

Her Son.

You need a deck of cards, 2d6, the departure cards from the back printed off and cut out, same with the board with the village's six-space health track and "queen's body" token pile, and then a couple of dozen tokens. It's a hotseat peer story game for 3, 4, or 5 players.

Get a deck of cards, take the black kings out, that's your father and he left your mom and you when you were little. Take the red kings out, that's your mother's boyfriend who left after the surgery when she came home without the infected breast. Keep the queens in, that's she, your mom who wakes in the night to comfort you from your nightmares and answers your questions as well as she can. She has red blood and black blood too, she's been home for six months but now she has to make more visits to the hospital and you understand that it's very serious and she will lose her hair again and no matter what she will always love you and you will just have to be brave for her and did you know how proud you make her? Very proud.

Leave the jacks in. That's you. You've got red blood, but you know you drank from the missing breast when you were a baby – maybe some of it got into you, too. Maybe you can use it to fuel your strength. And leave all the numbers in, "A" is the same as "1", those numbers will add to the dice rolls so that you can win and track them back to their hideout and defeat them all this time, every last miserable one so that she will be able to rule her people in peace. Shuffle, deal three to each player and no one look at them yet.

In your fantasy world, you are a prince and you are able to save your mother from cancer by fighting the black bugs that are invading her jungle kingdom. You must be careful: if the cancer gets too strong in her body, she might not pull through, but if the black bugs invade the village she won't make it either. You needn't fear for yourself – the black bugs can't defeat you. At least not now, when you are young.

At any given time, one of us players will be setting up the scene for the others to enjoy. Everyone else will play the part of the prince, who is eight years old. The guide will lead us from this boy's real world into his fantasy, and then into a situation wherein we can work to defeat the evil upon the land. After we get a chance to work toward that, the next person to the left will become the guide and the old guide will act the part of the prince along with the others. It's ok for the people playing the prince to talk all at once, grown ups assume that your head is very confused at this age. At least your mom will figure out what you're saying.

I can tell you more about the fantasy world. Part of it is a jungle, and in that part there's a village where your mom lives; like, kind-of your mom but she's not exactly your mom. She is a great warrior queen, and her kingdom is a village of great warrior ladies, like your babysitter and the neighbor next door, but you are also a great warrior even if you are not a lady.

There are other parts to the kingdom too, and then other lands beyond it, harsh lands across which you'll have to search to find the hive of the black bugs. Oh, should I tell you about them? They are not small, like regular bugs, which you might have thought they were. They are the size of cars, and as fast

as them, and there are different types and they are difficult to outsmart and to fight, but you can do it. And they have thick black blood which oozes disgustingly, and you want to crack it out of all of them and make them shrivel up to the last, down to their wretched queen. Because they have a queen too, you know, and you have not seen her but you can somehow sense her. Your mother has only one child but you are braver than all of the bugs put together so you will win. That is, if the bugs don't invade the village, and if you can avoid using your own black blood to beat them, because every time you use it their queen who is burrowed down deep in the ground and maybe also in your mother's chest grows stronger.

How to be the guide:

Amalgamate the kid's experienced, "real" world into the fantasy world; with minor characters as well as aspects of the location. Time slows down, then the space that the prince moves through stops having any relation to how the boy is moving. Some aspects of the scene might persist, or become magnified or twisted in some way. There is a story arc which starts with the prince starting off in the village where his mother rules from, traveling out across the scary landscape to find the hive of the black bugs and then destroying them. Recognize where you are on that arc, there are 10 departure points, make a gradual overland travel. (Maybe I should have a track to measure the ten departures, to show which scene we are at.) The adults don't have to be right up in the kid's grill, interacting with him all the time. It can totally be him off playing by himself, overhearing stuff, and can also transition to him playing by himself early in the scene, before the fantasy world takes over. Or they could be trying to talk to him as he starts phasing out and imagining. / Choose a departure card which already has tokens on it (which are placed on it when parts of the situation are dealt with, to mark that it's partially complete.) or draw a new one.

The cards that you cut out are where we start in the real world, they are our departure places. Put the hive queen one at the bottom and don't draw it if you've got other pots in the fire [or I could figure out a way how to problematize having too many situations going on at once... but I can do that later when my brain isn't mush]

There will be a list of the minor characters & vague, customizable stabs at their motivations, which allows the guides to differentiate between the different minor characters, for example The Doctor wants two things from the mother. The neighbor wants to tell the mother something. These are just motivations to fall back on.

Describe how to frame a scene, all that kind of stuff.

"this game is about a boy's escapist battle with his mother's potential death and the certainty of her change. It's about his fears, and these can come out in the situations he has to deal with."

How to deal with situations:

So you've all got your face-down cards and you're ready to overcome the situation that the guide presented you with. One of the people playing the prince describes a way to get around or deal with the situation, so they roll the dice. Then they pick up the cards, and spend some of them:

\*For this roll to count towards beating the situation, you've got to get 13 or more.

- \*Look at your cards now. [i'm now unsure where to put the reveal about what's in your hand.]
- \*You can use one number card, plus a face card or two. The face cards have special rules.
- \*For each black card you use, you put a cancer token into the queen's body on the board.
- \*Red Jack: play along with a black card, & it doesn't add a cancer token to the queen's body. Black Jack: Double the value of the card you play it with. Red Queen: when people help you, you count the full value of their card. Black Queen: play this with another black card and it counts as a 13, regardless as to what the actual numbers are.
- \*"Helping": players can give one another an extra push – any card played as a “helping” card counts as a +1 to the current roll+card equation. Black cards still add cancer tokens.
- \*After you make your decision about what cards you're using, the player who was dealing with the situation describes the outcome of their actions, unless they failed, in which case see below.
- \*You don't automatically redraw cards, you only draw when you come back to the real world.
- \*You go back to the real world in two cases: you beat all the stages of the situation (the number that's given on the departure card), or maybe it means you failed a roll – when you fail a roll, you get “kicked out” of the fantasy world, the situation is left undefeated & so we'll have to continue there later, the guide changes, and the village harm track is worsened one step. When you go back, whoever's now the guide will remember where you were at & move the action a little into the future, worsening it for you.

endgame mechanic: each person playing the prince does this separately: the cancer token total is the new target number, not 13. Roll+card as normal. If all are successful, yippee! No face cards can be used at this time. If any of the princes fails, the mom doesn't make it. (maybe too heavy handed, we'll have to look at the math.)

Strategy about accruing cancer tokens versus the village's downfall:

Well, you can accrue up to 6 cancer tokens before it's a problem for the roll. After that, it becomes much less of a sure thing that you'll beat it, but you're probably well safe even up until 10. After that... well. That can get rough.

List of inspiration situations:

A bug is attacking you.

A bug is attacking someone near you, perhaps a minor character from the “real world”.

A bug has slipped past you & you must run it down before it gets away.

Some of the villagers are worried about the queen and can't focus on anything else.

Some of the villagers don't know about black blood and cancer and bugs, and they're scared and confused.

Some of the villagers are hungry, but the black bugs ate their crops.

The prince and your group is lost in a dangerous area.

There is an imposing aspect of the landscape which prevents your easy passage.

Each departure card has the following: A name. A list of minor characters who are there (the repeat minor characters are shared among the players, but only usable by the person who is currently the guide). In each departure, the guide sets up a situation which the prince will have to face, which means that one or more of the players playing the prince will have to engage with the card-and-dice mechanics; the actual number that must engage is listed on the card.

THE DEPARTURE CARDS

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It's called: Your living room.

Who else is there: The babysitter (has been learning in school about the amazons)

Start your description with: The slumping, depressed couch.

After you've made your transition into the fantasy world & introduced the problematic situation, they'll need to succeed on 4 rolls to best the situation.

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It's called: Your bedroom by day.

Who else is there: Perhaps the babysitter (has been learning in school about the amazons), or your Mom.

Start your description with: The plastic figurines strewn across the floor.

After you've made your transition into the fantasy world & introduced the problematic situation, they'll need to succeed on 2 rolls to best the situation.

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It's called: Your bedroom at night.

Who else is there: No one.

Start your description with: The tiny night-light in the dark room.

After you've made your transition into the fantasy world & introduced the problematic situation, they'll need to succeed on 5 rolls to best the situation.

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It's called: Along the walk home from school.

Who else is there: Your grown-up neighbor. Shaved off her hair in solidarity with your mom during her first operation, along with your mom's sister.

Start your description with: The cracks in the sidewalk.

After you've made your transition into the fantasy world & introduced the problematic situation, they'll need to succeed on 2 rolls to best the situation.

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It's called: The doctor's waiting room.

Who else is there: Your mom's doctor, your mom.

Start your description with: The uncomfortable chair you're supposed to stay seated in.

After you've made your transition into the fantasy world & introduced the problematic situation, they'll need to succeed on 1 rolls to best the situation.

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It's called: Your kitchen.

Who else is there: Your mom, your aunt (shaved off her hair in solidarity with your mom during her first operation, along with neighbor).

Start your description with: The warm savory smell of the soup on the stovetop.

After you've made your transition into the fantasy world & introduced the problematic situation, they'll need to succeed on 3 rolls to best the situation.

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It's called: Under the tree in your yard.

Who else is there: Your grown-up neighbor, your mom.

Appearance: Shaved off her hair in solidarity with your mom during her first operation, along with your mom's sister.

Start your description with: The comfortable dim light under the boughs.

After you've made your transition into the fantasy world & introduced the problematic situation, they'll need to succeed on 3 rolls to best the situation.

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It's called: Your classroom at school.

Who else is there: Your teacher.

Start your description with: The vacant desks in perfect rows.

After you've made your transition into the fantasy world & introduced the problematic situation, they'll need to succeed on 2 rolls to best the situation.

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It's called: The empty lot beside the Grocer's.

Who else is there: The grocer, your mom.

Start your description with: The puddles of rain in the dirt of the parking lot.

After you've made your transition into the fantasy world & introduced the problematic situation, they'll need to succeed on 3 rolls to best the situation.

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It's called: The hive queen's lair.

Who else is there: No one else.

Start your description with: Moist earth rising from the walls.

After you've made your transition into the fantasy world & introduced the problematic situation, they'll each need to succeed on a roll to deal with the situation.

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LIST OF CHARACTERS (put on a reference card or something)(?)

your mom

her doctor

grown-up neighbor (shaved off her hair in solidarity with your mom during her first operation, along with your mom's sister)

grocer at the market

babysitter (has been learning in school about the amazons)

aunt (shaved off her hair in solidarity with your mom during her first operation, along with neighbor)

teacher

#### THE GAME BOARD:

An area for tokens, labeled The Queen's Body, which is where you put a token if you add a black card to your roll (in dealing with a situation).

A draw pile of the departure cards (which are written out above).

The village's health track, (which acts as a communal hit point track). See below, in descending order. Starts with the first, if it gets to the last one, the village is wiped out and the game is over.

1. The village is on the lookout for black bugs, and have seen perhaps a few of them in the distance.
2. The village has fought off a few black bugs who have come out of the jungle; they're spooked.
3. The village has fought off a focused attack by the black bugs.
4. Part of the village has been lost to the bugs, but there are many villagers who are still fighting.
5. There are only a few villagers left. Enough to rebuild, but only if the invasion stops soon.
6. The last of the villagers are overrun by the black bugs. The warrior queen is the last to fall.

#### Known issues:

Well, it might have trouble scaling between players as that I just realized that the refresh-your-hands-after-a-complete-situation will throw that off. So maybe i'll have to go back to refresh at the start of your turn (attempting to deal with the situation)?

\*not sure if I described the system of dealing with a situation well. Ah.

\*I am too tired to puzzle out the new permutation of when to look at your cards in dealing with a situation, my goal is to have there be two layers of suspense, one for the die roll and one to find out what's in your hand. But everyone can't just look at the same time, can they? But they'll have to, in order to give helping cards effectively.

#### Design notes.

Dedicated to: everyone who at one point thought you could help people by fighting.

Written by: Jackson Tegu

Well within: 24 hours

For Ron Edwards' third round of: 2011 Ronnies.

This version called: Ronnies version.

Using the Ronnies words: Amazon and Queen.

In Ross Cowman's room while he wrote: The Queens of Time and Space.

What the main characters in Ross' game are queens of: Time and space.

#### Eaten:

Before: Two eggs, one toast, sml bowl yogurt, few bites of ricey beany oniony thing. During: Sandwich.

Apple juice (three cups full). Water (lots). Small bowl of soup. One piece rosemary bread. Popcorn with chipotle. Apple. Handful of Jalapeño potato chips. Glass of milk. Jam cookie. Half a carrot.

Listened to:

Low hum of my computer fans. The cat meowing inside and outside. My bass guitar as amplified by the speaker. My mother's voice on the phone.

Left the room:

Bathroom. Trip to food co-op & then made lunch upon return. Bathroom. Bathroom. Make & eat popcorn. Bathroom. Go home & then keep working at the kitchen table.

It's still: kind of cold out.

I'm so very: tired.