

How to Survive in Our Village

a collaborative storytelling game for 3-10
players by Eric Honour

you will need

- three coins to flip
- paper or other writing surface for a map
- notecards to write on
- a writing utensil

Round 1: Society

Starting with the player whose name has the longest history, and then proceeding widdershins (counter-clockwise), each player describes a role within the Village. This can be official (mayor, seneschal, sherriff) or unofficial (matchmaker, drunkard, lothario). The next player gives the names of the current and previous person that occupied that role, as well as the circumstances under which the role changed hands. At the end of the round, the first player (the one whose name has the longest history) names and describes the handing off of the role that was specified by the player before them. Each Role is written on a notecard, along with the names of both defined people in that role; these notecards make up the Society deck.

Round 2: Location

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Draw a regular grid (Cartesian or hex probably work best). In the order from player with the earliest birthday in the year to latest in the year, players take turns labeling each space on the grid until the grid is filled up. Labels can include passable features (plain, meadow, road), structures (homes, places of commerce, monuments, temples), or features (natural or otherwise) that may impede motion (rivers, quarries, dense forests). Each player also flips all three coins. If all 3 coins come up the same, the player must describe an event that happened (either recently or passed down in oral tradition) at the location placed by the previous player; add a number to the location on the grid and write the event down on a notecard with the corresponding number; these notecards make up the History deck. This round continues until all spaces on the grid have a description.

Round 3: Needs

Starting with the player who last ate, and proceeding sunwise (clockwise), each player specifies a need that the villagers have (strict needs, such as food or water, but also social needs, such as status or amusement). Each subsequent player defines two different ways that the previously defined need can be met. At the end of the round, the first player (the one who most recently ate) defines two ways of meeting the need defined by the previous player. Each Need is written on a notecard, which constitute the Needs deck.

Round 4: How To Survive

Before this round begins, shuffle each Deck.

Starting with the player who most recently suffered a hardship, and then proceeding widdershins (counterclockwise), each player flips 3 coins; for each that comes up heads, they must draw a card from any of the existing Decks. The player then specifies one Danger that is INSIDE the Village and one Danger that is OUTSIDE the village. The next player specifies how to avoid or mitigate each Danger defined by the previous player before specifying their own Dangers. The player must work any cards drawn into some aspect of what they have generated; after each player finishes, cards are shuffled back into their Decks. At the end of the round, the first player (the one who most recently suffered a hardship) specifies how to avoid or mitigate the Dangers specified by the player before them. This information is written on a notecard; these notecards constitute the Insular Knowledge of the Village.