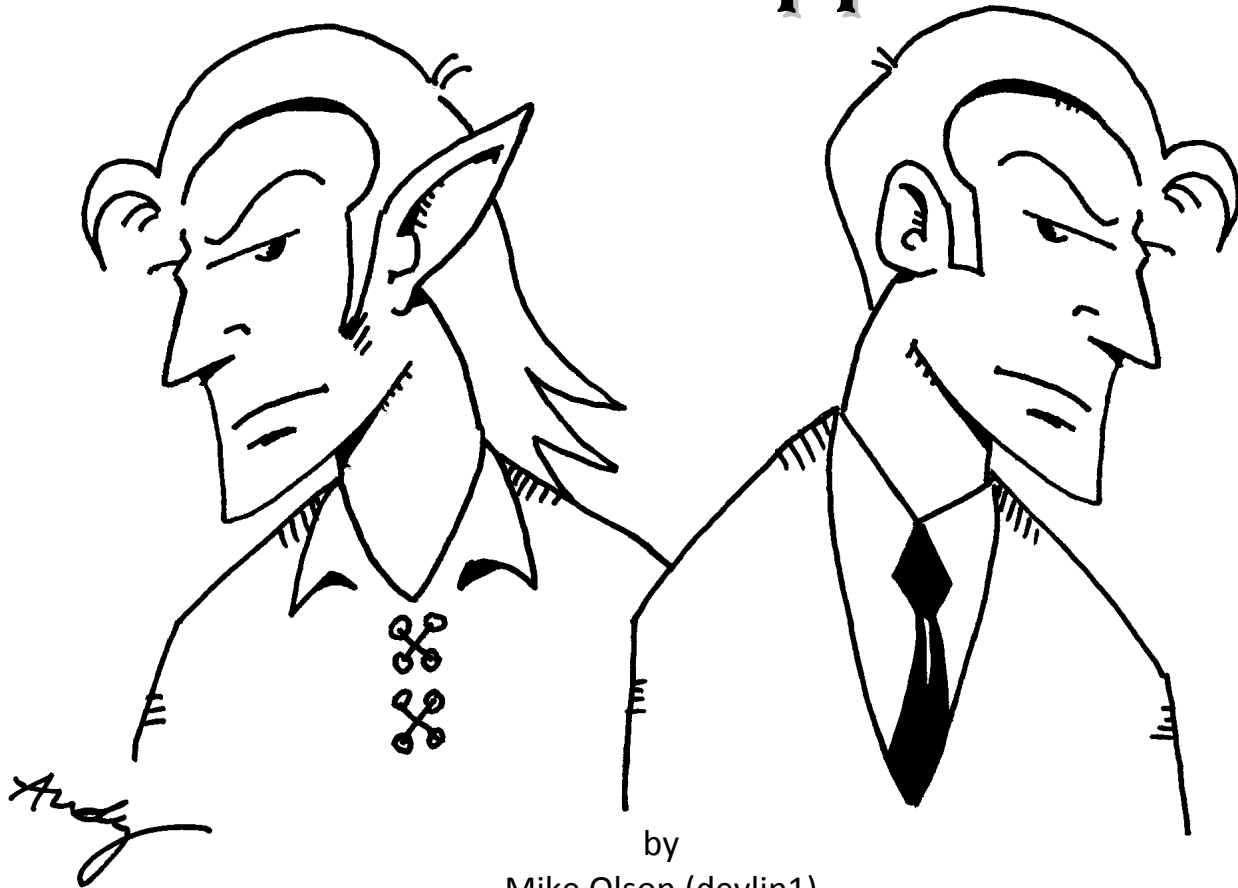


Tales of the Glass Slipper



by

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Game-Fu #8 Ingredients:

1. Genre Blender: Fairy Tales + Modern Occult
2. Roll-and-keep dice pool mechanic where the “unkept” dice are mechanically significant
3. Character sheet fits on an index card
4. Karma system in which a character’s actions can reward or punish them later
5. No-XP character advancement
6. Driving Force: Recover stolen fairy-tale treasures

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In Old Times, when wishing still helped one, the Queen of the Fairies and the Seven Kings of Men were fast friends. Every night the Fairy Queen and her court would dine at the palace of one of the kings, and she was always received with great pomp and celebration. In turn, once a year the Seven Kings of Men would gather at the palace of the Fairy Queen, and such was their merriment and feasting that the angels in the firmament cried tears of joy to see the sovereigns of Man and Fairy in such happy communion. Fairies and mortal men traveled freely between the Fairy Queen's lands and the World of Men, so much so that one might accidentally cross over to the Fairy World and back while taking a simple walk in the woods without being any the wiser. Fairies often took an interest in the affairs of mortal men, from the courts of royalty to the lowliest peasant household, and everyone was pleased with the state of affairs.

As it happened, this felicitous arrangement could not continue forever. There came a year when the Seven Kings of Men gathered in the Fairy Queen's magnificent palace, as was their custom, only to find her wracked with rage. "In the past year," she told them, "you have each done my court a grave injustice."

To this, the Seven Kings of Men reacted with shock and alarm, and professed innocence of the Fairy Queen's charges. But such was her wrath that their protestations fell on her ears like droplets of rain on a stone.

She turned to the first king and said, "Your son carried off the Princess of the Golden Palace and made her his bride without her father's consent."

To the second, she said, "Your son slew one of my giants to steal a goose and a harp."

To the third, she said, "You killed your own step-mother, who was of fairy blood and a distant cousin of mine, for the sake of your young wife."

And so the Fairy Queen accused each of the remaining kings in turn with likewise acts of violence and betrayal. The kings responded in kind, each blaming the other for the Fairy Queen's disposition. Before long, though, all seven accused the Fairy Queen and her subjects of having wrought many injustices against men themselves: kidnapped children, murderous witches, rampaging giants, and worse.

Long into the night the eight rulers argued, until finally the Fairy Queen threw the Seven Kings of Men out of her palace and broke their covenant of friendship forever. Between her realm and theirs, she conjured a great barrier, invisible to the eye, such that no mortal could cross over into the Fairy World. Never again would the World of Man know fairy godmothers, talking wolves, or transformed princes. Fairies and mortal men would live happily, and separately, ever after.

Eventually, the Fairy World faded from the minds of mortal men. All that remained of the days when the two worlds had been intertwined were stories, misremembered and distorted in the mortals' favor. Jack the Giant-Killer. Hansel and Gretel, the outcast urchins who outwitted a witch. Poor Little Red-Cap, victim of a big bad wolf. What magic remained in the World of Man was confined to these fairy tales.

However, the Fairy Queen would never forget. While her barrier prevented mortals from setting foot in the Fairy World, it did not wholly prevent fairies from visiting the World of Man....

The State of Things

Of the Renegade Fairies

In the court of the Fairy Queen Mab, there are those who serve her well and are rewarded, and there are those who serve her with no special distinction and escape notice. Then there are those who serve her poorly and are punished.

But for those misguided fairies who refuse to serve at *all*, who want something *more* for themselves, there is only death. And, as any fairy will tell you, nobody does cruel and unusual like the Fairy Queen: baked alive in an oven, trapped in a nail-filled barrel dragged behind a team of horses, skinned and strung up like an animal, tossed into the sea with a stomach full of stones, devoured by a cauldron-full of toads and serpents.

In other words, there's no upward mobility in the court of Queen Mab – only servitude. So where can they go to stroke their egos? The World of Man, of course.

Of Traveling Between Worlds

This is where the Fairy Queen's arrogance has come back to haunt her. When she erected the barrier between worlds, she built into it a number of doorways, obvious to fairies but obscure to mortals, in case she might be able to use them later to her advantage. A ring of mushrooms in the woods, an ancient stone circle, a neglected door in an alleyway, an old well – to mortals, their true nature is disguised, but fairies recognize them for what they are. More to the point, they can pass through them to the mortal world quite easily.

Each such portal leads to a specific place in the World of Man, but only functions sporadically – only during a full moon, or only once a year, or something similar. Worse, fairies that pass through them are stripped of their magic. In the mortal world, they are merely human... a terrifying prospect for a fairy.

Of Magic in the Mortal World

Unbeknownst to Man, those old, half-remembered stories they call "fairy tales" yet contain a trace of magic through their connection to the Fairy World. Every time a fairy tale is told, its power grows ever so slightly. This power flows to the Fairy World and is concentrated in the physical objects from those stories that still survive – a red cap, an ogre's knife, a book, a pair of boots. In the Fairy World, these are mundane items, and oft-ignored. But when brought into the World of Man, they are vibrant with magic. Their owners enjoy significant yet subtle gifts that elevate them far above the average human. The wearer of a certain red cap can never get lost. The spindle that felled Briar Rose can turn anyone into a sleeping beauty. Bluebeard's bloodstained key opens any door – but not to where it should lead.

Renegade fairies who fear the suffering and struggle that plagues mortals often compensate by bringing with them one of these "souvenirs" when they cross over. Most rely on them to attain great wealth and influence, while a few are more circumspect. Regardless, all are labeled criminals and traitors by Queen Mab.

The Order of the Glass Slipper

That's where *you* come in. You are part of a highly esteemed royal order tasked with tracking down these renegades in the World of Man, apprehending them and their stolen goods, and bringing them back to the court of Queen Mab to face justice. **You are the Order of the Glass Slipper.**

Where Do Fairy Tales Come From?

The fairy tales that inspired this game have a thousand sources, all of them disputed. They're usually referred to as folk fairy tales, or peasant fairy tales, to differentiate them from literary fairy tales. That is, these were stories told among the peasantry of Europe, passed down from one generation to the next. Literary fairy tales by the likes of Goethe, Kafka, Tieck, and especially Hoffmann are a completely different animal. Inspired by a renewed interest in folk fairy tales in the 18th and 19th centuries, they're extended allegories, dripping with meaning and symbolism.

And what spurred all that interest in fairy tales? While Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm weren't the first to publish fairy tales, their 1812 book, *Nursery and Household Tales*, was exceptional largely due to the brothers' interest in ethnography. Instead of simply retelling well-worn stories, they went to the source: the peasants. A number of further volumes and editions followed through 1857, and today the names of the Brothers Grimm are synonymous with fairy stories.

But, as mentioned, they were hardly the first. Equally important was Charles Perrault, a 17th-century author and courtier in the court of Louis XIV. His *Histoires ou contes du tems passé. Avec des moralitez* was a touchstone for fairy tales for more than a century after its publication in 1697. Far less concerned with ethnographic scholarship than the Grimms would later be, Perrault instead tinged his tales with courtly concerns and wry humor. He's also credited with the invention of Mother Goose, owing to a literal translation of "*ma mère de l'oie*," a colloquial French term for "grandmother."

The Basics

The Core Mechanic

Whenever you want to do something in the game, and failing to do it would carry a significant or interesting consequence, you'll roll some dice – usually at least 3d6 – and attempt to hit a threshold number. This roll determines either your success or failure (which we'll call your **effort**) and the degree of success or failure (your **effect**). The threshold number is called the task's **difficulty**.

Out of the pool of dice you roll, you can keep any number to total up and count towards your **effort**. Every die that you *don't* use for your effort gives you one point of **effect**, regardless of the results of those dice.

For example, let's say you're rolling 4d6 against a difficulty of 9. Your dice come up 1, 3, 4, and 6. You can keep the 6 and 3 to put toward your effort, for a total of 9 – enough to equal the difficulty and succeed. That means two dice left over, for two points of effect.

What those points of effect mean varies with the situation. In a combat, they're usually damage; in an investigation, they're usually clues or details, and so on.

Gifts

Gifts define a character's basic capabilities or natural talents. These are divided into three broad categories: **Gifts of the Body**, **Gifts of the Mind**, and **Gifts of Magic**. Examples include Strong, Cunning, and Conjure.

For every Gift your character has that's relevant to the task at hand, add 1d6 to your dice pool. For example, if you're starting with 3d6 and have two Gifts that apply to what you're trying to do, you'll add another 2d6 to your pool for a total of 5d6.

There are other ways to add dice to your pool – namely, by spending Fortune and capitalizing on Hardships – but Gifts are the most common.

Fortune and Misfortune

The actual numbers on your effect dice don't matter, except for 1s and 6s. Every effect die that's a 6 earns you a point of **Fortune**. Something especially good has happened, and the results should be narrated accordingly. Every effect die that's a 1 earns you a point of **Misfortune**. In this case, something especially bad has happened, and again, this is reflected in how the outcome is narrated.

Spend a point of **Fortune** to add 1d6 to your dice pool. There's no limit to the amount of Fortune you can spend on a single roll.

Whenever you have more **Misfortune** than Fortune, you suffer a -1d6 penalty to your dice pool. This condition is called being "beset by Misfortune."

Curses

Every character also has a **Curse** – a moral weakness or character flaw. Examples include Greedy, Vain, and Paranoid.

Every time you indulge in your Curse, you lose a point of Misfortune, but only if doing so is detrimental to your goals. For example, a Vain character wouldn't lose any Misfortune for fixing her hair in a mirror, but if she spent an hour preening instead of tailing a runaway fairy, that's worth a point of Misfortune.

The Moral of the Story

Before a story begins, the GM chooses a **moral** for that story and shares it with the players. Morals are typically along the lines of "That which you have promised, you must perform" or "Better to suffer than do wrong."

If a character *obeys* the moral in a way that puts him at a disadvantage, he earns a point of Fortune; acting *contrary* to the intent of the moral, especially if it means short-term personal gain, earns the character a point of Misfortune.

Creating Your Character

Gifts

Next the fairies began to give their gifts to the princess. The youngest gave her as a gift that she would be the most beautiful person in the world, the next that she would have the wit of an angel, the third that she would move with enchanting grace, the fourth that she would dance to perfection, the fifth that she would sing like a nightingale, and the sixth that she would play every musical instrument.

—“The Sleeping Beauty” (Perrault, 1697)

A character’s exceptional talents and natural abilities are represented by **Gifts**. Every character starts with a number of these Gifts spread between the categories of Body, Mind, and Magic. Each of these categories must have at least one Gift.

However, you won’t have access to all of these Gifts at once. When in the Fairy World, you have Gifts of the Mind and of Magic. As a mortal in the World of Man, however, you have Gifts of the Body and of the Mind. You’ll have the same number of Body Gifts as you do Magic Gifts. Whether in the world of fairies or of mortals, who you are on the inside – your Mind – remains the same.

You either have a Gift for something or you don’t, in which case you have no special advantages where that Gift is concerned. For example, a Strong character is exceptionally muscular, and a Well-Spoken character is especially talented when it comes to personal interaction. A fairy without these Gifts isn’t necessarily weak or tongue-tied – he’s just nothing special when it comes to such matters.

Gifts of the Body and Mind work as outlined earlier: For every relevant Gift you can apply to a task, add 1d6 to your dice pool. The description of your action must include every Gift used. It’s not enough to say “And I’m Cunning!” and plop down a d6. You need to explain *how* you’re using your Cunning to benefit you in the situation at hand.

The Gifts of Magic, however, follow different rules. See **Fairy Magic** for more.

Pick either two Gifts of the Body (and Magic) and one of the Mind, or one of the Body and two of the Mind.

Gifts of the Body	Gifts of the Mind	Gifts of Magic
Alert <i>Senses, reaction time</i>	Brave <i>Courage, discipline</i>	Conjure <i>Create objects out of thin air</i>
Attractive <i>Pleasant appearance</i>	Clever <i>Intelligence, problem-solving</i>	Enchant <i>Charm, mesmerize</i>
Hardy <i>Resilience, stamina</i>	Cunning <i>Trickery, deception</i>	Glamor <i>Create illusions</i>
Nimble <i>Agility, manual dexterity</i>	Well-Spoken <i>Persuasion, diplomacy</i>	Summon <i>Call forth supernatural beings</i>
Strong <i>Brawn, physical force</i>	Wise <i>Intuition, empathy</i>	Transform <i>Alteration size and shape</i>

For example:

Jon's making his character, a fairy named Schlauraffen. He decides to make Schlauraffen Alert, Clever, and Cunning. Because he has one Gift of the Body, he also picks one Gift of Magic: Enchant.

Alternately, if you're a fan of random character creation, roll 1d6. On an odd result, you have two Gifts of the Body (and Magic) and one of the Mind; on an even result, you have the reverse. Then roll 1d6 for each Gift. If the result is 1-5, take the corresponding Gift from the list above. If the result is 6, gain a point of Fortune, and roll again for the Gift in question. If you roll the same Gift twice, roll again.

For example:

Don decides to put his trust in his dice instead of choosing his character's Gifts himself. He rolls 1d6 and gets a 2 – that means one Gift of the Body and of Magic, and two Gifts of the Mind. Rolling for his Body Gift first, he gets a 6! He marks down a point of Fortune on his sheet and rolls again – a 3. He's Hardy. On the first roll for his Gifts of the Mind, he gets another 6, so he marks down another point of Fortune, the lucky devil, and rolls again, getting a 2. He's Clever. For his second Mind roll, he gets a 5, so he's Well-Spoken, and for his Gift of Magic: Glamer.

In the end, his character is intelligent and knows how to communicate effectively. As a mortal, he's tough and able to withstand more punishment than most. As a fairy, he can use magic to get others to do his bidding. Finally, he starts off with two points of Fortune – a lucky fairy indeed.



Curses

*"Looking-glass, Looking-glass, on the wall,
Who in this land is the fairest of all?"
— "Little Snow-White" (Grimm, 1812)*

Every fairy has a weakness of some kind. Below is a list of possible Curses, although you're encouraged to invent your own, using these as a guideline.

Greedy	Vain	Gluttonous
Paranoid	Selfish	Cruel
Lustful	Envious	Wrathful
Arrogant	Lazy	Curious

Engaging in behavior appropriate to your Curse lets you lose a point of Misfortune, but only if that behavior is actually problematic. In other words, the situation created by the Curse must put the character in danger, complicate the story, or benefit the opposition. Either the player or the GM can suggest the Curse-related danger or complication.

For example:

Jon's character Schlauraffen is staking out a renegade fairy's house in the World of Man. Schlauraffen is a Lazy fairy, so Jon suggests that she grows drowsy and falls asleep on the job, allowing her quarry a chance to escape unnoticed. The GM agrees that this is definitely a complication, so Jon loses a point of Misfortune. Schlauraffen's in for a surprise when she awakes.

For example:

Pfriem, Don's Gluttonous fairy, is on his way to meet up with his team of Inquisitors to exchange information. Specifically, he's discovered that their target plans to leave town later that day, so they'll have to move quickly. On the way, though, the GM mentions that Pfriem passes a pastry shop, and Don decides to take advantage of the opportunity to indulge his Gluttony and lose some Misfortune. "I'll buy an éclair," Don says, "and be on my way." Before he can erase that Misfortune, the GM tells him that simply buying an éclair won't be enough – he'll have to get completely sidetracked, such that he wastes valuable time and misses his appointment with his team. Don, eager to reduce his Misfortune, agrees to do it anyway, and by the time Pfriem shows up, wiping crumbs and crème from his face, their target has a big head start.

Filling in the Details

If you chose your Gifts, you begin with one point of **Fortune**. If you determined your gifts randomly, you begin with Fortune points equal to the number of 6s you rolled. Either way, make a note of that.

Now that you know your Gifts and Curse, think of a concept for your character. We're much more concerned about personality here than, say, profession. What do fairies do all day, anyway? That's not as interesting as how *your* fairy in particular reacts to an insult, a threat, or a stranger in need.

What does your character look like, both as a mortal and as a fairy? They need not be the same. As a mortal, your character is a human being, but as a fairy the field's wide open. Just keep in mind that magic is all in the Fairy World – whatever your fairy-self's appearance, you won't have any Gifts of the

Body outside the World of Man. You may be an ogre, but your magical ability is far more important to you than your size and strength. In fact, just about *everything* about you is magical when you're a fairy; there's no separating the two.

What's your character's name? It may be a relic of the Old World, as befits the Fairy World, or it could be something really nature-y sounding, like Willow-Leaf, or anything in between. Don't worry about your mortal name right now – you can come up with that on the fly, or change it every time someone asks. It's just part of your disguise, after all.

The Character Card

Take an index card. On one side, in the upper right-hand corner, write "MORTAL." Over to the left, make a column labeled "GIFTS." This is where you'll list your Gifts of the Body and Mind. Under that, a few lines down, write "CURSE." To the right of those, write "HARDSHIPS," and leave room underneath. Along the bottom, "TOOLS" – this is where you'll write down of any useful items you happen to acquire. Somewhere along the top, write "FORTUNE" and "MISFORTUNE," so you can keep track of those – or, better yet, use poker chips of two different colors.

Flip the card over. In the upper right-hand corner, write "FAIRY." Make this side just like the other side. The only real difference here is that this side will have your Magic and Mind Gifts. Leave a space across the top for your name and another spot to track Fortune and Misfortune.

When you're in the World of Man, use the Mortal side of the card. When you're in the Fairy World, flip it over to the Fairy side.

NAME: "Paul"	MORTAL
GIFTS: Hardy, clever, well-spoken	HARDSHIPS:
CURSE: GLUTTONOUS	
POSSESSIONS: Basin Bar (Heavy)	

NAME: PFRIGN	FAIRY
GIFTS: Glamor, clever, well-spoken	HARDSHIPS:
CURSE: GLUTTONOUS	

Fortune and Misfortune

*He whom fortune favoereth
Even in sleep good raineth for him.
—“Sun, Moon, and Talia” (Basile, 1847)*

No matter where they are, fairies’ lives are ruled by the whims of Fortune. But Fortune is a fickle mistress – one day she’s sunshine, and the next, a thunderstorm.

Characters earn Fortune and Misfortune in two ways: through die rolls, and through actions.

Every effect die that’s a 6 earns one point of Fortune, and every effect die that’s a 1 earns one point of Misfortune. Note that whether an effect die earns Fortune or Misfortune, the outcome of the roll isn’t affected – three 1s on your effect dice still means three points of effect, even if you *have* earned three points of Misfortune in the process.

Because you can choose how many dice to use for your effort, it’s always possible to avoid earning Misfortune, although it may come at the cost of failure.

Characters can also earn Fortune and Misfortune when they do something that’s either in accordance with or contrary to the story’s moral. See **The Moral of the Story** for more on how this works.

Lastly, the GM can improve an NPC’s Ability at the expense of paying a point of Fortune to the target of the NPC’s action at the *end* of the scene. See **Running the Game** for more on how this works for the GM.

When your Misfortune is greater than your Fortune, your dice pool suffers a -1d6 penalty. That is, instead of starting with a pool of 3d6, you start with 2d6.

Before rolling, you can spend a point of Fortune to add 1d6 to your dice pool. You can spend any amount of Fortune on a single roll, as long as you have it to spend, but remember the perils of Misfortune. Fortune can also be spent to offset damage; see **Damage and Hardships** for more.

Fairy Tales and Luck

Luck – good or bad – often plays a huge role in fairy tales. What if Hansel and Gretel hadn’t found that gingerbread house? What if the Jack’s beans hadn’t been magic? What if Cinderella hadn’t been fortunate enough to have a fairy godmother? What would Little Red Riding Hood have done if that huntsman hadn’t come by when he did? (Earlier versions of the story, which end simply “And then he ate her,” answer that question pretty well.) The list goes on.

Indeed, in the Grimms’ stories, it’s abundantly clear that luck is far better than virtue. Even if you have everything else going for you, an unfortunate happenstance or two can really ruin your day. Look at Little Red-Cap: The opening lines of the story tell us that she’s “a dear little girl who was loved by everyone who looked at her.” And yet, she still gets eaten by a wolf. Tough luck.

The Moral of the Story

*Boys who are bright and look all right
Are always welcome to most folk,
While one who's weak or doesn't speak
Will be the butt of every joke.
But for all that the little brat
May turn out useful, when you're broke.
—"Tufty Ricky" (Perrault, 1697)*

In addition to Fortune, fairies have a deep belief in morals. Not morals as we speak of them today, but rather *lessons*. They commonly share a strong conviction that every experience carries with it a meaningful life lesson, or establishes a certain rule that governs how to live. This isn't to say that they always obey these morals – quite the contrary. In fact, without disobedience, the lesson can't truly be learned, and so the experience is wasted. When you get right down to it, they're surprisingly philosophical, these fairies.

At the start of an adventure, the GM decides on a moral for the story and tells it to the players. (Better yet, write it down on an index card and put it in the middle of the table so everyone can see it.) The moral can come from the brief list below, or be one of the GM's invention. Regardless, the moral must imply two kinds of behavior: a *correct* way and an *incorrect* way.

Take the moral above, from Perrault's version of "Tufty Ricky." These six lines basically boil down to this: "Don't judge by outward appearances. Everyone's good for something." The correct behavior is rather explicitly to treat everyone well in the event that they may be useful to you later. That may not be "morally right" in the conventional sense, but it does follow the *moral* itself, and that's all fairies are interested in. The implied incorrect behavior is to make snap judgments about people, and treat them poorly without a thought for the future.

There's no need to be as fanciful with these morals as Perrault was. Indeed, it's probably better to strip them to the bare essentials, so as to make them as clear as possible for the players. A few examples follow, each accompanied by an example situation and ways of resolving it that might earn Fortune or Misfortune:

Better to suffer than to do wrong.

Example: A hotel concierge refuses to let you into a particular room, but then is called away – leaving his master key behind. You know you can steal it and open the door yourself if you take it.

Fortune: You leave the key where it is and find another solution.

Misfortune: You steal the key and skulk off.

That which you have promised, you must perform.

Example: A contact lends you his car on the condition that you return it within the hour – he needs it to pick his wife up at the airport. You're in pursuit of your quarry, tailing him at a discreet distance, when you see him go into a nightclub. Unfortunately, the hour's almost up.

Fortune: Instead of following him inside, you drive back across town to return the car, as promised.

Misfortune: You put your needs ahead of the contact's and keep the car for as long as you need it.

Even the ugly and weak are good for something. (A.k.a. "Even a broken clock is right twice a day.")

Example: While discreetly questioning patrons at a bar about your high-class target, an old drunkard shuffles up to you and, his breath redolent of the inside of a whiskey barrel, offers to share some useful information in exchange for a drink.

Fortune: You hear him out, and end up patiently listening to his booze-fueled rambling all night in the hopes that he'll mention something of use to you.

Misfortune: You tell the old codger to shove off and get the bouncer to throw him out.

One good turn deserves another.

Example: Unfortunately, your investigation in the World of Man has attracted some undue attention. However, a sympathetic shopkeeper offers to hide you in his stockroom so you can lose the goons on your tail.

Fortune: Later, en route back to the Fairy World with your prisoner, you go out of your way to stop by his shop and drop off a duffel bag full of cash.

Misfortune: While in the stockroom, you come across the shopkeeper's car keys. When he comes back to tell you it's safe to come out, both you and his car are gone.

As a rule of thumb, if it doesn't put you at a disadvantage or cause trouble somehow, it isn't worth Fortune. Conversely, if it doesn't *benefit* you, especially in the short term, it probably isn't worth *Misfortune*.

Player-Driven Fortune

The GM doesn't have to be the last word in what's worth Fortune and what isn't. If you, the player, take an action that's in line with the moral of the story and want a point of Fortune, tell the GM. If she agrees and hands it over, that seemingly innocuous action has sown the seeds of future problems.

For example:

A friendly street urchin has taken a liking to you for whatever reason and wants to tag along to help out. At first you refuse, but he's so insistent that eventually you cave and give him a chance. As it happens, the moral of the story is "Even the weak and ugly are good for something," so you tell the GM you want a point of Fortune for accepting the kid's offer. The GM agrees and gives you the Fortune. She wasn't expecting to have him complicate the story, but now that you've accepted that point of Fortune, she'll make sure that he does.

When Morals and Curses Collide

Sometimes, indulging a Curse means disobeying the story's moral. That's perfectly fine. In these cases, if you have any Misfortune, the Curse takes precedence. If not, then disobeying the moral earns you Misfortune, as usual.

“Be Like the Wolf!”

If you’ve read *Grimm’s Fairy Tales*, you’ll know there’s very little there in the way of what we’d recognize as “morals.” The central lessons of the folk tales the Brothers Grimm collected are brutal, ruthless, and unflinchingly pragmatic. These aren’t fanciful tales of magic and adventure we’re talking about – they’re instructive allegories intended to turn children into adults capable of surviving in a dangerous world.

What lessons do they teach? Grow up fast. The only person you can rely upon is yourself. Luck and guile are more important than virtue. Do whatever you can, no matter how amoral, to escape poverty. Or, as a professor of mine used to say, *“Be like the wolf!”*

Composer and lyricist Stephen Sondheim certainly got the message. In his fairy-tale musical *Into The Woods*, the Baker and his wife trick Jack to part with his beloved cow for a handful of beans that the Baker’s Wife tells him are magic. The cow is Jack’s best friend, but the couple needs it to break a curse that’s been placed on them. The guileless Jack agrees, and the Baker is wracked with guilt. As the Baker’s Wife later says to her husband to convince him that they’ve done no wrong:

“If the end is right, it justifies the beans!”

So why do we connect fairy tales to morals so strongly? That’s down to Perrault, whose *Histoires ou contes du temps passé. Avec des moralitez* introduced the association to the public at large. Perrault himself wrote the morals, short poems of a half-dozen or so lines to put the tales in the context of Louis XIV’s reign. It’s right there in the title, in case you aren’t up on your French: “Stories and tales of past times. With morals.”

Taking Action

When the children saw they were alone, they started to cry and bawl. Hop O' My Thumb let them shout. He knew full well how they were going to find their way home, for, as they walked along, he had dropped the little white pebbles he had in his pockets and marked the path. So he said to them, "Don't be afraid, brothers. Our mother and father have left us here,

but I will take you back home. Just follow me."

—"Hop O' My Thumb" (Perrault, 1697)

When the narrative between the players and the GM comes to a stalemate – that is, when a player wants something to happen and the GM doesn't automatically say "Yes" – start rolling some dice. These situations should always involve risk, or the potential to complicate the story in an interesting way. For example, climbing a wall could be an automatic-success situation, if the GM just wants the character to get over the wall and on with the story, or the GM could decide the risk of falling and injury makes it worth a roll. See

As outlined earlier, your dice pool starts at a base of 3d6. For every Gift you have that's applicable to the task, and for every point of Fortune you spend, add another 1d6 to your pool. The size of your pool can also be increased with the use of tools or, in a conflict with someone else, by capitalizing on your opponent's Hardships, but we'll get to that later.

Whenever you're rolling dice, you're trying to muster enough effort to meet or beat a threshold number corresponding to the difficulty of the task or the Ability of your opponent, as shown on the table. Unless you generate at least one point of effect, the attempt doesn't actually succeed.

For example, if you're attempting a Tricky task and have rolled 2, 3, 4, and 6, that's enough to have an effort of 9 (6 and 3) and two points of effect (the two leftover dice). If the task were Hard, however, even though you could muster an effort of 15 by using all four dice, you wouldn't have any dice left over to generate any effect, so you'd fail.

Setting Difficulties

When in doubt, a task's difficulty is Tricky (9). Statistically, someone with one applicable Gift can pretty reliably achieve one point of effect against Tricky, while someone without a relevant Gift will have to spend Fortune to be on equal footing. For every complication inherent in the task, increase the difficulty by one step (Tricky to Challenging, Challenging to Hard, and so on). For example, quickly searching a house is a Tricky task, but searching a house that's a mess (one complication) in the dark (two complications) is Hard.

This includes ranged attacks against distant targets. For example, if you're trying to shoot someone who's a little farther away than you'd like, the GM can increase his Body Ability by one or two steps. This isn't a game of intricate tactical warfare, so don't feel like you have to get more detailed than that.

Remember: If you're not sure what a task's difficulty should be, start with Tricky and work your way up.

Threshold Number	Task Difficulty	Opponent Ability
6	Easy	Weak
9	Tricky	Average
12	Challenging	Trained
15	Hard	Expert
18	Vexing	Master
21	Incredible	Paragon
24	Herculean	Deific

Players Make All Rolls

Instead of Gifts, the non-player characters have Abilities – Body Ability, Mind Ability, and, in the Fairy World, Magic Ability.

When taking action against an NPC, the player rolls as usual, totaling his effort and counting points of effect to determine how well he did. The threshold number for physical attacks is the opponent's Body Ability; for mental or social contests, such as a game of chess or a negotiation, the threshold is the opponent's Mind Ability. For any kind of magical contest or attack, it's their Magic Ability.

When an NPC acts against a PC, the player rolls to defend, including all applicable Gifts and other bonuses. If the total equals or exceeds the opponent's relevant Ability, the attack fails. If the total is *less* than the attacker's Ability, the player rolls *additional* dice, one at a time, until his total meets or beats it. Each additional die rolled in this way is a point of effect achieved by the attacker.

For example:

Pfriem's so busy playing baseball with that gunman that he doesn't notice the second thug until the guy's fist is nearly in the fairy's face. The thug's Body Ability is Expert (15). Pfriem's player gets to roll 4d6 – 3d6 plus 1d6 for being Hardy – but his dice only total 12. He rolls another die and gets a 4, which brings his total to 16. That's enough to beat the thug's total, so the thug gets one point of effect because Pfriem had to roll one additional die. In this case, that'll be damage.

What Effect Means

"Effect" is a pretty general term, but the exact meaning of those effect dice will vary depending on circumstance. Regardless, every point of effect should represent a favorable event or result for the character, or increase the speed with which the task is accomplished. If eavesdropping, every point could be a word or sentence overheard; if examining an abandoned house for evidence of the target's whereabouts, every point could be a clue.

For example:

Schlauraffen is trying to pick a lock, and gets two points of effect. Normally, this would take about 10 minutes, but the GM decides that because she did so well, she gets it done in a quarter of the time.

In combat, effect represents either **damage** or **hindrances**. Damage what it sounds like: an attempt to cause harm to your opponent. Hindrances are much broader, and cover everything from tripping your opponent to pinning him to the ground to knocking the gun out of his hand. If the hindrance would logically interfere with your opponent's ability to be effective, the GM may reduce your opponent's Ability by one step until the hindrance is rectified.

For example:

Pfriem swings a baseball bat at a gunman and connects, scoring three points of effect. With one point, Pfriem's player chooses to knock the gun out of his hand. With the second he knocks him to the ground, and with the third he does a point of damage. The GM rules that until he stands back up again, his Body Ability will be reduced one step, from Average to Weak. Of course, he won't be able to use his gun at all until he manages to retrieve it.

Offsetting Effect

When an opponent obtains one or more points of effect against you in combat, you can spend Fortune to offset it: one point of Fortune for one point of effect. You're drawing on your accumulated good luck to soften or avoid the blow. Whenever you do this, describe how your good luck intervened.

Damage and Hardships

Points of effect obtained in combat that aren't offset by Fortune or spent on hindrances become **damage**. When a character takes damage, he also accumulates **Hardships**.

A Hardship is a single word or brief phrase that describes the effect of the damage sustained. Examples include Bruised, Bleeding, Off Balance, Frightened, Shaking in My Boots, Distracted, Limping, Blind with Rage, and Sprained Ankle. It's up to the player and GM to come up with a mutually agreeable Hardship.

When you record a Hardship, also record the amount of damage that produced it. For example, if you're punched in the face for two points of damage, you might write down a Hardship of "Black Eye (2)."

A character can withstand up to **five points of damage** and still stay "on his feet," as it were. For example, if you have a 1-damage Hardship and a 2-damage Hardship, that's a total of three points of damage, so you could still withstand either two more 1-damage Hardships or one more 2-damage Hardship.

If you take more than six points of damage, you're **out**. The exact meaning of "out" varies depending on the circumstances of the conflict and the attack, but it could be anything from disgrace to unconsciousness to death. The GM shouldn't kill off a character unless the player agrees, or the situation just doesn't allow for any other option. A gunshot could mean incapacitation and imminent death. Falling out of an airplane onto jagged rocks, however, is a less-negotiable situation.

Capitalizing on Hardships

Add a number of dice to your pool equal to the rating of the highest-rating Hardship your opponent has. When capitalizing on a Hardship this way, describe how you're using it to your advantage.

For example:

Pfriem and the gunman have one Hardship each. Pfriem's is Staggered (2), and the gunman's is Black Eye (1). When Pfriem attacks the gunman, his player Don says, "With that black eye, he's having trouble focusing and can't get out of the way in time." Then he adds 1d6 to his dice pool and rolls.

NPCs operate in the same manner, except instead of adding dice, boost their Ability by a number of steps equal to the rating of the highest-rated Hardship their target has.

For example:

When the gunman attacks Pfriem, the GM says, "Staggered as you are, the gunman has an easy time lining up his shot," and the gunman's Body Ability bumps up a step from Average to Expert for the attack, thanks to Pfriem's Hardship of Staggered (2).

Removing Hardships

Hardships require a roll of the dice against a difficulty of Tricky to remove. Subtract points of effect achieved from the Hardship's damage rating. When the damage rating is reduced to zero, erase the

Hardship – it's removed entirely. Gifts and Fortune can be used with these rolls, as usual. For example, if trying to remove a Hardship like Sprained Ankle, you could include dice from Hardy or Strong; if trying to remove a mental Hardship, such as Freaking Out, Brave and Wise would apply.

The type of care needed to accomplish this depends on the Hardship. Physical wounds need medical attention of some kind to heal, whereas something like fear or self-doubt is usually a matter of "shaking it off" or snapping out of it.

At the end of a story, remove the one with the lowest rating, no roll required. Make a roll against each other Hardship. If you fail to remove all of them, you gain a second Curse. This should be something consistent with one of your remaining Hardships. Describe how the Hardship has resulted in this new Curse. In addition, for every Curse beyond the first, your character begins the next story with one point of Misfortune.

For example:

Ricky finishes a story with a Hardship of Sucking Chest Wound. His player, Ron, decides that the intense pain of the experience has made Ricky want to inflict pain on others. Ron writes down "Cruel" next to his other Curse, Greedy. In addition, because he now has two Curses, he'll start the next story with one point of Misfortune.

Hardships and the Barrier Between Worlds

When crossing over from the World of Man to the Fairy World, characters lose all of their physical Hardships, such as wounds. This is automatic and requires no rolling. Mental Hardships, however – for instance, fear and self-doubt – stay with the character no matter what. Changing from fairy to mortal doesn't change who you are inside.

Extended Tasks

Tasks too complex to be represented by a single roll of the dice are called **extended tasks**. In these cases, the task requires a certain number of effect points to complete. As a rule of thumb, this should be somewhere between three and five. When in doubt, make it three. Examples include picking a lock, picking up rumors at a bar, and searching a house.

Every roll of the dice in an extended task takes a certain amount of time – usually 10 minutes, one hour, or one day. Pick one of those three that makes sense for the task and go with it. For example, the default time to pick a lock would be 10 minutes, while searching a house would be an hour and picking up rumors would take at least a day.

For example:

Schlauraffen's looking for Jacob Hoffman, a renegade fairy in the World of Man, so she decides to hang out at his favorite watering hole and see what she can pick up. She's Alert, Cunning, and Clever, so as long as her player can work those into the description of what she's doing, he'll get to roll 6d6. The GM decides that the difficulty for this will be Hard (15) – starting from a base of Tricky (9), the crowd at the bar doesn't trust strangers (Tricky), and Charlie has paid the bartender to keep quiet about his whereabouts (Hard). Completing this extended task will require three points of effect. The first night, Schlauraffen – or Laura, as she calls herself in the mortal world – gets two points of effect. She's made

some progress, but still hasn't found out what she needs to know. The second night, she gets another two points of effect, which is enough to complete the task successfully. The bartender's on Charlie's payroll, but the waitress sure isn't....

Working Together

If two or more characters work together to tackle a task that additional manpower would make easier, simply have each character roll individually and add their points of effect together to determine the result of their shared labor. If the helper is an NPC, reduce the difficulty of the task by one step instead.

Boosting NPC Abilities

At any time, the GM can boost one of an NPC's Abilities for one roll by one step. Set aside a point of Fortune for the NPC's target or opponent each time this happens. At the end of the scene, that player receives that stockpile of Fortune.

For example:

Schlauraffen is chasing after a fairy suspect in the World of Man. Her player, Jon, rolls 3d6 to chase after her, plus another 2d6 due to being Alert and Cunning, and gets 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. Normally, the pursued fairy's Body Ability is Trained (12), which could mean as much as two points of effect for Schlauraffen, but the GM wants to raise the stakes a bit. He sets a point of Fortune aside for Jon and bumps up the fairy's Body Ability one step to Expert (15). That's equal to Schlauraffen's effort, but since she now has no points of effect, he narrowly escapes, slipping through a door he locks behind him. Schlauraffen desperately tries to break the door down (a Hard task), but fails. The scene's effectively over, so Jon gets that point of Fortune.



Tools of the Trade

They ran him through with their swords and left him dead.

—“Bluebeard” (Perrault, 1697)

Any physical object that helps you accomplish a task is a tool. A coil of rope is a tool, as is a car or a pistol. Some tools are better than others, but they’re all handy to have in a pinch.

The vast majority of tools that aren’t weapons are worth 1d6. Truly exceptional tools are worth 2d6. Of course, the tool has to be useful to the task at hand. A rope can help you climb a wall or tie up a prisoner, but it won’t help you hotwire a car, for example. When in doubt about a tool’s quality, it’s 1d6. Exceptional tools are just that: extraordinarily good pieces of equipment.

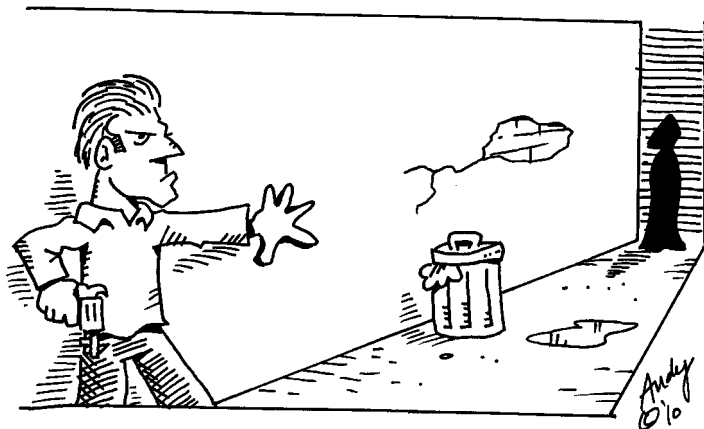
Weapons are a specialized kind of tool, and are defined by their Qualities the same way characters are defined by their Gifts. Every Quality a weapon has that’s appropriate to the attack adds 1d6 to the wielder’s dice pool. The five weapon Qualities are **Fire**, **Gun**, **Heavy**, **Long**, and **Sharp**.

- ❖ **Fire:** The weapon is on fire, or uses fire offensively. Examples include a lit torch, a flamethrower, and a Molotov cocktail.
- ❖ **Gun:** The weapon is a firearm. All firearms, in other words, start with this Quality.
- ❖ **Heavy:** The weapon relies on its sheer bulk or weight to cause harm. If applied to a firearm, it’s an especially big firearm. Examples include a baseball bat, a nightstick, a crowbar, a shotgun (fired or as a club), a crossbow, and brass knuckles.
- ❖ **Long:** The weapon’s length makes it more effective. Melee weapons longer than a broomstick have this Quality. Examples include a quarterstaff, a spear, a longbow, and a rope.
- ❖ **Sharp:** The weapon has an edge or point that makes it more dangerous. Firearms have this Quality, thanks to their ammunition. Examples include a knife, a sword, an axe, an arrow, and a bullet.

A weapon can have a maximum of three Qualities – but that would be a pretty deadly weapon.

For example:

Normally, Pfriem isn’t much for fighting, rolling only 3d6 unless he can manage to be Clever about it. With his trusty baseball bat in hand, however, he gets to add 1d6 to his pool, but only when its Heavy



Quality comes into play – say, when hitting someone with it. If an NPC with Average Body Ability were to pick up that same bat, he’d attack with it at Trained Ability, not Average. If Pfriem managed to get his hands on a fireman’s axe, though, he’d get to add 2d6 to his attacks: 1d6 for being Heavy, and 1d6 for being Sharp.

Fairy-tale treasures are tools too, in a way, but work differently. See **Fairy-Tale Treasures** for more.

Fairy Magic

*Her godmother scooped it out to a hollow skin, then tapped it with her wand,
and the pumpkin was instantly turned into a beautiful gilded carriage.*

—“Cinderella” (Perrault, 1697)

In the Word of Man, fairies are indistinguishable from any other mortal, but in the Fairy World, they’re capable of wondrous feats of magic.

Fairy magic is divided into five basic types: Conjure, Enchant, Glamer, Summon, and Transform. Each of these is a Gift of Magic, but unlike Gifts of the Body or Mind, if you don’t have a particular Magic Gift, you simply can’t perform that type of magic. For example, if your Magic Gifts are Conjure and Transform, you can’t Enchant, Summon, or Glamer.

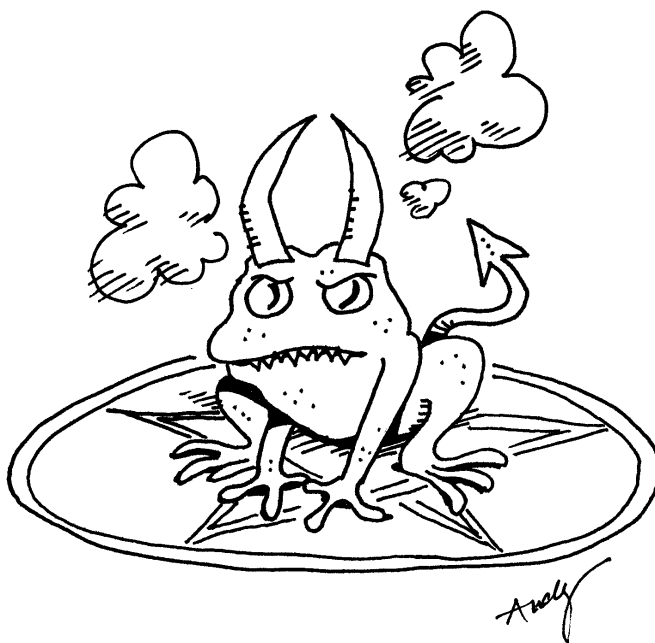
Because the five types of fairy magic can achieve such varied effects, each works a little differently from the rest, although all of them still use the same core mechanic and follow some common principles:

Difficulty: If the magic doesn’t target someone else specifically, the difficulty of the spell is Easy. If it does have a target, the threshold number is the target’s Magic or Mind Ability, if an NPC. In the event of PC-on-PC spellcasting, the threshold is $9 + 3/\text{Magic or Mind Gift}$, as appropriate.

Focus: A focus is some kind of external implement that aids in the working of fairy magic. If the caster is using the listed focus, add 1d6 to his dice pool.

Condition: A condition is like a focus, but it refers to a circumstance instead of a physical object. If this condition is met, add 1d6 to the caster’s dice pool. Every type of magic has either a focus or a condition, but not both.

Effect Cost: Spend points of effect to determine what the spell can do.



Conjure

*"Shiver and quiver, my little tree,
Silver and gold throw down over me."*

—"Cinderella" (Grimm, 1812)

The conjurer can create inanimate objects out of thin air. Points of effect can be spent on the object's size, Qualities (as a tool), and duration. If the conjured item is a weapon, use the standard weapon Qualities. Otherwise, make up some qualities that fit the nature of the item.

Effect Cost	Maximum Size	Qualities	Duration
0	--	--	10 minutes
1	Fairy/Man	+1	One hour
2	Tree	+2	One day
3	House	+3	One week
4	Castle	+4	One month

- ❖ *Difficulty*: Easy (6)
- ❖ *Focus*: --
- ❖ *Condition*: Rhyming couplet

For example:

Cinderella needs a dress for the ball. (Thanks to her fairy godmother, she could work a little magic, too.) She rolls 6d6: 3d6 plus 1d6 for Conjure, 1d6 for phrasing her spell as a rhyming couplet, and 1d6 for a point of Fortune. Her dice are 1, 2, 2, 3, 4, and 6. She uses the 6 for her effort, which gives her five points of effect. One she spends on the dress's size, two on the duration, and the remaining two on the dress's Qualities: Silver and Gold. Whenever she tries to impress someone with it, she'll get to roll another 2d6! Note that she used that 1 for one of her effect dice, which means a point of Misfortune. But what does she care? She's going to the ball!

Enchant

Then the wolf said, "Undress and get into bed with me."

"Where shall I put my apron?"

"Throw it on the fire; you won't need it anymore."

—"The Grandmother's Story" (traditional, 14th Century)

The enchanter uses magic to charm and fascinate others, often to the point where they can order them around. Record the amount of effect achieved when the spell is cast. Spend at least one right away to determine how long the enchantment will last. The rest of the points are spent to give the target command. For every command that's against the target's nature, spend a point of effect. Unobjectionable commands don't require the enchanter to spend any effect. Commands which put the subject into harm's way are acceptable, but a command that would force the subject to harm himself, such as "Jump off that cliff," immediately break the spell.

- ❖ *Difficulty*: Mind Ability
- ❖ *Focus*: Eye contact with the target
- ❖ *Condition*: --

Effect Cost	Duration
1	One hour
2	One day
3	One week
4	One year

For example:

The wolf wants to enchant the girl into bed and then eat her. (He could just eat her, but it's a control thing.) He rolls 4d6, resulting in 4, 5, 5, and 6 – jackpot! The girl's Mind Ability is Weak, so he uses that 6 for his effort. He spends one point of effect to make the enchantment last for an hour, which is way longer than is necessary. The other two points he spends on two commands: "Undress" and "Get into bed with me."

Glamer

The children saw her from afar, and the girl threw a brush behind her which formed an immense hill of bristles, with thousands and thousands of spikes, over which the nixie was forced to scramble with great difficulty....

—“The Water-Nixie” (Grimm, 1812)

This magic creates lifelike illusions, sometimes pleasant, often not. Roll your dice, and put any number towards your effort, as usual. That becomes the threshold number for anyone else to beat to see through the illusion, if they're a PC; if an NPC, compare the total to their Mind Ability to determine if they're fooled by it. Effect dice are spent on the size and duration of the illusion. Glamering includes turning someone or something invisible.

- ❖ *Difficulty*: Special, or Mind Ability
- ❖ *Focus*: Expendable “material component”
- ❖ *Condition*: --

Effect Cost	Maximum Size	Duration
0	--	10 minutes
1	Fairy/Man	One hour
2	Tree	One day
3	House	One week
4	Castle	One year

For example:

In an attempt to slow down her water-nixie pursuer, a girl creates an illusion of an impassible thicket. She rolls 6d6 (3d6, plus Glamer, one point of Fortune, and her focus, a brush) and gets 2, 2, 3, 4, 6, and 6. The nixie's Mind Ability is only Average, so she uses the 6 and 3 for her effort, leaving her four effect dice to spend. That's enough to make an illusion of a house-sized thicket that will last for an hour and slow down the nixie a bit.

Summon

One evening when he sat in the dark without even enough money to buy a candle, he suddenly remembered there was a candle end in the tinder box that he had picked up when the witch sent him down the hollow tree. He got out the tinder box, and the moment he struck sparks from the flint of it his door burst open and there stood a dog from down under the tree. It was the one with eyes as big as saucers.

“What,” said the dog, “is my lord's command?”

—“The Tinder Box” (Andersen, 1835)

The summoner can call up supernatural creatures (usually) to do his bidding. Summoned creatures have Gifts, like PCs do: Either Body and Mind Gifts or Magic and Mind Gifts. Points of effect can be spent on the creature's power, toughness, and the duration of its stay. A summoned creature can

represent a group of creatures instead of only one being, but that's a matter of flavor – the statistics, number of Gifts, and so on doesn't change, and the group acts as one.

Effect Cost	Gifts	Hardships	Duration
0	1	0	10 minutes
1	2	1	One hour
2	3	2	One day
3	--	3	One week
4	--	4	One year

By default, a summoned creature has one Gift of the player's choosing, one Curse of the GM's choosing, and is destroyed if it takes a single point of damage. If the summoner lets the summoned creature indulge its Curse, he can spend Misfortune as if it were his own.

- ❖ *Difficulty*: Easy (6)
- ❖ *Focus*: Book
- ❖ *Condition*: --

For example:

The soldier wants to summon one of his tinder-box dogs, so he rolls 4d6 and gets 1, 2, 3, and 5. The 1 and 5 he uses for his effort. The two points of effect go towards a second Gift for the dog, and to make it stick around for an hour instead of just 10 minutes.

Transform

"I've been assured," said the cat, "that you have the gift of being able to change into all kinds of animals – that you can, for example, change into a lion or an elephant."

"That's true," snapped back the ogre, "and to prove it to you, you'll see me turn into a lion."

—*"Puss-In-Boots"* (Perrault, 1697)

The magic of transformation gives the fairy the ability to turn himself or something else into... well, something else. The greater the change, the greater the effect cost. Changes in size and classification are measured on a continuum – moving from one end to the other is more difficult than shifting one step in either direction. Effect can also be spent on extending the duration of the transformation and on granting the target additional Gifts appropriate to the transformation.

- ❖ *Difficulty*: Easy (6) if transforming self, or Magic Ability if transforming someone else
- ❖ *Focus*: Wand
- ❖ *Condition*: --

Effect Cost	Gifts	Duration
0	--	10 minutes
1	+1	One hour
2	+2	One day
3	+3	One week
4	+4	One year

The Transformation Continuum

Size:	Mouse	Fairy/Man	Horse	Tree	Giant	Dragon
Class:	Animal	Fairy/Man	↔	Vegetable	↔	Mineral

For example:

After seeing the ogre change himself into a lion, Puss-In-Boots tells him it'd surely be impossible for him to become as small as a mouse. Indignant, the ogre does just that. Knowing he'll need at least three points of effect to pull it off (two to shrink down to the size of a mouse, and one to go from being a Fairy/Man – that includes ogre – to an Animal), he spends a point of Fortune, for a total of 5d6. His result: 1, 1, 2, 4, and 5. Seeing that he's going to have to take some Misfortune no matter what, so he puts a 1 and the 5 towards his effort, and uses the remaining three effect dice to turn into a mouse. Puss-In-Boots is impressed – then hungry.

For example:

A witch, annoyed with the traveler begging at her door, decides to teach him a lesson. She rolls 5d6 and gets 3, 3, 4, 5, and 6. The traveler's Magic Ability is Trained (12). She puts a 3, 4, and 5 toward her effort, enough to match his Ability, and uses the two effect dice to turn him into a toad (one to shrink him, and one to make him an Animal). He'll be fine in 10 minutes, assuming nothing eats him before then. With another point of effect, she could've turned him into a small block of wood, or with four, she could've turned him to stone – again, for 10 minutes. Turning him into a small rock, suitable for skipping, for a year would cost nine points of effect: four to go from Man to Mineral, one to go from man-sized to mouse-sized, and another four to extend the duration from 10 minutes to one year.

NPCs and Fairy Magic

Obviously, NPC fairies don't roll dice, so how does fairy magic work for them?

If the NPC is casting a spell with a PC as a target, the PC defends against the NPC's Magic Ability, as usual. The GM can bump up the spellcaster's Magic Ability as usual, too.

The thorns come in when an NPC casts a spell with a static threshold, such as when conjuring. In brief: Wing it. Give the NPC whatever he needs as long as it makes for a good story. Would it be cool if he turned into a dragon? Then fine, he turns into a dragon. NPCs are different than PCs.

If you really feel the need to keep everything tightly within the rules, for every three points of Magic Ability the NPC has above the listed difficulty, the caster achieves one point of effect. The GM can give the NPC additional points of effect in exchange for deferred Fortune points (see **Boosting NPC Abilities**), but since there isn't a single "target" of non-targeting magic, at the end of the scene distribute Fortune among *all* players as equally as possible. In this circumstance, a player can opt to lose a point of Misfortune instead of gaining a point of Fortune.



The Order of the Glass Slipper

Life as a member of the Order of the Glass Slipper has its ups and downs. On one hand, you're treated favorably by Queen Mab (usually) and tend to command the respect of her subjects (often), and there's no denying how rewarding it is to fulfill one's duty to the Crown, not to mention the excitement of visiting the otherwise-forbidden World of Man. On the other hand, your life is much more dangerous and stressful than the average fairy's – every mission could be your last, and the very nature of your job is enough for some to label you a traitor against your own kind.

However, of more practical concern to a player is how life in the Order figures into game play.

The Duties of the Order

The Queen has charged the order with three basic duties: **Investigation**, **Recovery**, and **Observation**.

Investigation

This duty comprises the bulk of a fairy's activities in the Order – more time is spent following clues and connecting the dots than anything else. However, it's also the most important duty, in many ways. Everything that comes after hinges on a successful, accurate investigation.

Recovery

Arguably the main purpose of the Order, recovery includes recovering both the stolen fairy-tale treasure and the thief who stole it in the first place, although the former is more important to the Queen than the latter. While punishing the guilty is important, without the power of the treasure they're essentially exiled to the World of Man as a mere mortal, and that's easily a fate on par with whatever punishment the Queen might devise. Further, getting the thief but not the treasure is a potential recipe for disaster – there's no telling what might become of that treasure without a fairy around to keep an eye on it. Without either, the mission is an abject failure.

Observation

Less known to the public at large is the Order's role as an observer of the World of Man. It's important to the Queen to keep track of the doings of the mortals. Is there war? How has their technology changed? What do they look like now? How do they dress? Apart from the Queen's curiosity, the Order needs this information for the sake of the agents they send there. They need to know what to expect, how to talk, and what to wear to convincingly pass as mortals. The Order's learned the hard way that merely having a mortal body isn't quite enough. Consequently, every member of the Order receives an education in the mortals' customs and culture, though the second-hand nature of this information sometimes renders it less than completely accurate.

A Typical Mission

The PCs' superior in the Order – or, sometimes, Queen Mab herself – gathers them together to explain the situation. They're told everything the Order knows about the theft, which, for metagame purposes, is always enough to know where to go and possibly even the suspect's identity. By the time the PCs get involved, another royal order, the Order of the Book, has researched the stolen item enough to develop a theory as to which treasure it might be; this information is relayed to them as well, so they'll know

what they're up against and what to look for in the World of Man. When the investigation proceeds to the point of needing to cross the barrier, the Order sends a conjurer, who provides the PCs with clothing appropriate to the mortal world. Sometimes, the Order knows where the portal through the barrier leads; just as often, though, they don't. Equipped with the necessary disguise and information, they cross over.

Once in the World of Man, the PCs are on their own. How they identify their target and go about completing their mission are up to them. There is no contact with the Fairy World in either direction when in the World of Man. Fortunately, renegade fairies usually engage in behavior that attracts attention. The temptation is just too great to use their ill-gotten treasure for their own flamboyant gain. They often set themselves up in positions of fame, power, wealth, or all three. Indeed, it isn't uncommon to find that they've set themselves up as something of a king or queen themselves, ruling over anything from a successful corporation to a cut-throat street gang, depending on their own proclivities and how long they've had to establish themselves. Remember, some portals only operate each way but once a year – armed with the right fairy-tale treasure, that's plenty of time to acquire quite a bit of power among the mortals.

Though the renegades may hate their Queen, all of them retain some degree of fear about never being able to return to their homeland. Because of this, and because paths back there are all but impossible for mortals to find, they often remain rather close to the portal they used to cross over, just in case they wish to return some day.

What with one thing and another, the PCs eventually track down confront their quarry, usually after a number of other confrontations with the quarry's underlings. Some renegade fairies are willing to return to the Fairy World without a struggle, once they know their number's up. Maybe they can plead their case with the Queen and appeal to her mercy. Others won't be taken without a struggle, sometimes to the death.

Regardless, assuming recovery of the fairy, the treasure, or both, the PCs need to return and report to the Order and the Queen. This may involve its own challenges: Their prisoner's associates (in either world) may try to free him, or he may simply escape, with or without the treasure. Eventually, though, if they don't *completely* screw it up, the PCs report back to their superiors, and their performance is evaluated accordingly.

Glass or Gold?

All versions of "Cinderella" involve her leaving a shoe behind when she flees the palace ball, but not all agree on what kind of slipper it is. Some say glass, and some say gold. Why?

Perrault has her wearing glass slippers. In 1697, Venetian glass was all the rage, and rare as can be. A pair of Venetian-glass footwear, however impractical, would've been a great treasure indeed.

However, by the time the Brothers Grimm came along, glass production was far cheaper and its use much more common. Glass slippers would've been a curiosity, nothing more. Gold, however, was in high demand, as it always is – thus, gold slippers.

Fairy-Tale Treasures

The chief problems with the theft of fairy-tale treasures from the Fairy World are recognition and anticipation. The items themselves are so mundane there, so easily ignored, that recognizing them is all but impossible without significant research. As such, it's equally difficult to provide them with adequate protection. Worse, many treasures known to have been recovered have also been known to wander off again. Fortunately, Queen Mab has the resources to deal with the continuing problem.

Below is a catalogue of just a few fairy-tale treasures, with a brief description of their known properties in the World of Man. In game terms, these properties just *work* – no dice-rolling required, unless otherwise noted.

Little Red-Cap's Red Cap

Once she gave her a cap of red velvet, which suited her so well that she would never wear anything else; so she was always called "Little Red-Cap."

Fairy Form: A small, round hat of red fabric, such as a young girl might wear.

Mortal Form: Varies, but always red and always a hat or head ornament of some kind. Past forms have included a baseball cap, a sun hat, a headscarf, a beret, and a plastic hair clip.

Known Properties: The wearer can reach any destination without getting lost. This isn't to say that the wearer knows the destination before starting out, but if he has a destination in mind he *will* find it, unerringly, given time.

Bluebeard's Bloodstained Key

After a few moments she began to see that the floor was sticky with clotted blood; worse, she could see reflected in this blood the corpses of several women, hanging up along the walls.

Fairy Form: A small house key with two teeth, stained with what appears to be blood.

Mortal Form: Varies, but always a darkly colored key.

Known Properties: The key fits into the lock of any door; once turned, the door opens into a room in Bluebeard's castle – the room described above, where he kept the bodies of the wives he'd killed. There is no other exit from the room.

Doctor Knowall's ABC Book

"My lord, now will I search in my book where the gold is hidden."

Fairy Form: A nondescript almanac with a picture of a rooster on the frontispiece.

Mortal Form: A thick, well-worn, hardcover book with the faded letters "ABC" on the cover.

Known Properties: In the book, the reader can find any piece of information that a living person still knows. This includes, but is not limited to, security codes, safe combinations, locations of fugitive criminals, celebrity secrets, and so on. Anything that a living person *doesn't* know isn't in the book – the location of Atlantis, for example.

Witch's Spindle

"The King's daughter shall in her fifteenth year prick herself with a spindle, and fall down dead."

Fairy Form: An old, battered spindle, such as it commonly found in many village homes.

Mortal Form: Varies; commonly a spinning top.

Known Properties: The possessor of this spindle can, if he wills it, cause anyone to fall into a deep, coma-like sleep within 24 hours of touching the victim with the pointed end of the spindle. The coma lasts for one year. (Not even Sleeping Beauty actually *died* from this, despite the old fairy's prophecy.) Touching an unwilling target requires a roll that generates at least one point of effect.

Seven-League Boots

"Bring me my seven-league boots! Quickly, so I can catch them!"

Fairy Form: A pair of well-worn leather boots with heavy soles.

Mortal Form: Varies; usually large, ill-fitting running shoes.

Known Properties: When not observed by others, the wearer of these boots can travel seven leagues (21 miles) with a single step. The wearer emerges in an isolated area, such as an empty alley, an unoccupied public restroom, or inside a locked tool shed. The boots do not function in front of witnesses.

Clay Pitcher

"I'm sorry, said the poor girl, "for taking so long." As she spoke, out of her mouth came two roses, two pearls, and two large diamonds.

Fairy Form: An ordinary clay pitcher, such as a peasant might use.

Mortal Form: Varies, but always a pitcher, mug, or cup.

Known Properties: Drinking from the pitcher causes gems to fall out of the mouth of the imbibor with every word he speaks. The condition lasts for a day, after which the pitcher ceases to function for a week.

Wishing-Cloth

"Now I perceive," said he, in what kitchen my cooking is done. You shall be dearer to me than the mountains of silver and gold." For he plainly saw that it was a wishing-cloth.

Fairy Form: A small, faded tablecloth.

Mortal Form: Also a small, faded tablecloth.

Known Properties: Once per day, the possessor can spread this cloth on the ground and wish for anything he desires. The wished-for item must fit *completely* on the 4' x 4' cloth, and it must be a physical object of non-living matter. The cloth only works when used unobserved.

Puss-In-Boots' Boots

"All you have to do is give me a sack and have a pair of boots made for me for walking through the brambles, and you will see that you have no done so badly in the share-out after all."

Fairy Form: Lightweight, comfortable boots of soft leather.

Mortal Form: Always knee-high boots of unfashionable design that somehow fit anyone who wears them.

Known Properties: Any lie the wearer tells is taken as an unequivocal, unquestionable truth.

Dame Gothel's Scissors

In her anger she clutched Rapunzel's beautiful tresses, wrapped them twice round her left hand, seized a pair of scissors with the right, and snip, snap, they were cut off, and the lovely braids lay upon the ground.

Fairy Form: Heavy iron scissors, dull from use.

Mortal Form: Varies, but always either a knife or a pair of scissors.

Known Properties: These scissors can cut through any substance as if it were nothing more than hair. In combat, the scissors grant a bonus point of effect on a successful attack, and have two Qualities: Sharp and Magical.

Mercurius' Rag

"Now you shall have your reward," said he, and handed the boy a little rag just like sticking-plaster, and said: "If you spread one end of this over a wound it will heal, and if you rub steel or iron with the other end it will be changed into silver."

Fairy Form: A dirty rag with indeterminate stains.

Mortal Form: Varies, but usually a washcloth or tea towel – or, in one instance, an adhesive bandage.

Known Properties: Just as Mercurius promised, his rag has the ability to heal any wound (including any Hardship) with its merest touch, and can turn any ferrous metal (up to the size of an axe-head) into silver.

First Charcoal Burner's Knapsack

When he had walked a while, he wished to make a trial of the magical powers of his knapsack and tapped it. Immediately the seven warriors stepped up to him, and the corporal said: "What does my lord and ruler wish for?"

Fairy Form: A worn leather knapsack.

Mortal Form: A backpack or rucksack of contemporary design.

Known Properties: By lightly tapping the knapsack, the possessor can summon seven warriors, fit for battle (use the Bodyguard statistics in the Adversaries and Allies chapter). These warriors look like ordinary mortals wearing suits, and are unarmed. They appear by some innocuous means, like walking through a nearby door. After a day's time, during which they obey the possessor's every command, they disappear – usually by simply leaving the room, or walking around a corner. The warriors can only be summoned once per day.

Donkeyskin's Wand

"Here is my wand. If you hold it in your hand, all your dresses and jewels will follow you in this chest. It will be hidden underground, but when you want to open it, all you need to do is strike the ground with the wand."

Fairy Form: An ordinary wand twisted wood.

Mortal Form: Varies, but usually a pen or pencil.

Known Properties: With a thought, the bearer can transport any of his possessions to an inaccessible extra-dimensional space. With another, he can retrieve any or all of them just as easily.



Second Charcoal Burner's Hat

"Up there on that shelf lies a little old worn-out hat which has strange properties: the moment someone puts it on, and turns it round on his head, the cannons go off as if twelve were fired all together, and they demolish everything so that no one can withstand them."

Fairy Form: "A little old worn-out hat."

Mortal Form: An old Tyrolean hat.

Known Properties: While twelve cannons don't literally fire when the wearer of this hat turns it around on his head, there is an equally dramatic effect. The wearer can target either an object, such as a building or a car, or people. If the former, the object is destroyed in a sizable explosion. The blast is powerful enough to demolish a single building the size of a large apartment block or office tower. Against the living, the explosion deals 10 points of damage, spread among any number of nearby targets. The hat can only be used once per day.

Poisoned Comb

When they had made a bargain the old woman said: "Now I will comb your hair properly for once." Poor little Snow-white had no suspicion, and let the old woman do as she pleased, but hardly had she put the comb in her hair than the poison in it took effect, and the girl fell down senseless.

Fairy Form: A pretty comb carved out of ivory.

Mortal Form: An unbreakable black plastic comb.

Known Properties: When this comb is placed in a person's hair, that person will fall into a deep, sleep indistinguishable from death sometime during the next 24 hours. This condition will appear to appear to have some other cause, such as a blow to the head, exhaustion, or hyperventilation. The sleep lasts for a day, after which the victim wakes up feeling normal.

Telling Stories

Told by generation after generation, the traditional stories projected the deepest wishes of the folk, generalized diverse characters into a few types, selected the incidents that would most strikingly illustrate what heroes and heroines, witches, enchanters, giants and dwarfs, the haughty, the envious and the unfaithful were capable of.

—Padraic Colum (1881-1972)

This is what we're all here to do: Tell a story, play a game, and have fun. This section contains advice and rules for making your stories the best they can be.

The Fairy World

By its very nature, the Fairy World should be dreamlike and fantastic – only a few aspects really need to be in place to keep things functional and consistent. The rest is up to you and your group. Read some fairy stories and steal liberally.

As a starting point, here are some concrete facts about the Fairy World, along with potential consequences for altering them in your game:

Nothing really changes. *Ever.* Time doesn't really work in the Fairy World the way it does in the World of Man. Sure, the sun sets and rises, and seasons pass, but things never really change. Nobody ages or falls seriously ill. In fact, death by natural causes is the most unnatural thing imaginable.

- ❖ Without this, the Fairy World is far less alien and fantastic, which diminishes its contrast with the World of Man. Traveling from one to the other should involve no small degree of culture shock. If the Fairy World is too much like our own, a key setting assumption is ignored.

It's the Middle Ages, sort of. When the two worlds were intertwined, their culture, science, and technology progressed at the same rate. As soon as the barrier cut off its ties to the World of Man, however, all that progress ceased in the Fairy World. To human eyes, the society and technology of the Fairy World would be analogous to the popular conception of medieval Europe: knights, peasants, nobility, castles, farms, no industry to speak of, rolling hills, old stone bridges, packed-earth roads, uncivilized wilderness, and so on. There are some notable differences, of course, but if you think "stereotypical medieval Europe," you're on the right track.

- ❖ As above, the more similar the two worlds are, the less difficult (and interesting) it is for the PCs to make the transition between them.

Castles, villages, and wilderness. Wherever you might go in the Fairy World, odds are you'll either be in a castle, a village, or the wilderness. Castles, of course, are the homes of great lords and other important people. They are the seats of influence and power in the realm of the Fairy Queen. Villages are where everyone else lives – peasants in a perpetual state of barely sustainable poverty. The wilderness is what most of those people are justifiably afraid of. It's where all the things that people are afraid of in fairy tales live: ogres, trolls, witches, you name it. Of course, in the Fairy World, none of those are necessarily *evil* – they may even be PCs, in fact – but old superstitions die hard.

- ❖ This is pretty essential to maintaining the proper tone. Most fairy tales involve a protagonist leaving the relative safety of home – usually a poor village or a fantastic castle – and venturing into the woods in a desperate attempt to improve his or her situation. Besides, quite a lot can be done with these three archetypal locations.

A fairy can be just about anything. On a related note, each player can define his or her fairy's natural form in the Fairy World as being just about anything, from an ogre to a brownie to something that's recognizably human (perhaps the product of a union between a fairy and a human from centuries past). Talking animal? Sure. Little flying-around pixie-thing? You bet. Physical form in the Fairy World is far less important than magical ability.

- ❖ Most fairy tales feature supernatural creatures as important supporting players or antagonists. What is Cinderella without her fairy godmother, or Rumpelstiltskin without, well, Rumpelstiltskin? Then there are the ogres, the giants, the witches, the brownies, the spirits – the denizens of the Fairy World are diverse indeed. Part of the thrill for the player is breathing life into one of these normally deprotagonized characters. It's all about magic in the Fairy World, anyway. The rest is an aesthetic choice.

The Order of the Glass Slipper. This might be the most important fact about the Fairy World: Someone's in charge. Queen Mab sits on the throne and wears the crown. She is the final arbiter of justice and the provider of fantastic rewards.

- ❖ The Order does a lot of things for the game. It connects the characters, gives them built-in motivation to go gallivanting off into the World of Man, and provides them with a sense of identity in the Fairy World.

The Fairy Queen. This might be the most important fact about the Fairy World: Someone's in charge. Queen Mab sits on the throne and wears the crown. She is the final arbiter of justice and the provider of fantastic rewards.

- ❖ Simply put, all those rebellious fairies need something to rebel *against*. The Fairy Queen puts a face on that authority, and gives the PCs someone to interact with directly. She can charge them with tasks, chastise them for their failures, and praise them for a job well-done. They don't have to *like* her, of course, but if the GM plays her well, they'll sure want to *act* like they do.

That's it. If you have those details in place, this game should chug along for you just fine with minimal (if any) alterations.

So what's left for you to fiddle with? Plenty, when you think about it. Is Queen Mab popular with her subjects, or is there a revolt constantly fomenting? What factions might vie for power in her realm, and how might they affect the PCs? Are the PCs celebrated knights of the Order, or loose-cannon bad-asses? Or are they the low fairies on the totem pole, struggling to earn a little respect? For that matter, what kind of reputation does the Order have in the first place? Is it a noble organization of knights devoted to serving the Fairy Queen, or do the masses fear and hate it for its refusal to let those dissatisfied fairies *be*?

The World of Man

Far easier to define is the mortal world. Simply put, it's the time and place you live in now. Use your own city, or a big city that everyone knows, and get to it. Naturally, if you'd rather set the action somewhere or somewhen else, like the Wild West or MegaFrance 9595, feel free – but that will likely require more work in the way of research and GM preparation to get everyone on the same page. If you enjoy that, more power to you, but the aim of the game is to take away as many of those barriers as possible.

Adventure Structure

You are cheerfully invited to ignore these guidelines as you please. They're provided only to indicate a typical session of *Tales of the Glass Slipper* and to provide a starting point for a new group.

The recommended stages of an adventure are **Getting the Assignment**, **Investigation: Fairy World**, **Passing Through the Barrier**, **Investigation: The World of Man**, **Confrontation**, **Return**, and **Report**.

Getting the Assignment

The PCs are contacted and brought together by the Order, or the Queen herself, and told the details of the crime. This usually consists of the missing fairy's name and description, plus what was stolen and from where. In other words, they get everything the Order knows on the matter, which should be enough to point them in the right direction.

Investigation: Fairy World

From there, it's a matter of tracking the suspect down. Ideally, the goal is to catch them before they escape to the mortal world, but that's a rarity. More often than not, by the time the Order completes its research the culprit is long gone. The PCs, then, need to find out all they can about the fairy's movements. Tracking him down is key to finding the portal he used to escape. This stage of the adventure generally involves a lot of asking around, maybe some interrogation, and possibly a little tracking, but don't let it go on *too* long. The meat of the adventure should be in the World of Man.

Passing Through the Barrier

Once the PCs find the portal, they'll have to travel through it. At this point, the players flip over their character cards from Fairy to Mortal and describe what their characters look like as humans.

Investigation: The World of Man

This stage of the adventure should form the bulk of the session. The PCs start at a notable disadvantage here: They're strangers in a strange land with no leads, no contacts, and little in the way of resources. However, they do have a few things working in their favor. Fairy-tale treasures are a rather corrupting influence in the World of Man. Their quarry will almost always be wealthy, successful, and relatively famous. Of course, *lots* of mortals are wealthy, successful, and famous, but it's a start. After identifying the target (which should be a relatively brief process), the primary challenge here is getting close to them and completing the mission. This is a lot like the PCs' investigation in the Fairy World, but with the added complication of being discreet. If the target finds out the PCs are after them – a common circumstance – the investigation can quickly turn dangerous.

The game assumes that the portal, the quarry, and the investigation are all in the same mortal city, but there's no reason this stage can't involve some more travel – as long as the second location is even more colorful, more dangerous, or more interesting than the first location.

Confrontation

Once the PCs find their quarry and bypass or defeat whatever security measures are in place (including henchmen), they'll eventually confront the renegade fairy himself. Depending on the nature of the stolen treasure, this can be a deadly endeavor.

Return

Assuming the PCs are successful in their task, it's time to return to the portal (or find another) and get back to the Fairy World, preferably with the quarry in tow. This can be a simple matter, or it can involve more adventure. If the quarry's still alive, he might not take kindly to being brought back to face the Queen's punishment. Maybe he has some allies in the Fairy World intent on springing him before the PCs can get him to the Fairy Queen's court. Upon return to the Fairy World, the players flip their character cards from the Mortal side to the Fairy side.

Report

Finally, as a sort of epilogue to the adventure, the PCs report to the Fairy Queen, return the stolen treasure, hand over their prisoner (if they have one), and recount the entire affair to the Queen. This can be an opportunity for drama and tension as the players try to tell their story in the best possible light while fielding pointed questions from the Queen, or it can be a much more cursory affair. The GM is encouraged to gauge the tone of the table before launching into a prolonged denouement. If the players aren't up for it, or if time is tight, feel free to be quick about it.

While this stage of the adventure is more or less just color in a one-shot game, it takes on added importance when it comes to long-term play. See **Advancement and Long-Term Play** for more.

Katherina Viehmann: The Grimms' GM

Well, not quite. But in their travels, the Grimms were fortunate to make the acquaintance of Frau Viehmann, who was a virtual treasure-trove of folk fairy tales. Wilhelm Grimm said of her, "She retains fast in mind these old sagas – which talent, she says, is not granted to everyone; for there by many that cannot keep in their heads anything at all. She recounts her stories thoughtfully, accurately, with uncommon vividness and evident delight."

Sure, the Grimms had other sources for their stories, from medieval manuscripts to their own wives, but Viehmann's unique contributions can't be denied. Plus, she sounds like she would've made a pretty good GM, doesn't she?

Running Conflicts

If there's one thing all members of the Order have in common, it's plenty of conflict in their lives. It's all but inevitable in any investigation. In order to better include combat and other direct conflicts in your stories, here are a few guidelines to help them flow more smoothly.

Sequence of Events

When a conflict begins (or is about to begin), go through the following checklist:

1. Determine Surprise
2. Establish Order of Actions
3. Take Action
4. Record Hardships

Determine Surprise

When it comes to surprise, there are three possible outcomes: One side surprises the other, neither side is surprised, or both sides are surprised.

Mechanically, the latter two outcomes are identical – either both sides are prepared for a confrontation, or neither is. Examples include a fistfight arising out of an argument (neither side surprised) and opening a door and unexpectedly finding a group of thugs who are just as surprised as you are. Regardless, carry on to the next step.

If one side is surprised and the other isn't, it's usually the result of subterfuge, such as sneaking up behind an enemy or attacking someone who's distracted. Whether sneaking or detecting a sneak, make a roll against the opponent's Mind Ability. Depending on the circumstances, Gifts like Nimble and Cunning can apply when sneaking, while Alert and Wise can be relevant when you're on the receiving end of an ambush.

When a group is attempting to be stealthy together, take the *lowest* roll or Mind Ability and use it for the entire group. Conversely, when a group is attempting to *detect* an ambush, take the *highest* roll or Mind Ability.

For every die of effect the ambushing party gets, add 1d6 to their dice pools (or increase their Abilities by one step) for the first round of the conflict – the surprise round. The surprised side doesn't get to act during the surprise round.

Establish Order of Actions

The PCs act first, going clockwise around the table from the GM's left. Once all the players have had their turns, it's the GM's turn. There's no need to maintain a rigid order among the players – if they want to act in a different order, that's fine, so long as everyone gets a turn each round.

Take Action

Each participant gets to take one action during their turn. In addition to whatever this action is, everyone can also move a reasonable distance. Don't get caught up in the details here – this isn't a tactical combat game. Taking cover behind a parked car is a reasonable move action, for example, as is

charging from one end of a gas station to the other. Anything else, like slamming a door, picking something up off the ground, or drawing a weapon, counts as an action.

Record Hardships

Note Hardships taken by PCs and NPCs at the end of each participant's turn. When the maximum amount of damage a participant can take is exceeded (five for PCs, variable for NPCs), that participant is out of the conflict.

Advancement

"And I know things now, many valuable things, that I hadn't known before...."

—Little Red Riding Hood, "I Know Things Now," *Into The Woods*

Much like Little Red Riding Hood learned some indelible lessons from her experience with the wolf, no fairy returns from the World of Man unchanged. What's more, the Queen and the Order place a high value on fairies with a proven track record, and are eager to make use of them in the future. In other words, your character's first mission need not be his last.

At the end of your first story, think back to something your character saw or experienced in the World of Man. It could be a sport, like football or baseball (or cricket, if that's how you choose to live your life), a profession, like doctor or taxi driver, or some other activity that's easily encapsulated in a word or two. This becomes your character's **Interest**. It's something from the mortal world that really stuck with you for one reason or another. Write it down under your Gifts with the label "INTEREST."

Treat your Interest like a Gift whenever you do something that's relevant to it. For example, if your Interest is Baseball, you could bring it into play when running, throwing, or swinging a bat; if it were Taxi Driver, you'd get that extra d6 when doing just about anything at the wheel of a car.

With each successfully completed story, you get an additional Interest – again, following the same guidelines as above.

On any roll, you can add only 1d6 from your Interests. Additional Interests don't make you more powerful, but they *do* make you more versatile.

With the GM's permission, you can trade in three Interests to change one of your Gifts. However, the number of Gifts in each category must remain the same, so you can't exchange a Gift of the Mind for a Gift of Magic.



Adversaries and Allies

The ogre had seven daughters who were still little girls. These little ogresses had lovely rosy complexions, because they ate fresh flesh like their father, but they had mean little round eyes, sharp noses, and huge mouths full of long, pointy teeth with gaps between them.

—“Hop O’ My Thumb” (Perrault, 1697)

In the Fairy World

Below are a number of Fairy-World natives one is likely to run into in the course of an investigation, or even in the course of an ordinary day. The Hardships line indicates the maximum combined total damage rating of the creature’s Hardships. For example, if the combined damage rating of an ogre’s Hardships exceeds 4, it’s out. In addition, many of the creatures listed below have their own version of a standard form of fairy magic. Note that, regardless of what kind of fairy a PC is, none of these restrictions apply – the favor of the Fairy Queen sets the PCs apart from the common populace.

Ogre

Monstrous and ugly, ogres have a bad reputation in the mortal world thanks to centuries of derogatory depictions in fairy tales. Nonetheless, they’re perfectly accepted and commonplace in the Fairy World.

- ❖ Magic Ability: Average
- ❖ Mind Ability: Average
- ❖ Hardships: 4
- ❖ Fairy Magic: Transform (Trained). An ogre’s magic is limited to transforming himself into animals – never anything or anyone else.

Dwarf

Dwarves are related to both trolls and giants, but it’s usually best not to remind them of that. Sullen and gruff, they spend most of their time mining ore in the mountains and tend to stick to themselves. Dwarves tend to hold mortals in low regard.

- ❖ Magic Ability: Trained
- ❖ Mind Ability: Average
- ❖ Hardships: 3
- ❖ Fairy Magic: Conjure (Expert). A dwarf’s magic is limited to producing objects made of metal. This is representative of the dwarves’ supernatural skill at metalcraft. For a dwarf, instead of having a Condition of Rhyming Couplet, Transform has a Focus of Expendable Raw Materials.

Troll

Trolls come in many shapes and sizes, from squat dwarf-like things to ogre-sized monstrosities who turn to stone in sunlight. Some could pass for humans, were it not for their tails. Because of their extreme variations in appearance and nature, trolls don’t have much of a sense of community with one another.

- ❖ Magic Ability: Trained
- ❖ Mind Ability: Weak to Average
- ❖ Hardships: 2-4
- ❖ Fairy Magic: Transform (Expert). A troll’s magic is limited to transforming himself into inanimate objects such as a log or a ball of yarn – never anything or anyone else.

Goblin

Variously known as gnomes, manikins, and even elves, these diminutive creatures are generally bad news for anyone who crosses them, though usually through mischief rather than outright violence.

- ❖ Magic Ability: Trained
- ❖ Mind Ability: Average
- ❖ Hardships: 2
- ❖ Fairy Magic: Glamour (Expert)

Brownie

Brownies are short, pleasant-faced, and hard-working subjects of the Queen. Mortal legend has it that they wouldn't work if observed, but the truth is that they just don't like being micromanaged. Brownies, too, are sometimes referred to as "elves," despite the confusion this occasionally causes.

- ❖ Magic Ability: Expert
- ❖ Mind Ability: Trained
- ❖ Hardships: 1
- ❖ Fairy Magic: Glamer (Master). A brownie's magic is limited to turning himself invisible.

Giant

An unusual sight even the Fairy World – a place practically *defined* by its unusual sights – this towering race tends toward stoic isolationism. The average giant is typically found in a castle in the sky.

- ❖ Magic Ability: Master
- ❖ Mind Ability: Average
- ❖ Hardships: 5
- ❖ Fairy Magic: None, unless you count the ability to build a castle on a cloud and live in it.

Unicorn

These noble, majestic beasts are held in high esteem by all in the Fairy World. Merely standing in the presence of a unicorn is enough to inspire or unnerve just about anyone.

- ❖ Magic Ability: Paragon
- ❖ Mind Ability: Paragon
- ❖ Hardships: 5
- ❖ Fairy Magic: Enchant (Deific) and Glamer (Deific). In addition, the willing touch of a unicorn's horn will cure any injury, illness, or disease.

Fairy Knight

These are career soldiers in the service of the Queen, commonly found clad in shining armor and mounted on horseback.

- ❖ Magic Ability: Expert
- ❖ Mind Ability: Trained
- ❖ Hardships: 3
- ❖ Fairy Magic: Summon (Master). A fairy knight's magic is limited to summoning animals and fantastic beasts, such as a falcon or unicorn.

Fairy Noble

You'll find more than a few of these hanging around the Queen's court, jockeying for position or neck-deep in some other manner of political intrigue.

- ❖ Magic Ability: Trained
- ❖ Mind Ability: Expert
- ❖ Hardships: 3
- ❖ Fairy Magic: Enchant (Master)

Fairy Peasant

The humble villages that dot the Fairy World's landscape are full of these – simple working folk, such as farmers and smiths.

- ❖ Magic Ability: Average
- ❖ Mind Ability: Average
- ❖ Hardships: 2
- ❖ Fairy Magic: None. Peasants are usually too busy with their labors to play around with magic.

Note on terminology: While the word "fairy" has been used thus far to refer to any denizen of the Fairy World, in the entries above it refers to a bipedal humanoid relatively indistinguishable from a human being, save for unusually pointed ears.

In the World of Man

Far more familiar to you, in all likelihood, are the denizens of the mortal world. In addition to the possessions listed for each entry, feel free to give these mortals anything else they might reasonably have, or have access to.

Bodyguard

Professional bodyguards are a cut above your typical henchman.

- ❖ Body Ability: Trained
- ❖ Mind Ability: Trained
- ❖ Hardships: 3
- ❖ Possessions: Pistol (Gun, Sharp)

Henchman

Your average toady.

- ❖ Body Ability: Average
- ❖ Mind Ability: Average
- ❖ Hardships: 2
- ❖ Possessions: Pistol (Gun, Sharp)

Hired Goon

These are the knee-breakers of the criminal underworld.

- ❖ Body Ability: Trained
- ❖ Mind Ability: Weak
- ❖ Hardships: 3
- ❖ Possessions: Brass Knuckles (Heavy) or baseball bat (Heavy)

Street Gang Thug

The guys you don't want to run into in a dark alley late at night.

- ❖ Body Ability: Trained
- ❖ Mind Ability: Average
- ❖ Hardships: 2
- ❖ Possessions: Baseball bat (Heavy), switchblade (Sharp), or pistol (Gun, Sharp)

Civilian

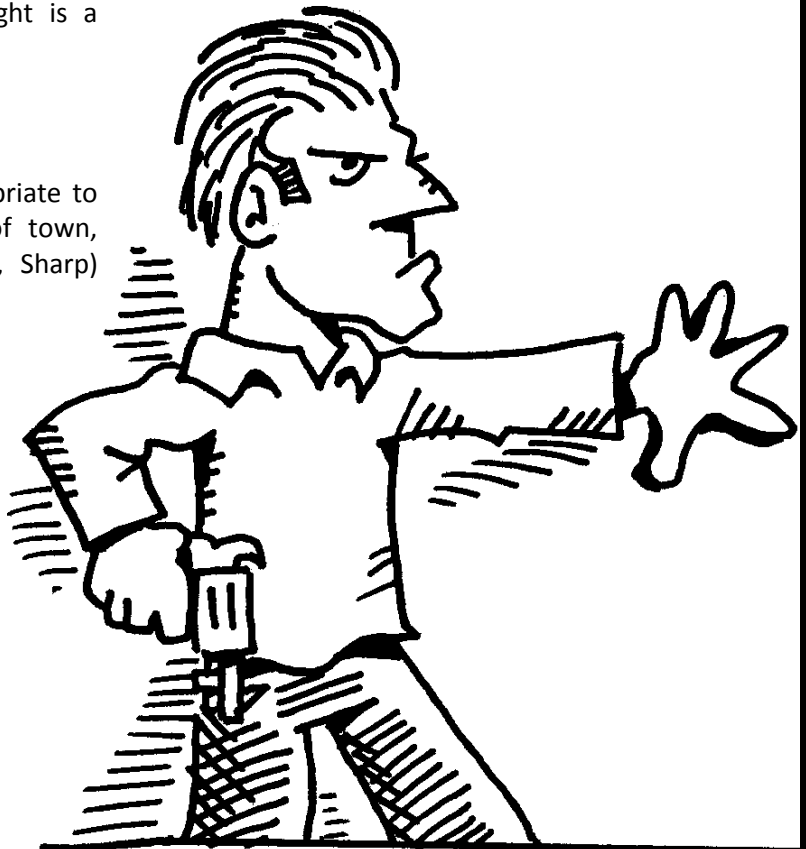
Shopkeepers, schoolteachers, waiters... anyone who you don't expect to get into a fight is a civilian.

- ❖ Body Ability: Weak-Average
- ❖ Mind Ability: Weak-Average
- ❖ Hardships: 1
- ❖ Possessions: One tool (+1) appropriate to profession; if in the bad part of town, possibly a shotgun (Gun, Heavy, Sharp) behind the counter.

Police Officer

The long arm of the law.

- ❖ Body Ability: Expert
- ❖ Mind Ability: Trained
- ❖ Hardships: 3
- ❖ Possessions: Pistol (Gun, Sharp), nightstick (Heavy), and handcuffs (Difficulty: Herculean), plus a shotgun (Gun, Heavy, Sharp) in the cruiser



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