

# Uncle Chestnut's Table Gype

Based on a Concept by G.K. Chesterton and H.G. Wells  
Taken Seriously and Designed by Paul and Christopher Nowak

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*The human race, to which so many of my readers belong, has been playing at children's games from the beginning, and will probably do it till the end, which is a nuisance for the few people who grow up.*

– Napoleon of Notting Hill

**Number of Players:** 2-4

**Components:** Cloth game board, 32 dice in 4 colors. Each die should have one of each of the 6 symbols on it.

**Object of the Game:** Like any game, to have fun and enjoy the company of others! The game ends when a player has moved all of their pieces to the Home Row opposite their starting position.

**Set Up:** Each player takes the 8 dice of the color they choose, and sets them in any order in their starting row. Each player should have 2 Swords, 2 Trees, 2 Books, and 2 Flames to start, but can place them in any arrangement in their Home Row.

Choose a player to go first by any method you choose. The player to the left of the first player goes second, and so on.

**How to Play:** On their turn, each player may do one of two things.

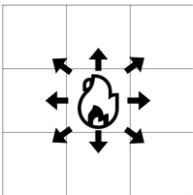
- 1) They may roll any one of their pieces and place it back where it was.\*
- 2) They may move any of the pieces according to the rules for the face-up side.

\* See "Variations" (on reverse side), Slow Your Roll, for a different version of game-play.

## Movement of the Pieces

*I myself cut out and coloured pieces of cardboard of mysterious and significant shapes, the instruments of Table Gype; a game for the little ones.*

– Autobiography

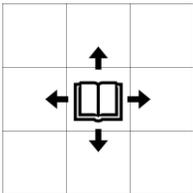


**The Flame** is the most versatile piece, moving 1 space in any direction.

*Fire, the most magic and startling of all material things, is a thing known only to man...*

*It is the most human thing in the world.*

–Miscellany of Men



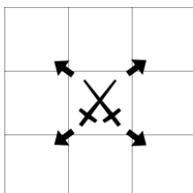
**The Book** moves 1 space horizontally or vertically.

*Life may sometimes legitimately appear as a book of science.*

*Life may sometimes appear, and with a much greater legitimacy, as a book of metaphysics.*

*But life is always a novel.*

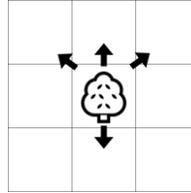
–Heretics



**The Swords** move 1 space diagonally.

*... for me all good things come to a point, swords for instance.*

–Orthodoxy



**The Tree** moves 1 space forward (towards its goal Home Row) vertically and diagonally, and backwards (towards its starting Home Row) vertically.

*As long as a tree is a tree, it is a top-heavy monster with a hundred arms, a thousand tongues, and only one leg. But so long as a tree is a tree, it does not frighten us at all.*

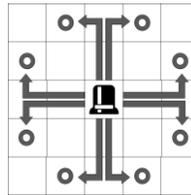
–Heretics



**The Ear** cannot move at all.

*It was even duly settled what disease threatened the over-assiduous player; he tended to suffer from Gype's Ear.*

–Autobiography



**The Hat** moves two spaces vertically and one space horizontally, or 2 spaces horizontally and 1 space vertically, moving over all other pieces – exactly like a Knight in chess.

All pieces the Hat passes over must be rolled.

**The Hat is the only moving piece that cannot move multiple times by jumping.**

## Jumping

As in the game of Chinese Checkers, a piece may jump over an adjacent piece if there is an open space on the other side of the piece being jumped in the direction of the jumping piece's movement. All moving pieces (except for the Hat) may continue to jump as long as there is another valid jump available from the landing space.

Whenever a piece is jumped over, regardless of what player owns the piece, it is rolled, and must behave according to the new symbol. Pieces are never captured or removed from play.

In the case of a long series of jumps, the pieces that are jumped over are rolled one at a time and put back in place. Each player rolls their own pieces; it is not polite to touch another player's piece in the course of the game. No matter how many times a piece is jumped in a single series of jumps, it is only rolled once.

## Boundaries

A piece may move freely into and out of its starting Home Row. It may not enter a Home Row other than the one directly across from its starting position.

Once a piece ends its turn in its destination Home Row, it may not be moved again. It may, however, continue a series of jumps within the Home Row before coming to rest.



## Ending the Game

The game ends when a player gets all of their pieces into their destination Home Row. If the game would end in a draw because a player indefinitely blocks a final piece from entering their Home Row, the owner of the piece being blocked is declared the winner.



*The whole object of travel is not to set foot on foreign land; it is at last to set foot on one's own country as a foreign land.*

–Tremendous Trifles

## Variations

*All sorts of variations and complications were invented in connection with Gype.*

–Autobiography

### “Not a Chance”

To remove all chance from the game, do not roll the pieces when they are jumped.

### “Rolling Start”

For a *more* random game, roll all the starting pieces – each player starts with whatever they rolled (we suggest re-rolling Ears until they come up as moving pieces, though).

### “Choose Your Path”

Allow players to choose their own starting pieces.

### “Shallow Bench”

To encourage more chaos, you may wish to require that a player may not cross the middle of the board with any of their pieces until their starting Home Row has been emptied.

### “Slow Your Roll”

For a longer, more defensive, and possibly more difficult game, disallow the option to roll in place of a turn; thus, the only means of re-configuring a piece is to jump it.

### “All Ears”

A modification of *Slow Your Roll*, in this case a player may roll any piece in place of a turn *except* for ears: thus, ears remain a strategic challenge, as a player must plan to jump them to get a moveable piece.

### “GKC Style”

In this variation, you *make up your own rules!* In the spirit of Chesterton, use your imagination and create your own game.

*The essence of every game is that the rules are the same on both sides.*

–Appetite for Tyranny

## General Strategy & Tips

*Games are competitive, because that is the only way of making them exciting.*

–What’s Wrong With the World

As in life, players of Table Gype can only plan ahead so far; events beyond the control of all players can upset long-range plans. Unlike chess, where one may see a dozen moves ahead, Gype players must consider: what is the best move, considering the state of things *right now*?

Pieces move twice as fast if they jump another piece; but jumping over your own pieces too much can inevitably cause Gype’s Ear to show up, or disrupt future moves.

Having many pieces in play early in the game, instead of leaving several sitting in your home row, creates greater opportunity for more and longer jumps.

By correctly identifying pieces that are unlikely to be jumped by other players, knowing the probabilities that a piece can change into an unusable piece in a given situation, and making other observations, it is possible to make likely or even definite plans of action despite the chaos on the board.

## GKC and Gype

In his *Autobiography*, G.K. Chesterton tells of “the well-known and widespread national game of Gype” he created with his friend, H.G. Wells. While the rules of the sport were decided for several fields of play, including water, land, and on the table, the game was never officially invented – even though playing too much was known to lead to a condition known as “Gype’s Ear.” Wells himself documented several other games in his books *FloorGames* and *Little Wars*, but neither he nor Chesterton expounded on the rules of any version Gype.

Table Gype embodies several of the ideals Chesterton expressed elsewhere, such as the adventure of inconvenience (in *All Things Considered*) and how going around the world (or across a board) is the shortest way home (from *Homesick at Home* and *Manalive*). The quotations on the game board and scattered throughout these instructions are all from Chesterton’s works. The “mysterious and significant shapes” on the playing pieces are all elements often found in Chesterton’s writings.

## About Gype

Table Gype was invented and produced by Paul and Christopher Nowak of [EternalRevolution.com](http://EternalRevolution.com) in 2011, and it won top 5 games of the year and received the Mensa Select award from the Mensa Mind Games competition. It was listed by Games Magazine as one of the top 100 games that same year.

After a kickstarter-funded short run, the game ceased production in 2013, leaving a lucky (relative) few owners of the game who, in a testament to the game’s wonderful play and popularity, don’t seem to put their sets up for re-sale or auction, making Gype almost impossible to find.

That’s why, in the spirit of Chesterton, the Southeast PA Chesterton Society has elected to borrow the idea and *make our own!* On the other hand, that’s also why we must emphasize that **this game and its concept are solely for private use, and should not be sold or reproduced for public use!**

Enjoy playing your very own game of Gype, and watch out for those frustrating ears!

*What keeps adults from joining in children's games is, generally speaking, not that they have no pleasure in them; it is simply that they have no leisure for them. It is that they cannot afford the expenditure of toil and time and consideration for so grand and grave a scheme.*

–Tremendous Trifles

**Need a fresh copy of the rules of Gype? Visit [www.SEPAChesterton.org/Gype](http://www.SEPAChesterton.org/Gype) to download a copy!**