

CMWGE Players Guide

original version from <http://chuubo.wikidot.com/cmwge-players-guide> by PK Levine; reformatted for print by Elaine "OJ" Wang

So you've been invited to play *The Chuubo's Marvelous Wish-Granting Engine RPG* and need help getting up to speed? Great! You're in the right place.

We're going to explain the setting and the system — the important bits, anyway — and then let the HG step in to help you make a character and pick your starting quests. "HG" stands for "Hollyhock God," by the way; it's just another way to say "GM," "DM," or "referee."

Setting

The game takes place in a town called simply **Town**. Town used to be just another place in the world, but there was a weird, sad moment where the Sun died. A little while later, a new Sun appeared over Town specifically, and it was then that Town became the only place that was *real*.

The rest of the world still "exists" in a sense — there are nations and people and hockey teams — but it's like shadows on the wall or a film being projected onto a fog bank. We call it the **Outside**. And it's not just our world like that; there are other, strange worlds floating in the Outside. Sometimes one of those worlds dies, and everyone in it is lost. Often, refugees manage to make it into Town — usually floating in via Big Lake, but sometimes finding a path on solid ground — either on their own or because a Town fishing ship saved them.

But don't let all of that fool you into thinking this is a sad game! Town is a pretty awesome, fun place. Imagine *Adventure Time's* Land of Oo combined with your favorite Studio Ghibli films. It's up to your group how much the situation with the Outside and the Sun comes into play; in the meantime, you've got plenty of adventures to have in Town itself!

Locations Around Town

Big Lake is the huge body of water that connects Town to the Outside; on its shore is the sleepy fishing community of **Fortitude**. Life there is simple, slow, and honest, with people taking care of each other (for the most part). A variety of shrine families catch and purify the "dust" that wafts in from the Outside, to keep it from clogging things up and causing metaphysical problems.

Further in, you'll find **Horizon**, which looks sort of like Victorian London built atop gothic ruins. See, this used to be the home of vampires and ghosts before humans moved in. (A few still live here.) Horizon is dominated by the *massive* School, the only sane option parents have if they want their kids to get an education. Principal Entropy is probably the Devil Himself — I mean, seriously, his hands are always *literally* dripping with blood! — but at least he seems to care about the students.

Other areas include the shopping district **Arcadia** (all bright colors and techno gadgets and noodle shops), the jungles and catwalks of **Old Molder** (it used to be an industrial area long ago, but now the plants have taken over), and the mysterious **Bluebell Park** (full of wish-spirits, never in the same location twice, great place to take a date or have a duel). There's also the distant **Soma Village**, but it is a *long* walk there and mainly exists in case the story demands somewhere far from Town but not in the Outside.

Not Everyone Is Human

Town used to be inhabited by a variety of *youkai* (think monsters, but not automatically evil ones), but as humans began moving in, sailing in from Big Lake, the *youkai* got pushed back. Now most live in the **Walking Fields**, a wild area adjacent to the rest of Town. But some intermingle with the townsfolk, or at least ship their kids in to attend School.

The **Riders** (a.k.a. "Excrucians") look like normal folks but with black, starry eyes. Some are downright friendly, others ride in packs that kidnap and torment folks. A common theory is that they're responsible for killing the Sun and now don't agree on what to do with their time. The **Jotun-Blooded** (or just "Jotun") retain some of the strength of their frost-giant ancestors, along with a weakness to the trappings of Christianity.

Not all *youkai* live in the Walking Fiends. Most **vampires** and **ghosts** live in Horizon; some vamps are scary and dangerous, but many are pacifists who even drink "pillow tea" to soften their fangs as proof. The **Tenko** (a.k.a. "shop foxes") look like humans with fox ears and tails; most run businesses in Arcadia.

Appropriate Characters

The Chuubo's Marvelous Wish-Granting Engine RPG assumes that the PCs will be roughly high-school age (or whatever that means for, say, vampires), even if they don't actually go to School. A lot of teens stay home and help their families run the business (or shrine), particularly in Fortitude and Arcadia. Your PC group should be some mix of friends and friendly rivals; basically, it should make sense for you all to interact and spent time together.

Past that, there aren't many limits. If your group ends up comprising a shrine maiden, a Jotun farmer, an orphaned Tenko, and a Rider delinquent, that's fine! Just figure out how you all know each other and why you might interact.

Names are equally flexible, ranging from the common to the ludicrous. There's nothing wrong with, "Hi there, I am Xiiphu; this is my sister Euphoria and brother Bob."

Skills and Intention Levels

This game doesn't use dice. Instead, you're going to have a few different **skills** — each rated from -1 (a failing or weakness) to 5 (omg ur the best evar!!) — and a pool of 8 Will. When you want to do

something, pick your most appropriate skill; you can then choose to spend 0, 1, 2, 4, or all 8 Will. The total of your skill level and Will spent forms your **intention level**. Then just look that up on this chart:

0. Attempt to do things, but only make them worse.
1. Make yourself happy.
2. Accomplish a task; have a tangible impact on the world.
3. Do something “correctly;” impress people around you.
4. Do something effective – something that moves you closer to your goals.
5. Do something productive – something that makes your life better.
6. Do something that looks damn good – impressive, dramatic, and cool.
7. Do something really effective, moving you a lot closer to your goals.
8. Do something really productive – it will make your life a lot better.
9. Do the right thing, for some fuzzy definition of right.

If you don't have a skill that fits, your effective skill is 0 which means that your intention will be set by Will alone. *Exception:* If your intention involves another person, and you have a **Connection** perk with that person, you can use the Connection level as your skill level. (Don't worry about this now; we're just mentioning it in case the HG lets you start with a few free Connection perks.)

If the action seems especially difficult, the HG will add an **obstacle** which penalizes your intention level directly. If something is making it easier, that might count as a **tool**, which adds to your intention level. And a few things provide **edge**, which doesn't directly add to your intention but counts as an obstacle to anyone opposing you (thus helping you win contests).

Example: Shadlyn wants to form the intention "sneak out of class without the teacher or any other students noticing." The HG doesn't feel like this is a contest of intentions, simply because the teacher isn't really forming an intention of "watch the class," but sets Obstacle 3 because it seems almost impossible. Shadlyn has the skill **Delinquent 2** which the HG agrees fits. She spends 4 Will. The end result is 2 (skill) + 4 (Will) - 3 (obstacle) = intention level 3. Her fellow students don't notice her slipping out, which will certainly impress them later!

You can maintain up to two intentions at once. Once you agree that you've succeeded or failed, and release an intention, you recover 1 Will. You also restore *all* of your Will at the end of each "chapter" of the game. (There are usually 1-3 chapters per game session.) So don't be afraid to spend it!

Special Skills

Most skills represent things that anyone could theoretically do, but a few give you access to special abilities.

Magical Skills let you do completely unrealistic things, like transform into an animal or weave shadows into objects. Pretty awesome, right? The downside is that magic is hard and thus *always* suffers an obstacle — so you'll either need a high skill level or a lot of Will.

Superior Skills represent some sort of super-power, like having wings or being super-strong or being able to talk with cats. They're an easy way to give your character kewl abilities *and* they count as edge

where it would make sense for them to ... but they also mark as you as abnormal or inhuman. (That isn't necessarily a big deal in Town, but it's worth stating.)

Other Resources

Depending on the campaign's concept, the HG may let you start off with either or both of these as perks. (A "perk" is just anything nifty that you get to start off with or that you earn in play. You can have up to eight perks at any given time, though you usually won't start with that many.)

Bonds are important statements about you, your life, your destiny, etc., along with a rating from 1 to 5. If you're facing opposition on an intention (an obstacle or another person contesting you), you can add a single bond to your intention level. For example, if you have "Bond: I am always on time (3)" and you're facing obstacle 1 to get home quickly, you get an effective +3 to whatever skill you're using.

Bonds can also help miraculous actions overcome opposition; ask your HG for details.

Afflictions look a lot like a bonds: statements involving you plus a rating. However, where a bond is a *personal* thing that drives you to overcome obstacles, an affliction is an *objective truth*. For example, if you have "Affliction: I am always on time (2)," the universe itself will bend over backward to ensure that, no matter what, you arrive at your destination on time. If you're due home by sunset, and magicians have displaced your neighborhood into another dimension, you'll still arrive on time.

No normal intention can oppose an affliction, only miraculous action. (Its rating is how well it resists such opposition.) Thus, the HG might forbid afflictions in a non-miraculous game — or at least insist that they're restricted to truths which can be enforced via believable coincidences.

Story Arcs

Every character is always on an **arc** — the story arc about the person they're becoming or growing into. Arcs come in eight different "colors," each covering a different flavor of story that you want your character to experience. For example, a Gold (Aspect) story arc is about overcoming doubts and distractions to train or develop new skills, while a Purple (Shepherd) arc is about exploring your mutual bonds with the people and things that matter to you.

You'll choose one of these story arcs to start off on; once you've earned about 120 XP, the arc is completed and you get new abilities.

What kinds of new abilities? That depends on whether you're playing in a "mortal" or "miraculous" game. (Ask your HG!)

Mortal Games

Each story arc gives you a mix of bonds, afflictions, and skills.

Choose your arc based on what feels right for your character; the actual skill you're planning to buy is less important. For example, if you plan on improving your Martial Arts skill, a Gold arc is the obvious

choice — but it would be just as reasonable to pick a Purple arc and say that it's all about bonding with your friends at the dojo.

Once you complete the arc and reap its rewards, you can either repeat it, which doesn't necessarily mean training the same skill, or start a completely different one. Both have mechanical advantages (your HG can explain the details), so choose based on what feels right from a story perspective.

Miraculous Games

Each story arc gives you a new assortment of miraculous powers.

(Alternatively, miraculous characters *can* take a mortal arc if they'd rather earn skills, bonds, etc. See above for that; this section is about miracles.)

Miraculous powers don't have to change who you are, or even be something that people notice in-game. They range from the subtle ("I work well with others, accomplishing things beyond our normal reach") to the blatant ("I can turn into a freaking kaiju!") — and from lighthearted ("My happiest dreams come true!") to dark despair ("My wounds empower me, turning my pain into a powerful tool"). They might be the defining trait of your character, but more commonly are just one facet of your personality.

Really, the big deal about miraculous powers isn't that they let you do impossible things. (You can already buy Magical and Superior Skills for that!) It's that they bypass the intention system completely, allowing you to assume temporary control of the narration and simply *dictate* what happens. If a miraculous action says that you win, then you win and no mortal intention of any level can stop you — only another miracle can.

There are lots of premade miraculous arcs to choose from; [this is a list of the official ones](#). The color of the arc is preset, based on the flavor of the miraculous powers being added. For example, Gold arcs give you powers based on improving yourself and "leveling up" while those from Purple arcs are about your connection with other people and things.

Every time you complete an arc, you get one level of that arc and all of the powers commensurate with that level. You can then either repeat the arc (earning a higher level of it) or switch to a new one.

Example: *The HG wants PCs to start the game with three arc levels under their belts. Bryce decides to start with Accursed 3. She thus has **all** of the Accursed powers listed for Arc 3 or lower. She continues following Accursed and eventually earns the 120 XP needed to complete another level. Now she has Accursed 4, which gives her a few new abilities. Wanting variety, she switches to a new arc, pursuing Sentimental. She doesn't lose her Accursed 4 powers; she earned those! As soon as she completes her first quest toward the new arc, she gains access to Sentimental's weakest ("Arc 0") powers ... and once she acquires the 120 XP needed to earn Sentimental 1, she gains access to its Arc 1 powers as well.*

XP and Quests

So if you need about 120 XP to advance each arc, you're probably wondering how you earn XP. There are three ways:

Emotion XP

Your character has an emotion that they're trying to evoke in the other players. For example, if you're playing a bumbling fool, your emotion might be "Facepalm" — and then every time one of the other players facepalms or headdesks at something dumb you did, you get 1 XP (maximum 1 per 15 minutes). Other sample emotions include "Fist-Bump" or "Putting My Faith In You" or "Speechlessness."

Choose an Emotion XP that sums up who your character is — not what they can do, but how others would describe their personality. "She's the kind of person who makes you facepalm. A lot."

Genre-Appropriate XP Actions

Every campaign of *The Chuubo's Marvelous Wish-Granting Engine RPG* is set in a particular *genre*. Ask your HG what the genre of this campaign is. If your group hasn't chosen a genre yet, now would be a good time to sit down, look through the options, and pick one that you all like.

Each genre comes with a list of appropriate **XP Actions**. For example, in a "pastoral" game, just relaxing with a friend and enjoying the scenery is an appropriate XP Action. Conversely, in an "adventure fantasy" one, being outmatched by a dangerous foe is an XP Action. As a player, one of your goals is to work to bring these situations about. Whenever you do so, you may put 1 XP (up to 2/chapter) into a pot that will be later divided among the entire group.

Think of your "XP actions" list as a reminder sheet. Whenever you aren't sure what to do next, look down and see if there's any way you can push the situation toward one of those actions. And if you've already taken the maximum two actions this chapter, help one of the other players do the same! Remember, this XP is shared by the group, so don't hesitate to work together.

Quests and Quest XP

During character creation, the HG will help you choose two **quests**, based on the color of your story arc. One (your "Basic Quest") will be a simple, repeatable one that mainly exists to help you earn XP for roleplaying your character well. The other (your "Story Quest") represents the first stage in your personal journey — what's currently important to you, problems that need solving, goals to attain, etc.

Every quest has ways to earn XP. Your Basic Quest is usually something you can do or say once per scene to earn +1 XP (e.g., if you're an aspiring scientist, you might earn 1 XP/scene by proposing a new theory).

Your Story Quest may work the same way, or it may have a list of **goals**: events that can earn XP. For example, a fox-eared teen trusted with his parents' shop for the first time might have the quest "A New Job." He can earn 1 XP per chapter for minor related plot events ("the business struggles with money,"

"an older mentor explains the dizzying scope of the work," etc.) and a flat 5 XP for major, one-time-only events (like "you use the first money from your job on an unexpected expense for someone else" or "you encounter a secret underground fighting tournament related to the job").

During play, you'll be trying to hit these goals for quest XP. Don't be afraid to ask the HG and other players to help you — and be willing to help the other players with their own goals. It is the interaction of these quests that makes *The Chuubo's Marvelous Wish-Granting Engine RPG* so unique and fun. With everyone working together to find ways to achieve all of their quest goals, the end result is a story that's as much a personal journey for each PC as it is an overall adventure for the group.