Draw Fortress

A game of drawing and defending
by Selene Tan

About

This is a game about security. Together you will design a fortress and protect it from threats, while making sure it can serve the needs of the inhabitants.

Materials:

You will need:

1. 2-4 players and 2-3 hours.
2. A large piece of paper, the bigger the better. If you only have letter or A4 paper, you may want to place two sheets next to each other.
3. Writing or drawing implements. Multiple colors are more fun but not required.
4. Sticky notes, half index cards, or other small sheets of paper. If possible, have two different colors.
5. Tokens or counters, ideally one color for each player.
6. Some six-sided dice.

Setup:

1. As a group, come up with a Precious—the thing or person your fortress is designed to protect.

   Alice, Bob, Eve, and Mallory are playing Draw Fortress. They decide they are protecting the Queen.

2. Come up with one Trait of the Precious for each player, plus two more. (e.g. with four players you will have six traits.) The Traits must be in the following categories, and you must have at least one of each:

   1. What makes it Valuable and worth protecting.
   2. What makes it Vulnerable.
   3. What makes it Defensible.

   Alice says that the Queen is Valuable because she makes laws. Everyone agrees she lives in a big castle, which is easily Defensible. Bob tries to think of a Vulnerability and suggests that the Queen is ill and weak, but nobody else likes that idea. Mallory points out the Queen is Vulnerable because she holds court for people to make requests. Eve suggests that maybe the Queen likes to go on long horse rides with few bodyguards. People like that image, so it becomes a Trait. Alice protests that the Queen is strong and can protect herself. Bob suggests that the Royal Treasury is in the castle, too.
   The final traits:
   *Valuable: Makes Laws, Royal Treasury*
   Vulnerable: Holds Court, Horse Riding
   Defensible: Big Castle, Strong

3. Draw the Precious in the middle of the paper
4. Draw representations of the Traits spaced equally around the Precious.
5. Divide the paper pie-style into one sector per Trait. Number the sectors.
6. Draw a circle snugly around the Precious and its Traits. Then, leaving room to draw between each one, draw three more concentric circles. Each of the resulting wedges is a Space.

> *If you want a shorter game, only draw two outer circles.*
> *For a normal game, the board should look like this:*
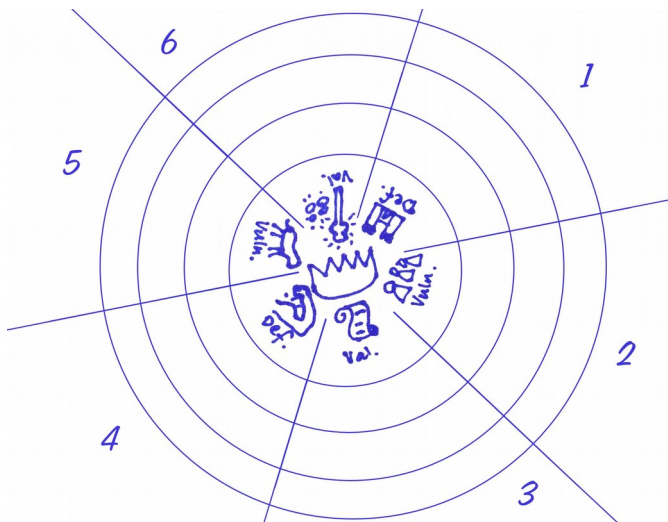
7. Brainstorm some groups or factions that want to support, use, or protect the Valuable. There should be at least one per player.
8. Each player picks a group/faction to represent and picks a color.

   The group quickly comes up with the Royal Guard, loyal retainers, and nobles. They're stumped for a fourth until Mallory points out that in medieval times, the Church had an interest in the running of the kingdom.

   Alice picks the Royal Guard, Bob picks the nobles, Mallory picks the Church, and Eve picks the retainers
9. Each player defines one Defense inspired by their group or a Trait, and draws it in one of the spaces. Additionally:
   1. Starting Defenses in the Vulnerable sectors also start with an Access Lane in the middle, compromising the Defense but allowing access to certain people.
      1. The player describes a way of bypassing the defenses that has been built into it and draws it in the space.
   2. Starting Defenses in the Defensible sectors are two layers deep. Draw a copy of the Defense in the space above or below.

      Alice draws the Royal Guard into the sector with the "Strong" trait. Bob draws a large locked door into the sector with the "Royal Treasury" trait. Eve draws a line of retainers, who determine who gets into court, in the "Holds Court" sector. Mallory draws a moat in the "Big Castle" sector.

      Since Alice and Mallory drew in Defensible sectors, they each draw an additional copy of their Defenses.

      Since Eve drew in a Vulnerable sector, she draws an Access Lane, and draws a little tiara inside. Nobles can bypass the retainers.

10. Put one token on each Defense space of the owning player's color.
11. Put one token on each Access lane of the owning player's color.
12. Every player gets starting funds depending on which sector their defense is in:
    1. Defensible: 2 tokens
    2. Valuable: 3 tokens
    3. Vulnerable: 4 tokens
13. On one corner of the paper, add a Rounds counter and start it at 0.
14. Pick a player to go first

The final board looks like this. Now the group is ready to play!
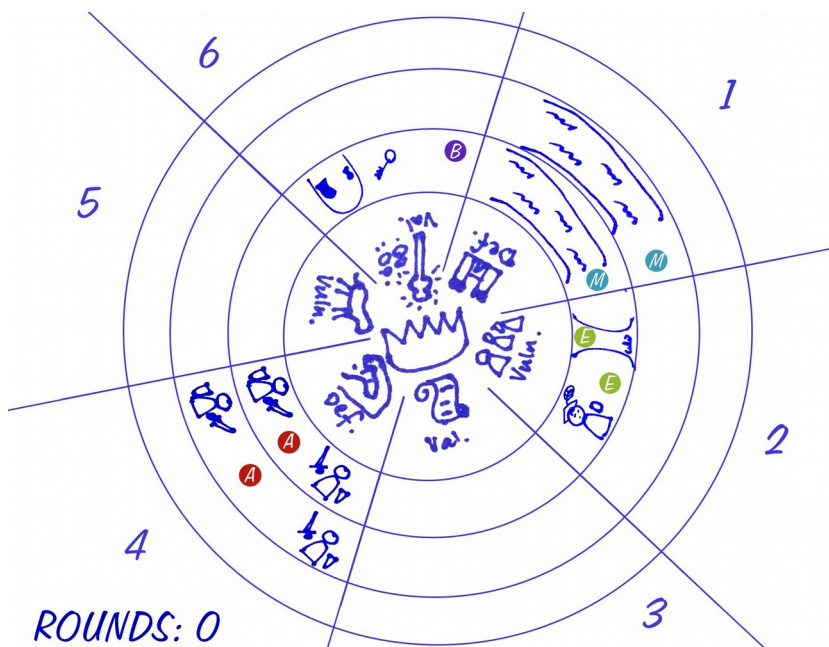
Game Flow

There are two phases to each turn: the Events Phase, and the Player Phase. Turns go clockwise around the table. Once all players have gone, increase the Rounds counter by 1.

While playing, you will be asked to make value judgments as a group about defenses and accessibility. In general, the most pessimistic opinion wins.

You will also be asked to describe Threats, Needs Defenses, and Accesses.

- A **Threat** is a person or thing that poses a danger to the Precious or the Defenses.
- A **Need** is a person or thing that the Precious must have, or that wants something from the Precious.
- A **Defense** is something that protects the Precious
- An **Access** is a way for the right people to bypass a Defense

Events Phase

First, all Events on the board move as described:

Threats

1. Each Threat will move one space inwards if possible, then attack.
2. The Threat can move when:
    1. It is on the edge of the board
    2. It is on an empty space
    3. It is on a space with a Defense that has been destroyed
    4. It is on a space with a Defense, but the Defense doesn't work against it
    5. It is on a space with a Defense, but there's an Access it can use
3. When the Threat starts or lands on a Defense:
    1. Decide as a group whether the Defense protects against the Threat. The Defense is effective only if everyone agrees; otherwise it doesn't work.
    2. If the Defense works and has an Access, decide whether the Threat can use the Access. If even one person thinks it can, it can.
    3. If the Defense doesn't protect against the Threat, or the Threat can use the Access, treat it as an empty space.
        1. If the Threat already moved, do nothing.
        2. If it hasn't moved, move it now. Otherwise...
    4. The Defense and Threat attack each other:
        1. First, the Defense attacks the Threat.
            1. Reduce the Threat's Rating by the Defense's Strength, to a minimum of zero.

1. The Strength of a Defense with an Access is the lower of its Strength and the Access, even if the Access doesn't apply to this Threat.
   2. The owner of the Defense gets one Token for every point removed from the Threat.
2. If the Threat is reduced to zero, everybody gets one Token and the Threat is removed from the board.
   1. This means the owner of the Defense that defeats a Threat will get one Token + one Token per point removed from the Threat
3. Otherwise, the Threat attacks the Defense. Reduce the Defense's Strength by the Threat's Rating.
4. If the Threat reaches the Precious:
   1. Destroy one of the Precious' Valuable traits
   2. If it doesn't have any left, the players lose and the game is over.
   3. Remove the Threat from the board.

Needs

1. Each Need will attempt to move inwards one space if possible. The Need can move when:
   1. It is on the edge of the board
   2. It is on an empty space
   3. It is on a space with an Access it can use
   4. It is on a space with a Defense that doesn't interfere with it
2. When the Need is on a Defense, first decide whether it can move:
   1. Decide as a group whether the Defense will interfere with it. If at least one person thinks it interferes, it interferes.
   2. If the Defense interferes, but has an Access, decide if the Need can use the Access. Everyone must agree, or it can't use the Access.
   3. If the Defense interferes with the Need, and there's no Access it can use, the Defense attacks the Need:
      1. The Need's rating is reduced by the Defense's Strength.
      2. The player who owns the Defense loses a Token.
      3. If the Need is reduced to zero, it is removed from the board and everybody loses one Token.
      4. Otherwise, the Need does nothing.
3. When the Need is on a Defense with an Access it can use, the player who owns the Access gets one Token.
4. If the Need reaches the Precious, it's removed from the board. Convert its remaining rating to tokens and divide them evenly among all players, rounding up.

Next, generate a new Threat:

1. Roll a die to pick which sector the Threat attacks. If you roll a number with no sector, reroll until you get a sector.

2. Determine the Rating of the Threat—its importance or severity. Roll a six-sided die and half the result rounding down, counting 1-2 as 1, 3-4 as 2, and 5-6 as 3. Add the number of Rounds to get the final Rating.
   In gamer-speak, roll 1d3 + Rounds

3. As the active player, you decide who or what the Threat is and what danger it poses. You can discuss with other players, but you have final say. It can't be the same as any other Threat that's still on the board.

4. Write or draw the description, type, and rating of the Threat on a sticky note. If you have two colors, use one for Threats and one for Needs.

5. Put the Threat on the edge of the board, just outside the outermost layer of the sector it targets.

Player Phase

On your turn, you can take three Actions. The Actions can be any of the following, and you can choose the same Action multiple times:

Raise Funds

When you choose this Action, do both of the following:

1. Gain one Token for every space with a Defense or Access you control
2. Add a new Need to the board:
    1. Roll a die to pick which sector the Need appears in. If you roll a number with no sector, reroll until you get a sector.
    2. Roll for the Rating of the Need—its importance or urgency. Roll a six-sided die and half the result rounding down, counting 1-2 as 1, 3-4 as 2, and 5-6 as 3. Add the number of Rounds to get the final Rating.
        In gamer-speak, roll 1d3 + Rounds
    3. As the active player, you describe the Need. Think of something the Precious or defenders want, or someone who needs to see or use the Precious. You can discuss with other players, but you have final say. It can't be the same as any other Need that's still on the board.

Move Event

When you choose this Action, do one of the following:

1. Spend one token to move an Event sideways, to an adjacent sector on the same layer.
2. Spend one tokens to move an Event in or out by one layer.

Build

When you choose this Action, do one of the following:

1. New Defense
    1. Describe the new defense you're creating and where. Draw it into that section.
    2. Put one or two of your tokens on the new Defense. This is its Strength.
1. New Access
    1. Propose the new method of access and which Defense it will be added to. Draw it in the Defense's space.
    2. Put one or two of your tokens on the method of access.
    3. The final Strength of the Defense is the lower of the Access and Defense token counts.
2. Improve or repair an existing Defense or Access
    1. Propose a modification to an existing Defense or Access, and draw it.
    2. Put one or two of your tokens on the Defense or Access.

Ending the Game

1. If a Threat reaches the Valuable when it has no remaining Valuable traits, the players lose and the game is over.
2. When all sections are filled, enter Endgame.

Endgame

1. Generate one Threat for each sector using the usual rules
2. Every player takes one Move or Build Action
3. Keep running through the Events phase, skipping the Player Phase, until all Events are either reduced to zero or reach the Precious.
4. If the Precious survives, everybody wins!
   The player with the most Tokens at the end wins the most.

Example Settings

Royalty

The Precious:

- The King or Queen

Traits:

- Valuable: Makes laws, Royal Treasury
- Vulnerable: Petitioners, Long horse rides
- Defensible: Has a big castle, Fit and strong

Groups:

- Loyal retainers
- Royal guard
- Assorted nobles
- The Church

Fort Knox

The Precious:

- Gold Bullion

Traits:

- Valuable: Gold Standard, Recession-proof asset
- Vulnerable: Also used to store other valuable objects, Everybody knows where it is
- Defensible: Heavy, Doesn't need to move

Groups:

- US Army
- US Treasury
- US Mint Police
- Louisville, Kentucky local government

Snacks

The Precious:
- The snacks in the cabinet

Traits:
- Valuable: Tasty, Forbidden before dinner
- Vulnerable: Small enough to hide, Can eat the evidence
- Defensible: Makes rustle-y noises when moved, Leaves crumbs behind

Groups:
- Mom
- Dad
- Babysitter

The International Prototype Kilogram

The Precious:
- The platinum cylinder used to define the Kilogram

Traits:
- Valuable: Needed for science, Prestigious to hold
- Vulnerable: Fits in a pocket, Mass easily changes
- Defensible: Doesn't move on its own, Replica backups

Groups:
- Scientists
- International Bureau of Weights and Measures officers
- The French Government
- People obsessed with accuracy