

# Solitary Journey

by Karen Deal Robinson

## Overview

This played-in-the-hand solitaire game, played with ordinary playing cards, simulates a journey through fields and forests, oceans and mountains. On the way you may meet helpful guides and mischievous fellow-travelers. With some luck you may find enough treasure and magical tools to enable you to find the home of your dreams and live happily ever after. But if you get restless, you can always take off on another journey.

This game is played entirely in the hand, so there is no need for a table. You can play it anywhere. If you are interrupted, you can put it in your pocket and take it up later.

## Set Up

Remove the four Jacks from a deck of playing cards and shuffle the rest of the deck, including the two Jokers. Arrange the Jacks face up in the order Hearts, Diamonds, Clubs, and Spades, with Spades in the back and Hearts in the front. Place the rest of the deck face down on top of the Jacks. The Jacks will act as counters to keep track of how many times you've gone through the deck; when they show up, put the first one behind the other three and continue playing. When you reach the Jack of Spades you have gone through the deck four times and have finished the game. The Jacks also hold your items for you. Turn over the top four cards in the deck and fan them out so you can see them. Hold them on top of the deck so that everything is in one hand.

## Interpretation of the cards

The four suits represent four kinds of landscapes. Hearts are oceans, lakes, and rivers. Diamonds are plains, fields, moors, and prairies. Clubs are forests. Spades are mountains.

The values of the cards represent various treasures, tools, items, landscapes, and people, as shown in the table at the end. The “**view**” is the name for the four cards that are fanned face upward in your hand. They are not only the cards you can view, but they also represent the things you can see as you look around you.

The rules apply in the same way for each of the suits, but you will have a more immersive experience if you refer to the **chart** at the end, which describes each thing in terms of the landscape represented by that suit.

Some of the cards represent first a **location**, and then, under the right circumstances, an **item** that you find at that location. On the next page is a visual way to remember what each card means. After that you will find a detailed description of how to play the game.

## How to remember the meanings of the cards

**Ace:** In many games the aces are the high cards, so they represent treasure.

**Two:** The two is small, so it represents a small key.

**Three:** The three pips line up in a row, so this card represents a straight thoroughfare.

**Four:** A horse has four legs, and a carriage has four wheels, so this card represents transportation. On the water it could be a ship with a large square sail.

**Five:** The five pips look like an X, so this represents a crossroads, where different land types come together.

**Six:** The six pips form a rectangle that looks like the door of an inn. It also looks like a paper on which a map is printed. The inn is where you might find the map.

**Seven:** Seven is a magical number, so it represents the magical power of flight. It rhymes with "heaven" which could mean the sky. The seven pips could represent the four limbs, the head, and two wings of the flying horse and the fairy. They could also represent the shape of the flying carpet with the person sitting on it.

**Eight:** The rectangular pattern with the diagonals crossing it could be the latticed windows of the bookshop, and the pattern on the cover of the magical book that you may find there.

**Nine:** The two vertical lines are the walls of a tower, and the single pip between them is the scrying tool that you may find there.

**Ten:** The many pips surrounding the central open space represent the many comforts of the home of your dreams.

**Jack:** These four guardians act as counters, to keep track of how many times you have gone through the deck. They are also useful for keeping track of stored items.

**Queen and King:** these are helpful guides you meet on the way. One helps you find things, and acts as a map, and the other helps you unlock things and acts as a key. You could assign them either way, but it's easier to remember if you let the King act as a key, since they both start with K.

**Joker:** These are obviously tricksters

## Goal

Travel though various landscapes, collecting treasure and magical tools. Eventually use the tools to find the home of your dreams. If you find your home, you have won the game. But once the Jack of Spades appears, you have finished your journey, whether or not you have met your goal.

## Terms

**View:** the top four cards fanned out face up on top of the deck. In some situations there may be more cards in your view.

**Discard:** place a card face down at the back of the deck.

**Store:** place a card face up behind the face-up Jack of the same suit

## Gameplay

Hold the deck face down in your hand, with the Jacks face up in the back. Turn over the top four cards and fan them so you can see them all. These cards form your current **view**. If in the course of play your **view** becomes less than four cards, replace them with cards from the front of the deck.

You may discard any card from the view at any time. At any time you may look to see what cards you have stored behind the Jacks. They will be easy to find because they will be face up together, while the rest of the deck will be face down.

See the chart at the end for a more descriptive meaning of each of the 54 cards.

**Ace:** If any of the cards in your view is a **treasure cache** (Ace) and if you have stored both a **map** (6) and a **key** (2) in the same suit as the Ace, you may store the treasure. You then must discard the map and the key. If you have the Queen of the same suit in your view, she may act as a map. If you have a King of the same suit in your view, he may act as a key. The King and Queen are never stored, but must be discarded after being used.

Note: if you have either a map or key or both in your view along with the cache, you may first store them and then use them to get the treasure. They do not have to have been stored from a previous view.

**Two:** If any of the cards in your view is a **key** (2), store it (behind the Jack of the same suit).

**Three:** If any of them is a **thoroughfare** (3), check to see which Jack is on top. That is the landscape through which you are traveling. If the thoroughfare matches the suit of the Jack, you may discard it and draw cards to increase your **view** to 6 cards.

\*For an easier game, use the thoroughfare whether it matches the suit of the uppermost Jack or not.

If the (3) and the Jack do not match suit, but you also have a crossroads (5) of the same suit as either the (3) or the Jack, you may use the thoroughfare. You must then discard the (5) and the (3).

You may use any of the cards in your expanded view, but may not draw another card from the deck until your view is back down to below 4 cards.

Exception: If you have more than one card that allows you to expand your view, you may keep the other one in your view and use it later, when the view is back down to 6 or fewer cards.

**Four:** If any of them is a place where you find **transportation** (4), and if you have stored an Ace of the **any** suit, and the suit of the (4) matches that of the topmost Jack, you may discard the transportation card and draw cards to increase your **view** to 6 cards. You do NOT have to discard the Ace (you have only spent a pittance of your treasure.)

\*For an easier game, use the transportation whether it matches the suit of the uppermost Jack or not.

If the (4) and the Jack do not match suit, but you also have a crossroads (5) of the same suit as either the (4) or the Jack, you may use the transportation. You must then discard the (5) and the (4). You may use any of the cards in your expanded view, but may not draw another card from the deck until your view is back down to below 4 cards.

Exception: If you have more than one card that allows you to expand your view, you may keep the other one in your view and use it later, when the view is back down to 6 or fewer cards.

If you have both a **thoroughfare** (3) **and transportation** (4) of the same suit as the topmost Jack (with an Ace of any suit to pay for the transportation), you may discard both of them and increase your **view** to eight cards, with similar rules to those described above.

**Five:** If any of the cards is a **crossroads** (5), you have reached a place that is adjacent to several landscapes. If you are in a situation where two cards must be of the same suit to be used, you may set aside that requirement, as long as one of them is the same suit as the crossroads. The crossroads card must be discarded as soon as the transaction is completed.

**Six:** If any of the cards is an **inn** (6) and if you have a **key** (2) of the same suit stored, you find a **map** in the inn and may store it (the 6). If you don't have a key stored, but a King of the same suit is in your view, he will unlock the map for you. Discard the King.

**Seven:** If any of them is a **magical place** (7) and if you have a **map** (6) of that suit, you find a **flying item** (the 7). You may discard the flying card and draw cards to increase your **view** to 10 cards. You do NOT have to discard the map. You may use any of the cards in your expanded view, but may not draw another card from the deck until your view is back down to below 4 cards (or 6 if you have a thoroughfare or transportation and use it to increase your view again.) If you don't have a map, but a Queen of that suit is in your view, she will find the flying item for you. Discard the Queen.

If you have a (9) stored, which allows you to permanently expand your view, and a (7) is in your view, you may store the (7).

**Eight:** If any of them is a **bookstore** (8) and if you have a **treasure cache** (Ace) and a map (6) of the same suit, you may buy a **magical book** (the 8.) Store the book (8) and **discard** the Ace and the map (6).

\*For an easier game, use any Ace, whether it matches the suit or not.

\*For a more difficult game, collect all four Eights to complete the magic book before using it.

**Nine:** If any of them is a **tower** (9) and if you have a **key** (2) and a **book** (8) stored, as well as a Queen in your view, all of the same suit, you may find and use a **scrying tool** (the 9). Store the scrying tool (9) and **discard** the Queen and the key. The scrying tool allows you to permanently increase your view to 10 cards. If you have a King in your view, he may act as a key.

Once you have stored a (9), if a flying item (7) of the same suit appears in your view, you may also store the (7). In terms of the story, this allows you not only to see far away, but also to travel to the places you see.

**Ten:** If any of them is a **home** (10) and if you have a flying item (7), a magic book (8), and a scrying tool (9) of the same suit, as well as Ace of **any** suit, you have found your home and may live happily ever after.

**Queen:** If any of them is a Queen, she is a guide who can provide you with a **map**. While she is in your view, you may use her like a map for items in her suit, but she cannot be stored and must be discarded after use.

**King:** If any of them is a King, he is a guide who can provide you with a **key**. While he is in your view, you may use him like a key for items in his suit, but he cannot be stored and must be discarded after use.

**Joker:** If any of them is a Joker, they distract you with fun and you discard your entire four-card view and draw a new one. If the view is more than four cards, you must discard the joker and three cards of your choosing. If this brings your view to fewer than four cards, draw cards to bring it back to four cards as usual.

If your view contains two Jokers, you must discard your entire view no matter how large it is, and draw four more cards.

**Jack:** When you reach a Jack, discard any stored key (2) and map (6) directly behind the top Jack, but keep all other stored items. Once you have done that, set aside your view, and set aside the Jacks and the stored items. Shuffle the face down cards. (Option: do not shuffle.)

Move the top Jack and its stored items to the back of the Jacks and their items, placing the other Jacks and their stored items on top of it. Place the face down cards on top of them, and then the view cards face up on top of the deck.

When you reach the Jack of Spades, you have journeyed from the ocean to the mountains and your journey is ended. (You may choose to set up the Jacks in a different order at the beginning if you wish to take your journey in a different order.)

	<b>Hearts (ocean,rivers)</b>	<b>Diamonds (plains)</b>	<b>Clubs (forests)</b>	<b>Spades (mountains)</b>
<b>Ace</b>	Cache of pearls	Cache of diamonds	Cache of emeralds	Cache of gold
<b>2</b>	Find pearl key in a tidal pool or pond	Find diamond key in a field	Find emerald key in a hollow tree	Find golden key in a cave
<b>3</b>	Bridge or channel or river	Road across fields or plains	Road through the forest	Road through a cutting in the mountains
<b>4</b>	Pay for passage on a boat or ship	Pay for passage in a carriage	Pay for passage in a coach	Pay for passage on a horse
<b>5</b>	Harbor or river	Crossroads on a moor	Crossroads in a forest	Crossroads in the mountains
<b>6</b>	Island inn; if you have a key, find a <b>map</b>	Old stone inn; if you have a key, find a <b>map</b>	Inn made of logs; if you have a key, find a <b>map</b>	Alpine inn; if you have a key, find a <b>map</b>
<b>7</b>	If you have a map, find a flying carpet on a desert island	If you have a map, find a flying machine in a deserted farmhouse	If you have a map, find a phial of fairy dust that can make you fly, hidden in a hollow tree.	If you have a map, find a flying horse in a hidden mountain meadow.
<b>8</b>	Bookstore in an island city. If you have pearls, and a map, you may buy a book of magic.	Bookstore in a city on a plain. If you have diamonds and a map, you may buy a book of magic.	Bookstore in a forest city. If you have emeralds and a map, you may buy a book of magic.	Bookstore in an island city. If you have gold and a map, you may buy a book of magic.
<b>9</b>	Tower on an island. If you have the pearl key, the magic book, and the guidance of a wise woman, you may use a scrying bowl to see far away.	Tower on a moor. If you have the diamond key, the magic book, and the guidance of a wise woman, you may use a crystal ball to see far away.	Tower in a forest. If you have the emerald key, the magic book, and the guidance of a wise woman, you may use a magic mirror to see far away.	Tower on a mountain. If you have the gold key, the magic book, and the guidance of a wise woman, you may use a crystal ball to see far away.

	<b>Hearts</b>	<b>Diamonds</b>	<b>Clubs</b>	<b>Spades</b>
<b>10</b>	Large estate and house on an island	Large estate and house surrounded by fields	Large estate and house in the forest	Large estate and house in the mountains
<b>Jack</b>	This ocean guardian helps you keep track of time and items.	This prairie guardian helps you keep track of time and items	This forest guardian helps you keep track of time and items	This alpine guardian helps you keep track of time and items.
<b>Queen</b>	This ocean guide can help you find treasures.	This prairie guide can help you find treasures.	This forest guide can help you find treasures.	This alpine guide can help you find treasures.
<b>King</b>	This ocean guide can help you unlock treasures.	This prairie guide can help you unlock treasures.	This forest guide can help you unlock treasures.	This alpine guide can help you unlock treasures.
<b>Joker</b>	This fun-loving acquaintance distracts you from where you were going.	This fun-loving acquaintance distracts you from where you were going.	This fun-loving acquaintance distracts you from where you were going.	This fun-loving acquaintance distracts you from where you were going.

## Quick reference chart.

<u>If you have</u>	<u>you may</u>	<u>then keep</u>	<u>and discard</u>
	store a key (2)		
a key (2)	store a map (6) of the same suit	the key and the map	
a Jack of the same suit on top	use a thoroughfare (3)		the thoroughfare
a Jack of the same suit on top, and a treasure (Ace) of any suit	use transportation (4)	the treasure	the transportation
a key (2) and a map (6) of the same suit	store treasure (Ace) of that suit	the treasure	the key and the map
a map (6)	use a flying item (7) of that suit	the map	the flying item
treasure (Ace) and a map (6) of the same suit	store a magical book (8) of that suit	the book	the treasure and the map
a book (8) and a key (2) and a Queen of the same suit	store a scrying tool (9)	the book and the scrying tool	the key and the Queen
a scrying tool (9)	store a flying item (7) of the same suit	the scrying tool and the flying item	
a flying item (7), a book (8) and a scrying tool (9) of the same suit, and treasure (Ace) of any suit	store the home of your dreams in that suit (10) and live happily ever after		

Remember that a crossroads (5) allows you to ignore the requirements that two items be of the same suit, as long as one of them is of the same suit as the crossroads. Also remember that a Queen may act as a map of the same suit, and a King may act as a key of the same suit. The Queen and King may never be stored, but must be used from the view and discarded after use.