

The Small Folk

❧ A Wainscot Roleplaying Game ❧

by Phil Masters

The Open Gaming License, Version 1.0a

The following text is the property of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. and is Copyright 2000 Wizards of the Coast, Inc (“Wizards”). All Rights Reserved.

1. Definitions: (a) “Contributors” means the copyright and/or trademark owners who have contributed Open Game Content; (b) “Derivative Material” means copyrighted material including derivative works and translations (including into other computer languages), potation, modification, correction, addition, extension, upgrade, improvement, compilation, abridgment or other form in which an existing work may be recast, transformed or adapted; (c) “Distribute” means to reproduce, license, rent, lease, sell, broadcast, publicly display, transmit or otherwise distribute; (d) “Open Game Content” means the game mechanic and includes the methods, procedures, processes and routines to the extent such content does not embody the Product Identity and is an enhancement over the prior art and any additional content clearly identified as Open Game Content by the Contributor, and means any work covered by this License, including translations and derivative works under copyright law, but specifically excludes Product Identity. (e) “Product Identity” means product and product line names, logos and identifying marks including trade dress; artifacts; creatures characters; stories, storylines, plots, thematic elements, dialogue, incidents, language, artwork, symbols, designs, depictions, likenesses, formats, poses, concepts, themes and graphic, photographic and other visual or audio representations; names and descriptions of characters, spells, enchantments, personalities, teams, personas, likenesses and special abilities; places, locations, environments, creatures, equipment, magical or supernatural abilities or effects, logos, symbols, or graphic designs; and any other trademark or registered trademark clearly identified as Product identity by the owner of the Product Identity, and which specifically excludes the Open Game Content; (f) “Trademark” means the logos, names, mark, sign, motto, designs that are used by a Contributor to identify itself or its products or the associated products contributed to the Open Game License by the Contributor (g) “Use”, “Used” or “Using” means to use, Distribute, copy, edit, format, modify, translate and otherwise create Derivative Material of Open Game Content. (h) “You” or “Your” means the licensee in terms of this agreement.

2. The License: This License applies to any Open Game Content that contains a notice indicating that the Open Game Content may only be Used under and in terms of this License. You must affix such a notice to any Open Game Content that you Use. No terms may be added to or subtracted from this License except as described by the License itself. No other terms or conditions may be applied to any Open Game Content distributed using this License.

3. Offer and Acceptance: By Using the Open Game Content You indicate Your acceptance of the terms of this License.

4. Grant and Consideration: In consideration for agreeing to use this License, the Contributors grant You a perpetual, worldwide, royalty-free, non-exclusive license with the exact terms of this License to Use, the Open Game Content.

5. Representation of Authority to Contribute: If You are contributing original material as Open Game Content, You represent that Your Contributions are Your original creation and/or You have sufficient rights to grant the rights conveyed by this License.

6. Notice of License Copyright: You must update the COPYRIGHT NOTICE portion of this License to include the exact text of the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any Open Game Content You are copying, modifying or distributing, and You must add the title, the copyright date, and the copyright holder’s name to the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any original Open Game Content you Distribute.

7. Use of Product Identity: You agree not to Use any Product Identity, including as an indication as to compatibility, except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of each element of that Product Identity. You agree not to indicate compatibility or co-adaptability with any Trademark or Registered Trademark in conjunction with a work containing Open Game Content except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of such Trademark or Registered Trademark. The use of any Product Identity in Open Game Content does not constitute a challenge to the ownership of that Product Identity. The owner of any Product Identity used in Open Game Content shall retain all rights, title and interest in and to that Product Identity.

8. Identification: If you distribute Open Game Content You must clearly indicate which portions of the work that you are distributing are Open Game Content.

9. Updating the License: Wizards or its designated Agents may publish updated versions of this License. You may use any authorized version of this License to copy, modify and distribute any Open Game Content originally distributed under any version of this License.

10. Copy of this License: You MUST include a copy of this License with every copy of the Open Game Content You Distribute.

11. Use of Contributor Credits: You may not market or advertise the Open Game Content using the name of any Contributor unless You have written permission from the Contributor to do so.

12. Inability to Comply: If it is impossible for You to comply with any of the terms of this License with respect to some or all of the Open Game Content due to statute, judicial order, or governmental regulation then You may not Use any Open Game Material so affected.

13. Termination: This License will terminate automatically if You fail to comply with all terms herein and fail to cure such breach within 30 days of becoming aware of the breach. All sublicenses shall survive the termination of this License.

14. Reformation: If any provision of this License is held to be unenforceable, such provision shall be reformed only to the extent necessary to make it enforceable.

15. COPYRIGHT NOTICE

Open Game License v 1.0 © 2000, Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

Fudge 10th Anniversary Edition Copyright 2005, Grey Ghost Press, Inc.; Authors Steffan O’Sullivan and Ann Dupuis, with additional material by Jonathan Benn, Peter Bonney, Deird’Re Brooks, Reimer Behrends, Don Bisdorf, Carl Cravens, Shawn Garbett, Steven Hammond, Ed Heil, Bernard Hsiung, J.M. “Thijs” Krijger, Sedge Lewis, Shawn Lockard, Gordon McCormick, Kent Matthewson, Peter Mikelsons, Robb Neumann, Anthony Roberson, Andy Skinner, William Stoddard, Stephan Szabo, John Ughrin, Alex Weldon, Duke York, Dmitri Zagidulin.

FATE (Fantastic Adventures in Tabletop Entertainment) © 2003 by Evil Hat Productions LLC; Authors Robert Donoghue and Fred Hicks.

Spirit of the Century © 2006, Evil Hat Productions LLC. Authors Robert Donoghue, Fred Hicks, and Leonard Balsera.

Free FATE © 2009 R. Grant Erswell.

The Small Folk © 2005, 2013, Author Phil Masters.

In accordance with the Open Game License Section 8 “Identification” the following designate Open Game Content and Product Identity:

PRODUCT IDENTITY

For purposes of this license, the following things are considered to be Product Identity in addition to anything covered in section 1, above: the Prelude; Chapter 1; Chapter 4; and all art, layout, characters, names, examples, “colour” quotations, and dialogue.

OPEN GAME CONTENT

All parts of this document previously declared as Open Game Content elsewhere, the blank character sheet, and all parts which are not Product Identity, are declared Open Game Content.

Contents

The Open Gaming License, Version 1.0a.....	2	Item Value.....	50
Prelude: Best-Laid Plans.....	4	Requisitioning.....	50
Introduction.....	5	Commonplace Equipment.....	51
What It's About.....	5	Weapons.....	53
How This Book is Organised.....	6	3. Playing the Game.....	56
1. A Small World.....	7	Using Skills.....	56
The Basics.....	7	More on Skill Use.....	57
Metaphysics.....	8	Contests.....	59
History (Such As It Is).....	9	Time-Consuming Tasks.....	59
Remaining Hidden.....	10	Fate Points.....	60
Practicalities.....	11	Assessments.....	60
Births, Marriages, and Deaths.....	12	Declarations.....	61
The Clique System.....	14	Knowledge Tests.....	62
The Seelie and Unseelie Courts.....	15	Invoking Aspects.....	63
Small Folk Lairs.....	16	Invoking for Effect.....	63
Urban vs. Rural Life.....	17	Tagging Aspects.....	64
Domesticated Animals.....	17	Tagging for Effect.....	64
Law and Custom.....	17	Free Clique and Magic Aspect Tagging.....	64
Justice.....	18	Introducing Aspects.....	65
2. Small Folk Characters.....	20	Compelling Aspects.....	65
The Concept.....	20	Conflicts.....	66
Cliques and Concepts.....	21	Running Conflicts.....	66
Aspects.....	21	Other Actions.....	71
Clique Aspects.....	22	Stress and Consequences.....	72
Magical Aspects.....	23	Other Sources of Injury.....	76
What is a Good Aspect?.....	24	Magic in Play.....	80
Skills.....	26	The Charms.....	80
Stunts.....	27	Other Creatures.....	91
Finishing Things Off.....	28	Humans.....	91
Stress Tracks.....	28	Animal Life.....	92
Fate Point Refresh Rate.....	29	4. Small Folk Stories.....	97
Equipment.....	29	The World From Ground Level.....	97
The Cliques.....	29	Internal and External Conflicts.....	97
Boggarts.....	30	Magic.....	98
Brownies.....	31	Gatherings.....	99
Goblins.....	32	Small Folk Around the World.....	102
Gremlins.....	33	Scavenging.....	104
Knockers.....	35	Small Folk and Human Technology.....	104
Pixies.....	36	Small Folk on the Move.....	105
Sprites.....	38	Campaign Models.....	107
The Cliqueless.....	39	Defending Hearth and Home.....	107
Skills.....	40	Preserving Secrecy.....	108
Skill Descriptions.....	41	Founding a Community.....	109
Stunt Definitions.....	48	Magical Research.....	111
Economics and Equipment.....	49	Situation Comedy.....	112
		Changing the World.....	114
		Small Folk Character Sheet.....	116

The Small Folk is Copyright © Phil Masters, 2005, 2013, apart from materials encompassed by the Open Gaming License.

Special Thanks: To Roger Bell West, John Dallman, Marcus Rowland, and Sheila Thomas for suggestions, commentary, and proofreading, to David Pulver and James Nicoll for editorial input on the original Guardians of Order version of this material, and to the players at assorted UK conventions on whom I tested this stuff. Art is by Steve Stiv. Photography (p. 5) by Angela Masters.

The scanning, uploading, and distribution of this material via the Internet or via any other means without the permission of the publisher, **except insofar as is permitted by the Open Gaming License**, is illegal and punishable by law. Please purchase only authorised electronic editions, and do not encourage the theft of copyrighted materials. Your support of the author's rights is appreciated.

1. A Small World

The Small Folk live in what seems to be our world, but not as we know it. In effect, they have a world of their own, in the gaps and spaces which we leave around ourselves. They are supernatural creatures, and they are very good at hiding.

The Basics

Small Folk superficially resemble miniature humans, but closer inspection reveals a wider range of physical forms than is general with humanity. Adult Small Folk can be anything from 5-10 cm tall, and their builds vary from stick-thin to impressively hefty. Their bodies are a little denser than those of humans (meaning that they have trouble staying afloat in water, although they can manage with positive effort). Hence, their weights can vary widely; anything from 10 to 50 g is possible for a healthy adult, and 20-30 g is typical. Their rugged physiques and a degree of downright supernatural resilience makes them more robust than might be expected for their size, but they're by no means indestructible. They are quite resistant to poison and disease, but not immune.

They have a range of skin colours, although most are pale tending to downright sallow, and their hair and eyes cover the same range as humanity. Their ears are sometimes but not always noticeably pointed.

They are quick on their feet – far faster than a human scaled down to their size would be – and quite agile, and their senses are sharp, more because they have to learn to be alert much of the time than because of any innate superiority over humans. They are thus well equipped to evade predators, although all their advantages are not always enough. Like most animals of their size, they can often survive long falls – small, light bodies benefit from higher effective wind resistance, slowing them as they drop – although they are slightly too dense to be completely unworried by falling.

Small Folk generally prefer to sleep at night and be up and about during the day, but they are extremely adaptable in this regard, and can adjust to a fully nocturnal lifestyle easily enough if they need to. Some find this makes travel or survival easier, although usually it makes them vulnerable to nocturnal predators with better night vision than themselves.

One odd thing about the Small Folk is that their bodies evaporate into a puff of oily vapour when they die. This is not only immensely frustrating for predators; coupled with the Small Folk's use of illusory and mind-warping magics, it means that humans rarely acquire any substantial evidence of their existence. Their clothes and belongings usually just look like a little bit of rubbish to human eyes, although every now and again this causes trouble or at least confusion; very occasionally, brave Small Folk have to recover stuff that belonged to a now-deceased acquaintance because they don't want humans to find it, or because it is somehow especially valuable.

Diet

Small Folk are omnivores; they seem to enjoy very much the same sort of foods as humans, but this may be a matter of custom inspired by the necessity of stealing much of their food from humanity. They also need much less food than natural animals of their size; their rich omnivore diet and some skill in food preparation may help with this, but mostly it has to be thanks to their supernatural natures. Three good meals a day, each weighing just a couple of grams (maybe more if it's poor-quality food), and a few drops of water, will keep them going quite happily. They also enjoy alcohol at least as much as humans do, scavenging from bar cellars with great enthusiasm.

themselves that it is unwise to make an enemy of a pixie, whatever the provocation, and sometimes good to have a pixie friend.

SPRITES

“Hey, man – time to turn on, y’know? Like, get with the flowers and the beauty an’ all. Is really cool if you just chill.”

Those few humans who knowingly encounter Small Folk have often been exposed to old-fashioned fairy stories, and bring certain expectations along with them. If they are lucky, what they first encounter is a sprite. Still, after a few days of dealing with this clique, a meeting with a businesslike brownie or proletarian knocker can come as a positive relief.

Sprites pride themselves on their proximity to nature – in an idealised form. They love blue skies, rainbows, and most of all, flowers. Some try to wear clothes made from flower petals, but these invariably prove hopelessly fragile, and no protection from the elements, so most sprites resort to scraps of the brightest floral prints and other human fabrics that they can acquire. Their love of beauty always exceeds their taste. They never cut their hair, trying to look wild and free but usually just looking untidy. When they can acquire or improvise eye-glasses of the right size, they like to wear those too.



Sprites are almost all self-proclaimed pacifists, although they sometimes forget, and may display a vicious streak when crossed. Still, they are mostly quite laid back; other Small Folk call them downright lazy, but they can summons a fair amount of energy when they perceive something as really important or cool.

Sprites And Other Cliques

Sprites affect a peaceable, detached, calm attitude to everything, including other cliques. Beneath the surface, they are often quite irritated by everyone else’s failure to agree with them. The sight of a sprite who has lost patience with other Small Folk has been compared to that of a sheep in a berserk rage. Sprites think that they are the only clique that appreciates the true beauties of nature, and often say so; they may, for example, suggest that the nearest that other Small Folk come to appreciating beauty involves unnatural passions for human-made dolls

“Black ain’t a bad colour, but there are so many others that are so much nicer. Boggarts should get out and smell the flowers, man!”

“Brownies are breadheads. They can be a real pain at times. Remember, man, flowers smell nicer than that boosted human perfume stuff.”

“Be cool, man! Nothing’s worth all the grief that goblins generate. Relax and smell the pretty flowers.”

“Gremlins really do take themselves a long way from all the flowers and such. Wake up, man – there’s a whole world out there beyond the toys and gadgets!”

“Digging under their roots the way knockers do makes the flowers die – and the boots and the attitude are just ugly. Look, man, we know that the system has pushed you down there, but all you’ve got to do is push back and you can get out into the daylight.”

“Pixies are pretty cool folks, really. But not pretty enough. How can someone be that close to nature, and not appreciate its finer aspects? Remember the flowers, not just the soil, man!”

3. Playing The Game

Once your Small Folk characters are defined, you come to the interesting part; playing them. The following rules show how the mechanical details discussed in the previous chapter interact with the game universe.

Or, to put it another way, this is where we talk about rolling dice.

Using Skills

Whenever a player wants his character to perform an action where the outcome is in doubt a Test is made pitting a character's Skill against a Difficulty chosen by the Games Master. A Test is resolved as follows:

1. Determine the Skill to use
2. Determine a Difficulty
3. Roll the Dice and Modify the Skill Rating
4. Determine Success or Failure
5. If Successful, determine Effect

Determine the Skill to Use

The GM should determine what Skill is appropriate to the task at hand; Athletics to climb a wall, say, or Rapport to charm someone, or Fists to swing a punch.

Determine a Difficulty

The Games Master should gauge how difficult the task should be. Difficulties, like Skill ratings, are based on the Ladder (p. 26).

Modifiers reflect circumstances that make a task easier or more difficult to perform. Modifiers impact the test by adding to, or subtracting from, the Difficulty. For each complicating factor increase the Difficulty by one step up the Ladder, so for example a Fair (+2) task which is complicated by 3 factors becomes a Superb (+5) task. For each simplifying factor, which makes the task easier, decrease the Difficulty by -1, so for example a Great (+4) task with one simplifying factor becomes Good (+3).

For many tasks, the GM may use another character's Skill rating as the Difficulty Number, e.g. haggling may use the opposing character's Resolve Skill rating as a Difficulty.

*Example: Barrwell is trying to hurl a stone at a thuggish knocker who is assaulting his friend Loopy Alysse. The GM, Daisy, determines that this is (obviously) a Test using the Missiles Skill. She also judges that hitting the thug would **normally** be a Mediocre (+0) task, as he is unaware of Barrwell and thus unable to duck – but the conflict is taking place in a dark room (a human restaurant kitchen) at night, which is one complicating factor, and Barrwell doesn't want to accidentally hit Alysse, which is another. So Daisy determines that this a Fair (+2) Difficulty task. If the thug had been aware of Barrwell, though, the starting Difficulty would have been the thug's Athletics skill, raised by +2 for the complicating factors.*

Roll the Dice and Modify the Skill Rating

Once the Skill and the Difficulty have been determined, the player should roll two six-sided dice (abbreviated as "D6s") to reflect the role of random chance. One die should be designated as the *Plus Die*, the

Cats

While hawks and owls can generally be avoided by sensible Small Folk, domestic cats are perhaps the greatest practical day-to-day threat for members of the race. Fast, clever in a lazy sort of way, and positively encouraged in their vicious hunting by humans (who may well also notice if they turn up strangely dead or maimed), they are a deadly nuisance. A cat can and will wreak terrible carnage among an unarmed, unprepared group of Small Folk, and may do some serious damage even to the toughest bands until driven off or defeated.

Fortunately, most cats are also easily deterred if they decide that a potential victim is too much like hard work. Furthermore, Small Folk can and do systematically harass individual cats into harmlessness. Many a kitten has grown up with a healthy terror of this one type of potential prey.

Cats can move, sprinting or leaping, at speeds comparable to humans over short distances. However, after a few seconds of this sort of effort, any cat will give up and rest for a while.

Game Details: 8 Physical Stress boxes; Alertness Good (+3), Athletics Fair (+2), Endurance Mediocre (+0), Fists Fair (+2), Intimidation Average (+1), Investigation Mediocre (+0), Might Good (+3), Resolve Mediocre (+0), Stealth Good (+3); Armour Value 1; Stress Bonus +2; Aspect, “Feline”.

Dogs

Dogs vary a great deal, of course, and some Small Folk dismiss them as threats, regarding them as too large to get into hiding places, fundamentally rather stupid, and hopelessly softened and weakened by human domestication. This attitude has killed many Small Folk, usually when they encountered a terrier which may have mistaken them for rats but more likely *didn't care*. Even the largest, dopest dog can display snap reflexes to go with its big teeth and keen senses. Dogs can have Aspects ranging from “Big sloppy idiot” to “Silent killer”, and Small Folk often only discover these the hard way.

Hence, sensible Small Folk communities are as systematic about deterring dogs as cats. This is easier with the smaller types, who are more on the Small Folk scale, but those are often the greater threat in practise, being able to get into smaller corners. Anyway, magic and cunning can affect any dog, and most are gratifyingly susceptible to “training.”

Game Details: 6-20 Physical Stress boxes (depending on size); Alertness Fair (+2), Athletics Fair (+2), Endurance Fair (+2), Fists Fair (+2), Intimidation Average (+1), Investigation Average (+1), Might Good to Legendary (+3 to +8) depending on size, Resolve Average (+1), Stealth Average (+1); Armour Value 0 to 3; Stress Bonus +2 to +5. Aspects can vary from “Sloppy-tongued idiot” to “Silent killer”.

Foxes

Foxes are a significant rural predator which has also invaded human towns, giving some Small Folk communities a problem. There are worse threats, but foxes are used to hunting prey on this scale and have keen senses, and their reputation for cunning has some basis in fact. They are also notorious for inflicting excessive carnage if they find themselves in an environment full of prey, such as a hen-house or a Small Folk lair. Fortunately, they can usually be driven off by truly determined resistance; as part-time scavengers, they see little reason to take too much trouble over their hunting. For game purposes, they have similar details to a medium-sized dog; they always have the Aspect “Feral cunning”.

Mustelidae

For Small Folk in rural areas especially, members of the ferret and marten family are almost as great a nightmare as birds of prey. While a bird can swoop down with sudden, devastating effect on careless Small Folk in the open, predators of this type can get into a seemingly secure Small Folk lair, however well buried or hidden – and they possess a frightening combination of speed, sharp teeth, and vicious killer instinct. The smaller weasels are easier foes in a straight fight, but fit through even smaller gaps. Some, especially ferrets, are owned by humans and used in small game hunting or vermin control.