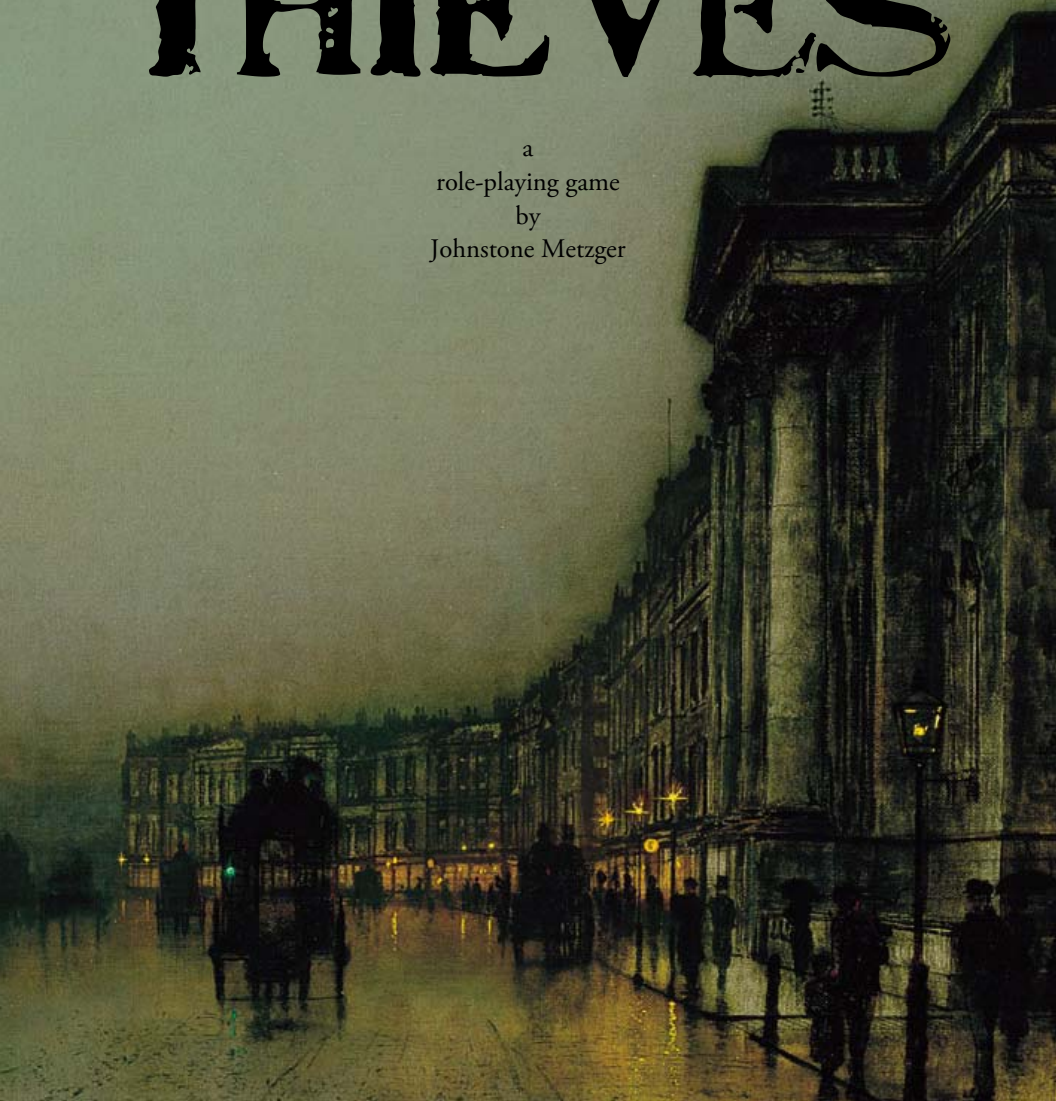


DEN OF THIEVES

a
role-playing game
by
Johnstone Metzger



Den of Thieves

by Johnstone Metzger.

Rough draft

May, 2014.

This game is a revised version of *Thieves Can Too, Motherfucker!*, a game I wrote in 2009 for Jake Richmond's game design contest.

Some other things that also had a significant impact on this:

- *Apocalypse World*, by D. Vincent Baker.
- *Blacksand!*, by Marc Gascoigne and Peter Tamlyn.
- *Ghost/Echo*, by John Harper.
- *Gnostica*, by John Cooper, Jacob Davenport, Kory Heath, and Kristin Matherly.
- *Miller's Crossing*, the Coen Brothers movie.
- Otherkind Dice, by D. Vincent Baker.
- *Sexy Deadly*, by Joe McDonald (Avery Mcdaldno), Lance D. Allen, Johnstone Metzger, and Tony Dowler.
- *The Smoke Dream*, by Jackson Tegu.
- The life and work of Edgar Degas.

This game is still not finished, but there is enough here to play it, if you want to. Let me know how it goes.

THE GAME

Preparing to Play

In order to play Den of Thieves you need a scenario deck and some protagonist characters. You can use a normal deck of 52 playing cards if you want to use the scenario deck included in this document. Protagonists are fantasy thieves in a fantasy city, and the rules for creating them are given later.

During the game, each player takes on one or more roles. There must always be one dealer, one antagonist, and one or more protagonists. Anyone who is playing but not as one of these three roles makes up the audience until they take on a role.

Protagonists

Each player who wants to create a protagonist character and plays them throughout the game. When it is your turn, you are the main protagonist, and you play out a scene with your character. Your character may also appear in someone else's scene, when it is their turn. In that case, you are both protagonists for that scene. Although there can be multiple protagonists in each scene, there also needs to be one dealer and one antagonist, and players who take those roles may not also portray a protagonist character.

The Dealer

Someone has to manage the deck, adjudicate the rules, introduce the scenes, and portray the supporting cast, however. That person is the dealer. The dealer can change from turn to turn and scene to scene—anyone who is not currently playing a protagonist can be the dealer.

The Antagonist

In addition to one or more protagonists and the dealer, for each scene there is also an antagonist. Someone who is not playing a protagonist and who is not the dealer must be the antagonist, but exactly who that is can change from scene to scene. The antagonist portrays the enemies of the protagonists.

Multiple Characters

You can play more than one protagonist character during a game, but you only get one turn, the same as everyone else playing a protagonist. When it is your turn, you must choose which of your characters will have a scene of their own.

Playing the GM Role

It is also possible to have one person play both the dealer and the antagonist for every scene, while each of the other players only portray their protagonist characters. The player in the dual dealer/antagonist role is then very much like a traditional Gamemaster, as found in other role-playing games.

The House of Cards

Before play begins, use the cards to create a map—this is the House of Cards, with the Big Score at the centre, and the Crossroads extending out around it. At the beginning of a game, it looks like a small pile of face up cards surrounded by a cross made of two face down cards on each side.

The Big Score

Draw five cards to create the Big Score. This is the most important and profitable heist that can be accomplished during the present game. Ideally, there should be an item, which the protagonists would want to steal, a person, who possesses the item, and a location, where the item is being stored. If one of these three things is not present, feel free to make it up based on the other two, but if the five card draw is quite lacking in flavour, draw another five cards and repeat the process. Put these cards down in the centre of the table, in a pile, face up. Everyone can look at them during the game.

The Crossroads

Around the Big Score, lay eight cards face down, in four sets of two. On four sides of the Big Score, there should be adjacent cards face down, with another face down card on the other side of each, so that altogether, they form a cross.

Markers

When play begins, each protagonist places a marker on a card at the edge of the crossroads to represent their protagonist character. This marks where they are, generally, in the tangled web of plots and subplots that make up this particular adventure. What card your protagonist character's marker rests on impacts what kind of scene you will play when it is your turn.

The Wasteland

This creates what is basically a 5 by 5 grid, but with only one column and one row fully occupied by cards. The unfilled spaces are called the Wasteland. You can move your marker onto a Wasteland space, but when you do so, draw a card from the deck and place it face up in that space, underneath your marker. It is now part of the map. You can also create a Wasteland space by removing a card from the map, either by taking an item for yourself or a person as a companion.

Playing the Game

Play proceeds in turns, clockwise around the table. Everyone playing a protagonist gets a turn. When it is your turn, follow these four steps in order, and play out a scene with your protagonist:

1. Map Phase.
2. Dealer Phase.
3. Establishing Phase.
4. Scene Phase.

Map Phase

If this is your first turn, place a marker representing your protagonist character on a card at the edge of the Crossroads during this phase. If this is not your first turn, you must move your protagonist marker to an adjacent card. If there are any other protagonists on the same card as you, you may move them along with you.

Once you have moved to an adjacent card, or once you have placed your marker on the Crossroads, if the card is face down, flip it face up. If you move your marker off the map, to where there is no card, draw a card and place it there, face up. During your first turn, you must place your marker on a card that is already part of the Crossroads, but once your marker is on the Crossroads, you may move off the existing map, thus extending it.

Finally, decide who will be the antagonist and who will be the dealer for this scene. Anyone who has a protagonist marker on the same card as you can play their protagonist in this scene, alongside you. Neither the antagonist nor the dealer may play a protagonist in this scene. Anyone not playing one of these three roles—antagonist, dealer, and protagonist—become the audience.

Dealer Phase

Some cards have special rules that take effect during the dealer phase, before a scene begins. If any of these cards are face up on the map or in play, the dealer must resolve them before a scene can begin.

Establishing Phase

It is the dealer's responsibility to frame the scene. The card that the protagonist marker rests upon must be included in the scene—it does not have to be the focal point, necessarily, but it does need to be both a major element and present during the initial scene framing.

The protagonist player has a say as to what they are doing in this scene, how they arrived in it, and what their goal is, but most details are up to the dealer. The dealer also decides which enemy characters, if any, are present, though the antagonist is responsible for portraying them.

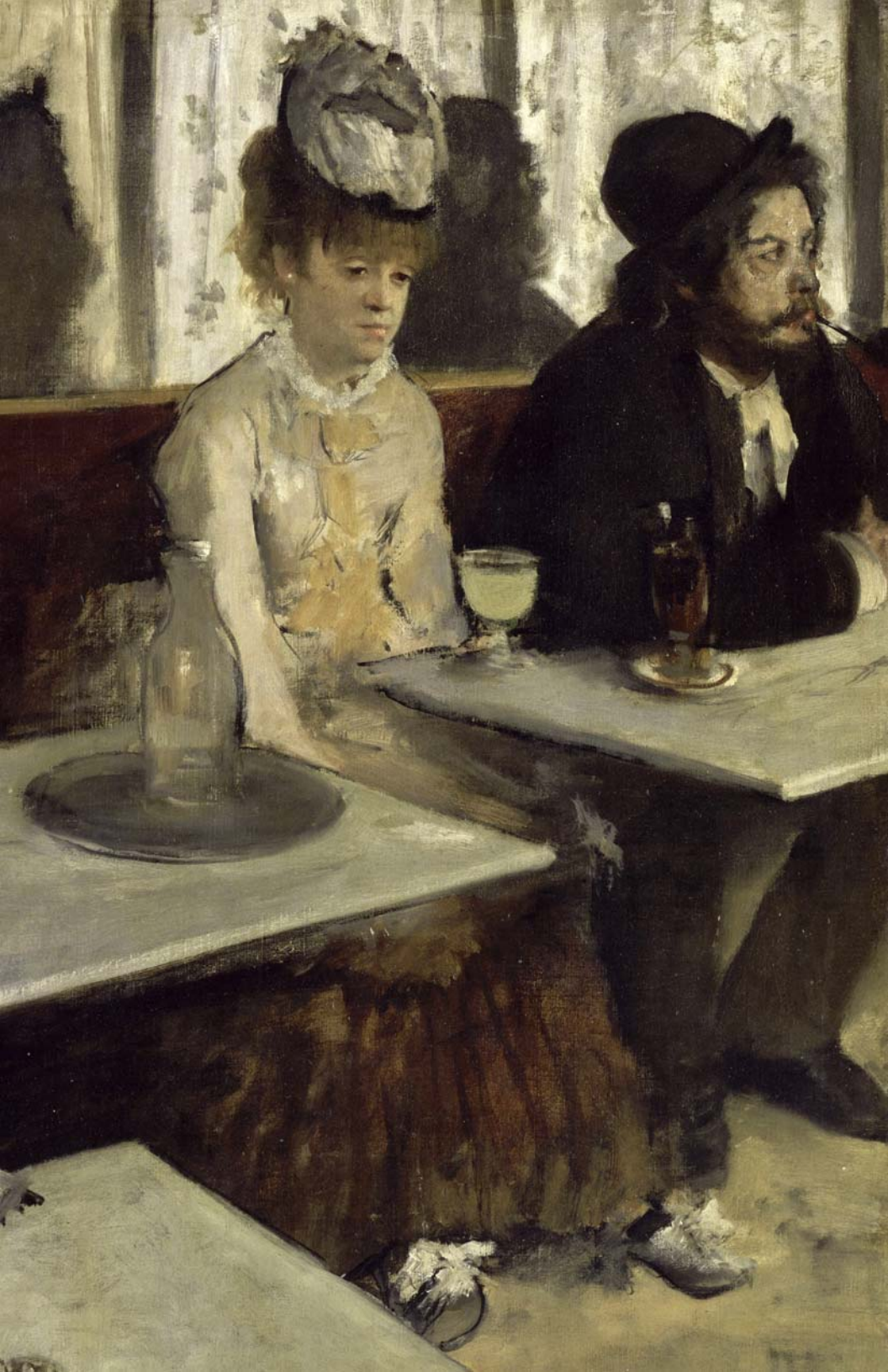
Scene Phase

The protagonists portray their characters, the antagonist portrays their enemies, and the dealer portrays the environment and the supporting cast, as well as the general situation. The audience is encouraged to offer suggestions, but each role has final say over their own responsibilities.

The scene ends when it moves far enough away from the dealer's original framing that it is clearly a new scene or when the initial questions asked by the scene framing have been resolved. The dealer has final say.

When a scene is finished, the current turn is over, and the next player to the left gets a turn, if they have a protagonist character.

During a scene, you will draw cards to resolve certain actions your protagonist character undertakes. Their fate is uncertain, and their life is most certainly in peril—but these rules are explained in the next chapter.



THE PROTAG ONISTS

Fantasy Thieves in a Fantasy City

If you are portraying a protagonist character in a game of Den of Thieves, first you need to actually make that character. In addition to a name and a description, a protagonist also has the following seven groups of details. These details interact with the rules and help you determine what happens to your protagonist during a scene.

1. Characteristics.
2. A Special Bonus.
3. Tokens.
4. Trust in the other protagonists.
5. Bonds with the supporting cast.
6. Curse rating.
7. Harm rating.

Characteristics

Each protagonist has these four characteristics: Danger, Magic, Persuasion, and Stealth. Rate each of them between 1 and 4, with no duplicate numbers. A 1 means this is your worst characteristic, a 4 means it is your best. When you are asked to draw a characteristic, the dealer gives you a number of cards equal to that characteristic.

Special Bonus

One of your characteristics is rated 1. This means you are really quite bad at using it to your advantage. But all is not lost! You also get a special bonus—you get to draw an extra card (two cards total, instead of one) when you use this characteristic under a certain circumstance. Once you have selected which of your four characteristics is the worst, choose a special bonus for it, from those below:

If you have Danger 1, choose a special bonus from these three:

Draw an extra card when you do something dangerous...

- for the sake of revenge.
- in order to escape.
- to get your hands on some treasure.

If you have Magic 1, choose a special bonus from these three:

Draw an extra card when you wrestle with a spell...

- as it's being cast.
- in order to escape from it.
- that helps you steal something valuable.

If you have Persuasion 1, choose a special bonus from these three:

Draw an extra card when you manipulate...

- someone by offering counterfeits or forgeries.
- the authorities into thinking you are innocent.
- the wealthy (through charm or deception).

If you have Stealth 1, choose a special bonus from these three:

Draw an extra card when you conceal your actions...

- at night.
- breaking and entering.
- in order to ambush someone.

Tokens

You start each game with two tokens. These tokens represent special powers that you can use during play. There are four different types of tokens—companion tokens, item tokens, location tokens, and spell tokens.

If you have Danger 4, take 2 item tokens. When you spend a token, draw from the deck until you find an item. If you want it, it's yours. If you don't like the first item you draw, discard it and draw until you get a second item. Keep that one. Discard all the other cards.

You can get more items during the game when you find them, anybody can.

If you have Magic 4, take 2 spell tokens. When you spend a token, draw one card, then discard it. You can use magical spells of the same type as the suit allows, for the rest of the session. If you already drew that suit, draw again until you draw a different suit, then discard all the cards drawn. Each scenario deck has a different list of spells that you can choose from.

You can get more spells during the game if you find a tome or other source of magic, anyone can.

If you have Persuasion 4, take 2 companion tokens. When you spend a token, draw from the deck until you find a person. If you like them, take them. If you don't, discard them and draw until you find another person. Keep that one. Discard all the other cards.

You can get more companions during the game if you persuade them into accompanying you, anyone can.

If you have Stealth 4, take 2 location tokens. When you spend a token, draw from the deck until you find a location. If you want access to that location, take the card. If you don't, discard it and draw until you find another location. Keep that one. Discard all the other cards.

You can't get more location tokens during the game, no one can.

Trust

Write down the names of the other protagonists. Then rate how much you trust each of them, from 1 to 4. If you don't trust someone at all, give them a 1. If you trust someone implicitly, give them a 4. If you're somewhere in between, rate them somewhere in between.

During a scene, if someone helps you, or hinders you, they draw cards equal to your trust in them, to see how well they played their part. Trusting someone means it is easier for them to help you—but also easier for them to betray you. When you help or hinder another protagonist, you draw cards equal to their trust in you. If you try to help or hinder someone who doesn't put much trust in you or your intentions, you may find yourself in more trouble than it's worth. The actual rules for this are described later.

You can change your trust ratings during play. If you play a scene with another protagonist, at the end of it, you may decide that you trust them more, or that you trust them less—whichever the case, you can raise or lower your trust in someone by 1 at the end of a scene. You cannot lower your trust below 1, nor can you raise it above 4, but anywhere within that range is fine, but no more than 1 level per scene.

Companions and Items

When you move onto a space in the house of cards occupied by a card that is an item or a person, and you do what is required to charm or seize them, you can take that card as a companion or a possession.

If a card is rated 2-6, you can sacrifice it to get an extra answer, if you can use it while making a move. If you do so, discard the card.

If a card is rated 7-10, you can flip it to get an extra answer, if you can use it while making a move. You can only flip a card once per scene. Turn all your cards the right side up at the beginning of a scene.

If a card is a face card, you can get an extra answer if you abide by that suit's requirements to get an answer, and if the card is relevant to your move.

Some cards have additional abilities.

Bonds

You can also get help from members of the supporting cast, both those that accompany you as companions, and those that decide to help on a one-time basis. If you have a bond with them, you may be able to draw more cards when it is time for you to do so. A bond is like trust, but because it is a bond with a member of the supporting cast, and not another protagonist, it is less important.

Normally, your bond with any particular member of the supporting cast is zero. But when a character is introduced who is not your enemy, you may decide you have a bond with them. You have 4 points to spend on bonds during each game. How many you decide to spend on each character is up to you. You can write a bond with the same rating as the number of points you put into it.

Like trust, bonds can also increase or decrease. If a character you have a bond with helps you during a scene, and is rewarded for doing so, your bond with them goes up by 1, to a maximum of 4. If they help you and are not rewarded, or they find only misery as a result, your bond with them goes down by one, to a minimum of zero. Your bond with a particular member of the supporting cast can only change by 1 level each scene.

If you take a person from the deck as a companion, you automatically get +1 bond with them. When someone is your companion, keep their card on the table in front of you until you part ways.

Curse and Harm

Finally, you have two other ratings to keep track of: curse and harm. Both of these start at zero. When you are cursed by magic, or demons, or the gods, raise your curse by 1. When you suffer harm or injury, raise your harm by 1. If either of these ratings are raised too high, you may have to retire your protagonist character. It's a dangerous life, being a fantasy thief in a fantasy city!

Making Moves

When you portray your protagonist character, say what they say, what they think and feel, and what they do. The dealer and the antagonist tell you how the world around them reacts, and what your enemies and the members of the supporting cast try to do to them.

Sometimes, you describe your character doing something that calls for the rules to intervene. These situations are called moves—you are making a move, and there is risk involved. When you make a move, consult the specific rules to determine the end result. It might go well for you. It might not!

There are 13 different moves, each of which describes an action that triggers the rules to be used. The first seven are the lucky seven, the last six are the sinister six

The Four Criminal Virtues:

When you conceal your actions, draw your stealth.

When you do something dangerous, draw your danger.

When you manipulate through charm or deception, draw your persuasion.

When you wrestle with a spell, draw your magic.

Honour Among Thieves:

When you get help from a supporting cast member, draw your bond with them.

When you help another protagonist make a move, draw their trust in you.

When you hinder or betray another protagonist making a move, draw their trust in you.

The Four Horsemen:

When you case the joint, draw your stealth.

When you eyeball a mark, draw your persuasion.

When you size up a con, draw your danger.

When you use the Sight, draw your magic.

The Devil and the Angel of Death

When you are cursed, take +1 curse and draw your curse.

When you suffer harm, take +1 harm and draw your harm.

Asking Questions

The first seven moves are the lucky seven. Though they can bring you down, they can also confirm your good luck, bring you fortunes, and whisk you away from tragedy. They all follow a similar format. Each one asks you two questions. In order to answer, you must draw the right cards, and you only draw as many as the characteristic or other rating indicated by the move in question.

If you draw a card numbered 2-6, it is useless. Discard it. You get nothing from these cards.

If you draw a card numbered 7-10, however, it counts as an answer. You may use this card to answer a question in your favour.

If you draw an ace card, that card is a maybe—meaning that maybe you can use it as an answer, and maybe you can't. In order to use an ace as an answer, you must put it into play. Each ace is an event, and putting it into play means laying it face up on the table, next to the house of cards. It stays outside of the deck for the rest of the game.

If you draw a face card, that card is also a maybe. You can only use it as an answer card if your protagonist character undertakes certain actions, as dictated by the suit of the face card:

- **Clubs:** If violence or destruction is involved, you can get an answer from any clubs face card you draw.
- **Diamonds:** If money, valuables, wealth, or other financial profits are involved, you can get an answer from any diamonds face card you draw.
- **Hearts:** If love, passion, romance, or friendship is involved, you can get an answer from any hearts face card you draw.
- **Spades:** If secrets are shared or the spreading of information is involved, you can get an answer from any spades face card you draw.

These conditions may be different if you are using a scenario deck that has different suits.

The Four Criminal Virtues

Of the first seven, four are based on your characteristics. These are the four criminal virtues, and are probably also the four moves you will make the most during the game.

Conceal

When you conceal your actions, draw your stealth and answer these two questions if you can:

- ▶ *Does anyone find out?*
- ▶ *Does it cost you?*

If *no one finds out* and it *doesn't cost you anything*, you get what you wanted—into the mansion, your hands on the gold, etc.—and you're out with no one the wiser.

If *it costs you*, the dealer's possible answers are:

- ▶ *You cause unintended harm or damage.*
- ▶ *You leave something behind.*
- ▶ *You suffer harm.*
- ▶ *You take something with you.*
- ▶ *Your actions are discovered later.*

If *someone finds out*, but *it doesn't cost you anything*, you're discovered before you can get in or steal anything, well in time to make your escape.

If you can't answer at all, the dealer will tell you the consequences.

Danger

When you do something dangerous, draw your danger and answer these two questions, if you can:

- ▶ *Do you do it?*
- ▶ *Do you get away with it?*

If *you do it*, it's done right, just like you say.

If *you don't get away with it*, the dealer's possible answers are:

- ▶ *You cause unintended harm or damage.*
- ▶ *You find yourself in a bad position.*
- ▶ *You lose something.*
- ▶ *You suffer curse or harm.*

The dealer may also defer to the antagonist to choose the consequences.

If *you don't do it but you get away with it*, you manage to back off before committing yourself all the way. You can try again or find another way, assuming the situation stays the same.

If you can't answer at all, the dealer will tell you the consequences.

Manipulate

When you manipulate through charm or deception, draw your persuasion and answer these two questions, if you can:

- ▶ *Are you convincing?*
- ▶ *Are you motivating?*

If *you're convincing*, the other players cannot say their characters think you are something other than what you say you are. They can't see through your disguise, lies, or false front. If *you're not convincing*, they can see what you really are.

If *you're motivating*, members of the supporting cast will do what you say. If *you're motivating but not convincing*, they only do what you want if it's immediate and quick, and they realize their mistake right after. Other protagonists can resist being motivated, but it counts as doing something dangerous, and you decide the consequences.

If *you're convincing but not motivating*, you can't get anyone to do things for you, but not because they can see through you. Because they can't.

If you can't answer at all, the dealer will tell you the consequences.

Spells

When you wrestle with a spell, draw your magic and answer these two questions, if you can:

- ▶ *Are you affected?*
- ▶ *Is anyone else affected?*

If you don't answer the first question, a beneficial spell won't have any affect on you, but a harmful spell will.

If you don't answer the second question, your allies can be affected by harmful spells and your enemies can be affected by beneficial spells, but not the other way around.

If you can't answer at all, the dealer will tell you the consequences.

Honour Among Thieves

The three that round out the lucky seven are the trinity of honour among thieves: how you get help, how you help others, and—perhaps the most useful of all—how you can betray your allies and steal all the loot for yourself.

Get Help

When you get help from a supporting cast member, draw your bond with them and answer the following questions, if you can:

- ▶ *Do they help you?*
- ▶ *Do they put themselves in danger?*

If they help you, take an extra answer.

If they put themselves in danger, the dealer will tell you how.

Help Another

When you help another protagonist make a move, draw their trust in you and answer the following questions, if you can:

- ▶ *Do you help them?*
- ▶ *Do you put yourself in danger?*

If you help them, you can answer one of their questions, or give them an extra answer.

If you put yourself in danger, the dealer will tell you what the consequences are.

Hinder Another

When you hinder or betray another protagonist making a move, draw their trust in you and answer the following questions, if you can:

- ▶ *Do they fall for it?*
- ▶ *Does it come back on you right now?*

If they fall for it, you can answer one of their questions, or you can ask a question that they must answer.

If it doesn't come back on you, there's nothing they can do about it now. Later, maybe, but right now, you're in the clear.

Getting Answers

The final six moves follow a different format. You still draw cards and count up your answers, but these moves don't ask questions. Four of them allow you to ask questions—one for each answer you draw. The last two—the Devil and the Angel of Death—are moves you probably don't want to be making, because if you are, it means you're not just running close to the edge, you're in danger of falling off it.

The Four Horsemen

After the lucky seven, the remaining six moves are ones you may or may not be so enthusiastic about. Four of these—the four horsemen, bringers of revelation, harbingers of the apocalypse—are based on your protagonist's perceptive abilities, and while it may seem like an advantage to have more information than not, you are playing a desperate thief in a magic-ridden world, which means the honest truth might perhaps not be to your liking.

Revelation is not always so bad though! When you act on the answer to a question you asked after making one of these moves, you may count one maybe as an answer, without having to conform to its suit.

Case the Joint

When you case the joint, draw your stealth and ask your questions from the list:

- ▶ *What already happened here?*
- ▶ *What's my best way in / out / through?*
- ▶ *What's hidden / missing / wrong here?*
- ▶ *Where the valuables at?*

If you draw no answers at all, the dealer will tell you the consequences.

Eyeball a Mark

When you eyeball a mark, draw your persuasion and ask your questions from the list:

- ▶ *How could I get your character to (name an act)?*
- ▶ *How is your character vulnerable?*
- ▶ *What does your character want?*
- ▶ *What's your character worth?*

If you draw no answers at all, the dealer will tell you the consequences.

Size Up a Con

When you size up a con, draw your danger and ask your questions from the list:

- ▶ *How could I get in on / out of this?*
- ▶ *How could this go wrong?*
- ▶ *What's in it for (name someone)?*
- ▶ *Who, or what, is the biggest threat?*

If you draw no answers at all, the dealer will tell you the consequences.

Use The Sight

When you use **The Sight**, draw your magic and ask your questions from the list:

- ▶ *How do I cure / escape / thwart this magic?*
- ▶ *What can this magic do?*
- ▶ *What is magical here?*
- ▶ *Where is this magic from?*

If you draw no answers at all, the dealer will tell you the consequences.

The Devil

Magic abounds in this world, all around your protagonists. Sometimes, that means bad magic sticks to them.

When you are cursed, by magic or other mighty forces, give yourself +1 curse and draw your curse. You start each session with zero curse.

One answer means you take an involuntary action, to your own detriment. The antagonist's possible answers include:

- ▶ *You become confused and misread the situation.*
- ▶ *You falter, and hesitate for a crucial moment.*
- ▶ *You flee the scene in terror, horror, or revulsion.*
- ▶ *You flinch, losing your grip on whatever you're holding.*

Two answers means you are driven temporarily insane and the scene ends. The antagonist will tell you where you are when you return to your senses, and what you have done.

Three or more answers means you are driven permanently insane—the antagonist will tell you how—and your protagonist is retired.

For this move, the first maybe doesn't count as an answer, but the second one does, and so do all subsequent maybes, whether they are faces or aces. Ignore the suits, and do not put aces into play.

The Angel of Death

Like anywhere, some people are willing to use violence to get what they want. Your protagonist might be on the receiving end of that violence, if they don't watch their back!

When you suffer harm, give yourself +1 harm and draw your harm. You start each session with zero harm.

One answer means you take an involuntary action, to your own detriment. The antagonist's possible answers include:

- ▶ *You fail to notice something important.*
- ▶ *You falter, and hesitate for a crucial moment.*
- ▶ *You flinch, losing your grip on whatever you're holding.*
- ▶ *You stumble, fall, or lose your footing.*

Two answers means you are incapacitated. The antagonist will tell you when you return to your senses, and what has happened to you in the meantime.

Three or more answers and you die. The antagonist will tell you how. Your protagonist is retired.

For this move, the first maybe doesn't count as an answer, but the second one does, and so do all subsequent maybes, whether they are faces or aces. Ignore the suits, and do not put aces into play.

Recovery

Give yourself -1 curse when you pull off the heist at the centre of the house of cards.

Give yourself -1 harm when you rest up and heal, or receive proper medical attention.



**THE
HOUSE
OF
CARDS**

House of Fear, House of Tongue

Summer is over and now the leaves begin to turn. The nights grow sharper, longer, and more inviting to conspirators. The old and young alike are reminded once again of winter, just around the corner. Farmers look to their crops, townsfolk begin to save their coins for firewood, and the wealthy open up their ledgers to see what this year's excesses have cost them so far. But thieves? Broke-ass thieves only ever think of money, and how to get it.

The city of Thieves' Port sprawls across the coast, rich and bloated, gorging itself on the gold of innumerable merchant galleons. A city of the wealthy, a city of the poor, a city full of temples, and a city made for godless brigands—though its proper name is Reeve's Port, for the reeve who runs it on behalf of the distant king, we all call it Thieves' Port, because why wouldn't we? *House of Fear, House of Tongue* is a scenario deck that takes place in the Lampshade Quarter of this great city, where pleasure houses and halls of low vice sit next to banks and police stations, where the lowest of the low live in the shadows of the city's greatest cultural institutions.

What secrets lie hidden in the canebrake just beyond the city's walls? What was written on those letters that you "found," just by chance? What happens to those who go missing here? Whose heart is about to break, and which of you will leave with gold in your pockets and a story on your lips?

The Suits

The four suits in *House of Fear, House of Tongue* are: gold, hearts, leaves, and tongues. If you are using a normal deck of playing cards, clubs represent leaves, diamonds represent gold, and spades represent tongues.

Spell Tokens

When you spend a spell token, draw a card. What suit is it?

If it's gold, choose which type of spells you can cast from the following:

- Spells of cold light and fanciful illusion. You may conjure fleeting phantasms and temporary glammers, lights of many colours, starshine, and shadows.
- Words of the deep, dark earth, that twist stone and metal and bid them do your will.

If it's hearts, choose which type of spells you can cast from the following:

- Rituals of blood and desire. You may bind people together, or drive them apart, give them new sensations to explore, or cut off what they have already.
- Spells of fire, and heat, and burning. Call it, shape it, unleash the dancing flames.

If it's leaves, choose which type of spells you can cast from the following:

- Spells of beast and bird, and all the woodland creatures. You may know them, speak with them, and imitate them.
- Spells of trees and flowers, and the soil beneath them. You may speak to them, hear their secrets, and form them into new shapes.

If it's tongues, choose which type of spells you can cast from the following:

- Spells of clouds and rain, snow sleet, and hail, of storms and lightning and great claps of thunder. All these are yours to command.
- Words upon the air. You may send them far, on gusts of wind, to the ears of your choosing, or to become pummelling gales, or sandstorms, or hurricanes.

Reading the Entries

When you turn up a card that is part of the map, look up its entry in this document and use it to frame the scene.

Dealer sections are instructions to the dealer, naturally, and include most of the fictional material that should inspire the dealer's scene framing. Antagonist sections are rare but specific instructions to the antagonist specifically. Protagonist sections are where most of the special rules attached to a card are located. Some of these rules also take effect when the card is used in other circumstances—as a companion, for example.

GOLD

- A♦ Market Instability
- 2♦ A Butterfly Corpse
- 3♦ A Stack of Papers
- 4♦ A Shipment of Luxury Goods
- 5♦ The Golden Temple's Donation Box
- 6♦ The Gambler
- 7♦ Skeleton Keys
- 8♦ A Prize Animal
- 9♦ Auditions
- 10♦ A Fortune in Gold
- J♦ Jacqueline
- Q♦ Elissa Nai
- K♦ The Old Lion

Ace of Gold

Market Instability

Event

The markets are a wonderful thing. Until they go completely wrong.

Dealer

As long as market instability is in effect, draw a card when you begin a new scene. What number is it?

- If it's 2-6, the price of food has gone up (again?), and people are taking to the streets in protest.
- If it's 7-10, a flood of valuable good has arrived in the Lampshade Quarter, and are now considered nearly worthless.
- If it's a face or an ace, a bank or stock market fails, and the world is turned upside down—there is no food to be had, but expensive goods are dirt cheap.

Protagonist

To get an answer from this card, you need to put it into play. Lay it face up on the table next to the house of cards, over top of any ace card already there. It remains in play until another ace is put into play, after which it no longer affects the game, but is not discarded or returned to the deck. Lay the new ace over top of it.

A Butterfly Corpse

Item

Some say a butterfly corpse is a key to the door that separates the living from the dead. Others say a butterfly corpse will protect you from the police. But everyone says that getting the right butterfly corpse, in the right condition, is a terribly expensive proposition.

Dealer

This particular butterfly corpse... (draw for a suit):

- **Gold** ...is the only one there is...
- **Hearts** ...is a brilliant orange, stiff and lacquered...
- **Leaves** ...is a dark green in colour, as if covered in leaves...
- **Tongues** ...is iridescent blue, with a spiny body...

...and it comes... (draw for a suit):

- **Gold** ...with a note attached to it.
- **Hearts** ... displayed in a small glass case.
- **Leaves** ...still sealed in its killing jar.
- **Tongues** ...mounted on a piece of black velvet.

Protagonist

If you take this item, remove it from the house of cards and put it in front of you. It does three things:

- **First**, you may cast spells that raise the spirits of the dead to this realm so that you can question them.
- **Second**, you may draw an extra card when you do something dangerous while wearing the butterfly corpse as a mask. This may prevent you from being inconspicuous, of course.
- **Third**, you may have an extra answer when you conceal your actions if you crush the butterfly corpse into powder. Discard this card when you do so.

Three of Gold

A Stack of Papers

Item

Stiff and yellow, or with ragged edges. Scented with perfume, or smelling of leather and mildew. What strange glyphs are written on these parchments? Do you know?

Dealer

What could be written on these papers? Draw a card. What suit is it?

- **If it's gold**, there are spells written on these pages, alchemical formulas that can transmute matter and thoughts into stranger, more wondrous and alien substances.
- **If it's hearts**, these are love letters—proof of an illicit and scandalous affair. They look like perfect blackmail material.
- **If it's leaves**, these are promissory notes that can be exchanged, at a bank, for gold—but only by a reputable financial agent.
- **If it's tongues**, these papers are a map, showing the secret ways in and out of some other location.

Protagonist

These papers can be used for whatever the dealer says they are for. If you take them, remove them from the house of cards and put them in front of you. If you give them up to save yourself when you make a move, draw an extra card, then discard the stack of papers.

4♦

Four of Gold

A Shipment of Luxury Goods

Item

Gems and jewels do not grow from the trees in the gardens of the wealthy, and silks do not simply weave themselves. But who will obtain these things, and face the ever-present danger of thieves who strike when treasure is least well-guarded? Not you, you are that thief!

Dealer

Luxury goods, you say? What's the skinny, then? Draw a card. What number is it?

- **If it's a 2-6**, a shipment of luxury goods has just been stolen. Draw from the deck until you reveal a location. That's where the police are currently searching for it.
- **If it's a 7-10**, a shipment of luxury goods is in transit, hauled by someone important. Draw from the deck until you reveal a person. That's who has the shipment now.
- **If it's a face or an ace**, a shipment of luxury goods is being dropped off. Who is receiving it? Draw from the deck until you reveal a location (that isn't the pines, the thicket edge, or also an event) or a person (who isn't the late messenger).

Protagonist

You can sacrifice a shipment of luxury goods to get an extra answer when you make a move, if doing so would make sense. If you do, discard this card.

Five of Gold

The Golden Temple's Donation Box

Item / Location

The Lampshade District's most prominent temple knows how to flaunt its prestige, with its golden dome and its basalt pillars. Its priests wear golden masks and carry incense with them wherever they go, and are so beloved by the rich that their donation box is never empty.

Dealer

Who else is near the donation box? Why, it's... (draw for a suit):

- **Gold** ...just the thief who stole it.
- **Hearts** ...the priests of the temple, of course, preening and full of themselves.
- **Leaves** ...no one. No one at all. Is this the perfect opportunity?
- **Tongues** ...someone important. Draw until you reveal a person. That's who it is.

Protagonist

You must steal the donation box before you can take it as an item. If you do, you may use the gold inside to get an extra answer when you make a move. If you do, discard this card.

6♦

Six of Gold

The Gambler

Person

You're a gambler too, aren't you? Of course you are, all thieves are gamblers.

Dealer

The gambler is... (draw for a suit):

- **Gold** ...a very flashy individual, always winning, then spending money like tomorrow never comes.
- **Hearts** ...a friend of the casino's, always bringing in the marks.
- **Leaves** ...a degenerate, always going broke at the tables.
- **Tongues** ...a mechanical turk, not a real person at all. Unless you count the dwarf hiding inside it!

Who is the gambler playing cards with? Draw from the deck until you reveal a person. That's who it is.

Protagonist

If you play the gambler as your protagonist, your characteristics are Danger 1, Magic 2, Persuasion 3, and Stealth 4.

If you have the gambler as a companion, you may sacrifice them to get an extra answer when making a move that involves them somehow.

Seven of Gold

Skeleton Keys

Item

Every thief's dream, a key that opens any door. If only it would get rid of guards, too!

Dealer

How are these keys recognized? Draw a card. What suit is it?

- **If it's gold**, they are described in a book by Cerinthus, with illustrations by Wm. de Arminius. Go read it.
- **If it's hearts**, they can be recognized by the odd coat-of-arms they bear, not seen anywhere else.
- **If it's leaves**, they are known by the rust that covers them, such is their age. Still, they work fine.
- **If it's tongues**, they are very difficult to recognize. One must know exactly what they are, or they can be overlooked.

Someone knows about these keys, and might have spread the word. Draw from the deck until you reveal a person. That's who. Discard the other cards.

Protagonist

What might you need these skeleton keys for, aside from burglary? Draw a card. What suit is it?

- **If it's gold**, you're supposed to get them for someone else, as a favour, or to return one.
- **If it's hearts**, you know someone who has a locked box that doesn't want to damage it by trying to get it open.
- **If it's leaves**, you still have manacles attached to you, for *some reason*.
- **If it's tongues**, there's someone you need to get released from jail.

You can use these keys to open any door, and access any building. You can also flip this card once per scene to get an extra answer when you use them while making a move (turn all your cards right-side up at the beginning of a scene).

A Prize Animal

Item / Monster / Person

A common man has a common dog for a pet. It stands to reason that a plutocrat would have something equally as rare, instead of something anyone can have.

Dealer

This prize animal is... (draw for a suit):

- **Gold** ...a champion race horse...
- **Hearts** ...a racing hound and former underdog...
- **Leaves** ... an exotic lapdog from a foreign land...
- **Tongues** ...a brightly-coloured bird of paradise (maybe it can talk?)...

...owned by... (draw for a number):

- **2-6** ...one of the many thieves of the Lampshade Quarter.
- **7-10** ...one of the many courtesans of the Lampshade Quarter.
- **face** ...a fat merchant's wife.
- **ace** ...a witch.

Protagonist

If you play a prize animal as your protagonist, your characteristics are Danger 3, Magic 4, Persuasion 1, and Stealth 2.

If you have a prize animal with you, as an item or a companion, once per scene you may flip it to get an extra answer when you make a move (turn all your cards right side up at the beginning of a scene). The animal must be able to help you.

Nine of Gold

Auditions

Event / Location

There are many gates to the kingdom of paradise, but every gate has its gatekeepers. If you want something in this city, the best way to get it is to take it from someone else. Or you could ask, I suppose, like artists and beggars do. But then again, when have you ever seen a wealthy beggar?

Dealer

Who's auditioning for what? Draw a card. What suit is it?

- **If it's gold**, musicians are auditioning for a place in the orchestra.
- **If it's hearts**, dancers are auditioning for a place in the ballet.
- **If it's leaves**, clowns and street performers are auditioning for a place in the autumn festival.
- **If it's tongues**, singers are auditioning for a place in the opera.

Who else is there? Draw from the deck until you reveal a person. They are there, too. Discard the other cards.

A Fortune in Gold

Item

One man's fortune is another man's fall from grace, they say. Or do they? No, that must be wrong. A fortune in gold could never be a bad thing to have, could it?

Dealer

If there's a fortune in gold on the loose, people are after it. Draw from the deck until you reveal a person. That's who has a fortune in gold *right now*. Draw from the deck again until you reveal another person. That's who wants it *right now*.

During the dealer phase, if there is more than one person on the same space as a fortune in gold, discard the one with the lowest number, or the last number remaining if there are any face cards. Keep all face cards.

Protagonist

How do you know there's a fortune in gold to be made? Draw a card. What number is it?

- **If it's 2-6**, you read about it in the papers. Or someone read the newspaper to you, if you can't read.
- **If it's 7-10**, you were at the right place at the right time and you saw it with your own eyes. Hallelujah, it was beautiful.
- **If it's a face card**, that person told you about it, whether they know it or not.
- **If it's an ace**, someone tried to kill you with it, literally.

When you make a move, you can flip a fortune in gold to get an extra answer. At the end of a scene, turn all your cards right side up again.

Antagonist

At the end of the dealer phase, move any two persons in the house of cards one space closer to a fortune in gold.

Jack of Gold

Jacqueline

Person

Fierce-eyed and wild, Jacqueline doesn't care about your braggart anecdotes or your heartsick poetry. She lives in order to live, in a world where gold spends freely and deeds are more important than words.

Dealer

Jacqueline, what's that lady's deal, anyway? Draw a card. What suit is it.

- **If it's gold**, she is the Lampshade Quarter's most notorious loan shark.
- **If it's hearts**, she has a cult of disciples that look to her for guidance and enlightenment.
- **If it's leaves**, she is a librarian, and does a good side trade in used book selling and appraising.
- **If it's tongues**, she likes to get drunk and dance (or even knife-fight) to bouzouki music at the worst of this city's dives.

Protagonist

If you play Jacqueline as your protagonist, your characteristics are Danger 4, Magic 1, Persuasion 3, and Stealth 2.

If you take her as a companion, there is a wicker man out in the pines that Jacqueline can show you.



Queen of Gold

Elissa Nai

Person

Elissa Nai is the proprietrix of the House of Tongue. She knows many, many secrets, but she does not divulge them cheaply. How many of *your* secrets does she know?

Dealer

Elissa Nai is a pretty interesting person. Why is she so interesting today? Draw a card. What suit is it?

- **If it's gold**, she is sailing around on a golden barque, apparently not doing anything, which means she *must* be plotting and scheming even more than usual.
- **If it's hearts**, she is attempting to lure some wealthy citizen of Thieves' Port into her clutches.
- **If it's leaves**, she is receiving the ambassador of some far-flung, foreign kingdom.
- **If it's tongues**, she is scouring the marketplaces for valuable and hard-to-find items.

She has spies all over the city. Where was one spotted? Draw from the deck until you reveal a location. That's where a minion was seen. Discard the other cards.

During the dealer phase, move Elissa Nai one space closer to the House of Tongue, if it is part of the house of cards.

Protagonist

If you play Elissa Nai as your protagonist, your characteristics are Danger 1, Magic 3, Persuasion 4, and Stealth 2.

If Elissa Nai is your companion, you may sacrifice her to get an extra answer when you attempt one of the four criminal virtues. If you do so, discard this card.

King of Gold

The Old Lion

Person

There are many powerful people in Thieves' Port—no one person can claim to rule over everything. But if anyone can claim supremacy amongst the criminal gangs, the thieves' guilds, the smugglers, and the racketeers, it's the old lion.

Dealer

What's the old lion doing now? Draw a card. What number is it?

- If it's 2-6, he's looking to fix a fight, or a race, or more likely a fight *and* a race.
- If it's 7-10, he's shaking someone down for protection money.
- If it's a face card, the old lion has just fired his chief lieutenant.
- If it's an ace, the old lion is looking to kill a bookie.

And what is his gang doing? Draw a card. What suit is it?

- If it's gold, they are on a heist right now, this very minute.
- If it's hearts, they are having a party at their favourite pub.
- If it's leaves, they not doing anything, really, just hanging around, waiting for something to happen.
- If it's tongues, they are trashing an establishment that didn't pay protection.

During the dealer phase, if Robin Red-Fellow is also in the house of cards, move the old lion one space closer to that space.

Protagonist

If you play the old lion as your protagonist, your characteristics are Danger 3, Magic 1, Persuasion 4, and Stealth 2.

If you have the old lion as your companion, you can also order around a gang of thieves.

HEARTS

- | | |
|-----|--------------------------------|
| A♥ | Romance |
| 2♥ | A Maze |
| 3♥ | An Enchanted Mirror |
| 4♥ | The Legendary Sword |
| 5♥ | The Nightingale's Tears |
| 6♥ | The Honest Bookie |
| 7♥ | Magic Rope |
| 8♥ | A Courtesan's Box of Keepsakes |
| 9♥ | Daybreak |
| 10♥ | A Heart |
| J♥ | Robin Red-Fellow |
| Q♥ | The Little Match Girl |
| K♥ | Dr. Barton Fell |

Ace of Hearts

Romance

Event

They say spring is when new romance blooms, and autumn is a time when lovers fall away like leaves. But this is not always so.

Protagonist

To get an answer from this card, you need to start a new romance with someone else who is in the current scene. If you do so, put this card face up on the table next to the house of cards, over top of any ace card already there. It remains in play until another ace is put into play, at which point the romance is over, but this card is not discarded or returned to the deck. Lay the new ace over top of it.

If you start a romance with a member of the supporting cast, you get +2 bond with them immediately. If you start a romance with another protagonist, your trust in them changes to 4. Their trust in you does not change.

Antagonist

When this card leaves play, because a new ace has been played over it, decide how the romance ends.

2♥

Two of Hearts

A Maze

Location

An archetypal symbol, ancient and primal as creation itself, the maze is both simple and confusing. Is your life a maze? Do you know how to get out of it? Better to be looking into the maze from the outside.

Dealer

What kind of maze is this? Draw a card. What suit is it?

- If it's **gold**, this is a maze of funhouse mirrors.
- If it's **hearts**, this is a maze of rooms in a house that never seems to end.
- If it's **leaves**, this is a garden maze of gigantic hedges and gravel pathways.
- If it's **tongues**, this is a maze of tiny alleyways and underground tunnels.

During the dealer phase, if a terrible monster is also in the house of cards, move it one space closer to a maze.

Protagonist

What are you doing in the maze? Draw a card. What suit is it?

- If it's **gold**, you broke in, you dumb motherfucker.
- If it's **hearts**, you followed someone inside. Draw from the deck until you reveal a person. That's who. Discard the other cards.
- If it's **leaves**, you were kidnapped!
- If it's **tongues**, you were tricked. This wasn't a maze when you walked in!

Three of Hearts

An Enchanted Mirror

Item

Mirror, mirror, on the wall, how can I take you down and sell you to a fence for gold?

Dealer

An enchanted mirror can be used to reflect spells. What else it is capable of doing? Choose one:

- The mirror shows you what you most desire, and where it is.
- The mirror shows you your greatest foe, and where they are.
- The mirror will transport you to other place, maybe even other times.

Protagonist

An enchanted mirror gives you an extra answer when you use it to reflect spells cast on you back onto their caster. You can also use an enchanted mirror for whatever the dealer says it can be used for, but the price of doing so is set by the antagonist. If you sacrifice an enchanted mirror while making a move, you can get an extra answer. If you do, discard this card.

Antagonist

When the mirror is used, except to reflect a spell, there is a price. Choose one:

- The mirror calls out to your enemies.
- The mirror causes the user to age prematurely.
- The mirror requires fresh blood.
- The mirror summons ghosts and spirits into the world.

The Legendary Sword

Item

Gleaming and silver, this sword is legend. What will you add to that legend?

Dealer

This sword is legend because...

- **Gold** ...it is perfectly crafted, a joy to wield.
- **Hearts** ...it is magical. Draw a card to see what kinds of spells it can produce.
- **Leaves** ...it is enchanted, and can be used to fight monsters, ghosts, and other spirits.
- **Tongues** ...of its historical importance. It has seen some “interesting” times indeed.

Protagonist

Once per scene, if you are using the legendary sword to make a move, you can draw an extra card. Turn this card sideways to indicate this ability has been used.

If this sword is enchanted, draw an extra card when you make a move while using it against a monster, ghost, or spirit.

If this sword is perfectly crafted, draw an extra card when you make a move while using it against mortal foes.

Antagonist

More than one person wants to get their hands on the legendary sword. When a protagonist takes the legendary sword, draw from the deck until you reveal a person or you draw five cards. If you draw a person, that's who else is after the sword. Introduce them into the scene and leave them on the same space as the legendary sword. Only if this person is thwarted can a protagonist take this card into their possession. The person card remains in this space if that happens.

Five of Hearts

The Nightingale's Tears

Item

Few treasures are so renowned as the nightingale's tears. Ballads are sung about it, operas use it in their plots,

Dealer

The nightingale's tears is... (draw for a suit):

- **Gold** ...a collection of coins from an ancient civilization, of which little else is left.
- **Hearts** ...a rare and special perfume, much sought after. A single vial is worth a fortune.
- **Leaves** ...a necklace of sapphires that look like drops of water.
- **Tongues** ...a giant opal that looks like it has teardrops suspended in it.

Protagonist

If you have the nightingale's tears, you can sacrifice them to get an extra answer when you make a move, if it would make sense to do so. If you do, discard this card.

The Honest Bookie

Person

The Lampshade Quarter is rife with gamblers, gamers, thrill-seekers, and desperate losers. Sometimes a mark is a mark is a mark, and even the species of scoundrel known as the bookie has all he can do to keep from shearing off his own fair share of fleece. But not all of them will take free money from a fool. There's still one honest bookie left in this rotten world, and this is them.

Dealer

You can find the honest bookie... (draw for a number):

- **2-6** ...out at the race track, most every day of the week...
- **7-10** ...a messy bookmaking office down on Grub Street (who knows why?)...
- **face** ...at a deli, noshing on smoked mackerel and pickled pigs' feet...
- **ace** ...at the scene of a crime, strangely...

...this time with... (draw for a suit):

- **Gold** ...some other bookies, all contemptuous behind their smiles.
- **Hearts** ...someone attractive enough to be in another league entirely.
- **Leaves** ...a thug who's come to make this bookie just a little less honest.
- **Tongues** ...a group of urchins who repeat gossip in exchange for food.

Protagonist

If you play the honest bookie as your protagonist, your characteristics are Danger 3, Magic 1, Persuasion 4, and Stealth 2.

If you have the honest bookie as a companion, you can sacrifice them to get an extra answer when you make a move. The antagonist decides their fate and you discard this card.

Seven of Hearts

Magic Rope

Item

A piece of the mysterious East that has travelled many, many leagues, this piece of rope is. What mischief will it get up to here in Thieves' Port, I wonder?

Dealer

The magic rope... (draw for a suit):

- **Gold** ...will crawl up walls and fasten itself at their tops, all on its own.
- **Hearts** ...can be used as a fearsome weapon, burning all who are struck by it.
- **Leaves** ...will rise into the air and still be climbable.
- **Tongues** ...will coil itself around anyone it is thrown at, securing them tightly.

However, it...

- **Gold** ...is owned by the wealthiest merchant in the Lampshade Quarter.
- **Hearts** ...is in the possession of a notoriously vicious thief.
- **Leaves** ...is buried in the pines, still wrapped around the neck of a murderer who was hanged with it.
- **Tongues** ...was last seen being carried into the House of Fear.

Protagonist

If you take the magic rope into your possession, you can use it for everything the dealer tells you it is good for. Once per scene, you can flip it to get an extra answer when you use it while making a move (turn all cards right side up at the beginning of a scene).

A Courtesan's Box of Keepsakes

Item

A comb, a brooch, a lock of hair, perhaps, all tucked away in a nicely lacquered box with a silver clasp. Oh, but where is the little silver key that will open it?

Dealer

When the box is opened, ask every player to describe a keepsake that might fit inside it, then add a few of your own. There could be small pieces of fabric, a beetle trapped in amber, foreign coins, letters or notes, a length of ribbon, rings, a rosary, shells, smooth rocks, toys, or the tooth of a wild animal.

Whose box is this? It belongs to... (draw for a suit):

- **Gold** ...Elissa Nai, proprietrix of the House of Tongue.
- **Hearts** ...a woman who died of a broken heart.
- **Leaves** ...a courtesan from the House of Leaves and Flowers.
- **Tongues** ...no one knows, but they would all like to. Because they all want this box for themselves.

Protagonist

When you manipulate through charm, you may draw an extra card if you show off a keepsake from the box while you do it. If you give away one of these keepsakes instead of just show it off, you can get an extra answer, but if you do not replace it with something you value deeply, you must discard this card. The box is gone!

Nine of Hearts

Daybreak

Event

The first rays of dawn slip over the horizon. Did you know that it was night? Do you remember what happened to the hours? The daytime is a dangerous time to be a thief.

Dealer

At daybreak, magic is dispelled, but the city comes alive. Crimes are discovered, lost things are found, and all is revealed.

Protagonist

Give yourself -1 curse. Any ongoing enchantments or spells that have been cast upon you dissipate into the ether, regardless of who cast them or when.

Antagonist

If the protagonists were last seen many long hours before daybreak, decide what happened in the time between, unless they have the wolf-blooded girl as a companion, in which case the night has passed uneventfully.

A Heart

Item

A heart is a powerful and dangerous thing to possess, if it is not your own. Whose heart is this heart?

Dealer

What kind of heart is this? Draw a card. What suit is it?

- **If it's gold**, this is a clockwork heart, made of cogs, springs, and gears, covered in metal plates.
- **If it's hearts**, this is a glass heart. What do you see when you peer inside? Draw a card and place it on the map, that's what you see.
- **If it's leaves**, this is a real human heart, cut from someone's chest. If you like, now or when it becomes relevant, draw from the deck until you reveal a person. It's their heart.
- **If it's tongues**, this is Griselda, the Hollow Lady's heart. What she wouldn't do to get it back...

Protagonist

You can sacrifice a heart to give yourself -1 harm. If you do, discard this card.

If you possess a clockwork heart or a glass heart, you can draw an extra card when you make a move in order to directly win someone's heart.

If this is Griselda's heart, draw a card to see what kind of spells it will let you cast.

Jack of Hearts

Robin Red-Fellow

Person

Golden-haired and silver-tongued, mischievous and troublesome yet never in trouble, stern but fair, Robin Red-Fellow is your cousin.

Dealer

Robin Red-Fellow is... (draw for a suit):

- **Gold** ...a gambler and a thief.
- **Hearts** ...really an honest man under all that bluster.
- **Leaves** ...actually a woman. Now what do you think of that?
- **Tongues** ...a snitch. No wonder he's never in trouble.

Robin Red-Fellow is... (draw for a suit):

- **Gold** ...pursuing a feud with Detective Inspector Sala.
- **Hearts** ...pursuing a romantic interest.
- **Leaves** ...on the run from Detective Inspector Sala.
- **Tongues** ...spreading rumours.

Protagonist

If you play Robin Red-Fellow as your protagonist, your characteristics are Danger 2, Magic 3, Persuasion 3, and Stealth 2. You get a special bonus for either danger or stealth, your choice, and you get one companion token and one spell token.

If Robin Red-Fellow is your companion, you may draw an extra card when both of you attempt to manipulate a common citizen through charm together. You may also sacrifice Robin Red-Fellow in order to get an extra answer when you make a move while attempting to escape. If you do so, discard this card.



Queen of Hearts

The Little Match Girl

Person

You know the story, of course? She will be dead before the winter ends, no doubt.

Dealer

The little match girl can be found... (draw for a suit):

- **Gold** ...wherever there are people all around.
- **Hearts** ...by the lake.
- **Leaves** ...on a deserted street corner. The silence and emptiness is ominous, like the calm before the storm.
- **Tongues** ...at the edge of a crowd. Something has just happened. What could it be? Draw from the deck until you reveal an event.

During the dealer phase of each turn, if any of the fights, the autumn festival, the opera house, or the race track are also part of the house of cards, the little match girl moves one space closer to whichever has the higher number.

Protagonist

Who is this girl standing around in the street, carrying a little box around? Draw a card. What suit is it?

- **If it's gold**, she's a girl who sells matches. What do you need matches for?
- **If it's hearts**, she's the witch of brass in disguise. She's probably spying on you, so she can steal your things. Watch out.
- **If it's leaves**, she's your half-sister.
- **If it's tongues**, she's a girl who sells matches. For a generous tip, she'll pass on some gossip, though, and you might learn a thing or two.

If you play the little match girl as your protagonist, your characteristics are Danger 2, Magic 1, Persuasion 3, and Stealth 4.



K♥

King of Hearts

Dr. Barton Fell

Person

A doctor through and through, with illegible handwriting and an inscrutable expression, Dr. Barton Fell can be seen going about his business at all odd hours of the day or night. Whenever he takes a carriage back into town from the country, he invariably has a hitchhiker with him.

Dealer

They call him... (draw for a suit):

- **Gold** ...the bear...
- **Hearts** ...the black bear...
- **Leaves** ...the old bear...
- **Tongues** ...the prickly pear...

...because... (draw for a suit):

- **Gold** ...he's a great big bear of a man...
- **Hearts** ...he's about as friendly as a bear...
- **Leaves** ...that's what they call him...
- **Tongues** ...that's what's on his coat of arms...

...but... (draw for a number):

- **2-6** ...they don't call him that to his face or nuthin'.
- **7-10** ...he's been loyal to his friends, they say.
- **face** ...they also say he knows secrets about all the wealthy people in this town.
- **ace** ...his heart has gone missing, and you didn't hear it from me.

What does Dr. Fell actually do, you ask? Why... (draw for a number):

- **2-6** ...he's a prominent physician, well known amongst the wealthy.
- **7-10** ...he's Reeve's Port's head medical officer, in charge of health inspections.
- **face** ..."not much these days. Why, you got sumpin'?"
- **ace** ..."e kills whores, 'e does. Good fing 'e's dead now, innit?"

Protagonist

If you play Dr. Barton Fell as your protagonist, your characteristics are Danger 3, Magic 2, Persuasion 2, and Stealth 3. You get a special bonus for either magic or persuasion, your choice, and you get one item token and one location token.

If Dr. Barton Fell is your companion, you can sacrifice him to take -1 harm. After he has given you medical attention, discard this card and leave him to his business.

LEAVES

| | |
|-----|---------------------------------|
| A♣ | A Death in the Family |
| 2♣ | The Race Track |
| 3♣ | The Bank |
| 4♣ | The Jockey Club |
| 5♣ | The Bitter Sea |
| 6♣ | The (Late) Messenger |
| 7♣ | The Smoke Dream |
| 8♣ | Autumn Festival |
| 9♣ | The House of Leaves and Flowers |
| 10♣ | The Thicket Edge |
| J♣ | Stanislas |
| Q♣ | The Wolf-Blooded Girl |
| K♣ | The Old Wolf |

Ace of Leaves

A Death in the Family

Event

A lone horn blows as the bearers haul the casket on down the road. We all wore black and dour looks. The sky was grey as our hearts and the dead did not return to the kingdom of the living as promised.

Protagonist

To get an answer from this card, you need to put it into play. Lay it face up on the table next to the house of cards, over top of any ace card already there. It remains in play until another ace is put into play and is neither discarded nor returned to the deck. Lay the new ace over top of it.

Antagonist

When this card comes into play, choose someone to die. It must be someone in the protagonist character's family or in the family of someone they care about, rely on, or are currently associating with. Once the death happens, this card has no further effect on the game, except to take any previous aces out of play.

2♣

Two of Leaves

The Race Track

Event / Location

It was meant to be where the best of the best compete for honours, the martial field where the best of breeders, riders, and trainers are revealed. But mostly, it's where desperate losers go to lose their money.

Dealer

What is happening at the race track today? Or, if it is night, what happened earlier today? Draw a card. What suit is it?

- **If it's gold**, there is a horse racing championship being held today, with a fat purse on the line.
- **If it's hearts**, there's greyhounds racing today, no horses on the track.
- **If it's leaves**, nothing is happening, it's a day off today.
- **If it's tongues**, there's regularly scheduled horse racing today, with regularly scheduled betting.

Three of Leaves

The Bank

Location

Banks used to be some guy behind a table in a market square. Now they are giant stone citadels full of gold and other precious valuables.

Dealer

What? It's a *bank*. You know what banks are like.

Protagonist

Who is that you spy, hanging out at the bank? Draw from the deck until you reveal a person. That's who it is. Discard the other cards.

The Jockey Club

Location

The private domain of the kingdom's pre-eminent horse breeders and authorities on horse racing, the Jockey Club is more a political arena than even the city hall is. No laws pass the mayor's desk without first being approved in the billiards room, no trade violations are too extreme they can't be voided over cognac and cigars in the lounge, and even the greatest composers must write their operas to suit the club's dinner schedule, unless they wish to stay penniless.

Dealer

What's happening at the Jockey Club today? Draw a card. What number is it?

- If it's 2-6, there's a post-lunch card game going on.
- If it's 7-10, they are having dinner before watching the ballet at the opera house.
- If it's a face card, they have a guest of honour giving a talk on something or other that rich people think is important.
- If it's an ace, and impromptu wrestling match has been arranged, to settle a bet.

Protagonist

Are you in disguise? If you are, whose guest are you? A member in good standing, or someone who is merely tolerated? If you're not in disguise, draw a card. What suit is it?

- If it's gold, you have broken in. Or you were brought to the break-in point at the last minute, by sheer chance.
- If it's hearts, you were hired to deliver something to one of the big-wigs who hangs out here.
- If it's leaves, you're out the back, having a smoke with the kitchen staff. Door's right there, all you have to do is walk right in.
- If it's tongues, you were invited to a high-stakes card game. Is anyone important at the game with you? You may draw from the deck until you reveal a person. They're at the table, too. Discard the other cards.

Five of Leaves

The Bitter Sea

Location

Most seas are salty, but this one is bitter too. Just like tears.

Dealer

The Bitter Sea is... (draw for a suit):

- **Gold** ...a popular brewery.
- **Hearts** ...the sea that Thieves' Port sits next to.
- **Leaves** ...a tavern, down by the docks.
- **Tongues** ...a bar frequented primarily by barristers, backgammon players, and students of the medical college.

Protagonist

What are you doing in the Bitter Sea? Draw a card. What suit is it.

- **If it's gold**, you're having a few drinks with some pirates.
- **If it's hearts**, you're meeting a love interest, on the down low.
- **If it's leaves**, you're drowning in trouble, or that's what it seems like.
- **If it's tongues**, you're having a productive business meeting with some fellow thieves.

6♣

Six of Leaves

The Late Messenger

Event / Item / Person

A messenger arrives, dead or dying, in dramatic fashion.

Dealer

The messenger is... (draw for a number):

- 2-6 ...stone cold dead atop their horse...
- 7-10 ...with the murder weapon still lodged in their back and a name on their lips...
- face ...not dead at all, but far too late to change things now...
- ace ...not dead at all, but everyone thought they were...

...with... (draw for a suit):

- Gold ...a message meant for a mark you have your eye on.
- Hearts ...a message for you, from an ally.
- Leaves ...a message for you, from an enemy.
- Tongues ...a message meant for an enemy of yours.

Protagonist

You can take the message as an item, but not the messenger as a companion. If you do, you can sacrifice it to draw an extra card when you are making a move that includes carrying a message. If you do, discard this card.

The Smoke Dream

Location

In the middle of the Lampshade Quarter, almost completely surrounded by tall buildings, at the end of a twisting alley, lies the Smoke Dream, a notorious opium den. There is also another entrance, only open during the day, when the small, ancient cemetery behind the Smoke Dream is also open. While a red lantern hangs to light the front door that never sees the sun's rays, out back, the gravediggers sit around, on a set of benches they call the Gravedigger's Union Hall, waiting for their turn at the pipe.

Dealer

If the protagonists go through the front, they find... (draw for a suit):

- **Gold** ...a bouncer demanding a cover charge.
- **Hearts** ...a heartbroken artist in the middle of being ejected.
- **Leaves** ...leaves on the ground, shining in the reddish light.
- **Tongues** ...patrons gossiping.

If the protagonists go in through the back, the gravediggers have just buried... (draw for a suit):

- **Gold** "Nobody, guv'ner, I swear!"
- **Hearts** ...a suicide.
- **Leaves** ...more bodies from the House of Fear.
- **Tongues** ...someone famous.

Protagonist

If you are looking for someone at the Smoke Dream, draw cards until you reveal a person. Discard the other cards. Ask the dealer if that person could normally be found at the Smoke Dream. If the answer is yes, there they are. If they aren't who you're looking for, maybe they can help you find them? If the answer is no, ask the antagonist if they are really there or if they are an illusion.

Autumn Festival

Event / Location

Autumn is a time to celebrate the harvest, worship the moon, and lament the passage of summer. A time to wonder at the changing of the leaves and to hold each other close against the new chill of night. And autumn is a time for masks. Don't ask which one is mine, you're not *supposed* to know, now *are you?*

Dealer

An autumn festival always has a host of street performers and temporary market stalls, along with free food and drink doled out by the wealthiest of citizens (elections are coming!), but what else is happening? Think of something.

Protagonist

What do you know about that's happening at the autumn festival? Draw a card. What suit is it?

- **If it's gold**, someone very wealthy is out and about, in a neighbourhood you know well, looking to spend some coin.
- **If it's hearts**, there's a brawl going on (isn't there always?), but this time it's between rival gangs of thieves.
- **If it's leaves**, someone who is in a lot of trouble is going to use the festival as cover to escape the city. Are you helping them, or trying to snatch them up before they get away?
- **If it's tongues**, you've been told that a murder is about to happen.

Are you wearing a mask? Do you have an extra one? If you are and you do, draw an extra card when you conceal your actions or manipulate through deception. Autumn is a time for *thieves*.

Nine of Leaves

The House of Leaves and Flowers

Location

Some will say the highest achievements of culture in the city of Thieves' Port are the opera house, or the golden temple, or perhaps even the autumn festival. They will never say the House of Leaves and Flowers, though, but anyone who has been within its walls will think of it. Could any orchestra or sermon really compare with such refinements of beauty and luxury as offered here?

Dealer

The House of Leaves and Flowers is the oldest, most refined pleasure house in all of Thieves' Port. What would such lowly thieves be doing there? Draw a card. What suit is it?

- **If it's gold**, someone has just spend the last of their ill-gotten gains here, and must now say goodbye. Who is it? Let the protagonists choose, maybe it is one of them.
- **If it's hearts**, one of the courtesans has summoned them. She wants a thing, and only a thief would know how to get it for her.
- **If it's leaves**, they have come to fetch someone who must now leave. Why would they do such a thing? Ask the protagonists, only they would know.
- **If it's tongues**, someone wants a message delivered, but this is such a dangerous job. Best to hire someone lucky, no?

The House of Leaves and Flowers sits right next to the canebrake. If there is any Wasteland next to the House, draw ten cards or until you reveal the thicket edge. If you reveal the thicket edge, place it in the Wasteland next to the House of Leaves and Flowers. If you do not reveal the thicket edge, discard all ten cards.

The Thicket Edge

Location

Outside the walls of the city, man's impact on nature lessens immediately. Perhaps you will see deer or a fox, darting between the thicket's trees. Or perhaps you will stumble across a duel? The city is still right there, after all.

Dealer

Out here there is only wicked canes of brambles and ... (draw for a number):

- 2-6 ...an abandoned shack that no one pays any attention to.
- 7-10 ...a scenic river, a lovers' lane, a noble hunting foxes. Nothing, really.
- face ...the odd woodcutter, bird watcher, or coachman, resting his horses.
- ace ...a mad shrine to an alien god.

Protagonist

If you take a look around the thicket edge, draw a card. What suit is it?

- If it's gold, you find whatever it is, unless it's a person, in which case you find nothing and discard the card.
- If it's hearts, you come across a pair of lovers, taking a stroll down the scenic river.
- If it's leaves, you find a dead body. Draw cards from the deck until you draw a person. That's who's body you find. I hope it's not you!
- If it's tongues, there's a woodcutter watching you.

Jack of Leaves

Stanislas

Person

Tall and thin, with large hands, Stanislas can be found working all sorts of odd jobs all over the city—and most of them in the Lampshade Quarter. How does he know so many people here? No one really knows, because somehow everyone has a different story of how they know him. A real jack-of-all-trades he is, always smiling, even in hard times.

Dealer

Where is Stanislas now? The protagonists find him... (draw for a suit):

- **Gold** ...in the window of a popular store...
- **Hearts** ...behind a popular restaurant...
- **Leaves** ...at the end of a back alley...
- **Tongues** ...in the middle of a crowd in the street...

...where he's... (draw for a suit):

- **Gold** ...hauling goods around town for someone he knows.
- **Hearts** ...playing guitar and singing a song.
- **Leaves** ...getting paid so he can head down to the race track.
- **Tongues** ...doing some job for the graveyard behind the Smoke Dream.

Protagonist

If you play Stanislas as your protagonist, your characteristics are all 2, and you get a special bonus for each of them, even though none of them are rated 1. You also get one of each kind of token.

If you take Stanislas as your companion, he can show you how to trap a person in a glass heart, if you have one. He can get you out of the House of Fear, if both of you are stuck there. He has a key to the Baker's Arms, if you need to get in. He knows where there's a body buried in the pines. He's good with animals. If you sacrifice him when you're making a move, you can draw an extra card. If you do, discard this card.



Queen of Leaves

The Wolf-Blooded Girl

Person

She knows the pines like the back of her hand, the thicket edge fits her like a well-worn jacket, but who knows what all she is up to? She throws her thick brown hair back and tracks mud across your carpets. She will defend you from harm, though, if you make it worth her while.

Dealer

The wolf-blooded girl is very strange. What is she up to now? Draw a card. What number is it?

- **If it's 2-6**, she's tracking down an enemy. Someone crossed her and she's looking for payback.
- **If it's 7-10**, she's trying to buy some kind of object d'art from a dealer too arrogant to give her the time of day.
- **If it's a face or an ace**, she has come to help one of the protagonists, whether he wants her help or not.

Someone else is interested in these circumstances, too. Draw a card. What suit is it?

- **If it's gold**, some rich socialite is trying to impress her with his wealth, and can't see that it's not working.
- **If it's hearts**, she has a musician lackey following her around.
- **If it's leaves**, there's really nobody else around... except that shadow over there. Which is now gone! How very odd.
- **If it's tongues**, there's a squad of street urchins who seem to have taken an interest in her business.

If there is Wasteland next to the wolf-blooded girl, draw ten cards or until you reveal either the pines or the thicket edge. If either is revealed, place it in any Wasteland space next to the wolf-blooded girl and discard the other cards. If neither are revealed, discard all ten cards.

Protagonist

If you play the wolf-blooded girl as your protagonist, your characteristics are Danger 4, Magic 3, Persuasion 1, and Stealth 2.

In order to take the wolf-blooded girl as your companion, you must give her something unique and valuable, or seduce her. If the wolf-blooded girl is your companion, draw an extra card when you fight people. You can also sacrifice her to get an extra answer when you do something dangerous. If you do so, discard this card.

Antagonist

The wolf-blooded girl demands to be paid for her service—only something valuable and unique will do. The next scene with a protagonist after defending them from harm, she demands payment (unless this card has been discarded). If she is not paid, she leaves. Discard this card.



King of Leaves

The Old Wolf

Person

They call the chief inspector of the city's police the old wolf, because he's a vicious hunter and he's caught so many thieves, we've all lost count of how many he gave back to the city and how many he kept. He's long in the tooth these days, though.

Dealer

What's the old wolf doing here? Draw a card. What suit is it?

- If it's **gold**, he's looking to take down the big score himself. Clever old wolf!
- If it's **hearts**, he's just out with the missus, no police duty at all. Tread lightly.
- If it's **leaves**, he's after a Napoleon of crime, he is. But is there even such a person, or is it just a rumour run wild?
- If it's **tongues**, he wants a protagonist to rat somebody out.

Protagonist

If you play the Old Wolf as your protagonist, your characteristics are Danger 3, Magic 1, Persuasion 2, and Stealth 4.

If you have the old wolf as a companion, you can sacrifice him to get an extra answer when you make a move that involves violence of policework. If you do so, discard this card.

Antagonist

The old wolf always backs down when faced with a terrible monster or the wolf-blooded girl. Anyone else, he can take 'em.



TONGUES

| | |
|-----|-----------------------------|
| A♠ | Rumours |
| 2♠ | The Baker's Arms |
| 3♠ | Villemina's Instrument Shop |
| 4♠ | The Rat's Nest |
| 5♠ | The Opera House |
| 6♠ | A Famous Painter |
| 7♠ | The House of Tongue |
| 8♠ | The House of Fear Itself |
| 9♠ | The Fights |
| 10♠ | The Pines |
| J♠ | Detective Inspector |
| Q♠ | Griselda, the Hollow Lady |
| K♠ | A Terrible Monster |

Ace of Tongues

Rumours

Event

Rumour, whose life is speed, whose going gives her force. Timid and small at first, she soon lifts up her body in the air. She stalks the ground; her head is hidden in the clouds. Fast-footed and lithe of wing, she is a terrifying enormous monster with as many feathers as she has sleepless eyes beneath each feather, as many sounding tongues and mouths, and raises up as many ears. Between the earth and skies she flies by night, screeching across the darkness, and she never closes her eyes in gentle sleep. By day she sits as sentinel on some steep roof or on high towers, frightening vast cities; for she holds fast to falsehood and distortion as often as to messages of truth.

— Virgil, *Aeneid* (tr. Allen Mandelbaum)

Protagonist

To get an answer from this card, you need to put it into play. Lay it face up on the table next to the house of cards, over top of any ace card already there. It remains in play until another ace is put into play, after which it no longer affects the game, but is not discarded or returned to the deck. Lay the new ace over top of it.

When you meet a person for the first time in a scene while this card is in play, draw a card from the deck What suit is it?

- **If it's gold,** your new acquaintance offers to sell or trade privileged information, either directly or through a circuitous route. They might threaten you, too, watch out!
- **If it's hearts,** they have heard scandalous rumours about you.
- **If it's leaves,** they endeavour to discredit rumours they have heard, whether you have heard them or not. You might learn something new!
- **If it's tongues,** they will tell you rumours, if you let them. Lots of rumours.

2♠

Two of Tongues

The Baker's Arms

Location

The oldest hotel in the Lampshade Quarter, the Baker's Arms has seen it all. If only these walls could speak, your ears would burn from the stories they would tell.

Dealer

What's happening now? Draw a card. What suit is it?

- If it's **gold**, a party for a prominent socialite has taken over the hotel, and the other residents are not welcome to attend.
- If it's **hearts**, there's a fire in the kitchen, accidentally sparked by two chefs who were knife-fighting.
- If it's **leaves**, the dead body of a wealthy foreigner has just been found—in someone else's room.
- If it's **tongues**, the police have been shaking the residents down today, more than usual. What are they looking for? Draw from the deck until you reveal an item.

Protagonist

If you live at the Baker's Arms, you have a key to the front door, which is locked at night, as well as a key to your room. Your key has your room number on it, but not your floor number, which is a bit odd.

Three of Tongues

Villemina's Instrument Shop

Location / Person

The singers and the dancers are the ones who soak up the limelight. But all the greatest magics come from the humble orchestra, sitting in the pit, diligently sawing away at their instruments. And where better to buy those instruments than here? This humble shop is run by one of the greatest luminaries of a bygone generation. Though the crowds have moved on to younger, more dynamic, virtuosos, there are those who still remember Villemina's talents, and even a few who have discovered them more recently.

Dealer

Villemina's instrument shop carries... (draw for a suit):

- **Gold** ...only the finest instruments, made by the finest craftsmen in the kingdom.
- **Hearts** ...very special musical instruments, each of which is looking for the perfect owner, instead of it being the other way around.
- **Leaves** ...musical instruments, yes, but also other products, if you know the right way to ask for them.
- **Tongues** ... finely enchanted instruments of middling quality that sound amazing at first, then slowly lose their savour.

Protagonist

If you play Villemina as your protagonist, your characteristics are Danger 2, Magic 3, Persuasion 4, and Stealth 1.

You cannot have Villemina as a companion, her shop is too important to her.

The Rat's Nest

Location

The dirtiest, dankest, lowest, and most run-down joint in all the Lampshade Quarter squats like a frog on the docks, right over the water. Will they throw you down the trap door into the sea, or shanghai you on a ship to a far-away land? You *think* you're going to leave by the same door you came in through, but then, so does everybody.

Dealer

Behind the bar, there is... (draw for a number):

- 2-6 ...a very short bartender.
- 7-10 ...a muscular woman with an eye patch and a meat cleaver.
- face ...a wall of preserved octopuses in jars.
- ace ...a trained monkey, serving drinks.

On stage, there is... (draw for a number):

- 2-6 ...a woman who can't sing to save her life, singing at the top of her lungs.
- 7-10 ...an old man, playing a bouzouki.
- face ...a troupe of mimes, engaged in a fistfight.
- ace ...a bouncer throwing salt water toffee at the drunken patrons.

Protagonist

When you go to the Rat's Nest, some horrible person tries to... (draw for a suit):

- Gold ...rob you.
- Hearts ...fight you.
- Leaves ...drug you.
- Tongues ...seduce you.

What are you going to do about it?

Five of Tongues

The Opera House

Location

Gone are the blood tragedies of the ancient world. Gone are the bawdy comedic romps of last-century hedonism. The new New Art is here, and it is High Culture indeed, for now it is words themselves that have fallen, liars that they are, in favour of the pure art of line and form, pitch and harmony. Sound and vision speak in unison, these days.

Dealer

Ask the protagonist(s): “Do you look respectable?”

If the answer is “no,” choose one of these:

- The basement, under the orchestra pit.
- Behind the bar, with the bartender.
- The green room.
- In the back alley, where the musicians smoke.

If the answer is “yes,” choose one of these:

- At the bar, without the bartender.
- Front row, on the floor.
- The highest seats in the house.
- An opulent private box, with other respectable people.

What is the performance? Draw a card. What suit is it?

- **If it’s gold,** the ballet is performing a classic work, tried and true.
- **If it’s hearts,** the work of a new playwright is being performed.
- **If it’s leaves,** it is the last night of an unpopular opera.
- **If it’s tongues,** it is the debut of a much-anticipated new opera by a famous virtuoso.

Who else is there? Draw from the deck until you reveal a person. They’re at the opera house, too. Is that odd, or did you expect to see them here?

What is everyone gossiping about?

- Choose one from this list: a cello, a choreographer, a dancer’s gentleman admirer, a famous painter, the lead dancer, a soprano, an understudy.
- And one from this list: acid in the face, a gift of jewels, indiscreet letters, infidelity, a loan, revolutionary politics, a theft.

A Famous Painter

Person

The artist, a volatile figure. A lifetime of experience distilled again and again into paint on a canvas. A new world opens up with each viewing.

Dealer

The painter's studio contains... (draw for a number):

- 2-6 ...endless paintings of ballerinas that always sell and are always replaced by more.
- 7-10 ...a painting that transports the viewer to somewhere else. Stare into it and move your marker to any space in the house of cards but the big score itself.
- face ...a painting that suffers any ill that befalls the painter.
- ace ...a painting that curses all who look upon it.

But the painter... (draw for a suit):

- Gold ...still has debts to pay. So many debts.
- Hearts ...has found a new lover to paint, and this may well change everything.
- Leaves ...has been making regular trips out into the woods for inspiration, lately.
- Tongues ... is too busy being flattered by patrons to take much notice of business or even art, really.

Protagonist

If you play a famous painter as your protagonist, your characteristics are Danger 1, Magic 3, Persuasion 4, and Stealth 2.

If you have a famous painter as a companion, you can sacrifice them to get an extra answer when you make a move. If you do so, discard this card.

Seven of Tongues

The House of Tongue

Location

Though it is neither the oldest nor the most prestigious pleasure house in Thieves' Port, it is still the most legendary. Whatever you want, for a price, there is nothing that the House of Tongue would refuse to give you.

Dealer

People talk, especially about the House of Tongue. What's happening now? Draw a card. What suit is it?

- **If it's gold**, the house is looking to buy new mockingbirds, as its current population has grown small.
- **If it's hearts**, the house is looking for a youth with particular talents, to satisfy a customer.
- **If it's leaves**, the House is closed, presumptuously, in honour of the falling leaves or flowers.
- **If it's tongues**, someone has committed a theft dressed in the mockingbird livery used by the House of Tongue. They are looking to hire out for vengeance.

During the dealer phase, draw from the deck until you reveal a gold card. Place that card on the same space as the House of Tongue. Discard the other cards. At the end of the scene, if this card is still on the same space, discard it.

Protagonist

Oh, you have *business* with the House of Tongue? My ass. Why are you really here? Draw a card. What suit is it?

- **If it's gold**, they paid you to retrieve something valuable. Who'd you have to rough up to get it, or did you even?
- **If it's hearts**, I still don't buy it. You're outside, waiting for someone else to come out. You bodyguarding or stalking?
- **If it's leaves**, who are you taking out of there, and what condition are they in? You can draw from the deck until you reveal a person, if you like. Discard the other cards.
- **If it's tongues**, well, I take it back. I guess you *do* know someone who works here. So what's it all about then? You tell me.

The House of Fear Itself

Location

An ancient, imposing stone edifice that looms over the streets around it, the House of Fear is where the police keep all their secrets. Once it was painted turquoise, but once was long ago, and now it is grey and black and dour, what few flecks of paint still remain look more like stray tears than clues to a mystery. Many thieves have entered this building, but not as many have returned from it.

Dealer

Choose one:

- An evidence locker.
- An inspector's office.
- The reception hall.

Or do not choose, and pass to the antagonist.

Protagonist

If you begin your turn at the House of Fear, instead of moving, draw a card. What suit is it?

- **If it's gold**, you can buy your way out, if you have something extremely valuable. If you do, discard it and move your marker to an adjacent card as normal. If you can't afford to buy your way out, play another turn at this location.
- **If it's hearts**, they beat you and throw you out when you refuse to talk. Suffer harm and move your marker to an adjacent space if you are still alive.
- **If it's leaves**, you cannot leave, but someone from the supporting cast leaves. Play another turn at this location.
- **If it's tongues**, you may not leave. Play another turn at this location.

Antagonist

At the beginning of a scene at this location, draw ten cards or until you reveal the old wolf or Detective Inspector Sala. If you reveal either one, add that card to this location and discard the other cards. If you reveal neither, discard all ten cards.

If the dealer passes to you, choose one:

- A jail cell.
- The lavatory.
- A torture chamber.
- Underground, beneath the House of Fear.

The Fights

Event / Location

The wealthy classes have their horse racing and their opera houses, but the common man has his fights. Nothing fancy here, just good, old fashioned contests of arms, and may the best man win! Choose your favourite, put a few coppers down with the bookies, have a few pints. If the fights in here aren't up to snuff, we can always have a few of our own outside, after midnight.

Dealer

The most popular back-room entertainment amongst the underclasses is... (draw for a suit):

- **Gold** ...the dog fights. Sometimes the dogs fight rats, too!
- **Hearts** ...bare-knuckle but by-the-book boxing between two shirtless men.
- **Leaves** ...cockfighting.
- **Tongues** ...no-holds-barred unarmed brawling, the more blood the better.

Who shows up, you ask? Draw a card. What suit is it?

- **If it's gold**, all the richest and most powerful thieves of the city come here.
- **If it's hearts**, this is the heart of the working-class community. Butchers, millers, washer women, and woodcutters all turn out to see some blood on the ground.
- **If it's leaves**, this is where the whores come to unwind.
- **If it's tongues**, then all the tongues and nations brought to Thieves' Port by merchant ships aplenty come here for their entertainment.

Ten of Tongues

The Pines

Location

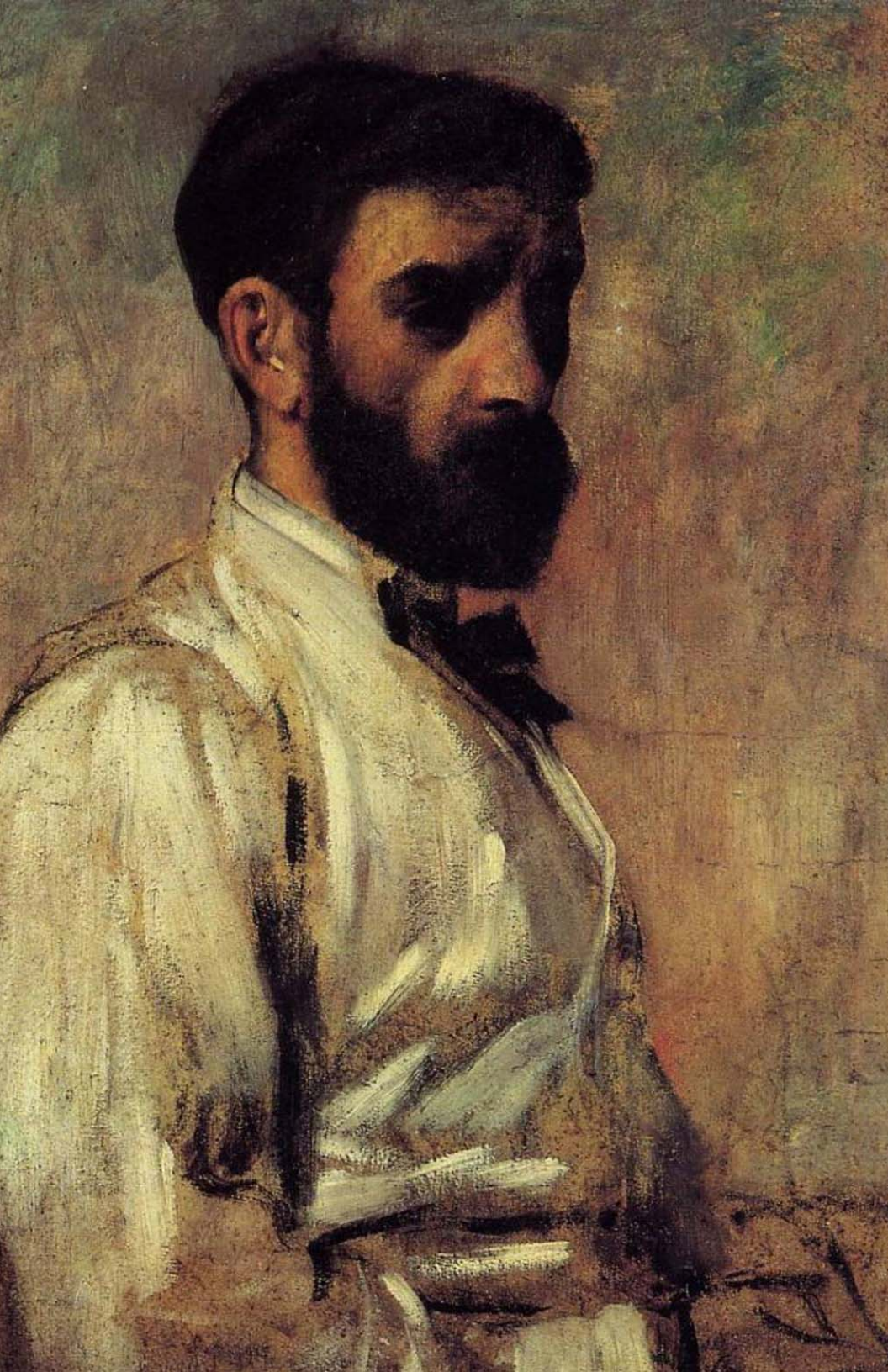
Out past the thickets and the farms, the pines grow wild and free. Only Miller's Road winds through them, but there are secrets out there. Secrets aplenty. Where did *you* sleep last night?

Dealer

The road crosses a bridge over a little stream. The road crosses a path, little-used but not forgotten. The pines are empty and desolate.

Protagonist

If you choose to sleep out here in the pines, draw ten cards or until you reveal daybreak. If you reveal daybreak, place it on the map next to the pines, or on the same space if there is no Wasteland next to this card. You gain all the benefits of daybreak. If you do not reveal daybreak, discard all ten cards. You awake in the pines and it is night. Draw another ten cards or until you reveal Griselda, the old wolf, a terrible monster, or the wolf-blooded girl. If you reveal one of them, they are here to give you a hard time. If you do not reveal any of them, discard all ten cards. You are simply lost in the woods at night.



Jack of Tongues

Detective Inspector Sala

Person

Still young, but a man of the world, only a hint of silver creeping into his night-dark curls. A confidence in his bearing, a swagger in his stride, even. The cleverest man to police the city, some say, a dark horse rival to the old wolf. He has many cousins in the underworld, and they whisper to him, whether they want to or not.

Dealer

What's young Sala up to now? He must be investigating... (draw for a suit):

- **Gold** ...a robbery.
- **Hearts** ...a murder.
- **Leaves** ...the disappearance of a very important person.
- **Tongues** ...someone's supposedly legitimate business dealings. Or at least, he's certainly asking a lot of questions about them!

This case has an odd angle to it, though. The rumour you heard says it involves... (draw for a number):

- **2-6** ...a brand new gang of thieves, muscling in on someone else's territory.
- **7-10** ...a strange new drug from across the sea.
- **face** ...a famous thief who is supposed to be dead.
- **ace** ...devil worship.

Protagonist

If you play (detective inspector) as your protagonist, your characteristics are Danger 3, Magic 1, Persuasion 4, and Stealth 2.

If you have Detective Inspector Sala as a companion, you may draw an extra card when you size up a con. You may sacrifice him to get an extra answer when you make a move. If you do so discard this card.

Antagonist

Only the old wolf can imprison Detective Inspector Sala in the House of Fear.



Queen of Tongues

Griselda, the Hollow Lady

Person

An imposing figure she is, commanding and dark of hair and eye. Her rage is a hurricane, her stare the cold of winter, more like a threat than a promise. Griselda has lost her heart, where could it have gone? Will she trouble you to find it, or will she fight with you for your stolen goods? She is known to want shiny things, like gold and jewels and whatever else. Oh, how she wants things.

Dealer

The Hollow Lady is... (draw for a suit):

- **Gold** ...a glamorous young woman of the upper crust, known to show off her wealth at private salons and nights out at the opera house, and...
- **Hearts** ...the iron-fisted matriarch of the largest clan of old money merchant families...
- **Leaves** ...an evil hag who lives in the woods but flies into Thieves Port at night to conduct her "business," and...
- **Tongues** ...a shadowy underworld figure who wears an iron mask and...

...who... (draw for a suit):

- **Gold** ...(also) has her eye on the big score.
- **Hearts** ...has (also) taken a new lover recently, or so the rumours have it.
- **Leaves** ...(also) has a heart of ash, to replace the one she lost.
- **Tongues** ...has (also) recently been asking around about one of the protagonists.

Her house is guarded by... (draw for a suit):

- **Gold** ...magical traps.
- **Hearts** ...fanatical servants who worship her as a goddess.
- **Leaves** ...carnivorous plants.
- **Tongues** ...ravenous hellhounds.



Who stole her heart? Draw until you reveal a person. That's who stole her heart. Discard all the cards. If that person shows up again, draw ten cards or until you reveal a heart (the ten of hearts). If a heart is revealed, that person has Griselda's heart in their possession. If not, they do not have it at this time. Discard the ten cards.

During the dealer phase, if Griselda has her eye on the big score, move her one space closer to it, unless she is already there. Move any other cards along with her, if they are items or persons.

Protagonist

If you play Griselda, the Hollow Lady, as your protagonist, your characteristics are Danger 3, Magic 4, Persuasion 2, and Stealth 1.

Antagonist

If any protagonists interact with Griselda and do not successfully manipulate her, she has her eye on the big score during subsequent turns.

K♠

King of Tongues

A Terrible Monster

Monster / Person

A terrible monster has a terrible smell, the colour of claws, the iron stench of its breath behind your ear. A terrible monster likes to pursue, to chase, but at the end it likes to catch its prey as well.

Dealer

A terrible monster arrives. It looks like a... (draw for a suit):

- **Gold** ...manticore...
- **Hearts** ...chimera...
- **Leaves** ...serpent...
- **Tongues** ...shadow...

...but it acts like a... (draw for a suit):

- **Gold** ...troll.
- **Hearts** ...dragon.
- **Leaves** ...ghoul.
- **Tongues** ...witch.

During the dealer phase, draw a card. What number is it?

- **If it's 2-6**, a terrible monster stays put.
- **If it's 7-10**, a terrible monster moves one space closer to the nearest protagonist. If multiple protagonists are tied for closest, even if they are on the same space, all protagonists draw a card. Whoever draws tongues moves their protagonist one space closer to a terrible monster.
- **If it's a face or an ace**, all protagonists draw a card. Whoever draws tongues moves their protagonist onto the same space as a terrible monster.

Protagonist

If you play a terrible monster as your protagonist, your characteristics are Danger 4, Magic 2, Persuasion 1, and Stealth 3.

A terrible monster will not become your companion until you find a way to defeat it.

Antagonist

A terrible monster can only be harmed by legendary or magical weapons, magical spells, the wolf-blooded girl, and... (choose one):

- fire and sunlight.
- salt.
- silver and wood.
- water.

A terrible monster will not attack a protagonist who has the wolf-blooded girl or Detective Inspector Sala as a companion.

The End.