



So You're in a Tavern

By Jason Walberg

It was a story as old as time. Four adventuring friends swaggered into a tavern. Sir Gillaboste clanked to the bar and shouted "Barkeep! An ale for my friend!" while Himbo the Thirsty unholstered his trusty lute.

The round and bald barkeep poured what passed as ale into four dirty glasses while keeping an eye on Shadow, who kept slipping her hands towards the purses of the honest customers. "What brings you back to our fine village?"

Grassy the White waggled their fingers, summoning a translucent hand to fetch their drink to a table in the corner.

"It's like this," Gillaboste said. "We were minding our own business, guarding this caravan of antique sculptures when...."

"Wait!" cried the buxom serving woman. "I heard it was a wagon of untaxed whiskey."

"So it was. Anyway, as we entered the Darkenscairee Wood, we were beset by bandits and..."

"Hold up," the mayor walked into the room, twirling his mustache. "I have it on good authority that you were accosted by demons."

"Right you are!" cried Gillaboste. "But they were wearing masks. Clearly bandits in training. And they had taken a princess hostage."

"And by princess," asked the stableboy. "You mean the crown prince?"

"Well, yes, but there was a dragon..."

"Wasn't it two dragons?" asked the red-faced blacksmith.

"Son of a...who's telling this story? Just give me a drink."

"Son, you can't can't get mad at the rumor mill for beating you here."

You need 5 coins per player and a deck of playing cards.

Play starts with the player who most recently exaggerated an adventure. The player will draw a card and, based upon the prompts provided by the suit and rank, they will ask another player to recount that adventure. The player's goal is to tell a story about their adventures without undue pauses to think. Pausing to think about the story is a sign of a lie, and all of these stories are true. The story should take about 5 minutes to tell. The players who are not the storyteller will temporarily play the part of NPC tavern dwellers. The barkeep, the servers, villagers out for an ale, etc.

For example, if the suit prompts with "Places I've Explored" and the rank prompt is "a magical site OR an extra-planar being", the player might say, "Krak, remember the time you discovered immortality in that demon's foyer?" The player will then start a story. This might be "There I was, rummaging through the midden at the demon tavern on the south side of the Abyss, when suddenly...."

At any time, another player (as an NPC) can interrupt the storyteller by laying one coin on the table, drawing a card for a new prompt, and revealing a rumor based on that prompt, saying "But Krak, I heard you were there to reveal the demon's destiny to be the savior of mankind?" The storyteller then has the choice to accept this rumor as truth and incorporate it into the story or lay their own coin on the table as a denial, saying something like "You're drunk. Demons are only saviors when the third full moon of the month falls on a holy day." If the interrupter accepts the coins, the storyteller can proceed. If the interrupter is persistent, they add another coin to the table and pass it back to the storyteller. This continues until one of them gives up or no longer has a coin to add and must accept the results. Multiple players can interrupt a given story, but only one at a time, please. If a rank is drawn twice for the same player, use the prompt that hasn't been used. If it's drawn a third time, that player is immune to interruptions for the rest of their story.

After everyone has had a turn telling a story, the players will then each decide who has told the best tale and give that storyteller all of their coins. They cannot give themselves coins. The player with the most coins wins and must buy the drinks.

Optionally, this can be used at the beginning of a gaming session with the opening prompt being something from the previous session instead of a drawn card. "Jurzee, tell me how you got that hobgoblin armor." This wouldn't change actual history of the game, but could influence how other characters in the game see the players.

For solo play, make this a travel journal instead of a conversation. Use the first prompt as the basis of the story and immediately draw two more cards for added details. Continue until you get three duplicate ranks.

- ♥ People I've Met
- ♣ Fights I've Won
- ♠ Places I've Explored
- ♦ Treasures I've Discovered

- A a magical site OR an extra-planar being
- 2 a deadly location OR an intelligent artifact
- 3 a surprising peasant OR something better forgotten
- 4 a surprising execution OR an interrogation
- 5 an unnatural disaster OR starting a war
- 6 an unholy army OR an entirely unique creature
- 7 a compelled quest OR a haunted castle
- 8 a hidden kingdom OR a legendary ancestor
- 9 one of the gods OR a cursed weapon
- 10 a forgotten dungeon OR a powerful evil
- J a indisputable good OR a disputed border
- Q a secret destiny OR mystical guardians
- K the downfall of a kingdom OR a haunted shipwreck