

chaotic shiny productions presents

5 minute mini-games

for those times when the dm is doing something
else for a few minutes and there's nothing
nearby that you're allowed to blow up

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Simple Games

A Merry Jest – 2 players

Requires: nothing

Description: Players take turns telling jests, trying to make one another laugh while avoiding laughing themselves. The first one to laugh loses.

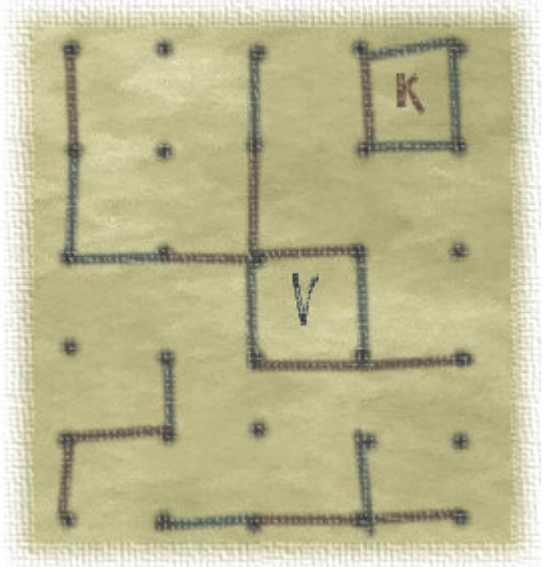
Rules: Each player makes a Charisma check against the other player's Will defense. These checks happen simultaneously. Any player who has had two successful checks made against them laughs. Ties are possible.



Castles and Cornerstones – 2+ players

Requires: a writing surface and utensil

Description: The game board is drawn as a series of dots – cornerstones – arrayed in a grid. Players take turns drawing in one wall between cornerstones. A player who completes a castle – draws the fourth wall of a box – places their initial in the castle, and draws another wall before ending their turn. This can cause chain reactions. The player who owns the most castles at the end of the game wins.



Rules: Decide on a number of rounds based on the size of the grid. Each round is an opposed Intelligence check. Whichever player has won the most checks at the end of the game owns the most castles, and wins. Ties are possible.



Hand Jousting – 2 players

Requires: nothing

Description: Players clasp hands with their index finger free, then attempt to touch one another with said finger. The first person to score a touch wins.

Rules: Players make a series of opposed Dexterity checks. The first player to win two in a row wins.

Rockball – 2+ players

Requires: a large water skin, rocks

Description: The water skin starts halfway filled with large rocks. Each player catches the skin, puts another rock inside it, takes a large step back, and then throws the skin to another player. The last player to drop the skin or fail to throw it far enough to reach another player wins.

Rules: The first player to throw the skin makes a Strength check versus a moderate DC, then picks another player. That player makes a Strength check against the previous DC + 2, then picks another player, and so on. A player who fails a Strength check is out. The last player to be out wins.



Stone, Scroll, Flame – 2 players

Requires: nothing

Description: Players simultaneously form hands into the shape of either a stone, scroll, or flame. The flame burns the scroll, the scroll contains a spell which shatters the stone, and the stone smothers the small flame.

Rules: Players make an opposed Insight check to guess one another's moves. Beating the other player's check by 5 or less results in a tie. Beating the check by more results in a win.

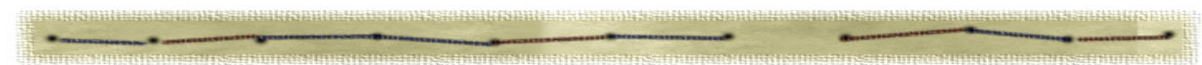


Thrag's Good Idea – 2+ players

Requires: hot coals

Description: Each player holds out one hand palm up, and uses their free hand to put coals into the other players' hands. Any player who drops their coals or cries out in pain loses.

Rules: The first round, each player makes a Constitution check versus a moderate DC. Players who fail, lose. Players who succeed make a Constitution check versus the previous round's DC + 4. This continues until all players but one have failed. Ties are possible if the last players fail in the same round.



Standard Games

Caltrops – 2+ players

Requires: a bag of small caltrops and a small ball

“I think I can get six! One, two, threefourfive- yeowch!”

Description: Players scatter the caltrops on the ground, then take turns naming a number, bouncing the ball, and trying to gather that many caltrops in one hand before catching the ball. The winner is the player who has gathered the most caltrops once they’ve all been picked up.



Rules: Set a number of rounds based on how many caltrops are available. The first player to go rolls an Intelligence check for how many caltrops they think they can pick up, then a Dexterity check to pick up that many caltrops. If they beat an easy DC with the Intelligence check, the Dexterity check is versus a hard DC. If they beat a moderate DC, the Dexterity check is versus a moderate DC, and if the Intelligence check beats a hard DC, then the Dexterity check is versus an easy DC. If the Intelligence check fails, the Dexterity check is versus a hard DC with a -5 penalty.

If the Dexterity check succeeds, the player has picked up the correct number of caltrops without cutting themselves, and gains a point. If the check fails, they have either picked up the wrong number of caltrops, cut themselves, or failed to catch the ball. Either way, they must scatter the caltrops back on the ground. Then the next player goes.

The winner is the one with the most points (caltrops) after the set number of rounds. Ties are possible.

Drunken God’s Honest Truth – 2+ players

Requires: nothing

“It’s hardly as bad as it sounds – really! What young lad hasn’t planted stink bombs around the temple right before an especially boring holiday?”

Description: As its name suggests, Drunken God’s Honest Truth is usually played while drunk, describing exploits that also took place while intoxicated. Each player in the

circle names an experience – typically scandalous – and then each other player must answer “true” or “false” about whether they have had that experience. If only one player answers “true,” that player (or, in some versions, all players who answered “true”) must tell the story behind the answer.

Rules: Either each player rolls a Wisdom check against a randomly determined DC (roll a d20 + half the average level of those playing) or all players roll an opposed Wisdom check. Each player who fails to beat the DC, or the single player who rolls lowest in an opposed check, must tell the story behind why they answered “true.”

In the actual game, the question would have been asked and the answers all determined beforehand. But for the purposes of roleplaying, it is more interesting to have the answering player make up a question and the corresponding story from the character’s history on the spot. The failed Wisdom check represents a past failure of wisdom, not a present one.

The game has no set end point, winner, or loser; it continues until the players tire of it.

Shocking Stones – 2 players

Requires: special set of three enchanted stones, some means to hide the stones

“Ha, I’m too clever for you by half! It’s clearly the third shell. ... Augh! By the Great Alchemist’s lanterns, that hurt.”

Description: The arcanists’ version of Sovereigns, the players first engage in a riddling contest, then a challenge of skill.

Rules: The players tell riddles back and forth; the first one to miss an answer loses. This is represented by a series of opposed Intelligence checks (long game) or one opposed Intelligence check (short game). The riddle contest can also be themed, using Arcana, Religion, or History instead of a simple Intelligence check.

The winner then takes the set of three stones – two of which have been enchanted to shock whomever touches them – and hides them, often under cups or shells. He or she rearranges the stones as quickly as possible, making a Dexterity check opposed by the other player’s Wisdom check. (A Thievery check may be substituted for the Dexterity check, but things could end badly for that player should they be caught.)

If the Wisdom check beats the Dexterity check, that player picks up the safe stone. If not, they pick up one of the shocking stones and are shocked. The pair of stones can be set before the game to contain a predetermined amount of shocks between them – once that number is used up, whomever has been shocked the least wins. Ties are possible.

Sovereigns – 2 players

Requires: a reasonably flat surface, two coins

“Keep spinning, keep spinning... aww. Alright, your shot.”

Description: A popular game in training yards and taverns, Sovereigns is seen as the best way to show off one’s speed and toughness without actually getting in a brawl. Players strip off their gloves or gauntlets, then take turns keeping a coin spinning. Whoever is the first to fail gets the coin thrown at them, usually with some force. The loser is the first to bleed.

Rules: Both players ante a gold piece (or lesser coin), one of which is used for the game. The winner keeps both.

Each player takes turns hitting the gold piece to keep it spinning. For a short game, this can be one opposed Dexterity check. For a long game, each player makes a series of Dexterity checks at progressively harder DCs; the loser is the first to fail.

The winner makes a melee basic attack with the coin (improvised weapon) against the loser's AC (long game) or lowest defense (short game). If the attack hits, the other player loses a point. They then spin the coin again.

Each player starts with a number of points equal to their Constitution modifier + 2, minimum 1 point. (For short games at higher levels, this number can be halved.) The first player to reach 0 points loses.



Tall Tales – 2+ players

Requires: nothing (or a neutral judge)

“So then I said to the dragon, ‘Steal your gold? Of course not! I’m here about an investment proposition.’ Needless to say, that’s one mountain range I’m not keen on visiting again any time in the next few centuries.”

Description: A tavern favorite, anywhere that two bards meet that has drink and coin will likely see a game of Tall Tales break out. First, the bards try to outwit each other to

determine who gets a chance to tell their tale, then the winner of that contest describes his or her exploits for the adoring crowd.

Rules: Each player takes turns making a statement about themselves which is either the truth or a lie; the other player must guess which. This takes the form of a series of Bluff vs. Insight checks (long game), or one opposed Bluff check (short game or more than two players). Once one player fails, the winner gets a chance to tell their story.

This story is a tale full of colorful detail and derring-do about the character's adventures, and can be anywhere from entirely to not at all truthful. The teller must act out the tale as they tell it. This is accomplished by making three skill checks – any three different skills – against a moderate DC, or, if a judge is available, against a hard DC with bonuses granted by the judge for elaborate description.

Each successful check is a point. The game is played until one person amasses a predetermined number of points. Alternately, each point is represented by the loser (or the audience) buying the winner a drink, and the game continues until most or all participants have passed out.



Thrag's Great Idea – 2+ players

Requires: very sturdy mugs, ale

“Anything a human can do, a dwarf can do better, huh? Well no dwarf is gonna beat Thrag at THIS game.”

Description: Players take turns kicking a mug of ale off one another's heads. A player who misses the mug must drink it. The last player to fall unconscious, either from drunkenness or head injuries, wins. Popular among berserkers.

Rules: Players each roll a Charisma check to argue for who should go first – the lowest roll starts with the mug on their head, and the highest makes the first kick. The remaining characters kick in order from highest to lowest check. Kicking the mug is a Strength or Dexterity (whichever's higher) check against a moderate DC.

A successful check knocks the mug off. A check that misses by more than five injures the character with the mug on their head, and a critical fumble injures both characters and one random bystander. If the kicker missed, they must drink the ale, or pour themselves a new mug and drink that if the ale spilled. The kicking character then puts the mug on their head, and the next character kicks.

Each injury or mug of ale drunk adds 1 to the DC of all successive checks to kick the mug. When a character's total combined injuries and mugs equals their Constitution modifier plus their level, they pass out. The last one to pass out wins.

Complex Games

Possession – 5+ players

Requires: lots or some other way of making a hidden, random determination

The baron smiles. “Welcome, guests, to my solstice ball. Everyone draw lots, and watch your backs and your drinks. Let the game begin.”

Description: A game as popular in thieves’ dens as noble’s parties, Possession is a test of skill, deception, and insight. Each player draws lots to determine who is the Priest and who the Demon. Each night, the Demon creatively slaughters one other player, and each day, the Priest gets one chance to slay the Demon. The Cultists attempt to throw suspicion on Innocents, while the Innocents try to survive.

Rules: One player is the Priest, determined by rolling highest on an unmodified d20 roll. The Priest closes his or her eyes while the remaining players roll dice again – the lowest roll is the Demon. Each other player then writes down somewhere hidden whether they are a Cultist or an Innocent.

Each round, the Priest briefly closes their eyes while the Demon makes a Stealth check versus the Priest’s passive Perception, and points to another player, who is killed. The Priest then opens their eyes, and the now-deceased player informs the Priest of their own grisly death, and also if the Priest noticed anything (the Demon failed the Stealth check).

The remaining players then roll Charisma checks to try and convince the Priest of whom they believe is possessed. The Priest then chooses a player that they suspect is the Demon. The Priest rolls the higher of their Wisdom or Intelligence modifier against a hard DC, with a +2 bonus if they noticed something during the night, and an additional +3 bonus if their suspicion agrees with that of the player who rolled the highest Charisma check.



If the Priest’s check succeeds, the accused must reveal whether or not they are the Demon. If the check fails, the Priest has no idea. The Priest may then slay the accused player, or choose to spend another day investigating.

If the Priest slays the Demon, the Priest and any surviving Innocents win. If more than two-thirds (rounded up) of the other players die, either due to the Demon’s slaughter or the Priest’s executions, the Demon and any surviving Cultists win.

About the Author

Hannah Lipsky has been writing since she first picked up a pencil, and gaming since the summer before high school. Her first character was a 1st edition D&D mage who didn't know magic missile. She's come a long way since then, and wreaked havoc across multiple systems.

She got her start writing and editing for the Roleplaying Tips e-zine, and has a few scribblings in Goodman Games' Book of Rituals. She's always dreamed about making a living doing what she loves, this is all a part of making that dream come true.

She currently lives in upstate NY with a berserker, a palawizard, a very patient non-gamer, and a cat.

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