

Every Story Deserves a Good Home

This is a storytelling game where players use cards to represent locations and create the building(s) where the story takes place while telling it. The features of standard playing cards (suit, colour and rank) are used prompt players to move the story in creative directions.

Playtime: Approximately 30 minutes per deck.

Setup: Choose a building as the setting for your story and a genre to get players started. You can use the tables below to decide these (or construct your own tables if you like choosing randomly).

Shuffle a standard deck of cards and place it where everyone can reach. (Note: you will need a bit of table or floor space to play this game.)

Choose a starting player (randomly or otherwise).

Each Turn: The player draws the top card of the deck and places it face up following the card rules (below). This will usually create a new room of the building (or other location). They can take as many cards from the deck as they like and place them face down to help illustrate spatial elements (such as hallways, elevator shafts, or rubble) that have not been created using face-up cards.

The player narrates some of the story that occurs in this room, following the card rules (below).

Play passes clockwise to the next player.



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These are rules that we found helped to prompt and challenge players. If any of them become too confusing or slow play down too much, feel free to adjust or remove them to suit your group. The aim is to create an interesting and spatially illustrated story.

Card Rules:

- ① Each card should indicate a new room or space. So, one card should not completely cover another. The exception to this is if you draw a card with the same number (rank). In this case you can return the story to a location of the same number or create a new location.
- ② Colour: Red cards (hearts and diamonds) should move the story towards conflict. If the story has a protagonist red cards should present an obstacle or frustration of their aims. Black cards (spades and clubs) should move the story towards resolution (or elaborate on the characters or setting if there is no conflict yet).
- ③ Suit: Clubs and hearts (the 'rounder' suits) should focus the story beat on a person or people (for example, what someone is doing or feeling). Spades and diamonds (the 'pointier' suits) should focus on an object or objects. This said, it is likely that many story beats will feature both people and objects.
- ④ Face cards: Each face card (queen, jack or king) should introduce a new character that has not yet appeared in the story. If that face card has already appeared (for example, you draw a queen and there is already a queen on the table), then you can use this card to represent that character again. (As per rule 1, you could also use the location that character was introduced in again, as well.)



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End:

Often the story will conclude naturally in a way that is satisfying to all players but, if not, the game ends when the deck runs out. (Note: Be sparing with playing facedown cards when the deck is running out. Leave at least the final card of the deck for the next player to play.)

Continued story variant: When the deck is running out of cards, the players may decide that they would like to continue the story. If so, players should direct the story so that it moves to a new location (for example, a different type of building). Once this transition has been made, reshuffle the cards and begin again in that new location.



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Tips and Suggestions:

Play around with how you use cards to represent locations (see examples below for ideas). Ideally, a completed game should look a bit like a building or a map (perhaps with some additional cards showing dramatic sequences like walls that have crumbled). Make sure you tell other players clearly how you see the building (is it in cross-section from the side or from above, as a floorplan).

Remember that even though characters are introduced in a particular location, they are in no way tied to that location. Most stories will involve a few characters moving from place to place, and you don't need to play a particular card (such as a face card, or a people-focused card) to include an existing character in a new story beat.

Don't worry if the tone or genre of your story changes. Most groups will end up moving the story to something they are all invested in. One of our playtests started as a comedy of errors and ended up as an action movie.

Try to break out of linear storytelling. When learning the game it is likely that players will place locations next to each other and set them one after the other in time, which works well for action scenes, such as chases, but closes off other options. Try occasionally playing cards as rooms that are on the other side of a building or across the road from it, or flashing back or forward to an event that helps contextualise the rest of the story (this can be especially good for mystery and heist stories).



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Building and Genre Charts:

Roll a six-sided die for each of these charts to select a building and genre (or make up your own).

Buildings

- ① Skyscraper
- ② Hospital
- ③ Mansion
- ④ Cruise Ship
- ⑤ Museum
- ⑥ Factory

Genre

- ① Murder Mystery
- ② Comedy of Errors
- ③ Heist
- ④ Romance
- ⑤ Horror
- ⑥ Spy Thriller

Adventure Variant: If players would like to use cards as larger locations (such as buildings, cities, or countries), we recommend matching the genre to this scale. For example, fairy tale, spy thriller, alien invasion and disaster movie could all work well for this sort of scale.

