

TAROT TELLING FOR TWO

A TAROT BASED
RPG FOR TWO
PLAYERS

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TAROT TELLING

is a story-telling game for two players, using one shared Tarot deck or two individual decks. You can also use online tarot readings if you don't have a deck handy, or aren't yet confident in your ability to read the cards.

Feel free to lean heavily on the art of the deck you're using to create your shared story. Different decks have different vibes and could influence your game accordingly. Please also check in with each other regularly for boundaries and comfort levels, as the Tarot is capable of unearthing sudden and unexpected emotions.

To begin, each player makes a standard three-card draw to indicate the Past, Present & Future (PP&F) of their Character. Use the cards to determine each character's background, their present condition and what their

individual dreams or fears are for the future. Tell each other your characters' stories.

Next, make another three-card PP&F draw to mutually describe your Scenario. The Past indicates how the characters came to know one another. The Present describes the current conflict, either with each other or an outside force. The Future card suggests both best- and worst-case outcomes for the characters.

After setting the Scenario, each player draws a card to show their character's individual relationship to or view of their mutual Past. Player One tells their story uninterrupted before Player Two tells theirs. Once both stories are told, players may continue to elaborate cooperatively.

Draw two more cards to help narrate each characters' views and actions in dealing with the Present Scenario. This time, Player

Two speaks uninterrupted before Player One tells their story. Then both players may collaborate.

Continue with another card draw each for What Happens Next, with Player One speaking first before Player Two narrates. Use the cards to shape what your characters want and do, and describe how this affects their relationship.

There will be one last card draw to determine The Ending, with Player Two speaking first but both players coming to a dialog afterwards to agree upon a mutually satisfying close for the players, if not necessarily the characters.

Optional: If both players feel that matters weren't resolved fully in the previous stage, perform a final three-card draw to lay out three steps towards finding a satisfying conclusion.

SAMPLE PLAY

Player One draws the Three of Swords, The Chariot and The World. They say that their character was orphaned at a young age but came up through the military ranks to hold a prestigious position, expecting eventually to retire with health, wealth and happiness.

Player Two draws the Eight of Wands, Ace of Pentacles and Five of Pentacles. They say that their character has always been an exemplary citizen and student, and is now a respected banker with the ear of the king. But secretly, Character Two fears penury and disgrace, and pines for someone who will love them even without their money or privilege.

The players draw the Ace of Swords, The Magician and The Hermit, so decide that their characters met in college and admired each other's intellects, becoming good friends even before rising through society. But a wizard has come to town who seems to have the king's ear in ways that worry them both, such that they've decided to secretly team up to investigate him. If things go well, the wizard will prove good or harmless, or evil and be banished. If things go poorly, it could mean exile for both characters.

Player One pulls the Ace Of Wands, and decides that their character was always the more outgoing one, the one who approached Character Two first, the one who makes the plans and sees them through. Player Two pulls Judgment, and decides that while their character was originally pretty judgmental of Character One's gregarious striving, they eventually realized they had no truer friend.

Player Two pulls the Four of Wands and decides that, perhaps for the first time in their relationship, their character is the one with the plan. They're going to investigate the wizard's funds, using their specialized know-how, and will rely on Character One and their military cohort to arrest the wizard once the evidence is presented in court. Player One draws the Two of Cups and realizes that all this time alone together has caused their character to realize the depth of their love for Character Two. Character One is now planning to propose marriage once they've successfully secured the wizard.

Player One draws the Page of Pentacles and decides to make an impassioned speech declaring their character's love for Character Two. Player Two draws the Four Of Swords and decides to have their character panic, running away to think about this change to their relationship.

The players draw The Tower and agree that Disaster strikes. Character Two withdraws emotionally so Character One, hurt and heartbroken, goes off on a military campaign in the desert. Without Character One's troops barracking the city, the wizard escapes, swearing revenge on both characters...

Deciding to invoke the optional rule, the players draw three final cards: the Three Of Wands, The Hanged Man and The Fool. Character Two deeply regrets Character One's absence for more reasons than one. Melancholy, Character Two seeks solace in the arms of a charming new acquaintance... who turns out to be the wizard in disguise! The wizard is ready to ritually sacrifice Character Two but Character One bursts onto the scene, having had an intuition that Character Two needed them. Together, they vanquish the wizard then decide to bet on each other and give love a chance.

This sample uses a Rider-Waite deck, which lends itself well to a low fantasy setting. Different decks may have different influences! Tell me about your own plays here or on Twitter @dvaleris.