



THE LORD OF THE RINGS

The Fellowship of the Ring™ Trick-Taking Game

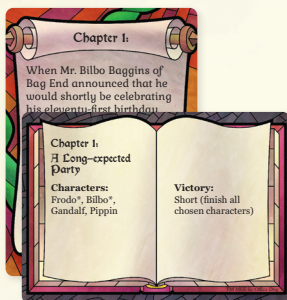
The Fellowship of the Ring Trick-Taking Game is a cooperative card game for 1 to 4 players that takes you through the first part of J.R.R. Tolkien's classic story over the course of 18 chapters.

What is a trick-taking game? Trick-taking is a set of rules used in many classic card games (hearts, spades, euchre, bridge, Doppelkopf, and tarot, for example). A trick is formed when each player plays a card from their hand to the middle of the table. One of the players wins the trick and takes the cards.

What is a cooperative game? In a cooperative game, players must work together to accomplish each player's goal and win or lose together as a group.

What is a chapter? Chapters are the scenarios that make up the story of *The Fellowship of the Ring*. They establish the characters the players must use, the special rules they must follow, and the goals they must achieve to win and advance. They can be played in any order, though playing sequentially is recommended.

Components



Chapter 1 Card



4 Character Cards

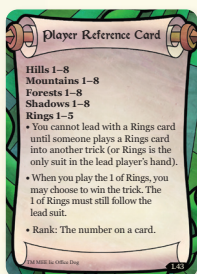


37 Main Deck Cards



5 Wooden Tokens

- 1 Ring Token
- 4 Star Tokens



6 Reference Cards



Chapters 2–18 Cards
(96 cards in a
precise order in
2 sealed sections)

Key Types of Cards

Main Deck Cards



The Card's Rank Number

The Card's Suit Icon

Main Deck Makeup:

- Hill 1–8
- Mountain 1–8
- Forest 1–8
- Shadow 1–8
- Ring 1–5

Character Cards



The Character's Name

The Character's Description

♦ The Character's Goal

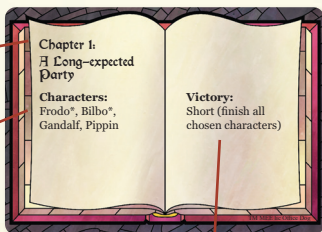
♠ The Character's Setup Action

Chapter Cards

The Chapter's Number and Title

Characters Used in This Chapter

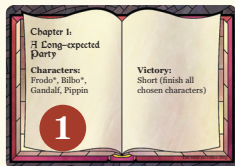
(* indicates that the character must be chosen)



The Chapter's Victory Condition

Chapter 1 Setup

- 1 Take the Chapter 1 card “A Long-expected Party” and put it and the character cards listed face up in the center of the table.



- 2 Place a star token next to each character with a * after their name on the chapter card.



- 3 Shuffle the main deck cards and deal 1 card faceup near the chapter card. This is called the **lost card**. If the lost card is the 1 of Rings, deal another card and shuffle the 1 of Rings back into the deck.



- 4 Deal the rest of the main deck cards to the players according to the player count. (Players look at their cards but keep them secret.)

- **2 players: 12 cards each** (see page 20)
- **3 players: 12 cards each**
- **4 players: 9 cards each**



- 5 The player dealt the 1 of Rings card takes Frodo and the Ring token on the **Cannot Lead Rings** side facing up. They keep the 1 of Rings card in their hand. Make sure you use the correct side of the Frodo card based on the number of players in the game (3 players or 4 players).



- 6 Starting to Frodo's left, each player picks a character card. Characters with a star token must be chosen this round. This means Bilbo must be chosen, but the first player to choose does not necessarily need to choose him. **Remove all of the star tokens once each player has a character.**

Tip: When choosing character cards, take a close look at the cards in your hand and decide which goal you can best accomplish.

- 7 Starting with the player to Frodo's left, each player with a character that has a setup action (indicated by a ) performs that action.

Exchange means the active character passes 1 card facedown to 1 of the indicated characters. The receiving character looks at the passed card, adds it to their hand, then passes any 1 card back facedown. (This may be the originally passed card.)

Any characters not in a given round cannot be part of an exchange (such as Merry or Sam on Pippin's card). Frodo may not exchange the 1 of Rings.

- 8 You are ready to play.



Trick-Taking

Players have a hand of cards that represent the world of Middle-earth and the One Ring's influence on it. Through clever play of these cards, players work together to complete each character's goal and win the game.

Each deal of the deck is called a round, which is played as a series of tricks. A trick consists of each player playing a single card. Below are more details on key terms, how to play cards, and how to determine the winner of each trick.

Lead: The first player in a trick (called the lead player) plays any card from their hand to the center of the table. The suit of this first card is the trick's lead suit (Hills, Mountains, Forests, Shadows, or Rings). **Frodo leads the first trick.**

Follow: The remaining players, in clockwise order from the lead player, must then play a card to the table, matching the lead suit if they are able to. This is known as following suit. If a player cannot follow suit, they may play any card from their hand.

Win: Once all players have played 1 card to the trick, check to see who wins. The player with the highest card of the lead suit wins the trick. That player takes all of the cards facedown into a pile in front of themselves. **The winner of the trick leads the next trick.**

Example: Frodo leads with a 1 of Hills. Gandalf is next to play. He has a 3 of Hills and a 6 of Hills and must follow suit. Gandalf chooses to play the 3 of Hills. Bilbo does not have any Hills cards, so he chooses to play the 5 of Rings. Gandalf played the highest card in the lead suit of Hills and takes the trick. Gandalf then leads the next trick. (See diagram below.)



The Rings Suit

The Rings suit is like the other 4 suits, except there are only 5 cards in the Rings suit (the others have 8), and it has a few special rules associated with it.



Leading Rings: Players cannot lead with a Rings card until someone plays a Rings card into another trick (because a player did not have the lead suit and played a Rings card instead). The Ring token begins on the Cannot Lead Rings ❶ side to reflect this.

Once someone plays a Rings card, players can lead with Rings cards in future tricks. Flip over the Ring token to the Can Lead Rings ❷ side.

In the unlikely event that a lead player has only Rings cards, they can lead with one even if no one has played the Rings suit yet.

The One Ring: The 1 of Rings is the most powerful single card in the game. When a player plays the 1 of Rings, they may decide that they want to win the trick; if they do, they will win the trick no matter what cards have been or will be played to the trick. If they decide to not automatically win the trick, treat the card as having a rank of 1 of the Rings suit. The 1 of Rings must follow normal rules for playing a card in the Rings suit.

Important: Only the 1 of Rings can win any trick; the 2 through 5 of Rings win or lose a trick like any other card



Communication

Players can only discuss information visible to all players during setup and gameplay. Players cannot discuss or show the cards in their hands or any other player's hands. During setup, players should not discuss character preferences, as this may reveal information. Players can remind each other of their characters' goals and special rules, the current status of their goals, or any other information known to all players, such as cards faceup on the table.

Players should keep the tricks they have won facedown to the side so these cards are not confused with the cards in hand. If it is useful, players can keep cards they win that are part of their character's goal faceup as a reminder (Rings cards for Frodo, for example), but make sure there is no confusion about which cards are in hand and which cards are being played.

Character Goals

Each character has a goal that must be completed by the player who selected them during the round.

Marking goals as complete: Once you have satisfied the condition for a character's goal (and cannot later fail the goal), put a star token on your character card to remind other players you have accomplished your goal.

Ending Early: If everyone finishes all of the character goals (and you cannot fail them later in the round), you can stop playing early and move on.

Conversely, if a play means you will never be able to finish a character's goal, you can stop the round as soon as you know you've failed the goal.



Pippin's goal is complete, marked by the star token placed over him.

End of the Round

Once all players have played all the cards in their hands (except Gandalf, who will have 1 card left over), the round is finished.

If everyone completed their character's goal this round, the players win and have completed the chapter. Set this chapter's card aside and get the next chapter card from the box along with any other new cards required. If even 1 player failed to complete their character's goal, everyone loses. You may replay the round and try again.

There are many chapters in the game, and it is unlikely you will get through them all in a single play session. Use the ribbons in the box to keep track of where you are so you can come back later and continue from where you left off.

Play Chapter 1 Now!



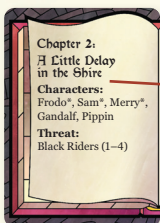
Additional Rules

Subsequent chapters are similar to the first chapter. You start with a chapter card that will tell you all the cards you will use.

The golden rule always applies: “If any text on a card contradicts these rules, follow the rules on the card.”

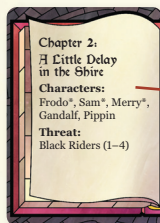
New Characters

Each new chapter will introduce new characters and new challenges. Some characters from earlier chapters remain in the game, while some depart and some return.



Threat

The Threat Deck represents the looming threat pursuing the Company.



Shuffle the numbered threat cards indicated on the chapter card and place them facedown to form the Threat Deck. During setup, certain characters will draw or select a Threat card from the Threat Deck. The Threat card goes faceup next to their character card.

In the unlikely event that the lost card matches both the rank of the drawn Threat card and the suit(s) required by a character's goal, draw a new Threat card.

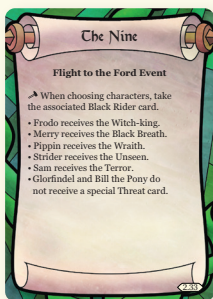
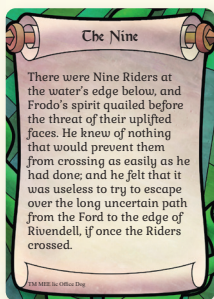
Example: If the 3 of Hills is the lost card and Sam draws the 3 Black Rider, he draws a new Threat card.



Some chapters have special Threat cards that won't be shuffled into the Threat Deck but will instead be assigned to a specific character, giving them an additional goal or restriction for the round. Use these Threat cards only when specified by the chapter card.

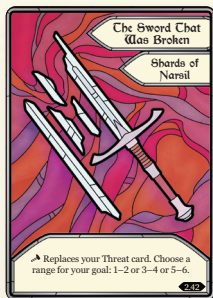
Events and Special Rules

Some chapters will have event cards that change the rules. Follow these instructions closely during setup and/or play. Consult Chapter-Specific Questions (page 14) if you have any questions about how a particular event or chapter works.



Gifts

Some chapters will have gifts assigned to specific characters. They will give extra rules or advantages to that character during setup and/or play. Use these gift cards only when specified by the chapter card, as they are not permanent for all future chapters. Gifts can only be used once per chapter.

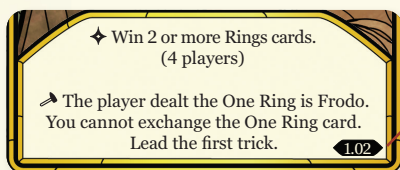


Frodo's Absence

If Frodo is not part of the chapter, the player dealt the 1 of Rings chooses a character first, then selection proceeds to their left. The player with the 1 of Rings will perform their setup action first after everyone chooses a character. The player dealt the 1 of Rings card always takes the Ring token. A character's setup action will indicate that they lead the first trick.

Card Numbers

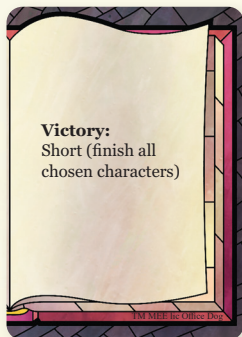
The small numbers in the bottom right corner of the cards are useful if you want to sort the game back to factory order to replay the chapters. The color also helps you find all the cards you need to play the Road Goes Ever On... mode (see page 19).



Card Number

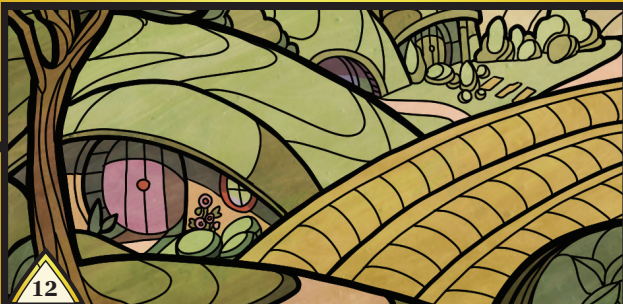
Victory Conditions

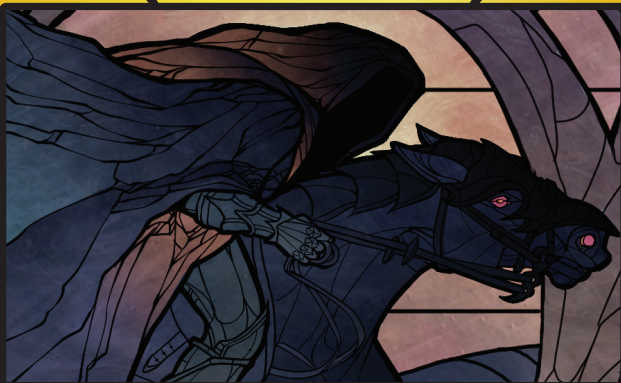
The chapter card will indicate the length of the chapter and victory condition, either short or long.



Short

“finish all chosen characters”: If the players complete all the goals of the chosen characters, they win the chapter and can play the next one. If they miss any goals, they can replay the chapter.



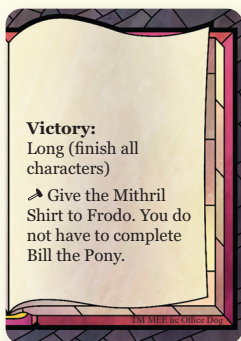


Long

“finish all characters”:

Long chapters will be played over multiple rounds. If the players complete all the goals of the chosen characters, they set those character cards aside.

If the players haven't completed all the characters, they then play another round in this chapter. Some chapters will indicate specific characters that do not have to be completed.



To begin the next round, shuffle the main deck and deal. Players will choose characters and follow all of the round setup using the same chapter card. Players can choose completed characters again in the next round, but they don't have to. (A player may decide to choose a previously completed character because they don't think their hand will work with any uncompleted characters.)

Use Frodo in every round, even after he has been completed.

If the players have completed all characters and met all the goals of every character they chose for this round, they win the chapter and can move on to the next chapter.

If at any point the players miss a goal, they lose the chapter and may start over. They can choose to start again from the beginning of the chapter or keep the characters they've completed.

Some long chapters will note a character as optional. Optional characters do not need to be chosen to complete the chapter but if an optional character is chosen, it must be complete successfully.

Chapter-Specific Questions

Below are some extra details about specific chapters and characters:

Chapter 1

Pippin always accomplishes his goal if he wins 0 tricks.

Chapter 2

Clarification: If **Sam** draws the rank 3 Black Rider card, he must win the 3 of Hills. **Merry** must win exactly 1 trick or exactly 2 tricks—any more or less and he fails his goal. Note: **Bilbo** is not used in the chapter.

Chapter 3

Gildor does not have to win the last trick, just play a Forest.

Chapter 4

Play until all players are out of cards; **Fatty** will not play a card for the last few tricks. If **Fatty** wins the trick with his last card, the lead passes to **Fatty**'s left.

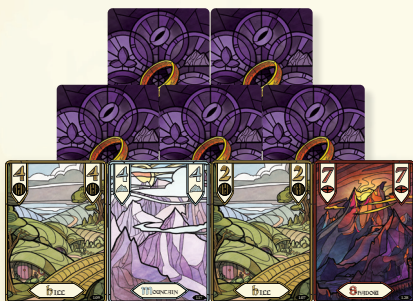
Solo: Before the rest of his setup, deal the **Fatty** character 5 more cards (9 total) from the deck. Do not deal **Fatty** a new card after each trick. Fatty's setup action does not count as the exchange.

Chapter 5

There is no specific penalty for losing a card to Old Man Willow, but it may prevent a character from achieving their goal. The Old Man Willow 9 card is used only in this chapter. With 3 players, **Tom** will have 2 card left in his hand, and with 4 players, 1 cards left. The Old Forest card loses ties. Cards won by the The Forest do not effect **Pippin**'s goal.

Solo: After building the Old Forest Deck, set up as you normally would for a solo game except the draw deck you will use to refill hands will have only 12 cards.

2-Player: use the following diagram for the open hand:



Chapter 6

Goldberry must win exactly 3 tricks (and no tricks other than these 3), and they must follow each other in sequence. **Goldberry** keeps her hand faceup the whole round, and it can be discussed by all players. **Tom** will have 5 cards left in his hand at the end of the round. Do not deal a lost card in addition to the Barrow-wights setup.

Solo: During setup of the Barrow-wights event, remove 5 cards from the deck (like in a 4-player game), then set up as you normally would for a solo game, except the draw deck you will use to refill hands will have only 16 cards. During **Goldberry's** setup, deal her 4 cards from the draw deck (so that **Goldberry** has 8 cards in her hand). She will not get more cards later during the round.

2-Player: Set up based on the Chapter 5 diagram. If the pyramid controls **Goldberry**, all of her cards in the pyramid are faceup, but the top 5 are still covered. If the pyramid controls **Tom**, the barrow cards are all faceup, not covering any cards.

Chapter 7

Barliman can win other tricks but must win 1 of the last 3 to accomplish his goal. **Mr. Underhill** is not considered **Frodo** for the purposes of any other cards. (e.g., **Sam** cannot exchange with him). Any player can choose Mr. Underhill, not just the player dealt the 1 of Rings. If Mr. Underhill does have the 1 of Rings, he can exchange it.

Chapter 8

Strider can never win tricks exactly equal to his Threat card. The Witch-King and The Black Breath are not shuffled into the Threat Deck.

Chapter 9

All characters will get their specific Black Rider when picked. **Strider** can look at his Threat card and will announce when his goal is complete. **Frodo** needs to be completed only once. **Bill the Pony** passes 1 card each to Frodo and Sam at the same time, not 1 at a time. **Glorfindel** will have 1 card left in his hand at the end of the round. During the round with both **Glorfindel** and **Frodo**, **Glorfindel** leads the first trick. The player with The One Ring does not need to select **Frodo**.

Solo: Strider is not given the Unseen special Threat Card.

Chapter 10

The Black Rider Threat Deck will not be used in this or any other future chapters. **Elrond's** goal does not replace the other characters'; you must do both. **Glóin** and **Arwen** cannot be tied for the most of their suit.

2-Player: During **Elrond's** setup, the human players choose their cards first before agreeing on 1 of the 5 faceup pyramid cards to pass.

Chapter 11

The Horn of Gondor's effect is required. If **Boromir** is tied with more than 1 suit being the most in his hand, he announces all of the suits he has the most of. **Aragorn** does not pick a Threat card during setup; he uses **The Sword That Was Broken** instead.

Solo: The Horn of Gondor is not used.

Chapter 12

The 1 of Rings counts as a 1 for the Saruman event. A trick won by **Gwaihir**, **Shadowfax**, or **Radagast** that contains more than 1 card of their suit counts towards their goal (but only once). **Radagast** can choose any cards during setup (even a Rings card and these set aside cards are face-up). It will set the lead suit of the trick only if he would be leading the trick anyway. **Shadowfax** can look at his tucked card at anytime.

Chapter 13

You can pick a completed character again, but it may mean taking an extra round to complete the chapter.

Chapter 14

You can complete the Moria events in any order, except the Bridge event, which must be last. You must complete each of the 3 Moria events to finish the chapter. (The Long Dark is the only one you can complete multiple times.) If you use the Mithril Shirt, you still count as completing the Moria event.

Solo: Ignore the setup text for the Long Dark Event. During setup of the Bridge event, set up as you normally would for a solo game, except the draw deck you will use to refill hands will have only 12 cards.

2-Player: For the Bridge event, set up based on the Chapter 5 diagram.

Chapter 15

Gimli can win tricks normally; the other players simply cannot see what he is playing until the end of the trick. If **Gimli** plays The One Ring, he plays it faceup.

Solo: Do not use the Blindfolded Event.

2-Player: the pyramid cannot control Gimli.

Chapter 16

With 2 or 3 players, **Sam** is not used.

Solo: Ignore the Mirror event. Instead, assign characters randomly to each hand (other than Frodo).

2-player: Build the pyramid normally and then the 2 human players follow the mirror instructions with each other.

Chapter 17

If you are familiar with trick-taking games, you can think of the River cards as all trump (which lose to the 1 of Rings).

Solo: Add River cards as you would for a 4-player game. After dealing the initial hands, the draw deck you will use to refill hands will have 28 cards.

2-player: Add 2 facedown cards to the top of the pyramid, covered by the row of 3 cards.

Chapter 18

Meriadoc Brandybuck's setup power is active during all of setup. Any card redraws should be done on that character's turn. In a 3-player game, there will be 1 unchosen character in each group. This chapter is always 2 rounds.





Three Rings for the Elven-kings under the sky,

Seven for the Dwarf-lords in their halls of stone,

Nine for Mortal Men doomed to die,

One for the Dark Lord on his dark throne

In the Land of Mordor where the Shadows lie.

One Ring to rule them all, One Ring to find them,

One Ring to bring them all and in the darkness bind them

In the Land of Mordor where the Shadows lie.

The Road Goes Ever On...

After you've finished the chapters, you can keep playing.

First grab all the cards with a black number box or gold number box in the bottom right corner of the card. Cards with a white number box are not used.

1.05

Black
Number Box

2.01

White
Number Box

3.44

Gold
Number Box

At all player counts, you will use **Frodo** and **Gandalf** as well as the Threat cards numbered 1–7. Then grab random cards based on player count to build a chapter:

2 or 3 Players

- 4 characters with a gold number box, 1 randomly on the burdened side
- 3 characters with a black number box
- 1 gift card
- 1 special Black Rider (cards with red Black Rider back)

4 Players or Solo

- 5 characters with a gold number box, 1 randomly on the burdened side
- 6 characters with a black number box
- 1 gift card
- 1 special Black Rider (cards with red Black Rider back)

To win, you must complete all characters' goals, similar to the "long" victory condition of the chapter cards in the story mode, except you must also use the special Black Rider card in 1 round to complete the game. Give the special Black Rider card randomly to a non-burdened character. The "Unseen" special Black Rider must be given to a character that uses a Threat card.

The player dealt the 1 of Rings must take Frodo (who will be used every round) and always leads the first trick. (Ignore non-Frodo first trick setup actions.)

All interactions with the lost card are optional. If multiple characters interact with the lost card, the players decide as a group which of the characters takes the card, as it is important for characters such as Tom Bombadil.

Rule Changes for 2 Players

The 2-player setup is similar to the 3-player setup, with some changes. One of the players will control an open hand represented by a card pyramid. This pyramid will have a character card and act as the third player in the round. Position the pyramid between the 2 players, treating it as though a player is sitting there.

Setup: Deal cards as you would in a 3-player game and take 1 hand of 12 cards to build the card pyramid. Follow the diagram below. Deal 3 cards in the top row first (2 faceup and 1 facedown), then cover it slightly with 4 cards for the middle row (all facedown), then cover that slightly with the bottom row (5 faceup).



The player dealt the 1 of Rings will control the pyramid, including picking a character for it during setup and playing cards from the pyramid hand during tricks. Use the 3-player side of the Frodo card.



Rules Changes for 2 Players Continued

If the pyramid is dealt the 1 of Rings (i.e., if neither of the players has the 1 of Rings), then the pyramid is Frodo, and the player to the right of the pyramid will control it.

The pyramid can exchange or be exchanged with but uses only uncovered cards in the bottom row for these exchanges.

If the character assigned to the pyramid adds cards to their hand during setup (e.g., Gandalf), it is added faceup to the left or right of the bottom row, not covering any cards.

The player controlling the pyramid can play only the cards that are uncovered. The bottom row is the only uncovered part of the pyramid's hand at the start of a round. Facedown cards in the pyramid's hand flip faceup when there are no cards covering them at the end of a trick.

Solo Setup

1. Take a chapter card and put it and the character cards listed faceup on the table.
2. Place a star token next to each character with a * after their name on the chapter card.
3. Set aside the 1 of Rings Card.
4. Shuffle the main deck cards and deal 1 card faceup near the chapter card. This is called the lost card.
5. Shuffle the deck and deal 3 faceup hands of 4 cards each and a hand of 3 faceup cards plus the 1 of Rings for a total of 4 hands. The remaining cards form a draw deck.
6. The hand with the 1 of Rings card takes Frodo (on the 3-player side) and the Ring token on the Cannot Lead Rings side.
7. Starting to Frodo's left, each hand is assigned a character card. Characters with a star token must be assigned. Remove the star token once you have assigned a character with a token.
8. Starting with the character to Frodo's left, each character that has a setup action indicated by a  performs that action. **Choose only 1 character's exchange to use per round.**

Solo Gameplay

Each of the 4 characters will have their own hand that will lead or play into each trick.

After determining the winner of a trick, deal each hand 1 new faceup card from the draw deck if there are any cards left in the deck.

You must complete all 4 character goals.

Gameplay is otherwise the same as a multiplayer game.

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Designer's Note:

It has been my great privilege to combine two of my favorite things: The Lord of the Rings and trick-taking games. I would like to thank the designers of some important trick-taking games I've been inspired by: Fukutarou (Familiar's Trouble / Trick'n Trouble), Thomas Sing (The Crew: The Quest for Planet Nine and The Crew: Mission Deep Sea), Akiyama Koryo and Kozu Yusei (Hameln Cave/Sail), Hiroken (TRICKTAKERS), Brent and Jeffery Beck (Skull King), and the designers of Doppelkopf, Hearts, Bridge, Spades, and Euchre whose names have been lost to history but upon whose broad shoulders we all gratefully stand.

Rules Summary

If you're familiar with trick-taking games, here is a brief overview of the gameplay.

If you're new to this style of game, please read the full rules first.

- Card play is standard must-follow trick-taking. Players must follow the lead suit if they can, with the highest ranked card of the lead suit winning the trick.
- The player leading a trick can play any card but not a Rings-suited card right away.
- The Rings suit is special in 3 ways:
 - This suit goes from 1 to 5 (instead of 1 to 8 as with the other 4 suits).
 - Players cannot lead with Rings until it is broken (played offsuit in a previous trick) or forced (lead player has only Rings).
 - A single card, the 1 of Rings, can win any trick (like a trump card in other trick-taking games). The 1 of Rings may also be played as a non-trump card. The 2–5 of Rings are not trump and are otherwise a normal suit.
- The round ends when everyone has played all of their cards. Certain characters may have a card left in hand at the end of a round (Gandalf, for example).
- To win the round, all players must meet the goals of their characters by the end of the round.
- Players cannot discuss or show the cards in their hands.



Scan this code to watch our learn-to-play video!

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