

# In The Beginning, There Was Doubt

A storytelling game of rumor, reason, and revelation

## Story

**You are the investigative chroniclers of the Great Library of Alexandria:** scribes and philosophers devoted to capturing the pulse of the world in ink and papyrus.

This morning, Curator Theon of Cyrene summons you: A courier from the eastern provinces has brought reports of a person performing wonders. Long story short, Theon smells opportunity!

He orders you to **investigate the story: gather testimonies, sift fact from fable and compose a chronicle** that will both enlighten the Empire and secure Alexandria's reputation as the keeper of truth.

But truth is never pure - and every chronicler sees it through a different lens.

## Roles

Each chronicler sees the truth differently. Keep your role secret until the end:

### The Idealist

You believe in the light of knowledge and the possibility of uncovering something real amid the noise. You wish to create a report that inspires and endures - a chronicle for the ages.

**Winning Condition:** Finish a story with max 1 inconsistency.

### The Rationalist

Every miracle has its logic, and every myth its author. Your mission is to expose exaggeration and bring reason to the page.

**Winning Condition:** Drive the group's Doubt up to VII(7) OR have a story finished with 2 or more inconsistencies.

### The Opportunist

You are ambitious and meticulous, mostly driven by your own reputation. You strive for nothing less than a flawless chronicle - but if the story begins to unravel, you are prepared to step away and let others take the blame.

**Winning Condition:** Complete a chronicle without any inconsistencies OR be sent out as Field Correspondent when the story has 2 or more inconsistencies.

## Setup

- I. Shuffle the Role cards and deal one face-down to each player.
  - 5 players: 1 Opportunist, 2 Rationalists, 3 Idealists
  - 6 players: 1 Opportunist, 2 Rationalists, 4 Idealists
  - 7 players: 2 Opportunists, 2 Rationalists, 4 Idealists
- II. Place the Doubt Track and a marker on 0.
- III. Draw rumor fragments until you have 2 per type and place those rumor fragments on the table (top to bottom) - they should not touch each other.
- IV. Shuffle the Rumor Deck.
- V. Give each player one coin.
- VI. The oldest player begins as first Collector of Testimonies and gets the wine goblet (in vino veritas, you know...)
- VII. The player on the right side of the Collector of Testimonies gets the group's donkey and will be the first Field Correspondent

## Gameplay Overview

Each round, the chronicler will:

- Seek Rumors (draw cards)
- Validate Rumors (filter fact from fable)
- Write the Chronicle (discuss and vote)
- Choose the Players (move goblet & donkey)

### Phase I: Seeking Rumors

- I. The Collector of Testimonies heads to the local tavern to pick up new rumors:
  - A. Doubt below 5, draw until you have 3 Rumor cards (else 4)

- B. When an event is drawn, it is instantly resolved (then trashed)
- II. If unhappy, bribe the tavern guests with 1 Coin to re-draw Rumors.
- III. The Collector of Testimonies secretly reads all cards and selects 2, passing these face-down to the Field Correspondent.
- IV. The Collector of Testimonies secretly discards the other rumors.

*“The fields are full of stories... but which are divine, and which are mere tavern gossip?”*

### **Phase 2: Validating Rumors**

The Field Correspondent heads out onto the road accompanied by the group's Donkey, visiting the lands to investigate those rumors and decide:

- Which one to accept as true (discard the rejected one secretly), or
- Reject both as false (discard both secretly, increase Doubt +1), continuing with Phase 4.

### **Phase 3: Writing the Chronicle**

- I. The Field Correspondent reveals the Rumor and shows where it should be placed.
- II. Now, the group discusses the placement and can suggest alternatives.
- III. Then, the Field Correspondent decides on a position.\* (Note: replacing an existing one is possible but it costs a Coin since new papyrus must be purchased).
- IV. Finally, the group votes simultaneously with a thumbs up (approve) or down (reject) for that placement. If a majority approves, the rumor is added to the story. Else, the fragment is discarded and Doubt +2. (Note: if the total group number is even, the Field Correspondent isn't voting)

#### **\*Choosing a Rumor position**

- If placement is impossible: Doubt +1.
- Existing Rumors can be overwritten - but it costs a Coin since new papyrus must be purchased.
- If there is no free space & the current Field Correspondent has no coin, another chronicler may give theirs to use it for overwriting.

- If nobody has a coin left, the Rumor is discarded & Doubt +1
- If nobody wants to give their coin, the Rumor is discarded & Doubt +2
- On final placement, Doubt +1 for each inconsistency (no connection of setting & location, location & location, action & object) if the cards have possible connections

When Doubt reaches II(2), IV(4), VI(6) - the chronicler that currently has the goblet may look at one role card of another chronicler (and talk about it!).

### **Phase 4: Choosing the Next Players**

- I. The goblet is passed clockwise (skipping the Field Correspondent).
- II. The chronicler with the donkey chooses who should have it next (not the new or previous Collector). Others can suggest who to give the Donkey to, but the Field Correspondent has the final call.

## **Game End**

The game ends immediately if:

- I. The Doubter is sent out while Inconsistencies  $\geq 2$  → The Doubter betrays the group and wins
- II. Doubt reaches VII (7) → The group succumbs to skepticism & distrust and gives up work on the story. The Rationalists win.
- III. The Chronicle is completed (four sentences)
  - A. The story is perfectly coherent → A new faith is born. The Idealists & Doubters win.
  - B. The story has max 1 inconsistency → The Idealists win.
  - C. The story has 2 or more contradictions → The Rationalists win.

***When the Chronicle is done, read it aloud, be proud!***