

I was reading through my Burning Wheel Gold book today and realized what the rules for Grief and Laments mean: when Elves are sad, they can sing a song they have learned and they don't feel as sad anymore.

And the final piece fell into place for the hack of Mouse Guard I've been churning around to run My Little Pony. I'd appreciate feedback.

Character creation works pretty much like Mouse Guard, but a few things are different. Every Guard rank starts with one fewer rank in Resources, mostly because of these:

### **Questions for Pony Nature:**

- Do you like to buy or give gifts for yourself and your friends? If so, increase starting Nature by 1. If not, increase starting Resources by 1, but you may not take the traits Generous or Bold. (It's always a little risky giving a gift, isn't it?)
- In a conflict, do you take a stand for yourself or do you seek common ground? If you seek common ground, increase your Nature by 1, but reduce your starting Fighter skill by 1, if you take it.
- Do you fear griffons, manticores, and wolves? If you do, increase your Nature by 1, but you may not take the Fearless trait.

Pony Nature covers: Running, Foraging, Befriending, and a fourth area dependent on the type of pony: Tenacity for earth ponies, Aerialist for pegasus ponies, and Magic for unicorn ponies.

The skill you have a natural talent for and the trait you were born with, taken together, define your Cutie Mark. They also have special interactions with some of the aspects of Nature, so I'll call them your "Cutie Mark skill" and "Cutie Mark trait".

Befriending means that ponies can use Nature in an argument conflict to defend or maneuver. They can also use it to attack or feint, if their opponent's highest skill (or something in their opponent's Nature if they have no skills) would be helped by their Cutie Mark skill. Speech conflicts are too impersonal for this.

Tenacity, Aerialist, and Magic are only within your Nature if you're tapping your Cutie Mark trait for the roll, or if you're doing something that fits under a skill that helps or is helped by your Cutie Mark skill.

Sometimes you might try to use them for something there's no clear guide for, so consider these factors when generating an obstacle:

**Are you trying hard?** Enough for one pony, enough for two ponies, enough for a patrol, enough for a family, enough for a settlement.

**How long can you keep this up?** Just long enough, enough to buy time, as long as it takes.

**How are you bracing the load?** ("with my legs" is free) With my wings, with magic.

Time pressure can be a Factor, too (+1 Ob), if for example you're trying to catch a falling

pony or reinforcing a dam that's about to burst.

You can learn a skill called "Effort" that does this freeform thing, as your special talent, your mentor's training, or your experience in the Guard. It's rooted in Health for earth ponies and pegasus ponies, and in Will for unicorn ponies.

Effort, by default, only helps itself! If you want to take it as your special talent and roll Nature for it all the time, that's fine, but that means you won't be able to use it to do anything covered by another skill without paying tax!

If your Nature is ever taxed to 0, the trait that flips over into a way-out weirdie is your Cutie Mark trait, if it hasn't flipped already.

**Harmony:** Fate and Persona points have a few additional effects for ponies.

Ponies can spend a Fate point to double all the dice they get from other ponies helping them.

When ponies spend a Persona point to tap their Nature, they may at their option sing a song about what they're doing, perhaps related to their Cutie Mark skill and trait. This has the effect of *wonderment* - a pony singing can be an enthralling thing.

Generally, *wonderment* has no game effect. However, if a pony is participating in a conflict, taps their Nature in the first volley of an exchange, and helps with the remaining two volleys, they may at their option try to invoke *wonderment* in the first volley of the next exchange, after actions have been declared. They make a versus test of their Nature or Cutie Mark skill, at their option, and the opposition's Will. If they succeed in the test, the opposition forfeits their action to stand and drool, or perhaps start singing along. If other ponies tapped their Nature in the remaining two actions, they may help with this action.

If a pony tries to invoke *wonderment* in a kill conflict, they must roll their Nature and their Nature is taxed as if they tapped it to do something outside their Nature (1 point plus the margin of failure if any). Any ponies who help with this take the same penalty.

During the Players' Turn, ponies can spend two checks to try and reduce the tax on another pony's Nature by 1. They roll their Nature or Cutie Mark skill for this, and the obstacle is the intended new (taxed) value of Nature. Other ponies can help with this task, if they could help with the Cutie Mark skill.

If it is the first Players' Turn since a pony's Nature was taxed to 0 and their Cutie Mark trait changed, a pony can also spend two checks to try and increase the affected pony's maximum Nature. The obstacle is the intended new maximum value of Nature, +1 Ob because the new trait is a factor. If the test is successful, the old trait is also restored.

And some ideas for additional traits:

**Jovial:** Being around a jovial pony makes the little bumps and bruises life sends your way a little more bearable, but jovial ponies can find it hard to make a good impression on certain

creatures, and other ponies tend not to take them too seriously.

**Idealistic:** To an idealistic pony, there is no such thing as a hopeless cause. Every mystery has a solution, every obstacle has a way around, and there's always a safe way out. Idealistic ponies tend to overestimate their own abilities in finding these things, though.

**Sincere:** Sincere ponies keep their word, and the weight of truth seems to lie just a bit more heavily behind the things they say. But they find it hard to say things they don't believe in, even when it would help, and they may go too far to keep promises.

And because I pretty much had to:

**Element of Harmony:** This artifact from a time long before shines with a subtle light. When you wear an Element of Harmony, you gain the following three powers:

- **Inner Light:** You can tap your Cutie Mark Trait to help another pony; a level 1/2/3 Trait will let you pass them 2/3/4 dice. Traits tapped in this way must be available for use and are exhausted as normal; a level 2 Trait tapped this way is unusable for the rest of the session unless 3 checks are paid to recharge it.
- **Burning Heart:** When you help another pony with your Cutie Mark skill, pass them two dice instead of one.
- **Circle of Friends:** If another pony helped you with their Cutie Mark skill or through the Inner Light power, and any dice they passed you came up failures, you can reroll them once.