

# PRINCESS WITH A CURSED SWORD

A solo role-playing game by Anna Anthropy

*A figure stands in an ancient ruin, bare feet on crumbling stone. Her gown far too fine, her sword much too dark.*

At a princess' coming of age ceremony, an uninvited guest gifted her a sword, then vanished, laughing, into smoke. She cannot put it down until she finds the place it came from. So she has come.

## Before playing, make sure you have:

- A tarot deck, freshly shuffled.
- Two coins from any land.
- Somewhere to record the story.

## WHO IS THE PRINCESS?

◇ **What does her gown signify?**  
*her dual heritage, her humble beginnings, her house's unchecked extravagance, her religious studies, or something else.*

◇ **Why are her feet bare?**  
*in penance, easier to leap and climb, raised where there's no need of shoes, highwaymen, or something else.*

◇ **What does her sword want?**  
*blood, secrets, to see beauty twisted, to call forth the dead, or something else.*

◇ **What are her pronouns?**  
*she / her / hers, he / him / his, they / them / theirs, or something else.*

While this text uses *she / her*, a princess may have any pronouns so desired.

## CHRONICLING THE JOURNEY

As the princess EXPLORES THE RUINS, record her explorations. Write in third person, as though writing a fairy tale.

In some parts of the ruins, you may decide the princess faces an obstacle, threat or foe. In those cases, finish the passage after FACING A CHALLENGE.

Keep descriptions brief. What does the princess notice, feel, remember?

*The princess' own shadow mocked her, caricaturing her worst aspects. – But she had faced far worse ridicule as a poor tailor. She extinguished her torch, and her shadow, and crept forward in the dark.*

## EXPLORING THE RUINS

To explore the ruins, turn over the next card in the deck. Use the suit and card image to decide what the princess finds.

◇ **SWORDS:** white stone courts, a sudden noise, shadows and ghosts, precarious heights, menacing statues, blades.

◇ **WANDS:** dark halls, groaning wood, torchlight, yawning pits, glowing sigils, eyes in the dark, a locked door, teeth, fire.

◇ **CUPS:** overgrown gardens, deep water, creeping vines, a supernatural animal, strange dreams, lost souls, your shadow.

◇ **COINS:** tattered banners, an old library, grinding gears, a strange artifact, cloaked thieves, a caged bird, guarded treasure.

◇ **MAJOR ARCANA:** a shrine in disrepair, ancient rites, an altar, a sacrifice, a tomb, hollow voices, the attention of the gods.

## FACING A CHALLENGE

Whenever the princess is faced with a challenge, throw coins:

**1 if she is completely out of her depth,**

**2 if her past has prepared her, or**

**2 if she gives the sword what it wants.**

◇ If you throw no heads, the princess falters and barely escapes with her life.

◇ With just one head, she achieves her goal but it is tenuous or costly.

◇ With two heads, she achieves her goal with frightening prowess.

## RETURNING THE SWORD

Whenever you reveal a card, ask: Is this where the sword belongs? If so, decide:

◇ **The princess makes a sacrifice (what is it?) to break the curse.**

OR

◇ **The sword promises her something (what is it?) and she keeps it.**

Compose a brief epilogue: Who does the princess become, after her journey?

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