

# Past the Wit of Man

Or

## Go Puck Yourself

V0.3

This is a game where you will play a group of mortal lovers whose relationships are tangled in a web of unrequited love, who stumble into the realm of fairies. You will also play the fairies that are toying with the mortals to confront them with the flaws in their characters and help them find true love. It is a game about people experimenting with identity (and having their identities experimented with) to find out who they are and what they really want.

### **You need:**

**Players:** 3-8

**Time:** 2-4 hours (More players mean a longer game)

**Materials:** Note-cards, writing utensils, counters (glass beads, poker chips, coins, dice, or something like that)

## **SET UP**

### **Setting**

Collectively decide on the time period and physical location of the game. This will help define the characters and the flavor of the game.

The setting should be someplace outdoors or surrounded by the outdoors, and the characters will be there for the night. Figure out why everyone is there together.

*Maybe they all decided to go on an outdoor adventure, a camping, hiking, rafting, cave exploration, mountain climbing, or skiing trip, for example. Maybe they are on a road trip and had their car break down or simply had to stop for the night. Maybe they are staying at a cabin in the woods or a rural house with acres of land. They might be at a college party, a wedding reception, a holiday gathering, co-workers, or in a band together.*

Be creative. The characters don't all need to know each other at first, but you do know the characters to your left and right.

### **Characters**

Each player will have a mortal character, in addition to an off-screen fairy character. Each player needs a single note card. On one side, write mortal at the top, on the other, fairy. On the mortal side, write Name, Gender, Sexuality, Strength, and Weakness. On the Fairy side, write Virtue.

## Mortals

To make your mortal characters, first we'll decide your strength and weakness, then gender and sexuality, and your name last. Each player takes a turn, one after another around the table. On your turn, ask the player on your right (speaking as your mortal) what they think your greatest strength is, which is also what they love about you. Have them pick one:

Confident, Beautiful, Humorous, Graceful, Strong, Intelligent, Kind, Humble, Courageous, Tenacious, Pure, Creative, Honest, or Sensual.

Write it down on the note card under the heading Strength.

Ask the person on your left what your greatest weakness is, which is what they dislike about you. Have them pick one:

Greedy, Gluttonous, Vain, Stupid, Lustful, Cruel, Dishonest, Arrogant, Addicted, Clumsy, Physically Weak, Cowardly, Lazy, Unimaginative, Frigid.

Write it down under the heading weakness.

Decide on a gender for your mortal, male or female. Write it down. Decide on a sexuality, straight, gay, bisexual, confused, or whatever. You may change your mortal's sexuality anytime it becomes appropriate. Write it down anyways. Decide on a name and write it down too.

Together your mortal's strength and weakness make up their dual nature. If your strength and weakness are in conflict, pick one to be public and one to be private. Usually your character's strength is how they present themselves to others and their weakness is part of their personality they try to hide, but sometimes it's the other way around. Your natures might also work together seamlessly, if you were confident and lecherous, for example.

Regardless, after each scene in which you role-play your mortal's strength or weakness, take one faerie point, or two if you did both. It's up to all the players to come to an agreement over whether or not you role played your strength or weakness.

After everyone has decided their strengths and weaknesses, discuss your characters with one another and flesh out their details and relationships, especially your relationships with the mortal characters to your right and left. You will start out the game in love with the mortal to your left, you want to be with them and get them to fall in love with you. You are anywhere from feeling indifference to outright hate for the mortal on your right; for some reason (most likely their weakness) they are someone you don't want to be in a relationship with. There's no reason your mortal can't fall in love with them by the end of the game, however, no matter how much you hate them at the beginning.

## Fairies

Your fairy is working for a fairy higher up in the fairy court, possibly the fairy queen or king. Your fairy has been sent to teach the mortals a lesson in the name of the virtue their lord embodies. Your fairy's goal is to confront the other player's mortals with their own weaknesses to help them discover who they really are.

Your fairy's virtue is a single word, something opposite of the weakness of the player on your left. Use this as a loose guideline for when to use your fairy powers, confronting players with their weaknesses in a way that pushes them towards your virtue. Your fairy's virtue is also its name.

*For example, if the weakness of the player on your left is Gluttony, your virtue could be moderation, health, or maybe sacrifice.*

Fairies are not allowed to be seen by mortals, so everything your fairy does will occur off-screen (or invisibly). Your fairy interacts with the other players entirely through the use of their fairy powers, all of which cost fairy points. Whenever you are exiled from a scene by the lead player, you take control of your fairy instead and use your powers to influence the scene and complete your fairy's goal. Fairies are also forbidden to let mortals come to permanent harm, so it might be up to your fairy to stop them from killing each other, even if you got them mad at each other in the first place.

Each player receives five fairy points at the beginning of the game. These are kept track of with any form of small object that's easy to keep track of, coins, poker chips, dice, glass beads, whatever works. While you are the player in exile you can use any of the powers on the following list, in any order, at anytime, as long as they have the points to spend to use them. If the description says there is a target, it may be used on a player playing a mortal or an exiled player using a fairy power.

*Fairy Laws – 1) Confront mortals with their own weaknesses.*

*2) Allow no permanent physical harm to come to mortals.*

*3) Allow no mortal to see you.*

## Fairy Powers

### Do Over – 1 point

The target immediately must replace what they just said or did with an alternative. The original statement or action never occurred and the new one takes its place. The new one must be fundamentally (not radically) different. A mortal target believes what they are saying and that their words came from their own free will.

*For example: if the target said "Yes", they could not simply say yes in another way. They could say "No", "Maybe", "I'm not sure", "I need to think about it", or "Lets try to find a middle ground", but they could not say, "Sure", "Alright", or "I'm okay with that" instead.*

## **Twists – 1 point**

### **Swap**

You may pick something the target just said or did and change the meaning by replacing one word. The target repeats the line with the new change and the scene continues from there. You may spend more points to affect more words. A mortal target believes what they are saying and that their words came from their own free will.

*For example: the target says, "I'm going to kill you." You use a twist, and change the word "kill" to "kiss".*

### **Redirect**

Same as Swap, except you may change the subject or predicate of the target's last sentence to something different instead of a single word.

*For example: the target says, "I am a member of the king's army." You use redirect to change "king's army" to "royal harem".*

### **Addition**

Same as Swap, except you simply add a new word somewhere in the sentence.

*For example: the target says, "I've known a lot of people." You spend two points to add the words "in bed" to the end of the sentence.*

## **Forswear – 1 point**

You may make a single word or subject impossible to speak of for a particular mortal. When they attempt to say it or speak of it they make an animal sound in its place. This lasts until you decide it stops.

## **Enchantment – 1-2 points**

You may make an illusion that persists until you decide to remove it or the end of the scene. You may specify which mortals experience the illusion and which do not. For 1 point you must decide whether the illusion is visual, a sound, a taste, a smell, or a feeling. For 2 points the illusion fools all the senses. Fairies can use this power to maintain an illusion from a previous scene.

*For example: you may give a particular mortal the head of a donkey, or you may make it so that one mortal believes another mortal is someone else entirely.*

## **Meddle – 1 point**

You may have your fairy invisibly enter the scene and physically rearrange objects in the scene.

*You could plant one character's money in another's pocket, change the name on the love letter to someone else's, remove all the bullets from a gun, or break the video camera.*

### **Create – 1 point**

This power is used to introduce objects into the scene. *A bird craps on the wedding dress, someone finds a forged love letter, or even an enchanted fairy object with magic powers.* However you cannot make a magic object that copies the powers of one of the fairy powers.

### **Love Potion – 3 points**

You may use this on a lead player's turn after they have picked who else will be in their scene. The fairies have placed a love potion on the mortal of the player whose turn it is, and they fall in love with the first character they see in the scene. Give their love card to that player. They cannot fall out of love with that mortal until the next time they are lead player, after which it's up to them whether they stay in love or not.

### **Love Cards**

Each player writes "(The name of your mortal character)'s love" on a note card, folded in half to stand up so everyone can see it. Hand your card to the player on your left. Your mortal is in love with that character. If during the game your mortal falls in love with someone else, take your card back and hand it to the person you are now in love with. You can also take your card back and keep it if your mortal loves no one but themselves. It's up to you to decide who your mortal loves or doesn't love (unless they are under the effects of a love potion), but they can only be in love with one person at a time. Mortal hearts can be fickle. It's also possible for one person to have all the love cards and have everyone else in love with them.

Anytime your love card moves from one mortal to another, or someone else gives their love card to you, take a fairy point.

### **Play**

#### **Taking the lead**

Each player takes turns being the "lead" (as in leader of the pack, not lead poisoning). When you are the lead, you pick one or more other players to "Exile" from the scene, and decide who else starts in the scene and how the scene begins. The lead describes the setting (for example, near a babbling brook in the moonlight, among a field of lilies in the morning sun, or under the shade of a weeping willow), and what each mortal is doing at the start of the scene, but the other mortals are allowed to add definition to their environment as they see fit once they are in the scene. It's your job when you're lead to set up interesting scenes full of conflict and romance. Do whatever interests you most, but be open to suggestions.

*If two characters are in love with the same mortal, it might be a good idea to put all three in a scene together. Or, you might want to have a scene just between the two fighting over the love interest, or one of the suitors catching the love interest alone to steal them out from under the other suitor's nose.*

If a mortal player is not exiled but their mortal does not begin in the scene, they can decide when to enter the scene at any time.

## **Playing Your Character**

Each player is in charge of describing the actions of their own mortal, speaks as their mortal in the scene, and can decide what possessions their mortal has. Although you have the final say on what your mortal does or does not do, all the players may make suggestions at any time for your mortal. You can take no action against another mortal that isn't consensual; if a mortal takes an action against another mortal, the player of the mortal affected by the action gets to decide the outcome of that action.

*For example, if I say I'm going to try to kiss you, or push you into the river, or talk about programming languages until you fall in love with my intelligence, or chop your head off with a machete, you get to decide the outcome of that action.*

You may hurt or even *attempt* to kill another mortal, but no mortal character can die during play.

The first time your mortal appears in a scene, you should take a moment to describe them to everyone else. Talk about how they look, how they talk, what they are wearing, and their general mannerisms and attitude. Talk about them as if you were watching them and telling someone else about them.

When playing your mortal, your main motivation is to get the person you are in love with to fall in love with you. Your love card is just a symbol; it's not set in stone.

*Treat your character like a real person with emotional responses, who can be angered, flattered, stubborn, impressed, and hurt. If the person you love is mistreating you, but someone else is being very nice, that's a good time to give your love card to the nice one. Or maybe the nice character helps you learn how to respect yourself and you take your love card back.*

It's also up to you whether you wear your heart on your sleeve or whether you are more shy or reserved about making your love known; even though the players know who everyone else is in love with, the mortals most likely don't.

The other guideline for playing your mortal is their strength and weakness. Their strength is most likely the way they present themselves to others and the way they will try to win the hearts of their romantic interests. Sometimes it might be the other way around; another character might find your weakness charming when you display it openly. Weaknesses also tell you something your character is easily tempted by or manipulated with.

*A timid or cowardly character might be easily manipulated by violence and attracted to someone who is strong and protective, an unimaginative character might go after a creative artist, and two lecherous characters might end up together based on their weaknesses alone.*

## **Fairies and Exile**

The players whose characters are exiled will take on the role of their fairies, and can use their powers to affect the scene. It is also up to the exiled players to decide when a scene ends, setting the pace while picking a good moment to finish.

When you are exiled, gain a fairy point. If you exile a player with no fairy points you must give them 2 of your own. If you are forced to exile a player with no points and you can't pay them (no players have points), they get 2 free points instead.

## **Resolution**

The game ends when every mortal is paired off into a two person relationship, with each mortal in the pair in love with the other. Once two mortals end up in a mutual relationship chances are that they will end up together at the end of the game, but that's not always the case. If there are an odd number of players in the game, one mortal must end up not loving or being loved by anyone else, holding their own love card. That mortal has discovered how to love themselves and is perfectly happy with not being in any relationship.

## **Epilogue**

Once a scene ends with everyone happily paired off or happily single, each couple takes turn telling their epilogue. The two players take turns speaking as their mortals as though speaking to friends, talking about how happy their lives are years after the last scene. One player in the couple begins telling the story, then they may stop mid sentence at any time, at which point the other person in the couple continues telling the story. After all the couples have told their epilogue, any player of a single mortal tells a brief monologue of their happy single life.