

# Cliffs & Cactuses

## The Rules

(Check out our rules video on the back of the box!)

*Howdy partner, n' welcome to the wild-west! I'ma let you in on a little game we call cliff-racin'. You see that trail post all the way down yonder? I'll race ya down!*

## Overview

Cliffs & Cactuses is a cliff-racing card game where your goal is to be the first racer to the bottom of the cliff, no matter the cost! While the banjo music plays, everyone plays cards to help themselves and sabotage their friends. Then, you'll each take turns revealing your cards and navigatin' the chaos that follows. Keep going until someone finishes!

## Contents

Bonus Cards (27)	Reference Cards (9)
Sabotage Cards (27)	Cliff Cards (9)
Special Cards (42)	Character Cards (9)
Multiplier Cards (12)	Blank Characters (9)

## The Race Phase

To start the race phase, press play on our boppin' banjo music timer (see [cliffsandcactuses.github.io](https://cliffsandcactuses.github.io)). While the music plays, all racers play cards at the same time, one-at a time, face-down and right-side up in front of any racer. After playing up to 4 cards, racers draw before the timer runs out to replenish their hands to 7 cards. Once the banjo finishes, **EVERYONE MUST STOP!** No more playing cards, no more drawing, no more anything! It's time for the Resolution phase.

## The Resolution Phase

During Resolution, racers reveal the cards in front of them and fight for their lives! Starting with the first-place racer, all cards are revealed from left-to-right. Bonus cards help racers go faster, sabotages slow 'em down, and the others make things fun! Don't go gettin' too attached to your cards—they're gonna get stolen, swapped, flipped, and vaporized! Because of this, **Nobody** moves until **Everyone's** cards are resolved. Got it?

Now that you've got a lay of the land, let's get into the details.

# Key Terms

## The Queue

A racer's queue refers to the cards laid down in front of 'em. Cards are always added to the right of a racer's queue, and revealed from left-to-right, followin' the arrows on the card-back. It's like the cards are waitin' in line!

## The Cliff

A racer's cliff card tracks their position. The lowest uncovered number on the Cliff represents a racer's current position. **The first racer to reach the bottom of the cliff (0 meters), wins the game!** Whenever racers are tied, they play Rock-Paper-Scissors to determine who's in the lead.



## Card Types

There are 4 types of cards you can use to help get ya down the Cliff and to slow others down.

### Bonuses (x27):

Bonuses help racers run farther down the Cliff. For example, Nitroooooo! makes racers run 200m farther when tallyin' distances.

### Sabotages (x27):

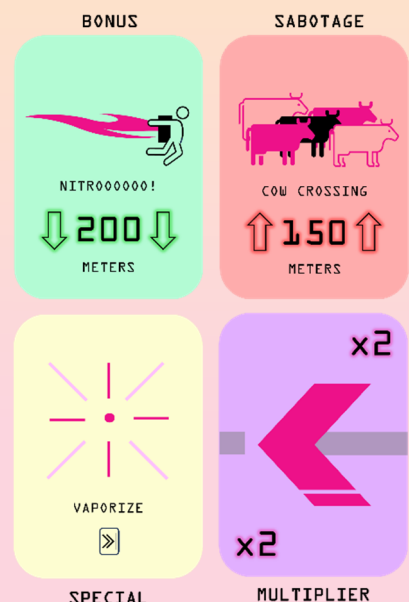
Sabotages slow racers down. Cow Crossing adds 150m UP the cliff to a racer's tally.

### Special Cards (x42):

There are 6 types of special cards, each with different effects. Special cards activate immediately when revealed, and are then discarded.

### Multipliers (x12):

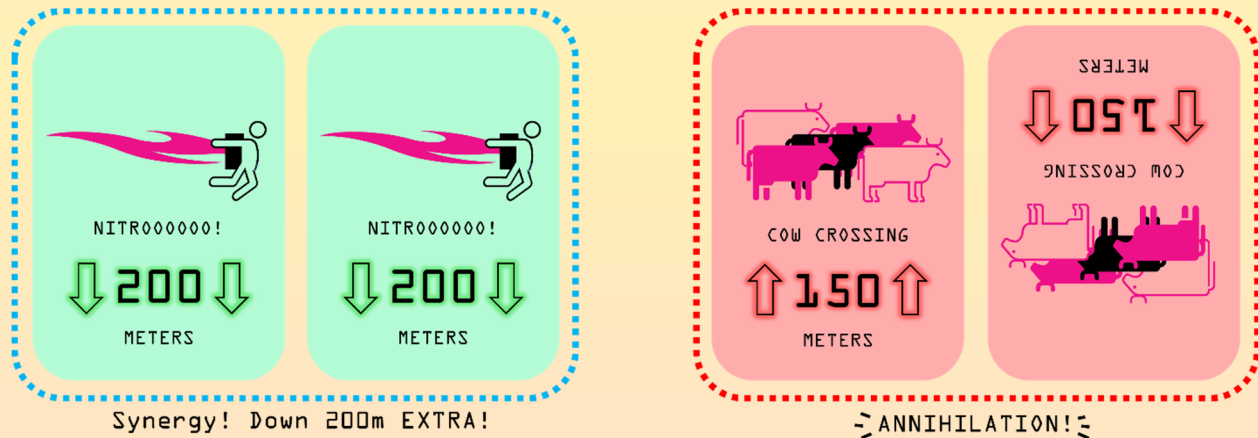
Multipliers double the effect of the target card, doubling distances, activating special cards twice, and stacking with other multipliers. If a Cow Crossing were on the left of this multiplier, the racer would add 300m instead of 150m UP to their tally.



## Synergy

When a bonus or sabotage is adjacent to an identical card, the cards *synergize*, adding extra movement to the racer's tally equal to the movement value of the card. For example, if two Nitro's were adjacent, the racer would move an *extra* 200m down the Cliff!

But if one of the cards has been flipped (by a special card), the two cards instead *annihilate* and are immediately discarded.



## Special Cards



### Vaporize:

Discards target card.

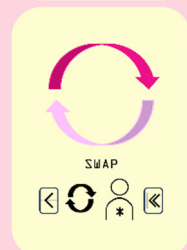
*This Vaporize allows the racer who revealed it to discard ANY card of their choice.*



### Gift:

Adds target card to target racer's queue.

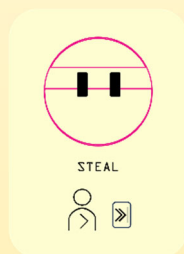
*This Gift adds the left-most card of the revealing racer's queue to the queue of the racer on their left.*



### Swap:

Swaps the positions of the two target cards. Note, this is the only time a card won't be placed at the end of the queue.

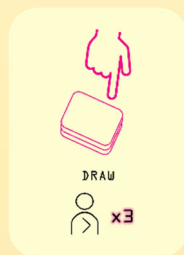
*This Swap swaps the card to its left with ANY racer's left-most card.*



### Steal:

Adds target racer's target card to the revealing racer's queue.

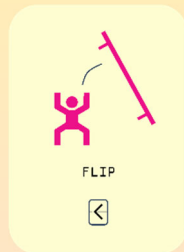
*This Steal targets the racer to the right, adding their right-most card to the revealing racer's queue.*



### Draw:

Draw 3 cards from the target racer's hand. Note, this is the only mechanic that affects cards in racers' hands.

*This Draw has the revealing racer draw two cards from the hand of the racer to the right.*



### Flip:

Flips the target card upside-down. This reverses directions on a card (left/right and up/down), which turns Bonuses into Sabotages and vice-versa. A flipped card stays flipped unless flipped again.

*This Flip flips the card to the left. Turn the target card upside down, even if it's unrevealed.*

## Reading the Symbols

Strugglin' to figure out where your cards are pointin'? Use your reference card!

<	Card to the left ◦		
>	Card to the right ◦		
<<	Left-most card -		Player to the left
>>	Right-most card -		Player to the right
*	ANY Card		ANY Player

A few important clarifications about the reference card:

**Relative directions treat the queue as circular!** Relative left and right references wrap around the queue (indicated by the "wrapping" grey line).

However, **absolute references** (left-most and right-most) **refer to the first and last cards in the queue** (no "wrapping" here, indicated by the vertical grey line telling you to STOP!)

Additionally, a multiplier/special card cannot target itself. This means that if an absolute reference is in the left/rightmost position, it targets the closest card instead.



Finally, **ANY Card** means any card in any player's queue. Any (\*) targets are chosen by the racer that reveals the card.

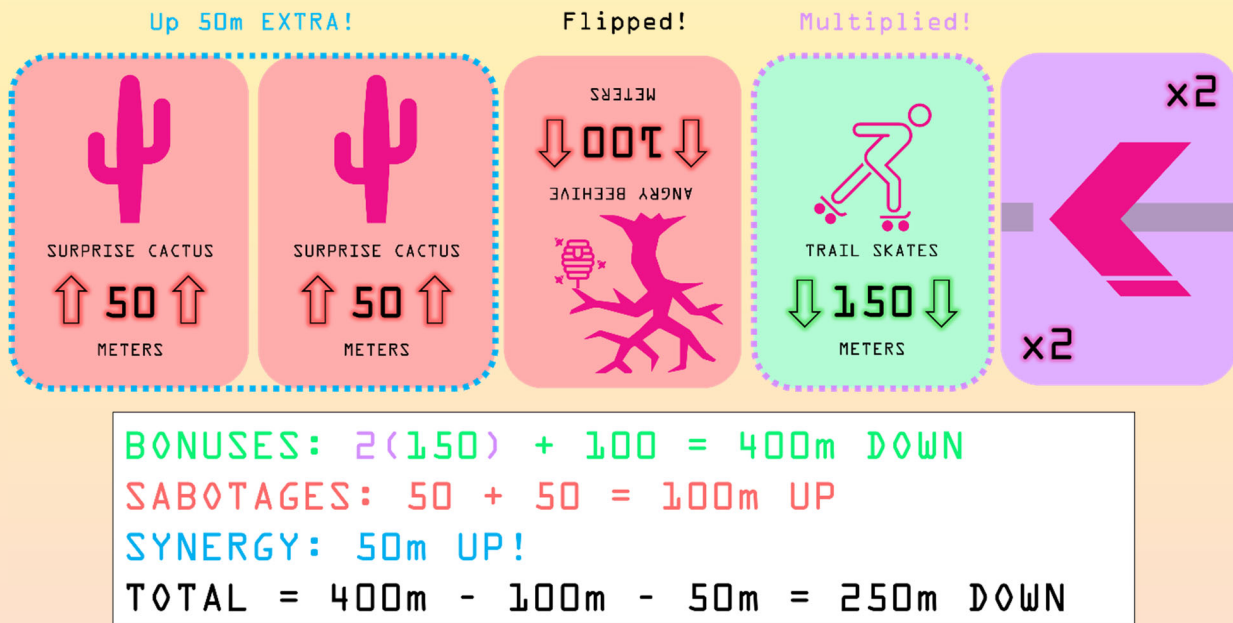
**Last-Ditch Larry:** For the keen-eyed among you, you may have noticed that there is a very special card on the back of your reference. Last-Ditch Larry is the only card that can be played outside of the Race phase. A racer can play Larry once per game At ANY TIME to draw the top card of the deck, look at it, and play it at the end of any racer's queue. Last-Ditch Larry is very powerful, but you can only use him once – make it count!



# Tallyin' Movement

After the race and resolution, each racer tallies up how far they've moved and updates their position on the Cliff. Every round, each racer gets 100m DOWN added to their total. All together,

**Total Movement DOWN = Bonuses - Sabotages + 100m + Synergy,**  
accounting for multipliers and flipped cards.



## Setup

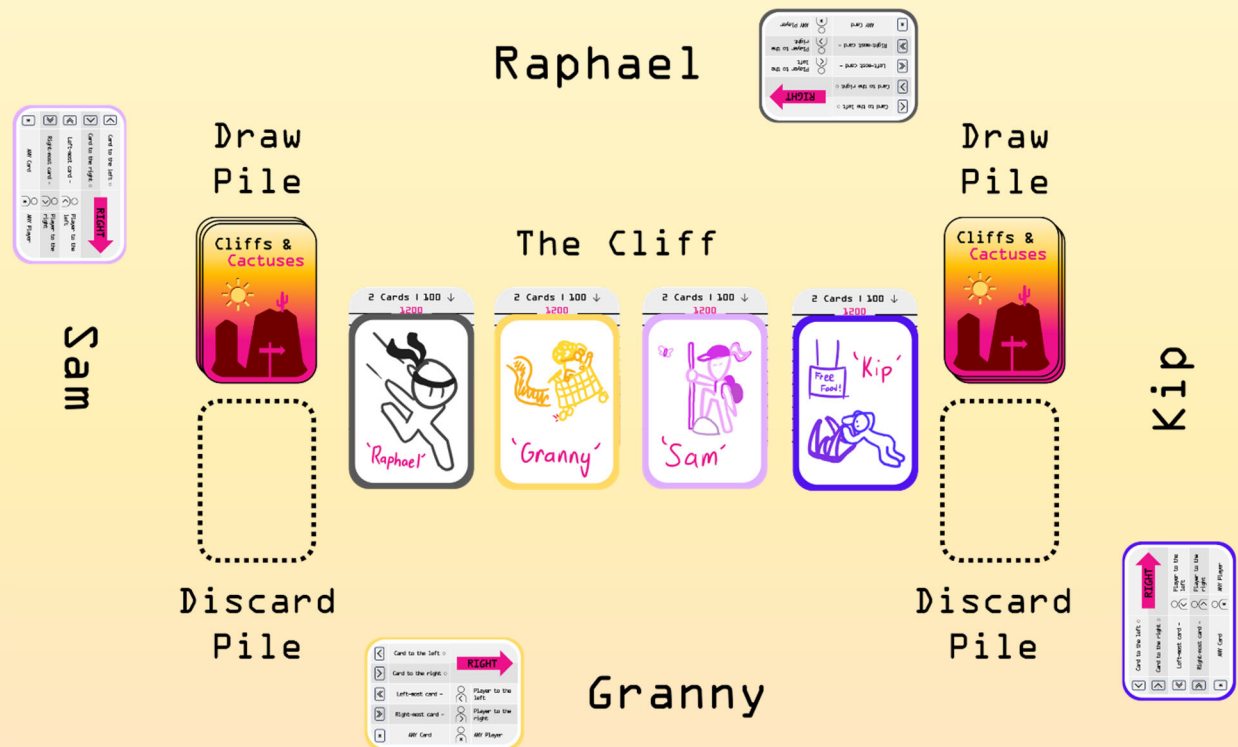
Great! You've mastered the rules of Cliffs n' Cactuses, now let's play! First, y'all racers need to form a circle (try yer best)—everyone should be able to reach each other!

Next, give every racer

- a character card,
- a reference card with a matching color,
- and a Cliff.

The reference card will sit in front of them, indicating the start of their queue and showing who's who. Everyone places their character at 1200m on the Cliff in the center of the play area.

Shuffle the deck and deal 7 cards to each racer. Place the remaining deck in the middle—you may want to split it into multiple piles so everyone can reach!



*Example game setup for 4 players. Each player marks the start of their queue with their reference card, and starts with 8 cards in-hand.*

## Who goes first?

Now that everyone is ready to begin, you need to determine who will start during the Resolution phase. Y'all are tied, so it's time for a good ol' fashioned Rock-Paper-Scissors tournament to determine who's in 1<sup>st</sup>-place!

Once a racer has established their dominance, start the timer and begin racin'! The game alternates between the Race and Resolution phases until somebody makes it to the bottom of the Cliff! Ready? GO!

## Alternative Modes

**3-Legged Race (\*HIGHLY RECOMMENDED\*):** Everything is the same, except that racers play in teams of 2. Teammates still have separate queues, but are "tied" together, sharing a position on the cliff. Coordinate your cards to be the first team to the bottom!

**Unlimited Cards:** Instead of limiting play to 4 cards during the race phase, let racers draw and play as many cards as they want. Use a hand size of 4, and only draw new cards once you've emptied your hand.

# Quick Reference

## The Race Phase

- Cards can only be played during the music.
- Cards can be played into any racer's queue.
- Cards are played one-at-a-time, face-down, and right-side up.
- Cards are always played at the end (right) of the queue.
- A racer can **play up to 4 cards** during the race phase.
- A racer draws to **replenish their hand to 7 cards**.
- A racer can't play cards after drawing.
- You can only draw cards during the music.

## The Resolution Phase

- Cards are revealed from left to right, starting with the queue of the 1<sup>st</sup>-place racer. Play proceeds counter-clockwise.
  - Ties for 1<sup>st</sup>-place are broken via Rock-Paper-Scissors.
- Special cards activate as soon as they are revealed.
- Special cards and multipliers *cannot* target themselves.
- Special cards are discarded after activating.

## Tallyin' Movement

- All racers get a default movement of 100m down every round.
- Two identical, adjacent movement cards *synergize*. If one of them gets flipped, they *annihilate*.
- Your total movement is equal to  
**Total Movement DOWN = Bonuses - Sabotages + 100m + Synergy**
- No racers move until all racers have tallied their movement.



# FAQ

## **Multiplying a special card**

When a multiplier doubles a special card, that special card triggers twice, even if the multiplier is moved. When a special card targets ANY (\*) card or racer, the revealing racer may choose different targets for each time the special card activates.

*For example, doubling Vaporize the card to the left discards the left 2 cards even if the first card vaporized is the multiplier. When doubling Steal any card, the revealing player can choose any two cards.*

## **Moving a flipped card**

A card stays flipped when moved between queues. It only goes back to normal if hit with another Flip.

## **Stealing from yourself**

ANY racer includes the revealing racer, which means technically you can steal from yourself.

## **Targeting an empty queue**

- A card may be gifted to a player whose queue is empty.
- A steal card targets the first non-empty queue.
- A swap card targets the first non-empty queue.
- A swap any card may be used to gift a card to an empty queue.

## **There were no cards left to draw**

Guess you should've shuffled shouldn't've ya?

## **Multiplying a swap**

If you swap the same two cards twice, it's like nothin' ever happened!

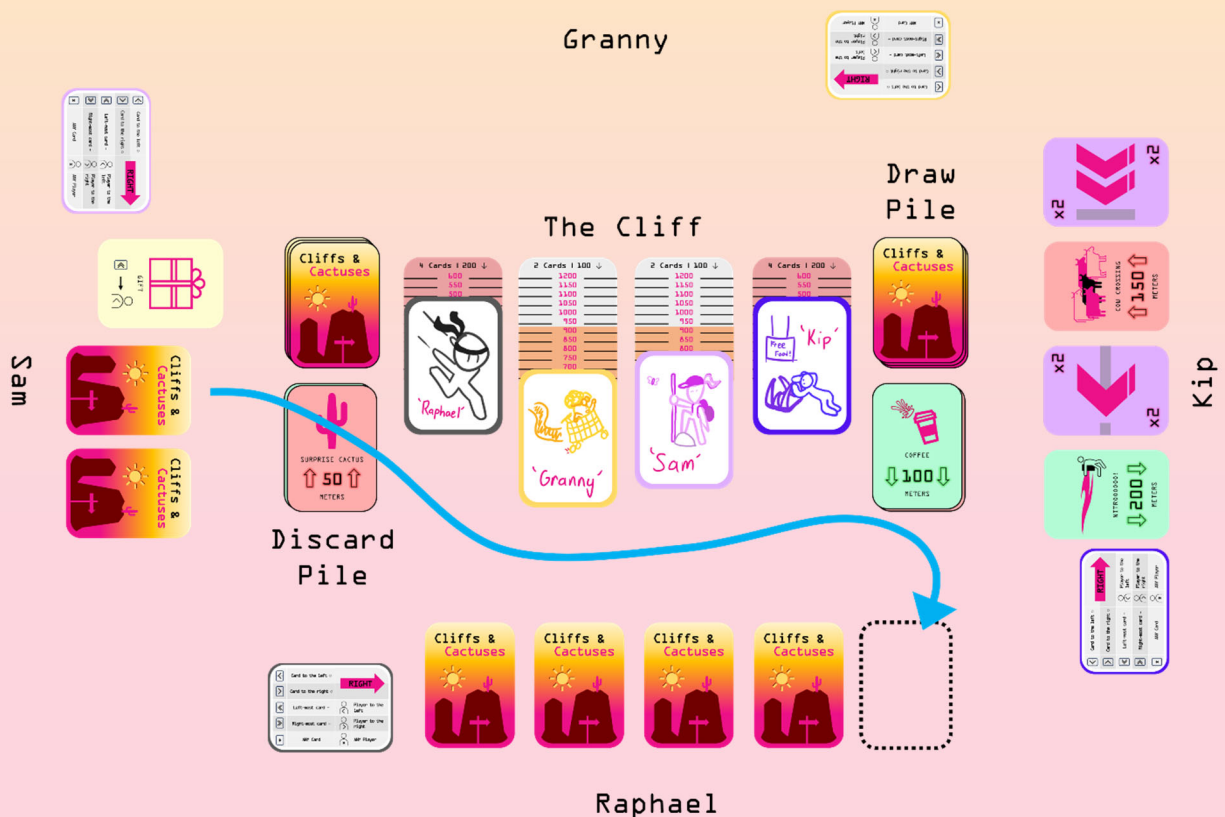
# Example Round

Raphael and Kip are tied at 500m on the Cliff. They play Rock-Paper-Scissors (no shoot!) and Kip wins meaning he'll resolve his queue first during Resolution.

Then the timer is started and the Race Phase begins! Sam and Granny play sabotages on Raphael and Kip to stop them from winning. Everyone draws before the timer runs out, except Granny who forgot! She won't have as many cards to use during the next round.

Kip is the first one to reveal his queue. His Nitroooooo! gets doubled by BOTH multipliers (left and left-most) so his total movement is  $4 \times 200m - 150m + 100m$  (Default) = 750m down the mountain! Unless something happens before the end of the Resolution phase, he'll win!

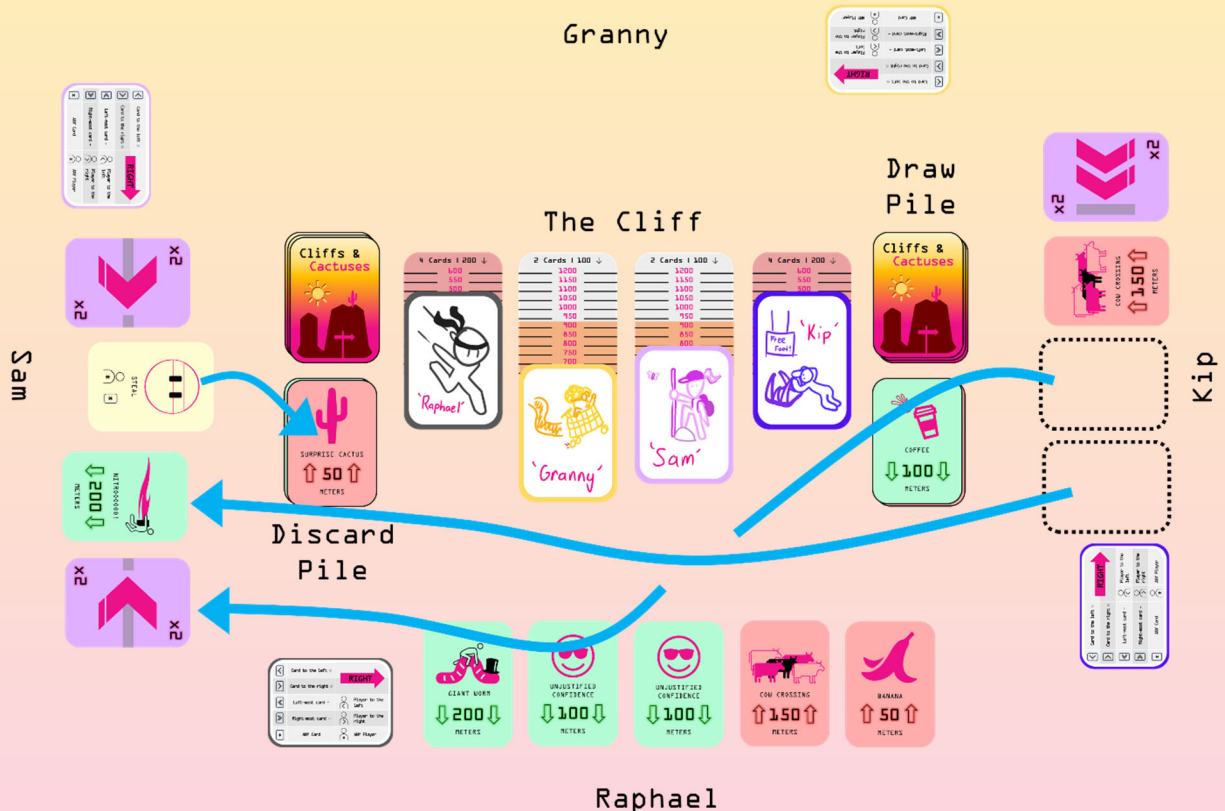
Play continues clockwise, continuing from left-to-right around the circle. Granny has no cards in her queue, so Sam goes next, revealing the first card in their queue. It's a special card: gift the left-most card to the player on the left. A special card cannot target itself, so this gives the next left-most card in Sam's queue to Raphael.



Finally, Sam reveals their last card, which is a Multiplier pointing right.

Next, Raphael reveals his cards and gets a bunch of Bonuses and Sabotages. Raphael has two *Unjustified Confidence* bonuses adjacent to each other, which *synergize* for a 100m bonus! This gives Raphael a total movement of 200m + 100m + 100m + 100m (Synergy) + 100m (Default) - 150m - 50m = 500m down the mountain.

Now, before anyone moves their character cards, Sam plays Last-Ditch Larry. Sam draws the top card from the deck, looks at it, smiles deviously, and places it at the end of their queue. No one else has unresolved cards, so it's Sam's turn to resolve. Sam reveals Steal any card from any player, which Sam can do twice because of their multiplier. Sam grins mercilessly, and first steals Kip's Nitrooooooooo! and then his Multiplier pointing left.



Everyone else has already used their Last-Ditch Larry's this game, so the round ends and everyone tallies their movement. Kip now moves up 300m, Granny down 100m, Raphael down 500m, and Sam down  $4 \times 200\text{m} = 800\text{m}$ , leaving Sam and Raphael tied at 0m. Sam beats Raphael at rock-paper-scissors and wins the game!