

"GOODNIGHT HONEY. SLEEP TIGHT AND I'LL SEE YOU IN THE MORNING"

"LOVE YOU MOM. LEAVE IT OPEN A LITTLE, PLEASE?"

EVEN WITH THE THIN SLIVER OF LIGHT FROM THE HALL, SALLY WAS NERVOUS. HER ROOM WAS DARK, AND THE BRANCHES SCRATCHED ON HER WINDOW. THE WIND MOANED, RATTLING THE TREES LIKE BAGS OF BONES, AND THE MOONLIGHT CAST STRANGE AND SCARY SHADOWS ON THE WALLS. THOUGH SALLY COULD HEAR THE MUTED VOICES FROM THE LIVING ROOM DOWNSTAIRS, PUNCTUATED BY THE OCCASIONAL SOUND OF CANNED LAUGHTER, IT WAS QUIET, QUIET EXCEPT FOR THE TAPPING AND RATTLING OUTSIDE.

SALLY HUNKERED DOWN INTO HER COVERS. THE SMELL OF HER NEWLY WASHED BLANKET OFFERED LITTLE COMFORT. HER FEET AND PALMS WERE DAMP WITH SWEAT. THE SCRATCHING. THE TAPPING. THE MOANING. EYES WIDE, SHE LOOKED AROUND THE ROOM, LOOKING FOR SOMETHING, ANYTHING THAT WAS OUT OF PLACE... ANYTHING.

HER PRETTY PONY SAT ON HER NIGHTSTAND, HER RAG DOLL SLUMPED ON THE ROCKING CHAIR, AND HER DOLLHOUSE WAS DARK. THE ROCKING CHAIR... IT MOVED!

SALLY FELT A SCREAM TRY TO CLAW ITS WAY OUT OF HER THROAT. SHE SWALLOWED, KNOWING IF SHE DIDN'T SLEEP THE NIGHT THROUGH, MOMMAY WOULD BE MAD. HAD TO BE THE CAT. THE CAT. YES, OF COURSE. THE CAT. NAUGHTY CAT. THE CLOSET'S OPENING. NAUGHTY, NAUGHTY, NAUGHTY, NAUGHTY CAT!

SALLY SLID DOWN A LITTLE MORE, PULLING HER BLANKET UP OVER HER NOSE, JUST UNDER HER WIDE, SEARCHING EYES.

THE MOANING, THE SCRATCHING—THAT NAUGHTY CAT.

THE DOOR SLID OPEN, INCH BY INCH, LITTLE BY LITTLE. THE DOOR TO THE HALL DRIFTED CLOSED. THE ROOM WAS DARK. SALLY SUPPRESSED A CRY. AND THEN SHE REMEMBERED... FLUFFY RAN AWAY... SHE HADN'T SEEN HER NAUGHTY CAT FOR DAYS...

"MOMMAY!"

Welcome to suburbia. It's ordinary. It's quiet and safe, with clean streets and streetlights that hum in tune with the chirp of the crickets. It's a town where everyone knows everybody, where Mr. Smith runs the family general store just off the square. Neighbors grill hotdogs and hamburgers on warm summer afternoons, light fireworks on Independence Day, have picnics in the town park in between baseball games and soccer matches. Here, no one worries about terrorists or politics. At Christmas, everyone decks out their houses in lights to celebrate the season, dropping off baked goods to their neighbors and giving a little extra to the poor starving kids in China. And at Halloween, all the kids dress up in costumes sewn by doting mothers or picked up from the local store, going from house to house armed with orange buckets to haul their ill-gotten gains.

It's a nice place to live, a great place to raise a family. It's perfect... except for one small, ever so slight, itsy-bitsy problem. It's so insignificant, no one pays attention, no one admits it, and certainly, no one believes it. What is it? Nothing... nothing at all really... well... nothing except for the monsters. They're real, you see.

The Razor in the Apple is a setting for the *True 20 Adventure Roleplaying Game*, inspired by a slew of great movies and books.

Those who've been around a little while probably have fond memories of *Goonies*, *The Sandlot*, *Silver Bullet* and just about every Spielberg movie with at least one smart mouth kid who knows more than all the adults around him. But *The Razor in the Apple* also stands on the shoulders of Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys, as well as darker fiction like Clive Barker's *The Thief of Always*. With the rules presented in this mini-game, you can create all sorts of adventures. Whether you add more fantastic elements such as a world of wizards or of talking lions, or darker, more horrific elements, making the kids teens and pitting them against such awful villains as Freddy, Jason and Michael, *The Razor in the Apple* is your door to a weirder world of adventure.

In this game, the players take the roles of children in a small town. They must face the horrors of youth, squaring off against the thing in their closet or the monster under the bed. They might enter a haunted house on a dare, walk through a graveyard at night or talk to the spirits in the woods. *The Razor in the Apple* combines the essence of horror with the wonder of being a child. It pits the innocent (or not so innocent) child against the corruption of the world around them. While not great knights, nor powerful wizards, nor stealthy thieves, children are resourceful, quick and armed with incredible imagination.

MEET THE KIDS

At the center of every *The Razor in the Apple* adventure is a group of kids. These children are different from others of their age. They've all had a brush with the supernatural, seen strange things that made absolutely no sense and when they told their friends and parents, nobody believed them. Perhaps the problem stems from an overactive imagination, a preoccupation with the fantastic, but then, maybe, just maybe, they really *are* seeing monsters.

When creating kid heroes, *The Razor in the Apple* uses a process similar to that used in the *True20 Adventure Roleplaying Game*. All kids have six ability scores. They gain skills, feats and all the other crunchy bits that make gaming fun. But while the process of character creation follows the standard hero creation rules, *The Razor in the Apple* has a few changes and adds a number of flavorful elements to help bring the setting to life.

COMMON TRAITS

All kids have the following traits:

- Small. Kids gain a +1 Combat bonus and a +4 bonus on Stealth checks. However, they can only carry three-quarters of what an adult can carry, and they move about two-thirds as fast as adults do (20 feet).
- One bonus known skill at 1st level.
- One bonus feat at 1st level (chosen from any of your archetype's available feats).

THE KID ROLE

Unlike other *True20* heroes, kids don't select a role at 1st level. Since kids don't have the same capabilities as other heroes, they all advance in the kid role. To provide some differentiation between characters, they also choose an archetype, which grants several special abilities and determines the starting number of skills and feats.

THE KID

Level	Combat	Good Save	Normal Save	Popularity
1st	+0	+2	+0	+0
2nd	+1	+3	+0	+0
3rd	+1	+3	+1	+1
4th	+2	+4	+1	+1
5th	+2	+4	+1	+1

POPULARITY

Like reputation in *True20 Adventure Roleplaying*, popularity reflects how well-known a character is. It is a measure of the kid's personality, achievements and how well other students, teachers and parents regard her. Kids add their popularity bonus to all Charisma-based skill checks made to interact with teachers, kids and other kids' parents (though not their own). As well, a Narrator may make a secret popularity check to see if a kid is recognized.

ARCHETYPES

An archetype in *The Razor in the Apple* defines a stereotypical kid. Since all kids use the kid role, archetypes help distinguish one kid from another by providing general information as it applies to the character's inclinations and interests.

Since kids are basically wee adults, they are slightly disadvantaged when it comes to assigning ability score points. All characters in *The Razor in the Apple* begin with the following scores: Str -2, Dex -1, Con -2, Int -1, Wis -1, Cha -1. They gain 6 points to distribute as normal.

For example, Leslie wants to play a girl scout and decides to make her little hero a real charmer. She places +3 in Charisma and +1 in Dexterity, Intelligence and Wisdom. Her starting ability scores are Str -2, Dex +0, Con -2, Int +0, Wis +0, Cha +2.

BULLY

"Hey dork! Gimme your milk money."

Swirlies, wet willies and beating up the nerds are all good fun. Yours is the province of dispensing fear and terror. As the school bully, you have few friends, none of whom you can call real friends. The people you hang around tend to be more afraid of you than actually like you. That's ok though. You'd rather kids fear you.

Abilities: Strength and Charisma are your two most important abilities. Charisma is key because much of your power comes from the threats you level, while Strength lets you make good on them.

Harass (Core Ability): You may spend 1 Imagination point to add your level to Taunt checks. See the **Taunt** feat in **Chapter Three: Feats** of *True20 Adventure Roleplaying*.

Saving Throws: Bullies have a good Fortitude save and normal Reflex and Will saves.

Skills: Choose 2 + Intelligence score starting skills (minimum 1). Bullies gain 2 + Int skill ranks per additional level.

Feats: Taunt. Plus, choose 3 feats from the General or Expert categories.

CHEERLEADER

"So are you going to the basketball game I am everyone who's a nyone will be there I'm sure we can beat Northdale they suckc anyou believethewhomeworkwegot I love candy are you going to the basketball game?"

It's all about school spirit! You love school! School is great! Basketball is great! Candy is great! Johnny is cute! Fun! Life for you is one great big blur. You delight in everything you do, and it seems you're never tired. Whether talking about boys, gossiping about the ugly girl, some stupid boy's striped socks, or what was on your show last night, it seems you never run out of things to talk about.

Abilities: Cheerleaders need a high Charisma to charm everyone. Dexterity is also important since cheerleaders need to do all sorts of acrobatics, dances and other nonsense.