



Plucky Kid Detective is a storytelling game
(that's sort of like a role-playing game)
about a kid detective whose investigative
instincts get her into trouble and out again.

It's for two players.



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Plucky Kid Detective



A Storytelling Game by anna anthropy

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WHAT IS THIS?

This is a storytelling game, or story game, or role-playing game, whichever you prefer. Together, you and a friend will make up a story by taking turns narrating what happens. The rules are here to prompt you what to say and when. Think of it as a conversation - one with a structure, but where you still respond and react to and riff off of each other.

WHAT'S THE STORY ABOUT?

Plucky Kid Detective is about a Kid Detective on the heels of a big case, the trouble she gets into investigating that case, and how she escapes that trouble using her wits. She's gutsy and assertive, following her unflagging intuition from clue to clue.

Even though she's a kid, adults take her seriously because she's bold and uncompromising, qualities they remember having before they grew old and jaded. Maybe some adults think of her as just some pesky kid, but that'll change when she gets the perpetrator to confess to their crime. Think of Nancy Drew, or Encyclopedia Brown, or Inspector Gadget's niece Penny. The world of adults is confusing, but there are always answers for a Plucky Kid Detective, and she will always find them.



WHO ARE THE CHARACTERS?

One of the players plays the Plucky Kid Detective, a street-smart youngster who just can't let a mystery go unsolved. The Kid Detective can be a girl, a boy, something else, whatever. But they're definitely a kid, their investigations leading them, maybe, into the strange and often confusing world of adults.

The other player plays the Invisible Hand of Crime, reaching into the world to arrange scenes, to create trouble for the Kid Detective, and to ultimately lead her to the criminal. If you're familiar with role-playing games already, think of the Hand as being kind of like the "Game Master."

HOW DO WE PLAY?

Decide who will be the Hand of Crime: Pass them these rules. Then, they should read the following:

A crime has taken place and only the Plucky Kid Detective (that's you) can solve it! I'll ask you to tell me certain things, and you make up the answers. There's no wrong answers - the Kid Detective's instincts are never wrong! If you're not sure what to say, ask me questions about anything I've told you.

The Simple Rules on the next page summarize the entire game. If you want an example or more information, check the expanded rules which follow!

SIMPLE RULES

1. The HAND declares what crime has taken place.
2. The KID DETECTIVE decides what location to investigate.
3. The HAND picks a letter from the name of that location and tells it to the K.D.
4. The K.D. discovers some piece of evidence relevant to the crime that begins with that letter.
5. The HAND describes a dangerous situation, natural or criminal, that the K.D. finds herself in.
6. The K.D. describes how she uses her wits and resources (including any pieces of evidence she's collected) to escape from the dangerous situation.
7. The HAND reveals a new clue that the K.D. discovers as she escapes from danger.
8. The K.D. chooses a new location to investigate (repeat steps 2 through 7) or decides she has enough evidence to unmask the criminal (proceed to step 9).
9. The HAND describes the people who have gathered to witness the unmasking of the criminal.
10. The K.D. explains who committed the crime and how, incorporating all the pieces of evidence she's found into her explanation. The culprit is either one of the people who've gathered, or is DISGUISED as one of the people who've gathered.
11. The HAND, speaking as the criminal, delivers a confession and parting threats.
12. The KID DETECTIVE wins because *crime just doesn't pay!*

EXPANDED RULES

This game takes place in turns, alternating between the Plucky Kid Detective and the Invisible Hand of Crime. Below are what gets said, when, and who says them. If you're not sure what to do 0-0-p next, ask the other player questions about what they just told you. When you answer a question, answer it in a way that moves the story forward.

THE SCENE OF THE CRIME

1. The HAND OF CRIME announces what crime has taken place. *Example: "There's been a robbery at the Puppy Bank - that's the place where dogs deposit their solid gold bones. All the bones are missing!"* Set the scene a little - say what the crime scene looks like, who's milling around the scene and what brought the Kid Detective there and let the Kid Detective ask questions. When the Kid Detective decides on a place to continue her investigation, move to the next step.

Hand: *"The Puppy Bank is in complete disarray. Brett Brentworth - a human bank teller - unable to do his job, is standing around looking bored, while his boss, Doberman Schnauzer - the Bank's canine owner - apologizes profusely to Dogs Millionaire. Dogs is the Bank's most valued client and is absolutely irate over the loss of her bones. You're just here because you heard a lot of barking and came to see some dogs."*

K.D.: *"When did you notice the bones were missing?"*

Hand: *'Brett came in this morning and found the vault open and empty,' says Doberman."* If you're going to introduce suspects, make sure you introduce a few. Remember: you don't know who the criminal is yet.

THE INVESTIGATION

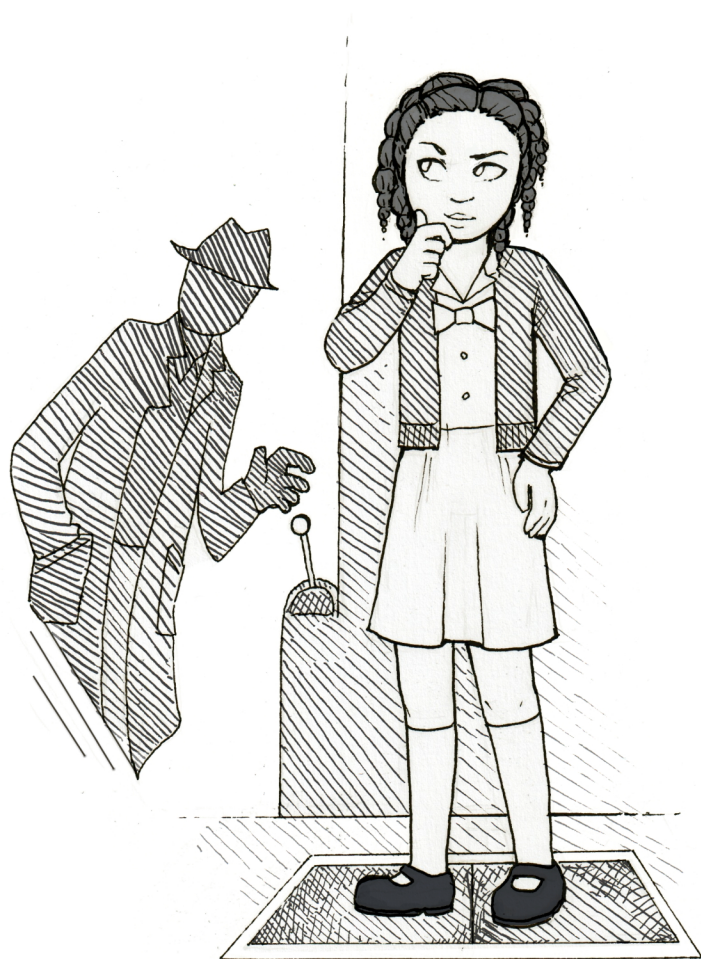
2. The KID DETECTIVE decides where they want to next investigate for clues. It's best if the name of the location is two words or less. If it's longer than that, see if you can reduce it to two words. *Example: "I want to look around the empty bank vault." can be reduced to "Bank Vault."*

3. The HAND OF CRIME picks a letter from the name of the location, and tells it to the Kid Detective. That letter determines what piece of evidence the Kid Detective finds at the scene. *Example: "You find a piece of evidence whose name begins with the letter N. What is it?"*

4. The KID DETECTIVE tells the Hand what piece of evidence she's found. Its name must start with the letter the Hand chose. *Example: The Hand chose N, so the Kid Detective decides she finds a Needle in the Bank Vault. Where do you find the needle? What makes it look suspicious? These are questions the Hand could ask.*



5. The HAND OF CRIME describes the dangerous situation the Kid Detective suddenly finds herself into as she investigates. This can be a natural peril - a shaky rope-bridge, a fallen tree - or the work of the criminal or a henchman. *Example: "Suddenly, a shadowy figure slams the vault's heavy door shut! You hear the lock catch - you're trapped inside!"*



6. The KID DETECTIVE narrates how she uses her wits and the resources at her disposal - that includes any pieces of evidence she's accumulated - to escape the situation. *Example: "Using the needle, I carefully pick the lock on the vault door and open it!"*

The Kid Detective always accomplishes what she says she does, but the Hand can ask questions about what it's like: *"Is it hard to get it open?" "Where did you learn to pick locks?"*

7. The HAND OF CRIME reveals a new clue, some signature left behind. Start vague, and let the Kid Detective's questions develop the information. Or she can use her own detective's instincts to decide what the clue means. *Example: "There are footprints outside the Bank Vault." "What do they look like?" "They're actually two sets of prints - one footprints and one handprints, as though their owner was walking on all fours." "I'm going to follow them - they lead to the Dog Park! I knew it!"*

8. The KID DETECTIVE decides whether she has enough evidence to explain how the crime took place (in which case, proceed to step 9) or whether she picks another location to investigate (repeat steps 2 through 8). *Example: "I want to check out that Dog Park."* Three pieces of evidence is usually enough to make a compelling conviction. More than that and it'll get tough to connect all the dots.

THE UNMASKING

9. The HAND OF CRIME describes and names the people who've gathered at the crime scene to hear the Kid Detective's explanation of the crime. These could be people who were introduced earlier, people whose existence is implied by the story so far, people who could conceivably be suspects, as well as police chiefs, reporters, and rubber-neckers, if appropriate to the crime.

Example: "Brett Brentworth is here, and Doberman Schnauzer, trying to look dignified. Dogs Millionaire's here too, eager for an explanation. Gruff the Crime Dog is here as a representative of the local precinct, munching on a cigar."

10. The KID DETECTIVE explains who perpetrated the crime, and how, incorporating every piece of evidence she has uncovered into her explanation. Maybe the culprit is among the people who have gathered - or maybe one of them is in disguise.

Example: "...and finally, while absconding with the bones, the bank robber dropped this needle - found at the scene of the crime - which he had used to sew up his costume. You see, the criminal disguised himself as a human, but is actually - I pull off Brett Brentworth's human mask - Bowser Bradshaw, the dog burglar! I knew when I saw that the culprit fled the scene on all fours, despite leaving human prints."

11. The HAND OF CRIME takes possession of the criminal's body to issue a confession and, optionally, parting threats.

Example: "Yes, I did it! I studied human behavior for years to perfect my disguise! It was the perfect crime - no one would have suspected a human of stealing a bunch of bones! If only running on two legs wasn't so hard - and if this pesky kid hadn't been so nosy! Well I'll get out of the kennel someday, kid, and when I do you'd better watch out! Old Bowser's got your scent!"

12. The KID DETECTIVE wraps up the investigation by coming up with a name for the case and declaring it closed. *Example: "The case of the Dastardly Doggy Disguise is now closed!"*

The Kid Detective wins, because *crime doesn't pay!*



WHAT CAN BE A CRIME?

The crime can be a Kid crime - someone stealing Marcy's secret diary out of her treehouse - or an Adult crime - someone stealing the diamond from Marcy's mother's secret vault. Though the crime might occur among adults, make sure it can be solved by seeking clues in the places a kid could reasonably get to - even though that might include sneaking in in the middle of the night. What's important is that the crime is a mystery - it shouldn't be something straightforward, but should require multiple pieces of evidence to finger the perpetrator. So murder's out unless it's an unusual murder - someone killed Mercer Moneyworth while he was locked in his tenth-story penthouse.

ASKING QUESTIONS

Ask questions to help figure out what to do next! You could always just say "I want to investigate the Garbage Dump!" The Kid Detective's instincts are never wrong. Or, if you need some inspiration, ask the other player questions. Make up answers that move the story forward. *"Who's in the area?" "Well, Ashley Ackermann is hanging out by the treehouse, smoking. Ashley's an older kid and a local bully." "What were you doing an hour ago, I ask her." "Why, you think I swiped the kid's journal? Ha! I was busting old TVs at the dump!" "I want to check out that dump."* When you've figured out what to do next, just move on and do it!



EXTENDED EXAMPLE

Hand: *"'Garbage Dump.' I pick the letter R - you find something that starts with R."*

K.D.: *"Uh. A Rat."*

H: *"What makes this particular rat so interesting?"*

K.D.: *"It's - it's a trained rat."*

H: *"What's it trained to do?"*

K.D.: *"Steal stuff!"*

H: *"Okay. Right as you're making friends with the rat, though, a pile of trash crashes down around you like an avalanche! You're stuck! How do you get out, Kid Detective?"*

K.D.: *"I, uh, send the rat to find a rope! And I use the rope to pull myself out of the trash."*

H: *"Does the rat do a good job? Like is that easy for the rat to do?"*

K.D.: *"Yeah it is! It's a highly trained rat!"*

H: *"As you climb out, you notice has a little collar around its neck."*

K.D.: *"Is there a name on the collar?"*

H: *"Yeah, there's a little name tag. It says 'Fergie.'"*

K.D.: *"Hi, Fergie."*

H: *"It looks like the kind of collar you get at a pet store."*

K.D.: *"Well, in that case I want to ask at the Pet Store!"*

A LONGER EXAMPLE

Hand: *So at dinner one night your dad, who happens to be the chief of police, is like "These pork chops look delicious but I just can't bring myself to eat them. There's this murder case that's had everyone at the precinct up the wall, no one can figure out how this dude Archibald Prancibald got killed in this third story apartment building when no one came in or out of the apartment all night."*

Kid Detective: *"How do you know it was murder, then?"*

H: *"Well, this isn't really dinner table talk, but the state his body was in made it easy to rule out that he had done it to himself. I can't say anything more."*

K.D.: *"Can I see the body?"*

H: *"Absolutely not. Eat your pork chops."*

K.D.: *Oh I'm totally checking out that body.*

H: *So you're going to the "Morgue," then?*

K.D.: *Yeah!*

H: *How do you get in? Your dad said no.*

K.D.: *Nuts to my dad. I'm gonna sneak in after hours.*

H: *Alright. The whole place is deserted, except for like a million dead people. It's kind of spooky, especially at night, with all the lights off. Anyway, you find Archibald laid out on a slab in one of the creepier back rooms. You know it's him because there's one of those tags on his toe that has his name on it.*

K.D.: *Cool! So what's so weird about his body?*

H: *Well - you find something on his body that starts with an O. You tell me what it is.*

K.D.: *He's got a weird orange swelling. On his belly?*

H: *Like, he's bloated and orange?*

K.D.: *Yeah. Like a pumpkin.*

H: *Weird. At just that moment, though, you hear footsteps down the hall - coming your way! What do you do?*

K.D.: *Oh gosh! I'm gonna - I'm gonna hide behind the body. He's so big and swollen that you won't be able to see me behind him.*

H: *So you're lying down next to a bloated, orange dead man. Is that scary?*

K.D.: *I have nerves of steel!*

H: *Radical. So yeah, a dude in a laboratory smock pokes his head into the room - I guess he works at the morgue at night - and he looks around and he doesn't see you because you're so well hidden.*

K.D.: *Yeah!*

H: *"Funny, thought I heard something," he says. He's muttering to himself. "Sad about that guy, I wonder which of his three weird children will inherit the money." He's like walking away down the hall as he says this, just mumbling. There's no one else for him to talk to in the morgue at night, I guess.*

K.D.: *I want to talk to his weird kids.*

H: *Which one? There's, uh, Prancibald Prancibald, who owns the spooky house on the edge of town, Reginald Prancibald, who has the llama farm, and Marigold Prancibald, who has the pumpkin patch.*

K.D.: *Yeah! Her!*

H: *Okay, so you're going to the 'Pumpkin Patch...'*