

# The Court of Ferns

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## Setup

This game requires crafting supplies - paper, pens and pencils, and tape at the very least. Other suggestions: stamps, ink pads, glue sticks, construction paper, scraps of fabric, pipe cleaners, glitter, modeling clay, safety pins, general office supplies, etc. Your play space should be open and have at least a few tables and chairs scattered around.

Print out each of the signs, as large you're able, and post them in the space you're playing. The first page should be right outside the space or visible as soon as you enter. Put the other signs somewhere close to the first one, so you can easily find them while standing by the first sign. Put a houseplant in the middle of the space, in a place of honor. Put the sign for the judge next to the plant.

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## YOU ARE NOW ENTERING THE COURT OF FERNS

There are five kinds of people in the Court of Ferns. Pick now which one you want to be:

### **Bureaucrats**

It is a Bureaucrat's purpose to create forms, move paper around, embellish and complicate the procedures of the Court of Ferns, create barriers, provide authorization, and help Petitioners. Bureaucrats wear HATS.

We recommend becoming a Bureaucrat if there is no else here, more Petitioners than Bureaucrats, or only 1-2 Bailiffs.

### **Petitioners**

It is a Petitioner's purpose to have a problem that they have come to the court of Ferns solve. Petitioners wear NAME TAGS.

We recommend becoming a Petitioner if there are a few Bureaucrats already.

### **Lawyers**

It is a Lawyer's purpose to follow the procedures of the Court of Ferns, seek authorization, have expert knowledge, bypass barriers, give bribes, and help Petitioners. Lawyers wear MEDALS.

We recommend becoming a Lawyer if there are a few Bureaucrats and Petitioners already.

### **Bailiffs**

It is the Bailiff's purpose to keep order, adjudicate disputes, interpret the Judge's rulings, decorate the court, and arrange furniture. Bailiffs wear CROWNS.

We recommend becoming a Bailiff if there are plenty of the other roles or no one else here.

### **The Judge**

No. You cannot be a Judge because the Fern is already the Judge and there is only one Judge.

Pick your role and then go to it's sign to begin!

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## Bureaucrats

You are a Bureaucrat. Make yourself a hat, to indicate your status. Find a place in the room to stay – that is your office. While you are waiting for Petitioners, make forms. A forms may have:

- A combination of letters and numbers at the top to identify it
- Checkboxes
- Words
- Text Boxes
- Signature boxes

And anything else you'd like to add. Once you finish making a form, leaving it at your station for when it's needed.

Petitioners will come to you with problems, with forms, or seeking authorization. When they do, tell them:

- You don't have the proper form for that.
- You need to fill out this form and take it that office
- I can do that, but first I'll need (a form, the completion of a task, an object, etc)
- This is the wrong department
- I'm sorry, only Judge Fern can do that for you
- I can do that but you'll also need (an authorization, another form, the completion of a task, etc)

Or any other obstacle that would prevent them from fulfilling their goal. After refusing them, give them a form, alter a form they already have, or points them to another bureaucrat.

You may also say

- Here you are

And solve their problem. If it is their ultimate problem, be sure to give them some kind of receipt or certificate to indicate they've gotten what they want

If a Lawyer intervenes, ask them for their justification. If they give you a sufficiently complicated or outlandish explanation or offer you a bribe that you desire, offer the Petitioner a less onerous obstacle. Or, you may explain to the lawyer why the rules prevent you from changing your stance.

You must immediately comply with any ruling from Judge Fern.

You may, at any time, become a Petitioner, Lawyer, or Bailiff, if you wish.

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## Lawyers

You are a Lawyer. Make yourself one or more medals to indicate your status. When you are not otherwise occupied, gather forms and authorizations in case they come in useful later or make bribes: money, swords, gift boxes, fish, etc. A bribe can be anything, except for a form. Unless it's a particularly nice form.

Offer your services to any Petitioners you find. You may help Petitioners by guiding them to bureaucrats and intervening when a Bureaucrat puts up an obstacle. To intervene, give a convoluted explanation for why they are obligated to give your Petitioner better treatment. If that fails, you may offer bribes them bribes. Start with explanations, move onto bribes later.

As a last resort, you may ask Judge Fern to intervene. Find a Bailiff and ask them for an intervention from Judge Fern.

You may, at any time, become a Petitioner, Bailiff, or Bureaucrat if you wish.

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## Petitioner

You have a PROBLEM, and you've come to the Court of Ferns to get it solved. Pick a problem by combining elements from the table below:

YOU ARE A	WHO NEEDS	FOR
Plant	A license	Something you normally do
Insect	To pay a fine	Something you don't normally do
Building	To contest a fine	Your identity
Item of Furniture	Get a certificate	Changing your nature
Natural Feature	Update a record	Marriage
House Pet	Resolve a dispute	The joy of participating in bureaucracy

Or any other problem you might have! Make yourself a name tag that says what you are and tape it to yourself.

Go to a Bureaucrat and explain your problem to them, they will tell you what to do. If you're having trouble with a Bureaucrat, ask a Lawyer for help. As a last resort, you may ask Judge Fern to intervene. Find a Bailiff and ask them for an intervention from Judge Fern.

You may, at any time, become a Bureaucrat, Lawyer, or Bailiff, if you wish too.

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## Bailiffs

Make yourself a paper crown and wear it as long as you are a bailiff.

As a Bailiff, your tasks are:

**Helping:** Help people in the court find where they need to go, find things to do, and find whatever they're looking for. Take a moment to familiarize yourself with the rules for the other roles, so you can help them with any rules questions they might have.

**Move around furniture:** The court of Ferns is forever shifting and being reinvented. Take furniture in the room and move it to a different place. If a Bureaucrat complains about you moving their station, sadly shake your head. There is nothing to be done.

**Decorate the Room:** add arrows to help guide patrons or informative signs on the walls or garlands to make it look nicer.

**Adjudicate Disputes and Keep Order:** Whenever there is a disagreement, you may intervene to resolve it. Resolve it using your best judgement, or any other logic you like.

**Interpret Rulings from Judge Fern:** If a Petitioner or Lawyer asks you for an intervention from Judge Fern, gather up all the involved parties and take them to Judge Fern. Have them explain their problem to Judge Fern. Let Judge Fern deliberate for a moment. Then, look at Judge Fern. Really look. Study their leaves, the shape of the stems, how it sits in reference to the room. Interpret these elements to find Judge Fern's ruling then convey it to the involved parties. If any issues come up later with the ruling, intervene to make sure Judge Fern's ruling is followed. If the same parties come back too soon, explain to them that Judge Fern is busy to see them.

You may, at any time, become a Bureaucrat, a Lawyer, or a Petitioner, if you wish too.

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## Judge

Make energy from the sunlight

Meditate on the nature of law.

Absorb carbon dioxide and expel oxygen.

Grow wiser.

When petitioners come to you with issues, listen carefully then issue a ruling you believe is the wisest.

You may, at any time, become a Bureaucrat, Lawyer, Petitioner, or Bailiff, if you wish too.