

Lashings of Ginger Beer Lite

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(**Note.** Many of the above sections are only available in the full version)

Introduction

What is this game about?

You are a 13-year old kid living in Idyllic England. Idyllic England is an unreal place, a sort of fantasyland along the lines of those versions of England, which appear in such works as *The Famous Five*, *Swallows and Amazons* and *The Secret Seven*. In Idyllic England the time period doesn't really matter - suffice to say that kids ride bicycles not BMX's, they read books such as 'Boys' Own Adventures' since there is no such thing as Sega or Nintendo and most importantly they never swear and are rarely rude to grown ups.

All right, you may ask, but this is a role-playing game so what is there to do? Well, there are camping hols a plenty, mysterious smugglers caves to explore, ghostly haunted houses to poke around in, secret passages in ruined castles to discover, all manner of suspicious villains to report to the police for real (and imagined) crimes. Nasty people can of course be spotted a mile off, and every circus that comes to town holds its own mystery to solve. And, once solved PC Plod is always on hand with his trusty bicycle to arrest the villains of the piece, or to clip the kids around the ears for wasting his time (without the possibility of being hauled before the court!).

Creating a Kid

Attributes

To play in an rpg you need to create a character, that is the persona that you pretend to be in the game. In LoGB the character you need to create is a nosey kid. Kids are initially defined by 4 *attributes*. These attributes are rated on a numeric scale, where the higher the number the better. They help to determine how well each kid performs in his or her day-to-day activities, whether they be at home, at school or more particularly when they are on an adventure.

The attributes are: -

Tough

This is a measure of the kid's strength, resilience, build and all round physical ability. It is useful in sports, outdoor activities and particularly useful in fights. It tends to be higher as kids grow older.

Deft

Speed, agility, athleticism and co-ordination are all measured by this attribute. Useful for many outdoor and sporting pursuits. Deft reduces as kids grow older.

Clever

A bright kid is an intelligent and quick witted kid who does well at school work and is good at remembering things and working things out. As kids get older,

they learn more and therefore become more clever.

Charm

Being able to smile sweetly and get away with anything. That is charm. Younger kids tend to be more charming.

Age

For the most part, it is the age of the kid that you create that decides what the initial attribute levels are. The higher the number, the better able your kid is.

To determine your kid's age, you need to either choose an age between 10 to 15, or roll a dice (d6) and add 9 to the result. Write this age on your character sheet.

Age	Tough	Deft	Clever	Charm
10	1	3	1	3
11-12	2	2	1	3
13-14	2	2	2	2
15	3	1	3	1
Grown-up	4	1	4	1

Initial attribute levels are determined by starting age. Look up your kid's age on the following table and write the numbers for each attribute on your character sheet. Then add 1 point to any attribute you like. Write down the final attribute levels on your character sheet.

Kid type

After attributes have been decided, you then need to determine the things that your kid knows or is good at. This depends on the type of kid, which can be a Swot, a Truant (Tomboy) or a Good ('normal') kid. You get to choose.

Good ('Normal')

Good kids - these make up the vast majority of kids in Idyllic England. They have a father who works in the bank or in insurance a mother who is a housewife (as all mothers in Idyllic England should be - no such thing as the women's movement here) probably an older brother or sister and a family pet.



A Good Kid

They will live in a suburban semi detached house with ample room at the end of the garden for a tree house or den. Father will have a Rover car or maybe a Wolsey or Morris which he uses for work and at weekends to take the family on outings or drop the kids off at the train station, when they go off to see auntie Mable.

Good kids will go on to become bank managers, solicitors, doctors, accountants or politicians. Girls will of course get married and become housewives.

Swots (Bookworms)

Swots are from backgrounds similar to those of good kids but could be, for example, an only child and therefore molly-coddled by mummy & daddy. They are not good at sporty things (too rough) but at their lessons they excel.

Swots prefer to spend leisure time in the library or in their rooms with their noses stuck in their books.

There will rarely be more than one Swot in any gang.

Swots will go on to become Professors, scientists, inventors and train spotters.

Truants (Tomboys)

These kids are the naughtier kids of Idyllic England. They tend to be the opposite of Swots, that is good at sports but poor at their studies. They may even use strong words or phrases like 'damn it' and 'blast' or even on occasion 'bloody hell!' (as long as no grown-ups are nearby).

Truants are fond of games and pranks

that lead other kids astray, such as cherry knocking and apple scrumping but because they are better at these things, they do not usually get caught.

By present day standards Truants are not bad kids by any means and they do not get into trouble with the police - they are simply naughty by Idyllic England standards.

There will rarely be more than one Truant in a gang.

Truants will go onto become footballers, racing drivers, journalists and game designers. Girl truants may be called Tomboys.



A Truant

What is my kid good at?

These are called skills, abilities, feats or traits in other rpg's. They are learned or taught skills and knowledge. All player character kids in Idyllic England are adventurous and resourceful. They see things that grown-ups and most other kids do not see. Accordingly all your kid is automatically good at two things - Hide and Snoop. These are already written onto the character sheet and you have a level of 2 dice in each. You can spend points to improve them from your points allocation detailed below.

The other things a kid is good at depend upon the type of kid she is. You have 8 points to split amongst them. Simply assign some of your 8 points to each thing.

If you want to choose things that are not a part of your kid type, you need to as-



A Swot

sign a greater number of your points.

Swots get Truant skills at treble cost. Truants get Swot skills at treble the cost. They both buy Good kid skills at double the cost. Good kids buy any non-good kid skills at double the cost. So a Swot could, for example put one point into each of his 6 listed skills, and then put two points into Act Innocently (effectively making that skill a 'level' 1 too).

Any player can choose to increase Hide or Snoop for one point per point of increase.

Good

- Act Innocently
- Camping
- Hobbies
- Sports
- Ride Bicycle
- Spot Nasty People

Swot

- Sciences
- History
- Geography
- Languages
- Music
- Useless Facts

Truant

- Fighting
- Wriggle (from Grasp)
- Climb Trees & Walls
- Catapult
- Throwing Things
- Lie Convincingly

Example of creating a kid

I grab a character sheet and roll a dice, which comes up 5. My kid is therefore 14 (I could have chosen his age had I wanted to). I write this on my character sheet. I also come up with a name for him at this stage - Daniel (Danny).

Looking up the attributes on the table for a kid of 14, I see that all four attributes will be rated at 2. I have an extra point to add, so I increase Deft to 3.

Next, I decide that my kid will be a Good Kid. With the 8 points, I put one point in each of the things listed, except for Act Innocently. I decide my kid is not going to be good at pretending. I write the selected things down on my character sheet, with a '1' alongside each. This leaves 3 points. I want my kid to be especially good at snooping, so I add a point to Snoop skill, bringing it up to 3. I also want my kid to be good at climbing, so I can assign a level of 1 to Climb Trees & Walls (this costs both points that were left over). I add this to my character sheet too.

Danny is now nearly ready to go and solve a few mysteries. But I still need to know what he is able to do with the things he is good at. There are also a couple more things I need to know about Danny before he is ready for adventure.

Doing things

Rolling dice

In *Lashings of Ginger Beer*, the dice used are the ordinary six-sided dice that you find in board games like *Monopoly*. In most cases when you roll dice to determine whether your kid succeeded when trying to do something he or she is good at, you need at least one '6' to come up. Often you will roll more than one dice. Where these rules are different (for example rolling on the Useful Items Table, the rules will explain how the dice work).

Sometimes rolling dice can break up the flow of the game. It breaks up the thrill of the chase, or simply gets in the way of good role-playing. So, there is a rule of play for LoGB and that is to roll dice only when there is a real need to do so – i.e. where the game situation means that it would be more exciting to do so. If it would get in the way of a good story, don't do it.

Where a kid is trying to do something that he or she has a skill in, the player rolls dice equal to the skill level plus the most appropriate attribute for what he is trying to do.

For example Tommy, a Truant, is firing his catapult at an open window to try to get a message into the room where his friends are held captive by the villains (he has wrapped a note around the stone). If he has a 2 in catapult and 2 in Deft, then the player gets 4 dice to roll.

If a kid has no appropriate skill, the player simply rolls a number of dice equal to his character's most appropriate attribute.

At least one '6' is required in order to succeed. Where more than one '6' is rolled, the more impressive the result of the action.

Modifiers

If you want to introduce modifiers, the player can roll one extra dice if the GM reckons what he is trying to do is quite easy or subtract a dice if the GM determines the task is difficult.

Contested rolls

Sometimes a player will want his kid to do something that is being opposed by another kid or a grown-up – say a race or a 'scrap' or similar. In these cases, both players or the player and the GM roll the appropriate number of dice.

The one who gets the most 6's is the 'winner'. In a fight, the loser suffers a one-point reduction in their Tough attribute. This represents tiredness, being 'roughed up' and general wear and tear. It does not represent wounding as such – although it could represent a bloody nose or black eye etc.

When Tough is reduced to 0, the kid is out of the fray – either he is exhausted or demoralised or on his rump crying.

Either way, he has been beaten.

Where the result of a contested roll is a 'draw' - i.e. both 'contestants' rolled the same number of sixes, this means they were equal for that part of the action.

If for example, it is a fight, neither side got in a telling blow—it is a kind of stand-off and a chance to reassess the situation. If it is a race then they are running side by side, or in a chase the chaser has gained no ground on the other.

You will see that there is no strict 'round-by-round' combat system in LoGB like there is in other rpg's. This is because combat is not really a feature of the game. It is really more a case of dealing with the whole 'scene' based upon the result of the dice roll. You can break the action up a little if you need to or if you feel it important for a particular set piece.

Something else to bear in mind is that kids do not fight with grown ups. They can use the skill 'wriggle from grasp' to get away, or can fight them, simply to shove them away or something, but cannot stay in a prolonged fight with them.

Narrative play

In LoGB, you are creating a story in Idyllic England. To help do this, narrative control is passed to the players when their kid's succeed at doing things.

Using Tommy as our example, Tommy's player rolls 4 dice. One of them comes up a '6', so he says "right,

I pull back the rubber band, line up the open window and let loose the stone. It flies straight and true through the opening".

The more 6's rolled the more impressive the result and the more narrative control the GM can give to the player, within reason and within keeping with the Idyllic England style.

Going back to Tommy, if he had rolled two 6's the player could add, for example, "the stone lands perfectly on the lap of Sammy, who was tied to the chair against the far wall of the room".

Where the players fail their character's rolls (i.e. they don't get a 6) the GM can narrate their failure if he wants to. Alternatively, the GM may want to pass responsibility to the players to narrate both successes and failures.

The GM can overrule anything that seems 'out of place', or if a player tries to narrate a failure into some sort of a success.

The Mystery of the Haunted Castle



GM's information

Four crooks have robbed the local branch of the Mid Counties Bank and after a car chase have thrown off their police pursuers. They have found their way to the ruins of Barchester Castle (in the dead of night) and have stashed the loot to be picked up in a few days, when the heat is off.

Involving the kids

Of course, the kids are camping in the woods at the foot of the hill upon which the castle is situated. At the dead of night, one of the pc's will awaken to the strange sounds and eerie lights coming from up at the castle. It is very spooky.

The GM should play this bit up as much as possible. If the kids try to investigate at night, have owls hoot in the woods, have the kids getting scratched on thorns and thistles, have branches of trees snag in their hair like bony fingers grasping at them.

It would be best if the crooks have already gone by the time the kids get there and there will not be much to see

until daylight in any event.

However, when the kids start to search the castle, they will find tyre marks from the crooks' vehicle and one of the more Clever kids may also find a piece of herringbone cloth torn from the jacket of one of the crooks.

In the morning, or when the kids are next in town, they will see the report of the bank robbery in the local newspaper (the Barchester Chronicle). They will also learn that there is a £100 reward for information leading to the recovery of the money.

Later on in the day one of the kids could spot a 'nasty person' town with a torn herringbone jacket...

The kids should not attempt to tackle these dangerous criminals themselves but should carry out sufficient investigations and obtain enough clues and evidence to be able to convince the police of what they are saying.

Maybe the kids could even find the loot at the same time that the crooks return to pick it up, possibly resulting in foot and bicycle/car chases down the hill into town. There are many other ways this basic plotline can be developed.

Go for it! Have fun!

Credits

Laskings of Ginger Beer was created by Simon Washbourne.

Layout & Design: Simon Washbourne

Artwork: Allan Dotson, Burgess Sharrocks, Jay Forster

Play testers: Annette Flower, Robert Irwin, Nigel Uzzell, Janine Uzzell, Mark George, Alyson George, Robert Watkins, Gary Collett, Leigh Wakefield, Phil Chivers, Phil Ratcliffe, IWARPUK and many others.

Inspirations for the game: All the Famous Five books and Secret Seven books by Enid Blyton, Swallows & Amazons by Arthur Ransome and many other similar children's books. Even The Weirdstone of Brisingammien by Alan Garner and the Narnia Books by C S Lewis are full of ideas, especially if you want your adventures to go beyond Idyllic England. I may write a sourcebook for this type of play at some future date.

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If you liked this game, why not check out the other role-playing games at the Beyond Belief Games website here:

beyondbeliefgames.co.uk

Coming soon: *Tales from The Wood* role playing creatures of the British countryside in their fight against the evil creatures of 'The Bane' and *The Barbarians of Lemuria*, sword & sorcery role playing in the prehistoric world of Lin Carter's Thongor of Lemuria (licence pending).