

Storytrick

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Goal of the Game

You play with your friends to tell a story with the help of the Storytrick cards. These cards represent events, people, objects or locations in your tale. Together you manage the waves of rising and falling tension as you work towards the finale.

Game Start

Deal 10 object cards and 3 event cards to each player. This is your maximum hand size and no player may have more than that number of cards at any time.

Shuffle the rest of the event cards and place them face down in the event pile. Also shuffle the remaining object cards into their own pile.

The player who most recently finished a story begins.

Game Progress

You play up to ten rounds. At the beginning of each round the starting player plays an event card. Then their neighbor to the left plays a story card and so on until all story cards determined by the event have been played. Find out which player wins the round. That player can determine how the story continues and starts the next round.

Playing the event card

When you start a round, search your hand for an event card to play. If this is the first round, the event card has to be a critical event (marked with a star). In later rounds the previous event card determines what kind of event card may be played.

The first event card is placed in top left of the table and represents the inciting event that begins the story. Later events are placed to the right of each previous event card.

If you have no suitable event card, the player to your left has the opportunity to start instead. If no player can start the round, draw from the event cards pile until you find an appropriate card and put that card into play as the event for this round.

Understanding the event card

The text on the event card describes what is happening in your story in a general sense. There are two kinds of cards: rising event cards raise tension, falling event cards lower the tension in the story.

The event card influences play: It determines what kind of story cards can be played and where. It also determines which suit is the trump suit for this round and whether high or low cards win.

The event card provides two options for the story to continue at the end of the round. One option leads to a rising event, one to a falling event. The exception are critical events that can only be followed by rising events.

Playing a story card

In each round, when it's your turn you flesh out the current event by playing one story card from your hand. You play the card below the current event in rows which are called story lanes.

There are three kinds of story cards: Characters, objects and locations.

The current event determines how many cards of each type can be played. For example: The event "*Licking their wounds*" allows for two character and one character or object card. This means players can play 3 characters or 2 characters and one object in total. These may be played in any order.

If you can't play a card, the opportunity to play passes to the next player as usual. If no player can play, turn over cards from the stack until you get an appropriate card. The original acting player may play that card how and where they desire.

Place your story card in one of the free lanes under the current event. You can't place two object cards in the same lane during the same event.

As you play your card explain what role it fills in the current event and how it relates to the lane it is placed in.

Understanding Story Lanes

Story lanes represent recurring characters, objects or locations or important factions. The first card in each lane determines what the lane is about. Further story cards placed in the lane have a relationship to what is called the "lane owner".

For example: The lane owner is "the proud empress" and Frank plays the "mild monk" and he tells the table that the monk is the younger brother of the empress who has turned to god. Later in the game the Pete plays "the poisoned knife" and says that this is the knife that was made to kill the empress. In another round, Dan plays "the timid lover" in

the same lane. This represents a different aspect of the empress, rather than a new character.

If there are no more open lanes while you have to play a card, you may place a card to open a new lane. This card then becomes that lane's owner. (This is always the case in the first round as there have been no open lanes yet)

The event card might allow you to place a card into a new lane. Do not do this if there are already five open lanes.

Judging a round

When all the cards required by the event have been placed, you check to see which player wins the round. That player decides how the story continues.

The card suit indicated on this round's event is the *trump suit*. The player who played the trump card with the highest number wins the round. If no player played a trump card, the player who played the card with the highest number wins. In case of a tie, the tiebreaker is determined by whoever played their card first.

If the current event is a falling event, the player with the lowest number wins instead of the one with the highest. Trump cards still win over other cards.

A joker always wins, regardless of the event.

Resolving the round

The person who won the round decides how the story continues: Choose one of the options on the event card. Each option continues the story and may tell you something to do:

- *Draw*: Starting with you, each player draws 3 story cards and 1 event card. Do not draw up to more than your starting hand size.
- *+1 Lane*: You may move one story card from this round to open its own lane. Don't do this if there are already five lanes. You can also choose not to do it anyway. Do it if you feel one of the story cards played this round deserves to be a recurring element in the story.

Example: Deborah wins the round with "A ceasefire is established..." and decides on the option "...but secret machinations begin!". It allows him to open a new lane so she decides to move the poisoned dagger out from the lane of the bored empress into it's own lane.

- *-1 Lane:* You may permanently close one lane. Indicate this by tilting the cards in the lane and explain how they leave the story. You do not have to do this. No more cards may be added to this lane later.

Example: Andrea wins the round with “An evil is awakened...” and decide on the option “...to devour its enemies”. Andrea declares that the life of the bored empress has been cut short by the awakening of the archdemon. She closes that lane by tilting all the story cards in that lane.

Example: Steven has won the round of “A friendship is betrayed ” with the option “...and leads to friction.” This is an excellent opportunity to remove the “wild monk” and he declares that he returns to his days as hermit, disgusted by the mortal world.

The option also indicates the type of the next event: rising or falling. You have to start the next round with an event of card of that type. If you can't, the opportunity to play passes to the next player as usual. Be aware that if you draw cards as part of the option you chose, you may draw *before* the new round begins.

End of the Game

At the end of each round check if the game ends. The game ends if the next round would lead to tension level 6 or 0 or if there are already 10 event cards in play.

To determine the tension level, start at the first event card and count up for each rising event and down for each falling event.

Example:

1. *“Evil is awakened”, rising. Tension level = 1*
2. *“A transformation”, rising. Tension level = 2*
3. *“Recruiting new help”, falling. Tension level = 1*
4. *“A fiend is summoned”, rising. Tension level = 2*
5. *“A valuable item has gone missing”, rising. Tension level = 3*
6. *“Research begins”, falling. Tension level = 2*
7. *The final tension level for the current game state is 2. Play continues as normal.*

If the story concludes with a raise in tension, resolve the climax. If it concludes with an option that lowers tension then resolve the epilogue.

The Climax

The climax is a special round. Like the first event, the event for the climax must be a critical event. As normal, the player who won the last round may play a critical event

from their hand as usual. If they can't or don't want to, the opportunity passes to the next player as usual.

Complete the round as normal, don't score it and don't choose an option from the event.

The Epilogue

The epilogue is another special round. No event is placed. Each player has the opportunity to play one story card in any open lane they want, beginning with the winner of the last round.

As you play your card explain how the lane owner fares after the events of the story.

Tips, Tricks & Optional Rules

Game Legacy

When you play a second round you can choose to continue your last story. To open a new chapter simply use the event card with which you ended the last game to open your new game

Solitaire Storyteller

You can play Storytricks by yourself (with yourself? You decide! There's no one to tell you otherwise). To do this only draw a hand for yourself but imagine that there is a second player that never has a legal card to play. That means whenever it would be his turn they draw random cards until a legal card is found.

This provides a constant stream of random input. If this is too random for you, you can draw three cards from the pile as an action of your "invisible partner" and then pick the one you like best.

Time Stretched Games

As you start playing it is natural to see each event as a relatively regular flow of actions. However if you want, you can consider the times between event cards to be more malleable. If you want to play with this rule, the player that places an event card has a lot more leeway in describing the things that happen from one event to the next.

A Consistent Theme

The suit type of the first event card determines the trump suit for the entirety of the game. This means that games starting with hearts remain dominated by emotional and courtly characters.

Scalable Stories

Before you begin play you can choose an intimate or epic game. In an intimate game you only play 2 story cards each round and the number of lanes is lowered to 4. In an epic game you play 4 cards per round and the number of lanes is raised to 6.

This also influences the amount of cards you draw during the game, reducing them to 2 for intimate or increasing them to 4 for epic games. This means that games will have a much more limited set of characters.

Beyond Fantasy

Even though most cards allude to people, objects and locations from fantastical stories, we've tried to be generic enough to make room for other stories. So in a western story the "Executioner" could come to represent the evil sheriff, while for a sci-fi story, the "ill-gotten vehicle" may come to represent a smuggler's spaceship.

A fixed Genre

Try setting a genre for the story before you begin, such as a tragedy, comedy, heroic epic, western, farce, etc. You can further enforce this by removing an unfitting suit of event and/or story cards from the piles before you start play.

A Given Troupe

To tell a story with a fixed set of characters, simply set up lanes for these characters/factions/objects/locations before you play.

Example: You place down the card "Radiant Jewelry" as a starting lane to symbolize the one magic ring whose wearer gains power over the lands.

Lane Twister

Instead of opening a new lane you can turn the lane owner on their head, changing the meaning of the entire lane.