



HEARTH & HUNT

Chris Sakkas

HEARTH & HUNT:

BOYS ◆ MAIDS ◆ BEASTS

CHRIS SAKKAS

The original idea for this game came from **Game Poem 12: The Azone Butterflies**.
<http://gamepoems.gizmet.com/2010/04/game-poem-12-the-azone-butterflies/>

The games **Archipelago II** and **Love in the Time of Seið** proved to be great inspirations for this work.

This game was typeset in Linux Biolinium O and Linux Libertine O C. Free software GIMP and OpenOffice.org Writer were used in the creation of this product.

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The cover is illustrated with a number of images under open licences.

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A STORYSTORY GAME

INTRODUCTION

I wrote *Hearth & Hunt* to serve three purposes.

The first is as a warm-up for more serious *Storystory* games. I think playing a structured and straight-forward *Storystory* game may prepare and energise players for a longer, 'proper' session with another *Storystory* game.

For the same reasons that *Heath & Hunt* makes a good warm-up, it also serves as a good game for those who are unfamiliar with story games or how to play *Storystory*.

Finally, I wanted a game that I could write quickly and play quickly, to test the *Storystory* rules and ideas.

WHAT THIS GAME IS ABOUT

You and two friends are going to create a story together. Each of you will pretend to be a storyteller. If others want to watch, that's okay.

These storytellers live in a village on the edge of the world. Every Spring, their boys have a rite of passage where they take up their weapons and walk to the edge of the forest. On the tree nearest to the village hangs a great brass bell. In turn, each strikes the bell and a beast emerges from the forest. He fights the beast as his village watches. If he triumphs, he returns to the village as a man and may ask any maid for a kiss.

If he does not triumph, things may not go well for him or his village.

Every Winter, the village gathers in their warm hall and waits for the coming Spring. To prepare the boys for what they will face, the storytellers tell of the battles of the past year.

The months were long and many. The storytellers cannot remember all the details. They will embellish and argue and forget. It is more important that they tell an interesting story than that they tell one which is perfect.

How Do I PLAY It?

In four stages explained over the next four pages!

THE AUDIENCE

Anyone who is watching the game play out is a member of the audience. They can ask questions of the storytellers, applaud, laugh and cry. They can also take element cards that have been used and retire to a different place to tell their own stories with those characters.

THE STORYTELLERS

Each player should take one storyteller card. In turn, they will introduce their storytellers to the other players. If they can, they should speak as their storytellers instead of as themselves.

The other storytellers will ask questions of the storyteller – about her, about her fields of expertise, about the world itself and about the boys and the maids and the beasts.

Remember

You are speaking as your storyteller. Don't worry about whether you are wrong or embarrassing yourself – you're not. Your storyteller may be a fool, a liar or lacking in eloquence, but that is no reflection on you!

After the storytellers introduce themselves, each should ask a question about the past Spring which has been weighing on them. These questions will be answered as the stories are told. Write them on scraps of paper and put them on the table. These are called 'destiny questions'.

Example Questions

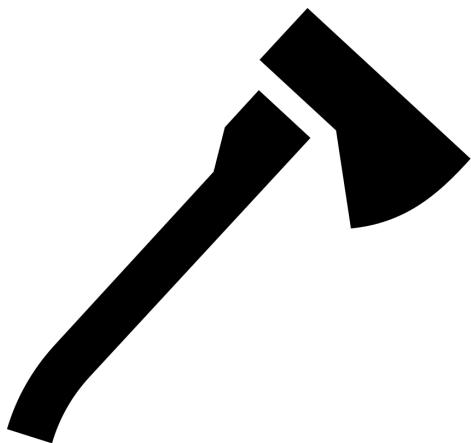
“How was it that the ugliest warrior wooed the most beautiful woman?”
“Why did one warrior face two beasts?”
“How did a maid distinguish herself above all the warriors?”
“What was the beast that came from beyond the edge of the world?”
“What broke the great brass bell?”

Each player then lays two element cards face down on the table in front of him or her. The player will not look at them before putting them down.

Then, Tarol One-Leg declares:

At the edge of the world, the boys gathered. One stepped forward and struck the great bronze bell at the edge of the glade.

THE BOY



Tarol's player then flips over the two element cards and Tarol uses them to describe the boy in as much or as little detail as she pleases.

Example

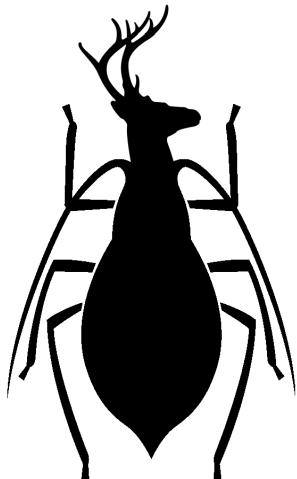
If the player turns over 'Fire' and 'Beyond the Edge', Tarol may describe the fire in the boy's eyes as he stared for hours into the blankness beyond the world. Or maybe she talks about his fiery torch and how he practiced at slinging stones by throwing them into the void. Any connection to the cards is a legitimate one.

At any stage during the description, the other storytellers can interrupt with comments or questions. There are suggested phrases on the back of each storyteller card.

When Tarol seems satisfied with her description of the boy, Quaya Firehair declares:

As the bell rang, the boy shook. A call answered the peal of the bell.

THE BEAST



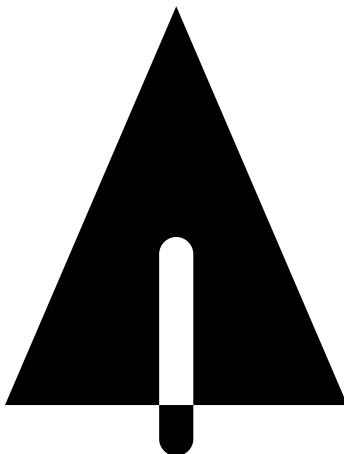
Quaya's player then turns over the two element cards before her and Quaya describes the beast that confronts the boy. Tarol and Quaya then share the story, with Tarol describing the actions of the boy and Quaya the actions of the beast. Again, any storyteller may add details and ask questions as they wish.

Some battles take hours, beast and boy travelling through the woods, laying traps, hiding to lick their wounds, meeting with others for aid and all the rest. Other battles are the matter of a minute, a flurry of claws and iron.

At the end of the battle, when one or the other could triumph, Mother Aum says:

And so it came about that the boy was greatly imperilled and the maid whom he loved watched the final blow.

THE MAID



Mother Aum's player then flips her two element cards, and Mother Aum describes the maid.

Tarol's player then plays roshambo (paper-scissors-rock) with Quaya's player.

If Tarol wins the game of roshambo, the warrior is victorious. Tarol describes the victory, with help from Mother Aum who says, 'and ... ' and then describes some additional factor to the victory.

Example Additions

He collects its head as a trophy.

Treasure spills from its gizzard.

Its hide would make fine armour.

It had swallowed a woman from a distant tribe, who emerges alive.

If it is a tie (that is to say, both throw the same sign), Tarol describes the warrior's victory but is hindered by Quaya who says, 'but ... ' and then describes the cost of the victory.

Example Additions

It takes your ear.

You won in a dishonourable way.

Its pleas for mercy haunt your dreams.

It lays a death curse upon you.

If Quaya wins the game of roshambo, the boy is defeated. Quaya describes the defeat but is hindered by Tarol who says, 'but ... ' and then describes the boy's small success.

Example Additions

He survives, though grievously wounded.

His love runs to him and they share one final kiss.

One of the maids is heavy with his child.

He slays the beast in his final moment.

The beast came to respect him and will not trouble the village.

Mother Aum then describes whether the maid was won over by the warrior's exploits or haunted by the boy's defeat. She also talks of the fate of the village.

THE NEXT BATTLE

The players swap around the storyteller cards and tell of the Ritual of another boy.
Do this three times in total, so that each player has spoken as each storyteller.

THE NEXT SEASON

If you play this game, change some parts of it. Write your own elements or describe a different village with different customs (perhaps one where it is the maids who fight and the boys who remain at home) or write new storyteller cards or change the rules or ...

Whatever you like.

Whatever you do, tell me about it!

[<sanglorian@gmail.com>](mailto:sanglorian@gmail.com)