The Fox in the Forest

by Joshua Buergel



You can also learn to play by watching a video explanation:

FoxtrotGames.com/Forest

The Fox in the Forest

A Trick-Taking Game for 2 Players

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Overview

The Fox in the Forest is a trick-taking game for two players, each playing cards to win tricks against the other over multiple rounds. Players score points during a round by winning tricks containing specific cards and at the end of a round based on the number of total tricks they won. The player with the most points at the end of the game is the winner.

Components

GAME CARDS (33)



1-11
Bells



1-11
Keys



1-11
Moons

SCORING TOKENS (17)



x5

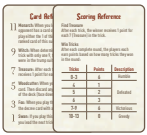


x4



x8

PLAYER REFERENCE (2)



Deep in the woods lived a witch well known for her potions. Desperate travelers would brave the depths of the dark forest in order to consult with her.

Setup

Each game consists of multiple rounds. In each round, one player will be the dealer. (For the first round, randomly select the dealer. For each round after that, alternate which player is the dealer.) At the beginning of a round, the dealer for the round completes the following steps:

1. Shuffle the 33 GAME CARDS.
2. Deal both players a HAND of 13 cards. (Each player may look at their own hand but should keep their hand hidden from the other player.)
3. Set aside the remaining 7 cards face down to make a DRAW DECK.
4. Take the top card of the draw deck and place it face up next to the draw deck. This card is known as the DECREE CARD. (The suit of this card will be important during the round.)

Gameplay

Round Overview

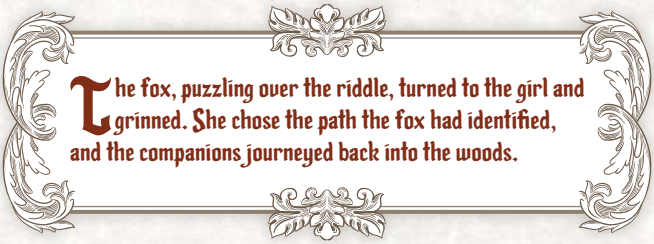
Each round consists of a series of 13 turns for each player, called **TRICKS**. Every trick, both players will play one card from their hand face up into the middle: one player will **LEAD** (that is, play the first card of the trick), and the other player will then **FOLLOW** (that is, play the second card of the trick). Based on the two cards that are played, one player will be said to **WIN THE TRICK**.

> The woodcutter's daughter packed a bag with flint and steel, her food, and a long blanket. She set off into the woods, following one of her father's trails.

Trick Details

LEADING: The non-dealer leads on the first trick of a round. After that (unless specified otherwise), the winner of one trick will lead the following trick. The leader can choose to play any card from their hand, without restriction. The suit of that card is known as the **LEAD SUIT** for the trick.

FOLLOWING: After one player leads, the other player now must play a card that (if possible) matches the lead suit; that card can be (unless specified otherwise) of any rank in that suit. If the



follower does not have a card in the lead suit, they may play any card without restriction.

DETERMINING THE TRICK WINNER: After both cards have been played (and any abilities activated; see *Abilities* on page 7), players determine the winner of the trick. Typically, the card with the highest rank in the lead suit wins the trick. However, the suit of the decree card (known as the TRUMP SUIT) is considered higher than the lead suit:

- If either card in the trick is in the trump suit, the player who played the card in the trump suit with the highest rank wins the trick.
- If neither card in the trick is in the trump suit, the player who played the card in the lead suit with the highest rank wins the trick.

The winner of the trick takes the two cards and keeps them face down near their side of the table. The number of tricks won by each player is public information, visible to both players during the round. However, no player may look at the faces of cards in previously won tricks.

The winner of a trick leads the next trick (unless otherwise specified). Continue to play tricks until all 13 tricks have been won.

Once upon a time, a woodcutter and his daughter lived in a small village bordering the forest. She had traveled with him and had seen him speak with the forest animals.



The woodcutter was known in the village as a brave man, unafraid of the forest's dangers. He would travel deep into the woods to bring back the best timber.

The queen decreed that whoever defeated the monsters would be granted half the kingdom in reward. Many second sons and daughters came from faraway lands to seek their fortune.



Visit FoxtrotGames.com/Forest to read the original fairy tale by Alana Joli Abbott for more background on the setting of this game.

Abilities

All the cards of odd rank (1, 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11) have special abilities printed on them, which activate when the card is played. They may change what your opponent can play, how the winner of the trick is determined, or who leads the next trick; they may let you take a special action when you play the card; and they may give points to the winner of the trick. The exact timing of each ability is included in the text.

(See the *Appendix: Common Questions* on page 9 for any additional help with these abilities.)

End-of-Round Scoring

After all 13 tricks have been played, count how many tricks each player has won. Players may win points at the end of the round, based on the number of tricks they won. (See the chart below.) You want to win more tricks than your opponent, but not too many.

Tricks	Points	Description
0-3	6	Humble
4	1	Defeated
5	2	
6	3	
7-9	6	Victorious
10-13	0	Greedy

(If you get too greedy, you will be brought down like the villain in so many fairy tales.)

After the end-of-round scoring, if either player has at least 21 points, then the game is over. Otherwise, play another round (with the dealer of the next round being the player who did not deal the current round).

End of Game

Play complete rounds until either player has at least 21 points. The player with the most points wins! If there is a tie, the player who won the most points during the last round wins.



VARIABLE GAME LENGTH: For a shorter or longer game, you may agree to end the game at a different number of points:

- For a shorter game, we recommend playing complete rounds until either player has at least 16 points.
- For a longer game, we like playing complete rounds until either player has at least 35 points. (You will need a piece of paper and a pencil to record the higher scores.)

Appendix: Common Questions

When do the abilities on the 3 (Fox) and 5 (Woodcutter) occur?

Each of these two abilities takes place immediately when the card is played, before another card is played or the winner of the trick is determined. (Note: If the person playing a 3 changes the decree card, the trump suit may also change. The new trump suit is used to determine the winner of the current trick.)

If my opponent leads a 9 (Witch), do I have to follow the 9's suit or the trump suit?

You must follow the 9's suit if you can. A non-trump 9 is not treated as if it were in the trump suit until after both cards in the trick have been played following the normal rules.

If my opponent leads a trump card and I have a trump card, can I play a non-trump 9 (Witch)?

No. A non-trump 9 is not treated as if it were in the trump suit until after both cards in the trick have been played following the normal rules. If you can follow suit with a trump card, you cannot play a non-trump 9.

Who wins a trick with two 9 (Witch) cards in it?

The special ability on the 9 (Witch) only applies when the trick contains one 9 (Witch). (The witch's magic lets her transform into the trump suit at the end of the trick, but with two witches in the trick, they neutralize each other's magic.) If the 9 of the trump suit was played, it would win; otherwise, the 9 of the lead suit would win.

Who leads the next trick after a trick with two 1 (Swan) cards in it?

If both players play a 1 (Swan), the player who loses the trick would lead the next trick.

The queen moved to strike the girl, but the swan spread its wings and flew to protect her. "My beak is quick and my wings are powerful," said the swan.

Credits

Game Design: Joshua Buergel
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Rulebook Editing: Dustin Schwartz

Playtesting: Jeff and Ruth Ashton, Michael C. Brannon, Andrew Brooks, Jarrett Carberry, Michael Domeny, Todd Edwards, Sarah Graybill, Megan Hazen, J. R. Honeycutt, Christine and Daniel Isom, Nolan Lichti, Christin Miller, Mike Mullins, Justin Neddo, Daniel Newman, Kelsey R. North, John Shulters, Beth Sobel, and Brian Villanueva

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