

**G.C. Katz**  
**Author and Game Designer**  
gwenckatz.com  
gwenkatzwriter@gmail.com

## **Contents**

### **Dialogue**

Keep It Together: [Breaking the Telescope](#)

What the Sea Wants: [The First Battle Wound](#)

### **Prose**

Arbor: [Selected Letters](#)

Care: [Full Script](#)

### **Character Design and Barks**

What the Sea Wants: [Character Profiles and Barks](#)

### **World-Building**

Nightwell Inn: [The Shattered World](#)

The Book of Beasts: [The Spheres](#)

### **RPG Design**

One-Page RPG: [I'm Not a Cat, I'm a Lawyer](#)

D&D 5e Encounter: [The Silver Sylph](#)

[Complete List of Publications](#)

## Keep It Together Script Excerpt: Breaking the Telescope

*This is a simple scene with minimal branching. This is a sample flow demonstrating one possible pathway. Consult my [online portfolio](#) for a flowchart of the full scene.*

**DR. GREEN:** We are about to make astronomical history, and you are here to witness it.

**INTERN BOWEN:** I want a commemorative mug. Or one of those rolled-out pennies.

*The four of you are clustered around the viewscreen of a rusty, dented telescope held together with duct tape, Popsicle sticks, and a combination of prayer and black magic.*

**PLAYER:** Are we sure the old telescope is up to it?

**ENGINEER FARAWAY:** It should work. Just don't rotate it too fast. Or move it more than 48 degrees to starboard. Or breathe on it.

*Dr. Green is practically vibrating with excitement.*

**DR. GREEN:** It took me weeks to work out the calculations, but I'm finally going to get a sighting of that uncharted meteor! Is it too soon to decide what to name it? I'm gonna name it after my dog.

**PLAYER:** Well, let's get started!

*Agonizingly slowly, the telescope swings around with a groan of stressed metal.*

**DR. GREEN:** See anything yet?

**INTERN BOWEN:** Just stars.

**DR. GREEN:** How about now?

**INTERN BOWEN:** Still stars.

**DR. GREEN:** Now?

**INTERN BOWEN:** Wait, hang on, there's something. Is your meteor red?

**DR. GREEN:** I don't...think so?

*The telescope screen comes into focus. A red sports car is floating in the middle of open space.*

**INTERN BOWEN:** Aaaaaand it's Elon Musk's space Tesla.

**ENGINEER FARAWAY:** Predictable, really.

**DR. GREEN:** I don't understand. I did the calculations three times! What else can I try?

**PLAYER:** Try adjusting the plane of focus.

**DR. GREEN:** Oh—of course! The comet is millions of miles behind the Tesla. It's just blocking the view!

*She adjusts the focus. With a painful creak of metal on metal, the car on the viewscreen goes out of focus and another shape begins to appear.*

**DR. GREEN:** I think I see something! No, wait. No, yes! There's something there! It's a—

*CLUNK. The telescope console goes to static.*

**ENGINEER FARAWAY:** What did you do??

**DR GREEN:** I didn't do anything!

**PLAYER:** *Kick it!*

*Satisfying, but ineffective. Still static. Faraway looks out the window.*

**ENGINEER FARAWAY:** Oh, wow. Yeah, it is definitely not supposed to bend like that. That is one broke telescope.

**PLAYER:** Nice one, Green.

**DR. GREEN:** I didn't do anything! I wasn't even near it!

**ENGINEER FARAWAY:** Hardly matters. I'm gonna have to send away for parts from Earth. Again. And spend a million hours fixing it. Again. And that's assuming it isn't worse than it looks. And it's always worse than it looks.

**INTERN BOWEN:** If anyone asks, I was in the bio lab the whole time.

**PLAYER:** I know that everyone here is sincerely committed to this station's mission and we will all diligently work to find a solution to this problem.

*The scientists look at each other. Then Faraway bursts out laughing. At least they're amused?*

*You head back to your office.*

## What the Sea Wants Script Excerpt: The First Battle Wound

*In this scene, a young deck hand has been wounded. You can either have a serious conversation about the dangers of a life of piracy or a silly conversation where you teach him to swear like a sailor. This is a sample flow demonstrating two possible pathways; adaptive text has been omitted for clarity. Consult my [online portfolio](#) for a flowchart of the full scene.*

\*\*\*

*In the sickbay, your surgeon, Ibrahim, is examining the saber slash across the new guy's shoulder. The lascar brothers, who should be busy loading cargo but are instead in here where they have no business being, slap him on the back.*

**BLUE:** It's your first battle wound, Pavão!

*Pavão blushes and looks down.*

**PAVÃO:** It's hardly anything. Just a scratch.

**NAVIN:** You're a real pirate now. It's a rite of passage, your first wound. Mine was a shard of wood that got blown off the deck, and his was...

**BLUE:** ...Mine was when you hammered a nail into my foot.

**PAVÃO:** Wait, how did...?

**NAVIN:** It's a long story. We'll tell you sometime.

*Ibrahim takes out his suture kit.*

**IBRAHIM:** A couple of stitches and you'll be right as rain. Now answer me this, Pavão: Two men play three games of chess. They each win the same number of games, and there are no draws. How is this possible?

*You've heard this one before. You could jump in with an answer.*

**PLAYER:** They died during the third game.

*Ibrahim gives you a look of annoyance.*

**IBRAHIM:** Stop interrupting my riddles! Pavão hasn't heard them yet.

**PAVÃO:** I don't know.

**IBRAHIM:** They weren't playing each other.

**PAVÃO:** What does that have to do with—ow!

*Ibrahim finishes the stitch.*

**First branch: A serious conversation**

**PLAYER:** Ibrahim is the master of distraction.  
He could have your arm off before you noticed.

*Pavão's eyes get big.*

**PAVÃO:** Has...that happened?

*Belatedly you remember how young this kid is and how little he knows about his new occupation.*

**PLAYER:** Look, kid, this is a rough life. I'm not going to lie to you.  
I've lost good men and women. So many...

*Your voice catches in your throat at the flood of faces that enter your mind.*

**Second branch: A silly conversation**

**PLAYER:** "Ow?" Is that the best you can do?

**BLUE:** Yeah, you're a sailor now! Sound like it!

**PAVÃO:** My family is very religious, I don't really know any...

**PLAYER:** How about "Devil take you, you whoreson?"

*Pavão's eyes widen.*

**PAVÃO:** I can't say that to my doctor!

**IBRAHIM:** Son, as long as you don't move, you can call me anything you like. I promise there's nothing you can say about my mother that I haven't already heard.

**BLUE:** Give it a shot, Pavão! "May donkeys piss on you, you half-drowned sea rat!"

**PLAYER:** "Go shit in the sea, you thrice-damned landlubber!"

**NAVIN:** "May ants crawl up your ass, you fleabitten dog!"

*Blue puts an affectionate arm around Navin's shoulders.*

**BLUE:** I'm so proud of you, baby brother. They grow up so fast.

*By this point Pavão is doubled over weeping with laughter.*

**IBRAHIM:** Hey, stop making him laugh! He needs to hold still!

**PLAYER:** Sorry.

*Ibrahim bites off the thread and gives Pavão a pat on the shoulder.*

**IBRAHIM:** There you go. Good as new. And now I have a riddle for you, Captain: Who has blue eyes and won't climb the rigging for at least two days?

**PLAYER:** I get it, I'll keep Pavão on light duty for a few days.

**IBRAHIM:** Good. We don't want him busting those stitches.

*You head back out onto the deck.*

## **Arbor**

*In this mini gardening sim, you care for a tree while your father is away at war. Your days are punctuated by a bird who carries letters from your father. These letters carry the emotional tone of the game, provide key items, and explain the gameplay.*

### **Act 1, Day 1**

Dear Agung,

Your father in uniform! I bet you never thought you'd see that. Truth be told, neither did I, but at moments like this, we all must do our part, even those of us who are more fit to hold a spade than a gun.

Take care of the garden until I come back, won't you? Here are some sweet potato slips to get you started. Growing them is a piece of cake. Just plant them in good rich earth and give them plenty of water.

I've also sent along some ripe chiles to stock the stand with in the meantime. Be sure to visit the stand every day--you never know who might stop by!

Most of all, take care of our tree. When you water it, I hope you'll remember the day we planted it together. This cheeky little myna bird has agreed to carry my mail. If you see her perched on the tree, you'll know there's a letter from me.

I'll be home soon.

Love, Dad

### **Act 2, Day 1**

Dear Agung,

Happy birthday! I'm sorry I couldn't be there. I know, that's what I said last year, and the year before. Where has it all gone?



I've sent you a present I bought from one of the roadside vendors: Moon orchid seeds. Moon orchids are a symbol of peace, you know. How she managed to cultivate such a delicate plant amid all the bombings I can't imagine. I know they'll thrive in our garden.

Pray for an end to the war, and for us here at the front. There isn't a single day when I don't pray to see you again.

Love, Dad

### **Act 3, Day 3 (final letter)**

Dear Agung:

Do you remember how you used to be fascinated by dreams? Nearly every morning you'd tell me yours. I hope they still intrigue you, because I had a dream last night, and you were in it.

We were in the garden, and you were a child again. Our tree had grown so big that it took up the entire sky, but instead of leaves, it had pieces of glass in all different colors, and the wind made them tinkle against each other and sparkle like stars. Thousands of birds of all kinds came and roosted in the branches.

How big our tree must be now, the real one! It must be almost ready to bear acorns. Thank you for taking such good care of it. I like to think of how, when this war is long over, future generations will still be sitting in its shade.

Love, Dad

*The next time the bird arrives, it is not carrying a letter.*

## Care

*In this game, you are trapped within your own mind, exploring familiar memories accompanied by the omnipresent voice of an abuser. This script shows the narration that appears when you examine different things in each scene.*

### Complete Script

#### Scene 1: The Apartment

*A messy studio apartment, littered with garbage.*

You're finally awake! Yep, this is your place.

What a dump. You should really clean up.

**Phone:** You deleted all your contacts, remember?  
You didn't want to talk to them anyway.

**Catnip mouse:** No, you don't have a cat.  
You never had a cat.

**Empty picture frame:** You took all your pictures when you moved in with me, remember?  
I still have them. I kept them safe.

**Fridge:** You're not hungry. You just ate, remember?  
Besides, you haven't gotten anything done yet today.

**Fridge (repeat):** I told you, you're not hungry.

**Pastry (in fridge):** Don't eat that. It's not healthy.  
I'll find you something better.

**Pastry (repeat):** What have you done to earn that?

**Door:** Not until you throw away all that trash.

**After cleaning up:** That's better. Still not much, though.  
No idea why you wanted to come back here.

### Scene 2: The City

*A vaguely surreal, abandoned city surrounded by a high wall.*

Oh good, you're getting some fresh air.

I thought you were going to stay cooped up in there forever.

**Wall:** You like the wall. It keeps you safe.

There are so many things out there that could hurt you.

### Scene 3: The House

*An suburban living room. Framed kids' art on the walls. A phone and some paints on the coffee table.*

There's no one here, remember? Your parents moved.

It's okay. They didn't support you.

**Parents' phone:** No, you don't want to call them.

Remember how they said we should break up? They were always criticizing your choices.

**Artworks:** Cute! You're much better now, though.

Actually these ones are kind of embarrassing.

**Paints:** Yes, you used to paint. But you stopped, remember?

You had to travel too much. All those art fairs and events. We never had any time together.

### Scene 4: The Coffee Shop

*A small independent coffee shop. An apron and a folded piece of paper on the counter. Some coffee cups, a sketchbook, and a paintbrush on one table.*

The coffee shop!

This is where we met.

**Paintbrush:** You used to come here every day to sketch and paint people.

I loved watching you. It made me sad that you never painted me.

**Apron:** Oh, the barista? I got rid of her.

You didn't like her. She was nosy.

**Paper:** *Unfolds to reveal a note that says "If you need anything, call me."*

Oh no, you don't. You don't need her help.

You're not a child. Besides, you have me.

*The note crumples up.*

**Phone (after reading the note):** No.

You're not going to call her.

**Phone (repeat):** I said you're not going to call her.

*The phone breaks.*

### **Scene 5: The Tower**

*At the south of the city, a tower looms over everything. In the distance, a bridge has been partially demolished to make way for the wall.*

**Bridge:** There's nothing over there but the old bridge.

It doesn't go anywhere, anyway.

*In the tower is a fancy apartment. A large TV on the wall. An in-progress board game on the table. The walls are covered with paintings.*

You're home! This is our place. All your favorite stuff is here.

Why did you want to leave?

**Paintings:** See? I told you I kept them.

The good ones, anyway. The ones you should be proud of.

**Board game:** Your favorite game.

If only you weren't so competitive. You know it makes me sad when you beat me.

**TV:** We spent so many hours watching movies together.

Just the two of us.

### **Scene 6: The Bridge**

*The bridge is half demolished and surrounded by rubble. A small dark gap is visible under the bridge.*

See? I told you. There's nothing here.

Since we put in the wall, the bridge doesn't go anywhere.

**Gap:** Why would you want to go in there?

It's just a bunch of junk.

**Gap (repeat):** Well, don't come *\*static\** to me when *\*static\**

*Beneath the bridge, the narration goes silent and Debussy's Chansons de Bilitis begins playing. Several easels are placed around a small cave and there's some paper lying on the floor. Using the brush and paints on the papers creates a series of paintings: Several decorative pieces, but then a painting of the wall with a gap broken through it, figure with wings flying through the sky, and finally, a tiny figure curled up, cupped between two large, menacing hands. When the paintings are finished, the music cuts off and the narration resumes.*

There you are. I was so worried when you disappeared.

What are these?

*The paintings come up one at a time.*

These are beautiful.

You need to show these.

*The painting of the broken wall:* Not this one. You don't really mean that.

It's not your best work anyway.

*The painting of the flying figure:* Not that one either.

*The painting of the hands:*

And what's this one? It hurts that you would draw me like that.

I think you should rip this one up.

Go on.

I said rip it up!

*The painting rips in half.*

### **Scene 7: The Gallery**

*The house has been torn down and replaced with an art gallery. There's a pile of rubble behind it.*

I built you a gallery!

Now everyone will be able to see your art. Isn't that wonderful?

**Rubble:** It's okay.

You didn't need anything from in there.

*Inside the gallery, the paintings hang on the walls, covered in awards.*

Look at all these awards you won! People love you when you do the right kind of art.

Let's go back to our place and celebrate.

### **Scene 8: The Dinner**

*In the tower, the table has been set with a bottle of wine, two unlit candles, and a book of matches.*

Isn't this nice? I did it all for you.

I got you candles. I know you like candles.

**Matches:** Careful with those.

*Using the matches on the first candle lights the candle. The second candle falls over and lights the tablecloth on fire.*

Now look what you did!

*Using the matches on other things in the scene also lights them on fire.*

No! Stop it! You're ruining everything!

I worked so hard!

### **Scene 9: The End**

*Outside, the tower is now on fire. It collapses, knocking a hole in the wall.*

I don't understand. I gave you everything you ever wanted.

You can be really mean sometimes. But I forgive you. I'm not angry.

*The bridge now creates a stairway of rubble leading through the hole in the wall. Debussy begins playing again, quietly. Clicking on each step allows the player to climb the stairs one at a time.*

*The music grows louder with each step, while the narration continues.*

You're making a mistake.

You don't know what's out there.

You're safer here with me.

You're happy here.

Don't go.

Please?

*From the top step, the player exits into the blue sky. The scene fades to a black screen displaying the final line of narration:*

Don't you know I care about you?

*The beginning and end of the line fade out, leaving only the words:*

I care

## What the Sea Wants: Character Profiles and Barks

*Everyone in What the Sea Wants has a secret. How do they present themselves to others? And who are they really?*

### Rodrigo

**Role:** First Mate

**Age:** 28

**Gender:** Male

**Home Port:** San Juan

**Skills:** Sailing, fighting, overwhelming arrogance

**Description:** Your right-hand man since the beginning. He would absolutely take a bullet for you, and has. Twice. Too bad his judgment hasn't caught up with his loyalty.

**Backstory:** When he was ten, his sailor father sailed off and never came back, leaving Rodrigo his lucky silver coin. He's never forgiven him. At eighteen, he went to sea in the hopes of crossing paths with him. When he eventually came to accept that it would never happen, became determined to prove that he never needed him.

**Barks:**

"Fortune favors the bold!"

"I still say we could have taken that man-o'-war."

"Redheads are bad luck. You let them on board and the next thing you know you're having to wash your socks, pick up your things, wear pants..."

## Siobhan

**Role:** Second Mate

**Age:** 23

**Gender:** Female

**Home Port:** Bridgetown

**Skills:** Sailing, common sense

**Description:** She's the only reason anything gets done around here, and she may be *slightly* salty about it. Inherited Irish sarcasm without ever clapping eyes on the Emerald Isle. She keeps her wedding band and a locket with a bit of her kid's hair on a cord around her neck.

**Backstory:** Of course there's no husband. She only wears the ring to keep people from asking questions. Her older sister agreed to take in her baby on the condition that she never attempted to see him.

**Barks:**

"Yes, you're God's gift to women. Get back to work."

"You break it, you buy it. That does include the entire ship."

"I'm going to practice saying 'I told you so' in front of a mirror."



## Constanza

**Role:** Master-At-Arms

**Age:** 38

**Gender:** Female

**Home Port:** Cádiz

**Skills:** Fighting, impeccable manners

**Description:** A baron's daughter in search of adventure, she brings a certain panache to the crew's swordplay. The only member of your crew who has technically been dead.

**Backstory:** An indulged youngest daughter, she realized with despair that she knew exactly how the rest of her life was going to go. When she was thirty, she was on an ocean voyage when her boat was caught in a storm and she nearly drowned. When Ibrahim revived her, she realized with delight that she'd had no idea whether she was going to live or die. She's been at sea chasing that high ever since.

**Barks:**

"Fourth position! ...No, that's sixth position, you Philistine."

"Oh dear, that's never coming out."

"A storm on the horizon? Excellent."

## Ibrahim

**Role:** Surgeon

**Age:** 48

**Gender:** Male

**Home Port:** Cádiz, or at any rate that's where you picked him up

**Skills:** Medicine, riddles

**Description:** Mild-mannered and kindhearted, maybe too kindhearted for his line of work. Doesn't mind blood but detests the smell of gunpowder.

**Backstory:** He was an army doctor who served in one of the Ottoman Empire's many wars against Russia. Overcome with the futility of trying to heal people in the midst of war, he fled to Cádiz, planning to stop practicing medicine--only to happen to be there at the right moment to save Constanza's life. That moment made him realize he still wanted to be a doctor after all.

**Barks:**

"Please come back in one piece this time."

"These boys have no idea what they're getting themselves into."

"Feeling all right, Captain? You look a little pale."

# Nightwell Inn: The Shattered World

## The Premise

In Nightwell Inn, the player is the proprietor of an inn on the brink of an abyss. They must gather resources, make food and drink, and defend the inn against monsters and brigands in this dark, high-difficulty management sim where crops fail, storms tear down buildings, and highwaymen waylay travelers on the road.

While the core mechanics resemble popular sims like Stardew Valley and My Time at Portia, the dark fantasy aesthetic and the challenging game balance draw more from RPGs like Darkest Dungeon. Throw in a robust, high-stakes story and an unusual Central Asia-inspired setting and the result is a powerful and unique gameplay experience.

## The Factions

The Shattered World was rent apart by a magical cataclysm many centuries ago. A bottomless chasm now divides the world into two continents and many smaller islands. To the east is a land of majestic mountains, fertile lowlands, and broad rivers. This is the land of the ancient, technologically-advanced Song Empire. To the west lie vast grassy steppes that melt into endless forest. These forests are home to the hardy and reclusive Rus. Between the two float an archipelago of fragments, the rubble from the great explosion. Here dwells the nomadic Khanate.

The cataclysm brought to a boil the long-simmering distrust between the three factions. Each blames the others for causing the explosion, and each--especially the Khanate, whose ancient territory now lies in countless pieces--lays claim to lands surrounding the rift. Their relations range between temporary uneasy truces and outright war.

Despite the risk of conflict, the area is an important trade corridor, and caravans of all three factions can regularly be found crossing the rift. Many attempts have been made to bridge the rift over the centuries, but one war or another has always swept them away.

## The Aesthetic

The Shattered World is loosely based on the geopolitics of 12th-century Central Asia. The architecture and clothing of the three factions are inspired by China's Song Dynasty, Kievan Rus', and the Golden Horde, respectively.

This is an isometric 2D game with a hand-drawn aesthetic. Menus and UI elements draw influence from the icons, textiles, and jewelry of these cultures. The character and environment art also draws from these artistic traditions, as well as Romanticism, Symbolism, and fairy tale illustrators like Ivan Bilibin.

## **The Fauna**

This high-magic setting does not feature ordinary animals like horses and cats. Instead, it is populated by a wide variety of magical creatures large and small, especially those from Russian and Chinese mythology--qilin (pictured), firebirds, dragon turtles, and more. These are the natural fauna of the Shattered World, and they may be captured, tamed, and ridden.

When the rift opened, it released seething black clouds of dark magic that still pour forth, sometimes blanketing the nearby lands and bringing with them storms, lightning, and floods of fell monsters that devour everything in their path. Worse still, these clouds can corrupt people and animals they envelop, turning them into evil, twisted versions of themselves.

Fighting off these monstrosities--and protecting what parts of nature remain uncorrupted--is one of the player's most important tasks.

## **The Magic**

The cataclysm saturated the landscape around the rift with magical energy, which now infuses the people and creatures who live near it. The player can choose innate magical traits, such as enhanced speed, preternatural charisma, and danger sense, as well as features like stripes or horns. Magic-infused plants can be used to craft charms, potions, and enhanced structures.

The most powerful magic, however, is found in the incantations of the three factions' sorcerers--the very incantations that created the rift in the first place.

As the player discovers late in the game, all three factions were responsible for creating the rift. They had each prepared a devastating spell to wipe out the enemy, and when all three were unleashed at the same time, the interacting magical energies caused the cataclysm, laying waste to all the armies and to the earth itself. These magical energies have long laid dormant, but they are once again stirring, threatening to break apart what of the world remains intact.

The cataclysm can be reversed, but only by the same combination of magic that first created it. Only the most powerful sorcerers of each faction know these secrets-- and they refuse to work together.

# **The Book of Beasts: The Spheres**

## **People and Civilization**

The people of the Spheres have colors and patterns inspired by dogs--brindle, spotted, tricolor, and so on. They are not furry; the patterns are simply skin coloration. Their hair never grows more than two inches long, and they have pink or black pads on their palms, fingers, and soles. Some also have features like blue tongues.

The civilization of the Spheres has a technology level similar to the early 20th century with a lightly dieselpunk vibe, including cars, radios, firearms, and the like. However, there are no fossil fuels in the Spheres--all fuel is derived from plants or animals.

The main mode of transportation is small personal airships and boats, fueled by oil harvested from the Spheres' vast cloud whales. A movement is arising to protect these majestic creatures, but with no known replacement for cloud whale oil, phasing out hunting would cripple the infrastructure of the Spheres.

## **Biomes**

Unusual biomes create unusual lifeforms. In the highlands, unusual volcanism creates jagged cliffs of obsidian cut through with rivers of radiant-hot molten gems, populated by armored reptiles that thrive in the heat. Lush underwater fungus forests thrive in the deepest ocean trenches. Gelatinous bubble lakes are home to colorful meter-long aquatic slugs. Most famous of all are the legendary migratory floating islands, where birds propel themselves by singing. (More on that in a moment.)

The player must climb, jump, swim, and glide their way through these environments, either on foot or with dieselpunk submersibles and flying boats, as they search out these elusive animals. And spotting them isn't enough--the player must also observe where they live, what they eat, and how they interact with their environment.

## **The Risen Empire**

Thousands of years ago, the Spheres were dominated by an enigmatic, technologically-advanced culture that has since vanished. Since its writing system has never been deciphered, no one knows what they called themselves, but height and levitation so defined their society that they are now known as the Risen Empire.

The ruins of the Risen Empire--found now only on remote mountains and in deep jungles--are dizzyingly tall, gravity-defying towers constructed of glass, ceramics, and unknown metal alloys. Modern engineers cannot explain how they have stayed up for so many centuries. Attempts to dismantle or study them usually result in their sudden collapse.

The Risen Empire also constructed delicate airships that seemed to have no source of fuel, and their art depicts people doing impossible midair dances and acrobatics. Artistic license, or a secret ancient power? No one knows.

## **Physics**

Except the player, of course, who will discover the true nature of the Spheres over the course of the game.

Resonance is a vibration in a material produced by specific wavelengths of sound. In our world, resonance can cause severe damage to structures and is usually minimized; however in the Spheres, resonance produces a force orthogonal to a surface.

In plain English, music makes things float.

This is how the Risen Empire built its civilization. This is how the Spheres' many flying creatures propel themselves. Modern civilization has forgotten about resonance, but by reconstructing these fundamental music based laws of physics (through a minigame, of course), you can rebuild a society that is fueled entirely by the Spheres' natural harmonies.

## One-Page RPG: I'm Not a Cat, I'm a Lawyer

*A whimsical RPG for one, created for a one-hour design challenge. It is extremely silly and by far the most popular game I have ever created. (It's been reformatted to match this portfolio, hence why it's no longer a single page.)*

### Introduction

You are a humble talking cat who belongs to a barrister in medieval London. Unfortunately, your owner went on a drunken bender last night and is now passed out. Successfully impersonate him in court to save his job.

### Choose a Strategy

Choose one of the following strategies:

#### DISGUISE

You assemble a mildly convincing costume out of a barrister's robe, a wig, and the neighbor's scarecrow. Hopefully the judge won't look too closely.

*If you choose this option, you must attempt to roll LOW numbers. You win draws.*

#### BLUFF

You tell the judge that you were cursed by a witch to appear like a cat for 24 hours. Or something. Don't worry, you'll be fine tomorrow.

*If you choose this option, you must attempt to roll HIGH numbers. You win draws.*

### Argue Some Cases

Roll 1d6 to determine what each case is about:

1. A husband accused of infidelity (Difficulty 3)
2. Neighbors squabbling about the location of a property line (Difficulty 3)
3. A man who stole a sheep off the common (Difficulty 4)
4. A clerk who's been taking bribes (Difficulty 4)
5. A woman accused of witchcraft (Difficulty 5) *Oh no! The witch hunters will see right through your claim to be cursed! Lose a life if you chose Bluff!*
6. A spy selling information to France (Difficulty 2) *Curses! He's an expert in impersonation! Lose a life if you chose Disguise!*

For each case, you must make an opening argument, a cross-examination, and a closing argument. Roll a die to beat the case's Difficulty for each argument. If you fail, you do



something distinctly un-lawyerly, such as mewling. Lose a life. (Don't worry, you've got nine.) If you win all three arguments in one case, you win the case. Gain a life back!

### **Final Case**

Wait, the court is hearing one unexpected final case! And it's...  
...Oh dear. A dog has been accused of biting the mayor. Bugger.

For your opening argument, your cross-examination, and your closing argument, roll first to see what happens, which determines the difficulty:

1. You hiss at the dog! Lose a life and reroll!
2. You take the stern and silent approach.
3. You distract the judge with a visual aid.
4. You say "I object!"
5. You make a sapient point in Latin.
6. The dog starts barking uncontrollably! You win the argument without rolling  
Disguise or Bluff!

Then roll your Disguise or Bluff and attempt to beat that number.

### **FAILURE**

You lost all your lives! You are chased from the courtroom with a broom. Maybe cats weren't cut out to be lawyers.

### **SUCCESS**

You made it to the end of the day with at least one life remaining. Your owner wakes up to find you calmly licking your butt as if nothing has happened. Tomorrow may be awkward for him...

## The Olympiad Encounter: The Malignant Blancmange

*A classic monster fight featuring a custom-designed ooze.*

**Stop Number:** 10

**Pub Name:** The Silver Sylph

**Proprietor:** Valenna Liastradel, halfling bard 1

**Signature Beer:** Extra crisp lager. A light, effervescent beer with a clean aftertaste. Very refreshing. Intoxication save: DC 10.

It's a bad sign when you approach the Silver Sylph and run into a group of fleeing patrons. One of them throws away his Olympiad map, shouting, "It's not worth it!"

You burst into the pub to find an enormous jelly mold thrown off to one side. In the middle of the floor, pulsing with unholy life, is the largest strawberry blancmange you have ever seen. In its wobbly grip is Valenna Liastradel, experiencing her most unjust desserts.

### Malignant Blancmange

Large ooze, unaligned

Armor Class 8, Hit Points 142 (15d10 + 60), Speed 20 ft.

STR 16 (+3), DEX 7 (-2), CON 18 (+4), INT 1 (-5), WIS 6 (-2), CHA 1 (-5)

Damage Immunities: Acid, Cold, Lightning, Slashing

Condition Immunities: Blinded, Charmed, Deafened, Exhaustion, Frightened, Prone

Senses: Blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), Passive Perception 8

Languages —

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

**Amorphous.** The blancmange can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

**Corrosive Adhesive.** A creature that touches the blancmange or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 7 (2d6) acid damage and must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw. On failure, the creature is engulfed by the blancmange. If the creature hit the blancmange with a melee weapon, they can choose to drop the weapon and allow it to be engulfed instead.

The blancmange can eat through 2-inch-thick, nonmagical wood or metal in 1 round.

*Edible.* Bite attacks have Advantage against the blancmange and are immune to the Corrosive Adhesive effect.

### **Actions**

*Pseudopod.* *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage plus 8 (2d6) acid damage.

*Spread.* While the blancmange normally occupies a 10-foot square, it can use a move action to flatten itself out and spread into one adjacent square, to a maximum area of 9 5-foot squares (unless it has been Split).

*Engulf.* When the blancmange enters the space of a Large or smaller creature, or if a Large or smaller creature is in the blancmange's space at the beginning of its turn, the creature must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw.

On a failed save, the creature takes 18 (4d6) acid damage and is engulfed. The engulfed creature is restrained and takes 21 (6d6) acid damage at the start of each of the blancmange's turns. If the blancmange moves out of that square, the creature is released.

An engulfed creature can try to escape by taking an action to make a DC 14 Strength check. On a success, the creature is no longer engulfed and may move normally.

### **Reactions**

*Split.* When a blancmange with at least 40 hit points is subjected to lightning or slashing damage, a smaller blancmange splits off. This blancmange is Medium sized, has 20 hit points, and cannot Engulf, Split, or Spread. The original blancmange loses 20 hit points and can spread to 1 fewer squares maximum.

When the blancmange has been subdued, you finally have a chance to take in your surroundings. The Silver Sylph is decorated in delicate pastels, with lace curtains and rose-patterned wallpaper. Shelves of ceramic figurines line the walls, although a few of them have been smashed in the melee.

Valenna sits down and wipes a bit of jelly off her apron, understandably shaken.

“I was trying to create the world’s biggest blancmange,” she explains. “It was going to be my crowning achievement. But it kept collapsing. So I bought a scroll of Animate Objects from the discount scroll emporium, just to hold it up...I guess I should have bought it from a more reputable wizard...”

Valenna pours you your extra crisp lagers. “Would you like any dessert to go with that? I’ve got a nice lemon jelly in the icebox...”

## Publications

*A full list of my finished, published games, stories, and articles. The games listed here are all independently published, the novel was traditionally published, and the stories and articles were all published in paid magazines, anthologies, and podcasts.*

### Games

*Arbor.* Created as lead developer for Adventure Jam 2022.

*Labyrinth of Ludum.* Created as lead developer of the Ludum Daredevils for Ludum Dare 50. Unity game, 2022.

*Community Cryptid Circus.* Created as lead developer of Pocket Mouse Games for Wholesome Games Jam 3. Unity game, 2022.

*Care.* Created for Brackeys Game Jam 7. Unity game, 2022.

*Keep it Together.* Created as lead developer of Lunar Tide Games for Indie Game Academy Cohort 3. Unity game, 2022.

*Hoard Master.* Unity game, 2021.

*Nimos.* Unity game, 2021.

*A Crumb in Winter.* Dungeons and Dragons 5e module, 2021.

*The Adventures of Houdini.* Interactive fiction, 2012.

*The House of Fear.* Interactive fiction, 2011.

## Fiction

### Novels

*Among the Red Stars*. HarperTeen, 2017.

### Short Stories

"Oil Bugs." *Translunar Travelers Lounge*, 2022.

"Palio." *The Lesbian Historic Motif Podcast*, 2022.

"Fold." *Vastarien* Volume 4 Issue 2, Grimscribe Press, 2021.

"The Sound of Wolves." *A Cold Christmas and the Darkest of Winters*, Cinnabar Moth Publishing, 2021.

"Los Angeles Is Sinking." *Field Notes from a Nightmare*, Dreadstone Press, 2021.

"Unshackled." *Cinnabar Moth Literary Collections* Volume 1 Issue 1, Cinnabar Moth Publishing, 2021.

"Neofan." *Voyage*, 2021.

"The Curious Case of the Cave Salamander." *Utopia Science Fiction* Volume 2 Issue 4, 2021.

"The Empress and the Marauder." *Cosmic Horror Monthly* Issue 5, 2020.

"Blacktooth 500." *Hear Me Roar*, Poise and Pen Publishing, 2020.

"The Song of the Machines." *Truancy* Issue 8, 2020.

"Seven Cups of Tea." *Curiosities* Issue 7, 2020.

"All the Daughters of my Father's House." *Glittership* Spring 2020.

"Portrait of Three Women with an Owl." *The Future Fire* Issue 53, 2020.

"The Black Handkerchief." *The Lesbian Historic Motif Podcast*, 2019.

"The Beast that Ate the Stars." *Pioneers & Pathfinders*, JayHenge Publishing, 2019.

"The Difference Engine." *Well Said, O Toothless One*, Reshwity Publishers, 2018.

"The Ibex Tattoo." *Dates* Volume 2, Margins Publishing, 2017.

"All's Fair." *Likely Red*, 2017.

## Articles

“Banning 'Maus' Is Just the Latest Case of Sanitizing History for Kids' Comfort.”  
Coauthored with A.R. Vishny. *Washington Post*, February 10, 2022.

“Banning Books Like 'Maus' Is Part of Sanitizing History.” Coauthored with A.R.  
Vishny. *Teen Vogue*, February 9, 2022.

“Gideon, Harrow, and the Value of Problematic Relationships in Fiction.” *Tor.com*,  
December 1, 2020.

“Aging Properties in Fiction.” *Putting the Science in Fiction*, 2018.