HeartQuest

Romantic Roleplaying in the Worlds of Shoujo Manga

Hopcroft, Pool, Ashling, Cluney, Boyd, Alvarez

Credits

Project Leader & Publisher
Michael Hopcroft

Writers
Michael Hopcroft

Robert Pool

Dimitri Ashling

Ewen Cluney

Robert Boyd

Robert Bain

Ismael Alvarez

Travis Johnson

Douglas Larke

Art Director
Laura Block

Artists
Laura Block

Krista Wells

Stephanie

Alexandre van Chestein

Jennifer Kitzman

Editor
Robert Bain

Graphic Design & Typesetting
Alexandre van Chestein

Electronic Formatting
Alexandre van Chestein

Disclaimer

The following materials based on Fudge, entitled HeartQuest: Romantic Roleplaying in the Worlds of Shoujo Manga, are created by, made available by, and Copyright © 2002 by Seraphim Guard, and are not necessarily endorsed in any way by Steffan O'Sullivan or any publisher of other Fudge materials. Neither Steffan O'Sullivan nor any publisher of other Fudge materials is in any way responsible for the content of these materials unless specifically credited. Original Fudge materials Copyright ©1992-1995 by Steffan O'Sullivan, All Rights Reserved.

Fudge

SYSTEM

About Fudge

Fudge is a role-playing game written by Steffan O'Sullivan, with extensive input from the Usenet community of rec.games.design.

The basic rules of Fudge are available on the internet at http://www.fudgerpg.com/ and in book form from Grey Ghost Games, P.O. Box 838, Randolph, MA 02368. They may be used with any gaming genre. While an individual work derived from Fudge may specify certain attributes and skills, many more are possible with Fudge. Every Game Master using Fudge is encouraged to add or ignore any character traits. Anyone who wishes to distribute such material for free may do so; merely include this ABOUT FUDGE notice and disclaimer (complete with Fudge copyright notice). If you wish to charge a fee for such material, other than as an article in a magazine or other periodical, you must first obtain a royalty-free license from the author of Fudge, Steffan O'Sullivan, P.O. Box 465, Plymouth, NH 03264.

Table of Contents

Introduction:
HeartQuest in a Nutshell

Welcome to *HeartQuest*, the roleplaying game of adventure and romance in the worlds of shoujo manga. This rules summary will serve as an introduction to a game that we hope will provide you with hours of entertainment.

An Introduction to Roleplaying

A roleplaying game is a grown-up version of the "let's pretend" games that most of us played as children. If you ever played "cops and robbers" with your neighbors, hosted a tea party for your stuffed animals, or engaged in similar imaginative activities, you have played simple roleplaying games. Some folks have realized that gathering with their friends to portray imaginary characters in dramatic situations is too much fun to be abandoned on reaching adulthood. Roleplaying games like HeartQuest provide their players with an opportunity to play "let's pretend" with their adult friends in a more sophisticated manner. In HeartQuest, each player assumes the role of one or more characters, imaginary people living in a fictional world. The game consists of the interactions between the characters and between the characters and their environment. Roleplaying games are a form of open-ended storytelling or improvisational theater where the players respond to and build upon the ideas and actions of their companions to create a fictional world that seems lifelike because it constantly evolves with each player's contributions.

Because the point of roleplaying is pretending to be somebody else, characters are at the center of any roleplaying game. Thus, it is important for the game to have guidelines to help the players define their characters' abilities and personalities. Chapter One contains HeartQuest's rules for character generation. Shoujo manga contain a wide variety of character types. HeartQuest allows players to simulate this diversity through a flexible character creation system that gives players a great deal of liberty in defining their characters. To get an idea of the kinds of characters you can create with HeartQuest, look at the Sample Characters we have provided in Chapter Twelve. These sample characters will also give you an idea of the variety of worlds that HeartQuest characters adventure in. This rule book also contains guidelines for

creating your own milieu for shoujo manga style drama as well as introductions to three game settings developed by Seraphim Guard: "Sendai Academy," "Ghost Tamer Miyaki," and "Steel Heidi."

One frustration that juvenile roleplayers run into is resolving conflicts between characters. Arguments that run, "'Bang! You're dead!' 'Am not!' 'Are too,'" practically define childish behavior. HeartQuest helps its players avoid this kind of bickering through the Combat rules in Chapter Four and the Task Resolution rules in Chapter Three. HeartQuest's combat and task resolution systems are designed to be easy to understand and use.

To play HeartQuest, you will need a few items in addition to this rule book. First, you will want to find a few other players to play with. In most circumstances, five to seven players is an ideal number, although flexible players can find ways of accommodating as few as two players and as many as two or three dozen. One player in every group will act as the GameMaster. The GameMaster, or GM, acts as a combination of referee, playwright, theatrical director, and legion of extras. The GM is a referee because she is responsible for interpreting the rules as the game progresses. She is a playwright because she determines the game setting that the players' characters will adventure in and the situations they will face. She acts as a director because she provides each player with an opportunity to act their character's part. Finally, the GM provides a "cast of thousands," portraying all of the characters encountered in the game world who are not portrayed by the other players.

You will also want to make sure that the following materials are available when you play HeartQuest: pencil and paper, dice (preferably FUDGE dice as described in "HeartQuest in a Nutshell"), comfortable chairs, a well lit table, a few snacks and drinks. You should plan on setting aside a few hours for play. Depending on the situation being simulated and the number of players present, it can take four hours of game play to resolve an adventure that would fit in a one hour television episode. If possible, take some time before the scheduled start of the game to arrange administrative details such as character

creation with the other players. Character creation in HeartQuest gives you many options, it will take some time to make the decisions that will help you get your character "just right." Finally, don't forget your imagination, sense of humor, and dramatic sensibilities–they'll all come in handy as you enjoy HeartQuest.

Introduction to Shoujo

Shoujo is Japaanese for "girl", and "shoujo manga" literally means "comics for girls". In Japan, everyone reads comics, from children to housewives and salarymen. There are comics for every kind of audience, from teenagers to adults, and every level of maturity in subject matter from childish to perverted in the extreme.

Shoujo manga as we know it today began with the first great master of Japanese comics, Osamu Tezuka. There had been comics aimed at girls today., but Tezuka's series Princess Knight revolutionized the field with its strong storytelling, broad appeal, and classic art style. It helped launch the girls' comic magazine Nakayosi into a powerhouse. Nakayosi would go on to host, over the next forty years, a diverse range of titles including Sailor Moon, Magic Knights Rayearth, Saint Tail and Card Captor Sakura. Tezkua in turn got his inspiration from the all-female theatrical troupes he had watched as a boy growing up in prewar Japan.

Shoujo manga, like manga itself, deals with a wide variety of subjects. Some of it consists of no more than romance stories set in high school or college, or in the workplace. Others introduce all the adventure elements that are present in other Japanese comics. The mood of the comics can range from gritty realism to wild, romantic fantasy. The one constant is the emphasis on emotions and their power over the characters in the story. Even a seemingly straight adventure story like Salior Moon has a strong romantic element – Usagi is driven by love and torn by romantic and emotional uncertainty as much by her reasonable fear of the power of her enemies.

Ever since Princess Knight, shoujo stories have been animated frequently, and sometimes adapted into live-action films. Sailor Moon ran for 200 episodes!

Shoujo first gained popularity in America in the early '90s when a horrible dub of Sailor Moon was released for syndication. Anime fans, of course, at least those lucky enough to be in clubs that could get their hands on it, had already seen the original. Fans began importing shoujo anime on their own, translating it themselves and distributing it among themselves as illegal "fansubs". Nonetheless, this was tolerated as long as the fansubs did not trespass on shows that were already being release d commercially. Sailor Moon was the first test of this policy, as many fans of the series did not want to give up their fansubs after seeing the English version. Later in the 1990s, Pioneer Animation brought over the romantic adventure series Fushigi Yuugi and shoujo began to seriously take off. If the anime front began to expand, the manga front got even bigger with many comic book publishers acquiring shoujo titles and bringing them over to the States.

Today, shoujo manga is an accepted part of the comics scene in America.

Characters and Character Traits

HeartQuest characters are described by "traits," including attributes (five traits that everyone in the game world has), skills (any trait that isn't an attribute and can be improved through practice), gifts (any trait that isn't an attribute or skill but is something positive for the character), and faults (any trait that limits a character's actions or earns him a bad reaction from others). Supernormal powers are treated as potent gifts.

HeartQuest uses ordinary words to describe attributes and skills. The following terms of a seven-level sequence are the descriptive words used in *HeartQuest*:

Superb
Great
Good
Fair
Mediocre
Poor
Terrible

There is an additional level not listed above, Legendary, which is beyond Superb. Beginning players should not have Legendary attributes without the GM's permission.

Attributes

Characters in *HeartQuest* have five attributes. These attributes are further described in Chapter One, Character Creation.

Physique: This measures physical prowess.

Mind: This is your mental capacity—how smart you are and how swiftly your mind works.

Willpower: This measures stick-to-itiveness, determination, and ability to remain focused on your goals.

Cool: This is your ability to keep it together in the face of pressure.

Appearance: This represents how good you look to others, particularly members of the opposite sex.

Character Creation

In *HeartQuest*, a character's attributes start at a default level of Fair for all attributes other than Appearance, which starts at Good, and each player has three "free" levels to allocate amongst their attributes. Most skills start at a default rating of Poor and the player has thirty free levels to allocate. Those skills that do not start at Poor are indicated as Easy, Hard, or Very Hard in the Master Skill List and on the Character Folio. The player may also take two free gifts. In some settings, the GM may also permit the players to take two free supernormal powers. In some cases, the character may desire to have more of one type of trait than another. Furthermore, the player may wish to acquire additional traits at the cost of taking faults. This is done through the procedure of trading traits. Not all traits have equal impact on the game, so the following ratios are used in determining their relative values:

1 fault = 2 attribute levels
1 fault = 6 skill levels
1 fault = 1 gift

1 attribute = 3 skill levels
1 gift = 2 attribute levels
1 gift = 6 skills

Action Resolution

For any action the player character wishes to perform, the GM must determine which trait is tested. (This will usually be a skill or an attribute.) If the action is Unopposed, the GM determines the Difficulty Level. Some actions are so easy that the character succeeds automatically; others are impossible. No rolls are needed in either of these situations.

Unopposed Actions

When a character performs an action that isn't influenced by anyone else, it is referred to as an Unopposed Action. Examples include jumping a wide chasm, climbing a cliff, buying the right keychain, etc.

Difficulty Level: The GM will set a Difficulty Level when a character tries an Unopposed Action. Usually the Difficulty Level will be Fair, but some tasks are easier or harder.

Rolled Degree: This refers to how well a character does at a particular task. If someone is Good at Climbing in general, but the die roll shows a +1 to the character's skill level–in this case Great. Rolled Degrees from Superb +1 to Superb +4 are possible; a GM may thus set a Difficulty Level beyond Superb for nearly impossible actions. Likewise, there are rolled degrees from Terrible -1 down to Terrible -4. The GM should use her imagination in determining such abysmal failures.

Opposed Actions

Actions are Opposed when other people (or animals, etc.) may have an effect on the outcome of the action. In this case, the player of each contestant rolls some dice, and the results are compared to determine the outcome.

Relative Degree: This refers to how well a character did compared to another participant in an Opposed Action. The relative degree is expressed as a number of levels. If a player character gets a rolled degree result of Good in a fight, an his non-player character foe gets a rolled degree result of Mediocre, the player character beat his foe by two levels–the relative degree is +2 from his perspective, -2 from the opponent's.

Fudge Dice and Alternate Random Result Generators

Fudge Dice are six-sided dice with two sides marked + (+1), two sides marked - (-1), and two sides left blank (+/-0). Rolling four Fudge Dice gives results from -4 (sub-Terrible) to +4

(Legendary). To determine the result of an action, roll the dice and use the result to modify the trait level being tested. For example a +3 dice result (three more + than - rolled) added to a Fair trait is a Superb rolled degree; a -1 result added to a Fair trait indicates a Mediocre result.

Alternative 3d6 dice method: If you do not have Fudge Dice available, you may wish to use the following method for calculating results: Roll 3 six-sided dice. Add the numbers and compare the sum to the following tables:

Rolled:	3-4	5	6-7	8-9
Result:	-4	-3	-2	-1

Rolled:	10-11	12-13	14-15	16	18
Result:	0	+1	+2	+3	+4

When determining Difficulty levels, it may help to keep the statistical results of rolling four Fudge dice in mind. A little over half of the time, you will roll zero or plus or minus one. The chance

of obtaining the various results is shown in the graph below.
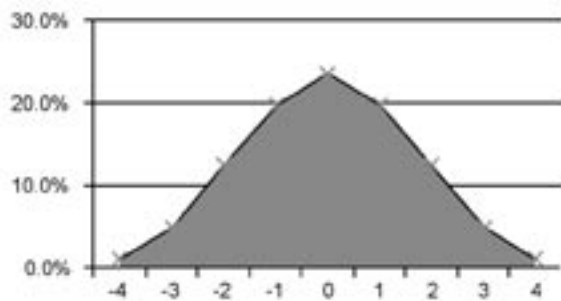
Scale

Every so often, characters with very different traits will oppose each other. For example, the heroine's kitten may chose to pick a fight with a dragon. Both the dragon and the kitten will have traits ranging from Terrible to Superb; however, a dragon with a Poor Physique is not a push over for a kitten with a Great Physique. In our example, the dragon's physique is rated in the Dragon Scale while the kitten's physique is rated in the Cat Scale. The GM determines the difference between dragon and cat scale as a number of additional success levels when they attempt various actions (the dragon will do much more damage, but the kitten will have an easier time hiding under his mistress' dress). The GM will tell you when Scale is a consideration in your game.

Wounds

Each character has a Wound Threshold that is calculated by adding or subtracting the character's Physique and Willpower attributes to 10. A character can withstand accumulated damage up to his Wound Threshold without penalty. If the character suffers damage equaling his Wound Threshold, he is Hurt and suffers a -1 penalty to all of his dice rolls. A character that suffers twice his Wound Threshold, is Very Hurt and suffers a -2 penalty. If a character takes accumulates three times his Wound Threshold, he is Incapacitated and falls unconscious. A character that suffers five times his Wound Threshold is Dead.

Determining Damage Levels: Each character has an Offensive Damage Factor (ODF) and a Defensive Damage Factor (DDF). The ODF is determined based on the attacker's Physique, Scale (mass), and weapon. The DDF is based on the defender's Physique, Scale (mass), and armor. The damage inflicted by a victorious attacker equals his ODF minus the defender's DDF.

HeartQuest

Chapter 1:
Character Creation

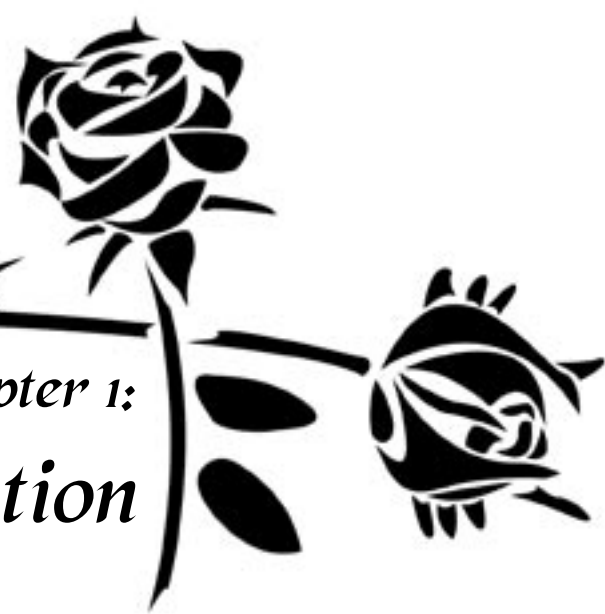Needless to say, a character is a necessity for playing a roleplaying game. This chapter delves into the ins and outs of character creation for the *HeartQuest* RPG. This is an important step for any player character as the concepts and stats developed now will likely stay the same for a long period of time. This section describes the step-by-step process, starting with the basics and developing a better picture of the character as it proceeds.

To make things a bit clearer, we'll use Hiroshi from the Sendai Academy as an example character for each step. As we progress through the chapter, we'll watch as Hiroshi slowly develops into a complete character.

Trading Traits

Each character is made up of five specific elements that define, in terms of the character's stats, what the character is and what he can do. These elements are collectively known as "Traits." The five traits are attributes, skills, gifts, faults, and supernormal powers. Each character automatically starts with free levels for attributes, skills, gifts and (if used in the particular campaign) supernormal powers. In some cases, the player may feel their character needs more of a specific trait and less of another. Thus, players have the option of trading their traits around for their character. Not all traits are considered equal, however, and as such the values of some of the traits do not necessarily match up at a one-to-one ratio. Characters also can buy faults to increase the value of other traits.

1 fault = 2 attribute levels
1 fault = 6 skill levels
1 fault = 1 gift

1 attribute = 3 skill levels
1 gift = 2 attribute levels
1 gift = 6 skills

0. Campaign Settings

The first step in character creation is of course deciding what kind of character you want to play. There are countless character types in shoujo manga and their related anime that make fascinating player characters. Before work can begin on the character, you will need to work with your GM as far as what kind of campaign setting the game will use. This is an important decision since it may greatly affect the character's traits and background.

There are three types of campaign settings supported by the *HeartQuest* RPG: Teen Romance, Magic Girls, and Fantastic Adventures.

In a **Teen Romance** game, most of the characters will be boys and girls in high school or junior high. They'll be dealing with the traumas of growing up, falling in and out of love, friendship and enmity, and all of the sources of teenage angst and comedy. The characters can be much more than ordinary students, of course, often with their own unique talents. In a game like this a lot of characters will have social Gifts and Faults in quantity, attributes like Appearance and Cool are at a premium, and so forth. Characters will not have Supernormal Powers in this type of game unless the GM says otherwise.

However, characters in a Teen Romance game are not necessarily limited to students. Teachers can make very interesting player characters as well, as can family, friends, siblings, parents, and anyone else likely to interact with teenagers.

There are other types of campaigns; perhaps the most famous type is the **Magic Girl** campaign. In a Magic Girl game the player characters will be linked by a common thread and will all have Supernormal Powers. Usually, the GM will give each player a set number of powers and let the player buy extras by taking faults. Magic Girls have several traits in common; they usually keep their mystic activities a secret from the world at large by various means, they frequently transform from a normal form to a disguised or costumed one, and those whose activities are known are often misunderstood.

In both types of campaigns the players should all work out as a group who is playing what type of character to avoid excessive duplication of effort. In most magical girl campaigns where all the PCs are magical girls, and they'll tend to have names or abilities in a certain theme. In Sailor Moon, for

instance, each girl is named after a planet (Sailor Mercury, Sailor Venus, Sailor Mars, etc.) and has a type of power that is associated with it. This isn't required, but it should be something you and your fellow players should think about.

The third shoujo genre supported by the *HeartQuest* RPG is called **Fantastic Adventures**. In this type of campaign setting, the characters are often displaced persons that are sent to another world. In addition, all bets are off in terms of character creation. PCs from our world are often schoolgirls and schoolboys, but in the other world they often have abilities they only gradually become aware of. This can be handled by the GM giving the players latent Supernormal Powers that only manifest themselves gradually or only in emergencies. Characters can come from the other world as well, and have those abilities that are natural for that world. The GM will hopefully involve the players enough in the world design that they'll feel their characters belong there.

There are many other campaign types that work in *HeartQuest*, of course – far more than can be described here. The best approach when choosing a character concept is to have all the players and the GM work together to create the party of player characters so that they all fit together, with natural relationships and rivalries.

Example: Michael has decided he's going to start up a game for HeartQuest to give the game some much needed playtesting. He's managed, so far, to get five different players for the game: Clarissa, Rob, Paul, James, and Dimitri. After some discussion, the six of them (counting Michael) decide to do a Teenage Romance campaign and comes up with a short list of character ideas he'd like to see implemented by the players.

1. Character Concept

All things have start from a certain point and expand outward. For the character creation process, this starting point is known as the "character concept" (or simply "concept"). The character concept, is, in essence, the basic set of ideas everything else comes from. The easiest way to come up with a character concept is create a brief phrase that describes the character. Take

Hiroshi, our example character, for instance. Hiroshi could be described as "normal guy who hides superb physical/sports talent." We know that Hiroshi looks like a normal guy, but he's also got exceptional physical abilities. If he's a sports god and showing it off, why is he hiding it? From such a phrase, more details can be yanked out and expanded to give the character greater depth. Little hooks like these give GMs excellent ways to mold sessions around the character's concept.

Other important elements of the character should also be fleshed out at this point. These include the character's gender, general height and weight, hair color and style, eye color, general tastes in clothing, and age.

Example: Rob, one of Michael's players, looks down the list and spots a guy named 'Hiroshi' who is the long time friend of the game's 'heroine', Chiharu. After telling Michael that he'll play the part of Hiroshi, he starts thinking about how to turn the character concept into a more fleshed out character. With that in mind, he starts with Hiroshi's physical appearance. He's a typical male shoujo manga character (in other words tall and slender with broad shoulders) with dirty blonde hair he combs to the left. He'll be a handsome guy, but not excessively so. Since Chiharu already looks be a bookworm, Rob decides to make Hiroshi more of a physical guy – maybe good at sports (since Chiharu isn't).

2. Attributes

Each FUDGE game defines its attributes differently. Each attribute is essentially something that all characters in the game have (see "FUDGE In A Nutshell" for more on attributes).

HeartQuest characters all have five attributes; **Physique**, **Mind**, **Willpower**, **Cool** and **Appearance**. Each attribute controls various aspects of how a character interacts with others and the world.

At the beginning of character creation all five Attributes are rated as Fair. You get three "free levels" you can use to increase your attributes. In addition, player characters automatically get an additional level of Appearance, meaning

your Appearance can start out at Good without you using one of your free levels. You can get additional levels to spend on Attributes by taking a Fault: each fault gives you two levels to use for Attributes. You can also reduce the level of an Attribute below Fair and use that level elsewhere.

Physique is a measure of the character's ability to perform physical tasks. This attribute includes speed, dexterity, agility and raw muscular power. It is used when the character needs to do something physical such as lift something, run from one place to another, leap over a fence, and other feats where strength, stamina, or agility are important. It is rarely used in combat; use combat skills instead. If your character is stronger than he is quick, or vice versa, appropriate Gifts can further define this attribute.

Mind is a measure of mental capacity, including memory, raw intelligence and mental flexibility. A player can, for example, roll against Mind if there's an important detail the player has forgotten but the character might remember – the GM will remind him if the roll is made successfully. Mind rolls should never be used as a substitute for good role-playing, however! The Mind attribute can also be used to provide a general idea of how well a character does with schoolwork.

Willpower is a measure of the ability of the character to stick to a task, resist persuasion and seduction, and resist panic. Characters with a high Willpower possess truly indomitable spirits, while characters with a low Willpower are easy to manipulate. Willpower is also important for characters who dabble in supernatural powers and can also help characters withstand punishment in combat.

Cool is a measures of the character's ability to be smooth and composed in social situations. Characters with a high Cool never seem flustered and are always able to say what they want to. Characters with a low Cool stumble on their tongues and don't always get to say what's on their minds.

Appearance measures how good a character looks to others. Characters with high Appearance are handsome or beautiful, and characters with really high Appearance are flat-out gorgeous. Characters with a low Appearance are unpleasant to look at for some reason. A character's Appearance is important and will go a long way towards determining how people react to him.

Example: Having gone through the descriptions, it's time to give Hiroshi his attributes. He's got three free levels to work with, plus a free level of Appearance. As Rob decided in step one, Hiroshi is going to be a very physical guy, so he uses those three free levels to flat out boost his Physique attribute to Superb. As for the other attributes, Rob will say Hiroshi has problems keeping his temper sometimes (especially when somebody is hitting on Chiharu) and can be a mess around pretty girls. Rob moves Hiroshi's Cool attribute from Fair to Mediocre. This will free up an extra attribute level, which he'll give to Willpower. This signifies Hiroshi's determination and ability to do what he sets his mind to. So in the end, Hiroshi has the following attributes:

Physique: Superb (+3)
Mind: Fair (+0)
Willpower: Good (+1)
Cool: Mediocre (-1)
Appearance: Good (+1)

Note: Rob has a habit of writing the modifiers alongside the attributes and skills of the characters he writes. He does it this way so to show the GM (and remind himself) how his attribute or skill levels were used. You don't have to do it yourself, but we thought it'd be a good idea to use them in the examples.

3. Skills

Skills represent any trait that can be learned through practice, study, or instruction. They represent narrow abilities and can be used to showcase areas where a character excels. Like attributes, they are rated on a scale from Terrible to Fair to Superb. Each player character starts with 30 skill levels at this point in the creation process. Additional skills can be obtained by taking faults at a rate of one fault per six skill levels.

Keep in mind that the skill list that follows is only a list of the most common skills that might

pop up in *HeartQuest*. If the character should have an additional Skill not covered on the list, talk with your GM on the effects of the Skill. Think of the skills used in *HeartQuest* as the most common skills found among most characters.

Skill Difficulty

Most skills start at the "Poor" level and are increased with the free skill levels each player gets to distribute through their character. "If I place 3 points into my Acrobatic skill, the skill goes from Poor to Good." However, several skills in *HeartQuest* are easier or harder to learn. These skills and cost to increase them are included on the table below:

Table 1.1: Skill Difficulty Table			
Level	**Easy**	**Most**	**Hard**	**V.Hard**
Superb	4	5	6	7
Great	3	4	5	6
Good	2	3	4	5
Fair	1	2	3	4
Mediocre	0	1	2	3
Poor	-1	0	1	2
Terrible	-2	-1	0	1

Those skills that fall under the Easy, Hard, or Very Hard categories will have an E, H, or VH in parenthesis by the name of the skill both in Master Skill List (found near the end of the chapter) as well as in the descriptions.

Skill Groups

All skills are organized into nine distinctive groups: Athletic Skills, Artistic Skills, Combat Skills, Covert Skills, Everyday Skills, Knowledge Skills, Manipulative Skills, Supernatural Skills, and Wilderness Skills. This is mainly done so that skills that are very similar can be found easier both in the list below and for the descriptions found later.

Artistic Skills: Skills used to perform or create a specific type of art. This can cover such activities as drawing, painting, making sculptures, calligraphy, etc.

Athletic Skills: Any skill that requires physical motion like running or jumping. Obviously, a character tightly bound with rope or otherwise incapacitated is not going to be able to use an Athletic skill.

Combat Skills: Any skill that results in harming another person. Characters taking any combat skill must be discussed with the GM first. You're not going to find 11 year old kids with a Great Guns skill in an otherwise non-violent campaign – this is a shoujo RPG!

Covert Skills: Skills that let the character do sneaky stuff like shadow that arch-enemy to find where he's going, or slip past their ninja bodyguards. Some Covert skills, such as Poisoning, are not appropriate for all campaigns and may require the GM's permission.

Everyday Skills: These are skills that are frequently used in everyday life by everyone. Many of these are particularly geared toward to teenagers, but can still be of use to characters of any age.

Knowledge Skills: These are skills that grant knowledge of a specific area of knowledge or know-how to a character. For instance, a character with the Japanese History skill could tell you trivial bits of information on the early years of Japan. The more obscure the information, the more difficult the skill roll will be.

Wilderness Skills: As the name implies, these are skills that are used in the wilderness. For the most part, these skills don't traditionally appear in shoujo anime/manga since we rarely see anything other than the occasional camping trip during summer break.

Supernatural Skills: These are skills used in conjunction with Supernormal powers. This group is fairly small and any power that the character has that might be used against another character (i.e., Mind Control) should have a skill that links to it.

Artistic Skills

Note: There are some instances where multiple Artistic skills can be used in conjunction.

A prime example is a rock band where there's a singer, guitar player, bass player, and drummer (and possibly back-up singers, keyboardists, etc.). In such cases, the skill value if a unopposed/opposed test is required should be roughly equal to that of the person who is leading the performance. In the case of the rock band, this would be the lead singer. However, the skill levels of the other performers are important too. If a member of the performance has a higher or lower skill rating than the performance leader (the lead singer in the example), the difference should be added or subtracted from the leader's skill rating. In some cases, a great performer can balance out someone with a less than stellar skill rating.

Example: We have a simple three piece band - Toshio, Setsuyo, and "Bobby." Toshio is the lead singer and has a Singing skill of Great (+2). However, Bobby has Musical Instruments (Drums) skill of Good (+1), which while excellent isn't quite on par with Toshio's fine singing voice. To make things even is the awesome riffs coming out Setsuyo's guitar playing- Musical Instruments (Guitar): Superb (+3). Since Setsuyo's skill is higher than Toshio's, it gives Toshio a +1 bonus to his skill and balances out Bobby's lesser skill.

Acting/Drama: The ability to change one's voice and mannerisms to something completely different. The GM should increase the difficulty of using the skill based on how different it is from the character's own voice or mannerisms. A character that is a boisterous tall boy with a deep voice may have trouble acting like a mousy little girl!

Calligraphy: The skill of producing neat and artistic traditional writing using ink and a paintbrush. The GM may increase the difficulty if the character is attempting to produce particularly complex kanji (Chinese characters, the hardest element of the written Japanese language); some kanji have as many as 20 separate strokes involved.

Dancing (Traditional/Classical): The character has been trained in traditional Japanese dances and possibly (depending on the character's background) dances from other countries. The difficulty may be increased depending on the complexity and duration of the dance.

Drawing/Painting: The ability to produce pleasing imagery on paper or canvas. Although identical in practice, Drawing and Painting are two different skills that must be bought separately. GMs may allow a character that is Good or higher in one of the two skills to default two levels lower to the other. The difficulty for the skill can be increased, depending on how complex the artwork is. It's one thing to make a fancy doodle and another to paint the interior of a cathedral....

Example: Hiroshi has a Superb Drawing skill. Midori-Sensei requires him to paint (of all things) a female classmate. Unfortunately, Hiroshi has no prior experience in Painting, but the GM decides that since he is such an excellent artist when drawing, he has the Painting skill at Good (two levels lower than his Drawing skill).

Flower Arrangement (E): The ability to arrange a vase or similar container of flowers in a visually pleasing way. The difficulty for using the skill can be increased by the complexity of the arrangement and its size. It's one thing to arrange three flowers, but arranging 300 or more is an entirely different matter!

Musical Instrument: The character has been trained to play a specific instrument or a small group of them (in this latter case the character effectively has a skill level that is one level lower than purchased). This skill can be used to inspire such emotions as love, happiness, or even anger upon the audience. The difficulty for using the skill may be increased or decreased depending on the audience's mood, how much they like the performer, etc.

Poetry: The skill of creating emotionally pleasing or otherwise effective poetry. The Poetry skill can sometimes be used with Oratory (see Manipulative skills) to produce emotionally stunning spoken poetry. The most common use for the skill, however, is for written poetry. The GM may opt to increase the difficulty depending on the complexity and range of the poem. Creating a simple haiku is one thing, but writing a 200 page poem dedicated to beauty and grace of a specific character is a totally different matter.

Sewing/Costume Design: The ability to create and repair clothes and costumes. The difficulty for using this skill can be increased depending on the complexity of the intended design or by the amount of damage that needs to be repaired.

Singing: The skill of using the character's voice to produce emotionally effective songs. This skill can be used to inspire such emotions as love, happiness, or even anger in the audience. The difficulty for using the skill may be increased or decreased depending on the audience's mood, how much they like the singer, etc.

Sculpting/Modeling: The ability to create visually pleasing works of art out of clay and similar substances that can be molded by using the character's hands or other instruments. The difficulty increases depending on the complexity and size of the sculpture. Making little houses out of clay is one thing, making a replica of the Statue of Liberty is something totally different.

Athletic skills

Acrobatics: The ability to do various acrobatic or tumbling tricks like somersaults, cartwheels, aerial cartwheels, etc. The difficulty for using the skill may increase depending on the difficulty of the maneuver being performed.

Climbing: The skill of climbing surfaces or obstacles without falling down. The difficulty may be increased or decreased depending on factors such as the weather, the availability of hand-holds, and whether or not the character is using the proper equipment.

Driving: The ability to drive any form of land based vehicle without crashing it into other cars, pedestrians, or conveniently placed brick walls. This skill is frequently used for driving stunts like dodging attacks, driving in the wrong lane, or performing jumps on a vehicle that wasn't meant to jump. While a character who knows how to drive should have this skill, skill rolls are not necessary for normal everyday driving.

Jumping: The character's ability to perform jumps, horizontal or vertical. Assume the character can leap horizontally 1.5 meters/yards for every level over poor or vertically 1 meter/yard for every level over poor (e.g., a character with a Jumping skill of Good can jump vertically 3 meters).

Piloting: The ability to pilot any type of aircraft (helicopter, fighter jet, airship, etc.) without crashing into the ground and killing the character and anyone stupid enough to fly with him. This skill is most frequently used for various piloting stunts like aerial acrobatics (loop 'de loop!), dodging missiles, etc.

Running: The ability to run for an extended period of time. Assume the character run a number of rounds/minutes equal to each bonus from Physique and Running. Each round after that, the character must make a Running skill test to keep running. The difficulty starts at Terrible, but increases by one level each round afterwards. (1st round: Terrible, 2nd round: Poor, 3rd round Mediocre, etc.) If the roll fails, the runner stumbles!

Example: Ichiro has a Physique of Great (+2) and a Running of Good (+1). He can run at full speed for 3 minutes (180 seconds). After that amount of time, he will slowly start feeling himself wind down...

Shiphandling: The ability to pilot any type of boat (sailboat, submarine, battleship, etc.) without running it into the beach or losing direction. This skill is most frequently used for various sailing stunts like keeping the ship on course during a storm, dodging torpedoes, etc.

Sport (name): The skill and talent to effectively play a specific sport other than those exclusively involving swimming, running, jumping, or combat skills like fencing or archery.

Swimming: The ability to swim for an extended period of time. Assume the character can easily swim a number of rounds/minutes equal to each bonus from Physique and Swimming. Each round after that, the character must make a Swimming skill test to keep swimming. The difficulty starts at Terrible, but increases by one level each round afterwards. (1st round: Terrible, 2nd round: Poor, 3rd round Mediocre, etc.) If the

roll fails, the swimmer gets a cramp or some other nuisance that forces them to stop swimming!

Throwing: The character's skill at throwing something accurately. This can be a shuriken, a baseball, or a conveniently launched Pocky stick. If the thrower attempts to make a fancy throw (hitting a target by ricocheting a ball off two different walls) or the target is a long distance away, the GM may increase the difficulty of the skill test.

Combat Skills

Archery: The skill of using various types of bows (such as the traditional Japanese daikyu) accurately. The difficulty may be increased based on the range between the character and the target, any obstructions that may be in the way, and the size of the target.

Brawling: The character's ability to fight with one's fists. If the player wants fancy kicks and judo style throws, they must purchase the Martial Arts skill.

Demolitions: The ability to set up or create an explosive without blowing yourself up in the process.

Guns (VH): The ability to accurately shoot any form of personal firearm, from a typical revolver to a standard heavy-duty assault cannon. Since most *HeartQuest* RPG campaigns take place in Japan and Japan has very strict firearm restrictions, guns are very hard to obtain, let alone use. As a result, guns are very rare and usually either possessed by villains or replaced by less deadly high-tech weapons.

Martial Arts (VH): The character has extensively trained in the use of the martial arts and is an effective fighter without a weapon. For each skill level over Fair, add a +1 DF bonus to any damage done by a martial arts attack. GMs may restrict this skill if they feel the campaign will focus solely on character interaction and use of the skill should be prohibited.

Melee Combat: The skill of using any type of handheld weapon in combat except swords, be it a bokken or a broom handle. The character may specialize in a specific weapon for an extra skill.

Swordsmanship: The skill of using swords; the character must specify which type of swords (Japanese swords, western fencing swords, medieval broadswords, etc.) she has learned to use. This skill can be applied to other types of edged weapons with a -1 penalty. Melee Combat defaults to this at -1 for a roughly sword-shaped weapon (such as a wooden practice sword). If you want a multi-cultural swordswoman, equally comfortable with a katana and a saber, spending an extra skill level will gain efficient use of both types of weapon. Note this on the character sheet.

Covert skills

Breaking and Entering: The skill of entering a residence or other building without altering security or the owners.

Disguise: The ability to use make-up and other items to impersonate a specific person or a general type of person (such as a student of another school or a police officer). The difficulty increases when trying to disguise as a specific person; it's easy to convince a person that you're a random bum, but it's a lot harder to convince Mrs. Sukino that you're her husband, though knowing the person being impersonated and successfully using the Acting skill can reduce the difficulty considerably.

Electronics: The character has a knack for playing around with electronic devices. He can modify or repair broken devices with the right equipment and tamper with electronic security devices such as cameras, alarms, etc.

Forgery: the skill of copying a different person's penmanship and producing letters or other documents that look like the original. Surprisingly useful for forging love letters…

Lockpicking: The ability to pick locks or otherwise bypass methods of guarding valuables.

Perception: The ability to notice things that do not belong such as secret doors and less-than-obvious clues.

Pickpocketing: The skill of removing wallets and other valuables from a person without them noticing the items are gone. The difficulty increases based on the size of the objects stolen and the alertness of the victim.

Poisoning: The ability to create and administer different types of poisons. The term poison covers toxins created from plants as well as from chemicals. Most poisons have a specific effect, determined by the GM, but this is not necessarily always deadly. This skill can, for example, be used to handle "food wars" between rival girls that mix different type of love potions into the food they offer their would-be boyfriend to make the guy fall in love with them.

Shadowing: The skill of following a person without being spotted. The difficulty may be increased depending on different situations such as the amount of light available, how many other people are around, etc.

Sleight of Hand: The ability to make items seem to vanish in much the same manner as seen in a stage magic show. This skill can also be used to move objects when the other person isn't looking. This can be very useful with games of Go, Chess (Western chess or Japanese shougi), or Checkers.

Stealth: The ability to quietly get past a person without alerting them of your presence. The difficulty may be increased depending on the situations, including factors such as the amount of light and cover available. This skill can also be used to surprise/ambush a person or group.

Traps: The ability to find and deactivate any type of traps that might interfere with a would-be thief.

Everyday Skills

Animal Care: The ability to take care of animals and raise them properly. A high skill may imply the character has a natural affinity for taking care of animals while a low skill might result in unruly pets.

Cooking: The skill to prepare edible food by following the appropriate directions. A high Cooking skill allows the character to create their own dishes or dishes from different countries (Chinese Food, American Food, Italian Food, or even Mexican Food or something even more exotic). Keep in mind that cooking is a very important genre convention of Shoujo anime, especially for girls. It is common for girls to attempt to impress boys they like by fixing them a special lunch, and thus a good Cooking skill is a considerable asset. On the other hand, a girl that can't cook rarely has a boyfriend or has one that she wishes she didn't have.

Dancing (Modern): The ability to do all the latest moves that are all the rage in the local dance clubs and the knowledge of how to identify the moves being used by other dancers. This skill may also grant knowledge of the local favorite bands, DJs, and the local club scene.

Fashion Sense: The ever-important skill of dressing fashionably and identifying which types of clothing are currently "in." This skill also determines how well the character can apply make-up and pick the right accessories to go with their clothes.

Gossip: The ability to pick up gossip from a variety of different sources – specifically true gossip and not false rumors. The Gossip skill can be used to spread rumors although the difficulty depends on how believable the rumor is.

Shopping: The skill of picking out the right bargains while shopping – although the Fashion Sense skill is required in order to determine whether they will look good on the character.

Knowledge Skills

Alchemy: The ability to create different magical (or at least allegedly magical) mixtures from various substances. Most often used to create love potions and other similar concoctions.

Computers: The ability to use a computer without being utterly confused by the interface. A higher skill grants the ability to write programs as well as build or repair a personal computer.

Culture (name): The knowledge of a specific foreign country and its culture, beliefs, customs, and so forth.

Doctor (VH): The character can efficiently diagnose and treat various ailments and injuries. This skill also covers the ability to identify and administer medicine.

Folklore: Each country develops, over the years, its own unique stories and "tall tales" that are told again and again throughout the years. This skill grants the character knowledge of the most important stories and myths that are unique to it. Thus, a character with Japanese Folklore would know about Momotaro, Oni, and so forth, while a character with American Folklore might know about Paul Bunyan and Bigfoot.

Geography: The character has managed to learn the geography of a specific country. Most school students and adults can find the most common cities and countries on a map, but pinpointing the exact location of a very minor fishing village is a different matter. If the character has the correct History skill as well, he can pinpoint historical battlegrounds, ancient monuments, and destroyed cities/villages.

History: This skill grants the character knowledge of a specific country's history since its founding. Like other knowledge skills, the difficulty increases depending on how obscure and specific the information desired. For instance, a person with a Japanese History skill could tell you that there was a Sengoku (Warring States) period, but it would be much harder for them to name off the most influential generals in the time period as well as produce the names of each of their children accurately.

Language: This skill grants the character with knowledge of a foreign language of their choosing. Each level over Fair can either be used to master more difficult uses of a specific language (e.g., knowledge of the Kanji that is no longer used by modern Japanese) or additional languages for each level above Fair. For instance, a character with Language: Superb could have three different languages at Fair level.

Literature: The character knows a great deal about a specific type of literature. The player should specify what type of literature it is either in the form of the nation it comes from (Japanese Literature), by the genre of the literature (Science Fiction Literature), or both (Japanese Sci-Fi Literature).

Lore: This skill grants the character knowledge of a specific area of knowledge not covered by any other knowledge skill. The name of the skill should be changed to suit this. For instance, a character with a knowledge of the Lore of Shoujo Manga would have the skill listed as "Shoujo Manga Lore" on his sheet.

Mechanic: The character is skilled at maintaining, repairing, and (with a high enough Mechanic skill level) constructing things – specifically cars and similar large devices – given the proper tools and time. The more complex the device is, the more difficult it may be to use this skill. For instance, it would be very hard for someone to repair fusion powered spaceship if he was accustomed to fixing regular cars.

Occultism: This skill grants knowledge the "occult." In most cases, this refers to many of the darker areas of mythology such as vampires, werewolves, devils, demons, ghosts, and similar supernatural entities. This skill could possibly be split between "Western Occultism" and "Eastern Occultism," but most bits of occult lore are known to both hemispheres with a bit of research regardless of the character's nationality. Occultism also covers Satanism and other cult religions.

Research: This skill allows the character to retrieve useful information on a specific topic from any source such as libraries, internet databases, newspapers, or even the local television news. While useful on its own, the Research skill can be used to supplement other Knowledge skills to find the utmost arcane bits of information about a subject that the character has as a Knowledge skill. If used as such, the GM may grant a bonus

depending on how arcane the knowledge is and how well stocked the character's information source is. Finding out the name of a WWII GI unit will be easier to locate in the Library of Congress than it will be in a small poorly funded library in the middle of nowhere.

Teaching (VH): The ability to impart knowledge of a particular skill or subject matter to others.

Theology: While Folklore handles myths and legends, the Theology skill grants knowledge of the legends and events in the history of a specific religion. For instance, Christian Theology would grant the character knowledge of the Old and New Testaments, stories about the various saints, the Crusades, and so on. It also grants knowledge of the religion's chain of command, beliefs and principles, traditions, and prominent priests and other clergy.

Veterinarian (H): This skill grants the same abilities as the Doctor skill, but for taking care of injured or sick animals.

Manipulative Skills

Important Note: In most anime – particularly Shoujo anime – telling lies to your friends or fast-talking them into doing things they might not ordinarily want to do can damage the relationship between the two characters.

Bribery: Greasing a person's palm with an appropriate bribe can be the perfect way to get out of a jam. This skill allows the character to bribe people who might not normally be tempted by bribes. A character with a high Bribery skill can also bribe for less. There are a number of modifiers that could come into play when using this skill such as a bad relationship with the person, a previous history of bad bribing attempts, or using an insufficient bribe for the task. Failure at using the Bribery skill may result in the character getting themselves in trouble or a well-known reputation as a "greaser of palms."

Fast-Talk: The classic skill of manipulating through confusion, "not exactly true" information, and even sinking as low as to using guilt trips.

Flattery: The ability to make people like the player character by resorting to a few well place positive comments. The ultimate "brown-noser" skill.

Guilt Trip: The de facto manipulation skill used by mothers and girlfriends around the world. Nothing gets to an unruly son or boyfriend like faking emotional hurt or distress.

Haggle: This ability allows the character to decrease the price of an object on sale to a more reasonable amount of money. This skill is frequently used as an opposed roll between both characters using the Haggle skill. The difficulty can be increased by attempting to lower it ridiculous amounts or through a well-used type of blackmail on the other person. Failures can result in prices increasing.

Interrogate: The ability to get information out of a person. This can be done in several ways such as making the person like the character or a shrewd bit intimidation or blackmail ("Tell me what I'd like to know and I'll make sure a certain 'embarrassing' photograph isn't leaked to the school newspaper.") Torture is another possibility, but this is a shoujo anime RPG….

Intimidate: A cold stare, a demonstration of strength, or a few well-place threats… These all have the same effect of intimidating people. By use of this threat, the target(s) might be persuaded into doing what the character tells them to do, such as giving up their money or staying out his way. The Intimidate skill is most often used as an opposed rolls between the intimidator's Intimidate skill against the victim's Willpower. Failure may result in the target not being moved by the use of intimidate (by 1-2 levels) or becoming royally ticked off (by 3+ levels). Frequent uses of the Intimidate skill can result in a bully mentality that eventually results in the victims wanting to get even.

Lying: The ability to tell a believable lie. The more simple or believable the lie is, the easier it becomes to make the person lied to believe in it. For instance, "the moon is populated by mice that eat cheese" wouldn't faze any but the most gullible of people. However, "Midori-sensei and Kazuko-sensei are dating" would be very believable

– especially if it's already a hot rumor throughout the school that the two are a couple.

Oratory: The character has the ability to make eloquent speeches that have an impact on his audience. The difficulty of the skill can increase or decrease depending on how well the audience likes the character, how much the audience believes in the speaker's subject, and how big the audience is. If used successfully, the skill can be used to influence the emotions of the audience to the speaker's pleasing. The speaker can invoke heart-felt sadness, emptiness, anger, or inspiration in the audience. What effect this has on the audience is ultimately up to the GM. On an extremely good result, the audience may be roused to do exactly as the character wants or may fight/play extra hard in the case of a pep-rally type speech.

Example: Kiyoji is the captain of the Kendo club and speaks to the entire club to motivate them in their upcoming kendo match. Unfortunately for the club, they were absolutely crushed in their last match, although the captain himself retains a flawless record thus far this year. The GM decides the guys are bummed and Kiyoji's player automatically gets a -1 penalty. This lowers Kiyoji's otherwise Great skill level at Oratory to Good. The GM rolls 4dF as normal as Kiyoji's player rants and raves in character that they go forth with their mighty shinai and strike a true blow for justice in the honor of the noble Inazuka Sr. High School. By some act of God, the GM gets a +4 result- a Superb++! The GM tells Kiyoji's player that the students are inspired and gleefully salute their honorable captain and are ready lay down their lowly lives in the name of the school's honor.

Persuasion: The ability to get a person to see the character's point of view without resorting to any other Manipulation skill.

Seduction: Does this skill really need an explanation? The ability to impress a member of the appropriate sex by using one's masculine or feminine charm. The Seduction skill is normally used in opposed rolls between the person using the Seduction skill and the target's Cool attribute. Obviously, a person with a low Cool will be easier to seduce than a person with a very high Cool.

Other modifiers can be applied depending on the situation. For instance, it's harder for the bishonen playboy to seduce a girl who happens to be very sure she's a lesbian.

Supernormal Power skills

Spellcasting (VH): The ability to cast magic spells. In order to take this skill, the character must have the supernormal power of Magic Talent. The character's skill level in Spellcasting does not determine how powerful the character is with magic; rather it refers to how well they can handle the talent that they have. A character could easily possess a very high Spellcasting skill but only be able to pull off cheap tricks (level one/novice magic) or a have a very low Spellcasting skill that can produce incredible feats of magic (level five/archmage magic).

Use (Supernormal Power): This skill must be taken if the character buys any supernormal power than can be used against another person. For instance, a super jump power wouldn't require a "Use Super Jump" skill – it lets the character jump really high and that's all it does. However, a Mind Control power could be resisted by the target so it will require the player character to buy a "Use Mind Control" skill.

Wilderness Skills

Fishing: The ability to catch fish from a stream or river with the proper equipment (fishing rod, bait, etc.).

Riding: The ability to control a horse or similar animal that can be ridden. This skill can also be used to perform daring stunts such as jumping chasms or standing in the saddle while galloping.

Survival: This skill allows the character to "live off the land" (without the aid of a car loaded with groceries) for an extended period of time. Depending on the environment, the character may be able to hunt animals for food, identify foods or plants that may be poisonous, know about the local animals, and find drinking water.

Tracking: The skill of tracking a person, animal, or vehicle by identifying the markings left on the ground. The difficulty may be increased depending on the weather (snow or rain can obscure or eliminate tracks) and the age of the tracks (it's hard to track someone that came through an area three weeks ago). A successful use of the skill indicates roughly the age of the track and the direction in which the target was traveling.

Example: It's time to determine Hiroshi's skill ratings. First off, Hiroshi will need to capitalize on his athletic prowess. Sports will definitely be at Superb, which will suck up five of Hiroshi's 30 free skill levels. Jumping and Running are shoo-ins and we'll make both of them Good (3 skill levels each, 11 skill levels used so far). To round out Hiroshi's athletic abilities, we'll also give him Brawling at Good (3 skill levels) since he should be able to hold his own when fighting a rival in a man-to-man fight. To round out his abilities so they aren't TOO focused on physical stuff, we'll give him Animal Care at Good (he likes animals), Cooking at Great (to make up for Chiharu's lousy cooking), Drawing at Superb (because Hiroshi's player has a thing for making characters with artistic talent), Fashion Sense at Fair, and Manga Lore at Fair (Being a bit of a manga otaku, he knows a lot about them). Lastly, Hiroshi is a terrible liar, so we'll give him a Lying skill at Terrible.

Animal Care: Good (+3)
Brawling: Good (+3)
Cooking: Great (+4)
Drawing: Superb (+5)
Fashion Sense: Fair (+2)
Jumping: Good (+3)
Lying: Terrible (-1)
Manga Lore: Fair (+2)
Running: Good (+3)
Sports: Superb (+5)

4. Gifts

Not every trait a character has can easily fit in the Terrible...Fair...Superb scale like skills and attributes. A trait that grants a positive ability that does not fall under the auspices of an attribute or skill or as an element of the player character's background is known as a gift. Each gift grants a specific type of bonus although not necessarily always a bonus to a dice roll. For instance, the Common Sense gift allows the player character to be warned by the GM if they are about to do something stupid. Each character in the *HeartQuest* RPG automatically starts out with two free Gifts, and additional Gifts can be bought by taking Faults at a rate of one Gift for one Fault.

Example: Hiroshi's player, Rob, wants four Gifts. He starts with "Always there when Chiharu is in trouble" (an original Gift that allows Hiroshi to be on the scene whenever Chiharu is in trouble, emotional or physical) and Pain Tolerant (+1 DDF). But Rob wants to give Hiroshi two more Gifts: Rapid Healing and Common Sense. So in order to take either Gift, he will have to pick up at least two Faults for both.

Keep in mind that these are not all the possible Gifts that could be used in the *HeartQuest* RPG. If you have a good idea for a Gift that isn't on the list, feel free to talk with the GM to see if the Gift would be okay. Keep in mind that 1) the gift cannot be something that can already be handled as an extension of an attribute or skill and 2) the gift cannot be something that can be handled as an element of the character's background. Think of the gifts listed in *HeartQuest* as examples of what a character could take. Keep in mind that the GM has the final say on whether or not a gift is acceptable or not in their campaign. The play may have to explain exactly why a shy pretty girl would have a gift like Pain Tolerant or a muscle-head would have Good Memory.

All gifts marked with an asterisk (*) are socially-related gifts that can be removed from the character by the GM if they are abused frequently. A character with the patron gift, for instance, would lose favor in the eyes of the patron if they repeatedly try getting equipment or other services from them without an equal amount of work on the player's side.

Absolute Direction: You know where you're going no matter where you happen to traveling. It's very difficult for you to get lost since you always know what direction you going in.

Ambidextrous: You can use your off-hand as well as your regular hand without a penalty.

Animal Companion *: You have a faithful pet that is always at your side through thick and thin, reminiscent of old TV shows like Lassie. At one gift, the animal is considered a normal pet like a dog or a cat. If required, the animal should be assumed to have a Mediocre level in all five attributes and two free attribute levels that can be used to upgrade their attributes. They also get the Perception skill at Great as well as the gift Keen Senses and Night Vision for free. For two gifts, you have a very unique type of pet that normally isn't found in most places like a Bear, Panda, Wolf, Tiger, and similar aggressive animals. Their attributes default to Mediocre, but they get 4 free attribute levels. They get the Perception skill at Great and the gifts Keen Senses and Night Vision as well as the Brawling skill at Great. Of course, the player will be expected to explain just how they came to have a pet tiger running around and may have difficulties traveling if the animal is always with them. If you saw somebody walking down the street with a full-grown panda, it's fair to say most of the populace would freak out.

A potential variation of this gift is "Animal Guardian," which could be used to create the ever-popular animal guardian/mascot for a magical girl.

Animal Empathy *: Animals like you and you can tell what their moods are. This grants an unusual talent when it comes to soothing angry animals or attracting docile ones. For instance, a character with Animal Empathy could easily get a bird to sit on their finger or forearm. GMs can base the difficulty for using this Gift based on the character's Willpower attribute and how ferocious the animal might be. Attracting a few blue jays is a minor feat compared to calming a raging bear!

Charisma *: You have an uncanny ability to attract people to your cause or get them to like you. This gift grants a +1 bonus to any NPC reaction roll where the character's charisma comes into play.

Common Sense: Unlike most anime characters, this gift grants you a healthy amount of common sense. When you're about to do something stupid, the GM will warn you.

Contacts *: You have friends in high places such as the local authorities, a corporation, a news organization, or something similar, allowing you to gain information or assistance. Depending on how hot the information is, it may be harder for the character to get the info through their Contacts.

Danger Sense: You have a natural ability to sense danger when it's directed at you. On anything better than a Mediocre situational roll, you know when something is about to ambush you. On a Good roll, you can even anticipate what direction the attack will come from.

Flunkies *: How many school kids do you know that have their own crew of flunkies that do whatever they want? This gift grants you roughly six to twelve NPCs who will essentially do whatever you want of them. These characters should not be used for combat situations since in most cases they'll be inadequate (depending on the GM's discretion). Assume all the flunkies have Fair attributes (anything better requires shuffling around attribute levels) and at least one skill at Fair. The most common types of flunkies are bodyguards, ninjas, gang members, servants, or simply a bunch of people that you can boss around.

Good Memory: You have a knack for remembering things that have happened during the course of the campaign. On an unopposed Mind roll, the character can remember anything that has to do with the character's life. The more specific and obscure the detail the character is trying to recall, the higher the difficulty; for instance; trying to remember the exact description of a person you met on the street a year ago might be kind of tough.

Good Reputation *: You are well known for a specific skill, gift, supernormal power, or some other trait. As a result, the GM may apply a +1 bonus for any NPC reaction roll where the character's reputation comes into play.

Guardian Angel *: Somebody out there is keeping an eye on you. Whenever the character is in deep trouble, the Guardian Angel may appear to save the day. Keep in mind that the GM has complete control over the guardian – especially when the guardian pays a visit. If the character depends on the Guardian Angel too much, the GM may take away the gift. Despite the name, the guardian doesn't necessarily have to be an angel; a protector can take nearly any form imaginable, or even be a normal human.

Immortal: You are, for all intents and purposes, capable of living forever. In order to possess this gift the player must pay for at least four gifts, have a very good excuse, and get the GM's permission for this potentially powerful gift. Essentially, the character is immune to aging and heals wounds at a rapid pace (as per the gift Rapid Healing, which is included in the cost of the gift) and can even survive in conditions that might otherwise kill normal people such as being trapped underwater or traveling through harsh conditions without the proper provisions. Although tough to kill, it's not to say you are completely immune to death – you CAN die if you take enough damage to cause death. This gift can be used to create interesting characters that have lived for hundreds of years with their "curse," but if it is abused the GM may see fit to yank the gift away.

Keen Senses: Your senses – eyes, ears, and nose – are very strong, compared to a normal human. This Gift doubles the character's normal range of perception; you can see farther, you can distinguish scents better, and you can hear things other people might not.

Lucky: You are the type of person that actually wins prizes in sweepstakes and have a better chance to win the lottery than a normal person. In any situation that isn't important (i.e., not in battle or during a crucial moment), the player can roll a single FUDGE die. If the result is a plus or a minus, they get a free +1 bonus to the result of the roll.

Membership *: You are a member of a group that grants you a certain amount of prestige and power. The character may be a member of a local school club, the PTA, a corporation or company,

or even the government. The main perks of the gift include the occasional assistance from the group such as money, equipment, and possibly the assistance of other members. On its own, however, the character is essentially a "grunt" that has to take orders from the Powers That Be. By taking the gift Position of Authority the character can have a leadership role in the group.

Natural Linguist: You can pick up new languages easily. If dumped in the middle of Beijing with a modest amount of training before hand, the character could pick up speaking Mandarin in a matter of weeks. Any language they learn through use of the gift has the equivalent of a Language skill at Fair, and acquiring higher ratings requires XP spending as usual.

Night Vision: You can see clearly in the darkness with even a small amount of light.

Pain Tolerant: You have a particular talent for shrugging off damage. This Gift grants a +1 Defense Damage Factor bonus when determining damage.

Patron *: You have a powerful boss who can supply you with anything you require – money, equipment, etc. Characters with this Gift often have the Faults Duty or Owes Favors.

Perfect Balance: Through training or a natural talent, you have a keen sense of balance that makes it nearly impossible for you to stumble or fall. Even when knocked off your feet, you have a knack for rolling your body so that manage to get back on your feet.

Perfect Timing: You have a long-standing relationship with father time and are always exactly where you want to be when you want to be there. If you have a date at 7:00, you'll be there by 6:59.

Poison Resistance: You have developed a strong resistance to a specific type of poison (damage poison, sleeping poison, etc.) that makes it nearly impossible to infect the character with that type of poison. You also subtract 3 points from the potency modifier for any poison. See Chapter Two for details on using poison.

Position of Authority *: You have some sort of official capacity that gives you legitimate authority over a limited group of people. Examples could include a teacher that has authority over their students or the leader of a school club. Very high positions of power such as a principal, general, or something similar that grants authority over a large number of people should be worth at least 2 gifts. This gift can also be taken with the Membership gift to confer authority over a specific group.

Prop: You have in your position a significant item that grants some form of bonus. This can cover everything from a family heirloom quality katana, a magical girl's special item, and other similar items of power. The exact benefits of the prop are up to the GM and the player to discuss although they should grant a bonus equal to the number of gifts the Prop costs (i.e., a magic sword worth 1 gift grants a +1 bonus to its Offensive Damage Factor while a magic suit of armor might bestow a +1 Defensive Damage Factor bonus) or bestow a supernormal power of equal level. These, in fact, can be combined as long as the result isn't a horrendously powerful item. Keep in mind that if the item is stolen, damaged, destroyed, etc., the character no longer gets the benefits of the item.

Quick Reflexes: You have exceptionally fast reflexes and are thus hard to surprise. This gift grants a +1 bonus to the character's initiative.

Rapid Healing: You heal quickly compared to normal people.

Schtick: You have a particular trick or feat that you pull off regularly that is a part of how you act. Examples include always having a rose handy for a girl, having thunder roar in the background when you do a dramatic pose, or a seemingly endless supply of rose petals appear when you exit the scene.

Sense of Empathy *: You have a natural talent for knowing how people feel. Such characters tend to make friends easily.

Unique Upbringing/Background: You have access to skills that are outside what are available to most characters in the campaign. For example,

people raised in mystic circles or ninja clans might have this unless the campaign was chock full of mystics and ninjas.

Wealth *: You or your family happens to be quite wealthy. Where other kids have to work hard for what they get, you can snap your fingers and it's yours. As a fringe benefit of the Gift, the character also gets a free supply of flunkies that will do whatever they are told to do.

5. Faults

Faults are the negative counterpart of Gifts. Where a Gift may grant a specific benefit, faults represent hindrances and restrictions on the ways a player character behaves. Although a negative effect, they represent important aspects of the character's personality and attitude. Most characters should have no less than two Faults and no more than five or six.

The list of Faults included in *HeartQuest* should in no way be considered the only Faults available in the game. Players are free to invent their own Faults as they see fit for their characters. The Faults listed in *HeartQuest* should be seen as a set of guidelines for many of the most common Faults found in shoujo manga and anime. The GM has the final say on whether or not the character's faults are acceptable. If you continuously ignore playing out your faults, the GM may penalize you during gameplay. Characters that extensively make use of their faults frequently are available for an extra experience point at the end of the adventure, which can be used to improve the character's traits.

Sometimes, the effects of a Fault can be incredibly dangerous to the continued good health (physical, mental, or both) of the character. For instance, a Coward may be forced by circumstances to fight or an Absent-Minded character might lose concentration while walking and walk straight into traffic. How this is handled is up to the GM. They can simply be a matter of "yes" or "no". Or make it an unopposed dice roll using the character's Willpower attribute level with a −3 penalty. The difficulty can be increased or decreased pending on the situation.

Absent-Minded: You have trouble keeping their concentration on a single object. At other times you sometimes forget minor details like names or people that you would otherwise know easily.

Amnesiac: This Fault leaves your memory a complete blank save for your name. You may regain your memories slowly over the duration of the campaign. Amnesiac characters frequently have a number of "hidden" Faults such as Enemy or Secret.

Annoyance: You have a person who will simply NOT leave you alone. You can beg, bribe, or beat them and they come back for more. This fault is most often used for NPCs that are hopelessly infatuated with the player character or an unwanted sidekick character that simply won't leave the character alone.

Bad Reputation: You have a reputation that you wish you didn't have. This includes a reputation for one or more of the character's faults. For instance, a reputation as a lecher (Lechery Fault) would be bad if a male character tries impressing a cute girl. The GM should feel free to tack on a penalty to any NPC reaction rolls where they feel the fault may come into effect.

Blunt and Tactless: The "tomboy" Fault, thought it is available to characters of either gender. Blunt and Tactless means you're just that – blunt and tactless. You tell it how it is even if it might hurt a friend. For instance, if you felt your friend's new boyfriend was ugly or a slob, you'd tell her as much.

Boy/Girl Magnet: You have an uncanny (if not scary) ability to attract members of the appropriate gender. Unfortunately, you have absolutely no control over this "gift" and often are in situations where their fans are constantly hounding you. Ironically, the ones that you can't impress are the ones you actually want. Male characters with Girl Magnet frequently also have the Fear of Commitment or Indecisive Faults as well.

Clumsy: Some people simply can't walk a straight line and chew bubblegum at the same time. Whenever you attempt a roll involving dexterity or fine precision, subtract two levels from the your Physique attribute. You'll frequently fall, trip, drop things by accident, and otherwise have comical pratfalls.

Code of Honor: You have a specific set of beliefs that you live by and strive to uphold. The exact nature of the code is up to the player and should be described in detail. Most Codes of Honor include loyalty to others, being fair in competitions or combat, protecting those who cannot protect themselves, etc.

Compulsive Gossiper: You love to yack about the latest bits of gossip and will go to nearly any length to stay in the know. In addition, you'll spread any gossip you can get a hold of – even gossip on your friends.

Compulsive Lying: You just can't help but tell lies. In situations that aren't dead serious, the character has to make a -3 Willpower check to not tell a lie.

Coward: You have developed a strong aversion to getting into any kind of situation where you'll be placed in physical danger. You must make an unopposed Willpower roll (Good difficulty) to resist discreetly exiting the scene.

Curious: You just can't keep their fingers out of any type of mystery or secret – you just have to know. When some type of mystery or secret arises, you must make a resist roll or defy common sense.

Daydreamer: You're prone to bouts of daydreaming at times when you should be focused on something else, such as a lecture or a discussion with a friend. Such people are considered flighty or "have their heads in the clouds."

Dependent: You are responsible for taking care of a family member such as an elderly grandparent or little brother, or you have a child of your own (adult characters only).

Drama King/Queen: If life were a soap opera, a character with this fault would play the part of the over-dramatic character in the show

that must stress everything they say or do. Most of your speech should be portrayed as a bad interpretation of William Shatner or Shakespeare style old English ("Thou hast insulted my honor for the last time, fiend!") even if the you're Japanese (you'd might be using melodramatic "samurai talk," in which case the Shakespearian dialogue is a good substitute).

Duty: You have a strong sense of duty to a specific organization such as a school club, company, magical girl team, gang, or sports team. If the group or other member needs help, you are obliged to do anything you can to help.

Easily Distracted: You have a specific type of thing for which you will simply drop whatever you happen to be doing to look at, talk to, chase after, or otherwise pursue.

Enemy: You have a NPC character with a grudge against you who will stop at nothing to cause the character trouble of some kind. The particular type of problems brought to bear by the enemy depends on the nature of the grudge or rivalry. Most enemies should have similar traits to the player character – a character that is good at sports would likely have an enemy that is good at sports as well.

Fear of Commitment: You have a particular fear of committing yourself to any specific person. This type of Fault is common among boys or girls with a large number of people interested in them.

Fickle: You're the type of person that never does the same thing often if never twice. What you may do in one type of situation, you probably won't repeat often. Such characters frequently change their preferences in food, fashion, manga, RPGs, and so on without warning.

Filtered Reality: What you see is not necessarily what happens. Essentially, the character tends to view things oddly. For instance, they might refer to two people trying to kill each other as playing. Other uses are up to you and the GM.

Garrulous: You simply will not shut up! Unless stopped sharply, you'll keep talking indefinitely.

Gender Bender: An occasional plot device in anime and manga (shoujo and otherwise) is to introduce a character that looks more like a member of the opposite sex than of their own gender. This can be done to create schoolgirls that look more like boys or pretty boys that are frequently mistaken as girls.

Getting Old: This fault is only available for adult characters (PC or NPC) aged 50 or more. You're getting old and the world you grew up in is history and the kids of today are much different from what you were like.

Glutton: Food! You frequently think about food first and people later. The Glutton fault frequently is accompanied by the fault Easily Distracted (Food).

Gossip Magnet: You seem to attract gossip, both positive and negative. The GM is encouraged to occasional invent a new topic of gossip about the character at least once per session.

Greedy: Some people simply aren't satisfied with what they have – they have to have more. You must pursue whatever activity they can to make more money. Such characters frequently spend their money as fast as they acquire on luxury goods such as new clothes, the latest gadgets, or expensive homes/furnishings.

Gullible: You have a bad habit of believing lies and stories that most people would realize are fake.

Humanitarian: You can't help yourself from helping others in need, provided you have what they need or can help them. For instance, a character with the Veterinarian skill would do whatever they could to nurse an injured bird back to health.

Indecisive: You sometimes have difficulties making up your mind in situations where a choice is required. This doesn't pop up with trivial matters ("hmm… red dress or blue dress,") but it will pop up in stressful situations such as a girl forced to choose between two potential boyfriends or a guy whose girlfriend wants to know if her dress makes her look fat. The reaction depends on your

personality and the situation. For instance, the girl might get flustered and stutter and the guy (if he was smart) might attempt to escape the scene or change the subject.

Jealous: You have a bad habit of getting jealous when a person they have feelings for becomes close friends with other people.

Lechery: You simply can't control yourself when around a cute member of the appropriate sex. The character is at −3 Willpower to resist attempting to get a "cheap feel" or flat out glomping them.

Macho/Feminine: You hare an excessive example of the stereotypical good and bad traits of your gender. A Macho guy is aggressive, jealous, and has a hair-trigger temper. A Feminine woman might follow the typical stereotype of a Japanese woman who wants to be a housewife and have kids.

Melancholy: The world... is a dark and loooonely place.... You have a dark and depressive personality and have trouble seeing the good things in life.

Multiple Personalities: There's another person in you that comes out under certain conditions. Common conditions for this include a great amount of stress but in more silly games things such as sexual stimulus or even being hit with something as trivial as cold water. The "new" personality can be nearly anything the player can cook up, but is often the exact opposite of the character's normal personality. Suddenly the unruly lecher becomes a handsome gentleman or a shy ultra-feminine girl becomes a surly macho tomboy.

Nearsighted: You have trouble seeing things far away and rely upon glasses or contacts to see. If you are stuck without them, you face a −1 penalty to all dice rolls involving sight until they have them on.

Nosebleeder: This Fault is only available to virgin heterosexual males. When you are stuck in a situation where you see a girl or woman naked/close to it, start having naughty thoughts, or otherwise put are into an... ahem... unusual position, you automatically have a nosebleed. You never realize this until someone else points it out to you, and the nosebleed is rather like a bullhorn alerting other people to what you're thinking of. Nosebleeder is worth 2 faults if the character faints from the nosebleed.

Nosy: Your friend's business is your business. You go out of your way to know all the latest gossip.

Obsessive: Everybody wants something in life, but there's something in particular that you must have at all cost!

Otaku: Although the term Otaku has been ritually abused by American anime fandom, being an Otaku (rabid fanboy) carries a social stigma in Japan. Although most westerners are accustomed to the use of Otaku for anime fan, it can be applied to any type of activity where "fanatic" would be applied to in America. Gun Otaku, Game Otaku, Cooking Show Otaku, Idol Singer Otaku, and so on are all feasible examples.

Outlaw: This fault is not available for Teen Romance campaigns unless the player is an adult. You are a known criminal and wanted by the local authorities. Outlaw is worth two faults if the character is wanted throughout the world.

Over-Achiever: Some people are fine with simply succeeding at something, but you have to be absolutely perfect. This obsession with perfection is usually focused on a specific theme ("Akari-chan always gets perfect grades") and the character tends to go to obscene lengths to insure they retain their "perfection." Many elements of this fault are up to the player and the GM since the character's sense of perfection may not be the same as for the other characters in the campaign.

Over-Confident: You have a strong belief that you're the absolute best at something (often a skill) even when face-to-face with someone with a superior level in the trait. A classic example is the upperclassman kendoist who thinks he's the greatest thing to kendo since the invention of the Shinai. Such characters often tend to lose badly

and will not stop until they can raise their skills to match or surpass the person that has defeated them.

Owes Favors: One doesn't get through life without depending on others at some point in life. In the case of a character with this Fault, somebody did you a big favor. As such, you are obliged to help them out if they need you until the debt is repaid.

Phobia: You have an acute psychological aversion to something that causes paralyzing fear or running away as fast as possible away from the object of the phobia. For instance, a guy with a fear of cats (ailurophobia) might freak out if a cat suddenly rubbed up against him.

Poor: Not everybody can be filthy rich. A person stuck with this Fault is, in fact, quite poor and may have trouble obtain funds for many of things their friends might take for granted. This Fault can also be used for young-ish characters (teens or early 20's) that have to work and support a child/younger sibling.

Practical Joker: You can't help pull a prank or tell a joke when the situation produces fuel for either.

Pushover: You just won't stand up for yourself when somebody tells you what to do. Often used along with Coward or Shyness.

Quick Temper: You have a hair-trigger temper that can be easily ignited by insults and tend to generate personal vendettas easily.

Quixotic: You are the champion of all lost causes and frequently search for new ones when the old ones get stale. Typical for the over-heroic magical girl or superhero type.

Roricon Magnet: "Roricon" is a Japanese abbreviation of "Lolita Complex"; Roricon Magnet is often found with adult characters, but can be possessed by teenaged characters as well. Essentially, you attract people to you that are younger than what might be sensible, let alone socially acceptable. This fault would be perfect for the high school teacher that most of their students find incredibly handsome/sexy or the high school character that mysteriously (and annoyingly) attracts 10 year olds and junior high school students.

Secret: You have a dark personal secret that you must keep or risk deep social, mental, or physical complications. Examples of this fault include secret romances, connections to seedy organizations, or a secret identity like Batman, Superman, or Sailor Moon.

Serious Illness: You suffer from a serious illness that may one day take your life if you aren't careful. The exact effects of the Fault and the nature of the illness should be discussed thoroughly between the player and GM. An example of the Fault would Kotori, a young girl from X/1999 who suffers from a "weak heart." If she performs any strenuous activities, she may faint.

Shyness: You have trouble talking to people who you aren't friends with and it can be hard sometimes to make new friends.

Stubborn: You have trouble admitting you're wrong or saying sorry. You have a way of thinking and adamantly stick to it even when it may bring you harm – physically or socially.

Unlucky: Some people are lucky, but you're cursed with all the crap they don't get stuck with. The GM is free to throw in a free fudge die roll in any unimportant unopposed or situation roll the character makes. For this special fudge die a + or – are both considered a minus.

Vow: You have sworn to perform a specific act that causes a number of restrictions on your social life. For instance, you could take a vow not to date or marry anyone unless they could defeat you in a martial arts duel. Other spins on this fault include vowing to protect the earth from supernatural menaces or becoming a great super model. The character should feel driven to keep after the vow and the GM should feel free to penalize the character if they don't keep their vow.

Young: It sucked being a kid, but that's what you are by taking this fault. As a result, the older

characters tend to ignore your entire existence unless you do something that requires them to pay attention. In addition, you are stuck with the usual difficulties of childhood like parental supervision, bedtime, and truancy laws. In most *HeartQuest* games, a character with this fault would be a grade school student (1st to 6th grade).

6. Supernormal Powers

In the FUDGE RPG System, all traits that go beyond the abilities of normal people are known as supernormal powers. Supernormal powers are not always present in all *HeartQuest* campaigns (especially the Teen Romance type), but are fairly common in some of them. Supernormal powers have an incredible range of uses such as superhero type powers, magic, psionics, and cybernetics. A full list of example powers will be found in Chapter Two.

In games where supernormal powers are common, each character gets two powers for free. Additional powers may be bought by taking faults (2 faults equal 1 power) or with experience points after character creation (with the GM's approval). Additional power levels can be granted if the GM desires a high powered game setting, but two free levels should be enough for most *HeartQuest* games.

7. Finishing Touches

Congratulations! You've nearly finished your character. At this point, we recommend going over the character's traits and make sure the totals add up. Are there too many or too few skills? Do I really need that trait at that level? Should I take this Fault or drop this other one? Questions like these should be considered before considering the character close to completion.

More importantly, it's time to finish up what was started with the first step and flesh out the character's background. Any character should have a background worth at least a few sentences that hits the following areas:

What does the character looks like?

Does the character have any notable hobbies or activities they like to perform when they have spare time?

How did they develop any notable skills at Great or Superb level as well as their gifts, faults, and supernormal powers (if any)?

If the character has any notable friends, who are they and how did they meet?

Expanded Background (Optional)

Not everyone is satisfied with such a short bio. For those that desire the proverbial "more," the Expanded Background may be what you are search of. If the player has his own computer, he could use a regular word processor like Word or Notepad to crank out a write-up. For those with lousy writers as players or who are playing the game table-top style, you can use the expanded background sheet found in the rear of the book.

The expanded background method is made up of five sections: Appearance, Background, Personality, Possessions, and Goal. Of the five, Possessions is optional since not everyone has belongings that are worth noting. GMs may also add extra sections if they wish such a section explaining the character's supernormal powers (if available) or any friendships/connections the character has with other characters.

Appearance: What the character looks like. This should get into anything and everything – age, general height, weight/build, hair color and style, eye colors, general posture, and any type of important accessories like glasses, rings, earrings, or notable hair ornaments. The player might also want to slip in a quick note on clothing when at home.

Background: The Background essentially sums up "what the character's life has been like so far." This should describe the character's family (if any), which is important for any shoujo character, with very brief descriptions if not just names and what they do. Any notable relationships with friends should be explained (e.g., Hiroshi's background would have notes on how he first met Chiharu) as well as how the character developed

any notable skill above Good level. (Hiroshi joined the soccer team in Jr. High after a soccer star from a rival school stole his girlfriend).

Personality: A basic idea of how the character acts and behaves. This is a good place to impart upon the reader/GM how the character's mind works and more importantly "why." This is a good place to explain any particular faults that the character has and how they got them.

Possessions: If the character has any items of significant worth to the character, the player should explain how they got it and what it means to them. This especially true if the character has the Prop gift.

Goals: Everybody has things they want to do; player characters are no different. Most characters should have at least one long range goal like trying to get a specific girl, mastering a particular skill, overcoming one or more of their faults, and so on. These give GMs an idea as far as what the character wants to do in the future so the GM can provide appropriate hurdles for them, such as rivals, contests, and so on.

8. GM Review

And you thought you were done with step seven…. Think again!

Having completed distributing the character's traits and rounding out the character's background using either the simple or expanded methods, the final step is getting the GM's proverbial "stamp of approval." This, essentially, is a review period where the GM will look over the character and discuss any bits of information that might be important about the character. If there are any problems, the two of you can make the appropriate fixes at this point in the development of the game. For instance, if there are any gifts that look out of place, the GM may ask why the character should have them. The same can be said about skills, faults, or attribute levels. If the GM likes what they see, they may be nice enough to grant you one or even two free quirks.

This is a good time, also, to discuss any relationships between each of the player characters and/or important NPCs.

Example: Michael looks to his five players – Clarissa, Rob, Paul, James, and Dimitri (Chiharu, Hiroshi, Yuuko, Satoshi, and Junko respectively) – and asks them if they want to make any notable connections between the five player characters. Rob mentions that Hiroshi already has a strong connection with Chiharu (Clarissa's character), but it might not be out of the question later down the road for him to become friends with Satoshi-provided he doesn't make any moves on Chiharu. Clarissa and James decide to make Chiharu and Yuuko best friends with Dimitri keeping Junko somewhere in the middle rather than form any ties to the other player characters for now.

Quirks

A quirk is a unique trait that the GM may grant those player characters that put extra effort into developing their characters. Essentially it can be something like a gift and a fault since it can be either beneficial or it can be a hindrance. Either way, they don't tend to have any specific bonus/penalty attached to them or if they do, the modifier only comes into effect on very rare occasions. For instance, it might be a +1 bonus when performing a specific type of task like trying to impress a girl the character likes. Their main purpose is to give the character's personality and background a little bit more polish.

Although there is a list of Quirks provided below, a Quirk is much like the Skills, Gifts, and Faults listed in the *HeartQuest* RPG: they only represent the kind of Quirks a character could have. There are plenty of other possibilities and we strongly recommend that you or your GM discuss any possible new Quirks that might be suitable for the character.

Broad-Minded: You are especially tolerant of differences in others. As a result, you tend to make friends with those that tend to be misunderstood or stuck with a social stigma.

Cheerful: You have a naturally cheerful disposition and tend to spread it to others. A

positive Quirk, but if taken to extremes it can be turned into a Fault.

Easygoing: It's harder than your Willpower would suggest to make you angry or frustrated. You tend to shrug off threats and other attempts at intimidation.

Famous: *Everybody* knows who you are! This Quirk is something of an in-between since it can be both positive and negative. It's positive because a lot of people know who you are. It's negative because those people will want more of you than you're willing to give. If the character's fame is more to one specific side, this should be taken as a Gift or Fault. If this applies to more than a small area (like a school or a hometown), this should cost a Gift for national fame or two gifts for international fame.

Gift of Gab: You are never at a loss for words. In situations where the character has recite something such as a long rant, they never have to pause and think about the right words that go with the rant. This can also be applied to would-be actors and actresses, comedians, and so on.

Great Collection: If you're interested in something, you've probably got a copy of it. This works well for otaku with a wide array of anime movies, DVDs, action figures, wallscrolls, soundtracks, and so on. Can be applied to other interests such as coin collecting, manga, baseball cards, UFO watcher dolls, or stuffed animals.

Great Parents: You have really understanding, responsible parents who will drop everything to come to your aid in an emergency.

Original Thinker: You're good at "thinking outside the box." Unconventional ideas and solutions come more easily to you.

Patience: You are a rarity in that you have an exceptional amount of patience. You are satisfied with waiting until the right opportunity to make your move. If the GM wishes, this could be used in a manner similar to Common Sense, where the GM will tell you if it's too soon to act.

Photogenic: When you show up in pictures, you always look great. This works as well on magazine covers as it does on Print Club pictures.

Resilient: You have a rare talent for pushing through the hard times where others would be emotionally crushed. This doesn't mean you're not familiar with feeling wounds of the heart, but you bounce back quicker than others.

True Artist: Not only are you a great artist, but an inspired one. It's easy for you to come up with new and inventive ways to use your most prominent Artistic Skills.

Well-Traveled: You've traveled afar, unlike most people, so you have an idea of how the cultures of other nationalities work. You tend to avoid mistakes that others make when referring to certain countries. The exact uses of the Quirk are up to the GM.

Master Lists

There are a *lot* of different skills, gifts, and faults available in the *HeartQuest* RPG. To make things easier, the following are the master lists for those three specific trouble spots with every last skill, gift, or fault listed in the RPG. Keep in mind anything that's not on the lists can be created if necessary.

Master Gift List

Absolute Direction	Ambidextrous
Animal Companion	Animal Empathy
Charisma	Common Sense
Contacts	Danger Sense
Flunkies	Good Memory
Good Reputation	Guardian Angel
Immortal	Keen Senses
Lucky	Membership
Natural Linguist	Night Vision
Pain Tolerant	Patron
Perfect Balance	Perfect Timing
Poison Resistance	Position of Authority
Prop	Quick Reflexes
Rapid Healing	Schtick
Sense of Empathy	Unique Upbringing
Wealth	

Master Fault List

Absent-Minded	Amnesiac
Annoyance	Bad Reputation
Blunt and Tactless	Boy/Girl Magnet
Clumsy	Code of Honor
Compulsive Gossiper	Compulsive Lying
Coward	Curious
Daydreamer	Dependent
Drama King/Queen	Duty
Easily Distracted	Enemy
Fear of Commitment	Fickle
Filtered Reality	Garrulous
Gender Bender	Getting Old
Glutton	Gossip Magnet
Greedy	Gullible
Humanitarian	Indecisive
Jealous	Lechery
Macho/feminine	Melancholy
Multiple Personality	Nearsighted
Nosebleeder	Nosy
Obsessive	Otaku
Outlaw	Over-Achiever
Over-confident	Owes Favors
Phobia	Poor
Practical Joker	Pushover
Quick Temper	Quixotic
Roricon Magnet	Secret
Serious Illness	Shyness
Stubborn	Unlucky
Vow	Young

Master Skill List

Artistic Skills

Acting/Drama	Calligraphy
Dancing (Traditional)	Drawing/Painting
Flower Arrangement (E)	Musical Instrument
Poetry	Sewing/Costume Design
Sculpting/Modeling	Singing

Athletic Skills

Acrobatics	Climbing
Driving	Jumping
Piloting	Running
Shiphandling	Sport (name)
Swimming	Throwing

Combat Skills

Archery	Brawling
Demolitions	Guns (VH)
Martial Arts (VH)	Melee Combat
Swordsmanship	

Covert Skills

Breaking and Entering	Disguise
Electronics	Forgery
Lockpicking	Perception
Pickpocketing	Poisoning
Shadowing	Sleight of Hand
Stealth	Traps

Everyday Skills

Animal Care	Cooking
Dancing (Modern)	Fashion Sense
Gossip	Shopping

Knowledge Skills

Alchemy	Computers
Cultures	Doctor (VH)
Folklore	Geography
History	Language
Literature	Lore
Mechanic	Occultism
Research	Teaching (VH)
Theology	Veterinarian (H)

Manipulative Skills

Bribery	Fast-Talk
Flattery	Guilt Trip
Haggle	Interrogate
Intimidate	Lying
Oratory	Persuasion
Seduction	

Supernormal Power Skills

Spellcasting
Use (Supernormal Power)

Wilderness Skills

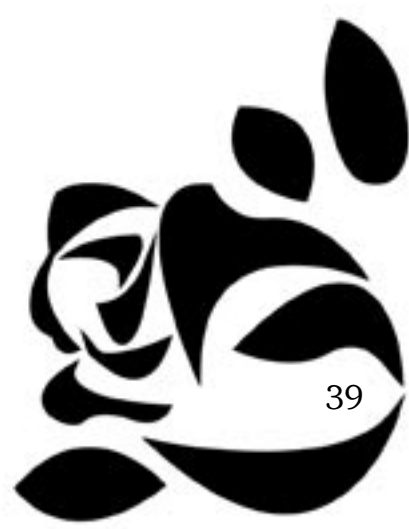|	
Fishing	Riding
Survival	Tracking

Chapter 1: Character Creation

HeartQuest

Chapter 2:
Supernormal Powers

Introduction to Supernormal Powers

Supernormal Powers are those abilities that ordinary mortals cannot possess. They represent forces beyond human ken, often magical, occult or supernatural forces. However, they are not limited to that! Access to technology that is significantly higher than that present in the rest of the campaign, genetic mutation, or being an alien can also result in Supernormal Powers for a character.

There are as many Supernormal Powers as there are characters that possess them. This chapter does not attempt to create an exhaustive list of superpowers – creating the power is a significant part of creating the character. Instead, this chapter gives some guidelines on gauging the effectiveness of a proposed power, some sample supernormal powers, and a demonstration of how supernormal powers are used in play.

While many RPGs that use powers require a considerable amount of math to define them, HeartQuest is more freeform in its approach. How much the power you want costs depends on how the player and the GM work out its basic utility.

Defining A Power

The first step is to decide what you want the character to be able to do. This is called Defining your power, and is part of the character concept.

Let's use an example from the game book – Ghost Tamer Miyaki. You can find Miyaki's character sheet on page 99 – feel free to leaf forward and take a look at it as we go through here.

Miyaki's player decides that her main power will be the ability to banish the "troubled dead" from this world to the next. Her player has gone over the campaign setting with the GM and knows that the troubled dead are the main opposing force. The GM agrees that banishing these beings is an essential function of the character, but he asks Miyaki's player to define it further. He

doesn't want it to be a quick and easy end to every adventure almost at the outset, so he asks Miyaki's player to set some conditions under which the power will and won't work.

Miyaki's player thinks about this for a while. She decides that the spirit must be willing to depart to the next life for her to banish them. This means that she must either persuade the spirit to go or use some form of mind control on it. The GM reminds her that most of the troubled dead will be Mind Controlled to begin with, so Miyaki would have to break through the opposing Mind Control. Miyaki's player also decides she can't send the spirits just anywhere – only to where they would naturally go in their next life.

The GM is satisfied that Miyaki's player has limited her power quite nicely, and the player writes it down on her character sheet this way:

Banish spirit; only on ghosts she has used Mind Control on or otherwise persuaded; only to send the spirit on to the next life

Now Miyaki needs to come up with a Mind Control power to complement this power. Mind Control is a very powerful ability which, when used willy-nilly, can really foul up an adventure. The GM recognizes this and asks Miyaki's player to limit the power in some way.

She decides that the power can only be used on spirits – she can't Mind Control the living. The GM tells her that the ability still needs to be refined to fit the genre, and asks her if she will be using the ability for anything else besides breaking the Mind Control that drives the troubled dead to wreak their havoc. Miyaki's player thinks about this for a moment and decides she probably won't, so she decides to accept this limitation, here is how she writes up the power.

Mind Control; only on ghosts; only to remove rival Mind Control

The GM is satisfied with this write-up and allows the power. He also tells her that she would need to be able to see the ghosts she fights, which is a separate power. Miyaki's player agrees and writes up this power:

Chapter 2: Supernormal Powers

See Ghosts; automatically sees ghosts and can detect ghostly possession with a Skill roll

The GM has no problems with this power and accepts it as written. Miyaki's player is really getting the hang of this! She decides she's powerful enough, but as a true Magical Girl she needs one more thing – a Transformation. Transformations are a special kind of Supernormal Power that usually works automatically. Miyaki's player decides to write up the Transformation this way:

Transform from normal identity to Ghost Tamer costume (with staff) at will.

This completes Miyaki's Supernormal Powers. Now the GM determines how many faults she will have to take. Since Supernormal Powers are essentially powerful Gifts, how many faults are required depends on the relative potency of the power. Further, the GM has already decided that PCs in his campaign get two free Powers automatically. Miyaki has four powers. The GM decides that each of these powers is restricted enough to only be worth one Fault. So Miyaki's player must take two Faults to pay for her Supernormal Powers, in addition to any faults she will have had to take for other things.

Using A Supernormal Power

To use a Supernormal Power in play is rarely automatic (a few are, but most are not). Whether a power is inborn, granted or trained, it still requires practice and/or insight to use effectively.

Most characters with powers must also take a skill called Use Supernormal Power. This is a normal skill, purchased at character creation like any other. When using a power, the player must roll with this Skill against the difficulty of the task they are attempting.

Example: Miyaki suspects that one of her NPC classmates may be possessed by one of the Troubled Dead (she's been noticing some odd behavior). The GM knows she's right, but he's not about to let her off that easy. He tells Miyaki's player to roll her Use Supernormal Power skill. Miyaki has this skill at Good. She rolls a –1, reducing it to Fair. The GM has decided

that, since this spirit is concealing itself especially well, she needed a Good roll to detect the ghost. Nonetheless, he does not choose to tell Miyaki's player she failed the roll. Instead, he lies to the player and tells her she does not see any signs of possession. Lulled by a false sense of security, Miyaki is completely surprised when the boy sprouts claws and fangs and starts attacking.

Some powers are automatic and can be invoked at will. The most common of these are Transformations; you usually don't need a skill roll to change from one form to another. Other powers can be automatic if the GM agrees. And some powers are always active with no detriment and are the default status of the character, such as a character who is permanently invisible.

Example: Under attack from the possessed boy, Miyaki sees that nobody else is around. She invokes her Transformation power and transforms into her Ghost Tamer identity, complete with costume and staff. She does not have to make a skill roll to do this, and the boy does not get a chance to strike her while she transforms.

Certain powers can be invoked involuntarily. Usually they are triggered by specific circumstances determined when the power is created. This can often be inconvenient for the character, but it can also be a lifesaver in the right conditions. Involuntary Powers should be used with caution in Character Creation, as they take away much of the player's free will.

Example: Black Rose is in his normal identity, who is unaware of his own activities as Miyaki's protector. Right now he in gym class, getting ready to take a good, hot shower. At that moment Miyaki is attacked by the boy she had previously failed to detect. Miyaki being in danger triggers Black Rose's linked powers of Transformation and Teleport. The GM automatically invokes them and suddenly Black Rose, in his full outfit, is at Miyaki's side, fully aware and ready to fight. Meanwhile the shower, which he had just turned on, is still running and his classmates are wondering where he went.

A Supernormal power roll can be opposed by another Supernormal Power roll, or the result of an earlier roll.

Example: After the Black Rose has prevented the possessed boy from disemboweling Miyaki, she decides to send the spirit on to its next life. That means breaking the Demon King's Mind Control over the spirit with her own Mind Control power. Miyaki's player rolls against her Use Supernormal Powers skill and gets a Superb result. The GM, having previous rolled for the Demon King, determines she needed a Good result to break through. The control is broken and the creature stops attacking. Now Miyaki can persuade the spirit possessing the boy to go peacefully to the next life, a much easier task – she only needs a Mediocre result, which she easily manages. Finally she rolls against her Use Supernormal Powers skill to use her Banish Spirit power. Again she succeeds, and the spirit goes on to the next life, leaving the boy unconscious and restored to himself.

Chapter 2: Supernormal Powers

Magic and Spells

The power to cast magic spells is a special case of Supernormal Power because of its great flexibility. It is always worth at least two Faults and, when taken as a free Power, the character cannot take any additional free powers. Any extra powers besides Spellcasting must be paid for by faults, as much additional levels of spellcasting.

For additional faults, the player can choose to make their spellcasting abilities more powerful. This means they can cast more powerful spells. The GM must determine, based on his campaign, how powerful a spell a character can cast with the basic Spellcasting ability and how much more power they can gain by taking additional levels.

To cast a spell requires a successful Spellcasting roll – magic-users MUST take this Very Hard skill. The GM sets the difficulty of each spell and does not necessarily inform the player. The GM can also determine the effect of a particular spell, again without necessarily telling the player in advance. This can lead to some surprises! How powerful the spell cast is depends on these factors:

The character's Power level, which reflects their raw magical power;

The character's skill, which reflects their control over that power; and

Whatever other circumstances the GM brings to bear.

Magic-using players can build "spell books" defining specific spells they know how to cast. The player can define those spells at any time by making a Spellcasting roll to learn the spell. This can result in a player character developing a long list of spells. The GM has the right to set a cap on the number of spells based on the character's skill.

In addition to the spells in a spell book, characters can cast spells "on the fly" if they have the proper Spellcasting skill. Make a Spellcasting roll to see if the character can figure out a proper spell for the situation, and then make another Spellcasting roll to cast the spell. On-the-fly spells are notoriously fickle and can backfire on failed rolls, sometimes with disastrous results.

Players can take limitations on their magic just like any other power. They can say that their magic won't work during the day, or at night, for example, or limit the circumstances under which it can be used or the spells that can be cast.

Example: Kitten, a magic-using thief, can do just about anything with her powers with one restriction – she cannot use them to cause direct physical harm. This is a significant limitation on her magic, making her effectively useless offensively in combat. The GM tells the player creating Kitten that she can take an extra level of Magic because she has drastically limited the effectiveness of her power. She'll need to find other ways to deal with people who want to do her harm.

Sample Powers

No powers list can hope to encompass all the powers that are found in shoujo manga and anime. Nonetheless, some powers merit special mention and description here.

Attacks: A character can have an attack as a Supernormal Power. An Attack is written up just like a weapon, with an Offensive Bonus and a Defensive Bonus to reflect its ability to do additional damage, Attacks are normally worth two faults for a +3 attack, with each additional +2 in the damage being an extra fault. Attacks can be limited like any other power; you can take an Attack that only works while you are transformed, for example. You cannot, however, take a limitation that your attack works "only against foes"!

Defenses: A character can take a defense as a Supernormal Power. A defense is written up like armor, with a –3 Defensive Bonus available for two Faults, with an additional –2 Bonus for each additional fault. For an additional Fault, the defense can be extended (like a force field) to include other characters. Limitations can be taken on a defense to reflect weaknesses (such as a specific type of attack it has no effect on).

Transformation: Magical Girl characters can take a Transformation as one of their powers. It is not mandatory, but since it can be awkward to go grab their costumes in the middle of combat, many magical girls have one. Transformations change the character's outfit from whatever they were wearing at the time to their "battle costume," with the possibility of an intermediate stage. If there is any special equipment that comes with the battle costume (such as a weapon), that also appears with the costume (although if the weapon has magical or special properties it must be purchased separately). Transformations, no matter how long the "transformation sequence" would take to show in an anime, are practically instantaneous, and characters can never be attacked while in the act of transforming. Transformations are often linked to objects – if the object is taken away or destroyed, the character cannot transform until it is replaced.

Magical Age Change: This is a special case of Transformation, in which the character changes into an older or younger version of herself. It is frequently used by preteen girls who transform into more mature women for various reasons (like to become famous idols). This cannot be taken as a permanent ability. Characters can have skills in their older form that they do not possess in their normal, younger form. (Singing is a common example for girls who transform from little girls to teenage idol singers).

Magical Disguises: Characters can take this variation of Transformation to create instant disguises. This usually does not change gender or basic physical appearance, but it does enable the character to impersonate members of just about any profession or participants in just about any activity. If you want to change your actual physical appearance (height, weight, gender, or facial features) the GM should ask you to take some extra Faults. For two faults, you can impersonate any specific person for a limited period of time – for three you can keep the ruse up indefinitely. For ways this power can be used and abused, refer to the anime Hime-chan's Ribbon.

Chapter 2: Supernormal Powers

HeartQuest

Chapter 3:
Playing the Game

Now that you've learned the basics and created your character, it's time to learn how to play. Hopefully you will have a patient gamemaster who will guide you through the difficulties you might encounter. But some GMs are less tolerant, so here are some of the basics of a roleplaying game.

In an RPG, you aren't doing anything yourself. It's your character who does everything. You are controlling (or attempting to control) your character's actions as she faces the world and people around her. You are interacting with the characters played by your fellow players, with those played by the GM, and with the general environment around you. Is it cold this morning? The GM will tell you this and you will react to the fact that it is cold. That seems like a simplistic example, but it's the sort of information that might prove useful. (If it's snowing in July, it might give you an idea that something supernatural is going on….)

In a way this resembles the games like "cops and robbers" and "house" that you played as little kids. You were taking on the role of a cop, robber, husband or wife. This time, though, there are rules that define what the role you took on can do. We've already seen some of those rules in action when you created your character. Now let's see how those rules are put into practice to create the roleplaying experience.

Description and Declaration

Throughout the game, you will be declaring and describing what your character is doing. You can go into as much detail as you like – just try not to bore the other players.

An example of a simple declared action is "I kiss Kasumi". What happens next is up to several things. If Kasumi is a player-character, she might have an opinion about being kissed by you. If she consents to the kiss, there usually won't be a problem resolving the immediate action – you and Kasumi exchange an intimate moment. If Kasumi doesn't want to be kissed, on the other hand, it gets more complicated. Her player can say "Kiss him? No way! I'm going to slap his face instead!" You have both declared actions, and the GM has

to step in and resolve how the scene plays out. And the GM may have other tricks up his sleeve – maybe Kasumi's former boyfriend (an NPC or "non-player character") is watching all this and decides to barge in on the scene, posing a whole new set of problems.

If Kasumi is an NPC, it is up to the GM to decide if she will accept or reject your kiss. He'll make the decision based on how well it will advance the story you are playing out. Perhaps he'll make you roll to see if you can carry through on your intentions. Or perhaps he'll throw in some other complication. If he's really sadistic, he'll do all of the above.

Sometimes you will have to describe how you do something as well as what you do. It might not be enough, for example, to say "I listen in on the conversation going on in the other classroom". The GM could very well ask you how you are going to accomplish this feat. Maybe you'll be outing your ear to the door, or (if you have one) you might plant a microphone in the classroom (which raises possible complications all its own).

Conversation

You won't just be acting with or on other characters, of course. You'll be talking to them to. You have to be able to convey to others what you want or you probably won't get very far. Conversation offers chances for agreement, cooperation, misunderstandings, and all the things that just can't be conveyed without words.

NPCs will also be talking to you. At what length depends on the situation. It will be rare, for example, for the GM to give you Yoshizumi-sensei's entire lecture on Japanese Literature. But he might read the entire romantic haiku that Kenshiro wrote to your character. Monsters will make deadly threats to your magical heroines, authority figures will try to question you at times, and you'll naturally have to deal with your family and other NPCs.

You'll usually be able to tell the difference between the GM describing a situation and the GM speaking in character for an NPC. You are going to need to develop the same skill. Usually,

when you are conversing at the table (or beanbag chair or whatever) during a game it is assumed you are conversing in character unless you deliberately step out of character. In this game, you have to make it clear that "I want to order a pizza" means that you want to call out yourself and not that your character wants to order a pizza in the game. Otherwise you'll go hungry!

Task Resolution

Many of the actions your character will take over the course of the game are automatic. You don't need to do anything special to walk, pick up most objects, talk to another character (most of the time) or look for something.

On the other hand, there will be times when there is a chance your character will not succeed at something she attempts. This is resolved with a die roll and the process is called "task resolution". The action you are attempting is called a "task". Task resolution is a cooperative process between you and the gamemaster, who is not out to get you in spite of what some people might have told you about roleplaying games.

Ideally you will have a set of four FUDGE dice with you when you play *HeartQuest*. FUDGE dice are a special kind of six-sided die on which two sides have a plus sign, two sides have a minus sign, and two sides are blank (have nothing on them at all). You can buy them from Grey Ghost Games, publishers of the original FUDGE rules. You can also make them yourself if the need arises, but we'd prefer you supported Grey Ghost.

Rolling FUDGE dice is simple. You roll four of them (no more, no less), add up the plus signs, and subtract the minus signs. That's your roll, and it can be anything from +4 (best) to -4 (worst). The rest of this chapter will show you how to apply this roll to any task you attempt to perform.

Traits and Tasks

Your character is defined by your traits, and you roll against those traits to determine your relative success or failure at each task the GM

assigns. They way you do this is quite simple. The GM will tell you which attribute or skill to roll against. You roll the FUDGE dice and total them up. You then move your trait up or down on the scale from Terrible (bottom) to Superb (top) based on the roll. Then you tell the GM what your final result is and he tells you what happened.

Simple, no?

Some notes on the basic process: you will often get rolls that are lower than terrible or higher than Superb. In that case you go further down on the additional levels. The worst possible roll is "Terrible -4" and the best is "Legendary +4" (for those few characters who have a Legendary trait).

Another note: The GM will tell you what happens: what you see (or think you see), what you figure out, etc., but he will NOT necessarily tell you if you made your roll! The GM will often not tell you the difficulty of the roll you are attempting. You might find yourself having to guess whether you really succeeded at the task at hand or whether the GM is lying to you about something, especially when the task involves perception.

Task Checks

There are many types of tasks that you can attempt. Often you won't know you're going to be attempting a task until the GM interrupts you and asks you to make a die roll. There will be other times when you ask the GM to let you roll against a trait to do something.

Some of the types of tasks you will perform (or attempt to perform) include:

Attribute Checks: This is when you roll against an attribute to see if something happens to your character. An example would be a Physique check to push open a door (hey, there can be some pretty heavy doors!), a Cool check to withstand an insult without lashing out, or a Willpower check to resist that extra piece of strawberry cheesecake. There can even be Appearance Checks, to see for example if on a particular occasion you are looking good enough to attract the kind of attention you want from a particular boy.

Skill checks: This is a roll against one of your Skills to perform a task. If there is a question on whether to roll against an Attribute or a Skill, roll against the Skill even if it's at a lower level than the Attribute. Generally, if a task specifically falls under the realm of a Skill, then an attempt to perform it by someone who doesn't have the skill will be at a very high difficulty or be declared impossible by GM fiat. Again, the GM will usually not tell you how difficult the task is (although he may give you hints).

Example: Miyaki is shopping at the local clothing store, looking for a new outfit. Being the clothes horse she is, Miyaki wants something cool, new and fashionable. The GM asks her to make a Shopping roll. He's set a high Difficulty, knowing that Miyaki lives in a relatively small town. Miyaki rolls and does not beat the difficulty. However, Miyaki's player is not told this. Instead, she is told that she could not find a suitable outfit in the store. Miyaki makes a note to herself to make a trip to Tokyo sometime soon, where she knows she'll find the latest fashions, unaware that the perfect outfit is sitting on the rack right behind her…

HeartQuest

Chapter 4:
Combat

Fighting and Shoujo Manga have an odd relationship. In some instances, fighting is strictly prohibited. For example, in one episode of the Kodomo no Omocha TV series, the heroine Sana shouts out "This is a Shoujo Anime!" when a fight is about to break out. In others, you have the recurring "monster of the week" type of scheme, where the heroes fight a new monster in every episode. Regardless, there is always the potential for violence and HeartQuest does not shy away from it. The following section deals with how to orchestrate all forms of battle in HeartQuest, be it against fearsome dragons, giant mecha, evil youma, or even just a confrontation between rivals in the school's kendo practice hall.

Basic Combat Routine

Combat is handled as a series of four steps in HeartQuest. Since in Shoujo Manga most combat involves dueling between two characters, this part of the Combat section assumes the fight is a one-on-one affair. In cases where multiple fighters are involved at the same time, the multi-fighter rule described under *Initiative* should be used.

The four steps are as follows:

1. Determine Initiative

2. Resolve first character's action

3. Resolve second character's action

4. If both participants are not incapacitated, continue to the next round.

Initiative

In order to determine who goes first, the participants will have resolve Initiative. Since most combat has a dueling nature, HeartQuest assumes the character with the higher combat skill automatically goes first. In cases of ties (or the players/GMs getting bored), roll 4dF and modify the combat skill being used accordingly. In cases of character with no combat skill, the result is automatically Poor (-2). Keep in mind that Dodge is considered a combat skill and can be use if the character will be acting defensively that round. Throwing, although listed under physical skills, can also be used if the character is throwing something dangerous.

Example: Hiroshi and a gang punk are about to brawl. Hiroshi has a Brawling skill of Great (+2) while our stupid gang punk has a Brawling skill of Fair (+0). Since Hiroshi has the higher skill rating, Hiroshi gets "first whacks."

Multi-Fighter Initiative: When in doubt, expect the unexpected. Although most fights in Shoujo are one-on-one, there are occasionally multiple person brawls. In such cases, using the skill levels of the characters would be tedious. Instead, each character rolls 4dF and applies their Physique attribute since it is the closest attribute that encompasses a character's reflexes. The character with the highest result followed by the second, third, fourth, et cetera until all the combatants have acted. In case of ties, each character rolls a single Fudge Die until the tie is broken.

Actions

Upon getting to their initiative, the combatant has an almost unlimited number of things he or she can accomplish provided they can do it within 10 seconds (the average time in which a combat round takes). This is known as the character's action. Each character gets to perform one action on their initiative turn. There are five common actions: Attack, All-Out Attack, Defend, Use Trait, or Wait. Other possible actions are up to participants' imaginations.

Attack: The act of inflicting damage upon either a living thing or an inanimate object. This deals with physical attacks such as the use of a weapon, displays of martial arts prowess, or flinging the occasional projectile. Magic attacks are handled in the Magic section later in Chapter Two. Attacks behave like normal Opposed Skill Tests. The attacking character must pick an appropriate skill depending on the attack they intend on using (e.g., Martial Arts if attempting a fancy martial arts attack), while the target must pick a suitable defensive skill (the target could also use Martial Arts if they have the skill or Dodge). If either the attacker or defender lacks the appropriate skill, assume their skill is Poor

(-2). If the attacker wins the test, they may inflict damage upon the defender. If the defender wins, no damage is inflicted at all since the attacker missed.

All-Out Attack: The character lashes out, ignoring any need for defense, and performs a single fearsome attack which, with the right timing, can slaughter anything in his or her way. It grants a +4 bonus to the ODF of the attack, but also results in a -2 penalty to the attack skill test.

Defend: When all else fails, the character can choose to focus purely defending themselves. In that case, the character gets a +2 bonus to his or her defensive skill and DDF when any enemy attacks during that round.

Use Trait: This is a catchall for using any non-combat related ability during a battle such as a Skill or a Power that the character may possess. This also can cover Magic use, but the Magic section handles the use of magic in combat in better detail.

Wait: Provided the character has a higher initiative than their opponent(s), he or she can choose to simply wait for the other participant to act first before acting. This can useful for when the enemy character decides to execute an All-Out Attack so the character can counter it by Defending or launching his or her own All-Out Attack at the same time.

Inflicting Damage

If the attacking character succeeds in his or her Opposed Test, damage is inflicted. How much is inflicted depends on a number of different factors. The most important two factors are the Offense Damage Factor (ODF) of the attacking character and the Defensive Damage Factor (DDF) of the target. Both of these values are based on the Physique attribute of the characters involved; the table below should be used to determine the character's "base" Offense Value and Defense Value. Certain other traits such as Gifts and Powers may grant bonuses to the ODF and DDF ratings as do weapons and armor.

Editor's Note: the ODF & DDF values presented below are different than the ones found in the FUDGE rulebook. We did this because of the use of the Damage Threshold to make combat in HeartQuest more drawn out and epic rather than short and lethal. Since it takes more to incapacitate a character, it was natural to increase the ODF/DDF rates to compensate for it.

Table 2.1: Base Offense Factor	
Physique Rating	**Base Offense Value**
Superb	+10
Great	+9
Good	+8
Fair	+7
Mediocre	+6
Poor	+5
Terrible	+4

Table 2.2: Base Defense Factor	
Physique Rating	**Base Defense Value**
Superb	–6
Great	–5
Good	–4
Fair	–3
Mediocre	–2
Poor	–1
Terrible	0

While other factors can increase either value, these ratings reflect what the character can do in combat with a regular punch. Once the other factors are accounted for (various Gifts, Offense Factor bonuses from the Martial Arts skill, weapon or armor bonuses, etc. etc.), the attacking character's Offense Factor should be reduced by the target's Defense Factor.

Example 1: Hiroshi and that gang punk are still at it. This time, our hero has managed to land a hit on the punk. He has a Physique of Superb, which gives him an Offense Factor of +10 and a Defense Factor of –6. The punk, however, has a Physique of Good (Defense Value: -4). This means that Hiroshi inflicts 6 points of damage (Hiroshi's OV of +10 minus the Punk's DV of –4. 10-4 = 6) with his punch.

Example 2: Chiharu is being bullied by a mean sempai (upper classman) who really doesn't like her. In dramatic fashion, the sempai slaps Chiharu! The sempai has a Physique of Good (ODF: +8), but Chiharu has a Physique of Terrible (DDV: +0). Thus the slap does a numbing 8 points of damage if the GM actually considers this a form of combat.

Random Damage (Optional): Like initiative, doing the same amount of damage round after round gets old after a while. In order to add a random element to it, simply roll 4dF and add it to the result. Say for instance Hiroshi's player in the example rolls a +2 result. The damage done would go up from 8 to 10.

Damage & Wound Levels

No matter how skilled and powerful they may be, all characters get hurt sooner or later. To account for this, all HeartQuest characters have a derived attribute known as "Wound Threshold." This attribute determines how much damage a character can take before they begin to suffer the negative effects of reaching the lower Wound Levels (explained below).

The Hurt Wound Threshold is formed by combining the modifiers from their Physique and Willpower attributes and adding the result to 10 (negative modifiers should be subtracted from the 10 points instead).

Once the Hurt Wound Threshold is figured, it is then used to determine the character's wound thresholds for more severe wound levels. Multiply by 2 for the Very Hurt threshold, by 3 for the Incapacitated threshold, and by 5 foe the Dead threshold.

Examples: A character with a Physique & Willpower of Fair (+0) would thus have a Wound Threshold of 10/20/30/50 (0 + 0 + 10 = 10). Meanwhile, a character with a Physique of Superb (+3) and a Willpower of and Great (+2) would have a WT of 15/30/45/60 (3 + 2 + 10 = 15) while a character with a Terrible Physique (-3) and Fair Willpower (+0) would have a WT of 7/14/21/35 (10 – 3 = 7).

In HeartQuest, all damage is cumulative. When the accumulated damage exceeds one of the character's Wound Thresholds, their Wound Level worsens and they begin to suffer penalties to their dice tests. There are five Wound Levels: Unhurt, Hurt, Wounded, Incapacitated, and Dead. The Wound Level Unhurt sums up any character that has either sustained no damage or the damage taken is less than their Hurt Wound Threshold. Upon reaching the Hurt Wound Level, the character is stuck with a –1 penalty to all of their dice rolls. The Very Hurt Wound Level increases this penalty to –2. At the Incapacitated level, the character is knocked out and will remain that way until they recover enough that the damage taken in combat is less than the Incapacitated threshold rating. If a character with an Incapacitated WT of 30 takes 34 points of damage, they will regain consciousness when they have recovered 5 points of damage, since they will then have 29 damage- -one less damage point than their Incapacitated threshold. And Dead is, well, dead. This gap between the Incapacitated and Dead thresholds are twice the size of normal Wound Levels on purpose so that character deaths are in most cases very rare.

Healing Wounds

Despite how invulnerable some characters may believe themselves to be, all characters take damage in combat and must heal from it eventually. How fast the character heals depends on several variables. The most important one is their Physique attribute- obviously a tough character can heal faster than someone that's allergic to every substance known to man. The second factor is the type of campaign. In a serious game where fighting is highly lethal, the healing rate is slower. In a more comic game a character recovers from "lethal" wounds by the time the next scene comes up. Using the below table of healing rates, the character reduces the damage they've taken by this amount at the beginning of each new scene.

Table 2.3: Healing Rates		
Physique LVL	**Serious Game**	**Comic Game**
Superb	7	9
Great	6	8
Good	5	7
Fair	4	6
Mediocre	3	4
Poor	2	3
Terrible	1	2

Example: Hiroshi has taken a total of 13 points of damage from his brawl with the gang punk. Since the campaign setting is rather comic and he has a Physique level of Superb, his damage is reduced by 9 points after the fight.

Combat Complications

Having discussed the basics, the following section deals with addition complications that may arise during or after combat is concluded.

Armor

The term armor covers all forms of protective gear that are worn with decreasing damage in mind. Players can gain access to armor by taking the Prop gift, which covers the use of any important items that the character may have access to or own. In the case of heavier armor, the character's defense tests when attacked in combat are penalized due to the bulk of the armor.

Table 2.4: Armor List		
DDF Bonus	**Defense Penalty**	**Examples**
+1	+0	Leather Armor Kevlar Vest
+2	+0	Scale Mail Kevlar Jacket
+3	+0	Chain Mail Light Body Armor
+4	−1	Plate Mail Heavy Body Armor
+5	−2	Full Plate

Shields: Although armor mainly covers protective body wear such as suits of armor, shields are a form of protection that some players may want to consider. A shield is simply a slab of something (wood, metal, plastic, etc.) that is carried in the off-hand and used to block incoming attacks. In game terms, a shield provides a small bonus to the player's defense rolls. If the character's defense roll beats the shield's 'Defense Range', the character suffers no damage. If not, the DDF rating of the shield reduces the damage of the attack.

Table 2.5: Shield List		
Defense Bonus & Range	**DDF Bonus**	**Examples**
+1	+1	Buckler
+2	+2	Large Shield
+3	+3	Tower Shield

Attack Ranges

One of the more complex subjects that arise in the combat system of any role-playing game is determining the range within which a character can strike his or her intended target. In HeartQuest, there are four ranges: melee, short range, medium range, and long range. Each weapon or attack has its own range.

Melee: The weapon or attack requires the character and their target to be within very close range- often less than a meter or yard away. Examples: all forms of physical combat (punching, kicking, etc.) as well as the use of all melee weapons.

Short Range: A distance of roughly 30 feet (10 yards/meters). Examples include thrown weapons such as shuriken, rocks, and knives.

Medium Range: A distance of roughly 100-300 feet (30-100 yards/meters). Examples include bows and crossbows.

Long Range: A distance of roughly 500-1000 feet (160-300 yards/meters). Examples include firearms and other more powerful weapons.

Weapons

Through the Prop gift, a character can gain access to nearly any form of weapon imaginable. The obvious benefit of having a weapon in combat is that the character inflicts more damage than they are normally capable of without one. They come in four varieties: Melee and Ranged.

Melee Weapons: these cover any weapon that is swung or thrust at the opponent in close combat. Since it relies on the muscle power of the holder, it supplies a direct bonus to the attacking character's ODF pending on the size of the weapon. Weapons with a sharp edge or point receive an accumulative +2 bonus to their ODF, even though listed differently. A knife, for instance, is listed as a +2 weapon but does +4 damage.

Table 2.6: Melee Weapon List		
DDF Bonus	**Initiative Modifier**	**Examples**
+2	+2	Small Weapon (Black Jack, knife, brass knuckles, sling)
+4	+0	Medium weight one-hand weapon (billy club, machete, short sword, epee)
+6	−1	Large one-handed weapon(Broadsword, axe, large club)
+8	−2	Light two-handed weapon(Spear, Quarterstaff)
+10	−3	Heavy two-handed weapon(Polearm, Great Sword, battleaxe)
+2*	N/A	All sharp weapons (swords, axes, etc.)

* Cumulative with other bonuses

Ranged Weapons: This covers long ranged weaponry that involve firing projectiles such as Bows and guns. With the exception of Bows and thrown weapons, all Ranged Weapons have a "set" ODF that it always inflicts if the character

using it successfully strikes their opposition in combat.

Table 2.7: Ranged Weapon List		
ODF Bonus	**Initiative Modifier**	**Size & Examples**
+0	+0	Shuriken
+2	+0	Short Bow
+4	+0	Long Bow
+4/+6	−1	Composite Bow (Short/Long)
4	+0	Hold-Out Pistol (Saturday Night Special)
7	+0	Light Pistol (Beretta)
10	+0	Heavy Pistol (Desert Eagle)
13	+0	Assault Rifle (M16, AK-47)
16	+0	Shotgun
19	+0	Assault Cannon
25	+0	Rocket Launcher

Chapter 5:
Gamemastering

If you are reading this and you are not the GM (Game Master), you are wasting your time. There are no "World Secrets" or "Things a Player Was Not Meant to Know." This is the chapter about preparing and hosting your own shoujo manga/anime drama. If you don't want to do this, hand this book to the person who does, so she can get started. Arigato!

All right, so you're the GM. You have the tough, but ultimately rewarding job of putting on a game for a group of your friends, and delivering to them a world and story where they can be heroes and heroines, fight evil, find love, and experience all of the pathos and emotion they find in their favorite dog-eared manga. In order to do this, you have to be pretty familiar with the rules, act out the parts of the various people the players will meet along the way, and above all, be able to improvise to keep with the story and feeling. Yes, you have to do all that, but in return, you get a chance to decide what goes into a good romantic (or tragic) anime, and to take your friends on an adventure they have probably only dreamed of. You also get a good dose of god-like power

Still here? Good. Let's get started with the nuts and bolts of a well-run game.

Running the Game

It may seem like a daunting task, but running a game is not as difficult as it might first seem. Just keep your cool and use your intuition, and most of all, try to have fun! You're playing a game for enjoyment, not putting on a multi-million dollar production (If you are, refer to our royalty agreement). Here are a few things that you may be wondering:

When to Roll Dice

When should you roll dice? The answer is: as rarely as possible. A set of dice is acceptable as a randomizer, but dice can be even more fickle than fate or fortune in real life.

In case of actions with no active resistance (meaning no resistance coming from another person), such as climbing, only roll dice when there is emotion to gained from it. For example,

climbing up a cliff aided by proper equipment, on a good day, taking all the time you need, will not need any dice roll, even from characters with Terrible Climbing Skills (Although such characters players should role-play their apprehension anyway, just for fun). Rolling dice will only slow the game down.

However, if there are high winds, or the players have to get up the cliff before a huge monster gets there to eat them, a roll would be necessary, because the outcome is in doubt, and the characters (and thus the players) are under stress. If the players hold their breath in anticipation as the dice tumble, the roll was necessary. That's as good a rule of thumb as any.

Now that you know when to roll, lets talk about *what* and *how* to roll.

Attributes, Skills and Difficulties

The GM should usually decide what attribute or skill is used for different types of rolls. Descriptions of what the different attributes and skills mean can be found in the first chapter.

But how can you decide what result the character must get to complete a task? Here are some guidelines; use your own common sense and judgement:

Result	Example (Acrobatics roll)
Terrible	Balance on one foot
Poor	Jump up and down on one foot
Mediocre	Balance with one leg straight out
Fair	Turn a somersault on the ground (Not too gracefully)
Good	Turn a cartwheel
Great	Do a double back-handspring
Superb	Do a double back-handspring on a narrow ledge
Legendary	Defy the laws of physics as we know them

These guidelines are only that, however: guidelines. In a highly cinematic game where the PCs are constantly pulling off death defying feats, only a Fair roll may be needed for incredible stunts. On the other hand, an incredibly realistic game

may require at least a Fair roll for any task not performed on a regular basis by the character.

Players may be able to modify these difficulties with their descriptions. A player whose most exciting description of his own action is "I'm rolling my Pick Pocket skill now" should receive the maximum reasonable difficulty when attempting his action. On the other hand, a player who describes the above pick pocketing attempt as "As I near my target, I fake a cough and stumble forward, bumping into him, deftly slipping my hand into his pocket, seeking his wallet" should receive some sort of positive modifier to his attempt. Consider it a reward for making the scene that much more enjoyable. However, don't award spotlight hogs who go on and on about every single action in hopes of getting a modifier. On the other hand, if a player comes up with a description that sounds like it would make the task much harder than it would be otherwise, don't give him a penalty for his efforts. Good attempts at role-play should never be penalized.

The point is, don't get too caught up in making all things equal and scaled. Get a basic idea of how often you want something to be done, and set the difficulty accordingly. If you think an action is routine and could be done often, it should only require a Terrible roll (or no roll at all). If you only want something done once an adventure, make it Superb or beyond. Just don't get bent out of shape about it!

Setting the Stage

Now that you know the when, what, and how of rolling dice, it's time to discuss the where.

The where is, of course, the story's setting. Every time your PCs come across something new, whether it be an old mansion, a dank cave or a new classroom, it is up to you, the Game Master, to describe the setting is such a way as to make the players be able to envision it themselves.

This may seem like a daunting task, but it's only as hard as you make it. Try these tips for best description:

1. Be sensual

Don't forget to include all the senses in your description. Of course, describe the grass's green color, but also its lovely smell, its spongy feel under their feet, the way the wind whips through it, even the way you can almost taste it in the air. Of course, don't describe it unless you want to make an impression, which brings us to our next point.

2. Hit the High Points

Don't get too caught up in details. Make sure to give the players an overview of the scene as a whole (Such as "A dirty street corner, with litter being tossed about, filling the cracks in the sidewalks, and covering the dented street signs"), and then describing important things in more detail. Anything you describe in detail will be considered by the players to be important, and they will investigate it. Remember that.

3. Be Flexible

Don't use a map. A map is too rigid for such a free-form game. Instead, be logical when players suggest certain actions. If they are in an alleyway, for example, it's logical to assume there are some crates to be kicked over or some trash to hide in, even if these things weren't specifically in the description. You can assume that these things are so mundane that the characters registered them in their minds without taking any great notice.

4. Finally, Remember What Game This Is

HeartQuest is a shoujo anime game. So describe the scene as it would appear in your own anime or manga! Don't describe the scene in terms of panels or cells, but getting an idea with a shoujo mindset will certainly put you on the right track. Who knows? Maybe your production *will* be a manga someday!

Non-Player Characters

The cute American English teacher. The cackling space pirate. The evil demon king from the sixteenth dimension. All of these are Non-

Player Characters (or NPCs), which means they are controlled by the Game Master. As the Game Master, you will be in control of a whole slew of these constructs, which can range from bit parts and walk-ons to fully fledged characters who garner as much spotlight time as the players' characters. They can cause problems for the players, help them, provide them with information, or simply supply a little local color to the mix. Effectively employing NPCs for this purpose is a skill that takes practice, but your players (and you) will appreciate the result.

Here are a couple of pointers for using good NPCs:

1. Separate the Wheat and the Chaff

In the real world, everybody has motivations, problems, hang-ups, talents, and history. In a game however, a bit part NPC like a shopkeeper is just scenery. Don't bother giving a complicated background, or even attributes to an NPC the players are only going to see once. (However, a bookseller at the most popular bookstore in town where your players regularly hang out should probably be a fully fleshed out character.) Instead, give them a short description (For a fish merchant, "Short, dark haired, overweight, black full beard and mustache, dirty clothes"), skills he might have ("Haggling: Good, Appraise Fish: Good"), a motivation ("Sell fish; cheat customers'), and maybe one or two memorable traits ("Constantly gestures with a dead, smelly fish"). This should create a seemingly 3-D character out of a 2-D NPC. Of course, if your characters are having long conversations with every smelly fishmonger, it might be time to move the story along.

2. Get into it

When roleplaying an NPC, don't just read her lines, get into it! Try an accent; raise or lower your voice; put some emotion into it. Use facial expressions and gesticulate. Time permitting, rehearse the more important roles in front of a mirror. If you can use props, like a hayseed for a hick farmer, or a bunch of papers for a busy executive, do that! Anything that makes an NPC more than just a clue dispenser is a good idea.
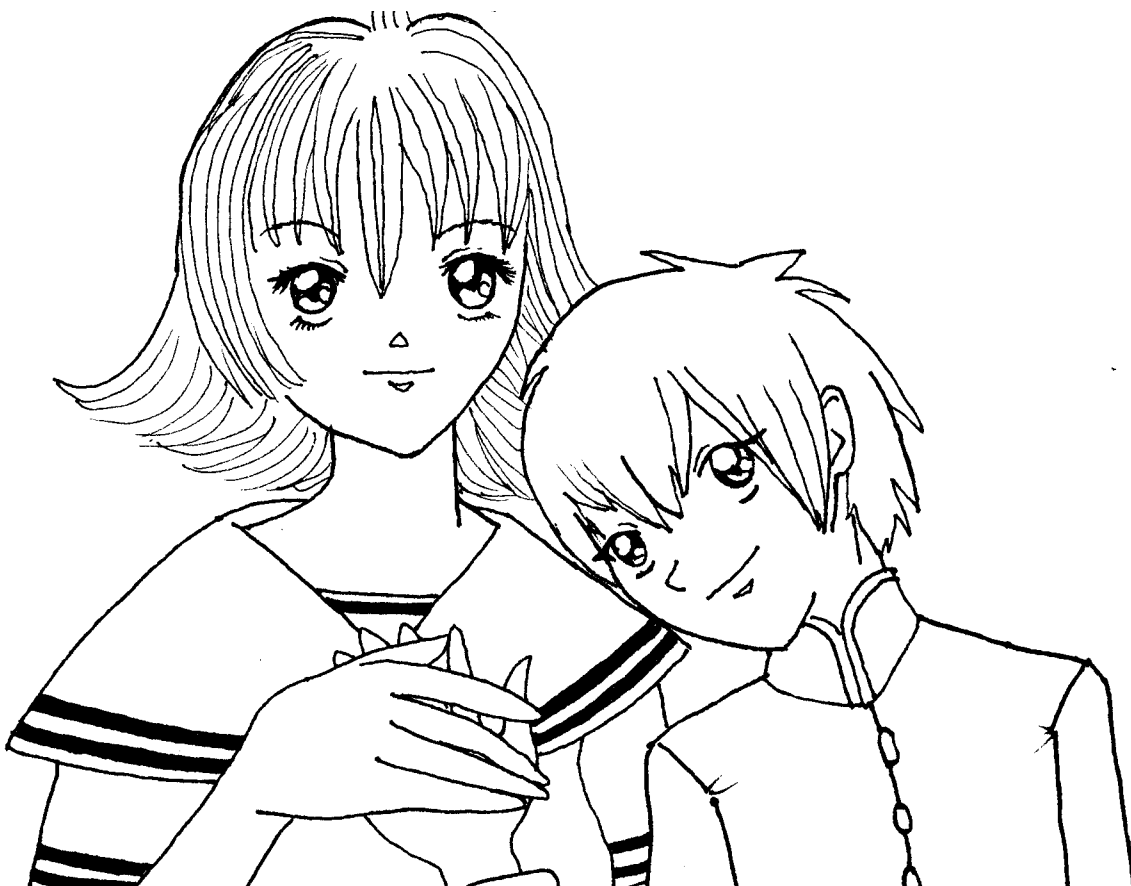
Running Combat

Players (and thus, their characters), being who they are, will no doubt find themselves in a scrap. Combat is exciting and dramatic, and so gets a bit of special attention in this section.

The first thing to remember about combat is that it should always serve a purpose; there are no "random encounters" in *HeartQuest*. Each and every fight should serve to either, A) Put the PC in direct confrontation with her opposition (i.e. The final showdown with the villain); B) Impede the progress of the PC in a certain line of action (As the villain makes an escape, he sends out some thugs to "deal with the intruder"); C) Reveal information ("Ah-ha, hero! Once I have killed you, I will kill the princess I kidnapped as well!" "You mean YOU have her!?" "Blast it!"); D) Create tension or suspicion (A mysterious black cloaked figure attacks the PC for seemingly no reason); or E) give the PC a chance to do something really, really cool ("No…I can't let you take him…I…I love him!" Fight!).

Most fights will involve one-on-one duels, or groups of one-on-one duels, between PCs and NPCs. This allows a lot of chance for the PCs to trade witty banter or angsty cursing with their foes. There may also be instances of all of the PCs going after one lone and very strong enemy. This gives the PCs a chance to cry out for help, go to each other's aid, seemingly lose hope and then all pull together for the final victory.

Once the characters are actually in a fight. It is the GM's job to make sure it is exciting and fast paced. Don't give the players a lot of time to decide on their actions, as this ruins the pacing. This also makes the fight more stressful, which can be fun to talk about later.

One thing the GM needs to avoid that many GMs have a problem with is the "Rockem', Sockem' Robots" method of narrating fights. Player: "I attack", GM: "Okay roll", "I hit", "He takes damage. He attacks", "He missed", "New initiative." This is very boring.

Be sure to describe the battle in dramatic detail. We aren't talking warrior-poet battle hymn quality, but at least put some effort behind it. Describe pratfalls, daring lunges, near misses, and other exciting things. If a player makes a Superb attack roll, describe the effortless grace, and the utter surprise of the NPC at the sight of such skill. Describe witnesses' reaction, their gasps and awed expressions. Your player will just eat it up, and you'll have fun too. Of course, with a terrible roll, tripping on the carpet mid swipe and landing face first in the egg salad is good too.

A Short Word on Death

Only let the characters die when it really means something. Don't let them die at the hands of a nameless goob. Just cheat and let them live. When a PC dies, it should be with lots of tragedy, flashbacks, sad music, heroic speeches and of course, cherry blossoms.

Experience and Character Improvement

Player characters can, over the course of a campaign, improve their abilities. They do this by gaining *experience points* and spending those points to improve their levels in attributes and skills, buying new gifts and supernormal powers, and buying off faults.

Experience point awards are determined by the GM and given out each game session. A general guideline is each player should get 1-3 points per session for good roleplaying, with a maximum of four points for utterly flawless play. This is partially for accomplishing goals but also for playing in character, showing the character's emotional and intellectual development, and interacting well with both PCs and NPCs. Players should always be rewarded for actions that add to the enjoyment of the game session and to the development of the story, even if those actions sacrifice the character's own personal goals.

Experience Points, or EPs, are spent to improve abilities. To increase a skill costs 1 point per level to raise from Terrible to Poor, Poor to Mediocre, or Mediocre to Fair. It costs 1 EP to learn a new skill at Terrible. The cost to raise each level after Fair doubles: thus Fair to Good costs 2

EPs, Good to Great costs 4, Great to Superb costs 8. Legendary skills require GM permission and 16 EPs to raise from Superb. Easy skills are treated as if they were one level lower, to a minimum of Terrible. Hard skills are treated as if they were one level higher. Very Hard skills are threated as if they were two levels higher.

Player characters can increase an atrtribute by spending three times the cost of raising a skill to the same level and always requires GM permission. Example: Miyu wants to improve her appearance from Great to Superb. She's saved 24 EPs. Now she needs the GM's approval and a good in-game reason why she suddenly has gone from being pretty to a knockout.

Gifts and Supernormal Powers can be added at the cost of 6 EPs per fault you'd need to take at character creation to buy this gift or power. The player must go through the same power design process with the GM as she did when she first created her character, and the GM must create an in-game situation in which the new power can emerge or the new gift can display itself. In other words, there has to be a story-based reason this character now has this ability she didn't have before.

For 6 EPs and with GM approval, a player character can "buy off" a Fault so that she is no longer affected by it. Again, this requires an in-game reason. For example, perhaps the character went into therapy to overcome an otherwise crippling phobia.

The GM is always free to impose a new fault in game play if the situation arises that demands one. In darker games, new phobias are quite possible. In games where combat is common, characters can suffer crippling injuries, either temporary or permanent, that are reflected in new Faults.

The Final Rule of GMing

Well now you have tips, tricks and a host of guidelines for running your first game. You also have a book full of rules and numbers. But in truth, there is only one rule you really need:

This is a game, and games are fun!

If you find any rule in this book that you think makes the game less fun, ignore it. If you think of a better rule, use it (and send it to us). Don't let our inadequacies get in the way of your good time.

And lastly, remember, when you are all strung out over your adventure and whether it will be good; or you agonize over deciding a difficulty number; or you worry and worry as to whether or not the players will be mad at you for not being familiar with the rules, take a deep breath and remember that these people are indeed your friends. They like you and you like them, and you are both willing to forget little mistakes in the name of camaraderie. Trust in them, and things will go smoothly.

Now, ye new *HeartQuest* GM! Go forth and bring adventure and excitement to the world! And have fun!

HeartQuest

Chapter 6:

Teen Romance

Introduction

Since the target audience for shoujo manga and anime is young girls, it is natural that many shoujo stories are about young girls and boys. Young people in Japan face many challenges, from school and the general pains of growing up, to the difficulties of falling in love. It is this subject, teenage romance, that is the source of both drama and comedy in many a manga and anime. It will be a major theme in most shoujo campaigns, but some campaigns will be devoted entirely to it.

These campaigns, while difficult to run sometimes, can prove enormously satisfying. They provide an intense and emotional roleplaying experience that, while it may not be for everyone, can be especially rewarding when done right.

Teenage Life in Japan

By the time a child reaches the age of 14 they are already in junior high school facing rigorous coursework. They have already had to pass a difficult series of exams to get into the junior high school of their choice and have three years (seventh, eighth and ninth grades) to prepare for high school.

Until recently, 14 was also the age of consent in Japan. The law does not generally take much interest in what juveniles do among themselves in Japan, so some 14-year-old boys and girls are already sexually active. This is not usually the case for shoujo heroines, however. Sex is an important step, as we shall see later in this chapter. It should also be noted that pedophiles are looked upon with the same disdain in Japan as they are in North America, so an adult caught in bed with a junior high student is likely to be prosecuted or ostracized.

It is universal that K-12 students at all levels in Japan wear school uniforms. The uniform varies between each school and the student's family must buy it. There are also summer and winter versions of most school uniforms. The typical male uniform is a suit, a military-style officer's uniform, or a white shirt with dark pants. Girls always wear skirts and either a coat and ribbon or a "sailor

Chapter 6: Teen Romance

suit" (the classic "sailor fuku" that anime fans are so fond of). This dates back to the beginning of the current Japanese educational system, which was originally inspired by Germany's military academies. Boys dressed like naval officers and girls like enlisted sailors.

Schoolwork is heavy in junior high. Students are tested frequently on a variety of subjects including Japanese, English, Math, History and many more. Physical education is mandatory and requires a "gym uniform" that consists of a sweatshirt or T-shirt and either shorts for boys or "bloomers" for girls. (The *Dragonball* character Bulma was named for these garments).

Students are also involved with clubs. Sports teams, theatre companies, orchestras, choirs and other groups are run as official school "clubs" with a faculty advisor, and every student is expected to join a club. The clubs and the classes combine forces at several times each year to organize and put on a school festival, where visitors can come to the campus, sample food prepared by students, and watch artistic presentations and athletic exhibitions.

Ninth grade is the period of "exam hell". To get into a good high school is extremely important, and to achieve this goal one must pass that school's entrance exams. These exams are usually extremely rigorous (especially for the most prestigious schools) and require a LOT of study and preparation. Much of the back-story of *Sailor Moon S* centers around the Sailor Senshi preparing for exam hell. Students who fail their entrance exams cannot get into that school – they must try another, usually lesser school and keep on trying until they get into a high school.

Tenth Grade is the freshman year in high school. By now the student is about 16, supposedly more mature, and ready to take on more responsibilities. Thus high school is even more rigorous academically than junior high; there are still festivals and clubs, and even more demands on the student's time. In addition, student government responsibilities fall on the shoulders of exceptional students (known as "class representatives"), who are chosen either by election or based on their academic performance.

Twelfth Grade is a repeat of exam hell, only more so. Colleges and Universities, while they will consider grades earned in high school, mainly admit based on standardized test scores. Preparation for these tests is critical if a student wants to get into a good college – and having a successful career without going to a good school is a hard road indeed. Those who cannot get into college have two options: find work that doesn't require a college degree (usually menial, low-paying and undesirable) or try again the next year as a "ronin" student, spending the intervening time studying independently. (Godai in *Maison Ikkoku* begins the series as a ronin student before finally getting into a college, as does the hero of *Chobits*.)

Independent study is common throughout the educational process, as students take on extra classes and homework to give them an edge in the exams. This is most commonly done at "cram schools", where single subjects are taught intensely and literally forced into the students' brains. Cram schools are not meant to provide a broad understanding of their fields; they are meant to force you to pass your exams.

Schools prefer that students have as few distractions as possible. Thus part-time jobs are usually against the rules. Nonetheless many students take them, for spending money or to help support their families. The school can penalize them if they are caught, but schools vary on how strictly they enforce this provision. Many shoujo manga characters have part-time jobs.

College is still rigorous, but students have a lot more freedom than in high school. It is now expected that they will be supporting themselves independently of their families and leading active social lives. Thus there are much fewer restrictions on what students do. By then alcohol is legal, and a culture of drinking that will last throughout the student's professional life is often born in college days.

Dating and Sex

One of the other activities that junior high schools and high schools frown upon is dating among students. Dating is seen as a distraction

from what is really important – schoolwork. Students caught together by faculty from their school on a date are likely to be punished. Just how severe that punishment is depends on the school.

Of course, students do date early and often. How this works varies depending on the situation, obviously, but movies, aquariums, zoos and concerts are popular attractions for teenage couples. Amusement parks are especially popular, with Tokyo Disneyland and similar theme parks being special hot spots.

Students of the opposite sex often study together. This enables them to combine romantic and academic interests. Sometimes it is perfectly innocent, especially if the rest of one person's family is also in the house. Sometimes, however, two teenagers will find themselves studying by themselves, at which point things can get hot.

As was mentioned earlier, sex between teenagers is not proscribed after age 14, at least under the law. Social taboos may be against starting so young, but as long as both parties are consenting the law will not do anything. Sexual mores are a common theme in shoujo manga, as is how far to take a relationship. *His and Her Circumstances* often deals with this issue, culminating in one of the most erotic scenes in all of TV Shoujo anime (in which not one bit of skin is ever shown).

In a roleplaying situation, it is usually best to fade out and move on to the next scene once things get too heavy. Just remember that all acts have consequences…

Romantic Traditions

There are several traditions that come into play when dealing with relations between the sexes. Some are ancient, others relatively new. But many of them are pervasive.

One that is seen most frequently in anime is the exchange of chocolate on Valentine's Day. On Valentine's Day, girls are expected to give chocolate to *every* boy in the class – this is known as obligation chocolate. But a girl who loves a

particular boy will prepare a special chocolate for him and him alone. This is handmade with all the skill and love she can muster (although the ingredients and forms often come from a commercially purchased kit). Even if she hasn't declared her feelings for the boy, she will try to express them through the chocolate. If the boy refuses the chocolate, it means he does not return her feelings. If he accepts, it is a sign of hope that he just might (although it is far from a certainty). The litmus test is on White Day (March 14th), when he is supposed to return the favor.

Christmas is also celebrated differently. Instead of a family holiday, it is frequently considered a holiday for lovers. (Since most Japanese follow a combination of Buddhism and Shinto, the holiday has no religious significance for them.) Characters in a boyfriend/girlfriend relationship will carefully consider the presents they exchange, where they will meet to exchange them, and what they will do afterwards.

Confessions of Love

One of the most stressful parts of any shoujo manga relationship is the beginning. A confession of love is a very important thing for a character of either sex and not to be entered into lightly. On the other hand, if it is taken lightly by the recipient, the result can be a severe heartache for the confessor. This is often a turning point in a romantic story either way, and gamemasters should not do anything to make the process any easier.

Confessions can be attempted several ways. Two classic methods are to arrange a meeting on the school grounds and to leave a note in the locker or desk of the beloved.

Both approaches carry significant risk. The beloved may never show up at the meeting. Worse, he may reject you to your face. The note could be ignored, intercepted, read aloud in class or in some other embarrassing situation, or even posted on a bulletin board. Many of these results can lead to complete humiliation and a broken heart.

Proffered love can be refused for many reasons. One common one is that the beloved already has "someone he likes"; another is that he can't commit to anyone. This may not be a permanent situation – some characters go through several boyfriends or girlfriends during their junior high and high school years. But for the moment, it is a setback that the character must find a way to deal with.

Shonen-ai and Shoujo-ai

Shonen-ai literally means "boy-love" and shoujo-ai means "girl-love". These terms refer to stories about homosexual and lesbian relationships, respectively. These are a common subgenre in shoujo romance stories – many women find them appealing in their beauty and sorrowful nature.

It is quite common in Japan for a girl's first crush to be another girl. Usually very little is made of it and it is even encouraged – as long as it is not acted upon. The classic example of a girl with a shoujo-ai crush is Tomoyo from *Card Captor*

Sakura, who obsessively worships her best friend Sakura. Whether she will ever get over her crush is the object of much fannish speculation.

Shonen-ai and shoujo-ai stories rarely end happily. The couples, if they form at all, are usually not together at the end of the story as some tragedy pulls them apart. It could be the intervention of a third character, the weight of social disapproval, or any number of other factors.

Shonen-ai and shoujo-ai stories are especially tricky to roleplay. The players should ideally know in advance what they're getting into and know what their comfort level is. Explicit descriptions of sexual situations should certainly be avoided – this will make most players very uncomfortable very quickly and could very easily ruin a game.

Nonetheless, having a same-sex NPC develop a crush on one of the PCs can be an intriguing and difficult complication in any Teen Romance game.

The "Couple-in-Denial" Syndrome

One of the most common themes in anime is the couple that everyone but the parties involved knows belong together. These can be referred to as "couples-in-denial" and there are far too many examples to list.

Roleplaying this situation can be tricky but rewarding. It is usually portrayed by the couple that bickers between themselves so frequently that everyone around them sees that they are fixated on each other, if only to show them up. But admit romantic interest? Never!

It usually takes something dramatic to break the denial and prove to these characters that they want each other after all. The GM can probably supply such an impetus, whether it's a dangerous situation or a rival coming in between them. ("Why do you care so much who Hotaru dates?" "I DON'T CARE! I DON'T CARE!" "Yes, I can see by the way you have your fists clenched like that just how much you don't care…") Jealousy is

a wonderful motivator and can get a PC into a lot of trouble.

The Role of Sports

Sports can be everything from a part of the story to an occasional distraction. Many Shoujo manga characters, male and female, are good athletes. Athletic prowess may lead to a boy or girl suddenly acquiring a horde of admirers eager for their company. Locker rooms are prime locations for gossip and rumor-mongering. Many a girl's heart is broken by something she overheard passing the boy's locker room.

Sports teams are clubs, instead of official parts of the school. Teachers advise the clubs, but do not run them. Captains run the teams, and they are usually chosen on the basis of their athletic ability.

The most popular sports in high school-based anime are tennis and soccer, followed by softball and basketball. Tennis is played by both sexes, while soccer is usually a major boy's sport. The most popular guys in soccer are usually the strikers, though you will find stories about goalies. Track events are also frequently a part of shoujo anime, and are participated in by both sexes.

One of the many festivals that take place at Japanese schools is the athletic festival where the teams and their members get to show off their skills. These festivals also feature races that can involve both students and parents. They are major events that require a great deal of preparation from the entire student body, even non-athletes; many is the anime in which panic approaches as the deadline for the sports festival draws nearer, and the students are forced to work harder and harder.

In many sports, especially at the high school level, clubs compete in a series of regional and national tournaments with the finals often televised nationwide. This is most popular for soccer and baseball, which are also the major professional team sports in Japan.

Forbidden Loves

There are some kinds of relationships that are strictly taboo even in Japanese society. When these come up in a game (and they can) they can have severe consequences for the characters involved.

The most common forbidden passion in shoujo manga is teacher-student romance. This can have severe consequences for both parties, but is a common enough fantasy that it shows up frequently in shoujo manga and anime, including in *Marmalade Boy* and *Card Captor Sakura*. Teachers who are caught risk the end of their careers or worse; students who are caught face suspension from school or worse. In any event, it becomes a major scandal if it becomes publicly known.

The stepsibling relationship per se does not exist in Japan. Therefore there is nothing technically illegal about one of the central themes in *Marmalade Boy*. Nonetheless, actually living with someone of the opposite sex who is your boyfriend or girlfriend can be quite scandalous in the high school years, and familial relationships are stressed very strongly in Japanese society. This is not to be taken lightly.

It is also generally considered scandalous to take up with anyone who is considerably older than you are. A junior high school girl dating a college student, Like Usagi and Mamoru in *Sailor Moon*, could be considered damaging to both their reputations. And Aya in *GALS!*, who sells non-sexual dates with older men at the beginning of the series, is the subject of much vicious gossip.

How and When to Wrap Things Up

One of the major differences between an American comic book and a Japanese one is that the Japanese book will often come to a definitive ending, This is especially important in the Teen Romance genre, where the dangling plotlines need to be resolved.

When to wrap things up is usually an easy decision. If your players get tired of the campaign and want to try something else, it's often a good idea to ask them to let you run one last session to wrap things up. In this session, decisions must be made, and events must occur that force all the ongoing conflicts to a head and resolve them.

This session can be very intense as characters that have been sitting on the fence are forced to make decisions. As the GM, you can't control what decisions they make or their results. Your job is to present the situations and speed along their resolution.

Chapter 6: Teen Romance

HeartQuest

Chapter 7:
Magical Girls

On the Subject of the Magical Girl

Though the magical girl type shows can be described as sub-genre of the Shoujo genre, it really has taken a life of its own. To give an example, it was the *Sailor Moon* (the touted premier 'Magical Girl' series) craze that gave Japanese Animation the chance to make a comeback. Of course, other shows have received a lot more attention, but the single show with such a huge fan base was able to catapult anime into the mainstream.

In the overly fantastical lineup of today's shows, perhaps it was a nice change of pace to have a theme which one could describe as a "Superhero teenage girl coming to terms with life." Many of the strengths of the magical girl sub-genre are present in many American Superhero comics, in which not only the fantastic is shown, but also the day to day hustle of being a person. It is refreshing to see someone who is not invincible, but rather emotionally fragile, something that is heavily played off of in many of these shows. It is often shown, in fact, that these girls are taken advantage of when it comes to their emotions, and their feelings are made a major weakness, as well as a great strength.

It isn't only the initial success of the theme, but the variation and selection now found. You now have a vast selection of series that include great shows like *Card Captor Sakura*, *Magical Girl Pretty Sammy*, *Saint Tail*, and many others. The popularity of these series is not only rising in Japan, but in the United States as well, where magical girl is becoming accepted. Already shows like *Card Captors* and *Sailor Moon* are in syndication, and several more titles reach US shores by the month. In fact, by a slight stretch of the imagination, one could cite shows like *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* as examples of an American take on the magical girl type shows, which just goes to show how popular such shows are becoming.

Now that we have taken a good look at the magical girl sub-genre, we will look at what it would mean to run a magical girl game. There are several things involved in such an undertaking, much like any other game setting. For instance,

will there be one magical girl, or many? Will the animal familiar be run by a player or as an NPC? But more than just that, one must become familiar with the entire scope of what a magical girl game can mean. Remember also that you are supposed to work together to make a story, so by all means talk to your players about what kind of story elements will be included in the game. It is absolutely critical that everyone can take part in the story. Oh yeah, one more thing; have fun!

As the person in charge of the game (and even you players) it is most important to intimately know your subject. And that subject (in this case) is that of the magical girl series. Watching the shows and studying the anime and manga is never a bad idea. Theme is also important, as the variations range from such themes as sealing magical mischievous menaces to modern day Robin Hood type capers. Now, here are some examples.

1) Magical Heroine Team

This is usually the easiest type of campaign to do, since every player can be a different magical girl and nobody is left out. Each girl should have a different base of powers to complement the team. The different attacks and defenses should be powerful in their own right, but not overwhelming. That's where the team attacks come in, they are usually high in special effects and may take a while to power up properly. And they require the whole team to participate. Also, they all have something in common, which is good for interaction during the interim.

The other thing that is vital to this type of series is that the bad guys be organized and powerful. Monsters are often summoned, and tend to be easier to defeat than the major bad guys. A theme should be decided for the bad guys, and all of them should be soldiers in that structure. There are often generals and such near the top, and a main bad guy that doesn't get defeated easily. A good mood to this type of game then would be an oppressive evil, with the players acting as shinning beacons of hope.

The girls often have allies and romantic interests, and sometimes there will be double agents as well. Magical animals that talk and are

allies are common, they often have their own piece of the story. There will usually be an entity that gives the girls their powers, though if they are heirs to something in the past they may be born with them. And these girls are always leading a double life, having to deal with the troubles of middle or high school (not to mention growing up) while saving the world.

And of course no fight against oppressive evil is complete without the villains and their cronies. Make them interesting, and make them fun! Cronies can be anywhere from pathetic to a downright menace to the city. Just make sure not to overdo the whole thing, but of course magical girls get their powers to fight something, right? A lot of camaraderie and rapports between two people can be developed during battle, and the compelling tension that a battle creates is great for game play.

It is important not only to focus on the parts of the game where the girls are fighting evil, but also where they interact with each other. The unifying fact that they are part of a team brings many of these girls together, and often, that they rely on each other. Whether they become friends or rivals, talk about the guys they like or compete for a man's affection, the group dynamics can provide for some interesting scenarios.

Most importantly though, is that the team should bond, and learn to work together. Without that they could never defeat the ultimate evil. Sometimes the road to teamwork is harder than the road to victory.

2) Single Magical Girl

This often has the most possibilities, but can be the hardest to pull off since several players may feel left out. There is usually 1 girl who has powers in this series, and it's usually acquired from an outside source (Aliens, magic, etc.) She is usually about 9, and the magic turns her into a young woman (often about 15) with one great skill. And the magic is usually a secret. Usually there are magical animals sent to help, or are stuck with her.

The complications in this type of series are not usually bad guys, but the problems every girl can have while growing up. Having to deal with a new career, school and love triangles are very common. Most often the other people essential to the story (or in the case of other players) they tend to be supporting characters. For instance, the magical girl would have her scientist friend, an occultist relative who gives her tips, or even has a whole family geared towards helping her achieve her destiny, just to name a few examples.

So all the other characters will tend to fill in for support roles, though this will split the focus from a 'fight of the week' game to one of a personal nature. It is also possible for this type of series to turn into a magical heroine team, if everyone gets or finds their powers at a different time. Eventually, a single magical girl series can turn into a magical heroine team very easily, with several ordeals involved in discovering the new team members or powers. This is often the case, as most 'team' series do not start off with all of the members present, or even with all of their abilities.

The focus of this game is again two fold where the real life and super hero life overlap each other. Everything rides on the one girl, which draws many people in to support her, as her success is critical to the community at large, if not the world. Usually, the girl has a great amount of character and charm from surviving through rough times and persevering with her tough position, and her friends are very supportive, often to the point of self-sacrifice for her cause. This makes for a very tight knit group. Also note that the main character may have many contacts, friends, acquaintances and such that would aid her, but otherwise be a very small part of the story.

3) Rival Magical Girls

This tends to be good versus evil, though friends at the start may be on different sides as the story goes on. Many times a sponsor for each side will appear and heavily influence either rival, though a freelance rival is not too uncommon. A lot of personal turmoil pervades this style, and it becomes a story of a personal nature, and can run the gamut of light hearted to dark series. Such series tend also not to focus on a 'fight of the week' kind of pacing, but go in a more cinematic or epic scope as the nature of the battles takes on more of an emotional or personal significance.

One magical girl on each side, brainwashing or coercion is common in this type. Sometimes, there are bigger problems that they must face together. There are often allies on both sides; magical animals are common but not necessary. These stories are often colored with inner conflict, personal hardship, as well as being littered with stories about the relationship between rivals. It can get dark, gritty, and interesting, especially as the rivalry reaches a boiling point, and a resolution to the rivalry inches into the foreground. Such games would be a great challenge for a group playing both sides.

4) Physic Girls

This tends to be more of a modern setting, the girls are often twins or otherwise closely related. Their powers are limited, often requiring both of the girls to use. Telepathy, telekinesis, and teleportation are common. Bad guys are often of the mad scientist or researcher type, wanting to research or expose the magical girls for fame and fortune.

5) The Magical Thief

This magical girl style is most like a mystery or detective story with a Shoujo twist. It is also very non-combative by nature, with the main character making flashy getaways and the like, and avoiding confrontations. This can make for a lot of intrigue and suspense.

But also remember that behind every great thief is a gumshoe that needs to bring the culprit to justice. Also, don't forget about the vast and shady underworld the thief may be associated to, including personal contacts, thugs, and fencers (people who sell stolen goods). Though this isn't a presented theme in any of the series in question, its something to consider. The thief is likely to at least have some assistant helping with information, getaways, or something of the like.

But there are other reasons to steal. The thefts can be part of some grander plan to stop evil, or perhaps simply righting wrongs. It could also be that a good number of artifacts were stolen/scattered, and now the magical thief must retrieve them from their current (and perhaps unworthy) owner.

Maybe one of the hardest types of magical girl styles to pull off, it can also be very rewarding, as there is a very interesting relationship between all people involved. The rest would depend on the people involved, for such a game can get gritty and dark, or lighthearted and colorful.

6) Out of This World!

The "Out of this world" series are those where the main characters are usually dimensional travelers, and usually by accident or by fate (one of my personal favorites). These characters are often either given superhuman powers, or are in some slight way good enough to be able to do what others on that dimension cannot.

A great example of this would be *El Hazzard* in any of its incarnations, as the show is about a

group of high school students and a high school teacher who are transported to a new world. Their rivalries friendships and interests carry over, even into the new world. To compound the matter, the new world somehow imparts abilities like super strength and manipulate ancient mysterious machines.

This all has tremendous potential in a game. For one, the characters must rely on each other in this strange new world. The new setting may be dangerous, foreboding, xenophobic, or just downright inhospitable. Also, any new "powers" will make the characters instant targets for the world's inhabitants to seek them out for a vast variety of purposes. For instance Kings and brigands would seek someone who could tell the future, since it can be a very lucrative ability to manipulate.

Another interesting aspect is the culture shock, which would affect both visitors and the inhabitants of the new world. The characters would of course have to be very careful not to break any laws or upset any local customs. What is against the law and what isn't? Everything is game here, but making a whole new world of course would be a lot of work for the game master.

Some options for different worlds would include worlds that resemble our own past, such as ancient China, medieval Europe, or even places like India and Africa. Or another possibility is to have the other world simply be like the modern day with some kind of twist, like making everything backwards. Science fiction can be a very convenient reference in this case.

But lastly, it is important that the characters are not way in over their heads. They must be able to survive the new environment, even if it is very difficult. Also, the characters should probably have something in common, though it is not a requirement per se.

7) Witch in Training

This magical girl series type is one that focuses on a very light occult theme. Think of it as an anime take on *Sabrina the Teenage Witch*. It tends to lead away from any monumental fight

of good versus evil. When the lines are drawn, the definition of who and what are evil is blurred. For instance, in Western society, witches are not usually good, yet of course the anime witches are nearly all cute and nice (mostly).

What is most noteworthy of this kind of series would be its marriage of Eastern and Western ideas, both in the occult, and in pop-culture references. These shows are very down to earth, and again focus on day-to-day life, and how people react to the witch's "magic". Though the series' tend to portray witches in a positive light, they usually carry a stigma with them as people are not willing to accept them for what they are; a normal girl with magic abilities. I don't think I need to point out the possible complications.

In a game with this theme, be sure to throw in pagan and occult references, as long as you don't offend your players. Then again, running a game like this, the players should know what they are getting into. There are possibilities for both lighthearted adventures, and grim stories, as always. It is also a great opportunity for some colorful villains, ranging form rival witches, to crusty inquisitors, gung-ho reporters, and even dark forces from beyond! However, it might be more appropriate to have the villain to be more foppish or affable, depending on the mood. As an example, perhaps a runaway familiar can be the villain, assembling all the familiars for a familiar revolt! Viva la revolution!

What Do Guys Do in Magical Girl Campaigns, Anyway?

Guys in Magical Girl campaigns play a vital role. They almost always act as a foil to the man character. Also, without the male character for the main magical girl to swoon over, your magical girl characters could run into some very straining relationships. Then again, romance may NOT be the theme in your game, but its something to remember.

However, critical to most of the magical girl series has been that romantic interest for the main character. Enter the lead male role. There are many variations on the role. He could be a "Rival

Magical Guy" and act for or against the main character in any number of ways. Or he could be a silent partner that the main character doesn't even know about, being like a guardian angel in combat against evil, yet tragically separated by circumstance in everyday life. Perhaps they could even be the mind-controlled minion, captive, or the ultimate bad guy. And don't forget, the average magical girl has a family, so fathers and brothers and such can be an influence as well, as has been seen in many instances, so don't rule those relatives out.

The possibilities are endless, as male characters run the gamut from allies to romantic interests (of the girls, or other characters) to bad guys and double agents, just to name a few. One thing to take into account is whether or not the male character will have similar powers to the magical girls in the group. Such a decision can be critical to the part the male character plays, and could spell the difference between NPC and PC. Also keep in mind that male characters in such a game are not completely necessary, but can add so much to the story. The romantic link between two or more characters (ala love triangles) can be a very fun and intriguing thing as well, so long as it is handled well.

All in all, guys can fill in for most roles the girls can, and some they can't (often). Guys can be just as important, though the focus of course will be on the (mostly) female protagonists. Yet do not discount the male.

Evil?

Ok, you have all seen the "misunderstood" villains in just about every story. Most Magical Girl series are no different. However, just who is good and evil? The space aliens draining life from the human victims may only be doing so to survive, or because its all they know. Or the kingdom of evil tearing the world apart may be doing so under their leader's banner of love. Or perhaps the villain is being manipulated by a greater evil, or is simply misunderstood. True evil acts are not usually the breaking of laws (which is not often portrayed). More often, evil is viewed as toying with emotions, playing games with love (in any way shape or form) and corrupting innocence.

These evils sometimes take on a physical form, creating a monster that the villain may use these or other monsters as obstacles and traps.

Stories tend to be very emotionally driven, as the villains put the heroes into positions of emotional anguish and moral question. Will the magical girl destroy the monster that also happens to be her little brother? Why did her new friend turn out to be a villain in disguise? A good number of these problems the girls overcome are inner struggles presented by the antagonist, which might be a person, fate, or even themselves. Did you ever listen to those "man vs. self, nature, etc." discussions in English class?

The true villains are either out for their own selves (power, control, oblivion, etc.) or are misguided and are driven by obsession (love, hate, revenge, duty…). All in all though, most series tend not to make a very big deal out of evil in their stories on a very physical level. Evils committed tend not to be any worse than robbery, or in very extreme cases, murder. However, the evil springs from the outcome of whatever repercussions arise from the heinous moral acts the villains have committed. Though the forces of good and evil are well defined, their causes may sometimes come under question.

HeartQuest

Chapter 8:
Historical Romance & Out of this World

Historical Romance
Let's talk about History

So what is so interesting about history? Lots! Historical settings have a certain draw that legendary stories might hold, but with the added bonus of being true, and documented. So it's not a surprise that history could be the setting for a role-playing game. Current historical games include Castle Falkenstein (fantasy/Victorian), Call of Cthulhu (1920's/horror), and Sengoku (Feudal Japan). The best part is that historical settings can be used in a Shoujo game with excellent results!

Something to remember about a historical setting is that you need to know the setting well. You don't have to be a history buff, but it helps. Now, before you start playing games with encyclopedias at the table, keep in mind two things; history can be fun, and learning helps get you into the setting.

Also, don't forget that it's historical romance. This is where the shoujo comes in. Any place in time could provide a tragic romance, or an emotional adventure. Certain anime shows come to mind. Rose of Versailles and Fushigi Yuugi used Revolutionary France and ancient China, respectively. In the end, it's all just another setting, but the important thing is to capture the mood of the setting, the theme of the story, and the attention of your players.

Setting

Let's start by deciding what kind of historical setting you want to use. Since history is so varied, there are many options. Let's run through a few of the more interesting ones. Just keep in mind that these are merely suggestions. Any historical setting can be good. Use your own judgment when selecting a period in history. Hopefully, these samples will give you an idea on how to incorporate a historical setting into your game. Just remember to pick a time you like, and run with it!

Keep in mind that modern times have nullified a great number of traditional barriers for relationships. There are a great many hurdles to jump through in the name of love nowadays, but the trials of courtship were much different in the past. Obstacles such as class, gender bias, and separation of culture, among others, kept many a love from being realized.

Roman Empire Setting

One of history's greatest civilizations also held a lot of intrigue, subterfuge, and adventure. It was a world of roving barbarians, sprawling cities and an empire unlike any the western world had ever seen! This setting is ripe with opportunity, as one could play off of the simple politics of Rome, or emerging new ideas such as new religions and philosophy. And don't forget that Rome's empire spanned all of Europe, which was as wonderful and varied in its cultures then as it is now. With war and conquest as well as peace and politics, this setting could do in a pinch.

And don't think I forgot about the romance part. Rome was infamous for a great number of romances, from the real romance between Marc Antony and Cleopatra, which lead to great strife, to the mythical romances involving mortals and gods (though that takes the game from the historical into the mythological, which can still apply to a game). Something to keep in mind is that Rome's caste system, as well as its cultural diversity, could serve as an obstacle to star-crossed lovers.

Possible ideas for Rome setting characters:

• Roman slaves fighting for love and freedom.
• Roman soldiers and/or the people resisting the might of the Roman Legions.
• Conquered people (or alternatively, founders or members of any new controversial religion) striving under the Roman rule, possibly inciting rebellion.

Chapter 8: Historical Romance and Out of this World

Dark Ages & Medieval Setting

Yes, a tried and true cliché. While the Middle Ages did not really have any (recorded) magicians or monsters, or most of what you see in traditional fantasy settings, it is just as interesting a time. It was the period of time that gave rise to knights, castles, kingdoms and kings. During this time, the western world was torn from being a single nation into many small ones. War and conflict were nearly constant, and the people either prospered or suffered…

Picture a continent full of knights, nobility, war, and intrigue. A place where kingdoms clash, adventure abounds, and a snide word can harm as badly as a poisoned dagger. Royal courts have parties and festivals while the serfs and slaves are left in the dark. You must fight tooth and nail to exceed your birthright.

Such a setting can present a plethora of possibilities that range from a disparity between class (like the peasant in love with royalty), or perhaps a political struggle (think of Romeo and Juliet, set a few hundred years further back). Political rivalries are ended with arranged marriages that leave dissention among the swollen ranks of those suffering with unrequited love. Peasant girls yearn for their knight in shinning armor, and princes long for that special…someone…

Possible ideas for Medieval setting characters:

· Knight in shinning armor, squire, and entourage.
· Mixed group of nobility and commoners.
· Travelers or gypsies caught up in a royal scandal.
· Political refugees/saboteurs from another kingdom.
· Soldiers in an ongoing war.

Recent History

A lot can be said about our recent history. As Americans, as Europeans, heck, worldwide, we have had times unparalleled in all of recorded history. Let's take a quick look at the 1930' s-1940. It was a world of war, struggle, and planet-wide angst over the future. The war brought us modern warfare, medical advances, and political turmoil that set the stage for our current world situation.

Europe especially is a very interesting place during World War II. Alliances are forged, enmities made, and the continent is split by war. And don't discount the Pacific, as the Japanese wage total war upon the rest of the East. Again, many possibilities lie in this very interesting time.

French refugees run from their parent country to find solace from the invaders, Chinese peasants cope with the horrors of the war, German soldiers try to find a reason for the attricities they commit in the name of their country, and the British bravely face down an enemy of epic proportions.

Recent history ideas:

· Russian ex-patriots after the Revolution that brought rise to communism.
· French revolutionaries trying to take their country from the tyrannical occupation.
· Japanese peasants struggling to survive several revolutions and changes in government.

Mood

It's the feel of the game, like a horror movie has that creepy, anxious feel. History can have its own feel, but romance will probably play a part in it (as per the title). Here is where you must do the work, and incorporate the characters in thick plots of star-crossed love, treachery, and broken hearts. Stories like this pervade history. Here are a few pointers for how to evoke the romantic feel in a historical game.

First of all, remember that love is most interesting when it is unrequited. Angst will probably play a major part in the game. Troubled feelings and shyness could be problems. Perhaps an outside influence prevents love from blossoming. In any case, something always gets in the way. Let's look at the example below and you may see what I mean.

Example: Take for instance a Japanese immigrant family during World War II. A sympathetic American family takes in the daughter of the impoverished Japanese family while they are taken away to live out their cruel internment. She sits by and watches the prejudice or wartime sentiment play itself out on her people. Her

affection falls upon the American family's young boy, as she attempts to catch his attention when at school, as well as trying to avoid the students that despise her so (who include a rival for the boy's affection). The young boy struggles with his feelings for her, as well as the overwhelming pressure to discriminate against his houseguest. Sadness sets in as both the girl and boy try to meet halfway, as their lives are turned upside down by the War.

Take a while and think about what kind of game you want to run. The mood can vary greatly from tragic and heart wrenching to light hearted to gloomy. It need not be some emotional love/angst/depression fest. It also need not be some thrill packed adventure-thon. That, however, is determined in part by the theme.

Theme

The theme is the face of the game: the general plotline. The theme of a story, or game, can vary greatly. And as unlikely as it may seem, historical romance has few limits in the ways of theme.

Lets imagine for a second that the group is composed of Russian Royalty (with servants in tow) fleeing from the Communist revolutionaries. They find themselves taking shelter in an abandoned villages and caves, trying to escape the wrath of their aggressors. They struggle to survive in conditions their former status had never exposed them to. Now they must all band together, servant and noble, and realize what it is to live, die, and to eke out a meager existence while being hunted down.

The "theme" is one of hardship and survival. Let me list a few more examples.

The Quest- an adventure must be had, for any number of reasons. The group travels together, and endures the perils of the journey, and discovers new things.

Growing up- a classic theme, which could occur at any point in history. The story revolves around mental and emotional growth (as well as some physical growth). It's also a time of discovery and turmoil, as everyone faces adulthood, and forges memories of their youth, which is quickly slipping away.

Conflict- a great theme! Conflict between one or more factions or groups causes a split in the city/high school/neighborhood. Many are caught in between, and the fighting spills over into the streets, as well as into many people's hearts and minds.

Any of these basic themes can provide some interesting game opportunities. For instance, in a conflict game, some people may choose sides, and as the lines are drawn, some grow closer, as others reluctantly grow farther apart. In 'Growing up', new emotions and feelings can alienate some people. Yet in others, it creates a bridge of understanding as two kindred spirits try to understand each other despite themselves, or their surroundings. And it doesn't end there! There are plenty of other avenues of creativity we've yet to explore. So have at it!

Out of this World!

There has been a strong influence of the "out of this world" theme in anime as of late. If you are unfamiliar, "out of this world" is a theme in fiction where characters are displaced (temporally or dimensionally) to a place that is radically different from their own. Some Western examples are A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court, or Arthur Conan Doyle's Lost World. The premise lies in a person or persons out of place, coping with their new surroundings; and being, simply put, a fish out of water.

Setting

So you want to run an "out of this world" adventure, right? Well, what setting might you use? It could be a fantasy world, like Magic Knight Rayearth, or Escaflowne. It could be a futuristic world, like Futurama (ok, it's not anime, but you get the point). It could even be a slice out of our worlds past, like Fushigi Yuugi. It may just be something completely new and amazing, like El-Hazard.

Ask yourself, what place is the starting point? Will the group be from present day? Will they be from an alien world visiting ours? Wouldn't it be fun to run a group of people from our own past coming into the future? So it can go either way.

You might want to make up your own world. This can be a lot of fun, and very rewarding, since you don't have any boundaries. However, it's a lot of work, and you have to build most things from scratch. Don't discount it though, because with just a little pinch of imagination, you could create a beautiful setting with lots of colorful characters. Just don't be afraid of borrowing and stealing, because hey, it's your game.

Speaking of borrowing and stealing, an established setting can be good. Maybe your characters want to go to some other RPG setting with their shoujo characters. Or perhaps they would like to play out their favorite TV show (a favored pastime of mine). Or maybe you just read a really good book with a good setting in it. The possibilities really are endless.

Caution: If you use a setting your players know about, it would be a good idea to stick to the setting, or the players might object. And trust me, you don't want to argue over who is in love with who in 'such and such' show for half an hour. Of course, if you are the only one who knows about the setting, go crazy and do what you like.

Mood

As the game master, it is your job to create the mood for the group. So be descriptive with the new and foreign lands. Since the players are embarking on a journey of new discoveries, it would be great to have a nice picture painted for them. Think of how you might describe the colossal castle made of jade, towering over the forests, buzzing with exotic flying creatures darting around the spires. An image like that can go along way towards stimulating the players' imaginations. Also, be very emotional. 'Out of this World' is also about self-discovery, and learning your own boundaries and limits. Try to incite certain emotions through your words. You might say…

"Sarah, your character Miko has just been abandoned by her object of affection. The rain starts to trickle from the clouds overhead, and a dark gloom sets in. As he walks away from you, the possessions on your pack feel just that much heavier. Even the tumbleweed seems droopy, and does not bounce along. So how do you think Miko feels right now?"

Things like this can draw people into the story. If they can see it in their minds, then the new world they explore becomes all the more real. And when everyone shares a vision of their land of adventure, it can make the game all that much better. Don't be too wordy though, since that might bog down the adventure, and people will get bored.

Use caution with this, as it can sometimes go overboard. A lot of the game will be getting used to each other, and learning what is and is not appropriate. You probably don't want to depress your players to the extreme. You also might not want the game to be too light hearted, or it won't

be taken seriously. It's a game of balance and measure.

Theme

Familiarity is something to think about as well. Using two non-earth settings can be interesting, but try not to have both be too alien. For instance, one of the settings should probably be Earth, modern day. If not, the players may not be familiar enough with their "homelands". Your characters would have to be familiar with at least one setting to be able to identify with their own character's culture and background. That is what Out of this World is all about; comparing and contrasting your world to the new world, as you explore the new world.

On that same thread, carefully remind everyone that they are playing characters that are out of place. Some of your players might know a good deal about the setting you place them in, but their characters most likely don't know a thing. The foreigners should be making a pilgrimage of discovery and adventure through a world they

Chapter 8: Historical Romance and
Out of this World

know nothing about. It's also about the bonds they forge and the hardship that a group will endure as they have only each other to rely on in this new world (for the most part).

Here is an example of what such a game could be like:

Hitomi, Miko, and Tatsuya were the best of friends. People called them the "Three Musketeers". They were always together, and had been friends since grade school. Hitomi is the quiet girl who only opens up to her two friends (barely). Miko is the adventurous tomboy who gets her friends in constant trouble. Tatsuya is the nerdy friend who can't make any friends outside of the ones he has (and probably doesn't want to).

One day, however, Miko dared the others to sneak into an abandoned museum. When a mishap occurs with a magical artifact, the trio is transported to a strange version of the Wild West! Wacky antics ensue as the three Japanese kids try to survive in this spaghetti western. The only help they receive is from Wandering Tom, a mysterious gunman who takes them under his wing. Will they survive the harsh lands of lawlessness? Will Tatsuya ever admit his secret feelings for Miko? Will Hitomi ever come out of her shell and overcome her shyness?

As you can see, this sample setting has a lot of potential for both adventure and romance. Does Miko fall in love with Tom, her current idol? How will the meek Hitomi and Tatsuya handle the rough and tumble lifestyle? How in the world do they get home? All of these things are just a taste of possible complications in an "out of this world" game.

Chapter 8: Historical Romance and Out of this World

Chapter 8: Historical Romance and
Out of this World

HeartQuest

Chapter 9:
Sendai Academy

Sendai Academy is an example of a teen romance campaign of the sort that can be run using HeartQuest. HeartQuest was playtested using many of these characters. It is set at a private high school in Tokyo and revolves around the lives, loves and relationships of the students and teachers there. Although fights occasionally break out, there are no duels to the death and no supernormal abilities are used. Thus characters for Sendai Academy can be created straight out of the rules in Chapter One without resorting to Supernormal Powers.

Most of the sample characters are classmates in Class 2-2 of the high school portion of the academy. Sendai is an elevator school with a junior high, high school and university attached. Students who graduate from one level can get into the next without taking an exam, but the last year of each level is very tough.

Introduction

Class 2-2 is in the equivalent of an American high school's junior year, with roughly 16-17 year olds evenly divided between boys and girls. Most of the new transfer students, who have to either pass a difficult exam or receive a special dispensation from the Headmaster, end up in this class. There are about 26 students in Section 2-2; only a few are detailed here.

As is traditional in Japanese high schools, the teachers go from classroom to classroom to teach their subjects and expect the rapt attention of the entire class. Tanaka-sensei is the homeroom teacher, with the ultimate responsibility for the decorum of the class and its overall academic performance. He's a good teacher and a naturally charismatic leader, but he does have a weakness that is one of the Big Secrets of the campaign.

A good teen romance campaign has several Big Secrets, and Sendai Academy has a ton. Many of the students in Section 2-2 conceal things; special abilities, hidden pasts, secret relationships, and so forth. The GM should be careful about revealing these secrets to anyone other than the player playing that particular character until it is dramatically appropriate for the secret to come

out. When that happens, the consequences can often be explosive.

Tanaka-sensei, in addition to being homeroom teacher, teaches PE and mathematics. Yoshida-sensei, a pretty young female teacher, teaches Japanese literature. Other teachers teach different subjects, including science, history, home economics and English.

Before and after each day of school, the classroom needs to be cleaned. Cleaning duty is rotated among the students in pairs, with each pair taking the chore for a week at a time. This provides a splendid opportunity for two characters to be alone together, with all that entails.

This Year's Class

This year's class is a diverse group. Sendai has a reputation for attracting the most talented students, and this year's second-year class is no exception. The very brightest students are in Section 1, where Yoshida-sensei is the homeroom teacher. These students work very intensely on academics to the point that all else becomes insignificant. Section two is only slightly less intense, and there are five lower classes – all of which are no slouches academically. The seven classes compete in intramural athletics, competitions, and in putting on the best presentations for the seasonal school festivals. There is also competition between the first, second, and third-year students. This competition provides many opportunities to bring NPCs from other classes into the game to stir things up a bit.

This year's overall class is especially talented. Most of section 2-2 has a gift of one sort or another, whether they reveal it or not. There is a huge desire on the part of many students in class 2-2 to surpass the achievements of Class 2-1, whether on the quarterly exams or in the school basketball or soccer tournaments.

Clubs

Like all Japanese high schools, Sendai places a heavy emphasis on club activities. There is a club for just about every conceivable sport, academic subject and hobby.

Every student is expected to belong to at least one club. Clubs meet after and before classes for their activities two or three times a week, put together projects, and compete in events with similar clubs from other schools. Sendai's soccer club, coached by Tanaka-sensei, is considered to be especially prestigious and is frequently competing nationally. This year they may be one good striker away from a regional championship.... There are also clubs in tennis, baseball, basketball, softball, kendo and kyuudo (Japanese archery) that are competitive regionally and beyond. Sendai's chess club is also competitive regionally.

School Rules and Regulations

All Japanese schools have strict rules and regulations that are kept, to varying degrees, by the students. One rule that is frequently going to be facing PCs is the school's prohibition against dating. Students tend to date anyway, however, and unless they are caught by a teacher who is willing to report them there isn't a problem.

School at Sendai Academy is held Monday through Friday and every other Saturday. Sunday is always a day off and a prime time to socialize; going out and about with friends is fine as long as the students don't stay out past curfew.

Another rule at Sendai is that students can't hold part-time jobs or otherwise work. Again, enforcement is only an issue if you're caught by a teacher who is willing to turn you in.

Sendai students wear a set uniform to school and to all school events. This uniform consists of a blue sailor suit for girls and a blue jacket, pants and tie with a white shirt for boys. Teachers wear business attire when teaching.

Socio-Economic Issues

Most Sendai students come from upper-middle-class to upper class families; tuition is expensive and financial aid is offered only to the highest-ranking academic students. Thus, a PC will typically live in a nice house, have their own room, and have access to a decent amount of pocket money. Some students are even richer, and a few even have servants in their homes.

This doesn't stop some students from wanting money they can truly call their own. Thus the forbidden part-time job is an ongoing temptation. Students who are caught working are typically suspended from school for a few days and ordered to quit the job – which is usually a moot point as one of the first things the Headmaster does is call the employer to inform them of the violation. Getting caught is actually far more of a disgrace than actually committing the deed, and some teachers will not report violations they encounter.

Sample Characters

Chiharu Shojijuma

Chiharu managed to get into Sendai Academy by virtue of her outstanding exam scores. She's one of the smartest students in school, but is naive and romantic (naturally). Her fashion sense is unique, preferring more classical, elaborate clothes over the latest styles. She reads too much and some think she's doomed to be brutally disillusioned. She's also a member of the Media Club and, in a cute twist of self-reference, is a bit of an otaku.

Attributes (3 free levels plus 1 level of Appearance)
Physique: Fair
Mind: Great
Willpower: Good
Cool: Fair
Appearance: Good

Skills (37-ish levels taken, paid for with faults)
Japanese Literature: Good
Japanese Language: Superb
English Literature: Good
Math: Good
English: Great
Research: Great
Fashion Sense (weird): Great
Music (Piano): Great
Video Production: Fair
Computers: Good
Drawing: Good
Cooking: Poor
Sports: Terrible

Gifts (2 free, 2 taken)
Musician: Chiharu is a near-prodigy pianist, and her tastes range from Punk Rock to Classical. Hardly anybody knows this, because she's not a part of any music club.
Bishoujo: People who bother to look twice find her oddly fascinating…

Faults (3 taken)
Absent-minded: Sometimes Chiharu just doesn't get it.
Introvert
Gullible

Yuuko Sadanori

Yuuko's test scores trail Chiharu's, but her Mother had more than enough money and influence to make up the difference. That was fine with Yuuko since she's been shinyu (best friends) with Chiharu since the beginning of Jr. High. The two of them exchange a diary, but Yuuko's entries are always in poetry of one form or another, so that Chiharu has to concentrate to recognize exactly what Yuuko is talking about. If Chiharu went back and very carefully read the volumes since 8th grade, she might figure out that Yuuko is involved in a love affair, but so far she hasn't made the connection.

Yuuko is passionately in love with Tanaka-sensei, to the point that she often makes him uncomfortable with her "availability." Yuuko hasn't set her sights on seducing Tanaka-sensei, but has resolved to deny him nothing should he ask. And yet, she doesn't believe the two of them will be together forever, or even necessarily that their relationship will last till next week. If confronted she would point out how Teacher/Student relationships are "more like dreams than real life." She expects that her affair with Tanaka-sensei will become only a memory, and is determined to make it as happy a memory as possible.

This view is probably influenced by her Mother's situation. A successful businesswoman, Sadanori Haruka divorced Yuuko's Father when Yuuko was only 4, and has since gone from one affair to another publicly avowing never to marry again. As a result the two of them are estranged from their larger family. Yuuko and her Mother have a "good" relationship, in that Yuuko neither fights with nor embarrasses her Mother. The rigors of her work keep Haruka from recognizing what's hidden in her daughter's heart.

Also hidden from her Mother is Yuuko's growing success as a poet. Yuuko has published in a number of trendy and artsy magazines, always under the pen name of "Butterfly." Chiharu knows the details of this part of Yuuko's life, and Yuuko wouldn't deny it if confronted, but to her Mother, the school and world at large, even to Tanaka-sensei, Yuuko is only a cute young lady with a butterfly key chain attached to her school briefcase.

Attributes (3 free levels plus 1 level of Willpower)
Physique: Fair
Mind: Good
Willpower: Good
Cool: Good
Appearance: Good

Skills (30 free, 30 taken)
Japanese Poetry: Superb

Oratory: Great (only on her own poetry, otherwise Fair)
Business Etiquette: Good
Streetwise: Good
Flirt: Good
Detect Lies: Great
Calligraphy: Great
Flower Arranging: Fair
Athletics: Fair
Sewing: Fair
Cooking: Fair

Gifts (2 free, 2 taken)
Poet: Yuuko composes poetry that moves the hearts of a wide variety of people, not just a select group reading a particular genre.
Contacts: Yuuko is known to the publishers of various artsy and underground 'zines in her city.

Faults
Secret: Love Affair with Tanaka-sensei
Coward: It's not that she fears being punished, but rather that Yuuko doesn't believe in her own future. What looks like a better than healthy "Carpe Diem" attitude is really a profound level of hopelessness.
Daydreamer: Yuuko could do better in class if she'd pay attention instead of composing poetry. Even Tanaka-sensei's lectures may get blown off.

Hiroshi Tanagawa

Standing tall for a Japanese boy of his age, Hiroshi doesn't have many features that stand out sharply from the other boys of his class. His hair is a dark blonde shade, which he keeps short and combed to the left. His eyes are an amber hue and his build is fairly average for a shoujo male (i.e., slender, but with broad shoulders). In his free time, he frequently wears loose clothing for comfort – typically a T-shirt and various colored khakis.

Hiroshi comes from a fairly normal middle-class family. His father runs a painting company and his mother is a nurse at a nearby clinic. He has a younger brother aside from the typical line-up of aunts, uncles, cousins, and grandparents along with a pet cat named "Mister X." During his seventeen years of existence, the most two notable events in it have been meeting his (unknown to her) childhood sweetheart, Chiharu, and his legacy as a soccer player in Jr. High.

Hiroshi first met Chiharu in 1st grade (Japanese schools are ranked slightly differently than their American counter-parts. There's 6 years for Grade School (Grade 1-6), 3 years for Jr. High (7-9), and 3 years for Sr. High (10-12)) under odd circumstances. A bully was teasing Chiharu so bad she was reduced to tears. Angry, Hiroshi got into a brawl with the bully. Although the bully pounded Hiroshi, it was enough that the bully never picked on Chiharu again. The two of them became buddies during these years even thought their classmates went on about how girls had cooties and other typical nonsense that kids go through before realizing the appropriate differences between boys and girls. This kicked in for Hiroshi around 6th grade as it became obvious that Grade School would end soon and the two of them might never get another chance. Hiroshi managed one night to tell Chiharu that he "really really liked her and wanted to be her boyfriend,: but Chiharu didn't understand and thought it was funny.

(Note: Chiharu, being absent-minded as she is, has no recollection of Hiroshi's one successful attempt to tell her how he feels).

When finals came, Hiroshi couldn't manage the scores he needed to go to the same school Chiharu would. The two said their byes and Hiroshi went on to a different Jr. High…

During his 2nd year in Jr. High, Hiroshi had managed to get over his crush on Chiharu and found himself a new girlfriend named Naoka. She was everything wanted in a girlfriend; she was cute, intelligent, witty, kind, and even managed to look slightly like Chiharu. One day, however, Hiroshi's happiness was destroyed when Naoka developed a crush for the soccer star of a rival jr. high school named Akira Saganaki. It eventually got the point where Hiroshi was dumped and Naoka and Akira started dating. Hiroshi is already jealous by nature, but to say he was pissed is an understatement. On that fateful day, he begged the soccer coach to let him join the team so he could have revenge upon the bastard that stole his girl! With a misfit collection of characters, Hiroshi trained intensely and whipped the team into a frenzied band of elite soccer players. Within no time, the team became a sword that sliced through the opposition like a hot knife and earned Hiroshi the nickname "Lightning Tanagawa" for his incredible speed. Soon came the finals in which Hiroshi's team won in a final duel in the national play-offs with their hated rival, led by the nefarious stealer of girls, Akira Saganaki! Fueled by his anger, Hiroshi's team crushed their rival on the field. In the end, Hiroshi got the cup & Akira later got a broken nose in the after-game celebration, but he still lost the girl. Hiroshi also played soccer in 9th grade, but the team only made into the regionals when some upstart school led by a blonde half-gaijin won the game by a single goal.

Near the end of 9th grade, as luck would have it, Hiroshi accidentally bumped into Chiharu for the first time since grade school. Literally. Chiharu was daydreaming about something when she failed to realize the light had changed and the incoming garbage truck wasn't going to be able to stop in time. With trademark speed, Hiroshi managed to grab Chiharu and dodge the traffic in time. The two immediately rekindled their friendship over a trip to a restaurant in which, during the conversation, Chiharu dropped several "bombs." For one, she was planning to go to Sendai Academy for her Sr. High School and Hiroshi quietly resolved to do the same at all costs. Also, she brought up seeing Hiroshi somewhere in the newspaper ("something about soccer"). Hiroshi humbly denied it, which is good since Chiharu replied more or less that she hated jocks. Afterwards, Hiroshi got into Sendai Academy by the skin of his teeth through sheer willpower & resolve. God had granted him a second chance to win Chiharu's heart.

Now if only his tongue would stop getting in the way, he might be able to pull it off…

The only other worthwhile note about Hiroshi's background is his secret skill with drawing manga. This developed, oddly enough, after he and Chiharu went separate ways. Almost by accident, Hiroshi discovered he had a talent for drawing when he found himself sketching out a picture of Chiharu. After a few years of practice along with using his allowance to buy "how to draw manga" books, he actually managed to develop a decent amount of skill. Enough so that he regularly contributes a manga story to a small magazine under the pen name "Mister X" (after his cat). Although he wants to do Shounen manga, it seems that he can do even better shoujo manga. This has become obvious given his recent manga story,

"I Wanna Be A Soccer God!," has been a big hit and the publisher regularly sends Hiroshi 20-40 fan letters a day about the manga series. The series, BTW, is an autobiography about his Jr. High days.

Under normal circumstances, Hiroshi tends to be a quiet guy whose good manners resemble a light bulb – you're not always looking at it, but you know it's there. Given his appearance and manners, he easily melds with the rest of the male populace although his lack of hentai qualities makes him stand out also. When it comes to Chiharu, however, Hiroshi can become incredibly jealous and protective, to the point of absurdity. He would literally do anything to keep Chiharu safe and happy – such as hiding the potential for a national hero caliber soccer career.

If it isn't already obvious, Hiroshi's main goal of existence right now is to win Chiharu's heart… If he can ever manage to tell her how he feels. This becomes increasingly harder and harder as time passes and the number of suitors for Chiharu seems to grow. To make matters worse, he yearns to return to the soccer field, yet worries about how Chiharu might react if she knew, in truth, that he was a "jock."

Attributes (Three free, +1 free for Appearance, three taken)
Physique: Superb (3)
Mind: Fair
Willpower: Good (1)
Cool: Mediocre (-1)
Appearance: Good

Skills (30 free, 30 taken)
Animal Care: Good (3)
Brawling: Good (3)
Cooking: Great (4)
Drawing: Superb (5)
Fashion Sense: Fair (2)
Jumping: Good (3)
Lying: Terrible (+1)
Manga Lore: Fair (2)
Running: Good (3)
Sport (Soccer): Superb (5)

Gifts (2 free, 2 taken & balanced by Faults)
Always there when Chiharu is in trouble*
Intuition (a.k.a. Common Sense)
Pain Tolerant
Rapid Healing

Faults (3 taken)
Always chickens out when he tries to tell Chiharu his true feelings!
Secretive about his Sports/Drawing talents
Never backs down from a challenge

Satoshi Uchiyama

Satoshi is the New Kid – a transfer student to Sendai Academy. Having arrived a few weeks after school started, he's got catching up to do, both academically and socially. Academically he's doing well, but because of his melancholy nature, he hasn't really made any friends. There are all kinds of rumors about him, ranging from sexual orientation to terminal illness to past affairs.

His family business, "Uchiyama Motorwerks," a successful motorcycle shop, has recently expanded to the Ueno district of Tokyo, and Satoshi helps run the store. (Hence the inclusion of "Mechanic," "Haggle," and "Street Smarts" in his skills).

The truth of the matter is Satoshi was in love, but it didn't work out. He was injured in a motorcycle racing accident (Satoshi is a promising up-and-coming racer, although nobody at school knows this) and after he recovered, his love left him because she couldn't handle the worry, and he couldn't give up racing. He doesn't feel as though racing is bad, but his confidence has been shaken, and until Satoshi finds a balance between his own dreams and the feelings of those he cares for, his racing performance and heart alike will suffer.

Attributes (3 levels, 5 taken, paid for with faults)
Physique: Great

Mind: Fair
Willpower: Fair
Cool: Great
Appearance: Great

Skills (30 levels, 42 taken, paid for by faults)
Literature: Fair
English: Good
Math: Fair
Study: Fair
Cram: Good
Driving (motorcycle): Superb
Mechanic: Good
Street Smarts (racing): Good
Haggle: Good
Sports: Great
Martial Arts: Good

Gifts (One free, one taken.)
Bishounen

Faults (3 taken)
Melancholy
Low Self-Esteem
Otaku (Motorcycles)

Richard Blaine

Richard is an exchange student who has come to Sendai Academy from Chicago, where his family holds large stakes in several telecommunications firms. He'd been into the Internet from the beginning, learned guitar at an early age, and is a good student. In America he had a reputation as a bit of a geek and the girls ignored him – he's ashamed of this and puts on as worldly a front as he can in his new environment.

Richard was assigned Chiharu's parents as a host family. As a result he lives in a room in her house. On discovering that his housemate is also his classmate, he has become rather intrigued by the shy girl and very curious about her.

Richard has wanted to come to Japan for a long time and has studied the language so that he speaks it adequately. In fact, getting him to understand something in Japanese is far easier than getting him to shut up when he's talking about one of his many enthusiasms.

Attributes (Three free levels +1 free level of Appearance, five taken, balanced by fault)
Physique: Good
Mind: Great
Willpower: Good
Cool: Fair
Appearance: Great

Skills (30 free levels, 30 taken)
Japanese Language: Good (English is native)
Sports (Basketball): Good
Guitar: Great
Computer Use: Good
Computer Technician: Good
Math: Fair
Cram: Fair
Singing: Good
Cooking: Great
Songwriting: Good
Fashion Sense: Terrible
Audio Technician: Fair
Carnival Games: Terrible
Gifts (Two free, four taken; balanced by faults)
Bishonen
Unflappable

Gift of Gab (even in Japanese)
Walking encyclopedia of Western popular culture

Faults
Less familiar with Japanese customs than he thinks
Conceals his lack of experience with girls
Doesn't always know when to shut up
Obviously a gaijin – stands out in a crowd

Yuuchihiro Tanaka-sensei

Tanaka-sensei is the popular homeroom teacher of Class 2-2 at Sendai Academy, adviser to the soccer club, and one of the most influential teachers in the school. Naturally charismatic and inspiring, his classes have always done well and many of his students in the five years he's been teaching at Sendai have gone on to successful college careers. He is himself a Sendai graduate and a classmate and friend of Yoshida-sensei who advises the Poetry Club.

Nobody knows, however, that Tanaka-sensei has violated the prime taboo of his profession by falling in love with a student. He met Yuuko three years ago when she was in Sendai's junior high and they eventually fell in love. They haven't gone out in public together since he became Yuuko's homeroom teacher this year, and he has consistently refused to take advantage of her although the temptation is very strong. Deep down, Tanaka-sensei is deeply torn and fearful over his feelings for Yuuko – he senses that it's wrong for him to be in love with her, but just can't give her up. He has sublimated his desire for her into a desire to see her become strong, secure and happy at any cost to himself. If they can just hold out and keep the secret long enough, he plans to propose to her when she graduates (but has not told her so).

Attributes (3 free levels +1 Appearance, 7 taken; balanced by faults)
Physique: Good
Mind: Great
Willpower: Great
Cool: Good
Appearance: Great

Skills (30 free levels, 30 taken)
Teaching: Superb

Japanese Literature: Good
English: Good
Math: Fair
Fashion Sense: Mediocre
Cooking: Fair
Sports (Soccer): Good
School Bureaucracy: Good
Brawling: Terrible
Science: Good
Animal care: Good
Driving (Cars): Good

Gifts (2 free, 4 taken; balanced by faults)
Charismatic -- Natural leader
Contacts: Headmaster, PTA
Artistic Connoisseur with a strong sense of beauty
Patient to the extreme

Faults
Secret: Affair with Yuuko; faces severe consequences if exposed
Guilt-Ridden
Self-Sacrificing: Values Yuuko's happiness over his own
Must answer to school authorities

Junko Yamigawa

Junko Yamigawa is the eldest daughter of the Yamigawa family, which has run a traditional theater for 500 years (though it is getting more modern these days, in small ways). As the eldest daughter, her parents have expected her to keep on with the tradition and be there when they go. She does plan on being there, but she's probably going to hire others to do the mundane things…

Junko developed a love for acting and dancing very early in her life; she was very taken by the dramatic plays at the family theater and wanted to act in them someday. Now she's not only acting in the plays, but also writing and directing them as well. However, her plays are not the most popular; she tends to be too dramatic and tragic when writing them. To Junko, Macbeth is a story written by an idealist. In her plays, if someone isn't involved in an ever-closing web of conspiracy or being murdered, they either got lucky or soon will be. Despite this, her sense of fashion isn't Gothic. Though she does tend toward darker tones, she tends to have a mixture of color and black in her

wardrobe, which tends to make her look strangely sophisticated when paired with her short blue hair. She carries a cell phone, but doesn't use it much except to call her family butler, Ms. Kawamura. She also has access to a car, though she just uses it when she needs to shop. She took up tennis in middle school to keep in shape, and has become decent at it. But there is a Chinese girl who beats her regularly in tournaments, so she just keeps in practice these days. Though she has a lot to do and keeps busy, she is pretty lonely these days. Part of this is because she has a tendency to ask acquaintances or even friends to get parts in one of her plays, and has cast them on occasion without asking, and then conning them into the part later. Though she has learned what needs to be said to sweeten things up over the years, she has little sense of what to say to actually attract a guy, and is usually more interested in keeping up with her life's work than romance (though her parents do remind her at times that the bloodline will have to keep going somehow).

Attributes (3 levels, 5 taken, balanced by Fault)
Physique: Good
Mind: Good
Willpower: Good
Cool: Good
Appearance: Good

Skills (36 taken, balanced by Fault)
Tennis: Good
French: Good
Fashion Sense: Great
Knowledge (World Sports, except Tennis): Terrible
Acting: Great
Disguise: Good
Dancing (Traditional): Great
Drama: Great
Playwriting: Good
Oratory: Good
Flattery: Good
Fast-talk: Good

Gifts (2 free, 2 taken)
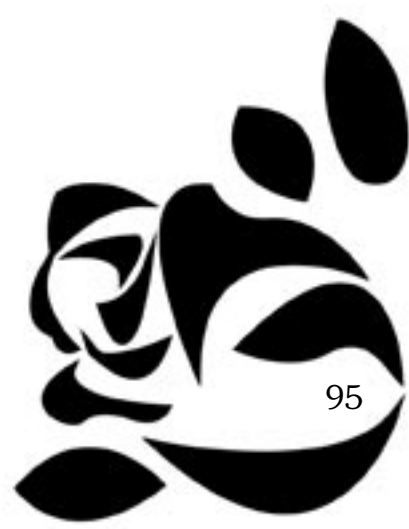Very Rich
Always Remembers the Words

Faults
Almost no sense of romance
Used to getting her way

HeartQuest

Chapter 10:
Ghost Tamer Miyaki

Ghost Tamer Miyaki is a magical girl campaign that involves heavy elements of the supernatural, a threat to the entire world, and seemingly ordinary schoolgirls who are nonetheless blessed (?) with extraordinary powers. It is presented here as an example of how to build a campaign around a set of characters in this genre and to show that sweetness and light are not necessary components of maho shoujo roleplaying.

Introduction

Fifteen years ago the Demon King woke from his thousand-year slumber. Using his ability to call upon the spirits of the Troubled Dead he tried to extinguish Hope, the one thing he hated most, from the face of the Earth. He sent his tormented souls out to attack every symbol of peace and love he could find, in an effort to drag Humanity into the pit of despair – to be with him forever in misery. That was where he found pleasure.

At the same time, in rural Japan, two young people met and fell in love. One was a swordsman, a national champion at both kendo and Western fencing, whose heart was pure and whose mind was filled with grace. The other was a shrine maiden of great power who saw the coming of the Demon King and knew it meant the end of mankind if he was not stopped. Shortly after their marriage they both set out together to find the Demon King's lair on Earth and destroy his plans once and for all.

Many hardships and obstacles blocked their path, but in the end they finally reached the Demon King's lair. The battle that ensued was of an epic scale. Although the young man wielded the finest blade his family's fortune could buy, he could not cleave the Demon King, who toyed with him until he finally struck the young man down. But this had only been a diversion, part of the couple's agreed-upon plan (although the young man had not expected to die). Although she was torn by grief and rage, the shrine maiden was able to complete the powerful spell that the occupied Demon King did not even notice until it was too late. A great and powerful magic trapped the Demon King in the interior of the mountain. Before he left her sight, the Demon King laughed that it was but a hollow victory – the seal would last only as long as the woman lived. But the woman scorned his mockery, knowing that she was bearing the young man's child to carry on the fight.

For fifteen years the world has seen peace, at least from demonic invasions. Although it was hard raising their daughter alone, the shrine-maiden was well provided for by her husband's estate and was able to live well and send their daughter to fine schools. But two years ago the woman discovered that she had inoperable cancer. So she has spent these two years, the last of her life, preparing for what is to come. When she was gone, she knew, the Demon King would return. But there was always her daughter, her beloved, innocent daughter, who the woman knew possessed a strength she did not know.

That girl's name is Miyaki Kajoshiro, and this is her story….

A Deathbed Encounter

For the last six months, Miyaki had been separated from her mother, at her mother's request. A trust fund established on her behalf supports her, pays her school tuition, and gives her spending money. And Miyaki loved to spend money – to her shopping was the supreme art form. Although she kept up a cheerful front, Miyaki knew that the mother she loved was dying and there was nothing she could do about it.

Then, one night, Miyaki was summoned to her mother's side. Mother was about to die. She tried to tell Miyaki everything, but she wouldn't listen – she was too stricken with grief. Finally, Mother took Miyaki by the hand and, with the last of her strength, passed on the power she had been secretly building for the past six months. As she released her daughter's hand, she took her last breath and passed on to the next life.

When Miyaki looked down at her hand, she saw birthmark that was not there before – the mark of a white carnation.

She immediately went for comfort to her best friend. Akane Kurogawa was a "miko" – a maiden who assisted in the management of the local Shinto shrine. She was also Miyaki's classmate in first-year high school. Akane, who was a bit of a mystic in her own right, could not make out the purpose of the birthmark. However, it did tie in to a dream she had had the previous night – a dark, evil dream that foretold unimaginable disaster.

The First Strike

Meanwhile, the seal around the Demon King's body began to weaken and his mind was able to reach down to his dark domain. He knew that Miyaki's mother had died and that it was time to extinguishing Hope from the human heart. But he remembered all too well the words about the daughter. Could this daughter pose a threat to his plans? What could this daughter be like? The Demon King wanted to learn more before acting, but his own impatience and the counsel of his loyal lieutenants to try to kill the girl outright before she could pose any trouble swayed him.

Chapter 10: Ghost Tamer Miyaki

He summoned a Troubled Spirit and sent him out to possess one of Miyaki's classmates. Its mission was simple – kill Miyaki, her friends and anyone else it could find until there was nobody in the vicinity left to kill.

The next morning, when Miyaki returned to school, all her classmates expressed sympathy over her mother's death save one. Akane immediately recognized something was wrong with this girl but could not put her finger on it. It was as if her human feelings had been taken away.

In gym class, the reason became apparent. The girl's fingernails suddenly transformed themselves into steel spears, her teeth into sharp, tearing jaws, and her whole body changed into something inhuman right in front of everyone! The class scattered in panic, but the possessed girl decided to go for Miyaki first. Miyaki, terrified, ran and hid as well as she could, but she was finally found as the locker she was hiding in was torn to pieces. The monster was about the strike the killing blow, when suddenly….

A shining sword parried its blades! Miyaki looked up and saw a tall stranger dressed in black holding off the monster. He parried each blow the monster rained down on him, and then pushed it away to give Miyaki room to get out of her predicament. He was ready to move in for the kill when Miyaki reminded him that the monster had once been an innocent girl.

Then the man told her that only Miyaki could save that girl by taming the possessing spirit that dwelt within her. He instructed her to touch the birthmark on her hand and say an incantation, and as the incantation was completed, Miyaki CHANGED. Her clothes were completely different – a hooded cloak that went down to the knees, a skirt that went just above the knees, and a bodice of white. In her hands the birthmark had become a long staff with the ankh, ancient Egyptian symbol of life and death, at the head.

Suddenly knowing, as if by osmosis, what she had to do, Miyaki reached out with the staff and struck the monster. Instantly she was in communication with the possessing spirit.

Suddenly she knew all the unfinished business that had troubled its rest. Finally she released it from its burdens, and uttered the phrase "Go in peace to the next life". With that, the spirit departed and the girl was left on the floor, exhausted and unconscious but unharmed.

Although the man praised Miyaki's courage, he would not answer any of her questions; instead, he simply vanished with a flourish of his cape, leaving behind, at Miyaki's feet, a black rose.

Akane, hoping to protect her friend, had followed her into the locker room and seen the entire duel. After swearing Akane to secrecy, Miyaki began to ponder what all this meant. Would more minions of the Demon King – whoever that was – come after her and her friends? Just what sort of power had Miyaki's mother given her? Who was the stranger with the sword and how did he know so much about her – and why wasn't he willing to tell her? Many questions, few answers, and an implacable enemy determined to destroy them at any cost. Miyaki, Akane and their friends are in for the struggle of their young lives. If they

Chapter 10: Ghost Tamer Miyaki

fail, the end of the world is only the beginning of the consequences….

The Characters

Miyaki, the Ghost Tamer

Attributes (Three free levels plus one free level of Appearance, three taken)
Physique: Fair
Mind: Good
Willpower: Great
Cool; Mediocre
Appearance: Great

Skills (30 free levels; 30 taken)
Use Supernormal Powers: Good
Occultism: Mediocre
Swimming: Fair
Fashion: Good
English: Terrible
Shopping: Fair
Cooking: Terrible
Driving: Terrible
Psychology: Fair
Singing: Fair
Acting: Good
Persuade: Good
Studying: Fair
Computer Use: Good
Care for Animals: Good
Hiking: Fair
Riding (Horses): Fair

Gifts (Two free; three taken)
Large trust fund pays all her bills and gives her spending money
Animals like her
Looks cheerful even when she isn't

Supernormal Powers (Two free; four taken)
Transform from normal identity to Ghost Tamer costume with staff at will
See Ghosts; automatically sees ghosts and can detect ghostly possession with a Skill roll
Mind Control; only on ghosts; only to remove rival Mind Control
Banish spirit; only on ghosts she has used Mind Control on or otherwise persuaded; only to send the spirit on to the next life

Faults (Five taken)
Insatiably Curious
Lives to Shop
Eats too much fast food
Impatient
Naïve

Miyaki only found out recently that her mother had been one of Japan's foremost mystics. Now the sudden responsibility that has been thrust upon her of being the Ghost Tamer has been unwelcome at best. She doesn't go out looking for supernatural trouble she'd much rather hit the malls and the fast food joints, spending her money, buying new clothes and gadgets and having fun. She knows she has a long way to go to get Akane up to speed in the ways of modern young womanhood, but is up to the challenge.

However, once the battle is joined, and once she gets the initial panic out of her system, Miyaki is a determined fighter. She knows that the monsters she fights are possessed people and tries to avoid seeing them physically harmed. This

Dancing: Good
Cooking: Good
Oratory: Fair
Studying: Terrible
Housekeeping: Fair
Judo: Good
Japanese Literature: Mediocre
Singing; Good
Give Comfort: Good
First Aid: Good
Buddhist theology: Fair

Gifts (Two free; three taken)
Absolute sense of time
Naturally Empathetic
Reputation: Reliable, honorable mystic

Supernormal Powers (two free; two taken)
Spirit Wards; prevent spirits from passing an area where Akane places an ofuda
Precognitive Dreams; No conscious control

Faults (5 taken)
Afraid of her precognitive dreams
Obligations to shrine take up a lot of her free time
Values Miyaki's safety above her own
Always dresses plainly when not in uniform or shrine garb
Doesn't really know how to have fun

leads to many clashes with more straight-ahead fighters like the Black Rose.

Miyaki finds Black Rose mysterious, sexy and cool, but suspects there is a lot more to him than there seems (not that there doesn't seem to be enough already). Miyaki would love to have a boyfriend, except that any boy she selects is likely to be the enemy's next target and meet a horrible demise. Why do girlhood years have to be so complicated?

Akane, Shrine Maiden and Seer

Attributes (Three free levels + 1 free Appearance level; three taken)
Physique: Good
Mind: Good
Willpower: Good
Cool: Fair
Appearance: Good

Skills (30 free levels; 30 taken)
Shinto Practices: Great
Japanese Mythology: Good

Akane is the miko of the family shrine, the closest Shinto shrine to Miyaki's school. She met Miyaki in their last year of junior high and Miyaki made her laugh – something that was very rare for the serious shrine-maiden. They have been fast friends ever since, even though Akane cannot keep up sometimes with Miyaki's shopping and eating habits.

Akane has been blessed (in the eyes of those who visit the shrine) or cursed (in her own mind) with mystic powers and precognitive dreams. Akane frequently sees things in her dreams that will happen in the future; unfortunately, she rarely sees happy things, seeing death, sorrow and destruction instead. On the night of September 10, 2001, for example, she had a dream of falling towers, and wept openly when the images of the World Trade Center appeared on Japanese television,

Chapter 10: Ghost Tamer Miyaki

Now that Miyaki has been gifted with these strange powers and cursed with a deadly enemy, she is determined to come to her friend's aid whenever possible. Her spirit wards can be quite effective barriers to ghosts and the possessed but are no substitute for an exorcism. And her dreams, terrifying though they are, could serve to warn that a threat has emerged. (The GM is in control of what Akane dreams; Akane's player must interpret the dream and act accordingly).

Fido, Ghost Dog and Advisor

Attributes (Three free +1 Appearance; three taken)
Physique: Poor
Mind: Great
Cool: Fair
Willpower: Good
Appearance: Good (for a dog)

Skills (30 free levels; taken)
Occultism: Superb
Lore (The Spirit World): Great
Language (Japanese: Dog is native): Superb
Running: Good
Use Supernormal Power: Good

Gifts: (two free; two taken)
Unflappable; never loses his cool
Loyal to Miyaki to the End

Flaws (Two free: taken)
Ghost: does not have any life functions, limited ability to manipulate physical objects.
Vulnerable to spirit wards and exorcisms

Supernormal Powers (two free; taken)
Invisibility: Always on, only Miyaki and Akane can see him
Teleport to wherever Miyaki is whenever he wants

Fido is the ghost of Miyaki's first pet, one of those little dogs that are common pets among the Japanese. He died ten years ago and his ghost has been kept aside, waiting for Miyaki's power to emerge. He then returned to Earth to advise his former master.

Although he is extremely intelligent and speaks perfect Japanese, as well has having developed a vast knowledge of the occult, Fido is still a dog at heart. He loves to be scratched behind the ears (he'll solidify just a little so he can be touched), likes to play, and will gladly fetch a stick if asked. However, he takes his role as Miyaki's mentor very seriously. He has consented to appear to Akane too, but won't show himself in front of anyone else (even Black Rose).

Fido is somewhat more useful than the typical maho shoujo mascot -- he frequently has useful tidbits of information that only scratch the surface of what he knows.

The Black Rose

Attributes (Three free levels plus One free level of Appearance: eight taken)
Physique: Great
Mind: Good
Willpower: Great
Cool: Great
Appearance: Great

Skills (30 free levels; 30 taken)
Swordsmanship: Great

Chapter 10: Ghost Tamer Miyaki

Brawling: Fair
Acrobatics: Superb
Jumping: Great
Encourage: Great
Tactics: Good
Occultism: Good
Oratory: Good
Driving: Fair
English: Fair
Fashion: Mediocre

Gifts (Two free; two taken)
Always appears in the nick of time
Always has a black rose to give Miyaki

Supernormal Powers (Two free; three taken)
Teleport; only to scene of a crisis involving Miyaki
Transform from normal identity to Black Rose (change of clothes and tattoo)
Summon "Sword of the Masters" at will from tattoo on the back of his hand

Faults (5 Taken)
No memory of being Black Rose in normal identity

Concealable Distinguishing Mark (tattoo on the back of his hand)
Uncontrolled Transformation (automatically transforms when Miyaki is in danger)
Believes himself to be cursed
Mortal Enemy (Demon King)

Ironically, the man known only as Black Rose (after the trademark black rose he wears in his lapel and gives Miyaki after each battle) knows much more about Miyaki than he does about himself. All he knows is that when Miyaki is in a crisis he is suddenly there, in the nick of time, to protect her.

He always appears in the same outfit; a jet-black suit with a black fedora and a black bandana covering the lower part of his face. There is always a black rose in his lapel. He has a birthmark on the back of his hand (the mark of a black rose) from which he can summon the "Sword of the Masters", an exquisite blade that looks something like a cross between a rapier and a saber and has a +1 Damage factor. Physically he is tall and dark, and would definitely qualify as a bishounen.

Chapter 10: Ghost Tamer Miyaki

Black Rose's motivations in life are twofold: protect Miyaki at any cost to himself, and kill the Demon King. Since he doesn't expect the Demon King to show himself, he is satisfied for the moment to fight off his minions and help Miyaki reach her potential as the Ghost Tamer.

The Demon King (In human form)

Attributes (No Limit)
Physique: Great
Mind: Superb
Willpower: Great
Cool: Superb
Appearance: Superb

Skills (No limit)
Acrobatics: Superb
Swordsmanship: Superb
Occultism: Superb
Persuade: Superb
Oratory: Superb
Jumping: Superb
Fashion: Great
Teaching: Good
Karate: Superb
Flattery: Superb
Tactics: Superb

Gifts (No limit)
Completely unflappable
Always looks just right
Unlimited Wealth
Position of authority

Supernormal Powers (No limit)
Speak all human languages at Superb
Mind Control; only on ghosts
Summon Ghost; can only call the "troubled dead"
Send and control dreams to anyone on Earth
Summon "Ebon Blade" from tattoo on back of hand
Transform to monstrous form

Faults (6 taken)
Obsessed with Miyaki
Mortal Enemy: Black Rose
Megalomaniac: Determined to extinguish Hope from Mankind
Relishes others' pain and suffering
User: Manipulates others needlessly

Must keep true nature a secret until his plans mature

The Demon King is a monstrously powerful, evil being whose goal in life is to throw the Earth into death and despair. With each defeat his minions suffer, he learns more about Miyaki and her friends. His plans are long running and complex, and the more he learns about Miyaki the more intrigued he becomes. On the other hand, he knows all about Black Rose –much more than Black Rose does about himself. If they ever meet, the Demon King plans to break the spirit of his foe.

These statistics are for the Demon King's human form, which he plans to take to infiltrate Miyaki's school as a teacher. His "true" form is monstrous indeed, with leathery wings. His human form is demoniacally attractive and he could no doubt seduce any person he desired to without breaking a sweat.
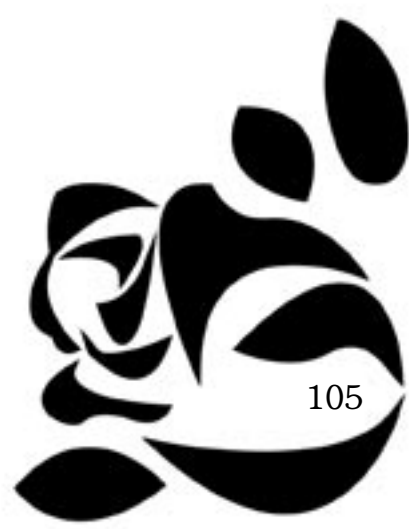
Chapter 10: Ghost Tamer Miyaki

HeartQuest

Chapter 11:
Steel Heidi

Steel Heidi is a Historical Romance campaign set in 1720's Germany, or rather a fictionalized and romanticized version of that country. It is inspired by mangas like Rose of Versailles and Princess Knight, in which a heroine posing as male faces obstacles as she tries to navigate her two roles. It could turn out to be triumphantly romantic or tragic in the extreme depending on how you play it out.

The emphasis in this campaign is on courtly intrigues and swashbuckling action. Sometimes rapiers will clash, but other times a well-placed verbal barb can be just as deadly. Royal courts are places where everyone is vying for royal attention and favor – it is the currency of life itself among the nobility,

In the 1720's, Germany was a patchwork quilt of kingdoms, principalities, dukedoms, independent free cities, archbishoprics and bishoprics. They were all under the nominal control of the Holy Roman Emperor, who was chosen by a group of Electors every time an Emperor died. In reality, the Emperor had little power and received very little real attention. Into this patchwork quilt it is easy to throw in a factional kingdom or two and set the campaign there, which is what we have done here with the fictional kingdoms of Kensmarck and Husmark.

Kensmarck

Kensmarck is a small but strategically important kingdom of about 400,000 people. The economy is mercantile, with most agricultural goods being imported from neighboring kingdoms. About half of the population lives in the capital of Denschelsburg, which is where Heilmann Palace is located.

Kensmarck has been rules by the House of Gorschen for the last three hundred years. The current king, Rupert III, has reigned for thirty years. He is still sharp and savvy, but he is getting weary. He is also aware that his neighbors, greedy for Kensmarck's wealth, are watching his every move for a sign of weakness in himself or his house.

Long since widowed, Rupert has only one child – Crown Prince Hendrick. In Hendricks's hands is the future of Kensmarck, and the kingdom's enemies know that should Hendrick succumb there would be little chance of the kingdom not being absorbed by its more powerful neighbors. Hendrick is a skilled warrior and a decisive leader, and he is in good health. But many attempts have been made to dispose of the young heir.

Heidi's Story

Five years ago, in the midst of a battle against neighboring Husmark, Hendrick rescued a teenage girl from certain death in a burning building at great personal risk. At the time he felt it was the right thing to do. Little did Hendrick know that this girl was a student at Husmark's famed Martial Academy for Women, where young ladies were trained to guard the nobility. Husmark was finally defeated, but the girl never forgot her rescuer.

Some time later, a woman appeared in male garb at the headquarters of the Kensmarck Royal Guard. She bore a letter of recommendation from the Academy and she requested the privilege of joining the Guard. Lord Farber, the commander of the Guard, thought the whole matter absurd until she defeated five of his best men in "friendly" swordplay. After that humiliation, he reluctantly accepted her to the lowest rank of the Royal Guard on the condition that she not reveal her true gender.

A short while later agents from a rival kingdom prepared an attempt on the Prince's life. Several of the Guard had been bribed to look the other way, but no one had approached the new recruit. That night, as assassins prepared to sneak into the Prince's chambers with knives and pistols, the new recruit from Husmark caught them red-handed as if she knew they were coming. Fighting with a supernatural fury, she killed two of the men and wounded the other three so badly that they could offer no resistance when Lord Farber arrived to answer the alarm.

Farber immediately decorated her for valor and told her she could have any assignment she wished, without hesitation, she asked to be made the Prince's bodyguard. She goes by the

name Heidi Husmark. The rest of the Guard call her "Steel Heidi" out of respect and fear for her bladework. Nobody suspects the secret she carries, buried deep in her heart….

The Characters

Heidi Husmark

Attributes (3 free, 4 taken)
Physique: Great
Mind: Fair
Willpower: Good
Cool: Good
Appearance: Good

Skills (30 free, 33 taken)
Acrobatics: Good (3)
Throwing: Fair (2)
Dancing: Mediocre (1)
Guns: Good (5)
Fashion Sense: Fair (2)
Fencing: Superb (5)
Culture: Fair (2)
Christian Theology: Fair (2)
Intimidate: Good (3)
Interrogate: Good (3)
Persuasion: Fair (2)
Brawling: Good (3)

Gifts (2 free, 3 taken)
Ambidextrous
Danger Sense
Prince's personal guard

Faults
Has sworn to protect the Prince til death do us part
Code of Honor
Suspicious of People almost to the point of paranoia

Heidi Husmark's life started out like that of any other young Husmark noblewoman (she still does not use her real name while in Kensmarck). At eight she was shipped off to the Academy where she learned and excelled in the martial skills. She seemed destined for a life guarding the noble women of court from threats to their person as the women of her family had done for generations.

All that changed when Husmark foolishly declared war on Kensmarck. After the initial offensive was routed, Kensmarck armies swept through the land toppling all in their path. The Academy was temporarily evacuated and the students sent out to fight. Leading a platoon of teenagers, Heidi was caught in a burning building. To her surprise, she was rescued unharmed by the young leader of Kensmarck's attacking army. She expected to be captured or worse, but instead she was treated with kindness and charity by a young Prince Hendrick. She soon learned the name of her rescuer and never forgot it.

Soon the war ended with Husmark's unconditional surrender. Those girls who could returned to the Academy to resume their training, this time to be sent into the world as swords-for-hire. Heidi grew even stronger with the blade and became a skilled fighter in almost every method. The Prince who had saved her became a cherished memory which sustained her through the hard and rigorous training.

When Heidi finally graduated, she headed straight for Kensmarck, showing up at the capital and presenting herself literally on Commander Lord Farber's doorstep. She knew that if she couldn't get close to the Prince as an ordinary woman, she might at least get the chance to protect him, and when that chance came she made the most of it. Now Heidi is the Prince's official bodyguard. On the job she is cool and efficient, ever watchful and alert and always knowing when there is danger as if prompted by an unknown signal.

Gradually, however, Heidi realized something was wrong. The Prince had become more important to her than life itself, and while it may be a bodyguard's job to lay down her life for her client, she began to think it would be almost a pleasure to give her life for the prince. She came to realize there was a name for this feeling – Love.

Heidi has confided in only one person, the Vatican envoy Bishop Alfonso who serves as her confessor. (Heidi remains a devout Roman Catholic.) Not even Lord Farber knows the reason why Heidi is willing to sacrifice so much to protect the Prince.

Lord Farber

Attributes (Three free levels plus one free level of appearance: the free level of Appearance is traded for a level of Physique; three taken)
Physique: Great
Mind: Good
Willpower: Good
Cool: Fair
Appearance: Fair

Skills
Swordsmanship: Great
Guns: Good
Climbing: Good
Brawling: Great
Fashion Sense: Fair
Interrogate: fair
Intimidate: Great
Gifts
Captain of Royal Guard
Keen Senses

Faults
Curious
Over-Achiever
Stubborn

Lord Farber is captain of the Royal Guard. His family has been guarding the Kings of Kensmarck for five generations and he cannot imagine any other lifestyle outside the military. He is intensely loyal to the Royal House and will do anything the King or the Prince asks. He is well into middle age, but still strong and vigorous. Although he gives the impression of being a busybody, it is a calculated act and he is not to be underestimated.

Farber's opinion of Heidi is slightly suspicious. He appreciates her skills, knowledge, and strength, but has some questions about her motives that he cannot find good answers for. Although it has done a great deal of good so far for her to be so close to the Prince, Farber wonders just where things are headed and whether Heidi has plans of her own. For now, they treat each other with grudging respect.

Bishop Alfonso

Attributes (3 free, 4 taken)
Physique: Fair
Mind: Fair
Willpower: Great
Cool: Good
Appearance: Good

Skills (30 free, 29 taken)
Calligraphy: Good (3)
Forgery: Fair (2)
Language (German): Fair (2)(Italian is native)
Language (Latin): Great (4)
Christian Theology: Great (4)
Islamic Theology: Mediocre (1)
Bribery: Good (3)
Fast-talk: Good (3)
Oratory: Great (4)
Persuasion: Good (3)
Gifts (2 free, 4 taken)
Common Sense
Natural Linguist
Contacts (the Church)
Clergy

Chapter 11: Steel Heidi

Faults
Reputation for Machiavellian politics
Duty (Church)
Torn between doing what is best for here & now and what is best for the afterlife

The personal representative of the Archbishop of Salzburg, Bishop Alfonso di Corelli is an Italian prelate who has served the Church in various capacitirs his entire life. Unlike many clerics of the period, he takes all of his duties and vows very seriously; he is celibate, keeps the secrets of the confessional, and will never break a confidence.

At the same time, Alfonso has a well-deserved reputation for getting things done that his hosts might not necessarily approve of. While he is determined to gain the ear of the King and the Prince, he can act without their aid. Alfonso would not object to Kensmarck being incorporated into some larger, more stable state, and while he is not actively working towards that end the thought has crossed his mind. He prefers the art of persuasion to that of force, but he has been said to keep a copy of Machiavelli's The Prince on his nightstand next to his Vulgate Bible.

Alfonso became Heidi's confessor almost by accident. Heidi was in a state of considerable anxiety over her feelings for Prince Hendrick and Alfonso happened to be waiting to meet with the prince. He soon got her into the confessional and gently coaxed her into dropping the bombshell. Alfonso has kept the secret, and has taken to advising Heidi on ways to cope with her passions without falling into sin or risking her reputation. His determination to get Heidi to trust in him is great, suggesting he may have some ulterior motive…..

Lady Gretchen Ruprecht

Attributes (3 free, 3 taken)
Physique: Fair
Mind: Good
Willpower: Fair
Cool: Good
Appearance: Great

Skills (30 free, 34 taken)
Archery: Good (3)

Sewing: Great (4)
Musical Instrument (Flute): Good (3)
Dancing: Great (4)
Stealth: Good (3)
Shadowing: Fair (2)
Perception: Fair (2)
Fashion Sense: Good (3)
Gossip: Good (3)
Doctor: Fair (2)
Flattery: Good (3)
Lying: Poor (0)
Persuasion: Fair (2)

Gifts (2 free, 3 taken)
Royalty
Flunkies
Natural Linguist

Faults
Easily Distracted
Jealous
Compulsive Gossiper
Gossip Magnet

Lady Gretchen is a teenage beauty who came to court determined to impress the crowd and win the heart of the Prince. Of noble birth and royal stock, and still very young, Gretchen is a fine marriage candidate – on the surface. Underneath, though, she is pure poison.

Gretchen's hobby is the destruction of reputations. If she can discover a truth that will make one persona non grata at court, she will find a way to make sure everyone learns about it. And if she can't find a truth, she'll invent a lie. Her lies aren't very convincing – yet. But if you get on her bad side, you could find yourself exiled to the country – or a dungeon cell.

The arrival of Heidi has complicated Gretchen's plans considerably. Not only is Heidi not playing her game, she is at a completely different level, and she has day-and-night access to the prince! This cannot be allowed! Gretchen has sought many ways to ruin Heidi's reputation, so far to no avail. Worse, Heidi seems to be on to her schemes and can catch her in a lie instantly.

Prince Hendrick

Attributes (3 free, 4 taken)
Physique: Great (+2)
Mind: Fair (0)
Willpower: Good (+1)
Cool: Good (+1)
Appearance: Good (0)

Skills (30 free, 30 taken)
Fencing: Great (4)
Guns: Terrible (1)
Calligraphy: Good (3)
Stealth: Fair (2)
Dancing: Good (3)
Fashion Sense: Good (3)
Oratory: Great (4)
Leadership: Good (3)
Intimidate: Fair (2)
Persuasion: Fair (2)
Riding: Mediocre (1)
Tracking: Fair (2)

Gifts (2 free, 3 taken)
Ambidextrous
Member of Royal Family
Keen Senses

Faults
Duty (to Country)
Curious

Prince Hendrick is the heir to the throne of Kensmarck and knows exactly how much is resting on his welfare. Nonetheless, he refuses to cocoon himself among advisers and sycophants. Indeed, he finds unnecessary flattery utterly appalling and the fastest way to lose his favor is to tell him how wonderful and brilliant he is. Hendrick knows he has only an average intellect, but he compensates by studying hard and preparing well for his role as Kensmarck's future king.

Hendrick has had a taste of war and discovered he didn't like it. Although he can lead troops into battle, he would prefer diplomacy as a solution to problems and wants to live in peace with his neighbors. He has not made the connection between the young girl he rescued five years ago and his daring new bodyguard, but he finds Heidi somewhat intriguing although he has no idea why.

As for his future, Hendrick knows that he will eventually have to marry someone of royal blood who will bear him strong children to keep the line going. To him, though, it seems a pity as he would rather marry for love like the peasants do. He knows, however, that to do so would be the ruination of Kensmarck, and he is nothing if not a patriot.

Chapter 12:

Sample Characters

Lala – Girl Genius!

Attributes (Three free, One free level of Appearance, four taken)
Physique: Mediocre (-1)
Mind: Superb (+3)
Willpower: Good (+1)
Cool: Fair
Appearance: Great (+1)

Skills (30 free, 45 Taken)
Running: Fair (2)
Throwing: Fair (2)
Electronics: Good (3)
Stealth: Fair (2)
History, Japanese: Great (4)
Literature, Japanese: Good (3)
Language, English: Fair (1)
Language, French: Fair (1)
Language, Chinese: Fair (1)
Research: Good (3)
Computers: Good (3)
Musical Instrument, Violin: Good (3)
Geography: Fair (2)
Science, Chemistry: Good (3)
Science, Physics: Good (3)
Science, Biology: Good (3)
Mathematics: Great (4)
Lore, Collectable Card Games: Fair (2)

Gifts (Two Free, Two Taken)
Good Memory
Really Supportive Parents

Faults (Three Taken)
Young
Nearsighted
Curious

Lala is a typical ten year old girl with big brown eyes, freckled face, and pony tails. She's as cute as a button in her horn- rimmed glasses and "big girl's" high school uniform. No, Lala's not some cosplay maniac, she's been promoted from sixth grade to the second year of high school. Lala's promotion came about through her natural brilliance and a strange conjunction of the wrong map, the wrong test, and a school administration that was desperate not to give offense. Because of her insatiable curiosity, quick wit, and amazingly

retentive memory, Lala is having no difficulties with the academic demands of high school life.

Lala's social life, on the other hand, is a complete mess. On those rare occasions when Lala has a chance to interact with kids of her own age, she has trouble relating to their simple pass times. Lala is desperately trying to find acceptance amongst her classmates. She constantly tries to hang out with the most popular kids in class, male and female, hoping that some of their glamour will rub off on her. The other students like the adorable Lala-chan, but can quickly get annoyed with having a "kid sister" tagging along at inappropriate times and asking embarrassing questions.

Lala's parents are a normal middle-class couple. Although they've known Lala was special from the day she was born, they are often baffled by their daughter's genius. They truly want the best for their little girl and strive to provide it for her

Ichiro Gyozu (Hyaku-San)

Attributes
Physique: Good
Mind: Good
Willpower: Fair
Cool: Great
Appearance: Great

Skills
Singing: Superb
Dancing: Superb
Academics: Terrible
Fast Talk: Great
Seduction: Great

Gifts
Sense of Style
Idol Singer

Faults
Famous
Uneducated
Ashamed

Ichiro is, in a word, stunning. He has dark, short cut hair, a sculpted face, and a body that would make even the most conservative girl twinge with desire. He is always impeccably dressed, his usual stage attire being a blue head band, black designer shirt and jeans, slick boots, and a black trench-coat with "Hyaku-San" (Mr. One-Hundred)written in bulbous blue English letters and Kanji.

From the day he performed in a second grade play, everyone knew Ichiro was going to be a star. Already terrible smooth and cute, his talent for singing, dancing and working a crowd only heightened his parents resolve to make him famous. They took him out of school, and put him with voice teachers, choreographers, and agents, making him the best performer they possibly could. It didn't take much.

Now, Hyaku-San, as his stage name goes, is number on international music charts. His hits "Spice in the wine" and "Snowflakes and Raindrops, like Love" have been translated into French, English, Chinese and Spanish. And in Japan, all six of his CDs sell out regularly at local music stores. Part of the appeal to the young star is that he writes his own songs, and designs his own dance routines. Everyone who works with him says he is simply a pleasure to be with, and he quietly refrains from performing the usual decadent relations with groupies like so many other teen stars do.

However, Ichiro is a troubled soul. When his career first started to take off two years ago when he was fifteen, he was everything you expect a pampered star to be: spoiled, rude and contemptuous. He refused to see tutors and the like, preferring the company of his many fans and groupie girlfriends.

However, one day after a concert, outside was a girl who wasn't from the usual crowd of adoring fans he was used to. She was a reporter for the local High-School newspaper, and simply wanted to ask him some questions. She was bright, funny, cute, strong-willed, and Ichiro was simply in love.

Eventually he had to go, but he sent her letter after letter, proclaiming his love of her and his desire to be near her again. He counted the days until the tour took him back to her town, and finally he arrived and sought her out, knowing for sure his witty charm and good looks would sweep her off her feet.

When he found her, and asked if she got the letters he sent, all she could do was giggle. "That was you?" she asked amusedly, "I thought you had a kid brother and he had a crush on me!" Confused, Ichiro demanded to know what she meant and she showed him.

For the first time, he saw what she meant: his letter looked like they had been done by a first-grader. In places where the scrawling handwriting could even be read, there were terrible syntax and grammar errors. And if this weren't enough, his love pointed out the places where he had misquoted, misread, or misinterpreted several historical or literary tidbits that he had inserted to woo her. "I mean, c'mon! 'If I were but a frog on the hand?' Give me a break!" Poor, poor Ichiro was crestfallen.

Ichiro's early release from school, coupled with a subtle learning disorder, gives him the educational equivalent of a third grade education. He is deeply shamed by this fact. Upon interrogating his staff as to their knowledge, they had always known, and laughed behind his back about his bragging of his own intelligence (Like he bragged about everything else). Ichiro decided it was time for a change.

A contract he had signed has him in concerts for years to come, but he fired all his staff and replaced them with new ones who had never known him. He changed his ways, becoming much more soft-spoken and humble around them. Late at night, on the bus or plane or in the hotel room, he crouches over elementary school readers and text-books, trying desperately to catch up.

Ichiro knows that he should probably just quit the music business and dedicate himself to his studies, but he is still too prideful to go back to school. Also, singing and dancing are the only two things Ichiro feels good about or good at. If

he didn't have them, he would just be another way below average student out in the boondocks. He just can't take that.

Miyako Hitoshi

Attributes
Physique: Good
Mind: Good
Willpower: Good
Cool: Good
Appearance: Good

Skills
Motorcycle: Good
Police Work: Good
Attack (Police Shield): Good
Interrogation: Good
Intimidate: Good
Military Lore: Great
Attack (Pistol): Poor
Gardening: Fair
Singing: Great

Gifts
Green Thumb
Commanding Presence

Faults
Jealous
On duty most of the time

The girl next door in a uniform. Miyako has brown eyes and fiery red hair that tumbles halfway down her back when she removes her motorcycle helmet. She wears her uniform on duty (Which shows off her curves in just such a way), and tends toward loose sweat when off.

Miyakos big sister Sakura might as well have been a goddess to her. Anything Sakura did, Miyako wanted to do, whether it was play with dolls, dress up of flirt with boys. If Sakura did it, Miyako immediately saw the benefits of such an activity, and considered it the only thing worthwhile until Sakura changed her mind. Sakura, for her part, decided the imitation is the most sincere form of flattery, and tolerated it with mountains of patience.

This trend continued on for years, all the way through Sakura's senior year (Miyako was still in middle school), when she decided she was going to go into the officers program for the Japanese Self Defense Force. Instantly, Miyako thought this was simply a fantastic idea (Although she was more than heartbroken to see her sister go), and vowed that she would enter the officers program just like her sister.

Unfortunately, Miyako, while bright, was never the student Sakura was. She maintained decent grades through all her years, and even got into one of the most prestigious schools in the city. However, in the end, she simply did not have the qualifications to get into the Officers Program.

Instead, she decided to join the police force, so as to better prepare her for when the Program came to its senses. Quickly she went through the ranks, achieving a sergeant's rank and a motorcycle beat (Which she loved). Every year she submitted a new application for the Officers Program, and every year it has come back negative. This has gone on for six years (She is now 24).

Despite her high rank and many citations, Miyako is a real headache for her chief. She is always on the lookout for the case that will bring her to the attention of the JSDF, and so is something of a loose cannon. Nevertheless, she gets results and she is a real joy to have around with her smiles and laugh.

Miyako has had few romantic entanglements. A few boyfriends in school, along with one after she received her police job, a private detective she crossed paths with during an investigation. She dumped pretty quick, right after she showed him her collection of letter Sakura sent her while in the Defense Force, of all the interesting things she's doing. Her beau questioned the mental health of such an obsession, and was kicked to the curb.

However, unbeknownst to poor Miyako, there is a great deal of truth to this. Miyako was always jealous of all the attention and praise Sakura received Sakura unknowingly stole the affections of many boys who had originally had it for Miyako), and so decided to imitate her. In doing so, not only did she lose a great deal of

her own identity, but fostered within her a terrible self-defeating resentment. This resentment rarely surfaces (Usually only while she is drunk), but a hard look at her Officers applications would definitely denote a few errors that seem almost intentional.

There is one thing that Miyako loves that Sakura never had, besides police work: Gardening. In a small flower box outside her apartment window, she grows whatever the season permits. When she is tending to her little garden (Which grows a variety of cooking herbs as well as beautiful flowers) is the only time you can ever hear her sing.

Sanatome Ikuga

Attributes
Physique: Good
Mind: Good
Willpower: Fair
Cool: Fair
Appearance: Good

Skills
Financial Lore: Fair
Etiquette: Good
Writing: Good
Poetry Lore: Good
Athletics: Fair
Harp: Good

Gifts
Excellent Stenographer
Well rounded

Faults
Disowned by family

Iritoshiko Tonshu

Attributes
Physique: Poor
Mind: Great
Willpower: Good
Cool: Good
Appearance: Superb

Skills
Latin: Great
Greek: Great
French: Great
Sanskrit: Great
Academics: Superb
Writing: Great
Fast Talk: Great

Gifts
Bishounen
Bishoujo

Faults
Weak constitution

Words describing Sanatome's appearance would probably be "recreational athlete": he's fit, with rugged good lucks and a blond crew cut. Some might consider him a jock, but he has kind eyes and a ready smile that, if nothing else, doesn't let anyone hold that against him.

Iritoshiko (A "ko" was added to his name because he thought is sounded more natural) is incredibly beautiful, and we mean beautiful. His slight build, pale skin, long golden hair and blue eyes, combined with his general posturing a mannerisms cause many to mistake him for a female. This misconception is quickly tossed aside by his deep baritone voice. He is well spoken and articulate, and always smiles at you unless truly upset. Many (even straight guys) feel an instant romantic attraction.

Sanatome was born into the stereotypical rich family. He was the son, so it was his job to become one of the leading shakers of the pillars of the financial world. However, his parents were just a little batty, and wanted him to have the appearance of a "successful man." How they accomplished this was by rolling together every stereotype of success together and have him live through it. He went to business school, military school, and music school. He was made to dabble in politics and agriculture, stock broking and manufacturing, and a host of other trades without ever becoming much more than a debutante. Sanatome never really minded; he always had things to do, and he could go play baseball and soccer whenever he felt like it, and

read poetry like he always loved. He never even though why he was going through medical school until Iritoshiko asked him.

Iritoshiko was the story every orphanage wants hanging on their wall: downtrodden, but extremely bright kid who, though he was never adopted, was an excellent student. He entered college early, and gained the respect of many of his professors in his language mastery and writing ability. As soon as he earned his degree in Literature however, he broke all their hearts saying he was going to go off to write soap opera scripts.

Iritoshiko was a patient at the university hospital, and was put into Sanatomes care as part of his education. Iritoshiko had a body wracked by illness and weakness of immunity, but that didn't stop him from utilizing his brilliant mind. The two of them talked about poetry, and life, their lives, and other things that people talk about when they really hit it off. Soon they became friends and then more than friends, and finally Iritoshiko asked Sanatome to come with him to live in Tokyo and write soap opera stories with him.

Sanatome was shocked. Though he was deeply in love with Iritoshiko, and wanted to be with him, leaving his parents security was a big change. Not to mention that Sanatome had no experience in the field. However, as the long medical school days dragged on, Santome realized that his life was being led for him, and the Iritoshiko had shown him what he was missing. And so, as soon as Iritoshiko checked out, Sanatome dropped out, and they headed for Tokyo.

Life at first was hard. The couple made ends meet on what was left of Iritoshiko's scholarship money, and Sanatomes stipend, when they finally landed gig at a soap opera convention, and were given a chance to write s script for a popular Japanese soap.

Iritoshiko laid on the bed dictating while Sanatome typed and edited. They discussed characters, argued plots, and together wrote a script that would catapult the two of them into a three year contract, and the show into the number one most watched show on any channel. The pair couldn't be happier.

Chapter 12: Sample Characters

Well, that isn't true. Santome wishes private detectives would stop "tracking him down" and try to bring him home. And Iritoshiko still gets letters from colleges begging him to come back and teach, as well as love letters from girls who imagined that he was their boyfriend. And of course, not a day goes by where Sanatome doesn't agonize about Iritoshiko's health. He's always worried Iritoshiko will overexert himself and get terminally ill. Iritoshiko always says that he's fine (and from the nights where Iritoshiko is feeling the least bit better, overexertion is not a problem), but the thought always lingers in Sanatome's mind…

Jukiro and Ariko Hana

Jukiro and Ariko were born in Osaka to two very loving college professors. They often left their children with a babysitter while they went to guest lecture in another city somewhere in the world. On one such trip, their plane crashed, and in an instant Jukiro (Age 8) and Ariko (Age 4) were orphans. Escaping the well-meaning social service workers, the two children escaped into the Japanese countryside, where they wandered for two years, going from city to city seeking temporary shelter and scraping for food.

After a while, they came to Tokyo, and met a kindly old Shinto Priestess named Keiko Dohaku, who took them in, fed them, and eventually adopted them. They have lived at the temple for nine years.

Jukiro Hana

Attributes
Physique: Fair
Mind: Good
Willpower: Great
Cool: Mediocre
Appearance: Good

Skills
Meditation(Prayer): Good
Soccer: Good
Urban Survival: Great
Urban Tracking: Good
Hiding: Great
Weapon (Broom): Fair
Haggle: Fair

Gang Lore: Fair
Fast Talk: Good
Shinto Lore: Superb

Gifts
Easy To Talk To
Tough
Loyal To The End

Faults
Easily Excitable
Annoyed with Ariko

Jukiro stands at average build for a nineteen-year-old, with brown eyes and a ready smile. His most noticeable (some would say best) feature is his hair: dark violet, with long bangs in front, and a low pony-tail down to his shoulder blades. He is most commonly found in his temple robes (A dogi and a hakama) when sweeping or manning the souvenir counter, and will simple jeans, t-shirt and denim jacket when out on the town.

It was Jukiros idea to run away from the social workers, and it was Jukiro who led his little sister all over Japan. He, unlike his sister, clearly remembers the cold nights in the rain, or running frantically from gangs or sexual predators. He is beyond grateful to Keiko for what she has done for them, and shows his gratitude by eschewing college in favor of taking over the temple duties while she is away, and preparing to take over the temple completely when she is gone.

Many of the students of Sendai Academy (Which he graduated from) come to Jukiro for advice on everything from love to schoolwork to troubles at home. He is known for his cool head and logical ability to solve any problem.

The only thing that really gets to him is his sister, Ariko. He does not like how she hangs out with the hot-rod gangs and neglects her position at the temple. The only time you really see him angry is when she makes a flippant comment to him. Or someone tries to threaten her. Jukiro loves his sister more than anything in the world, and he would fight and die for her without a moments hesitation.

As far as anyone can tell, Jukiro has never had any romantic relations (Though more than a few girls have expressed intrest). He does, however, have one true love: soccer. At first, Keiko scolded him about missing his prayers to practice soccer, but he was too busy practicing to hear her. Soon she gave up, and now whenever he isn't sweeping or performing other necessary tasks for the temple, he breaks out the soccer ball and imagines himself at the Tokyo World Cup.

It was during one of the frequent practice sessions that he met Hiroshi. Despondent with love for Chiharu, Hiroshi passed by the Nine Silent Rivers Temple. Jukiro, in an unusual display of botched ball control (And an all to common display of destiny) accidentally sent the ball sailing toward Hiroshi, who expertly bounced it off his chest, and sent it right back at the surprised temple worker. After a game of one-on-one that lasted until sunset, Hiroshi and Jukiro were fast friends.

Jukiro does his best to counsel the poor love-sick Hiroshi as to what to do about Chiharu, but even he is at a loss. Nevertheless, Jukiro is always there for Hiroshi, whether for advice, for consolation, or a heated soccer battle.

Ariko Hana

Attributes
Physique: Fair
Mind: Fair
Willpower: Great
Cool: Mediocre
Appearance: Great

Skills
Acrobatics: Fair
Gang Lore: Great
Driving(Motor Cycle): Great
Switchblade: Good
Sneaking: Good
Shinto Lore: Mediocre
Fire Reading: Great (see below)
Seduction: Good
Fast-Talk: Fair
Meditation: Terrible
Hiding: Fair
Intimidation: Good

Gifts
Tough as nails
Gang to back her up
Fire Reader (see below)

Faults
Hair Trigger Temper
Impulsive
Argumentative (Especially with her brother)

Ariko is perhaps a little short for a fifteen-year-old, but she makes up for it in "development." She has short violet hair with two long bangs hanging down the front, in front of two searing blue eyes and a mouth almost always in a snarl. She wears dirty, oil stained leather pants and jacket, with a white t-shirt. Around her arm are the colors of her gang, the Bullet Tremors.

Ariko has very little memory of the time she and Jukiro spent wandering all over Japan. When he tries to remind her of cold nights and empty stomachs, she just shouts and turns away, insisting that it couldn't have been that bad. In truth, it scarred her deeper than she is willing to admit: it takes almost nothing to set her on a rampage, and almost nothing can stop her after that.

She tried to get into temple life, but she just couldn't seem to focus her mind, and the calm, condescending tone of her adopted grandmother set her teeth on edge (She loves her grandmother deeply, but is too tough to show it). Instead, she took to the streets and quickly joined up with one of the numerous hot-rod gangs operating discreetly in the city. She quickly earned the nickname Ohanabi (Fireworks) from her new family, and proceeded to wreak havoc on anyone who got in the way of her custom Chinese bike (Which she drives without a license, by the way).

She and her brother argue very, very often. He wants her to join the temple and be thankful for their new home, and she wants him to be a man and hit the road again. However, despite the heated, almost violent wordplays, the two are much closer than any outsider could imagine. There are many times when Jukiro has been there for her when her gang couldn't, and she makes sure that no other gang harasses Jukiro or the temple.

Ariko has some training as a Shinto Priestess, although she never went as far with it as her brother did. She was never good at meditating, her chores were slapdash, and her blessings seemed to scare away the "blessed." However, there is one part of the job she is almost frighteningly good at: fire readings. Ariko is immensely intuitive, and could be a fortune-teller if she wasn't so angry all the time. Many times she has insights for the future that are uncanny; but when she focuses her intuition into a Fire Reading, she becomes nearly pin point accurate. Truth be told she rarely does such focused work. She may be rejecting it as she rejects most everything else, or she may be scared of her own ability. Or future.

She receives similar "feelings" and "vibes" from people, albeit rarely. Recently, one of her fellow students (If they could be considered fellows; Ariko is enrolled in Sendai, but rarely attends): a nerdy foreign exchange student named Richard. She is not quite sure why, but her special sense is starts tugging whenever she sees him. One things she knows for absolutely certain: she does not like him. She has her pick of tough ganger guys, all of whom are more suited to her lifestyle than a nerdy gaijin. So a love connection is silly to the point of absurdity! Right?

Kadeth and Losse

Kadeth

Attributes
Physique: Superb (+3)
Mind: Good (+1)
Willpower: Good (+1)
Cool: Fair (+0)
Appearance: Mediocre (-1)

Skills
Acrobatics: Mediocre (-1)
Climbing: Good (+1)
Jumping: Good (+1)
Running: Good (+1)
Swimming: Mediocre (-1)
Calligraphy: Mediocre (-1)
Musical Instrument: Great (+2)
Archery: Mediocre (-1)
Martial: Arts Poor (-2)
Melee: Great (+2)

Stealth: Fair (+0)
Traps: Fair (+0)
Cooking: Mediocre (-1)
Dread Lore: Mediocre (-1)
Intimidate: Fair (+0)
Use Power Strike: Mediocre (-1)
Use Sense Dread: Poor (-2)
Survival: Fair (+0)
Tracking: Good (+1)

Gifts
Membership: Dread Hunter
Pain Tolerant
Rapid Healer

Faults
Code of Honor
Duty

Supernormal Powers
Sense Dread (Sense Dread within two hundred feet)
Power Strike (doubles damage of a strike)

Quirk
Broadminded

Losse: Bahn Assassin

Attributes
Physique: Mediocre (-1)
Mind: Great (+2)
Willpower: Fair (+0)
Cool: Great (+2)
Appearance: Good (+1)

Skills
Acrobatics: Good (+1)
Climbing: Good (+1)
Jumping: Good (+1)
Acting/Drama: Good (+1)
Melee: Mediocre (-1)
Breaking and Entering: Good (+1)
Disguise: Good (+1)
Poisoning: Fair (+0)
Shadowing: Good (+1)
Stealth: Good (+1)
Traps: Fair (+0)
Bribery: Mediocre (-1)
Fast-Talk: Good (+1)
Interrogate: Good (+1)
Intimidation: Good (+1)

Lying: Good (+1)
Seduction: Good (+1)
Use Shapechanging: Great (+2)
Spellcasting: Mediocre (Mid-Level spells) (-1)
Survival: Fair (+0)

Gifts
Charisma
Good Memory

Faults
Bad Reputation (Bahn)
Enemy (a Binder)
Melancholy

Supernormal Powers
Magic Talent
Shapechanger (any humanoid form)

Ages upon ages ago one of the six kindreds, it isn't known which, discovered the secrets of Dread magics. The knowledge spread quickly. The elf-like Eledh, in their tall cities on the great plains, the draconian Ryu, with their great fleet of ships plying the seas, the hill dwelling Huldre, large and powerful, the cat-like Lath, in their mountain fastnesses, the sylvan Ffolk, in their forest glades, and the dwarf-like Corrigan in their deserts. The great empires of that age, strained by lack of resources, exploded into a collection of wars that used magically created creatures for weapons. At some point Dreads that could think were made, and Dreads that had no thought but to kill. Both cases resulted in the weapons turning on the masters. When it was done the kindreds were still in firm control, but their great empires were mere shadows of their former glower, and vast stretches of the world were lost to knowledge.

The Dread Hunters, an organization comprising of all the kindreds and owing alleigance to none but their order, were founded to track down and destroy rogue dreads and punish any Binders that dared to use the binding spells on any sentient Dreads.

For seven new races were accepted as part of the world, the Vinya, the New. The Bahn, dopplegangers, the perfect spies and assassins. The Srath, diminutive versions of the Lath, scouts that could be in and out without being seen. The

Oread, nymphs who replaced the priestesses of the Ffolk (or maybe came from the priestess, no one knows for sure). The Tokage, lizard men warriors. The Malbrau, huge creatures of vast power. The minotaur like Taurous, and the Grim, seemingly Corrigan aside from a coal black skin and hair, and an almost stone like flesh.

Still the Vinya were Dread, and built with vulnerabilites to certain spells, and so, to insure they were never enslaved by an unscrupulous wizard, the marks were devised to protect them. A marked Vinya cannot be touched by the Binding spells, and were safe. And only the Bahn suffered from the marking. For the marks were visible in any form the Bahn took and so their use as investigators was greatly reduced. The other Vinya each had other gifts they could use to make a living in this new world. The bahn were physically weak, and couldn't even handle the strain of casting powerful spells. Many became entertainers, or even prostitutes, since no one would hire them to do a job that another could easily do. And it was the marks that drove the greatest trial a Bahn would have to face. The process of marking a Vinya was painful and too much for any child to bear, and so most Vinya lived through multiple years vulnerable to the binding spells. Many Bahn children were and still are stolen to be used as assassins, spies or just slaves in later years.

Losse was one of those children. She (most Bahn eventually settle on one form and gender, though they all keep their shapechanging abilities, they just find a form they're most comfortable with, in Losse's case she appears as a pale, slender Ffolk woman with black hair) spent most of her life a prisoner in her own body. Watching as she said and did things on her master's orders that she felt certain were wrong. She was on the verge of not caring, becoming in soul, the killing weapon that her body and mind were presenting. Then she was sent to kill someone, and a young huldre dread hunter stopped her. She was surprised when she not only survived the encounter, but escaped. It was after several encounters with the same Huldre, that she realized he was trying to take her down without hurting her. It was a change from the rather militant dread hunters she had encounter in the past. Kadeth, for his part, was

doing his best to follow what he thought was the spirit of his order and trying to rescue a slave.

Eventually, Losse managed to gather enough willpower to break the binding on her and actually talk to her hunter. (A breaking or forming Bind is visible to the naked eye even if the Bind itself isn't) In the journey to the nearest Hunter's Outpost to mark Losse, the two fell in love. But Losse's master, a wizard of good reputation in the world as his practices as Binder were unknown, found them and recaptured Losse after she tried to run on her own to lead him away from Kadeth (she recognized one of the wizard's employees and panicked). Kadeth is now on the trail to rescue her again, realizing that he might have to fight her before he can save her.

Chapter 12: Sample Characters

Chapter 13:
Bibliography, Resources

Here is a listing of some shoujo and shoujo-related titles that should give you some inspiration for your games. We have separated them by category to help you match the genre you're looking for.

Fantastic Adventures

Fushigi Yuugi

(Video: Pioneer. Manga: Viz)

Two girls from Tokyo are transported to ancient China and find themselves on opposite sides of a war as the living spokeswomen of rival gods. This is the series that introduced serious shoujo adventure to the US.

Magic Knights Rayearth

(Video: Media Blasters. Manga: Tokyopop)

Three schoolgirls are summoned to a fantasy world where they must save it from destruction by rescuing its "pillar", Princess Emeraude, with their newfound magical powers. A masterwork from CLAMP.

Princess Knight

(Status Unknown)

Osamu Tezuka's masterpiece about a princess raised as a boy who must fight for the throne and the heart of her true love. The manga first appeared in 1955, and it is the inspiration for many of the shoujo series that followed. If you ever get the chance to read this book, do it.

Revolutionary Girl Utena

(Video: Central Park Media, Manga: Viz)

At an exclusive private school, the Student Council is a secret society of fencers who duel for the Rose Bride and the fate of the world. When a young girl who believes she is a "prince" forces her way into the game, everything changes. Well worth getting – the movie is a Matrix-level mind-bleep.

Starship Girl Yamamoto Yokho

(Video: The Right Stuff)

High school girls from the 1990's are whisked forward into the future to pilot massive space battleships for sport and profit. Proof that a team of heroines doesn't always need to get along.

Vision of Escaflowne

(Video: Bandai)

A girl who can see the future arrives on another world – just in time for an apocalyptic war in which her visions will play a vital part. Dark and frightening, but also romantic and sweeping in scope.

Idol Singers

(Shows about idol singers and other celebrities)

Child's Toy

(Manga: Tokyopop)

An 11-year-old TV star goes through life in her wacky, hyperactive way only to discover that first love isn't all it's cracked up to be. The TV series is in serious need of tranquilizers, but is hilarious and enormously popular in fannish circles.

Creamy Mami

(Status Unknown)

One of the originators of the genre of shows in which preteen girls use magic to transform into older girls who become enormously popular idol singers. Like the crepes from which the heroine gets her name, it's sweet in the extreme.

Fancy Lala

(Video: Bandai)

A newer show in the little-girl-becomes-teenage-idol genre, with a somewhat more realistic approach to the idol business.

I'll Make a Habit of It

(Status Unknown)

This show defies description, but here goes: a teenage martial artist becomes an idol singer, poses as a boy so she can go to a tough school, and meets the boy of her dreams while disguised as a guy. From there it gets weird; even though the central plot element is essentially resolved in the second episode, the series just keeps getting stranger and stranger. Some call is "the shoujo Ranma"; others call it "The Idol show for people who hate Idol shows". Momoko the rival idol is one of the most bizarre characters in anime.

Magical Girls

Card Captor Sakura

(Video: Pioneer; Manga: Tokyopop)

A 10-year-old girl accidentally (?) releases the contents of a book of magical cards and now must get them all back, with only a plushie-looking guardian and her obsessive best friend to aid her. This show has one of the most ardent fandoms in anime. Get the real series, not Cardcaptors, and be amazed at all CLAMP can do to the magic girl genre.

Corrector Yui

(Manga: Tokyopop)

A girl who is terrible with computers finds out that she is the defender of virtual reality. Even though most of the fighting takes place in VR, Yui qualifies as a magic girl everywhere it counts.

Jubei-chan the Ninja Girl

(Video: Bandai)

A young girl reluctantly inherits the powers of a legendary swordfighter and immediately becomes the target of assassins in this satirical blend of samurai action and magical girls.

Kamikaze Kaitou Jeanne

(Status Unknown)

A lone thief, aided only by her angelic guardian, struggles to seal demons that threaten the world while being hunted by the police and haunted by a handsome rival. A dark but exciting take on the magic-thief genre with many surprising twists.

Magical Project S

(Video: Pioneer)

It started out as an in-joke: Sasami from Tenchi Muyo! as a magical girl. It grew into three OVAs and this TV series, which you could easily dismiss as just another Tenchi sequel. Don't. Magical Project S is funny, smart, and a darned good show in its own right. Episodes 19 and 20 in particular are spectacularly good.

Miracle Girls

(Manga: Tokyopop)

Twins with psychic powers try to keep their abilities secret while struggling to sort out the pressures of growing up and falling in love. A gem.

Sailor Moon

(Video: Pioneer and AD Vision; Manga: Tokyopop)

When most people mention magical girls, this is what they think of: heroines in very short skirts fighting evil monsters. There is so much more to Sailor Moon than this, of course; Usagi as a heroine is in turns hilarious, sympathetic and compelling. Look out for ADV's release of the uncut first two seasons starting in 2002, and no – Uranus and Neptune are NOT cousins!

Saint Tail

(Video and Manga: Tokyopop)

A junior high school girl uses magic powers to take back things that were wrongfully taken

from others, all the while being pursued by a determined classmate. A classic caper show; the final four-episode story arc is amazing.

Tonde Buurin

(Status Unknown)

Some magic girls have all the luck; Karin-chan turns into a flying, super-strong pig whenever she needs to use her powers. That she's a CUTE pig does not help at all.

Teen Romance

Brother, Dear Brother

(Status Unknown)

A teenager goes to an all-girl boarding school and is caught up in the social and romantic intrigues of a powerful sorority. Very strong and dramatic stuff, with strong doses of lesbianism and drug use. Not for the timid.

Call Me Princess

(Manga: Central Park Media)

A girl wants to be adored just like her sister was and finds that the boys in her life have problems of their own.

Hana Yori Dango

(Unknown)

When a male gang turns its attention to a feisty new girl, she strikes back and makes several surprising discoveries about them and herself. A long-running manga and a very popular anime.

His and Her Circumstances

(Video: Right Stuf)

The top girl in her junior high class moves on to high school, where she is shocked to discover there is a handsome boy who is better at everything than she is! She wants to destroy him, but he takes everything in stride and their attitudes begin to change – until he reveals his own secret past. A teen romance series from the producers of Evangelion and FLCL, with many unusual visual stylings.

Kimagure Orange Road

(Video: AnimEigo and ADV)

A boy from a family of ESPers is torn between two girls and discovers that his psychic powers are of no help whatsoever. The finale, done in a movie, is a classic example of why being in a love triangle is a very bad idea.

Marmalade Boy

(Video and Manga: Tokyopop)

A girl discovers that her parents have decided to switch partners with another couple – permanently! Now a handsome and mysterious boy her age is living in her house and her entire life is thrown into turmoil. Funny, dramatic and maddeningly addictive. Highly recommended for anyone who wants to run a teen romance game.

Mintna Bokura

(Manga: Viz)

From the creator of Marmalade Boy comes this story of a boy who moves to a boarding school to check up on his twin sister. Problem is the only room left is in the girl's dorm, but with a little ingenuity….

Other Series

Kiko-chan's Smile

(Status Unknown)

Meet a little girl the world isn't ready for! Four-year-old Kiko-chan amazes her parents, wows her friends, and drives her teacher to the verge of a nervous breakdown on a regular basis. A very hard-to-find show but worth the effort.

Vampire Princess Miyu

(OVA Video: AnimEigo, TV Video: Tokyopop, Manga: Studio Ironcat)

Just because it's shoujo doesn't mean it's all sweetness and light, as this atmospherically creepy horror series proves. Follow the unaging little girl vampire Miyu as she hunts down and banishes other creatures of the Dark, often leaving a trail of ruined human lives in her wake.

You're Under Arrest

(Video: AnimEigo; Manga: Dark Horse)

Policewomen in Tokyo chase bad guys while dealing with their own romantic and professional issues in this comedy from the creator of Ah! My Goddess!. Watch for the movie from ADV in 2002.

Books and References

Antonia Levi, "*Samurai from Outer Space*" (Open Court, Chicago, Illinois 1996)

Susan J. Napier, "*Anime from Akira to Princess Mononoke*", (Palgrave, New York: 2000)

Rex Shelley, "*Culture Shock! Japan*", (Graphic Arts Center Publishing Company, Portland, Oregon: 2001)

Other Role-Playing Games

Big Eyes, Small Mouth

(Guardians of Order, Guelph, Ontario)

The classic generic anime game. The Tri-Stat System originated here and has spread to envelop many licensed anime, including Sailor Moon.

Exalted

(White Wolf Game Studio)

Ultra-high-powered swords-and-sorcery fantasy with an anime motif.

FUDGE Expanded Edition

(Grey Ghost Games)

More and more detailed rules for those who want to bring more of the FUDGE system into their HeartQuest game.

Teenagers From Outer Space

(R. Talsorian Games)

Extremely silly comedy RPG, based more than a little on Urusei Yatsura. Chase girls! Blow things up! Try to survive gym class!

Web Resources

The Anipike

(www.anipike.com)

The main directory to anime websites, be they in Japan, North America, or elsewhere.

Anime on DVD

(www.animeondvd.com)

All the information you need on what has or is about to come out on DVD.

The Right Stuf

(www.rightstuf.com)

A premier online retailer, specializing in anime and manga.

Seraphim Guard

(www.seraphimguard.com)

The publisher of this book. First place to look for new reference and source material. To subscribe to the Seraphim Guard fan-based list designed to let HeartQuest fans discuss both the game and the shoujo genre in general, send a message with the word 'subscribe' in the Subject field to HeartQuestShoujoFanMailingList-request @seraphimguard.com.

In a world not entirely unlike our own.....
In a time much like the present.....
Animals rule the world!

On an Earth without humans, dozens of species of mammals and birds have evolved into sentience, and they all share a society in a tenuous balance. Keeping that order in the City by the Bay are the officers of the BCPD, male and female fursons dedicated to preserving law and order. Opposing them are those who would break the law – thieves, racketeers, thugs, muggers, and the hated Predators who have forsaken civilized ways to prey on sentient beings.

This is the world of FUZZ: The Furry Police RPG, where you can take the role of a BCPD officer and fight crime – or of a crook who commits them. Be a fox, wolf, cat, bear, mouse, or any of 24 unique creatures. Learn the skills of the cop – driving, shooting, hand-to-hand combat. Walk the beat, drive on patrol, do dangerous undercover work.... Or plot and carry out outrageous crimes as a master criminal.

FUZZ: THE FURRY POLICE

Because you never know what's out there!

Coming in 2003 from Seraphim Guard,
publishers of fine roleplaying games!
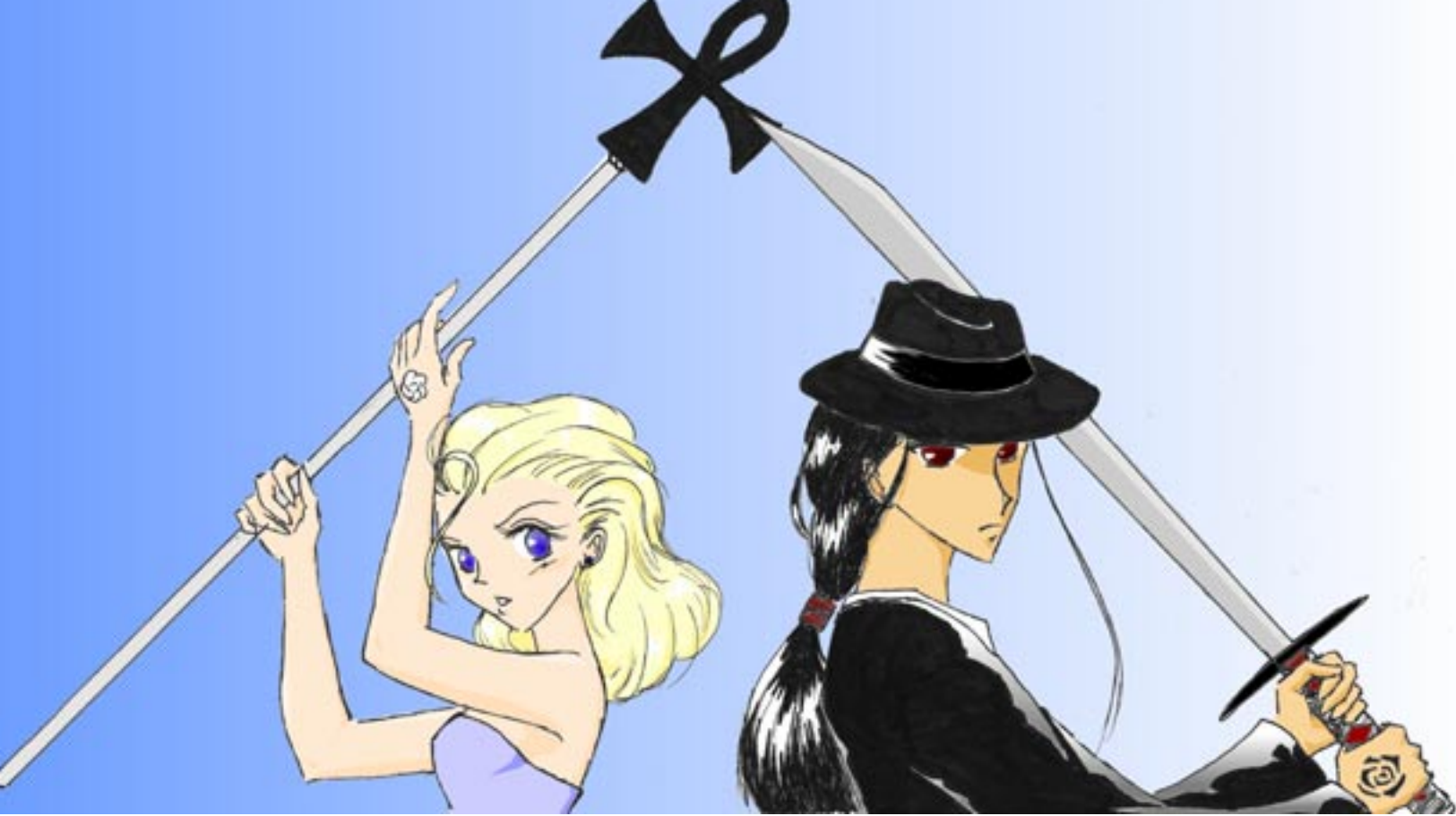
Enter the worlds of *HeartQuest* and experience a new dimension of manga and anime roleplaying. *HeartQuest* is the first roleplaying game dedicated to shoujo manga, "girls' comics," style storytelling. Designed by dedicated fans, *HeartQuest* covers the entire spectrum of shoujo manga settings and remains true to the genre. Magical girls, teen romance, fantastic worlds, idol singers, school exams, evil villains, and much more await inside this book.

The hallmark of shoujo manga style is an emphasis on character development. *HeartQuest* provides players with powerful tools to put their characters in the spotlight of every game session. The flexible character creation system lets you design whatever character you can imagine. Will you play the star of the school soccer team, an orphan coming to grips with a strange destiny, the gaijin exchange student struggling to fit in, a dashing swordswoman fighting for love and honor, or...? In *HeartQuest*, the choice is yours.

HeartQuest features elegant, simple, and easy to learn rules, built from the popular FUDGE system, that encourage character interaction and dramatic storytelling. *HeartQuest* provides players and Game Masters plenty of tips and hints for getting their games up and running:

· Many pages of sample characters

· Dozens of illustrations to spark your imagination

· Guidelines for shoujo style campaigning

· Overviews of genres suitable for *HeartQuest* adventures

· Three introductory campaign settings – "Ghost Tamer Miyaki," "Sendai Academy," and
    "Steel Heidi" complete with sample characters

Experience the exciting worlds of shoujo manga with HeartQuest!