

WIZARDS AREN'T GENTLEMEN

By James and Elizabeth Iles



LET THE MAGIC BEGIN!

Wizards Aren't Gentlemen tells stories in the mould of Clark Ashton Smith and Jack Vance. They're set in a world where miraculous events are commonplace and eccentric mages feud with each other dismissive of the mortals toiling below. Wizards have a society of their own with complex social rules, kept in check by grim Inquisitors.

Aim for a tone of high fantasy meets academic infighting. Jostle with the other wizards for status, expand your magical power, and attempt to gain your heart's desire. Feel free to include elements from your favourite fantasy works, but remember these principles:

- 1) Magic can work miracles.
- 2) Magic makes you weird.
- 3) Magic doesn't stop you from feeling lovesick, envious and arrogant.
- 4) A problem solved with magic may come back to bite you.

GOAL OF THE GAME

The goal of *Wizards Aren't Gentlemen* is to tell a fun story together. As **players** you should build on each other's contributions and make sure each character has a chance to shine.

Your **characters**, however, are much more short-sighted and petty. As you go you'll try to use Assets (yours and other's) to advance your Goals. When a Goal's advanced enough, you'll attempt to achieve it, but in doing so risk losing the Goal forever. Once someone's hit their Goals, the game is up and you'll tell an epilogue that resolves your story.

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5 character decks
(9 cards each)



15 Location cards



25 Asset and Goal cards



5 Basic Move and reference cards

GAME SETUP

- 1) Each player picks a character deck.
- 2) Each player picks deck options: two deck moves, positive and negative relationships, and personal style. Flip unchosen moves facedown.
- 3) Each player gets a Basic Move and Rule Reference card.
- 4) Shuffle the Asset and Goal cards and deal out one more than there are players. Starting left of the dealer, go clockwise picking a card until one is left. Deal out the same number and pick cards going anticlockwise starting with the dealer until everyone has two cards. Flip the remaining cards over for use as ♀ tokens.
- 5) Put the two starting Locations (*The Wizard's Tower* and *The Tavern*) in the centre of the table.
- 6) Start play with the Apprentice (*or the youngest player*) framing the first scene (*see Scene Framing Procedure*).

THE CONVERSATION

Playing *Wizards Aren't Gentlemen* takes the form of a conversation: you'll describe your actions, other players will describe their character's response, and the story you're building will continue onward.

When describing your actions, you can do so as a narrator ("*Cinder asks Hilda how she's doing*") or an actor ("*High magus Hilda! How is your work going?*"). Either works: go with what you're comfortable with!

When someone interacts with the environment or with minor characters, the whole group decides what happens.

On top of the conversation, you'll have **move cards**. These let you declare what happens in specific situations by spending a limited stock of **tokens**.

GAME STRUCTURE

The game is broken down into **scenes**. Each scene one character is the **focus**, and the scene is about whether they achieve a particular aim of theirs. When you're the focus your abilities are refreshed to help you push for your Goals, but everyone else can further their own Goals if they're canny and find a way.

Each scene is set in a **Location**. The game comes with 15 of them, complete with suggested characters you might see there and events that might happen, but feel free to make up your own.

Instead of framing a scene as a focus, you can activate your **Trouble Move**. This creates a brief interlude where we see things getting more troublesome and hectic for your character, but you come out of it with extra abilities to use!

For expanded rules, play examples and FAQs, visit ufopress.co.uk/GentleWizards

MOVE CARDS

Most *move cards* will have the following:

A trigger. The circumstances when the move comes into play. If you meet the trigger of one of your move cards, *you must carry on and resolve the rest of it.*

Something that happens when it's activated. This is guaranteed to happen, modified by your choices.

Optional extra effects you can get by spending tokens. You can activate as many extra effects as you can *spend* tokens for.

TOKENS

You'll start with three facedown move cards. These cards each show two token icons: *grace* ♡, *wits* ♢, *skulduggery* ♣ or *knowhow* ♠. The cards can be spent as either type shown.

Excellence tokens (★) can be used as *any* token type. To get some in your hand use your *Trouble Move* or achieve a Goal.

Whenever you gain a ★ token, swap it with one of your free facedown moves and flip that card over. From then on you can use that move as well as your starting ones.

Free tokens are in your hand, available to be *spent*.

When you *spend* a token put it in your discard pile.

To *bank* a token put it under the specified card.

Banked tokens are *committed* and can only be *spent* in specific ways.

When a card is *refreshed*, it's *free* again.

SCENE FRAMING PROCEDURE

Refresh all your *spent* tokens, and decide if you want to activate your *Trouble Move*. If not:

- 1) Decide on your Aim: a step towards your Goal that's doable in a single scene, with clear success and failure conditions.
- 2) Pick a Location and fill in extra details.
- 3) Decide which characters are there, and suggest minor characters for the players whose characters are absent (they can make their own if they wish).
- 4) When everyone's ready, begin the scene!
- 5) When it's clear the Aim is met or thwarted, the scene ends. Pass *focus* clockwise.



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ACHIEVING YOUR GOALS

At the end of a scene, any character that used any Asset to make progress towards a Goal can *bank* a ★ token under the Goal. Each Asset can only be used to advance a given Goal once.

If a Goal has been advanced at least once and you're the *focus*, you can declare the Goal as your Aim to try and complete it.

Gain the banked ★ tokens to use during this scene. Everyone else declares an obstacle in the way to achieving your goal. You must use moves to overcome every obstacle in order to succeed - not to mention the actions of the other characters!

If you succeeded, gain the Goal as a permanent ★ token, flipping a facedown move card as normal.

If you failed, discard the Goal. You've missed your chance! Draw another card and describe how the new Asset enters your life.

Either way, lose the ★ tokens you banked on this goal.

ENDING THE GAME

If someone achieves both of their Goals, the game is over. Going clockwise from the focus, each player narrates an epilogue for their character that ties up their plot threads.

Include a rise in status, good fortune or happy outcome for each met goal, and a public embarrassment, stroke of bad luck or fall from grace for each unmet or failed goal. Don't make things too final: there's always room for another tale!

TIPS

For the first round of scenes, everyone should have a go at playing minor characters and helping adjudicate move card use. Try having only half of the characters present in any one scene.

It's useful to have paper to hand to write down the names of recurring characters and location details.

If you're not the focus, go into a scene with a question that centres the focus: "How will they react if I do X?", "How can I get them to help me do Y?", and so on. This'll help you drive the scene, keep it entertaining, and work out when it's time to end it.

Edit aggressively: start scenes as close to their crux as you can, and wind them up before people start spinning their wheels.

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