Gameplay Overview

Players

The game can be played with 2, 3 or 4 players in a semi-cooperative way – you might work together at times, but the 'best' guard captain will win. You can also play solo (1 player), in which case it's you against the city!

Guards

Each player recruits a squad of guards, including 1 guard captain and about 5 others. Solo players have more.

There is a points system, but this is not needed if you are using the starter set figures.

There is a maximum number that a player can have on the board at any time (reducing with more players). The remaining guards stay in reserve (in your 'guardhouse') and enter when needed. This is to keep the game balanced with different player counts.

Civilians

Traitor's Toll is a crowded, bustling city, so the board is populated with a variety of citizens and travellers, thieves and merchants, collectively known as civilians. During the game they move about (with some control by the players), getting in the way or potentially helping your cause.

There are no enemies at the start of the game, just people going about their lives – but suspects will soon emerge from the crowd!

Ability Scores

Guards, suspects and all denizens of Traitor's Toll each have a set of ability scores. The abilities are AIM, AGILITY, BRAWN, WITS and HEART, with scores ranging from 1 to 6. The most common score is 3.

Game Turns

The order in which figures act is determined by drawing tokens from a bag. Players take turns drawing a token.

If you get a Guard Action token you use it to act with one of your guards who hasn't acted yet (Captains can act twice per turn).

If you draw a Suspect Action token, you must choose and activate a suspect.

If you draw a Plot token, you play a new Plot card from the deck – these trigger a new crime or other event.

Lastly there are Time tokens, which allow you to move civilians about.

When the final Time token is drawn, the turn ends – even if some figures haven't acted yet!

Dice

Guards of Traitor's Toll uses special dice for most rolls – whenever the rules talk about rolling a 'dice', it means these special dice.

D6

A normal dice numbered 1 to 6 is also used sometimes. This is always referred to as a 'D6'.

It is common for a particular outcome to happen if you roll a 4 or higher. This is abbreviated to rolling a '4+'. Similarly, '2+' means rolling a 2 or higher.

Tests

During the game your guards (and the other figures) will take tests, rolling the number of dice equal to their score in the relevant ability. So, for an AIM test, if your AIM score is 2 then you roll two dice. Count up the number of swords that you rolled – the more the better!

For most tests 3 swords is a pass.

Attacks

When attacking someone you can either try to hit and wound your target or alternatively try to seize and subdue them.

This second, less lethal method is used by muggers and brawlers, and is also how the guards make arrests. However, it is easier to subdue someone if you wound them a bit first, so arrests can get violent!

Moving

When figures are moving around, the dice work differently. The number of dice you roll still depends on your ability score (AGILITY when running and WITS for walking), but now the swords show the possible directions the figure can move in.

This means that your figures won't always go where you want them to!

However, if you are trying to reach a suspect, and are close enough, then you can head straight towards them.

Results showing Feet allow you to go faster.

Silver Coins

The dice also have one face showing a silver coin. A coin result can be 'spent' to trigger special bonuses called 'coin effects' that apply for the test or roll you are making. This could be a special move with a particular weapon or extra options when moving.

In addition, when a guard or a suspect rolls 3 silver coins together, they can spend them on an extra action!

Look out for this icon, meaning a Coin Effect may be possible.

Missions

To play a game you'll first choose a mission. This will tell you the central story for your game, with tasks for your guards to complete and how the game ends.

There's a quick Training Mission to help you learn the game, after which the 'standard' mission is Patrol Duty, in which your guards patrol the streets and must deal with whatever comes their way! Subsequent missions may involve a building on fire or the discovery of a body – these may be played singly, but are designed to be played in order as linked games.

Plots

Throughout the game you'll draw Plot cards, which present tasks to complete.

Plots usually start with identifying a suspect from among the civilians on the board.

You will often need to catch and arrest them. Arrested suspects must then be escorted away to the nearest guardhouse – if you leave them unattended, they might escape again!

Meanwhile, some suspects turn out to be harmless, in need help or protection, or have useful information. Other tasks may involve investigating a particular location on the board – perhaps a dark alley or some crates of contraband.

Expansion sets will add lots more plots, often involving specific new figures.

Assistance

If they are close by, the civilians of the city may be persuaded to assist you in your duties - often by sticking out a foot as your suspect sprints past. Nearby guards can help too, including those controlled by other players.

Discontent

Discontent measures the collective anger and irritation among the population of the city.

The plots currently in play often raise the level of general DISCONTENT, as thefts, muggings and murders cause understandable consternation until the culprit is arrested.

Your guard squad may also gain personal DISCONTENT, which only applies to them.

If your DISCONTENT is high, it will become difficult to get information or assistance from the civilians of the city. It also becomes harder to win the game...

Rewards

Successfully completing a plot removes any DISCONTENT it caused.

On top of that, the player whose action it was gains a reward, so there will be competition between players to grab the glory!

The reward could be Gold Coins, Advances, removing personal DISCONTENT or Secrets:

Gold Coins

Whichever player has the most gold coins at the end of the game is the winner.

However, any DISCONTENT remaining costs you gold coins as you are forced to pay fines and bribes!

You may also spend gold during the game. Sometimes there are opportunities to buy an item or pay a bribe, but most importantly you can pay a gold coin instead of a silver coin if you failed to roll one at a crucial moment. Or if you rolled 2 silver coins, you might want to add in a gold to get an extra action.

Advances

Advance cards are played on your guardsmen to improve them. They might add useful new skills, items such as superior weapons or a protective amulet, or a backstory giving an advantage based on past experiences.

Most Advance cards are unique, so your guards will develop their own personality and skill-set.

Remove Personal DISCONTENT

If the reward includes this symbol, it cancels 1 personal DISCONTENT that you have previously gained.

Secrets

The final type of reward is a Secret. Often part of a specific mission or plot, these cards reveal hidden outcomes and information, special rewards or further tasks to continue the story. This means that players won't always know what sort of challenges they'll be faced with. Such is the lot of a city guard!

DO NOT READ UNTIL INSTRUCTED!

The numbered Secret cards have a red colour scheme, so you can avoid reading them too soon!

Markers

Blood Drop marker, indicates a minor wound.

Clue marker, can be investigated by the guards.

Prisoner marker, placed next to arrested suspects.

Fire marker, used if buildings catch ablaze.

Sneak marker - suspect cannot be targeted.

Reload marker - must reload before firing again.

Wheel token (optional) - move wagons etc.

Cautious marker - prepared for an attack.

Side Street marker, a route on and off the board.

Squad Roster

It's useful to keep notes during the game and record your guards' achievements, especially when playing linked games, so using a roster sheet is a good idea.

Linked Games

If you are playing a series of games with the same opponents, then keep the details of your guard squad the same. Advances can be mastered to carry over to your next game. Likewise, guards who were cut down may return with an injury. And certain Secrets have continuing effects!

An exciting narrative runs through the missions and will continue in future expansion sets, allowing you to uncover and shape the story of Traitor's Toll!