

Small Monsters by Chad Wolf
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Players: 8-20

Time: Under 2 hours unless you're doing it wrong.

Supplies: Name tags, sharpies, scissors to cut out character personalities on last page of document, something to keep time with.

Background: Small monsters yell. Small monsters shout. Small monsters stamp their feet and growl. Small monsters are scary, but not as scary as big monsters. Big monsters are big, and small monsters are small. Small monsters never hurt each other, but they do sometimes get territorial or upset with one another. Small monsters gather when the moon is high in the sky. At The Gathering of Kollot, small monsters may consume one another to become big, but first they must tell secrets that will change them forever.

Small Monsters is a game in which players play the eponymous monsters who come together to ritually consume each other in order to become a big monster. The ritual involves each monster telling the other a secret about themselves and then one monster consuming the other in order to form a new body. If the small monsters do not all consume each other before the end of the ritual period, they will not be big enough to survive out in the world.

Safety:

It's important to talk to players about safety!

Read the following principles to players:

- 1. Players are more important than the game-** The emotional and physical well being of the players is more important than this or any other game.
- 2. The door is always open -** While the door may be physically closed, the door is always metaphorically open for you to leave the game temporarily or permanently. Taking care of yourselves is important, and you may leave the game for any reason at any time. If you need to leave the game temporarily, tell the players around you and the facilitator. It's ok to leave a giant monster body, it won't break the game.
- 3. No Racism, Sexism, Homophobia, Transphobia, Ableism, Fatphobia, etc. -** These suck in real life, and they are not appropriate in this game.

4. **Touch is ok as long as there is consent** - Because you're all going to be forming one big monster body, it is entirely possible that you will negotiate to be touching each other. This is fine, but make sure that everyone is ok with this touch, and do not exceed normal touch boundaries. If someone does not want to be touched, they are no less a part of the monster, and narratively, they are attached to the body. Sometimes you may start out ok being touched and later change your mind. That's ok! You may also start out not wanting to be touched but then decide otherwise. That's ok too! Use the safety techniques about to be explained or say something in character about moving to a different part of the body. It's allowed and makes narrative sense since you're weird monsters.

Explain the following safety techniques to players:

- 1) **Cut** - A player can yell "cut" to put the game on pause. Use this if you or someone else seems incapable of emotionally continuing the game. Be sure to check in with the person you are worried about before yelling cut. You may also use this if there is physical danger.
- 2) **Brake** - Say "brake" along with a hand motion of pushing out (like your hand is pumping a car brake) if someone is being too intense and you would like them to tone it down.
- 3) **OK Check in** - If someone seems upset. Flash an "OK" symbol to them and ask if they are ok. If they give a thumbs up, continue on. If they give the thumbs down or seem uncertain then call cut. [Note to facilitators: If your players are capable of taking care of each other, and you know your community, it may make sense to not have cut called and have players take each other aside for care. Please do what you think is right for your safety culture.]
- 4) **Out of Character Statement** - Hold your fist to your forehead and talk to the person. Use this when negotiating the outcome of something or checking in about whether someone would be comfortable with something that you're not sure about.

Character Creation:

Small monsters have pretty basic personalities. Hand out the strips of paper you cut on the last page of this doc to people and tell them to base their characters on that word. Give them name tags and have them come up with a name and pronouns for their monster. **Do not put the nametags on yet.** The characters will develop more out of the workshops.

Workshops:

Monster walk and noise workshop (3-5 minutes): Small monsters don't walk like people. Spend some time figuring out how your monster walk. Does it hop? Does it shake its arms? Practice your walk. Figure out some monster noises you like making--remember, monsters can talk though.

Aggressive Monster Workshop (3-5 minutes): Small monsters don't physically fight-- someone could get hurt--but small monsters can become aggressive. When small monsters want to assert their dominance,

they get about a foot or two apart and start stamping, hooting and hollering, and jumping up and down. Maybe they do other things? Who knows? Only you do. Players should partner up (form a 3 person group if necessary) and practice acting aggressive.

New Body Workshop (5-10 minutes): When a small monster eats another monster, they absorb their essence and grow an all new body which incorporates the other monster. Players should practice negotiating their new bodies. Do they attach at the arm? Is one riding the other? Are they a weird slithering snake now? How do they move when they are getting aggressive? How do they walk? In game this is negotiated out of character, and thematically in game, a new body is grown every time a new monster is consumed, and that body will be completely different. While it's not absolutely necessary they touch, it is important that they move in unison to form a cohesive whole. The new body should always grow a head for everyone, all of which are capable of speech.



In this workshop, players should practice making bodies with two players but not worry about monster personalities. Do this out of character. After they do this, the new body should find a new 2 person group and form a new body with them. Tell players that in the actual game the monsters vote on whether to merge and then tell secrets. If a majority of both monsters want to merge, one eats the other. In this workshop though, voting is not important. Monsters in game tell each other secrets to perform the ritual. In this workshop, people should tell facts about themselves. This should continue until the players form the last giant monster. **Tell players that if their positions in the monster are not working for them for whatever reason, they can always move. Players can always use an out of or in character statement to say they want to move to another part of the body. It works narratively because you're all weird monsters anyway.**

Clan workshop (5 minutes): Break the players into around 4 groups. Each of those groups is a clan. The clans are based on where you come from e.g. The Pit Clan, The Swamp Clan, etc. The facilitator should assign clan names so there are no duplicates. Suggestions: Pit, Swamp, River, Cave, Marsh Everyone in the clan likes each other. Talk about your personalities with each other. Talk about where you all grew up and what it was like. Who was in charge? Talk about your survival strategy: Will you split up to merge with other monsters first in order to have a one up in votes involving the others or will you

immediately all eat each other to form a big monster? After a few minutes, clans should find another clan to name as their enemy. Meet up and figure out why your clans hate each other. It's better if the reason isn't very good. **Add your clan to your nametag and put it on.**

Gameplay (20-60 minutes):

Read the following: You will be playing small monsters who are entering a sacred cave at a special date and time for The Gathering of Kollot, a ritual in which small monsters eat each other in order to form new bodies and become big enough to survive in the world. If you have not all eaten each other by the end of 60 minutes then the ritual will have ended without you being big enough, and big monsters will certainly eat you when you go outside.

As a review, here is how monster eating works:

1. A monster proposes they eat each other and then both monsters talk it out.
2. Monster heads all vote.
3. If a majority of heads on each body vote yes, then it happens. A majority on each monster must approve, not a straight majority.
4. Before one monster eats the other, all of the monster heads involved in the eating must tell a secret to everyone about themselves. It doesn't matter if the secret is scandalous, serious, or silly. All that matters is that it's something that could be secret. Players decide. You'll be thinking of the secrets while you play.
5. One monster eats the other.
6. Players (not characters) negotiate what their new bodies will look like.
7. Form your new body. Remember everyone has a new head on the body and can still talk, but now they are perhaps a bit more complicated since they have mixed with other monsters.
8. Your characters can now embody the personalities of other monsters you just absorbed.

Gameplay begins with the monsters slowly filing into the cave (play area). They should stagger themselves so everyone does not rush in at once.

Debrief: Have everyone derole (say who they are in real life) and a secret they really liked hearing.



Personalities. Cut these out and give one to each player.

Happy	Gloomy	Silly	Pretentious
Confused	Exuberant	Gruff	Haughty
Angry	Child-like	Curious	Caring
Sad	Hot-headed	Agreeable	Chill
Judgmental	Paranoid	Scared	Antsy