



The MGF Rules System

Maximum Game Fun

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As we all know, the Maximum Game Fun principle is simple: in a nutshell, when writing, thinking, and gaming about Glorantha, you ask yourself, "*now, in this situation what will be the most fun?*"... and then you go with it!

You can keep this principle in mind no matter rules you use - *MoonQuest*, *GoonQuest*, *BODGERS*, *Pendragon Pass* or (gasp!) even bog-standard *RuneQuest 3*. Or, for an evening's light diversion, why not give the MGF Rules System(tm) a go?

When writing this article for publication, I tried setting myself a self-imposed limit of one page to describe the MGF Rules, but I failed abysmally. Nevertheless, despite crapping on for however many words, I'd better be frank about the rules right up front: *there ain't none*. Yep, that's right: the MGF Rules, as they are, are in fact more about character generation than the actual mechanics of the game. So, just as Lord Norwich in his magnificent 3 volume history of the Byzantine Empire artfully disposes of the Byzantine economy in one-and-half sentences, here I will be a little more generous and devote a whole paragraph to how you actually play the game...

Rules

There are no hard-and-fast rules. Things happen, spells work, weapons hit at the discretion of the GM. In any situation, go with whatever you think will have the most MGF potential. Be prepared to take the plot in all directions, and keep the Petersen Principle in mind at all times (as expounded by Sandy on the *Glorantha Digest*):

"The party will come up with things you never expected, and these plans and explanations might not bear any resemblance to what you anticipated. So what?!"

If you do want to randomize things, you could use some dice, though I have used the tops off beer bottles just as effectively in the past. Of course, as the game proceeds and more beer is drunk, there are more bottle tops at your disposal and more possible variations: handy as the game approaches its dramatic climax! In the forthcoming *Advanced MGF Rules System* (tm), randomising potential is increased by making sure there are at least two brands of beer. Different values are assigned to the various brands - following standard Glorantha-Con practice, we urge that lite beer should be rated less than full strength.

Okay, okay, that was two paragraphs, but any rules system that actively encourages excessive consumption of alcohol is probably worth spending some time on. Anyway on to...

Character Generation

The storytelling dynamic of the MGF system lends itself very well to on-off tournaments, and the character generation operates accordingly. Unlike most tournaments, where the players are given a pregenerated character with personality, background and aims already outlined, here in MGF the players get to create *their own* characters before the game begins!

Character generation is stupidly simple. Dice are not needed, and bottle tops are only a factor if you're thirsty.

Ideally, with MGF character generation, you begin by deciding what sort of background the characters have: in the first MGF-style tournament I ran - Mike Dawson's *Embarrassment of Riches* - the characters are Jonatelan peasants. In my homage to Stanley Kubrick [Rune Metal Jacket](#), they're all Lunar soldiers fresh out of boot camp. And in my new tournament [The Getting of Wisdom](#), you'll get the chance to play eager beaver Lhankor Mhy apprentices, cramming for their initiate exams!

As peasants, all the characters in *Embarrassment of Riches* knew basic 'peasantry' things. In *Rune Metal Jacket* it was assumed the characters had elementary hoplite training, and knew simple drill, basic commands, how to care for their armour and equipment, and so on. For *The Getting of Wisdom*, as apprentices, it is assumed that all the characters can read/write a bit, and know how to cut quills, prepare ink and parchment, trim candles, and run errands for their masters.

The interesting bit for the players is to decide how their character differs from the archetype.

This is done by answering a number of simple questions, which can be written on the [Generic MGF Character Sheet](#) or, if you're playing one of my MGF tournaments, the [Rune Metal Jacket MGF Character Sheet](#) or [The Getting of Wisdom MGF Character Sheet](#).

In *The Getting of Wisdom*, these are the questions and some sample answers. Write down:

FIVE THINGS YOUR CHARACTER DOES BETTER THAN THE AVERAGE APPRENTICE

Examples could be:

- is a speed reader
- excels in exams by cheating
- writes with beautiful calligraphy
- magnificent bushy-beard puts even the high priest's to shame
- is reigning temple arm-wrestling champion

FIVE THINGS YOUR CHARACTER DOES WORSE THAN THE AVERAGE APPRENTICE

Examples:

- never gets up on time
- has trouble following instructions
- can't lie convincingly
- has appalling handwriting
- is dyslexic

FIVE THINGS EVERYONE KNOWS ABOUT YOU

Examples:

- the high priest has had me in his study for 'private tuition'
- likes to drink ink
- bone idle
- has failed the initiate exam six times
- has appalling hygiene problem

FIVE THINGS NO ONE KNOWS ABOUT YOU

Examples:

- I've got a Thanatar head under my bed
- my chaotic feature: "explodes on death"
- I'm actually in the Irripi Ontor cult
- my beard is fake
- I'm pregnant
-

THREE THINGS YOU BELIEVE ARE TRUE

Examples:

- I am a chick-magnet
- the world is round
- young women find my theories on Moose hsunchen fascinating
- beards are sexy
- I don't need to study to pass the exam

A FAVOURITE POSSESSION

Examples:

- my Thanatar head
- Vol. 7 of Ficus Lovechild's illustrated pop-up treatise on Ulerian Variances
- a copy of the exam questions

A SPECIAL SPELL

Examples:

- *Detect Vellum*
- *Mindspeech*
- *Ingest Scroll*

In my experience, creating the characters can be as much fun as playing the scenario, particularly when you go round the table and get each player to tell everyone about about themselves (and even more fun at the end of the game, where everyone reveals the secret stuff!).

Have fun!