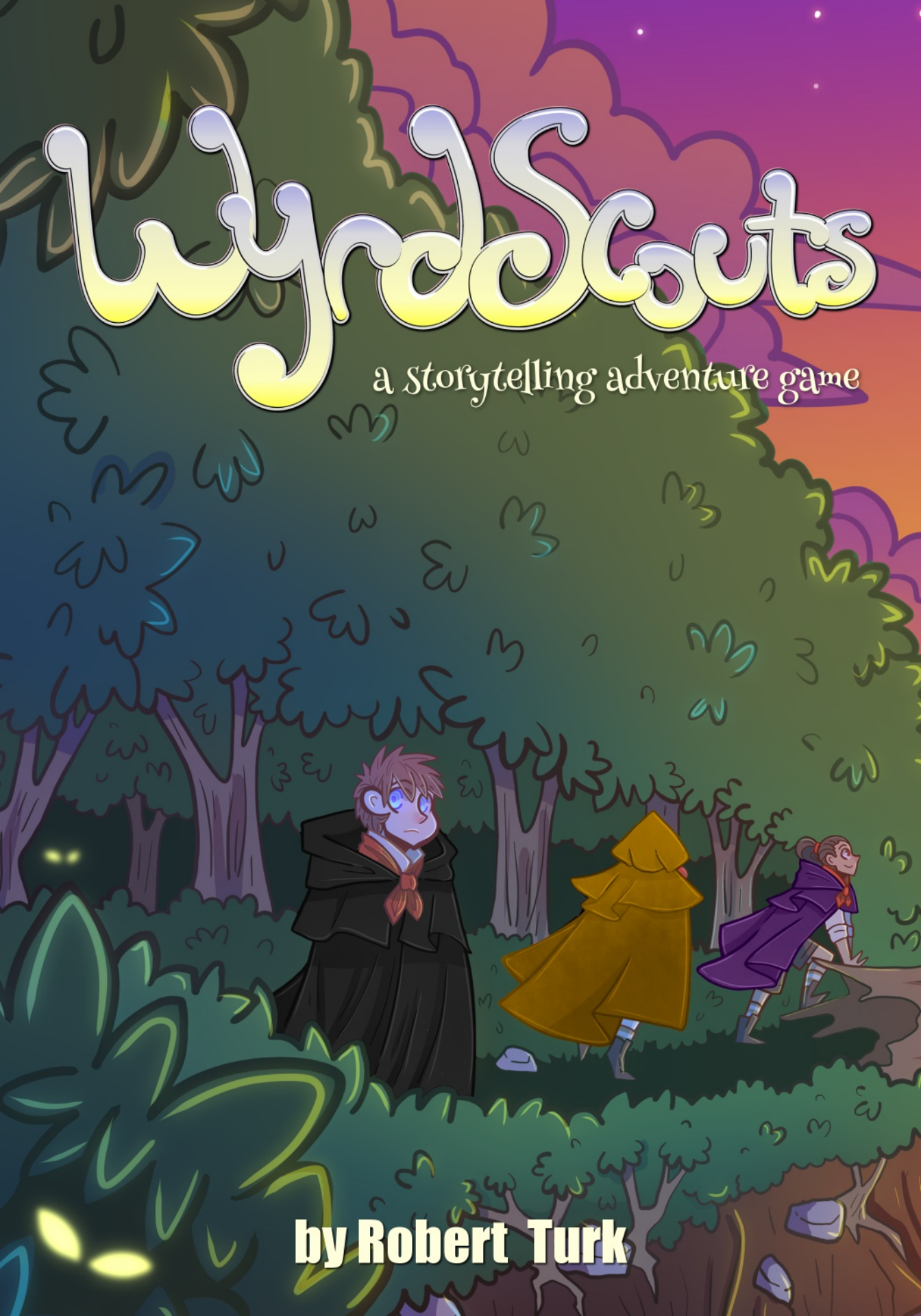


# Wyrd Scouts

a storytelling adventure game



by Robert Turk



# WyrdScouts

a storytelling adventure game



**Written and Designed** by Robert Turk

**Cover Art** by Elizabeth Crouse

**Logo Design:** Sean Baygents

**Interior Art:** Elizabeth Crouse, Heather Hunter, Amanda Kahl, & Melissa Robb

**Character Sheet Design:** Maryanne Rose Papke

**Art Direction & Layout:** Robert Turk

**Editor:** Keith Garrett

**Playtesters:** Robin Chadima, Jessica Cook, Richard Hopkins-Lutz, Heather Hunter, Carl Kashnier, Ian Lemke, Mab Just Mab, Devi Monjot, Matt Monjot, Spring Netto, Dave Olsher, Ari Papke, Owain Papke, Maryanne Rose Papke, Thaddeus Papke, Bart Sullivan, Elowyn Turk, JD Turk, & Dr. Rebecca Turk

**Special Thanks to** Dr. Kay K. Clopton, Kathleen Rowen, and Jeffery Rowen; Amanda Kahl, William Munn, Morgan Nuncio, and Douglas Shute of Victory Condition Gaming; & all of the generous supporters on Kickstarter.

**Copyright © 2020 by Robert Turk**

All rights reserved. This book or any portion thereof may not be reproduced or used in any manner whatsoever without the express written permission of the publisher except for the use of brief quotations in a book review.

*Margin sketches adapted from 18th century public domain manuscripts.*

Print ISBN: 978-0-578-23213-3

Printed in the United States of America

First Printing, 2020

Published by Wicked Clever

[www.wicked-clever.com](http://www.wicked-clever.com)



# AUTHOR'S NOTE

When my kids were younger, we attempted to play various “kid-friendly” role-playing games together. Invariably, we either quickly out-grew them or became bored with the narrow focus and simplistic rules.

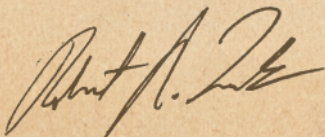
What really bugged me about all these games is that every single one was a variation on “Slay the monster and take its stuff” or it was a fluffy, storytelling exercise with no real rules. I wanted a middle ground, a game that focused on creative problem solving and de-emphasized combat, but still had a sense of adventure. A game where the rules could handle a kid climbing a tree, picking a lock, running from a dragon, outwitting an ogre, or baking a birthday cake. A game where you had something to show for your accomplishments instead of just ticking off experience points.

My daughter joined the Girl Scouts in the 6th grade. When she came home from her first meeting very excited about earning badges, that was when it clicked! I saw a game spun out of these experiences.

The game you hold in your hands is the culmination of these desires. An adventure game where kids explore the forest, solve problems, help others, and earn badges—hopefully without trying to kill anyone! This is a game that adults can play with their kids without overshadowing them, that kids can play with other kids as they grow into creators and story-tellers, and that adults can play with other adults to revisit themes of adventure through the eyes of a child.

But this is not a game that must be light and fluffy. It still has the dark undercurrent of old faerie tales. It still has dice to roll and rules to follow. It still has risks, conflict, and danger. And characters can get hurt. The theme is built to be scalable, so parents can ensure that it works for their own kids' experience, while a group of adult players can make it as deep and spooky as they desire.

Ultimately, this game is whatever you choose to make of it. Hopefully, it will be as much of a joy for your family to play together, as it was for mine to make. Thanks for giving it a go!



**Robert A. Turk**  
(father, author, & designer)



# TABLE OF CONTENTS



<b>An Introduction</b>	<b>5</b>
What is This Book About	6
What is a Role-playing Game?	7
 <b>Part 1: The Wyrdwood</b>	 <b>11</b>
Finding & Entering the Wood	12
Time & Travel in the Wood	13
Regions of the Wyrdwood	16
People of the Wyrdwood	21
Beasts of the Wyrdwood	36
 <b>Part 2: Your Characters</b>	 <b>41</b>
Ancestry	42
The Four Virtues	50
Badges	52
Finishing Touches	61
Quick Steps to Creating a Character	63
 <b>Part 3: The Troop</b>	 <b>65</b>
The Troop Journal	67
The Oath of the WyrdScouts	69
Troop Mascots (aka Animal Familiars)	74
Before the First Adventure	78
 <b>Part 4: The Rules</b>	 <b>81</b>
The One, Big, Dice Rolling Rule!	83
Faerie Stones	86
Getting Hurt	88
Gaining Experience	90
 <b>Part 5: The Story Guide</b>	 <b>93</b>
Building the Story	94
Adventure Chart	100
Running the NPCs	103
Engaging the Players	106
Gaming with Kids	112
Adjudicating the Rules	115
Degrees of Success	121
Ending the Story	127







# AN INTRODUCTION



You have always been a different sort of child. A dreamer, a singer, a storyteller, an explorer. You have lived your whole life near the border of the woods, hiking along its trails and picnicking in its clearings. You have always felt the forest tugging at your heartstrings and you have wondered what secrets she hides deep inside.

You have often hoped that there was something special about you. Something more. And then this past spring a stranger with a mischievous smile and horns on his head walked out of the wood and knocked on your door.

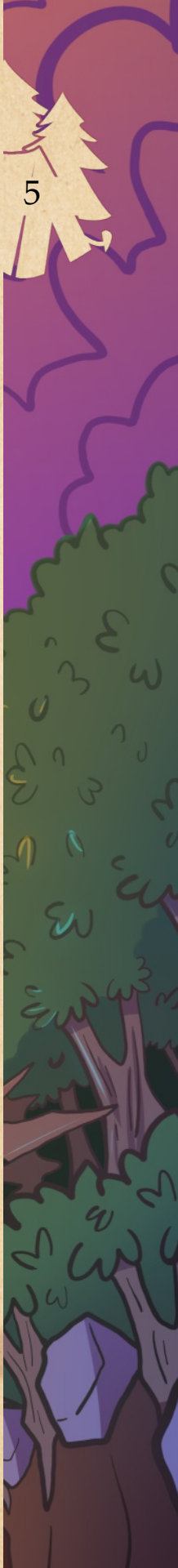
*"Bring them forth," he said. "The children of the Wyrdwood, bring them to me. There are truths to be learned, stories to be told, and their birthright to be claimed."*

That evening you were brought to a bonfire at the edge of the forest, sat down alongside several other strange kids, and told the truth about your heritage.

*"Each of you is descended from both mortals and Fae. Your blood sings with memories of the old magic. You can travel between this world and that of the Wyrd, and thus you have a responsibility to the Wyrdwood and her people."*

*It isn't always easy to walk beneath her twisting boughs and solve the problems you will find. But if you wish to follow me, if you yearn to see the wondrous secrets of the trees, then take my oath tonight and begin your journey as WyrdScouts."*

*"To the Wyrdwood and her people too,  
I shall be faithful, loyal, and true.  
Leaves and branches, roots and bud.  
I go in peace, I shed no blood.  
Brave and Charming, Helpful, Clever,  
My solemn word shall bind forever."*





## WHAT IS THIS BOOK ABOUT?

*Wyrdscouts* is a rules-lite, storytelling adventure game about modern kids who spend their weekends exploring an enchanted woodland realm. It is a game about embracing myth and faerie tale, earning badges, meeting strange new people, and finding non-violent solutions to the challenges you encounter in the woods.

This game uses your imagination, or the theatre of the mind, to give life to a fantastical story, much like the experience of reading a book. But unlike reading a book, you don't play this game alone. The story is created when everyone at the table interacts and adds their own contributions to the tale.

This game is designed to adapt to the skill of the players and the dynamics of the group. Thus, it can become a lifelong option instead of just a “kids game” that is quickly outgrown.

*Wyrdscouts* encourages parents to play along with their elementary and middle-school aged children, supporting their creativity and guiding them into this wonderful, imaginative hobby. More experienced gamers will enjoy playing with their friends, recalling their own childhood, and venturing into the darker aspects of the Wyrdwood.

One person will be responsible for overseeing the plot, interpreting the rules, and guiding the story. We call this person the **Story Guide**.

The other players in the game will experience the story through the eyes of a single character. We call these **player characters**, or just **players** for short.

The first part of the book contains details of the Wyrdwood and being a Wyrdscout as well as the rules for creating characters and playing the game. The second part of the book deals with how to run the game as a Story Guide.

**Nothing in this book is forbidden knowledge or off-limits.** If you or your kids want to read this entire book, cover to cover, please go ahead and do it!



## Why Are Some Words in Bold?

Important words that mean something special in this game will be in **bold text** the first time they are encountered, such as **Story Guide** and **player character** on the preceding page. This is a clue that we will continue to use this definition of the word throughout the book.

A **game term** will be in bold text every time it is encountered, in order to clue you in that it is an important word which relates to the mechanics of the game. Words will also be in bold type if they are components of a dice pool (such as specific **virtues** or **badges** in examples).

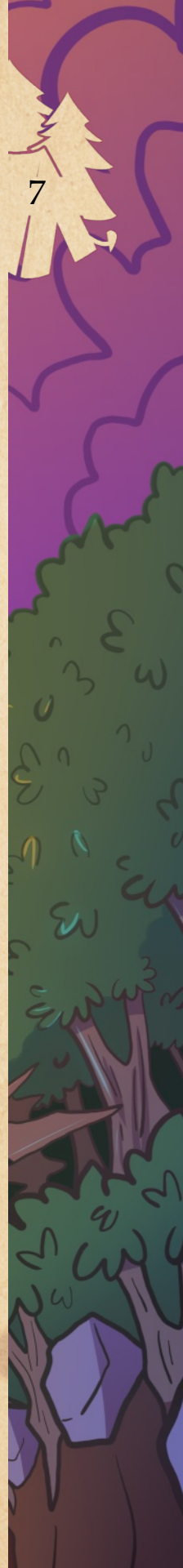
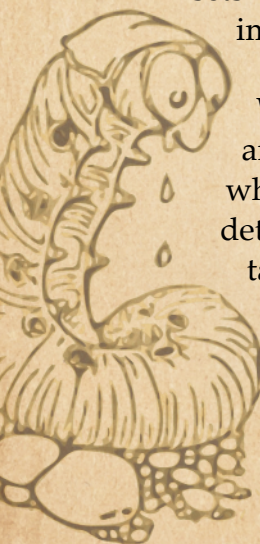
## WHAT IS A ROLE-PLAYING GAME?

Role-playing games, also known as RPGs, are ultimately just games of playing pretend. It is like reading a book or watching a movie, only you get to be a part of what happens. This is something we instinctively do as modern humans. When you have given voices to your toys, dressed up like someone else, or pretended to be a character from your favorite book, movie, or TV show—you have been role-playing.

In a role-playing game, the players tell a story together with most of the players assuming the role of one unique character, like in a movie or a play. However, there are no pre-written lines to read, no script to follow, and usually, no real-world sets or props to interact with. Instead, the stage is your imagination and the action happens inside your mind.

What makes it a game, instead of just friends sitting around telling tales, is that there are rules to help decide what happens next. These rules are usually used to determine if your character succeeds or fails in an important task, and thus the story will often change direction based on the roll of the dice.

In *WyrdScouts*, the Story Guide will describe to the players what is happening and then each player will narrate what their own characters do in response.





Then the Story Guide decides if anyone needs to roll the dice for what they want to do, interprets the results if they do, and ultimately continues on with the narration, taking the players' actions into account.

Thus the flow of the story continually moves back and forth between the players and the Story Guide, occasionally pausing for someone to ask questions or roll the dice.

## IMPORTANT THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

- ✕ Everyone at the table is responsible for adding to the fun. Listen, participate, and let others do cool stuff too!
- ✕ Each player is narrating what they do, not dictating how others should react.
- ✕ The story works best when everyone takes turns.
- ✕ Your character is separate from the real you! They may make choices and face challenges that you would not.





## On Big, Fancy Words

No effort has been made to dumb down the vocabulary in this game. Sometimes we even use words with really challenging pronunciations. (Wyrd sounds like weird, by the way.)

Role-playing games have always been a great way to learn new words and if the context doesn't make the meaning of a word clear, please grab a dictionary and look it up. Your teachers will be amazed! Your test scores will rise! You might even earn a little trophy on your desk for knowing the meaning of the word "charismatic!" (That one actually happened.)

## WHAT DO I NEED TO PLAY?

While the role-playing game experience can be enhanced through the use of maps, miniatures, props, sound effects, and even fancy video screens, none of this is actually needed to play the game. In fact, all that you need are a few friends and the following supplies:

- ✕ A copy of this rulebook
- ✕ Paper and pencils
- ✕ Dice (ten-sided)
- ✕ Some small counters or tokens

Only ten-sided dice are used to play this game. You can get them in many wonderful colors at any gaming store or online.



You will need at least ten dice to play the game, but it helps the flow if everyone has their own set of ten. You will also need about a dozen small tokens to use as faerie stones.

Lastly, every Wyrdscouts player will need paper or a journal to record the details of their character and to keep important notes. You can photocopy the one from the back of the book, or download a printable character sheet from our website: [www.wicked-clever.com](http://www.wicked-clever.com).







# PART 1: THE WYRDWOOD



11



In the Wyrddwood, you can find monsters.

In the Wyrddwood, you can find myth.

In the Wyrddwood, you can find remnants  
Of old stories distilled to their pith.

In the Wyrddwood, it pays to be clever.

In the Wyrddwood, you must keep your wits.

For the Wyrddwood, it goes on forever  
And gets darker the deeper you get.

## WHAT IS THE WYRDDWOOD?

The Wyrddwood is a strange and magical place, an enchanted forest as old as time itself, and then even older still. Everything in it seems filled with grandeur and somehow more real than anything in the outside world.

Trees of all sorts grow within the wood: oak, elm, ash, pine, and even stranger species never seen outside her borders that seem to bend their branches towards passers-by. The canopy towers overhead, craggy, moss-covered boulders sprout like teeth from the ground, and centuries of fallen leaves litter the forest floor.

Trickling streams of clear, cold water lead to timeless lakes surrounded by meadows of wildflowers, and marshy bogs flicker with the dangerous glow of mindless will-o-wisps. Mushrooms are common, some growing as big as the trees, as are a plethora of wild flowers, strange succulent fruits, and rich golden nuts.

Animals, both mythic and mundane, can be found in much of the wood, and while mosquitos are strangely absent, there are giant spiders creeping through the Darkenwood, kite-sized butterflies sailing in the Summerlands, and colossal snails, beetles, and worms squirming away underground.



The Wyrdwood is also home to many different Fae people, collectively called the **Wyrd Folk**, each with their own customs, needs, and problems.

The trooping Aelfar serve as lords and ladies of the entire realm, bright and noble as they ride through the mist on their stags and doe. And horned Satyrs carry their messages between this world and the others.

Pixies tend to the flowing meadows, Naiads watch over the lakes and streams, and the Gruv toil away at their secret missions underground. The Dryads of the Oak King's court fight a never-ending struggle with the shaggy, sun-averse Trolls, and there are whispers of a spider queen who lives deep in the dark and weaves nightmares for the world.

Ogres, twelve feet tall but as dumb as rocks, are a common obstacle, and occasionally there are rumors of a witch gone bad. Mythical beasts such as unicorns, griffins, and silver boars are not unheard of in the wood, though finding such a creature might be a quest in and of itself.

**Most of the denizens of the wood are not out to harm the Scouts, however.** They simply have their own motivations and challenges, which the Scouts may be able to help with.

This is not to say the wood is a safe place, as it can be dangerous to the unwary, but it is a fertile wonderland to explore and not an untamed wilderness meant for conquering.

## FINDING & ENTERING THE WOOD

Infinite and ever-changing, the Wyrdwood is accessible via any wooded area of any realm, though usually not by accident. Well-tended paths do not lead to the Wyrdwood, but an overgrown trail up the hillside, a cave behind the waterfall, or even a slide down the ravine might land you beneath her mystic boughs.

**Most travelers have to make a conscious, deliberate effort to enter the Wyrdwood;** you must step off the normal path, even if you don't know where it will take you.



The boundary itself manifests as a strange feeling, like butterflies in the stomach and goosebumps on the skin. The trees seem to whisper back and forth to each other, and the light filtering through from above is hazy and dreamlike.

13

The age and inherent magic of the Wyrddwood are easily apparent. Overall it fills outsiders with a warm and heady glow, the excitement of a new place all wrapped up together with a calming sense of relief and belonging.

Most troops will enter and exit the woods from the same spot each time and often come up with some sort of ritual they perform before entering. This might be touching rocks in a particular pattern, reciting a poem or phrase, or spinning widdershins (*counter-clockwise*) while hopping on one foot and then spitting over your left shoulder.

It is, however, completely possible to enter the woods from anywhere (though you won't arrive in your usual location) and there are many other exits from the woods that will deposit travelers in distant or unfamiliar real-world places.

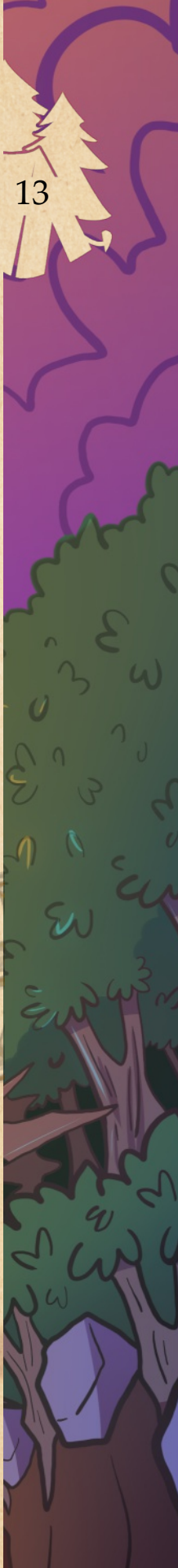
## TIME & TRAVEL IN THE WOOD

The passage of time and flow of the seasons follow strange rules in the Wyrddwood, often without any rhyme or reason. An entire day may pass inside the wood while only a few hours transpire back home, or a whole week might slide by outside in the span of a few hours within.

However, the actual cycle of night and day does tend to follow a familiar pattern inside most of the wood with darkness and light alternating equally.

The moon also progresses through her phases with a regular and reliable pattern, though greatly sped up in comparison to the mortal realms. A complete cycle from the full moon to the new moon and back again takes only eight days.

The moon is full for a night, then waning for three, dark for a night, waxing toward full for three more, and then back to full on the ninth night.





The seasons, however, change based more on your location than on the real-world time of year. Heading southward will take you toward Summer, and heading to the north will bring you toward Winter.

Holidays from the mortal realm often have no corollary in the Wyrddwood, though some may naturally fall at times when the paths to and from the Wyrddwood are easier to find.

Most travel in the woods is done by hiking, at least as far as the WyrddScout are concerned, and it may take several days of walking to reach any particular destination. However, there are often shortcuts for those desperate enough to brave them.

### MUSHROOM RINGS

Mushroom rings are magical portals which physically transport those who step inside to another part of the forest entirely.

It usually takes a moment or two after entering a ring to fade from one place and reappear in another, but especially powerful rings might activate in the blink of an eye. Older, less-used rings might require a simple song of waking before they will work, or they might be so excited to be of use again that they suddenly sputter to life in a puff of spores and dust.

The danger with mushroom rings is that they are almost always a one-way mode of transportation. There is rarely any sign of where they lead, and many tend to blend in with the rest of the forest floor. Unwary Scouts might suddenly find themselves in a strange new part of the woods with no way to get back, never even realizing that they lingered too long in the middle of a more subtle ring.





## STANDING STONES

Standing stones are large rocks that serve as a doorway to hidden groves, hollows, or other private places in the Woods. Unlike mushroom rings, they can be crossed in both directions but only on specific dates, at certain times, or with the right key.

Keys to a standing stone might take the form of a password or phrase (short poems are common), a physical object (such as an actual key, a handful of red berries, or three drops of your own blood), or a feature unique to the opener (being the seventh son, or having only one eye).

Once a standing stone has been activated, the rock itself becomes the doorway. Usually these doors open into magical halls, filled with feasting and dancing, or sacred tombs of famous kings and warriors. Sometimes they are simply a safe place to rest and get a good night's sleep. On the rare occasion they are the gateway to an ancient prison, locking away something horrible inside.

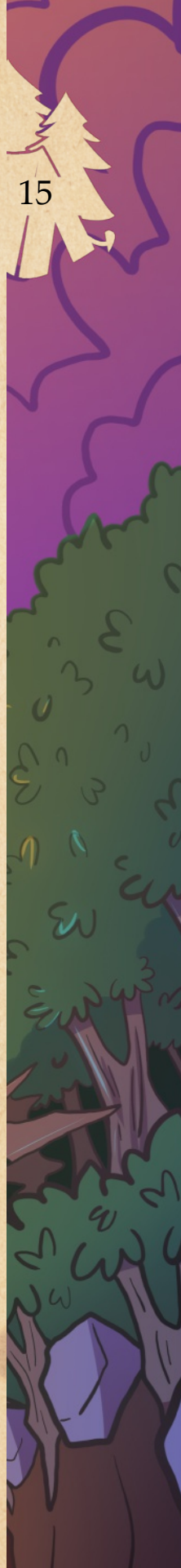
## STRAY SODS

Stray sods are clumps of enchanted grass or other vegetation that whisks away those who stand upon them. This is not teleportation but is more like being on a moving sidewalk or run-away scooter.

The sod actually moves through the forest, often in an erratic manner and at a break-neck speed. Jumping off a sod is a dangerous and difficult feat, as the grass often entangles its passengers' feet to ensure they don't fall off.

The main benefit to travelling on a stray sod is that the location does not have to be a fixed point. An Aelfar lady could enchant the sod to bring riders to her, no matter where she travels, or a Satyr could ride one to whomever needs his message. The downside is that the fastest sods are also the smallest, usually only allowing for a single passenger.

Larger sods are possible, but they tend to move much slower. Finding a stag, giant snail, or even a large tortoise would probably be a more effective means of group travel.





## REGIONS OF THE WYRDWOOD

The Wyrddwood has several distinct areas that are accessible if you know the general rules for reaching them, but it is important to remember that “place” depends more on story and intent than actual geographical location. Though the Woods are broken up into defined regions to make it easier for us to comprehend, many of these places overlap, connect, and flow around each other in strange and twisting ways.

### BORDERLANDS

The Borderlands are the areas of the Wyrddwood that transition to other realms, including the mortal one, by means of various pathways. This area of the woods tends to blend and bleed different realities together, as the two conjoined realms shift like the tides and exert their pull over each other. This is the first area of the Wood that the Scouts will encounter and the one that seems most like the “normal” world to them.

In other areas, the Borderlands may not feel normal at all, as the Wyrddwood blends with the cloudy “Land of the Giants,” the backward “Mirror World,” or countless other magical realms. Hobgoblins and Satyrs are the most common folk found in the Borderlands, though errant Aelfar, lonely Giants, and abnormally adventurous Pixies might be found here as well.

### DINGLEDELL

The Dingledelell is the technical term for the common area of the Wyrddwood that follows the most predictable patterns, appearing as a general forest woven through with streams, trails, cliffs, and meadows. It is populated by all manner of animals, both magical and mundane, and contains members of all the different Fae.

This is where most of the Scouts’ adventures will take place, at least at first, as it is generally considered the safest part of the Wyrddwood. The term Dingledelell itself is very rarely used in modern times, mostly because of the snickers, laughter, and rude jokes it invariably evokes. As this region feels mostly like the default magical forest from myth and story, folks have simply come to refer to this general area as the woods.







## OAKENHALL

Oakenhall, the seat of the Oak King's domain, is accessible only by leaving an offering of three acorns and a token of silver at the entrance of an old overgrown path and then walking down that path with your eyes closed.

Once a land of spring, the Oakenhall is now locked in perpetual Autumn, dimly lit by the setting sun of twilight, the shadows grown long as the trees whisper sorrowful songs. This is the realm of the Drus (*droo*), the male tree spirits bound to the wood as a whole instead of just a single tree like the Dryads. Here the Drus serve as soldiers and servants to their slumbering oaken king.

Even more so than other parts of the Wyrdwood, the Oakenhall holds a dreamy sort of quality. The trees are shrouded by rolling foggy mists, and there is a strange silence that permeates the air. It is as if the very land is waiting, fading as its regent slumbers.

The closer you get to the center of the region the more tightly the trees come together, as if seeking to block your progress to their lord. In the very center of the realm, beneath a canopy of spider webs, the Oak King sleeps upon an ornate wooden throne. His courtiers have long since abandoned the thought of waking him up, and now they simply leave him to his nightmares.

## SUMMERLANDS

If you head southward, consistently and with purpose, you will find yourself entering the Summerlands, the domain of the Aelfar.

Here there is plenty of room to move among the trees, deer are bountiful, and the trooping Aelfar hunt for sport with blaring horn and braying hound. Meadows and lakes, often tended by Pixies and Naiads respectively, are more plentiful here than in the Dingledell, as are craggy cliff sides, ancient standing stones, and tumbling waterfalls.

No permanent buildings exist within the Summerlands, as the Aelfar are a nomadic sort and simply set up camp in whatever glen or glade seems appropriate for their purposes.




These camps will often be given grand and important-sounding names, such as Evergrace, Knighthall, and Daringdown. It is here that the Aelfar hold formal balls, great feasts, and stoic courts as they sit in judgment and settle the grievances of their followers.

The days in the Summerlands are warm, but not sweltering, with plenty of shade to be found at the base of a sleepy willow tree. Nights in the Summerlands are awash in moonlight and clear starlit skies, beneath which dance a stately ballet of flickering fireflies. It rarely rains in the Summerlands, and then only as a reflection of the wood's sadness at the passing of someone of great importance.







## UNDERCROFT

The Undercroft is the land beneath the Wyrddwood, a series of caves, grottos, tunnels, and holes that teem with secrets and life that may never see the sun.

Essentially, any passageway into the ground—be that a cave, a well, a jagged crack, or even a hollow in the roots of a tree—will gain you entry to Undercroft, the home of the Gruv. Their halls are lit by glowing insects and luminescent moss, their lakes are dark and still, and their gardens and larders are filled with mushrooms. Carts pulled by giant slugs and beetles amble down the tunnel ways, and strange songs of chanting and drums echo up from forgotten tombs.

It is not uncommon to find Trolls skulking in the Undercroft as well, safe from the harsh sun of the world above. Lost and broken things tend to eventually make their way into the world below, as do ancient secrets and slumbering magics. If you go deep enough underground there are plenty of treasures to be found, but there are also terrible dangers lurking patiently in the dark.

## WINTERWEALD

Heading north takes you into the Winterweald (*wee-ld*), the evergreen forest of snow-capped pines and icy trails.

This is a dangerous place for Scouts to explore, though more from the harsh conditions than any overt malice from its inhabitants. The sky is dark, the air is cold, and the howls of hungry wolves ride side by side with the bitter wind. Shaggy Trolls hunt beneath the trees, sleepy bears snuffle for food, and the shades of lost travelers huddle around sputtering fires for warmth.

Cottages abound, as a refuge from the snow and a place to get warm. But too often these are nothing more than traps laid by witchy sorts. The lakes and streams are all frozen over, making what few Naiads that live here bitter and cruel.

Deep within the Winterweald, a jagged tower of ice rises above the trees. It is here, among her subjects, that the wicked Häxentrol holds court, far from the reach of her enemies, the noble Aelfar.

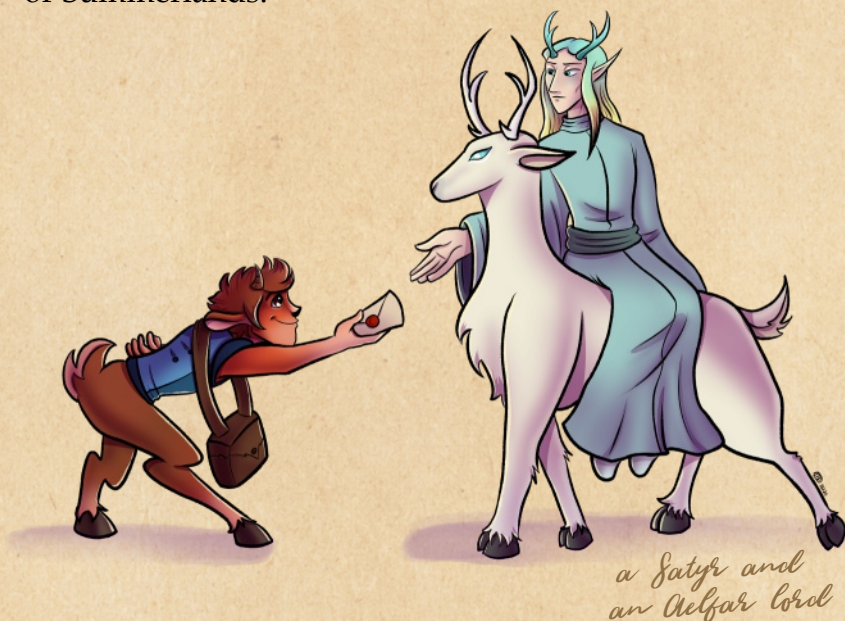


# PEOPLE OF THE WYRDWOOD

## THE TROOPING COURT

The Trooping Court is comprised of those Fae who tend to band together and travel from place to place in the company of the Aelfar. They are known for their long parades and impromptu parties and they reside mostly in the Dingledell or Summerlands.

21



*a Satyr and  
an Aelfar Lord*

## AELFAR

The Aelfar are the self-proclaimed noblest of Wyrd Folk and masters of the Trooping Court. Standing a head shorter than a full-grown human, Aelfar are invariably beautiful with bright smiles and pointed ears. Many, but not all, sprout antlers from their brow, both women and men, as a sign of rank and nobility. They move with the languid, easy grace of a deer, and can climb the trees with a nimbleness that rivals the squirrels.

Aelfar tend to dress in forest finery, though this may be in garments sewn of leaves and grasses or even elegant gowns of moonbeams and spider silk. It is nearly impossible for a mortal to look upon an Aelfar without feeling awe and reverence, and quite easy for the unwary to find themselves falling completely in love. It is well known that eating any food offered by an Aelfar will make you their servant for a year and a day, though dining as equals (by providing half of the meal) is generally okay.



The Aelfar hold closely to rules and courtly traditions, though these may seem strange and cryptic to outsiders. Though they do not build any castles and they roam from place to place, chief among them is a single Queen who sets down the laws and dispenses justice for all of the Fae.

Under the Queen are various lords and ladies, each taking a nebulous rank such as Duchess of Leafitter, Earl of Mossgrove, the Viscount of Goldenrod, and Baroness of Briars. Their favor, and thus their power in the Wood, ebbs and flows at the Queen's whim, and they are always attempting to improve their station.

Beneath the lords and ladies come the knights. These are the soldiers of the Aelfar, often clad in silver armor and carrying thin silver knives and supple hunting bows.

The lowliest of the Aelfar, though they all consider themselves a step above the other Fae, are the squires. Not quite servants, as such duties are handled by the Hobs, these are the common folk of the Court, the musicians, artisans, tailors, and poets.

Aelfar magic is called Glamoury, and it deals with enchantment, illusion, binding oaths, and the manipulation of natural forces. All Aelfar are capable of simple glamours to enhance the appearance of things that they touch, including their own bodies and clothing.

Aelfar above the rank of knight are able to enchant mortals and bend them to their will, often leaving them with only hazy, dreamlike memories of their experiences. The most powerful of Aelfar are capable of becoming elemental sorcerers, harnessing the forces of nature under their domain into service as well.

All Aelfar magic is achieved through a force of will and is only broken once its master has died or releases their spell. There are, however, simple remedies against faerie enchantment, such as salt, four-leaf clovers, rowan berries, and wearing one's clothing inside out.





## HOBGOBLINS

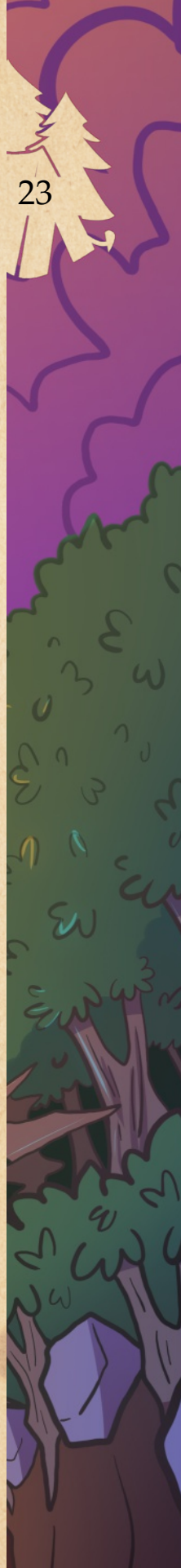
Hobgoblins are the hard-working household Fae that traditionally take up residence in the human farms that stray too close to the edge of the Wyrdwood. Common in the Borderlands and among the Aelfar courts, Hobgoblins are generally shorter and plumper than other Fae. They don't have pointed ears, but often have exaggerated noses (either quite long or extra bulbous) and nimble fingers.

Hobgoblins are known for completing astonishing feats of labor or craftwork in a single night and are responsible for many of the faerie tales about brave tailors or straw being spun into gold. In the Wyrdwood, they might be found as wandering tinkers and solitary craftsmen, or they might belong to the multitude of servants that wait on the Aelfar nobles in the Trooping Court.

Hobgoblins are generally down-to-earth homebodies, are fond of good food and drink, and tend to prefer comfort over ostentatious displays of finery. Though most are easygoing and pleasant, their stature and station should not be mistaken for an indication of simpleness.

Hobgoblins can be just as clever as any other Fae and have a fondness for reading and learning. They also hold grudges, and once crossed even the jolliest among them can become stubborn and spiteful.

Hobgoblin magic deals primarily with the hearth and home. They can turn invisible within their domicile or while working in another; are completely immune to fire, ice, heat, and cold; and are capable of doing simple physical labors in an impressive amount of time. They are also able to influence the conditions and comfort within their homestead, making it brighter or darker, warmer or colder, bursting pipes to cause a leak or downpour, making surfaces slick or sticky, and filling the air with smoke or foul scents.





## SATYRS

Satyrs are the goat-legged messengers of the Wyrddwood. Human-looking from the waist up, they possess cloven feet and furry legs with horns sprouting from their brows. In younger Satyrs the horns might be nothing more than tiny nubs, but as they age the horns will grow into massive, goatish spirals.

Though Satyrs tend to be mild-mannered and soft-spoken in the wild, they are without a doubt the most athletic and adventurous of all the Fae. They also like to party when among their own kind. In court, their playful tendencies can seem simple and foolish compared to the lofty manners of the noble Aelfar, but they are valued for their swift hooves and loyal service. They are fond of music and sport, though they become brash and quick of temper when spurned or insulted.

Satyr magic is a simple matter of protection and passage. While carrying a message they are considered on a sacred duty and able to open any passage barred to them. This also allows them to slip between the worlds with ease, and gives them the fortitude to keep going despite harsh or painful conditions. It is not an easy feat to stop a Satyr from their deliveries.

## THE CLANS

These are the Fae that tend to band together with others of their own kind, shunning the ways of the Trooping Court and instead forming societies scattered throughout the Wyrddwood. In ages past, they were often referred to as the "Fine Folk," from the Irish word for family. Though Trolls and Gruv are certainly not "fine" by the more common use of the word, those wishing to curry their favor may still use such terms as a mark of respect.

## GRUV

Gruv (*gr-uhv*) are the mushroom-loving scavengers that live underground. They are short and stocky, with large heads, big ears, enormous black eyes, spindly fingers and toes, and skin that is either strikingly pale, bruised and purplish, or glossy black.



Gruv tend to the soil, tunnels, and root caves of the forest floor, dealing with decaying things, collecting shiny rocks, and hoarding abandoned trinkets. Their colonies consist of tiered holes bored into the cavern walls, like underground skyscrapers, with the homes stacked one atop the other and connected by a precarious network of ladders and walkways.

The most important members of the clan live closest to the bottom with the less important members relegated to the upper levels, closest to the sun. They light their homes with luminescent moss, smoky fires, and jars of glowing insects.

Manners are of the utmost importance to Gruv, as they strive to be treated as equals to the Aelfar above; however, what they find acceptable or rude often follows a confusing local code. They collect broken things from the world above, treating such artifacts as priceless treasures. They are also known to trick mortals into coming down into their underground lairs and laboring there as servants through the night.

Gruv are mostly carrion creatures, subsisting on a diet of mushrooms, rotten things, and homemade cheese. They have also domesticated giant snails, slugs, and beetles as beasts of burden.

Heavy labor is done by their mudlarks, golem-like creations made of mud, a little bit of magic, and a single living insect buried within.

*a Gruv collecting mushrooms*





Gruv have no innate magic, apart from the immortality of the Fae, though many are quite skilled at crafting potions, poisons, and other alchemies, which then powers their mudlarks and even stranger creations.

## PIXIES

Pixies are a single species with two different forms. They appear both as the small sprites that flit here and there tending to the flowers, fruits, and seeds of the Wyrddwood, as well as the diminutive brownies that are bound to the ground.

Like an insect, the brownie is akin to a larval form which toils away on the forest floor, gathering wisdom and life experience before growing wings and taking to the sky. Some speculate that a cocoon might be involved in the transformation, but Pixies are loath to talk about such things, even with each other.

Brownies dress in earthen tones to blend in with their surroundings and often sport caps made of acorn tops. The sprites are more prone to light and airy clothing in a multitude of colors.



Pixies are generally peace-loving folk, with tiny squeaky voices and an appreciation for good pranks. They are one of the most common Fae in the Wyrddwood, though they are rarely found outside the company of their tight-knit clans.

Pixie clans, which consist of both airborne and earthbound folk, usually take up residence in a single glade or meadow, or around the base and in the branches of a large, ancient tree.



Their individual homes may be nestled in the roots like a comfortable mouse hole or high up in a hollow knot; they might live in swinging nests woven of twigs and leaves, or even in a village of tiny stone cottages meandering through the wildflowers. The life of the tribe revolves around the health of their domain, and their days are spent tending to their chosen area with tiny tools and a sense of pride in their work.

Pixies are also the most democratic of all the Wyrd Folk, with each member of the tribe having an equal voice and vote in all matters that concern the group as a whole. They are fiercely loyal to their own particular clans, however, and will get competitive when amongst the other tribes.

Various tribes gather together at regular festivals to exchange news and goods and discuss weighty matters of the woods. At these gatherings, there is usually an elected representative to speak for each of the various tribes, while the rest focus on feasting, dancing, and friendly sport.

Pixies have little innate magic beyond their faerie immortality. Their only special ability is a sort of magical camouflage that helps them hide in their natural surroundings, blending in with the flowers, leaves, mushrooms, or even simple patterns of light and shadow. If a Pixie doesn't want to be seen, then they won't be.

## TROLLS

Trolls are large, shaggy, and primitive. Standing at least half as tall again as any full-grown humans, they have enormous noses, huge floppy ears, and oversized hands and feet. On the whole, male Trolls are dumber and meaner than most other Wyrdfolk, but female Trolls can be quite clever and cruel.

Older, more powerful females also have the ability to change their appearance and have been known to take the form of beautiful human women. All Trolls have poor eyesight but an incredible sense of smell and are thus able to track their prey easily through the Wyrdwood.



Troll society is matriarchal. A powerful witch queen, known as the Häxentrol, rules over all the Trollish clans from her palace of ice in the Winterweald. The oldest and wisest woman from each village serves as the leader of her clan, with other Troll women being in charge of their individual homes.

Out in the woods, however, bands of roving males are led by the biggest and toughest Troll, who bullies the rest of his gang into following orders.

Trolls are comfortable in the cold and congregate mostly in the Winterweald, though hunting gangs can frequently be found in the Borderlands, Dingledell, and Undercroft. Trolls are barred from the Oakenhall and the Summerlands, due to past altercations with the Aelfar and a full-on war with the Oak King.

Trolls originally came from the Undercroft and still prefer to sleep under the dirt, forming villages of elaborate earthen mounds. This is in part due to the fact that all Trolls turn to stone when touched by sunlight, though they will revert to their fleshy form in the shade or in shadow.

Trolls are also nocturnal. While out hunting in the greater Wyrddwood they may sleep through the day in a cave or simply crash around their fire and trust in their stone bodies to keep them safe. Trolls do not like living alone, and it is only the outcast and desperate among them who will be found taking up residence beneath a bridge.

Trolls on the whole have no magical ability, beyond their faerie immortality and an ability to regenerate wounds. While their sense of smell may seem magical at times, it is a perfectly natural development and simply part of their physiology.

Older and wiser Troll matrons often learn the magical arts, and some have become even more accomplished sorcerers than the Aelfar. Troll sorcery, while still drawing on the natural elements, tends to lean more toward spells of darkness, foul weather, and ice.





*Trolls making Scout Soup?*

## THE SOLITARIES

These Fae live alone, either through choice or by nature, and care little for the hierarchies and dictates of the Trooping Court or other groups. Instead, they focus on their own needs and well-being, though individuals vary as much in personality and motivation as humans do.

## DRYADS

Dryads are the peaceful, all-female spirits of the trees. They are reclusive and shy and most come across as innocent or naive, though they are also steadfast protectors of special heart-trees and the surrounding groves.

Each Dryad resides within and holds a special affinity for a single living tree, usually an ancient tree of some import in the Wyrddwood. They are also able to physically meld with their chosen tree in order to rest or hide. If a Dryad's chosen tree is damaged, the Dryad will suffer as well, and could even die. Dryads from damaged or sick trees tend to be dark, desperate, and bitter.

Dryads tend to look like the trees that they bond with. They might have long supple limbs, clothing made of leaves, hair like moss or willow boughs, and patterns in their skin akin to bark or heartwood.



Dryads are never found very far from their grove, as they will grow considerably weaker as they travel away from their tree. They tend to have soft voices, like the wind through the leaves, and though they are curious about the greater Wyrdwood and the outside world, their first concern is always for their tree.

The Dryads as a whole serve only themselves and their slumbering Oak King, who they revere as a sort of grandfather-like figure. In the great wars between the Trolls and the Trees, long since forced into an uneasy ceasefire by the Aelfar, he protected the Dryads alongside his army of Drus.

Now the Drus have dwindled and the Oak King is trapped slumbering in his hall, lulled to sleep and being fed on nightmares by the Spider-Queen. Though they weep at his troubles, the Dryads are unable to directly aid their king in his time of need, due to the very nature of their existence that requires them to remain near their own trees.

All Dryads have the magical power of healing. They can coax plants to grow, drive disease from the sick and injured, and grant the blessing of health and fertility. However, if a Dryad's tree is damaged, their connection to the Wyrdwood is also impacted, and thus their magic will suffer as well.

There are rumors of dark Dryads, those whose trees have died or become diseased, who use their magic to spread pain and corruption instead of healing. Thankfully, such Wyrd Folk are very rare and usually dealt with by the Drus before becoming a threat to the Wyrdwood.





## GIANTS

Peering over the tops of the tallest trees, Giants are the ancient caretakers of the Wyrddwood. They look the most human of all the Fae, but are a hundred times bigger.

31

Giants focus on the big picture of the wood which often causes them to overlook the little things, like whose house they just knocked over or whose garden they just squashed. Thankfully, Giants in the Wyrddwood are very rarely encountered.

Ages ago, when the Aelfar rose to power, they forced the Giants to swear an oath preventing them from using their strength to harm any sentient person. Many refused the oath and ultimately left the woods, climbing up the mountains and into the sky.

The few who remain keep mostly to themselves in secluded places of the wood and concern themselves with their own deep thoughts. An angry Giant, however, is a horrible thing to behold as they are capable of terrible destruction, simply by virtue of their enormous size.

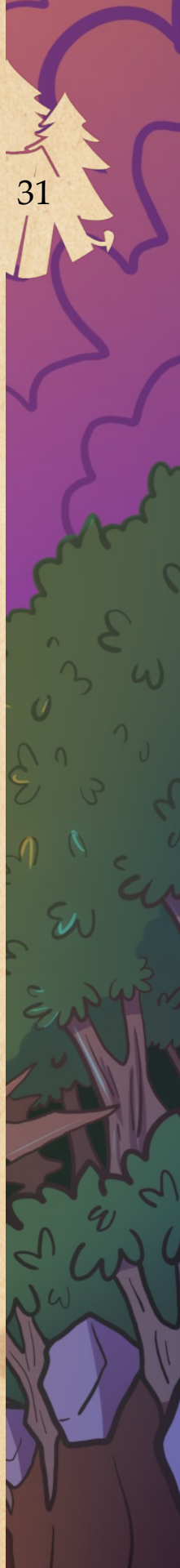
If anything truly threatened the Wyrddwood as a whole, it is believed that the Giants would return to protect their original homes. But this could just be a myth the Aelfar tell so that nobody asks too many questions about where they went in the first place.

Giants have no innate magic, apart from their Fae immortality. They don't really need magic though. In their view, most any problem can be solved by stepping on it.

## NAIADS

Naiads are the faeries that inhabit and protect the streams, rivers, and natural springs of the forest. They usually have long wavy hair, skin that shimmers like scales in the water, webbed fingers and toes, and incredible singing voices.

Male Naiads are ugly by human standards, though seldom seen, and prefer to remain completely under the water in murky lakes and marshes.







*a Wryad and a Naiad*

Naiad women are often considered beautiful by any standard. There are many faerie tales about Naiad brides and the curses that befall the human men who inevitably betray them.

In the Wyrdwood, Naiads tend to live alone or in small sisterly covens at the bottom of a pond, behind a waterfall, or tucked into a creekside cove. They are not, however, confined to the water and do not take kindly to trespassers. Many a traveler has been awoken by a vengeful Naiad in their camp for not leaving an offering before drinking from her spring or politely asking permission to cross her stream.

Naiads love music, shiny trinkets, and shells from far off shores. They often have a collection of “treasures” in their underwater lairs, and deal more favorably with musicians, trading away gifts and magic baubles for a well-played song.

Naiads are masters of magical enchantment, capable of mesmerizing mortals with their beautiful songs. There is only one option with their enchantment though, a plucking of the heartstrings that makes their target fall hopelessly in love. This usually leads to a mortal diving beneath their waters and drowning in the Naiad’s arms. Thankfully, most Naiads are careful about using this ability.



## OGRES

Ogres are smaller than Giants, bigger than Trolls, and universally as dumb as a box of rocks. They stand about fifteen feet tall and are brutish, primitive, and dangerous, willing to eat practically anything that crosses their path.

They tend to live alone in cliffside caves or dilapidated huts. They have no art or culture to speak of and possess only a cruel and childish sense of humor. They are thankfully slow and easily confused, but incredibly stubborn and hard to sway from their course.

Ogres possess no magic beyond their natural faerie immortality. They wouldn't know what to do with magic even if they did have it. They are, however, quite easily impressed by displays of power, or cleverly disguised "magic" tricks.

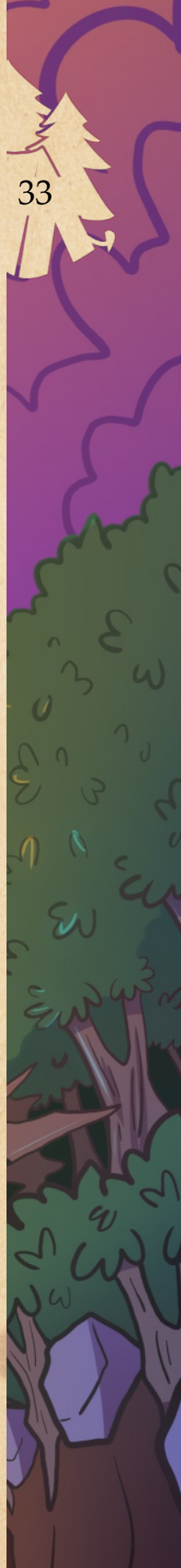
Still, as Wyrd Folk Ogres are protected by the oath against bloodshed (*The Oath of the WyrdScouts*, pg 69). This makes them a particularly troublesome foe as they are prone to violence. If you can befriend an Ogre, though, you will have a lifelong defender, so long as you treat them well and never let them go hungry.

## PUKA

Roguish defenders of the forest, Puka are mischievous spirits that are able to transform into any forest animal. They do this sometimes to lead to mortals astray, but more through a desire to protect their animal friends than a true affinity for doing harm to others.

Puka invariably have a single, solid, black or white streak in their hair. This stripe is evident in any animal form that they take, giving the wary observer a clue as to their true nature. They also tend to portray the features of their favorite animals, such as cat eyes, fox ears, or feathers instead of hair.

Puka are solitary creatures, unable to gather with their own kind without descending into a chaotic contest of one-upmanship or an outright brawl. They also tend to be





perpetual travelers, never settling down in one place for very long. Though they may choose to stick with a group of friends for a while, eventually they will get bored and wander away to follow their own desires.

Puka are whimsical and easygoing, preferring to simply avoid trouble when they can. When they can't, they tend to face their problems with trickery and deceit, and are quick to run away when they are on the losing side of a situation. When cornered and forced to fight, however, like any wild animal a Puka can be an outright fierce and dangerous foe.

Puka magic, beyond the ability to shapechange, is all about confusion and misdirection. They are capable of summoning simple illusions, such as a flash of light, a twist of shadow, or a bird call in the treetops. They are also able to befuddle the senses of a mortal, making them hopelessly lost and wandering in circles.

The protections against Aelfar enchantments also work against Puka magic (four-leaf clovers, rowan berries, salt, or inside-out clothing.)

### *Faerie Oaths and Lies*

*Part of the reason that oaths and promises have so much power in the Wyrdwood is that Fae folk are absolutely unable to lie. Once they have given their word, the Fae are simply unable to break it (as that would constitute a previous told lie). If they speak a thing, they must honestly believe it to be true.*

*This is not to say that Wyrd Folk cannot twist their meanings or deceive. They can, and do. They can also simply be wrong or mistaken, believing something to be true but not having all the information.*

*Their spoken words must be "technically" true (as far as they know), but there is plenty of room for vagueness and omission. This leads them to favor a flowery way of speaking which paints a picture and leads the listener to make assumptions, rather than a direct and straightforward presentation of the facts.*





## WITCHES

While not Fae in the technical sense, witches are mortal women who have harnessed the magic of the Wyrdwood to grant them exceptional power and long life. They live alone in secluded cottages scattered throughout the wood, usually guarded by magical constructs or strange familiars.

Most witches are fiercely independent, secretive, and often seen as selfish. Though covered by the Scout's Oath, their survival amongst the other Wyrd Folk depends entirely on their own cleverness, magical ability, and cold-heartedness.



Witches, by definition, are capable of magic, but it is not an innate ability like the rest of the Wyrd Folk. Their magic comes through study, experiment, ritual, and practice. When a witch casts a spell, they have to go through a process which usually involves props, rare materials or exotic herbs, chanting, and most importantly time.

Whereas an Aelfar can summon a storm with a word of command, a witch would study the weather patterns, research a spell, beseech the spirits of the wind with offerings, and dance around a cauldron beneath the full moon. Witches can do powerful magic, but only with proper preparation.

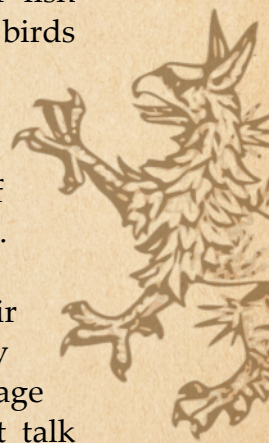
Witches often possess assorted magical trinkets and tend to excel at alchemy and poisoncraft. They collect secrets and tricks so that they don't have to rely so heavily on their hedge-magic. They are also perfectly willing to bargain for favors and power, though they take pains to ensure that any deal they enter always leans more to their needs than any others.

Unlike the other Wyrd Folk, witches are not immortal. They can also lie and do so whenever it suits them.

## BEASTS OF THE WYRDWOOD

With the exception of flies and mosquitoes, most mundane forest animals can also be found living in the Wyrdwood. There are plenty of perfectly normal squirrels, regular fish swimming in the streams, common deer mice, everyday birds flying hither and yon, and no lack of rabbits, racoons, skunk, foxes, bears, wolves, snakes, toads, turtles, deer, badgers, or beavers. There are also forest goats, wild boar, elk in the snowier regions, and at least one herd of fluffy, miniature, teddy-bear-like cows in the Borderlands.

These mundane animals are often no different than their counterparts in the mortal realms, though occasionally they might possess strange coloring, a higher than average intelligence, or an abnormal size. Most animals cannot talk and there is no blanket prohibition against hunting them. There are also mythical beasts not normally found in the





mortal realms, a small selection of which are presented below. None of these are considered people, as they do not talk. They are all simply magical beasts.

37

However, an enchanted, talking animal or a Fae in animal form, is absolutely covered by the oath against bloodshed (pg 69). Harming such a creature is bound to bring repercussions.

## CHIMERA

A chimera (*kai-mare-ah*) is a creature composed of multiple other mundane animals. The most common depiction is of a lion with three heads—one from its natural feline form, one from a goat, and one from a large snake. However, other rare hybrids exist, such as a half-lion, half-eagle (also known as a griffon) or a half-chicken, half-lizard (also called a cockatrice.)

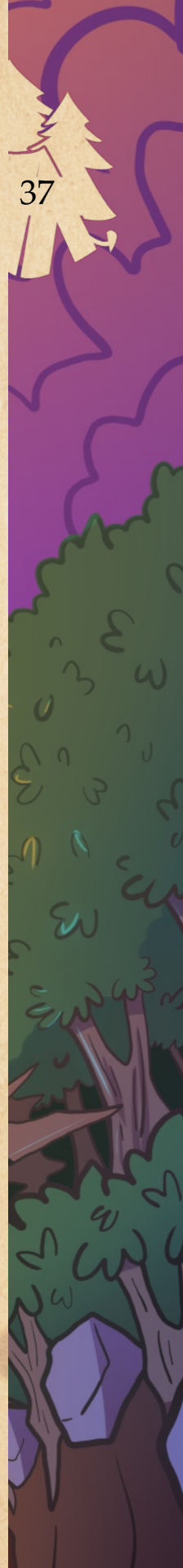
Regardless of the composition, chimera are wild animals operating on pure animal instinct. Their primary concerns are finding food and avoiding predators. As the byproduct of ancient magic gone awry, they are often prone to foul and grumpy dispositions.

Sometimes chimera are used as guardians to watch over a prisoner, a sacred place, or a powerful treasure. They must be bound to the location in some way, however, as their service is never by choice, and they are as likely to attack their master as they are any intruders.

## FOREST DRAKE

Large, fire-breathing dragons are almost unheard of in the Wyrddwood, but their smaller cousin, the drake, is not so rare. Drakes are sinuous, winged lizards that commonly grow to about four feet in length, though an old and well fed drake can easily reach double that size.

Drakes only possess two legs, which are situated toward the front of their body, so they move across the forest floor by clawing their way forward and wiggling their tail like a snake. Given this awkward form of locomotion, drakes prefer climbing over crawling, and can often be found high in the treetops, trusting their wings to catch them should they fall.





Drakes like eating hot or spicy things, and though they cannot belch forth huge gouts of flame on command, they are capable of short bursts of fire if they have recently dined on hot coals. They cannot stand being cold and many a Scout has woken to find an errant drake curled up atop their campfire.

### MANTICORE

The manticore has the face of a man, the body of a lion, and the poisonous tail of a scorpion. Despite its human face, there is no mistaking this for a peaceful person of the wood—it is a beast in all respects of the word. No intelligence comes from its mouth, only terrible roars, and there is no awareness in its eyes, only rage and hunger.

The manticore is a fierce predator, but thankfully there are not very many of them left in the woods. They tend to keep to their own secluded parts of the forest, as they are hated by all the various Wyrd Folk. If a manticore is sighted, all Fae are expected to set aside their differences and take up arms until the hunt is over and the danger has been dealt with.

The sting of a manticore's tail causes almost instant paralysis followed by a fever and a slow wasting illness. These effects cannot be countered by a Dryad or Sapling's healing ability, but only by creating a powerful anti-venom. Finding a cure for someone struck down by a manticore makes for an excellent quest, though it will usually require travel to remote and dangerous parts of the Wyrdwood.

### SILVER DEER

While herds of regular deer roam the Wyrdwood, these snowy white deer are sacred to the Aelfar and a gift, so they say, from the moon. The stags are favored by the nobles as mounts, and the does are kept as trusted companions, like one would keep a cat or a dog. The only inherently magical thing about the silver deer is a faint glow, though many are also enchanted with spells of strength and protection by their masters.



Harming one of the sacred silver deer is grounds for banishment from the woods—or worse. Of course, they are not sacred to either Ogres or Trolls, both of which consider them to be easy hunting and excellent eating. Still, even those folk are not eager to admit to hurting such a deer if any Aelfar are within earshot.

## UNICORN

Scouts are sometimes disappointed when they see a unicorn for the first time. Though these creatures are rare and majestic, they are not quite as perfect as the stickers and lunchboxes make them out to be. For starters, they only stand about as tall as a pony. Secondly, they are shaggy, their coats are often dirty and tangled with brambles and briars, and they are incredibly skittish. They do, however, have a sharp spiral horn that protrudes straight out from their brow.

Unicorns are immune to disease, resistant to magic, and eternally youthful. Their horn is what enables them to cure illness, remove curses, and travel the realms simply by stepping across moonbeams or into crystal pools of water. Unlike deer, unicorns do not shed their horns. If you find one, it was not acquired by accident.




*a unicorn fighting a chimera*







## PART 2: YOUR CHARACTERS



41



Every player in *Wyrdscouts* will need a character for their adventures. This is the person in the story you will pretend to be as you explore the Wyrddwood.

Some players might wish to create a Scout that is very similar to themselves. This will allow you to react in the story how you yourself would react in the same situation and may help the adventures feel more personal.

Remember, however, that when bad things happen to your character, and they might, they are only happening to the character and not the real you.

Other players might seek to emulate their favorite hero or heroine or come up with someone totally new, someone who can do things that they cannot. After all, the Wyrddwood is a magical place, and creating a character that is different than you is a great opportunity to embody other experiences and points of view.

The most important thing is to create a character that you will have fun with as you explore the Wyrddwood through their eyes. Kids (and adults playing without kids) will create new Wyrdscouts between the ages of 8 and 14.

While there are rules to creating a character, they are covered in only four steps, each of which only requires you to make a few easy choices.

To record those choices you will need a blank piece of paper—or a printed character sheet from the back of this book—and a pencil. Don't use a pen as your these choices may change!

Players can complete the steps of character creation in any order they like. Some may wish to start with a name, others with their magical ability, and others with what badges they are working on. As long as you do all the steps, there is no wrong way to go about it.



## Parent Players as Familiars

As a family-friendly RPG, we want to encourage kids to have fun, allow them to make mistakes, and push them to find creative solutions to their problems. To that end, adult players are tasked with a special role when accompanying their children on adventures: that of the enchanted **animal familiar**. (See *Animal Familiars* on pg 74.)

Often when mixing younger and older gamers together, we find that the adults are either frustrated with the quirks of inexperienced gamers, or they end up taking over and not really letting the kids think for themselves. We want to empower the younger players to be the central heroes and encourage the adult players to model behaviors and offer guidance. Of course, if you are playing this game with all adults, there is no need for anyone to play an animal familiar and everyone can just make a Scout.

If everyone is creating characters at the table together, though, we suggest progressing through each step in the order they are presented. (There is also a quick-start outline on pg 63.) This way the group can make choices that complement each other, answer each other's questions, and share ideas.

## ANCESTRY

Wyrdscoots are mostly human and have spent their entire life up till now in the human world, but they are also all descended from a person of the Wyrddwood as well. This Fae ancestor could have been as recent as one of your own parents (though usually, Fae parents return to the Wyrddwood at some point) or it may have been several great-grandparents ago.

No matter how long ago your ancestor lived, there is lingering magic in your blood that has been passed down from generation to generation. This inherited magic gives you special abilities in the Wyrddwood, similar to those of a full-blooded Fae. When you enter the woods, you are more human looking than Fae, but the longer you linger here the more like them you will become.



Every ancestry provides an active ability that you must choose to use, and a passive ability that is always available. Making use of your Ancestry special abilities will only require a roll in the most extreme circumstances, as determined by the Story Guide.

The nine ancestries are: **Aelfling**, **Faun**, **Gruvkin**, **Half-Giant**, **Hob**, **Pix**, **Pook**, **Riverchild**, and **Sapling**.

You should pick the ancestry that seems like the most fun for you to play, but it can make for a better story if each player chooses something different.



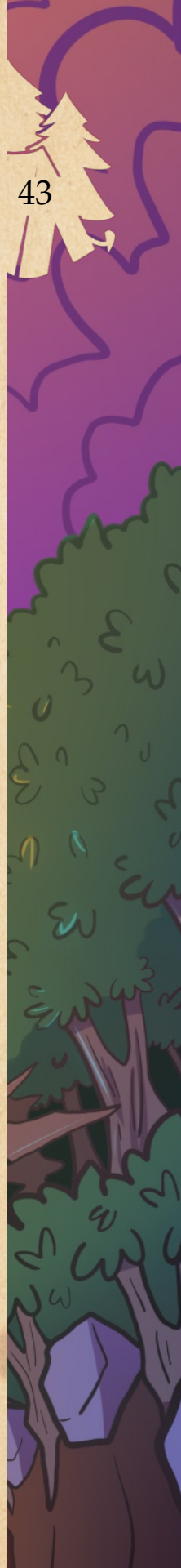
## AELFLING

You are descended from the Aelfar, the noblest of Wyrd Folk and the masters of the Trooping Court.

Aelflings are often confident, steady, at ease in social situations, and exude a dancer's grace. They may also be among the most popular kids of their age. As they journey through the Wyrdwood, they often develop a perfect complexion, a stunning smile, sparkling eyes, and even slightly pointed ears.

**Charming Presence** (passive): The blessing of the Aelfar manifests as a general sense of being likeable and trustworthy. If you have been helpful to someone, or done them a favor or good deed, they are unable to cause you any direct harm. This protection is in effect even if they are unaware of the aid you have rendered.

**Star Light, Star Bright** (active): You may touch an object (or person) and make it glow with the flickering light of the stars. You can do this to only one item at a time and the effect will fade at the next sunrise or sunset.







## FAUN

You are descended from the Satyrs, the goat-legged messengers of the Wyrddwood Fae.

Fauns are often athletic, energetic, adventurous, and somewhat silly. They also tend to be fond of music and poetry. As they journey through the Wyrddwood, they will likely develop a smattering of freckles, their ears may transform into those of a goat, and two small horns might sprout from their brow.

**Sure Footed** (passive): The blessing of the Satyrs manifests as an unerring sense of balance. You will never accidentally fall down, though you could be swept off your feet by an assailant.

**Goat's Grace** (active): You can climb any solid surface no matter how steep or slick, so long as it is capable of supporting your weight.

## GRUVKIN

You are descended from the Gruv, the mushroom-loving scavengers that live underground.

Gruvkin are often shorter or stockier than their peers, enjoy secrets, and seem a little odd. They are usually quite at home in the dirt and capable of handling gross things or dealing with strange smells. As they travel through the Wyrddwood they often develop thick fingers and toes, big ears, or a stumpy sort of nose.

**Dirt Dweller** (passive): The gift of the Gruv manifests as an ability to see perfectly in the dark and to ignore all ill effects from bad smells.

**Hardy Stomach** (active): You are able to digest anything that you can easily swallow. While you don't have the ability to bite through un-biteable things, such as iron bars, you can eat anything at all without suffering any ill effects. You can subsist quite nicely on garbage, eat a poisonous apple, or even chow down on fistfuls of dirt and nothing bad will come of it.



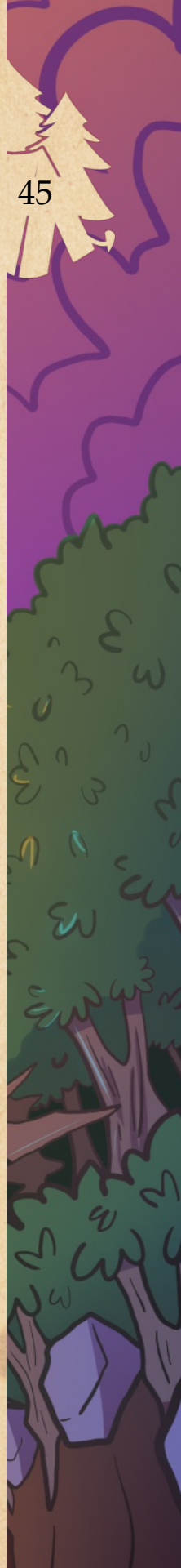
## HALF-GIANT

You are descended from Giants, the ancient caretakers of the Wyrdwood.

Though not large enough to peer over the treetops, Half-Giants are most likely taller than their peers and perhaps a bit clumsy, like a large puppy who doesn't know its own strength. They are also often loyal, protective, and thoughtful. As they travel through the Wyrdwood, they grow larger and stronger and sometimes lose their hair. Many such Scouts end up several feet taller than their companions.

**Solid Stance** (passive): This blessing means that while you might accidentally fall down, you can never be intentionally knocked over.

**Incredible Strength** (active): You are able to channel the ancestral strength of the Giants to aid your friends. You never need to worry about something being too heavy to lift, pull, or push—it won't be. However, if you try to use your strength to hurt another living being, it will fail entirely and leave you even weaker than a mouse until the next sunrise or sunset.







## Hob

You are descended from the Hobgoblins, hard working household Fae who often worked in the human farms close to the edge of the wood.

Hobs are often shorter than their peers and can be fond of cleaning, tinkering, and making crafts. As they journey through the Wyrddwood, their hair tends to become wild and unruly, their fingers and toes become gnarled and knobby, and their eyes might change to strange and unnatural color.

**Ignore the Elements** (passive): Hobgoblins are able to squat in the hearth or oven of a homestead and remain unbothered by the flames, or to work in the stables and fields despite rain or snow. Their gift makes you unable to be burned or injured in any way by heat and fire or by freezing cold.

**Sparkle and Shine** (active): You may make any object you touch look shiny and new. This illusion only works on one item at a time and the effects will fade at the next sunrise or sunset.

## Pix

You are descended from the Pixies, small sprites and brownies that tend to the flowers, fruits, and seeds of the Wyrddwood.

Pix are usually smaller and more delicate than their peers, often possess a fondness for flowers and dancing, and are prone to giggling. As they journey through the Wyrddwood, their facial features tend to become more adorable, with a dainty nose and pointed ears, and they often shrink even a little bit more, becoming considerably shorter than their companions.

**Light as a Feather** (passive): Though you cannot fly, if you fall from any height you will slowly spiral down to the ground like a feather and sustain no injuries.



**Small as a Mouse** (active): The gift of the Pixies is the ability to shrink, at will, down to about 4" tall. Your clothing and personal belongings may shrink with you, if you wish. You can return to normal size whenever you want, though the spell is broken automatically at the next sunrise or sunset.

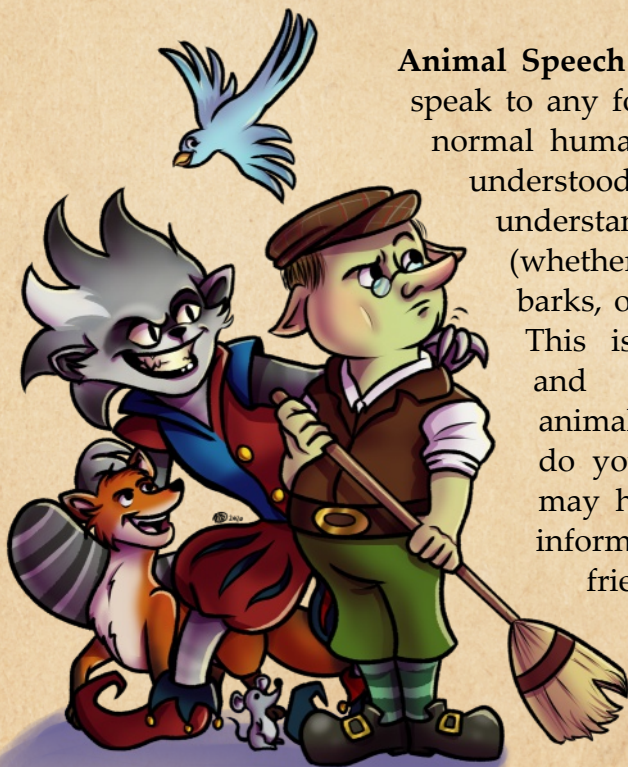
## Pook

You are descended from the Puka, mischievous spirits with a bond to forest animals.

Pooks are often playful, clever, and bold and have a strong affinity for animals. As they journey through the Wyrddwood, they will most likely develop a single white or black streak in their hair, and they even start to display the minor features and mannerisms of a single animal, such as the eyes of a cat, the teeth of a squirrel, or the tail of a fox.

**Member of the Pack** (passive): The blessing of the Puka means that you will not be attacked by normal forest creatures, so long as you do not try to cause them harm.

**Animal Speech** (active): You may speak to any forest animals (in a normal human tongue) and be understood. You can also understand the animal (whether it chirps, growls, barks, or hisses) in return. This isn't mind control and won't force an animal to automatically do your bidding, but it may help you to gather information, make new friends, or convince an animal to render aid.





## RIVERCHILD

You are descended from the Naiads, faeries that protect the streams, rivers, and natural springs of the forest.

Riverchildren tend to be both excellent swimmers and natural singers, with a fondness for shiny objects and all sorts of music. As they journey through the Wyrddwood many begin to display a faint shimmer to their skin or hair, their fingers and toes become webbed, and their voice starts to carry its own faint echo.

**Spirit of the Waterfall** (passive): The blessing of the Naiads gives you the ability to breathe underwater and makes you immune to the cold while submerged or swimming.

**Siren's Song** (active): You are able to use your voice to draw the unwavering attention of everyone around you. Should you so choose, your words will cut through any noise in the area and everyone will hear you speak, sing, or shout. Whether they actually listen to what you say is entirely up to them, however.

## SAPLING

You are descended from the Dryads, caretakers and protectors of the forest trees.

Saplings tend to be long limbed, with a fondness for trees and plants, tend to have strong convictions, and often have a sense of guardianship over those who are bullied or picked on. Saplings can also be very shy and introverted. As they journey through the Wyrddwood, they usually develop a healthy glow about them, a tinge of green to their hair, and a nutty burnish to their skin.

**Photosynthesize** (passive): As a Sapling, you have no need to eat. So long as you have daily access to clean water and sunshine, you will not get sick or hungry.



**Healing Touch** (active): As long your skin is touching fertile soil, you may touch another living thing and heal almost any damage they have suffered. The effort of healing another person drains you physically, though. Such fatigue counts as a **Bruised** degree of injury (see *Getting Hurt*, pg 88) and this tiredness should be reflected via narration and role-play.





## THE FOUR VIRTUES

While there are lots of things the Scouts are in the Wyrdwood to focus on and learn about, there are four core virtues that the WyrdScouts encourage in each member. These are **Bravery**, **Charm**, **Cleverness**, and **Helpfulness**.

Virtues will determine some of the dice rolled when facing a challenge. When a Scout is acting in a brave manner for a task, they will roll their Bravery value. Likewise when they are being charming, clever, or helpful.

Each character will have some combination of all four virtues, which reflects how they approach various problems and where their strengths and weaknesses lie.

**Virtues are not a specific set of skills and actions**, but are instead behavioral choices and tendencies.

It bears noting that many actions could fall under more than one virtue. Ultimately a Scout's intention is what matters the most when determining which virtue to use.





## CHARACTER CREATION: VIRTUES

- ✦ Choose one virtue that is your character's strongest and assign three (3) points to it. You will have three dice to roll when using this virtue.
- ✦ Pick two virtues that are average for your character and give each of these a value of two (2). You will have two dice to roll for these virtues.
- ✦ The weakest of your character's virtues gets a value of one (1). You will have one die to roll when using this virtue.

### BRAVERY

A WyrdsScout is brave. The Wyrdwood can be a scary place, but sometimes you just have to stand your ground.

This virtue represents your ability to face your fears, keep guard over those who are weaker, put a selfish Ogre in his place, stand tall in the presence of queens, sneak steadily past a slumbering dragon, climb the tallest trees, and take a leap of faith into the darkness.

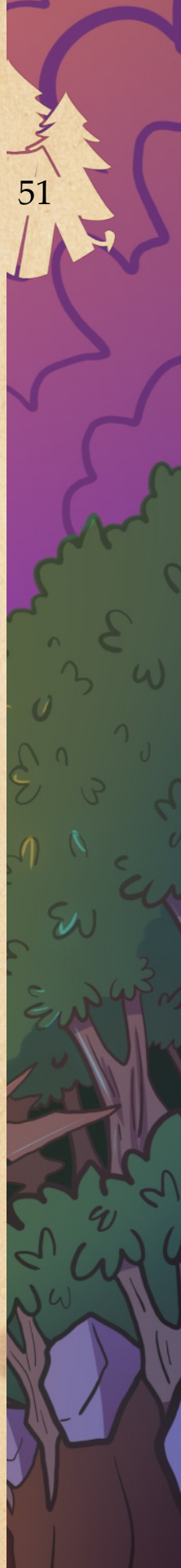
Scouts who excel in Bravery may find themselves in trouble more often than most, but they are great to have on your side when the going gets tough.

### CHARM

A WyrdsScout is charming. Not everything in the Wyrdwood can be handled head on and sometimes the best bet is to talk your way out of a situation.

This virtue represents your affinity for chumming, fast talking, deception, and persuasion, be that by smiling your way out of trouble, convincing a hungry Troll that you would make a terrible meal, covering for your missing mates, or making an Aelfar prince into your best friend.

Scouts who excel in Charm are happy to be the ones speaking for the whole group and winning over adversaries with their shining smile, but they also know when to listen to their friends and let others take the lead.





## CLEVERNESS

A Wyrdscout is clever. There is a lot to learn in the Wyrddwood and nobody can know it all, but those who prize this virtue are good at gathering knowledge, thinking outside the box, and putting what they know to good use.

This virtue represents your aptitude for problem solving and learning, be it via studying, figuring out puzzles and riddles, gathering secrets, making plans, deciphering strange languages, recreating magical spells, performing mental math, uncovering clues, or explaining complicated ideas.

Scouts who excel in Cleverness might not be the strongest on the team, but they are often smart and creative thinkers who love the challenges of a new problem.

## HELPLEFULNESS

A Wyrdscout is helpful. There are a lot of folks in the Wyrddwood who have troubles, and those who follow the scouting ways are often well-positioned to lend a hand.

This virtue represents your aptitude for helping others out and making the best of a situation, be it by listening, offering suggestions, lending a hand, making a gift to lift someone's spirits, pulling the team together, or tending to a broken leg.

Scouts who excel in Helpfulness may not always be marching at the front of the troop, but they are certainly the nurturing heart that holds up the rest of the team.

## BADGES

Badges are a visual representation of a Scouts' achievements and reflect how their skill set grows as they travel through the Wyrddwood. As your character gains experience, they will become more confident in these skills and earn new badges.

Each badge has an associated **Master Ability** that is unlocked after earning **five (5)** points in that badge. Mastering a badge grants your Wyrdscout the right to wear the badge on their sash, and gives them the power to use the associated special ability. As with your ancestry powers, using a badge's Mastery Ability almost never requires a roll.



Your badges will also determine some of the dice you will roll when attempting a task or challenge.

For instance, if a Scout is trying to hide from a Troll, they would use the value of their **Hide & Seek** badge (and most likely their **Cleverness** virtue).

If the same Scout was instead digging a trap for the Troll, they would use the value from their **Camping & Exploring** or **Athletics** badge.

Situations may arise where more than one badge could fit the task at hand. In such cases, the Story Guide should offer various options but it is up to the player to pick which badge best suits what they are wanting to do.

### CHARACTER CREATION: BADGES

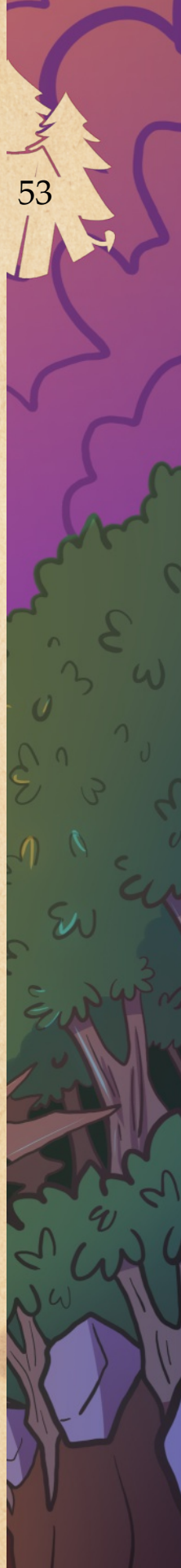
- ✕ Assign a total of seven (7) points spread among your badges to represent your initial abilities.
- ✕ No character may begin with more than two (2) points assigned to a single badge.
- ✕ As there are twelve total badges, it is not possible to begin with a point in all of them.
- ✕ Characters will earn more points for badges at the end of each session.

### ALCHEMY



Alchemy is the skill of creating potions, unguents, oils, poisons, and salves. It is science with a dash of magic, and is used mostly in the healing arts of the Fae. Other possible uses include creating super strong glues, sleeping gasses, truth serum, black powder, and digestive aids.

Any time a character wants to identify a potion; mix chemicals; or determine an antidote for a poison they will use their Alchemy badge.





**Secret Stash (*Mastery Ability*)**

In the process of mastering the Alchemy badge, you have created or collected various potions, some of which were never used.

Once per adventure, you may discover on your person, tucked into a pocket, bag, or pouch, a useful potion that you had previously created. This can be anything appropriate to the situation at hand, but the Story Guide has final say on what is allowed. (I.e. You probably can't carry a highly volatile explosive in your pockets.)

**ARTS & CRAFTS**

An integral part of scouting is the creation of charms, knick knacks, and macaroni necklaces. This badge combines the skills of painting, sewing, weaving, sculpting, carving, jewelry making, knot tying, and leather working.

Any time a character wants to create a physical item they will use the Arts & Crafts badge.

**Magical Trinket (*Mastery Ability*)**

Upon mastering the Arts & Crafts badge, you have learned not only to create cool stuff, but also imbue it with a hint of magic. This ability allows you to create an item with a single, utilitarian, magical effect, such as socks that never get wet, a bracelet that protects you from snake bites, a locket that shows your true love's face at that very moment, a book that records your words as you say them, etc.

You should work with the Story Guide to determine a suitable effect and how long it will take to create the item. Usually the creation can be accomplished during the downtime over the course of a single adventure.



## ATHLETICS



Athletics reflects all of the physical skills a WyrdScout needs to make their way through the forest: climbing, running, jumping, swimming, swinging, lifting heavy things, using a bow and arrows, and on the very rare occasion, punching someone in the nose.

Any time a character wants to attempt something that is ultimately physical in nature, they will most likely use the Athletics badge.

### **Forest Parkour (*Mastery Ability*)**

In the process of mastering the Athletics badge, your body has become one with the physical realities of the forest. You can flip, roll, dive, climb, swing, slide, bounce off the rocks and trees, and use the terrain to your advantage to easily gain access to difficult areas, avoid pursuit, or simply show off at will.

## CAMPING & EXPLORING



A crucial part of being a WyrdScout is learning to live in the forest without succumbing to any of her natural threats such as sudden cold snaps, quicksand, or poison ivy.

The Camping & Exploring badge is used for all of the general survival skills like pitching a tent, hunting, foraging, fishing, boating, first aid, tracking, and navigation.

### **Mental Map (*Mastery Ability*)**

In mastering this badge, you have become fully aware of your surroundings and the places you have been. You have created a mental map of the Wyrdwood and can retrace your steps to any place you have previously visited, utilizing paths that may not have been obvious your first time through.





## COOKING

The Cooking badge covers anything to do with the creation of food, be it creating a hearty stew over the campfire; whipping together a bacon, mutton, and tomato sandwich for a hungry Ogre; or baking wildflower cookies fit for a Dryad queen.

While the process of gathering edibles from the wild is covered by the Camping & Exploring badge, any time a character wants to turn their raw materials into something grander they would use the Cooking badge. You can also use this badge to determine if a dish is poisoned, enchanted, or otherwise unsafe to eat.

### Enchanted Treats (*Mastery Ability*)

In mastering the Cooking badge, you have learned how to enchant food with the magic of the Wyrddwood. You may use this ability once per day to enhance a dish that you have created.

Anyone who eats the treat will become enchanted and will do your bidding so long as you are nice to them and keep them safe. If the enchanted person takes damage or experiences pain due to your commands the spell will be broken. Otherwise, it fades naturally at the next sunrise or sunset.

## HERALDRY & MANNERS



There are many strange customs, taboos, and protocols among the Fae, and the Heraldry & Manners badge reflects both the knowledge and practical applications of these strange ways.

This skill is useful when talking to nobility, researching Wyrddwood laws, tracing your family tree, or even knowing which shoe to drink from at a hoedown of Hobgoblins.



### Diplomatic Immunity (*Mastery Ability*)

In the mastery of the Heraldry & Manners badge, you have earned prestige and renown among all the people of the Wyrddwood. Even if they do not know your name, residents of the wood recognize you as someone important.

This also affords you a degree of diplomatic immunity. Short of attacking a denizen of the wood, your minor transgressions will be overlooked, often as an amusing entertainment or simple misunderstanding.

### HIDE & SEEK



The Hide & Seek badge reflects both the ability to hide and stay hidden and the ability to spot those trying to do the same.

Any time a character is searching for clues, hiding under the bed, attempting to walk without crunching the leaves, trying to conceal an object, or detect an ambush they will use the Hide & Seek badge.

### Hiding in Plain Sight (*Mastery Ability*)

Upon mastering this badge, the Wyrddwood itself helps obscure you from view. So long as you remain quiet and still, you can hide even when there is nothing to hide behind.

You could be standing next to a tree, in a misty clearing, or even in the middle of a ballroom filled with whirling dancers, but if you don't want to be seen then nothing short of magical scrying will be able to find you.

### Notice Rolls

There are no general "notice rolls" in this game. If there is a clue, item, person, etc. that the characters should reasonably know about, then the Story Guide will clue you in about it.



## KNAVERY



This may seem like a strange badge for a Scout, but in the Wyrdwood being able to pick a pocket, bypass a lock, or disarm a trap is often a necessity. This badge reflects those skills of dexterity and misdirection that might be frowned upon in polite circles but are absolutely fair game when dealing with the tricky sort of Fae.

Any time a character wants to pocket something unseen, open a locked door, or create a quick but believable counterfeit they will use the Knavery badge.

### **Knock (*Master Ability*)**

Upon mastering this badge, locks seem to know that it is only a matter of time before you can open them and thus they save you the trouble. Rapping sharply three times on any locked door or container will unlock it for you. If you knock three times again, it will return to its original locked state. However, if there is a trap set to trigger when a door is opened, this ability will not disable the trap, simply unlock the door.

## MUSIC & DANCE



The Music & Dance badge covers playing instruments, singing, dancing, composing, and recognizing particular sounds or patterns. The actual creation of a traditional instrument would fall under Arts & Crafts, but a skilled musician can create sound out of just about anything.

Any time a character wants to serenade a crush, dance a waltz, whistle a tune, or join a drum circle they will use this badge.

### **Soothe the Savage Heart (*Mastery Ability*)**

Upon mastering the Music & Dance badge, you have gained the ability to calm the enraged through song. You may sing, dance, or play an



instrument and slowly lull any person or beast, magical or mundane, into a swift but natural sleep. Loud noises, sudden movements, or being attacked will break the spell.

### MYTHICAL BEASTS



The Wyrdwood is full of fantastic creatures, and the Mythical Beast badge reflects the knowledge and ability to work with all of them. This encompasses their identification and behaviors, as well as the befriending, riding, grooming, and training of beasts, mythic and mundane.

Whenever a character wants to calm a skittish pegasus, figure out whether a serpent is venomous, or pluck the thorn from the paw of a hippogriff they will use the Mythical Beasts badge.

#### **Baby Beast Companion (*Mastery Ability*)**

Upon mastery of this badge, you have gained a sense of kinship with all mythical beasts of the wood. In the following session, you will be approached by (or discover) an orphaned mythical beast of your choosing to keep and care for as your own pet.

This pet is unable to speak, but it can follow basic directions. Like all young animals, it is probably more interested in eating, playing, and getting into trouble than anything resembling training or work.

### PUZZLE CRAFT



This badge reflects an ability to think through a challenging mental problem.

Whenever a character wants to try and decipher a strange text, puzzle out a riddle, or determine what sort of magic is at work in a curse they will use the Puzzle Craft badge.



**Secret Knowledge (*Mastery Ability*)**

Upon mastering the Puzzle Craft badge, you have amassed a wealth of knowledge and an ability to look at things with a highly critical eye. Once per scene, you may ask a question about the place you are in, the people you are dealing with, or the problem you are facing and the Story Guide will provide you with a snippet of information that is not automatically apparent.

**STORYTELLING & LORE**

The Storytelling & Lore badge reflects a knowledge of old tales and the skill of telling a story to persuade other or entertain. As most storytelling involves some degree of falsehood this badge also covers the ability to deceive others with words or expressions.

If a character wants to recite a spooky ghost story around the fire, recall which witch gave away poison apples in the faerie tale, convince someone to see their side of things, or pretend to be someone else they will use the Storytelling badge.

**Poetic Illusion (*Mastery Ability*)**

Upon mastering this badge, the Wyrdwood takes an active part in your storytelling. You can conjure up fantastical images that support your narrative, though they have no substantial form.

For instance, reciting a battle poem may allow you to conjure a rain of arrows overhead, but they do no damage. Likewise, you could tell the tale of a beautiful maiden and have her appear before your listener's eyes, but she will speak with your voice and your words.

Your illusions are maintained for only as long as you are speaking, and three breaths afterward, after which they fade away into nothing.



## FINISHING TOUCHES

Now that you have all of your big choices made, your character is completely playable from a rules perspective. But it is a good idea to giving them some quirks, habits, and details that will help you play them in a story.

61

### NAME & AGE

For starters, your character is definitely going to need a name. Think about what you want people to actually call this character in the game. While Rockstar17 is a nice handle for a video game, you wouldn't actually call your friends by that moniker when hanging out.

Good names for a character can be something normal, like Sally or Dave, or you could choose something with a unique, old world flair, like Albus or Ashling. Nicknames will also work well for your character, such as Scoop, Digby, or Slugs.

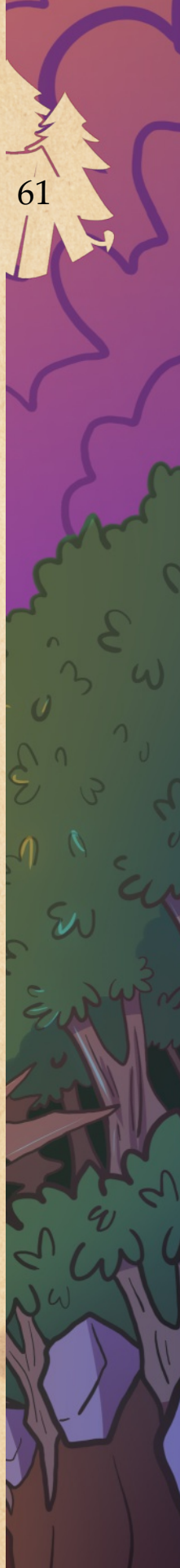
The next thing you will need is an age for your character. You don't have to know exactly when their birthday is (though such detail never hurts) but there is a good bit of difference, both in size and experience, between a 3rd grader and an 8th grader.

### LIKES & DISLIKES

Lastly, you should write down at least one thing that your character likes and at least one thing that they don't like. The easy answers here are pizza and homework, but the more unique you make these choices the more fun you will have in play. Maybe your character really likes dancing, or puppies, or curling up with a new book. They might be afraid of spiders, don't like chocolate, or hate thunderstorms.

To make it even more interesting, you might decide to like or dislike something opposite from most other kids your age. Maybe your character really loves broccoli, but can't stand snowy weather. Maybe you really like bugs but could care less for pizza.

As long as you pick things that you can remember, your choices will work out in the end. Also know that you aren't stuck with these decisions. Just like in real life, people's preferences can change and grow.





## STUFF

Upon joining the Wyrdscouts, every Scout is usually tasked with obtaining a backpack, a sleeping bag, a mess kit (plate, bowl, mug, and flatware), a canteen for water, a pocket knife, a toothbrush, a towel, and a flashlight. These items might be handed down through the generations of a family, or they might be purchased new.

Scouts are not allowed to bring any electronic devices into the Wyrdwood, like a video game player or cell phone, but should choose three other small personal items to bring with them. These items can be anything of personal importance, like a diary or teddy bear, or they might be supplies that you think are critical but not included in the list above.

All Scouts wear a standard uniform while in the Wyrdwood. This uniform consists of brown pants or shorts (probably with extra pockets), a shirt of any solid color, tall socks, a brown sash for badges, a kerchief in your family color, and sturdy boots or tennis shoes. Most Scouts will have a spare uniform, an extra pairs of socks and underwear, and a pair of warm pajamas.

A Scout's kerchief is given by his or her mortal family, and all Scouts from that family have worn the same color. A Scout's cloak (or capelet, which is how it starts) is gifted to them once they have earned the attention of their ancestors in the wood.

### Flashlights and Electronics

*Wait a second! Scouts get a flashlight, but they can't bring electronic devices into the woods. Isn't that a contradiction?*

*Indeed, but this is a game of imagination and rules can be bent or broken for the sake of simplicity or the story. Going camping without a flashlight is not something modern Scouts are likely to do. This is not to say that the batteries will last forever or that the flashlights can't be lost or destroyed. Scouts start with one flashlight each. What happens from there depends entirely on the story...*



## Quick Steps to Creating a Character

(Do these in any order you like)

### ✧ Pick your Ancestry

- Choose what sort of Fae your ancestor was.
- Ancestry gives you two special abilities.
- The longer you stay in the Wyrdwood, the more like your ancestors you will appear.

### ✧ Rank your virtues

- Bravery, Charm, Cleverness, and Helpfulness.
- Rank as: 3-2-2-1

### ✧ Assign your starting badges

- Pick 7 points of starting badges.
- No single badge can begin higher than 2.

### ✧ Write down your name & other important details

- Age: 8 to 13
- What your character looks like
- The stuff they are carrying
  - Basic Scout gear + three personal items
- Likes & Dislikes (at least one of each)

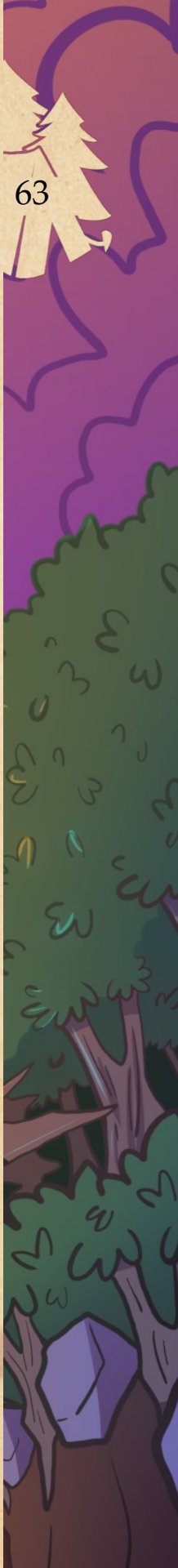
## WRAPPING UP

Anything else you want to write down about your character is entirely up to you. You should consider what they look like, and feel free to draw a picture of them if you want.

It is normal for WyrdScouts to show small signs of their Fae ancestry that might be odd to regular mortals. Funky colored hair or strangely colored eyes are a classic favorite, as are strange birthmarks, or slightly impish features.

You might also want to think about how your character feels about the fact that they are part Fae and what they hope to see in the Wyrdwood. You probably want to think a bit about how you know and relate to the other kids in your troop or if you are meeting for the first time.

Whatever helps you to make character unique and a joy to play, go ahead and do it. You created this person from your own imagination and the more you know about them the easier it will be to tell a story through their eyes.









## PART 3: THE TROOP



65



### A HISTORY OF THE WYRDSCOUTS

The Wyrdscoots is a relatively modern organization which traces its roots back to the founding of “Camp Wyrddwood” in the early 1870s.

Before then, mortals with Fae ancestry were not welcome in the Wyrddwood, and those that found their way in anyway often met with a grizzly and unfortunate fate. Many were devoured by Ogres, became lost forever in the woods, or were tricked into servitude. Those scant few who survived their dangerous adventures in the forest and returned to the mortal realm either became great storytellers...or were mistaken for lunatics and locked away.

It was the Häxentrol that first realized how useful her half-human offspring, the Trow, could be in her war with the Oak King. As Trow were generally smaller, less conspicuous, and did not turn to stone like full blooded Trolls, they were kidnapped from the mortal realms and used as spies, saboteurs, and expendable workers. As this practice proved successful for the Trolls, it became common for other Wyrdd Folk to kidnap enchanted mortals as well.

Eventually the Aelfar managed to negotiate a cease-fire between the Häxentrol and the Oak King, which paved the way for relative calm in the Wyrddwood. The Aelfar also sought to make amends to the mortal families whose half-blooded kids had been stolen. A summer camp was established in line with the popular mortal trend at the time, but Trow children were not invited to attend.

Camp Wyrddwood was originally designed as a two week introduction to the ways of the Wyrddwood and the Fae Folk. It was thought that by giving those half-blood children a glimpse of the magic and danger inherent in their Faerie ancestry, their curiosity would be sated and they could then live happy lives among humans.

Unfortunately, this had the opposite effect.



Once the children were aware of the wonders that awaited them, many more began sneaking into the woods and getting into trouble. The Aelfar did not have the time or the inclination to keep an eye on these new explorers and many perished. In 1883, the camp was permanently shuttered.

It was not until after the publication of the book *Scouting for Boys* in 1907 and the rise of the Scouting movement in America, that several of the original attendants of Camp Wyrddwood (now parents themselves) petitioned the Fae to consider a scouting solution for their own children. After much negotiation, the Aelfar finally agreed to the concept of small, persistent troops, so long as certain rules were followed.

Thus the Oath was set down, responsible guides were selected, and the first troops of WyrddScouts were created. The Trow children were still not invited to participate, but barring a few isolated incidents, the current solution seems to be working out well enough for everyone.

Half-Fae children are now able to learn about their ancestry and experience the magic of the Wyrddwood in relative safety, and the Wyrdd Folk have easy access to groups of trustworthy kids who are eager to aid them without coercion. Kidnapping as a practice amongst the Fae has become almost unheard of.

## THE TROOP

Every WyrddScout belongs to a troop, the basic unit of organization and community in the WyrddScouts. Every troop consists of several Scouts, a Troop Leader, and possibly some animal familiars. The members of a troop camp together, explore together, and face their challenges together. Over time, a troop will come to have a shared history and hopefully a common bond from their collective experiences in the Wyrddwood.

For the ease of adventuring, it is assumed that all of the players in your game belong to the same troop and are the entirety of its membership. Individual Scouts, however, can be from anywhere in the mortal-realm, so long as there is a forest nearby. The troop-mates don't all have to be from the same school, the same city, or even the same country.



Each troop has its own unique customs and rituals, and the individual trappings of a troop can be as detailed and intricate as the players want it to be. They might come up with a secret password or handshake. They might design their own patch or motto. They don't have to start out knowing, trusting, or even liking each other, but over time a bond should form.

67

While *Wyrdscouts* stories work best when all of the players gather, the weekend-trip style of adventures ensures that if someone has to miss a session, the rest of the troop can still do things together. The adventure doesn't need to end simply because one player is absent.

However, the players should be sure to fill in their missing troop-mate once they return. It is no fun to be left out of the game for a session, but it is even worse to be left in the dark about what happened in the story.

## TROOP LEADER

While every troop technically has an adult leader, the strange person who showed up and gathered the kids together, they should be mostly absent from the troop's actual adventures. Perhaps they have other responsibilities in the Wyrdwood, or maybe they just believe in a hands-off approach to teaching.

Gamewise, if a grown-up is always present and telling the Scouts how to act in every situation, the kids won't be able to find their own power and become the heroes of their own story. Instead, the Scouts have several in-story tools to guide them: the **Troop Journal** and a **Troop Mascot**.

## THE TROOP JOURNAL

At their first meeting, every troop of Wyrdscouts is gifted with the combination guidebook and journal of a previous troop.

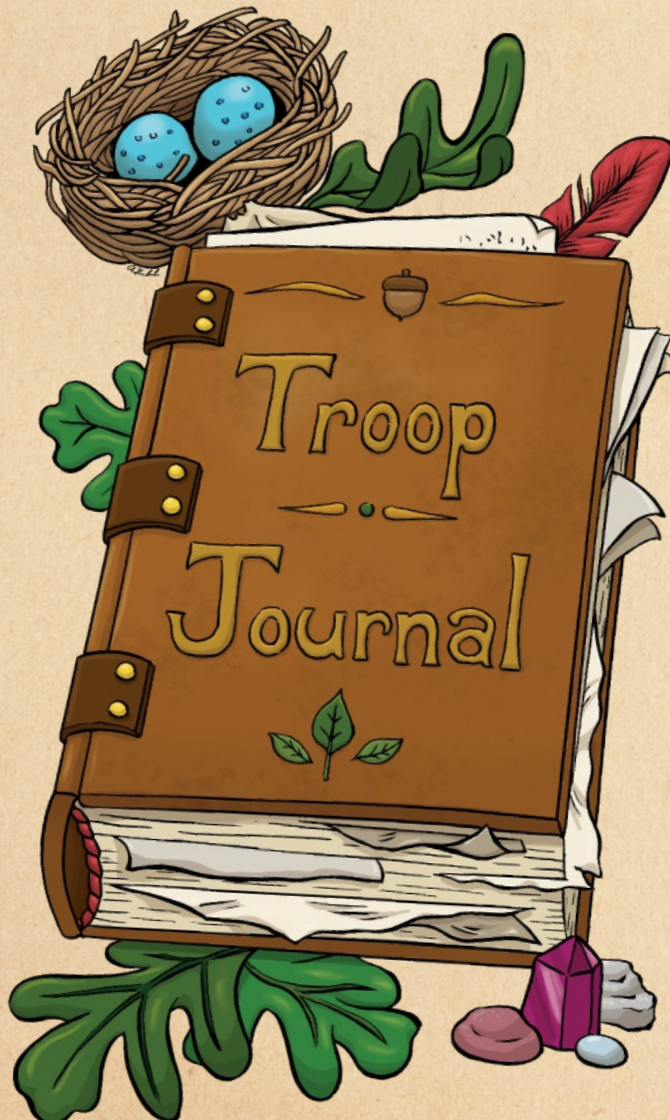
The first fifty pages are the same in every handbook: a breakdown of the oath, general survival information (like how to pitch a tent and bind a wound), and a brief overview of the different regions and peoples of the Wyrdwood. However, it is the notes in the margins and the handwritten journal pages of past adventures that often provide the greatest value.



Previous Scouts have written down stories and experiences in order to aid future troops. These take the form of sketches of the people they met, descriptions of magical items they heard about, and maps of places they went.

Not all of the information in the journal will be relevant to the current troop's journey, and none of it is terribly easy to find in a hurry, but sometimes just the right secret will help you out of a bind.

When a Scout wants to look through the Troop Journal for information, they should let the Story Guide know that they are doing this. The Guide might simply narrate what you discover or may ask for a **troop roll** (see pg 87), especially if you are in the middle of other pressing things.





It is expected that the current troop will add to the information and stories contained in the book, to pass on when they are done with it, and often this task is given to a particularly studious member.

69

As players, it is a very good idea to take notes of what happens in a role-playing game anyway. If your troop wants to make a prop for the Troop Journal and actually record their adventures in it at the table, then by all means go for it!

### THE OATH OF THE WYRDSKOUTS

The very first page of every Handbook presents the oath of the WyrdScouts, with a brief explanation following each stanza.

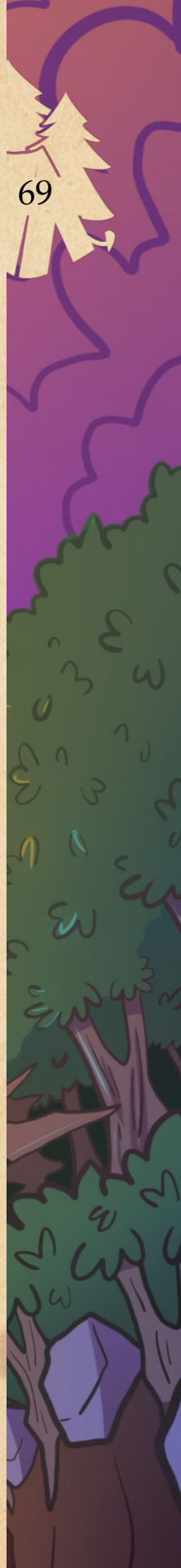
To the Wyrdwood and her people too,  
I shall be faithful, loyal, and true.

WyrdScouts are the ambassadors between the world you know, and the magical Wyrdwood. You are a guest, here to help, protect, and serve. Be polite to every person you meet in the Wood, no matter how strange they may seem. Learn their ways, gain their trust, and you shall learn their secrets. If you find someone in distress, do your best to help them.


Leaves and branches, roots and bud.  
I go in peace, I shed no blood.

WyrdScouts must not shed the blood of any Fae Folk in the wood. To do so is to invite the ire of the Fae, risk expulsion from the Scouts, and face the punishment of the Aelfar. However, many people you meet will have no compunction against harming you.

When you can avoid conflict, do so. When you can't, run! If you are trapped, free yourself in the least damaging way possible. Knocking an Ogre out with a clever trap is sometimes necessary, but stabbing the same Ogre with your knife is sure to cause no end of trouble.







## Brave and Charming, Helpful, Clever, My solemn word shall bind forever.

70

These are the virtues all Wyrdscouts should embrace and strive to embody. That said, nobody is perfect and everyone makes mistakes. As long as you learn from mistakes, make an effort to grow, and right what you have wronged then you are walking the path of a Wyrdscout with honor.

Wyrd Folk are unable to lie, but they know that mortals do so with impunity. If you give your word on something, make sure you mean it. The trees of the Wyrdwood listen, and they will hold you to your promise.

### BREAKING THE OATH

What happens if you do shed the blood of the Wyrd Folk or break your word? And just how stringent is this oath anyways?

#### SHEDDING BLOOD

Oaths on the whole do not provide wiggle room, but they do provide loopholes. The prohibition against shedding blood, for instance, only extends to the Wyrd Folk themselves; so hunting, fishing, and even shedding your own blood are allowed (though that last one is highly inadvisable).

The oath only covers blood, so broken bones, concussions, black eyes, and bruises are not banned. Not to say that beating up anyone is a good idea, just that it won't trigger the oath. It bears noting that while unintelligent monsters are fair game, Trolls, Ogres, and Giants are still Wyrd Folk, and thus covered as well.

There is no mystical shield that physically stops you from shedding a Wyrd Folk's blood, no bolt of lightning comes down from the sky, and you don't drop to the ground wracked with pain. However, if you do shed blood, there are mystical signs that you have broken your sworn oath.



After shedding the blood of a Fae, your own tears will become dark red, instead of clear in the Wyrddwood. For the rest of your life, or until you are forgiven by the one whose blood you shed, if you cry it will look like you are weeping blood.

If others see this, then word will most likely spread, and eventually the Aelfar will catch up and hold you to account. Once they do, there will usually be a formal trial and a chance for you to explain your actions.

If it is found that you acted to save the life of another, or if the bloodshed was entirely accidental, then the Aelfar may choose to simply give you a warning (depending on how serious the injury was) or possibly remove your Scouting ranks and let you remain in the woods as a novice. If the act was intentional or malicious, chances are that you will be banished from the wood. In such cases, it is best to start over with a new, less violent character.

### YOUR SOLEMN WORD

Breaking your word is a more straightforward process. It is not against the oath to tell a lie or to trick others when need be. It is only against the oath to break your solemn word. Thus, for a promise to be tied up with the oath, it must be formalized.

Giving your solemn word can be as simple as saying the words *"I swear"* or *"I promise"* or it can be a deal made via a handshake (i.e., let's shake on it), the exchange of gifts or food, a sworn oath, or even a formal signed agreement.

It bears noting that **the wording of such a promise is extremely important!** The intent doesn't matter as much as the specifics.

For instance, swearing that *"No harm shall come to you while you help us"* is a very bad promise to make. If ANYTHING happens to harm them, even if it was not your fault, then you have broken your word.



It would be better to swear that *"I shall not harm you while you help us,"* to make sure you are not on the hook for outside accidents.

If your character breaks their solemn word, they will be unable to speak again until the next sunrise or sunset. Any time they open their mouth, no words will emerge and something horrible will come out instead, such as a frog, or a swarm of bugs, a cloud of black smoke, or a screeching wail.

If you repeatedly break your promises, then the Wyrld Folk will learn about your lies and be reluctant to help or trust you. The Story Guide may also choose to add a curse (in the form of a dice penalty) to your rolls until your character makes amends.

### SCOUTING RANKS AND REGALIA

There are several official stages to being a Scout in the Wyrldwood. While these have a mechanical component noted below as a guide, progressing between ranks is mostly a matter of story.

When a Scout has been deemed worthy of the next rank, a gift will mysteriously appear for them at the next sunrise. It might be placed at the entrance to their tent, found hidden in their pack, or set at the base of a tree with their name on it. Regardless of how it is presented, there will be no mistaking which Scout the gift is meant for.

#### NOVICE SCOUT

These Scouts are just starting on their path—they are fresh and have much to learn. This is the rank all players should start at for their first adventure into the Wyrldwood. Novices are expected to wear their kerchief (in their particular family's chosen color) and badge sash (even if it has no badges on it yet) at all times.

As novices are new to the wood, they are usually afforded a lot of leeway to make mistakes as they learn their way around the woods. Novice Scouts do not yet have a cloak to wear.



### JOURNEY SCOUT

A Journey Scout has gained some experience in the workings of the woods and has had several adventures.

Once a Scout has mastered at least three badges and completed at least one quest, they are gifted with a capelet and a copper acorn pin which marks them as a Journey Scout.

### MASTER SCOUT

These are the most experienced Scouts and have earned a name for themselves in the wood. Once a Scout has mastered at least six badges and competed at least two quests, their capelet disappears and a full length cloak is left in its place. A Master Scout also wears a pin of polished wood.

### EMISSARY OF THE WYRDWOOD

Once a Scout reaches 16 years of age, they have graduated from the WyrScouts and are no longer afforded the protection of the organization. Most Scouts hang up their sash at this point and embrace their responsibilities in the mortal world.

Those rare Scouts that manage to master nine badges and complete at least three quests are given the opportunity to stay in the woods and become full emissaries of the Fae. By this time, these Scouts are almost indistinguishable from their ancestors anyway.

Emissaries of the Wyrwood no longer wear the sash, kerchief, or badges from their time as Scouts, but instead don a cloak of shimmery green and the solid silver acorn pin of the Aelfar.





## TROOP MASCOT (AKA ANIMAL FAMILIARS)

Most troops have at least one magical animal that serves as the troop's familiar and mascot. These familiars are mundane woodland animals that have become enchanted, either through a direct act of magic or by extended habitation in the woods.

There are no magic spells or badge abilities needed to communicate with your troop's familiars, simple speech will do just fine. These animals are intelligent and can converse just like any other person in the woods. Familiars are rare, however, so it should not be assumed that all animals encountered in the Wyrddwood are capable of human speech.

Familiars will rarely roll dice for their own efforts, as the Scouts are physically better equipped to handle most situations, but they are capable of aiding in appropriate situations. They can also serve as a source of sage wisdom and advice whenever the Scouts seem uncertain of what to do, or if the kids seem to be leaning toward an obvious mistake.

**If the group has adults and kids playing together,** the other adults (beyond the Story Guide) should assume the role of the animal familiars.

**If you are playing with all kids, or all adults,** the familiar is created by the group but run as a non-player character by the Story Guide. The troop's very first mission, in this case, is usually to discover or choose their mascot familiar.

**If multiple adults beyond the Story Guide are playing,** they should each make an animal familiar but pick different virtues and badges.

**If there is one adult player for each child,** then you may want to make the familiar a personal one, connected to the single Scout (and perhaps that Scout's family) instead of the entire troop. In this case, the Story Guide may want the familiars to only be able to communicate with their chosen Scout or Scouts.





The role of familiar can be very rewarding to those who embrace it and it is a lot of fun to watch your familiar's wards, aka your kids, gain in confidence, learn to think strategically, and grow into the game.

75

## CREATING A FAMILIAR

Mechanically speaking, familiars embody only a single virtue, but those virtues are fundamentally different from the ones the Wyrdscouts embrace. Familiars must choose their virtue from **Nurturing, Power, Stealth, and Wisdom.**

**Familiars always have a score of 3 in their virtue,** but may gain a bonus to that if the troop undertakes a familiar-specific quest. (*See Virtue Quests, pg 91.*)

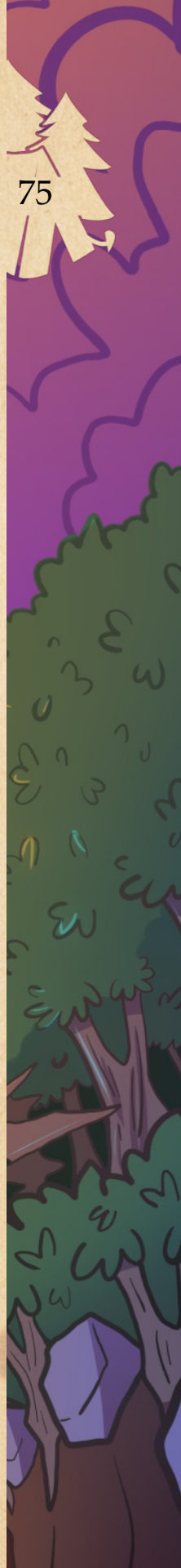
**Familiars also possess three badges at 3 dice each.** These can be anything the group (or familiar player) chooses. Familiars are capable of offering aid to a Scout in any of their relevant badges.

**Finally, familiars have two special abilities,** determined by virtue, that they can use to support the Scouts.

The most memorable familiars in movies and books are those that have a quirky personality or are a little bit different from the norm. Your familiar should have a unique quirk too. Perhaps they have wings when they shouldn't, or they glow in the dark, or speak in a really terrible French accent. These quirks might also help to establish a narrative aspect; for example, a mouse with wings can probably fly, and a glowing bear might see perfectly well in the dark.

**Familiars do not gain experience as the Scouts do.** Instead, at the end of a session when any connected Scouts master a badge (by earning five levels in it), the familiar may add one point to any of their own badges.

Familiars only do this once per session, not once per Scout. No matter how many Scouts may have mastered badges in a session, the familiar only gains one point.





## FAMILIAR ABILITIES

Every familiar receives two abilities based on their chosen virtue. One of these abilities can be used once in each and every scene, but the other ability is only usable one time per gaming session. These abilities only function within the Wyrddwood but no roll is normally required to use them.

### NURTURING

Your primary aim is keeping your Scouts healthy and well. They can handle the rest. (Suggested animals: *Hedgehog, Otter, Opossum, or Deer*)

- ✖ **Heal** - Once per scene, you may heal a living creature of all its wounds. You must touch the creature to do this, and there will be a visible manifestation of your healing power, such as a glowing light or a humming sound.
- ✖ **Calm** - Once per session, you may look a creature in the eye, speak a word of command, and force it to be calm. The word must be the same every time you use this ability. Intelligent creatures may realize that they have been ensorcelled, but until you leave their presence (or they are provoked anew) they will not seem to care.

### POWER

You favor direct action, relying on the strength of your spirit and body to guide the Scouts. (Suggested animals: *Badger, Elk, Wolf, Skunk, or Bear*)

- ✖ **Shield** - Once per scene, when a Scout is about to take damage you may step in and save them. However, you must be close enough to intervene and you will take the damage onto yourself instead.
- ✖ **Roar** - Once per session, you may emit a terrible noise, which will cause all who hear it (even the Scouts) to be stunned for a moment. Nobody, except you, is able to do anything for a full ten seconds.





## STEALTH

You favor sneakiness, deception, and spying to aid your Scouts. (Suggested animals: *Squirrel, Fox, Mouse, or Raccoon*)

77

- ✂ **Magic Pocket** - You possess a magic pocket. Once per scene you may put an item into it or take the same item out. The pocket is invisible, six feet deep, and has an opening of one foot in diameter.

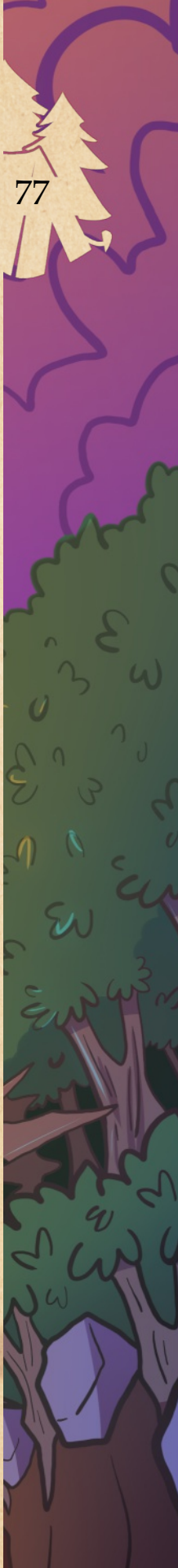
Whatever you place into the pocket will be held in a state of suspended animation and will not age or decay. Living things will not need food, water, or oxygen to survive, though they will have no recollection of being inside the pocket. You may only hold a single item in your pocket at a time.

- ✂ **Turn Invisible** - Once per session, you may turn completely invisible. You will still have a solid form and will be able to see, speak, and make noise, but no-one else will be able to see you. This invisibility will end at the next sunrise or sunset, though you may abandon it by choice at any time.

## WISDOM

You favor knowledge, caution, and careful planning, and encourage those same tendencies in your Scouts. (Suggested animals: *Spider, Owl, Toad, Snake, or Raven*)

- ✂ **Know Secret** - Once per scene, you may ask the Story Guide any question and get a truthful yes or no answer to it. This answer should be given in secret, and it is up to you whether you will share it with the rest of the group.
- ✂ **Magic Threads** - Once per session, you may ask the Story Guide to point out and give a basic description of any magical effects, traps, or charms in your area. You may then choose to unweave or negate one of these effects. The person who laid the spell might know that it has been broken, but they will not immediately be able to tell who did it. If there are no magical effects in your area, you have not exhausted this ability.







## BEFORE THE FIRST ADVENTURE

Instead of bogging down the start of the game with in-character introductions, nervousness, and confusion (all of which could be present for the first plunge into the Wyrddwood), it is better to start the story right in the action of adventuring. To do this, there are a few things that need to be covered before play begins.

- ✂ Do the Scouts know each other?
- ✂ Have they taken their oath and do they understand it?
- ✂ Do they know how to use their powers?

THE EASY ANSWER TO ALL THESE QUESTIONS IS "YES!"

When the Scouts first gathered for their invitation and initiation around the bonfire at the edge of the Wyrddwood, they may not have known each other or anything about the mythic woods. They were simply told that each of them was special and different, that Fae magic ran in their families, and that they were about to join the WyrddScouts for a summer of exploration and adventure.



Most Scouts took the oath together on the spot. But maybe there was a shy Scout that had to go home and think about it. Maybe they needed to be reassured by their parents that this was a real thing. They might have even taken the oath in the privacy of their own home, with only their parents as a witness.

It doesn't matter where or when a Scout took the oath, but in order to enter the Wyrddwood with the troop, the oath must have been sworn.

A few days later they all gathered with their families just outside the edge of the Wyrddwood for a picnic. Introductions were made, basic skills were demonstrated (like pitching a tent and making a fire), and then one by one, the kids were taken across the boundary and into the actual Wyrddwood by the Troop Leader. Each Scout was given the chance to try out their magical abilities.

As the sun set, everyone packed up and headed for home. The Scouts shook hands and vowed to return the next morning. The story begins when they arrive again, this time to enter the Wyrddwood for real to begin their summer of stewardship.

### *Other Common Handbook Advice*

- ✧ *The Fae like formalities. Be polite to everyone you meet. But also know that they tend to respect those who can trick them.*
- ✧ *Before you drink from a spring, leave an offering for the Naiads. And don't drink where a Troll has washed his feet!*
- ✧ *Only collect fallen wood for your fire. Cutting limbs off the trees is best avoided at all costs.*
- ✧ *Names have power, but in the Wyrddwood so do you. There is no need to keep your name hidden from everyone you meet.*
- ✧ *The presence of iron doesn't sicken or harm most faeries anymore, but it is still rude to threaten them with it.*







## PART 4: THE RULES



81



Every game needs a set of instructions on how to play and role-playing games are no different. While this sort of game is mostly a shared storytelling experience, without some basic rules it could easily devolve into frustrations, arguments, and hurt feelings.

Some games involve lots of complicated rules, and various minutiae to cover every possibility. Some games seek to recreate a simulation of the real world as best they can. *Wyrdscouts* is a game that puts the story first, thus the rules are designed with that goal in mind. In this game, the rules exist to support the stories without slowing them down.

**It bears noting that the ultimate goal of any game should be to have fun.** If a rule doesn't work for the group or seems to be getting in the way of the story, feel free to get rid of it. At the end of the day, this is just a fancy game of pretend.

If the thought of rules or past role-playing game experiences have made you nervous, please don't worry. In *Wyrdscouts*, there is only one BIG rule, and it covers when and how to roll your dice.

There are some smaller related rules that cover what happens if a character gets hurt, how your character learns new things, how you can help out a teammate, and how adults go about making enchanted animals to support the *Wyrdscouts*'s adventures, but everything comes back to the one BIG rule.

### THE DICE

*Wyrdscouts* uses 10-sided dice to play the game. Whenever you are required to roll to see if your character can do something, you will build a pool of dice by combining a badge and a virtue together based on your action or response. The most dice any player could ever need to roll on their own is ten, but players are able to temporarily assist others by lending them an additional die.



At a minimum, make sure that you have at least 10 dice for the table to share, plus one more for each player. It will be easier, however, if each player has their own set of ten dice, preferably in their favorite color.

**The Story Guide does not need any dice for *WyrdScouts*.** All outcomes will be determined entirely by the rolls of the players. The Story Guide should never have to roll the dice in this game.

### WHEN DO YOU ROLL DICE?

An adventure in *WyrdScouts* is mostly about passing the narrative back and forth between players and the Story Guide. The Guide will set up a scene by describing what is happening around the characters at that moment in the story. The Scouts will respond, one at a time, with what their character would do. The Guide then determines what happens next, based on the players' actions, and so on and so forth.

Much of the time, there won't be any need to roll the dice. If a character wants to talk to someone else, climb a tree to get the lay of the land, walk toward a clearing, read a book, or any mundane thing that they could reasonably do without any issues, they simply say that they are doing it and the story moves on.

However, if there is ever a situation where the outcome of an action is uncertain or the risk of failure makes the story more interesting, then it is time to break out the dice and roll.

### SOME GOOD TIMES TO ROLL THE DICE ARE WHEN:

- ✖ The tree they want to climb is incredibly tall and has few sturdy branches.
- ✖ It is dark and there are only flashes of lightning to reveal a book's text.
- ✖ They are trying to tiptoe past a slumbering Giant without making any noise.
- ✖ Their wild dancing could end up drawing unwanted attention at an Aelfar ball.



# THE ONE, BIG, DICE ROLLING RULE!

83

Any time a character wants to do something where the outcome is uncertain or there is a risk of failure, they will roll a number of **ten-sided dice** (written in shorthand as d10).

The value of the numbers rolled does not matter, i.e., higher numbers aren't better than lower ones. What matters is if any of the numbers match.

✖ **If no numbers match,**  
then the attempt fails and there may be consequences.

✖ **If two numbers match (a pair),**  
then the player has achieved a **Costly Success**.  
They can do what they set out to do, but there may be unexpected consequences.

✖ **If three numbers match,**  
then the player has achieved a **Solid Success**.  
They do what they want to do and they do it really well.

✖ **If four numbers all match,**  
then the player has achieved a **Spectacular Success!**  
Things go even better than they had hoped for.

## Extra Pairs

*Extra pairs (such as one pair of 4s and a second pair of 1s) do not increase the level of success, but these do give you a narrative bonus to your action!*

*For each extra pair beyond the matches needed for your success level, you get to define one further facet of the situation, so long as it doesn't negate anything already established.*

*This is best conceptualized as an "and" statement and comes after the results of the action have been described by the Story Guide. (See Degrees of Success, pg 122.)*



## HOW MANY DICE DO YOU ROLL?

Dice pools are formed by determining what virtue your desired action falls under and what badge (if any) aids in the attempt. Sometimes your teammates can also give you extra dice to help you out. Any time you need to roll the dice, you will assemble a pool using this formula:

### **Virtue + Badge (+ bonuses & - penalties)**

For example, let's say the troop stumbles upon a hungry bear. Ari, being a brave sort of Scout, decides to stand her ground, puff out her chest, and wave her arms to scare it off while her friends slip back into the trees behind her. There is absolutely a chance that this action could go very badly for her, so dice should be rolled.

In this case, Ari is trying to trick the bear and being helpful in letting her friends escape, but the manner in which she is doing so takes a lot of guts and puts the bear's attention squarely on her. **Bravery** is the most obvious choice for virtue.

So Ari would count out a number of dice equal to her Bravery score and set those aside.

The best badge for this action would probably be **Mythical Beasts**, though she could make an argument that **Camping & Exploring** fits, or maybe even stretch it into **Athletics**. It is ultimately up to the Story Guide to decide which badge makes the most sense given the player's desired action.

Ari would then count out a number of dice equal to her chosen badge and put those with the ones from her virtue.

For our example, let's say that she has a **3** in **Bravery** and a **1** in **Mythical Beasts**. This gives her a total of **4 dice** to roll.

She picks up all four dice at once and rolls them all together, checking the final result for any matches.





Ari rolls a 2, 2, 5, and 8. Those two 2's are a match, so she has achieved a **Costly Success**. She doesn't scare it away, but the bear pauses and turns its attention toward her, allowing the rest of the troop to slip away unnoticed. On Ari's next turn, she is probably going to have to try and outrun the bear as well.

### HELPING ANOTHER PLAYER WITH THEIR ROLL

Sometimes there will be situations where one player is about to roll the dice to do something and another player realizes that they could help out. If the second player has a relevant badge (at any level) or can work their additional efforts into the narration, they may lend the rolling player a single die to help in this one roll.

**The person who declared the action first is always the one who will roll the dice.** Anyone adding to the effort will hand them a die to borrow for the roll.

For example, Ian has decided to bake a mud-cake for the Bergking's birthday party, in hopes of gaining favor with the underfolk. He has a 3 in **Helpfulness**, and a 4 in **Cooking**. Heather decides that she can help by beating the eggs, sifting flour, and licking the spoons. Heather gives Ian one of her dice to add to his roll.

Or maybe, the troop is trying to hold a door closed against an angry group of Hobgoblins, and simply having another body up against the door helps in the effort. In this case, the character with the highest Athletics should be the one to roll but everyone else also pushing against the door can pass them an extra die.

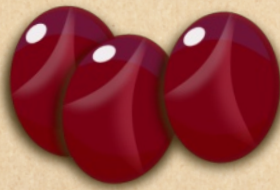




## FAERIE STONES

The troop begins each session with a shared pile of faerie stones, which can be spent at any time to help a player with their actions.

- ✖ If you have five or fewer players, the pile starts with 3 stones.
- ✖ If you have six or more players add two additional stones for a total of 5.



Faerie stones need to be physical objects that the players can manipulate, such as small glass gems, plastic tokens, coins, or even candy (be careful that you don't eat them though!)

**A faerie stone can be spent by any player to change the number on a single die.** This could turn a failure into a costly success, raise the level of an existing success, or provide for a bonus pair. You may use multiple faerie stones together, so long as you have them to spend.

**A faerie stone may also be spent to channel the power of the wood** to create a clearly magical effect by non-magical or questionable means. (Such as creating a salve out of mud, glitter, and jalapenos to make you immune to the cold.)

Faerie stones will refresh at the start of each session and extra stones do not carry over from game to game. The troop earns additional stones in a session for naming stuff when prompted by the Guide.

**Faerie stones are NOT subject to a group vote or veto.** If they are in the pot and a player feels the need to use them, they may do so. However, players should remember that the stones are not a personal commodity meant for frivolous things, but are a group resource that are best used when it really matters.



## NAMING STUFF

In order to allow players to help shape their adventures even more, the Story Guide will occasionally ask them to name significant elements of the story as they appear.

This could be the name of the character's hometown or their family members. It could be an important NPC or a landmark in the forest. In addition to providing a name, you may also get to add a few noticeable details.

**When you provide a name that the Guide uses, you earn a faerie stone to be spent during the current session.** While all faerie stones go into the group pot, it is not polite for one player to name all the things. Be sure to give others a chance to contribute and earn faerie stones for the group as well.

## TROOP ROLL

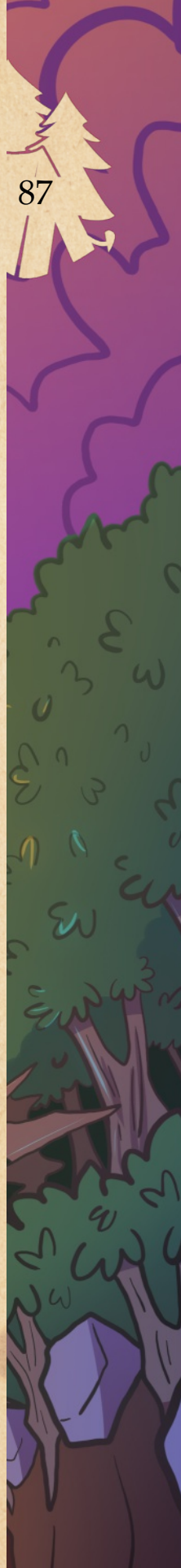
Occasionally, there may be a situation where the outcome is uncertain, but it doesn't make sense for a single player to roll dice.

This might be when someone is frantically flipping through the Troop Journal for help, when a rickety bridge might collapse underneath them, or when a game of chance might go their way. Usually, these events can be pinned solely on the luck of the troop as a whole.



In these cases, every member of the troop (including any player character familiars) will roll a single die each. Compare the results like normal, taking everyone's roll into consideration when looking for matches.

Faerie stones can be spent to adjust the outcome of a troop roll.





## GETTING HURT

The Wyrddwood can be a dangerous place, and while the game of *WyrddScouts* discourages direct combat situations, sometimes the characters might get hurt. Injuries are usually sustained from a failed roll, but only when the Story Guide decides that it makes sense. Not every failed roll must result in an injury.

For example, falling from the top of a tree or being smashed in the head by an Ogre's club will probably cause an injury. Simply failing to open a locked door, decipher some runes, or bake a delicious pie should not.

Every character has four degrees of damage that represent the scope of their injuries. Starting with the lowest, these are: **Bruised** (*a black eye, mild sunburn, minor scratches, etc.*), **Scraped Up (-1)** (*a sprained ankle, a shallow cut, etc.*), **Broken (-2)** (*broken bones, a deep cut, etc.*), and **Out Cold (x)**.

When the Story Guide says that you have taken an injury, you should mark it down on your character sheet, indicating the degree and cause. Being hurt tends to slow people down and makes it harder for them to concentrate, therefore:

- ✖ If you are merely **Bruised**, there is no dice penalty but you should role-play the effects.
- ✖ If you are **Scraped Up**, you will have a **-1 dice penalty** to all of your rolls and must remove one die from your pool before you roll it.
- ✖ If you are **Broken**, you are at a **-2 dice penalty** to all of your rolls.
- ✖ If you are **knocked Out Cold** you are out of the action until someone can help you recover.

In *WyrddScouts*, the player characters are almost never in danger of dying. Dealing with a beloved character being killed does not add to anyone's fun. The worst that can happen is a Scout gets knocked out or captured. Even then, their friends should eventually be able to help them.



## HEALING DAMAGE

Damage to a character is never permanent, and there are several ways to remove it.

89

- ✖ Applying first-aid by using the **Camping & Exploring** badge removes all **Bruised** damage on a **Solid Success** and then downgrades a single **Scraped Up** injury to a **Bruised** injury.

On a **Spectacular Success**, you can remove all **Scraped Up** injuries and then downgrade a single **Broken** injury to a **Scraped Up** injury.

- ✖ A healing potion (created with the **Alchemy** badge) removes a number of injuries as per first aid above. A **Costly Success** counts as a **Solid Success** but inflicts side-effects to be determined by the Story Guide.
- ✖ A character with the Sapling heritage can use their **Healing Touch** ability to heal **ALL** injuries on one character, but will become exhausted (a **Bruised** degree of injury) from the effort.

### What About Combat?

*This is not a combat-oriented game, nor is it the sort of game where problems should be solved by attacking things. This is a game about finding other solutions. If your Scouts are in a situation where they must fight for their lives, then something has gone very wrong in the story. Kids shouldn't be able to directly challenge a terrible beast with only sticks and stones and expect to win. If your Scouts insist on being magical murder hobos, there are other games to play.*

*That said, knocking an Ogre out with a frying pan to the head, causing Trolls to fall into a pit trap, pushing a witch down the stairs and locking her in the cellar, or even tripping an Aelfar knight with a stick are all potential non-combat solutions that can be handled just fine by the One, Big, Dice Rolling Rule.*



## GAINING EXPERIENCE

A key part of the story in Wyrdscouts is learning, growing, and earning your badges.

**At the end of each gaming session, every Scout character is awarded one free point to add to a badge of their choice.**

**Each Scout will also get a second point to put in one of two badges suggested by the Story Guide.** This point must ALWAYS be placed in the lower of the two badges. If the choices are tied, the player can choose between the two.

This means that most characters will be able to master a badge after every three or four sessions.





## VIRTUE QUESTS

**Virtue Quests** are challenging group tasks that allow every Scout in the troop to earn a +1 dice bonus to a specific virtue. Usually, a quest will serve as the focus of several sessions, or it may be set up as a series of tasks that the troop must complete.

91

Scouts may only earn a +1 bonus for each virtue once, though a quest may be completed for each of the four virtues separately, ultimately allowing Scouts to receive a +1 bonus in all four virtues.

For example, the troop decides that they would like to go on a **Bravery** quest. The troop might have to face the biggest fear of each Scout in the group, they might simply have to do a set number of undefined brave actions, or they might have a single challenging task such as striding into a Troll encampment to parlay for prisoners on behalf of the Aelfar King.

Once the Story Guide declares that a quest has been completed, be sure to write a +1 beside it, so that you remember to roll an extra die when using that virtue.

## SWAPPING VIRTUES

Sometimes a player may decide that their virtue scores no longer reflect the path their character has chosen. Perhaps they have three points in **Cleverness** but realize that they are using their **Bravery** virtue much more often.

The value of any particular virtue is not locked forever to the original choice. If you are playing the character one way, there is no reason why you should not be allowed to adjust their virtues to match.

**At the end of an adventure** (which usually takes more than one session of play to complete) **any player may rearrange or swap the values of their virtues for free.**

You may only ever swap the base values of a virtue. If you have completed a quest to raise a particular virtue, you will always receive the +1 die to that virtue, no matter what its value may become through a swap.






RiGiROONY



## PART 5: RUNNING THE GAME



93

### WHAT IS A STORY GUIDE?

In the previous chapters, we discussed the particulars of the Wyrdwood and the rules for playing as Scouts. But who decides how the story starts? Who says what happens when a roll fails? And who creates the obstacles that make the game a game, instead of just a creative storytelling exercise? These jobs all fall to the Story Guide.

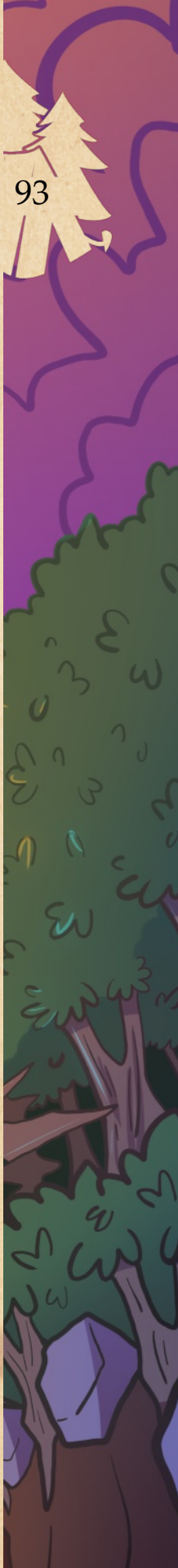
Performing the role of the Story Guide is perhaps the most challenging part of *WyrdScouts*, but it can also be the most rewarding. Your job is to weave the world for the characters to explore, provide challenges to make the story interesting, adjudicate the rules, and keep the adventure flowing.

You are like a director for a movie that has started filming before the story has been fully written. You will take the setting, the props, some plot ideas, and the choices made by your actors (the players) and run with them, forging a story as you go along.


While this may sound difficult at first, your job mostly consists of simply presenting a situation, letting the players react to that situation, and then asking yourself, “What should happen next?”

This chapter will provide tools and advice to help you run an exciting and memorable game. While the following pages will be most useful to the Story Guides, there is nothing here that can’t or shouldn’t be read by the players. **No story-spoiling secrets will be given away in these pages.**

There are roughly three broad categories of Story Guide responsibilities: **Building the Story, Engaging the Players, and Adjudicating the Rules.** While these duties overlap and intermingle, each building off the others, this chapter breaks them down into smaller sections for easier consumption. For more advice on the art of running a RPG, there are many other great books, podcasts, and websites to check out.







## BUILDING THE STORY

### ASSEMBLING THE CAST

94

While a good story in books or movies is possible with only one author, you need a diverse cast of players for a good role-playing game. And those players will need interesting characters.

While it is perfectly acceptable to have the players create their characters on their own, it is usually wise to create the characters together the first time you gather to play. This way players can ask questions, explore connections and concepts, and create a troop that complements each other's abilities.

This last part is of particular importance. While you could totally run a game in which the entire troop is comprised of bookish Dryads, such a setup limits the sort of stories the characters can excel at and leads to a potentially frustrating sameness. Every player wants to feel that their character is unique, and each one needs to have something special to contribute to the group dynamic.

If two people have their hearts set on playing the same ancestry, encourage them to find differences in their virtues, badges, and personalities.

There is no need to have characters cover all of the traditional "party roles," such as wizard, tank, healer, and social charmer, as *WyrdScouts* is designed to allow characters to serve in various capacities as needed.

However, you will create a better story if the troop has a balance of different personalities. Usually groups will arrive there on their own, but younger players may need some guidance in creating an interesting persona that melds well with the others.

Even if players are creating characters ahead of the first game, you do want to set aside some time to discuss the troop particulars (such as any familiars, who carries the Troop Journal, etc.) and introduce the characters to each other. Remember that they will have met prior to their first adventure and should at least know everybody's name and most likely their ancestry.



## SETTING THE STAGE

The first job of the Story Guide (after characters have been created and everyone is ready to play) is to set the stage for the upcoming adventure. You need to let the players know where they are, what has happened already, and what their next mission is.

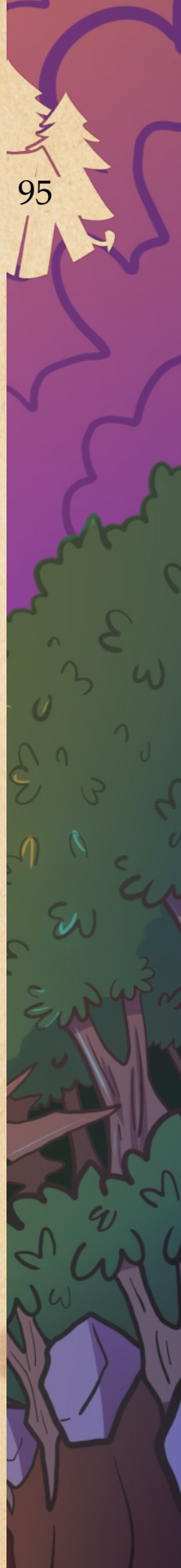
If this is the first session of the game, you might want to begin with a recap of their pre-Wyrdwood picnic and narrate their entrance into the wood. If there have been several sessions of play already, it helps to give a brief recap of what has happened in the story so far and where things stand for the characters at this moment.

When providing a description, try to use all five senses. The more descriptive you can be when painting a picture, the easier it will be for the players to immerse themselves in the story and decide what to do.

*"The air is crisp and chilly, sending shivers across your skin as the morning fog creeps through the trees. Woodsmoke tinged with the scent of roasting apples and cinnamon rises into the sky from the witch's chimney nearby. The leaves rustle overhead and crunch beneath your feet, the trees leaning close to whisper to one another.*

*You kneel down to take a sip from the spring, and cool, refreshing water trickles down your throat. It tastes fresher than any water you have ever tasted before, like liquid moonbeams with the slightest hint of peppermint. Then a sudden cry of despair shatters the morning air. Somewhere, close by, someone is in trouble."*

Then, jump into the adventure and get the story rolling. Any time the scene changes (such as when the characters travel to a new location) or new elements come into play (a trap is sprung and the characters tumble into a pit), take a moment to describe the surroundings and situation again. Be sure to include any new relevant information that the characters are aware of.





For instance, while you could simply say, “*You fall into a pit,*” it is much more interesting to say:

*“Without warning, the ground gives way with a crackling of sticks. An explosion of leaves whirls around and around, as you fall a dozen feet down into the dark and land on a rough dirt floor. Thankfully, the dirt is loose and hasn’t been packed down, which softens the blow even though the wind is knocked out of you. The walls of the pit are dirt as well, and up above you see the remnants of the brittle branches you unwittingly walked upon.”*

THIS LETS THEM KNOW SEVERAL IMPORTANT THINGS:

- ✂ How far down they are.
- ✂ What the floor and walls are made of.
- ✂ That they are not hurt.
- ✂ What they have to work with.
- ✂ How they missed spotting the trap in the first place.

Sure, they might still ask questions about their situation, but you have gotten the basics out of the way already.

Also, remember that the characters are kids, and everything is bigger in a kid’s world. The trees are taller, the streams wider, the holes deeper, the ogres enormous, and so many things are out of their reach.

## CRAFTING THE ADVENTURE

Every story needs a basic plot, and adventures in *Wyrdscouts* are no different. However, plots in a role-playing game should be intentionally vague and loose, as you never know how the player's choices are going to alter your own plans.

While you should settle on the basics of the adventure BEFORE your players gather for the session, you should not decide too many things ahead of time.

If you have every detail laid out before the story begins, either you will be frustrated that the players aren’t doing what you expected of them, or the players will be frustrated that you are forcing them to go in a certain direction for victory.



## Noticing Things

There is no “notice roll” in this game. If there is a clue, item, person, etc. that the characters should reasonably be aware of—make them aware of it. Nobody wants to know that they missed an element of the story, simply because they rolled poorly for their character’s observation at that moment.

Do not hold the story back simply because nobody thought to look for a clue. Instead, give them a reason to notice it. But remember, just because they have a clue, they don’t automatically know what it means or what to do with it.

If the story works better with elements of surprise (or the characters are intentionally being clueless or preoccupied) feel free to spring traps and ambushes on them. No need to tell them about the Trolls hiding in the bushes if they are not taking pains to watch out for such things.

Most adventures in *Wyrdscouts* will take the form of the Scouts helping someone in need. Occasionally, the Scouts may just have to overcome some obstacles of the forest on their own, without any prompting, but the bulk of the stories will be driven by the needs of one or more Fae NPCs (non-player characters).

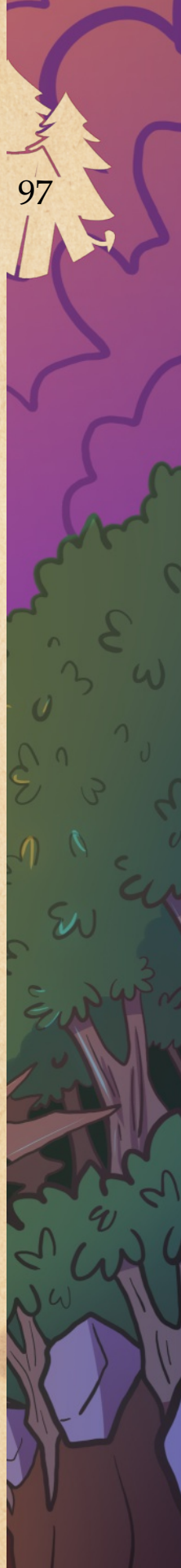
While many other role-playing games are heavily monster focused (i.e., kill this, that, and his brother and then take all their treasure), *Wyrdscouts* is very much a task and people focused game instead. The Scouts will have an actual job to do, and they should not be left adrift without direction.

IN AN ADVENTURE, THE FIRST QUESTION TO ASK IS:

- ✂ Who needs help, and what do they need?

SOME FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS TO ASK ARE:

- ✂ Where are they?
- ✂ What stands in the way?
- ✂ What are two possible solutions they could explore?





For instance, an Alefar known as the Traveler might need help to create a new path through the forest. Their chosen direction leads through a foul swamp that they didn't expect to be there, and the stench, snakes, and poisonous toads have forced them back.

The Scouts could create a bridge to help them across, convince them to go around on a safer path, or maybe even see if there is a grumpy Naiad that has caused the area to turn swampy.

Or, maybe an Ogre has moved into a Pixie clan's garden and is fouling the ground, squashing the flowers, and eating the Pixies. Moving the clan is one option, but the Pixies probably won't accept it, so the characters need to get rid of the Ogre.

They could trick it into leaving, entice it away with a more robust feast than the Pixies provide, or maybe even lull it to sleep and physically roll it out of the garden.

### NPC Names

*Remember that the players will be naming the important NPCs when they are introduced in the story. This saves you the hassle of coming up with a lot of interesting names, but it can also make it slightly harder to plan out an adventure and keep everyone straight.*

*To that end, we suggest giving the NPCs titles or tags. Aelfar each have a title, so the Hunter, the Traveler, the Herdsman, etc. is perfectly acceptable for you to use before you know their actual name. Other NPCs may be noted by their job or position, such as the White Witch, the Swamp Naiad, etc.*

*When planning for a group of similar NPC, such as a hunting party of Trolls, you might label one as the chief, another as the sentry, a third as the cook, and so on.*



The players might easily come up with many options you had never considered. (Maybe they devise a fogger to clear out the toads as the troop tromps on through the middle of the swamp.)

**If the players come up with a plan that sounds interesting or adventurous, let them go for it!** Even if it wasn't the solution you had in mind for a particular adventure, part of the fun in a role-playing game is seeing how other people's ideas can shape the story into something even better.

There are so many folks who need help in the WyrldWood, so practically anyone in need can be the basis for an adventure. Further adventures might start from the lingering consequences or unresolved threads of a previous one.

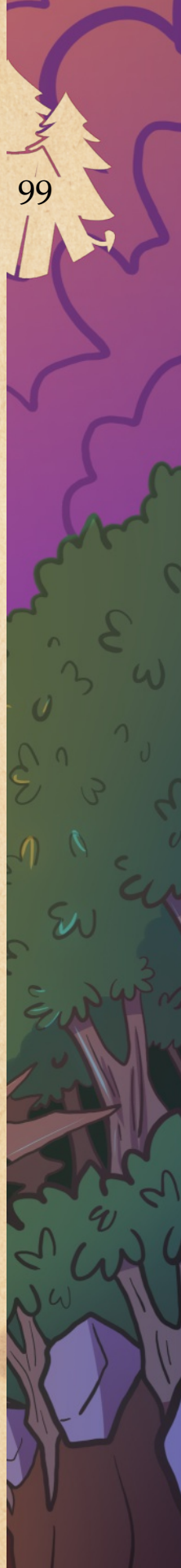
To get you started on a story, we have provided charts on the next page to quickly and easily create the bones of an adventure.

Simply roll one d10 for the Task chart, and then again on each referenced chart. While the charts don't dictate specific details to use, they should serve to spark your imagination enough to flesh out the greater details.

Also note that adventures do not need to start with a face to face meeting. The Scouts could receive a message, find a note tacked to a tree, or all have the same shared dream. They could even be in the middle of doing something else when they hear a cry for help.



Even though the task may be to help a particular person, there does not need to be a formal request to get started. The Scouts might never even meet the person they are helping.





# ✧ ADVENTURE CHART ✧

(Roll a d10 for the Task and again for each referenced item.)

## WHAT IS THE TASK?

- 1) Find <Object> for <Person>, made difficult by <Obstacle>.
- 2) Deliver <Object> to <Person>, avoiding <Obstacle>.
- 3) Convince or persuade <Person> to help with <Obstacle>.
- 4) Rescue, Collect, or Steal <Object> from <Obstacle>.
- 5) Entertain or Distract <Person> for <Person>.
- 6) Fix or Heal <Object/Person> from damage by <Obstacle>.
- 7) Defend <Object/Person> from <Obstacle>.
- 8) Conceal or Hide <Object> from <Person>.
- 9) Neutralize or Tame <Obstacle> for <Person>.
- 10) Create <Object> for <Person>, but <Obstacle> interferes.



## OBJECT

- 1) An important message
- 2) A sentimental item
- 3) An important guest
- 4) A dangerous prisoner
- 5) Something long lost
- 6) A magical treasure
- 7) A perfectly mundane gift
- 8) Delicious food or treats
- 9) A special book or secret plans
- 10) A mythic beast or strange plant





## PERSON

- 1) Aelfar (or their vassals)
- 2) The Trolls (or other dark Fae)
- 3) A Gruv or Pixie clan
- 4) A Dryad or Naiad
- 5) A Giant or monster
- 6) A traveler, messenger, or hunter
- 7) An outcast, scoundrel, or criminal
- 8) A witch or mystic
- 9) An enchanted animal or mythic beast
- 10) A fellow Scout(s)

## OBSTACLE

- 1) Aelfar (or their laws)
- 2) Trolls (or other dark Fae)
- 3) A trickster or scoundrel
- 4) A moral dilemma
- 5) Wild animals or mythic beasts
- 6) Foul weather or confusing directions
- 7) A witch or strange magic
- 8) A monster, Ogre, or Giant
- 9) A dangerous place
- 10) Pick (or roll for) two!

If you are feeling brave and up for a creative challenge, you can also switch up the charts (Object for Person, Person for Obstacle, etc.) to create a stranger, but still possibly story-worthy result. Doing this may just require a bit more mental-gymnastics to figure out how to get the story started.



## VIRTUE QUESTS

Virtue Quests are major undertakings that the Scouts can accomplish as a troop in order to “level-up” in a particular virtue. These are grand adventures, possibly the basis for an entire story arc that spans several sessions, and they should involve some significant chance of failure.

Virtue Quests tend to need a bit more planning and thought than simply rolling on the chart at the start of the adventure. They should tie into ongoing event and build off past storylines. Though rolling on the chart could be a good way to gather some ideas about possible quests.

For example, if the Scouts have made an enemy of a bitter, lonely Aelfar, then a suitable Virtue Quest for **Helpfulness** may be to sneak into his home and prepare small kindnesses without being spotted. They might clean the place up, bring in fresh flowers, paint pictures of his past deeds, and do other simple things to mend their relationship. After they have worked their magic, they can leave a cryptic sign to let him know it was them was all along.

If it is a **Charm** quest the troop is seeking, perhaps they have to head into the Winterweald to confront the Häxentrol and convince her to call back a hunting party that has been causing trouble in the woods. She may present them with challenges to test their mettle, or riddles to test their wits, but ultimately it is their behavior and not their success or failure at her tasks that will win her respect and favor.

For a **Bravery** quest, maybe the Scouts have to descend deep into the Undercroft to rescue a team of lost Gruv miners. It is dark down there and there are monsters lurking who would be more than happy to gobble them up. Simply pressing forward despite the dangers is brave, but actually finding the miners and bringing them home is what makes it a completed quest.



A **Cleverness** quest could take the form of helping a Dryad who needs guidance from the Oak King. The troop must navigate the Oakenhall to his throne room and find a magical way to rouse him out of his slumber for a moment, or otherwise communicate with him through symbols and dreams. Once they bring his deciphered wisdom back to the waiting Dryad, they have shown their Cleverness and completed their quest.

## RUNNING THE NPCs

Even though the players will provide the names (and one defining detail) for the characters the Story Guide introduces, it makes for a more memorable session if you can give the NPCs their own quirks and personalities. **One way to do this is by giving each character a unique voice.**

This doesn't mean you have to give them a funny voice, and you should absolutely avoid the tendency to make all the NPCs sound like they belong at a bad Renaissance Faire, but it does mean to take a moment to think about things such as the timbre of their voice (is it low or high?), their speed of talking, and the words they choose to use.

An Aelfar noble will speak very differently from a brutish Ogre, and both will be distinct from an excited Pixie.

### NPCs SHOULD HAVE THEIR OWN WANTS AND NEEDS!

Sure, the character's primary goal might be to overcome an immediate obstacle, but why do they want to overcome it? What do they value most? What are their thoughts about the other characters, or their own place in the woods? The more motivators you can devise for a character, the easier it will be to decide what they do in response to any given situation.

It is often very helpful to write down (on a notepad you keep solely for the game) the name of an NPC and details that arise about them in play. This way you can refer back to those notes if you ever want the character to cross the players' path again.



While not every NPC needs to return after their part of the story is done, recurring NPCs can be great tools for building a larger story and a more immersive world. Having a familiar cast makes coming up with adventures a bit easier and provides for a more enjoyable game in the long run.

### REMEMBER THAT FAE CANNOT LIE!

Wyrd Folk are very careful and often clever with what they say and how they say it. They can twist their words to be vague and confusing, they can omit information and allow assumptions, and they can simply have bad information that leads them to make an incorrect statement, but they cannot speak an intentional falsehood.

### TROOP LEADERS & FAMILIARS

If no adults are playing an animal familiar, then the role becomes an NPC under the Story Guide's control. This character can be a useful tool to remind the characters of their responsibilities and provide guidance when the players seem stuck.

The familiar can also become a crutch that the players turn to for every solution. If this seems to be happening, feel free to have the familiar disappear or get into trouble itself from time to time. It is also perfectly acceptable to have the troop's familiar refuse to help under the guise of "providing an opportunity for learning and self-reliance."

The Troop Leader (*a former Scout assigned to the troop to keep them safe*) should actually be absent at every available opportunity!

Having an adult character that is constantly around to tell the Scouts what to do is frustrating to the players and tends to inhibit a sense of adventure. Use this character to set up the start of a story line or task, and then have them called away.

When the Troop Leader is around, most players will instinctively rebel against them in an effort to be heroes. You should allow them to indulge that tendency.



## MONSTERS & OTHER ANTAGONISTS

Unlike many other role-playing games, the goal of an antagonist in Wyrdscouts is not to defeat the players or give them something to kill. Antagonists are a challenge that serves to advance the story and should be an obstacle that can be overcome in many different ways.

Of course there will be some unintelligent monsters that simply see the Scouts as a meal, but this means that you must balance out such threats with clever ways to trap or avoid them and pepper your adventures with narrow escapes. You should not let the players actually get eaten, unless being swallowed whole leads to a new adventure inside the belly of a beast as opposed to a character's grisly death.

For example, a group of Trolls is making "Scout Soup" and needs fresh Scouts to complete the recipe. The Trolls want to eat the Scouts, but the adventure shouldn't be about fighting and killing the Trolls; instead, it should be a story about the Scouts' efforts to trick the Trolls and ultimately make a heroic escape.

Since Trolls sleep during the day, this might be a chance to sneak in and drill a hole in their pot. Or the Scouts might get captured, placed in flimsy cages, and have to break free. Or they could even try to convince the Trolls that these particular Scouts would be terrible for their soup and they should wait for better specimens.





## ENGAGING THE PLAYERS

After setting up the story, your main responsibility as a Story Guide is to ensure that the game keeps rolling and everyone has an equal opportunity for fun. This means providing options when the players seem stuck, responding to their questions, reacting to their ideas, and making sure that everyone has a voice in what the group is doing.

Note that we say you should provide an *“equal opportunity for fun.”* It is not your job to bend over backward to accommodate one player, nor is it entirely on the Story Guide to provide the session’s entertainment.

Part of role-playing is the buy-in and enthusiasm of the players. Your job is to make sure everyone has the impetus and freedom to get involved. The players have to take it the rest of the way.

## TAKING TURNS

One of the main conventions of a role-playing game is that everyone takes turns. Each player has a moment to describe (and roll for) a single task or action their character takes. That action is resolved if it can be, and then the attention shifts to the next player around the table.

**If an action is complicated or takes more than a few seconds** of “story time” to accomplish, note that it is being worked on and move on to the next player.

**If a player can’t decide what they want to do**, you can offer offer suggestions or ask if they need a moment to think about it and move on to the next player. Just be sure to come back to the player who paused and ensure that every player gets to do something before any player gets a second turn.

While there is no set initiative mechanic built into this game, if the players are having trouble taking turns, or if you want to shake up the order, an easy option is to pass out cards from a basic poker deck. The player with the highest number (or face card – Ace, King, Queen, Jack) acts first and then hands their card back in. Once they are done with their action, the next highest cards acts and so on until all cards are used.



**The Story Guide should take a turn whenever it is needed.** If a character's action causes something to happen that introduces new details or changes the scene, then, by all means, jump in and describe the changes.

Adversaries will usually act when a player rolls a failure or **Costly Success**, but if they do not act on a player's turn in response to a roll, make sure they do SOMETHING after all of the players have had a turn.

## SHARING THE SPOTLIGHT

Every player deserves a moment in every game for their character to be center stage and to do something memorable. It is the Story Guide's job to recognize when these moments can occur and give them the chance to happen.

Bolder players usually have no problem finding their character's moments to shine, but more hesitant players may need extra attention or coaxing. Their moment could be in the finding of an important clue or noticing some crucial details. It could be in crafting a potion or creating a plan.



When the moment is more subtle or an indirect action, make sure you point out after the fact how much that helped the rest of the party. The spotlight can certainly be applauded after the actual act.

**Remember that a player who thinks up an idea is the one who gets to roll for it.** Other players can add a die to assist if they want to be involved with that action, but they cannot take the action away from the player who first voiced the idea.

**Occasionally, a player may think of an idea but declare that someone else would be better at it than they would.** In these cases, the player is in effect giving up their right to roll. If another player likes the idea and wants to go for it, they can do so. The original player is, of course, welcome to assist.



## GIVING OPTIONS

If a player seems truly stumped on what to do, it is the Story Guide's job to remind them of the circumstances and provide some possible options.

You shouldn't simply give them the answer and say *"This is your best way to proceed!"*

But you can say *"Given the current situation, you might want to think about doing X, Y, or maybe Z?"* or *"Your character is really good at X, is there anything you can think of to do with that?"*

## THE TROOP VOTE

If the group as a whole seems at a loss on what to do, or has conflicting ideas on how to proceed (that can not be accomplished in tandem), pause the action and call for a vote.

Present the main choices talked about and then simply ask, *"All in favor of this plan, raise your hand."* and then, *"All in favor of this other plan, raise your hand."*

Then tally the votes and move forward by narrating how the most popular plan gets underway or jump forward to the scene that occurs after putting the chosen plan into action. Moving on with the story is always a better option than letting the players argue themselves in circles.

## DRIVING THE TENSION

Another useful trick for getting the group to move forward is to remind them that while they sit there idle or debating, the NPCs are continuing to act. The characters cannot stop in a chase and discuss which way to go; likewise, they cannot pause most situations to analyze the best approach.

While this tool should not be used for penalizing players who fail to act fast enough, if an otherwise urgent or tense scene seems to be suffering because of indecision, feel free to interrupt and narrate the further troubles that are rising up due to the characters' hesitation.





## SPLITTING THE PARTY

While there is no question that role-playing games are easier to run when the entire group sticks together, and the nature of the Wyrdwood should discourage any characters from going off all on their own, there are times when you cannot help but have the players split into smaller groups to achieve an outcome.

If this happens, make sure you take turns between the two groups when it makes sense to do so. This may mean that you focus on one group for a few rounds and then jump to the other group for a little bit, or you may continue jumping between the two groups action by action.

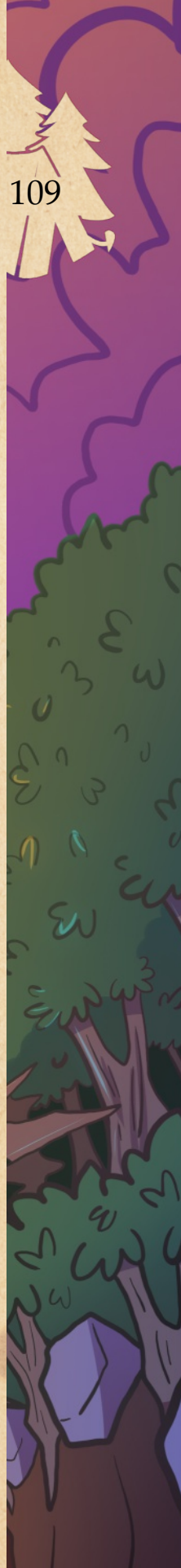
If one group has no set actions while the other group is in the thick of things (for example, one group is scouting while the other remains at camp), try to give the less active group something to do that could help down the line. You could even treat the actions of the second group as assistance dice for rolls later on.

For instance, one group is scouting out a Troll camp during the day and trying to sneak around without being noticed, and the other is preparing disguises for later in the evening.

That evening, one of the characters gets caught by a Troll and tries to convince their captors that they are really just a little Troll who got lost. The captured player can now add bonus dice from the players who stayed behind to work on their costume, even though they are not actively helping them in the current scene.

## "NO, BUT..." OR "YES, AND..."

As a Story Guide, these two phrases are the most important ones you can utter. Sometimes the players may want to do something that is simply outside their abilities or the scope of the current situation. Instead of just shooting down their idea, say "No, but..." and offer a suggestion on how they could do something similar to what they wanted.





For instance, Spring wants to jump off of a tower and land with both feet on the backs of swarming crows and thus fly off to safety. Sure you could let her roll for it, but this scenario stretches credibility and failure means she is most likely going to break her neck.

Instead, you might suggest that she finds a way to entice the crows to fly higher, ties a string to several of their feet, and uses that to carry her safely away. It is still just as outlandish but molds the basic idea into a more workable plan.

Saying **“Yes, and...”** is a great way to entice more detail from your players, which ultimately makes for a more engaging narrative. It coaxes them to define their plans and really think about their methodology, while also painting a better picture in everyone’s mind of how the story unfolds.

For example, Ian decides that he wants to sneak into the witch’s cottage. He could simply roll **Cleverness + Hide and Sneak** and be done with it. But a better approach is for you to say *“Yes, and...how do you do that? Do you wait for nightfall? Do you create a distraction? Do you go through the door or the window?”*

This allows both you and the player to know exactly what is going on, and if Ian’s approach is clever enough you might not even need him to roll the dice at all.

## AWARDING FAERIE STONES

You want to encourage the players to spend their faerie stones instead of hoarding them. Hanging on to the last one for an important roll is fine, but players need to realize how easy they are to get back.

**You always add one faerie stone to the pot when an NPC name is asked for by the Story Guide and provided by the players.** These stones are NOT prompted by the players.



Players do not get to add characters to scenes just to name them, nor should they be naming random animals or individuals in a crowd (*"And there is a farmer named Bob over there in a field."* doesn't earn a faerie stone). Only characters that become part of the story get a name and thus award a faerie stone.

**You should also award faerie stones for excellent role-playing** such as standing up and giving a speech in character, or playing up your character's fears or dislikes even when it hinders their own chance of success.

**Faerie stones can also be awarded for good gamesmanship,** such as handling an important failure with grace, offering a clever idea, or allowing another player their moment in the spotlight.





## GAMING WITH KIDS

112

If you are running a game for inexperienced or younger players, you may need to do things differently than in a game with all adults. Kids bring an abundance of enthusiasm to the table, but often also have a lack of knowledge regarding standard conventions and expectations.

Part of the fun of gaming with kids is not only teaching them about this wonderful hobby of role-playing games, but also marveling at the creative solutions they come up with. To ensure that everyone has a good time, here are some suggestions to keep in mind when running games with a younger audience.

**Schedule shorter sessions and take breaks.** While a weekly game with adults might stretch into the wee hours of the morning, kids tend to play better when they aren't tired or distracted. You probably want to limit your sessions to two or three hours and take a short break halfway through. Snacks are also a great addition to any game.

**Remember that kids don't yet know the cliches!** They have not read all the books nor seen all the movies you have. They don't know most of the classic tropes, which means that you can use them without risking boredom or an immediate solution.

**Ask leading questions!** Many kids can be overwhelmed by having an adult turn to them and say *"What does your character do?"* Or they might be shy and not speak up even when they want to contribute.

A good solution to both of these issues is to ask leading questions, such as *"Do you think the witch is telling you the truth?"*

Or *"You need to get the key from the guard's belt. What do you think might be a good way to do that?"*

Or even *"How would you feel if you heard something snuffling around outside in the dark?"*





**Let them try things!** Kids think differently than adults. Their brains are more flexible and they are not tied down with past mistakes and assumptions.

113

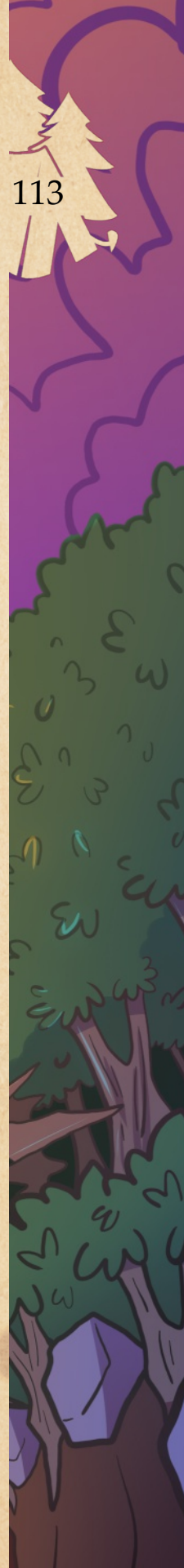
They might come up with a solution or storyline that seems completely implausible or absurd, but if it is fun you should try to roll with it and see where it leads. Even if it ultimately fails, the kids will remember that you didn't just say "No" and actually let them try something different.

**Let them read this book!** If you are blessed with a child that loves to read, please don't stop them from reading this book. So often they are simply told things by adults, but if given the freedom and permission to read and discover stuff on their own they often develop a greater understanding and investment.

If the kids read and know the background of the game, that makes your job of weaving the story easier. If they know the rules, that makes them capable of helping out the kids with less experience, which again makes your job easier. And if they are confident enough to go and run the game with their friends, then your job is done and you might even get the joy of being their player!

**Roll their ideas into the story.** Letting players have a sense of ownership over the narrative goes a long way toward making an enjoyable game. If the kids come up with an idea of how something should work, or speculate on situations that have not yet come into play—use those ideas! It means less world-building and brainstorming that you have to do, and they ultimately get a sense of satisfaction from "figuring it out" beforehand.

**Have Fun!** This is by far the most important advice we can give. Have fun playing the game and telling stories together. If it is getting too stressful, take a break! If a rule isn't working for your group, drop it. If the table dissolves into giggles for ten minutes because something funny happened in the scene, let them laugh! The point is to enjoy playing, and nothing kills a game faster than making it feel like homework.





## MIXED GROUPS

A mixed group of children and adults can be a lot of fun, and *WyrdScouts* has been written to support and encourage this sort of arrangement. This gives parents an opportunity to play something different and challenging as animal familiars and gives children a chance to learn the ropes of role-playing and be the stars in a game. It also makes your job as the Story Guide easier, as you can lean on the experience and support of the adults at the table to help keep the game moving.

However, as the Story Guide it is up to you to keep the balance of this mentor/apprentice relationship intact and ensure that everyone continues to have a good time. Most parents will not want to play in a game where they do nothing at all, and most kids won't want to play in a game where they are bossed around by their parents the whole time.

**If an adult is beginning to overshadow the Scouts efforts,** you should take a moment to remind them that they are an animal and limited in what they can do. Also point out that you need their help teaching and setting a good example.

**If an adult is becoming bossy,** remind them that part of being a Scout is learning through mistakes. Even if the kids don't take their advice the story still rolls forward. Often, the game becomes more interesting when plans don't work out exactly like they intended.

**If the children aren't listening to what their animal familiars are advising them to do,** pause for a moment and repeat what the grown-ups said and ask the kids if that makes sense to them. If it doesn't, ask them if they have a different plan they want to try.

**If a familiar player is starting to withdraw from the action or seems bored,** remind them of their special magical abilities and toss them a task that only they can accomplish. Perhaps the Scouts would benefit from some aerial surveillance and the familiar can fly. Perhaps they are soon to be facing a magical riddle, and this is the familiar's specialty. Perhaps the Scouts are trying to hide and the familiar can lead a threat away. There are lots of things familiars can do to share the spotlight without overshadowing the entire story.



## ADJUDICATING THE RULES

While the rules of *Wyrdscouts* are pretty straight forward, it falls to the Story Guide to be the ultimate umpire, coach, and referee. Not only will the players turn to you for an explanation of the rules, they will also ask your guidance for the badges they should use and the dice they need to roll.

Remember that no matter what the rules say, the point of the game is to have fun and tell a good story, so it will also be up to you to determine when the rules are needed and when the narration can simply lead the way.

## WHEN TO ROLL DICE

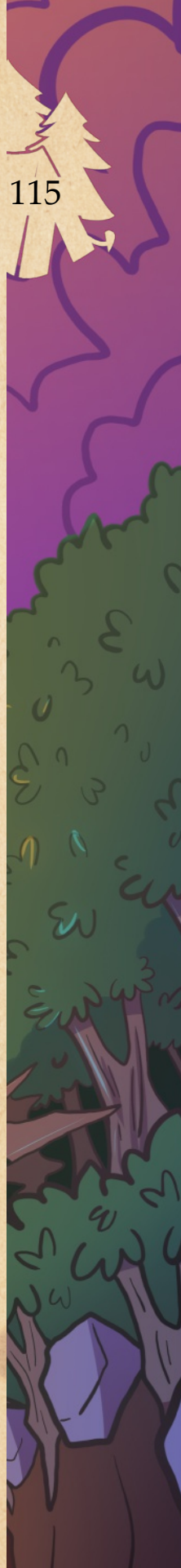
Rolling dice is part of what makes a role-playing game a game. It provides an element of chance, which can be swayed in your favor through the right virtues and badges (or faerie stones), helps reinforce the risk of being in the Wyrdwood, and is ultimately fun—when done in moderation.

**Whenever an action is challenging enough that the outcome is uncertain or there could be repercussions, if failure in a task is important enough to move the story forward, or the players ask if they can roll to do something—roll the dice.**

Otherwise, simply allow the narrative to unfold as it will. Too much dice rolling bogs the game down into mechanical minutia and makes it less fun for everyone.

For example, if Ari wants to gather herbs for cooking as the troop takes a leisurely walk through the woods, then there is probably no need to roll. This is not a challenging action. However, if she wants to gather special herbs in secret while the troop is being followed by Trolls, then a roll is most likely in order.

If Heather wants to run up and poke a bear with a stick, there is no need to roll. She can certainly poke it. However, if she wants to actually scare the bear away (uncertain outcome) or avoid being attacked back (repercussions), then she absolutely needs to roll.





If Thaddeus wants to climb a tree to get a higher vantage point, there is no need to roll. If Thaddeus wants to scramble up the tree while being chased by wolves (failure moves the story forward) then a roll makes sense.

## WHO CAN HELP?

In most situations, anyone can help with an action so long as they can explain how they are doing so. There might be times when too many people want to help, or their help just doesn't make sense in the greater narrative. In such instances, it is perfectly fine to limit how and when the players can lend a die to the effort.

It certainly makes sense that only people close enough to help should be able to do so, so if the party is split up then absent characters would have to have a pretty compelling explanation for how they are helping. (*Perhaps they did something in a previous scene that lends to the current effort, like creating a disguise or discussing the particulars of a plan.*)

If you are playing with a large group (more than five characters) then it is also acceptable to require that anyone wanting to help must have at least one point in an applicable badge. It doesn't need to be the same badge that the active character is using in their roll, but it should make sense on how it can help.

For instance, Heather wants to create a feast for the Aelfar court that evening. Dave has zero points in his **Cooking** badge, but in a small group he could help with simple tasks like stirring the soup or chopping the vegetables. However, because this is an important task and the group of players is large, the Story Guide declares that these efforts alone are not enough to lend a die.

Dave realizes that he has points in **Heraldry & Manners** and asks if he could advise on what foods the Aelfar might respond favorably to, and how the dishes should be presented.



This could be helpful in the current situation, so the Story Guide allows him to add a die to Heather's roll.

## VIRTUES AND BADGES

While it is ultimately the responsibility of the player to decide what virtue their character is trying to use, as the Story Guide you should be ready to offer suggestions and ask for explanations.

For instance, Kimberly may be trying to sneak quietly through a sleeping merman's lair. She says this is **Bravery**, but you think it feels more like **Cleverness**. Instead of saying, "*No, you can't use **Bravery** for this!*" it is better to ask, "*How is this a brave action?*" and let her explain it to you.

She might convince you that since the merman could wake up at any moment and eat her, it is totally a **Bravery** thing. Or she might decide that it really isn't all that brave, but maybe it is clever instead. Either way, you both get a better idea of the mindset and approach of the character.



Or, Dave is stumped and needs guidance. He needs to get through a gate that is blocked by a guard and he wants to do something **Charming** but doesn't know what. As the Story Guide, you suggest that Dave could flatter the guard to win his favor, or he could be commanding and use his forceful personality to convince the guard to let him through. Both are a use of **Charming**, but Dave can pick which one makes the most sense for his character.

It always falls to the Story Guide to decide which badges should be used in a test, but again it behooves you to listen to your players' suggestions as you offer choices of your own. Sometimes a character may not have the most obvious badge for a task, but they might have another one that could do just as well in a slightly different manner.



For example, Ari is searching the woods around their campsite for magical herbs. You rightfully think this is an obvious use of the **Camping & Exploring** badge, but Ari's character doesn't have any points in that. She asks if she could use **Cooking** instead, which is a bit of a stretch since she isn't looking for cooking herbs. You counter that **Alchemy** is more appropriate. Her character has that badge! On to the roll.

## OPPOSITE VIRTUES

Sometimes you will need the players to roll, even though their actions do not seem to fit within the definition of a virtue.

Remember that the virtues represent a range and thus encompass those actions that would seem to be the opposite of the virtue's name. This is often the case when the characters are reacting emotionally or instinctually to the situation.

For example, Ian is exploring a dark cavern in the Undercroft and suddenly realizes that he is walking on bones. He turns in fright and begins running away.

The challenge here is to go in the right direction, away from danger. While this may not seem like a brave thing to do, he does use the **Bravery** virtue to see if he can retain enough presence of mind to head in the right direction.

Or perhaps Thad wants to insult an Ogre into chasing him away from the rest of the group. While throwing insults isn't very charming, he would use the **Charm** virtue to craft a biting taunt sure to drive the Ogre into a rage.

Or maybe Spring is lost in a maze and is randomly picking directions to find her way out. While not necessarily a clever approach to the situation, she would still roll **Cleverness** to see if she is subconsciously choosing the best route.



Lastly, Owain wants to sabotage a witch's wagon, which he has been forced to load up for her. He is removing the supplies she needs on her journey and generally slowing down efforts by dropping things and "accidentally" getting in her way. This could be argued as a **Cleverness** roll, but it can also easily be **Helpfulness**, even though he is being intentionally unhelpful.

## ADJUSTING THE DIFFICULTY

If a player wants to roll to attempt an action, they should always be allowed the opportunity to roll. It is also perfectly acceptable for players to tailor their approaches to ensure that they can use their highest virtues and badges in most situations.

If they are role-playing their actions in such a manner that it makes sense given their stats, then it is believable that they will more often succeed.

However, there are times when what a character wants to do stretches the limits of believability or they are trying to use a virtue or badge that doesn't quite fit the task at hand. In those cases, instead of disallowing a roll, you can apply a degree of difficulty.

There are two ways to do this: **Limited Success** or **dice penalties**.

### LIMITED SUCCESS

If a player wants to achieve more on a task than the situation or their stats will support, simply inform them that their roll will not have as great an effect as they are hoping for. Instead of achieving X,Y, and Z with the single roll they can only achieve X with a **Solid Success**.

If they go on to get a **Spectacular Success** or multiple pairs, you can allow them to achieve more of their original goal.

For example, George wants his character to leap from the back of a moving carriage, grab onto a castle wall, flip up and kick a watchman



in the face, knock him off the wall into a pile of hay, and then drop down below the parapet before anyone spots him. Despite his high **Bravery** and **Athletics**, this is still an enormous action to pull off in one roll!

You tell George that he can roll to make the jump with a **Solid Success**, but the flip, kick, and hide will have to happen on following turns (or with a **Spectacular Success**).

George rolls a **1, 2, 5, 5, 5, 8, 8, 9**. That is a **Solid Success** plus one extra pair. He makes the jump and now has to decide if he would rather use the extra pair to remain unnoticed or to take down the guard and risk being seen.

### DICE PENALTIES

Sometimes an action is just very difficult, even for a seasoned pro, or it doesn't really fit the badge being used. In this case, imposing a dice penalty may be in order. You do this by subtracting dice from a player's pool (the opposite of assisting).

Note that removing a single die makes a task more difficult, removing two dice makes it significantly harder, and removing three dice makes a success almost impossible to achieve.

Revisiting the previous example, you may decide that what George wants to do (jump, flip, kick, and hide) is possible but extremely difficult under the circumstances (the carriage is going very fast, the wall is a bit too high, the guards are on alert, and not being noticed is really more of a job for **Hide and Seek**.) You set a penalty of three dice to the roll, meaning that George must remove those three dice from his pool **BEFORE** rolling. If he succeeds, though, he has achieved all that he set out to do.



## DEGREES OF SUCCESS

It is the job of the Story Guide to narrate what happens after the dice are rolled. It should be pretty easy when a player achieves a **Solid Success** (*three of a kind*) on their roll, whatever they were trying to do happens without a hitch. And when they roll a **Spectacular Success** (*four of a kind*), things go even better than they hoped for.

**Costly Successes** (*one pair*) are sometimes a bit harder to navigate. The character succeeds, but not as well as they hoped or with an unforeseen consequence. Whatever the cost may be, it should not negate the fact that they did succeed at their basic goal—they now just have a complication to deal with.

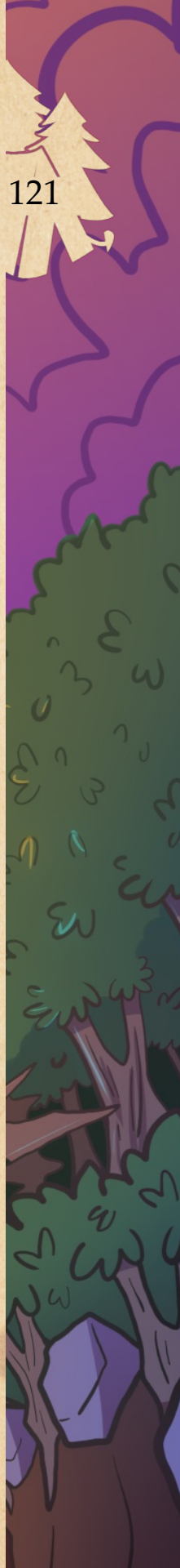
Using the previous examples, if George only rolled a single pair for his attempt to jump from the moving carriage to the wall, then he makes it, but just barely. He is left hanging from the edge of the wall by his fingertips. Or maybe he makes the jump with no problem, but the guard steps out of the way of his kick and turns to look directly at him. Either way, George now has a problem to deal with on his next turn.

Or, Dave manages to successfully flatter the guard and gets through the gate, but the guard also follows along to make sure that Dave doesn't get lost.

Or, Ari manages to find the magical herbs she wanted, but they are being guarded by a venomous toad who doesn't seem likely to move out of the way.

### Regarding Faerie Stones

Remember that if a player wants to attempt a magical effect with clearly non-magical means, they must spend a faerie stone before rolling. This spent stone is only to do the roll in the first place. It does not also allow them to change the value of a die after it is rolled.





Not all costs need to be immediate or obvious, but it is important to note the essence of the cost before a player spends any of their **extra pairs** so that they can help mitigate the negative impact. They cannot totally erase the cost with extra pairs, but they might be able to make it sting less.

Perhaps George actually rolled two pairs of matching numbers, for a **Costly Success** and one extra pair. You tell George that he nails the landing, but misses the guard who now turns toward him.

George decides to spend his extra pair to have the guard step back in surprise and fall off the edge of the wall, landing in that big pile of hay. The guard still saw George, and will most likely raise the alarm, but George is no longer in immediate danger.

### FAILING FORWARD

Sometimes a dice roll simply fails and there aren't any faerie stones left, or the player doesn't want to spend them. In this case, you need to narrate what happens instead of what the player wanted to do.

For some attempts this is easy: you don't find any magic herbs, you don't make the jump, the guard is not swayed.

It is important, however, to help the players fail forward. That is, to ensure that every failure brings an opportunity for further story and does not simply end their plans and leave them stuck for ideas.

For example, perhaps Spring fails her roll to entice the crows higher. She can't escape the tower with their help as she wanted. But maybe her efforts draw the attention of something else, like a hungry griffin.

She didn't succeed and is now in a worse situation than when she started, but there is still an avenue for action and adventure.





Or maybe Kimberly fails her roll to sneak past the merman and bumps right into his tail. Instead of having him wake up and eat her, perhaps he simply cracks an eye, glances her way and asks with a sleepy yawn, "*Why are you here? Are you my breakfast?*" The situation has gotten worse for Kimberly, but the story has grown way more interesting.



## DEALING DAMAGE

Injuries, especially while camping, are a staple of childhood experience. The Wyrdscouts are no exception. They will get hurt in the game, and those mishaps impose not only mechanical penalties but also plenty of story opportunities.

You should not shy away from dealing damage to the characters, though most simple wounds will be a matter of role-playing, and most troops can get access to magical means of healing.

From a rules standpoint, damage in *Wyrdscouts* is a somewhat abstracted system. There are no hit points to chip away at or stacked injuries that give way one to the other until a character falls down dead. As this game de-emphasizes combat in favor of storytelling, the mechanics of dealing with damage are nuanced and narrative as well.

Any minor injury such as a bee sting, a bumped head, a bruised elbow, or a skinned knee should be noted for story effect but only counts as **Bruised** damage. There is no mechanical effect from these sorts of injuries—they rarely slow you down, and they are easy to heal.

Spraining an ankle, burning your hands, getting bitten by a wolf, or being slashed by a sword counts as **Scraped Up** damage. These injuries do impose a **-1 dice penalty** to all of the player's rolls until they are healed.

Breaking an arm or a leg, getting gored in the stomach, or cracking your head open counts as **Broken** damage. This is a significant injury that needs medical or magical attention. This damage affects everything the character does and imposes a **-2 dice penalty**.

Let's say that in the previous example Spring insists on jumping out of the window and trying to land on the crows. She fails her roll, and falls to the ground. Characters in *Wyrdscouts* should not die, but she should certainly break some bones. You should impose a **Broken** level of damage to Spring's character, telling her that she has broken her leg.



Narratively, she will be in a lot of pain, unable to run or even walk fast, and needs at the very least a splint and crutches. Mechanically, she is at a **-2 dice penalty** to all her rolls until she gets the leg fixed.

125

**Damage does not stack** (i.e., two **Scraped Up** levels do not become one **Broken** level) and you do not add the penalties together; instead, only use the greatest penalty imposed by all injuries. Thus a character that has both a sprained wrist (-1) and a stab wound (-2) is only at a **-2 dice** penalty, not a -3.

Damage can also be healed in stages. Thus proper first aid (splints, bandages, etc.) and pain relief could turn a **Broken** injury level into merely **Scraped Up**. This should be done at the Story Guide's discretion, and to support the narrative efforts of the players. If a character is acting in ways that would reasonably cause more pain or make an injury worse, feel free to return the penalty to full strength and remind them that being hurt isn't easy to ignore.

## PLAYER VS PLAYER

Occasionally situations will arise where two players want to act opposite to each other's efforts. Most of the time, especially in a social situation, the Story Guide should simply let them roleplay the narrative out. Encourage them to remember that both in stories and real life, people do not have to agree; however, in the game they are all there to have a good time.

If one player wants to roll to affect another player's character against their will, then the affected player essentially does the opposite of assistance and provides a penalty to the roll. In such cases, the rolling player will subtract a number of dice determined by the affected character's stats. The penalty should be the lower of the virtue or badge that they would normally roll to resist the action, as if it came from an NPC.

For example, Devi wants to convince the rest of the group not to go back into the dark tunnel with the bones. This is simply a role-playing situation, and Devi's character has to make her point using words alone and no dice rolls.



However, if she decides to step in front of the entrance and actually block her friends from going through, they would need to roll to get past her. Ari decides to do just that, so Ari's roll (most likely **Bravery + Athletics**) would be at a dice penalty equal to Devi's **Bravery** or **Athletics**, whichever is lower.

The other troop mates could choose to assist Ari in pushing Devi out of the way (or to try and convince Devi to move), and would thus each add one die to Ari's roll to help offset the penalty imposed by Devi.

To ensure that everyone at the table has the opportunity for fun, player vs player rolls should be an incredibly rare thing. When a conflict like this is looming, pause the action and see if simply talking about it as players (as opposed to in-character) will work things out. Don't spend too much time arguing, though. If there really doesn't seem to be a player compromise in the works, go with the roll and move on with story, reinforcing the idea that there should be no hard feelings.

If one player is attempting to damage, restrain, or steal something from a troop mate, then the game does need to stop and have a very real discussion about the values of the Scouts and the appropriateness of such actions. Sometimes there is a legitimate story reason for such an action, but usually it is simply bad sportsmanship and needs to be nipped in the bud.

## BEYOND THE WYRDWOOD

This book has hopefully given you the spark you need to tell stories in the Wyrdwood, but those are not the only adventures that can be told with these characters or these rules. Guidelines for adventuring in other realms are planned for future supplements and expansions, but you may want to have adventures in the mortal realms before then.

As the WyrdScouts are half-human, with ties to their family and friends back home, it makes sense that trouble might arise between their trips to the Wyrdwood, and it can be fun to explore that side of the character's lives.



To do this, think of the normal problems that the kids might face back home—a bully at school, a lost pet, an illness—and let them tackle it with the skills and experience they have gained in their WyrldWood adventures. However, do note that in the mortal realm, any use of a magical ability requires the expenditure of a faerie stone, due to being disconnected from the Wyrldwood.

127

Mortal problems are not the only sort that the Scouts might encounter at home. Remember that they come from magical families, who may have made personal friends and enemies in the Wyrldwood. There are also unsavory WyrldFolk who venture out of the woods to make trouble, and Hobgoblins who sometimes take up residence in homes beyond the edges. Any of these could be the source of an exciting mortal realm adventure.

## ENDING THE STORY

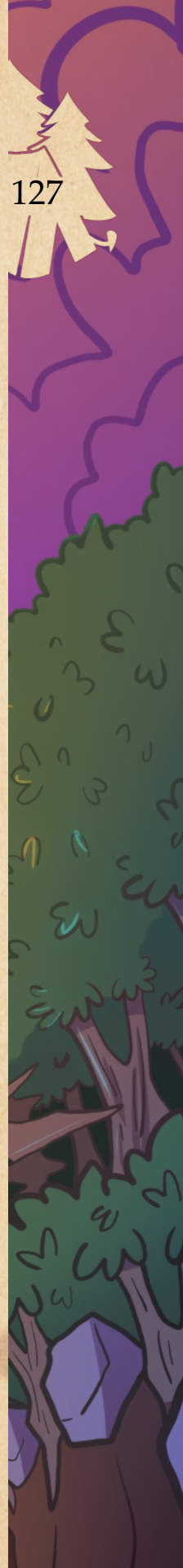
While role-playing games can and do continue on with the same cast ad nauseum, session after session, year after year, there may come a point when you wish to wrap up your character's stories and move on...or start over again.

The characters might have become too powerful to find any more challenge in the woods. The cast may have changed too much as players move away or join anew. Or the Story Guide might simply be out of ideas and need a break. Such things are a perfectly normal part of the hobby.

While some players may want to keep their characters around as lifelong companions, dipping in from time to time to relive adventure through their eyes, the reality is that many times those stories will just trickle away under real life intrusions. As in a good book or movie, bringing a long-running story to a suitable conclusion can be immensely fulfilling.

## IT IS OKAY TO REACH "THE END."

In *WyrldScouts*, this end is usually a crossroads in the character's lives. They have gone on many adventures together, made friends and enemies, solved numerous problems, and most likely grown up quite a bit.





They have learned all that they can from the Wyrddwood and are now forced to choose between staying in the woods and returning to their mortal life. Either choice means the end of their current adventures, and a closing of the stories you can tell with this rulebook.

If you feel your game is reaching that point of completion, it is best to discuss that impulse with the players and decide what unresolved business seems suitable for their final adventure in the Wyrddwood.

They may have a problem left unsolved, a friend they wish to revisit, or a final passage to write in their Troop Journal. The characters will know that their last summer as WyrddScouts is coming to an end and this is their chance to say goodbye before moving on with their lives.

Upon the close of their final adventure, you want to be sure to give each player a spotlight moment to wrap up their story and describe where their beloved character goes from here.

It might be off to college, or into the service of the Aelfar. It might be that they become renowned real-world explorers, or authors writing books about their adventures, or it may be something as simple as them all going out for pizza. The point is that each player gets to wind their story down in a way that feels right to them.

And then—there are other great role-playing games out there to explore! Or, if you prefer, new adventures with new characters to be had in the Wyrddwood, maybe even building off and reacting to the things the previous characters did. If you do start up a fresh game of *WyrddScouts*, remember to pass the Troop Journal on to the fresh novices.

Part of the fun of any role-playing game is remembering the sessions long after you have finished them, to revisit your adventures (the memory of which grows golden over time), your victories and downfalls, and your inside jokes with your old friends.

So until we meet again—



May your time in the Wyrldwood  
be full of adventure.

May the stories you tell  
be exciting and memorable.

May the friendships you make  
last forever.

The End...





# INDEX

<b>A</b>		When to roll	82, 115	Leader	67, 104
<b>Aelfar</b>	18, 21	<b>Dryads</b>	18, 29	Mascot (see <i>Animal Familiars</i> )	
<b>Ancestry</b>	42	<b>E</b>		Roll	87
Aelfing	43	<b>Experience, Gaining</b>	90	Vote	108
Faun	44	<b>F</b>		<b>V</b>	
Gruvokin	44	<b>Fae Folk</b> (see <i>Wyrdwood, People of</i> )		<b>Virtues</b>	50, 51, 117
Half-Giant	45	Inability to Lie	34	Bravery	51
Hob	46	Resist Magic of	22, 34	Charm	51
Pix	46	<b>Faerie Stones</b>	86	Cleverness	52
Pook	47	Awarding	110	Helpfulness	52
Riverchild	48	Uses of	86, 121, 127	Opposite Virt.	118
Sapling	48	<b>G</b>		Swapping Virt.	91
<b>Animal</b>	42, 74, 104	<b>Giants</b>	31	Virtue Quests	91, 102
<b>Familiars</b>		<b>Gruv</b>	20, 24	<b>W</b>	
Abilities	76	<b>H</b>		<b>Witches</b>	35
Creation of	75	<b>Hobgoblins</b>	23	<b>WyrdScouts</b>	
Virtues	76	<b>N</b>		First Meeting of	74
<b>B</b>		<b>Naiads</b>	31	History of	65
<b>Badges</b>	52, 53, 117	<b>Notice Rolls</b>	57, 97	Oath of	69
Alchemy	54	<b>NPCs</b>	103	Shedding Blood	70
Arts & Crafts	54	Naming of	87, 98, 110	Solemn Word	71
Athletics	55	<b>O</b>		Ranks & Regalia	72
Camping & Expl.	55	<b>Ogres</b>	33	Standard Equipment	62
Cooking	56	<b>P</b>		<b>Wyrdwood</b>	11
Heraldry & Man.	56	<b>Pixies</b>	26	Beasts of	36
Hide & Seek	57	<b>Player vs Player</b>	125	Finding & Entering	12
Knavery	58	<b>Playing w/ Kids</b>	112	Going Beyond	126
Music & Dance	58	<b>Puka</b>	33	People of	21
Mythical Beasts	59	<b>S</b>		Clans	24
Puzzle Craft	59	<b>Satyr</b>	24	Solitaires	29
Storytelling & Lore	60	<b>Story Guide</b>	93	Trooping Court	21
<b>C</b>		Creating Adv.	98, 100	Regions of	16
<b>Character Creation</b>		Ending the game	127	Borderlands	16
Quick Steps	63	“No, but...”	109	Dingledell	16
<b>D</b>		Setting the Stage	95	Oakenhall	18
<b>Damage</b>	88, 124	“Yes, and...”	110	Summerlands	18
Healing	48, 89, 125	<b>T</b>		Undercroft	20
Injury Levels	88, 124	<b>Trolls</b>	20, 27	Winterweald	20
<b>Dice</b>	9, 81	<b>Troop</b>	65, 66	Time & Travel in	13
Adjusting diff.	119	Journal	67, 79	Mushroom Rings	14
Dice Penalties	120			Standing Stones	15
Limited Success	119			Stray Sods	15
Degrees of Success	121				
Extra Pairs	83				
Forming a Dice Pool	84				
Helping	85, 116				
OBDR Rule	83				



Marching north brings cold and ice,  
Southward, summer's sun is nice.  
To the east for morning's light,  
Westward toward the dead of night.  
When it rains, keep safe your head  
All goodly folks should be abed.  
When the sun is high and bright,  
Stony Trolls shall cause no fright.  
Beyond the Wyrdwood, sights to see,  
Up high in the sky, beneath the sea.  
Or deeper where the nightmares dwell,  
What lurks within that darkened dell?



DARKSCOUTS  
COMING SOON!



## ~ Virtue & Abilities ~



Per Scene \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Per Session \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## ~ Badges ~



\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## ~ Animal Familiar ~

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Description \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## ~ Injuries ~

☐ Bruised \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Scraped Up (- ④) \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Broken (- ④) \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Out Cold \_\_\_\_\_



## ~ Virtue & Abilities ~



Per Scene \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Per Session \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## ~ Badges ~



\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## ~ Animal Familiar ~

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Description \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## ~ Injuries ~

☐ Bruised \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Scraped Up (- ④) \_\_\_\_\_

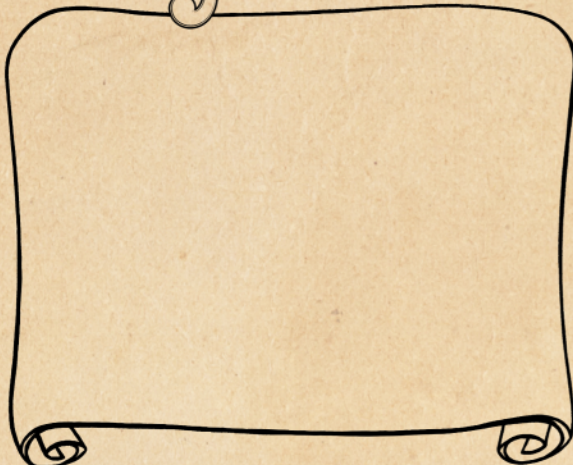
☐ Broken (- ④) \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Out Cold \_\_\_\_\_





# Wynd Scouts



## Me & My Powers

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Ancestry \_\_\_\_\_

Passive Ability \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Active Ability \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

## Injuries

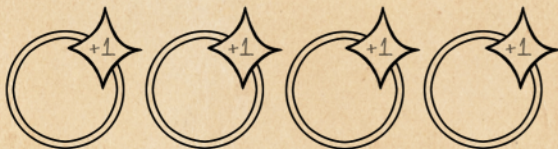
☐ Bruised \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Scraped Up (- ④) \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Broken (- ④) \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Out Cold \_\_\_\_\_

## Virtues



Bravery

Charm

Cleverness

Helpfulness

## Badges



ALCHEMY



ARTS & CRAFTS



ATHLETICS



CAMPING & EXPLORING



COOKING



HERALDRY & MANNERS



HIDE & SEEK



KNAVERY



MUSIC & DANCE



MYTHICAL BEASTS



PUZZLE CRAFT



STORYTELLING & LORE

Mastery Abilities \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_





## More About Me

Likes

Dislikes

## My Stuff

Backpack

Mess kit

Toothbrush

Pajamas

Pocket knife

Sleeping bag

Canteen

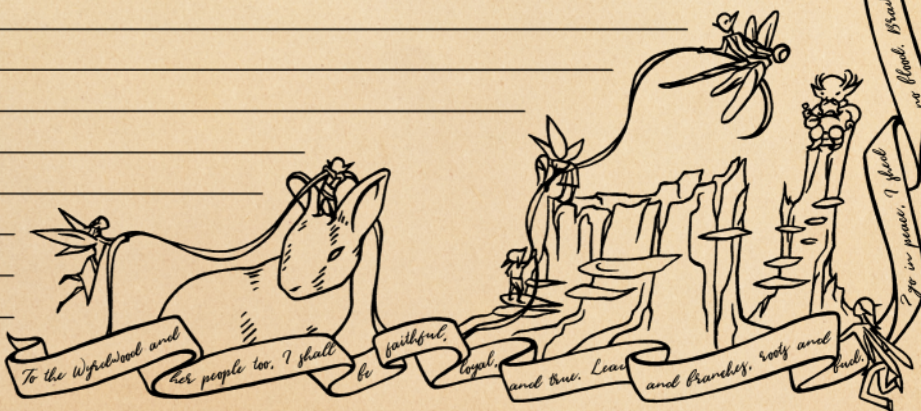
Towel

Extra set of clothes

Flashlight

## Things I've Done

## Other Notes





## ~ Virtue & Abilities ~



Per Scene \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Per Session \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## ~ Badges ~



## ~ Animal Familiar ~

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Description \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## ~ Injuries ~

☐ Bruised \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Scraped Up (- ④) \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Broken (- ④) \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Out Cold \_\_\_\_\_



## ~ Virtue & Abilities ~



Per Scene \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Per Session \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## ~ Badges ~



## ~ Animal Familiar ~

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Description \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## ~ Injuries ~

☐ Bruised \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Scraped Up (- ④) \_\_\_\_\_

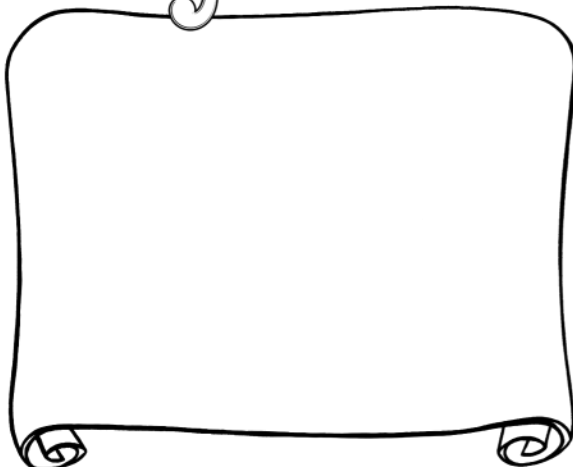
☐ Broken (- ④) \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Out Cold \_\_\_\_\_





# Wynd Scouts



## Me & My Powers

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Ancestry \_\_\_\_\_

Passive Ability \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Active Ability \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

## Injuries

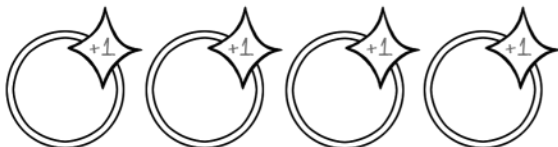
☐ Bruised \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Scraped Up (- ⑧) \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Broken (- ⑧) \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Out Cold \_\_\_\_\_

## Virtues



Bravery

Charm

Cleverness

Helpfulness

## Badges



ALCHEMY



ARTS & CRAFTS



ATHLETICS



CAMPING & EXPLORING



COOKING



HERALDRY & MANNERS



HIDE & SEEK



KNAVERY



MUSIC & DANCE



MYTHICAL BEASTS



PUZZLE CRAFT



STORYTELLING & LORE

Mastery Abilities \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_





## More About Me

Likes

Dislikes

## My Stuff

Backpack

Mess kit

Toothbrush

Pajamas

Pocket knife

Sleeping bag

Canteen

Towel

Extra set of clothes

Flashlight

## Things I've Done

## Other Notes

