NED KELLY

Aim just under the iron.
Miss by a hair, and the shot goes into the inn.



2–5 players · 12+ · 20–30 min

Glenrowan, Victoria, 28 June 1880. The Kelly gang has torn up the railway and holds the inn, full of hostages. You are a trooper in the cordon, firing into the dark. At dawn a figure in iron walks out of the mist, and the bullets ring off him. There is £8,000 on his head, and the inn behind him is full of people.

HOW IT WORKS

A trick-taking game of troopers. Each trick, a **Ned card** shows **the line**: how high you can aim before you hit his armour.

- **The hit:** the best shot **at or under the line** hits Ned and takes the card (£100 to £300).
- **The ricochet:** the shot **just over the line** goes into the inn. Its player takes **every Inn card** in the middle.
- **The Royal Commission:** at the end of the hand, the **most Inn cards** held is censured: **−£500**.

COMPONENTS



Train the police special · **Lantern** the warning · **Gun** the siege · **Fire** the inn burns

48 trooper cards in four suits, numbered 1 to 12. These are your shots. The 6 and the 9 have a dot after the number, so you can tell which is which.



Night back 6 cards lines 2–7 · **Dawn** back 6 cards lines 7–12 · The line, and its reward

12 Ned cards. The big number is **the line**. The reward rises with it: £100 for lines 2–5, £200 for 6–9, £300 for 10–12. There are two 7s, one Night and one Dawn.



Inn card
12 cards

12 Inn cards. You only ever use them **face down**: one goes in the middle every trick, and the ricochet takes them. You also need a pen and paper for the scores.

SETUP

1. Sort the **Ned cards** by their backs and shuffle the 6 Night cards and the 6 Dawn cards separately. With 4 players, put 1 Dawn card back in the box unseen; with 5 players, put back 3.
2. Stack the Night cards **on top of** the Dawn cards, face down: this is the **Ned deck**. Night comes first.
3. Put the 12 **Inn cards** in a face-down stack. One goes to the middle of the table every trick.
4. The player who last caught a train is the first **dealer**. Shuffle the trooper cards and deal them out as the table shows. Any cards left over stay out, face down and unseen.

Players	Cards each	Left out	Tricks (and Ned cards)	Hands in a game
2	12	24	12	3
3	12	12	12	3
4	11	4	11	4
5	9	3	9	5

A TRICK

The player on the dealer's left leads the first trick.

1. The first shot is blind

The leader plays any card face up, **before** anyone knows the line.

2. Turn up the top Ned card

Its number is **the line**.

3. Everyone else fires

Clockwise, each other player plays one card. If you have a card of the **led suit**, you must play one. If you can't, play any card.

4. The hit

The **highest card at or under the line** hits Ned, **whatever its suit**. Its player takes the Ned card and keeps it face up in front of them.

5. The ricochet

Put the top Inn card **face down in the middle**, on any already there. The **lowest card over the line** clipped the iron. Its player takes **every Inn card in the middle** and keeps them face down in front of them, where everyone can count them.

Any other cards over the line flew high and hit nothing. **Nobody over the line?** The Inn cards stay in the middle.

6. The next trick

Put the trick's cards aside, face down. **Whoever hit Ned leads the next trick**, and fires blind.

ANY SUIT CAN HIT

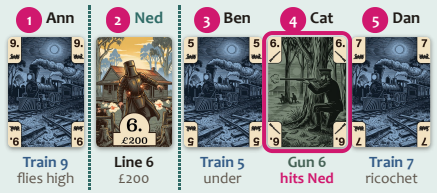
Following suit only limits which card you may play. Once the cards are down, the suit doesn't matter: any card can hit Ned or ricochet.

Two cards of the same number? A card of the led suit beats a card of another suit. Otherwise, the one played first counts.

NIGHT, THEN DAWN

The Night lines are low: only a careful, low shot finds him, and it pays little. At dawn Ned walks into the open. The lines rise to 12 and the rewards double and triple. **Save some high cards for the dawn**: a 12 fired at night flies high and is wasted.

EXAMPLE: THE FIRST TRICK



1 Dan dealt, so Ann leads, blind: the Train 9.

2 The Ned card turned up is a **6**. That is the line.

3 Ben must follow Train. His 5 is under the line, his 8 is over it. He plays the 5.

4 Cat has no Train, so she can play anything: a Gun 6, exactly on the line. It is the highest card at or under 6, so **Cat hits Ned** and takes the card: £200.



5 Dan follows with the Train 7, the **lowest card over the line**: a ricochet. An Inn card went in the middle, and he takes it, face down. Ann's 9 flew high. Cat leads next.

NED STILL STANDING

If **no card is at or under the line**, nobody hits Ned. Leave the Ned card where it is. The next Ned card is turned **on top of it**, and the next player to hit Ned takes the whole pile.

There is still a ricochet, as every card is over the line. With no hit, the **ricochet shooter leads** the next trick.

INN CARDS PILE UP

Just as Ned cards pile up when nobody hits, **Inn cards pile up when nobody ricochets**. If every card is at or under the line, the Inn cards stay in the middle, and the next ricochet takes them all.

EXAMPLE: STILL STANDING



1 Cat leads the Fire 8, blind. The line is only **2**, and nobody is at or under it: Ned is still standing.



2 Ben's Lantern 3 is the lowest over the line. He takes the Inn card from the middle. Ben leads next.



3 Ben leads the Gun 4. The **5** is turned on top of the 2.

4 Ann's 5 is exactly on the line and beats Ben's 4 and Dan's 1. **She takes both Ned cards**: £200. Cat's 10 ricochets: she takes the Inn card. Ann leads next.

EXAMPLE: A PILE OF TWO

1 Later in the hand the line is **7**. Ann plays Lantern 2, Ben 7, Cat 1 and Dan 5: all at or under it. Ben's 7 hits Ned. Nobody is over the line, so the Inn card **stays in the middle**.

2 Next trick the line is **10**. Ben leads Train 4, Cat plays 10, Dan 1 and Ann 12. Cat hits Ned, and Ann's 12 is the only card over the line. Another Inn card goes in, and **Ann takes both**.

END OF A HAND

The hand ends when everyone's cards are gone. Ned cards and Inn cards still in the middle count for nobody.

The Royal Commission. Count the Inn cards each trooper holds. The trooper with the **most** is censured: **–£500**. If two or more tie for the most, **every one of them** is censured. Nobody holds any? Nobody is.

Your score: the rewards on your Ned cards, less £500 if censured. It can be below zero.

EXAMPLE: THE SCORES

	Ned cards	Inn cards	Censure	Score
Ann	2, 5, 9, 12	3	–£500	**£200**
Ben	3, 7	3	–£500	**–£200**
Cat	6, 7, 10	1	–	**£700**
Dan	4, 8	2	–	**£300**

1 Eleven tricks put in 11 Inn cards: 9 are held, and 2 are left in the middle, which count for nobody. Ann and Ben tie for the most, with three each, so the Commission censures **both**: –£500 each.

2 Ann: £700 – £500 = **£200**. Ben: £300 – £500 = **–£200**. Cat and Dan are not censured: **£700** and **£300**.

THE NEXT HAND

Gather all the Ned cards and Inn cards (any left in the middle too) and set up again as in Setup. Pass the deal to the left, shuffle all the trooper cards and deal again.

END OF THE GAME

Play **one hand per player** (three hands with 2 players). The biggest share of the reward **wins**.

Ties: the tied player who was censured the fewest times wins. Still tied? Share the win.

AT A GLANCE

- **Lead blind,** then turn up the line.
- **Follow suit** if you can.
- **Highest at or under the line** hits Ned and takes the card.
- **Lowest over the line** ricochets: takes every Inn card in the middle.
- **Nobody under?** Ned stands. **Nobody over?** Inn cards stay.
- **The hitter leads next** (no hit: the ricochet shooter).
- **End of the hand:** the most Inn cards held is censured, –£500 (a tie: all of them).

GLENROWAN, 1880

The gang tore up the line beyond Glenrowan to wreck the police special. The schoolteacher Thomas Curnow slipped away and stopped the train in the dark, holding a candle behind his red scarf.

The police surrounded the inn and fired into it at the muzzle flashes, with dozens of hostages inside. At dawn Ned Kelly came out of the mist in home-made armour, and the bullets rang off him until a shotgun brought him down with wounds to his legs. In the afternoon the police set it alight.

Ned was hanged in Melbourne on 11 November 1880. A Reward Board shared out the £8,000. In 1881 a Royal Commission censured the officers who handled the siege: it recommended that Superintendent Hare be retired and Sadleir reduced in rank.

Train the police special and the torn-up rails.
Lantern Curnow's warning.
Gun the siege.
Fire the burning of the inn.

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Rule book v4 · 26/11/2026 · Prototype art