

The Forest of Tamtonas

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A lush canopy, drakelings flitting from tree to tree. A hole in the trunk of a tree where two mice work with local ants to create beautiful art. Every level of the Forest of Tamtonas teems with a special kind of magic. Magic that enables all of its residents to communicate with each other and organize as a community. Magic that is quiet and subtle, though it sometimes manifests in spectacular ways. But magic does not resolve the needs of these beings, merely shifts them.

Young Seekers are sent out from Tamtonas for a number of reasons. Perhaps a Sage has foreseen a great danger approach the Forest, or perhaps the harvest was lean this year, leading the residents to seek nourishment elsewhere. Sometimes, it's simply a desire to explore, to know what's out there. But no matter the reasons, the Seekers must seek. And when they have found, they return to one of the Sages of the Forest to discuss what to do next. Seekers can frequently be impulsive, but they, as all residents of the Forest, will heed the Sages' wisdom.

Sages are revered throughout Tamtonas for their powerful guidance. Their wisdom frequently tempers the more impulsive drives of younger members of the community. Some say they have been given knowledge that borders on the divine, but they are simply normal creatures that have learned much through practice and experience. They are responsible for protecting Tamtonas from threats and preventing it from becoming a threat itself. Much of that responsibility manifests in their relationship with the Seekers. Whether they have guided a Seeker to some omen or have been brought surprising news, they try to guide the Seekers towards decisions that respect nature and those that live in it.

How to Play

This is a game for two or more players. You will need the Findings, printed and cut out, a way for each Sage to reference the section on Guidance, and, if playing outside, small capsules to hold each Finding (plastic easter eggs work well). Seekers should be at least five years old, and Sages should generally be adults or teenagers.

The ratio of Findings to Seekers to Sages is flexible. Generally you want a Sage for every 1-4 Seekers and 3-5 Findings for every Seeker. Adjust these levels for the players you have and how long you'd like the game to take.

At the start of play, Sages are responsible for planting the Findings in hidden, but not inaccessible, spaces. If there are two or more Sages, one Sage at a time should be helping the Seekers figure out who they are playing. Anything magical or fantastic is

allowed, as long as it is not something that will interfere with the other Seekers. Sages should take turns leading this conversation, so each Sage has a chance to hide Findings around the play area. During this time, each Sage should also select their Form from the options provided.

During play, Seekers will search around the play area for Findings. Once they have discovered a Finding, they should bring it to a Sage to talk about what they have found. If a Seeker wishes, or if they are having trouble in their search, a Sage may send them on a specific mission to investigate an area where that Sage knows a Finding is hidden. The Sage does not know what is hidden there, but received news that there was something of interest. A Seeker can bring their Finding to any Sage to discuss. Sages should ask questions about the Finding and engage with the Seekers' creativity as much as possible. More about leading this discussion can be found in the Guidance section. Once all or most Findings have been discovered, or if the Seekers are losing interest, move on to the next section.

When Sages and Seekers are ready to end play, everyone should gather together. Each character may, if they desire, select one Finding to tell the group about (yes, Sages too). Once everyone that wants has had a turn, make sure you retrieve any Findings that were not gathered during play.

Sage Forms

Each Sage will be working off the same list of Guidance questions. However, their motives and responses are colored by their form. There are seven listed below, but you can create more to suit your needs.

OWL

Embodies Wisdom
Acts with Swiftmess
Wary of Ignorance

DRAGON

Embodies Power
Acts with Confidence
Wary of Loss

DOG

Embodies Love
Acts with Enthusiasm
Wary of Separation

FAIRY

Embodies Wonder
Acts with Subtlety
Wary of Boredom

MOUSE

Embodies Charity
Acts with Timidity
Wary of Hunger

FROG

Embodies Adaptability
Acts with Creativity
Wary of Stubbornness

GARGOYLE

Embodies Patience
Acts with Reverence
Wary of Greed

Guidance

Sages, the role you play for the Seekers is vitally important. You have a responsibility to guide them towards thinking about the world as an interconnected system, where there are consequences for our actions, even if we do not face them ourselves, where just because you have found something does not mean you can take it and just because you have learned something does not mean you can tell others what to do. When a Seeker brings you a Finding, there are three phases: **Discovery**, **Inquiry**, and **Consequence**.

In **Discovery**, you are asking the Seeker to tell you about what they found, how they found it, and where they think it came from. Depending on the Finding, your questions might lead anywhere, so instead of listing examples, here are some good practices to follow:

- Let the Seeker's ideas come first and let yours follow.
- Accept any answer.
- Remember your Form.
- Allow yourself to be surprised by everything.

Inquiry is about asking questions. Sometimes Seekers may need your help thinking about these things. Your good practices here are:

- Challenge the assumptions made in **Discovery**, both yours and the Seekers.
- Explore how residents of the Forest might respond to this thing.
- Speak communally (“Are we afraid of this?”).
- Seek answers, but accept thoughts.

And some example question sets to get you started.

- Is this a threat to us? Can we avoid it or do we have to face it?
- Is this a threat to someone else? Who? Should we do something to protect them?
- Can we use this? Is there someone else using this already? What happens if we use it all up?
- Is there something we can learn from this? How can we share that knowledge with others?
- Would taking this benefit us? Would taking it hurt someone else?

Finally, in **Consequence**, ask the Seeker what the community is going to do with the Finding. Once you have an answer, briefly describe the consequence of that decision. This does not have to be negative, but should reflect how the world responds based on the choice. Go as big or as small as you like, but connect it to your conversation.

Findings

1. A small set of rocks, engraved with runes
2. A brook, clear and strong but impenetrable
3. Supple branches, shaped like bones
4. A winged creature you don't recognize who speaks a language you don't know
5. A pile of gemstones that seem to glow
6. A wild orchard, heavy with fruit
7. Roasted meat around a fire, unattended
8. Vines, inviting you in for a hug.
9. A sword too small for you to use
10. A ring, held aloft by a finger of stone
11. A cave, deep and warm
12. A lake full of fish that slip in and out of reality
13. An empty cabin, locked and quiet
14. A horse that does not speak but seems to understand
15. A nest, fallen from a tree, with a snake curled within
16. A gate, impassable, latch consumed by a growing tree
17. A path, unsteady with movement.
18. A wagon, stinky and wet
19. A family, lost in the mountains.
20. A shadow, hissing in the fields
21. Armor, made of wool but with the strength of metal
22. A large encampment with many guards
23. A joke told by a falling leaf
24. A name that hurts even though you don't understand it
25. A breeze, heavy with mysterious news

26. A hedge with sweet berries that jingle like bells.
27. A pine cone with a small door
28. A boat, sailing a river of smoke.
29. A herd of beasts that sing but do not speak
30. Heavy clouds that rain honey on a giant anthill
31. A shard of ice that does not melt
32. An ornate mirror, always blurry
33. A drawbridge with no moat or castle
34. A single lock of violet hair
35. A drum whose sound never echoes
36. A string from a shattered harp
37. A stone hammer, heavy and wet
38. Three statues of blind cats
39. A giant's tear, which fills a whole bucket
40. A hilltop, warm with sun
41. A simple rhyme, and the dance to go with it
42. A sphere of silver, big as your head
43. A wooden box, empty, that rattles like something is inside
44. A painter's easel, locked in a brass cage
45. A brown rat the size of a small dog
46. A red key that smells of roses
47. The ghosts of two friends, who whisper and laugh
48. A swarm of blue butterflies that remembers your name
49. Five iron nails, melted in the shape of a hand
50. Your own reflection, distant and sad