Mythic

Create dynamic role-playing
adventures without preparation

For use as a stand-alone game or
as a supplement for other systems

Mythic

Adventure Generator
Role Playing System

by Tom Pigeon

Credits

"To help, to continually help
and share, that is the sum
of all knowledge;
that is the meaning of art."

Eleonora Duse

The author extends his heartfelt thanks to those friendly souls who helped make this book come true. Without contributors, playtesters, friends, helpful advice, guidance and criticism, there would be no Mythic.

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Mythic

Introduction

Welcome to Mythic, a universal, improvisational role-playing game. If you are a veteran role-player, then you will likely find much in this chapter that is old hat to you. However, it still contains concepts unique to Mythic, so you'd best give this section at least a cursory skim through. If you're new to the role-play gaming world, then this section will hopefully clear up any confusion you have as to what this craziness is all about.

WHAT IS A ROLE-PLAYING GAME?

Those veterans who are still with me are probably groaning now. You have seen this headline in various forms about a zillion times. For those of you new to this genre of games, you're in for a treat. A role-playing game is, basically, virtual reality. People sit around a table, pretend to be characters (just like in a movie), and go on quests and missions.

The action in a role-playing game (or RPG) takes place entirely in your imagination. Your character can be anyone, or anything, you want to be. There are no limits. The rules set forward in this RPG, as all others, give you the parameters you need to operate in this virtual reality. This mostly consists of rules for advancing the story and performing "task resolution," or seeing whether a character's action succeeds or fails.

Following are some terms you should become familiar with:

Universal - Mythic is a Universal RPG. This means that the rules within these pages are generalized to any type of game you want to play. They work just as well for a science fiction world as they do for a fantasy or super-hero universe. Setting-specific RPGs have rules specifically tailored to a unique genre and place, such as swashbuckling on the high seas or modern spies. Mythic's open-ended nature allows you to import elements from other games to create your own worlds, or you can start with a brand new setting made up on the spot. Although Mythic's rules are universal to begin with, setting-specific rules will evolve throughout game-play, giving you the best of both worlds.

Improvisation - I call this an "improvisational" game because the action and details in a Mythic adventure are concocted as you go along. In most RPGs, a Game Master (GM) cooks up an adventure, complete with details, and then runs the players through that adventure. In Mythic, you can start an adventure with zero details. The players, and the Game Master (if there is one), come up with the details as the adventure progresses. The mechanics of Mythic are designed to facilitate this process smoothly.

Adventure - This is the term Mythic uses for a complete, played-out storyline. This consists of a quest or mission, from beginning to end. Usually, an adventure will take from one to two play sessions (about two to four hours or more) of actual game time. You can think of this as a complete story, like a movie or book.

Game Master - The Game Master (or GM) is the person who commonly runs an adventure for the players. The GM is in charge of all details concerning the world of the players and their characters. They describe the scenes, tell what is happening, and decide the outcome of character actions. You can think of the GM as the story narrator. She is also the person who knows and applies all of the game rules. You will find that in Mythic, however, a GM is not always necessary.

Emulator - I call Mythic a Game Master Emulator because you can use Mythic to take the place of a real, live GM. You will see what I mean later.

Player - The player is you, the person playing this game. We use this term to distinguish you from your character ...

Character - The character is the player's persona in the game world. You will use a character sheet to record all details about your character, just like a dossier in the real world. Characters can, and probably should, have personalities much different from your own. A character can be anyone you want.

Statistics - Characters are described using statistics of various sorts. These are details, such as "strength" and skills, which describe who your character is and what he can do.

Attributes - These are statistics that describe a character's basic, innate abilities. Attributes are usually a set, finite list, such as: strength, intelligence, intuition, agility, etc.

Attributes are used to decide the outcome of some tasks and help in the development of skills and abilities.

Abilities - These are statistics that describe what a character can do. Usually, this is a list of skills. These can also be powers and supernatural abilities.

Strengths & Weaknesses - Many characters will have specific strengths and weaknesses beyond their attributes and abilities. This usually takes the form of bonuses and penalties for performing certain tasks. For instance, a character with Eagle Eyes may gain a bonus when firing a ranged weapon. A character with Sea-Sickness may acquire a combat penalty when fighting on a ship.

Details - "Detail" is a catchall word for any statistic, attribute, or ability of a character or item within a Mythic adventure. "Strength" is a detail for a character. "Breakability" is a detail for a window. "Password Complexity" may be a detail of a computer firewall. Details in Mythic are decided as you go along an adventure. For instance, a window's Breakability detail is not important until a character tries to break one.

Ranks - Every detail in Mythic has a corresponding rank. A rank is a description of potency ranging from weak to strong. The higher the rank, the more potent the detail. A character with a high ranking strength detail is very strong, for instance. A task with a low rank difficulty is easy to accomplish.

Non-Player Character - Non-Player Characters (or NPCs) are the other denizens of the game world besides the player characters. They have attributes and statistics just like the player characters have. These are the bad-guys and supporting cast that the players will encounter in the course of an adventure. If you are playing Mythic with a GM, the GM will control the NPC's actions. If you are playing without a GM, the players and Mythic will determine what the NPCs do.

Dice - Mythic uses only ten-sided dice (referred to as D10). These can be purchased at any game store that sells RPGs (such as the one you bought Mythic at!) Generally, you will be asked to roll 1D100. This is done by rolling two D10, with one die acting as the ten's digit and the other as the one's, resulting in a number from 1 to 100 (double 00 is 100). You may want to get different colored dice to tell them apart.

HOW MYTHIC DIFFERS FROM OTHER RPGS

Most RPGs operate under the principle that there are players and there is a GM. The GM prepares all the details of an adventure, and then "runs" the players through that adventure. This usually requires a great deal of preparation on the part of the GM and the handling of many details.

Mythic is different in that it requires no preparation from the GM. Mythic adventures are meant to be played off the cuff, with perhaps a few minutes of brainstorming to come up with the initial setup.

Mythic can also be played entirely without a GM. The same mechanics in Mythic that allow a GM to run an adventure without preparation also allows a group of players to do without the GM.

There is more on this in Chapter 1. I just wanted to give you a heads-up.

NOTES ABOUT THIS BOOK

In each chapter you will find shaded boxes and "torn paper" boxes. The shaded boxes provide examples and clarifications, while the paper boxes offer useful rules. At the back of this book you will find a summary of most of these rules, and other bits of useful information collected for you to find easily. There are also blank character sheets, adventure sheets, and other forms that you are free to copy for personal use.

Mythic Adventures
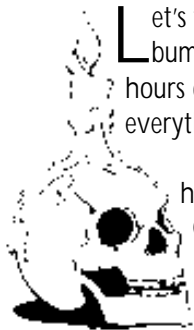
Let's face it: The life of a gamemaster can be a bummer. There's the weight of responsibility, hours of preparation, and keeping track of everything. And I mean everything!

It's no mystery why most gaming groups have one poor schmuck who acts as the GM every single time. No one else wants to do it. And who would? Actually playing is so much more fun.

With Mythic, you can do away with the GM entirely, if you wish. Or, if your GM enjoys playing God, Mythic can make adventures more fun for the GM by eliminating all of that nasty preparation. In a Mythic adventure, the GM (or players sans GM) can start an evening's entertainment with about five minutes of preparation. As the adventure unfolds, the GM is just as surprised by the twists and turns as the players are.

Fun for everyone.

No GM? What you talkin' 'bout Willis!

Mythic is a gaming system that automates the functions of a living, breathing GM. It works through interpretation and logical principles. (We'll get more into that later. For now, trust me.) The upshot is, with Mythic acting as your GM, that poor schmuck can finally roll up a character and get his hands dirty. It also means you can play solo if you wish (and who hasn't wanted to do that, just once?).

How can such a system be used?

I'm glad you asked.

No GM, multiple players

Everyone whip out your character! Players decide on an opening scenario, and perhaps a few details or two, and Mythic takes it from there. All action is decided through the asking of yes/no questions and the application of logical principles. By answering questions, the adventure moves along, with the occasional random event throwing players a curve ball. The action is broken into scenes, just like in a movie, to keep everything straight.

No GM, one player

As stated above, Mythic can be used to go solo. There have been many solo systems in the past. But let's be honest, they all sucked. How many variations of Choose-Your-Own-Adventure can you go through before you start longing for something more? Solo play in Mythic works the same as group play. You're just alone.

One GM, any number of players

For those who like to be a GM, we have something for you, too. The same tools that allow Mythic to automatically generate adventures on the fly without a GM also work with a GM. This means very little to zero preparation, if you don't want to prepare. Simply create an opening scenario (hey, you can come up with that on the drive over!) and follow Mythic as it guides you along. Mythic will throw in its own twists and turns, so the GM will be just as shocked as the players.

This is not to say, though, that total control is taken out of the hands of the GM. The GM is free to break away from the structure that Mythic puts together. If nothing else, Mythic will generate an adventure skeleton that the GM can work with. At the most, Mythic will spin the entire adventure for the GM, whose only job will be to administer the whole process.

Mythic, stand-alone

Mythic can be played as a complete role-playing game. The same logic-based tools that guide an adventure along can also answer other questions, such as "Did Boltar's sword hit the goblin?" On its own, Mythic is a free-form and interpreted system. Much of the details defining a campaign world will come up as the adventure proceeds.

The rules presented in this book will present Mythic as a stand-alone game. That way, you can take what you like and leave the rest, or use the whole enchilada.

Mythic with other RPGs

Mythic's main strength is the ability to generate dynamic, unfolding adventures on the fly. Mythic can replace the game master even if you're playing another role-playing game and not using Mythic rules as the core rules for your campaign. Mythic takes the place of the

GM, but the main RPG's rules still handle character creation, combat, task resolution and everything else. Questions that players would normally ask the GM are now asked to Mythic, instead.

The write stuff

Finally, Mythic can be used as a writing tool. The architecture that creates dynamic adventures is really an automated story-telling system. It will work just as well without any games or formalized characters attached. Just set the scene, ask some questions, and start writing.

Pick and choose

It's been stated before in this book, and will be stated again, but this point is important: Mythic is meant to be used in whole, or in part. The rules in this book accomplish two, separate tasks: generate impromptu adventures and provide rules for general role-playing. Using nothing more than this book, you can go on as many role-playing adventures as you can imagine. Or, you can choose to ignore the adventure generating aspect, or ignore the general role-playing aspect. Then again, you could use only part of the general role-playing portion to supplement an existing RPG.

Not to beat you over the head with this too much, but the idea is that Mythic provides a stable foundation for you to do whatever you want. It provides the necessities: the ability to generate adventures, and the rules to play out those adventures. Beyond this, you have complete freedom to adjust and modify. This is possible with Mythic because the general role-playing rules are based on logical concepts and everyday language. This allows you to have Mythic interact with other RPG's you own with a minimum of conversion fuss.

Let's go on to something else.

THE IMPORTANCE OF LOGIC AND INTERPRETATION

There are two concepts that are central to successfully running a Mythic adventure: logic and interpretation. The entire mechanic for generating adventures on the fly, running without a GM, and making it all work hinge on the proper application of logic and interpretation.

Where logic comes in

Logic is used in Mythic usually to figure out what happens next. This is done by considering what has already happened, applying whatever new twists have popped up, and deciding what the most logical outcome will be. The final outcome, if important, will be tested on the fate chart and will go one of several directions.

The general rule is, whatever is most logical, that is what is expected to happen. Notice, I say "expected." The story will rarely proceed exactly where you think it will and unexpected events will crop up that will turn your logical adventure on its ear. However, we need a basis to work from and logic provides it.

This harping on logic will make more sense later in this book, but I wanted to hook your mind on it now while you're fresh.

Where interpretation comes in

Just as all things are logical in Mythic, all answers to important questions are arrived upon through interpretation. Most information in Mythic comes through the asking of simple yes/no questions. Mythic provides a framework for providing general answers to these questions. These answers must be interpreted, logically of course.

This, too, will make more sense later in this book.

Improvisation

In addition to logic and interpretation, improvisation is Mythic's third linchpin that makes it all work. Think about our claims for a moment: you can play without any preparation and without a GM. Huh?!

Logic dictates what happens next, interpretation decides the answers to questions, and improvisation is the glue that fills in the holes and keeps it all together.

Improvisation comes from the players and usually in the form of questions. A player can ask any question, and the answer will change the course of the adventure, perhaps in ways the player hadn't even guessed. But it's the asking of questions that moves events along, and those questions are derived improvisationally.

For instance, the players' characters are standing in the foyer of an ancient, abandoned, mansion. They know only that the place is musty and decayed, but must have once been a very spacious and beautiful house. A player asks, "Are there stairs going up to the second floor?" Using the rules set forward here, they answer "yes."

Thus, a new detail about the gameworld has been established (there are stairs in the foyer leading up to the second floor). This detail did not exist until the player asked the question, and the question was out of his imagination, improvised.

All details in Mythic are generated in just this way. The answers to these improvised questions are determined using logic and interpretation, which maintains the world's consistency and gives it the same logical solidity as it would possess if there were a living GM with sheets full of data running the show. The only difference is that this detail of the world did not exist until a player specifically asked for it. The end result, however, is the same.

Once again, how all this works without a GM

Perhaps the hardest concept in Mythic is the idea of playing a role-playing game without a Game Master. It sounds like taking a flight on a plane without a pilot.

If you follow the guidelines in Mythic, it all works out. These rules become your virtual GM, an artificial intelligence that can answer all of your questions (yes/no questions, that is).

This works by combining improvisation, logic and interpretation to guide everything. As long as the players are honest with themselves, you never have to assign GM tasks to another player again.

DETAILS AND RANKS

For gaming purposes, everything in a Mythic adventure, from characters to objects, are described in terms of details and ranks. A detail is just what it sounds like: an important aspect of the character or object. For instance, Intuition would be a detail for a character. Skills and abilities are also details. For an object like a computer, a detail may be its complexity, or password protection.

Every detail has a corresponding rank that describes the "potency" of that detail. Ranks are expressed in common language. For instance, a character's strength might be "exceptional" and he might be "above average" with a gun.

Mythic uses its own set of adjectives to describe ranks, which are very subjective. To clarify gameplay, players may wish to stick to this list. However, if they do not, it will usually be very clear where a custom rank description fits on the fate chart (see Chapter 3); simply find the Mythic rank description that most closely matches it.

Often, ranks will be determined on the spur of the moment. For instance, a character trying to break open a window might ask, "How strong is this window?" The detail for the window is strength, and the players decide the rank is weak. This is one of those instances where logic comes in. We all pretty much know how strong a window is, we really don't need a specific rule to tell us, do we? An easy determination like this can be made on the spot, without consulting the dice or tables. However, if the question is an important one, the original question can be rephrased as a yes/no question and applied to the fate chart for a ruling.

Ranks, relative to what?

Since ranks are a subjective measurement of a detail's potency you must have a clear understanding of what a rank is relative to. If something is called average, then what is it an average of? This becomes especially important for abilities and powers that are rare or unique. If no one else has them, what is average?

Ranks are all relative to the typical denizen of the same game world as your character. All character detail ranks are relative to this model. A character with a strength of above average is slightly stronger than the average person in that game world, for instance.
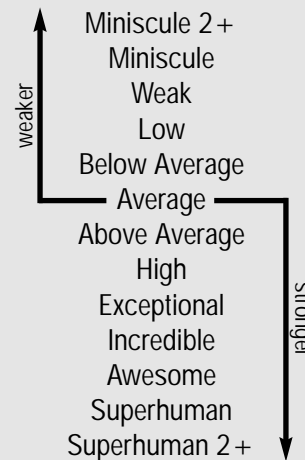
Skills, abilities and powers are all relative to this average model who also possesses the same skill, ability or power. For instance, a character with ability in carpentry that is ranked at high is not compared against a non-skilled average, but against the average professional person who also possesses carpentry skill. The average person only has carpentry skill of minuscule or so (anyone can swing a hammer), but the average professional carpenter has that skill at average.

It is sometimes easier to think of skills in terms of professionals. A typical professional will have the relevant skill at average rank. That is high enough to earn a living with the skill. There are professionals who are not quite as good, and many who are much better. But the average professional has average skill.

You can think of abilities and powers in the same way. A character with telekinesis is compared to others with

Mythic Ranks

Ranks are used in Mythic to express the "potency" of everything, from how strong a person is to how much damage a weapon causes. Mythic uses everyday language to describe a rank. The following list shows standard Mythic ranks, although any language can be used that is similar.

Miniscule 2+
Miniscule
Weak
Low
Below Average
— Average —
Above Average
High
Exceptional
Incredible
Awesome
Superhuman
Superhuman 2+

(weaker ↑ / stronger ↓)

NOTE: Ranks can drop below Miniscule, or rise above Superhuman. Each level greater (or lesser, in the case of Miniscule) is double the potency for Superhuman ranks and halved for Miniscule ranks. In other words, someone who has a strength of Superhuman 2 is twice as strong as Superhuman. A Superhuman 3 is twice as strong as Superhuman 2, and so on. Someone with a strength of Miniscule 2 is half as strong as Miniscule, and Miniscule 3 is half as strong as Miniscule 2.

The following graph offers calculations of the relative differences between Superhuman and Miniscule ranks for you, giving the relative potency difference between these extreme ranks. For instance, someone of Superhuman strength of 5 is 8 times stronger than someone of Superhuman strength of 2 (5-2=3, a 3 rank difference) and 16 times stronger than merely Superhuman (5-1=4, a 4 rank difference).

Rank Difference	Potency Difference	Rank Difference	Potency Difference
1	2	6	64
2	4	7	128
3	8	8	256
4	16	9	512
5	32	10	1024

Rank Averages and the Real World

It is not enough to know that a rank is "average." You have to know what average is in real world terms. Average strength may be the ability to bench press 100 pounds. Average intelligence may be being able to open a bottle of child-proof pills. Since Mythic ranks are expressed in common language (high, low, etc.), the only way to measure a character's real-world ability is to compare the rank to a benchmark, which usually starts with average. To do this you must know what average means for that attribute or ability. The average mark for attributes and abilities are measured somewhat differently.

Average Attributes: Average in this sense means the average person in your game world. If you are playing in a fantasy genre with humans, elves and dwarves, you may determine that the most common characters are humans. Attribute scores (strength, agility, etc.) of average then are relative to this human scale. A typical dwarf may have a strength rank of above average, an Elf may have a typical IQ of high. As long as you know what average is, scaling additional ranks is easy.

Average Abilities: Abilities are skills, talents and powers that not everyone possesses. Obviously, you cannot say that average means the typical person, since the typical person may not possess this ability. In this case, average is the typical person who possesses this ability. Or, in other words, the typical professional (when it comes to skills). So, a character of average archery ability has the talent of a typical, professional archer. A skilled amateur may have an archery rank of below average or low. A wizard may have magery at above average,

meaning he is more talented than the typical wizard. Knowing what a rank of average means is important to figuring out what the other ranks mean, in real world terms. If an archer has a rank of average, he can probably hit a standard target most of the time, although not always in the center. Someone of high rank, however, will likely hit the center consistently, and can hit the target from a greater distance.

It is up to the players, and the GM, what ranks mean in the real world (or at least, the game world). What can a tracker of exceptional rank be capable of? How powerful of a spell can a mage of awesome ability fire off? The answers are up to you, but you should be consistent. This means knowing what average means, and comparing all other ranks to it.

It is advisable to record averages for a detail if that detail is likely to come up again in an adventure. For instance, for the detail of computer programming, the players determine that average ability gives a character the skill to write any program in a week that can perform most common computing tasks. The players record this on a piece of paper for future reference. Later, when a character of above average ability attempts to write a program in less than a week, they refer to this average scale and determine that he has the ability to do so.

There are blank scaling sheets at the end of this book that you may copy freely to help you in recording averages.

the same ability. The typical telekinetic has this power at average rank. What this means in real-world terms is up to you. Perhaps the average telekinetic can pick up a book from across the room, while one who has a rank of exceptional can pick up a person from across the street. When such averages are determined for a game world you should record them for future reference. There are tools provided later in this book to help you do that. By recording important details as they appear your game world will grow and evolve as your characters progress through it.

For any detail, you only have to figure out what the average rank stands for in real-world terms. Once you know that, higher and lower ranks will work themselves out relative to this standard.

Resisting, or difficulty, ranks, which are used to set the difficulty of a particular task, can be set in much the same way. Later you will learn about resisted questions. A difficulty rank is not based on a character detail but on a task or situation. For instance, how difficult is it to kick in that door? The easiest way to think up difficulty ranks is

to also think in terms of our average citizen. What rank in the appropriate detail would he need to accomplish the task? To kick down a door, you would expect someone of high strength to be able to do it fairly easily. That would make an appropriate difficulty rank for the task of kicking down a door.

Difficulty ranks need to be relative to a scale like this. Otherwise, the ranks won't make sense. If the door you're trying to kick down is a bank vault, that could be a Superhuman 2 difficulty rank for an average person, but it would be a piece of cake to a superhero with strength of Superhuman 5. Does this mean the superhero faces it at a lower difficulty rank? Nope, because the rank is relative to the normal guy.

Just as character details relating to skills and abilities are based on the average professional, so too are difficulty ranks that rely on skills. For instance, the difficulty of hacking into a computer system is relative to the difficulty an average hacker would have in getting in, not the average general person.

In the Tomb of Tumnus

Following is a rough "transcript" of a portion of an adventure session using Mythic. Many of the terms and game concepts will be unfamiliar to you as yet, but I present them to you now to give you some idea of how a Mythic adventure unfolds. This example shows two players working with a GM, who is using Mythic rules completely, without any other RPG rules. The game world is a high-fantasy one. The player characters are Sir Eran, a noble knight, and Sera, a stealthy thief. The pair are making their way through an underground cavern in search of treasure.

GM: "You hear a sound ahead, echoing in the hall. You can't quite make out what it is." By consulting the fate chart, the GM determined that a random event occurred. He interpreted the results to mean an unknown sound coming from down the hall. At this point, not even the GM knows what is causing this noise.

Eran: "I stop to listen. What does it sound like?"

GM: The GM doesn't know what the sound is, and isn't going to make it up. Since the player didn't ask a yes/no question, the GM decides to ask the question to himself as a yes/no. If the question were of less importance, the GM would use simple logic to come up with something, and not consult the chart. However, since the sound can mean impending danger, he decides to play it safe. He consults the fate chart, asking himself, "does it sound like something approaching, marching feet and clanking armor?" He rolls on the fate chart and gets a no. He interprets the answer into another sound.

GM: "It's like a rhythmic booming sound, as if something heavy is smashing something else, slowly and methodically." Not wanting to go on with the questioning until he received a positive answer, the GM took the initiative to provide his own interpretation to this fate question. Since the answer was no, he was free to come up with anything that didn't sound like an approaching monster. If he wanted, he could have asked another question to help narrow the answer down.

Sera: "I don't like the sound of that."

Eran: "It could be more machinery." Earlier in the adventure, the two had run across large, ancient machinery operating many of the functions of the underground caverns, including the traps. They are learning that the entire complex is built around enormous, clock-work mechanisms.

Sera: "Let's proceed cautiously."

Eran: "Ok. We move on. Do we see anything?"

GM: "Yes. You begin to come around a curved corner and see light ahead." The GM applied Eran's question to the fate chart and got a yes response. Again, rather than put more questions to it for more specifics, he took the most logical detail.

Sera: "We proceed, weapons ready."

Eran: "Right. Sir Eran mumbles, 'Infernal caverns.'"

GM: Without voicing them to the players, the GM asks himself a few questions: "Does the hall widen into a large cavern?" "Are the sounds being made by machinery?" "Is there anything else visible in the room?" He rolls up answers to these questions as he thinks them up, getting yes, yes, no responses. He reports to the players, "The hall widens, letting you into a huge cavern, the ceiling rising to darkness. Rising from floor to roof are more of the huge machines you've seen earlier, like giant clockworks. They are rusted and most are motionless, except for a giant gear that slowly turns. Each revolution, it shifts slightly, then falls back into place, causing the loud noise you heard."

Eran: "Is there anyone here?"

GM: "No." He can answer this right away since he already answered the question of whether there was anything else visible in the room.

Sera: "I approach the moving gear. Is it connected to anything?"

GM: "Yes. It's actually set into the floor, with more gears visible beneath it." The GM consulted the fate chart with Sera's question. While rolling, he determined that another random event occurs. While answering Sera's question, he rolls the particulars for the random event. "You also notice something odd. What you initially took for a pile of rusted parts you realize is actually a small pile of bodies, wearing rusty old armor. The bodies are skeletal, strewn about the base of the gear."

Sera: "Just here, at the gear?"

GM: "Yes." The GM is asking himself more questions, again silently: "Are these the bodies of people attacked by something here?" "Is the gear a trap to mask the sound of something?"

Sera: "I bend down to check the bodies out, see if there is anything useful on them."

Eran: "Looking around nervously, I say to Sera, 'Are you sure that's such a good idea?'"

GM: Based on the answers to his earlier questions, he knows that an ambush is about to happen. Since Eran said he is looking around, the GM asks himself, "Does Eran see the approaching attack?" He gets a yes. "Eran, while you look around, you happen to catch motion from above. Descending rapidly on a thin wire is a huge, man-size, metallic spider. It is made completely of rusty iron, its legs twitching. You realize from its condition it's probably making a lot of noise, but the sound is masked by the clanking gear. It is coming down directly over Sera."

... and so on, the adventure continues, prodded along by the players' questions (including the GM).

Character Creation

As stated in the introduction, Mythic can be used as a stand-alone role-playing game or as a gamemaster emulator for another RPG. If you are using it as an emulator, then you don't need to worry about creating a Mythic character. However, you should still read this chapter as it contains important concepts about Mythic adventures.

Characters are composed of details, as discussed in Chapter 1. The details of your character decide how strong she is, how smart, and what she can do. Every detail has a corresponding rank that determines that detail's potency. Before you decide what your character details and ranks are going to be, you need to make a few decisions.

CHARACTER CREATION CHOICES

There are two ways to make a character in Mythic: Freeform and Point-Based. Freeform characters are only sketched out in the beginning with details added as you adventure. Using the Point System creates a complete character from the start that will be more balanced with the other players. Which method is right for you? Let's see the benefits:

Freeform characters

This is the best option when you have a good idea of who it is you want to role-play, but you don't want, or need, to record every detail right now. In the beginning, you can just record those details that are most important to you. The character summary is the most important portion to start with; the rest of this character's details will be fleshed out later during adventures. This option works well for impromptu role-playing sessions when you just want to come up with a character fast and get right into the action. This is also the best option if you just don't like point-based systems.

Point-Based characters

This is the best option if you are concerned with characters being balanced with each other. Point-based characters will be much the same power level. Also, this is a good option if you like more structure in your character creation process. Point-based characters are far less fluid than freeform characters, but more fully realized from the start.

The main portion of the character Creation Chapter will deal with freeform characters, since this information is central to character creation anyway. The end of the chapter deals with point-based character creation.
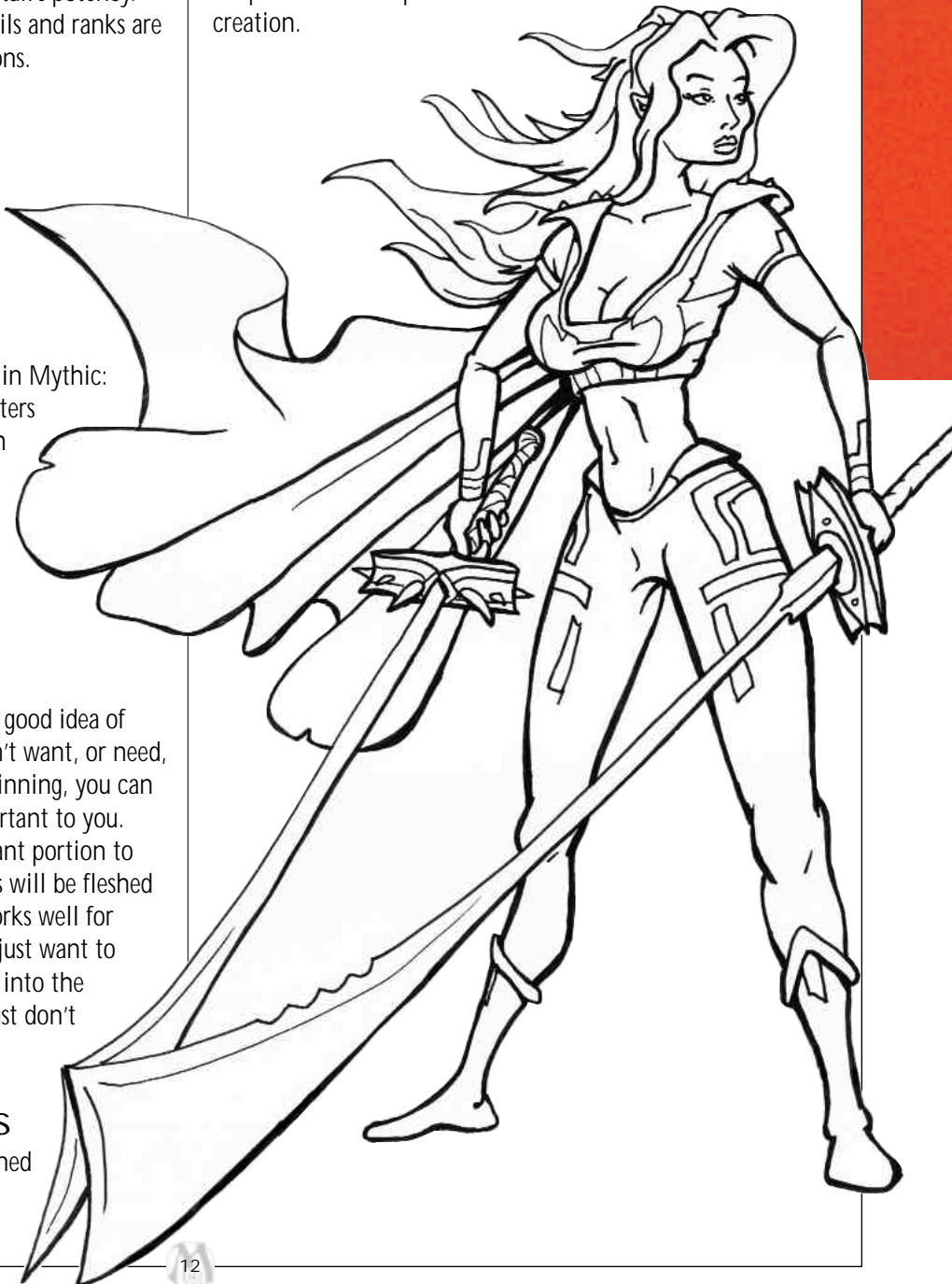
CHARACTER COMPONENTS

Whichever creation method you choose, a Mythic character is composed of the same basic parts. There are five sections to a Mythic character: Summary, Attributes, Abilities, Strengths/Weaknesses, and Notes.

Summary

Whether you are creating a freeform character or a point-based one, you need to decide just who your character is. Summarize this information in a descriptive paragraph that gives a brief impression of what your character is all about. This becomes your character summary and should be written on your character sheet (there are blank sheets in the back of this book, free for you to copy.)

This summary is perhaps the most important part of your character as it will guide the remainder of the creation process. For freeform characters, it will have a large impact on the further development of the character as they adventure.

Why Freeform Characters?

The freeform approach to character creation is unusual for a role-playing game. Usually, about an hour is spent creating a variety of details describing a character from top to bottom. In most RPGs, players enter adventures knowing virtually all there is to know about their characters.

But the whole point of Mythic is to be able to come to the gaming table largely unprepared and play as though you were prepared. This idea also extends to character creation. All that is really important is that you have a pretty good idea of who your character is. All other details will flow from this, some during character creation and others through adventuring.

Freeform characters are easy to make off the cuff, but they don't suit everyone. That's why we offer the point-based approach as well. Even using that system a Mythic character is still easy to create; it just takes a little more time than a freeform character.

What does a summary look like? How about a player who wants to create a super-spy character. He wants someone who is suave, but also dangerous. He comes up with the following summary: "People take notice when Nathan Silver enters a room. His aristocratic features and sharp, intelligent eyes draw attention. He is a man of many talents and those talents are often sought by governments from around the world. Although he doesn't like getting his hands dirty, Nathan is deceptively adept at hand-to-hand combat and a crack shot with a pistol."

This paragraph tells us a lot about this character and what he is capable of. If there is ever a question in the future about what this character can do, this summary will be used to help determine the answer. There is more on this in the section on hidden abilities.

Attributes

The most basic set of details that describe a character are his attributes. These are fundamental statistics that tell how strong, how smart and how fast your character is. Attributes are not learned, they are more like innate abilities, although they can change over time.

Generally, a Mythic character is composed of seven basic attributes. These are Strength, Agility, Reflex, IQ, Intuition, Willpower and Toughness. The first three are physical, the next three are mental, and Toughness is a combination of physical and mental.

Strength

This is a measure of a character's raw, physical brawn. Strength is not just arm strength, but power generalized across the entire body.

Agility

Agility is a character's "foot dexterity." This measures general grace.

Reflex

Reflex is a character's "twitch speed." This measures how quickly they can react physically. Reflex is very important for the development of combat skills.

IQ

This is exactly what it says, intelligence. IQ does not measure a character's base of knowledge, but how quickly he can think and process information. The higher the IQ, the quicker and more completely a character can figure problems out.

Intuition

This is a catchall attribute for a character's general awareness. Intuition can be used to detect if someone is lying to you, or to notice a sniper nestled high in a tree.

Willpower

This is a character's mental strength. The higher the willpower, the more things the character can make himself do that lesser wills break at. Willpower is also very important for the development of future skills and abilities.

Toughness

Toughness is a character's overall measure of their ability to withstand punishment. The higher the toughness, the harder it is to hurt, knock unconscious and kill the character. Toughness is both a physical and mental attribute. It is a combination of strength and willpower, and should generally be somewhere in between those attributes, although it can be higher. A character may have great strength, but unless they also have great willpower, their resolve will crumble long before their muscle gives way. The same is true of a character with great willpower. No matter how strong their will to live is, they can only push the boundaries of their body so far.

Other attributes

The seven attributes listed above are the basic attributes for a standard Mythic character. When putting an adventure together, the GM (or players, if there is no GM) may decide to add additional attributes that are pertinent to their particular game world. In a magical setting, they may add a spirit attribute. Or, in a more social genre, they may add charisma or appearance. The atmosphere of the adventure you are playing will determine whether you need additional attributes, as it is entirely up to you.

Determining attribute ranks

The ranks of your attributes determine how "potent" that attribute is. If you are creating a point-based character, there are guidelines to follow for determining attribute ranks. This is discussed more fully at the end of this chapter.

For a freeform character, you may determine any rank you wish for each attribute. Keep in mind your character's summary, however, and try to keep the attributes in character. Go through each attribute and refer to the character summary. Would this character's strength be average, or above average? Use your best judgement to come as close to the summary as possible.

Custom Attributes

The seven attributes listed in this chapter are enough to describe nearly any Mythic character. However, the demands of a particular game world may require changing this attribute list. Or, if you're porting a character from another RPG to Mythic, you may have to adjust Mythic attributes to match the characters existing attributes.

You should only change the attributes list after all players have agreed, since their characters too should have the new attributes. It is suggested, also, that you only consider new attributes that are actually important to this game world. For instance, a player may suggest a new attribute of "astralness" for a science fiction world. He argues that psychic phenomenon will play a major role in their adventures, and astral travel will be common.

If there is not a compelling reason to create a new attribute, consider making it an ability or a strength. In the example above, the other players may disagree, saying astral travel will still be rare and there is no need for a specific attribute. Instead, they decide to provide it as an ability.

In the end, customized attributes should make the characters fit more snugly into the game world and the style of the players.

For instance, for Nathan Silver, we can assume a strength of above average. The summary mentions that he is skilled at combat, so he is probably quite fit. Considering how suave and sophisticated he is, though, I doubt he's too brawny. His reflex? How about exceptional, since the summary mentions that he is deceptively capable with his hands. And so on ...

Abilities

If attributes are a character's innate, personal resources, then abilities are additional talents that the character has developed. Usually, abilities take the form of skills. However, abilities can also be powers and supernatural capabilities. Abilities, essentially, is a list of what the character can do.

You may choose any abilities you wish for your character, again keeping them in line with the summary. If you are creating a freeform character, then the ranks are

also up to you and they are set the same way ranks for attributes were set. For a point-based character, there are limits to how high you can set your ranks (this is explained at the end of this chapter.)

When setting ranks for abilities, remember what we said before: for skills and other abilities, an "average" rank means an average person skilled with this ability, an average professional. Those with less than average ranks are skilled amateurs.

Hidden abilities

Even when you have finished creating your character, there may be more to him than you have recorded on the character sheet. This is especially possible for freeform characters as you are not required to fully detail their capabilities at the start.

If, during the course of an adventure, the character is called upon to use an ability that is not recorded on the character sheet, you may determine that she still possesses the ability.

The most fundamental rule about a Mythic character is that the character summary encapsulates the essence of that character. If it seems apparent from that summary that the character should possess a particular ability, then the character probably does possess it, and at the most logical rank. Conversely, if it seems likely that the character does not possess a particular rank, or does so at a low rank, then that should also be the case.

For instance, what if our super-spy is sitting in a lounge talking with an agent of his arch-enemy, the villainous Dr. Nefario. Silver wants to impress the agent and the topic of wines comes up. Wine knowledge is not an ability listed on Silver's character sheet, but judging from his summary it seems logical that he would know a thing or two about wines. The players decide that this seems appropriate and give him "wine knowledge" with a rank of above average.

If you are playing with a GM, he must approve any such hidden abilities and their ranks. If the players are gaming without a GM, any new abilities and their ranks should be generally agreed upon by all and should make sense. If there is argument or uncertainty, the existence of a hidden ability, and the level of its rank, can be determined through a yes/no fate question (you'll learn more about this in a later chapter.)

The hidden ability rule should be applied more leniently toward freeform characters than point-based characters. A point-based character finishes the character creation process more fully realized than a freeform character, who may actually begin an adventure as more of an outline than a complete dossier.

Using attributes and abilities

Attributes, and more commonly abilities, are used to do things, put simply. This will be covered more fully in the chapters on the fate chart, task resolution and combat. Suffice it to say for now that the higher ranking an attribute or ability, the more a character can do with it.

Strengths and Weaknesses

Strengths and weaknesses: everyone has them, even you and me. You better believe characters have them to, and then some!

When developing your character, you can choose to make strengths and/or weaknesses for her. If you're using the point-based creation system, then these choices will determine how many points you have to spend on your character. If you are using freeform, then this is a good place to flesh your character out even more.

Strengths and weaknesses are just that, areas where your character has a bonus, and places where he suffers a penalty. Usually, a strength or weakness will present itself as a +/- rank shift (abbreviated "RS") of one or more. For instance, a significant strength might grant a +1 rank shift in some specific incidences to an ability rank. A similar weakness would provide a -1 shift.

The exact nature of the strengths and weaknesses are up to you, the player, and the GM. They should be in the flavor of the game world you are running, however. Most rank shifts should be in the range of +/- of 1 to 3.

How strengths and weaknesses work

A strength or weakness should be listed on the character sheet as a simple statement of what the strength or weakness is, when to apply a rank shift, and any special rules that pertain.

For instance, a character might have a strength stating: "Sharpshooter: Gains a +1 rank shift to firearms abilities when firing a gun and can see the target clearly."

Or, she might have a weakness stating: "Fear of heights: Suffers a -2 rank shift to all tasks when performed at an obvious height."

The strength or weakness should state clearly what the conditions are that activate the bonus or penalty (in our examples, when firing a gun or when at a height), what the rank shift is (a bonus to all firearms skills in the first example and a penalty to any and all ranks required for

the performance of a task) and any special rules (in the above examples, none. See the sidebar for more strengths and weaknesses examples.)

Coming up with the modifier

Most strengths and weaknesses will give a modifier of +/- 1 rank shift. This is a significant modifier, showing natural talent or weakness. A modifier of +/- 2 rank shifts is much more serious, and would probably apply to a narrower range of situations. You can go to +/- 3, or even greater, but this is becoming a very serious strength or weakness at this point.

For examples of various ranges of strengths and weaknesses, see the sidebars in this chapter with sample strengths and weaknesses.
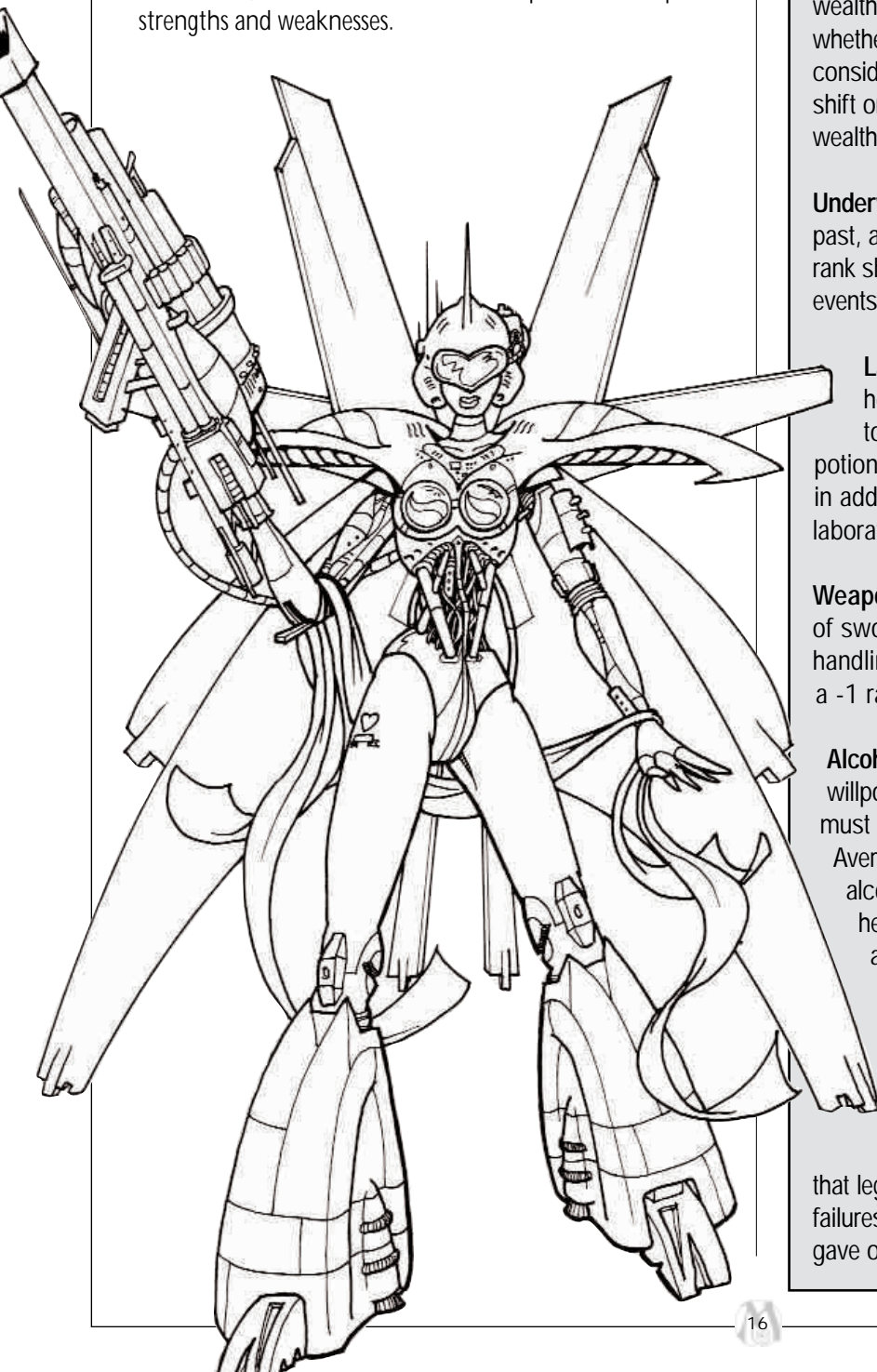
Sample Strengths and Weaknesses

Quick Draw (strength): The character is very skilled at drawing a gun fast. Gains a +2 rank shift bonus for any feats involving drawing his gun and firing before his opponent. Suffers no penalties for the quick draw.

Sixth Sense (strength): Gains a +1 shift to intuition when determining if she detects an ambush or other dangerous situation.

Great Personal Wealth (strength): She is immensely wealthy. For purposes of feats involving questions on whether or not she can acquire something by money, consider her rank awesome. She also has a +2 rank shift on social feats with anyone who knows of her wealth and is impressed.

Underworld Background (strength): He has a shady past, and knows all the rats in the city. He gains a +1 rank shift on any feat involving learning about criminal events or activity in the city.

Lab Rat (strength): The character feels right at home in a magic laboratory. When using a lab to create or investigate magic items, such as potions or swords, gains a +1 rank shift to all feats in addition to any bonuses gained from the laboratory itself.

Weapon Inept (weakness): Due to a childhood fear of swords and other weapons, he is clumsy when handling any weapon, melee or ranged. He suffers a -1 rank shift when using any weapon.

Alcoholic (weakness): Suffers a -1 penalty to willpower to resist the temptation of alcohol. He must make a willpower feat against a difficulty rank. Average difficulty rank is being in the presence of alcohol after experiencing a stressful situation. If he fails the feat, then he drinks and must make another feat roll to see if he gets drunk. If he fails again, he suffers -2 rank shift to all feats while drunk.

Bad Knee (weakness): An old injury has left a knee partially incapacitated. He suffers a -1 rank shift penalty on any feats that require that leg, such as running, jumping, etc. Exceptional failures on such feats probably mean that the knee gave out and his leg is incapacitated for about a day.

Special rules

Some strengths and weaknesses will apply special rules to the character, or will need more explanation than a simple statement of when to activate it. The sidebar examples of various strengths and weaknesses offers a few that provide special rules, such as alcoholic. This weakness needed a special rule describing how to bring alcoholism into the game and how the character can try to resist it.

The specifics of special rules are up to the players and the GM, but should be determined when the strength or weakness is first generated.

Designing to genre

There is no comprehensive list of strengths and weaknesses in this book since they are completely up to the players and should be tailored to the world the characters are adventuring in. The strengths and weaknesses of characters in a horror adventure will be very different than those in a super hero adventure. The players, and/or GM, should keep the game world in mind when they are devising their strengths and weaknesses.

The sidebar below gives examples of strengths and weakness designed to genre.

Examples of Setting Specific Strengths and Weaknesses

Game World: Schlock Hollywood horror

Hard to Hit (strength): This character is extremely lucky. Whenever a killer tries to hit her with a murder weapon, she gains a +2 bonus rank shift to any defenses or dodges she performs.

Really Quiet (strength): Very good at hiding. Gains a +1 rank shift to any hiding feats.

Notices Clues (strength): The character is very observant and gains a +1 rank shift to tasks involving noticing important clues, such as footprints or a pair of shoes at the bottom of the drapes.

Panics (weakness): When being attacked, or in other panic-inducing situations (discovering a mutilated body), the character must make a willpower -1 rank shift feat against a difficulty rank equivalent to the panic inducer. An average rank panic inducer would be finding the aforementioned mutilated, dead body. If the character fails the feat, he is at -2 to all feats until he is away from the panic inducer and he does everything he can to get away. He is also screaming the entire time.

Vulnerable to Black Magic (weakness): This character suffers a -1 rank shift to any defensive feats against attacks by magic.

Terrible Shot (weakness): When shooting to kill, suffers a -2 rank shift to firearms abilities. Does not apply if shooting at a target to wound.

Game World: High fantasy

Battle Hardy (strength): This character knows how to take a hit. When struck in combat, modify his toughness by +1 RS when determining damage.

Magic Sense (strength): She has an uncanny ability to sniff out magic when it is near. She automatically gains a chance to detect the presence of magic using her intuition score. The difficulty rank is determined by the GM.

Soft Soled (strength): This character is particularly adept at walking quietly. Any attempts to move in silence gain a +1 RS.

Not Liked (weakness): This character belongs to a race or profession that is not liked in the game world. Maybe he is a half-ogre, or a sorcerer in a world that does not trust magic-wielders. He suffers a -2 RS penalty on any social feats until he can gain the trust of whomever he is dealing with, at which point the penalty no longer applies.

Unable to Use Magic (weakness): For whatever reason, this character is incapable of casting or using magic, including reading scrolls or drinking potions. This does not apply to magical effects that do not directly affect his person, such as using a magic weapon.

Sun Allergy (weakness): This character is uncomfortable in the sun, preferring dark places. She suffers a -1 RS penalty to all feats performed under daylight.

Character Creation Example

Our player wishes to create a freeform pirate character. He comes up with Nathanial Dirkson.

Step 1: Character Summary
Nathanial's player decides his summary will read: "Nathanial Dirkson is an experienced pirate, a legend with his sword. He has sailed the seas for many years, forever on the lookout for more treasure. He has also racked up his fair share of enemies over the years, and there is a sizable bounty out for his skull."

Step 2: Attributes
Nathanial's player decides his pirate character possesses the following Attribute scores:

Strength . . . . .Above Average
Agility . . . . .High
Reflex . . . . .Exceptional
IQ . . . . .High
Intuition . . . . .Exceptional
Willpower . . . . .Incredible
Toughness . . . . .Exceptional

Step 3: Abilities
Sailing . . . . .Exceptional
Handle cutlass . . . . .Awesome
Social skills . . . . .Weak
Swimming . . . . .Low
Navigation . . . . .Above Average
Intimidate . . . . .Exceptional

Step 4: Strengths and Weaknesses
Feared (strength): Gains a +2 rank shift on attempts to influence those who know his reputation, fear him and are weaker (townspeople, common sailors, etc.)

One-handed (weakness): Dirkson has a hook for one of his hands. This can be used as a weapon, but he cannot perform two-handed actions.

Alcoholic (weakness): See chapter examples.

Step 5: Notes
Nathanial's player sketches out a few more details, such as the fact that the pirate commands his own ship and crew.

Hidden strengths and weaknesses

Just as with abilities, it is possible to have hidden strengths and weaknesses. However, this should be very rare, and almost never in the case of point-based characters. A freeform player should be required to make a pretty darn good argument for why his character has a certain strength or weakness, and it should be entirely consistent with the character's summary.

For instance, if our players were adventuring in the schlock Hollywood horror genre described in the sidebar on the previous page, one player may plead in the midst of the action: "Wait! Wait! My character has a strength. He's hard to hit! Yeah, because he's the last one alive. He's naturally lucky, he's gotta be hard to hit!" If everyone agrees, and the character is a freeform character, then he gets his strength. You should be fair, though; if a weakness seems logical, and some player suggests it, you should consider taking it on.

For instance, in the example above, a player may say, "Yeah, well, the last character alive also takes stupid risks. You should have a weakness for making it difficult to resist doing something stupid, like walking into a dark room."

Strengths are not abilities

It's important that you don't confuse strengths with abilities. A strength is an innate, special "something" that the character possesses that gives him an advantage. It doesn't necessarily have to make a lot of sense, the character just has it. This is not a skill, however. If a character is very good with guns, then he should have guns as a high ranking ability. He doesn't need to have a gun ability and a strength involving guns also. Many characters will have no strengths at all, but very high ranking abilities.

Strengths and weaknesses give the player an extra opportunity to define the character. These bonuses and penalties help fill in gaps that abilities are not able to adequately address. You should feel free to have fun with strengths and weaknesses and use your imagination. This is an area that can really help define the uniqueness of your character.

Notes

You're just about done. Now, it's time to flesh out the rest of your character. The notes section on your character sheet is for all of the stuff not covered above, such as the character's age, any family that matters, group affiliations, equipment, etc. These are mostly notes to yourself as reminders of certain facts about the character. Notes can also be filled in as the character adventures. For instance, the character may suffer a wound that causes a scar, which the player adds to her notes section.

Everyone needs favors

A very special type of note are favors. Whether your character is a Mythic character or not, you may want to have favor points. Favor points are points the player may elect to spend to change the outcome of the fate chart (which we'll get to in a later chapter.) Since the fate chart is used to answer all important questions, and questions move the adventure along, favor points can come in pretty handy.

Mythic uses favor points to give characters an edge. Every central character in a book or movie has an edge, and that edge is usually a great big wad of luck. Favor points represent that storehouse of luck. You can choose to live fast and furious, and count on favor points to bail you out, or you can play it safe and cautious, and only use favors when you really need them. The former tend to burn brightly, then suddenly bite the dust when their luck runs out. The latter live long and productive lives, but maybe just not as exciting.

Characters start out with 50 favor points, and may gain more at the end of each scene (see Chapter 7). When a question is asked on the fate chart, the player may spend up to 25 favor points to change the result of the percentile roll

Favor Rewards

Favor points are a Mythic character's best friend. They should be awarded at the end of each scene based on how well the character did. They are awarded for:

0	The character made no progress in this scene.
+10	The character made progress toward solving an open thread.
+25	The character helped solve an open thread.

used to answer that question, on a point-by-point basis.

In other words, if the fate chart says there is a 35% chance of a yes answer to a particular question, and a 45 is rolled, the player may spend 10 favor points to change that roll to a 35. The player can do this after the dice are rolled, effectively changing the outcome. However, the points can

only be spent directly after the roll. A player can't change his mind one minute later and go back to change a result.

Characters can earn more favor points by doing well in a scene. At the end of each scene, if the character did poorly, he won't receive any more favor points. If he did well, and moved closer to solving a thread (an on-going storyline), he will receive 10 additional favor points. If he did very well, closing an open thread, then 25 favor points are awarded.

Now, don't say we didn't do you any favors.

POINT-BASED CHARACTER CREATION

For those craving more direction in their character creation process, or who are concerned with character balance, we offer a point-based character creation option. Even if you already have a good idea of who your character is and are leaning toward freeform, you may still want to try the point-based approach first; the structure it provides can actually help enhance the creative process of character generation.

The point-based approach follows the same steps as the freeform strategy. The only differences are that there are limits you must adhere to and more guidelines for what you can, and cannot, do.

The first step is to determine how many points you have in which to build your character. You need points to "buy" attributes and abilities. You can also use points to purchase strengths. You can take on weaknesses to gain more points.

The number of points you have to spend is determined by the genre of your game world and how experienced you want your character to start off. The more fantastic the world the more points you will get for your character to make him larger than life.

Determine what style of game you want to play and consult the Points Per World table (this page). This gives how many points you have to spend on attributes, on abilities, and what the maximum rank is for ranks in both.

Next, determine what power level your character fits within this genre. If he is weaker than average, or perhaps a beginner, then multiply the points by .75 (dropping them by 25%). If he is an average individual for the genre, then leave the points alone. If the character is exceptional, or highly experienced, then multiply the points by 1.5 (increasing by 50%). All fractions are rounded up.

These points, and limits, will be used in a moment when we get to attributes and abilities. You should keep in mind

that these recommendations are just that, recommendations. The players and GM may decide that their game world needs more points for attributes or a higher limit.

Now, follow the same steps freeform characters followed:

Step 1: Summary

This is the same process freeform characters go through. The summary is still important to a point-based character since it should guide his creation and may come into play in a future adventure to determine if he possesses any hidden abilities.

Step 2: Attributes

You have as many points with which to purchase attribute ranks as the Points Per World chart indicates, based on your adventure genre. The maximum rank limit is

Points Per World

World	Attributes	Abilities	Max rank
Real World (just like our world)	30	10	Exceptional
Gritty, real world (detective, cyberpunk)	35	20	Incredible
Action/Adventure (shoot 'em ups, pulp era)	60	35	Superhuman
High Fantasy/Science Fiction	65	40	Superhuman 5
Super hero, low powered	70	40	Superhuman 5
Super hero, medium powered	130	90	Superhuman 7
Super hero, high powered	165	105	Superhuman 10

Rank Costs

Rank	Cost	Rank	Cost
Miniscule	1	Exceptional	20
Weak	2	Incredible	25
Low	3	Awesome	30
Below Average	4	Superhuman	35
Average	5		
Above Average	10	Each level above Superhuman costs 5 points more.	
High	15		

a suggestion to keep characters from loading up all of their points on a single attribute and range out of balance in that particular game world.

You have the same attributes (strength, agility, reflex, IQ, intuition, willpower, toughness) as freeform characters. Consult the rank costs table to figure out how many points a particular rank requires for each of your attributes. You must spend your attribute points across all of the attributes (except for toughness, which you may elect to be set automatically based on strength and willpower); you need to purchase at least miniscule rank in each attribute (you cannot skip an attribute and give it no rank). Left over points can be applied to strengths later. Also, you can spend points acquired from weaknesses later on attributes to raise them even higher.

For example: A player wishes his character to have a willpower of exceptional, but only has 18 points left. That's 2 points shy of the 20 he needs. He holds onto those 18 points, planning on adding a small weakness that will give him those last few points.

You only need to purchase ranks in the first six attributes. Your toughness score is averaged from your strength and willpower ranks. You can do this by taking your strength and willpower ranks, adding together their rank cost, dividing it by 2 (round fractions up), and see what that comes closest to on the rank cost table. For instance: A character with a strength of above average and a willpower of incredible would have a toughness of exceptional (10+25=35/2=17.5 rounded up to 18 is closer to 20 than 15).

If you wish, you may purchase toughness just like any other attribute. If you do so, then you can ignore the above formula. Obviously, you should only do this to gain a higher rank in toughness and this will come at the expense of other attributes as you are taking points away from them. For instance: If our player above is not happy with a toughness of exceptional (he wants awesome), he can decide to take 30 points from other attributes, and perhaps from weaknesses, to do so. For him to do this, he will have to significantly lower several attribute scores, but he will attain a toughness rank that he otherwise could not have.

Custom attributes

You may not be using Mythic's core seven attributes, instead substituting attributes that fit into your custom adventure world. If you still have six attributes plus toughness, then you can use the same point pools indicated on the Points Per World chart. If you have fewer, or more, attributes, then you will need to adjust these point totals. To figure out the correct point pool for you, divide the amount given on the chart by six, then multiply by the number of attributes you are using, not including toughness.

Step 3: Abilities

Once again, abilities work the same way for point-based characters as they do for freeform characters. And, just like with attributes, ranks are bought using the rank cost table. The specific abilities are up to you, the players, using the same guidelines described for freeform characters.

As with attributes, left-over points may be applied to strengths and weaknesses may be added to increase abilities.

Step 4: Strengths and Weaknesses

These are chosen as they are for freeform characters. The players are free to come up with what they want. However, they must spend points for strengths, while weaknesses give them points.

Players do not receive any "free" points to spend for strengths. The player must come upon these by either leaving points over from attribute or ability selection or by acquiring a weakness.

The cost of a strength, or the bonus of a weakness, is determined by how strong it is and how often it is "activated." The basic point value of a strength or weakness is defined as the rank shift it causes multiplied by 5. Thus, a strength that offers a +2 rank shift would initially cost 10 points.

If the strength or weakness applies special rules instead of a rank shift, then the players must decide on an equivalent rank shift value to match the special rules. If there is a rank shift plus special rules, they should increase or decrease the value of the rank shift based on the added value, or hindrance, of the special rules.

For instance, say a character had "missing his left hand" as a weakness. This offers no rank shift, it simply limits the character from manipulating anything with two hands. The players determine that this "special rule" weakness is equivalent to a -2 rank shift, thus benefiting the character by 10 points. On the other hand, let's say a character has a strength called, "Full Moon Fever: Gains +2 to all physical ranks, including toughness, during a full moon. To acquire these benefits, though, he must make a willpower feat versus a difficulty of average." This strength gives a +2 rank shift bonus, but only if the character can fulfill the special rule listed. The players decide this limits the rank shift somewhat, and they downgrade the point cost to the equivalent of a +1 shift.

No strength or weakness can drop below a 1 rank shift

Character Creation Example #2

Let's take another look at our freeform pirate, Nathanial Dirkson. This time we'll assemble him as a point-based character. The player decides that Nathanial will be adventuring in an action-intense setting. He is also an experienced pirate, not just your average swashbuckler. This gives him 90 attributes points (60X1.5) and 53 ability points (35X1.5, rounded up). The maximum rank he can possess, at this time, is superhuman.

Step 1: Character Summary
The summary will not change from "Nathanial Dirkson is an experienced pirate, a legend with his sword. He has sailed the seas for many years, forever on the lookout for more treasure. He has also racked up his fair share of enemies over the years, and there is a sizable bounty out for his skull."

Step 2: Attributes
Strength . . . . .Above Average (costs 10)
Agility . . . . .High (costs 15)
Reflex . . . . .Exceptional (costs 20)
IQ . . . . .High (costs 15)
Intuition . . . . .Exceptional (costs 20)
Willpower . . . . .Incredible (costs 25)
Toughness . . . . .Exceptional

This comes to 105 points, 15 more than he is allowed. Nathanial's player decides to leave it as is and make up the difference with weaknesses.

Step 3: Abilities
Sailing . . . . .Exceptional (costs 20)
Handle cutlass . . . . . . .Awesome (costs 30)
Social skills . . . . .Weak (costs 2)
Swimming . . . . .Low (costs 3)
Navigation . . . . .Above Average (costs 10)
Intimidate . . . . .Exceptional (costs 20)

This totals 85 points! That's 32 over what he is allowed. The player now has to make up 47 points with weaknesses.

Step 4: Strengths and Weaknesses
Feared (strength): Gains a +2 rank shift on attempts to influence those who know his reputation, fear him and are weaker (townspeople, common sailors, etc.) (10 points)

One-handed (weakness): Dirkson has a hook for one of his hands. This can be used as a weapon, but he cannot perform two-handed actions. (20 points)

As this character stands, there is still a 37 point deficit the player needs to make up. He decides to tack on a few more weaknesses to even things out.

Fear of Sharks (weakness): Nathanial lost his hand to a shark. Now, whenever he sees one, he must make a willpower feat. An average rank difficulty is seeing one shark fin in the water. Greater numbers of sharks, or closer proximity to himself, will increase this difficulty rank. If he fails the feat, then he is at -3 on all ranks while he panics and seeks to put distance between himself and the shark. (5 points)

Enemies (weakness): He is so hated, by authorities and other pirates alike, that there is always a chance when he puts in to shore and enters a town that someone will try to kill him. The rank for this unresisted question (more on this later) is below average, although this can be adjusted based on recent events as the players see fit. (15 points)

Peg Leg (weakness): Well, as long as the shark took his hand, it also took a foot. Nathanial has a peg for one foot. This precludes him from running, and gives him a -2 rank shift to any feat that requires foot mobility. (20 points)

This takes care of the deficit of points Nathanial had accrued, going over by 3 points. The player shrugs, happy with what he has built.

Step 5: Notes
These don't change for the point-based version of Nathanial. The player sketches out a few more details, such as the fact that the pirate commands his own ship and crew.

The only differences between the point-based version of Nathanial and the freeform is that the player was forced to flesh the character out more with weaknesses. Of course, he could have chosen lower ranked attributes or abilities, or taken fewer, higher cost weaknesses. One of the advantages of point-based character creation is that it requires you to think your character through. As with Nathanial here, you may end up with a more fully-fleshed character by the time you are done. Of course, he is also more set in stone than a freeform character.

cost or benefit in this manner.

Next, the players must determine the frequency with which the strength or weakness is "activated." This means how often the strength or weakness actually comes into play. A character may always be deathly allergic to a substance, but if that substance never appears in the game, then the weakness has a very rare activation rate.

If the strength or weakness comes into play rarely, about once a month or less, then divide the point benefit/cost in half, rounding fractions up. If it is common, appearing more than once a month, then leave the points alone. If it is always present, then double the point benefit/cost.

Strength and Weakness Point Values

To determine how much a strength costs, or how many points you receive from a weakness, follow these steps:

Step 1: Points from Rank Shifts

The base number of points for a strength or weakness is determined by the number of rank shifts it calls for. If there are special rules involved, modify the rank shift to reflect how much value is added, or lost, through the special rules. For instance, if a weakness calls for a -2 rank shift, but the weakness is not too serious (the character has a hard time seeing the color red, for instance), you might lower the effective rank shift by 1 (for an effective rank shift of 1). When you are comfortable with an effective rank shift, multiply that number by 5 for your base point value.

(Effective) rank shift X 5

Step 2: Determine Activation Frequency

Activation	Modifier
Rarely (once a month or less)	1/2
Common (more than once a month)	--
Always on	X2

Figure out how commonly the strength or weakness would come into play and multiply the base points by the modifier supplied above. Round any fractions up. This will give you the final point cost for a strength, or point gain, from a weakness.

For instance, with our "missing left hand" guy, he initially got 10 points coming to him. However, this would qualify as "always on," increasing the benefit to 20 points. The "full moon" strength can only be activated when there is a full moon, which is rare. This cuts the cost in half, down to 3 points (5 divided by 2, rounded up to 3).

As with freeform characters, strengths and weaknesses can really make a point-based character come to life. However, you must take special care with a point-based character. Unlike freeform, you will not be as free to add strengths and weaknesses later through adventures. So be careful what you choose now.

Step 5: Notes

This is no different than for freeform characters, including the favor points.

THAT'S ALL, FOLKS!

That's all there is to a Mythic character. The all-important concept to keep in mind is that your character is just that, a character. He is a cast-member, not just a list of statistics. Your character has flavor and attitudes which you should keep in mind. By having a good sense of who and what your character is the character will flesh himself out even more over time.

In case you haven't noticed yet, there are blank character sheets at the back of this book. You are free to copy and use them for your own personal purposes.

The Fate Chart

The fate chart is the heart of Mythic. Everything that happens in a Mythic adventure is resolved by forming a yes/no question. The logic of that question is then applied to the fate chart, which gives a percentage probability of a "yes" answer. The results are either yes, no, exceptionally yes or exceptionally no. The players then interpret the results to fit logically into the adventure. All action, and all situations, can be resolved in this manner, from determining the contents of a room to resolving the outcome of a combat.

QUESTIONS, QUESTIONS

All action is moved along in Mythic by asking yes/no questions. Are there monsters in the room? Does my car jump the chasm? Can I successfully cast this spell? Does my sword kill the troll? Did I persuade the cop to let me go?

Normally, such questions would be asked to a game master who is keeping track of such details. In a Mythic adventure, the GM can be replaced; the rules of Mythic are designed to answer all questions put to it and in a logical manner, as long as they are phrased as a yes/no.

A glance at the next page will show you the fate chart. Along the left side and bottom you will find the ranks that we discussed in the last few chapters. The ranks that help define your character, and everything else in Mythic, are compared on the fate chart to find the odds of the answer to your question being "yes."

There are two types of questions in Mythic: Odds and resisted.

Odds questions

An odds question is a question that doesn't involve ranks competing against each other. The question is just a straight query of probability. For instance, "Does the roulette wheel come up with my number?" Or, "Is it still raining?" In these cases the gambler is not pitting his gambling skill against the table, and the questioner has no chance on changing the outcome of whether it will rain or not. These are straight questions of odds, the kind that players normally ask a GM to gain further detail about the

Examples of Questions

Exactly how a question is worded is up to the players. Following are some examples.

"Does my sword strike the goblin?": This is a resisted question, pitting the swordman's rank with a sword versus the goblin's rank with his shield.

"Is the wizard successful in casting his fireball spell?": This is a resisted question between the wizard's rank at casting fireballs versus the rank of the difficulty of the spell being cast.

"I am going to steal this car. I look in the glove compartment for a spare set of keys. Do I get lucky?": This is an odds question, with the players coming up with the odds of this being yes (this becomes the active rank) and comparing that against a rank of average (usually).

game world. If there is no GM, however, or if the GM doesn't know the answer, then players can use the rules for an odds question.

To answer, the players must decide what the chances are that the answer to the question is yes. To do this, they assign that probability a rank, just like they assigned ranks to character attributes and abilities. The descriptive nature of ranks makes it simple to determine. Are the odds of the roulette table turning up black average? Is there an exceptional chance it will rain? Are the odds weak that a key will be under the doormat?

If you are playing with a GM, she makes this determination. If you are not, then the group of players must come to a consensus. If you cannot decide, then the group must average their opinions and take the closest description. A word of caution here, however: don't take forever. Decide quickly, and move on.

For example: The players are leading their characters, a trio of old-west cowboys, through a canyon as they search for a band of escaping bank robbers. One of the players is nervous of an ambush, so he asks the odds question, "Are there cliffs above us where they could ambush us from?" The player who asks the question thinks the odds are high, while the other players think the odds are exceptional.

Fate Chart

To use this chart, cross reference the acting rank versus the difficulty rank for the odds of a "yes" answer to the acting rank's question. If this is an odds question, without competing ranks, then the acting rank is the odds of a yes answer and the difficulty rank is determined by the current amount of chaos.

Acting Rank \ Difficulty Rank	Miniscule 2+	Miniscule	Weak	Low	Below Average	Average	Above Average	High	Exceptional	Incredible	Awesome	Superhuman	Superhuman 2+
Miniscule 2+ (-20 for each point over 2)	$_{10}50_{91}$	$_5 25_{86}$	$_2 10_{83}$	$_1 5_{82}$	$_1 5_{82}$	$_0 0_{81}$	$_0 0_{81}$	$_0 -20_{77}$	$_0 -20_{77}$	$_0 -40_{73}$	$_0 -40_{73}$	$_0 -55_{70}$	$_0 -65_{68}$
Miniscule	$_{15}75_{96}$	$_{10}50_{91}$	$_5 25_{86}$	$_3 15_{84}$	$_2 10_{83}$	$_1 5_{82}$	$_1 5_{82}$	$_0 0_{81}$	$_0 0_{81}$	$_0 -20_{77}$	$_0 -20_{77}$	$_0 -35_{74}$	$_0 -45_{72}$
Weak	$_{18}90_{99}$	$_{15}75_{96}$	$_{10}50_{91}$	$_7 35_{88}$	$_5 25_{86}$	$_3 15_{84}$	$_2 10_{83}$	$_1 5_{82}$	$_1 5_{82}$	$_0 0_{81}$	$_0 0_{81}$	$_0 -15_{78}$	$_0 -25_{76}$
Low	$_{19}95_{100}$	$_{16}85_{97}$	$_{13}65_{94}$	$_{10}50_{91}$	$_9 45_{90}$	$_5 25_{86}$	$_3 15_{84}$	$_2 10_{83}$	$_1 5_{82}$	$_1 5_{82}$	$_1 5_{82}$	$_0 -5_{80}$	$_0 -15_{78}$
Below Average	$_{20}100_0$	$_{18}90_{99}$	$_{15}75_{96}$	$_{11}55_{92}$	$_{10}50_{91}$	$_7 35_{88}$	$_4 20_{85}$	$_3 15_{84}$	$_2 10_{83}$	$_1 5_{82}$	$_1 5_{82}$	$_0 0_{81}$	$_0 -10_{79}$
Average	$_{21}105_0$	$_{19}95_{100}$	$_{16}85_{97}$	$_{15}75_{96}$	$_{13}65_{94}$	$_{10}50_{91}$	$_7 35_{88}$	$_5 25_{86}$	$_3 15_{84}$	$_2 10_{83}$	$_2 10_{83}$	$_1 5_{82}$	$_0 -5_{80}$
Above Average	$_{22}110_0$	$_{19}95_{100}$	$_{18}90_{99}$	$_{16}85_{97}$	$_{16}80_{97}$	$_{13}65_{94}$	$_{10}50_{91}$	$_9 45_{90}$	$_5 25_{86}$	$_4 20_{85}$	$_3 15_{84}$	$_1 5_{82}$	$_0 0_{81}$
High	$_{23}115_0$	$_{20}100_0$	$_{19}95_{100}$	$_{18}90_{99}$	$_{16}85_{97}$	$_{15}75_{96}$	$_{11}55_{92}$	$_{10}50_{91}$	$_7 35_{88}$	$_5 25_{86}$	$_4 20_{85}$	$_2 10_{83}$	$_1 5_{82}$
Exceptional	$_{24}120_0$	$_{21}105_0$	$_{19}95_{100}$	$_{19}95_{100}$	$_{18}90_{99}$	$_{16}85_{97}$	$_{15}75_{96}$	$_{13}65_{94}$	$_{10}50_{91}$	$_9 45_{90}$	$_7 35_{88}$	$_3 15_{84}$	$_1 5_{82}$
Incredible	$_{25}125_0$	$_{23}115_0$	$_{20}100_0$	$_{19}95_{100}$	$_{19}95_{100}$	$_{18}90_{99}$	$_{16}80_{97}$	$_{15}75_{96}$	$_{11}55_{92}$	$_{10}50_{91}$	$_9 45_{90}$	$_4 20_{85}$	$_2 10_{83}$
Awesome	$_{26}130_0$	$_{25}125_0$	$_{22}110_0$	$_{19}95_{100}$	$_{19}95_{100}$	$_{18}90_{99}$	$_{16}85_{97}$	$_{16}80_{97}$	$_{13}65_{94}$	$_{11}55_{92}$	$_{10}50_{91}$	$_5 25_{86}$	$_2 10_{83}$
Superhuman	$_{30}150_0$	$_{26}145_0$	$_{26}130_0$	$_{20}100_0$	$_{20}100_0$	$_{19}95_{100}$	$_{19}95_{100}$	$_{18}90_{99}$	$_{16}85_{97}$	$_{16}80_{97}$	$_{15}75_{96}$	$_{10}50_{91}$	$_5 25_{86}$
Superhuman 2+ (+20 for each point over 2)	$_{34}170_0$	$_{29}165_0$	$_{30}150_0$	$_{24}120_0$	$_{24}120_0$	$_{20}100_0$	$_{20}100_0$	$_{19}95_{100}$	$_{19}95_{100}$	$_{18}90_{99}$	$_{18}90_{99}$	$_{15}75_{96}$	$_{10}50_{91}$

Difficulty Rank column headers: Miniscule 2+ (+20 for each point over 2), Miniscule, Weak, Low, Below Average, Average, Above Average, High, Exceptional, Incredible, Awesome, Superhuman, Superhuman 2+ (-20 for each point over 2)

Chaos: 10-9 | 8-7 | 6-4 | 3-2 | 1

Exceptional Yes — The lower 1/5 of the success range.

Exceptional No — The upper 1/5 of the failure range.

Fate Chart Examples

Above is the fate chart. All yes/no questions in Mythic are answered using the fate chart. This is handled by comparing an acting rank versus a difficulty rank. Usually, the acting rank is the rank a character uses to accomplish a feat, while the difficulty rank is the rank used by an opposing character, or the rank denoting the difficulty of a particular task. Following are some examples of using the fate chart.

Two characters are arm-wrestling. To answer the question, "Does Sven win?," Sven's strength rank is the acting rank and his opponent's strength is the difficulty rank in this resisted question. Sven's strength is high while his opponent is exceptional, giving Sven a 35% chance of a yes answer. If Sven's player rolls a 7 or less, he has scored an exceptional yes. If he rolls an 88 or more, it becomes an exceptional no.

Agent Norman is fleeing from a pair of assassins across building-tops in a city. He comes to the edge of a building and decides to try and jump across to the next building. The players decide that Norman can use his agility rank for the task, which is above average. They figure the buildings are an alley length apart, making for a difficult jump. Because Norman has a running start, they give this a difficulty of high. Norman's player rolls a 43, and he barely makes it (it was 45%). If he had rolled a 9 or less, it would have been an exceptional yes, while 90 or more would have been an exceptional no.

Superdude is attempting to stop a speeding train before it collides with a busload of school children. He has a strength rank of superhuman 4. The players decide the difficulty of stopping the train is superhuman 3. Since superhuman 4 is 2 ranks off the chart, they can add 40% to the success chances. However, superhuman 3 is also off the chart, by one rank, subtracting 20% from the odds. This gives Superdude a total chance of a yes of 70%. (50% + 40% - 20%).

They decide, democratically, since 2 out of 3 think it's exceptional, then exceptional will be the odds. Generally, if a group of players cannot decide what the odds should be, the players should seek to come up with a compromise rank, something inbetween the suggestions. If that is not possible, they should go with whatever rank has the most votes.

The rank of the odds you just came up with is the active rank for this question. Now it's time to consult the fate chart. For the difficulty rank (at the bottom of the chart), use a rank of "average" (unless you are using the chaos rules, see the sidebar on this page).

Cross reference the two ranks on the chart for your probability of a "yes." Roll 1D100, and compare it to this value. If you roll within the value, then the answer is "yes." If you roll above, then the answer is "no."

By rolling very low, or very high, you can achieve exceptional results. These are the little numbers to the left and right of the larger, percentage numbers. Rolling equal to or less than the left number is an exceptional yes, rolling equal to or higher than the right number is an exceptional no. There's more on this later.

You'll notice that some numbers are negative, while others go above 100. These results are virtually a guaranteed no or yes. However, you still must roll to see if an exceptional result occurs, or to see if favor points can sway the results (you can use favor points to achieve a negative number, or to bring the die result above 100).

If you are using Mythic along with another RPG, you can use odds questions to flesh out the adventure

The process: Using odds questions to gain information

Odds questions will often be used to gain information about the game world, the kind of details GM's usually supply. If you aren't playing with a GM, or if the GM is using Mythic to answer all questions, odds questions will be very common.

For instance, a pair of mercenary characters begin their patrol of a South American jungle. Their players ask the odds question, "Is the weather nice today? Good visibility?" Since the weather has been generally pleasant lately, they assign this odds question an acting rank of exceptional. The chaos factor is currently 4, giving a difficulty rank of average. They roll a 70, for a yes.

Wanting more information, however, the characters decide to check with their commander on recent rebel activity. The players ask, "Has there been much rebel activity lately?" The players already know, however, that there has been some activity. So, they rate the odds of a yes on this question incredible. The difficulty rank remains average. They roll an 83, another yes.

The players consider this, and decide they want more firepower for their patrol. They ask, "We ask the commander to issue hand grenades. Do we get them?" They decide the acting rank is above average and roll a 2, an exceptional yes. He gives them grenades, and a rocket launcher!

The influence of Chaos on Odds Questions

You will find out about chaos, and how it effects the game, in the adventure chapter. For now, you need to know that you will keep track of a chaos factor ranging from 1 to 9. The higher the number, the more unexpected events occur. Chaos can also influence the results of odds questions.

Instead of going with an automatic "average" for the difficulty rank on odds questions, you can consult the following chart and let the chaos factor set the difficulty rank. The higher the chaos, the more frequently odds questions come up yes. Since yes answers usually add elements to an adventure, the higher the chaos factor, the more action you will have as a result of odds questions.

You may want to use this table if you are running a cinematic adventure. However, if you are trying to keep the game world as realistic as possible, then you can skip this rule and keep the difficulty rank an automatic average.

Chaos Factor	Difficulty Rank for Question
1	High
2-3	Above Average
4-6	Average
7-8	Below Average
9-10	Low

surroundings. You may seldom use resisted questions, as the other RPG will likely contain rules to handle most of those situations. However, odds questions are a handy tool for answering just about any question not covered by a specific rule.

More information, please

Odds questions are usually used to gain more information about the game world. Since Mythic adventures can be played without a GM, the only source of information about the adventure is through yes/no questioning. The most common questions, then, will be odds questions seeking more detail about adventure surroundings. Are there exits in this room? Are there more than three goons? Do the thieves have a getaway car ready? Does the newspaper run a story on my character's successful rescue operation?
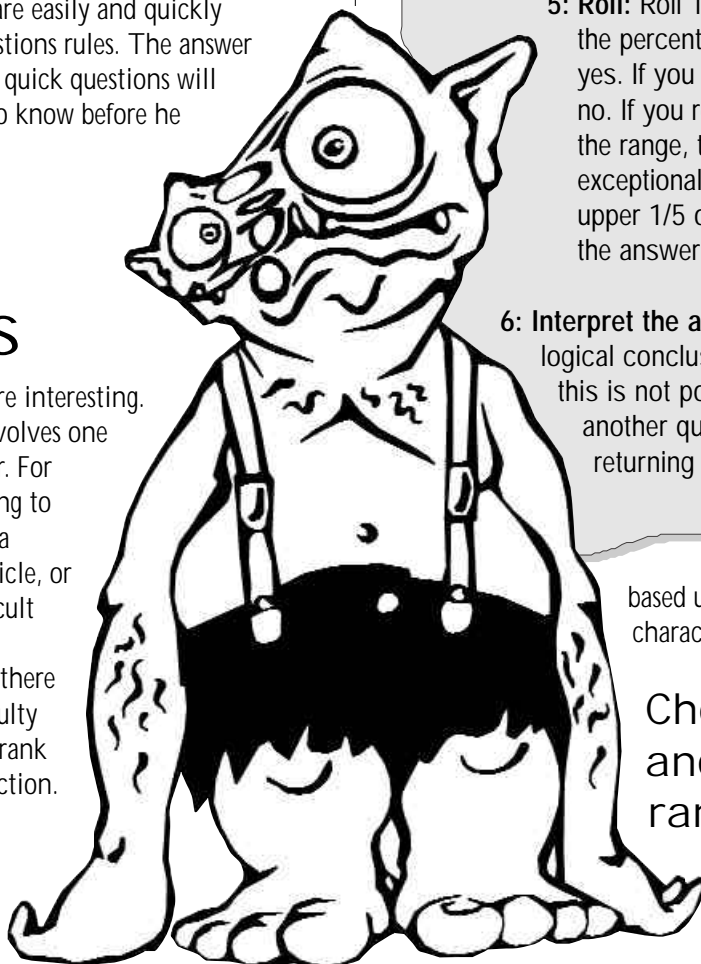
Players can also use odds questions to gather more detail before they ask a more important resisted question. For instance, the character may be a fantasy warrior who has rounded a corner in a cavern and encountered an ogre. Before the warrior commits himself to combat, he asks a few odds questions. Such as: Is the ogre armed? Does he seem surprised to see me? Do I see friends of his behind him down the hall?

These are questions that are easily and quickly answered using the odds questions rules. The answer is either yes or no, and a few quick questions will tell this player all he needs to know before he decides to attack or run.

Resisted questions

This is where life gets more interesting. A question is resisted if it involves one rank working against another. For instance, a sword fighter trying to strike another sword fighter, a superhero trying to lift a vehicle, or a wizard trying to cast a difficult spell.

To be a resisted question, there is an acting rank and a difficulty rank. The acting rank is the rank used by the initiator of the action. The difficulty rank is either decided upon by the players, much like acting ranks for an odds question, or is

Summary of How to Use the Fate Chart

1: State a question: Form a yes/no question.

2: Determine ranks: Determine the acting rank and the difficulty rank. The acting rank is the rank used by the initiator of the action. The difficulty rank is determined by the players. If this is an odds question, then the acting rank is the probability of a yes answer and the difficulty rank is average (this can be modified by chaos).

3: Modify ranks: Apply any modifiers to the acting and difficulty ranks that are appropriate.

4: Determine probability: Cross reference the ranks on the fate chart for the probability of a yes answer to the question.

5: Roll: Roll 1D100. If you roll within the percentage range, the answer is yes. If you roll above, the answer is no. If you roll in the lower 1/5 of the range, then the answer is an exceptional yes. If you roll in the upper 1/5 of the failure range, then the answer is an exceptional no.

6: Interpret the answer: Draw the most logical conclusion from the results. If this is not possible, then ask another question to clarify, returning to step 1.

based upon the rank of a resisting character or object.

Choosing acting and difficulty ranks

In the case of the dueling swordsmen, each of them would use their

sword rank both to attack and defend. If one was defending with a shield, he would use his rank with a shield, instead, to defend and his sword rank to attack. The difficulty rank for the superhero would be based on the weight of the vehicle he is trying to lift. The difficulty rank for the wizard would be based on the difficulty of the spell he was trying to cast, and would rise higher for more difficult spells.

Which details, and their corresponding ranks, are actually applied when a fate question is asked are up to the players and should be the most obvious ranks. When trying to knock a door in, a character's strength attribute makes a lot more sense than agility, even if it is higher. There may be times when more than one rank is appropriate. In that case, the player can either choose whichever he likes, or combine the ranks (more on this later). For instance, with our dueling swordsmen, one of the combatants may possess a sword detail and a dodge detail. He would use sword-fighting when he strikes, but may use dodge to defend because it is higher.

Abstract difficulty ranks

In a resisted question, the resistor does not need to be another character. The difficulty rank can be based solely on the difficulty of the feat being attempted. For instance, if an archer were trying to shoot at a target, the acting rank would be his archery rank while the difficulty rank would be the difficulty of hitting the target.

When there is no character opposing the acting character, then setting difficulty ranks is very similar to setting odds for odds questions. It is simply a question of,

How (not) to cheat

Whether players are asking questions to a GM, or they are playing without a GM and are handling the questions themselves, Mythic relies on the asking and answering of questions to move the adventure along. Since any yes/no question is allowed, the setting is ripe for abuse.

Of course, you are free to play any way you wish. But if a power-gamer is playing with a group of role-players, they may not appreciate the carefully worded questions designed to elicit the most desired response from the fate chart.

As a general rule, a question should only be asked if it makes logical sense. A party of adventurers prowling down a dungeon hall may very well ask, "Do we hear anything?" However, it would make little sense to ask,

"Do I look down and see a Vorpal Blade of Instant Murder at my feet?"

Also, players should discourage each other from twisting their questions to take advantage of system mechanics. For instance, when the chaos factor is high, there is a greater likelihood of odds questions coming out yes. Knowing this, they could always ask their question in the negative. For instance, "There are no monsters in this hall, right?"

This could all be turned on its ear if the players decide to intentionally play a comedy adventure, trying to get as ridiculous as possible. This can actually be a lot of fun, especially if you try to push the system into answering oddball questions.

how hard is it? Is it extremely hard? Is it superhuman?

In these cases, the difficulty is relative to an average individual of the game world, possessing the same ability or attribute, attempting the same feat. In other words, the superhero lifting the vehicle may be so strong that the feat is a piece of cake, of low or even weak difficulty. However, when setting the difficulty rank, we are comparing the rank to a person of average strength. This may make the feat a difficulty rank of superhuman 2 or superhuman 3.

Activating hidden attributes and abilities

If a question is resisted, but it involves details not recorded for the characters involved, either take the closest detail that is most appropriate, or make them up. This is where characters, particularly freeform characters, flesh themselves out and make use of their summary statements. Once a detail and its rank have been decided for a character, this should be recorded for future reference.

For instance, the sword fighter may lose his sword and pick up a dagger. However, the character sheet does not list a dagger detail. The player, knowing his character, has a pretty good idea how talented he is with a dagger. It is assumed that the character has some ability with a dagger, even though it is not listed on his character sheet. After a short discussion with the other players, he writes the detail onto his character sheet along with a rank, and play moves on.

If the character is a point-based designed character, the players should require a really good reason why the character possesses this hidden ability. The players, as a group, can decide whether the character does in fact know this ability. They should give much more leeway to a freeform character, since he is a work in progress.

This assumes that the character logically possesses the hidden talent. If the players decide that he lacks the skill, he can still attempt the action at a penalty. The next chapter discusses how to handle unskilled actions.

Finishing up

Once ranks are determined for a resisted question, consult the fate chart, just as you do with odds questions, comparing the acting rank and the difficulty rank. Find the percentage chance of a yes, roll the dice, and interpret. There is more information on interpretation later in this chapter.

What to do when using another RPG

Resisted questions involve the character applying a rank, from either his attributes or his abilities, to accomplish a feat of some kind. This, of course, only applies to Mythic characters in an all-Mythic adventure. If you are using Mythic solely as a GM emulator for use with another RPG, you will not need to use resisted questions very often; the task-resolution system of the other RPG will likely handle most situations. Of course, you could always pop in a resisted question if the other game is lacking a mechanic to solve a certain problem, or you've forgotten the rule and just don't want to take the time to look it up. In these cases, you can estimate what the character's appropriate rank would be based on the relevant statistics represented in the other game (for instance, if he was trying to bust open a door, and that game has no rules for such a situation, and his strength is the highest allowed in that RPG, you can decide that his Mythic strength is awesome and go from there).

When using Mythic as a GM emulator, you only need to ask questions that would normally be decided by the GM. In this case, the fate chart answers overall adventure questions, generally posed as odds questions. For instance, you might ask, "Is this room occupied?" But if it is, and combat ensues, then use the combat rules from the other RPG.

Or, the players are running an adventure using a fantasy role-playing game. The characters encounter a band of goblins in a cave and proceed to enter into combat. The fantasy game handles details of initiative, hitting and damage. However, one of the players asks, "Are they armed with swords or clubs?" The players turn to Mythic and ask this as an odds question, "Are the goblins armed with swords?" They decide that the rank for this odds question is high and proceed to roll.

Modifying ranks based on circumstances

When using Mythic characters in a resisted question, normally they will be operating at full capacity. However, circumstances will often change this. Perhaps a character is wounded, or the characters are fighting in the dark. If a special circumstance is present that effects a rank, it is up to the players to determine how much of a factor that circumstance represents.

The acting and/or difficulty ranks can be modified. Ranks are modified in rank shifts, using the same scale represented on the fate chart. For instance, a -1 rank shift of an above average rank would bring it down to average, while a +1 shift would raise it to high.

A 1 rank shift is a significant modifier and should cover most circumstances. More than 1 rank will represent more serious circumstances, although modifiers should rarely be more than 3 ranks. Consult the rank shift modifier table on the next page for more guidelines.

Rank Shift Modifier Guidelines

+/- 1 Small, but significant, modifier. Anything truly small, such as a purely cosmetic circumstance, should be ignored as a modifier. Examples: Running uphill; searching for something specific in a disheveled room.

+/- 2 Serious modifier. This is where your character is in serious hurt, or has a serious advantage. Examples: Fighting with a combatant on your back; taking time to aim at a target using a scope.

+/- 3 Very serious modifier. This is usually the maximum, and should be reserved for the most extreme situations. Examples: Fighting blind.

+/- 4+ Modifiers this high are usually reserved for superheroes and the supernatural. Example: Surviving having your head blown off; lifting a tank while being blasted by a bazooka.

Rank shifts are cumulative. If a rank is shifted down by 2 ranks, then gets a +1 modifier, the final rank shift is -1.

For instance, a character with a high sword fighting detail who has suffered a moderate wound may be at a -1 shift disadvantage, bringing his skill down to above average. Then someone turns out the lights, making him fight in the dark. That's about a -2 shift, dropping him to below average. Not bad, considering. He is then shot in the leg. Still standing, but wobbly, he is 1 more shift down. That's weak.

You do not need to worry about modifiers in odds questions since the difficulty of the circumstances is already built into the acting rank. Likewise, in a resisted question, when the resistor is not an active participant, and is just an abstract difficulty rating, then special circumstances are already built into the difficulty rank. However, you can still use the rank shift modifier chart as a guideline to help you set those difficulty ranks. In the example previously of the archer shooting a target, that may be a difficulty rank of only average. However, if the archer moves back another 15 yards, now that target is a little more difficult to hit, perhaps above average.

Sample Questions and Answers

"My character parachutes out of the plane. He tries to land in an open field. Does he make it safely?"
Yes: Yep.
No: He lands in the field, but hurts himself. Another question on the fate chart will decide how badly he is hurt.
Exceptional Yes: He lands without a problem, and very quickly.
Exceptional No: He misses the field entirely and crashes into the forest. Another question on the fate chart will determine how badly he hurt himself, or if he is entangled in the branches.

"I use my lightening wand and zap the orc. Is he fried?"
Yes: He falls to the ground, a crispy critter.
No: You miss.
Exceptional Yes: He's fried and the lightening arcs off his smoking body, frying the orc behind him as well.
Exceptional No: The bolt misses and hits the far wall, rebounding back. Let's ask another question and see if you get hit.

"Do I succeed in running into the house and slamming the door shut before the vampire pounces on me?"
Yes: 'nuff said.
No: You make it to the door, then he pounces on you.
Exceptional Yes: You make it to the door in double time, shut it, lock it, and have a few seconds to spare.
Exceptional No: You trip and fall, never making it close to the door. Not only does the vampire pounce on you, but let's see if you're hurt by the fall, too.

"As I walk through the dark hall, I listen carefully. Do I hear any sounds?"
Yes: You hear something, but you don't know what yet.
No: All is silent.
Exceptional Yes: You hear something very loud, perhaps very sudden. It may take another question to figure out what it is.
Exceptional No: All is silent. There is no appropriate exceptional result, so this remains the same as a simple no.

"I want to get into the house. Is there a set of keys under the door mat, by chance?"
Yes: Your lucky day.
No: No.
Exceptional Yes: No, but when you try the door, it's unlocked.
Exceptional No: Heck, there's not even a door mat.

Bundling questions

A special shift is used when questions are bundled. In other words, the question concerns more than one action, and could have been represented by more than one question.

For instance: "I use my karate skill and kick the gun out of his hand, snatch it from the air and point it back at him. Does this work?" This question is actually 2 or 3 separate questions. You could ban bundled questions and make the players ask each one separately. However, it's okay to bundle like this because it can make life easier by reducing fate checks and dice rolling.

The simplest way to determine rank shifts for bundled questions is to handle modifiers for each part of the question. In this example, the players decide that kicking the gun out of the opponent's hand is a little tricky, a -1 rank shift. Grabbing a flying gun out of the air, while in the middle of a fight, is also hard, a -2 rank shift. Successfully pointing the gun back, after having done all that other stuff, adds another -1 rank shift. The total rank shift is -4.

Additionally, the various questions bundled into one question may involve different ranks. So, which rank do you use? For instance, the karate guy above may be using his karate ability to kick the gun, reflex to grab it out of the air, and gun ability to point it back. To determine the acting rank, and the difficulty rank, consider all of the ranks involved as combined ranks. There is more on this further in this chapter.

The answer to the question applies to all aspects of a bundled question. If he gets a yes on the fate chart, then all parts of his question succeed. If he rolls no, then it fails from the start.

Question Depth

Another circumstance similar to bundling is when a question has a lot of depth. This means that the question is a single question, unlike the chain-like bundled questions, but it implies the answering of other questions.

For instance: A fantasy warrior character is fighting a skeleton. Before any hits are resolved, the player asks: "Does my fighter kill the skeleton?" He could have asked, does the fighter hit? Then, is the skeleton destroyed? However, this player jumps straight to the bottom line, giving his question depth.

Depth questions should be handled the same way bundled questions are handled. When coming up with the modifiers, the players should keep in mind all of the questions that should have been asked prior to this question. In this case, there should be modifiers based on any special circumstances making the skeleton harder, or easier, to hit, any armor that may reduce damage, and anything special about the skeleton itself that may reduce the odds of a killing blow.

Questions with depth are interpreted the same way bundled questions are. If the answer to the question above is yes, then the character succeeds in hitting the skeleton and destroying it. If the answer is no, then the character missed and the question failed from the get-go.

Example Scenario Resolved on the Fate Chart

The pirate Nathanial Dirkson (a freeform character) has been cornered in a seaside cave by British Captain Charles Bing. As Bing enters the cave, Dirkson draws his pistol and fires. "Does Dirkson hit Bing?"

Nathanial's player notes that he has not yet listed a pistol detail on his character sheet. He figures Dirkson is good, but not as good as he is with a sword, since that is what he is known for. He decides Dirkson has a rank of high. The players also decide that Bing is no fool, and is sticking to the walls of the cave to make a small target. The difficulty in hitting him, they say, is very high. Let's figure exceptional. Since the difficulty rank is based on circumstances, and not a specific, resisting rank, it is considered abstract.

In this resisted question (high versus exceptional), cross-referencing Dirkson's rank versus the difficulty rank, we see the pirate has a 35% chance of hitting. The player rolls a 20. A yes, so Dirkson hits.

Now he asks, "Is Bing killed?" The player gets right to the point here, asking a question with depth (he could have asked, "Is he hurt?" or "Is he knocked out?"). They figure the damage of Dirkson's pistol is above average, but give it a -1RS modifier to account for the question depth, and Bing's toughness is exceptional (he is a hardy fellow, chasing pirates all over the coast). That gives odds of 15% for a yes. The player rolls a 44. The answer is no.

He's not dead. And, since this was a depth question, he suffers no wounds (the answer to the question applies to all levels of the question).

The players could have created more detail by asking more questions, such as, "Is he wounded?" or "If wounded, is he dead?"

The trade-off for bundled and depth questions is faster resolution for less detailed results.

If the question is an important one, it might be better to break it down into its component questions. A question with a lot of depth is also more abstract, offering less detailed answers. In the above example, if the character gets a yes answer, then we know the warrior swung his sword and destroyed the skeleton. If the question had been broken up into separate questions, you would of course have a more detailed combat, recounting the action blow by blow. If the skeleton were a minor encounter it might make sense to dispatch it quickly with a depth question. However, more important events should be given more time.

Combining ranks

A special kind of modifier is when a character uses one rank to shore up another rank. For instance, the character may be using his artillery ability to fire a shell over a hill at enemy forces. However, he may have a specific knowledge ability related to the hills themselves that could help. Perhaps he once lived there. In that case, he can use his rank with hill knowledge to increase his artillery rank.

Another example is when multiple characters work together. For instance, three characters may attempt to lift a fallen pillar that is trapping a friend.

A main rank must be established first. This is usually the highest rank involved, but not necessarily. It is the rank of the primary ability or attribute being used to accomplish the feat. In the former example, it is the character's artillery rank. In the last example, it is the strongest character's strength rank.

How much of a bonus helping ranks apply to the main rank is a judgement call on the players part. We could offer you a complex series of calculations to pinpoint exactly how much of a modifier to apply (and hey, we thought about it), but decided against it. Why spend minutes performing calculations for a single modifier when there is an easier way?

Consider all the helping ranks as a whole and apply the guidelines given in the rank shift modifier guidelines table. Are the helpers insignificant, thus applying no modifier at all? Or, do they help some, giving a +1? Are they a serious help, boosting the rank by +2, or a very serious help, raising the rank by +3?

This is a judgement call on the part of the players, as are all modifiers. Most modifiers of this type should be +1, if they are any help at all. The player should present a good argument for higher adjustments.

When to roll, when to make it up

Should you use the fate chart to answer every question? "Is the sun shining today? Does the taxi driver say 'Hi'? Do I have exact change in my wallet?"

No. Please.

Don't use the fate chart for every question, your characters will never get out the front door. If the question is not important to the adventure, then just use good old-fashioned logic and don't bother rolling. If there is confusion as to the most logical answer, then go ahead and use the fate chart.

Much of the color of your adventure will come from the logical answers that were fleshed out by prior fate chart questions. Maybe you did roll to see if the taxi driver says "Hi." He doesn't. Later, when characters talk to him to get news of local happenings, he is less likely to be chatty, as we have already established that he is not very friendly. Knowing this about him will change the odds of future questions concerning his actions.

In this way, the logical chain of events builds upon itself, shaping the entire structure of the adventure. Keeping past events and logic in mind also cuts down on the number of rolls required on the fate chart. The more information you already possess, the less you have to ask of the chart.

On the other hand, sometimes one question on the fate chart is not enough to clarify a situation. It may take yet another fate question to figure out what the original answer meant.

For instance: "I just shot that bad guy. Is he dead?" The answer: No. Well, if he's not dead, then what is he? At this point, you can either use logic, or ask another question to clarify. Such as: "Okay, he's not dead. Did he fall on the ground, incapacitated by pain?"

To keep the frequency of questions down, and encourage logical thinking, set a 2 question maximum to define any given situation. That should be enough information for logic to take over from there.

For instance, a pair of occult investigators creep through a graveyard at midnight, searching for the walking dead. They inspect a mausoleum, checking to see if the entrance has been opened lately. One of the players asks, "Do we hear anything?" Yes. "Does it sound like something scrambling inside?" No. "Does it sound like someone walking through the graveyard?" No. "Is it something flying through the air?" No.

This player is hitting a run of no answers and apparently plans on continuing to ask until he gets a positive answer. He could have stopped after the second question, "Does it sound like something scrambling inside?" We already know that they hear something, and it's not coming from inside the mausoleum. They could simply use logic at this point to say they hear something outside, in the graveyard. A shuffling sound, perhaps. Or something too faint to identify. Going the logic route after two questions yields an answer that the players should be able to work with.

Of course, if you really want to, you can keep asking more questions. We find, however, that setting the 2 question maximum automatically stops players from asking a series of detailed questions; they get to the Big Picture much faster.

The art of interpretation

Using the fate chart to find your percentage chance of success is only the beginning. Next, someone must roll some dice and see if the answer is "yes" or "no." After any favor points are factored in, it is up to the GM, or the players if there is no GM, to figure out what the answer really means.

Interpretation is an important part of Mythic. Again, logic must prevail. Whatever seems the most logical answer, given the circumstances, is the result.

Sometimes interpretations will come easily. If the question was, "I fired my gun. Did I hit?" A no answer is simple enough, and a yes means you hit. It doesn't say

where you hit, but the logical assumption would be the largest section of your target.

If the players wish, they can try to clarify the answer further with more questions. "Did I hit in the head?" "Is he hurt?" "Does he fall down?" Eventually, players learn to ask the right questions. It is best to ask "Big Picture" questions, rather than many small, detail questions. The more important the situation, the more detailed questions you should ask, but don't get in the habit of asking for excruciating detail in every circumstance. The point is to gather only as much information as needed to make a logical decision.

Exceptional results

Sometimes when a roll is made on the fate chart, the player will roll very high or very low. This can create an exceptional result. Exceptionals occur when a roll is made in the upper or lower 20% (one-fifth) of the percentage range given.

In other words, if the odds of a yes are 50%, then a roll of 1-10 is an exceptional yes, and a 91-100 is an exceptional no. If the odds are 80%, then a 1-16 is an exceptional yes, and a 97-100 is an exceptional no. So you don't have to work out the exceptional values for yourself every time, the fate chart lists the lower and upper ranges beside each percentage chance for success.

You'll notice on the fate chart that some values go above 100 and some below 0. These are cases where success or failure is assured. However, you still need to roll to see if an exceptional result occurs. For instance, if there is a 120% chance of a yes, then a roll of 1-24 is an exceptional yes, and the rest is a normal yes.

What exactly is an exceptional result? Well, just that … exceptional. Usually, you can double or halve the normal result, or determine that an exceptional no yields the opposite of what you wanted. As with all else in Mythic, you must use judgement and go with what seems most logical, but exceptional results are the ideal yes and no. For instance, if the question was, "I fire my gun at him. Do I hit?" and the result is an exceptional yes, then you may decide that the bullet not only hit, but struck the target in the head or some other vulnerable spot. Had the result been an exceptional no, then you may decide that not only did the bullet miss, but you may have hit a friend, or blown out a window in the plane, or some such.

Some questions may be so cut and dried that exceptional results seem silly. In those cases, ignore the exceptional result and just treat it as a plain yes or no.

For instance, a player may ask, "Is the car locked?" A yes or a no answer is pretty clear. What would an exceptional yes or no mean? If it's important, perhaps it means the car is unlocked and the key's in the ignition. Or, maybe it just means the same as a normal yes. If, after rolling an

exceptional result, the players cannot come up with a result right away that makes sense in an exceptional way, then just treat it as a normal yes or no.

Using resolution tables

As new questions arise during an adventure, you may find some questions come up again and again. So you don't have to reinvent the wheel every time the same question is asked, you may want to record the results for future reference. This will be especially helpful if the question pertains to a unique aspect of your adventure world. For instance, if your characters are using a custom magic system that requires mages to make a success check in order to cast a spell, you will want to keep track of the results of the fate chart so you are consistent with future rulings on the same question.

To make this easier on you, we've provided handy question resolution tables in this book for you to freely copy. It appears again at the end of this book.

To fill out the table, just record the question, any notes you want to remember, any modifiers that apply, and the results as they crop up. In the example of our spellcasters, after some time playing, the players may have filled out their question table like the one on this page.

As they continue to play, they keep this chart handy, updating it as required.

Resolution Tables

Below are a couple of question resolution tables. The one on the left is a blank, free for you to copy. The box on the right shows what a filled out table might look like. You can use the boxes to help keep track of how you answer recurring questions during an adventure.

Question

NOTES

ACTING RANK:

DIFFICULTY RANK:

MODIFIERS

RESULTS

YES

NO

EXCEPTIONAL YES

EXCEPTIONAL NO

Question
Does the mage successfully cast the spell?

NOTES
Spell cannot be attempted unless required elements are available.

ACTING RANK: Magic ability rank

DIFFICULTY RANK: Difficulty of the spell. This is an abstract value, determined by the players.

MODIFIERS
Distracted: +1 RS difficulty
Mage hurt: Add to difficulty worst damage RS mage is suffering
Doesn't possess all the elements: +2 RS difficulty

RESULTS

YES Spell goes off as planned.

NO Spell fizzles, nothing happens.

EXCEPTIONAL YES Spell works great, +1 RS to its effects.

EXCEPTIONAL NO Mage fumbled it, magic power backfires. He suffers damage.

Task Resolution

In the previous chapter you learned about the fate chart, the central tool in Mythic for resolving all questions, including task resolution. This chapter will offer a few more guidelines for how to best use the fate chart in resolving questions of tasks.

OH, WHAT A TASK

Task resolution is the process of figuring out whether a character is successful in attempting an action. Mythic uses the same yes/no question format to resolve tasks as it does any other question, phrased simply as, "Does the character succeed at such-and-such task?"

Task resolution is one of the most frequent uses made of the fate chart. Everything from a character trying to climb a wall to fighting an enemy is task resolution.

No matter what the task, though, they are all handled in similar fashion.

The question

Task resolution begins with a character attempting an action. The matter of success is then phrased as a question. Such as, "The emerald knight is attacking the dragon. Does he hit?" Questions for task resolution are usually very straight-forward: does the character succeed or not?

All the same rules that apply to other questions also apply to task resolution questions, such as bundling and depth.

Ranks

As discussed in the previous chapter, questions involving opposing forces make use of their ranks. There is the acting rank which is resisted by the difficulty rank. In cases of task resolution, the acting rank is whatever ability or attribute the character attempting the action is using. The emerald knight would use the rank of his skill with a sword.

The difficulty rank is either the rank of an ability or attribute of another character opposing the acting character, or, if there is no opposing character, an abstract judgement of the difficulty of a particular task. In the case of the knight, the difficulty rank may be the combat rank of the dragon. Or, if the dragon were sleeping, the difficulty may be more abstract, such as a determination of how thick the dragon's hide is.

Modifiers

There are sure to be many circumstances that impact either the acting rank or the difficulty rank. You shouldn't hold the entire game up so you can think of every single possible modifier, but you should take note of the obvious ones.

For instance, the emerald knight may be suffering from a wounded arm, which would give him a penalty for striking the dragon.

Some common modifiers to consider:

Wounds: A wounded character often suffers modifiers for all of their actions until the wounds heal. This is covered more fully in the next chapter, combat.

Momentary Advantages: Sometimes a character will benefit from a shortlived advantage, such as an enemy who has his back turned. These kinds of advantages are usually received only once before going away.

Environment: Conditions are not always perfect for the accomplishment of some tasks. That wall may be easy to climb on most days, but not so easy in the pouring rain. A character may be an expert swordsman, but how good is he going to be in pitch darkness? The effect of the immediate environment should be considered as modifiers, often for both the acting and difficulty ranks.

When considering modifiers, don't forget the rank shift modifier guidelines from the last chapter. Usually, a shift of +/- 1 is sufficient for a significant modifier, while 2 points is a much more serious modifier, and shifts up to 3, or even 4, are possible but rare.

Figuring out the results

Here we come back to the fine art of interpretation, also covered in the last chapter. You know the question, the ranks, the modifiers, you've rolled the dice and you've checked it against the fate chart. Now that you have your answer, what does it really mean?

In short, a yes means the character did indeed succeed at her task, exactly as stated, and a no means she did not. It's okay to keep this simple. If an exceptional result is rolled, but there is no immediate exceptional result presenting itself, then keep it a simple yes or no. For instance, a character may attempt to pick a lock. A yes means he succeeds, a no means he doesn't, so what does an exceptional yes mean? I suppose he could succeed really fast, although we're only talking a few seconds here. Rather than spending time trying to figure out what additional benefit this character gained, it may just make more sense to downgrade this to a simple yes.

You could use a little help

Many tasks will be performed off the cuff, such as climbing walls or picking locks. Others may happen only once in an adventure, such as trying to figure out the ancient language scratched upon a dungeon wall.

However, some tasks may arise again and again in an adventure. For instance, in a fantasy game, the task of casting a spell may be very common. When you expect a task to become recurring in an adventure, you may not want to cover the same ground every time the same question arises.

Located in the previous chapter, and at the back of this book, are blank resolution tables. These tables have spaces for everything you need: the question, ranks, modifiers, results and notes. It's a good idea to begin filling one of these out for a task when you think that task will show up again.

You don't even have to fill it all out at once. For instance, you

Q	uestion
NOTES	
ACTING RANK:	
DIFFICULTY RANK:	

MODIFIERS

RESULTS

YES

NO

EXCEPTIONAL YES

EXCEPTIONAL NO

A blank resolution table. You can find these at the back of the book.

may add modifiers to the table as you think of them, with each succeeding attempt at the task. You may not even fill out the exceptional results areas until a character attains one, at which point you can figure out what it means.

By maintaining a resolution table, you help maintain consistency across the adventure. You know that the same ranks are being compared, and the same modifiers are used, and the same results applied, each time the task is attempted. This doesn't mean you can't change the information if a better idea occurs to you, but it does mean you don't have to recreate the whole process each time.

For instance...

Here's an example of a player using a resolution chart. Her character, Hurricane Halle, is an archaeologist trekking through the dense jungles of South America. She is plodding along in a junky jeep that breaks down frequently. Since the player does not yet possess a resolution chart detailing auto repairs, the player decides to start one the first time the jeep dies. Hurricane Halle gets out to perform repairs. Her resolution chart, after her first repair, looks like this:

Question
Is the broken vehicle repaired?

NOTES
This is just for cars.

ACTING RANK: Mechanical repair ability

DIFFICULTY RANK: Abstract estimation of the extent of the vehicle's damage.

MODIFIERS
Lacking good tools: -1RS to acting rank

――― RESULTS ―――

YES Vehicle is repaired and running again, although no telling for how long.

NO

EXCEPTIONAL YES

EXCEPTIONAL NO

On her first repair attempt, Halle succeeded and continued on her travels. Later, the jeep dies again while she tries to make it across a shallow river. Knee deep in rushing water, Halle tries once again. This time, she fails and updates her chart as follows:

MODIFIERS
Lacking good tools: -1RS to acting rank
Poor work environment: -1RS to AR

――― RESULTS ―――

YES Vehicle is repaired and running again, although no telling for how long.

NO Repair attempt failed.

This stalwart heroine will not be deterred, and she continues on by foot. She later comes upon a small outpost, where, lo and behold, she buys a junked car for a steal. It doesn't work, but Halle thinks she can get it going again. She makes an attempt at repairs and succeeds with an exceptional result. The resolution chart now looks like this.

Question
Is the broken vehicle repaired?

NOTES
This is just for cars.

ACTING RANK: Mechanical repair ability

RESISTING RANK: Abstract estimation of the extent of the vehicles damage.

MODIFIERS
Lacking good tools: -1RS to acting rank
Poor work environment: -1RS to acting rank

――― RESULTS ―――

YES Vehicle is repaired and running again, although no telling for how long.

NO Repair attempt failed.

EXCEPTIONAL YES Vehicle is repaired and running as good as new. -2RS to any future chances of breaking down again.

EXCEPTIONAL NO

Halle doesn't have any more car trouble during this adventure, so this is as far as the chart goes. Nevertheless, the player established some guidelines for auto repair that may come in handy during a future adventure, so she keeps the chart handy for later.

BUILD A BETTER WORLD

This brings us to an important point. Once you've made a resolution chart, save it. If your characters continue on with further adventures in the same game world, the resolution charts from previous adventures will still be useful. You will generate more resolution charts as the characters explore the game world, helping in its evolution.

This not only gives you an opportunity to watch the adventure world grow and change, but a chance to record this evolution and keep it consistent across adventures. You are, in effect, creating the rules of your adventure world as you go along, fully customized to your characters and your style of play.

UNSKILLED TASKS

Normally to perform a task, a player simply picks the most suitable rank, whether it's an attribute or an ability. However, some tasks require specialized knowledge.

When a character attempts a feat using a skill he doesn't possess, he must substitute another detail, either an attribute or some similar ability. The players have to decide if the detail he is using is close enough to the real thing. If not, then they must decide on an appropriate modifier, or if the character can attempt the task at all.

Following are some guidelines:

Unskilled simple tasks

Many tasks require no special training or knowledge. There is not much to know about wrenching a door open or trying to remember something. For very simple tasks that can be addressed by an attribute, there is no penalty for lacking a relevant ability.

Semi-specialized tasks

However, there are simple tasks that do benefit from training. Many physical tasks, such as combat, running, climbing, etc. can be taught and learned as a skill, but don't require it. Anyone can attempt to climb over a wall, you don't need to be taught to do it. However, a character attempting a task at something simple, but for which a skill does exist, suffers a -2RS penalty if he substitutes an attribute. For instance, an untrained fighter can still fight, using his reflex at -2RS.

If the character possesses a similar ability, he can substitute that one at only a -1RS penalty. For instance, a character may have no skill with handguns, but some ability with rifles. He could substitute his rifle ability, at -1RS, for the missing handgun skill.

It's very possible to possess attributes so high, that it wouldn't make any sense to learn an ability to perform some tasks. A superhero character may want to learn martial arts, but if his reflex is already superhuman 2, what he learns in the dojo may never come close to what he can do naturally. There is something to be said for natural ability, which often shines most clearly in tasks that don't require specific training.

Specialized tasks

These are tasks that require special knowledge or training to be performed correctly. This includes complex medical treatment, computer programming, repairing devices, or just about anything that requires schooling to acquire the knowledge to do. It is up to the players if a character can still attempt a task without the proper ability, but they would suffer at least a -3RS penalty. If a task is very complex, the players may just rule it impossible without the proper training. Or, if they don't like simply ruling it out, they can give it a huge penalty (-4 or more), which not only increases the chance of failure, but increases the chance of exceptional failure.

Sample Completed Resolution Tables

Question
Does the character hear anything?

NOTES This is used when a character actively stops to listen for any sounds.

ACTING RANK: Intuition

DIFFICULTY RANK: Abstract determination of the likelihood of hearing something

MODIFIERS
-2RS to AR if there is lots of distracting noise

RESULTS

YES Yes, a noise is heard. It will require further questions to determine what.

NO All is quiet.

EXCEPTIONAL YES Yes, a noise is heard, and clearly. The character gains a +2RS on any further questions to determine what is heard.

EXCEPTIONAL NO All is quiet, same as simple no.

Question
A character is searching a computer hard drive for specific information. Does she find it?

NOTES The character must have some computer ability for this to work. This assumes at least a half hour is being taken.

ACTING RANK: Computer ability

DIFFICULTY RANK: Abstract determination of the difficulty of finding the information.

MODIFIERS
-1RS to AR if rushed (less than 15 minutes)
-2RS to AR if really rushed (less than 5 minutes)
+1RS to AR if the character has some general idea of where in the computer the info might be

RESULTS

YES Yes, she finds what she's looking for.

NO Nope, it's either not there or she can't find it. Can try again, but at -2RS to AR.

EXCEPTIONAL YES Found it, and in half the time.

EXCEPTIONAL NO Nope, can't find it, even after using every trick she knows. Cannot attempt again.

Question
Does the character succeed in building a giant robot?

NOTES This assumes a significant amount of time and resources have gone into the planning and construction.

ACTING RANK: Robotics ability

DIFFICULTY RANK: Highest rank possessed by robot, combined with other ranks

MODIFIERS
+2RS to DR if the laboratory did not possess the full resources required
+2RS to DR if the robot contains technologies the builder does not fully understand

RESULTS

YES Yes, it is built exactly to specifications

NO No, it doesn't work at all.

EXCEPTIONAL YES Yes, it works, and was finished in half the time or at half the cost.

EXCEPTIONAL NO It explodes, causing damage to those near as with a rank equal to the highest rank possessed by the robot

Question
The character attempts to read a set of runes. Can he make out what they say?

NOTES The character must have some knowledge of the language of the runes, otherwise it is automatically meaningless.

ACTING RANK: Rune language

DIFFICULTY RANK: Abstract determination of the difficulty of reading the message.

MODIFIERS
+1RS to DR if the runes are partially destroyed
-1RS to AR if read under poor conditions, such as in poor light or while rushed

RESULTS

YES Yes, he understands what it says

NO He hasn't got a clue.

EXCEPTIONAL YES He figures it out in half the time.

EXCEPTIONAL NO He hasn't got a clue, and he never will.

Combat

Mythic combat is handled like any other task; ask questions, check for answers. This chapter will offer guidelines on how best to use the Mythic system to make combat run smoothly.

The rules set out in this chapter extend the concepts from the last chapter, focusing attention, of course, on combat oriented tasks. If you are using Mythic as a GM emulator, you will probably be using the combat system of another role-playing game. Nevertheless, the information in this chapter may still be useful to you to answer any combat situations not easily addressed by the other system.

Initiative? You don't need no stinkin' initiative!

There is no initiative in Mythic combat. At least, not in the way you are probably thinking of. There are no rounds. Combat is a free-for-all, guided by players' questions and the interpreted answers.

Who really fights in rounds, anyway? Whether in movies, books, or real life, combatants don't throw blows punch for punch. Usually, one fighter tosses off a flurry of attacks while his opponent defends himself, and then the defender comes back on the attack, if he's still alive.

Combat in Mythic works the same way. Player's ask if they can act or if their opponent acts. They state what they want to do, ask if they can do it, and then see if they succeed at whatever it is they wanted to do. There is no difference between questions asked in combat and those asked for other tasks. With combat, as the life-or-death struggle that it is, it's important we spend a little time on how to make it all work seamlessly.

Since there are no rounds, and no initiative, combat can get very chaotic and very messy. No one can enter a combat and say, "I will get exactly 2 strikes for every 1 of my opponent's." Even the best fighters will have a bad day, and even the worst can have a glowing moment where they dominate a more skilled adversary, at least for an instant.

Who goes first?

A combat situation occurs when a player character, or an NPC, engages someone in an attack. That's pretty obvious. Equally obvious, whoever engages in that initial attack goes first. But how do you figure the order after that?

To determine who goes next, frame it as a fate question. For instance, the player would ask, "Can I attack now?" This question uses the character's combat ability as the acting rank. If he lacks a suitable combat skill, he can use reflex at -2RS as per the unskilled rules. The difficulty rank is the combat ability rank of the opponent (or the modified reflex, again). There are many difficulty rank modifiers, such as: is the defender or attacker wounded? Is this a surprise attack? Does one opponent have an advantage over the other, such as both hands are free, attacking from higher ground, etc.? These modifiers will be addressed later in the chapter.

For help in resolving the "who goes next" question, and other combat questions, you will find a number of charts in this chapter. You can use these as guidelines to help in combat task resolution.

If the answer is a yes then the character can make an attack. If it's a no then the opponent gets a shot. This question, of whether the character strikes next or not, is asked after each blow. These are not rounds: the combat flows from attack to attack not round to round. It makes no difference who got the last shot in. It's possible for a very skilled combatant to run off a series of attacks before his opponent has any chance to fight back. Opponents who are equal in skill will trade off attacks more evenly.

For instance, two ninjas face each other, one with a short sword the other with a pair of knives. They attack each other simultaneously, so neither gets an automatic first strike. They check to see who strikes first, and the ninja with the sword wins out on the fate chart. He swings and misses. The player asks, "Do I get the next attack?" The question is answered using the fate chart. Perhaps the sword ninja will go again. If he's better than his opponent, the sword ninja may get in three or four shots before his opponent can find an opening for his own blow.

The results of each combat maneuver can affect who gets in the next attack. For instance, with our ninjas, say the sword ninja succeeds in getting in first. He then tries to hit, but gets an exceptional no to his question. The players interpret this as swinging so wide he left himself open to a counter-attack, automatically giving the knife ninja the next blow.

Who goes first with multiple opponents

In many combats, it will be one-on-one. However, this is not always the case. If a character is facing multiple opponents he still asks the same question, "Do I go next?" The difficulty rank is made up of the combined ranks of all of his opponents. These are combined as described in the fate chart chapter. Start with the highest reflex or combat ability. This is the main rank. Consider the ranks of all of the other combatants and determine how much "help" they would be to the main rank.

For instance, if a player is facing two opponents, one

Sample Combat Order: One-on-one

Captain Spangle squares off with supervillain, Max Murder. Spangle is fighting with his reflex of superhuman 2. Max is using his martial arts ability of exceptional. The two characters meet in a cave and attack each other at the same time. Spangle's player asks, "Do I go first?" His effective acting rank is superhuman 2 (from reflex) minus a rank shift of 2 (because Spangle is unskilled), for a rank of awesome. Spangle's character rolls a 3 and checks on the fate chart, seeing he scored an exceptional yes. Spangle's character was so fast, he went first and caught Max off-guard gaining a bonus to hit.

Max gets punched and is reeling from the blow. His player asks, "Ouch. Does Max go next?" His acting rank is his martial arts rank of exceptional minus a penalty of 1RS (from the wound he suffered from Spangle's punch), for high. He puts this against Spangles rank of awesome as the difficulty rank. Max's player rolls a 43, a no (he needed a 20 or less). This means Spangle gets to act again, and proceeds to slap Max around a little more.

Max's player asks again, "Do I go next? I'm getting a little desperate here." He now suffers from two wounds, totaling a penalty of -2RS, so his acting rank is only above average versus a difficulty of awesome. He has only a 15% chance of going next, and gets lucky with a 12. Smiling, Max gives Spangle a vicious kidney punch, hurting the hero.

"That's more like it. Do I go again?" Max's player asks. He still has an acting rank of above average, but now Spangle is also hurt and is suffering a -1 penalty, bringing him down to a rank of incredible. Max's player rolls a 32, a no.

Max tries to follow up his last punch with another, but even hurt, Spangle is way to fast for him and clobbers him a good one across the jaw. Max Murder falls stunned to the cave floor, defeated.

Sample Combat Order: Two-on-two

Player characters Ranlin the warrior and Ursa the barbarian face off against two goblins atop a frozen wasteland. Ranlin and Ursa are both armed with swords, their ranks with those weapons are both exceptional. The goblins are armed with clubs, both ranked high.

Ranlin's player asks, "It's time we wasted these losers. Do we go first?" Since they both have the same rank, neither takes precedence over the other. They determine that together they make a combined rank of incredible (the two ranks help each other, a +1 modifier). Since the goblins are in the same boat, they give them the same modifier, for a combined rank of exceptional. Ranlin's player rolls, and gets a 47, a yes.

After a moment of discussion, they decide that Ranlin attacks, since he initially engaged the encounter anyway. He swings his sword, immediately cleaving one of the goblins through the head, killing him.

As the goblin crumples to the ground, the second one raises his club to attack. However, since he lost his buddy, his rank to determine if he goes next is now only high. The players ask again, "Do we go next?" The players still have a combined rank of incredible, and roll a 58 for a yes. The players can't decide if this means Ranlin, or Ursa, since it makes sense that either might get in the next attack (Ranlin because he is closer, Ursa because Ranlin is busy finishing his attack on the other goblin). They decide to make this a resisted fate question, since the fighters are competing against each other to see who gets the shot in first. The ranks are exceptional and exceptional for the question, "Does Ranlin go again?" They roll a 63, for a no. Ursa goes.

He rushes forward with his sword and runs the other goblin through, killing him. Both warriors congratulate themselves on the quick victory.

with a combat ability of above average and another with a combat ability of average, the players may determine that the average guy is helpful, adding a +1 rank shift. If there are three average guys, they may determine this is a serious modifier (+2), just based on the sheer number of combatants.

If the player wins the question then he acts normally. If he loses, then the players determine which of the multiple attackers acts. You can leave this as a judgement call, just taking the most obvious combatant. Or, if there is some doubt, frame it as a question and put it to the fate chart ("Does Leroy get in an attack? He's closest, after all.")

The same rules apply to multiple player characters. If it's three PCs versus three NPCs, both sides will combine their ranks for a total rank. The winning side chooses who, logically, gets to act. If there is no clear logical choice, frame it as another question and ask the fate chart.

It is possible to have a group melee, but treat it like multiple, smaller melees. In other words, it may be 5 PCs versus 8 NPCs. But, very likely, the combatants will pair off. One or two PCs may take on a few NPCs, while several pair of one-on-one fights are going on, etc. In this case, handle each separate, smaller group as an individual combat, determining their own "who goes next" question, rather than all being lumped together.

Did I hit?

The next question is, "Does the attack hit?" The acting rank is the attacker's combat ability and the difficulty rank is the combat ability of the defender. In both cases,

this is usually the same rank which was used to determine who gets to act. Also, the two details do not have to be the same. For instance, an attacker may use his sword rank, while the defender is using his rank with his shield detail to block. If the defender has multiple combat abilities that apply to the situation, he can use whichever he wants. For instance, in the ninja example, if the knife ninja possessed dodge ability at a higher rank than knife-fighting, then he would likely use that for defense.

The resolution of this question is the same as any other question. A yes means a hit was scored, a no means a miss. You can consult the question charts in this chapter for more detailed answer summaries.

If a character hits, then it's on to the good part ... damage!

Is he hurt?

The next question, which may be the last, is, "Is the character hurt?" The acting rank is the damage rank of the weapon, the difficulty rank is the rank of the struck character's toughness. The actual results of this answer depend somewhat on the weapon being used ... is it a stunning, bashing weapon, or lethal, killing weapon? There is more on this later.

A yes answer to this question means the character is hurt, wounded in some way, but may still be able to act. The weapon did it's job, whatever that may be, but not

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Does [a character] act next?

This question is usually asked after every action in a combat. Exceptions include when special circumstances automatically give a combatant the next strike.

ACTING RANK: Combat ability.

DIFFICULTY RANK: Combat ability.

MODIFIERS

Consult the modifiers table for next action. Keep in mind that if there are multiple opponents, they act as a combined rank for purposes of the next action.

RESULTS

YES	The character gets to attack the opponent.
NO	The opponent gets to attack the character. If there are more than one opponents, then either choose the most logical or ask a question.
EXCEPTIONAL YES	The character gets to attack. He moved so quickly, he got the drop on his opponent, and receives a +1 RS to the question to hit.
EXCEPTIONAL NO	The opponent gets to attack. He moved so quickly, he got the drop on the character, and receives a +1 RS to the question to hit.

Does the character hit?

This question comes after the "next act" question. The character, whether a player character or NPC, is attacking. This question determines whether or not the character hits.

ACTING RANK: Combat ability.

DIFFICULTY RANK: Combat ability if a melee combat. If ranged, the players must assign an abstract difficulty.

MODIFIERS

Consult the hitting modifier table. If this is a ranged attack, also consult the ranged attack modifier table.

RESULTS

YES	The character hits.
NO	The character misses.
EXCEPTIONAL YES	The character hits in the best way possible. This means striking a vulnerable area, or causing some additional benefit, the choice is up to the players. If the strike hits a vulnerable area, then add a +1 or +2 RS to the damage question (how much of a modifier is up to you.) If a benefit is gained, such as knocking a weapon free, then this occurs plus the normal damage question.
EXCEPTIONAL NO	The character misses and fumbles, such as dropping his weapon, hitting the wrong target, or putting himself in a bad position, automatically giving his opponent the next action. The result is up to you, using logic, or it can be asked as an additional question.

100% of the way. In other words, a killing weapon wounded, but did not necessarily kill; a stunning weapon hurt, but did not necessarily stun. A no means the character may be bruised or bleeding, but is no worse for the wear. An exceptional yes, however, means the weapon performed as it should, dealing out the kind of harm it was made for. This usually means the character is out of commission, either dead or stunned. An exceptional no, on the other hand, means the character did not receive a scratch, and may even gain a bonus of some kind.

There is more on damage later in this chapter.

The issue of armor

Armor can be worn across the body, or just in specific areas. Wherever the armor is, it provides a bonus to the wearer's toughness for purposes of resisting damage. The kind of armor available to your characters is up to the players, depending on the adventure world, its technological level, etc. Aside from the toughness bonus, armor may carry additional modifiers, or even penalties, such as lowering reflex because it is bulky. These issues are up to the players. Below is a chart showing generally how armor should augment a character's toughness. If the character takes damage despite his armor, it means the armor was breached, or he is getting banged up inside the armor. The specific effects are up to the players, or can be framed as a question on the fate chart, if important.

Despite the bonus received from armor, there are limits. The maximum toughness that can be derived from a particular armor is equal to the material strength of the armor. In other words, if you were to actually try and destroy the armor itself, what difficulty rank would it pose? You should be a little generous with this estimate as we are not just talking about poking a hole in the armor but destroying it. A good set of leather armor may have an upper limit of incredible, while hard plate mail might be superhuman 2. Once the RS bonus to toughness matches this rank, then the character receives no additional benefit. This is why some superheros don't need to wear protection; they are already tougher than any armor.

Armor Effectiveness

Armor	RS to Toughness
Very light (thick hides)	+1
Thick, non rigid (cured leather)	+2
Light metal (chain mail, thin, loose plates)	+3
Hard metal covering (plate mail)	+4
Hi-tech armors (battle suits)	+5 and up

Is the opponent hurt?

This question usually follows after a hit is scored. If the character is hurt, the specific nature this hurt takes is up to you, depending on the weapon used and the results of this question.

ACTING RANK: Damage rank of the weapon.
DIFFICULTY RANK: Toughness of the character hit.

MODIFIERS

Consult the damage modifier table.

RESULTS

YES — The character is wounded, the weapon had a partial effect. See the damage section for the effects of wounds.

NO — The character may be bruised or bleeding, but the wound has no other impact.

EXCEPTIONAL YES — The weapon causes full damage. Refer to the damage section.

EXCEPTIONAL NO — The character not only shrugs off the attack, but something beneficial happens. What exactly is up to the players, but can be something like the attacker's weapon breaks, or the defender receives a +1 RS on a subsequent "who goes next" roll and "to hit" roll from an adrenaline rush from the blow, or the failed attack left the attacker in a vulnerable position.

When it's the other guy's turn

It won't always be the player characters throwing the punches and swinging the swords. The bad guys get their shots in too. On the question, "Do I attack next?" when you get a no, that means the other guy gets a chance. The NPCs follow the same process of questions as the PCs do. However, if you are playing without a GM, you may have to toss in a few additional questions to figure out what the NPCs are going to do.

For instance, the PC, a noble knight, is battling an evil dark knight. The good knight is too slow and his opponent has an opportunity to attack. Before he can do anything, the player has to determine what the evil knight intends to do. Usually, this can be solved by logic. The guy's got a sword, the two are fighting, it stands to reason he'll try to hit the good guy with his sword. However, the player can ask anyway, just to be sure. So, he asks, "Does he attack me with his sword?" What if he gets a no? Hmm, maybe that means he tries to disarm the good knight, not assault him. That would be a logical interpretation of the result.

As with all things Mythic, any problems or areas of confusion in an adventure are solved by simply forming a question and answering it. The same is true for combat.

Combat Question Modifiers

"Does the character go next?" Modifiers

- Character is surprised: -3RS

- Character is unskilled: -2RS

- Character is wounded: RS penalty of wounds from body or limb used for the attack, whichever is greater

- Character is somewhat burdened or hampered: -1RS

- Character is distracted: -1RS

- Character is at a tactical disadvantage, such as lower ground, etc: -1RS

- On the ground: -2RS

The modifiers above are reversed if they apply to the opponent. For instance, if the character is attacking someone who is surprised, the character will receive a +3RS, if the character's opponent is on the ground, she gets a +2RS, etc.

"Does the character hit?" Modifiers

- Character is wounded: RS penalty of wounds from body or limb used for the attack, whichever is greater

- Character is unskilled: -2RS

- Character's action is hasty: -1RS

- Character is distracted: -1RS

- Character is somewhat burdened or hampered: -1RS

- Visibility is limited slightly, as in a fog: -1RS

- Visibility is limited severely, as in sand in your eyes: -3RS

- Zero visibility, total darkness: -4RS

- Targeting a small area, head-size: -1RS

- Targeting a limb: -2RS

- Targeting a hand, foot, or held object: -3RS

Additional Ranged Attack Hitting Modifiers

- Point blank range: +3RS

- Medium range: -2RS

- Long range: -3RS

- Target is moving, although predictably: -1RS

- Target is moving erratically: -3RS

- Target is 25% concealed: -1RS

- Target is 50% concealed: -2RS

- Target is 75% concealed: -3RS

- Target is 95% concealed: -4RS

"Is the character hurt?" Modifiers

- If melee, and character's action is hasty: -1RS

- Hit a vulnerable area, such as groin or other "soft" spot: +1RS

- Hit a weak part of the body, such as a hand or foot: +1RS

- Hit head, neck or face: +2RS

NOTE: These modifiers are only suggestions. Feel free to adjust them as you see fit and apply any others that seem logical to the situation. Keep in mind that a modifier of 1 is standard, 2 is for serious situations, and 3 is for the most serious. Anything higher should be very rare and extraordinary.

Additional considerations

Hidden combat abilities

In the character creation chapter we discussed the concept of hidden abilities. These are abilities that a character should possess but aren't on her character sheet. Freeform characters should especially be given consideration for hidden abilities, although point-based characters can also have them.

In combat, a character who is already familiar with weapons may very well have familiarity with other weapons not listed on the character sheet. Often, ranks in these weapons can be made up for by using reflex (albeit unskilled) or substituting a similar rank at a -1RS penalty (using sword ability to use a dagger, for instance). The player may make a case that their character should actually have the ability in question, although it should be a good argument. For instance, a knight loses his sword and must fight with a dagger. This ability is not listed on his character sheet, but the player argues that since the character has the sword ability at only a rank of average, then it stands to reason that he would also be average with a dagger, and not below average as he would be if substituting the sword ability. Whether this argument works is up to the players as a whole.

Defending against ranged weapons

When a question of "Did the character hit?" comes up, it usually pits the combat rank of the attacker versus the combat rank of the defender. This is most often the case in melee attacks. Ranged attacks are different, however. After all,

knowing how to fire a gun will not give you any chance of dodging a bullet.

Difficulty ranks for ranged attacks should be based on circumstances, not on character ranks. The difficulty rank is abstract, a measure of how difficult a shot the attacker is attempting. Unless the character has superhuman reflexes, she will probably not be dodging any bullets or laser beams. In that case, she'd better just take cover.

Any defensive tactics on the part of the target should increase the difficulty rank. For instance, a person just standing there is probably about an average difficulty rank for being shot with a gun from across a room. If that person were moving, perhaps running, then the difficulty rank might be above average or high. If he took cover behind a desk, with only part of his body showing, then the difficulty rank may be exceptional.

The combat modifier table shows suggested modifiers for use with ranged attacks.

Weapons

When a character scores a hit, and you move on to a question of damage, the damage rank of the weapon becomes that question's acting rank. Every weapon has a damage rank, although these can be modified by the character wielding the weapon. For instance, stronger characters will deal more damage with melee weapons than weaker characters. Some weapons may have a static damage rank, such as a gun that always does the same rank damage.

Damage ranks for weapons can be judged on the spot by the players when the issue comes up in an adventure. When a rank is assigned to a weapon, though, the players should make a note of it for the next time the weapon comes into play.

For a sample list of weapon damages, see the chart on the following page.

DAMAGE

Mythic characters don't have hit points or any similar "pooled" measurement of health. They use their toughness rank to resist harm in all its various forms, from bruising to broken bones, unconsciousness and death.

When combat occurs and a character is hurt, it is up to the players to determine in what form this hurt comes. Generally, a weapon causes one of two effects when it does damage: either it performs to full effect, enacting its function completely and doing what it was made to do (guns to kill, clubs to knock out), or, the weapon made a partial effect, doing less than this optimal damage.

Also, there are two types of damage: stunning and lethal. A weapon will usually cause one type or the other.

Stunning Wounds

A punch to the chin would be considered a stunning wound. This is any wound that does no "structural" damage, such as puncturing the skin or breaking bones. These are wounds that "shake" a character, rattle his cage and make him dizzy.

Most blunt attacks are considered stunning wounds. If a weapon's damage rank is at least 3 ranks greater than the target's toughness, however, the damage is so great that it is now considered lethal damage.

Lethal Wounds

This is any form of damage that causes internal harm, or easily has the capacity to kill with a single blow. This covers a wide range of wounds, from gunshots to sword thrusts.

Partial effect

When a weapon does less than full damage, then the character is hurt, but is most likely still functional. This is usually the result when the fate chart returns a yes answer to the "Is the character hurt?" question. This means she suffers a rank shift penalty of at least -1 to all actions with the wounded body part until it is healed or recovers. If a specific body part was struck, then the rank shift only applies to actions with that body part. If the head or torso (collectively referred to as the "main body") were the target, then the modifier applies to all actions. If the character is already suffering damage in that area, then the rank shifts are added together. For instance, a character with a wound causing a -1RS gets hit again for another -1RS, bringing his total shifts to -2RS.

If a character suffers wounds to a body part and additional wounds to her main body, and is trying to use the wounded body part, then the larger of the two modifiers is used. They are not added together.

Wounds come in two types: stunning and lethal. For purposes of penalizing a character's actions, both types of wounds operate the same. In other words, a -1RS stunning wound acts the same as a -1RS lethal wound.

Usually, each wound will give the character a -1RS penalty. However, there are two cases where the penalty is higher. The first instance is when the players or GM decide the wound is more serious. This should be rare and involve some special circumstance, and perhaps an additional check on the fate chart. For instance, a character is struck by a sword, but the weapon has been laced with a poison. This might call for a -2RS wound.

The second instance is when the damage rank is much higher than the character's toughness. For every 3 ranks that the damage rank exceeds toughness, increase the rank shift

Sample Weapon Damage ranks

These ranks are only suggestions to help you with constructing weapons for your game world.

Weapon	Damage Rank	Notes
MELEE AND MEDIEVAL WEAPONS		
Light crossbow bolt	Above Average	
Heavy crossbow bolt	High	
Short bow arrow	Average	
Long bow arrow	High	This may require a strength rank of at least high to fire.
Knife or Dagger	Below Average	Most melee weapons are based on strength. A dagger, or any small knife, however, is not necessarily a "muscled" weapon.
Light sword, rapier	Strength +1 RS*	
Medium sword	Strength +2 RS*	
Great sword	Strength +3 RS*	This is any huge sword, which would require two hands, and likely a strength rank of high or greater.
Wood axe	Strength +1 RS*	
Battle axe	Strength +2 RS*	
Throwing axe	Above Average	
Club	Strength +1 RS*	
Spear, thrust	Strength +2 RS*	
Spear, thrown	Exceptional	
Thrown rock	Low	Assumes thrown by normal person, not one of super strength.
Chainsaw	Incredible	Difficult to wield, -2 RS to go next and to hit.
Fist	Strength	Add +1 RS if gauntleted, or using brass knuckles.
Kick	Strength +1RS	The +1RS damage bonus only applies if the character has some martial training. Otherwise, it is strength. Because of increased difficulty in maintaining balance, the kicker receives a -1RS to the "act next" question.
MODERN DAY FIREARMS		
Small caliber handgun	Average	
Medium caliber handgun	Above Average	
Heavy handgun	High	
Rifle	Exceptional	
Shotgun	Exceptional	Damage is dependent on range, -1 RS for each 10 yards beyond the first 10 yards. If double-barreled, and firing both barrels at once, +1 RS.
Sub-machine gun	Exceptional	The damage is based on multiple bullets striking, and represents the accumulated damage from a burst.
HEAVY, CONTEMPORARY WEAPONS		
Molotov cocktail	Exceptional	Only for the initial blast area of 15′.
Grenade launcher	Incredible	For every 30′ from the blast, -1 RS to the damage.
Claymore mine	Superhuman	For every 30′ from the blast, -1 RS to the damage.
Stick of dynamite	Superhuman	For every 40′ from the blast, -1 RS to the damage.
Plastique, 4 oz.	Superhuman	For every 15′ from the blast, -1 RS to the damage.
Hand grenade	Awesome	For every 20′ from the blast, -1 RS to the damage.
Mortar shell	Superhuman	For every 30′ from the blast, -1 RS to the damage.
Tank gun, 210mm	Superhuman 2	For every 30′ from the blast, -1 RS to the damage.
Mounted machine gun	Superhuman	

* Damage maxes out when it reaches material strength of the weapon, usually superhuman to superhuman 3

penalty by 1. If a character has a toughness rank of average, and he takes an exceptional wound, then it would be a -2RS wound. If he took a superhuman wound, it would be -3RS. The exception to this rule is when the damage is stunning damage, instead of lethal. In this case, instead of a shift for the first 3 rank shift difference, the wound would be upgraded from stunning to lethal. Additional rank shifts beyond the initial 3 would increase the damage normally. So, in our example above, if the character took an exceptional stunning wound, it would become a -1RS lethal wound, and at superhuman damage it would become -2RS.

Full effect

If the weapon performs to its full effect, usually from an exceptional result on the damage question, then the character is in trouble. First, she suffers a normal wound, as with partial effects. But wait, there's more!

If the damage is lethal, and a hit to the main body (head or torso), then the character suffered major trauma and is dead. That's it, she's pushing up daisies. If a limb is struck, then the limb is "dead," or completely and maybe permanently incapacitated. What exactly happens depends on the weapon. A sword might cut an arm off, while a bullet could shatter a bone. Even though the body part may be missing, the character still suffers the wound, but it is considered part of the main body damage as well as the limb itself. For instance, a character shot in the arm with a lethal, full effect wound, loses the use of his arm and also suffers a -1RS wound to his total body.

If the weapon performs to full effect and causes stunning wounds, a hit to the head or torso would knock the character out, or at least stun him so badly he is out of commission. A hit to a limb would stun the limb, incapacitating it for the duration of the wound.

Succumbing to wounds

Wounds to a specific body part only count against actions taken with that body part. This only applies to arms, hands, legs and feet. Wounds to the torso and head are considered against the "main body," and effect any and all actions the character performs.

For example, a character suffering a -2RS wound to her right arm and trying to climb a rope suffers a -2RS penalty on the fate chart check. If she tries to decipher a cryptic code, which doesn't require the use of her right arm, then she suffers no penalty. However, if she suffered that -2RS wound to her total body, she would be penalized while climbing the rope and while deciphering the code.

When a character reaches -3RS in any area from stunning wounds, or receives any lethal wounds at all, he may become incapacitated from pain, blood loss, etc. This comes as a question for the fate chart: "Does the character succumb to the wounds?" See the chart on this page for question results. The acting rank is the damage rank of the last hit that caused the question to be asked. The difficulty rank is the character's toughness, modified by the rank shifts to that area or to the total body, whichever is greater.

If the character is hurt, but can continue, he must ask the same question again when he receives additional lethal wounds, or when more stunning wounds are added past -3RS.

Keep track of your wounds

Each individual wound is handled separately for purposes of healing. So, keep track of your hurts. You will need to know what the wound is, the damage rank that caused it, the type of damage it is (stunning or lethal), and it's effect on the character. For instance: an arrow wound to the shoulder, above average lethal damage, -1RS.

Recovering from Wounds

Not all wounds are created equal. A character receiving a punch to the jaw may be wounded, and so may a character who is shot in the shoulder. However, you can expect the guy

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Ⓠ Does the character succumb to wounds?

Ask only when a body area receives -3RS in stunning wounds, or any lethal wounds. This question must be asked each time the RS increases after this point.

ACTING RANK: Damage rank from the last wound that caused this check.
DIFFICULTY RANK: Toughness.

—————— MODIFIERS ——————

• Toughness is still modified by the RS penalty from wounds for this roll.

—————— RESULTS ——————

YES	Character falls unconscious from the pain, or is otherwise incapacitated from the damage until some healing occurs.
NO	The character keeps on going.
EXCEPTIONAL YES	The character is so badly beaten, that if the last wound was lethal, he dies. If the wound was stunning, he falls unconscious and the wound is considered lethal for healing purposes.
EXCEPTIONAL NO	The character takes it all in stride. If the wound was lethal, it is downgraded to stunning. If it was stunning, the character instantly recovers from it.

who took the punch to recover much faster than the one who is bleeding from the slug.

Recovering from stunning wounds

A character who is suffering stunning wounds can recover fairly quickly. The first chance the character gets to catch his breath he can check to see if a stunning wound is healed, asking the question, "Does the character recover from stunning wounds?" You can only ask this question if there has been some time to recover, even if only a minute. After one wound has been checked, another can be checked for in the same, short amount of time. How much time is up to the players, and should be based on how harsh the wound, but usually amounts to a few minutes of catching one's breath.

Each wound received is considered a separate wound, and its damage rank is used to resist the character's attempt to recover from it. As stunning wounds are taken, record the damage rank that caused it and the effect it has upon the character. When the character tries to recover, he must start with the highest ranking wound first and work his way down.

For example: Sir Hurtalot is a knight limping off the battlefield. He has taken the following stunning wounds: -1RS from a high ranking stunning wound to the chest, -1RS from an exceptional stunning wound to his head, another -1RS high stunning wound to his chest, and a -1 RS average stunning wound to his leg. All told, Sir Hurtalot is suffering -3 RS to all his actions.

As he takes a breather he checks to see if he recovers. He would have to start with the wound to his head. The difficulty rank he must test against on the fate chart is exceptional. If he recovers this, his total RS penalties would drop to -2. The next wound he can recover from are the two chest wounds, each recovered separately. Finally, if he bounces back from those, he can see if he shakes off the leg wound.

When checking against recovery, use the question resolution table on this page.

Recovering from lethal wounds

The effects of lethal wounds are the same as stunning wounds: a rank shift penalty from one is the same as from the other. The difference comes in recovery time: stunning wounds can be shaken off quickly, whereas a lethal wound sticks around.

Lethal wounds come in many shapes and sizes, from arrows to sword thrusts to laser burns. Since there are so many different ways to get hurt, the base amount of recovery time varies from 1 to 30 days. The amount of time is a judgement call from the players and should reflect how extensive the

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Q Does the character recover from a stunning wound?

This question can be asked after the character has had a moment to rest. It can be asked as often as you like until the character recovers from all stunning wounds. It only applies to the highest ranking stunning wound taken.

ACTING RANK: Toughness.

DIFFICULTY RANK: Highest damage rank from stunning wounds taken.

MODIFIERS

- Character is taking extra time, at least a few minutes, specifically to recover: -2RS to RR.
- Character is only taking a few seconds to recover, but is still actively engaged in combat: +1RS to RR.
- Character is receiving assistance, such as water and aid: -1RS to RR.
- Penalties from wounds still apply. If the wound is to a limb, either apply the penalties to that limb, or from the main body, whichever is greater. If the wound is to the head or torso, apply the main body wounds.

RESULTS

YES	Character recovers from the wound in question.
NO	There is no change.
EXCEPTIONAL YES	The character recovers from this wound, and the next highest ranking wound as well.
EXCEPTIONAL NO	The stunning wound is too great, such as a broken bone or serious sprain. It cannot be checked for recovery again for 1 to 30 days, at the players' discretion. The character can continue to check other stunning wounds, however.

Q Does the character recover from a lethal wound?

This question can be asked 1 to 30 days after the wound is received (time at player's discretion). It can be asked as often as you like until the character recovers from all lethal wounds.

ACTING RANK: Toughness.

DIFFICULTY RANK: Highest damage rank from lethal wounds taken.

MODIFIERS

- Character is receiving basic medical attention: -1RS to RR.
- Character is receiving hospital level medical attention: -3RS to RR.
- Character is not resting during recovery time: +1RS to RR.
- Previous recovery checks have been attempted on this wound and failed: -1RS to RR for each previous attempt.
- Penalties from wounds still apply. If the wound is to a limb, either apply the penalties to that limb, or from the main body, whichever is greater. If the wound is to the head or torso, apply the main body wounds.

RESULTS

YES	Character recovers from the wound in question.
NO	There is no change. The same amount of recovery time must pass before another check can be made.
EXCEPTIONAL YES	The character recovers from this wound in half the time expected.
EXCEPTIONAL NO	A complication arose from the lethal wound, killing the character.

damage is. A simple knife slash may only have a 1 day recovery time, a bullet wound 3 days, a sword thrust through the gut 4 weeks.

The character can begin recovering from the wound as soon as the wound is received. As long as the same body part is not wounded again, aggravating old wounds and keeping them fresh, the recovery time can be considered uninterrupted. If the character is wounded again, in the same general area, then the recovery must start over. Other measures, such as medical attention, also aid recovery, and may even be necessary to complete recovery.

The "recovery clock" runs concurrently with all wounds, at the same time. In other words, you don't have to heal one wound before another begins to heal, they all heal at the same time. Unlike stunning wounds, lethal wounds are not checked in order of severity but as their healing times complete.

For instance, Sir Hurtalot has an average slash wound to his arm with a recovery time of 2 days. The same day he receives a high arrow wound to his back with a recovery time of 7 days. Both wounds begin healing that day. If he isn't hurt again in the arm, he will get a chance to check for recovery in 2 days, and check again for his back in 7 days.

Medical attention

Medical attention, whether in the form of basic first aid or complex hospital care, can be applied to characters suffering from wounds. For most stunning wounds, only the most basic care is required as the character will recover without much help anyway. The impact of medical attention is reflected as a modifier for lethal wounds, and helps in the recovery process.

Medical attention can also be used for more creative healing purposes. Depending on the technology or magic content of a particular game world, medics may be able to regrow lost limbs, instantly heal lethal wounds, or even raise the dead. These kinds of treatments would require questions of their own and would likely use the medical detail rank of the character administering the care.

A special use of medical attention is when a character has received a killing blow. With immediate medical attention, death my be averted. Use the resolution chart on this page as a guide.

Specialized combat questions

The combat questions detailed in this chapter are very general and are supplied to offer a framework to run the most common combat situations. Using these three basic questions (Does the character go next?, Is a hit scored?, Is the target

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ⓠ Is the dying character stabilized?

This question can only be asked immediately after a character has "died" and expert care is being applied. The character is presumed to be in the process of dying, and this is an attempt to keep the character alive.

ACTING RANK: Medical ability rank.

DIFFICULTY RANK: Damage rank from wound that caused death.

───────── MODIFIERS ─────────

• Treating character doesn't have the proper tools: -3RS to AR.
• Some time has passed since the wound was caused. The amount of time is up to the players, but treatment has not been administered immediately: +3RS to RR.

───────── RESULTS ─────────

YES	The character is not dead. However, treatment will have to be continuous, or the character will begin to die again. Another check can be made if circumstances change (receive more skilled help, better tools, etc.)
NO	The effort failed, the character is still dead.
EXCEPTIONAL YES	The character is not dead and is stabilized. Normal recovery rules apply.
EXCEPTIONAL NO	The effort failed, the character is still dead. Deader, maybe.

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hurt?) is enough to arbitrate nearly any combat between any opponents. However, these are not the only questions you can ask.

Attacks may come in uncommon forms, or damage from non-combat sources. In these cases, more specialized questions may have to be asked. For instance, a character kicking the leg of another character may ask, "Did I break his leg?" instead of "Is he hurt?" Or, a character falling from a plane, without a parachute, is going to take more than a high level stunning wound when he smacks into the ground. In this case, it would be more appropriate to simply ask, "Is he dead?"

In special cases like these, you can use the question resolution tables in this chapter as a guide, but you are pretty much on your own as far as answering and interpreting the questions. In the broken leg question above, the players may pile on additional modifiers because of the extra depth of the question, while a yes result does break the leg, creating a -1RS stunning wound, incapacitating the leg, with a recovery time of 4 weeks. For the guy falling from the plane, the players may assign an active rank of superhuman 3 versus the character's toughness. In this case, there is no question of wounds, it is simply does he live or die. If he lives, he will still end up with serious wounds to every part of his body.

As with all other areas of Mythic, this will call for a judgement decision on the part of the players. Generally, however, standard combat situations can utilize the guidelines set in this chapter, while specialized situations will call for customized results decided on the fly.

COMBAT EXAMPLES

Following are 2 extended examples of combat in Mythic. The first is a melee combat, the second a ranged gun battle. Each uses the steps outlined above.

Ninja Showdown

Blackheart Ninja	Silver Sword Ninja
Reflex: Exceptional	Reflex: Incredible
Strength: Exceptional	Strength: High
Toughness: Awesome	Toughness: Incredible
Martial Arts ability: Incredible	Martial Arts ability: Exceptional
Nunchuk ability: Incredible	Sword ability: Awesome
Nunchuk damage: Exceptional	Sword damage: Incredible

Mortal enemies, Blackheart and Silver Sword meet in a rundown barn at night. The two square off, facing each other across the dusty floor. Blackheart carries his nunchuks, flicking them in a whirling, windmill pattern. Silver Sword holds his katana forward, calmly assessing his foe.

For this adventure, the players decided ahead of time that although their characters are using melee weapons, the katana and nunchuks do static damage instead of damage based on Strength. They justify this by saying the superior craftsmanship of the sword and the skill required to use both weapons are more important to damage than brute strength.

Silver Sword: "Do I go first?" Taking his Sword ability of Awesome, we compare that against Blackheart's rank of Incredible. The Fate Chart says we have a 55% chance of a yes, and we roll 23. Silver Sword launches forward, getting in the first strike.

Silver: "Do I hit?" He isn't targeting any specific location, so we assume he is striking at Blackheart's chest. We compare their combat abilities, Awesome for Silver and Incredible for Blackheart, who is trying to parry the blow with his nunchucks. Silver rolls 18, a yes.

Silver: "Is he hurt?" Compare the sword's damage rank of Incredible against Blackheart's Toughness rank of Awesome. He rolls a 67, a no. Silver Sword stabbed at his opponent, but only nicked his shoulder, tearing the sleeve and drawing a cut.

Silver: "Can I attack again?" A roll of 76 says no, it's Blackheart's chance.

Blackheart: "I swing my nunchuks at his head. Do I hit?" He receives a -1RS modifier for targeting Silver's head. That makes this a contest of Exceptional versus Awesome. He rolls a 52, a no. He whips the nunchuks around, but Silver easily ducks the blow.

Silver: "Do I go next?" He rolls a 51, and gets a yes.

Silver: "I slice at his arm, trying to reduce his ability to use the nunchucks. Do I hit?" He receives a -2RS penalty for targeting the arm, for an Exceptional versus Incredible contest on the Fate Chart. He rolls a 72, missing. His sword whistles through the air, meeting nothing.

Blackheart: "Do I go?" He rolls a 73, a no. Silver's superior fighting ability allows him to get in another shot, keeping Blackheart on the defensive.

Silver: "I kick at his hand, trying to knock the nunchuks away. Do I succeed?" This is a specialized question with some depth (he is asking if he hits, and if the weapon is knocked loose). The players determine that Silver's rank is Average (Exceptional Martial Arts ability penalized by -3RS for targeting Blackheart's hand). Blackheart's rank is Awesome (Incredible nunchuck ability combined with his Toughness of Awesome to resist the blow and keep hold of the weapon). This only gives him a 10% chance, and he rolls a 57, which means no. Silver kicks at his hand, but Blackheart is much too fast and avoids the blow.

Blackheart: "Do I go next?" He rolls a 34, a yes. "I take advantage of Silver's kick and strike at his kicking leg. Do I hit?" He normally receives a -2RS penalty for striking a limb, but since Silver just attacked, the players decide they can presume that the kicking leg is a little more exposed, giving him a +1RS modifier for a total modifier of -1RS. Also, since Blackheart is attacking Silver's outstretched, kicking leg, the players determine that Silver will have to use his Martial Arts ability, not his Sword ability, to defend himself. This gives us an Exceptional versus Exceptional contest. Unfortunately, Blackheart rolls a 100, an exceptional no. The players determine that Blackheart's missed attack threw him off balance, automatically giving Silver the next attack.

Silver: "Let's end this. I try to run him threw. Do I hit?" Since Blackheart is unbalanced, Silver gets a +1RS. He rolls a 21 for a yes.

Silver: "Great! Is he hurt?" He rolls a 62, for a no. The sword struck, but only gouged Blackheart, drawing blood but not a serious wound.

Silver: "Darnit! Can I go again?" He rolls another 62, for a no.

Blackheart: "That hurt. I whip my nunchucks at his chest. Do I hit?" He rolls a 26, for a yes.

Blackheart: "Is he hurt?" He rolls a 12, for another yes. The nunchucks crack Silver in the chest. He groans in pain and receives a -1RS stunning wound to his body.

Blackheart: "Ha-ha! Do I go again?" Silver must now apply his wound modifier for this question, making this

an Incredible versus Incredible contest. Blackheart rolls a 56 though, a no.

Silver: "Feeling the blow, I drive really hard at him, trying to impale him. I'm going all out, not caring much for my defense. Do I hit?" Since he is making such a wild effort, he receives a +1RS to hit. However, the players decide, if Blackheart gets in the next attack, he'll also get a +1RS to hit since Silver is leaving himself somewhat unprotected. The bonus cancels out the -1RS penalty he is suffering from the wound, making this an Awesome versus Incredible contest. He rolls a 27 for a yes.

Silver: "Is he hurt?" He rolls an 86, for a no. He stabs Blackheart, drawing more blood, but the ninja is extremely tough and can take the abuse.

Silver: "Do I go again?" He is penalized -1RS for the wound, and another -1RS for the last, wild action. He rolls a 3, however, for an exceptional yes. Blackheart is still backpedaling from Silver's previous attack, making him vulnerable to another strike, at +1RS for Silver. Again, this cancels out his -1RS for the wound.

Silver: "Do I hit?" Silver drives in again with his sword, trying to hit Blackheart. He rolls 37, yes.

Silver: "Is he hurt?" 76, no. He slices Blackheart yet again, drawing more blood, and the ninja is shrugging it off.

Silver: "I keep pressing. Do I go again?" An 89, no.

Blackheart: "I swing at his head. Do I hit?" He receives a -1RS for targeting the head, but Silver suffers a -1RS for the wound. He rolls a 32 and hits, the nunchuks connecting with Silver's head.

Blackheart: "Is he hurt?" Blackheart receives a +2RS to the damage for hitting the head. Silver is still suffering from a Stunning wound, so his Toughness is reduced by -1RS, for an Awesome versus Exceptional contest. He rolls a 19, a yes. The nunchuks crack against Silver's head, adding another -1RS Stunning wound to Silver's total body wounds.

Blackheart: "Do I go again?" Silver is hurt now, and suffering a total of -2RS to his ranks. This helps Blackheart, who rolls a 49 and gets a yes.

Blackheart: "I whip my nunchuks around and try and hit him in the chest. Do I hit?" Silver's ranks are reduced to Exceptional, giving Blackheart the advantage, but he rolls a 72 and misses.

Blackheart: "Can I go again?" He rolls a 60, not enough.

Silver: "Okay. I swing at his head. This guy is ticking me off. Do I hit?" He suffers a -2RS from his Stunning wounds, and another -1RS for targeting the head, for a total of High against Blackheart's Incredible. He rolls a 19 and hits.

Silver: "Is he hurt?" The sword's damage rank boosts by +2RS for the headshot to Superhuman against

Blackheart's Toughness of Awesome. Silver rolls a 37 for a yes. The blade slices across Blackheart's face, giving him a -1RS Superhuman Lethal Wound he won't soon be recovering from. This is also his first Lethal Wound, which calls for a check to see if he is taken down.

Blackheart: "Do I succumb to the wound?" He must roll his modified Toughness of Incredible against the rank of the wound, Superhuman, with the wound as the acting rank. He rolls a 67 for a yes. The slice to his face was too much, knocking him unconscious. Blackheart's body thumps to the wooden floor, a dazed, though victorious, Silver Sword standing over him.

Bad guy cornered

Detective Blake	The "Killer"
Reflex: High	Reflex: Above Average
Toughness: High	Toughness: Exceptional
Gun ability: Exceptional	Gun ability: Average
Gun damage: High	Gun damage: High

Big city police detective Jim Blake has been on the trail of a notorious serial killer. The clues lead him to an apartment building where he confronts the killer and chases him out into an alley, where the killer runs up against a dead end. Cornered, the bad guy pulls a gun and prepares to take Blake down.

Killer: "I pull my gun and turn on Blake. Do I go first?" Blake had already drawn his gun when he started the chase, so he gains a +1RS for this question, the players decide, making it the killer's gun ability of High versus Blake's modified Incredible. He rolls 63, a no.

Blake: "I see him stop, turn and draw his gun. I don't waste any time telling him to freeze, I just squeeze off a shot. Do I hit?" They determine that Blake is at one end of the alley while the killer is at the other, making this medium range and giving both -2RS to hit with ranged combat. The difficulty rank is only Average because the killer is just standing there, raising his gun. Blake rolls a 61, within range of the 65 he needed for a yes.

Blake: "Great, I hit him! Is he hurt?" This is a test of Blake's gun damage, High, versus the killer's Toughness, Exceptional. He rolls a 32, a yes. The bullet hits him in the chest, giving him a High Lethal -1RS wound to his body. This also requires the killer to check if he can withstand the wound.

Killer: "Do I succumb to the shot?" His Toughness is modified down to High because of the wound, versus the damage of High. He rolls an 88, for a no answer. He takes the bullet and keeps on ticking.

Killer: "I'm a real psychopath, and just grin as the

bullet strikes my chest, the pain and blood exciting me. Do I get off the next shot?" Blake loses the +1RS modifier he enjoyed last time, but the killer suffers a -1RS for the wound he suffers. This makes it a Below Average versus Exceptional contest, he rolls a 26 when he needed a 10 or less, a no.

Blake: "This guy is slow and nowhere near as accustomed to guns as I am. I fire again. Do I hit?" He rolls a 28, yes.

Blake: "Alright! Is he hurt?" The killer's Toughness is now -1RS because of his previous wound, giving Blake a 50% chance of a yes. He rolls a 38. They determine that the second bullet pretty much follows the course of the first, striking him in the chest for another High Lethal -1RS wound. This brings the killer's total body wound modifiers to -2RS and calls for another check against collapsing.

Killer: "Crap. Does my body give in?" Now he is at -2RS from his accumulated wounds. The High wound is the acting rank. He rolls a 67 for a no.

Killer: "Whew. I try to dodge behind an old dumpster for cover. Can I get there before he plugs me again?" They determine that this is a contest of the killer's reflexes versus Blake's gun ability. Again, the killer suffers a -2RS, lowering his reflex to Below Average. His chances are only 10%, but he lucks out with a roll of 3. This isn't low enough for an exceptional, but they determine that he ducks behind a metal dumpster before Blake can pull the trigger again.

Killer: "I stick my arm around the dumpster and fire off a bunch of random shots. Do I hit?" Since he isn't bothering to aim, and isn't even looking, they decide on a -3RS modifier (it would have been -4RS, but since he's firing multiple shots it isn't as bad.) Blake isn't going to stand around and just let himself get hit, though. He dives behind a pile of wooden crates. Although you cannot normally dodge ranged attacks, they decide that using Blake's reflex is warranted in this situation since he is trying to get out of the way of a barrage of bullets, and the faster he moves, the fewer bullets he'll have to face. This makes it the killer's rank of Weak versus Blake's rank of High, giving the killer only a 5% chance. He rolls 37. They decide Blake dives behind the garbage, the bullets harmlessly ricocheting off the alley walls and floor.

Blake: "I peer around the corner of the crate, gun aimed, and wait to fire."

Killer: "Yeah, I pretty much do the same. Do I go first?" They decide that since both are doing the same tactic, they should consider it done at the same time, making this a standard "do I go first?" question. The killer's ranks are still at -2RS, so his rank is only Low, while Blake's remains Exceptional. He lucks out again though and rolls a 5.

Killer: "Aha! I see him peeking out and fire a shot. Do I hit?" He is at -2RS for the wounds, and at -2RS for the medium range. Since they are both leaning out to fire, they are 75% concealed, giving another -3 RS penalty. For simplicity, they decide to just modify the difficulty from Average to Exceptional. He rolls a 92, and realizes it doesn't matter what he rolled since there was a 0% chance of hitting. However, he managed to roll an exceptional no anyway. They decide that the loss of blood is making the killer dizzy, and he slips, stumbling out into the alley in full view of Blake.

Blake: "Do I go next?" Since the killer is trying to regain his footing and get back behind the dumpster, his rank will be based on his reflex. Blake rolls an 18 for a yes.

Blake: "I see him stumbling like a drunk into view. I try to plug him. Do I hit?" The killer lost his cover advantage, however he is at least moving, making him a more difficult target: they decide on a difficulty rank of Above Average. Blake rolls a 12 for a hit.

Blake: "Is he hurt?" The killer is a tough guy, but his wounds are adding up. The -2RS modifiers from the two previous gunshots bring him down to Above Average. Blake rolls an 8 for a yes. The bullet rips into his chest, sending more blood flying as the killer takes his third chest wound.

Killer: "Argh! Do I go down?" He must check against succumbing to the wound. He rolls a 14 for a yes. That last shot sends the staggering killer sprawling backwards into an unconscious heap lying in the alley, although he is still alive.

Randomness

Logic is poor at one thing: coming up with surprises. Taking this into account, Mythic builds random events into the adventure. In an adventure that is guided by players' questions and expectations, randomness will add extra dimensions to the action, spinning plot twists you may never have thought of before.

Random events can occur at two times during a Mythic adventure: when a scene is first generated (see the next chapter) and when a question is asked on the fate chart.

Scene random events

These are unexpected twists that derail the characters and create new, surprise scenes. As you will find in the next chapter, Mythic adventures are broken into scenes, just like a movie, and scenes are generated from the player's expectations. After the players express what they think the next scene will be, however, they must roll to see if that concept is altered. Sometimes the scene will begin as expected, sometimes it will be changed slightly, and sometimes a random event will create an entirely new, unexpected scene.

This is described more fully in chapter 7.

Fate chart random events

This is the most common type of random event. Whenever a question is asked on the fate chart there is the possibility of a random event occurring. The event does not have to be linked to the question in any way. In fact, the question should be resolved first, and then the random event generated, just to keep everything straight.

When a fate question is asked, and 1D100 is rolled, if a double number is obtained (i.e. 11, 22, 33, 44, etc.), then a random event may have occurred. If this number (the single digit, 1 for 11, 2 for 22, etc.) is equal to or less than the chaos factor (another mechanic covered in the next chapter), then something random happens.

For instance, if the player rolled a 55 to a question, and the chaos factor was 8, then a random event takes place. If chaos was below 5, however, nothing would occur.

RANDOM EVENTS

Random events can throw unexpected twists into the adventure, keeping the adventure fresh and exciting. Mythic adventures are guided by logic, which maintains the structure and continuity of events, but random events will lead the adventure places that logic cannot. This is where surprises pop up and the story can take twists that no one would have expected.

Once it has been determined that a random event has occurred, you must figure out what happens. There are three components to a random event: event context, event focus, and event meaning.

Event context

"Context" is everything that has gone on in the adventure up to this point. The adventure itself, and all that has happened in the adventure, is the context. When generating a random event, the focus and meaning of the event should be shaped by the context of what has already happened. The random event isn't happening in a vacuum; all that has already occurred is the stage on which this new event occurs.

For instance, if the characters are spies sneaking through a Russian castle, looking for stolen plans to a military satellite, any new random events generated will have some relation to this adventure scenario. If they generate a random event that implies something negative happens to one of the characters, perhaps he is spotted by a guard or he drops his gun down a stairwell.

To say that you must consider the context of the adventure before judging a random event may seem like common sense, but sometimes even good sense bears repeating. Keeping the context of the adventure in mind will help you make the logical leap to a resolution of the random event.

Event focus

Keeping the context of a random event in mind helps frame the possibilities of what can happen. Next, you establish where the action of that event is focused. This is done by using the event focus table.

Roll 1D100 on the event focus table. This tells you what aspect of the adventure the random event directly impacts. For instance, a player character or the introduction of a new, non-player character. Apply the result to the events that are currently going on in the adventure, the context. This will require interpretation, but usually a clear meaning will present itself. The next step, event meaning, will provide the final piece you need to determine the random event. We'll get to that in a moment.

Following are explanations of the various results of the event focus chart:

Remote Event

Something important has happened that bears on the adventure, but the player characters were not present when the event occurred, they only learn about it remotely. This can result in many ways, from a non-player character telling them some piece of news, to coming across evidence of this other event. For instance, the players may encounter the dead body of a NPC previously met in the adventure. The remote event here is the murder of this character, which the player characters did not directly witness. Or, the characters may wander into a tavern and learn that the enemy hordes have advanced, destroying the next town down the road. Again, they are receiving the news second hand.

A remote event can either by implied or directly stated. In the case of the dead body, the characters only know that the poor chap was killed somehow. In the tavern example, they do not see the advancing hordes, they are told explicitly about it. Both cases count as remote events.

If you are playing your adventure cinematically (see the adventure chapter), then your next scene may be a flashback to this remote event. This will allow the players to role-play the event, adding more tension to the adventure. If you are taking a simulation approach to the adventure, then the players will have to figure out what happened on their own.

The evidence should be enough to give the players a picture of what happened. In other words, the random event shouldn't be so vague as to be completely mysterious. For instance, in the example of the dead NPC, the players know that this character fell to foul play. They don't know exactly what happened (unless they have enough clues to figure that out, too), but they know the character was murdered. Now, if the NPC

Event Focus Table

Roll	Result
1-7	Remote event
8-22	Character action
23-30	Introduce a new character
31-42	Thread related event
43-47	Close or open a thread
48-55	Player character negative
56-63	Player character positive
64-88	Neutral event
89-94	NPC negative
95-100	NPC positive

simply disappeared, then the players would have no idea what happened. This would be too vague to constitute a remote event.

Character Action

An existing NPC makes a surprise action. The players roll a random character from the character list (see the adventure chapter). The next step, event meaning, will help determine what this character does. In many cases, when compared to the adventure context, obvious character actions will spring to mind. If one of the characters on the list, for instance, is an assassin, a random character action associated with that character may likely involve someone's attempted murder.

Introduce a New Character

A brand new face is involved in the adventure. This may be someone the player characters had expected to meet, or a surprise. Either way, this new character is important to the overall adventure and will be added to the character list when the scene is over. If a logical character does not spring to mind, take the most likely and turn it into a fate question ("Does so-and-so appear?") The character's appearance will likely be combined with an action of some sort. The nature of this action will come clearer after the next step, event meaning.

The character does not need to be an individual but can be any entity capable of independent action. Such as generic townspeople or a government agency.

For example, the characters may be fantasy heroes exploring a cavern. The players come up with a random event and it turns out to be a new character. They determine that the heroes come across a troll wandering the cavern. If the characters kill the troll in this encounter, then that would be the last of that character. However, if
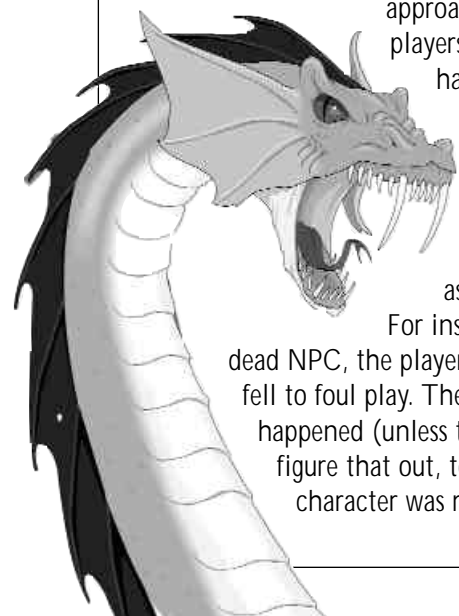
the troll escapes, or if they flee from the troll, then the monster may appear again later in the adventure. After this first encounter the troll is no longer a "new" character and would be added to the character list at the end of the scene. On the other hand, the characters may come across an entire colony of goblins. In this case the character is not a single creature but an entire population. This "character," perhaps entitled "goblin colony" on the character list, would be a persistent character throughout the rest of the adventure, capable of popping up at any time.

Thread Related Event

The random event has something to do directly with an open thread (more on this in the adventure chapter). If there are more than one, then randomly determine which thread it is. Other random events in this list can also involve a thread, but not necessarily. This random event is directly related to the thread, and should offer the characters an opportunity to step closer to solving the thread.

For instance, the characters may be pulp-era treasure hunters exploring an Egyptian pyramid. One thread is, "Find the ancient tomb of Ank-Tonen." They roll up a random event involving this thread. They determine that they run across an inscription on the wall that talks of the tomb, but warns that the halls are guarded by deadly traps.

Close or Open a Thread

The random event is so important it actually closes an open thread or creates a new one. A thread is any ongoing storyline that the characters can resolve. If there are multiple threads open, then randomly determine which one it is. If there is a logical way to resolve this thread automatically, then it is resolved. The next step, event meaning, will help describe how.

However, if there is no logical way to solve the thread, then a new thread is created. This can be completely different, having nothing to do with the other threads. This can be a side-adventure or errand for the characters to solve. The event meaning step will help determine what the thread is.

For instance, the characters may be buying equipment from a merchant when this random event comes up. In a conspiratorial whisper, the merchant mentions that there have been strange goings-ons at the local graveyard and there is a legend of buried treasure there. The characters now have the option to explore this treasure, opening up a new thread to the adventure.

Summary of Resolving Random Events

1) Determine Event Focus

2) Determine Event Meaning

3) Interpret the Random Event based on Focus, Meaning, and Context. Take the most logical conclusion.

4) If there is more than one logical conclusion, form a question and consult the fate chart to clarify the results.

Player Character/NPC Negative or Positive

Something bad, or good, happens to a player character, or non-player character, whichever is indicated on the chart. If there is more than one player character or NPC then randomly determine who it is. The event meaning step will help determine what happens although logical ideas should begin springing to mind. These can be major, or minor, events. Perhaps the slumbering monster in the chamber awakens and attacks the poor, chosen character. Or, maybe while hiking through the desert the character discovers that the only food he has packed is beef jerky. He hates beef jerky.

This can be a very vague event focus, so you will have to rely much upon the event context and event meaning. All this focus tells you is who is directly effected, and if the effect is good or bad. If, even after the event meaning is determined, you're still not sure, frame a fate question and try to get a resolution there.

Neutral Event

This is a catchall category for anything that can happen that does not directly impact characters or NPCs. It is also not necessarily bad or good. The event can be important, but often it is more atmospheric to the scene. For instance, perhaps a chill wind blows and a few dark clouds can be seen in the sky ... portents of future rain. Or, while examining a house, the characters come across a photograph of several people. Is this a clue or just junk? They don't know.

A habit can develop while generating random events for every event to have Earth-shattering importance. This random event focus offers you the opportunity to inject

less important elements or even comedy elements. For instance, maybe the characters are wondering whether the ruined castle they are exploring harbors a monster when one of the characters steps in a pile of Ogre dung.

Event meaning

After the focus of the event has been determined it's time to figure out the general gist of what the event means. This step is to help the players interpret the random event, putting a spin on the context and focus. By combining the event focus with the event meaning, and taking the most logical conclusion based on the context, an easy interpretation should spring to mind.

The event meaning chart runs from 1 to 200. To roll on it you will have to use three ten-sided dice. The first die determines if the hundreds number is a 0 or 1 (if you roll 1-5, then it's a 0, if you roll 6-10, then it's a 1), and the tens and one's numbers are figured normally. A roll of 000 is 200.

Some of the meanings given may seem to duplicate results of the event focus table. That's fine; just read it all together and see what you come up with. For instance, a few of the event meaning entries mention people. You can take this to apply to existing characters, if it seems appropriate, or introduce a new character. You can do this even though you didn't roll up "Introduce new character" from the event focus table.

The important thing is to let the event meaning lend "spin" to the context and focus of the event. Just go with whatever makes the most sense.

Interpreting the final event

The result given from the event meaning chart is a brief, and vague, description. It is up to the players to interpret what it means when combined with the event focus and context. Often, a meaning that fits nicely into what is currently happening will jump out. If not, then take the most logical interpretation that comes to mind.

If you're stumped, or several meanings come up, you can ask a fate question or two to clarify the meaning.

For instance: The characters are far-future explorers examining the ruins of an alien civilization. That's the context. They roll up a random event, and determine the focus is a player character negative. Checking the event meaning chart, they get, "Theft." Hmmm, they're not sure what this means and a ready interpretation is not jumping to mind. To clarify, one of the players asks, "Do I find that something I brought along is missing?" The fate chart answers yes. Then they ask, "Is my gun missing?" Again, yes.

All of these elements, combined with logic and interpretation, give a virtually endless stream of possibilities for random events. Do not feel constrained by the results of the focus and meaning tables. These are meant as guides to lead you to interpretations. Feel free to bend and twist the results until they fit a logical interpretation, although you should take the most logical interpretation instead of just taking the interpretation that most benefits your characters.

The 'I dunno' Rule

When using Mythic and the randomness rules there will come times when you follow the rules, perform each step, and are left wondering, "What does all of this mean?" The clues offered by the meaning, context and focus should suggest an immediate meaning to the random event. Generally, whatever occurs to you first, and seems the best fit, is what you go with.

But what if nothing comes? Or it's taking too long? Then forget it.

This is the "I Dunno" rule. Simply put, if a meaning does not jump right out at you, right away, assume that no random event occurred in the first place.

The motivation for this rule is purely practical. A difficult to interpret random event can stall a game indefinitely as the players sit there thinking. The entire intent of Mythic is to create fast-paced games from nothing. Anything that slows this process down should be discarded.

Don't abuse the "I Dunno" rule, however. If only one meaning suggests itself to you, but you don't like it, beware the temptation to discard it as not good enough. If any interpretation fits the facts, then go with it.

Event Meaning Table

1. Attainment of goals.
2. The founding of a fellowship.
3. Neglect of the environment.
4. Blight.
5. The beginning of an enterprise which may harm others.
6. Ecstasy to the point of divorce from reality.
7. Conquest by force.
8. Macho excess.
9. Willpower.
10. The recruitment of allies.
11. The triumph of an evil cause.
12. Physical and emotional violation.
13. Weakness in the face of opposition.
14. Force applied with deliberate malice.
15. A declaration of war.
16. Persecution of the innocent.
17. Love.
18. Abandonment of the spiritual.
19. Instant gratification.
20. Intellectual inquiry.
21. Antagonism towards new ideas.
22. Joy and laughter.
23. Written messages.
24. Movement.
25. Wasteful dispersal of energies.
26. Truce.
27. Balance disturbed.
28. Tension released.
29. Disloyalty.
30. Friendship.
31. Physical attraction.
32. Love for the wrong reasons.
33. Passion which interferes with judgment.
34. A physical challenge.
35. Desertion of a project.
36. Domination.
37. Procrastination.
38. Acclaim.
39. A journey which causes temporary separation.
40. Loss.
41. A matter concluded in plenty.
42. Healing.
43. Excessive devotion to the pleasures of the senses.
44. Swiftness in bringing a matter to its conclusion.
45. Delay in obtaining material possessions.
46. Delay.
47. Prosperity.
48. Material difficulties.
49. Cessation of benefits.
50. Temporary companionship.
51. Loss due to the machinations of another.
52. Lies made public.
53. Spite.
54. A situation does not live up to expectations.
55. Defeat.
56. Return of an old friend.
57. New alliances.
58. Imitation of reality.
59. Confusion in legal matters.
60. Bureaucracy.
61. Unfairness in a business matter.
62. Journey by water.
63. A path away from difficulties.
64. A temporary respite in struggle.
65. Stalemate.
66. Publicity.
67. Public recognition for one's efforts.
68. Good news.
69. Bad news.
70. Indefinite postponement by another of a project.
71. Cause for anxiety due to exterior factors.
72. Delay in achieving one's goal.
73. Theft.
74. A journey by land.
75. Good advice from an expert.
76. The exposure and consequent failure of a plot.
77. A project about to reach completion.
78. Intellectual competition.
79. Haggling.
80. Imprisonment.
81. Illness.
82. Release.
83. Opposition collapses.
84. A matter believed to be of great importance is actually of small consequence.
85. Loss of interest.
86. Celebration of a success.
87. Rapid development of an undertaking.
88. Travel by air.
89. Non-arrival of an expected communication.
90. Jealousy.
91. Dispute among partners.
92. A project does not work out.
93. The possible loss of home.
94. An investment proves worthless.
95. Suffering.
96. Mental imprisonment.
97. Debasement.
98. Material desires are wholly fulfilled.
99. Overindulgence.
100. Wishes fall short.
101. Delaying tactics.
102. Stalemate leading to adjournment.
103. Adversity, but not insurmountable.
104. Gambling.
105. Lack of solidity.
106. Misfortune.
107. The death of a dream.
108. Disruption.
109. Temporary success.
110. Usurped power.
111. A balance is made, but it is temporary.
112. Failure of a partnership.
113. Possible loss of friendship.
114. Betrayal.
115. Abuse of power.
116. Becoming a burden to another.
117. Oppression of the few by the many.
118. Intrigues.
119. Resentment.
120. Fears realized.
121. A student.
122. Messages.
123. The bearer of bad news.
124. Fears proven unfounded.
125. A sentinel.
126. Inspection or scrutiny.
127. Ambush.
128. Spying.
129. Mutiny.
130. News.
131. Attachment to the point of obsession.
132. The affairs of the world.
133. Unexpected aid.
134. A bearer of intelligence.
135. Rumor.
136. Old wounds reopened.
137. Carelessness.
138. Friendship strained.
139. Guerrilla warfare.
140. Ruin.
141. Unwise extravagance.
142. Dirty tricks.
143. Arrival of a friend.
144. Propositions.
145. Fraud.
146. Rivalry.
147. A spiritual representative.
148. Triumph over adversities.
149. Travel by air.
150. Frustration.
151. Division.
152. The refusal to listen to views at variance to one's own.
153. Motherly figure.
154. Opulence.
155. Ill-natured gossip.
156. Mistrust of those near.
157. Liberty.
158. Deceit.
159. Cruelty from intolerance.
160. A person not to be trusted.
161. Excitement from activity.
162. Someone of assistance.
163. Father figure.
164. A dull individual.
165. Military.
166. A judge.
167. A wise counselor.
168. The mundane.
169. A teacher.
170. Trials overcome.
171. Frenzy.
172. Negligence.
173. Duality.
174. Passion
175. Hard work.
176. The control of masses.
177. Alliance as a formality, not sincere.
178. Attraction to an object or person.
179. Travel by vehicle.
180. Success in an artistic or spiritual pursuit.
181. Vengeance.
182. An unethical victory.
183. Judicial proceedings.
184. Dispute.
185. Legal punishment.
186. Guidance from an elder.
187. A journey.
188. Good fortune.
189. Too much of a good thing.
190. The spiritual over the material.
191. The material over the spiritual.
192. Transformation and change.
193. Disunion.
194. Amassment of riches.
195. Overthrow of the existing order.
196. Communication by technological means.
197. Oppression.
198. Hope.
199. Hope deceived, daydreams fail.
200. Change of place.

A note about logic

The master sleuth Sherlock Holmes was often credited with astounding skills of deduction. However, the type of logic he most often exhibited was inductive logic, going from the specific to the general.

Although you don't need to know this to play Mythic, it's interesting to note that there are different ways to look at logic.

Inductive logic, generally, is taking specific facts and fitting them into a larger picture. For instance, you know facts A, B, and C. All three facts are consistent with theories 1 and 2, but not theory 3. Thus, theory 3 is false, while 1 and 2 are both logically possible. If you learn another fact, and it's not consistent with theory 1, then theory 2 is the only possible final conclusion.

Deductive logic goes at it from the opposite direction, starting with the big picture. In other words, assuming that theory 1 is correct, then facts A, B, and C should be present. If facts A and C are present, but not B, then theory 1 is proven false and another theory must be developed to explain the facts as they are.

In practice, using both forms of logic together is very effective for analyzing clues, since each has its merits and flaws. For instance, inductive logic is like taking pieces of a puzzle and fitting them together. However, the pieces may fit in more ways than one, giving any number of possible outcomes. Deductive logic begins with the puzzle already put together. If the picture is true, then all the pieces of the puzzle should be present somewhere. However, you may only have available a few of the pieces, so the others are only assumed to exist. This presents an opportunity to test the theory, however. If a deductive assumption predicts the existence of certain facts, you only have to go find these facts, or facts to the contrary, to help prove or disprove your theory.

Mythic tends more toward the inductive model. Characters are presented with facts throughout the adventure. When a new question arises, the current set of applicable facts helps determine, in an inductive way, what the big picture may be.

Random Event Examples

Context: The player characters are treasure seekers digging around in an ancient tomb. They are in a room with frightening stone statues and strange carvings on the walls.
Event Focus: Neutral Event.
Event Meaning: "Transformation."
Interpretation: The characters all experience the same vision where the room suddenly becomes shining and beautiful, as if new. They see people rustling about, as if this were an active temple. As suddenly as it came on, the vision goes away. Since this is a "neutral event," the vision doesn't seem to offer any useful information, such as where any treasure or traps are.

Context: Captain Stupendous has pursued the evil Dr. Nefarious to his lair high atop a New York skyscraper. Captain Stupendous hovers over the lair, debating what to do next.
Event Focus: Character Action. There are 3 characters on the character list: Dr. Nefarious; Nefarious' henchmen; the Team of Justice. Rolling, we get the second character, the henchmen.
Event Meaning: "Possible loss of home."
Interpretation: Interpreting the meaning to refer to Dr. Nefarious concerned that the Captain has discovered his "home," henchmen suddenly appear on the rooftop and begin firing at the Captain, trying to drive him away.

Context: Jim Diamond, a secret agent, has broken into the luxury offices of Maxit, a firearms production company suspected of providing weapons to terrorists. He has hacked into their mainframe computer and is trying to access their secret files.
Event Focus: Player character Negative. Since Jim is the only PC in this adventure, this means him.
Event Meaning: "The triumph of evil."
Interpretation: As Jim works on the computer, the lights suddenly turn on. He looks up to see three armed men in the room, pointing guns at him. In walks Mr. Maxit himself with a sneer. "You thought we didn't know about your snooping, Mr. Diamond. You thought wrong!"

Context: Their spaceship infested with deadly aliens, the characters desperately barricade themselves in the life-support room. They plan to close the room off and flood the rest of the ship with poison gas through the ventilation system, hoping to wipe the aliens out.
Event Focus: Introduce a new character.

Event Meaning: "An investment proves worthless."
Interpretation: A locker suddenly opens and the characters nearly pee their pants when Crewman Jenkis leaps out. The characters thought everyone else on board was dead, but Jenkis has been hiding in the closet. Frantic, but glad to see them, he casually informs the characters that he had already tried the poison air trick, but it didn't work because the ship's filters automatically clean the poison out of the air as it goes through the vents. The characters are still mulling over the fact that he tried it with everyone else still out there ...

Context: Jonathan Stark is a 1920's occult investigator. It is midnight, and he is locked in his study, looking over an ancient and curious volume of blasphemous lore.
Event Focus: Remote event.
Event Meaning: "Delay."
Interpretation: Jonathan is searching for a mystic artifact that has the power to bind demons. He hopes to use it to stop the rampages of a monster terrorizing the local village. He had hoped to discover from the book where the relic lies. However, this random event is interpreted to mean that the book tells a tale of how the device was destroyed in a great battle, centuries before. Stark closes the book, determined to find another way to stop the beast.

Context: Sir Trent and his band of adventurers are searching a cavernous catacomb for a princess kidnapped by an evil mage.
Event Focus: Thread Related Event.
Event Meaning: "Carelessness."
Interpretation: The hall branches in two directions, and they are not sure which way to go. Sir Trent notices something on the ground and picks it up. It's the princess' shoe. He smiles. "I think I know which hall they took her down."

Context: A modern day mage in the nighttime streets of Los Angeles is searching an alley for a secret portal to another dimension.
Event Focus: Player Character Positive.
Event Meaning: "Someone of assistance."
Interpretation: "You'll never find it over there," a gruff voice says in the darkness. The mage turns to see a bum rise from the garbage. He rubs his finger across a wall and suddenly a glowing door appears. The mage stares at the bum, who is obviously more than he seems.

Chapter 7
The Adventure

This section provides the structure for running a Mythic adventure. Whether you are using Mythic on its own, or in conjunction with another RPG, the structure outlined in this chapter is designed to generate a dynamic, and improvised, adventure. These rules can be used by a game master to help come up with adventures off the cuff, offering as much surprise to the GM as to the players. Or, players can do away with the GM and use these rules to generate their own adventures.

Improvised means "free-form," right? Not necessarily. Mythic is designed to move the adventure along based on improvised ideas, but it provides a structured framework to guide and shape those ideas. This isn't "making it up as you go along" so much as hopping from one idea to the next with rules to navigate the way. The current idea is the current scene, the action of the moment. You may have some clue as to what the next idea is, but you won't know what happens for sure until you get there.

This may sound confusing right now. But it all makes sense in the end.

To start, let's take a look at how Mythic views time.

SCENES

Mythic gameplay is visualized like a movie with an adventure session broken into scenes. Just like in a movie, a scene takes place at a certain location, involving certain characters, and covers a certain segment of action. Usually unimportant stuff is left out of a scene and only the good stuff gets shown. When the action is over and the characters are ready to move on the scene ends and we proceed to the next scene.

Mythic works the same way. A scene setting is envisioned, the characters resolve conflicts within the scene then it wraps up and everyone moves on. A scene is a discrete unit of time within an adventure, but it can be of any length. The scene, in game time, can last a few minutes or many years. The important thing is that each scene must have purpose. Perhaps the characters have come across an empty room while exploring a dungeon. They pause to check the room out. This is a scene. When they are done, and all actions have been resolved, the scene is over.

The simplest way to move from scene to scene is for the characters themselves to physically move. However, they

The End is Near …

Below are some example scenes emphasizing where they begin and where they end. The important concept to keep in mind is that a scene begins with a setup and ends when action and conflict have been resolved.

Scene 1
Beginning: A band of superheroes is breaking into the stronghold of a villain. They discovered an airduct in the previous scene. This scene begins with the heroes crawling inside, entering the building. The scene proceeds with the heroes making their way inside and searching.
Ending: Since the point of this scene is the heroes getting into the stronghold, once they've accomplished this, the scene is over. The players may stretch the scene out with some preliminary exploration of the stronghold to get some flavor for what it's like ("the halls are made of chrome and strips of light glow dimly from the ceiling"), but the next scene will likely deal with initial encounters.

Scene 2
Beginning: Earlier in the adventure of a mecha/military game, the players discovered that the alien Battle Pods were staging an attack. This new scene begins with the characters jumping into their War Mechs and charging onto the battlefield. The action for this scene is straightforward: combat.
Ending: The scene ends when the battle ends. Either the aliens are beat back or the players stage a desperate retreat.

Bottom line
There are no hard and fast rules for what constitutes the beginning and ending of a scene, there are just guidelines. The scene structure is designed to help give the adventure shape. The most important rule of thumb is simply to end a scene where it seems natural.

don't have to. Time can pass and move characters to the next scene while they remain in the same physical location. For instance, characters travelling through the woods make camp for the night. They rest up, and the scene ends. The next scene takes place in the morning as they get up and prepare for the day.

Just like in movies, scenes should be about important events. If a scene is nothing more than walking along a path maybe you should just skip it and go ahead to the next scene which is probably more interesting. You won't be missing out on anything and you won't shortchange

your characters the opportunity for an unforeseen encounter. Remember that Mythic builds random events into adventures and they can happen at just about anytime, so you don't need to pepper your adventure with boring scenes just to see if anything happens. Stick to what's important and interesting.

In Mythic, it is up to the gamemaster to decide what the next scene will be like. Or, if there is no GM, the players decide. However, Mythic will throw a wrench in the works on its own to keep the players on their toes, changing the scene or diverting the players to unexpected scenes.

Cinematic Play Versus Simulation

There are two approaches players can take to the sequence of their scenes. They should decide before the adventure session begins which style suits them best.

Simulation
The simulation approach is like most role-playing games, where the action happens linearly and players only see what their characters see. With this style each scene will follow the next in chronological order.

For example:
Scene 1: A platoon of space marines land on a distant world on a rescue mission to find a lost ship and its crew.
Scene 2: They begin searching the barren landscape for signs of the crashed ship. They find evidence of life where there shouldn't have been any.
Scene 3: Following up on this evidence, the marines make their way to a range of rocky mountains where they have their first run-in with a race of aliens composed of organic metal.
Scene 4: The marines decide there may be a connection between the aliens and the lost ship. They track the aliens to a main cave and learn they live underground.
Scene 5: The marines venture underground, beating back marauding aliens along the way.

Cinematic
Players may also choose to go cinematic. Here, you can choose to play scenes out of linear order, or to play scenes where the player characters are not even present. In cinematic play, the scenes follow in order of interest, not time.

Cinematic play is a fun alternative because the adventure will run like a movie or a book, constantly focusing on what is most interesting and entertaining. Perhaps the next scene is a flashback to a previous event. Or, action is taking place somewhere else and the players are just curious as to what may be happening. The cinematic style makes more demands on the players, however. Their characters are not aware of events occurring beyond them so they cannot act on this information. These "cut scenes" are more for the players' interest to flesh out the adventure. Much of the action from these scenes where the characters are actually not present will be determined by asking fate questions.

To reprise our previous example:
Scene 1: This is a setup scene, where we see the crew of the soon to be lost ship orbiting an alien world when, suddenly, alarms start blaring. Through a series of fate questions the players determine that the ship inexplicably malfunctions and begins to plummet to the rocky surface below.
Scene 2: Our platoon of player character marines set out on a rescue mission and to find out what happened.
Scene 3: They begin their search, and find evidence of life on the planet.
Scene 4: A short scene with a lone, non-player character wandering off from the main platoon. He is examining a strange flower when a shadow falls over him. His blood-curdling scream and death at the hands of an alien monster is the first sign to the others that they are not alone.
Scene 5: The marines track the aliens to their cave ...

THE SETUP

Assuming you've got characters ready (if not, get back there to Chapter 2!) players begin a Mythic adventure by first coming up with an adventure setup. If you've got a GM, then that's her job. If there is no GM, then the players need to come up with something. You don't need to take all week to create a multi-layered plot. Mythic is all about improvisational role-playing. Just take a few minutes to concoct an interesting concept, or even just a few interesting ideas for a starting scene.

Keep in mind that the setup should establish a goal for the characters to attain. The setup shouldn't be: "Okay, we're just sitting around. What happens next?" It should set in motion the central conflict that the players will spend the rest of the adventure trying to solve.

For instance, a group of Mythic players want to run a space-opera style of game. They devise the following adventure setup: "The System Lords have discovered a rare deposit of Trendite, an ore vital to faster-than-light space travel. The deposit lies deep within a treacherous asteroid belt. They fear the evil Banes, a hideous alien race, are also aware of it. The characters have been hired to retrieve the ore before the Banes can get it." In this example, the

players have a clear idea of what is expected of them, while giving just enough information to allow them to make the next move.

It's best to keep the adventure setup as detail-free as possible. Maybe just an interesting opening scene, that's it. The less the players know about what's going on, the better, so that you can spend the adventure figuring all of that out. Whatever goal the setup generates may not even remain the main goal of the adventure. In our space example, the characters may set out to recover the ore, and end up sidetracking on a mission to save an interstellar princess. The adventure setup got the ball rolling, but players will spend the rest of the adventure seeing where it ends up.

Lists

Once you've announced the setup, it's time to get your lists in order. Lists catalog important details about the adventure that change from scene to scene. By the way, you'll find at the back of this book a handy form to make it easier to keep track of adventure details (see sample at lower left).

List 1: Characters

Keep track of all of the NPCs that pop up during an adventure. When the adventure setup is announced, make a list of all NPC's that may be involved. You don't have to list only those characters named in the adventure setup, but any characters you think may have a possible involvement in the adventure. At the end of each scene, you will review this list and add any more NPCs who premiered during that scene.

For instance, from the space marines example, the adventure setup was probably something like, "A platoon of space marines travel to a distant world to rescue a ship that inexplicably disappeared." The opening list this setup generates might include: "NPC marines; crew from the lost ship; the marines' superiors on Earth; non-military ship crew."

Characters on the list don't have to be individuals or "people." They can be any entity that is capable of independent action. Your character list from a modern day crime adventure may include: Police Officer Jeffrey; the murderer, identity unknown; Miss Scarlet, the witness; tenants in apartment building; the City Council, which has taken an interest in the murder investigation, etc.

There will be times when you have to randomly choose a character from this list (for random events). Just roll a die closest to the number of characters on the list, or use whatever fashion you are accustomed to. Every character on the list has the same odds of being chosen, so the method is up to you.

Summary of Resolving Scenes
- Come up with the Scene Setup.
- Roll 1D10 against Chaos to see if the Setup is modified as an Altered Scene or an Interrupt.
- Play out the Scene.
- When the main action ends, the Scene ends.
- Update lists: Characters, Threads, Chaos Factor
- Award Favor Points (0, 10, or 25)

Adventure Setup

Scene Setup

Scene Setup

Lists
Characters

Scene Setup

Scene Setup

Scene Setup

Scene Setup

Threads

Scene Setup

Scene Setup

Chaos Factor
5

List 2: Chaos Factor

This isn't really a list but a single number to keep track of. It starts at 5 and is modified at the end of each scene. The higher the chaos factor, the greater likelihood of a random event occurring. At the end of each scene, evaluate how chaotic the scene was. If nothing unexpected happened and the scene proceeded smoothly, then lower the chaos factor by one point. If the scene was active, however, with the unexpected happening and lots of action, increase the chaos factor by one.

Chaos and randomness have a way of building like a snowball. In the beginning of the adventure there may be little chaos. But as the scenes roll on, the chaos factor will likely jump, which will encourage more chaotic scenes, increasing the factor higher and so on until the adventure comes to its climactic end.

The chaos factor cannot drop below 1 or rise higher than 9.

List 3: Threads

A thread is a storyline. Usually your adventure will start with just one thread, the goal of the adventure. For the space opera adventure, they would begin with the thread, "Retrieve the trendite."

As the adventure continues, more threads may develop as subplots grow. A thread is considered "open" as long as it

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Examples of Setting the Scene & Maintaining Lists

The current scene: The characters are a band of medieval elves on their way to rescue the fairy queen from the evil Orcs who have imprisoned her. In the current scene, the characters successfully navigated their way through the Dim Wood, a dangerous and treacherous place.
List maintenance (Characters): Add fairy queen, orcs, woodland monsters.
List maintenance (Chaos): The experience in the Wood was wild, so they add 1 to chaos.
List maintenance (Threads): No new threads develop, the current thread remains unresolved.
The players decide to...: Since they didn't make it through the wood unscathed, they decide to find a nearby town, hole up in an inn, and get some rest and supplies.
The next scene: The scene begins in the streets of Anderval. There is no need to role-play the trip from the Dim Wood to the small city as that is uninteresting. This scene begins with the characters arriving at the door of the Hunter Inn.

The current scene: In a Hong Kong action style of campaign, the characters have blasted their way through a building full of Yakuza hitmen. They are searching for a stolen gem, taken by an underworld boss. In the current scene, the characters finished dispatching a roomful of thugs as they search the building. The battle was drawn out enough that the players decide it constituted a scene in itself.
List maintenance (Characters): Add Yakuza hitmen, lesser thugs.
List maintenance (Chaos): The scene consisted mostly of an intense battle, so they add 1 to chaos.
List maintenance (Threads): No new threads develop, the current thread remains unresolved.
The players decide to...: Continue their search. They figure that the fight from the last scene was large enough, they probably finished off most of the guards in the building. That only leaves the boss and his bodyguard.
The next scene: It's only a matter of time before the characters find the diamond and its new owner. They decide that this scene is a showdown. They find the kingpin in his private chamber cradling the stolen diamond. At his side is the bodyguard, a skilled marksman with weapons drawn.

The current scene: The characters are soldiers fighting in a jungle when they run across an ancient ruin. Inside they find a portal that bursts to brilliant life as they draw near.
List maintenance (Characters): Friendly soldiers, enemy soldiers, jungle animals.
List maintenance (Chaos): The players decide that the ruins represent a safer environment than the jungle, where the war rages on. They deduct 1 from chaos.
List maintenance (Threads): The discovery of the artifact creates a new thread, "What is the artifact?"
The players decide to...: The portal, obviously, cannot be ignored. The players decide to investigate it more closely and see what it does.
The next scene: The characters step through the portal and find themselves transported to another world.

remains unresolved. Usually, the adventure is over as soon as the main thread is solved, or all of the open threads are closed.

Keep a list of all open threads. At the end of each scene, add any new threads that developed out of that scene, and rub out any threads that were resolved. What constitutes a new thread is up to the players but it will always be a side-adventure of some kind. A new thread can relate to the main thread but it doesn't have to. For instance, in a time traveling campaign, the main thread might be to successfully travel back in time to prevent the assassination of an important world leader. En route to the past, the characters' time-warp machine is damaged. This creates the new thread of "Fix the time machine," so they can return to the future.

Players will occasionally fail to recognize a new thread and forget to put it on the list. Don't worry about it. As long as you catch the important ones, you're doing well. Keeping a thread list helps in the generation of random events but has little function beyond that (other than helping the players keep track of adventure details, that is). The better your thread list, the more meat you can supply to future random events.

Just as with the character list you will occasionally have to roll a random thread. They all have equal weight so use whatever method you are accustomed to for rolling them randomly.

RUNNING SCENES

You've got your adventure setup. You have your lists ready. Now its time to say "Action!" Every scene involves the following steps:

Step 1: Set the scene

Just like you created a setup for the overall adventure, you need to create a setup for each scene. Keep this logical. In other words, based on
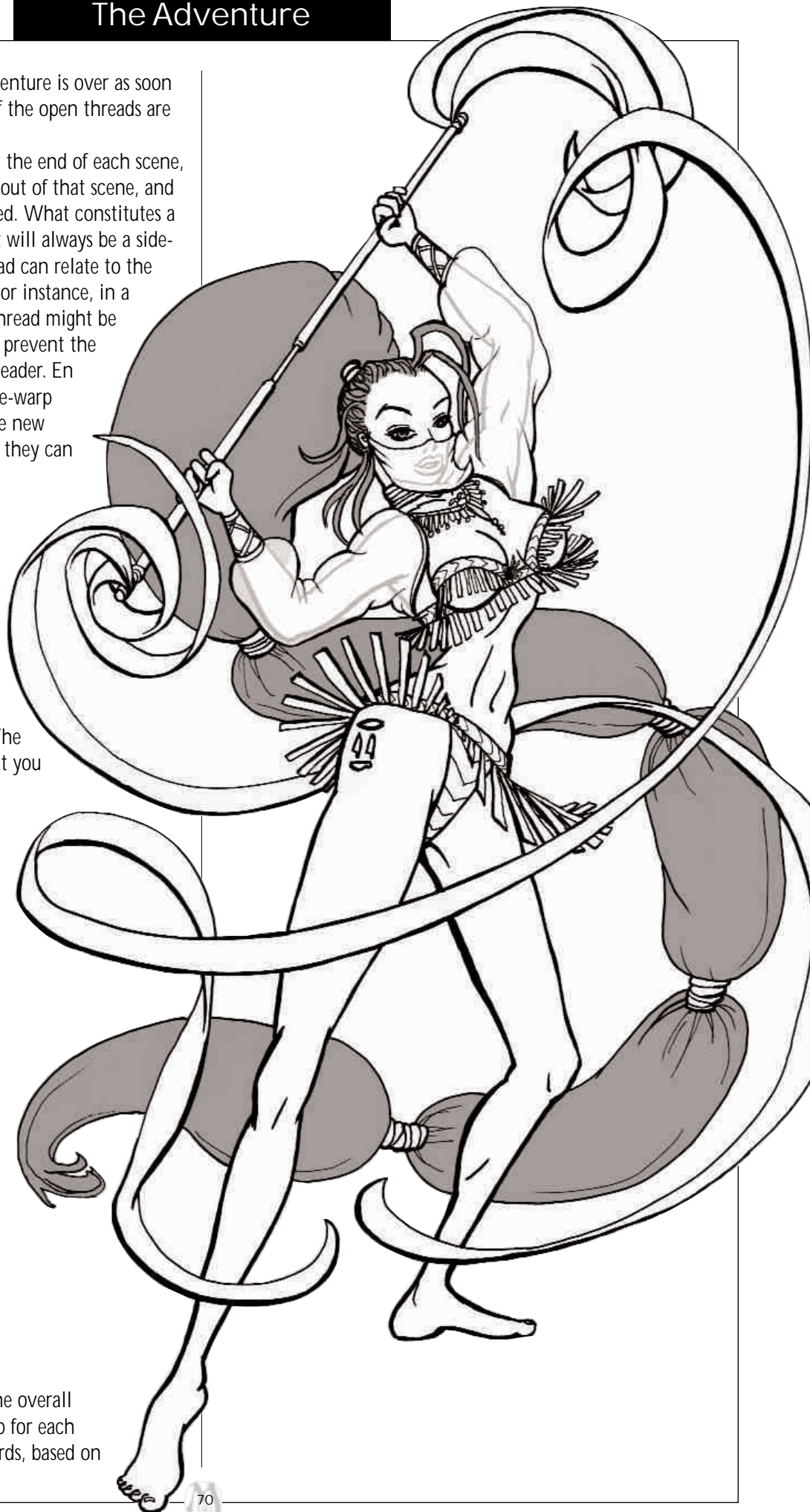
what has already happened, what do the players expect this next scene to be?

The scene setup will usually depend on what the players decide to do. If your characters are investigating a murder, the players may decide to question a witness. The next scene then is at the witness' home. To help set the stage you can make all kinds of assumptions about the scene based on information you already know. In this case, the players can decide what kind of house the witness lives in, what kind of neighborhood, etc. to help flesh out the scene. Use what you already know and apply a little logic.

Just like the adventure setup, when deciding on the scene don't include too much detail. Just give enough color to get the scene started. details will work themselves out as the scene is played.

The players have a great deal of control regarding the nature of scenes. Pretty much, whatever they want the scene to be, that's what it will be. If you are playing with a GM, he will decide what the setup is. This is not the final word on what the scene will be about, however; the scene setup decides how the scene opens, not how it unfolds.

Modifying the scene setup

Don't jump into the scene just yet. After a scene setup has been floated, it's time to see if that idea is modified. Roll 1D10. If you roll chaos factor or less then the scene is modified. If you roll higher, then the scene begins just as expected.

If the scene is modified you need to determine in what way. If you rolled in the lower half of the chaos range (rounded up), then stay with the scene setup, but altered (see below). If you rolled in the upper half of the chaos range, then the scene setup is preempted by a completely different scene, an interrupt scene.

For instance, if the chaos factor is currently 7, then a roll of 7 or less on a D10 will modify the scene setup. If the players roll a 1, 2, 3, or 4, then the scene is altered. If a 5, 6, or 7 was rolled, then an interrupt scene occurs.

Altered scenes

If the scene setup is altered, use logic and the fate chart

Sample Scene Ideas Modified

Previous Scene Ending: The character is a cop who just witnessed a bank robbery.
Following Scene Setup: The cop hops into his police cruiser and chases the bad guys. This results in a high-speed pursuit through the city.
Altered: "Do the robbers shoot at the character?" The players assign a rank of high, giving a 75% chance of a yes. They roll a 35, making for a deadlier scene.
Interrupt: Something happens to prevent the chase. Whatever prevents the chase is treated as a random event. Rolling on the event focus chart, we come up with "Close or Open a Thread." Since the adventure just began, and we started one thread (catching the bank robbers), we can't close it just yet, so we assume that this event starts another new thread. Rolling on the event meaning table, we get, "Communication by technological means." Hmmm .... thinking for a moment, we come up with: The cop's radio crackles and his Sergeant's voice barks out, "Break off pursuit on order from the Mayor!" This interrupt scene may be very short, perhaps a quick verbal exchange between the cop and his Sergeant. Or, it could be longer as the players learn why the chase was called off. Just because it's an interrupt scene doesn't mean that the original scene idea has to be abandoned. If the cop

refuses to do as ordered, then this interrupt scene ends and the player can again call for a scene where he is chasing the robbers. Either way, a new thread has been generated to find out why the Mayor wanted to let them get away.

Previous Scene Ending: While enjoying a tankard of mead at a local tavern a fantasy warrior character gets in a brawl with a disapproving patron. The fight erupts into a tavern-wide fiasco, resulting in the character getting his clock cleaned. He winds up unconscious in a corner, a bulging bump on his forehead.
Following Scene Setup: The character wakes up in a dungeon cell, arrested by the local magistrate for instigating a brawl.
Altered: "Does the character wake up in the magistrates office, instead of his dungeon?"
Interrupt: The character wakes up on a bed of straw, a smiling maid stooping over him. It turns out the barmaid dragged him from the fray and into the barn, tending to his wound and perhaps saving his life. She has a favor to ask, though, the matter of a little quest to attend to ...

to figure out how. Start with the most likely modification (or whatever comes to mind first), word it as a yes/no fate question, assign it a likelihood, and check the fate chart. If the result of the fate chart is "no," try another question with the next most likely possibility. Keep going until the scene has been altered, then continue with play.

For example: The scene setup is a pair of swashbuckling characters swaggering into a crowded bar to have a few beers and pry around for information about a certain famous pirate who has been seen in the waters lately. The players roll and find that this scene setup is altered. The most likely alteration, they figure, is that the bar is actually quite deserted tonight and there isn't much opportunity to ask questions. The players phrase this as a fate question ("Is the bar deserted?"), decide the likelihood is average, and roll. If the result is "no," then they try again. Maybe instead they notice right away a few members of the pirate's crew in the tavern. As before, the players would phrase this as a fate question and consult the fate chart.

Keep in mind that these are fate questions; you are not just looking for a simple yes or no, the exceptional values also work. In the above example, an exceptional yes to the first question might mean that the bar is boarded closed, out of business. Or, an exceptional no could mean that the bar is unusually crowded and rowdy, ripe for a brawl to break out for any reason.

Interrupt scenes

This is an entirely different, and unexpected, scene than the scene setup. The characters were on their way to the scene setup, but the interrupt scene preempts it. Since the scene is unexpected, treat this as a random event (see Chapter 6). Generate a random event and consider that the cause of the interrupt scene. The rest of the scene is logically built around this random event.

The interrupt is very different from the altered scene. In an altered scene, you are still going with the original scene setup, but with a new twist. An interrupt scene, however, is an entirely different scenario. The scene setup is tossed out the window and replaced with this new one, based off of a random event.

For instance, in our swashbuckling example above, there are many interrupt possibilities. Maybe, on their way to the tavern, the characters are waylaid by bandits. Or, a stranger pulls them aside and promises information about the pirate, for a price. The possibilities are endless, and unexpected.

Step 2: Play out the scene

This is the heart of the adventure, where all the action unfolds. The scene has been determined. Now what happens?

That's pretty much up to the players. This is where they begin asking fate questions and resolving conflicts. Likely, the first set of questions will involve clarifying details about the scene setup.

For instance, in our murder investigation example, the players set off to the witness' house. A player may ask, "Is the house nice?" They check the fate chart and come back with "Yes." From that, they interpret that the house is a modest, but nicely kept, two-story home. Then someone asks, "Is there a car parked out front?" Consulting the chart: "Yes."

After only two questions, they have some detail on what the scene looks like and what they can expect.

They then decide to walk up to the front door and knock, asking, "Does the witness answer?" The answer from the chart is exceptional yes.

Hmmm, exceptional. They decide that the most logical interpretation is that the witness opens the door and is very excited to see them, immediately ushering them into the house. The characters, a little confused by this reaction, go along with the witness.

The players ask, "Does the witness know who we are?" The answer: "No."

They interpret this to mean that the witness has mistaken them for someone else. The characters decide to play along with this, pretending to be whoever the witness thinks they are. Using whatever persuasion skills they possess, they try to keep the witness talking, then they ask, "Does the witness talk as if he were a party to the murder?" Answer: "Yes."

They interpret that the witness thinks the characters are also in on the conspiracy. As the scene plays out, the characters might learn that the murder was a mafia hit and the witness merely a plant to throw off suspicion. The witness thinks that the characters are mafia representatives there to pay him for his services. He is anxious to get paid so he can leave town.

Scenes progress in this fashion, by asking fate questions and making logical assumptions, until the main action is over. In the above, the scene might end when the characters are through with the witness and decide to leave.

If you are using Mythic with another RPG, this is also the time when the mechanics of that game would come into play. In the above example, this may involve

communication skill checks, or even combat if the witness realizes his mistake and tries to kill the characters.

Scene length

The length of a scene is based on the action of the scene, not the passage of time. Whatever the main purpose of the scene is, when that business is concluded, then the scene is concluded. In the example above, the scene takes as much time as the characters are in the house and until they are done with the witness. But a scene could last years: a princess lies in suspended animation until that magic kiss comes; a dragon slumbers on its hoard until disturbed; a man searches the world for clues to the identity of the criminal who killed his wife.

A scene doesn't require success to reach its end. With the investigators, they may have arrived at the witnesses house, asked a few questions, received little information in return, and left empty-handed ... a boring scene that hopefully would not last long. The important thing is that the purpose of the scene is addressed (meeting the witness) and is dealt with.

Scene topics

It's been stated before, but bears stating again, that a scene should be about something interesting. Although a scene should be what logically happens next, you can fast forward through uninteresting material. For instance, explorers in a cavern might come upon a room, kill a monster and find some treasure. The next scene doesn't have to be, "Alright, they go out in the hall and walk a few feet. Anything happen?"

What would make more sense would be a scene setup

like: "They delve deeper into the caverns, wandering through dark halls until they come across another room that looks interesting."

What is important to a scene are interesting bits that move the adventure along, in the same way that a movie or novel doesn't bother staging scenes or chapters on pointless information. Every scene setup should at least contain the potential to advance the story.

Cinematic scenes

As stated before, you may want to consider the style of your adventure. Most gamers take the simulationist approach, where scenes follow each other chronologically and the players know about as much as their characters do.

A cinematic approach uses techniques found in the movies: flashback scenes portraying events from the past, dream sequences, events in remote locations that the characters are not aware of. Any of these drama techniques, and more, are available to you in a cinematic style of game. The caution is that you really have to want to play like this and be prepared to limit your character. You, as the player, will likely learn information that is impossible for the character to know or act upon.

Randomness

Mythic is based on logic, but not everything happens as expected. Random events, discussed in the previous chapter, will give your scenes the necessary twists to keep your characters on their toes. Wherever you think the adventure might be heading, a single random event could send it spiraling in an entirely different direction.

Step 3: End the scene, update the lists

When the action ends so does the scene. The scene should end at a logical break and can cover any amount of time. If the characters were involved in a boxing match, each scene may last only as long as each round of the fight. If the characters were on a long march across the country, a scene could last weeks.

At the end of each scene, run through the three lists and update them.

Characters

Scratch out any characters who have dropped out of the adventure and add any new ones who have appeared.

Summary of Resolving Scenes

• Come up with the Scene Setup.

• Roll 1D10 against Chaos to see if the Setup is modified as an Altered Scene or an Interrupt.

• Play out the Scene.

• When the main action ends, the Scene ends.

• Update lists: Characters
                  Threads
                  Chaos Factor

• Award Favor Points (0, 10, or 25)

Remember, this doesn't just mean individuals. Characters can be any force in the adventure with the ability to act on its own. That means crowds, organizations, anonymous thugs, etc. This also means adding the less important characters, not just the heavy-hitters. You never know when that maid you ignored in the last scene may show up in the dark ... wielding a knife!

Chaos

Update the chaos factor based on the level of activity from the scene. If the scene was out of control and busy, add 1 to the chaos factor. If the scene was controlled and calm, then subtract 1 from the chaos factor. Chaos stays in a range of 1-9. The chaos factor must move up or down at the end of each scene unless it is already at 1 or 9. It is the players choice which way it goes.

Threads

Remove completed threads and add new ones. A thread is complete when the goal has been accomplished or it no longer matters. If the goal is to rescue the princess, but she dies when the dragon you slew falls on her, then that pretty much ends that thread.

Adding new threads is a judgement call for the players. The scene may have included a random event that specifically called for a new thread. However, a new sub-plot can also develop on its own. It's up to the players if this is a plot they wish to pursue.

For instance, the characters are fantasy adventurers searching for the lost Wand of Varza. Along the way they spend the night at a peasant's home. The peasant bemoans the fact that his son disappeared in the forest days before and has not returned. The characters can search for him if they wish, or forget about it and move on. If they decide to find the boy, then this forms as a new thread.

Favors

The GM, or players, should award favor points to the characters for deeds well done. If the characters performed well in the scene, moving closer to resolving a thread or actually resolving a minor thread, then they should be awarded 10 favor points. If they did exceptionally well, resolving a major thread, then award 25 points. If they didn't make any progress, then award nothing.

The larger award should only be given as a special benefit. If a thread was solved, but it was a minor thread, then the award should be only 10 points. In any single adventure there should only be one or two times when a 25 point favor award is handed out. This includes resolving the main thread that is actually the purpose of the adventure.

Favor awards within a scene are not cumulative. In other words, you won't award 35 points for resolving a minor and

Doling out the Favor Points

If a character performed well, and helped move closer to resolving an open Thread, award 10 Favor Points.

If a character performed very well, resolving a major open Thread, award 25 Favor Points.

If a character did poorly, or didn't make any progress toward resolving an open Thread, award no Favor Points.

a major thread in the same scene. In these cases, the larger award would take precedence over the smaller, resulting in a 25 point award.

SAMPLE SCENE

The following scene is a "transcript" of two players in a Mythic adventure session. They are playing without a GM using only Mythic.

The adventure

Let's play superheroes, our two players decide. The adventure teams The Fantasm, a gun-toting anti-hero who can phase through solid objects, with Mighty May, a spandex-clad superheroine of tremendous strength. The pair have teamed up to root out the evil Marzitron, a sentient robot bent on the eradication of all things human.

The scene

In previous scenes, the two superheroes hunted down the robot until they discovered he was hiding in the sewers beneath the city. The players propose the following scene setup: "Fantasm and May descend into the sewers through public manholes and begin searching around. The sewers are dank and, of course, stink."

The chaos factor is 8. Rolling 1D10, they get 3, within the range of chaos, which means the scene setup is modified. They rolled in the lower half of the range (1-4 out of 8), so the scene setup is altered.

Fantasm: "The most likely change is that the sewers look cleaned up, even shiny and new."

May: "Hmmm ... that seems pretty unlikely, actually." They agree that the odds are "weak," and roll on the fate chart against the question, "Do the sewers look shiny and new?" They roll a 64, "No."

Fantasm: "How about, 'Do we see a track of footprints right away?'" This seems marginally more likely, although still "Low." They roll a 22 for a "Yes." However, this is a double number and within the chaos factor, which means a random event happens right off the bat.

They roll "Neutral Event" on the event focus chart, and "Love, companionship," on the Event Meaning Chart. They agree on an interpretation.

May: "As we climb down a manhole and enter the sewer, we see there's a message scrawled on the wall. 'Jack loves Susan,' with a crude heart drawn around it. 'Charming,' May sighs in her southern drawl. 'Love in the sewers.'"

Fantasm: "'Come on, let's move,' Fantasm says gruffly. We follow the prints in the muck, trying to make as little noise as possible. I have my twin .45s drawn."

May: "May listens as she walks. Does she hear anything unusual?" They decide that the odds of hearing anything unusual are about Average, and roll a 90 for a No.

Fantasm: "Okay. We just keep following the footprints. I assume they will lead to a room or something. Do they?" This possibility seems likely, so they assign it High rank. They roll 87, however, above the 75 needed.

May: "How about, do they lead directly into a solid wall?" This seems unlikely, so they assign it a rank of Weak, only 15%. They roll a 2, however. Exceptional Yes! Thinking about this for a moment, May comes up with the interpretation.

May: "The footprints continue, and then just stop, as if the walker disappeared."

Fantasm: "I lean over and examine the footprints closely. 'What the hell?' I muse."

May: "May looks up, worried there may be something lurking on the ceiling. Is there?" The odds seem Weak, and she rolls a 45. No.

May: "I have an idea. May says to Fantasm, 'Poke your head underground, maybe there's a room below.'"

Fantasm: "I nod and phase out, ducking my head through the pavement. Do I see a room below?" They give this Question a rank of Below Average, 35%, and roll 21, a yes.

Fantasm: "I pull my head back up with a grin. 'You were right. There must be a trap door here or something.' I examine the concrete, looking for secret mechanisms. Do I find any?" Fantasm has no searching skills or attributes already defined that would help here, so they decide he has a hidden ability and create a new skill for him called Search. Since he is a detective, and quite intelligent, they figure his Search rank is Exceptional. The Question is a Resisted Question, with the difficulty rank being the difficulty of finding a method to open the assumed trap door. They figure that since Marzitron is a robot, and uses a great deal of high technology, the door would also be technological in nature, giving it a difficulty

of Exceptional. This gives Fantasm an even 50% chance to discover the mechanism. He rolls a 54.

Fantasm: "I scratch my head in confusion. 'If there's a door here, I can't figure it out,' I say, annoyed."

May: "'Stand back,' I instruct to Fantasm. 'I'll do it the old-fashioned way.'"

Fantasm: "I step back out of the way."

May: "I lean over and give the floor a heavy-duty punch, trying to knock through it. Does this work?" Mighty May's Strength is Superhuman 4. They figure the concrete has a strength of about Superhuman (they arrive at this by assuming that Superhuman strength can exert about a ton of pressure, and that's how much the floor could take.) Checking May's Strength versus the concrete's difficulty rank gives May a 115% chance of success. She rolls 49. A piece of cake, of course, although not exceptional.

May: "I easily punch through the floor and drop down into the room below."

Fantasm: "I follow her into the room."

May: "I look around quickly. Does this place look different from the sewers, all shiny metal like a high-tech complex?" They figure the odds of this are Above-Average, and roll 55. A yes, but also a Random Event (Chaos is 8).

May: "'I think we've found his hideout,' I say." They check for the Random Event on the Event Focus Table and get "Player character Negative." With only 2 players, they randomly determine that the player character in question is Fantasm. Rolling for Event Meaning, they get "Conquest by physical strength." It doesn't take too much interpretation to read this as Fantasm getting attacked. They ask, "Does Marzitron attack?" and get no. Then they ask, "Is there a guard in this room who attacks?" and get a yes.

Fantasm: "Is the attacker a robot, maybe kind of a spidery thing that was lurking near the ceiling, which is why we didn't notice it at first?" Another yes.

Fantasm: "Do I notice the attacker in time to defend myself?" This would use his Intuition, which has a rank of Exceptional. They have to determine how quick the robot is before they can answer the Question, so they ask, "Is the robot's Reflex High?" They give this odds of High and roll 76. Just missed, so they decide it only has a Reflex of Average. It might be dangerous, but it's kind of clunky. Going back to Fantasm's Question, they figure that he suffers a -2 Shift to his Intuition because he is being caught unawares. This gives him a rank of Above Average. He rolls an 81 for a no. He needed 65 or less. Grimacing, the Fantasm's player decides he doesn't want to find out how tough this thing is the hard way. He decides to spend 16 Favor Points to bring the roll down to 65 and change the answer to a yes. He sighs in relief.

Fantasm: "I happen to catch movement out of the corner of my eye. I look up to see this large, robotic spider crawling along the ceiling. 'Look out!' I cry as it leaps at me. Can I phase out before it hits me?" We already know that the robot's Reflex is Average. Fantasm's Reflex is Exceptional. He rolls a 4 for Exceptional Yes. They interpret this in the following way:

Fantasm: "As it leaps at me, I not only have time to phase out, but right before I do I squeeze off a shot with my gun. Do I hit?" His rank with a gun is Awesome. However, they determine that since he is acting quickly there is a -2 Shift. Additionally, the robot is very close range, giving him a +2 Shift right back. He rolls a 32 and hits.

Fantasm: "Great! Is it damaged?" The gun does High rank damage. They ask, "Does the robot have Superhuman Toughness?" They figure the odds of this are Exceptional and roll a 23 for a yes. Going back to his Question about the damage, they check his rank of High against the robot's rank of Superhuman and roll 82 for a no. There is no damage.

Fantasm: "Darn. My shot ricochet's off its metal frame as it flings itself through the air. However, it passes right through me and hits the floor. Hey, is it damaged by the fall?" They give the fall a rank of Above Average, and check that against the robot's Toughness. They roll a 98. Exceptional No. They interpret:

May: "The spider hits the floor with all 8 legs and immediately bounces back for another attack. Does it attack Fantasm again?" Since it passed right through, they give the robot some credit for intelligence and give this Question odds of Low, rolling 54 for a no.

May: "Okay, it attacks me then. Bring it on! Does it hit?" May's Reflex is High and she matches that against the spider. Since this was a surprise attack, she is still a little off-guard, so they give her a -1 Shift. Checking Average vs. Above Average, they roll a 16 for a yes.

May: "'Ugh!' I grunt as it hits me, grappling me. Does it hurt me?" Before that Question can be answered, they have to figure out how much damage the thing does. So, they ask, "Does it do Superhuman damage?" The odds of this seem High, and they roll 20 for a yes. To see if May is hurt, they check the thing's Superhuman damage against her

Toughness of Superhuman 4. This gives the robot a -15% chance of hurting her, no possibility. They roll anyway for Exceptional results and get a 43. Nothing.

May: "I stagger back for a moment as it tries to tear my super skin, but it is too weak. I grab at a leg and smash it against the wall. Does that work?" They decide to Shift her Reflex by -1 because she is actually doing two actions here, grabbing the robot and swinging it (in other words, the Question has Depth). This pits her modified Reflex rank of Above Average against the robot's Reflex rank of Average. She rolls a 23 for a yes.

May: "Yeah! I smash it against the wall. Does it burst into a million pieces?" This Question uses her Strength rank against the robot's Toughness. Since the Question is jumping right to destroying the robot (again, this gives the Question Depth), and it hasn't even been damaged yet, they decide to give her a -1 Shift. If she had just tried to stun it or damage it, then they decide there would be no Shift. May wants to go ahead anyway, giving her a rank of Superhuman 3 against the robot's rank of Superhuman. They roll a 76 for a yes.

May: "I smash it against the wall and it explodes in a spray of sparks and metal pieces. 'Take that, you darn spider. I hate spiders!'"

Fantasm: "'Well done,' I say. Is there a door out of here?" The odds of this are Awesome, and they roll 52. Yes.

Fantasm: "We head for the door, keeping a wary lookout for more guards."

Since they have successfully searched the sewers and found the hideaway, this ends the main action of the scene. The next scene would involve them looking deeper into the headquarters, perhaps finding the evil robot, and so on. Ending the scene, they run through their lists quickly and make the following changes:

Characters: Add Robot Guards to the list.

Threads: No changes here.

Chaos factor: This scene was definitely chaotic, with the sewer and robot and all. This ups the Factor from 8 to 9, its maximum.

Since the discovery of Marzitron's lair is a significant step forward in defeating him, they both get a +10 favor point bonus.

GM Emulation

Emuwhat?

So, you all want to be players, and no one wants to run the show. Well, that's just great. The Mythic adventure engine is designed to build games off the cuff, making the game master's life easier. Or, these same tools can be used to replace the GM entirely. After all, a GM can use the Mythic engine to develop an adventure even if he doesn't know any more about what's going on than the players do. It's not a far cry to cut out the GM entirely.

If you want to try playing without a GM, this chapter offers some suggestions that might make the adventure run smoother.

Be prepared

Yeah, that's right, I said "preparation," but it's not what you think. The only preparation you should have on hand is some scratch paper for making notes. Better yet, check out the back of this book for blank forms you are free to copy. These forms will help you record important information as it crops up in the adventure, such as non-player characters, scaling boxes, adventure summaries, etc.

If you are going to play without a GM you are going to have to keep track of what happens each scene. This is the kind of activity usually performed by the GM, but he's not here. Don't worry, it's not a lot of work. All you're doing is recording important information as your characters run across it and the adventure unfolds.

Building worlds

You don't have to start a game session completely from scratch. You may have already generated your characters and have a good idea, if not a definite idea, of what kind of game world you are playing in. If the world is pre-generated, then you should have those materials on hand, whether they are supplements from another RPG or notes of your own creation.

You may have even come up with more than just a general idea of what the particular adventure is about. That's good, too. However, whether your adventure world is fully fleshed out, or completely unknown to you, you should be ready either way to take notes.

I mentioned the scaling boxes above. You've seen these elsewhere in this book, also. These help you establish average ranks for common game phenomenon, from the damage caused by weapons to the range of a telepathy power. No matter how prepared you think you are, you will run across new situations all the time that call for judgements on what an "average" rank is. Knowing what is average makes it much easier to gauge greater, and lesser, power levels.

Scaling Box	
Description	Mythic rank
	Miniscule
	Weak
	Low
	Below Average
	Average
	Above Average
	High
	Exceptional
	Incredible
	Awesome

This doesn't mean you have to create a new scaling box every time something new happens. But if the matter is likely to come up again, you should take note. This also doesn't mean that you have to fill in all of the spaces on the box right away. It's enough to figure out what average is. Later, this will help you figure out higher and lower ranks, and the scaling box will evolve as the adventure unfolds.

For instance, characters adventuring in a sword-and-sorcery fantasy come across a monster made of shadow that, when it passes through your body, can paralyze you. The players determine that the potency of this paralysis is dependent on the size of the shadow. Since they expect to see more of these later in the adventure, they determine that average potency is a shadow about the size of an average dog. The first shadow monster they encounter is man-sized, so they determine it's paralysis rank is high, since it is more than twice the size of an average shadow. Later in the adventure they are swarmed by three man-sized shadows. Looking at the scaling box so far, they know this is larger than a single man-sized shadow, and decide that three combined would equal exceptional paralysis. Finally, they encounter a giant shadow that blots out an entire cavern. They decide the potency of this shadow is awesome.

By taking notes like this, it becomes easier and easier to judge new situations as they arise throughout the adventure. The game world also evolves, growing as the characters interact with it. Keeping notes also helps

Sample Scaling Boxes

Scaling Box

Telekinetic ability
(Used for a sci-fi game where telekinetics are common)

Description	Mythic rank
Lift 1/4 pound at 1'	Miniscule 2
Lift 1/2 pound at 1'	Miniscule
Lift 1 pound at 5'	Weak
Lift 5 pounds at 10'	Low
Lift 25 pounds at 10'	Below Average
Lift 50 pounds at 20'	Average
Lift 100 pounds at 40'	Above Average
Lift 200 pounds at 100'	High
Lift 400 pounds at 200'	Exceptional
Lift 1000 pounds at 400'	Incredible
Lift 1 ton at 1000'	Awesome
Lift 2 tons at 1 mile	Superhuman 1
Lift 4 tons at 2 miles	Superhuman 2

Scaling Box

Occult magic
(For a horror game, to gauge difficulty rank of casting occult spells)

Description	Mythic rank
Too weak, no effects	Miniscule 2
Too weak, no effects	Miniscule
Very minor, quasi-natural effects (flickering candle, etc.)	Weak
Minor effects (flashes of light, etc.); immediate area of effect	Low
Cause non-damaging, irritant harm; minor curses; range of .25 mile	Below Average
Deal stunning damage; range of .5 miles; 30 min. duration	Average
Deal lethal damage; range of 1 mile; 1 hour durations	Above Average
Summon a minor creature; range of 2 miles; 4 hour durations	High
Summon several minor creatures at once; range of 5 miles; 12 hour durations	Exceptional
Summon a major creature; range of 10 miles; 24 hour durations	Incredible
Contact a major entity; range of 20 miles; 1 week durations	Awesome
Summon a major entity to your presence	Superhuman 1
Bind and control a major entity for a short period of time	Superhuman 2

Scaling Box

Hi-tech weapons
(For sci-fi game when coming up with new weapon damage ranks)

Description	Mythic rank
	Miniscule 2
	Miniscule
	Weak
Needle gun	Low
Laser knife	Below Average
Low power laser pistol	Average
Standard laser pistol	Above Average
Laser rifle; plasma grenade	High
Vehicle mounted laser	Exceptional
Plasma cannon	Incredible
Disintegration bomb	Awesome
Death-energy neurolyzer	Superhuman 1
Plasma-nuke	Superhuman 2

Scaling Box

Wealth (Measures most expensive item buyable by character with this wealth rank.)

Description	Mythic rank
Lunch at a fast food place	Miniscule 2
A day of groceries	Miniscule
A week of groceries	Weak
A computer system	Low
A really good TV	Below Average
A decent, new car	Average
A good sportscar	Above Average
A decent house	High
A very nice house	Exceptional
A mansion	Incredible
A personal jet	Awesome
A small island	Superhuman 1
A small country	Superhuman 2

maintain the consistency of this growing world. For instance, if the players in the example above were not so careful, they might forget later in the adventure the rank of a man-sized shadow, and when a larger one shows up, it'll take longer to figure out its rank without notes from the previous encounters.

First ideas

You can come to the gaming table armed with only your character and nothing else. In fact, it's often best if you don't have any clear ideas for an adventure. The only thing you need to get started is an adventure setup and a setup for the first scene; there has to be some kicker to get the ball rolling. The players can brainstorm a little and take the idea that sounds most interesting. Whatever idea you come up with doesn't have to make a lot of sense. You don't even have to know what it means. The point is to come up with something and see what unfolds from there.

For instance, some adventure setup ideas:

- "The players are called in by the FBI to investigate a mysterious murder. The body was found with odd occult symbols drawn across it and other oddities that the government investigators cannot explain. They are seeking the help of the characters."
- "The characters wake up in a hotel room with no memory and no possessions besides the clothes on their back. There is a set of keys on the dresser, a video store rental card with the name 'Sue' on it, and a bloody knife on the floor."
- "The characters are hanging out in a tavern when a cloaked figure approaches. He plops a bag of gold on the table, sits, and explains he wants to hire the group to eradicate a nest of goblins that are marauding the countryside."

As you can see from the examples above, some ideas offer more information than others. Regardless of the content, each idea is a seed that can lead anywhere. It's all up to the players and the questions they ask.

Taking a hint from the movies

The adventure setup, which will help to generate the opening scene, should be interesting, whether the players understand it or not. Of course, you could start with, "We are walking along a dirt road on a pleasant afternoon. The sun is shining, the birds are singing." This could still work as an adventure setup, but it is bland and doesn't spark the imagination. Starting from such a place is, in a sense, begging the dice to throw in some random events to take the adventure in an interesting direction.

To get the action started faster come up with something that ignites your interest. For inspiration, just think about nearly any movie you have ever viewed. The opening scene almost always sets the tone for the whole movie. This is not always the case, but it is certainly common enough to suggest you should use it for yourself.

The adventure idea doesn't have to flow sequentially into the action of the first scene. It can be a flashback. For instance, the adventure setup might be: "In 469 BC, King Musdah of the desert city of Kasmar sealed into a tomb the eye of Anzla, an amulet said to be made from the eye of an evil, dead god. The king so feared the relic that the tomb was sealed and hidden beneath the sands, and all who worked to build it were killed to protect the secret." Boom, there you go. The first scene might be an archaeological dig, involving the characters, where the tomb is discovered in modern times.

Where to go from here

There is really no difference between playing a Mythic game with a GM and without. Whether you use a GM or not, you still ask yes/no questions for all situations, and they are resolved using the fate chart. Now, however, you are also responsible for interpreting the answers. Logic is still the prime rule when interpreting the yes/no question results.

The scenes progress the same way, also. Players travel through a scene, asking yes/no questions along the way, until the scene runs out of steam. The players wrap up the scene, adjust the NPC list, the threads list and the chaos factor. Then they proceed to the next scene, deciding what they think it should be, and then rolling the dice and seeing if that is actually what happens.

Playing this way is clearly not the same as playing with a well-prepared GM. Nevertheless, the experience can be the same, if not better. The adventure still progresses along logical lines. The players are still embroiled in a mystery that unfolds before them, scene by scene, and which will eventually lead to an answer. Just because that mystery, and those answers, don't objectively exist yet in the real world does not make them any less real when they reveal themselves to the players.

The gaming experience

Since you are in near-total control of the adventure, there is a certain degree of responsibility you have to toe. If you are a powergamer this may not work out so well for you. After all, without a GM, you have free reign to manipulate the rules any way you wish. This doesn't sound like much fun, however.

Sample adventure openings

Adventure setup: A race of insect-like aliens have invaded the Earth, destroying human civilization. Those who have not been captured and enslaved live in the wastelands, desperate to stay alive. The characters have been captured by a village of humans. To gain their freedom, they must help invade an alien outpost and free a group of captured comrades.

First scene setup: Although they already know how the adventure will begin, the players decide to play the game cinematically and make the first scene where their characters are captured. They set it up as their characters are making their way across a desert and are ambushed. They will put up a good fight, but will be outnumbered, so the odds are hopeless. However, the ambushers will not kill the characters, but will take them hostage.

Where the players may go from here: With their capture inevitable in the first scene, the characters may still get a little banged up. Subsequent scenes may involve them negotiating with the village elders on the terms of their release, a period of healing, or the characters' own plans to escape. The adventure may lead where the adventure setup originally intended (invading the alien outpost on a rescue mission), or it could vere in another direction. Perhaps the characters escape and are so embittered by the experience, they side with the aliens long enough to wipe the village out. Or, maybe the characters discover the village elders are in league with the aliens and the rescue plot was only a ruse to get more villagers captured.

Adventure setup: The characters have been invited to dinner at the home of a rich friend. The house is a mansion deep in a secluded forest. At the dinner, which involves ten other people, the host declares that he believes one of his friends is an extradimensional monster who has been prowling the earth for centuries, feeding on the souls of innocents. He cannot figure out who it is, since the monster seems human in all respects. So, he will let his guests figure out who among them is a monster. If no one can prove to him by midnight who the creature is, the house is rigged to blow up, killing all inside. The doors and windows are all locked and barred, there is no escape.

First scene setup: The players decide to skip role-playing the backstory, and just pick up from where the adventure setup leaves off. The first scene takes place at the dinner table, after the host makes his announcement. This scene will mostly involve watching the reactions of all of the guests, and learning a little about who they are.

Where the players may go from here: The players will likely either play their hosts game, and try to figure out who the monster is, or they will decide their friend is insane and try to find a way out of the mansion before it blows sky high. Either way, the adventure will likely end with the characters learning whether their host was correct, or mad.

Adventure setup: The characters are American secret agents who are suddenly arrested by their own people. It appears they are accused of murdering a US Congressman and of being double-agents. The characters know they are being framed, and must escape and prove their innocence.

First scene setup: The first scene can involve the characters' incarceration, and their plans to escape. Or, if they want to bypass the escape and get right into the meat of the adventure, they may decide that a former teammate who believes them helps free them so they can prove themselves.

Where the players may go from here: The adventure is wide open. Anyone could have framed the characters, from an old enemy to a new one who just wanted to pin the murder on someone else. The characters will likely use personal contacts to discover their initial clues, and take it from there.

Adventure setup: The character is a normal, everyday man who is bitten by a wolf and discovers he is slowly degenerating into a lycanthrope ... a werewolf! He must discover a way to cure himself before he permanently turns into a monster.

First scene setup: The character has been attacked in the woods and bitten, he wanders helpless and finds a light through the trees that lead to a small house. Their he discovers an old woman who, upon seeing his wounds, shuns him, but not before informing him of what his fate will become. She proves it to him by showing him a mirror and pointing out his extended canines and his own desire for live meat.

Where the players may go from here: Gleaning a clue or two from the old woman, the character may seek out myth experts and other sources of werewolf lore to learn of a cure. Once he does, the rest of the adventure involves his quest to cure himself, perhaps running across others like him, or even becoming the target of werewolf hunters, who would rather destroy him than help cure him.

Your best gaming experiences will come when you approach the adventure with a character you like and an open mind to what can happen. It doesn't matter whether you are a cinematic type of player, or a simulationist, you both want to know the same thing: what happens next? You should ask the types of questions that will move the adventure forward, instead of questions that manipulate the rules and will help your character most.

The example

Enough babble, let's get down to an example. Following is a transcript of two players adventuring with Mythic and without a GM. The adventure is set in the modern world with a dark, magical twist. The character Michael is an FBI agent who investigates occult murders. Sara is an occultist herself who has teamed up with Michael. She possesses a range of mystic talents.

The adventure setup is: "Michael and Sara are investigating the murder of a homeless man in New York city. His body is found with the heart removed and strange runes chalked on the sidewalk around him."

As the scenes unfold, Michael and Sara discover that there have been two other similar murders that had gone underreported, each victim with his heart removed. Checking some of her resources, Sara identifies the runes as Aztec in origin and discovers the treatment of the bodies is similar to some ancient, Aztec rights to appease cruel gods. Their adventure worksheet is to the right and a few details about some of the NPCs are recorded below.

We pick up at the beginning of Scene 4, with the setup: "Check Sara's theories with an expert. Seek out an expert at a local university."

Michael's Player: "That sounds like a good scene setup. Let's check it." Before starting

the scene, he checks against the chaos factor to see if the scene setup is modified. Chaos is 2, he rolls a 1D10 and gets a 2. This means an interrupt. They have to roll a random event to see what interrupted the expected scene. He rolls on the Event Focus Table and gets, "character action." He rolls among the four characters in the list and comes up with Agent Summers, Michael's contact with the FBI who helped him uncover the information on the previous murders. Checking the Event Meaning table, he gets, "Mental imprisonment."

Sara's Player: "Hmm, that's an interesting one. Sounds like he's gone insane."

MP: "Yeah. How about we get a call from Summers, sounding agitated. He's been working on the case and wants to meet us at a hotel. When we get there, the place is a mess and he's acting very strangely."

SP: "Sara eyes the hotel room as Summers lets them in. Are there papers and files anywhere? I figure this is incredibly

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Name	Reginald Morrow
Strength	
Agility	
Reflex	
IQ	
Intuition	
Willpower	
Toughness	

Local occultist and nut, has long record of assaults. ID'd by NYPD as suspect, although has not been approached yet by police.

Name	Officer Daniels, NYPD
Strength	
Agility	
Reflex	
IQ	
Intuition	
Willpower	
Toughness	

Officer initially on the case, saw the body. Apparently freaked out, been acting strange.

Adventure Worksheet

Summary of Resolving Scenes

- Come up with the Scene Setup.
- Roll 1D10 against Chaos to see if the Setup is modified as an Altered Scene or an Interrupt.
- Play out the Scene.
- When the main action ends, the Scene ends.
- Update lists: Characters, Threads, Chaos Factor
- Award Favor Points (0, 10, or 25)

Adventure Setup   Michael and Sara are investigating the murder of a homeless man in New York city. His body is found with the heart removed and strange runes chalked on the sidewalk around him.

1 Scene — Scene Setup
They visit with local cops, seeing photos of the bodies and the runes.

2 Scene — Scene Setup
Michael uses police contacts to review other murder records, looking for similar cases.

3 Scene — Scene Setup
Sara reviews her textbooks, looking for the meaning of the runes.

4 Scene — Scene Setup
Visit an agitated Agent Summers, who might have a lead.

Scene — Scene Setup

Scene — Scene Setup

Scene — Scene Setup

Scene — Scene Setup

Lists

Characters
Inspector Richards, NYPD
Officer Daniels, NYPD
Reginald Morrow
Agent Brian Summers, FBI

Threads
Find the killer.

Chaos Factor
5
2

likely, given the setup." With the chaos factor so low, she rolls on the fate chart against a difficulty rank of high. She rolls an 84, a no.

MP: "I guess it just looks messy then, bed unmade, coffee cups, but not a total wreck. How does Summers look? Is he manic, talking fast?" They figure the odds on this are exceptional, and roll a 2 for an exceptional yes.

SP: "Sara is alarmed by Summers, who is wild-eyed and barely coherent."

MP: "He's talking so fast, moving about the room aimlessly. Michael tries to understand what Summers is ranting about. Does any of it make sense?" He uses Michael's Intuition, which is high, as the acting rank, and they decide on a difficulty rank of exceptional. He rolls a 66, for a no.

MP: "Michael shakes his head at Sara, shrugging. He approaches Summers and says in his most soothing voice, 'Calm down, buddy. Why don't you sit on the bed and start at the top.' Do I get him to calm down?" Michael has some ability with psychology, at rank exceptional. Since Summers appears so manic, they stick with a difficulty of exceptional. He rolls a 64 when he needed 50 or less.

MP: "This is too important. I'm going to spend 14 favor points to bring the roll down to 50."

SP: "Oh, good. He calms down a little, sitting on the bed, still chattering away though. While Michael talks to him, Sara will casually drift about the room, looking for any files or exposed papers. Does she see anything interesting?" They decide the odds are High, and roll a 95, an exceptional no.

MP: "Does that mean the room is exceptionally uninteresting?"

SP: "More likely, I don't see anything unusual, but perhaps Summers is getting upset with my looking."

MP: "Hmm, I'm not so sure about that. Let's put it up as a question. Does Sara's searching tick Summers off?" They really aren't sure how he would react, so they decide on average odds and roll an 85 for a no.

MP: "Good, he doesn't seem to care. You just don't find anything. I ask Summers why he called us. Does he tell me he discovered the killer?" This seems somewhat unlikely, so they decide the odds are low, and roll a 47, for a no.

SP: "How about to warn us away from the case. Does he tell us it's too dangerous?" They assign this a likelihood of above average and roll a 5, an exceptional yes.

MP: "Exceptional, great. He gets nuts again, jumps up, ranting about how all our lives are in danger. We need to flee New York immediately."

SP: "Danger from whom? Sara asks him, does he say?" They give this average odds and roll a 27 for a no.

MP: "He's too bonkers, and isn't listening to Sara. Is he panicked or angry?"

SP: "Make that a yes/no. Is Summers afraid?" They assign this odds of high and roll 68 for a no.

SP: "Angry then."

MP: "If angry, then he must be angry at us. He thinks we're stirring the pot, drawing the killer to us."

SP: "Sara tenses up at Summers' tone. She studies him closely. Is he armed?" Summers is an FBI agent, so they decide on exceptional odds and roll a 4, an exceptional yes.

SP: "Uh-oh. He's got one gun in a shoulder holster, visible with his open coat, and another gun on the nightstand near the bed."

MP: "That sounds about right. Is he behaving threateningly toward us?" Given the previous conclusion about his anger toward the characters, and his manic behavior, they decide on exceptional odds and roll a 67, for a no.

SP: "The low chaos factor coming to our rescue. OK, so he's ticked off and telling us to back off the case, but he's not threatening."

MP: "Not yet. Michael tells him, 'We can't back off this case. But if you're so worried then you're free to run.' Does he accept this?" Given Summers' anger and attitude, they decide the odds are below average and roll a 66 for a no.

SP: "He gets angrier..."

The above scene would continue playing out until Michael and Sara were done with Summers, at which point the main action for the scene would be over, ending the scene. Since this scene was an interrupt, the players are free to make the next scene setup the same one they had tried before. Or, if they learned something interesting from Summers, they may decide to go off in a different direction.

The players in this scene asked the questions they needed answered to move the scene along. When a question was answered on the fate chart, the first one with a ready interpretation threw it out. The only disagreement came when Sara's player interpreted the exceptional no result when Sara was casually searching the room. They posed the interpretation as a yes/no question and consulted the fate chart, which gave it a no response.

The players didn't rely on the fate chart for every detail. This is where logic comes into play. It's also the area where a game master usually does most of his work, generating details. Many of the small details don't matter much in the long run, so there is no harm in running along with a description if it seems fitting. Both players here ad-libbed some, describing Summers' demeanor and the condition of his hotel room.

World Creation

Creating the world that your characters adventure within can be as simple, or complex, as you want it to be. Many players come to the table with a highly prepared game master armed with complete data on a very realized gaming universe. Others come to the table with a few ideas and the desire to have fun.

There is no right way to approach gaming, it is all a matter of style. Mythic, however, caters to the other players, the underprepared.

What kind of a world do you play in if you start a gaming session completely from scratch? Or, maybe a better question, can you even begin an adventure without knowing some detail about the world at large?

Where to begin

The fact is, you can begin a Mythic adventure with as little detail about the world as you wish. If playing with a GM, she will likely have some ideas about the adventure world. She may even base it on another RPG, or a favorite book or movie, which would very much help in fleshing the world out. On the other hand, she may start without a clue about the adventure world, or perhaps the players are forging ahead without a GM and the only notion they have about the universe is that it is a "light fantasy" one.

Whether you start detailed or with a blank slate, if you are running a Mythic adventure, the key word to keep in mind is "evolution." Since the Mythic adventure engine is guiding the progress of the adventure, there is no telling what details about the game world this will reveal. Players could begin with their characters in a very generalized concept of a game world and, by the end of their first adventure, have a much more concrete picture of where it is their characters live.

Evolution of a setting

Everything from setting details to adventure specific rules will evolve out of a gaming session. For instance, if a pair of players decide they want to adventure in a fantasy world, in the beginning they may only know the name of the village their characters come from and the fact that the kingdom is at war with a nation of orcs. By the end of the adventure they may have learned that a secret society of humans is working to help the orcs, that magic is difficult to cast and has unpredictable results, that the kingdom's

armies are broken into factions, each loyal to a certain general, and that their village lies on a major road that stands in the way of the approaching orc army.

These are all important details that help define the adventure world. These facts will have a profound impact on future adventures, which will evolve the world even more.

By the end of the first adventure, the players will find the world their characters live in a much different place than they may have first thought. They will learn about it as their characters learn.

Issues of control

This is not to say that you have to leave it all up to Mythic. If you are playing with a GM, that person ought to consider the results of random checks and altered scene ideas as suggestions and not hard-and-fast rules. As the adventure speeds along, they will find ideas popping in their heads that they like better than the ones evolving in front of them. Or maybe not. The choice is theirs.

If playing without a GM, the situation is more controlled by Mythic. Still, the course of the adventure is largely shaped by the questions the players ask and the scene ideas they generate.

Tools of the trade

Notes are crucially important for keeping track of this evolving game world. In the back of this book you will find blank resolution charts and scaling boxes. They look like this:

A blank resolution table and scaling box. You can find these at the back of the book, free for you to copy for your personal use.

Resolution charts are, essentially, the setting specific game rules to your particular campaign. You may come up with spell-casting rules that appear in no other campaign you play, or even modify the combat resolution tables to fit your style of play. Maybe mind-reading is a common feat in your campaign, so you need a resolution table to accommodate it.

You should make a resolution table for any feat that may come up fairly often, or is important enough that you want to treat the feat consistently each time it comes up. This doesn't mean you have to fill out the whole chart the first time such a feat is attempted; you can fill in the relevant entries as you need, letting the box evolve. For instance, you may know what a successful and unsuccessful mind-reading feat means, but not exceptional results until someone roles one up.

The scaling boxes, on the other hand, help maintain consistent parameters in your game world. It may be important to know the range a telepath has. Perhaps an average rank telepath can reach a half mile with his ability, while one with high rank can reach 10 miles. As this information evolves in the adventure, you fill in the box, making it more useful for the next time it's needed.

Before long, you'll have a small stack of resolution tables and scaling boxes that define your campaign world, a unique setting that you discovered on your own.

Global questions

Everyone, even the least educated, knows something about the society and world they live in. Even if you begin an adventure knowing nothing about the campaign world, your characters know more than you do. It is fair to ask fate questions that reflect general knowledge. For instance, if players are adventuring in a generic sci-fi universe, which they know nothing about, some questions they might ask right away are: Is faster than light travel possible? Are aliens common? Does everyone speak the same language?

These kind of global questions will help shape the adventure world fairly quickly. Some you may already know, especially if the campaign world was not started completely from scratch. But even if you come prepared, your characters may stumble into areas where they should have knowledge, but you don't.

Many of these questions will involve large issues and will be easily remembered. If there is any question about the fallibility of your memories, however, it may be a good idea to keep a notebook handy and write some of these findings down.

EVOLUTION BY EXAMPLE

Following is a sample game world evolved during the course of several adventures.

Welcome to Durnam

The kingdom of Durnam is a fantasy realm with an economic and caste system straight out of the middle ages. Mancers, the mages of this world, are fairly common although magic is difficult to control. The kingdom is in a period of great turmoil as a pestilence, the Withering Fever, scours the land. Warlords are beginning to take advantage of the unrest, rising up against once strong lords.

This is the adventure world as envisioned by a pair of players who want to try their hand at a dark fantasy game. Their characters are Turvol, a wandering soldier whose lord has been toppled and Abner, a mancer of some ability.

Right at the outset, at the beginning of their first adventure, the players decide that social station is very important in this world. In areas where civilization still stands, he of the highest caste rules.

They add a new attribute, Station, and come up with the following scaling box:

Scaling Box	
Social station	

Description	Mythic rank
A homeless beggar	Miniscule
A slave	Weak
A peasant	Low
A poor merchant	Below Average
A professional of some kind	Average
Lesser known noble family	Above Average
Well-known noble family	High
A relation to the king	Exceptional
A member of the king's family	Incredible
The king	Awesome

Turvol has a social station of average, he is a professional soldier. Abner hails from a small, noble family, giving him a station of above average. Early in the first adventure, as Abner and Turvol team up, Abner establishes himself as their leader in the cities, while Turvol takes over in the untamed wilds.

Since Abner is a mage, magic will be a fairly common feat in this adventure. As Abner casts his first spells, the players come up with the following resolution chart:

Is a spell successfully cast?

Mancing is a creative act, with spell effects made up on the spot. There are no "formula" spells.

ACTING RANK: Mancing ability

DIFFICULTY RANK: Abstract difficulty of the spell, based on what it does

MODIFIERS
- Very first attempt at a particular effect: +1DR
- Casting it instantly: -1AR

— RESULTS —

YES The desired spell effect takes place.

NO Nothing happens.

EXCEPTIONAL YES

EXCEPTIONAL NO

The players don't know the effects of exceptional results because they haven't rolled any yet. They'll save that for later.

The characters go on an adventure to avenge Turvol's fallen lord. Abner agrees to help him to kill the warlord who usurped command and decimated Turvol's fellow soldiers.

As they journey through the countryside, they come across a lieutenant of the warlord who refused to follow his boss' evil commands and fled. He knows a secret way into the castle where the warlord is residing, and agrees to show the two adventurers the way in. Unfortunately, he has also come down with a case of Withering Fever so he isn't long for this world. Since this character is important, the players

decide they better learn a thing or two about the disease.

The players come up with the following scaling box to describe the rank intensity of the fever.

Scaling Box

Intensity of Withering Fever	
Description	**Mythic rank**
	Miniscule
Light headache. Initial onset of the disease.	Weak
	Low
	Below Average
Very bad fever, sweaty.	Average
	Above Average
Difficult to walk or concentrate.	High
	Exceptional
	Incredible
	Awesome

These are the only ranks they know so far. By asking the appropriate fate question, the players learn that their guide currently has the disease at average rank. The players decide that the disease operates as if the character is hit with a lethal blow the same rank as the disease. Any damage effects the total body.

During the course of the adventure, Abner uses his magic to keep the guide alive. While using his abilities, the players learn a little more about mancing and develop the resolution chart further:

MODIFIERS
- Very first attempt at a particular effect: +1DR
- Spell has been successfully cast in the past at least 10 times: -1DR
- Casting a spell instantly: -1AR

— RESULTS —

YES The desired spell effect takes place.

NO Nothing happens.

EXCEPTIONAL YES The spell comes off exceptionally well, it's rank increased by 1RS.

EXCEPTIONAL NO The spell runs out of control.

While trying to heal their guide, Abner rolls an exceptional no, resulting in his spell running out of control. The players decide this means the mancer must try to control the magical powers that are surging wildly. They come up with the following resolution chart:

Q Is the surging power controlled?

This requires a moment of concentration as the mancer tries to manage her out of control spell.

ACTING RANK: Mancing ability or willpower, whichever is higher.

DIFFICULTY RANK: Abstract difficulty of the spell +1RS

MODIFIERS
- Caster is distracted: -1AR
- Another mancer lends his support: -2DR

———— RESULTS ————

YES The spell dissipates, although the caster still suffers a -1RS total body lethal wound.

NO The caster suffers a -2RS total body lethal wound and the spell manifests, though mutated and out of control.

EXCEPTIONAL YES The spell dissipates without any harm to the caster.

EXCEPTIONAL NO The caster suffers a -2RS total body lethal wound and the spell manifests, though mutated and out of control and at +2RS rank.

As their guide's health deteriorates, the players update the scaling box. Later, when they meet other sufferers of the disease, the players can more accurately describe the NPC's state of health and how much longer they have to live.

When the characters wrap up this adventure, the players can set these notes aside and bring them out again for another adventure in the kingdom of Durnam. The more adventures they have, the more scaling boxes and resolution charts they'll develop, fleshing out the details as they evolve.

Character Advancement

The characters you play are not just statistics on a piece of paper. Within the adventure worlds you create, these characters are real people (or whatever they are). Just like with us, their experiences change them, and they seek their own advancement and betterment.

Nearly all role-playing games provide some mechanism for allowing characters to grow and change. This chapter provides guidelines for advancement for Mythic characters. If you are using Mythic as a supplement for another role-playing game, it is up to you whether you choose to use these rules or the rules from another game.

When to check for advancement

A character is not going to change every day. In fact, change usually comes quite slowly and over time. Sudden events have the potential to change a character instantly, such as a fantasy campaign that magically empowers a character, or a science fiction adventure where a character gains cybernetic powers. Generally, though, a character will advance in one of three ways: through direct experience, training and time.

Experience

At the conclusion of an adventure, you should look your character over and see if there were any abilities or attributes that came into play during the adventure where the character did something extraordinary. Maybe she used her intellect to figure out a riddle that saved everyone's life, or he used his skill with a pistol to make an amazing shot.

If the character did something amazing it should also be something that was extremely difficult. It's one thing for a superhero to lift a car but quite another for a common man. If the character performed some incredible action that defied the odds then it's possible he will advance.

Where does this advancement come from? Perhaps the character had to stretch himself to succeed and learned from the experience. Or maybe he has always held himself back and didn't even know how good he was, until that event brought it out of him.

When a character succeeds at an amazing feat, the rank he used to perform the feat is the one marked for possible advancement. If the feat required more than one rank, or

Character Advancement Examples

Following are some examples of when characters can make checks for advancement:

- Bjorn the Cudgeler has just returned from an adventure where, single-handedly, he saved the lives of his comrades by cudgeling like he had never cudgeled before, dispatching 20 orcs in a single encounter. This amazing feat gives him a chance to increase his cudgeling ability rank.

- Minot the mystic is between adventures and decides to travel to Tibet to study under the Wise One. There, he takes a year to meditate with the master of magic and see if he can't improve his own abilities.

- X19 is a sentient robot. He absorbs and records everything going on around him. As such, after a year of mingling among humans, there is a decent chance he has automatically picked up a few basic skills, such as driving.

- Roland was tracking his way through a jungle when he was suddenly attacked by a leopard. Armed with only a small knife, Roland killed the beast in melee combat, barely coming out alive himself. This extreme achievement gives him an opportunity to boost his knife-fighting rank.

- Fireman may be a superhero who can fly and cover himself in flames, but he knows nothing about computers. During some down time, he decides to take some classes at a local community college and try to gain a new ability.

- Detective Frank Malone is a good cop who has been on the job for many years. He has never taken extra training, but after years of tracking killers and thieves, he's probably learned a thing or two, earning him the chance to check for advancement on his detective and criminal behavior abilities.

perhaps was a combination of ranks, choose the most appropriate rank.

You can identify more than one attribute or ability if more than one tremendous feat was accomplished during an adventure, but don't get carried away: limit it to no more than three. If the character is succeeding at more than three amazing actions per adventure, then the actions become more routine than amazing and the character isn't really breaking any new ground.

Training

Training is the most common way characters learn and grow, just like us. Training can come in many forms, from attending a school or having a private teacher, to simply practicing on your own. If learning from another source, such as a school or teacher, that source must possess the ability or attribute at a rank higher than the character. Otherwise, what can the character learn if he already knows more than the teacher? Some characters may possess attributes so extreme that there is no one on the planet who can teach them more.

When a character elects to train at something, there are a few rules they must follow:

• Training can only occur between adventures. If the character is embroiled in other activities, there is not enough time for study.

• What is being trained must be stated explicitly. For instance, the character is trying to increase his strength, or improve his skill with a bow, or kick her addiction to alcohol (get rid of a weakness).

• A base amount of time must be determined in which to train. The actual amount of training may take less, or more, but this is the expected amount of time to learn. This is a judgement call on the part of the players and all factors should be considered. For instance, a character of average strength working to increase his muscle hits the weights and trains for about 3 months before getting a check. A more advanced character, with a strength of exceptional, will find gains much more

difficult and may have to train for a year or more.

After these conditions have been met, and the character spends the base amount of time, then a check can be made to see if the character does indeed advance. You'll see more on this later in this chapter.

Time

Even if a character is not actively training, and isn't having any major experiences, the simple process of time can advance a character. In a sense, this is the same as training, except it takes place over a longer period. For instance, a man of 40 can be expected to have a broader range of knowledge than a man of 20, simply by virtue of having lived longer.

At any point between adventures, a player can request to have an advancement check based on the progress of time. To receive such a check, a few requirements must be met:

• As with training, what is to be advanced must be clearly stated.
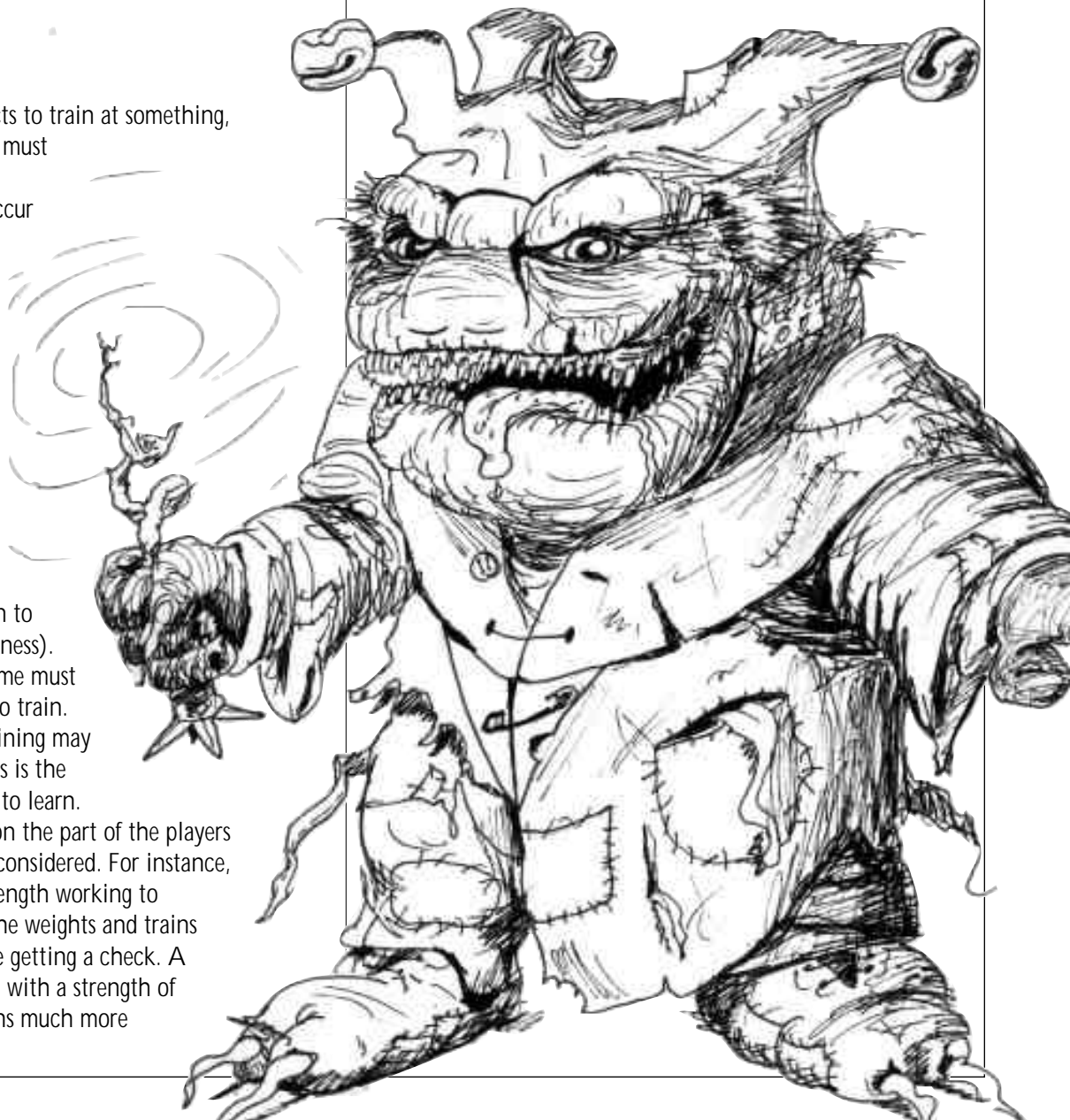
• The player must make a good argument for why the character might advance. Saying, "This character started at age 16 and is now 30, I think it's likely his IQ will have risen," is a good argument. But saying, "My character has been watching cop drama television shows for years on her down time and should have acquired a law-related ability," is a terrible argument.

• Along with this argument the player must point out that a sufficient amount of time has passed for the advancement to take place naturally. Usually, this means years. This is a judgement call on the part of the players, however.

• Within the time period stated above, there cannot have been any other advancement with this attribute or ability. In other words, if the character had experiences or training which increased the rank, then he has already exceeded any natural growth that may have occurred otherwise.

If all of these issues are met, then the character can check for advancement.

What can be advanced

Any aspect of a character can be advanced or changed. In game terms, this means increasing attributes, increasing abilities or acquiring new abilities, gaining new strengths and shedding weaknesses.

Increasing attributes

Any attribute can be increased, although the means to increase some attributes are easier than others. For instance, dedication to a fitness regimen can increase strength or reflex, but increasing IQ or intuition can be very difficult to work out. This should be taken into consideration if the character is training: abstract attributes, such as IQ and intuition, may be impossible to increase because the character cannot find the means to conduct the training. Whether training is possible or not is a judgement call on the part of the players and will rely on how powerful of an argument the player makes and how much training time the character plans to invest.

Increasing and adding abilities

Improving abilities is usually more straightforward than attributes. Most abilities are skills and can be improved through simple practice. Likewise, entirely new abilities can be acquired by taking the time to learn them.

Some characters may have abilities that are more difficult to pin down. For instance, a superhero character who has the ability of flight, how would she improve such an ability? Perhaps practice can allow her to fly faster, or maybe the power is at its peak and cannot be increased. These cases are judgement calls for the players, although they may phrase them as fate questions. For instance, our superhero may try to train her flight power, spend the necessary training time, but before checking for advancement, asks the fate question, "Can this power be increased through training?" If the answer is a no, then the training gained her nothing, other than the knowledge that the power cannot be increased that way.

Strengths and weaknesses

Strengths and weaknesses were discussed in the character creation chapter and offer ways to make the character unique. It should be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to gain new strengths. If a player wants to acquire a strength, he should make a really good argument. For instance, a character may undergo special training in a government intelligence agency and discover a strength he never knew he had, "Very proficient at detecting lies. Gains a +1RS on any feat to detect a lie."

Similarly, weaknesses should be very difficult for the character to knock off.

Whether the character is trying to gain a strength, or lose a weakness, the process should be unique and may even require a special adventure. The character may have to go through an extreme experience, such as dying and being reborn or achieving a lifelong goal. In other words, standard forms of training and experience are not likely to make it happen.

Advancement checks

Making an advancement check is just like any other Mythic feat; form a yes/no question (i.e., "Does my character advance?") and consult the fate chart. This chapter provides resolution tables to help you make the interpretation.

Given enough time and opportunity, there is no limit to how many advancement checks a character can make. Of course, somewhere in all this downtime they should actually go out and adventure. But, if they have a few months off, they might as well work on something. The effects of training, and the simple passage of time, allows players to fill in the gaps in their characters' lives between adventures. The characters not only grow from their adventuring experiences, but also from the more mundane existence they live in between.

Increasing attributes	Increasing/Adding abilities	Strengths & Weaknesses

Question
Does the attribute increase by 1 RS?

Question
Does the ability increase by 1 RS?

Question
Does the character gain the strength/lose the weakness?

NOTES Willpower is the main ingredient to increasing ability ranks. If a character is trying to increase willpower through training or time, then the acting rank is IQ or Intuition, whichever is higher.

ACTING RANK: (If training or time) Willpower

(If experience) An abstract rank based on the event precipitating the check

DIFFICULTY RANK: New rank that the attribute will rise to.

MODIFIERS
• (If Training) Poor instruction or resources to work from: -2RS to AR.
• (If Training) Training is interrupted for a short time: -1RS to AR.
• (If Training) For each item trained at the same time beyond the first: +1RS to DR per additional item, applied to all advancement checks.

RESULTS

YES   Attribute rises +1RS.

NO   The attempt failed, no change.

EXCEPTIONAL YES   The character took to the advancement naturally, accomplishing it in half the time.

EXCEPTIONAL NO   The attempt failed. If possible, double the required time was taken.

NOTES Treat gaining a new ability the same as increasing an existing one, instead it goes from non-existent to weak.

ACTING RANK: The most closely related attribute.

DIFFICULTY RANK: New rank that the ability will be.

MODIFIERS
• A very complex ability or skill, such as surgery: +2RS to DR.
• (If Training) Poor instruction or resources to work from: -2RS to AR.
• (If Training) Training is interrupted for a short time: -1RS to AR.
• (If Training) For each item trained at the same time beyond the first: +1RS to DR per additional item, applied to all advancement checks.

RESULTS

YES   Ability rises +1RS. Or, if adding a new ability, gain it at weak rank.

NO   The attempt failed, no change.

EXCEPTIONAL YES   The character took to the advancement naturally, accomplishing it in half the time.

EXCEPTIONAL NO   The attempt failed. If possible, double the required time was taken.

NOTES

ACTING RANK: The most closely related attribute at -1RS

DIFFICULTY RANK: An abstract rank based on the potency of the strength or weakness.

MODIFIERS
• (If Training) Training is interrupted for a short time: -1RS to AR.
• (If Training) For each item trained at the same time beyond the first: +1RS to DR per additional item, applied to all advancement checks.

RESULTS

YES   The strength is gained, or weakness lost.

NO   There is no change.

EXCEPTIONAL YES   The character took to the advancement naturally, accomplishing it in half the time.

EXCEPTIONAL NO   The attempt failed. If possible, double the required time was taken.

OTHER FORMS OF ADVANCEMENT

I wasn't completely truthful when I said the only aspects of a character that can advance are attributes, abilities, and strengths and weaknesses. Your character is more than the sum total of his personal qualities. He might have a job, social standing, money, equipment, vehicles, contacts, friends, family, and everything else that goes to make up the life of a person. A player can check for advancement in any of these more non-personal and material areas of a character's life.

Such an advancement check is similar to other advancement checks. Some criteria that must be satisfied include:

• What is being improved must be stated explicitly. For instance, the character is trying to gather better equipment or increase her income.

• A base amount of time must be determined in which to accomplish this improvement. The actual amount of time required may take less, or more, but this is the expected amount of time for the average person to accomplish this goal. This is a judgement call on the part of the players and all factors should be considered.

• The player must make a good argument for why the improvement should take place.

Since making a "life improvement" can include so many different subjects, we will not provide a resolution chart. Treat this like any other fate question. Begin with a question, posed something like, "Does the character experience this life improvement?" The acting rank can be an attribute or ability that the character primarily uses to accomplish the goal, the difficulty rank an abstract rank based on how hard the goal is to obtain. It's possible that the character has no influence over the improvement in which case this would be treated as an odds question: the acting rank would be the likelihood of a "yes" answer and the difficulty rank would be average (or based on chaos).

Modifiers can include any influences which may help or hinder the improvement. You can use the modifiers listed on the resolution charts for other improvements in this chapter as a guideline.

Interpreting the results is fairly simple: a yes means the

improvement was achieved; a no means the time was spent but the improvement was not achieved; an exceptional yes means the improvement was achieved in either less time, or a greater improvement was gained; an exceptional no means the improvement was not achieved and it took longer, or the character failed so badly she may actually have lost something instead of improving.

A few examples:

• An espianoge character wants a gun that is disguised as a camera. This isn't an item he can normally lay his hands on, so the player pitches this as an improvement the character works on between adventures. The players determine that an average of 2 months must be spent searching. The acting rank is the characters espianoge ability, rank high. They determine that such a device would be very difficult to find, giving a difficulty rank of incredible. If the character rolled an exceptional yes, he might acquire the weapon in only a few weeks. An exceptional no might mean he searched for 4 months and turned up nothing, or his search is noticed by law enforcement authorities, who arrest him for possession of an illegal weapon.

• A fantasy mage character lost his magic familiar, a black cat, during an adventure. He does not know if the familiar is alive or dead. Between adventures, the character poses this question as an improvement: "Does my cat return?" The players figure on a time frame of two months. Since the character has no control over this, it's all in the hands of his cat, more or less, so they frame this question as an odds question, with an acting rank of below average (they think the cat is probably dead). An exceptional yes might mean the cat returns within the month, with quite a tale to tell. An exceptional no might mean the cat turns up dead, or is simply never seen again.

CHARACTER ATTRITION OVER TIME

It would be nice if we all got better with time. The fact is, we get better and worse. Between adventures, the player should look at areas of the character that may begin to slide due to age or neglect.

Effects of aging

The impact aging has on a character can be difficult to judge. The following guidelines are very general, and you should feel free to either ignore them completely or modify them as you see fit.

The negative impact of aging can be determined using an attrition check. Much like an advancement check, this is a fate roll to see if a character is sliding in his advancing years.

A check should be made every 10 years, starting at age 30. This, of course, is for an average human being. A character's race may vary the timing of these checks, depending on the game world he lives in. Attrition checks should begin at the point in a character's life when he has passed the bloom of youth although he is still short of entering his middle years.

A check should be made against each of his physical attributes (strength, reflex, agility and toughness). If he fails the check in any of those areas, then the attribute drops and any ability that is closely related to that attribute declines. Which abilities are covered is up to the players, but it should have a clear link to the attribute. For instance, if a character loses a rank of reflex then all melee combat skills would drop by a rank.

You'll notice from the resolution table below that the higher the character's rank, the greater the chances are that it will drop due to age. This is because those with higher attribute ranks have more to lose than an average person.

Question

Does the character's attribute drop due to aging?

Attrition checks due to aging begin at age 30 and are made every 10 years after for normal human beings.

ACTING RANK: Attribute in question

DIFFICULTY RANK: Toughness.

MODIFIERS

• The character has lived particularly poorly, or unhealthily, during the past 10 years: -1RS to DR.
• The character has lived particularly healthily during the past 10 years: +1RS to DR.
• Old age effects: see text.

RESULTS

YES	The attribute, and all abilities that are directly related to this attribute, fall by 1 RS.
NO	There is no change.
EXCEPTIONAL YES	The attribute, and all abilities that are directly related to this attribute, fall by 1 RS, and the character experiences a crisis.
EXCEPTIONAL NO	There is no change, and the character is particularly healthy in this attribute. He can automatically skip the next check on this attribute.

Meet Rolf the Barbarian

Following is an example of a character going through the ups, and downs, of life. Meet...

Rolf the Barbarian
Strength: Incredible
Reflex: High   IQ: Below average
Agility: Above Average   Intuition: Above average
Toughness: Awesome   Willpower: High

Sword ability: Incredible
Climbing ability: Above average
Hunting ability: Above average

Rolf is a successful barbarian, spending his youth pillaging and hacking his way through life. As he hits his 30s, though, time starts taking its toll on his body and he has to start making attrition checks. He checks against his four physical attributes, with a -1RS penalty due to his rough lifestyle of sleeping on the ground and never eating vegetables. Unfortunately, he makes some poor rolls and age begins to catch up: he loses a rank in reflex and toughness. The reflex loss also loses him a rank in his sword ability. His new ranks are now: Reflex Above Average; Toughness Incredible; Sword Exceptional.

A few years later, he takes part in a hugely successful war, distinguishing himself with his swordsmanship. This experience allows him to roll to see if he advances in his skill. He succeeds at the roll, bringing his sword ability back up to incredible.

Rolf continues on much as he always has. As he hits 40, we make another age check. This time, all his years of hard living catch up to him and he has a very bad decade, experiencing a health crisis in reflex and toughness. First of all, he loses one rank in each, bringing his reflex down to average, his sword skill down to exceptional again, and his toughness to exceptional. The players decide that the reflex crisis is a bad fall Rolf took while hunting one day, breaking his leg. He recovers from the wound in 30 days. The second crisis is pneumonia, which he also recovers from in 30 days.

The health problems, and his loss of reflex and toughness, are starting to alarm Rolf. In a mid-life crisis, he trains himself hard, trying to regain the stamina from his youth. He trains hard for a full year, and his toughness rises +1RS to incredible. Immensely pleased with himself, he carries on throughout the rest of his 40s with the same kill-or-be-killed attitude.

Hitting 50, we check again: he receives an exceptional result when checking strength, meaning that his strength is maintained and he gets a free pass on the next roll. Whatever else is declining in Rolf, no one can deny his might. He also receives an exceptional no with reflex, halting any more decline for several decades. Unfortunately, the gains he made in his last decade with his toughness are lost as that drops -1RS back to exceptional.

Although still very healthy, Rolf feels he cannot compete against younger barbarians anymore, so he hangs up his sword and becomes a farmer. After the first year, where he doesn't use his sword or climbing skills, he makes checks against attrition and fails, so they fall 1RS. He's still a talented swordsman, but nothing like what he was in his youth. Rolf's player makes an argument for increasing his IQ, stating that time to sit and think has given Rolf an opportunity to broaden his mental horizons. Since Rolf wasn't that bright to begin with, the check succeeds easily and his IQ rises to average. Rolf still hunts occasionally, so he doesn't have to check against lack of use with his hunting ability.

As Rolf hits 60, he makes the attrition checks again, but now at a penalty due to his advancing years. Since he did so well on his previous Strength and Reflex checks, he doesn't need to roll for those. He passes fine on the others. However, he needs to check against death from old age, but he passes that check also.

At 70, his strength finally begins to ebb and drops to exceptional. At 80, his agility and toughness both fall by 1 RS, to below average and high, respectively. He walks with a bit of a limp now, but he is still extremely healthy. Unfortunately, he fails his check against death from old age. One night, in his mid-80s, Rolf the Barbarian finally shuffles off his mortal coil quietly in his sleep while dreaming of bloodier days.

Aging does not prevent the character from using training or other methods to keep her attributes up. The character will probably have to work harder as she gets older to keep attributes from falling, however.

Having a health crisis

If the character is unfortunate enough to pull an exceptional result when checking against attrition due to age, he enters a health crisis. This means his attribute and abilities drop as normal, but he also incurs a lethal wound. In game terms, a health calamity impacting that particular attribute has befallen the character. For instance, if the attribute was reflex, maybe he fell and broke his arm. If the attribute was toughness, maybe he came down with cancer. This is treated like any lethal wound, and a recovery check can be made after 30 days. The wound counts as a -1RS to the total body, and is of rank average. The character can take all normal actions to heal the wound, such as special medical care, etc. However, as a lethal wound, the crisis has the potential to kill the character.

Old age and death

As a character ages it's possible to die from health problems due to a health crisis. But if they live long enough to grow really old, they can die just from old age.

To simulate the effects of old age, at age 60, the character incurs a -1RS to the DR for the fate check against the effects of age. Also, the rank damage of a crisis is at +1RS. Finally, the character must ask the fate question, "Does the character die this decade from old age?" The AR is below average and the DR is toughness.

Every 10 years after, the DR on the old age question receives another -1RS (so -2RS at 70, -3RS at 80, etc), the damage from a crisis increases by +1RS, and the AR for the death question rises by +1RS.

The onset of old age, and the gap in between checks, is figured for human beings. If the character is something different, or if circumstances place him outside the normal realm of humans, you may have to go with different numbers. For instance, an elf in a fantasy campaign world may not reach old age until 400, and the checks may only be made every 50 years.

Effects of disuse

A character can also decline from lack of activity. If you don't use it, you lose it, as the saying goes. The impact of lack of use of an ability or attribute is less damaging than from age, however.

At the end of each year of a character's life, you should look over his attributes and abilities and note any that were not used during the year. This means, however, used to their fullest. In other words, a character with an IQ of average will use his IQ every day of his life, obviously. But a character with an IQ of incredible may actually go a whole year without handling any incredible mental problems. The same goes for abilities. A character with a firearms rank of awesome doesn't have to make an attrition check if he uses his ability often and in trying circumstances throughout the year. However, if he doesn't use it at all, or only for mundane feats, then he will have to make a check.

If an attrition check is called for, follow the steps provided on the resolution chart on this page. Loss due to lack of use is more forgiving than from aging. Also, once attrition from lack of use has set in for a rank you don't need to roll for it again. In other words, a particular rank can only be hurt from this once. After that, your attribute

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Question

Does the character's attribute or ability fall from lack of use?

This check must be made at the end of each year and is applied to any attribute or ability that was not used to full effect during the year. Once a rank falls you do not need to check again in succeeding years unless the rank is brought back up.

ACTING RANK: Attribute or ability in question

DIFFICULTY RANK: Toughness (if an attribute); most closely related attribute (if an ability)

MODIFIERS

• The ability was not used at all, not even once, during the past year: -1RS to DR.

--- RESULTS ---

YES — The attribute (and all directly related abilities) or ability falls by 1 RS.

NO — There is no change.

EXCEPTIONAL YES — The attribute (and all directly related abilities) or ability falls by 2 RS.

EXCEPTIONAL NO — There is no change, and the character is particularly strong in this attribute or ability. He can automatically skip the next check next year.

or ability has fallen to a level that is a "baseline" for your character, and only aging can drop it further.

If an attribute or ability has fallen from lack of use, it can be brought back up fairly easily. The character will have to go through the normal channels (experience, training or time), but gains a +1RS to the acting rank on those checks. This bonus applies only to attributes or abilities that have fallen due to lack of use and this bonus is gained only until the rank has come back up. Bear in mind that if a rank falls from lack of use and is brought back up, that rank is once again susceptible to falling from future lack of use checks.

Just like with aging, if an attribute falls, all related abilities fall with it automatically. If an ability falls with an attribute, you do not have to check that ability again for attrition this time around, even if it did suffer from lack of use. If the character brings the attribute back up, the fallen abilities will come back up with it.

Timing infirmity

Just because a character loses a rank at a certain age doesn't mean that rank falls right on the date of his birthday. The same holds for lack of use, it doesn't take effect exactly one year to the date. Actually, if you roll a loss from old age or lack of use, feel free to make it apply anywhere in the time span that you are looking at. Since this is usually downtime in between adventures, this issue isn't that important. If timing is a concern, however, you can find the exact time a character loses a rank by forming it into a fate question.

Converting to Mythic

L ike any role-playing game you'll either like Mythic enough to play it often or the system won't click with you and you'll set it on the shelf. However, the system is also designed so that you can take it in parts, if you wish, or use it in conjunction with your other games. In this way, you can pick and choose the portion of Mythic you like best and it will help you pick and choose among your other RPGs as well.

Since Mythic ranks are based on common-sense language and concepts (i.e. average, above average, awesome, etc.), it's easy to port elements of other games into a Mythic campaign. For instance, if you know a weapon does "1D8" damage in one RPG, you might say, "Hey, that's above average damage." There, you know what rank it has in Mythic.

The idea is, if you have various RPG products and you like certain elements from each, pour them all together into the campaign that you'd like to run. As long as you understand those other systems it's a simple matter to assign Mythic ranks. Of course, you could convert one game into any other game, but since most games use specific, and often fairly arbitrary, number systems to define rank and degree, it can get difficult, especially to do it as you are gaming. With Mythic, it's all in everyday language.

If this idea appeals to you, the following chapter gives some suggestions for converting other systems to Mythic. If you hate this idea, then forget about it and move on.

Keeping the language common keeps the game simple

To convert elements of one RPG over to Mythic, you have only to understand the rudiments of that other system. If you can explain that game, and some of its details, to a total novice, then you already know enough to convert it to Mythic. For instance, you know that in a certain game, damage of 1D6 is quite common, while 2D6 is pretty high. If someone, who knows nothing about the game, were to ask you how much damage those weapons do, you might say, "Oh, this one's a little weak. The damage it does is about average. This other one's a little tougher, it can do a fairly high amount of damage." There, you've just converted those two weapons to Mythic: weapon 1 is average rank, weapon 2 is high.

This may sound simple, and it's supposed to be. There are no complex equations involved, no calculators or charts. You simply have to understand the game well enough to know what the numbers mean in a relative way. This can usually be accomplished by first establishing what is "average." After you know that all other data can be compared to this baseline.

If you don't let yourself think too hard, you'll find the rank conversions springing out of your mouth automatically. "That guy is really strong ... the door is incredibly solid ... the poison is highly toxic ... you would need superhuman toughness to survive that fall ..."

Knowing the basics

You don't have to be a role-playing scholar to understand the rudiments of a game. You may even see a supplement for a game, buy it, check it out, and never purchase the main rule-book. As long as you can make

some sense of the data in the supplement you can convert it to Mythic. The important factors are the ability to establish a baseline average, the ability to measure greater and lesser degrees, and finally the ability to express this in common language.

Most of this can be figured out by simply looking the text over and comparing what you see. Even if you don't own the core rule-book you should be able to make enough sense of the information to convert it over.

Number angst

On the upside, this system of conversions is so simple you don't need to do much in the way of preparation. You could convert ranks and statistics on the fly as you play. On the downside, this may sound too simple to some players. After all, if a gun from a very realistic, modern day warfare game has a damage factor of exactly 2.3 in that game (whatever that means), is it too simple and abstract to then say the weapon does exceptional damage?

That's a valid complaint. If you enjoy super realistic games then you probably won't like Mythic anyway. Or, you may like the GM-emulation aspect of Mythic, but not the game mechanics. That's fine too, since you can pick and choose with Mythic.

However, there are enough Mythic ranks available to match the flavor of just about any game on the market. For instance, in an RPG where stats are measured on a scale of 3-18, giving a possible 16 values for each stat, how does Mythic measure up? Well, a 3 would be comparable to miniscule, while an 18 would be awesome, this gives a total of 10 ranks in between. Not quite the 16, but still enough to make clear distinctions between character statistics. After all, how much difference can there be between a score of 3 and one of 4, while there is a huge difference between a stat of 7 and one of 15. Mythic easily reflects the important differences.

Using Mythic to fill in the gaps

If you like another RPG more than Mythic, and don't want to convert it over, there is another way you can use Mythic to aid your game-playing experience. Since Mythic is based on everyday language, and all issues are settled with the same question/answer dynamic using the fate chart, it can easily handle unusual situations that other games are unclear on.

For instance, your playing your favorite fantasy RPG when a character, in full armor, suddenly falls out of a boat and sinks to the bottom of a lake. Someone asks, "Hey, how long before he drowns?" The GM has no idea, he's never run into this situation. So, what do you do? You can either make up a spot rule, or you can start sifting through book indexes looking for "drowning."

Unless you want to spend an evening flipping pages rather than playing, my bet is on making up a spot rule. Mythic excels at handling spot rules since, in essence, every rule in Mythic is a spot rule. In the drowning example above they may decide to phrase it as a fate chart question and ask, "Can he strip out of his armor and swim to the surface before he drowns?" They decide his acting rank is based on his dexterity, boosted by +1RS because he has high endurance. The difficulty rank is a difficulty of above average because, they reason, it's not easy to yank off armor while underwater, but struggling for your life can speed the process up. The final step is a simple roll on the fate chart.

By using Mythic to judge spot rules you save yourself time from scouring through rule books and you bring some level of consistency to how spot rules are adjudicated.

Keeping it all straight

Say you want to use Mythic as the foundation for a campaign, but you also want to roll in aspects of other RPGs and you understand the pertinent sections that interest you. Before you get rolling, though, you should have a few tools handy to help with keeping track of your conversions. The chapter on World Creation introduced the scaling boxes, which come in very handy here as well. You can use the boxes to scale statistics from one game over to Mythic ranks.

Make some copies of the scaling boxes (there are pages at the end of this book prepared for easy copying). You can place the various statistics from the other RPGs in

the description column and record their Mythic rank next to it.

Following are some examples using standard role-playing systems.

3D6 attributes

Here are samples of attributes, such as strength and intelligence, converted from a game that uses a 3D6 standard. The attributes of one game may not coincide exactly with the same attributes in Mythic. In this case, you can make the closest approximations (such as changing "spirit" into "willpower"), or you can simply replace Mythic's attributes with the other system.

Scaling Box

3D6 attributes conversion

Description	Mythic rank
3	Miniscule
4-5	Weak
6-7	Low
8-9	Below Average
10-12	Average
13-14	Above Average
15	High
16	Exceptional
17	Incredible
18	Awesome

5 "dot" attributes

Some systems abstract the attributes into only 5 or so categories, sometimes designated with dots. This offers a much more restricted range but simplifies the process of defining attributes.

Scaling Box

5 "dot" attributes

Description	Mythic rank
•	Weak
• •	Average
• • •	High
• • • •	Incredible
• • • • •	Awesome

Percentiles skills

There are a million ways in which role-playing games define skills. Some use a percentile system where skills are rated from 0% to 100% (or sometimes even higher). The ranges given here are very general since the definition of an "average" rating in one skill may not be the same as with another. For instance, a common skill, such as the ability to read and write in one's native language, may have an average rating of 80%. However, a rarer skill, such as computer programming, may have an average rating of 40% ("average" here being a typical professional programmer.) The chart below assumes the mid-point, 50, is average.

Scaling Box

Percentile Skills

Description	Mythic rank
0-5%	Miniscule
6-10%	Weak
11-20%	Low
21-40%	Below Average
40-60%	Average
61-70%	Above Average
71-80%	High
81-90%	Exceptional
91-95%	Incredible
96-100%	Awesome

Diced Damage

Here are some sample damage ranks for games that use multiple dice for weapon damages, with most small weapons, such as arrows, causing 1D6 points of damage. The maximum damage can be used for weapons that cause different combinations of dice to be rolled or call for fixed amounts of damage. For instance, a 30′ fall that does 3D6 points of damage may be converted into Incredible, while a dragon's breath that does 40 points of damage might be considered Awesome. The number in brackets denotes the upper range of damage for that rank.

Do it yourself

The examples above are only ideas. Feel free to do your own conversions as you see fit. You can either figure all of this out before you start playing, or do it as the occasion arises during the adventure session. Either way, you should make good notes of your decisions so you don't forget what constitutes an average rank and what an above average, etc. Blank Scaling Boxes are provided at the back of this book to make this easier for you.

Scaling Box

Diced damage	
Description	Mythic rank
1 (1)	Miniscule
1 – 3 (3)	Weak
1D4 (4)	Low
1D6 (6)	Below Average
1D8 (8)	Average
1D8+1 (9)	Above Average
1D10 (10)	High
1D12 (12)	Exceptional
1D20 (20)	Incredible
2D20 (40)	Awesome
3D20 (60)	Superhuman
Each additional 1D20 (or additional 20 points)	Increase by 1 each (Super 2, 3, etc.)

Notes and Suggestions

Q&A

Following is a list of common questions that popped up during play testing. If you have questions that are not answered in these pages, you can contact us by email at mythic@wordpr.com. Your question, and its answer, will also be posted on our website at www.mythic.wordpr.com.

Can this really be played without a GM? I don't see it happening.

If you've read this book, and you don't believe me, you're just going to have to take my word for it until you find out for yourself. Granted, a GM-free game is not for everyone. You may prefer a highly prepared game master controlling the behind-the-scenes action. However, impromptu adventures, such as those created by Mythic, can take you to surprising places and are often more satisfying than a prepared adventure.

There isn't enough detail. Without a prepared adventure, how can you tell what's in a particular room, etc.?

You have to use some common sense and a few logical leaps. It all boils down to asking those yes and no questions. If your characters have been walking through a dungeon full of orcs, a good first question when entering a room might be, "Is the room empty?" If a no, then, "Are there orcs in here?" If a yes, you might assume a warband of some 4 since that's been the most common encounter. If you want more detail you ask another question. You can have as much detail as you like, framed as questions. If you were playing with a live GM, you'd be asking the same questions anyway.

I like the games I play now. Why should I switch to Mythic?

You don't have to switch. You can use Mythic as a GM "emulator" to help create impromptu adventures for use with your other RPGs. You can get a lot of use out of Mythic without ever making a Mythic character or playing by Mythic rules. The chapters on the fate chart and adventures are enough to create endless stories for characters in any game.

Will there be supplements for Mythic, like world books?

Maybe, but probably not. One of the reasons for my writing Mythic was to have a generic, every-day language role-playing foundation to import the crunchy bits from other RPGs into. In other words, if you want a world book, take one of your existing games or buy any of the limitless products available for other systems. As long as you understand the rudiments of those systems (what an average rank is, etc.), you can port them over to Mythic easily, on the fly, as you play.

This may not be as commercially profitable as locking you into purchasing world books, but hey, this is a small press publishing venture and won't make any money anyway.

What' with the name? Is there a story behind "Mythic"?

Nope. I just like the way it sounds. Well, actually, there is a tad more thought into it. Since Mythic is intended to be generic, and to be able to create any kind of story for any situation, I thought "Mythic," as in generating myths and legends, was fitting.

You say Mythic is generic, but are there certain genres that fit the system better than others?

Not really. Since Mythic is, at its core, simply a system for answering questions posed by the players, it's those questions that will set the tone of a particular adventure. Also, the system is very loose and flexible, intentionally so in case you want to bring rules and bits over from other RPGs. Having said this, Mythic, on it's own without any other rules supplements, tends to favor somewhat more realistic settings, though not too realistic.

For instance, the combat rules are bloody and hurt characters fairly quickly, although it is not easy to die. Characters in a heroic, high-fantasy world might require high toughness ratings to stay on their feet for long. But even still, it largely boils down to the style of the people playing and the questions they ask.

I don't like to ask questions. Thinking makes my head hurt. What can I do?

I can't help you.

You mention at the beginning that Mythic can be used as a writing tool, but that isn't addressed in the book. What's up?

I figured I didn't have to specifically address this issue, but here we are now, doing that. Simply, to use Mythic as a writing tool, you just do a solo game using only Mythic. You sit, you write, and you refer the questions to Mythic, just like you would in a game with other players. You can keep track of data, such as threads, characters, chaos, and all of that, or not. Mythic is centrally an adventure generating tool so it also works great for helping craft written stories as well.

I hate freestyle games. Will I hate Mythic?

I don't like freestyle games much either, that's one reason I came up with Mythic. The big advantages to freestyle games ("freestyle" as in rules-light and more story-teller oriented) are that they are simple to learn, play fast because they don't require a lot of rules-searching and page flipping, and are able to create a wide range of adventures very easily. The big downside to freestyle games is that they come across to the players as arbitrary, as if things only happen because the GM wanted them to happen. In many cases, this is quite true of freestyle games. Many players begin to feel that their choices are meaningless.

Mythic is an attempt to draw in the advantages of a freestyle game while cutting out the disadvantages. It is freestyle in the sense that the action is directed by the players (they decide how each scene begins, their questions direct the course of the adventure, etc.). However, there are random, built-in mechanics to the game that modify these decisions. Events rarely always work out the way players think they will and adventures have a tendency to spin in unexpected directions, just like "real" adventures do. The story, then, is not entirely in the hands of the players as it is in many freestyle games.

Mythic is also "rules light," in that a single mechanic, the yes/no question approach, is used to decide everything. However, for those more detail oriented players, they can add as much complexity as they like to this system by simply asking more questions.

I find the no-initiative rule of combat confusing. Why not just go with standard initiative?

I've got to admit, a standard initiative system would be a bit simpler. I opted for the system here, however, to make combat more chaotic, exciting and less predictable. Besides, the system is also more realistic: whoever saw anyone fight in rounds, blow-for-blow?

Of course, the combat chapter is really only a set of suggestions, not rules. I offered it to help present a system for using the fate chart to answer combat questions. The entire chapter can be disregarded if you like and replaced with another RPG's combat section, or just handle combat like any other fate question.

Is there an origin to this game? How did it come about?

Mythic originally developed as an idea to create a solo role-playing game. As a teenager who loved role-playing games, but was always light on finding players, I dreamt of discovering a good, solo game out there. The only attempts at solo play were some adventures written in the "choose-your-own-adventure" style, where you follow a path in the book and are limited to only a few choices at each important juncture.

This was disappointing to say the least.

I experimented with various ideas, from creating reams of random tables that describe just about everything to using tarot cards (after all, if a tarot card can tell the future, why not use it to tell the present, even a fictional present?)

All of these ideas were bad.

Then, like sunlight breaking through the clouds, an idea dawned: why not use a system based on simple logic? From that idea Mythic came, where logic and interpretation are the base. I tried to develop the fate question system as a type of artificial intelligence, able to answer any question like a real, living game master. The choice to make the questions all yes/no is simply for the sake of efficiency (an early draft of Mythic allowed for any question to be asked and the answers were created by interpreting a combination of randomly rolled words. This was unwieldy as the list of words was over 10,000 strong and produced some wild results.)

So there you go.

TIPS FOR
BETTER PLAY

This section deals with a few issues and ideas that were not covered fully in the preceding chapters.

This isn't '20 Questions'

It's easy once you get knee deep into a Mythic adventure to not only get in the habit of asking questions, but of asking too many questions. Resolving answers is a balance of forming yes/no questions and using simple logic. You shouldn't need to ask more than two questions before logic can finish the rest.

For instance, it's easy to fall into this kind of trap: "Great, my arrow hit the orc. Is he hurt?" Answer: Yes.

"Is he hurt enough to fall down?" Answer: No.

"Does he scream in panic and run?" Answer: No.

"Did I hit him in the arm, and now he can't use that arm?" Answer: No.

"Is it just a flesh wound, and he is only annoyed?" Answer: Yes.

This took five questions to find out how hurt the orc is! Logic easily could have stepped in after the second question. If the orc is hurt, as the first question established, but he's not hurt enough to go down, as the second question established, then he's probably hurt enough to slow him down, giving him a negative rank shift, but he can continue fighting.

It's best to live with a 2-question limit to prevent the "20 questions" syndrome and only breaking that limit a few times in a gaming session to clarify really important situations. When you know a few facts and compare them against the larger context of the whole adventure then a logical conclusion should be easy to come up with.

Only when logic eludes you should you resort to asking more questions until you have enough new information to form a conclusion.

Frankenstein's Game

It's stated at the outset that Mythic can be played on its own or with another RPG. You can also do both at the same time for a very customized campaign.

Since Mythic uses everyday language to describe ranks, ranking systems from other games can be easily imported into Mythic. This way, you can run a Mythic adventure but use portions and supplements from a variety of RPGs. Take a magic system from one, weapons from another, and monsters from yet one more, and mix them all together.

In this way, you can turn any RPG into a supplement for the generic framework provided by Mythic. This was one of the original intents of Mythic: to allow players to incorporate all of their favorite elements from all of their favorite games into one setting.

The conversion into Mythic standards may take a little tweaking, but if you know that a score of 3 is "average" in one game then it is described as "average" in Mythic. If a score of 18 is the pinnacle of human achievement, then Mythic might describe that as "awesome." Just use everyday language to describe the other RPG's stats and ranks, and that is what they are in Mythic.

The fine art of interpretation

You've been warned about the excessive use of questions. There is another, similar, trap to avoid: excessive interpretation. Commonly you will be faced with a handful of facts and some vague references from the events meaning chart, and find yourself cooking up several possible interpretations. Instead of sitting there all day mulling over each one, just take the one that seems most logical. If you aren't sure which one that is, take the one that came to mind first.

This is especially important if you are playing Mythic with a group. Everyone will suddenly throw out interpretations. Take the first one that seems to fit and move on. If someone has an interpretation that seems more logical, then quickly consider it as a group.

This leads me to my (almost) last topic ...

You are SOOO immature!

A successful Mythic adventure relies on mature role-playing. This means enjoying yourself and respecting the other players. An adventure can be ruined by a player who attempts to take advantage of the system's free-form nature. For instance, the characters are walking down the street when one player suddenly asks, "Do I find a pot of gold on the sidewalk?"

Technically, this is a valid question. But it makes no sense to ask. The player could ask the same question every time he enters a room, opens a door, or gets out of bed.

Obviously, this kind of play should be discouraged.

Such "strategy" is usually self-defeating in Mythic, fortunately. If this player shows up in a Mythic group, or even a well-meaning player asks the occasionally self-serving question, Mythic can discourage the question automatically. For instance, the odds of finding a pot of gold on the sidewalk are pretty slim, let's say miniscule 5. Anything less than miniscule has a 0% chance, or less, of happening. So, right away, the would-be "power-gamer" is

shut down. Even if he can argue the other players up to a miniscule rating, this gives him a 5% chance of a yes, an 85% chance of a No, and a 17% chance of an exceptional no. In a question like the "pot of gold" question, an exceptional no could mean the opposite, perhaps the character gets mugged for his wallet! By asking such a question the character actually puts himself at greater odds of the opposite happening than gaining a benefit.

The point is that Mythic should be played by those who want to play it for its free-form nature. And, oh yeah, be careful what you ask for!

Any more questions?

As if you haven't heard enough about "questions," I'm going to talk about it once again. This time, however, I'm talking about YOUR questions. If you have any questions about Mythic, you can email them to mythic@wordpr.com. Or, come to our Mythic website at http://www.mythic.wordpr.com

At the site we will post the answers to common questions and other Mythic relevant information.

Thanks!

Thanks for giving Mythic a try! I hope you find it a valuable new tool in your role-playing arsenal. Like most games, this has been a labor of love several years in the making. If you've enjoyed it half as much as I have, then I will consider it a success.

Tom Pigeon
December 3, 2002

Chapter 13
Extended Example

This chapter is a great, big extended example of play, from beginning to end. The example here is essentially a transcript between two players: John is the GM and Samantha is the player. Even though they are playing with a GM, they will be using Mythic rules for all aspects of their adventure.

John and Sam get together without any prepared adventure, although Sam has some ideas. She's been reading Michael Moorcock lately and wants a female version of Elric. The two chat for a bit and come up with the following new campaign world.

The place is Rantha, a fantasy, medieval world that has been wracked by war. The clash between kingdoms has been immense and involved powerful magics which have devastated the countryside. The final blow in the war came when a great dragon arose from his ancient slumber to decimate the staggering armies and claim the land for itself. In desperation the kingdoms gathered together and blasted the beast with unheard of magical might. The dragon literally exploded in a fantasy equivalent of a nuclear blast.

The armies and kingdoms had already been devastated and fractured. The cataclysmic death of the dragon ended what little civilization remained and showered the land with evil magic, which mutated plant and animal life into horrific forms. With their liege lords dead, and the soldiers gone, commoners found themselves at the mercy of walking horrors.

Into this world comes Sam's character, Gloranna. She was once a commander in the army of one of the fallen lords. During the wars, she came into possession of a magic sword that sapped the life out of those the blade bit and converted that energy into magical power. Gloranna became adept at manipulating these forces, using the ancient blade to devastating effect on the battle-field and earning herself a fearsome reputation.

Sam decides to construct Gloranna as a point-based character, using the standards set for "high fantasy." Since Gloranna has already seen quite a bit of action in the wars leading up to the current campaign setting, they decide that she is a veteran, and increases the point values by a multiple of 1.5. This gives Sam a total of 98 points for attributes and 60 points for abilities. Sam and John work on Gloranna for a bit, and come up with the following character sheet:

Name	Gloranna

Attribute	Rank
Strength	High
Agility	Above Avg.
Reflex	Incredible
IQ	Above Avg.
Intuition	High
Willpower	Awesome
Toughness	Incredible

Abilities	Rank
Sword	Exceptional
Survival	High
Horse riding	Average
Military Tactics	Above Avg.
First Aid	Average
Bow	Average

Character Summary

A former commander for a warlord, Gloranna is the bearer of a mystic sword of power. She is a skilled warrior, but the sword has taken her abilities to new levels. She feels a responsibility for the people she once protected as a champion.

Notes

Mage Blade: For combat, a typical great sword, damage is Str. +3RS. Requires 2 hands. Also allows her to manipulate magic using energy stored in the sword from kills it has made.

Strengths & Weaknesses

Sword Sickness (weakness): The power of her sword can sicken Gloranna. If she uses it for a magical effect more than 3 times in a day, each use after, she has to make a fate check to see if she gets sick. The AR is the current power rank of the sword, the DR is her toughness. If she fails, she is at -2RS for all actions until she succeeds on a check. She can check each 3 hours.

Favor Points

50

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Sam is happy with the way this character has worked out. She and John decide that magic in this campaign world will be somewhat freeform, where mages bend magical energies to their wills and make up magical effects on the spot. However, they decide to hold off generating any hard-and-fast rules, or resolution charts, until the situation arises. Gloranna's magical abilities with the sword mimic a standard mage, they decide, so whatever they come up with to handle Gloranna will work with other mages as well.

Having settled Sam's character, John thinks up an adventure scenario. He decides that Gloranna lives in a valley with the remnant of the populace her lord once protected. She is now their champion, and the only surviving son of the dead lord is their leader. Unfortunately, this leader is showing signs of the Pox, a magical disease that is part of the evil that infused the land. The disease will ultimately warp the prince and turn him into a monster. There is nothing that the valley's healers have on

hand that can cure him. A sage, however, says that the magical disease can be cured by magical means. He instructs Gloranna to travel to the Dark Heart, the place where the great dragon was destroyed and the cataclysm of evil magic began. There, she must find a bone fragment of the dragon and bring it back, where it can be fashioned into a potion that will heal the prince. Unfortunately, the Dark Heart is powerfully charged with evil magic, and many warped creatures roam its blasted hills. Gloranna decides to go it alone, seeing as how it is likely a suicide mission.

Sam and John decide not to role-play much of the preparation and just get into the adventure. John decides that the first scene will be the beginning of the journey, and give him a chance to describe how the land looks. John is making notes on his adventure sheet, which now looks like this:

Summary of Resolving Scenes
- Come up with the Scene Setup.
- Roll 1D10 against Chaos to see if the Setup is modified as an Altered Scene or an Interrupt.
- Play out the Scene.
- When the main action ends, the Scene ends.
- Update lists: Characters, Threads, Chaos Factor
- Award Favor Points (0, 10, or 25)

Adventure Setup
Travel to the Dark Heart and retrieve a piece of dragon bone to save the prince.

Scene Setup (×8)

Lists

characters
The prince
People of the Valley
The Sage
Mutants

Threads
Get the bone

Chaos Factor
5

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For the list of characters, John just puts down every name that has cropped up so far, including the mention of mutant monsters.

John decides that the first scene is Gloranna getting prepared and setting off, out of the valley. He rolls 1D10 against the chaos factor of 5 to see if this idea is modified. He gets a 4, which means an interrupt. So, something else entirely happens. The event focus table

says the event is a neutral event. The event meaning table says, "Non-arrival of an expected communication." John decides what this interrupt means and comes up with the following first scene.

John: "You gather your gear and are prepared to go. The night before, you eat well and make sure your horse is rested. As you take in the night air, looking over the valley for perhaps the last time, you hear a cracking stick. You turn suddenly, your hand instinctively reaching for your sword, when a familiar face appears out of the darkness. He is Gerald, an old friend of yours. He used to be a soldier, but is old now. He greets your warmly and offers you good luck on your journey. He is concerned, however."

Sam: "Gloranna smiles at him. 'Don't worry,' she says. 'I've gone through tougher trials than this.'"

John: "Gerald looks at you doubtfully. 'Don't be so sure, Gloranna,' he says. 'The world outside the valley has changed. It has been many months now since we've heard from any travelers. It used to be that some news would trickle in from the blighted lands. Now, nothing. I fear that the poison is not lessening, but growing deeper.'"

Sam: "I shrug, hand gripping the hilt of my sword. 'That's why I have this,' I say."

John: "The old man's eyes travel to your magic sword. 'I hope that is enough.' Tired of talk, the man offers you a final greeting, and disappears back into the night."

There is nothing more that Sam wants to do here, and John is done. This is a short scene, but John is satisfied that it has helped established a mood for the adventure. Also, it is foreshadowing the dangerous world outside of the valley, perhaps more dangerous than they had at first imagined.

With the scene over, John updates his adventure sheet, and decides to increase the chaos factor. The scene was nothing wild, so normally the chaos factor would be lowered, but John decides that the old man's message portends chaos, so he decides to adjust it higher. His adventure sheet now looks like this:

Summary of Resolving Scenes

- Come up with the Scene Setup.
- Roll 1D10 against Chaos to see if the Setup is modified as an Altered Scene or an Interrupt.
- Play out the Scene.
- When the main action ends, the Scene ends.
- Update lists: Characters, Threads, Chaos Factor
- Award Favor Points (0, 10, or 25)

Adventure Setup

Travel to the Dark Heart and retrieve a piece of dragon bone to save the prince.

1 Scene — Scene Setup

Gerald gives a grim warning about the world.

Scene — Scene Setup

Scene — Scene Setup

Scene — Scene Setup

Scene — Scene Setup

Scene — Scene Setup

Scene — Scene Setup

Scene — Scene Setup

Lists

characters

The prince
People of the Valley
The Sage
Mutants
Gerald

Threads

Get the bone

Chaos Factor

6

Before proceeding with the next scene, John asks Sam how she plans to approach the journey.

Sam: "Well, I've got my basic gear, and sword. I pack it all up on my horse and just ride straight out. I make sure to have a map to where I'm going, although she should pretty much know where that is. In the beginning, I won't take any special precautions."

John: "Good enough." He decides that the next scene will be Gloranna riding out of the relatively pristine valley and into a blighted landscape. This scene will largely give him a chance to describe the world to her, and perhaps toss a mild combat at her. He rolls 1D10 to see if this concept stands up against the chaos factor, and gets a 3, which means the scene is altered. He decides the most likely change is that the land is not so bad, at least right outside of the valley. It gets progressively worse as she rides on. He figures the odds of this are high, and checks it on the fate chart. There is a 75% chance that this is the case, and he rolls a 36.

John: "It has been some time since you've been out of the valley. In the morning, at dawn, you set out. As you ride, you appreciate the relative safety of the valley. It has fresh water, green plants and enough good land to grow food. As you ride, the land slopes higher, and you gradually emerge from the valley and onto the plains. Here, you notice that the grass is not so green, although it is not as desolate as you had thought it would be. Looking at the wain, but still green, trees, you wonder if perhaps Gerald had been overreacting. What's your riding schedule for the day?"

Sam: "I'm not going to push too hard. I'll ride for a few hours, then give the horse a short break, and move on again. By the way, how long should it take me to get to the Black Heart?"

John: He thinks about this for a moment, and decides against posing it as a fate question. The answer should be logical enough. "About a week."

Sam: "Okay. Do I see anything unusual along the way?"

John: He treats this as a straight-up yes/no fate question, with odds of average. He rolls a 75, a no. "The morning is uneventful." Not much is happening, so John decides to fast forward through this scene somewhat. "You take your break, and move on, riding in this way throughout the day. The further you get from the valley, the worse the land looks. The grass looks duller, the trees are more twisted and bleak. You are also seeing fewer and fewer birds and small land animals."

Sam: "Hmm. Do I notice any strange tracks on the ground? Of horses, or larger animals?"

John: He decides the odds of there being anything like that to see of being low, and rolls an 87, an exceptional no. "You don't see any tracks of anything. You are travelling along what was once a basic road, but even it is nearly trackless."

Sam: "Hmm. Sounds pretty bleak. At least, there doesn't seem to be anything dangerous about."

John: "You ride on, pausing occassionaly for breaks." John has a thought and decides to privately ask a fate question: is there any life at all about? Considering the degrading quality of the land, and the complete absence of tracks, he figures the odds are high. He rolls 45 for a yes. "You hadn't thought to specifically look for this, but something odd has been nagging at you all day as you ride. Stopping for a break late in the day, you realize what it is. Not only are there no tracks on the ground, but there are no birds in the sky. The plains and forests are very quiet, as if there isn't a living thing in them."

Sam: "That's not good. What time of day is it now?"

John: "It's nearing dusk. You have about an hour of sunshine left."

Sam: "Gloranna isn't liking this outside world too much. She hops back on her horse and continues on, picking up the pace a little to get this over with. She'll ride until it gets dark, then pitch camp somewhere."

John: "Gotcha." John privately asks himself another question: does Gloranna encounter anything while riding? He figures the odds are weak, considering the lack of wildlife. He rolls 69 for a no. "Okay, as the sun sets you stop riding and make camp. Do you make any special precautions?"

Sam: "I tie the horse close to a tree, and camp out between the tree and horse. My sword is laying across my lap, my hand on the grip. I rest lightly, trying not to fall into a deep sleep all night."

John: "Sounds good. As you sit near your horse, the quiet of the forest is disturbing. There are no crickets chirping or owls hooting." John asks himself: does anything happen during the night? The odds are low. He rolls a 93, an exceptional no. He can't think of anything exceptional, so he treats this as a normal no. "You rest as best you can through the night." At this point, John calls this good for scene 2. He updates his adventure sheet. There were no new characters to add, and no new threads. The scene also went smoothly, so he lowers chaos by one point. For scene 3, John decides he wants to fast-forward through the trip. So, he decides the scene idea will be the following week of Gloranna riding toward the dark heart as the land around her grows worse. He rolls to see if this idea stands up unchanged, and gets an 8. No changes.

John: "The night passes uneventfully. As dawn breaks, you eat something, prep your horse and set off again. Each day of the journey is much like the first one, except the land is getting bad, very fast."

Sam: "How so?"

John: "By day 3 there is no longer any plant life. The ground is ashen soil and the trees are leafless and look like they came through a fire. Even the rocks are gray."

Sam: "Do I see any other travelers along the way?"

John: He treats this as a fate question, with odds of low. He rolls 96 for an exceptional no. "You see no one and no signs that travelers have come through here any time recently." John asks himself the fate question: does she see any ruins of past wars? He gives this odds of high, considering she is traveling closer to where the kingdom staged its final war. He rolls an 11 for an exceptional yes and triggering a random event. "On day four you see some remnants of armor on the ground. Soon, you ride into what was once a great battlefield, now littered with blackened armor and the bones of horses. There are some human bones as well, still sheathed in their ruined armor and clutching broken swords."

Sam: "Do I recognize any insignias?"

John: He holds off on generating the random event so he can answer Sam's question. He figures the odds are average, and rolls a 6 for an exceptional yes. "Yes, you can see that some of the troops were from your old army. In fact, there are a few helmets and shields bearing family crests, you actually knew those men personally."

Sam: "I stop riding and get off my horse, stooping to inspect the armor. I take a moment to mourn the men."

John: John takes the opportunity to see what the random event is. He rolls on the event focus chart and gets a thread related event. Next, on the event meaning table, he gets, "instant gratification." He considers that maybe there is an actual piece of the dragon's bone lying beneath a helmet, but discards this since the event focus didn't call for closing a thread. Instead, he comes up with a better idea. "As you look at a helmet, you think of the man who once wore it. Then it suddenly dawns on you that the soldier died in the Great Conflagration, the final battle that resulted in the dragon's death. You look around you and realize you reached your destination much faster than you thought. This is the Black Heart."

Sam: "Surprised, I put the helmet down. Keeping my sword handy, I walk about, looking for anything unusual. Do I see anything out of the ordinary?"

John: "Well, first off, this whole place is out of the ordinary. You walk through the rubble, though, searching." John asks himself the fate question, does she see anything that might lead her to a dragon bone? He figures the odds are low and rolls an 87, an exceptional no. Well, he thinks, maybe she sees something else. "As you pick through the ruins, you notice in the distance a plume of smoke. Something out there is still burning."

Sam: "Maybe there's an actual piece of dragon still smoldering. I don't take any chances, though. I leave the horse behind and proceed on foot, trying to be as quiet as possible."

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2 Scene Setup
Gloranna sets out.

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Gerald

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John: "That's not easy, with all the garbage lying around." John asks himself, is the smoke coming from a campfire? He sets the odds at average, and rolls a 91, another exceptional no. Alright, it's no campfire, it's something completely different. "The ground rises up a little as you walk. You come to the edge of a drop-off. Looking over, you see you are on the rim of a great crater. The other side stretches maybe a mile off. The inside of the crater is completely black and cracked, as if it had been smitten by tremendous heat. At the bottom of the crater is a gaping hole in the ground. That's where the smoke is coming from."

Sam: "Great. A big hole. I suppose this is where the dragon bought the farm."

John: "Could very well be."

Sam: "Well, if that's the case, then there should be some dragon bones around here somewhere. Is the crater too steep to climb down into?"

John: John checks this as a fate question. He figures the odds of it being too steep are low, and rolls a 1, an exceptional yes. "Unfortunately, the drop is more like a cliff edge. It's a sheer drop straight to the bottom of the crater and the crater's edge is jagged and broken."

Sam: "Great." She scans her record sheet for a second. "No climbing skills. It'd be stupid to come all this way only to break my neck climbing down a wall. Gloranna wants down into that crater, though. She grips her sword. I think it's time we used a little magic."

John and Sam are playing in a new adventure world of their own creation. At the outset, they made only general determinations about how magic works. Now they need to figure it out specifically, and how Gloranna's sword allows her to cast magic. They determine that mages in Rantha generally do not practice set incantations. Magic is a chaotic force which must be controlled by the mage. If a mage can bend the magic power to his will, he can make it do just about whatever he wants. They come up with the following resolution box to adjudicate magic.

Q — Is a spell successfully cast?

The ability to cast magic is called magery. The rank in magery determines the maximum spell rank that can be cast. Willpower is used to successfully cast a spell.

ACTING RANK: Willpower

DIFFICULTY RANK: An abstract determination of the spell rank. Can't be higher than the mage's magery ability.

MODIFIERS
- Cast hastily, less than 10 seconds: +2 to DR
- Takes more than a minute to cast: -1 to DR
- Takes from 10 seconds to cast: no change, normal casting time.
- Cast in a location with a high concentration of magic: -1 to DR.

RESULTS

YES — Spell effect comes off exactly as intended.

NO — Nothing happens.

EXCEPTIONAL YES — The magic energies flowed especially well. The spell effect comes off at +1RS.

EXCEPTIONAL NO — The mage blew it and the power backlashed. The mage takes a stunning hit at the rank of the spell. Consult the damage resolution chart for combat.

However, this chart is for your typical mage. Gloranna is a little different in that she doesn't actually know magic, she is granted the ability to cast because of her magic sword. They determine that the sword itself has a magic power rank that can grow when it kills and is diminished as magic is used. The sword's rank will substitute for mage ability. Gloranna must still use her willpower to shape the magic. After each use of the power in the sword, they must check to see if its energies are depleted. They come up with this resolution chart:

Q
Does the sword lose power?

Gloranna must check after each use of the sword's energy.

ACTING RANK: Rank of the spell cast.

DIFFICULTY RANK: Current power rank of the sword.

MODIFIERS

--- RESULTS ---

YES The sword's power rank drops by 1RS

NO No change.

EXCEPTIONAL YES The sword's power rank drops by 2RS

EXCEPTIONAL NO No change.

Scaling Box

Examples of magic usage	
Description	**Mythic rank**
	Miniscule
	Weak
	Low
Basic levitation.	Below Average
Simple flight.	Average
Fly like a bird.	Above Average
	High
	Exceptional
	Incredible
	Awesome

They arbitrarily determine that the sword's power rank is currently average.

Sam: "I concentrate on the power in the sword and draw it forth. I try to shape it around me, to lift me into the air and float me down to the bottom of the crater. I take my time with this."

John: Since this is the first use of magic in their adventure, John needs to set some standards for power levels. He pulls out a scaling box and writes a few notes. From Sam's description of her spell, it should be at a rank of below average. However, she is also taking her time casting the spell, lowering the DR by 1. Additionally, John figures that the crater is indeed the place where the dragon was killed, and there must certainly be a high concentration of magic here, giving the DR another 1 rank adjustment down. The final rank of the spell is weak. Gloranna's willpower is awesome, nearly assuring her success. John rolls a 21, an exceptional yes. This means the spell effect is increased by 1 RS. John decides that Gloranna's simple levitation spell is a little more elaborate. "You find the magic energies easily bound by your will, and they lift you into the air. You control the power easily and rise quickly, swiftly hovering over the edge of the crater and down. With a rush, you whoosh down, settling lightly on your feet.

Sam: "Cool. I'll have to do that again sometime. Any drain on the sword?"

John: He checks the resolution table they just made and cross references the acting rank, the weak spell level, by the difficulty rank, the average rank of the sword. He rolls a 67. "No, still plenty of juice left."

Sam: "I examine the hole. Anything unusual?"

John: John has some ideas here, and decides he doesn't need to check the fate chart on this. "It's not just a hole, it's more like a cave. The ground slopes away and seems to level out lower down, so you could actually walk into it. The smoke is not so thick that you couldn't walk under it, the hole is plenty big for that."

Sam: "I suppose that's where I go next, then. Gloranna takes a deep breath and walks in."

John: He decides the transition into the cave is a good place to end scene 3. He updates the adventure sheet and prepares for the next scene. Still, no new characters to add. Despite the eeriness of the battlefield, there was no chaos in this scene, so John drops the chaos down another point. The character did make progress, though, by finding the Black Heart, so John awards Sam another 10 favor points. For the next scene, John has this idea for what he thinks it should be: the cave leads to a large cavern, where Gloranna

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is attacked by a mutated beast. John figures it's about time for some action. He rolls against the chaos factor of 4 and gets an 8, so his idea remains as is.

John: "You step into the cave, your sword ready. You don't get very far before it becomes very dark. It continues on much further ahead. Do you have something to make light with?"

Sam: "Hmm, I dunno. Do I? We didn't really talk about this. It would make sense that Gloranna would come with basic provisions."

John: "Yeah. Of course, most of those are probably back with your horse." John decides to make a fate question out of this, and asks himself, does Gloranna have a light source? He figures the odds are low and rolls a 46. "Nope. All your gear is with the horse."

Sam: "Crap. I could fly back up and get it, then fly back down, but that would take two more uses of the sword. It'd be simpler just to try and make light with the sword."

John: "Okay. That sounds like a good idea."

Sam: "Before continuing, I concentrate and tap into the sword's power. I'll take my time. I want to make the sword glow like ten torches."

John: "Alright. Let's see if that works." John figures the rank of what Gloranna is attempting is average, within the bounds of the rules they have set for maximum spell rank. The acting rank to cast is Gloranna's willpower, and the difficulty rank is average modified by -2RS to a rank of low because she is taking time and she is casting it in a location of high power. John, incredibly, rolls a 100, for an exceptional no.

Sam: "Huh? You're kidding me. Okay, hold on. I'll spend the necessary favor points to make it a simple yes."

John: He deducts 5 points from her 60 favor points to change the fate roll to a 95 for a yes answer. Sam has 55 favor points remaining. "Okay, with a little extra effort, you make the spell come off correctly. By the way, that is your second casting of the day. You have one more before you start getting in danger of sword sickness."

Sam: "No problem. With my sword all shiny now, Gloranna proceeds. What do I see?"

John: "You are in a sloping cavern of solid rock. The surface is black and cracked, as if it had been formed by incredible heat."

Sam: "Do I hear anything?"

John: He considers this an odds fate question, and gives it odds of average. He rolls a 98. "No. Not a thing." From the scene setup idea, John knows that there is a monster down here and it will attack. He jots down a few notes in preparation.

Sam: "I proceed slowly, looking about for anything out of the ordinary."

John: "Alright." John has an idea for a mutant monster, one that has skin that looks like the rock wall. The monster is standing against the wall to blend in as Gloranna walks by. He decides to ask a fate question to check if she notices it. The question is: does Gloranna notice the rock monster? He decides the acting rank is her intuition of high, the difficulty rank is incredible, considering how perfect the creature blends into the wall. He rolls a 23 for a yes. "The glow of your sword is bright and casts many shadows across the walls. As you move, however, you notice out of the corner of your eye a movement that is too quick to be just a shadow. You turn in time to see something coming at you, as if it had come out of the cavern wall itself. It's tall, about 7 feet, and is basically humanoid although devoid of any features. It appears to be made out of rock, the same as the cavern walls, and its arms end in two giant pincers that are reaching toward you."

Sam: "Ugh! I ram my sword through it's chest."

John: "Hold on. Let's see who gets to act first." John consults the combat charts. He needs to determine the monster's reflex. Since the combat is rushing so quickly, he decides to use reflex for this first check instead of combat ability. John decides to make it a fate question, and asks: is the monster's reflex low? He decides the odds are exceptional, considering it is made of rock. He rolls 47 for a yes. He pulls out an NPC worksheet and writes the information down. Next, he answers the fate question, does Gloranna act? It's her incredible reflex against the monster's

```
Name   Rock creature

Strength
Agility
Reflex          Low
IQ
Intuition
Willpower
Toughness
```

low reflex. He rolls an 84 for a yes. "The monster is big, but it's slow and you have no problem getting a shot in."

Sam: "Great. Do I hit it?"

John: "Let's see." John asks the fate question, does Gloranna hit? He uses her sword ability as the acting rank. He decides he needs to decide if the monster is intelligent. If so, it may possess actual combat skills. He figures the odds are weak, but rolls a 1 for an exceptional yes. He decides this means the monster's IQ is high. Also, the monster does possess combat skills, at a rank of above average. He marks all of this on the NPC sheet. John

```
Name   Rock creature

Strength
Agility
Reflex                    Low
IQ                        High
Intuition
Willpower
Toughness
Claw combat               Ab. Avg.
```

rolls on the fate chart to see if Gloranna hits, and gets a 13 for an exceptional yes. "You thrust your sword forward and get a great shot, nailing it on the throat." John has to determine if the beast is hurt, now. He asks the fate question: does the creature have a toughness of high? John gives this odds of above average and rolls a 4, for an exceptional yes. He decides this means it has a toughness of exceptional. He also asks: does the creature's rocky

skin give it an armor bonus of +2? He figures the odds are above average and rolls an 89, for a no. He decides that the thing's rocky hide gives it an armor bonus of +1 to its toughness. John rolls on the combat chart, asking the question, does Gloranna hurt the monster? The acting rank is the damage rank of her sword, which is awesome. The difficulty rank is the monster's toughness modified by its armor, or incredible. He rolls a 51 for a yes. The monster takes a -1RS lethal wound to the neck. Since this is a lethal wound, John must check to see if the monster succumbs to the wound and is incapacitated. He asks the fate question and consults the resolution chart. The acting rank is awesome (the rank of the wound that caused the damage) and the difficulty is exceptional (the armor only increases toughness to determine if damaged when struck, not for resisting the effects of damage). He rolls a 73 for a no.

John records the damage on a damage record for the monster. He doesn't bother filling in the space for when to check for healing since he figures the monster won't be around the campaign long enough to matter. "Gloranna thrusts her sword right at its throat. The blade tip crunches in and purple ichor splatters as the creature howls, it's arms flailing. It doesn't go down though."

```
Wounds

Character
Rock monster

Wound Description
Sword thrust to
neck
[X] Lethal    [ ] Bashing

Body Area
Main body

Wound Rank
Awesome

Wound Effect       -1RS

When to check for healing
```

Sam: "Wow. This is a tough bastard. It can be hurt though, so I don't give it a chance to recover. I swing for it."

John: "Okay. Let's see who goes next." The creature is suffering a -1RS wound to its main body, which will lower its combat ability when checking to see who goes next. John rolls a 5 for an exceptional yes to the question, does Gloranna go next. "You quickly bring your sword around for another swing. The monster is reeling and you moved so swiftly, that you've got an easy shot at its body."

Sam: "Great! I take it, then."

John: Again, the monster's penalty lowers its combat

ability to determine if Gloranna hits. He rolls a 17, for a yes to the question, does Gloranna hit. Next, he checks to see if it's hurt. It's toughness is lowered by 1RS because of the wound it's suffering, making it easier for Gloranna to hurt it. John rolls a 36 for a yes. "Your sword slams into the creature's side, sending rock chips and ooze in a splatter. The creature howls as it staggers back." John notes on the creature's wound sheet that it suffered another wound. This time, however, the wound is a -2RS wound, since the creatures toughness is adjusted down from exceptional to high because of the previous wound. This means that Gloranna's awesome damage is 3 ranks greater than the creatures effective toughness, making for a more devastating wound. John checks to see if the creature succumbs to its wounds, now totaling -3RS in penalties. He rolls an 86 for a yes. "The thing staggers back, clutching its side and throat. With a rattling cough, it falls to the ground and is silent."

Sam: "Alright! Gloranna stands her ground for a moment, making sure the thing isn't going to spring up or anything."

John: "You stand over it, sword ready, but the only activity is more of its purple blood oozing out of its side."

Sam: "The sucker was no match for me. Did my sword absorb him?"

John: "You didn't get the sense that it did. Then again, maybe it's not dead."

Sam: "Hmmm. I'm not going to get too close to it to find out. I raise my sword and drive it through the thing, to finish it off if it's not dead yet."

John: John decides not to check for hitting and damage, and just rules that this final blow kills the creature. "Your blade drives through it and the creature wheezes its last breath. We need to figure out a few more rules regarding you sword." They discuss it for a moment and decide that the sword itself needs to answer a fate question to see if it successfully absorbs the energy from a kill. They come up with the following resolution chart:

Q Does the sword absorb a kill?

Check each time the blade makes a killing blow, but only if the victim's toughness is at least equal to the sword's power -1RS. Otherwise, there is not enough to absorb.

ACTING RANK: Current power rank of the sword.

DIFFICULTY RANK: Full toughness of the kill (without penalties applied)

MODIFIERS
- The sword hasn't absorbed anything in a week: +2AR

— RESULTS —

YES	The sword's power rank rises to the rank of the victim's toughness, if higher. If the same rank or 1 lower, then the sword gains 1 rank.
NO	The sword failed to capture the creature's life energy.
EXCEPTIONAL YES	Same as a yes, but the sword gains an additional rank.
EXCEPTIONAL NO	The sword gets "indigestion" on the life energy. It fails to absorb it, and cannot absorb anything else for at least 6 hours.

Using this chart, John checks to see if the sword's energy grows. They decide that the sword hasn't fed in a while, so it gains the bonus listed in the modifier box, giving an acting rank of high. The difficulty rank is equal to the monster's toughness of exceptional. John rolls a 97 for an exceptional no.

Sam: "Ugh! What do I need to succeed?"

John: "35. You can't get there with 25 favor points, but the exceptional is 88 and over."

Sam: "Crud. Okay, I'll spend 10 points to make it a simple no. Don't want my sword to get sick on me."

John: "Okay. The monster's energy was too much for your sword, which failed to digest it. You're down to 45 favor points."

Sam: "Okay. I decide to move on."

John: John had initially only intended for Gloranna to encounter a single creature in this scene. However, he thinks it would be fair to make a fate question to see if any more monsters wander by. He asks himself, is Gloranna attacked again? He gives this question odds of above average and rolls 71 for a no. "You continue on, the cave looking much the same deeper down. Nothing else attacks you, so far, and all seems quiet. I'm going to call this the end of the scene, so hold on for a sec." John updates his

adventure chart. The rock monster is a new character, so he adds it to the list. He decides the combat constitutes chaos, so he increases the chaos factor by one. Since this was the first combat of the adventure, and Gloranna won, he decides to give her some favor points, as well, bringing Sam's total up to 55. For scene 5, John decides that the bone shards are somewhere down in this cave. He figures Gloranna will have to look around for a little while, but will eventually find them. He decides getting the shard should be something of a challenge, however, but he'll figure that out later. He rolls against chaos to see if his idea stands, and gets an 8, which means nothing changes.

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Chaos Factor
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Sam: "By the way, I proceed slowly, keeping an eye on the walls for any more rock monsters."

John: "Gotcha. Progress through the cave is simple, since there are no caverns branching away. You don't encounter any more monsters, although you hear the occasional distant echo and you don't know what that is. After a time, though, you see a light ahead."

Sam: "Hmm. I stop to watch it. Are there any sounds, or motion?"

John: Since he really has no idea, he gives the odds of this as average and rolls 65 for a no. "No, you don't hear anything and the light is steady and unbroken."

Sam: "Not like torchlight?"

John: "No. It's more like daylight, except that it's too pale to come from the sun."

Sam: "With my sword ready to strike, I move in. I go slowly, looking constantly at the walls around me."

John: "Okay. The light gets brighter and brighter until you enter a larger cavern, where it is very bright. It takes a moment for your eyes to adjust, but the far wall of the cavern appears to be covered by a giant, glowing crystal. The cavern itself is huge."

Sam: "Do I feel any heat?"

John: "No. The crystal shines brightly, but it doesn't seem hot." John has decided that the bones of the dragon are imbedded in the rock of the wall, and the crystal is covering the bones. Gloranna doesn't see the bones in the wall yet, but John decides to make a roll to see if she does. He gives this a difficulty of high and checks it against her intuition of high. He rolls an 82 for a no.

Sam: "I look around. Is there anything else of interest in here? Any monsters?"

John: John figures odds of weak of there being anything else here, and rolls 23 for a no. "No, it's just this giant crystal wall."

Sam: "I approach the wall, keeping my sword ready. Gingerly, I tap it with the tip of my sword. Does anything happen?"

John: He gives this question odds of weak, and rolls an 80. "No, nothing unusual happens." Since she is closer to the crystal wall, he checks again to see if she notices anything inside. He now gives a difficulty of above average and rolls 75 for a no.

Sam: "Hmm. Maybe this wall is just meant as simple illumination and continues on. Does the cavern keep going?"

John: Since he knows the bones are here, he figures the odds are weak that the caverns continue on. He rolls 78 for a no. "No. This appears to be the end of the line."

Sam: "Gloranna leans against her sword and thinks for a moment. There can't be nothing down here but a single rock monster." Sam thinks for a moment while John watches. "I step closer to the crystal. Is there anything inside?"

John: Since she is specifically looking now, John decides there is no need to roll. "It's hard to tell at first, since the crystal is so bright. But then, you notice that there is something behind the crystal. You can see the black rock wall behind, like the rest of the caverns, but something is imbedded in the rock."

Sam: "What's it look like?"

John: "They look like thick, white logs, curving in and out of the rock."

Sam: Smiles. "Or dragon bones. Gloranna stands back, hefting her sword. I don't know what this crystal stuff is, but I'm sure it breaks. I take a good, hard swing at it."

John: John has to come up with a material strength for the crystal. He decides that it's probably pretty tough, like Superhuman 3. He assigns that odds of high and rolls on the fate chart, getting a 15 for an exceptional yes to the question, is the crystal superhuman 3 in strength? He decides this means that the material strength is actually superhuman 4. Gloranna does awesome damage with her sword, so he uses that rank as the acting rank to determine if Gloranna cracks the crystal. The difficulty rank is superhuman 4, making it impossible for Gloranna to crack it. He rolls anyway to see if he gets an exceptional no, and rolls a 29. "You swing at it hard, hitting it squarely without so much as scratching the surface. Your arms ache with the impact."

Sam: "Not a scratch?"

John: "Not even a blemish."

Sam: "That's not good." Sam pauses to think. "I look up and along the surface. Is there anyplace where the crystal seems thinner, or maybe there is a bone exposed?"

John: Since the wall is so broad, John gives this odds of high and rolls an 80. "No, it all looks pretty thick."

Sam: "How much did the roll miss a yes by?"

John: "5 points."

Sam: "I'll spend the favor points to change it."

John: John brings her favor points down to 50. "You suddenly notice a patch high up where there is no crystal. A small piece of bone is partially exposed."

Sam: "How high up?"

John: "At least 40 feet."

Sam: Sighs. "Alright, I take the time to activate my sword and levitate myself up there. Does it work?"

John: "You hone in on the power of your sword, trying to bend it to your will." John gives the difficulty a rank of weak after all modifiers are applied and rolls a 60 for a yes. He then checks to see if the sword's power weakens and rolls a 31 for a yes. "You bend the power easily to your will and feel yourself rise into the air. This expenditure of power though drains the sword, lowering its rank to below average."

Sam: "Okay. Hopefully, I won't need it much after this. I rise up until I am close to the bone. I chip at it with my sword. Does it flake off easily?"

John: He decides this isn't something that needs to be rolled for. "Yeah, it's pretty brittle. You crack away a few large chunks and store them in a pouch at your side. That should be enough for the sage to work his magic."

Sam: "Good! I lower myself to the ground and get the hell out of dodge."

John: John decides this is a good place to end scene 5. No new characters were introduced this scene, so he doesn't add anything to the character list. Everything went smoothly, so he lowers the chaos factor by 1. Although she found the bones, Gloranna still has to get them back home,

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6 5 4 5 4

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so he awards her 10 favor points, bringing her total to 60. For scene 6, John decides that things have been too easy for Gloranna: you can't just walk into Evil Central and walk back out, encountering only one guard. He decides that there are other denizens in the cavern, and they are awakened by the disturbance to the bone. He rolls against chaos to see if this is the case, and rolls a 5. No change. "You settle to the ground and begin to leave the way you came. You barely take a step when you hear a sound. It sounds like the wind, howling somewhere in the upper reaches of the cavern. A chill runs down your spine, however, as you realize it's an animal howl. The sound grows louder as more voices are added to the chorus."

Sam: "I think I just upset the applecart. Running as fast as I can, I hightail it out of there."

John: "As you run, you hear rustlings from above. From the corner of your eye you can see shapes descending from the upper reaches. Creatures, dozens if not hundreds, are clawing, scuttling or flying their way down toward you."

Sam: "I don't bother to take any notes and just move as fast as I can."

John: John asks himself the fate question, are any of the monsters close enough to attack Gloranna? He figures the odds are below average, since she started running from the beginning of the sounds. He rolls a 90 for an exceptional

no. "They all seem to be coming from the crystal cavern, so you have a generous headstart on them. However, from the sounds, some of them are very fast, especially the flyers. You don't know how long it will be before they catch up to you."

Sam: "I don't look back. I just move as fast as I can to get outside. If I have to fight any of them, I think it'd be easier in the open than in the cave where I might get trapped."

John: Since he rolled an exceptional on the previous fate check, he decides that Gloranna does make it to the cave mouth, but the monsters are close on her heels. "You finally see the light ahead of the cave mouth. All around you you hear the howls and screeches of the creatures, their claws scrabbling at the rock floor and walls as they pursue you. You burst out of the cave at a full run, but the monsters are close behind. You won't have time to concentrate for any length on flying spells."

Sam: "I turn to face them, still stepping back. What am I looking at here?"

John: "About four or five monsters have lunged from the cave. Each is different, a mutant of some kind. They are large and demonic looking, their yellow eyes trained on you. These first pause, obviously wary of you. You see more clustered at the mouth of the cave, but they seem reticent of entering the sunlight, meager as it is."

Sam: "I wave my sword threateningly. 'Come on, uglies!' I taunt."

John: He asks himself the fate question, do they attack, with odds of above average. He rolls an 89 for a no. "They snarl and begin to fan out somewhat, but they don't attack. They seem to respect your sword." He asks himself another question, do any more monsters come out? He gives this odds of above average and rolls 24 for a yes. "As you watch, two more uglies crawl out of the cave. They seem to dislike the sunlight and wince, but they are eager to have a piece of you."

Sam: "That makes six against one. But they are still standing their ground?"

John: "Yes. For now."

Sam: "They may just be waiting for more creatures to find their backbones and venture into the light. Forget it, I don't give them a chance. I attack the nearest one."

John: John decides he doesn't want to check the stats of every creature, so he rules that they all have ranks of high in everything. That gives him a place to start and he can always modify some of them if the need arises. Since Gloranna is initiating the attack, she automatically goes first. John goes straight to see if she hits. John decides that the beasts are not smart enough to have fighting skills, so they substitute reflex at -2RS (unskilled penalty). He rolls a 27 for a yes to the "to hit" question. He checks on damage next, and rolls an 87 for a no. "You launch forward and

swing as the monster tries to dodge. Your blade bites its shoulder a bit, drawing blood, but not enough to hurt it."

Sam: "Now that I've broken the ice, do the others attack?"

John: John gives this a rank of below average and rolls a 66 for a no. "No, they growl and look menacing, but stand back. Except for the one you attacked, of course."

Sam: "I keep at him, swinging again."

John: John checks to see if she goes next. He rolls too high, however, so the monster goes next. "The monster is quick enough to get a shot in, swiping its claws at you." John checks to see if it hits, and rolls a 13 for a yes. Next, he checks for damage, and rolls an 80 for a no. "The claw sweeps by, raking your arm a little, drawing bloody scratches."

Sam: "Bastard. Do I get a shot in?"

John: John checks again to see who goes next, and rolls a 40, for a yes on Gloranna acting. "You do."

Sam: "I go for his neck, to lop off his head."

John: "Okay." He applies a -2RS penalty to hit for this shot, and rolls an 82 for a no. "You swing but it ducks below your sword."

Sam: "Do I get the next shot?"

John: He rolls and gets a 75. "Yes, you can go again."

Sam: "I quickly readjust my stance and drive the sword at his chest."

John: John checks to see if she hits, this time without any penalties. He rolls a 33 for a yes, which also triggers a random event. He decides he'll figure it out when this attack has been resolved. For damage, he rolls a 5, for an exceptional yes. "It might have zigged when it ducked your head shot, but it zagged when it shouldn't have, and you run your blade straight through him, killing it instantly."

Sam: "Great! Does my sword swallow him?"

John: He checks the resolution chart they came up with earlier and rolls a 50 for a no. "No, it did not."

Sam: "Darnit."

John: Before anything else can happen, John checks to see what the random event is. He rolls for the event focus and gets "player character negative." For the meaning, he rolls, "adversity, but not insurmountable." As far as John is concerned, that's easy to interpret. "At the sight of the slaying, the other five monsters that are outside howl in rage and attack you at once."

Sam: "Alright. Here we go. I swing at the nearest one, ready to take them all down."

John: John needs to determine who goes first. Since the monsters are all attacking Sam at once, they are counted as a single unit. He decides that their sheer numbers give them a rank of high (the highest reflex rank among them is high, since they are all high, and he decides that the large number of combatants gives them a +2RS, but they are also penalized -2RS for fighting unskilled). He rolls on

the fate chart and gets a 100, for an exceptional no to the question, does Gloranna act next? "They come at you at once, making it difficult to defend yourself. One of them gets an easy swing at you." John decides that the exceptional result gives the monster a +1RS bonus to hit, and he rolls a 25 for a yes. Next, he checks for damage, and rolls a 7 for a yes. "It leaps forward and strikes you in the gut, its claws taking a good chunk of flesh. You take a high rank lethal wound, -1RS to the main body." John checks to see if Gloranna succumbs, since the wound is a lethal wound.

Wounds

Character
Gloranna

Wound Description
Claw to gut.

[X] Lethal   [ ] Bashing

Body Area
Main body

Wound Rank
High

Wound Effect
-1RS

When to check for healing
2 days

He rolls the rank damage of high versus her modified toughness of exceptional and gets an 85 for a no. "You're able to keep going, though."

Sam: Frowning, she writes on her wound sheet. "Ouch. My first wound. And still with five guys facing me. Do I get the next attack?"

John: John rolls, getting an 84. "Nope, another monster takes a swing at you." He checks to see if it hits, applying Gloranna's -1RS now to her rank. He gets a 77, for a no. "It swings its claws, but they miss, whistling through the air."

Sam: "Now, do I go?"

John: He checks again, getting an 11. A yes, and another random event. "Yes, you find an opening to attack the one who just swung at you."

Sam: "I swing at his head, trying to kill him quick."

John: John holds off on determining the random event, and rolls to see if she hits, applying a -2RS penalty for the difficult shot. He rolls a 24 for a yes. He checks for damage, giving her +2RS to damage for hitting the monster in the head. The damage done by her sword, though, is lessened since she is at -1RS on all ranks, including her strength which helps determine the damage her sword does. John rolls a 76 for a yes, the monster is hurt. Next, he checks to see if it succumbs to the attack. He rolls a 9 for an exceptional yes. "You swing for his head and connect,

cleaving his skull in two and killing him instantly."

Sam: "Alright! Who's next?"

John: John checks for the random event. He rolls on the event focus table, getting "neutral event," and the meaning of "theft." He decides this is just an event to add a little color to the scene. "The remaining four monsters howl in anger. One reaches down and rips a rusty sword from the skeletal hand of a dead soldier, brandishing it with a screech and charging you." Since this is supposed to be a neutral event, John decides that the weapon is of such low quality, that it doesn't give any more damage than high, gaining the monster no combat benefit from using it.

Sam: "Who gets the attack?"

John: John rolls against the fate question, asking if Gloranna goes next, and gets an exceptional no with a roll of 100. "The monster who picked up the sword charged you so fast, he's catching you off balance. Gloranna backpedals wildly as the creature barrels in for the kill." He checks to see if it hits, giving it a +1RS for the exceptional result. He rolls an 81 for a no, though. "He brings the sword down in a murderous arc, but Gloranna is able to deflect it, barely, with her own blade."

Sam: "Do I go?"

John: He checks again, getting a 36, so Gloranna can go. "You go."

Sam: "I don't have time to mess around. I try to drive my sword straight through the monster's head."

John: Again, he assigns -2RS for the difficult shot. He rolls a 68. "You miss."

Sam: "By how much?"

John: "You needed a 45 and rolled a 68, so you're off by 23 points. Want to change that?"

Sam: "Yes. I'll spend the points."

John: John subtracts 23 points from her existing pool of 60 favor points, bringing her to 37 points. "Okay. It's a struggle, but Gloranna manages to hit the beast in the face with her sword." He checks for damage, giving her +2RS for the face shot. He rolls a 19. "The monster is hurt. You missed an exceptional by 1 point. Want to spend it?"

Sam: "Sure."

John: He takes her favors down to 36. "Good choice. Gloranna desperately thrusts her sword into the face of the aggressive monster, driving the point straight through and out the back. The monster shudders and slumps to the ground, dead."

Sam: "Does the sword get his soul?"

John: "Let's see." He rolls a 39, needing a 45, so the sword does absorb the creature. "The sword glows blue briefly and makes a slurping, howling noise. The creature's body instantly shrivels as the sword absorbs its dying energy. Your sword is now at high energy level."

Sam: "Alright. And only 3 to go. They've got to be a little worried."

John: "The creatures seem somewhat taken aback by the sword's display of power, but they are not discouraged from taking you down. They've probably seen a lot worse in their day."

Sam: "Okay, then. Do I go next?"

John: John decides that since there are only 3 monsters left, they receive only a +1RS bonus now on the next strike question. He rolls 76 for a no. "No. The remaining three all come at you, claws swinging and teeth gnashing." He checks to see if one hits, and gets a 75 for an no. "One comes in close and swings, but misses." John checks to see if Gloranna goes next, and rolls a no. "Another one at the same time also takes a swing. That one misses too."

Sam: "I'm dodging and blocking all these attacks. Do I get the next shot?"

John: He checks, rolling a 19 for a yes. "Yep."

Sam: "I'm going to try and disarm one of them by swinging at his arm, to take it off."

John: He gives this a -1RS penalty and rolls a 31 for a hit. Next he checks to see if the arm is hurt, giving her damage a +1RS because she hit a weaker part of the monster's body, its arm. He rolls a 45 for a yes. Next he checks to see if the monster succumbs to it, rolling a 62 for a yes. "You swing and hit his arm, blood spurting everywhere as something important is cut inside. The creature howls, clutching its arm and sinking to the ground in pain. You didn't cut it off, but the monster is now very much preoccupied with its own agony to bother you."

Sam: "Good enough. Do I go?"

John: He checks again, now with only two monsters in operation. He rolls a 2 for an exceptional yes. "Yes. Gloranna moved so fast, slicing that monster, that the other two have their guard down." He gives her a +1RS on her to hit roll.

Sam: "Good. Continuing the swing from the last attack, I spin around and go for the neck of the next creature."

John: This applies a -2RS to hit. Coupled with the +1RS bonus, and the -1RS wound, she has a total penalty of -2RS. He rolls a 14 for a yes, she hit. Next he rolls for damage, giving her a +2RS bonus for the neck shot and gets a 42 for a yes. "Your sword cuts neatly across his neck, blood spraying out." He checks to see if the monster succumbs to the wound, and gets an 86 for a yes. "The creature howls and falls to the ground, writhing in pain."

Sam: "Not a kill, though."

John: "Nope. Not unless you want to take the time to finish him."

Sam: "No. Clutching my sword, I square off against the remaining monster."

John: "It glares at you menacingly, its comrades lying around both of you either in pieces or debilitated by pain. There is a moment's hesitation, then it attacks."

Sam: "I attack to. Who goes first?"

John: "Let's see if you do." Since there is only one monster left, it doesn't gain any bonuses on the next attack check from numbers. John rolls 67 for a no. "It reaches you first, swiping you with its claws." He rolls to see if it hits, getting an 89 for an exceptional no. "It lunged at you so desperately, however, that after Gloranna sidesteps the attack, the thing trips and drops to one knee, automatically giving you the next attack."

Sam: "How convenient. I cut its head off."

John: He gives her a -2RS penalty for the head shot, but throws in a +1RS bonus for the monster's compromising position. He rolls 77. "Nope. It lunges out of the way just in time, your sword clanging against the ground."

Sam: "Damn. I keep after it. Do I go next?"

John: He checks, rolling a 33 for a yes and a random event. He decides to go ahead and check for the event now, rolling on the focus table "player character positive" and the meaning table "inspection or scrutiny." John thinks for a second. "You get the next attack as it scrambles to get back to its feet. As you drive toward it, you notice suddenly that its left eye is milky white and appears to be blind. You could probably use this to your advantage by attacking it on its left side."

Sam: "Alright. I swing for its side, shifting to its left as I do so."

John: He gives her a +1RS bonus for attacking on the monster's blind side and rolls a 6 for an exceptional yes. He decides that she hit it squarely in its ribs and gives her a +1RS to the damage roll. He checks for damage and gets a 5 for an exceptional yes. "It really must be blind in its left eye since it barely even defended against your swing. Your sword strikes it, unhindered, in the rib cage and bites halfway through its body, killing it instantly."

Sam: Smiling. "And the sword?"

John: John checks to see if the sword absorbs, and gets a 7 for an exceptional yes. "The sword glows blue, howling even louder this time. The energy rank rises two shifts to incredible."

Sam: "Hey, alright! I stand among the scattered bodies, my only wound a bleeding tummy. I stare back at the cave, daring the monsters to attack me."

John: He decides the major moment of drama in this scene has been achieved, and there's no way any creature that witnessed the battle would take her on at this point. "Glowing eyes glare back balefully, but nothing ventures into the light."

Sam: "Good. Then I use my sword to fly out of here and go home."

John: "Good enough." He checks to see if this last usage of the sword drains it, and it doesn't. John figures this is a good place to end the scene. He updates the adventure sheet, adding "cave monsters" to the character list, increasing the chaos by 1 and awarding Gloranna 10 favor

points for defeating the monsters and escaping with the bone shard. John decides this should pretty much conclude the adventure. He decides that the next scene should be a flash forward to Gloranna returning home with the bone, the sage making the cure, and everything wrapping up

nicely. He rolls to see if this is how it happens, and gets a 9: no change. "Gloranna travels swiftly back over the plains and through the forests, encountering as little this time as she did before. You're happy to see your valley when you come to it and you leap from your horse, panting, to a crowd of hushed villagers. When they see the pouch you carry, they cheer."

Sam: "Nice to be appreciated. I give this to the sage."

John: "The prince isn't feeling well, but the sage mixes his potion and within the day, the prince is looking much better. He later comes to you and thanks you for undertaking the dangerous journey to save his life. He says, 'I, and this entire village, are once again in your debt, Gloranna. Is there anything I can give to you as reward?'"

Sam: "I just smile and pat him on the shoulder. 'I'll hold onto that promise for a while.'"

John: "Alright. The end. Congratulations." John wraps up the adventure, awarding Gloranna 25 favor points for completing her quest. Sam makes the changes to the favor points on her character sheet in preparation for the next time Gloranna goes on an adventure.

Sam: "Do I get any checks for skill advancement? I think maybe for her sword skill, considering that she took down 6 monsters in a single fight."

John: John thinks this sounds fair and consults the progress resolution table. He asks the question, does her sword ability rise by +1RS, and rolls a 20 for a yes. "Only a few times in her life has Gloranna been so hard pressed in a battle and done so well. Her sword skill rises by one rank to incredible."

Sam: Happy, she notes the change on her character sheet.

Summary of Resolving Scenes

- Come up with the Scene Setup.
- Roll 1D10 against Chaos to see if the Setup is modified as an Altered Scene or an Interrupt.
- Play out the Scene.
- When the main action ends, the Scene ends.
- Update lists: Characters, Threads, Chaos Factor
- Award Favor Points (0, 10, or 25)

Adventure Setup
Travel to the Dark Heart and retrieve a piece of dragon bone to save the prince.

1 Scene Setup
Gerald gives a grim warning about the world.

2 Scene Setup
Gloranna sets out.

3 Scene Setup
Gloranna finds the Black Heart.

4 Scene Setup
Gloranna enters a cave and fights a rock monster.

5 Scene Setup
Gloranna finds bone shards.

6 Scene Setup
She escapes the cave with the bone.

Scene Setup

Scene Setup

Lists

Characters
The prince
People of the Valley
The Sage
Mutants
Gerald
Rock monsters
Cave monsters

Threads
Get the bone

Chaos Factor
6 5 4 5 4 5 **5**

Point-Based Character Creation
Points Per World

World	Attributes	Abilities	Max rank
Real World (just like our world)	30	10	Exceptional
Gritty, real world (detective, cyberpunk)	35	20	Incredible
Action/Adventure (shoot 'em ups, pulp era)	60	35	Superhuman
High Fantasy/Science Fiction	65	40	Superhuman 5
Super hero, low powered	70	40	Superhuman 5
Super hero, medium powered	130	90	Superhuman 7
Super hero, high powered	165	105	Superhuman 10

Rank Costs

Rank	Cost	Rank	Cost
Miniscule	1	Exceptional	20
Weak	2	Incredible	25
Low	3	Awesome	30
Below Average	4	Superhuman	35
Average	5		
Above Average	10	Each level above Superhuman costs 5 points more.	
High	15		

Summary of Resolving Scenes

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　　　　　　　　　Threads
　　　　　　　　　Chaos Factor

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Rank Shift Modifier Guidelines

+/- 1   Small, but significant, modifier. Anything truly small, such as a purely cosmetic circumstance, should be ignored as a modifier. Examples: Running uphill; searching for something specific in a disheveled room.

+/- 2   Serious modifier. This is where your character is in serious hurt, or has a serious advantage. Examples: Fighting with a combatant on your back; taking time to aim at a target using a scope.

+/- 3   Very serious modifier. This is usually the maximum, and should be reserved for the most extreme situations. Examples: Fighting blind; hacking into a computer.

+/- 4+   Modifiers this high are usually reserved for superheroes and the supernatural. Example: Surviving having your head blown off; lifting a tank while being blasted by a bazooka.

The influence of Chaos
on Odds Questions

Chaos Factor	Difficulty Rank for Question
1	High
2-3	Above Average
4-6	Average
7-8	Below Average
9-10	Low

Favor Rewards

0   The character made no progress in this scene.

+10   The character made progress toward solving an open thread.

+25   The character helped solve an open thread.

Fate Chart

To use this chart, cross reference the acting rank versus the difficulty rank for the odds of a "yes" answer to the acting rank's question. If this is an odds question, without competing ranks, then the acting rank is the odds of a yes answer and the difficulty rank is determined by the current amount of chaos.

Acting Rank \ Difficulty Rank	Miniscule 2+	Miniscule	Weak	Low	Below Average	Average	Above Average	High	Exceptional	Incredible	Awesome	Superhuman	Superhuman 2+
Miniscule 2+ (−20 for each point over 2)	10 50 91	5 25 86	2 10 83	1 5 82	1 5 82	0 0 81	0 0 81	0 −20 77	0 −20 77	0 −40 73	0 −40 73	0 −55 70	0 −65 68
Miniscule	15 75 96	10 50 91	5 25 86	3 15 84	2 10 83	1 5 82	1 5 82	0 0 81	0 0 81	0 −20 77	0 −20 77	0 −35 74	0 −45 72
Weak	18 90 99	15 75 96	10 50 91	7 35 88	5 25 86	3 15 84	2 10 83	1 5 82	1 5 82	0 0 81	0 0 81	0 −15 78	0 −25 76
Low	19 95 100	16 85 97	13 65 94	10 50 91	9 45 90	5 25 86	3 15 84	2 10 83	1 5 82	1 5 82	1 5 82	0 −5 80	0 −15 78
Below Average	20 100 0	18 90 99	15 75 96	11 55 92	10 50 91	7 35 88	4 20 85	3 15 84	2 10 83	1 5 82	1 5 82	0 0 81	0 −10 79
Average	21 105 0	19 95 100	16 85 97	15 75 96	13 65 94	10 50 91	7 35 88	5 25 86	3 15 84	2 10 83	2 10 83	1 5 82	0 −5 80
Above Average	22 110 0	19 95 100	18 90 99	16 85 97	16 80 97	13 65 94	10 50 91	9 45 90	5 25 86	4 20 85	3 15 84	1 5 82	0 0 81
High	23 115 0	20 100 0	19 95 100	18 90 99	16 85 97	15 75 96	11 55 92	10 50 91	7 35 88	5 25 86	4 20 85	2 10 83	1 5 82
Exceptional	24 120 0	21 105 0	19 95 100	19 95 100	18 90 99	16 85 97	15 75 96	13 65 94	10 50 91	9 45 90	7 35 88	3 15 84	1 5 82
Incredible	25 125 0	23 115 0	20 100 0	19 95 100	19 95 100	18 90 99	16 80 97	15 75 96	11 55 92	10 50 91	9 45 90	4 20 85	2 10 83
Awesome	26 130 0	25 125 0	22 110 0	19 95 100	19 95 100	18 90 99	16 85 97	16 80 97	13 65 94	11 55 92	10 50 91	5 25 86	2 10 83
Superhuman	30 150 0	26 145 0	26 130 0	20 100 0	20 100 0	19 95 100	19 95 100	18 90 99	16 85 97	16 80 97	15 75 96	10 50 91	5 25 86
Superhuman 2+ (+20 for each point over 2)	34 170 0	29 165 0	30 150 0	24 120 0	24 120 0	20 100 0	20 100 0	19 95 100	19 95 100	18 90 99	18 90 99	15 75 96	10 50 91

Difficulty Rank column notes:
- Miniscule 2+ (+20 for each point over 2)
- Superhuman 2+ (−20 for each point over 2)

Chaos: 10‑9 | 8‑7 (Below Average) | 6‑4 (Average) | 3‑2 (Above Average) | 1 (High)

Exceptional Yes — The lower 1/5 of the success range.

Exceptional No — The upper 1/5 of the failure range.

Summary of How to Use the Fate Chart

1: State a question: Form a yes/no question.

2: Determine ranks: Determine the acting rank and the difficulty rank. The acting rank is the rank used by the initiator of the action. The difficulty rank is determined by the players. If this is an odds question, then the acting rank is the probability of a yes answer and the difficulty rank is average (this can be modified by Chaos).

3: Modify ranks: Apply any modifiers to the acting and difficulty ranks that are appropriate.

4: Determine probability: Cross reference the ranks on the fate chart for the probability of a yes answer to the question.

5: Roll: Roll 1D100. If you roll within the percentage range, the answer is yes. If you roll above, the answer is no. If you roll in the lower 1/5 of the range, then the answer is an exceptional yes. If roll in the upper 1/5 of the failure range, then the answer is an exceptional no.

6: Interpret the answer: Draw the most logical conclusion from the results. If this is not possible, then ask another question to clarify, returning to step 1.

Increasing attributes	Increasing/Adding abilities	Strengths & Weaknesses

Question: Does the attribute increase by 1 RS?

Willpower is the main ingredient to increasing ability ranks. If a character is trying to increase willpower through training or time, then the acting rank is IQ or Intuition, whichever is higher.

ACTING RANK: (If training or time) Willpower

(If experience) An abstract rank based on the event precipitating the check

DIFFICULTY RANK: New rank that the attribute will rise to.

MODIFIERS
- (If Training) Poor instruction or resources to work from: -2RS to AR.
- (If Training) Training is interrupted for a short time: -1RS to AR.
- (If Training) For each item trained at the same time beyond the first: +1RS to DR per additional item, applied to all advancement checks.

── RESULTS ──

YES Attribute rises +1RS.

NO The attempt failed, no change.

EXCEPTIONAL YES The character took to the advancement naturally, accomplishing it in half the time.

EXCEPTIONAL NO The attempt failed. If possible, double the required time was taken.

Question: Does the ability increase by 1 RS?

Treat gaining a new ability the same as increasing an existing one, instead it goes from non-existent to weak.

ACTING RANK: The most closely related attribute.
DIFFICULTY RANK: New rank that the ability will be.

MODIFIERS
- A very complex ability or skill, such as surgery: +2RS to DR.
- (If Training) Poor instruction or resources to work from: -2RS to AR.
- (If Training) Training is interrupted for a short time: -1RS to AR.
- (If Training) For each item trained at the same time beyond the first: +1RS to DR per additional item, applied to all advancement checks.

── RESULTS ──

YES Ability rises +1RS. Or, if adding a new ability, gain it at weak rank.

NO The attempt failed, no change.

EXCEPTIONAL YES The character took to the advancement naturally, accomplishing it in half the time.

EXCEPTIONAL NO The attempt failed. If possible, double the required time was taken.

Question: Does the character gain the strength/lose the weakness?

ACTING RANK: The most closely related attribute at -1RS

DIFFICULTY RANK: An abstract rank based on the potency of the strength or weakness.

MODIFIERS
- (If Training) Training is interrupted for a short time: -1RS to AR.
- (If Training) For each item trained at the same time beyond the first: +1RS to DR per additional item, applied to all advancement checks.

── RESULTS ──

YES The strength is gained, or weakness lost.

NO There is no change.

EXCEPTIONAL YES The character took to the advancement naturally, accomplishing it in half the time.

EXCEPTIONAL NO The attempt failed. If possible, double the required time was taken.

Question: Does the character's attribute drop due to aging?

Attrition checks due to aging begin at age 30 and are made every 10 years after for normal human beings.

ACTING RANK: Attribute in question

DIFFICULTY RANK: Toughness.

MODIFIERS
- The character has lived particularly poorly, or unhealthily, during the past 10 years: -1RS to DR.
- The character has lived particularly healthily during the past 10 years: +1RS to DR.
- Old age effects: see text.

── RESULTS ──

YES The attribute, and all abilities that are directly related to this attribute, fall by 1 RS.

NO There is no change.

EXCEPTIONAL YES The attribute, and all abilities that are directly related to this attribute, fall by 1 RS, and the character experiences a crisis.

EXCEPTIONAL NO There is no change, and the character is particularly healthy in this attribute. He can automatically skip the next check on this attribute.

Question: Does the character's attribute or ability fall from lack of use?

This check must be made at the end of each year and is applied to any attribute or ability that was not used to full effect during the year. Once a rank falls you do not need to check again in succeeding years unless the rank is brought back up.

ACTING RANK: Attribute or ability in question
DIFFICULTY RANK: Toughness (if an attribute); most closely related attribute (if an ability)

MODIFIERS
- The ability was not used at all, not even once, during the past year: -1RS to DR.

── RESULTS ──

YES The attribute (and all directly related abilities) or ability falls by 1 RS.

NO There is no change.

EXCEPTIONAL YES The attribute (and all directly related abilities) or ability falls by 2 RS.

EXCEPTIONAL NO There is no change, and the character is particularly strong in this attribute or ability. He can automatically skip the next check next year.

Q Does [a character] act next?

This question is usually asked after every action in a combat. Exceptions include when special circumstances automatically give a combatant the next strike.

ACTING RANK: Combat ability.

DIFFICULTY RANK: Combat ability.

MODIFIERS

Consult the modifiers table for next action. Keep in mind that if there are multiple opponents, they act as a combined rank for purposes of the next action.

RESULTS

YES	The character gets to attack the opponent.
NO	The opponent gets to attack the character. If there are more than one opponents, then either choose the most logical or ask a question.
EXCEPTIONAL YES	The character gets to attack. He moved so quickly, he got the drop on his opponent, and receives a +1 RS to the question to hit.
EXCEPTIONAL NO	The opponent gets to attack. He moved so quickly, he got the drop on the character, and receives a +1 RS to the question to hit.

Q Does the character hit?

This question comes after the "next act" question. The character, whether a player character or NPC, is attacking. This question determines whether or not the character hits.

ACTING RANK: Combat ability.

DIFFICULTY RANK: Combat ability if a melee combat. If ranged, the players must assign an abstract difficulty.

MODIFIERS

Consult the hitting modifier table. If this is a ranged attack, also consult the ranged attack modifier table.

RESULTS

YES	The character hits.
NO	The character misses.
EXCEPTIONAL YES	The character hits in the best way possible. This means striking a vulnerable area, or causing some additional benefit, the choice is up to the players. If the strike hits a vulnerable area, then add a +1 or +2 RS to the damage question (how much of a modifier is up to you.) If a benefit is gained, such as knocking a weapon free, then this occurs plus the normal damage question.
EXCEPTIONAL NO	The character misses and fumbles, such as dropping his weapon, hitting the wrong target, or putting himself in a bad position, automatically giving his opponent the next action. The result is up to you, using logic, or it can be asked as an additional question.

Q Is the opponent hurt?

This question usually follows after a hit is scored. If the character is hurt, the specific nature this hurt takes is up to you, depending on the weapon used and the results of this question.

ACTING RANK: Damage rank of the weapon.

DIFFICULTY RANK: Toughness of the character hit.

MODIFIERS

Consult the damage modifier table.

RESULTS

YES	The character is wounded, the weapon had a partial effect. See the damage section for the effects of wounds.
NO	The character may be bruised or bleeding, but the wound has no other impact.
EXCEPTIONAL YES	The weapon causes full damage. Refer to the damage section.
EXCEPTIONAL NO	The character not only shrugs off the attack, but something beneficial happens. What exactly is up to the players, but can be something like the attacker's weapon breaks, or the defender receives a +1 RS on a subsequent "who goes next" roll and "to hit" roll from an adrenaline rush from the blow, or the failed attack left the attacker in a vulnerable position.

Q Does the character succumb to wounds?

Ask only when a body area receives -3RS in stunning wounds, or any lethal wounds. This question must be asked each time the RS increases after this point.

ACTING RANK: Damage rank from the last wound that caused this check.

DIFFICULTY RANK: Toughness.

MODIFIERS

• Toughness is still modified by the RS penalty from wounds for this roll.

RESULTS

YES	Character falls unconscious from the pain, or is otherwise incapacitated from the damage until some healing occurs.
NO	The character keeps on going.
EXCEPTIONAL YES	The character is so badly beaten, that if the last wound was lethal, he dies. If the wound was stunning, he falls unconscious and the wound is considered lethal for healing purposes.
EXCEPTIONAL NO	The character takes it all in stride. If the wound was lethal, it is downgraded to stunning. If it was stunning, the character instantly recovers from it.

Combat Question
Modifiers

"Does the character go next?" Modifiers

- Character is surprised: -3RS

- Character is unskilled: -2RS

- Character is wounded: RS penalty of wounds from body or limb used for the attack, whichever is greater

- Character is somewhat burdened or hampered: -1RS

- Character is distracted: -1RS

- Character is at a tactical disadvantage, such as lower ground, etc: -1RS

- On the ground: -2RS

The modifiers above are reversed if they apply to the opponent. For instance, if the character is attacking someone who is surprised, the character will receive a +3RS, if the character's opponent is on the ground, she gets a +2RS, etc.

Additional Ranged Attack Hitting Modifiers

- Point blank range: +3RS

- Medium range: -2RS

- Long range: -3RS

- Target is moving, although predictably: -1RS

- Target is moving erratically: -3RS

- Target is 25% concealed: -1RS

- Target is 50% concealed: -2RS

- Target is 75% concealed: -3RS

- Target is 95% concealed: -4RS

"Does the character hit?" Modifiers

- Character is wounded: RS penalty of wounds from body or limb used for the attack, whichever is greater

- Character is unskilled: -2RS

- Character's action is hasty: -1RS

- Character is distracted: -1RS

- Character is somewhat burdened or hampered: -1RS

- Visibility is limited slightly, as in a fog: -1RS

- Visibility is limited severely, as in sand in your eyes: -3RS

- Zero visibility, total darkness: -4RS

- Targeting a small area, head-size: -1RS

- Targeting a limb: -2RS

- Targeting a hand, foot, or held object: -3RS

"Is the character hurt?" Modifiers

- If melee, and character's action is hasty: -1RS

- Hit a vulnerable area, such as groin or other "soft" spot: +1RS

- Hit a weak part of the body, such as a hand or foot: +1RS

- Hit head, neck or face: +2RS

NOTE: These modifiers are only suggestions. Feel free to adjust them as you see fit and apply any others that seem logical to the situation. Keep in mind that a modifier of 1 is standard, 2 is for serious situations, and 3 is for the most serious. Anything higher should be very rare and extraordinary.

Armor Effectiveness

Armor	RS to Toughness
Very light (thick hides)	+1
Thick, non rigid (cured leather)	+2
Light metal (chain mail, thin, loose plates)	+3
Hard, metal covering (plate mail)	+4
Hi-tech armors (battle suits)	+5 and up

Sample Weapon Damage ranks
These ranks are only suggestions to help you with constructing weapons for your game world.

Weapon	Damage Rank	Notes
MELEE AND MEDIEVAL WEAPONS		
Light crossbow bolt	Above Average	
Heavy crossbow bolt	High	
Short bow arrow	Average	
Long bow arrow	High	This may require a strength rank of at least high to fire.
Knife or Dagger	Below Average	Most melee weapons are based on strength. A dagger, or any small knife, however, is not necessarily a "muscled" weapon.
Light sword, rapier	Strength +1 RS*	
Medium sword	Strength +2 RS*	
Great sword	Strength +3 RS*	This is any huge sword, which would require two hands, and likely a strength rank of high or greater.
Wood axe	Strength +1 RS*	
Battle axe	Strength +2 RS*	
Throwing axe	Above Average	
Club	Strength +1 RS*	
Spear, thrust	Strength +2 RS*	
Spear, thrown	Exceptional	
Thrown rock	Low	Assumes thrown by normal person, not one of super strength.
Chainsaw	Incredible	Difficult to wield, -2 RS to go next and to hit.
Fist	Strength	Add +1 RS if gauntleted, or using brass knuckles.
Kick	Strength +1RS	The +1RS damage bonus only applies if the character has some martial training. Otherwise, it is strength. Because of increased difficulty in maintaining balance, the kicker receives a -1RS to the "act next" question.
MODERN DAY FIREARMS		
Small caliber handgun	Average	
Medium caliber handgun	Above Average	
Heavy handgun	High	
Rifle	Exceptional	
Shotgun	Exceptional	Damage is dependent on range, -1 RS for each 10 yards beyond the first 10 yards. If double-barreled, and firing both barrels at once, +1 RS.
Sub-machine gun	Exceptional	The damage is based on multiple bullets striking, and represents the accumulated damage from a burst.
HEAVY, CONTEMPORARY WEAPONS		
Molotov cocktail	Exceptional	Only for the initial blast area of 15'.
Grenade launcher	Incredible	For every 30' from the blast, -1 RS to the damage.
Claymore mine	Superhuman	For every 30' from the blast, -1 RS to the damage.
Stick of dynamite	Superhuman	For every 40' from the blast, -1 RS to the damage.
Plastique, 4 oz.	Superhuman	For every 15' from the blast, -1 RS to the damage.
Hand grenade	Awesome	For every 20' from the blast, -1 RS to the damage.
Mortar shell	Superhuman	For every 30' from the blast, -1 RS to the damage.
Tank gun, 210mm	Superhuman 2	For every 30' from the blast, -1 RS to the damage.
Mounted machine gun	Superhuman	

* Damage maxes out when it reaches material strength of the weapon, usually superhuman to superhuman 3

Q Does the character recover from a stunning wound?

This question can be asked after the character has had a moment to rest. It can be asked as often as you like until the character recovers from all stunning wounds. It only applies to the highest ranking stunning wound taken.

ACTING RANK: Toughness.

DIFFICULTY RANK: Highest damage rank from stunning wounds taken.

MODIFIERS

- Character is taking extra time, at least a few minutes, specifically to recover: -2RS to RR.
- Character is only taking a few seconds to recover, but is still actively engaged in combat: +1RS to RR.
- Character is receiving assistance, such as water and aid: -1RS to RR.
- Penalties from wounds still apply. If the wound is to a limb, either apply the penalties to that limb, or from the main body, whichever is greater. If the wound is to the head or torso, apply the main body wounds.

RESULTS

YES	Character recovers from the wound in question.
NO	There is no change.
EXCEPTIONAL YES	The character recovers from this wound, and the next highest ranking wound as well.
EXCEPTIONAL NO	The stunning wound is too great, such as a broken bone or serious sprain. It cannot be checked for recovery again for 1 to 30 days, at the players' discretion. The character can continue to check other stunning wounds, however.

Q Does the character recover from a lethal wound?

This question can be asked 1 to 30 days after the wound is received (time at player's discretion). It can be asked as often as you like until the character recovers from all lethal wounds.

ACTING RANK: Toughness.

DIFFICULTY RANK: Highest damage rank from lethal wounds taken.

MODIFIERS

- Character is receiving basic medical attention: -1RS to RR.
- Character is receiving hospital level medical attention: -3RS to RR.
- Character is not resting during recovery time: +1RS to RR.
- Previous recovery checks have been attempted on this wound and failed: -1RS to RR for each previous attempt.
- Penalties from wounds still apply. If the wound is to a limb, either apply the penalties to that limb, or from the main body, whichever is greater. If the wound is to the head or torso, apply the main body wounds.

RESULTS

YES	Character recovers from the wound in question.
NO	There is no change. The same amount of recovery time must pass before another check can be made.
EXCEPTIONAL YES	The character recovers from this wound in half the time expected.
EXCEPTIONAL NO	A complication arose from the lethal wound, killing the character.

Q Is the dying character stabilized?

This question can only be asked immediately after a character has "died" and expert care is being applied. The character is presumed to be in the process of dying, and this is an attempt to keep the character alive.

ACTING RANK: Medical ability rank.

DIFFICULTY RANK: Damage rank from wound that caused death.

MODIFIERS

- Treating character doesn't have the proper tools: -3RS to AR.
- Some time has passed since the wound was caused. The amount of time is up to the players, but treatment has not been administered immediately: +3RS to RR.

RESULTS

YES	The character is not dead. However, treatment will have to be continuous, or the character will begin to die again. Another check can be made if circumstances change (receive more skilled help, better tools, etc.)
NO	The effort failed, the character is still dead.
EXCEPTIONAL YES	The character is not dead and is stabilized. Normal recovery rules apply.
EXCEPTIONAL NO	The effort failed, the character is still dead. Deader, maybe.

Summary of Resolving Random Events

1) Determine Event Focus
2) Determine Event Meaning
3) Interpret the Random Event based on Focus, Meaning, and Context. Take the most logical conclusion.
4) If there is more than one logical conclusion, form a Question and consult the Fate Chart to clarify the results.

Event Focus Table

1-7	Remote event
8-22	Character action
23-30	Introduce a new character
31-42	Thread related event
43-47	Close or open a thread
48-55	Player character negative
56-63	Player character positive
64-88	Neutral event
89-94	NPC negative
95-100	NPC positive

Event Meaning Table

1. Attainment of goals.
2. The founding of a fellowship.
3. Neglect of the environment.
4. Blight.
5. The beginning of an enterprise which may harm others.
6. Ecstasy to the point of divorce from reality.
7. Conquest by force.
8. Macho excess.
9. Willpower.
10. The recruitment of allies.
11. The triumph of an evil cause.
12. Physical and emotional violation.
13. Weakness in the face of opposition.
14. Force applied with deliberate malice.
15. A declaration of war.
16. Persecution of the innocent.
17. Love.
18. Abandonment of the spiritual.
19. Instant gratification.
20. Intellectual inquiry.
21. Antagonism towards new ideas.
22. Joy and laughter.
23. Written messages.
24. Movement.
25. Wasteful dispersal of energies.
26. Truce.
27. Balance disturbed.
28. Tension released.
29. Disloyalty.
30. Friendship.
31. Physical attraction.
32. Love for the wrong reasons.
33. Passion which interferes with judgment.
34. A physical challenge.
35. Desertion of a project.
36. Domination.
37. Procrastination.
38. Acclaim.
39. A journey which causes temporary separation.
40. Loss.
41. A matter concluded in plenty.
42. Healing.
43. Excessive devotion to the pleasures of the senses.
44. Swiftness in bringing a matter to its conclusion.
45. Delay in obtaining material possessions.
46. Delay.
47. Prosperity.
48. Material difficulties.

49. Cessation of benefits.
50. Temporary companionship.
51. Loss due to the machinations of another.
52. Lies made public.
53. Spite.
54. A situation does not live up to expectations.
55. Defeat.
56. Return of an old friend.
57. New alliances.
58. Imitation of reality.
59. Confusion in legal matters.
60. Bureaucracy.
61. Unfairness in a business matter.
62. Journey by water.
63. A path away from difficulties.
64. A temporary respite in struggle.
65. Stalemate.
66. Publicity.
67. Public recognition for one's efforts.
68. Good news.
69. Bad news.
70. Indefinite postponement by another of a project.
71. Cause for anxiety due to exterior factors.
72. Delay in achieving one's goal.
73. Theft.
74. A journey by land.
75. Good advice from an expert.
76. The exposure and consequent failure of a plot.
77. A project about to reach completion.
78. Intellectual competition.
79. Haggling.
80. Imprisonment.
81. Illness.
82. Release.
83. Opposition collapses.
84. A matter believed to be of great importance is actually of small consequence.
85. Loss of interest.
86. Celebration of a success.
87. Rapid development of an undertaking.
88. Travel by air.
89. Non-arrival of an expected communication.
90. Jealousy.
91. Dispute among partners.
92. A project does not work out.
93. The possible loss of home.

94. An investment proves worthless.
95. Suffering.
96. Mental imprisonment.
97. Debasement.
98. Material desires are wholly fulfilled.
99. Overindulgence.
100. Wishes fall short.
101. Delaying tactics.
102. Stalemate leading to adjournment.
103. Adversity, but not insurmountable.
104. Gambling.
105. Lack of solidity.
106. Misfortune.
107. The death of a dream.
108. Disruption.
109. Temporary success.
110. Usurped power.
111. A balance is made, but it is temporary.
112. Failure of a partnership.
113. Possible loss of friendship.
114. Betrayal.
115. Abuse of power.
116. Becoming a burden to another.
117. Oppression of the few by the many.
118. Intrigues.
119. Resentment.
120. Fears realized.
121. A student.
122. Messages.
123. The bearer of bad news.
124. Fears proven unfounded.
125. A sentinel.
126. Inspection or scrutiny.
127. Ambush.
128. Spying.
129. Mutiny.
130. News.
131. Attachment to the point of obsession.
132. The affairs of the world.
133. Unexpected aid.
134. A bearer of intelligence.
135. Rumor.
136. Old wounds reopened.
137. Carelessness.
138. Friendship strained.
139. Guerrilla warfare.
140. Ruin.
141. Unwise extravagance.
142. Dirty tricks.
143. Arrival of a friend.
144. Propositions.
145. Fraud.
146. Rivalry.
147. A spiritual representative.

148. Triumph over adversities.
149. Travel by air.
150. Frustration.
151. Division.
152. The refusal to listen to views at variance to one's own.
153. Motherly figure.
154. Opulence.
155. Ill-natured gossip.
156. Mistrust of those near.
157. Liberty.
158. Deceit.
159. Cruelty from intolerance.
160. A person not to be trusted.
161. Excitement from activity.
162. Someone of assistance.
163. Father figure.
164. A dull individual.
165. Military.
166. A judge.
167. A wise counselor.
168. The mundane.
169. A teacher.
170. Trials overcome.
171. Frenzy.
172. Negligence.
173. Duality.
174. Passion
175. Hard work.
176. The control of masses.
177. Alliance as a formality, not sincere.
178. Attraction to an object or person.
179. Travel by vehicle.
180. Success in an artistic or spiritual pursuit.
181. Vengeance.
182. An unethical victory.
183. Judicial proceedings.
184. Dispute.
185. Legal punishment.
186. Guidance from an elder.
187. A journey.
188. Good fortune.
189. Too much of a good thing.
190. The spiritual over the material.
191. The material over the spiritual.
192. Transformation and change.
193. Disunion.
194. Amassment of riches.
195. Overthrow of the existing order.
196. Communication by technological means.
197. Oppression.
198. Hope.
199. Hope deceived, daydreams fail.
200. Change of place.

Question

NOTES

ACTING RANK:

DIFFICULTY RANK:

MODIFIERS

———————— RESULTS ————————

YES

NO

EXCEPTIONAL
YES

EXCEPTIONAL
NO

Question

NOTES

ACTING RANK:

DIFFICULTY RANK:

MODIFIERS

———————— RESULTS ————————

YES

NO

EXCEPTIONAL
YES

EXCEPTIONAL
NO

Question

NOTES

ACTING RANK:

DIFFICULTY RANK:

MODIFIERS

———————— RESULTS ————————

YES

NO

EXCEPTIONAL
YES

EXCEPTIONAL
NO

Question

NOTES

ACTING RANK:

DIFFICULTY RANK:

MODIFIERS

———————— RESULTS ————————

YES

NO

EXCEPTIONAL
YES

EXCEPTIONAL
NO

Scaling Box

Description	Mythic rank
	Miniscule
	Weak
	Low
	Below Average
	Average
	Above Average
	High
	Exceptional
	Incredible
	Awesome

Scaling Box

Description	Mythic rank
	Miniscule
	Weak
	Low
	Below Average
	Average
	Above Average
	High
	Exceptional
	Incredible
	Awesome

Scaling Box

Description	Mythic rank

Scaling Box

Description	Mythic rank

Adventure Worksheet

Summary of Resolving Scenes

- Come up with the Scene Setup.
- Roll 1D10 against Chaos to see if the Setup is modified as an Altered Scene or an Interrupt.
- Play out the Scene.
- When the main action ends, the Scene ends.
- Update lists: Characters, Threads, Chaos Factor
- Award Favor Points (0, 10, or 25)

Adventure Setup

Scene Setup
Scene #

Scene Setup
Scene #

Scene Setup
Scene #

Scene Setup
Scene #

Scene Setup
Scene #

Scene Setup
Scene #

Scene Setup
Scene #

Scene Setup
Scene #

Lists

Characters

Threads

Chaos Factor
5

Name		
Strength		
Agility		
Reflex		
IQ		
Intuition		
Willpower		
Toughness		

Name		
Strength		
Agility		
Reflex		
IQ		
Intuition		
Willpower		
Toughness		

Name		
Strength		
Agility		
Reflex		
IQ		
Intuition		
Willpower		
Toughness		

Character Sheet

Name

Attribute   **Rank**

Strength

Agility

Reflex

IQ

Intuition

Willpower

Toughness

Abilities   **Rank**

Character Summary

Notes

Strengths & Weaknesses

Favor Points

Wounds

Character

Wound Description

☐ Lethal ☐ Stunning

Body Area

Wound Rank

Wound Effect

When to check for healing

Wound Description

☐ Lethal ☐ Stunning

Body Area

Wound Rank

Wound Effect

When to check for healing

Wound Description

☐ Lethal ☐ Stunning

Body Area

Wound Rank

Wound Effect

When to check for healing

Wounds

Character

Wound Description

☐ Lethal ☐ Stunning

Body Area

Wound Rank

Wound Effect

When to check for healing

Wound Description

☐ Lethal ☐ Stunning

Body Area

Wound Rank

Wound Effect

When to check for healing

Wound Description

☐ Lethal ☐ Stunning

Body Area

Wound Rank

Wound Effect

When to check for healing

Wounds

Character

Wound Description

☐ Lethal ☐ Stunning

Body Area

Wound Rank

Wound Effect

When to check for healing

Wound Description

☐ Lethal ☐ Stunning

Body Area

Wound Rank

Wound Effect

When to check for healing

Wound Description

☐ Lethal ☐ Stunning

Body Area

Wound Rank

Wound Effect

When to check for healing

Name
Serena

Attribute — Rank

Attribute	Rank
Strength	Above Avg.
Agility	Above Avg.
Reflex	High
IQ	High
Intuition	High
Willpower	Exceptional
Toughness	High

Abilities — Rank

Cyborg engineer — High
Any feats involving cyborg technology, including repairs.

Laser pistol — High

Space pilot — High
Generic skill for piloting any general spacecraft.

Space Navigation — Average
Ability to chart courses through space with the aid of a computer, also includes some knowledge of celestial phenomenon.

Character Summary

A cyborg mercenary and former space pirate who has turned in her evil ways to fight for the innocent. Despite turning over a new leaf, Serena can be a bit brutal at times. (This character was constructed from 65 attribute points and 40 ability points).

Notes

Blades: High lethal damage, retract from her knuckles.
Laser Blaster: Exceptional lethal damage. Can fire 20 shots before needs a new power cartridge.
Ship: She has her own spaceship outfitted with weapons and a powerful engine for quick getaways.

Strengths & Weaknesses

Cyborg components (weakness): Since parts of her are technological, if she takes -2RS or more worth of lethal damage to any one body area, she can only heal it down to -1RS. That last bit must be repaired in a qualified engineering shop.
Wanted (weakness): Though she has turned good, she is still wanted by the authorities of several planets. She suffers a -3RS to any communication attempts with beings from those worlds who know who she is. Authorities from those planets will immediately try to apprehend her.

Favor Points

50

Name
Dirk Howser

Attribute — Rank

Attribute	Rank
Strength	High
Agility	Average
Reflex	Above Avg.
IQ	Above Avg.
Intuition	Exceptional
Willpower	Incredible
Toughness	Exceptional

Abilities — Rank

Handguns — Exceptional

Knife fighting — High

Law — Above avg.
General knowledge of the law.

Boxing — High

Occult — Above avg.
Only for general knowledge about legends and lore.

Drive — Exceptional

Detect lie — Incredible
Must be able to see and hear clearly. Ability to read body language.

Character Summary

Dirk is a private investigator with a police background. Although cynical and practical, he has found himself often embroiled in cases with a strange, supernatural bent.

Notes

.357 Magnum: High lethal damage
Switchblade: Below average lethal damage

Strengths & Weaknesses

Magic cynicism (weakness): -2RS to cast anything because of his disbelief.
Hardy (strength): +1RS to resist succumbing to wounds.

Favor Points

50

Name
Wild Jill

Attribute / Rank

Attribute	Rank
Strength	Average
Agility	Average
Reflex	High
IQ	Above Avg.
Intuition	High
Willpower	High
Toughness	Above Avg.

Abilities / Rank

Abilities	Rank
Six shooters	Incredible
Horse riding	Average
Poker	Below Avg.
Survival	Average

Skill at living in the wilderness or desert with little or no provisions.

Character Summary

Jill is an old-west outlaw and expert shot with a twin six-gun. She can be cantankerous and doesn't like being challenged, preferring to settle most disputes with a duel. (This character was built with 60 attribute points and 35 ability points).

Notes

Six-shooters: Jill carries two pistols at either side. They do Above Average lethal damage.

Thunder: Her horse. Sturdy enough to travel long distances. Toughness of incredible.

Strengths & Weaknesses

Enemies (weakness): Jill has lots of enemies. Whenever she enters a new town, there is always a low odds question that someone will try to kill her.

Twin shot (strength): When holstered, can draw both of her six-shooters and fire at the same time without penalty, taking two shots at once. Can only do this at the initial draw.

Fear of water (weakness): She cannot swim, and suffers a -1RS to any action when in or on water from distraction by the fear of falling in and drowning.

Favor Points

50

Name
Crimson Avenger

Attribute	Rank
Strength	Superhuman 2
Agility	Exceptional
Reflex	Exceptional
IQ	Above Avg.
Intuition	High
Willpower	Incredible
Toughness	Superhuman

Abilities	Rank
Flight	Above Avg.
Government contacts	Avg.
Knows high ranking officials in both the pentagon and the CIA.	
Personal wealth	Awesome
Ability to purchase stuff. Can make a feat to see if he can acquire nearly any good.	
Science contacts	Incredible
There are a small group of super-scientists who sometimes enlist his aid, and in return help him with technology issues.	

Character Summary

The Crimson Avenger was once an ordinary man until he stumbled upon a radioactive meteor that mutated him into a super human. He feels a strong responsibility to use his powers to help others. (This superhero character was created from 130 attribute points and 90 ability points).

Notes

The Avenger wears a crimson costume with a flowing cape.
He uses his wealth to keep a headquarters in a high-rise condo. From there, he monitors criminals activity and government alerts.
His government contacts keep him up on the movements of villains, and often enlists Crimson's aid. He keeps in contact with a group of brilliant scientists who help him solve technological problems.

Strengths & Weaknesses

Bulletproof (strength): His skin is extra tough, providing the same benefit as light armor, giving him +1RS to his toughness for determining if he is hurt from direct, physical damage.
Danger sense (strength): He has limited telepathic abilities in that he can sense an attack right before it happens. This does not always work, but he gets an intuition check at +1RS before he is ambushed, the difficulty rank equal to the suddenness of the attack (average for a prearranged ambush).

Favor Points

50

Name

Garok

Attribute — Rank

Attribute	Rank
Strength	Incredible
Agility	Above Avg.
Reflex	Exceptional
IQ	Below Avg.
Intuition	Above Avg.
Willpower	Incredible
Toughness	Incredible

Abilities — Rank

Abilities	Rank
Sword fighting	Incredible
Bow	Average
Dodge	Incredible
Ride horse	Above Avg.
Wilderness survival	High
Northern legends	Average
Ice fishing	Average
First aid	Below Avg.

Character Summary

Garok is a barbarian from the frozen North who has come into the tamed, civilized lands in search of adventure and gold. He has little patience for subtlety and prefers the brutal honesty of combat.

Notes

He normally wields a heavy, 2-handed sword that gives him a +3RS to strength for damage.

He wears no armor, preferring to block and dodge attacks, and destroy his enemy before he gets destroyed.

Strengths & Weaknesses

Battle lust (strength): During combat, Garok may fly into a fit of fighting frenzy. He can try to do this by asking the fate question, "Does Garok go berserk?" The AR is his willpower, the DR is the toughness of his opponent. If he does go berserk, he gets +1RS on the "next strike" and damage questions, and a -1RS on the "to hit" question. The rage lasts until the battle is over.

Favor Points

50

Name	Michelle Lee

Attribute	Rank
Strength	Above Avg.
Agility	High
Reflex	Exceptional
IQ	Average
Intuition	High
Willpower	High
Toughness	High

Abilities — Rank

Martial arts kicks — Incredible

MA hand tech. — Exceptional

MA throws — Incredible

Escape holds — Exceptional

Improvised weapon — Exceptional

Teaching — Above Avg.

Note: This character is for a martial arts campaign world where the players wanted more detail in the martial arts encounters. Michelle has specific abilities for different kinds of attacks, such as kicks or hand techniques. The improvised weapon ability allows her to pick up anything and use it as a weapon.

Character Summary

Michelle seems like a small, unassuming school teacher, but her years of rigorous martial arts training have made her more than what she seems. She often finds herself using her abilities to defend those weaker than herself, even if she didn't seek the situation in the first place.

Notes

Michelle does not carry weapons, preferring to use her martial arts, or simply pick up something handy nearby.

Strengths & Weaknesses

Poor eyesight (weakness): Michelle needs to wear glasses to see well. Without her glasses, she suffers a -1RS to any physical feat.
Danger awareness (strength): Michelle is always conscious of her surroundings and potential dangers. She gains a +1RS to any checks for detecting an attack.

Favor Points

50

Sample Characters

Goblin

Strength	Average
Agility	Average
Reflex	Above Average
IQ	Weak
Intuition	Low
Willpower	Low
Toughness	Below Average

Summary:
Goblins are brutish little creatures with a thirst for inflicting pain. Individually they are no match for a well-prepared opponent, but in a group of six or a dozen, they can be a match for anyone. Goblins are often found in the employ of others, either as foot-soldiers or scouts.

Abilities:
Club: Average
Track: Below Average
Hide: Above Average
Sense of Smell: Average

Strengths and Weaknesses:
Fear of sunlight: Though not actually harmed by the sun, they suffer a -1RS to all actions while under direct sunlight and they will seek the earliest opportunity to get away from it.

Notes:
They usually wear armor, though of low quality with no more than a +2RS benefit.

Some goblins may have low-grade magical abilities, rarely over average rank.

Zombie

Strength	Above Average
Agility	Weak
Reflex	Low
IQ	Miniscule
Intuition	Miniscule
Willpower	--
Toughness	Incredible

Summary:
Zombies are corpses reanimated through evil magic. They are slow and nearly mindless (hence the lack of a willpower attribute), but are incredibly difficult to dispatch. They are most dangerous in large numbers or in tight spaces, where their slowness is less of a factor.

Abilities:
Grapple, claw or bite: Low (their usual mode of attack is to grapple, then strangle, claw or bite the victim to death).

Strengths and Weaknesses:
Pain immunity: Zombies do not feel pain when they are hurt, thus gaining a +3RS to resisting succumbing to wounds. Because of the physical damage to their bodies, they still suffer penalties for wounds.

Notes:
If it has teeth, it can bite for below average lethal damage. Claws usually do low lethal damage. A zombie may also grab any handy, sharp instruments such as a knife.

Generic thug

Strength	Above Average
Agility	Below Average
Reflex	Average
IQ	Below Average
Intuition	Below Average
Willpower	Below Average
Toughness	Average

Summary:
These are the countless "cannon-fodder" hoodlums who grace many a movie scene. They are generally ineffectual, stupid and clumsy, though they can look intimidating. Although the costume and weapons may vary, this character is interchangeable for many genres and eras.

Abilities:
Weapon: Below Average (this is their weapon of choice, such as a gun or sword).

Strengths and Weaknesses:
Sucker: They are not only stupid, but tend to fall for any trap or ruse, such as the old throw-the-rock-I'm-over-there trick. Suffers a -2RS penalty for resisting/figuring out tricks.

Scaredy cats: They act tough when it looks like they will win, but as soon as the chips start falling the other way, they tend to wimp out, receiving a -2RS willpower penalty to resist fleeing a difficult encounter.

Notes:
Their weaponry will generally be basic and not too elaborate, such as a simple firearm or sword. Armor is minimal, if any at all.

Robot of Destruction
<small>Name</small>

Strength	Superhuman
Agility	Below Average
Reflex	Average
IQ	Below Average
Intuition	Average
Willpower	Superhuman
Toughness	Superhuman

Summary:
This is the generic, havoc-wreaking monstrosity that many superheroes face from time to time. This one is a weak one, and could vary in size from 7′ to 12′ tall.

Abilities:
Laser eye blast: Average
Fist fight: Average

Strengths and Weaknesses:
Achilles Heel: Usually have a secret weakness that will destroy or critically weaken it. This can be a very small, weak point, or a weakness to some substance such as water.

Notes:
Their armor is usually worth at least +2RS. Their laser eye beams can do at least Superhuman lethal damage. If the beam is more of a stunning, force beam, then give it +1RS. The robot may also come equipped with other goodies, such as rockets, night-vision, flight, or the good ol′ self-destruct mechanism.

Elite Mercenary
<small>Name</small>

Strength	High
Agility	Above Average
Reflex	High
IQ	Above Average
Intuition	High
Willpower	High
Toughness	High

Summary:
Elite mercenaries are highly trained soldiers who hire themselves out. They may serve as a leader of a combat platoon, or go solo as a hitman. They tend to be coldly dispassionate and without mercy.

Abilities:
Firearms: High
Knife fighting: Above Average
Martial arts: High
Explosives: Above Average
Sneak: Above Average
Hide: Above Average
Drive auto: Average
Pilot helicopter: Average

Strengths and Weaknesses:
Sellout: They tend to go where the money is, and suffer a -1RS to resist any effort to buy them out at a higher price.

Notes:
Their weaponry and armor will usually be top-notch, and they will have plenty of it. Some elite mercenaries have a specialty of some kind. If so, most of their combat abilities will be at -1RS to the above, but they will possess their specialty at exceptional rank. This specialty may be sniping, explosives, poisons, tracking, or just about anything.

Dragon
<small>Name</small>

Strength	Superhuman 3
Agility	Exceptional
Reflex	Exceptional
IQ	Exceptional
Intuition	Incredible
Willpower	Superhuman 2
Toughness	Superhuman 3

Summary:
This is the classic "great wyrm" of fantasy legend. Enormous and powerful, a great dragon is often haughty and arrogant. They can also be very curious and may stave off a person's destruction for some decent conversation.

Abilities:
Bite, claw, stomp, tail whip: Exceptional (basically, any attack performed with its body).
Breath fire: High.
Magic: Incredible. (Not all dragons possess magic ability, and levels will vary greatly).

Strengths and Weaknesses:
Hoard: The dragon has a hoard which it will be loath to leave. This is a weakness, since it suffers a -2RS to any attempt to leave the hoard, such as in pursuit.

Notes:
A dragon's hide is worth at least +3RS armor. It′s fiery breath does Superhuman 4 lethal damage on a direct hit. Any physical attack with claw, bite, stomp or tail does Superhuman 3, lethal if with a claw or bite, stunning if a stomp or tail swipe.

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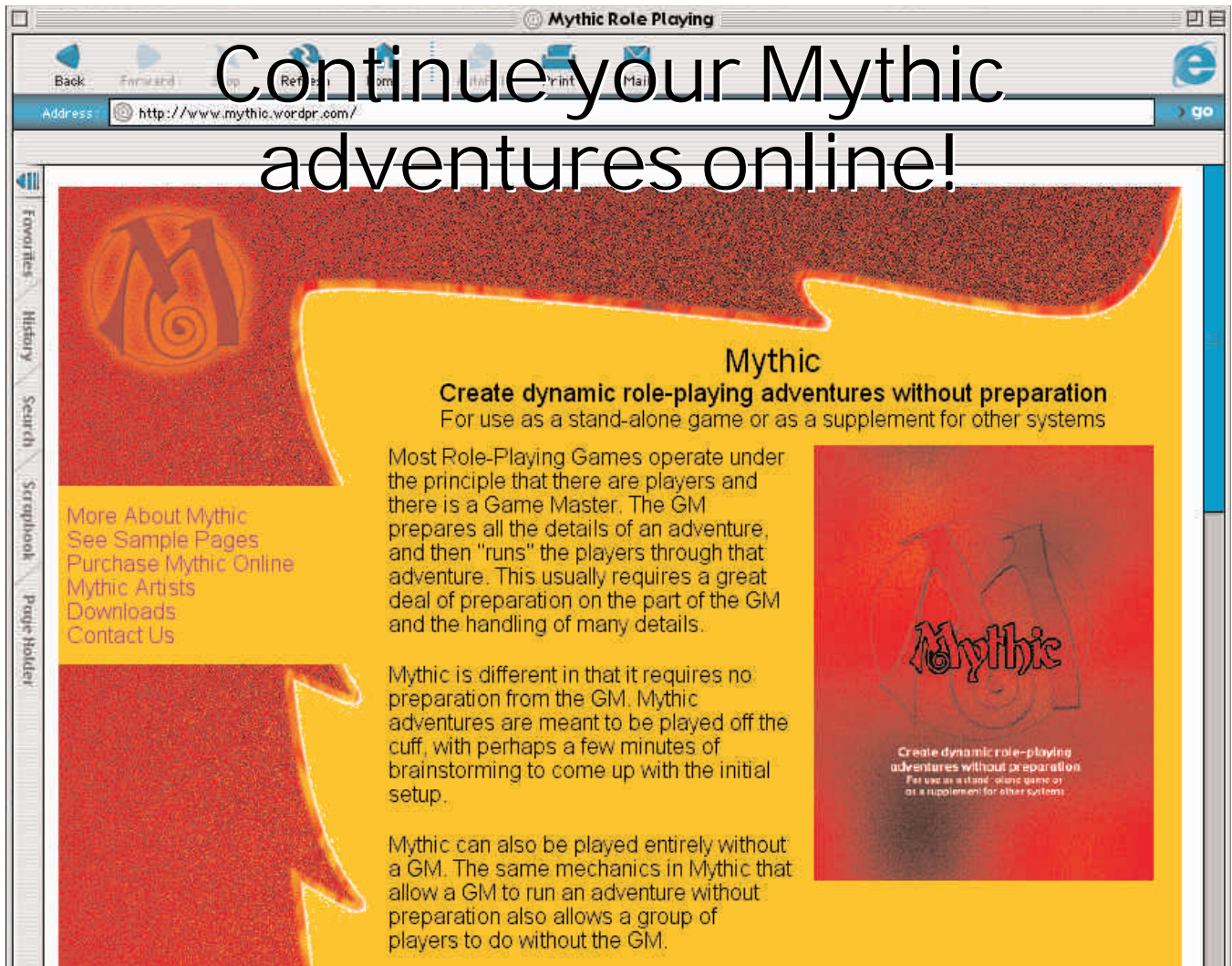
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