

Argyle & Crew



Adventures in the Land of Skcos
By Benjamin Gerber

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Adventures in the Land of Skcos Creativity, storytelling and role playing For players aged 4 – 104

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Dedicated to Izzie and Luca – my daughters and the two kids in my life who most inspire me to play, imagine, and create.

Skcos (Noun) [*skaws*] – A mystical land inhabited by Soppets.

Soppet (Noun) [*sop pet*] – A magical creature that lives in the land of Skcos.

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The story of Argyle & Crew

Listen young ones to a tale as old as time in this land of Skcos. Gaze in to the fire, as the sky grows darker, and the woods are outlined by the setting sun. Let that most powerful magic of the land, your *imagination*, run within you! I, Bertold, Keeper of Soppet Secrets, shall tell you one of those very secrets now.

This is the secret given to us by two of the greatest Soppets to ever live. Argyle and her most trusted friend Crew. They were among the first Soppets to awaken, as you just have. Their story is one that all Soppets should know. Theirs is the secret of courage and bravery.

We have as many different kinds of Soppets among us as there are stars reflected in half-moon pond. Argyle, though, came from a very special place in that other world, before she made the journey to Skcos.

You see, Argyle was from a very old family, who kept their socks for a very long time before they ever parted with them. Before she took her journey in the Great Washing Machine, she had been with her family for sixty seven years and two months. Argyle was nothing if not well travelled.

In that time, she had been worn over many miles of walking, sewn up and patched countless times, and came to be perhaps the most colorful sock in that other world.

Perhaps that is why she was chosen by the Great Washing Machine to be one of the first of our kind. Or perhaps it was simply that the old magic was ready to make a change.

The world she awoke to was lonely, cold and without a single star to guide her, or a single road to follow. There were no mountains to see, no birds to hear, nothing but hard ground to feel and only a little of the faintest light.

For a great, long time she simple huddled in to herself and shivered, convinced that she would never hear a friendly voice, or travel through green fields again.

It was there, in the middle of her worst and darkest thoughts that the image of a green field flew in to her mind. This thought refused to go away, and begged for attention like an excited fox.

She smiled slightly, and crinkled her button eyes ever so little at the thought of the cool grass waving around her, the smell of the dirt below and the air above and the sound of the wind through the distant trees.

Happier with this thought in her mind, she realized that she had found something within her that she had never had before, when she was just a sock. Argyle found that buried deep within her mind, sitting still and quiet like a frightened mouse, was her *imagination*.

She had never used her imagination before. Looking around her at the cold and empty world, she

was frightened of thinking about something so different.

Argyle was nothing if not full of courage, which is when a Soppet is able to do things they have to, but don't want to, mainly because this thing is scary to them.



She pictured in her mind the green fields all around her, with warm sunlight to keep her company and green grass to rest on. She shut her eyes as tightly as they would shut, and in her mind, she imagined the green field all around her. When she had this field in her mind just the way she wanted it, she poked her imagination quickly from behind, where it wasn't expecting it. Suddenly she imagined this field all around her and in her mind she could see it all!

As her eyes were still shut she could not see around her, but she felt the most amazing and soothing warmth. Her body rested on something soft and springy and she could clearly smell the dirty and wonderful smell of the ground beneath her.

Opening her eyes, Argyle discovered that in this new land she had new powers in her mind and her imagination, and she could use these powers to make wonderful things happen!

For the next few hours Argyle sat and imagined all of the amazing things you and I could think of. She had a dinner made entirely out of sugar cookies, a cat who could sing lullabies, six hundred and twenty seven different kinds of paper airplanes, and a juice cup that could say all of her favorite poems, which she had to make up on the spot. Argyle was nothing if not full of imagination.

Despite all of these things she imagined into the world she began to realize that she was still alone, and this made her sad once again. Try as she might, she couldn't imagine another Soppet in to the world.

At this very same time, while paper airplanes and singing cats were popping into the world with a noise like a million soap bubbles crashing in to each other, another Soppet was just beginning to awaken nearby.

He opened his eyes, and looked down on himself to see a plain, white sock. He was a crew sock, freshly bought and freshly washed and then just as freshly plopped into the land of Skcos. He didn't have any memories to remember or a name to go by, so he called himself Crew and thought he was a rather plain fellow.

Just as he decided on a name for himself and started to look around, he heard the most amazing thing! It sounded to him like singing cats, talking cups, whooshing paper airplanes and a whole mix of other noises! Underneath them all though, was the sound of someone being quietly sad.

Without another thought through his head, Crew jumped up and walked directly towards the singing cats, talking cups and a cloud of swooping paper airplanes. Someone was sad, and he would do nothing until he at least tried to give them some happiness.



Argyle was a courageous Soppet alright, and no other Soppets may have yet matched her courage, but Crew, he had something else just as special. Crew was brave, which is when a Soppet does their best to help other Soppets, even if they must find their way through strangeness and spookiness to do so.

Crew arrived next to Argyle, and ever so gently, gave her the lightest of pats on her head.

And that changed everything for them, for us, and for any Soppet who will ever awaken in the land of Skcos.

Crew, in that moment of bravery, walked through singing cats, talking cups and the whole group of six hundred and twenty seven paper airplanes, and did the bravest thing he had done so far: he found a sad stranger, and offered to be a friend.

Argyle, as courageous as ever, took Crew's friendship when it was offered, even though she had never met him or another Soppet before.

Together they imagined a whole world of adventures and the most magical of places! When other Soppets arrived and opened their eyes for the first time, they found themselves in green meadows or on majestic purple mountains. They heard birds singing, Soppets playing and the sound of a perfectly cool stream splashing away in the warm sunlight.

Oh, Argyle and Crew had a million other adventures themselves, to be sure. Remind me some time to tell you about the day they tricked a dragon in to turning itself into a rabbit! But, that is a story for another time.

While the two of them did many courageous and brave deeds, the greatest thing they did was use their imaginations to make this world better, and their courage and bravery to form a friendship. With that, they had someone else to share a better world with!

Truly, Argyle and Crew were nothing if they were not friends.

Introduction

Welcome to the magical Land of Skcos, where anything can happen and it often does! Skcos is a world full of amazing adventures, where mystical creatures await you and the only limit is your own imagination!

The Land of Skcos is inhabited by all manner of things, but primarily its inhabitants belong to a race of ever changing, always interesting creatures called *Soppets*. Soppets are a magical breed of intelligent, funny, thrill seeking socks.

Yes, you read that correctly. Socks. Soppets start off as simple socks, laying about the land with little purpose and less life. It takes the creativity and individuality of a person to give a Soppet life.

While Soppets make up the most common inhabitants of Skcos, there are all manner of other creatures that can be found. The list of inhabitants is constantly growing and changing and is limited only by imagination.

The Land of Skcos can be a game of simple storytelling as players gather around a table, or it can be a rollicking romp as players scamper around in a scavenger hunt, race to be the first to discover an artifact, and act out their parts in a greater story.

All you need to enjoy Land of Skcos are a few socks, some magic markers, and various items you'll find around the house or classroom.

Land of Skcos is an extremely open ended game by its very nature. The more structure that is applied to it, the less open it becomes. To that end, I've included several variants on the basic

rule set. Keep in mind that this is your game – you can choose to keep or discard rules as you see fit. Adding new rules (or “house rules”) is also perfectly fine! Do what you will to make this experience as enjoyable as possible for you and your group.

A note for parents, educators, teens, and other old people

As a writer, game developer, and most importantly a parent, I feel that inspiring creativity amongst children is extremely important. Children naturally express themselves through play. Using directed play in the form of this basic role playing game allows an adult to guide a child (or group of children) through a scenario where they are all engaged and learning skills that will help them throughout their lives.

Land of Skcos is designed to be a simple, storytelling game that's ideal for children, educators, parents, and anyone who's young at heart or enjoys creating and collaborative play. These rules are designed for adults to read and interpret for children that may be too young to understand them.

This game can be played simply to have fun. It can also be used as a helpful tool to inspire creativity in design, interaction with peers, coping with real life situations, and to help develop problem solving skills.



For adults interested in departing from their normal games, Land of Skcos offers an open, challenging storytelling environment that can test any preconceived notions that role playing needs to be severely structured and constrained by multiple tomes of rules. Use the alternate rules included in this book for those looking for a more structured game.

What is a Role Playing Game?

Role playing games, or RPGs, are a form of collaborative storytelling. They are games in which the players take on the roles of characters in a fictional setting. The players take responsibility for acting out these roles within the framework of a guided story. There are rules that help structure the game, letting the players know what their characters can and cannot do. Land of Skcos is a rules-light system. This means that there are few rules that need to be followed.

In the Land of Skcos, one player, generally an adult, should be chosen to lead the story. This person is called simply the Guide. All others taking part in the game are the players. The Guide helps to keep the players on track as everyone moves collectively towards the Goal.

In most role playing games, players have a character sheet. A piece of paper which lists the various attributes of their characters and the limits to what they can and cannot do. Land of Skcos is a bit different in this respect. Your character sheet is a sock puppet or *Soppet*.

The player designs their own Soppet using the materials provided by the Guide and following the rules of Land of Skcos.

Soppets and the Land of Skcos – a tale for children of any age

In the long night of the past, the land of Skcos was empty, quiet, and still. Not a sound was made, and if it was there would have been no creature to hear it.

Then, quite without warning and with nobody being asked, something changed. It was the first change in the land of Skcos and the second most important. It happened when the first clothes washer washed the first pair of socks.

Where there were two socks in your world and none in Skcos, there was suddenly one in Skcos and one less in your world! A sock had magically vanished from inside the washer and had come to the land of Skcos.

It was still a very quiet place. If you haven't noticed a pair of socks does not make much noise. One sock makes even less.

Over time, many single socks found their way to the land of Skcos through magical means known only to the clothes washers, who aren't telling anyone a thing.

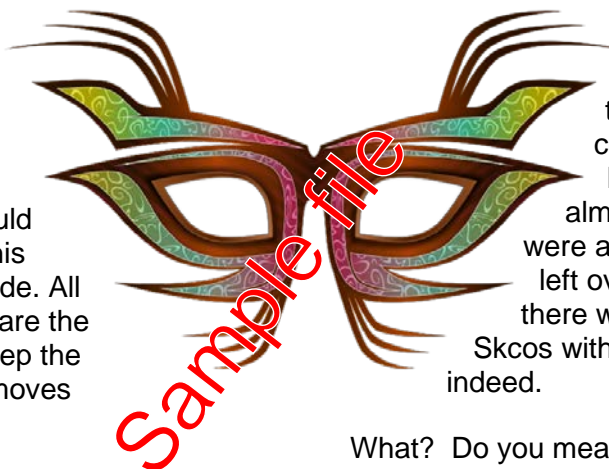
It took almost all of the magic that socks and washers could come up with to make this happen. Thankfully it was *only* almost all of the magic, and there were a few bits and pieces of magic left over. Without that extra magic, there would be no Soppets, and Skcos without Soppets is a boring place indeed.

What? Do you mean to tell me that you have never heard of a Soppet? You are a child, correct? And even if you are not, I am sure you were one once. Most people were.

I'll bet you know exactly what one is. I would bet all of the cushions on all of the couches ever made that you've had a Soppet in your hand before!

Let me tell you what a Soppet is and we shall see if I am wrong.

Every time a person, whose imagination is one of the biggest things they own, puts a sock on their hand, a Soppet awakens from the long sleep in the land of Skcos. This was the second change in the land of Skcos, but the most important one of all.



Now, those people with particularly largish imaginations will do more than just put a sock on their hands. Unless you are a hand walker, in which case you can be forgiven for not imagining much. People with imaginations at least as large as their own heads will make their sock talk.

If these people are especially special and their imagination can see things that aren't yet made, they will add eyes, perhaps a bit of yarn for hair, or a nice moustache made out of pipe cleaner.

That is the best sort of Soppet, one that can really get things done in the land of Skcos; things that are in need of doing.

You see, in the land of Skcos, a Soppet isn't alive in any real way until they awaken from their deep, deep sleep. And they only awaken when a wonderful thing known as an Outside Arm comes to them and gives them a bit of that left over magic.

Where do these Outside Arms come from? Why, from you! For every single sock is something of a sock-shaped door in to the land of Skcos. You can't travel through it, but a bit of that old magic can.

Soppets who have been touched by an Outside Arm can speak, see, laugh, run about, and think. Most importantly, they are filled with imagination, which gives them something to think about.

A Soppet who can think about things can quite naturally do them, no matter what they are. The land of Skcos is a magical place after all, and what good would magic be if it were only used for making potions or amusing dragons?

This is why it's so very important for you to think big thoughts and imagine amazing things when a Soppet is nearby, in your world or in any other.

That is what a Soppet is, and I believe you owe me a few couch cushions, which you can get at any couch cushion store. I prefer purple with yellow stripes on mine.



Skcos

Skcos is a truly magical place. The only limits to what exists in the Land of Skcos are the imaginations of everyone involved in the game.

For this reason, writing a simple description of this world is something of a fool's errand. The land of Skcos is whatever your players need it to be in order to successfully tell their story.

From grassy hills to expansive wasteland, dark tunnels, or multiple worlds separated by the vast emptiness of space. Whatever landscape empowers your session is what the land of Skcos will appear as.

For children, it may not be necessary to launch into a descriptive monologue when starting a story. I've found that anywhere a child happens to be is an appropriate place to begin imaginative play. They can easily alter their worldview to encompass magical landscapes, right in their own living room.

For older players, it may be helpful to introduce the particular aspects of Skcos that your scenario will take place in. Older folks are more likely to both sit down and listen to some descriptive prose being read, and also to need a bit of help jumping into a setting vastly different from the reality that surrounds them.