



A New Pub Game by James Ernest
Beta Rules version 1.3, 12/23/23

Background: In the firelit pubs of Schoffield, gamblers try their luck at a fast-playing game of chance, where the goal is to avoid a pair. In the Old World, they play *Ageda Brava*, a similar game with dice. But in the New World, that game has fallen by the wayside, and transformed into a new card game called *Whispers*.

Players: 2 to 8

Playing Time: Variable, 5 Minutes per hand

Equipment: A *Whispers* deck, a button, and chips for betting, roughly 100 per player

The Format: *Whispers* is a gambling game, which means the overall goal is to finish with more money than you started with. For a home game, you can start every player with 100 chips. Start the dealer button with a random player, and pass it to the left after each hand. The action always begins with the button (the dealer), or on the active player closest to their left.

The Deck: The deck is based on an older game with 6-sided dice, *Brava*, and so it includes the numbers 1 through 6 in eight suits. The deck also includes six *whispers*, which are numberless, suitless cards that cannot pair with anything, even each other.

You can make your own *Whispers* deck with cards from two poker decks, or one UNO deck. Use any non-number card (Jacks, for example) as the whispers. You can also buy *Whispers* decks from Crab Fragment Games at DriveThruCards. We offer a traditional standard deck, with only numbers and suits, as well as an illustrated deck, with art on every card.

Definition: Whispers. There are six whisper cards in the deck. Cards that make a pair on the deal also become whispers. A whisper can't form a pair with another card, not even another whisper. However, each whisper in your hand *doubles your penalty* for receiving a pair.

The Deal: To begin, each player *antes* one coin into the pot. Shuffle the deck and deal two cards face up to each player. If any player receives a pair on the deal, turn one of these cards face down. That card becomes a whisper.

Each Round: Starting on the dealer's left, each player in turn must now declare whether they are "in" or "out" of the next round. They can do this by resting a finger on their cards, to show that they are in, or by turning their cards face down, to show that they are out.

After at least one player has been eliminated, a player has a third choice in this step: they may offer to *split the pot*. However, if this offer is not accepted by everyone, any player who offers to split is automatically *in*.

After every player has declared in or out, deal one card face up to all players who are in. If any player gets a pair in their hand (any two cards of the same rank) they are *knocked out*.

Players who are knocked out must pay a penalty into the pot, which is equal to the rank of their paired card. For example, if you catch a pair of 4s, you pay 4 coins. Each whisper in your hand *doubles this penalty*, so a pair of fours with a whisper costs 8 coins. With two whispers this would cost 16 coins, and so on.

After the deal, if more than one player remains, play another round. This repeats until the players agree to split, or until only one player is left, in which case that player takes the pot.

Washout: If all remaining players are knocked out on the same round, this is called a *washout*. In this event, the active player(s) who paid the *highest penalty* will win the pot.

For example, suppose three players remain, and they all get a pair. Player A has 2-2, Player B has 6-6, and Player C has 4-4 with a whisper. Player C owes the highest penalty, 8 coins, and therefore she wins this hand. This means that you actually do want to pay the highest price, but only in the one case where everyone is knocked out.

Splitting the Pot: The pot can be split on any round when all players agree to split it, or if more than one player is tied for the highest penalty (in a washout). Divide the pot as evenly as possible, leaving any odd coins for the next pot.

Playing Again: Each hand is a self-contained game, and players may come and go after every hand. Pass the button to the left after each hand, and play for as long as you like.

Variations: Whispers is fairly new and we don't have any variations yet, but we hope you will play the game and [let us know what you think!](#)

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Testers: Andrew Arenson, John Brieger, Logan Chops, Michael Dunsmore, Nate Heiss, Hunter Johnson, Nora Miller, Jeff Morrow, Paul Peterson, Marthat Soukup, Jeff Wilcox, Mike Walsh, Julie Wotzko, and many more!