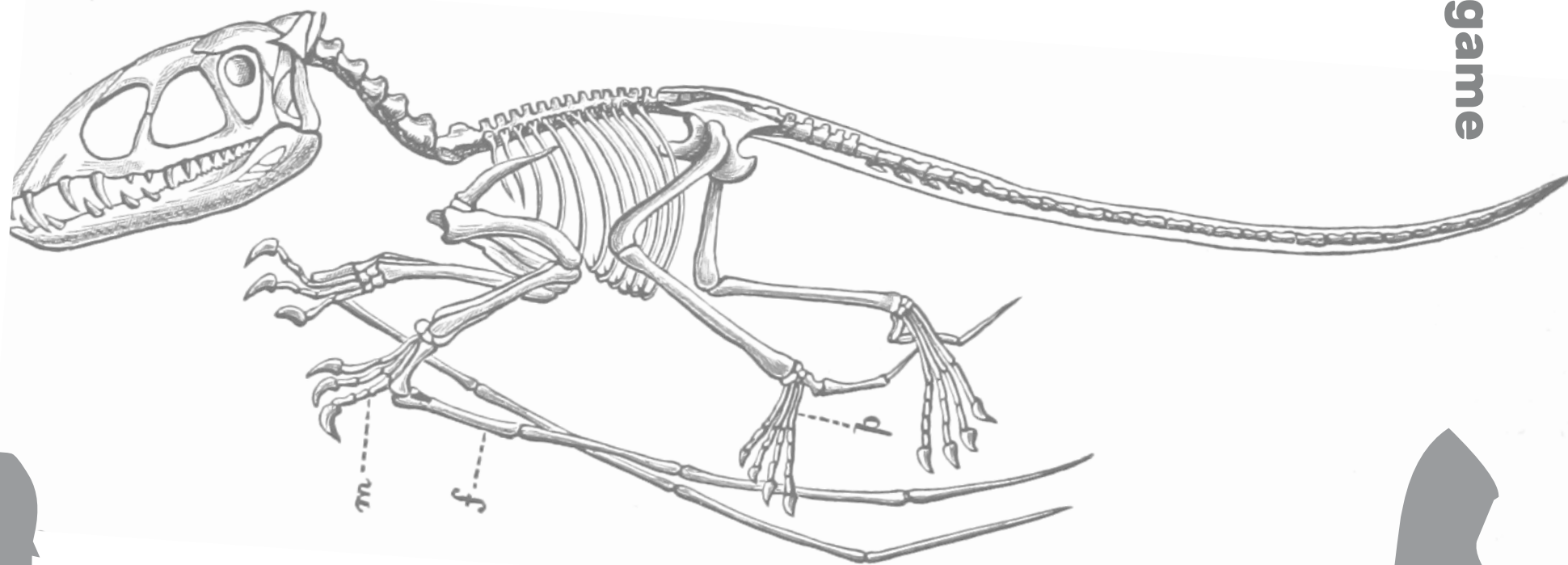


# Saurials

A roleplaying game  
by Nick Wedig



# of the Two Worlds



## INTRODUCTION

Once, the saurials lived in harmony in a world they understood.

Then the evil god came, and stole them away. An entire village was kidnapped and taken to an unknown land. The humanoid dinosaur people of the village were enslaved, forced to work toward the god's nefarious ends.

And then the god was defeated. Just like that, the saurials were free once more.

But what comes next? They are still stranded on an alien, unfamiliar world. They have no way to return to their original home. How will they build a new life on this strange new world?

***Saurials of the Two Worlds*** is a roleplaying game for 3-6 players (no GM). It should take 2-5 hours to play from start to finish. You'll need a Tarot deck and some way to take notes.

## Notes

This game is built out of pieces of numerous (no doubt better) other games. In particular, it borrows heavily from ***Fiasco*** by Jason Morningstar, ***Ganakagok*** by Bill White, ***A Penny For My Thoughts*** by Paul Tevis, ***Hillfolk*** by Robin Laws, and ***Dungeons and Dragons*** by a bunch of different people.

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## SAURIALS

Most player characters in this game will be saurials, humanoid dinosaur-like people who have been kidnapped and transported to another dimension. Saurials walk upright and use tools, like humans, but they have facial features and other aspects more like dinosaurs. Saurials become physically mature quickly, but mentally achieve adulthood at roughly the same pace as humans. Saurials are warm-blooded, but they are naturally adapted to warm tropical environments. They have difficulty communicating with the natives of their new world, because the saurial language exists largely in scent form and tones outside the hearing range of native life.

The evil god kidnapped four varieties of saurial:

**Bladebacks:** Stegosaurus-like creatures who are larger than other saurials. Bladebacks are commonly thought of as hedonistic, sociable, trusting, forgiving, straightforward and difficult to anger. But once something disturbs their peace, bladeback can be quite passionate.

**Hornheads:** Triceratops-like people who are thoughtful, cautious and ambitious. Hornheads are slow to speak and slow to act, but this is because they carefully weigh every option before making any decision. Their every action is calculated to help them achieve their goals.

**Longtooth:** These people resemble Tyrannosauruses. They are known for being curious, emotional and active. Longtooths tend to see the world in clear terms of black and white, and oppose anyone who disagrees with them slightly. Longtooths tend to act before considering the consequences of their actions.

**Flyers:** These Pterosaur-like people are smaller than any other saurial. Flyers are typically thought of as nervous, excitable, mercurial and mischievous.

## SIGNS AND PORTENTS

To begin the game, you will create the “endgame tableau”. This is a set of possible endings that your saurial might achieve, depending on your choices and luck throughout the game.

Take the Tarot deck and separate the major arcana cards from the minor arcana. Shuffle the major arcana together, leaving out the Fool. Draw ten major arcana and arrange them into numerical order. Place the Fool at the end, as if it were rank 22.

Make labels on index cards or post-it notes, one for each of the following poker hands. Assign these labels to the major arcana you drew. Place the “Five of a kind” label on the lowest numbered arcana. Place the “Straight flush” on the next lowest, and so forth until you place the “High card” on the highest numbered major arcana card.

<b>Five of a kind</b>	5 cards of the same rank
<b>Straight flush</b>	A straight all the same suit
<b>Four of a kind</b>	4 cards of the same rank
<b>Full house</b>	Three of a kind plus a pair
<b>Flush</b>	5 cards of the same suit
<b>Straight</b>	All five cards in numerical order.
<b>Three of a kind</b>	3 cards of the same rank
<b>Two pair</b>	2 sets of 2 cards of the same rank
<b>One pair</b>	2 cards of the same rank
<b>High card</b>	Any other hand

Each Tarot major arcana signifies a ending for the PC and for the village as a whole. Lower numbered arcana have generally larger, more positive outcomes. Higher numbered arcana have more negative outcomes. (*See the endgame section for more detail.*)

Over the course of the game, you will be assembling Tarot cards into a poker hand. At the end of the game, each player will select one of these endings, with the best endings going to the player with the best poker hand.

Shuffle the leftover major arcana cards back into the deck with the minor arcana.



## THE VILLAGE

There are only a few definitive facts about the saurial village or the world the saurials live in.

- *Saurials originally came from another plane of existence.*
- *They were unwillingly brought to this world by an evil god.*
- *That god has now been slain.*
- *The village is small, only about 100 members*
- *The evil god only took the adults of the village.*

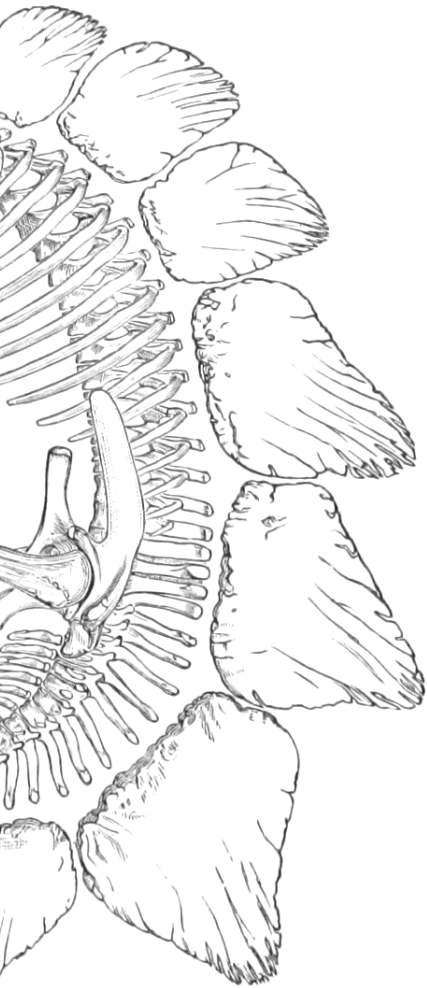
Beyond these facts, you as players will have to invent the answers for yourselves. To do this, you will take turns asking and answering questions from the list below. (It is fine if some questions are not answered, and it is okay for some questions to be asked multiple times so long as the answer gives us new information each time.)

If you have 3 or 4 players, then each player will select two questions. For one of these you will draw and interpret a Tarot card to answer the question. For the other question, you should "consult the oracles" (see below). You can do these in either order.

To consult the oracles, you select a question and draw a Tarot card. The player on your left offers an interpretation explaining how the card answers that question. Then the player on your right offers a different interpretation. You choose which answer is the true one.

If you have 5 or 6 players, the procedure is slightly different. With that many players, each player only asks a single question. When they do so, they can choose either to interpret the card themselves or to consult the oracles for the card's answer.

- ***How did the evil god leave a corrupting mark on this village?***
- ***What injustice or problem causes conflict within the village?***
- ***What danger threatens the village from outside?***
- ***How is this world alien, hostile or unfamiliar to our people?***
- ***How will life in the village worsen if someone doesn't act soon?***
- ***Who defeated the evil god? How did they kill the god?***
- ***What does the village need to survive?***
- ***What tradition or beliefs do we hold sacred?***
- ***What myths and stories define our people?***



## DRAMATIS PERSONAE

There are many people in the village, but the story will focus on a handful of them. The most important characters will be the protagonist characters (PCs) of the story. Protagonist characters receive special focus over the course of our story. They may not have the most power in the village, but these are the characters the story focuses on because they are interesting. Every other character in the game is a minor character (MC), who receives less attention as you play the game.

Each player of the game will control one protagonist character. You have greater authority over your PC's actions and characterization. Other players can make suggestions on what your PC does and how they act, but you have the final authority on how your character. (One exception is when you consult the oracles, when you must abide by the behavior described by one of the oracles.)

To create your protagonist character, first you draw three cards from the deck. One represents your character's role in the village's society. Another represents the physical form your PC takes: what variety of saurial they are or if they are a non-saurial outsider.

Each card also represents a driving desire your PC is pursuing. Every PC is torn between two desires. These desires sometimes coincide and sometimes disagree. This internal tension is the reason the character are the focus of our story.

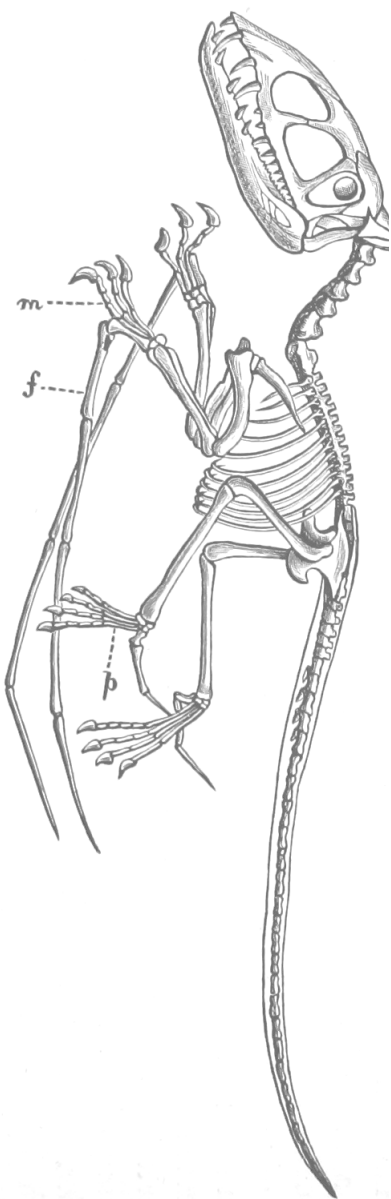
Choose one of the cards to represent your role, and another to represent your variety of saurial. Discard the third card. Each role and bodily form has an associated desire. Interpret the card to answer the question associated with that desire.

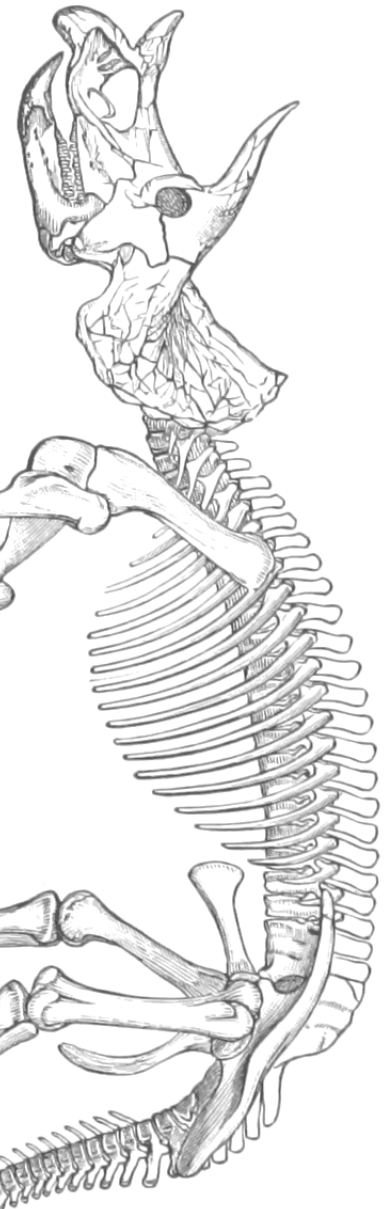
Then explain how your two desires sometimes conflict with each other. Keep these role and form cards to represent your starting hand of cards.

Finally, each player chooses a relationship question from the following list and consults the oracles for an answer. When you do so, ask the two players with the fewest relationships to interpret the card. When they answer the question, they are describing the (potential) relationship between their character and yours. When you select one of the answers to be true, you are creating a relationship between your two characters. This process should create a complex web of charged relationships.

- ***What emotional response do I want from you that you will never give me?***
- ***What do we both hope to change in the village?***
- ***Why do I blame you for my problems?***
- ***Why do I owe you a debt that I can never repay?***
- ***Why did you end the romantic relationship we shared?***
- ***Why am I unworthy of your respect?***
- ***Why do you and I share a close bond?***
- ***What family relationship do we have between us?***
- ***Why does you oppose my plans?***
- ***Why do I need your help to achieve my goals?***

Decide on a name for your PC. Saurial names typically combine two items from the natural world, like Clearwater or Sweetleaf.





## **Form**

### **Cups**

### **Bladeback**

**Desire:** Seeking personal pleasure.  
*What luxury makes you happy?*

### **Pentacles**

### **Hornhead**

**Desire:** Seeking personal power.  
*How do you hope to gain control?*

### **Swords**

### **Longtooth**

**Desire:** Obeying your own moral code.  
*What strict ethical rules have you defined for yourself?*

### **Wands**

### **Flyer**

**Desire:** Protecting yourself from loss.  
*What do you fear losing?*

### **Major Arcana** **Outsider**

**Desire:** Finding acceptance in the village.  
*How are your mind and body alien to the saurials of the village? Why do you wish to live among the saurials?*

## **Role**

### **Cups**

### **Laborer, farmer, priest, acolyte, cleric**

**Desire:** Enforcing the traditional ways  
*What law or tradition of the village do you feel may be lost if we don't stick to it strictly?*

### **Pentacles**

### **Shaman, storyteller, healer, wizard**

**Desire:** Doing what benefits the village  
*What sacrifice does the village demand of you?*

### **Swords**

### **Warrior, hunter, sentinel, enforcer**

**Desire:** Protecting the village  
*What threat to the village most worries you?*

### **Wands**

### **Craftsperson, artist, musician, scout**

**Desire:** Improving the village  
*What change do you hope to make to village life?*

### **Major Arcana**

### **Criminal, outcaste, warlock, thief**

**Desire:** Freedom from constraint  
*How does the village restrict or persecute your behavior? Why do you remain in the village?*

## SCENES

Shuffle back into the deck any cards used during character and village creation, except for people's role and form cards. When you begin the main body of play, every player should have two cards in front of them, 11 major arcana cards should form the endgame tableau, and the rest of the card should form the draw deck for play.

The main body of the game is formed out of a series of scenes. Each scene will focus on one PC. Players should take turns having the game focus on their PC, going around the table in clockwise fashion (assuming that you are collectively sitting around a table). Every player will have 4 scenes focus on their PC. Once this is complete, you will enter the endgame phase (see below).

The game takes place over a year, so each round of scenes encompasses one season. The first round of scenes are all during the spring, the next during summer, the third during fall and the final scenes for each character take place during winter. You can shift the date around somewhat as needed for the scene. But the idea is to observe time passing in the village and see the lives of the characters as a series of vignettes rather than one hectic, plot-driven story.

### *Frame the Scene*

When it is your turn, the scene will focus on your character. Draw a card from the deck and interpret it to frame the scene. Treat the card as an omen describing the events of the scene, perhaps drawing on themes of the card or on its visual imagery. At a minimum, you should tell the other players where and when the scene takes place, who is present and what is happening in the first few seconds of the scene.

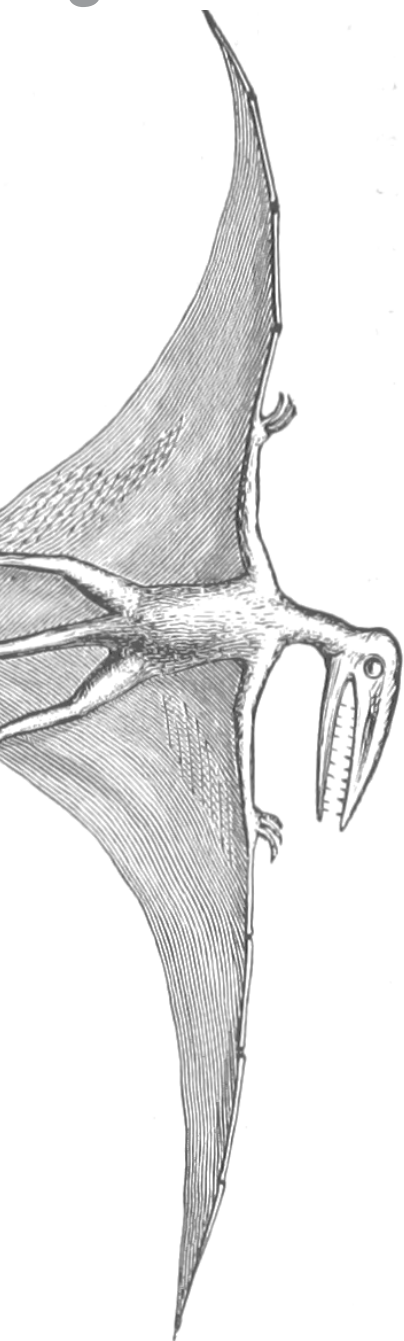
Your PC does not have to be present for the scene you frame, but the scene needs to be meaningfully about your character. That is much easier to do when your character is present and working to achieve one or more of their goals.

### *Follow the Story*

Once you set the scene, you roleplay your character in the scene. Describe their thoughts, actions and speech as they deal with the situation you created. Similarly, any other players who have a PC in the scene roleplay that character. Any player can offer suggestions on what a PC might do, but that PC's player has authority to veto or modify these ideas to fit their idea of the PC.

All players, particularly those without a PC present, should add additional details to the scene. Everyone should work to describe the world around the characters by adding sensory details, descriptions of the village environment, and other details relevant to the scene. Any player can also narrate the actions or speech of minor characters, perhaps actively roleplaying that minor character throughout the scene.





## ***The Moment of Uncertainty***

Eventually, you will reach a point where the scene requires some uncertainty. Sometimes, a scene becomes dull, directionless and lifeless; no one knows where to take the scene. Other times, you know the scene is reaching a dramatic climax, but you want to know how that suspenseful moment resolves. Sometimes, the scene reaches a point where a question must be answered, but no player has a strong idea what that answer should be. In all these cases, the way to resolve the issue is through the Tarot cards. For this, we will use a procedure I call “consulting the oracles” (see below).

Anyone can call for the consulting of oracles, not just the focus player. Every player should be watching the scene looking for the moment of uncertainty where the story would best benefit from the introduction of the unknown. Regardless of who suggests it, though, the focus player is the person who asks a question and chooses the answer.

At this moment of uncertainty, you are consulting the oracles as to how the situation resolves. They will give guidance on where the scene goes after the moment of uncertainty. Once you have consulted the oracles, the job of all players is to roleplay out the rest of the scene, playing their characters, describing the world, etc. But they have additional duties: to make the oracles predictions true, and to wrap up the scene in a timely manner. Once the oracle has spoken, the scene should rapidly come to a close in the way the oracle described.

Every scene should consult the oracles once and only once.

## ***Consulting the oracles***

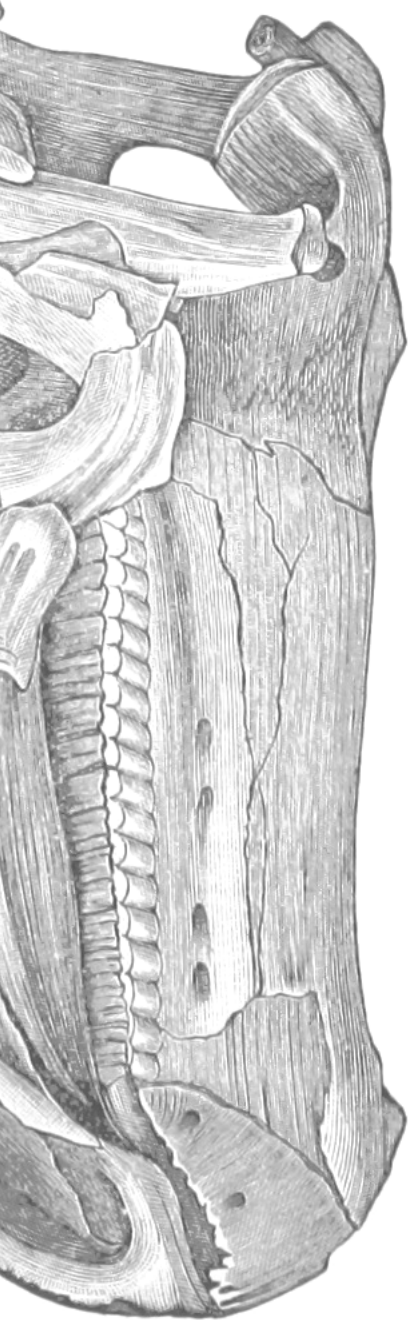
In moments of uncertainty, you will “consult the oracles” to resolve that uncertainty. To consult the oracles, you follow a simple set of procedures:

Two players will provide interpretations of a Tarot card to answer the uncertainty. When you announce that you are consulting the oracles, players have the chance to volunteer their interpretations. If you attempt to consult the oracles and two players do not volunteer, then the players on your left and right must act as the oracles. (Or one of them, if one player already volunteered to act as oracle.)

During character creation, you will draw one card and ask two different players for interpretations of the same card. The card is then discarded.

During regular gameplay, two players will offer a card from their hand and their interpretation of that card. When you choose one oracle’s story to be the true one, you take the card they offered into your hand. Then they take the card used to frame the scene into their hand, to replace the one they gave you.





## CARDS IN HAND

When you create your character, you will have two cards to represent your role and form. (All others used to create the village and define relationships get reshuffled into the deck.) These are the beginning of your hand of cards.

When a scene focuses on your character, you draw a card to frame the scene initially. Later on in the scene, you will consult the oracles to define how the scene ends. As part of that process, each oracle offers you a card from their hand. When you choose one oracular declaration to be true, you take the card they offered into your hand. This is how your hand size grows over the course of the game.

The oracle then replaces the card they gave you with the card you drew to frame the scene. This means that your hand is always (potentially) changing.

Everyone's hands should be kept faceup in front of them. This isn't a game about secret information.

## "TELL ME MORE"

When you want more detail on something, you can use the ritual phrase **"Tell me more"**. This is a friendly reminder to make sure all players are creating a fully fleshed out story, not just a synopsis. When another player says this, describe the events in greater detail. This will help the story seem more real, rather than just an outline of a story.

You can also use this ritual phrase to identify what other players are interested in. If a player asks for more detail about one aspect of play, that means that you have their attention. They want to see more of that thing in the game, not just in this scene but throughout the game.

## ENDING

After every player has had 4 scenes focus on them, we reach the ending of the game. A year has passed, and we now see how the characters have grown and changed in that time. Each player will choose an epilogue for their PC, based on a poker-like hand of cards they have assembled over the course of the game.

At this point, every player should have 6 cards in hand. To make a poker hand, all players must discard one of the cards, leaving 5 cards in hand.

If you discard the card that symbolized your initial desire from your role or form, then your PC is choosing to abandon that desire. They are choosing to embody one of their two desires and to reject the other. Create your epilogue narration around making that choice, and the consequences the PC experiences because of it.

If you discard any other card, then you can make any choice you want for your character: they can reject one or both their desires, they can find a way to combine them, or whatever seems to fit the epilogue you choose.

### *The Epilogue Tableau*

Each major arcana symbolizes an ending, for your PC and/or for the village as a whole. Each major arcana in the tableau is tied to a poker hand. Once the final scene is complete, every player assembles their hand of cards into a poker hand, and chooses an ending. Beginning with the highest ranked poker hand, every player selects an ending. You can select any poker hand that your cards qualify for. So if you have a

Straight Flush, you could select the Straight Flush, the Straight or the Flush.

Major arcana that are in your hand count as wild. You can select any suit or value for them, to fulfill the requirements of your poker hand. Wild cards may mean your hand qualifies for several different potential endings.

As each player selects their endings, they pick up the major arcana card for that ending and narrate how things turn out for the village and for their character based on that card. Because they have taken the card, no later players can select that ending, even if they would qualify for it based on their poker hand.

Continue in declining order of poker hands, so that the player with the best hand goes, then the player with the next best hand, goes, on down to the player with the worst poker hand going last. Each player's narration must accept the truth of those that went before.

If two players tie for their hand, judge based on the rank of the card in that hand (so a pair of Kings beats a pair of 3s). If still tied, judge based on the rank of any major arcana in the player's hands: the player with the lowest major arcana goes first. If neither has any major arcana, then the player with the highest ranked minor arcana card goes next (Aces are low, Cups beats Pentacles beats Swords beats Wands).



# HANDS

<b>Five of a kind</b>	5 cards of the same rank
<b>Straight flush</b>	A straight all the same suit
<b>Four of a kind</b>	4 cards of the same rank
<b>Full house</b>	Three of a kind plus a pair
<b>Flush</b>	5 cards of the same suit
<b>Straight</b>	All five cards in numerical order.
<b>Three of a kind</b>	3 cards of the same rank
<b>Two pair</b>	2 sets of 2 cards of the same rank
<b>One pair</b>	2 cards of the same rank
<b>High card</b>	Any other hand

# MAJOR ARCANA

- |                                                                                       |                                                                                            |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1 The Magician</b><br><i>To achieve your desires with amazing skill</i>            | <b>9 The Hermit</b><br><i>You retreat from the village to live in isolation.</i>           |
| <b>2 The High Priestess</b><br><i>To decide the ultimate fate of the village</i>      | <b>10 Wheel of Fortune</b><br><i>A stroke of luck improves your life in some way</i>       |
| <b>3 The Empress</b><br><i>To decide how the village grows and changes</i>            | <b>11 Justice</b><br><i>You find a balance between opposing forces</i>                     |
| <b>4 The Emperor</b><br><i>To determine the fate of the world outside the village</i> | <b>12 The Hanged Man</b><br><i>You suffer but emerge stronger because of it.</i>           |
| <b>5 The Hierophant</b><br><i>To decide how world outside the village changes</i>     | <b>13 Death</b><br><i>Your character or someone close to them dies</i>                     |
| <b>6 The Lovers</b><br><i>To find love, acceptance or joy</i>                         | <b>14 Temperance</b><br><i>Your character learns a harsh lesson</i>                        |
| <b>7 The Chariot</b><br><i>You leave the village to find a new home</i>               | <b>15 The Devil</b><br><i>You fall to the temptation of your worst impulses.</i>           |
| <b>8 Strength</b><br><i>You struggle but emerge victorious</i>                        | <b>16 The Tower</b><br><i>The destruction or downfall of everything you achieved.</i>      |
|                                                                                       | <b>17 The Star</b><br><i>Despair, sadness, longing, unfulfilled desire</i>                 |
|                                                                                       | <b>18 The Moon</b><br><i>Your character changes into something they hate</i>               |
|                                                                                       | <b>19 The Sun</b><br><i>Innocence lost and trust betrayed</i>                              |
|                                                                                       | <b>20 Judgment</b><br><i>A catastrophe the devastates everything you worked toward</i>     |
|                                                                                       | <b>21 The World</b><br><i>The world moves on without you, forgetting you ever existed.</i> |
|                                                                                       | <b>22 The Fool</b><br><i>You achieve your goals but wind up unhappy because of it.</i>     |

