



WHISPERS FROM
THE THOUSAND
MOONS

BY JENNIFER ADCOCK

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INTRODUCTION

Whispers from the Thousand Moons was born from quarantine.

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic changed the world, as people went into isolation and physical distancing to slow the spread of the disease. It was - and is - a scary time, I say as this introduction is being written in the middle of it all. In-person communities are broken into a thousand little fragments, as we all keep to our homes, the caretakers of our own tiny fractures of space. We are able to keep up communication with each other, but everything is more distant than it ever has been.

Whispers from the Thousand Moons is a modular journaling game - you can play just the base game or you can add in optional rules and minigames to change the experience. These games are my way of expressing everything I've pent up about it, the fear and the hope and the confusion and the loneliness.

Journaling has been one of my coping mechanisms for almost my whole life - I've kept a diary since I was 12 years old - and I was ecstatic to discover the world of journaling RPGs, even in the time before COVID. Being able to play a game by myself and have this narrative experience, even when face-to-face tabletop gaming isn't feasible or safe, has been a godsend. My hope is that these games can be a comfort, a place to explore fear in safety, a welcome distraction, or a bright spot on a dark day - whatever you need right now.

The base game, *Whispers from the Thousand Moons*, is a basic journaling game that uses random word prompts to help you explore a new environment, where people have been before, and people may be again... but right now there's only you. A small sliver of space, where you are both the lone resident and caretaker. You can't stay forever, but you have to do your best during your time here.

If you wish to continue the Thousand Moons experience after playing the base game, you can try the three modular rules expansions - these keep the game what it is, a solo journaling story, but change the rules to change the mood.

The Sun is Too Quiet uses rules inspired by For the Queen, and other Descended from the Queen games, to ask you questions for your journaling prompts. The Thousand Moons are in grave peril, some terrible danger looms - but no one fully understands what it is, or how to fix it. This rules module comes from my own fear and confusion this year - living under the joint threats of a pandemic and a totalitarian regime, and the feeling of being completely overwhelmed by those facts.

Excavation uses fragments of poetry to explore potential connections to a past that no longer exists, a past that may seem too distant or strange to the present. In the months before the pandemic lockdown, one of my closest friends and I had started attending live poetry nights, which had become the highlights of my month. Lacking that outlet, I started reading more poetry than I had at any point before. Poetry forms a wonderful connection between the writer and the reader, or the speaker and the listener, even across time periods and geographical distance. I was inspired by surviving fragments of ancient poetry, such as Sappho, and how we're forced to extrapolate based only on what remains, without the full context.

Finally, *The Honey-Golden Future* alternates between warm reminiscences of the past and hopes for the future, contrasted with the cold, blue present reality. I've always had a tendency to latch onto certain movies or books as "comfort media", and I rewatched two movies in particular really often during the lockdown: the 2019 *Little Women* and the 2015 live-action *Cinderella*. Both movies explore the warmth of the past giving us the resilience to get through the worst parts of the present. Of particular interest to me was the cinematography, how the scenes of the past and the present were lit and colored in warm or cool tones.

The Honey-Golden Future also comes from a bad habit I found myself forming in the early days of the lockdown, where I would reminisce about something in the past that had been made impossible by the lockdown - parties and gatherings, concerts, conventions, communal meals, date nights, and so on - and spiraling about how we'd never get to do those things again. It helped me to reframe the memory as a blessing, something I was fortunate to have experienced at all, and something to actively work towards bringing back to my life. These warm memories became both a comfort and a goal.

Most art is a product of its time, in one way or another - *Whispers from the Thousand Moons* is the product of a very particular point in time, both in the world and in my life personally. I don't think I could have written these games at any other time. I hope you enjoy them, even the fear, even the confusion, even the loneliness - maybe especially those. It's real and it's what I have to offer.

Health and safety to you and yours, from my own little piece of the Thousand Moons.
-Jennifer Adcock, lead developer

WHISPERS FROM THE THOUSAND MOONS

The Thousand Moons is a fragmented region in the furthest reaches of outer space. The name is misleading — there are perhaps hundreds of thousands of Moons here, maybe millions, each one tiny and unique. A perpetual gravity storm rages around this astral archipelago, making entry into the Thousand Moons — or exit from them — quite difficult.

No Moon in the Thousand Moons is bigger than a speck of dust, in the scheme of things. Each one can accommodate only a few people for any length of time, so the few beings — humans and aliens alike — who eke out their livings here tend towards transiency. The Thousand Moons are safe, and they are quiet, though they are far from perfect.

You are a Seneschal of the Thousand Moons. You have been tasked with the care and protection of the Moons — as many as you may visit in what time you have. You stay around two weeks on each Moon you visit, to learn and explore and solve any problems you may encounter. No two Moons are the same, flung here in pieces from disparate galaxies, so there is a great deal to learn and explore.

All Seneschals keep journals, and often leave them behind as a gift to future Seneschals who may arrive on the same Moon. It is exceedingly rare to meet another Seneschal face-to-face — there are so few of you and space is so large — but there is a vast network of you, connected across time and space only by each other's journals.

This is a storytelling game, where you will write the journal of a Seneschal on a new Moon, using randomized word prompts, like Magnetic Poetry, a commercially available set of poetic words printed on refrigerator magnets.

To begin, you will need a box of words. These could be pre-made words, like Magnetic Poetry, or you could write your own words on scraps of paper. You will need a mix of adjectives, nouns, and verbs. You will NOT need what I call “connective” words (‘the,’ ‘to,’ ‘and,’ ‘with,’ etc.), which many pre-made word sets come with. You will need a minimum of 35 words, but 50 or more is even better. You could also use a website like randomwordgenerator.com to pick any words at random from the whole language. You will also need a 20-sided die, or a dice rolling app that can roll a d20 for you.

You will need something to write with and on, whether that’s a pen and paper, a word processing software, or the notes app on your phone. The last thing you will need is time — this game can either be played one entry at a time, representing the 14 days of your Seneschal’s stay on this particular Moon, or you can play the whole thing at once, if you prefer, making 14 entries in one day.

Before you start, you will need to create your Seneschal, as well as the new Moon you are arriving on. I will start this with you, to demonstrate.

Draw seven words from the box. I drew the words blaze, blue, cloud, dance, death, river, and spring. There are many ways to interpret these words.

Pick one word to relate to your Seneschal’s personality. I’m choosing ‘blaze’ to be the keyword for my Seneschal’s personality. I think they’re a very intense person, often intimidating without realizing it, and certainly very stubborn.

Pick one word to relate to your Seneschal’s appearance. I’m choosing ‘dance’ to be the touchstone for my Seneschal’s appearance. They have a lithe body, very agile and graceful. Their movements are slow and deliberate. They wear their long hair pulled back in a tidy ballerina’s bun.

Pick one word to relate to your Seneschal's past. I'm choosing 'spring' to be the word for my Seneschal's past. They grew up outside the Thousand Moons, on a planet full of geothermal hot springs. They left when a political revolution sprung up and threatened the safety of their family, and a navigational accident threw their ship into the Thousand Moons.

Pick one word to relate to your Seneschal's future. I'm choosing 'death' for my Seneschal's future. Ever since they arrived in the Thousand Moons, they've had a bit of a death wish. They are very reckless, and throw themselves into danger at every opportunity. It is only a matter of time before this catches up with them.

The remaining three words will describe features of the Moon you are arriving on. My remaining words are 'blue,' 'cloud,' and 'river'. I think this is less a rocky moon and more a very dense atmospheric weather system that condensed into something habitable when it passed through the gravity storm. The surface is soft and fluffy underfoot, like a cloud. It can be quite fun at first, but if one stays in one spot too long, they could begin to fall through the surface and be sucked into the center of the moon. There's a ring of water that orbits the moon, just like Saturn's rings, but in the form of liquid water rather than ice. It is always raining under that ring of water, no matter what. Spending an extended time here begins to turn one's skin blue, due to the amount of colloidal silver particles suspended in both the orbiting ring and in the surface itself.

Set these seven words aside. They cannot be drawn again as random words during the journaling prompts portion of the game.

Write these details about your Seneschal and the Moon at the start of your journal. You can also decide on some of the more quotidian details for your Seneschal - name, pronouns, age, etc. - and your Moon - name, geographic location, size, history, etc. These things are not necessary, but they can help provide another source of inspiration for your journaling.

For each of the 14 journal entries you will make in this game, you will roll the 20-sided die. The corresponding prompt in the table on the next page will be the one you will write about. You will also draw two words from your box of words, choosing one or both of them to incorporate into the prompt. It is okay to roll the same prompt more than once, but every word you use from your box of words should be set aside so that it doesn't come up again.

At any time, you may also choose to apply a randomly-drawn word to your Seneschal, rather than using them for your journal entries. Do this by replacing or adding to the words you've already applied to your Seneschal's personality, appearance, past, or future.

At the end, you may choose to share your journal, for future Seneschals to learn from, or take it with you, as a memory. You may also choose to travel onwards to a new Moon, leaving this one behind. If you do this, draw five words from your box of words and apply three of them to the new Moon. If you do choose to continue onwards to future Moons, you may want to add more words to your box, to avoid repetition.

STORY PROMPTS

d20	Story Prompt	d20	Story Prompt
1	You discover a new feature of the Moon	11	You dream of another Moon, alike yet dissimilar to this Moon
2	Something on the Moon reminds you of your past	12	Something on the Moon changes while you are here
3	Someone else arrives on the Moon	13	You take something from the Moon as a memento of your time here
4	Something on the Moon makes you afraid	14	You discover that the Moon is growing or shrinking
5	You overcome one of the Moon's dangers	15	The Moon begins to collide with another Moon
6	Something on the Moon makes you overjoyed	16	Something on the Moon is poisonous to you
7	You find a previous Seneschal's journal on the Moon	17	You meet a permanent inhabitant of this Moon
8	Something on the Moon raises more questions than it answers	18	You find an old, abandoned structure on the Moon
9	You discover new wildlife or fauna on the Moon	19	Something on the Moon changes you physically
10	Something on the Moon is decaying or falling apart	20	Something on the Moon changes you emotionally

RANDOM WORDS

d100	Random Word	d100	Random Word
1	Sing	11	Breath
2	Paranoia	12	Job
3	Friend	13	Scry
4	Epiphany	14	Morning
5	Heretic	15	Noble
6	Reveal	16	Student
7	Wild	17	Inner
8	Stone	18	Rip
9	Energy	19	Purple
10	Absolute	20	Swoon

RANDOM WORDS

d100	Random Word	d100	Random Word
21	Mind	31	Cloud
22	Spear	32	Gnarled
23	Face	33	Enchant
24	Shade	34	Being
25	Grass	35	Object
26	Meat	36	Moss
27	Blue	37	Frantic
28	Sail	38	Elaborate
29	Super	39	Spell
30	Space	40	Galaxy

RANDOM WORDS

d100	Random Word	d100	Random Word
41	Need	51	Above
42	Trust	52	Goddess
43	Flower	53	Liquid
44	Enormous	54	Lazy
45	Ugly	55	Slow
46	Sprinkle	56	Ash
47	Wine	57	Storm
48	Fusion	58	Climb
49	Orbit	59	Pool
50	Porcelain	60	Hope

RANDOM WORDS

d100	Random Word	d100	Random Word
61	Play	71	Chant
62	Three	72	Velocity
63	Show	73	Scream
64	Rain	74	Chocolate
65	Chemical	75	School
66	Comfort	76	Mask
67	Lie	77	Meek
68	Panic	78	Home
69	Book	79	Talk
70	Spring	80	Hand

RANDOM WORDS

d100	Random Word	d100	Random Word
81	Nightmare	91	Serve
82	River	92	Secret
83	Dream	93	Harm
84	Trip	94	Vision
85	Urge	95	Void
86	Watch	96	Note
87	Creature	97	Disappear
88	Frost	98	Moment
89	Happy	99	Harmony
90	Thirst	100	Open

THE SUN IS TOO QUIET

The Thousand Moons have fallen under the shadow of a looming threat known only as Dead Air. It is mysterious, it is dangerous, and it is always there. The Moons are beginning to drift apart; spaces that were once lively and loud have gone silent.

The damage done by Dead Air is still reversible, but if it continues to ravage the Thousand Moons, it may become permanent. As with most grave issues in the Moons, it falls upon the Seneschals to fight the danger and save the day.

How do you fight a threat you can barely identify? How do you solve a problem when you don't know what's causing it to begin with? And how do you work together when no one has the same answers to these questions?

The Sun is Too Quiet continues the base game of Whispers from the Thousand Moons - you are still playing a Seneschal, by keeping their journal as they explore the Moons. Instead of drawing random word prompts, as in the base game, you will instead roll on a random table of questions to answer.

Your journal entries here will be about your fight against Dead Air - both your personal struggle and your shared fight alongside other Seneschals. This is a war, and your success is not guaranteed.

To start each journal entry for this game, roll a 20-sided die (d20) and a 4-sided die (d4). The result on the d20 will tell you which question to answer on the table on the next pages. The d4 will tell you the fate of that journal entry. On a 2, a 3, or a 4, your entry is recorded as normal. On a 1, however, your words are eaten by the Dead Air, and you must - in whole or in part - destroy that journal entry.

Rather than being of a predetermined length like the base game, the number of days in *The Sun is Too Quiet* is variable. Any time you roll a 20 on your d20 and answer the question "Do you still believe you can save the Thousand Moons?", you may choose to end the game, with the answer to that question serving as your final journal entry. You may also choose to continue playing until the next time you roll a 20 and receive the same question.

If you choose to end the game before answering that question, your Seneschal drops out of the fight against Dead Air - but the fight is never truly over, and can be resumed at any time.

You may choose not to address whether you are triumphant in the fight against Dead Air or not - the final question leaves it up to you. What matters is your belief in your ability to do so.

STORY QUESTIONS

d20	Story Prompt	d20	Story Prompt
1	You saw another Seneschal do something terrible to protect the Thousand Moons. What was it? How do you feel about them afterwards?	11	Sometimes you feel you will miss the fight, when it's all over. Why?
2	Dead Air is responsible for the loss of something dear to you. What was it?	12	How do the other Seneschals disappoint you? How do you fear disappointing them?
3	How do you feel the omnipresence of the Dead Air? How does it make itself known to you?	13	When did you know you would give everything to fight the Dead Air? Why?
4	What do you fear you will have to resort to in the fight against Dead Air?	14	An encounter with the Dead Air has changed you. How?
5	What strange beauty exists in the Dead Air and nowhere else?	15	You have suspicions about the origin of the Dead Air. Who can you safely tell?
6	What new weapon have you found to combat the Dead Air?	16	Why are people beginning to fear the Seneschals? Why you, specifically?
7	How do you help unite the other Seneschals in your region of the Thousand Moons?	17	The Dead Air destroys something you hated. Why does this not soothe you?
8	You learn something new about the Dead Air. What do you sacrifice for this knowledge?	18	Another Seneschal gives up in the fight. Why do you continue?
9	You learn something new about yourself and the other Seneschals. Why don't you tell the others right away?	19	The Dead Air reflects something of yourself back to you. What is it?
10	What do you bring to this fight that only you can do?	20	Do you still believe you can save the Thousand Moons?

EXCAVATION

Sometimes, when a Seneschal of the Thousand Moons arrives on a new moon, the space is uninhabited - but wasn't always so. It is not uncommon for nomadic groups to move throughout the moons, leaving behind only traces of themselves and their presence on their former homes. Sometimes they return; sometimes they do not. Often, it is up to the Seneschal to try and record what they can of these groups, with what little information they are able to piece together.

Writing is highly valued amongst all those who inhabit the Thousand Moons - the Seneschals and their journals being only one manifestation of such - and so Seneschals may find scraps of writing, of poetry, of prayer, recorded and left behind by those who once lived here.

While it is never possible to piece together a whole and complete picture of a group from only a few trace fragments of their writings, it is nevertheless the responsibility of a Seneschal to record and interpret what they can, in hopes that others may be able to find more such fragments and add to the collective shared knowledge of the Seneschals.

Excavation is an alternate prompt set for Whispers from the Thousand Moons, using scraps of poetry as prompts for reflection and to construct an image of a group that once lived on this particular moon, but is no longer there.

You will need a book of poetry, or multiple books of poetry, to play Excavation. You may also choose to look up specific poems online, or find random ones as you play. Any length is acceptable, although if you want to write a full fourteen entries on this moon as you would for Whispers from the Thousand Moons, you may want to make sure you have at least fourteen poems available.

Your journal entries here will be about your attempt to piece together an understanding of a culture or group that came before you exclusively through fragments of their poetry - which may not all be perfectly preserved.

To start each journal entry for Excavation, flip to a random page in the poetry book that you've chosen. Then follow the below steps to determine what kind of poetry fragment your Seneschal is able to unearth, and how much you are able to glean from it:

1) Count how many lines the poem is, then roll a die size closest to that number (ie. rolling a d12 for a 15-line poem, or a d20 for a 30-line poem, or a d8 for an 8-line poem). The line number that you roll will indicate what line your fragment starts with.

2) Roll a d6 to determine how many lines of the poem you are able to find. If the number you roll would continue past the end of the poem (ie. if the first line of your fragment is the eighth out of nine lines and you roll a three), pick up lines from the start of the same poem or the start of the next poem, as you prefer.

3) Roll a d4 to determine how damaged or preserved the poem is.

- On a 1, the lines are out of order - scramble the lines when you copy them into your journal. The lines themselves are intact.
- On a 2, the words are out of order - scramble the words of each line when you copy them into your journal.
- On a 3, words are missing - skip over some words at random when you copy them into your journal.
- On a 4, the fragment is well-preserved and you are able to read it in its entirety.

Copy the fragment, as noted above, into your journal. Then, begin your normal journal entry and theorize about what this poetry fragment says about the culture or group that wrote it.

How does this fragment express their values, desires, or goals? How does it reflect their history or sense of belonging? What does it leave unsaid? What do you wish you knew more about them after reading just this fragment? Does this fragment change how you feel about the group, or change your past understanding of them?

If you choose, when you start the next day's journal entry, you may roll a d4 to locate your next fragment rather than flipping randomly through the book.

- On a 1, use the same poem, but a different starting point.
- On a 2, flip one page forward in your book.
- On a 3, flip one page backward in your book.
- On a 4, use the same lines, but with different damage.

Understand that even after finding many fragments, there may be many questions left unanswered.

THE HONEY-GOLDEN FUTURE

Time often behaves strangely and fluidly in the Thousand Moons, and it's never quite the same anywhere. What passes as a year or more to some may feel like mere days to others, and events that occurred hours ago could feel like the ancient histories of years long gone. Even on individual moons, time and memory may not act normally.

A Seneschal may find themselves on a particularly strange moon, its name long lost or perhaps not imagined yet, where they are able to explore their own pasts and futures, in mirrored shards or fractal mirages.

One could explore there, to live out the dream of a past and a future, or many pasts and many futures, but it is not safe to stay for long. To stay too long in the ice-blue past or the honey-golden future is to risk never being able to return to the present as one understands it.

Though your time on this moon is limited, the memories you form here are not.

The Honey-Golden Future is a loose prompt set for Whispers from the Thousand Moons that can be used to flesh out your Seneschal, to explore their past and their future - or at least, a possible past and a possible future, of many possibilities.

These prompts are less specific than those given in the other rules modules, and may be combined with the other prompts to give more of a framework, if you want. Or, if you prefer, you can keep these ones loose and freeform to give a more open journaling experience.

Your journal entries here will document your illusory experiences of your Seneschal's past and future, which you are not able to change. These are memories, real or fake, and they are already written, whether or not your Seneschal has experienced them yet. Each day you will write down the details of the memory they experience, and their reflections and feelings about the memories.

The Honey-Golden Future is a twelve-day prompt set following a specific path:

Days 1 - 3: The Warm and Sugared Past

These days, the memories experienced by your Seneschal are fond ones of their past, positive occurrences that helped shape them, warm memories that they draw strength from, moments that helped them form their virtues and ideals.

Days 4 - 6: The Ice-Blue Past

These days, the memories are of cold or unpleasant parts of their past - not necessarily traumatic ones, but ones that maybe shaped their lives in negative ways, or things that they don't like to look back at, or times that they acted in ways they are ashamed of now.

Days 7 - 9: The Cold and Spindly Future

These days, the memories and visions are of a strange and not-entirely good future, a possible future where things have not gone as they wished, or where things seem bleak or confusing.

Days 10 - 12: The Honey-Golden Future

These days, the memories and visions are of a joyous or peaceful future, where dreams are realized, goals are met, and satisfaction is found - the joys may be large or small, but they are joys nonetheless.

In your journaling, you may find that the past and the future, the warm and the cold, are not entirely separate from each other. You may find elements of bad memories in good ones, or good memories leaving their mark on bad ones. A future full of joys may also be full of sorrows, in small or unpredictable ways.

You may find recurring elements in the threads of your memories and visions - a person who keeps reappearing, or a location you keep coming back to. Explore those relationships or places as much or as little as you want to in your journal entries.

At the end of the twelve prompts, you may choose to write an additional entry as you leave this strange moon, where you might explore if you think the pasts and futures envisioned here might be real ones - yours or someone else's.

Due to the nature of time and memory in the Thousand Moons, it is hard to say what is true, what is real, what is yours.

SHARING THE THOUSAND MOONS

This game, and all its modular rule sets, were written with the intent of a single player, journaling for themselves. But this is not the only way to play Whispers from the Thousand Moons - after all, Seneschals often share their journals, and so you may wish to as well.

To create a multiplayer game of the Thousand Moons, gather an interested group of players and discuss what you think will work best for your group among these options.

Safety, Comfort, and Content

Regardless of any other decisions, introducing more players introduces more opportunities for someone to be hurt or discomforted by the writings of another player. Before anyone begins journaling, make a separate document in a shared location that lists topics that you do not want to include or discuss in your journals as well as topics you especially want to include and explore in your journals.

Make sure that everyone is able to update the list, and check the list before you begin each new journal entry, to make sure that you are aware of any updates or changes. If any players list a topic as something they do not want to include or discuss, make sure that your entries are free of that topic.

Virtual or Physical Journals?

Perhaps the easiest way to share journals from the Thousand Moons is to create a shared virtual location that each player has access to, such as a Google Drive folder or a Dropbox. This way, players can upload their journals as files that the others can read.

However, it can also be exciting and fun to mail physical journals back and forth, combining the pleasures of handwriting with the pleasures of receiving good mail. This option gets more unwieldy the more players you have, but can be easily manageable for smaller groups.

A Shared Character or Individual Characters?

Another option you can explore is the possibility that you are all writing as the same Seneschal in different parts of their life, as they explore many moons throughout the region. It can be interesting to see how other players interpret the actions and motivations of one character, and to imagine how the events of another player's journal influence the events playing out in your own.

You may also play as distinct Seneschals, perhaps a group who've crossed paths within the Thousand Moons, or who've never met in person but who keep stumbling across each other's journals as you explore the same expanse of the Moons.

Same Rules or Different Rules?

Some of you may be interested in playing with certain rules modules and some of you might not - that's okay! Regardless of if you're all playing the same Seneschal or not, you can all choose to follow different prompt sets. You may also choose to all do an initial journal following the base game rules, and then all branch out into different rules modules, if you like.

Sharing by Entry or by Journal

Depending on everyone's availability to write frequently, or the interest people have in frequent sharing and reading, you may choose to only share the files once a whole journal is written. If you have higher engagement within the group, you may choose to share each entry as you write them, posting something new to the shared location each day.

Within a group, you may also have players who choose to do both, especially in a large group.

