MAJUS

Magic Noir Adventures of
Supernatural Intrigue

Goblinoid Games

Pacesetter™

COMPETE against your Majus enemies to control the Skein.

FIGHT supernatural creatures from other worlds.

MASTER the sorceries of the Majus and wield great power!

YOU MANIPULATE FROM THE SHADOWS BUT EVEN THE SHADOWS HAVE MASTERS

You are a sorcerer who can trace his ancestral roots to the Sumerian sorcerer-priests who wielded vast power. You are an inheritor of the magical bloodline enmeshed in a conspiracy dating from before human civilization. Battle against enemies in the *Old Game*, to harness the secrets of the mysterious *Skein*. You may be a member of a competing Tower, an association or cabal of like-minded Majus, or a renegade with your own motivations.

MAJUS is a role-playing game complete in one volume.
These rules contain:

Rules for character generation
A complete magic system compatible with other Pacesetter games
Guidelines for playing campaigns in a magic noir world
Supernatural enemies
...and more!

Pacesetter™

MAJUS ™

Magic Noir Adventures of Supernatural Intrigue

By Michael Curtis

Pacesetter ™

Goblinoid Games

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Foreword by Michael Curtis

Like most children, magic fascinated me as child. It didn't matter if that magic appeared in the wondrous forms of Merlin and Gandalf or as the mind-boggling illusions performed by Doug Henning and David Copperfield. Both were equally mystifying and exciting. I believe all adolescents view the world through magical eyes, convinced that if we open the right door or take the correct turn on a forest path, we'll be granted access into a place where magic is real, welcomed into the warm folds of fantastical persons and creatures that exist solely in daydreams.

When I grew older, I never lost my hope that I might one day find that hidden door, but the world that lay beyond it was no longer pure. It had been tainted by the anxieties and fears we accumulate as we age. Now, not all the residents in that magical world had my best interests at heart and toiled to achieve their own dark designs. No longer a place of wonder and hope, the magical world turned dark and was populated by the denizens who drifted through the stories of Harry Dresden, John Constantine, and Harry D'Amour. Sinister cabals worked black magic behind the scenes and to fall into their clutches without power of one's own was to be doomed.

MAJUS is a game that combines both those hopes and fears together, playing them out against a backdrop similar to that found in film noir cinema and in the hardboiled detective novels of the 1930s. MAJUS is about hope and horror, the sinking feeling that you and you alone stand between a better tomorrow and the machinations of those who would destroy that brighter future. Once you see the world through the eyes of a Majus, reality is never the same again. There is no going back after the scales fall from the eyes and the horrible and wonderful vistas that await you behind the shadows and mist are fully seen. This is your last chance to turn away. Do you have the mettle to continue and enter into the realm of MAJUS?

Michael Curtis

Foreword by Daniel Proctor

This is an exciting time for the Pacesetter product line! As I write this I've been publishing TIMEMASTER longer than its original creator, Pacesetter Ltd. I own and publish TIMEMASTER and SANDMAN, both original Pacesetter games, and I'm continuing to support the Pacesetter System with more games. MAJUS is the second new Pacesetter game, following in the footsteps of ROTWORLD, the zombie survival RPG. Additional exciting things are forthcoming!

When I approached Mike about writing a new Pacesetter game, I gave him creative license to write any sort of game he wanted, in any genre he desired. I told him to have fun with it and let his imagination take him wherever he pleased. MAJUS is the fruit of that creative freedom, and as I read through the manuscript I'm extremely impressed with what he has written. I'm proud to be publishing it because it is something creative, new, and most importantly, *fun!*

I sincerely thank all of the Kickstarter backers for their support of MAJUS and Pacesetter in general. Over the years the awareness of the risks to supporters of crowd funding projects has caught up to the enthusiasm surrounding this support mechanism. Today it is all the more humbling to have people put their trust in me to fulfill this project; it is appreciated beyond words. Thank you!

Daniel Proctor

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INITIATION

Do you *want* to believe in magic? Have you ever wondered what it would be like to possess the power to change the world to your liking? To create magical artifacts of great potency that will stand the centuries? To wander beyond the material plane and stroll paths that angels and demons alike fear to tread? To stand between the forces that would tear the world apart or join them in their schemes? If so, MAJUS is your initiation into a place where all that is possible and holds more wonders and terrors than you can easily imagine.

Welcome to MAJUS, the roleplaying game where the players take on the roles of modern sorcerers enmeshed in a conspiracy whose roots extend back to the dawn of civilization. They are Maji, players in the Old Game battling to control, protect, or destroy the enigmatic Skein that binds them and others like them together in a conflict none of them can escape.

MAJUS is a game of conspiracy, deceit, and high weirdness set in the modern era. The Maji are not lightning-throwing superheroes, blasting one another in the middle of Times Square, or demi-gods that soar through the stratosphere. Instead, they are consummate gamesmen engaged in a daily contest of wills, intelligence, and, above all, magic to advance their own goals. In the world of MAJUS, secrecy is paramount and the best victory is winning a contest your enemy never even knew he was participating in.

However, the Old Game—called *Mehen* by its players—is one of myriad levels and even the shrewdest, most powerful Majus can never be certain if he is not being played in turn. In addition to his Maji rivals, he must be wary of the Veiled Masters, inscrutable workers of magic who might be pulling all the strings. And sometimes, even the Skein itself has other plans for those playing to win it as a prize...

MAJUS can be played on its own, or may also be used in conjunction with TIMEMASTER and ROTWORLD to introduce magic elements into those games. Herein both players and game masters will find complete rules to working magic in the modern era, guidelines for creating arcane items, an introduction into hidden worlds, and new, unearthly menaces to challenge the players. But before the reader can be indoctrinated into those secrets, he must first know how they came to be.

THE HISTORY OF MAGIC

The origin of magic is lost to the mists of history. Some claim that the elemental, unseen forces that power it were discovered in lands forgotten by the historical record: Atlantis, Lemuria, or Hyperborea. Scholars of both reputable and dubious reputations attest that these places were real and that evidence of their existence and the Maji who dwelt there still exist in fragmented relics and faded signs left in the remote corners of the world. These theories are discounted by mainstream historians, archeologists, and anthropologists, who dismiss any so-called evidence to these lands existence as fabrications, misinterpretations, and outright delusions.

Even these scholars, however, admit that Magic has been part of humanity for at least forty-thousand years. Evidence of its importance in the lives of early man can still be seen scrawled on the cave walls where ancient shamans drew pictograms to ensure a plentiful hunt and the fecundity of the tribe. But, like the needs of the people then, magic was a simple art in mankind's youth and could not produce the wonders it would later be capable of doing. This changed when the primordial civilization of the Sumerians appeared and the first great cities arose along the great Tigris and Euphrates rivers.

The mystery that was Sumer still confounds scholars. Seemingly overnight, civilization came into being along with the arts and sciences needed to maintain it. What was the catalyst for this and what force changed humanity forever? The Sumerians themselves seemed unsure, and their creation myths speak of them coming from the sea, the product of strange, fishlike gods who gifted them with the knowledge to change the world. It was during this uncertain time of legend and myth that the first Maji appeared.

Where these Maji came from is a mystery, beyond the ken of even the most gifted diviner to confirm. The Maji themselves are uncertain where their predecessors arose from, but this hasn't stopped legends and speculations from forming. Some say that the first Maji escaped the sinking lands of Atlantis to arrive on the shores of Sumer, refugees in search of a new home to practice their craft. Other legends say that the first Maji came from the cosmic sea, alighting upon Earth from extraterrestrial realms, agents of unknowable entities beyond the stars. Still other rumors place the Maji's origins in the hands of the gods, fashioned to bring the divine ember of magic to warm humanity as it struggled against a hostile world.

Although their origins remain unknown, it is without a doubt that the Maji were the ones who helped shape civilization over eight thousand years ago in Mesopotamia. It was these sorcerer-priests who erected the ziggurats to the gods. They were the scholars who invented cuneiform and recorded the first laws, myths, and history. And it was they who become entwined in the Skein.

THE SKEIN AND THE FRACTURING OF THE MAJI

Although the Maji are notoriously clandestine, there are some occult scholars who've gleaned fragments of lore pertaining to these sorcerers. Amongst those fragments, none is more speculated on and misunderstood than the Skein.

No two theories agree what this ineffable network of mystic connections truly is, but conjecture continues. The most common theory is that the Skein is that network of ley lines that crisscross the Earth's surface like a net, connecting places of power in a system of magical energy paths that fuel magic.

Another hypothesis is that the Skein is not a thing, but a living creation, a magical bloodline birthed in ancient Sumer whose scions will one day change humanity for the better (or perhaps worse). A third conjecture holds that the Skein is represented by objects of magical power—The Lost Ark, the Crystal Skulls, Excalibur, and the Holy Grail—that share powerful connections and extreme possibilities if ever brought together. Other, wilder theories also persist, but the Maji remain secretive about which, if any, theory is true.

What is for certain is that the original Maji, through design or accident, became inextricably bound to this magic phenomenon, naming it *Uttu*, after the weaver goddess. In time, *Uttu* become known as the Skein on account of its tangled network of connections. From the very start, the Skein was a source of controversy and conflict amongst the Maji. Some deemed it necessary to guard the Skein from destruction, certain that if it were to fall, so would the Maji. Other factions believed it was too dangerous to be allowed to continue and that the Skein was a threat to all the Maji had worked for. Still other groups looked longingly upon the Skein and desired to make it their own.

These disagreements amongst the Maji were reflected in the political climate of Sumer. Rival factions of Maji flocked together in different city-states, gathering in the ziggurats to plot against their enemies. The city-states, under the influence of the Maji, went to war with one another as each battled to become the dominant force in the region. This was the time of the Fracturing and its events still echo down the ages to the modern day.

In the wake of the Fracturing, some Maji chose to leave the cradle of civilization, seeking to build their powerbases away from the warring city states of Sumer. These errant Maji spread east into Asia or west into Africa, bringing with them the arts, science, and magic lore that had built Sumer. The peoples of these lands soon had civilization—and more importantly, Maji—of their own. The battle for the Skein was no longer confined to Mesopotamia and magical conflict became a world-wide phenomena.

MEHEN, THE OLD GAME

It was in the shadows of the pyramids that the conflict between the Maji grew in earnest. The mighty sorcerers of Egypt continued to build upon the magics first mastered by the Sumerian Maji, forging new paths and developing arts hitherto unknown by magicians. The Egyptian Maji encoded their secrets into the tombs, stele, and other monuments that littered the desert, cloaking them in enigma and metaphor. Many Maji believe the greatest of these secrets was encoded in the Great Sphinx, which still keeps its mysteries and remains the guardian of the True Secret of Magic.

While these magical advancements initially granted the Egyptian Maji an advantage in conflicts with other Maji groups, it wasn't long before craft, guile, and treachery allowed those secrets to fall into the hands of the Egyptian Maji's enemies. Once these secrets became known, the Maji of the Old Dynasties of Egypt lost their preeminence and created a state of cold war between the rival factions. With the majority of Maji having reaped the benefits of the Egyptian sorcerers, outright magical conflict would only lead to mutual destruction. Victories could now only be achieved by striking from the shadows, weakening a rival's powerbase, and with stratagems that took decades to come to fruition. This new state of war for the Skein was dubbed *Mehen* after a game popular

with the Egyptian Maji of the time. The Old Game is still being played to this day.

THE VEILED MASTERS

It was while the magical war was cooling down in Egypt that the first evidence of the enigmatic players known as the Veiled Masters appeared. Maji at this time reported receiving inexplicable omens as to where they should direct their studies, or being visited by mysterious beings that offered advice or information assisting them in the *Mehen.* The ineffable forces behind these events were dubbed the Veiled Masters, as their command of magic seemed to outstrip the most learned Maji during this period.

Speculation on the identities of the Veiled Masters ran riot amongst the Maji, with most believing they were a product of rival factions intended to mislead their enemies. However, as time progressed, it became clear that the Veiled Masters had no agendas other than their own—and whatever that agenda was, it was incomprehensible to the rest of the players in the *Mehen.*

The Veiled Masters then and now work behind the scenes and their plots are wheels within wheels. They pit rival factions against one another for their own inexplicable ends, playing no favorites. They are just as willing to assist a faction seeking to destroy the Skein as protected it, and shift their aid as easily as the wind changes course.

Even after millennia, their identities remain unknown, although theories to who the Veiled Masters are continue to emerge. The most popular suggests that the Veiled Masters are Maji who, through magical mastery, achieved a state of superhuman existence and now dwell entirely on the Astral Plane. Others believe the Veiled Masters are the spirits of dead Sumerian Maji who are disgusted with what their descendants have done with their art and knowledge and now seek to use the Skein to their own purposes. Still another hypothesis holds that the Veiled Masters are the ancient gods

who gifted humanity with civilization and high magic at the dawn of time and now work to bring about the next phase of human evolution. Whatever the case, more than one Majus has found his schemes disrupted by an unexpected gambit of the Veiled Masters.

MAGIC THROUGH THE MILLENNIA

Since the fragmenting of the Maji in Sumer, the Maji and their art have spread throughout the world, traveling by both mundane and arcane means to distant lands. In the ancient past, Sumerian and Egyptian Maji first traveled to India, China, and Greece and soon spread even further, bringing their art with them. The names of these Maji are still spoken of in myth or written on the esoteric pages of history: Circe, Merlin, Hermes Trismegistus, Lao Tzu, Wei Po-Yang, Vasistha, Apollonius of Tyana, and Agrippa are but a few of the Maji of old.

As the centuries unfolded, the Maji factions became even more fractured with alliances shattering and cabals collapsing as contests for the Skein grew ever more convoluted

and clandestine. These smaller cabals of allied Maji were dubbed "Towers" after the mythical—and sometimes not-so-mythical—bastions wizards erected for security and solitude. Each Tower consisted of less than a hundred members, with many claiming much smaller memberships. Numbers mean little to the Maji in the Old Game, however, as disposable allies are easy for them to find or create. The Towers set about forming secret magical societies intended to be disposable game pieces that could be maneuvered and sacrificed as gambits in the *Mehen*. Surprisingly, some of these cat's-paws endured and still remain active as witting or unwitting allies of the Maji. Their names are scrawled across the pages of occult history and even a novice student of esoterica has heard of these Maji minions. The Rosicrucians, the Ordo Templi Orientis, the Knights Templar, the Thuggee, the School of Night, Thule-Gesellschaft, and more all began as Maji tools in the Mehen.

When secret societies could not accomplish the goals of individual Maji or Towers, they manipulated themselves into inconspicuous roles

within governmental systems, acting as advisor to those who wielded temporal power. John Dee, Grigori Rasputin, and the Comte de Saint-Germain are a few of the Maji sorcerer-advisors whose identities are unwittingly revealed in the pages of history. Many kings, queens, czars, emperors, warlords, sultans, rajas, and shoguns assumed power by magical means and paid the price for it when forced to change national policy at the whim of their benefactors to better benefit their Majus mentor and his personal goals.

Just how many wars, purges, embargoes, assassinations, and invasions have Maji to blame for them will likely never be known. This unfortunate tradition continues into the modern age. Knowledgeable occultists speculate, for example, that the recent conflicts in the Middle East are spurred by Maji looking to create an atmosphere of chaos which they can exploit to locate and loot lost Sumerian sites for forgotten magical lore.

Despite the secrecy of the Maji, the *Mehen* did not go unnoticed down the centuries. Occasionally their machinations or pawns would draw attention to themselves and those unversed in magic would react swiftly, fearfully, and violently to destroy what they didn't understand. Efforts by both political and religious groups were undertaken to put an end to magic, but they seldom had any effect on the Maji themselves. The Maji had long known that their cat's-paws made the best game pieces when they could work a bit of magic themselves.

These pawns were instructed and indoctrinated into the magical paths known as adits by their Maji masters, both to increase their potency in the *Mehen* and to provide a shield against those who sought to root out "pagan" and "profane" practices in society. Many members of the Maji-created secret societies, covens, and magical lodges died by the decree of Theodosius or in the pyres of the Inquisition, but the Maji themselves largely escaped unscathed, free to continue their warring over the Skein.

As the centuries passed, so did anti-magical sentiments and new occult societies were founded to replace those destroyed by religious and governmental pogroms. However, there was one population that continued to suffer as humanity spread across the world and civilization and science—both encouraged by the Maji themselves—took a more dominant hold upon the Earth: the other supernatural denizens of the world.

From the dawn of time, mankind was not the sole intelligent species on the planet. Outside the cities, in the great forests, forbidding mountains, trackless wastes, and miasmic swamps dwelled other sentient and often supernatural forces. The existence of these creatures was well known and legends, folklore, and myth name many of them: faeries, vodnik, ghuls, selkie, lycanthropes, vampires, and more. Every culture feared the monsters in the night, but it was ultimately culture and civilization that doomed these creatures.

As humanity filled in the blank spaces on the map, the supernatural residents were forced to adapt or die. Today, many of these once proud and ferocious beings have become refugees, reduced to dwelling in the shadow of humanity and eking out a precarious existence in the few shadowy corners left to them by concrete, plastic, and steel. The Maji, always quick to exploit those less fortunate then themselves, have turned these creatures into pawns in the Old Game, unleashing them against rivals in the conspiracies that contest for the Skein.

AN ERRATIC NEW AGE

Although millennia have passed since the first Maji arose and the Mehen survived great threats from both internal and external forces, only recently do the Maji and the Old Game face a development that jeopardizes their very existence. In the 1960s, magic underwent a remarkable transformation in the West. The so-called Dawning of the Age of Aquarius was supposed to

usher in a New Age of human enlightenment and bring about the downfall of old bigotries and hatred. Interest in the occult skyrocketed and sciences and theories that had once been dismissed as sheer nonsense began to attract fervid interest. The world view was changing and unlike other eras when humanity took a greater interest in magic—for better or for worse—the New Age had great impact on the Maji and the *Mehen*.

There have always been Maji who eschew the company of their peers, either to protect themselves from their machinations or from disinterest in playing the Old Game. These loners—or solitaires as they are known amongst the Maji—have always been ignored or exploited, depending on their usefulness. Since the 1960s, however, there has been an explosion in the number of Maji who wish to have no part in the *Mehen* and refuse to become involved in anything having to do with the Skein. These Maji are known as Erratics due to their unpredictability and questionable allegiances.

Erratic Maji chose to walk their own paths, free of the decrees and demands of Towers, content to utilize their magical skill to benefit those causes they do champion. In many cases, that cause is their own selfish fortunes and powerbases. Erratics war with one another over magical "turf" and for antiquities of power, careless that their schemes might upset the delicate balances of power that traditional Maji fought long and hard to achieve.

Their numbers make the Erratics dangerous to the Towers. The Erratics cannot simply be ignored in hopes they go away. Despite their desire to remain aloof from the *Mehen,* they remain a potent resource to be tapped and turned against one's enemies—provided they can be convinced or tricked into doing so. Even more worrisome is the belief that the Erratics may actually be fulfilling a role in the *Mehen* after all as pawns of the Veiled Masters.

CHAPTER 2: THE GAME

Shadowy figures in trench coats lurk in an alley across from a modest brownstone. Obscured by the steady rain that splatters the oil-slicked puddles at their feet, they pass their hands in complex patterns, tracing weird symbols in the air with blood-stained knives and wands of ancient rowan wood. Moments later, a window in the brownstone across the way glows orange-red, reflecting the sudden fire that ignites behind it. The fire spreads swiftly, turning the building into an inferno. The cabal of figures, men and women with faces etched deep by a lifetime of wonders and horrors, slips away unnoticed, satisfied with their evening's work. Another victory is scored in the Old Game, the ancient magical war known as the *Mehen.*

We've all wished for magic at one time or another, the power to change our world to our benefit and to overcome the obstacles that stand in our way. Magic is the ultimate wish-fulfillment, the ability to have everything we want from life with the wave of a hand. But as the old adage goes, "Be careful what you wish for."

In a world where magic is truth and wonders ordinary, one would not be alone in the command of the magical arts. Some of these other magicians would be friends or allies, seeking to work the same positive influence upon the world. Far more, however, would possess opposing goals and seek to thwart us at every step. MAJUS posits such a world, plunging the players into a conflict that has existed since the dawn of civilization.

MAJUS is a game that examines this ancient war, placing the characters into roles as magical soldiers fighting against awesome opponents with powers equal to or exceeding their own. This conflict plays out in the shadows of modern existence, its battles occurring in the occult underworld that lurks behind the façade of day-to-day life. A place that once glimpsed, like an optical illusion, can never be unseen again.

MAJUS draws heavily on two sources: the popular genre of "urban fantasy" and the classic "film noire" genre of Hollywood. Mixed together like strange reagents in an alchemist's crucible, these influences create a game of shadow and miracles, ready to be explored by the players (and their characters) as they seek ultimate victory in the magical battle known as the *Mehen.*

Anyone who has thrilled to the tales of "occult detectives" like Carnacki the Ghost Breaker, Steve Harrison, Hellboy, or John Constantine will find MAJUS instantly recognizable. There are no robe-clad wizards or cackling witches to be found here. Instead, the players in the Old Game rely on both cutting edge technology and antiquated tools to achieve their victories in the *Mehen.* Their dress and attitudes might reflect an older time, but not much older than the 1940s and 50s. And unlike the great wizards of fiction, the Maji's magics are more subtle, but no less dangerous than their literary counterparts.

If you've ever dreamed of walking the night-time streets of the big city with a .45 pistol in one pocket and a stolen Egyptian amulet that conjures up ghosts in the other, destined to make a name for yourself in a world most people have no idea exists, you'll fit right in to the world of MAJUS. Welcome to the *Mehen,* my friend. Keep your eyes open, your head down, and a spell on your lips.

WHAT IS A ROLE-PLAYING GAME?

Most people reading this are role-playing game veterans. Nonetheless, a few words are said here for newcomers. Role-playing games are similar to acting in a play. As a player you take the role of a character (usually of your own design) and pretend that you are that character in a different (make-believe) world. The action takes place in your mind and sometimes with the aid of small figures and maps to track your movement.

This behavior is likely reminiscent of games of make-believe from your childhood. One way a role-playing game differs is that there are a set of rules governing many actions, such as fighting, and another type of player who referees activities and designs the fictional world and its events, the Cabal Master.

USING DICE

The dice used in MAJUS have ten sides. Each side has a number ranging from "0" to "9." Ten-sided dice are used in several different ways.

Take a second to roll a die. The number that comes up on top is the number you've rolled. If the number rolled is a "0," read it as "10" instead.

Now roll two or three dice and add them together. Remember that any roll of "0" counts as "10," so rolling a "5," a "0," and a "2" would produce a result of 17 (5+10+2=17). These types of rolls are called rolls of d10. The small letter "d" stands for "dice," and the "10" indicates that ten-sided dice are being rolled.

Often, the rules will require you to roll "1d10," or "2d10" or "3d10." These abbreviations mean to roll one, two, or three dice and add the results together to get your final result.

The dice can also be used to roll percents; that is, to roll numbers between 1 and 100. This is represented as d00 or d%. When percents are being rolled, only two dice are used and the dice are read differently: one is read as the "tens" die and the other die is read as the "ones." Rolls of "0" are read as "0," not "10." If both dice come up "0," the result is read as "100."

THE CM

In every group of players, one player must separate himself from the others and play a very special role in the game. This player is called the "CM," which stands for "Cabal Master." During a game, the CM does not pretend to be one character, as the other players do. Instead, the CM gets to play all the people, animals, and supernatural creatures that the other players meet in their roles as Maji. The CM also acts as referee; he or she applies the rules of the game and guides the other players through the adventures. In effect, the CM "runs" the game.

THE CHARACTERS

Every person in MAJUS is called a character. The characters portrayed by each player except the CM are called player characters—PCs for short. Characters played by the CM are called non-player characters—NPCs for short.

Player characters are Maji, mortal humans who possess powerful magical talents. They may have very different backgrounds, but they bring varying skills to a group of PCs, and at least one thing they all have in common is the desire to survive and hopefully thrive in the shadowy magical world that surrounds them.

ABILITIES, SKILLS, AND TALENTS

Every character in MAJUS has eight Basic Abilities: Strength, Dexterity, Agility, Personality, Willpower, Perception, Luck, and Stamina. These eight Abilities are the core of every character; like human qualities, they tell us what the character is all about. Chapter 3 tells more about the Basic Abilities.

In addition to Basic Abilities, characters have skills. Abilities come naturally, but skills must be acquired. Examples include Martial Arts, Investigation, and Disguise. See Chapter 4 for more information on skills.

Player characters in this game also have magical adits and paranormal talents—special powers that allow them to influence and change the world around them. "Summoning" and "Psychometry" are two such examples. Maji begin play with some magical adits and paranormal talents automatically; others they have to learn. See Chapters 5 and 6 for more information on adits and talents.

SCORES

In the real world, people differ; certain qualities are strong, others may be weak. They perform some skills like an expert, others merely "well enough." In MAJUS, characters differ, too. They have a score for each Ability, which tells how strong that Ability is. They also have scores for skills and talents, which show how well the character can use them. Most scores range from about 20 to 100.

CHECKS

During the game, characters put their Abilities, skills, and talents to use. Some things, they can do automatically, no matter how low their scores may be. But characters can't do everything they try automatically; if they did, the game would be no fun. So when Mira wants to leap across a ravine, or find a needle in a haystack, she must put her scores to the test, and make a "check" with the dice. Checks are percent rolls that determine how an action turns out, when the outcome is in doubt.

Here's where scores come in handy. Jumping across a ravine? That requires Agility. Mira's player rolls the dice, and compares the result to Mira's Agility score: she makes an "Agility check." Finding a needle in a haystack? That requires Perception. Mira's player rolls the dice, and compares the result to Mira's Perception score; she makes a "Perception check." Obviously, dice rolls are important here, so be sure you've read the section above called "Using the Dice."

GENERAL CHECKS

A general check is a percent roll to find out whether a character can do something difficult. It gives yes or no answers: yes, she does it; no, she doesn't. All general checks work like this: if the percent roll is higher than the score being checked, the character fails. If the roll is lower than or equal to the score, the character succeeds.

Let's say Mira wants to walk across a narrow beam—an action that requires Agility. The CM thinks that's hard to do, so he or she asks the player to make a general check against the character's Agility score. The player makes a percent roll. If the player rolls a number equal to or less than the character's Agility score, the character can walk across the beam. If the player rolls a number higher than the character's Agility score, the character cannot walk across the beam; she falls off!

SPECIFIC CHECKS ON THE ACTION TABLE

Sometimes players need to find a very specific result—such as how much injury an attack causes, or how many clues a character notices. In these cases, a general check is not enough, and players must make a specific check to find results. Specific checks use the MAJUS Action Table to find the exact outcome of an action. Take a look at the table in the back of the book. Then read the steps below to learn how to make a specific check.

1. The player rolls a percent and compares it to a score—just as if he were making a general check.

2. If the dice roll is higher than the score, the character fails. If it's equal to or lower than the score, the character succeeds, and the player goes on to Step 3.

3. The player subtracts the number rolled on the dice from the value of the score being checked. Then the player finds the difference on the Action Table, in the ranges listed under "Attack Margin." The row that lies across from the appropriate range will show the result of the check.

4. To find out the exact result of the check, the player must find the appropriate defense column. The game rules will always tell you which column to use, depending on the check. Checks against Ability scores are usually on Column 2.

5. The player "cross-indexes" the attack row with the defense column. This means that the player follows the row found in Step 3 until he reaches the column found in Step 5. The letter code that lies in the box shared by each one shows the result of the attack.

6. Finally, the CM finds the meaning of the letter code, using one of the "result keys" in the game. The rules explain which one.

Example: Bob, throws a rock at a rival Majus' guard dog. The CM asks Bob to make a specific check against his Dexterity score to find out what happens. Bob's Dexterity score is 72.

First, Bob's player makes a percent roll with the dice, and rolls 52. The CM subtracts 52 from 72, and finds the difference—20—under the heading marked "Attack Margin." The result of the attack lies on the 10-29 row.

According to the game rules, this kind of an attack calls for the defender to roll 1d10 to find the defense column, so the CM rolls 1d10. He rolls a 5, so the result lies in the defense column underneath the "5."

The CM cross-indexes the 10-29 row with defense column 5, and finds an "M" on the Action Table. In this example, the CM would look for the "M" in the Armed Combat Results Key, and apply the results for a "Medium Wound." Don't worry about using the keys just yet; for now, you only need to understand the basic procedure: rolling a specific check and finding the letter code result on the Action Table.

USING MAPS

The maps in MAJUS typically use squares. On maps these will often have a scale of 1 square = 10 feet. If using miniature figures to track character movement, squares will have a scale of 1 square = 5 feet.

LEARNING TO PLAY

You don't have to memorize everything in this book to learn how to play: the best way to learn is to start playing as soon as possible! If you're the CM, read through the book first to start to become familiar with the rules. You should understand what you're reading, but there's no need to memorize everything all at once. Read it through again, and see how the game rules apply. Then you're ready to play! If you don't remember a rule just be sure you know where to look it up.

Players who are playing PCs don't need to know the rules quite as well as the CM. They should concentrate on Chapters 2-6. Next, they should concentrate on having fun playing their characters, and quit worrying about the rules!

EXAMPLE OF PLAY

During play, a MAJUS game is a continuous conversation between the CM and the players. The CM tells the players what their characters can see, hear, and sense, and plays the roles of the "supporting cast." In return, the players tell the CM what their own characters say and do. An outsider might think he was watching improvisational theater, except that players rarely get up and do what their characters do. Still, if the outsider only listened, he might believe he was hearing a play...

CM: Last week, you learned that a shipment was due down at the docks and decided to try and intercept if before the Abraxas Tower could receive it. You're currently hiding at the mouth of a fog-filled alley across from Dock 13. A couple of tough-looking longshoremen are standing at the foot of the pier as if waiting. They haven't noticed you...yet.

Karin: Maybe we can lure them away with a diversion. Any ideas?

Henry: I could use my Summoning Adit and call up Sylpha (an air elemental Henry has befriended in the past). She could cause a disturbance and draw them away. It'll take a few minutes though.

Carl: I should get a closer look. I'll use my Glamour Adit to look like a drunk Skid Row bum. I have the spell "hanging" (a prepared spell with a fast casting time).

Karin: OK, Henry should start his summoning while Carl's character takes a look. If he doesn't spot anyone else hanging around, send Sylpha in. I'll draw my gun and keep a lookout with my Sight in case anyone else shows up.

CM: Henry, you start drawing a circle on the ground with a piece of chalk and speak the words in a low voice. Carl, since your spell is "hanging," you just say the final incantation to enact it. Roll your dice.

Carl: (rolling d%). Woo hoo! A 21 and my modified Glamour score is 56. That's an "H" success.

CM: The air shimmers around Carl and in his place you now see an unshaven man in a filthy trench coat and knit cap. He holds a bottle of cheap wine in his hand.

Carl: I stumble out of the alleyway and head down the dock parallel to the goons while singing drunkenly.

CM: The two toughs give you a once-over but don't seem concerned. You stagger a bit further down the pier and find a dumpster to "pass out" behind and still get a good look. So far, you don't see anyone else around. After a few minutes, the goons start looking anxious as if they're expecting someone real soon.

Henry: Is my spell finished?

CM: Just about. You say the final words of the summoning spell and let's see what happens. Roll d% to see how successful you were. Since you know Sylpha, you just need an "M" result or better on the Action Table.

Henry: (rolling the dice) Uh-oh. My Summoning is a 55 and I rolled a 52. That's an "L" result.

CM: You finish the spell and the foggy air over the circle takes on a humanoid shape. The air around you suddenly rises in temperature and you feel a blast of hot air in your face.

Henry: That doesn't sound like Sylpha.

CM (to Karin): Now you see a pair of headlights turn the corner as a black limo pulls up to the dock. With your Sight up, you detect at least four people with magical auras in the car. Also, it seems that Henry's Summoning has caused the fog to disperse around you two and the longshoremen are now fixedly staring directly at you.

Carl: This isn't good.

CM (chuckling): No, it isn't...

CHAPTER 3: CHARACTERS

ll of the people and supernatural creatures in MAJUS are called characters. Characters being played by the players are called player characters, or PCs for short. All the other characters in the game are called non-player characters, or NPCs. Usually, the CM plays all NPC roles. NPCs include minor characters, major villains, and anyone else that the PCs meet.

In Chapter 2, we touched briefly on what it takes to make a character: Basic Abilities, magical adits, paranormal talents, and skills. This chapter explains how to put all these things together—and more—to create your own character. The eight Basic Abilities are explained in detail, as are character background and appearance. Skills, magical adits, and paranormal talents are explained in later chapters.

THE CHARACTER SHEET

During the game, each player keeps track of his or her character on a "character sheet." A blank sheet is provided at the end of this book, which you may copy to use during play. The character sheet is a good tool for learning about characters, since it shows what you need to know during an adventure.

Player: That's you. Record your own name on the sheet to help everyone keep track of "who's who."

Character: Record the name of your character here—the Majus you're going to play.

Background: This includes a number of things: birth date, sex, etc. Refer to the upcoming section called "Background Notes" for more information.

Basic Statistics: These include the eight Basic Abilities, plus a few special scores:

Current Stamina: During the game, characters lose Stamina points due to fatigue or minor injuries. With a little rest, they can regain lost points. Stamina points are subtracted

and added to the "current Stamina" score—the Ability score stays the same. Current Stamina may never exceed the original Stamina Ability score.

Recovery rate: This tells how fast characters can regain Stamina by resting.

Current Willpower: Like Stamina, Willpower may rise and fall during the game. The "current" Willpower score shows the correct level at any given moment. Characters lose Willpower points temporarily when they cast spells, use certain paranormal talents, or suffer a paranormal attack. The original Willpower Ability score stays the same during the adventure, marking the character's maximum level of Willpower.

Unskilled Melee Score: This score equals a character's base percent chance to attack successfully in hand-to-hand fighting, when he has no skill for that kind of fight.

Penetration Bonus: Strong characters get a bonus to penetrate armor when they're using their hands to strike with or throw a weapon. See Chapter 7 for more information.

Wounds: In MAJUS, wounds are serious injuries. Every character has a certain number of wound boxes, to show the number of wounds he or she can receive before dying. The exact number is based on Stamina. During the game, players must mark wound boxes to keep track of how many wounds their characters suffer. When the players run out of wound boxes to mark, the characters die. Fortunately, characters can heal wounds with bed rest—if they get to bed in time. Players then erase the marks in the boxes, to show that the wounds have healed. See Damage and Healing, Chapter 4.

Skills: All Maji start play with the Occult skill to represent the magical knowledge they've acquired during their studies. In addition to this skill, characters begin with a number of skills at the beginning (specialist)

level, determined by rolling on the table below. Note that a character may sacrifice one skill in order to take another skill up to expert level. Starting skills may never be taken at the master level.

Starting Skills	
Roll d10	Number of Skills
1-3	3
4-6	4
7-9	5
10	6

Magical Adits: Magical adits are the paths of sorcerous knowledge used by Maji to cast spells and evoke mystical effects. Each starting PC begins the game with three magical adits of their choice. Alternately, the player can reduce his starting number of magical adits creation to two and choose an additional paranormal talent (see below) in place of a third adit. Each starting magical adit is at the specialist level and, unlike skills, cannot be raised to expert level at character creation.

Paranormal Talents: Paranormal talents (PT) are special powers of the mind possessed by Maji, supernatural creatures, and some gifted humans. Each Majus automatically begins play with the "Aura Sight" paranormal talent and may choose to replace one of his starting magical adits with another PT of his choice. There is no limit to how many paranormal talents a Majus can learn during play other than experience cost and time.

Some NPCs also possess paranormal talents. Unlike Maji, these gifted individuals are limited to the number of PTs they can possess by their Basic Ability scores. In order to have one or more paranormal talents, the NPCs must meet the PCN and WIL requirements listed below. The character must meet both requirements to qualify for the corresponding number of PTs, or the number of PTs will correspond to the lower of the two. For example, if a character has a PCN of 61 and WIL 80, the character may only choose

one PT. If he has PCN 74 and WIL 66 he may choose 2 PTs. If the CM allows, characters that start with paranormal talents may acquire more later by spending experience points.

PCN	WIL	PTs
60-69	50-59	1
70-79	60-69	2
80+	70+	3

Experience Points: Players record experience points (XP) earned through play. More is said about XP and how it is used for character advancement later in this chapter.

HOW TO CREATE A CHARACTER

Follow the steps below to create a character:

1. Assemble the necessary equipment: a pencil, a piece of scratch paper, three ten-sided dice, and a copy of the character sheet. Write your name on the sheet next to "player."

2. Decide upon your character's background, using the guidelines near the end of this chapter.

3. Choose skills. All Maji begin play with the Occult skill. The number of additional skills a character has is determined randomly as discussed above. If your character has a profession, one skill must relate to it.

4. To determine your character's Basic Ability scores, repeat this process eight times: First, roll 3d10 and add the results together. Then multiply the sum by 2. Finally, add 20 to this product. Your final result will be a number between 26 and 80. Jot this number down on your scratch paper. Repeat until you have eight numbers. If you have three scores of 40 or less, the CM may allow you to roll all such scores again. Your character might be considered "hopeless" with three scores that low. On the other hand, playing a character with low abilities can be viewed as a worthwhile challenge.

5. Assign one of the eight numbers obtained in Step 4 to each of the eight Basic Abilities. The number you write down by each Basic Ability on the character sheet is your character's score in that Ability. You may assign the eight numbers to the Basic Abilities as you choose. Notice that Ability scores affect your skill scores, so choose accordingly.

6. Add your character's Strength and Agility scores together, divide this sum by 2, and round up any fraction. Write the result on the character sheet as the character's Unskilled Melee score.

7. Use your character's Strength score and the chart below to find your character's Penetration Bonus:

Strength Score	Penetration Bonus
0-49	0
50-59	+5
60-69	+10
70-79	+15
80	+20

8. Fill in the character's Stamina recovery rate. To determine the rate, find the character's Stamina score in the ranges on top of the Action Table. The number of the column below equals the number of Stamina points the character can recover per round of rest. See Chapter 5 for more information.

9. Use your character's Stamina score and the chart below to determine the number of wounds he can sustain before being killed:

Stamina Score	No. of Wounds
26-36	11
37-47	12
48-58	13
59-69	14
70-80	15

There are 15 wound boxes on the character sheet. Each box corresponds to one wound. If your character should have fewer than 15 wounds (according to the chart above), draw a line through the extra boxes. You must ignore them during play.

10. Choose three magical adits, Using the formula for each adit, find your character's scores. Alternately, you may only choose two magical adits and gain an extra paranormal talent in step 11.

11. Write down "Aura Sight" under Paranormal Talents. All Maji begin play with this PT. If you chose to take only two magical adits in step 10, you may now choose an additional PT. Using the formula for each talent, find your character's scores.

12. Find the character's base scores for each skill, using the formulas that you jotted down in Step 3.

13. Find the character's actual scores for each skill by adding 15 to the base score obtained in Step 11.

13. Give your character a name. Note that many Maji use pseudonyms in the occult world, so don't feel constrained by normal naming conventions when giving your PC a name.

THE EIGHT BASIC ABILITIES

Every character has eight Basic Abilities: Strength, Dexterity, Agility, Personality, Willpower, Perception, Luck, and Stamina. Each Ability has a score. For normal human characters, Basic Ability scores range from a low of 26 to a high of 80. These scores have many uses: they help determine how well a character performs, how good his skills are, and—sometimes—whether he lives or dies.

Strength (STR)

Strength is a character's physical muscle power. As a general rule of thumb, the CM should assume that a human character can lift a maximum weight in pounds equal to five times that character's Strength score. That doesn't mean that anything less than maximum weight is easy; it just means it's possible.

Strength is used in the following ways in the game:

Feats of Strength: A character's Strength score is his or her base percent chance to perform some action depending on physical strength, such as lifting or moving a boulder, or shouldering down a door. Usually, a general Strength check should be required any time a character tries to lift over 100 pounds. Remember that no character

can lift more than five times his Strength score in pounds.

Unskilled Melee Score = (Strength+Agility)/2: A character's Strength score is averaged with his or her Agility score to produce that character's Unskilled Melee score.

Armor Penetration: A character's Strength score helps determine whether he or she receives a bonus to penetrate armor when using a weapon in hand-to-hand fighting. See the table in Step 7 of "How to Create a Character."

Dexterity (DEX)

Dexterity is a character's hand-eye coordination and nimbleness with his or her fingers. It is used in the following ways in the game:

Throwing and Firing: A character's Dexterity score is his or her base percent chance to hit a target when firing or throwing a weapon. (If the character has a skill with that weapon, however, his or her skill score equals the base chance.)

Hand-eye Coordination: A character's Dexterity score is the character's base percent chance to perform some action that depends upon good hand-eye coordination—catching a ball, for instance.

Agility (AGL)

Agility is a character's ability to control the overall movement of his or her body. It is used in the game in the following ways:

Nimbleness and Balance: A character's Agility score is the character's base percent chance to perform some difficult or unusual movement, such as leaping a wall, climbing a sheer surface, or swinging on a chandelier into a fistfight!

Unskilled Melee score = (Agility+Strength)/2: A character's Agility score is averaged with his or her Strength score to produce that character's Unskilled Melee score.

Personality (PER)

Personality is a character's ability to get along with and influence the opinions and behavior of others. It is used in the game in the following ways:

Dynamo or Dud?: A character's Personality score is that character's base percent chance to obtain a favorable reaction from an NPC when requesting assistance or

generally trying to establish a friendly relationship.

Deception: A character's Personality score is his or her base percent chance to deceive, mislead, or otherwise use distortions of the truth to influence an NPC's behavior.

Willpower (WPR)

Willpower is a character's mental fortitude. It shows his or her "staying power" in the face of pain, and affects the use of paranormal talents. Willpower is used in the game in the following ways:

Running on Empty: A character's Willpower score is the character's base percent chance to continue action in combat after being critically wounded.

Current Willpower: A character's current Willpower score is temporarily reduced when the character uses magical adits or paranormal talents. In addition, characters may temporarily lose Willpower points due to paranormal attacks that supernatural opponents make against them.

Magical Adits and Paranormal Talents Defense Column: A character's Willpower score determines which defense column on the MAJUS Action Table shows the results of magical or paranormal attacks against the character.

Magical Adits and Paranormal Talent Scores: A player character's Willpower score is a major factor in determining his magical adit and paranormal talent scores. See Step 10 of "How To Create A Character."

Perception (PCN)

Perception is a character's ability to notice things in the environment around him. It is used in the game in the following ways:

Sleuthing: A character's Perception score is his or her base chance to notice small clues or hidden items. For example. Perception would be used to find out if the character notices a few drops of blood on an NPC's clothes, or two shoes barely visible below a curtain.

Judge of Character: A character's Perception score equals his or her

base chance to judge characters—e.g., tell when they're lying or afraid.

Avoiding Surprise: A character's Perception score is his or her base percent chance to avoid surprise in a combat situation.

Luck (LUCK)

Luck is the random factor which affects the lives of all player characters. Only player characters have a Luck score; NPCs do not. Luck is used in the game in the following ways:

Escaping Death: A character's Luck score is the base percent chance that the character is still alive when, according to all other rules of the game, the character should be dead. For example, a character with a Luck score of 36 has a 36% chance of still being alive (although certainly in terrible shape) after falling off the top of a skyscraper.

Reducing Damage: A character may "permanently" deplete his or her Luck score by one or two points during combat in an attempt to reduce the amount of damage from certain attacks (see Chapter 4).

Lucky Breaks: The CM can use a character's Luck score to make checks when the character wants a "lucky break" and no other Basic Ability, paranormal talent, or skill score would apply to the situation.

For example, suppose a character is being chased by enemies. The player tells the CM his character is desperately looking up and down the street for a place to hide. The CM might decide to use the character's Luck score as the character's percent chance of finding a suitable place in time to get away from his enemies.

Synchronicity Checks: Maji can occasionally tap into the arcane phenomenon known as Synchronicity. The character's Luck score is used to determine the success of these Synchronicity checks. More information on Synchronicity and how it works is found in Chapter 10.

Optional Luck Uses

In addition to the normal uses of Luck, the CM may, at his or her discretion, decide to use Luck in either of the two ways below. At the start of an adventure, the CM must tell the players whether he or she plans to use these options. The decision stands until the adventure is over; the CM can't change his or her mind while the adventure is underway.

The optional uses of Luck are:

Saved by the Bell: When a character is about to be killed, his or her Luck score equals the base chance that some small stroke of luck will come about, offering a second chance. In these cases, the character doesn't get what he asks for; he gets what the CM decides would be a minimum lucky event.

For example, let's say Fred is in a pitched gun battle in a deserted warehouse. He's critically wounded, and close to death. His opponent chuckles, and gets ready to take a killing shot on Fred. But suddenly (the CM rolls a successful general check against Fred's Luck score) another character shouts at Fred's opponent, distracting it. Fred now has a few precious seconds of "free" time; what he does with it is his own decision.

Coincidental Rolls: Whenever a player makes a percent roll (for any reason), and the result equals his or her Luck score exactly, something moderately lucky will happen for the character.

Example: Fred, a character, is making a general Perception check during play. The dice roll equals his Luck score. The CM decides that Fred suddenly notices something hidden. Or if Fred were hungry, the CM might decide that Fred finds a bit of food; the CM can choose almost anything!

Stamina (STA)

Stamina is a character's ability to sustain damage and undertake sustained, strenuous activity. Stamina is used in the game in the following ways:

Passing Out: A character's Stamina score is the exact number of damage points that he or she can receive before being knocked unconscious. During the game, players keep track of damage with their character's current Stamina. In the beginning, current Stamina equals the original Stamina score. But when the character takes damage, his or her current Stamina drops. Damage is never recorded against original Stamina; that score stays listed under Basic Abilities to show the character's "normal" state.

Wounds: A character's original Stamina score determines the number of wounds the character can take before dying. See the chart in Step 9 of "How to Create a Character."

Recovery Rate: A character's original Stamina score determines the rate at which the character can recover lost Stamina points. See Step 8 in "How To Create A Character."

ABILITY CHECKS

Ability checks can be either specific or general; they are called Ability checks because the check is rolled against a Basic Ability score.

Like all checks, Ability checks are required whenever a character tries to do something that is clearly not a "sure thing." For example, let's say a character named Mira is walking across a narrow beam between buildings, with a horde of ghuls waiting below. There is reasonable doubt that Mira can walk across the beam without losing balance and falling, so the CM asks Mira's player to roll a general check against her Agility. If Mira fails the check, she falls off.

A general Ability check can handle most situations that arise during an adventure. In Mira's case, either she falls off the beam or she doesn't; we don't need to know anything more. If the CM wants to add detail to the game, however, or is dealing with a complex situation, then he or she should use specific Ability checks, too.

Column 2 on the Action Table applies to most specific Ability checks, though higher column numbers may be chosen if the situation is particularly challenging. Use the key below to interpret the Ability check results.

ABILITY CHECK RESULTS KEY

L = *Limited success:* The character is barely able to perform the desired action. He or she may suffer damage if the action is dangerous.

M = *Moderate success.* The character can perform the desired action moderately well. He or she may still suffer some damage if the action is dangerous.

H = *High success:* The character completes the action very well. He or she suffers only minor damage if the action is dangerous.

C = *Colossal success:* The character does everything exactly right achieving exactly the desired effects. He or she suffers no damage, even if the action is dangerous.

K = *Not applicable:* "K" results don't apply to Ability checks; just ignore this code.

Use the combat results keys below the Action Table as a guide for assigning damage. See also "Damage" in Chapter 4.

Specific Ability Check Example

Mira is on a building roof trying to leap across a 10-foot gap between buildings. A specific ability check could be used to determine the results. Mira gets a running start and takes the leap, rolling 58 on d%. This specific check is against her AGL of 72, so her success is by a margin of 14 (72-58=14). After consulting column 2 of the Action Table we see she has a result of "H" on the Defense Column. Since it is a High success she will definitely make the leap. However, applying discretion we can reason that a Colossal success would have gotten her there completely safely, while a limited success might mean she didn't quite make it but landed so that she is hanging over the edge of the building. That situation would require an additional check, probably against STR with a penalty, say rolling on Column 4 instead of 2. In our case, we will interpret a High success as meaning that she made the jump but will need to make another AGL check on Column 2 to avoid

stumbling when she lands, and falling down on the other rooftop.

BACKGROUND NOTES

This section offers guidelines for choosing the background and appearance of your new character.

Sex

Choose the sex of your character.

Education and Profession

Many Maji received education or training along with their instruction in the magical arts and some still maintain a career in addition to or as a cover to their mystical exploits. Education and profession should be decided in a way that matches the character's skills. For example, characters with the Medical skill will be doctors by profession. Characters can be fireman, police officers, professors, truck drivers, lawyers, etc. Any profession is possible.

Race and Nationality

Player characters may be of any race and nationality consistent with the rest of their background and the setting, at the CM's discretion.

Character History

The player can write a brief history for the character. It need not be long. A paragraph or two is sufficient. A background can help solidify the character's personality and preferences. Depending on the situation, it may be written in conjunction with feedback from the CM to decide how the character gained magical instruction, or what's happened to the PC from then until the game begins.

Height and Weight

Players should choose the height and weight of their PCs. Any values may be chosen in the normal human range.

Starting Possessions

It is assumed that each PC begins play owning belongings, transport, and housing suitable to their background and profession. The CM has final say in what possessions a PC can own at character creation and may refuse requests that contradict

the PCs background or grant him or her an unreasonable advantage.

Should the player wish to begin the game with an item that might be unusual but not impossible for them to own, the CM can call for the PC to make a general Luck check modified by the possession's cost or rarity. Use the table below to determine what modifier the PC's Luck score receives. On a successful check, the PC owns the belonging and may add it to their character sheet. If the check fails, the PC cannot begin play with the possession.

Luck Check Modifier for Possessions	
Belonging is cheap or readily available (a cell phone, a leather jacket, or hunting knife)	+20%
Belonging is of average cost or availability (personal computer, motorcycle, or handgun)	+0%
Belonging is of above average cost or uncommon (luxury model car, house, or membership in a private club)	- 20%
Belonging is expensive or rare (limousine, occult library, or automatic rifle)	- 40%
Belonging is has an exorbitant cost or is extremely rare (penthouse apartment, private jet, or minor antiquity)	- 60%

CHARACTER ADVANCEMENT

Characters in MAJUS advance by earning and spending experience points (XPs). Experience is earned through accomplishing goals in the game and by good play. Characters that become involved in the Old Game, either by attempting to advance the plans of one Tower or thwart the designs of another earn experience points depending on how successful their actions are. These awards are cumulative and typically awarded at the end of the adventure. The experience point awards are given to each player character. The following chart lists the experience rewards.

Suggested Experience Point Awards	
Goal Achieved	XP Reward
Players defeat or obstruct a minor enemy	50 XP
Players defeat or obstruct an enemy of equal power to themselves	150 XP
Players defeat or obstruct an enemy of stronger then themselves	300 XP
Players achieve a minor victory in the *Mehen*	500 XP
Players achieve a moderate victory in the *Mehen*	1,000 XP
Players achieve a major victory in the *Mehen*	1,750 XP

Secondly, XP may be awarded for good play at the CM's discretion. These bonus XPs will range from 5-50, and can be awarded for clever ideas, risking one's life for others, etc. These guidelines are intentionally vague so that each CM can decide what action is worth extra XP and how much.

Experience points can be used to raise Ability scores, or to improve and acquire skills and talents.

USING EXPERIENCE POINTS
Experience Points are like money in the bank for player characters. Players can save them up or spend them right away—it's their choice. What can they buy? Higher skill scores, higher Ability scores, brand-new skills, and new adits or paranormal talents.

The table below shows what the player character can buy with XP and how much each item costs.

Players should keep track of XP on their character sheets, adding and subtracting from the total as their characters earn and spend the points. Characters may only "shop" at the end of an adventure.

Notes:

1. Basic Ability scores have a maximum value of 80; players may not raise scores above this limit.

2. Raising an Ability score may cause another score to rise, too: check the formulas for skill scores, adits, paranormal talent scores, and the Unskilled Melee score.

3. New skills are bought at Specialist level. They cannot raise above that level until after the next adventure.

4. A skill cannot be raised more than one level after any given adventure. There's no limit on how many skills they raise, though.

5. PCs can buy any number of magical adits or paranormal talents, and any number of skills, after an adventure, if the CM allows it. The CM may have other guidelines regarding adits and PTs.

6. XP may be spent on any skill, even skills not related to a PC's profession. This reflects the character being placed in new situations.

XP COST CHART	
Use	SP cost
New skill	500 per skill
New magical adit or paranormal talent	750 per power
Raise Basic Ability	500 per point
Raise skill from Specialist to Expert	750 per skill
Raise skill from Expert to Master	1,000 per skill

MAJI RANKS

The more magical skills a Majus acquires, the greater respect he commands from other Maji. An Initiate Majus is more likely to listen to the suggestions of an Adept than those of a Neonate. The CM is encouraged to create his own special ranks and titles awarded within a Majus' Tower, but the following three ranks serve as the basis for all magical hierarchal advancement.

A *Neonate* is any Magus who possesses magical adits of mostly the Specialist level of mastery. A Magus that knows three adits, two of which his is a Specialist in, he is considered a Neonate by his peers.

An *Initiate* is a Magus who is now an Expert in the majority of his magical adits, even if he has reached the Master level in others. A Magus who knows five adits and is an Expert in three and a Master in two, for example, would still be considered an Initiate.

An *Adept* is a Magus who has reached the Master level in the majority of his adits. In the above example, once the Majus raised his skill level in one of his three Expert level adits, he'd be considered an Adept.

A Magus can never be "demoted" for learning a new adit that upsets the majority of his expertise (a Initiate with two Expert adits and a Skilled one learns a new adit at the Skilled level does not become a Neonate again, for example). It merely means he must raise a greater number of adits in skill level before rising to the next rank. It should also be noted that while both a Magus who knows two adits at the Master level and one who has mastered four may both be considered Adepts, the Magus who has achieved mastery in the larger number of magical arts would likely command greater respect amongst his peers.

CHAPTER 4: SKILLS

I n addition to Basic Abilities and talents, each character in MAJUS has skills: special abilities or bits of know-how that stem from training and experience.

Each newly created player character has a number of skills. Characters can gain additional skills and improve their existing ones by spending XP.

NPCs have skills, too. The NPC descriptions in published adventures will include a list of skills these characters have acquired. If the CM creates his or her own adventure, he or she should choose skills for the NPCs to match their roles in the scenario.

SKILL LEVELS

Not everyone who has a skill performs in the same way: you may play tennis very well, but that doesn't mean you're a match for the pro at the local health club. In MAJUS, these differences in ability are represented by three levels of skill: Specialist, Expert, and Master. Specialist is the lowest level; Master is the highest. When characters first acquire a skill, they usually start at Specialist level, and then work their way up. (Practice makes perfect, right?)

SKILL SCORES

Just as with Basic Abilities and talents, characters have a score for each of their skills. Skill scores are based on Basic Abilities, plus the level of skill. Just follow these simple steps to figure out a character's skill score:

1. Find the name of the skill on the Skills List.

2. Follow the formula on the chart to figure out the base score. This always involves adding up a few Ability scores, and dividing the sum by the number of Abilities. Fractions are rounded up.

3. Add the appropriate modifier for the character's level in the skill:

SKILL LEVEL MODIFIERS	
Specialist level:	+15
Expert level:	+30
Master level:	+55

These modifiers are not cumulative. When a character advances to the next skill level, he adds the modifier to his base score, not his previous score.

Example: Harry Adams has just acquired Sword skill. To obtain his skill score, Harry adds his Strength score, 58, to his Agility score, 64, for a total of 122. Next he divides this total by 2, obtaining 61. Sixty-one is his base score. Because Harry has just acquired this skill, he now adds the Specialist modifier to 61, and finds that his skill score is 76 (61+15=76). If Harry ever acquired Expert level in this skill, his score will be 61+30=91; and if he reaches Master level, his score will be 61+55=116.

WILLPOWER AND STAMINA

Several skills use either Willpower or Stamina as part of their base score. Changes in a character's current Stamina and Willpower scores do not affect a character's skill scores, with the exception of the Distance Running and Swimming skills.

SKILL CHECKS

Characters make skill checks to find out how well they use a skill—just as they make Ability checks. Skill checks can be general or specific, depending on the skill; the rules below tell you which kind of check to make. The Basic Action chapter will explain the checks for combat skills. For non-combat skills—which can be just as vital for survival—characters find the results of most specific checks on Column 3 of the Action Table.

EXCLUSIVE SKILLS

Characters can use most weapons without having skills for those weapons; they just use their Dexterity or Unskilled Melee score as the base chance for success. Not all skills work this way; many cannot be used unless characters actually have the skill. Such skills are called exclusive. Characters without exclusive skills may never, under any circumstances, attempt to perform actions that require these skills.

KNOWLEDGE AND RESEARCH SKILLS

Some skills, particularly academic (humanities, social sciences) or scientific skills, involve knowledge of broad areas or research. When these skills are used, use the results for each category below:

KNOWLEDGE CHECKS

Knowledge checks are used to determine what a character currently knows about a subject within his area of expertise.

Failure = The facts or information completely escape the character.

L = *Limited:* Only one relevant fact or detail is known.

M = *Moderate:* Two relevant facts or details are known.

H = *High:* Three relevant facts or details are known.

C = *Comprehensive:* Detailed, expert knowledge is known. It is still possible that some information is outside the character's grasp, but it would be highly specialized or secret. This new information could be learned from another source.

K results are ignored.

RESEARCH CHECKS

Research checks are conducted when an expert seeks to gain new information, whether via reading more literature or conducting scientific experiments. This check reflects both knowing how/where to look for more knowledge and how successful he is at obtaining it.

Failure = The research is a complete failure. No useful results are obtained.

L = *Limited:* The character is able to obtain one new piece of information after 8 hours of research/experimentation.

M = *Moderate:* The character is able to obtain up to two new pieces of information after 4 hours of research/experimentation per item of information.

H = *High:* The character is able to obtain up to four new pieces of information after 2 hours of research/experimentation per item of information.

C = *Comprehensive:* The character is able to obtain a virtually unlimited amount of information after spending at least 1 hour of research/experimentation per item of information. This can be carried on until all useful information about the subject/research problem has been gained.

K results are ignored.

SKILL LIST

Consult the following list of skills as a quick reference. Skill descriptions follow.

COMBAT SKILLS
UNARMED MELEE SKILLS
†Boxing (Str+Dex+Agl)/3
†Wrestling (Str+Agl)/2
†Martial Arts (Str+Dex+Agl+Wpr)/4
†Advanced Self-defense (Str+Dex+Agl+Wpr)/4
†Astral Combat (PCN+WPR+PER)/3

ARMED MELEE SKILLS
Bayonet (Str+Agl)/2
Blackjack (Str+Agl)/2
†Bullwhip (Str+Dex+Agl)/3
Dagger/Knife (Str+Agl)/2
*Lance, horseman's (Str+Agl)/2
Polearm (Str+Agl)/2
Short handled weapons (Str+Agl)/2
Swords (Str+Agl)/2
*Florentine style (Str+Dex+Agl)/3

SPECIAL WEAPONS
†Bola (Dex)
†Lasso (Str+Agl)/2
†Net (Str+Dex+Agl)/3

MOUNTED COMBAT SKILLS
Equestrian (Dex+Agl+Per)/3
*Mounted melee (Weapon skill)
*Mounted missile (Weapon skill)

MISSILE WEAPON SKILLS
Sling (Dex)
Crossbow (Dex)
Shortbow (Dex)
Longbow (Str+ Dex)/2
Automatic Rifle (Dex)
Long barreled gun (Dex)
Pistol (Dex)

THROWN WEAPON SKILLS
Axe (Str+ Dex)/2
Dagger/Knife (Str+ Dex)/2
Dart (Str+ Dex)/2
Javelin (Str+Dex)/2
Spear (Str+Dex)/2
Grenade (Dex)

NON-COMBAT SKILLS
Computers (Pcn+Luck)/2
Demolitions (Pcn+Dex)/2
Disguise (Pcn+Dex)/2
Distance Running (Current Sta)
Electronics (Pcn+Dex+Luck)/3
Forgery (Pcn+Dex)/2
Gambling (Pcn+Luck)/2
Humanities (Pcn+Wpr)/2
Investigation (Pcn+Wpr+Per)/3
Journalism (Per+Wil+Luck)/3
Language (Pcn+Wil)/2
Mechanics (Pcn+Dex)/2
Military (Str+Wpr+Per)/3
Medicine (Pcn+Wpr+Per+Luck)/4
Occult (PCN+WPR+PER)/3
Outdoor Survival (Pcn+Wpr+Luck)/3
†Pilot (Pcn+Dex+Agl)/3
Sciences (Pcn+Wpr)/2
Security Devices (Pcn+Dex+Luck)/3
Social Sciences (Pcn+Wpr)/2
Stealth (Dex+Agl)/2
Stunt Driving (Pcn+Agl)/2
Swimming (Current Sta)
Theft (Pcn+Dex+Wpr)/3
Tracking (Pcn+Luck)/2
† indicates an exclusive skill.
* a skill that can't be acquired without a prerequisite skill.

UNARMED MELEE SKILLS

Unarmed melee skills usually allow a character to make more than one attack in a round. They reflect skill in hand-to-hand fighting styles, including two special kinds: Martial Arts and Advanced Self-defense. Note that Martial Arts is a "cross-over" skill; it allows characters to make both unarmed and armed attacks.

Boxing
Exclusive: Yes
Base: (Str+Dex+Agl)/3
Check: Specific

Characters using Boxing skill are allowed one extra melee attack per round at Specialist level, two extra attacks at Expert level, and three extra attacks at Master level. Thus, a Master Boxer would get four attacks in a melee step when using his Boxing skill. In addition, if the Boxer obtains a "K" result, he forces the defender to make an immediate general check against current Stamina. If the defender fails the check, he is knocked out for 100 minutes (roll a percent). If the defender passes the check, he's still knocked down, according to the normal "K" result.

Wrestling
Exclusive: Yes
Base: (Str+Agl)/2
Check: Specific

When characters use Wrestling skill, any "H" on the results key means that the defender is pinned in a "hold." The defender can do nothing while he's pinned, except try to free himself. The hold is broken if: 1) The defender wins initiative and passes a general Unskilled Melee check, Wrestling check, or Martial Arts check—all with a -20 modifier to his score; or, 2) a third party successfully attacks the Wrestler making the hold, using any combat form.

The Wrestler doesn't have to make a check to maintain a hold; it's automatic each round until someone breaks it. For every round that he's held, the defender receives normal "H" unarmed combat damage.

If a Wrestler obtains a "C" result when using this skill, he has managed to make a stronger hold. The results are the same as "H" results, with two exceptions: the held defender suffers a -40 modifier to his checks (rather than -20), and the damage inflicted each round is normal "C" result unarmed combat damage.

"K" results still apply normally. If a "K" result occurs along with an "H" or "C" result, the defender is knocked down and held. The holding character is also on the ground, maintaining the hold.

Characters using Wrestling skill may declare strangling as a called shot. A "C" result is applied as above,

in addition to the effects of strangling described in Chapter 5.

Martial Arts
Exclusive: Yes
Base: (Str+Dex+Agl+Wpr)/4
Check: Specific

Characters with Martial Arts skill can also make more melee attacks per round: Specialists make two. Experts three, and Masters four. But that's not all; the skill offers other advantages, too:

1. At Specialist level, a skilled character can "call a shot" to inflict up to five wounds—using the armed combat results key. If the attack result is a "C," the defender takes the specified number of wounds.

2. At Expert level, the skilled character may enter combat armed with nunchakus—lethal weapons that consist of two sticks connected by a chain. Characters can attack with one nunchaku in each hand, if they'd like. All attacks made with nunchakus are considered armed melee attacks. Characters without this skill may not use nunchakus.

3. At Master level, the Martial Artist can use shurikens (sometimes called "throwing stars") as thrown weapons up to a range of 30 feet. The Master can throw this weapon during any missile fire step. Each shuriken counts as one missile attack.

In Chapter 5, we explain that characters must choose one combat form each round. Well, here's the exception to the rule: Martial Arts Masters can mix melee and missile attacks as they choose. The maximum number of attacks is still four, so the character might throw one shuriken as his first attack, throw another later, then kick twice, or... declare a kick, then turn around and throw three shurikens. It's up to the Artist to decide.

Advanced Self-Defense*
Exclusive: Yes
Base: (Str+Dex+Agl+Wpr)/4
Check: Specific

Characters must be Masters in either Boxing, Wrestling, or Martial Arts before they can acquire this skill. Once they have Advanced Self-defense skill, however, they can use any of the unarmed melee skills at a level equal to their level in Advanced Self-defense. Of course, if they already have a higher skill level in an unarmed melee skill, they attack at that level, instead.

In addition, characters with Advanced Self-defense skill shift one defense column to the right when defending in melee—as long as their opponent doesn't have this skill, too. Column 10 is the highest column possible.

Astral Combat
Exclusive: Yes
Base: (PCN+WPR+PER)/3
Check: Specific

This skilled is used anytime the character engages in physical combat while astral projecting, regardless of the type of combat (melee or ranged). Since actions in the Bright are governed by thought and not body, the skill covers all weapon types and is used even if the PC fights with a weapon he is not normally skilled with on the physical plane.

ARMED MELEE SKILLS

All Skills
Base: (Str+Agl)/2 (usual)
Check: Specific

Armed melee skills are simply skills with melee weapons. Most do not offer extra attacks per round, but they increase a character's accuracy (chance to hit) with the weapon. The Skills List has all the armed melee options. Many are self-explanatory (e.g. Dagger skill means you have skill with a dagger), so no further description is needed. Those that are unusual in some way, or present an exception to a rule, are listed in detail below.

Bayonet
Characters with this skill gain one additional bayonet attack per round for each level of skill: Specialists can make two attacks, Experts, three; Masters, four.

Blackjack
A blackjack is a nasty weapon that resembles a short, heavy club, usually covered with leather. Characters with this weapon skill can sometimes knock their opponents out, provided they make it a called shot. The opponent must have his back turned, or be surprised. Then if the attacker makes the shot, the opponent's current Stamina score drops to zero immediately, and he falls unconscious.

Bullwhip
Exclusive: Yes
Base: (Str+Dex+Agl)/3
Check: Specific

The base for this skill differs from most others of its kind, so be sure to use the formula given here. An attacker can use the bullwhip two ways: First, he can use it to strike an opponent, although the maximum damage it can cause is "M" on the armed combat key. Second, the attacker can use it to tangle up his opponent: the attacker strikes, and makes tangling a called shot. Any "C" result inflicts no damage, but indicates that the whip is wrapped around the defender, pulling him immediately to the ground. Entangled defenders are helpless. They can free themselves in two rounds, as long as they take no other action during that time.

Lance, horseman's*
Characters with this skill can use any type of cavalry lance as a melee weapon, while they are riding on horseback. A character must have Expert level Equestrian skill before they can acquire this skill. After all, what good would the lance do if you couldn't stay on the horse?. This is a special mounted melee skill; characters with this skill do not also have to acquire Mounted Melee skill with the lance (see below).

Polearms
Characters with this skill can wield polearms and thrusting spears of all types—including pikes, awls, halberds, and other common European polearms.

Short-handled Weapons
Characters with this skill are particularly good at bashing and

chopping with any short weapon other than a sword, knife, or dagger. Examples of weapons for this skill include the club, mace, axe, morning star, and the flail.

Sword

This skill includes any type of weapon with a blade at least 2 feet long. Examples include the short sword, long sword, two-handed sword, broad sword, cutlass, scimitar, and rapier.

Florentine style*

Exclusive: Yes
Base: (Str+ Dex+Agl)/3
Check: Specific

Fighting Florentine style means fighting with a rapier in one hand and a dagger in the other. The rapier is a light sword common in Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries. Florentine fighting is no easy feat; characters must have Sword skill at Master level before they can acquire this skill. They can still make only one attack per round, but opponents must shift their "defense" on the Action Table one column to the left unless they have this skill themselves. At the CM's option, characters may substitute any straight, one-handed sword for the rapier when using this skill.

SPECIAL WEAPONS SKILLS

Bola

Exclusive: Yes
Base: Dex
Check: Specific

The bola is a thrown weapon that entangles its victims and causes normal armed combat damage. Characters with this skill may throw a bola to a distance of 100 feet. "C" results indicate that the victim is tangled in the weapon and suffers damage; other successful results simply indicate normal damage. Entangled de-fenders fall down, and are bound and helpless for at least 2 rounds. The defender can free himself in that time, provided he takes no other action. If a friend of the victim has a knife or similar tool, he can cut
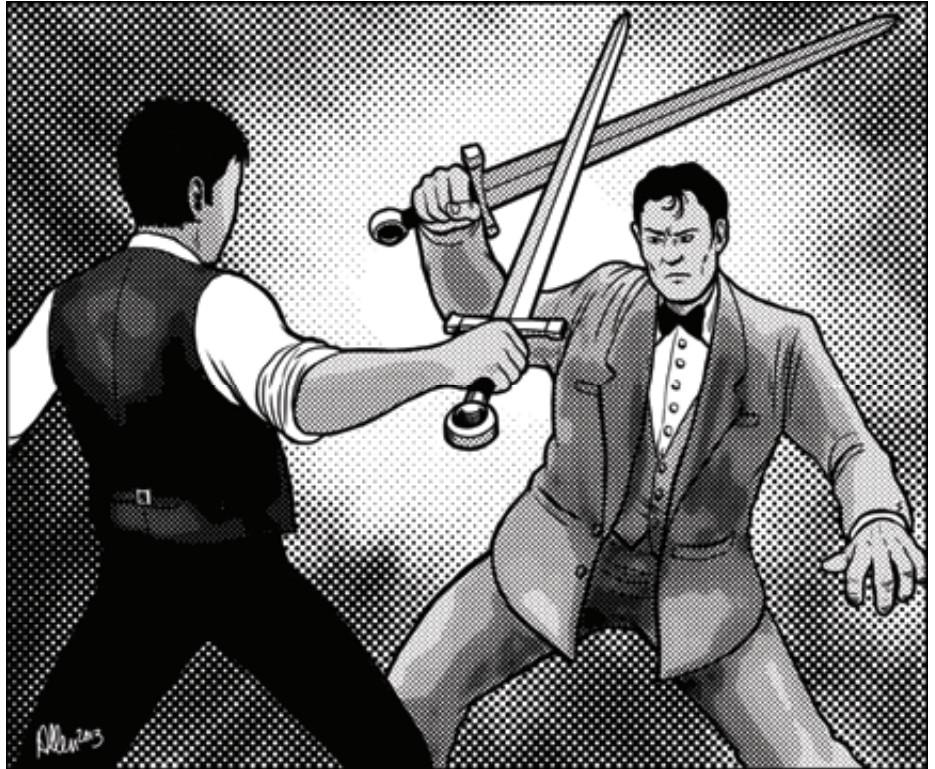
through the bola in 1 round, and free the tangled character.

If players use the optional hit location system in Chapter 5, a character may cut himself free in 1 round if his arms and hands are not entangled.

Lasso

Exclusive: Yes
Base: (Str+Dex)/2
Check: Specific

The lasso is a rope with a sliding noose at one end. It has no effect unless the attacker gets a "C" result. A "C" result indicates that the attacker has successfully entangled the defender in the lasso. The entangled defender is knocked down, bound, and helpless. See the Bola skill description above for a character s ability to free himself (or be freed); the same rules apply. Characters with Lasso skill can throw a lasso no further than 15 feet. No range modifiers apply.

Net

Exclusive: Yes
Base: (Str+Dex+Agl)/3
Check: Specific

Roman gladiators often used this weapon while fighting in "the games." The weapon has no effect except on a "C" result. A "C" result indicates that the defender is entangled in the net. See the notes on the bola for the defender's chance to free himself (or be freed); the same rules apply.

As long as the defender is tangled in the net, he must make a general Agility check each round to remain standing. If he fails the check, he immediately falls down, and is considered "on the ground" until he stands up—which also requires a general Agility check. The entangled defender may use no melee skill in attacking, and defends in melee on Column 1 while entangled.

MOUNTED SKILLS

Equestrian Skill

Exclusive: Yes
Base: (Dex+Agl+Per)/3
Check: General, Specific

Any character without this skill can ride a horse under normal circumstances. This skill allows the character to stay in the saddle (and in control) under more difficult circum-stances: in melee, during high-speed

chases, and during dangerous leaps or stunts, for instance.

The rider must make a general check whenever he tries to do something on horseback that in the CM's judgment could cause him to fall off the horse. A successful check indicates the character stays in the saddle.

If characters use this skill to perform stunts—such as clinging to the side of a moving horse to use the animal for cover—they must make a specific check. Only "C" results indicate success; everything else spells failure.

It always seems to happen: you get up on a high horse, and someone tries to knock you off. When an opponent tries to push or pull a skilled Equestrian from his horse, the Equestrian "defends" against this melee attack by using the defense column lying beneath his skill score (use the ranges at the top).

Mounted Melee*
Exclusive: Yes
Base: as weapon
Check: Specific

Characters with this skill make good use of melee weapons while they're riding. Characters without this skill suffer a -40 modifier, as explained in Chapter 5. Characters must have reached Expert level in the Equestrian skill before they can acquire this skill. Mounted melee attacks are made using the character's skill score with the weapon being used, or his Unskilled Melee score; no modifiers for skill level apply to Mounted Melee itself.

Mounted Missile*
Exclusive: Yes
Base: as weapon
Check: Specific

Characters with this skill have received training to fire or throw weapons on horseback. (Some weapons are excepted; see the Missile Weapons Table in Chapter 5.) Characters without this skill suffer a -40 modifier, as described in Chapter 5. A character must be an Expert (or Master) Equestrian before acquiring this skill. There's no need to advance

in this skill, since the base chance always equals a missile-weapon skill score.

MISSILE WEAPON SKILLS
Missile weapon skills reflect training with any weapon that you can fire, sling, or throw. With the exception of firearms, these skills do not offer additional attacks per round, but they increase a character's chance to hit when using a particular missile weapon.

Sling
Exclusive: No
Base: Dex
Check: Specific

The sling is simply a piece of leather or cloth bound by thongs. To "load" the weapon, the attacker places stones or rounded pieces of metal in the center of the sling. To "fire," the attacker swings the sling over his head, releases one thong, and then lets the contents fly toward the target.

Bow Skills
Exclusive: No
Base: Varies
Check: Specific

There are three bow skills:
Shortbow: Base = Dex
Crossbow: Base = Dex
Longbow: Base = (Str+Dex)/2

In addition to increasing accuracy, these skills increase the speed with which the skilled character can reload and be ready to shoot again. Characters cannot shoot any bow more than once per round. Furthermore, they need several rounds to reload, as shown on the following chart:

BOW RELOADING			
	Rounds Required To Reload		
Level	Long-	Short-	Cross-
Unskilled	5	5	12
Specialist	4	4	10
Expert	3	3	8
Master	2	2	6

Firearms Skills
Exclusive: No
Base: Dex
Check: Specific

All firearms skills allow a character to make one additional missile attack per skill level, per round—up to the maximum rate of fire for the weapon. There are three specific firearms skills:

Automatic Rifle - This skill includes the use of submachine guns, all automatic rifles, and the photon rifle (in sci-fi settings).

Long-barreled guns - This skill includes the use of the arquebus, musket, dragoon musket, rifle and shotgun.

Pistol - This skill includes the use of hand guns of all types, including derringers, revolvers, automatic pistols, and flintlock pistols.

Long-barreled gun skill enables a character to reload a musket or dragoon musket more rapidly than an unskilled character. Here's how long it takes to reload:

Skill Level	Rounds to Reload
Unskilled	4
Specialist	3
Expert	2
Master	1

Thrown Weapon Skills
Exclusive: No
Base: (Str+Dex)/2
Check: Specific

Five separate skills make up this group: Axe/Tomahawk, Dagger/Knife, Dart, Javelin, and Spear. These skills simply increase a character's accuracy when throwing these weapons; they don't allow him to throw more than one weapon per round. Dart skill refers to a special small, thrown weapon used in Roman and Western Medieval cultures; it does not refer to the 20th-century leisure game.

Grenade
Exclusive: No
Base: Dex
Check: Specific

Characters with Grenade skill don't just toss and take their chances; they've practiced to increase their accuracy in throwing any type of hand grenade.

NON-COMBAT SKILLS: THE STUFF OF LIFE

Non-combat skills are simply non-fighting skills. That doesn't mean these skills don't help a character survive—they do! Skills often reflect a character's profession. Characters use non-combat skills to protect themselves, gather information, and succeed in their adventures.

When characters must make a specific check for a non-combat skill, the result always lies on Column 3 of the Action Table.

Computers
Exclusive: Yes
Base: (Pcn+Luck)/2
Check: Specific (secret)

Computer skill enables a character to get information from these machines. The character can reprogram a computer, too, if hackers have tampered with it.

Before a character can interact with a computer, he must first find a terminal or some other communications link. Computer skill does not help a character do this.

Once access has been gained, though, this skill becomes useful. Characters must overcome any security program the computer may have before they can get information or start programming. Computer skill assists them in overcoming security.

Finally, the character must find the information he is looking for in the computer's files, and/or accomplish any reprogramming necessary. Computer skill also assists a character in doing this. Characters can learn just about anything from a computer, as long as that information already lies in the machine. Published adventures will specify how much information a computer contains, and the CM should decide this for his own scenarios, too, before play begins.

To get information from a computer, characters must tell the CM exactly what they want to find out. They cannot ask for "everything the machine has about this guy"; instead, they must be specific. For example, they might ask, "Can we find a record that says this person deposited money in this bank last week? What was the amount?" If they ask, characters can also find out whether someone has reprogrammed the computer.

This skill requires a secret specific check. Use the following key to interpret the results:

L = *Little success*: the character needs 1-100 hours (roll percent dice) to pass the security and get information (or reprogram it).

M = *Moderate success*: the character can get the desired data or do the reprogramming in 1d10 hours,

H = *High success*: the character can get the information or do the reprogramming in 1d10/2, rounded up, hours.

C = *Colossal success*: the character can get the information or do the reprogramming in 1d10 minutes. Ignore "K" results.

The CM may optionally allow characters to make a Luck check when using this skill. If they pass, the characters stumble across extra information or clues, beyond the information they requested.

Demolitions
Exclusive: Yes
Base: (Pcn+Dex)/2
Check: Specific (secret)

Characters with this skill can use explosives of all kinds, if they can get them. When a character uses this skill, he must state exactly what he wishes to happen, including the radius of the area to be affected. The CM treats all explosions as 100% catastrophic damage.

Use of this skill requires a specific check—a secret one at that—rolled by the CM. The CM should use this key to interpret the results:

L = *Limited success*. The explosion has the desired effect, but the blast affects a radius 50 feet larger than intended.

M = *Moderate success*. The explosion has the desired effect, but the blast affects a radius 25 feet larger than intended.

H = *High success*. The explosion has the desired effect, but the blast affects a radius 10 feet larger than intended.

C = *Colossal success*. The explosion has the desired effect in the intended area.

If the specific check shows failure, the CM should roll percent dice. A roll of 01-50 means the explosives did not go off on schedule. They may explode later, however; there's a 10% chance per round until the characters leave the area. A roll of 51-00 means the characters used too much explosive; the blast radius is 100 feet larger than intended.

Disguise
Exclusive: Yes
Base: (Per+Dex)/2
Check: General (secret)

Characters with this skill can use clothing and make-up to change their appearance. They can also disguise other people, if those people are willing.

Characters can use this skill to change basic appearance and facial features; unskilled characters cannot do this. However, this skill cannot change a character's apparent height by more than six inches, nor his or her weight by more than 20 pounds. Furthermore, Disguise skill does not enable a character to pass for a specific person.

Disguise skill requires only a general check. The CM should roll this check secretly, letting the results become known during play.

Success indicates that the disguised characters are taken at face value for at least 12 hours, unless they do something which obviously does not fit within the role they are playing. Roll a new check every 12 hours, until the character removes the disguise.

If characters fail their Disguise check, the first NPC who encounters them and passes a secret general Perception check (rolled by the CM) will realize that the disguised PCs are imposters. If the NPC already knows the disguised PCs' faces, he or she will recognize them. See Chapter 6

for information on how this NPC would react to uncovering such a fraud.

Distance Running
Exclusive: Yes
Base: Current Sta
Check: None

Characters who do not have this skill are allowed to run no more than 30 minutes; they must then get a full eight hours' sleep before running any further. This skill enables a character to run much longer and for greater distances. To find out how long and how far, add the character's skill-level modifier to his or her current Stamina to find the Distance Running score. Now find the column on the Action Table corresponding to this skill score. The column number below shows the speed in miles per hour that the character can run, and the number of hours the character can continue to run before needing eight hours of rest.

Electronics
Exclusive: Yes
Base: (Pcn+Dex+Luck)/3
Check: Specific (secret)

Successful use of this skill lets a character make field repairs of electronic devices such as radios, televisions, communicators, calculators, and listening devices ("bugs"). If the character can find the proper equipment and materials in the field, he or she can make these electronic devices, too. Characters must have an electronics tool kit to use this skill.

Characters make specific checks to find out how well they use this skill. Read the key below to interpret the Action Table results:

L = *Limited success*: repair or construction takes 1d10 hours, and the device will work for 2d10 hours.

M = *Moderate success:* repair or construction takes 1d10/2, rounded up, hours, and the device will function for 3d10 hours.

H = *High success:* repair or construction takes 1d10/2, rounded up in hours, but the device will function 2d10x2 hours.

C = *Colossal success:* repair or construction takes 3d10x2 minutes; the device will work normally as long as it has a power source.

Failure of the check means the character wastes 1d10 hours before he knows that he has failed.

The CM should roll all of these checks secretly and then let characters begin their repair or construction work, not telling them the results until the time indicated by the dice has expired. Characters can always give up before the time runs out, but they have no chance for success if they do.

Forgery
Exclusive: Yes
Base: (Pcn+Dex)/2
Check: Specific (secret)

Characters with Forgery skill can produce hand-written and other documents, given the correct supplies, that look authentic. To forge the document, the character must have a sample of the handwriting or document type (as appropriate) he or she wants to copy. In the case of handwriting, the forger must have a sample of at least 100 words. Then he or she must pass a specific check, rolled secretly by the CM. The key below describes the results:

L = *Limited success*: Characters who know the original handwriting well can make a general Perception check to see if they notice the forgery.

M = *Moderate success*: Same as "L" result, but characters make the Perception check with a -20 modifier.

H = *High success*: Same as "L" result, but characters make the Perception check with -40 modifier.

C = *Colossal success*: Characters without Forgery skill cannot detect the forgery, even if they know the original handwriting or document type well.

The CM should reveal the results during the normal course of play—as the characters themselves would make the discovery. Failure of a check means the forgery is obvious; anyone who knows the genuine handwriting will detect the forgery on sight, no check required.

Characters with Forgery skill can detect forgeries as well as make them. To detect a forgery, they must have a copy of the genuine handwriting or document type to which the forgery can be compared. Detection still requires a specific check. Characters succeed if they get a result equal to or higher than the result earned by the forger (L, M, H, C; L is low, C is high). If the forger is unknown, or didn't make a check, then the CM must specify the level of quality.

Gambling
Exclusive: Yes
Base: (Pcn+Luck)/2
Check: Specific

Characters who have this skill know games of chance extremely well, so they can cheat to skew the odds. Games of chance include poker, craps, and any other card or dice game.

In any game, characters play "hand by hand." All participants in the game must first agree on the stakes: the amount to be wagered. Each participant then rolls percent dice (the CM rolls for NPCs). High roll wins the stakes multiplied by the number of players.

Characters who cheat can increase the amount of their die roll. In order to cheat, the character must declare his intent before anyone rolls the dice. The player rolls a specific check against his character's skill score. The result lies on the defense column below the Perception score of the "duped" character—the victim of the cheat. If more than one NPC is involved in the game, use the highest Perception score.

Use the key below to interpret the result of the check.

L = *Limited success*: the character may add 10 to his or her percent roll.

M = *Moderate success*: same as "L" but add 15 to the roll.

H = *High success*: add 20 to the roll.

C = *Colossal success*: add 40 to the roll.

Failure = The character gets caught—with an Ace down his sock, or extra dice in his pocket. Use the

guidelines in Chapter 6 to see how his victims react.

Humanities
Exclusive: Yes
Base: (Pcn+Wpr+Per)/3
Check: Specific

This is a broad category from which the player must choose a specific humanity discipline. A list and brief description of several humanities follows. This list is not comprehensive, and the CM should add additional ones as the need arises. These skills require a specific check from the Knowledge and Research check results.

History: this skill covers knowledge of historical places and items.

Linguistics: This skill reflects knowledge of language, its structure and use, understanding of dialects, and the ability to distinguish accents. It does not necessarily grant fluency in any particular language. See the Language skill for knowing additional languages.

Literature: This skill represents knowledge of different kinds of literature through time and in different cultures.

Symbolism: This skill covers the knowledge and interpretation of both mundane and magical symbols and is commonly used when interpreting omens and other signs created by the Veiled Masters.

Investigation
Exclusive: Yes
Base: (Pcn+Wpr+Per)/3
Check: Specific (secret)

This skill offers two options:

1. Questioning. A character can use this skill score instead of his Personality score when he questions an NPC about a person or event.

2. General Investigation. A character with this skill can gather information from large groups of minor NPCs, provided he or she spends several hours canvassing a neighborhood, or working through a crowd. This skill enables the character to ask questions that bring out hidden information. (Characters can best use this skill when the CM has not prepared clues and witnesses who can be found in specific locations.)

In both cases, the Investigation skill temporarily boosts the character's Perception: when the character gathers information, he or she does so with a +20 bonus to his Perception score.

This skill could be used to help track down someone in hiding. It can also prove helpful if the PCs are in legal trouble.

The CM rolls a secret specific check to determine how well characters perform this skill. When the character uses the skill to question a specific NPC, use the direct action check results in Chapter 6. When the character uses this skill to make general surveys, use the following results key to find out how well he does:

L = *Limited success*: the character uncovers one major lead or fact, or one important witness in 1d10 hours.

M = *Moderate success*: the character uncovers two major leads, facts, or witnesses in 1d10 hours.

H = *High success*: the character uncovers three leads, facts or witnesses in 1d10/2 (round up) hours.

C = *Colossal success*: the character uncovers four leads, facts, or witnesses, plus many minor details, in 1d10/2 (round up) hours.

Failure means the character spends 1d10 hours in investigation, but still learns nothing of value.

This skill does not allow a character to pull information out of thin air. If no one's around to give him clues, then not even a successful result will offer any useful information. And if no one witnessed a crime, then the Investigator simply cannot gain information from a witness—no witness exists!

Journalism
Exclusive: Yes
Base: (Pcn+Per)/2
Check: General and Specific

Characters with this skill have the abilities of a professional journalist, and may be affiliated with a television station, newspaper, or other news source. In the course of developing this skill the character becomes well traveled and knowledgeable about a variety of things and issues. This skill can be used to know the proper contacts of prominent businesses or governments. It may also be used to know about recent or old news. The previous examples would require a general check of the Journalism skill.

This skill may also be used to investigate an issue, in a similar fashion to the skill Investigation. This is a specific skill check using the results from the Investigation skill, but the time it takes to gain the knowledge is doubled to reflect the fact that a journalist has to track down and converse with sources in order to attain information.

Language
Exclusive: Yes
Base: (Pcn+Wpr)/2
Check: Specific

Characters are fluent in one native language automatically, but this skill may be taken to become fluent in one additional language per skill. This skill can be used both for living languages and more obscure languages that have fallen out of use. Characters may engage in normal conversation, reading, and writing with no required skill check. However, if reading or communicating in a very technical subject or when dealing with a different accent or dialect, a specific skill check is required. This check shifts to column one when looking at results if the character also has the Linguistics (Humanity) skill. See below for interpreting results:

Failure: The character does not understand.

L = *Limited Understanding:* The character understands about 25% of the meaning, but not any complete ideas.

M = *Moderate Understanding:* The character understands about 50% of the meaning, with some but not all ideas understood.

H = *High Understanding:* The character understands about 75% of the meaning, with an understanding

of some of the key points but missing fundamental insight.

C = *Complete Understanding:* The character completely understands.

Mechanics
Exclusive: Yes
Base: (Pcn+Dex)/2
Check: Specific (secret)

Characters can use this skill to build anything from small electrical motors to jet engines and spacecraft drives (in a sci-fi setting). As with the Electronics skill, characters must find the proper materials in the field before they can use Mechanics. The CM rolls a secret specific check when characters use this skill. Use the key listed under "Electronics" to interpret the results.

Military
Exclusive: Yes
Base: (Str+Wpr+Per)/3
Check: Specific

Characters with the Military skill are knowledgeable about military practices and strategies; they can attempt to predict enemy behavior, from how they may attack to what kinds of strategic placements of traps or troops the enemy may be likely to use. When used in this way the skill requires a specific check using the outcomes for Knowledge and research checks. This skill may also be used to influence people in a military situation, either one category better or worse, as desired, in the results from a a Direct Action Check.

Medical Skill
Exclusive: Yes
Base: (Pcn+Wpr+Per+Luck)/4
Check: General

Characters with this skill are medical doctors. Doctors may use their skill to do the following things:

1. Doctors can treat critically wounded characters during combat, providing emergency bindings and pain-killers. Treatment takes two consecutive rounds. During that time, neither doctor nor patient may take any other action or suffer an attack; if either occurs, the treatment is void that round.

Characters who receive these "quick fix" treatments don't have to make a Willpower check each round to take action. They can keep on fighting, but the treatment does nothing to protect them from further wounds or death. Doctors can treat themselves, too, but they must pass a general current Willpower check before they try.

2. If doctors care for wounded characters daily, they double the rate at which the patients heal wounds.

3. In scenarios involving poisons and disease, doctors can diagnose the type of poisoning or disease and administer the appropriate antidote or cure/treatment. Antidotes save characters who would otherwise die from the poisoning.

Doctors must pass a general check every time they hope to use this skill successfully in the ways mentioned above. This skill may also be used in a specific check for a Knowledge and Research check when trying to find the cure for an unknown disease or other medical situation.

Occult
Exclusive: Yes
Base: (PCN+WPR+PER)/3
Check: Specific

Characters with this skill are well-versed in esoteric lore and have a basic understanding of magic, myths, purported monsters, and other kinds of supernatural or paranormal phenomenon. Knowledge of these things does not necessary imply belief, and just as many skeptics and debunkers possess this skill as do Maji, psychics, and other workers of supernatural effects. This skill does not impart the ability to cast spells either and those wishing to master the workings of magic are better served by seeking out esoteric masters to study under.

The Occult skill covers information about magical practices, objects and rituals used in magic making, cryptozoological creatures, ancient myths and legends, famous artifacts and grimoires, and secret societies. It also allows the character to know and identify "public" occult figures and their known allies. Non-Maji with the skill cannot use it to divine any information about the *Mehen* and its players, but Maji can apply this skill in that manner with a successful use. This skill requires a specific check from the Knowledge and Research check results.

Outdoor Survival

Exclusive: Yes
Base: (Pcn+Wpr+Luck)/3
Check: Specific

This skill enables characters to find food, water, and shelter when these things are in short supply. If they find shelter, they can prevent exposure damage; see Chapter 5. Characters must make a specific check to use this skill, and they can try only once per day. Use the key below to interpret results:

L = *Limited success:* the character finds sufficient food, water, and shelter to serve one character for one day.

M = *Moderate success:* the character finds sufficient food, water, and shelter to serve two characters for one day.

H = *High success:* the character finds sufficient food, water, and shelter to serve four characters for one day.

C = *Colossal success:* the character finds sufficient food, water, and shelter to serve all desired characters for one day.

Failure means that the character doesn't turn up a thing: no water, no food, no shelter.

Pilot

Exclusive: Yes
Base: (Pcn+Dex+Agl)/3
Check: General

Characters with Pilot skill can fly helicopters, aircraft and spacecraft (space shuttles or more advanced craft in a sci-fi setting), and fire any weapons on those craft—though not necessarily at the same time.

Sciences

Exclusive: Yes
Base: (Pcn+Wpr+Per)/3
Check: Specific

This is a broad category from which the player must choose a specific science. A list and brief description of several sciences follows. This list is not comprehensive, and the CM should add additional ones as the need arises. These skills require a specific check from the Knowledge and Research check results.

Biology: This is the study of all life, including plants, animals, and fungi. Knowledge of animal behavior is part of this skill. This skill includes expertise in physiology and genetics, and can be used for identifying organisms. A biologist may attempt to find cures for disease or engage in genetic engineering (given the proper facilities).

Chemistry: This area includes knowledge of chemicals and chemical reactions. It is useful for constructing, identifying, or synthesizing substances.

Geology: This skill provides knowledge of physical planetary processes like volcanism, plate tectonics, and erosion. This includes information about minerals, how to identify them, and how planetary structures are formed.

Physics: This skill provides knowledge of the physical properties of the universe, from the law of gravity or thermodynamics to quantum physics.

Security Devices

Exclusive: Yes
Base: (Pcn+Dex+Luck)/3
Check: Specific

Use of this skill enables a character to find and defeat security devices, including locks, traps, alarms, and electrical or electronic gadgets. Each use of the skill requires a specific check, with results from the following key:

L = *Limited success:* the character successfully defeats any normal lock or combination lock, but fails to find and defeat electrical or electronic alarm systems, which go off!

M = *Moderate success:* the character finds and defeats any lock and electrical alarm system, but fails to detect and defeat any electronic system (such as "electric eyes." pressure plates, etc.): the latter, unfortunately, go off.

H = *High success:* same as "M" result, but the character does find electronic systems and realizes he cannot defeat them before they go off.

C = *Colossal success:* the character find and defeats all locks and alarms systems.

Failure indicates the character is unable to deal with a given lock or system until he or she has gained one level in this skill.

Social Sciences

Exclusive: Yes
Base: (Pcn+Wpr)/2
Check: Specific

This is a broad category from which the player must choose a specific social science. A list and brief description of several social sciences follows. This list is not comprehensive, and the CM should add additional ones as the need arises. These skills require a specific check from the Knowledge and Research check results.

Anthropology: This skill grants knowledge of different cultures and cultural practices, from kinship to religion and customs. It also grants information about human evolution and knowledge of fossils and the human skeleton. In addition, the character is versed with archaeology and the techniques of excavation.

Geography: Characters with this skill understand the weather, flora, fauna, cultures, and land characteristics of an area. This skill also grants knowledge of how to use and design maps.

Psychology: This skill provides knowledge of psychological disorders and individual behavior. This skill is useful for predicting behavior or gaining insight into motives, and diagnosing and counseling mental disorders or other psychological ailments.

Sociology: This skill provides insight into societal structure and patterns of human behavior at the population level, from crime rates to what variables influence specific trends.

Stealth

Exclusive: Yes
Base: (Dex+Agl)/2
Check: Specific

Stealth is the ability to move silently and stay out of sight, using

darkness, doorways, or other natural cover to remain hidden. Characters who use this skill successfully—that is, who escape detection—can surprise their opponents by applying a -20% to their Perception checks. Characters who use this skill must make a specific check each round. Read results from this key:

L = *Limited success*: victims of the "sneak" must make a general Perception check with a -20 modifier in order to see or hear the skilled character. ("Victims" include anyone whom the skilled character is trying to bypass or sneak up on.)

M = *Moderate success*: same as "L" result but the Perception check modifier is -30.

H = *High success*: same as "L" result but the Perception check modifier is -40.

C = *Colossal success*: same as "L" result but the Perception check modifier is -60.

Failure means the "victims" have normal chances to spot the character using the skill; they must pass a general Perception check, but suffer no modifiers.

Stunt Driving
Exclusive: Yes
Base: (Pcn+Agl)/2
Check: General

Characters with this skill can perform dangerous "stunts" while driving an automobile, pick-up truck, or any light motor vehicle—motorcycles included. Characters may make "bootleg" turns with a car: forcing the vehicle to turn 180 degrees at high speed in just one round. They may also ram other vehicles, forcing the other driver to make a driving check to stay in control. These are just two of the many possible stunts.

Characters can also use this skill to throw another character off a car, when he's clinging to the roof or hood. The character being thrown must pass a general Agility check with a -40 modifier to stay on the car.

Use of this skill requires a general check each round that it's used. The skill score is modified by -01 for every mile per hour of vehicle speed in excess of 50 miles per hour. If

drivers fail the check, they have an accident (see Chapter 5).

Characters can substitute their Stunt Driving skill score for their general Driving score in normal vehicle action (see Chapter 5).

Swimming
Exclusive: Yes
Base: Current Sta
Check: None

Swimming skill enables a character to swim distances of more than one mile. Characters without this skill can only swim one mile before they are forced to rest. In addition, skilled characters can stay in the water for up to 24 hours, and still make forward progress. Find the character's current Stamina score on the ranges above the Action Table. Then multiply the number of the defense column below by 3. The result equals the number of miles that the character can cover while swimming and floating for 24 hours.

Characters who use this skill must make a general Luck check after 24 hours, unless they have reached land. Those who pass the Luck check find some means of support in the water (a log, floating debris, etc.) that will enable them to stay afloat and keep moving forward for another 24 hours. Those who fail this Luck check can only float and drift for another 24 hours, with no additional support.

After 48 hours in the water, the character must make a second general Luck check. Success means the character is rescued, finds land, or otherwise gets out of the water. Failure means the character drowns.

No character can swim for longer than one day without support (though he can still float or drift). Characters must rest on land for a full day after swimming for 24 hours or more.

This skill also grants knowledge and ability to use all gear associated with scuba diving.

Theft
Exclusive: Yes
Base: (Pcn+Dex+Wpr)/3
Check: Specific (secret)

Theft allows a character to pick pockets, filch items in plain view while standing in the middle of a

crowd, and so on. Any character can attempt to steal things when no one's around or looking, however. Each time the character uses the skill, the CM must make a secret specific check. The defense column matches the highest Perception score of the victim or onlookers, as long as they aren't distracted. Read results from the following key:

L = *Limited success*: the character gets the item desired, but someone immediately notices that it is missing.

M = *Moderate success*: for 1d10 minutes, no one discovers the theft.

H = *High success*: for 1d10 hours, no one discovers the theft.

C = *Colossal success*: no one discovers the theft for 24 hours, and no suspicion is directed toward the character who took it.

Failure, or course, indicates that the character is caught red-handed while attempting to take the item.

Tracking
Exclusive: Yes
Base: (Pcn+Luck)/2
Check: Specific (secret)

This skill allows a character to follow the tracks or trail of an animal or character outdoors. The skill requires a specific check when it is first used, and a new check each time the trail is interrupted and then found again. The CM should roll these checks secretly. Results are interpreted on the following key:

L = *Limited success*: the character can follow the trail for one mile, at which point it is interrupted. If the character searches carefully, he or she will find the trail again in 1d10 hours.

M = *Moderate success*: Same as the "L" result, but the character can follow the original trail for 2 miles and find the trail again in 1 to 5 hours.

H = *High success*: Same as the "L" result, but the character can follow the original trail for 10 miles and find an interrupted trail in only 1d10 minutes.

C = *Colossal success*: The character can follow the trail to its ultimate end.

Failure of the check indicates the character cannot find the trail. The CM may optionally rule at any time that bad weather or other factors cancel any result except a "C."

CHAPTER 5: MAGIC

N o other aspect of a Majus' existence can define him better than his command of the supernatural forces the produce magical effects. From his introduction into the magical world, a Majus works to master the eldritch paths known as adits that allow him to produce wondrous effects that seemingly break the laws of reality. This chapter explains both how magic works and the magical adits that draw upon those primordial forces.

HOW MAGIC WORKS

In theory, working magic is a simple process. The Majus draws energy from both the material and astral planes, focusing this power within himself. He shapes this energy with his mind, visualizing the effect he wishes to produce, and then releases the energy back into the world where, if he was successful in this whole process, it creates the effect the Majus wishes. The method is simple enough that almost anyone can be taught to work magic and consistently produce results.

There is a reason, however, that the world is not filled with magicians. Magic requires a mental discipline that is rare in the modern age, a time when most people work dreary jobs, consume mass produced, easily prepared foods, and watch mindless entertainment. In an ADHD world, it's rare to encounter anyone with the ability to focus their thoughts, still their mind, and produce REAL magic.

The other factor that keeps magic out of the hands of the masses is belief. A Majus works magic successfully because he completely believes he can. This belief is regularly reinforced by his successes, and therefore his acumen grows with practice. The average person, someone who has been told time and time again that magic isn't real and that spectacular, inexplicable events are either illusions, hoaxes, or coincidences, cannot generate the belief he or she needs to effectively work the unseen forces of the universe to their advantage. Yet even with the knowledge that magic is real and the training to produce it, Maji—especially beginning ones—still require assistance to make magic work.

THE LAWS OF MAGIC

Magic is as much a science as it is an art form and it conforms to certain inflexible regulations that both help and hinder its effectiveness. These laws stretch across cultures and even a brief survey of magical traditions discovers that, no matter how you dress the Majus, the rules he abides by are the same.

The most elemental law is that an unfocused mind will produce no change. A Majus who is not in the right mindset works poor magic—when it works at all. For this reason, most Maji require a fair amount of tools, exercises, and surroundings to work magic. These elements help the Majus create the necessary psychodrama he needs to plug their mind and body into the cosmos.

What the Majus does, uses, or where he works is incidental and is largely dependent on who taught him to work magic (or what "school" of magic he considers himself). Swords, daggers, candles, cups, wands, staves, pentacles, Seals of Solomon, incense, herbs, poultices, dancing, singing, chanting, sex, drugs, music, meditation, clothing, etc. are all used in magical ritual to focus the Majus' mind and produce potent effects.

Likewise, calm surroundings or a dedicated space for magic work greatly assists the Majus in his magic. Without these elements, his spells are less likely to succeed. As a Majus advances in skill, however, these elements become unnecessary and his ability to work magic "on the fly" increases. A true master of Magic needs nothing but his mind to make magic happen.

This law also means that magic performed in chaotic situations, while injured or ill, or when under the effects of mind-altering substances produce less predictable results. It is much more difficult for a novice Majus to Hex a target in the middle of Times Square during rush hour than it is to do so in a pastoral glade near a gently babbling brook.

The next law of magic is that objects retain their connections even after they are separated. This law of contagion is why hair, blood, finger nails, saliva, and other bodily fluids and parts are regularly used in magical spells. Having a lock of hair from your target or a cigarette butt she recently smoked in your hand helps focus the spell on its intended target and produces stronger magic. A caster who possesses a personal object or physical component of his target has all negative modifiers imposed by distance (see below) reduced by half.

A third law of magic is that knowledge is power. The more a Majus knows about his target, the better magic works. For this reason, especially in the *Mehen,* knowing one's enemy is extremely important. A Majus preparing to confront an opponent will spend weeks, months, or years learning as much as he can about his target. He'll bribe officials for birth records, hire private investigators to take photographs, pay hackers to break into computers, and interview friends, co-workers, and childhood acquaintances of the target to gather information that will help him direct his magic against his foe.

This law works equally well against objects and places. A Majus looking to ward a building against demons will pull blueprints and research its construction, while one

seeking to charge an object with power will track down its provenance or research who made it and when.

The most powerful form of the law of knowledge is the true name. All sentient creatures possess a secret name, but only the magically inclined are aware of their own. Knowing the true name of a creature gives the Majus almost utter control over them and makes it nearly impossible for the being to avoid any spells cast by the Majus. It is for this reason that many Maji adopt "magic names" when initiated into a Tower or upon beginning their training. There is a plethora of Maji with names like "Shadow," "Silverwolf," "Moon-Knower," and "Thoth," none of which are their given names.

True names are a rich commodity in the magical world and Maji often go to great lengths to seek out the true names of their targets. Some study their victims intensely, looking for any slip or hint that might give away their magical identity, while other summon up demons or angels in hopes that these entities might know the truth. Even a part of a true name is extremely valuable and some Maji have bought their lives or freedom by offering their enemies a few letters from their true name.

TIME REQUIREMENTS FOR SPELLS

Novice Maji require time to center their minds, channel the energies that power magic, visualize the spell's effect, and then release that energy. During this time, he uses his magical tools to concentrate his focus and to help ensure the spell's success. It is only with experience that the Majus can create magical effects without a prolonged build-up.

For most spells, it takes a Majus with a Specialist level of expertise in the Magical adit being employed one minute of casting time for each point of Willpower the spell requires. The only exception to this is the Divination adit, which takes 30 seconds per Willpower point spent. Interrupting the Majus during this period requires the caster to make a general LUCK check to avoid spoiling

Laws of Magic Modifiers	
Working without ritual (no tools or other ephemera utilized in spell-casting):	-20%
Caster is distracted (chaotic/loud conditions; under the effects of drugs):	-15%
Caster is critically injured:	-40%
Casting is rushed:	-40%
Casting is prolonged (taking twice the normal time to enact):	+15%
Target is greater Rank than caster:	-20% per Rank difference
Possesses an item belonging to or a physical piece of the target:	+15%*
Knows nothing about the target:	-30%**
Caster is physically touching his target: +15%	+15%
Has extensive knowledge of the target:	+25%
Knows the true name of their target:	+75%
Summoning a Major Spirit:	-20%
Per additional Willpower point spent above required amount:	+1% (max. of +20%)

*This also reduces range penalties by half.
**This penalty does not apply if the Magus can at least see his target, either in person or in a photographic or video image of the subject.

the spell entirely. If successful, he can attempt to continue the casting, but suffers the -15% penalty for working spells while distracted. If this penalty is already affecting the Majus, it is doubled to −30%. Continued interruptions require additional LUCK checks, but do not increase the penalty further.

Upon reaching the Expert level of expertise in an adit, this casting time is dramatically reduced and the Majus can now focus, visualize, and cast a spell in under a minute. The spell now needs only 1 second of preparation and focus for every point of Willpower the spell requires. For example, a spell powered by 20 Willpower points can be thrown in 4 game rounds (20 seconds). The Majus must still have at least one of his magical tools with him to avoid negative modifiers and the effects of being interrupted are still applicable.

Majus that achieve the Master level of expertise in an adit can work spells on the fly, centering, powering, and visualizing the spell in seconds. The Majus needs only a single game round to cast a spell from a Mastered adit, but he can perform no other action in that round, including movement. Doing so automatically breaks his focus and causes the spell to fail.

All Majus can attempt to rush their spell castings, but suffers a -40% penalty in doing so. No spell may be rushed faster than the time required by the next highest level of expertise. Thus, a Specialist could attempt to cast a spell at the rate of 1 second per Willpower point spent (Expert-level expertise) and an Expert could try to cast a spell in a single round (Master-level expertise). As always, the Majus can perform no other action other than casting when rushing a spell. No spell can be worked in less than 1 game round, regardless of the Majus' level of expertise.

RANGE

Magic is a potent force, one unimpeded by gravity, wind resistance, and other variables that affect a physical object attempting to reach a distant target. Spells can target individuals on the opposite side of the Earth from the caster and still have an effect. However, as with most things, casting spells are easier when the Majus can see or better yet touch his intended target.

Casting a spell on a subject the Majus is in physical contact with grants the Majus a +10% bonus to his adit score for the check. If the caster can see his target (with his own eyes or through another means such as a

security camera or webcam), the Majus' adit score is unchanged.

Attempting to cast a spell on a subject that the Majus cannot see is possible, but the spell's potency is diminished. The greater the distance between caster and target, the more the spell is weakened. Use the following guidelines to determine how large a negative modifier is applied to the caster's adit score.

- If the Majus cannot see his target, but is still within close proximity to him (within a few city blocks or on the other side of a rural town), the caster suffers a -20% penalty to his score.
- A target located in the same city or other large local area imposes a -30% penalty to the Majus' adit score.
- Casting a spell on a subject in the same geographical region (same area of the country, for instance) inflicts a -40% penalty to the caster's adit score.
- If the target is in the same nation or continental region as the Majus, the caster's score is reduced by -50%
- If the target is on another continent from the Majus, a -60% penalty is applied.
- If the target is on another place of existence, the Majus' adit score is reduced by -80%

Note that if the Majus has a personal belonging or a physical piece of the target's body, these penalties are reduced by half as indicated by the law of contagion under the Laws of Magic above.

"HANGING" SPELLS

Due to their long casting times (especially for novice Maji), many sorcerers prepare a spell or two they anticipate being useful in the hours ahead by partially casting them ahead of time. Then, when needed, they complete the magical process to make the spell take effect. This process is called "hanging a spell."

To hang a spell, the Majus must undergo all the normal steps required to enact its magic, including the

expenditure of Willpower points. He assembles his ritual tools and any adjuncts he intends to use, works his magic, and then halts the spell process with but a single step remaining, usually the final spoken phrase that enacts its magic. This creates a matrix of spell energy on the Astral plane that follows the Majus about. Willpower points that are spent in the casting of a hanging spell are not recovered through rest as normal. Instead, those points remain tied up in the spell and the Majus cannot replenish them until after the spell has either been enacted or the time it can be maintained elapses.

There is a limit to the amount of spell energy a Majus can tie up in hanging spells. The base number of spells he can create is determined by his Willpower score. Use the chart below to find the base number of hanging spells allowed at one time:

Willpower Score	Hanging Spells Allowed
26-36	0
37-47	1
48-58	2
59-69	3
70-80	4

For each Rank the Majus possesses above Neonate, he can maintain another hanging spell. Thus, a Master Majus with a Willpower score of 72 can have up to six hanging spells at a single time provided their cost does not exceed his total pool of Willpower points. Maji cannot willingly create hanging spells that reduce their current Willpower to less than 21 points.

Hanging spells deteriorate over time and how long they remain active depends on the Majus' skill in the adit that creates the spell. A Majus who is a Specialist in the adit can maintain a hanging spell for six hours. An Expert's hanging spell lasts for twelve hours, and a Master in the adit that created the spell can maintain a hanging enchantment for up to 24 hours before it dissipates. Once a hanging spell collapses, the Majus regains the Willpower points

spent to cast it at the normal recovery rate.

If a Majus knows multiple versions of a magical adit (i.e. he has above Specialist level mastering in the magical path) he must stipulate which spell power he is hanging when the spell is prepared. Multiple effects of the same adit can be hung provided the total Willpower can be met by the Majus.

CASTING IN CONCERT

Maji can pool their talents to offset the mental drain of working magic. All participating Maji must have the sufficient level of expertise in the adit being used to produce the intended effect (i.e. if the Maji are attempting an Expert-level effect, each Magus assisting the casting must be an Expert or better in the adit.

When a spell is cast in concert, one of the Maji is designated the lead caster and must contribute 50% of the required Willpower to enact the spell. The remaining Maji then expend the remainder of the Willpower required. To do so, each must first make a successful general check of the adit being employed. A Majus succeeding in this check can then contribute Willpower to enact the spell. Maji who fail the check cannot spend Willpower on the casting.

Each Majus who successfully participates in the concert casting declares how many Willpower points he is to expend. If the total is enough to meet the required Willpower cost of the spell, it takes affect as normal. If the total declared Willpower is less than the amount needed, the lead caster must contribute enough additional Willpower to cover the deficit. If he does not or cannot, the spell fails. Willpower that exceeds the spell's required cost can be spent to increase the chance of success at the usual +1% per additional Willpower point, but is limited to a maximum of 20 points as normal. Any excess Willpower is lost.

If the Maji working in concert are all of various level of expertise (but still knowledgeable enough to enact the spell's effect), the casting time

required for the concert spell is equal to the slower rate amongst the participating Maji. Therefore, if three Maji, a Specialist, Expert, and Master were casting a Specialist-level adit effect in concert, the casting requires 1 minute per Willpower point spent to take effect. Concert castings can be rushed, but suffer the normal penalty.

MAJI VS. MAGES

Although most of this chapter concerns Maji and the way they perform magic, most of this information also applies to other magicians, witches, shamans, and other non-Maji practitioners of magic. This leads the reader to ask "What's the difference?"

A Majus is a worker of magic who is descended from the original Sumerian sorcerer-priests and whose destiny is intertwined with the Skein. Although mortal, they possess a natural talent for working magic and are therefore capable of producing magical results far beyond the norm of the average magician.

On the other hand, "mages" are those wonder-workers who do not share the Sumerian bloodline (no matter how diluted). The term is an inclusive one and covers witches, shamans, Hermetic sorcerers, Cabbalists, medicine men, druids, Satanic priests, neo-pagans, etc. These people can work magic, often quite effectively, but will never master the process the way Maji do. For this reason, it is extremely rare to encounter a mage who has a skill level greater than Expert in any magic adit and a Majus will never meet one who has reached the Master level of more than one adit.

Nearly all mages unknowingly owe their talents to a true Majus, for it was the Maji who established the archaic secret societies, magical lodges, nocturnal covens, and other mystic schools as pawns in the *Mehen.* Over the centuries, the smidgen of magic they taught their minions became both thaumaturgical and theurgical traditions that still continue into the modern age.

Should the CM or the players wish to introduce non-Maji magic practitioners into the campaign, they are created largely as Maji PCs are with a few exceptions. Firstly, mages do not gain the Aura Site paranormal talent for free at character creation, although they may acquire it through normal means at the CM's discretion. In addition, non-Maji are subject to the NPC limitations in the acquisition of paranormal talents.

Secondly, starting mages begin with two magical adits, not three. Like Maji, mages can choose to pick one less magical adit at character creation and replace it with a paranormal talent (including Aura Sight). Thirdly, although mages can "hang spells" as Maji do, they are treated as having a -20 penalty to their Willpower score for the purpose of determining the number of "hanging spells" they can have prepared at any given time. Lastly, mages cannot tap into the forces of Synchronicity (see Chapter 9) as Maji can.

During the course of the campaign, mages gain experience as Maji do and pay the same costs to acquire or improve skills, adits, and abilities. However, they are limited to how far they can advance their magical adit. Mages may only ever reach the Master-level of expertise in a single adit, although they can advance any number of other adits to Expert-level with time, experience, and training. Because of this limitation, it is impossible for a mage to ever exceed the rank of Initiate, making it much more difficult for him to work effective magic against higher-ranking Maji as per the laws of magic.

MAGICAL ADITS

Magic and humanity have existed together for at least 40 thousand years, but it wasn't until the Maji appeared in Sumer that the practice of magic became an elevated art form, rising above the concerns of the hunt and fertility of the tribe. The first Maji produced the paths of magical study and practice known collectively as the adits. Each adit is a pathway of magic art that concentrates on producing a certain type of effect.

An adit is not a singular power, but rather a collection of various spells, rituals, and enchantments dedicated to a specific subject or task. When a Majus uses an adit, he chooses from the multitude of magical spells and rites he has learned during the course of his mystical instruction, picking one most applicable to the result he wishes to produce, the subject he is targeting, and other esoteric variables too complex to detail herein. All of these spells collectively form a particular adit. The adits can heal wounds, summon spirits, create magical talismans, curse one's enemies, and create other spectacular effects.

For ease of play, magical adits are similar to skills. Rather than require each Majus to keep track of all the various spells and rituals he knows, his rating in a magical adit is used to resolve the action of casting spells pertaining to the type of effect he wishes to create. Players and CMs can further elaborate on this system, creating specific names and details for spells of a single adit, but this is not required for adjudicating magical spells in the game.

Adits are considered exclusive skills and cannot be attempted by the untrained. When rolling to determine the success of an adit, the column on the Action Table pertaining to the subject's Willpower score is used to find the spell's success. If the adit is used against a non-living target, Column 3 on the Action Table is used to find the spell's effectiveness.

Like skills, adits have three levels of mastery: Specialist, Expert, and Master. Maji increase in mastery of adits by spending experience points. Increased knowledge of an adit allows the Majus to produce more spectacular effects. Spells cast using the adits cost Willpower points, which are expended when the spell is either cast or "hung." The number of Willpower points required is dependent on the effect the Majus wishes to produce. Each adit's description contains a Willpower Cost entry which is divided into three categories. The first category is the

cost for producing a Specialist level effect, the second entry is for casting an Expert level effect, and the third is for a Master level spell.

Animagic
Base: (STR + WIL+ PER)/3
Willpower Cost: 5/10/20
Check: Specific

This adit deals with all forms of human-animal interaction. It is no longer common amongst city-dwelling Maji, but remains a potent form of spellcasting in the repertoires of rural or "primitive" players of the Old Game.

Some animals are easier to influence than others and the adit's score is modified by the animal's type. Mammals grant a +5% bonus to the adit's score, while birds, amphibians, and reptiles provide no modifiers. Insects and fish are most difficult to influence and all uses of this adit against them are at a -10% penalty. Possessing a physical part of an animal of the same type the Majus is attempting to work magic on grants a +5% bonus. Having a physical part from the same exact animal as the Majus is casting a spell on grants the usual +15% bonus as per the laws of magic.

A *Specialist* of this adit casts spells that can calm or agitate animals, making them friendly to his presence or aggressive against enemies. The spells provide no means of control over the animal(s), so caution must be used when casting. For each degree of success on the specific check, the Majus can adjust the animals' Situation Check Results by a single step in either direction (but only in one direction). Use the following key to determine how many steps the Majus shifts the animals' attitude:

L = Limited change: ± 1 step.
M = Moderate duration: ± 2 steps.
H = High duration: ± 3 steps.
C = Critical duration: ± 4 steps.

Thus, a Majus who scores an "H" result on his spell's specific check could improve a curious animal's attitude up to "eager" or worsen it to "scornful." It remains in the CM's

hands to determine the exact effect this has on the animal's actions, but most animals with an attitude of "scornful" or worse are likely to attack any creature they perceive as a threat. Regardless of the result, the animal's adjusted attitude lasts for 20 minutes after which the adit's effect fades.

When a Majus becomes an *Expert* in Animagic, he can establish an empathetic connection with an animal, allowing for both communication, and with great effect, the creation of a magical companion to assist him in his spell work. If successful, this communication lasts for 1 hour. The level of communication between the Majus and the animal is determined by the specific check. Use the following key to determine the quality of their connection:

L = Limited communication: The Majus and animal can read each other's emotional states.

M = Moderate communication: The Majus and animal can communicate enough to ask and answer simple "yes/no/maybe" questions. The animal's response is limited to its own intelligence and personality. The Majus must vocalize in a manner similar to the animal's natural "voice" in order to communicate and the creature answers in kind.

H = High communication: The Majus and animal can communicate at the conversational level, allowing for an information exchange between equals. The Majus can speak normally and is able to understand the animal's natural "voice" in reply.

C = Complete communication: The Majus and animal achieve utter telepathic rapport that allows for complete, unspoken communication. Although the animal's response is still limited by its own intelligence, personality, and perceptions, the Majus can make leaps of logic to fill in gaps in the creature's understanding of situations, people, and events.

A Majus who achieves a "C" result with an animal can attempt to make

it their magical assistant or "familiar." Doing so requires a general check of this adit modified by the usual laws of magic and the species adjustments listed above. If the check is a success, the Majus must then expend 50 Willpower points to make the animal his companion. If the general check fails, the animal will never become the Majus' familiar regardless of future Animagic used on it.

A *Master* of Animagic can now summon animals to his location and coerce them to serve him. The success of this spell casting is determined by both the specific check and natural limitations. Even a Majus who gets a "C" result in the specific check will have little luck summoning a blue whale to help him in the middle of the Sahara Desert or a polar bear in Tahiti (extraordinary circumstances not withstanding). Use the following key to determine the type and number of animals summoned:

L = Limited summoning: The Majus calls a single, common animal from the surrounding region.

M = Moderate communication: The Majus summons 1d10 common animals from the surrounding region or a single, uncommon animal.

H = High communication: The Majus summons 2d10 common animals from the surrounding region or 1d10 uncommon animals.

C = Complete communication: The Majus summons 3d10 common animals from the surrounding region, 2d10 uncommon animals, or a single exceptional specimen providing one is in the area.

The animals called are dependent on both the type indicated by the Majus in the casting and by their availability as determined by the CM. A Majus attempting to summon a squirrel in a city park would have little trouble doing so and could easily call up to 30 of them with a "C" success. Likewise, with an M result, he could summon a coyote that sometimes enters the city to scavenge. With a "C" result, the Majus could call a silverback gorilla to him—if there was one in the local zoo and it could escape its enclosure. The

CM has final say on what is available to answer the Majus' call and how long it takes for them to arrive. A common animal will generally arrive in 1d10/2 minutes, an uncommon one in 3d10 minutes, and an exceptional animal in 1d10/2 hours (1 hour minimum). Once in the Majus' presence, they understand the Majus whole or in part (use the table for the Expert application of this spell to determine the level of communication granted by the summoning) and obey his commands for a number of minutes equal to the Majus' Personality score.

Blessing
Base: (WIL+ PCN + PER)/3
Willpower Cost: 5/15/20
Check: Specific

This adit cloaks the target in beneficial energy that rewards them with improved luck and protection.

Specialists of this adit bestow a blessing upon themselves or others than manifests as a bonus to their Ability, skill, adit, and talent scores. The duration and bonus size is determined by the results of the specific check. Use the following key to determine how long and how strong the blessing is:

L = Limited duration: The target's next check (+5% bonus).

M = Moderate duration: Any check in the next 30 minutes (+10% bonus).

H = High duration: All checks in the next hour (+15% bonus).

C = Critical duration: All checks in the next three hours (+20% bonus).

The benefits granted by the use of the adit can be counteracted by the successful use of the Counterspell adit (see below).

Maji with the *Expert* level of this adit not only enjoy the benefits provided at the Specialist level, but also gain the ability to alter fate to their benefit. A successful casting of this adit gives them a number of "rerolls" that can be used during the duration of the spell to replace failed or poor check rolls. Use the following key to determine how many re-rolls are granted:

L = Limited duration: One reroll on the next check of any Ability, skill, adit, or talent.

M = Moderate duration: Two rerolls on the check of any Ability, skill, adit, or talent made in the next 30 minutes.

H = High duration: Three rerolls on the check of any Ability, skill, adit, or talent made in the next hour.

C = Critical duration: Three rerolls on the check of any Ability, skill, adit, or talent made in the next three hours.

When used, a reroll allows the caster to immediately make another roll of the dice and apply the result to the check IF HE CHOOSES. However, regardless if the Majus decides to apply the dice result to the check, the reroll is expended and subtracted from the number of rerolls remaining (if applicable).

Masters of this adit create a pool of energy they can expend to reduce the ability of others to harm them. The pool lasts until all the points are expended or a number of hours equal to the Majus' Personality have passed. This beneficial energy can be used to reduce the success or effectiveness of an attack. The energy pool has a numeric value and the Majus can expend this energy to modify the strike number of an attack on a one-for-one basis. For example, a Majus under the effect of this spell with 30 points in his energy pool remaining can expend all of them to induce a -30% penalty to his opponent's attack skill and thereby increase the chance that his attack misses.

In addition, the Majus can expend points on a 10 point basis to shift the Defense Column used to determine the effects of a successful attack one column to the right. This can be done in the same round points are spent to reduce the attacker's strike number. For example, if the Majus in the scenario above had 40 points in his energy pool remaining and spent 30 to reduce his opponents strike number, but the attack was still successful, he could then spend the remaining 10 points to shift the Defense Column one step to the right and possibly spare himself some injury.

Charging
Base: (WIL+ PCN + PER)/3
Willpower Cost: 10+/25+/25+ and 10 points of PER
Check: Specific

From the lowly apprentice's wand to the great swords of power, Maji have always created objects imbued with their own magic. This process is called charging and mastery of this adit is the mark of a true Majus. With the knowledge of this adit, a Majus can impart some of his magic into an item, making it ready for use when he needs it most. It also allows him to affect creatures immune to ordinary weapons and defenses, permitting him to wound magical beings.

At the *Specialist* level, a Majus can charge an item with energy to make it a more effective tool. This requires a general check and, if successful, makes the item "magic." A magic item becomes an extension of the Majus, granting him benefits when used in his spell casting. If the item that is charged is a ritual tool, the Majus gains a +5% bonus to any of his adit scores when casting the spell. If the item is a weapon, it can affect any creature immune to mundane weapons. If the item is armor, it provides defense against the attacks of creatures that ignore mundane protections. For every 10 points of Willpower expended in the casting, the item becomes charged for one day.

A charged item is not without its drawbacks, unfortunately. Since a charged item is considered an extension of the Majus it can be used in castings against him if it falls into an enemy's possession. A Majus who possesses a charged item belonging to another Majus gains a +15% bonus to any magic worked on its creator as if he were physically touching him for as long as the charge remains.

Experts of this adit can create magical talismans, allowing them to instill another adit's power into a magical object. When creating the talisman, the Majus must declare which adit(s) he is binding into the object and which function of those adits is being used. For example, a Majus with Expert level Charging and Expert Hexing is creating a talisman. He decides to make it a harmful object, capable of injuring opponents. He therefore decides to

instill Hexing's ability to cause unarmed damage (as allowed by the Expert level in the adit). If the talisman is successfully created, using its power causes injury to enemies only. He cannot use the Hexing adit's Specialist level power of causing bad luck as the Majus chose not to include this power at the time of the talisman's creation. Had he done so, the talisman would have both powers and the use of either would count against the number of times the talisman could be used effectively (see below).

The Majus must make a specific check against his Charging adit, a general check versus any other adit being used, and spend the necessary Willpower for both adits. The Willpower cost for using this level of the Charging adit is 25 Willpower points plus the cost of any other instilled adits. Failing either check indicates the talisman-making process fails. If successful, however, the specific check determines the potency of the talisman created. Use the following key to determine how many "uses" the talisman has:

L = Limited use: The talisman can be used but once before its magical energy is expended.

M = Moderate use: The talisman can be used five times before exhausted.

H = High use: The talisman can be used seven times before exhausted.

C = Colossal use: The talisman can be used up to ten times before its magical energies are expended.

The benefit of a talisman is that it allows the Majus to throw a spell quickly and at a fraction of the Willpower cost normally required. Any spell instilled into a talisman can be cast in a single round as if the Magus had Mastered the spell's adit and requires only half the necessary Willpower normally spent to enact it. In order to use a talisman, however, the person possessing it must have at least Specialist level in one or more Magical adits of any kind (not necessarily those bound to the talisman), indicating they understand the basic rules of spellcasting.

Normal humans and other non-magical creatures are incapable of causing a talisman to produce its effects(s). Additionally, talismans have the ability to affect targets immune to non-magical attacks.

This utility object is not without its own cost, however. An active talisman must be "fed" magical energy each day to remain charged and failing to do so exhausts one of the talisman's remaining uses as it cannibalizes itself to remain functional. To charge the talisman, the Majus expends one Willpower point each day per talisman he owns. Any Maji can pay this Willpower cost to maintain its upkeep as the power need not come from its creator. A talisman that is not fed and has only a single use remaining devours that single use and becomes non-magical.

Lastly, each talisman produces a magical field and possessing too many talismans at once plays havoc with a Majus' spellcasting ability. A Majus can safely carry one talisman for every 20 points he has in his Willpower score (not Current Willpower points). If a Majus carries more talismans than his Willpower allows, all spellcasting suffers a -30% penalty for each talisman above his limit. This includes the specific checks made when invoking a talisman's own magic. Even after the Majus strips himself of talismans, the energies have a lingering effect and either a full 24 hours or a successful use of the Specialist level Blessing adit is required to dispel these negative effects.

At the *Master* level, a Majus can now create permanent talismans known as antiquities, albeit at the cost of part of his own essence. The process is the same as creating a lesser talisman, but both the Charging adit and the other adit(s) instilled into the object both require specific checks. A "C" result must be achieved on both checks for the creation process to be successful. Failing either or both forces the Majus to begin anew. If both checks achieve "C" results, the Majus pays the Willpower costs as normal, but must also permanently

expend 10 points of Personality to bind the object's energy fields together. These points are spent at the end of the creation process and are not expended if the specific checks failed to achieve "C" results.

Permanent talismans act like lesser ones in regard to the number of talismans allowed by a single Majus. They do not require daily feeding of Willpower, but do require that Willpower points be spent to enact the object's power. Permanent talismans have the additional benefit of being able to be used by any sentient creature; magical talent is not required. Like lesser talismans, permanent ones are considered magical devices for the purposes of affecting targets immune to non-magical attacks.

Counterspelling
Base: (WIL + PCN + STA)/3
Willpower Cost: 20
Check: Specific

No Majus lasts long in the *Mehen* without some knowledge of this adit, which covers the various spells and charms needed to negate or turn away harmful magic directed at him.

Unlike most other adits, Counterspelling does not grant different uses with each level of mastery and has a set Willpower Point cost for all castings. Mastering this adit merely increases its chance of success.

Counterspelling is used to either prevent a spell from taking place or to remove the effects of one after it has been cast. If used in the same round as a malignant spell is cast against the Majus, the Counterspell specific check is resolved and applied to the malignant spell's own success to see if it works.

If the Counterspelling's result on the Action Table exceeds (not ties) that of the countered spell, the spell fails to take effect. Any magic blocked by the successful use of this adit still exhausts the Majus who cast the spell and he or she loses Willpower as normal.

When used on a person, place, or object already under the effect of a spell, the specific check must meet or exceed the specific check result of the original spell. Then the spell is negated. If it fails to do so, the Majus cannot attempt to Counterspell that effect again until after 24 hours.

Counterspelling can be used in conjunction with Charging to create magical talismans that protect the wearer against harmful magics. When used in this manner, Counterspelling works differently. The Majus making the talisman (or assisting by casting Counterspelling onto it) makes a specific check as normal. The Attack Margin of the specific check becomes the negative modifier applied to the score of any harmful magic directed anyone protected by the talisman. For example, if the Majus making the talisman had a final Attack Margin of 51 on his specific check, the talisman would apply a -51% modifier to the score of any magical adit used against the wearer of the talisman.

Divination
Base: (WIL + PCN + LUCK)/3
Willpower Cost: 5/10/20
Check: Specific or General (see below)

This adit concerns all spells dealing with prognosticating the future. Spells within this adit typically require a tool or technique to help focus the Majus' thought and provide a medium through which messages concerning the future can reveal themselves. Tarot cards, runes, I Ching, dice, bones, dreams, tea leaves, and the stars are just a few ways a Majus can foresee the future. Unlike other spells, divinations are much shorter to perform as they do not require the ceremony needed for most other forms of magic. Divinations take half the normal time to cast than other adits.

At the *Specialist* level, a Majus can use Divination to assist his spell castings by determining if the forces of Synchronicity are currently in his favor or in that of his target. Unfortunately, this knowledge can sometimes be detrimental to the caster's success. A Magus who knows that Synchronicity is currently favoring a rival and proceeds with his casting anyway often subconsciously sets himself up for failure. But when he does know that the unseen forces of the Skein are on his side, his spells are more potent. Some Maji speculate that this is all a placebo effect and

eschew Divination entirely for this reason.

To use this form of Divination spells, the Majus makes a specific check prior to casting another spell. He informs the CM what spell he intends to cast ("I'm going to Hex the Crimson Duchess for kicking me out of the Hellfire Club last night.") and then makes a specific check. The results of this check will modify the stated spell for better or for worse when the Majus casts it. Use the key below to determine what modifier to apply to the spell's adit score:

Failure: The spell suffers a -40% penalty as the divination reveals powerful forces act against the Majus.

L = Light opposition: Forces favor your target; spell suffers a -20% penalty.

M = Minor opposition: Minor forces work against you; spell suffers a -10% penalty.

H = Helpful forces: Synchronicity is working in your favor; the spell enjoys a +15% bonus.

C = Complete assistance: It's almost as if unseen forces want you to succeed; spell gains a +30% bonus.

The modifiers from a Divination apply for a 24 hour period after it is complete. If the Majus is unhappy with the results of his divination, he must either wait 24 hours before doing another Divination or skip the process entirely in order to "reset" Synchronicity. At the CM's discretion, greatly changing the intended target or spell to be cast ("Since Synchronicity doesn't want me Hexing the Duchess, I'm going to Summon a demon and have it attack the clubhouse instead") may be enough to ignore a Divination's penalty.

When a Majus had reached the *Expert* level in this adit's spells, he can now get a glimpse of the probable outcome of an action that will be performed in no more than an hour's time. Use of the adit in this manner requires the Majus to state specifically what action he wishes to foretell. For example, a Majus about to break into a rival's secure penthouse to steal an ancient grimoire decides to cast a Divination spell. Producing his battered deck of Tarot cards, he asks them, "What awaits me in Don Pedro's sanctum?"

After making a successful general check, the CM consults his game notes and sees that one of the rival Majus' flunkies is inside the penthouse, dozing off when he should be on duty, and that an "electric eye" beam guards the room the grimoire is in. He tells the player, "Step lightly and beware the unblinking eye and you shall be successful." How the player chooses to interpret this advice is up to his own self.

A *Master* of Divination can discern the will of Synchronicity itself and in doing so help it achieve its goals or foil them completely. With a general check, the Majus gains insight into what objects, people, and locations are important in the hours ahead. This is an extremely potent ability and the CM should take steps to ensure its use does not ruin the enjoyment of the game for the players—including the one using this adit.

When used successfully, the CM should give the Majus clues about what is important to the current adventure. How they reveal themselves is up to the CM, but examples could be mental visions, seeing colorful auras around them, or discerning subtle patterns in their positioning. However, knowing that a thing is important to future events is much different from understanding what role it will play.

For example, a Majus is shadowing a smuggler he believes possesses a rare artifact important to the Skein. As he watches from an alleyway, he decides to use Master Divination to determine what's in store for him. The CM knows the smuggler is targeted for death and monstrous servants of a rival Tower are planning on detonating a car bomb outside his business as he leaves for the day. The Majus makes his check and the CM reveals that he gets a mental glimpse of the smuggler leaving his office, a broken-down car driven by two feral-looking men, and a street littered with bleeding bodies and wreathed in smoke and clouds of debris. As his vision clears, the Majus sees a beat-up looking car pull into a parking spot outside the smuggler's office building...

Glamour
Base: (WIL + PER+ PCN)/3
Willpower Cost: 5/15/25
Check: Specific

Spells that affect how others perceive the Majus fall within this adit. Everything from love charms to passing unseen are each a form of Glamour, and all are useful in playing the *Mehen*.

A *Specialist* of this adit can affect the emotions of others, either improving or worsening their dispositions towards the caster. This manifests as an adjustment to the target's initial Situation Check result. When cast, the Majus makes a specific Glamour check, the result of which determines the degree of emotional manipulation that affects the subject. Use the following key to determine the exact effects of the Glamour:

L = Limited change: Targets attitude towards the caster is improved/worsened ± 1 step on the Situation Check table.

M = Moderate change: Targets attitude towards the caster is improved/worsened ± 2 steps on the Situation Check table.

H = High change: Targets attitude towards the caster is improved/worsened ± 3steps on the Situation Check table.

C = Colossal change: Targets attitude towards the caster is improved/worsened ± 4 steps on the Situation Check table.

Because the emotion felt for the caster by the target is artificially induced, it is short-term. Each hour after the Glamour is cast, the target makes a specific Willpower check and compares the result to the caster's success. If the target's check matches or exceeds the caster's success result, the target undergoes an attitude adjustment towards the caster and a Situation Check is made for the target

with a -4 penalty to the roll. The result of the check indicates the target's new attitude towards the caster. The caster can attempt to Glamour the subject again, but does so at a -30% penalty to his adit score.

At the *Expert* level, the Majus can now alter other people's perception of his identity, allowing him to pass himself off as someone else. The difficulty of making this spell work is increased by the number of people he intends to affect, their familiarity with the impersonated individual, and other factors. If successful, the target(s) must make a general Perception check. If they fail, they completely believe the Majus is who he pretends to be. If successful, they suspect that something is amiss and will act accordingly. The Perception check is modified by the spell's specific check. Use the following key to determine the Glamour's effectiveness:

L = Limited effect: The Perception check suffers a -20% penalty. The glamour lasts for 1 hour.

M = Moderate effect: The Perception check suffers a -30% penalty. The glamour lasts for 3 hours.

H = Highly effective: The Perception check suffers a -50% penalty. The glamour lasts for 6 hours.

C = Completely effective: The Perception check automatically fails. The glamour persists for 12 hours.

The following modifiers affect the spell's specific check:

Target knows the subject being impersonated intimately.	-40%
Target knows the subject in passing.	-20%
Target has never met the impersonated subject in person.	+10%
Glamour is that of a generic "type" of person (biker, security guard, corporate drone).	+20%
Per person beyond the first being affected simultaneously.	-10%

Note that this power of the adit affects the Perceptions of those directly seeing the Majus. Cameras and other visual recording devices are unaffected by the spell's power. Those observing the Majus through these devices (or watching a recording after the fact) will see the Majus' true appearance.

A *Master* of Glamour can now make himself completely invisible to both the naked eye and other visual recording devices. This is not physical invisibility, but the power to "cloud men's minds" making it impossible for them to perceive the Majus—even on a recorded medium after the fact. The specific check determines how difficult it is for others to perceive the Majus. Use the following key to determine the Perception modifier to all targets attempting to detect the Majus' presence:

L = Limited success: Persons attempting to glimpse the Magus must make a general Perception check with a -30% modifier to the PCN score. The glamour lasts for 10 minutes.

M = Moderate success: As above, but the PCN modifier is increased to -40%. The glamour lasts for 30 minutes.

H = High success: As above, but the PCN modifier is increased to -50%. The glamour lasts for 60 minutes.

C = Colossal success: As above, but the PCN modifier is increased to -70%. The glamour lasts until broken. This invisibility effect lasts for a set duration indicated by the specific check result or until the caster draws attention to himself. Any action that has an extremely obvious effect on the caster's surroundings (the caster makes an attack, knocks over a large object, starts up an automobile, or other action determined by the CM) immediately breaks the Glamour and the caster loses the benefit of its invisibility.

Using Master-level Glamour and the Stealth skill successfully allows the Majus to combine the modifiers of both, leading to extremely high penalties for those attempting to discern them.

Healing
Base: (DEX + WPR + PCN)/3
Willpower Cost: 10/15/20
Check: Specific

This adit deals with combating pain, injury, and disease, and restoring bodily health. It is one of the most ancient adits and practitioners of this path are found in every society in the world.

Specialists of this adit can remove the pain of injured individuals. The greater the result of the specific check, the longer the relief lasts. A character receiving the benefits of this spell does not need to make a Willpower check in order to take action after being critically wounded. Use the following key to determine how long the pain is ignored by the recipient of this magic:

L = Limited duration: 1 minute.

M = Moderate duration: 30 minutes.

H = High duration: 1 hour.

C = Critical duration: 12 hours.

At the *Expert* level, the Majus heals stamina loss and occasionally wounds with this adit's magic. The greater the result of the specific check, the more health is restored to the target. On a successful use of this adit, consult the unarmed combat results. The target gains the number of stamina points (and wounds when applicable) indicated as lost on the table. A "K" result has no effect. Thus, an "M" result on a specific check at this level of adit mastery restores 4-40 stamina points to the target.

Masters of this adit can restore lost stamina, heal wounds, counteract toxins, and combat disease. When this adit is used to restore lost stamina or heal wounds, a specific check is made and the armed combat results table is consulted. The target gains stamina points and heals the number of wounds indicated as lost on the table. Thus, an "H" result restores 6-60 stamina points and heals four wound boxes.

A master of the Healing adit can counteract poison as if he possessed the Medicine skill. If the Majus passes a general check of this adit, the victim of a poisoning who would otherwise

die is saved. He can also assist a target in recovering from a disease with a successful general check of this adit. If the caster succeeds in the general check, the target is allowed a general LUCK roll. If the LUCK roll is successful, the patient begins to recover from the disease and is restored to full health after a period determined by the CM. The adit's general check is modified by the severity of the disease. Against the common cold, the check would enjoy a +40% bonus. Against a terminal illness the check is made with a -60% penalty or more.

Hexing

Base: (WPR + PER + STA)/3
Willpower Cost: 10/15/20
Check: Specific

Curses, afflictions, and other baleful magics intended to inconvenience, harm, and even kill a target falls under the auspices of this adit. In some cultures, hexing has fallen out of favor amongst New Age types who attest that harmful magics always return to their sender three-fold. Not all practitioners are so forward minded, however—Maji even more so than most.

At the *Specialist* level of mastery, a Maji causes the target to be plagued with ill-fortune. Each day the hex is in effect, the target must make a general LUCK check to avoid some nuisance, misfortune, or stroke of bad luck in their life. The exact effects of the missed LUCK check is determined by the CM, but seldom results in physical harm to the target. Examples include failed romances, broken friendships, having personal possessions stolen, succumbing to a minor illness, impotence, a -5% penalty to all checks, etc. The hex lasts for a duration based on the specific check of the adit. Use the following key to determine the duration of the curse:

L = Limited duration: One day.
M = Moderate duration: One week.
H = High duration: One month.
C = Critical duration: One year.
K = A "K" result indicates the

victim must make two LUCK checks each day to avoid the effects of the hex. Failing either results in misfortune. At the CM's discretion, failing both may mean the target suffers even greater bad luck than normal.

Once a Majus has reached the *Expert* level of Hexing, his powers now physically affect the target. A successful casting of the adit causes damage directly to the target. Use the unarmed combat results table to determine the effects of the Hex. A "K" result has no effect. This damage is taken immediately upon spell taking effect making it immune to Counterspelling after the damage is incurred. Hanging Counterspell adits affect the casting normally.

Maji who *Master* Hexing can now inflict serious wounds or lingering disease upon their targets. If outright physical damage is desired, use the armed combat key to interpret the results of the specific spell for this adit. Alternately, if the Majus wishes to infect the target with a disease, use the table below to determine the results. Damage occurs after the incubation period given below and causes damage determined by the result of a specific Luck check as indicated under the rules for Disease (see chapter 7). The CM may substitute diseases other than those suggested below.

L = Limited affliction: Pneumonia (Potency 7; incubation period: 1 week).
M = Moderate affliction: Tuberculosis (Potency 8; incubation period: 3 days).
H = High affliction: Cancer (Potency 9; incubation period: 1 day)
C = Critical affliction: Ebola (Potency 10; incubation period: 12 hours).

Sending

Base: (WPR+ PER + PCN)/3
Willpower Cost: 20/30/50
Check: Specific

With the Sending adit, a Majus can project himself outside of his physical body, allowing him to view events occurring in distant places,

explore the Astral plane, and, with mastery, witness happenings that occurred in the distant past. While sending, the Majus' body slips into a comatose state and he is unaware of the events happening around his torpid body. He is considered a helpless defender for purposes of attack and a cautious Majus seldom Sends unless assured his body is protected.

A *Specialist* in Sending can extend his senses far beyond his corporal body, passing through solid barriers, rising high above the ground or deep within the earth to see and hear events happening elsewhere. There is no travel time involved with extending one's senses; he immediately perceives his target regardless of how distant it is from the Magus' physical location. The specific check indicates how far he can extend his senses. Use the following key to determine the distance he can witness events:

L = Limited distance: Up to 1 mile away. The Sending lasts for 10 minutes.
M = Moderate distance: Up to 100 miles away. The Sending lasts for 20 minutes.
H = Huge distance: Up to 1000 miles away. The Sending lasts for 30 minutes.
C = Colossal distance: Up to 5,000 miles away. The Sending lasts for 1 hour.

In order for this spell to be effective, the Majus must either know the location of the place he wishes to view or possess something belonging to the person he wants to observe. Lacking either of these pieces of information imparts a -50% penalty to the adit's score. Trying to observe a person he's never met in a place the Majus has never seen without some sort of information to help focus with is impossible.

An *Expert* can now astrally project, allowing him to explore the Astral plane (see Chapter 9 for more information on the effects of Astral travel). The duration of his jaunt is dependent on the specific check. Use

the following key to determine its duration:

L = Limited duration: 1 hour.

M = Moderate distance: 12 hours.

H = Huge distance: 1 day.

C = Colossal distance: Unlimited. (but the Majus' physical body will deteriorate if left unattended for long periods)

When a Majus has reached the *Master* level of this adit, he can now extend his senses back in time, using his own soul and previous incarnations to experience events as if he were actually present—because he was! This is not a form of time travel, but rather the retrieval of forgotten memories possessed during a previous lifetime. The Majus is actually extending his consciousness back through time and into a previous incarnation's mind to view proceedings in the past. How far back he can extend himself is dependent on the specific check. Use the following key to determine the chronological limits of his Sensing:

L = Limited duration: Within the past 100 years.

M = Moderate distance: Within the past 500 years.

H = Huge distance: Within the past 1,000 years.

C = Colossal distance: Within the past 4,000 years.

The Majus can spend up to 1 hour per point he possesses in the Willpower Ability (not current Willpower) in the past, experiencing events as if physically present during the time perceived. This time limit may be reduced or extended at the CM's discretion and by events that occur while the Majus is experiencing the past. A Majus who Sends himself into the past and experiences events as a previous incarnation being fed to the lions in the Roman Coliseum is in for an extremely short trip!

Use of Master-level Sending can easily upset a campaign and the CM is encouraged to strictly regulate its usage. Just because a Majus existed during a certain time period doesn't mean he was witness to the events his current incarnation is seeking and it is reasonable for the CM to rule that the spell fails to recover useful information. By the same token, the CM shouldn't ignore the possibilities that this type of Sending introduces to the campaign. Entire adventures can take place in the distant past as the players assume the roles of former incarnations playing the *Mehen* in exotic times and places. CMs interested in taking this route are encourage to acquire TIMEMASTER for more information, rules, and inspiration about time traveling campaigns.

Summoning
Base: (WPR + PER + STA)/3
Willpower Cost: 15/25/50
Check: Specific

This adit concerns magic spells that call up (or down) supernatural entities to attend to the wishes of the Majus. It is both the most powerful and most dangerous adit to master, but one indispensible for serious players of the *Mehen.*

Due to the forces involved with Summoning spells, this adit is most often used in conjunction with Warding. The Majus safely ensconces himself behind a barrier keyed to keep the entity being summoned out should the Summoning go awry.

Summoning a spirit requires a specific check, the result of which determines the entity's attitude towards the Maji when it appears. Use the following key to assess the likelihood of its cooperation once summoned forth:

L = Limited Cooperation: Roll on the Situation Check Results table with a -3 to the d10 roll.

M = Moderate Cooperation: Roll on the Situation Check Results table with a -1 to the d10 roll.

H = High Cooperation: Roll on the Situation Check Results table with a +2 to the d10 roll

C = Complete Cooperation: Spirit is willing to assist the Majus provided the request is within its power.

Once the summoned creature appears and its initial reaction to the Majus is determined via the Situation Check, the summoner must entreat the entity to perform or assist in whatever task the Majus wishes the entity to do. The spirit's agreeability is determined with using the Direct Action Chart in chapter 8 modified by the result of the Situation Check. Angry and hostile entities will attack the Majus at the first opportunity unless the Majus manages to calm the spirit in some manner, typically by offering a gift or sacrifice. If this is done, the CM makes a new Situation Check for the spirit.

The duration of an entity's cooperation is dependent on the

DAC result. Use the table below to determine the length of service:

L = Limited duration: The entity will perform one task for the Majus that takes no longer than 1 hour to complete.

M = Moderate Cooperation: The entity will perform multiple tasks or one long one taking no longer than 6 hours to complete.

H = High Cooperation: The entity will perform multiple tasks for the Majus for up to 12 hours.

C = Complete Cooperation: The entity will perform any task the Majus asks for a 24 hour period.

One the task(s) is complete or the duration agreed to expires, the entity is free from obligations to the Majus and usually returns from whence it came. If treated disrespectfully, however, the Majus must make a general LUCK check modified by the spirit's original Situation Check DAC modifier. If the check fails, the entity turns on its summoner, doing everything in its power to inconvenience or destroy the Majus.

Summons performed by a *Specialist* in this adit are limited to minor spirits, such as elementals and other nature entities. These beings can be quite potent in their environment of choice, but lack power outside of it. See Chapter 10 for more information on minor spirits and their capabilities.

Experts in this adit can call up lesser spirits, which go by many names (djinni, Manitou, etc.) as well as the shades the dead. Details of their exact abilities and powers are found in Chapter 10.

At the *Master* level, the Majus can call upon the primordial entities of the cosmos—angels, demons, and even older things best left forgotten. These entities are difficult to control and all attempts to summon them suffer a -20% penalty to the adit score. Even when they do appear, they seldom acquiesce to a mortal's desires without negotiation or promises made on the Majus' part for favors to be named later. However, with one of these entities in the Majus' corner, near-miraculous magic

can be accomplished—or his enemies laid to waste with ease.

The CM is encouraged to create specific entities of various types, especially in campaigns where Summoning is common. Over time, a Majus may find himself calling up the same spirits again and again, asking them for favors on a regular basis. Spirits of this type become important NPCs in the game with all the benefits and drawbacks associated with that role.

Warding
Base: (WPR + PER + STA)/3
Willpower Cost: 15/25/40
Check: Specific

This adit protects a person, place, or thing against that which seeks to do it harm. Typically, the person, item, or location to be warded is protected by painting or drawing specific mystic symbols anathema to that which it is to be protected from, but this is not always the case. Some Maji cloak the target in protective incense, rings of minerals or herbs, or with mirrors to reflect the seeker's attempts to find it. Warding not only acts to protect creatures from outside forces, but to expel them once they've gotten to their targets. An exorcism is nothing more than the use of Warding after the fact and an entity inside a person, place, or thing is subject to expulsion if its Willpower check does not tie or exceed the ward's strength as indicated below.

Specialists of this adit can protect their targets against the attentions of mundane searchers to find it. With a successful use of this adit, animals, non-magic using humans, and technological sensors all have difficulty locating the protected person, place, or thing. Even if the target is located, these individuals must make a specific Willpower check to enter, touch, or attack the target. Use the following key to determine the strength of the Warding:

L = Limited strength: Attempts to locate the target suffer a -10% penalty. The ward lasts for 2 hours.

M = Moderate strength: Attempts to locate the target suffer a -20%

penalty. The ward lasts for 6 hours.

H = High duration: Attempts to locate the target suffer a -30% penalty. The ward lasts for 12 hours.

C = Critical duration: Attempts to locate the target suffer a -40% penalty. The ward lasts for 24 hours.

The penalty applies to all uses of the Perception Ability, Divination adit, or the Computers, Investigation, or Tracking skills (and others at CM discretion).

Should the use of these abilities, magic, or skills be successful, any creature affected by the Ward must make a specific Willpower check. If the result of that check ties or exceeds the specific check of the Warding adit, the creature may enter, touch, or attack the target as normal. If the specific check fails or is less than the adit's result, the creature cannot interact with the warded target until the ward fails.

A Majus who has achieved an *Expert* level in the Warding adit can now protect targets against lesser preternatural agents such as fellow Maji, ghosts, psychics, supernatural monsters, and similar creatures. At this level of expertise, the adit works the same as above, but the penalty to locate the target applies to spell use, paranormal talents, and other magical abilities as well as more mundane efforts to locate the target. Magical creatures seeking to enter, touch, or attack the target must make a specific Willpower check as indicated above. It should be noted that if a single entity with the ability to Counterspell magical effects makes a successful Willpower check, he can attempt to dispel the Ward as normal and thereby remove the target's protection.

A *Master* of this adit can now protect targets far beyond the ken of even accomplished Maji. Angels, demons, and the Veiled Masters themselves are subject to the effects of a successful Warding effort and suffer the penalties listed above in their efforts to locate the target.

Weather Control
Base: (WPR + PER + STA)/3
Willpower Cost: 15/30/50
Check: Specific

Like Animagic, Weather Control is an adit that's fallen into disuse in civilized countries, but nevertheless remains a powerful form of magic in the right hands. The power to control the weather is one of the oldest forms of magic and should not be dismissed lightly, especially when confronting a Master of this adit.

At the *Specialist* level, a Majus uses existing weather conditions to benefit himself and his allies. The exact manner in which weather conditions aid him is dependent on the current state of the environment and the CM. A Majus could intensify a rain storm to make it difficult to see him as he sneaks up on an enemy, whips winds about to make it harder to speed his flight as he runs or sails a boat away from enemies, or cause mists to thicken to fog to provide him cover. The specific bonus applied to his Ability or Skill score is dependent on the specific check for this spell. Read the following key to determine the granted bonus:

L = Limited success: Conditions provide a +5% bonus to his own scores or modifies an opponents by -5%.

M = Moderate success: As above, but the modifier is +/-10%.

H = High success: As above, but the modifier is +/-20%.

C = Colossal success: As above, but the modifier is +/-30%.

The CM has final say in whether the Majus can use prevailing weather conditions in the manner intended. The altered weather condition appears 6d10 minutes after the spell is completed and the conjured weather condition lasts for 30 minutes.

Experts in the adit can now change the current weather conditions, improving or worsening them by a number of steps depending on the success of the specific check. Weather can only be changed in one direction per use of the spell and the Majus must determine whether he intends to make conditions better or worse at the time of casting. It takes 3d10 minutes for the conjured weather to appear and the altered conditions last for 1 hour. Use the following key to determine how many "steps" he can alter conditions:

L = Limited success: Weather improves or worsens by a single step (see below).

M = Moderate success: As "L" result, but weather is changed by two steps.

H = High success: As "L" result, but weather is changed by three steps.

C = Colossal success: As "L" result, but weather is changed by four steps. When determining the amount of weather change, use the following progression to adjudicate the spell's results:

- **Precipitation:** Clear/light precipitation/heavy precipitation/storm conditions/disastrous storm conditions
- **Winds:** Calm/breezy/gusty/gale/ hurricane or tornado
- **Fog:** Clear/mist/fog/dense fog/pea soup conditions

Masters of this adit can create weather conditions hazardous to the well-being of their enemies. They can pelt opponents with bludgeoning hail, create wind storms that knock them off their feet, down trees, or overturn cars, and call down lightning from the skies to electrocute them. These effects do not suddenly appear, however, and require that at least some pertinent conditions are currently affecting the area. If not, the Magus must first summon the necessary weather using the *Expert* level of this adit before calling down the thunder (so to speak). It takes 2d10 minutes for the weather conditions to change after the spell is cast.

The result of the specific check determines how damaging the summoned weather is. Use the following entries to determine how to adjudicate the check results;

- **Hail:** The rain of icy, golf ball-sized or larger precipitation inflicts damage. Apply the results of the specific check to the unarmed combat results table to determine the damage inflicted by the hail.
- **Wind:** Any individual caught in the gale must make a specific Strength check to stay on his feet. If the result of the Strength check fails to exceed the result of the spell's specific check, he is knockdown as if suffering a "K" result on the armed combat results table. If he succeeds in his Strength check, he remains standing, but suffers a -15 feet penalty on his movement and a -30% penalty on any ranged attacks for as long as the wind is blowing. Against inanimate objects such as cars, trees, or small buildings, the winds have a chance to overturn, uproot, or cause structural damage to the object. This is a straight percentage (modified by extenuating circumstances at the CM's discretion). With an "L" result, there is a 10% chance of damage; a 20% chance with a "M" result; a 30% chance with an "H" result, and a 40% chance with a "C" result. If a "K" is also present in the result, the chance increases +10%.
- **Lightning:** A lightning strike does damage to its target according to the armed combat results table.

The CM should use the above to determine the effects of other imposed weather conditions as he sees fit. The conjured storm lasts for up to 2 hours or until the Majus chooses to dismiss it, which requires no roll to do so.

CHAPTER 6: PARANORMAL TALENTS

sing magic requires a very disciplined mind, so it is no wonder than all Maji also possess some form of psychic power that far outstrips that of your average citizen. These psychic powers are called Paranormal Talents (PT) and are similar but different from the Magical adits they also command. PTs require much less time to use, but tax the mental reserves of the Magus more than using magic.

Characters can start with up to three talents. Some talents take only a round to work, but some take longer. All require complete concentration. Whenever a character wants to use a talent he or she can do nothing else. Any successful attack against the character will break his or her concentration and cause the talent to fail.

Maji are not the only individuals with Paranormal Talents. Ordinary humans occasionally manifest these talents, although many more claim fraudulently to possess them. True psychics make valuable allies for a Magus caught up in the Game and many sorcerers do their best to woe one into their confidence if they learn of a confirmed psychic's existence. In some cases, rival Towers come into magical conflict with the psychic as the contest's prize. Most non-Maji psychics have only a single PT, but extremely rare subjects have been known to have multiple Talents.

A full description of each PT follows in the next part of this chapter. The descriptions tell you how to figure out a talent score (always round fractions up), and which kind of check the talent requires (general or specific). Specific checks occur on Column 2 of the Action Table, unless otherwise noted.

WILLPOWER AND PTS

Most PTs cost a certain number of Willpower points to use, which are subtracted from the character's current Willpower score.

When characters use a talent that costs Willpower, they subtract the points from their current Willpower score during the declaration step, before they actually use the talent. If a character's current Willpower falls below 21, he or she cannot use a talent—in fact, the character refuses to fight, and tries to run for safety (see Chapter 7, "Willpower Loss"). Obviously, you shouldn't declare the use of a talent if the cost would bring your Willpower score below 21.

Characters can spend up to 20 extra Willpower points to use a talent, to increase their chance for success. Each extra Willpower point temporarily raises the character's PT score by 1 point; when he uses the talent once, his score returns to "normal." Remember, no character can use paranormal talents when his Willpower score is below 21.

All Willpower spent to use a PT is lost immediately when spent, regardless of whether the PT succeeds or fails. It's not lost forever, though; sleep brings it back. All characters can recover 10 points of Willpower per hour of uninterrupted sleep—no matter how they lost the Willpower.

TALENT DESCRIPTIONS

All Maji begin play with the Aura Sight PT. Additionally, a Majus may chose to pick only two magical adit at character creation and receive a third PT in return. Characters can acquire more PTs by spending Experience Points, as explained in Chapter 2.

In the descriptions below, "Time Required" tells how long the user must concentrate to make the talent work. "NA" means "Not Applicable."

Aura Sight
Base: (WPR + PER + LUCK)/3
Willpower Cost: 5
Check: General
Time Required: NA
Range: Sight
Duration: 1 round
This PT grants the user the ability

to see the auras surrounding living things and to detect the presence of magical energies. With a successful use of this talent, the Majus knows the attitude of an NPC or creature (according to the Situation Check Results chart) and can see if magical energy is present in the form of a recently cast spell (no more than 10 minutes ago), a "charged" object, or as a hanging spell around another Majus. With a subsequent general Perception check, the Majus can ascertain what Magical Adit the energies were created by (Warding, Hexing, Counterspell, etc.). This PT does not give the user the ability to see ghosts or spirits; that falls under the *Medium* PT.

Distance Viewing
Base: (WPR + PCN + LUCK)/3
Willpower Cost: 30
Check: Specific
Time Required: 10 minutes
Range: Unlimited
Duration: Time of use

This PT is used to view a place from a distance. The specificity of the viewing depends on degree of success. Any distance may be viewed, but the degree of familiarity the character has with the place influences the results. See the table below.

Familiarity	Check Column
Very	2
Moderately	3
Weakly	4
Unfamiliar	5

Very: The character has been to the location 5 or more times.
Moderately: The character has been to the location 1-4 times.
Weakly: The character has never been to the location, or has seen it only once from a distance, or the location has been described by someone who has been there.
Unfamiliar: The character has never been to the location and has little idea what the place looks like.

See below for interpreting results:
Failure: The character is unable to learn anything about the location.

L = *Limited information:* The character gets a vague idea about the appearance and happenings of the location. The appearance will be general, with no specific people or objects identified. For example, the place is in darkness or lighted, people are present (but no specific number, and unable to discern their nature), the room is large, etc.

M = *Moderate information:* As above, but specific room/location dimensions are known, and approximately 50% of the details of the location are understood. No specific identities are discernible.

H = *High information:* As moderate, but approximately 75% of the details of the location are viewable.

C = *Comprehensive information:* The character can view the location and perceive what is happening there as if he were standing there. Limitations of visibility or light do not hinder the viewing, but the viewer does perceive if the area is in darkness, etc.

K = Not applicable.

Dowsing
Base: (WPR + PCN + LUCK)/3
Willpower Cost: 20
Check: Specific
Time Required: 1 round
Range: 100'
Duration: 10 minutes

Dowsing is the ability to detect hidden substances underneath the earth. Typically, a stick or wire rods are used in conjunction with this PT, but it may be performed without them (albeit at a -10% penalty to the PT's base score). The difficulty in locating the sought after substance is determined by its scarcity and quantity; use the following key to determine what result is necessary to successfully dowse a substance:

L = Limited success: Finds any common substance (water, power cables, fiber optic lines, etc.).

M = Moderate success: Locates uncommon substances (coal, oil, iron, ley lines, etc.).

H = High success: Locates rare or dangerous substances (silver, land mines, trip wires, etc.)

C = Complete success: Finds extremely rare or valuable substances (gold, uranium, buried riches, etc.).

If the sought after substance is present in large quantities (as determined by the CM), the success needed is reduced one step. Thus, finding a land mine in a field salted with them requires only an "M" success. The difficulty to find a substance is never reduced below "L" no matter how much is present.

Dream Walk
Base: (WPR + PCN + PER)/3
Willpower Cost: 30
Check: General
Time Required: 30 minutes
Range: 100 yards
Duration: Time of use

A character with this PT may enter the dreams of another person. Once there, he may observe the dream and interact with the dreamer. He may attempt to gain information or seek the answer to a question the dreamer knows. Because of the nebulous and symbolic nature of dreams, the character may only learn one fact or bit of useful information per use of this PT. The dream walker must be within 100 yards of the subject. He must know the location of the specific subject if the target needs to be specific, otherwise the character may enter the dreams of the nearest sleeping person.

Medium
Base: (WPR + PCN + PER)/3
Willpower Cost: 20
Check: General
Time Required: 1 round
Range: Sight
Duration: 20 minutes

This PT grants the user the ability to perceive ghosts and other noncorporeal spirits that are normally invisible to the naked eye. The medium can clearly see and hear the spirit should it wish to communicate, but grants no other ability to interact or harm them. The ghost is aware it can be seen and this may cause problems for the medium

if the spirit is malicious or has unfulfilled tasks that need a mortal agent to complete.

Mesmerism
Base: (WPR + PCN + PER)/3
Willpower Cost: 30
Check: Specific
Time Required: 1 round
Range: 20'
Duration: 1 hour

Maji are by nature self-confident egotists and many can channel that to their advantage. Use of this PT makes the talent's target more likely to acquiesce to the Majus' demands. When used successfully, the Majus gains a bonus to the next Direct Action Check (DAC) he makes against an NPC. This bonus is in addition to that listed on the Situation Check Results tables and can counteract a negative modifier. Use the key below to determine the bonus granted by the PT:

L = Limited success: +10% DAC bonus.

M = Moderate success: +15% DAC bonus.

H = High success: +20% DAC bonus.

C = Critical success: +25% DAC bonus.

This talent does not "charm" its targets, it merely temporarily dazzles them. After an hour, the victim will begin to question why he went along with the Majus' demands and may become angry with both himself and the PC. Especially violent NPCs might even attempt to track down the Majus and demand recompense or else.

Psychometry
Base: (WPR + AGL + PCN)/3
Willpower Cost: 25
Check: Specific
Time Required: 1 round
Range: Touch
Duration: 1 minute

Psychometry is the power to perceive events that occurred surrounding a place or object by touching them. The user of this PT receives a brief vision of those events, the clarity of which is determined by the specific check. Use the following key to determine how clear the vision

is and how far back the user can witness occurrences:

L = Limited success: User "sees" confusing images that flash by. He can recall a single clue or image such as a color, a scent, a word, etc. from an event that occurred within the last 24 hours.

M = Moderate success: User "sees" a single, clear image. He gets a general impression of the number of people present, what they were doing, and vague physical descriptions. He can "read" events that occurred within the last week.

H = High success: User "sees" several clear images like a series of photographs. While he can make out exact details, the gaps in between the images still make deciphering the events witnessed and how they occurred difficult, leading to lapses in the chronology of actions and their consequences. He can "read" events that occurred with the last month.

C = Complete success: User witnesses events as if watching a brief movie and can recall exact details as to who was present, what they looked like, and what they were doing. He can "read" events that occurred within the last six months.

Pyrokinesis
Base: (WPR + PER + STA)/3
Willpower Cost: 45
Check: Specific
Time Required: 2 rounds
Range: 50'
Duration: Instantaneous

This potent talent allows the user to start fires with his mind, albeit at great mental strain. The size of the fire is determined by the specific check result. Use the key below to determine how large a blaze the PT user creates:

L = Limited success: A brief spark; extremely flammable materials (oil-soaked rags, pools of gasoline) have a 50% chance of igniting.

M = Moderate success: A small match-sized flame; extremely flammable materials ignite automatically; less combustible, but still flammable, materials have a 50% chance of igniting.

H = High success: Torch-size fire; combustible materials ignite; living

creatures suffer 1 wound and must make a general LUCK check to avoid catching fire.

C = Complete success: Immolation; combustible materials ignite; living creatures suffer 3 wounds per round until the fire is extinguished.

Use of this talent not only requires a great deal of Willpower, but, when enacted poorly, can take a physical toll on the user. A Majus who attempts to use the PT and fails suffers a loss of 2-20 Stamina points. Pyrokinetic Maji should be aware that this talent grants them no protection from heat and fire, and an incautious user might find himself trapped in a blaze of his own making.

Precognition
Base: (WPR + PCN)/2
Willpower Cost: 50
Check: General (secret)
Time Required: d10 rounds
Range: Unlimited
Duration: Time of use

Precognition allows a character to sense the outcome of a future event. When using this ability the player must *be specific* in terms of what he or she is trying to see. For example, if he wants to know what will happen if a companion attacks an opponent, the CM may roll the attack dice secretly and reveal to the player what he is able to discern. Alternatively, the player may be looking to see if the group will encounter enemies in a period of time or as the result of an action, and the CM can roll a random encounter check for a later time and reveal the result to the PC. The CM is entitled to use full discretion in deciding how much information is learned.

Note that the CM should roll the check for using this ability, and keep the results secret. If the check fails, the PC receives false information. The check will suffer a penalty depending on how far into the future the PC desires to see. Refer to the table below.

Time	Modifier
Up to 1 day	0
Up to 1 week	-15
Up to 1 month	-25
Up to 1 year	-35
Up to 5 years	-45
5+ years	-55

Note that there will always be a minimum of a 5% chance of success regardless of the modifier.

Telepathic Sending

Base: (WPR + PCN + PER)/3
Willpower Cost: 5
Check: General
Time Required: 1 round
Range: Unlimited
Duration: Round of use

Characters can use this PT to mentally communicate with others. Approximately the same information that can be spoken in one round may be conveyed each round, or mental images may be transmitted. The receiving character may be any distance from the sender, but the sender must know his location. The receiver hears the message as if a voice begins speaking in his or her mind—a "little" voice that matches the voice of the sender. Undead may not be sent messages in this way.

Ignore Pain

Base: (WPR + PER)/2
Willpower Cost: 20
Check: Specific
Time Required: 1 round
Range: NA
Duration: Variable

Successful use of this PT allows a character to ignore physical pain. The greater the result of the specific check, the longer he or she ignores the pain. A character who uses this PT successfully does not have to make a Willpower check in order to take action after being critically wounded.

Use this key to determine how long a character can ignore pain:

Failure: The character feels just as bad as before; the PT has no effect.

L = *Limited duration:* 1 minute.

M = *Moderate duration:* 30 minutes.

H = *High duration:* 1 hour.

C = *Colossal duration:* 12 hours.

K = Not applicable.

Read Thoughts

Base: (WPR + PCN + PER)/3
Willpower Cost: 10
Check: General
Time Required: 1 round
Range: Line of sight
Duration: Round of use

This PT is used to read the thoughts of others. The thoughts read are surface thoughts at the given moment only, not deeply buried knowledge. The receiver may also assess general mood and disposition toward the sender and others in proximity. Approximately the same information that can be spoken in one round may be received each round. If the subject is envisioning mental images those may be conveyed as well. The receiving character may be any distance from the subject, but the subject must be within the receiver's line of sight. The connection is broken if the subject is no longer in sight.

Speak with Dead

Base: (WPR + PCN + STA)/3
Willpower Cost: 10
Check: Specific
Time Required: 5 minutes
Range: 10 feet
Duration: Time of use

A character may use this PT to communicate with a dead body within range. The head of the dead person must be mostly intact. The subject does not actually speak out loud, but communicates by the mind with the character. The amount of information gained depends on the degree of success of the check and the time since the person died. The column used for the specific check may be modified depending on time since death. Note that the character cannot communicate with skeletonized bodies, and the CM must use discretion as to how decomposed a body may be. Unless other conditions interfere, a body is generally skeletonized after a month in a temperate environment. See the table and results key below.

Time Since Death	Check Column
Up to 24 hours	3
Up to 2 weeks	4
Up to one month	5
Per year	+1 column*

*Max. column 10

Failure: No information is gained.

L = *Limited communication:* The answer to one yes/no question may be learned.

M = *Moderate communication:* The answer to a question that can be answered in one short sentence may be learned.

H = *High communication:* As Moderate, but two questions may be asked, or one question with a more complicated answer of no more than three main points.

C = *Colossal communication:* The character has a detailed conversation with the dead, learning as much as might be learned in 5 minutes of conversation.

K = Not applicable.

CHAPTER 7: BASIC ACTION

GAME TIME

Exactly as time passes for people in the real world, so it passes for characters in a MAJUS game. The CM must keep track of two different kinds of time: real time and game time. Game time reflects time that passes for the characters, while real time reflects the time that passes for the players.

Often, the amount of real time that passes is different from the amount of game time that passes. For example, players may take 30 minutes to plan their characters' attack against a rival Tower, and then to put that plan into action. But only a few minutes of game time may pass for the characters during the fight.

The CM controls the passage of game time, depending upon what the characters are doing. If they spend a rather eventless day (for example, gathering provisions or traveling at sea) the CM can measure game time in days or hours. When the action gets tense, however, the CM has to measure game time very carefully—breaking hours into minutes, and minutes into rounds.

A round of game time equals 5 seconds of time for the characters. You must use rounds whenever the characters fight something, and whenever they try to avoid fighting something that wants to fight them. In other words, use rounds to measure time in any "fight or flight" situation.

At times, you might want to group the rounds together into minutes, to measure something less precisely than you would measure combat. For example, if characters are hot on the trail of an enemy, use minutes to handle the pursuit, and switch to rounds when they actually encounter him. One minute equals 12 rounds.

FEAR, OPTIONAL RULE

Characters are occasionally exposed to horrific sights or fearsome entities in MAJUS. Because the game deals with unique individuals who commonly witness supernatural events, an argument could be made that rules for fear are not appropriate. Therefore, the rules presented here are entirely optional, and at the CM's discretion they may be ignored, used, or modified as needed.

On the other hand, maybe even the greatest Maji's mind can only take so much. Simply seeing a demon may no longer instill complete panic, but perhaps being confronted by one intent on claiming the Majus' soul would. Or perhaps a particularly horrific encounter may induce fear. A fear check is a specific check versus current WIL. It is recommended that a check be required in the following situations, using the Defense Column indicated:

1. The character encounters a the scene of a blood-splattered ritual gone awry. Because there is no immediate threat to the PCs, it is suggested column 3 be used, or 4 if it is a particularly gruesome scene.

2. If a horrific threat of slightly greater power than the PCs is encountered, Column 5 is recommended.

3. If a horrific threat of significantly greater power than the PCs is encountered, Column 6 is recommended.

4. If a severely more powerful and horrible threat, like a major demon or other fearsome entity whose might far-outstripped the party is met, Column 7 is recommended.

FEAR RESULTS

Failure: As soon as the fear check fails, the character loses 2d10 current WIL points and he runs away as fast as possible for one round. Alternatively, at CM discretion, the character may not run but instead attempts to hide if it seems most logical in the situation.

S = *Scared:* As a failure, but the character loses 1d10 current WIL points.

L = *Loathing:* As a failure, but the character subtracts 1d10/2 (round up) current WIL points.

M = *Misgivings:* As *Loathing*, but the character does not run away.

H, C = *Heroism:* All fear is overcome.

SURPRISE

Whether the characters throw caution to the wind or plot their every move in detail, they can never control the unexpected; sooner or later, something will take them by surprise. Surprise plays an important role in this game, especially during a fight. It can stop players dead in their tracks, and cause even the best of plans to fail.

SURPRISE CHECKS

A surprise check is simply a general check against Perception. It determines whether a character can respond immediately to an unexpected situation, or whether he stands there gawking and frozen in place.

Usually, characters only check for surprise in threatening situations; they don't have to make a surprise check every time a stranger passes on the street! A character must make a surprise check immediately whenever:

1. An unexpected person or animal suddenly comes into view, or is suddenly sensed by the character.

2. Someone—or something—ambushes the character, attacking him from concealment.

3. Unexpected circumstances arise, and the CM decides they require a surprise check.

The CM should make sure that all surprise checks are made the instant any of the above conditions are met. Immediately, all actions must freeze. If the character must check for surprise while he's moving, then he must stop moving until the surprise check is resolved. If he passes the check, he finishes the movement as if nothing had ever happened. If he fails the check, here's what occurs:

1. He "freezes" on the spot, remaining stationary in the location at which he failed the check. He can't take any other action for the rest of the round—that means no combat skills, no paranormal talents, no running away, ...nothing.

2. His Unskilled Melee score becomes zero for the rest of the round. Surprised characters can, however, make use of defense rolls during missile attack, and they can use Luck to modify that roll. You'll learn about all these things in a minute, when actual combat is explained.

FIELD OF VISION

In a MAJUS game, your field of vision is defined as the area you can see under normal conditions without turning your body. It's important to be clear about this for two reasons. First, if you can't see something, you can't fire or throw a weapon and hit it. Second, if that "something" suddenly jumps into your field of vision, you must check for surprise. Darkness can make it hard to see much of anything. The CM should use his or her discretion to determine how much a character can see.

LIGHT SOURCES

Refer to the table below for light sources and their effective areas.

Light Source	Illumination
Candle	30-foot radius
Flashlight	100 feet
Headlights	500 feet
Lantern	60-foot radius
Moonlight	300 feet
Moonless Night	Cloudy, 30 feet
	Clear, 300 feet
Torch	60-foot radius

WATCHING BEHIND

If (as a player) you say that your character is "watching behind," you can increase your character's field of vision to a full circle (360 degrees). If your character is moving, he or she has to slow down, since characters must essentially stop and turn around to look behind themselves.

Characters cannot run (or sprint) while watching behind, and if they're walking, they must deduct 10 feet from the distance they can normally cover each round.

The CM should allow "watching behind" only when characters (and not just the players) have reason to keep close watch of the world all around them. Use a general Perception check to resolve any question of whether a character has a reason to watch behind: characters who pass the check can watch behind.

SEQUENCE OF PLAY DURING A ROUND

A lot can happen in a round: someone fires a weapon, someone punches an enemy, characters flee, characters fall, and others stand dumbfounded in surprise—the list can go on and on! Fortunately, the rules of the game provide a system for creating order from chaos: the Sequence of Play.

The Sequence of Play determines the order in which events must take place in a round. If you follow the Sequence of Play, you can determine the outcome of each action quickly, and players can concentrate on the adventure instead of worrying about the rules.

Three combat forms can take place in a round: paranormal, missile, or melee. Paranormal combat just means the character uses a paranormal talent or magical adit. Missile combat means throwing or firing a weapon, and melee is hand-to-hand fighting. Each player may choose one (and only one) of these to use in a round. Once the player chooses one of these three, his or her character cannot use any other combat form that round.

The rest of this chapter fully describes how the Sequence of Play works. For now, look over the steps below, and try to keep them in mind. During play, you'll probably want to refer to the list on the Action Table.

THE SEQUENCE OF PLAY

1. CM declares NPC and animal actions, including movement, combat form, and first attack.

2. Players declare their PCs' actions, including movement, combat form, and first attack.

3. Both sides roll for initiative, to determine who goes first.

4. Side A (the side that wins initiative) uses magical adits or paranormal talents.

5. Side A throws or fires missiles.

6. Side A moves.

7. Side B fires or throws missiles in defense. (To do so, they must have declared missile combat in Step 1 or 2.)

8. Side A melees.

9. Side B uses magical adits or paranormal talents.

10. Side B fires or throws missiles.

11. Side B moves.

12. Side A fires or throws missiles in defense (To do so, they must have declared missile combat in step 1 or 2).

13. Side B melees.

14. Stamina Loss and Recovery.

Note: Surprise checks may be made during any step of a round, as called for by the situation.

COMBAT PROCEDURE

As you can see by looking at the list above, most of the Sequence of Play revolves around the three forms of combat: adit/paranormal, missile, and melee. In any given round, a character may use only one form of combat, which must be specified during the declaration step.

Any time combat occurs, players must follow combat procedure. The combat procedure doesn't change the Sequence of Play; it expands it, allowing you to determine the outcome of any attack as soon as it is made. The following steps make up the combat procedure:

COMBAT PROCEDURE

1. Attack Declaration. This step only applies to characters who can make more than one attack each round—firing more than one shot, punching more than once, etc. Only skilled characters can make more than one attack. Every character's first attack is always specified during steps 1 or 2 in the Sequence of Play. When the character is making a subsequent

DEFENSE COLUMN CHART

Attack Type	Defense Column
Missile Attack	Defender Rolls 1d10 and adds any luck spent to the die roll. Resulting number is number of the Defense Column (10 maximum).
Melee Attack: Defender has declared use of a melee skill as action for the round.	Use column beneath the range of numbers that contains the defender's skill score.
Melee Attack: Defender surprised.	Use Column 1.
Melee Attack: Defender doing none of the above.	Use column beneath the range of numbers that contains the defender's Unskilled Melee score.

attack (including defensive missile fire), he or she declares it now. Be sure to specify your target.

2. Base Chance Determination. In this step, you must figure out the attacker's base chance to attack successfully—his chance before modifiers are applied. The base chance depends upon the attack form:

a. Magical adit = Adit score.
b. Paranormal Talent = PT score.
c. Missile = Skill score or Dexterity. If the attacker is using a weapon skill, the base chance equals his skill score. If the attacker doesn't have skill with the weapon, use his Dexterity score.
d. Melee Attacks = Skill or Unskilled Melee score. As with missile attacks, if the attacker is using a skill, his base chance for success equals his score for that skill. If the character isn't using a melee skill, however, his base chance for success equals his Unskilled Melee score.

3. Strike Number Determination. The strike number is the attacker's exact chance for success. It is simply the base chance with a few adjustments to reflect the attack at hand: how far the target is, whether the target is moving, whether the attacker is moving, etc. The upcoming sections list the modifiers for each combat form, which you must subtract from (or add to) the base chance to figure out the strike

number. There are no modifiers for paranormal talents or adits.

4. Defender Luck Use (for missile attacks only). If the defender is a player character, and a missile attack is in progress, the defender may now choose to "spend" up to 2 Luck points from his Luck score. The points will lessen the injury he or she takes if the attack succeeds. Of course, at this point, no one has rolled dice to see if the attack succeeds, so the outcome is still in question. Even if the attack fails, the Luck points are gone. Step 5 explains how to use Luck points to reduce injury from a successful attack.

5. Roll to Strike. Roll a specific check against the attacker's strike number. If the attack fails, combat procedure is over. If the attack succeeds, subtract the result of the roll from the strike number, and find the difference on the Action Table, under "Attack Margin." As with any specific check, this determines which row contains your combat result. The defense column varies according to the attack and how much Luck the defender spent in step 4. See the Defense Column Chart to figure out which defense column to read.

6. Apply the Results. To find the result of the attack, cross-index the attack row with the defense column.

Then read the result on the appropriate key. If the character attacked with a weapon, use the Armed Combat Results Key. If he attacked only with his body, use the Unarmed Combat Results Key. Both

of these keys are beneath the Action Table. Keys for paranormal talents are listed in Chapter 5 (generally column 2). After you find the result, apply the effects immediately, including wounds and damage. Wounds and damage are explained later in this chapter, after the descriptions of each combat form.

CALLED SHOTS IN COMBAT
When characters "call a shot," they say what outcome they'd like their actions to have. "C" results on the Action Table always indicate success. In missile and melee attacks, called shots usually tell two things: 1) location ("I'd like to shoot him in the leg"), and 2) approximate amount of injury. This does not mean that attackers may say, "He should lose six Stamina points and die." It only means that attackers may request that their attacks cause the damage listed under "S," "L," "M," "H," or "C" on the results key.

Here's an example: Let's say that Bob wants to stab a nasty NPC in the leg, but he only wants to inflict "M" ("Medium") damage, not "C" damage. He specifies all of this in his called shot. If the attack result is a "C" on the Action Table, then Bob's wish comes true. He stabs the leg, and the CM follows the instructions under the "M" result to find out exactly how much damage the stabbing caused.

Note: No character may make called shots for paranormal attacks.

HELPLESS DEFENDERS
Sometimes, a defender is totally unable to defend himself: he is unconscious, bound, or otherwise helpless. In these cases, the attacker always succeeds with a missile or melee attack; no dice roll is needed. In this instance, and this instance only, characters may make "killing" a called shot.

If the defender is a PC, he can make a Luck check, as explained later in the section "Damage from Combat."

LEARNING THE SEQUENCE OF PLAY

DECLARATION

Steps 1 and 2 in the Sequence of Play are called the "declaration steps" of the round. Both the CM and players must declare what movement and combat action they plan to take even though they still have no idea which side will get to go first. After the CM or a player declares an action, he cannot change his mind; characters must make every effort to carry out declared actions. Of course, an *opponent* may make a declared action impossible later on—but then, that's the nature of combat.

Follow the instructions below during every declaration phase.

All players, including CM: Declare what movement, if any, your character will make, and declare which combat form your character will use, if any. Choose from adit/paranormal, missile, or melee. Declare your first attack, and specify the target. Many characters only get one attack; but if they can make multiple attacks in a round, they can wait for the appropriate attack steps to choose and declare subsequent attacks. If your first attack includes a called shot, you must declare the called shot now.

CM only: Follow the instructions above, but describe only what the PCs will see, sense, or notice; don't give the players information that their characters wouldn't have during combat. Make mental or written notes of anything you don't describe; you still have to make a declaration and stick to it, even if part of your declaration is secret. If an opponent makes a paranormal attack (for example), tell the players that the opponent is standing still, in a trancelike state. Don't say who he's attacking, or which adit he's using.

WHO GOES FIRST?

WITHIN EACH ROUND:

INITIATIVE

Initiative determines which side gets to go first during a round—the characters controlled by the players, or those controlled by the CM.

To determine initiative, each side rolls 1d10. Players choose one "roller" amongst themselves. The side rolling the highest number wins. In case of a tie, roll again. In the Sequence of Play, the side that wins initiative is called Side A. The side that loses is called Side B.

WITHIN EACH STEP

During any given step of the round, the CM determines who goes first. For example, when the Sequence of Play calls for Side A to resolve missile combat and two players on Side A have declared missile combat for their characters, then the CM decides the order in which the characters fire

MISSILE ATTACK MODIFIERS			
Target's Declared Action or Situation This Round		**Attacker's Declared Actions or Situation This Round**	
Walking	-10	Walking	-10
Running	-20	Running	-20
Sprinting	-30	Sprinting	-30
Falling/Diving	-40	Falling/Diving	-40
Going to cover	-20	Going to cover	-20
Behind cover	-30	In slow vehicle	-10
In slow vehicle	-10	In fast vehicle	-30
In fast vehicle	-30	Charged or meleed this round	-40
Prone	-10	Getting up, and/or turning more than 60 degrees	-20
Swimming	-30	Drawing this round	-20
		Firing more than one weapon	-20
		Aiming a single shot*	+10
		Second shot in a round	-10
		Third shot in a round	-20
		Fourth shot in a round	-30
		Unskilled riding	-40
		Range modifier	*Varies—see weapons chart*

* Applies only to characters skilled with the firearm, and who choose to fire only one shot this round.

Notes:

Falling/Diving: An attacker may fire only when leaping intentionally from a height of 10 feet or less; the attacker may not fire while unintentionally falling. In either case, the attacker suffers normal falling damage.

Going to cover: A character is "going to cover" if he or she does not begin the round behind cover and ends the round behind cover, or moves from one covered location to another covered location and is fully visible at any point along the move. Use the modifier for running or sprinting instead of this modifier if the character runs or sprints to go behind cover.

Behind cover: Use this modifier if the target keeps at least half of its body behind cover for the whole round.

In slow vehicle: Any vehicle moving 20 m.p.h. or less is a slow-moving vehicle. Note that a target in such a vehicle will probably also be behind cover. See "Vehicles in Action."

In fast vehicle: Any vehicle moving faster than 20 m.p.h. is a fast vehicle. Note that a target in such a vehicle is probably also behind cover. See "Vehicles in Action."

Prone: This modifier applies only if the attacker is not 10 feet or more higher in elevation than the defender. Otherwise, the defender gains no benefit for being prone.

Charged or melee attacked: Any character being charged or melee attacked this round, regardless of initiative or any other previous results, suffers this modifier on all missile attacks during the round.

Firing burst: A burst is a special type of fire from an automatic weapon. Bursts are explained in detail in the section "Automatic Rifles."

or throw their weapons. If a dispute arises, the CM should declare that the character with the highest Willpower score goes first. If any character is firing (or throwing) more than one missile that step, then he or she must fire them all before the other character acts. The rules in this example apply to all three combat forms: the CM determines the order in which the PCs attack, and each PC must finish his attacks in that step before the next PC begins.

MAGICAL ADITS AND PARANORMAL TALENTS IN COMBAT

Paranormal combat is special because it requires total concentration; characters cannot do anything else during the round—they cannot even move. Characters who elect to use a magical adit or paranormal talent during a round do not declare movement.

WILLPOWER LOSS

Magical adits and paranormal talents relate strongly to Willpower. Like Stamina, Willpower has a current value, which can rise and fall during play. Characters must spend Willpower points to use magical adits and paranormal talents. Furthermore, some paranormal attacks cause the defender to lose Willpower. Like Stamina, Willpower can be regenerated, but a severe loss of Willpower means problems for the character.

Characters whose current Willpower drops to 20 or below refuse to fight and try to move immediately to the nearest place of safety. This reaction must occur; the CM should never allow players to break this rule.

A character whose current Willpower drops to zero is completely confused. He or she cannot fight or interact with other characters. He or she can't do anything at all without simple directions from others which take no more than one round to complete, such as, "Get up," "Come over here," or "Sit in this chair."

MISSIL COMBAT

Any time a character throws or fires a weapon at a target, he is attacking with a missile. Missiles include bullets, arrows, rocks, javelins, and shurikens—just to name a few.

SKILLED VS. UNSKILLED ATTACKS

Unskilled characters may only make one missile attack per round (the same applies to melee). Skilled characters can often make more missile attacks, each round, depending on their weapon and level of skill. For instance, characters with firearms skills gain one extra shot per level of skill, up to the maximum possible for the weapon. Skilled characters also have a better chance to hit their targets; they use their skill score, while unskilled characters use Dexterity.

SIGHTING

Characters cannot make a successful missile attack against targets they

		MISSILE WEAPONS			
Type	Range Modifier (per 10 feet / per 100 yards)	Ammo	ROF	RL	Mounted Use?
SHORT RANGE WEAPONS					
THROWN WEAPONS					
Axe/Tomahawk	-30	NA	1	NA	Yes
Dagger/Knife	-20	NA	1	NA	Yes
Javelin	-05	NA	1	NA	Yes
Shuriken	-25	NA	4	NA	Yes
Spear	-20	NA	1	NA	Yes
Hand Grenade	-30	NA	1	NA	Yes
SPECIAL WEAPONS					
Blowgun	-20	1	1	NA	No
Bola	-10	NA	1	NA	Yes
Sling	-05	UL	1	NA	No
SHORT RANGE FIREARMS					
Antique Pistol	-15	1	1	4	Yes
Revolver	-07	6	4	2*	Yes
Automatic Pistol	-12	8	4	1	Yes
Shotgun (double barrel)	-04/120	2	2	1	Yes
Shotgun, pump	-04/120	5	4	2	Yes
LONG RANGE WEAPONS					
Arquebus	-05/150	1	1	12	No
Musket	-02/50	1	1	+++	No
Dragoon Musket	-05/120	1	1	+++	Yes
Rifle	-.5/15	1-10**	1-4**	1	Yes
Automatic Rifle	-.5/15	1-20	4***	1	Yes
BOWS AND ARROWS					
Crossbow	-02/50	1	1	++	No
Shortbow	-05/150	1	1	++	Yes
Longbow	-02/50	1	1	++	No

Notes:

Range modifiers for short-range weapons apply for every 10 feet of range beyond the first 10. To calculate the actual modifier, therefore, divide the range in feet by 10, rounding up any fraction, and subtract 1. Multiply the number obtained by the modifier shown on the table.

Long range weapons (and shotguns) have two modifiers separated by a slash. The number to the left of the slash is for every 10 feet beyond the first 10. The number to the right of the slash is the modifier for every 100 yards when players are using maps with 10-yard or 100 yard-scales. These maps are discussed in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6.

Ammo - The number of rounds of ammunition carried in the weapon. Do not confuse this with the number of rounds carried by the person using the weapon, which can vary from scenario to scenario.

ROF - Rate of Fire, the maximum number of times the weapon can be fired in one round. Characters without skill with a weapon can fire the weapon only once per round (at most) regardless of the rate of fire.

RL - The number of rounds required to reload the weapon.

Mounted Use - This column tells whether or not the weapon can be used while the character is mounted on horseback.

* - Can be reloaded with 3 bullets in one round.

** - Rifles vary a great deal in the number of bullets carried in their clip and in their maximum rates of fire. Specific values are given in each adventure scenario for the types of rifles available in that scenario. An average 20th Century World War II combat rifle had a clip of five bullets and a maximum ROF of 4.

*** - Automatic rifles and photon rifles can fire either a maximum of 4 single shots per round or one automatic burst per round. A burst depletes the ammo of the weapon by 10 rounds.

++ - Reload rates for these weapons vary with the skill of the user. See the Bow skills in Chapter 7: "Skills."

+++ - Reload rates for these weapons vary with the skill of the user. See the Firearms skills in Chapter 7: "Skills."

UL - Unlimited.

NA - Not applicable. When applied to reload rates, this means the weapon can be used every round.

cannot see. It's that simple. During missile fire steps, characters can turn to face targets that used to be outside their fields of vision, with one provision: they must have a valid reason for turning. (Be careful, CM: players may know where a target is, while their characters do not! Use a general Perception check to resolve any doubtful cases.)

There is one exception to the "If you can't see it, you can't hit it" rule: hand grenades. Characters can throw hand grenades into an area where they know an enemy is lurking, even if the enemy is currently hidden from view.

In moving crowds or heavy traffic, characters may at best have fleeting glimpses of a target. Dense foliage can create the same effect. In these cases, the CM might wish to have the character pass a general Luck check to determine if the target is in view.

MISSILE ATTACK MODIFIERS

An attacker's chance of using a missile successfully equals a base score plus or minus certain modifiers. Modifiers are numbers that show how the characters' actions in combat affect their chances of success. For instance, if the target is moving, the attacker's chance to hit it should decrease. Therefore, a modifier is subtracted from the base chance, to reflect the target's movement.

The table below lists all the modifiers for missile combat To figure out an attacker's Strike Number (Step 3 in Combat Procedure), look over this table and pick out the modifiers that fit the missile attack at hand. The modifiers are cumulative; if you find more than one that applies, add (or subtract) all of them together.

DEFENSIVE MISSILE ATTACKS

Steps 7 and 12 in the Sequence of Play are reserved for defensive missile attacks. Characters who make attacks during these steps must have declared missile combat as their action for the round. They must also have at least one attack remaining. Unskilled characters, who are allowed only one attack in a round, may choose to hold that attack until their defensive missile attack step.

Characters may make one, and only one, defensive missile attack, regardless of their skill or lack of one. This attack does count against the number of attacks they are allowed in a round.

MISSILES INTO MELEE

Melee is hand-to-hand fighting, which can occur when characters are within 5 feet of one another. Firing or throwing a weapon into that kind of scuffle is risky business; you can miss your target and hit another fighter who is your ally!

Whenever an attacker fires into melee, a "hit" on the Action Table indicates only that someone in the melee was hit—it doesn't tell who the victim is. Roll percent dice to determine the victim: a roll of 0-50 means it's the right target; 51-100 means it's the wrong one. If the wrong victim is indicated by the dice, and there is more than one wrong victim to choose from, the CM should assign an equal chance to each victim and roll to see which one is hit.

Note: "C" results are handled differently; the attacker can make hitting his target a called shot, in which case any "C" would indicate that he hit the correct target in whatever manner specified.

AUTOMATIC RIFLES

Automatic rifles (including submachine guns) have two modes of fire: single-shot and burst. Characters firing these rifles must declare which mode they are using in each round.

Automatic rifles can fire one to four single shots per round: unskilled characters can fire one shot; characters with Master Level weapon skill can fire four.

A burst is a spray of 10 bullets. Characters can fire only one burst in a round, regardless of their skill level. This attack receives a +30 modifier, and all modifiers listed on the Missile Attack Modifiers Chart under the heading "Target's Declared Action or Situation This Round" are ignored. All other modifiers are applied normally. A burst covers a 45° arc from the attacker.

When firing a burst, the attacker rolls only once against his or her strike number. If the attack is successful, each defender in the area covered by the burst makes his or her own separate roll of 1d10 for a defense column.

SHOTGUNS

Shotguns fire a spray of pellets which can hit more than one target in an area. A hit with a shotgun means all characters in the spread have been hit. The spread is 5 feet wide to 20 feet, after which it is 15 feet wide for its remaining range.

Notice that a shotgun doesn't distinguish between friends and foes. Each character in the spread pattern makes a separate defense roll, just as in the case of automatic rifle fire.

When firing a shotgun, the attacker uses the set of modifiers for the character most likely to be hit (out of all possible targets in the spread pattern).

An attacker who misses with a shotgun misses all targets in the spread pattern.

There are two types of shotguns commonly used: double barreled shotguns and pump action shotguns. Any character, skilled or unskilled, can fire both barrels of a double barreled shotgun with one, single missile attack. The damage caused by this attack is doubled. Pump action shotguns fire one shell per attack, and have a maximum rate of fire of 4 shots per round.

HAND GRENADES

Hand grenades are small, hand-thrown explosive devices. Although characters can acquire a skill for grenades, they don't need this skill to throw one. As with all missile weapons, unskilled characters just use their Dexterity score as their base chance for success. Thrown hand-grenades hit their target on any successful check result. If the character fails the check, the grenade lands 1 to 5 (1d10/2, round up) squares beyond the target on a 5'

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2" align="center">HINDERED MOVEMENT</td></tr>
</table>

Obstacle	Effect on Walking Distance
Normal Obstacles	
Doors, closed	-10 feet
Stairs	-10 feet per flight
Entering or leaving a vehicle	-20 feet
*Dangerous Obstacles**	
Vehicles	-15 feet
Furniture	-10 feet
Placed Obstacle	-10 feet

* Modifiers do not apply if characters walk around the obstacle. If characters climb over, or jump across, they need to make a general Agility check. If they fail, the characters fall down.

Terrain	Effect on Walking Distance
Heavy Woods	-10 feet
Light Woods	-5 feet
Broken (rough terrain)	-15 feet
Swamp	-20 feet

Action	Effects/Comments
Firing firearm or throwing missile	Deduct 5 feet from total walking movement for each missile fired or thrown before movement. Deduct triple this amount from running distance.
Firing bow	No movement allowed in same round.
Standing up	Deduct 10 feet from total walking movement, 30 feet from total running movement.
Placing obstacle	Deduct 5 feet from total walking movement, 15 feet from total running movement; limit one obstacle per round.
Watching behind	Deduct 10 feet from total walking movement; running and sprinting not allowed.

Notes:

Placing obstacle: Quickly grabbing something (such as a chair) directly ahead and flipping it behind to foil pursuit.

Watching Behind: Keeping a watch behind while moving forward.

scale. The CM may roll dice for the direction in which the grenade misses, or simply assign it according to the circumstances.

Regardless of where a hand grenade lands, it causes 75% catastrophic damage to each character within a 15' radius. (See "Special Damage" below.)

MISCELLANEOUS THROWN WEAPONS

Resourceful characters can—and will—throw just about anything in combat if they have to. Rocks, mugs, lamps, small chairs,—all of these can be missiles. To determine success, the CM should use the character's Dexterity score as his base chance to hit, and modify it for the bulk or clumsiness of the object, use the situation itself as guide. In general, characters should not be able to hit a target with a miscellaneous thrown object at ranges of greater than 30 feet.

MOVEMENT

KEEPING TRACK OF MOVEMENT

Depending on the preferences of the CM and the players, maps can be used to keep track of everyone's location during combat. This becomes especially important during the movement step of a round. No character likes to find out—too late— that the opponent he intended to punch is just beyond his reach, sporting a gun and a grin.

If maps are used, each character is represented by a counter on the map. Just move the counters on the map whenever the characters move. In this way, you will always be certain where your character stands—and where his enemies stand, too.

Experienced players may want to use miniature figures instead of counters to represent their characters. And, when playing scenarios of the CM's own design, such players may want to use their figures on a tabletop instead of a map, using any handy items to stand for buildings, trees, walls, and so on. When using miniatures, a scale of 1 inch = 5 feet is typical.

MOVEMENT RATES

Characters may have special magical and mental talents, but they are still bound by the restrictions of their bodies. They can only move so far, so fast—and that's it. The chart below shows the limits to character movement during a round, according to the type of movement declared.

CHARACTER MOVEMENT IN ONE ROUND		
Declared Move	Distance in feet	5' Squares
Crawling	15	3
Walking	25	5
Running	75	15
Sprinting	150	30
Swimming	15	3
Climbing	5	1

Sprinting indicates all-out running. Its use costs the character 3 Stamina points per round. Characters who sprint may take no other action. Characters in metal armor cannot sprint.

Swimming rates may vary if the CM wants to adjust them according to currents, tides, etc.

Climbing in the chart above refers to mountains, cliffs, ladders, and ropes—not stairways.

HINDERED MOVEMENT

Often, a character wants to take some kind of action while moving: he throws garbage cans at the feet of his pursuer, or turns around from time to time to fire his gun, for instance. Actions such as these slow movement.

Obstacles and terrain may slow a character, too. Characters can't walk up stairs or over furniture as quickly as they cross the dance floor. And

they can't cross a swamp as fast as they cover flat ground.

The chart shows how actions and obstacles can hinder movement. Use the chart as a guideline to determine a character's actual movement rate during combat.

MULTIPLE CHARACTERS IN ONE SPACE

When using a map with a 5-foot scale, it's best not to allow more than two characters in one space. Characters engaged in melee can occupy adjacent 5-foot squares. Sometimes, special movements may force opponents to be in the same space, but that's uncommon.

Any conscious character who isn't held or helpless can automatically force another character to stop upon entering his space (or coming within 1 inch when using miniatures). No dice roll or declaration is required. This rule only applies when players use the 5-foot scale.

LEAPING AND JUMPING

When a character wants to leap over an obstacle or jump up and grab something, his base chance to do so equals his Agility score. Most humans can't reach an object higher than 10 feet, and they can't make a running leap much over 15 feet without losing their balance. As a general guideline, subtract 25% from the character's Agility score for each foot over these maximums the character is attempting to jump or leap. The check is a general Agility check.

MELEE

Melee, or hand-to-hand fighting, occurs in two forms: armed and unarmed. Melee with weapons—such as swords, clubs, and knives—is called armed melee. Melee without weapons—teeth (human), fists, and feet, etc.—is called unarmed melee.

To engage in melee, the attacker must be within 5 feet of his or her target at the beginning of the Melee step of the round.

Characters without a melee skill can make only one melee attack per round. Some, but not all, melee skills allow a character to make more than one attack per round.

SKILLED MELEE

Characters can acquire skills in both armed and unarmed melee. (See Chapter 4 for a complete list and description of skills.) Armed melee skills are usually defined by a particular type of weapon; for instance, Dagger and Sword are two different skills. Unarmed melee skills reflect a particular class of fighting; Boxing and Wrestling are also separate skills. Whenever a character uses a skill in melee, his or her skill score is the base chance to strike an opponent successfully.

UNSKILLED MELEE

Characters don't need melee skills to hold their own in hand-to-hand fighting. Nearly everyone can do something in a scuffle—kick, bite, punch, scratch—even slash or club. Such actions may be crude, but that doesn't mean they're ineffective. Both armed and unarmed attacks are possible.

Whenever a character uses un-skilled melee, his base chance for success equals his Unskilled Melee score.

Unskilled Holds

If a character without a Wrestling skill wants to secure his opponent in a hold, then he must declare that he intends to grab or jump on his opponent, and make the hold a called shot. A "C" result indicates a successful hold with normal "C" damage possible.

A defender who is held cannot do anything until he breaks the hold. To do so, the defender must gain initiative and make a successful melee attack in a subsequent round. He cannot declare a called shot for the attack, but any successful attack will break the hold and inflict normal damage.

The attacker doesn't have to make a check to maintain the hold; it's automatic from round to round, until the defender breaks it. During the first round, the hold inflicts normal "C" damage on the defender, according to the results for unarmed combat. In each subsequent round,

the hold inflicts 1d10 points of Stamina damage.

All of the above assumes that no one intervenes with the two wrestling characters we've described. If anyone, or anything, scores a successful attack of any kind on the character maintaining the hold, the hold is automatically broken. The character who lost his grip takes normal damage from the attack.

Strangling

Treat strangling as a special kind of hold in which the attacker has the defender by the throat (see above). The results and rules are the same, with one addition: at the end of every round, the defender must pass a general check against his current Stamina. If he fails the check, the defender falls unconscious and his current Stamina drops to zero immediately.

Remember that the CM can declare called shots to be impossible, if they're too far-fetched. This rule could be applied whenever the character wants to strangle a large animal. For instance, most characters could strangle a monkey or a dog, but very few of them could strangle a hippopotamus!

MELEE MODIFIERS

Melee modifiers are numbers which are added to or subtracted from a character's base chance to hit his opponent in melee. They work in melee just like missile combat modifiers work in missile combat. To find a character's strike number for a melee attack, go through the following list of melee modifiers and add or subtract those that apply to the melee at hand.

ESCAPING FROM MELEE

The following rule applies when any characters start the round within 5 feet of one another, and melee is declared. If one of the characters says he intends to run instead of melee, then follow these rules:

As long as the fleeing character was not fleeing in the previous round, no attacker may run after him and engage in melee in the current round. The attacker can declare "I'm

chasing," or "I'm hitting," but not both. If the fleeing character wins initiative, all is well; he runs before the attacker can hit him. But if the fleeing character loses initiative, and the attacker declared melee, the attacker strikes before the defender can move. Furthermore, the attacker strikes with two impressive modifiers: First, the attacker automatically adds +10 to his base chance to hit, just for winning initiative against someone who declared flight. Second, the attacker adds +20 (for a total of +30) if the defender declared he was running away; this modifier is applied because the fleeing defender is automatically being struck from behind. As you can see, running from melee can be risky business.

MELEE RESTRICTIONS

1. Multiple Attackers. No more than three attackers can strike one human-sized defender during the same round.

The CM must determine what's appropriate for defenders of other sizes, but these examples should help: during a single round, up to six humans can strike a horse, and up to a dozen rats can strike a human.

2. Knockouts. Knockouts are not allowed as called shots in melee unless the attacker is using Boxing or Blackjack skills. A defender does fall unconscious, however, whenever his current Stamina reaches zero. See "Damage and Healing."

DAMAGE FROM COMBAT

In game terms, damage is physical injury to any character or animal. Damage always causes the character's current Stamina to drop; that shows that he's tired, and maybe bruised or battered. If damage is more severe, then the character may also have to check a "wound box" on his character sheet; that shows that he's suffered some kind of serious injury, too. So we know that damage results in two things: Stamina loss and, sometimes, wounds.

Notice there are two different results keys below the Action Table: one for unarmed combat, and one for armed combat. Weapons are

MELEE ATTACK MODIFIERS	
Situation	**Modifier**
Attacker on ground	-40
Attacker getting up	-20
Attacker moved to close this round	-20
Attacker charging with long weapon	+20
Attacker attacking from behind	+20
Defender lost initiative and is fleeing	+10
Charging on horseback	+30
Mounted, charging against polearm	-30

Notes:

On ground: This modifier applies when the attacker begins the round on the ground and does not stand before making the attack.

Getting up this round: This modifier applies when the attacker began the round on the ground and stands before making the attack.

Moved to close this round: This modifier applies if the attacker did not begin the round within 5 feet of the defender and the defender did not declare any movement for this round. Ignore this modifier if the attacker is charging with a long weapon.

Charging with long weapon: This modifier applies if the attacker moved at least 25 feet in the same round before attacking. The attacker must be armed with a spear, lance, polearm, rifle with a mounted bayonet, or other thrusting weapon at least 6 feet long. If the defender won initiative and is fleeing faster than the attacker is charging, do not apply this modifier. Mounted characters use the modifier for "Charging on horseback" instead.

Attacking from behind: This modifier applies to any attack from behind the defender (The CM should resolve any questions about whether the attack comes from behind.) If the attacker wins initiative and begins the round next to a defender who declares he or she will flee, the attacker can automatically use this modifier. A defender who wins initiative can only be attacked from behind if surprised, or if trapped by two or more attackers.

Defender lost initiative and is fleeing: This modifier applies when the defender declares he or she will flee and loses initiative. Note that in many cases this modifier and the modifier for attacking from behind will both apply.

Unless specified otherwise, all melee attack modifiers are cumulative—added or subtracted together.

more dangerous than fists; consequently, the armed combat key always calls for wounds. The unarmed combat key only calls for wounds in the most severe cases ("H" or "C" results). Both keys call for Stamina loss.

How to record Stamina loss:

1. Determine the amount of Stamina lost by rolling one or more ten-sided dice. The results key will tell you how many dice to roll. Add up the numbers rolled. (Many results call for this sum to be multiplied by two.) The result is the amount of Stamina lost.

2. Subtract the lost Stamina from your current Stamina score—the original Ability score for Stamina stays intact.

How to record wounds:

1. See how many wounds are indicated in the results key. There may be none, or there may be as many as five.

2. Check off the appropriate number of wound boxes on your character sheet.

EFFECTS OF DAMAGE

Damage can lead to two things: unconsciousness and death. When a character's current Stamina drops to zero, he passes out. When he has no wound boxes left to check off, he dies.

Unconsciousness: As soon as a character's current Stamina drops to zero, he passes out for 1d100 minutes (the CM rolls a secret percent). Unconscious characters cannot take any action.

If someone douses an unconscious character with cold

water, or shakes him gently, the character awakens immediately. As soon as the character comes to, he regains one current Stamina point

Death: As soon as a character has taken all the wounds he can take (so that he has no wound boxes left to mark on his character sheet), he dies. Player characters can make a Luck check against death. A successful check means the character falls into a coma instead of dying. The character may immediately erase one wound box to show that he has one wound box left. He remains unconscious for 1d10 days (CM rolls secretly), with a current Stamina of zero. While in a coma, the character heals normally, but he does not awaken and cannot be awakened.

CRITICAL WOUNDS

Characters are critically wounded when they have three or fewer wound boxes left to mark. As soon as they reach this level of wound damage, they must make a general Willpower check. Those who fail the check can take no further action that round; the pain is just too great. If they pass the check, they can continue to fight.

Critically wounded characters must continue to make a general Willpower check before the declaration step of each round until: 1) they receive 2 rounds of treatment from a character with Medical skill, or 2) they use the paranormal talent "Ignore Pain" successfully, or 3) they heal wounds and have four boxes unmarked.

RECOVERY AND HEALING

Characters heal damage in two ways. One, they must rest briefly to recover lost Stamina. And two, they must have bed rest to heal wounds.

RECOVERING STAMINA

To recover lost Stamina, a character simply rests for a few rounds—"taking a breather." To determine a character's recovery rate, find his original Stamina score in the ranges along the top of the Action Table. The number of the defense column below equals the number of Stamina points he can recover during each round of rest. (You should mark

that number on your character sheet, next to "Recovery Rate.)"

For example, John's original Stamina score is 70. That number falls in the 61-75 range, above column 5. Therefore, John can regenerate 5 points of current Stamina for every round of rest.

A character can take no action during rounds of rest. If anyone attacks a character during a round, the character has not rested, even if the attack fails. Lost Stamina is regenerated at the end of every round.

HEALING WOUNDS

It takes more time to heal wounds than it does to recover Stamina. The character must spend one day in bed to heal two wounds. After a day of bed rest, the player can erase the marks in two wound boxes on the character sheet If a character with Medical skill treats the wounded character daily, then the character can heal four wounds a day instead of one.

SPECIAL DAMAGE

Most damage comes from combat—but not all. Characters can be their own worst enemies: like real people, they fall off cliffs, fall asleep in bed with a cigarette, or forget to run before the bomb goes off. Mother Nature can be even more dangerous: she brings on storms, zaps the earth with lightning, and causes the cities to shake. All of these things can damage a character, just as combat does.

FIRE

Fire causes two kinds of damage: burns and smoke inhalation. When a character catches on fire he takes three wounds per round until the flames are extinguished. Characters catch on fire when exposed to open flames for one round, or in other circumstances at the CM's discretion. If a character must breathe while in a smoke-filled area, he takes two wounds per round.

FALLING

Characters take damage if they fall more than 10 feet. Follow combat procedure to determine the amount

of damage, treating the fall as a missile attack against the character (the character can spend Luck points). The strike number equals 90 plus the number of feet fallen. For example, if the character fell 15 feet, the strike number is 105; (90 + 15 = 105). Characters never suffer more than "C" damage from falls of less than 100 feet. Unfortunately, falls from elevations of 100 feet or more will always kill characters. (Luck checks still apply.)

CATASTROPHES

Catastrophes include explosions, collapsing buildings, avalanches, natural disasters, and the like. Follow combat procedure, treating the catastrophe as a missile attack just as you would in a fall. The strike number is calculated differently, however: use a base chance of 100, and add modifiers according to the guidelines below.

Modifiers: Keep in mind that a strike number of 100 is likely to inflict heavy or crippling damage. If you think that characters have a reasonable chance of surviving, subtract a few points from the base chance. (A forest fire, for instance, could have a strike number of 95.) If characters have blundered into a situation where death is highly probable, add some points to the base chance. (For instance, if they're standing on top of Hoover Dam when it collapses, use a strike number of about 175.)

EXPOSURE

Characters without appropriate clothing or equipment suffer exposure damage when they spend 24 or more hours outside in very bad weather or other harsh conditions, such as desert heat. To determine the exact amount of damage, roll a specific check against 99 (the strike number), and use column 5 as the defense column. Use the armed combat key to read the results. Make one check for every 24-hour period spent outdoors. Outdoor Survival skill can help characters avoid exposure damage.

CRAZY STUNTS

Most characters can't resist trying stunts. Remember our man who swung on a chandelier and crashed through the window in Chapter 3? In cases such as these, the CM must use his own discretion to apply damage. The combat results keys and the examples above should offer useful guidelines.

POISONS

In MAJUS, there are two methods for handling poisons. One method does not have to be chosen to the exclusion of the other in the game, depending on the situation, at the discretion of the CM. However, only one method should be used per instance of poisoning.

POISON GENERAL CHECK

All characters must make a general check against current STA when they come in contact with a poison. If they pass the check, they're unaffected. If they fail the check, they die, or suffer other damage as specified in the scenario. Player characters may still make a Luck check against death, and characters with Medical skill may administer an antidote to keep the victim alive if there is time.

POISON SPECIFIC CHECK

Poison may be assigned a potency from 1-10, with 10 being the strongest. These numbers correspond to the same number on the Defense Column of the Action Table. As with the General Check method, PCs may make a Luck check against death, and characters with Medical skill can attempt to administer an antidote to keep the victim alive (time permitting).

Failure = The poisoning results in death after 1d10 rounds.

S = *Serious:* The victim will die in 1d10 minutes.

L = *Limited:* The victim becomes terribly sick and may not engage in any activity for 1d10 days.

M = *Moderate:* The poisoning results in incapacitating illness for 1d10 hours.

H = *Harmless:* The poisoning results in incapacitating illness for 1d10 minutes.

C = *Combated:* The victim's body resists the poison and it has no effect.

SICKNESS AND DISEASE

Sickness and disease is handled in a similar fashion to poisons. There are two methods that may be employed to resolve whether a character catches a disease or other illness. Either method may be used, depending on the situation, but only one method should be used per exposure to a particular illness.

DISEASE GENERAL CHECK

Characters must make a general check against current STA when they are exposed to a disease. A successful roll indicates that they are unaffected. If the check fails, they suffer other effects and/or damage as specified in the scenario. As with poisons, PCs may still make a Luck check against death, and characters with Medical skill can administer care that will prevent loss of STA and/or possibly mitigate other effects depending on the symptoms defined by the CM.

DISEASE SPECIFIC CHECK

Diseases may be assigned a potency from 1-10, with 10 being the most aggressive or virulent. The Disease Potency corresponds to the same number on the Defense Column of the Action Table. As with the General Check method, PCs may make a Luck check against death, and characters with Medical skill can attempt to administer care to prevent loss of STA.

Failure = The victim is rendered incapacitated from the illness within 1d10 hours. He loses 3 wound boxes, and 4d10 points of STA immediately. An additional 1d10 STA are lost per day until he dies. Further, he suffers a daily cumulative penalty of 5 ability points from STR, AGL, DEX, and PCN. These adjustments will affect skills that rely on these abilities. The illness will pass 2d10 days after the victim begins receiving medical care. All ability losses are recovered when the illness passes.

S = *Serious:* The victim loses 1 wound box, and 2d10 points of STA immediately. An additional 1d10 STA are lost per day until he reaches 0. At 0, he will die in 1d10 minutes unless attended to by a character with the Medical skill. Further, he suffers a daily cumulative penalty of 5 ability points from STR, AGL, DEX, and PCN. These adjustments will affect skills that rely on these abilities. The illness will pass 1d10 days after the victim begins receiving medical care. All ability losses are recovered when the illness passes.

L = *Limited:* The victim loses 1d10 points of STA immediately. An additional 1d10 STA are lost per day for 1d10 days. If the victim reaches 0 STA, he falls unconscious for 1d10 days. The victim suffers a daily cumulative penalty of 5 ability points from STR, AGL, DEX, and PCN (up until unconsciousness occurs). These adjustments will affect skills that rely on these abilities. When the character awakens the illness has passed.

M = *Moderate:* The victim loses 1d10 STA and may not regenerate STA for 1d10 days. Successful medical care can reduce this period of time by 50%.

H = *Harmless:* The victim suffers from symptoms of the illness (fever, cough, aches and pains, etc.) but is otherwise able to perform as normal.

C = *Combated:* The victim's body resists the disease and it has no effect.

RADIATION

Radiation exposure is rare, but may occur in unusual situations in a MAJUS campaign. Radiation is handled almost exactly as Sickness and Disease, with differences as noted below. Either of the following methods may be used to resolve radiation exposure, but only one method should be chose per exposure/situation.

RADIATION GENERAL CHECK

Characters must make a general check against current STA when they are exposed to radiation. A successful roll indicates that they are unaffected. If the check fails, they suffer other effects and/or damage as specified in

the scenario. As with poisons or disease, PCs may still make a Luck check against death, and characters with Medical skill can administer care that will prevent loss of STA and/or possibly mitigate other effects depending on the symptoms defined by the CM.

RADIATION SPECIFIC CHECK

Radiation doses are assigned an Exposure Severity of 1-10, with 10 being the most harmful. These numbers correspond to the same number on the Defense Column of the Action Table. PCs may make a Luck check against death, and characters with Medical skill can attempt to administer care to prevent loss of STA. However, with severe radiation exposure medical care is not always helpful.

Failure = Deadly radiation renders the victim incapacitated within 1d10x10 minutes. He loses 5 wound boxes, and 6d10 points of STA immediately. An additional 1d10 STA are lost per day until he dies. Further, he suffers a daily cumulative penalty of 5 ability points from all abilities. These adjustments will affect skills that rely on these abilities.

If the Exposure Severity is 9 or 10, a failed check always eventually leads to death. In this case Medical care can reduce STA loss by 50% per day, but death is inevitable. If any ability reaches 0 before STA reaches 0, the victim dies. Otherwise, Medical care can arrest STA loss and ability penalties, and the character will require 1d10 weeks of bed rest. If the victim recovers, a random ability is chosen and 2d10 points are subtracted from the previous maximum score permanently.

S = *Serious:* The victim loses 3 wound boxes, and 3d10 points of STA immediately. He is completely incapacitated 1d10 hours after exposure. An additional 1d10 STA are lost per day until he reaches 0. At 0, he will die in 1d10 minutes unless attended to by a character with the Medical skill. The victim also suffers a daily cumulative penalty of 5 ability points from all abilities These adjustments will affect skills that rely

on these abilities. After medical care is received, the victim will require 2d10 days of bed rest. If the victim recovers and the Exposure Severity was 8, 9, or 10, a random ability is chosen and 1d10 points are subtracted from the previous maximum score permanently.

L = *Limited:* The victim loses 1d10 points of STA immediately. An additional 1d10 STA are lost per day for 1d10 days. If the victim reaches 0 STA, he falls unconscious for 1d10 days. The victim suffers a daily cumulative penalty of 5 ability points from all abilities. These adjustments will affect skills that rely on these abilities. When the character awakens the illness has passed.

M = *Moderate:* The victim loses 1d10 STA and may not regenerate STA for 1d10 days. Successful medical care can reduce this period of time by 50%.

H = *Harmless:* The victim suffers from mild symptoms of radiation sickness (fever, nausea, aches and pains, etc.) but is otherwise able to perform as normal.

C = *Circumvented:* The victim's body either resists the radiation, or he has been lucky and avoided the worst of the exposure.

ARMOR IN COMBAT

This section of the rules explains how body armor affects basic combat.

HOW ARMOR WORKS

Armor doesn't change how combat takes place, but it may change the outcome—how much damage a character receives. When characters fight in armor, follow normal combat procedure. If a strike against an armored character fails, then you can ignore the armor. If the strike succeeds, find the result as usual and follow these steps to see if the armor protects the wearer:

1. First, find out where the blow (or shot) hit. Armor rarely covers the whole body, and it offers no protection to areas that it doesn't cover. If the attack result is a "C" or "CK," and the attacker made a called shot against a particular spot, then that's where the blow landed. If some

other result occurs, roll dice and use the Hit Location Chart to find the hit location.

2. Now you know where the blow or shot struck. If the attacker hit a location that wasn't protected by armor, then the defender takes normal damage. If the attacker hit armor, that's another story.

HIT LOCATIONS	
Dice Roll	**Location Hit**
01-09	Head
10-27	Upper torso
28-44	Abdomen/lower back
45-53	Right leg
54-62	Left leg
63-71	Right arm
72-80	Left arm
81-85	Right hand
86-90	Left hand
91-95	Right foot
96-00	Left foot

All armor protects characters against damage from unarmed attacks ("K" results—knockdowns—still apply). Kicks and punches, for example, do nothing against armor. Armed attacks may have an effect, however, if they can penetrate the armor.

3. To penetrate armor, an attack must be "stronger" than that armor. All armor has a value called the Armor Rating, or "AR." The higher the rating, the stronger the armor. The table below lists the AR for general armor types and notes any exceptions to the penetration rules.

The strength of an attack equals the amount of Stamina loss called for by the results key. Roll for Stamina loss as usual. If the number of Stamina points lost is equal to or higher than the Armor Rating, then the attack penetrates the armor. The defender takes full damage—wounds and all. If the amount of Stamina points lost is less than the Armor Rating, then the attack has no effect (see "Hits to the Head").

GENERAL ARMOR GUIDE		
Category	**AR**	**Immunity Type**
Leather	10	A
Studded Leather	15	A
Mail	45	A
Metal Plates	60	B
Helmet	30	B
Bulletproof vest	15	C
Combat suit	45	C

Notes:

AR: Armor Rating

A: withstands all sling-fired missile attacks.

B: withstands all attacks from slings, short bows, and thrown missiles.

C: withstands all missile attacks, but not beam or melee weapons.

Firearms automatically penetrate any type of armor except C.

CRUMPLED ARMOR

After armor is penetrated, it becomes worthless against future attacks to the same hit location.

PENETRATION BONUSES

Strong characters get special bonuses to penetrate armor when they attack with normal melee weapons or thrown missiles. Look at the table below, and add the correct bonus to the Stamina damage before you determine if a hit has penetrated. If the hit penetrates, drop the bonus and apply normal damage. The bonus makes it easier to penetrate, but it does not change the amount of damage that a successful hit inflicts.

Note: Penetration bonuses do not apply to attacks with slings or fired weapons.

STRENGTH AND PENETRATION BONUS	
Character's STR	Penetration Bonus
50-59	+5
60-69	+10
70-79	+15
80	+20

HITS TO THE ARM OR HAND

Characters may be in trouble if they receive a wound in an arm or hand that carries a weapon: if the wound is less than "crippling," (a "C" result according to the armed combat results key) they must make an immediate general Dexterity check. If they fail the check, they drop the weapon. If the wound is "crippling," they must make a general Willpower check to continue using the hand or arm at all. They must make a new Willpower check at the beginning of each round until: 1) a character with Medical skill treats them for 2 rounds; 2) they use the talent "Ignore

Pain" successfully; or 3) they heal one wound box and are not critically wounded.

Note to the CM: You can use the Hit Locations Chart to add spice to regular combat, too. In missile attacks, ignore the modifiers for targets "behind cover." If the hit location is behind cover, the shot misses.

HITS TO THE HEAD

No armor offers full protection against blows to the head. When a character is hit in this location, he takes normal Stamina damage, even if the blow doesn't penetrate his helmet. Many helmets only cover part of the head, or leave the face unshielded. If a hit against this type of helmet occurs, roll a percent. 01-50 indicates that the attack struck the defender in an unshielded area; the defender suffers full damage, including wounds. 51-00 indicates that the blow struck the helmet; the defender suffers normal Stamina loss, but no wounds.

CALLED SHOTS AGAINST ARMOR

Characters may make hitting an armored character in the head, or in a body location not protected by armor, a called shot. Characters in melee may also call a shot to hit an armored character in a location where the armor is jointed; a favorite tactic against heavily armored knights was to try to stab them with a dagger beneath the arm, where the dagger could slip between the joints in the armor and penetrate the chest cavity.

SHIELDS

There are two categories of shields: large and small. Characters who use a small shield may shift their defense column one column to the right. If they use a large shield, they can shift it two columns to the right. For example, a character who would normally defend in melee on column 4 and who is using a small shield would defend on column 5 instead With a large shield, he'd defend on column 6.

Restrictions: Shields only protect a character against two attacks per

round; on the third attack, the victim defends normally. Like all metal armor, shields (whether medieval or modern riot shields) never offer protection against a firearm, or a paranormal attack. However, heavier large or small ballistic shields will block firearms.

STAMINA COSTS OF ARMOR

Most armor is heavy and cumbersome, so characters who wear it tend to tire more easily during battle. For each round in which they melee, throw a missile, or run, they lose a few Stamina points.

To determine how many Stamina points an armored character loses, find the Armor Rating for his heaviest attire in the ranges on top of the Action Table. (Don't include helmets or shields.) The number of the defense column below the appropriate range equals the number of Stamina points lost each round.

Note: Bodysuits and bulletproof vests do not cause Stamina loss. Furthermore, characters cannot sprint in metal armor.

VEHICLES IN ACTION

Not all characters fight their battles while standing in the open air; quite a few of them take to the road. When a character takes off in a vehicle traveling 10 mph or faster, use the table below to determine the distance that he covers each round.

VEHICLE SPEED CHART		
Speed	Ft/round	5' Squares
10 mph	75	15
20 mph	150	30
30 mph	225	45
40 mph	300	60
50 mph	375	75
60 mph	450	90
70 mph	525	105
80 mph	600	120
90 mph	675	135
100 mph	750	150
110 mph	825	175
120 mph	900	190
130 mph	975	205
140 mph	1050	220
150 mph	1125	235

If a vehicle is traveling less than 10 mph, it covers 1.5 hexes per round

per mile per hour on a 5-foot-scale map. For example, let's say two characters are engaged in a "high-speed" rickshaw chase through the crowded streets of Indonesia. The vehicles are traveling 8 mph, so they move 12 five-foot hexes each round (8 x 1.5=12).

DRIVING CAPABILITY

Most NPCs can drive common land vehicles. Player characters can drive most conventional transportation, including cars, pickup trucks, jeeps— but tanks or other armored vehicles will require a skill. A character's basic capability to drive a vehicle equals the sum of his Perception and Agility scores, divided by 2. Characters with the Stunt Driving skill have more exceptional talents behind the wheel.

ACCIDENTS

Accidents do happen, especially in shoot-outs and high-speed chases. The characters have accidents when they fail a driving check (against their basic capability or a Stunt Driving skill score). The CM should call for a general check against a character's driving capability when:

1. The character fails a surprise check while operating a vehicle.

2. The character operates the vehicle at an unsafe speed (including horse-drawn vehicles). Make one check for every fifth round of unsafe speed. See the chart below for speed guidelines which apply in most time periods.

3. The character receives more than one wound from a single attack.

SAFE VEHICLE SPEEDS

Condition	Max. Safe Speed
Rush hour, or downtown	20 mph
Moderate city traffic	30 mph
Sharp curves	40 mph
Highway drive	60 mph
Light fog	40 mph-day, 30 mph-night
Heavy fog	20 mph
Dense fog	10 mph

When characters fail driving checks, use the situation at hand to determine what kind of accident occurs. Perhaps the driver hits

another car, or swerves to miss it and runs off the road. Or perhaps the driver runs into a building. Regardless of the accident each character in the vehicle must check for damage as follows:

1. Roll a percent and subtract it from 100. This determines the attack margin on the Action Table.

2. Use the speed of the vehicle to determine the defense column. Column 10 is for 10 mph, 9 is for 20 mph, 8 is for 30 mph, and so on. (Shift one column to the left for every 10 mph. This way, column 1 is for 100 mph and faster.)

3. Find the result. Use the armed combat results key to determine damage.

VEHICLES AND COMBAT

Vehicles will often be employed by Maji as they play the *Mehen*. Both civilian and military vehicles may be available. This section presents different vehicle types, their characteristics, and how vehicle combat is resolved.

VEHICLES

Armored Personnel Carrier
Missile Value:	75
Defense Bonus:	0
Speed:	50
Distance:	300
Weapons:	1
Structural Points:	120
Engine:	3
AR:	30 II

These truck-like armored vehicles can carry 20 people, excluding the driver and another in the front. It has a mounted machine gun fired from the vehicle itself.

Car (Armored)
Missile Value:	75
Defense Bonus:	0
Speed:	80
Distance:	300
Structural Points:	80
Engine:	3
AR:	20 II

An armored car is a lightly armored car that may be of the civilian type typically used to transport money and other valuables,

or it may be the military type that can also be mounted with heavy machineguns

Car (Civilian)
Missile Value:	NA
Defense Bonus:	0
Speed:	120
Distance:	400-600
Structural Points:	50
Engine:	1
AR:	NA

This represents a basic car. The CM can alter the maximum speed for different types as desired. A typical car can seat up to 5. Cars will have different potential distances depending on gas mileage.

Helicopter
Missile Value:	75
Defense Bonus:	0
Speed:	130
Distance:	300
Structural Points:	70
Engine:	1
AR:	NA

A helicopter may be civilian or military. A military helicopter may be mounted with a machinegun.

Jeep (Civilian or Military)
Missile Value:	NA
Defense Bonus:	0
Speed:	70
Distance:	300
Structural Points:	60
Engine:	2
AR:	NA

A jeep may carry up to 4 people if armed, and 5 if unarmed. Military jeeps may be armed with a heavy machinegun.

Military Truck
Missile Value:	NA
Defense Bonus:	0
Speed:	60
Distance:	300
Structural Points:	80
Engine:	4
AR:	NA

Military trucks carry up to 20 people, excluding the driver and an assistant in the front.

Motorcycle

Missile Value:	NA
Defense Bonus:	0
Speed:	150
Distance:	200
Structural Points:	20
Engine:	1
AR:	NA

Motorcycles range in size from one-person to two-person. Larger motorcycles may have small storage compartments for gear.

Pickup

Missile Value:	NA
Defense Bonus:	0
Speed:	110
Distance:	450
Structural Points:	40
Engine:	2
AR:	NA

Pickups come in a range of sizes and may be customized by the CM. The standard pickup may seat three in the cab, but extended cabs may seat up to 5. A pickup may carry a load of 1/2 ton to 1 ton.

Tank

Missile Value:	85/100/125
Defense Bonus:	+4
Speed:	30
Distance:	300
Weapons:	LG 2 MG 1
Structural Points:	300/400/500
Engine:	4/5/6
AR:	45 II

A tank is a heavily armored vehicle. It carries a large gun (LG) in its turret, and one machine gun (MG) as well. Tanks have three grades—light medium and heavy—distinguished by their missile value, structural points, engine damage boxes, and AR. The tank can fire either its main gun or its machine gun. Tanks have a 360 degree field of fire with both weapons.

Vehicle Listing Explanations

Missile Value: The base percent chance the driver or mounted weapon has to hit when using missile combat. This represents the average scores of a vehicle's or heavy weapon's crew: PCs must use their own skill scores in the weapon when firing it.

Defense Bonus: Added to the roll of 1d10 used to determine the defense column of the weapon when attacked by missiles. Only armored vehicles like tanks have a defense bonus.

Speed: This is the vehicles maximum speed in miles per hour.

Distance: This is the distance in miles a vehicle may typically travel on a tank full of gas.

Weapons: This is the number of damage boxes allocated to weapons.

Structural Points: Structural points are analogous to PC current stamina points. When a vehicle's structural points reach zero it is destroyed and completely nonfunctional.

Engine: This number is the number of damage boxes for the engine.

AR: This is the armor rating and immunity type for the vehicle. Not all vehicles have this listing, indicated by NA for not applicable.

VEHICLE COMBAT

Fire against vehicle targets of any type is resolved by interpreting the results of the fire on a different results key, the Vehicle Fire Results Key. Structural point damage is deducted when indicated on the key. When a damage box is indicated, the victim may choose whether to deduct the box from engines, weapons, or some other vehicle component that has damage boxes. When all damage boxes are gone, that component is destroyed and must be replaced or repaired.

The Sequence of Play

1. CM declares enemy vehicle actions.
2. Players declare their PCs' actions.
3. Both sides roll for initiative, to determine who goes first.
4. Side A (the side that wins initiative) uses paranormal abilities if relevant.
5. Side A fires ranged weapons.
6. Side A moves.
7. Side B fires defensive attacks.
8. Side A fires.
9. Side B uses paranormal abilities, if relevant.
10. Side B fires ranged weapons.
11. Side B moves.
12. Side A fires defensive attacks.
13. Side B fires.

Note that ranged weapons may be mounted to a vehicle, or a PC may be firing out of a window or some similar opening.

VEHICLE FIRE RESULTS

S = Structural points of defending craft reduced by 1d10.

L = Structural points of defending craft reduced by 1d10x2.

M = Structural points of defending craft reduced by 2d10x2.

H = Structural points of defending craft reduced by 3d10x2.

C = Structural points of defending craft reduced by 3d10x2 and one damage box (chosen by attacker).

K = As C results, but driver may lose control of the vehicle due to weapon fire. Roll a driving check to avoid an accident.

Use the situational modifiers below and apply them as skill adjustments to attackers.

Situation	Modifier
Vehicle firing while moving same round	-5 per 10 mph of movement declared
Target is vehicle moving same round	-5 per 10 mph of movement declared
Defender in light woods at instant of fire	-20
Defender in heavy woods or broken terrain at instant of fire	-30
Defender in building	-40
Firing machine gun	+50
Range	*As per range modifiers on weapon table*

VEHICLE ARMOR

Vehicle armor works similarly to armor worn by PCs. Vehicles will have a variable AR rating that generally reflects how much armor plating is present.

Immunity Type	
I	Withstands all attacks from primitive and thrown missiles, but not firearms or beam weapons.
II	Withstands all missile attacks except heavy artillery, but not beam melee weapons.

HORSES IN ACTION

All characters can ride horses at a basic level; their score equals Agility divided by 2. Characters can also acquire Equestrian skill, which gives them many more advantages on horseback.

Use the following table to determine movement for horses each round:

MOUNTED MOVEMENT PER ROUND

Type of Move	Distance in feet	5' spaces	25' spaces
Walk	50	10	2
Trot	100	20	4
Canter	175	35	7
Gallop	250	50	10

Fatigue: Horses in combat can gallop (move at charging speed) for no more than 6 consecutive rounds. At the end of this time, they must slow to at least a canter for 12 rounds. Horses in continuous combat action for more than 20 minutes are winded and must rest for 30 minutes before they can be used in combat again.

OBSTACLES TO MOUNTED MOVEMENT

Numerous obstacles can impede mounted movement: ditches, ravines, fences, walls low enough to jump, rough terrain, and so on. Generally, horses cannot gallop over terrain that isn't flat, and thus they cannot charge over any type of obstruction.

Horses can jump obstacles, but their success is measured by the Equestrian skill of their rider, not their own physical build. Normally, horses can jump over an obstacle up to 5 feet high. For each foot over this height, subtract 25 from the skill score of the rider. This means that no horse—no matter how good his rider is—can jump obstacles over 10 feet high.

Horses can normally leap across ditches, ravines or chasms up to 10 feet wide. For each additional foot of width, subtract 25 from the riding score of the rider.

Riders may sometimes be surprised by the sudden appearance of obstacles. In such cases, their horses will automatically balk, and the riders must make a riding check. If they fail the check, they fall off.

FIGHTING ON HORSEBACK

Use the chart below whenever horses are involved in active combat:

Horse	Capacity	Wounds
Light	AR 30; one rider	10
Medium	AR 45 or 2 riders	13
Heavy	AR 60 or 2 riders	15

Notes: AR refers to the Armor Rating of the rider which may be carried. Medium and Heavy horses may carry two unarmored riders. "Wounds" is the number of wound boxes a horse can have checked off before being killed.

Characters with Equestrian skill and mounted combat skills fight mounted as explained in those skill descriptions (see Chapter 3). Characters without these skills may still attack from horseback, but do so with a -40 missile and melee modifier (in addition to all other modifiers).

Losing your seat: Mounted characters with Equestrian skill use the defense column that corresponds to their riding score when other characters try to drag or push them to the ground. (Look for the skill score in the ranges above the column numbers.) If the mounted character has no skill, he defends on column 1. Characters on the ground can pull a rider from his mount by making the action a called shot.

Charging: Mounted characters are charging when their horses gallop for at least 30 feet toward a target. Charging characters usually get a +30 melee modifier. They lose this bonus if another character wins initiative and charges them first.

Mounted characters suffer a -30 modifier when charging characters who face them with a polearm.

Wounded riders: Characters who are wounded while fighting on horseback must make a general riding check to keep from falling off the horse. Characters without Equestrian skill must use their basic riding score.

CHAPTER 8: PEOPLE YOU MEET

Non-player characters (NPCs) may feature in an adventure. Some have starring roles; others act in support. They are the villains and their victims, the strangers on the street, the mysterious woman, the helpful police officer...in short, everyone the PCs meet. The CM must breathe life into all these characters. He must give them distinct personalities. This chapter explains how the CM can keep track of the many NPCs in the world—and how he can play them to the best advantage.

MAJOR AND MINOR NPCS

Major NPCs are characters whose roles are essential to the plot of an adventure. They are the villains, or the important victims of those villains. The PCs may interact with these NPCs frequently.

Minor NPCs include everyone else that the PCs meet: they are the people in the streets and shops, the servers at a restaurant, the cops on the beat...all the people the PCs would expect to find in a realistic setting, but who have little to do with the actual plot of the adventure.

Sometimes, a minor NPC gets "promoted" to major status because of something the characters do. For example, if the PCs befriend a person who initially tries to steal an Antiquity from them, he may wind up fighting by their side in the *Mehen* against rivals!

NPC STATISTICS

NPCs have the same Basic Abilities that PCs do, with one exception: Luck. Future published adventures will give full descriptions of major NPCS: what their scores are, what they look like—even how they act. The numbers in this information are called "statistics," or "stats" for short. When the CM creates his or her own adventures, he or she should be sure to make up the statistics for major NPCs before play begins.

Minor human NPCs may or may not have individual statistics. Sometimes, one set of statistics can cover several of these at once. If the CM decides to give them individual statistics later, he or she can roll up their Basic Ability scores (in the way done for PCs) as they are needed during play. In any case where a "quick" NPC is needed, the CM should assume that all human minor NPCs have a score of 50 in each Basic Ability.

Many skills and talents include Luck in their score formula. In these cases, you can use 50 for Luck, even though NPCs don't really have that Ability.

STATUS RATINGS

NPCs who hold political, military, economic, occult, or other forms of power have a status rating. The ratings range from 1 (least powerful) to 5 (most powerful). NPCs who hold no official power may still have a status rating if they've got an influential family, or know the right "connections." Of course, the vast majority of NPCs have no status rating.

Future published scenarios will provide status ratings for NPCs whenever it's appropriate. The following guidelines should help the CM create status ratings for NPCs in his or her own scenarios:

SITUATION CHECK RESULTS		
Die Roll	Result	DAC Modifier
1	*Angry and Hostile:* The NPC is angry about being disturbed right now.	-20
2	*Angry but not hostile:* the NPC is angry about something but is not necessarily angry at the PCs.	-15
3	*Scornful:* The NPC feels himself too important to waste time with the PCs.	-10
4	*Hurried:* the NPC will grant very little time to the PCs; he or she has more important matters at hand.	-05
5	*Uninterested:* The NPC will grant the PCs time, but is really not interested in what they have to say.	0
6	*Open:* The NPC will be open and courteous with the PCs.	0
7	*Curious:* The NPC will be open, courteous, and very curious about the PCs, asking lots of questions which may be embarrassing.	0
8	*Friendly:* The NPC will be initially friendly to the PCs, providing reasonable service or information.	+5
9	*Comradely:* As Friendly, but may be willing to provide a service or information that puts him/her out or is somewhat inconvenient.	+10
10	*Eager:* The NPC is eager to hear what the PCs have to say and may put themselves to great inconvenience to meet a request.	+15

STATUS RATINGS	
Position	Rating
Head of State, Veiled Master	5
Minister, cabinet member, high general, royal family, Tower leader	4
Senator, counselor, high bureaucrat, general, high nobility, extremely wealthy	3
Wealthy, state governor, Adept Majus	2
Servants or associates of the above	1

NPC REACTIONS

In the shadowy world of the Old Game, it's not just who you meet that's important. It's what they do

when they meet you! Do they help you, or try to kill you? The three guidelines below should help the CM decide how NPCs react. The first one has top priority: the CM should follow it above all others. The third one has lowest priority: the CM should follow this guideline only if the other two seem inappropriate.

Priority One: The adventure. In most cases, the adventure itself will dictate the reactions of major NPCs. Major NPCs are just like people; they have their own plans, goals, and feelings, which dictate their reactions. Sometimes these goals are one of the main driving forces of the adventure's plot, other times they are the backdrop to deciding how they will react as the PCs interact with the place or events in a scenario.

Priority Two: The personality (or position) of the character. The CM should have a decent grasp of the personality of NPCs. One way to do this is to write down several personality traits to keep in mind when an interaction occurs. In this way, the CM can guess how an NPC would react to most situations. For example, impulsive people react impulsively, while cowards put their own safety above all else.

Priority Three: Situation checks, and direct action checks. Although it may be clear from a particular situation how an NPC will react, sometimes the CM will want to use situation and direct action checks to determine the character's behavior. This leaves some of the play to chance, which is a great way for a situation to unfold in ways no one could have designed or predicted.

SITUATION CHECKS

A situation check tells the CM how an NPC feels at any given moment. To make the check, the CM secretly rolls 1d10 just before the PCs begin to talk to or interact with the NPC. If the NPC has a status rating, the CM subtracts it from the result of the roll. Treat results less than "1" as "1". The chart marked "Situation Check Results" describes how to use the result to discover the mood of an

NPC. (Ignore the column marked "DAC Modifier" for now.)

DIRECT ACTION CHECKS

A direct action check is a specific check against a player character's Personality score. It shows how NPCs react when the player character does something that warrants a response: asks for help, makes a threat, attempts a con, etc.

Usually, the direct action check immediately follows a situation check. For instance, let's say a character approaches a stranger. The CM rolls a situation check to find out what kind of mood the stranger is in. Perhaps the two characters talk for a moment. Then the character asks for help, and the CM rolls a secret direct action check to find out what the stranger does in response.

The Situation Check Results key has a column marked "DAC Modifier." That stands for "Direct Action Check Modifier." When the CM makes a situation check, he notes the modifier indicated with the result If he later makes a direct action check for the same meeting, he adds or subtracts the modifier from the PC's Personality score.

Direct Action check results lie on the defense column corresponding to one of the NPC's Basic Abilities (refer to the number ranges above the column number). The chart below tells which Ability score to use, depending on the PC's action.

DIRECT ACTION CHART

PC Action	NPC Ability (Defense Column)
Routine request	Personality
Request for aid, no danger	Personality
Request for aid in danger	Personality
Lying, conning	Perception
Persuading	Willpower
Threatening	Willpower

Failure of a direct action check means the NPC reacts negatively. He or she refuses to help, or sees through a lie. If the PC has made a threat, the NPC

may grow hostile, even violent, in response.

Direct Action check results are interpreted on the following key:

DIRECT ACTION RESULTS

S = *Slight positive reaction:* The NPC doesn't say "Yes" to the PC, but doesn't say "No" either. Further discussion is in order.

L = *Limited positive reaction:* The NPC takes limited action as desired by the PC, so long as such action does not involve danger or harm, cost the NPC money, or require much time.

M = *Moderate positive reaction:* The NPC helps the PC as long as no risk is involved.

H = *Highly positive reaction:* The NPC gladly does exactly as the PC requests, within reason, as long as no risk is involved.

C = *Charmed:* The NPC is quite taken with the PC (or quite frightened by a threat) and even takes some risks to help the PC.

K = Not applicable.

The CM should adjust these reactions if they don't fit a given situation.

BRIBERY

There are times when a bribe seems like the only way to reach a goal. The PCs may follow the guidelines below to resolve this kind of interaction.

1. Roll percent dice to determine whether the NPC is honest and cannot be bribed. Under ordinary circumstances, most people who are honest cannot be bribed. But desperation can make even the most honest person more agreeable to a bribe. See the table below for the probability that an NPC can be bribed. The CM may roll to determine the NPC's current state.

Roll d10	Personality/State	Chance
1-2	Honest/Secure	30%
3-4	Reputable/Comfortable	35%
5-6	Reliable/Content	40%
7-8	Fraudulent/Discontent	50%
9-10	Dishonest/Desperate	75%

Note that the CM should feel free to alter the die roll if randomly deciding the personality/state of an NPC, depending on current circumstances. In addition, the CM may choose to roll twice, averaging the result. For example, the first roll can be used to determine personality, and the second their state of being. One possible result could be dishonest/secure, for an average chance of being bribed of 53% (round fractions up). This can reflect the fact that even a secure person may accept a bribe when he is content with his life, but fundamentally dishonest or greedy.

2. If the NPC will accept a bribe, determine the minimum bribe the NPC will accept. The CM will need to decide what is appropriate based on the status rating of the NPC. It is possible that the NPC has no status rating, in which case the CM will decide the current circumstances of the NPC. The guidelines below can be used in making these determinations, and may be adjusted to fit the specific circumstances. When times are tough a lower bribe may be accepted. This is also influenced by the scope of the favor being asked.

3. Roll a direct action check for the player character making the bribe. Failure, of course, means the NPC refuses the bribe totally; a touch of honesty has overcome him or he decides his situation isn't so desperate after all. Only a "C" indicates that the NPC accepts the bribe; on any other successful result, the NPC haggles for more, and the PC must make a better offer and try again. The CM may end this haggling at any point, at his or her discretion.

Bribe Required	Status Rank
Monetary bribe of $200 or more.	1
As 1, along with a minor magical boon	2
Monetary bribe of $2,500+ or a magical boon or item of moderate power	3
A minor favor or object of great monetary or magical power	4
A major favor, or some other service/goods that increases the standing or power the leader maintains.	5

CHAPTER 9: SHADOWS & SECRETS

aterial in this chapter is written especially for the CM and contains rules and advice to help run a Majus campaign. Players may read this chapter without fear of spoiling the game experience, but the information contained in these pages is intended for the CM and players do not need to know the following rules and suggestions in order to enjoy playing in a Majus campaign.

SETTING THE STAGE: WHAT IS "MAGIC NOIR"?

Although the rule system for Majus is robust enough to accommodate almost any time period, style of play, or genre the CM wishes, the default setting for the game is that of "Magic Noir." This section defines that genre and provides tips for the CM looking to invoke this atmosphere in his games.

"Magic Noir" is a sub-category of the genre commonly called "Urban Fantasy." Urban fantasy presents a world where fantastical elements such as magic, monsters, and other supernatural phenomenon occur in an urban setting. Typically, urban fantasy takes place in a contemporary setting, making the fantastic stand out all the more against an otherwise prosaic backdrop. Wizards, vampires, faeries, and other otherworldly creatures walk the streets of major cities, sometimes in the shadows, but other times in the figurative light of day.

Magic Noir takes these elements of urban fantasy and combines them with the motifs of film noir, the cinematic crime melodramas Hollywood produced in abundance in the 1940s and 1950s. Mixed together, the two genres create a world of deep shadows, flawed heroes, and filthy streets walked by supernatural threats. And although film noir is notoriously difficult to define, certain motifs will go a long

way in turning an otherwise "typical" urban fantasy game into magic noir.

The first consideration in establishing a magic noir setting is shadows, both literal and figurative. The world is a place of bright lights representing goodness and order, and that of black shadows that obscure all manner of evils. The action in MAJUS takes place in those grey areas in between. The characters meet in gloomy, seedy dives, await the arrival of mysterious packages on fog-shrouded loading docks, move down dark alleys lit by a flickering streetlight, and work magic in rooms illuminated only by candlelight and an ever-burning computer monitor screen. During daylight hours, clouds and rain are more common than not, and everyone wears sunglasses to shade their guilty eyes.

The shadows of magic noir are not limited to the physical world. There are few paragons of goodness or epitomes of evil in the world of MAJUS. Most people—especially the ones the PCs encounter—are not so easily categorized. Instead, moral ambiguity rules their hearts and they walk the line between good and evil. An otherwise decent police officer takes payoffs from a Tower to keep watch over their holdings, alerting them when someone comes sniffing around. A born killer from the Quiet refuses to take the life of an animal or child. A member of the Black Sun funnels money into a foster child program as penance for the Maji he's slain in the *Mehen.* Many of the players in the Old Game have their own twisted moral codes, even if they seem inscrutable to others.

While the morality of those found in a magic noir setting might be ambiguous, their emotions are not. Passions of all types help the players of the *Mehen*, their pawns, and even the monsters in the shadows, make it from day to day. A powerful Majus still mourns her lover sacrificed for an advantage in the *Mehen.* A golem stalks the night, driven by utter

hatred for the Maji who made it. Smugglers cut corners and throats to feed their avarice and anguish fills the spirit bound to a talisman and forced to serve its masters. In a bleak world of magic noir where cynical facades are necessary to survive, the inhabitants cling to a single, driving emotion to keep them sane, even if they know that passion is their Achilles ' heel in the *Mehen.* The CM should assign one or more important emotions to his NPCs and use them to define both the character and his or her actions in the intrigue-filled world of MAJUS.

Connected to these strong emotions are the two most powerful forces at work in the shadowy world of the Maji: the *Mehen* and the Towers. These two aspects of the setting take the place of war and crime in film noir, but the results are the same. In the melodramas of the 40s and 50s, the Second World War cast long, lingering shadows over the characters in these films. Many had suffered physical or psychological wounds in the war and are forced to either accept or overcome them. In the MAJUS setting, the Old Game has the same effect. Many Maji, especially those who've been playing the *Mehen* for decades, pay a steep price for their participation.

Permanent injuries or scars, mental illness, lost friends and lovers, magical addiction, persistent curses, the enmity of powerful spirits, and other dangers plague these Maji. Yet despite the cost, they cannot quit playing. After all, why stop now when they've nothing else to lose? These Maji stand as not only warnings for what might await the PCs, but also as serious threats to their well-being. A Majus who sacrificed his own family to gain a victory in the *Mehen* won't think twice before throwing the player characters under the magic bus.

And just as crime and gangsters played an important part in the noir films, the Towers assume this role in

Majus. In the hardboiled detective novels that inspired the noir films, there were no massive cartels that controlled crime on the international level. Instead, gangster kingpins and criminal masterminds built empires of crime and vice, clashing with underworld rivals. These conflicts were settled with hired killers, staccato machine gun fire, and double-crossing *femme fatales.* In MAJUS though, despite the fact that criminals make useful pawns, it is the Maji and their Towers that battle for control of the magical underworld.

In MAJUS, the Maji operate from the shadows, cloaking their gambits behind the guise of legitimate operations or through the actions of minions difficult to trace back to their true masters. The Towers take on the roles of the crime empires, battling to control the finite magical resources available while attempting to eliminate their opposition and win the *Mehen.* They're not a far cry from the gangsters of film noir and should be portrayed as such—even when they operate driven by an odd code of honor or a fierce passion as detailed above.

This is not to say that there are no actual criminals in the magic noir world of MAJUS. It is quite likely that the PCs will cross paths with the criminal underworld as they play or avoid the *Mehen.* Their homes will be burglarized, their allies murdered, their loved ones kidnapped and held hostage, but these actions will be done at the behest of the Towers who oppose them.

One last motif to consider when building your magic noir setting is that of anachronisms. Since magic noir harkens back to the films of the '40s and '50s, the CM might consider adding slightly out-of-date touches to the campaign world to better convey the setting's inspirational heritage. Maji already have a tendency for wearing trench coats in the night to better hide the weapons and tools they use in their battles. Why not take the extra step and dress them in natty or rumpled suits or add a fedora to hide their eyes? Women might eschew pants and blouses for dresses—either elegant or revealing—and have a tendency for veiled hats, mink stoles, and tiny purses that conceal small handguns.

Other Maji, especially older or wiser ones, retain a fondness for obsolete technologies. After all, when email and mobile phones are easily hacked, a letter pounded out on a typewriter and sent via post is not a bad idea, especially when trying to keep secrets. A tablet or laptop can contain thousands of spells and scanned pages from crumbling grimoires, but what happens when the Majus is forced to dive into a polluted river to escape his enemies or a bullet hits the device? It'd be better to keep that information in hard copy in a dusty library. And while hybrid cars might be great for the environment, there's nothing like old Detroit steel to outrun one's enemies on rainy highways. Anachronisms are not required to make use of the magic noir setting, but they certainly are fun.

The CM is not required to make use of all (or any) of these motifs. The game's setting is ultimately decided by what he wishes to do with MAJUS. However, if creating a magic noir world is his goal, using the above in various degrees goes a long way towards making the game world a place of shadows and secrets, the perfect venue for Maji to play the Old Game.

THE RULES OF MAGIC

Not to be confused with the laws of magic, which are natural restrictions that affect spells, the rules of magic are the Four Commandments of all Maji. Drafted in the ancient days of Sumer, the Rules of Magic define a Majus and guide his conduct, and while there is no official tribunal that enforces them, Maji who break them discover they are in place for good reasons. They are:

1. Know: Related to the magical law that knowledge is power, this rule impels all Maji to never stop pursuing knowledge. A Majus who is not constantly seeking to master a new adit, dig up intelligence on his foes, look for omens or warps in Synchronicity, or merely learning for learning's sake will eventually lose the *Mehen*—and most likely his life.

2. Dare: Knowledge or at least useful knowledge can seldom be attained without risk and a Majus should always be willing to extend his grasp to gain an advantage. This does not mean that a Majus should take foolish risks, but constantly playing it safe will ultimately disadvantage a Majus and all he has worked for will be lost.

3. Will: Magic is the manifestation of a Majus' desire to make something happen, the embodiment of his will on the material world. For this reason, most Maji possess magnetic, self-confident, and even abrasive personalities (which is also why they all have the Paranormal Talent of Mesmerism). A Majus should know what he or she wants and never ceases the quest to attain that goal until it is fulfilled. It is probably for this reason alone that the *Mehen* still rages despite the passage of millennia without a clear winner.

4. Silence: Magic is not a flashy thing, despite what movies, books, and games would like one to believe. Nevertheless, it would be possible for a Majus to demonstrate his ability before a live studio audience and provide reasonable proof that magic does indeed exist. Yet, this does not happen and this rule is the reason why. Maji remain silent about the talents and keep a low profile not for fear of what would happen if the world knew that magic was real, but because they wish to avoid making themselves targets to a rival Majus in the Old Game. The less that a Majus reveals, the better—especially when any scrap of information about himself can be used in potent sorceries against him.

THE SKEIN

The goal of the *Mehen*, the prize of the Old Game, is the Skein. No other factor plays a greater role in the life of a Maji than this occult trophy. Since the dawn of civilization, Towers have been fighting to control, preserve, or destroy the Skein, and thousands, if not millions, of lives have been

sacrificed on its bloody altar. But what is the Skein?

The answer is, "Whatever the CM wants it to be."

MAJUS is designed to give the CM the tools he needs to create an exciting modern magical game where ancient wizards fight a battle as old as history itself. However, we realize that not every CM wants to play the game in a similar manner. Some players want shadowy conspiracies and high weirdness in their MAJUS game, while others desire globe-trotting exploits that take the PCs to exotic locales or ancient ruins to do battle with fearsome magical creatures. Because of this, the Skein is purposely left undefined so that the CM can customize the goal of the *Mehen* to suit his and his players' preferred style of play and to introduce story elements that they find interesting. The Skein can be any number of things, but MAJUS assumes that it is a series of connected objects, places, people, or facts that could determine the ultimate fate of humanity. It's up to the CM to fill in the blanks.

Although the author leaves the specifics of the Skein up to the CM and his players to decide, he's not so cruel as to end the matter there. What follows are several suggested ideas that the CM can use as for inspiration when determining what the Skein will be in his campaign. These ideas can be combined, altered, built upon, or otherwise manipulated to serve as the campaign's central goal or merely serve as an inspiration for what to do or to avoid.

Suggestion #1: The Skein as magical bloodline

In this option, the Skein represents not a thing but a people. It is an ancient lineage descended from antiquity and destined to play an important role in the evolution of humanity. Eventually, one or more members of this bloodline will rise up to bring about a new age—provided the bloodline is not severed first. The goal of the *Mehen* is to either guard this ancient lineage from danger, attempt to usurp its members

and use them for one's personal goals, or to stamp out the family completely and thereby keep humanity in the grasp of invisible restraints.

The scenario can be played many ways, depending on the group's attitudes and desires. The easiest variant on this version of the Skein would be the idea that the bloodline will eventually produce the greatest Majus of all time—a Chosen One who will bring about a new magical age and unveil spells long forgotten or undreamt of. Call this the "H.P." option after a certain adolescent wizard of recent origin. In this version, the Maji know that the Great Majus will arise from one of several families that share blood with the ancient sorcerer-kings of Sumer and have been keeping watch on these kin since antiquity. The time of the Chosen One is fast arriving and there are those Maji who aren't pleased with the idea of being subservient to the forthcoming über-wizard seeking to stamp out the Skein. The PCs job is to either stop these plans by attacking the rival Maji directly or by acting as bodyguards to the Skein's bloodline. Neither option will be particularly easy.

If the players and CM are comfortable with exploring religious subject matter (and all players should be consulted before going this route), the Skein may be less of a magical bloodline and more messianic one. The ultimate product of the Skein will not reveal unknown magical truths, but universal ones and perhaps bring about peace on earth. Of course, war and strife are big business and certain factions of mortal, magical, and supernatural origin seek to avert this new age. How far the CM and players wish to go with this variation, as well as the specific religious beliefs used, is up to them, but no matter what they decide, books on the Knights Templars, the Priory of Scion, *Holy Blood, Holy Grail,* or at least *The Da Vinci Code* are required reading when setting up this type of campaign.

The above options assume that the Skein is a positive thing and that

most sane Maji actively seek to bring about the culmination of the ancient bloodline. This is not the only option and a great campaign could be based on destroying the Skein before its poisonous family tree bears fruit. In this version of the Skein, the bloodline is tainted, possibly from supernatural sources. The Chosen One is a malevolent figure whose birth heralds the end for humanity. The PCs must find the scion of the Skein (who may already be born and is now coming of age and into his power) and destroy him before the End Times arrive. Arrayed against them are any number of Towers and average, ordinary—and insane—cultists. Abraxas makes for perfect bad guys in this Skein's campaign and the CM simply must watch *The Omen* before running a game in this vein.

The polluted bloodline Skein need not be apocalyptic, but merely inhuman. Instead of bringing about the end of life as we know it, the lineage has the capacity to rival Maji in the field of magical arts and to upset their eon-long stewardship of humanity. Given the opportunity, the Skein bloodline will eventually corrupt humanity and replace its creations with more loathsome substitutes. H.P. Lovecraft's, "The Shadow over Innsmouth," provides one example of this scenario. A particularly malevolent CM might be tempted to make the PCs unwitting blood relatives to the corrupt bloodline. When they find out the truth, do the PCs continue their fight against their own kin or accept their destiny and seek to advance their family's horrible agenda?

Suggestion #2: The Skein as sacred sites

Occult scholars know that the world is crisscrossed by networks of magical "roads" that connect important archeological sites. These connecting paths are called "ley lines" or "dragon roads" and suggest that many religious or magical constructions were deliberately placed to take advantage of the energies that flow along these routes. In this scenario,

the Skein is the collective name for all of these archaic places and the mystical lines of power that connect them.

In this guise, The Skein acts as a magical power plant, allowing Maji who know its secrets to tap into this network of concentrated magic and utilize it for their own purposes. Naturally, the Tower that controls the most number of sites (and therefore the pathways that connect them) has access to the lion's share of this inherent magical power to use towards their own ends. And sometimes more a matter of keeping the wrong Towers from controlling sites than it is claiming them for one's own.

In this variant, each sacred site is termed a "labyrinth" by the Maji as a nod to both their ancient heritage and the mystical concept of the labyrinth as both a place for group ritual and private meditation. The danger of dealing with labyrinths is that each has a guardian, known as its "Minotaur." Minotaurs can be anything from supernatural entities bound to the labyrinth, to families of sacred guardians whose life task is to protect the site (tie this into Suggestion #1 for bonus fun), to elaborate death traps designed to kill interlopers. Well-known labyrinths, those visited each year by tourists, might no longer be protected by a Minotaur, but that doesn't mean gaining control of the site is any easier.

In a campaign using this version of the Skein, adventures will emphasize travel to exotic locales and conflicts with rival groups seeking to control these labyrinths before the PCs. Depending on the group's preferences, these adventures might be either subtle or obvert, largely depending on the nature of the contested site. Rival Maji fighting over a public site such as Stonehenge would have to keep a much lower profile to avoid being noticed by visiting tourists and control would be achieved through a specific (and often unusual) magical goal. Such goals might include digging up the bones of an ancient Majus buried at

the site (or perhaps interring the corpse of a more recent one), carving certain signs in hard to reach places, or by appeasing or slaying its Minotaur. Doing so while one or more rival Towers is attempting the same thing (and under the watchful eye of a bevy of school children on a field trip) is not an easy task. Add in the factor that many of these steps must be achieved during a certain time period or while the stars are in unusual alignments and it's little wonder the *Mehen* has been going on for millennia.

If the players are looking for more two-fisted action rather than covert gambits, the CM should pick important sites far from the beaten path. Labyrinths buried under hot deserts, obscured by thick jungles, or frozen in eternal ice all make excellent locations to fight over. The PCs must first deal with hostile environments, dangerous locals, and treacherous travel to reach the site before their competitors. Once there, the fun really begins and magical duels, raging gunfire, and summoned monstrosities occurring in the shadows of crumbling monoliths make for a memorable game session.

The Skein in this type of campaign could also be more than a powerful magical generator. It could also be a mystical lock or puzzle that the Maji must solve or unlock to usher in a new era in humanity. The Maji have been struggling to find the right combinations of labyrinths to activate since the days of Sumer and are finally getting close. Activating or unlocking a labyrinth could require that the Maji summon specific entities or find lost rituals carved on the walls of antediluvian tombs, which adds more opportunity for adventures. As the Towers get nearer to the ultimate solution, the battle for control of the Skein or to destroy it completely heats up and the conflicts get more lethal.

No matter what version of this suggested Skein the CM uses, an additional rule regarding labyrinths and using them in spellcasting is needed. To this end, the following is suggested: Each labyrinth grants a

bonus to any spell cast within its boundaries. The bonus is dependent on the size and power of the labyrinth as adjudicated by the CM, but typically would run from +5% for a small, unassuming labyrinth (such as the tomb of a ancient Maji of middling power) to up to +25% in sites with much more magical significance. The Sphinx or Machu Picchu are examples of labyrinths with a +25% bonus. All spells cast at the site gain this bonus; control of the labyrinth is not required, but having dominance of the site provides its own benefit.

Any Majus who controls or is aligned with the controller of the site can draw upon the magical forces that pool there and use them to power his own spellcasting. This energy takes the form of a reservoir of Willpower points that can be spent in lieu of the Majus' own personal Willpower. The size of this pool is dependent of the labyrinth's size and power. A small labyrinth may only have 10-15 Willpower points, but an ancient, significant site could have a Willpower pool of 100 or more points. This energy can only be used to power spells cast at the site and cannot be used to create "hanging spells." Once exhausted, the Willpower replenishes at a rate determined by the CM depending on the labyrinth's significance and size, ranging from 24 hours to several months' time.

Suggestion #3: The Skein as antiquities

This version is similar to suggestion #2, but instead of ancient magical sites, the Skein is comprised of antiquities of great power. Anyone who ever thrilled to the exploits of Indiana Jones will find this option a very seductive one.

With this type of Skein, certain ancient objects of magical power play an important role in the future of mankind—for either good or ill. If these objects can be collected or destroyed depending on the CM's choice, mankind will reach the next step in its evolution and a new age of unlimited potential will spread across

the Earth. Unfortunately, finding the correct items and dealing with them is not a simple matter. Rival Maji have been fighting over these antiquities since the dawn of civilization and a seemingly infinite number of wars, catastrophes, and disasters have destroyed records of these objects over the millennia. Many have been lost and recovering rumors or clues to their present whereabouts is just the first step in the long and dangerous path to recovering these antiquities.

As in the Skein as sacred site option, this form of campaign can be played as either a clandestine clash of wills or high action (or a mix of both). In a more subtle vein, adventures will occur in the PCs' home city (or one nearby). Rather than acquiring the necessary antiquities by brute force, the Maji deal with shady smugglers and disreputable antiquaries, greedy museum curators and unwitting couriers who carry unmarked packages to sinister addresses. They engage in clockwork heists and spur of the moment crimes to acquire the objects they seek, facing off against double-crossing allies when the stakes are high.

Gunfights are limited to silenced pistols in dark hallways and magical duels are surreptitious curses on unwitting minions rather than arcane battles against rival Maji. This option is perfect for those players who love mysteries, technological thrillers, and heist films.

Groups looking for more action will find this scenario's other option more to their liking. In this variation, adventures have one foot planted firmly in pulp territory. The Maji are globe-trotting tomb raiders seeking out the resting places of lost antiquities while fending off rivals, guardians, and other dangers. One adventure might see the PCs hacking through the jungle in search of Mayan ruins, while another has them doing battle with undead Nazis in the secret catacombs beneath modern Berlin. Gunplay, chases, bar brawls, and desperate flights across closed

borders are all everyday events in a campaign that chooses this route.

But what happens once the necessary antiquities are acquired? The items could open a doorway between the planes, allowing hitherto unknown magical forces or entities access to the world. Their assembly might presage the rising or rediscovery of humanity's magical heritage, one covered by the ocean's waves or grinding glaciers since the hoary days of history. The item's themselves could be a code, requiring the PCs to arrange the items in a certain sequence to unlock their mysteries and gain the benefits if control. A CM can choose one of these options or craft his own.

Suggestion #4: The Skein as the Maji

As a final suggestion, the Skein is not places or things, but the same gifted individuals who helped elevate humanity at the dawn of civilization: the Maji. Regardless of where they came from (and this version of the Skein might entail the PCs seeking out the answer to that conundrum), the Maji remain the shepherds, teachers, and guardians of mankind and continue to help guide the inhabitants of the world towards a higher state of being. Unfortunately, not all of the Maji desire to uplift humanity, preferring to dominate mankind and doom them to an existence of servitude under magical overlords.

In this scenario, the Skein and the *Mehen* are one. Rather than fighting over a bloodline or relics or places of power, the Old Game is a war of attrition, with each Maji faction scheming to be the last ones standing when the final battle is won. And while the major battles are fought between Towers, those magical cabal are by no means free of internal scheming. Members of each Tower fight a much slyer war with their brethren, striving to rise in rank and power and be better positioned to dictate the fate of humankind when the Old Game reaches its climax.

Campaigns using this form of the Skein are rife with paranoia, even

more so than is normal in a game of MAJUS. Regardless of whether they are members of an established Tower or developing their own power bloc, the PCs cannot trust anyone. Alliances last so long as they remain beneficial to one side or the other, and all participants are aware that in the final days of the *Mehen* even the truest of friends will likely stand on opposite sides of the game board.

A mentor or teacher within one's own Tower may seem to have a PC's best interests at heart, but he is only grooming them to be a most useful pawn to be sacrificed when the time is right. The PCs can scarcely trust one another, as they can never be sure what their companions are doing when absent. Perhaps they are entertaining offers from rival Towers or plotting their own treachery.

This option for the Skein works best with a CM and players who enjoy multi-level conspiracies, betrayal (both against them and masterminded by them), and an atmosphere of suspicion. If the players are skilled, mature gamers, the CM can foster interparty rivalry in the group, ratcheting up the level of mistrust that permeates the campaign. However, this should only be done if he trusts that the players can handle and enjoy such internal rivalry. If some of the players' enjoyment of the game would be ruined by another player's character betraying his friends, the campaign should concentrate on external forces as the source of duplicity.

THE ASTRAL PLANE

In their dealings with spirits, the quest for more potent magic, and the various gambits and stratagems of the *Mehen*, it is inevitable that a Majus will find himself interacting with the invisible spaces that exist concurrently with the physical world. The key to these realms lies in the hyper-dimension named the astral plane.

Understanding the nature of the astral plane requires one to venture into the world of metaphor and symbolism. One cannot simply draw a map of the astral realm or define it

in the concrete terms used to describe the physical plane. It is less a place than a place than a state of being, a sea of higher consciousness that exists both around and within the physical plane. As heat, matter, and light can all occupy the same point in space, so can the astral, permeating the physical even when it cannot be sensed. To glimpse into the astral or to project one's psyche into this plane requires the changing of one's perceptions, much like tuning one's ear to hear a specific pitch above all others. Mastering the techniques to perceive and interact with the astral is no easy task and only Maji and the most dedicated mystics even manage to achieve this goal. Once it is done, however, the disciple's world-view is forever changed.

On the surface, the astral plane is no different from the physical. All objects present in the mundane world are visible in the astral. The same houses line the streets, identical trees sway in the breeze, and people stroll about unaware of the astral world. Yet a closer inspection reveals subtle differences. Many compare seeing the astral plane to experiencing the effects of hallucinogenic drugs: the world seems both more real than normal, but also ephemeral, as if it can pop like a soap bubble if one isn't careful. Colors are especially crisp and rich on the astral plane, giving the entire realm a sense of hyper-reality. For this reason, the astral plane is sometimes called "The Bright" by those who've learned to glimpse it.

Once a Majus attunes his senses to the astral, he begins to notice other differences between The Bright and the physical world. The most glaring difference is that inanimate objects are typically "colored" by their condition in the real world and by the emotions connected to them. For example, an abandoned house where horrible crimes occurred appears worn and sinister; it's weather-beaten gray paint sullen and deep like sorrow. On the other hand, a maternity ward in a hospital seems bright and sunny, even when rain clouds obscure the sun, and it smells

of lemons and green grass, the scents of new beginnings. In The Bright, expectations and emotions have a powerful effect on the reflections seen there. This is even true to the Majus himself.

A Maji or other mystic who has projected himself into the astral plane does so by detaching his consciousness and senses from his physical body. Upon doing so, he creates an "astral body," an identical twin of his mortal form comprised of pure energy. This astral form is connected to his now inert physical form by a shimmering trail of light. This is commonly called his "silver cord." The Majus' astral body appears as an extremely healthy and vigorous version of his physical one, with an appearance colored by his self-image. A brazen and self-confident Majus' astral body gleams with silvery light, while a self-doubting and shy Majus appears to be shrouded in gloomy shadows.

INHABITANTS OF THE ASTRAL PLANE

The most commonly encountered entities on the astral plane are spirits of all types. From the eroding echoes of dead people to the radiant forms of the beings called angels, the astral plane is home to a myriad of spirits. An experienced "astralnaut" learns to negotiate, avoid, and battle these beings as necessary.

What these spirits exactly are remains open to debate. Many Maji believe that spirits are energetic entities that appeared in the astral realm just as life did on Earth, either evolving naturally or created by some higher power that exists on a plane beyond the astral. Other mystics disagree. Owing to the mutable nature of the astral plane and how easily it is altered by the expectations and perceptions of individuals on the physical realm, these scholars maintain that spirits are in fact sentient thought patterns created by humanity's unconscious. They believe spirits to be the product of humankind's collective unconscious, existing solely because humanity had a need for them. For example, when

the denizens of ancient Egypt began to venerate a god they called Thoth, their belief in this being caused it to crystallize in the astral plane, taking on all the characteristics attributed to it by those who believed in it. Those Maji who ascribe to this theory say this is why one occasionally encounters the spirits of "dead" Lemurians, Lovecraftian horrors, and extraterrestrial "Greys" in astral space. These entities are simply the unconscious creations spawned after enough people believed in them.

It should be noted that even if this theory is correct, that doesn't make these entities any less "real," and more importantly dangerous, on the astral plane. The debate over whether one of these schools of thought is more correct than the other continues, but it is likely that the truth lies somewhere in between the two theories.

PLACES IN THE ASTRAL PLANE
Once a Maji has projected into the Astral, there are several "regions" within it that can be visited. These are not geographic locations, but more like different frequencies within a singular energy field. Accessing them requires the Majus to find a way to alter his own energy's frequency. This is most easily done by locating a point in The Bright where these various frequencies converge. Such energy crossroads often take on a symbolic appearance: a pathway to Cemetery might appear as a wrought iron graveyard gate or crumbling mausoleum, while a route to the Sleeping Regions could be a gateway of ivory and horn or through a dim-lit hall lined with comfortable beds and gauzy curtains.

The following astral regions are known to be static and can always be reached with the proper effort. Other, less stable regions appear in The Bright from time to time, and the CM is encouraged to create his own unique areas within the astral as he desires.

1. Cemetery: This region is where spirits go to "die." Over time, some astral reflections break down, eroding away into nothing. Towards the end

of their disintegration, most sojourn to Cemetery, like elephants to their legendary graveyard. Old ghosts, god-entities who've lost all their worshippers, spirits damaged to near destruction in battles within The Bright, and other worn down spirits can be found here, wandering amongst astral gravestones, the reflections of ancient ruins, and other somber landmarks. These spirits seem unaware of their surroundings and require much coaxing before they acknowledge the presence of others. Cemetery is also home to astral scavengers who find easy pickings amongst these fading spirits. Travelers here should take care, for a dying spirit is often in a state of mental collapse as well and can be extremely erratic in its behavior—even with old allies.

2. Hell: Known by a seemingly infinite number of names such as Sheol, Hades, the Pit, etc., this region is most often simply called Hell. It is a region of perpetual darkness, fog, fire, ash, and ice, often all at once. This region is rife with malicious and masochistic spirits. Demons dwell here in great numbers, as do the ghosts of degraded men and those who believed themselves to be damned in life. A spiritual food chain has evolved here. The masochistic and those believing themselves damned are preyed upon by the debased spirits of men, who are in turn quarry for the demons who reside here. All manners of murders, assaults, and other hideous crimes are perpetrated in Hell and a Magus who enters this region must tread carefully. Safe passage can be negotiated, but it usually requires gaining the assistance of a demon and they tend to drive hard and treacherous bargains.

3. Serenity: Sometimes called Heaven or Paradise, Serenity is the negative image of Hell. Here, higher spirits dwell in a state of bliss amidst soothing vistas of shining marble and deep blue skies. Angelic figures and beatific souls occupy this region, convinced that they've attained the eternal reward they strove for in life. Some Maji consider Serenity to be a
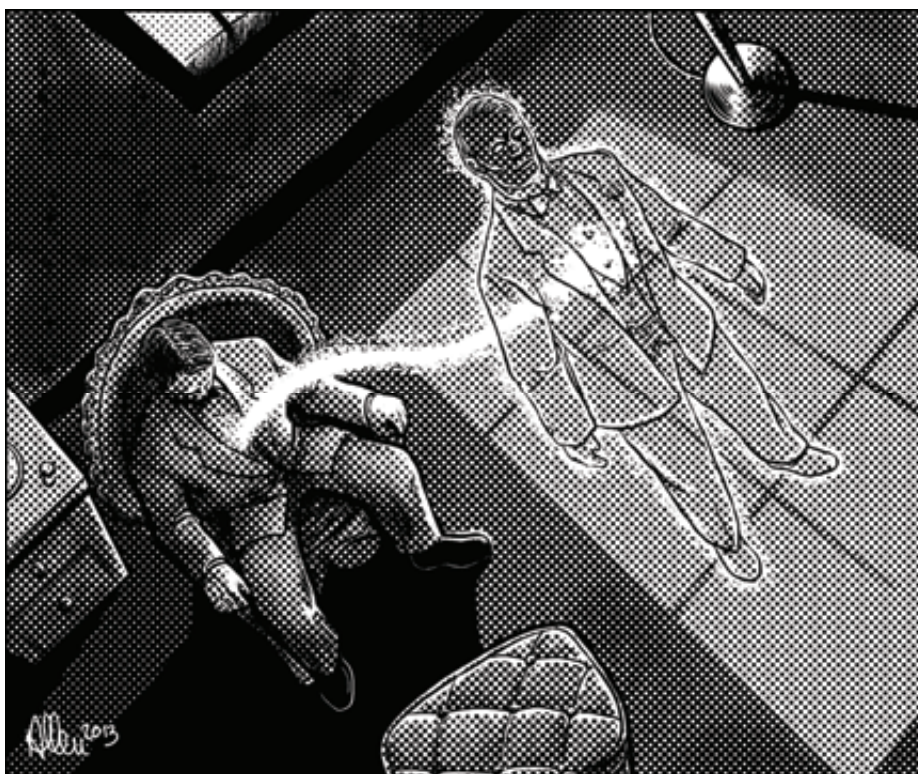
delusion created by the expectations of deceased humanity, while others believe that it serves as a waiting room of sorts where good-hearted spirits rest before moving on to either eternity or another round on the karmic wheel. If the spirits here know the truth, they are not telling.

Serenity is believed to be the resting place of the famed Akashic records, an endless, four-dimensional gallery that contains the whole of human knowledge past, present, and future. All of humanity's history from its beginnings to its eventual end is found within the Akashic records, but gaining access to this endless gallery and finding what one seeks are two very different and difficult tasks.

4. Slumber: This turbulent area is a reflection humanity's collective unconscious, a shared dream realm that each of us taps into when we sleep. It's best envisioned as a house of infinite rooms. Each sleeping human populates one of these rooms with their own subconscious creations, hopes, fears, or symbols, and it is here that their consciousness roams in the night, separate yet still part of the collective unconscious. Sometimes, the barriers between the

rooms break down and two slumbering souls invade one another's dreams, but this is a rare event that is unforgettable by those who experience it. Some say that when two people share the same dream, they are destined to be soul mates and will seek one another all through their waking hours. Native astral spirits are rare here, and when they are encountered it usually means they were brought here for a purpose by a Majus or other magician. However, the Slumber is home to numerous entities created by the unconscious desires and fears of sleepers and these creatures can be just as dangerous as those born of The Bright.

MAJI ON THE ASTRAL PLANE
Because a Magus in not physically on the astral plane, but merely a projection of himself, different methods of adjudicating certain actions is required. The following systems apply anytime a Majus enters the astral realm.

- Firstly, only the character's PER, WPR, PCN, and LUCK abilities have any impact on their actions in the Astral. In The Bright, mental

prowess takes the place of physical abilities since all actions are simply the product of the Majus' imagination and will. Personality, Perception, and Luck all perform as usual; an astral Majus' STR and STA scores are replaced by his PER score and his Willpower is used in the place of Dexterity and Agility as required. When a general check is required for any of these abilities, the appropriate replacement ability is used instead. When a physical skill is enacted, the skills score must be recalculated using the replacement ability in place of any of the physical abilities listed above. In campaigns that spend an inordinate amount of time within The Bright, PCs should keep a separate listing of skill totals derived with these altered formulae to increase speed of play. Magical adits are unchanged in The Bright and their scores are determined as normal.

- Most intellectual skills are unchanged in the Astral. A Majus uses any skill that requires mental acumen as normal. Skills that fall under this heading include, but are not limited to, Humanities, Investigation, Languages, Sciences, and Social.
- Combat in the astral realm is most always melee (unless the CM introduces astral ranged weapons into his campaign). All attacks are resolved using either the Astral Combat skill or the character's Unskilled Astral Melee score, which is equal (PER + WPR/2). The skill's success is determined using the column beneath the defender's Astral Combat or Unskilled Astral Melee score. Unless an astral weapon is used, all damage is resolved using the Unarmed Combat Results chart. Astral weapons can be found while journeying within The Bright or created as magical items at the CM's discretion.
- Magic is extremely easy on the astral plane, although the restrictions affecting targets on the

physical plane outlined in chapter 5 affect magic as well. All spells cast while on the astral plane require only 25% of the normal Willpower points to enact (rounded up). Spells are also enacted by mere thought and take only a single round to cast. Thus they cannot be rushed and never receive a negative modifier for fast casting. However, the Magus can take no other action during that round as if using a Paranormal Talent. All applicable modifiers affect the spell's adit score as normal.

GRIMOIRES

Maji who regularly deal with spirits, especially greater ones, seek any advantage they can when calling up these astral entities. To this end, no item is more sought after than the grimoire. Grimoires are essentially spiritual "phone books" created primarily during the Middle Ages by Magi and Goetic magicians. These large tomes are collections of spiritual lore, supposed true names of astral entities, and specific instructions for raising up demons and calling down angelic spirits. Most are written in a hodge-podge of Arabic, Greek, Latin, and Hebrew. Some famous grimoires include *The Testament of Solomon*, the *Picatrix*, the *Liber Razielis Archangeli*, and *The Transmaniacon*.

Each grimoire grants a bonus to the use of the Summoning Adit when attempting to raise greater spirits; it gives no benefit when calling up minor or lesser spirits that lack distinct individual identities. The benefit of each grimoire depends on its accuracy, legibility, and authorship. Most grimoires are a mixture of truths and falsehoods, either intended or simply the result of

poor experimentation. Those penned by true Maji are always more beneficial than those written by lesser magicians.

A typical medieval grimoire awards a +10% bonus to the owner's Summoning Adit, while a less accurate version would only award a +5% bonus. A Maji-penned grimoire adds a +15% or even a +20% bonus to the adit's base score at the CM's discretion. However, as most grimoires are penned in uncommon languages, the reader must be literate in the language it is scribed in to gain full use of the book. If an interpreter or other intermediary is employed when using the grimoire during the summoning, a -5% penalty is applied to the grimoire's normal bonus.

The CM is encouraged to create a number of unique grimoires for his campaign complete with a title, their Summoning bonuses, and what language they are written in. The CM can even make specialized grimoires that grant bonuses to summoning specific types of spirits (angels, ghosts, devils, etc), but provide no benefit when calling upon other classes of astral entities. Entire adventures or even campaigns can be constructed around the PCs attempting to track down and collect (or destroy) these special grimoires before their rivals do.

SYNCHRONICITY

Some Maji claim that it is not the ability to work magic that makes them what they are nor is it their playing of the *Mehen*. After all, magic and participation in the Old Game is not limited to those descended from the Sumerian sorcerer-kings alone. Rather it is the Magus' ability to be in the right place at the right time which makes him unique in the occult world. This ability, the skill to tap into what Maji call Synchronicity, is both the Maji's greatest secret and most powerful weapon.

Synchronicity is a mysterious force in the universe that, much like gravity, exists all around the Majus. It has been called many names in many cultures (fate, karma, luck, etc.), and has the power to assist Maji in their

efforts when nothing else can. Synchronicity acts as the unseen connection between a Magus and the Skein. With time and practice, a Magus is able to discern the clues and subtle hints that reveal Synchronicity's connecting threads that tie him to the Skein and the Old Game.

For example, a Majus is seeking the location of hidden tomb that holds an antiquity important to the Skein. He's been staying in a remote village deep in the jungle while performing various divinations and questioning the locals to learn of the tomb's location and has had little luck. Rather than exert himself fruitlessly another day, the Majus decides to let Synchronicity do the dirty work for him and sets about looking to see if he can find any clues in seemingly mundane events. All during the day, the Majus encounters flowing water imagery: a group of children playing at the village's sole public water pump, a sudden and unexpected rain catches him the afternoon, a dream of rushing water as he naps in the afternoon, and finally, a soothing sensation as he watches a glass of water poured at the village cantina. That night, he goes back over his map of the area and sees a waterfall marked just up river and decides to concentrate his search there. The next day, he discovers the tomb's entrance hidden behind the curtain of falling water. Synchronicity has shown him the way.

Synchronicity only works for a Majus when he is involved directly or indirectly with the Skein. As much as he'd like it, Synchronicity is of little advantage in the casinos of Monte Carlo—unless the Majus is involved in a backroom game of chance and there's an antiquity important to the Skein in the pot—and even when it is useful, it never functions with a heavy hand. Synchronicity is a subtle force. Our Majus in Monte Carlo using Synchronicity to help him win the pot isn't rewarded with better cards or a lucky throw of the dice. Instead, his power to tap into Synchronicity might give him insight into his opponents' weaknesses (their unconscious tells or a brief flash of what suit their hand is strong in), but how the Majus uses this information to his benefit is up to him.

Synchronicity is largely represented by the character's Luck ability and it is this score that is used to determine whether or not the character can tap into this enigmatic force and reap its benefits. It is resolved by either a general or a specific Luck check at the CM's preference. When a general check is used and the roll is successful, Synchronicity steps in and grants the PC a helping hand in a manner determined by the CM. When a specific check is used, the result is the same, but the amount of help is determined by the exact result of the check with an "L" result meaning the PC gains some small insight to a "C" result indicating a *deus ex machina* type effect.

Despite its power, Synchronicity should never be relied upon to get a job done when there are more certain methods available to the Magus. In the example of the Majus searching for the tomb above, he decided to tap into Synchronicity only after all other avenues had been exhausted. There is a potent reason for this. It is said that Synchronicity helps those who help themselves and to punish those who call upon it too often. A Majus can attempt to call upon Synchronicity's assistance once per week without any drawback. But for each additional time he draws upon it during that period, his chances of success are reduced and failure to succeed in such efforts actually causes Synchronicity to work against him.

Each Synchronicity check after the first in any week's period suffers a cumulative -20% penalty to the Majus' LUCK score. If the modifier check succeeds, Synchronicity steps in and works as normal. However, if the check fails, things begin to go bad for the Majus. This effect manifests as a curse identical to the Specialist level effect of the Hexing adit. Each day the Majus must make a LUCK check or suffer a minor inconvenience as detailed in the Hexing adit's description. Further failed attempts to use Synchronicity to the Majus' advantage either impose a cumulative -10% penalty to his daily LUCK checks or increases the severity of the misfortunes plaguing the Majus at the CM's discretion. These misfortunes dissipate one week after the Majus' last failed Synchronicity check and cannot be cured by the use of magical adits. Synchronicity is far too powerful to be overcome by mortal magic.

THE VEILED MASTERS

Lurking behind the scenes of the Old Game are the Veiled Masters, enigmatic entities who, like the Maji, have a vested interest in the outcome of the *Mehen*—but for what reason is anyone's guess. There are almost as many rumors and theories about the real identities of the Veiled Masters as there are players in the Old Game, and only the Masters themselves know the truth of the matter.

What is known for certain is scant. The Veiled Masters first appeared in the days of ancient Egypt. Cryptic allusions carved on stele dating to c. 3100 BCE first allude to manifestations of their occult presence during this time. The date of their appearance leads some Maji scholars to conjecture that the Veiled Masters are the legendary sorcerer-kings of Sumer who achieved a state of superhuman existence through the magical adits. Having elevated themselves above the human norm, these former Maji continue to participate in the *Mehen* on a different level of existence, one that extends even beyond the astral plane.

Other scholars suggest that the date of the Masters' appearance isn't significant and that the historical record, as fragmented as it is regarding the dawn of civilization, is simply missing earlier accounts of their presence. These theorists maintain that the Veiled Masters have existed in concurrence with the Maji from the earliest days of Sumer. Amongst this faction, the Veiled Masters' identities are posited as being that of the same inscrutable entities who bestowed the adits upon the Maji in the occluded days of

history. They continue to guide, instruct, and reprimand their students into the modern era, albeit through mysterious channels and means.

These two theories are the most popular, but other, more radical suggestions can be found amongst the players. Some Maji speculate, without a hint of humor, that the Veiled Masters are everything from aliens to the ghosts of dead Atlanteans to ancient gods to time travelers from the far future of humanity. Initiates scoff when first exposed to these theories, but after a few years of participation in the *Mehen* and encountering what does dwell in the shadows, they tend to weigh these hypotheses with a more open mind.

The Veiled Masters' motivations are as mysterious as their identities. They seem to support or thwart Towers on a whim, giving aid to a cabal one week and then assisting that Tower's enemies the next. No moral compass appears to guide the Masters, as they'll equally support the most reprehensible Maji as well as those sorcerers dedicated to the preservation of human life. This unpredictability leads some Maji to conjecture that the Veiled Masters should not be treated as a group of evolved beings, but rather as just another Tower to compete against in the *Mehen.*

Expediency has Maji referring to the Veiled Masters as if they are a single, homogenous organization, but this implied cooperation within their ranks is speculative at beast and may account for their unpredictability. There is likely to be just as many if not more factions at work within the Veiled Masters' numbers as there are amongst the Maji. Players in the Old Game should remember this when dealing with the occult instructions of the Veiled Masters.

The CM can attribute any origin to the Veiled Masters he desires or leave their identities a complete mystery. Likewise, the Veiled Masters' participation in campaign events is left to the CM to decide. A MAJUS

campaign can be played without any direct interaction by the Veiled Masters at all, their plots and actions occurring "off-screen" with the PCs only hearing of these events through a third party. If the CM desires, however, the Veiled Masters can act as both allies and enemies of the party, manifesting through mysterious signs, strokes of unearthly good (or bad) luck, or via strange messengers or minions. A series of adventures—if not an entire campaign—could revolve around the discovery of the Veiled Masters' identities, origins, and current location. The PCs might seek them out to learn unknown adits, gain an important advantage in the *Mehen*, or to depose them and assume their lofty positions for themselves.

Should the CM require game stats for the Veiled Masters, assume that each have abilities at or above the human maximum and possess Master-level expertise in all magical adits and numerous PTs as well. The Veiled Masters also have knowledge of magical adits not detailed in this book and the CM is encourage to create new magical adits that produce miraculous effects beyond the ability of those spells known by the Maji. Most Veiled Masters have a vast inventory of talismans and antiquities at their disposal, as well as powerful familiars, guardian spirits, and supernatural creatures owing them fealty. Almost anything the CM desires the Veiled Master to possess or command is within reason when it comes to these enigmatic beings.

CHAPTER 10: MAJOR ARCANA

n overview of the rivals, enemies, antiquities, and threats a Magus is likely to encounter in playing the *Mehen* (or attempting to avoid it) is presented in this chapter. Herein, the CM will find information on Towers, summoned spirits, sample antiquities, and supernatural creatures to populate his campaign. The CM is not only free to alter the following material in whatever manner best suits his campaign, but is actively encourage to do so in order to better build a campaign suited to his and his players' tastes.

TOWERS

Groups of Maji with common goals involving the Skein tend to band together. After all, the Old Game is a dangerous one and the more allies one has, the better his chances of surviving the schemes and threats that surround him. These groups of Maji are called "Towers" after the supposed strongholds legendary wizards erected to protect themselves and their studies.

Towers come in all sizes, ranging from a mere handful of likeminded Maji in a single geographical area to ancient conclaves numbering a hundred or more and spanning continents. Some operate openly in the occult world, while others believe that anonymity is the best strategy for survival. Depending on the campaign the CM wishes to run, the PCs may begin play as a member of one of these Towers, as independents looking to join a group or establish their own Tower, or Erratics seeking to avoid the manipulations of them entirely.

ABRAXAS

This Tower claims to date from antiquity, founded on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea when ancient Greece held sway over that region, but other Towers dismiss the group's assertion as a falsehood to lend them mystical credibility. Regardless of the truth, it cannot be argued that Abraxas is one of the more powerful and frightful Towers currently playing the *Mehen.*

Although once known by another identity, Abraxas now entitles itself after the demon of the same name that was invoked by Maji and less enlightened sorcerers down through the ages, but is now impossible to call up. The reason for these failures (or so Abraxas claims) is that the demon was last dredged up from Hell on November 25th, 1584 by the Tower for the purpose of stealing its power. At the height of the ritual, the Tower slew and committed magical "daemophagy"—eating Abraxas alive and consuming its essence.

As a result of this rite, there exist several Maji families within the Tower who have demon's blood coursing through them. The mightiest of these scions are Maji in their own right, while their less talented cousins serve as inhuman shock troops against the Tower's enemies. The blood of Abraxas grants both minor magical resistance (all spells targeted against bloodline Abraxas are resolved using Defense Column 5 on the Action Table) and either increased Willpower (+10 to the Ability if a true Maji) or Stamina (+10 to the ability if one of the non-Maji shock troops). In addition, most of the Abraxas bloodline exudes an aura of unearthliness that causes a -3 penalty to rolls on the Situation Check Results table.

Abraxas is one of the Towers seeking to destroy the Skein and makes a good opponent for the PCs. Depending on the CM's campaign, Abraxas might wish to consume the Skein and steal its power like they did the demon itself (if using the mystical bloodline option for the Skein), collect the parts of the Skein and destroy them in a ritual designed to summon up an immensely powerful entity to commit daemophagy upon (if the Skein is magic artifacts), or capture and cannibalize rival Maji in order to steal their power (if the Maji as Skein is being used). If the CM chooses another option for the Skein, the Abraxas will undoubtedly be looking for a way to either destroy it or steal it for themselves.

THE CIRCLE OF SATURN

In an unassuming building in Dublin, this Tower of Maji gathers. Their faces are obscured by hoods and their robes embroidered with a reversed symbol of Saturn. Safe from spying eyes, crumbling grimoires and mysterious antiquities are removed from laden shelves and the circle summons the shades of the dead to pry secrets from their decaying minds. These men and women have one goal: immortality at any price.

The Circle of Saturn has existed for three hundred years, but they are simply the latest searchers in a quest that has obsessed humanity since the first man went into the grave. Maji, despite their significant powers, are as mortal as the next person and death is no less terrifying. In fact, after sojourning into the astral plane, Maji, who've now seen what awaits some souls beyond, fear death even more than most. The Circle of Saturn is dedicated to cracking the code of immortality and gifting themselves with its secrets. Without death to fear, the Circle can take risks and make plays in the *Mehen* that no other Majus dares and ensure that they will be the only players left standing when the Old Game eventually ends.

This Tower is comprised almost exclusively of men and women of mature age, ones past their physical prime and who now sense the shadow of death for the first time. With the illusions of immortality that blissfully blind one during youth stripped away, they concentrate their efforts on beating the Reaper, while neglecting the Old Game in the process.

The Saturnists are bit players in the *Mehen*, if only for the moment. Despite this, they regularly come into conflict with other Towers. The Circle

expends its resources tracking down scraps of forgotten lore, lost antiquities, and moldering grimoires that contain clues to the secret of immortality. This puts them at cross-purposes with other Towers seeking the same objects and these conflicts seldom end peacefully. The Circle is fervently devoted to their goal and fight doggedly to achieve it. Luckily for those who find themselves in competition with the Circle, the Saturnists don't fight to the death, which would defeat their central purpose. Tenacious Towers willing to sacrifice a member or two for a goal always defeats the Circle in open combat.

Despite these reservations, the Circle remains a potent, albeit often advertent, enemy for the PCs. Their research into thanatology has rewarded them with weird antiquities that age or preserve the physical body, as well as access to innumerable ghosts that serve the Circle—willingly or not. Having passed through the irrational period of youth, the Saturnists are patient and subtle when it comes to making plans and hatching intrigues; a Tower that overcame the Circle in a battle out in the field may come home to their sanctum and find an ambush awaiting them on their home turf.

Most Circle members have high Perception, Personality, and Willpower scores and possess only average and even subpar Strength, Stamina, Agility, and Dexterity. Luck varies from Majus to Majus. Summoning, Healing, Charging, and Divination are all popular adits amongst the Saturnists. Lastly, an atmosphere of quiet paranoia underlies the entire Tower and members have no less than two or three contingency plans in place to preserve their lives or expedite escape whenever they venture outside the safety of their sanctums.

PRIMA MATERIA, "THE PRIME MATERIAL"

For centuries, sorcerers, philosophers, magicians, and scientists have sought the secrets of alchemy. They perused crumbling grimoires filled with contradictory instructions, wrestled with puzzling metaphors, and pondered the cryptic lore that implied that, with the right methods, the Philosopher's Stone could be created, base metals transformed into gold, and the path to immortality made clear. Despite claims to the contrary, none of these alchemists succeeded in unlocking the secrets of the art.

Unbeknownst to these proto-chemists, what they sought was not a physical thing and the alchemists of old were completely deluded by the riddles that hid the true goal of alchemy. Alchemy is a path of personal transformation. The goal of the art is not to transmute lead into gold, but to elevate the human body and mind to a higher state. Only a true Maji can see through the cunning deceptions and ineffable metaphors and achieve this exalted state, but even for them, this is a lifelong journey.

Prima Materia is a Tower composed of Maji dedicated to this goal, sometimes more so than the Old Game itself. These Maji believe that only by achieving a higher state can the *Mehen* be ultimately won and the Skein allowed to serve its purpose. The Maji of the *Prima Materia* hold that it was through the unraveling of alchemy's secrets that the Veiled Masters reached their enlightened state and gained their potent magical capabilities.

The alchemists of the *Prima Materia* spend their lives seeking the perfection of their physical forms and honing their mental abilities. They embody the philosophy of *Mens sana in corpore sano*, eschewing earthly pleasures to attain a higher state of being. Because of this, it is rare for other Maji to come into direct confrontation with *Prima Materia*, but when it does occur, they swiftly discover that the alchemists are not mental giants trapped in scrawny bodies, but near-supernaturally gifted both physically and intellectually. Were it not for their small numbers and tendency to remain aloof from the *Mehen*, it is possible that the *Prima Materia* would dominate the Old Game entirely.

Although *Prima Materia* Maji are found throughout the world, their members most often reside in out of the way regions. From the lofty Himalayas to secluded hollers of Appalachia to remote islands in the Pacific, the alchemists of the *Prima Materia* prefer to pursue their path to enlightenment in solitude. Yet despite their remoteness, these Maji have an uncanny knowledge of the day-to-day stratagems enacted by other Towers and quickly rejoin the Old Game when they feel the Skein is threatened severely enough to warrant their assistance.

All Maji of this Tower have extremely high scores in STR, DEX, AGL, and STA, typically between 70-80. Only recent initiates will have lower scores in these abilities. Other scores also tend to be above the norm, and the highest ranking members of the Tower will possess PCN and WPR scores in the 70-80 range as well. Only LUCK and PER remain variable.

THE PROJECTEERS

Since the days of ancient Sumer, Maji have pulled the strings of power, ruling from secrecy behind the throne. The Projecteers are the most recent incarnation of this propensity. This Tower is comprised of Maji operating secretly within both the United States Government and in the allied administrations of foreign countries. The Tower takes its name from its tendency of hiding their machinations behind blacker-than-black operations with codenames such as "Project Mercury Ascending," "Project Fringe," and "Project Quiet Village."

The Projecteers date back from the early days of the Second World War when the Tower's founding Maji installed themselves within the Office of Strategic Services. Originally, these Maji sought to use the OSS as a cover to enter parts of China and Burma and acquire certain artifacts, but as the importance of the OSS grew, these proto-Projecteers set about steering the agency in directions that

could be best exploited when playing the Old Game. Since the end of World War II, the Projecteers have infiltrated multiple U.S. agencies and departments including the Central Intelligence Agency, the Department of Defense, the Department of Homeland Security, the Office of Naval Intelligence, and other secure organizations inside the federal government. Projecteer agents are also found in the British Secret Intelligence Service, Israel's Mossad, Japan's Cabinet Intelligence and Research Office, and Germany's *Militärischer Abschirmdienst.*

In theory, the Projecteers are one of the most powerful Towers in existence today. They have the resources of entire governments to draw upon when necessary. The truth is that for all their power, the Projecteers regularly find their hands tied by bureaucratic red tape that even their potent magic cannot defeat. They must move slowly and secretly, hiding their budgets and operations behind mundane-seeming requisitions and budgetary expenses. The only indications that the Projecteers are at work in the halls of power are the strange glyphs found inscribed on locked blast doors situated deep in subterranean government installations or the whiff of exotic incense detected in the otherwise sterile halls of clandestine agencies.

Although they possess strong government ties, the Projecteers should not be mistaken for patriots. Like all Maji, their main allegiance is to magic and their ultimate goal is winning the *Mehen.* All else is secondary and the Tower is willing to expend any of their resources to achieve victory. Enemies of the Tower blame the Projecteers for everything from the war in Vietnam to Ruby Ridge to the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan—and are unfortunately more often correct than not.

The Projecteers seek to control the Skein in the campaign and use any number of government resources to do so. In campaigns where the Skein is a mystical bloodline, the Tower

wiretaps phone lines, hacks computer networks, and shadows potential scions to gather blackmail material or plot kidnappings. If the Skein is artifacts, the Projecteers scour the globe to collect them and then hide them in secure warehouse facilities deep in America's heartlands. If the Skein is an overwhelming magical conspiracy, the Tower seeks to compromise its operatives or to turn them against their masters.

The Projecteers make both potent allies and frightening enemies in the campaign. The CM could weave an entire campaign around the concept of the PCs as government sorcerers engaging in black-ops missions throughout the world. Likewise, the Projecteers could stand in the way of the PCs as they play the *Mehen* (or seek to avoid it), forcing the characters to dodge black helicopters hovering over secret desert installations or outwitting trench-coat wearing agents on the crowded streets of foreign ports of call.

THE QUIET

No Tower is more feared by the Maji than The Quiet. They are the bogeymen that skulk in the shadows, enigmas that operate according to their own ineffable agendas. It is said that even the Veiled Masters fear The Quiet, for if any Tower could pierce the layers of protection those secret wizards cloak themselves in, it is they—that is unless this Tower is actually in league with the Masters...

The motivations of most Towers are easy to discern. All wish to win the Mehen, and to do so they seek to protect, control, or destroy the Skein. The Quiet is the sole exception to this categorization: no one knows what their intentions are—other than striking fear in Maji everywhere.

The Quiet specializes in completely removing Maji from the Old Game, disappearing them without warning and leaving their ultimate fate in question. To all outside observers, the Tower seems to operate without reason or plan, simply appearing out of the shadows to remove the Majus who has drawn their attention or ire, and then

vanishing again without a trace. A common theory amongst the other Towers is that The Quiet serves the Veiled Masters, acting as their secret police or society of magical assassins. The only certainty is that Maji of this Tower are all well-schooled in the adits of Glamour, Hexing, and Summoning, which they use to approach their enemies undetected and dispose of their targets.

These enigmatic Maji are not gross murderers; they never leave a body cooling on the floor. Their victims disappear completely, leaving their allies with nothing but unsolvable theories as to their fate. Legends within the Maji community claim the vanished sorcerers are murdered and then disposed of in the astral plane, their corpses devoured by entities that dwell in The Bright. Less macabre, but no more certain are stories that the taken Maji are incarcerated in a secret prison under the direction of the Veiled Masters. There, they are interrogated, magically brain-washed, and inducted into the ranks of The Quiet to serve their new overlords.

The Quiet make for a perfect complication in a MAJUS adventure. When the PCs and another rival Tower are clashing over one goal,The Quiet suddenly arrives and starts picking off Maji on both sides of the conflict, changing the field of battle immediately. Maji of The Quiet all have above-average physical abilities and skills, and near-superhuman scores in Stealth, Investigation, and at least three combat-related skills.

Quiet assassins possess magical or chemical suicide methods to use if they are in danger of being captured, leaving nothing but a corpse behind if their plot fails. Some of these self-destruction techniques also baffle Paranormal Talents that allow communication with the dead.

SCHWARZE SONNE, "THE BLACK SUN"

This Tower formed in Europe during the 19th century, organized by Maji who had fallen out of favor within the Circle of Cold Fire (see below). Several Maji within the Circle

proposed that controlling the Skein was the only way to protect it, placing them at odds with the majority of the Cold Fire. These renegade Maji broke away and formed a new Tower in Westphalia, one uninhibited by the morality of the Circle. They dubbed themselves *Schwarze Sonne* or "The Black Sun".

The Black Sun was instrumental in the formation of several occult societies in Europe during this period, but came to prominence with Hitler's rise to power and the German neo-paganism movement that accompanied it. *Schwarze Sonne* was the power behind the Thule Society and other esoteric brotherhoods within the Third Reich, using both these groups and Hitler's S.S. as a cover for their own gambits in the *Mehen*. The Black Sun made good use of their Nazi pawns, commandeering both magical and monetary riches plundered during the war and confiscating the results of many research projects involving the occult and alternative technologies.

When the war ended, the Black Sun abandoned their Nazi cat's paws, taking advantage of ODESSA to relocate to more hospitable climates where they continued playing the Old Game. A few turned coats and allowed themselves to be recruited by the Projecteers (see below) as part of Operation Paperclip, relocating to the United States where they could make use of the magical and technological resources available there. The majority of the *Schwarze Sonne*, however, fled to various South American countries, Italy, the Far East, and Scandinavia. The Black Sun continues play the *Mehen* from isolated citadels located away from prying eyes.

The Black Sun is well-equipped, possesses state of the art technology, and a seemingly endless number of disposable soldiers in the guise of various neo-Nazi groups, making them formidable opponents. In addition to cutting edge tools, the Black Sun owns a variety of archaic technologies, products of secret Nazi experiments stolen for their own use. These clunky, battered devices possess capabilities that outstrip modern technology and the CM is free to give them a litany of powers ranging from anti-gravity, cryogenic preservation, experimental masers, or any other effect his campaign needs.

If the Black Sun is operating in the campaign, their main goal is to dominate the Skein in whatever form it takes. This could be the tracking down and culling of extraneous branches of the mystic bloodline, the acquisition of artifacts (think *Raiders of the Lost Ark*), or to seek out a method to elevate themselves and challenge the Veiled Masters to gain utter control over the *Mehen* itself. Most of their minions are skinhead stooges and Maji of middling power.

The real masters of the *Schwarze Sonne* reside in secret plantations deep in the jungle, in remote villas in the Alps, or in hidden bases buried beneath the eternal ice of Antarctica. Many of the Back Sun's founding Maji exist in a state of near-undeath, more machine than man, clinging to life through the use of sorcery and secret S.S. gadgetry. PCs battling their way to the heart of a *Schwarze Sonne* stronghold must face these rotting, sorcerous foes and the magical—and technological—enhanced minions they command.

SODALITY OF THOTH ETERNAL

The late 19ᵗʰ century saw a blooming of two esoteric pastimes: the occult secret (and not so secret) society and an avid interest in Egyptology (to put a polite name on grave robbing and cultural theft). As might be expected, these interests were fueled by Maji working behind the scenes to benefit their own stratagems in the Old Game. One of the more influential groups in these endeavors was the fellowship of Maji that founded the Sodality of Thoth Eternal.

These Maji were convinced that sizable caches of antiquities and lost lore remained undiscovered in Egypt, the land that saw the second flowering of magic in the long and strange history of occult arts. They funded and participated in numerous digs in the desert wilderness before stumbling upon an unusual structure buried beneath the sands. It was not a tomb as expected, but a temple dedicated to Thoth, the god of writing, science, and magic. The temple itself held rooms filled with wonders, but it was what laid in the temple's central chamber that excited the Maji the most: piles and piles of scrolls and codices spirited away from the Library of Alexandria before it burned to ash. That night, under the desert sands, the Sodality of Thoth Eternal was founded as the Maji took a sacred pledge to protect and preserve the knowledge that might otherwise be lost or destroyed in the machinations of the *Mehen.*

Since then, this Tower has served as the self-appointed guardians of all magical knowledge. They scour the world seeking lost artifacts and forbidden grimoires to claim and protect in their specially-built archives. The Sodality believes that no matter who wins the Old Game, knowledge itself should not be a casualty of the war. To this end, they've taken a stance of strict neutrality in the *Mehen* and exist only to preserve information that might be lost and to instruct those who seek knowledge.

The Sodality makes their archives available to any who request it, although the location or locations of these intellectual storehouses remain a closely guarded secret. Seekers of knowledge are carefully screened and magically probed before being taken to one of the Sodality's archives. Once inside, their actions are closely monitored by trained guards and cutting edge security measures. Those who've attempted to steal an object from under the Sodality's care discovered that powerful wards, guardian spirits and constructs, as well as machine-gun wielding archivists stand ready to prevent the crime. It is also the last piece of knowledge they ever learn.

Although neutral in the *Mehen,* the Sodality's oath of non-participation does not extend to the battle to acquire and control magical knowledge. The Tower firmly believes that the occult world would be better off if all its intellectual wonders were

placed under their guardianship and that when left in private hands, the knowledge these objects contain cannot be used for the betterment of mankind and those who watch over them. The Sodality's devotion to this philosophy of "magic knowledge wants to be free" is complete and they have no qualms about dispassionately murdering whoever stands in their way.

Maji of the Sodality are average spell-casters and seldom Master any singular adit. They do, however, possess access to both magical lore and antiquities long-unseen by other Magi. If the CM wants to introduce a cool new magical adit or artifact, the Sodality is the perfect way to do so—especially if he wants to include it in the campaign world without dropping it into the PCs' hands. This tendency makes the Sodality an unpredictable foe in the field. Just when the PCs think they've seen every spell imaginable in action, a Sodality Majus produces a magical effect that was last witnessed in the days before the pyramids were constructed.

The Sodality of Thoth Eternal can be both a resource and an occasional threat to the PCs. Despite their stance that their archives remain open to all, the Sodality maintains a thick veil of secrecy around themselves and piercing this veil is necessary before they can be contacted to seek access to their storehouses of wonders. Locating the Sodality in itself can be the subject of several adventures and gaining access to their holdings the focus of several more.

In the field, the PCs could run afoul with the Sodality over an antiquity or grimoire that the Tower seeks to claim for their own. And while this conflict will not prevent the Sodality from allowing the PCs access to it in the climate-controlled rooms of their archives at a later date, this is little consolation if the object is needed by the PCs right that very moment or if the Sodality kills one of them in the process. PCs less burdened by the confines of rigid morality might even be recruited by either Abraxas or the Black Sun to raid and loot a Sodality archive, making for an adventure that could range from clockwork heists to ferocious firefights. But with such malignant allies, treachery will undoubtedly result before the job is finished.

THE THESSALIANS

In the tales of the ancient Greeks, Thessaly was a land to be feared, for the women who dwelt there were known to be powerful witches with the ability to draw down the Moon's power. They excelled in divination and herbalism, and were believed to be the handmaidens of the goddess Hecate.

The Thessalian Tower lays claim to this ancient heritage, although it is believed they are of more recent origin. Most Maji historians expound that the Tower was formed in the late 15th century, but this is base speculation that relies on sparse historical records. Regardless of the Tower's founding date, the Thessalians are a major player in the Old Game.

The Tower consists entirely of female Maji, the majority of whom are of European descent. An especially powerful chapterhouse has been active in the United States since the mid-1950s and in recent years the Tower has gained inroads in other nations and boasts members in South America, India, and Japan. The Thessalians excel in the Divination adit and each sorority of the Tower is led by a Seeress with Master-level ability in that art. The Tower constantly performs divination magic to determine the best strategy when playing the *Mehen*, acting according and plotting according to the signs and portents these spells reveal.

After the Tower determines the necessary course of action, it sends out specially trained teams of Maji to see their plans to fruition. These Thessalian special operatives are called "Maenads." Each is trained in the art of combat, espionage, and battle magic, and is completely loyal to their Seeress. Misogynistic rumors abound about the Maenads, and although some of these slanderous statements may have a basis in truth, they are grossly exaggerated—mostly out of the well-deserved fear that many, mostly male-led, Towers have for the Thessalians. The old adage about a woman scorned is true when it comes to thwarting the Thessalians and their plots.

Thessalians have developed a special affinity for the moon and like their legendary foremothers can tap into lunar energy to aid their spell casting. Unfortunately, this reliance on the moon has its drawbacks as well. When the moon is full, all Thessalians gain a +15% bonus to their adit scores when performing magic under the light of the moon. They do not gain this bonus when working magic indoors or during the daytime. When the moon is waxing, this bonus is only +5%. Alternately, on nights of the new moon, the Thessalians suffer a -15% penalty when working magic outdoors at night and a -5% penalty on nights when the moon is waning. During the evenings of the half moon, they gain no benefit, but suffer no penalty.

Because of their restrictions on membership, the Thessalians are ill-fit for the PCs to be initiates in unless all are playing female characters. In mixed-sex parties, the Tower works best as an NPC group and can either serve as ally or enemy to the PCs. Despite rumors to the contrary, the Thessalians have no special hatred towards men; they simply believe that woman have a special connection with potent lunar magic and the divine astral thought patterns that are connected with the moon.

THE WITCHFINDERS

Down desert highways comes the rumble of shovelhead engines. Hot winds and exhaust whip road-beaten leathers and the burning sun gleams off chrome, steel chains, and knife blades. Faces are obscured by beards, bandanas, and goggles. These are all signs that the Witchfinders have come to town.

The Witchfinders is an outlaw motorcycle club that operates largely in the American Southwest. Most of its membership is comprised of ex-

cons, brutal thugs, and other minor criminals and hangers-on. Such a motley crew seems out of place in a listing of powerful Towers. But all is not as it seems.

The club's original members were all Erratics who banded together in the early 1970s. Their goal was to maintain autonomy in the *Mehen* and to provide a safe haven for other Erratic Maji wishing to escape the intrigue of the Old Game. In the years since, the Witchfinders have carved out a power bloc in the shadowy, magical underworld and built a minor empire with violence and sorcery.

Although only three of the original Witchfinders are still alive, they have recruited a number of other Erratics in the past four decades and today the club's entire inner circle is comprised of Maji. The rest of the Witchfinders are mostly uninitiated into the secrets of magic, but a few older members have picked up some magical lore over the years. And although the majority of the club is non-magical, the Witchfinders incorporate many occult symbols and titles in the club's patches and practices. The Witchfinders inner circle all bear the title "Sorcerer," the pledges are called "Seekers," and its non-magical members are called "Warlocks." A pentagram ringed by arcane symbols decorates the club's patch.

The Witchfinders, true to their founding purpose, eschews the machinations of the *Mehen*, preferring to use their magical adits and paranormal talents to maintain a stranglehold on local criminal enterprises. The club is involved in gun-running, drug trafficking, extortion, and protection rackets targeting strip clubs, tattoo parlors, and other businesses with one foot planted in the criminal underworld. Joining the Witchfinders is a long and arduous process that involves prospects severing ties with polite society and committing crimes that can be used as leverage against them should they ever decide to renounce their membership in the club. Erratic Maji have an easier time acquiring membership, but must run a gamut of sorcerous and paranormal trials designed to ferret out Tower spies looking to infiltrate the club.

This Tower (although they never refer to themselves as such) can be used in campaigns where the PCs are seeking to escape the Old Game and its dangers. They might seek out the Witchfinders to join their ranks or as a starting point for learning how to avoid participating in the *Mehen.* The Witchfinders will not act as allies to traditional Maji under any circumstances and should they ever learn they've been employed as pawns by players in the *Mehen,* they'll go to extreme lengths to avenge themselves on whoever deceived them.

The Witchfinders have below-average levels of expertise in the magical adits, but tend to possess a wider variety of them than their *Mehen*-playing counterparts. They possess above-average physical abilities and most are Expert-level or higher in Firearms, Knives, Clubs, and Unarmed Combat skills. All have the Stunt Driving skill and can coax performances from their motorcycles that put Hollywood stunts to shame.

ANTIQUITIES

Maji have used the Charging adit to create magical objects since the hoary days of pre-history. While many of these objects are lesser talismans whose power is swiftly spent, a few ancient objects remain potent long after their creators have turned to dust. These artifacts are known as antiquities.

Antiquities are repositories of great power, which makes them the subject of magical rivalries amongst the Maji. Depending on the campaign, antiquities may even be the basis of the Skein and thus the key to winning the *Mehen.* No matter what their importance in the grand scheme, antiquities will undoubtedly play a role in any Majus game. The following are examples of the types of artifacts loose in the world today. Most have been lost or stolen and their present whereabouts is for the CM to decided

Astral Camera

This antiquity seems at first glance to be merely an antique Lewis Daguerreotype Camera dating from the mid-19th century. It is missing its customary tripod and its wood casing is scuffed and bears a small patch of charring. Its lens is crafted from a single piece blue kyanite.

The Astral Camera first appeared in 1856 in the hands of the Magus and famed "ghost breaker" Salman Jha. He possessed the device until losing it during an investigation in the Tennessee Great Smoky Mountains. It reappeared in an auction in 1932 and disappeared again into the hands of a private collector. Images from the camera continue to appear in occult circles.

The Astral Camera can take photographs (or more specifically, *daguerreotype)* of the astral plane and the entities found therein. The antiquity's enchantment resides entirely in the camera itself, and a Magus can peer through the camera's viewfinder and see The Bright beyond. Should he wish to use its power to create an actual photograph, however, he must acquire the necessary mundane plates and chemicals to produce an image.

Using the camera as an astral viewer requires no roll, but the Magus can only see whatever resides in The Bright immediately around the camera. Should he wish to make a daguerreotype of what the camera is capable of discerning, a successful general Science (Chemistry) check must be made and 5 current Willpower points expended to power the camera. If the CM wishes, he can replace the general check with a specific one and use the success level of the roll to determine how clear the final daguerreotype is and what it contains.

Brass Head

Reports of wizards owning a "brazen head" or "man of brass" were once commonplace in the last millennium and ownership of these items were attributed to such diverse figures as Pope Sylvester II and Dr. Faust. Amongst the Maji, it is known that

these heads were in truth a singular antiquity that passed through many hands down the years. The identity of the person responsible for the making of the Brass Head is commonly attributed to either Roger Bacon or Albertus Magnus, but the Head's true creator is the same unnamed Maji of antiquity who forged Talos, the giant man of bronze.
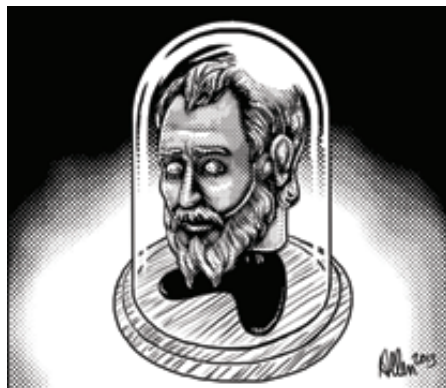
The Brass Head is a stylized human head, rendered in the form of a bearded male of apparent middle age. Two bolts affix the Head's movable lower jar to the upper head and its eyes are covered by sliding "eye lids" that can retract into the Head to give the appearance of blinking and sleep. When not in use, the eyes are closed. The Head bears patches of blue-green verdigris and pale barnacles that even the most aggressive cleaning cannot remove.

To use the Brass Head, the user expends 10 current Willpower points, asks the extremity a question, and awaits a response. Due to the era of its construction, the query must be spoken in Ancient Greek, but there are no other restrictions as to who can utilize this antiquity. At the CM's discretion, the Brass Head might be limited to "yes or no" questions or may be able to provide detailed responses. If the Head answers yes or no, make a general Knowledge check when determining if it knows the answer to a question. If the Head is more responsive, what the Head knows about a subject is resolved by making a specific Knowledge skill check. Treat the Head as having a

score of 95 in any and all knowledge-based skills for the purpose of determining the success of the specific check.

Enuma Anu Enlil

This antiquity is a series of 75 clay tablets inscribed with cuneiform that date to 2000 BCE. Each tablet is a collection of omens and astrological information. Combined, the tablets contain more than 7000 descriptions. Although other copies of the Enuma Anu Enlil exist in both public and private collections, this antiquity is the prototype upon which all these lesser works are based.

The Enuma Anu Enlil provides the ability to work powerful divination and weather magics. The complete set grants its owner the magical adits of both Divination at the Expert skill level (90) and Weather Control at Master-level expertise (115). No previous knowledge of these magical arts is needed to utilize the Enuma Anu Enlil, but if the tablets' owner already has training in these adits at or above the levels provided by the antiquity, he enjoys a bonus +30% to the applicable adit(s) score. All normal modifiers for adit use (target distance, rushed casting, etc.) apply when using the tablets.

The tablets require the expenditure of 20 current Willpower points to activate and use if the owner is untrained in the antiquity's magical adit he wishes to use. If he has some training, even of a lesser skill level than that provided by the tablets, the Willpower cost is reduced to 10 points.

Using the Enuma Anu Enlil has its risks, however. If the owner fails in his spell casting with the tablets, he causes a magical disturbance centered on himself. If the Divination adit is the casting that fails, he is plagued by unfortunate events for 1 month's time. He must make a general LUCK check each day to avoid a minor misfortune as if under the effect of a Specialist-level Hexing and suffers an additional -10% to all skill and adit checks for the duration of the misfortune.

Should he fail in the Weather Control adit, his geographical location is affected by bizarre weather patterns for 2d10 days. The weather follows him if he attempts to relocate to escape the meteorological phenomenon. This strange weather manifests in a manner determined by the CM, but is likely to include unseasonal weather, savage storms, tornadoes, lightning strikes, and other potentially hazardous weather events.

Hess' Luger

This antiquity is a Luger P08 pistol of seemingly average construction. The sole hint that it is more than it appears are the two silver decorations on its handle. On the left side is a single Solwelu (or "S" rune) and on the right side is a left-facing swastika. The weapon bears a small number of nicks and scratches, but is otherwise in excellent condition.

This weapon once belonged to Rudolph Hess, Deputy Fuhrer of the Nazi Party and prominent member of the occult Thule Society. It was given to Hess by members of the Black Sun Tower in 1933 as a gift commemorating his initiation into the deepest ranks of the Thule Society, an unwitting tool of the *Schwarze Sonne.* It is unknown if Hess himself was a Maji, but his birth in Egypt and his Greek mother, combined with his associations with the upper echelon of the Black Sun, suggest the possibility. Regardless of his own magical powers or lack thereof, there is no doubt that his Luger is a magical tool of modern origin. Hess entrusted the pistol to one of his aides prior to his flight to Scotland in 1941. Its current whereabouts are unknown, but the *Schwarze Sonne* is actively seeking the Luger.

Hess' Luger is a powerful tool intended to protect its owner from supernatural threats such as spirits and demons. The silver badges on the pistol allow the owner to create a personal Warding around him, making it difficult for spirits of all types to physically harm him. The Ward in created by expending 25

Willpower points and making a specific check against the pistol's innate Warding adit score of 105. The result determines the difficulty for spirits of all types to harm the Luger's owner. If the Warding fails or is breached, the Luger, as a magical weapon, can harm spirits and other magical entities and the shooter enjoys a +15% bonus to his Pistol skill when using the gun against these types of creatures.

Hex Rifle

This rifle appears to be a Lee-Enfield No. I Mk. III rifle modified to hold a modern telescopic site. Closer inspection reveals it to be "Khyber Pass copy" of the Enfield, made by Afridi gunsmiths in that region of Pakistan. Furthermore, the rifle's front sight has been replaced by a pentagram and the weapon's stock inscribed with Latin curses, their lettering filled with lead. When "fired," the shooter feels a slight tugging on the rifle, but no other physical effect is noticeable.

The Hex Rifle's provenance is questionable. While undoubtedly a product of Khyber Pass gunsmiths, its alterations suggest the weapon was modified and enchanted at a later date. It's been recorded in various hands since 1956, and was last known to belong to a Projecteer Majus operating in South Africa.

This Antiquity has two powers. First, it can afflict a target with any Hex adit effect from a distance. The weapon is treated as having Master-level expertise in the adit with a score of 115. The shooter merely lines up his target in the rifle's crosshairs,

pulls the trigger, and expends current Willpower based on the effect he wishes to produce. If the wielder wants to afflict his target with a Specialist-level Hex, the cost is 5 Willpower points. An Expert-level Hex effect is 10 Willpower points and a Master-level effect is 15 current Willpower points.

The rifle's range is line of sight and never suffers a penalty for range. All other combat modifiers affect the rifle's Hex strike score normally. No ammunition needs to be in the rifle, and if the gun is ever used as a firearm with live rounds, ranged attacks with the Hex Rifle suffer a -30% penalty to the shooter's Firearms score due to the weapon's poor construction and unconventional sight. When used to afflict a Hex, the rifle is considered a magical weapon for the purpose of injuring supernatural creatures immune to non-magical attacks. Bullets fired by the gun are considered non-magical.

The Hex Rifle's second power lies in its scope. The telescopic sight of the rifle is enchanted to ignore the effects of the Glamour adit, illusions, and other magical disguises. A subject seen through the scope automatically appears as its true identity to the viewer, no die roll required. The scope does not pierce mundane disguises or other non-magical attempts to obscure one's identity nor does it allow the weapon's owner to see in the dark.

Amulet of Druj Nasu

This Antiquity is a teardrop-shaped piece of amber encircled by a strand of hammered silver wire. It measures 2″ in height and 1″ in width at its largest point. A simple wire loop at the top of the teardrop allows it to be worn on a chain or piece of cordage. Close examination of the amber reveals an abnormally large fly with brilliant iridescent wings trapped within the stone.

This amulet contains a potent Babylonian demon, entrapped within it while in the form of a fly many millennia ago. The demon, Druj Nasu, is an unclean, corrupt spirit, but her power and the control

enforced on her by the amulet make her a useful tool in the *Mehen.*

By expending 25 current Willpower points, the owner of this amulet can command Druj Nasu to appear before him and she is bound to fulfill the owner's tasks to the best of her ability. She cannot physically harm the amulet's owner, although she can (and, given the opportunity, will) attempt to orchestrate events so that he comes to harm inadvertently. If the owner is careful, however, Druj Nasu is a potent tool to pit against his enemies and to advance his own endeavors. Unfortunately for the Magus looking to use the demon for the betterment of humanity, Druj Nasu must take the life of a living, sentient creature before she can be forced back into the amulet. This is due to the original agreement she made with the amulet's creator and the killing cannot be circumvented in any way other than destroying the demon permanently. Destruction of the amulet frees Druj Nasu, who will immediately seek revenge on the amulet's former owner (if still living), any other Maji in the vicinity, and then upon humanity as a whole.

Druj Nasu is a Greater Spirit (see later in this chapter) and has the following powers: Magical Adit (Hexing), Magical Adit (Glamour), Magical Adit (Warding), Paranormal Talent (Mesmerism), Paranormal Talent (Read Thought), Possession, Skilled (Stealth), Supernatural Ability (Tough).

Emerald Tablet of Hermes Trismegistus

This antiquity has the rare honor of being of astral origin, an object created by unknown forces in the depths of The Bright. Although it is unknown who first discovered the Emerald Tablet, many have encountered either it or a duplicate of it in the Slumber. Even Carl Jung encountered the Emerald Tablet, which appeared to him as a slab of green stone and served to inspire his writings.

The version most often encountered in the physical realm is an oblong and angled piece of raw

emerald measuring 2' high by 1' wide and 4″ thick. One surface is flat, cut smooth by unknown tools while the rest of the stone remains unworked. The flat face of the tablet is covered in a mass of small inscriptions, each no more than .5″ in height.

The Emerald Tablet is a repository of expansive occult lore. The writing on it is Enochian, the language of spirits, and the owner must be able to read or decipher this tongue in order to benefit from the lore inscribed upon it. In addition to this occult knowledge, the tablet acts as a reservoir of magical energy.

Those that can read the tablet gain a +20% bonus to all known adits if the antiquity is consulted for one hour prior to the casting of a spell. There is always an applicable piece of previously unknown occult lore written on the tablet's face when consulted—even if the owner has read the tablet's writings over and over again. New information seems to appear when needed.

In addition to this bonus, when discovered, the Emerald Tablet contains 1d1000 points of magical energy that can be expended in lieu of Willpower points to enact a spell. This energy does not replenish after use and should it ever be depleted entirely, the tablet ceases to work for its current owner (including granting the bonus for its lore). No individual can possess the tablet more than once during his life, even if the antiquity still contained energy when the owner lost possession. Should a previous owner attempt to reacquire the Emerald Tablet, it vanishes from sight, reappearing in a random location somewhere in the world (or at the CM's discretion, on the astral plane). When the Emerald Tablet is depleted or otherwise changes hands, the amount of magical energy it contains when a new owner takes possession of it is again determined randomly.

John Dee's Other Mirror

It is widely known (even outside of Maji circles) that Dr. John Dee, the Elizabethan occultist, possessed an obsidian mirror of Aztec origin that he used in his magical practices. That mirror is currently held in the British Museum. What is less commonly known is that John Dee owned a second glass of uncertain provenance.

The Other Mirror is crafted from quartz crystal covered with silver sheeting and highly polished. The antiquity is concave and roughly the size and shape of an adult male's occipital bone (the back part of the skull). It bears no discernible tool marks or other signs of mundane craftsmanship. Legends attribute the Other Mirror as being a portion of one of the famed "crystal skulls" that shattered after being looted by Spanish explorers in the early 16th century. Some whisper that it is much, much older and dates back to the primordial civilizations of Lemuria or Atlantis. It was last known to be in the possession of a minor British noble in the early 19th century, but vanished after his death.

The Other Mirror is a powerful tool for divination and allows even the untrained to achieve miraculous results with the Divination adit. Simply holding the Mirror grants the owner Master level skill in Divination (calculate the skill's score normally and add the +55 Master level modifier to the result). He can produce any effect allowed by that adit by spending the necessary Willpower and making a successful check as usual.

Unfortunately, using the Other Mirror has its drawbacks. Each time it is used, the owner must make a general LUCK check. If failed, he ages one year. This magical aging is sinister as it does not manifest physically. To observers, the owner still appears his normal age, but his body and metabolism are affected. Even the owner is likely to be unaware of the mirror's side effects until he's failed a number of LUCK checks and finds himself feeling physically older. In one case, the owner died of old age when still apparently in his late twenties. This aging can only be countered by ridding oneself of the Mirror permanently and then being the subject of numerous Healing spells of the Master skill level (CM's choice as to how many are required, but a good rule of thumb is one successful Healing per year aged).

Sappara

The *Sappara* is an ancient sickle-sword similar to the Egyptian kopesh. Unlike its contemporaries, the weapon is crafted from meteoric iron and was likely forged by a Maji as a gift for one of the Sumerian priest-kings during the Third Millennium B.C. The iron-nickel alloy that comprises the blade is pitted and worn, but the *Sappara* remains razor-sharp and formidable in battle.

This weapon is arguably the first "magic sword" and it served as the template for every legendary magical blade in human history. Excalibur, Tyrfing, Kusanagi, and Durendal may all be distortions of the legend of the *Sappara*. Like these swords, the *Sappara* is attributed with the ability to destroy any enemy, never lose its edge, and to withstand any blow. Its last known location was Morocco in 1924.

In game terms, the *Sappara* has the following abilities: It grants its wielder an additional +10 Stamina points and a single bonus Wound box when held. Any damage suffered while holding the sword is subtracted from this bonus health first. It grants its user an uncanny knowledge of sword play, resulting in either a +20% bonus to the wielder's Sword skill if he has that skill or adds a +10% bonus to his Unskilled Melee score if he is not trained in fighting with swords. It cannot be broken or otherwise damaged or destroyed, and it can injure entities only subject to magical attacks. It also grants the owner protection against any magic worked against him. All adits targeting the *Sappara's* owner when the sword is held suffer a -30% penalty to their scores. Lastly, in the hands of a Maji or other sorcerer, the sword grants its user a pool of 25 Willpower points that can be used to fuel spells or PTs. This pool renews at dawn each day.
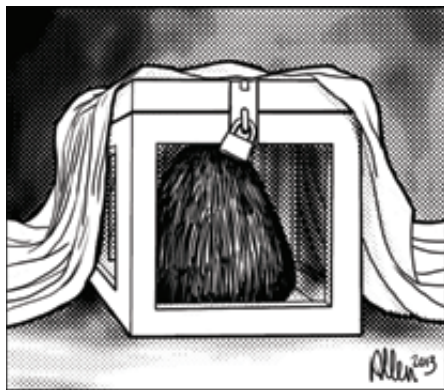
Yeti Scalp Cap

This antiquity is a short, roughly conical shaped cap lacking any form of brim. It is fashioned from preserved flesh and covered with short, coarse hairs that appear black in dim light and fox red in bright sunlight. It is large enough to fit most human heads comfortably.

The Yeti Scalp Cap was first discovered by English Maji in a Tibetan monastery during the 1950s. Its creator and how it found its way into the monks' possession is a mystery. The hairy flesh from which the cap is fashioned resembles that of no animal species known to science. The monks who owned the cap claimed it was made from the scalp of the famed Yeti of Nepal and Tibet. The truth of this declaration remains in debate.

Regardless of the Yeti Scalp Cap's origin, its power is well-documented. The cap grants its wearer the ability to use any Paranormal Talent as if the owner naturally possessed the PT. Once per day, the wearer may choose any existing PT and use that ability one time as if he had a score of 85 in that talent. The Yeti Scalp Cap can only be used a single time in a 24 hour period, but the wearer can use the same PT every day or choose another one as he wishes. He must pay the normal current Willpower point cost associated with the chosen Paranormal Talent when it is used, but there are no other restrictions or costs for employing this antiquity's power.

THE MENAGERIE OF MUNDANE AND MAGICAL CREATURES

In addition to angry spirits, rival Maji, and the assorted minions that serve them, PCs can encounter a plethora of other threats of both magical and mundane origin. From vicious guard dogs to magically controlled gorillas to flesh-eating ghouls to life-sucking vampires, the shadowy world of the Majus is occupied by a variety of fearsome opponents. This section details but a small sample of creatures a Majus is likely to confront while playing the Old Game.

Each creature's entry includes ratings for the basic ability scores, movement rates, special powers, and other traits. The listings for abilities assume an "average" creature. Most abilities will have two numbers listed, one number followed by another in parenthesis. The first number is used if the CM wants to customize a creature. The number corresponds to the same number on the Defense Column of the Action Table. Each Defense Column has a range of numbers associated with it. For example, column 3 has 31-45 listed. The CM takes the lowest number in the range, in this case 31, and adds 2d10. The sum is the ability score. If the CM prefers to save time, the number in parentheses corresponds to the highest number in the range, in this case 45, and that number is used for the ability score. Note that if abilities are customized, UMS and WND will change accordingly.

The following entries use the standard ability abbreviations, with five additional ones.

MV: Movement. This is the movement of the creature expressed in feet per round, in an encounter situation. L refers to land movement, F to flying or air movement, and W refers to water or swimming movement.

Some creatures move similarly to PCs and NPCs, with similar rates depending on type of movement (walking, running, sprinting, etc.), and are generally subject to STA loss from sprinting. Such creatures will have † next to movement to indicate this, and movement provided is running movement.

UMS = Unskilled Melee Score. Animals and many supernatural creatures use this score when attacking, and it is calculated as normal (STR+AGL/2). The value provided assumes maximum STR and AGL, and the CM may adjust this if desired. Details of the attack are provided in the description below. The CM can also assign combat skills to intelligent supernatural creatures at his discretion, calculating the scores for each according to the normal formulae. Animals and most supernatural creatures cause armed combat damage on a successful strike.

ATT: Number of attacks per round

WND = Wounds. Based on the creature's STA, this is the number of wounds it can take before being killed.

PWR = Power. This ability is unique to supernatural creatures and is used to determine the effects of any supernatural ability listed in the creature's description. When PWR is used in a specific check against a victim's WPR, the column used corresponds to the number range which includes the victim's WPR score.

M = Movement in feet per round, at a running pace. Entries followed by (W) indicate the creature's speed while swimming. Movement rates followed by (A) are the creature's airborne speed.

NORMAL ANIMALS

The following animals might be encountered either as guardians, natural threats, or through the use of the Animagic adit. Additional animals can be created using the listings below as examples.

Bird, Large

STR: 1 (15)	STA: 2 (30)
DEX: NA	UMS: 45
AGL: 5 (75)	ATT: 1
WPR: 1 (15)	WND: 10
PER: NA	PWR: NA
PCN: 5 (75)	MV: L 20 A 225

The above scores represent any large bird such as a raven, parrot, or small hawk. Larger and smaller varieties can be created by either raising or lowering the applicable ability scores. Most of these smaller birds can inflict a maximum of Moderate wounds regardless of the attack's actual result. Large avian animals such as eagles and vultures are not limited in this capacity when damaging an opponent.

Cat, Great

STR: 5 (75)	STA: 5 (75)
DEX: NA	UMS: 90
AGL: 7 (105)	ATT: 3
WPR: 2 (30)	WNDS: 15
PER: NA	PWR: NA
PCN: 5 (75)	MV: L 225 W 50

There are various large predatory felines found both the wild and kept as exotic pets. Lions, tigers, cougars, leopards, and more all fall within this range. The CM can customize the scores provided to better reflect the species of great cat encountered (raising STR for a lion or increasing the movement of a cheetah, for example) if he so desires. All great cats attack with their sharp claws (both front and back) and a powerful bite.

Gorilla

STR: 8 (110)	STA: 6 (80)
DEX: 3 (35)	UMS: 88
AGL: 5 (65)	ATT: 1
WPR: 2 (35)	WND: 15
PER: NA	PWR: NA
PCN: 3 (45)	MV: L 150

Although normally quite docile, some gorillas have been specially trained or enchanted attack humans. The above statistics are for such a beast. Smaller apes such as chimpanzees and orangutans can be created by adjusting the STR and STA scores above.

Horse

STR: 7 (105)	STA: 7 (105)
DEX: NA	UMS: 90
AGL: 5 (75)	ATT: 2
WPR: 2 (30)	WND: 17
PER: NA	PWR: NA
PCN: 5 (75)	MV: L 300 W 30

A rarity in the city (except for mounted police), horses nevertheless remain a vital method of transportation in rugged lands and underdeveloped counties, and can go places wheeled vehicles cannot. Horses attack by kicking with their hooves and occasionally biting.

Shark

STR: 6 (90)	STA: 7 (105)
DEX: NA	UMS: 83
AGL: 5 (75)	ATT: 1
WPR: 2 (30)	WND: 17
PER: NA	PWR: NA
PCN: 5 (60)	MV: W 175

Apex predators of the sea, sharks are rarely encountered by city-dwelling Maji, but the occasional mad sorcerer keeps a tank of these animals as a convenient means of disposing unwanted guests.

Snake, Venomous

STR: 1 (15)	STA: 3 (35)
DEX: NA	UMS: 45
AGL: 5 (75)	ATT: 1
WPR: 1 (15)	WND: 11
PER: NA	PWR: NA
PCN: 4 (60)	MV: L 90 W 10*

Venomous serpents lurk amongst crumbling ruins deep in the jungle, in the shadows of boulders in barren deserts, and in herpetariums owned by unhinged Maji. Although small, these snakes kill with a toxic bite. The CM should determine the potency rating of the snake's venom. As examples, a rattlesnake has potency 6 venom, a cobra potency 7 toxin, and a black mamba has potency 9 venom. *Not all snakes may swim at CM discretion.*

Wolf

STR: 3 (45)	STA: 4 (55)
DEX: NA	UMS: 58
AGL: 5 (75)	ATT: 2
WPR: 2 (30)	WND: 13
PER: NA	PWR: NA
PCN: 7 (95)	MV: L 225'

Wolves are usually encountered in packs of 10 to 20, but occasionally hunt alone. The above scores can also be used for attack dogs and other ferocious canines. Wolves bite and claw their prey.

From the dawn of the world, mankind has shared his planet with monsters. Echoes of humanity's encounters with the supernatural still reverberate in the myths and folklore of all cultures, shedding dim light into the shadows in which these creatures dwell. As humanity spread across the planet, encroaching on the natural habitats of the unearthly, these monsters were forced to adapt or die and now lurk just outside the borders of mankind's domain. As walkers in the night, Maji regularly find themselves occupying the same dark corners of the earth these creatures now call home. Some supernatural entities have been swept up in the Maji's battles for the Skein, while others simply exist to prey upon the sorcerers who delve too far into the lands of night.

Below is a sampling of supernatural creatures that can still be found lurking in the quiet dark. Many are monsters of legend, but those who fall into their clutches are quick to discover that legends don't always adequately reflect the truth when it comes to the uncanny. A Majus relying solely on folklore is in for a rude surprise. The CM may further modify these creatures to better fit into his campaign or create entirely new supernatural threats to populate the shadows of his world.

Amok

STR: NA/host	STA: 7 (105)/host
DEX: NA/host	UMS: NA/host
AGL: NA/host	ATT: 1
WPR: 6 (90)/host	WND: 17/host
PER: NA/varies	PWR: 90
PCN: 9 (135)/host	MV: A 100/host

(Entries before the slash are for the amok alone. Those after the slash are determined by the amok's host)

An amok is a supernatural virus once native to Malaysia but now wide-spread around the world. The amok is semi-sentient and propagates itself by infecting a victim, causing its host to physically assault others and thereby spread the amok virus to other creatures. Once infected, the virus can lay dormant for years before

erupting in bloody violence to spawn a new generation of infection.

Amoks can only be permanently destroyed when outside of a host, but are immune to most forms of attack. When encountered in between hosts, an amok appears as a small cloud of speckled grey and black mist that moves with an unnatural urgency and purpose. It is unaffected by wind or other conditions that normally disrupt gaseous matter.

Special Properties and Powers

Ignore Pain: A creature inflected by an amok does not suffer the effects of painful injuries and no Willpower check is required to remain active after being critically wounded.

Incorporeal: An amok cannot be injured by non-magical weapons and can pass through solid barriers when not possessing a host. As an incorporeal creature, amoks do not suffer a penalty to their movement rate when moving through obstacles or dangerous terrain. The STA and WND scores listed above are for use in resolving magical attacks only.

Incubation: A living creature reduced to zero current STA by attacks from an amok host risks becoming the incubator for the disease, spawning a new amok within its body. The target must make a general STA check. If the check fails, a new amok begins to grow inside its body, coming to maturation in 3d10 hours after the target is incapacitated. The new amok remains dormant inside the incubating creature until its host has fully recovered from its injuries. At that time, it either immediately attempts to take control of the host with its infection power or remains dormant for a period of up to 1d10 years before starting the cycle of violence anew.

Infection: An amok can infect a living host by making a specific PWR check against the target's WPR column. Depending on the level of success, the amok causes its host to act violently even to the point of attacking random strangers and loved ones.

S = Slight possession: The amok causes its host to take one minor aggressive action (slams a door angrily, pounds his fists, or shoves someone out of his way).

L = Light possession: The amok controls its host for one round, lashing out physically at a random nearby target.

M = Medium possession: The amok controls its host for 1d10 rounds, and will use the host to inflict harm on as many targets as possible during this period. Living targets are preferred, but if none are available, wanton destruction will suffice.

H = Heavy possession: As "M" above, but the infection lasts for a full 24 hours.

C = Complete infection: As "M" above, but the amok has complete control over its host which lasts until driven out.

An infected host can be freed of the amok's influence in one of three ways. Firstly, the amok can be exorcised from its host with the successful use of the Warding adit. An amok suffers a -40% penalty to its PWR score when attempting to re-infect a creature from which it has been driven out. Secondly, an amok will abandoned its host if it suffers more than seven wounds and will be destroyed if it takes ten wounds in damage. Only magical weapons and spells can injure an amok and any damage inflicted upon it is shared with its host (divide the damage taken by two and apply it equally to both the host and the amok). Thirdly, killing the amok's host causes it to abandon its physical body and seek another target to infect.

Fortify Host: Any creature infected by an amok gains a +15% bonus to STR and STA. These increases affect skills dependent on these abilities.

Ghul

STR: 5 (75)	STA: 5 (75)
DEX: 5 (75)	UMS: 75
AGL: 5 (75)	ATT: 3
WPR: 2 (30)	WND: 15
PER: 4 (60)	PWR: 75
PCN: 4 (60)	MV: L 75†*

*no STA loss from sprinting

Ghuls are the living dead of Arabian legend who dwell in barren places and feed off the dead. They appear as gaunt humans with sharp teeth, slightly-pointed ears, and harshly angular faces. They are nocturnal and shun bright light whenever possible, although it does them no true harm. Ghuls typically work in packs of four to ten individuals and will attack live prey if it is weak or significantly outnumbered. A ghul needs to consume human flesh at least once a week or it rots away into a pile of ash and sand. In combat, they attack with slashing claws and a savage bite.

In the modern age, a number of ghuls have changed their hunting strategy. No longer content to hunt weak prey in the wastelands or forage in cemeteries, some use their ability to assume other identities to seek employment in hospitals, hospices, funeral parlors, or other environments where they have easy access to fresh corpses. A cunning ghul can maintain this deception for years without being noticed.

Special Properties and Powers

Assume the Eaten's Visage: A ghul can transform its physical form into that of any humanoid creature it has consumed within the last 48 hours. The effect is identical to that

produced by the Expert-level Glamour adit.

Shapeshift: Ghuls can assume the form of jackals and typically do so to avoid detection or to better sniff out the corpses they feed upon. The transformation takes 1d10 rounds to complete. They retain their normal ability scores, with the exception of PCN and movement. In jackal form, a ghul has a PCN of 6 (90) and a movement rate of 225'.

Vulnerability to fire: A ghul suffers twice the normal damage from fire and even a mere brush with open flame sets it on fire. See chapter 8 for rules on catching fire and damage.

Golem

STR: 8 (120)   STA: 8 (120)
DEX: 4 (60)   UMS: 98
AGL: 5 (75)   ATT: 2
WPR: 2 (30)   WND: 18
PER: 3 (45)   PWR: 75
PCN: 4 (60)   MV: L 75

Golems are magical constructs typically crafted from earth or clay, but nefarious Maji have been known to utilize the dead flesh of humans and animals to create them. Regardless of the material they are formed from, golems are ugly, monstrous brutes and cannot pass as human when not using their innate Glamour power. Once the golem's physical form is constructed, a spirit is called up using the Summoning adit and bound within the body to animate the inert form. This binding is permanent and slaying the golem destroys both the body (which immediately collapses) and the spirit within.

Most golems are loyal servants to their creators, but rare specimens rebel against their masters or become "feral" if their creator is killed. These free golems are extremely unpredictable and can be fearsome monsters or benevolent souls looking for their place in society. In battle, golems eschew weapons, preferring to strike their enemies with their two massive fists or rend their opponents limb from limb with their titanic strength.

Special Properties and Powers

Glamour: Golems are able to disguise themselves as normal humans. This effect is identical to the Expert-level Glamour adit. No matter how successful this power is, the golem always retains some semblance of abnormalcy. Most appear as hulking examples of humanity or move awkwardly as if on unsteady legs.

Supernatural Endurance: Golems are immune to the effects of poison, disease, electricity, and cold. They are unaffected by pain and do not require a Willpower check after being critically injured to remain active.

Captivated by Beauty: Golems, perhaps as a result of their own abominable appearance, are stunned by intense physical beauty. Upon seeing a living creature with a PER score of 80+ or possessing extreme beauty (CM's discretion), the golem must make a general Willpower check or be stunned for 1d10 rounds. Attacking the creature immediately breaks this state. Even if the Willpower check is successful, golems tend to fixate on beautiful people and might either decide to become that individual's personal guardian or else attempt to kidnap the person and keep him or her for itself.

Grotesque

STR: 5 (75)   STA: 6 (90)
DEX: 3 (45)   UMS: 60
AGL: 3 (45)   ATT: 2
WPR: 2 (30)   WND: 16
PER: NA   PWR: NA
PCN: 5 (75)   MV: L 75 A 225

Grotesques are monsters of carved stone granted animation by binding a spirit within their rocky bodies. They were popular guardians during the medieval period and they inspired the gargoyles that adorn many cathedrals and other buildings to this day. The rites necessary to make grotesques are a lost art and the few remaining grotesques encountered today were created almost a millennium ago.

Grotesques can appear as any fearsome creature, but many share the features of classical gargoyles: horns, wings, wide mouths with vicious teeth, and squat bodies. Some bear beards of snakes. Grotesques attack with raking claws. They are typically encountered outdoors and on rooftops where they make their lairs, but a few still serve as the guardians of Maji Towers and can be found within their chapterhouses and sanctums. Due to their weakness of sunlight, they are nocturnal creatures and take refuge amongst other rooftop statuary when the sun rises. Grotesques feed on rock, brick, or concrete, but some have developed a fondness for blood and take to snatching children and pets off the streets. A lair of these degenerate types of grotesques is always discernible by the large quantity of discarded shoes, animal collars, and other debris left behind by their meals.

Special Properties and Powers

Flight: Many, but not all grotesques possess wings (75% chance of flight capability). Winged grotesques have the ability to fly at a rate of 225' per round.

Stealthy: Because of their construction, grotesques have a Stealth skill of 105 when amongst natural or worked stone, brick, or concrete.

Weakness: The spirit that animates a grotesque becomes dormant when exposed to sunlight, causing the creature to appear as nothing more than ugly decorative statuary. If threatened during daylight, a grotesque can attempt to stir and either fight or flee, but doing so requires a specific Stamina check. The results below determine how long the grotesque can remain active:

S = Slight success: The creature can act for 1 round before returning to its dormant state.

L = Limited Success: The creature can act for 2 rounds before returning to its dormant state.

H = High success: The creature can act for 2d10+2 rounds before returning to its dormant state.

C = Complete success: The creature can act for 10 minutes before returning to its dormant state.

Mummy

STR: 4 (60)   STA: 5 (75)
DEX: 4 (60)   UMS: 60
AGL: 4 (60)   ATT: 2
WPR: 4 (60)   WND: 15
PER: 2 (30)   PWR: 70
PCN: 5 (75)   MV: L 40

Mummy is a catch-all term for any human corpse preserved with the intention of providing it an avenue to eternal life beyond the grave. Mummies are found in many cultures and should not be equated solely with the bandage-wrapped specimens of ancient Egypt. They appear as desiccated, animated human corpses with empty eye sockets that burn with sinister, incandescent light. They attack with boney fists or by strangling their victims.

Mummies are animated by magic, but unlike a Zombi (q.v.), are not bodies possessed and motivated by a spirit. Mummies are the product of secret religious rites or inadvertent animation caused by interment near powerful places of magic. Many mummies retain at least a portion of the mental capacity and memories that they had in life and can be cunning opponents. Some mummies are even former Magi who continue to keep a rotted hand in the Old Game. It is rumored that these undead sorcerers still retain the magical adits they possessed in life, but the veracity of these tales is unproven.

Special Properties and Powers

Impervious: Mummies are not wounded by most non-magical attacks, but do suffer normal Stamina loss. Fire affects them normally. A mummy reduced to zero Stamina becomes incapacitated and appears dead. However, it recovers Stamina at the rate of 1d10 points per round after reaching zero current Stamina. Mummies "play possum" until their attackers depart or until their current Stamina reaches a sufficient amount to continue the battle.

Siphon Bodily Fluids: As desiccated husks, mummies crave the bodily fluids of living creatures. Consuming these fluids revitalizes the mummy, causing it to take on a more lifelike appearance that allows them to pass as living. When using this power, they can make only one attack during the round. They can drain fluid from a creature by making physical contact with them and making a successful specific PWR check. Use the Armed Combat Results table to determine the damage inflicted by this siphoning of life and then cross-index the result of the check on the following table to determine what additional effect that siphon attack does:

S = Slight drain: The victim must make a general STA check or lose his next action.

L = Lightly drained: As above plus lose 5' of movement until damage is healed.

M = Moderately drained: Victim automatically loses his next action and suffers a -5' penalty to movement until the damage is healed.

H = Heavily drained: The victim may not act for the next two rounds, and movement is halved (round down) until healed.

C = Completely drained: As above, plus the victim permanently loses 1d10 points of PER. These points can be repurchased with XP at normal cost.

Each point of current Stamina drained by the mummy adds a point to the creature's PER score. When this score exceeds 50, the mummy appears as a gaunt, tired-looking human. With a PER of 60, the mummy appears to be a healthy human. No mummy can increase its PER score above 100, but can continue to drain a victim's fluids as an offensive action. This stolen vitality erodes at a rate of 10 PER points per day until the mummy drains new fluids or its PER returns to its base score.

Ogre (De Rais' Child)

STR: 9 (135)   STA: 7 (105)
DEX: 3 (45)   UMS: 98
AGL: 4 (60)   ATT: 1
WPR: 2 (30)   WND: 18
PER: 2 (30)   PWR: NA
PCN: 5 (75)   MV: L 75†

Ogres are the result of magical rituals performed by the infamous French Maji, Gilles de Rais who trucked with demons and sacrificed children. De Rais conducted sorcerous experiments that produced the thirteen creatures known as ogres. Each was a human child invested with demonic energies that made them incredibly resilient, vicious, and strong. These original creatures still roam the world, masterless and hungry for the blood of adolescents.

Ogres appear as brutish human men and women with oversized heads, thick beards and body hair, and blood-stained clothes. They make their homes in out of the way places, lairing in abandoned buildings, under bridges, in sewers and within culverts. They are always hungry, attacking any living creature they encounter and eating them raw.

They prefer children over other meat, but have no qualms about consuming stray animals, vagrants, and vermin when that is all that is available. A sure sign an ogre has moved into the city is an increase in missing pets and vanished homeless.

Although dim-witted, an ogre can be convinced to work for an unscrupulous Majus if kept well-fed. However, if the Magus fails to uphold his end of their agreement, he becomes the ogre's next meal.

Special Properties and Powers

Immortality: Ogres cannot be killed by magical or mundane means. Even incineration or utter dissolution only prolongs their incapacitation. When reduced to zero wounds, the ogre falls into a seemingly-dead state, but its physical body slowly repairs itself over time. An ogre heals one

wound per day if its body is mostly intact (killed in battle, for example). In more damaged states such as dismemberment, the wounds heal at a rate of one per week until the ogre is at half its total health; after which it heals at 1 wound/day. In cases where the ogre is completely destroyed, it regains health at the rate of 1 wound/ month until at half health and then regains 1 wound/ day.

Rending Attack: Ogres never inflict less than a Medium wound with a successful attack. An Action Table result of lesser effect automatically upgrades to Medium. Higher results remain unchanged.

Tough: Ogres have thick skins that act as natural armor. Treat them as having an AR of 20/B over their entire bodies.

Pranic Vampire

STR: 5 (75)	STA: 6 (90)
DEX: 3 (45)	UMS: 68
AGL: 4 (60)	ATT: 1
WPR: 4 (60)	WND: 16
PER: 2 (30)	PWR: 80
PCN: 5 (75)	MV: L 75† A 100'

Pranic vampires are not the undead monsters of Eastern European folklore. They are a race of living creatures whose appearance closely resembles humanity's. Unlike mankind, however, pranic vampires feed not on food and drink, but upon the mental energies of sentient beings. This energy, called *prana* in Sanskrit, serves to preserve the vampire's life and, given a steady source of this energy, they can live for centuries if not longer.

A pranic vampire appears human and can be of any race and gender. The only mundane way to discern a pranic vampire from their prey is to examine the vampire's hands. A pranic vampire's palms are completely smooth, lacking both finger prints and lines on the palm. For this reason, many wear gloves when moving amongst their prey.

Special Properties and Powers

Cause Sleep: A pranic vampire can lull nearby creatures to sleep by emitting a low drone that reverberates at the very limit of human hearing. This noise causes drowsiness, slow reaction times, and sleep depending on the vampire's PWR roll. The result of the specific check is compared to the WPR column of all creatures individually within 30' of the vampire. Use the following key to determine the result:

S = Slight affect: The victim becomes drowsy for 1d10 minutes.

L = Limited affect: The victim becomes drowsy for 1 hour.

M = Moderate affect: The victim falls asleep for 1d10 minutes.

H = High affect: The victim falls asleep for 1 hour.

C = Critical affect: The victim falls asleep for 1d10 hours.

A drowsy character automatically loses initiative each round. Sleeping characters cannot be awaken until the duration of the slumber has passed and do no gain any benefits from this unnatural sleep (recovering Willpower, etc.).

Flight: Pranic vampires can fly by expending Willpower points. This flight is supernatural and the vampire moves through the air without the need to move its body or otherwise perform physical actions to remain aloft. This power costs 2 WPR a round to maintain and has a movement rate of 100.

Magic Resistance: All spells directed against a pranic vampire are resolved using the column three steps to the right of the normal cross-indexed column. Thus, a spell that is usually resolved using the results of column 3 is resolved on column 6. This modification never adjusts the column past 10.

Willpower Drain: The vampire must physically touch its victim to use this power (requiring a melee attack if in combat), but once it does it drains 2d20 current Willpower from its target. This attack does not awaken a sleeping victim.

Tylwyth Teg

STR: 5 (75)	STA: 5 (75)
DEX: 6 (90)	UMS: 83
AGL: 6 (90)	ATT: 1
WPR: 4 (60)	WND: 15
PER: 7 (100)	PWR: 80
PCN: 5 (75)	MV: L 75†

Once upon a time, the faerie folk dwelled in the twilight, disappearing into their mounds when the sun rose and cock crowed. But once mankind's number swelled and the wild places destroyed, the faerie fled our world and sealed the portals to the Summerlands behind them. Unfortunately, not all the Good Folk made it back under the mounds before the last door was sealed. The Tylwyth Teg are the faerie folk left stranded upon Earth.

When not cloaked by glamours and illusions, the Tylwyth Teg stand 5' and are slight of build. Their skin and hair are dusky colored and all are quite beautiful, albeit in a cold and cruel way. They dress in fine clothes whenever possible and are easily insulted if not treated with great respect. Some Tylwyth Teg possess knowledge of the magical adits and sell their magical services as mercenaries in the Old Game. Since the closing of the doors to the fairylands, the Tylwyth Teg have made great inroads into the criminal underworld, dominating the prostitution, drug, and human trafficking rackets. They have a fondness for blonde females and seek to corrupt, kidnap, or seduce these types whenever they can. Rumors in the magical underworld speak of new and nefarious drugs being manufactured by the Tylwyth Teg that combine chemistry and magic to create highly addictive narcotics by which the faerie intend to gain a stranglehold on the drug trade.

Special Properties and Powers

Adept at Swordplay: All faerie are trained in the art of the sword. 75% of all Tylwyth Teg are Expert in the Swords skill and the remaining 25% are Masters.

Create Illusion: Tylwyth Teg can create three-dimensional illusions complete with sound and smell in a 30' square area. The faerie must be standing inside the area where the illusion is to be created, but can move outside of the illusion once in place. It costs five current Willpower points per round to create and maintain the illusion. The illusion disappears when touched by a living creature. Observers with the Aura Sight PT perceive the illusion as trickery with a successful use of that talent. Creatures carrying cold iron on their persons can make a specific Willpower check to pierce the illusion, doing so with a check result of "M" or greater.

Faerie Armor: Tylwyth Teg wear armor crafted from living plant matter (bark, vines, and leaves) that wraps around their bodies providing an AR of 15/B. This armor works only for faerie folk and the armor "dies," withering and drying out within a minute if worn by those not possessing faerie heritage.

Glamour: All the Tylwyth Teg are Masters of the Glamour adit and can use any of that art's ability at will. It takes them a single round to produce a Glamour effect, but they do not need to spend Willpower to create the Glamour.

Mesmerize: Tylwyth Teg have the Mesmerize PT and can employ it with all the normal Willpower costs, stipulations, and powers appropriate for that talent.

Nocturnal: The Tylwyth Teg prefer to act in darkness, hiding away from the sun during the day. Although sunlight causes no damage to the faerie, they suffer a -15% penalty to all rolls when exposed to daylight.

Vulnerable to Cold Iron: Tylwyth Teg are affected by all normal attacks, but are especially vulnerable to cold iron. Any damage the faerie suffers from cold wrought iron is increased by one result step. For example, an attack on a faerie with a cold iron sword that achieved a "L" result would do damage as if it were an "M" result on the armed combat results table.

Vodnik

STR: 6 (90)	STA: 6 (90)
DEX: 3 (45)	UMS: 90
AGL: 6 (90)	ATT: 2
WPR: 4 (60)	WND: 16
PER: 3 (45)	PWR: 90
PCN: 5 (75)	MV: L 75† W 220

The vodnik is an amphibious creature from Eastern Europe. He has two forms: When in the water, the vodnik appears as a humanoid figure with a monstrous body covered with black scales, fishy eyes that burn like coals, webbed hands with short claws, and a scraggly blue-green beard. When he leaves the water, he assumes a more human appearance. Typically, he looks like a haggard bum dressed in old, often out of date clothes. His scales vanish, replaced by algae green flesh and his beard takes on a bedraggled blue-black appearance. Webbing stretches between his fingers and his clothing constantly drip water.

Vodníci vary in temperament. Some act as protectors of those who make their living on the water, while others drown anyone swimming in the body of water where they make their homes. Those unfortunate enough to drown at the hands of a vodnik have their souls stolen by the beast. The vodnik keeps the souls of his victims in air-tight containers which the creature uses to decorate its lair. In the old country, souls were kept in lidded ceramic jars, but nowadays almost any discarded receptacle the vodnik finds in its waters will serve. Coffee cans, soda bottles with screw-caps, and baby bottles all act as these soul prisons. Only by opening the container can the soul be freed and allowed to move on to its final rest.

Special Properties and Powers

Command Fish: A vodnik can control fish as if he possessed an Expert level in the Animagic adit. It takes a full round to use this power during which the vodnik can perform no other action. Success of this ability is resolved using the vodnik's PWR score cross-indexed on Column 2.

Drowning Attack: A vodnik can drown his opponent if in water of sufficient depth and it makes a successful attack with an "H" result or better as if pinning an opponent with the Wrestling skill. So long the victim remains pinned, he is held underwater and takes two wounds per round. Breaking the vodnik's hold allows the victim to catch his breath, assuming the water's surface is within a reasonable distance, and he stops taking damage each round. The vodnik must make another successful attack to resume drowning his opponent. When using its drowning attack, the vodnik can only make a single attack that round.

Steal Soul: The vodnik can capture the soul of any human it kills with its drowning attack. These spirits are placed within special receptacles and coveted by the creature. Any soul possessed by the vodnik can be called forth and used as its slave. This power acts as a form of the Summoning adit and is resolved as such.

Warg-wolf

STR: 6 (90)	STA: 6 (90)
DEX: 3 (45)	UMS: 90
AGL: 6 (90)	ATT: 2
WPR: 4 (60)	WND: 16
PER: 5 (75)	PWR: NA
PCN: 7 (105)	MV: L 75† (220 burst)

Warg-wolves are the origin of the werewolf legends, and like most legends, are not quite what they're made out to be. This makes them no less dangerous. The warg-wolves are a sub-race of humanity, one said to have been created by the Maji of old in the hills of Greece. Despite their Mediterranean origins, they came to infamy in the wilds of Scandinavia where they were known as "rogue wolves" and inspired the berserkers of old.

Warg-wolves are muscular, hirsute humans who radiate a tangible, primal energy. They are clannish, rarely mixing with average humans and tend to pursue careers that rely on physical strength, cruelty, or both. Many warg-wolves are found as enforcers or bodyguards in the magical underworld, working for Maji and other supernatural creatures for pay. Warg-wolves prefer to melee in battle, but will use firearms when necessary.

Special Properties and Powers

Burst of Speed: By spending 2 current Willpower points, a warg-wolf can increase its movement rate to 220' for one round.

Howl: A warg-wolf can emit a frightful, piercing, wolf-like howl to unnerve its opponents. It costs 10 current Willpower points to produce this effect. When used, all opponents within 50' of the warg-wolf must make a general Willpower check. If the check fails, they are stunned with fear for 1 round and unable to act. If more than one warg-wolf howls during the same round, all opponents suffer a cumulative -5% penalty to the Willpower check and the duration of the stun effect is increased by one round per addition howling warg-wolf.

Ignore Pain: Warg-wolves do not suffer the effects of painful injuries and need not make a Willpower check to remain active after being critically wounded.

Resilient to Weapons: All non-magical weapons (knives, bullets, rocks, etc.) suffer a one step reduction on the combat results table when determining damage. For

example, a warg-wolf stabbed with a knife that achieves a "M" result would only inflict damage equal to a "L" result. K effects are unchanged by this power. This reduction cannot reduce an attack's effect below an "S" result. Magical and silver weapons bypass this resilience and inflict normal damage.

Sharp Nails: The fingernails of warg-wolves are preternaturally sharp. They always inflict damage according to the armed combat results table, even when attacking bare-handed.

Will o' the Wisp

STR: NA	STA: 5* (75)
DEX: NA	UMS: NA
AGL: NA	ATT: NA
WPR: 6 (90)	WND: 15*
PER: NA	PWR: 6 (90)
PCN: 7 (105)	MV: A 100

Will o' the Wisp is a form of earthbound spirit permanently divorced from the astral plane. Because it cannot access the potent energies found in that realm, it must find other forces to feed upon. It does this by leading unwitting victims into dangerous environments such as swamps, derelict buildings, hazardous industrial sites, and other danger zones. Once there, the victim is invariably injured or killed and the will o' the wisp consumes the frantic emotions produced by the victim's pain or death throes. In the past, will o' the wisps appeared as glowing orbs of marsh gas, but they've since evolved to better suit their urban environments. Will o' the wisps can now be found in a variety of forms, most of which resemble neon signs or other illuminated symbols. More than one wisp appears as a blinking "Live Nude Girls" sign to better lure the unwitting into hazardous conditions.

Special Properties and Powers

Incorporeal: A will o' the wisp cannot be injured by non-magical weapons and can pass through solid barriers when not possessing a host. As an incorporeal creature, a will o' the wisp do not suffer a penalty to its movement rate when moving

through obstacles or dangerous terrain. The STA and WND scores listed above are for use in resolving magical attacks only.

Lull: The will o' the wisp attacks its victim's better judgment, making him more likely to venture into a place that poses risk to life and limb. The wisp makes an attack against the victim, using the column beneath the defender's WPR score. On a successful specific check, use the following key to determine the target's actions:

S = Slightly affected: Target moves towards the will of the wisp for a single round before regaining control of his actions.

L = Lightly affected: Target moves towards the will o' the wisp's position for two rounds or until he regains his senses.

M = Moderately affected: Target follows the will o' the wisp for five rounds or until he regains his senses.

H = Heavy affected: Target follows the wisp for 10 rounds or until he regains his senses.

C = Completely affected: Target follows the wisp until he regains his senses.

A person under the effect of the will o' the wisp's Lull power can attempt to regain his sense by making a specific Willpower check each round. If the result of that check equals or exceeds the Lull's attack result, the person regains control of their actions and is no longer compelled to follow the wisp. The actions of another (shaking or slapping the Lulled subject, for example) can allow the affected individual to make another Willpower check to free himself from the will o' the wisp's power at the CM's discretion.

Magic Resistance: All spells directed against a will o' the wisp are resolved using the column three steps to the right of the normal cross-indexed column. Thus, a spell that is usually resolved using the results of Column 3 is resolved on Column 6. The maximum column is 10.

Zombi

STR: 5 (75)   STA: 6 (90)
DEX: 3 (45)   UMS: (55)
AGL: 3 (45)   ATT: 1
WPR: NA   WND: 15/--
PER: NA   PWR: NA
PCN: 1 (15)   MV: L 60

A zombi may be a living person whose mental capabilities and personality has been destroyed by the ingestion of specific and highly-toxic chemicals, or the animated corpse of a recently deceased individual. Regardless of the method of its creation, a zombie has the same game statistics. Animated zombies are much more difficult to kill than those created chemically. Most zombies attack by pummeling and tearing their opponents apart with their bare hands, but can also use simple melee weapons. CMs seeking more options for zombies in the campaign should consult ROTWORLD for additional zombie types.

Special Properties and Powers

Ignore Pain: Zombies do not suffer the effects of painful injuries and need not make a Willpower check to remain active after being critically wounded.

Rise Again: Animated zombies never suffer wounds and recover from lost Stamina swiftly. An animated zombie reduced to zero Stamina recovers in 1d10 rounds, rising again with all its current Stamina restored. Only a called shot to the zombie's head will stop an animated zombie permanently, but the attack must inflict at least one wound.

Slow: Zombies always lose initiative in combat.

SPIRITS

In the course of the *Mehen,* Maji deal with the energetic entities known as "spirits" more than any other supernatural creature. No Majus can truly be called a player in the Old Game until he or she has mastered the Summoning adit and has powerful spiritual entities at his beck and call. This section provides rules for creating and adjudicating those spirits.

As the campaign progresses, the CM will be required to create any number of spiritual entities. Ghosts, demons, elementals, djinn, angels, nature spirits, and more abide just beyond human senses, and some of these entities may become recurring enemies and allies to the PCs. The CM is encouraged to make each spirit unique and to give it a distinctive personality of its own, for one never knows when a supposedly one-time NPC may become a recurring favorite (or despised) non-player character in the campaign.

There are three classes of spirits in MAJUS: minor spirits, lesser spirits, and greater spirits, each with their own powers and limitations. Minor spirits include small nature and technology spirits such a sylphs, gnomes, gremlins, and bugs. Lesser spirits include all varieties of elementals (both natural and technological), djinn, ghosts, and other such types. Finally, greater spirits are the most potent entities encountered on the astral plane and include demons and angels and other energetic forces of the CM's design.

To construct a spirit, use the base stats provided below for the appropriate spirit type, choose a number of powers based on the power of the spirit, and then "flesh" it out with a memorable quirk or personality trait to make it unique amongst the myriad denizens of The Bright.

Minor Spirits

STR: NA/3* (45)   STA: NA/1* (15)
DEX: NA/1* (15)   UMS: NA
AGL: NA/3* (45)   ATT: NA
WPR: 3 (45)   WND: 10*
PER: 1 (15)   PWR: 95
PCN: 4 (60)   MV: L or A 75

scores after the slash are only applicable when manifesting physically

Minor spirits usually appear as small (2' or less tall), roughly humanoid creatures composed of a material they're associated with. A nature spirit of the woods would have leafy hair and bark-like skin, while a computer spirit might look like an ambulatory circuit board crackling with electricity. They are incapable of speech, but can usually make themselves known through mime, drawing symbols, or, in the case of technology spirits, making words appear on computer monitors or other displays. Minor spirits are typically summoned to perform a single action or task and quickly lose vitality if forced to remain outside of their natural environment for long periods of time. They can fight if commanded to, but are poor combatants and inflict damage using the unarmed combat table. Like all spirits, minor spirits are immune to non-magical attacks, but do possess a weakness against certain substances (see below) which can affect them when both incorporeal and manifesting physically.

Special Properties and Powers:

Incorporeal: The spirit possesses no physical form and does not suffer a penalty to their movement rate when moving through obstacles or dangerous terrain. A spirit can manifest itself physically at the cost of 1 current Willpower point per round it remains in physical form.

Weakness: All spirits take twice the normal damage from a substance that is the antithesis to their type. For example, a fire or computer spirit would suffer double damage from water, and a wood spirit would take twice normal damage from fire. This substance affects the spirit even if non-magical in origin. The CM has final authority on what substances counteract the spirit's composite type.

Custom Powers: Each minor spirit has one to three powers chosen from the following:

Skilled: The spirit possesses a single skill pertinent to its type. A technology spirit might possess the Computers or Electronics skill and a nature spirit might be adept in Outdoor Survival, Stealth, or Tracking. This skill has a base score of 95. These types of spirits are typically summoned when the Magus needs a specific task accomplished such as unlocking a security door, finding a lost comrade in the forest, or fixing

his broken down car on the side of the road.

Inconvenience: The spirit can cause havoc in its natural environment. A wood spirit could slow down and trip creatures passing through its glade by entangling them with vines and roots. A computer spirit can cause files to become corrupted or motherboards to fry. Resolve this action by making a specific check against the spirit's PWR score and comparing the results to either the target's appropriate ability or skill score (if attempting to inconvenience a living creature) or to Column 3 if used against an inanimate object. Use the result key below as inspiration when adjudicating the spirit's effect:

S = Slight success: the computer reboots and loses unsaved work, an engine stalls on the first attempt to start it, or a target loses -5 feet of movement for the round.

L = Limited success: a single file is corrupted, the target suffers 1-2 points of Stamina damage, or a lock becomes difficult and requires another round to open.

M = Medium success: a single room loses power, a large branch falls and blocks a path, or a single security camera fails to record.

H = High Success: a hard drive is corrupted, an engine blows a gasket, or a dead tree topples over.

C = Complete success: an electrical fire begins, a lock becomes jammed shut, or a small whirlpool forms in a lake.

Each use of this power costs the spirit 5 current Willpower points.

One with Element: With a successful general PWR check, the spirit is aware of all other creatures within its domain. It would be able to tell if a specific person was in the spirit's home woods, using its native computer network, or driving on its roadway. It can provide the target's approximate location if the means to communicate this information is provided.

Lesser Spirit

STR: NA/5* (75)   STA: NA/5* (75)
DEX: NA/5* (75)   UMS: 75
AGL: NA/5* (75)   ATT: 1
WPR: 6 (90)   WND: NA/15*
PER: 4 (60)   PWR: 115
PCN: 5 (75)   MV: L or A 100

scores after the slash are only applicable when manifesting physically

Lesser spirits are the next most commonly encountered or summoned energetic entities of The Bright and a wide variety of types fall within this category. Elementals such as fire, earth, electricity, and asphalt, powerful nature spirits like the Manitou or the Leshii, and the ghostly shades of the dead are all lesser spirits.

Because there are so many forms of lesser spirits, they have no similarities when it comes to appearance. The CM is encouraged to draw inspiration from spirits in folklore and religion or to simply form their physical descriptions out of whole cloth. All lesser spirits are capable of conversation and are able to be understood by any Magus who summons them, regardless of his native tongue. They are immune to non-magical attacks, but, like minor spirits, most have a specific weakness.

They can be used as guardians or combatants, provided the Majus is able to convince them to serve him, and many are formidable opponents. Lesser spirits inflict damage according to the unarmed combat table unless they possess the power Ferocious (see below).

Special Properties and Powers:

Incorporeal: The spirit possesses no physical form and does not suffer a penalty to its movement rate when moving through obstacles or dangerous terrain. A spirit can manifest itself physically at the cost of 1 current Willpower point per round it remains in physical form.

Weakness: The majority of lesser spirits have a form of Achilles' heel, but the specific weakness of each type is dependent on the CM. Folklore and mythology provide many suggestions for substances baneful to

spirits and the CM is encouraged to draw upon legends and folklore when designing lesser spirits. Common substances or items that inflict additional damage on spirits include salt, cold iron, holy items, vinegar, Dragon's Blood, garlic, yarrow, and other, even stranger things. Elementals are always injured by their opposite elemental substance. Spirits take twice the normal damage from a substance they possess a weakness against if it's in weapon form. Otherwise, simple exposure to the substance inflicts damage according to the armed combat results table.

Custom Powers: Lesser spirits typically have three to five powers chosen from the list below depending on their type and strength. The CM is encouraged to create other powers based on the folklore associated with specific spirits or to simply make up completely new abilities.

Elemental Blast: Most commonly possessed by elemental types, this power allows the spirit to blanket an area with the elemental forces of its own composition. Salamanders cause fires, electricity elementals throw lightning, and storm elementals lash the area with rain and wind. Each use of this power costs 10 current Willpower points. The size of the area affected is determined by the result of a specific PWR check on Column 3.

L = Limited area: A 10' square area is affected.

M = Moderate area: A 30' square area is affected.

H = High success: A 100' square area is affected.

C = Complete success: A 500' square area is affected.

Damage inflicted is dependent on the type of element invoked and the CM should consult the appropriate entries in the Special Damage section, under the Weather adit entry, or use either the unarmed or armed combat results table as appropriate. These attacks are treated as missile combat and each target in the area of effect rolls a d10 to determine the column is used when calculating the amount of damage inflicted (when applicable) and may spend LUCK to

increase his d10 result as is typical for missile attacks.

Ferocious: Lesser spirits normally inflict melee damage using the unarmed combat results table, but a spirit with this power uses the armed combat results table when physically attacking foes. Note that armor does not protect against any spirit's physical attacks unless the armor is magical.

Inconvenience: As the minor spirit power above.

Magical Adit: The spirit possesses a magical adit of the CM's choosing. The spirit has an Expert level of mastery in the adit and all spell castings are resolved using the spirit's PWR score as a base. Spirits can cast spells almost instantly and are not required to expend the time normally needed to cast spells at the Expert level, nor do they suffer penalties for fast casting. The spell costs half its normal current Willpower cost when performed by a spirit. Casting a spell does require 1 full round of action during which time the spirit can perform no other activity. Otherwise, the casting is resolved as normal including all other positive and negative modifiers. This power may be chosen multiple times to give the spirit access to additional adits.

One with Element: As the minor spirit power above.

Paranormal Talent: The spirit possesses a PT of the CM's choosing. The talent functions as normal, but uses the spirit's PWR score to determine its effectiveness. As a supernatural entity, the spirit's current Willpower cost for using the talent is only half the normal cost.

Poltergeist: The spirits of the restless dead are often able to hurl small objects about within a limited area. This spirit can bombard any creature up to its PER score in feet away with dangerous consequences. The spirit makes a ranged attack against the target using its PWR score and usually inflicts damage on the unarmed combat results table. In certain circumstances, such as when there are many sharp objects lying about, damage might be inflicted according to the armed combat

results table. Each use of this power costs 10 current Willpower points.

Possession: The spirit can attempt to take mental and physical control of its victims by overwhelming their minds. Doing so requires the spirit to make physical contact with a target and succeed in a specific Willpower check cross-indexed against the column corresponding to the target's current Willpower. If the attempt fails, the spirit cannot make another possession attempt on any creature until 24 hours have passed. Each use of this power costs 20 current Willpower points. The results of a successful check are:

S = Slight possession: The spirit can direct the target's actions for 1 round.

L = Light possession: The spirit can control the target's actions for 1d10 rounds.

M = Medium possession: The spirit can control the target's actions for 1 day.

H = Heavy possession: The spirit can control the target's action for 1 week.

C = Complete possession: The spirit controls the target for an entire month.

At the end of the possession period, the spirit can attempt to make another attempt to control its target, but failing to do so means it loses control and cannot attempt to regain possession for another 24 hours (as above).

While possessed, the victim can attempt to break free of the spirit's control by making a successful specific Willpower check cross-indexed against the column for the spirit's Willpower. If the victim's result is greater than the spirit's initial check, the victim is free from possession. If less than or equal to, the spirit remains in control. The victim may make an attempt to free himself from possession once every 24 hours.

Skilled: As the minor spirit power above, but the skill is treated as if having a score of 115.

Supernatural Attack/Ability: The spirit has the attack or ability of another creature. When a spirit has

this power, the CM chooses one special attack or ability from those listed under any creature in the Supernatural Menaces section (see above). The spirit can perform this action as described and the CM should refer to that power's entry when used by the spirit.

Greater Spirit

STR: NA/10* (150) STA: NA/10* (150)
DEX: NA/7* (105)   UMS: (140)
AGL: NA/9* (135)   ATT: 3
WPR: 9 (135)   WND: NA/22*
PER: 7 (105)   PWR: 125
PCN: 7 (105)   MV: L or A 220
scores after the slash are only applicable when manifesting physically

At the top of the astral hierarchy of entities are the greater spirits. Known by many names in many cultures—angels, devils, *kami*, *loa*, etc.—greater spirits are venerated and feared in equal proportion. Only a Master of the Summoning adit can call one of these entities down (or up) and it is not a task they do lightly.

The appearance of greater spirits runs the gamut from horrific monstrosities to beautiful humans to visions of pure madness. One might appear with golden skin and dressed in flowing robes, while another seems to be a fragment of Lovecraftian horror given shape. The cultural biases of the summoner often decides the appearance of a greater spirit and most can change form with ease, manifesting as they are expected to.

Of all the spirits, greater spirits are both the closest to humanity and the most alien. Each possesses at least human-level intelligence, but many far outstrip mortal genius. Greater spirits can speak any human language, but some of the most powerful of their kind refuse to do so and limit their conversations to the Enochian language, once believed to be the speech of angels. Greater spirits have complex emotions, and a cunning Majus can use these emotions against them to entrap a spirit into agreeing to serve him in some capacity. When a Majus has no

leverage over a spirit or shares a common goal, he finds that they are prone to, and even revel in, engaging in prolonged negotiations and striking bargains with mortals.

Greater spirits often ask for seemingly nonsensical tasks to be undertaken by the Majus in return for the spirit's assistance, for although they are as smart as humans, their goals and desires are ineffable to mortal minds. These compacts are the origin of the "selling one's soul to the Devil" legends that abound in Western culture. Some of these tales may even be true...

Greater spirits rival Maji when it comes to the ability to work magic. These entities do so as naturally as humanity takes breath. Greater spirits have served as magical tutors to Maji down through the centuries and it is not uncommon for an initiate Majus to learn the basics of one or more adits during their careers at the metaphorical feet of a greater spirit. Despite their magical talents, greater spirits seem to have no vested interest in the Old Game and only become players when coerced, commanded, or agree to assist a Majus.

Special Properties and Powers:

Incorporeal: The spirit possesses no physical form and does not suffer a penalty to their movement rate when moving through obstacles or dangerous terrain. A spirit can manifest itself physically at the cost of 1 current Willpower point per round it remains in physical form.

Magic Resistance: All spells directed against a greater spirit are resolved using the column three steps to the right of the normal cross-indexed column. Thus, a spell that is usually resolved using the results of Column 3 is resolved on Column 6. Column 10 is the maximum column.

Ferocious: Greater spirits inflict damage according to the armed combat results table.

Custom Powers: Greater spirits typically have up to ten powers chosen from the list below and at least three will usually be magical adits. The CM is encouraged to create other powers based on the folklore associated with specific spirits or to simply make up completely new abilities.

Antiquity/Talisman: The greater spirit owns an antiquity or powerful talisman that materializes with it when it manifests in physical form. If stolen or lost, the item vanishes whenever the spirit returns to incorporeal state or, if summoned, returns to the astral plane.

Awe/Fear: The spirit emanates such a baneful or beatific aura that all confronting it must make a specific Willpower check to avoid becoming affected by fright or awe. Only one check is required per encounter with the greater spirit, but a new check is always necessary when meeting the spirit at a later time. This is an innate power and requires no Willpower to use. Consult the following key to determine the effects of the Willpower check:

Failure: Target loses 2d10 current Willpower and either flees (if fear) or stands awestruck and unable to act (if awe) for 1 round.

S = Scared/Stunned: As failure, but target loses 1d10 current Willpower.

L = Loathing/Lost in Wonder: As failure, but target loses only 1d10/2 current Willpower (minimum of 1, round up).

M = Misgiving/Moonstruck: As "L" result, but subject does not flee or become awestruck.

H, C = Heroic: All fear/awe is overcome.

Elemental Blast: As the lesser spirit power above.

Inconvenience: As the minor spirit power above.

Magical Adit: As the lesser spirit power above.

Paranormal Talent: As the lesser spirit power above.

Poltergeist: As the lesser spirit power above.

Possession: As the lesser spirit power above, but a greater spirit can attempt possession once every six hours. Additionally, the duration of a successful possession is increased. Use the following key to determine how long the greater spirit controls its victim:

S = Slight possession: The spirit can direct the target's actions for 1d10 rounds.

L = Light possession: The spirit can control the target's actions for 1 day.

M = Medium possession: The spirit can control the target's actions for 1 week.

H = Heavy possession: The spirit can control the target's action for an entire month.

C = Complete possession: The spirit controls the target indefinitely.

Restore Life: The spirit can return a deceased creature to life with a touch. The resurrected creature returns to life fully healed of any injuries, diseases, or other debilitating affects it suffered at the time of its demise. It retains knowledge of all its experiences up to the moment of its death, but cannot recall what (if anything) occurred while it was deceased. This power costs 100 current Willpower points to use. Most spirits do not use this power lightly and require additional promises or services before agreeing to perform this ability. The CM may, at his discretion, apply guidelines or limitations for who may be resurrected, how long they may have been dead, and any other requirements or rituals that must be undertaken.

Skilled: As the minor spirit power above, but the skill is treated as if having a score of 140.

Supernatural Attack/Ability: As the lesser spirit power above.

Teleport: The spirit can instantly travel a distance of up to five miles by expending 10 current Willpower points. It can bring other creatures along with it at the cost of 5 current Willpower points per additional traveler.

MAJUS™

Action Table

Defense Column

Attack Margin	1-15 **1**	Ability Checks 16-30 **2**	Skill Checks 31-45 **3**	46-60 **4**	61-75 **5**	76-90 **6**	91-105 **7**	106-120 **8**	121-135 **9**	136+ **10**
0	LK	L	L	L	L	S	S	S	S	S
1-4	M	M	L	LK	L	LK	L	S	S	S
5-9	H	MK	M	L	L	L	L	L	LK	S
10-29	C	H	MK	M	M	M	LK	L	L	L
30-49	C	C	H	M	MK	M	M	MK	L	LK
50-69	CK	CK	C	H	H	H	M	M	M	M
70-89	CK	CK	CK	CK	H	H	H	H	M	M
90-94	CK	CK	CK	CK	CK	HK	H	H	H	H
95-99	CK	CK	CK	CK	CK	CK	HK	HK	H	H
100+	CK	CK	CK	CK	CK	CK	CK	HK	HK	H

ARMED COMBAT RESULTS

Code	Result
S	Scratch: Lose 1-2 points (see above), and mark one wound box.
L	Light Wound: Lose 2-20 points (1d10x2), and mark two wound boxes.
M	Medium Wound: Lose 4-40 points (2d10x2), and mark three wound boxes.
H	Heavy Wound: Lose 6-60 points (3d10x2), and mark four wound boxes.
C	Crippling Wound: Lose 6-60 points (3d10x2), and mark five wound boxes.
K	Knockdown: Defender knocked down and back 5 feet; must make DEX check to hold onto any hand-held items; all uncompleted actions this round are cancelled.

UNARMED COMBAT RESULTS

Code	Result (Defender loses points from current STA)
S	Scant Damage: Lose 1-2 points (roll 1d10; 1-5=1, 6-10=2).
L	Light Damage: Lose 2-20 points (1d10x2).
M	Medium Damage: Lose 4-40 points (2d10x2).
H	Harsh Damage: Lose 6-60 points (3d10x2), and mark one wound box.
C	Crushing Damage: Lose 6-60 points (3d10x2), and mark two wound boxes (or called shot, if specified otherwise).
K	Defender knocked down and back 5 feet; all uncompleted actions this round are cancelled.

COMBAT PROCEDURE

1	Declare attack	4	Defender declares luck use (PCs, missile attacks only)
2	Determine base damage	5	Attacker rolls specific check against strike number
3	Determine strike number	6	Apply results

SEQUENCE OF PLAY FOR ONE ROUND

1	CM declaration	8	Side A melees
2	PC declaration	9	Side B uses paranormal talents
3	Initiative determination	10	Side B fires or throws missiles
4	Side A uses paranormal talents	11	Side B moves
5	Side A fires or throws missiles	12	Side A defensive missile fire
6	Side A moves	13	Side B melees
7	Side B defensive missile fire	14	Stamina loss and recovery

MAJUS™

Character: **Player:**

BASIC STATISTICS

Strength (STR): _____   Willpower (WPR): _____

Dexterity (DEX): _____   Perception (PCN): _____

Agility (AGL): _____   Luck (LUCK): _____

Personality (PER): _____   Stamina (STA): _____

Penetration Bonus: _____   Unskilled Melee: _____

                 (STR+AGL)/2

Current Stamina: _____

Current Willpower: _____   **WOUNDS**

Stamina Recovery Rate: _____   ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

               ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Armor: _____   AR: _____

Stamina Loss/Round: _____   Items Worn: _____

BACKGROUND

Date of Birth: Place of Birth:

Profession: Age:

Education: Nationality:

Height: Sex:

Weight: Eye Color:

Features: Hair Color:

Experience Points: _____

SKILLS

Name	Base	Level	Score
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Gear/Notes:

PARANORMAL TALENTS

Name	Base	Score
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

WEAPONS

Name	Range Mod.	Base
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____