



Grandma  
GOT **S.T.E.A.M.**

## CREDITS

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## Science and storytelling are both powerful tools that help us to understand the world around us and our place within it better.

They become even more important when they act as bridges, bringing people of different ages and experiences together, to envision the possibilities that open up to us when we allow ourselves to believe in our own potential.

Now, imagine this...five women. Mothers! Actually, grandmothers who all have a career in science, technology, engineering, art or maths (STEAM). Imagine the stories they would have to tell and share, the knowledge and experience that would make them brilliant mentors to youth who have not yet fully discovered their potential and are sometimes overwhelmed by the

choices they need to make and also, at times, stifled by the norms that society imposes on them.

Meet these women here: Irene, the Mathematics professor; Agatha, the conservator and artist; Doris, the pharmacist; Mary, the seamstress; Rose, the chemistry teacher.

In Grandma Got Steam, their life stories inspire a group of twenty young people to create a set of storytelling cards with multiple protagonists and plenty of adventures. The pack and instructions for use are available for free download from [www.esplora.org.mt/GrandmaGotSTEAM](http://www.esplora.org.mt/GrandmaGotSTEAM)

# THE STORYTELLING PACK

The storytelling pack includes twenty cards split into four categories: characters, places, objects and obstacles.

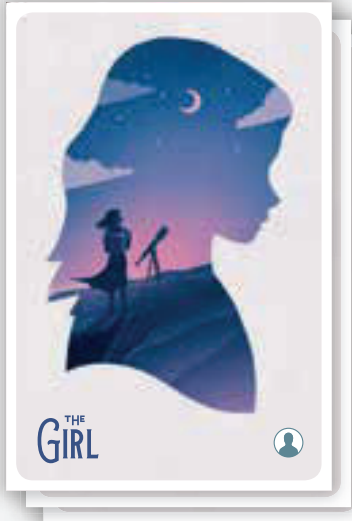
The cards, and accompanying storyboard sheet, may be used to craft various stories in which a character goes on an adventure, encounters danger, finds ways to overcome all difficulties and succeeds in achieving various goals.

Each card includes an explanation and directions for use. Mix and match the cards to retell the stories of the five grandmothers presented here or create your own.

In your story, the grandmother can be a little girl or a grown woman. She has dreams but also encounters obstacles. She meets people who help her and others who try to harm her. She finds solutions. The ending will develop depending on how she deals with the difficulties and opportunities that come her way.

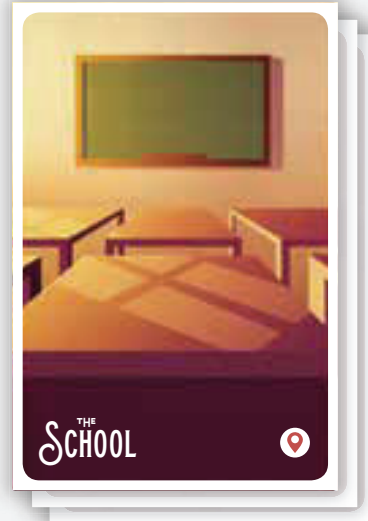


 **CHARACTERS**



The Girl  
The Grandmother  
The Father  
The Boy  
The Trickster  
The Savage Beast

 **PLACES**



The Kitchen  
The Island  
The School  
The Laboratory  
The Street

 **OBJECTS**



The Herb of Healing  
The Gift of Bravery  
The Brush of Dreams  
The Calculator of Danger  
The Pattern of Survival

 **OBSTACLES**



The Failure to Communicate  
The Conflict of Ideas  
The Lens of Doubt  
The Battle for Space





# STORIES / EXAMPLES

These are some examples of stories you can use to get you started on your storytelling adventure!

## Example 1

The minute she wrapped her fingers around the pair of scissors, Mary knew they would change her life forever. But how? As always, her mother had the answer.

'Go', she said, 'to the tiny, old woman who lives in the narrow street by the village

square and is always seated in the same chair surrounded by tens, no hundreds, no thousands, of material scraps!

Show her your scissors and listen to what she says very carefully. If you are deserving, she will honour you with her blessing, her pattern of survival.'

## Example 2

She looked out of the window at the other children playing in the sun and splashing in the big puddles left behind by the rain.

'Please!', she begged.

'No, you'll be ill', he replied, 'I love you so much I cannot bear the thought of anything happening to you.'

Rose, torn between the longing to go

out to play and a deep love for her father embraced him and retreated to the laboratory he had built for her. There were her faithful companions – beakers, burners, bottles, baskets and bits and pieces that she used to create her own world.

Her father believed great things were in store for Rose. He often told her that she had the whole world at her feet and could be anything she wanted to be. As a little girl, Rose wasn't so sure...

## Example 3

The children stood by the kitchen sink watching the tears roll down her cheeks.

'What's up Mummy? Why are you crying?', they asked as they took her hands into theirs.

At first, Agatha thought of inventing an excuse but her head and heart were too full of guilt and sorrow to think of anything but the truth.

'The thing is, children, I've lost my brush of dreams. It's gone and all I see ahead of me is dull and colourless and this makes me too tired to go in search of it.'

'Is that it, Mum? Is that why you are crying?', they looked at each other and smiled. 'Then perhaps we can help, we have the perfect gift for you!'

## Example 4

The space was huge. How many seats were laid out? A hundred? No. More than three hundred at least!

Irene sat down, she needed to catch her breath. Could she do this? Was the robed mathematician right about her? He was worried that she may be out of her depth, that formulas were too complicated and students too demanding for her to manage. Could she calculate her skill, their demands and her chances of success?

Breathe, she reminded herself. They were filing into the room now. He had won. He had tricked her into believing that this was all a big mistake.

## Example 5

Doris would never give up.

'Can't you see that you will lose this fight?', the angry man shouted, waving the lens of doubt in the air.

She stopped to think for a moment.

'No,' she replied. 'No, I will not lose this fight. I have worked hard all my life to build this pharmacy and to gain the trust of the people who live here. I won't let you take it all away from us in one day!'

Suddenly, the lens of doubt was up in the air, flying towards Doris. Would she manage to turn his anger into something positive or would he strike her down?



# STORYBOARD

## Each story needs a protagonist - the main character.

Once you choose the main character, decide what all the characters want and where they are heading. Along the way, they use objects to overcome obstacles. They also meet others who help or cause difficulty. How does your story end?

Use the cards to help you map out the story before telling it to your friends.

1

**Who is this character?**

**What does this character desire?**

**2**

**Where is the character going?**

**What is standing in the character's way?**

**What is the character taking with them?**

**3**

**Who does the character meet?**

**What is taken from the character?**

**How is the character feeling?**

**How does the character react?**

**4**

**What does the character want now?**

**What has the character learnt?**



Grandma  
GOT STEAM.



**Grandma got STEAM is an intergenerational project that brings together a group of young people from Aġenzija Żgħażaġh and women with families and successful careers in Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Maths.**

Curated by **Esplora** and **Spazju Kreattiv**, participants worked with **Giuliana Fenech** (Lignin Stories) (storyteller), **Julian Mallia** a.k.a **Julinu** (visual artist) and **Dragana Rankovic** (photographer), to develop a pack of illustrated storytelling cards that features characters and plots drawn from the life and work experiences of the women.

The pack, which functions as a storytelling tool and may be used by anyone with an interest in story and community, is available at [www.esplora.org.mt/GrandmaGotSTEAM](http://www.esplora.org.mt/GrandmaGotSTEAM)



# THE KITCHEN

A space in every home, used every day to prepare food and nourishment. The kitchen is often a space where families and friends get together.

Who do we expect to find in the kitchen?  
Can you smell all those herbs and spices?  
Which is your favourite kitchen and why?

Kitchens are usually safe spaces that offer comfort.  
They also remind us of our childhood.

---

*Use this card to help characters slow down, remember and reflect, whilst connecting with other members of their families or friends.*



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GOT STEAM.





THE  
KITCHEN



# THE ISLAND

**A limited space contained by its coast, made up of land and surrounded by sea.**

The island can make you feel safe because it is small and recognisable or it can feel suffocating. Here everyone knows each other and nothing much ever changes.

All around the island is the horizon.  
What lies beyond the horizon?

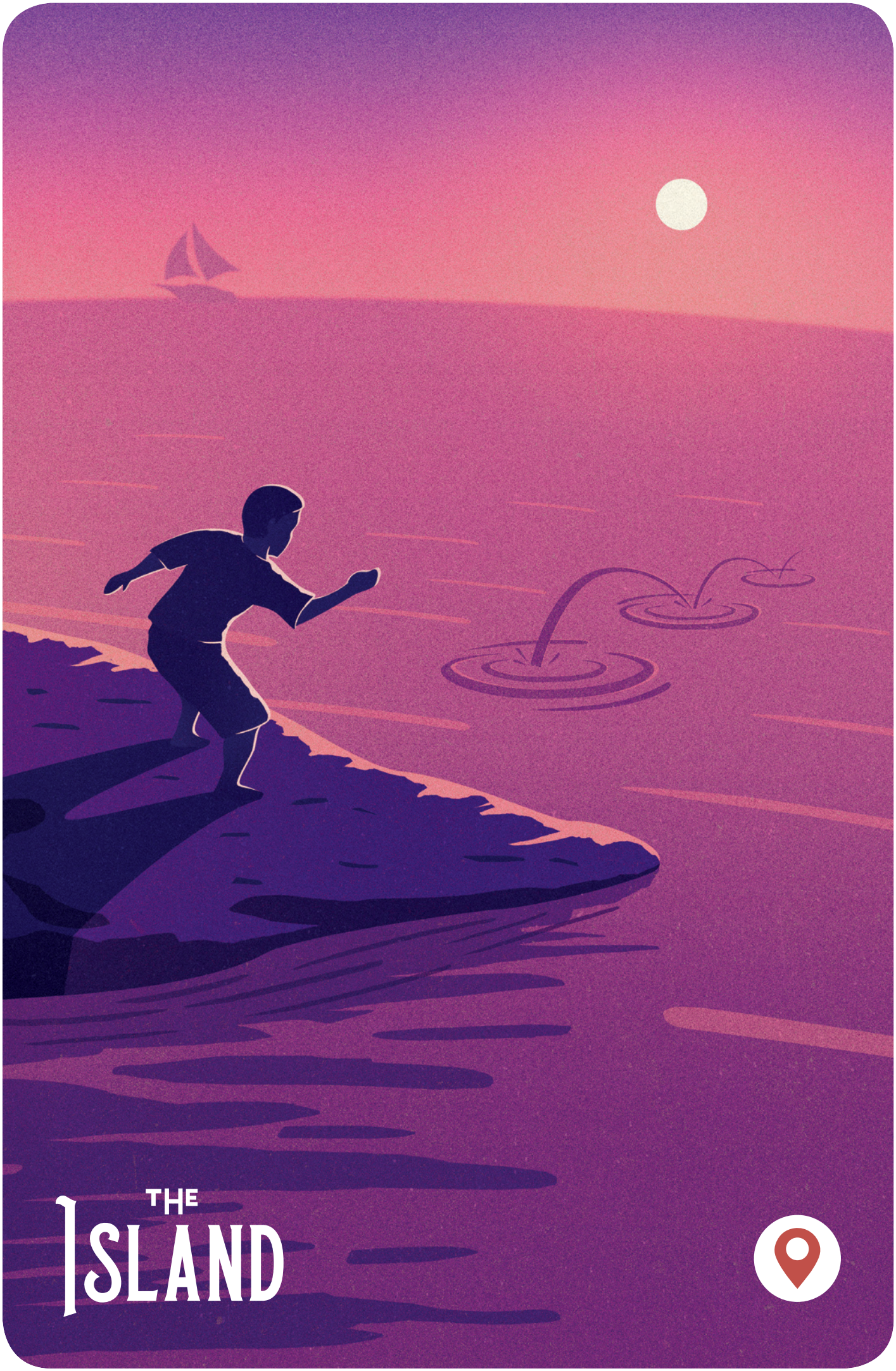
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*Use this card to explain the place in which the characters live or where they have their adventures. Think about the environment that they find themselves in and the culture that is represented on the island.*



Grandma  
GOT STEAM.





THE  
ISLAND



# THE LABORATORY

A place to learn about mixing,  
remembering, discovering and  
creating things.

In the laboratory everything is possible. If you can  
think of a new idea, here you can make it real.

Your senses are alive in the laboratory as you see,  
hear, touch and feel things that are unusual.

---

*Use this card to help the characters invent new things and  
experiment with different solutions and sensations.*



Grandma  
GOT STEAM.





THE  
**LABORATORY**



# THE SCHOOL

**A place to learn about different subjects and more about yourself.**

At school you meet many children and some adults. The adults are in charge and they always follow the rules. The children are made to follow the rules too.

What happens if the rules are changed?  
Who changes them and why?

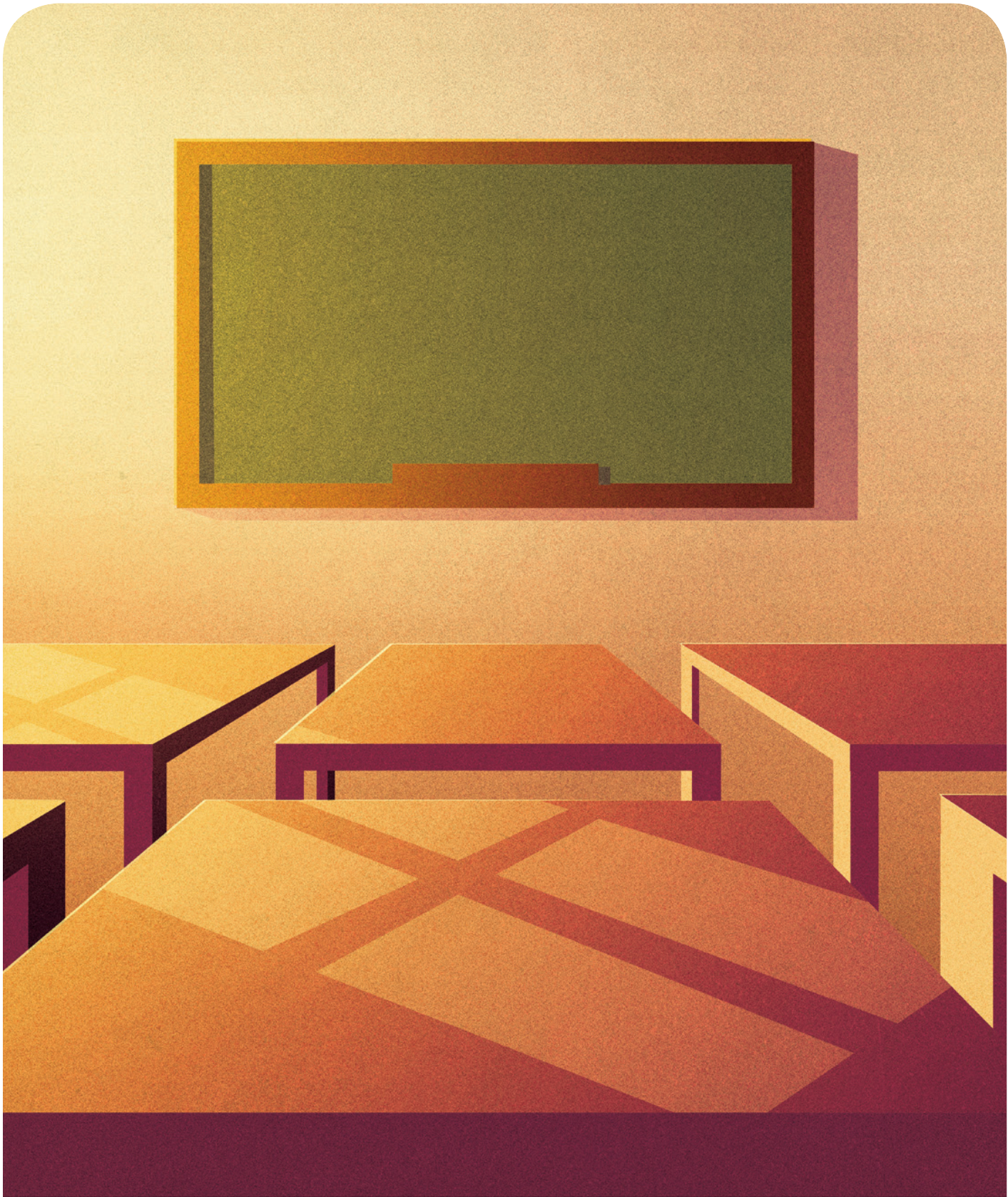
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*Use this card to help the characters understand things better and to challenge what is not working well. School can be a place for discussion and the sharing of ideas.*



*Grandma*  
**GO! STEAM.**





THE  
SCHOOL



# THE STREET

**A space that allows you to get from  
one place to another.**

The street is also a space where different people meet, where we live out our daily lives and where our personal lives become public.

On the street you usually meet friends as well as strangers. Where are they going and what do they have to say to you today? Beware! You may also find yourself lost on a long and winding road.

Can you find your way back?

---

*Use this card to help the characters move around and meet new people. They can return to the same street many times or can visit different streets along their journey.*



*Grandma*  
**GO! STEAM.**





THE  
STREET



# THE BOY

**Who is the boy? Who are his friends?  
How will his actions impact the  
community around him?**

Boys have many dreams and desires. Sometimes they are allowed to follow their dreams but other times they have to do what others expect of them. Sometimes they feel like they are not supposed to be afraid or angry, that they must always succeed and be good at everything.

What journey will the boy go on?

Who will he meet along the way?

Will he meet the girl?

Does he know her already?

How will his story with the girl develop?

---

*Use this card to create a character who goes  
on an adventure.*



*Grandma*  
**GO! STEAM.**





THE  
BOY



# THE FATHER

The father protects and supports his children but sometimes his ideas do not match theirs and then a compromise must be found.

Whilst the father wishes that only good will come the children's way, sometimes he is unable to prevent bad things from happening and this makes him sad. He has the difficult task of advising the young people in the story whilst allowing them to find their own way and their own solutions.

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*Use this card to allow characters to reflect on what is happening, to ask for advice and receive it.*



Grandma  
GOT STEAM.





THE  
**FATHER**



# THE GIRL

Who is she? What is expected of her? What does she wish for? Will she overcome her fear? How will she change the world?

Girls can be anything they want to be...scientists, inventors, artists, surgeons, writers, professors, leaders. Do they realise this?

What adventures will these girls have?  
Who will help these girls along the way?  
Who will stand in their way?

---

*Use this card to take create a character who goes on a big adventure and overcomes a number of obstacles to achieve her dreams and help others in the process.*



Grandma  
GOT STEAM.





THE  
GIRL



# THE GRANDMOTHER

The grandmother is great at listening and baking cookies. Maybe this is what we expect from her. BUT stop for a while and you will hear that she has a surprising story to tell too.

Where has the grandmother been?  
Who has she met along the way and what unexpected things has she done?  
What advice can she give others?

---

*Use this card tell the grandmother's story and her relationship with the other characters. You may use the stories of Rose the Chemistry teacher, Agatha the artist, Irene the Mathematics researcher, Doris the pharmacist and Mary the seamstress to help you!*



Grandma  
GOT STEAM.





THE  
**GRANDMOTHER**



# THE SAVAGE BEAST

**Be afraid! Be very afraid. The savage beast is fearless and angry.**

It has no mercy or compassion. It will not help you even if you beg. The larger your fear grows, the larger the beast becomes.

What does the beast look like?  
Does it spit fire or have sharp claws?  
Does it speak or only growl?  
Is it always outside of us or do we sometimes feel like we are the beast?

---

*Use this card to challenge the characters, to show them their fears and obstacles. Nobody's life is problem free and perfect. The beast reminds us that we all have conflicts to deal with and that our choices have consequences.*



Grandma  
GOT STEAM.





THE  
**SAVAGE BEAST**



# THE TRICKSTER

The trickster never reveals his tricks. You cannot be sure of what he is thinking or what he will do next. Be careful! The trickster can lead you astray.

Tricksters are always friendly but behind their friendliness there is a purpose. This purpose is sometimes good but at other times it misleads the characters and gets them into trouble.

---

*Use this card to cause confusion and doubt. Tricksters can be of any shape and size and not necessarily human.*



Grandma  
GOT STEAM.





THE  
**TRICKSTER**



# THE BRUSH OF DREAMS

Imagine life were a blank canvas.  
What would the characters paint on  
it? If they could choose how this story  
goes, what would they choose for  
themselves and those around them?

Dreams are made of many colours and they hold all  
of our hopes and wishes. When we dream we imagine  
new possibilities and embrace ideas we hadn't  
thought of before.

---

*Use this card to remind characters to think big ideas, to  
remember who they really are and what they stand for.  
Whoever is in possession of the brush of dreams has the  
power to make wishes come true.*



Grandma  
GOT STEAM.





THE  
**BRUSH** OF  
DREAMS



# THE CALCULATOR OF DANGER

Stop running and think. Calculate what is at risk. Make a plan. Check that you have everything you need for the next step.

Does it add up? The calculator helps us to determine how each of the factors around us will affect us. What is surrounding the characters? Do they understand it well? Is it a threat to them?

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*Use this card as a tool to help characters move forward with caution. Using the calculator they can reflect on their next step and if the journey becomes too dangerous they can assess their variables and find different options.*



Grandma  
GOT STEAM.





THE  
**ALCULATOR**  
OF **DANGER**



# THE GIFT OF BRAVERY

Being brave means doing things we do not feel ready to do. It means we must go outside of our comfort zone and take risks.

Every character experiences moments in which they must take difficult decisions. Their choices affect themselves and others around them. Sometimes the right choice is the hardest one to make. What will the characters choose? What consequences will their choices have?

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*Use this precious card to challenge the characters and help them to make the right choice. Being brave comes in different forms, sometimes we do things that require physical strength and sometimes we need to be strong emotionally.*



Grandma  
GOT STEAM.





THE  
**GIFT** OF  
**BRAVERY**



# THE HERB OF HEALING

For thousands of years, herbs have been used to heal all kinds of illnesses. As part of our natural environment they remind us of our connection to the earth.

Herbs have different textures and smells and effects on the human body. If we do not protect the environment we will lose these precious resources.

Whoever holds this card has the ability to recognise and name the herbs and understand their magical powers.

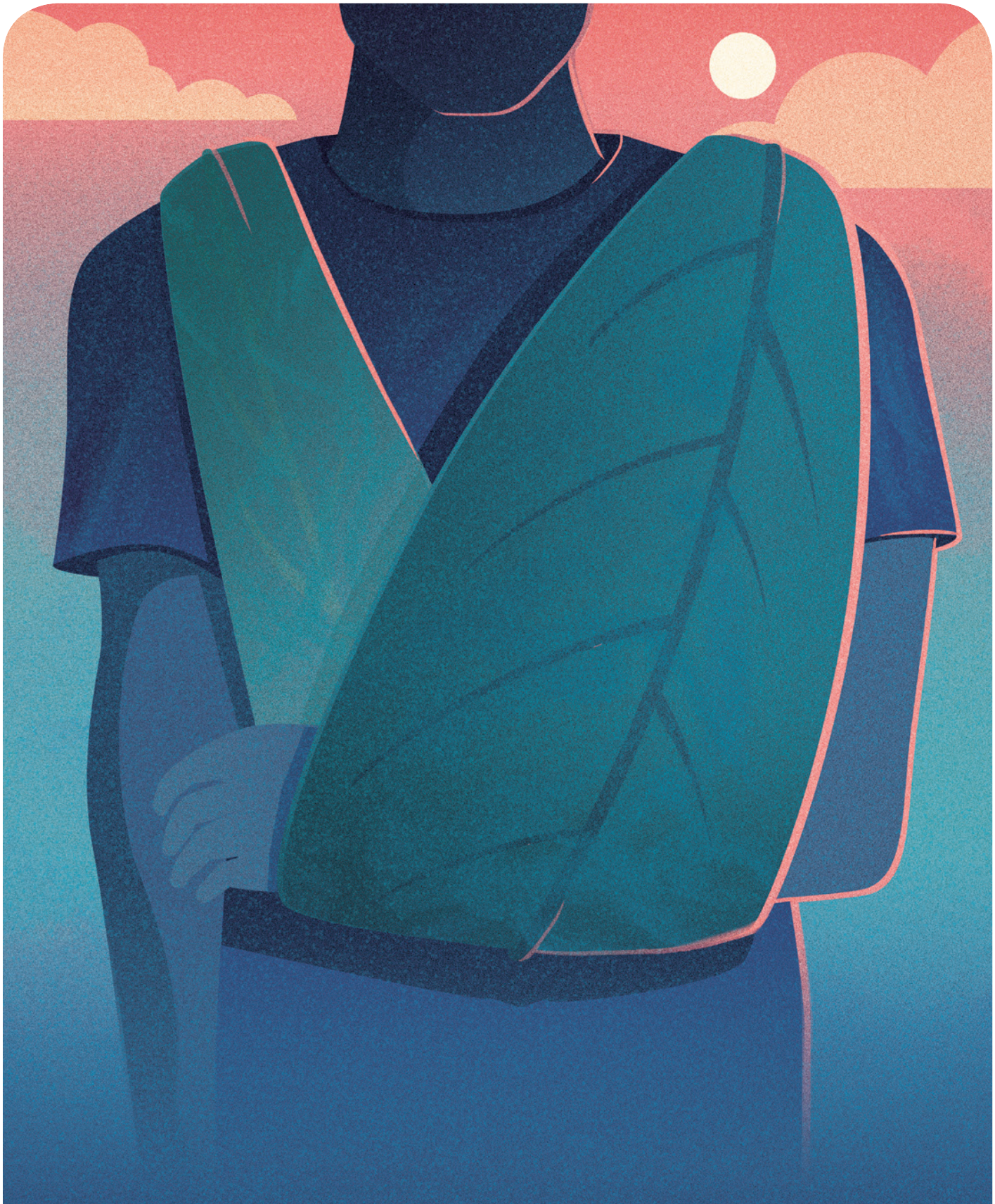
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*Use this card to help sick or injured characters, to provide healing of the body and the heart and the earth. Healing helps the characters move on from a difficult situation.*



Grandma  
GOT STEAM.





THE  
**HERB** OF  
HEALING



# THE PATTERN OF SURVIVAL

Patterns are great tools of learning and creativity. We can observe patterns in nature and art and science.

Patterns are also a way of understanding how people behave differently when put in the same situation. They help us interpret the past and predict the future. Patterns are made of shapes, equations, perspectives and sometimes materials.

---

*Use this card to help characters plan, evaluate and also create.*



Grandma  
GOT STEAM.





THE  
**PATTERN**  
OF SURVIVAL



# THE BATTLE FOR SPACE

Space allows us to think more clearly and act more effectively. It can be private space or public space, which is shared.

Sometimes the characters find themselves sharing spaces. Occasionally, one or more of the characters attempts to control the space, to take power over the actions and thoughts of others. When this happens, a battle may follow.

---

*Use this card to draw the characters into a battle to fight for what is important to them. Is the space they are fighting for their home, their laboratory, their village?*



Grandma  
GOT STEAM.





THE  
**BATTLE**  
FOR **SPACE**



# THE CONFLICT OF IDEAS

**Different people have different ideas.  
Sometimes we accept difference and  
at other times we resist it.**

When people refuse to accept those different to them they enter the conflict of ideas. If the ideas of others result in hurt or disrespect then we must oppose. When other people's ideas do not hurt others but are not what we are used to we must listen and discuss respectfully.

---

*Use this card to challenge the characters to accept ideas they may not like. Conflicts are hard, sometimes even violent. What do the characters learn from these conflicts? What is lost during the conflict? What is gained?*



*Grandma*  
**GO! STEAM.**



THE  
**CONFLICT**  
OF IDEAS



# THE FAILURE TO COMMUNICATE

Failure to communicate is very dangerous because it leads to misunderstandings. When we do not understand others we tend to judge them.

Sometimes characters fail to communicate because they are afraid or because they feel they are too different to others so they withdraw. Communication is the basis of understanding and empathy.

What is the message the characters need to communicate? Who are they communicating with?

---

*Use this card to lead the characters into a situation of doubt or danger. This experience will show the characters that they must try harder.*



Grandma  
GOT STEAM.





THE  
**FAILURE** TO  
COMMUNICATE



# THE LENS OF DOUBT

**Lenses help us to see things more clearly, enlarging details and allowing us to ask more questions.**

Looking at things more closely and considering situations in detail can reveal important information and understanding to us but if we spend too much time behind the lens we may start to doubt what we are seeing.

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*Use this card to confuse characters, to make their journey harder, to make them doubt themselves.*



Grandma  
GOT STEAM.





THE  
**LENS** OF  
DOUBT

