

LONE WOLVES



To become the Alpha, bare your teeth
but also know when to go it alone.

Lone Wolves is a two-player dueling game with trick-taking and area majority elements. As leaders of wolfpacks, players attempt to ensure victory by becoming the Alpha of these lands. To achieve this, they dispatch wolves, of which there are 5 species representing suits, to compete over territories. The winner of the trick turns the wolf of the opposing player into a lone wolf, thus strengthening their position in that territory; whereas the loser of the trick gains a scar, experience which helps their pack grow stronger.

In your struggle to become the Alpha, there are no weak hands, just weak leaders!



Components

- 1 30 Wolf cards
- 2 18 Scar tokens
- 3 1 Territories board
- 4 5 Honor tokens
- 5 1 Moon token
- 6 1 Blood Moon token



Setup

- 1 Place the Territories board between both players with the side without any icons face up.
*The side with  in the lower left is used in the Advanced Ruleset.
- 2 Mix the 18 Scar tokens face down. On each territory, randomly place 1 token *face down* on each lighter scar with a darker background (total of 2); and 1 *face up* on the darker scar (total of 1). Place the 3 remaining unused tokens back in the box without looking at them.
- 3 Mix the 5 Honor tokens in a way that randomizes which side will be placed face up. Randomly place 1 token on each territory with either side face up.
- 4 Place the Moon and Blood Moon tokens within reach.
- 5 Shuffle the 30 Wolf cards and deal 13 to each player. Place the 4 remaining unused cards back in the box without looking at them.
- 6 The player who could survive the longest alone in the wilderness is the starting player (or choose randomly).



✦ Goal

Over the course of 13 rounds (“tricks”), players earn Honor points by (a) competing over territories by playing their Wolf cards into one of their choosing; and (b) obtaining Scar tokens. At the end of the game, the player with the highest number of strength (the total value of their Wolf cards) in each territory wins its Honor token, with certain Scar tokens also awarding points. The player with the most Honor points wins!

✦ How to Play

Trick-Taking

Before starting, it is important to be familiar with the concept of “trick-taking.” For those who are, you may skip this introduction and continue at “Dispatch a Wolf.” Each card has a “suit,” of which there are 5 represented by their colors in **Lone Wolves**. The first player (known as the “lead”) plays one of their cards face up into a territory on their side of the Territories board. If possible, the other player must play one of their cards of the same suit (“follow suit”) into a territory; if that player does not have a card of the lead suit, they are free to play any card of their choosing (including “trump,” explained below).

Once both players have played a card (“trick”), the player whose card is the highest value of the lead suit “wins (takes) the trick.” This player then becomes the lead for the next trick. Play continues until all players have played their cards (**Lone Wolves** thus has 13 tricks).

The “trump” suit, however, is stronger than all other suits, including the lead. For example, Milo leads with the Green 6. Howard does not have any Green cards in her hand, so she can play any card of her choice (“off-suit”). Knowing that White is trump, she decides to play the White 3. Normally, Milo would take the trick, but because White is trump, Howard takes it and becomes the lead. Note that trump can also be played as the lead suit, forcing the other player to likewise play trump if they have any.

Dispatch a Wolf

The first (lead) player chooses a Wolf card to play from their hand and places it in line with any territory of their choosing on their side of the Territories board. The opposing player must, if possible, follow suit and choose a card of the same color (suit) to play, likewise placing it in line with a territory on their side. The player whose card is the highest value of the lead suit, or highest trump card, wins (takes) the trick and becomes the lead player.

*The opposing player can also play into any territory of their choosing, including the same as that of the lead player.



Trick Resolution

Winner of the Trick: The Wolf card of the winner of the trick remains in line with the territory face up. The value of the card is the amount of strength dispatched to that territory in an attempt to control it and win the Honor token. The winner then becomes the lead player.

Loser of the Trick: The Wolf card of the loser of the trick also remains in line with the territory, but is flipped face down to its Lone Wolf side, which has a strength value of 1. In addition, the losing player must obtain 1 Scar token—face up or down—from the territory they played into and immediately place the token in an empty location on *any* territory on their side of the Territory board, thereby possibly establishing the trump suit (see “Trump”) and affecting the strength value or end-game scoring.

The lead player then dispatches a Wolf card to begin the next trick.

Card Abilities

Each of the 5 suits of Wolf cards consists of the cards 2–7 (5 suits of six cards). Of them, only cards 2 and 3 have abilities as follows:

2>7 The 2 takes the 7 of the same suit; that is, when comparing the value of the cards in the trick, only the 2 is stronger than the 7.
 $7 > 6 > 5 > 4 > 3$; $3 - 6 > 2$; $2 > 7$



When playing a 3, the player—whether leading or following—must immediately choose 1 facedown Scar token in the territory played into, if there are any, and flip it face up, revealing its effect to both players.

*If they lose the trick, the player does *not* have to choose the newly revealed token.

Example: During “Dispatch a Wolf,” Howard (A) chose 1 facedown Scar token in the Brown desert territory and flipped it face up.

Now, Milo’s Green 2 took the trick and thus remains face up, giving a strength value of 2 in the desert. Howard’s Brown 3 (B) flips face down, giving her a strength value of 1. Howard then (C) obtains 1 Scar token. Not satisfied with the two faceup tokens, she chooses the third, looks at the effect, and places it in the Black caves territory.



Playing into Territories

Each territory can only hold up to a total of 6 Wolf cards, whether face up or down. Once a sixth card is played into a territory on **either** side of the Territories board, that territory is considered full and cards can no longer be played into it.

*Scar tokens, however, can still be placed in any empty locations on that territory.

Example: Howard is the lead player and wants to play the Brown 6. Because the Green swamp and Brown desert territory both have a total of 6 Wolf cards, she cannot play her lead card into either territory, so she decides to play it into the White tundra territory.



Trump

At the beginning of the game, there is **not** a trump suit. Once the final Scar token has been obtained from any one territory, players place the Moon token on that territory. The corresponding suit, namely the suit of the same color as that of the territory, becomes trump beginning from the next trick.

*The player who controls the territory with the Moon token at the end of the game scores an additional 5 Honor points (see "Game End and Scoring").

Once the final Scar token has been taken from a **second** territory, players place the Blood Moon token on that territory and the corresponding suit becomes trump. The original trump suit established by the Moon token is no longer trump.

*The player who controls the territory with the Blood Moon token at the end of the game scores an additional 3 Honor points (see "Game End and Scoring").

Example: Earlier in the game, Howard obtained the final Scar token from the Brown desert territory. The players then placed the Moon token on the territory, establishing Brown as trump.

Now, Milo is the lead player and plays the Green 7 into the Green swamp territory. Howard plays the Brown 5 off-suit into the Red volcano territory. Being trump, Howard's Brown 5 wins the trick and remains face up. Losing the trick, Milo obtains and places the final Scar token from the swamp. The players then place the Blood Moon token on the swamp, establishing Green as trump. The Moon token remains on the desert, but Brown is no longer trump and functions as a normal suit.



Game End and Scoring

Once both players do not have any cards, namely after the resolution of the 13th trick, the game ends and players move to scoring.

In each territory, add up the total strength of each player by adding the values of their Wolf cards (Lone Wolf cards are a value of 1) and any Scar tokens that affect strength.

Both players then total their Honor points from (a) Honor tokens, (b) the Moon token, which is 5 points, (c) the Blood Moon token, which is 3 points, and (d) any Scar tokens that award points. The player with the most Honor points wins! In the case of a tie, the player who has the most Lone Wolf cards wins.



Scar Token Effects

-  +1 strength value for each Wolf card (incl. Lone Wolf) in the same side of the territory.
-  +3 strength value in the territory.
-  Flip over the Honor token in the territory, changing the number of Honor points.
*As the game progresses, the same Honor token may be flipped more than once.
-  +1 Honor point for each Wolf card (incl. Lone Wolf) in the same side of the territory.
-  +2 Honor points for each Lone Wolf card in the same side of the territory.
-  +2 Honor points for each faceup Wolf card (*not* incl. Lone Wolf) in the same side of the territory.
-  +3 Honor points for each faceup 2, 3, or 4 Wolf card in the same side of the territory.
-  +5 Honor points if the player wins the Honor token in the territory.



Advanced Ruleset

For added complexity, players may use the side of the Territories board with  in the lower right corner, which introduces asymmetrical territories. The gameplay as described in “How to Play” is the same.

Follow “Setup” from the base game, but with one exception: not every territory has three Scar tokens. Players still randomly place 1 token **face up** on each darker scar, but the number of lighter scars for tokens **face down** varies from 2 to 3.

*This may affect the tempo of which suit becomes trump.

Locations for placing Scar tokens can also be found on the boundaries between two territories. If a player places a token on this location, the token affects both territories simultaneously, whether adding strength, flipping Honor tokens, or awarding Honor points.

Credits

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