

*Anyone can watch films, but only FilmBuffs get BTS press access at film festivals! BTS, you know: buff, toned and swole.*

## **STORY**

Welcome to *FilmBuff*! You're a group of aspiring critics attempting to get special press access to the year's biggest film festival. In order to earn access, the festival's Board of Directors requires you to prove your understanding of a film's narrative structure and formal features. The deadline to register as critics is coming soon and your careers ride on this festival - can you prove you're enough of a *FilmBuff*?

## **OBJECTIVE**

Build hands of scene tools to construct scenes incorporating elements of film form. Reach the end of the third Act with your constructed movie scenes and see if you can earn press access from the Board of Directors!

For ages 16+

Player Count: 2-4

Duration: 35-45 minutes

## **PREPARATION**

### **Materials**

Note: (\*) denotes supplements that can be used instead of the materials listed below.

- 1 *FilmBuff* reference board
- 1 X-card (safety tool)
- Lines & Veils notecards\* (safety tool)
- 1 D4\*
- 1 *FilmBuff* deck
  - Includes:
    - Act cards (40 total)
    - Character Archetype cards (5 total)
- Board of Directors card deck, aka “BOD” cards (12 total)
- 3 Buff cards
- Pen/Paper\*
- Audio Files
  - Reading the Act description at the top of each Buff card (~ 45 seconds, 3 total)
  - Example of Cut Scene Gameplay (5 minutes long)

**\*Supplements:**

- Lines & Veils notecards: can be post-it notes, on paper, in a notes app, etc.
- 1 D4: online dice rollers
- Pen/Paper: online applications can be used (notes app, google docs, etc.)

**Safety Tools**

Before gameplay begins, have a Lines & Veils conversation to create a safe space to play.

Provided are Lines & Veils note cards which can help facilitate the creation and reminder of these predetermined safety rules throughout the game. If conducted this way, ensure this card can be seen by all players throughout the game.

Lines are completely off-limit topics.

- Ex. Sexual Assault/Violence, Pregnancy

Veils are potentially uncomfortable topics to avoid and otherwise be cautious of during gameplay.

- Ex. Violence against animals, Detailed violence

Have the X-card present near the board, and if any player touches it, the conversation should move to a new topic.

## The Setup

1. Take out the **FilmBuff deck (Act & Character Archetype cards)** and place it between all players
2. Place the board where all players can see the directions of play order.
3. Set out the **Buff cards** in the proper order of the Cut Scenes.
4. Set out the D4.

FilmBuff Reference Board:

**FILM BUFF**

ACT	ROLL	CUT SCENE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Read each <b>ACT</b> description to understand what your movie scene must convey</li> <li>- There are <b>3 ACTs</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>ROLL</b> for the number of FilmBuff cards you will draw in each <b>ACT</b></li> <li>- Roll one d4 and add 1 to it (d4+1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- On the FilmBuff cards are "scene tools"</li> <li>- Build a movie scene with the "scene tools" you chose, connecting it to "film analysis"</li> </ul>

~ ACT I ~  
 + 1  
 CUT SCENE I

~ ACT II ~  
 + 1  
 CUT SCENE II

~ ACT III ~  
 + 1  
 CUT SCENE III

\*Board of Directors\*

## PLAY OVERVIEW

Follow the flow of the board, starting at the top of Act I and moving through Act II, Act III, and each Cut Scene as designated. Reference the Almanac when stuck with terms, as well as the audio recordings for examples and Cut Scene directives. When finished with Act III, find out if you made the cut for the Board of Directors!

### Drawing from the FilmBuff deck

At the top of each act, roll one D4 + 1 to determine the number of cards to draw from the FilmBuff deck. Written on each Act card is a noun, verb, setting, and mood (aka “scene tools”). Each scene tool has a corresponding symbol on the Act cards. As a group, quickly choose one of the four scene tools to keep in your current Cut Scene deck; add the card to your deck and log which word you’ve chosen. **IF** your group is unable to quickly agree on which scene tool to choose and locked in a tie, you may take a different card from the FilmBuff deck in place of the current one.



There are also five character archetype cards mixed into the FilmBuff deck that you might draw (*see next section for more information*). Any cards you gather from the FilmBuff deck will be used in the Cut Scene. You may have as few as two or as many as five. However, once you reach a Cut Scene, **you have the option to draw as many additional Act cards as you’d like** – but you must use one scene tool from every Act card you draw. Discuss and decide quickly as a group.

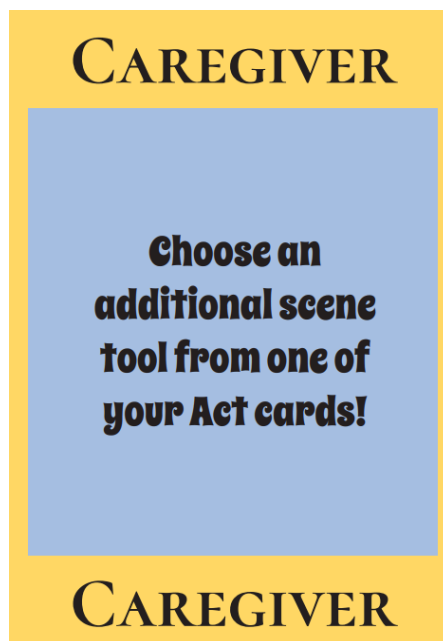
Here is an example of building one FilmBuff deck:

At the top of the first Act, we (Kaden, Isa and Xavier) roll the D4 and get a “2,” then +1 gives us three cards. The first card we draw offers the options of: “Spaghetti,” “Run,” “Melancholic” and “Beach.” We choose to keep the setting “Beach.” We kept “Firework” (a noun) from the second card, then “Yell” (a verb) from the third card. Before beginning the Act I Cut Scene, we decide to draw an additional card from the FilmBuff deck – we then select “Awkward” (a mood).

After a Cut Scene, set aside those Act cards in their own distinct pile for later. Do not reshuffle them into the deck until after gameplay has finished.

### Character Archetype Cards

There are 5 cards mixed into the FilmBuff deck that are dedicated to character archetypes: *Hero*, *Villain*, *Caregiver*, *Rebel*, and *Lone Wolf*. You now have a unique way to manipulate the Act cards already drawn or upcoming Cut Scene! All Character Archetype abilities take place after considering each of your Act cards.



If you draw any of these cards, then you also must use that character in the Cut Scene at the end of that Act section. Discuss with your fellow aspiring critics to ensure you are all interpreting the archetypes similarly.

Ex. If you draw *Hero* for your Act I Cut Scene, then you must include a character that represents your group's interpretation of a hero in that Cut Scene.

### Cut Scenes

At the end of each of the three Acts, there is a Cut Scene. At the Cut Scene, you must pause and complete the Cut Scene Actions, detailed on the back of each Buff card and written below. This is where you will apply the scene tools from your FilmBuff deck, any character archetypes you may have acquired, and one element of film form! Your goal is to discuss, build, and visually narrate a movie scene with everything you gathered in the last Act, while keeping it grounded within the description of that Act.

Begin by selecting the corresponding Buff Card, which includes a description of the plot structure and emotional journey of each Act, a list of four film form elements, and reminders of how to guide your discussion.

- 1) The player that last rolled the D4 reads the Act description out loud AND/OR listen to the audio and follow along.
- 2) Collectively review all the scene tools you selected during the last Act and character archetypes, if any were acquired.
- 3) Start discussion to build a movie scene using the scene tools in front of you. It can be anything, there are no limits! Collaboratively narrate the visuals as you go. Listed below are some things to consider.
  - a) What stood out to you when reading the Act description? Are there any particular concepts or questions that will help you to start creating a scene?
  - b) Similarly, is there a particular scene tool that you feel could strongly ground your scene?
  - c) How can these various scene tools fit together?
  - d) Who are the characters (if any) and what are they doing?
  - e) What do you want the scene to look like? How do visuals change throughout the scene?
- 4) Once you've all created the foundation of your scene, roll the D4 to determine **the one element** of film form you must use to further your collective vision.
  - a) Read the definition and guiding questions for the corresponding element.

- 5) Discuss again! What are some ways you could incorporate this element into your scene? How is the vision of your scene tools and characters influenced by film form? Be as specific as possible.
- 6) Once the group decides you are ready to move on, resume by rolling the D4 and continue onto the next Act!

### **Audio File: Example of Cut Scene Gameplay (5 minutes)**

Congrats! You've just finished your last Cut Scene! Time to submit...

### **The Board of Directors (Debrief)**

After creating your last Cut Scene, it is now time to submit your application for the Board of Directors to review! Imagine presenting your Cut Scenes to the Board, and with all of your Act cards, Character Archetype cards, and other notes in front of you, consider any or all of the following questions:

1. Now that you've finished your Cut Scenes, how do you feel about the decisions your group made? Do you like the scene tools you chose, or are there any you wish you had gone with? Did you wish you had taken more Act cards, or were you busy juggling what you had rolled for?
2. As a group, select your favorite Cut Scene that you created. What made this one special? Was the narrative especially moving? Was your film form element implemented in a thoughtful way?
3. Did you think about film form or narrative in a new way while creating any of your Cut Scenes? If so, how did you think about them differently, and what inspired you to do so?

When you've finished the debrief...

Welcome to this year's BTS Crew, FilmBuffs!

We encourage you to keep thinking about playing with the Cut Scenes you've created! Might these turn into larger ideas, or even one connected script? Is making a real film in the future? Exercising your filmic muscles never goes out of style!

~

You're now ready to begin your journey through *FilmBuff*!  
Earning press access will require creativity, collaboration, and  
the flexing of your filmic muscles - time to get rolling..

ACTION!

~



## ***CAHIERS DU FILMBUFF***

The FilmBuff Almanac!

FilmBuff is not just for people studying film, but all movie-enthusiasts! Thus, for those curious or unfamiliar with some more technical film words and phrases used in this rulebook, we made this as an additional definition reference for you.

- The words below are divided into “Game Terms,” words you’ll come across while learning about and playing the game, and “Film Terms,” words that may help you describe your scenes during Cut Scenes.
- We have also linked other resources that may offer more support at the end of this almanac!

### **GAME TERMS**

**Acts** – FilmBuff follows a traditional three-Act film structure (setup, confrontation/conflict, resolution). Each Act has different expectations for what the plot line should entail, such as the setting, character development and the emotional journey of the audience. To help, we have included written and audio descriptions for Act I, II and III, going over what your scene should embody during each Act and Cut Scene. (Review *Cut Scenes* in the Play Overview, and see *Buff Card* and *Cut Scenes* below for more.)

**Cut Scenes** – the core dynamic of gameplay, where you will create your three unique scenes, apply film form to them and enter the realm of filmmaking and critique! Each Cut Scene has an Act description, directives you must follow and 4 film form elements that you will roll for to further build out your scene. (Review *Cut Scenes* in the Play Overview, and see *Buff Card* and *Scene* below for more.)

**Board of Directors (Debrief)** – the end game of FilmBuff, where you reflect on the Cut Scenes your group created.

**D4+1** – a die that has up to 4 points on it (D4), which we ask you to add one to (+1). For example, if you roll 3, add 1 to it, meaning draw 4 cards total.

**Scene Tools** - the nouns, verbs, moods and settings that will make up each Cut Scene. You must pick one scene tool from each card, unless you have drawn the Caregiver. (See *Caregiver* below under *Character Archetype Cards*.)

**Act Cards** - these cards make up the majority of the FilmBuff deck and each have four scene tools (a noun, verb, mood and setting) you can choose from to use in your Cut Scene.

**Cut Scene Deck** - the collective hand that you will choose your scene tools from, which you roll for at the beginning of each Act. At the end of the Cut Scene, put this deck to the side and save it for later.

**Character Archetype Cards** - special FilmBuff deck cards that force you to use a type of character in the current Act you are in, like a hero or a villain, while also giving special abilities that affect the Act cards or the Cut Scenes.

While given an archetype, these characters may be anything you want them to be, as long as they showcase their archetypal characteristics. For example: a *Caregiver* may be a traditional parental guardian, a nurse or doctor, or even a coat rack! *\*All abilities occur after drawing all of your Act cards and reviewing the scene tools.*

- *Hero*: Draw an additional Act card!
- *Villain*: Drop one Act card from those you have rolled in this Act. Do not replace it!
- *Caregiver*: Choose an additional scene tool from one of your Act cards!
- *Rebel*: Take the top three Act cards from the deck and choose one to replace one of your Act cards with! Reshuffle the original and the two unused Act cards back into the deck.
- *Lone Wolf*: Choose the film form element you want to use in the Cut Scene of this Act! *\*Occurs at the time you would normally roll for the Cut Scenes film form element.*

Buff Card - a specific reference card used for each cut scene. These cards include the specific Act description, Cut Scene directives and the film form elements to be rolled for in that Cut Scene.

## **FILM TERMS**

Film Form - elements of film style, commonly used in film analysis by scholars and critics.

Examples include composition, sound (soundscape, diegesis, and score), color, lighting, etc.

Emotional Journey - the emotions the audience are supposed to feel or take away, across a scene or across the entire film. This is invoked by the narrative, visuals, score, and everything else operating at any given moment.

Scene - what you will be creating in every Cut Scene of each Act. While you are creating a story in FilmBuff, everything is film-based, so your "scene" should be envisioned as if you were seeing a few seconds of a movie played out on your tv, using the scene tools as elements that must be seen in this clip within each Act. Think of these scenes almost like MadLibs, except you are given the words to choose from (scene tools) and you are creating the storyline around them.

Composition - what the viewer can see in the frame at any given time. This "frame" creates the audience's understanding of the setting, situation and emotion at each point within the movie.

Camera Angle - the angle at which the audience is viewing the scene taking place. On the film production side, this is where the cameraman situates themselves at different angles or levels to get a certain type of shot.

Camera Shots - think of camera shots as pausing a movie at random points and describing what can be seen. Filmmakers will use different camera shots, along with angles and framing, to evoke certain emotions or subconscious knowledge to the audience.

**Additional References:**

If you're in need of more help or just want extra credit reps, here are links to additional Film Buffery!

- [Yale Film Almanac](#)
- [Shot Sizes - The Ultimate Guide](#)
- [CGI vs VFX vs SFX Guide](#)

## Buff Card – Act I

The first Act introduces the audience to the world of the film and the characters within it. There is emphasis on establishing the setting(s) as well as who the important characters are. Most importantly, the first Act begins the emotional journey that guides viewers for the rest of the film. For setting: consider time, place and its influence on the plot. For important characters: consider each of their key characteristics, goals, motivations, and obstacles. What do we learn about them at the start of a movie? For emotional journey: what *is* our emotional position as the audience here?

**1. Color:** The use or absence of color is a conscious choice. Would your emotional journey benefit from the use of color, or would it fit in black and white? If it's in color, consider some specificities of the color presentation – perhaps the hue (which colors), saturation (how colorful) and luminosity (level of brightness) – and how they'd affect the scene's emotional impact.

**2. Aspect Ratio:** Consider how the scene's emotional impact may be affected by the aspect ratio it's presented in, which describes the size of the frame in regards to the horizontal and vertical sides of the image. Common aspect ratios include 1.37:1 (Academy), 1.85:1 (Widescreen) and 2.40:1 (Anamorphic Widescreen, often referred to as “scope” after “Cinemascope”). The larger the first number is, the wider the frame is. Which aspect ratio is appropriate for your scene, and how will that choice work towards your intended emotional effect?

**3. Soundscape:** What does the environment of the scene sound like? Think about sounds the viewer will hear besides dialogue or score – what impact are these incidental sounds having on the viewer's emotional journey?

For example, if you are in a cafe, you would not expect to only hear one person talking, you would expect the coffee machines making noises, other conversations, the doorbell ringing, a barista calling out orders, etc.

**4. Scale:** Shot scale describes the amount of physical space the frame displays. Long or wide shots encompass the most physical space, and close-ups show the least. Most (but not all) scenes feature a variety of shot scales as they progress – what will yours look like? Try considering shot scale in relation to static (unmoving) compositions.

## Buff Card – Act II

This is the majority of the movie, often covering the middle two-thirds of runtime. Stakes and emotions are heightened as we follow the characters' journey through this act, which encompasses much of the narrative leading up to and informing the climax. A key word for this Act is conflict – the driver of the plot. There are conflicts of interest within one's self and/or between characters, which present challenges as relationships form and are tested by differing motivations, emotions, and goals. As the narrative progresses, consider how the audience's emotional journey is being impacted – what's changing, what's staying the same? How is this done – narrative events, specific connections to characters, or anything else?

- 1. Lighting:** How is the scene lit? Lighting is key in achieving mood amongst the audience – how will this scene take advantage of it? You may think about intensity, contrast, and sharpness as options for controlling the scene's lighting.
- 2. Focus and Depth of Field:** Focus describes which portions of the frame are “sharp” and easily visible. Shallow focus keeps only a single plane in sharp focus, whereas deep focus keeps each plane of the image sharp. Filmmakers make use of these extreme depths of field, but also work in between them. How would adjusting the depth of field affect the emotional journey of your scene?
- 3. Mise-en-scène and Décor:** Mise-en-scène describes how space is presented in a film in a very broad sense. However, when people refer to mise-en-scène, they are often referring to décor, or the arrangement of objects in the frame. How would your scene's presentation of space affect the viewer's perception? How should the scene be set?
- 4. Sound Diegesis:** Diegetic and non-diegetic are terms to describe where sound is coming from in relation to the viewer. If the originator of a sound is visible on screen as the sound is heard, it's considered diegetic sound, and if the originator is not visible it's non-diegetic. Will your scene contain diegetic sound, non-diegetic sound, or both? How will your choice affect the audience?

For example, if the viewer is watching a band play, any sounds by the band who is playing in frame would be called “diegetic” sounds whereas if we know the band is playing in a bar, but we cannot see them in the bar, then any noises we expect to hear offscreen are “non-diegetic” sounds.

## Buff Card – Act III

This Act begins with the fallout of the climax. The fallout and resolution have endless possibilities and interpretations. Consider the effects of the climactic action in terms of the greater plot, as well as for important characters. What are the results of the action – what happened, how does that affect the world? Where are characters after the climax, and at the end of the film, in terms of setting, action, self, and relationships? Lastly, what are we left with just before the credits roll, narratively and emotionally? As the viewers' emotional journey comes to an end, what are they meant to be feeling? How do we know this – through visuals, through dialogue, or anything else?

- 1. Camera Movement and Reframing:** Moving the camera should be taken as an intentional action – when the camera moves, it should be to provoke an audience reaction that can't be achieved without moving the camera. Does the camera move in your scene? If so, then how, and what reaction is this supposed to evoke from the audience? Reframing is another way to change a composition without editing, as it involves a lens adjustment (such as a zoom). If you reframe during the scene, why and what should the audience feel?
- 2. Visual Effects:** Visual Effects, or VFX, are images created through a process not directly available in live-action filming. VFX don't usually replace live-action footage, but work in tandem with it to craft compositions that are otherwise impossible to film. Does the scene contain any VFX, and if it does, what are they? Are they meant to be noticeable? How will they impact the viewer?
- 3. Costuming:** Costuming is a self-descriptive but nonetheless essential element in composition, because characters' clothing often takes up a great deal of space in the frame. What's the general theme of the costumes in the scene, and why are they designed that way?
- 4. Score:** A score is a piece of music designed to accompany the on-screen visuals. Is your scene scored? If so, what might the score sound like, and how will it drive viewers toward your desired emotional impact? If there's no score, what would the impact of that be?