

# UPSTAGE – HOW TO PLAY

**UPSTAGE** is a game about setting the scene and telling a story. Players take turns introducing cards to **staging areas** and changing the **scene** to match the 4 **story elements** of their 2 **scripts**: a pair of **characters**, a **day** and a **place**.

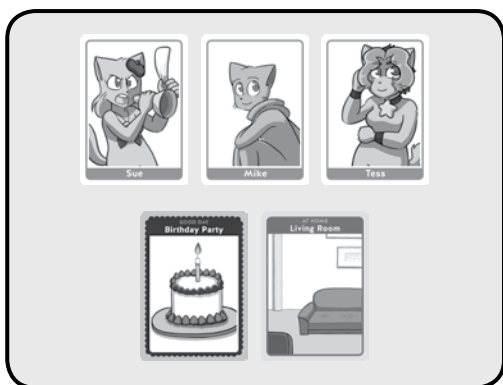
When all 4 **story elements** of a **script** are present in the **scene**, a player wins!

## Setting Up



### DECK

Shuffled. Contains all cards except **scripts**.



### SCENE

The table is set this way. The scene must contain 3 **characters**, 1 **day** and 1 **place**, randomly picked from the **deck**. In front of every player is a **staging area**, which is empty at first.

After separately shuffling the **deck** and **scripts**, each player must draw 2 **scripts**, privately read them, and place them face down on the table, keeping them secret. Then, each player must draw 3 cards from the **deck** to form their **hand**.



### SCRIPTS

The leftover **scripts** are set aside, and the game begins.

## Taking Turns

Any player may take the first turn, and the game continues in a clockwise direction from there. Each turn has two parts:

### INTRODUCE

Introduce a **story element** from your **hand** into your **staging area**, face up.

- or -

Introduce a **plot twist**.

### SWAP

Swap out a **story element** from the **scene** with a matching **story element** in your **staging area**.

Players must both **introduce** and **swap** unless they are unable to do so. After introducing a card or having one taken from their hand, players must draw a new card from the **deck** to replace it.

Matching **story elements** share the same type: either **character**, **day** or **place**. Remember, players must first introduce cards to the **staging area** before swapping them into the **scene**.

## Plot Twists

**Plot twists** can turn the **scene** upside-down! Players can introduce a **plot twist** during their turn instead of a **story element**. Once used, **plot twists** are discarded.

## Winning the Game

When a player sees the scene is one card away from matching either of their **scripts**, they must shout “**Upstaged!**” After this, the player must allow at least one other player a full turn before they can claim victory. A player only has to shout “**Upstaged!**” once per game.

When a victorious player swaps the last **story element** into the scene, they must tell their story: how are these **characters** carrying out their **script** in this **day** and **place**? e.g. “**Sue** and **Amaya** make plans for a ‘**popcorn night**’ during their long **bus ride** home. While they settle into the **bedroom** and put on the movie, **Augustus** lurks outside the window.” (Use of the third **character** in the **scene** but not on the **script** is optional.)

And like that, the game is over!

## The Storytelling Variation

At the start of each game, the player best able to describe the **scene** takes the first turn. e.g. “It’s **Sue’s birthday party**, so an excited **Mike** and **Tess** bring a present to her living room.” The game proceeds as usual, except every time a player introduces a **plot twist** or makes a **swap** with the **scene**, they must describe what their action means to the story. e.g. “**Jessica** arrives with snacks, pushing **Tess** out of the way.”