

IMAGINARY FRIENDS

The RPG of Childhood Friends by John and Sue Wilson

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INTRODUCTION

Imaginary Friends is an RPG where the players take the part of the imaginary creatures that inhabit a child's fantasy world. Every child has imaginary friends that they talk to.

Each imaginary friend represents a different, but important aspect of a child's life. They are protectors, adversaries, and expressions of hopes and fears.

In *Imaginary Friends*, the players become these creatures and interact with each other and the child in a world that is purely imagination.

MAKING FRIENDS

The first step in creating an Imaginary Friend is to decide on the **ROLE** the character plays in the child's life. This can be anything from being the child's best friend and protector to being the Thing That Lurks in the Wardrobe.

Once the **ROLE** has been decided, the next step is to decide what **DRAWBACK** the Imaginary Friend has. This should be consistent with the **ROLE** (although this might not always be the case).

The last step is to decide upon the **APPEARANCE** of the Imaginary Friend. This can be anything you want. Just remember that this will be what the child imagines the Imaginary Friend to look like.

DOING THINGS

When trying to do things in *Imaginary Friends*, the players will describe the actions of their Imaginary Friends to the referee. Sometimes it will be obvious that an action is possible or impossible. At other times, there will be some doubt. This is when the dice are needed.

When the referee calls for a dice roll, the player must roll a d10 and get better than 5. Modifiers are applied to the dice roll, depending on the Imaginary Friend's **ROLE**, **DRAWBACK** and **APPEARANCE**. The value of the modifiers range from +5 (if the Imaginary Friend's **ROLE** and **APPEARANCE** are totally applicable to the task) to -5 (if the Imaginary Friend's **DRAWBACK** and **APPEARANCE** make the task impossible). The exact value of the modifier is up to the referee.

THE INNER CHILD

Imaginary Friends takes place in the world inside a child's mind. These worlds can be as individual as the children. They can be inspired by a favourite book, a favourite TV show or even the contents of a child's room.

However, these places are not always cuddly and light. Children have fears, and these fears can be expressed in many different ways. So, before constructing adventures for the players, a referee should take time out to consider the most important thing in the game: the child!

First of all, give the child a name. Then, work out what the child is like as a person. Are they friendly? Quiet? Do they like to play with dolls, or do they prefer to spend their time climbing trees and getting dirty? These will all shape the world that the Imaginary Friends live in.

Finally (but possibly most importantly) you have to decide what are the bad things in the child's life. This might be something as simple as the dog next door that always barks when they walk past the gate ... or something more serious.

Once you have decided on the child and their likes and dislikes, the next thing to do is to work out what their fantasy world looks like. The most important things in a child's life will set the tone of their inner world. For example, a child that likes to play with dolls might have a fantasy world that resembles a doll's house, complete with bright furnishings; whilst a tree-climber might have a never-ending forest as their secret place.

Each fantasy world will have landmarks. These landmarks usually represent things that are central to the child's life. For example, one landmark might be a child's "safe place" where they can hide away when they are sad or in trouble. Another landmark might be a giant door that is always ajar, and which has something behind it. Landmarks will always be present, unless something serious happens to the child.

Imaginary Friends might have landmarks associated with them. An Imaginary Friend that looks like a teddy bear might live in a tree, while a mud monster could live in a pit of oozy, goopy mud. Players should help the referee decide where their Imaginary Friends live.

Next, the referee should decide what other Imaginary

Friends live in the world and what they do. After all, everything in the child's inner world will have some purpose—although it might not be obvious at first!

Finally, the referee should decide on possible adventures based upon the world that has been created. Some may be obvious, others can be suggested by the players themselves. After all, their Imaginary Friends are just as much a part of the world anything else.

Remember that people and places can change and move around as things become more or less important in a child's life. This is all part of growing up. The actions of the Imaginary Friends will also have an effect on the world as they help a child confront these changes and deal with them.

THE WORLD OF TIMMY

The World of Timmy is an example setting for *Imaginary Friends*. We'd rather you made your own up, but we'll understand (and may even be slightly flattered) if you decide to use this.

Timmy is a slightly hyperactive five-year old (but aren't they all). He has just started school, and this has come as something of a shock to him as up to now he has been the centre of attention at home.

He enjoys playing football and running around. For this reason, he has found it rather hard to sit down and be quiet in school. His teacher, because she shouts at him (or so Timmy thinks), has become something of a pet hate of his and he is constantly planning ways to "get his own back".

Timmy's inner world is set around the seaside. He likes going on holidays to the sea and thinks it is an exciting place. The centre of his inner world is a wide, sandy beach the lies at the bottom of a rocky cliff. There is a small town at the base of the cliff which is inhabited by people and things that he remembers from his holidays.

There is a cave at the bottom of the cliff that is surrounded by a deep, dark rockpool. This is the home of a sea monster that sounds very much like his teacher when she is in one of her moods. A huge sand-fort (big enough for a child to live in) is Timmy's safe place.

A number of creatures live in Timmy's world. The important ones are listed below.

BUSY CRAB

- **ROLE:** Guardian of Timmy's Fort.
- **DRAWBACK:** Busy is very single-minded. Once he gets an idea into his head (or something into his claws) he will not let go.
- **APPEARANCE:** Busy looks like a cartoon crab,

completer with beady eyes, moustache and a grumpy-sounding voice.

MR FISH

- **ROLE:** Tells stories to people. These stories often provide a clue as to exactly what is going on in Timmy's world.
- **DRAWBACK:** Mr Fish does not like to get too far away from his boat. The longer he spends away from it, the more excuses he will find to get back to it.
- **APPEARANCE:** Mr Fish is a wrinkled, old man who wears yellow oilskins and black wellington boots. He always smells of Old Spicy aftershave.

SEAGULLS

- **ROLE:** Noisy birds that congregate in flocks and try to get Timmy to do things. Sometimes they're good and sometimes they're bad.
- **DRAWBACK:** The seagulls are always obvious about what they are up to. They cannot conceal their motives at all. They also argue amongst themselves.
- **APPEARANCE:** A flock of noisy seagulls.

THE SEA MONSTER

- **ROLE:** Big, scary thing that wants to stop people having fun.
- **DRAWBACK:** The Sea Monster cannot leave the cave or the rockpool. It also finds loud noises painful.
- **APPEARANCE:** The Sea Monster is a cross between an octopus and a crab. It has a face that looks very much like Timmy's teacher.

So, what is there to do in *The World of Timmy*? Lots of things.

- It has been raining for a very long time down at the beach. Mr Fish tell the players that the Sea Monster is guarding a treasure at the bottom of its rockpool. If the players can get the treasure then the rain will stop. The treasure is actually Timmy's football that his teacher confiscated at school.
- After Timmy has been bullied at school, he seagulls have started attacking the inhabitants of the town. This is because they have a new leader who has decided that it is time to show the townspeople who is boss. Unfortunately, the leader of the seagulls lives at the top of the tallest cliff.

LAST WORDS

We hope you enjoy playing *Imaginary Friends*. If you have any feedback, please contact WilsonClan Games at games@wilsonclan.org.uk.