

The Trial of the Taming Spires: Revise Documentation

Game Rules

Objective

Be the first player to collect all 10 numbered cards (Ace–10) from your chosen suit (Pumpkins, Ghosts, Bats, or Imps).

Materials Needed

- The 56 Minor Arcana cards from the Halloween Tarot (Imps, Bats, Ghosts, Pumpkins).
 - One 6-sided die (D6).
 - Physical coins to represent Treat Points (TP).
 - Player cheat sheet cards that explain rolls, actions, and powers.
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Game Setup

Separate the Court Cards

Remove all 16 Court Cards (Page, Knight, Queen, King of each suit).

Character Selection

- Lay all 16 Court Cards face-up.
- Players draft one unique Character Card. No two players may share the same element or suit, but they may have the same rank.
- Keep your Character Card face-up in your Vault area; it defines your goal suit and special ability.
- The remaining Court Cards are set aside.

Prepare the Muster Deck

Shuffle all 40 numbered cards (Ace–10) together to form the central Muster Deck.

Deal Starting Hands

Deal 5 cards to each player, kept secret.

Starting Treat Points

Each player begins the game with 1 TP coin.

Pre-Game Clarifications

- Major Arcana cards are removed.
 - Cheat Sheet cards must be distributed.
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Gameplay Flow

Each player's turn follows this sequence:

- Roll the die and perform the corresponding action.
 - Perform the action (Draw, Ask, Steal, Fortify, etc.).
 - Spend or gain Treat Points if applicable.
 - Put down Keep Cards (matching your suit) at the beginning of your turn.
 - End your turn by replenishing your hand.
 - Draw new cards based on your roll's result.
 - Discard down to 5 cards (hand limit).
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The D6 Action Roll

Roll	Game Effect	Action
1	Draw the top card of the Muster Deck and add it to your hand.	Draw
2	Choose one opponent. Ask them for 2 specific cards.	Ask (2)
3	Choose one opponent. Ask them for 3 specific cards.	Ask (3)
4	Discard any 4 cards of the same rank to gain 4 Treat Points.	Fortify
5	Name one specific card (rank and suit) an opponent has. If correct, you steal it and gain 2 TP.	Steal
6	Draw 3 cards, then discard 2 to the bottom of the deck.	Draw & Discard

Action Clarifications

Ask (Roll 2 or 3):

- You must name specific cards.
- If the opponent cannot fulfill the entire request, it fails and you draw 1 consolation card.
- Note: The original draft had conflicting instructions; this version uses the specific-card rule consistently.

Steal (Roll 5):

- You must name the exact rank and suit.
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Treat Points (TP)

TP is the game's resource currency.

Ways to Earn TP

- Successful Steal (+2 TP).
- Fortify (+4 TP).
- Character powers.

Spending Options

- Peek: Look at the top 2 cards of the Muster Deck.
 - Freeze: Prevent an opponent from Stealing or Asking you.
 - Swap: Exchange 1 card in your hand with 1 from the Discard Pile.
 - Search the Discard: Look through the Discard, take 1 card, discard 1 from your hand.
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Endgame

The moment a player collects all 10 cards of their suit, they win. If multiple players finish on the same round, the player with the highest TP total wins.

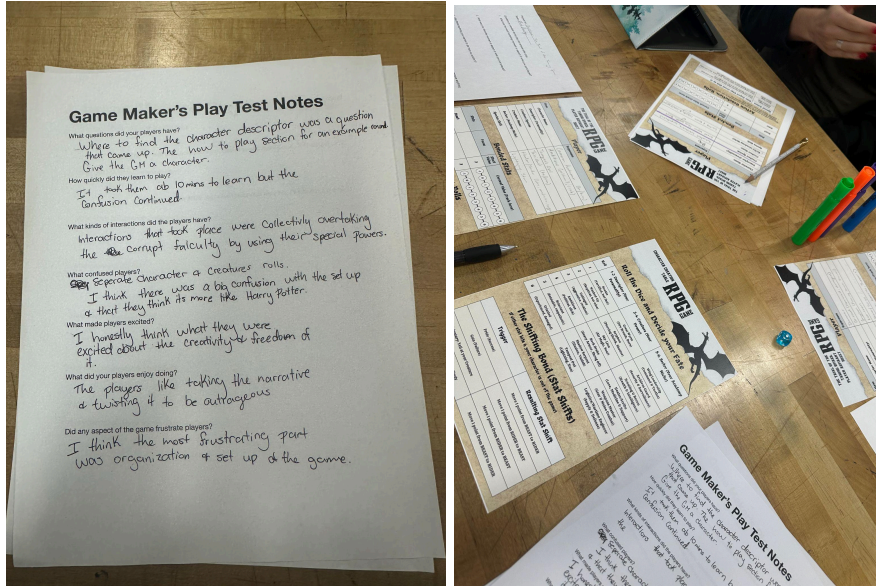
Photos of Game Setup and Pieces

Setup Overview

- The Muster Deck is placed in the center.
- The 16 Court Cards are laid out for drafting.
- Each player has a Character Card face-up, a hand of 5 cards, and 1 TP coin.

Components

- Minor Arcana cards (56 total).
- The 40 numbered cards form the Muster Deck.
- Court Cards are used for character selection.
- A single D6.
- Physical TP coins.
- Player cheat sheets.



Process Notes & Design Iterations

The design evolved from tarot symbolism and number meanings into a competitive deck-building race.

Character Powers & Suit Design

Court Card rank (Page → King) determines power strength.

Suit/element determines the ability theme.

Suit	Element	Power Theme	Example (King Rank)
Imps	Action	Extra actions	After a successful Steal, take a second action of any type without rolling again.
Bats	Intellect	Ask-related upgrades	Ask by Suit (e.g., "Give me all your Imp cards").

Ghosts	Emotion	Resource resilience and TP gain	Gain TP whenever an action against you fails.
Pumpkins	Material	Draw control and resource gain	When you roll Draw or Draw & Discard, gain bonus TP.

Overview of Changes Made (Prototype 2)

- Clarified materials: one D6, TP coins standardized.
- Clarified drafting rules for Character Cards.
- Standardized turn flow.
- Expanded TP spending options.
- Clarified Steal requires naming rank and suit.
- Added endgame tiebreaker (highest TP).
- Clarified hand-limit exception when both deck and discard are empty.

Overview of Changes Still Needed

- Standardize the Ask action once and for all (specific cards vs. by rank).
- Choose one clear win condition (collecting all 10 cards).
- Re-evaluate Fortify (possibly reduce to 3 cards of the same suit).
- Consolidate all TP earning/spending rules into a single final list.

Playtesting Reflections

What Worked

- Asymmetrical powers were fun and balanced.
- D6-based actions introduced suspense.
- TP as a currency added tactical depth.
- Easy setup was well-received.

What Didn't Work

- The original idea of telling a story using tarot cards was confusing and detracted from gameplay.
- Ask action wording caused major confusion.
- Multiple unclear win conditions caused frustration.

Core Lesson

Remove the storytelling element completely.

Focus on the competitive card-race gameplay with tarot flavoring for the theme only.

Rule Clarity

Playtest showed the absolute need for a strict, clearly written Gameplay Flow and cheat sheets.

TP Value

Players enjoyed the ability to use TP both offensively and defensively, especially Freeze and Search actions.