

FUR ONE NIGHT ONLY!

A Party Roleplaying Game for Musical Theater Fans

by Simon Moody



Credits

Written by Simon Moody.

Title and header text are set in Playfair Display SC and Playfair Display respectively.

Body text is set in Source Serif Pro.

Fur One Night Only draws inspiration from the following sources:

- **Honey Heist** by Grant Howitt, for the notion of party RPGs and randomized setups.
- **Fiasco** by Jason Morningstar, for the idea of passing dice to players to support their actions.
- **Cartel** by Mark Diaz Truman, for the idea of Keys as a way to guide players towards specific kinds of fiction to earn XP during play.
- **Fate Core System** by Leonard Balsera, Brian Engard, Jeremy Keller, Ryan Macklin, Mike Olson, Clark Valentine, Amanda Valentine, Fred Hicks, and Rob Donoghue, for the idea of Aspects letting a player say “Of course I can do, that, I’m a ___.”
- **Apocalypse World** by D. Vincent Baker and Meguey Baker, for being the first game to show me a GM doesn’t need to roll dice and for opening my eyes to what “fail forward” means.
- **The improv game I know as “Sounds Like a Song Cue to Me,”** for being the seed of this entire game’s design and helping me explain how to turn scenes into songs.

Special thanks to...

- ... **Fox Barrett, Jacky Leung,** and **Kate** for playtesting.
- ... the **BOARGADE** design meetup for encouraging me and great talks about RPG design.
- ... **Brittany** for asking me to see the movie in the first place and buying the popcorn.

This game was written on occupied Massachusetts land.

Fascists don’t deserve games – not that they’d play a game about singing cats anyway.

Black lives matter.

Trans rights are not up for debate.

Defund the police.

What is This Game?

Fur One Night Only is a roleplaying game inspired by a popular musical about cats who sing and dance. It's a **one-shot** game, which means you can play it in a single session of 2-4 hours. It's also a **party RPG**, which means you can play it right after reading the rules, with no experience in RPGs (or musical theater).

What the Characters Do

One special night each year, a clan of cats in the Big City gathers a group of candidates to compete against each other. The prize? Reincarnation! Whoever the clan elder decides is most worthy is chosen to ascend to a life better than this one. However, there are rumors that one cat intends to betray the rest; could it be one of you? Whether you're gracious and good or a trickster and a cheat, your chance to be chosen is **Fur One Night Only!**

What the Players Do

Together you'll make a crew of cats and work with and against each other to overcome challenges. As you do, you'll discover which of you are selfless (or comically naive) and which of you are selfish (or cartoonishly sinister). You'll create a series of scenes parodying musical theater tropes and sing original songs or rewrite existing ones. In short, you'll direct and star in your own musical theater parody!

What You Need to Play

You need at least **two six-sided dice** (hereafter referred to as d6) per player. You also need something to write your character's details on. You can use the included character sheet, pencil and paper, or even a smartphone.

You'll need at least three other people to play!

How to Get Started

One person takes the role of the **Cat Master/Cat Mistress/Cat Mxter (CM)**; the remaining 3+ people will play the cats. *(If you're reading this, you're probably the person who got the rules in the first place; you can be the CM for your first game, unless someone else wants to!)*

The CM's job is to guide the story forward, introduce challenges and obstacles, be a fan of the characters, and make sure everyone's having a good time.

The players' job is to play up their cats' **Gimmicks**, work with the CM and other players to tell a great story, and entertain each other.

Start by making sure everyone understands why you're here: you're going to make your own parody musical about dancing cats! Decide who the CM is if you didn't yet. Everyone else plays.

Each player fills out a character sheet using the rules under **Creating Your Cat**. While they're doing that, the CM creates a conflict for the game using the rules under **The Twist**. Once everyone has a completed character sheet and the CM has written some notes about the scenario, you're ready to play.

Flow of the Game

The CM describes a series of scenes with challenges affecting tonight's festivities. The players try to overcome those through song, dance, and generally being a cat. As you play, each cat gains **Adoration** for selfless deeds and **Odium** for acting selfishly. Each players' goal is to gather enough **Cattitude** to unleash their **Solo**, when they take center stage and tell us why they deserve to be chosen by the elder.

When every character has delivered a Solo, the CM wraps up the action and the choosing ritual begins. Before that can happen, the most Odious cat reveals their treachery and must duel the most Adored cat. Whoever wins will ascend!

Creating Your Cat

You're a cat living in the Big City. You drift in and around human society during the day, and you rub whiskers among the secret society of cats at night.

One night out of every year, the elder of your clan chooses one cat to rise above the rest. This cat best represents your cultural ideals of a "good" cat - one who helps those in need, protects the clan from danger, and uses their talents to help others. Those who act selfishly or use their talents to hurt and hinder others are spurned or exiled. You'll discover which kind of cat you are as you play.

To make a cat, you need to determine your **three names, Gimmick, stats, and descriptors.**

Names

A cat has not one but three names, of varying importance and power; write them down.

Your **Familial Name** was given to you by the humans who own or interact with you regularly - only humans ever call you by this name.

Your **Particular Name**, which is "peculiar, yet dignified," was chosen by you or given to you by other cats - this is what the other cats call you.

Your **Secret Name** is full of power, known only to you, and is never spoken. Don't share this with anyone until the game is over.

Gimmicks

Your **Gimmick** is a skill or personality trait that defines who you are and what you do. Are you a bodega's mascot, a fortune teller, or a layabout?

Roll a d6 to find out what your Gimmick is, then give yourself a title based on it. For example, if you roll Arts & Culture, you might take the title "___, the Illustrative Cat," "___, the Ballet Cat," or "___, the Critical Cat.

Die Roll Gimmick

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| 1 | Relationship to Other Animals |
| 2 | Arts & Culture |
| 3 | Generic Cat Stereotype |
| 4 | Human's Assistant |
| 5 | Connection to Nature |
| 6 | Magic & the Occult |

Your Gimmick is like your "class" in other RPGs. It's what you're good at and reflects how you deal with problems. There aren't rules for what each one can do - just describe how you use your Gimmick when you take an action.

Your Gimmick also determines how you gain **Cattitude**, described below. The more you roleplay your Gimmick in the game, the sooner you'll get enough Cattitude to do your Solo!

Stats

You have two stats: **Cat** and **Human**. Assign 6 points between them, (at least 1 point in each).

When you need to do something that a cat should be able to do (climb curtains, land on your feet, deceive others, etc.), use **Cat**. When you need to do something humans normally do (give impassioned speeches, wield or use tools, understand human society), use **Human**.

Descriptors

Write down three descriptors for your cat. These can be about your physical appearance as well as your personality, quirks, or general vibe. Examples: "Tiger Stripes and Leopard Spots," "Aura of Ineffability," "Inexplicably Wearing Pants," or "My Coat is an Actual Fur Coat."

"Wait, So Am I An Actual Cat or a Humanoid Cat, or...?"

You're a cat! You also have five-fingered hands, a tail, and fur. You lick yourself clean, purr when pleased, sing, and can dance jazz-tap. Hope that clears it up.

Rolling the Dice

To perform any action where the **outcome is uncertain, dangerous, or has something at stake**, describe what your character does and the CM will tell you if they think you'll use Cat or Human. Roll a d6 (you might add more).

If *any* dice you roll are *equal to or below* the stat you're using, you **HIT**. Describe how you do it.

If *all* dice you roll are *above* the stat you're using, you **MISS**. The CM tells you how things become more complicated or escalates the drama.

If the action you're trying to do relates to or involves your Gimmick, add a d6 to your roll and use the lowest result.

If another cat spends 1 Cattitude and describes how they help you do something, add a 1d6 to your roll and use the lowest (i.e. best) result.

The most dice you can roll on actions are 3d6:
1 base + 1 for your Gimmick + 1 for assistance.

Adoration and Odium

These two tracks start at 0 and advance as you play. You gain Adoration when you do things that prove how worthy you are to be chosen. You gain Odium when you show your dark side and act selfishly or harm others.

At the end of the game, you'll compare your Adoration and Odium to the other players - the two players with the highest of each track will face off in a duel to become the chosen one!

You gain Adoration...

...when another cat sings a song praising you (max. once per scene).

...when you protect, aid, or comfort another cat.

...when, during your Solo, you inspire and uplift the other cats through your words and deeds.

You gain Odium...

...when another cat sings a song decrying you (max. once per scene).

...when you cause harm, distress, or panic among the other cats.

... when, during your Solo, you describe how vile you truly are or how much you despise the other cats.

When you gain either Adoration or Odium, mark your new total on your character sheet. Alternatively, use tokens of two different colors.

Cattitude and Solos

Cattitude represents a character's confidence and stage presence. You can spend Cattitude to either help others or perform your Solo. Everyone starts the game at 0 Cattitude.

Once per scene, when you act according to your Gimmick as described below, you gain 1 Cattitude. The CM may also award you 1 Cattitude at their discretion for exceptional roleplay, breaking into actual song, supporting other players, or generally enhancing the game's atmosphere for everyone.

To **help another cat**, spend 1 Cattitude and describe how you lend them a paw. They add a d6 to their die roll and use the lowest result.

To **perform your Solo**, spend 3 Cattitude. When you do, the spotlight focuses on your character. You take control of the scene and describe a song and dance number unique to your cat's persona, during which you tell everyone why you, over all others, should be chosen to ascend.

During your Solo, you can do just about anything; no die rolls are required. When the song is over, the spotlight refocuses onto everyone else at the table. You can only perform your Solo once per game! When every character has performed a Solo, the CM sets up the end of the game.

How to Gain Cattitude

When you do one or more of the prompts listed for your Gimmick during a scene, gain 1 Cattitude. Performing *all* of your prompts in a scene does *not* award you extra Cattitude!

Relationship to Other Animals: Assert control over smaller animals, confront or trick traditional enemies of cats (i.e. dogs), avoid conflict with larger animals

Arts & Culture: Use your knowledge of culture to aid or harm another cat, deliver an inspiring or terrifying performance, create or manipulate a work of art to solve a problem

Generic Cat Stereotype: Survive or overcome a dangerous challenge you shouldn't have, act selfishly (regardless of others' feelings), do something you were explicitly told not to do (especially by a human)

Human's Assistant: Create a clever solution to a problem using human tools or concepts, earn the praise of a human (especially the human you work with), cause problems for other humans through feline trickery

Connection to Nature: Use your knowledge of nature to aid or harm another cat, demonstrate your knowledge by guiding other cats through a dangerous environment, create a clever solution to a problem using plants or other natural elements

Magic & the Occult: Use your magical talents to aid or harm another cat, solve a problem through mystical means, reveal a stunning truth about the true nature of the universe

The Twist

Something is happening, tonight of all nights, that complicates this year's ritual. At the start of the game the CM must roll a d6 for the game's **Twist**. This scenario becomes the central conflict that players must solve during the game before the choosing ritual can happen.

D6	The Twist
1	Turf War
2	Human Crisis
3	Stranded!
4	Artifact Hunt
5	Missing Elder
6	Undercats

Turf War: A turf war has broken out between 2+ groups of dogs at the ritual site. Players must investigate and get the dogs to disperse, either by peaceful or more direct means.

Human Crisis: Something's wrong among the nocturnal humans and it's getting in the way of the ritual. Either they're holding an event at the ritual site or their actions are threatening the festivities' success. Investigate the problem and solve it before the ritual must take place.

Stranded!: The players got stuck in a bad part of town and the ritual is taking place on the other side of the city. They'll miss their chance to be chosen if they don't sing and dance their way out. What dangers and mysteries lie ahead?

Artifact Hunt: The ritual approaches but the elder needs something to conduct it successfully. What is the necessary artifact? Was it stolen or is it a legendary item that must be recovered?

Missing Elder: The clan's elder hasn't been seen all day and the choice is nigh! Players must investigate who or what caused their disappearance and bring them back in time.

Undercats: You're *not* this year's nominees, but you know if you were just given a chance, you'd show everyone how much you're worth it. You'll have to get to the venue and sing and dance your way to self-discovery along the way!

How to Run the Game

If you've run RPGs before, run this game like a tight one-shot: always escalate the drama, give every player a chance to shine, and keep the story moving forward. If you've never run an RPG before, think of it like telling a story

together with the players. Set up a problem and see how they solve it! Keep doing that until everyone has done their Solos, then wrap it up.

Time and Framing

Time in this game is framed as either a **scene** or a **song**. When the CM describes a new area or sets up a new challenge, that's a **scene**. When the action zooms in to focus on an important task, an action montage, or a moment when time stands still for a monologue, that's a **song**.

Time in this game follows musical theater rules: when you arrive at the city dump, that's a new scene; when players try to sneak past the guard dogs or have a confrontation with the giant rat who rules the dump, that's a song.

Framing a Scene

When the "camera" of the game shifts the story's focus to a different set of characters, a different location, or jumps forward in time, you're now in a new scene. When you want to establish where the players are or introduce a new location, that's called **framing a scene**.

When you feel like you've done everything that needs to be done in an area or want to move the action forward for any reason, frame a new scene at a new location. Think of it like a scene change in a play; we fade to black, stage hands change the set, and the lights fade up on the characters just arriving in a new area.

We don't always need to see how the characters get from point A to point B unless there's a dramatic challenge involved. If it's important to find out how they got there, frame the next scene at the start of that challenge or obstacle.

Cueing the Music

If someone is about to do something dramatic or dangerous, introduce themselves to someone else, talk about another cat's reputation (good or bad), or have a soliloquy to develop their character or the world, that's **cueing the music**.

If anyone (player or CM) thinks something should be a song, they can tell whoever's taking action, "That's your cue." If that person agrees, cue the music!

When you cue the music, the game moves from a **scene** to a **song**. This is a focused moment where time stands still and we zoom in on the action. When you want to tell someone how much they mean to you and the only way you can express it is through flowery lyrics and dance numbers, that's a song. When you explain how dangerous the sewers ahead are, but reassure everyone they'll be safe because you're the "Queen of the Streets" and know this part of town like the back of your paw (again, through music and dance), that's a song.

Whenever someone cues the music, they should describe the musical sting that introduces the song, what its genre and tone is, and then describe what their character is doing. A song can involve multiple actions from different players but when the central drama of the song has resolved (such as after a die roll), the song is over, time restarts, and the scene resumes.

Even though this is a game parodying a musical, *nobody should feel forced to actually sing and dance when cueing the music!* You can also use songs from the real world, either as they are or with a few words changed. If Broadway shows can get away with only using covers, so can you.

At the CM's discretion, anyone who *does* actually sing as part of their roleplay can earn 1 Cattitude for putting themselves out there.

Putting Everything Together

As the CM, start the game by framing a scene in which you establish where the characters are, what the Twist is, and what they know about it. Let players cue the music to introduce themselves one by one, then start framing scenes that introduce new complications and challenges related to the Twist. If the characters need to get across the Big City before midnight, for example, frame a scene introducing the first leg of their perilous journey.

As you play, **frame a scene** and tell the story until someone **cues the music** to resolve an action or some kind of drama. Although the CM is going to frame a scene most often, players should feel free to suggest or ask for scenes they think best reflect the direction of the story.

The CM never needs to roll dice - instead, create problems for the players to solve, create scenarios that play to each cat's strengths, and give everyone at the table a moment to shine.

When a player MISSES on an action roll, they don't fail necessarily fail outright - the CM just makes things more complicated. They might still succeed but it'll cost them to do so, or they might have to find a new way to get around the problem! This doesn't mean there's never any danger involved in anything, but this is a lighthearted game. It's not fun to get locked down or punished because of a bad dice roll.

Finally, don't forget to frequently award Cattitude to drive players towards their Solos, since the game can't end until all players have performed their Solos! Giving Cattitude often can also encourage players to help each other out (unless they really want to be the Odious cat).

Ending the Game

When all the cats at the table have had their Solos, the CM should resolve the current scene and frame a final scene where all the cats have finally assembled for the night's ritual. The cat with the **highest Adoration** at this time is called up in front of everyone by the elder. Before they can claim this honor, the cat with the **highest Odium** reveals themselves as a traitor to all!

If any cats are **tied for highest Adoration**, they must decide among themselves which cat will be chosen to ascend, leaving the others to nobly defend the clan. If any cats are **tied for highest Odium**, they must decide among themselves which cat is actually the traitorous mastermind; the others are their partners in crime.

Once you know who the Adored and Odious cats are, **cue the music!** Those cats now work together to describe a song - the finale - about their conflict. They sing about why they deserve to be chosen and how they're going to win. *Nobody rolls dice during this part of the game!*

All other players become the Ensemble and can either express their support or hatred of either cat, or stay impartial. If a cat from the Ensemble helps either cat, they give a d6 to whoever they helped. Everyone can give a d6 to *one cat only!*

Once the Ensemble has finished giving out dice, the Adored and Odious cats roll a d6 + 1d6 for any extra help and compare how many successes they have (a roll of 4, 5, or 6).

If the **Adored** cat has more successes, they defeat the Odious cat in honorable combat with the help of the Ensemble. They work with the CM to describe the ascension while the Ensemble describes the celebration of the cats left behind, and the Odious cat describes how they slink back to the shadows to scheme their return.

If the **Odious** cat has more successes, they either defeat the Adored cat in dishonorable combat or steal the ascension somehow. They work with the CM to describe the ascension while the Ensemble describes the despair of the cats left behind, and the Adored cat describes how they cope with their defeat.

In the case of a **tie**, the Ensemble decides among themselves who wins!

Everyone can take a bow as the curtain closes.

Thank you for picking up **Fur One Night Only!** I hope you enjoy your time with the game. My goal was to write a game enjoyable by both people who know musicals and their tropes, as well as those who don't but still like storytelling. Let me know what you think!

Bye "fur" now,
- S

Example of Play

The **CM** is about to set a dramatic scene halfway through the game. The characters in this game are **Grumblekins** (Generic Cat Stereotype), **Briarthorn** (Connection to Nature), and **Showtime** (Arts & Culture).

CM: OK, let's frame a new scene. You've arrived at a massive park in the heart of the city. There's a low fog rising off the ground. This place is like a maze; it's hard to navigate without getting lost or turned around.

Briarthorn: Not for me! I turn to my companions and say "Don't worry, friends, we're close to our goal and I know just the way to get us there." Because I'm Briarthorn, the Outdoors Cat, I think I've been here before and know my way around.

CM: Cool! Since you're demonstrating your knowledge of nature by guiding your fellow cats through the park, you'll gain a Catitude.

Grumblekins: Also, it sounded like you were about to break into song there, right?

Briarthorn: Yes! I don't really know any songs that fit the scene, but I think the music is really upbeat because I'm telling you all how cool this place is and that it's not that scary when you get to know it.

Showtime: Oh, can I make a suggestion? "Come with me... and you'll be... in a world of pure imagination..."

Briarthorn: Of course - I love it! We have a dance montage across park benches and through bushes, and the shadows start to disappear. I think by the end of the song, all the park lights have turned on too. What stat do I roll?

CM: I think this is Human because you're trying to lead and inspire everyone. Add a die since this is your Gimmick. And Showtime gets a Catitude for the song suggestion!

Briarthorn: Alright, I roll two dice. My Human stat is 4, and I roll... a 5 and a 6, so I fail. Does that mean we get lost anyway?

CM: No, I just make things more complicated when you fail! I think you're singing and dancing when the song gets cut off because you bump into a gang of raccoons in leather jackets. They sneer at you. "Whaddaya doin' here, cat? This here's our turf now - scam!"

Grumblekins: Uh oh, I don't want any part of this. I sneak away while my friends aren't looking. I'm the Lazybones Cat, after all.

CM: Your Gimmick gives Catitude for acting selfishly, so take one and roll against your Cat to see what happens. You'll get to add a die for using your "Lazybones" Gimmick too.

Grumblekins: My Cat is 5 so this should be easy. I roll two dice and get a 3 and a 6. That's a hit!

CM: Yeah, you sneak away unseen and watch this all go down, hiding safely in the bushes! Gain an Odium for abandoning your friends.

Briarthorn: I'll remember this, coward!

Showtime: There's bigger fish to fry, Briarthorn! I'm the Melodrama Cat so of course I want to scare these raccoons away by hamming it up with a dramatic performance about how scary we are, using magic smoke effects and the big, flowing cape I'm wearing.

CM: Take a Catitude for giving a terrifying performance and roll Human to put on a show.

Briarthorn: I want to help by pulling all kinds of props for you to use out of a nearby trash can. Is that a reasonable thing?

CM: Absolutely. Briarthorn, spend one Catitude and take an Adoration for helping. Showtime, go ahead and roll your three dice. And cue the music; this sounds like a song!

Showtime: OK, the park lights go dark. One comes up like a spotlight. An organ plays...

Fur One Night Only! - Character Sheet

Familial Name:_____

Practical Name:_____

Secret Name:_____

Title:_____

Gimmick (roll 1d6 and circle one)

1	Relationship to Other Animals	4	Human's Assistant
2	Arts & Culture	5	Connection to Nature
3	Generic Cat Stereotypes	6	Magic & the Occult

Assign 6 points between Cat & Human (minimum 1 per category)

CAT	1	2	3	4	5	6
HUMAN	1	2	3	4	5	6

Adoration:_____

Odium:_____

Cattitude:_____

Once per game, spend 3 Cattitude to perform your Solo. Tick the box to show that you've done it.

Gaining Cattitude

Relationship to Other Animals: Assert control over smaller animals, confront or trick traditional enemies of cats (i.e. dogs), avoid conflict with larger animals

Arts & Culture: Use your knowledge of culture to aid or harm another cat, deliver an inspiring or terrifying performance, create or manipulate a work of art to solve a problem

Generic Cat Stereotypes: Survive or overcome a dangerous challenge you shouldn't have, act selfishly (regardless of others' feelings), do something you were explicitly told not to do (especially by a human)

Human's Assistant: Create a clever solution to a problem using human tools or concepts, earn the praise of a human (especially the human you work with), cause problems for other humans through feline trickery

Connection to Nature: Use your knowledge of nature to aid or harm another cat, demonstrate your knowledge by guiding other cats through a dangerous environment, create a clever solution to a problem using plants/natural elements

Magic & the Occult: Use your magical talents to aid or harm another cat, solve a problem through mystical means, reveal a stunning truth about the true nature of the universe

Quick Reference

When you want to do something *risky, dangerous, or with an uncertain outcome*, roll a d6. The CM will tell you if it's a CAT or a HUMAN action.

- Add +1d6 if what you're doing relates to your Gimmick in any way.
- Add +1d6 if another player spends 1 Cattitude and explains how they help you.

HIT: If *any* die roll is *equal to or under* the relevant stat, you do it!

MISS: If *all die rolls are above* the relevant stat, the CM will tell you how things get complicated.

Gain **Adoration** when...

- ...another cat sings a song praising you (no more than once per scene).
- ...you protect, aid, or comfort another cat.
- ...during your Solo, you describe how your selfless actions help others and/or you inspire and uplift the other cats.

Gain **Odium** when...

- ...another cat sings a song decrying you (no more than once per scene).
- ...you cause harm, distress, or panic among the other cats.
- ...during your Solo, you describe how vile you truly are and/or how much you despise the other cats

Whoever has the **highest Adoration** will duel whoever has the **highest Odium** at the end of the game.

Gain 1 Cattitude when you act according to your Gimmick in a scene, or whenever the CM says to.

Relationship to Other Animals: Assert control over smaller animals, confront or trick traditional enemies of cats (i.e. dogs), avoid conflict with larger animals

Arts & Culture: Use your knowledge of culture to aid or harm another cat, deliver an inspiring or terrifying performance, create or manipulate a work of art to solve a problem

Generic Cat Stereotypes: Survive or overcome a dangerous challenge you shouldn't have, act selfishly (regardless of others' feelings), do something you were explicitly told not to do (especially by a human)

Human's Assistant: Create a clever solution to a problem using human tools or concepts, earn the praise of a human (especially the human you work with), cause problems for other humans through feline trickery

Connection to Nature: Use your knowledge of nature to aid or harm another cat, demonstrate your knowledge by guiding other cats through a dangerous environment, create a clever solution to a problem using plants or other natural elements

Magic & the Occult: Use your magical talents to aid or harm another cat, solve a problem through mystical means, reveal a stunning truth about the true nature of the universe

Spend 1 Cattitude to give another cat +1d6 to their roll; explain how you help them out.

Spend 3 Cattitude *once per game* to perform your **Solo**: take control of the scene and show everyone why they should love you or hate you. Any actions made during a Solo automatically succeed.

When every player has performed their Solo, the CM wraps up the action and describes the Elder about to make their choice. Compare Adoration and Odium. The most Adored and Odious cats describe a dance-off; everyone else is the Ensemble and can give either cat (but not both) 1 bonus die. When finished, both cats roll 1 die + 1 for any help. Whoever has more HITS (roll of 4-6) wins.