

Project 5
“The Imagi-Nation,” Prototype Rules

Initial Thoughts:

For this project, I wanted to create a game that would play on two feelings for a person: nostalgia and desperation. What better vehicle for this, than a game that revolved around the very concept of losing ones childhood?

a) Initial Ruleset

As children our worlds are awash with fantasy, adventure, and delight. As we grow older, our lives become filled with disappointments, painful memories, and betrayals. However, as long as we can keep some small part of our hearts awake with delight and innocence, we can persevere through all rough troubles.

In ‘Imagination Preserved’ three or more players take the role of denizens of the Lands of Make Believe and Reality. One player represents the Realist, and tries to tear down the heart of Imagination and kill off the fantasies and dreams of the Make-Believers. The Make-Believers in turn try to maintain the child’s faith throughout their life, or build their faith to a point where they shall always preserve Imagination in their hearts.

Initial Setup

When the game begins, take the Whimsy, Rule, and Event decks and shuffle them separately. Place them on the game board. Put a marker on the Age track at the number 0 (the age track goes from 0 to 21). Also place a marker on the Faith track at the number 1 (also numbered 1 to 21).

From among the players, select who will be the Realist. They are given the bag of Realist Creature tokens.

Each of the other players selects a Make-Believer character sheet. They also pick an appropriate character model. This will represent them in the game. Each character is placed on Mother Goose’s Cottage on the game board.

Make-Believer Character Sheet

Each character sheet has the name of the Make-Believer as well as a number of stats. The Lands of Make Believe and Reality are defined by Truth, Courage, and Love. Character sheets should have the Make-Believers maximum value for each of these. This is what they will start out with at the beginning of the game.

Courage represents the overall strength of the character.

Love represents how dearly they are held in the heart of the child. It is similar to health for the Make-Believer.

Truth is used for a number of special events.

Characters also have a movement attribute that determines how many squares they can move on a turn.

Character Sheets will often also have a special rule or option that the character can perform.

Realist Creature Token

While the Make-Believers are defined by Truth, Courage, and Love, the creatures that infiltrate the Imagination have dark perversions of these values.

Courage is replaced by Ferocity.

Love is replaced by Toughness.

Truth is replaced by Painful Truth.

These values operate in mostly the same way as their Make-Believer counterparts.

Note: each deck also has a discard pile. When the deck empties, take the discard pile, shuffle it, and make it the new deck.

Whimsy Deck

This deck is filled with the raw stuff of the Imagination. The three major types are Items, Memories, and Games.

Items are either equipment or usable.

Equipment items can be taken from the hand and used on a character sheet. Equipment will also have a location description (as in armor, weapon, and charm). A player may only have one item per location attached to their character, although they may exchange a currently equipped item with an item in the player's hand. The previously equipped item is returned to the player's hand.

Usable items have an immediate effect. After use, they are moved to the Whimsy discard pile.

Memories, like Usable Items are immediate effects, but they tend to effect the entire game as opposed to just one character.

Games have a Single Game and a Group Game written on them. The use of these is explained later.

Every Whimsy card also has an associated Power value to it.

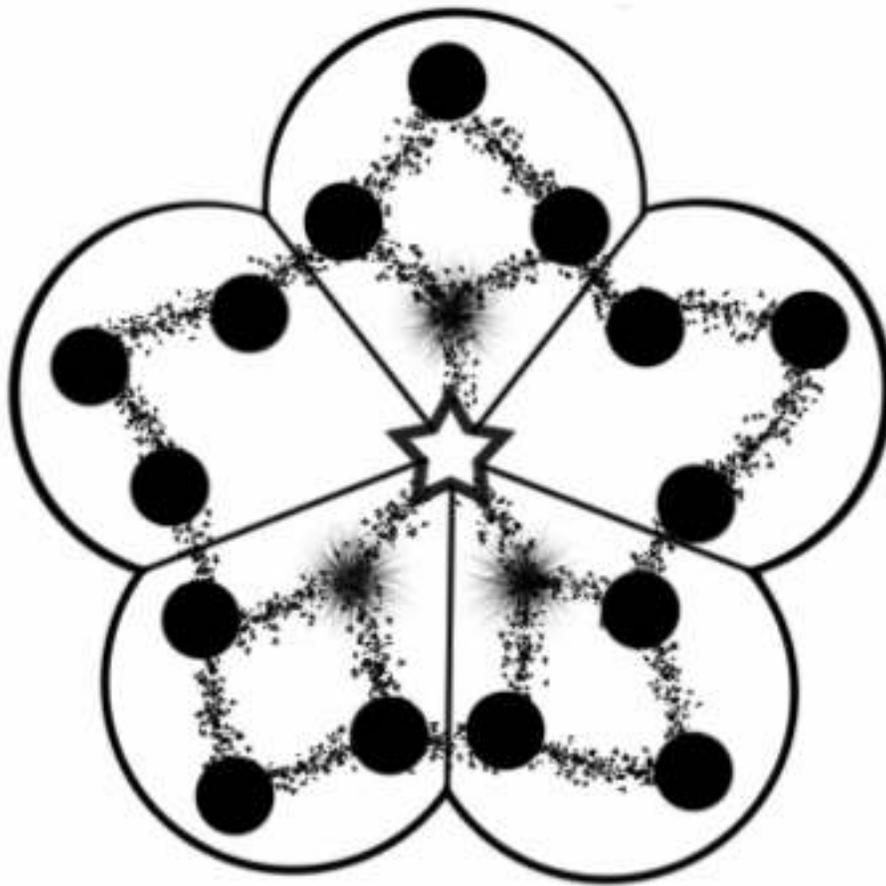
Rule Card

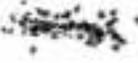
Rule cards represent the confining nature of Reality. They represents rules the Realist can play to complicate the lives of the Make-Believers.

Each Rule card also has an associated Power value with it.

Event Card

Every turn, an Event Card is turned over. This represents something happening in the life of the child. An Event Card will describe a location on the board. This location will “Fall” (more on this later).



-  - Land Square (shown as circle)
-  - Special Land  - Path
-  - Mother Goose's Cottage

Each of the five quadrants is considered a Realm. A Realm consists of three Land Squares (and for three Realms, a Special Land). At the center of the Imagination is Mother Goose's cottage. Make-Believers and Realist Creatures travel along paths.

Behavior of each of these types of square is described in the turn breakdown.

Land Squares start off as Unfallen (more on this in the turn breakdown)

Turn Breakdown:

1. If the Age marker is at 21, the game is over. If Mother Goose's Cottage is still Unfallen, the Make-Believers have won.
2. If the Faith marker is at 21, the game is over. The Make-Believers have won.
3. Draw an Event Card.
 - a) If the location listed is Unfallen, place a Fallen token on it.
 - b) Randomly select a Realist Creature from the bag and place it on that location.
 - c) If all five realms have Fallen, a Realist Creature is placed on Mother Goose's Cottage.
2. Move the Age marker ahead one number.
3. Make-Believer's Turn
 - a) Starting clockwise from the Realist Player, each Make-Believer acts.
 - b) At any point in their turn besides Battle or Group Whimsy, the Make-Believer may play a card from their hand. They may only play one card per turn.
 - c) If at any point two or more players are in the same square as one another, they may each pass only one of their cards to any other player in that square. This can also be done when a player's movement takes them past another player.
 - d) The player moves a number of squares less than or equal to their Movement stat.
 - e) If movement takes you over a Realist Creature, go to Battle. After the fight, you may finish your movement if you survived.
 - f) If you end your move on a Fallen Square, you may attempt a Group Whimsy.
 - g) If you end your move on Mother Goose's Cottage, you may attempt to Bolster the Heart. You may also draw a Whimsy card.
 - h) At the end of your turn, if the square you are on is Unfallen, follow the instructions on it.
 - i) Discard cards from your hand so that, at most, you are holding seven.
4. Realist Turn
 - a) Draw a Rule Card.
 - b) The Realist may move Realist Creatures less than or equal to their Movement stats. He may move all Creatures, not just one. NOTE: Realist Creatures cannot move to Special Lands unless they have Fallen.
 - c) If movement takes you over a Make-Believer, go to Battle. After the fight, you may finish your movement if you survived.
 - d) If you end your move on an Unfallen Square, you make Bring the Fall.
 - e) If you end your move on Mother Goose's Cottage, you may attempt to Attack the Heart.
- f) Discard cards from your hand so that, at most, you are holding seven.

Battle:

The Make-believer selects whether to undergo Common or Whimsical Combat.

Common Combat:

1. Both players may lie down as many cards from their hand as their Truth value, face down.
2. They then add up the power values of those cards and add it to their Courage.
3. The Realist player may then subtract from the Make-Believer's card sum the Realist Creature's Toughness.
4. The player with the higher number wins the combat.
 - a) If the Make-Believer loses
 - 1) Subtract one from their Love value return them to Mother Goose's cottage.
 - 2) Subtract one from their Truth value, although the lowest possible remaining value is 1.
 - 3) The player must discard one equipped item from the Make-Believer.
 - 4) If their love value is 0, they are removed from the game. The child has lost faith with them.
 - b) If the Realist Creature loses, they are removed from the game.

Whimsical Combat

NOTE: Games require the Realist to play along. The Make-Believers must suitably satisfy the Realist. This is based very much on good faith and player dynamics.

1. The player selects a Game card from their hand, with a power less than or equal to their Truth value, and plays it.
2. The Realist player may lay down a number of rule cards less than or equal to the Truth value of the Realist creature.
3. The 'Single Game' part of the Game Card is performed.
 - a. If the Realist is satisfied with the performance, the Realist Creature is given to the player as a card with Power equal to its Courage and the Make-Believer recovers one Truth value (not to exceed their starting Truth value from the beginning of the game).
 - b. If the Realist player is unsatisfied, the Make-Believer subtracts one from their Truth value and returns themselves to Mother Goose's cottage. If the Make Believer's Love or Truth value is 0, remove them from the game.
4. After play, the Game card is discarded.

When a Make-Believer is on a Fallen Square, if there is at least one square in the realm remaining Unfallen, the player may attempt a Group Whimsy.

Group Whimsy

1. To recover a fallen land, a player on a Fallen Square plays a Game card and follows the Group Game portion of the rules.
2. The Realist player may play as many Rule cards as they desire face down.
3. The Make Believer must draw from their friends to bring back the square. A minimum of two players must play the Group Whimsy, although for each person above two, the player on the Fallen Square may select one of the face down rule cards to be returned to the Realist's hand.
4. The Group Game is played.
 - a) If the Realist is satisfied, that part of the land becomes Unfallen. All Make-Believers that participated may draw one Whimsy card and recover one Truth (to a maximum of their starting value). Move the Faith track ahead by two.
 - b) If the Realist is unsatisfied, he may draw half as many cards (rounding down) that he used against the Group Whimsy. All players who participated lose one Truth (to a minimum of one) and the Faith track is subtracted by one (to a minimum of one).
5. After play, the Game card is discarded.

Bring the Fall

The Realist player may choose to cause an Unfallen Land Square to fall. This requires a Realist creature to be on the square. The Realist discards Rule cards to make the Land Square fall. The number of cards discarded depends upon the amount of Fallen Squares in that Realm. If no squares are fallen, the player must discard seven cards. If one square is fallen, the player must discard five cards. If two squares are fallen, the player must discard three cards.

If all three of the Land Squares fall, the Realm falls and those Lands can never be recovered through Group Whimsy. If a Special Land is in the Realm, it is rendered Fallen.

When attempting to cause a Land Square to Fall, the Realist must offer a realistic answer to the square. For instance, on the "Kingdom Beyond the Wardrobe" he could talk about the flimsy Christian allegory. Or Avalon could be dismissed as a pagan fiction created by a man attempting to give England a mythology. If it sounds reasonable enough to the Make-Believers (who should act on good faith), the Realist may discard cards to make the square fall. If not, he cannot do it this turn.

Assault on the Heart

A Realist Creature on Mother Goose's Cottage may choose to assault the very heart of the Imagination. They may discard a card from their hand to draw cards from the Event deck until you reveal a card that causes an Unfallen land to Fall. Shuffle all other Event cards drawn back into the deck.

Bolster the Heart

A Make-Believer on Mother Goose's cottage may discard a Realist Creature card (that they claimed in Whimsical Combat) here to increase Faith by one.

Card Rules (Examples to see how they play)

Whimsy Cards:

Wonderful Wizard of Oz's Certificate of Courage

Equipment (Charm)

Increases the courage value of the Make-Believer by two.

Power (1)

Orpheus' Lyre

Equipment (Weapon)

Using the Game card (Song) does not cause you to discard it after its use

Power (3)

Cardboard Armor

Equipment (Armor)

Increases the maximum Truth and Love value of the Make-Believer by one. The player receives a Love and Truth token when the armor is put on. If it is removed, these tokens are also removed.

Power (3)

Big Rubber Ball

Usable Item

Force a Realist creature to move to a square adjacent to it.

Power (1)

Hug

Usable Item

Increases the Love value of a Make-Believer by one.

Power (1)

New Crayons

Usable Item

Draw two Whimsy Cards. Put one in your hand and the other to the discard pile.
Power (2)

Box in the Attic

Memory

Select a card from the Whimsy discard pile and put it in your hand.

Power (2)

Mother Reading to You

Memory

You may move to any Land in the Realm of Mythville.

Power (3)

Old Drawings

Memory

You may move to any Land in the Realm of First Sight.

Power (3)

Over the Meadow and Through the Woods

Memory

Go directly to Grandmother's House.

Power (2)

Christmas With the Family

Memory

All Make-Believers may draw a Whimsy card and recover one Love.

Power (4)

Story (Sentences)

Game

Single Game:

The player must tell a story about the location they're on.

Group Game:

Each player must tell a sentence of the story about the location they're on.

Power (3)

Story (Words)

Game

Single Game:

The player must tell a story about the location they're on.

Group Game:

Each player must tell a word of the story about the location they're on.

Power (1)

Song

Game

Single Game:

The player must sing a song about the location they're on.

Group Game:

Each player must sing a song about the location they're on.

Power (3)

Poem

Game

Single Game

The player must make a rhyming poem about the location they're on.

Group Game:

Each player must contribute a line about the location they're on. Rhyme scheme is pairs of lines that rhyme with one another.

Power (2)

Joke

Game

Single Game:

The player must make a joke about something from the location they're at "Walking into a bar."

Group Game, only for two:

The players must act as bartender and something from the location walking into a bar.

Power (1)

Metaphor

Game

Single Game:

Make up a metaphor comparing something from this location to life, and explain it.

Group Game:

Cannot be used as a Group Game

Power (2)

Rule Cards:

But Why?

The Realist may ask three questions about something they didn't understand.

Satisfaction rests on illogical logic, humor, and good faith.

Power (3)

Pirate Day

The Make-Believers must speak like a pirate.

Power (1)

This Show is Not Brought to you by the Letter...

The Make-Believers may not use a non-vowel letter selected by the Realist.

Power (4)

Alliteration

The Make-Believers must make an effort to use as much alliteration as possible.

Power (2)

And the name is?

For a Story, Poem, or Song, the players must use a title given to them by the Realist.

Power (2)

I'd Like to See This, Thanks.

The Realist selects a word. That word must be used by the Make-Believers.

Power (1)

Let's Put it Here.

The Realist selects a place. The events must occur in that place. This overrides the Bar location for the Joke Game.

Locations

Before going over the Event Cards, I thought it best to describe the locations.

Realm of Toyland

Teddy Bear Picnic (Draw cards until you get a Usable item or a Game card. Take that and shuffle all else back into the deck)

Lego Fortress (Either draw a card, or discard a card to have all other Make-Believers draw a card)

Palace of Dress-up (Draw cards until you get an Equipment card. Take that, and shuffle all else back into the deck)

Realm of Metaphoria

Emerald City (Draw a card)

Country Beyond the Wardrobe (Draw a card, or discard an Equipment card to draw two cards)

Honnah-Lee (Draw cards until you get a Memory card. Take that, and shuffle all else back into the deck)

First Sight

Handprint Hall (Discard a card to recover one Love)

Crayon House (Draw a card or shuffle your hand back into the deck and draw five cards)

Table Fortress (Discard a card to prevent enemies from entering this square until after your next turn)

Mythville

Aesop's Garden (Draw a card)

Avalon (Draw a card until you get a Memory Card or a Game Card. Take that, and shuffle all else back into the deck)

Anansi's Web (Draw a card or discard a card to prevent a Realist Creature from moving next turn)

Eventopia

The North Pole (Draw a card, or if your Truth and Love are both above 2, you may discard a card to draw three cards, select one, and shuffle the other two back into the deck)

All Hallows Eveland (Draw a card. If its power is even, draw another card. If not, discard a card)

Hall of Birthdays (Name a type of card (Usable Item, Equipment, Memory, Game), draw a card. Repeat the process. If you are wrong, you must discard a card from your hand.

Special Lands:

Second Star to the Right (Recover one Truth)

Phantom Tollbooth (Draw two cards, keep one, and discard the other)

Grandmother's House (Recover one Love)

Event Cards:

Death of the Teddy Bear King:

The Teddy Bear Picnic Falls

My Cousin Choked to Death on One

The Lego Fortress Falls

Take Those Shoes Off!

Palace of Dress Up Falls

It was all a Metaphor for Expansionism?

The Emerald City Falls

The Movie was a lot Better:

The Country Beyond the Wardrobe Falls

Puberty

Honnah-Lee Falls

You Mean on Stage He's Played by a Girl?

The Second Star to the Right Falls

For God's Sake, Clean that Up!

Handprint Wall Falls.

Draw in the Lines

Crayon House Falls

Get Out From Under There!
Table Forest Falls

I'm So Sick of these "Morals of the Story"
Aesop's Garden Falls

We've Built a Factory Over the Castle!
Avalon Falls

The Tar Baby? Isn't that Racist?
Anansi's Web Falls

He's Not Real
The North Pole Falls

I Hear They're Sticking Razor Blades in There
All Hallows Eveland Falls

Aren't You a Little Old For That?
Hall of Birthdays Falls

Examples of Realist Creatures (using the phrases Truth, Love, and Courage for simplicity)

Doubt
Truth: 4
Courage: 2
Love: 1
Move: 1

Disappointment
Truth: 2
Courage: 4
Love: 1
Move: 1

Crushed Dream
Truth: 4
Courage: 1
Love: 3
Move: 2

Lies
Truth: 1
Courage: 4
Love: 4

Move: 1

Examples of Player Characters:

Songstress

Truth: 4

Courage: 1

Love: 3

Move: 2

Special: Instead of playing a card, they may search the Whimsy deck for a Song card.

Darkness Under the Stairs

Truth: 2

Courage: 5

Love: 2

Move: 3

Special: The Darkness Under the Stairs cannot use Equipment except for Charms.

Mythmaker

Truth: 3

Courage: 3

Love: 3

Move: 2

Special: At the beginning of the Make-Believers' turns, the Mythmaker may discard a card to increase one Make-Believer's stats by one (past even the maximum). This fades away at the end of the turn.

Lights in the Forest

Truth: 3

Courage: 0

Love: 2

Move: 2

Special: The Lights in the Forest may, once per turn, switch places with any other Make-Believer.

Kind Teacher

Truth: 5

Courage: 1

Love: 4

Special: Instead of discarding cards at the end of their turn, the Kind Teacher can give them to other Make-Believers.

c) Final Ruleset

Setup

1. Shuffle the Whimsy, Event, and Rule card decks separately. Place each on its place on the board.
2. Take a marker, and place it on the “1” on the Age tracker.
3. Take a marker, and place it on the “1” on the Faith tracker.
4. For each player, put their character marker on the center star. This star is the “Heart of the Imagi-Nation.”
5. Place all the creature tokens (marked as either a Lie or a Despair) into a bag to be drawn from randomly.
6. Play Rock, Paper, Scissors to determine who will play the Realist for the first turn.
7. Deal seven cards to each player from the Whimsy deck. This is the hand they use when they are a Make-Believer.
8. Deal seven cards from the Rules deck. This is the hand that is used by the Realist.
9. Begin the Game.

Board

There are three different kinds of spaces on the board, all connected via paths that are represented by thick orange lines.

The three kinds of spaces are defined by the color of their outer ring.

Bronze Outer Lands: These are normal spaces that represent the different Lands in each of the Imagi-Nation Realms.

Silver Inner Lands: These spaces cannot be moved on by Realist creatures until they are made to Fall by the Realm Falling (more on this later).

Gold Center: This is the Heart of the Imagi-Nation, and what the Make-Believers are trying to protect.

The board is also divided up into the five Realms of Imagi-Nation. These are Toyland, First Sight, Metaphoria, Eventopia, and Mythville. Each Realm has three Bronze Lands and three of the Realms have a Silver Land.

Characters

Players will take on two roles during gameplay.

Each player will have a Make-Believer character represented by a marker on the board. Characters have a number of stats associated with them. The three stats are Love, Truth, and Move.

Love determines how often the Make-Believer can be beaten, and represents their hold on the Imagi-Nation. The initial maximum value for Love is 3. You cannot recover (be healed) to an amount of Love over your maximum. These recover you only to your maximum.

Truth determines what the Make-Believer can do, and represents the faith that a child has in that Make-Believer. The initial maximum value for Truth is 3. You cannot recover (be healed) to an amount of Truth over your maximum. These recover you only to your maximum.

Move determines how far many spaces a character can move per turn.

The second role that players will take is that of a Realist. Every turn, the Realist's role will be passed to the Make-Believer on the right of the current Realist. This represents Real Life taking over the things that used to be mythological and fantastic. The Realist does not directly enter the world, but rather summons forth creatures to corrupt the Imagi-Nation and cause it to fall.

The two types of creatures are Lies and Despairs. Each of these is defined by its own version of Truth and Move.

Truth determines the influx of reality to the Imagi-Nation, and in game is used to determine how many Rules the Realist can use in battles.

Move determines how far the creature can move per turn.

The Tie

This represents the Force of the Realist. Pass it to whoever is the Realist for that turn.

Tollbooth Marker

This special token is accessed via the Phantom Tollbooth space. It can be placed on any path, and there prevents all movement on that path (both by Make-Believers and creatures). If the Phantom Tollbooth falls, remove the Tollbooth from the game.

Card Types

There are three different decks in the game.

Event:

Events either describe a space Falling or a different kind of effect.

Rules:

There are two types of Rule cards.

- 1) Proper Rule: These cards have Rule: [Name of the Rule] on the top of the card. These are used against Make-Believer games to enforce restrictions on them.
- 2) Usable Rule: These cause an effect on the game board. Only one can be used a turn, and it requires discarding three other cards as well.

Whimsy:

There are three types of Whimsy Cards. Whimsy cards have a point number in their upper left corner. A character must have a current Truth value greater than or equal to this value to use the card.

- 1) Equipment: Each character can have one of each type of equipment equipped. One can equip an equipment item as their action for the round, or may exchange an equipment (by switching a currently equipped item for an item in their hand. The two change places). If a character's Truth value changes while wearing equipment, equipment with a point value higher than their current Truth is returned to their hand. There are three types of equipment
 - a) Weapons
 - b) Armor
 - c) Charms
- 2) Usable Items: One of these can be used during a Make-Believer round, as their action for that round.
- 3) Game: These are used in Whimsy Battles and tend to have a Single and Group play option. If no Group play description is listed, it cannot be used for Group play.

Each of these types of cards also has some blank ones. These are for the players to make their own Rules and Games to add to Imagi-Nation!

Gameplay:

1. Pick the Realist
 - a) If this is the first turn, determine the Realist via Rock, Paper, Scissors.
 - b) Otherwise, the current Realist passes the Realist hand (and necktie) to Make-Believer to their right.
 - c) Being a Realist means the player's Make-Believe character is 'not in the game' for their turn. They cannot be affected by any cards, nor can they move, attack, or be attacked. When the player passes the Realist hand next turn, their character comes back into play exactly where they were when the player first became the Realist.
2. Event Turnover
 - a) Draw a card from the Event deck and lay it face up.
 - b) Event cards either cause Spaces to Fall (more on what it means to be fallen later), or cause a beneficial effect on the Make-Believers.

- 3) If it causes a space to Fall, and that space is currently Unfallen, put a Fallen marker on that space (it is now considered Fallen), and have the Realist grab a random creature from the creature bag and place it on that space. If that causes all three Bronze spaces in a Realm to fall, that entire Realm is considered Fallen. If there is a Silver space in the Realm, it also Falls.
 - 4) If it causes a space to Fall, and that space is already Fallen, have the Realist grab a random creature from the creature bag and place it on that space.
 - 5) If the event is beneficial, resolve its effects as described.
3. Realist Turn
- a) Draw a Rule card for each creature on the board, with a maximum limit of three cards.
 - b) At any point in the turn, you may use one of the Usable Rule cards, by discarding it and three other cards from your hand.
 - c) Move each of your creatures a number of squares equal to or less than their maximum movement. If they encounter a Make-Believer, begin a Whimsy Battle (more on battling later), unless that Make-Believer has already been beaten in a Whimsy Battle that turn, in which case they cannot be engaged.
 - d) If a creature ends its turn on an Unfallen space, they may attempt to “Bring the Fall” (more on that later).
 - e) If a creature ends its turn on the central Star, they may attempt to “Break the Heart” (more on that later).
 - f) Discard cards to get to the maximum hand size (7).
4. Make-Believer Turn (first Make-Believer to go is to the Right of the Realist. This continues to the Right until it reaches the Realist again)
- a) Follow the rules on the space your character is on, if that space is Unfallen.
 - b) At any time in the turn, a Make-Believer may use only one of their Usable Item or Equipment cards. If the Make-Believer is equipped with a Pirate’s Eyepatch, they may use two cards.
 - c) Move your character a number of spaces equal to or less than their maximum movement. If they encounter a Creature, begin a Whimsy Battle.
 - d) If a Make-Believer ends its turn on a Fallen space, they may attempt to “Bring back Faith” (more on that later) if they have not Whimsy Battled this turn.
 - e) If a Make-Believer ends its turn on the central Star, they may attempt to “Bolster the Heart” (more on that later).
 - f) Discard cards to get to the maximum hand size (default 7)
5. End of the Turn
1. Once all Make-Believers have gone, advance the Age token one space. If that would take it off the tracker.

Win Conditions:

- a. If the Age token would need to be moved off the tracker (to 21), the game is over. The child has grown up, and some part of their Imagi-Nation has survived. The Make-believers win.
- b. If the Faith token would need to be moved off the tracker (to 21), the game is over. The child has established a solid appreciation and faith of their younger days.
- c. If all the Make-Believers are destroyed, and only the Realist remains, the Realist wins.
- d. If all five Realms are Fallen, and a Realist Creature manages to “Break the Heart,” the Realist wins.

Special Rules:

Whimsy Battle: To perform a Whimsy Battle, the Make-Believer must play a Game card from their hand. If they have none, it is considered an automatic loss.

- 2) The player selects whether to have it be a Single or Group Whimsy. The rules for each of these is on the card.
- 3) The Realist draws a number of Rule cards equal to the amount of Make-Believers playing the Whimsy plus one.
- 4) The Realist may play a number of Rule cards equal to the current Truth value of the Creature. The Make-Believers must follow these Rules in their game.
- 5) After the game is finished, the Realist must determine if he is satisfied with the Make-Believers. This can range anywhere from being made to laugh, finding something clever, or just not stumbling with the presence of a lot of rules. It is up to the Realist.
- 6) If the Make-Believer wins, they get to collect that Creature as a trophy. This Creature counts as a card in their hand for determining if the Make-Believer needs to discard cards at the end of their turn.
- 7) If the Make-Believer fails, move their character to the central star. They can no longer move or be attacked for this turn. Subtract one from their Love and one from their Truth. If their Love becomes zero, remove them from the game. They are no longer believed in. Truth values cannot go below one.

Bring the Fall: A Creature can attempt to have an Unfallen land Fall to Reality.

- 1) If the land is Unfallen, the Creature can discard a number of Rule cards to make it fall. The number of cards is determined by how many spaces are already Fallen in that Realm.
- 2) If either none, or one space is Fallen, discard five cards.
- 3) If two spaces are Fallen, discard four cards.
- 4) If the three Bronze spaces fall, the entire Realm falls. If there is a Silver space in that Realm, it falls as well.
- 5) Once a space has fallen in this way, the Realist may draw a card.

Break the Heart: A Creature can attempt to Break the Heart of the Imagi-Nation.

- 1) The Realist discards a card from their hand.
- 2) If there all five Realms are Fallen, the game is over. The Realist wins.
- 3) Otherwise, flip over Event cards until an event appears that would cause a space to Fall. Play it.

Bring Back Faith: A Make-Believer can try to restore some faith to the land. Note, this can only be used on a Fallen square in an Unfallen Realm. Once a Realm falls, it is unrecoverable.

- 1) The player selects a Game card and plays it as a Group Whimsy. If that Game cannot be used as a Group Whimsy, it cannot be used here.
- 2) Play resolves exactly as Whimsy Battle, except the Realist can play, at most, three Rule cards, and there are slightly different win/lose conditions.
- 3) If the Make-Believer succeeds, that land becomes Unfallen and the Faith marker is moved ahead one.
- 4) If the Make-Believer fails, they lose one Truth.

Bolster the Heart: A Make-Believer tries to strengthen the Heart.

- 1) Discard a Creature token at the central Star to move the Faith marker ahead one.

c) Marketing Sheet (see attached)

d) Playtesting

Playthrough: 1
Date: April 4th
Time: 6:00 pm
Participants:
Bryan Cash (self)

Here I mostly tried to lay the game down, get the components created (in the form of card decks made of pencil and index cards), and see if I was getting the right distribution of cards in a hand. I also wanted to test the base mechanics of the game.

I listed out all the cards and decided on proportions for each. For example, in a hand of seven cards for a Make-Believer, I wanted to make sure that about three of them were Games and four of them were other types of cards. These other types would then be divided up in a mostly equal fashion.

From my initial rule set of Games, I also added one inspired from an Improvisational Acting book I had just read. This was the Spelling Bee Game, which is relatively quick, easy, and fun.

Additionally, I liked the idea of a little bit of Hope added to the series of horrible Event cards, so I made a few good ones that would benefit the Make-Believers.

I have removed the Memory type of card, and turned most of them into Usable Item cards to avoid making the rules that much more complicated. Some of the space rules had to be changed in accordance with this.

Much of this playtest was devoted to just shuffling and flipping over cards and seeing if that felt right.

Playthrough: 2
Date: April 5th
Time: 11:30 am
Participants:
Dustin Barnard (23)
Bei Yang (23)
Lucas Machado (22)
Bryan Cash (23)

All right. For this playtest, not wanting the people to go through the entire game, but just wanting to test of the Improv/Rule part was fun, I made a small game with three Make-Believers and one Realist just competing for points. Play worked fairly well, and seemed fun, but one very interesting point was brought up.

To have one player (the Realist) make all the decisions on who gets the point creates a very strange dynamic. Some people really don't want to be in the position of always judging, as they feel they'll look bad no matter what happens. It's also like creating a D&D game with the possibility of the DM winning. They have all the power and have the final say.

I was really unsure what to do about this, as I really liked the idea of a bunch of Make-Believers working on one staunch Realist. I decided to ask Jesse about it.

He mentioned a very interesting idea. What if every turn, the Realist changes? That way, the players will begin to police themselves. For each turn, power will still rest in one man, but each turn has a different person in power. Also, if the players all begin to decide to be 'easy on themselves' that will be their prerogative if that is what they want.

One other result of my playtest was a knowledge of finding an audience. Only Dustin and myself were interested in Improv games, so the other two players found themselves rather bored. I'm fine with appealing to just people who would enjoy Improv, as that's the kind of game I really want to create.

Playthrough: 3 (Board testing)
Date: April 6th
Time: 7:45 pm
Participants:
Bryan Cash (23)

Another solitary playtest where I laid out the game board to see what I thought of all the spaces. Did the Realms make sense, were the Realms balanced, would three of them falling cripple the players, those kinds of questions.

In general, I was fairly happy with how things looked, in particular the Silver spaces that serve as the way to get to the central Star, and how the entire Realm must fall before those can be used.

Initially, I also had all the text in one direction, but noticed this might create an odd hierarchy of people who could read the board, or would lead to trouble with having to spin the board around. I opted to make most of the text be aligned with the nearest board edge so people all sitting around it would all have something to read. This would help socializing in the form of, "Could you read to me what The North Pole does?"

I've also added some new cards. These cards all eventually made it to the final product, although their numbers varied depending on their power/chance of coming up.

I will go over all the cards in the game at the very end.

Playthrough: 4
Date: April 8th
Time: 1:00 pm
Participants:
Sara Bridges (22)
Lucy Wood (20)
Greg Park (22)

First off, hurrah for out of the ETC friends who like theatre sports.

For this playthrough, all creatures have a Truth, Love, and Courage of 3 and a movement of 1. All players have Truth, Love, and Courage of 4 and a movement of 2.

Notes:

The hand distribution is quite good. Make-Believers have a good range of Games and Items, and the Realist hand has good variety.

There are interesting points on the board that a Make-Believer can't get to on their first turn. This lets the Realist start to construct a base, although this base seems to go really quickly. Completely possible to collapse a Realm in two turns.

The Courage stats seems really useless. It just seems like more pointless bookkeeping.

Stats, in general, don't seem like that much of an important thing. Truth is a good equipment limiter, but I need to study and balance the numbers more. It's currently really easy for players to overtake creatures each turn.

People are having a lot of fun with the improv games, and seem to be policing themselves well. They're playing/judging fairly, and they find the passing of the Realist tie very novel. No one is doing regular battling because whimsy battling is much more fun.

Game doesn't seem that desperate. It just seems easy for the Make-Believers. There is a bit of initial weirdness over, "Who is the bad guy?" but the bad guy Realist eventually becomes a distant concept to defeat rather than a presence here. It's an interesting case, and not one that I think is entirely bad.

It's really hard for the Realist to recover cards. They're fighting off more than one person at a time.

Spelling Bee is easy and a lot of fun.

Some people like Song, some people hate it.

Hard to make spaces fall, especially because it's difficult for the Realist to recover cards.

If there are no realist creatures on the board, it's really boring for the Realist player.

Having the Realist ask questions about a metaphor/joke is very weird. They're not sure what to ask, and the Make-Believer isn't sure how to answer.

Changes to be Made:

Increase cards required to make a space fall to 5 universally. This should help against really quick Realm falls.

Gotten rid of Courage stat. Creatures now just defined by Truth and Movement. This should ease bookkeeping. Also gotten rid of/changed a lot of items that had to do with Courage.

When you die, your Love and Truth go down by one. If Love goes to 0, you're dead. Truth can only go to 1. So you can be useless (unable to use most items with Truth 1), but still be healthy and alive. This will make it so players will occasionally have to let the Realist cavort about while they rest up. This will help add to the feeling of struggle.

Also to help the 'too easy' feeling will be helping the Realist recover. They now draw a card for each creature in play. They also draw cards at the beginning of a Whimsy Battle depending on number of players plus one. This should also make it so that all Whimsy Battles have some rules, as those make it interesting.

Added more Spelling Bee cards.

Instead of going last, the Realist player goes first. That way, a creature spawns, and they can do something with it before the players come over and kill it.

Rule: Ask Questions only works on Stories, Songs, and Poems now.

Playthrough: 5
Date: April 9th
Time: 6:00 pm
Participants:
Sara Bridges (22)
Lucy Wood (20)
Greg Park (22)
Anthony Flores (28)

For this one, added random creatures of Despair (Truth 2, Move 1) and Lie (Truth 1 and Move 2). Movement is very useful in this game, so the Lie shows up only 20% of the time.

Also, all players are now starting at base stats of Truth 3, Love 3, Move 2.

Movement + items have too low a Truth value for their power.

Love really didn't seem too important at first, but gets important as time goes by. Players forced to rest up which lets Realist do stuff, or they need to talk to teammates.

Realist going first is pretty good, as it lets them set things up and have an action.

Card drawing for realist is MUCH better. They have the ability to do stuff now.

'Place' is kind of a weird rule and needs to be explained more

Alliteration is really hard.

Rules on attacking the Heart are kind of clunky and need to be clarified.

Right now, a creature appears, and then is still pretty quickly killed off.

Players really enjoying the Realist role-switching. Players also like the board and did mention feeling nostalgic without my prompting. This is a very good thing.

It's noted that the Undertable Forest's ability to prevent movement on it is kind of useless as there's a path next to it of equal length.

Changes Made:

Reduced number of Alliteration cards.

Heart rules clarified to their final incarnation.

Undertable Forest and Lego Fortress have their powers swapped. The Lego Fortress is on the only path into the Realm of Toyland from Eventopia, making a nice border guard.

I've also changed the role of the Phantom Tollbooth. Before it was related to card drawing, but now I've changed it so that it can place a blocker on any path. The intent of this is if a Realm with a Silver space falls, the Phantom Tollbooth may be able to block the path for a bit to prevent the Creature from attacking the heart. This adds a bit more strategy to the game.

To help the Realist, and give them a bit more variety, I am creating a new kind of card for them. Three different cards, one spawns a creature on any Fallen square, one causes an Event card to be flipped over, and one that reduces the Truth of a Make-Believer by one. One of these cards can be played a turn.

Date: April 9th
Time: 8:00 pm
Participants:
Sara Bridges (22)
Lucy Wood (20)
Marissa McCarthy (16)
Anthony Flores (28)

Okay, wow. Wow. Where there was no desperation for the Make-Believers, it is now hopeless. The Realist cards grossly overpower them and things looked hopeless by turn five. The one a turn limit doesn't hinder them much. They will now all cost five cards to play.

Nari seemed to enjoy the Improv games, although she didn't get some of the references on the board. The other three got most of them.

Playthrough: 6
Date: April 9th
Time: 8:20 pm
Participants:
Sara Bridges (22)
Lucy Wood (20)
Marissa McCarthy (16)
Anthony Flores (28)

And now we're back where we came from, with it being too easy again. However, the Realist player has to start making decisions on whether to save up to play rule cards or use his Usable Rules. I have reduced the cost down to three cards.

Playthrough: 7
Date: April 9th
Time: 8:50 pm
Participants:
Sara Bridges (22)
Greg Park (22)
Anthony Flores (28)

Now it feels right. There's a good balance between the two, and a quasi-happy medium between easy and hopeless has been reached.

We played it to the end, with a Faith victory, and it seemed like a pretty interesting and close match. It seemed to run a little long, but not overly so. I think it's a good amount with four people, as it gives the Realist a better chance of accomplishing something.

Something odd happened as well, the Realist player used the Event card to flip over an Event and it turned out to be beneficial for the players. They cheered, he cursed, and the next turn he was a Make-Believer and taunting the Realist. It's a really interesting dynamic that works quite well.

Playthrough: 8
Date: April 11th
Time: 10:00 pm
Participants:
Bryan Cash (23)

Final fiddling with the board. As I'm fairly satisfied with how play goes, I spent most of the time looking through all the cards in the game, thinking about how they performed in game, and tweaking the ruling of some or raising the power levels.

For instance, the Shiny Rubber Ball moves a creature to one adjacent space. This is quite powerful, so I changed it to power 3 instead of power 2.

Changed the Phoenix Feather to be more useful, now acts as a restart for Make-believers.

Wrote out all the cards with interesting titles. I figured as this is a game of Improv, I should provide a lot of sources for inspiration on the board that people can draw from.

I've also added some blank cards to the deck. I have decided these cards are there for players to add their own content if they so wish it.

To aid with identifying the Realist, I have added a business tie. I figure that's a fine symbol of Reality.

Final Reflection:

Overall, I am fairly pleased with the game. It's achieved an interesting balance of improvisational acting, strategy, and social dynamics that make it novel. I don't think it would have that wide of a popularity, but it does appeal to me and my circle of friends, who tend to be people with theatre backgrounds and an interest in cleverness and quasi-politics.

The game still needs some balancing I feel, especially in regards to multiple players and the end points (part of me feels twenty one for Age or Faith is still too much). I'd like to play more with the items in the game, but so far they add a nice twist, and the games/rules work out very nicely together.

I do regret I ran out of time to complete the models. I was hoping to get some small markers to appeal to girls as well, but I was not able to make it out to the toy shop.

Additionally, I think I did a rather nice job evoking nostalgia by the board. It has a very nice aesthetic appeal, and it really does evoke some feelings when you find out the "Teddy Bear Picnic" has fallen due to the death of the Teddy Bear King.