A COMPLETE SOLO JOURNALING GAME · FREE · NO COMBAT

A Spring at the Wayside

One six-sided die, a pen, an inn on a quiet road, and twelve days of spring.

PLAYERS	YOU NEED	DAYS	ENDINGS	COMBAT
one	one d6	twelve	eighteen	none

You keep an inn on a quiet road for one spring. People come up it, and you write down what happened. Keep the stores full, the woodpile dry and the road on your side, and at the end of twelve days the spring ends the way you kept it. About a week of evenings, and a whole game.

HOW IT WORKS

One die, one day, one page

You need these pages, a pen, one six-sided die, and somewhere quiet. Nothing else, and no other person. No die? Look at a clock: minutes past the hour 0–9 is a 1, 10–19 a 2, and so on up to 50–59, a 6.

Before you start

Roll three times on **Who you are** and three times on **The inn**. Write the answers on the page that says **This inn belongs to**. Give the inn a name. Then set all three tracks to **five**.

A day

1. Roll on who comes up the road.
2. Roll on what they want. If the two rolls do not fit together, that tension is the day. Do not reroll.
3. Write it. Three or four lines is plenty. What you gave them, what it cost, and what you did not say.
4. Move one track, up or down, for what the day was really about. What they cost you takes one: food takes one off Stores, warmth takes one off Firewood, turning them away takes one off Goodwill. What they left you adds one: money or trade adds one to Stores, work or wood adds one to Firewood, anything kind adds one to Goodwill.
5. Every sixth day, roll on what the road brings instead, and write about the inn rather than a guest. If it hurts the inn, take one off Stores or Firewood; if it helps, add one.

Spring is twelve days

Two of them will be quiet. When you want one, roll on **The quiet days** and write that instead. A quiet day adds one to Stores, Firewood or Goodwill, whichever you spent it on. Ten minutes a day, two days an evening: about a week.

The two rules

Nothing here is fought. There is no combat, no monster and no magic in this game. If something arrives that you cannot solve, you cannot solve it, and you write that down.

You never roll to find out if you succeed. The die says what happens; you say what you did about it. There is no failure in this game, only what it cost.

If you want a shorter spring

Play six days instead of twelve. The tracks still move, and the game takes three evenings.

When the twelve days are done

Roll on **How the spring ends**, on the table for whichever track is highest, and write the last entry.

ROLL THREE TIMES

Who you are

Roll once on each. If an answer does not suit you, take the one below it instead (below a 6 is the 1) — but only once.

WHY THE INN IS YOURS

D6

1. It was your aunt's. She left it to you and you have not decided how you feel about that.
2. You bought it with everything you had, from a man who was in a hurry to be gone.
3. You were the cook here for nine years and the owner simply stopped coming back.
4. You lost the argument. Everyone else in the family went to the town.
5. You were passing through, the roof fell in, and you were the one holding the ladder.
6. You won it, fairly, and you have never once said so out loud.

WHAT YOU ARE GOOD AT

D6

1. Bread. People come the long way round for it and you pretend not to know.
2. Listening. You can go a whole evening without saying eleven words.
3. Mending. Nothing in this house has been thrown away since you came.
4. Numbers. You know to the penny what the year has cost, and it frightens you.
5. Horses. They settle for you and you have never been able to explain it.
6. Weather. You are right about it often enough that people ask.

WHAT YOU DO NOT SAY

D6

1. You are waiting for one particular person to come up that road.
2. The inn is not making money and has not for two years.
3. You cannot read, and you have built an entire system around hiding it.
4. Somebody is looking for you, and this is the last place they would think to look.
5. You have not been further than the crossroads in four years and it has started to matter.
6. You did something at the old place. Nobody here knows and nobody there has come.

ROLL THREE TIMES

The inn

Then give it a name. The name matters more than any of the rolls.

THE HOUSE ITSELF

D6

1. Long and low, one storey, with the stable built onto the end so the wall is always warm.
2. Three storeys and too big, and the top floor has been shut since before you came.
3. Half of it is older than the other half by two hundred years and the floors do not meet.
4. Built of the local stone, which is the colour of wet sand and never looks dry.
5. Timber, black with pitch, and it moves in the wind enough to wake a light sleeper.
6. It was a farm and it still smells faintly of a farm in the damp.

THE ROAD IT SITS ON

D6

1. The old road, which is shorter, and which the carters stopped using for a reason.
2. A ford road. Four months of the year it is not a road at all.
3. The high road, and everything that goes to the coast goes past your door.
4. A road to one place only, and that place is losing people every year.
5. Two roads, meeting badly, so that carts have to stop whether they want to or not.
6. The road nobody maintains, because the two parishes cannot agree whose it is.

WHAT NEEDS DOING BEFORE WINTER

D6

1. The thatch over the back room. It has been one bad week away from failing since spring.
2. The well. The water is fine but the wall around it is not.
3. The stable door, which has to be lifted, and which you can no longer lift alone.
4. The chimney in the big room, which draws when it feels like it.
5. The bridge on your own lane, which is yours to mend and nobody else's.
6. Nothing urgent, which is the first year that has been true, and it is making you uneasy.

BEFORE THE FIRST GUEST

This inn belongs to

YOUR NAME

WHAT THE ROAD CALLS YOU

WHY THE INN IS YOURS · *answer or roll*

THE HOUSE ITSELF · *answer or roll*

WHAT YOU ARE GOOD AT · *answer or roll*

THE ROAD IT SITS ON · *answer or roll*

WHAT YOU DO NOT SAY · *answer or roll*

WHAT NEEDS DOING BEFORE WINTER · *answer or roll*

ITS NAME

WHAT THE REGULARS CALL IT

Draw the inn, or only its door.

THE ONLY NUMBERS IN THE GAME

Three things you are keeping

Start each at five. They go up and down one at a time. Colour one in when it rises; cross one out when it is spent.

Stores *flour, salt, what is in the loft and the garden*



1 2 3 4 5 · start 6 7 8 9 10

Firewood *what is cut, split and dry, right now*



1 2 3 4 5 · start 6 7 8 9 10

Goodwill *what people say about you when you are not in the room*



1 2 3 4 5 · start 6 7 8 9 10

Spring, day by day

*Mark each day as you play it. The ringed days are every sixth: roll **what the road brings** instead.*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
SPRING	○	○	○	○	○	✦	○	○	○	○	○	✦

When Stores or Firewood reaches zero

Roll on the table for it on the **Bad fortnights** sheet, write what happened, and set that track back to **two**. It is not an ending. It is a bad fortnight. Goodwill never drops below one: somebody always speaks up for you.

When Goodwill reaches ten

Roll on **Good days**, write it, and leave the track where it is. No track goes above ten.

At the end of spring

Whichever track is highest tells you which ending table to roll on. If two are level, roll on both and write which one you chose.

One day, worked through

So that the first evening does not start with a decision.

ROLLED A 4	The carter who comes every year, later than usual, with a horse that is clearly finished.
ROLLED A 5	Hot water, which will cost you a whole morning of the woodpile.
WRITTEN	Four lines. The horse went in the near stall because the far one still has no door. He did not ask about the horse and I did not offer, and we both stood there not asking for a while. I heated the copper twice.
TRACKED	Firewood down one, because the copper was heated twice. The stall was kind too, but a day moves one track, and this day was about the hot water.

TWELVE DAYS · THE ROAD OPENS

Spring

The ground dries out, the first carts come through, and everything that was put off in the autumn is now overdue.





TWELVE DAYS · THE ROAD OPENS

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WHO COMES UP THE ROAD

D6

1. A drover with sixty sheep and nowhere to put them, asking for the far field for one night.
2. Two surveyors who will not say who is paying them, wanting the back room and no questions.
3. A woman walking to a wedding four days away, who has been walking for two already.
4. The carter who comes every year, later than usual, with a horse that is clearly finished.
5. A boy of about fourteen with a letter he will not hand over and no money at all.
6. Nobody until dusk, and then three at once, all soaked.

WHAT THEY WANT

D6

1. A bed and nothing else, and to be gone before you are up.
2. To leave something with you until they come back through. They do not say when.
3. Work for a week in exchange for the room, and they can actually do the work.
4. To know whether somebody came through here in the last month.
5. Hot water, which will cost you a whole morning of the woodpile.
6. To be talked out of going on today, and they are right to want it.

WHAT THE ROAD BRINGS

D6

Every sixth day, roll this instead of a guest. If it hurts the inn, take one off Stores or Firewood; if it helps, add one.

1. The ford is up. Nothing crosses for three days and everything piles up at your door.
2. A hedge is laid the whole length of the lane, by somebody, overnight, and nobody says who.
3. The parish decides the road is the other parish's problem after all.
4. Frost, late and hard, and every green thing in the garden goes black in one night.
5. Somebody starts mending the bridge without being asked and without being paid.
6. A cart sheds a wheel on your corner and the load sits in the verge for a week.

WHEN A TRACK HITS AN END

Bad fortnights and good days

None of these ends the game. Roll, write it, and set that track back to two. Most years never reach either end of a track; a year that does will remember it.

THE STORES RUN OUT — D6

1. You feed people on what the garden has and apologise for a week.
2. You buy on credit from the miller, who is kind about it and will remember.
3. You close the kitchen and say it is the chimney. Everybody knows it is not.
4. A guest notices and says nothing and leaves more than they owe.
5. You sell something of the house that you meant to keep.
6. Somebody arrives with more than they need and will not take payment.

THE FIREWOOD RUNS OUT — D6

1. You burn the fence along the lane, one rail at a time, and mean to replace it.
2. You and a guest cut wet wood in the rain and neither of you enjoys it.
3. You move everybody into one room and keep one fire and it is better than it sounds.
4. A carter leaves you a load and refuses to explain why.
5. You go to a neighbour. You have never done that and you will not forget it.
6. You let the fire go out for one night and you do not sleep at all.

GOOD DAYS — D6

Roll when Goodwill reaches ten. Leave the track where it is.

1. Somebody sends word ahead. Nobody has ever done that before.
2. A guest mends something while you are not looking and denies it afterwards.
3. The house is full, and it is loud, and it is not hard work for once.
4. Somebody names the inn to a stranger as the place to stop, in front of you.
5. You are asked to a wedding, or a wake, as a neighbour and not as a service.
6. Somebody comes back specifically to tell you that it mattered.

THREE OF THEM

If you would rather write than roll

Some evenings you do not want a stranger at the door. Take one of these instead and write about the house, and the day still counts.

SPRING

1 Write the first thing you said to somebody today, and what you meant instead.

2 Write what the house sounds like at four in the morning in spring.

3 Write about something you put off last autumn that has now become urgent.

THE QUIET DAYS D6

Roll when nobody comes, which is twice in the twelve days. Add one to Stores, Firewood or Goodwill.

1 You mend a thing that has been broken since before you came.

2 You walk to the top of the lane for no reason and stand there a while.

3 You cook something for one person, which is yourself, properly.

4 You move a piece of furniture and the room is better and you cannot say why.

5 You read the same page four times and give up and go outside.

6 You do the accounts and they are not as bad as you had decided they were.

The guest book

DAY	WHO CAME UP THE ROAD	WHAT THEY WANTED	WHAT YOU DID, AND WHAT IT COST	TRACK
				S F G
				S F G
				S F G
				S F G
				S F G
				S F G
				S F G
				S F G
				S F G
				S F G
				S F G
				S F G
				S F G

AFTER TWELVE DAYS

How the spring ends

Roll once, on the table for whichever track is highest. Then write the last entry, which is the only one that is allowed to be long. If two tracks are level, roll on both and write which one you chose.

IF GOODWILL IS HIGHEST

D6

1. The carter stops on his way back down without wanting anything, only to say the road is better for your inn being on it.
2. On the last evening the children from the lane bring you the first primroses off the bank, tied with somebody's bootlace.
3. The miller's wife asks if her girl can work the summer for you, and you say yes before she has finished asking.
4. Somebody you turned away in the first week comes back, pays for a room, and neither of you mentions it.
5. The parish asks you to keep the key to the pound, because yours is the door that is always open.
6. A letter comes from someone who stayed one night at the start of spring. It is two lines long and you keep it.

IF STORES IS HIGHEST

D6

1. The loft is fuller on the last day of spring than on the first, which has never happened before.
2. You sell the seed potatoes you did not need and buy a second ham for the summer trade.
3. The garden comes up in straight rows, and you eat the first peas standing in the doorway.
4. You settle the flour account in full, and the miller rubs your name off his slate.
5. A drover pays you in lambs, two of them, and you are somebody who keeps sheep now.
6. You put a coin by for every guest this spring, and the jar on the shelf is heavier than you expected.

IF FIREWOOD IS HIGHEST

D6

1. The woodpile is taller than you on the last day of spring, cut, split and stacked bark up.
2. You have the chimney swept before summer, and the big room stops smoking for the first time in years.
3. You fell the dead ash by the gate yourself, and next winter's first stack is done before the hay.
4. You keep the copper lit one evening for anyone on the road who wants hot water, and four people do.
5. The far stall gets its door at last, made from the boards you had been saving for kindling.
6. You burn the last of the old wood in one evening for no reason, and sit up late watching it go.

IF YOU WANT MORE

The whole year

This spring is a whole game, and you can stop here. If you would rather keep the inn, there is a book for the rest of the year.

In **A Year at the Wayside** the same inn goes on through summer, autumn and winter, each with its own people on the road, what they want and what the road brings, and at the end of winter the track that is highest decides how the year ends.



SUMMER



AUTUMN



WINTER

- 162 written entries across 25 tables, every one rolled on a single d6
- 3 ending tables for the year, and 12 writing prompts, three per season
- 72 cards to cut out, for playing without a die
- 8 journal sheets, and a painting opening every season
- 35 pages, A4 and US Letter, in colour and ink-saver

Your inn carries over. Keep its name and the tracks where you left them, and start summer on day one.

onegoodevening.pages.dev/p/a-year-at-the-wayside/
also on itch.io and Etsy