

## IMPORTANT!

### READ THIS FIRST!

This is not a book to be read straight through. This is a game book, and the game-play involves a pack of normal playing cards which you mostly keep in the deck, retaining the order of the cards as you draw from the top and return cards to the bottom.

Over the course of the game some cards will be separated into other stacks, and you can take a few cards out as companions or items. This will all be explained in the next few pages. What is most important right now –

### WHAT YOU ABSOLUTELY MUST UNDERSTAND –

is that every card in the deck has a special write-up in this book, and that write up can only be read When you have drawn that particular card at the start of a round,

Or if you have it as a companion,

Or if you have it as an item,

Or if you are using the item.

Additionally, many write-ups have several sections. Over the course of the game you will mark and erase marks next to cards' names on the game sheet. When you read a write-up,

- Check to see how many marks you've put next to the card's name on the game sheet. This will lead you to the correct section.
- Watch out for Underlined words: only read a particular entry if it has no underlined words, or if you have the underlined name as a companion or an item (the entry will specify which).
- If a word or phrase is both *Italicized and Underlined*, then it may refer variously to a type of item you're carrying (such as a *Small Thing* or a *Weapon*,) or a time setting on the game sheet (either *Day* or *Night*,) or the marks next to a card's name on the game sheet, or which cards are in which stack.

In short, if the *Italicized and Underlined* thing is true, then you may read the entry.

- If, on the other hand, a word is *Italicized* only, then it refers to a game term but does not affect whether or not you can read the entry.

### WHOA! SLOW DOWN, BOOK!

Ok, this is a lot to dump on you on the first page.

This first section is rules and terminology-

It's a maze, and these are the walls.

If forming strategies while learning the game's logic seems like fun, then this game is for you!

Here is an example of a card write-up:

5♥ **Card Name** [starts off the card write-up]  
unmarked [denotes first section]

This is an entry with no underlined words!

This is an entry with an Underlined word! Should you be reading this?

1 mark [denotes another section] **A Further Name** [sometimes has one]

This is an entry with a Different Underlined word! Whoa! Secrets!

Reading the correct entry or entries, figuring out what the card is telling you to do and making whatever choices are applicable is called **Interacting** with that card.

Entries will either:

- Allow you to do something, if you so choose, or
- Force you to do something, even if you'd rather not. When an entry uses language like “must,” then indeed you must comply. Sometimes this means you can do other things too (like use other items to react with other entries), and on other occasions the entry telling you that you “must” will tell you to resolve the card in some way. In this case, you can't make use of any other entries.

You don't need to memorize the order of the cards to play effectively, but remembering a few things (like what's coming up right before The Hollow Lady) can help you anticipate the interactions and form strategies to create the outcomes that you want.

After interacting with it, the card may tell you where to put it and any other cards that you've looked at during the round. If a card doesn't tell you where to put it, simply **Return** it – which means put it on the bottom of the deck. This process is called **Resolving** the card.

Before drawing again, you can ask your companion to leave you or drop any items. In these cases, return them. You may also use an item at this time, instead of dropping it. If you do so, look it up in the book and interact with it.

And that is the end of a round. To re-cap,

1. Draw a card.
2. Interact with it.
3. Resolve it.
4. You have the option of using or dropping items and asking your companion to leave.
5. End the round, a new round begins with drawing a card.

## The Continued Lexicon – Terms for Navigation

**The Deck:** the main stack of cards. If this term gives you pause, maybe you're in over your head.

**Draw:** take the next card from the top of the deck, with intent to interact with it.

**Interact With:** look up the card's description, read the correct entries, make the choices it requests and follow the directions it gives you.

**Resolve:** putting a card where its entry indicates, which will include one of the following four terms:

**Return:** take cards indicated and move them to the bottom of the deck.

**Replace:** take cards indicated and move them to the top of the deck.

**Remove to...** : take cards indicated and move them to the top of the indicated stack.

**Advance:** take card indicated and move it past the indicated number of cards into the top of the deck.

**Reveal:** take indicated number of cards from the top of the deck and look at them, keeping their order.

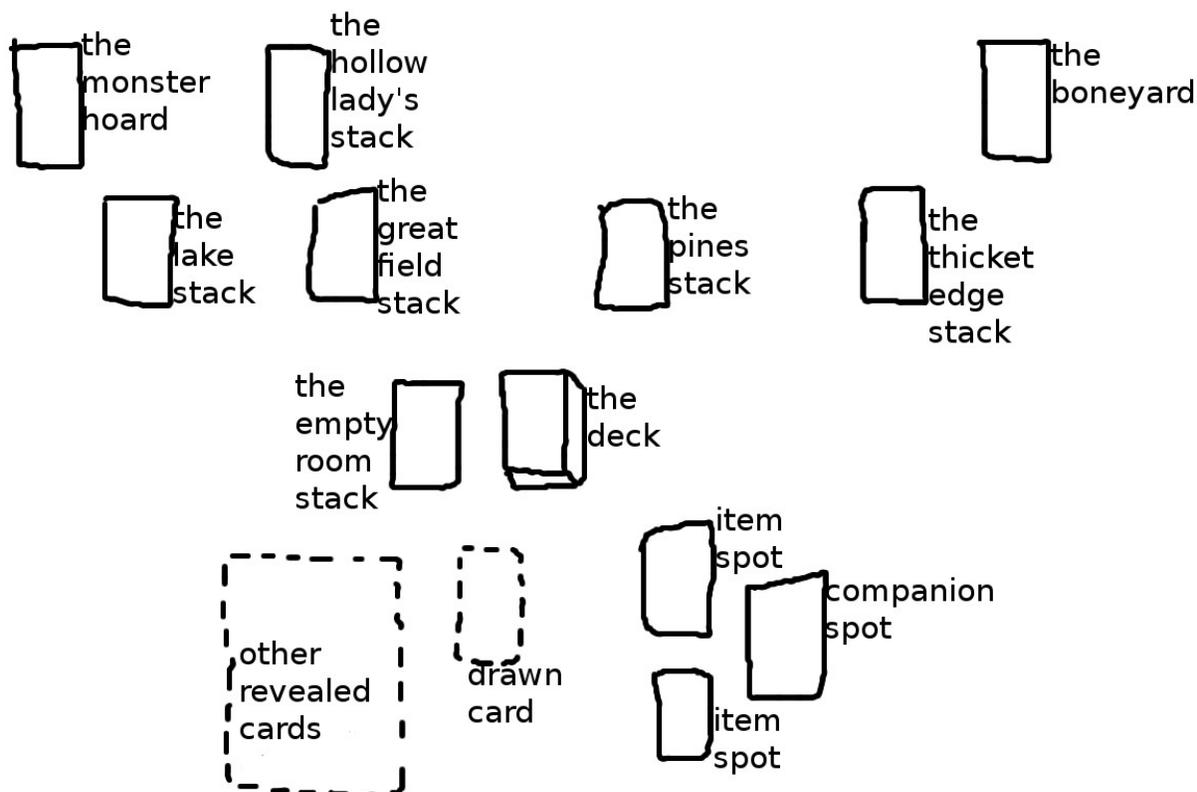
**Cycle:** move the indicated cards from the top of the deck to the bottom without looking at them.

**Mark (the verb):** put a check on the next sequential circle next to that card's entry on the game sheet.

**Mark or Marks (the noun):** the number of circles that you have checked off next to that card's entry on the game sheet.

**React With:** how an item or companion is said to relate to a room, location or scenario-character when the former appears in the entries of the latter, or vice versa.

**(Something) Stack:** one of eight different piles of cards outside of the deck. All eight begin the game with no cards in them, and all are face up except for the Hollow Lady's Stack, which is face down, and the Empty Room Stack, which is a special case.



Types of Cards – there are seven main types, with a handful of subtypes.

**Items:** You can carry up to 2 items with you at one time. Aces, 2s, 3s and red 4s are always items. Any other card can become an item, but only when a different card's entry turns them into one. When you interact with an item, you can choose to take it along with you. If you desire, you can drop an item that you're already carrying while picking up the item that you're interacting with. Items will react with particular rooms and locations, allowing you to read the underlined entries at those places. When you *use* an item it doesn't leave your inventory, only when you are directed to *return* it, or something similar.

*Small Things:* 2s and 3s. These are the main currency of trade.

*Weapons:* red 4s. Useful to fight things, or intimidate things.

**Companion-characters:** You can invite along one companion at a time. If you meet a willing companion, you can ask the one who accompanies you currently to leave and take the new one with you. Several of the face cards are companion-characters, and a few others go back and forth between being companion-characters and scenario-characters. When acting as your companion, these characters will react with particular rooms and locations similar to the way Items will, allowing you to read underlined entries and interact with cards in new ways. Many also have additional rules or abilities, which take precedence over the usual rules.

**Rooms:** Stationary things, rooms don't move around of their own accord. Rooms often react with items and companions, and each different sub-group has their own peculiarities.

*Empty Rooms:* black 4s. The empty rooms have their own stack. While interacting with one, you can put one item in the empty room stack. When you enter either empty room, pick up the item in the stack. Each has another card-moving ability in addition.

*Prism Rooms:* 5s. All prism rooms share an effect: reveal next card, that card is held in the prism inside the room. You don't interact with this card, and it doesn't leave the prism unless you figure a way to get it out.

*Major Rooms:* 8s. The major rooms each react with a couple of other cards, but all their reactions are in underlined entries – there's no way to know what will happen except through experimentation.

**Scenario-Characters:** The face cards who are not companion-characters are scenario-characters, and there is a bit of overlap. Scenario-characters behave a bit like rooms, inasmuch as you cannot bring them with you, but they tend to be far more mobile and have a bunch of unique rules or special abilities.

**Locations:** 10s. Each location has an accompanying stack, which you can access in some way while interacting with the location. Each also has a smattering of reactions.

**Movement Cards:** 6s and 7s. These let you move through the deck in interesting ways, revealing numbers of cards and on occasion changing the order of things.

**Time Cards:** 9s. These dictate whether it is night or day, which changes the ways several cards react or can be interacted with. There is a place to mark whether it is *Night* or *Day* on the game sheet; that is where the paper clip can come in handy during play.

Your Goal in this game is to find your heart. This is represented by the Ace of Hearts, though the first and second times you encounter this card it will represent other hearts that are not yours. The first time you pick up the Ace of Hearts as an item you'll mark it, then get rid of it somehow (maybe just by dropping it) so that you can encounter the card again. The second time you'll take it into your inventory again and mark it, then get rid of it somehow. The third time you take the Ace of Hearts into your inventory it will actually be Your Heart and you will have won the game, waking from your strange dream.

A couple of ideas were given to me during the initial playtests of the Smoke Dream, simple ideas that add to the fun. One is called Saving The Game For Later, wherein you just write down which cards were in each stack and pack it all up, without shuffling. If you plan on doing this, a few small envelopes can do wonders for organization. The second idea is called Explore With A Friend, wherein you navigate the dream together, discussing the ramifications of decisions before you make them. Apparently, it's fun to share the Dream as well.

I started making this game when my friend Tara was in the hospital a couple of years ago. I looked at a deck of cards and started searching for imagery, started looking at story, started thinking about what different cards could represent. I drew inspiration from the choose-your-own-adventure style of young adult novels and the “get lamp” variety of text-based computer games, weaving together a strange little game which one could dip into slightly or dive into fully, depending on how long one's body takes to heal or how long one's bus takes to cross the continent.

I've picked it up and put it down again on a couple of different occasions since, always getting farther along, but each time becoming discouraged with the breadth of work. Gradually it has taken shape. There is still more to do; I'd like to add strange and wondrous descriptions and perhaps some illustrations. First I need to know if the game itself is solid, or if perhaps there are details that need to be changed to make the game more cohesive and ultimately more fun. That's where you come in. If you are willing, I would ask you to play it. Play it a lot, and tell me about your experiences with it. After it has solidified I will issue another version. Without further ado –

It goes like this –

You are reading this book, sitting where you are, in reality as well as in the story of the game. Then you drift off to sleep. You are calm, and your breathing slows, and you are in a house. You are wandering through its halls, maybe feeling a bit nostalgic or disoriented, you put your hand to your chest. Looking down, you realize that something is missing; you realize you are missing your heart. And this is not as upsetting as it perhaps ought to be because you're fine, kind of, and still walking around anyway. But you've got to find your heart. So you begin looking for it.

Have you shuffled up the cards? Great. That's your last time doing so. As soon as you want to begin playing, draw the top card and look up its description in this book.