

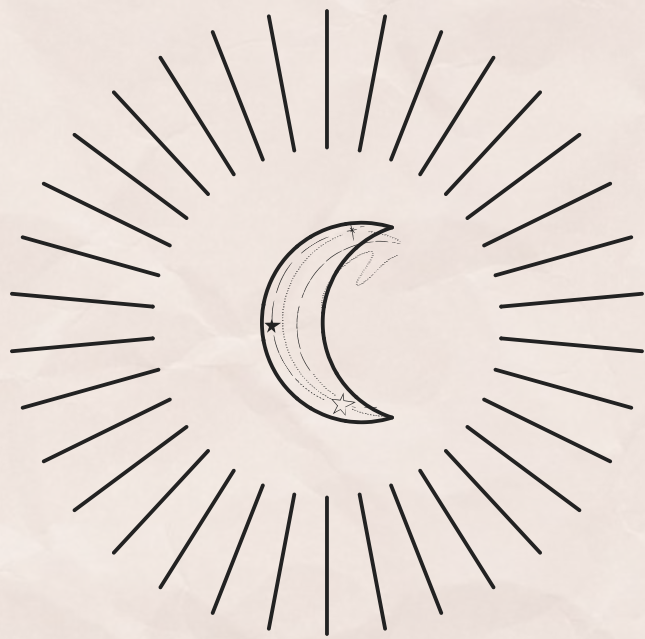


THE WITCH'S ALMANAC



**THE WITCH'S
ALMANAC**

A SOLO EXPLORATION GAME BY TALLYWINKLE



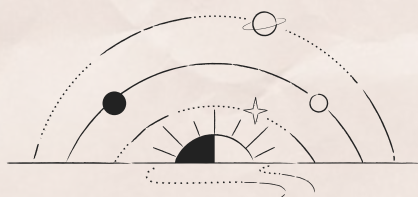
You sit in a stiff yet comfortable wooden rocking chair next to a crackling fire. Beams of sunlight spill through your dusty old window as you reach over and pull a large, well-worn tome from your bookshelf. It is a faded deep blue colour with golden lettering emblazoned on the front that reads:

THE WITCH'S ALMANAC

You consult a dog-eared page near the middle to confirm what you already know: the potion you've been studying requires two key components, and this potion can only be brewed under the light of the Pink Moon. You need to journey out to find these components, return home, break out your trusty cauldron, and get boiling.

Venturing out into the woods around you is always exciting. The very trees are teeming with magical energy, causing time to pass in weird ways.

Idly, you glance over at your lunar calendar and your stomach drops. Oh no – where did the time go?! The next Pink Moon is tonight! You quickly gather your things and prepare to begin your journey. There's not a moment to waste!





HOW TO PLAY

MATERIALS

- One standard deck of playing cards, jokers removed
- A six-sided die (or “1d6”)
- A character marker, like a figurine or a coin
- A piece of paper and a pencil

SET UP

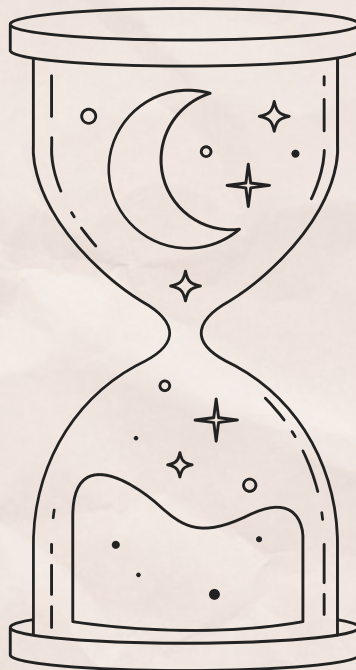
- Choose what potion you're trying to brew from the table below and then remove the corresponding *component cards* from the deck.

POTION NAME	COMPONENT CARDS
Blooming potion	Ace of Hearts & Queen of Hearts
Potion of skullduggery	Ace of Clubs & King of Clubs
Sheen potion	Ace of Diamonds & 9 of Diamonds
Potion of delirium	Ace of Spades & 3 of Spades

- Remove the *King of Hearts* from the deck.
- Shuffle the remaining cards, then deal a deck of 21 cards.
- Add in your *component cards* card to this deck, face down.
- Add the *King of Hearts* to this deck, face up.
- Shuffle this deck (now 24 cards), then lay the cards face down in a grid (except for the *King of Hearts*, which remains face up).
- Place your character marker on the *King of Hearts*. This is your home, your starting location. You are now ready to begin your journey!

PLAYING THE GAME

1. You start with **8 Hours**. Write this down somewhere.
2. Choose an adjacent card (not diagonal) and move your player token there. Flip the card face up, look up the card, and resolve the card's effects.
3. Repeat step 2 until you win (find the two *component cards* for your potion & return home without running out of Hours) or lose (when your Hours reach 0).
4. You may travel to adjacent already explored cards if you wish. Perform the card's effect each time you visit.
5. Your goal is to journey to find the two *component cards* for your potion, return home to your cauldron, and successfully brew your potion before the Pink Moon sets!



ACE OF HEARTS

In a clearing, in a perfectly trimmed circle of fresh green grass, you see the *Moon Drop Flower*. This is a key component for a *blooming potion*. You carefully pick the flower and place it in your bag, knowing that the flower will regrow at the next full moon.

ACE OF DIAMONDS

Snagged in the branches of a thorny bush, you discover a single *Peacock Feather*. Shimmering and vibrant, it looks like it's glowing in the moonlight as you gently twirl it between your fingers. You carefully tuck this component in your bag for safe keeping - perhaps to brew a *sheen potion* later.

ACE OF CLUBS

You discover a *Tiny Rat Crown*, perched carefully upon an equally small red velvet throne. This is just the component you need to make a *potion of skullduggery*. As you carefully place the crown in your bag for safe keeping, you wonder what "skullduggery" means.

ACE OF SPADES

Growing on the far wall of this damp and musky cave, you discover a *Black Spotted Mushroom*. You wouldn't eat this on its own, but it is the perfect component for a *potion of delirium*. As you tuck the mushroom into your bag, you hear a distant drip echoing from somewhere deep within the cave.

2 OF HEARTS

You hear the sound of thunder rumbling in the distance. Your skin prickles, the way it always does when a storm is near. **Roll 1d6. If the result is 5 or 6, the thrill of a possible storm drives you to move more quickly; gain 1 Hour.**

3 OF HEARTS

The terrain changes, shifting from firm, packed ground, becoming marshy and swamp-like. You hear a chorus of croaks nearby: a family of frogs. The frogs give you guidance and help you navigate the swamp without getting stuck. You thank them. **Gain 1 Hour.**

4 OF HEARTS

You come across a small bird's nest that seems to have fallen out of a tree onto your path. You look closer, and it appears to be empty. Was it abandoned? Just in case, you carefully tuck the nest back into a nearby tree. Perhaps it can be a home for future birds. **Spend 2 Hours.**

5 OF HEARTS

The rhythm of your footsteps becomes repetitive and mind-numbing. Your feet are sore and your legs are tired. **Roll 1d6. If the result is 1 or 2, the sensations are incredibly distracting; spend 2 Hours; otherwise, spend 1 Hour.**

6 OF HEARTS

The smell of brine hangs in the air. Soon the trees clear and you discover a beach! Soft waves lap along the sandy shore. The reflection of the Pink Moon gazes back at you from the salty water. **Spend 1 Hour.**

7 OF HEARTS

You meet a large badger wearing a miner's cap, who excitedly informs you that he's finished his network of connected tunnels, inspired by his favourite number. If you wish, **you may traverse the tunnels and move to any other visible 7 card on the board.**

8 OF HEARTS

You hear the chirping of songbirds. It seems out of place at this time of night: in the dark, surrounded by the moon and the stars. Despite it seeming out of place, you have a strong feeling that is a good sign; you are sure that following the melody will take you to where you need to go. **Gain 1 Hour.**

9 OF HEARTS

You look up and see a shooting star streak across the night sky. Make a wish! **The next time you roll 1d6, instead you can choose the number on the face.**

10 OF HEARTS

You hear the rustle of leaves behind you and jump as a white rabbit emerges from the brush. It looks at you inquisitively and then disappears into the woods again. You feel a strong urge to follow the rabbit; you think it could help you. **Gain 1 Hour.**

JACK OF HEARTS

You discover a collection of cherry blossom trees in full bloom. A gentle breeze shakes their branches, sending petals fluttering across your face and filling your nose with a lovely aroma. **Gain 1 Hour.**

QUEEN OF HEARTS

The sound of buzzing fills your ears. You see what you assume is a bee hive ahead; it is the size of a tree. Flying towards you is a bee the size of your palm, wearing a tiny crown. The Bee Queen gives you her blessing: an essential component of the *Blossoming Potion*.

KING OF HEARTS

Welcome home! This is your quaint little witch house. If you have what you need, you rush over to your trusty cauldron and begin brewing. Otherwise, you stop for a quick glass of water before continuing your journey.

2 OF CLUBS

The path you follow branches into a fork ahead. A wooden sign, once marking the way, has fallen to the ground and started to decompose. You're unsure which way to go. Left or right? **Roll 1d6. If the result is odd, spend 2 Hours. If it's even, gain 1 Hour.**

3 OF CLUBS

Taking some time to look around now could help you later. **You may choose to spend 1 Hour** to search the surrounding area in depth. If you do, flip over an adjacent card. You don't need to resolve its rules unless you choose to move there.

4 OF CLUBS

You come across a small clearing with what looks like a ritual space set up. It is in the shape of a clock, with a circle drawn in the dirt and some twigs placed as clock hands. **If you take a moment to perform a ritual here, gain 1 Hour.**

5 OF CLUBS

You find a small clearing filled with all sorts of rocks, big and small. Who knows what sorts of goodies or bugs might be hiding underneath these rocks? You can't help but take a peek. What do you find? **Spend 1 Hour.**

6 OF CLUBS

You walk into a dense copse of trees, and quickly feel yourself getting turned around. You aren't sure which way you came from. Eventually you manage to stumble out back into the light. Wait... this place looks familiar. You've been here before! **Spend 1 Hour and return to the card you came from.**

7 OF CLUBS

Scurrying out from a pile of leaves, you watch as one, no two, no three (!) raccoons make their way over to a nearby berry bush. As you approach, one of the raccoons turns to you and offers you a berry. **Gain 1 Hour.**

8 OF CLUBS

Glowing eyes peer at you from the darkness. You approach with caution and discover a large barn owl. Very large. Large enough for you to ride on its back. The owl offers you a ride to somewhere you've been to before. **If you wish, spend 1 Hour and move to any face up card.**

9 OF CLUBS

You discover a large, marshy swamp. The ground is soft and mucky, clinging to your shoes and making it hard to walk. There is no one here to guide you and it takes a while to traverse. **Spend 2 Hours.**

10 OF CLUBS

The ground begins to slope upwards, the grass becoming a mixture of larger stones and gravel. Quickly you find yourself getting out of breath. Have you discovered a mountain in the middle of this forest? **Spend 2 Hours.**

JACK OF CLUBS

Tall crops line the path you follow, so dense they seem to be their own forest. You look closely and realize they are bean stalks! What kind of beans are they? Are they magic? Perhaps they could come in handy. **Spend 1 Hour.**

QUEEN OF CLUBS

You hear footsteps nearby. You peek cautiously through a bush and see... yourself. Your past self? Your future self? You're not quite sure. Do you interfere? **Spend 1 Hour.**

KING OF CLUBS

You meet a tiny rat king. Well, that's what he calls himself. He's not wearing a crown, but he wields a royal scepter that he swings wildly when he speaks. He informs you (by royal decree) of the special incantation required to brew a *potion of Skullduggery*, one of its key components.

2 OF DIAMONDS

You discover a field of wildflowers, so vast that you can't see the other side of the forest. There are flowers of every colour here, spread out like a rainbow under the moonlight. It's beautiful. **Spend 1 Hour.**

3 OF DIAMONDS

You take a few deep breaths to calm yourself from the panic of rushing out so quickly to find the components to your potion. You focus on your breath, reflecting on why you wanted to make this potion so badly in the first place. **Gain 1 Hour.**

4 OF DIAMONDS

You see a tall tree—so tall you think you could reach the moon if you climbed it. And so you do. It isn't easy, but eventually you make it to the top. From your perch, you can see far and wide. **You may choose to spend 2 Hours** to turn over any card on the board. You don't need to resolve its effect until you move there.

5 OF DIAMONDS

You discover a large clearing in the trees, a meadow of some sort. Looking up at the sky, you have a clear view of the moon, bright and pink. It actually *is* pink, a rare occurrence. You're briefly mesmerized, taking in its beauty. **Spend 1 Hour.**

6 OF DIAMONDS

You find a pond, still and clear under the rising full moon. You gaze into the water and see your reflection... and shimmering behind you is something... or someone. You quickly look behind you, but the figure is gone. **Spend 1 Hour.**

7 OF DIAMONDS

A small babbling brook crosses your path. The sound of the water is peaceful. You take a moment to sit by the running water and rest your weary legs. **Spend 1 Hour.**

8 OF DIAMONDS

As you take a step, you hear a crack and look down to find a broken acorn under your shoe. You look up and dozens of tiny eyes are watching from the forest around you. Suddenly, a scurry of squirrels comes darting at you. You turn and run as fast as you can. **Retrace your steps and move back 3 cards.**

9 OF DIAMONDS

A beautiful bird flies across your path, its feathers a gorgeous mixture of pink and purple hues. It lands on a perch next to you and opens its mouth, beginning to sing. You realize this is the pink peacock's moon song: a key component of the *sheen potion*. You close your eyes and listen intently, storing it in your memory.

10 OF DIAMONDS

You discover a large, hollowed out tree, big enough for you to walk in. The tree seems to glow with some sort of magical energy. **If you wish, teleport to any card on the board (even if it's face down).**

JACK OF DIAMONDS

You get down on your hands and knees, feeling the dirt between your fingers. You take some time and observe the land around you closely, investigating for signs to lead you where you need to go. **Gain 2 Hours.**

QUEEN OF DIAMONDS

The wind is picking up. At first you think it is just a late evening wind, but it becomes more powerful. You clutch your bag tightly, fearing the wind could blow it away. **From the remaining deck of cards, draw a new card and place it face down on the card you came from; spend 1 hour.**

KING OF DIAMONDS

You feel vibrations coming from your bag. You rummage around and discover it's your lunar crystal which has started to hum. You forgot you had this thing. You look at it more closely and you feel it pulling you in a certain direction. Do you follow? **Roll 1d6. If the result is less than 4, gain 1 Hour; otherwise lose 1 Hour.**

2 OF SPADES

You come across some forest poppets tucked into some tree branches along your path. Perhaps they are the remnants of another witch's spell. **Roll 1d6. If the result is 4 or less, spend 2 Hours, otherwise spend 1 Hour.**

3 OF SPADES

You see a large birch tree ahead with markings carved into its bark. The trees have a collection of knots that look like eyes, gazing at you as you approach. Upon closer inspection, you realize these are important glyphs...one of the components needed for a *potion of delirium!*

4 OF SPADES

There is rustling in the bush ahead. A large lone wolf emerges, looking at you with golden yellow eyes. Its gaze is steady and unblinking. The wolf does not make any move to come closer, nor does it flee. Are you afraid, or do you feel that this wolf is a friend? **Spend 2 Hours.**

5 OF SPADES

You discover a doorless hut made out of an assortment of twigs, leaves, and straw. It is small, but you are still able to peer inside. Perhaps you take some time to look around. **Roll 1d6. If the result is 4 or less, spend 2 Hours, otherwise spend 1 Hour.**

6 OF SPADES

You come across what appears to be a tiny gold skull buried under a collection of rocks. What a fascinating little artifact; you wonder where it could have come from? Perhaps the remains from a tiny civilization. **Spend 1 Hour.**

7 OF SPADES

You stumble upon a large mushroom patch, bright and colourful. There are tall and skinny mushrooms, short and stout mushrooms, and everything in between. You are captivated by them and take some time to inspect a peculiar one that stands out to you. **Spend 1 Hour.**

8 OF SPADES

Your foot gets caught in a spiky vine, causing you to lose your balance. You trip and fall, getting caught in some brambles. It takes a bit of struggling before you're able to free yourself. **Spend 2 Hours.**

9 OF SPADES

The wee hours of the morning are approaching, but you feel wide awake. Your sleep schedule has been all over the place lately. You were feeling energized to trek through the forest earlier, but now you're starting to feel tired. Your cozy witch bed would be pretty nice right now. **Spend 2 Hours.**

10 OF SPADES

As you walk, you notice a small grave marking in the ground and realize you accidentally stepped on it. To avoid bad omens, you spend some time repairing the marker and paying your respects. **Spend 2 Hours.**

JACK OF SPADES

You see three large elk emerge from the tress nearby and begin to approach you. Their antlers are impressive and imposing. You have a bad feeling in your stomach; you give the elk a small bow and slowly back away. **Spend 2 Hours.**

QUEEN OF SPADES

Dancing lights appear around you, hanging in the evening air like tiny moons. You hear the fluttering of wings and you realize that this is a full moon faerie, here to give you her blessing. **Roll 1d6 and gain that many Hours.**

KING OF SPADES

The ghostly form of a spirit appears in front of you. It appears to be the shape of a bearded man wielding a harvesting scythe. The watch on your wrist begins to feel very warm. **If you have 12 or more Hours, set your Hours to 4. Otherwise, lose 1 Hour.**



DEBRIEF

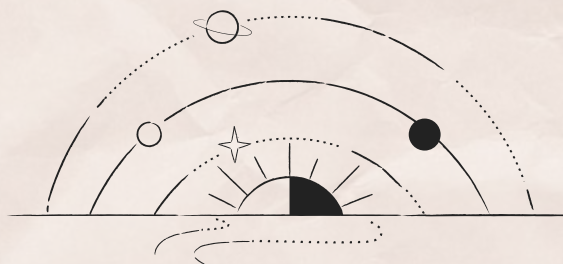
If you wish, reflect on the following prompts at the conclusion of your journey.

Were you successful in retrieving the necessary components for your potion? Or did you run out of time and watch the Pink Moon set before you could find what you needed?

What potion did attempt to make? What does the potion do? Why did you decide to make it? Perhaps you discovered some extra components along the way. Would you add those to your cauldron, just to see what happens?

What locations or creatures did you encounter along your journey? Did you make any new friends? New enemies?

Do you plan to journey out into the forest again?





CREDITS

Cover Art by Yuri R. Other image assets from Canva; designed using Canva.

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This game was made for Carta Jam, Mock Cover Jam, and #ChainLetterJam!

Thank you to pancelor for all of his help brainstorming, playtesting, and proofreading.

And of course, thank YOU for playing my game! I'd love to hear what you thought. You can let me know on twitter @tallywinkle or leave a comment on the game's itch.io page!





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