



Messing with Stacklands on macOS: Gatekeeper, Saves, and Performance Notes

Hey,

So, I spent yesterday poking around with **Stacklands (game)** from [OrchardKit] and thought I'd jot down what I found. I wasn't trying to write a blog or anything—just my messy notes and what actually worked. Spoiler: it's one of those “I tried a bunch of things before something finally clicked” situations.

When I first launched the game, macOS refused to open it. Gatekeeper threw up the classic “can't be opened because it's from an unidentified developer” message. At first, I thought the usual right-click → Open trick would do the job. It didn't. I even went into **System Preferences** → **Security & Privacy** and clicked “Open Anyway,” but the dialog kept coming back, which was annoying because I'd seen similar things work with smaller indie apps.

What I realized after digging a bit is that **Stacklands** is packaged in a way that macOS flags not just the developer signature but also the internal app binary. So even if the outer app bundle is “approved,” the inner executable triggers Gatekeeper. That's when I went down the rabbit hole of

```
spctl
```

and terminal commands. Here's what I did:

1. Open Terminal.
2. Ran

```
xattr -cr /Applications/Stacklands.app
```

– basically stripping extended attributes that macOS sometimes uses to quarantine files.

3. Then

```
sudo spctl --add /Applications/Stacklands.app
```

to whitelist the bundle.

After this, double-clicking actually launched the game. Not instant magic, but at least it didn't spit out the “damaged or can't be opened” nonsense anymore. I found this page useful when I was trying to understand why Gatekeeper was still blocking the launch: [Apple support on app security](#).

Once I got the game open, the next issue hit me: **file access permissions**. Stacklands wants to save deck states, which are essentially tiny databases, and on macOS Ventura it seems apps need explicit permission to access certain directories. At first, I ignored it, thinking it would just save in

```
~/Documents
```

automatically. Nope. The game launched fine, but my decks didn't save, and sometimes the "New Game" button would hang for a few seconds.

The fix here was surprisingly straightforward once I realized what was happening. I went to **System Settings** → **Privacy & Security** → **Files and Folders**, and granted Stacklands access to Documents and Downloads. Once that was done, save/load became instant, and crashes on starting new games disappeared. The key takeaway: even if an app opens, macOS may silently block filesystem access, which can look like a crash or freeze. For reference, Apple has a good note on this here: [developer.apple.com file system access](https://developer.apple.com/file-system-access/). Another small but annoying thing: the game initially ran laggy on my M1 MacBook Air. Frame drops when shuffling cards, especially if multiple AI opponents were doing their thing. I tried quitting background apps, switching from Wi-Fi to ethernet (lol, not needed here), even toggled full-screen vs windowed mode. What really helped was **turning off motion blur and the particle-heavy animations** in the game settings. It's one of those minor toggles that make a huge difference. I think by default the game tries to push fancy effects even on low-resource machines.

Controller support is surprisingly solid, by the way. If you're into using a gamepad, you do need to connect it **before launching** Stacklands. I tried plugging it in mid-game; the app detected it, but some button mappings were weird until a restart. So, lesson learned: plug it in first, then launch. Steam users might find this similar to other indie card games—here's the official Stacklands page for reference if you need controller notes: [Stacklands on Steam](#).

One thing I almost missed: the recent patch (I assume the latest OrchardKit update) changed how decks are stored internally. If you had a previous save from the first release, Stacklands might fail to recognize it. I didn't lose my decks entirely, but I had to manually move them into the new folder path. On macOS, that's usually under

```
~/Library/Application Support/Stacklands/
```

. Pro tip: always backup

```
Application Support
```

before updating, especially for card-heavy games like this.

So, if I were to give myself a "mini checklist" for next time (or for anyone else on macOS dealing with indie games like Stacklands):

- **Check Gatekeeper:** Right-click → Open, or use

xattr

+

spctl

if that fails.

- **Grant file permissions:** Documents, Downloads, Desktop (sometimes). Missing access = silent save failure.
- **Adjust graphics settings:** Motion blur, particles, anything that hits FPS. Even M1 chips can choke a bit on excessive UI effects.
- **Controller prep:** Plug in before launch; reconfigure if detection feels off.
- **Backup saves before updating:** Especially if the patch notes mention “deck changes” or “save format changes.”

Honestly, the whole thing was more educational than frustrating once I stopped trying the one-click “it should just work” approach. macOS has layers of security and little quirks that indie developers can’t always predict, and Stacklands is no exception. I like that OrchardKit keeps the game lightweight but still sneaky enough to trip Gatekeeper—funny in retrospect, but definitely worth noting if you’re on a Mac.

For anyone curious about the official OrchardKit info, you can peek here: [OrchardKit Stacklands page](#). The resource I used helped me map out exactly which permissions and folders mattered, so it saved a lot of guesswork. And of course, the App Store entry is always handy for verifying the latest macOS build: Stacklands (App Store).

Anyway, that’s the gist. I ended up playing a few hours after all the setup, and it’s charming as heck once you get past these little friction points. Nothing game-breaking, just a few Mac-specific quirks that anyone can navigate with the steps above.