

Introduction to *Fairy Tale Games*™

For 3 to 8 players age 8-98

You need: One normal deck of playing cards... that's all!

Optional: FTG™ Starter Kit, with Talent Markers

Everyone will tell a story together, while one person keeps things organized.

First decide who will be organizer, the Storyteller.

(Comments in blue are for the Storyteller, not to be read aloud.)

(Read the following to 3-8 players.)

You're going to be in a fairy tale!

We'll start with a story you already know, and then change it.

You'll be dealt cards, and can 'spend' them to do things.

We'll get to those details later.

To play this game, first you need to know who 'you' are in this world.

You still have the same name and personality, but you need to create a new background.

During the game you'll tell everyone what you do or say, and the Storyteller – that's me – will help blend *your* parts with the parts of the others. It's like writing a play together, as a group.

Unlike most games, here you all help each other. You don't take turns, just act normally. To figure out what to do, you can stop the story at any time and talk to each other. You learn to imagine together.

You all win, instead of just one player.

So who *are* you in the game? Well first, *where* are you?

Think of Snow White's 7 dwarves. They work at their mine, and they live in a house. There's a woods nearby, and lots more beyond that, a whole world.

In this game, that world is where *you* live. It's a lot like Europe in the 1600s. Whole families work at just one thing, and must work all day just to survive; only the very rich have leisure time. But since fairy tales are real, everybody can do a little magic! We'll get to that soon, it's a lot of fun.

In this world you live in a town, or on a farm, or in a remote location they call 'the wilderness'.

Pick one of those three, and answer just one question: **What do you do, exactly?**

Wilderness? You probably work at hunting/fishing/trapping or trees/lumber, but you can pick anything reasonable. Remember that a town is at least a day away, and you are entirely self-sufficient.

Farm? Pick one specific crop or animal, like corn or cows. You live within hours of a good town market.

Town? You might create something (barrels, candles, glass), handle foods (baker, butcher, brewer), provide a service (tavern owner, smith, painter), or do something else.

Now you have a life and a job in the fairy-tale world.

Imagine your family doing the work you selected. You might be the head of the family, or a teenager, or even a married young adult still working at the 'family business'.

The last choice to make is your Talent.

You'll pick one of four: Body, Mind, Heart, Magic. Everybody has all of them, but you're best at one of them.

This is a world with witches and dragons, and everyone knows a little bit of magic. It's not fireball-and-lightning magic, just everyday household stuff. You could call a spoon from the drawer, tell a skunk to go away peacefully, or 'these aren't the druids you're looking for...'

The other three Talents describe everyone who ever lived:

Body means real-world practical, often strong. You focus on observed reality.

Mind means thoughtful and analytical. You notice and deduce things.

Heart means compassionate. You can calm or befriend others.

Pick one Talent, if you haven't already: **Body, Mind, Heart, or Magic.**

Take a marker¹ to match your choice, and lay it in front of you.

(The last page of this Demonstration Kit is a worksheet. For your reference, list the player names, jobs, and talents.

Also write down the names you make up along the way, like people and places, unless you have a very good memory.)

¹ Paper markers are included inside the back cover of the FTG™ Starter Kit. If not available, remove the four A and 2 cards from the deck, and reserve them for Talent markers. (Three players with the same Talent is not recommended, but if necessary, add the four 3 cards to the markers. You may also use two decks, providing up to 16 A-2 markers.)

So why are you together?

This many different and successful people must have a connection! Indeed, it's a Community Service group in the fast-growing village of Hamlet. That's easy to remember – think of Shakespeare, and Hamlet means village anyhow.

Your family moved to Hamlet because Baron Frank was giving away free homesteading land, trying to grow the area. You moved your business and family, and it has turned out quite well.

Now before we continue, let's remember what you're not.

You're not an Adventurer. Those are the folks who fight monsters. It's an obsession not a career, and most of them are in the graveyard on the edge of town...

You're not in the Military. That 'thin red line' is a force of Nobles or Royals, and they fight wars. You enjoy the safety and protection they provide.

Nor are you a Policeman, a constable. That 'thin blue line' handles people problems, and you try to stay out of trouble.

Your Community Service group is called **The Green Line**. You help people and act as a neighborhood watch. You put out small fires, help those in need, rescue cats in trees, and get free pie from farm wives. Baron Frank doesn't pay much for working the Green Line, but many enjoy the part-time work and sense of community.

Now you know who you are in the world, what your main Talent is, and why you're all together.

You're ready for the story to start. It's easiest if we all know the fairy tale, instead of starting from nothing, so relax and listen while I summarize it.

Today's story is "Bear and Barrow":

The Queen of Dorado died young. Fearing more loss, King John kept his daughter Diana locked up for many years, well into her maturity, though her brother Gerald was public and popular. Diana was well educated but never met anyone but the castle staff. She hoped to marry a prince some day, but the only one she had ever met was her annoying brother Jerry.

Diana's old 'Nanna' still worked in the kitchen, and one day she helped the girl escape. Using an old wand, Nanna enchanted a bearskin and a wheelbarrow. The skin would change Diana's appearance to anything she wanted, but would not disguise her voice. The 'barrow would take her wherever she wished. And Diana would need the wand as well, to keep things working properly.

Diana put on the bearskin (becoming a brown bear), climbed into the 'barrow, and rode it away. But soon she was in a woods, and was lost.

Hunters approached, and she spoke aloud in fright. Prince Charles of Arcadia was leading them, and so they captured the talking bear and took her back to the castle. Diana was little impressed by this prince, kept her secrets, and bided her time.

Prince Charles attends a royal ball in Lakeland, in search of a princess bride. Diana's bearskin changes to a gown, and the wheelbarrow into a carriage with horses. She attends the same dance, a mysterious silent princess.

Charles falls madly in love, but she gets away before he can catch her, his attempt blocked by weathering. And this happens at two more dances! Finally she takes pity on him, reveals herself, and they fall in love and live happily ever after.

You're probably not familiar with this fairy tale. It's not the 'disnie dozen', not even Grimm – though the second half is like Cinderella. This is from "The Grey Book of Fairies", back in the late 1800s.

And now the Game Begins! Everybody ready?

The only rules we need are about the cards. They are the power for your Talents.

So let's see how your Talents are feeling this morning. I may be a Mind type, but it works better after my morning coffee... and that means I'd want a diamond, some power for my Talent. The other suits work the same way. King is 13, high, Ace is one, lowest.

(Deal one card face-up to each player, who places it next to the Talent marker.)

First, did anyone get a suit matching their Talent?

(If so, you give each match a second card, also face-up.)

Here are the two basic rules of the whole game. Anybody can call "TimeOut" any time they want, and that stops the story and the action. And during TimeOut, you can trade cards. You can't give them away, only trade one-for-one.

At the beginning of the game, you want power for your Talent, any card of the same suit. Look at everyone's cards, and see if trading could help you or them. If so, go ahead and trade now if you want to. It's your card, you're never forced to trade.

(Wait while players trade cards.)

All done trading? Great.

You can often do things with your Talent without spending cards. But spending earns you *more* cards.

During the story, you can spend a card to do something, and then you get two cards in return. If you don't succeed, though, you only get a replacement card, not a bonus card.

You can only have four cards at most. When you earn a fifth and must discard, you can throw away the worst card on the whole table, since you can trade before you discard. That makes it easy to decide.

So we're ready to go!

On this lovely day in May, just north of the village of Hamlet, you are told to scout the fields north of town, just past the Jones farm and others. Don't bother to check back unless you find something dangerous. So today on the Green Line we find...

(Repeat each player's name, job, and talent)

Interesting group!

Okay, you arrive at a clearing, one you've seen a hundred times, but this time you see a brown bear sitting in a wheelbarrow. You're still behind some bushes, and it hasn't noticed you yet.

(Storyteller: Stop reading aloud.

(All of the following notes are for you, with 'read-aloud' parts in boxes.

This is the first Event in the fairy tale. No card spending is allowed right now.

Select players with each of the four Talents (or as many as possible), and add the following information to each player.

Heart: You realize that the bear is looking around calmly but confused, very un-bearish.

Mind: You examine the scene, and immediately see that there are neither bear-prints nor people-footprints on the ground in the clearing.

Body: You see that the single rut from the barrow's front wheel, the only track, came through the north bushes and stopped mid-clearing. The border of the Kingdom of Dorado is near, only a mile beyond.

Magic: Since there are no footprints, something here is obviously magical.

If a Talent hasn't been chosen, you could give the information to whoever has the highest card of that suit.

After you deliver the new information, read aloud briefly:

You tell your friends what you know, and continue to discuss the situation.
 You could approach the bear, or use some magic, or try something else.
 What do you want to do?

Encourage discussion among the players.

You will also encourage them to spend cards, giving hints if necessary (see next page).

The group should find out more information, befriend the talking bear, and develop a plan of action.

One person will eventually act first, spending a card. Others may then act in turn or together.

At some point everyone has had a chance to spend cards and do whatever they like, and nothing more can be learned or done to continue the story. Start Event #2 at that time (page 6).

Card Spending Opportunities

Encourage any/all of the following, in any order as determined by the players, each resolved separately. In each case the card spent must match the player's Talent. (You may allow otherwise, but if so lessen its effect with a penalty of up to -5.) Other ideas are certainly welcome.

With inexperienced players, suggest the Action noted, to show them what they can do.

How to do it: The player pushes the card to be spent forward on the table. You put a card next to it, face-down (for the moment). Do this for each person intending to act. Then respond to each player one at a time, taking the card being spent as you summarize its results. If their action succeeds, add a bonus card face down.

After all the players taking Actions have been handled, call TimeOut, and everyone turns over their new cards. Players may trade before the story continues.

FRIENDSHIP: Once befriended, the bear gives the false name "Alice". Play her role, interacting with the characters in the story. Alice (actually Princess Diana) reveals only that she has escaped her captor in Dorado, and a friend provided the magic to do so. She was supposed to marry and raise children, but isn't sure about that. She is not familiar with this realm of Lakeland or the town of Hamlet, and is indeed lost and in need of help.

Mind ♦

Spend a diamond to deduce more about the situation

Result: Storyteller reveals more details (maximum for King, minimum for Ace)

If hostile, bear could endanger Hamlet

Bear posture and movements are not hostile

Wheelbarrow came from northwest, Kingdom of Dorado

Bear & barrow arrived within the last 10 minutes at most

No scent or trace of the bear is on the ground, since it's been riding

Body ♣

Spend a club to quietly circle unnoticed, to be ready for physical action if the bear is a normal animal

Result: Automatic success, character moves to guard & keep watch, unnoticed by the bear

Heart ♥

Spend a heart to approach the bear calmly and compassionately

Result: Turn up one card as a Reaction, but add the amount spent by the player

Bad (2-6): Bear is afraid, jumps out of barrow and retreats to bushes

Ave. (7-10): Bear is not afraid but not friendly; will stay in barrow and chat

Good (11+): Bear climbs out of barrow to chat, seeking help

Note: Any further Heart action, with or without spending, produces tentative friendship (see below)

Magic ♠

Spend a spade to more accurately detect the magic and its power

Result: Storyteller reveals more details (maximum for King, minimum for Ace)

Bear is magical, maybe a disguise

Barrow is magical

Barrow moves magically with only the wheel on the ground

Nothing else nearby is magical

Some friends have magical potential (those with Spade cards showing)

Optional: Spend another spade to try to penetrate the magic and/or gauge its power

Result: Very high needed to penetrate the veil of the bearskin (add +5 to random card)

Note: If failed, replace the card spent but do not award a bonus card

Event #2

After ‘Alice the Bear’ has become friends with the characters, and most or all of the players have earned cards, read the following aloud:

Alice suddenly becomes flustered, very alarmed and looking to the North.
 “The hunters’ horns, I hear them coming!” she cries. “Help me, save me! Let us flee!”

Continue the story from here. (Keep track of the wheelbarrow!)
 Possible immediate actions, most involving card spending:

Heart: Calm Alice

Convince Alice to escape to Hamlet

Mind: Remind all that the riding bear left no traces

Plan ahead; a bear would cause a commotion in town

Deduce an escape route west 200 yards, to avoid both town and hunters, for now

Magic: Suggest she take a new form; imitate a character for now, practice shapechanging later

Create a magical distraction to draw the hunters away

Body: Distract the hunting party by natural means

Change the clearing or woods in some way

Handle / take charge of the wheelbarrow

If the prince arrives:

The fairy tale continues as written. The characters can become the bear’s owners, or her ‘troupe’ (guards and aides) if she changes to human form before he arrives. The 20 hunter/guards and Prince Charles will capture or ‘escort’ everyone to his castle in Dorado, 10 miles to the northeast (continuing the story as written). Therein, a fierce Kitchen Boss of great strength and will poses problems for all. Meanwhile the prince gets ready for a ball in Lakeland, the characters’ home...

If the group and bear flee before the prince arrives:

Everyone avoids the prince, leaving him out of the fairy tale!) The story can go in several directions, as determined by the players. They probably head for their home nearby. If so, ‘Alice’ must change to an acceptable form before entering the town of Hamlet. She will need a place to stay, and a false background lest local snoops interfere. As Storyteller, your challenge is to loop the story back to the original ending or a variation thereof, in classic fairy tale fashion, with a romantic ending if suitable.

Here are four plots that you may find helpful, in pieces or wholly:

Princess Diana confesses to her friends, and needs their help to ensnare Prince Charles, who she secretly loves. The players help her go to the dances, and must use their magic to escape his pursuits until the proper time.

Princess Diana confesses her plight to her new friends, seeking advice and help. She wants to go to the dances, but seeks a life other than marrying a prince and watching him rule. She achieves a new life, designed in part by the players and partly by her random reactions to ideas (draw cards to determine her responses).

(continued)

Diana's grieving father gets active, sending his troops to post notices and rewards in the neighboring kingdoms. Though dormant in the original tale, here he reacts as would a powerful and possessive father. Mysterious criminals are suspected of abduction, and then the realm of Lakeland is specifically accused... The players will have to come up with an ingenious happy ending to satisfy everyone.

Alice takes an interest in Freddie, the lowly assistant baker, and their relationship grows. She still attends one or two dances, to look over the princes, her true royal peers. At one ball, the King of Sealand arrives in a rage, looking for his long-missing son (the King having been at sea for 2 months). Prince Frederick appears from the mob, humbly apologizes, confesses to Alice-the-commoner, and proposes in front of everyone, further enraging his father. But she reveals that she is Princess Diana of Dorado, accepts Freddie's proposal, and all ends well.

Guidelines for the Storyteller

Almost anyone can tell stories, but in this game the Storyteller is an editor and organizer. You will describe situations, but all the actions and decisions will come from the group, not you. You will rephrase players' statements, and summarize their individual and group intentions, to form an interesting story. The results may surprise both you and the players!

Your skills will improve quickly with experience and repetition. Everyone can and try being the Storyteller if they want to. You can easily find dozens more fairy tales online or at your library, an endless flow of ideas and sources. Also watch for Fairy Tale Games™ Sourcebooks, coming soon.)

Here are some tips for the games ahead:

If one or two players have fewer cards than others, actively suggest ways they could spend cards. Try to get them into the game (but don't make them uncomfortable in the process; this can be tricky).

Reward ingenuity, but don't let one player do everything. Everyone in the group should have a chance to act as desired.

Players will start thinking of things to try, realizing that they gain cards in the process. Once they fill their 4-card hands, the story options are endless... and the exact cards often become less important.

Advanced play

One player may use cards of different suits if warranted by the actions described.

When two or more players may use cards of one suit in combination, achieving high levels of power, the results should be commensurately fantastic.

If one character is separated and/or endangered, you may temporarily forbid card trading until safely returned to the group.

Time Limits: Good stories always have good endings. Try to conclude the story within the allotted time, even if you must truncate and summarize parts during the last hour. OR...

Ongoing Stories: List all the cards in play on the sheet with names and other notes. (It doesn't matter who has which cards, due to trading.) Make note of the last Event and where the story was 'parked', and you're ready to resume at your convenience.

Bear & Barrow
 Storyteller's Notes

Player Name	Occupation	Talent
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		

Town: Hamlet
 Baron: Frank
 Kingdom: Lakeland

Other Notes _____

Princess: Diana
 of: Dorado
 aka: Alice the Bear

Prince: Charles
 of: Arcadia
 (hunting)

Cards in Play (if game paused):

Hearts

Clubs

Diamonds

Spades