



IN DREAMING AVALON

~ A Role-playing Game for 4 to 6 by D. Vincent Baker & Meguey Baker ~

What orchard is this, we fairies, we knights, in which we meet?

It is the orchard of Dreaming Avalon, the sacred Isle of Apples, the golden summer crown of fairy-land.

We knights, late of Arthur's Round at Camelot, we knights are travelers here. We lost our way upon the mortal road, or else lay down beside it to sleep, and so dreamed ourselves to this strange place.

And we fairies, we are the Court of the Goddess Moon and this Her queen, Morgan Le Fay. We also slept, once, and were mortal, in ancient and forgotten time; but now we are fairies, and our waking life is yet our dream.

What will we, here, we fairies, we knights, to while away our dreaming hour?

IN DREAMING AVALON

by D. Vincent Baker & Meguey Baker

a role-playing party game for 4 to 6

Patreon Preview Version

In Dreaming Avalon: Patreon Preview Version

©2017 by D. Vincent Baker and Meguey Baker

For limited release only

a lumpley game



"The Fairy of the Dawn" by Henry Justice Ford [public domain]

Silhouette from *Sleeping Beauty* by Arthur Rackham [public domain]

HOW TO PLAY

You'll need 4–6 players. Set aside at least an hour to play, more the more players you have. Each player needs their own copy of this playbook.

Take the face cards and the aces from a deck of cards and shuffle them together. This is "the deck." Set the rank cards aside, you won't need them.

To start, introduce your characters.

To play, take turns around the table. On your turn, choose a game to play. Turn to that page of the playbook and follow the rules you find there.

Go around the table at least once, and then keep going if you want to.

THE OBJECT OF THE GAME

The object of the game is to fall in love. Play the games to find out who falls in love with whom, and what they do about it.

INTRODUCING YOUR CHARACTERS

To introduce your characters, turn to page 6 and follow the rules there.

ROUNDS

Take turns around the table. Choose at random who'll take the first turn.

On your turn, choose one of the games. Everyone turns to that page in the playbook and you all follow the rules there.

Choose any game you want, except *Waking*. Keep taking turns around the table until you've been all the way around.

Some of the games call for you to draw cards from the deck. You never keep your cards from game to game, so always return any cards you've drawn and shuffle them back into deck when the game ends.

THE GAMES

8–11 *The Court*; everyone plays.

12–13 *A Dance*; you play with a partner, and anyone else may join in.

14–15 *A Feast*; everyone plays.

16–17 *A Hunt*; you play with a partner, and anyone else may join in.

18–19 *A Joust*; you play with a partner, and everyone else plays as judges.

20–21 *Meeting Sword to Sword*; you play with a partner.

32–23 *Mischief*; you play with a partner, and everyone else eavesdrops.

24–31 *The Ogre; or, A Perilous Quest*; everyone plays.

32–33 *Solitaire*; only you play.

34–35 *Stealing Time Together*; you play with a partner, and may invite others.

36–37 *Waking*; everyone plays.

ENDING PLAY

When you've been once around the table, from then on, any player can end play. Simply choose *Waking* as your game. Play it out, and it marks the end of the game.

THE GENERAL RULE

You can always just *read out* what's written, verbatim. Fill in any *blanks* from your own imagination. You can *ad lib* instead, if you like. You should *convey the thrust* of what's written, and try not to *contradict* what's written. Either way, you can always *elaborate* freely.

YOUR DUTIES

Play easy, play fair, and always let the other players make their own decisions for themselves.

Try to make your character open to falling in love. It's not necessary, and it's not always possible, but it is the object of the game.

If you don't know which game to choose, *Solitaire* is a good choice. It's quick and you can use it to give yourself some guidance.

When you're choosing another player for a game, keep in mind which players have already gotten to play more games and which players have gotten to play fewer.

Whenever anyone asks you a question about your character, or about the current situation, answer it. If you don't know the answer, make something up. You can ask for suggestions if you're stuck.

When you don't happen to be playing the current game, you can flip through the games and think about which one you might want to play next. Some games call upon you as audience or potential ally, though, so keep at least one ear open to the game at hand.

If you find that you've missed a rule or played a game incorrectly, just try to go along with the other players and do what seems most fair. You can work out what should have happened later, when you aren't playing.

THEMES & CONTENT

In Dreaming Avalon is about love, romance, sex, vulnerability, and (slight) danger.

All of the games are designed with the informed consent and emotional well-being of the players in mind. You'll find that the games allow you to engage with the other players at your own level of comfort, to safely establish your own boundaries, and to play unguardedly without crossing the boundaries of others.

Still, don't introduce themes or imagery that you know another player might find troublesome. The object of the game is to fall in love, not to annoy each other.

There are a number of player support and safety tools that people have designed for use while playing games. These include Brie Sheldon's *Script Change*, Taylor Stokes' *Support Flower*, and John Stavropoulos' *X-card*. If you prefer to have one of these on the table, get the buy-in of the other players and please feel absolutely free to bring it to the game with you.

GETTING KILLED

It's possible to get your character killed during play. Don't let it interfere, just keep playing as before. If you like, when someone asks what they notice about you, remind them that you've been killed; or else tell them that you've recovered in part or in full.

If someone objects to your play on the grounds that you're dead, you may offer an extemporaneous explanation, or else just shrug and continue on.

Death in Dreaming Avalon is an insult or indignity, no worse.

YOUR CHARACTER

As a group, you need at least two fairies, and at least two knights, so address the whole group first. “Who’ll play a fairy, by hands? Who’ll play a knight? And, if necessary, who’ll switch to the other so that we have at least two of each?”

That settled, go around the table one by one to introduce your characters. Anyone may volunteer to begin.

If you like, you may quickly play *Solitaire*, pages 32–33, choosing “The Crown” or “The Serpent,” to give yourself inspiration. In this case, don’t expect the other players to watch you play.

FAIRIES

To introduce your character, say aloud:

“I am a fairy of Dreaming Avalon. I appear as a mortal [*woman / man / genderqueer / nonbinary person, as you choose*], except that —.” [*Here describe a marvelous visible quality that marks you as a fairy and sets you apart from mortal people, such as: you have gossamer wings, autumn leaves for hair, antlers, jewels for eyes, luminescent skin, a coat of fine velvet fur, an impossibly wide smile, deer’s legs or goat’s legs, deer’s ears or cat’s ears, a tail, lustrous green skin, copper teeth and nails, you cast no shadow, you’re lighter than air, you have an additional joint in your arms and legs.*]

“Otherwise, in appearance, I am —.” [*Here quickly sketch your appearance: body and stature, face, hair, eyes, clothing, as you choose.*]

“And in character, I am — and —.” [*Here choose two of the following fairy qualities.*]

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| ☼ Bold | ☼ Forgiving |
| ☼ Brooding | ☼ Generous |
| ☼ Capricious | ☼ Impulsive |
| ☼ Courteous | ☼ Light-hearted |
| ☼ Daring | ☼ Playful |
| ☼ Dashing | ☼ Romantic |
| ☼ Dreamy | ☼ Severe |
| ☼ Easy-hearted | ☼ Sly |
| ☼ Faithful | ☼ Tempestuous |
| ☼ Fiery | ☼ Thoughtful |

“My name is —.” [*Here choose or invent a name. You may use your own if you like.*]

“My pronouns are [*she / he / they / or others of your choice*].”

Note that events in play might see you appointed as Morgan Le Fay, Queen of Dreaming Avalon. As you conceive of your character, please don’t presuppose it or rule it out.

KNIGHTS

To introduce your character, say aloud:

“I am a knight of King Arthur’s court, come here to Dreaming Avalon. I’m a [*woman / man / genderqueer / nonbinary person, as you choose*], and in appearance, I am —.” [*Here quickly sketch your appearance: body and stature, face, hair, eyes, arms and armor, as you choose.*]

“In character, I am — and —.” [*Here choose two of the following knightly qualities.*]

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| ☼ Brash | ☼ Good-hearted |
| ☼ Brooding | ☼ Impulsive |
| ☼ Cheerful | ☼ Light-hearted |
| ☼ Compassionate | ☼ Loyal |
| ☼ Confident | ☼ Merciful |
| ☼ Courageous | ☼ Passionate |
| ☼ Courteous | ☼ Patient |
| ☼ Daring | ☼ Playful |
| ☼ Devoted | ☼ Steadfast |
| ☼ Generous | ☼ Thoughtful |

“My name is —.” [*Here choose or invent a name. You may use your own if you like.*]

“My pronouns are [*she / he / they / or others of your choice*].”

Note that events in play might see you appointed captain of the knights. As you conceive of your character, please don’t presuppose it or rule it out.

ON INCLUSION

As a fairy or as a knight, your character is explicitly allowed to be:

- ☼ Feminine, masculine, trans, nonbinary, gender-ambiguous or genderqueer in any way you choose.
- ☼ White, black, brown, or of any race, color, or people you choose.
- ☼ Pagan, Jewish, Muslim, Christian, atheist, or of any religion you choose.
- ☼ Straight or queer, allo or ace. *Note that romance and sex play roles in these games, but that it’s always your choice whether, with whom, and under what circumstances to participate in them personally.*
- ☼ Young, old, or any age you choose, above the age of consent.
- ☼ Poor, rich, or any class you choose.
- ☼ Physically or neurologically typical or atypical, as you choose.

Our preconceptions about Arthurian legend, King Arthur’s knights, historical England, fairies, and fairy-land don’t pertain. What matters is what we decide to create here and now, with each other, for each other.

THE COURT

Everyone plays.

You have gathered in the court of Morgan Le Fay, in the sacred orchard of Dreaming Avalon. What do you notice about each other?

During the court, anyone can ask anyone for details about the setting, occasion, and circumstances.

THE OBJECT OF THE COURT

Play to find out how Morgan Le Fay conducts her court: what hospitality she extends, what laws she enforces, and what forfeits she exacts.

Play *in attendance* to find out about one another.

CONDUCTING THE COURT

The first time you play the court, the knight players must appoint Morgan Le Fay, and the fairy players must appoint the knights' captain, as below.

Thereafter, Morgan Le Fay conducts the Court *proper*. Simultaneously, everyone plays the Court *in attendance*.

ENDING THE COURT

When Morgan Le Fay declares herself satisfied, the court ends.

MORGAN LE FAY & THE KNIGHTS' CAPTAIN

Everyone plays.

Draw a card from the deck. Draw it face down without looking at it.

On the count of 3, place your card, still face down, in front of the player you think should be Morgan Le Fay, if you are a knight, or the knights' captain, if you are a fairy. Fairies, choose a knight; knights, choose a fairy.

Flip all of the cards face up.

Morgan Le Fay is the fairy with the highest-ranking card, in this order:

- ☼ Foremost: a Queen, then an Ace, then a King, then a Jack.
- ☼ If a tie: of Hearts, then of Diamonds, then of Spades, then of Clubs.

The knights' captain is the knight with the highest-ranking card, in this order:

- ☼ Foremost: an Ace, then a Jack, then a King, then a Queen.
- ☼ If a tie: of Spades, then of Clubs, then of Diamonds, then of Hearts.

If you are Morgan Le Fay or the knights' captain, remember that you are. It matters only in court, but you should remember it for future courts.

THE COURT PROPER

Morgan Le Fay, you conduct court. Choose any or all of the following, in any order:

- ☼ Take the time to read through this list and consider your options. The other players are free to play *in attendance* as you do so.
- ☼ Acknowledge the knights by name welcoming them to Dreaming Avalon and to your court. Invite the knights' captain to speak, to formally accept your hospitality.
- ☼ Invite all in attendance, or a particular attendee by name, to bring forward the gift they've brought, and announce it to the court. If the player hesitates, you may ask them leading questions to draw a gift out of them, or else cruelly let them fumble.
- ☼ Declare a law that prevails in Dreaming Avalon, as below. If it pertains, ask the knights' captain to acknowledge it.
- ☼ Ask if someone has brought a complaint or petition. Ask them to state it. If a knight, you may ask the knights' captain to state their case instead. You may cut them off or command brevity as necessary. When they've finished, you may deliberate, and ultimately exact a forfeit, as you choose, as below.
- ☼ Play in court *in attendance*, if you've overheard an interesting question or have a question of your own to whisper.
- ☼ Command someone playing *in attendance* to repeat what they've whispered, loudly and clearly, so that the entire court may hear it.
- ☼ Command someone playing *in attendance* to elaborate upon what they've whispered, if you find it interesting or provocative.
- ☼ Award someone status as your court's favorite.
- ☼ Award someone status as your court's fool.
- ☼ Exact a forfeit of your choice, as below.
- ☼ Command silence from the court *in attendance*, if they've become too unruly.
- ☼ Acknowledge the knights' captain's authority and invite them to conduct court temporarily. They may choose something from this list, and you should choose to affirm or countermand it.
- ☼ Declare yourself and your court satisfied. The court ends.

THE LAWS OF DREAMING AVALON

Morgan Le Fay, you choose which laws prevail in Dreaming Avalon, if any, by declaring them in court. Choose from:

- ☼ Fairies and knights may attend one another, but must not engage in frivolous dalliance.
- ☼ If anyone is killed, they must bring complaint to the court, and their killer must face a forfeit.
- ☼ The knights must consider themselves to be at the service of any fairy, even the least.
- ☼ Should anyone offer insult to anyone else, the two must appoint champions to meet upon the field of honor.
- ☼ The fairies must refrain from committing mischief or indignity upon guests of the court, to wit, the knights.
- ☼ Should anyone offer insult to anyone else, the court will consider it to be an act of most dire murder, and judge it accordingly.
- ☼ Fairies and knights may marry. The court recognizes the term of marriage to be one night, one night, and the day between them.
- ☼ The knights are guests of the court and must conduct themselves with according humility and circumspection.
- ☼ Another law of your own invention.

FORFEITS

Morgan Le Fay, you may, in court, exact forfeits. These are the only punishments your court may command. Choose from:

- ☼ Name someone and name a game. They must play that game, now, out of turn. You can allow them to choose their own partner, or choose for them.
- ☼ Name someone, and demand that they apologize now, with due sincerity, to (choose 1): you yourself, the dignity of your court, the knights' captain, the person they've wronged, or everyone in general.
- ☼ Name someone, and command them to play through the remainder of the court (choose 1): without laughing; without smiling; humming instead of speaking; cross-eyed or with their eyes closed; answering all questions in opposite; speaking only plain and unmixed truth; with their back to the game; sitting on their hands; or in rhyme.

If they find the forfeit impossible or honestly distasteful, they should decline, and suggest a suitable forfeit themselves.

THE COURT IN ATTENDANCE

Everyone plays.

Take turns casually, in any order, as Morgan Le Fay conducts court *proper*. To take a turn, just choose one of the following and whisper it to the players near you. They may whisper their answers back, or else decline to answer with "hsst! Morgan Le Fay is speaking."

- ☼ If you had 10 yards of emerald-green silk, studded with diamonds, what would you do with it?
- ☼ If you had a pair of perfect horses, black as jet, black as nightmare, what would you do with them?
- ☼ If you could command built for you a capricious tower, what would you install on its topmost floor?
- ☼ If you could kiss once the lips of anyone here, whom would you choose?
- ☼ If you had only 5 minutes alone with —, what do you hope they would choose to do with you?
- ☼ If you could command any bird to fly down and alight, tame, upon your hand, what bird would you choose, and what would you bid it do?
- ☼ Between — and —, which would you favor in a fight, and why, and what might you wager on their victory?
- ☼ If you had 10 pounds of fine cinnamon and spices, what would you do with it?
- ☼ Who deserves a forfeit exacted of them, if only Morgan Le Fay realized it?
- ☼ If you could command clothing, gown and robes of any material and cut, what would you wear?
- ☼ If an ogre burst suddenly into the court, who do you suppose it would devour first, and why?
- ☼ If Morgan Le Fay turned upon you right this moment and pronounced a dire curse, what curse would you hope for?
- ☼ Another frivolous question of your own invention.

A DANCE

Choose a partner to play with. Decide with your chosen partner how you two came to be dancing together.

Other players can join freely. Everyone dances who wants to dance.

What do you notice about each other?

During the dance, anyone can ask anyone for details about the setting, occasion, and circumstances.

THE OBJECT OF THE DANCE

Play to find out who dances with whom, what it reveals about them, and how it changes their relationships.

CONDUCTING THE DANCE

Take turns asking each other questions. Go twice around the circle.

The worst dancer, self-proclaimed, takes the first turn.

On your turn, choose one of the other dancers, and ask them one of the questions. They answer it freely.

ENDING THE DANCE

When you've taken turns twice around the circle, the dance ends.

QUESTIONS

- ☼ My hair has fallen in front of my ear. Do you touch my face?
- ☼ Your mouth is close to my ear. What do you say?
- ☼ The dance's figures separate us. When they bring us back together again, do you blush?
- ☼ I lose my place in the dance. Do you let me stumble, or do you draw me back into place?
- ☼ Something about me catches your eye and your look lingers. What is it?
- ☼ You have the opportunity to draw me close and hold me for a moment. Do you take it?
- ☼ My face is close to yours. Do you turn subtly toward me, or subtly away?
- ☼ You may, at this moment in the dance, place your hand upon my elbow, my shoulder, my waist, or my hip. Which do you choose?
- ☼ At this moment in the dance, you laugh. At what?
- ☼ The dance's figures bring you to dance with someone else. Whom? When the dance brings you back to me again, are you pleased or disappointed?
- ☼ This moment in the dance allows me to step close to you and linger very near. Am I welcome?
- ☼ When the dance ends, will you stand with me or rush away?

A FEAST

Everyone plays.

What do you notice about each other?

During the feast, anyone can ask anyone for details about the setting, occasion, and circumstances.

THE OBJECT OF THE FEAST

Play to find out about each others' hearts and histories.

CONDUCTING THE FEAST

Everyone gets a turn. Go once around the table.

On your turn, the chef sends forth a dish for all to eat. You create the dish by choosing from the lists, either a knights' dish or a fairy dish, your choice.

Each dish ends with a question to the assembled feasters. Everyone answers every question, by a show of hands or other act of acknowledgment. Make note of others' answers as you like.

ENDING THE FEAST

Once everyone's had their turn, all together toast the chef, and the feast ends.

FAIRY DISHES

Choose 1:

- ☼ Tiger lily buds...
- ☼ Light-motes from dancing water...
- ☼ Wild, sweet rose hips...
- ☼ Shavings of gilded truffle...
- ☼ Sighing cress, unbruised...
- ☼ Blushing fern fiddles...
- ☼ Ripe, golden poppy pods...
- ☼ Sugared damson...
- ☼ Cutlets of toadstool...
- ☼ Midsummer's ripe berries...
- ☼ Curds of bitter almonds' milk...
- ☼ The sacred apples themselves...

Choose 1:

- ☼ ...boiled in soft moonlight.
- ☼ ...slow-seethed in bee-balm.
- ☼ ...marvelously well-sieved.
- ☼ ...roasted in nightingales' songs.
- ☼ ...glazed with strawberry wine.
- ☼ ...toasted under Orion's fierce flame.
- ☼ ...scented with amber and myrrh.
- ☼ ...iced, with mint and mistletoe.
- ☼ ...spiced with nettles' venom.
- ☼ ...simmered in nectar and dew.
- ☼ ...smoked in the aroma of hyacinth.
- ☼ ...dusted with salt and tiny jewels.

KNIGHTS' DISHES

Choose 1:

- ☼ River fish toasted on a plank.
- ☼ A handful of mustard and sorrel.
- ☼ A hare, split and grilled.
- ☼ Warm oatcakes with honey.
- ☼ Mushrooms baked on a stone.
- ☼ Pork chopped and fried in its fat.
- ☼ Broad beans with garlic.
- ☼ Boiled barley with a little salt.
- ☼ Pippins warmed by the fire.
- ☼ Ash-cakes and burned fingers.
- ☼ Wild turnips done in the coals.
- ☼ Currants simmered in sweet cream.

And choose 1:

- ☼ If you've never sat by a hearth in winter, this dish brings delicious unknown warmth to your belly and blood. Who hasn't?
- ☼ If you never had a caring uncle who fed you on such stuff, this dish offers a whole sequence of subtle and unfamiliar flavors. Who didn't?
- ☼ If you've never been hungry, this dish leaves you wanting. Who hasn't?
- ☼ If you've never eaten mortal meat before, this dish makes your head throb, your blood pound in your body, and your stomach churn. Who hasn't?
- ☼ If your heart's never raced with fear, this dish tastes insipid and lifeless and offers no savor. Whose never has?
- ☼ If you've never been bone-chilled, this dish is leaden in your guts. Who hasn't?
- ☼ If you've never kept wake over your beloved dead, this dish awakens fierce sorrow in you heart. Who hasn't?
- ☼ If you've never prepared breakfast for a lover on a cold spring morning, this dish dazzles you with its freshness and brightness. Who hasn't?

FAIRY DISHES (CONTINUED)

And choose 1:

- ☼ If your heart is free to be won by boldness, by tenderness, or by patience, then the spice of this dish overcomes you. Who's overcome?
- ☼ If you are in love with one here present, you both hiccup at once. Who hiccups?
- ☼ If you are unfaithful in love, this dish is wonderfully sweet. Who takes more?
- ☼ If you long to grow old with one sole beloved by your side, this dish burns your lips and tongue. Whose mouth is burned?
- ☼ If you intend malice to one here present, you can never eat enough of this dish to satisfy you. Who cannot?
- ☼ If you are wed to one not present, who waits bitterly for you to remember, this dish is intoxicating to you. Who is intoxicated?
- ☼ If your king or queen commands your heart, not you, then you set this dish aside untasted. Who does?

A HUNT

Choose a partner to play with. Choose which of you is the hunter and which is the quarry, and decide together how the hunt began. Other players can join freely as hunters.

What do you notice about each other?

During the hunt, anyone may ask anyone for details about the landscape, what's ahead, what's behind, and what course the hunt might take.

THE OBJECT OF THE HUNT

Play to find out whether the quarry is ultimately taken, and if so, by which hunter.

CONDUCTING THE HUNT

The quarry conducts the hunt.

First, say where you are and where you're going, and draw four cards into your hand.

Lead the hunters through a series of four challenges and admissions. Choose freely, except that at least one must be an admission. Each of your hunters must answer each of your challenges and admissions, in turn, in the order you indicate.

After each challenge or admission, judge for yourself which of your hunters has given you the best answer, and give that hunter a card from your hand. Or else declare that none of them have given you an answer good enough, and award none.

Either way, you remain free, or win free again, and the hunt continues.

ENDING THE HUNT

After a total of four challenges and admissions, compare cards.

If you still hold 3 or 4 cards, you break away and escape, and the hunt ends.

Otherwise, the hunter who holds the most cards, catches you. In case of a tie, draw one more card into your hand now and give it to the hunter you prefer.

Then choose how the hunt ends:

- ☼ I've somehow turned myself around. I blunder into you, and you catch me.
- ☼ I've come to some temporary security: a warren where I can take cover, a tree I can climb, a bramble I can work myself into. Here is where I go to ground.
- ☼ You've outrun me, outmaneuvered me, and now cornered me. You haven't taken hold of me yet, but I know I'm caught.
- ☼ With desperate, final, powerful effort, you reach after me and catch me at last.
- ☼ I'm exhausted, panting, spent, and you overtake me.
- ☼ You've proven yourself and I let you catch me.

CHALLENGES

- ☼ I'm a hare, dashing away in a zig-zag course, close to cover and close to the ground. Can you track me? How?
- ☼ I'm a deer, staring silently, ready to bound away. How will you approach me?
- ☼ I'm a crow, curious, wary, attracted. Can you entice me closer? How?
- ☼ I'm a bull, spinning, bellowing, rushing upon you. Can you stand me off? How?
- ☼ I'm a cat, circling you, wondering what you are and what you might have for me. Can you draw me out? How?
- ☼ I'm a peregrine, soaring high above, invisibly small against the sky. Can you trace my course? How?
- ☼ I'm an otter, diving suddenly into the deep water and playing in the rushing currents. Can you follow me? How?
- ☼ I'm a wolf, spinning on you, biting, lunging. Can you face me down? How?
- ☼ I'm a badger, plunging down through the dim tunnels of the underearth. Can you follow me? How?
- ☼ I'm a horse, now letting you approach, now snorting and dancing away again. Can you calm me? How?
- ☼ I'm a boar, crashing forward, fearless and reckless. Can you stand me off? How?
- ☼ I'm lightning, leaping across the sky, crashing into the branches of a storm-tossed tree. Can you leap after me? How?
- ☼ I'm a fox, pacing you, sometimes ahead, sometimes behind, disappearing and reappearing at will. Can you outmaneuver me? How?

ADMISSIONS

- ☼ I don't know this ground well, and at a turning I falter. What can you make of my hesitation?
- ☼ I slip on treacherous ground and scramble back to safer footing. What can you make of my retreat?
- ☼ I steal a look back at you, and you're nearer than I thought. When I meet your eye, what do I see?
- ☼ I've boxed myself inadvertently in, and will have to pass you closely to get away again. What can you make of my mistake?
- ☼ I come to a dangerous climb or leap and I hesitate, steeling myself. What can you make of my sudden reluctance?
- ☼ There are others ahead, and I must suddenly change my course. Who are they, and what are they to you?
- ☼ You catch me watching you closely from hiding. What do you see?

❧ A JOUST ❧

❧ Choose a partner to joust with. Everyone else plays as judges and onlookers.

Decide together how the two of you came to be here, ahorse, lances in hand, thundering toward one another upon the field of glory.

What do you notice about each other?

During the joust, anyone can ask anyone for details about the location and circumstances.

❧ THE OBJECT OF THE JOUST

Play to find out which of you will win and unhorse the other.

❧ CONDUCTING THE JOUST

The judges and onlookers conduct the joust.

Judges and onlookers, agree among yourselves which of the games here presented will stand in for the joust and determine its victor and loser. Your choices are:

- ❧ Balladeers, We
- ❧ How, Sir, Will You Receive My Lance?
- ❧ The Menagerie
- ❧ The Quest Preposterous

Lead the two combatants in the game and judge the outcome.

As the game proceeds, you may cheer your favorite, promise favors to the victor and mischief to the loser, try to sway the bout by meddling, or wager upon the outcome with your fellow onlookers.

❧ ENDING THE JOUST

Once the game is over and the victor and loser are decided, the joust ends.

❧ BALLADEERS, WE

Judges, agree to a single word. For instance, “rain,” “moon,” “open,” “danger”—any word that you think good.

The combatants must take turns. Judges, choose who takes the first turn.

On their turn, each combatant must sing a short portion of a song, including in its lyrics the word you’ve chosen.

The first combatant who cannot think of a song in good brisk time, or who repeats a song already sung, is unhorsed and loses the joust.

❧ HOW, SIR, WILL YOU RECEIVE MY LANCE?

The combatants must take turns. Judges, choose who takes the first turn.

On their turn, each combatant must address themselves to the other, and say in a level voice, “how, sir, will you receive my lance?”

The other may give any answer they choose, also in a level voice, then ask in turn: “and how, sir, will you receive *my* lance?”

The first combatant to laugh, smile, cough, groan, sigh, or otherwise break their composure, is unhorsed and loses the joust.

❧ THE MENAGERIE

The combatants must take turns. Judges, choose who takes the first turn.

The first combatant says, “in Arthur’s menagerie at Camelot, there is —” and must name an animal, for instance “a badger.”

The other combatant says, “in Arthur’s menagerie at Camelot, there is a badger and —” and must name another animal, for instance “an elephant.”

The first combatant says, “in Arthur’s menagerie at Camelot, there is a badger, an elephant, and —.”

Each combatant must recite the entire list in order, then add a new animal to recite thereafter.

The first combatant to fumble the list is unhorsed and loses the joust.

❧ THE QUEST PREPOSTEROUS

The combatants must take turns. Judges, choose who takes the first turn.

The combatants must recite up the alphabet: the first, “A”; the other, “B”; the first again, “C”; the other again, “D”; and so on.

On their turn, each combatant must recite a sentence following this formula:

- ❧ “I am on a quest to [place], where I will [adverb] [verb] a/an/the etc. [adjective] [noun].”

...Wherein all of the place, the adverb, the verb, the adjective, and the noun begin with the appointed letter.

For example, “I am on a quest to *Avalon*, where I will *avidly amuse* an *angry acrobat*.”

The first combatant who cannot accomplish this in good brisk time, is unhorsed and loses the joust.

MEETING SWORD TO SWORD

Choose a partner. Only you two play. Decide together how the two of you came to be standing alone, sword to sword, and where.

What do you notice about each other?

During swordplay, anyone can ask anyone for details about the location and circumstances.

THE OBJECT OF SWORDPLAY

Play to find out how you regard one another as enemies, and whether you are enemies in fact.

CONDUCTING SWORDPLAY

To open play, ask a leading question. The better with the sword begins. If you don't know which of you that is, choose at random.

Take turns asking leading questions, back and forth.

At any time after the third leading question, either of you can choose to ask one of the closing questions instead.

ENDING SWORDPLAY

Keep asking questions back and forth until an answer ends the swordplay.

Note that some of the leading questions might end the swordplay, and some of the closing questions might allow the swordplay to continue, depending on the answer.

LEADING QUESTIONS

- ☼ You touch me, cutting me along the rib or across the arm. Do you press your attack or give me a moment?
- ☼ I have my sword's point to your clavicle. Do you submit, or do you twist away to rejoin the fight?
- ☼ We lock swords and your mouth is near my ear. What do you say?
- ☼ I touch you, cutting you along the rib or across the arm. Do you withdraw and run, or do you rejoin the fight?
- ☼ I pretend to falter and dip my blade. Do I draw you out, or do you recognize the ploy and hold steady?
- ☼ I launch a sustained attack with my weight behind it. Do you give ground readily or grudgingly?
- ☼ I overreach slightly and you have an opportunity to slip in a dirty little cut. Do you take it?
- ☼ We circle, swords' tips touching. What do you say to me?
- ☼ You thrust perilously close to my face. Do you cut me? Where?
- ☼ I catch your wrist in my hand and draw you close to me. Do you let your sword drop, or do you shove me away and fight on?
- ☼ I thrust and you barely turn it; a fraction slower and you'd been cut through. Does it exhilarate you or chill you?

CLOSING QUESTIONS

- ☼ You get your sword's point well between us, inside my guard. If you drive it home, you kill me. Do you drive it home, or do you allow me to step back and recover myself?
- ☼ I get my sword's point high up under your chin. Do you submit or flee?
- ☼ You knock my sword rattling out of my hand. Do you allow me to recover it, or must I submit?
- ☼ I pierce your side, but in so doing leave myself open to a return stroke. Do you deliver it?
- ☼ I seize momentum and initiative and drive you backward. I might kill you now; if you stand, draw a single card. If it is black, you hold me back; if red, I cut you through, killing you. Do you stand and risk death, or do you allow yourself to be driven?
- ☼ You pierce me through the chest and I fall, pouring out my life's blood. Do you rush to me, or do you stand over me and watch me die?

MISCHIEF

Choose a partner. You are the querant, they are the dreamer. Everyone else may eavesdrop on your play, if they choose, and learn from it what they can.

You are alone. No one notices anything about you, nor you about them. Other than the querant, no one should ask anyone any questions.

THE OBJECT OF THE MISCHIEF

Play to find out how your chosen partner might feel about you, depending. And probably to mess up your chances with them by being weird and awkward. But maybe it'll work out.

CONDUCTING THE MISCHIEF

Querant, you conduct the mischief. Start with Part 1, reading the script aloud, allowing the dreamer to interrupt if they choose. Continue to Part 2, then conclude with Part 3.

However, dreamer, you may break off freely at any time, in which case the mischief ends at once.

ENDING THE MISCHIEF

When you finish part 3, or if the dreamer breaks off, the mischief ends.

PART 1:

"You're peacefully asleep in Dreaming Avalon. I'm somewhere else entirely, minding my own business, just smoking some incense and letting my mind wander.

"You're dreaming that you're dreaming. You won't remember this when you wake up. Or maybe you will remember it, but you'll think it was a dream. I don't actually know. You'll probably remember it.

"Anyway, in your dream-of-a-dream, I can ask you a few questions, and you should answer them. I hope you answer them honestly but you should answer them however you want. Unless you don't want to answer them at all. You can dream of waking up whenever you choose, just say something like 'enough, I dream of waking up.' Then the spell or whatever it is ends, and so does the game.

"May I continue, or do you dream of waking up now?"

"I DREAM OF WAKING UP."

If, at any point at all, the dreamer chooses to break off the game, it ends immediately. They dream that they've woken up, the spell is broken, and the mischief ends at once.

PART 2:

"The fact is, I'm curious about you. But I'm not sure how I feel about you and I haven't decided how I'm going to approach you. That's what I'm trying to figure out."

[Choose questions and ask them. Ask at most four, then go on to Part 3.]

- ☼ "If I do something stereotypically knightly, like devoting myself to you forever without ever saying anything or approaching you openly, will you find that endearing or annoying?"
- ☼ "If I do something stereotypically fairy, like rubbing and scrubbing your armor all full of cake crumbs and burnt currants, so that when you wear it it tickles and itches hideous, will you find that endearing or annoying?"
- ☼ "If I promised you —," [here offer a promise], "would you accept it? Would you like it? Just to be clear, I'm not promising, I'm just asking what if."
- ☼ "If I try to be more —, like —," [here naming another player's character and one of their qualities, either positive or negative], "would you like that? Or what?"
- ☼ "I think I might show my feelings for you in fairy fashion, by committing some kind of mischief. What kind of mischief might you be able to forgive? What kind probably wouldn't you forgive?"
- ☼ "Next time we meet, I think I might be so awkward that I'll accidentally slight you. Or on purpose, it's hard to know. Anyway, what's a slight that you might be able to forgive? What's a slight that you probably won't?"
- ☼ "But wait, I've squandered a chance to ask you to steal time with me by choosing to play this game instead, haven't I?"

PART 3:

[If you didn't want mischief, you shouldn't have chosen mischief.]

"The next day, you find that —." [Here describe some mischief.] "I'm not saying that I did it, maybe it's a side effect of the spell we were both under. But it happens."

Mischief is done, and ends.

EXAMPLES OF MISCHIEF

- ☼ Your hair is badly tangled with thorns, burrs, twigs, and a tiny brown mouse.
- ☼ All your clothing has faded itself to a dull, dingy yellow-gray.
- ☼ Your horse has turned into a horsefly, your sword into a swordfish, and your hat into, let me see. A hatbird. Yeah. No lie, hatbirds are amazing.
- ☼ You've been shipwrecked on a distant island. It takes you many years and many terrifying adventures to find your way back, but when you return to Dreaming Avalon, only a half hour has passed, and nobody noticed that you were gone.
- ☼ The person you're in love with? They're kind of an ass.

THE OGRE; OR, A PERILOUS QUEST

Everyone plays.

During the quest, anyone can ask anyone for details about where you are, what you see, how you seem, and what is happening.

THE OBJECT OF THE QUEST

Play to find out what course the quest will take.

CONDUCTING THE QUEST

If you have not yet played *The Court*, the knight players must first appoint Morgan Le Fay, and the fairy players must appoint the knights' captain, as below.

Choose someone to go first, and then take turns around the table.

Begin reading at the beginning of part 1. Follow the stage directions. What is marked out by quotes, read out loud; the rest, read silently. When they say to pass, your turn ends, and the next player around the table picks up with the next line.

ENDING THE QUEST

Play until you reach the end of the quest and return to Dreaming Avalon.

MORGAN LE FAY & THE KNIGHTS' CAPTAIN

Everyone plays.

Draw a card from the deck. Draw it face down without looking at it.

On the count of 3, place your card, still face down, in front of the player you think should be Morgan Le Fay, if you are a knight, or the knights' captain, if you are a fairy. Fairies, choose a knight; knights, choose a fairy.

Flip all of the cards face up.

Morgan La Fey is the fairy with the highest-ranking card, in this order:

- ☀ Foremost: a Queen, then an Ace, then a King, then a Jack.
- ☀ If a tie: of Hearts, then of Diamonds, then of Spades, then of Clubs.

The knights' captain is the knight with the highest-ranking card, in this order:

- ☀ Foremost: an Ace, then a Jack, then a King, then a Queen.
- ☀ If a tie: of Spades, then of Clubs, then of Diamonds, then of Hearts.

If you are Morgan Le Fay or the knights' captain, remember that you are. It matters only in court, but you should remember it for future courts.

THE OGRE, PART 1

[Here begin, reading aloud.]

"We have all gathered in the court of Morgan Le Fay, in the sacred orchard of Dreaming Avalon. Yet before Morgan Le Fay can bid us welcome, a monstrous ogre smashes its way in. [Here sketch the ogre in a few visual details.] One of us must be first to face the ogre, but the ogre is certain to prevail. Who'll volunteer?"

"But first, there's one important rule about volunteering: don't volunteer if you're the next in line. For instance, I'm calling for volunteers now, so [here addressing the player on your left] your turn is next, so please don't volunteer this time. You'll have opportunities to volunteer later on in the quest.

"So! The ogre's about to defeat one of us. Who'll volunteer?"

[Here PASS.]

[Addressing the volunteer, choose 1.]

- ☀ "It grabs hold of you, lifts you bodily, and throws you away into the trees."
- ☀ "It grabs hold of you and tears you bodily limb from limb, roaring in bloodlust."
- ☀ "It smashes you to the ground and stomps you into insensibility."
- ☀ "It catches you by the arm and bites your hand clean off, then throws you aside."

"And then it leaps forward and—which of us does it seize hold of? Who'll volunteer?"

[Addressing the volunteer:] "With you in its grip, it kicks past all who move to block it, and disappears among the trees."

[Here ends part 1. Go on to Part 2, without passing.]

THE OGRE, PART 2

PART 2

“We set out at once in pursuit. Who are we, and how are we armed?”

[Here everyone briefly illustrates themselves, armed for the quest.]

[Here PASS.]

“Through the day we pursue the ogre into the wilderness. As we pass from Dreaming Avalon, autumn comes, then winter, all in the one day.

“As a wintry night falls, which of us is in the lead? Who’ll volunteer?”

[Here PASS.]

[Addressing the volunteer, choose 1.]

- ☼ “Ahead, you see a cozy cabin, snug under the snowfall, smoke rising from its chimney.”
- ☼ “Ahead, you see a crooked and gap-toothed tower in the snowy woods, from which unseen eyes watch us.”
- ☼ “Ahead, you see a tent and pavilion, with a shield hanging from a tree and a bold warhorse snorting steam.”

“How shall we approach?”

[Here PASS, while everyone decides how best to approach.]

[There are three inhabitants here: a warrior, a servant, and a lover. One is the ogre in disguise, and the other two live in fear. The ogre is away on some errand. The other two are present, and one of them comes forward. Choose which.]

“— greets us. [Here sketch the one you’ve chosen, in appearance and manner, and convey their greeting, all in keeping with both their role and the way you’ve approached them.]

“Which of us will speak with them? Who’ll volunteer? What will you say?”

[Here allow someone to volunteer and speak.]

“Here is how — answers: [Here say how they answer. Have them introduce their fellow inhabitant, and have them speak in oblique fear of the absent third. All hope that you as a company can rid them of the ogre, but cannot say so for terror.] They insist that we accept their hospitality and spend the night.”

[Here describe the hospitality of the house and speak together with the other players about your disposition for the night.]

[Here PASS.]

“In the middle of the night, there is a great uproar!”

[The house has three inhabitants: a warrior, a servant, and a lover. The third inhabitant, who is away, is the ogre in disguise. The other two live in fear, but hope that you all can rid them of it. Now, choose accordingly.]

- ☼ “The warrior has returned suddenly, and is enraged to find us sleeping under their roof!” [Here ends part 2. Go on to Part 3a: The Warrior, without passing.]
- ☼ “The lover has returned suddenly, and is enraged to find us sleeping under their roof!” [Here ends part 2. Go on to Part 3b: The Lover, without passing.]
- ☼ “The servant has returned suddenly, and is enraged to find us sleeping under their roof!” [Here ends part 2. Go on to Part 3c: The Servant, without passing.]

THE OGRE, PART 3

PART 3A: THE WARRIOR

[Here, describe the warrior in their murderous rage. You may, if you like, have them imperil and wound one of the other players' characters. The warrior is the ogre in disguise, but has not revealed this yet.]

"One of us must take up arms and face them first, but the warrior is certain to prevail. Who'll volunteer?"

[Here PASS.]

[The warrior, receiving any wound, laughs and the wound heals itself at once. They cannot be defeated by the first of you to face them. Here tell the story of the battle, asking only for the stance and approach of the volunteer, ending with the volunteer's violent defeat, perhaps death.]

[Here PASS.]

[Address the others not in battle.] "But during the gruesome fight, [the servant / the lover] comes close. They reveal that the warrior is the ogre in disguise, and..."
[Choose 1.]

- ☼ ... "They cannot be defeated at night, only once the sun rises."
- ☼ ... "They cannot be defeated by any mortal or fairy weapons, only by kitchen implements."
- ☼ ... "They cannot be defeated unless first doused in water."
- ☼ ... "They cannot be defeated within the house, but must be led outdoors."
- ☼ ... Or another magical weakness of your own invention.

"What shall we do to act upon this revelation?"

[Once you have come to an agreement, describe how you collectively carry out your actions, how the ogre reveals itself at last, and how you overcome and defeat it. You must decide whether, given the ogre and your actions, you kill the ogre or only drive it away forever.]

[Here ends part 3. PASS, and the next player begins Part 4.]

PART 3B: THE LOVER

[Here, describe the lover in their wrath, ordering the warrior and the servant to seize you, bind you, and cut your throats. You may, if you like, have them carry out their threat in part upon one of the other players' characters, to the verge of murder. The lover is the ogre in disguise, but has not revealed this yet.]

"One of us must break free and attack first, but the lover is certain to prevail. Who'll volunteer?"

[Here PASS.]

[The lover does not do battle with warriors' weapons, but with a series of magical self-transformations. They can become a wolf, a bear, a boar, a venomous serpent, a lion, a crocodile, or any other ferocious beast you choose. With each transformation, they heal all wounds, even the most grievous. They cannot be defeated by the first of you to face them. Here tell the story of the battle, asking only for the stance and approach of the volunteer, ending with the volunteer's violent defeat, perhaps death.]

[Here PASS.]

[Address the others not in battle.] "But during the gruesome fight, [the servant / the warrior] comes close. They reveal that the lover is the ogre in disguise, and..."
[Choose 1.]

- ☼ ... "Their ability to transform themselves will end at dawn, when they may be defeated at last."
- ☼ ... "While they cannot be killed by any mortal or fairy weapon, they can be killed by the natural enemy of their assumed form: while a wolf, they can be killed by a hound; while a bear, by a bull; while a serpent, by a hawk."
- ☼ ... "They cannot transform themselves if they are first doused in water."
- ☼ ... "They cannot be wounded by any mortal or fairy weapon, but they can be wounded and killed by stone."
- ☼ ... Or another magical weakness of your own invention.

"What shall we do to act upon this revelation?"

[Once you have come to an agreement, describe how you collectively carry out your actions, how the ogre reveals itself at last, and how you overcome and defeat it. You must decide whether, given the ogre and your actions, you kill the ogre or only drive it away forever.]

[Here ends part 3. PASS, and the next player begins Part 4.]

PART 3C: THE SERVANT

[Here, describe the servant in their fury, ordering the warrior and the lover to seize you, bind you, and cut your throats. You may, if you like, have them carry out their threat in part upon one of the other players' characters, to the verge of murder. The servant is the ogre in disguise, but has not revealed this yet.]

"One of us must break free and attack first, but the servant is certain to prevail. Who'll volunteer?"

[Here **PASS**.]

[The servant does not do battle with warriors' weapons, but with magical upheavals and violent control of the environment. They can bring down the roof upon their attacker, use magic to hurl kitchen knives and blazing torches, strangle them with magically animate rope, split the earth beneath their feet. No blow touches them; it is like striking stone. They cannot be defeated by the first of you to face them. Here tell the story of the battle, asking only for the stance and approach of the volunteer, ending with the volunteer's violent defeat, perhaps death.]

[Here **PASS**.]

[Address the others not in battle.] "But during the gruesome fight, [the warrior / the lover] comes close. They reveal that the servant is the ogre in disguise, and..."

[Choose 1.]

- ☼ "...Their power fades in the moment of dawn, to reassert itself once the sun is free of the horizon. Only during that moment can they be defeated."
- ☼ "...Spill salt upon the ground and they must stop fighting and use their magic to put each grain back into the jar, one by one. During this time only, you may wound and kill them."
- ☼ "...Their power is lost if they're doused in water."
- ☼ "...They cannot be harmed by mortal or fairy weapons, but can be wounded and killed by one with bare hands."
- ☼ "...Or another magical weakness of your own invention."

"What shall we do to act upon this revelation?"

[Once you have come to an agreement, describe how you collectively carry out your actions, how the ogre reveals itself at last, and how you overcome and defeat it. You choose whether, given the ogre and your actions, you kill the ogre or only drive it away forever.]

[Here ends part 3. **PASS**, and the next player begins Part 4.]

THE OGRE, PART 4

[So far, you have defeated the ogre, in its disguise as one of the warrior, the servant, or the lover. One of the others helped you to do so, by revealing the ogre's weakness. Now the final one comes forward.]

"Now that the ogre is gone, — comes forward. They know where the ogre kept its captives. They can lead you there, but first, they ask you to do something for them."

[Choose 1.]

- ☼ "Slay — [here name the other surviving inhabitant], for they were always eager to usurp the ogre's power and will become a new ogre now that the first is gone."
- ☼ "Stay tonight and sleep with me, for I've never known a true lover's touch."
- ☼ "Release my brother also from the ogre's captivity, as I was never able to do, and see us together back upon the mortal road."
- ☼ "After you've freed your companion, end my life with mercy, for I have done things in the ogre's service that I cannot living bear."

"Will we do it? Who'll volunteer?"

[Here let someone volunteer.]

[If no one volunteers:] "They hang their head in disappointment. "Then at least you must bring me with you back to Dreaming Avalon, where I may forget these horrors."

[In either case:] "I will lead you. Follow me."

[Here **PASS**.]

[Now, the next player to take a turn must NOT be the one whose character was first taken by the ogre. If it is you, **PASS** again instead, and let the next player pick up here.]

[Once settled, address the player whose character was first taken by the ogre.]

"Tell us, where has the ogre kept you, and in what state are you when we come to you?"

[Here let them answer.]

"How do we free you? What do we say? What do we do? How is it with us?"

[Here let everyone answer. Once all have had their say, and all loose ends are resolved, continue.]

"And at last, together, we leave this wretched place. Through the day we travel through the wilderness, and as we go, spring comes, then summer, all in one day. As a sweet summer night falls, we see before us the lights of Dreaming Avalon, and we have returned."

And here the quest ends.

SOLITAIRE

Only you play. Everyone else can watch you, if they choose, and try to guess how you will interpret your cards, but they should keep their guesses scrupulously to themselves.

You are alone. No one notices anything about you, nor you about them. No one should ask anyone any questions.

THE OBJECT OF SOLITAIRE

Play to find out what the cards suggest to you.

CONDUCTING SOLITAIRE

Choose one of these lays. Draw cards from the deck and place them before you in that same arrangement. Interpret them silently.



THE LOVERS

With whom should I best fall in love? Or, whom do I love already, but haven't realized it?

The face-down card is you. The face-up card is your lover.



THE CROWN

What course or ideal should I best pursue? Who might be my best teacher?

The face-down card is you. The face-up card is the ideal or course you should pursue, or the teacher you should study.



THE SERPENT

Who is my secret enemy? What course or ideal would, pursued, bring me to harm?

The face-down card is you. The face-up card is the enemy you must beware, or the course or ideal you must not pursue.



THE CROSSROAD

Between two rivals, or two courses, which should I best choose?

The face-down card is you. The face-up card on the left, you should not choose. The face-up card on the right, you should.

ENDING SOLITAIRE

Return your cards to the deck as soon as you've interpreted them. Solitaire ends.

INTERPRETATIONS

OF A PERSON:

A Heart or a Club is a fairy. Of these, a Heart is a more gracious fairy, and a Club is a more artful fairy.

A Spade or a Diamond is a knight. Of these, a spade is a more valorous knight, and a diamond is a more noble knight.

An Ace is a paragon, peerless in their nature, not in their rank. A King is peerless in their rank. A queen is most generous in their nature. A Jack has not fulfilled their nature, but seeks after it.

OF AN IDEAL:

A Heart is love. A Club is achievement. A Spade is courage. A Diamond is generosity.

An Ace is all-sacrificing, all-consuming, all-encompassing.

A King is measured, just, reserved, considered.

A Queen is overflowing, unmixed, fearless, unhesitating,

A Jack is quixotic, whimsical, fickle, impatient.

OF A COURSE:

A Heart is deeper into Avalon or into fairy-land, or the way your heart leads.

A Club is subject to the will of Morgan Le Fay, or the Goddess Moon.

A Spade is toward danger or uncertainty, or the way you are reluctant to go.

A Diamond is subject to the will of Arthur in Camelot, or the knights' captain.

An Ace is the direct route, the bee's line, the crow's flight. A King is a planned journey, mapped, provisioned, and accompanied by guards and bearers, real or metaphorical. A Queen is a journey by night, or by water, or by secret ways. A Jack is wandering and indirect.

OF YOURSELF:

If you are unsure of yourself, if you choose, you may peek at the face-down card and interpret it, as above, as your self, your own ideal, or your present course. Do not reveal it to the other players, let them wonder.

STEALING TIME TOGETHER

Choose a partner to play with. Decide together how you two came to be stealing time together, and where.

If you and your partner agree, you may choose to invite other players to join. No one may join uninvited.

If any other player's character would contest your liaison, you're conducting it "under their nose." They play as well, following the rule below.

What do you notice about each other?

During the liaison, anyone can ask anyone for details about the location and circumstances.

THE OBJECT OF THE LIAISON

Play to find out what intimacies you will allow one another.

CONDUCTING THE LIAISON

Converse as you like, naturally. During the conversation, you may, whenever you like, begin an exchange by making an advance. Your counterpart then makes an answer to conclude the exchange. Return to conversation or advance into the next exchange as you like.

ENDING THE LIAISON

At any time after the third exchange, any player may interrupt you by having someone else enter the scene, quite unaware of what they're interrupting. Otherwise, continue your conversation and exchanges until you part or draw a curtain upon what follows.

UNDER ANOTHER'S NOSE

If there's a risk that you'll be caught together, then any player may, after any answer, have you draw a card. If it is red, you may continue your liaison uninterrupted. If black, though, you're caught out, discovered, and exposed.

ADVANCES

- ☼ I raise the visor of your helmet. May I?
- ☼ I touch your hand. May I?
- ☼ I touch your fingertips. May I?
- ☼ I touch your wrist. May I?
- ☼ I touch your cheek. May I?
- ☼ I touch your hair. May I?
- ☼ I touch your ear. May I?
- ☼ I touch your lips. May I?
- ☼ I touch your thigh. May I?
- ☼ I touch your —. May I?
- ☼ I loosen your armor. May I?
- ☼ I loosen your clothing. May I?
- ☼ I loosen my own armor or clothing. May I?
- ☼ I do not only touch, but kiss you, as above. May I?

ANSWERS

- ☼ You may.
- ☼ You may, but first I want you to do —. Will you?
- ☼ You may, but first I want to do —. Do you mind?
- ☼ You may, but only for a moment.
- ☼ You may, but only for a moment, and then I withdraw to a less charged distance.
- ☼ You may, but only for a moment, and then I break off and depart.
- ☼ You may, but at this moment we're interrupted.
- ☼ You may, and let's draw a curtain upon what follows.
- ☼ You may not, but instead I [make an advance]. May I?
- ☼ You may not, and I withdraw to a more comfortable distance.
- ☼ You may not, and I break off and depart.

WAKING

Everyone plays.

Take turns in volunteer order.

To take your turn, choose one of the options for waking up and read it out.

Once everyone's had their turn, continue on to "Puck's Farewell," and end the game.

WAKING UP

- ☼ I realize that I'm about to wake up, and rush toward [name someone] to say goodbye. I'm too late; I wake up before I reach them.
- ☼ I realize that I'm about to wake up, and rush toward [name someone] to say goodbye. I reach them in time, and my last memory before I wake up is of their arms around me.
- ☼ I realize that I'm about to wake up, and concentrate to fix in mind all that's happened here, so I remember it all as I return to my waking life.
- ☼ I realize that I'm about to wake up, but I've left things undone I hoped to do here, so that I wake up roaring or groaning in regret.
- ☼ I realize that I'm about to wake up, and make peace at once with the things I've left undone here, so that I wake up at peace.
- ☼ I realize that I'm about to wake up, and call out with all my heart, goodbye, my friends, and my very best wishes to you all.
- ☼ I don't realize that I'm about to wake up, so I just continue on with whatever inconsequential thing I was already doing until wakefulness steals upon me.
- ☼ I refuse to wake up, and instead of returning to my waking life, disappear into the fading orchard. Next time we play, we'll find that I'm still here.

PUCK'S FAREWELL

*If we shadows have offended,
Think but this, and all is mended,
That you have but slumber'd here
While these visions did appear.
And this weak and idle theme,
No more yielding but a dream,
Gentles, do not reprehend:
if you pardon, we will mend:
And, as I am an honest Puck,
If we have unearned luck
Now to 'scape the serpent's tongue,
We will make amends ere long;
Else the Puck a liar call;
So, good night unto you all.
Give me your hands, if we be friends,
And Robin shall restore amends.*

END