

A Host's Guide To

# The Great Game

*Role Playing Sans Dice  
in the Victorian World of Darkness*

Adapted from the *Castle Falkenstein*<sup>™</sup> Game System  
Published by R. Talsorian Games

BETA  
March 2001

# *A Game of Cards...*

*My* recommendation of an amusement was met by shocked silence. Several uncomfortable moments passed until a throat cleared. It was Sir Percival Humbert-Jones.

"My good sirrah," began the corpulent fop, his oversized mustaches quivering with undisguised contempt. "I don't know how you Yanks idle away your time on the other side of The Pond, but playing at dice is not how those of us of status and means spend our free time..."

"Indeed," continued that chinless spinster, *Fraulein Elsie Hespeler zu Galt*. "Dice are for the riff-raff and the small-folk. Those of Breeding," and at that she cast a knowing gaze around the others gathered with us in the salon, "play cards."

Her statement was met with a chorus of squawks and bleats... noises that must have passed as agreement among these vapid, dim witted bluebloods.

So continued the trials and tribulations of a *nouveau riche* American amongst the European circles of old money, power, and privilege.

*I supposed I shall be playing a game of cards...*

From the Private Journals of  
**Professor P.S. Murphy**  
*Inventor, Scholar,  
Paranormal Investigator  
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## *A Word from your Host...*

When I first read the rules for *Castle Falkenstein*, I was enthralled. I found it to be a classy, elegant, and yet simple rules system. Best of all, it did not use dice but playing cards! That there was enough to get me hooked on the concept. However, I also felt the rules had their limitations, and I thought they would be a hard sell for most of the players I knew, most of whom may resist learning a new game system.

But, if I adapted the card based rules to the Storyteller system, that would be the best of both worlds... I have learned to like the Storyteller system (once I got past the angst and goth overtones) for two reasons. The first being that, at its core, the Attribute + Ability rules paradigm is simple yet very comprehensive. There are myriad combinations to cover any conceivable action or situation.

Over the years, I have found that the rules, especially the rules for combat, have gotten unwieldy and cumbersome as layer after layer of special attack, defense, and counterattack have been added to the system. The rules have become bloated like bad software code. The whole thing runs, but very slowly. While some of these rules do help flesh out a character, I find they often times bog down the game flow with endless encyclopedia sessions-- and White Wolf books are not known for their tables of content and indices, am I correct?

With these rules, I was going to strive to make this game as free form, free flowing, easy to learn, use, and enjoy as possible.

The second reason I have always like Storyteller game is the different kinds of characters you can play. Now, I know White Wolf Games likes to look down their noses at TSR gamers, but let's face it, many of us have learned this hobby playing D&D, and we fondly remember playing an elven wizard, a dwarven fighter, a halfling thief, or a human cleric.

Well, the World of Darkness is populated by mortals, vampires, werewolves, mages, wraiths, changelings, and mummies. The various systems all share, at their core, the Attribute + Ability rules. But heaven forbid if you try to have a mixed group of Garou, Kindred, and Mages... the yawning chasm between the systems becomes painfully apparent. Mages, mortals, and Changelings are just so frail, and lycanthropes are just too over-powered in combat. Power gamers of the D&D ilk have always been drawn to Werewolf, and who can blame them? Those fifteen foot tall, death-on-two-legs Crinos forms are fun! And who doesn't love the thrill of rolling fistfuls of dice for a claw attack?

But I always thought the real strength of the Storyteller system would be in exploring the dynamics and interplay of a mixed group. Not something you could usually do unless you really hamstring the werewolves or vampires with their concepts or Flaws.

So, with these diceless rules, I have tried to level the playing field. A lot of a werewolf's power comes from spending Rage to get multiple actions, each action having a full pool of dice. But, by using a finite number of cards of different suits, you temper their power. Now, a lycanthrope most likely has the same number of cards in his hand as

his enemies and allies. Who knows if he'll even have the right suit for his desired action, and if he takes multiple actions in the turn, he'll probably run out of cards long before he runs out of actions!

Sure, I've stripped away a lot of a character's power, but the compromise is everyone plays by the same rules now. You can have a werewolf fight a changeling and not have it be a pre-ordained bloodbath. And I think that's an important compromise to make, because this game is called Storyteller because it is about Role Playing and not Roll Playing.

I've been working on this little pet project of mine since December of 2000. After many fits and starts, after many long weeks of neglect because of wedding plans and crazy hours at work, it has finally come to some semblance of completion. Enough for play testing to begin at least. I hope the rules work as well at your gaming table as they have been here in my head as I've been running simulations. Send your feedback to [editlonghair@netscape.net](mailto:editlonghair@netscape.net) and let me know!

Alrighty, then. Let's get ready to play a game of cards....

From the Desk of  
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*Game Player, Game Master  
and Sometime Game Designer*

29 May 2001

## Introduction:

*The Great Game* is a rules variant for role playing games using the Storyteller™ system. Instead of rolling ten-sided dice to determine the success or failure of their characters' actions, players use cards.

Two decks of cards are used in *The Great Game*. The first is a normal deck of poker cards (52 cards with 2 Jokers), called *The Fortune Deck*. The Fortune cards are used primarily during *Feat Checks* (q.v.).

The second deck is *The Mystick Deck*, and is a full Tarot deck (22 Major Arcana and 56 Minor Arcana). The Tarot are used during checks involving supernatural abilities- Magick, Cainite Disciplines, Numina, Garou Gifts, and the like.

The rules presented in this manual focus primarily on **Mage: The Ascension** and **Vampire: The Masquerade**. However, with a little work, they can easily be adapted for **Changeling**, **Werewolf**, or even **Wraith** characters.

These variant rules are best suited to chronicles set during the Gilded Age (the mid- and late nineteenth century). However, they can easily be used for games as far afield as Ancient China, the European Renaissance, the Age of Reason, or the Roaring Twenties... Any chronicle in which the manners are impeccable, one's wit and steel are sharp, and opulence hides corruption is apropos...

## Chapter the First: Character Creation

Characters are created as per the normal rules for the particular system, with the following additions:

1) Each character will have two particular Tarot of the Major Arcana associated with them. These cards are called *Fate Cards*. The symbolism of that pair of cards are inextricably linked with the character's destiny.

The first Fate Card is determined by the kind of character being created:

**TABLE 1-1: FATE CARDS**

<b>Character</b>	<b>Major Arcana</b>
Mortal	The World
Mage	The Magician
Vampire	Death
Werewolf	The Moon
Changeling	The Fool
Wraith	The Hanged Man

The second Fate Card is chosen by the player, who should base their choice on the character's concept, Nature, ambitions and goals, *et cetera*.

Both Fate Cards should be noted on *The Great Game* character sheet. The game effects of these cards will be described in **Chapter the Fifth: The Mystick Deck**.

2) Starting characters may take Abilities higher than three (3) when allocating their original points. In fact, it is recommended characters take high scores in a few Abilities rather than many low ones.

# *Chapter the Second: Attributes and Abilities*

The four suits of the Fortune Deck each represent a certain aspect of role playing. ♥ Hearts represent social and status related activities, or situations affected by emotions or passions. ♦ Diamonds are for mental and intellectual activities. ♣ Clubs are for physical activities. Lastly, ♠ Spades represent supernatural, metaphysical, and esoteric activities.

Each group of Attributes has a particular suit associated with it:

**TABLE 2-1: ATTRIBUTES**

<b>Attribute</b>	<b>Suit</b>
Physical	♣ Clubs
Social	♥ Hearts
Mental	♦ Diamonds

In addition, each Talent, Skill, and Knowledge has a suit associated with it:

**TABLE 2-2: SUITS BY TALENT**

<b>Talent</b>	<b>Suit</b>
Acting	♥ Hearts
Alertness	♦ Diamonds
Artist	♣ Clubs
Athletics	♣ Clubs
Awareness	♠ Spades
Brawl	♣ Clubs
Carousing	♥ Hearts
Dancing	♣ Clubs
Diving	♣ Clubs
Dodge	♣ Clubs
Elusion	♣ Clubs
Empathy	♥ Hearts
Expression	♥ Hearts

Intrigue	♦ Diamonds
Instruction	♥ Hearts
Intuition	♠ Spades
Intimidation	♥ Hearts
Invention	♦ Diamonds
Kenning	♠ Spades
Larceny	♦ Diamonds
Leadership	♥ Hearts
Logic	♦ Diamonds
Musician	♣ Clubs
Negotiation	♥ Hearts
Primal Urge	♠ Spades
Seduction	♥ Hearts
Singing	♥ Hearts
Streetwise	♥ Hearts
Subterfuge	♥ Hearts

**TABLE 2-3: TALENTS BY SUIT**

<b>Suit</b>	<b>Talent</b>	
♣ Clubs	Artist	
	Athletics	
	Brawl	
	Dancing	
	Diving	
	Dodge	
	Elusion	
	Musician	
	♥ Hearts	Acting
		Carousing
Empathy		
Expression		
Instruction		
Intimidation		
Leadership		
Negotiation		
Seduction		
Singing		
♦ Diamonds	Streetwise	
	Subterfuge	
	Alertness	
	Intrigue	
	Invention	
	Larceny	
	Logic	
	♠ Spades	Awareness
		Intuition
		Kenning
Primal Urge		

**TABLE 2-4: SUITS BY SKILL**

Talent	Suit
Acrobatics	♣ Clubs
Animal Ken	♥ Hearts
Archery	♣ Clubs
Artillerist	♦ Diamonds
Climbing	♣ Clubs
Crafts	♦ Diamonds
Disguise	♥ Hearts
Do	♠ Spades
Drive	♣ Clubs
Etiquette	♥ Hearts
Fencing	♣ Clubs
Firearms	♣ Clubs
Herbalism	♦ Diamonds
Hunting	♦ Diamonds
Hypertech	♠ Spades
Interrogation	♥ Hearts
Jury-Rig	♦ Diamonds
Kailindo	♠ Spades
Leadership	♥ Hearts
Lockpicking	♣ Clubs
Martial Arts	♣ Clubs
Meditation	♠ Spades
Melee	♣ Clubs
Music	♣ Clubs
Networking	♥ Hearts
Pilot	♦ Diamonds
Performance	♥ Hearts
Portents	♠ Spades
Research	♦ Diamonds
Riding	♣ Clubs
Rocketpack	♣ Clubs
Seamanship	♦ Diamonds
Security	♣ Clubs
Stealth	♣ Clubs
Survival	♦ Diamonds
Swimming	♣ Clubs
Technology	♦ Diamonds
Torture	♥ Hearts
Tracking	♦ Diamonds

**TABLE 2-5: SKILLS BY SUIT**

Suit	Skill
♣ Clubs	Acrobatics
	Archery
	Climbing
	Drive
	Fencing
	Firearms
	Lockpicking
	Martial Arts
	Melee
	Music
	Riding
	Rocketpack
	Security
	Stealth
	Swimming
♥ Hearts	Animal Ken
	Disguise
	Etiquette
	Interrogation
	Leadership
	Networking
	Performance
	Torture
♦ Diamonds	Artillerist
	Crafts
	Herbalism
	Hunting
	Jury-Rig
	Pilot
	Research
	Seamanship
	Survival
	Technology
	Tracking
♠ Spades	Do
	Hypertech
	Kailindo
	Meditation
	Portents

**TABLE 2-6: SUITS BY KNOWLEDGE**

<b>Knowledge</b>	<b>Suit</b>
Academics	♦ Diamonds
Animal Speech	♠ Spades
Beast Lore	♦ Diamonds
Calculation	
Engineering	♦ Diamonds
Cosmology	♠ Spades
Culture	♦ Diamonds
Enigmas	♦ Diamonds
Finance	♦ Diamonds
Gremayre	♠ Spades
Hearth Wis.	♦ Diamonds
Herbalism	♦ Diamonds
Investigation	♦ Diamonds
Law	♦ Diamonds
Linguistics	♦ Diamonds
Lore	♠ Spades
Medicine	♦ Diamonds
Metaphysics	♠ Spades
Occult	♠ Spades
Poisons	♦ Diamonds
Politics	♦ Diamonds
Power-	
Brokering	♥ Hearts
Propaganda	♥ Hearts
Psychology	♥ Hearts
Rituals	♠ Spades
Secret Codes	♦ Diamonds
Science	♦ Diamonds
Seneschal	♦ Diamonds
Symbolism	♠ Spades
Theology	♠ Spades
Weather-Eye	♦ Diamonds

**TABLE 2-6: KNOWLEDGES BY SUIT**

<b>Suit</b>	<b>Knowledge</b>
♥ Hearts	Power- Brokering Propaganda Psychology
♦ Diamonds	Academics Beast Lore Calculation Engineering Culture Enigmas Finance Hearth Wisdom Herbalism Investigation Law Linguistics Medicine Poisons Politics Secret Codes Science Seneschal Weather-Eye
♠ Spades	Animal Speech Cosmology Gremayre Lore Metaphysics Occult Rituals Symbolism Theology

Note that the suits listed are just guidelines, to be used in common occurrences. For example, a feat check requiring Strength + Intimidation would be modified by playing ♣ Clubs, not ♥ Hearts.

## Chapter the Third: The Fortune Deck And Feats

At the beginning of each Scene, the Fortune Deck is shuffled, and the Host deals out a hand of five (5) cards to each player, including himself. In a Scene in which the Host is playing several important NPCs, he may deal himself several hands at his discretion. As an optional rule, The Host can have the ‘minor cronies’ and henchmen of the villain draw the top card off the Fortune Deck during a turn for a Feat. This should not be abused, and should only be done a couple of times per scene per henchmen to add to the drama of the scene (even the bad guys get lucky sometimes!)

During the Scene, characters will encounter scenarios in which they must use their abilities to triumph. These skill checks are called *Feats*, and they are performed by adding an Attribute to an Ability with modifiers, and trying to reach a *Target Number* secretly determined by the Host. The Target Number is usually between 3 and 20, based on the Difficulty of the Feat:

**TABLE 3-1: TARGET NUMBERS**

Difficulty	Target Number
Easy	3
Routine	5
Moderate	7
Difficult	10
Extremely Difficult	15
Supernatural	20
Mythic Feat	30
Nigh-Impossible	50+

Again, these numbers are simply guidelines. Ultimately, the Host is the final arbiter of determining the Difficulty of a Feat.

When the Host calls for a Z Suit Feat Check of Attribute X + Ability Y (i.e.: ♥ Hearts Appearance + Disguise) the player adds the two applicable scores together. This determines the *Face Value*.

The player then receives bonus points based on certain conditions or actions:

1) The Player may play one or more Fortune Cards from her hand to increase the Feat Check’s Face Value. If the card played is of the same suit as the Feat (i.e. ♣ Clubs for physical, ♥ Hearts for social, ♦ Diamonds for knowledge, or ♠ Spades for supernatural), the card has the following value:

**TABLE 3-2: FORTUNE CARDS**

Card	Value
Ace*	1
Two-Ten	2-10
Jack	11
Queen	12
King	13

\*Aces can ONLY be played on a Feat of it’s matching suit (i.e. the Ace of ♥ Hearts can ONLY be played during a social Feat).

If the Fortune Card’s suit does not match the suit of the Feat, then the card has a value of one, and adds one point to the Feat Check’s Face Value.

If a Joker is played, fifteen (15) points are added to the Face Value. The Jokers are wild, and count on any Feat Check (**NOT** Mystickal Feat Checks).

You can combine cards from different suits during a Feat Check to add to the Face Value.

2) If the character has an Attribute and/or Ability ranked four (4) or more, that character has a *Specialty*. If the Host rules the *Specialty* applicable to this Feat Check, the player draws another card from the top of the Fortune Deck, which is played immediately. The value of this random Fortune Card is determined as per the rules above.

No more than two (2) Fortune Cards can be drawn per Feat Check in this way: one for an Attribute *Specialty*, and another for an Ability *Specialty*.

3) The character may spend a Willpower point at any time during a turn to draw another Fortune Card. This card is added to the player's hand and can be played at any time. Note that a player can have more than five cards in their hand at a time.

No more than one (1) Willpower can be spent per turn in this fashion.

4) Vampires may spend a Blood Point at any time during a turn to draw another Fortune Card. This card is added to the player's hand and can be played at any time.

No more than one (1) Blood Point can be spent per turn in this fashion. Blood spent on drawing an additional card counts towards the total the character can spend per turn based on their Generation.

5) Mages can spend a point of Quintessence at any time during a turn to draw another Fortune Card. This card is added to the player's hand and can be played at any time.

No more than one (1) point of Quintessence can be spent per turn in this fashion.

6) Garou can spend a point of Rage at any time during a turn to draw another Fortune Card. This card is added to the player's hand and can be played at any time.

No more than one (1) point of Rage can be spent per turn in this fashion.

Once the player has played as many Fortune Cards as she wishes and added their values to the Feat's Face Value to determine a total, the Host determines the degree of success the character has in the Feat:

**Botch:** If the character only amassed half of the Target Number or less, he botches the check. Misfortune strikes and something (Host's discretion) happens.

EXAMPLE: Malcolm is picking a lock in the country estate of the Marquis d'Ancre. His Dexterity is 3 and his Security skill is 2. He does not play any Fortune Cards for this Feat. His total is 5. The Host has determined this lock is of fine craftsmanship, and has a difficulty of 10. Malcolm botches, and his pick snaps off in the lock, jamming it.

**Failure:** If the character's total is less than the Target Number, the character fails the Feat. The character may attempt the Feat again, but at a higher difficulty.

EXAMPLE: Malcolm moves on to another locked door. This time he plays an Ace of ♣ Clubs to bring his total to 6. Unfortunately for Malcolm, this too is no ordinary lock, and also has

a difficulty of 10. His picking attempt fails.

If he tried the lock again on the next turn, the difficulty target may go up a few points at the Host's discretion... Malcolm is getting flustered.

**Partial Success:** If the character's total is equal to or greater than the Target Number, the Feat is a partial success. The Host uses his best judgment to determine what the result is.

EXAMPLE: Malcolm's partner Harris pushes him aside. Harris' Dexterity is also 3, but his Security is 5 with a Specialty in Lockpicking. This specialty allows him to draw a Fortune Card, which is the Four of ♣ Clubs, netting a sum of 12. He decides not to play any more cards.

Turns out this beats the lock's difficulty of 10. The tumblers fall into place with a faint click. Harris holds his breath, hoping nobody heard...

**Complete Success:** If the total is half again the Target Number, the Feat is entirely successful.

EXAMPLE: Harris holds his breath and listens intently. The Host calls for a Perception + Alertness ♦ Diamond Feat check. Harris' Perception is 3, his Alertness is 3. He decides to spend a Willpower and draw another Fortune Card (he doesn't have any ♦ Diamonds in his hand).

Lady Luck is smiling on our intrepid cat burglar! He draws the Five of ♦ Diamonds, which he immediately plays, bringing his total to 11. He decides to stop there.

The Host figures it would be relatively easy to hear any noises in the silent mansion, so he assigned the Feat a difficulty of 6. He tells Harris that he hears nothing but the faint sound of

snoring coming from the darkened room beyond the door...

**Fait Accompli:** If the total is equal to or greater than twice the Target Number, the Feat is an astounding success. Fortune smiles upon the character and something beneficial (Host's discretion) happens.

EXAMPLE: Harris opens the door and sneaks into the bedroom. He must make a Dexterity + Stealth check to move silently. Harris' Dexterity is 3, and his Stealth is 5 with a Specialty in foot padding. He draws a card from the Fortune Deck, it is the Six of ♠ Spades, not the right suit for the Feat, so it only adds one to his total, bringing it to 9.

Harris decides to sweeten the pot. He plays the Queen of ♣ Clubs from his hand, bringing his total to 21! He's confident that's more than enough to succeed, so he stops.

The Host decides to shake things up a bit. Telling the players that they hear a dog barking somewhere in the mansion, he plays the Six of ♣ Clubs, bringing Harris' total down to 15. Perhaps the dog's barking will awaken the slumbering nobleman...

Harris pauses, wondering what to do. Looking at his depleted hand, he decides he is not spending any more cards on the attempt.

Well, he called the Host's bluff, and his total is still more than twice the Target of 6 the Host set for the task (the Marquis is indeed a very deep sleeper!). The Host tells Harris he will be able to move about the bedchamber as silently as a shadow for the remainder of the scene. Harris sets about searching the chamber for d'Ancre's jewels...

Fortune Cards played during the course of the turn are shuffled back into the Fortune Deck at the end of the turn. Characters who played Fortune Cards during the turn may draw **one** (and only one) new Fortune Card into their hand before the next turn begins. Players may also draw new Fortune Cards when:

1) they spend Willpower, Blood, Quintessence, or Rage, **OR**

2) are told to do so by the Host because of a draw of a Major Arcana during a Mystick Feat.

At the end of the Scene, all players return any remaining cards from their hands to the deck. The Host will have someone cut and shuffle the deck, and he will deal out a new hand of five cards to each player for the next Scene about to begin...

#### **Resisted and Opposed Actions:**

When two characters oppose each other, the Host may call for a resisted feat check. One character pits his Face Value against a Difficulty equivalent to the other character's appropriate Face Value (plus any modifiers levied by the Host).

Then, both players get to bid cards on the Feat, the 'offensive' player adding to his Face Value to try and reach the Target, the 'defensive' player subtracting from the other player's successes. This bidding process continues until BOTH players decide they are do not wish to play anymore cards on the check.

**EXAMPLE:** Nikolai is attempting to seduce Margaret in order to get some information from her. This will require a ♥ Hearts Manipulation + Seduction check on Nikolai's part. This gives him a Face Value of 7 (he has a Manipulation 4 with a 'Charming' specialty, and a Seduce 3). The

Difficulty Target is Margaret's Wits + Subterfuge (3+2=5). The Host secretly decides that Nikolai's wit and charm are a little ham-handed this evening after having too much wine... he brings the Target up to 7.

Nikolai's Manipulation specialty allows him to draw an additional card. He does so, and it is the Eight of ♣ Clubs, not the ♥ Heart he needs for a social check, so it only adds one, bringing Nikolai's Face Value to 8. He then plays a Four of ♥ Hearts, bringing it to 12.

Margaret plays the Queen of ♥ Hearts, bringing Nikolai's Face Value down to zero! Appears the young lady is insulted by Nikolai's overtures, and finds him crass and boorish!

Nikolai redoubles his efforts- he plays a Joker! He now has a 15! Grabbing the departing Margaret, he embraces her and gives her a long passionate kiss...

Margaret's player has no further cards to play... and Nikolai plays no further cards. Margaret's resistance melts as she gives in to passion.

Nikolai's 15 is twice the Difficulty Target of 7 set by the Host, so he tells Margaret that her character is swept up in the moment, and will bear her soul to Nikolai... and that she is rather smitten with the young rogue and will be ill prepared to resist any further requests or demands he makes of her.

**Combat:** Combat is essentially a Resisted Action. Each weapon or melee maneuver has a Base Difficulty Number assigned to it. The Host determines other modifiers to this Difficulty (cover, movement, range, etc.) to secretly determine the Target Number.

The attacking character then determines the Face Value of his attack (Dexterity + Firearms, Dexterity + Fencing, etc.), and can play Fortune Cards (♣ Clubs adding full value, all other suits add 1) to the result.

The defending character can play his own Fortune Cards to subtract from the attacker's total (again, ♣ Clubs subtract the full value, all other suits subtract 1). Also, if the defender has an action available (see **Multiple Actions** below), he can **Dodge** the attack. He subtracts his Dexterity + Dodge Face Value from the attacker's total.

Also, if the damage dealt by the attack is non-aggravated damage, the defender may be able to **Soak** the damage. He subtracts his Stamina from the attacker's total.

The degrees of success for an attack are as follows:

**Botch:** 50% of the Target Number or less. The attack does not hit, and something else (Host's discretion) happens (a weapon jams or misfires, a sword breaks or gets stuck, the attacker slips...)

**Failure:** Less than the Target Number. The attack does not hit, or possibly hits a glancing blow or flesh wound that causes no damage.

**Partial Success:** 100% of the Target Number. The attack does one quarter of the full damage value (drop all fractions). (A heavy revolver with a damage value of 5 would do 1 Health Level of damage on a partial success).

**Complete Success:** 150% of the Target Number. The attack does half of the full damage value (drop all

fractions). (A heavy revolver would do 2 Health Levels of Damage).

**Critical Hit:** 200% or more of the Target Number. The attack does full damage. (A heavy revolver would do the full 5 Health Levels of damage).

EXAMPLE: While crossing the grounds of the Marquis d'Ancre's estate, Harris is spotted by a guard upon the roof, who fires at him with a musket.

The Host determines the guard's Target Number to be 8 (Base 6 for the musket, +1 for range, and +1 for darkness). The guard's Dexterity + Firearms is 6, and the Host plays the Five of ♦ Diamonds on the Feat, bringing the total to 7.

Harris is surprised by the sniper attack, so he does not have an action this turn (so he is not able to Dodge). He can still soak any potential damage. His Stamina is 2, so the attacker's total is down to 5. Harris decides not play any Fate Cards on this turn.

The 5 is less than the 8 needed to hit, but is not a botch. The shot is wide, and hits the ground at Harris' feet.

**Multiple Actions:** Even if the character does not receive multiple actions due to Celerity, Rage, a magical Time effect, etc., she may be able to perform multiple actions in a single turn by splitting her points.

When a player declares multiple actions at the beginning of the turn, the action that has the smallest Face Value is the one the player divides between the actions.

If the character does possess Rage, Celerity, or comparable supernatural ability, all additional actions are taken at full Face Value.

EXAMPLE: Harris is being attacked in melee by another of the Marquis' guards. He declares he is going to attack the guard with his rapier and also dodge the guard's attack. Harris Dexterity is 3, Fencing is 2, and Dodge is 3. Since his Dexterity + Fencing has the smallest Face Value (5), he will split five points between the two actions as he wishes.

EXAMPLE: Vlad the Silver Fang is spending a point of Rage to take a second attack with his sword this turn. His Dexterity is 3 and Fencing is 3. Each attack will use the full Face Value of 6. He can spend another point of Rage to take a third action to Dodge an attack, also at full Face Value.

**Initiative:** Initiative is checked at the beginning of each turn. Each character has an Initiative Face Value equal to their Dexterity + Wits + Alertness. Once Face Values are determined, characters may play ♣ Clubs to improve their Initiative, for that turn only, in descending order, from highest Face Value to lowest.

Once Initiative for that turn has been determined, characters with the lowest number declare their actions first. Once all actions have been declared, then the character with the highest number (and who declared last) gets to go first.

EXAMPLE: Michael and Geoff are dueling. Michael's Initiative Face Value is 9 (Dexterity 4, Wits 3, Alertness 2). Geoff's is 6 (Dexterity 3, Wits 3). Each turn, Michael gets to bid any ♣ Clubs he wishes to play to improve his initiative further. Once he is done bidding, then Geoff can play any

♣ Clubs to attempt to get the jump on Michael.

Whoever has the lowest initiative for the round, declares their action first. Then, the character with the highest initiative performs their action first.

**Willpower Checks:** The Host may call for characters to make a Willpower check when confronting certain situations: supernatural horror, a formidable foe, the death of a loved one, etc. A Willpower check is made by adding the **current** Willpower rating of the character with the value of any cards she decides to play.

To succeed a Willpower check, the character need only equal or exceed the Target Number secretly set by the Host. There are no degrees of success for a Willpower check- only success or failure.

Any suit of card could potentially be played to full value if the player makes a good case for why that suit's attribute applies to the check. If the Host decides the explanation is not plausible or applicable, the card adds 1 point towards the total. Otherwise, it adds its full value.

EXAMPLE: Harris is facing the Marquis d'Ancre himself. The Marquis is a legendary swordsman. Harris is desperately parrying and dodging the Marquis' flurry of blows, but it is obvious he is no match. He will lose. The Host demands the player make a Willpower check for Harris or he will drop his weapon and surrender to the Marquis.

Harris' Willpower is currently 3 (he's spent four points to draw cards while burgling the Marquis' mansion!). He knows he needs more than that. He plays the Four of ♣ Clubs, saying that

he breathes in deeply, tenses his muscles, and prepares to dive in for a last desperate attack. The Host accepts this explanation, and secretly adds four points to the total (he has determined he needs a 10 to make this morale check).

The Host asks Harris if he is done. Harris suspects he needs more than 7, so he plays The Three of ♠ Spades, saying that he whispers a prayer to the Patron Saint of Lost Causes, gambling that this will give him the points he needs. He declares that he is done bidding.

The Host knows the Marquis is a god faring man, so Harris' prayer will go unanswered- he only gets an additional point. This is not enough, so the Host tells Harris he drops his sword and falls to his knees, begging the Marquis' mercy...

## Chapter the Fourth: Supernatural Abilities

The player characters (and many of their foes!) in *The Great Game* possess abilities and powers far beyond those of mortal man. Disciplines granted by the cursed blood of Caine, Magickal powers granted by an Awakened Avatar, spiritual Gifts, all these and more are available to the Vampires, Magi, and Werewolves of the Victorian World of Darkness.

These abilities use their own deck, called the Mystick Deck. The Mystick Deck is a Tarot Deck, and each of the four suits of the Tarot represent a different facet of reality:

- Cups is often associated with water, chaos, thought, and mind (analogous to the Fortune Deck suit of ♦ Diamonds).
- Pentacles represents air, spirit, and the intangible (the Fortune suit of ♠ Spades).
- Swords is for earth, the body, and the physical world (the Fortune suit of ♣ Clubs).
- Wands is the suit of fire, energy, change and nature (the Fortune suit of ♥ Hearts).

Each Vampiric Discipline has a suit of the Tarot associated with it:

**TABLE 4-1: SUITS BY VAMPIRIC DISCIPLINE**

<b>Discipline</b>	<b>Suit</b>
Animalism	Wands
Auspex	Pentacles
Celerity	Swords
Chimerstry	Pentacles
Dementation	Cups
Dominate	Cups
Fortitude	Swords
Necromantic Path:	
Sepulchre	Pentacles
Bone	Swords
Ash	Pentacles
Obfuscate	Cups
Obtenebration	Pentacles
Potence	Swords
Presence	Wands
Protean	Swords
Quietus	Pentacles
Serpentis	Wands
Thaumaturgical Path:	
Blood	Swords
Conjuring	Pentacles
Destruction	Pentacles
Elements	Swords
Flames	Wands
Mind	Cups
Water	Cups
Weather	Wands
Vicissitude	Wands

**TABLE 4-2: VAMPIRIC DISCIPLINES BY SUIT**

Suit	Discipline
Cups	Dementation
	Dominate
	Obfuscate
	Mind*
Pentacles	Water*
	Ash*
	Auspex
	Chimerstry
	Conjuration*
	Destruction*
	Obtenebration
	Quietus
Sepulchre*	
Swords	Blood*
	Bone*
	Celerity
	Elements*
	Fortitude
	Potence
	Protean
Wands	Animalism
	Presence
	Serpentis
	Flames*
	Weather*
	Vicissitude

**TABLE 4-3: SUITS BY SPHERE OF MAGICK**

Sphere	Suit
Correspondence	Pentacles
	Wands
Entropy	Cups
	Pentacles
Forces	Swords
	Wands
Life	Cups
	Swords
Mind	Cups
	Swords
Matter	Swords
	Wands
Prime	Any
Spirit	Cups
	Pentacles
Time	Pentacles
	Wands

Each Sphere of Magick has two Tarot Suits associated with it. When a Mage creates an effect utilizing different spheres, the one with the highest rating is what determines which suits can add to the effect's success. A spell effect using Matter 3, Prime 2 is represented by Swords and Wands in the Mystick Deck. If there is a tie, the Host determines which sphere is dominate.

**TABLE 4-4: SPHERES OF  
MAGICK BY SUIT**

Suit	Sphere
Cups	Entropy
	Life
	Mind
	Prime
Pentacles	Spirit
	Correspondence
	Entropy
	Prime
Swords	Spirit
	Time
	Forces
	Life
Wands	Mind
	Matter
	Prime
	Correspondence
Wands	Forces
	Matter
	Prime
	Time

Each Garou Gift and Rite has a suit of the Tarot associated with it. Simply assign the Gift a suit based on the type of Feat Check associated with the Gift.

For example, the Gift Persuasion requires a Charisma + Subterfuge check. This is normally a ♥ Hearts social feat. Therefore, this Gift requires Wands to fuel.

See **Chapter the Eighth** for more rules on Garou Gifts and Rites.

Each Changeling Art has a suit of the Tarot associated with it:

**TABLE 4-5: SUITS BY ART**

Art	Suit
Chicanery	Cups
Legerdemain	Pentacles
Primal	Swords
Soothsay	Cups
Sovereign	Wands
Wayfare	Pentacles

**TABLE 4-6: ARTS BY SUIT**

Suit	Sphere
Cups	Chicanery
	Soothsay
Pentacles	Legerdemain
	Wayfare
Swords	Primal
Wands	Sovereign

See **Chapter the Ninth** for more rules on the Fae and their Cantrips.

# Chapter the Fifth: The Mystick Deck And Fates

When a Kindred uses a Discipline, a Mage casts a spell, or a Garou uses a Gift, the Host secretly determines the Success Target much as he would for a Feat Check. The character may then play cards to increase his chances of success.

Supernatural abilities are fueled by drawing cards from the Mystick Deck. See the following chapters for specific rules on the different supernatural abilities.

When a character uses a Discipline, Gift, Magick, etc., the Host draws the top card from the Mystick Deck and plays that in front of the player. It is important that the Host does this, as whether the card is played upright or upside down before the player will affect the result!

Mages may draw one Mystick Card per dot of Arete they possess. They draw these cards one at a time, and may stop at any time. Powerful Magi with high Arete ratings often do not use all their possible power, because nothing risks a scourging more than hubris!

Vampires may draw one card per dot in the Discipline they are using. Thus, a Nosferatu with Animalism ●●●● and using Noah's Call (the Animalism ● power), may draw up to five cards. These cards are drawn one at a time.

Garou using a Gift may draw one card per point of Rank they possess. Garou performing a Rite may draw one card per dot in the Rite Background they possess, one card at a time.

A Changeling using a Cantrip may draw one card per dot in the Art they are using. A pooka with Chicanery ●●● and using Fugue (the Chicanery ●● power), may draw up to four cards, one at a time.

The character may spend Willpower, Blood, Quintessence, Gnosis, or Glamour to draw additional cards from the Mystick Deck and continue fueling his effect. Unlike Feat Checks, there is no limit to the number of points a character can spend per turn in this way (caveat- a Vampire's Generation determines the amount of Blood she may spend per turn).

**Minor Arcana:** If the card drawn is of the Minor Arcana, it will add at least one point towards success. If the card is of a Suit appropriate to the power being used (i.e. Cups for Dominate, Pentacles or Wands for a Time effect), it will add as many points towards success as its value:

**TABLE 5-1: MYSTICK CARDS**

Card	Value
Ace*	1
Two-Ten	2-10
Page	11
Knight	12
Queen	13
King	14

\* If the Aces' suit does not match the suit of the spell or discipline, it does not add any points.

If the card is not of the appropriate suit, it adds one to the total.

If the card drawn is one of the character's two Fate Cards (q.v.), the character adds 15 points to his total, and he may immediately draw another card if he wishes.

**Major Arcana:** If the card is of the Major Arcana, it will immediately end the casting. No more Mystick Cards can be drawn by the caster. A Boon or Bane will occur, based on whether the card was played upright or upside down before the player performing the casting. The magnitude of the Boon or Bane is determined by how much Paradox/Nightmare has built up (so Cainites and Garou don't have as much to gain or lose when using their static magics as Mages and Fae do!).

NOTE: If the draw of a Major Arcana results in the current casting botching or failing, any Paradox points accrued from that casting are added immediately to the Mage's Paradox Pool and affect the severity of the Scourging!

As a rough guideline for the severity a Host should attribute to a Boon or Bane:

**Non-Mages, Mages with a Paradox pool of 0-5, or Changelings with a Nightmare rating of 0:** The Boon or Bane should only have an effect that is instantaneous or short-lived: grant a +/- 1-3 points to the next Feat Check of a specific suit; draw or discard a single Fortune Card or a suit of cards; grant a specific suit double face value for the next feat check, etc.

**For Mages with a Paradox of 6-8, or Changelings with a Nightmare of 1-4:** The Boon or Bane should have an effect that remains for the rest of the current Scene: a +/- 1 per Paradox to a Suit of Feat Checks; discard or refresh an entire Fortune Hand; +/-1 to an Attribute or Ability; or some minor role playing effect.

**For Mages with a Paradox of 9-15, or Changelings with a Nightmare of 5-8:** The Boon or Bane should have an effect that remains for at least the rest of the Story: an Attribute or Ability

increases to five or drops to one; gain a Merit or Flaw; some moderate role playing effect.

**Finally, a Mage with a Paradox of 16+ or a Changeling with a Nightmare of 9+ is calling down a catastrophe or miracle:** a major role playing effect or significant game mechanics effect (gain or lose a dot in a Sphere or Background, gain a Merit or Flaw permanently, etc).

See Table 5-2 for a recommended list of Major Arcana effects.

**TABLE 5-2: MAJOR ARCANA BOON AND BANE EFFECTS**

**Note:** These effects are simply guidelines. Boons and Banes represent the ultimate *deus ex machina* for Hosts, who should feel free to create effects that better fit the story or circumstances (especially for powerful Boons or Banes!)

**The Fool: Upright**

<b>0-5 Paradox</b>	<b>6-8 Paradox</b>	<b>9-15 Paradox</b>	<b>16+ Paradox</b>
Player can trade in one Fortune Card in his hand for another draw from the Deck.	Player can trade in as many cards from his Fortune Hand as he wishes for new draws from the Fortune Deck.	Character discards his current Fortune Cards and draws an all new hand of five cards.	Character discards his Fortune Hand. For remainder of the Scene, he draws cards randomly when he wants (up to five cards per Feat Check).

**The Fool: Reversed**

<b>0-5 Paradox / Nightmare 0</b>	<b>6-8 Paradox / Nightmare 1-4</b>	<b>9-15 Paradox/ Nightmare 5-8</b>	<b>16+ Paradox / Nightmare 9+</b>
Player discards one Fortune Card from his hand at random.	Player discards half of his Fortune Hand (round down) at random.	Character must use the same Fortune Hand next scene (he does not get to draw a new hand)	Character loses his entire Fortune Hand and it goes to the target of the spell! (if appropriate)

**The Magician: Upright**

<b>0-5 Paradox</b>	<b>6-8 Paradox</b>	<b>9-15 Paradox</b>	<b>16+ Paradox</b>
Non-Mages only: +1 to all Feat Checks (even if untrained in the skill) for remainder of scene.	Not Applicable (This is a Fate Card for Mages)	Not Applicable (This is a Fate Card for Mages)	Not Applicable (This is a Fate Card for Mages)

**The Magician: Reversed**

<b>0-5 Paradox / Nightmare 0</b>	<b>6-8 Paradox / Nightmare 1-4</b>	<b>9-15 Paradox/ Nightmare 5-8</b>	<b>16+ Paradox / Nightmare 9+</b>
Non-Mages only: Lose a point of Willpower because of cowardice.	Not Applicable (This is a Fate Card for Mages)	Not Applicable (This is a Fate Card for Mages)	Not Applicable (This is a Fate Card for Mages)

### The Empress: Upright

0-5 Paradox	6-8 Paradox	9-15 Paradox	16+ Paradox
+15 to success if performing a healing effect. Otherwise +5.	Character is healed of one point of damage. +1 per Paradox Point to success if spell uses Life sphere.	Next wise choice the character makes is a great success (Host's discretion).	Character is healed of all wounds, or gains a point of Wits if fully healed already.

### The Empress: Reversed

0-5 Paradox / Nightmare 0	6-8 Paradox / Nightmare 1-4	9-15 Paradox/ Nightmare 5-8	16+ Paradox / Nightmare 9+
+15 to success if performing a harming effect. Otherwise +5.	Character takes a point of damage. +1 per Paradox Point to success if spell uses Life sphere.	Next wrong decision made by the character results in a great disaster (Host's discretion).	A succubus or incubus comes in the night and mates with the Mage. The encounter will result in a child.

### The Emperor: Upright

0-5 Paradox	6-8 Paradox	9-15 Paradox	16+ Paradox
+3 to all Feat checks requiring trustworthiness for remainder of Scene.	+10 to success if spell uses Mind sphere for the greater good. Otherwise, +5 to success.	+1 per Paradox Point to all Social Feat Checks for remainder of Scene.	Character gains a point of Charisma, Manipulation, or Appearance (Host's discretion).

### The Emperor: Reversed

0-5 Paradox / Nightmare 0	6-8 Paradox / Nightmare 1-4	9-15 Paradox/ Nightmare 5-8	16+ Paradox / Nightmare 9+
-3 to all Feat checks requiring trustworthiness for remainder of Scene.	Discard highest ♥ Heart from Fortune Hand.	Discard all ♥ Hearts from Fortune Hand for rest of Story.	Paradox spirit will put character into an ethical situation and test his morals.

### The High Priestess: Upright

0-5 Paradox	6-8 Paradox	9-15 Paradox	16+ Paradox
Take the next ♠ Spade from the Fortune Deck. Reshuffle the Deck.	+1 Appearance for 1 day. +10 to success if spell uses Spirit sphere, +5 Otherwise.	Appearance increases to 5 (or 6 if 5 already) for rest of Story OR gain the Medium Merit.	Character gains Spirit • OR gain the Mistguide Merit (Host's Discretion).

### The High Priestess: Reversed

0-5 Paradox / Nightmare 0	6-8 Paradox / Nightmare 1-4	9-15 Paradox/ Nightmare 5-8	16+ Paradox / Nightmare 9+
Discard all ♠ Spades from your Fortune Hand.	Character attracts an obsessed admirer, who will have the character's love at any cost.	Gain the Cast No Reflection Flaw.	Transform into hideous creature- Appearance 0 for rest of Story. Thereafter, Lose 1 point of Appearance.

### The Hierophant: Upright

0-5 Paradox	6-8 Paradox	9-15 Paradox	16+ Paradox
+15 to success if performing a divination effect. Otherwise +5.	+1 per Paradox Point to all ♦ Diamond Knowledge Feats for remainder of Scene.	A master arrives to teach Mage. Can learn one new ability for 1/2 normal XP cost.	Character gains a point in the Dream Background OR Oracular Ability Merit.

### The Hierophant: Reversed

0-5 Paradox / Nightmare 0	6-8 Paradox / Nightmare 1-4	9-15 Paradox/ Nightmare 5-8	16+ Paradox / Nightmare 9+
Discard all ♦ Diamonds from your Fortune Hand.	-1 per Paradox Point to all ♦ Diamond Knowledge Feats for remainder of scene.	Next divination or research attempt will yield false results that character will accept as the truth.	Character trapped in cavern Paradox Realm for several years (days pass outside). When character emerges, has lost three points from Social Attributes, but may have spent XP on self improvement.

### The Lovers: Upright

0-5 Paradox	6-8 Paradox	9-15 Paradox	16+ Paradox
Draw next ♥ Heart from the Fortune Deck into your Hand. Reshuffle deck.	Draw next Cup or Sword from the Mystick Deck for this effect (whichever is needed for spell); otherwise +3 to success.	+1 per Paradox Point if spell uses Mind Sphere; Otherwise +1 Manipulation for rest of Story	A beautiful Paradox Spirit tries to tempt the character away from his friends, tasks, and obligations to a paradise realm of bliss.

### The Lovers: Reversed

0-5 Paradox / Nightmare 0	6-8 Paradox / Nightmare 1-4	9-15 Paradox/ Nightmare 5-8	16+ Paradox / Nightmare 9+
Discard all ♥ Hearts from your Fortune Hand.	-1 per Paradox Point to all ♥ Heart Social Feats for remainder of Scene.	Next crucial Social Feat attempt will fail spectacularly, no matter how well the character performs.	A Nephandus comes to tempt the character with great power (at a great price).

### The Chariot: Upright

0-5 Paradox	6-8 Paradox	9-15 Paradox	16+ Paradox
Next turn, character can make an additional action without penalty.	+15 if Correspondence sphere; +1 per Paradox Point if alteration effect; otherwise +5 to success.	All attacks cause Aggravated Damage for remainder of Scene.	Mage operates under an Accelerate Time effect for rest of Story- he receives an extra action each turn.

### The Chariot: Reversed

0-5 Paradox / Nightmare 0	6-8 Paradox / Nightmare 1-4	9-15 Paradox/ Nightmare 5-8	16+ Paradox / Nightmare 9+
Character must make Willpower check or flee (Vampires and Werewolves will Frenzy, not flee).	-1 per Paradox Point to all ♣ Clubs Physical Feats for remainder of Scene.	Character teleported to a random location 1 mile away per Paradox point.	Caster and all creatures in 20' radius are stranded on the other side of the Gauntlet.

### Strength: Upright

0-5 Paradox	6-8 Paradox	9-15 Paradox	16+ Paradox
Character regains a point of Willpower, up to his maximum.	+1 per Paradox Point to all ♣ Clubs Physical Feats for remainder of Scene.	Character regains all Willpower, plus one additional temporary point.	An angel or spirit appears comes to the wizard's aid when things look darkest.

**Strength: Reversed**

<b>0-5 Paradox / Nightmare 0</b>	<b>6-8 Paradox / Nightmare 1-4</b>	<b>9-15 Paradox/ Nightmare 5-8</b>	<b>16+ Paradox / Nightmare 9+</b>
Discard all ♣ Clubs from your Fortune Hand.	-1 per Paradox Point to all ♣ Clubs Physical Feats for remainder of Scene.	-1 Strength and -1 Stamina for remainder of Story.	Character tormented by nightmares, unable to regain Willpower for rest of Story.

**The Hermit: Upright**

<b>0-5 Paradox</b>	<b>6-8 Paradox</b>	<b>9-15 Paradox</b>	<b>16+ Paradox</b>
Next ♦ Diamond Fortune Card played adds twice its Face Value for that Feat. +5 if spell is a divination.	+1 per Paradox Point to all ♦ Diamond Knowledge Feats for remainder of Scene. +5 if spell uses Time sphere.	+1 per Paradox if spell uses Time sphere; otherwise +1 Intelligence for rest of Story.	Character transported to mountaintop Paradox Realm where he meditates and trains for several years (days pass in reality). While away he can spend XP at 1/2 normal cost.

**The Hermit: Reversed**

<b>0-5 Paradox / Nightmare 0</b>	<b>6-8 Paradox / Nightmare 1-4</b>	<b>9-15 Paradox/ Nightmare 5-8</b>	<b>16+ Paradox / Nightmare 9+</b>
Discard all ♦ Diamonds from Fortune Hand.	-1 per Paradox Point to all ♦ Diamond Knowledge Feats for remainder of Scene.	Character ages 1 year per Paradox Point; loses a point from one ability (Host's choice).	The Questing Beast (that which Mage desires most) appears and draws the character away on a fruitless chase.

**Wheel of Fortune: Upright**

<b>0-5 Paradox</b>	<b>6-8 Paradox</b>	<b>9-15 Paradox</b>	<b>16+ Paradox</b>
Refresh your Fortune Hand (draw up to five cards).	Draw 1 Fortune Card per Paradox Point. These bonus cards may be kept for several Scenes until used.	All Fortune Cards played for remainder of Story add twice their Face Value to Feat Checks.	Character gains 2 to the Luck Merit. No character can have more than 6 points in this Merit.

### Wheel of Fortune: Reversed

<b>0-5 Paradox / Nightmare 0</b>	<b>6-8 Paradox / Nightmare 1-4</b>	<b>9-15 Paradox/ Nightmare 5-8</b>	<b>16+ Paradox / Nightmare 9+</b>
Discard your entire Fortune Hand.	Discard entire Fortune Hand. The character will be unable to draw new cards for 1 turn per Paradox Point.	For remainder of Scene, each Fortune Card is treated as an Ace of that suit (adds one if same suit, otherwise zero).	For remainder of story, each Fortune Card played actually subtracts its Face Value from the Feat Check!

### Justice: Upright

<b>0-5 Paradox</b>	<b>6-8 Paradox</b>	<b>9-15 Paradox</b>	<b>16+ Paradox</b>
Next Feat performed for a just cause is an automatic <i>Fait Accompli</i> .	+1 per Paradox Point to all Knowledge Feats, but -5 to all Social Feats, for remainder of scene.	Can tell truth from lies for remainder of story.	Character becomes an excellent judge, but very aloof and cold. +1 Perception, -1 Charisma.

### Justice: Reversed

<b>0-5 Paradox / Nightmare 0</b>	<b>6-8 Paradox / Nightmare 1-4</b>	<b>9-15 Paradox/ Nightmare 5-8</b>	<b>16+ Paradox / Nightmare 9+</b>
Character must discard half of his Fortune Hand (he chooses).	-1 per Paradox Point to all Knowledge Feats, but +1 to all Social Feats, for remainder of scene.	Character will be very gullible and naïve for remainder of story.	Character will be accused of a crime. Must defend himself and deal with the consequences.

### Hanged Man: Upright

<b>0-5 Paradox</b>	<b>6-8 Paradox</b>	<b>9-15 Paradox</b>	<b>16+ Paradox</b>
Character must discard all Fortune Cards but one. That one card is treated as a Joker when it is played.	Character gains a point of Arete for next spell cast, but must discard all Fortune Cards.	Character gains a point in Arete for remainder of Scene, but must discard all Fortune Cards.	Character goes on a Seeking. Can raise XP to improve Arete by 'cashing out' other stats.

### Hanged Man: Reversed

0-5 Paradox / Nightmare 0	6-8 Paradox / Nightmare 1-4	9-15 Paradox/ Nightmare 5-8	16+ Paradox / Nightmare 9+
All Fortune Cards in hand are treated as ♠ Spades.	-1 per Paradox Point to all Knowledge Feats for remainder of Scene.	Character becomes preoccupied and hopeless. Loses Initiative for remainder of Story.	Character enters Quiet.

### Death: Upright

0-5 Paradox	6-8 Paradox	9-15 Paradox	16+ Paradox
Refresh your Fortune Hand (draw up to 5 cards). +10 to Success if Necromantic effect.	Discard all Fortune Cards of a particular suit (Host's decision), and draw twice that many new cards.	+1 per Paradox to all ♠ Spades Feats for remainder of Scene	Gain one dot in Entropy

### Death: Reversed

0-5 Paradox / Nightmare 0	6-8 Paradox / Nightmare 1-4	9-15 Paradox/ Nightmare 5-8	16+ Paradox / Nightmare 9+
Will not draw a new Fortune Hand at the beginning of the next scene- must continue playing with hand remaining.	The next attack caused on the character will be a critical hit (causing full damage).	All damage taken in combat for remainder of scene is considered aggravated.	Gain the Flaw: Reaper's Touch

### The Devil: Upright

0-5 Paradox	6-8 Paradox	9-15 Paradox	16+ Paradox
Draw next ♥ Heart from Fortune Deck, shuffle deck when done.	+1 per Paradox to ♥ Heart Feats for remainder of Scene.	Manipulation becomes 5 for rest of Story.	Character draws the attention of a Nephandus, who will attempt to convert him.

### The Devil: Reversed

0-5 Paradox / Nightmare 0	6-8 Paradox / Nightmare 1-4	9-15 Paradox/ Nightmare 5-8	16+ Paradox / Nightmare 9+
+1 per Paradox to ♥ Hearts from Fortune Deck.	-1 per Paradox to ♥ Heart Feats for remainder of Scene.	Charisma drops to 1 for remainder of Story.	Character's Nature changes, becoming diametrically opposed.

**The Tower: Upright**

<b>0-5 Paradox</b>	<b>6-8 Paradox</b>	<b>9-15 Paradox</b>	<b>16+ Paradox</b>

**The Tower: Reversed**

<b>0-5 Paradox / Nightmare 0</b>	<b>6-8 Paradox / Nightmare 1-4</b>	<b>9-15 Paradox/ Nightmare 5-8</b>	<b>16+ Paradox / Nightmare 9+</b>

**The Star: Upright**

<b>0-5 Paradox</b>	<b>6-8 Paradox</b>	<b>9-15 Paradox</b>	<b>16+ Paradox</b>

**The Star: Reversed**

<b>0-5 Paradox / Nightmare 0</b>	<b>6-8 Paradox / Nightmare 1-4</b>	<b>9-15 Paradox/ Nightmare 5-8</b>	<b>16+ Paradox / Nightmare 9+</b>

**The Moon: Upright**

<b>0-5 Paradox</b>	<b>6-8 Paradox</b>	<b>9-15 Paradox</b>	<b>16+ Paradox</b>

**The Moon: Reversed**

<b>0-5 Paradox / Nightmare 0</b>	<b>6-8 Paradox / Nightmare 1-4</b>	<b>9-15 Paradox/ Nightmare 5-8</b>	<b>16+ Paradox / Nightmare 9+</b>

**The Sun: Upright**

<b>0-5 Paradox</b>	<b>6-8 Paradox</b>	<b>9-15 Paradox</b>	<b>16+ Paradox</b>

**The Sun: Reversed**

<b>0-5 Paradox / Nightmare 0</b>	<b>6-8 Paradox / Nightmare 1-4</b>	<b>9-15 Paradox/ Nightmare 5-8</b>	<b>16+ Paradox / Nightmare 9+</b>

**Judgement: Upright**

<b>0-5 Paradox</b>	<b>6-8 Paradox</b>	<b>9-15 Paradox</b>	<b>16+ Paradox</b>

**Judgement: Reversed**

<b>0-5 Paradox / Nightmare 0</b>	<b>6-8 Paradox / Nightmare 1-4</b>	<b>9-15 Paradox/ Nightmare 5-8</b>	<b>16+ Paradox / Nightmare 9+</b>

**The World: Upright**

<b>0-5 Paradox</b>	<b>6-8 Paradox</b>	<b>9-15 Paradox</b>	<b>16+ Paradox</b>

**The World: Reversed**

<b>0-5 Paradox / Nightmare 0</b>	<b>6-8 Paradox / Nightmare 1-4</b>	<b>9-15 Paradox/ Nightmare 5-8</b>	<b>16+ Paradox / Nightmare 9+</b>

## Chapter the Sixth: Casting Magick

Determining the *Target Number* for a Mystick Feat is much the same as for mundane Feats. The Target Number is usually between 3 and 20, secretly determined by the Host, and based on the Difficulty of the Feat:

**TABLE 6-1: TARGET NUMBERS**

Difficulty	Target Number
Easy	3
Routine	5
Moderate	7
Difficult	10
Extremely Difficult	15
Supernatural	20
Mythic Feat	30
Nigh-Impossible	50+

Things a Host should consider when determining the Difficulty: the spell's Sphere ratings, whether it is Casual or Vulgar, the Mage's Resonance, if Sleeper Witnesses are about, the mage's style of casting, the conditions for the casting, etc.

The Host should also keep in mind a defender's Attributes and Abilities when determining the Target Number (much like a Resisted Feat Check). For example, the Difficulty Target for reading someone's thoughts could be the person's Wits + Subterfuge.

Once the player has drawn as many Mystick Cards as she wishes and added their values to the Feat's Face Value to determine a total, the Host determines the degree of success the character has in the Feat:

**Botch:** If the character only amassed half of the Target Number or less, he botches. The spell fails and the caster adds points to his Paradox Pool.

**Casual Botch:** one point of Paradox per dot in the highest Sphere used.

**Vain Botch:** one point of Paradox + one per dot in the highest Sphere used.

**Vain Botch with Sleeper Witnesses:** two points of Paradox + two points per dot in the highest Sphere used.

The Mage may spend a point of Willpower to cancel the botch (the spell still fails, but he does not gain Paradox points).

**EXAMPLE:** Electra is attempting to conjure a dagger in her hand in a crowded ballroom (a Matter •••, Prime •• effect). She has an Arete of two. There are Sleepers about, but she is reaching into her gown to "pull the hidden dagger out" (making it Casual). The Host determines this will have a Difficulty of 7 (if she was going to be Vulgar and make it appear in her hand suddenly, the Difficulty could be 15 or 20!) Since the effect's highest Sphere is Matter, she needs Swords or Wands to fuel the effect.

She has an Arete of two, so she may draw two cards. The first card is a Queen of Cups. This only adds one towards success.

She decides to draw again, and the Two of Pentacles is revealed. Again, not what she needs, so it adds one.

She decides to spend a point of Quintessence to draw another card. Unfortunately, she draws the Seven of Cups, which only brings her total to three!

She decides not to spend anymore Quintessence or Willpower to

draw more cards. Obviously it was not meant to be, and she does not want to risk drawing a Major Arcana and calling down the wrath of a Scourge, here in public.

So, Electra's casting achieved less than half the target of 7, so it is a Casual Botch. She spends a point of Willpower to keep from having to add 3 Paradox to her Pool.

If Electra had been arrogant enough to make the dagger appear in her hand, she could have earned eight Paradox for her hubris!

**Failure:** If the character's total is less than the Target Number, the character fails the Feat. The character may attempt the Feat again, but at a higher difficulty.

If the casting was Vain, the failure causes the mage to gain one point of Paradox.

EXAMPLE: To continue the previous example- Electra decides after drawing the Two of Pentacles she will spend a Quintessence point and draw again. This time she draws the Four of Wands. This adds four to her total, bringing it to six. She does not feel the hilt of the dagger materializing in her hand, so she knows she is not yet successful, but she does not want to risk drawing a Major Arcana. She stops, hoping it is not a botch. It is not, so the spell simply fails. Since it was casual, she gains no Paradox. She could try again next turn, but the Target Number will be even higher...

**Partial Success:** If the character's total is equal to or greater than the Target Number, the Feat is a partial success. The Host uses his best judgment to determine what the result is.

EXAMPLE: Instead of drawing the Four of Wands in the last example, say Electra drew the Six of Swords. This brings her total to eight. She feels the dagger appear in her hand. Success! She declares she is done casting (and drawing cards).

The Host tells her the dagger she draws out from under her cloak is rusted and the blade will probably snap after the first hit...

**Complete Success:** If the total is half again the Target Number, the Feat is entirely successful.

EXAMPLE: Instead of drawing the Six of Swords, Electra drew the Nine of Swords, bringing her total 11. The dagger she draws out is as sharp and strong as any she could by from the local weaponsmith...

**Fait Accompli:** If the total is equal to or greater than twice the Target Number, the Feat is an astounding success. Fortune smiles upon the character and something beneficial (Host's discretion) happens.

EXAMPLE: Instead of drawing the Nine of Swords, Electra drew the Magician. This is one of her Fate Cards, and adds 15 to her total (bringing it to 17). She stops the casting and the dagger she draws out has a silver blade etched with runes, a wicked edge, and a sapphire on the pommel. It is truly a masterwork, and could be possibly further enchanted and made into a Talisman!

All Mystick Cards drawn during a feat check are shuffled back into the Mystick Deck at the end of the turn.

**Casting in Concert:** Casting can be a collaborative effort. The collaborators must be able to communicate freely during the casting. Organizing the rite may take a turn or longer per caster. Once everything has been established, the group may work together in one of three ways:

- Each mage that has the Sphere ratings necessary to perform the effect makes a normal Mystick check, as if he was casting the spell alone. All points are added together; the result counts towards the total needed.

- If less knowledgeable magi (or magi with different casting styles) assist a more powerful mage, each assistant adds one to the check's Face Value. Each assistant may spend Willpower/Quintessence to draw additional Mystick cards.

- Un-Awakened companions may assist the magus. Add one to the Face Value per five assistants. The non-Mages cannot play any cards (Fortune or Mystickal) to fuel the effect. These helpers do not count as Sleeper Witnesses of Vain magic under these circumstances—they *want* things to happen!

If any participant in a collaborative ritual draws a Major Arcana, the Boon or Bane will effect all involved. The Paradox Pools of all involved in the ritual are averaged together to determine the magnitude of the Scourging.

**Resisting Magick:** A target who is aware of an incoming magickal attack and has an action available may be able to resist it.

**Dodge:** Direct attacks (lightning bolts, falling buildings, hail stones and the like) can be dodged like any other

physical assault, so long as 1) the victim knows the attack is coming and 2) has an action available this turn. Most direct assaults are visible; those that are invisible can still be detected with a ♠ Spades Perception + Awareness check. This check is a free action on the part of the defender(s), Target Numbers are determined by the Host.

The defender subtracts his Dexterity + Dodge total from the attacker's Face Value. The Defender may also play Fortune Cards to decrease the attacker's total further (♣ Clubs subtract full value, all others one).

**Soak:** If the magick causes non-aggravated damage, the victim can attempt to soak it. Subtract the victim's Stamina from the attacker's Face Value. Soaking is a free action.

**Willpower Checks:** Mental attacks (commands, possessions, charms, telepathy) can be countered by a Willpower check if the defender knows what is happening. The defender can make a ♠ Spades Perception + Awareness check (a free action) to detect the alien presence his brain.

Subtract the target's current Willpower rating from the attacker's success total. Also, the defender may potentially play any suit of Fortune Card for full value if they can give a plausible explanation (as per **Willpower Checks** in **Chapter the Third**).

**Countermagic:** To employ countermagic, the defender must be a mage with at least one dot one of the Spheres being used in the attack, a vampiric Thaumaturgist, an Un-Awakened magician, a werebeast, a faerie, or a mortal with True Faith.

Performing countermagic requires an action.

For each dot in the relevant trait (Arete for a mage, Thaumaturgy for a vampire, Faith, etc.); or for each point of Gnosis or Glamour spent by a Garou or Faerie respectively, the defender gets to draw a card from the Mystick Deck. Cards that are the *opposite* suit of those the attacker needs to fuel his effect subtract full value from the attacker's success total. All others subtract one point. If a Major Arcana is drawn, all casting this turn stops (including the attacker's), paradox points are determined, and something happens to all involved!

EXAMPLE: The Hermetic Mage Gottfried is attacking Harriet with a lightning bolt (Forces •••, Prime ••). Harriet has not yet acted this round, so she prepares a shield (she possesses Forces) to absorb the bolt.

Gottfried is a skilled magus and has an Arete of six. He needs Swords and Wands to fuel it. He draws the Six of Wands.

Harriet's countermagic will require Cups and Pentacles. She has an Arete of Three. She draws the Nine of Swords, bringing the Hermetic's Face Value down to five.

Gottfried draws again, and pulls the Seven of Wands, bringing his total to 12.

Harriet draws the Four of Pentacles, bringing the Face Value down to eight.

The Hermetic is angered by the girl's impudence and draws the Two of Pentacles, bringing his Face Value to nine.

Harriet passes this round of bidding. Enraged that he might fail to smite her, Gottfried draws again and

pulls The Emperor, one of his Fate Cards. This brings his total to 24 (9+15).

In desperation, Harriet uses her last point of Arete to draw again. She pulls the Queen of Cups, which drops Gottfried's Face Value to 11 (24-13).

Gottfried is truly angered now, and pours more energy into his spell. He draws the King of Wands, bringing his total to 25 (11+14).

Harriet has used all her Arete, she has no Quintessence, and dares not use a Willpower point because she only has one point remaining (if she had the points to spend, she would have nothing to lose—even drawing a Major Arcana could potentially disrupt the casting).

With a shout of victory, Gottfried draws one last time on his Arete. Unfortunately for Harriet, the Hermetic's hubris is rewarded! He draws the Queen of Swords, bringing his total to 38 (25+13). Gottfried's casting is done.

The only thing Harriet can do is soak the damage. She subtracts her Stamina 3 from the total, bringing it to 35.

His Face Value is double the Target of 15. Things look grim for poor Harriet as blue lighting streaks from Gottfried's outstretched fingers...

**Spell Effects:** When you need to determine the range, duration, and/or damage caused by a successful effect, the number the casting succeeded the Target Number by is used. If several factors need to be determined, the successes must be divided between them by the character.

**TABLE 6-2: TIME RANGES**

Successes	Timespan
One	Within a month
Two	One season
Three	One year
Four	Five years
Five	10 years
Six to nine	50 years
10 to 14	100 years
15 to 20	500 years
21+	1,000+ years

**TABLE 6-3: CONNECTION RANGES**

Successes	Range or Connection
One	Line of sight/ Blood relation; Body part
Two	Very familiar (home)/ best friend, prized possession
Three	Familiar (town square)/ cousin; possession
Four	Visited once/ Acquaintance; Anything used once
Five	Saw or heard about it/ stranger; item touched casually
Six	Anywhere on the continent/ no connection
Seven +	Anywhere on the planet

**TABLE 6-4: DAMAGE**

Successes	Damage (drop all fractions)
One to Four	One
Five to 12	Successes x0.25
13 to 50	Successes x0.5
51+	Successes x0.75

**Forces** add one success when used for damage; **Mind** subtracts one success when inflicting damage.

**TABLE 6-5: DURATION**

Successes	Duration
One	One turn
Two	One scene
Three	One day
Four	One story
Five	Six months
Six +	Host's option

**EXAMPLE:** Gottfried's lightning bolt needed a 15 to succeed. He drew 35 points total. Therefore, his spell succeeded by 20. It uses Forces, which adds one success, making it 21.

Harriet gets blasted by the mage's wrath, taking 10 points of damage!

**EXAMPLE:** Professor Murphy is using his Electrostatic Particle Accelerator to cause Molecular Agitation in a street thug he is fighting. Molecular Agitation is a Forces ••, Prime •• effect. The Host assigns it a Difficulty Target of 15, it is a Vulgar effect with Sleeper witnesses, and Forces is dominate- Swords and Wands are needed to fuel it.

Murphy draws the Ten of Wands. His Arete is three, so he decides to draw again. He draws the Eight of Swords. This brings his total to 18.

The only recourse the thug has against the attack is soak (he has already taken his action this turn when he

jumped the Professor with a knife, so he is unable to dodge). However, the damage caused by Murphy's effect is aggravated, so a soak is not possible.

Murphy decides not to draw again, he is reasonably sure he has beaten the Target Number, and he does not wish to risk drawing a Major Arcana, so he stops.

This is more than 100% of the Target, so the casting is a success (the Host determines that a partial success is not applicable here, so he rules it a complete success). Murphy beat the Target Number by three, so he has three successes to divvy up. In this case, the only factor he really needs to worry about is damage. Forces adds an additional success, bringing the total to four, so the thug takes one point of damage from the attack.

EXAMPLE: Madame du Pré, a fortune-teller, is using a crystal ball to determine the future of a young stranger sitting across from her. She is using a Connection ••, Time •• effect. The Host determines Time is dominate, so Pentacles and Wands are needed to fuel it. He assigns a Difficulty Target 7 (the young man, although a sleeper, is paying her to divine his future, so the effect is casual).

Madame du Pré's Arete is five. The first card she draws from the Mystick Deck is the Three of Cups. Not the suit she needs, so she has a total of one.

She draws again. The King of Wands. This adds 14, bringing her total to 15. She decides to draw again (she wants to impress the wealthy young man with an extremely accurate reading).

Fortune is smiling upon her! She draws the Four of Pentacles. This brings her total to 19. She decides to stop. This

is more than twice the Target, so it is a *fait accompli*. The Host says strange colors and half seen shapes flow and melt within her ball, captivating the young man. He is in awe of Madame's ability!

Du Pré exceeded the Target by 12. She knows she'll need to spend five of those successes on the Connection range (since the young man is a complete stranger). She also spends two of them on duration, to make the effect last for a scene. The remaining five she spends on Time range- she can now view as far as ten years into the young man's future, and has the entire scene to describe what she sees! A truly fantastic divination!

EXAMPLE: Nikolai is attempting to charm a young heiress, but he's not just willing to rely on his mundane abilities of seduction! He's using a Mind ••• effect on her (Cups or Swords to fuel). The Host determines the Target to be 10, but the effect is casual (relying only on a rose and a few phrases in Tuscan).

The first card drawn from the Mystick Deck is the Six of Wands. Not the right suit, so it is worth one point.

Nikolai has an Arete of three, so he decides to draw again. He draws the Seven of Wands, bringing his total to two.

He draws a third and final time on his Arete, and pulls the Queen of Pentacles. His total is only three.

Desperate, Nikolai spends a point of Willpower to draw another card (he has no Quintessence unfortunately). He draws the Queen of Cups. This brings his total to 16.

However, the heiress succeeds a Perception + Awareness check-- she feels the strange rush of emotions and

tries to resist. She can make a Willpower check to resist Nikolai's amorous advances. Her current Willpower is six, bringing Nikolai's total to ten. The Host decides to make Nik sweat a little more, and plays the Eight of ♣ Clubs from her Fortune Hand, telling Nikolai that the Heiress slaps him across the face, spoiling the mood and bringing his total to two!

Nikolai doesn't dare spend anymore Willpower to draw further, he knows this'll probably be a botch and wants to save the point to counteract its effects.

It is indeed a botch. The two points Nikolai netted are less than half the ten he needed, so he gains three points of Paradox. Nikolai spends a point of Willpower to cancel that, rubs his cheek, and skulks off, tail between his legs.

## Chapter the Seventh: Cainite Disciplines

Determining the *Target Number* for a Mystick Feat is much the same as for mundane Feats. The Target Number is usually between 3 and 20, secretly determined by the Host, and based on the Difficulty of the Feat:

## Chapter the Eighth: Garou Gifts & Rites

Determining the *Target Number* for a Mystick Feat is much the same as for mundane Feats. The Target Number is usually between 3 and 20, secretly determined by the Host, and based on the Difficulty of the Feat:

## Chapter the Ninth: *Faerie Cantrips*

Determining the *Target Number* for a Mystick Feat is much the same as for mundane Feats. The Target Number is usually between 3 and 20, secretly determined by the Host, and based on the Difficulty of the Feat:

## *Appendix I: The Schools of Fencing*

When a character takes the Fencing skill, he must choose which school he is studying. Also, each character must have a master he is learning from (a master must have two dots higher in the skill, to the maximum of 5). Note that certain masters only teach certain moves, so the acquisition of special maneuvers (known as Secret Passes) is based on role-playing and not on the player picking from a list.

Each of the schools listed below teach all of the maneuvers that can be found in **Sorcerer's Crusade** (parry, bind, disarm, fletch, riposte, thrust, tranche, et. al.), or the **Swashbuckler's Handbook**.

Note it is possible for a character to learn a second school of fencing, but this may cause some animosity with his former master and peers of his former school.

### **Secret Passes**

Secret passes are special maneuvers that the character must spend a great deal of time learning and perfecting. Each time a character increases his Fencing skill in a particular school he has the opportunity to learn new passes from his master. The method of progression within a school is as follows:

**TABLE ONE:  
SECRET PASS PROGRESSION**

- Character learns one Basic Pass
- Character learns one Basic Pass
- Character learns one Difficult Pass
- Character learns one Difficult Pass
- Character learns one Master Pass

So by the time a character has reached 5 in his school of fencing, he will know two basic, two difficult, and one master pass.

To learn a secret pass, a character must accumulate one month's training with a master and make a successful ♦ Diamond Intelligence + Fencing check. The difficulty of the Feat is based on the rank of the pass being learned:

**TABLE TWO:  
LEARNING DIFFICULTY**

<b>Pass:</b>	<b>Target Number:</b>
Basic Secret Pass	6
Difficult Secret Pass	10
Master Secret Pass	15
Death Move	20

Each additional month spent in training with the master reduces the Target by -1, to a maximum of -3. Willpower can be spent to draw additional Fortune Cards. The Target Number must be reached in order to learn the pass being taught.

If the Feat Check fails, the character cannot try to learn the Pass again until he gains another dot in his Fencing skill with that school.

In addition, a character can continue to learn additional secret passes after reaching 5<sup>th</sup> level in his school by spending additional XP. Additional secret passes have the following costs:

**TABLE THREE: XP COSTS OF  
ADDITIONAL SECRET PASSES**

<b>Pass:</b>	<b>XP Cost:</b>
Basic Secret Pass	4 XP
Difficult Secret Pass	8 XP
Master Secret Pass	16 XP
Death Move	32 XP

A character can never have more Difficult Passes than Basic Passes, or more Master Passes than Difficult Passes. He can not learn the Death Move until he has learned two Master Passes.

### Stealing Secret Passes

Secret passes are just that—secret. One does not want to overuse them in public for fear that another swordsman might see and copy them. Generally, a swordsman would use such moves only in combats to the death, or at least duels held in secret.

Allowing someone to steal a move is not only dishonorable, but it can also be grounds for punishment by the school. Steal passes, while not dishonorable, does anger the members of the school from which it is stolen.

A character can only steal passes he is capable of learning. For example, someone with Fencing 3 could not steal a Master stroke. In order to steal someone's move, the character must see the pass used firsthand with no distractions (such as being in battle). A character fighting nearby could not see the pass well enough to copy it. Even if it was used against him personally, a character would not be able to duplicate the move.

If all of these qualifications are met, then the character can attempt a ♦ Diamond Intelligence + Fencing check. The difficulty is per **Table Two** above, with a +5 penalty. If this check is successful, the character must practice the move (and cannot use it in combat) until he has the XP to spend on learning the move (see **Table Three** above). Once the character has spent the XP, he has mastered the stolen move and can add it to his repertoire.

### Using Secret Passes

The rapier is the most appropriate weapon for these moves, but any one-handed sword will suffice (subject to Host approval). Rapiers receive no penalty; other swords receive a +1 penalty to all secret pass attacks (see **Table Four** below).

The player must declare during initiative he is going to attempt to use a secret pass. By attempting this difficult action, he adds a certain number to the feat's Target Number. The exact number is listed on **Table Four**:

**TABLE FOUR:  
TARGET NUMBER MODIFIERS**

	Number Added to Target:		
Pass	Rapier	Sword	
Basic	5	6	
Difficult	6	7	
Master	7	8	
Death	8	9	

If the character scores at least a Partial Success with the attack (attains 100% of the Target Number), he succeeds in using the pass.

**The effect of a secret pass is always in addition to normal damage unless otherwise specified in the description.**

### Fencing Schools

Secret passes differ according to school. The four most famous fighting schools in Europe are the Florentine, the Milanese, the Venetian, and the Spanish Schools. These schools distinguish themselves by their differing philosophies on the art of fencing. There are masters and instructors of these schools in many of the major cities in Europe who will be willing to teach a

pass to a student who pass a series of tests, offer payment, perform a service, or some other requirement demanded by the Host.

The schools each have a secret phrase or signal that lets members identify one another. Someone who performs a secret pass and cannot identify himself as a member of that school could be in for a bit of trouble!

### The Florentine School

This school originated in the city of Florence, but it has become popular throughout Europe. It focuses on the use of two weapons, often of equal length, alternating between defense and attack. Characters employing this school of fencing can choose to either: use one weapon as a shield (adding one to the attacker's difficulty); or attack with both weapons (dividing his Face Value between the two, but adding a point to the Face Value before it is split).

To be a member of this school, characters must have a Stamina of at least 4.

### Florentine Secret Passes

#### Basic Passes

##### 1d10

1-3 **Michelangelo's two-step:** This attack can be used only on the swordsman's first attack (in any given turn). With it, the swordsman sets up his next attack, in which he will use his secondary weapon at a -2 Difficulty.

4-6 **Swift sting:** This attack inflicts a wound to the opponent's sword arm. The Difficulty of the foe's attacks increase by +1 until healed. (Effect is cumulative with each swift sting until +10;

then, the foe loses all use of that arm).

7-9 **Slow counter-step:** This attack automatically puts the opponent off balance until the end of the following turn; all attacks against him are made at -2 Difficulty.

10 **Stefano's double-dive:** This pass can only be used on the swordsman's first attack in any given turn. This move results in creating a opening which the fighter can exploit and hit with both weapons. Damage for each attack is determined by the degree of success by which the double-dive succeeded.

### Difficult Passes

#### 1d10

1-4 **Kiss of steel:** The swordsman hits opponent with weapon hilt; opponent must make a successful ♣ Clubs Stamina check, Target Number 8, or be stunned, losing all actions for one turn.

5-7 **Jiovanni's ironsnap:** The swordsman pins foe's weapon. If used against an opponent fighting with one weapon, the next attack automatically hits with an additional +2 Damage, unless the opponent uses his action (if he hasn't already used it) to make a successful opposed Strength check to free his weapon. If the Strength check is botched by either swordsman, their weapon breaks. This attack inflicts no damage.

8-10 **Two-handed farewell:** No matter which attack it is performed with, this pass inflicts both weapons' damage, even if one of them has already been used to attack that turn; this does

not negate any prior attacks. The amount of damage each weapon does is determined by the degree of success of the pass.

### Master Passes

#### 1d10

- 1-5 **Demarco's block and strike:** This attack must be on the first attack in any given turn. The first weapon inflicts no damage, but the second weapon does maximum damage if it hits. The swordsman also automatically gains initiative in the next turn. If the opponent has not attacked this turn, his next attack is automatically parried.
- 6-10 **Alphonso's blurring tower:** The swordsman whirls both blades so quickly that the opponent is confused, missing all attacks until the end of the next turn and all attacks against him are at -2 Difficulty.

### Death Move

**Florentine necktie:** The swordsman strikes with both weapons, opening the arteries in the foe's neck. Opponent can no longer fight and dies in 1d10 turns if not healed in that time. This is treated as aggravated damage and can only be healed by supernatural means.

### The Milanese School

Originating in Tuscany and Milan, this school focuses on force. Practitioners prefer moves that display strength and power. To be a member of this school, a character must have a Strength of at least 4.

### Milanese Secret Passes

#### Basic Passes

#### 1d10

- 1-2 **Bonaro's salute:** This attack is a crushing blow to the opponent's head. The opponent must make a successful ♣Clubs Stamina check, Target 8, or be stunned, automatically missing his next attack.
- 3-5 **Othello's charge:** The swordsman implements a forceful forward attack. The opponent must make a Strength check, Target 10, or be forced backward 1d10 feet. This is especially useful when fighting on a ledge or cliff.
- 6-7 **Ducal masquerade:** The swordsman distracts the opponent and rushes in, disarming him. The swordsman automatically gains initiative next round and a +2 to his next attack. This attack inflicts no damage.
- 8-10 **Marco's trounce:** The swordsman attacks forcefully enough to knock the foe off balance. The opponent must make a successful ♣Clubs Dexterity + Dodge feat, Target 10, or be thrown to the ground. His next action must be spent picking himself up.

#### Difficult Passes

#### 1d10

- 1-3 **Iron lunge:** The swordsman gets to make another attack this turn, at full Face Value, even if he doesn't have another action available. Success for this additional attack is determined normally.

- 4-6 **Battle royale:** The swordsman runs his sword through the opponent, doing maximum damage. The opponent must make a Willpower check, Target 6, or surrender.
- 7-10 **Shattering ram:** The swordsman strikes foe's weapon with his own sword, using massive force. The opponent must make a ♣ Clubs Stamina + Fencing check, Target 10. If he succeeds, he is disarmed. If he fails, his weapon is shattered. This attack inflicts no damage.

### Master Strokes

#### 1d10

- 1-5 **Scarlet veil:** The swordsman gouges out one of the foe's eyes. The foe now has the One Eye Flaw, and suffers all applicable penalties. A second successful stroke will result in the Blind Flaw.
- 6-10 **Sudden squall:** The swordsman successfully hits for maximum damage and grabs a nearby object, hitting the opponent for an additional damage equal to his Strength.

### Death Move

**Surgeon's knife:** The swordsman disembowels foe. Opponent can no longer fight and will die in 1d10 turns. This is treated as aggravated damage and can only be healed by supernatural means.

## The Venetian School

This school is a favorite of swashbucklers throughout the courts of Europe. It focuses on dexterity, speed,

acrobatics, and fancy footwork. To be a member of this school, a character must have the Acrobatics skill or a Dexterity of at least 4. This school also favors the use of a buckler or some other item used in the off-hand for defense (main-gauche, cloak, hat, etc.).

## Venetian Secret Passes

### Basic Passes

#### 1d10

- 1-2 **Lazaro's death wish:** This attack inflicts a painful wound to the opponent's side. All attacks against the foe are at -2 Difficulty until the wound is healed. (The effect is cumulative with each pass until -10, then the attack inflicts maximum damage).
- 3-5 **Rapier's harvest:** The swordsman can cut any single nonliving object within reach, such as a pouch, rope, candle, belt, or any object that can normally be cut with a rapier. This attack does no damage.
- 6-8 **Republican panache:** The swordsman's spectacular skill requires foe to make a Willpower check, Difficulty 6, or flee.
- 9-10 **Silk and steel:** This attack lets the swordsman swirl a cloak to confuse his foe and entangle his weapon, causing him to automatically miss the next attack.

### Difficult Passes

#### 1d10

- 1-3 **Master seal:** The swordsman carves a personal mark into the foe's forehead or chest. The resulting scar requires supernatural healing to erase.

- 4-6 **Swashbuckler's gambit:** The swordsman tumbles under the foe's weapon and inflicts maximum damage on this attack.
- 7-10 **Yvon's slip:** The swordsman skillfully steps around a foe blocking the way (including through a doorway), automatically gaining initiative in the next round and a -2 to the Difficulty of his next attack.

### Master strokes

#### 1d10

- 1-5 **Inigo's rebuke:** Swordsman creates an opening for an additional attack with a full Face Value, which he must take immediately.
- 6-10 **Swashbuckler's eyebrow:** The swordsman slashes the opponent on the forehead, inflicting maximum damage and temporarily blinding the foe, who attacks at +2 Difficulty for the next four turns.

### Death move

**Ranieri's Heartbreak:** The swordsman pierces foe through the chest. Opponent can no longer fight and dies within 1d10 turns if not healed in that time. This damage is aggravated and can only be healed by supernatural means.

## The Spanish School

This school originated on the Iberian Peninsula. Popular with both the nobility and the honor bound, this school teaches that superior skill is shown through control. Anyone can kill an opponent, but a superior swordsman can prove his skill without causing death. A

duel ends when an opponent is disarmed or, occasionally, at first blood. Though practitioners of this style do not like to kill, they will defend themselves to the death if no other alternative presents itself.

To be a member of this school, the character must have a Charisma of at least 3.

## Spanish secret passes

### Basic Pass

#### 1d10

- 1-2 **Corsair's handshake:** This disarm attack works even against an opponent using a two weapon fighting style. Opponent must make a ♣ Clubs Strength check, Difficulty 6, or drop all weapons he is currently holding. This attack inflicts no damage.
- 3-5 **Chevalier's reverence:** This attack inflicts a wound to the opponent's leg. Foe is -3 to Initiative until the leg is healed. This effect is cumulative, so the second pass causes Initiative to be -6, and the third at -9. The next hit will cause the opponent to lose use of the leg.
- 6-7 **Swordsman's slice:** The swordsman can cut any single nonliving object within reach, such as a pouch, rope, candle, belt, or other object which can normally be cut with a rapier. This attack inflicts no damage.
- 8-10 **Show of force:** The fencer unbalances foe and forces him backward. Opponent must make a ♣ Clubs Dexterity check, Difficulty 6, or be knocked to the ground. His next action must be to pick himself up. The swordsman can choose to

execute this attack for no damage.

### **Difficult Pass**

#### **1d10**

1-4 **Royal display:** The swordsman makes a flourish with his blade, demonstrating such superior skill that his opponent must make a Willpower check, Target 7, or surrender.

5-7 **Chevalier's accolade:** This attack inflicts damage to the opponent's sword arm. Foe fights at -2 to all attacks until arm is healed. Effects are cumulative the first two times this is used, on the third hit, the opponent can no longer use that arm.

8-10 **Spanish standoff:** The swordsman locks swords with the opponent, closing in until they are face to face. This effectively prevents any sword attacks by either until someone steps away. If the opponent steps away first, the swordsman automatically gains the next initiative with a +2 to the next attack. However, the opponent can attempt an opposed ♣ Clubs Strength check to push away; if he succeeds, neither receive any subsequent bonuses.

### **Master stroke**

#### **1d10**

1-5 **Musketeer sundown:** This attack inflicts a hard blow to the side of the opponent's head. Foe must make a successful ♣ Clubs Stamina check, Difficulty 6, or fall unconscious. This attack inflicts half damage.

6-10 **Honorbound's courtesy:** The swordsman disarms the opponent and shreds his garments over a

vital area. The opponent must make a Willpower check, Difficulty 8, or flee. The swordsman can choose to execute this attack for no damage.

### **Death move**

**Ramón's sentence:** The swordsman severs (or at least completely disables) opponent's sword arm at the elbow; opponent automatically loses half of his remaining Health Levels, and he must make a successful ♣ Clubs Stamina check, Difficulty 10, or fall unconscious. He will bleed to death in 1-5 hours if not healed.

## Appendix II: Merits and flaws

A character can take no more than seven points worth of Flaws. The rules for the following Merits and Flaws have been modified for *The Great Game*:

**Code of Honor (1 Point Merit):** When the character resists supernatural coercion, he subtracts an additional 2 points from the attacker's Face Value for the Mystick Check.

**Cupid's Gift (1 point Merit):** On any feat check involving Seduction or Subterfuge, add two to the Face Value.

**Noble Bearing (1 point Merit):** Any Social Feat Check in conciliatory situations receives an additional two to the Face Value.

**Noble Blood (1 point Merit):** Grants character a +2 to Social Face Values with people positively disposed to his ancestry, and a -2 with those negatively inclined.

**Traveler's Intuition (1 point Merit):** Grants character +2 to Science: Navigation Feat Checks.

**Acute Senses (1-3 point Merit):** +1 to Perception feats relating to sharp senses(s), and add one success to any Rank 1 Perception spell based on that sense.

**Luck (2/4/6 Point Merit):** The character draws additional Fortune Cards

into his hand at the beginning of each Scene. The two point merit allows one additional card. For four points, he may draw two, and for six (the maximum rating), he draws three additional cards.

**Enchanting Gaze (2 point Merit):** Grants character a +2 to Social Face Values that involve eye contact.

**Graceful (2 point Merit):** +1 to Dexterity based feats.

**Honeyed Tongue (2 point Merit):** Draw an additional Fortune Card to play immediately when making Subterfuge Feat Checks. +2 to any other Social checks requiring glib assurances.

**Innocent (2 point Merit):** Grants character a +2 to Subterfuge or Manipulation Feat Checks.

**Natural Linguist (2 point Merit):** +3 to any Feat Check involving a spoken or written language.

**Poison Resistance (2 point Merit):** Character can make a ♣ Clubs Stamina check to resist a normally fatal dose of poison (the Difficulty Target determined by the Host, usually between 7 and 15).

**Ties (2 point Merit):** +1 or 2 to the appropriate Social checks.

**Hands of Daedalus (3 point Merit):** +1 to all Feat Checks involving designing, making, or shaping something.

**Mark of Favor (3 Point Merit):** The character gets a +2 to any Social check involving worshippers of his religion.

**Age (1 Point Flaw):** -1 to -3 to Social checks, depending on the situation or individuals involved.

**Craven Image (1 Point Flaw):** -2 to Social checks appropriate to the situation.

**Stumbletongue (1 Point Flaw):** -2 to Social checks, especially in situations where eloquence is important.

**Clumsy (2 Point Flaw):** -2 to any Dexterity related check except combat situations.

**Infamy (2 Point Flaw):** -2 to any check to impress, seduce, or petition someone. Conversely, check to threaten or frighten someone- or impress an evil person, get a +2.

**Deformity (3 Point Flaw):** -2 to all Appearance related feats, and to some Dexterity feats (depending on the nature of the disability).