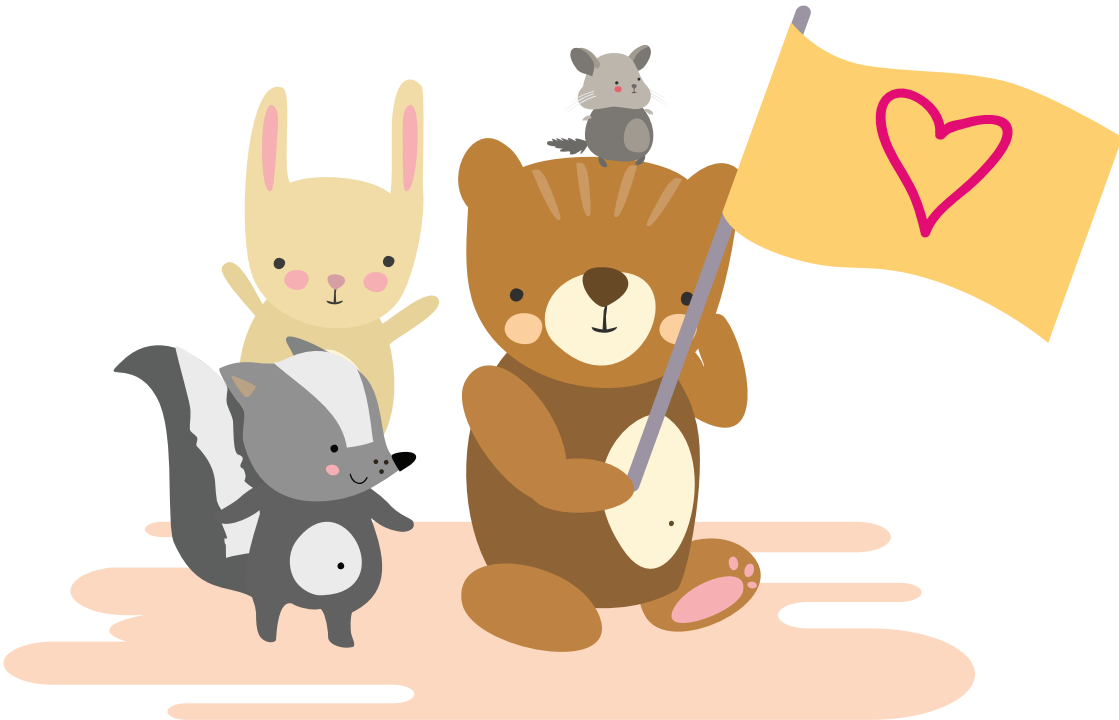
FOR NORTHWOOD!

(a solo trick-taking game)



For Northwood! Is a solo hand management and precision trick-taking game. Your task is to peacefully unite the titular woodland kingdom. You do this by visiting eight fiefs and engaging their rulers in dialogue (tricks) to win them over.



You start with four allies, each with an ability that you can use once per visit. These abilities can make you draw, discard, or otherwise manipulate your hand to help you hit the target score.

Once you've won a ruler over, they can substitute temporarily for one of your allies, giving you more choices for abilities to tackle the harder fiefs!

COMPONENTS

32 **dialogue** cards, valued 1-8 in four suits: **Claws** 🐾, **Flowers** ✿, **Leaves** 🍂, and **Eyes** 👁.



24 **character** cards, six of each suit. Twelve of them are marked with a crown icon on the lower-right; these are not used in the introductory game.



1 **visiting** card**,** with an arrow in front and a score chart at the back.



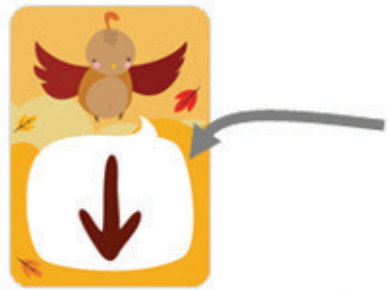
8 **fief** cards numbered 0 to 7, with a victory point value from one to four stars.



1 advanced **challenge booklet**

SETUP

(a) row of eight **fief cards** (in order from 0 to 7)



(d) **visiting** card



(b) **allies**



(c) **rulers** (one on each fief)

(e) deck



(f) discard pile

(g) score pile

The introductory setup shown on the previous page starts you off with simpler abilities and is recommended for your first few games. The full setup is described at the end of this rulebook.

(a) Place the eight **fief cards** in a row in order from 0 to 7.

• Set aside the 12 **character cards** with the crown icon. These are not used in the introductory game.

(b) Place the four Jack cards in a row under the fiefs to be your **allies**. Their order doesn't matter.

(c) Shuffle the King and Queen cards, then deal one on top of each fief to be the **rulers**. Place them slightly offset upward so you can see the fief number.

(d) Place the **visiting card** somewhere above the fiefs, arrow side up, pointing down.

(e) Shuffle the 32 **dialogue cards**. Place this **deck** under your allies.

(f) Leave space for a **discard pile** and a **score pile**.

• Draw eight cards from the deck to form your **hand**.

GAMEPLAY

Each game follows the five steps below:

A. Choose an unvisited fief to visit.

B. Optionally bring in friendly rulers to substitute for allies.

C. Play out dialogues with the chosen fief's ruler to try to hit their target score.

D. If you exactly hit the target score at the end of the visit, the ruler is now friendly.

E. Repeat until you've visited all the fiefs.

Each of these steps are described in detail in the following sections.

A. CHOOSE A FIEF TO VISIT

You must visit each of Northwood's eight fiefs once and only once per game. Each fief's ruler starts off **neutral** to you, and each fief requires you to end your visit with a different, exact score to turn its ruler **friendly**. The target scores are found on the bottom of the fief cards and range from 0 (leftmost) to 7 (rightmost).

1. Review the eight cards in your hand, then choose an unvisited fief to visit.

2. Move the visiting card above the chosen fief (fief #2 in the example below).



The fief you choose is ideally based on the cards in your hand, the ruler's suit, and your available abilities; this will be clearer later after explaining dialogues.

B. BRING IN FRIENDLY RULERS

You start the game with only your four allies, but rulers you've won over are willing to lend their help. When visiting a fief, any number of friendly rulers from previously visited fiefs may be brought in to temporarily **substitute** for an ally.

Each substitute brought in replaces a single ally, allowing you to use their ability for that fief only (more on abilities and turning rulers friendly later).

1. Choose any number of friendly rulers to bring in (or choose none).

2. Place each chosen ruler on top of one of your ally cards. Any ruler can substitute for any ally.



C. PLAY OUT DIALOGUES

Once you've chosen a fief and determined which four allies to use, you must now continuously play out **dialogues** (tricks) with that fief's ruler until either of you run out of cards.

A single dialogue consists of the ruler playing a card and you responding with a single card. Each ruler also has a favorite conversation topic, represented by their suit (also known as the **trump** suit).

1. You may activate up to one ally ability (explained below).

2. Place the top card of the deck face up into the discard pile. This card is the ruler's **statement**.

3. Choose one card in your hand to play as your **response**. What cards you can play follow standard trick-taking rules:

   • Your response must be of the same suit as the ruler's statement if able. This is called **following suit**.

   • If and only if you cannot follow suit, you may instead play any card.

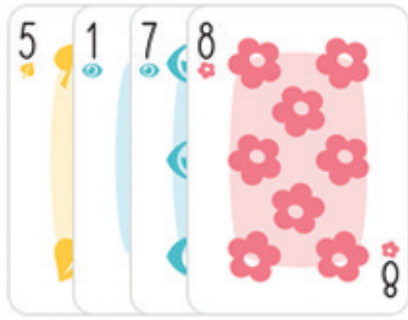
4. You score a point in the dialogue if either:

   • Your response is a higher card of the same suit as the ruler's statement (*a strong, on-topic rebuttal!*), or

   • The ruler's statement doesn't match the ruler card's suit, but your response does. (*Changing the topic to something they like. Way to go!*)

5. If you score, place your response card into the score pile (face up), otherwise place it into the discard pile as well.

Let's say these four cards form your hand, and Owl is the ruler (meaning the trump suit is **Eyes**).

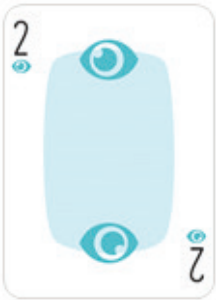




Three separate examples are shown below. If Owl leads with...



…<u>you must follow suit</u>. Since your only 🍁 card is 5, you must play it. Since 5 is lower than 7, it will not score.



… <u>you must follow suit</u>, but you have a choice. Responding with 7👁 will score since it's higher than 2👁. Responding with 1👁 will not.



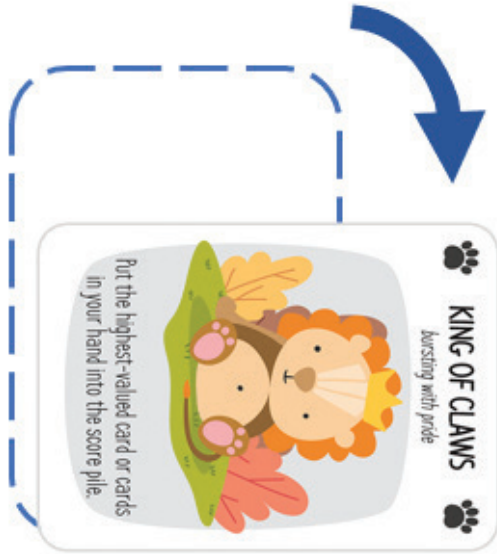
… you hold no 🐾 cards, so <u>you may respond with any card</u>. Playing 1👁 or 7👁 will score since it matches the trump suit 👁.

Responding with 8🌸 or 5🍁 won't score since neither card matches the statement's suit 🐾 nor the trump 👁. Values don't matter.

ALLY ABILITIES

Your most powerful tools are your four allies. Each of them has an ability you can activate once per visit.

Before each ruler's statement, you may activate up to one ally by turning that ally card (or the substitute on it) 90 degrees to the right, **exhausting** it. Follow the instructions on the card exactly, and fully resolve the whole ability.



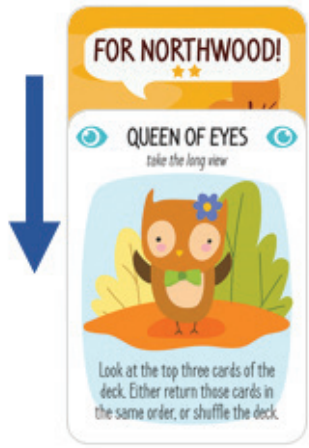
Allies are the heart of the game! Abilities reset after each visit, so use them freely – for example, you can activate one ally at the very start of the visit, two more in the middle, and not use the last one at all.

D. ENDING THE VISIT

After completing a dialogue or fully resolving an ability, if either your hand or the deck is empty, the visit immediately ends. You can't end visits early, nor can you activate abilities after the visit ends.

1. Once the visit ends, count the number of cards in the score pile.

- If it's exactly equal to the fief's target score, the ruler is now friendly. Slide their card downward a bit.



They'll be letting out a little "For Northwood!" cheer. You may call them to substitute starting from the next visit.

- If it's not equal to the target score, your discussions have unfortunately failed. Remove that ruler from the game and flip the fief facedown.



2. If you brought in any substitutes, remove all of them from the game, <u>whether you used their abilities or not</u>. In the next fief visit, you're back to your starting allies unless you bring in new rulers.

3. Reset all exhausted allies by rotating them back face up.

4. Shuffle all dialogue cards back into a new deck and draw eight new cards. Choose the next fief to visit.

E. ENDING THE GAME

Once you've visited all eight fiefs, the game ends. Each friendly fief gives you **victory points** equal to the number of stars on their card. Friendly fiefs give points whether their ruler is still on their card or was called in to substitute.

Add the total victory points to get your final score. You win with a score of 16 or higher. You may also a difficulty level before starting and set its minimum score as a cutoff for a game win.

Medal	Difficulty	Min. Score
Bronze	Standard	16
Silver	Advanced	18
Gold	Idealist	20



4 + 3 + 2 + 1 + 2 +4 = 16 (bronze medal! Win when playing on Standard, loss when playing on Advanced/Idealist)

The hardest rulers to convince are the ones in the edges. However, they're also much more valuable than the ones in the center and are must-wins at higher difficulties. Recruit the allies you need first!

If you lose a fief and realize that a win is out of reach, you may choose to either end the game or continue playing to see what score you can still get.

FULL GAME - ALL THE RULERS!

The introductory setup introduced earlier gives you the Jacks as allies, providing strong and beginner-friendly abilities. Once you're comfortable, you're ready for the full game using the whole roster!

Place the fiefs as normal, but instead with one random ally from each suit and two random rulers from each suit.

1. Shuffle all 24 character cards. Deal them face up one at a time, noting their suit as you deal.

2. As you deal, place the first card you see of each suit into your ally row. Place the second and third cards you see of each suit on the leftmost open fief as a ruler. Discard any further card of that

suit revealed.

3. Once you have four allies and eight rulers, stop dealing. Remove the 12 unused character cards from the game.

FAQ

• This is not a memory game. You are free to look through the discard or score pile at any time, but you may not rearrange their cards.

• If you activate an ability and there is at least one valid way to execute it, you must perform the ability. If there is no valid way to perform the ability, it does nothing.

• When moving multiple cards at the same time (e.g., 'discard two cards'), you may choose the order to move them.

• If an instruction tells you to draw or move cards from an empty pile (e.g., 'draw three cards' when the deck only has two), do as much as possible and skip the rest.

• Detailed examples for each ability can be found in bit.ly/ForNorthwoodFAQ.

CREDITS

• A huge thanks to Side Room Games for giving me and other new designers opportunities to bring our games to more people.

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