

Equinox

REINER KNIZIA

Fantastic creatures gather on the edge of a virgin forest to celebrate the equinox. In a friendly but challenging competition, these creatures confront each other using their magical powers. Their objective is to continue living through the tales and fables that will tell of their heroism.

Three of them will be remembered while the others will sink into oblivion. Which of these creatures will become legendary?

Object of the game

Earn the most points by betting on the creatures that will finish the tournament. The earlier a prediction is made on a creature, the more points it will be worth. However, betting heavily on a creature increases the odds that it will be eliminated by your opponents. At the end of the game, the player whose predictions gain the most prestige is the winner.

Components



Champion cards (x14): these cards represent the creatures that will take part in the tournament. Each creature has a special power that is activated (see page 5) when its controller plays a Creature card of the same type.

Creature cards (x154): these cards represent the participants of the tournament. Each of these 14 creatures comes with a set of 11 Creature cards, numbered from 0 to 10 in the top left corner. This number represents the **strength** of the card.



Chameleon cards (x11): despite not officially participating in the tournament, this thousand-faced creature likes to join and add chaos to the tournament by taking on the appearance of another creature, helping or hindering it.

The cards have a strength value ranging from 0 to 10, as for all Creature cards. They momentarily cancel the special powers of the creatures whose appearance they take (see page 5). Note: There is no Champion card for the Chameleon.

Tree cards (x3): the elders of the forest oversee the smooth running of the tournament. These cards have different effects when played.



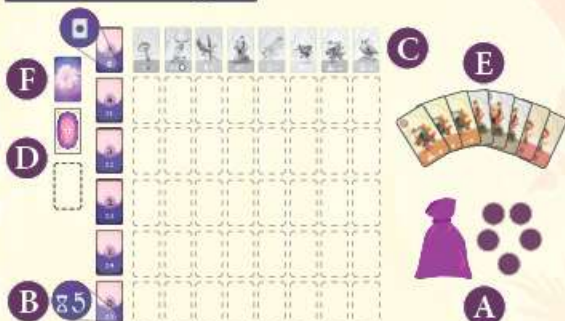
Row cards (x6): these cards, identified by the icons (1, 2, 3, 4 and 5) are used to identify each round while recalling the value of the prediction pebbles placed in their respective row.

Disappearance cards (x11): these cards identify which creatures were eliminated throughout the rounds.



Prediction pebbles (x25) and bags (x5): these pebbles (5 of each color) are used to place bets on the creatures taking part in the tournament. The bags are used to store the pebbles and to identify the color corresponding to each player.


Game setup



- Each player chooses a color and takes the 5 **Prediction pebbles** and bag of that color (A). Each player then places their 5 pebbles and their bag in front of them. Return any unused pebbles and bags to the box.
- Select 8 of the 14 **Champion cards** that you will use for this game (either by players' common agreement or randomly). Return any unused Champion cards and their corresponding Creature cards to the box as they will not be used in this game.
- In the center of the table, lay down the **Row cards** to create a column (vertically), by placing this card (B), at the top, then followed by the other cards (D), in ascending order from (1) to (5). Then, to the right of this card (B), create a single horizontal row using the 8 selected Champion cards by placing them face up next to each other (C). The order of the Champion cards does not matter.
- Shuffle the remaining **Creature cards** together with the **Chameleon cards** and **Tree cards** to form a draw deck. Place the deck face down, close to the playing area and reserve a space for the discard pile (D). Each player then draws 8 cards, face down, to make up their hand (E). Players then consult their cards.
- Keep the **Disappearance cards** (D) within easy reach (F).
- The first player is the one whose birthday is closest to the next equinox*.

* **Equinox:** Period of the year when the sun, passing through the equator during the day, has a duration equal to that of the night, from one polar circle to the other. In the Northern Hemisphere, the spring equinox occurs on or around March 21st and the autumnal equinox occurs on or around September 23rd.

Overview

The game is divided into five rounds . Each round consists of one or more turns for each player. Rounds are played clockwise, starting with the first player. A card is played each turn, eventually completing the current row. A round ends when a creature is eliminated from the current row.

Each player's turn is divided into 5 phases:

Phase 1: Make or Reveal a prediction.

Phase 2: Play a card.

Phase 3: Discard cards from your hand.

Phase 4: Draw cards to rebuild your 8-card hand.

Phase 5: Elimination of a creature, if applicable.

Important:

If you make a secret prediction during phase 1, skip phase 2 and go directly to phase 3.

Creature card



Playing the game

Phase 1

Make or Reveal a prediction

You can bet on a creature hoping that it will still be in play at the end of the game. The earlier a bet is made during the game, the more prestige points (PP) it will be worth if the creature finishes the tournament. During this phase, choose one of the following options:

- A) Make a regular prediction
- B) Make a secret prediction
- C) Reveal a secret prediction
- D) Skip

A) Make a regular prediction: Choose a pebble-free location at the intersection of the current row and the column of a creature still in play. Take one of your available Prediction pebbles and place it directly on this space if it is empty, or in the top right corner of the card.

- There can only be one regular prediction per creature per round.
- The value of a prediction depends on the round in which it was made (see page 4).
- **Important:** Each player can only make one prediction with each of their pebble during a game. A placed pebble cannot be taken back by its owner unless the power of *Moss Man* is activated.

Example:

Christopher wants to make a prediction on Stag. He places his Prediction pebble at the intersection of the current row and the column of Stag.

It will no longer be possible to make a prediction on this creature in this round.




Example :

During her turn, Laura wants to make a prediction on Twinz. She places her Prediction pebble at the intersection of the current row and the column of Twinz, directly on the card. It will no longer be possible to make a prediction on this creature in this round.



OR

B) Make a secret prediction: IN THE FIRST ROUND ONLY , you can choose to make a secret prediction. In this case, choose one **Creature card** from your hand, place it face down in front of you and play one of your available Prediction pebbles on this card.

You cannot play a card during the turn in which you make a secret prediction. Skip phase 2 and go directly to phase 3.

- The Creature card represents the creature on which the secret prediction was made.
- A secret prediction may also be made on a creature on which a regular (or secret) prediction has already been made during the first round.
- A secret prediction is worth 5 PP at the end of the game if the corresponding creature is still in play.
- A player can only **make one secret prediction** per game.
- **Reminder:** Chameleon cards and Tree cards are not Creature cards. You **cannot** make a secret prediction on these types of cards.


Example:

Stephen wants to make a secret prediction.

He takes one card from his hand, places it face down and places one of his Prediction pebbles on it.



OR

C) Reveal a secret prediction: Instead of making a prediction during your turn, you can choose to reveal your secret prediction. To do this, reveal the Creature card from under your Prediction pebble and discard it. Place your Prediction pebble on the corresponding **Champion card** (from row ).

Revealing your secret prediction may help you become the controller of a creature (see page 4). A **revealed secret prediction** has a **prestige value of 5** during the game.

- When a player plays the Ancestor Tree card, you may be forced to reveal your secret prediction, even if it is not your turn to play.
- Revealing a secret prediction does not cause you to skip playing a card during this turn.
- It is possible for 2 or more players to make a secret prediction on the same creature. When this happens, it is possible to place pebbles from those players on the same Champion card.

Example:

Mary wants to reveal her secret prediction card. She removes the Prediction pebble and turns her card over, face up, so that other players can see it.



She places her Prediction pebble on the corresponding Champion card.



She then discards her Creature card.




OR

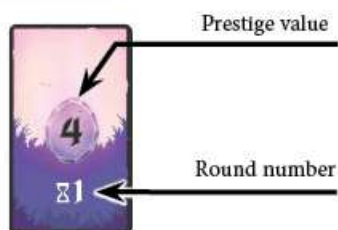
D) Skip: You can also choose not to perform any action during this phase.

Value of Predictions

Each player can bet 5 times, using their 5 Prediction pebbles during the game. At the end of the game, a prediction earns PP if it was made on a creature that is still in play at the end of the 5 rounds of the tournament. Each prediction is worth a certain PP value at the end of the game depending on the round during which it was made. The prestige value of each round is listed on the corresponding Row card.

At the end of the tournament, a secret prediction, for which a pebble is placed on a Champion card , is worth 5 PP if the corresponding creature is still in play.

Row card



The Controller

The controller of a creature is the player who has the highest total prestige value in the corresponding column.

- If two or more players share the highest total prestige values on a creature, no one controls this creature.
- Unless revealed, secret predictions do not count towards the total prestige value.

Example:

Mary made a prediction on Feather Fox during rounds 1 and 2, giving her a total prestige value of 7 (4 for her prediction in round 1, and 3 for her prediction in round 2).



Unless another player has a total prestige value equal or greater than 7 on this creature, Mary is the controller of Feather Fox and can therefore activate its special power each time she plays a Feather Fox Creature card.

$$4 + 3 = 7$$



Phase 2

Play a card

During each round, Creature cards and Chameleon cards are played in the columns identified by the Champion cards, aligned horizontally with the current Row card. These cards form the current row. The top card of each space of the current row indicates the strength of this creature for this round. During this phase, choose one of the following options:

- A) Play a Creature card
- B) Play a Chameleon card
- C) Play a Tree card
- D) Skip

Note: you cannot play a card during the turn where you made your secret prediction.

A) Play a Creature card: From your hand, place a Creature card where the current row and the column of the corresponding Champion card intersect.

- You cannot play a card of an eliminated creature.
- If other cards are already occupying this space, place the new card on top. Only the topmost card of a pile determines the current strength of a creature.
- If a Prediction pebble is already on this location, slide your Creature card under the pebble.
- No one has the right to consult covered cards.

Special Power

When you play a Creature card **FOR WHICH YOU ARE THE CONTROLLER**, you can use its special power immediately. The powers for all creatures are described in section "Creature Powers" of the appendix. However, there are some general rules that apply for all creatures:

- The special powers of a creature can break the rules. Any time a special power conflicts with a rule, the special power has a higher priority.
- A creature's special power can only be used by its controller. No other player has access to it.
- A creature's controller can only activate its special power by playing a Creature card from their hand. **Chameleon cards** or **Creature cards** moved around by other special powers **do not activate** a creature's special power!

OR

B) Play a Chameleon card: Place a Chameleon card at the intersection of the current row and the column of the creature of your choice (as if it was the same type as a Creature card).

- You cannot play a Chameleon card in the column of an eliminated creature.
- Playing a Chameleon card does not activate the special power of a creature.
- If other cards are already occupying this space, place the new card on top. Only the topmost card of a pile determines the current strength of a creature.
- Subsequently, a Creature card played **directly on top** of a face-up Chameleon card **does not activate** the power of this creature.



Example:

Mary plays a Chameleon card on Hoot, covering it up.



On the next turn, Stephen (who controls Hoot) plays a Hoot Creature card, covering up the Chameleon card. Because the Hoot Creature card covered a Chameleon card, Stephen cannot activate Hoot's special power!



OR

C) Play a Tree card: When you play a Tree card, follow its instructions, then discard it. There are two types of Tree cards: the Ancestor and the Dryad (see section "Power of the Trees" in the appendix).




OR

D) Skip: Your hand may sometimes consist of nothing but Creature cards for creatures that have already been eliminated. If this happens, then none of your cards are playable. In this case, you must show your hand to the other players to prove that you have no legal play and skip playing a card this turn. However, you cannot skip this phase if you have playable cards in hand.

Phase 3


Discard cards from your hand

During this phase, you can discard  up to 3 **Creature cards** of creatures that were eliminated. Show each discarded card to the other players to prove that each matches an eliminated creature.

Note: It is not allowed to consult the discard pile during the game.

Phase 4

Draw cards to rebuild your 8-card hand


If you have less than 8 cards in your hand, draw cards  to have 8 cards in your hand again.

If you draw the last card of the draw deck, the game ends immediately. Do not eliminate a creature in this round. This is the only case where a game can end with more than 3 creatures still in play.

Phase 5

Elimination of a creature, if applicable

Your turn ends by verifying if a creature is eliminated. A creature is eliminated from the current row if, in this row, all columns of creatures still in play are filled with Creature cards or Chameleon cards, and if **only one** visible card has the weakest strength.

- In case of a tie for creatures with the weakest strength, the round continues.
- The **current round ends** if a creature was eliminated. Place a Disappearance card  in the row below that creature. You can then proceed with setting up the next round.

Setting Up the Next Round

Partially fill the next row by placing a Disappearance card under each creature eliminated in previous rounds.

The next player can now play their turn in clockwise order.

Example:

At the end of a player's turn, all columns of creatures still in play have a card, but Hoot and Moss man are tied for the weakest strength of 1. This round is therefore not finished.



The round continues and one Hoot card of value 4 is played.


Moss man is now the only card in the current row to have the weakest strength. Moss man is eliminated and the round ends.




In the next row, place a Disappearance card below Moss man, and, to set up the next round, one more Disappearance card under each creature eliminated in previous rounds.



End of the game

The game ends either after the 5th round , or when the draw deck is empty.

If the game ends at the end of the 5th round, cover the newly eliminated creature with a Disappearance card  directly on the last card of its column.

At the end of the game, the layout will usually consist of a row of Champion cards and one row for each of the 5 rounds. Reveal all remaining secret predictions and place these Prediction pebbles on the corresponding Champion cards (as described on page 3).



Final Scoring

Each player calculates the total value of their predictions made on all creatures still in play. Whoever has the most Prestige Points is the winner. In case of a tie, the winner is the player who made a secret prediction on one of the creatures still in play. If there is still a tie, the player who placed the most Prediction pebbles on those creatures in row 1 is the winner. Each time the tie persists, proceed in the same way with the Prediction pebbles in the following row. Finally, if there is still a tie in row 5, the victory is shared.

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|---|
| | | | | | | | | | | Row of Champion cards Each secret prediction is worth 5 PP |
| | | | | | | | | | | Row 1—Round 1 Each prediction is worth 4 PP |
| | | | | | | | | | | Row 2—Round 2 Each prediction is worth 3 PP |
| | | | | | | | | | | Row 3—Round 3 Each prediction is worth 2 PP |
| | | | | | | | | | | Row 4—Round 4 Each prediction is worth 1 PP |
| | | | | | | | | | | Row 5—Round 5 Each prediction is worth 0 PP |

Fungy, Squeak and Hoot are still in play.



Consequently, only the predictions on these three creatures yield respectively:

$4 + 1 + 5 + 4 + 3 = 17$ PP to Stephen,

$5 + 3 + 3 + 1 = 12$ PP to Mary,

$4 + 2 = 6$ PP to Christopher and

2 PP to Laura.

Stephen wins the game!

Credits

| | |
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Appendix

Creature Powers



Squeak:

Draw 3 cards (no more, no less) from the draw deck and add them to your hand. If you draw the last card and deplete the deck, the game immediately ends.



Moss man:

Retrieve one of your Prediction pebbles already placed in the column of a creature (eliminated or not).

Place your pebble in front of you. If you retrieve the pebble of your secret prediction, discard the Creature card to which it is associated. You can make a new prediction with that pebble on a later turn.



Stag:

Immediately select another player, draw half of the cards (rounded up) randomly from their hand and put them face down in front of them, without looking at the cards.

The player cannot, in any way, use these cards on their next turn. They must draw them back in their phase 3, after discarding cards, but before refilling their hand to 8 cards.



Rubble:

Immediately place one of your available Prediction pebbles on any creature that does not already have a pebble on it, in any row (including previously played rows). You cannot place it on a Champion card.

Example: If you are playing during the 4th round, you can place your Prediction pebble on Feather Fox in the first row if there is no other Prediction pebble there. The value of this prediction is 4 PP, as if it had been placed during the first round.



Twinz:

Immediately play a second card as if you had an additional phase 2 in this turn. This special power cannot be used more than once per turn.



Hoot:

Select a player and choose a creature that is still in play. This player must give you a corresponding Creature card if they have one. If they do not have one, they must show you their hand. You cannot reveal to other players the contents of this player's hand. The player cannot give you a card that was placed face down due to the use of the special power of Stag, nor show you their face-down cards.



Carmen:

Carmen's special power can only apply in phase 3 of your turn. In phase 3, you can discard Creature cards still in play or eliminated. You do not have to show each card that you discard to other players. However, you cannot discard more than 3 cards in this current turn.



Fungy:

Choose another creature that has been eliminated and immediately activate its special power. You cannot activate the special power of creatures set aside before the start of the game.

Note: If you pick Fiery Fang (see below) with the power of Fungy, you will be able to retrieve a face-up card of Fungy.



Goatman:

Choose another player who has at least 3 cards in hand. Draw 3 cards from their hand and look at them. Keep one card of your choice and give the two others back to their owner without showing them to other players. You cannot draw cards that are face down due to the special power of Stag.



Fiery Fang:

Retrieve a played Creature card depicting Fiery Fang from a previous row and add it to your hand.



Hopscotch:

Choose a column from a creature still in play. You can exchange a visible Creature card from that column for another Creature card in the same column.

Example: If a creature currently has a 4-strength Creature card, and an 8-strength Creature card in a previous row, you can swap these two cards to put the 8-strength card in the current row instead of the 4-strength card, which can now take the place of the 8-strength card.



Feather Fox:

Discard any visible Creature or Chameleon Card from another column in the current row. Any card that is revealed by this power is considered to be the creature's actual card. Once you pick up a card to discard, you cannot change your mind.



Ursus:

During the game, Ursus does not have a special power. However, the strength of each of its Creature cards is increased by 0.5 more than normal. The strength values therefore range from 0.5 to 10.5.

Note: The strength value of an Ursus Creature card played directly on top of a face-up Chameleon card is unaffected.

During the final scoring, if Ursus is still in play, each player scores 0.5 PP for each of their prediction pebbles in that column.



Pilgrim:

Retrieve a visible Chameleon card from any row of your choice and add it to your hand. Any card that is revealed by this power is considered to be the creature's actual card.

Power of the Trees



Ancestor:

Choose one creature still in play. Players who have made secret predictions on this creature must immediately reveal their secret prediction. This may allow a change of controller of the creature. A secret prediction is worth 5 PP.



Dryad:

Retrieve a visible Creature card (from the current round or from a previous one) and add it to your hand.