

The story

Near an old Norwegian village, a troll climbed up from his bridge to make a quick and easy snack of a small goat that was foolishly attempting to cross the bridge alone. Unfortunately, the tables were turned when the small goat, its medium-sized brother, and their large brother teamed up.

A frightening troll, big and tough,
Treated those on his bridge rather rough;
But a big billy goat
Dumped that troll in the moat
In a manner both gruesome and gruff.

The troll managed to eventually crawl out of the river in order to seek out a new abode. Trolls must live under a bridge by decree of fairy tale narrative, so the troll trudged down the river to the next bridge. Fairies floated by singing little taunts to the troll.

“HELP! I have been beaten by the largest billy goat in the world with the sharpest horns and the roughest toes! Please help me find my way home so that I can cry on my mother's shoulder. I have sailed down a stream to a large lake and was taken down a river and into the big ocean. I am stranded on an island. Please send help!”

“Mr Troll should not have been so mean! If he had made friends with the goats, they could've shared meals and played together. I hope he learned his lesson and the next bridge he came to as he floated down the river that he decided to stay under, he would make friends and learn to eat grass!”

The troll grimaced a troll grimace (barely distinguishable from a troll smile), and attempted to ignore the fairies' laughter. “I have a bridge, so I'm still a troll. They will fear me if they try to cross! I'll eat them all up. See if I don't!”

Unbeknownst to the troll, however, was the fact that he had taken up lodgings under no ordinary bridge. No, this new bridge was the legendary Magic Bridge. Each night, the bridge's bricks would awaken and migrate to a new river or stream. There, the awakened bricks would form a new bridge to delight tired travelers the next day by providing a crossing where previously none had been. What a wonderful Magic Bridge it was!

In the evening, the troll settled down for bed. No sooner had dreams begun to come (dreams of tasty goats with no horns) than the sound of bricks stirring reached the troll's ears. The troll could hear their little brick voices softly whispering, “It's time... it's time to move.”

“Not on my watch!” the troll roared, seeing a repeat of its recent eviction playing out in the mind. The troll leaped up onto the bridge ready to beat into submission any brick that dared to move an inch! Thus begins our story.

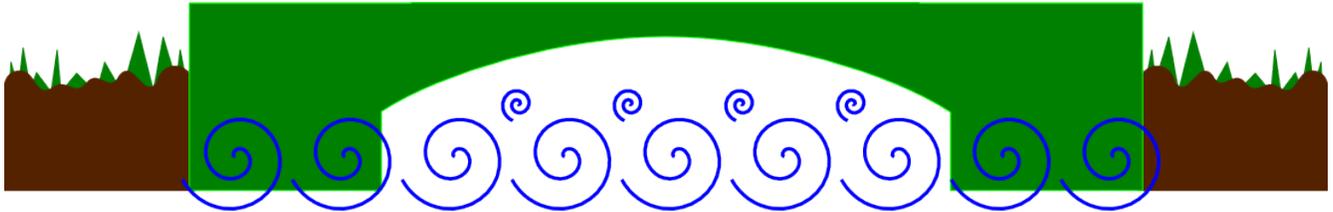
Angry Troll versus Magic Bridge

Materials required:

- 52-card deck of playing cards (Ace – King with suits of clubs, diamonds, spades, and hearts)
- One six-sided die (standard 1-6 die)
- An object to represent the troll (a shot glass works well)

Building the Magic Bridge and placing the Angry Troll:

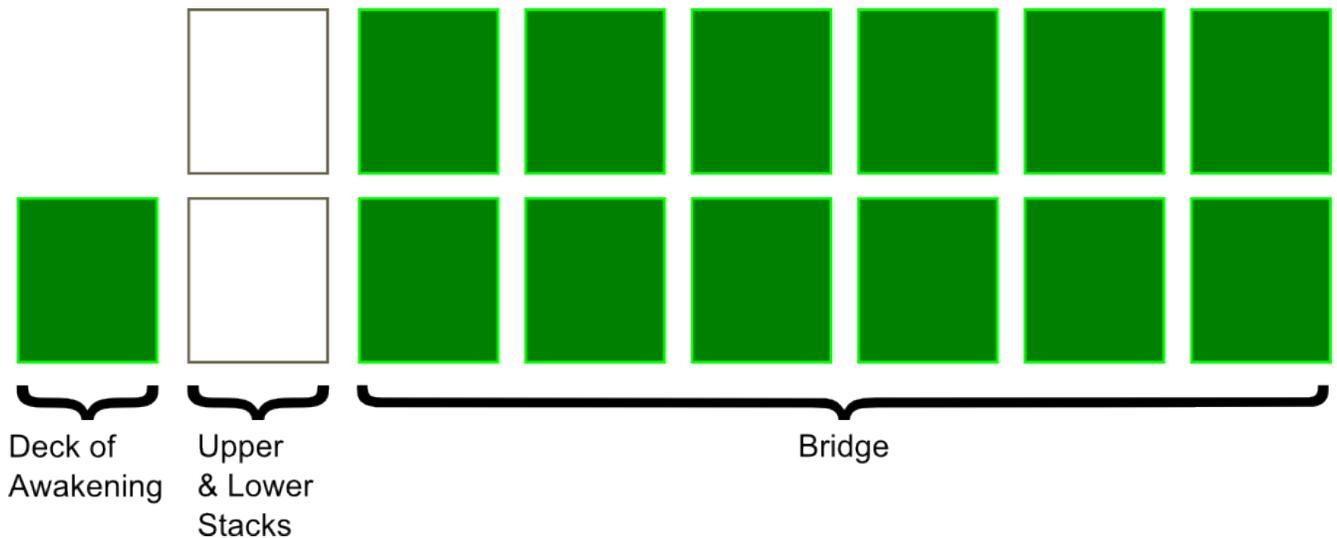
The bridge stands over a river, with a river bank on either side.



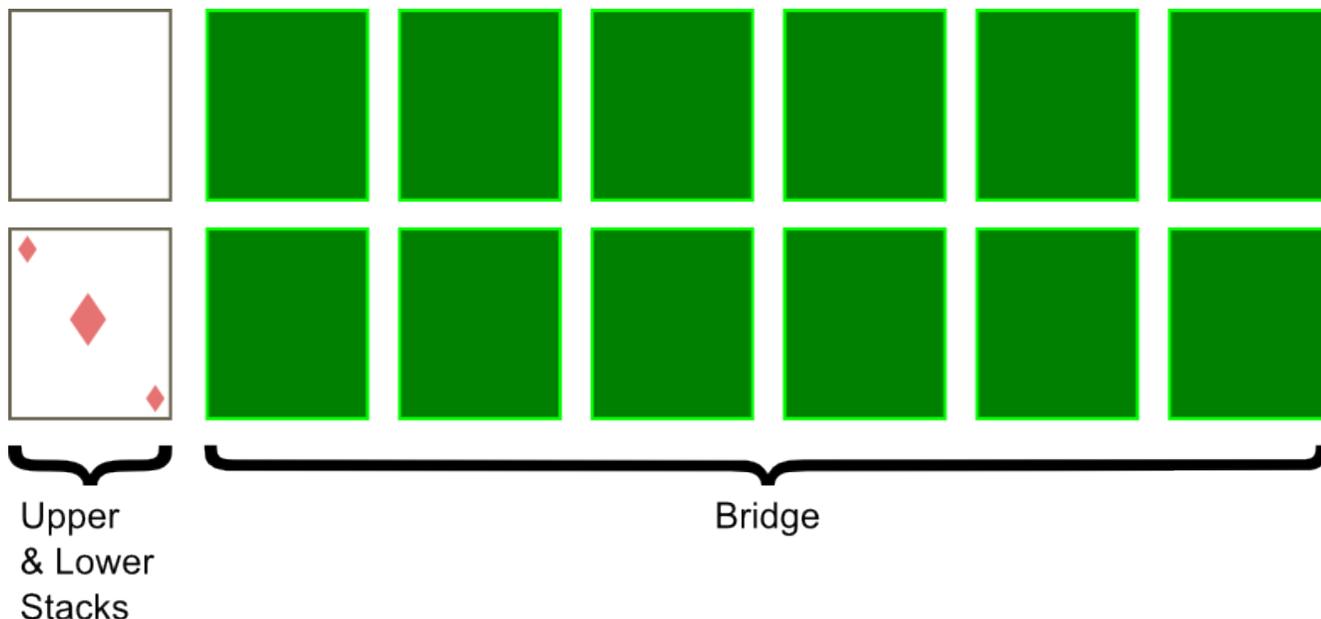
With cards as bricks, a row of a bridge is built with 3, 2, 1, 1, 2, and 3 cards in a row.



Two rows of bricks create a full bridge. The rest of the cards are set aside as the deck of awakening.

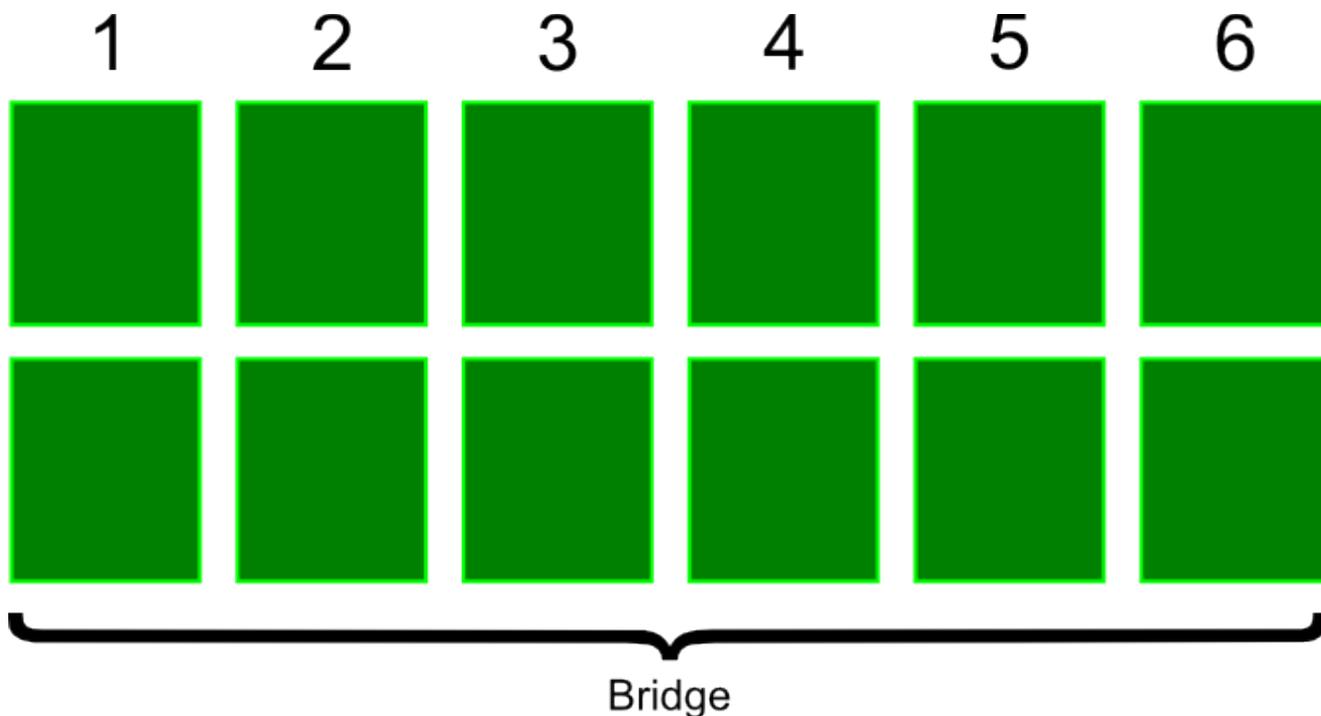


Before the first turn, a card is drawn from the deck of awakening and placed face up in the lower stack.



Only cards that match this first card's color can be played in the lower stack. Cards of the opposite color will be played into the upper stack. The stack a card is played into indicates which row is being used.

Each position of the bridge corresponds to a number on the die.



The die is rolled and the troll is placed into the row indicated by the card played into a stack (always the lower row for the first turn) and is placed into the position indicated by the number on the die.

The goal(s)

The Angry Troll's goal:

The troll wants to beat the bridge into submission, so it doesn't have to find a new bridge to live under.

The Magic Bridge's goal:

The Magic Bridge wants to leave and be a bridge somewhere else.

Your goal:

Help the troll have at least some semblance of a bridge to live under tomorrow.

Playing a turn

Each turn has three phases:

1. Brick awakening phase.
2. Troll action phase.
3. Brick flight phase.

Brick awakening phase:

Any cards set aside during the previous turn are played into the stacks one at a time. The card is always played into the stack that matches the color of the card, so that the lower stack contains all cards of one color, and the upper stack contains all cards of the opposite color. If no cards were set aside during the previous turn (such as on the first turn), a card is drawn from the deck of awakening and played into the stacks.

Each card is played into the stacks one at a time, and a die is rolled after each card. The brick in the row (determined by the stack played into) and in the position (determined by the die roll) will awaken. The card is turned from face down to face up. If the card was already face up, the card “flies away” and is immediately set aside for use in the next brick awakening phase. Dormant bricks the troll is standing on will still awaken as usual.

Troll action phase:

Every turn, the troll must take two actions. Actions can be movement, stomping, picking up a brick, using a brick, or laying down a brick.

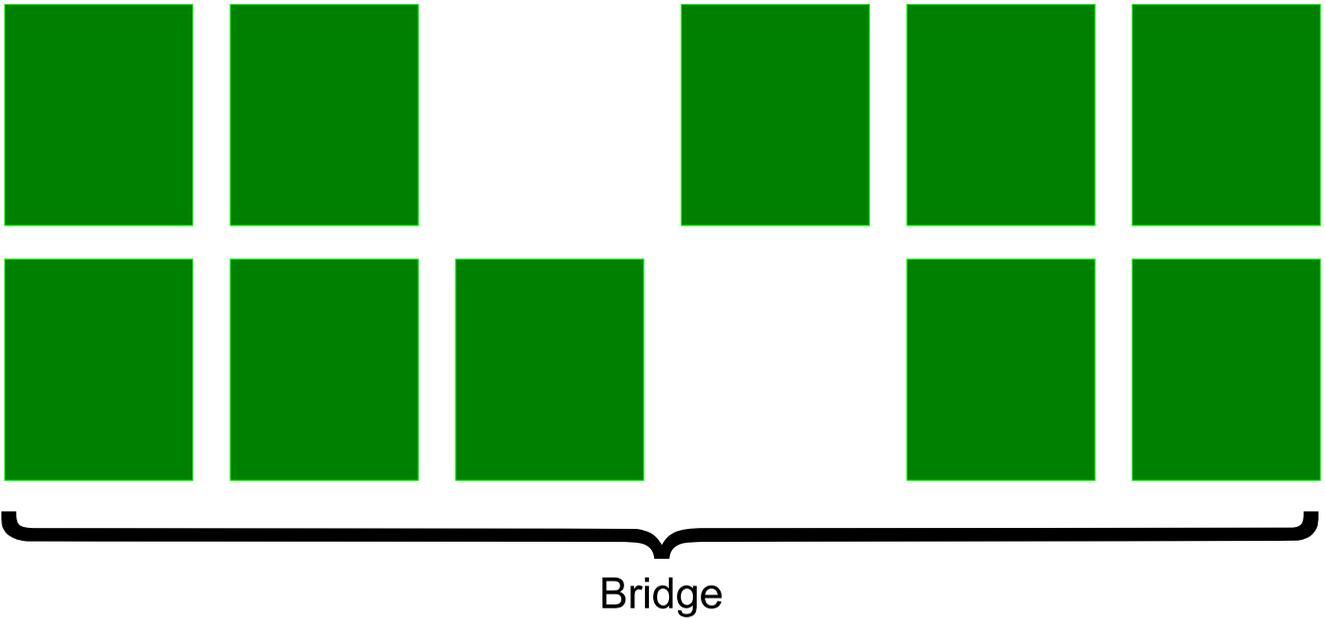
- Movement – The troll can spend one action to move one space up, down, left, or right. The troll must always be standing on a brick and cannot move onto the same brick twice in one turn.
- Stomping – If the troll is standing on an awakened brick, the troll can spend one action to stomp on the brick to make it dormant. Flip the card from face up to face down.
- Picking up a brick – If the troll is next to (not standing on) an awakened brick, the troll can spend one action pick up the brick for use later. Place the card on top of the troll token. The troll cannot pick up bricks that are hearts, because a troll cannot have a heart. It's a troll tradition. The troll can carry only one brick at a time.
- Use a brick – If the troll is carrying an awakened brick, the troll can spend one action to use it. The use depends on the suit of the awakened card. After use, the card is set aside for use in the brick awakening phase.
 - Clubs – If the troll is next to an awakened brick, the troll can use a club as a close-ranged weapon to beat the awakened brick and make it dormant. Flip the target brick's card from face up to face down.
 - Diamonds – The troll can throw a diamond up, down, left, or right as a throwing weapon to hit the first awakened brick in that direction to make it dormant. Flip the target brick's card from face up to face down.
 - Spade – If the troll is next to an awakened brick, the troll can use a spade as a shovel to flip the awakened brick up into the troll's hands as a dormant brick. Flip the target brick's card from face up to face down and place it on top of the troll token.
- Laying down a brick – If the troll is carrying a dormant brick (after using a spade), the troll can lay down the brick in a spot up, down, left, or right of the troll's current position. The brick must be laid down in one of the original bridge's positions.

Brick flight phase:

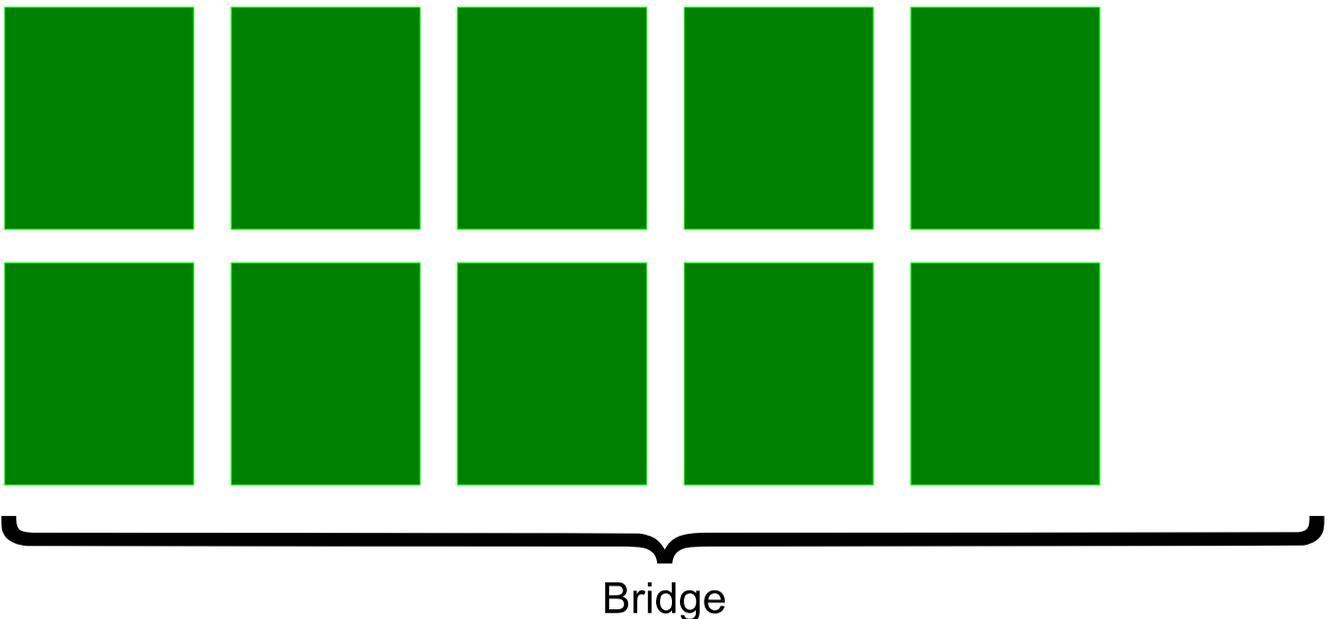
Each awakened brick attempts to flee. Bricks that the troll is standing on or carrying cannot flee. Bricks that can flee move one space left or right towards the closest bank not blocked by the troll. Any bricks that move beyond the bridge's original positions (1 – 6) and onto the river bank are set aside for use in the brick awakening phase. Bricks can move into empty spaces to reach a river bank, and multiple bricks can successfully flee on the same turn.

After all awakened bricks attempt to flee, the bricks must be evaluated to see if the bridge collapses. Bricks must be touching sides to create a bridge between the two banks of the river.

If the bridge is not connected, the bridge collapses.



If the bridge does not have bricks at either end touching the river bank (positions 1 or 6), the bridge collapses.



Winning

The troll wins if:

...the deck of awakening is empty, all bricks on the bridge are dormant, and the bridge is still standing.

The win is “perfect” if there are no gaps in the bridge.

The bridge wins if:

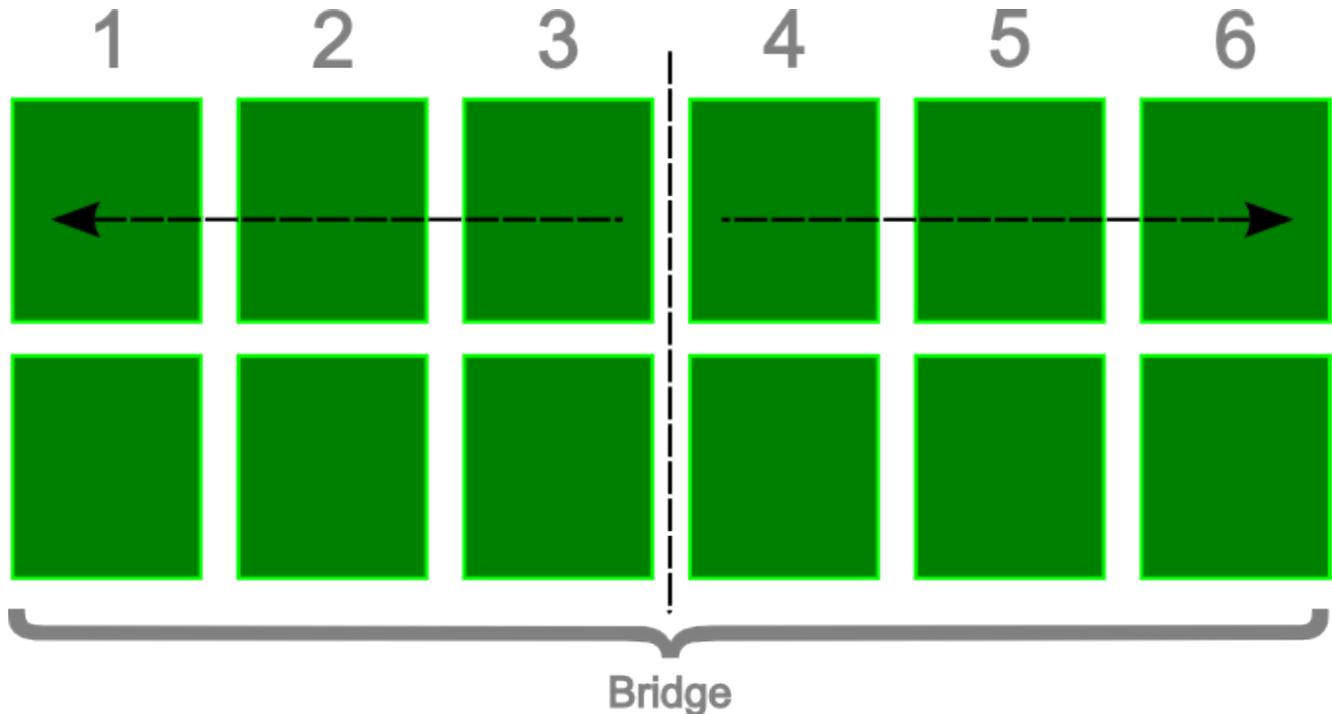
...the bridge collapses or if the troll is standing on an awakened brick that gets a second awakening and flies away (Hey, if the brick flies way, so does the troll standing on it!).

Your score for the game is the number of cards left in the deck of awakening.

Exceptions to the rules

No brick there...

During the brick awakening phase, if the card and die roll indicate an empty location, the next brick closest to a bank is awakened instead. If no bricks are in that direction, the next card in the opposite direction is awakened. If no bricks exist in that row, no brick is awakened, and the troll action phase and the brick flight phase still happen.



The deck of awakening is empty...

Hooray! You're really close to winning! You still have to continue playing the game until all bricks on the bridge are dormant. If you have a turn where no cards are set aside for the brick awakening phase, you skip the brick awakening phase and still have the troll action phase and brick flight phase. Good luck!

THE CLUB (ace of clubs)

The ace of clubs is a special variant of a club. **THE CLUB** can be used like a normal club, but **THE CLUB** is not set aside for the brick awakening phase. Instead, **THE CLUB** can be used repeatedly, and no other brick can be picked up by the troll for the rest of the game.

Variations

Making the game easier

To slightly adjust the difficulty, additional bricks can be placed on the bridge. The bridge must always have the most cards on the ends and the fewest cards in the middle in order to work. Putting more bricks on the ends makes the game slightly easier, and putting more bricks on every position makes the game much easier.

- **Normal**
Build the bridge as normal. Very difficult.
- **I'm close but can't win**
Put an extra brick or two on the ends.
- **I really want a win**
Put one extra brick on every position of the bridge.
- **Tutorial mode**
Put two extra bricks on every position.

Making the game “different”

The ace of diamonds and/or the ace of spades can be treated as infinite use items like THE CLUB. Changing the ace of diamonds in this way makes the game significantly easier, while changing the ace of spades has unpredictable results.