

Quick Discworld RPG Demo – GM’s Notes

A quick **Discworld RPG** demonstration game, with spaces for up to five players, mostly designed to show how various rules are used. The party are a bunch of fairly ordinary people on the Disc, who run into a problem while travelling. Available characters:

- **Blue Shoe**, an Agatean tourist who suffers from an excess of curiosity, and who is therefore taking a look round a remote part of the Ramtops, simply so that he can say he’s been there. He’s acquired a cart for travel purposes, and found a few vaguely trustworthy-looking people to drive it and keep him company.
- **Barry Turnling** and **Sharlen O’Dire**, a couple of Fourecksian backpackers who know how to look after a cart. **Barry** is a big guy who acts as the driver; **Sharlen** acts as the mechanic and knows how to use a sling in emergencies.
- **Hargo “Miscellaneous” Drust**, a wandering peddler who’s tagged along because the cart is useful for moving stuff around, and who’s good at buying, selling, and dealing with people in various ways.
- **Harry Ferret-Masher**, a quick, agile, and reasonably tough, 9” tall gnome who’s wandering the world with some vague idea about making his fortune, and who likes having bigger people around so he can hide behind them.

Distribute character sheets, and say that people are welcome to keep these as souvenirs when the game is over. Determine general familiarity with RPGs at this stage; this game uses **GURPS**, which is designed to depict characters in a reasonable amount of detail. It uses ordinary d6, usually no more than three for any given roll; does everyone have 3d6 to hand?

Go over the basics of what each section means. Note that characters are built using a points budget; these are quite ordinary people, so they just get 50 points – serious adventurers would get more. Anything in [square brackets] on the character sheet is a points cost; it’s not generally important in play. Take questions about terminology and such.

Basic system is 3d6 and roll below a target number – usually an attribute or skill value, often modified. Very low rolls may be critical successes, very high may be critical failures. Will show other mechanisms in play.

One note; most of the characters are wanderers, and hence have all of their money in hand or spent on equipment. Blue Shoe is nominally “settled”, and so has most of his wealth tied up in fixed assets. Still, that can be used to explain the party’s possession of a cart, and there’ll be various bits of gear stowed in that, including tents and camping equipment.

First Encounter

The party are heading over a pass that leads from Borogravia to Zlobenia. It’s a fairly wild area, but not totally uninhabited; Hargo, who knows the trade roads in this part of the world, reckons it’s quite safe. Still, they left the last village behind around lunchtime, and they’re expecting to camp out tonight. Fortunately, as both Hargo (with his experience of the road) and Harry (with his Naturalist skill) can confirm, the weather is usually okay this time of year, and there’s not much in the way of dangerous or even annoying wildlife likely to show up in these parts.

Which makes the howling of the approaching wolves distinctly annoying.

There are three of these (roll Hearing to determine the number as they close), and they’re hungry (because the local wildlife has become frustratingly inedible). A roll against Naturalist (default IQ-6 –

explain defaults if necessary) at +3 will tell anyone that wolves in this sort of area should know that humans are too much trouble, and will only attack people if they're desperate or provoked, while werewolves are scarce to the point of non-existence in these parts; it will also say that even desperate wolves are likely to retreat, at least temporarily, if the target seems dangerous. However, these three *are* closing aggressively.

ST: 10	HP: 10	Speed: 6.00
DX: 12	Will: 11	Move: 9
IQ: 4	Per: 14	
HT: 12	FP: 12	SM: 0
Dodge: 9	Parry: N/A	DR: 1 (Tough Skin)

Bite (14): 1d-2 cut. Reach C.

Traits: Discriminatory Smell; Night Vision 2; Quadruped; Sharp Teeth; Short Legs; Temperature Tolerance 1 (Cold); Ultrahearing.

Skills: Brawling-14; Tracking-14.

Wolf 1: 14

Wolf 2: 14

Wolf 3: 14

The wolves first emerge from the treeline ten seconds after they're first heard (plenty of time to draw weapons, etc.), at a range of 50 yards (-8 to hit). They'll then close at Move 9 (the cart can't manoeuvre well enough to reduce this effective speed), so subsequent rounds will put them at 41 yards (-8), 32 (-8), 23 (-7), 14 (-5, triggers horse panic – see below), 5 (-2), and then Move and Attack (effective skill 9 for this round). The PCs can attempt ranged attacks as the wolves close; point out that the sling takes 2 turns to reload. Characters can also take 2 turns to grab loose rocks from the road for throwing; these have a range of 2x ST, and do thrust-2 damage.

Incidentally, a Naturalist roll at this point might note that the wolves are going for the humans and ignoring the horse. The horse doesn't get this, though.

If a wolf takes damage BEFORE DR is subtracted, it has to make a Will roll at a penalty equal to the 2x all HP actually lost up until now and including this attack, with an extra -4 if the attack was unexpected; on a failure, it pauses its advance or retreats from melee for (margin of failure/2) turns, and on a failure by 6 or more, it runs away. Once the wolves are in melee, if they pause, the cart moves away from them at 4 yards/turn, and once no conscious wolves are within 10 yards of the cart, they all give up and slink off. Also, if a camera flash goes off, each wolf has to make a Will roll, at -5, +1 for every three full yards from the flash, or pause for 2d turns.

Controlling the Cart: However, there's one other snag; when the wolves come within 15 yards of the cart, the driver must make a Teamster roll (default IQ-5) to keep the horse from bolting. This gives everyone on board -3 to hit, and the driver gets a Teamster roll at -2 every turn to bring the horse back under control. The horse will also bolt automatically after 1d+1 turns of not having a driver. Somebody getting close to it and using Animal Handling would also work, but stop the cart from moving away from the wolves.

If things get seriously hairy for the PCs at any point, that might be an opportunity to demonstrate the Fright Check rules – p. 170.

All this should leave the PCs battered but intact, if they handle it okay. However, the wolves, or others like them, are still out there, and evening is falling; finding somewhere secure to hole up for the night now seems like a good and obvious idea. If anyone is injured, note that bandaging restores 1 HP with a minute's work; First Aid could restore 1d-2, but would take 30 minutes.

Spotting the House

A few moments after the fight ends, the party pass in sight of a substantial farm house just off the road. Everyone (who's functional) gets a Per (actually Vision) roll to spot this, with the highest success roll spotting it first. If they somehow all fail, or decide to ignore it, they carry on for a short way, then hear a full-scale wolf pack howling ahead of them; looking round desperately, they spot the house automatically, but have to make a Teamster roll to beat a hasty retreat; if that fails, the fast turn and harsh cornering crack the axle, which will need fixing before they can continue in the morning. It should be made very clear that seeking shelter at this place is necessary if they don't want a desperate fight against a lot of wolves in the dark; the howling of the approaching pack could again justify bringing out the Fright Check rules (p. 170).

Everyone also gets an Observation roll (default Per-5) as they approach the farmhouse; on a success, they take in that it has a stable attached, and a low barn; both have good solid doors – there'll be no problem holing up against the wolves here. On a success by 5 or more, or a critical success, they note the door sizes and small pens, and guess that this is a sheep farm.

The door of the house is a substantial oak number, with a big iron knocker that creates a satisfying clang.

The House Inhabitants

The door is answered by **Igor**, who will do the full hunchback-and-lisp thing while **leaving a chain on the door** to prevent them just forcing their way in. (The gap is small enough to exclude even a gnome.) His initial position is that "the mathter ith not retheiving visitorth", but he's susceptible to Influence skills (p. 172) because he's committed to the "cringing minion" role; treat him as **Will 8** for this purpose. Ask the players who's doing the talking, and what line they're taking, and then explain how this maps to a skill (hopefully one they've got):

- **Diplomacy** (default IQ-6): Being pleasantly reasonable.
- **Fast-Talk** (default IQ-5 – Hargo and Sharlen have): Blagging your way in.
- **Intimidation** (default Will-5): Bullying the minion, though Igor doesn't give many bonuses for threats of violence.
- **Savoir-Faire** (default IQ-4 – Blue Shoe has, and gets +2 for superior Status): Pulling Status, which Igor does respect.
- **Sex Appeal** (default HT-3): Flirting through this; might require a PC Will roll first.
- **Streetwise** (default IQ-5 – Hargo has): Not really applicable here, unless the players get really ingenious.

Success means that they get in (if that's what they were trying); a draw means try again at no penalty, or +2 if they switch to a different skill; failure means that they can try something else, but at a cumulative -1 to skill. If they try forcing the door, well, it's metal-bound and quite heavy; DR 4, 10 HP to bust the chain attachment, and it's Homogenous (see p. 183), and by the time they get in, Igor will have retreated down the corridor and loaded up a couple of heavy crossbows (skill 11, but the first will have the benefit of aiming with Acc 4, and damage 1d+5 imp), while **Doctor Borrhigund** (see below) will have shown up with a couple of guard dogs (treat as wolves, above, but less inclined to

retreat, and with DR 5 due to Borrigund's alchemical treatments)... Far better to talk, or if that fails, take shelter in the barn.

The Barn

This isn't hard to get into, not being secured. Even if the PCs gain admission to the house, they'll want to park their cart in here. A dozen or so sheep are in residence, and the place smells accordingly, but there's a hayloft which is dry enough.

Everybody who enters the barn gets a Per roll at +2 to notice one odd detail: there's a feed trough for the sheep, and above it on the wall, there are racks holding a handful of sacks. The trough holds a fixture of straw and odd blue pellets, and one of the sacks is open at the top and is clearly full of these pellets. They don't look like anything which any of the party are familiar with; close inspection shows that they are soft and crumbly, and have an odd herbal smell. They taste pretty disgusting to humans (or gnomes), and don't do them much good; Will roll not to spit them out, followed by two HT rolls, one to avoid being queasy (-2 to all rolls for 1d hours), and one to gain a point of DR (Tough Skin) for 3d x 10 minutes. However, herbivores, including both sheep and horses, can digest them okay, and then become basically super-tough grass-eating machines; **+12 DR** vs. physical injury, and an insanely calm mood that makes them ignore most physical threats (though they still react to fire), for the next 3d hours. Note that the party's own horse will get this benefit if offered the feed; Animal Handling (Equines) (default IQ-5) can pick up the psychological change.

If anyone pays attention to the sheep, they may note that they're prone to wandering up to strangers. A Naturalist roll (default IQ-6) will conclude that they're significantly bolder than is normal. It's unlikely that the PCs will attack the livestock, but if they do, they'll discover a major oddity; the sheep are of course under the influence of that special feed.

If the PCs all or mostly end up in here, Barry will need to roll to control his Compulsive Carousing, or try to get a party going, and Hargo will need to control his Gluttony or demolish a disproportionate share of the party's rations. If they're here by invitation, Igor will deliver a meal; those two may ask for extra booze and food.

If the PCs' cart has been damaged, a Mechanic roll will fix it in an hour. Igor will happily lend a good toolkit, worth +2 to skill, and taking three hours is worth another +1.

If all the party settle in here, they may want to establish a watch rota; this will mean Will rolls to avoid dozing off. Blue Shoe's imp-powered timepiece may be useful. But anyhow, providing that they don't do something insane like leave the door open, they'll actually have a safe night. However, even if they broke in and even if they antagonised Igor, **Doctor Borrigund** (see below) shows up outside the door at first light, being perfectly charming (*"Ah, yez, I undershtood zat ve haff visitors. Unt pleasure to be making your ackvaintanz"*) and apologising for Igor if necessary (*"Igor iz unt goot fellow, but unt little too loyal, you zee? He thinks zat I vont not to be disturbed..."*) He'll be happy to invite the party in for breakfast if they don't act like total idiots. However, if the players act like total idiots, Igor is in overwatch in the house with those crossbows, and Borrigund does have those dogs around.

The House

Barring disaster, some or all of the PCs should eventually end up in the house and having a meal with **Doctor Merkaptor Borrigund**, and suffering his generic accent. He's quite pleasant, but he is in fact a Mad Doctor whose peculiar (if well-meant) research is causing a local ecological disaster. However, he won't start giving away clues about that until he gets to know the PCs. He never monologues until after he's eaten – or until he's had a few drinks.

Medical Attention: If Any of the PCs are injured, Igor will cheerfully set to work on them. He has Physician/TL5-13 and decent equipment giving +1 to skill, so he can take just 20 minutes to help someone and restore 1d-2 HP on a success.

Hospitality: Doctor Borrigund is Status 1, so Igor will assume that he should only actually dine with Blue Shoe, the visitor of comparable Status; the others can eat in the kitchen. However, Blue Shoe can make excuses for one or two “servants”, “companions”, etc., to dine with him, and any of the others can get past Igor by using Influence Skills as above. Borrigund is far less of a snob, and will eat with anyone. Alternatively, PCs might want to have a look round the house while Igor is occupied serving the meal, or just spend time in the kitchen, admiring the array of hand-cranked labour-saving devices. Igor, who’s not immune to politeness, will note that *“Gentlemen of the mathter’s mind-thet are rarely able to retain a large thtaff, so it theems betht to acquire thome technology to compenthate.”* The number of blades whirling round on the end of spindly mechanical arms should remind people that this is an *Igor’s* kitchen.

Anyone eating with Borrigund should make a Savoir-Faire roll at +4 (i.e. a straight IQ roll if rolling at default) to avoid dropping too many clangers; Borrigund will basically politely ignore anyone who fails that. On a success, anyone who wants to get him talking might try keeping the wine flowing; roll a quick contest of Carousing – he’s at a default of 6, and inclined to go along with this because he doesn’t get much company here. If the PC wins, Borrigund gets drunkenly chatty, and can be quizzed about his work. He won’t be specific, but he’ll say that he’s conducting some research that may revolutionise the sheep-farming business. Wherever Barry or Hargo end up, they will need to roll if they want to resist the urge to carousing or gluttony respectively.

Problems and Mysteries

The PCs basically want to continue their journey. However, those wolves are still out there, and anyone taking a look out of the window in daylight will notice lupine shadows among the trees a hundred yards or so from the house. Systematic watching and an Observation roll will suggest a pack of 20 or so have now accumulated out there. This is quite obviously uncharacteristic behaviour for the species; both Borrigund and Igor will deny any knowledge of why this should be, though a Body Language (no default) or Detect Lies (default Per-6) roll against their default Acting skills (8 and 7 respectively) can pick up that they’re prevaricating a bit about this, and they don’t seem happy about it.

The PCs can look around the house while they’re waiting, though Borrigund will bar them from his **laboratory**. A sensible PC scheme (probably involving Harry being stealthy) will get past that, and discover a whole load of bubbling mad alchemy gear. There are a couple of sheep in a pen at the side of the room, looking about as confused as a sheep can get; there are also some notebooks, but wading through those would take hours and a lot of IQ rolls. However, a few moments looking around will make it clear that Borrigund is manufacturing those blue food pellets, in quantity.

If the PCs are crass enough to attack either of their hosts, improvise up some escape options involving secret passages, alchemical flash grenades, trained attack dogs, etc.

During the Day: Shortly after breakfast, Igor goes out, opens up the barn, and drives the sheep out to pasture. Then he goes to the barn, grabs a sack of blue pellets, and scatters them on the pasture around the sheep. If anyone asks him about the wolves, he shrugs and says “Oh, the theep can look after themthelves”. If anyone watches, though, he doesn’t venture far from the house himself.

An Observation roll in the period after this will note the sheep climbing all over precarious rock outcrops in pursuit of small tufts of tender vegetation, and wandering over towards the wolves...

Answers and Solutions

What's Going On: Obviously, Doctor Borrigund has created an alchemical sheep feed that makes the creatures that eat it immune to things like wolf attacks. (He's concentrated the Essence of Ramtop Sheep, p. 237, and made it orally dispersible.) His idea is to render these economically important creatures immune to the sort of accidents that make sheep-farming in marginal areas somewhat uncertain. He'd rather keep this quiet until he's ready to publish his results, but if he's cornered by someone who clearly knows what's going on, he'll admit it, with a bit of mad doctor *"Yes! You have perceived zer secret of mine brilliance! I vill revolutionize zer vool unt mutton industries!"* ranting.

What he failed to predict, though, was that other creatures might get at the feed, and experience similar benefits. (It didn't help that he made the stuff taste good to herbivores.) As a result, practically every creature down at that end of the food chain within ten miles of the house is now nigh-invulnerable – which in turn, means that the local carnivores are *starving*. Also, the sheep are becoming increasingly overconfident, plunging over a lot of cliffs, wandering up to hungry wolves, and so on, which is liable to make sheep-farming trickier.

Solutions: The PCs' immediate problem is how to get away from the house through all those wolves. Blue-feeding the horse, setting the cart up for defence (maybe with a Scrounging roll to rig up some armour, and Mechanic to fit it), and driving down the road as fast as possible, should just about work, though some Teamster rolls might be needed; using Influence Skills to get Borrigund to provide some alchemical weapons would count as a smart idea. Alternatively, the PCs could take a few sheep off the feed for a day or so, then drive them out to feed the wolves and buy time for an escape. Whatever sounds plausible should work, really. If it's a question of ending the game soon, have Igor suggest that stuff.

In the longer term, it's good citizenship to persuade Borrigund to cut back on the mad science a little. Public Speaking might do this; Hargo can have +1 or +2 for preparation or good arguments. Borrigund resists with **Will 13**, though Influence Skills might set him up for a -1 or -2 to that. Igor won't bother resisting, though the Code of the Igors requires him to go along with Borrigund until it's clear the denouement is happening; he plays by the rules, but he intends to survive. Burning down the laboratory would get points for style, though it's a bit excessive; in that case, Borrigund will plunge in with intent to recover his work, then come running out, on fire and gibbering, and Igor will nod approvingly; *"That'th a proper mathter"*. Other observers may need a Fright Check at -2. This sort of thing will also cause both sheep and wolves to scatter to the horizon, buying the PCs time and opportunity to depart the scene.