

POLARIZATION

Storytelling, a bridge between people

THE GAME - RULESET



ABOUT POLARIZATION

When talking about conflict, **POLARIZATION** is the process that causes the involved parties to take increasingly extreme positions that are more and more opposed to each other.

With the escalation of **POLARIZATION**, moderate opinions and neutral parties are gradually pulled toward two distinct opposite groups representing the opposite “poles” everyone is demanded to take a side: “...**either with us or against us**”.

In **POLARIZATION** there is no dialog, only **fighting**
in **POLARIZATION** it is not important to find solutions, only **winning the argument**

POLARIZATION does not recognize individuals or interaction:
it is not “ME vs YOU”, it is not even “US vs YOU”
The opposing side is detached and Alien, it is “**US vs THEM**”



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THE SPIRIT OF THE GAME

If you are here it's because you experienced **conflict**;
Maybe you started **talking** and little by little ended into an **argument**, and then in a **fight**
or simply you know about an issue in which you do not see “eye to eye”.

Either way, you realized you are **not able** to **talk** about it **serenely**
and want to learn how...

This game may **help** you

The game shift the **focus** from the conflict to the **people** having the argument

The **challenge** is not to prove yourself right and the other wrong
but to learn how to **listen** and how to be **listened**

During **the game** you will either ask or be asked to **talk**.
Talk about yourself, about your ideas, about your position
It is not important that you two agree with each other,
it is important for you two to feel a **connection**

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THE SPIRIT OF THE GAME

The **aim** of the game is **not** for you **to convince** each other, or to find a solution to the issue at hand, **but** for you to **learn how to talk** about it **without** triggering the **conflict**;

To start seeing each other as **individuals** with different backgrounds, opinions and passions, **not** as faceless members of **opposing sides**.

To actively **listen** to and try to **understand** the other's position and learn how to convey your own through the tale of your personal **experience** and **not** through the lens of “**absolute truth**”

In this game you are **not competing** against each other, there is no winner and loser you are challenging yourself and the limits of your **communication**.

HAVE A NICE GAME!



EQUIPMENT

- 1 Printable Game-board
- Templates for 40 stackable paper bricks
- 5 decks of 30 playing cards marked on the back
150 cards total
- 2 blank “Bonus” cards

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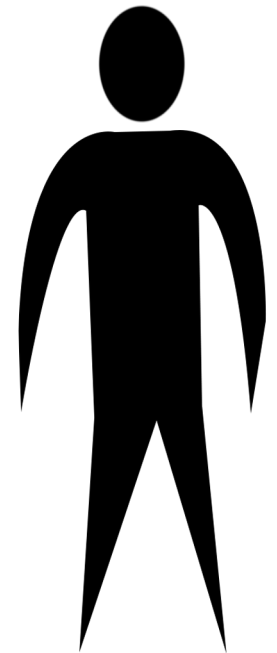
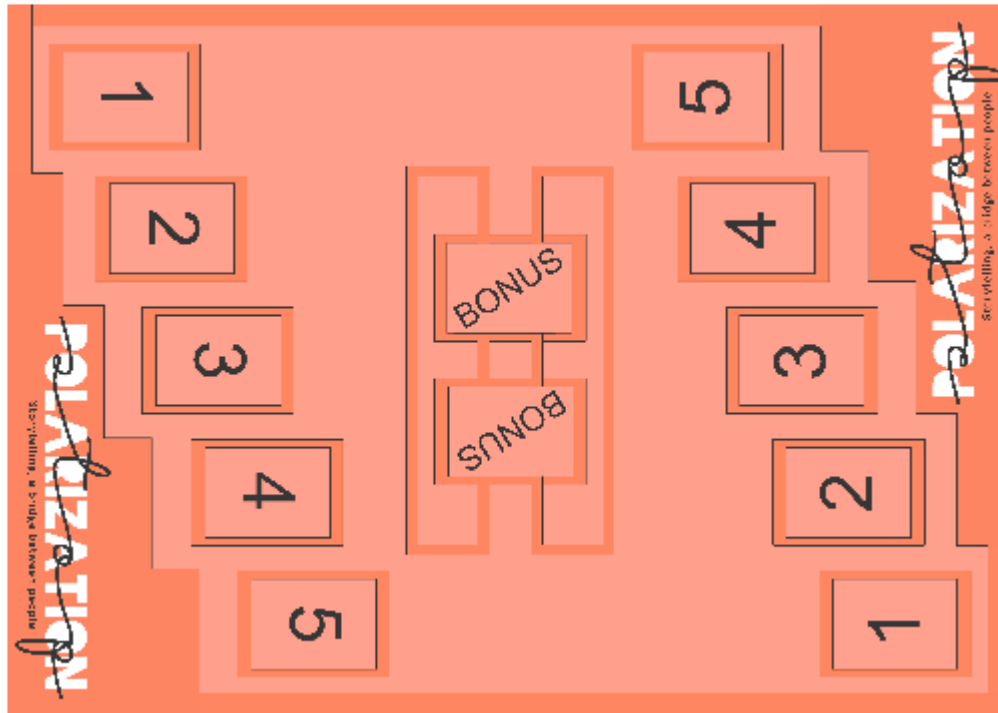
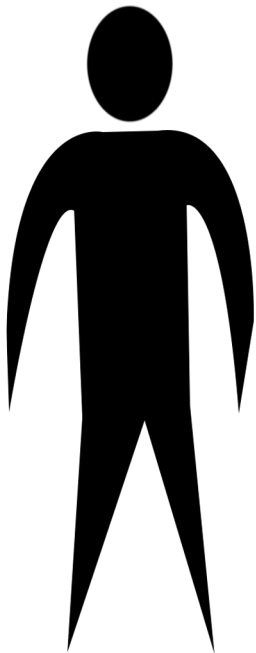
PREPARATION

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1. Open the game-board and set it on the table between the two players

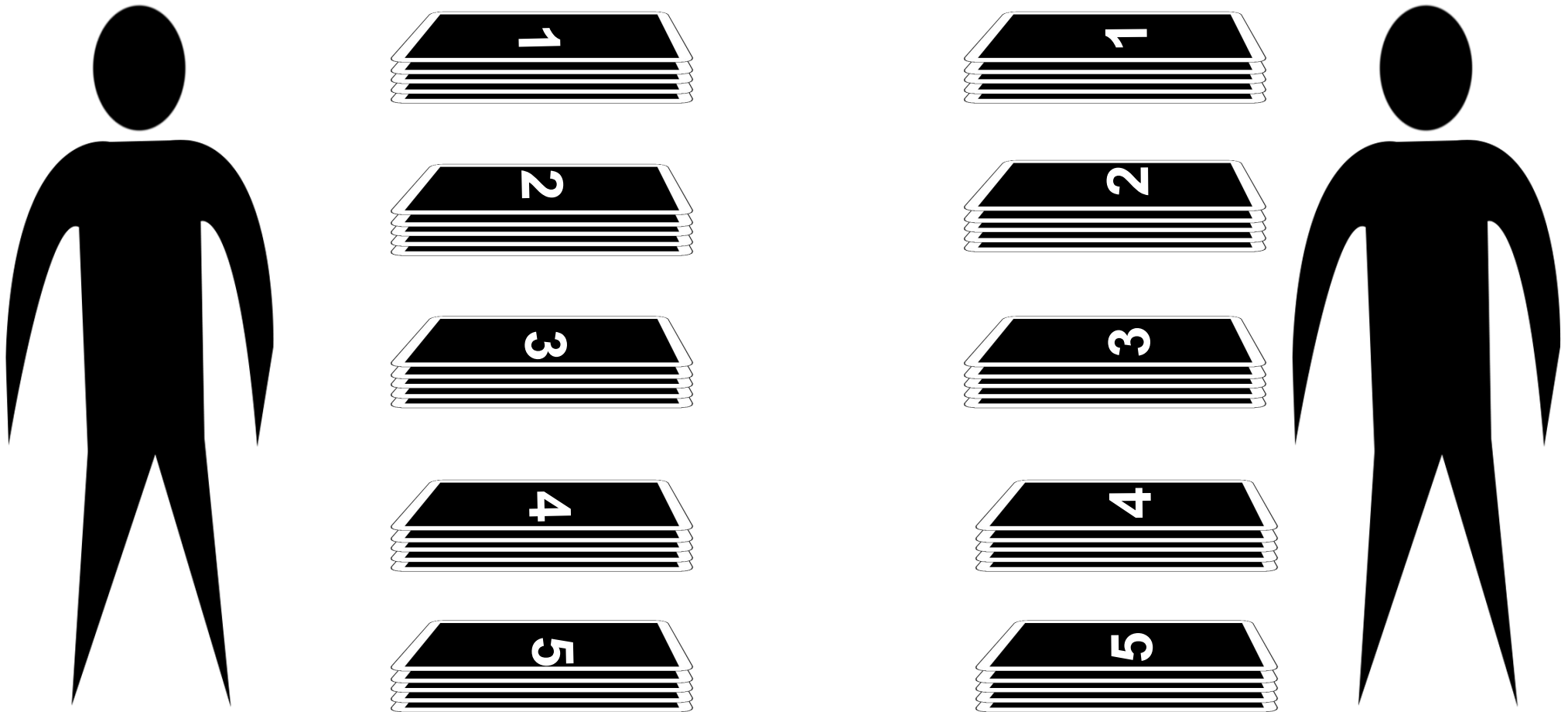


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2. Shuffle each deck of cards and split them among the two players by giving **10 cards** of each deck to each player

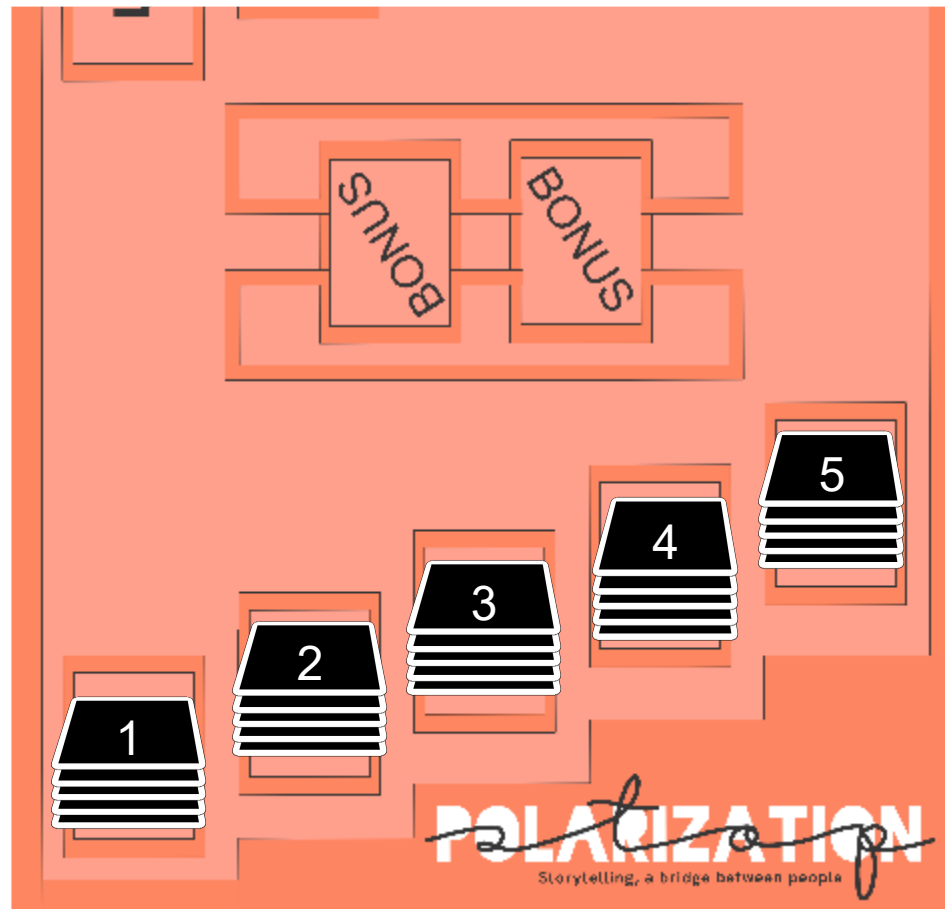


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- Place all the decks face down on their respective spot on your half of the board, their spot is marked on the board with the same symbol on the back of the cards;

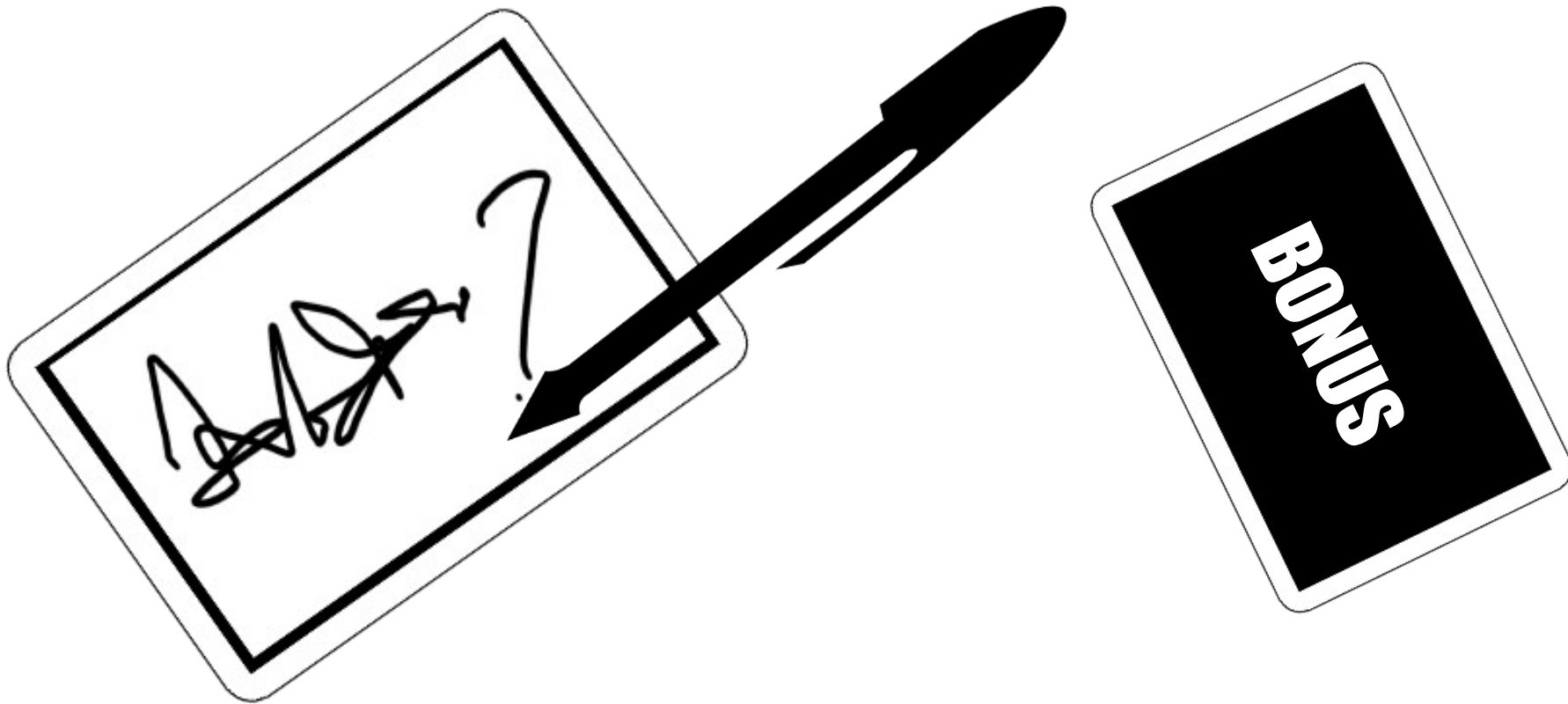


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4. The players take one “Bonus” Card each and write on it (privately) a question for the other player
5. the Players put their 2 “Bonus” card on the board, face down on their marked place

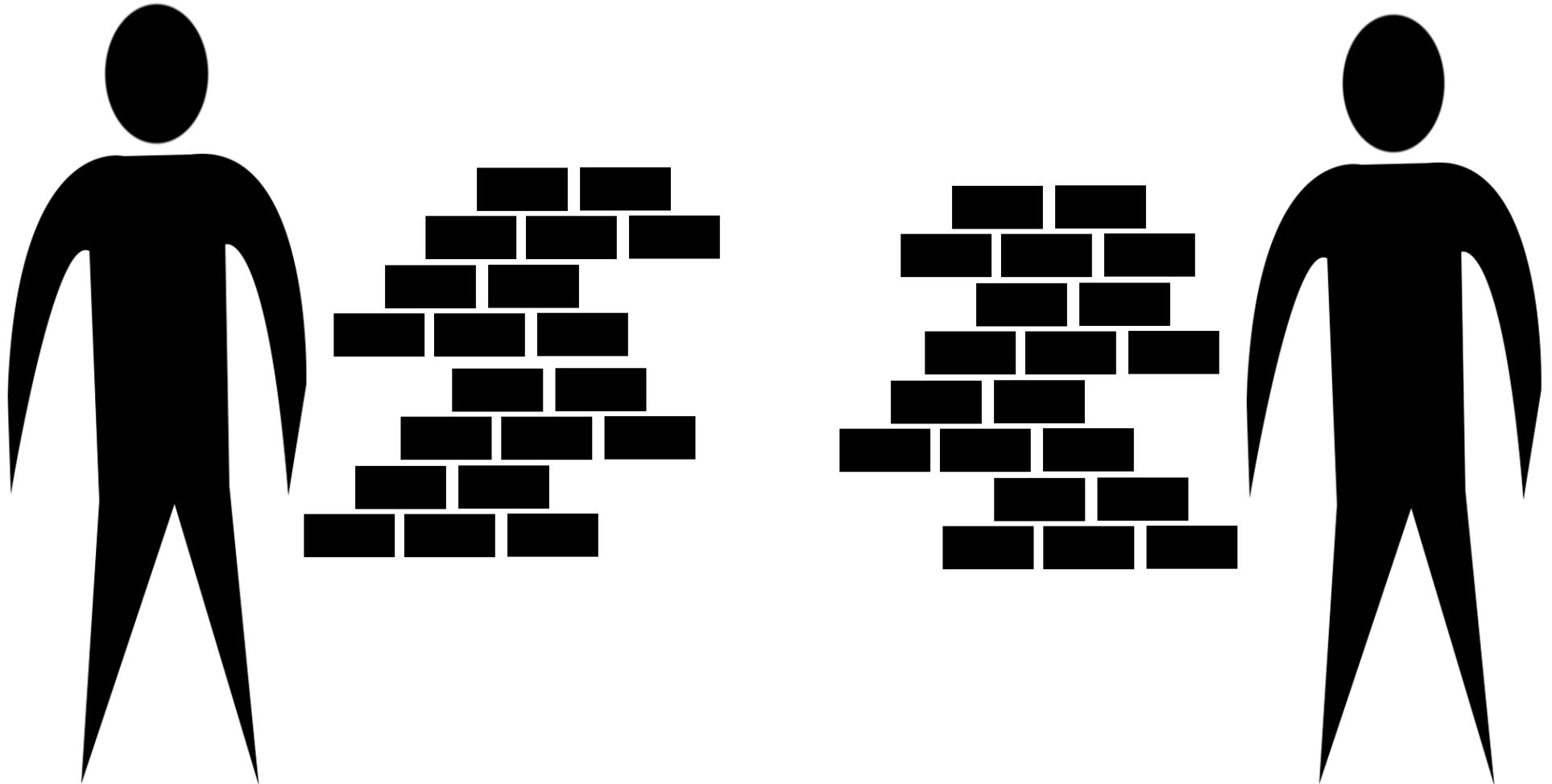


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6. Split the bricks among the two players (20 bricks each)



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THE PLAY:

2 Phases

- 1. Know the Wall**
- 2. Tear Down the Wall**

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PHASE 1
Know the Wall

In this first phase the two players will “build” their two respective walls representing their prejudices and biases about the other player's position.

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- In turns the two players set a line of four bricks on the “wall” space on their half of the board, each turn the players raise the wall with another line of bricks;



- For each line they “build”, the players tell outloud something they know about the other player's position



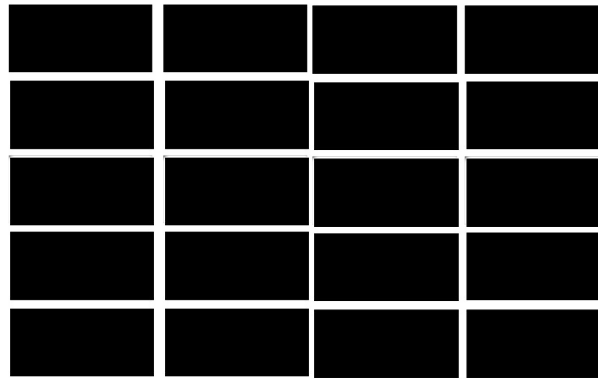
- Waiting for their own turn, each player listen to the other in silence;

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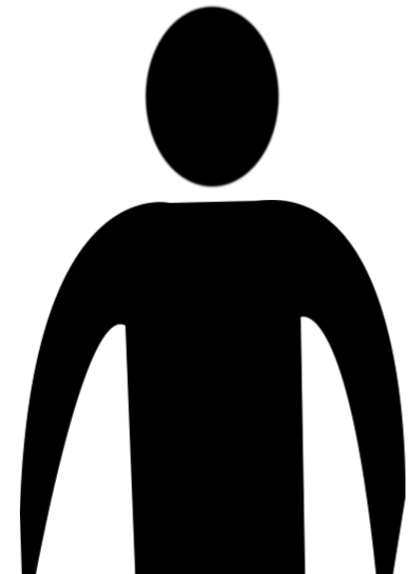
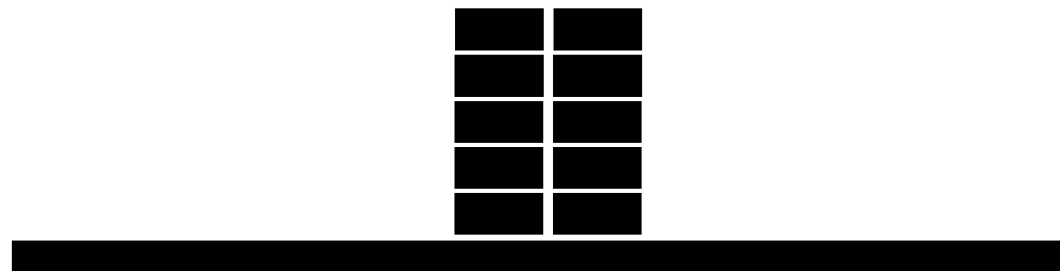
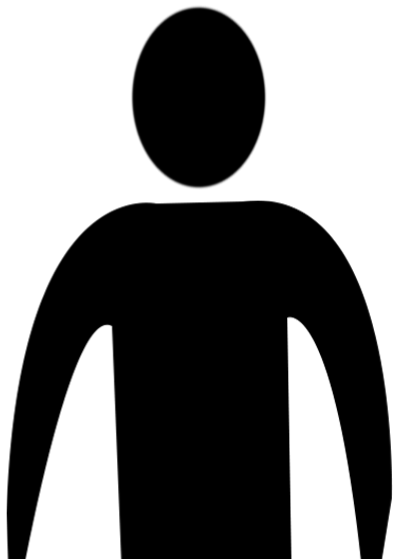
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The two walls will use all of the 20 bricks available to the players;
The two walls will be formed by 5 lines of 4 bricks stacked on top of each other;



The two walls will be covering the two “Bonus” cards



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PHASE 2

Tear Down the Wall

The game will be played in turns
Each turn is composed by an **ACTION** and by a **REACTION**

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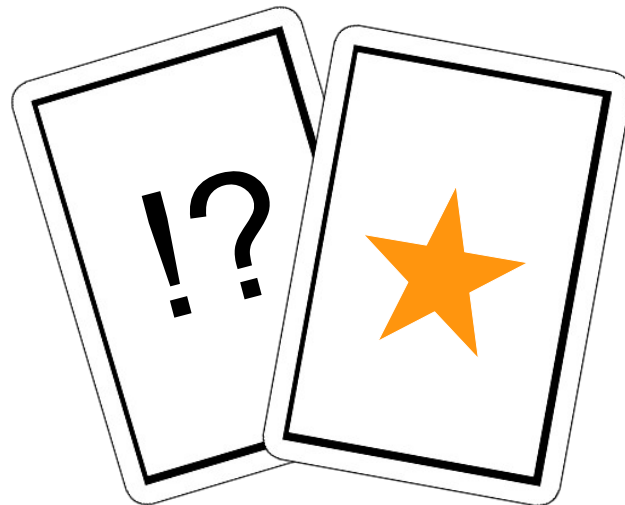
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At the beginning of their turn, the first player (Player 1) picks up the first card from the closest deck



On each card there is an Image or a question or the beginning of a sentence, the players must use these as inputs to tell a short specific story about themselves



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Player 1 “reads” the card and chooses their **ACTION**:

- **“I WILL TELL YOU”** Action



I WILL TELL YOU...

Player 1 uses the image/verbal input on the card to tell his own story and Player 2 listens;

or

- **“TELL ME”** Action



TELL ME...

Player 1 chooses to turn the image/verbal input to Player 2 who starts telling their own story while Player 1 listens.

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At the end of the story the player who listened uses their **REACTION**:

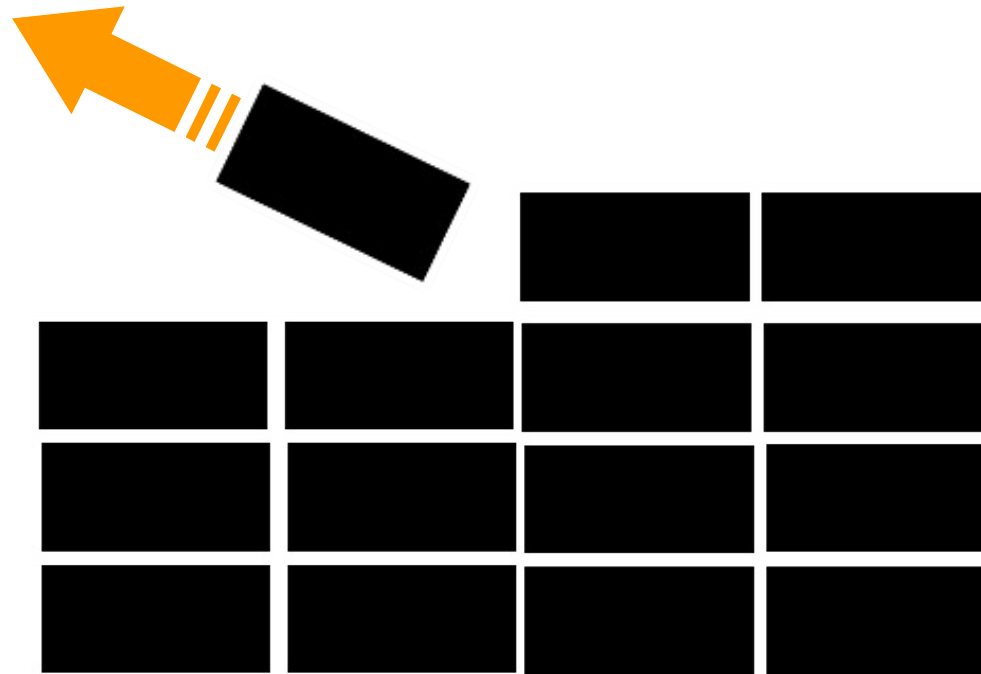
- **TAKE OUT A BRICK**
- **LEAVE A BRICK**
- **PUT ON A BRICK**

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TAKE OUT A BRICK



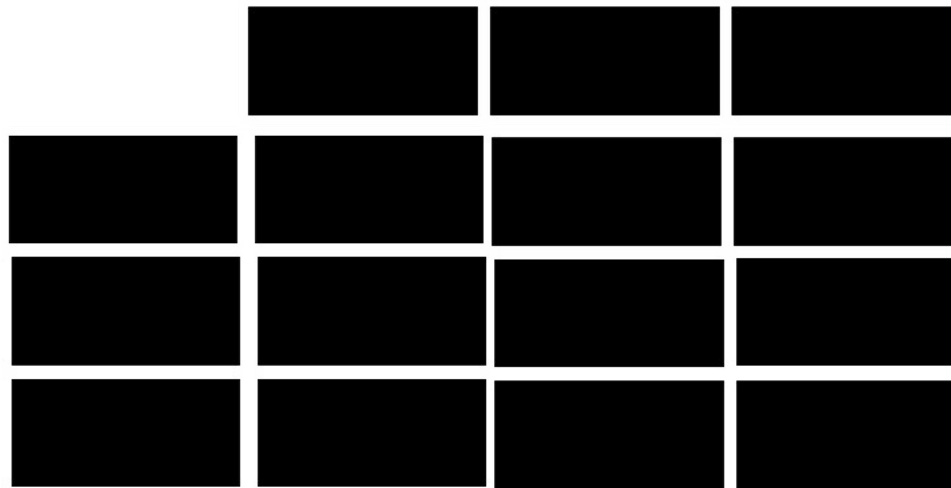
The listener understands the story, through the other player's tale, feels a connection and decides to take a brick out of the wall (taking out a brick doesn't mean to agree with what was said, but to understand and connect with the story told);

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LEAVE A BRICK



The listener finds the story unsatisfying, doesn't feel a connection, remains impartial and leaves the wall as it is for the turn.

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PUT ON A BRICK



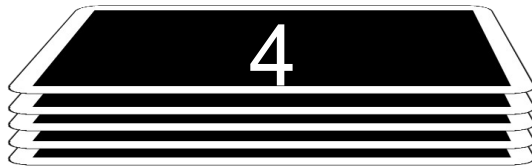
The listener doesn't connect with the story told, perceives aggression or polemic intent, there is lack of communication, the listener puts itself on the defensive and puts a brick back on the wall (each wall can be composed by a maximum of 20 bricks)

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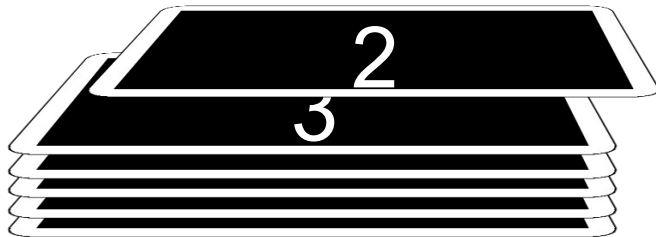
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At the end of each turn the card used is discarded by putting it on the side.



Passed

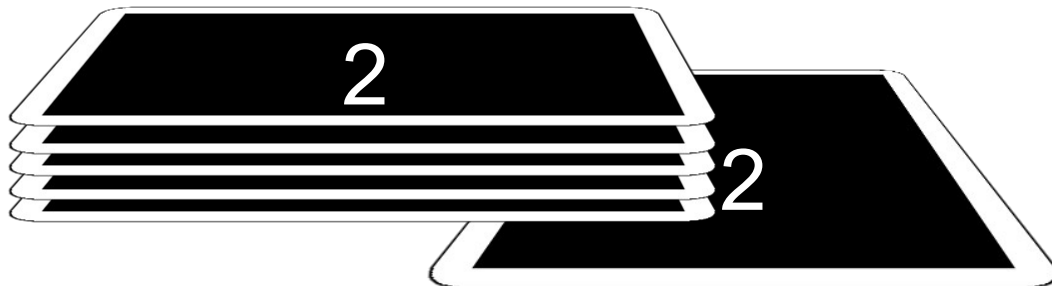


NOTE: If at any given moment a player feels uncomfortable in telling a story from any card input, the player can “Pass” the card to the next deck.

The “passed” card will be placed on top of the next deck waiting to be picked again at a later time when the player will feel ready.

One card can be “Passed” an unlimited amount of times, “Passing” the card above the last deck of cards means to discard it entirely

(Remember that “Passing” or “Discarding” too many cards may influence your progress and stall the game)



Discarded

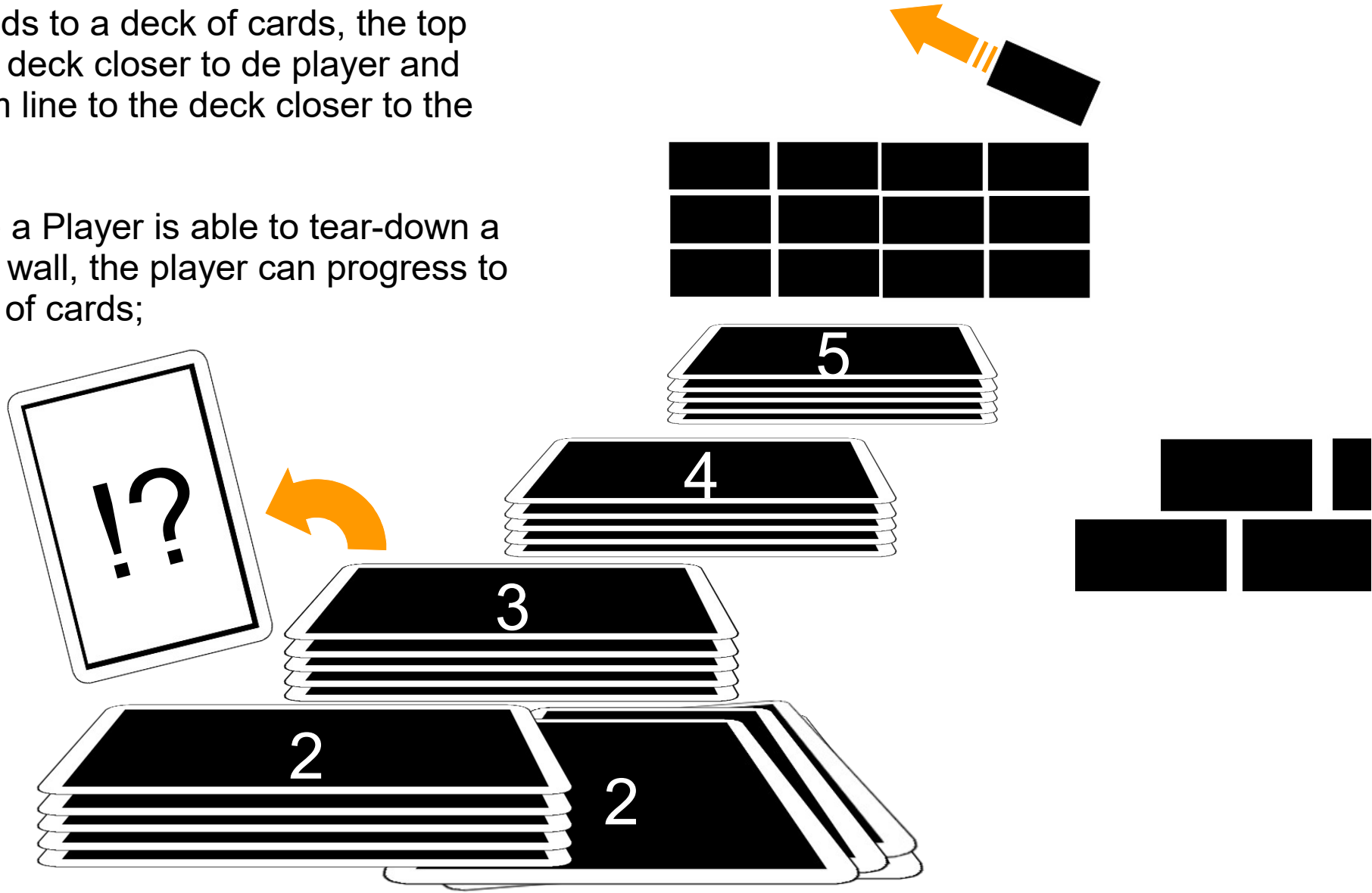
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Each line of 4 bricks on the Wall corresponds to a deck of cards, the top line to the deck closer to the player and the bottom line to the deck closer to the wall itself;

Each time a Player is able to tear-down a line of the wall, the player can progress to next deck of cards;



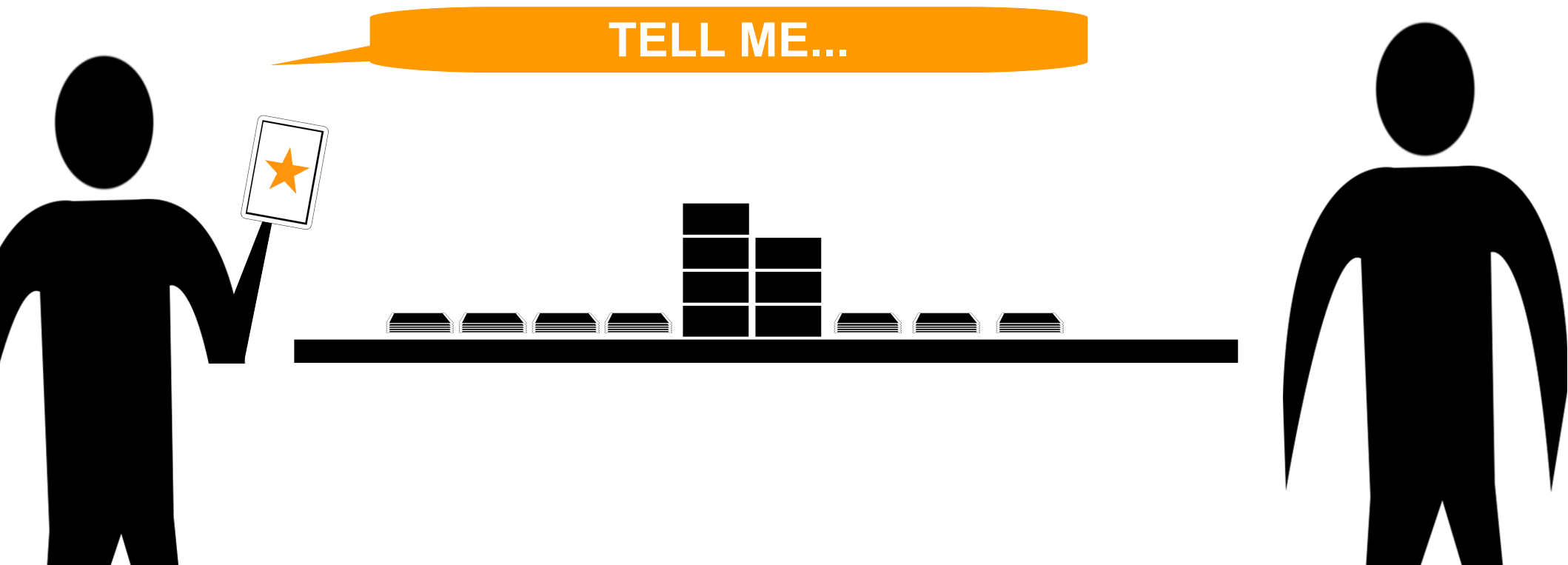
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If a Brick put back on the wall builds again a previously torn-down line, the player has to step back to the previous deck of cards, until the corresponding line of bricks is torn-down again;

ATTENTION: If the two players found themselves playing on different brick-lines/card-decks, the Player who did not progress yet can use only the “TELL ME” Action.



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CONCLUSION

The Game can end in two cases:

- Both the players were able to tear down both of the walls – **VICTORY!**
- A player finished the cards in one of the decks without being able to tear-down the respective line on the wall, therefore the player can not act on their turn – **STALL**

Whatever the case may be
CONGRATULATIONS!

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To sit at this Table shows you both **wish** to understand each other better and to resolve the conflict between you two.

To end in a **Stalled** game is not a Failure, every little progress during this game is on its own a small **victory**.

Observe what is left of your two walls:

every brick you successfully **tore-down** represents a moment of **understanding** toward each other;

every brick left on the wall is only a missed opportunity to know each other better.

You may have run out of time to play this game, but the time to communicate and better know each other never ends.



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BONUS ROUND

If you two were able to tear-down the wall completely, you just uncovered your “bonus” cards;

This is the most difficult part of the game:

if you reached this point it means you learned how to talk to each other **respectfully** and **without prejudice**.

These two cards may confirm your progresses or bring you back to the starting point.

Be proud, you both deserve great merit in reaching this point, but you also gain new **responsibilities**:

in front of you lies the question you wrote yourself for the other player to answer, **choose** if you still want to ask that question and if you want to answer to what will be asked.



VARIATIONS:

If you desire to make the game more challenging we propose the following variations:

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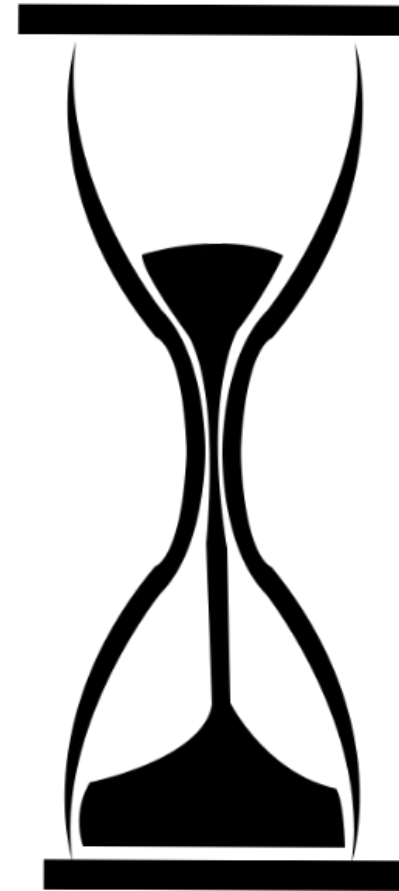
TIME PLAY

Equip yourselves with a timer to time your stories;

we suggest you set a maximum of 2 minutes for each card of the first deck,

then add a new minute for each deck above the first each time you progress (and take 1 minute out each time you go back to a previous deck)

the more you achieve the more time you will have to tell your story



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GROUP PLAY

If you have two groups you can play too, but remember to be very respectful of each other; each turn will be played by a different player rotating among the ones in the same group, each player will be able to play his action, tell or listen to a story and eventually react accordingly,

then they will leave the seat for another member of the group and so on. The other players waiting for their turn must listen in silence,

avoiding comments and showing the utmost respect for the other players (especially for the players telling their story).

