MAGICIANS OF THE COOL

2014 by BeePeeGee - v2.1, even cooler

Players represent magicians of four different magic schools based on the four elements: Fire, Air, Water and Earth. The basic game mechanic consists of "magical" gestures representing these elements.
Guided by a GM (Game Moderator), your group of magicians sets out to defeat the evil ~~dragon~~ princess Preiaya and to save your dear friend ~~princess~~ dragon Donzo. The game is performed in free-form, semi-LARP context.

Have fun watching i.e magicians of the "School of Voluptuous Eruptions" perform fire magic by demonstrating gestures of sexual prowess!

Ideally, this is played with an audience, rating the performances and providing additional background actors. Nonetheless, you can also just duel with two players behind closed doors for the heck of it.

Note: the first 5 pages should be enough for players, the rest is mostly GM information.

PERFORMING MAGIC:
FIRE/AIR/WATER/EARTH GESTURES

Situations of uncertain outcome are resolved by using four different types of magic, associated with the four elements Fire, Air, Water, Earth.

The 4-Elements-Magic is performed using body/hand gestures!

The following gestures are associated with the four elements:
Fire - demonstrate sexual prowess/virility
i.e. more or less explicit gestures, performed with vigor

Air - attract attention
i.e. wave arms in the air, clap

Water - appear charming
i.e. blow kisses, shape a heart with hands/arms, hugging gestures, smile a lot

Earth - display humility
i.e. humble/praying/meditative postures, keep a sober & dignified face

---

Remark: if Fire gestures get too obscene (i.e. in public places) or people are uncomfortable with it, you can limited them only to sexy dance moves (i.e. a sexy hip shake...).

CHOOSING A SCHOOL OF MAGIC

There are four cool schools of magic. Each one has a signature element:

School of Voluptuous Eruptions (signature element: Fire)

School of Wave in the Air Like You Don't Care (signature element: Air)

School of Charm no Harm (signature element: Water)

School of Humbledore (signature element: Earth)

Each player chooses a school. Choosing different schools should be encouraged (but don't make them cry either).

Remember: each magician can use gestures of <u>all</u> 4 elements for magic. In case of doubt or a draw, the element of their school will win.

Each magician has **3 Mana Points** they can spend during the game. A Mana Point will grant them a bonus in their signature element. In practical terms, a bonus means an additional background actor who will support them with the signature element.

BASIC CAMPAIGN: DEFEAT PRINCESS, SAVE DRAGON

In the basic campaign, the group of magicians sets out to defeat princess Preiaya in order to save their mutual dear friend, Donzo the dragon. The young dragon is being held captive by the evil sorcerer princess Preiaya.
Yep, defeat princess, save dragon - not the other way around. Other than this, feel free to validate or mock any fantasy roleplaying cliches you like.

If kept simple, the GM may guide the players through various challenges. New obstacles, rivals and curiosities may keep coming one after another in linear fashion, similar to a jump and run video game.

Then again, things may work out quite differently, depending on creative inspiration or the roleplaying environment available to you.
In the GM section, there are more details on setting up this game as well as alternative game suggestions.

INTRODUCING THE MAGICIANS

Each magician introduces himself to the group (and audience) by demonstrating the signature element of their school.

He should share his name and some improvised background details about his character. The chosen character traits can be relevant during gameplay.

MAGICIAN NAME	:	
MAGIC SCHOOL & **SIGNATURE ELEMENT**	:	*Voluptuous Eruptions* (FIRE) *Wave in the Air Like You Don't Care* (AIR) *Charm no Harm* (WATER) *Humbledore* (EARTH)
BRAGS ABOUT (brags about this in conversations)	:	*handsome - smooth - womanizer - strong -* *- pokerface - shooter - tall - stylish -* *- fighter - down-to earth - smart - fast -* *- rich - friends in higher places - ...*
BASIC EXCUSE (if something fails)	:	*weather - sore thumb - pet - astrology -* *- itching pants - merciful - relatives -* *- duties - ...*
OBSESSION / QUIRK	:	*shiny things - perfect hair - always right -* *- superstition - macho - vegan -* *- paranoid - cursing - grumpy - ...*

Example:
Muffold is a "Charm no Harm" (Water) magician and brags about how rich he is. His excuse is his dog, his quirk is being paranoid.
When the challenge is to climb a mountain, he responds: "_Climb_ the mountain? Hell, I could *buy* that mountain." (brags about: rich)
When failing to perform a magic spell, he responds: "Well, my dog chewed on my magic wand yesterday. Must have messed up the mojo." (basic excuse: pet)
He sure doesn't trust the hunter the group has just met in the forest. (quirk: paranoid)

BASIC GAME MECHANIC

Generally, the GM can let any action pass during the game flow. The basic game mechanic of gestures is used anywhere where you would usually roll the dice.

Perform Simple Gesture (to reach goal)

Perform a gesture of the required element (fire, air, water, earth) as required by the GM (sufficient duration, force or quality).
Situation: Magician wants to reach a goal of uncertain outcome.

Match Opposing Gesture (to reach goal against rival/obstacle)

You use the opposing element to overcome a rival or obstacle:
Air ↔ Earth
Fire ↔ Water
Your gesture needs to be at least on par with the opposition's gesture.
Situation: You want to pass/overcome a rival character or an obstacle (i.e. mountain, fence...).

Outperform Rival Gesture (to beat opposition for same goal)

You use the same element as your rival and try to out-perform his gesture.
Situation: This is usually the case when two parties try to reach the same goal (i.e. a contest, chase or race).
Note that the focus is not on combat.

Outperform Rival with Signature Gesture (for combat or direct conflict)

Opposing rivals use their signature element gesture to outperform their opponent.
Situation: This is usually the case when opposing a rival in combat or direct conflict.
And yes, if you are a Humledore Magician, you try to "humble the shit" out of your opponent!

When a magician fails his performance, the opposing actor can place a penalty on him (see below). The GM has final say on this.

Example (Perform Simple Gesture):
Magician tries to break open a door. GM requires him to perform a Fire gesture of medium strength for 5 seconds.
Magician does a sexy hip shake for 5 seconds and the door opens. That's it.

Example (Match Opposing Gesture):
Two magicians try to climb up a difficult hill.
The GM places a background actor representing the hill with an Earth gesture. The GM tells him how hard he should try (difficulty level). The actor is bowing in a gesture of humility.
The magicians try to climb by matching the opposing gesture using Air gestures. They wave their arms wildly.
The audience gives feedback (i.e. by cheering) for both magicians and the opposing background actor. One magician succeeds and can climb the hill. The other magician does not and falls down. The background actor decides with the GM's permission that a penalty ("1 leg", see below) is placed on the failing magician.

Group performance
Magicians may join forces to perform a collective gesture. (This ought to be interesting for fire, hmmm....)

Likewise, the GM may place several background actors as opposition.
Example:
In a final fight scene, the final boss monster could be represented by several actors (possibly including different gestures for the monster's teeth, legs, fire-breath etc.).

Pay attention to people's boundaries and comfort zone (see also GM advice on boundaries below). In case of doubt, refrain from touching.
With fire gestures, it's probably safer to perform them collectively rather than interactively (i.e. should look more like a Bollywood dance rather than an orgy).

AUDIENCE JUDGEMENT

Usually, the GM uses the audience to judge if the gestures have been performed sufficiently or which party has performed better.
Depending on the situation, the GM may let the audience cheer or raise hands for each contestant or group.

Remember when there is draw or split decision, the magician performing his own school's signature element wins.

In all cases, the GM has the final say on things.

JUDGING WITHOUT AUDIENCE

If there is no audience or using the audience is not appropriate for the situation, the GM may do the judgement himself.
He may give scores of 1-10 for the contestants with his fingers or - even better - using large score cards.

Alternatively, players not involved in the situation may judge the performance. After all, the objective is to have fun - this is definitely not a game for munchkin players!

USING BACKGROUND ACTORS

The GM may use background actors for several purposes:
- represent **characters** as opposition, allies, rivals or in combat
- represent **obstacles** (i.e. fence, blocked door, bad weather, bad luck)
- represent a **bonus** (obtained by Mana points) or
  a **situational aid** (i.e. a tool or support)

Background actors usually perform appropriate gestures using 4-Elements-Magic (fire, air, water, earth) as instructed by the GM.

If there is a large audience, willing background actors may be asked to sit/stand in the front row. This way, voluntary actors may be used easily.

If there are really tons of actors, additional background actors could be used for decoration purposes.
Example:
One actor symbolizes a mountain by making a triangle, surrounded by other background actors performing Earth magic gestures.

PLAYING WITHOUT BACKGROUND ACTORS

If there are no wiling background actors, the GM may improvise.
First, he can use a setting with rivaling PCs facing each other (see below).
He can also use PCs not involved in a situation - or possibly even himself - as background actors.

As an alternative, especially with a small group, the GM may define difficulty levels to be reached for a situation.
Example:
Magicians try to climb a hill. GM: "Oh, you need to reach difficulty level 6 with Air magic to get up that hill".
Players wave their hands in the air. GM: "Come on guys, this is only a 4, you need to try harder."
Finally, the players succeed.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT GESTURES

Depending on the situation, the GM may require the use of a specific gesture out of the 4-Elements-Magic.

Examples:	
FIRE	: brute force, break door, physical challenge
AIR	: movement, run, shoot, distract, dexterity
WATER	: social skill, empathy, persuasion
EARTH	: mental/inner strength, stability, invoke pity, wisdom

In general, fire/air tend to be more aggressive and water/earth are more defensive in nature. Use your judgement as GM and let people have fun.

Note that combats are performed with the signature gesture of your school (see above, "humble the shit out of your opponent").

VARYING DIFFICULTY LEVELS

When gestures based on the 4-Elements-Magic are performed, the GM can ask players or background actors (opposition) to perform their gestures at a certain level and quality.
For example:
- **force** (strong, medium, mild)
- **duration**
- **subtlety** (i.e. sweet, crazy or menacing gesture)

Certain **penalties** may apply (see below) that need to be considered with the gestures.

It is especially important for the GM to let the background actors know how strong their performance should be in opposition to the players.

APPLYING PENALTIES

For the players (sometimes also the background actors), certain penalties may apply.
This can be due to a **lost conflict** (see above) or **situational circumstances** (i.e. darkness).

Some ideas for penalties:
SLOW: Perform in slow-motion (i.e. drugged, under water, carrying heavy weight)
1 LEG: Perform standing on one leg only (i.e. injury)
1 ARM: Perform using one arm only (i.e. injury)
BLIND: Perform with closed eyes (i.e. darkness)
BACK: Perform turning your back to everybody (i.e. unaware)
CRAZY: Perform the gesture crazier than usual (i.e. spider bite)
SWEET: Perform gesture extra sweet (i.e. in love)
BAD: Perform gesture in particularly menacing manner (i.e. bad mood)

As GM, you apply the penalty by putting a PostIt® sticker on the player's t-shirt. It will stay there as along as you feel the penalty should apply.

Several penalties may be applied at the same time (could be fun watching...).

DESIGNING THE BASIC CAMPAIGN

So, the group of magicians sets out to defeat the evil sorceress Preiaya and to save their beloved friend, the young dragon Donzo.

The game can be designed in classic railroad fashion, meaning a **linear sequence** of challenges the players need to face.
Building and promoting an obviously simple game design makes it easier for the players and audience to follow what is happening and focus more on the interactions.
Like in a jump and run video game, start with simpler challenges and increase the threat. You can adjust difficulty level on the fly, depending on how the players do.
(If you have a special game environment, i.e. outdoor play, or creative ideas, feel free to vary.)

You can set up the game in a few **episodes**. Try to come up with an interesting **boss monster** at the end of each episode. Usually, these final monsters are made up of several background actors, involving multiple gestures.

Encourage also interaction with **NPCs** (non-player characters controlled by the GM) represented by background actors. Depending on how these interactions develop, the NPC may become an ally or an opponent.
You may even let the audience or the background actor himself decide about this.

Possible episodes of the adventure could be:

1. **The Forest**	(boss monster: group of bandits)
	(dubious NPC: Robin Hood parody)
2. **The Mountain**	(boss monster: giant spider)
	(dubious NPC: Gollum parody)
3. **The Castle**	(boss monster: princess Preiaya with bad mojo and side-kicks)
	(dubious NPC: house elf)

As for **setting**, feel free to come up with classic fantasy setting cliches and possibly try to twist them. Munchkin® RPG play-cards can be a good inspiration for building parody monsters and challenges.

ALTERNATIVE CAMPAIGNS & NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Ideally, to start out with the suggested basic campaign, you'd have a bunch of players with an involved larger audience.
Nevertheless, interesting gameplay is also possible with various group sizes.

Here are some suggestions:
- **3-5 players**: **Basic Campaign**
(*defeat princess Preiaya, save dragon Donzo*)

- **2 players**: **Duel**
(*two competing wizards*)

- **Even** no. of players: **Competition**
(*two wizard groups in competition, i.e. fight for a prize*)

- **Large** no. of players: **Rivaling wizard groups**
(*with competing goals, i.e. Elven magicians vs Necromantic sorcerers*);
inactive players provide background actors

With a larger group, a few players can be named to be the designated "champions". The other players/background actors are placed around them depending on the situation.

Duels and competitions are not limited to signature gestures for combat.

BOUNDARIES

Playing Fire gestures may be fun, but it may also be too much for some players or background actors involved.
As GM, you are responsible for respecting people's boundaries and making sure everybody feels comfortable.
In case of doubt – specially for conventions with previously unknown players – go with more conservative boundaries.

You should set clear boundaries in the beginning. Especially, **"no touching"** sounds like a fairly clear limit for conservative boundaries.
Pay more attention during group performances and of course during Fire gestures.

Remind people occasionally of the previously defined boundaries and make sure they are respected.

FINALLY...

Give the players enough spotlight to shine and possibly ridicule themselves.
Encourage the audience to get involved from the beginning and let them share the fun.

Also, as GM, you may start with some introductory demonstration or a simple demo round to ease people into playing.

In case of doubt, "let the Wookie win". Don't let the game get too serious and provide a space for everybody to enjoy themselves!
As GM have fun, too!

2014, BeePeeGee.