

# LASER KITTENS

*Quickstart scenario: The Rats in the Walls*

This quickstart guide is meant to give you the basics that you need to play a game of Laser Kittens. We've given you a pre-prepared setup with pre-generated characters, so you can jump right into playing.

To play, you will need:

- 3-5 players
- Two decks of regular poker cards
- Printouts of the attached character sheets (cut each page in half to make two sheets) and house sheet

## SETUP

Set the house sheet in the center of the playing area. Everyone should look at it and familiarize themselves with what is going on at Knoll St. School for Wayward Kittens, and who the NPCs are. The professors are the adult cats who will help you learn to grow up and be awesome kitties.

Each player should select one of the six pre-generated character sheets. The character's name, laser, and classes are already picked out. Players should think a bit about what their character is like, and jot down some notes in the "description" section. Remember, as a tiny kitten you won't have a long backstory yet. Think about what kind of impulses or poor judgment might drive your kitten. These will be the things that get you into trouble, and which you'll try to overcome as the story progresses. Players should also decide what their kitten looks like, and

even sketch a picture if they feel so inclined.

Remove the face cards (Jack, Queen, King) and jokers from the two decks of cards and then shuffle all of the number cards and aces together. Deal a hand of five cards to each player. Also give each player another five cards, which they should set face-down beside their character sheet without looking at them. These face-down cards are for your laser. Place the remaining deck in the center of the playing area, with room beside it for a discard pile.

## **CARDS**

The core mechanics of the game involve playing cards from one's hand. Black cards are treated as positive numbers, and red cards as negative – so cards range from +10 to -10.

Whenever a player plays a card for any reason, they place it in the discard pile and immediately draw back up to 5. Whenever the deck is exhausted, shuffle the discard pile and make it the new deck.

## **CLASS CAPTAIN**

The game proceeds in a series of scenes, each led by a Class Captain.

At the start of each scene, players bid on being the Class Captain. To do this, go around the table and give each player a chance to propose a premise for the next scene. The premise should be short, just a sentence or two – “Monks comes to yell at us for taking his catnip mouse,” “When we get the door open we find that it goes to the furnace room,” and “Rae tries to take the injured kittens to the vet” are all good scene premises. Each premise should be at least slightly different, but it's OK to propose a similar premise to someone else, if you like the general idea but you want to be the one in control of the scene. For example, “Ben bursts into the room” and “We hear Ben coming, but we have time to act before he gets there” are good alternate premises. Of course, two scene premises can be completely different, taking place in different locations or taking the story in very different directions. That's why being Class Captain is fun – it lets you shape the direction of the story!

Each player who proposed a premise then places one card from their hand face down as their bid. All bidders reveal them at the same time. The highest card wins, and that player becomes Class Captain. If only one player proposed a scene premise, they should still play and discard a bid. It is permissible to deliberately bid low if you like another player's scene premise better than your own. Being the only player to propose a scene, or deliberately low-bidding against another player, are good ways to get rid of bad cards from your hand!

Once a player has been Class Captain, they may not bid to be Class Captain in the next scene. In a 3-player game, a player may be Class Captain two scenes in a row, but not three.

Once the class captain is chosen, each player who wants their character to be in the scene should flip over one of the face-down cards in their laser. The Captain may not force a player to be in a scene that they don't want to be in. Players should be able to explain why their character is or is not in the scene if it's not obvious (e.g. “I was in the last scene at this location, but I'm not in this one because I ran away and hid” or “I'm in this scene because I showed up just as the action got started.”)

The Class Captain sets the premise of a scene, directing what happens in the environment and controlling any NPCs that are involved. Players direct their own character's actions and reactions to the events set out by the Captain. The Captain's character may or may not be in the scene. If they are, the Captain controls the scene as well as their own character's actions. You may wish to make a general rule for the whole group about whether it's permissible for the Class Captain's character to be in scenes.

The Class Captain also has the responsibility of declaring when the scene ends. Sometimes, the scene will go until there is a pause in the action. Sometimes the scene will go until a big decision has finally been made or a big conflict has occurred. And sometimes, the Captain may want to end the scene on a cliffhanger (e.g. “we've successfully gotten the door open – but what will we find on the other side?”). Basically, the scene ends when the Captain decides it's time to let someone else decide (by bidding to be the new Class Captain) where the story should go next.

## **CONFLICTS**

Any time there is an uncertain outcome, or when two characters (PCs or NPCs) want different things to happen, it is known as a “conflict.” A conflict could be a physical fight or athletic feat, an attempt to persuade another character of something, or a search for an object or piece of information. The Captain is the final authority on whether something should be treated as a conflict.

If there is a conflict between two characters in a scene, it is resolved with a single-card bid. Both parties to the conflict secretly choose a card from their hand, then reveal them at the same time. The highest card prevails. Both bid cards are then discarded and the players draw new cards.

If a conflict involves the topic of a class the character has an A in, the player should draw 2 additional cards before making their choice. After choosing their bid, any cards drawn in this manner that were not used should be discarded. If a conflict involves a class the character has a C in, the player must shuffle their hand and randomly set aside two cards before choosing what card to bid. After bidding, cards set aside in this manner are returned to the player's hand.

The Class Captain has the final say in whether a player can apply their A class or has to apply their C class. It's best to be flexible and generous about applying class skills. If a task is thematically related to a class, go for it!

If a third player wishes to help one or another party to a conflict, they bid a card in the same manner (including accounting for classes they are good or bad at). The team with the single highest card prevails.

Many times a conflict will be against an NPC or some element of the inanimate world. For example, a kitten may be trying to open a box in the kitchen, or catch a bug, or run away from the vacuum. In this case, the Captain should draw three cards from the deck, choose one, and discard the rest. This card is the NPC or world's bid. The player bids in the normal way to try to beat it. The Class Captain may deliberately choose a lower card if they want to make the challenge easier for the player.

If the Class Captain's character is involved in a challenge with the world, the Captain should choose their own bid (from their hand) before drawing cards to choose the world's bid. If multiple characters are attempting to do the same thing (e.g. all of the kittens are trying to get up the stairs), the Class Captain may select a single world bid and have all of the players bid against it, revealing all of the cards at once.

The aim of a challenge is to decide who controls the story. If a player succeeds in a conflict, they get to narrate how things work out for them. If a player fails, the Class Captain describes what happens. Failures should lead to interesting unintended consequences for the players!

If there is a tie during a challenge, the kittens are affected by a distraction – something comes along that takes the action in a direction perpendicular to what had been happening before. When there is a tie, the player who initiated the challenge should point to one of the NPCs or place elements on the map of the house that was not involved in the scene, and describe how that thing suddenly creates a distraction. The distraction should be something that makes the action the player was trying to accomplish irrelevant. For example, if a character was trying to get up on the counter but got a tie in their bid, perhaps the dog comes running into the room and spooks the kittens, or perhaps they suddenly remember that the house is out of wet food and they need to go resolve that

problem first.

## **LASERS**

At any time, a character may choose to use their laser during a scene. Your laser gives you a special extra power, that can be useful in accomplishing your goals – or could backfire dramatically! To use their laser, a player flips all of their laser cards face-up and adds them up, with red cards counted as negative numbers and black as positive. A total above 0 is a Win. The player gets to narrate the effects of the laser. The laser should do some super cool thing. Maybe it summons a flock of birds to your aid, or zaps all of the broken dishes so that they become whole again, or lets you make an astounding jump up into the window to get back into the house.

A total 0 or below is a Fail. The Captain narrates how the laser backfires, causing harm or destruction or unwanted consequences.

The nature of the laser's effects should be scaled to the total on the cards – e.g. a +15 Win should be more impressive than a +4 Win. Laser cards are then discarded, and the player puts five new cards face-down into their laser from the draw pile. A player may only use their laser once per scene.

When your laser goes off, you must say its name in a high-pitched voice: pew pew pew pew!

At the end of each scene, each character who was in the scene gets a chance to replace one of the cards in their laser. This is useful for trying to make your laser better, so that you'll get a bigger Win when it goes off. The Captain should draw cards from the deck equal to the total number of players.

Then the Captain declares whether each character acted in a way that was mature and responsible, or immature and impulsive. Based on this judgment, the Captain may give each player one of the cards that they just drew. The Captain does not have to give a card to every player. Any cards not handed out should be discarded.

Each player who receives a card from the Captain must swap it for a card in their laser, discarding the old laser card. The card they replace may be either face-up or face-down. The player should put the new card in the same orientation (face up or down) as the one it replaced.

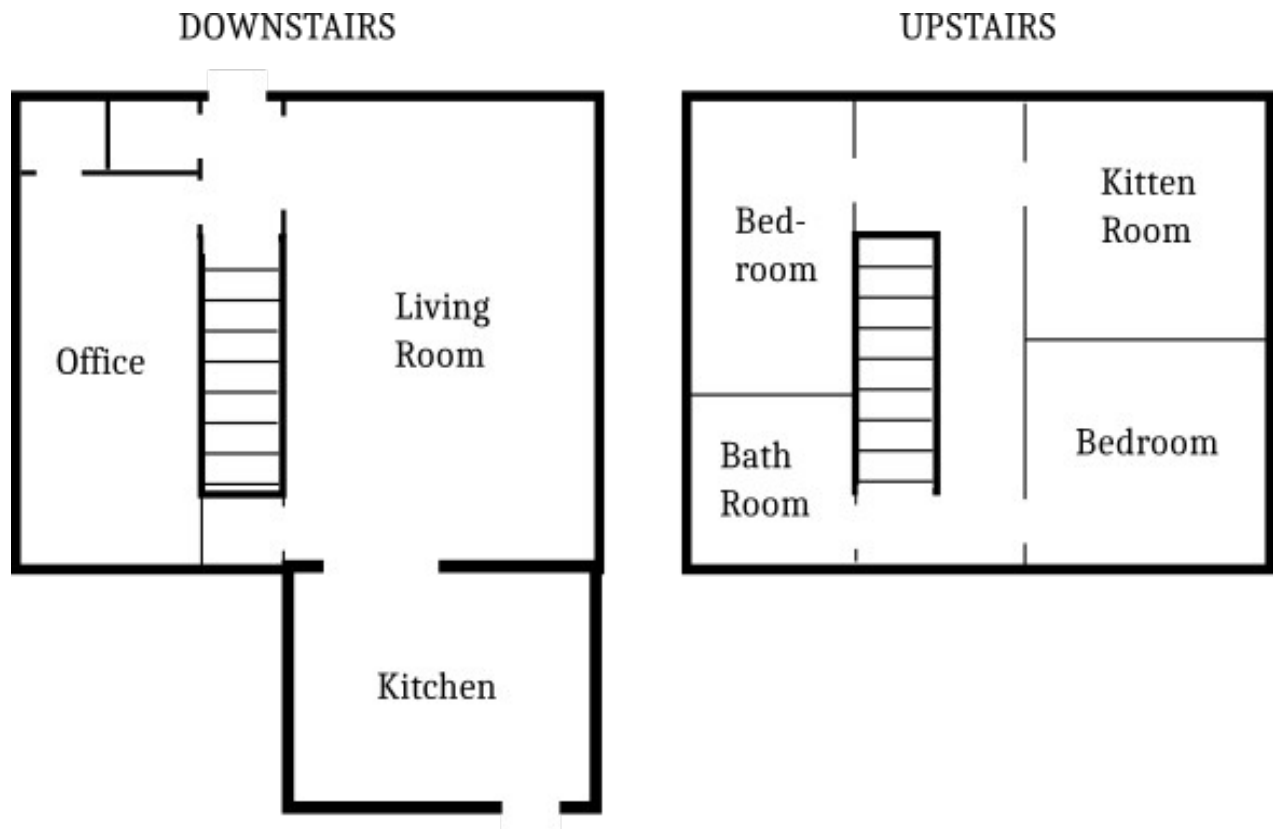
Kittens can only maintain control of their laser for so long! When a player flips over the fourth card in their laser to join a scene (i.e. they only have one face-down card left), their laser must go off in that scene, whether it's useful or not. The Captain may trigger the laser of a character who has four face-up cards, setting it off without the player's consent. When a laser goes off due to loss of control, a Win may simply be a harmless discharge of the energy – or it may unexpectedly accomplish something good that the player didn't deliberately aim at.

## **END GAME**

Eventually, the action in the game will come to a climax. By general consensus, the players should decide that a certain scene was the last. What happens next depends on whether you are playing a single-session or multi-session game.

The climax scene should be followed by an epilogue. Go around the table and have each player narrate what happens to their character when they go back to the Humane Society and get adopted by their forever home. What kind of humans do they get? How do their experiences at KSSWK shape their life going forward?

# HOUSE SHEET



## SITUATIONS:

- There are scary rats living in the walls
- All of the canned food is missing!
- Outside, there is snow.

## NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS:

- **Professor Monks.** He will teach you to speak up when your kitten rights are being violated. But he's kind of a sucker for head scratches.
- **Professor Elektra.** She is a master of exploration and disguise. One time she made everyone think she was a can of Diet Coke!
- **Human: Rae.** You better get ready, because she wants to rub your belly.
- **Human: Ben.** He has to work all the time, and does not have enough time to play with the kitties.
- **Rabbit: Liza.** A fluffy thing with big ears and white fur. She went Outside once, and came back scarred and traumatized.

# CHARACTER SHEET

## Bartholomew von Hamsandwich

Description:

### LASER

**Dew dew dew!** Water, water, everywhere, whether it just gets you a little damp or causes buckets to pour from the ceiling.

### CLASSES

Physics:	A
Political Science:	B
Film Studies:	C
Astronomy:	A
Health:	B

# CHARACTER SHEET

## Dr. Marvin Tofu

Description:

### LASER

**Achoo achoo achoo!** It's not very fun when little kitties get sick -- but now you also control the kitty medicines.

### CLASSES

Physics:	B
Political Science:	B
Film Studies:	A
Astronomy:	C
Health:	A

# CHARACTER SHEET

## Ramen

Description:

## LASER

**Two two two!** Seeing double, indistinguishable twins, multiplying fishes and loaves, permanent doppelgangers ...

## CLASSES

Physics:	C
Political Science:	B
Film Studies:	A
Astronomy:	A
Health:	B

# CHARACTER SHEET

## Cheerio McWheatie

Description:

## LASER

**Shoo shoo shoo!** You can make them go away, far far away.

## CLASSES

Physics:	B
Political Science:	A
Film Studies:	B
Astronomy:	A
Health:	C

# CHARACTER SHEET

## Lil' Dumplin'

Description:

### LASER

**Sue sue sue!** Somebody's going to get in big trouble, whether it's a swat from one of the professors or being locked up in Kitty Jail.

### CLASSES

Physics:	B
Political Science:	B
Film Studies:	A
Astronomy:	C
Health:	A

# CHARACTER SHEET

## Lutefisk Smörgåson

Description:

### LASER

**New new new!** Returns things to their original state. This might fix them if they're broken, but if they're not broken ...

### CLASSES

Physics:	A
Political Science:	A
Film Studies:	B
Astronomy:	C
Health:	B