

GREAT & SMALL

The Roleplaying Game of Animal Fantasy
Characters Quick Start



By Robert F. Mason

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This document is a doorway, a modest one to be sure, into the ancient, grand tradition of stories that feature talking animals as the heroes, or the hero's companions. From Aesop's Fables to *The Guardians Of Ga'Hoole*, these kinds of stories have fascinated audiences for thousands of years, but have rarely been the focus of a roleplaying game. GREAT & SMALL: THE ROLEPLAYING GAME OF ANIMAL FANTASY (or G&S for short) hopes to change that, by giving you a simple, easy-to-learn set of rules for creating and playing animal characters in a variety of roleplaying settings.

G&S is based in large part on the rules of the world's first fantasy role-playing game, created by Gary Gygax and David Arneson. It also converts, develops and advances concepts from another early roleplaying game by B. Dennis Sustare and Scott Robinson. The latter game was inspired by the classic novel *Watership Down*, and focused on rabbits as player-characters. GREAT & SMALL makes it possible to play rabbits, of course, but also seeks to expand roleplaying options to just about any animal species.

In the pages that follow, you will find a mostly-complete guide to creating a beginning character for G&S. This guide contains terms and rules references that are more fully explained in the Rules Quick Start, but are briefly defined below for ease of reference.

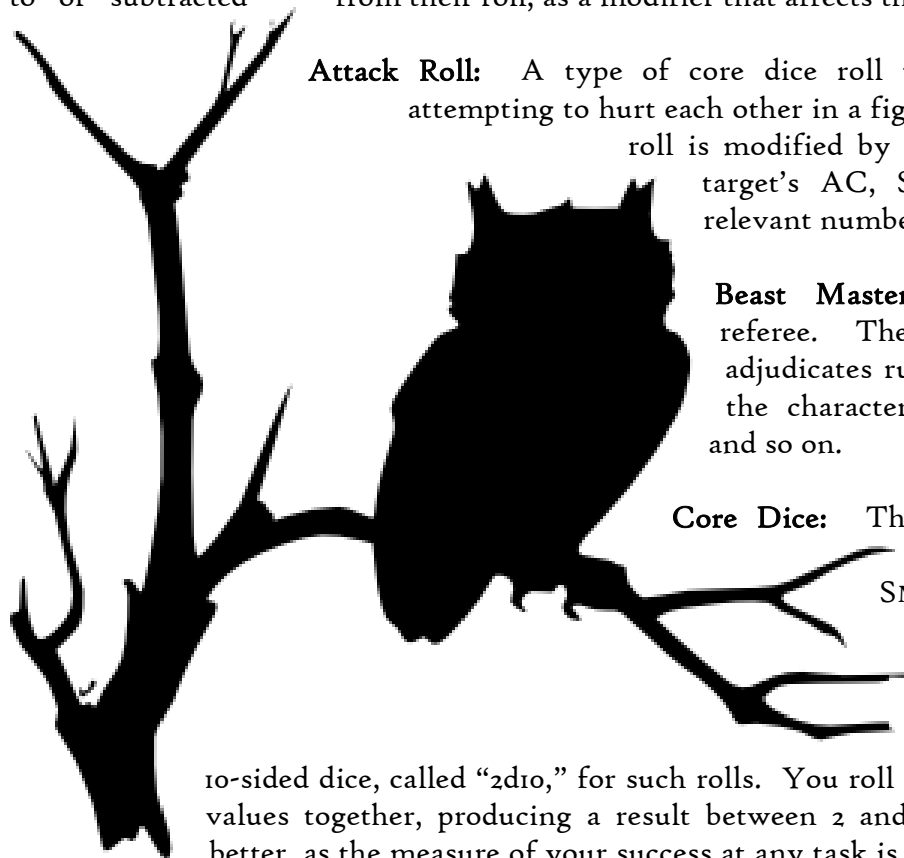
Armor Class (AC): An abstract measure of how difficult it is for opponents to penetrate your defenses during a fight. AC is rated from 9 (the easiest to overcome) to -9, the most difficult to beat. When other characters roll dice to attack your character, your AC is added to or subtracted from their roll, as a modifier that affects their final result.

Attack Roll: A type of core dice roll that simulates characters attempting to hurt each other in a fight. The result of an attack roll is modified by adding or subtracting the target's AC, Size modifier, and other relevant numbers.

Beast Master (BM): The game's referee. The BM is the player who adjudicates rules, devises situations for the characters, describes their world, and so on.

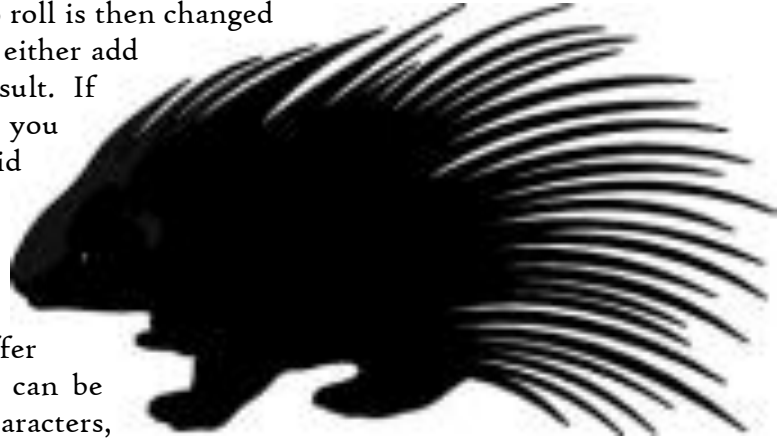
Core Dice: The central task resolution mechanic in GREAT & SMALL. Almost everything characters attempt to do in the game is handled by rolling the core dice. G&S uses a set of two

10-sided dice, called "2d10," for such rolls. You roll 2d10, and add the two face values together, producing a result between 2 and 20. Higher numbers are better, as the measure of your success at any task is to achieve a final result of



20 or more. The result of your 2d10 roll is then changed by applying various modifiers that either add to or subtract from your dice roll result. If the final tally is 20 or more, you succeeded. If it's below 20, you did not.

Hit Points: An abstract measure of how much physical punishment your character can suffer before dropping dead. Hit points can be lost through attacks by other characters, from diseases, poisons, falls, and various environmental (and sometimes supernatural) threats. Your hit points fluctuate throughout the game.



Initiative: A rule for figuring out who goes first during a fight or other situation where timing of actions is crucial. You figure your initiative by rolling the appropriate dice and adding in the Speed rating of your declared action. Characters with higher results act sooner than those with lower ones.

Level: A measure of your character's skill and power. The higher your level in something, the better you are at it. Level is often added to core dice rolls, thus improving your chances of success.

Lore Check: An attempt to use your character's abilities and special powers during uncertain situations. Like the attack roll, it is made by rolling 2d10, adding or subtracting various modifiers, and trying to get a result of 20 or higher.

Niche Die: A special, oddly-shaped die that you roll along with your 2d10, and add to its results. Niche dice are granted to you by specializing in a type of lore.

Saving Throw: A type of core dice roll made to avoid the effects of environmental dangers or other threats. Like attacks and lore checks, it is made by rolling 2d10, adding or subtracting various modifiers, and trying to get a final result of 20 or more.

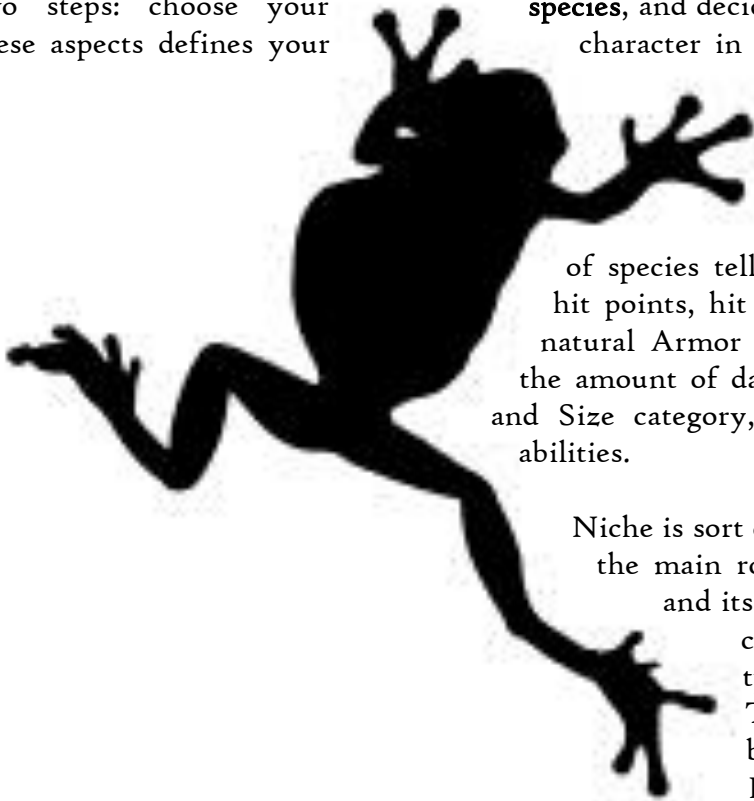
Speed: A numerical rating attached to various possible actions in the game, which helps determine initiative. Speed comes in three ratings: Slow (2), Average (4), or Quick (6). This number is added to any appropriate niche dice rolled. Higher results are better.

GETTING STARTED: HOW TO CREATE A CHARACTER

The first step to making a character is to consult with your BM, to see if she has restricted access to any particular types of animals. Some BMs will have no restriction, while others may want to focus on a single type (the sample adventure, "Secret Of The Spooky Old Warren," for instance, is designed with only rabbit characters in mind). It is likely that most

BMs will allow a specific list of animal types in their game, neither restricting the choice to one species, nor allowing whatever the players desire.

Once your available range of choices is known, you can make a GREAT & SMALL character in two steps: choose your **species**, and decide your character's **niche**. Each of these aspects defines your character in numerical ways, allowing you to interact with the rules from the get-go.



Species is, obviously, what type of animal you are. The choice of species tells you your character's beginning hit points, hit points per level, movement rate, natural Armor Class, natural attack forms (and the amount of damage these attack forms inflict), and Size category, along with some other unique abilities.

Niche is sort of like your character's profession, the main role she plays in the shared story and its world. You decide your niche by choosing in which of the eight types of lore you have specialized. The lores (described in more detail below) are Healer, Herbalist, Runner, Scout, Seer, Storyteller, Trickster, and Warrior. You may only choose one of these lores as your niche. Though your character may learn skills from any of the eight lores over the course of her career, she will always be better at her niche than she is at anything else. Niche tells you where to assign your character's beginning niche die, your special niche abilities, the type of saving throw at which you are especially adept, and the beginning Threat rating you use during non-lethal conflicts (for more on Threat, see below).

After you've chosen a species and a niche, you simply record all the numerical information these two traits grant your character, either on the provided character record sheet, or one of your own devising. It is best to record this information in pencil, as many of these numbers can change during the course of play.

Then, you come up with a name, description, and backstory, and you are ready to play your character.

SPECIES

Despite their great diversity of forms and capabilities, most animal characters will have at least one of the following game traits. Individual species descriptions will list which of the

traits the species possesses, but for ease of reference, the traits and their game effects are all defined here.

Adaptive Camouflage: Some species possess the ability to change their skin color to better blend in with their surroundings. During combat, this is an Average speed action, and grants a +5 bonus on all Trickster lore checks to hide from opponents.

Blindsense: Some animals perceive the world around them primarily with a sense other than sight. Whether using acute hearing, smell, or even taste, an animal with blindsense does not need to make Scout lore checks to detect any creature or object within 20 feet of herself, provided she has a “line of sense” between herself and the subject.

Brachiation: Arboreal species (like apes, monkeys, and squirrels) can move through the upper limbs of trees and similar environments at their normal Movement rate. This is done by jumping or swinging from branch to branch without touching the ground. The ability can also be used to traverse the rafters of a human dwelling, the stalactites of a cave, or any similar structure the BM determines to be appropriate.

Constriction: Animals like constrictor snakes can crush their opponents if they make a successful wrestling attack. The damage caused by such an attack is given in the animal’s description.

Death Roll: Crocodilians can use torque to drag opponents into deeper water until they drown, or to twist their limbs apart. When fighting in water, if the crocodilian makes a successful wrestling attack, she can begin to roll under the water, dragging her target down with her. In addition to taking wrestling damage each round, the target must also make a Tough saving throw vs. death, minus the amount of the crocodilian’s Warrior niche roll, if any. If the target fails this save, she must immediately make an unmodified Challenging save vs. death, or die from drowning.

While fighting on land, a crocodilian can significantly augment the damage she inflicts by latching onto a target’s body and twisting until a limb comes off. To do this, she suffers a -4 penalty on her attack roll, but if the attack is successful, she inflicts twice the normal wrestling damage (along with any Warrior niche die bonus).

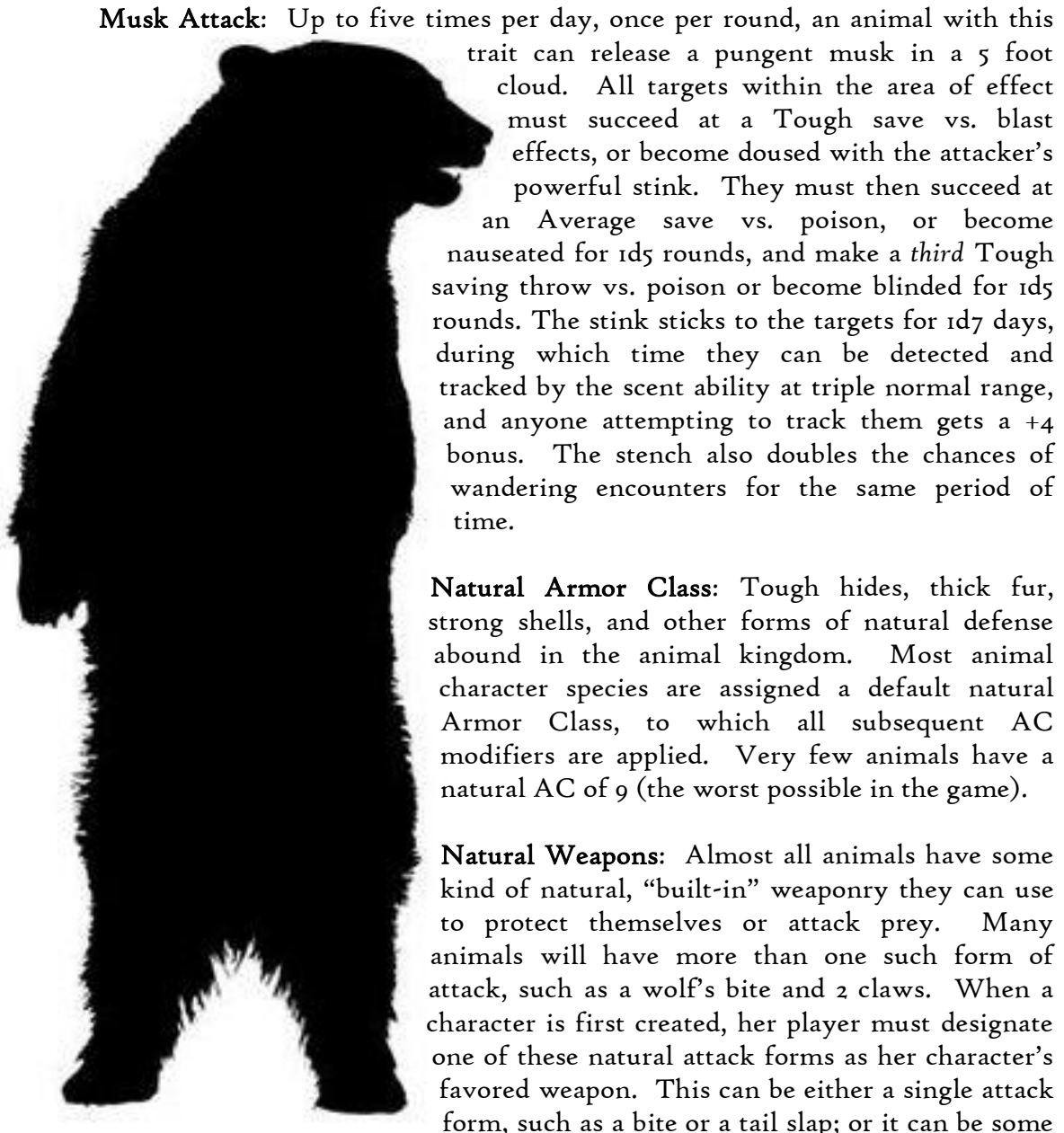
Diminished Profile: The animal can fit through spaces smaller than her Size category would normally allow. The size of the space she can fit through relative to her actual Size is detailed in the species description.



Flyby Attack: An animal with this ability can move at her normal flight speed and still attack with an Average speed action during a combat round.

Growth Spurt: Some animals change Size categories as they go up in level, representing their growing to physical maturity. This will primarily affect their AC, but will impact other aspects of their character, as well. An animal's beginning Size, the number of Growth Spurts they receive, and the level at which they occur, are given in its species description.

Low-Light Vision: The animal can see twice as far as a human in dim light, and when outdoors on moonlit nights, can see as well as she can during the day.



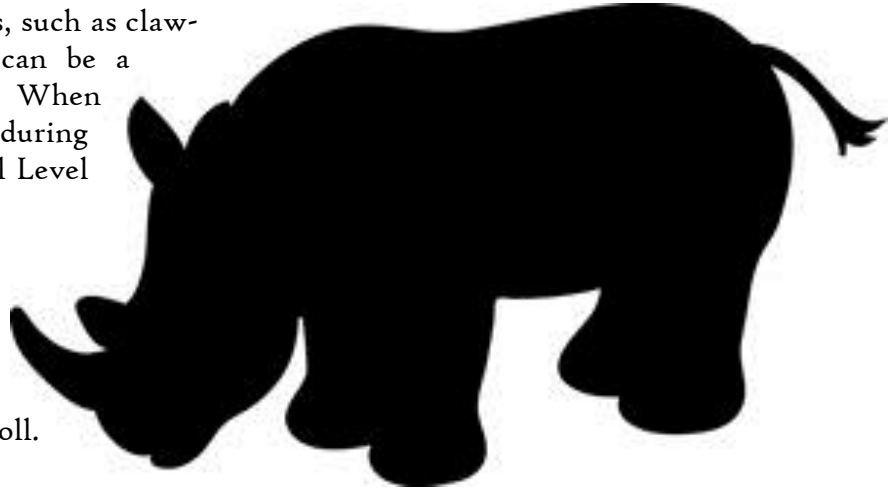
Musk Attack: Up to five times per day, once per round, an animal with this trait can release a pungent musk in a 5 foot cloud. All targets within the area of effect must succeed at a Tough save vs. blast effects, or become doused with the attacker's powerful stink. They must then succeed at an Average save vs. poison, or become nauseated for 1d5 rounds, and make a *third* Tough saving throw vs. poison or become blinded for 1d5 rounds. The stink sticks to the targets for 1d7 days, during which time they can be detected and tracked by the scent ability at triple normal range, and anyone attempting to track them gets a +4 bonus. The stench also doubles the chances of wandering encounters for the same period of time.

Natural Armor Class: Tough hides, thick fur, strong shells, and other forms of natural defense abound in the animal kingdom. Most animal character species are assigned a default natural Armor Class, to which all subsequent AC modifiers are applied. Very few animals have a natural AC of 9 (the worst possible in the game).

Natural Weapons: Almost all animals have some kind of natural, "built-in" weaponry they can use to protect themselves or attack prey. Many animals will have more than one such form of attack, such as a wolf's bite and 2 claws. When a character is first created, her player must designate one of these natural attack forms as her character's favored weapon. This can be either a single attack form, such as a bite or a tail slap; or it can be some

combination of two attacks, such as claw-claw or bite-claw, or it can be a maneuver, like grapple. When using this favored weapon during combat, she adds her Total Level to her attack roll.

All other attack forms are considered secondary weapons. These attack rolls add only $\frac{1}{2}$ her Total Levels to the attack roll.



Normal Movement Rate: Most animals have a default movement rate, which assumes they are moving across the ground or other flat surface. If a species has a method of locomotion other than walking and running (for instance, flight or swimming), it is noted in their species description, after their ground movement rate.

Poison: The animal has a venomous bite or sting. She can make an envenomed attack a number of times per day equal to her Healer lore level times 3. The specific effects of the poison attack are given in the species' description.

Pounce: While charging, an animal with the pounce ability can make a Quick attack action at no penalty (including rake attacks, if applicable).

Prehensile Tail: Animals with this ability (such as chameleons, and some species of monkey or snake) can use their tail as "hand" to aid them in climbing, or grasping objects. They receive a +3 bonus on all lore checks involving climbing. In addition, they can attempt to use their tail to manipulate objects or even wield weapons at a -5 penalty to their roll.

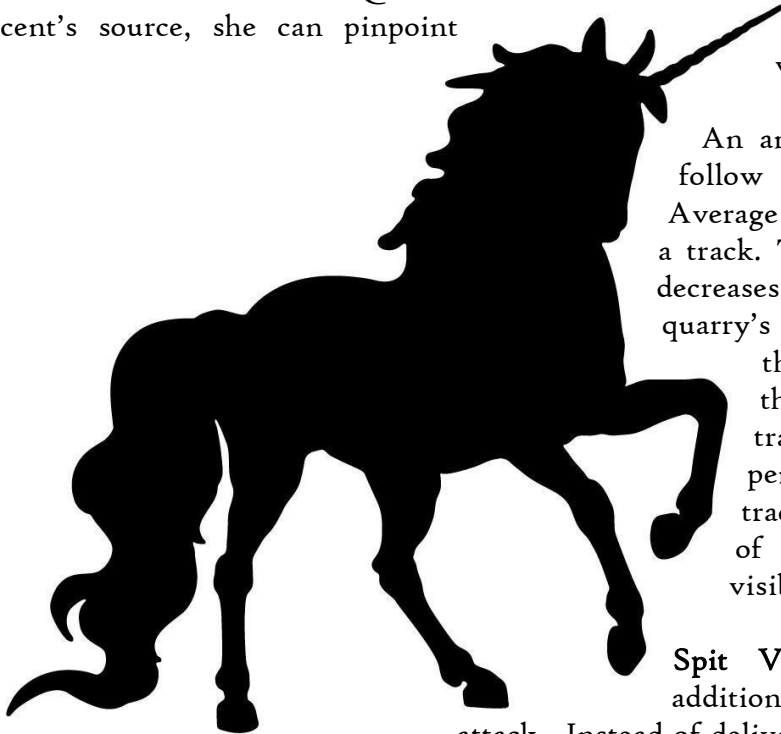
Protective Shell: Many animals with shells (often crustaceans, gastropods, or tortoises and turtles) can withdraw into their shell completely during lethal conflict, and better avoid taking damage. By withdrawing their head, tail, and all limbs into their shell, such animals can improve their AC by 4 points. They cannot make any movement actions at all, but can still use any mental or magical abilities that don't require them to move around. In addition, they may apply their Healer niche die result to any saving throw that would normally be modified by Runner or Trickster niche dice.

Rake: On a successful wrestling attack, an animal with the rake ability gains two additional claw attacks against her opponent, at no penalty.

Scent: Many animals – especially among mammals – can detect approaching enemies, sniff out hidden targets, or follow a trail by sense of smell. Such creatures can identify familiar odors as easily as longpaws do sights.

An animal with the scent ability can detect opponents by sense of smell, generally within 30 feet. If the opponent is upwind, the range is 60 feet. If it is downwind, the range is 15 feet. Strong scents, such as smoke or rotting garbage, can be detected at twice the ranges noted above. Overpowering scents, such as skunk musk, can be detected at three times these ranges.

The animal detects another creature's presence but not its specific location. Noting the direction of the scent is a Quick action. If the animal moves within 5 feet of the scent's source, she can pinpoint that source, even if it is not visible.



An animal with the scent ability can follow tracks by smell, making an Average Scout lore check to find or follow a track. The task's difficulty increases or decreases depending on how strong the quarry's odor is, the number of creatures, the type of terrain, and the age of the trail. For each hour that the trail is cold, the task's toughness penalty decreases by 2. Creatures tracking by scent ignore the effects of surface conditions and poor visibility.

Spit Venom: The animal has an additional use for its natural poison attack. Instead of delivering her poison through a bite or sting, she can choose to spit her venom as a ranged attack. The attack's range and damage are included in the species description. On a successful hit, the target must make an Average save vs. poison or become blinded. The blindness lasts for 1d5 turns, but only if it gets cleaned out within 1d5 minutes. Otherwise, the blindness is permanent.

Trample: Some animals of Large Size category or bigger can attempt to damage creatures smaller than themselves simply by moving through their space and stepping on them. An animal using Trample gets a +4 bonus on her attack roll, and moves over any opponent in her path. The damage inflicted by a Trample attack is included in the species description. Some animal herds may Trample as a group, inflicting 1d16 hp of damage through sheer numbers.

Targets of a trample can opt to either attack their trampler at a -4 penalty, or try to avoid the trampler and take only half damage with a successful Tough saving throw vs. blast effects.

This ability can only be used to inflict damage once per round, no matter how many times the trampler moves through her opponent's space.

Trip: On a successful wrestling attack, an animal with the trip ability can attempt to knock her foe into a prone position. The target is entitled to a Tough saving throw vs. paralysis to stay on her feet. If she fails, she falls to the ground in a prone position, and further attacks against her receive a +2 bonus to hit. A target gets a +2 bonus on the saving throw if she has four legs or is otherwise more stable than a humanoid creature.

A failed trip attempt means the target can then make a wrestling attack to try and trip her attacker, using the same conditions and modifiers as above.

Vestigial Hands: An animal with this trait possesses grasping forelimbs that can be used to hold and manipulate tools. Such animals get a +1 bonus to all Scout or Trickster lore checks to manipulate fine tools, spring traps, perform “sleight of paw” tricks, or other activities that mimic the ape or human use of real hands.

In addition to one or more of the above abilities, most species possess unique gifts, as well, detailed in their species description.

SPECIES DESCRIPTIONS

The expanded rules will include game stats for a wide array of species, of varying sizes and abilities, along with guidelines for designing game stats for animals not covered in the rules. This will include mythical beasts like the griffin and the unicorn for high fantasy campaigns.

Below, meanwhile, you will find game stats for rabbits, the most appropriate type of animal for use in the sample adventure “Secret Of The Spooky Old Warren.”

RABBIT

Rabbits have the unfortunate fate of being delicious to nearly every kind of predator. They make up for it by being quick, smart, and crafty. Also, rabbits are believed to be the inventors of herbalism, and are certainly its masters.

Beginning Hit Points: 2 + niche die result

Hit Points By Level: 1 + niche die result

Habitat: Temperate (desert, forest, plains/scrub)

Movement: 120 ft (40 ft.)

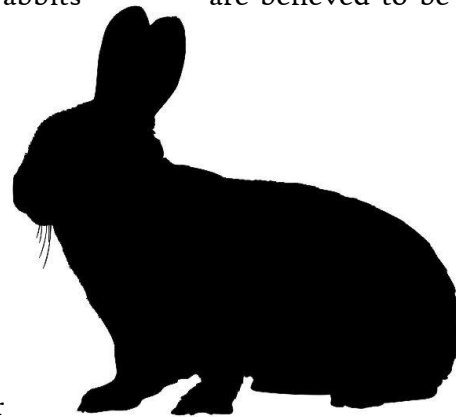
Natural Armor Class: 6

Natural Attacks: Bite (1d3); rear kick (1 hp)

Size: Tiny

Species Traits:

- **Leap:** Rabbits use their Trickster level rather than their Warrior level when making jump checks. Further, they get a +4 bonus on such checks. On a successful lore check, they can jump up to 3 feet in the air, or cover a distance of up to 9 feet without crossing the ground in between.
- **Low-Light Vision**
- **Scent**



- **Tunnel Sense:** Rabbits do not have a substantial burrowing speed, but are still familiar with underground environments. They get a +1 bonus on all lore checks to notice unusual earthenworks, such as traps, recent burrowing, unsafe tunnels, and so forth.
- +2 bonus on lore checks to hide and move silently
- -3 penalty on all Warrior lore checks related to feats of strength
- **Suitable Niches:** Healer, Herbalist, Runner, Seer, Storyteller, Trickster.

Below are listed some other species with beginning Sizes appropriate to the sample adventure. At the BM's option, you may play a character from one of these species instead, provided you can come up with a convincing reason why such a creature would be working with rabbits.



CAT, SMALL

Two things utterly fascinate cats: chases, and secrets. This simple fact explains their close association with longpaws – gullible targets who cling to the unspoken and hidden things in their lives more preciously than to their shiny trinkets. Cats are often considered pampered slaves of humans by other animals, but this is all part of their ruse. The cats know who's really in charge.

Beginning Hit Points: 4 + niche die result

Hit Points By Level: 2 + niche die result

Habitat: Any

Movement: 180 ft. (60 ft.)

Natural Armor Class: 6

Natural Attack: 1 bite (1d3), 2 claws (1d2)

Size: Tiny

Species Traits:

- **Low-Light Vision**
- **Nine Lives:** Cats can re-roll nine critical failures over the course of their career. Often, this will mean the difference between life and death; hence, the name *nine lives*. Once these “lives” are used up, they cannot be restored.
- **Scent**
- **Special Maneuvers:** Claw/Claw, Bite/Claw/Claw, Grapple, Pounce, Rake
- +2 bonus on all lore checks to climb, hide in shadows, and move silently. The bonus is +4 in tall grass or other thick foliage.
- +1 on all lore checks to interpret human behavior, or deduce the function of human-crafted devices
- **Suitable Niches:** Runner, Scout, Trickster, Warrior.

DOG

Dogs are the cleverest and most versatile of the animals, at least to hear them tell it. They tamed humans and have shepherded civilization for thousands of years, all while fooling the longpaws (their word for humans) into thinking it was their idea the whole time. As the species with the most intimate experience of human ways, and the greatest exposure to human knowledge, dogs are indeed highly flexible beasts.

Beginning Hit Points: 7 + niche die result

Hit Points By Level: 4 + niche die result

Habitat: Any

Movement: 180 ft. (60 ft.)

Natural Armor Class: 7

Natural Attack: Bite (1d3)

Size: Tiny

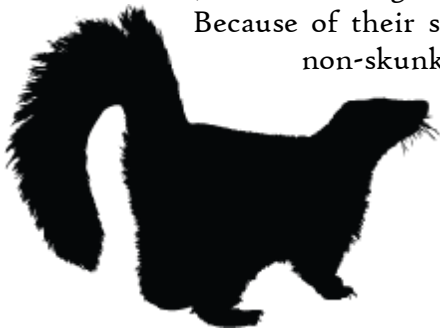
Species Traits:

- **Growth Spurt:** Many dogs remain Tiny, but large breeds can grow to be Small or even Medium. Dogs have the option of gaining a Size Category at 2 Total Levels, and again at 5 Total Levels, but are never required to do so (depending on breed the player chooses).
- **Low-Light Vision**
- **Scent**
- **Versatility:** Thanks to their close association with longpaws, dogs are quite flexible in their abilities. They have a permanent +2 bonus to all checks with a single lore of their choice outside their niche, chosen at 0-level and remaining the same throughout their life.
- +2 on all lore checks to interpret human behavior, or deduce the function of human-crafted devices
- +2 on all lore checks when tracking by sense of smell
- **Suitable Niches:** Any.



SKUNK

Skunks are a sub-species of badger, but you wouldn't know it from their demeanor. Where badgers are ornery and often vicious, skunks are quiet and meek. They will usually avoid confrontations (unless hunting for food) until their musk attack is their only option.



Because of their smelly musk, however, it is difficult for skunks to make non-skunk friends; if they finally do, their new friends will find them gentle and loyal unto death.

Beginning Hit Points: 4 + niche die result

Hit Points By Level: 2 + niche die result

Habitat: Temperate (forests, urban, woodlands)

Movement: 90 ft. (30 ft.); burrowing 10 ft. (3 ft.)

Natural Armor Class: 7

Natural Attack: Bite (1d3), 2 claws (1d2)

Size: Tiny

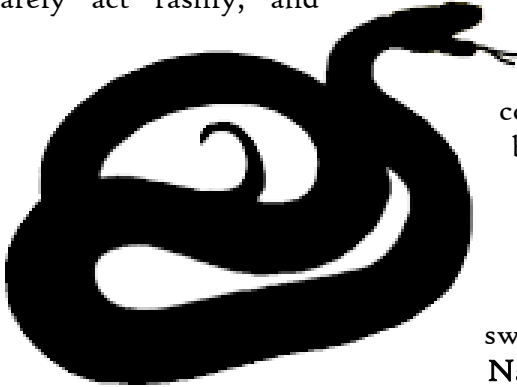
Species Traits:

- **Low-Light Vision**
- **Musk Attack**
- **Scent**
- **Tunnel Sense:** Skunks get a +1 bonus on all lore checks to notice unusual earthenworks, such as traps, recent burrowing, unsafe tunnels, and so forth.
- +2 bonus on Scout lore checks to follow trails left by other animals.

- +2 bonus on Trickster lore checks to escape traps or evade danger.
- **Suitable Niches:** Healer, Scout, Seer, Warrior.

SNAKE, CONSTRICTOR

Constrictor snakes are often deliberative and slow to act, and thus considered wise by many animals, even those who fear them as mighty hunters. They are consummate planners who rarely act rashly, and



pride themselves on being great strategists. Of course, as predators, they are generally feared by many other animals, and with good reason. A constrictor's wrath is swift and terrible when it finally befalls her target.

Beginning Hit Points: 7 + niche die result

Hit Points By Level: 4 + niche die result

Habitat: Temperate to Tropical (any)

Movement: 60 ft. (20 ft.); crawling, climbing, swimming

Natural Armor Class: 6

Natural Attack: Bite (1d3)

Size: Small

Species Traits:

- **Constriction Attack:** (1d2 + Warrior niche die result, if any). The damage caused by this attack bumps up if the snake increases in Size. At Medium Size, this attack does 1d3 (+ Warrior niche die result, if any) damage; at Large Size, it does 1d5 (+ Warrior niche die result, if any).
- **Diminished Profile:** Two Size categories smaller than their actual Size.
- **Great Strength:** At 1st Total Level, snakes gain a +1 bonus on Warrior lore checks involving feats of strength. This increases to +2 at 3rd Total Levels, and up to +3 at 6th Total Levels.
- **Growth spurts:** Constrictors have the option of increasing their Size by one category at 3 Total Levels, and then once more at 6 Total Levels. However, these Size changes do not grant them the usual bonuses to AC.
- **Low-Light Vision**
- **Natural Armor:** Improve AC by 1 point at 1st, 3rd, and 5th Total Levels.
- **Niche Restriction:** Because they lack limbs, snakes cannot choose Herbalist as their niche.
- **Special Maneuvers:** Grapple
- **Stealthy:** +1 bonus on Trickster lore checks to hide in shadows and move silently
- **Suitable Niches:** Healer, Runner, Scout, Seer, Trickster, Warrior.

SQUIRREL

Squirrels are frivolous, alert, and seemingly perpetually happy. They delight in all manner of dances, jokes, and riddles, and are among the craftiest of animals when it comes to living among longpaws. In



classic fantasy worlds, squirrels revel in the company of fairies like brownies or pixies, joyfully taking part in their schemes and tricks.

Beginning Hit Points: 2 + niche die result

Hit Points By Level: 1 + niche die result

Habitat: Temperate (forest, plains, urban, woodland)

Movement: 60 ft. (20 ft.); climbing

Natural Armor Class: 6

Natural Attack: Bite (1d3)

Size: Diminutive

Species Traits:

- **Brachiation**
- **Low Light Vision**
- **Glide** (Flying Squirrels only): Flying squirrels can use their “wings” to glide a distance of 2 feet vertically for every 1 foot horizontally.
- **Scent**
- **Scamper:** Squirrels can move at their full run speed while climbing, provided they are moving in a straight line
- **Vestigial Hands**
 - -3 penalty on all Warrior lore checks involving feats of strength
 - +2 bonus on all Trickster lore checks to hide and move silently
 - +4 bonus on lore checks involving balancing and climbing
- **Suitable Niches:** Healer, Herbalist, Runner, Seer, Storyteller, Trickster.

TORTOISE, GOPHER

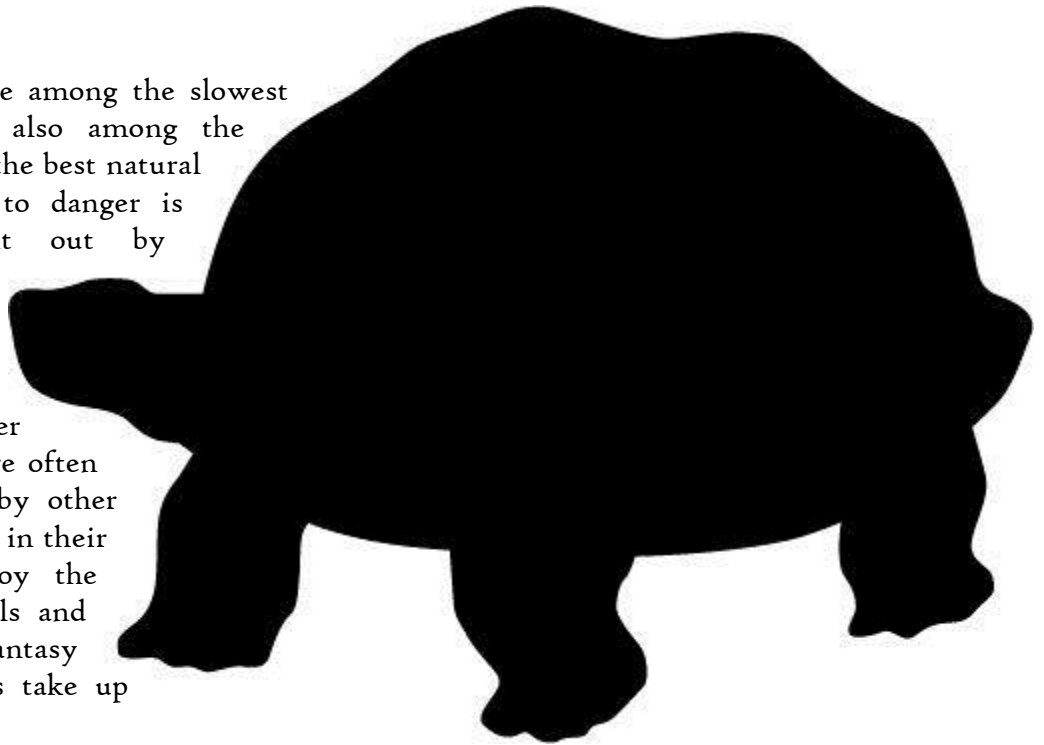
Tortoises and turtles are among the slowest animals on land, but also among the toughest. Blessed with the best natural armor, their approach to danger is normally to wait it out by withdrawing into their powerful shells. Known for long lifespans and gentle wisdom, aged gopher tortoises in particular are often sought out for advice by other Tiny and Small animals in their habitat, and even enjoy the respect of larger animals and predators. In classic fantasy worlds, they sometimes take up the practice of magic.

Beginning Hit Points: 4 + niche die result

Hit Points By Level: 2 + niche die result

Habitat: Temperate (plains, savannah, woodland)

Movement: 15 ft. (5 ft.)

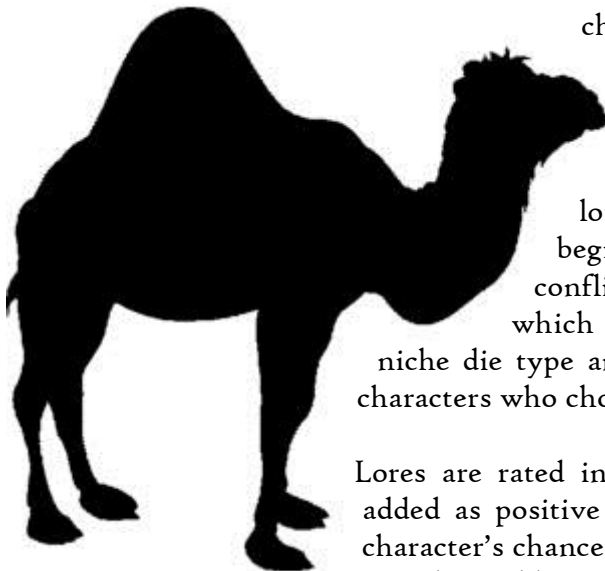


Natural Armor Class: 3
Natural Attack: Bite (1d3)
Size: Tiny
Species Traits:

- **Improving Armor:** A gopher tortoise's shell becomes thicker and sturdier as she ages. Her natural AC improves by 1 point each at 2, 5, and 8 Total Levels. Thus, at 2nd level, she has AC 2; at 5th level, she has AC 1; and at 8th level, she has AC 0.
- **Initiative Penalty:** All of a gopher tortoise's physical actions have a Speed rating of Slow (2), even if the action's description has a higher rating.
- **Low Light Vision**
- **Protective Shell:** When a 0-level gopher tortoise retreats into her shell, her AC becomes -1. At 2nd Total Level, her pulled-in AC is -2; at 5th level, her pulled-in AC is -3; and at 8th level, her pulled-in AC is -4.
- **Niche Restrictions:** Gopher tortoises lack the speed to be effective Runners.
- **Tunnel Sense:** Gopher tortoises do not have a substantial burrowing speed, but are still familiar with underground environments. They get a +1 bonus on all lore checks to notice unusual earthenworks, such as traps, recent burrowing, unsafe tunnels, and so forth.
- +2 bonus on all Herbalist lore checks to identify edible plants and fresh water
- -5 on all Runner lore checks; this becomes -3 at 5 Total Levels
- -3 on all Trickster lore checks; this becomes -1 at 5 Total Levels
- **Suitable Niches:** Healer, Herbalist, Scout, Seer, Storyteller, Warrior

THE EIGHT LORES

Lores lie at the heart of the GREAT & SMALL game, affecting everything from social interaction to combat to resisting various kinds of harm. Most things your character can do result in some way from your level in one or more of these types of lore.



There are eight lores, all named for the “profession” that specializes in them. Each lore provides characters with a set of listed skills, a beginning Threat rating for use in non-lethal conflict, and a particular type of saving throw at which members of that profession excel, along with a niche die type and a special ability which are only available to characters who choose that lore as their niche.

Lores are rated in numerical levels (1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc.), which are added as positive modifiers to all lore checks, thus improving a character's chances of success. Lore checks are made by rolling the core dice, adding in your lore level (and the result of your niche die roll, if applicable), applying the Difficulty Rating assigned by the BM, and trying to achieve a result of 20 or more. Thus, the formula is:

2d10 + lore level (+ niche die result) +/- Difficulty Rating vs. 20+

All characters begin with 0 levels in all their lores, but still gain the bonus die, special abilities, saving throw bonus, and beginning Threat rating of their selected niche.

The eight lores are detailed below, in the following format:

LORE NAME

Description: A brief summary of the lore and the role of its characters in the game.

Niche Ability: The special ability or abilities that is only available to characters who select this lore as their niche. All niche dice are 1d2 at 0-level. This increases to 1d3 at 3rd lore level, 1d5 at 6th lore level, and 1d7 at 9th lore level.

Other Abilities: Capabilities that can be used by anyone who has levels in this lore, whether it is their niche or not.

Saving Throw: You add your niche die result from this lore to all saving throws of the type listed.

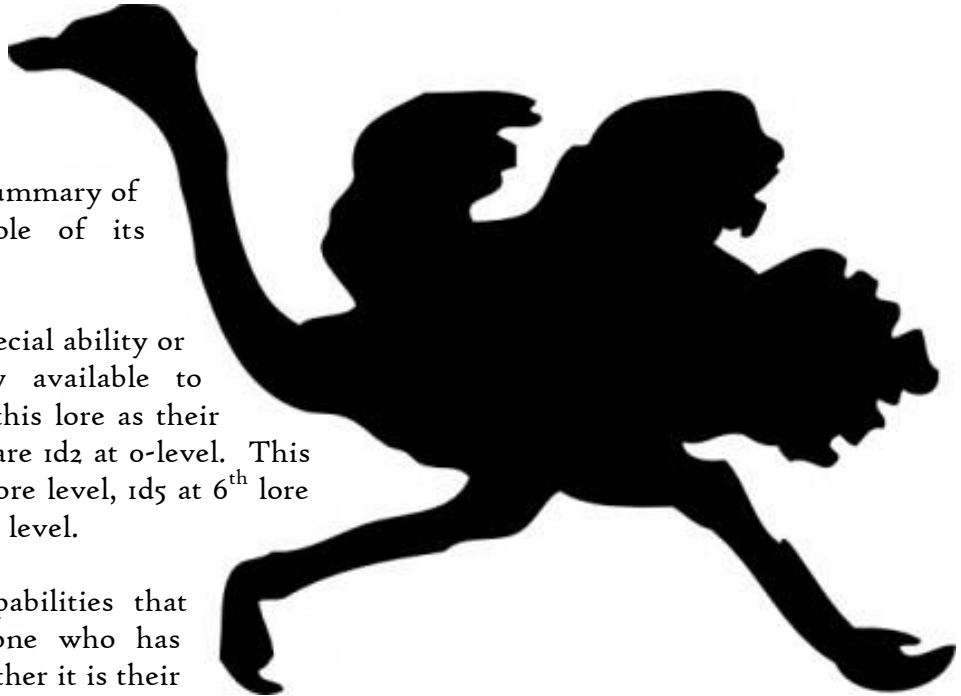
Threat: The difficulty rating against which your foes must make a successful saving throw when you hit them during non-lethal conflict.

HEALER

Description: Some animals possess a deep connection to the force of Life itself, and can channel its energy through their own bodies, though not without cost. Such empathic creatures are generally called Healers, because this is their most common function in a community.

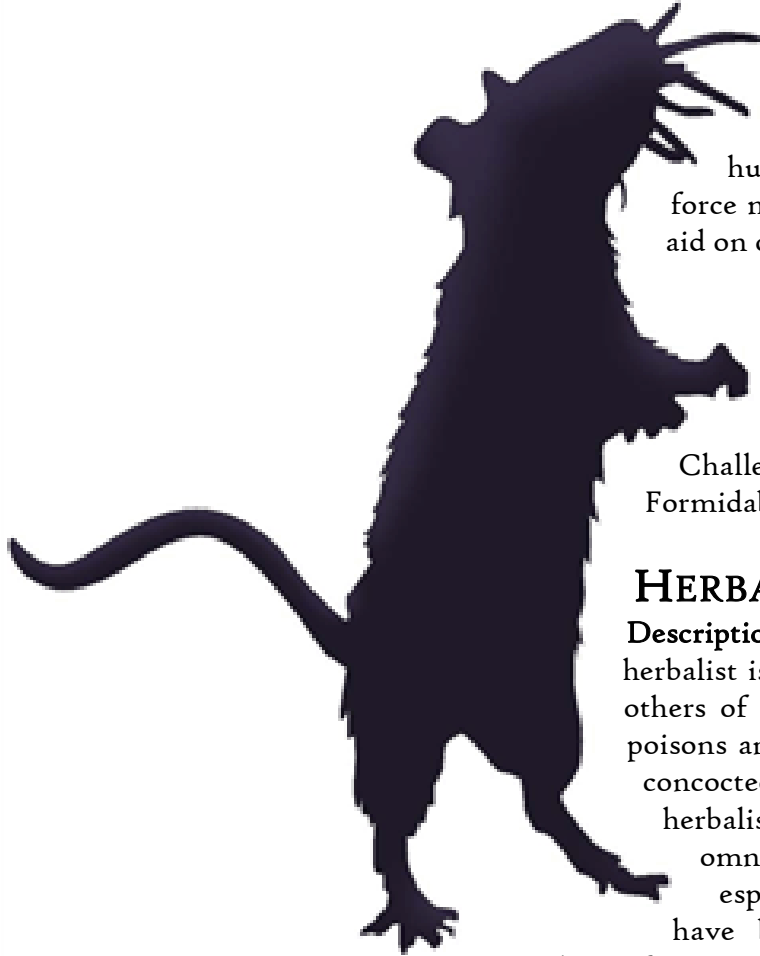
Niche Ability: If you choose Healer as your niche, you gain the power to take on the pain of other animals by absorbing ill effects from them. This normally takes the form of transferring hit point damage from another character to yourself, and then recovering from it at a much faster rate than they would.

You may absorb 1 hit point per Healer level (+ your Healer niche die result) from another character by laying your paws on them, grooming them, or otherwise making physical contact, and then concentrating for one turn. During this time, you cannot be attacked,



spoken to, or otherwise interrupted and continue absorbing damage without a successful save vs. paralysis.

Absorbed hit point damage “dissipates” from your body at the rate of 5 hit points every 10 minutes. Again, this must be a quiet, uninterrupted time, and disruptions will require a save vs death to continue dissipating normally. Failed saves indicate the damage becomes “permanent” and must be healed normally. If you are reduced to 0 or fewer hit points by empathically healing another, you do not die, but instead enter a coma that lasts until you return to your normal hit point total. A failed save to resist disruption during this time causes an immediate Healer lore check *without the benefit of a niche roll*, or you die.



Other Abilities: Add your Healer level to all lore checks when attempting to hold your breath, resist hunger, dehydration, and sleeplessness, force march for extended periods, or use first aid on other characters.

Saving Throw: Death & Poison.

Threat: Average (+6). This increases to Tough (+3) at 2nd total level, Challenging (+0) at 5th total level, and Formidable (-3) at 8th total level.

HERBALIST

Description: A master of plant lore, the animal herbalist is able to “live off the land” better than others of her kind. She is also a master of the poisons and their antidotes that can be found or concocted from the plants in her habitat. Most herbalists are found among herbivorous or omnivorous species, and the tradition is especially strong among rabbits, who have been using its secrets to ward off predators for countless generations.

Niche Abilities: When you select Herbalist as your niche, you gain three special abilities.

First, you begin the game knowing the recipes for 2d5 herbs, and a store of ready-to-use concoctions equal to twice that number. For more information, see the rules on **Herbalism**.

Second, you run no risk of accidentally poisoning yourself when preparing concoctions from natural poisons, and may also apply such poisons to your natural weaponry without risk.

Third, starting at 2nd lore level, you can, once per day, concoct a natural alchemical mixture that cleanses food and water sources as per the classic fantasy spell *purify food & drink*. However, this is not actually a magical effect, and so cannot be dispelled or disrupted by anything that would interfere with magical effects. You gain an additional daily use of this ability at 5th Herbalist level, and again at 10th Herbalist level.

Other Abilities: Add your Herbalist level (and Herbalist niche die result, if applicable) to all lore checks when attempting to use natural alchemy, locate and identify safe food and water in any habitat (although you still suffer the usual Habitat Penalty if they are outside their natural habitat), or recall something about animal or plant lore.

Saving Throw: Poison.

Threat: Easy (+9). This increases to Average (+6) at 2nd total level, Tough (+3) at 5th total level, and Challenging (+0) at 8th total level.

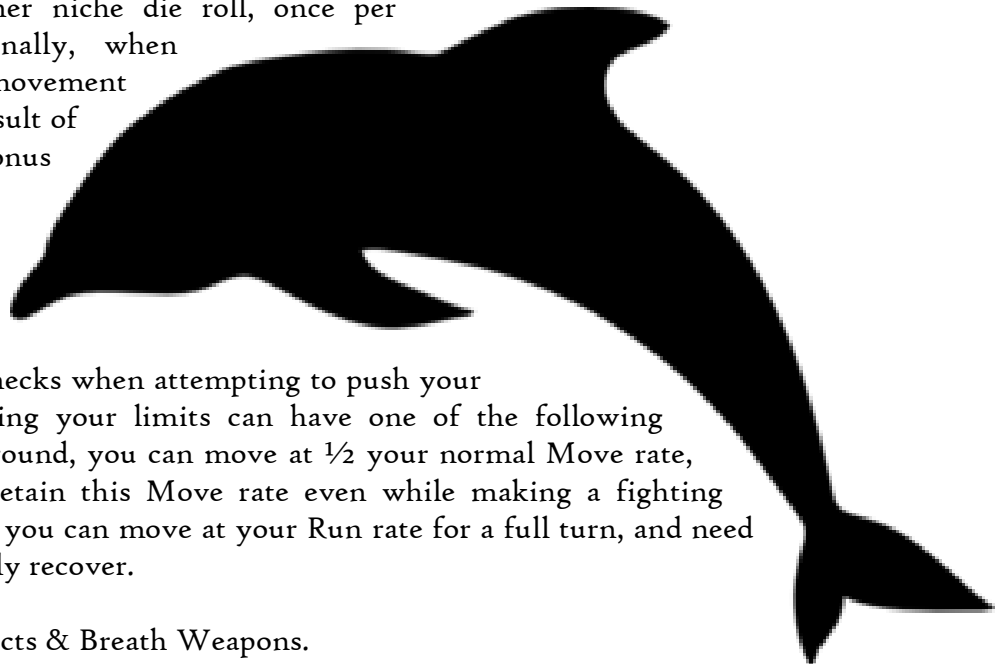
RUNNER

Description: Animals move by many means (walking, hopping, slithering, flying, swimming), all of which help them evade threats to their person. But some animals are better at fleeing or dodging threats than others. Runners are the best of their kind at avoiding danger, which also makes them the best messengers of the animal world. They have mastered their natural form of movement (even if it's something other than actual running) as effectively as Warriors have mastered their natural weaponry.

Niche Ability: When you select Runner as your niche, you gain lightning reflexes. When rolling for initiative, your actions are always assumed to be Quick (6), unless you declare otherwise. In addition, you can improve your natural Armor Class by an amount equal to the result of your Runner niche die roll, once per combat encounter. Finally, when attempting to push your movement limits, you can add the result of your niche die roll as a bonus to your Run rate.

Other Abilities: Add your Runner level (plus Runner niche die result, if applicable) to all lore checks when attempting to push your movement limits. Pushing your limits can have one of the following effects: during a combat round, you can move at 1/2 your normal Move rate, instead of 1/3, and can retain this Move rate even while making a fighting retreat or a full retreat; or you can move at your Run rate for a full turn, and need only rest for 2 turns to fully recover.

Saving Throw: Blast Effects & Breath Weapons.



Threat: Average (+6). This increases to Tough (+3) at 2nd total level, Challenging (+0) at 5th total level, and Formidable (-3) at 8th total level.

SCOUT

Description: Scouts are animals driven above all else by curiosity. They long to explore new habitats, seek out and solve mysteries, root out secrets, and expose hidden things. Though often brave, their innate smarts also make many of them cautious, so they frequently take an analytical approach to their endeavors. In a sense, they are the scientists of the animal world.

Niche Ability: When you select Scout as your niche, you become a consummate explorer and investigator. In addition to all other bonuses (including Scout level and Scout niche die results), you add +1 to all lore checks when attempting to detect traps, find hidden objects, follow a trail, identify subjects by use of your senses, or spring traps.

Also, you begin the game knowing how to communicate with other species better than your comrades: in addition to your species language, you know a number of other languages equal to the result of your Scout niche die roll result.

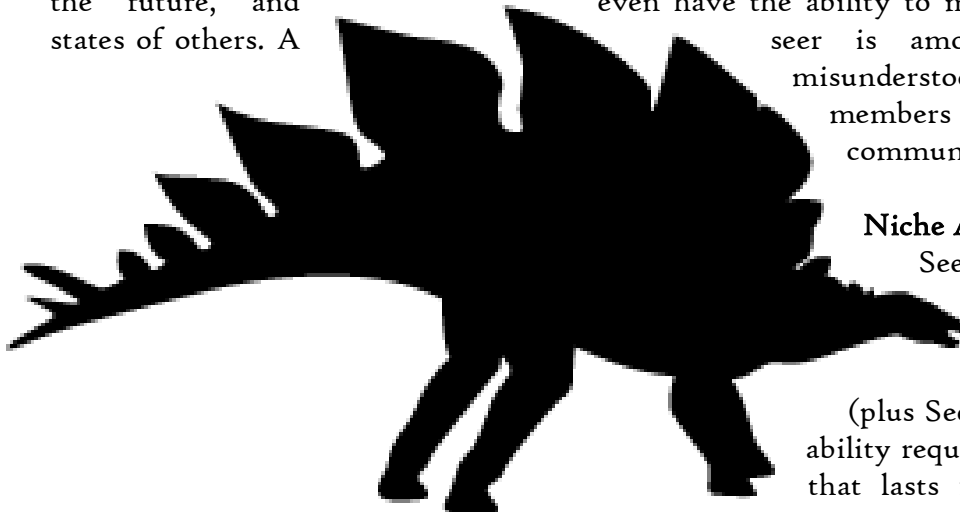
Other Abilities: Add your Scout level (plus Scout niche die result, if applicable) to all lore checks when attempting to detect traps, find hidden objects, follow a trail, identify subjects by use of your senses, predict the weather, and spring traps.

Saving Throw: Devices.

Threat: Average (+6). This increases to Tough (+3) at 2nd total level, Challenging (+0) at 5th total level, and Formidable (-3) at 8th total level.

SEER

Description: Seers, like healers, are mystics. But where the healer concerns herself with relieving the pain of others, seers pursue communion with the natural world, seek visions of the future, and even have the ability to manipulate the emotional states of others. A seer is among the most feared, misunderstood, and respected members of many animal communities.



Niche Ability: When you select Seer as your niche, you become capable having prophetic visions with a successful lore check (plus Seer niche die result). This ability requires you to enter a trance that lasts 10 full minutes, though

this time can be reduced by a number of minutes equal to the result of your Seer niche die results. While in this trance, you can call upon several different abilities, depending on your Seer level. However, you can only use one of these abilities per trance, and may only voluntarily enter a trance once per day at 1st level:

- At 1st level you have the power of *precognition*. During your trance, you will receive glimpses of possible future events... things that will happen if no one interferes. However, these glimpses make no real sense until the events themselves begin to unfold. At this time, you or your companions, if you act swiftly, can act on the information received. This translates to a +2 bonus on a single attack roll, damage roll, saving throw, or lore check. The bonus can be claimed by you, or granted to one of your companions, but can only be used by one character, one time.
- At 2nd Seer level, you can *detect thoughts* with a 60 ft. radius of yourself (expanded by the result of a Seer niche roll, if desired). You will know that there are other thinking beings within that radius, but will not know their specific locations, their species, or what they are thinking.
- At 5th level, you gain *clairsentience*, the ability to perceive things in another place without actually being there. You can see (or smell, hear, feel, or taste) objects or characters through obstacles, including solid stone, to a range of 60 ft.
- Finally, at 10th level, you can *commune with nature*. The power of the elements and the spirits of plants and animals will grant you answers to up to 3 questions regarding one of the following facts about the surrounding territory, to a range of 100 feet per level: the ground or terrain, plants, minerals, bodies of water, general animal population, presence of powerful unnatural creatures, or the general state of the natural setting.

Other Abilities: Add your Seer level (plus Seer niche die result, if applicable) to all lore checks when attempting to read another animal's body language, receive flashes of insight about what to do in a sticky situation, see through another character's bluff or deception (including a Trickster's play dead ability), or otherwise intuit the intentions of NPCs.


At 6th Seer level, with a successful lore check, you can use the force of your will to frighten another animal of your own species so badly that she finds it difficult to function normally. Provided your target is of equal or lesser total levels than you, and the target fails a saving throw vs. paralysis, the frightened character will either run away or "freeze up," unable to move, fight, flee, etc., for 2d5 rounds. A "frozen" character who gets physically attacked is entitled to another save vs. paralysis for a chance to "snap out of it" and run away.

At 10th Seer level, you may attempt to frighten members of other species in a similar way.

Saving Throw: Paralysis & Petrification (vs. mental effects only).

Threat: Easy (+9). This increases to Average (+6) at 2nd total level, Tough (+3) at 5th total level, and Challenging (+0) at 8th total level.

STORYTELLER



Description: Animals do not normally possess a written language, so the important task of preserving knowledge and history falls to storytellers. These unique characters are living repositories of wisdom and heroic tales that impart lessons and inspire comrades to greatness. One part shaman, one part historian, and one part liar, a storyteller is simply the best beast for the job when it comes to deception, diplomacy, or inspiration.

Niche Ability: When you select Storyteller as your niche, you become a charismatic weaver of tales both true and false, capable of entralling an audience with your performance, possibly even provoking visions in a Seer. With a successful Storyteller lore check (plus Storyteller niche die result), you can either cause an audience to become so involved in your performance that they forget whatever else they were previously doing or thinking, making them more susceptible to your attempts at shifting their attitude (this effect lasts for a number of rounds equal to your Storyteller level + Storyteller niche die result, and is resisted with a saving throw vs. paralysis); or, you can cause a Seer of your acquaintance to enter a trance state and possibly improve the quality of any subsequent visions. This latter skill grants the targeted seer a +1 bonus on her next attempt at a vision.

Also, you can recite poems, sing songs, or deliver pep talks that inspire courage in your comrades. If you spend one round prior to a combat spreading the love in this manner, your allies within 50 feet receive a +1 bonus to all attack rolls, damage rolls, saving throws against fear effects, and any lore checks relevant to these activities. This bonus lasts for 1 turn (10 rounds).

Other Abilities: Add your Storyteller level (plus Scout Storyteller niche die result, if applicable) to all lore checks when attempting to bluff, intimidate, woo, or otherwise shift the attitudes of NPCs in the desired direction.

Saving Throw: Paralysis & Petrification (vs. charms and emotional effects only).

Threat: Average (+6). This increases to Tough (+3) at 2nd total level, Challenging (+0) at 5th total level, and Formidable (-3) at 8th total level.

TRICKSTER

Description: Some animals delight in flouting convention, taunting enemies, and devising elaborate pranks to confound others just for the fun of it. The best tricksters, however, are more than mere nuisances; they possess unrivaled ability in the arts of stealth and misdirection that make them valuable, if sometimes annoying, additions to any band of adventuring animals.

Niche Ability: When you select Trickster as your niche, you are among the animal kingdom's sneakiest denizens, making you exceptionally dangerous under the right circumstances. You gain a +4 bonus to hit when attacking in a successfully sneaky way, such as striking from the shadows or creeping up quietly from behind. This attack inflicts double normal damage. At 5th Trickster level, it inflicts triple damage, and at 10th Trickster level it inflicts quadruple damage.

You're also better at playing dead than other animals. Anyone who wishes to call your bluff or see through your ruse must succeed in a save vs. paralysis made at a -4 penalty. Note that playing dead won't necessarily get you out of a sticky situation; some opponents might begin to eat you on the spot!

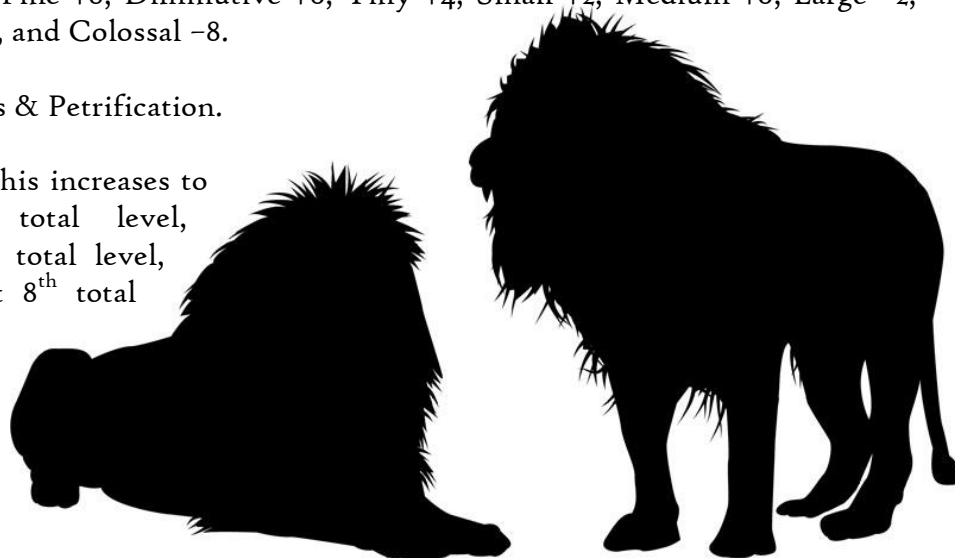
Other Abilities: Add your Trickster level (plus Trickster niche die result, if applicable) to all lore checks when attempting to climb surfaces, hear noise, hide in shadows, manipulate objects, mimic the movements or sounds of other animals, move silently, perform "deft of jaw" tricks, and "play dead." NOTE: A Trickster's lore check to hide attempts is modified by her Size, as follows: Fine +8, Diminutive +6, Tiny +4, Small +2, Medium +0, Large -2, Huge -4, Gargantuan -6, and Colossal -8.

Saving Throw: Paralysis & Petrification.

Threat: Average (+6). This increases to Tough (+3) at 2nd total level, Challenging (+0) at 5th total level, and Formidable (-3) at 8th total level.

WARRIOR

Description: Warriors are, as their name implies, masters of combat. They are able to maximize the use of their natural weaponry, and will almost always be at the frontlines of a fight. Whether they are defenders against predator attacks, captives trained for the arena by humans, or hunters who prefer the direct approach, warriors are the animals most equipped to deal out damage.



Niche Ability: When you select Warrior as your niche, you are the master of your natural attack forms, turning your body into a living weapon. Unlike other animals, you can use all of your natural attack forms equally well, and do not have to designate one of them as favored; thus, you can add your Total Levels to all attack rolls made using your species' natural attack methods. In addition, you can develop special maneuvers combining more than one natural attack form (for instance, Bite & Hold), or further improve your skill with a single natural attack form. These maneuvers are called *specializations*. When using a specialization, you gain an additional +1 to hit and +2 to damage with that maneuver.

At 5th Warrior level, you can make two attacks per combat round at no penalty. At 10th Warrior level, you can make three attacks per round.

You're also better at inflicting damage than other animals. You can add the result of your Warrior niche die to all damage rolls made using your natural weaponry. In addition, at 1st Warrior level, you bump up the damage die of your natural attacks by one "step" on the dice ladder (for instance, from 1d3 to 1d5). Your damage dice improve by one step again at 5th Warrior level, and at 10th Warrior level.

Other Abilities: Add your Warrior level (plus Warrior niche die result, if applicable) to all lore checks when attempting to break, drag, lift, pull, or push heavy objects; when jumping, swimming, or otherwise attempting to exert raw physical force with your muscles; when developing strategies and tactics against foes; or evaluating the strength of another character's or group's defenses.

Saving Throw: Paralysis & Petrification (vs. physically-constraining effects only).

Threat: Tough (+3). This increases to Challenging (+0) at 2nd total level, Formidable (-3) at 5th total level, and Heroic (-6) at 8th total level.



CHARACTER ADVANCEMENT

Like the classic fantasy game on which it is based, GREAT & SMALL measures character development over time with the concept of levels. The higher your level in a lore, the better you are at it; 2nd level is better than 1st, 3rd is better than 2nd, etc. Some of the lores have abilities that only become available to you after you have reached a particular level in them. This is especially true for your niche lore.

However, unlike the classic fantasy game, G&S does not use the concept of **experience points**. Instead, characters level up by mutual agreement between players and BMs. The usual rate is one level per adventure or story, though the BM is always free to declare level ups any time she feels the situation warrants them.

When the BM declares a new level for you, you have two choices: you can add a level to your niche, or you can add a level to some other lore you'd like to improve.

Adding a level to your niche is always free. In addition, you must always have at least one level more in your niche than you have in any other lore.

Adding a level to other lores, however, requires a series of successful lore checks made against Difficulty Ratings one rank harder than declared by the BM (for this reason, it's usually a good idea to declare your intention to add such levels before the start of an adventure, so the BM can be sure to throw some relevant challenges your way). For instance, if you want to add a Trickster level to your Warrior niche character, and the BM declares a Difficulty of Tough on the next relevant check, you will have to succeed at a Challenging Trickster lore check instead, if you want any chance of adding that level of Trickster lore.

In addition, the number of such harder checks you must make is equal to the level to which you wish to rise in your non-niche lore. Thus, if you want to go from 0-level in Trickster to 1st level, you'll have to succeed at one harder Trickster lore check before adding the level. To go up to 2nd level, you'll have to succeed at two harder checks, and so on.

If you fail to succeed at the required number of harder lore checks, but still beat the standard Difficulty Ratings by the time the BM hands out new levels, you automatically add the new level to your niche, and will have to start all over again to try and add any non-niche levels. That is, you cannot store up harder successes between levels. It's an all or nothing proposition.

LEVELS & NICHE DICE

Gaining levels in your niche lore allows you to "bump up" your niche die by one step. As noted, a beginning character (level 0) gains a 1d2 niche die in the appropriate lore when she selects that lore as her niche. This gets bumped up to a 1d3 at 3rd niche level, a 1d5 at 6th niche level, and finally a 1d7 at 9th niche level. Note that these refer to *lore level*, not *total level*.

The rules do not cover characters above 10th level, though it might be possible to meet epic-level creatures who have d10, d12, d14, or even d16 niche dice. Such beings would be rare and powerful in the extreme.



LEVELS & THREAT RATING

As noted under the lore descriptions, every possible niche has a beginning Threat rating, which “bumps up” a level of difficulty at 2nd, 5th, and 8th level for every character. The beginning Threat level is different for the different niches, however. Warriors, the toughest, begin with the highest Threat rating, while Herbalists and Seers begin with the lowest. All the other niches begin at Average rating.

Note that your Threat rating is based on *total* levels, not just your lore level. For more information on Threat rating and its role in non-lethal conflict (the default kind in G&S), see the Rules Quick Start document.

TREASURE & MAGIC ITEMS

A key component of character advancement in the original fantasy roleplaying game was the gradual acquisition of treasure and enchanted items like wands or magic weapons. This presents a special challenge to players of G&S, since animals are rarely concerned with the acquisition of gold or property as longpaws understand them; hence, most of the classic fantasy rules concerning treasure and magic items have little relevance to the kinds of characters you make with the GREAT & SMALL rules. But this does not mean there are no rewards to be had for a life of adventure!

Though they do not normally carry treasure, animal characters in G&S can acquire new abilities called **spandrels**, which either grant them traits of other species, or mimic the powers of classic fantasy magic items. There is no formalized system for gaining spandrels, however. Opportunities for them are inserted into adventures when the BM deems them appropriate.

Any Species Trait of animal can serve as a spandrel for an animal of another species. For instance, a rabbit could earn or acquire the Kick Back attack and damage of a horse, through whatever means the BM determines is appropriate to her setting and story. This can be a ritual exchange, the result of deep spiritual mediation, the result of an herbal concoction, or some other method.

CONCLUSION

The rules in this document should enable you to easily and quickly create a beginning character for the GREAT & SMALL game. To find out more about how to use your character’s abilities, consult the Rules Quick Start document. These two documents together should be all you need to start playing the game. If you plan to be the BM for your group, the sample adventure, “Secret Of The Spooky Old Warren,” designed for a group of o-level animals of Tiny or smaller size, should be a good place to get started.



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