

.. Travel Journal of ..

# Short Tales



A cheerful fantasy RPG about small races  
and their comfy adventures.

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Dedicated to my cousin Leo, whose enthusiasm made this game go from a little weekend project to one of my fondest memories in the hobby.

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# .. Introduction ..

## What is it?

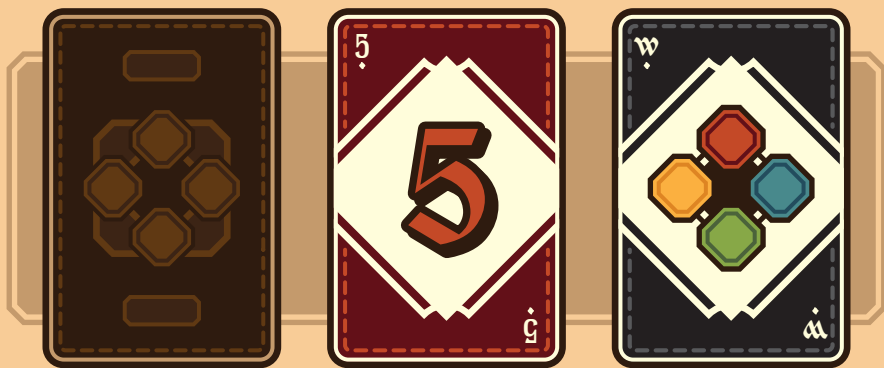
It's a lighthearted fantasy roleplaying game, following small fantasy characters in short, comfy, low-stakes adventures.

## What do I need to play it?

The game uses a set of **UNO®** cards, a game owned by pretty much everyone I know. If you don't have one, you should definitely go get one, because it's a fun game on its own. You can technically play with playing cards but it's just... not the same.

**Pen and paper**, too, to write stuff down.

Also **friends**. A good group is essential for this.



## But Why?

I overworked myself while working on a much larger game, and I needed a break from it. Maybe it can help you unwind if you're in a similar situation and don't want to burn out from your main campaign, or if you don't have the time to play bigger stuff with your friends. This game is made with lighthearted one or two session adventures in mind.

# .. Character Creation ..

## Pick a Race:

**Dwarves** are strong and tough, but not very friendly.

**Gnomes** are magical and wise, but easily distracted.

**Goblins** are dexterous and inventive, but cowardly.

**Halflings** are sneaky and charismatic, but lazy.

**Kobolds** are spiky and breathe fire, but aren't very bright.

**Red Pandas** are observant and nimble, but often greedy.

**Shroomfolk** are stretchy and don't need air or food, but are very slow when talking and moving.

## Pick two Jobs:

**Alchemists** know about potions and magic ingredients.

**Artists** create very nice works of art.

**Astronomers** know a lot about stars and the sky.

**Cartographers** make great maps and rarely get lost.

**Chefs** are great at cooking and handling ingredients.

**Entertainers** know how to handle an audience.

**Explorers** know about pathfinding and sneaking.

**Healers** can patch up just about anyone.

**Herbalists** know a lot about plants and their uses.

**Inventors** are great at using and crafting gadgets.

**Masons** know about architecture and building.

**Merchants** know a lot about routes and trade.

**Miners** know a lot about minerals and gems.

**Scholars** know about lore and riddles.

**Smiths** know about equipment and materials.

**Tamers** know about animals and how to handle them.

**Town Guards** know how to defend anyone.

**Wizards** and **Witches** know about magic and know 3 spells.

## Name and Description:

Give your character a name and visualize what they're like. This is the most basic and most important aspect of your character, as it defines who your character is and how they interact with the rest of the party.

# .. Stuff ..

## Pick Three Items:

(you always have the right tools for your jobs)

**Balloon:** You can use it to slowly go up, or to decorate a party.

**Berry Jam\*:** Sweet and tasty and everyone loves it.

**Big Stick:** Used to hit or poke stuff from a safe distance.

**Bread:** Essential for sandwiches and attracting pigeons.

**Bug Box:** A small matchbox full of tiny bugs.

**Cool Book:** Helps with any simple subject of your choice.

**Fire Stone:** Gives warmth and can spark flames.

**Gemstone:** Shiny, used as payment for stuff.

**Glass Bottle:** You can put liquids and stuff in it.

**Grappling Hook:** Latches onto stuff and can pull back.

**Magic Lantern:** Illuminates stuff and never fades out.

**Magic Patch:** Used to fix stuff, like holes or tears.

**Magnet:** Attracts and sticks to metals.

**Megaphone:** Used to make sounds louder.

**Mole Gauntlets:** Clawed gloves used to dig through dirt.

**Ogre Wine\*:** Causes sleepiness.

**Old Instrument:** Used to play melodies.

**Onion:** Has a strong and unpleasant smell.

**Oven Mittens:** Protects your hands from hot things.

**Potion\*:** Heals any ailment or injury.

**Root Wand:** Used to cast a spell stored within.

**Rope:** Can be used to tie stuff or to climb walls.

**Scary Mask:** Very scary.

**Shield:** Protects you from harm.

**Spyglass:** Lets you look at far-away stuff.

**Sticker Album:** Full of pretty, collectible stickers.

**Tiny Mirror:** Shiny and reflective.

**Umbrella:** Keeps you dry, makes you fall slowly.

**Wisp\*:** A small forest spirit in a Bottle that can keep watch or scout around for a while when released.

(\* becomes a Glass Bottle once used)

# .. How to Play ..

## Setting Up

The Narrator shuffles the main deck. He then deals **10 Cards** to each Player, which must remain face down until used.

These 10 cards are **your deck**.

## Drawing Cards

If success is not guaranteed or what you're trying to do depends on how good you do it, you draw one card from your deck face up, and may draw another for each relevant thing (Race, Job, or Item) that may help you out.

If your race's **weakness** plays against you or you're **Hurt**, you don't draw the first card.

You add together the value of any cards that share a color and modify them as needed (we'll get to that in a minute), and then compare the highest value to get your result:

**1 to 5**

**Failure...**

(something went wrong, and you failed. bummer!)

**6 to 10**

**Success!**

(you did okay, and succeed without much trouble)

**11 or more**

**Great Success!**

(you did great! something nice happens in your favor!)

Once you're done drawing cards, the Narrator takes away the drawn cards and removes them from play.

# .. The Cards ..

(and what they mean)



## Numbers

Added together if they share a color.  
Os are always worth 10.

Ex:  $1 + 3 + 5 = 9$



## Skip

Negates the last Number drawn of  
the same color.

Ex:  $7 + \text{Skip} = 0$



## Reverse

Allows a Number of the same color to  
match with any other color once.

Ex:  $3 + \text{Reverse} + 7 = 10$

# .. The Other Cards ..

(and what they mean, too)



## Wild

Doubles the value of a Number of any color.

Ex:  $4 + \text{Wild} = 8$



## Draw Two

+2 to a Number of the same color, and add two cards to your deck.

Ex:  $3 + \text{Draw Two} = 5$



## Wild Draw Four

+4 to a Number of any color, and add four cards to your deck.

Ex:  $8 + \text{Wild Draw Four} = 12$



# .. Further Rules ..

## Getting Tired

If you've run out of cards, you need to take a breather or a nap before carrying on. Until then, you're too exhausted to succeed when difficulty arises, and you only act with the bare minimum effort.

Whenever the players rest, the Narrator puts all the cards removed from play into the main deck and shuffles before dealing again.

A **breather** is a short rest of a few minutes that restores **up to 5 cards** to your deck.

A **nap** is a comfy sleep in a safe place for a few hours that restores **all your spent cards**.

You can only benefit from 2 breathers before needing a nap.

## Getting Hurt

If anything hurts you in a significant way, you don't draw the initial card for checks, and you need a breather to heal. If you get hurt again, you are passed out and need a nap to recover. Your friends carry you around until then.

## Tussles

Competing with anyone is the same as a normal draw, except both sides draw cards. Both the Narrator and the Player draw the appropriate cards, and the highest result wins.

(to the Narrator: use your judgement when deciding on how many cards should be drawn, and keep track of how many you've drawn)

(NPCs can get Tired and Hurt too)

# .. Magic! ..

## What?

**Wizards** and **Witches** know **3 spells**. They don't need a Wand to cast spells, because they use their **Hats** instead.

**Root Wands** have one spell stored in them, and can be used by anyone who knows what the stored spell is.

Whenever you want to cast a spell, you must Draw first to see if the spell works or not.

Failing to cast a spell slightly damages your Wand or Hat (treated as if **Hurt** when casting spells), but you can fix them up during a breather and put them into tip-top shape again.

You can stop an effect you created whenever you want.

## List of Spells

**A-HEM:** Makes your voice sound significantly different.

**BOOM:** Causes a loud but harmless explosion that covers the target in ash and soot.

**EM-BIG-O:** Makes stuff larger for a while.

**FIREWORKS:** Fireworks!

**FROG:** Summons a frog.

**LEVITATO:** Makes stuff levitate for a while.

**MAGIC MISSILE:** Bumps into and slightly annoys target.

**OPEN SESAME:** Opens a door or lock.

**PUPPET SHOW:** Creates a small illusion that you control.

**REDUCTO:** Makes stuff smaller for a while.

**TRICK-OR-TREAT:** Creates a poorly-crafted but oddly efficient disguise for the caster (or target).

**UPSY-DAISY:** Flips stuff upside down.

**VANISH:** Makes stuff invisible-ish for a while.

**WHOOSH:** Blows wind in a direction you choose.

(all spells are said out loud, except for Vanish)

(Vanish is whispered)

# .. For Narrators ..

(a few tips when running this game)

## Narrating Adventures

**Light-hearted:** Keep things non-violent, whimsical and fun. If your adventure can lead to a nice little story that would make your mum smile if you told her about it, you're probably on the right track.

**Comfy:** Take breaks, describe the tone of the area around the party, allow players to share a sandwich and tell stories around a campfire if they want to. Challenge them just enough for the adventure to be called such, but don't keep them on their toes all the time.

**Low Stakes:** Focus on the little things. You'd be surprised at how fun just gathering some berries by the creek for the local baker can actually be if you make each moment something to cherish and remember. Focus on small things that would take a day or two at most, and don't doom an entire village if the party screws up somewhere along the way.

**Don't Spread Out:** You should have a place to go back to, and one or two places in which adventure takes place. If the players need to draw a map instead of just someone pointing in the right direction, you might be complicating it too much.

## Narrating NPCs

Just in case you live under a rock, an **NPC** is a Non-Player Character, which means that **you** control it! NPCs should be kept simple and memorable. Give them a few interesting or amusing characteristics, and remember to make their objectives and motivations **clear**.

(in short: keep it simple, stupid)