

## CONTENTS:

62 Story, 18 Plot Structure, 1 Change Story, and 4 Guide cards, Rules

## GAME OVERVIEW:

Players take turns creating scenes and telling stories using the details from Character, Activity, and Setting cards. Enhance cards enable collaborative scene creation. Plot Structure cards show players how to build a cohesive narrative from opening to closing scene.

Players pick a play mode. In cooperative mode, mutual plot enhancement leads to a collective victory. In competitive mode, the sum of Story Points on the cards used in a player's story determines the winner.

## GAMEPLAY EXAMPLE:

Players use their cards to create a scene per turn, progressing their plot narrative. Plot Structure cards advise players on how to connect scenes to amplify their story's dramatic, thematic, and emotional impact.

In this example Player One, selects these cards from their hand to tell the following story, earning them seven Story Points:



*"Shiloh enters the bar with a purpose, finding Fred on a stool, drinking his second beer. Staring at a TV, Fred demands fifty thousand, swearing secrecy. The baseball game is an effective distraction as Shiloh contemplates murder, knowing Fred's fate could easily be sealed on the bottom of Lake Florentine."*

Players have the freedom to create unique plots or draw upon the plots of others. It's all about seeing where everyone's storytelling skills take you.

## SETUP:

1. Choose either this standard game or an episode from the website, following its setup instructions. Give each player a Guide card, and review the Characters and Settings. Select either cooperative or competitive play mode. Review the Win Conditions on page 4.
2. Spread the 18 Plot Structure cards on the table and, as a team, choose one to guide your story.
3. Shuffle the Character deck (24 cards with lawn chair back) and the Activity & Setting deck (38 cards with lightbulb back). Place them face-down in the center as two draw piles.
4. Place the Change Your Story card in the center.
5. Each player draws 4 cards from both decks. Discard down to 4 cards, ensuring you have at least 1 Character card and only 1 Enhance card.
6. Reshuffle the discards into the draw piles. For two players, draw 10 Character deck cards; for three players, draw 5. Keep these cards secret and out of the game.
7. Draw 2 Character deck cards and 2 Activity & Setting deck cards, placing them face-up in the common Pool.
8. The player who last read fiction shares the title and starts the game.

Player Two Hand



Player Two Discards



Change  
Story card



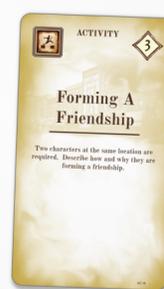
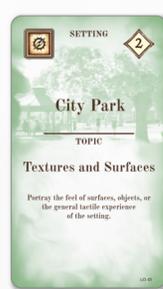
Character  
card  
Draw Pile



Activity &  
Setting cards  
Draw Pile



Plot  
Structure  
card



Pool



Player One Discards

Player One Hand

Two Player Game Example

**ORDER OF PLAY:** On your turn, perform these STEPS in this order:

## **STEP 1: Storytelling:**

- ◆ Select cards from your hand or the Pool to form a narrative, placing them face-up on the table in front of you.
- ◆ Every story *must include* one Character card and may optionally feature one Activity, one Setting, and one Enhance card. Only one of each card type may be played to tell your story.
- ◆ Share your story using your selected cards on the table, drawing inspiration from their topics and advice to guide your narrative.
- ◆ If a player wants to enhance your story, go to STEP 2, otherwise place your selected cards on your face-down Discard Pile.
- ◆ Optionally, put any remaining cards in your hand in the common face-up Pool as shown on the page 2 diagram. Go to STEP 3.

## **STEP 2: Enhanced Story Collaboration:**

- ◆ In clockwise order, players can use one Enhance card to add up to three cards to your scene: a *mandatory* second Character card, and optionally, a second Activity card and a second Setting card from their hand or the common Pool.
- ◆ Starting with the Enhance card player and moving clockwise, players can add up to the three allowed cards face-up on the table.
- ◆ Players enhance your story using their card's topic as inspiration.
- ◆ Once all contributing players have finished, place their cards on their Discard Piles and the cards you played on your Discard Pile.
- ◆ Contributing players draw replacement cards from the decks or Pool matching the card types used from their hand to enhance your story.
- ◆ Optionally, put any remaining cards in your hand in the common face-up Pool as shown on the page 2 diagram. Go to STEP 3.

## **STEP 3: Drawing Cards:**

- ◆ Draw 1 Character card and up to 3 Activity & Setting deck cards to your hand, provided your hand never exceeds 4 cards. You always need at least one Character card to share your next story.
- ◆ You may draw these cards from their draw piles or the common Pool.
- ◆ After drawing your cards, tell the player on your left it's their turn.

**CHANGE STORY CARD:** If at any time you feel uncomfortable with another player's story, touch the Change Your Story card. They must change it to a new topic or theme without questioning you.

**ONE ENHANCE CARD LIMIT:** If you have two Enhance cards in hand, place one in the common Pool and draw a replacement card.

**COMMON POOL CARDS:** In STEP 1 and STEP 2, you may use Pool cards as if they were in your hand. Pool cards used to enhance a scene are not replaced. New cards are added only when players discard voluntarily at the end of STEP 1 and STEP 2.

**PLOT STRUCTURE CARDS:** Use these cards to guide your story, connecting its scenes, and following your game's win conditions.

**NUMBER OF PLAYING ROUNDS:** Each player typically contributes 5 or 6 scenes before the game ends.

## **ENDING AND WINNING THE GAME:**

### **1. Epilogue Activation:**

- ◆ Drawing the last Character deck card activates the Epilogue Round.

### **2. Starting the Epilogue Round:**

- ◆ The player left of who activated the round starts this final round.
- ◆ Players share one final story bringing closure to their characters.
- ◆ Players put their selected cards on their face-down Discard Pile.

### **3. Ending and Win Conditions:**

- ◆ When the player who activated the round completes their story, the game ends, and its chosen win conditions are applied.
- ◆ *Competitive:* Calculate Story Points by summing the cards in their Discard Pile and subtracting those remaining in hand. Add Plot Structure card values if you used its guidance in your story. The player with the most points wins. Ties go to whoever has the most Activity card points.
- ◆ *Cooperative:* Everyone wins if the common Pool has 3 or less cards at end of the Epilogue Round; each player either enhanced another player's story or created a shared plotline between players; and, the team's story covered all the topics in the Plot Structure card. A shared plotline is when you include another player's plot in your scene.

## The Characters of Smalltown

Acquaint yourself with Smalltown's intriguing citizens. Every character plays a crucial role in the town's social dynamics. Look beyond the surface, as beneath their outward appearances lie flaws, quirks, and contradictions waiting to be unravelled through your imaginative storytelling skills.



Misha Mayhem

Mayor Misha Mayhem is newly elected and brimming with ideas for change. Her agenda has many in the city council upset.



Fred Fearful

Fireman Fred Fearful is Smalltown's Fire Department Captain. While he looks brave, he harbors many fears and self doubts.



Benito Blabber

Barber Benito Blabber owns a popular hair stylist shop in Smalltown. He loves to gossip and knows everyone's secrets.



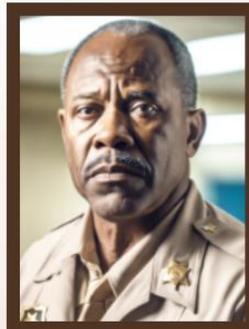
Tammy Tangent

Teacher Tammy Tangent is Smalltown High's math teacher. Although she is an excellent teacher, she often gets distracted.



Dawn Dangerous

Doctor Dawn Dangerous is Smalltown's family doctor. She is well respected, but hiding something very dangerous.



Shiloh Shifty

Sheriff Shiloh Shifty is Smalltown's sheriff. Known for strictly enforcing laws, but is he keeping them himself?

## Settings within Smalltown

Get to know Smalltown's favorite haunts. Experience the social tapestry of the town through each locale's setting. Attune your senses to the setting's activities and atmosphere. Use your storytelling skills to unlock the rich stories hidden in every nook and cranny.



**CITY PARK:** A place where most of the citizens of Smalltown gather on the weekends and special events.



**LOCAL DINER:** Grab a burger and fries as you take in the chatter of the locals discussing their lives.



**LIBRARY:** Much more than reading happens at this favorite spot for secret rendezvous and hushed conversations.



**GRAVEYARD:** You cannot bury the tramas and deeds of the dead, or of those who put them in the grave.



**HOSPITAL:** Visiting is one thing, but being admitted is dreaded by those who know the odds of leaving alive.



**SPORTS BAR:** Where Smalltown's citizens go to forget their worries while creating new ones.

## ORDER OF PLAY

### STEP 1: Storytelling

- ◆ Choose cards in hand or Pool to create a narrative on the table.
- ◆ Stories must have one Character card and can optionally include one Activity, one Setting, and one Enhance card.
- ◆ Tell your story using the selected Story Cards as inspiration. If another player wants to play an Enhance card skip to STEP 2, otherwise continue.
- ◆ When done place the chosen cards in your face-down Discard Pile.
- ◆ Optionally, place remaining cards in hand into the face-up Pool. Go to STEP 3.

### STEP 2: Enhanced Story Collaboration

- ◆ If anyone plays an Enhance card, they and the next players clockwise can add up to three cards on your turn: one Character (mandatory), one Activity, and one Setting card.
- ◆ Collaborate to build an Enhanced story using the added cards' topics as inspiration.
- ◆ After contributing players finish, place their cards in their Discard Piles and your played cards in your Discard Pile.
- ◆ Contributing players draw replacement cards from the decks or Pool matching the card types used from their hand to enhance your story.
- ◆ Optionally, place remaining cards in hand into the face-up Pool.

### STEP 3: Drawing Cards

- ◆ Draw 1 Character card and up to 2 Activity & Setting deck cards to your hand, provided your hand never exceeds 4 cards.
- ◆ You may draw these cards from their draw piles or common Pool.
- ◆ After drawing your cards, tell the player on your left it's their turn.

**ONE ENHANCE CARD LIMIT:** If you gave two Enhance cards in hand, place one in the common Pool and draw a replacement card.

**COMMON POOL CARDS:** During STEP 1 and STEP 2, you may use cards from the common Pool as if they were in your hand. Pool cards used to enhance a scene are not replaced.

**PLOT STRUCTURE CARDS:** Use these cards to guide your story, connecting its scenes, and following your game's win conditions.

## CREATING GREAT SCENES

Here are some ways to craft excellent scenes:

### **Clear Purpose and Intent:**

◆ Ensure every scene has a clear purpose—whether developing a character, advancing the plot, or revealing key information.

### **Chekhov's Gun Principle:**

◆ Eliminate irrelevant details. Every element introduced must serve a purpose, with early mentions having significance later in the plot.

### **Start Late, Leave Early:**

◆ Begin your scenes in the middle of the action and end them as soon as the main objective is achieved. This keeps the pacing tight and maintains the audience's interest.

### **Roleplaying for Realism:**

◆ Roleplaying allows writers to bring their world and characters to life. Roleplay dialogue, test plot decisions, and capture authentic responses to draw in the audience convincingly and immersively.

### **Setting as a Character:**

◆ Treat the setting as another character that can influence the story in subtle or overt ways, using strong visuals and weaving its influence throughout the scene without putting it all upfront.

### **Subtext and Subtlety:**

◆ Use subtext to add depth, letting dialogue and actions subtly reveal hidden motives, manage perceptions, or convey complex emotions. This enriches the narrative and deepens engagement.

### **Conflict and Urgency:**

◆ Add conflict and urgency to scenes by tying them directly to the protagonist's internal or external goals and desires. This will keep the story moving and heighten engagement.

### **Foreshadow at the End:**

◆ Hint at what's next, planting a seed of anticipation to keep the audience curious and the story's momentum strong.