

MisFit Mechanics: The Final Roll **a heartbreaking game by Robbie Boerth**

MisFit Mechanics are the flesh-and-blood avatars of discarded tabletop roleplaying game mechanics and other obsolete system elements. Banished from the game world, they now find themselves in the real world with a final chance to reclaim their relevance.

In this FreeForm LARP, players create avatars reflecting defunct game mechanics and then explore whether they can come together to make their way forward in the contemporary world.

Game requirements

- 3-6 players, one of whom serves as a Facilitator
- Copies of these rules
- Pens, post-it notes, and paper
- A comfortable play space: A table or board for posting notes, charts, and drawings is ideal.
- Timer (optional)

MisFit Mechanics can readily be played in an online format. In this case, you will need a video conferencing platform such as Discord or Zoom. In place of the pens, post-it notes, and paper, you can use an online application such as Google Drawing, Google Jamboard, or Google Docs, which allow for collaborative contributions.

Safety

When the players have gathered, the Facilitator should establish safety tools to ensure that the game remains fun and sustaining for all. Consider a modified version of the [Gauntlet's Tools of the Table](#) or a similar established system with which you are familiar.

Take note that game elements driven by racist, sexist, homophobic, or other prejudices will introduce those toxic attitudes into your game. The author's advice is to rule those components out of bounds for the purposes of playing *MisFit Mechanics*.

Prelude (5 minutes)

Beginning with the Facilitator, read the following aloud, moving to a new player with each paragraph:

In the beginning, it was glorious.

You were a young tabletop game mechanic with a purpose, a mission, a reason to live. You were a welcome guest: Players and gamemasters invited you to their tables with open arms and clattering dice. Some marveled at the sexy probability curves that propelled you. Others were titillated by how well you managed to simulate a slice of the real world.

Sadly, their appreciation was only skin deep. Newfangled mechanics appeared with their promises of "streamlined play" and improved "narrative positionings." Players and gamemasters treated you like an obsolete fantasy heartbreaker. You heard them snicker. They made jokes about how you were "absurdly crunchy," how you "disrupted immersion," how you "got in the way of the story."

For these fairweather players, your abandonment was as trivial and forgettable as an unfunded Kickstarter campaign. For you, it seemed that the apocalypse had arrived.

No longer welcome in the cool Twitter circles, you fled the fictions of the tabletop . . . and you landed here, in the harsh real world.

Times are tough, but you are hoping to make the best of it and find a way to reclaim your relevance. That's going to be difficult in a world that has lost faith in magic and the pleasures of collaboratively imagined fictions.

Fortunately, you are not alone. Other MisFit Mechanics have joined the exodus. Together you're going to make a new beginning in the only way that matters in this cruel capitalistic world—by getting rich, taking names, and showing the world you matter.

Phase One: Creating the Mechanics (15 minutes)

To assist with character creation, each player takes a character sheet and picks an appropriate game mechanic or element. This should be some aspect of a game that other players (and perhaps you yourself) Find ill-conceived, inelegant, annoying, or otherwise quaint.

Each player should choose a different one. Make your selection from the following:

- Fiddly encumbrance rules
- Game elements that create unnecessarily adversarial gamemaster or player vs. player situations
- A constraining or unrealistic alignment system
- Rules that generate whiff rolls (required dice rolls which, when failed, result in null effects)
- Rules that result in endlessly repetitive rounds (of combat, movement, searching, etc.)
- A cumbersome, baroque world setting
- A sub-system that seems important but turns out to have no impact on play
- An involved mechanic that applies strictly to one player, and thus leaves everyone else with nothing to do while it is being worked out
- A confusing, frustrating, or irrational procedure for experience points / leveling up
- Accounting requirements for wealth and/or gear inventory
- Arcane spell-components and casting requirements
- Redundant or overlapping character skills
- Something else that has a special, thorny place in your heart

When everyone has a mechanic or game element, take a few minutes to fill out your character sheet. Your goal during play will be to embody your mechanic or element in its real-world, flesh-and-blood avatar form using your character sheet as a guide.

MisFit Mechanics Character Sheet

Character name and pronouns:

Game mechanic or system element:

Personality quirks, mannerisms, and/or physical attributes:

My character's goal, drive, or dream:

My character's greatest virtue:

My character's Fatal Flaw:



Phase 2: MisFits Meet-Up (15 minutes)

At this point, players briefly introduce themselves in character to the group. Other characters should feel free to ask each other questions about their past, their reactions to the present state of affairs, and what types of enterprises they might pursue now that they have found themselves in the “real world.”

Assume that the Misfits have had a few days to learn about their surroundings. Most of you realize that you are ill-equipped to handle your implausible situation alone, but now that there are other Misfits, you might pool resources to achieve success and to show those newfangled mechanics back in the game world that you still have significance.

Phase 3: Drawing the Game Plan (45-50 minutes)

You realize that, in this real world, success means providing something that people want, or think they want. You and the other Misfits need to come together and formulate a plan to create that special “something” to the hungry public.

Take stock of each of your special abilities, embarrassing weaknesses, and irrepressible dreams. Come up with a course of action—a new business, a social movement, a service enterprise, or some other focused, profitable activity.

Liberal use the paper and post-it notes (or the digital equivalent) to start drawing and mapping things out. If you are starting up a company or founding a group, decide on your titles. Think about names, mottos, and tasks. Voice your objections. Offer new ideas.

Identify how your fellow Misfits can best contribute to the plan, and also how they might pose challenges. Discuss how mundane aspects of the real world might interfere with your success.

Ideally, midway through this phase, the Misfits will start to rally around an idea. However, it is perfectly fine—even expected—for this phase to end with ideas in half-formed, half-baked shape.

Phase 4: The Aftermath (10 minutes)

Time moves forward. On the one-year anniversary of the Game Plan’s conception, the Misfits reconvene to evaluate their enterprise and themselves. This phase begins with everyone offering one triumph and one heartbreak of the past year. These may be personal in nature (tied to the Misfits’ personal virtues and flaws) or they may be tied to the group’s joint effort. Players should feel free to create events and to feed off of the offerings of others. The phase ends with the Misfits adding any concerns, fears, hopes, and encouragements they have to offer.

Dedication

MisFit Mechanics is dedicated to the [Fantasy Heartbreakers](#) and to the enduring spirit of independence, passion, and innovation that guided them. Their commitment to create and experiment—often at great financial and reputational costs and in the face of adversity—remains a continuing source of inspiration.

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Submission for the 2022 Golden Cobra Challenge.

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