular Dancer until and unless Influenced or Dominated.

Influence Step

At the conclusion of a player's Movement, she attempts to Influence an adjacent Dancer, Avatar, or Server.

Influence Dancer

The player selects one Influence Domain (Extortion, Corruption, Subjugation, and Confidence) to use when making the Influence effort. The player may not select a Domain over which the target has a red negation symbol printed on its marker.

Before the roll is made, the player may choose to use one of her Refreshments to modify the roll. A player may use a Refreshment after a roll is made only if the Avatar has the *Tactician* Power.

Add the pips shown in that Domain on the Avatar's counter, the target Dancer's counter, and the Refreshment counter, if played. That total is the number the player must roll equal to or less than on a single six-sided die in order to bring that Dancer under her influence.

If successful, the player places an Influence marker on the target that matches the acting player's Family. If unsuccessful, there is no effect. The player's turn is over.

If the die roll is at least three less than what is needed to Influence the target, the target is Dominated. The acting player places a Dominated marker on the target.

When a Dancer has been Influenced, it will begin to move to the influencing player's Family Table on the next Waltz Phase. The influencing player moves the Dancer at a rate of two hexes per turn.

During any point in the game, the player may also choose to release his or her Influence from any Dancer. In that case, the player reclaims her Influence marker and the Dancer rejoins the Waltz on the subsequent Waltz Phase. Follow the appropriate arrows to bring the Dancer back into the Waltz.

An Avatar may try to Influence a Dancer even though her Influenced marker is on another Dancer. The Influenced marker is moved to the new Dancer if the effort is successful. If the effort fails, the Influenced marker remains on the original Dancer.

Influencing an Influenced Dancer

A player may instead choose to remove the Influence of another Avatar from a Dancer. To do this, follow the same rules for Influencing a Dancer, but upon success, remove the Influenced marker from the Dancer and return it to the other player. That Dancer must move to rejoin the waltz on the next Waltz phase, following the appropriate arrows to get back on track.

A Dominated Dancer is the same as an Influenced Dancer is every respect except that a Dominated Dancer may not be Influenced by an opposing Avatar.

Influence Avatar

Instead of Influencing a Dancer, a player may have her Avatar Foil an opposing adjacent Avatar. The acting player selects a Domain of Influence and rolls a die. If the result is less than or equal to the combined score of the players' Avatars in that Domain, the target is Foiled and a Foiled marker is placed on the Avatar. A Foiled Avatar loses the ability to take her next Influence phase. She removes the Foiled Marker from her Avatar as her Influence Phase action.

Influence Server

Instead of Influencing a Dancer or Foiling an Avatar, an Avatar can activate a function of an adjacent Server. Activating a Server requires no die roll. The effect is automatic.

Influencing the Server allows the player to draw two random Refreshments, if there are any remaining Refreshment markers.

After drawing Refreshments, remove the Server from the dance floor. He has returned to the kitchen for more refreshments.

The Server returns to the floor at the start of the Waltz phase.

A player may not exceed her Refreshment limit of four, but the player may draw new Refreshment markers and then discard the overage to avoid exceeding this limit.

May I Cut In?

A player may swap positions of her Avatar with any adjacent Dancer or Avatar, including an Influenced Dancer. This action replaces any other opportunity to Influence this turn.

WALTZ PHASE

If the Server is not on the Dance floor, roll one die. Place the Server marker in the hex containing the number corresponding with the die result. If that hex is occupied, the Server remains in the kitchen (off the Dance Floor) until the next Waltz Phase.

Advance the Tempo marker one box. If the Tempo Marker is in boxes 1, 2, or 3, move the Dancers, using the process below, one hex, counterclockwise, along the paths and arrows.

If the Tempo marker is in box 4, do not move any non-Influenced Dancers. Each player gains one Refreshment.

Move all non-influenced Dancers in a path hex counter-clockwise along the path. Move Dancers that have empty hexes in front of them first. This frees up their exit hexes for Dancers following them.

A Dancer may not move if a Dancer, Server, or Avatar is in its path.

Dancers in arrow hexes move last.

If necessary, rotate each dancer 60 degrees within its hex to mark that it has moved this phase. This process can help ensure no Dancer is moved more than once and that every Dancer that can move is moved.

ENDING THE GAME

The game ends when one player has all the symbols on her Plan marker in matching symbols of Dancers she has Influenced sitting at her Sanctuary table. That player is the winner. A player may possess more than the number of the symbols indicated on her Plan marker.

Players are free to continue to play if they wish to determine who earns second and third places.

SCENARIOS

Scenario 1 — Arrogance

All players reveal their Plans at the beginning of their first Player Phase. Each family is well-aware of the objectives of each of their adversaries, and offensively use that awareness.

Scenario 2 — Subtlety

All players keep their Plans concealed until one has met her victory conditions. At that point, the declaring player reveals her Plan marker and shows her count.

Scenario 3 — New Blood

Players select their Avatars after they draw their Plans.

EXPLANATION OF POWERS

ATHLETIC

Owner may choose to move her Avatar up to three hexes per turn.

Note the Ankh Refreshment does not add to this Avatar's speed.

DISCIPLINE

Spend two Refreshment markers to buy a second Influence marker. This power only works to possess one bonus Influence marker at a time.

When the Dancer Influenced by the second Influence marker reaches your Sanctuary table, return the second Influence marker to the pool.

HOST

Activate the Server at any range. Normal Server rules apply for this special activation. Remove the Server from the Dance Floor normally after activation.

MESMERIZE

Your Avatar's Influence range is increased to two hexes.

OLD WEALTH

Your Refreshment limit is 6 instead of 4. Begin the game with 6 Refreshments.

OVERWHELMING

All of your Avatar's successful Influence efforts result in Domination.

REGALE

Your Avatar may attempt two Influences per turn. If more than one Influence attempt is Successful, choose one of the two Influenced Avatars to receive your Influenced marker. If you have two Influence markers, you may Influence both Dancers.

RESOURCEFUL

You may use two Refreshment markers at the same time.

SHADOW

Your Avatar may move through Dancers, Avatars, and the Server. Your Avatar may not stop on a hex that is occupied — no stacking.

STRATEGIC

You may draw a random new Plan during your turn when the Tempo marker is in the #4 box. You may choose to keep the previous Plan or discard it in favor of the new one.

This does not prevent your Avatar from taking her Dance or Influence steps.

TACTICIAN

Spend a Refreshment to modify any of your die results by one after the die is rolled.

WILLPOWER

You may spend a Refreshment to reroll an Influence roll.

OPTIONAL RULES

INITIATIVE

The oldest player begins the game with the Initiative marker. The player who possesses the Initiative marker moves first during the current turn.

At the conclusion of each Waltz phase, the player with the Initiative marker passes it to the player of her choice. That player acts first the next turn.

SUPER VILLAINS

Each player keeps both Powers drawn at the beginning of the game. Players can use both powers each turn.

It is the end of the Influence Step of turn 10. Tatiana Saar uses the plum-colored Sanctuary Table. Thorne Balaz uses the grey-colored Sanctuary. Tatiana previously Influenced Rev. Mother Anna and moved her to Tatiana's Sanctuary table. Tatiana has Lady Julia currently under her Influence and is moving her across the ballroom to join the Rev. Mother. Thorne Balaz was hoping to Influence Contessa Marta or Primar Todoran.

It is the end of the Influence Step of turn 11. We see Artisan Belan, Captain Lupei, and Patron Constantin have all moved. Contessa Marta and Primar Todoran have not moved because Tatiana Saar is (intentionally) blocking them. Had Tatiana moved down, the Primar would have moved, blocking the Contessa for one more turn. (Path Dancers move before arrows.) The Server roll was "1" this turn. Thorne Balaz occupies the "1" hex, so the Server does not yet return.

SEQUENCE OF PLAY

PLAYER PHASE

Players take turns counterclockwise around the table, oldest player first. Each player's turn is composed of two steps, Dance and Influence. Steps may not be skipped, executed out of order, or saved for later use.

Dance Step

The current player moves her Avatar up to its full Movement allowance in hexes. Avatars usually have a Movement of two. Some game effects may alter an Avatar's Movement.

If a player has one or more Dancers with her Influence markers on them, she may move those Dancers up to two hexes.

Avatars and Dancers may not enter occupied hexes. Occupied hexes contain Avatars, Servers, or Dancers.

The owning player may Move her Influenced Dancers to the Sanctuary table from the nearest hex at the cost of one Movement. Sanctuary tables have five seats, so no more than five Influenced Dancers may occupy spaces at the Sanctuary table. Only Influenced Dancers may enter/be seated at the family's Sanctuary table.

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The player selects one Influence Domain to use when making the Influence effort. The player may not select a Domain over which the target has a red negation symbol printed on its marker.

Before the roll is made, the player may also choose to use one of her Refreshments in the corresponding Domain. A player may use a Refreshment after a roll is made only if the Avatar has the Tacticians Power.

Add the pips shown in that Domain on the Avatar's counter, the target Dancer's counter, and the Refreshment counter, if played. That total is the number the player must roll equal to or less than on a single six-sided die in order to bring that Dancer under her influence.

If successful, the player places an Influence marker on the target that matches the acting player's Family. If unsuccessful, there is no effect. The player's turn is over.

If the die roll is an unmodified "1," the target is Dominated. The acting players places a Dominated marker on the target.

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