

Duet Society



A GUIDE TO PLAYING WITH TWO PEOPLE

GOOD SOCIETY
A JANE AUSTEN RPG

Duet Society

*“There could have been no two hearts so open,
no tastes so similar, no feelings so in unison.”*



Two, they say, is company, and therefore an excellent number for a game of *Good Society*. Playing with just two people can be deeply dramatic or extremely hilarious, but above all it is a highly collaborative experience.

When you play *Duet Society*, both players will take on the role of a major character. The relationships and journeys of these major characters will provide the beating heart of your game. As you play, you will work together to create every part of your unique story and to explore the world of its two central characters.

Duet Society is divided into two sections:



**Duet
Backstory**
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Part 1: Duet Backstory contains a step by step guide to completing Backstory for two major characters. This section helps you set up your game to enjoy copious romance, drama, and scandal ahead.

**Duet
Gameplay**
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Part 2: Duet Gameplay contains tips and advice for getting the most out of your two player game. This section helps you collaborate to build your story together.

This guide assumes you are familiar with the rules of *Good Society*, so make sure to read those before you get started.

DUET SOCIETY & EXPANDED ACQUAINTANCE

The steps and tips in *Duet Society* apply both to *Good Society*, but also to the expansions contained in *Expanded Acquaintance*. In particular, *Emma*, *Forget Me Not*, and *Sense, Sensibility and Swordsmanship* work very well with two players. The only expansion that cannot be played with two is *Lady Susan P.I.*

PART 1: DUET BACKSTORY

When you play *Good Society* with two people, it helps to approach Backstory with the mindset of two authors, planning the novel you will write together. The decisions you make in Backstory will play a tremendous role in shaping the story, and many of them are best made together. The drama and details you create will provide plenty of fuel for your game. This section provides a step by step guide to Duet Backstory to lay the groundwork for your story ahead.

Before starting Duet Backstory, it's still important you complete Collaboration so you are both on the same page for the game to come.

PLAY WITH NO HIDDEN INFORMATION

While playing with hidden information can be fun, in the highly collaborative atmosphere of two player *Good Society* it can often get in the way. For this reason, we recommend playing with no hidden information.

CREATING MAJOR CHARACTERS

STEP 1: DECIDE ON THE CORE CONCEPT OF YOUR STORY

Your story will focus on your two major characters, and how their relationship and circumstances change throughout play. For this reason, it's important to start Duet Backstory by choosing the core concept of your story. Your core concept should include the relationship between your characters, and give a hint about what might unfold in the game ahead. Examples of core concepts are:

- ✂ Two siblings both intending to marry before the season is out.
- ✂ Two star-crossed lovers battling their families and circumstances.
- ✂ A parent and child trying to improve their family's dire fortunes.
- ✂ Two best friends intent on securing each other's success.
- ✂ Two old flames thrust together after 10 years apart, discovering if their feelings still linger.

Both players need to be excited about and ready to commit to this core concept, so take the time to find one you both love. Make sure the central relationship between your characters is interesting and changeable, as you will spend a lot of time focusing on it.

STEP 2: CHOOSE DESIRES AND A RELATIONSHIP

Next, you will each need to choose a desire for your major character. While desires do not have to directly involve the other major character, it is important your desires have the potential to impact each other's world. For example, a child's desire to marry their secret fiancé will certainly impact the life of their parent, even though it doesn't involve them directly. Think about the stakes your characters might have in each other's lives.

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During this step, it can help to discuss your desires and establish any required information. For example: “I think this desire would make your character the older sibling, how do you feel about that?” or “do you think maybe our mother has just died, and left you all the inheritance?”

If you plan to play a long game, or feel like you need more drama to fuel your story, consider choosing *two* desires for each major character. This will add another dimension to the story and give you more plot points to work with.

Along with your desires, you will also need to choose a relationship card to connect your major characters. In most cases, this relationship will already be a part of your core concept.

Tammy and Edwin are playing a two player game of *Good Society*. They have decided to play two siblings, struggling to restore their reputation after their parent's death. They pick the *Siblings* relationship card to describe their relationship.

Tammy likes the look of the desire “*restore your family name, and resume your place in society.*”

“This desire is all about recovering from a scandal that happened to our family 10 years ago. What do you think about that, Edwin?”

“I like that,” says Edwin. “I think my character might have a different approach to avoiding the scandal—marrying out of the family name. For that reason I want to choose the desire ‘*marry your secret fiancé*’. I assume your character will have some strong feelings about that?”

“I should say they would! Those desires fit really well with our concept for the game.”

STEP 3: CHOOSE ROLES AND BACKGROUNDS

Choose a character role and family background that fits with your relationship and desire.

STEP 4: FLESH OUT THE MAJOR CHARACTERS

Flesh out your major character by filling out the fields on your character role sheet. Also choose your starting positive and negative reputation tags from your family background sheet.

While doing this, think about your major character's personality, past, and position. What kind of family do they come from? Do they have a profession? Are they married, unmarried, or perhaps (secretly) engaged?

Talk and collaborate freely during this time. The more you build on each other's stories, and interweave the lives of your characters, the more there will be to draw from during the game. You can also add details that may be too specific for a normal game of *Good Society*, but tie in well with your concept. For example, "where are we staying in London? Did we attend the season last year?" or "how well do you think our families know each other? Do you think our parents get along or not?"

During this step, you should also perform any additional instructions listed on your desire card, such as creating a rumour, or gaining an additional reputation tag.

With those four steps complete, you have finished creating your major characters. You should have a good idea of the complexities of their relationship, and the tensions, wishes, and emotions that lie between them as the game begins.

CREATING CONNECTIONS

The next step in *Duet Backstory* is to create connections. Connections are supporting characters that hold tremendous influence over the lives, situations or hearts of the major character they relate to.

When you play *Duet Society*, connections will form an important cast of characters that are vital to telling your story. They will feature much more heavily than in a game with more players. Connections will appear in many scenes in your game, and you may even have scenes where two connections talk to each other. For this reason, it's worth taking your time to flesh out your connections, and to make sure that they are intimately tied to the story of your major characters.

You can create connections with or without connection cards. However, since connections play a more central role in a duet game, connection cards are not drawn randomly from the connection deck. If you are playing with connection cards, you will instead choose a card for the kind of connection you wish to create.

MID-PLAY CONNECTIONS

During *Backstory*, each player will create two connections for their major character. However, these are not the only connections that can feature in your game. You can also create one extra connection mid-play to serve the needs of the story.

This is even more useful in a two player game. If a strong idea comes to mind, or you want to inject an extra burst of drama into your story, this is a great way to do so.



STEP 1: DECIDE ON BROAD IDEAS FOR YOUR CONNECTIONS

Start by deciding on broad ideas for your connections that tie in with the dreams, circumstances, and ambitions of your major character.

In order to create connections that will play an important role in your story, it's worth thinking more carefully about the kinds of connections you create. You can still use the connection options on your character role sheet as inspiration, but you can also go beyond these and follow your sense of what will work best for your story. Here are some great starting points:

- ✦ **Mandatory connections:** You will need to create any mandatory connections specified by your desire card.
- ✦ **Connections required for your desires:** If your character's desire does not point to the other major character, you may need to create a connection to make your desire work. For example if your character's desire is to marry your secret fiancé, create a secret fiancé as one of your connections.
- ✦ **Connections to complicate your desires:** Connections which complicate your character's desire, by making it harder to achieve or casting it in a new light, are a great choice for a two player game and can add plenty of drama to the story.
- ✦ **Connections that bring new, but relevant, story possibilities:** You can also create connections that bring new story possibilities of their own. Some kinds of connections such as suitors, rivals, and old flames, will create possibilities inherently, while others might need more thinking. Just make sure these story possibilities still fit within the core concept you decided on at the start of Backstory.

STEP 2: SELECT CONNECTION CARDS

If you are playing with the deck of connections, choose a connection card for each of your connections. This should help inspire further ideas of who that connection might be and how they fit into the story you are going to tell.

STEP 3: FILL OUT THE CONNECTION SHEETS

Fill out the details on your connection sheets to flesh out your connections. While you do so, you can continue to share ideas and work together to create links between the connections and the major characters.

Along with filling out the usual information about each connection, you should also consider their desires and ambitions, and how these might involve the major characters. This will help the connection play a more active role in the story. For example, are they trying to rebuild their friendship with a major character after a falling out? Or seek revenge after a slight? You can write these in the notes section of the connection sheet, and change them as needed as the game goes on.

You should also think about the relationship between your major character, and the connections created by the other player. In *Duet Society*, the stories of your major characters are intimately intertwined. That means your character would likely have opinions of, and even an independent relationship with, the connections of the other major character. It's worth considering what that opinion or relationship might be, collaborating with the other player as needed.

STEP 4: PREPARE TO PLAY EACH OTHER'S CONNECTIONS

During your game, you will control the connections created by the other player. Take these connections and place them in front of you, then write your name in the 'played by' field. Lastly, place two resolve tokens on each connection for use during the game.

While you will play these connections as a starting point, during your game you may need to play other connections as well. Since your major characters are so closely interwoven, it is natural that they will want to interact with people who are important in each other's lives. Do not worry too much about who is assigned to play a connection, but switch in accordance with the story's demands.



PART 2: DUET GAMEPLAY

Duet Society is a highly collaborative experience, so it's important to enter the game ready to work together to tell your story. Since there are only two players, there will be lots of room for you to both explore the aspects of the game that interest you. At the same time, you need to be invested in and contribute to the other player's story. This part contains our tips for playing *Good Society* with two people.

NO FACILITATOR NEEDED

As you are playing completely collaboratively, you will not need a Facilitator for your two player game. However if one player would like to, they can take on some of the Facilitator's tasks to help the game run more smoothly.



Playing
without a
Facilitator
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of *Good
Society*

CONTRIBUTE TO THE STORY AND USE YOUR RESOLVE TOKENS

When you play *Duet Society*, you are responsible for creating the story together. This means both playing your major character, and thinking about the story itself—what might happen, and what twists and turns it might take. It's even more important than usual to actively contribute new elements to the story that will help it become more detailed and interesting. If you are stuck and looking for ideas, think:

- ✿ What is this character's desire, and what might get in the way?
- ✿ What is this character's inner conflict, and what might add fuel to the fire?
- ✿ Does this character need more romance in their life?

You can also use the advice and suggestions on page 163 to 165 of *Good Society* to help you.

ASK QUESTIONS



More
Questions
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of Good
Society

Ask each other plenty of questions as you play. Questions are a great tool to help bring your story to life. They throw light on details and situations that otherwise might be skipped over, and help shape your shared understanding of what is happening. If you're not sure what questions to ask, the best place to start is your own curiosity—what do you want to know more about? You can ask questions to:

- ❧ Find out what another character is doing, or feeling (*e.g. what is Edward doing towards the end of the ball?*)
- ❧ Add details about a place, event, or conversation (*e.g. we haven't seen Caroline's estate before, what does it look like?*)
- ❧ Make an open suggestion to shape the story (*e.g. do you think one of your brothers might be here?*)
- ❧ Clarify details that are unclear or confusing (*e.g. are they alone in the drawing room at this point, or is Cecil's aunt still here?*)
- ❧ Check-in about where the scene or story is going, and what you want to see next (*e.g. did we want to see Isabella bring up the letter with her uncle, or should she talk to Henry first?*)

LINGER ON THE DETAILS AND INDULGE

As you play, you will have plenty of time to spend enjoying the details, from the description of a grand ballroom, to a small moment between two old flames passing by on the dance floor. Take your time to explore these details to add richness to your game. If you have an idea about how something looks, what the atmosphere of an occasion is like, or what a character may be doing, share it. If you think of a scene you'd be interested in, even if it doesn't seem immediately important to the plot, suggest it. However, if you find yourself talking more than the other player, don't forget to ask questions to help them contribute to the story.

Since sharing the spotlight is easier with two players, it's also alright to stretch the rules if you need a little more space in your story. You can write an extra letter, set an extra visitation, or even play a monologue token on a connection if their thoughts and feelings become very important. Use the rules to help guide you, but don't be afraid to push them a little if it's fun, interesting, or important to your story.

TAKE YOUR TIME TO THINK AND DISCUSS WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

When you play with two people you are both constantly contributing to the story, so your brain is always on the go. Don't be afraid to take a moment to think, even if it means a lull in the conversation. If you're not sure what should happen next, take time to stop, think ahead, and talk about where the story is going. Working together, you can help each other come up with great story ideas that neither of you would have thought of alone. You can also take breaks as you need them, and return to the game when you're ready.

INVOLVE THE CONNECTIONS IN YOUR STORY

Duet Society centres around two major characters, along with four to six connections. These connections are a vital part of your story, and can provide the major characters with adversity, romance, friendship, and more.

Give time and weight to exploring the relationship between the major characters and the connections, and playing out scenes between them. You can even set a scene between two connections if their relationship becomes an important part of the story.



**Playing
Connections
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Good Society**

BE PREPARED TO SWITCH CHARACTERS AND PLAY MULTIPLE IN THE SAME SCENE

Along with your major character, you will also be playing two or three connections, and you may even need to step in to play other connections as the story demands. As the game progresses you may find yourself changing characters frequently, even within the same scene. When you start a scene, it can help to ask which characters are present, so you are clear on what characters you need to play.

If you have trouble switching, try finding a physicality, tone of voice, or way of speaking that helps anchor you to a particular character. You can also visualise the scene in your mind to help you keep track of who is talking. It can also help to slow down the pace of conversation and take a moment to think. If you find switching characters within the same scene difficult, you can also ask for less characters to be present in the scene, and explore what the absent characters think later on.

ENJOY YOUR GAME!

We've shared our tips for playing *Good Society* with two. But remember, it is your game, and you can play in the way that's best for you. With two players it's easy to check-in and discuss how the game is going. Talk about what you would like, and listen to the needs of the other player. The most important part is that you are enjoying yourselves and feeling comfortable!

This is a supplement for *Good Society: A Jane Austen RPG*.

www.storybrewersroleplaying.com/good-society

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