

His Due

His Due

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Introduction

Imagine if you woke up from a troubling dream somewhere other than in your bed, to see a strangely-coloured animal next to you.

And it talked.

And it told you that you now had a battery of magical powers that could shake the ground and bring down buildings.

Imagine that these powers had come at the cost of something, but the deal you struck with that animal to gain them is excised from your memory so you can't remember what that was.

You have a single clue to that cost, a blurred recollection that means nothing by itself.

The creature tells you that you can recover those memories, but only if you find other people who have gone through the same weird bargain as you and kill them.

If you don't want to kill anybody, well, they might try to kill you anyway.

Everyone else in the world apart from you and people like you is hard-wired to be unable to see the magic you do, and to accept any explanation for its effects apart from the truth.

*Know this: I am the only one you can
truly trust.*

The Game

'His Due' is a role-playing game about finding yourself in that very position. Success, whether in terms of the quest to recover his memories, survive or just carry on life as normal, is not the thrust of this game. The point of the game is how your character responds to this incredible circumstance, and how he has to compromise every time the two sides of his life meet. It's entirely possible that he will be killed, spiral into madness or abandon his moral sense during the course of the game. All of these outcomes are acceptable, and none is a failure or a let-down—this is a game about the journey, not the destination.

Materials Needed

You will need a number of dice, of different sizes. They are referred to by size, so a 'd6' is an ordinary six-sided dice. You will need dice from d4 up to, possibly, d12, but no more than about six of each kind. You can make do without a complete set of them, by rolling larger dice and trying again if the number is too high, or writing down the numbers after they have been rolled.

The character sheets at the back of this book are used to keep a record for your characters, both their abilities and for scores that change during the game.

One player will act as the Game Master (or 'GM'). Instead of having a character of his own, the GM takes the reins for the game overall and takes on any roles other players don't have. Those characters are called Non-Player Characters (or 'NPCs'). Although the GM is in nominal charge, suggestions from the other players are to be encouraged.



Character Generation

Until recently, your character was an ordinary person going about their daily business. Then he discovered himself next to his Broker – Brokers being the strangely-coloured animals that claim to have offered deals to humans – disorientated and with a whole array of interesting magical powers at his disposal.

There are several steps to creating a character—also called a duellist. At each step, you choose between one of a number of possibilities. These possibilities are not intended to cover every potential option: they are recommendations for types of character that might be interesting to play. The options might also seem to be peculiar choices, but they deliberately eschew some obvious alternatives in favour of unusual ones, to try to create an atmosphere of strangeness. If you have a definite idea for your character and none of the choices seem appropriate, use the rules for the closest match to your concept.

The limited choices at each step can also be used to generate a character randomly. You can choose randomly at each step, roll 5d6 and assign each dice to one of the categories, or use any other method else you fancy. Quick, rapid character generation is also handy for the GM if she needs an NPC in a hurry.

The character sheet has space for everything you need to record for your character.

Character Attributes

Skills

Your duellist has a rating in each of six Skills. These are:

**Attack
Power**

**Control
Speed**

**Endurance
Wits**

Each of these skills has a score of 2 at first, but the scores are adjusted by the choices you make for

your character. The score a skill has determines what dice are rolled when that skill is used, by the following table:

Score	Dice
1	d6
2	2d6
3	3d6
4	3d8
5	3d10
6	3d12

Your character cannot have any skill higher than 4 at this point, although some characters can get bonuses later.

Stress Tracks

Your character also has three Stress Tracks. These are:

Despair Disconnection Guilt

Each has a maximum value, and a score for how full it currently is. The maximum value is set by your character choices. The tracks begin empty. They will fill up as your character suffers during the course of the game. Having any of them fill up completely is a major problem.

Connections

Your duellist has five 'Connections' to other people. These cannot be other players' characters. Each connection is a person your character spends a lot of time with, or is important in some other way. Connections are what keep your character grounded and are used to indirectly replenish his supply of magical power. Three of the Connections are defined by the choices you make during character creation and the other two you are free to come up with from scratch. You can interpret the Connection description given in one of the



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choices very loosely, as long as it remains relevant in some way.

Powers

Your character will begin with 5 magical abilities. The first is set by the type of Power you chose for your duellist, and you can pick the other 4 based on the branches of the appropriate tree. The Abilities are covered in their own sections, later.

Memory Clues

Your duellist made a deal with his Broker, and that deal cost him something. The terms of the deal also mean he can't remember anything about it, including what was lost. He begins the game with one vague memory, a clue, to tantalise him.

Memory Clues are best recorded on the back of the sheet, so there's plenty of room to go into as much detail as you need to. When all of the players have created their characters, the GM will ask the group to decide the first clue for each character, in turn.

Suggestions for types of Memory Clue are:

<i>a place</i>	<i>a face</i>	<i>a time of day</i>
<i>an activity</i>	<i>a sensation</i>	<i>an emotion</i>
<i>a song</i>	<i>a news item</i>	<i>a symbol</i>

Other Details

It's important that your character has a name. Other details you fill in are:

- * **Mana** is your character's store of magical energy. It begins at the maximum amount, which is equal to 3 plus twice his Power.
- * **Hits** represent how much damage he can take in combat. It begins at the maximum amount, equal to 5 plus three times his Endurance.
- * **Combat Skill** is which skill he uses during duels. Each Power offers a choice of two, and it is best to pick the one your character is better at.
- * **Attack Adjustment** tells you if the dice your character rolls in combat are a larger size than normal, due to certain Powers,

and if you have any extra dice that can only be used to attack with.

- * **Defence Adjustment** tells you if the dice your character uses for defence are a larger size than normal, due to certain Powers, and if you have any extra dice that can only be used to defend with.

He can also acquire points of **Edge**, which represent an advantage over a specific opponent. Points of Edge are associated with that opponent, which is why there are multiple lines for it on the character sheet. Your character can gain points of Edge against other player-controlled characters, and indeed will probably accumulate a great deal if he spends much time with them. These points of Edge can be thought of as saying how much that duellist trusts your character. Unless one character betrays the other, they may not ever be used.

Creation Step-By-Step

Background

Your character's background says who he is to others. His background gives him bonuses to Stress tracks and one Connection

Back-ground	Des-pair	Discon-nection	Guilt	Connection
Labourer	7	7	4	a dependent
Pensioner	7	4	7	a grandchild
Policeman	5	8	3	a criminal
Salaryman	3	5	8	a boss
Schoolkid	8	3	5	a classmate
Secretary	4	7	7	a best friend

Aura

A character's aura colours the magic he uses slightly, and says who he is to himself. It also adjusts his Skills and Stress tracks.



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Aura	Skill Adjustments	Stress Adjustments
Black	Control +I Power +I Speed -I	Guilt +5
Crimson	Attack +I Power +I Wits -I	Disconnection +2 Guilt +3
Green	Attack +I Control +I Endurance -I	Despair +2 Disconnection +3
Ochre	Speed +I Wits +I Attack -I	Despair +3 Guilt +2
Silver	Endurance +I Speed +I Power -I	Disconnection +5
White	Endurance +I Wits +I Control -I	Despair +5

Skill Set

Your character's skill set says how he has improved himself through training or instruction. Your pick gives him two Skill bonuses and a Connection.

Skill Set	Skill Adjustments	Connection
Brawler	Attack +I Endurance +I	a rival
Brooder	Attack +I Power +I	a confidant
Dreamer	Power +I Speed +I	a follower
Runner	Speed +I Wits +I	a companion
Sufferer	Control +I Endurance +I	a healer
Thinker	Control +I Wits +I	a teacher

Broker

It's not certain what aspect of character a person's Broker represents, if any. A Broker's colour is determined by the aura of the human he has attached itself to. Brokers seek out characters with a Connection of a particular type.

Broker	Connection
Dragonfly	Someone who took something from you
Fox	Someone who you have cheated
Hummingbird	Someone you have drifted away from
Ocelot	An object of unrequited love
Reptile	Someone who has betrayed you
Shrew	Someone you have good reason to avoid

Deal

There are three types of magical power your character's Broker could have granted him. These abilities have their own sections later, but you can pick what type of power from these three.

- * **Collar of Obedience** - Your character can make his Broker grow in size and become a fighting beast.
- * **Glyphs of the Chosen** - Your character can summon magical energy out of the air to strike his enemies.
- * **Weapon of the Soul** - Your character can draw a mystical weapon out of his very body to fight with.



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Example

Constable Barry Chalmers is a Policeman with a Silver aura, with a Sufferer skill set and an Ocelot as a his Broker. He has the abilities:

Skill	Score	Dice
Attack	2	2d6
Control	3	3d6
Endurance	4	3d8
Power	1	d6
Speed	3	3d6
Wits	2	2d6
Mana	5	
Hits	17	

He has good all-round abilities, but is a little short on magical power and thus Mana. He can take a beating and keep on fighting, which will help offset that disadvantage.

Stress	Maximum
Despair	5
Disconnection	13
Guilt	3

Being a man of law and a straight arrow, Barry is vulnerable to feelings of guilt. He will find it very difficult to deal killing blows to his enemies, if any duel comes to that. On the other hand, he is quite used to maintaining distance between his work and private life, and can put his emotions to one side when dealing with serious issues, both as a result of his experience as a policeman. He has a huge tolerance to any potential feelings of disconnection.

His Connections are:

Connection	From...	Description
A criminal	Policeman	Alan Tyle, a burglar who Barry persuaded to turn straight.
A healer	Sufferer	Dr. Argyle, the station psychiatric assistant, who helps the constables through tough times.
An object of unrequited love	Ocelot	Ellen Chadwick, a former crime victim, who it would be unprofessional for Barry to pursue romantically.
Free choice		Sergeant Mann, a good drinking buddy of Barry's.
Free choice		Alan, Barry's brother, owner of a successful joinery business.

Of his Connections, Ellen Chadwick is a character he might not meet in person very often, and instead spends time pining over her instead. The others he probably sees on a regular basis.

He chooses the Weapon of the Soul as his magical power, and selects the Axe of the Executioner option. He chooses Speed as his Combat Skill, and the following 5 powers:

- * Axe of the Executioner
- * The Hooded Killer
- * The Thirsty Blade
- * Carry Out Sentence
- * Wind of Cold Breath

His Attack dice are upgraded a size by 'The Hooded Killer', so his Attack Adjustment is +I step. Depending on the Combat Skill of his enemy, he will roll 5d8 or 6d8. He has no Defence Adjustment.

Barry's Broker calls herself 'Anastasia, the Winter's Cold'.



Rolling Dice

Using Skills

When your character performs an action where there is some chance of failure, and a consequence for failure, you roll dice to see what happens. Fighting duels is a whole different matter, and is covered in depth in its own section.

For all tasks outside duels, you roll dice for Wits plus whatever other skill the GM says is most appropriate.

Roll	For tasks...
Attack + Wits	...involving physical strength
Control + Wits	...of persuasion or resisting persuasion
Endurance + Wits	...involving hardiness
Power + Wits	...investigating or controlling magic
Speed + Wits	...involving dexterity or nimbleness of thought or action

The worst roll you can possibly have is 3d6, the best 3d6 + 3d8. Roll the dice for the two skills and add all of them together. The total tells you how well your character succeeds (or not) at the task.

Total	Your character...
<10	...botches. The task is a failure and there may be additional consequences.
10 – 19	...succeeds at a cost. The task is a success, but you have to accept some set-back or additional problem that tempers his victory.
20 – 29	...succeeds cleanly. The task is a success, with no strings attached.
>29	...succeeds amazingly. The task is a success, and the GM will offer an additional benefit on top of what you wanted.

Tasks that are particularly difficult or are undertaken under conditions of additional risk are not more difficult to succeed at. However, on those occasions the consequences of botching will be more severe, and the set-back that comes with success at cost will be more of a problem.

Power Tests

Magic is rare. Skill rolls using Power are equally rare, generally reserved for dealing with major magical effects left over after a mighty battle or dealing with powerful spells set up to trap or injure player characters. The levels of risk with Power skill rolls is always very high.

Example of a Power Test

Barry, against his better judgement, has gone to an abandoned factory to meet a duellist who challenged him via letter. As he approaches the main gate, he sees glowing glyphs on the ground around the entrance. This is clearly some form of magic, and probably a trap of some kind. Barry won't enter without some idea as to what they might do, so he attempts a Power test.

He rolls 3d6, getting a total of 11.



He feels in his bones that this magic is intended to trap him in a force-field, leaving him vulnerable to attack. Unfortunately, during his inspection he has triggered the magic. He escapes being caught, but is injured leaping away, taking 2 Hits. His enemy will now also know he is here.

Competitive Rolls

If your character is in competition with another player-controlled character, then a roll is made for both characters. The one with the highest total wins, and uses the result for his total on the previous table. If the loser rolled a botch, he still suffers the effects of a botch as usual. If both characters botched no-one wins and they both suffer the consequences.

Rolls against NPCs are treated as ordinary rolls, as above.

Example of a Competitive Roll

Barry and another duellist, Siobhan, are arguing about whether to attack a hostile duellist they have cornered in a car park. Barry wants to leave him be, whereas Siobhan wants to attack him. They both roll Control + Wits.

Barry gets I6 in total, Siobhan gets I3. Barry wins the argument, but with the consequence that the enemy overhears their argument and now knows that they disagree on some things. This gives him a point of Edge against each of them (Edge is described a little later).

Brawls

If a character gets into a fight and is not using magical power, then a Skill test is used to work out what happens. The risk of the test is in terms of Hits, and the amount suffered depends on the weapon the enemy has- d4 for fists, 2d4 for a knife, 3d4 for a pistol and 4d4 for shotgun. The damage is taken if a botch or partial success is rolled on Attack.

If the character wanted to injure the other party, use the same damage rolls.

A character using magic does not have to fear any mundane weapon. If both characters are using magic, the fight is a duel, covered later.

Using Connections

Connections replenish your character's Mana. Whenever your character is in a scene that features one of his Connections prominently (unless he was unlucky enough that that Connection appeared in the middle of a duel), he can replenish 2 points of Mana. If the Connection only appeared but was not pivotal in the scene, only I point is regained. If multiple Connections for a character appear in the same scene, only the most prominently featured Connection supplies Mana.

In story terms, this is time your character spends in everyday life, meeting with friends and spending time doing normal activities. Doing so calms his spirit and lets him recover his magical energy.

It's not enough for you to say your character meets with one of his Connections. Something has to happen, preferably for several hours of in-character time, part of which is played out at the table. Dropping by to return a DVD isn't enough even for I point of Mana but an afternoon at an amusement park is easily enough to regain 2. Exactly how long these scenes are played out depends on the tastes of the players. If, as a group, you are interested in how the player characters cope with this huge change in their lives and how that in turn affects how they relate to their friends, then you probably want to make these scenes quite long. On the other hand, if that part isn't very interesting to you then you can make the scenes much shorter. In either case, players without characters present for the scene can be given NPC roles- including the Connection himself- for that scene.

Connections do not have to be positive. Examples of negative Connections are a school bully, an abusive boss and an estranged wife. A Connection just has to be someone who will impinge onto your character's life in some significant way. A scene does not even have to have the Connection present for him to be an important part of it; some Connections might be created specifically with this in mind.



Losing Connections

Connections are something of a weak point in your character's battle-readiness. If any enemy comes to learn about them, she may strike at them instead of you. Not only do they have no realistic way of defending themselves against magic, but their rationalisations will probably leave them unaware they are even in danger. Some enemies may want to kill the Connections, to deny your character the ability to replenish Mana. Others may merely want to draw your character out to fight. Some might even just enjoy the sensation of making someone sick with fear for a friend's life.

If a Connection is killed, there is no replacement. The GM should not kill off a Connection without giving a character a chance to save them, as that would be grossly unfair. It's much more sporting to make a character complicit somehow in his Connection's death, not least for the extra Guilt stress.

Whenever a character fills a Stress Track, he loses the ability to relate to one of his Connections. It can be any of his Connections, although it's better if the one chosen relates to the event that filled up the Stress Track in some way. This may involve the death of the Connection. Alternatively, it can simply be something that makes the two of them drift apart and lose what relationship they once had.

If a character loses a duel, and his attacker intends to kill him, his Broker might offer him a new deal. The deal will spirit the character out of danger, for now, but the cost will be to have all knowledge of one of his Connections blanked from his mind. This prevents the character from using that Connection in future.

However a character loses a Connection, he cannot lose the same Connection a different way. If a character is unfortunate enough to lose all of his Connections, he can no longer recover Mana. It can still be possible for him to win duels, depending on what Power he has, but the odds will be stacked against him. The truth about the deal he made with his Broker may have gone forever beyond his reach.

Edge

Points of Edge are spent during a duel to allow you to re-roll dice. Edge represents an advantage your character has over a specific opponent. There is no maximum amount of Edge you can have. There are many ways to earn Edge:

Earn Edge for...	Because...
...knowing your enemy	...learning things about her gives you insight into how she fights. Even things as trivial as her name can be used in psychological warfare, sowing doubt in her mind.
...making a credible threat	...putting something she values in danger will erode her will to fight and make her more likely to make mistakes.
...losing a duel to her	...a grudge makes you put more effort in next time.
...accepting a Stress trigger	...mental deterioration means you are prepared to fight with more resolve when the time comes.
...spending time observing her duel	... you had an opportunity to plan counter-manoevres to her abilities.
...preparing a trap for her	...she can't see it coming.

The GM says how much Edge is earned in each case. A small detail will earn only 1 Edge, but an elaborate magical trap, exploiting both your character's strengths and the enemy's weakness could earn as much as 5 points of Edge.

Consider this: Everything you learn about this 'Alan' is something you can use against him.



Undue Stress

It's not all smiles and rainbows being a duellist. The battles, the strangeness and the pain and loss all take their toll. Your character's stress tracks keep a record of how bad the effect is, and the maximum values of the tracks say how much stress of that type he can endure before breaking.

Stress Triggers

The situation the duellists find themselves in could almost have been designed to bring them stress.

There are three kinds of stress:

- ✧ **Despair**- When the things in life that are important to your character are ruined or destroyed.
- ✧ **Disconnection**- When the strange world of Brokers and duels becomes more real than ordinary life.
- ✧ **Guilt**- When the character's actions or his involvement in duels bring misery to other people.

No character is immune to any of these stresses. Characters who claim not to care about one of them may have a higher tolerance than most, but enough exposure to the stress will break them eventually. While there are genuine psychopaths in the world, Brokers never make deals with them.

Stress Trigger	Whenever...
Despair	...someone you care about dies ...you feel like you are trapped in this situation ...your life is badly disrupted ...you are defeated in a duel
Disconnection	...you fail to break someone out of their 'blind-spot' ...you ignore mundane life to duel ...something happens to you that should be impossible ...you rely on your magic for something you could do without it
Guilt	...you cause an innocent bystander to be hurt ...your friends are harmed by your involvement in the duels ...you attempt to kill another duellist ...you break a promise

Any player, including the GM, can suggest that a character has been exposed to one of these stresses. If a player does so, and that character hasn't already reached his limit for stress exposure that session, then that character reacts to the stress, below.



Reacting To Stress

If your character is under one of these stresses, you can choose how he handles it.

You can choose to 'accept' the stress. You mark off another step of that Stress track and carry on. You gain a point of Edge against the enemy of your choice.

Otherwise, you can choose to 'resist' the stress. Roll your Control dice. If you get 10 or more, your character has dealt with the stress and carries on with the scene. Otherwise, mark off a step of that Stress and your character Freaks Out for the rest of the scene.

*Know this: You are not the first to suffer
this doubt, and you won't be the last.*

Freaking Out

When your character fails to deal with Stress in a spectacular fashion, he Freaks Out.

- * Freaking Out with **Despair** means your character enters a berserk state. He will immediately start using his magic in the most destructive way possible. He won't stop until he has exhausted all of his Mana. He'll attack enemies for preference, but if none are available he will attack allies or destroy property indiscriminately.
- * Freaking Out with **Disconnection** means your character becomes catatonic, withdrawing from his surroundings until the condition passes. He can neither attack nor defend if in a duel, but may simply leave the area if that is possible. The state lasts at least until the immediate trigger has gone, and probably a short while afterwards.
- * Freaking Out with **Guilt** means your character is immobilised by the fear of causing harm. He may not attack or use

magic in any way that might cause harm. He may still defend himself. The state lasts until the end of the current battle, or the end of his next battle if he is not currently fighting.

These moments are times when your character loses control of himself, and you similarly lose a little control over what he does. They do not mean you lose all control over your character, and you do get a nicely dramatic moment for him in exchange for that loss of autonomy.

Breaking Point

Each character can only endure a certain amount of each Stress before losing his grip entirely. If a Stress Track is completely filled in, then the character has reached his limit for that type of stress.

When a track becomes full, a character loses the ability to relate to one of his Connections. He can't use that Connection to replenish Mana any more. In addition, each Stress also induces a particular aberrant behaviour.

- * **Despair**- He stops caring what happens to him, or to the world around him, becoming needlessly destructive.
- * **Disconnection**- He becomes absorbed by his own delusions. The duelling world remains as part of his delirium, but the mundane world no longer has any reality for him.
- * **Guilt**- He becomes morose and joyless, and frequently entertains suicidal fantasies.

These problems do not make a character entirely unplayable, but they are definitely a 'bad end' for the character. He will probably only remain as a player character for a short while, to wrap up any remaining plot threads. He may die, or become an NPC threat under the control of the GM.

Some of the duellists the GM controls may already be in the grip of one of these conditions. Such foes may be dangerously unconcerned for their own safety and very trigger-happy when it comes to magic. Some may even have discovered strange



new ways of using their magic as a consequence of their madness.

Stress Limit

In a game filled with drama, the Stress Triggers may come thick and fast. In order to pace the downward spiral, each game session has a limit on the total number of steps a character can mark off. Once that many steps have been marked off, future Stress Triggers have no mechanical effect, although they can still be described in the usual terms.

This limit should be governed by how many sessions you expect the campaign to last. In a single-session game, you can have no limit. Otherwise, set the limit to 24 / the number of sessions the game will last.

Interpreting Stress

The length of your character's Stress Tracks should have an influence on how you play him. A character with a very short Guilt Stress Track will avoid hurting innocents at all costs, because only a few incidents could fill his track up. A character with a very long Disconnection Stress Track is probably something of a loner, who can adjust to the strangeness of the duels and the disconcerting nature of people's rationalisations about them quite easily, and so on.

Of course, while it might be mechanically sensible to match your character's behaviour to his Stress Tracks in this way, there's nothing wrong with you making the decision to drive your character into madness quickly, if that kind of nihilistic drama is what you are after.



Duels

Duels are semi-formal contests of magic between duellists. The ostensible goal, at least for one of the participants, is the death of the other. However, most duels do not end in a death, as following through on killing a defeated enemy is not easy.

Duels are highly pyrotechnic, and may cause a great deal of property damage or by-stander casualties. The magical effect that screens Brokers and magic from the eyes of ordinary people will provide a mundane explanation for even the strangest events. However, in order to avoid potential Guilt stress, many duellists try to fight away from crowded areas.

It is not at all uncommon for a match-up between two duellists to be very one-sided as a result of their particular powers. Some duels may only last for a few exchanges of attacks before one participant is defeated. If the underdog survives, he will need to come up with an appropriate strategy, and lots of Edge, if he wants to win the next time they fight.

*Know this: This man will kill you if he
can.*

Starting a Duel

Duellists fight with dice from two skills at once. The first skill is the one chosen as their Combat Skill during character creation. The second is their value for the Combat Skill of their enemy. If the two duellists have the same skill chosen as their combat skill, then they each roll that and the other possible combat skill for their type of magical power.

This means that, before any powers come into play, each duellist is rolling between 3 and 6 dice, and most of the time at least 5. These dice are rolled for

each round of combat and used to attack and defend with.

At the start of the battle, however, each duellist rolls his Speed dice. The duellist with the higher total will get the privilege of making the first attack.

An Example of Starting a Duel

Barry Chalmers is facing a strange woman in the dead of night. Her Broker has suddenly grown in size and leapt for his throat. Her Combat Skill is Control, and Barry's is Speed. They will both roll their Control and Speed dice for the duel.

Barry's Speed roll is 3d6, and he gets 10. Her Speed roll is 2d6, and 5. Barry will make the first attack.

Before We Begin

The raw mechanics of fighting duels are given here, but you should always find ways of bringing in colour and excitement into the description of what is happening. The power descriptions have quirks that you can use to come up with interesting ways of using them. Finding novel ways of applying abilities- using an attack power to collapse a building onto an enemy, for example- doesn't change how effective the power is, or the damage it might deal, but it does make the fight more entertaining.



The Combat Round

A duel takes place over a number of combat rounds.

Starting a Round

Each player rolls his dice. From those, he picks which to keep as Attack dice for his Attack pool. He can keep all of them or none of them if he wishes. The dice not kept are put into a Defence pool. Attack dice keep the value they rolled. Defence dice will be rolled again when they are used, so the number they show now is not important. This means that a sensible strategy is to keep dice with an above average roll for the Attack pool and put the rest into Defence.

The duellist who attacks first chooses how to assign his dice last, as that is an advantage.

Some powers increase the size of the dice by one step, d6s to d8s, d8s to d10s and so on. If the Attack dice are upgraded in this way, improve all of the dice for the roll, and change the size back to the original for any dice put into Defence. If Defence dice are upgraded, dice change to the adjusted size after they are put in the Defence pool.

An Example of Starting a Round

Carrying from the previous example, Barry and his enemy are rolling Control and Speed. Barry's dice are therefore 6d6, but then he has a Power to upgrade his Attack dice, so he rolls 6d8. His enemy has a Control of 4 and a Speed of 2, so she rolls 3d8+2d6.

Barry rolls 3, 3, 4, 4, 6 and 7.

His enemy rolls 2, 2, 3 and the d8s and 6, 6 on the d6s. She puts the 6 and 6 in her Attack pool, and the d8s in her Defence pool.

Barry, seeing that she will only make 2 attack this round, puts 4, 4, 6 and 7 in his Attack pool and 3 and 3 in his Defence pool. The dice put in his Defence pool lose their size upgrade, so will be d6s when they are used.

Attacking

To make a basic attack, spend a dice from your Attack pool. The strength of the attack is the value of the dice. The dice is then removed from your Attack pool.

There are several ways this strength can be improved. Some Powers are attacks, which let you spend the dice and add bonuses to the damage, as well as possibly giving you other benefits. Some powers increase the strength of all future attacks you make.

Some powers let you make an attack without spending a dice. Apart from that, they behave as ordinary attacks.

Defending

When you are attacked, you use one of the dice in your Defence pool to defend. You can choose which dice to use. Roll the dice and subtract its value from the strength of the attack. If the difference is positive, you suffer Hits equal to the difference. Otherwise, you are unharmed. In either case, the dice is removed from your Defence pool.

Like attacks, there are several ways that defences can have their strength increased. The details are much the same as for attacks.

If you are attacked but you have no dice left in your Defence pool, you can still use Defence powers that don't need dice. If you have nothing else to defend with, you can still roll a d4 to reduce the damage you take, or get lucky and avoid a weak attack entirely. Magic that increases your defence strength still works for these emergency dice, but you can't use them for any defensive power that uses a dice.

After the attack is resolved, it is your turn to make an attack.

An Attack and Defence Example

Barry spends a 7 to make a basic attack, without using any Powers. His enemy decides to use a Defensive power, spending 1 Mana to add 3 points to her Defence roll. She rolls a 6 on a d8 from her Defence pool, so her total defence is 9, enough to resist Barry's attack completely.



His Due

Defeat

If you run out of Hits, you are defeated. Defeat doesn't necessarily imply death, but you cannot continue fighting. There might be an opportunity for you to turn tail and escape. If death looks imminent, your Broker might offer you a deal for your life. It probably won't be a good deal, all things considered, but probably preferable to death.

Elements

By default, attacks are physical. Some magical attacks also have an element. Most of the time this makes no difference, but certain duellists and certain powers are stronger or weaker against attacks with particular elements. There are five elements, eschewing any obvious classification: Dark, Fire, Light, Thunder and Water. Strange magics exist that aren't any of the five, but each of them behaves as though it was one of the five or a physical attack.

Ending a Round

Characters in the duel can keep making attacks even if they have run out of Attack dice, assuming they have a Power that lets them attack without dice. They can also keep using Powers that aren't attacks once they are out of dice. The round only ends when neither participant has anything else to do before the next round. The next round begins by rolling dice afresh. The character who won the Speed roll still chooses how to assign his dice last and still attacks first. That result stands until the end of the duel.

Not Attacking

If you want your character to do something other than attack when his turn comes around, he can do so as long as the action isn't too time-consuming or complicated. After the action is complete the enemy takes his next turn. Generally speaking, anything that requires a skill roll is out of bounds. Begging for your life is a common choice.

Most duellists will have Powers that allow them to become stronger in the duel, spending Mana but not dice. Using these Powers means a duellist will skip a chance to attack in exchange for being stronger for the rest of the duel. It is quite common for duellists to wait until the end of the

first exchange of attacks – in other the words until all Attack dice have been used in the first round – and then use all of the strengthening magic they have available.

Fleeing

If you want your character to flee the duel rather than fight, you need to say so before rolling the dice for that round.

Roll your Speed dice, and read off the result from this table:

Roll	Your character's escape...
I - 9	...is botched. All of his Attack dice must be turned into Defence dice if they can, or are lost otherwise. He cannot use any attack powers.
10 - 19	...comes at a cost. The restrictions of the botch result apply, but if he survives the round without being defeated he can slip away before the next one begins.
>19	...is clean. He leaves the duel right away without giving his enemy a chance to attack him.

If both duellists attempt to escape in the same round, for some reason, then they succeed without needing to roll. Similarly, if one duellist wants to escape and the other doesn't care to take parting shots, the duel ends without further incident.

A character with a Speed score of only I will never be able to flee.



Using Edge

Edge is used during a duel to re-roll dice. A point of Edge can be spent immediately after you have rolled dice. Each point lets you re-roll one of the dice. This can be used to change the result of a dice during the roll at the start of a combat rounds, to try to get a better result when rolling in defence, or to improve the result of a Power that adds dice to an attack or defence. It can also be used when attempting to flee.

If Edge is spent on a dice, the new result stands even if it is worse than the original. However, you can spend another point of Edge to roll the dice again and hope for better things.

Mana can also be spent like Edge, but it's generally more effective to spend Mana on specific powers.

Clock-Watching

A duellist can try to attack an enemy just before his Hits are due to refresh. If he can pull it off properly, this can almost double the Hits he has available for for the duel. If your character tries this, the GM will roll a d4 at the start of the duel- the number rolled is how many combat rounds will be fought before your character's healing triggers. Of course, this tactic is not very effective if the enemy recovers his Hits at the same time.

Larger Conflicts

Although this game is geared towards duels between two characters, it's entirely possible that fights will break out between more than that. It's not even guaranteed that there will be only two sides to the conflict. The rules are mostly unchanged, with the following exceptions:

- * No duellist can be killed. There will always be an opportunity to flee if one is defeated.
- * Edge cannot be used, but it can be gained.
- * Each duellist brings his chosen Combat Skill into play for all characters. If this leads to there being more than two skills in the fight, each character can pick two different skills from that list to use.
- * When attacking, a duellist must specify which other duellist he is attacking.
- * Turns pass in whatever sequence the GM wants, as long as each duellists gets the same number of turns as the others.

*Consider this: Can you ever be truly
sure that your friends are really your
friends?*



Brokers

Every character's Broker is voiced by the GM. It is an important part of the setting that the motives of the Brokers, as well as what they are actually capable of, is opaque. It's not clear whether they can be trusted, and whether they have been truthful with their partners about anything. Their behaviour tends to the slightly unsettling, particularly the way they follow their chosen humans absolutely everywhere.

Know this: What I truly am is not relevant.

Names

Brokers have strange names, at least use strange pseudonyms. There is no recognisable pattern to their names. Some use unbelievably pretentious names, others incongruously down-to-earth ones and everything in between. The name for your character's Broker should be one you and the GM are both happy with.

Motives

The GM can have a rough idea as to what the goals of the Brokers are, but should avoid deciding too narrowly in case a better opportunity comes along in play. All Brokers could have the same basic motive, or they could each have a different agenda. some possibilities for motive are:

The Broker...
...cares only about displaying dominance over the other Brokers through his proxy, the duellist
...genuinely wants the best for the duellist in a dangerous situation
...wants to manipulate matters so that the duellist makes another deal with him
...lives on the magical energy the duellist expends, and encourages him to use as much as possible
...belongs to one faction of Brokers, seeking to destroy another faction
...is a manifestation of the duellist's subconscious
...delights in watching the duellist destroy or abandon what is important to him
...relieves his boredom by making deals with humans, and cares little for what happens to them in the end
...is desperate to claim the prize that awaits the Broker bonded to the last duellist standing.
...despises humans and provides opportunities for them to destroy one another as a deliciously ironic gesture.
...is preparing the duellist for something even worse than the duels.
...is using the duellist as a tool to achieve a wider aim.
...is using the energy expended from the duels and the deals for a greater good.
...is only a reluctant agent of something else with its own agenda.



Speech and Mannerisms

The GM can have a great deal of fun coming up with characterisations for the each Broker. The Broker casts himself as being on his duellist's side, but his advice always encourages the duellist to fight with others, above all else. A Broker can wheedle, mock, persuade or anger his duellist, but he should always sounds slightly creepy. Because there will be one for each player character, and potentially one in view for each NPC duellist, it's easier to have a single distinctive and recognisable trait for each. Some possibilities are:

The Broker...
...speaks too little.
...speaks too much.
...is needlessly cryptic.
...has a distinctive, annoying laugh.
...has an affected mode of speech, such as ending every sentence with a particular phrase.
...lies whenever it is convenient.
...habitually tells misleading truths.
...mocks the duellist's successes and revels in his failures.
...urges the duellist to make decisions that are regretted later.
...encourages the duellist to be as belligerent as possible in all things.
...drives the duellist like a drill instructor to make him as strong as he can be.
...knows more than is comfortable about the duellist's private life.
...never displays any emotion.
...acts unduly wary around something quite ordinary.
...treats the duellist like a wayward child.
...has no respect for personal space or boundaries.

Abilities

That really is the million pound question- no-one really knows everything Brokers are capable of. All that can be guaranteed (perhaps) is that the Broker can take things from a person and give them magical abilities instead. As a baseline for skills and powers from which the GM can deviate as much as he wishes, use the following:

Skill	Score	Dice
Attack	1	d6
Control	5	3d10
Endurance	1	d6
Power	6	3d12
Speed	1	d6
Wits	5	3d10
Mana	15	
Hits	8	
Magical Ability	Can spend 1 Mana to teleport to somewhere within twenty paces of his current position, even when being attacked.	

If the duellist was granted the power The Collar of Obedience, then the Broker takes on the skills of the duellist (and gains the Powers the duellist has as their power choices) instead of these when empowered.

Note that although a Broker has an exceptional ability to persuade other people, based on Control and Wits, the GM should never roll a Skill test against a player's character. Persuasion of that sort is best done without dice.

No Broker will put himself to any trouble to directly help his bonded duellist, however, so these abilities will be used seldom. The likeliest time for them to come into play is if a duellist gets the bright idea of trying to kill an enemy's Broker in the hope it will rob the enemy of her magical power. The high Control and Wits skills are intended to indicate how effectively the Broker can lie.



Responses

There are many ways that a duellist can respond to his predicament. He won't have lost the ambitions and goals he had before the deal was made, but the Broker's gift will add a whole new world of trouble to his life. Which path your character takes, or which few he moves between, is up to you.

Concern

If a duellist comes to terms with his place in the ongoing battles, he can still worry about the civilians caught in the cross-fire. After all, they won't necessarily notice something dangerous is happening, and hence won't know to get out of the way. Concerned duellists go to great lengths to move their battles to places where the damage is minimised, and may even consider giving their own lives rather than fight a pitched battle where many people might be hurt.

Denial

Some duellists simply refuse to accept the reality of their experiences. They pretend, even to themselves, that it is nothing but a dream or a delusion. Even when approached by other duellists, they refuse to listen. If caught up in a battle, they will acknowledge their abilities just long enough to fight, then find a way to lie to themselves about what just went down. Ignoring a Broker on your shoulder for twenty-four hours a day is no easy task, but some manage it.

Obsession

The missing piece of the duellist's life, the thing that was traded away, can gnaw at him. Many duellists become unhealthily obsessed with trying to discover what it is. After the initial attempts to break the mental block regarding it fail, they seek out duellists to defeat as the only way to find out the truth. Their deaths are a sad necessity. They are not indiscriminate in their targets, though, and prefer ones who are dangerous or mad.

Opportunity

Whatever problems the Broker has brought the duellist, there is also an opportunity. An opportunity to do something the duellist would never be able to do without the power he has been given. Assuming he can avoid the attentions of other duellists for long enough to achieve it he can make the situation work for him. Of course, even if the goal is easy to achieve with magical power, there is always the question of what the duellist does next, and how well he can protect his success from others.

Resignation

Like a soldier, a duellist may come to terms with the danger and make his peace with it. He will fight when he has reason to, but he has mentally prepared himself for the pain, the suffering and the potential harm to those around him. He doesn't like the fact, but he believes it's a fool's errand to try to stop it, and simply makes the best he can of a bad situation. His goals from before the deal was made haven't gone away- few duellist's goals do- but he tries to keep the magic and the mundane compartmentalised.

Resolve

Perhaps the most optimistic outlook is to believe that the duels themselves are unnecessary, that the violence the duellists perpetrate on each other is senseless. Bands of duellists who agree on this fact are some of the most difficult to defeat, as they will come to each other's aid whenever necessary. They fight only to stop needless casualties, and generally try to persuade other duellists to see things their way.



His Due

Withdrawal

You can't blame someone for worrying about how this new world they finds himself in might endanger those he cares about. A frequent reaction is to withdraw from ordinary life as far as possible, minimising the chance that a close friend or relative will be exposed to the danger. When drawn into a battle, his primary goal is to keep the action away from anyone he knows.

Zeal

Some people, when they fully understand the magical powers they have been given and the duels they are expected to fight, get rather too much into it. They revel in the destruction, perhaps even in the killing, and continue their ordinary life only as a way to pass the time before the next round of bloodshed. Winning is not as important as having fun, so they don't always kill defeated foes.

Rage

Some duellists refuse to take the situation lying down. They rage not against other duellists, but against the entire arrangement. They might not try to strike at their Brokers directly, but they will try everything in their power to break the hold Brokers have over duellists, and bring the entire sordid spectacle to a close. Unfortunately, such a difficult task is all but impossible when also having to deal with hostile duellists and the stresses of the unnatural situation.

*Consider this: This can only end in
death, insanity or victory Only you can
choose which you aim for.*



The Unseen War

You would expect magical battles raging in the street to attract rather a lot of attention. The reason they do not is that everything to do with the Brokers, including the duels fought with the powers they grant, occupies a conceptual blind-spot in the human mind.

This protection is complete- nothing can shake it. Most of the time, anything directly starkly weird is just ignored, if ignoring it is possible. A battle of magical fire being fought on the rooftops over a crowded street won't turn heads. A six-foot, fanged cat-beast running headlong down the road simply won't penetrate anyone's consciousness. Those who have deals with Brokers can see the truth, but no-one else can.

If something is impossible to ignore- such as someone being killed in the street or a building being destroyed- then the incident will simply be rationalised away as a gas explosion, terrorist attack or sudden heart attack.

Duellists engaged in battle or acting directly as a consequence of a duel are also shrouded by the same blind-spot. Absence from school will simply go completely unremarked, leaving work without explanation rationalised into a sudden emergency that was approved by management. The protection doesn't extend to times duellists spend that aren't a direct consequence of duels. This can make learning about enemies difficult to do without jeopardising ordinary life. A duellist can be dragged away from normality to fight, but can't find time to learn about his predicament without making sacrifices. The Brokers themselves, which accompany the duellists everywhere, are always invisible to ordinary people.

In all of these examples the blind-spot is absolute. No evidence, logic or persuasion can break through the cognitive barrier. It does not happen, ever. Video footage of the impossible will be ignored, rationalised as something ordinary or dismissed as a hoax. Attempts to challenge that conclusion, by any means, always fail.

Duellist Blindness

The duellists have their own conceptual blind-spot, and it covers what they traded away to the Broker. Duellists ignore or rationalise anything that offers hints as to their deal. Entire sections of their memories are locked away, out of the conscious mind. Even if the subject is raised in conversation, the duellist will respond as though they still remember without ever being consciously aware of the topic of conversation. A duellist who has traded away the love he has for his daughter will still feed her, take her to school and otherwise look after her, but remains completely unaware of that half of his life.

The blind-spot only covers a duellist's own deal. It's entirely possible that the other duellists in the game knew full well what the deal was from the start or worked it out themselves. But attempts to convey that information in defiance of the blind-spot are just as futile as convincing a mundane person about the duels themselves.

A duellist can recover what was lost. Each duellist still has one lingering, vague hint as to what the deal entailed. Each duellist defeated and killed grants another hint. Once a duellist has slain five opponents, the full truth of the deal comes back to him in a rush.

How This Works in Play

When playing the game, assume that all of the action and conversation that takes place is filtered through the blind-spots of all the player characters. What is seen and discussed is the edited version. When a Memory Clue is revealed, it can contradict something that happened in play. Everything that has happened so far was merely the sanitised version, and much fun can be had working out what had actually happened in light of the new information. Characters who were not subject to the blind-spot for that piece of



His Due

information knew what had really happened all along, but now you, the players, know as well.

The clues given should be bold, and intended to force everyone to rethink what has happened before. In most games a player has full autonomy with regards to his own character. In some games the responsibility is shared with other players in the group on the understanding that derailing another player's character is off-limits. In this game, that trust is taken a step further. You should expect your character to be radically changed as new hints are revealed. That change is an important part of the game. Not every revealed clue should be drastic, but you should be prepared to completely rethink everything you thought you knew about your character at least once as the game progresses.

This is not to say that the moment one of these secrets is revealed play has to grind to a stop while the consequences are worked out; rather than there can be some rather chilling moments of realisation after the game has finished.

Know this: You cannot shake them out of their delusion. If you try and they do not ignore you, they will think you mad. There is no argument persuasive enough, no destruction pyrotechnic enough, to convince them. They are only allowed to see what they should see, and I am not one of those things.



Taking a Life

Killing another duellist is a big deal. It's a significant event in the advancement of the story, bringing the killer one step closer to learning the nature of the deal with his Broker. It's also cold-blooded murder, and should have huge emotional impact.

Opportunity

It's not an easy matter to kill another duellist. Defeating a duellist is not enough. Your character has to defeat a duellist in a one-on-one duel, without any interference from another duellist on either side. If your character's allies helped him, or are on stand-by to do so, his enemy will live, whatever he tries. This is a dramatic convention.

A defeated duellist might, when faced with death, be offered a new deal by her Broker. If a new deal is granted, the Broker's magic whisks the duellist out of danger. This means that for a duellist to be killed, her Broker must either deny her the chance to make a new deal or she must reject such a deal.

There is always the possibility that mundane forces will stop a duel at the last moment. The reality may be screened from ordinary people, but their rationalisations may still include one person attacking another. Interference is unlikely to be any challenge for a duellist, but it may distract him enough for the loser to escape, or leave him in a position where he would have to kill innocents to get to his target.

The first time an enemy duellist appears, he should not die. Duellist deaths are important, and they become so when there is some context for the death. The GM should let the first fight be a taster, and after the player characters have found out more details about the enemy future battles will be more dramatic.

Consider this: He now knows your face and your name. From those, he can learn about your husband, your sister and your friends. Do you think you can protect all of them, all of the time?

Edge

In order to attempt to kill someone, you need to know a little bit about them. If your character knows nothing about the defeated enemy, for all he knows the duel could have been some kind of mistake. Without the personal touch, he can't bring himself to kill.

Your character needs at least one point of Edge against the defeated enemy in order to kill him. If he used up all of his Edge in the duel, he can't finish the job.



His Due

Guilt

When a duellist suffers his last Hit, he is not killed. He is defeated, defenceless, but not yet dead, no matter how many more Hits the attack should have dealt. It will take another attack, of any strength, with the full knowledge that it will be a killing blow, to slay him.

Before your character can do so, he suffers a Guilt Stress trigger. If you choose to have him attempt to resist the Stress and the roll fails, The Guilt Freak Out will prevent from killing his enemy.

*Know this: If you hesitate now, you are a
worthless coward.*

The Act

If a foe has lost all of his Hits, it's not hard to deal him a killing blow. Duellists with Glyphs of the

Chosen still need to use an Attack power, and spend Mana, but the victim can't defend himself. As soon as the enemy is dead, the victor is overwhelmed by a Memory Clue. Sometimes this rush is so powerful that she is temporarily overwhelmed. As soon as she has recovered, she has gained a new magical Power from the selection available to her.

Aftermath

If the slain duellist had any duellist friends, they may seek to avenge his death. If there were any mundane witnesses to the act, the police probably become involved. What the witnesses saw may not have borne much resemblance to reality, but it might have still been a killing.

Perhaps your character starts receiving blackmail threats from an unknown source.

Perhaps her duellist friends start looking at him differently, and keep their distance more.



Magical Powers

The Powers granted to your character by his Broker can take many forms. Most of those available cost Mana to use. The three different types of magical power, the Collar of Obedience, the Glyphs of the Chosen and the Weapons of the Soul, each get their own chapter with the exact details of the Powers available.

What they all have in common is that the powers are arranged into trees. After picking which type of power your character has, you then choose which tree his powers come from. The first power in each tree is compulsory. You can give your character any of the second-tier powers. The third-tier powers are only available if your character already has the precursor second-tier power. He will have 5 Powers in total. This means that each tree offers nearly 60 slightly different power sets for your character.

When your character kills a duellist, he can claim an additional power from the tree, under the same rules as before.

Consider this: It was no accident that you were given this power as opposed to any other. It matches your nature and your skills. It is a gift- a gift that you should not squander.

Types of Power

The Powers fall into one of a number of types. The basic part of the Power is written on its own line underneath the name of the power, but there may be important details in the longer description. Some powers impose a special restriction on the character in duels or in ordinary life.

Attack

This power is used as an attack, with the strength stated. If the strength includes 'Dice', then the power can only be used by spending an Attack dice. Otherwise, the power can be used even if your character has no Attack dice left. If the attack is infused with an element, that is given.

Barrier

Some powers create a barrier to protect the duellist that created them. The barrier has to be destroyed before the duellist can be attacked, except for specific weaknesses. The barrier has its own Hits score and rolls its own Defence dice against attacks.

Buff

A buff is a power that gives your character a bonus for the rest of the duel. It takes a turn to use a buff, which could otherwise be used to attack, but it doesn't require the expenditure of any dice to use it. If your character survives until the end of the first round, that might be a good time to use any buffs he has Mana for before rolling dice for the next round. Buffs last long enough to complete a duel, but not long enough that it's possible to use them in preparation for a duel. Some buffs have effects that are useful when not duelling, and how long they last will be given in the description. Any given Buff can only be used once by a character during a duel.



Defence

This power is used as a defence, with the strength stated. If the strength includes 'Dice', then the power is used in conjunction with a Defence dice, which can be a d4 if no proper dice are left. Some defence powers are described as being 'perfect defences', which means that their strength is effectively unlimited against a specific type of attack.

Empower

Empower is a special ability that duellists with the Collar of Obedience get as their first power. It allows them to enchant their Broker into a fighting beast, as described in the chapter for their powers. Empowering also increases one of a duellist's skills by 2 points while it lasts, the skill mentioned in the power description. This means that empowering a Broker temporarily can give a benefit even when not duelling.

Extra Dice

A power that grants an extra dice to either Attack gives your character an extra dice when rolling at the start of a round. Roll this dice separately, as it cannot be turned into a Defence dice. The size of the dice is the same as the dice for your character's combat skill, including any Upgrade powers applied to it. A power that grants an extra Defence dice gives an extra Defence dice of usual size to the Defence pool each round.

Non-Combat

This power has next to no utility during a duel, but can be used in other situations. How long the power lasts, or how long it needs to be used to have the desired effect, will be stated in the description.

Permanent

This power is always in effect. The Mana cost for the power is also permanent, meaning that as soon as your character gains the power his maximum Mana is permanently reduced by that amount. If your character doesn't have enough Mana to reduce by the full amount, he can't acquire this Power.

Seal

If a power 'seals' something, it prevents a specific enemy using any power that fits the description. The most common type of seal is for a specific type of damage.

Special

Some powers do not fit entirely into any of the other categories.

Upgrade

Some powers, such as Buffs and Permanent powers, say they Upgrade Attack or Defence dice. This means that dice of that type have their size increased one step higher than normal.



Collars of Obedience

You and your Broker wear matching metal collars, covered in mysterious runes. Each collar has a short length of chain attached to it that ends in a broken link. The collar and chain is usually invisible to ordinary people.

You have ability to empower your Broker and turn into a monstrous beast that fights on your behalf. You do not have to spend a turn empowering your Broker at the start of a duel, but you do have to spend the Mana to do so. You keep out of the way of enemy attack and direct your Broker to strike for you and shield you if necessary. Your Broker has its own Hits score, equal to yours, and you can defend equally well in a duel if a foe attacks you or him. If your Broker loses his last hit, he reverts to his ordinary form, and you can no longer attack or defend, except to defend with d4s. You cannot empower your Broker again until the next noon. During a duel you can ride your Broker or direct the battle from the sidelines.

You can choose either Attack or Control as your combat ability. At noon, both you and your Broker recover all of your Hits. Unlike the other types of magical power, the tree you select powers from is dictated by the type of Broker you have.

The three studied Collars of Obedience are:

- * The Cunning One – when the Broker is a Fox or Ocelot.
- * The Venomous One – when the Broker is a Reptile or Shrew.
- * The Winged One – when the Broker is a Dragonfly or Hummingbird.

Know this: I am not your pet.



The Cunning One

This is the selection of Powers available to you if your Broker is the Fox or Ocelot type. They have an emphasis on sneakiness and attack appropriate to a carnivore.

Tier I	Empower the Cunning One		
Tier 2	Red in Tooth and Claw	Bunched Muscle and Sinew	The Prey is Marked
Tier 3	Pounce	Cry of the Nocturnal Hunter	Jaws of Death
	Stealthily Through the Tress	An Eye for an Eye	Cunning Plan
	Bare Teeth	To Toy with the Mouse	Hunter's Instinct

Empower the Cunning One

EMPOWER WITS

1 MANA

Your Broker increases in size and his claws and teeth become larger in proportion. He gains the ability to jump large distances with ease.

Cry of the Nocturnal Hunter

DEFENCE: DICE +3

1 MANA

The howl your Broker produced causes any animals within hearing distance to go crazy. This is a perfect defence against Darkness attacks.

Red in Tooth and Claw

PERMANENT: UPGRADE ATTACK DICE

3 MANA

Once your Broker has this Power, you must feed him raw, red meat every four hours day and night.

An Eye For An Eye

DEFENCE: DICE

1 MANA

If this defence doesn't prevent you from taking any Hits in damage, you can immediately attack with a d8, without that counting as your next turn.

Pounce

ATTACK: DICE +6

2 MANA

This power can only be used to attack an enemy from behind. If he has his back against a wall, or is otherwise protected from the rear, your Broker can't get into position for this attack.

To Toy With The Mouse

SPECIAL

0 MANA

After you have defeated an enemy, if you choose to let her live you immediately gain 3 Edge against her.

Stealthily Through the Trees

SPECIAL

1 MANA

Your Broker can hide himself in almost any environment, and can hide you too. This power can be used to escape from a duel immediately at the start of a round, without a Speed roll.

The Prey is Marked

BUFF

1 MANA

This power can only be used once per duel, against a single enemy. The next attack your Broker makes against that enemy gets a +5 bonus to its strength.

Bare Teeth

DEFENCE: D8

1 MANA

Your Broker raises his hackles and makes a display of aggression.

Jaws of Death

ATTACK: DICE +D4

1 MANA

Your Broker locks his jaws onto an enemy, grinding bone and flesh. The enemy must spend 1 Mana in order to break the hold and be able to take his next turn, otherwise he misses it.

Bunched Muscle and Sinew

PERMANENT: UPGRADE DEFENCE DICE

2 MANA

This power means your Broker is larger than normal, even when not Empowered. This makes it harder to take him with you wherever you go.



His Due

Cunning Plan

BUFF: DEFENCE +2

It cannot fail.

1 MANA

Hunter's Instinct

PERMANENT: ATTACK +2

2 MANA

You must have some piece of clothing or other personal item bearing your enemy's scent to give to your Broker for this power to work.



His Due

The Venomous One

This is the selection of Powers available to you if your Broker is the Reptile or Shrew type. It has an emphasis on depleting the enemy's strength and ability to fight.

Tier I	Empower the Venomous One		
Tier 2	Sap Strength	Bite of the Unloved	Skulk
Tier 3	Scavenge Trifles	Stand Off	Used to a Beating
	Luck of the Verminous	Bite and Roll	The Limits of Frailty
	Toxic Shock	Rob the Kong	Scales and Fur

Empower the Venomous One

EMPOWER ENDURANCE

1 MANA

Your Broker grows in size, taking on some features of ancient dinosaurs. His teeth become long and drip with venom. The Endurance bonus increases your maximum Hits and current Hits while the empowerment lasts. If the empowerment ends, those Hits are lost. If this takes you to 0 hits, you lose the ability to Empower your Broker until you recover your Hits at noon as usual.

Sap Strength

BUFF

1 MANA

Remove one specific buff from your enemy. You cannot use this Power if you already have a buff active on yourself.

Scavenge Trifles

BUFF

2 MANA

Steal one specific buff from your enemy. You cannot use this Power if you already have a buff active on yourself.

Luck of the Verminous

BUFF

1 MANA

You automatically get to re-roll any Is on your dice. You can't use this ability if you rolled any Is on your Speed skill at the start of the duel.

Toxic Shock

ATTACK: DICE

1 MANA

If this attack deals at least 1 Hit, the target skips his next opportunity to replenish his Hits.

Bite of the Unloved

ATTACK: DICE +3

1 MANA

You cannot use this Power if anyone has shown you genuine affection so far today.

Stand Off

BUFF: UPGRADE AND RE-ROLL ATTACK DICE

1 MANA

You keep your distance from your enemy and seek out his weaknesses. You can't use this ability if you have already made an attack in this duel.

Bite and Roll

ATTACK: DICE +D6 +3

3 MANA

Your Broker grabs your enemy with his jaws and twists to increase the damage. If the attack dice and extra dice rolled for this attack end up showing the same number, this attack does 6 additional damage.

Rob the Kong

SPECIAL

0 MANA

Discard a dice in your Defence pool to steal 2 Mana from an enemy. You can only use this Power if you have no Mana left yourself.

Skulk

PERMANENT: UPGRADE DEFENCE DICE

2 MANA

You can't use this Power if you have drawn attention to yourself somehow in the last day.

Used to a Beating

PERMANENT: DOWNGRADE DEFENCE DICE, 2 EXTRA DEFENCE DICE

2 MANA

Your Broker is used to taking a hard knock or two, and doesn't flinch in the face of injury. You must follow his example, and never shirk from potential harm.



His Due

The Limits of Frailty

DEFENCE: DICE +3

This defence is 2 points stronger against non-elemental attacks. You cannot use this Power if you have accepted medical treatment in the last month.

1 MANA

Scales and Fur

DEFENCE: DICE +2D4

2 MANA

You trade places with your Broker. If any damage gets past this defence, you take the Hits if the target was your Broker, and your Broker takes the Hits if you were the target.



The Winged One

This is the selection of Powers available to you if your Broker is the Dragonfly or Hummingbird type. It has an emphasis on speed and agility.

Tier I	Empower the Winged One		
Tier 2	Strike From Above	Shielding Wing	Forever out of Reach
Tier 3	Piercing Strike	Agility of the Skies	Strike Like Lightning
	The Wing of Freedom	Stormy Skies Press Down	Whisper on the Wind
	Sight of the Eagle	Fog the Mind	Comforting Touch of a Tail

Empower the Winged One

EMPOWER SPEED

1 MANA

Your Broker greatly enlarges in size, with disproportionately large wings, in order to still remain able to fly. The Speed bonus takes effect before the roll is made to decide who has the first attack in a duel.

Strike from Above

ATTACK: DICE +3

1 MANA

This attack can only be made when fighting in the open air.

Piercing Strike

PERMANENT: UPGRADE A SINGLE ATTACK DICE TWICE 3 MANA

Your Broker can make a single, devastating strike. However, this dice cannot be used with an Attack power.

The Wing of Freedom

BUFF

1 MANA

You can fly, just like your Broker.

Sight of the Eagle

BUFF

1 MANA

Your sight is greatly enhanced, allowing you to pick out details from a long way away. This might give you an upgrade to your dice for a skill test.

Shielding Wing

DEFENCE: DICE + D6

1 MANA

Your Broker can use his wings to create a formidable barrier, but only when fighting in the open air. This is a perfect defence against Thunder damage.

Agility of the Skies

PERMANENT: EXTRA DEFENCE DICE

2 MANA

This ability can only be used when a fresh breeze is blowing.

Stormy Skies Press Down

BUFF: DEFENCE +2

1 MANA

The skies become filled with clouds and the wind picks up. Thunder attacks are also 1 point stronger.

Fog the Mind

BUFF: SEAL THUNDER

2 MANA

Your Broker weaves a pattern flying the air that locks down the magic of the skies. This power can't be used in rainy conditions.

Forever Out of Reach

DEFENCE: PERFECT

2 MANA

Your Broker can whisk himself and you out of danger, at the cost of lost time. You skip your next turn. This power can only be used if there is a clear path to the destination you flee to.

Strike Like Lightning

ATTACK: DICE THUNDER

1 MANA

Your Broker can strike faster than the eye can follow, inflicting several terrible blows. You take the next turn in the duel. However, if the defence against the attack is equal to the strength of the attack, your Broker is caught fast while trying the manoeuvre, and you discard any unspent dice in your Attack pool.



His Due

Whisper on the Wind

DEFENCE: DICE +6

2 MANA

A sudden gust of wind blows an attack away. This power can only be used if your Broker is currently flying, and not stood on the ground.

Comforting Touch of a Tail

BUFF: HEAL ALL HITS

1 MANA

Your Broker bathes you in a healing light, restoring all of your Hits. However, he cannot do so during a duel.

Unidentified Cryptids

If you want to create your own Collar of Obedience, follow these guidelines. You can separate out one of the pairs of Brokers and give it a new selection of powers, or create powers for a completely new Broker. Collar abilities always start with an Empower ability, but this should never be for Control or Attack, as they are the Combat skills for this type of magic. These Power trees have an even mix of most types of abilities, all of which reflect some aspect of the animal the Broker resembles.



Glyphs of the Chosen

Your forearms are covered in strange runes in no known language. They resemble tattoos or birthmarks to you, although their presence can fall into the blind-spot and be 'invisible' to the uninitiated if tattoos would be remarkably out of place on you. Naturally, anyone who has dealt with a Broker themselves can see them plainly, unless you cover them up somehow. No two people's runes are alike.

You have the ability to manipulate certain elemental forces- not elemental in the scientific sense but elemental in the magical sense. You can command them to appear at your fingertips and have them flow or dance to your will. Your primary means of attack is to throw this energy at your enemies.

Chosen often refer to their Broker as their familiar; the creature takes no active part in the battle. Although you have some very powerful abilities, all of them rely on the use of Mana. On the plus side, fully powered, you can overwhelm most foes.

You cannot use Attack dice normally; you must use an ability that requires Mana to attack. You can use

Defence dice normally, but only if you have at least 1 Mana remaining. Otherwise, you can only use d4s to defend with.

You get a +2 bonus to your Power. You can choose either Control or Wits as your combat ability. When the sun sets, you recover all of your Hits.

The five recorded Glyphs of the Chosen are:

- * Crystal of Compassion
- * Flames of Hatred
- * Halo of Confidence
- * Runes of Reflection
- * Shadows of Regret

Know this: If you hold back your emotions, you cannot win.

Crystals of Compassion

These glyphs embody empathy and healing energy, even at the expense of your own ability to fight. You add 3 to your defence dice against Thunder damage, but Dark damage does 3 points of damage more than usual.

Tier I	Crystals of Compassion		
Tier 2	Balm	Lattice of Protection	Sapphire Lance
Tier 3	Spirit of Quartz	Diamond Shell	Emerald Chorus
	Empathic Trance	Rubies Like Drops of Blood	Breathe Easy
	Panacea	Shared Destiny	Feel the Shame



His Due

Crystals of Compassion

ATTACK: DICE THUNDER

I MANA

Strike an enemy with spikes of crystal that crackle with energy. After the attack, add the dice to your defence pool.

Balm

BUFF: HEAL 3 HITS

I MANA

Use this on yourself, or someone who trusts you to recover Hits.

Spirit of Quartz

BUFF: UPGRADE DEFENCE DICE

I MANA

Throw a handful of crystals into the air.

Empathic Trance

BUFF

I MANA

You can use this ability in one of two ways. The first way is to open yourself up to any strong emotions in the area around you so you can pinpoint the people having them. The second is to watch a person and gain an insight into her emotional state. If you use this against an enemy during a battle, you immediately gain I Edge against her. You can maintain the trance for as long as you wish, but you cannot fight while maintaining it.

Panacea

BUFF: HEAL ALL HITS

2 MANA

Place your life in the hands of someone you trust, and recover all of your Hits. If you trust someone in this way, and they wish to betray you, they can make this ability give you as many Hits as is needed to reduce you to 0 instead.

Lattice of Protection

DEFENCE: 6

I MANA

As long as you haven't hurt anyone so far today, you can create a pattern of crystals to defend

yourself with. This is a perfect defence against non-elemental attacks.

Diamond Shell

DEFENCE: DICE + 2D6

2 MANA

Empty your heart of feelings of violence. You cannot attempt to kill your enemy in this duel if you used this Power.

Rubies Like Drops of Blood

DEFENCE: UPGRADE THIS DICE TWICE

I MANA

Cut yourself and scatter a little blood into the air in front of you.

Shared Destiny

BUFF: UPGRADE DEFENCE DICE

2 MANA

Link arms with your allies - all of you benefit from this buff.

Sapphire Lance

ATTACK: DICE + 3D4 THUNDER

2 MANA

Throw a six-foot crystal at an enemy. You can only use this ability if you have no dice left in your Defence pool.

Emerald Chorus

BUFF: DEFENCE +2

I MANA

Sing out loudly enough for your enemies to hear.

Breathe Easy

NON-COMBAT

I MANA

Support a friend through a time of emotional need. Place a jewel on his forehead and he can add a d8 to any dice he rolls to deal with Stress.

Feel the Shame

ATTACK, NO DAMAGE

2 MANA

Make an enemy feel the guilt of their violent actions. Immediately cause a Guilt stress, unless the enemy has reached his limit for this session or has filled his Guilt Stress Track already.



His Due

Flames of Hatred

These glyphs are closely tied to a powerful negative emotion- you are at your most powerful when surrounded by loathing. You add 3 to your defence dice against Fire damage, but Water damage does 3 points of damage more than usual.

Tier I	Flames of Hatred		
Tier 2	Flames of Bitter Hatred	Rage Stoked	Burning Curtain
Tier 3	Ultimate Flames of Unbridled Hatred	Anger Kindled	Alone Against the World
	The Gnawing Within	Give in to Hatred	Rain of Terrible Fire
	Sea of Fire	Oblivious to Reason	Wreathed in Flames

Flames of Hatred

ATTACK: DICE + D6 FIRE

1 MANA

Throw a ball of fire.

Flames of Bitter Hatred

ATTACK: DICE + 2D4 FIRE

2 MANA

Conjure fire in a pillar centred on someone you have good reason to hate.

Ultimate Flames of Unbridled Hatred

ATTACK: D6 +6 FIRE

4 MANA

Fill an enemy's world with fire. To cast this spell declare a vendetta against someone. The vendetta lasts until the enemy dies, leaves the game or surrenders unconditionally. You cannot declare a vendetta while one is active.

The Gnawing Within

ATTACK: DICE +3 DARKNESS

2 MANA

The soul of someone with good reason to hate you gnaws at their being, inflicting terrible pain. They also lose 1 Mana from the attack.

Sea of Fire

ATTACK: DICE +D4 FIRE

2 MANA

Makes flames leap up from the ground across a wide area, as long as nothing of value to you is in the area. All enemies nearby are attacked with the same value.

Rage Stoked

BUFF: ATTACK +2

1 MANA

Deliver a short speech describing how angry you are.

Anger Kindled

PERMANENT: EXTRA ATTACK DICE

3 MANA

If something has happened today to annoy the hell out of you, begin any battle with an extra dice in your Attack pool.

Give in to Hatred

BUFF: UPGRADE AND RE-ROLL ATTACK DICE

2 MANA

Throw caution to the wind and pledge yourself to mindless destruction. Re-roll any remaining Attack dice in your pool after increasing their size by one step. Until the end of this battle, all of your attacks count as being Dark element, whatever they might be normally.

Oblivious to Reason

BUFF: DEFENCE +4

2 MANA

Refuse to listen to what anybody tells you.

Burning Curtain

DEFENCE: DICE +3

1 MANA

Create a curtain in front of you. This is a perfect defence against Darkness attacks. However, you cannot attack on your next action.

Alone Against the World

PERMANENT: UPGRADE DEFENCE DICE

2 MANA

You can only use this ability if no allies of yours are in the area.



His Due

Rain of Terrible Fire

BUFF: BARRIER 6 HITS, DEALS D6 FIRE DAMAGE 3 MANA

If you are under a clear sky, you can bring down a hail of fireballs. They form a barrier that protects you from harm until it has taken 6 Hits. It defends with d4s, and any attacker is attacked themselves at the same time. Light element attacks can pass straight through the barrier and hit you instead.

Wreathed in Flames

DEFENCE: DICE +6 FIRE 2 MANA

Your flesh crawls with living fire, erupting from your eyes and mouth when you open them. You cannot use this defence if you are touching anything other than the ground and/or your familiar.



Halo of Confidence

The Halo of Confidence is a source of magical power that rewards those able to keep fighting through difficult and prolonged battles. Rather than demonstrating existing confidence in a duellist, they engender confidence in an otherwise hesitant person. You add 3 to your Defence dice against Light damage, but Fire damage does 3 points of damage more than usual.

Tier I	Halo of Confidence		
Tier 2	Annulus of Invulnerability	Prism of Devastation	Torus of Indestructibility
Tier 3	Manifold Strike	Blinding Awe	Ultimate Shield
	Shielding Asymptote	Scintillating Guard	The Grinding
	Particulate Wave	Waviform Mote	Forever Fresh

Halo of Confidence

ATTACK: DICE +2 LIGHT

I MANA

You project rings of force that slice through your enemy. If your Control score is higher than your target's Control score, this attack does 2 more damage than usual.

Prism of Devastation

ATTACK: DICE THUNDER

I MANA

You encase your enemy in a geometric shape wrought of magic, and attack him from every angle. Triple the effect of any Attack buffs you have in place for this attack.

Annulus of Invulnerability

BUFF: SEAL ALL NON-ELEMENTAL ATTACKS

3 MANA

You create a complex weave of magic that permits only elementally-charged attack magic to be used. Basic attacks are not prevented by this buff.

Blinding Awe

ATTACK: DICE +3 LIGHT

2 MANA

This attack reduces the strength of your enemy's remaining attacks this combat round by 2. You can only use this ability if you are wearing dark glasses.

Manifold Strike

ATTACK: DICE + DICE LIGHT

I MANA

You create a curve in reality that permits you to strike with two magical blasts that hit at the same time. You use two Attack dice for this attack. You cannot use it if you have only 1 Attack dice left in your pool.

Scintillating Guard

DEFENCE: DICE +6

2 MANA

If this defence prevents you from taking any Hits of damage from the attack, regain the Mana it cost. You cannot use this Power if you are touching anything metal.

Shielding Asymptote

DEFENCE: DICE +3

I MANA

You create a discontinuity of magic in the air in front of you that obscures your position. This is a perfect defence against Water attacks.

Waviform Mote

BUFF: ATTACK +2

I MANA

You can only use this Power if at least part of you is in shadow.

Particulate Wave

BUFF: ATTACK +2

I MANA

You can only use this Power if at least part of you is in direct light.

Torus of Indestructibility

BUFF: DEFENCE +2

I MANA

You cannot use this Power if you are facing more than a single enemy duellist.



His Due

Ultimate Shield

DEFENCE: DICE +3D6

3 MANA

You make your very flesh almost impossible to damage. This Power can only be used if you have a small diamond in your hand.

The Grinding

BUFF: CONTROL +I

1 MANA

This Power does not affect your Attack dice for the current combat round, but it does for all future rounds in this duel. You can also use this buff once per combat round instead of only once per duel. You can use this ability outside of a duel, but only can only cast it once per skill roll.

Forever Fresh

DEFENCE: DICE +3

2 MANA

If this defence prevents you from taking any Hits, you keep the dice in your Defence pool. You can't use this ability unless you have showered or bathed in the last twenty-four hours.



Runes of Reflection

Some users of magic look inwards for their power rather than outwards. The Runes of Reflection are associated with introversion, understanding of the self, and turning an enemy's power back on him. You add 3 to your Defence dice against Water damage, but Thunder damage does 3 points of damage more than usual.

Tier I	Runes of Reflection		
Tier 2	Soul Burn	Conductor	Tsunami
Tier 3	Guard Against Piety	The Zen Master	Still Waters
	Guard Against Rage	Awesome Downpour	Armour of Knowledge
	Guard Against Fluidity	Inner Wisdom	Resolve of the Contemplative

Runes of Reflection

ATTACK: DICE +3 WATER

1 MANA

You create a shimmering wall of floating runes in front of you, which converge on your enemy.

Soul Burn

PERMANENT

0 MANA

At any time during a duel, you can take 2 Hits and receive 1 Mana. This Mana is spent before any ordinary Mana you have, and if you still have it when the duel ends it is lost.

Guard Against Piety

BUFF: SEAL LIGHT

2 MANA

You create a vortex of runes in the air around an enemy, that stops him drawing on the power of Light magic.

Guard Against Rage

BUFF: SEAL FIRE

2 MANA

You create a cloud of moist air around an enemy, that stops him drawing on the power of Fire magic. This power can't be used during a heatwave.

Guard Against Fluidity

BUFF: SEAL WATER

1 MANA

You make the area of the duel very arid, denying everybody in it, including yourself, the ability to use magic based around water.

Conductor

DEFENCE: DICE +2D6

2 MANA

A Faraday cage made out of water surrounds you, deflecting enemy attacks. This is a perfect defence against Thunder magic.

The Zen Master

DEFENCE: DICE +6

3 MANA

You weave a defensive magic that turns an enemy's attack against him. If you avoid taking a Hit when you use this defence, your attacker immediately has to defend against an attack of the same strength.

Awesome Downpour

ATTACK: 3D6 WATER

5 MANA

You summon a torrential rainstorm that beats your enemy like a thousand clubs. This can only be used out of doors.

Inner Wisdom

BUFF: DEFENCE + SPECIAL

1 MANA

You spend a moment in quiet contemplation, and reveal to anybody listening a new and interesting fact about yourself. You get a bonus to your defence equal to your Wits score.

Tsunami

BUFF: BARRIER 9 HITS

3 MANA

If you are standing in at least an inch of water, you can create a massive barrier that protects you from harm. The wall of water intercepts any attack made against you and defends with d4s. Thunder damage attacks can pass straight through it and hit you as normal.



His Due

Still Waters

ATTACK: DICE FIRE

I MANA

You can summon a brief burst of flammable liquid to attack an enemy. The Mana you spend on this attack is returned to you immediately afterwards.

Resolve of the Contemplative

BUFF: ATTACK +2

I MANA

You can only use this power if you have spent some time in quiet contemplation since the last sunset.

Armour of Knowledge

DEFENCE: DICE +DIO

I MANA

You know your weaknesses better than any, but that knowledge hurts sometimes. You take 1 Hit whenever you use this power.



Shadows of Regret

This glyph falls on duellists who have much they have done wrong in their lives, and saps the strength of those around them. Its efficacy relies on slowly draining away an enemy's ability to fight. You add 3 to your Defence dice against Darkness damage, but Light damage does 3 points of damage more than usual.

Tier I	Shadows of Regret		
Tier 2	Fighting the Darkness	Pale Imitation of Life	Extinguish the Candle
Tier 3	No Form No Target	Difficulty at the Beginning	Always Waiting
	Claws of Pitiless Night	Veil of Night	Entropy
	The Light that Casts the Shadows	Grim Fandango	Fortress of Ultimate Darkness

Shadows of Regret

ATTACK: DICE +3 DARKNESS

1 MANA

Dark energy leaps out of the shadows near your enemy to claw away his vitality. This Power is only effective if your target is within a few metres of solid shadow.

Fighting the Darkness

BUFF

1 MANA

Each time you defend against an attack and take no Hits, all your future Attack dice get a +1 bonus to strength.

No Form No Target

BUFF: DEFENCE +2

1 MANA

You become a creature half of shadow, and something much harder to destroy. You cannot use this ability if you are carrying anything that emits light.

Claws of Pitiless Night

ATTACK: DICE +3D6 DARKNESS

3 MANA

Your enemy's own shadow attacks him and tries to choke the life out of him.

The Light That Casts the Shadows

ATTACK: DICE +3 LIGHT

2 MANA

All your nearby enemies are attacked by this Power. It also makes all shadows in the immediate area grow and deepen.

Pale Imitation of Life

BUFF

1 MANA

You sap the strength of your enemy. His Combat skill score is reduced by 1 for the remainder of the duel. This does not affect dice already rolled.

Difficulty at the Beginning

BUFF

2 MANA

Your sever part of your enemy's connection to the magical world. All of his Powers cost 2 more Mana than usual, and he has to spend 2 Mana to re-roll a dice instead of 1.

Veil of Night

BUFF: BARRIER 12 HITS

3 MANA

You create an immaterial barrier. It does not roll any defence dice. This Power can only be used at night. Light attacks pass straight through it.

Grim Fandango

BUFF: ATTACK +1 AND DEFENCE +1

1 MANA

You cannot use this power if you are touching any vegetation.

Extinguish the Candle

DEFENCE: DICE +3

1 MANA

You snuff out sources of light, heat and magical power around you. This is a perfect defence against Fire attacks.



His Due

Always Waiting

BUFF: ATTACK +4

2 MANA

The darkness knows where the light will be. You must be in total darkness to use this Power.

Entropy

DEFENCE: DICE +2D6

2 MANA

You embrace the death of the universe as a friend and ally. You can only use this Power if you have fewer than half of your total Hits left.

Fortress of Ultimate Darkness

BUFF: BARRIER 9 HITS

5 MANA

You must be on high ground to use this Power. The barrier it creates can be pierced by Darkness attacks, and rolls d12s for defence against other kinds of attack.

Novel Glyphs

If you want to create your own Glyphs, follow these guidelines. Glyphs of the Chosen must start with an Attack power, and all their attacks must have an element. They have a heavy emphasis on buffs and often have powerful Powers with expensive Mana costs. Each Glyph relates to an emotion.



Weapons of the Soul

You can draw a weapon out of your very body. It is far keener than any ordinary weapon could be, and glows faintly when in your hands. While you wield it, your reflexes and strength are enhanced enough for you to be able to fight, even if you aren't particularly strong or dexterous normally. The weapon itself falls in to the 'blind-spot' of mundane sight, although it may be rationalised into a more everyday weapon, such as a knife or gun.

This weapon is capable of slicing through solid metal and stone and can deflect magical energy thrown at you by your foes. It is what you use to duel. You can return it to your body as easily as you can withdraw it. If it is ever more than one hundred paces from you, it vanishes and can be drawn from your body again.

You can choose Attack or Speed as your Combat skill. When the sun rises, you regain all of your Hits.

The five known Weapons of the Soul are:

- * Arrow of the Artisan
- * Axe of the Executioner
- * Blade of the Baron
- * Meteor of the Messenger
- * Wings of the Warrior

Tell me: Do you have a fear of blades?

Arrow of the Artisan

You carry a bow. The arrows you draw from your body as and when you need them. The weapon reflects your grace and sense of artistry.

Tier I	Arrow of the Artisan		
Tier 2	Perfect Draw	The Advantage of Range	Arrow True
Tier 3	Death From Above	Duck and Cover	Parting Shot
	Many of Horror	Pure of Purpose	Strike Down the Attack
	Bullseye	Clear of Mind and Spirit	Trick Shot

Arrow of the Artisan

ATTACK: DICE + 3

1 MANA
Your arrow flies true, and can pierce walls and other cover.

Perfect Draw

PERMANENT: UPGRADE ATTACK DICE

3 MANA
You expect perfection from anything you do. You must spend Edge to re-roll any 1 in a duel if you can.



His Due

Death From Above

PERMANENT: DOWNGRADE ATTACK DICE, 2 EXTRA ATTACK DICE
2 MANA

You sacrifice precision for quantity.

Many of Horror

ATTACK: 5D4 4 MANA

You fire a flurry of arrows, faster than the eye can follow. Your enemy can, and must, spend 2 Defence dice to deal with this attack.

Bullseye

ATTACK: DICE +2D6 THUNDER 2 MANA

Firing this arrow creates a thunderclap that shatters any nearby windows.

The Advantage of Range

SPECIAL 1 MANA

Use this Power at the start of a combat round. You and your enemy must re-roll all of your Attack dice.

Duck and Cover

BUFF 1 MANA

Until the end of the duel, you can choose to re-roll any Defence dice once without having to spend Edge.

Pure of Purpose

BUFF: ATTACK +D6 2 MANA

You and your bow are one. You must keep your bow visible and with you at all times.

Clear of Mind and Spirit

DEFENCE: +3 1 MANA

You cannot use this Power if you have suffered a freak out in the last day. This is a perfect defence against Water attacks.

Arrow True

PERMANENT 2 MANA

Any basic attack you make with a dice showing 8 or more does an additional 3 points of damage.

Parting Shot

PERMANENT 0 MANA

If any enemy flees at the start of a round with a good Speed roll result, you may make a single attack against him anyway. If an enemy flees at the end of a round with a moderate Speed roll result, you may make a single attack with a d10 dice roll against him as he does so. In either case, you can use any Attack power that uses a Dice.

Strike Down the Attack

DEFENCE: DICE +2D6 2 MANA

You fire an arrow that deflects an enemy attack.

Trick Shot

ATTACK: DICE THUNDER 1 MANA

You use a deflected attack to catch your enemy off-guard. He cannot use any Defence power against this attack.



Axe of the Executioner

Your weapon is a long-handled, vicious axe. The blade is perpetually stained with blood. It represents your sense of righteousness.

Tier I	Axe of the Executioner		
Tier 2	The Hooded Killer	Carry Out Sentence	The Block
Tier 3	The Long Drop	Cleave	The Scaffold
	The Thirsty Blade	Wind of Cold Breath	The Madame
	The Whisper of Heavy Steel	Heart of Stone	The Tip

Axe of the Executioner

ATTACK: DICE +3 DARKNESS

1 MANA

The axe is heavy, the axe cuts all.

The Hooded Killer

PERMANENT: UPGRADE ATTACK DICE

3 MANA

When you wield your axe, your face must be covered.

The Long Drop

PERMANENT: UPGRADE ATTACK DICE

3 MANA

You may only use your axe to strike at an enemy's neck.

The Thirsty Blade

PERMANENT: EXTRA ATTACK DICE

3 MANA

Once you have produced your Axe, you cannot put it away until it has tasted blood by inflicting at least 1 Hit on someone. You can inflict a single Hit on a willing target to meet this requirement. If your Axe is separated from you, it does not disappear unless it has wounded someone since it was last drawn.

The Whisper of Heavy Steel

ATTACK: DICE +6 DARKNESS

2 MANA

The environment must be quiet enough for your enemy to hear your Axe cut through the air in order for you to use this ability.

Carry Out Sentence

ATTACK: DICE + SPECIAL BONUS DARKNESS

1 MANA

Let your target's guilt decide his fate. The damage bonus from this attack is equal to your target's accumulated Guilt stress.

Cleave

ATTACK: DICE

1 MANA

After this attack, if the dice used was larger than a d6, roll a dice one size smaller and add it to your Attack pool.

Wind of Cold Breath

DEFENCE: DICE +6

2 MANA

You can only use this ability if you are standing in shadow. As you wave your axe, a wind as chill as the grave protects you. This is a perfect defence against Fire attacks.

Heart of Stone

PERMANENT: DEFENCE +1

2 MANA

You can show no emotion when fighting, otherwise you lose this bonus.

The Block

DEFENCE: DICE +D6

1 MANA

You cannot use this ability unless you are standing on the ground.

The Scaffold

DEFENCE: DICE +D6

2 MANA

You cannot use this ability if you are standing on the ground. If you avoid taking damage using this defence, your attacker suffers 2 Hits.

The Madame

BUFF: DEFENCE +2

1 MANA

You can only use this buff if you have already been dealt a Hit by your attacker. You create a forest of phantom guillotines in the area that you can use as cover and to confuse your enemy.



His Due

The Tip

SPECIAL

X MANA

Immediately after you have made an attack that has dealt at least 1 Hit to an enemy, you can spend as much Mana as you want to inflict an additional 1 Hit per Mana you spend. The bite of your axe proves unnaturally devastating.



Blade of the Baron

Your weapon is a large, two-handed cruciform sword. The hilt appears to be made of gold, and the end of the pommel is shaped to resemble your Broker. The blade represents your courage and sense of obligation to others.

Tier I	Blade of the Baron		
Tier 2	The Vow	Parry	Knight's Strike
Tier 3	The Knight's Shield	Clear Sound of Silver Trumpets	Charging the Lists
	Pennants in the Breeze	Golden Parry	Unfettered Steel
	Strike With Glory	Life of Servitude	Knight's Courage

Blade of the Baron

PERMANENT: UPGRADE ATTACK DICE 3 MANA

You must always fight chivalrously, never ambushing an enemy or otherwise striking without warning.

The Vow

PERMANENT 0 MANA

At the start of a combat round you can choose to re-roll all of your dice. If you do so, you must make a vow to your enemy about your conduct during the duel. The vow must be meaningful, and restrict your actions in some way during the duel. Suitable vows are "I will spare your life", "I will harm no innocent" and "I will not attack a fleeing enemy". If you fail to keep your vow, you do not regain your Hits the next time you would do so.

The Knight's Shield

PERMANENT: EXTRA DEFENCE DICE 2 MANA

You must henceforth wield your sword in one hand, and bear a shield in the other. Unlike your sword, your shield is an otherwise ordinary object, which you must carry with you. If you are parted from your shield, you lose this bonus until you recover it or find a suitable replacement.

Pennants in the Breeze

BUF: ATTACK +2 1 MANA

You must declare your name to your enemy, possibly granting him a point of Edge, when you use this Power.

Strike With Glory

ATTACK: DICE +D6 LIGHT 1 MANA

Your blade shimmers with golden light when you use this Power.

Parry

DEFENCE: DICE +3 1 MANA

This is a perfect defence against Darkness attacks.

Clear Sound of Silver Trumpets

BUF: DEFENCE +2 1 MANA

The sounds of trumpets gives you strength. This Power cannot be used if there is any other music audible in the area of the duel.

Golden Parry

DEFENCE: DICE +2D6 2 MANA

There is a flash of light when you use this Power.

Life of Servitude

PERMANENT: UPGRADE DEFENCE DICE 2 MANA

You pledge yourself to help the innocent and weak whenever you can do so.

Knight's Strike

ATTACK: DICE +2 1 MANA

If your enemy has more accumulated Guilt stress than you, this attack is at +3 strength.

Charging the Lists

ATTACK: DICE +6 LIGHT 2 MANA

This mighty attack requires that you take a run up to your enemy, and can only be used once per combat round.



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Unfettered Steel

BUFF

Break any seal an enemy has cast on a particular kind of magic.

I MANA

Knight's Courage

ATTACK: DICE +3 LIGHT

I MANA

If this attack scores any Hits, you take another turn. You cannot use this Power if you have fled from a duel in the last week.



Meteor of the Messenger

You carry a heavy, spiked ball on a length of chain- a meteor hammer. The spikes on it move in a pattern that never repeats itself. It is tied to your personal need for acknowledgement of what you say.

Tier I	Meteor of the Messenger		
Tier 2	Wings of Hermes	Shield of the Stars	Ultimatum
Tier 3	Strike from the Sky	Strike from the Heart	Shield of Fair Play
	Falling Star	Long Horizon	Tangle Indecisive Feet
	Uncomfortable Truth	Incandescent Plasma	Leonid Downfall

Meteor of the Messenger

PERMANENT: UPGRADE ATTACK DICE 3 MANA
Your weapon, while unusual, strikes hard and fast.

Wings of Hermes

BUFF: DEFENCE +2 1 MANA
You temporarily become extremely quick, and dodge an attack aimed at you.

Strike from the Sky

ATTACK: DICE +3 THUNDER 1 MANA
Swing your weapon down to strike your enemy from above. You can only use this power if you are on higher ground than your enemy.

Falling Star

BUFF - 1 MANA
Throw your weapon into the air. Your next strike takes your enemy by surprise. Your enemy cannot use any of his Defence Pool dice (and thus, any defence powers) on your next turn.

Uncomfortable Truth

SPECIAL 1 MANA
Reveal a fact you know about your enemy, something that has earned you a point of Edge. Spend that point of Edge along with the Mana cost for this power to remove any Buffs your enemy has cast on himself.

Shield of the Stars

DEFENCE: DICE +D6 1 MANA
You swing your meteor hammer in front of you, and defensive runes appear in the pattern of light shining on its chain.

Strike from the Heart

ATTACK: DICE +3D4 THUNDER 2 MANA
Throw your hammer directly at your enemy, telling them the true reason why you are fighting them. This might earn them a point of Edge against you.

The Long Horizon

DEFENCE: DICE +2D6 2 MANA
Perspective shifts until you are just a tiny dot on the horizon under a huge sky, and equally hard to hit. This power can only be used when the horizon is visible, and is a perfect defence against Fire damage.

Incandescent Plasma

BUFF: ENDURANCE +1 1 MANA
Your Endurance increases by 1, and your Maximum and Current Hits increase by 3. When this buff wears off at the end of the duel, lose 3 Hits. If this is enough to reduce you to 0, you immediately collapse unconscious for ten minutes or so.

Ultimatum

ATTACK: DICE +2 1 MANA
If your enemy doesn't use a magical power to defend with, the strength of this attack increases by 3.

Shield of Fair Play

PERMANENT: UPGRADE DEFENCE DICE 2 MANA
This bonus only applies if you have not told a lie since the last noon.



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Tangle Indecisive Feet

SPECIAL

Snare your enemy's legs with the chain of your hammer. He immediately loses on point of Edge against you, if he has any.

I MANA

Leonid Downfall

ATTACK: DICE

I MANA

If this attack does not inflict at least 1 Hit, you can repeat it immediately for no additional Mana cost.



Wings of the Warrior

Your weapon is a pair of butterfly swords. Each is patterned to resemble a bird's wing. Your nimbleness and agility is reflected in their speed.

Tier I	Wings of the Warrior		
Tier 2	Paired Souls	Flashing Like Silver Fish	Dance in the Shadows
Tier 3	Myriad Souls	A Thousand Cuts	Float Like a Butterfly
	Paired Destiny	Carpe Diem	Pinion
	Dead Leaves	Sacred Strike	Woven Wall of Steel

Wings of the Warrior

ATTACK: DICE +2

1 MANA

You strike with your blades, jumping a large distance either before or after the attack. You cannot use this ability if you do not move in this way.

Paired Souls

BUFF

2 MANA

You create a phantasm indistinguishable from you, and hand it one of your swords. It draws attacks away from you. While the power lasts, every time you roll a Defence dice you produce a perfect defence if the number rolled is even. After this perfect defence, however, the power ends and the phantasm disappears.

Myriad Souls

BUFF

3 MANA

You create a number of phantasms, each of which resembles you but has one important difference to the trained eye. Whenever you are attacked, your attacker must roll his Wits dice. If this roll is less than the strength of his attack, then his attack is reduced in strength to match it.

Paired Destiny

BUFF

2 MANA

You create a phantasm identical to you and hand it one of your swords. It fights alongside you. Every time you use an attack power, the bonus to attack strength from the power is doubled. It doesn't matter which of you is attacked by an enemy, you have to defend as though the real you was attacked and suffer Hits as normal.

Dead Leaves

DEFENCE: DICE +3D4

2 MANA

Your enemy strikes what he believes to be you, but turns out to be a simulacrum of leaves. This power can only be used when near trees or bushes.

Flashing Like Silver Fish

PERMANENT: UPGRADE ATTACK DICE

3 MANA

Your swords flash silver when you wield them, and they always look wet.

A Thousand Cuts

ATTACK: DICE +D4

2 MANA

You deal a number of small wounds, each of which is insignificant but the total weakens your enemy. You can cancel any buff he currently has if your attack deals at least one Hit.

Carpe Diem

SPECIAL

1 MANA

Before another duellist takes his turn, use this power to have it be your turn instead. If there are more than 2 duellists in the battle, then the turn order changes to put you ahead of the character you pre-empted, so he will take the next turn.

Sacred Strike

ATTACK: DICE +4 LIGHT

2 MANA

You call upon the spirits of the air to make your blow stronger. If this attack does not cause a Hit, the Mana you spent on it is returned to you.



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Dance in the Shadows

DEFENCE: DICE

1 MANA

You dodge out of the way of an enemy blow at the last moment. No attack can deal more than 3 Hits to you when you use this power. You must be in an area where you can move between being in shadow and being in light easily to use it.

Float Like the Butterfly

DEFENCE: DICE +2

1 MANA

Defend yourself and then leap a large distance away from your attacker. You can use this power to turn a botched escape attempt you made this round into a partially successful escape attempt.

Pinion

DEFENCE: 6

2 MANA

You use one of your swords to pin your attacker to a solid surface. Your opponent cannot move for the rest of the round. You can use this ability to turn a partially successful escape attempt you made this round into a completely successful escape attempt.

Woven Wall of Steel

PERMANENT: UPGRADE DEFENCE DICE

2 MANA

You create a dancing wall of metal whenever you defend yourself. This upgrade is only applied when you use a Defence power.

Unknown Weapons

If you want to create your own Weapon of the Soul, follow these guidelines. Weapons of the Soul have a heavy emphasis in permanent Powers, and generally have few other abilities that are expensive in Mana. Most attack powers do not have an element, and every Weapon of the Soul reveals something about the personality of the bearer.



GM Advice

This chapter has some general advice for the GM. There are no secrets that the other players shouldn't see, but it's far from essential for them to read it. The basics of running an entertaining role-playing game should be taken as read- keeping everyone interested, responding to what the players want to happen and being prepared to change plans on the fly are all important, but there are some specific recommendations for this game.

Player Suggestions

It can be hard for the GM to come up with all of the ideas. Because of that, and because it's good to keep players interested in scenes even if they don't have a character present, the GM should be responsive when they make entertaining suggestions. More than that, the GM can deliberately put the onus on a player by asking a question designed to tease out details about character. For example, if the GM wants a player's character to be in a scene at a particular place, she can simply ask the player why his character is there. This saves the GM some effort, avoids the GM accidentally creating details that don't fit the player's conception of his character and the answer often reveals interesting detail about the character that might not appear in play otherwise.

Starting the Game

Unlike many other games, where the player-controlled characters are assumed to be allies from the start, or at least after an initial introduction, the duellists in His Due are nominally enemies, and may never have met each other before noticing each other's Brokers.

Because there are so many details about the duellists' situation, particular with respect to their Brokers and their magical powers, it's a sensible idea to take one of the characters through all the details, as told through his Broker, and have the other players listen in to pick up the information.

Introducing the First Duellist

Beginning the game with a huge information dump is not exactly exciting. So, a good tactic is to have a Broker explain the situation to his human briefly in the short time before another duellist attacks. During the battle, the Broker can offer advice on how to fight, or even tell the player-controlled character what magical powers he has been given and how to use them. Mix the exposition with some action.

The duellist needs to know...
...where he is, against expectations
...what the Broker is (up to a point)
...that he has magical powers
...why he can't remember getting them
...what his first Memory Clue is
...that an enemy is going to attack him right away

Introducing the Other Duellists

Avoid going over the same details for the other duellists. The GM can come right out and ask the players if there are any questions they want their characters to ask their Brokers. The GM doesn't need to introduce an enemy for each of the other characters, as by this point the basics of the duelling rules have been demonstrated. What she can do is give each a vignette in which the individual details can be shown about where they find themselves and what their Memory Clues are.

Introducing Them to Each Other

As part of this process, particularly if two player-controlled characters are in the same general area, duellists might meet. How they react to one another can vary enormously. Duellists who need little prompting to buy into the 'kill enemies, get more power' ethos might go on the offensive right away. Others might, against the advice of their Brokers, consider co-operating. These different reactions demonstrate different ways a person can



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deal with the situation, and having a variety is interesting.

Because the player-controlled character won't have any Edge against each other at this point, there's no danger of character death.

After any initial introductions, it's a good idea to have them encounter each other sooner rather than later, to maximise the time they can spend interacting during the game. It's not terribly hard to identify a fellow duellist, unless he takes special measures to hide his Broker, and once contact is made it's only sensible to stalk them a little to learn more about him. That, in turn, might bring you to his attention, and sooner or later the two of you will talk or duel.

Party Cohesion

There are excellent reasons for the player-controlled characters to fight with each other built right into the situation. However, the GM should be up-front with the players that the game will be more interesting if they make allowances and keep relations between their character relatively cordial. She should ask them to make allowances that allow their characters to work together at least part of the time. Even if the characters are forever threatening to light each other up with magical energy, most of the time they should keep a lid on it. After all, having someone to pull your fat out of the fryer is a sensible precaution. If factions develop in the player-controlled characters, perhaps one group planning to win duels as quickly as possible and another wishing to avoid conflict wherever possible, that's dramatic gold.

Party Conflict

Player-controlled duellists can come to blows for many reasons. Sometimes, it's just a way of blowing off steam and working out outstanding grudges. Other times, it's the product of emotions running faster than reason.

If the duel is deadly, where at least one participant genuinely wants to kill the other, it's better if this dramatic moment is built up to slowly. It can come after a series of inconclusive clashes, or perhaps after one character has spectacularly betrayed the

other somehow. Because such a duel might permanently remove a player's character from the game, it is better if it can be timed such that the final showdown comes at the end of the campaign.

If the players are amenable, the climax of the entire campaign can be the former erstwhile allies turning on one another until only one remains.

Enemy Duellists

Because the other duellists in the area could be just about anybody, the GM can create a roster of potential enemies ahead of time without worrying too much about how they relate to the player characters. Whenever the GM introduces one of these duellists to a scene, she can decide how much Mana he has and how many Hits he has taken since he last healed, within the usual limits. This is a way of adjusting how dangerous the duellist is for that particular duel. The GM can also set how much Edge that duellist has against his player-controlled enemy. By letting this be zero, the GM can guarantee that the duellist can't kill a player-controlled character at the first encounter.

Using dice to create random choices is a useful way to create them quickly. When it comes to picking their Powers, however, it's best to select ones that will interact in interesting ways with their likely opponents amongst the player-controlled characters. Having an enemy who is able to seal the attacks of a player-controlled character might force him to retreat and come up with a better plan, to seek help or to stockpile Edge.

The GM can keep the number of Powers for NPC duellists the same as the amount player-controlled characters have, but does not have to. Introducing a powerful enemy early on means that the players will have to avoid crossing her path until they've had a chance to rise to her power level, or gang up on her. Even if they gang up on her, she won't be killed and will remain a thorn in their sides. If the player-controlled characters have earned some extra Powers, the GM should consider introducing the occasional weaker opponent, to serve as a reminder as to how much stronger they have become. Just don't be surprised if the battle-hardened characters don't hesitate to cull the weak to get that extra Power or Memory Clue.



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Occasionally the GM will need an enemy significantly more dangerous than normal. In these cases, she can increase their skill beyond the usual levels.

Connections

Connections should be more than Mana recharging points. They don't know about the duels, but they do have their own lives. Whoever is taking on their roles in scenes should have them pursue their own, mundane goals. Wherever possible this should push them into danger or work at cross-purposes with the duellist who has them as a Connection. This should be the case particularly for player-controlled characters that don't have much interest in the duels for their own sake. Every duellist should get an equal opportunity to have the game revolve around him for a while, whatever attitude he takes to his predicament.

Duel/Downtime Balance

More than anything else, the balance between duels and other activities depends on the preference of the players. There's nothing wrong with a succession of quick-fire duels, one for each player-controlled character, followed by some time to rest for all of them. Equally, if the heart-string-tugging everyday affairs grab the attention of the players, the duels can turn out to be very rare. The only mechanical difference will be in how much Mana and Hits a duellist is likely to have on hand for a duel, and the GM should adjust NPC duellists' Mana and Hits appropriately.

Connections as Duellists

No NPC can be a duellist and a Connection. On the other hand, there's nothing to prevent a former Connection, now cut off from the player-controlled character, to become a duellist, or to suddenly be revealed as having been a duellist all along. Once the Connection is lost, the character is fair game to be re-introduced as an enemy duellist. If a situation arises where a Connection is killed, that NPC could be offered a deal by a Broker at the last moment, or choose that seeming hopeless situation as the time to reveal his true nature. From

the perspective of the rules, it's not too different to if he had died. Another occasion when a Connection could become a duellist is if the duellist he was a Connection for is killed, as he stops being a Connection then, too.

It's up to the GM to decide which Connections might become duellists, but in general it's a good idea to re-use NPCs wherever possible- characters who already have some history the players know about come to life more readily. How such duellists interact with their former friends is bound to be compelling.

New Deals

If a Broker offers an additional deal to a duellist, the benefit is almost always rescuing the human from what looks like certain death. This could be death at the hands of another duellist, or an everyday tragedy. The benefit the human receives is not any additional magical power, it is merely survival.

The cost is always in terms of more memories. The GM can pick one facet of the duellist's life, an important one, and simply spirit away the duellist's knowledge of it. Unlike the original lost memories, which aren't mentioned in play even by characters that would know of them as a conceit, these newly-lost ones can be talked about in and out of character, as long as the player doesn't have his character act on knowledge he should no longer have.



Building to a Climax

The 'classic' scenario for His Due is a series of play sessions, culminating in the player-controlled characters getting their memories back one after the other in rapid succession. In a shorter campaign, it's unlikely that enough duels will be fought for the characters to get five victories, even if they have no qualms about killing. There are, however, alternative climaxes the game can include, some of which work well even for single-session games.

The climax is...
...the player-controlled characters turning on each other finally, leaving only one to claim the prize of restored memories
...working together to defeat and destroy an incredibly powerful opponent
...preventing a group of enemy duellists from completing their plan to destroy huge number of innocents, including many Connection of the player-controlled characters
...beating the Brokers at their own game and finding out the truth behind the deals and the duels
...permanently defeating all the hostile duellists in the area, so the player-controlled characters have earned breathing space, at least for a while

The GM should have an idea as to what the climax will be from the start and use foreshadowing from the very start to build up tension. Of course, if the players end up pulling the story towards a different climax, the GM should consider adopting that climax instead, possibly with his original idea as a dramatic moment midway through the campaign.

Retiring the Insane

If a player-controlled character reaches the maximum on a Stress track, he is technically insane. Ordinarily, this is grounds for retiring the character, possibly through death. On the other hand, if the end of the campaign is a short time away or you are playing a one-shot, his player can keep him until the game ends. In either case his behaviour will be erratic, possibly even self-destructive. Ultimately, the GM should let the player decide what the eventual fate of his character is, bearing in mind the state of the campaign and which Stress track reached maximum.

The insane duellist...
...dies at the hands on an NPC duellist, possibly as an indicator of how bad-ass that NPC is
...dies at the hands of a player-controlled duellist, in a tear-filled showdown
...destroys himself somehow, possibly taking his Connections with him
...is destroyed when he tries to attack his Broker
...finds a way to slip out of sight quietly, abandoning his lost memories and all of his friends

There is a temptation, particularly if the despair Stress reaches its maximum, to try to cut a swathe of destruction through things that are important to the other player-controlled characters while going out in a blaze of glory. If the other players in question are happy to have this level of internal conflict, then go ahead. If there's resistance, on the other hand, come up with something else. Messing up other players' plot-lines needlessly is something a jerk would do.



Replacement Characters

If a player-controlled character is killed or otherwise retired, and the end of the campaign is still some distance away, that player should create a new character using the usual rules. As per the guidance on Connections becoming duellists, he can choose to have his character be a former Connection, possibly even one of his retired character. If the end of the campaign is only a short distance away, rather than introduce a new character the GM should have the player take roles of NPCs, not just in scenes with Connections but also assuming control of NPC duellists during their duels.

Restoring Memories

When a duellist slays his fifth and final opponent, the truth about his lost memories comes to him. By this point, there have already been four player-suggested memory fragments that have shaped some of the details about it. The fifth one, agreed upon by all the players, should be something dramatic, possibly even heart-breaking. The revelation should be the dramatic high-point of the entire campaign for that character, even more so that than the duel that earned it.

After learning the truth, the character retires- the exact circumstances are up to the GM and the character's player. Whatever the truth was, it's reason enough for the duellist to fade out of the story. If this happens near the end of the campaign, the character can take a back seat role for the remaining time- his player can still take on the roles of NPCs for scenes with other player-controlled characters, so he can still participate.

Some suggestions for complete memories, which the players can work towards or borrow ideas from, are:

The duellist...
...wanted magic to achieve a specific goal, which was achieved in the process of the deal, leaving him with power, a gappy memory but no particular purpose.
...wanted magic to achieve a specific goal, and now he remembers what that goal was he can finally achieve it, long overdue.
...wanted magic to achieve a specific goal, but between getting the power and remembering why he wanted it something has happened that has put that goal forever beyond his reach.
...wanted magic to protect someone important to him, but that cherished individual was lost before the memory returned.
...made the deal only because the Broker offered to save his life if he did. The legacy of magic is just a side-effect.
...has been tricked into destroying something very important to him while he didn't remember it.
...made the deal purely in order to forget a terrible memory, one he has just regained to his horror.
...realises he never agreed to any deal, and that his Broker has been playing him from day one.
...realises that he didn't exist before the deal, and that everything about him is a hollow lie.
...realises that this isn't the first time he's been drawn into this world of duels.

*Tell me: Did I neglect to inform you that
Alan was your son?*



Extending the Game

There are plenty of ways the rules can be extended. The most obvious way is to add extra choices for character creation. The main choices are simple enough to create, as long as you keep to the same total values as the existing options.

Power trees take a little more effort to create, but they can be amongst the most rewarding changes. Guidance for creating new powers is given in the chapters for that type of deal.

IF you are feeling bold, you can create an entirely different type of power to the three given here.

Another approach is to change the somewhat nihilistic tone of the game. Making it so that 'killed' duellists are merely stripped of their magic, and are otherwise unharmed, makes for a very different game. Perhaps in addition to that, performing an altruistic act can reduce the current Stress level in an appropriate track.

Inspirational Material

There are plenty of films and TV series that directly or indirectly inspired this game, mostly in terms of settings where ordinary people have strange powers thrust upon them.

- * Heroes
- * Misfits
- * Fate/Stay Night
- * Shakugan No Shana
- * Mai HiME
- * Bleach
- * Puella Magi Madoka Magica

