

A BIRD PERCHES ON A TREE BRANCH, SINGING.

A SNAIL CRAWLS ACROSS A BED OF SPRINGY MOSS.

SUNBEAMS SHINE THROUGH THE CANOPY, THEIR DAPPLED
LIGHT SPARKLING ON THE FOREST FLOOR.

Moss Creeps, Stone Crumbles is a game about the slow, gentle march of nature. Using drawings and words, you'll tell the story of a forest grove and how it changes over the course of 100 years. You can play with any number of participants from 2 through 20.

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MOSS CREEPS, STONE CRUMBLES

A COZY STORYTELLING AND DRAWING GAME FOR A GROUP

BY ADAM ROY

MATERIALS

You'll need the following:

- Drawing paper
- Pens or pencils

Divide the paper into 20 equally-sized boxes and label them: Year 5 for the first box, Year 10 for the second box, Year 15 for the third, and so on, all the way up to Year 100 for the last.

PLAY

Play starts with the youngest player in the group and moves counter-clockwise. Draw a simple picture in the first box, making sure to leave a few inches of blank space at the bottom (we'll get to why in the next step). Focus on a detail: a beam of sunlight shining through the canopy, a snail munching on a leaf, a necklace lying in a bed of moss.

Pass the paper to the next player. Look at the first player's drawing and write a description of the scene at the bottom of the box. It should be a couple of sentences long, and you don't need to restrict it to what the drawing depicts.

Ex: Gita goes first. In the Year 5 box, she draws a picture of a bird building a nest, then passes the paper to Jack. At the bottom of the drawing, Jack writes their description: "Wildflowers are beginning to erupt from the ground, and all around, the smell of damp leaves and soil fills the air. A finch pokes around the forest floor, picking up twigs for her nest."

When you're done, make your own drawing in the next box, and pass the paper to the next player. Continue drawing, describing, and passing until you've filled all 20 boxes. As you play, imagine the tiny changes happening. Maybe a squirrel makes a home in an old log, a sapling grows into a tall tree whose thick canopy casts dappled shadows on the forest floor, or the twins who built the nearby windmill come to sit in the meadow and read books on their days off.

When you're finished, gather round and read the story of your forest grove together.

SAFETY

The forest grove is a safe, cozy place. Avoid themes of destruction, loss, conflict, and the like.

Before you start, consider talking about your boundaries and subjects you'd like to avoid. Maybe you don't want to talk about predation at all, or maybe the image of a bird pulling worms out of the ground doesn't bother you. You probably don't want anyone to log the grove, but maybe a character sustainably cutting a tree down for firewood is all right with the table.

If a drawing or description bothers a player, they should cross it out and continue play as if it never happened, no explanation needed.



A MEDITATION BEFORE YOU PLAY

Curl up into as much of a ball as is comfortable. Close your eyes and empty your mind.

Pretend you're a seed, buried in the soft dirt. Feel the warmth of the soil around you.

Slowly begin to extend yourself. Stretch out, growing up through the ground and bursting through the surface.

Lift your face towards the sky. Feel that bright sunlight shining on your closed eyelids. Open your eyes.

The world around you is fresh and new, wide open and full of possibilities.

Unfurl your leaves.

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