

Rival Wizards

by Duncan Gibbs

The Game

About

RIVAL WIZARDS IS A GM-LESS MICRO-RPG THAT WILL SEE 2-5 PLAYERS ASSUME THE ROLE OF COMPETITIVE WIZARDS, CASTING ELABORATE SPELLS TO OVERCOME CHALLENGES ON THEIR WAY TO ACHIEVING A FINAL GOAL.

PLAYERS WILL TRADE OFF BEING ANTAGONISTS, DRAWING CARDS FROM THEIR DECK AS THEY SET UP SCENES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE OTHER WIZARDS TO FACE, AND BEING PROTAGONISTS, DRAWING CARDS AS WELL WHILE VIVIDLY DESCRIBING THE SPELLS THEIR WIZARDS CAST. ABOVE ALL ELSE, RIVAL WIZARDS SHOULD BE FUN. PLEASE IGNORE OR CHANGE ANYTHING ON THESE PAGES THAT MAKES IT LESS SO FOR YOU.

Materials

EACH PLAYER NEEDS ONE SHUFFLED DECK OF STANDARD PLAYING CARDS WITHOUT JOKERS. A GROUP MAY WANT SCRATCH PAPER FOR THE SETTING AND RULES OF MAGIC.

Starting The Game

The Setting

PLAYERS WILL COLLABORATIVELY DECIDE ON A SETTING FOR THEIR GAME. THIS IS WHEN AND WHERE YOUR GAME TAKES PLACE. START WITH AS MUCH OR AS LITTLE SETTING AS

The Goal

THOUGH NO ONE LOSES IN RIVAL WIZARDS, ONE PLAYER WILL WALK AWAY WITH MORE THAN THE OTHERS. TOGETHER PLAYERS WILL DETERMINE FOR WHAT, CONCRETE OR ABSTRACT, THE WIZARDS ARE COMPETING. THIS GOAL MAY HINT AT WHAT YOUR STORY MAY LOOK LIKE, OR WHAT GENRE IT MAY BE.

The Characters

THERE ARE NO STATS, DICE, OR CHECKS TO COME. MUCH LIKE EVERYTHING ELSE, THE DEVIL IS IN THE DETAILS. WHETHER INTERNALLY OR OUT LOUD, PLAYERS SHOULD THINK ABOUT WHO THEY WILL BE PLAYING.

Defining The Game

Details

RIVAL WIZARDS IS A GAME THAT LIVES AND DIES BY ITS DETAILS. PLAYERS WILL DRAW A CARD FOR EVERY DETAIL THEY INCLUDE, IMPROVING THEIR CHANCE OF DRAWING THE HIGH CARD.

WHAT IS A DETAIL THOUGH? A GOOD QUESTION WITHOUT A GOOD ANSWER. IN GENERAL, A DETAIL IS SUPPOSED TO REPRESENT AN IDEA. FOR ANTAGONISTS THIS CAN INCLUDE CHARACTERS, SETTING FEATURES, DIALOGUE, OR DESCRIPTIONS IN GENERAL. FOR PROTAGONISTS THIS COULD INCLUDE SPELL PREPARATION, INCANTATION, OR EFFECTS. CHARACTER ACTIONS, DIALOGUE, OR DESCRIPTIONS IN GENERAL.

Scenes

THE GAME WILL BE PLAYED IN SCENES. YOU KNOW, THOSE THINGS THAT MAKE UP MOVIES, SHOWS, AND PLAYS. A SCENE IS SET UP BY THE ANTAGONIST FOR THE PROTAGONISTS, AND WILL CONTAIN AN OBSTACLE. A SCENE CONTINUES UNTIL EVERY PROTAGONIST SUCCEEDS. THESE SCENES SHOULD ADVANCE THE CHARACTERS TOWARD THE GOAL.

Antagonist

THE ANTAGONIST WILL BE PLAYING THE TEMPORARY GM. THEY ARE IN CHARGE OF SETTING UP THE SCENE: DESCRIBING WHERE THE PROTAGONISTS ARE, WHAT THEY ARE TRYING TO ACCOMPLISH, AND WHAT IS STOPPING THEM FROM ACCOMPLISHING IT (AN OBSTACLE). FOR EVERY DETAIL THEY ADD, THEY DRAW A CARD FROM THEIR DECK (UP TO FOUR CARDS).

EVERY DETAIL THE ANTAGONIST ADDS TO THE SETTING HELPS DEFINE IT. EVERY ANTAGONIST SHOULD TRY AND BUILD ON, WITHOUT INVALIDATING, WHAT THEIR PREDECESSOR SET FORTH. A COMPELLING SETTING CAN GIVE YOUR SCENES A PUSH IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION.

Protagonist

A PROTAGONIST IS A WIZARD CURRENTLY IN THE SCENE. THEY WILL FACE AN OBSTACLE IN THE SCENE THAT THEY WILL RESPOND TO WITH SOME CREATIVE SPELLCASTING. FOR EVERY DETAIL THEY INTRODUCE ABOUT THE SPELL, THEY DRAW A CARD FROM THEIR DECK (UP TO SIX CARDS).

EVERY DETAIL A PROTAGONIST ADDS ABOUT SPELLCASTING HELPS SET THE RULES OF MAGIC IN YOUR WORLD. WHILE THESE RULES SHOULD NEVER STOP YOU FROM DOING WHAT YOU WANT, A LOGICAL, FASCINATING MAGIC SYSTEM CAN GO A LONG WAY TOWARDS GETTING PLAYERS INVESTED AND TELLING A LASTING STORY.

Playing The Game

Step One

IF THIS IS THE FIRST SCENE, EACH PLAYER DRAWS A CARD FROM THEIR DECK. THE PLAYER WITH THE HIGHEST CARD (ACES ARE LOW) IS THE ANTAGONIST. IN THE EVENT OF A TIE, DRAW AGAIN. SHUFFLE THE CARDS BACK INTO THE DECKS. IF THIS IS NOT THE FIRST SCENE, THE ANTAGONIST IS THE PLAYER WHO HAD THE HIGHEST CARD LAST SCENE.

Step Two

THE ANTAGONIST SETS UP THE SCENE, DRAWING A CARD FOR EACH DETAIL (UP TO FOUR CARDS).

Step Three

THE PROTAGONISTS, IN ANY ORDER OF THEIR CHOOSING, DESCRIBE THE SPELL THEY CAST TO OVERCOME THE OBSTACLE, DRAWING A CARD FOR EACH DETAIL THEY INCLUDE.

Step Four

THE PROTAGONIST AND THE ANTAGONIST COMPARE HIGH CARDS (COMPARING NEXT HIGHEST CARDS IN A TIE).

IF THE PROTAGONIST DOES NOT SUCCEED, THE ANTAGONIST GAINS A POINT AND NARRATES HOW THE SPELL GOES WRONG IN SOME WAY, OR HOW IT WASN'T ENOUGH. THE PROTAGONIST TRIES AGAIN BY CASTING A NEW SPELL OR CORRECTING THE OLD SPELL. THE PROTAGONIST WILL KEEP THE OLD CARDS AS WELL AS DRAW NEW CARDS FOR NEW DETAILS (UP TO SIX STILL).

WHEN THE PROTAGONIST SUCCEEDS, THEY NARRATE HOW THE SCENE ENDS FOR THEIR CHARACTER, AND GAIN TWO POINTS.

Step Five

EACH PLAYER KEEPS TRACK OF THEIR POINTS (I RECOMMEND WITH FACE DOWN CARDS), AND REMOVES THE REST OF THE CARDS THEY DREW FROM THEIR DECK.

Repeat

REPEAT THESE STEPS UNTIL THE FIRST PLAYER RUNS OUT OF CARDS IN THEIR DECK. OR UNTIL YOU FEEL LIKE IT. THEN IT'S TIME TO SEE WHO WINS.

Ending The Game

Points

I BET YOU WANTED TO KNOW WHAT THOSE POINTS WERE FOR, HUH? EACH PLAYER SHUFFLES THEIR DECK OF CARDS, AND THEN DRAWS A NUMBER OF CARDS EQUAL TO THE NUMBER OF POINTS THEY EARNED. ALL PLAYERS COMPARE THEIR HIGHEST CARDS, COMPARING NEXT HIGHEST CARDS IN A TIE. THE PLAYER WITH THE HIGHEST CARD IS THE WINNER.

Final Scene

AT THIS POINT, FINGERS CROSSED, YOU HAVE CHARACTERS YOU CARE ABOUT, A STORY THAT BEGS TO BE FINISHED, AND A GOAL NO ONE HAS ATTAINED YET. THE PLAYERS COLLABORATIVELY DESCRIBE THE FINAL CLIMACTIC SCENE, BRINGING ALL THE CHARACTERS TOGETHER. ANY LOOSE ENDS SHOULD BE BROUGHT UP AT THIS POINT, LETTING THE WIZARDS (AND THE PLAYERS) TIE THEM UP.

Thank You

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR PLAYING THIS STUPID GAME I MADE.

