

Cover Sheet

The Wishing Tree

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People leave their wishes at the Wishing Tree, and decorate it beautifully in the hopes that their wishes will be granted. What they don't know: when no humans are around, the animals gather to read the wishes and help them come true.

To play this game, you will need:

- A tree, or another place to hang decorations
- Paper, pens, scissors, and other art supplies
- String, tape, or another method of attaching decorations
- One Tree Spirit mask (make your own from the art supplies)
- Six animal masks (make your own from the art supplies)
- Six animal character sheets (print from this document)

This game is designed to be played outside, near a tree that can be used to hang wishes and dedications. It requires one Tree Spirit, between two and six animals, and can accommodate any number of humans. Players can join, leave, or change roles between rounds of play.

Overview

People leave their wishes at the Wishing Tree, and decorate it beautifully in the hopes that their wishes will be granted. What they don't know: when no humans are around, the animals gather to read the wishes and help them come true.

There are three character types in this game.

1. The **Tree Spirit** is the spirit of the Wishing Tree. This person helps facilitate the game.
2. Between two and six **animals** work together to make wishes come true.
3. Any number of **humans** create new wishes and decorate the Wishing Tree.

Starting the Game

Prepare the play area

Choose a tree to be your Wishing Tree, where players can hang their decorations. If you are playing indoors, you can use a part of the wall as your "tree." In either case, make sure you have a non-damaging way of hanging decorations, such as string or masking tape.

The area around the Wishing Tree is the play area.

Prepare the craft area

Choose a space to be your craft area. This should be outside the play area, but visible and nearby.

Place your art supplies in the craft area. We recommend having a printout of the rules in the craft area as well.

If you don't yet have masks, take a few minutes to create the following masks for players to wear:

- Tree Spirit
- Fox
- Owl
- Crow
- Squirrel
- Raccoon
- Mouse

Find some sticks nearby and attach one stick to each mask, so that players can hold them in front of their faces while playing. This way, players can easily pass the masks around as their roles change.

Decorating the Tree

The human players decorate the Wishing Tree, using the supplies in the craft area. This is an ongoing activity that happens in parallel with rounds of Granting Wishes. Anyone can stop by and contribute to the tree.

There are two types of things that you can make for the Wishing Tree.

First, you can **make a wish**. Make sure to include *who you are*, *what you wish for*, and *two barriers to your wish*. You can make the outside of the wish as beautiful as you want, but don't forget to fold it up so no one can see what's inside. Only the Tree Spirit is allowed to look, when they're choosing their next wish to come true.

Second, you can **make a dedication**. You can use any of the craft materials to make something beautiful to hang on the tree. Find a secret spot on your decoration and dedicate it to **one** of the six animals by writing their name (Fox, Owl, Crow, Squirrel, Raccoon, or Mouse). When the animals need to do something tough, they'll use these items to help them.

You're encouraged to make your wishes and dedications collaborative, especially if there are folks at the table who are too young to write independently!

When your decoration is finished, put it to one side. The Tree Spirit will hang it on the tree for you between rounds of Granting Wishes.

Granting Wishes

The main portion of the game takes place in rounds of Granting Wishes. The Tree Spirit facilitates play, the Animals invent and carry out plans, and humans can move back and forth between spectating and decorating the tree.

As noted below, the Tree Spirit and Animal players can join, leave, or change roles between each round. Humans can join or leave at any time.

Select roles (Everyone)

Choose one player to be the Tree Spirit. Give them the Tree Spirit mask.

Two to six players should volunteer to be Animals. Each player should choose one of the animal masks.

If there are players remaining, choose one player to host the craft area.

If more than one player wants the same role, give priority to players who haven't yet had that role. If there are still multiple players in the running, choose the player with the next birthday.

Choose a wish (Tree Spirit)

The Tree Spirit chooses the wish that they want to help come true. They can take any wish from the tree and look at it. If they don't like that wish, they can hang it back on the tree and choose another.

If no humans have hung wishes on the tree yet, the Tree Spirit can choose one of the sample wishes from the end of this document.

Once the Tree Spirit has chosen a wish, they should read it aloud to all players.

Make a plan (Animals)

The Animals should discuss how they are going to make the wish come true. Animals are free to differ about what it means to make the wish come true, how they might carry it out, and what they personally are willing to contribute.

The plan cannot involve any of the following:

- Revealing themselves to humans
- Physical harm to humans or other animals
- Actual or implied sexual violence

Additionally, each animal has a different requirement for what they need in a plan. They may only agree to a plan if it meets their personal requirement. For example, Fox can only agree to a plan if it is unnecessarily complicated. If the plan is simple, they must make it more complicated before they can say yes.

Finally, each animal must contribute something unique to the plan. For example, Mouse might sneak through a small hole where none of the other animals can fit, while Owl might spy out the area late at night.

If you join in the middle of a round and didn't hear the wish, no worries! Neither did your character. Say why you were late and ask the group to fill you in. For example, Squirrel could have been storing away acorns for winter, or Crow got distracted by something shiny. And if you need to leave in the middle of a round, tell the group what's calling you away, then return your mask to the craft area.

When *more than half* the animals in play have agreed to a plan, they can take it to the Tree Spirit for resolution. Note that even animals not directly involved in the plan will contribute to resolution.

Resolution (Everyone)

The animals take turns narrating how their plan goes to the Tree Spirit, and to any spectating humans. As the narrator speaks, the animals involved in the story should act out what they are doing.

Rotate to the next narrator each time a new animal contributes to the plan.

The Tree Spirit can stop the action at any time by saying “Hold on just a moment!” They should do this if:

- The animals are doing something difficult.
- The animals have drawn human attention.
- The animals are doing something impossible or inappropriate.

If the animals are *doing something difficult*, they have two choices. They can show that the animal in question is using a skill from their character sheet, in which case they succeed and continue. Otherwise, the Tree Spirit chooses a dedication from the tree. The dedication has an animal’s name on it. That animal’s player should explain how they save the day when the original plan fails, then they pick up the narration.

(This is true even if the animal is not part of the plan. However, if no one is playing that animal, the Tree Spirit chooses which animal saves the day.)

If an animal has *drawn human attention*, the Tree Spirit should explain how the humans behave, based on the animals’ character sheets. For example, if an animal is CUTE then humans might try to approach it, while if it is SCARY they might scream or try to scare it away. The animal who drew the human’s attention picks up the narration to explain how the situation resolves.

If the animals are *doing something impossible or inappropriate*, the Tree Spirit can ask them to try again another way. The narrator does not change; instead, they pick up the story from the last acceptable action.

When all animals have narrated their contribution to the plan, and all issues raised by the Tree Spirit have been resolved, the wish is fulfilled!

Add decorations to tree (Tree Spirit)

The Tree Spirit should pass around the fulfilled wish. Every animal who contributed to the plan - including those who joined in during resolution - can make their mark on the wish. For example, Squirrel might draw an acorn or write their name. Then, the Tree Spirit should hang it, unfolded, on a special part of the tree, where everyone can see it.

Next, the Tree Spirit should visit the craft area to pick up any new decorations. They should help the humans safely hang dedications and wishes on the tree.

Finally, decide whether you want to play another round. If so, select new roles and start the process again!

Ending the Game

When you decide to stop playing, gather around the Wishing Tree for a group photograph. Then clean up your materials. Don't forget to recycle and reuse any art supplies that you can!

Character Sheets

You are FOX.

You can only agree to a plan if it is UNNECESSARILY COMPLICATED.

You are good at these three things:

- POUNCING ON PREY
- PLAYING TRICKS
- FOLLOWING A SCENT

Humans think you are CUTE and UNUSUAL.

You are OWL.

You can only agree to a plan if it is FORESIGHTED.

You are good at these three things:

- SEEING IN THE DARK
- FLYING QUIETLY
- GRIPPING STRONGLY

Humans think you are SCARY and UNUSUAL.

You are CROW.

You can only agree to a plan if it involves SHINY THINGS.

You are good at these three things:

- USING TOOLS
- TELLING HUMANS APART
- COUNTING

Humans think you are OMINOUS and ORDINARY.

You are SQUIRREL.

You can only agree to a plan if it involves FOOD.

You are good at these three things:

- CLIMBING FAST
- HIDING THINGS
- DIGGING TUNNELS AND HOLES

Humans think you are CUTE and ORDINARY.

You are RACCOON.

You can only agree to a plan if you LOOK CLEVER.

You are good at these three things:

- USING YOUR HANDS
- SOLVING PUZZLES
- BEING STRONG

Humans think you are ANNOYING and UNUSUAL.

You are MOUSE.

You can only agree to a plan if it is NOT SCARY.

You are good at these three things:

- BEING SMALL
- GNAWING ON THINGS
- FINDING FOOD

Humans think you are ANNOYING and ORDINARY.

Sample Wishes

My name is Maisie and I really want a puppy! Especially if it is a black puppy with floppy ears who will sleep on my bed. My mom says I am not allowed to have a puppy because I am not responsible enough, and my dad says that puppies are expensive. But I am nine years old and that is definitely old enough to be responsible. Please help me, Wishing Tree!

Dear Wishing Tree, I want to reconcile with my wife. Samira is so smart and so kind and so beautiful. I was wrong not to support her when she wanted to go back to school. But, now she isn't talking to me so I can't even apologize. I know you are only a tree but please grant my wish if you can. Sincerely, William Mehta

HEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEY WISHING TREE BRO! I WANT A NEW TRUCK! I DON'T HAVE ANY MONEY BUT I WANT IT TO BE FANCY AND SHINY AND RED! HELP OUT YA BOI JIMOTHY HERE AND GET ME A TRUCK AND A PLACE TO KEEP IT!

Wishing tree, can you help me get my revenge? Lee from next door is a real bully. Yesterday he pushed me while we were waiting for the bus and tore up my homework. He's big and strong and my parents say I have to be nice to him. Well I don't want to be nice. I want revenge. Thank you, Wishing Tree. Love, Su-Lin