LASER KITTENS

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Tales from the Knoll St. School for Wayward Kittens

*pew pew pew pew pew pew pew pew pew pew pew pew
pew pew pew pew pew pew pew pew pew pew pew pew*

A storytelling game about tiny kittens learning to be awesome cats.
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THE SETTING

Welcome to Knoll Street School for Wayward Kittens! KSSWK is a big house where humans take in stray and abandoned kittens. The adult cats in the house help to teach these young kittens how to be awesome cats before they get adopted by their forever home.

There are many things young cats need to learn – how to clean themselves, how to pounce on bugs, how to find sunny places to lay in. But the most important thing to learn is how to control their lasers. Every cat has lasers, and each cat's lasers are unique. Lasers let cats do things that ordinary animals can't do. But lasers can be dangerous when you don't know how to use them properly.

In Laser Kittens, the players take on the roles of a litter of kittens at KSSWK. You'll go on kitty adventures (like exploring The Place Under The Stairs, or confronting the dread monster they call "vacuum"). In the process, you'll learn important lessons that will help you grow up to be awesome cats.

Laser Kittens is a shared-GM game for 3-5 players. That means instead of one person controlling the adventure,

all the players get to take turns being the Class Captain, in addition to playing their own kitten character. In Laser Kittens, instead of rolling dice, you'll manage a hand of cards to determine what happens to your kitten in questionable circumstances.

SETUP

To play Laser Kittens, you will need:

- 2-4 friends who also want to be tiny kittens on big adventures
- 2 decks of regular poker cards. Remove the face cards (King, Queen, Jack) and Jokers from both decks, and shuffle them all together into one deck
- A copy of the character sheet (see last page) for each player

Deal five cards to each player, and set the remainder in the center of the playing area as the draw pile, with room nearby for a discard pile. During the game, anytime the draw pile is exhausted, shuffle the discard pile and make it the new draw pile.

Give each player a character sheet, two notecards, and a pencil.

Step 1: Lasers

Every cat has a laser, and every laser is unique. Your laser is like a blast of energy that comes out of your eyes or paws and causes some big thing to happen in the world around you. There is a table in the back of this rulebook with a numbered list of lasers to pick from, and a description of the general kinds of things that laser can do. Going around the table, each player should pick a laser whose number corresponds to one of the cards they have in their hand. After doing so, they discard that card and draw a new one.

Write your laser's name and description on your character sheet. Then place five cards from the draw pile face-down along the side of your character sheet. These cards will determine whether your laser is helpful or just causes more chaos when it goes off.

Start thinking about your kitten's personality, based on the laser you chose.

Step 2: Place elements

Going around the table in reverse order, each player should select an item off of the place elements chart at

the end of this rulebook, and write it on a notecard. Place elements define characteristics of KSSWK. You don't have to encounter all of them in the course of the game, but they give you some plot hooks to get your creative juices flowing.

Selecting place elements works just like selecting lasers – pick one whose number corresponds with one of the cards in your hand, then discard that card and draw a new one.

Step 3: NPCs

In the same way that you selected place elements, go around the table and have each player pick an NPC from the NPC charts. There are two charts – one for adult cats, and one for non-cats. You should make sure there is at least one adult cat and one non-cat in your game. Write your selected NPC on a notecard so that everyone can see it. As with the place elements, you don't have to use these NPCs in your game, but they give you something to work with in telling the story of your litter.

Step 4: Classes

As a group, the players should decide on a class schedule of 5 classes that the kittens are all taking. The classes can be anything, from traditional academic subjects like English Literature and Physics to practical things like Plumbing or Computer Programming to fun or silly things like Basketweaving or Advanced Hide And Go Seek. The sillier the classes, the better! Write your class list on your character sheet in the designated area.

Once the schedule of five classes is agreed on, each player should pick one class that their kitten is especially good at and write an "A+" beside it. And they should pick a class their kitten is especially bad at, and write "C-" beside it. Write "B" next to the other three classes. Usually you will want to distribute the good and bad classes so that different characters are good at different classes – but sometimes it's funny to have everyone be bad at the same class. It's all up to you!

Which classes your kitten is good or bad at will help you flesh out their personality. Good and bad classes will also give you bonuses or minuses when trying to accomplish tasks during the game. For example, if you're trying to make a difficult jump from the counter to the dining room table, you could point out that you have an A+ in Geometry, which would help you figure out the trajectory for your jump. On the other hand, if you're trying to negotiate with the giant rat who lives in the walls, it may be harder for you because you have a C- in Political Science.

Step 5: Lessons

Each kitten has two Important Lessons that they are trying to learn – a Professor Lesson and a Personal Lesson.

Everyone in the litter is trying to learn the same Professor Lesson. Decide which adult cat NPC is the main professor at KSSWK. Based on the personality of the professor, decide as a group what lesson they want you to learn. The lesson should be a general life skill that represents maturity, not a specific piece of academic content. For example, the professor might want to teach you how to clean yourselves properly, or how to get the humans to pet you more.

Each player then decides on a personal lesson for their own kitten character. Your personal lesson is something specific to your own personality – kind of the mature response to the dominant tendency in your tiny kitty id. For example, if you are a rambunctious kitten who likes to jump all over everything, your personal lesson might be how to be quiet a night. If you are a bossy kitten who always thinks you know what needs to be done, your personal lesson might be in letting others take the lead sometimes.

When deciding on your personal lesson, you should pick another character who you think will help teach you that lesson. Your kitten might not want to admit it, but someone else in their litter has something useful to teach them!

Once these setup tasks are done, players should discuss their characters, fleshing out their personalities and roles. Pick a name for your kitten, and if you want, draw a picture of them in your character sheet.

It's common – but not required! – for KSSWK to give a litter "themed" names. So a "Mr. Rogers" litter might have names like King Friday, Henrietta, and Cornflake, whereas a "Harry Potter" litter might have names like Draco, Luna, and Myrtle.

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. In comparing cards, hearts beat diamonds and

spades beat clubs, but cards of the same color all count the same when adding up total numbers. In other words, a 7 of hearts and a 7 of diamonds are both worth 7, but in a head-to-head competition the 7 of hearts would win. If two players play identical cards, discard them both, then do the conflict over again.

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 – "Beecee comes to yell at us for taking her 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.

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.") No character should be in more than three scenes in a row, nor should any character sit out more than two scenes in a row.

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.

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). Players on a team may try to signal to each other covertly to coordinate their bids, but should not get up from the table or use electronic devices to communicate in secret. 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, choose the highest, 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.

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!

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 over all of their current laser cards 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 +5 Win should be more impressive than a +2 Win. Laser cards are then discarded, and the player puts five new cards face-down into their laser from the draw pile.

When your laser goes off, you must say its name in a high-pitched voice: *pew 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 flip over cards from the deck equal to the number of PCs in the scene.

Then the Captain declares whether each character acted in a way that moved them toward learning their Important Lessons or not. You don't have to have completely learned your lesson for it to count, you just have to have shown some effort at moving in the right direction. On the other hand, sometimes you will have done something immature that does not move you toward your lesson. Not learning your lessons can be fun and make the game more interesting, but it will also mess up your laser!

Each player who moved toward learning their lessons has the opportunity to choose one of the flipped-over cards and swap it for a card in their laser, discarding the old laser card. A player may choose not to take any of the flipped-over cards if they don't like any of them. 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.

For each player who did not move toward learning their lessons, the Captain chooses a card from the face-up ones that must be added to the player's laser. The player still gets to pick which card in their laser gets replaced. The Captain may choose not to force a player to take a new laser card.

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 it 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.

Place Elements

Black 10	Litterboxes are always full
Black 9	Elaborate climbing post that looks like it's about to fall down
Black 8	Big dogs and loud birds live here too
Black 7	Secret passages behind the walls leading to strange and mysterious lands
Black 6	Nothing to eat but that gross dry food.
Black 5	That one cardboard box that you fit *perfectly* in
Black 4	The bathroom. While your human is using it.
Black 3	Inside the refrigerator.
Black 2	Outside.
Black 1	Automatic food dispenser and water fountain.
Red 10	On the humans head. While they sleep.
Red 9	Back at the Humane Society, waiting to be adopted to you forever home.
Red 8	At the vet's office.
Red 7	The couch that is always covered in that really comfy blanket.
Red 6	The human's lap.
Red 5	In the window sill, in the sunlight.
Red 4	Under the couch, with your secret stash of toys.
Red 3	Running around the house at 2am.
Red 2	On top of all the clean, warm clothes fresh out of the dryer.
Red 1	Outside. With snow!

Lasers

Black 10	**Achoo achoo achoo!** It's not very fun when little kitties get sick -- but now you also control the kitty medicines.
Black 9	**View view view!** You have the ability to see better than any other kitten. Even better than most cats!
Black 8	**Coo coo coo!** You have the ability to use your adorable ways to soothe even the biggest tantrum.
Black 7	**Chew chew chew!** What kitties want more than anything is food, and you can give it to them. Just hope it's a tasty kind of food.
Black 6	**Dew dew dew!** Water, water, everywhere, whether it just gets you a little damp or causes buckets to pour from the ceiling.
Black 5	**Drew drew drew!** Humans make all these funny little pictures on papers. Maybe instead of just sitting on them, you can figure out what they mean, or even make your own.
Black 4	**Eww eww eww!** Sometimes kittens make a mess. If you have a poop butt or a gravy mohawk, surely you can use this to your advantage.
Black 3	**Few few few!** Plenty becomes scarcity. Things disappear. The many have become one.
Black 2	**Shoo shoo shoo!** You can make them go away, far far away.
Black 1	**Hew hew hew!** Pounce! Grab! Break all the things!
Red 10	**Crew crew crew!** You are always the leader of your kitten posse.
Red 9	**Clue clue clue!** Important information becomes known to those who want it bad enough.
Red 8	**Loo loo loo!** Grants control over the litterbox, the most important of kitten appliances.
Red 7	**Mew mew mew!** You are a siren amongst cats.
Red 6	**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.
Red 5	**Two two two!** Seeing double, indistinguishable twins, multiplying fishes and loaves, permanent doppelgangers ...
Red 4	**True true true!** A kitten lie detector. Just make sure you really want to hear the truth.
Red 3	**Woo woo woo!** Excitement! Mass panic! Rioting in the streets! Wooooooooooooooo!
Red 2	**New new new!** Returns things to their original state. This might fix them if they're broken, but if they're not broken ...
Red 1	**Zoo zoo zoo!** Non-felines of the world appear -- at the window, on TV, or in your home.

NPCs: Regular Cats

Black 10	Adult Cat: Professor Beecee. She will not put up with your nonsense.
Black 9	Adult Cat: Professor Ron. He is gorgeous, absolutely gorgeous -- and he knows it.
Black 8	Adult Cat: Professor Elektra. She is an expert at getting into places that cats should not be.
Black 7	Adult Cat: Professor Siren. She is prim and proper and will not indulge in your silliness.
Black 6	Adult Cat: Professor Quincey. She bonks into things all the time.
Black 5	Adult Cat: Professor Toad. She is fearless about dangers like the vacuum.
Black 4	Adult Cat: Brigadier Fuzzykins. Nobody is sure what is going on inside that giant pile of fluff.
Black 3	Adult Cat: King Friday. He has great knowledge of the world.
Black 2	Adult Cat: Professor Luna. A protective mommy cat.
Black 1	Adult Cat: Professor Panther. A sickly old man who was once a notable cat.
Red 10	Adult Cat: Professor Julius. He's seen some stuff in his life on the streets, but now he just wants to cuddle.
Red 9	Adult Cat: Professor Steinway. He is always watching you, even when you think you're alone.
Red 8	Adult Cat: Professor Hahna. She is just SO LONELY. Why has everyone abandoned her?
Red 7	Adult Cat: Professor Detroit. Legend says he can fly like a bird.
Red 6	Adult Cat: Professor Leon. He will show you how to break all the things and get away with it.
Red 5	Adult Cat: Professor Dryer Vent Kitty: She will try to lure you outside with promises of forbidden knowledge.
Red 4	Adult Cat: Professor Draco: He has a mouse, and it is HIS mouse.
Red 3	Adult Cat: Professor Frank: He is always watching what you are up to. It's kind of creepy.
Red 2	Adult Cat: Professor Figaro. He is afraid of everything.
Red 1	Adult Cat: Professor Spooky. He has sadly contracted a terrible kitty disease and needs lots of medical attention.

NPCs: Big "Cats"

Black 10	Dog: Jackson. He wants to go outside RIGHT NOW ARE WE GOING OUTSIDE HEY HERE'S MY LEASH LET'S GO OUTSIDE
Black 9	Dog: Persephone. Wise, old matriarch who runs the place.
Black 8	Dog: Kirby. Annoying, snorting, not much bigger than you.
Black 7	Dog: Shanna. She bit the janitor at the school next door, so now she has to stay inside.
Black 6	Dog: Atlas. He is so old that nothing bothers him anymore.
Black 5	Dog: Bruno. Yap yap yap yap yap yap yap yap.
Black 4	Rabbit: Liza. She went Outside once and came back battle-scarred.
Black 3	Rabbit: Fred. She's a hyperactive little poofball.
Black 2	Rabbit: Raspberry. He would like to mate, and doesn't care if it's not with another rabbit.
Black 1	Rabbit: Tan Bunny. He is pretty sure he's the best at everything ever.
Red 10	Human: Rae. She forces you to submit to belly rubs.
Red 9	Human: Christina. She is always worried that something is wrong.
Red 8	Human: Maisha. A visitor who is oh so very allergic to cats.
Red 7	Human: Carol. She will not put down that black thing that flashes VERY brightly.
Red 6	Human: Matt. The person who always smells like dogs.
Red 5	Human: Elijah. He is completely indifferent to you and that makes him FASCINATING.
Red 4	Human: Ben. Very sweet human. The desire to lick his hair overcomes you every time he's near.
Red 3	Human: Joe. He does not like cats. At all.
Red 2	Human: Vanya. She is so excited to get to take care of kittens.
Red 1	Human: Colleen. She wants to wear you like a hat, for some reason.

Name: _____

Description:

CLASSES:

Name: Grade:

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_____   ____

_____   ____

_____   ____

IMPORTANT LESSONS:

Professor Lesson:

Personal Lesson:

LASER

Name: _____

Description:

Cards: