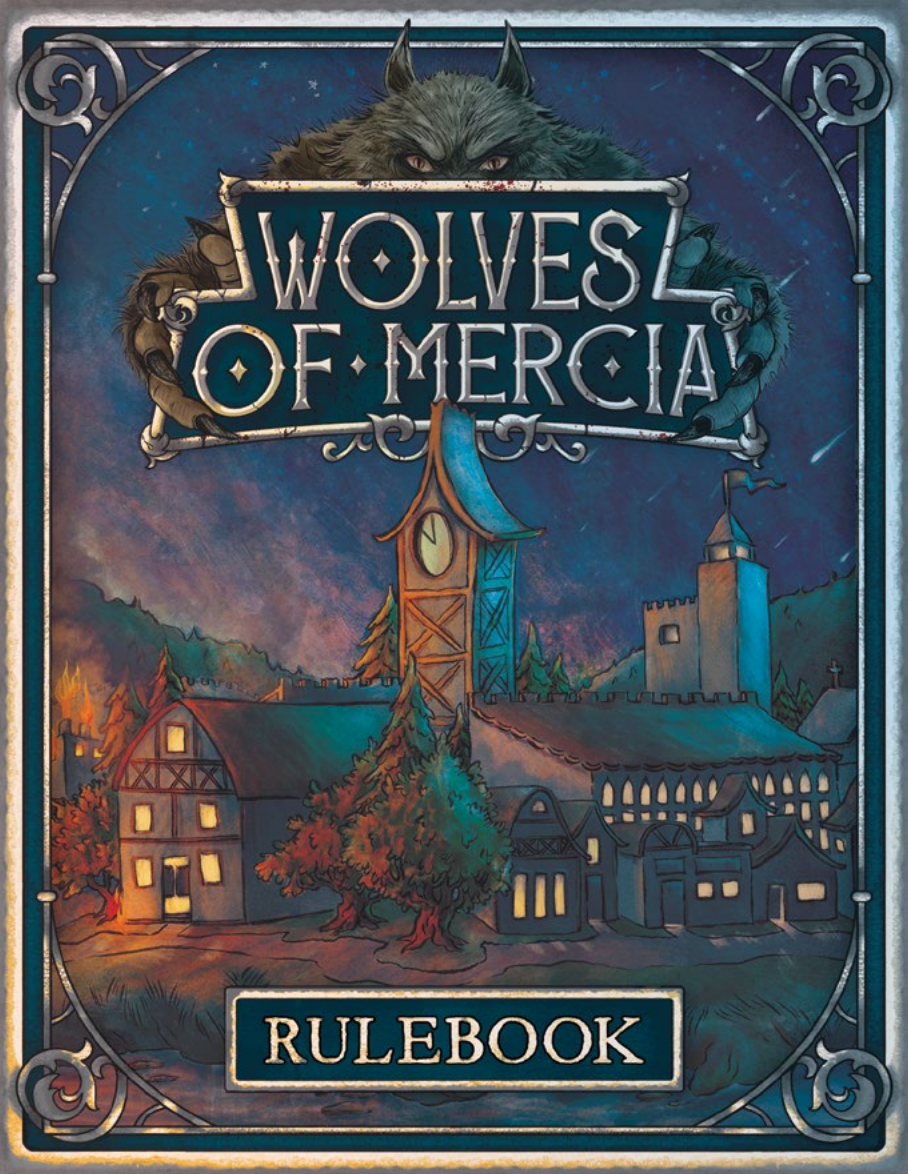


The cover art is framed by a decorative border with ornate scrollwork in the corners. At the top, a large, grey-furred wolf's head with yellow eyes and pointed ears looms over the title. The title 'WOLVES OF MERCIA' is written in a stylized, white, serif font with decorative diamond-shaped cutouts in the letters, set against a dark blue background with a starry night sky. Below the title, a medieval-style town is depicted at night. A tall, wooden clock tower with a blue roof and a white clock face stands prominently in the center. To the left, a large, half-timbered house with a red roof has several windows glowing with yellow light. To the right, a stone castle with a blue tower and a flag on top is visible. In the foreground, there are several trees with autumn-colored foliage in shades of orange, red, and green. The overall scene is illuminated by a mix of the cool blue light of the night sky and the warm yellow light from the town's windows.

WOLVES OF MERCIA

RULEBOOK

WOLVES OF MERCIA

In the medieval village of Mercia, everybody has a secret.

During the day, you pretend to be ordinary. Trading goods as a merchant, studying ancient lore as a scholar, or taking confession as a priest.

But when night falls, you drop the façade and work toward your own secret agenda. Perhaps you are an initiate of a sinister cult, working with your fellows to usher untold destruction. Or perhaps you prefer the arsonist's insane fantasy of torching half the village. You might even bear the mark of the dreaded Wolf of Mercia, who strikes down one villager every night without fail.

In Wolves of Mercia, each player has their own way to win. Can you keep up the charade long enough to fulfill your wicked desire?

OBJECTIVE

Each player's Secret card offers a unique win condition. Some players only need to survive to the end of the game, while others pursue one of several hidden objectives. For example, while the Werewolf slakes his bloodthirst over the course of five nights, the Cultists attempt to complete a sinister ritual.



CONTENTS

Game Board	15 Wooden Counters
17 Villager Cards	Day/Night Token
18 Secret Cards	1 Blackmail Token
14 Special Cards	1 Consecration Token
3 Ritual Cards	1 Shield Token
5 Item Cards	4 Patronage Tokens
1 Edict Card	4 Study Tokens
1 Misinformation Card	6 Cursed Tokens
4 Phantom Cards	



Game Board



Villager Cards



Secret Cards



Ritual Cards



Item Cards



Edict Card



Misinformation Card



Phantom Cards



Day/Night Token



Shield Token



Consecration Token



Cursed Token



Wooden Counters



Patronage Token



Study Token



Blackmail Token

VILLAGER CARD

4

Initiative



Portrait

Title

Knight

* Action: Give the  token to another player until tomorrow. If that player would be targeted by an action, the targeting player instead discards the  token.

SECRET CARD

8

Initiative



Portrait

Title

Werewolf

○ Action: Target another player and kill them.

At the end of the fifth night, if no other player has won the game, you win the game.

6

GAME BOARD

Time Track

I

II

III

Ritual

5

*Action: Remove one counter from the Burning Village track.
Any player may take this action.

5-7

Burning Village Track

I

IV

V

Track



8-10 11-13 14+

Fugitive Track

SETUP

1. Place the game board within reach of all players. Place the Day/Night token on the first circle in the Time Track, with the * side up.
2. Place all tokens and counters near the game board.
3. Deal each player a Villager card, face up. If a player's Villager role controls a Special card, distribute them:
 - ❖ 5 shuffled "Items" to the Merchant
 - ❖ "Edicts" to the Noble
 - ❖ "Misinformation" to the Inquisitor

Note: Even though the Misinformation card has a "Secret" back, it is not considered a Secret card during setup. Don't include it in the Secrets deck!

4. Prepare the Ritual deck by placing the 3 Ritual cards in a pile with I on top, II in the middle, and III on the bottom. Place them face-down near the game board.

5. Prepare the Secrets deck:

- ❖ Include the Werewolf card and a predetermined number of Cultist cards (see table). Return excess Cultist cards to the box.
- ❖ Shuffle the remaining Secret cards and add them to the Secrets deck until there are X cards in the deck, where X is the number of players. (Add an additional Secret card if a player is using the Widow role.)
- ❖ Shuffle the Secrets deck.

Number of Players	Number of Cultists
5-7	2
8-10	3
11-13	4
14+	5

Example: Tonight, we're playing with 9 players. We will begin with the Werewolf and 3 Cultists. Then we will add 5 more Secret cards at random, for a total of 9 Secrets.

6. Deal each player a Secret card, face down.
7. Choose a Game Master, who will announce the passage of time throughout the game.

SETUP LAYOUT





HOW TO PLAY

The game takes place over the course of five rounds, each consisting of a “Day” ☼ phase and a “Night” ○ phase. As action moves from Day to Night, the Game Master will flip the Day/Night token from the sun icon to the moon. When moving from Night into the next Day, flip the token again and move it to the next numbered circle on the Time Track. At the end of the fifth night, the game is over.

Day Phase	Pg. 15
Night Phase	Pg. 16
Ending the Game	Pg. 17

TRACKS & COUNTERS

There are three tracks on the game board: the Burning Village track, the Ritual track, and the Fugitive track. Over the course of the game, players will add or remove counters from these tracks through player abilities and card effects.

While the Arsonist adds counters to the Burning Village track with their ○ action, any player may “put out the fire” by using the ✱ action listed below the track. The Arsonist wins the game when there are five counters on the Burning Village track.

Over the course of the game, Cultist players will add counters to the Ritual track until the track is “full.” The required number of counters is dependent on the number of players in the game. 2 counters for 5-7 players, 3 counters for 8-10, 4 counters for 11-13, and 5 counters for games of 14 or more.

A player with the Fugitive secret may place counters on the Fugitive track with their ○ ability. The Fugitive player wins the game when there are three counters on the Fugitive track.

DAY PHASE

During the day, players may talk freely about their plans. They can scheme, bargain, lie, and bamboozle.

During the day, initiative order is determined by a ★ initiative number in the top left corner of each Villager card. Low numbers act first.

In initiative order, each player may take one ★ action. Usually this will be the action on their Villager card, but other actions may be granted by other cards and game effects.

Once every player has had a turn to act, advance to the Night phase by flipping the Day/Night token to the ○ face.

Tip: At the beginning of each Day phase, remember to check your Secret card to make sure it wasn't switched during the Night!

NIGHT PHASE

All players close their eyes and keep them closed until their turn. Players should also lightly drum on the table, tap their feet, or play some spooky music in order to cover up any noise made by the active players.

The Game Master calls the ○ initiative order, counting from 1 to 12, pausing about 20 seconds to allow the “awakened” players enough time to take their actions. When a player's number is called, they “awaken.” While awakened on their turn, a player may take one ○ action, then close their eyes. If more than one player is “awake” at the same time, they may communicate nonverbally with each other, but may not speak.

After all numbers have been called, the Game Master awakens all players to begin the next Day phase.

To move from Night to Day, flip the Day/Night token to the ✱ face and move to the next numbered circle on the time track.

ENDING THE GAME

When a player achieves their win condition, they immediately reveal their Secret card and declare their victory, thus ending the game. Multiple players may declare victory simultaneously. However, a player must be awake to declare victory.

ADVANCED RULES

Moderator

In larger groups, it may be difficult for all players to reach certain components. In such cases, you may introduce a full-time moderator who will act as Game Master, as well as help other players perform actions outside of their physical reach.

Phantoms

If your playgroup would like to ensure everybody can participate - even after the werewolf strikes - introduce the included Phantom cards. Each of these roles introduces an alternate win condition, as well as a way they can influence the game from beyond the grave.

Whenever a player dies, they may choose one of the remaining Phantom cards, then gain control of it face down. A Phantom's **O** initiative replaces the value on their Secret card, if applicable. A Phantom may only trigger the game effect listed on their Phantom card. They may still communicate with other players and must close their eyes during the Night phase as normal.

True Love

Some Secret cards, like the Lovers and Lonely Heart, work best when all 3 are included in the game. For a more consistent game experience, consider curating your Secrets during setup to include both Lover cards.

KEY TERMS

Action

Unless otherwise prohibited, a Player can perform the ✱ and ○ actions on any card they control. This includes their Villager card, Secret, and Items. Players may also perform the actions granted by public spaces on the game board, such as putting out fire on the Burning Village track.

Alive & Dead

When an effect says to kill a character, flip that character's Villager card to its Dead side. Set aside any items, tokens, and counters on this card. Unless otherwise noted, a dead character may not be targeted, take actions, or otherwise participate in the game.

Another Player

When an effect references “another” player, the effect applies only to characters besides yourself.

Cursed ///

Some game effects distribute // tokens to players. When using the werewolf’s ability to kill another player, the werewolf player must target a player with a // token, if able.

Response

A response is an optional effect triggered as a reaction to a specific in-game action. It takes effect before the triggering action. A response is not considered an action.

Revealing a Card

When a card is revealed by a game effect, it is shown to all players, then turned face down. A player may never reveal their Secret card or show it to another player unless explicitly allowed by a card or game effect. Players may look at their own Secret card freely during the Day phase or while they are awakened in the night.

Playing a Card

When a game instructs you to play a card, add that card face up next to the game board.



THE STORY SO FAR

The wolves have begun to howl in Mercia. They herald an ancient curse, which brings five nights of terror and blood. Search these pages for your villager role and your dark secret, then join them together to begin your story.

VILLAGERS

Bishop

When the blood starts spilling, they'll turn to you first. They will beseech you to consecrate the village, as if a little holy water could wash the curse from this wretched earth. And yet...

Priest

You have heard strange whispers through the walls of your confessional. Some seek to hide their hideous impulses, while others beg you to unburden their guilt. Everyone knows, your absolution comes at a price. And yet...

Noble

The peasants are gathering in your halls to weep and moan and stain the linens. They are getting restless. You have soldiers and high walls and hoards of treasure, but what happens when the coffers run dry? And yet...

Knight

You have always been the protector. The strong shield, keeping peace between the rich prigs and the hungryfolk. You can only play both sides for so long before they crush you in the middle. And yet...

Inquisitor

You always tell the prisoners: speak the truth, know the truth. They all have something to offer. Something useful, or brilliant, or beautiful. Even their screams tell a story. And yet...

Jailer

The prisoners continue to complain. No food. No company. Boo-hoo, you tell them. The rats supply plenty of both. And yet...

Artist

It takes connections to protect yourself in this world, and good connections are hard to come by. A flattering portrait here, a tapestry for the tavern there, and you might finally have a moment to breathe. And yet...

Scholar

Hush! You have heard the stars murmuring. Celestial movements portend the revolution of a powerful curse. A black star ascendant, heralded by bloody teeth. And yet...

Merchant

Every morning, they flock to your stall. The beauties, the vagrants, even that ugly, lurching jailer. They offer favors in exchange for silver, and silk, and strange artifacts smuggled from distant lands. Fools. And yet...

Jester

You've played the fool a long while. One thing you learned between the handsprings and japes, is that the ones who laugh the loudest have the most to hide. And yet...

Dissident

The rich barricaded themselves behind brick while the hungryfolk wait for the wolf's jaws to close around them. Once you've seized the keep, will you remain a hero to the people? And yet...

Widow

The day after your husband dies, you discover a locked chest beneath the bed. The wolf may have claimed his life, but you claimed his secrets. And yet...

Medium

Their bodies may be buried, but the dead are still among us. Still weeping, still afraid. Only you can speak for them. Only you can carry them forward. And yet...

Lunatic

The Inquisitor said you were diseased with sin. In your ravings, there was more than a hint of truth. Your illness lets you see to the heart of things. And yet...

Beggar

The others scabble for an edge. Sneaking, posturing, threatening. Not you. You simply watch, and wait. Some of them spit on you. Their time will come. By blade or by claw, their time will come. And yet...

Barkeep

You used to open the kegs to keep folk happy. Now you just hope everyone is too drunk to wonder what you've been doing in that back room. And yet...

Courtisan

Like the lioness, you can move through the day and night. You learned young: speak confidently, don't let them see you without your makeup, and never, ever flinch. And yet...

SECRETS

Lovers

...all you can see is your secret lover's face. You must protect them. Kill for them if you have to. Your love is all that is worth living for.

Lonely Heart

...you have walked too long without the comfort of love. No longer. The howls have stirred something within you. That love will be your own.

Hierophant

...the fools do not know what they summon. The eye of the storm, the dark mouth of an eldritch god. Only you shall know the sublime taste of annihilation.

Cultist

...some of your neighbors have grown suspicious of your dark mission. Your brotherhood may be small, but when the black star rises over Mercia, you will know salvation at last.

Fugitive

...it's only a matter of time before your crimes catch up to you. You will have to strike out again, after all this time. You'll have to keep a low profile until the preparations have been made.

Arsonist

...the flames beckon. You have seen it in your dreams. A great darkness rises. Only you can banish it with purifying flame. Mercia must burn.

Blackmailer

...the dullards continue their petty feuds. Like lambs in the mire, each wriggle brings them closer to ruin. Now is the time to set your fateful trap.

Slayer

...this land is marked with the curse of the wolf, and dark powers are rising in its wake. Set out tonight, knife in hand. Catch the wolf in its lair and cleanse Mercia with holy silver.

Werewolf

...you have resisted the curse for so long, but now the scent of blood is in the air. When the new moon returns, you may enjoy another few weeks of peace. Until then, the hunt beckons; you must answer.

Assassin

...a new contract has arrived. Mercia's enemies wish to see it crumble from within. Three bodies. Five days. Make it so.

Martyr

...you seem to be the only one who realizes how bad it's going to get. A wolf carves its way through the village and at least two of your neighbors are trying to summon an ancient god. Hope is a distant memory.

Grave Robber

...the dead do not always keep their secrets. Now, bodies are piling in the village square. Perhaps you may finally begin to seek some answers.

Sinner

...your heart is choked with sin, and now your very soul is at hazard. Your only salvation is to pass it on. Pity the poor stranger. Pity the damned.

EPILOGUE

Lovers Win

Wandering through an orchard, you marvel at the sunset. Your love is at your side. The killing has stopped. For now, at least, this is all that matters.

Lonely Heart Wins

Your lover eyes you coldly. Things will change in time. All things do. No matter what it cost you, remember: this is what you wanted.

Hierophant Wins

They did it. The fools actually did it. Now your dark god stands at the doorstep. It raises its mask. You are the first to gaze upon the face of desolation.

Cultists Win

The chanting ceases. In the sky hangs a vortex of utter black. The moon twitches in the sky like a diseased child, then blinks out of existence. Inky tendrils creep from the void. They reach toward Mercia. Your terror is sublime.

Fugitive Wins

You sling a pack over your shoulder. The road is quiet by night. You leave behind the village, the blood, the darkness. You encounter a stranger on the road. You strike camp together. You tell him only lies. In the morning, you return to the road, alone.

Arsonist Wins

The tower is the last to burn. Your triumph complete, your flames scrape the very stars. The night is bright as day. A mural of light. A masterpiece.

Blackmailer Wins

The look in their eyes is priceless. Like a trapdoor has opened in their soul. The moment they realize...they belong to you.

Slayer Wins

The wolf's blood drips from your silver knife. The fools and killers are safe in their beds. There is no glory in this work. The ancients work through you. The desolation stymied for another generation.

Werewolf Wins

The next day, you watch the sky with dread. A new moon rises, but no beast stirs within you. The curse will return. It is inevitable. But for now you wait, and wait, and wait.

Assassin Wins

Just as the bell tolls, your bloody work comes to an end. A sentry calls out from the ramparts; purple banners on the horizon, flying the emblem of the golden serpent. The new gods have arrived.

Martyr Wins

The terror lasts only for a moment. This is a kind of victory.

FREQUENT QUERIES

Q: What happens if more than one player would win in a given night phase?

A: When a player meets their victory condition, they should immediately reveal their Secret card and proclaim victory. A “sleeping” player cannot declare victory.

Q: How do // tokens work?

A: If a werewolf is using its ability to kill another player, and there are players with // tokens in play, the werewolf must select its target from among those players. Of course, a werewolf is never forced to use its action, and may not target itself.

ACCREDITATIONS

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INITIATIVE ORDER

- | | | |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1. Bishop | 7. Artist | 13. Medium |
| 2. Priest | 8. Scholar | 14. Lunatic |
| 3. Noble | 9. Merchant | 15. Beggar |
| 4. Knight | 10. Jester | 16. Barkeep |
| 5. Inquisitor | 11. Dissident | 17. Courtesan |
| 6. Jailer | 12. Widow | |



INITIATIVE ORDER

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| 1. Lovers and
Lonely Heart | 5. Arsonist | 10. Martyr |
| 2. Hierophant | 6. Blackmailer | 11. Grave
Robber |
| 3. Cultists | 7. Slayer | 12. Sinner |
| 4. Fugitive | 8. Werewolf | |
| | 9. Assassin | |