

The Hand of Gulliver the Man-Mountain

A manual-digital-tactile roleplaying game by Mike Pohjola.

You are given a chance to be the first Lilliputians to explore the Hand of Lemuel Gulliver, a Man-Mountain resently washed ashore. Are you up to the task of walking the fingers, mining the nails, decyphering the tattoos, and crossing the ring? Will you become the Master of the Hand?

The game

This is a game for 1-5 players, that is to say, 2-10 hands. Most hands will play the part of Lilliputian adventurers. One of the hands must be the Hand of Gulliver the Man-Mountain, and the owner of that hand will then be the Game Master. However, his other hand may still be a Lilliputian. (That is to say, he's welcome to use one hand to play with himself.)

What are roleplaying games?

A roleplaying game is you with a group of friends pretending to be some other people. It's not a game in the sense that you can win it. It's only a game in the sense that you can play it, and it has rules.

This particular roleplaying game is a comic adventure in the world of Gulliver's Travels by Jonathan Swift. The idea is to play your character and interact with the other characters. Don't focus too much on beating your opponents and hoarding all the treasure (even though Lilliputian is almost synonymous for Munchkin).

The world of the Lilliputians doesn't make too much sense with the eggs and the heels and whatnot, but try to play it as if it's serious to you, since Lilliputians take it very seriously.

On the other hand, stupid puns are encouraged! Especially hand-related puns can come in handy. Such as: "...and I became an explorer to avoid manual labor!"

The World Handbook

The setting

The location is Mildendo, the capital city of the island nation of Lilliput. Steadfast Lilliput is the neighbor of the extravagant Blefuscu, both of them small islands in the Indian Ocean, somewhere southwest of Sumatra.

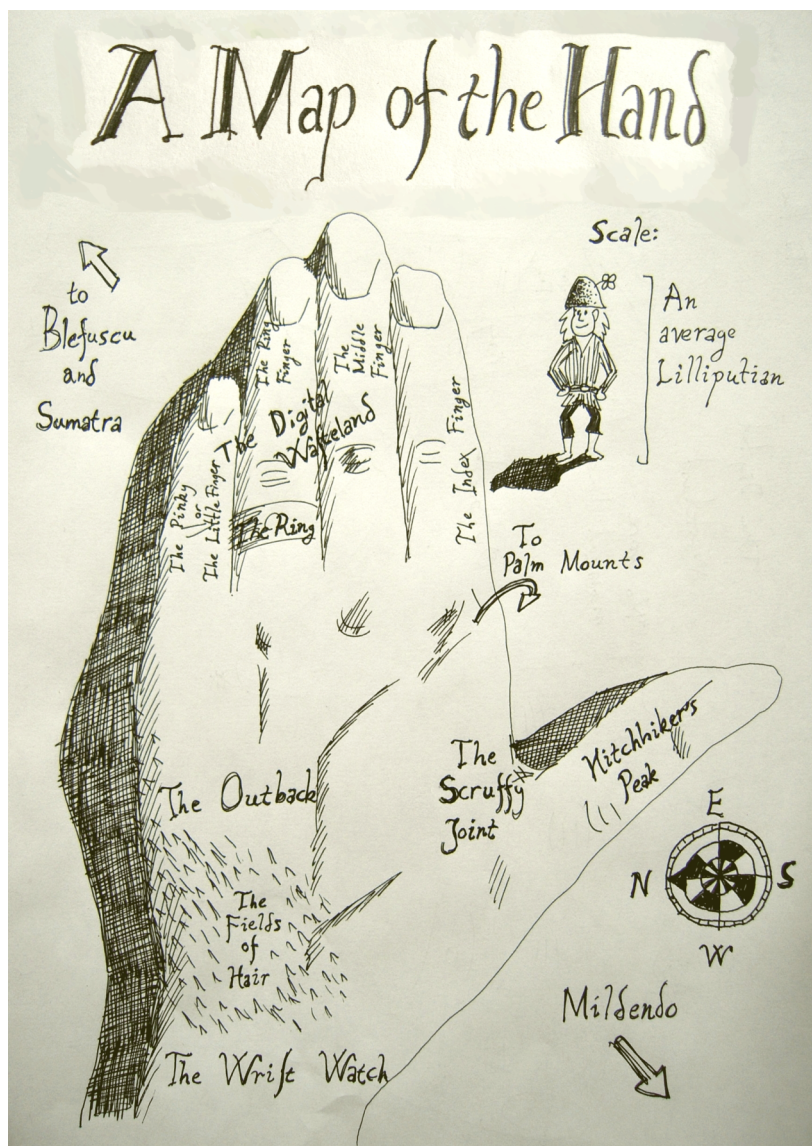
The time is May 5, 1699 A.D., by European reckoning. It is a delicate time for Lilliputians, what with the constant bickering between the Tramecksan and the Slamecksan parties, the feud between the Big-Endian and the Little-Endian world-views, and the threat of Blefuscu constantly hanging over Lilliput.

And as if all that wasn't enough, a gigantic Man-Mountain has just washed ashore, and been tied down by Lilliput soldiers. You know the name of the Man-Mountain is Lemuel Gulliver, but that's all. Its secrets must be unraveled, because according to the Lilliputian Emperor, he who controls the Hand, controls the Man-Mountain.

Map of the Hand

Lilliputian cheirographers have drawn a rudimentary map for you. The visible part of the Hand has four major regions, the Digital Wasteland, the Outback, the Wrist Watch and the Hitchhiker's Peak.

THE DIGITAL WASTELAND comprises of the digits. Therein you will find the Pinky or the



Little Finger, the Ring Finger, the Middle Finger and the Index Finger. If the Man-Mountain has one or more Rings, this is where they will probably be found.

THE OUTBACK is to the west of the Digital Wasteland, a barren land of skin. It might have veins of blood, tattoos, scars or who knows what. If there are Fields of Hair growing on the Hand, this is where they will probably be found.

THE WRIST WATCH is off limits to you, as it leads to the Arm of the Man-Mountain. It's to the far west of the Outback, and is heavily guarded by the Wrist Watch.

HITCHHIKER'S PEAK is the thumb of the Man-Mountain. It's separate from all other fingers, and may or may not contain some clues about the

Man-Mountain's nature. The Hitchhiker's Peak meets the Outback at the Scruffy Joint, which is where you will enter the Hand.

Under the Hand the cheirographers believe to be a land of wealth and promises that the Lilliputian will one day reach. The PALM MOUNTS are currently inaccessible as the incredible mass of the Hand weighs heavily on them. On the Palm Mounts there are rumored to be the Life Line that makes its finder immortal. Places such as the Girdle of Venus, the Heart Line, the Mount of Mars Negative, the Simian Crease, the Ominious Line, or the Mount of Moon hold no meaning for you, but you've heard old Lilliputians whisper their names in terror.

Character Creation Handbook

Characters

Each player may have one or two Lilliputian characters. Each Lilliputian is presented by the player's finger. The fingernail will show the character's face. The Lilliputians will explore Gulliver's Hand when the players move their fingers on the back of the Game Master's hand.

Lilliputians are like smaller versions of other humans, each as long as the player's finger. For a particularly long Lilliputian, feel free to use the middle finger, for a short and

stubby one, the thumb, and so on. But only one Lilliputian per player hand.

Lilliputians are mainly characterized by four things: Their political affiliation, their religious or philosophical worldview, their relationship to limp-wristed Blefuscian, and their adventurousness.

To create your character, choose her political and religious affiliation, come up with an inner conflict, choose a special skill, come up with a name, draw her face and finally calculate the movement rate.

Politics

Is your character
Tramecksan or Slamecksan?
Although some Lilliputian cynics
consider the two-party system
flawed and claim the parties are
no different from one another,
there are several major
differences!

THE TRAMECKSANS
believe in wearing shoes with
high heels, and claim that the
Emperor has divine authority to
rule Lilliput. As far as they're
considered, the Lilliput
Parliament is just a corrupted
waste of tax money.

On the Hand: High-Heels
hate cowardly Blefuscu above
everything else, and readily
accuse anyone suspicious of
being a Blefuscan spy. They are
afraid the Man-Mountain might
be a Blefuscan plot.

Tramecksans want to get
everything of value out of the
Man-Mountain, especially the
rings.

THE SLAMECKSANS believe
in wearing shoes with low heels,
and consider the parliament
elected by the people more
important than the Emperor.
They generally think religion
should be kept away from
politics.

On the Hand: The
Slamecksans oppose drilling the
Man-Mountain for blood, and
will actively try to stop anyone
from trying. They are mostly
interested in exploration, and

want to find out as much as
they can about the Man-
Mountain.

Many modern Lilliputians
(no doubt influenced by weird
Blefuscan philosophies)
consider both the High-Heels
and the Low-Heels corrupt and
old-fashioned, some even want
to take down the Emperor. They
wear no shoes at all, and are
known as AMECKSANS or
Barefooters. They are wild cards,
and might want to sabotage the
entire mission, wake up the
Man-Mountain, or just steal
everyone else's findings.

You can also be undecided,
such as the Emperor's son, who
is said to have one one of his
heels higher than the other.

Religion

In your grandparents time,
all Lilliputians broke their eggs
on the big end, as had always
been done. Then an Emperor
decided that eggs should be
broken in the small end.
Lilliputians, loving their boiled
eggs, divided into the Big-
Endians and the Small-Endians,
overthrowing one government
after the other.

BIG-ENDIANS are a
minority nowadays, and perhaps
too closely tied to old-fashioned
Blefuscu (a country where
Small-Endians are not
tolerated). They remember the
good old days, and know very

well they are superior, but will have to bide their time until this new craze is over.

Small-Endians claim that Big-Endians are greedy and manipulative. Some Big-Endians may be powder-faced spies from Blefuscu.

On the Hand: Big-Endians naturally think all charting operations should start with the biggest finger. They want to find out what's under the fingernails... maybe some wonderful eggs of rare seabirds, ready for boiling?

Ever since the Parliament and Emperor have both been on their side, SMALL-ENDIANS have been smug and arrogant, trying to impose their life-style on everyone else. They act as if they own all of Lilliput, and generally despise wig-wearing Blefuscans and are suspicious of all Big-Endians.

Big-Endians claim Small-Endians are violent and brutal. Some Small-Endians may be refugees from the fundamentalist Blefuscu.

On the Hand: Small-Endians want to start charting and mining with the pinky, since it's the smallest finger. They're also very interested in what's under the fingernails, and want to get it before the Big-Endians do.

Some young Lilliputians have decided that it's wrong to boil eggs altogether, and claim that eggs should be fried or even scrambled.

The NO-ENDIANS disapprove of both Big-Endians and Small-Endians, and generally love the sound of their own voice. Whether they're right or not, is no excuse for being so snotty about it.

On the Hand: These No-Endians disapprove of charting the fingers and want to actively stop anyone from going through the fingernails. The fingernails, like boiled eggs, should be left alone. However, they have a scientific curiosity about the Man-Mountain's biology. Does it have red blood like Lilliputians? Can you mix it with eggs?

Inner conflicts

All Lilliputians should have some unresolved inner conflict. It can be related to anything, but the most interesting ones have to do with the group dynamics or the exploration itself. For example, your Lilliputian may be afraid of death but still stuck on this dangerous mission. Or she may be a devout Tramecksan but also secretly a Big-Indian, trying to serve a fallen Emperor.

Your Lilliputian may also have secrets from the others, but it's more interesting if there's at least a chance that they'll be revealed during the game. A good secret would be that your Lilliputian would be a Blefescan spy, or an Amecksan rebel who intends to turn against the others during this very mission.

Skills

Each Lilliputian has one special skill that separates them from all the others.

TOUGH AS NAILS. If you end up in a situation where you would be killed or squashed, you get another chance. You only die if the same thing happens again.

PALM READER. You are familiar with the tremors of the Hand. You get advance warning anytime the Hand is about to shake or move, and can then use one of your Movement points before the Game Master's turn.

HAND WALKER. When in a situation where you would fall off the Hand because of movements of the Hand, your acrobatics skills will help you keep your balance.

MASTER DEBATOR. When in trouble, you can always convince a neighboring Lilliputian to help you. When you propose discussing the Man-Mountain, everyone agrees.

HANDYMAN. During the game you can perform one mining task without losing a turn.

IRON-FISTED. If you get into a fight, you win any unarmed opponent.

STICKY FINGERS. You can steal an item from a neighboring Lilliputian without them noticing.

Ideas for other skills:
Sleight of Hand, Well-armed, Sign Language, Handicrafts, Fisticuffs, Back-handed.

Name

Now you know a little about your Lilliputian. Is the Lilliputian male or female? What's his or her name? Lilliputian names are typically onomatopoeic, almost like sound effects in comic books.

Some famous Lilliputians include Lord High Treasurer Flimnap, Principal Secretary of Private Affairs Reldresal, High Admiral Skyresh Bolgolam and, of course, the Emperor Golbasto Momaren Evlame Gurdilo Shefin Mully Ullly Gue the Third.

Make up a name that somehow sounds like your character, and preferably has a hand-themed pun. Here's some suggestions: Allygrin the Hairy-Knuckled, Lady Blimwas the Strong-armed, Drueflim the Manicurist, Doctor Grillogrue With The Extra Finger, Hullyresh the Limp-wristed, Lefty Lelodry, Vice-Count Molinmue Two-Thumbs-Up, Ollyhap of the Two Left Hands, Peshdrim the Soft-Handed, Imperial Gardener Shimlap Greenthumb, Captain of the Men-at-arms Tullyhur of Teshro.

Face

To complete your Lilliputian, you must draw her face on your fingernail.

First, pick the finger that best suits your Lilliputian. Tall or short? Agile or clumsy? Hairy or bald? Clean or dirty?

Now, imagine what your Lilliputian's head looks like. Smiling or frowning? Bear or mustache? Hair on the eyes? Could she have an eyepatch, glasses, tattoos, a pipe, piercings, or something else to make her more distinguished?

Finally, take a thin-tipped magic marker, and draw your Lilliputian's face on your fingernail. If you have dark nail polish, use a white magic marker instead, or remove the nail polish first.

Movement rate

Each Lilliputian has the Movement rate of 1-3. The rate is calculated through an unnecessarily complex formula. (But this is the only ability score we have, so bare with us!)

The base number for Movement is 2.

If your Lilliputian is Tramecksan, her high heels give her -1 Movement.

If your Lilliputian is actually Blefuscan, her unfamiliarity with Lilliput gives her -1 Movement.

If your Lilliputian's name has a nomicker such as "The Fast", "Speedy" or "Strider", or her title is "Imperial Runner", "Official Secretary of the Messenger's Guild" or somesuch, she gets +1 Movement.

Further Lilliputian adventures on the Man-Mountain

If this is, hands down, the best Lilliput-themed roleplaying game you've experienced, don't worry! It doesn't have to end there! There's plenty more Man-Mountain to explore. Don't miss these future Lilliputian adventures:

The Armpits of Despair
Eyes, Eyes Baby
Das Boot
Backmaster
Schlong Story Short
Hair Today, Gone Tomorrow
Ass: The Other Cheek
Face/Palm: The Crossover Wars

If your Lilliputian's name has some hand or egg-related pun, she gets +1 Movement.

If your index finger is longer than your middle finger, your Lilliputian gets +1 Movement.

If your Lilliputian is smiling, she gets +1 Movement.

If you're playing this game alone with your one hand against the other, your Lilliputian gets +1 Movement.

In the end, if Movement is less than 1, round it up to 1. If Movement is more than 3, round it down to 3.

Congratulations, you've now created your Lilliputian!

The Game Handbook

The beginning of the game

Each Lilliputian in the game moves independently on the Hand of Gulliver the Giant. They don't have to co-operate, and will probably end up fighting each other verbally or physically.

The Hand is big, but not so big that a Lilliputian at the Wrist Watch couldn't speak to a Lilliputian on the Digital Wasteland. In other words, all Lilliputians on the Hand can communicate all the time. Feel free to talk at any time, and try to persuade the other Lilliputians to do as you'd like.

In the beginning the Game Master's hand has the palm facing the table, fingers pressed together, the thumb adjacent. The Lilliputians enter the Hand

The game is divided into rounds. The one with the longest middle finger goes first, and the turn then moves on clockwise.

The first round begins with everyone speaking in a high-pitch voice ("Mickey Mouse") proclaiming their name and that they are a Lilliputian. "I am Mistress Orbash the Buttefingered and I am a Lilliputian!" That player then places her Lilliputian on the palmside root of the thumb, at a place called The Scruffy Joint. All the players should place their fingers on that spot. Then begins the adventure.

Game rounds

Each Lilliputian can make as many movements as they have Movement points. Each movement is the width of the finger in play. If a Lilliputian has the Movement of 1, the player moves the finger in a spot next to the finger. If the Movement is 3, the player moves the finger to a spot three finger-widths off. An easy way to measure this is to just place two fingers between the current spot and the next spot, and then move the Lilliputian to the new location.

Instead of walking by using the Movement points, the Lilliputian may decide to jump, fight, mine, or just stay her ground. If the Lilliputian does something else, they may not move normally, no matter how many Movement points they have. However, speaking and bickering are always welcome, and won't disturb their other activities. Lilliputians like to talk.

After all the players have had their turn, it's the Game Master's turn. He plays the Hand. But he only plays it, if there's a situation at Hand – probably not at the beginning.

Each Lilliputian may have their own priorities, but they may not leave the Hand until they have some understanding of Gulliver based on his hand.

If a Lilliputian falls off the Hand, they will take their next turn getting back to the Hand, at which point they'll enter through the common starting point.

If a Lilliputian dies, she is out of the game for good. If the player manages to make a new character before the game is over, the new Lilliputian may enter the Hand on that player's next turn.

Jumping

If a Lilliputian wants to cross the finger, she has to jump over it. If she wants to move from one finger to the other, she has to jump. There's a special rule for this.

The player first specifies where they're trying to jump to. They can jump anywhere within their Movement range plus 1. A Lilliputian with Movement of 2 may jump to anywhere within three finger-widths of her position. The player explains the destination to the Game Master.

The player then closes his eyes, lifts the finger from the Hand and tries to place it at the destination. If the jump falls short, but lands on the Hand, that's where the Lilliputian ended up. If the jump is longer than Movement+1, then the Lilliputian falls off the edge of the Hand. If the jump doesn't land on the hand, the Lilliputian has fallen off.

A fallen Lilliputian must spend their next turn getting back to the Hand at The Scruffy

Joint, and can then continue the game normally.

Fighting

Two Lilliputians standing next to each other may enter into a fight with one another. Any one of them may start it. Unless one of them has a Skill or an Item that overrides this, here's the rule for this:

The Game Master counts "One, two, three, go!" Both players will then try to place their Lilliputian on the other Lilliputian. That is, put the tip of the finger on top of the other one. The Lilliputians may try to move out of the way and attack again, but once one of them is on top, the fight is over.

After the fight, the victor may decide to either kill the other Lilliputian, or take one of her possessions. If the loser remains alive, they will lose one turn, and then recover from the fight to continue their adventure.

Mining

The Hand promises untold riches for the Lilliputian with the right skills. The two most promising places to mine are the fingernails and the rings. Sometimes a Lilliputian may also want to dig the skin, perhaps to find a fountain of blood.

To mine, the Lilliputian will simply remain in the same spot for one turn. On their turn, the

player will knock the Game Master's hand on that place a couple of times. Inflicting pain is not wise, as the Game Master determines the outcome.

The rings. A ring is made of whatever the Game Master tells you, as long as it looks like it. A golden ring can turn out to be brass, or a silver ring might actually be white gold. After mining, the Lilliputian will have a Piece of Gold (or Silver or Bronze or...) or a Gem. The metal doesn't run out, but each stone can only be mined once.

The fingernails. The fingernail itself is worthless, but underneath it lie untold riches. When swimming ashore, the Man-Mountain's fingers have caught on all the treasures of the sea. Pearls, messages-in-bottles, barrels of rum, weapons, skeletons, dolphins, you name it! Even eggs! The Game Master is free to come up with their own treasures, but in the next chapter there's a list of five possible treasures.

Treasures

BRASS KNUCKLES. Gives you extra punch in a fight, you'll beat up any unarmed opponent without special fighting skills.

QUAIL EGG. An expensive delicacy when cooked right, will yield a high price in the egg markets of Lilliput.

BLEFUSCAN GLOVES. Made of silk, very valuable. But their owner will look suspicious to anyone else.

HANG GLIDER. Will make any jump so much easier. The player can keep their eyes open when moving the Lilliputian during jump.

PICK-AXE. Will allow you to mine faster, you don't have to skip a turn when mining.

End of the Game

The game ends when the Lilliputians have reached an understanding of the nature of the Man-Mountain.

At any point, any of the Lilliputians may proclaim: "I propose we gather to discuss the Man-Mountain!" If at least one other Lilliputian agrees, all Lilliputians will gather on the Outback to discuss the Man-Mountain. (If not, game continues until someone else makes the same proclamation.)

Each Lilliputian will present their findings and assumptions about the giant. Is it an animal or a sentient creature? Male or female? Friend or foe? High-Heel or Low-Heel? Big-Endian or Small-Endian? Blefuscan spy or trustworthy foreigner? What is the profession of the Man-Mountain, and on what basis? The assumptions can be as crazy as the players like, full of cheap puns and innuendo. No punch against the Game Master should be pulled.

After this, the Lilliputians leave the Hand and go to report their findings to the Emperor of Lilliput.

The Game Master's Handbook

As the Game Master, you play the part of the Hand of the Man-Mountain. That's most of what you have to do, but you can also help the players in setting the mood, in staying true to their characters and in coming up with puns. You will also know the secrets of the Hand that the Lilliputians will only uncover during play.

The mood

You are mostly in charge of setting the mood of the game. On one hand, it's high (no pun intended) adventure in the Indian Ocean in the Age of Enlightenment, so maybe a pirate or maritime theme would be appropriate. On the other hand, the Lilliputians are exploring the vast deserts of the Digital Wasteland and the Outback, so perhaps an Egyptian or western theme would be better. It's your choice!

Whatever mood you want to go for, you should enhance it with proper music, lighting, costumes and – of course – finger foods. Music should be loud enough to be audible, but not so loud the players have to raise their voice.

Personally, I mostly go for the western theme, playing Ennio Morricone and old country

or blues music on the background. Ice tea or cactus juice, and some nachos will help set the mood. Maybe change the light bulb to a yellow-tinted one, if you really want to go all the way.

One option would be to go for hand-related music, such as Red Right Hand by Nick Cave & the Bad Seeds, Hand in Hand by Dire Straits, Hand In My Pocket by Alanis Morissette, That Hand That Feeds by Nine Inch Nails, and I Want To Hold Your Hand by the Beatles, or Wrapped Around Your Finger by The Police.

One other thing you should enforce is the Lilliputian aspect. If you can convince your players to do it, the game will be more fun, if all the Lilliputians speak in a falsetto all the time. You should encourage them to do this (for example by kicking the male players in the groin). If it helps, you can also adopt a silly voice when game mastering.

The Hand
**(For the Game Master's
eyes and hands only.)**

The Hand of Gulliver the Giant holds many mysteries and even more perils. The Hand is similar to the Game Master's left hand. If the Game Master has nail polish, so does Gulliver. If the Game Master has a wedding ring, then Gulliver is married. Tattoos, warts, hair, amputations, mutations, all of that comes straight from the Game Master's hand. With each new hand, the Hand of Gulliver the Giant becomes a different game. You may also alter your own hand with fake rings, and magic marker tattoos of mysterious origin.

There are several rules about the Hand, and you are free to come up with more. If any of the player has read these, change them.

1. THE CURL. The first time any one finger has three or more Lilliputians on it (at the end of a turn), the finger next to curls. If there's two fingers next to it, the bigger one curls.

Any Lilliputian on that finger will fall either on the back of the Hand, or entirely off the Hand, depending on where on the finger they are located. Depending on the curling finger, another finger may automatically bend a little. In that case, the Lilliputians on that finger may fall over to a different spot, a

different finger, or fall off the Hand entirely.

2. THE CHASM. The first time any Lilliputian reaches the fingernail on the pinky, there is a horrible handshake. The fingers on the left and the fingers on the right separate, leaving the hand in a V shape. ("A Vulcan salute.")

Any Lilliputian on the little or the index finger is safe. However, all Lilliputians on the ring or middle fingers face the risk of falling into the Chasm. They must count on the help of their neighbors. Any Lilliputian that touches another Lilliputian (less than the smallest fingerwidth in between them) can help that Lilliputian. If any Lilliputian next to a one in danger of falling, chooses to help them, then that Lilliputian remains safely on the finger.

If nobody can or wants to help, the Lilliputian is falling down, and has one last chance. They can try to jump over the Chasm. If they land on the finger on the other side, they have made it. If they go too far, or not far enough, they fall into the Chasm. (If they land on the pinky or the index finger, they will fall over the other side.)

3. THE OTHER HAND. If a Lilliputian tries to pull a hair, or to prick the Hand to see if there's blood, stick something under a fingernail, or hurt Gulliver in some other way, the sleeping Gulliver will slap the Lilliputian with his Other Hand.

The Game Master should absent-mindedly move the Other Hand, and let it fall almost randomly on the Lilliputians. Any Lilliputians whose face is under the Other Hand, will be squashed. Other Lilliputians will have to continue their task as best they can, if they're not too scared to continue.

To climb the fingers of the Other Hand, apply the rules for jumping.

4. THE WRIST WATCH.

Trying to enter other bodyparts of the Man-Mountain through walking westwards on the Outback is not feasible within this game. After the Outback and the Fields of Hair comes the Man-Mountain's Wrist, on which the Emperor has wisely positioned several of his soldiers to stand guard. They are the Wrist Watch. They will question any Lilliputian approaching the Wrist, and accuse her of being a Blefuscan spy. If pushed, they will attack the Lilliputian, but would never kill him.

THE HAND OF GULLIVER THE MAN-MOUNTAIN

A manual-digital-tactile roleplaying game by Mike Pohjola.

Based on Gulliver's Travels by Jonathan Swift.

Created by Mike Pohjola

Game design by Mike Pohjola

Unnecessary fluff text four cents a word by Mike Pohjola

Art by Mike Pohjola

Hand model Mike Pohjola

Lay-out by Mike Pohjola

Edited by Mike Pohjola

Published by Mike Pohjola in Helsinki, Finland, Sep 2010.

Blog: <http://mikepohjola2.wordpress.com/>

Website: <http://www.iki.fi/mike.pohjola>

E-mail: mike.pohjola@gmail.com

Other roleplaying games by Mike Pohjola

