



A SWORD QUEEN GAME

a sword queen game

BY JAMILA R. NEDJADI

by jamila r. nedjadi



A DREAM AWAITS YOU  
a dream awaits you

**The dream has teeth, long and sharp.** It has eyes, soft and wet. It has hands cold and tender. Skin to skin, the dream feels like a veil, an almost, a maybe, a gentle lie happy enough to stand in for your truth.

**It's a dream that forges a sword in your heart,** a dream that bleeds in your stead. It's a dream that stands in the light, a twisted shadow streaming free and undefined behind it.

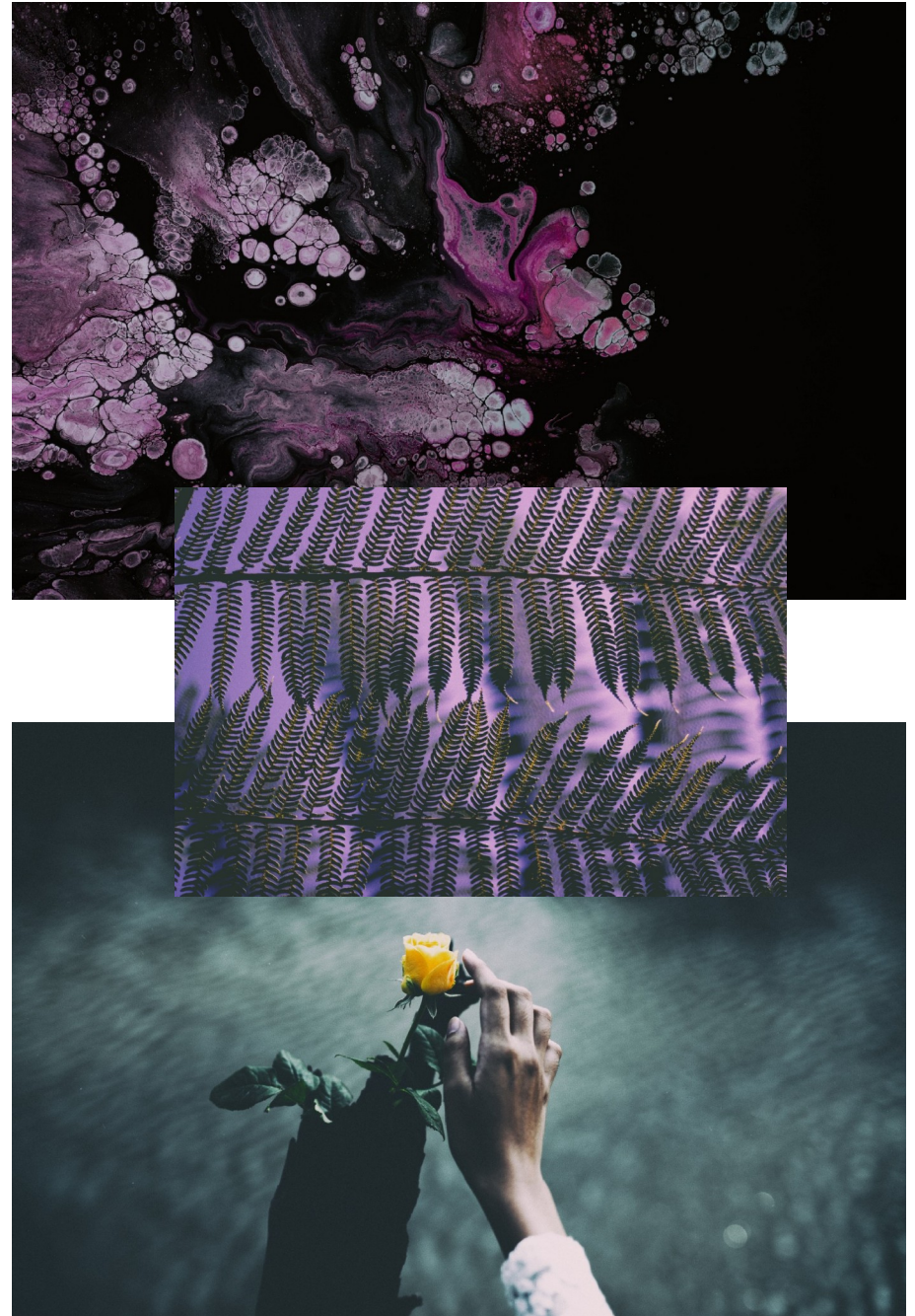
**It's a dream that has asked for nothing,** before this point.

**You awake to it.** In the dark, your body lies sleeping on the behind behind you. In this place, the moon is a deep and forgotten shade of lilac, and it sings to itself gently as the stars flow like tears from its hallow eyes.

**You awake to it.** Your body stirs and continues dreaming, you see the cord growing softly between the two of you. From your body's eyelashes grow the faintest fern like strands, dancing in the air, moving towards you with great purpose. The cord strengthens now, bolder now, deadlier now. It wraps around your soul, and it makes a sound like your ex-lover's sigh, the last one they made before they left forever.

**You awake to it.** And the dream stands in the doorway. It's surrounded by mirror shards and rotting flowers. It smells of the sand's memory of the ocean. It looks at you with no eyes, and you feel yourself changing to suit its gaze.

**You awake to it.** It's time to go, my love.









# TO BEGIN THE QUEST

## to begin the quest

Take a *standard playing card deck*. *Six sided dice of two different colors*. Preferably red and black. (But Spirit will understand if you deviate a little, really.) *Paper*, to draw your map on. *A pencil*, to draw with. *An object of protection*. This is a photograph of someone or someplace forgotten, that you yearn for. A gift given that carries heartbreak now. A flower pressed between two books. A letter stained by time. Something, anything, that will ground you. That will bring you back home, should you stray too far. *If you are desperate and there is nothing to bring you home: on a piece of paper write your name. Then write your hidden name, the name you call yourself when no one is looking at you.*

*Go to a place that is safe.* That is quiet. Where you cannot be disturbed. But a place you can leave easily, if you suddenly need to hear a physical breath, to trace symbols in a warm hand, to lightly touch a shoulder. *Someone else may go on this quest with you. But they must stay silent, and may only draw cards for you. If they wish to say something, they must write it down.*

Take the deck. Split the cards into seven piles, savoring the repetitive motion. Let your mind wander where it may. Regather the cards as you like (and if a card falls out: set it aside. This card belongs to Spirit now, and cannot be taken back. It's a token of you, proof that you exist.) Set the cards aside, and knock on the deck three times.

***Knock, knock, knock.***

*Hello, Spirit. I am here. I am ready.*

Place the dice next to the deck. The quest begins now.





# THE DREAM AWAITS

## the dream awaits

The dream comes close to you now. It breathes along your neck, wanting, wanting. It sighs and pulls back, and you feel your heart open up now. Like a flower now. Like a flower searching for the sun, the sun long gone, the sun the moon sings to searching and searching and sighing and blooming and now the dream sheds and sheds and sheds and comes true and now

*Draw a card, beloved.*

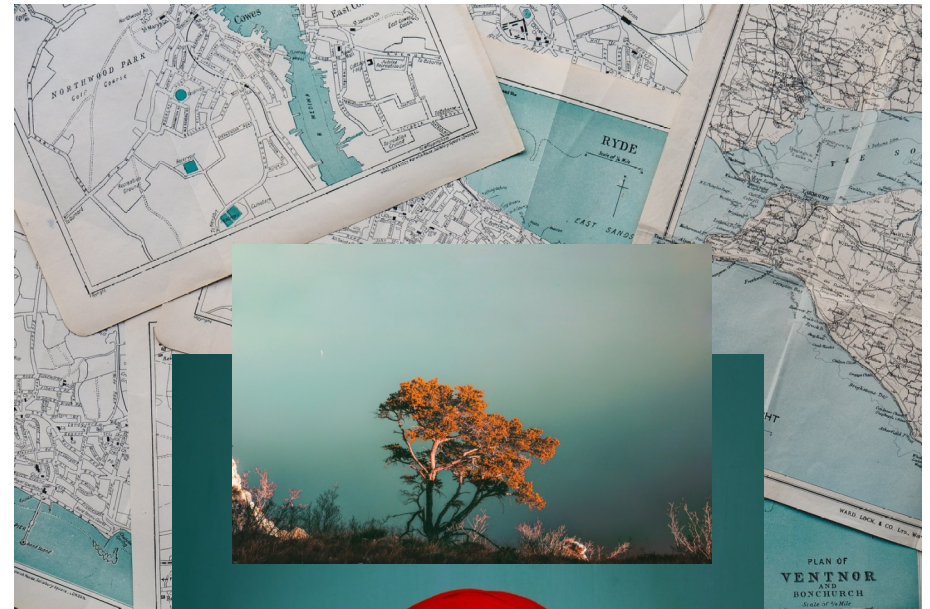
### WHAT IS YOUR DREAM LIKE?

- ♠ It's **sharp** and **many-edged**, it grins with too many teeth, and reaches out with too many hands, it's many eyes searching.
- ♣ It's **warm** and **flickering**, like candlelight, but threatening to burn and burn and burn everything around it careful now.
- ♥ It's **soft** but **barely there**, straining against something unseen. It's gentle and tastes like summer fruit, dripping and dripping.
- ♦ It's **shining** and **earthy**, smells of the rain through the trees and feels like ash coating between the eyes a cross of protection now.

*Draw another card, my forgotten one.*

### WHAT DOES YOUR DREAM WANT?

- ♠ A sense of **justice** long deserved, vengeance if necessary.
- ♣ A reason to **breathe**, a light at the end of a long tunnel.
- ♥ A **kiss** from someone or something forbidden.
- ♦ **Tokens** of your love, proof of your right to continue existing.







*Draw two cards, there is no turning back.*

**WHO GUIDES YOU ON THIS JOURNEY?**

- ♠ An **angel** with sword and shield. Their clothing torn, blood streaming from their eyes. They glow with righteous anger.
- ♣ A **demon** of shadow and smoke. They smile patiently, twirling an echo of your soul between their fingers.
- ♥ A **love long lost**, taken by time or death. They stand with you now, smiling, as if they had never left. As if they will never again.
- ♦ A **spirit** unformed, curious and confused with the summoning. It asks you if all the papers are in order, if you have filled all forms.

*Draw three cards, get ready to fight my love.*

**WHAT DO YOUR GUIDES GIFT YOU WITH?**

- ♠ A **weapon**, strong and true; OR a **secret**, sharp and dark.
- ♣ A **light** to guide the way; OR a **reason** to come home.
- ♥ A **flask** of healing water; OR a **kiss** of passion and sweetness.
- ♦ A **soul coin** with your name on it; OR a **promise** you must keep.

*Draw one card, the portal reveals itself.*

**HOW DO YOU ENTER THE OTHER WORLD?**

- ♠ Someone **whispers** your name, and a forest grows around you.
- ♣ A **star** casts its light, the moonlight creates a path just for you.
- ♥ A **memory** comes undone, and within it the road leads home.
- ♦ A **strange house** builds itself, and a door slowly creaks opens.



# THE MAP IS REVEALED

## the map is revealed

The world opens up to you now. It's been asleep, for a long time. Sleeping under the tyranny of your waking dream, suffocating in silence and fading dying rotting twisting but

*Roll the dice, my precious.*

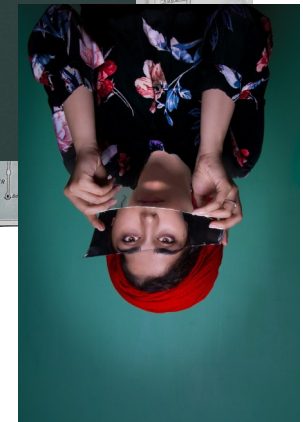
*The number that shows on the red die is the number of miracles that await you, yearning to be discovered. Pull that many cards, refer to the oracle below, and draw them on your map.*

*The number that shows on the black die is the number of curses that lurk in between the lines. Pull that many cards, refer to the oracle on the next page. In the corners of your map, in reaching letters, write down what darkness awaits.*

*Draw the cards beloved, create your miracles.*

### WHAT WONDERS AWAIT YOU?

- ♠ *Oasis of truths; soldiers from a forgotten war; a library of books written in light language; singing saints; paintings as portals.*
- ♣ *Structures of power; beings of fire and dance; sunsets trapped in spells; mountains with faces, demons turned into gentle muses.*
- ♥ *People of the land; children with ancient eyes, wise ones with no faces; colorful beings of gold and purity; the forgotten ones.*
- ♦ *Treasures beyond compare; memories encased in glass beings; delicate gem-machines; souls encased in forests; golden waters.*







*Draw the cards my dearheart, spin your curses.*

### **WHAT HORRORS AWAIT YOU?**

- ♠ **Blood and bone;** creatures with skin made of teeth; doppelgangers with the longest knives; beasts of nightmares.
- ♣ **Storms and disaster;** screeching lightning; rains that burn away lies; floods of vines; skeletal forests uprooting themselves in anger.
- ♥ **Memories and despair;** ghosts thirsting for life; fallen angels bleeding black; an army of you bearing powerful witchcraft.
- ♦ **War and violence;** blazing ships that plow through land and sky; Valkyries twisted by hate; a horde of animals tearing flesh.

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***The world is laid bare, trembling beneath your fingers, praying for your bravery.*** The whispers urge you ever forward, and your soul shivers in response. In the undiscovered expanse, destiny awaits your hand.

How will your soul journey onwards? What shaman within you awakens, what lingering blessing waits and waits and waits beneath the fragile surface of your consciousness?

(This is the moment now, now,  
*now, if you want this to remain a game, allow your eyes to defocus  
and read on. There is nothing for you here but my love if you  
desire this ritual to become, to become,  
to become real then whisper to yourself under the breath) or in  
the ear of one next to you whisper whisper whisper to them (*

***Soul, I release you from the shackles I created for you. I befriend the fear, and call it by another name: an unnamed dream. Rise, Rise, Rise in me, and take a name for yourself***

(draw a card, and write down this name on the card. Shuffle it back into the deck, and grant it luck and good fortune)



*The Journey - Spell is Cast*



THE RULES OF THE QUEST ARE RULES BUT THEY ARE NOT  
STONE UNYIELDING, THEY ARE LIKE THE AIR AWAITING  
YOUR BREATH. BEND, BREAK, DISCARD THE RULES AS YOU  
LIKE. HOLD THEM CLOSE, CHERISH THEM, AS YOU LIKE.



# THE RULES OF QUEST

## the rules of quest

*Start somewhere, anywhere, on the map.*

Speak out loud of your journey. Your voice soft, low, the softest shudder of a chant settling into your throat, your stomach, the seat of your soul, your soul, your soul it reaches now and moves the hand the hand the hand picks up the pencil and it draws it draw it draws circles within circles shapes within shapes curses within blessings mazes of the mind of the heart of the spirit and **when the pencil reaches a miracle on the map**, stop chanting. *Stop and*

*stop and*

*stop and*

draw a card, my brave one, my beloved, my all, my heart.

*Draw a card and reveal all of your heart to me;*

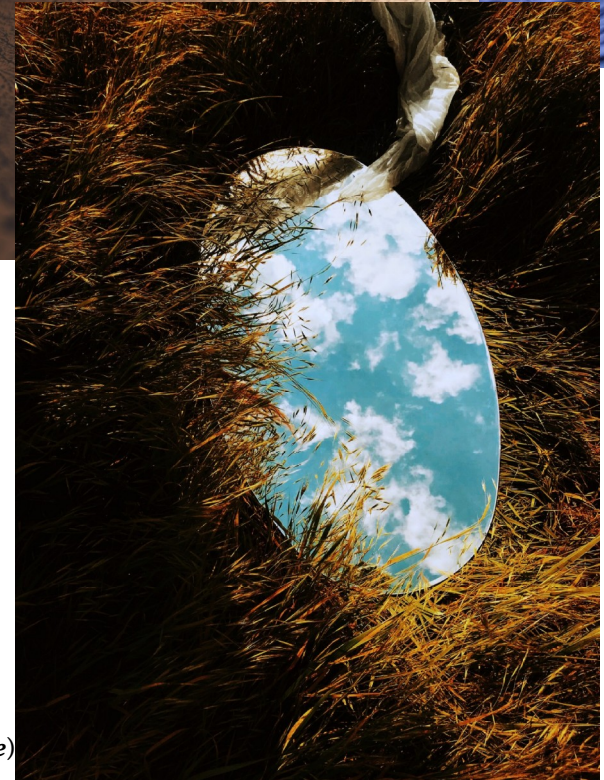
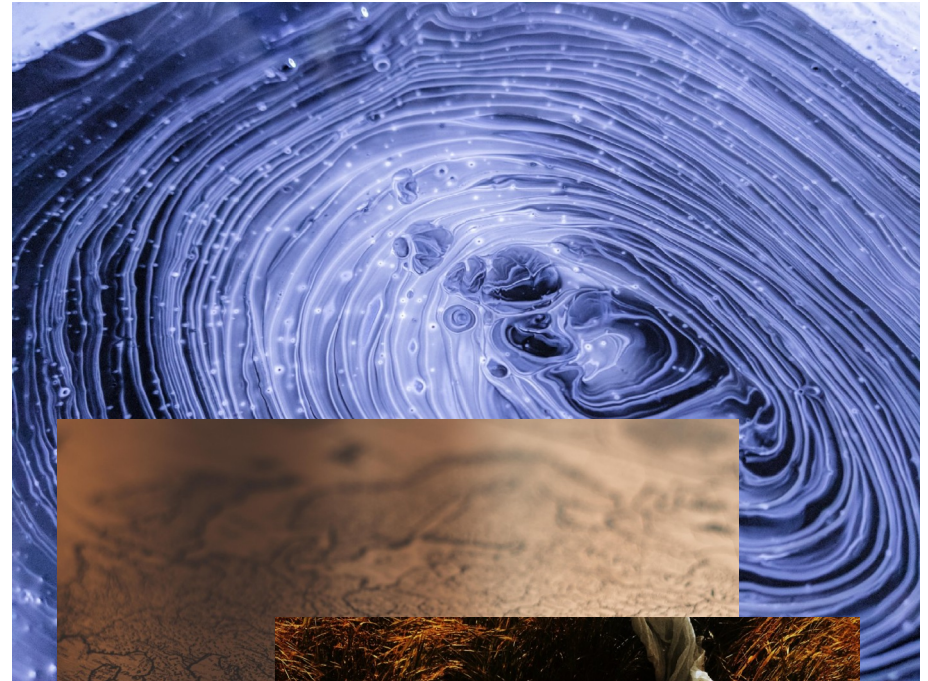
**DOES THE MIRACLE ACCEPT YOU AS YOU ARE?**

♠ **NO AND;** *a curse is released. It crashes through and makes demands. Look to the corners of your map. Choose a nightmare, and unleash it. What disaster strikes? Something precious is taken, corrupted, destroyed. How are you left haunted?*

♣ **NO BUT;** *one of your guides proves the worth of your soul. In doing so, they are destroyed. Should both guides have been destroyed, discard this card. Return home, journey unfulfilled.*

♥ **YES AND;** *they have been waiting for you for so long, so long, my love. What celebrations, miracles, and victories await you?*

♦ **YES BUT;** *they ask you to change. Form, speech, song, desire, fear, something, anything. How do you change? What is lost and what is gained through the change?*







*Once a miracle is explored, blossomed, come to life, birthed again in your mind and takes residence in your soul then erase it from the map. **The miracle is spent, gone forever, released to the processes of divine creation.** You may thank the Miracle, leave a token or sigil drawn on the map where it once was. The power spent is yours now. Cherish it, yes?*

Once the miracle is gone, allow your eyes to drop drop drop and allow the body to sway sway sway just a little just a touch just as much just as you pick up the pencil and whisper of the journey chanting again from a place deep and lingering and soft and precious and yielding and surrendering to the magic to the magic to the magic and do this again and again and again **stopping**

stopping **stopping**

stopping **when**

when the lines of your pencil hits another miracle. Draw a card again, my love, the page before remains the same, the oracle guiding the journey as needed.

Continue continue continue the journey the journey the journey for as long as your soul can bear. If the soul grows tired and desires to return home announce it, tear apart the map. Crumple it, burn it, throw it away. Allow someone else to take this journey for you, my love. I will do it for you, my love.

**Ah but, you ask, what if I make it all the way to the end? What if every miracle is erased, its power taken into me?**

***This is your apocalypse.***

Lovingly crafted, dreamed of, prayed for. And in this apocalypse you will shatter, every blackened mirror shard falling away, falling away falling away and turning into dust into dust into

Take the map. Quickly, don't hesitate. Take a deep breath, and on what remains, write your name again and again. Write your name, until something changes, shifts, bleeds, sings, dances.



TAKE THE PAPER, FOLD IT, AGAIN AND AGAIN AND AGAIN UNTIL IT YIELDS NO LONGER AND THEN HOLD IT TO THE LIPS, WHISPERING YOUR NAME.

(IF YOUR NAME HAS CHANGED BY NOW, WHISPER THAT NAME INSTEAD. LET IT BE FREE, GIVE IT WINGS, GIVE IT THE LOVE, THE LOVE I HAVE FOR YOU, THAT I'VE ALWAYS HAD FOR YOU.)



(page eleven)

*The Journey-Spell is Broken, Spell is Broken, The Journey-Spell is Broken*



# COMING BACK HOME

## coming back home

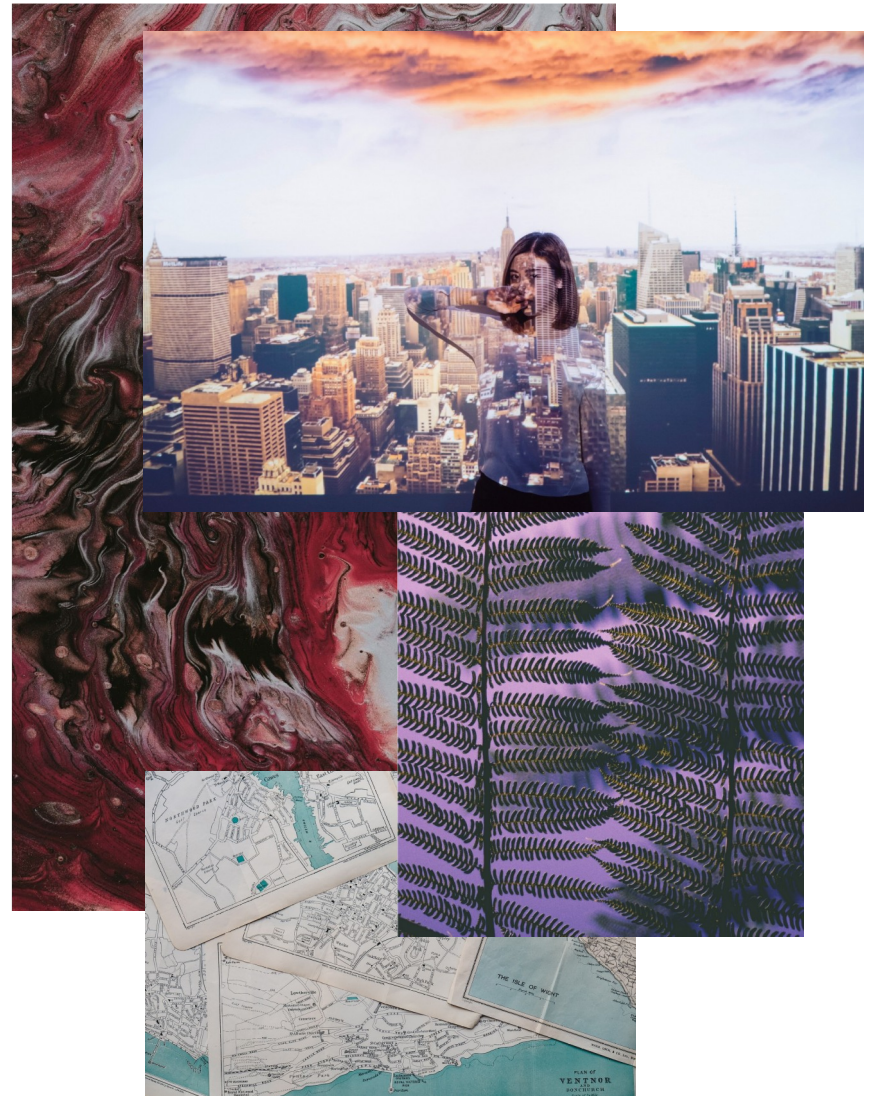
Take the paper. **If someone was playing with you**, give it to them. Thank them for their soul, their presence, the space they offered. For standing with you, dream to dream to dream to.

**If you played alone**, thank yourself. Be kind, and love you, as much as I love you. More than I could ever. Be kind, **be kind**.

**If there is someone you pray for**, wish for, long for, worry for, sing for, smile for, if there is someone who does the same for you give them this paper instead. But not in person, no. Place it under a pillow, dream a dream of them. It may take many nights. It may take forever. It may take a moment. Once the dream is dreamed leave the paper in a forest. Plant the seeds of your beauty, your bravery, your miracles and curses. Bless every journeyman that makes it way through the forest, be it a forest of trees or a forest of buildings or a forest of walls or a forest of the sky.

*If you made this game into a ritual, you wrote your name on one of these cards. Was it drawn? Did it remain hidden? What does this mean to you? Regardless, take the card now. Erase your name, if you like. Keep it there, if you like. Keep the card, pull it away from the rest of the deck, rendering the deck incomplete and unplayable. Or leave it there, a strange token, proof of your ritual. **Or give the card to someone you love. Perhaps that someone is you.***

*Thank you for your magic.*





## **CREDITS**

Many thanks to *The Blind Sword* for your  
endless inspiration, kindness, magic.

*Maria Mison* for your support and sheer power.  
The Sword Prince makes games at <https://mariabumby.itch.io/>

*Matthew Arcilla*, who guides me through love  
and calls my soul by its most precious name.

### **SWORD QUEEN GAMES is**

by *Jamila R. Nedjadi*. I am a Filipino game designer, queer and non-binary.  
I am a Reiki-Shaman, and enjoy leading others through shamanic journeys.  
This is a game that is not a game, a game that is a ritual, a game that holds  
some of these shamanic totems and paths. Thank you for your journey.

*Soul Quest* will be playtested and refined. To keep track of this, please feel free to  
follow me on Twitter (@temporalhiccup) or itch.io (<https://temporalhiccup.itch.io/>).  
You can also become a patron at <https://www.patreon.com/swordqueengames>,  
this game was made for my patrons as a timed exclusive.

Special thanks to my King of Swords Patrons:  
*Floo Floo, Minea, and Grasswatch Games!*

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