



ROOT

A Game of Woodland Might and Right

Learning to Play

A Step-By-Step Guide



Introduction

Root is a fast-paced game of adventure and war. In this game, you will take control of one of the four factions attempting to gain legitimacy over the vast Woodland: the invading Marquise, the proud Eyrie, the upstart Alliance, or the wily Vagabond. Root is a highly asymmetric game—each faction plays according to its own set of rules. However, all factions follow a few central concepts.

First we'll teach you those shared concepts. Then, we'll describe each faction with many examples and illustrations. Note: this booklet is not a complete reference. If you need a full rules reference, use the Law of Root. A complete list of rules not described in this booklet can be found on page @@.

Cards

Play in Root relies on a shared deck of 54 cards. These cards represent the many creatures living in the Woodland. Players will gain cards as they develop sources of income, and will spend cards in various ways throughout play.

Each card has a **suit** matching one of the four forest nations: fox, rabbit, mouse, or bird.



Fox



Rabbit



Mouse



Bird

Most cards also have an **improvement** or **item**, which you can craft to score points or gain persistent benefits.

Birds are Wild: You can always treat a bird card as a mouse, fox, or rabbit card. However, if you must spend a bird card, you can't spend a card of another suit instead.



The Map

Much of the action in Root unfolds on a map of the Woodland, consisting of twelve **clearings** connected by **paths**. The spaces enclosed by paths are called **forests**.

Some clearings are also connected by rivers. Only use rivers if the Riverfolk Company, an expansion faction, is in play.

Each clearing has two important parts:

First, a clearing is aligned with one of three forest **nations**: mouse, rabbit, or fox. A clearing's nation is shown by a matching symbol and by the color of its trees.

Second, each clearing has one to three **slots**, which hold buildings that the factions will place during play. A clearing with no open slots cannot hold more buildings.

Slots with a ruin icon begin with ruins. They cannot be built in until the Vagabond explores them. Without a Vagabond, these slots will be blocked for the entire game.

NOTE: THIS IS A PLACEHOLDER GRAPHIC



Player Pieces

In addition to their faction board, each player has a set of pieces in their color. Broadly speaking, pieces fall into these four categories.



Warriors, used to move and attack pieces belonging to other players.



Tokens, which are placed on the map but do not take up a building slot.



Buildings, which begin on player boards and are placed on empty slots on the board.



Status markers, which track things like victory points and a faction's relationship with the Vagabond.

The Vagabond has only one piece: a Vagabond pawn. This piece behaves quite differently from the other pieces. Its rules are on page @@.

Ruling a Clearing

Many actions in Root depend on who rules a clearing.

The ruler of a clearing is the player with the most combined **warriors and buildings** in that clearing. If there is a tie for rule, no one is the ruler.

Ruling Examples



*Blue rules
the fox clearing.*



*Orange rules
the mouse clearing.*



*No one rules
the rabbit clearing.*

Overview

The Flow of the Game

In Root, each player's turn is divided into three phases: Birdsong, Daylight, and Evening. After a player completes their turn, the next clockwise player begins their turn. Play continues until one player has won the game.

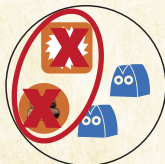
How to Win

In Root, you must demonstrate your legitimacy to rule over the great Woodland. To win, you must be the first to score **30 victory points**. Any faction can score victory points by **crafting items** (1–3 points each) and **removing opponents' buildings and tokens** (1 point each). Each faction can also score victory points in its own way, as described in its section.

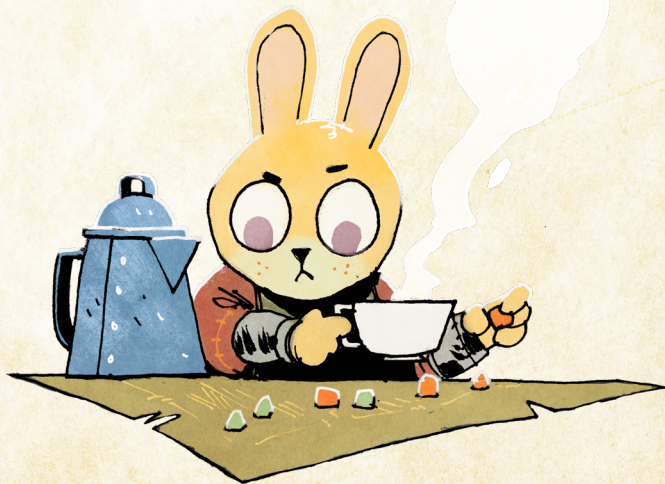
You can also win the game by playing and completing a **dominance card** (page @@).

Universal Scoring

Score whenever you remove a building or token.



Score when you craft items.



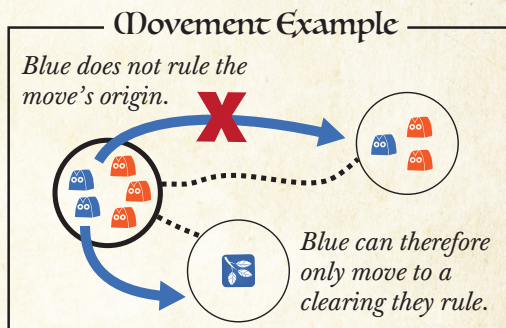
Key Actions

Though each faction has many different capabilities and constraints, all factions **move**, **craft**, and **battle** in the same way.

Moving

When you move, you may take any number of your warriors from one clearing and move them to one adjacent clearing.

To move you **must** rule either the origin or the destination clearing.



Crafting

Most cards in the deck can be crafted, scoring you points or giving you game-altering special powers.

Cards that can be crafted show a cost in their bottom-left corner. This cost indicates the **number** of crafting pieces you need and which **nations** (mouse, rabbit, fox) of clearings those crafting pieces must be in.



Each faction uses a different crafting piece, listed on its Craft action. Each crafting piece can only be used once per turn.

When you craft an **item**, score the listed victory points. Then, if a Vagabond is in play, take the matching item from the supply and put it near the top of your faction board.

When you craft an **improvement**, tuck it partially beneath your faction board. You may use its effect as described on the card.

Battling

When you battle, choose any clearing where you have any warriors. You are the attacker, and you choose one faction with any pieces there as the defender.

A BATTLE HAS THREE STEPS:

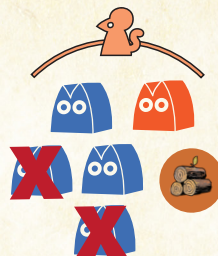
- » **1. Ambush?** The defender can play an ambush card to deal two immediate hits. However, the attacker can cancel the ambush card by then playing an ambush card. If no attacking warriors remain, the battle ends.
- » **2. Roll.** The attacker rolls two dice. The attacker deals hits equal to the **higher** roll, and the defender deals hits equal to the **lower** roll. Each player may deal hits up to their number of warriors in the clearing of battle.
- » **3. Remove Pieces.** The players deal hits simultaneously. For each hit taken, a player must remove one warrior in the clearing of battle. If a player has no warriors left to remove, they must remove a building or token there.

Many improvements and special abilities allow players to deal **extra hits**. Extra hits are not limited by the number of warriors in the clearing of battle, so a single warrior could deal multiple hits.

Defenseless: If the defender has no warriors in the clearing of battle, the attacker deals an extra hit.

Battle Example

Blue initiates battle and targets orange.

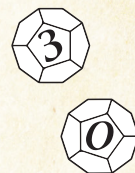


First...

Orange plays a mouse ambush card! Blue cannot foil the ambush and removes two warriors, returning them to their stock.

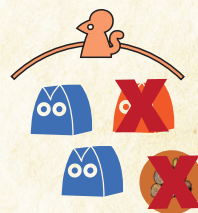
Then...

Blue still has warriors, so the battle continues. Blue rolls the dice and, as the attacker, takes the higher result.



Finally...

Both sides deal hits. Because blue only has two warriors left, he can only deal two hits. Orange deals zero hits.



Orange returns pieces to his stock, blue scores a victory point for removing a token.

You may now wish to set up your first game by following the instructions on the back of this booklet. If playing with fewer than four players, do not use the Vagabond. If playing with fewer than three, do not use the Alliance. Once you've set up the game, continue reading.

The Eyrie Dynasties



*The Eyrie Dynasties wish to restore their once-dignified kind to their former glory in the Woodland by resettling the forest clearings. During their Evening, the Eyrie score victory points from their number of **roosts** on the map. The greater their presence, the greater their gains. However, the Eyrie are bound by their **Decree**, an ever-increasing set of mandated actions promised by their **leader**. Each turn, they must take all of the actions on their Decree, or else fall into **turmoil**.*

The Eyrie are the **Lords of the Forest**. They rule a clearing even when tied for presence. However, their **Disdain for Trade** means they score less when crafting items.

Birdsong

You **must** play one or two cards onto any columns in the Decree. You may only add one bird card per turn.

Emergency Orders: If you have no cards or no roosts on the map during Birdsong, you will draw a card or place a roost and warriors.

Daylight

First, you may craft any number of cards, using roosts.

Then, you **must** resolve the Decree, starting with the leftmost column and moving right. In each column, you may resolve cards in any order.

For each card in a column, you must take the action listed by the column in a clearing matching the card. Here are the actions in the four columns of the Decree:

- » **Recruit:** Place a warrior in a matching clearing with a roost.
- » **Move:** Move at least one warrior from a matching clearing.
- » **Battle:** Initiate a battle in a matching clearing.
- » **Build:** Place a roost in a matching clearing you rule with an open slot and no roost.

Evening

First, score the victory points shown on the rightmost empty space of your Roosts track.

Then, draw one card plus any uncovered income bonus. If you have more than five cards in your hand, discard down to five.



Turmoil

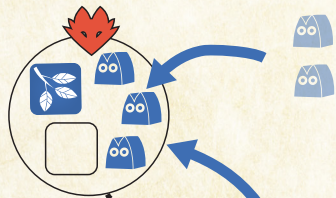
If you cannot take an action for any reason, you fall into **turmoil**:

- » **First, your regime is humiliated.** Lose one victory point per bird card in the Decree.
- » **Then, purge your court.** Discard all of the cards in the Decree except the Loyal Viziers.
- » **Then, you depose your leader.** Flip your current leader face down and set it aside, choose a new leader from those face-up, and place it on your faction board. Then, tuck your Loyal Viziers into the Decree spaces listed on your new leader.
- » **Finally, you rest.** End Daylight and go to Evening.

There are many ways to go into turmoil! You might not have any warriors left in your supply to Recruit, for example, or maybe all the clearings you rule already have a roost, meaning you can't Build any more.

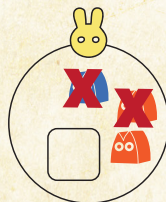
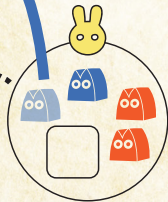
Decree Example

The Eyrie's Decree has a bird and fox card in the Recruit column, and a rabbit card in the Move column, a bird card on the Battle column, and a bird card on the Build column.



For the Recruit, Eyrie chooses to use the bird card as a fox and so places two warriors in a fox clearing with a Roost.

Next, the Eyrie must move at least one piece from a rabbit clearing.



Then, the Eyrie must battle. They only have a target in the rabbit clearing.

In the battle the Eyrie and orange each lose a single warrior.

Finally, the Eyrie must place a Roost in a clearing they rule that does not have a Roost. They have no legal Roost placement and so the dynasty enters turmoil!

The Marquise de Cat



*The Marquise de Cat occupies the Woodland and wants to turn it into an industrial and military powerhouse. Each time the Marquise builds one of her **buildings**—a workshop, sawmill, or recruiter—she scores victory points. The more of the same building she has on the map, the more points she scores. However, to fuel ongoing construction, the Marquise must maintain and protect a strong, interconnected economy of **wood**, which make for easy targets for her adversaries.*

In her starting corner, the Marquise has a token called the **Keep** which grants two special abilities while the Keep is on the map. First, no one but the Marquise can place pieces on the clearing with the Keep. Also, when a Marquise warrior would be removed, she may discard any card to instead place that warrior at the Keep.

Birdsong

During Birdsong, place one wood token at each sawmill.

Daylight

First, you can craft any cards in your hand using workshops. Then, you can take up to three of the following actions.

- » **March:** Take two moves.
- » **Battle:** Initiate a battle.
- » **Build:** Place one building in a clearing you rule with an open slot by spending wood tokens equal to its cost. You may spend any wood on the map connected to this clearing by a chain of ruled clearings. When you place the building, score the victory points revealed on your faction board.
- » **Recruit:** Place one warrior at each recruiter. You can take this action only once per turn.
- » **Overtime:** Spend a card to place one wood token at one sawmill in a clearing matching the card played.

Hawks for Hire: After taking three actions, the Marquise may take any number of additional actions by spending one bird card each.

Unless otherwise noted, a faction may take actions listed in the same phase in any order, and may take a given action multiple times.

Evening

Draw one card plus one card per uncovered draw bonus. Then, if you have more than five cards in your hand, discard down to five.



Draw Bonus

Most of the other factions draw and discard during Evening in exactly the same way.

Daylight Example

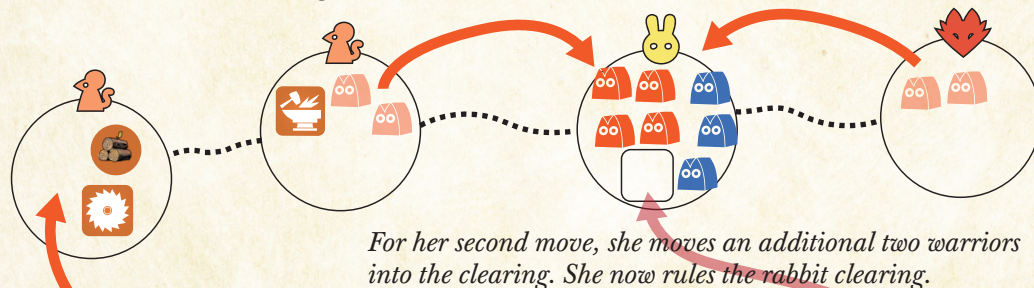
First, the Marquise decides to craft the Gently-Used Knap-sack, which requires a single mouse workshop. She scores a victory point and puts the item on her faction board.



Then, she begins to take her actions:

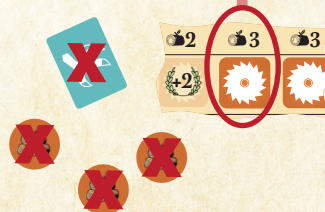
She starts by taking the March action, which lets her move twice.

She moves two warriors from a mouse clearing, which she rules, to a rabbit clearing, which she doesn't.



For her second and third action, she takes the Overtime action twice, spending a mouse and a bird card to put two extra wood in a mouse clearing with a sawmill.

Though she has used her three actions, she would like to go again, so she spends a bird card to get a bonus action (Hawks for Hire). With this action she decides to build. Because she rules the rabbit clearing, she can now build in its empty slot. The next Sawmill to be built costs three wood, and she spends wood from the nearby mouse clearing to pay the cost. Then, she scores three victory points.



The Woodland Alliance



The Woodland Alliance works to gain the **sympathy** of the various oppressed creatures of the Woodland. Each time the Alliance places a sympathy token, they score victory points. The more sympathy on the map, the more victory points they score. Gaining the sympathy of the people requires **supporters**, cards on the Alliance's faction board. These supporters can also be put towards violent ends, inciting outright **revolt**. A revolt establishes a new **base**, allowing the Alliance to train **officers** that increase their military flexibility.

The Alliance are experts in **Guerrilla War**. When defending in battle, the Alliance uses the higher roll and the attacker uses the lower roll.

Sympathy and Outrage

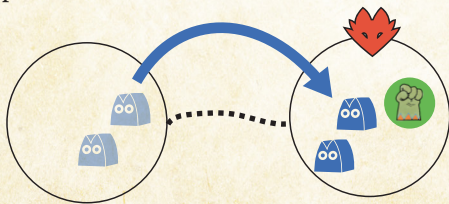
A clearing with a sympathy token is called a **sympathetic clearing**. These clearings are critical to you. First, placing sympathy is the main way you score victory points. Also, sympathetic clearings generate supporters through **outrage**.

Whenever another player removes a sympathy token or moves any warriors into a sympathetic clearing, they must add a card from their hand matching that clearing to your Supporters stack.

If they don't have a matching card, they show you their hand, and then you draw a card from the deck and add it to your Supporters stack.

Outrage Example

The Eyrie would like to move into the fox clearing. Because it has a sympathy token, they must pay one fox card into the Alliance's supporter stack.



Supporter Stack

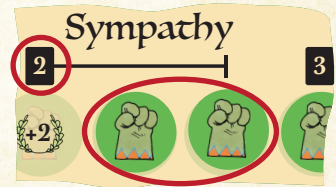


Then the Eyrie battles in the fox clearing and removes the sympathy token. They must now pay an additional fox card to the supporter stack. The Eyrie pays a bird card. If they were unable to pay, the Alliance player would have added a card from the top of the draw deck.

Birdsong

You may Revolt any number of times, and then Spread Sympathy any number of times.

- » **Revolt:** Spend two supporters matching a sympathetic clearing. Remove all enemy pieces there, and place the base matching the clearing there. Then, place warriors there equal to the total number of sympathetic clearings matching the nation of the Revolt clearing, including the Revolt clearing itself.
- » **Spread Sympathy:** Place a sympathy token in an unsympathetic clearing adjacent to a sympathetic clearing. You must spend supporters based on the cost shown on your Sympathy track.



During Birdsong, you only spend **supporters**—cards in your Supporters stack. Supporters are separate from your hand of cards, and you can only spend supporters for their suit. For example, you couldn't craft a supporter or play an ambush card to deal hits.

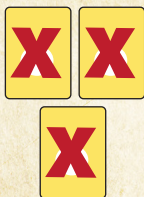
Birdsong Example

At the start of Birdsong, the Alliance sees a sympathetic fox clearing as a prime target for Revolt, so they take the opportunity, spending a fox and a bird from their supporter stack.

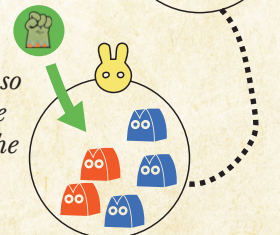
Supporter Stack



This Revolt removes the Eyrie's Roost and two Marquise warriors, and the Alliance scores a victory point for the removed Roost. Because the Alliance has three sympathetic fox clearings, they place three warriors in the fox clearing of the Revolt. A massive outcome!



Then, the Alliance places a sympathy token in a rabbit clearing. This is the fourth sympathy token, so the cost is two cards. In addition, because there are three warriors belonging to at least one player in the clearing, the cost increases to three. Three rabbit cards are paid from the supporter stack and the Alliance places the sympathy and scores two victory points.



Daylight

You may take the following actions. Unlike in Birdsong, these cards come from your hand, **not** your supporters.

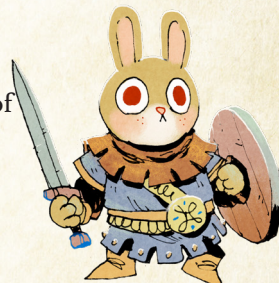
- » **Craft:** Craft a card, using sympathy tokens.
- » **Support:** Add a card to the supporter stack.
- » **Train:** Spend a card whose nation matches a built base to place a warrior in the Officers box. This warrior is now an **officer**.

Your **officers** determine the number of military operations you can take during Evening. Without officers, you can't move or battle with your warriors! Training officers will also let you recruit new warriors and place sympathy tokens without spending supporters.

Evening

You may take these military operations, up to your number of officers.

- » **Move:** Take one move.
- » **Battle:** Initiate a battle.
- » **Recruit:** Place a warrior in a clearing with a base.
- » **Organize:** Remove one of your warriors from an unsympathetic clearing to place a sympathy token there. Score the revealed victory points.

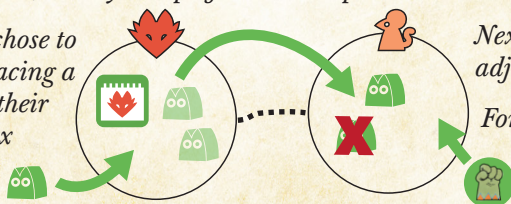


After you finish military operations, draw one card plus any uncovered draw bonus. Then, if you have more than five cards in your hand, discard down to five.

Military Operations Example

It is now the start of Evening. The Alliance has three warriors in their operations box, so they can perform three operations.

First, they chose to Recruit, placing a warrior in their base in a fox clearing.



Next, they move two warriors to an adjacent mouse clearing.

For their final operation, they organize, removing one of their warriors and placing a sympathy token.



Whenever a base is removed, you'll have to remove all of your officers and discard all supporters matching the nation of the base removed—even your bird supporters!

The Vagabond

*The Vagabond plays all sides of the conflict, making friends and enemies as suit his ends, while going on **quests** to increase his renown throughout the wood. As the Vagabond improves his **relationships** with other factions, or removes warriors of factions hostile toward him, he scores victory points.*

Being a **Lone Wanderer**, the Vagabond cannot rule a clearing or stop another player from ruling one, but he is **Nimble**, so he can move regardless of who rules his current clearing.

Items

To move and act effectively, the Vagabond must manage his Satchel of **items**, expanding his selection by exploring the Woodland's **ruins** and providing aid to other factions.

Each item can be face up or face down and damaged or undamaged. You can only exhaust an item, using it for an action, if it is both face up and undamaged. When you exhaust an item, flip it face down.

When undamaged, some items are stored on the matching tracks on the left side of your faction board, while all other items (*damaged and undamaged*) are stored in your Satchel. You can only carry so many items in your Satchel, and you will have to discard down to your item capacity during Evening.

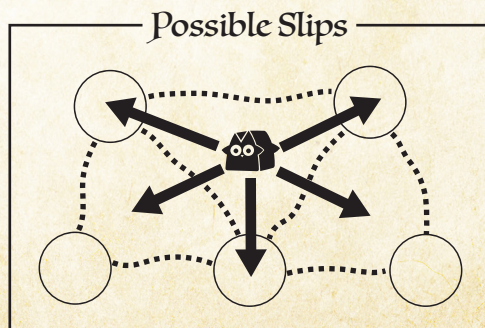
An item's position displays one of three states:



Birdsong

Flip up two exhausted items for each <tea> face up at the start of Birdsong, then flip up three more.

Then, you may Slip once, moving into an adjacent clearing or forest without exhausting any <boot>.



Daylight

You can perform various actions by exhausting items, flipping them face down.

- » **Move:** Exhaust <boot> to move.
- » **Repair:** Exhaust <hammer> to repair a damaged item and place it face up.
- » **Craft:** Play a card from your hand, and exhaust <hammer> equal to the cost of the item or improvement. All of your <hammer> match your clearing.
- » **Battle:** Exhaust <sword> to initiate a battle.
- » **Strike:** Exhaust <crossbow> to remove a warrior in your clearing. If a player has no warriors there, you can instead remove a building or token of that player.
- » **Explore:** Exhaust <torch> to take one item from ruins in your clearing. Also, score 1 victory point. Then remove the ruins.
- » **Special Action:** Exhaust <torch> to perform the action listed on your character card.
- » **Aid:** Exhaust any one item, and give a card from your hand matching your clearing's nation to any player in your clearing. Then, take one item, if any, from their Crafted Items box.
- » **Quest:** Complete a quest whose nation matches your clearing, by exhausting the two items listed on the quest. Score 1 victory point for each quest of this nation that you have completed, including this one. Then, place the quest in your play area, and draw a new quest. Finally, draw a card from the deck.

Evening

Then, if you are in a forest, repair all of your damaged items, and flip all exhausted items face up.

Then, draw one card, plus one card per draw bonus on your track. Then, if you have more than five cards in your hand, discard down to five.

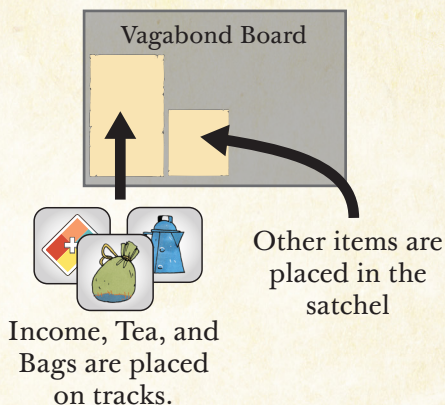
Finally, if you have more items in your Satchel than your item limit, six items plus <bag>, you must remove items from your faction board down to your item limit.

Unlike other factions, the Vagabond does not uncover draw bonuses, but instead gets draw bonuses as items. This item only adds a bonus draw if it is undamaged and faceup on its matching track.

Gaining Items

Whenever you gain or take <tea>, <income>, or <bag>, place it on its matching track. Place all other items in your Satchel. When an item is damaged, move it to your Damaged box. When an item is repaired, move it back to its matching track or Satchel, as appropriate.

Only undamaged, face-up items can be exhausted or improve your capabilities, such as increasing card draw or hand limit.



Relationships

Your Relationships chart represents how friendly or hostile other factions are toward you.

You can improve a relationship by giving cards to another player with the Aid action. You must Aid that player the number of times shown between their current relationship space and the next one, during the same turn. Each time you improve a relationship, you score the victory points listed on the new relationship space. When you reach the **Allied** space, you may move and battle with that faction's warriors.

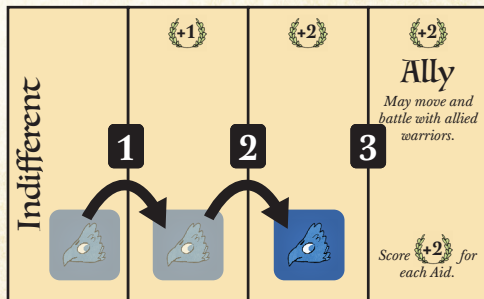
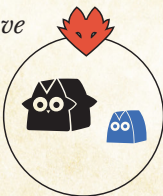
If you ever remove another player's warrior, place their relationship marker in the **Hostile** box. From now on, you will score 2 victory points each time you remove one of their warriors in battle. However, when moving, you must exhaust another boot if there are any Hostile warriors in the destination clearing.

Aid and Improving Relationships Example

The Vagabond would like to improve his relationship with the Eyrie.

Because he shares a fox clearing with them, he may give fox cards to the Eyrie using Aid. For each aid, he must exhaust an item and give a fox card. He decides to aid three times.

The Vagabond then advances the Eyrie marker two spaces and scores three victory points.



Battling as the Vagabond

Because you don't have warriors, you follow a few different rules in battle.

- » The Vagabond pawn is not a warrior, so you can't rule and you are not affected by effects that refer to warriors.
- » The maximum hits you can deal by rolling equals your total undamaged swords, whether exhausted or not.
- » You take hits by damaging items of your choice. If you have no undamaged items, you ignore further hits.
- » You are defenseless, taking an extra hit, if you have no undamaged swords.



Vagabond Battle Example

The Vagabond is in a clearing with three Marquise warriors. He has two face-up swords in his Satchel. After a long and fruitful relationship with the Marquise, the Vagabond is ready to betray his friend.

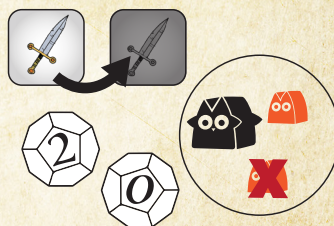
The First Battle

He exhausts a sword to initiate battle against the Marquise. The Marquise doesn't play an ambush card. The Vagabond then rolls the dice, rolling a 1 and a 1. The Vagabond deals one hit and moves the Marquise's relationship marker to Hostile. The Marquise also deals one hit, and the Vagabond chooses to damage the exhausted sword.



The Second Battle

Undeterred, he exhausts his second sword to initiate battle again. The Marquise doesn't play an ambush card. The Vagabond then rolls the dice, rolling a 2 and a 0. With only one undamaged sword, the Vagabond can only deal a single hit. Because he removed the warrior of a hostile faction, the Vagabond scores two points.



Dominance Cards

The deck has four dominance cards, one in each suit. Like ambush cards, these cards cannot be crafted, but they can be spent for their suit.

When you spend a dominance card for its suit, do not discard it! Instead, place it near the map. Any dominance card near the map can be taken into a player's hand during their Daylight by spending a card of matching suit.



Changing Your Victory Condition

During your Daylight, if you have at least ten points, you may play a dominance card into your play area to **activate** it. Remove your score marker from the score track. For the rest of the game, you can only win by meeting the victory condition listed on your activated dominance card.

Your activated dominance card does not count against your hand size, and it cannot be removed from play or replaced.

Forming a Coalition as the Vagabond

The Vagabond cannot rule clearings, but, if he has at least ten points, he can play a dominance card to form a **coalition** with the player with the lowest score. If there is a tie for fewest victory points, the Vagabond may pick who to form a coalition with.

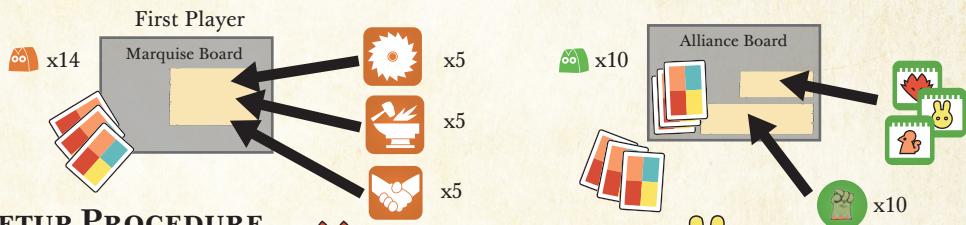
When forming a coalition, the Vagabond removes his score marker from the score track and places it on the faction board of that player. Now, the Vagabond will share the victory if that player wins.

A Vagabond can even form a coalition with a hostile faction! If doing so, the Vagabond moves his partner's relationship marker to the Indifferent space of his Relationships track.



Example of a Four Player Setup

For your first game, we recommend the seating order of Marquise (first player), Alliance, Eyrie, Vagabond. Once players are seated, set up the game using the following instructions.



QUICK-SETUP PROCEDURE

- 1st Assign Factions
- 2nd Take faction boards and pieces and setup according to the illustration.
- 3rd Deal each player 3 cards.
- 4th Place the indicated four items beneath the ruins and then shuffle the ruins and place them on the board.



Remaining Items in Pool

