

Gremlins

"But it's so hard to make things simple and so easy to make them complicated."
"Nightmare At 20,000 Feet: Horror Stories" — Richard Matheson

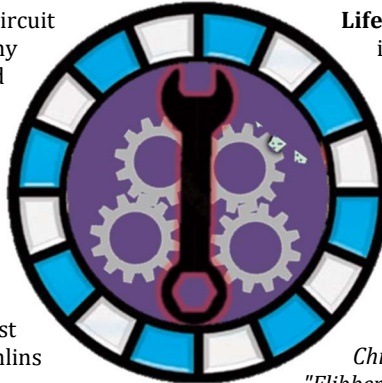
Quote: Hold on to your lugnuts, Jack, we're about to blow the mother-ship... YEEHAW!

Sabotaging aircraft, overloading circuit boards, ripping wires to shreds: a hegemony of chaos for the sake of brotherhood and camaraderie. The Gremlins, whose name is old Germanic for "to Vex", have been plying their nihilistic trade for a while, yet have only gathered notice since the Second Great War. Roald Dahl, the children's author of "Willy Wonka" has claimed to know them well, and it was to him personally that most of their secrets were shared. He shared, supposedly, against their wishes. That's okay though, the Gremlins wanted to be known.

Unlike their cousins the Nockers or the Goblins, the Gremlins don't rightly care what you think. They enjoy their work, and it is their Dreaming-Given duty to keep things interesting and moving. Things need to be broken before they can be rebuilt, and complacency breeds hazards. More than anything is the looming threat of stagnation, which is the hallmark of the coming Winter. The Gremlins know this, and ensure that every bolt loosened and every wire stripped serves a greater purpose.

If all this means that there's a couple of crashes, then so be it, it was all for the better, yes? SURE! In fact, the Gremlins have a built in defense that always endears them to their allies. (See Birthright below). Is what they do wrong? Evil? Unseele? Not necessarily. What the truth of it all can be debated for hours, the Gremlins are not the master debaters that the Sidhe are. The Gremlins are too busy for such navel-gazing diatribe. They have work to do. It's a dirty job, true. But they love it.

Appearance: In Mortal Mien, the Gremlins are smiling little creepers, with slight skinny builds, long skinny limbs, googly eyes (often wearing goggles when they don't need them, it's weird) big ears and snaggle-tooth smiles... They have sallow skin, or oddly pale greying skin with splotches of freckles here and there. Their hair is a mess and they giggle at odd moments. This doesn't change much in Fae Mien. They are even shorter, rarely over 4 feet, the smallest pushing just over two feet. They have twig like limbs but with big hands and feet, with long twitching fingers and toes. Their skin is a mottled mix of greens, browns, yellows and in some cases even blues (Supposedly the blue ones are psychic, but the Gremlins may be lying about that. There are big webbed ears, like a bat's wings, what peek out from their heads. Their faces are all smile, with dozens of sharp needle-like teeth, and huge staring eyes. They still prefer those goggles, and many sport bomber jackets, scarves and aviator caps... the better to show that they belong in the air. Many younger ones favor steam-punk gear, or even hacker-culture paraphanelia. It is a good era to be a Gremlin...



Lifestyles: While it will be hard for them to get into the military, often due to their lack of physicality, many score high enough on entrance exams to serve as military contractors, as engineers and mechanics. They relish their jobs, and their superiors praise their diligence and hard-work. Groups of like-minded Gremlins can be found burning the midnight oil into the wee hours of the A.M., long after their mortal allies have hit their racks.

Childing Gremlins, also called "Widgets," (boys) or "Flibbertigibbets" (girls) are industrious little bastards.

They will help vacuum the house one day, and then break the vacuum, so that Mom has to go with Dad to get a new one. Or they will wreck the engine on the old Studebaker, just so that they can volunteer to help Dad work on it,

Wilder Gremlins are trying to make a name for themselves out there. They try to join the military, or seek employment as mechanical engineers. Anyplace that their abilities will be "Appreciated".

Grump Gremlins have been all around the world, and destroyed machines that most can only dream exist. They are fonts of mechanical knowledge, and younger Gremlins around the world seek them out to learn their secrets.

Affinity: Prop

Glamour Ways: Gremlins gain Glamour when someone utilizes the machinery that a Gremlin "Fixed". The emotions that come off the person. Whether a curse at that "Piece of Shit" engine, or a sardonic laugh at the futility while trying to get it running, it is the emotional spectrum that serves as the fuel for the Gremlins' Magic.

Unleashing: Cantrips cast by Gremlins smell like engine oil and ozone, cordite and gasoline. They are often accompanied by sparks and the sounds of a sputtering engine trying desperately to turn over.

Birthrights:

Jacking-On: The Gremlins love electricity....They looove it. They take no damage from electrical damage, and even enjoy the tingling sensation of a screwdriver in an outlet. Some grow addicted to it. (*see Frailty below*)

Dynamic Appraisal and Alteration: With a single turn palying with something and watching it work, Gremlins can see the



inner workings of something. Not just how it work, but *why*. This just doesn't apply to mechanical Appraisal, but social as well. The social dynamics of a group is just as obvious as an engine block. It takes one turn and a successful Charisma + Empathy roll (difficulty of how complicated the system is).

With a point of Glamour spent, the Gremlin can alter the production rate of these systems. Machines can improve their functionality, producing far more output. Social groups gain cohesion and camaraderie, producing just as much output as the machines. A favorite of Gremlins is to cause a machine to malfunction, and then watch the team gather round to fix it. Everybody Wins!

This is how the Gremlins did so well in WWII. If Gremlins wrecked Nazi air-craft, it was because they were on our side. If Gremlins wrecked American Air-craft, it was because they were on America's side and trying to bring them together. Everybody Wins!

Frailties:

Jacking-On: It's bound to happen to anyone. When working with electronics, one's going to get shocked at sometime or another. Gremlins however, can quickly become as addicted to this shock as some are addicted to smack or crack or cigarettes... The first time a Gremlin is shocked, he or she must roll their willpower difficulty 7. A success means that they liked it, but can go on with their life. If they fail, then the next time they get shocked it is a willpower roll Difficulty 8, and so on. The first time a Gremlin botches such a roll, they become addicted. They switch courts, Seelie becomes Unseelie, Unseelie becomes Thallain. Any use of the Dynamic Alteration Birthright results in the Gremlin using it for ill, even the social aspects. All

the Gremlin wants to do is stick it in... an outlet. They will hang out in the bathroom jacking on over and over again. The only cure for this is an intervention from allies on the Gremlin's behalf.

Apertif for destruction: While the Gremlins are certainly capable of making something work better, it is far more satisfying to watch it sputter and spark and smoke. When utilizing their Dynamic Alteration birthright, it not only costs the one point of Glamour, but it takes a willpower roll, difficulty 8, to ensure that the Gremlin fixes the machine, and doesn't see it destroyed. This roll isn't needed for the Social aspect of the Birthright, most Gremlins are pretty Ace, and don't want to spoil a good thing.

Googy, Gremlin Ace and holistic mechanic, riding on the wing, waggles a finger at the window and elucidates...

Boogey-Men: They can be any of us, ya know? Like, they're not that far off from any of us. You could be one in other circumstances. Think about this the next time you think that they're creepy.

Cats with Hats: Fun Fun Fun Fun Fun.

Diabhals: One wanted to make a deal with me, wanted me fix his stratocaster for him in exchange for my tool-box. His fingers should heal sometime in the next few months.

Dust-Devils: Goggles? Check. Leather vest? Check. Watching things crash and burn? Checkeroo. Yep. The Dust-Devils are just cowboy Gremlins. You're welcome...

Hodag: Look out Midwest, here comes the greenest meanest cheese-head what ever loved the snow... These guys are fun. Real fun. Drinking buddies til the end.

Jellies: I asked one if she could lube my pistons for me. She slapped me.

Myconids: These guys know what it means to get your hands dirty. For that I applaud them.

Nomes: I still don't get it. Chickens, you say?

Pumpkin-Heads: We all need vegetables. I get it. But we all need wi-fi too.

Nockers: Yes I get we're sort of related, I'm not denying that. But related doesn't mean friends. They get so peeved when something blows up. That just means you fix it again.

Goblins: Likewise, don't go out of your way to destroy something just for the sake of destroying it. There's no art in that. Nihilism is only half of it...

Effigies: I don't trust anything that burns but doesn't. They're creepy. Too creepy.

Children of the Aether: There's people out there, *not sure if I'd call them mortal*, that can do things with machines that would make our eldest of elders lose their shit. If you ever find one, make nicey-nice and watch... with these guys, lightning strikes three, four, a dozen times in the same place, and it feels great.