

CCT270

THE PRINCIPLES OF

GAME DESIGN

CLASS 2 : RULES

PROFESSOR: STEVE SZIGETI

TA: IGOR SOKOLOV

FALL 2025

AGENDA

- Rules – history and definition
- Activity: Professional Sports Rule changes
- Rule Breaking
- Activity: Cartographers

Required Readings

- Tekinbas, K. S., & Zimmerman, E. (2004). Chapter 11: Defining Rules. In *Rules of play: game design fundamentals*. The MIT Press. Pp 176-185.
- Tekinbas, K. S., & Zimmerman, E. (2004). Chapter 21: Breaking Rules. *Rules of play: game design fundamentals*. The MIT Press. Pp 416-446.

Recommended Readings

- Freyermuth, G. S., Czauderna, A., Pozzi, N., & Zimmerman, E. (2015). Games (1st ed.). A Short History Pp 161-164
- Stahlke, S. & Mirza-Babaei, P. (2022). Chapter 1: Caveman Arcade from *The Game Designer's Playbook: An Introduction to Game Interaction Design*. Oxford University Press. Pp 1-16.

RULES

The rules of chess, of course, state how the pieces may be moved; they distinguish between legal and illegal moves. Since the knight, for example, is permitted to move only in a highly restricted manner, it is clear the **permitted** means for moving the knight are of less scope than the **possible** means for moving him.

Bernard Suits.
The Grasshopper: Games, Life and Utopia.

1. Play occurs on a 3 by 3 grid of 9 empty squares.
2. Two players take turns marking empty squares, the first player marking Xs and the second player marking Os.
3. If one player places three of the same marks in a row, that player wins.
4. If the spaces are all filled and there is no winner, the game ends in a draw.



1. Go is played on a grid where players take turns placing black or white stones on the intersections of lines.
2. Stones (or groups of stones) with no adjacent empty intersections (called *liberties*) are removed.
3. When both players pass, the player controlling the most territory - empty intersections surrounded by their stones - wins.





Evolution of suitmarks

international (French, English)	German	Swiss	Spanish	Italian
 clover, clubs	 acorns	 acorns	 swords	 swords
 pikes, spades	 leaves	 escutcheons	 clubs	 batons
 hearts	 hearts	 roses	 cups	 cups
 tiles, diamonds	 bells	 bells	 coins	 coins



**ARE RULES
UNIQUE TO
GAMES?**



RULES

Rules are what differentiate games from other kinds of play. Probably the most basic definition of a game is that it is organized play, that is to say rule-based. If you don't have rules you have free play, not a game. Why are rules so important to games? Rules impose limits—they force us to take specific paths to reach goals and ensure that all players take the same paths. They put us inside the game world by letting us know what is in and out of bounds.

—Marc Prensky, *Digital Game-Based Learning*

RULES

Rules limit player action.

RULES

Rules limit player action.

Rules are explicit and unambiguous.

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Rules are shared by all players.

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Rules are binding.

Rules are repeatable.

RULE CHANGES

Select a rule (one per table)

Research online to answer:

- What issue did the rule change address?
- Was the rule change successful?



What issue did the rule change address?

I

Was the rule change successful?

Baseball

1. Pitchers Mound Height (1968)
2. Designated Hitter (1973 and 2022)
3. Pitch clock (2023)

Soccer

4. Back Pass rule (1992)
5. Offside rule: a player considered onside if level with the second-last opponent (1990)
6. Offside rule: decided that only two instead of three defenders had to be between the ball and the opponent's goal (1921)
7. Player substitutions allowed (1958)

Basketball

8. The 24-second Shot Clock (1954)
9. Back Court Violation (1936)
10. Introduction of the three-point field goal (1979)

Volleyball

11. Rally scoring, which allowed either side to score a point whether it was serving or not (1999)

Softball

12. Metal bat allowed (1971)

Hockey

13. Goaltender not permitted to play the puck outside a designated trapezoid-shaped area behind the net (2005)

14. Goal pad size was reduced (2013)

Football

15. Unlimited free substitution was restored, opening the way for the era of two platoons and specialization in pro football (1950)
16. Quarterbacks may now receive communications from the bench from a small radio receiver in their helmets (1995)

17. Use of Stickum was banned (1981)

18. Allowed two-point conversion after a touchdown (1969)

F1 Car Racing

19. Large mirrors and quick release steering wheel made mandatory (1990)
20. The use of commercial petrol became compulsory and alcohol-based racing fuels were banned (1958)

RULE CHANGES

Spokesperson from each table

Provide brief context (which sport, minimum we need to know about sport)

- What issue did the rule change address?
- Was the rule change successful?



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RULE BREAKING

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When you have to win, you're willing to break whatever rules you can if that would help you get closer to the goal. When you have to win, you're not concerned with fairness, feeling, the community, or even play. When you have to win you can't leave the game until you have finally, ultimately won.

What's amazing to me about all this is that the game itself doesn't change. The rules and the conventions are the same. But the manner of playing the game is completely different.

*—Bernard DeKoven, *The Well-Played Game**

BREAKING RULES

The Standard Player.

The Dedicated Player.

The Unsportsmanlike Player.

The Cheat.

The Spoil-Sport.



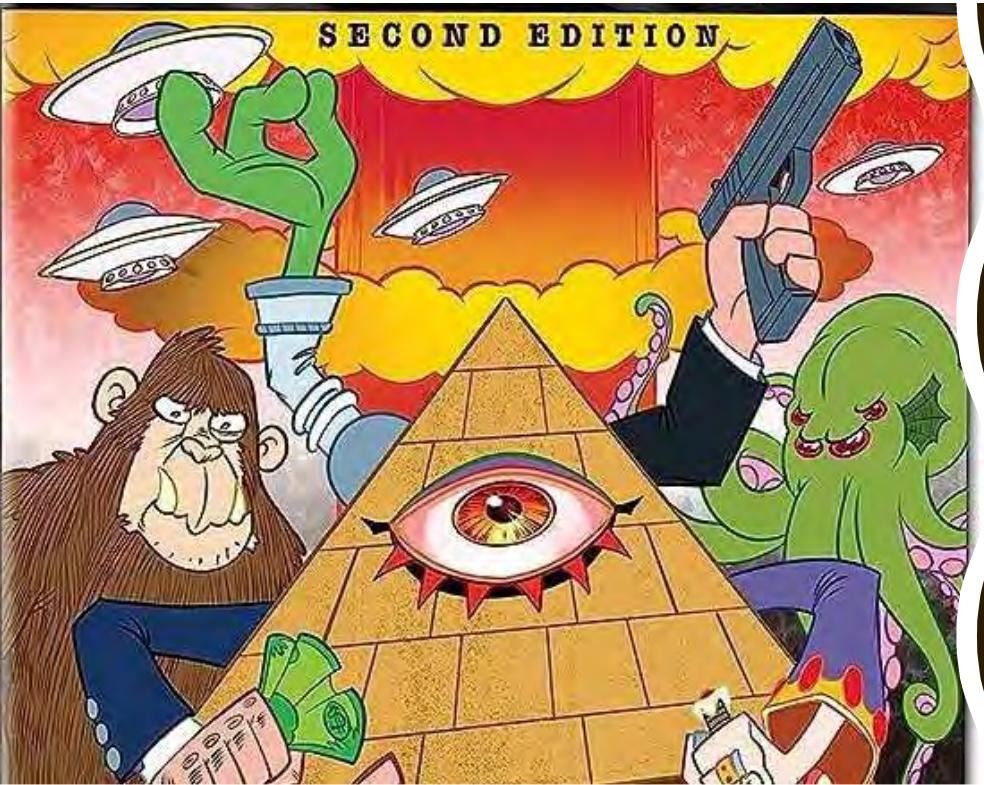
DEGENERATE STRATEGIES

As a rule of thumb, you want to be on the lookout for degenerate strategies and keep them out of your game. The ability to win a game by playing in a singular way demonstrates a poor game design, a space of possibility with an unintended, limiting short-circuit.

- Salen and Zimmerman



ILLUMINATI



SANCTIONED CHEATING

Cheating

Some fiendish people think Illuminati is even more fun when nothing, not even the bank, is sacred. In this variant of the game, most forms of cheating are permitted.

Exceptions:

- You may not tip over the table or disarrange opposing power structures.
- You may not bring in counterfeit money or money from other sets.
- You may not cheat on the amount of money drawn from the bank during setup or the income phase (this would slow things down too much).
- Anything else goes. Anyone caught in the act must undo that cheat. There is no other penalty.



DIGITAL RULES

RULES “FORCED” IN CODE

BUGS?



Special page

Statistics

Page statistics	
Content pages	1,936
Pages (All pages in the wiki, including talk pages, redirects, etc.)	22,117
Uploaded files	8,871

? Rules are explicit and unambiguous.

? Rules are shared by all players.

Tutorials required



DIGITAL RULE BREAKING

EASTER EGGS

CHEAT CODES

GAME GUIDES AND WALKTHROUGHS

RULES

The rules of chess, of course, state how the pieces may be moved; they distinguish between legal and illegal moves. Since the knight, for example, is permitted to move only in a highly restricted manner, it is clear the **permitted** means for moving the knight are of less scope than the **possible** means for moving him.

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LANGUAGE



ENGLISH

FRANÇAIS

DEUTSCH

ITALIANO

ESPAÑOL

PORTUGUÊS

Русский

TÜRKÇE

POLSKI

简体中文

繁體中文 (台灣)

日本語

한국어

BAHASA
INDONESIA

Game mechanics as “game language”:
making narratives and meaning

Languages of games

Audio & Visual language



Text narrative



go. Call it an instinct, a need -- the need to ask *questions*. It's like you've said the words a million times before...

KLAASJE (MISS ORANJE DISCO DANCER) – She looks back at you, a light glinting off her eyes.

YOU – What if I don't want to ask questions?

REACTION SPEED – You're a cop, Harry. It is *unnatural* of you not to want to ask questions.

1. - "Wait! I have some questions before you go."

Online games, human interaction



Game mechanics

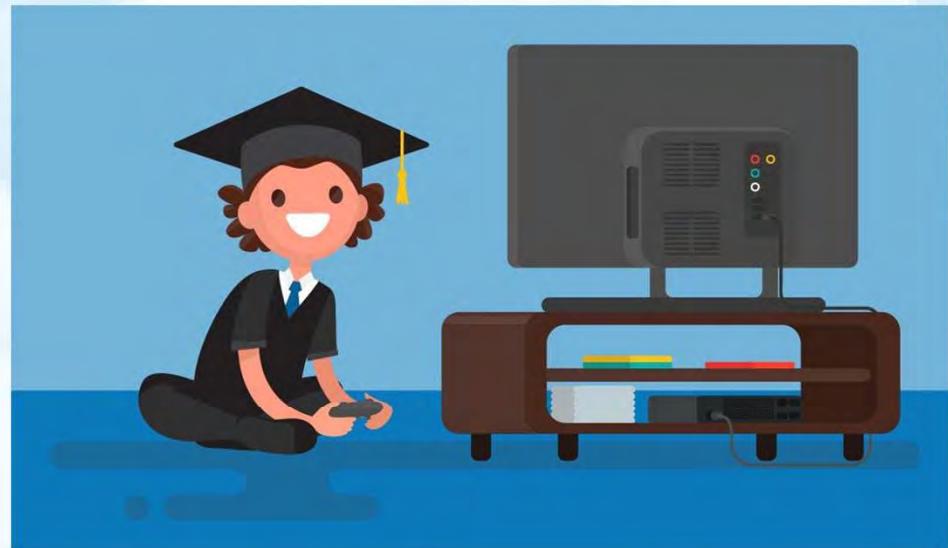


Game as a tool in education

Gamifying processes



Games for motivation



Community engagement



Game as a thing in itself ?



BRAID

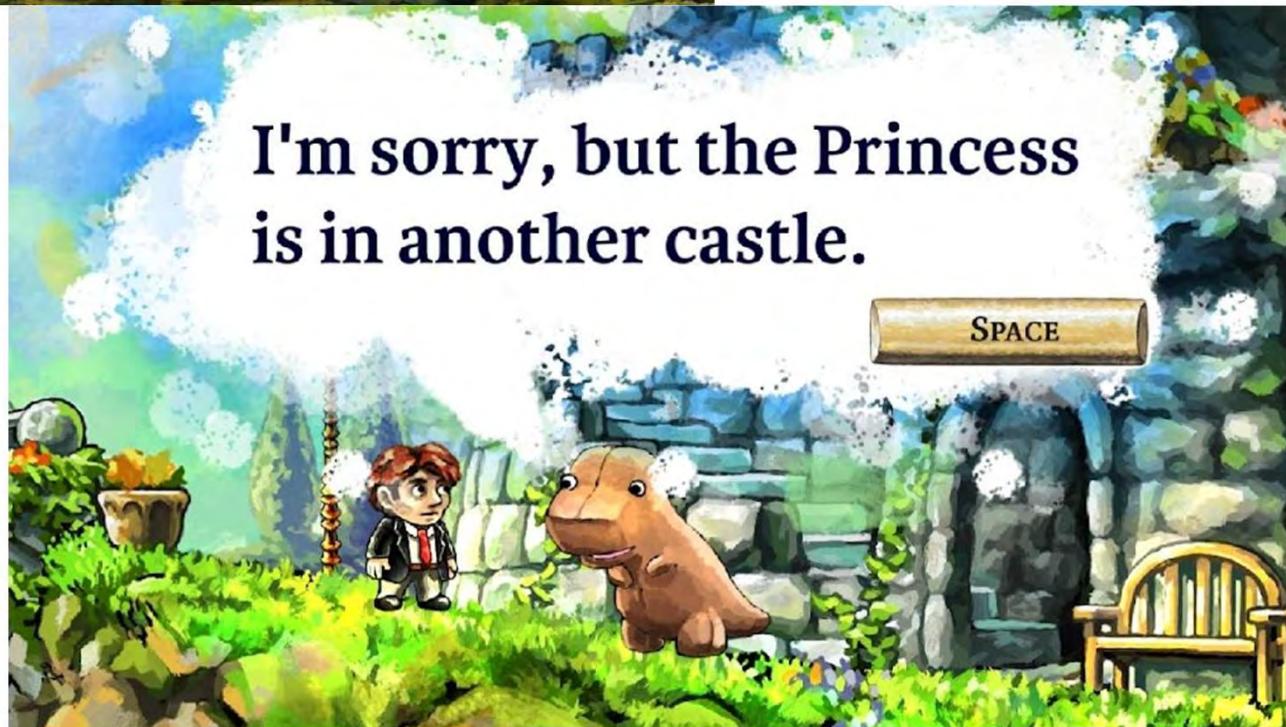
Anniversary Edition





Uses the created “experience” to hit hard with critique of perfectionism and that not everything can be undone

- Uses game-mechanic to amplify and emotionally charge the narrative
- Puts a player in “undoing for perfection” mode through game mechanics







- A 2-player game about what it means to be 2 different people
- Creates pragmatically shared (mostly) world, why making those worlds existentially very different
- Highlights the idea that even if we pragmatically live in the same world – we all live in our own world



The Last Guardian™





2

bvwbfjwvjh

wtf thats a extremly bad game wow trico is so annoying because he is not doing what you want

- Creates the experience of “living being” by making imperfect control of the character, creating illusion of separate “will”

The Gaijin Card

Ethnographic Deckbuilder about immigrant experience in Japan



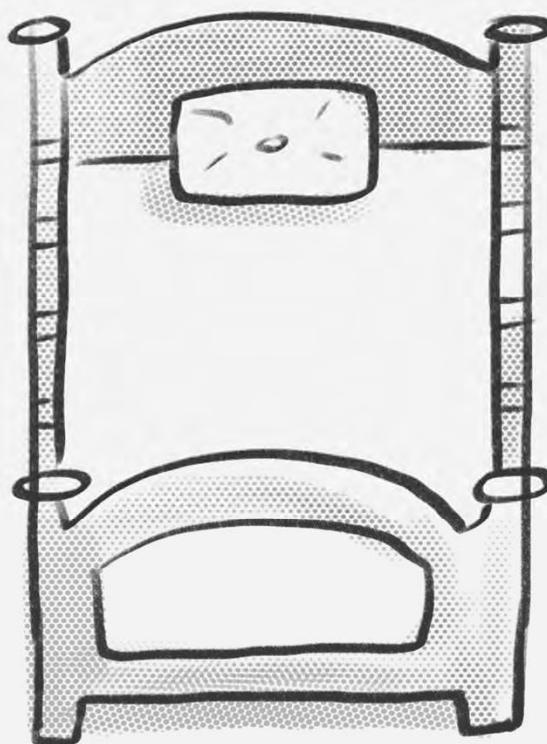
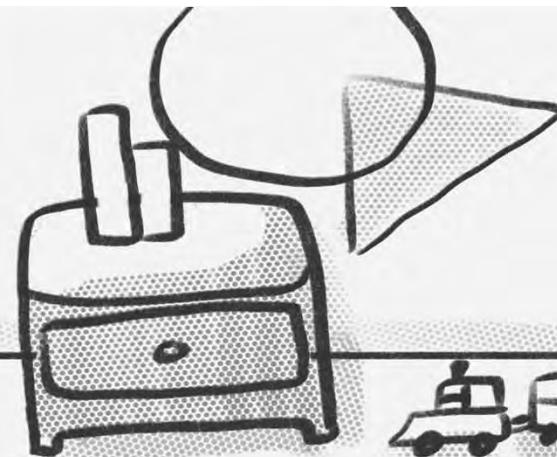
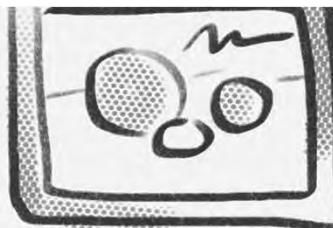
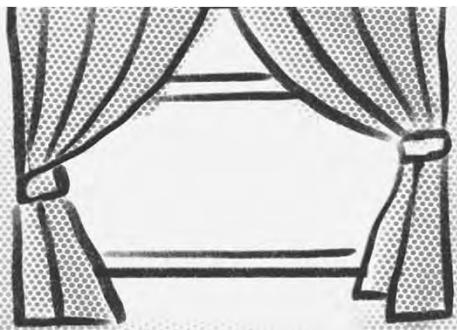
The Gaijin Card
PhD game project

Based on the trope “to play a gaijin card” – to broke social norms in hopes to be forgiven for being a foreigner.

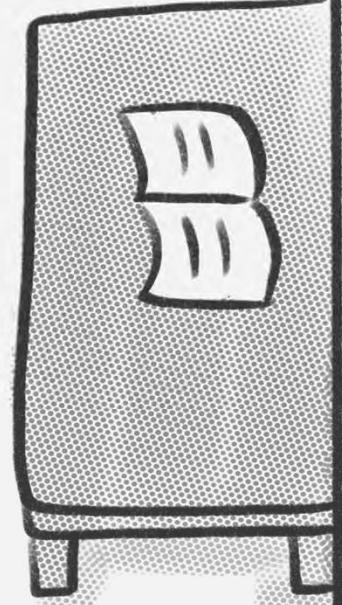
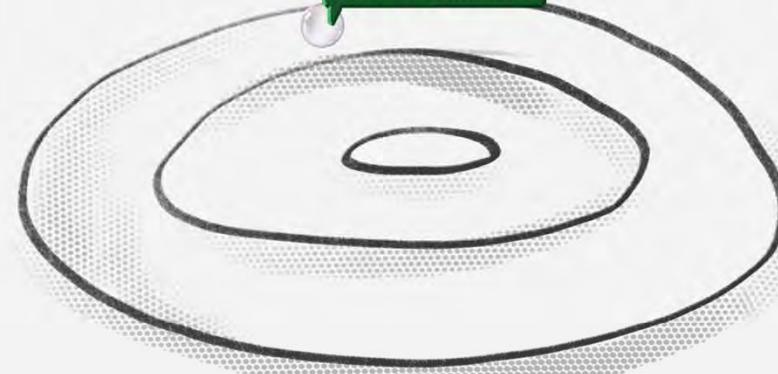
An ethnographic Deckbuilder game about immigrant experience in Japan

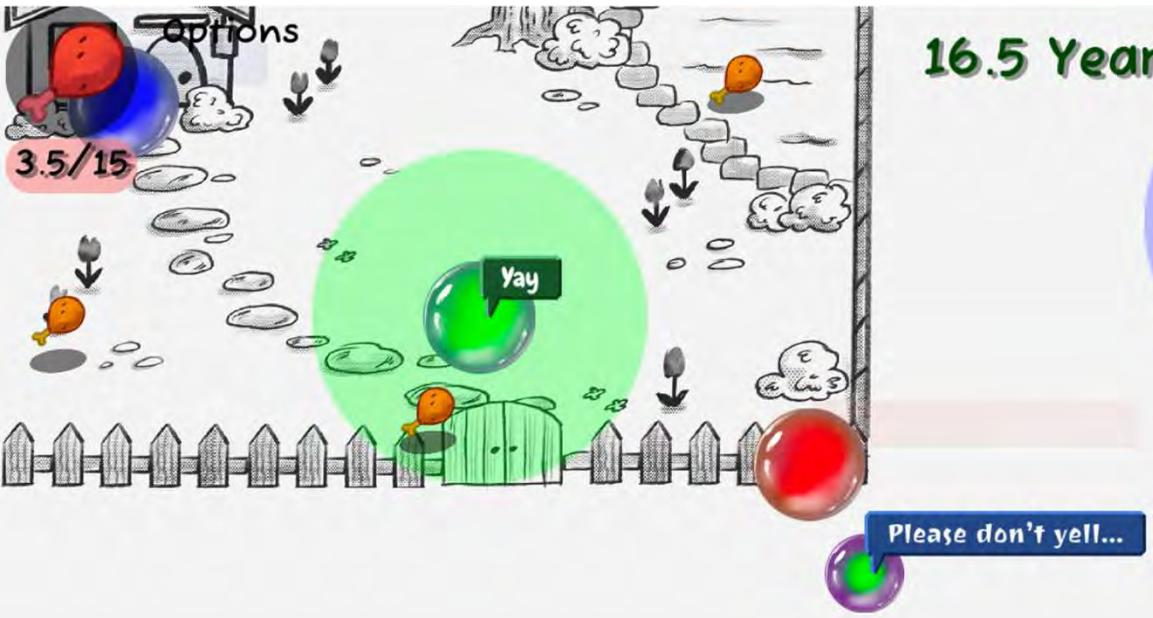
Key feature: every card is different based on characters intersectionality and background (ethnicity, gender, social status etc.)

Shows that we are all playing a different game despite seeming to play “same cards.”

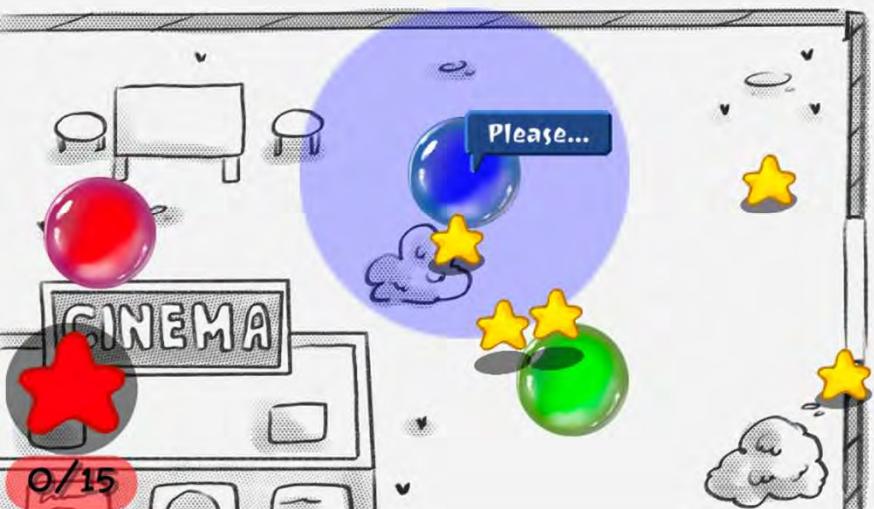
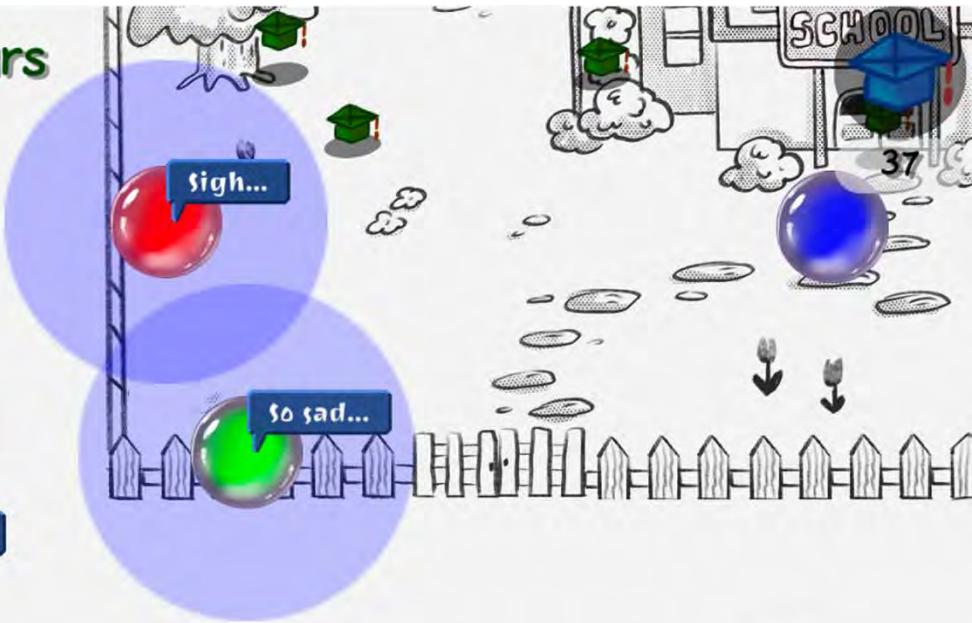


You are a bubble.



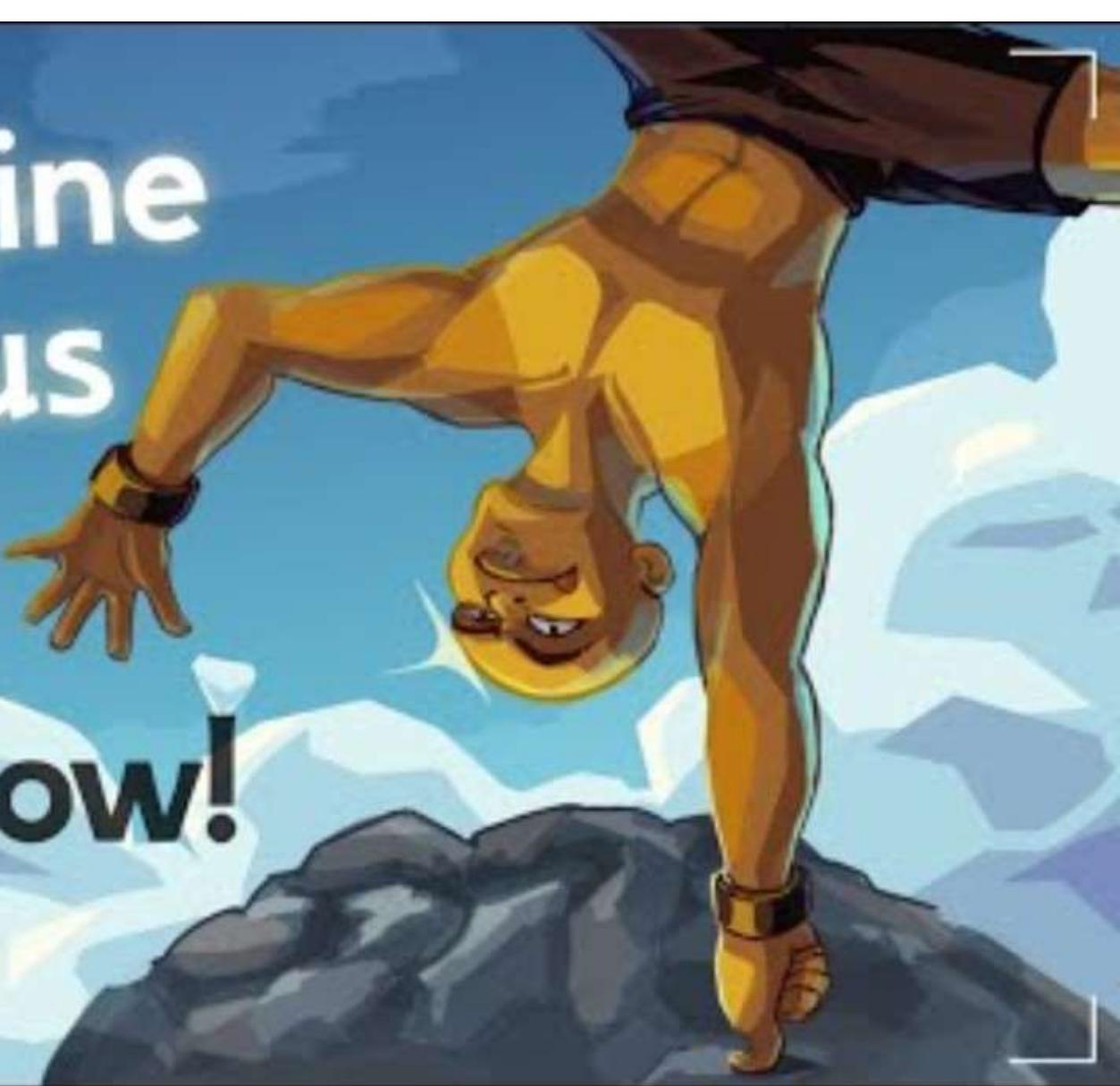


16.5 Years



You play as a bubble that goes through the stages of human life, interacting with other bubbles and exchanging emotions. Your goal is to live your life, from infancy to old age, trying (or not trying) to succeed while managing the emotions you are surrounded by.

Can you **Imagine**
Sisyphus
Happy?



Wishlist now!

A game with meta-narrative about everyone being a Sisyphus.

Depict Sisyphus becoming a streamer as a way to find joy in futility, and questions whether the player is also a Sisyphus in their own way.

Mixes philosophy of Albert Camus and “meme-space” – got viral traction from this mix.



All Games > Simulation Games > Imagine Sisyphus Happy

Imagine Sisyphus Happy

[Community Hub](#)


Sisyphus didn't give up – he decided to livestream it. Clicker + QTE game about life, spectacle, and making the grind worth living. Push the boulder. Do tricks. Go live. Aren't you a Sisyphus too? Can you Imagine Sisyphus Happy?

ALL REVIEWS: No user reviews

RELEASE DATE: Q1 2026

DEVELOPER: UnplayTheGame
UnplayTheGame



@tristanthetristan 12 days ago

Chat are we rolling this boulder the right way?



1.5K



0



0

Reply

4 replies



@Khyrberos 2 days ago

NorthernLion getting that sweet recognition

Also Ultrakill reference



41



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Reply



@Flymerick 10 days ago

I liked how me watching youtube was a part of the trailer. We can all be happy, fellow Sisyphusses!



244

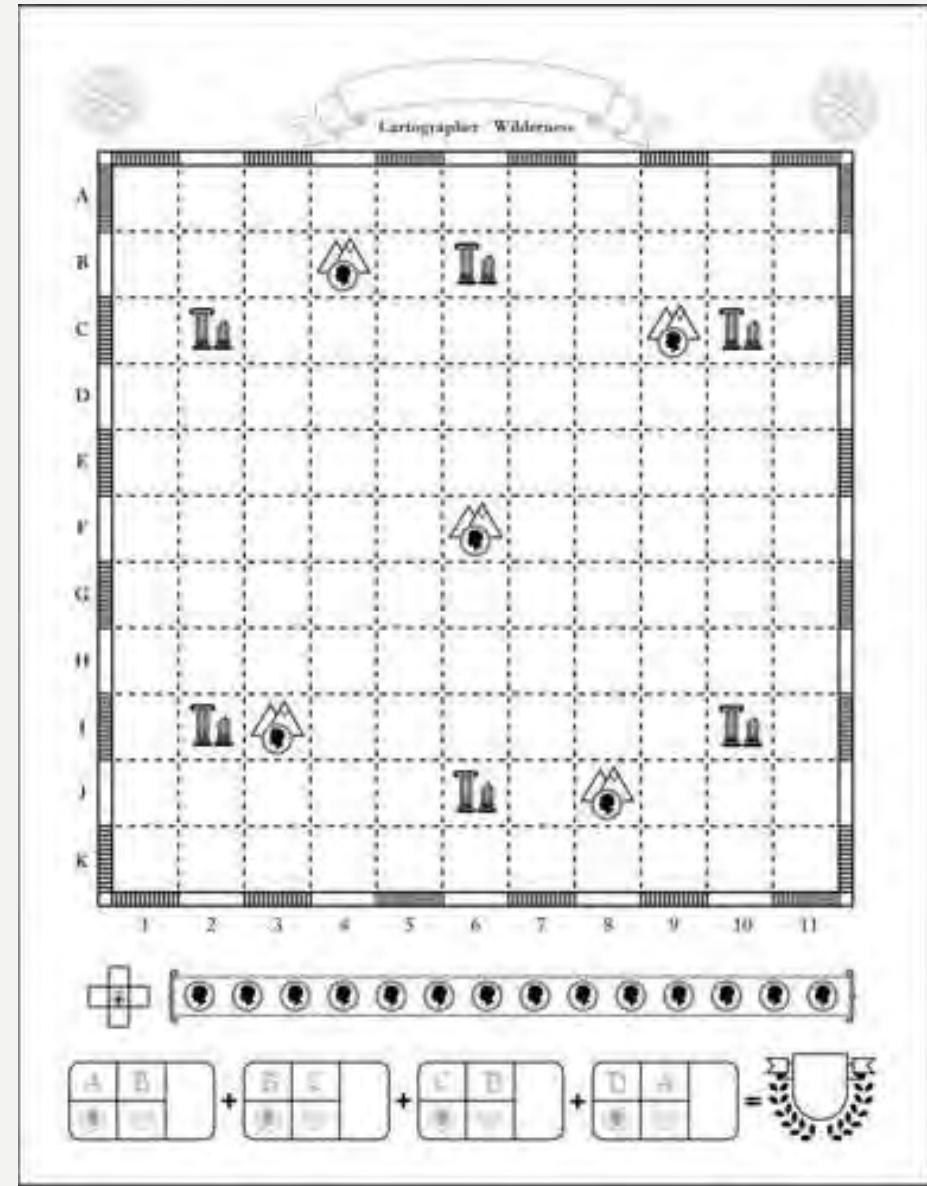
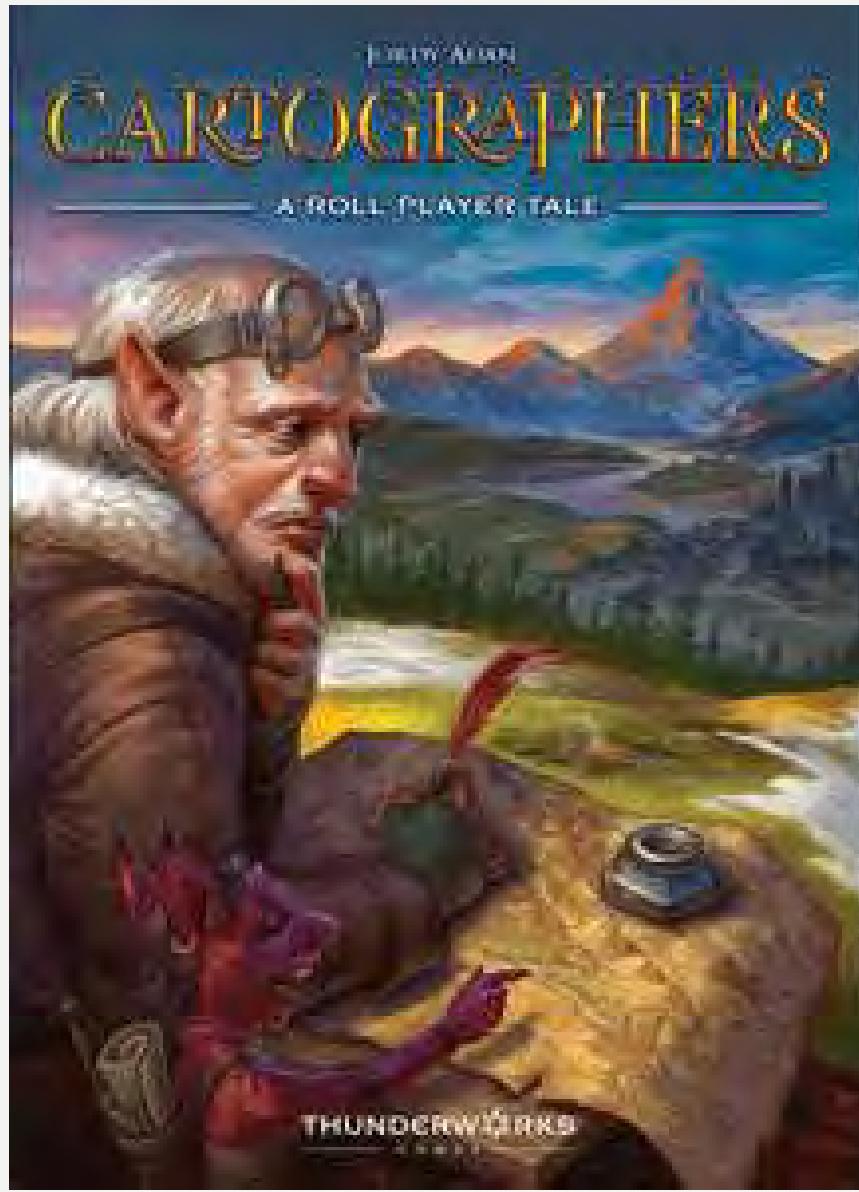


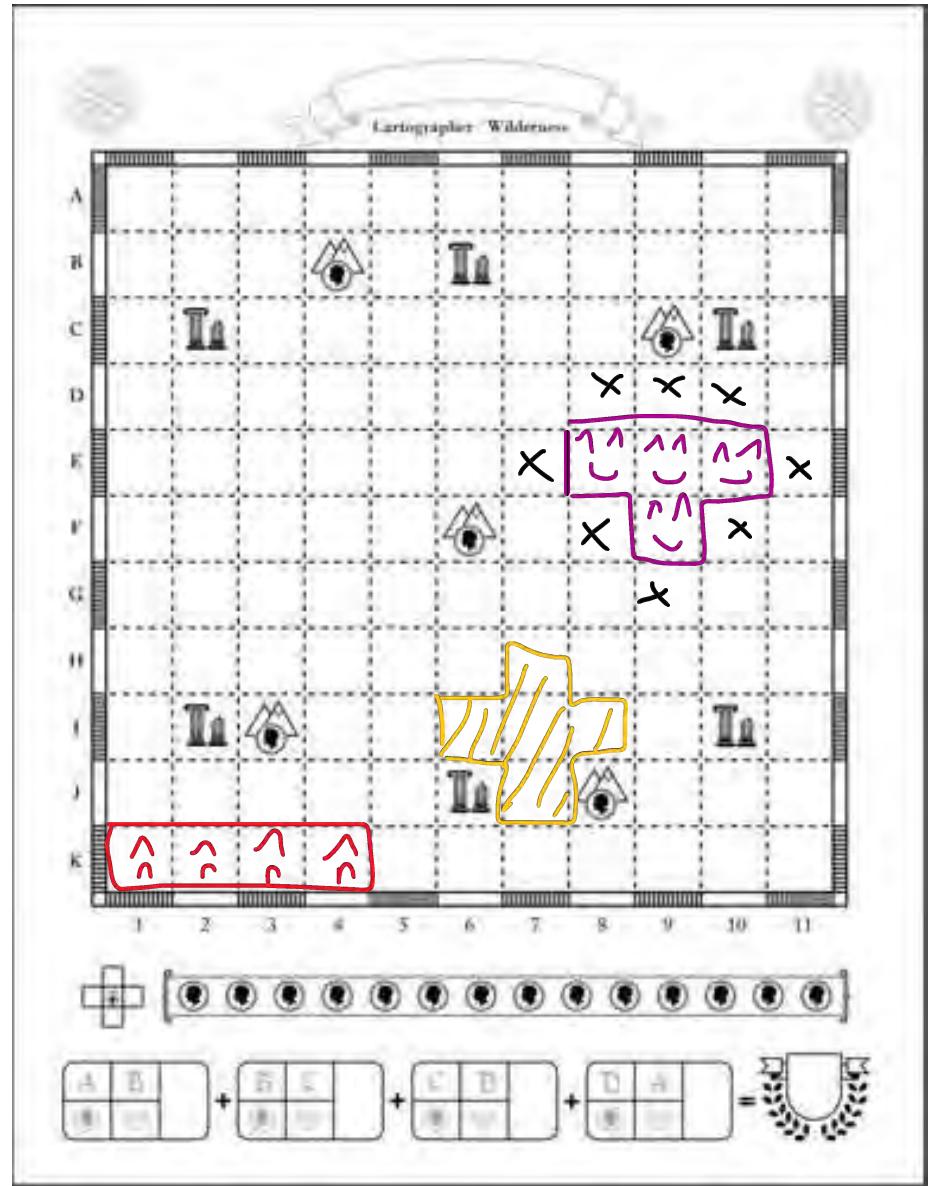
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Reply





Greenbough

Canal

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EARN ONE REPUTATION STAR FOR EACH ROW AND COLUMN THAT HAS A FOREST SPACE. THESE SPACES MAY BE SCORED.

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EARN ONE REPUTATION STAR FOR EACH WATER SPACE ADJACENT TO A FARM SPACE. EARN ONE REPUTATION STAR FOR EACH FARM SPACE ADJACENT TO AT LEAST ONE WATER SPACE.

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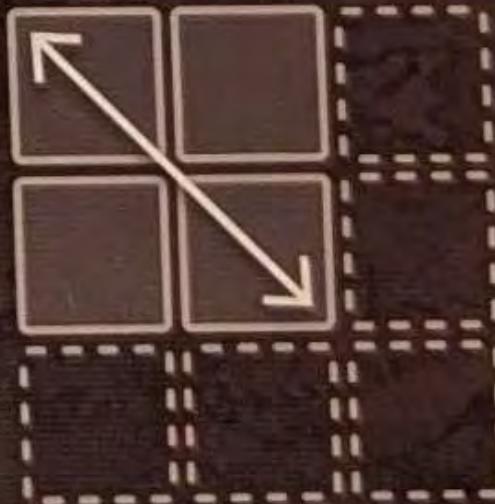
Wildholds

Lost Barony

8

6+

3 3



EARN EIGHT REPUTATION STARS FOR EACH CLUSTER OF SIX OR MORE FILLED SPACES.

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EARN THREE REPUTATION STARS FOR EACH CLUSTER OF THREE OR MORE FILLED SPACES ALONG ONE EDGE OF THE LARGEST SQUARE OF FILLED SPACES.



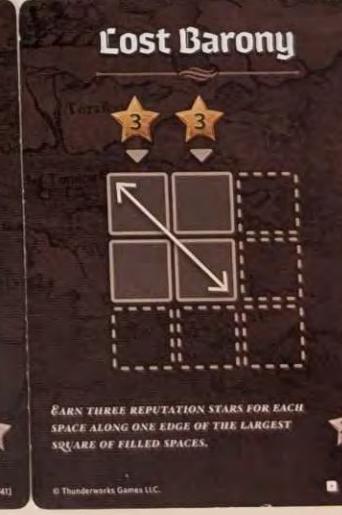
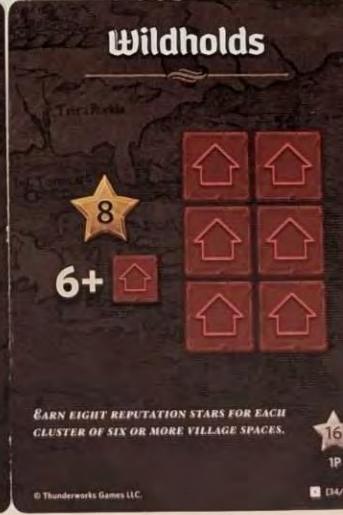
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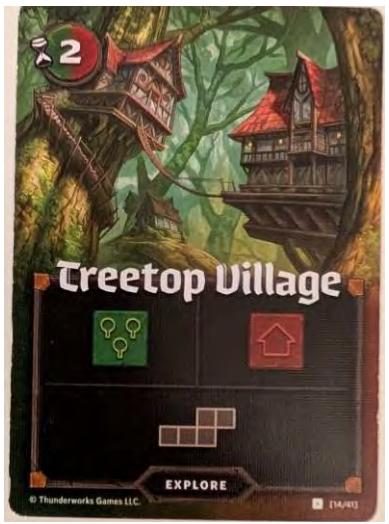
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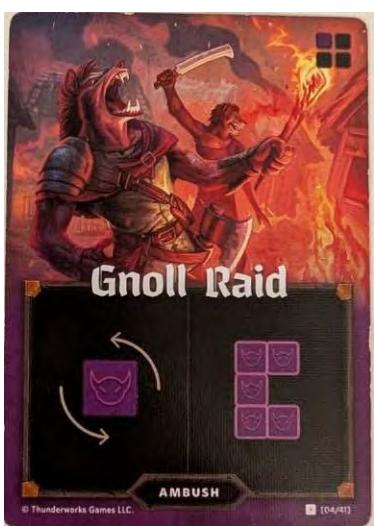




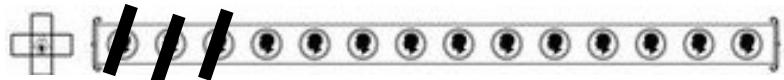
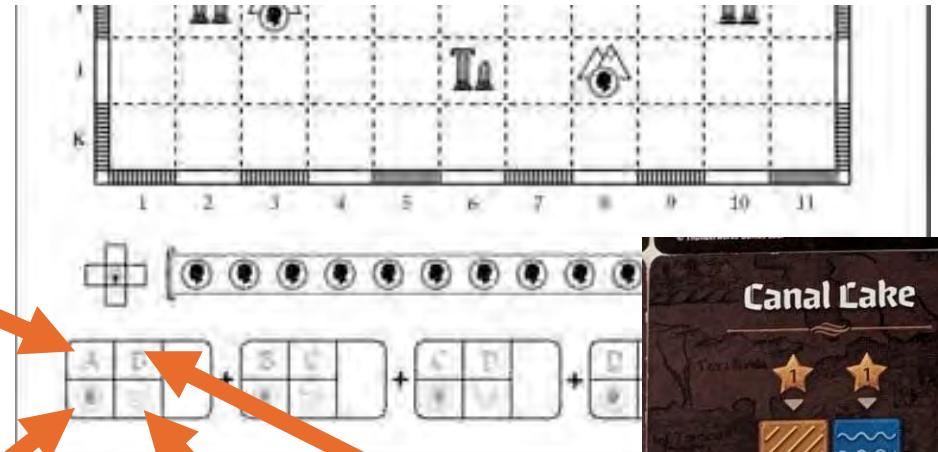


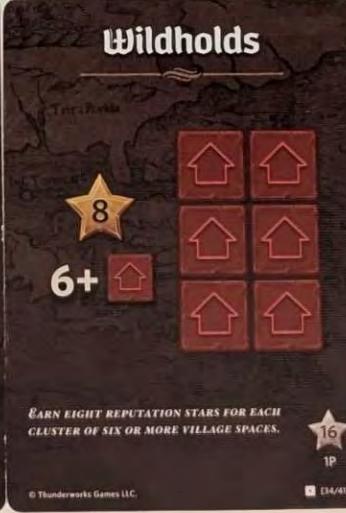




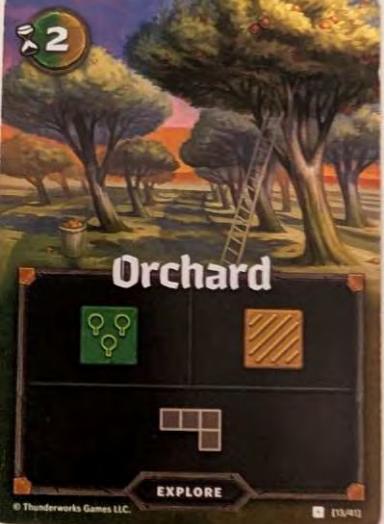
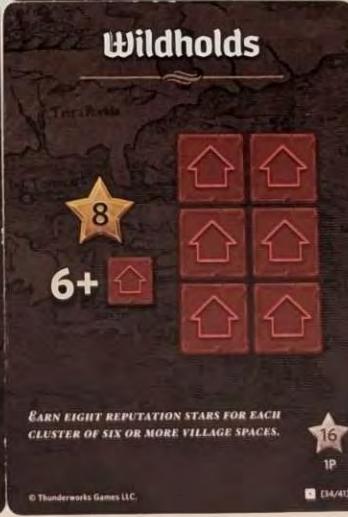


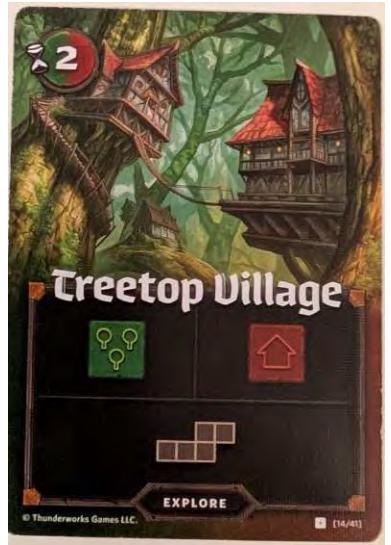
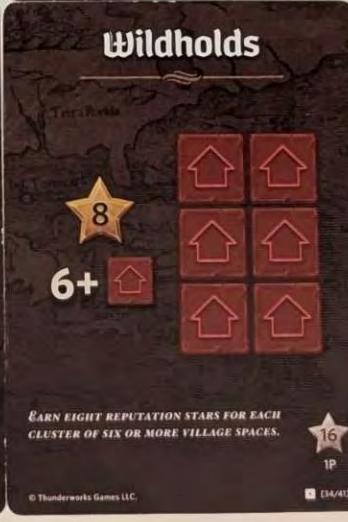


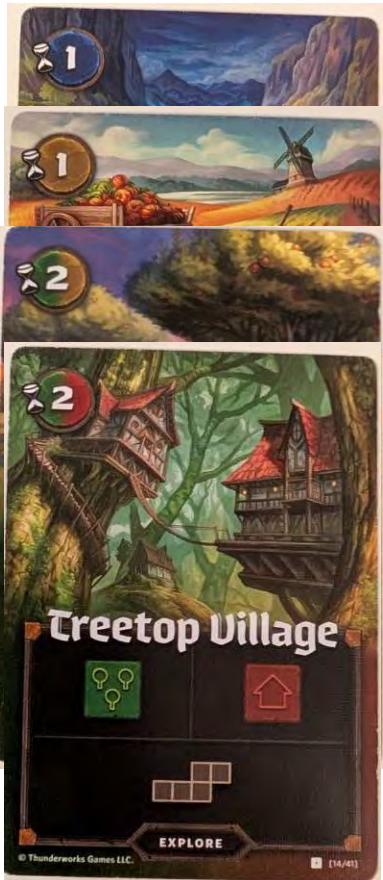
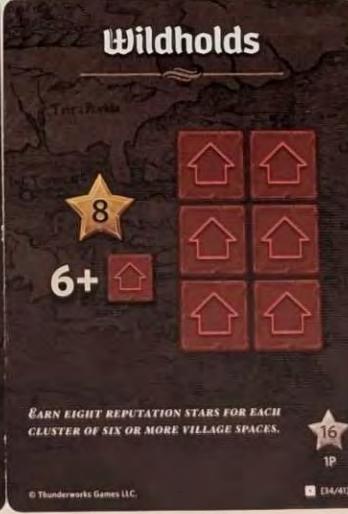


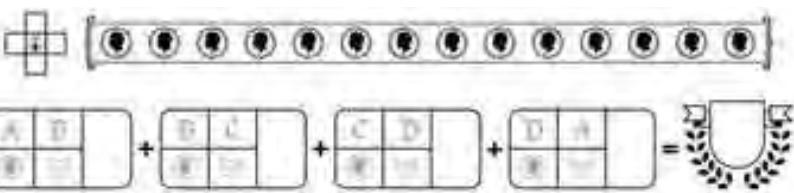












Canal



EARN ONE REPUTATION STAR FOR EACH WATER SPACE ADJACENT TO AT LEAST ONE FARM SPACE. EARN ONE REPUTATION STAR FOR EACH FARM SPACE ADJACENT TO AT LEAST ONE WATER SPACE.

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EARN ONE REPUTATION STAR FOR EACH ROW AND COLUMN WITH AT LEAST ONE FOREST SPACE. THE SAME FOREST SPACE MAY BE SCORED IN A ROW AND A COLUMN.



[22/41]

WATER SPACE ADJACENT TO AT LEAST ONE FARM SPACE. EARN ONE REPUTATION STAR FOR EACH FARM SPACE ADJACENT TO AT LEAST ONE WATER SPACE.

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[24/41]

CLUSTER OF SIX OR MORE VILLAGE SPACES.

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[16/41]

EARN THREE REPUTATION STARS FOR EACH SPACE ALONG ONE EDGE OF THE LARGEST SQUARE OF FILLED SPACES.

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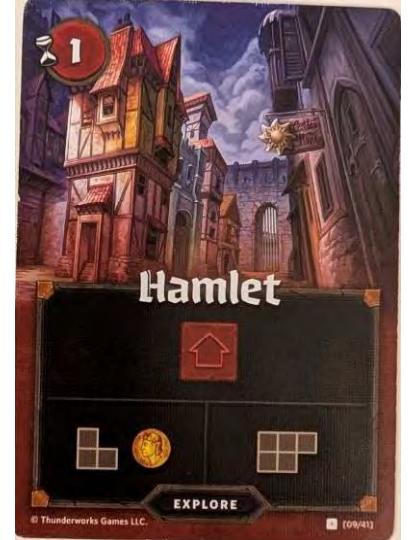
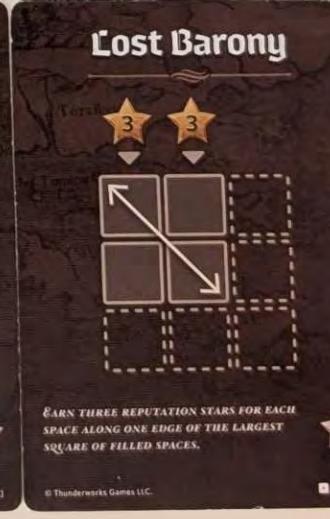
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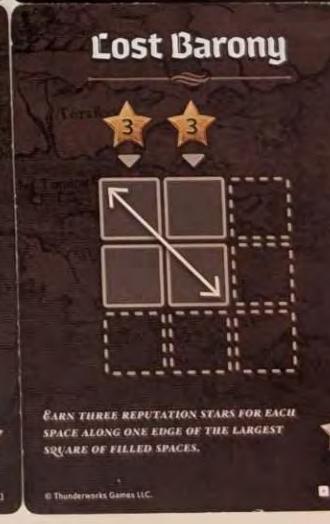
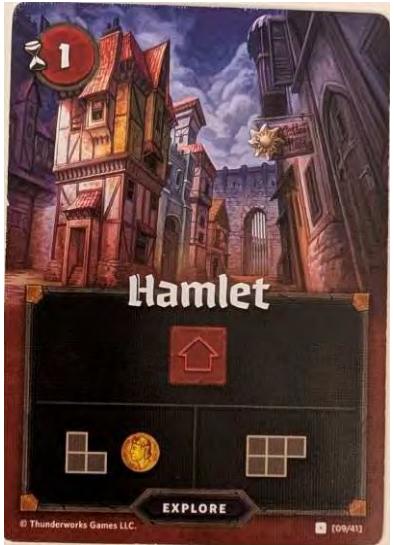


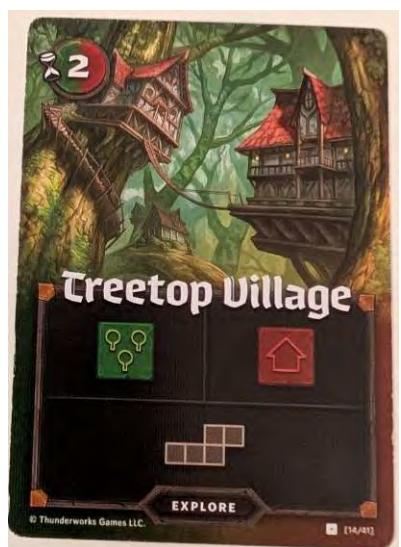
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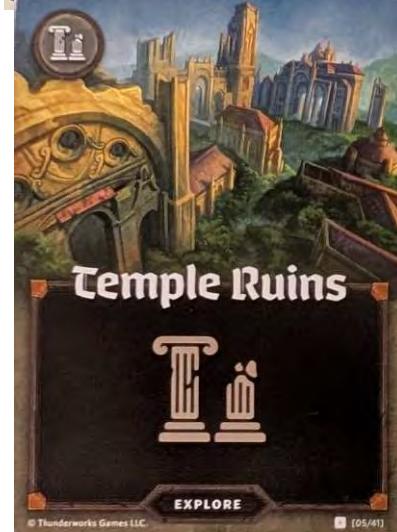






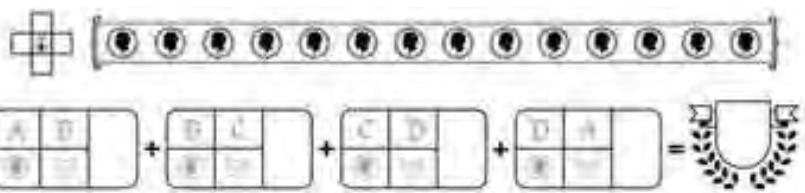








Wildholes



Barony

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6+



EARN EIGHT REPUTATION STARS FOR EACH CLUSTER OF SIX OR MORE VILLAGE SPACES.

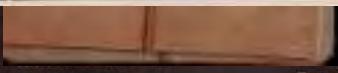


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EARN ONE REPUTATION STAR FOR EACH FOREST SPACE. THE SAME FOREST SPACE MAY BE SCORED IN A ROW AND A COLUMN.



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CLUSTER OF SIX OR MORE VILLAGE SPACES.



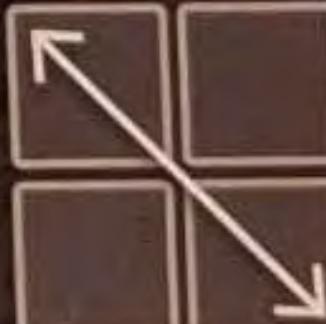
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EARN THREE REPUTATION STARS FOR EACH SPACE ALONG ONE EDGE OF THE LARGEST SQUARE OF FILLED SPACES.



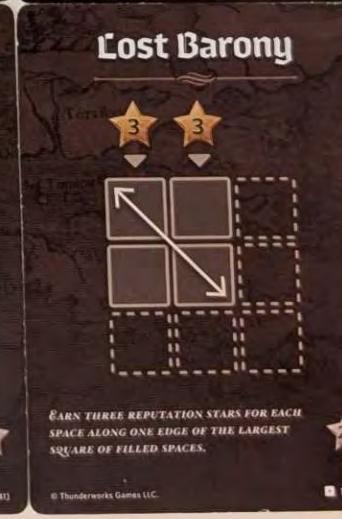
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SQUARE OF FILLED SPACES.

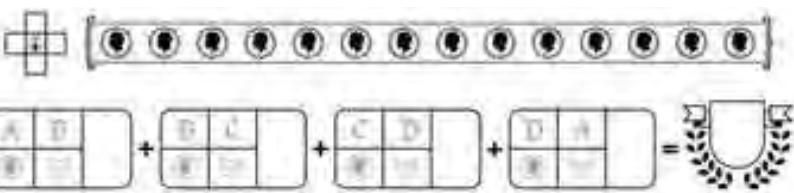
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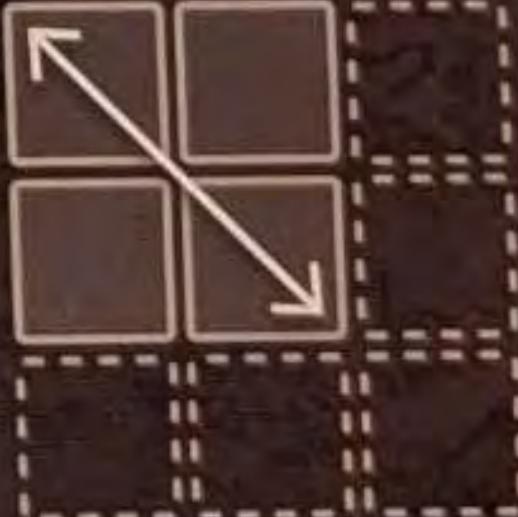






Lost Barony

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3



EARN THREE REPUTATION STARS FOR EACH
SPACE ALONG ONE EDGE OF THE LARGEST
SQUARE OF FILLED SPACES.



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Greenbough



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EARN ONE REPUTATION STAR FOR EACH
ROW AND COLUMN WITH AT LEAST ONE
FOREST SPACE. THE SAME FOREST SPACE
MAY BE SCORED IN A ROW AND A COLUMN.



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