# OMFG

*The Overprivileged Metripoliteen Fantasy Game*

Inspired by teen dramas such as *Gossip Girl, 90210, One Tree Hill, The OC* and *Dawson's Creek, OMFG* is designed to help you and some friends play out your own teen drama against the high-fashion and high-income background of life in the upscale parts a big city. Everyone's beautiful, everyone's rich, but no-one is happy, or at least not for long....

**WHY PLAY?**

***TO BE WRITTEN* (stuff goes here)**

**HOW DO YOU PLAY?**

***TO BE WRITTEN* (roleplaying as improv theatre, as a writer's room, as a conversation)**

Each of you has control of a single specific character, who we'll call your *protagonist.* You're like this character's actor on a TV show - you speak their lines, you aim to inhabit their personality, talking and acting as they would.

**WHO YOU ARE**

Your character is, or at least starts as, a high-school teenager: age 14-18. Pick a name.

You go to a private high school in a fashionable and upscale part of a major metropolitan area.

You are over-privileged and under-supervised.

Choose a wealth level. You character may not be poorer than this - poor people don't have agency, or at least they don't have Givenchy, which is the same thing.

**Upper Middle Class ("Hollywood Poor")**

You live in an unfashionable bit of town but your loft apartment would still comfortably host a convention. Said apartment probably has bare brick walls, because wallpaper and paint are worth more than gold or something. You are aware of what it is like to take public transport, although it is still unlikely that there'll ever be a scene set on any. Your parents or guardians made "sacrifices" to get you into your private school but the nature of these is mostly unspecified; they have careers as something to which the word "struggling" (or "washed-up has-been") may be applied as a prefix - artist, musician, maybe a teacher. You're probably very familiar with corner cafes and ethnic food stalls. Your clothes are not from high fashion labels, for which you will be routinely mocked. Despite your comparatively lowly status you can still

summon an astonishing level of snobbery.

An Upper Middle Class character *excels at:*

- not being noticed
- surviving by themselves
- improvising solutions with limited resources
- two other topics you choose

An Upper Middle Class character starts with the following *motivations*:

- honor my parent's sacrifices by succeeding at school
- hold fast to my principles in the face of temptation
- get *(a character richer than you)* to like me

**Merely Rich** - You have a townhouse, or palatial apartment, as your main abode. Your parents are probably well-moneyed professionals - lawyers, doctors - who you rarely see due to the constant need to maintain their high-powered jobs. You keep up in the fashion stakes, but you follow trends rather than set them. You were probably properly brought-up and believe in hard work as a virtue and manners as a way of life, but are nonetheless paradoxically deferential to those richer than you who are morally dissolute and never had to work for anything. You are probably kind, or at least condescending, to the help.

A Merely Rich character *excels at*:

- working hard at school
- flattering, brown-nosing or otherwise sucking up to authority
- organising social events
- one other topic you choose

A Merely Rich character starts with the following *motivations*:

- make my parents proud by following in their career footsteps
- get *(character you see as an authority or role model)* to like me
- get (*a character richer than you*) to love me

**Very Rich -** You have a house, actually several, but it's probably being redone so often that you're never there and you effectively live in a penthouse hotel suite instead. Your parents are some variety of capitalist, owning a great deal of property, businesses, investments, inheritances or stock in addition to or instead of a job. You are almost certainly referred to as either a "socialite" or an "eligible bachelor", and the tabloid press will publish stories about you. It's plausible that fashion houses will lend you stuff for free just so you can be seen wearing it, which ironically means you probably spend less on fashion then the merely rich, especially since anything your parent hands down to you counts as vintage rather than secondhand. (You DO fit into the clothes they wore when they were your age, right? Prepare to be disowned otherwise.)

A Very Rich character *excels at:*

- attracting public and press attention
- being the very peak of fashion
- one other topic you choose

A Very Rich character starts with the following *motivations*:

- get my parent's attention by acting out in public
- prove the world wrong by achieving something of substance
- get *(a character poorer than you)* to love me

**Comically Rich -** You buy people boats, or houses, as presents. Your parents are probably from a straight up dynasty, whether actually royal or just old money. If not, your parents are super-famous, if only for how much money they have. They have either never needed to work a day in their lives, or transcended that need at least a decade or so ago. You are almost certainly the "heir" to whatever it is they have. You resent them for this, of course. Fashion-wise, if you wore a traffic cone on your head, people would either think you "eccentric" but still put up with you no matter what, or top designers would call you immediately and ask to be able to style your cone for you, an entire traffic-chic trend would start, and within eighteen months there'd be knock-off fashion-head-cones in the half-off bin at Sears. Any press coverage of you is almost certainly fawning: heck, you probably own the paper, or at least are on good terms with the guy who does.

A Comically Rich character *excels at:*

- being accepted, or at least tolerated, wherever they go and whatever they do
- one other topic you choose

A Comically Rich character starts with the following *motivations*:

- prove my parents wrong by succeeding without their help
- indulge my hedonistic impulses to their maximum
- get *(anyone)* to love me

Whatever your wealth level, you never *really* have to want for food, accommodation, clothes (although maybe designer clothes if you're Upper Middle), theatre tickets, plane tickets, a dozen cups of coffee at an upscale cafe, a mobile phone that takes video clips, a laptop or a taxi to anywhere. (It may appear for an episode or three that you are at risk of losing these things, but it somehow comes good, or gets ignored, in the end).

***Choose three secrets that, if revealed, would cause your character deep embarrassment, humiliation, or actual danger***. These can be personal secrets or they can involve the other protagonists (but if they involve the other protagonist having done something specific, get their buy in first.) Expect all of these secrets to be common knowledge by the end of the third episode, but don't allow that fact to mean that you come up with lame, not-that-devastating secrets.

***Describe your clothing style*** in as much detail as you have enthusiasm for, but keep in mind that even casual clothing sends a message, and even if you don't want it to, it will be read as one. If you don't know fashion labels either A) Do some research or B) make it up and give out biting put-downs to anyone who disagrees - "Of course Chanel make the best jeans, don't you know ANYTHING?".

**MOTIVATIONS**

Each episode, have at least one of these motivations. If you can't decide, roll a die and pick one at random. Ideally your motivations should be consistent with your character, but barring that just go with it anyway - sometimes characters are arbitrary, or actually insane, and those characters can be fun too! The most important thing is that your character wants something at all times, consistency is secondary.

I want to:

- get (protagonist or NPC) to like me - be as craven as possible
- get (protagonist or NPC) to kiss me
- get (protagonist or NPC) to love me
- get (protagonist or NPC) to forgive me
- get (protagonist or NPC) to hate me - fucked up, but fun! try to have some semblance of a reason why though
- get revenge on (protagonist or NPC) for last episode
- get revenge on (protagonist or NPC) for something in their past they remember
- get revenge on (protagonist or NPC) for something in their past they don't remember or didn't see as hurtful
- get revenge on (protagonist or NPC) for something entirely imaginary
- find out (protagonist's) secrets - you don't even need a reason for this
- find out my parent's secrets (if your parents are interesting enough)
- find out the secrets of a mysterious-acting NPC (obviously *they* have some)
- find out the secrets of an NPC who isn't particularly mysterious but has done something to earn my enmity (they probably have secrets too, although it might appear like they don't and you humiliate yourself, before it turns out they actually do after all)
- prevent the revelation of my own or my family's secret (you WILL fail, eventually, but don't let that stop your character running themselves ragged)
- make my parents proud by doing X - make this concrete, totally over-invest in a specific thing as arbiter of their pride
- prove my parents wrong by doing X - as above
- prove (protagonist) wrong by doing X - ditto
- prove the world wrong by doing X - grand yet concrete gestures!
- hold a successful event at which nothing humiliating happens (you will fail, but it will be fun to watch you try)
- hold fast to my principles in the face of temptation (probably best if you fail, or at least

succeed only at the very last moment and after someone has already got some compromising evidence)
- indulge my hedonistic impulses to their maximum - a useful fallback if you can't think of anything more interesting
- *Advanced:* punish myself for my failures - this can be dull to watch, especially if you're only hurting yourself - try to involve others somehow
- *Advanced:* withdraw from society (you will fail, and keeping this one up for a long time gets boring, so be careful)
- *Advanced:* defray some negative temporal circumstance (e.g. homelessness) - it can be fun to flirt with this stuff, but remember poverty is like a holiday: it can be interesting for a few weeks but no-one wants to live there. Contort the plot however you need to in order to reverse this as soon as you're bored.

With motivations that are about NPCs, remember that these are almost certainly way less interesting than protagonist-targeting motivations. As such, always consider targeting protagonists first, and if you must target an NPC, try to resolve that motivation quickly, probably over no more than the course of one full episode.

You may hold as many motivations as you like at any time, even contradictory ones (go crazy!), and pick up new ones on a whim, but once you have taken up a motivation you **must** work towards it, and let it inform your character's decision making.

You **may not** quietly abandon a motivation. The only options to *resolve* a motivation are:
- Success, or at least temporary success, or apparent success;
- Dramatic failure

Dramatic failure means *at the very minimum* a heartfelt conversation with another protagonist (or, if you really must, an NPC or parent) in which you abandon the goal with much soul searching and great regret. Even this may be viewed as the weak option ("Dan" players, looking at you here), although you can amplify it with some poignant gesture (the "leave the significant item on the doorstep" maneuver).

It is better if your ambition is thwarted in some public, humiliating way first, at the Must-Be-Seen Event, with the heart-to-heart denouement being part of the fallout.

**SECRETS**

In *OMFG*, whatever you do, your secrets WILL come out. As a character, fight hard and dirty to protect your secrets, but as a player recognise the inevitability.

In fact, the harder you try to hide something, the more certain it is to be revealed, especially at the climax of the episode at that week's Must-Be-Seen Event. Have a conversation, someone

overheard. Have a private conversation in a locked room, and there was a guy videotaping the whole thing through an air-vent on his mobile phone. Write your secret on a slip of paper, lock it into a safe and drop it into the Marianas trench, and that week's cliffhanger will be a deep sea diver with a grudge against you stumbling upon the combination.

It's best not to be at all precious, as player, about your secrets being revealed: you can always make new ones, and you probably will. In fact, the process of trying to cover-up secrets (or more likely and inevitably, do damage control for revealed ones) will almost certainly involve doing something sufficiently nefarious to warrant becoming another secret all by itself.

If as a player you're fighting the revelation of a secret on the basis that you need to wait for the perfect moment for it to do maximum damage, then you are thinking along the right lines but consider whether it'd be more fun to just have it revealed now and then set up and reveal another dozen in the time it was going to take you to reveal this one. Always err on the side of revealing something too soon, because this keeps scenes dramatic and full of reaction shots.

There is always room for more secrets. No-one's past is exhaustively documented, there are no end to your sinister relatives, and anyone you have always thought was dead is probably your doorman. And that's not even counting the terrible things you are doing right now.

**RELATIONSHIPS**

You don't have to have shared history with the other protagonists (although it may help, and you can always invent a secret one later), but you DO have to interact with them, if only on sufferance. To start with sharing a high school will enforce this - if you get around to having characters graduate, you hopefully then have enough shared history to keep them in each other's lives. Anyone who still has a warrant to attend the week's Must-Be-Seen Event is still in the loop, so invent reasons (however implausible) for you still to be there even if you hate and want nothing to do with all the other attendees.

If your characters' don't know each other, have them develop a strong opinion within minutes of meeting for the first time - the opinion can always change later, and the more strongly held it was the more fun it is to watch that happen. Good impulsive first reactions to pick are starry-eyed hero worship or instant and unjustifiable utter loathing. Pick some minor comment they make and fly off the handle, or make broad assumptions consistent with your character's views based on their class, gender, clothing, manner of speech, perceived bank balance, obeisance to codes of conduct or rules of precedent that you hold sacred, or anything that takes your fancy.

Once you have settled on the initial state of your relationship to a character, pick a motivation consistent with it. If you're friends with Mindy, take "stay friends with Mindy". If you took a dislike to Alex because of something he did to slight you, pick "get revenge on Alex".

Seek to have your character either enthusiastically confirm or vituperatively deny the first impressions of other characters - for best effect, alternate between the two on a whim. If you infuriate and surprise another in roughly equal measure then you will probably be kissing by November sweeps.

If you have decided on a shared history, either as close friends, bitter enemies or anything in between, strive to have your first interactions with each other in the game test that bond or enmity. Early on, pick another motivation that seems to cut across the relationship - you want to kiss your BFF's boyfriend, perhaps, or conceal the fact you already did.

**GOSSIP**

Assume that everyone has access to all the latest gossip nigh instantly. This could be from an anonymous broadcast, like the Gossip Girl website on *Gossip Girl*. It could be an anonymous, threatening stalker-like informant (*Pretty Little Liars*). It could just be an informal network of camera phones, or even an actual newspaper - well, a tabloid newspaper.

Assume that any scene that happened even remotely in public (i.e. with the possible existence of at least one bystander or eavesdropper) will end up on the gossip network with all the juicy details. (Boring details will be omitted).

Assume that any scene where an attempt was made to be clandestine, secretive or obscure was still witnessed in part. Assume the general thrust of what happened is on the network ("William met Sarah at a hotel!"), and that ferocious speculation is rife about what actually happened beyond these details, with many competing theories, at least one of which is 100% correct. The more secretive you tried to be, the scantier the details and the more ferocious the speculation, but details are never so lacking that anyone will think nothing happened at all.

Anyone who wishes to can give a tip-off, anonymous or not, to the network may do so, at any time. Anonymous tips will be used, but reported with a degree of scepticism - "we hear". Otherwise, tips will be treated with more respect depending on who sent them and what they were about, but expect things like "a source close to (protagonist) tell us". Tips are broadcast with only a tiny delay, and are received by everyone with a working phone (which is to say, everyone). Needless to say, tips don't have to be true or even plausible, but the network might not publish absolutely everything, especially if you spam it or if your tips are repeatedly shown to be utterly false.

Don't make the mistake of spending lots of time on what the gossip network is or who operates it. Think of it like a law of physics or a narrative device rather than a person - this is just how the world operates, now deal with it.

**THE MUST-BE-SEEN EVENT**

In your *OMFG* world,  there's something called the Social Calendar, although no-one has ever actually seen one written down. Whatever its alleged structure, some unfathomable temporal or astrological engine ensures that precisely once per week (and hence once an episode), there is a social event of such significance that not to be seen at it is inconceivable.

At the start of a session (or "episode"), decide together what the Must Be-Seen Event this week is. You don't have to have mentioned it or in any way acknowledged its existence up to this point, but once you have decided everyone suddenly acknowledges its importance (whether through genuine enthusiasm, resigned obligation, or sardonic disdain).

Examples include:

- Cotillion
- Soirees
- Celebrations for people's engagements, anniversaries, funerals - anything where an argument would cause maximum embarrassment
- Balls of any kind, but especially masked ones
- Parties (although ensure they're either quiet enough for conversation or that there are side rooms with magically sound-proofed walls (although not so sound proof you can't learn a lot with your ear to the door))
- Performances, but only if there's either enough space and time to talk during and/or if you somehow interrupt the performance at a critical moment, preferably with un-ignorable slapstick fighting
- Fashion shows
- The "launch party" or "grand opening" for anything more significant than a bottle rocket or an envelope, especially if it's a project of one of the protagonists.

The event can be allegedly annual or even more frequent, although that doesn't matter and you don't ever have to mention it occurring again. It's probably for the best if you deliberately try and differentiate your events as much as possible and avoid repeating locales and situations, although sometimes there can be mileage in having characters go back to a particularly memorable event so they can muse on how much things have changed since those days (spoiler: they probably haven't).

Must-Be-Seen Events always require some degree of dressing up, or at least, dressing **even MORE up** than usual. Indeed, settling on, purchasing or otherwise acquiring the wardrobe is something to do during the preparation scenes. Always make at least some effort to describe what you wear to the Event. (If you don't enjoy this, playing a male character may be easier, since the answer is usually "black tie, plus single distinguishing feature". But remember that all fashion choices, even ill-advised and/or cheap ones, make a statement!)

Whatever the event, the whole episode is spent:

1. preparing for it (whether literally doing preparations, selecting outfits and so on; or

setting up the story-lines that are going to pay off during it; or more probably both)

2. attending it, with all the attendant shocking revelations and dramatic conflicts
3. dealing with the fallout, which will probably involve staring moodily into the middle distance at some point.

**MAKING A SCENE**

If you can't think of what scene to do, throw two or more characters together at random doing some preparation for the event (either they're collaborating on it, they've been thrown together unwillingly by some outside force, or they just ran into each other) and then listen to their motivations. If their motivations don't seem to lead to any interesting interaction, have one character attempt to recruit the other into a scheme to fulfil one of their motivations.

What kinds of preparation are appropriate depends on the nature of the Must-Be-Seen event. Here's some suggestions for a first session.

**The Event:** Founder's Masked Ball at your high school
**Possible Preparation Scenes:**

1. **Selling tickets.** The most responsible character is running the ticket booth during the school day, with help willingly or unwillingly from the least responsible character. All the other characters come up to the booth to get their tickets, with their dates in tow, or not. Take the opportunity to make snide comments about each other's dates, or lack of them.
2. **Getting a date.** Have one character ask a second character for help in getting a date with someone else. This works best if say, Bob likes Alice, but then Alice asks Bob for help getting Charlie as his date.
3.

It is also acceptable to spend some time at the start of the episode processing the fallout from last week in summary, as a form of exposition, probably over breakfast in an exquisitely appointed/charmingly rustic/entirely-absent-because-the-servants-do-it kitchen (we recommend waffles).

**CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

***TO BE WRITTEN* (explain what conflict is - disagreement over where the narrative should go - return to writer's room metaphor, and character advocacy?)**

So if you've noticed a disagreement like this is happening, whether you are part of it or not, speak up and say "hey. we're disagreeing about where this should go! Let's engage the conflict resolution process!" The more you play, the better you will get at noticing when these disagreements are occuring.

**PRIMARY RULE:** If everyone in the scene or with a stake in the outcome (in nearly all cases, this just means “everyone”) agrees on what should happen, **just do that.**

In the event you disagree, we look to the respective characters and the actions they are undertaking. We score each character as follows, and the highest number wins.

- Everyone starts at zero. Your score can go negative.
- If your character is doing something that *works toward at least one motivation of theirs*, declare that motivation (out of character) and add 1.
    - If they declare the motivation *IN character as well, in no uncertain terms,* add another 1.
    - If them winning the conflict *would directly resolve the motivation as a success,* say so and add another 1 - but if you fail, the motivation should instead be narrated to resolve as a failure!
- On the other hand, if the action will cause you to *dramatically fail to achieve another motivation, right here and now,* add 3, and that motivation resolves.
    - However if it *works against any of your motivations, but not in a way serious enough for it to dramatically fail*, you don’t add anything and subtract 1.
- If your character is *just better at this,* add 1. Remember where you excel!
- If your character has *been planning this for a while,* add 1.
- If your character’s action *will cause a secret to become more widely known*, add 1.
- If your character’s action *is itself scandalous (or would be if it became widely known),* add 1.
- If your character’s action *will involve a dramatic display in public,* add 1.
- If your character has *schemed with other protagonists to get this done,* add 1 for each protagonist still backing up the scheme at the critical moment.
    - If a protagonist instead *hesitates, flinches, backs down or lets you down at the critical moment*, don’t add anything for them, and subtract 1.
    - If a character outright *betrays you* to another side at the critical moment, you count as being let down and THEY count as having a schemer on their side (so you subtract 1, and they add 1).
- If your character is *trying to conceal a secret,* subtract 1.
- If your character is *trying to prevent a dramatic display in public*, subtract 1
- If your character has been *taken by surprise,* subtract 1.

In the event of a tie, **richest character wins**. Remember the wealth levels! In the event of a tie in wealth, toss a coin (the largest denomination you can find) or roll your most attractive die.

If there are multiple characters on “sides”, then pick a “lead character” for each side and ask the questions of them, or ask the questions of the characters on each side as a collective. They don’t get three times the points if they have three characters who are all better at this - just one point per statement unless the statement says otherwise.

If you used one of the statements above to modify your score and you win the conflict, that statement now acts as a constraint on what you narrate. If you won because you did something scandalous, you had better narrate something scandalous (if you haven't already)! If you won because you were richer, your wealth should have influenced the outcome somehow (be creative - did it mean you hired help, bribed someone important, set up something elaborate that would have taken a lot of money?)

**PASSING JUDGEMENT**

Deciding on the "if" statements in the resolution rules requires you to make a judgement as to the state of the story. Which character IS better at this?

Here's how the group should make judgements.

- *Look to the current fiction first*. How have people acted so far in the scene? What does that imply about the question at issue?
- *Look to the fictional history second.* If you've been playing a while, you know these characters - what's your honest gut feeling?
- *Look to what you wrote down in character generation , or noted later, third.* This is more significant early on.
- *Look to the most impartial player fourth.* In any conflict, there may be a player who has no particular stake in the outcome of this conflict, or not much of one. They're probably the most reliable guide.
- *If all else fails, have a vote, or toss a coin - then stick to it.* If you really can't decide, say, who is better at this, have a simple majority vote (or if that fails too, randomise the winner), and then write down the decision: "Sandra is better than Max at X". Then stick to it ever after, or at least until in-fiction events cause it to convincingly change. Write it down on a sheet somewhere if you like.

Making these judgement calls is hard! It requires a deep commitment to the integrity of the fiction, and requires you all to pay attention.

Some groups may struggle to do this. It *may* help to have an impartial referee, a GM, in this case, who can also be useful as someone to play NPCs and the gossip source - but such a person might not be having as much fun as everyone else, so be wary! If you do have a GM, they should make the decisions (and they are the most impartial player) but they should still follow the flow above when making them. They can also still resort to the vote (and after that, randomise).

**OPTIONAL: PLAY A WHOLE EPISODE OVER A REAL LIFE WEEK?**

**Here's an option that might be fun, who knows:**

- Do all the preparation scenes in duos, trios etc. through the week.
- Have an actual *Gossip Girl* style rumour pinboard/messageboard/group blog - this is

how other players keep informed of what happened in scenes were they weren't there. Either have the characters write in their own in-character tips, and/or collaborate on a tip from an anonymous witness - remember there's always a witness! (If you have a GM and they're witnessing all the scenes, they could write the tip too).
- Have the weekly session proper just focus on the big Must Be-Seen event! You could LARP it, even - dress up a bit for the occasion, prepare drinks, nibbles and music.
- Run the denouement scenes either as part of this session or as scenes in the day or two after

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