

Poor Unfortunate Foals

A horror role playing game of colourful horses created by a bunch of neckbeards and horsefuckers from /tg/ and /mlp/

Shit nigger, let's be horse lolis. This is a work in progress.

Things to be revised or changed for future editions are listed at the end of the document. Certain unfinished parts of this document may be found in the clean PDF copy.

IT'S HAPPENING!

<http://www.mediafire.com/folder/5afwj9nj7pnnt/MLPTG>

Don't forget to follow (or at least bookmark or something)

<https://twitter.com/MacStableman> if you want to know when future PDF copies are published, and when new MLP/tg/ threads are being started.

Introduction

Maybe you were looking to find a cutie mark in exploring, orienteering, botany, archaeology, being lost, monster hunting or something similar, but for whatever reason, the handful of colts and fillies in your chapter of the Cutie Mark Crusaders got the idea into their heads that the Everfree Forest is the perfect place for an adventure to find their cutie marks.

But the Everfree Forest is far from perfect. There are things in there.

Creatures that live off the living essence of young lovers, wrap themselves in the skins of missing ponies to hide themselves among us, or revere ancient and unspeakable gods.

Deep in the forest can be found ruins of forgotten civilisations, which creep deeper into the earth than any living pony has ventured.

And, as everypony knows, not that far from Ponyville are the gates of the prison realm of Tartarus. Though seldom mentioned, nobody knows for sure what kind of ancient evils may have broken their chains and taken refuge in the dark embrace of the Everfree over the years.

Even the forest itself is just wrong in a natural sense- plants and trees grow without the love and care of earth pony gardeners. Sweet Celestia, how horrifying.

And that's without even mentioning the rumours of strange lights and noises coming from the forest at night. The talk of cults, witches, monsters and less describable things that call the thick of the trees their home.

Of course, that won't stop a band of brave (and foolish) young ponies from wandering off into the undergrowth looking for adventure and destiny. But that far from the comforting candy-coloured houses, perfectly uniform apple orchards, and pegasus-regulated weather patterns, who knows what they will find instead... And whether they will ever see home again.

About

Welcome to '**Poor Unfortunate Foals**', the horror roleplaying game where each player takes control of their own young pony in the Ponyville chapter of the Cutie Mark Crusaders. This is a work-in-progress rules-lite horror RPG taking place in a slightly darker re-imagining of the world of "My Little Pony: Friendship Is Magic".

It is being gradually developed by the My Little Pony /tg/-related General- a disorganised band of like-minded fa/tg/uys and /mlp/edophiles discussing ponies in the context of RPGs on /mlp/, in order to avoid the shitstorms and bans that occur when discussing such things on /tg/.

How do I into horse dice game?

On the off-chance that you stumbled across this game without prior knowledge of how tabletop roleplaying games work, here's the rundown of how a game like *Poor Unfortunate Foals* works.

Poor Unfortunate Foals is a game for a group of friends with access to pencils, some six-sided dice, and a few hours of free time. It's helpful if as many players as possible understand the mechanics of the game, though you can still play as long as at least the GM knows the rules.

'GM', by the way, stands for 'Game Master' (or 'Glue Master', as we have decided to dub him in this game). One of your friends (ideally the one most familiar with the rules) takes the role of the Glue Master, and it is his job to weave the story within (or without) the structure of the rules- a kind of referee+narrator.

The rest of the players are... Players. In a game of *Poor Unfortunate Foals*, each one creates and plays as their own character- a filly or colt in the Cutie Mark Crusaders. They will describe their character's actions, try to guide them to victory (and survival), and ideally role play as them- meaning that you may talk with the other characters through their players, conversing as your characters would. Perhaps in *PUF* more than other roleplaying games, players may be more likely to feel uncomfortable or silly getting into the roles of their characters right off the bat, if only because those characters are young horses. It's important to have some degree of communication between the GM and the players, so between you all you can determine how much roleplaying becomes too much roleplaying.

The general structure of a game of *Poor Unfortunate Foals* involves the GM describing what's going on around the characters, where they are, and who (or what) is with them. The players then tell the GM what their characters are doing (describing their action in-character, or with exciting sound effects if necessary), and the GM uses the methods detailed later on to determine how well the players accomplish what they're trying to do, and what happens next.

In an attempt to keep the rules easy to learn and pick up, *Poor Unfortunate Foals* is a bit more liable than other games to rely on the GM to fill in the gaps about how the result of a dice roll actually relates to what is occurring in the world of the game. Normally, the GM should have an idea in mind of what kind of threats the player characters (PCs) might run into, what rewards (if any) they will receive for conquering or escaping the challenges they've blundered upon, and

the key points of the story itself that the characters are playing into.

Then, the GM reels the characters in with the possibility of finding their cutie marks (or finding the missing pony, or discovering the rumoured treasure, or whatever the hook is for the story), and let's them blunder through the story he's prepared, using wits, creativity and luck to stay alive.

Or not.

Mechanics

The Core Mechanic

(Dice sizes may be fiddled with later, for balance reasons).

When trying to do something difficult, or that may have a significant consequence if failed, the player gets to roll the dice to see if they succeed. Declare to the Glue Master how you plan to approach the challenge before you roll, and check that the Glue Master agrees that is a possible approach. Maybe you want your pony to use the stars in the night sky as a means of finding their way, to try swimming the river where the rope bridge has collapsed to reach the other side, or simply dodge and weave their way through a rockslide unharmed.

You're trying to beat a number, representing the difficulty of the challenge, that the GM already knows in his head (that devious fucker). If it's challenge that has emerged during play or that the GM has devised ahead of time, the number is probably an informed approximation appropriate to how difficult the obstacle is (or even how difficult the pony's approach to the obstacle would be), or the GM might borrow one of the hazards or obstacles later in this rulebook.

- Normally, you will roll **2d6**.
- If the action you're undergoing falls under one of your skills (and the GM agrees), you get to roll one extra die, for a total of **3d6**. Sweet, right?
- However, if you're attempting an action which may be affected by one of your weaknesses, you only get to roll **1d6**.
- And if the skill you have your cutie mark in comes into play (see below), you get to roll a whole **4d6** in your efforts.

Combat and Challenges of Opposition

If your character is going up against something living (or unliving), then it works slightly differently. Instead of rolling against a predetermined number, you'll be trying to beat a number the GM is rolling himself for that creature's attempts. Thinking, rational (to whatever degree that actually applies) creatures are capable of both unexpected fumbles... And brutal efficiency. Maybe your attacker will fail miserably and trip up on her own coat of severed cutie marks. But probably not.

There are several ways such a roll can occur. The player characters may be defending themselves from (or ambushing) one or more enemies directly, requiring each pony involved to

see how they fair against the foe. They may be being chased by an enemy, requiring that the ponies roll to see if each can escape that creature's pursuit. Basically any action whose outcome may be affected by the actions of the enemy uses this system

It is up to the GM to decide whether they want to roll in plain sight of the rest of the players, or hide the dice, only revealing the in-game result of the encounter to the players.

It is important to note that a threat quickly becomes overwhelming if it is backed up with numbers. Each variety of creature has a base challenge roll (*as described in the Bestiary*), which is rolled by the GM to determine the number a player must beat to succeed in competition against a *single one* of that kind of enemy. At least in direct confrontation, for each additional individual creature backing up the first, the challenge roll increases by another die.

So for example, if a group of foals tried to defend their ramshackle camp from a patrol of three changelings, come to drag them kicking and screaming back to their hive where who knows what will happen to them, you have the base challenge roll for a changeling (3d6), and

Roll results

If you beat the number the GM has in mind (or has rolled), then that is a **success**. In this game of storytelling, it is the GM's final call on exactly what the outcome is, but it should be in your favour- he decides whether that rock you just rolled onto the monster's head knocks it out... Or scatters it's brains across the forest floor.

Don't forget that the GM is well within his jurisdiction to declare that a sweet victory has a bitter aftertaste. Perhaps that same rock lets out an echoing 'THUD' that may draw more unwanted attention.

If you fail to meet the number, then that is a **failure**. As with a success, the details are the GM's to determine, but don't feel entitled to his mercy. While death following a single failure may seem a harsh way to end a pony's life, if that pony tripped over a loose root while running for her life from the flowing magma of an erupting volcano, you should expect nothing less.

A foe such as a cultist or changeling may prefer to drag a helpless foal away for their own twisted designs, but you should not rely on such luck. If luck is the right way to describe it. At the same time, GMs should refrain from treating every failure as a death sentence. The frantic colt who loses his footing and tumbles heavily down the mountainside needn't fall hundreds of feet to a sudden death as his spine snaps to an unnatural angle across the surface of an unyielding rock far below, when being separated from his friends deep in the Everfree would be punishment enough.

Such sudden, gruesome endings are the domain of critical failures (*below*).

If you meet the number exactly... Something different happens. The GM should recognise that you haven't *failed* outright... But you haven't exactly *succeeded* either. A **stalemate** or non-event takes place. You fail to escape your pursuer, but they don't catch up either- the chase continues.

However, if you roll your dice and they *all* turn up *ones* (regardless of how many dice the roll in question involved), we call this a **critical failure**. The immutable forces of fate have reached out and marked your pony for doom. Unless you have the resources to resist (see *friendship points*), the worst case scenario unfolds before your pony's eyes.

This needn't always lead to death, though if death would be a possible outcome of the situation, then this is certainly when it would occur. Such deaths should be sudden, dramatic, and horrible affairs. A filly lagging behind the party as they swim the divide is suddenly yanked below by something more malevolent than water currents, without time to scream or even gasp. When her friends turn their attentions, they find a frothing crimson cloud rising to the surface from the depths. With luck, they find the remains of her Cutie Mark Crusader cape. With a miracle, they may even find enough left of her to bury.

Friendship Points

Friendship is magic. There's no denying it. It's been proven, empirically, time and again. Ponies are a curious lot, and their reliance on one another is a source of both their greatest strength, and their greatest weakness. When disharmony takes hold across the land, storms rage, evils awaken, and disaster runs amok. Yet when a band of ponies stand together, there is nothing that can stand in their way.

Or, at least, that's how it works on the show.

In the darker, more bleak world of *Poor Unfortunate Foals*, friendship is still a notable advantage for a group of lost foals to have on their side. They need each other to survive, just as much as you'd expect... It's just that sometimes, it's not enough.

Except in parameters noted under '*Purpose Points and Insanity*', every filly starts each story with one **friendship point**- no more, no less. They can have a maximum of three friendship points at any given time- if a filly performs some heroic deed that might earn them even more, it's for nil. Aside, of course, for the opportunity for characterisation and storytelling.

A filly can spend a friendship point to allow *another filly* to reroll one of their dice, thereby crossing out one of the friendship points on the character sheet of the pony spending the friendship point.

There's no limit to the number of friendship points a filly can spend messing with a single dice roll, as long as they can afford it (and the player receiving the benefit of the expenditure is willing to accept it), and both the foals providing the points and receiving the benefits are together.

A filly can never spend a friendship point to reroll one of their own dice. Such is the nature of friendship- it strengthens us as a whole, so long as we are all willing to strengthen one another in turn. If we aren't, the system *shatters* with *disastrous results*. You can't *force* another player to offer up a friendship point, no matter how much you may need it.

Friendship points can, therefore, be spent both in a bid to salvage a failed roll, or in an attempt

to save a friend from the wrath of a critical failure (one situation where a regular failure may indeed be preferable). Such expenditure can be rationalised by the player and the GM as that foal rushing in to help their friend maintain the barricade in the face of the timberwolf onslaught, delivering a swift buck to the legs of the manticore before it can strike the killing blow, or swinging down to catch the hooves of their friend when he slips and topples from the perilous cliff face.

The would-be-hero may do these, or any number of similar things... Though it's certainly no guarantee that they work: it's important to note that, even if the reroll is just as bad or even worse than the original, you don't get back the lost friendship point if the roll is still a failure. You can, of course, still spend another friendship point to reroll your unfortunate reroll, should you so choose...

All fillies start with one friendship point at the start of each session (and unspent points from the previous session are lost), but can earn more during play. An admirable display of one of the six elements of harmony (loyalty, laughter, generosity, honesty, kindness and magic), at an appropriate risk or cost to the pony performing it, earns them a friendship point.

Of course, in a game of *Poor Unfortunate Foals*, some elements are more likely to be exercised than others (I mean really, what the hell is an act of 'magic'?). Ultimately, it's up to the GM whether an action can be considered 'harmonious', and whether it was selfless, difficult or damaging enough to warrant a reward in friendship points.

As further explained under *Purpose Points and Insanity* (below), friendship points are also necessary to save a pony whose insecurity over not being able to do as their cutie mark tells them they should do has brought them to the point of insanity.

When a pony with a cutie mark loses all three of their purpose points, they can no longer regain them by practicing the skill symbolised by their cutie mark, and are overcome by mental illness brought on by the anxiety, frustration, and damage to their self worth.

In this situation, the only cure is an expenditure of a total of three friendship points by one or more of that unfortunate pony's friends. Ideally this takes the form of a tearful exchange about how much the pony really means to their friends, a reassuring speech about love or destiny or something similar, or at the very least a group hug.

Of course, if the suffering pony's friends are separated, then hard luck. If they're dead, the pony had better hope he can find some way to escape the forest on his own, reach civilisation, and generally rebuild his life and his sanity brick by brick. Such a pony is a sorry case for sure, and is not likely to go crusading any time soon, if ever again. Even if he conquers his insecurities and make new friends, the magnitude of what he has gone through and seen will weigh heavy on his soul for many years to come, as he wonders whether it could possibly have been worth it. He may have found his cutie mark, but that won't bring his friends back.

Finding your Cutie Mark

In the face of true adversity, we discover more about ourselves.

If you roll for a challenge where you get to use your skill (so, an encounter where you're rolling

3d6), and ALL of those dice come up as sixes, then you can choose to discover your cutie mark in that skill.

From that point on, when rolling for that skill, you can add ANOTHER DICE. That's FOUR BUCKING DICE, MOTHERBUCKER. HOLY BITS, YOU ARE AN UNSTOPPABLE FRIENDSHIP MACHINE.

Purpose Points and Insanity

A powerful, almost disturbing connection exists between a pony and her cutie mark. A cutie mark represents more than somepony's favourite hobby, or job (if, indeed, a pony's cutie mark relates to their job at all). It's a magical, supernatural statement about *who that pony is*. A filly whose skill in carpentry becomes a cutie mark of a hammer and nail isn't just 'a very good builder'.

That pony *builds*, and building is *what that pony does*.

And when that pony finds that she can't build like she should, something snaps.

When a filly finds their cutie mark, the GM should take that filly's player aside and, between them, choose a mental illness that filly may develop in the future. It can be as abstract or as empirically clinical as the player feels they would be comfortable roleplaying.

The filly also gains three **purpose points**. As long as all three of these points are present, the filly retains their 4d6 dice roll when using a skill affected by their cutie mark (although, if a pony's weakness also applied, the roll becomes 3d6, like any normal skill).

If you should fail a 4d6 roll affected by your cutie mark (or a 3d6 roll where your cutie mark is kept in check by your weakness), and none of your friends step in with their friendship points to turn your failure into a success, you lose a single purpose point, and should cross it out on your sheet.

With each purpose point lost, your maximum friendship points drops by one (and should be illustrated on your sheet by filling the dots in, from right to left), as well as the number of dice that you roll when using your cutie marked skill. As your pony's mystically manifested mental illness gradually flares up, it impedes their ability to come to the aid of those close to them, and makes it harder to keep a grip on what it is that makes that pony *special*.

If players wish to prove themselves good role-players, they should treat the friendship point limit as a character flaw as much as a mechanical one. As suiting their mental illness, the pony may become confrontational or hostile to their friends, or they may become functionally useless as crippling depression or catatonic fear takes hold. Get creative.

You regain a purpose point each time you succeed a roll involving your cutie mark, as you relievedly determine that you can still do what your cutie mark says you're meant to do, and that the last hiccup was probably just bad luck.

However, if you should ever lose all three magic points, the final tumbler falls into place in the lock sealing your pony in the prison of her own mind. Or whatever colourful metaphor you prefer.

At any rate, the result is the same. Your maximum friendship points are absolute zero, and when using your cutie marked skill, you might as well be working with one of your weaknesses (and if you are unfortunate enough to find yourself operating under one of your weaknesses when trying to make do with your cutie mark talent, not even Faust will be able to save you from the GM's wrath).

The only way to recover from this dire state (apart, perhaps, from finding your way out of the forest and recovering in the familiar surroundings of home with the undivided care and attention of your friends) is for one or more of the other players to expend a grand total of three friendship points all at once, in a grand display of affection and camaraderie described in the '*friendship points*' section above, at which point all ills are banished, and the pony regains their entire three purpose points, with all the freedom from constraints that this brings (although it should be noted that unspent friendship points rendered inaccessible by the descending ceiling of friendship point limits are lost, and do not return when the limit is lifted).

Character Creation

All fillies start with three 'skills' and one 'weakness'. Oh, and a name and shit like that.

Skills are things like 'runs very fast', 'good at lying' or 'experienced with orienteering'. Weaknesses are things like 'afraid of the dark', 'not very perceptive' or 'flammable'.

At character creation, players can purchase more skills at the cost of taking on more weaknesses, on a 1:1 basis.

During play, there will be the opportunity to turn a skill into a Cutie Mark, should the player accept. This officially marks the transition of a filly into a pony (at least as far as these rules are concerned), and will empower that single skill even further, though will also enable certain sanity mechanics for that character. With experience and maturity comes clarity and understanding of the terrible things going on around them.

SOMETHING SOMETHING PONY RACES

Bestiary notes

Animals and Hazards

- Bears. They'll get you, motherfucker.

Monsters

- Hideous, Lovecraftian seaponies who kidnap land ponies and breed with them to produce blasphemous offspring (IA IA SHOO SHOO BEE DOO CTHULHU FTAGHN).
- The defeated but gradually recovering Changeling army, kidnapping ponies to increase their own numbers, while leaving doppelgänger imposters in their place.
- Parasprites (It's all love and cuddles, until they get a taste for succulent pony flesh).
- Diamond Dogs, who are known to make excursions to search for wayward ponies to

capture, blind, and put to work in their gem mines. Or to feed to the ancient monstrosity known only as 'the Burrower Beneath'.

- Manticores
- Hydra
- Carnivorous plantlife, growing outward from an enigmatic greenhouse tended by a lunatic pony gardener in a pesticide hazard suit.
- Dragons (oh shit fillies, what are you doing?)

Twisted and Villainous Ponies

- The Cult of Discord (who will happily snatch up lost fillies and colts to sacrifice to their god in an attempt to free him from his stone prison).
- The Cult of the Nightmare. Even with Princess Luna returned to normal, the same enigmatic entity that corrupted her and made her Nightmare Moon waits patiently for a new vessel to be offered up to it by its devotees.
- The legendary Cupcake Killer, of hushed campfire tales and playground limericks, is believed by a few to dwell somewhere deep in the Everfree. Many others dismiss her existence as an urban myth invented by parents to keep their foals from wondering off.

Ancient Evils

- THE ALMIGHTY SLUMBERING SMOOZE (You can't stop it).
- Grogar, goat lich from a forgotten age of My Little Pony, who waits imprisoned in the Shadow Realm for someone to chime the bell that will set him free once more.
- Erebus, ancient shadow demon escapee of Tartarus that devours the souls/shadows of mortal ponies.

Future Revisions

The observations below have been made without insight from playtesting,

- Maybe the dice system for having multiple enemies, because different enemies work in packs with different efficiencies, and Ancient Evils might deserve their ratings in d8s.
 - challenge rating for an individual is (almost) always measured in d6s for everything other than Ancient Evils, but the increments for backup are scaled to the efficiency of the enemy in a group.
- Maybe include a system for stacking dice for player rolls to accomplish a single task, similar to what packs of enemies use.
- Neutral/Friendly NPCs? w/ bonus die for assisted rolls

Those below are informed by feedback from playtesters

- Nothing. Nada. Seriously, send that feedback in.