

The Color Game

tell tiny tales

by Emily Care Boss

The old woman drank her
amethyst wine and thought of all the
things she had seen and done...

The woodcutter left his small **earthen** home and set
off into the forest, just as a snow storm began, seeking
wood to keep his home warm and safe in the winter..

The small **sandy** bird said to the wood cutter, "My
feather is a token of our friendship. It will show you the
way when you are lost. But if you should ever cut down a
tree with my home in it, then it will crumble into dust."

The young girl's mother pulled the straps tight on the girl's
emerald green dress. "Settle down and be serious, you
can't daydream your whole life away!"

A **flame-red** phoenix emerged from the
small, speckled egg, and said, "Though you have
broken your word, you have fulfilled the bonds of
friendship, I gift you with this feather of **flame**
that will keep you eternally warm."



In the **Color Game**, two players help each other create interlocking short stories, based on a Color and a Theme. The game takes about 15 minutes to play.

The goal is to tell two very short tales, weaving together themes and colors chosen by the players.

To BEGIN PLAY, have each player choose a **COLOR**.

For example:

*Emily chooses **Green***

*Elizabeth chooses **Purple***

This is the story's HOME COLOR. The person who chooses the color is that color's HOME PLAYER. They will use this color in the stories to be told. These are distinguished from the OTHER COLOR and OTHER PLAYER.

Each player chooses a related word for the Other Color through free-association. Write this down, and connect it word-web style to the other player's Color. If you can, use colored ink.

*For Emily's **Green**, Elizabeth adds **Spring***

*For Elizabeth's **Purple**, Emily adds **Wine***

The words are connected by a line like this:

Green ——— **Spring**

Purple ——— **Wine**



The original player adds a THEME to their Home Color.

Themes are issues or ideas that a story can be about.

Example Themes:

Love, Desire, Homecoming, Friendship, Family, Hope, Regret, Confidence, Pride, Courage, Travel, Despair, Cycles, Wisdom, Growth, Innocence, Mercy, Togetherness, Isolation, Community, Ingenuity, Creativity, Longing, Redemption.

Write the Theme beneath the Color.

Green — Spring
(HOPE)

Purple — Wine
(PRIDE)

This is the HOME THEME.

The Theme may be inspired by the Color and the first Word. However, it should not be limited by them. Choose easily and quickly.

The Theme is not connected to any other word by a line. However, it is paired with the Color. Whenever that Color appears in a story, what happens in that part of the tale expresses this Theme as well.



Once the Themes have been created, Play can begin.
Players take TURNS telling parts of the stories.

Each word web around a color represents the thread of the tale, with its own characters and action. So in a given game there will be two strands of story line.

There may be overlap. For example, an old woman in one part of the story turns out to be the same person as a young girl in another; in this case, one thread is a flashback for the other. The stories begin separately, however, and need not connect explicitly ever.

In each Turn a Player makes a MOVE.

Each time a player makes a Move they tell part one of the stories, by doing the following:

- 1) **Choose** a Move to make on one of the Stories. The Move chosen determines the nature of this part of the story. (see page 5)
- 2) **Use** the appropriate Color in your description of an element of the story, a person or thing that appears. Color is determined by the Move made. (see page 5)
- 2) **Incorporate** one of the words already written down on the appropriate word web into that part of the tale. Write it near the old word used.
- 3) **Write** a new word on the page that was just used in the story.
- 4) **Connect** the old word to the new with a line and the appropriate symbol for the Move made. (see page 6)



Types of Moves, and Color used:

The Moves expresses different aspects of the story.

Each Move is associated with a Color and its Theme.

Advancing a Theme -- HOME COLOR:

The story begins or continues and expresses the Home theme.

Something described is some variant of the Home Color.

Blocking a Theme -- OTHER COLOR:

The characters encounter an obstacle or complication that challenges or distracts the characters from the home theme. The Other Theme can be incorporated or evoked by the Block. Something described is the Other Color.

Supporting a Theme -- OTHER COLOR:

The story progresses and the Home theme is advanced, but the Other theme and the Other Color are involved.

Echoing an Element -- HOME COLOR:

A word found in the Other word web is used as the new word in the this one. The Home theme is expressed. Something described is the Home Color.

Ending a Story -- EITHER COLOR:

The story is brought to an end, an element of either the Home or the Other Color is described.



Each Move is associated with a certain SYMBOL which is written on the line connecting it to another word. These are shown below.

The Moves and their Symbols:

Advancing a Theme 

Blocking a Theme 

Supporting a Theme 

Echoing an Element 

Ending a Story 

Anyone can do any move on their turn, though the players should confer before ending the story.



Tips for Starting a Story:

Always begin by Advancing your own theme. When beginning a tale, start with a character in a situation that strongly evokes the home theme. The initial action may be simple. The opening situation may be implicit. Succeeding turns will elaborate on how the theme develops.

Go with your first instinct. Trust yourself and your imagination.

Telling a Story with the Color Game, An example.

Alexis chooses Brown

Shreyas chooses Red

They choose a Word for one another.

For Shreyas' Red, Alexis adds Stop Light

Red — Stop Light

For Alexis' Brown, Shreyas adds Wood

Brown — Wood



They choose their Home Themes.

Alexis chooses HOME COMING

Brown — Wood

(HOMECOMING)

Shreyas chooses Friendship

Red — Stop Light

(FRIENDSHIP)

Now they begin telling the tale....

Alexis: A woodcutter walks through the forest seeking wood to keep his house warm. The brown handle on his axe glistens in his hand, polished from long use.

Alexis is advancing her Home Theme. She used the word “wood” from her web, and used the color brown. She adds a word and writes in the Symbol for Advancing:

Brown — Wood → Forest
(HOMECOMING)



Shreyas takes his turn. He begins a separate tale, based on his word web.

Shreyas: As a woman drives down the road in her red car, she stops at a stop light thinking of a friend she hadn't seen in many years.

He adds to his word web.

Red — Stop Light → Car
(FRIENDSHIP)

In her next turn, Alexis decides to Block Shreyas' theme.

Alexis: The cars slow down, and she finds that a chocolate brown cadillac got into an accident. The traffic jam means that it will be a long time until she gets home.

Red — Stop Light → Car + Accident
(FRIENDSHIP)

Shreyas supports Alexis' theme.

Shreyas: As he walks through the forest, the wood cutter sees a beautiful crimson flower. He picks it to bring to his neighbor back at home.

Brown — Wood → Forest → Flower
(HOMECOMING)



Alexis now sees a way to block in her own story.

Alexis: After he takes the flower, all goes dark as murky **red** clouds choke the sky. A blizzard begins to fall and the wind howls around the woodcutter as he tries to forge on.

Brown — **Wood** → **Forest** ↗ **Flower**
(HOMECOMING) +
Blizzard

Shreyas returns to his story and advances it.

Shreyas: Long delayed, the woman finally drives home in her car. At home, she takes out her old high school year book. The **red** cover has faded to **pink** with age, and she looks for a picture of her friend.

Red — **Stop Light** → **Car** + **Accident**
(FRIENDSHIP) ↓
Year Book

Alexis advances her Home theme.

Alexis: The snow of the blizzard falls and falls. The woodcutter begins to wonder how he will ever get home. Just then a small **brown** bird flies up to him. It speaks to the woodcutter and says "I can help you get home."

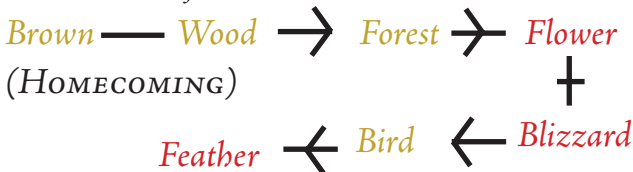
Brown — **Wood** → **Forest** ↗ **Flower**
(HOMECOMING) +
Bird ← **Blizzard**





Shreyas supports her theme.

Shreyas: The bird goes on, “If you promise to harm not the home of any bird or beast of the forest by the strokes of your axe, I will give you a token of friendship that will always lead you home.” The woodcutter agrees, and the bird gives him a feather. As the bird flies away, the woodcutter wonders, because the feather is *red*.



Alexis decides to go back to Shreyas’ storyline, and Echo.

Alexis: As she sits reading the year book, the woman suddenly the woman hears a fluttering and banging on her window. She goes to it and sees a small *red* bird battering itself against the window. She opens it to try to get it to stop, and the bird flies inside. “It says to her I can help you find your friend.”





Tips for Ending a Story:

At a certain point, the themes will have been explored and the conflicts introduced will have been resolved. Wrap up each story in turn when you feel this happen. These a small tales. The game can be played in fifteen minutes all together. Allow the stories to wrap up when you feel a satisfactory conclusion has been reached.

When you think a story is over, on your turn mention this to the other player. Ask them if they'd like one more turn. As you complete the tale, you may wish to look for ways to connect both the stories if they have been separate, or perhaps to make parallel stories take different paths.

Follow what the other person has introduced in the story. Trust your sense of what is right.

In the examples, one story ended like this:

Alexis: As the woodcutter watched the mighty oak fall, he realized that there was a nest in its branches, with a tiny brown egg within. The feather in his hand fell into dust. With a cry he ran toward it, too late. {The theme of Homecoming is Blocked, by destroying the nest.}

Alexis asked if she could end it. Shreyas asked for another

Shreyas: He crept among the branches and miraculously found the egg, untouched. But as he cradled it in his hands, it blackened and crumbled, and--burst into flame from the inside. A phoenix emerged from the small, speckled egg, and said, "Though you have broken your word, you have fulfilled the bonds of friendship, I gift you with this feather of flame that will keep you eternally warm."

{The theme of Homecoming is Supported by using the Color Red, and the Theme of Friendship to end the tale.}



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