

A Tale for Passage

Kent Blue

A Tale for Passage is a roleplaying game about telling a story for two players. One player takes on the role of an Elder, the other of a Youth as they take a leisurely journey to the peak of the mountain on the border of their lands.

In Vanelle, creativity is valued above almost everything else. Some will say it *is* valued above everything, because what is life without creativity. Children are taught to be creative at a very young age through games and song. As they grow older, they are introduced to musical instruments and paint brushes. They take these tools and branch out on their own creative paths as they get older. But, the one constant in their life is storytelling. Because all art tells a story in some way.

Vanellians value storytelling so much it is part of their rite of passage into adulthood. On the eve of their 16th birthday, every child must share a Tale for Passage. A centuries old ritual; each child must accompany an Elder to the peak Mount Sighlar. The journey is not strenuous and is completed in 24 hours. During the journey, the Youth must create and share a story based on a prompt given to them by the Elder. Once the journey is completed, the story will not be wrote down or ever told again. It simply fades away with childhood.



[Ghost Presenter](#)

To play *A Tale for Passage*, you will need:

- 1 or 2 six-sided dice
- A standard deck of playing cards, Aces and Jokers removed
- 15-20 index cards
- Writing utensils
- A few sheets of scrap paper for hitting down notes
- (optional) a set of Rory's Story Cubes or similar storytelling dice

At the beginning of the game, the players will decide which role to play. Play the role of the Youth if you like telling a story with some guidance. Play the role of the Elder if you like asking questions to help shape a story.

Once roles have been selected, the Elder will remove the Aces and Jokers and shuffle the remaining cards. While this is happening, the Youth can jot down the name of their character, a brief description, and how they express themselves through art. After the deck is shuffled, the Elder will draw four cards. To create the prompt, select one number and one suit from the cards drawn. Combine the two elements to create the prompt for the story they wish to hear. See below:

Numerical Value

- 2 - 4: An optimistic tale...
- 5 - 7: A humorous tale...
- 8 - 10: A sorrowful tale...
- J - K: A fearful tale...

Suit

- ♥: ... about a relationship.
- ♦: ... about something of value.
- ♣: ... about a dark time.
- ♠: ... about finding what was lost.

After deciding what kind of tale they wish to hear, the Elder will write down the prompt they wish to present to the Youth. Custom dictates the prompt is given once the Elder and the Youth have stepped foot on the path that will take them to Mount Sighlar.

Example: Joni, playing as the Elder, draws four cards: 4♥, K♠, 2♣, 9♥. After some consideration, they decide they want to hear a sorrowful story about finding what was lost. Joni uses the ♠ and the 9. They write the prompt "A sorrowful tale about finding what was lost." on an index card and put it where the Youth player can easily see.

The Tale For Passage is told over five rounds of play. Each round represents a moment during the journey of the Elder and the Youth. While the focus of this game is the story being told, these moments during the walk can and should be roleplayed out. Take a moment to talk about how the Youth is feeling as they face their transition into adulthood. The Elder should reflect on their Tale for Passage, just not the story that was told.

Playing A Tale for Passage

During each round of play, the Youth will tell a story based on the prompt chosen by the Elder. The Youth will roll dice at the beginning of each round and consult the tables provided to help shape their tale. Elders in Vanellian culture often offer guidance on most matters. This is most true during the rite of passage. The Elder should ask questions about the story being told and offer suggestions at times.

Round One - A Tale’s Beginning - The Elder and the Youth walk the path that brings them to the base of Mount Sighlar. Each player should share a few details about the path. The Youth player, when ready, roll 2d6 or choose from the table below to establish some elements of this part of the tale. Once decided, write each element on a separate index card.

Setting		Character Traits	
1	On a far away planet.	1	Strong-willed and unyielding.
2	Across the sea, in unfamiliar land.	2	Reserved and insecure.
3	High in the clouds.	3	Daring and fearless.
4	In the depths of the earth.	4	Forlorn and dissatisfied.
5	On a floating city.	5	Blunt and honest.
6	In a nomadic caravan.	6	Comical and joyful.



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Round Two - A Winding Path Up and Up - A winding path takes the Elder and the Youth up the side of Mount Sighlar. Each player should talk about wildlife they have seen on the mountain. The Youth player, when ready, roll 2d6 or choose from the table below to establish some elements of this part of the tale. Once decided, write each element on a separate index card.

The conflict is...		The character...	
1	... an internal struggle.	1	... is prepared for the conflict.
2	... something once thought gone.	2	... will need to ask for help.
3	... hidden, yet known.	3	... must deal with this alone.
4	... will weigh heavy on everyone.	4	... knows how this will end.
5	... part of something larger.	5	... will have to search for answers.
6	... not as real as one may think.	6	... will not be the same after.

Round Three - The Peak of Mount Sighlar - The Elder and the Youth make camp for the night. They roll out their sheepskin sleeping mats beneath the stars. Each should take a moment to talk about what adulthood means to them. The Youth player, when ready, roll 2d6 or choose from the table below to establish some elements of this part of the tale. Once decided, write each element on a separate index card.

The climax...		The scene takes place...	
1	... happens & is resolved quickly.	1	... somewhere familiar.
2	... is dealt with easier than imagined.	2	... somewhere disadvantageous to the character.
3	... is unexpected.	3	... in a crowded place.
4	... involves a previously unknown thing.	4	... on the shore of a great lake.
5	... happens over many years..	5	... during chaos.
6	... is what the character wanted.	6	... before someone important.

Round Four - Traveling Home - The Elder and the Youth wake early the next morning and begin the journey back home. Each should talk about how they slept and what they dreamt about. The Youth player, when ready, roll 2d6 or choose from the table below to establish some elements of this part of the tale. Once decided, write each element on a separate index card.

One last moment...		The outcome of which ...	
1	... of tension arises.	1	... leaves the character hopeful.
2	... with someone special.	2	... causes heartache.
3	... of peace.	3	... will bring many together.
4	... of genuine happiness.	4	... is not initially clear.
5	... to be alone.	5	... angers someone.
6	... to tell someone the truth.	6	... leads to a revelation.

Round Five - A Tale's End - There is no rolling of dice this round as the Youth's story should have a natural conclusion stemming from the prior rounds. The Youth should tell how the story ends on their own terms. Write down a one or two sentence summary of the conclusion on an index card. The Elder and the Youth return home from their journey. They go to the Elder's house where a ceremonial drink will be consumed and then the Elder will present the Youth as an adult. Talk about how these events play out.



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Game's End

After the Youth is presented as an Adult, take a moment to debrief. Talk about the events that occurred during the game and the Tale for Passage that was told. Once both players feel satisfied, take the index cards that were filled out and destroy them. This is symbolic of the Tale for Passage never being told again.

Speed Walking Variant

The frame of *A Tale for Passage* follows the classic 5 act Dramatic Structure in storytelling. If players are looking to play a quicker game, utilize the Speed Walking variant rules. These rules loosely follow a three act structure frame, which means omitting Round Two and combining Round Four and Round Five.

Story Cube Variant

For a more free form storytelling experience, the youth can roll a set of *Rory's Story Cubes* or similar storytelling dice instead of rolling on the tables each round. Use the results of the roll to find inspiration for your tale.

Notes

This game is mostly inspired by the stories I told as a child to my friends and family. I don't remember any of them anymore and I think that is what made them special. They exist only in that moment.

Game Chef Ingredients

Theme

Lost Stories: The game is all about stories told and then lost.

Ingredients

Blunt: A Character Trait possible in Round One.

Weigh: As part of a possible conflict framing in Round Three.

Sheepskin: Sleeping mat material as mentioned in Round Three

Speed Walking: The name of a faster play variant.

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