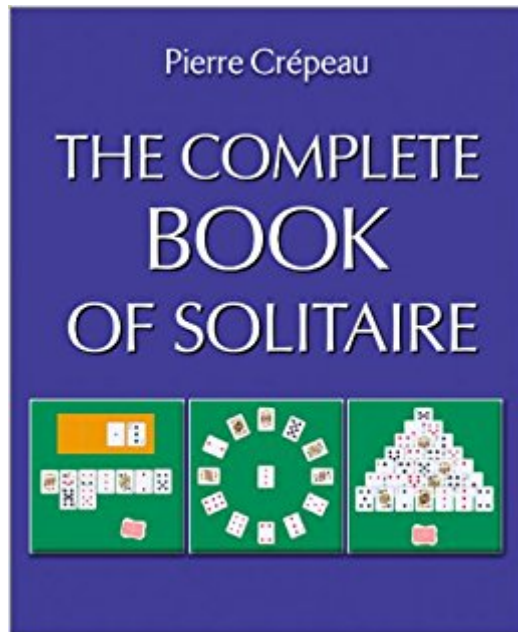




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The Complete Book Of Solitaire



Synopsis

Everyone has played basic Solitaire at one time or another, but there is a world of Solitaire enthusiasts who play every variation of the game. In compiling this authoritative Solitaire collection of 179 variations, Pierre Cr  peau took joyful inspiration from his grandmother, a noted Solitaire aficionado. The Complete Book of Solitaire is structured according to the object of each game and grouped accordingly: tableau-clearing, pile games, combination games, and building by suit, color or sequence. Each game is illustrated in color and is introduced by the author with either a personal anecdote or useful background information. Players will find many of these games highly clever, constantly changing and evolving with a host of wonderful surprises or devilish traps awaiting. Learning the Solitaire variations is greatly facilitated by the book's numerous illustrations. Winning at Solitaire does not depend on luck alone, it takes a good memory and some strategic thinking. Here is an ideal way to exercise the mind in mathematics and the art of precision while learning the benefits of perseverance, honesty and, of course, patience.

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Customer Reviews

Pierre Cr  peau is an anthropologist specializing in representational systems, the arts, and popular traditions. Author of several books and a feature writer, he retired in 1991. He plays Solitaire whenever he can.

Introduction Grandmother and Her Playing Cards My grandmother was one of those women who would terrify you at first sight, but then you'd adore her. Her bearing, patrician and aloof, invited

respect and deference. She stood ramrod straight like a caryatid and yet glided fluidly about like a gently moving stream. Her face -- smooth, unlined, handsomely tanned -- radiated upper-class hauteur. But behind her dreamy eyes and raspy voice -- the result of years of smoking -- lurked a fragile soul. There was a deep wound somewhere inside. I'll never know whether it was some personal tragedy or betrayal, for my grandmother was hardly one to confide in others. For her, acknowledging one's private pain in public was unacceptable, and she jealously guarded hers behind a veil of imagined diffidence. But the long, sleepless nights she endured spoke volumes about her inner turmoil. Growing up, I never saw Grandmother sleep. Every evening, as we were getting ready for bed, she would stay by herself at the long kitchen table and absentmindedly shuffle her cards. In the morning, I'd find her in the same place, sitting in front of her cards, as though she'd hardly moved all night. Intrigued by her "mania" -- a word used by other members of the family to describe her behavior -- I approached Grandmother one evening and quietly asked her why she always played cards alone. Instead of a direct answer, she taught me Clairvoyance, a children's game that involved predicting the color of the cards about to be turned up. It was love at first sight for both of us. Seeing my determination to beat the odds, Grandmother knew at once that I it took to be a persistent player. At last, she had found an avid student. Soon the two of us played together almost daily. Grandmother taught me as many games as I could fathom and let me practice them with her, correcting my mistakes as they occurred and tapping on my fingers gently each time I attempted an "illegal" move. One day she allowed me into her room. There, she lifted a little cedar box from a drawer, ceremoniously opened it and fished out an old deck of cards that were dog-eared and discolored. Yet, Grandmother held up the cards as if they were holy relics on display before an assembly of believers. She had inherited the cards from her own grandmother, she said, and had been preserving them as if they were sacred.

The Origin of Playing Cards "Who invented playing cards?" I once asked her, and she treated me to a story. Hundreds of years ago in China, she said, most mandarins forbade their concubines to work lest it harm their physical beauty. The idle concubines, poor things, grew so desperately bored that the mandarins had to call upon a Chinese sage for help. The latter obliged by inventing playing cards as a pastime for the concubines. The great explorer Marco Polo eventually brought the cards back to Venice and, in time, the Venetians introduced them to Europe. Grandmother added that some people believed that playing cards had originated in India, where they were invented by a maharajas wife to discourage her husband from playing with his beard. I burst out laughing and told Grandmother I didn't believe a word of it. After a long silence, she said in that cigarette-strained rasp: "Ah! The things one invents just to counter boredom!"

Pictorial Symbols One day, Grandmother decided to describe to me

what playing cards actually represented. "They have always had four suits," she explained. "In the old days, these were a coin, a cup, a sword and a stick. The suits evolved as the cards gained popularity in Europe. The Germans opted for a leaf, a tassel, a bell and a heart. And it was the French who gave the cards their current suits, which originally symbolized the four social classes. Hearts represented the church; spades, the army; diamonds, the bourgeoisie; and clubs, the peasantry. "For me, though, cards are a mirror of the human race," Grandmother added. "Hearts represent the lovers' race -- people who are tall, attractive and impeccably groomed; they are happy, gregarious and generous. Spades represent sinister-looking criminals with black, bulging eyes and shaggy, grimy hair. Diamonds represent dreamers, like poets and artists -- sensitive, whimsical people with slim, lithe and gracious bodies. Clubs represent the peasantry: narrow-minded, indolent and tenacious individuals. They are thick, heavy-set and muscular, with shiny, unkempt hair." Watching Grandmother manipulate the cards, I sensed that she was also rearranging the story of her own life -- the triumphs as well as the heartbreaks.

Playing Cards and the Calendar Year Grandmother was so struck by the eerie affinity between a pack of cards and the calendar year that she often wondered whether or not some ancient astrologer had actually invented them. She pointed out that a deck contains 52 cards, just like a year has 52 weeks; the colors -- red and black -- correspond with the two yearly solstices; their 12 figures match the 12 zodiac signs; and there are four suits -- hearts, spades, diamonds and clubs -- just as there are four seasons. The 13 cards that make up each suit correspond with the 13 weeks in a season, or the 13 months -- of 28 days each -- in a lunar year. Since the ace is worth one point, the jack 11, the queen 12 and the king 13, the sum of all the cards in a suit is 91, which is also the number of days in a season. What's more, if you add up all four suits, you'll get a total of 364, which is the number of days in a year (52 weeks x 7 days, or, in the case of the lunar year, 13 months x 28 days).

Grandmother believed that the joker was added to the deck to fulfill the role of the 365th day in a leap year. Come to think of it, the joker does not really belong anywhere -- not with the hearts, nor the spades, diamonds or clubs. He doesn't even have a figure -- he is neither king, nor queen, nor jack -- and has no rank. Withdraw the joker from the deck and it remains whole. Yet, introduce him in a game and at once he starts commanding it, dominating all the assets and outclassing all ranks. In Grandmother's mind, the advent of the joker must have been the work of a cheat.

Solitaire Games There are two kinds of card games: the plastic game, or tarot, which originated in Italy and is based on images. the numerical game, which originated in Asia; it is based on rank and consists of one numerical sequence per suit. Solitaire belongs in the numerical-game category, which can be broken down further into two categories: one is based on rank, such as in Battle, whereby the

higher number prevails; the other is based on combination, whereby the player tries to put combinations together that will yield the greatest value. Poker is the best known of combination games. According to Grandmother, solitaire is a game to be played alone and to say that it requires two or more players is utter nonsense. It is the most popular of all card games, and there are more varieties than all other forms of card games combined. Experts believe there are at least 350 different games of solitaire, and new ones are being invented all the time. Blessed with an extraordinary intelligence and a fabulous memory, Grandmother was a high-caliber solitaire player. She knew more than a hundred games by heart. She had written out about 200 games in her notebook: some she had learned from her maternal grandmother and some from acquaintances; others she had picked up from old books or by corresponding with her parents and friends. Grandmother had even invented a few games. She was so proud of one particular game, Germaine, that she named it after herself. Unfortunately, I was unable to find her notebook; I assumed she burned it shortly before she died. Most games of solitaire require a mixture of luck and skill. Rare are those that are designed to "come out" either through pure chance or by skill alone. They ar

This is by far the best book of Solitaire that I own. It is well written with step by step instructions that are easy to understand & follow. There are often various scenarios of situations that might occur when playing a game & their solutions which are often accompanied by photographs of various stages of the game in progress. The pages are beautiful & glossy. This book will keep me entertained for years. I like to notate the date the game was first played & give it a rating. It is a book well worth having for the Solitaire lover. While it is preferable to have the computer shuffle & deal, nothing beats a quiet game of Solitaire without undesirable visuals & annoying sound affects. I prefer a nice game with my favorite classical music playing in the background.

Thus book is a treasure. The games are well described and beautifully graphically depicted. What differentiates this from other books is the author's homage to his Grandmother. For me, solitaire is a warm and cozy "cup of tea" pastime. Having Pierre's Grandmother as a guide and companion is a delightful treat.

Thanks! Great book to have.

Mom loves solitaire sits up most nights till 11-12pm playing the one game of solitaire she knows.

Now she is blown away by how many options and how easy it is to learn more games. This book has an amazing # of solitaire games. Could be for you if you're a technical solitaire player.

excellent collection and instructions for anyone looking for new solitaire card games. What seems to be missing is the 2 pack 2 person solitaire games instruction and scoring.

Never knew there were this many options to play the game.

loved it

A Great collection of Solitaire. The whole book divide 179 games (in addition to hundreds of variations) into 3 categories: Elimination/Amalgamation (1-62); Ascending Suit Sequences on the Ace (63-91); Suit Sequence and other runs (92-179). The rules are clearly explained. What's more, each game has an example illustrating the rule and/or a strategy for good-play. With full-color print and 179 different solitaire games, this is both a resourceful book for solitaire lovers and a collection itself.

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