

How to Play

Story War is a collaborative storytelling party game in which 3 to 8 players compete to convince an impartial Judge that their Warriors can defeat their opponents' Warriors in battle.

This can be done by using a card's art or text, by referencing pop culture, or just by making stuff up! As long as you're able to convince the Judge, anything's fair game.

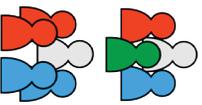
The only way to win Story War is to be **bold, logical and creative!**

SETUP:

- Sort the cards into three stacks: Warriors (red), Items (blue) and Battlefields (green).
- Each player draws 3 Warrior cards and 2 Item cards. Players are allowed to look at the cards in their own hand.



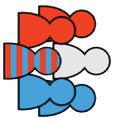
- Whoever owns this game is the Judge for the first battle. **The Judge does not participate in the battle.** Everyone else splits into teams.



SOLO (3-4 players): Everyone is fighting for themselves, acting as a "team" of one.

TEAMS (5-8 players): The players sitting on the Judge's left team up against an equal number of players sitting on the Judge's right.

A 5 or 6-player game has teams of 2; a 7 or 8-player game has teams of 3.



If you have 6 or 8 players, the person sitting opposite to the Judge is the **Maverick**, who can try to join either team at any time.



BATTLE:

- The Judge draws a Battlefield card off the top of the deck, reads it out loud, and places it face-up in the center of the table.



- The other players each choose a Warrior from their hand and play it face-down. Teammates may discuss which cards to play, and even trade.



- Once all the Warrior cards are played, everyone reveals them by flipping them over simultaneously. The battle has begun!



Left Team



Battlefield



Right Team

- Players control their own Warriors by describing their actions out loud in an open discussion. Anything any player says must be accepted as true unless the Judge says otherwise. Players may **challenge** an opponent's claim, which forces the Judge to either accept or reject the action.

- If an individual Warrior is **weakened**, turn it sideways.



Normal



Weakened



Defeated

- Players may play a single Item card from their hand to support their Warriors at any time. **Only one Item is allowed per team**, per battle. The Maverick cannot play an Item.

- A team can only win the battle by defeating all the Warriors on the opposing team (excluding the Maverick) while at least one Warrior on their own team survives. The Maverick can only win by successfully allying with the winning team.

- When a team announces they are ready to give their **final argument**, the other team must remain silent while they explain to the Judge why their team would ultimately win the battle. When they are finished, the other team may give their final argument without interruption.

- Once both teams have spoken, the Judge recaps the story of the battle and reaches a conclusion as to who should ultimately win. When the Judge declares a winner, their decision is final.

- The losing team discards their Warrior cards. The Battlefield card, as well as any Item cards played this turn, are also discarded. The winning team's Warrior cards become **victory cards**, which may not be played again. Players can set aside their victory cards or hold them backwards in their hand.

REGROUP:

- Everyone draws new cards to replace any cards that they used on this turn. Everyone must always end up with 3 Warriors and 2 Items in their hand before the next turn starts. If any deck is empty, shuffle the discard pile of the same color and use that as the new deck.

- The player sitting to the Judge's left becomes the Judge for the next battle.

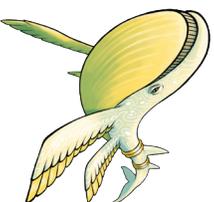
- In a TEAM game, the players on the new Judge's left group up against those on the new Judge's right. In a 6 or 8 player game, the player opposite the new Judge becomes the new Maverick. Players gain victory cards as a team, but their teammates change every turn!

VICTORY:

Repeat BATTLE and REGROUP until everyone has judged twice in a SOLO game, or once in a TEAM game. The players with the most victory cards win, but the real goal is to tell memorable stories and have fun!



FAQ



What Is Defeat?

Defeating a Warrior doesn't necessarily mean killing it. A Warrior might simply be rendered harmless, or driven insane, or propelled far from the Battlefield tied to a rocket.

A round must always end in a victory. The Judge is not allowed to call a tie or a draw. If a match is too close to call, the Judge may have to evaluate the situation from a different angle.

As a guideline, keep an eye out for one Warrior surviving just a little longer than their opponent. In cases of mutual destruction, one Warrior might still have the moral victory.

If the Warriors resolve their differences and become friends, choose the one most likely to betray the others twenty years down the track.

Item Notes

Some Items may only be used a limited number of times while some may be used over and over. An Item card may be flipped over to indicate that it can no longer be used.

The player playing the Item card can suggest whether the Item's been suddenly dropped into the Battlefield or if one of the Warriors had it all along but, as with everything else, it's ultimately the Judge's call.



Being Weakened

A: "The dragon sends a massive blast of flame down the hallway, toasting everyone!"

B: "Nah, Puss has got fantastic reflexes, he leaps out of the way as soon as he sees the dragon's head peer around the corner."

J: "He's fast, but I don't think he's that fast. I'll say he gets lightly singed, and he's distracted now trying to put out his tail!"

Being weakened can mean a whole range of things: roughed up past a certain point, a little bit on fire, non-fatally poisoned, terrified, humiliated, just grossed out - if a Warrior's been hampered without being taken out entirely, that's weakened.

As well as being a good way to keep the state of play clearly visible, the weakened state is also useful as a compromise. Sometimes a player may not be ready to accept defeat, but may admit that his character is weakened as part of an opposing Warrior's defeat.

Challenging

A: "The Witch uses the crater of the volcano as a giant cauldron, and brews up a massive potion to--"

B: "Hold it! That would take forever to set up, the Golem would just beat her up before she could."

A: "No way, this is totally the Witch's island. It's her hideout! She's had the volcano set up like that for years."

B: "What?! Judge - I'm challenging that. Can the Witch use the volcano as a cauldron?"

J: "I'm going to say yes."

As soon as you feel like you're just going in circles with an argument, it's time to challenge. The Judge's ruling is definitive and final.

Remember that a new Judge comes with new rulings! Just because the last Judge thought that a zombie couldn't climb a tree doesn't mean the next one has to go along with that.

Judging Tips

It's important to remember that when you're the Judge, the other players have to convince you, not the other way around. Your view of the story is the only view that matters.

Do hear your players out, but if you've made up your mind on something, don't be afraid to declare it with finality and shut down further argument.

Above all, don't be afraid to go with your gut, and always remember - you're the Judge, and your word is law... at least until the next turn!

More Story War!

The game doesn't end here!

Visit www.cantripgames.com/storywar for fan art, cartoons, comics, video games and more!

You'll also find new game modes like:

- **Trial Tales** - Do battle in a court of law, with Warriors as the suspects!
- **Kiss & Make Up** - Fight for the most valuable treasure of all: true love.
- **Youngster Mode** - An alternate rule set designed for young children.

✉ storywar@cantripgames.com
🐦 [@CantripGames](https://twitter.com/CantripGames)

Credits

By Brad O'Farrell and Tom McLean. Illustrated by Vondell Swain.

Additional art by Geoff Adams, Nell Bailey, Fraser Brown, Jaime Cortes, Josiah Files, Veronica Guzzardi, Olga Koldziejczak, Nyssa Oru, Ludano Perez, Joe Ryan, Alison Vellas, Zac Wells and Nicole Xu.

Graphic design by Ned Hugar, Maré Odomo and Farid Safare.

Special thanks to Peter Berkman, Emmy Ciderrega, Anthony Clark, Nick Douglas, Christopher Ford, Hank Green, KC Green, Peter C. Hayward, Ryan North, David Malki, Alexis Ohanian, Max Sebelia, Fred Siebert, Alex Small-Butera, Lindsay Small-Butera, Caldwell Tanner, Max Temkin, Zach Weiner and Christina Xu.



Anvil



It can upgrade your gear or downgrade your head.

Banana



It's a banana.

Bramble Seed



This bad seed contains the root of all evil.

Cornucopia



The produce launched from this magical horn hits like a low-calorie cannonball.

Excalibur



The king of all swords.

Flame Bow



For hot shots who want to fire fire.

Flying Carpet



This rugged flying vehicle can show you the world.

Invisibility Ring



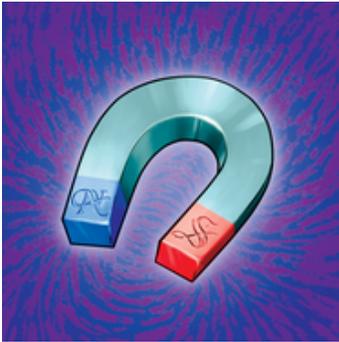
Nobody's ever seen this ring in action, but that probably means it's really effective.

Life Potion



This potion cures any ailment, from headaches to death.

Magnet



This strange artifact attracts metals with an unknowable force.

Mega Mushroom



If you eat this fat fungus then you'll grow humongous!

Mirror Shield



It's rubber and you're glue; all your attacks bounce off of it and stick to you.

Mythril Tux



This flashy suit is totally impenetrable. It's cut so well it fits ANY body type.

Philosopher's Stone



Centuries of alchemical research led to this shiny rock that can transform stuff into other stuff.

Pickaxe



With this antique axe you can mine with the speed of seven dwarves.

Poison Dagger



This dagger is so poisonous that it makes you sick.

Pumpkin Chariot



This wicked ride runs on midnight oil.

Secret Room



This trap door was definitely here all along.

Shrinking Spell



Your enemies will be cast down to size.

Skeleton Key



This key can unlock any door, even metaphorical doors!

Tempest In A Teapot



This brew is storming.

Thunder Hammer



Great for hammering in nails or for hammering out bolts.

Time Bomb



It'll blast you into next week.

Winter Wand



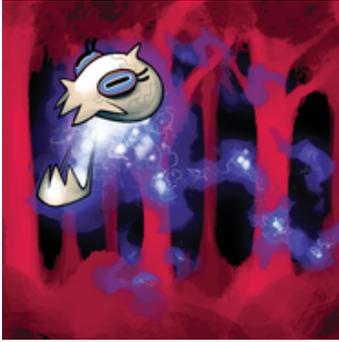
This ice device can freeze with ease.

Wishing Star



Be careful what you wish for! Because it just might come true in the most ironic way possible.

Banshee



The scream of this horrible flying ghoulish creature is loud enough to shatter dreams.

Behemoth



This colossus of the land makes a big impression wherever it goes.

Blue Dragon



A dragon that breathes frost. She's a cold intellectual.

Bone Dragon



A dragon that doesn't breathe. It's bad to the bone.

Bugbear



Just because he's made out of bugs doesn't make him any less of a bear.

Centaur



He lopes to rope up interlopers.

Cerberus



It fetches lost souls and makes them play dead.

Cherub



This little piggy fires psychic arrows that go "wee wee wee" all the way into the minds of his enemies.

Cockatrice



This weirdo's paralyzing stare means it has never lost a game of chicken.

Cyclops



What he lacks in depth perception he makes up for in lasers.

Doppelganger



A shapeshifter with identity issues. It can be anything but itself.

Dwarf



He might look small but he's as strong as an ant!

Elf



He once shot an apple off of his own head right into a bull's eye.

Fairy



This manic pixie dream girl will blow your mind with her tricky magic.

Frog Prince



This heroic frog became royalty after being kissed by a princess with low self-esteem.

Gargoyle



This flying statue's holy water is harmless to the pure of heart but scathing to the objectively evil.

Ghost



His spectral shroud is unfinished-business casual.

Giant



She thinks she's a normal-sized girl living in a tiny world. She is wrong.

Goblin



To this brilliant inventor, someone losing an eye is when the fun and games begin.

Golem



This iron man is held together by his electromagnetic core and unwavering confidence.

Gremlin



This mischievous electric sprite likes to break things to see how they worked.

Imp



This pint-sized pyrotechnic's plans always blow up in your face.

King Midas



This greedy king discovered the secret to true happiness: turning things into gold.

Knight



She will defend her realm to your dying breath.

Kraken



This giant angry squid dreams of one day eating four ships at the same time.

Leprechaun



This tiny man is so lucky that when he flips a coin it always lands as two coins.

Leviathan



This colossus of the sea gets really crabby under pressure.

Lich



This necromancer stored her soul in her staff to stave off mortality.

Mandrake



Its gurgling scream is the only thing that distracts from its putrid smell.

Manticore



It uses its mechanical tail to shoot poison darts with pinpoint accuracy.

Marionette



This voice-stealing puppet will make a dummy out of you.

Medusa



Make eye-contact with this devious diva and you'll be stopped in your tracks.

Mermaid



Half fish, all woman.

Minotaur



The one thing this burly nerd loves more than solving riddles is beating up jocks.

Mummy



Anyone hit by this mummy's curse-bomb will be wrapped up in bad luck for the rest of their life.

Nymph



She uses hippie magic to manipulate the environment as if it were an extension of herself.

Phoenix



Its goose will never be cooked.

Puss In Boots



This world famous criminal cat has already served nine life sentences.

Rat King



These ambitious plague rats combined their abilities to become the ruler of all vermin.

Red Dragon



A dragon that breathes fire. He's a haughty millionaire.

Sky Whale



This colossus of the sky weighs a thousand tons, but is lighter than a cloud!

Spider Queen



This giant spider became intelligent after she was bitten by a radioactive duchess.

Treant



This tree's bite is worse than its bark!

Unicorn



Like a horse, but fancy. He dazzles his enemies with his rainbow magic.

Vampire



This ageless teenager is popular with the ladies.

Werewolf



This teen wolf's situation is getting pretty hairy.

Witch



She can brew anything from a deadly poison to a strong punch.

Wizard



He can cast every trick in the book as long as there's time for a spell check.

Yeti



He has a fever of absolute zero. Anything he touches freezes instantly, even ice!

Zombie



He's just looking for a little piece of mind.

Beanstalk



A child's poor business decision grew into this colossal vine!

Candy Prison



The gummy guards have built custom candy cells to ensure each inmate gets their just desserts.

Capital City



A bustling metropolis plagued by political corruption, violent crime, and actual plague.

Carnival



Wow, tickets are free and there aren't any lines! What's the catch?

Clock Tower



The fabric of space has been caught in the gears of time!

Crystal Cave



The reflective crystals amplify magic, the reflective lake dampens clothes.

Dark Castle



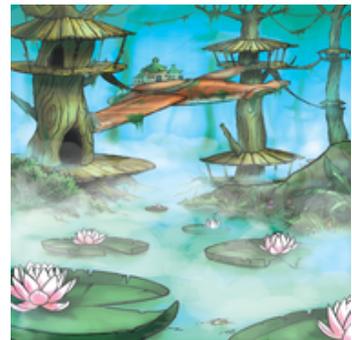
Taking this castle is the first step towards taking over the world.

Desert Oasis



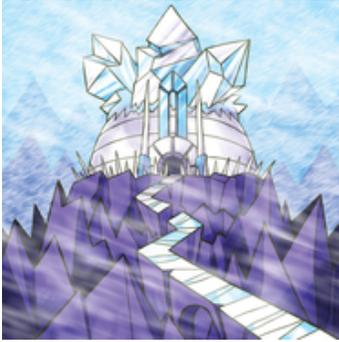
A tiny tropical haven from the burning desert sun. Or is it?

Foggy Bog



It's full of soggy logs and groggy frogs.

Frost Keep



This frozen fortress protects a place that nobody wants to go anyway.

Graveyard



Where dead people live.

High School



The enemies you make here will last the rest of your life.

Hot Springs



It's too relaxing to fight.

Labyrinth



Constructing this reality-bending maze drove a mad architect sane.

Library



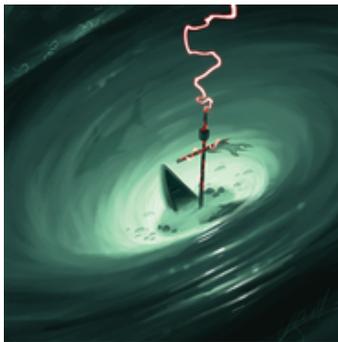
Shhh! The books are sleeping and waking them up would be a literal nightmare.

Lost Woods



The branching paths will leave you bushed.

Maelstrom



The eye of this violent storm contains a smaller, even more violent storm.

Mystery Mansion



You have been cordially invited to a lovely dinner party where the delicious meal could be your last.

Pirate Cove



This traitor's trading post imports treasure and exports theft.

Plains



Even ground.

Sky Palace



The path to the heavens must be walked with a leap of faith, not a flight of fancy.

Sleepy Village



The humble folk here enjoy crafts, fresh air, and the occasional torch-and-pitchfork mob.

Trapped Temple



A temple built to honor the spirit of giant swinging blades and hidden spike pits.

Underworld



You always thought this place was beneath you, yet here you are.

Volcanic Island



This exotic getaway could explode at any minute!