

# Out For Blood

*An independent supplement for Feng Shui by Ben Wright*

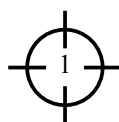
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# Introduction

Welcome to *Out For Blood*, the Game Moderator's guide for Feng Shui. It presents a great deal of information useful to the GM when running the game, from practical advice to suggestions as to how to handle certain common situations. You won't find any essays on the philosophy of being a GM, or any boring old generic advice. Instead, it's chock full of concrete, Feng Shui specific assistance so you can visit a beat-down upon the players with renewed efficiency. There's a range of new toys for the players, too, with many new schticks, weapons and other goodness just waiting to be read. In fact, because I know my audience, that section comes *first*. Turn the page right now if you can't wait.

While this book is described as a GM's guide, it's certainly not for the GM's eyes only. There's only one chapter that has any descriptions of factions and their abilities that might spoil the surprise and tension if players read it themselves. The rest is pretty much fair game, being new weapons, schticks and rules ideas to handle some of the less commonly encountered situations. There are also no lists of new characters for any of the factions (apart from the Four Monarchs). What with all the other books out there, there should be plenty of stock characters for you to use. After all, we all know that the best characters are the ones you make yourselves.

## BRING THE AWESOME

The first part of this book is full of useful new toys and schticks for players. These include new character types, weapons and schticks.

The second part is full of advice for the Feng Shui GM. There are practical tips on how to run the game, how to set up interesting fights and how to establish villains' characters. There are a smattering of new optional rules (which, thankfully, don't make the game any more complicated), some artefacts and some feng shui sites. The last chapter provides information for making one or more of the Four Monarchs the principle antagonists in a campaign.

I was going to put in a section near the front saying something like 'This isn't an official supplement, so you're at liberty to ignore any bits you don't like'. Then I realised that *every* supplement comes with that assumed, even the official ones. You should feel no guilt at ignoring any part of your Feng Shui library if it doesn't suit your purposes, and *Out For Blood* is no exception. If you're dissatisfied overall with this book, please return the unused portion for a full refund.

This book uses British English throughout. This is because it is nominally a GM's Guide, and as we all know the best villains are English. It is certainly not because the author is British and too lazy to try to write in American English. No sir.

Because we are helpful, whenever we cite a rule from the main Feng rulebook, we'll include a page number for reference. These are the page numbers for the Atlas Games edition of the rulebook – that's the hardback version with the slightly pyrotechnic cover. The first edition of the core book, from Daedalus Games, contains pretty much all the same content, though not necessarily on the same pages. The major exception is that six archetypes from the Atlas edition of the main book – the Gambler, Journalist, Magic Cop, Medic, Private Investigator and Thief – were originally published in *Back for Seconds*. If you lack that book, you can find them on-line for free at <http://www.atlas-games.com/fengshui/>

## THOSE THAT FELL BEFORE

Most supplements for the Feng Shui game stand alone well. They are self-contained little packets of wonder.

You can't pretend that the other books don't exist, though. Some of the new schticks in *Out For Blood* are of types in one of these previous books. You shouldn't feel short-changed, mind, because even if you lack the details for that kind of schtick you can always wing it. And when you do get these other books, the juicy material will be here, waiting.

## August 13

*It was a filthy hot day in Kowloon. Hot enough to make your clothes stick to you. Hot enough that the smell from the fish market drifted clear across the city. Hot enough to make me really wish I wasn't there. To make it worse we were wearing heavy clothes that afternoon- big coats and broad hats. We wanted to make sure we wouldn't be recognised, and we needed the heavy togs to cover our weapons. Gappy Cho nodded, and we fanned across the alley entrance as we'd planned.*

*It was deserted.*

*"Looks like the heat has driven Brown's boys inside," Song muttered, "Good luck for us."*

*I wasn't so sure. We were way outside our territory, and Brown's gang had a reputation for brutality these days. I kept my eyes on the doors and windows as we stepped under the washing lines that criss-crossed the alley. The blue door on the left was, according to the best information we could get, one way into one of the Brown gang's safe houses. Big Brother Tsien had told us to go in there and rough up a few bodies until they gave us information on how Brown's gang had grown so strong so quickly. To hear him tell it, it would be so simple. I was not convinced.*

*But if we didn't get a handle on Brown and his men, our whole operation would be in trouble. I may only have been hired muscle, but I knew that my well-being was tied to Tsien's. We had to go through with this because, well, you didn't talk back to Tsien. Brown's gang had been nobodies only two months ago. Their patch was a small area near the docks that wasn't lucrative enough for anyone else to want to take it from them. Then suddenly they'd taken the whole of the dockside gambling area in one night. Something had put a firecracker up Brown's ass, and he had the strength to take by force anything that took his fancy. Tsien reckoned he must have outside backing from someone using him as a cats paw in a gambit for greater control of the SAR drugs trade. I didn't know enough about Triad politics to decide whether I agreed with him or not. Naturally, established interests had tried to smack Brown's lot down, and a lot of capable cleaners had turned up shot to pieces. A little over a week before our raid some of the bodies started to look like they had been beaten to death rather than shot, so presumably he had some psycho working for him as well. Just what we needed.*

*And it was into that nest of vipers that we were heading. I knew for a fact that Gappy Cho was under instructions to flee with whatever information we had if went sour. Song reached the door, kicked it open and threw himself against the brickwork. Still nothing. The four of us hurried inside. The rooms were unfurnished, with rotting floorboards and peeling wallpaper.*

*We heard and noise and all four of us pointed our guns at one wall. As our eyes adjusted to the dark we could see an old calendar gently knocking against the wall as a draught tickled it. The name of the restaurant at the top was still readable.*

*"God damn," Barry said.*

*We were getting too jumpy.*

*We split up, Gappy and Song heading down the main corridor while Barry checked the building's yard. I was sent up a creaking staircase to the upper floor.*

*The whole place looked deserted. Just when I thought our information had been bad and we could all go home, there was an explosion of pain in my kidneys. It felt like someone had driven a train into me. I half turned to try to shoot at whoever had got the drop on me but my revolver was twisted from my hand and my legs kicked out from underneath me. The gun barked as it fell and I heard the bullet ricochet off a nail head. Before I could even see my attacker I was dragged up onto my knees and put into some sort of arm-lock. My arms were forced backwards and up, and my head so far forwards I had trouble breathing. I thought my head was going to pop clear off. I tried to break free, but I might as well have tried to bend steel bars. All the time, I hadn't heard a word from my attacker. My back felt wet, and I could look down and see blood staining my coat. I thought I must have been got with a knife.*

*Boss Brown came into the room, a cigar in his hand and an unpleasant grin on his face. I'd never seen him in person before, but there was something about the gleam in his eyes that told me he was quite, quite mad. He took a drag on the cigar while he slipped a set of brass knuckles on his right hand. Then he slugged me right in the jaw.*

*The last thing I remember as I fell limply to the floor was looking up at my attacker and seeing a girl in plaits with blood on her hands.*

# Characters

## WHAT CAN I DO AGAIN?

In some of the source books there are optional rules or alternative sorts of schticks available for some character types. But naturally, the original write-ups doesn't include these bonus options. So, for convenience, the additional options are summarised here.

### Bodyguard

The section in chapter 8 about 'Defending your Buddy' in this book makes a recommendation for changing the Bodyguard's Unique Schticks.

### Cyborg

The Cyborg can swap out Arcanowave Devices for Hardware Schticks on a one-for-one basis- and gets a lot stronger. Hardware Schticks are in *Gorilla Warfare*.

### Gambler

The Gambler can change his Unique Schtick to one in *Golden Comeback*, pg 100.

### Journalist

The Journalist can change his Unique Schtick to one in *Golden Comeback*, pg 101.

### Magic Cop

According to Robin Laws, the Magic Cop should start with a Martial Arts Action Value of 12, in addition to the Sorcery and Guns skills. Magic Cops from the contemporary and 2056 junctures can take Technomagy (in Chapter 5) as one of their starting schticks.

### Masked Avenger

The Masker Avenger can sacrifice a skill bonus to take a Unique Schtick in *Back For Seconds*, pg 19.

### Maverick Cop

The Maverick Cop can sacrifice a skill bonus to take

a Unique Schtick in *Back For Seconds*, pg 19. He can also swap out Gun Schticks for Driving Schticks on a one-for-one basis. Driving Schticks are in *Golden Comeback*.

### Ninja

The Ninja can sacrifice a skill bonus to take a Unique Schtick in *Back For Seconds*, pg 19.

### Old Master

The Old Master can change his Unique Schtick to one in *Back For Seconds*, pg 40 or one in *Thorns of the Lotus*, pg 104. The Path of the Beneficial Flow, in chapter 5 of this book, restates the original Old Master Unique Schtick as a Fu Power. Your GM may allow you to take one of the alternative Unique Schticks then purchase that Fu Power from your usual allotment.

### Private Investigator

The Private Investigator can change her Unique Schtick to one in *Golden Comeback*, pg 102.

### Sorcerer

The Sorcerer can change his style of magic to that of an alchemist. The details are in *Thorns of the Lotus*, pg 104.

### Spy

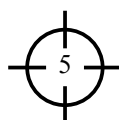
The Spy can change his Unique Schtick to one in *Golden Comeback*, pg 102, or swap it for two Driving Schticks, which are also in *Golden Comeback*.

### Techie

The Techie can change his Unique Schtick to one in *Golden Comeback*, pg 102, swap it for two Driving schticks (also in *Golden Comeback*) or swap it for two Hardware Schticks (in *Gorilla Warfare*).

## NEW BLOOD

You didn't think we'd write a book without giving a few more character types, did you?



# Gentleman Retainer

*“Very good, sir. Will sir be taking the Glock 18 or the Franchi SPAS-12 to the mayor's ball this evening?”*

Behind every good hero, there's a good retainer. Even the most hardened warrior needs a helping hand behind the scenes to keep the household in order, pay the bills on time and send the blood-stained clothes off to be dry-cleaned. That's a role you fulfil. You may be past your prime, physically, but you're as sharp as ever where it counts and your experience is only matched by your ability to be calm under fire. Maybe you were a fighter yourself when you were younger, as a vigilante or as part of an armed unit. The years may have cooled your temper, but they haven't extinguished the fires in your heart. You may not be suited to the front line any more, but your wealth of knowledge certainly comes in handy. When the call comes to join the secret war you know your duty, and you know your place: at the shoulders of heroes.

**Juncture:** Any

**Attributes:** Bod: 5  
Chi: 0  
Mnd: 8  
Ref: 5

*Add 2 points to two different primary attributes.*

**Skills:** Guns +8 (=13)  
Info/The Done Thing +3 (11)  
Martial Arts +5 (10) [Max 12]

*Add 12 Skill Bonuses. Swap Guns and Martial Arts is desired. The maximum for all skills is 14 unless otherwise stated.*

**Schticks:** 1 Gun Schtick or Fu Power.

**Unique Schtick:** *Jack of All Trades*- You can turn your hand to just about anything under the sun. You do not suffer the usual -3 penalty when using a skill you don't have. When you purchase a new skill, you only pay your attribute in experience points instead of your attribute +8.

**Weapons:** 1 weapon from appropriate juncture.

**Quick Schtick Pick:**

Gun Schtick: Eagle Eye

Weapon:

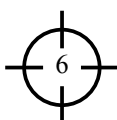
69: Bow

1850: Crossbow

Cntp.: AMT Automag V

2056: Buro Godhammer

**Wealth Level:** Working Stiff (although if you are in the employ of a Rich character you can operate as if you are Rich).



# Golem

*“Run as much as you like. You may be faster than me, but I don't need to sleep.”*

You were created to serve. A powerful sorcerer carved you into human likeness, animated you with potent magic, and commanded you to obey - and obey you did. But the sorcerer was made of a less enduring material than you were, and in time you were left with no master, no commands, and no purpose. Perhaps now, as you drift across the secret war, you can discover a new purpose. Perhaps you can even discover how to be free...

**Juncture:** AD 69, Netherworld

**Attributes:** Bod =12 (Mov 4)  
Chi 0 (Mag =7)  
Mind 3  
Ref 4

*Divide 7 points among your secondary attributes, adding no more than 3 points to any one attribute.*

**Skills:** Info/Drudgery +7 (10)  
Intimidation +7 (10)  
Martial Arts +5 (9)

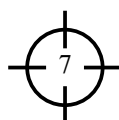
**Creature Schticks:** Elemental Body (Earth, Metal or Wood only); Unliving. [both of these schticks are described in *Glimpse of the Abyss*.]

**Stat Schticks:** One body-related Stat Schtick of your choice.

**Unique Limitation:** As a walking statue, you cannot be healed by either variety of the Medicine skill - you need either someone with the Heal schtick of Sorcery, or the appropriate Info skill (stonecutting, metalworking or woodcrafting, respectively). No, Fix-It won't cut the mustard.

**Quick Schtick Pick:**  
Shattering Blow

**Wealth Level:** Poor



# Modern Mage

*“Yes, officer, I quite understand you have to be careful about these things. But perhaps you should check our papers again?”*

Common sense says that magic died out some time ago. After all, if it was still possible, everybody would be doing it, right? Well, it still is possible for some people. People like you. You would have been trained by another such as yourself, someone who recognised your potential and taught you how to control your gift. They also taught you how to keep it secret because obvious magic attracts all kinds of unwanted attention. And so you lived your life carefully, to all outward appearances just an ordinary guy. Maybe you used your talent to help people out here and there or to give you a bit of an edge in life. When the ceaseless madness that is the secret war spills out into your back yard, you come to realise that it's time to pick sides and unseal a tin of whup-ass.

**Juncture:** 1850, Contemporary

**Attributes:** Bod: 5  
Chi: 0 (Mag=8)  
Mnd: 5  
Ref: 5

*Add 3 points to one primary attribute, 2 points to a second and 1 point to a third.*

**Skills:** Driving +2 (7)  
Guns +5 (=10)  
Info/your choice +4 (9)  
Info/your choice +2 (7)  
Sorcery +6 (=14)

*Add 4 skill bonuses. Change Guns to Martial Arts if desired.*

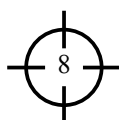
**Schticks:** 4 Magic Schticks

**Unique Schtick:** *No Place Like Home*- You never suffer a juncture penalty to your Sorcery Action Value when in your home juncture.

**Quick Schtick Pick:**

Divination  
Fertility  
Influence  
Weather

**Wealth Level:** Working Stiff





# Rookie

*"I still want to go in, sir. I know it's gonna be bad, but I have to get used to it some ti- \*hurk\*"*

Everyone has to start somewhere. Everyone was new to their calling once. You may only be a junior cop, fresh out of the academy, or a soldier who has just finished their training, but you're out of the nursery and dealing with the real world now. You might even be a young innerwalker, selected as a promising talent for use by one of the factions in the secret war. You may lack experience, but you have plenty of youthful enthusiasm. If you're not the most talented member of your team, your willingness to learn means you catch on quickly. Your idealism hasn't yet fallen prey to cynicism- and when you find out about the secret war you put your life on the line for what's right without hesitation.

**Juncture:** Any

**Attributes:** Bod: 5  
Chi: 0 (For=4)  
Mnd: 5  
Ref: 5

*Add 3 points to one primary attribute, and 2 to another.*

**Skills:** Driving +2 (7) [Max 11]  
Martial Arts +8 (=13)  
Guns +7 (=12)  
Police +2 (7) [Max 11]

*Add 6 skill bonuses. Maximum Action Value for skills not listed is 11. Swap Martial Arts and Guns if desired.*

**Schticks:** 2 schticks, which can be Gun or Driving Schticks.

**Weapons:** 1 weapon of appropriate juncture.

**Unique Schticks:**

*So That's How It's Done-* When a friend with a skill at a higher Action Value than you is instructing you or demonstrating how to use that skill, you get +1 Action Value on use of that skill. This schtick can be used in combat.

*Keen To Learn-* When you spend Experience Points to improve a skill another player has at a higher Action Value than you, you spend 1 less point to increase it.

**Quick Schtick Pick:**

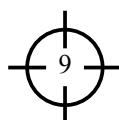
Gun Schticks:

Eagle Eye  
Fast Draw

Weapon:

69: Sword  
1850: Sword  
Cntp.: Colt 1911A  
2056: Buro Beat Patroller

**Wealth Level:** Working Stiff



# Tainted One

*“Monster? Takes one to know one, pal. At least I never hurt anyone who didn't deserve it. Now let me show you just how monstrous I can be... [meaty noises]”*

You have a guilty secret. Not an affair with your secretary or embezzling funds from the orphanage, but something more, shall we say, vital. In short, you are not entirely human. Maybe you were bitten by something foul and barely recovered, maybe there was an accident at the nuclear power plant, maybe you were shanghaied into experiments of questionable ethics or maybe you just have a peculiar ancestry. Whatever the reason, there is something of the night about you. People seem to be able to tell there is something not quite right about you even if they can't say exactly what it is. Whenever you have trusted someone enough to reveal something of your true nature to them they have fled in fear and disgust. You refuse to even get close to people because you've been betrayed before. But despite your cynical exterior, your heart is being gnawed at by uncertainty; are you truly a monster, or can you redeem yourself through your actions?

**Juncture:** Any

**Attributes:** Bod: 5  
Chi: 0 (Mag =8)  
Mnd: 5 (Cha =3)  
Ref: 5

*Add 4 points to Body or Reflexes. You have another 3 points to spend on primary attributes. The maximum for all attributes is 10.*

**Skills:** Creature Powers +5 (=13)  
Deceit +7 (10)  
Guns +7 (=12)  
Intimidation +7 (10)  
Intrusion +4 (9)

*Add 6 skill bonuses. Change Guns to Martial Arts if desired.*

**Schticks:** 3 Creature Powers  
1 Gun Schtick or Fu Power

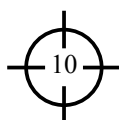
**Weapons:** 1 weapon of appropriate juncture

**Unique Schtick:** *No Place Like Home-* You never suffer juncture penalties to your Creature Powers Action Value when in your home juncture.

**Quick Schtick Pick:**

Creature Powers:  
Armour  
Regeneration  
Transformation  
Gun Schtick: Hair Trigger Neck Hairs

**Wealth Level:** Poor



# Tart With A Heart

*“Trust me, kid, that guy’s Bad News - tougher schmucks than you have tried to take him down, and they’re now holidaying at the bottom of Kowloon Harbour.”*

A staple of western action films, you are the woman with a shady past and colourful reputation, but a no more than slightly tarnished conscience. You might be an actual prostitute, but this archetype encompasses many other types of women - many work in bars, or around the fringes of criminal organisations. You are often overlooked and underestimated by men, especially testosterone-fuelled hero-types, but can almost always outwit them with your cunning, nous and accumulated knowledge. And if that doesn’t work, then they’ll learn to their cost that you’re more than capable of holding your own in a fight.

**Juncture:** Any

**Attributes:** Bod: 5  
Chi: 3 (Mag =0)  
Mnd: 5 (Cha =11)  
Ref: 5

*Add 2 to one primary attribute, and 1 to another. Add 2 to two secondary attributes.*

**Skills:** Dancing +5 (10)  
Deceit +2 (=13)  
Guns +5 (10) [max 13]  
Info/The word on the street +7 (12)  
Info/[your choice] +5 (10)  
Seduction +4 (=15)

*Add 8 skill bonuses. Change Guns to Martial Arts if desired.*

**Schticks:** 1 Gun Schtick **or** 1 Fu Power; 1 Charisma Stat Schtick.

**Unique Schtick:** *Great Listener*- You can spend a Fortune point to make someone unburden himself of a secret that’s been preying on his mind. You can only do this outside of combat, and only if no-one apart from you will hear his confession.

**Quick Schtick Pick:**  
Fast Draw

**Wealth Level:** Working Stiff

# Skills

## TEACHING OLD DRAGONS NEW TRICKS

One of the little-used facets of Feng Shui is the capacity to make up your own custom skills. Many different skills are just old favourites under a different name, but here are a handful of interesting and innovative new skills.

### Acrobatics

*Base Attribute:* Agility

*Physical Ability:* You can perform feats of acrobatics fit for a circus troupe. You can flip and jump with great aplomb, emulating the skill Martial Arts but only for movement stunts and dodging, not parrying or attacking. You have a repertoire of tricks you have practised to perfection, and stunts that use these tricks get a +2 bonus to your Acrobatics Action Value. The size of this repertoire is equal to your Skill Bonus in Acrobatics.

*Knowledge:* You know about famous tricks and the acrobats who perform them. You know about circus troupes and other places that hire acrobats. You can name particular moves when you see them.

*Contacts:* You know other acrobats you have performed with and other people associated with them like promoters. There also a chance that anyone you meet will have seen you perform your tricks.

### Dancing

*Base Attribute:* Agility

*Physical Ability:* You can dance, if you want to. While you may be most proficient in one form of dance, at a pinch you can hold your own in any form. You may also use your Dancing skill for your Dodge Action Value, but only if there is music playing. In some circumstances, you can use your Dancing skill to emulate the Seduction skill.

*Knowledge:* You have a wide range of knowledge about dancing and music that can be danced to. You can recognise just about any style of dance. You can read the significance in traditional or ritual dances. If you've travelled with a dancing troupe, you know venues where

you've performed and major troupes and dancing schools around the world.

*Contacts:* You know other dancers, as well as promoters, bookers and musicians. There's also a chance that anyone you meet will have seen you perform at some point.

### Demonology

This skill replicates one of the uses of Sorcery, so the GM may restrict its knowledge depending on the campaign you're running.

It can also serve as a template for magical skills that are far more narrow in scope than Sorcery, but are difficult to combat with general Sorcery.

*Base Attribute:* Intelligence

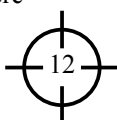
*Physical Ability:* You know how to summon supernatural creatures and get them to perform your bidding. This behaves like the Magic Schtick Summoning, except that you use your demonology skill and you have to have careful preparation for all your checks. This gives you anything up to a +5 bonus to your Action Value, depending on the time and resources you dedicate to the task. You cannot simply make a check on the spur of the moment, or in combat. Creatures you summon typically cannot be affected by sorcerers with Summoning unless their Sorcery Action Result exceeds your Demonology Action Result. You can unsummon creatures summoned by Sorcery or Demonology in the same way, but you need the usual preparation to do so.

*Knowledge:* You have deep knowledge of supernatural creatures, including their principle strengths and weaknesses, and how to summon them. You know dark lore that would turn the minds of most men to mush. You know about famous demonologists of the past.

*Contacts:* You know other demonologists. It's a small profession, so you have probably heard of all its practitioners around the world. You are on first name terms with some demons, having summoned them before. Whether or not that is a good thing is open to debate.

### Geomancy

This has been called *Info/Geomancy* in other books, but I figured it's important enough to the world of Feng Shui to get promoted to the big league. It still counts as an Info skill for all other purposes.



## SKILLS

*Base Attribute:* Intelligence

*Physical Ability:* You know how to move pieces of furniture and ornaments to promote or impede good chi flow. With a successful check you can identify Feng Shui sites or areas that could become Feng Shui sites with judicious changes. By moving small objects around in significant ways you can damage a Feng Shui site just enough to give a head-ache to anyone attuned to it. This can be a sneaky way of finding out who is attuned to a site.

*Knowledge:* You know about Feng Shui sites you have visited, and can recommend ways of improving chi flow just about anywhere you are. You can recognise the patterns of chi in an area and read the local juncture modifiers, assuming you have previous experience of the skill the modifier applies to. Otherwise, you can tell that chi is being manipulated, but in an unfamiliar way. You can debate the intricacies of Feng Shui with other experts.

*Contacts:* You know other geomancers, either as colleagues or as competition. Your skill has also probably brought a number of secret warriors knocking at your door one time or another, though you may not have recognised them as such. You also know people who deal in the tools of the geomancy trade, such as mirrors and auspicious coins.

### Hacking

Only characters from the contemporary or 2056 junctures may learn this skill.

*Base Attribute:* Intelligence

*Physical Ability:* You can gain unauthorised access to computer systems and networks. You can subvert those same computers to your ends or skim off information you need from them. You also know about computer hardware, and can phreak communication lines to gain access where there is not a terminal. You can fix broken computer equipment and install new components, given time. You can write your own software, including viruses and worms.

*Knowledge:* You know about computers, software, infamous hacking events and useful techniques. You can harden a computer system or network against hacking attacks. You know the tell-tale signs that a computer has been compromised.

*Contacts:* You know other figures from the hacking scene, probably only by their on-line aliases. You have a web of contacts in large companies that drop you the occasional juicy hint about an insecure system. You probably also know law enforcement figures who specialise in cybercrime, but they don't exactly like you. There's also a small chance that someone you meet in your local area is someone you've fixed the computer of in the past.

### Musicianship

*Base Attribute:* Manual Dexterity (or Charisma)

Characters who play instruments use Manual Dexterity as their base attribute, singers use Charisma.

*Physical Ability:* You can play a variety of musical instruments and sing. You probably specialise in one instrument, but can get by with a great many others. You can maintain your instruments and set up a stage for performance as long as it's nothing too fancy. If you are playing music, you can subtly alter the atmosphere of a location. This is considered a weak form of the Influence Magic Schtick, although it is not magical in nature.

*Knowledge:* You know quite a bit of music theory, have a very broad knowledge of pieces and styles of music and can quote many songs from memory. You know about music venues, bands and performers in your area. You know more about famous musicians than most people, but probably only about their music and careers. If your skill is high enough, you probably are a famous musician.

*Contacts:* You know other musicians, and have probably played with many of them in the past. You know the people who run the venues where you've played and might have done session work for famous icons in your area. You know the people who sell or tune instruments. There's a chance that anyone you meet has heard your music at some point, either live or recorded, but you have to make a Fortune check to see whether or not they liked it.

### Prestidigitation

*Base Attribute:* Manual Dexterity

*Physical Ability:* You can perform close-up magic tricks and other feats of dexterity such as juggling. You can pick pockets, palm small items or even misdirect someone's attention while you do something you shouldn't. Unlike Intrusion, this doesn't rely on escaping notice. Instead, you can be in plain sight, and still do something that doesn't get noticed. You can also tie balloon animals. You can make a prestidigitation check when you first meet someone to impress them with your prowess.

*Knowledge:* You know how magic tricks of all types work, and what quirks of human behaviour magicians exploit to work their art. You can spot the moment that other practitioners make the substitution or palm the coin.

*Contacts:* You know other magicians. You know stockists that specialise in magician's supplies. You also know a large number of children you've done party tricks for in the past, every single one of which hates you.

# NEW USES FOR OLD SKILLS

## Leadership

You can inspire greater competence in those you directly command. They can be troops assigned to you as part of a military unit, or people who have willingly decided to follow your command for the time being. Make a Leadership skill check against the highest Action Value of a group of 5 mooks. If you succeed, apply the Outcome as a bonus to all their Action Values for the duration of the mission, but their skills can become no higher than 12. If you fail, your botched attempt gives them all -1 Impairment due to confusion and doubt. You can attempt to improve more than 5 mooks at once, but each additional group of 5 gives you a -2 penalty to your roll. You can only have one group receiving the benefits of being inspired at a time.

Leadership can also be used to inspire named allies. To inspire, you must succeed at a Leadership task check against a difficulty equal to the Action Value of the skill

your ally is using. If you are successful, your ally gets a +2 Action Value bonus whenever he uses that skill for the rest of the scene. If you are inspiring an ally, you cannot normally take any other meaningful role in whatever is happening at the time.

## Intimidation

You can use fear to make your minions do your bidding more effectively. There must be some realistic threat hanging over them for failure. The mechanics are exactly the same as for using Leadership to inspire mooks, described previously.

You can also use Intimidation as an attack against mooks. In essence, you intimidate them into fleeing. Handle the attempt exactly as you would an attack- however you can only intimidate an entire group of mooks, and not any single members or subset of members. This makes the skill most useful when you have already whittled down the number of mooks. The difficulty of the check is the combat Action Value of the mooks- their confidence is directly linked to their prowess in battle. Multiple target penalties apply as usual, and you must achieve an Outcome of 5 or greater to successfully drive the mooks away.

# Weapons

## GUN HO

Here is a smorgasbord of hot new firearms for your Maverick Cops to go weak at the knees over. Technically, some of these are 21st-century weapons, but we promise to keep quiet if you smuggle one into the 1996 juncture.

### AI Arctic Warfare (13\*\*/5/10)

This is a bolt-action sniper rifle with a couple of interesting quirks. It's designed for cold-weather warfare so has an integral de-icer and has enlarged holes for fingers to accommodate Arctic mittens. Happily, this also makes it easier to use for any supernatural creature or abomination that fancies himself as a sniper. It is also more concealable than many sniper rifles due to its light weight, and has a decent capacity in its box magazine.

### Blunderbuss (11/5/1)

The spiritual ancestor of the shotgun, this weapon has a lot of stopping power but severely limited range. Although it takes 12 shots to reload, its ammunition can be literally anything to hand, eliminating worries about finding ammo in out of the way places like 69 AD. If you spend a shot putting a little extra in it before firing, its damage increases by 1, just like a shotgun. Using one of these to intimidate someone is especially potent- they can stare down the flared barrel and see exactly what's about to be fired at them- and gets a +2 Action Value bonus.

### CornerShot (10/5/6)

Imagine, if you will, that a machine pistol and a camcorder had a baby. The result would be something like this weapon. It is a fully-automatic pistol mounted on hinged holder so the user can be behind a corner, out of harm's way. The hinge can flex to 60 degrees, and the operator has a little camcorder screen to aim with. You can straighten it and use it as a normal gun if you want. But let's face it, if you could shoot round corners when would you ever use it like a normal gun?

### Helsing ARMS Harkonnen (16\*\*/10/1)

This breach-loading behemoth of a weapon was designed for those with superhuman strength<sup>1</sup>. Weighing

<sup>1</sup> Specifically, a vampire in the Japanese manga *Helsing*.

60 kilos, 7 feet long and firing 30mm depleted uranium shells, it is overkill of the most magnificent kind. It requires a Strength of 10 to use at all. It can be fired from a built-in bipod with a Strength of 10, fired prone (without the bipod) with a Strength of 12 or fired standing with a Strength of 14. It takes only 1 shot to crack the breach and slip a new round in, but each round has a concealment of 1 in its own right. Technically, it is a sniper rifle. The Buro liked the idea so much they built a couple of dozen of these things to issue to their strongest abominations. Kudos if you manage to slip this weapon past airport security.

### M79 Grenade Launcher (20 or 14/4/1)

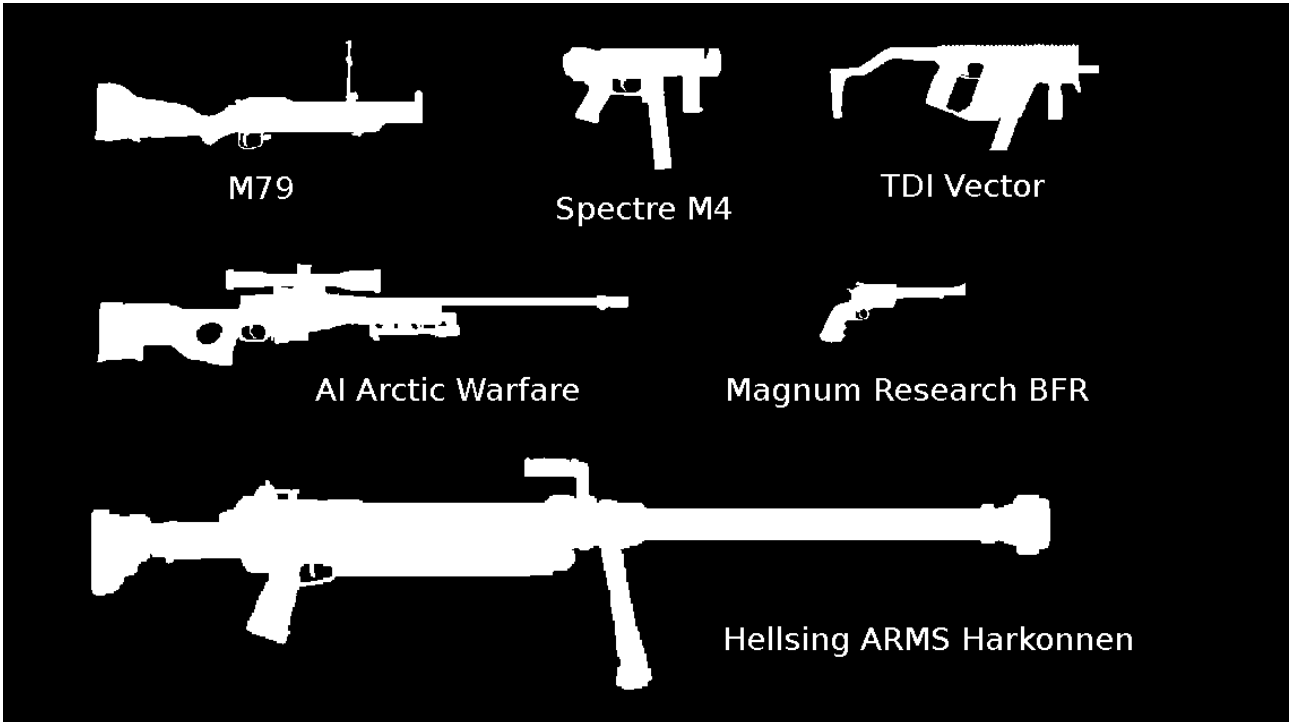
This piece was used in Vietnam and also by Arnie in Terminator 2. It looks a little like a shotgun, and makes a distinctive hollow 'whomp' sound. Grenades can, pleasingly, be made to bounce off walls, down stairs and generally cause chaos and panic. The one downside is that they can be parried. Bear in mind that the explosion has to happen *somewhere*. Deliberately batting a grenade somewhere when it's fired at you is a 3-shot defensive action where you roll Martial Arts (or possibly Sorcery if you have the Movement Magic Schtick) against the Action Result of the attack. Failure implies it lands right at your feet. If grenades are a little imprecise for the task at hand, you can also load buckshot into the M79 for the lower damage rating, but its range is even worse than a shotgun (quadruple range penalties). You can also load more exotic rounds such as CS canisters or sponge rounds for crowd dispersal. Reloading the weapon takes three shots, but every two rounds add 1 concealment to your total carry.

### Magnum Research "Biggest, Finest Revolver" (12/3/5)

This modestly-named piece of hardware can be chambered for .500 Smith & Wesson and .50 Beowulf, among others. Those who own a BFR never shut up about how it's 50% more powerful than the Desert Eagle .50, especially if someone within ear-shot is carrying one of the latter.

### Metal Storm Pistol (10/3/0+6)

The Australian Company 'Metal Storm' has been researching weapons where a whole bunch of bullets are loaded into the barrel at once, and fired sequentially. With



multiple barrels, these systems can shoot a million rounds a minute. Although they are only at the prototype stage at present, they represent too much fun for a Feng Shui character to let slip through her grasp. This pistol has but a single barrel, with the cartridge loaded in at the rear of the weapon. It can be fired in two modes- 'single shot' and 'everything left in the barrel'. In the latter, each bullet counts as a three-round burst for the purposes of damage. These things take 5 shots to reload.

**Metal Storm Rifle (13\*/5/0+6+6+6)**

Like its cousin, this baby packs multiple love in each of its three barrels. Unlike miniguns, these barrels do not need to rotate. It doesn't have a single shot mode- instead it has 'one from each barrel' and 'everything must go' modes. Again, each bullet fired counts as a burst for autofire purposes. It takes 8 shots to reload.

**PGM Hecate II (14\*\*/9/7)**

A metal-bodied sniper rifle from France with the coolest name of any in its class. Designed for use against objects rather than people- but Pledged innerwalkers have taken a shine to this weapon for use against abominations and demons because of the respectable capacity in its box magazine.

**Spectre M4 (10/3/50+1)**

A sweet little SMG with an additional forward grip. Its high-capacity magazine and the ability to carry one round in the chamber makes it a good choice for a shooter who just loves to paint the town lead.

**TDI Vector (10/3/13)**

A futuristic number that reduces recoil by having the moving parts of the weapon move downwards as it fires to pull the muzzle back down when they hit the stops. It's matte black and very futuristic looking, so the image-conscious assassin covets it for its style and accuracy.

**Tesla Blaster (10\*\*/3/-)**

Isn't science wonderful? Particularly when you can use it to send many, many volts into a target with a widget like this. It never runs out of ammo and is excellent against mooks. The drawback is that it makes a loud crackling noise when it's ready to fire, and takes 5 shots to warm up from a cold start. Typically confined to mad scientists in the contemporary and 2056 junctures.

## COMBIJET WEAPONS

When the Buro operatives in 1996 first laid their hands on captured Lodge gyrojet weapons, they felt slighted that someone else had come up with a cool futuristic weapon first. Testing showed that while deadly in the right circumstances, they lacked power at close range<sup>2</sup>. Because Buro techs can never leave well alone,

<sup>2</sup> Gyrojet weapons really were developed, some time in the 60s. They didn't catch on because the ammo was expensive and the guns really were weak at close quarters. Apparently you could render a gyrojet weapon useless by putting your finger over the end of the barrel. I took their word for it on that one, as should any PC who likes counting on her fingers.



## WEAPONS

they developed the combijet system. In essence, these weapons combine the best of both gyrojet and standard firearms. Each 'bullet' has two stages: a normal percussion cap and a small rocket motor. When first fired, it travels down the barrel like a normal bullet. Once it reaches the end, however, the tail end of the bullet falls away to reveal the rocket motor which then ignites.

In game terms, only characters who are Rich can afford to use one of these regularly, and that's assuming they somehow gain access to the schematics that the Buro is keeping close to its chest. They suffer the same reliability problems as other Buro firearms, although the failures are rather more pyrotechnic in nature. Like conventional firearms, Combijet weapons are ineffective under water.

### **Combijet Back-up Arm (11/1/2+1)**

Although it has a truly pitiful capacity, this weapon packs a surprising punch for its weight and size.

### **Combijet Pistol (12/2/5+1)**

The first production model using the concept, it has a slick pistol grip but a mediocre capacity.

### **Combijet Rifle (13\*\*/4/20)**

Although this weapon is modelled after assault rifles, it is not actually capable of full autofire. However, its power, slim-line profile and reasonable capacity can work wonders.

## BIGGER BANGS

It's time for the big ordnance. All these weapons should never be considered usual equipment for a character, and most especially they should never be made Signature Weapons. These are the gifts you bring to the party at the military base, even though they already have plenty. Using any of these attracts extreme attention from any local authorities. They cross the line between 'vigilante' and 'terrorist', so only plan on using them if you really need to. Most of them require some kind of firing platform- although characters fortunate enough to have Hardware Schticks have access to some of these, the sick puppies.

### **Artillery Piece (26/-/-)**

For the purposes of personal damage, one era's artillery weapon is pretty much like another. Hitting a moving target incurs a +10 difficulty modifier, as it isn't what they are designed for. They hit like a big explosion, however. Should an area be saturated by fire from these

weapons, every character must make a Fortune check against the number of artillery pieces firing into their immediate area. If a character fails, she takes 12 damage from being a little too close to one explosion. If she fumbles, she gets tagged directly. Ouch.

### **Flamethrower (12/-/12)**

Once used to clear trenches, these horrific weapons set anything they hit on fire, continuing to do 4 wound points every 3 shots that by-pass Toughness. Putting yourself out is a three-shot action if you stop, drop and roll, but only a 1 shot action if you find a source of water to douse yourself with. GMs with a sense of humour may see to it that nearby pots and pans are actually filled with something flammable.

### **M203 Grenade Launcher (20/+1/1)**

This is not a weapon in its own right, but as an under-barrel attachment to an assault rifle. It enables the shooter to fire grenades as easily as lead. It takes 3 shots to slot a fresh grenade round into place (and every two rounds constitutes 1 concealment). The M203 is designed for M16 rifles, but equivalents exist for the assault rifle of your choice. See the entry for the M79 grenade launcher for fun with grenades. These attachments are only used in serious war-zones, hence their presence in this section.

### **Metal Storm Field Piece (20\*\*/-/1)**

These things have 38 barrels, each loaded with a number of bullets. They are all fired in under a second. If anyone is hit by one of these, it's a race between gunshot trauma and lead poisoning.

### **Minigun (15\*\*/-/100)**

These are often found on tanks and helicopters. They are capable of full autofire, naturally.

### **Obnoxiously Big Chaingun (18\*\*/-/100)**

Typically packed on naval vessels, these things are bigger and nastier than miniguns.

### **Rocket Launcher (26/-/1)**

Your basic rocket launcher. Treat it like a big explosion. Some rocket launchers are designed to be fired from the shoulder.

### **Sentry Gun (13\*\*/-/100)**

These handy contraptions can be set up and left. They fire at anything that enters the field of vision of their

camera. The Perception they have varies from 10 up to 20, depending on the sophistication of the software and the camera used. They make an attack every shot, with a Guns Action Value of 12. They don't have friend or foe recognition, so sneaking up to it and turning it round is an excellent prank. Hitting one has a difficulty of 18, and you have to weather two shots worth of return fire even if you hit it.

### Tesla Cannon (20\*\*\*/-/-)

Weird science types might have one of these handy in their lair. Anyone who gets within about 10 metres of it is automatically struck by a bolt from it, and is hit again in 3 shots time if he doesn't get out of the way. Unnamed characters are taken out automatically<sup>3</sup>.

## SHELL SHOCKS

You know that part in the main *Feng Shui* rule book, right there on page 65, where it says that different types of ammunition have no effect on game mechanics? It's a lie. In fact, ammunition has no game effect unless said ammunition is *really cool*. Here are some speciality types of shotgun ammunition to play with.

### Baton Round

Originally six-inch wooden cylinders, these nominally non-lethal projectiles are useful for crowd control, and can be recovered undamaged after use. Whatever weapon they are fired from, they only do 8 damage.

### Dragon Breath Shell

Strictly for pump-action shotguns only, this incendiary shell turns your shotgun into a flame-thrower. When you fire it, it shoots flame for a while afterwards. The damage of the shell is 10, but for the next two regular actions after the initial firing you have a small continuously-firing flame-thrower that does the same damage, whether you want it to or not.

### R.I.P. cartridge

The Round Irritant Personnel cartridge is a shotgun round filled with CS gas and smoke-generating powder. When one of these things is fired, the area gets a generous helping of smoke and anyone hit with it directly suffers 1 point of Impairment for three shots.

### Rubber Ball Shell

A shotgun shell with tiny rubber balls. When fired into an enclosed space, they continue to bounce around. For the two shots immediately after the round is fired, make an attack against anybody in the confined space with an Action Value of 12. The damage of the initial shot and the bouncing follow-ups is 10.

### Siren Shell

A shotgun shell that is, essentially, a whistle. Ear protection is advised. Damage from the round itself is negligible.

### White Phosphorus

Another shotgun shell, that burns and creates a smoke cloud after firing. Damage is much the same as a regular shotgun round, but the smoke and burning can be useful. This ammunition is actually banned from use in warfare by the United Nations, although some banana republics haven't agreed to the protocol that bans them.

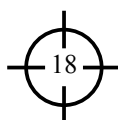
## THE ARMOURY

So, you want a little more detail in your hand to hand weapons? Well, without compromising the free-wheeling spirit of the main rules, here are some weapon categories you can use to broaden your horizons. And by 'broaden your horizons' I mean, of course, 'kick ass'. These weapons are not entirely compatible with the weapons listed in *Iron and Silk*, but you can easily convert from one to the other by looking at appropriate types. In fact, you could let your players pick which write-up they want, as the versions here are typically easier to hide.

These weapons are given a concealment rating, which reflects how easy it is to tell when someone's carrying a weapon as with guns. Walking down the street with a naked blade is an invitation to be met by police in the contemporary juncture, but in other junctures simply carrying a weapon may not cause consternation. For this reason, higher concealment weapons are more appropriate to other junctures, and innerwalkers who roam the streets of Hong Kong tend to leave their big toys at home unless they're expecting trouble. Some of the problems can be offset by having a carrying case for the weapon, but getting it out in a hurry takes 8 shots of fumbling with catches while your buddies take a beating. Most cases are themselves Innocuous Weapons, below.

It goes without saying that you should only use these rules if you want a bit more variety in your weapons to excite your jaded palette.

<sup>3</sup> That's what the \*\*\* means here. Hey, it's not every day you get the opportunity to use 3 consecutive asterisks.



## WEAPONS

### **Classic Big Weapon (Str+4/6/-)**

The basic damage-dealing weapon. It lacks finesse, but gets the job done. Swords, axes or indeed any weapon of the largest kind fall into this category. Weapons of this type are not really concealable, and unless it's in a case or a large sports bag they attract comment and the attention of law enforcement.

### **Collapsible Weapon (Str+4/6 or 2/-)**

Some weapons can be disassembled for transport. This makes them excellent for avoiding notice, but they require time to put back together before they can be used. In combat, this takes 5 shots. Certain pole-arms and axes are collapsible as well as more exotic options.

### **Huge Weapon (Str+5/9/-)**

This weapon is just oversized. Some such weapons are exaggerated versions of normal weapons, but others only exist in versions of this size. Because of the extreme size and weight of these weapons, any attempts to use a Fu Power while wielding one suffers a -2 Action Value penalty. Furthermore, when in combat with an unarmed enemy the user of this weapon also suffers a -2 Action Value penalty, which stacks with the first penalty if he tries any Fu Powers.

### **Innocuous Weapon (Str+3/5/-)**

Although these weapons are easy to spot, they don't look like weapons. Baseball bats, golf clubs and spades are three examples of innocuous weapons. Even when noticed, they won't register as weapons unless the context makes it very apparent they will be used as such. One man carrying a sledgehammer down a road is not suspicious. Four men with sledgehammers blocking your exit from an alleyway spell trouble.

### **Mook Shredding Weapon (Str+3/4/-)**

Some weapons are very quick and precise. These are less effective against skilful enemies, but make dispatching mooks that bit easier. Rapiers and butterfly swords fit the bill for these weapons. The Outcome you need to take down a mook down is 2 points lower when you use these weapons.

### **Parrying Weapon (Str+3/4/-)**

These weapons are particularly effective at parrying. When you parry a Martial Arts attack with one, you get a +1 bonus to your parry (on top of the normal +3 for an active defence). Some swords are designed with parrying in mind, as are staves.

### **Slightly Concealable Weapon (Str+3/3/-)**

These weapons offer a trade-off between damage and concealment. They can be hidden under a largish coat or in a small bag. Small swords, large knives and any of the middling size of weapons match this description. Again, unless they're in a case or bag they are seen as dangerous by law enforcement agencies if detected.

### **Technical Weapon (Str+3/5/-)**

These weapons trade off raw damage dealing potential for the capability of performing more effective manoeuvres. If the Outcome of an attack with this weapon is 6 or more, then the attack causes some additional benefit beyond damage. Typical benefits include disarming an opponent or tripping them, but the precise nature is up to the GM and is usually consistent for the same weapon. Hook swords, twin swords, pole-arms and other curious weapons fall into this category.

### **Very Concealable Weapon (Str+2/0/-)**

These weapons are the smallest of the small. Tiny little daggers, razor blades and other fiddly items fall into this category. Barring metal detectors or cavity searches, you can take these babies anywhere. They don't do more damage than a hearty kick, but at least they have an edge.

## SIGNATURE WEAPONS

Everyone loves the cheesy goodness of signature weapons. Those 3 extra points of damage are so much fun. Here we have some alternative benefits from taking a signature weapon, should you decide you want ol' Betsy to be a little different from other signature weapons out there. With these rules, you can buy signature weapon multiple times for the same weapon; you just can't buy the same benefit twice. All signature weapons, whatever ability they get, have the usual robustness to loss or damage. Most of these benefits can be applied equally well to guns as to martial weapons. Naturally, only the character taking the schtick gets the benefits described here.

### **Built For Stunts**

Some weapons are particularly adept at performing stunts. Whether it's using a whip-sword to snag ceiling beams or a flexible staff to trip and embarrass enemies, stunts that take advantage of the characteristics of the weapon gain a +2 Action Value bonus.

## *The Big Table of Wacky Signature Weapon Ideas*

Anvil  
 Atlatl  
 Bag of marbles  
 Balloons  
 Bolas  
 Boomerang  
 Chopsticks  
 Cheese grater  
 Corkscrew  
 Cymbals  
 Dumb-bells  
 Egg whisk  
 Frying pan  
 Golf club  
 Hunga munga  
 Iron  
 Jukebox  
 Knife boot  
 Knifewrench (for kids!)  
 Knitting needle  
 Leaf blower  
 Left-handed Rickenbacker Bass Guitar  
 Library stamp  
 Mousetrap  
 Newspaper  
 Owl  
 Parasol  
 Pen (Gets a +4 AV against swords)  
 Pineapple  
 Pizza wheel  
 Plaits  
 Potato masher  
 Quiver  
 Rake  
 Razor-edged hat  
 Reel of razor wire  
 Scythe  
 Sex toy  
 Shillelagh  
 Sickle  
 Strimmer  
 String of sausages  
 Tape measure  
 Trident  
 Umbrella  
 Violin  
 Wheel of cheese  
 Xylophone  
 Yo-yo  
 Zither

### Concealable

Weapons can be made a little more concealable with the right approach. A sword concealed in a false leg, for example, or as part of an exotic costume, is much more difficult for others to spot. Zatoichi's sword cane is a good example of a weapon of this type. Concealable signature weapons get a -2 concealment bonus. Naturally, trying to reduce concealment below 0 has no additional effect.

### Extra Damage

This gives the weapon +3 damage in your hands. Nothing more to see here, move along.

### Fu-Friendly

By channelling your chi through this weapon which has a spiritual significance for you, it becomes an extension of your body. You can use any Fu Powers you know that normally require bare-handed attacks with this weapon<sup>4</sup>.

### Mook-tastic

The signature weapon ability for the secret warrior in a hurry. The Outcome needed to take down mooks is 2 lower than it would be otherwise.

### Parrying

When this weapon is used to parry an attack, you get a +2 Action Value bonus due to its carefully honed defensive properties.

### Utility

This weapon has built into it equipment that helps you with another (non-combat) skill. Maybe the grip of your gun contains a set of lock-picks (Intrusion), the pommel of your sword has the seal of a noble and respected family (Leadership) or the haft of your axe conceals healing powders (Medicine). When you use this utility, you get a +2 bonus to the relevant Action Value.

## EXTRA WEAPONS

Sometimes a character wants to change their weapons. If a character wants to seize a dropped weapon, then he can- he just can't keep it forever. If a character wants to change one of their weapon picks, then he can do so between sessions without penalty. If a character wants to add a normal weapon to his character on a permanent basis, then he can do so by spending 4 Experience Points.

<sup>4</sup> Helloooooo Flying Windmill Kick.

## August 13

*I came to in some dank underground cell - I couldn't tell if I was in the same building or not. There was a toilet against one wall, which I took as a good sign. They wouldn't bother with facilities if the cell was only meant to hold people until they were killed somewhere else. By the smell, the previous occupant hadn't cared much where he relieved himself. I had bandages around my back, which was another good sign. My jaw was swollen like a melon but by some miracle it wasn't actually broken. Of course, just because they wanted to keep me alive didn't mean they'd leave me unhurt.*

*Or whole.*

*As is usual when I was in that kind of grim situation, I found myself recalling all the bad decisions that had led me to it. It usually started with deciding to live with my mother when Dad moved back to England. Then there was deciding I wanted to make a fast buck working for one of the gangs instead of sticking with the job at the copy shop.*

*I didn't have much time to muse before the metal door scraped open. The girl I'd seen before stepped into the noisome room and pushed the door closed behind her. She wasn't carrying any weapons and I hadn't seen any guards outside, but if she had been my attacker earlier I doubted that rushing her would improve my situation.*

*"Before anything else," I mumbled, trying to ignore the pain, "I want you to know that I am prepared to tell you absolutely anything. I've always respected the Brown gang. In fact, I thought about joining you lot before I met Tsien- there's a funny story about that actually-"*

*She cut me off with a look. She couldn't have been more than twelve years old but I couldn't see anything childish in her expression. Okay, so I hadn't really been looking very carefully when I entered the house but she'd sneaked up behind me and had practically felled me with a single blow. I started wondering if she was reason the Brown gang's fortune had changed. No wonder no-one wanted to talk about it, if some of the toughest hoods in the Hong Kong underworld were being rolled by someone in a pinafore dress. Just the same, there was something that didn't quite fit. I couldn't put my finger on it, but I felt sure that even if I*

*was close to the truth with my idea, there was more to the picture than that. Her style seemed to be punches, for starters. I couldn't see her firing a gun without falling over backwards. It seemed more likely that she was Brown's new psycho.*

*I brought myself back to the here-and-now and realised the girl was staring at me. She looked... thoughtful.*

*"Mr. Brown will be here soon," she said, presently. "If you put up a little resistance, he will hurt you a little and then be satisfied with your answers. If you tell him everything right away, he will assume you are lying."*

*It was good advice, and I grudgingly decided to follow it. The girl threw me a bottle of water:*

*"It is important to replace fluids if you have been bleeding. And eat iron rich foods."*

*I gestured hopelessly to the cell walls, "I'll tell room service to bring me some liver."*

*She looked at me blankly for a moment then cracked a big smile. I laughed, a little nervously it has to said, and she laughed too. Then she pressed an old, small cushion into my hands.*

*"Hide this under your shirt. Mr. Brown prefers to strike the abdomen. Your friends escaped. He will ask you where they will have gone."*

*I felt a small surge of pride that the shot I had got off had alerted the others to the ambush, but it was a hollow kind of pride.*

*No sooner had I padded my clothes than Boss Brown stormed in with a couple of his heavies. As they hauled me to my feet and held my arms, Brown gestured to the girl in the corner:*

*"I see you've met little Mingxia. Mingxia the Merciless, we call her. She's quite a charmer, isn't she?"*

*He rolled his cigar around his mouth while his men laughed dutifully.*

*Then he slipped the brass bar back over his knuckles and got down to business.*

# Schticks

## ARCANOWAVE DEVICES

### Aperture Device

BTM forces and Abomination shock troops are not generally known for their mobility. Someone noticed that lack of mobility was a disadvantage, and a brief to improve this got sent to the lab-rats at the CDCA. Desperate to redeem themselves after their failure to replicate the Gatemaker device the Jammers are so fond of, they put what they had learned from that project to work. The result is the Aperture Device. Resembling a futuristic ray gun, when it is fired at a flat metal, rock or concrete surface at least two feet by two feet, it creates a blue-green circle of energy. The second time it is fired, it creates an orange circle of energy. Once both are deployed, these two circles are linked by a stretch of the Netherworld disconnected from the rest of it, and only a micron in length.

Basically, it creates two linked portals. When only one is in place, it cannot be passed through. Each portal only remains open for a number of shots equal to the sum of both numbers of the dice rolled when the weapon is fired. This means that sometimes the first portal closes before the second can be opened, which is one of the problems the lab-rats are trying to fix. Being caught halfway through when one of the portals closes is... unpleasant... to say the least. The other main drawback is that flat metal and concrete surfaces of that size are not exactly common in many places where Buro operatives are sent.

Should the Aperture Device malfunction, any open portals close. And always remember- speedy thing goes in, speedy thing comes out.

### DNA Injector

The DNA Injector is an over-large syringe with an automatic plunger mechanism. It contains a small sample of genetic material from a transformed animal. When triggered, it injects some of the specially treated material into the user. This material temporarily grants the recipient the ability to use one transformed animal power. The power must be specified when the material is prepared, and must be possessed by the transformed animal the material came from. The effect lasts until the

end of the sequence. The user spends her own chi to activate the power, and gets a mutation point when the injector is first used and every time she uses the power it gave her. If the DNA Injector suffers a malfunction, the genetic material is destroyed. The injector can be prepared for new genetic material (if the original is destroyed, or if a new power is desired) with an Arcanowave Devices roll of 15 or more. On a failure, the material is destroyed and some more must be obtained. Note that anyone can attempt the roll to prepare the material, not just the character with the DNA Injector schtick. Unless there is a malfunction, the injector can work indefinitely on a single sample.

### Gravity Shield

This device creates a wall of force three feet in diameter that can protect you from attacks. Once it is operational, you can choose to parry with it against any kind of attack, based on your Arcanowave Devices Action Value. When you plug the device in, you must make a task check Difficulty 5 using Arcanowave Devices to turn it on correctly. If you fail, the device fails to operate but you can try again 3 shots later. If the device malfunctions, it encloses you in an indestructible, frictionless sphere. You cannot stand up, and the sphere can be pushed around with ease and slips down any slope it encounters. The sphere only disappears at the GM's discretion. It's not often your own equipment can be complicit in your kidnapping. If you parry or attempt to parry an attack that got a roll of boxcars, the shield turns itself off immediately after the attack, forcing you to turn it back on again.

### Helix Eviscerator

The bigger, meaner cousin of the Helix Ripper, fresh from the Architect labs. It weighs close on 25 kilos when shouldered but only 10 when plugged in. It has a damage rating of 16 and a concealment rating of 8. It can penetrate 12cm of inorganic matter and the wounds it inflicts cannot be healed by conventional means (as with the Ripper). It is not especially effective at taking out mooks. However, any target hit by it has one Fortune die stripped from him without benefit. Should the Eviscerator suffer a malfunction, it consumes any remaining Fortune points its wielder has and inflicts 10 Wound Points on him that are not reduced by Toughness. This is in addition to the usual drawbacks of an arcanowave device malfunction. This is the reason it doesn't see wider use.

## PFG (Physique Feedback Gun)

The PFG is an experimental project by the CDCA designed to deal with opponents that are particularly physically tough. Determined raids by Jammers were the initial provocation for this work, but it has found use in all sorts of places. The PFG looks like a medium-sized handgun but with a flared barrel like a trombone (the original prototype was the size and shape of a tuba). Simply put, the PFG disrupts the flow of physical chi through the target in such a way that it is reversed and amplified. The weapon is fired using Arcanowave Devices and does base damage equal to the target's Constitution, by-passing armour and Toughness. Each time it is fired, the user suffers 1 mutation point.

## Second Chance Unit

Designed by a mad Buro statistician who took his own life after sketching the first prototype, the second chance unit offers a way to avoid embarrassing slip-ups. Whenever the user fails at any skill roll, he has the option of triggering the Second Chance Unit. If he does this, he can make the roll again but this time use his Arcanowave Devices skill. Whatever the new Outcome, he gets mutation points equal to the number rolled on the negative die of this second roll (if this was a six and rolled again, he takes the full added value). The unit can only be used once a session.

# CREATURE POWERS

## Duplication

You have the ability to generate multiple copies of yourself. You can maintain a number of copies (including the original) equal to your Magic attribute. Each duplicate has your normal attributes, schticks and mundane equipment- although weapons and special items are not duplicated. Any damage taken by one of your bodies is also taken by all the others- you also have to share Chi, Fu, Fortune and Magic points and suffer any other effects (such as Impairment) in common. You can leave some bodies standing or sitting while you concentrate on one in particular. As long as you only actively control one body at a time, you act normally. If you try to use more than one body at once, then you suffer Impairment due to concentration issues equal to the number of active bodies. All of your incarnations act on the same shot of initiative- although you can Active Dodge with all of your active bodies during a particular shot with no additional penalty. You can only reduce the number of copies you have by absorbing one back into one of your other bodies.

Generating or re-absorbing a duplicate takes a full sequence.

## Elemental Body: Air

The Elemental Body Schticks were introduced in *Glimpse of the Abyss*, and catered for the traditional Chinese elements of Earth, Wood, Metal, Fire and Water. Any Western geomancers who wanted to be able to create an Air Elemental would add the following schtick to their repertoire:

Air Elementals gain a +1 bonus to their Dodge Action Value, and a +1 bonus to initiative. They are immune to any damaging effects that depend on their victim's need to breathe, including suffocation, drowning, and inhaled poisons.

## Feral Strength

Your power in combat owes little to form and skill and everything to raw strength and fury. You may use your Creature Powers Action Value when making a Martial Arts attack unless you are using a Fu power.

## Fluid Form

Your body can reconfigure itself more or less instantly. What is your foot one moment can be your head the next. This makes you able to counter attacks against you with frightening speed. Whenever you successfully parry an attack against you, you may make a Martial Arts attack against the foe you parried (assuming you could attack them normally) with no shot cost. This schtick is also useful for slipping bonds and squeezing through narrow gaps. Called shots against your body (but not items you hold) are no more effective than a regular attack.

## Scattered Form

You can break yourself down into a large number of small creatures. They may be bats, rats or moving blobs of shadow. Transforming yourself into this form or back takes 8 shots. The number of creatures in your swarm is equal to your remaining Wound Points. Each member of the swarm has any skills of yours that are appropriate to the new form with an Action Value of 1. However, you also gain the Group Attack schtick (*Glimpse of the Abyss*, pg 10) so your swarm members can attack together. No group of your creatures can fight with an Action Value higher than your normal combat Action Value, however. The swarm must stay more or less together and act as one. Each swarm member is considered a mook when taking damage, and for each swarm member that is killed you take 1 Wound Point (and, naturally, are down one member of your swarm). If the last member of your swarm is killed, you must pass a Death Check with a difficulty of

10 to survive. Even if you do, you must spend a handful of days regenerating your swarm before you can resume your regular form and act normally.

### Shadow Reach

All shadows are connected to the same primal darkness, a darkness you carry in your soul. You can reach into one shadow and out of another nearby. The maximum range for this ability is your Magic attribute in metres. Using this ability to attack is a standard -2 stunt- it's a little difficult to land a blow properly when your arm is metres away from your body- but your target doesn't get an opportunity to take a defensive action. If you buy a second schtick in Shadow Reach, you can even pass bodily from one shadow to another if the shadow is large enough. You spend some of time in the darkness before you return. Roll an open die, and spend that many shots in transit. With a third schtick, you can take one person with you (or an object you can carry not larger than a person).

## DRIVING SCHTICKS

Driving schticks first featured in *Golden Comeback*. Their cost is 8+X, where X is the number of Driving Schticks you have when you have bought the new one. You can only buy Driving Schticks if your Driving Action Value is 12 or more.

### Boarding Action

If you succeed in a Driving task check with a Difficulty equal to the Driving skill of a larger vehicle, then you can perform a boarding action. Your vehicle lodges somewhere in the larger vehicle, allowing anyone to move from one to the other. For example, you could get a car stuck in the side of an articulated lorry, jump a motorbike onto the back of a speed boat or steer a hang glider onto a jumbo jet as it takes off. Although this schtick doesn't guarantee success at the boarding action, it does guarantee that if you do succeed your vehicle shall remain lodged until someone specifically takes action to remove it.

### Grand Theft Auto

You are no stranger to... er... commandeering a vehicle. When you try to break into a vehicle in a hurry, or wrestle someone out of a passing car, you can use your Driving skill instead of Intrusion or Martial Arts respectively. This doesn't let you break into particularly important vehicles (Popemobile, anyone?), or throw bad guys out their cars willy-nilly, but it does mean that if you need wheels in a hurry, you can get them. It also

guarantees that a suitable vehicle is nearby when you need one.

### Peas in a Drum

If there's an enemy in the vehicle you are driving, you can swerve and change speed abruptly to throw them around. You can make attack against a passenger in your vehicle using your Driving skill. The damage is low, typically 6, depending on what he bumps into. It may not hurt him much, but it can knock him off his feet or ruin his aim. The rest of your passengers suffer no ill effects, apart from lurching about a bit. You can make attacks against multiple targets in your vehicle, using the normal rules for doing so.

## FU POWERS

### Path of the Guarded Moon

#### Guarded Step **Chi: 1 / Shots: 1**

You can weave a barrier almost impenetrable to mêlée attacks with your hand-to-hand weapon. As a defensive action, parry a Martial Arts attack against you with a +3 bonus to your Active Dodge Action Value (on top of the +3 for a normal Active Dodge). This schtick is ineffective against other attacks or if you aren't wielding a hand-to-hand weapon. *Prerequisite: None; Path: Guarded Stance.*

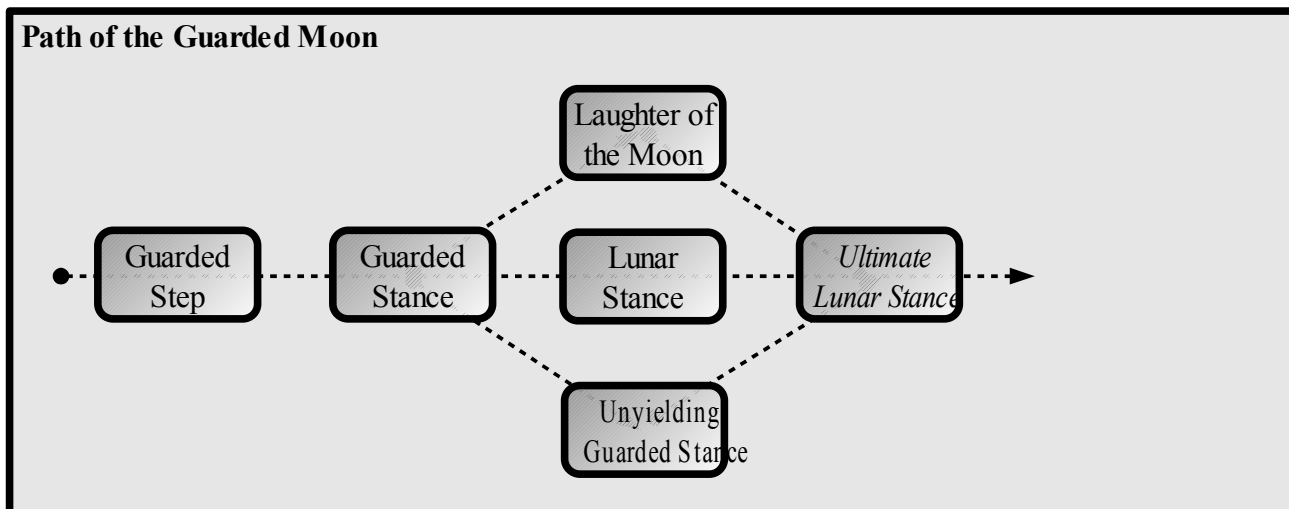
#### Guarded Stance **Chi: 1 / Shots: 1**

You have honed the art of defence to the point where even bullets are easy to deflect for you. As long as you have a hand-to-hand weapon, you can deflect most projectiles fired at you. You can parry a Guns attack against you with a +2 bonus to your Active Dodge Action Value. This counts as a defensive action. *Prerequisite: Guarded Step; Path: Laughter of the Moon, Lunar Stance, Unyielding Guarded Stance.*

#### Laughter of the Moon **Chi: 2 / Shots: 1**

Your skill at deflecting bullets is without peer. As a defensive action, parry a Guns attack against you with a +2 bonus to your Active Dodge Action Value. If the attack fails to hit you, you may deflect it to another character in line of sight from you, even the one who fired at you. The Action Result of this attack is the same as the Action Result of the attack against you. You need to be wielding a mêlée weapon to use this power. *Prerequisite: Guarded Stance; Path: Ultimate Lunar Stance.*





**Lunar Stance**

**Chi: 3 / Shots: 1**

Your perception of the flow of Chi in order to defend yourself has reached epic proportions. As a defensive action, you may parry a Sorcery attack against you with a +3 bonus to your Active Dodge Action Value.  
*Prerequisite: Guarded Stance; Path: Ultimate Lunar Stance.*

**Eyes of the Beast**

**Chi: 1 / Shots: 1**

There is dark knowledge in your eyes. You can study a character for a short while, and gain an insight into their nature. You discover what Creature Power schticks they possess and whether they have the Summoning Magic Schtick. *Prerequisite: None; Path: Claw of the Beast.*

**Unyielding Guarded Stance**

**Chi: 2 / Shots: 1**

Your keen eye and fantastic reflexes make the old magic trick of catching a bullet a reality. As long as you have a free hand, you can parry a Guns attack against you with a +3 bonus to your Active Dodge Action Value.  
*Prerequisite: Guarded Stance; Path: Ultimate Lunar Stance.*

**Claw of the Beast**

**Chi: 2 / Shots: 3**

Your diabolical strength makes you a troublesome enemy. Make a Martial Arts attack against an opponent. If the attack hits, then instead of doing damage you throw your target your Strength in metres, plus the Outcome of the attack. Even if you miss, the target is thrown half your Strength (rounding up) in metres. *Prerequisite: Eyes of the Beast; Path: Vengeance of the Beast.*

**Ultimate Lunar Stance Chi: 7 / Shots: 0**

Your mastery of the art of defending against incoming blows is legendary. It has reached the stage where you are only ever hit if you mean to be. Until the end of the sequence, you may parry any attack with a +7 bonus to your Active Dodge Action Value. The effect ends early if you choose not to parry any attack, or are attacked by an enemy you were unaware of. *Prerequisite: Laughter of the Moon, Lunar Stance, Unyielding Guarded Stance.*

**Vengeance of the Beast Chi: 2 / Shots: 0**

Use this ability after you are subjected to an effect that relies on your supernatural nature. Examples are Summoning checks and the Wave Suppressor arcanowave device. You may use this power after any roll has been made to see if the effect succeeds in order to negate the effect entirely. No roll is required. *Prerequisite: Claw of the Beast; Path: Rage of the Beast.*

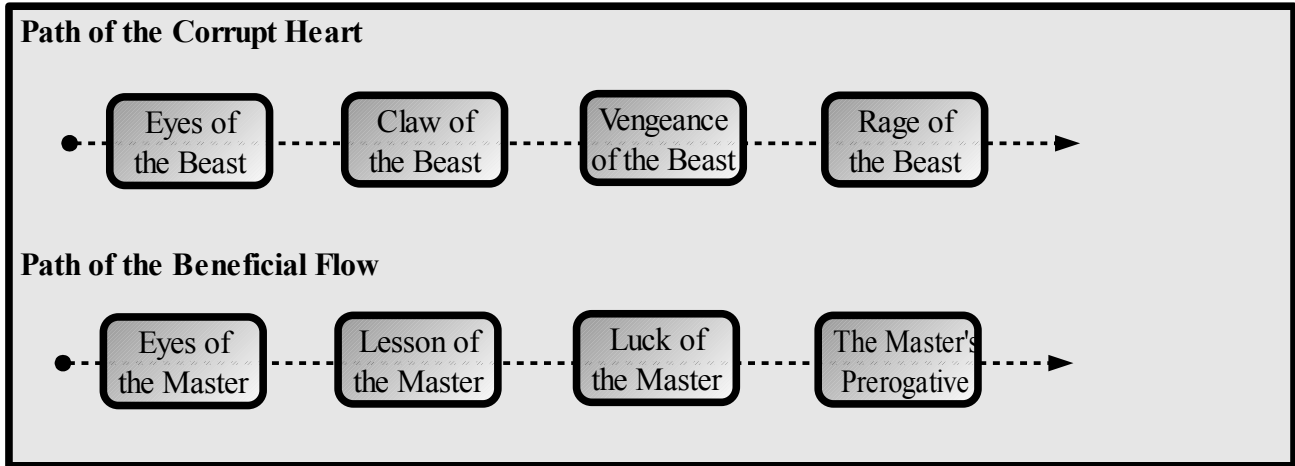
**Path of the Corrupt Heart**

This is a very special Fu Path, dedicated to such Supernatural Creatures that have the will and discipline to use their unnatural heritage to best effect. Characters may only take schticks from this path if they have the Creature Powers skill.

**Rage of the Beast**

**Chi: 5 / Shots: 0**

That is not dead which can eternal lie- and while you can still be killed you can keep kicking much longer than any would expect. Use this schtick whenever you would be required to make a death check. You may delay the death check until the end of the sequence, and automatically pass any death checks you make in the meantime. The death check at the end of the sequence only has the difficulty of the check you triggered this ability for, regardless of how many Wound Points you have suffered since. These Wound Points do not go away, however. *Prerequisite: Vengeance of the Beast.*



**Path of the Beneficial Flow**

**The Master's Prerogative**

**Chi: 5 / Shots: 0**

**Eyes of the Master Chi: 0 / Shots: 0**

You are adept at perceiving the chi flow through people's bodies, striking them where they are their weakest. The damage for your punches or kicks is equal to your Chi attribute. They do not count as Fu attacks unless you use another Fu power. The observant among you will notice that this duplicates the Old Master's unique schtick. Old Masters count as having this schtick, and can get the other Fu Powers later in the path. It does, however, make all their Fu powers slightly more expensive to buy. Ain't that a shame. *Prerequisite: None; Path: Lesson of the Master.*

Some old devils can be very quick over the ground when they have reason to be; such as if there's a sale on plum wine. Before rolling initiative, you may activate this schtick to roll initiative using your Chi attribute instead of your Speed. *Prerequisite: Luck of the Master.*

**Path of the Harmonious Chord**

This is a path specifically of use to Martial Artists who also know Sorcery. Magic Cops are the most frequent users of this path.

**Lesson of the Master Chi: 3 / Shots: 0**

When you are hurt, you can concentrate the flow of chi in your body to lessen the injury. Whenever you are hurt you may use this schtick to substitute your Chi attribute for your Toughness when calculating damage. *Prerequisite: Eyes of the Master; Path: Luck of the Master.*

**Harmonious Stance Chi: 1 / Shots: 1**

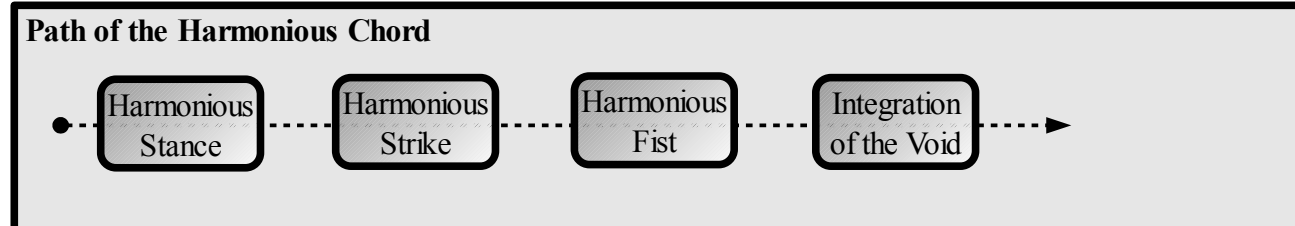
You can use a mixture of your magic and your martial arts prowess to deflect just about any attack. As a defensive action, you may parry any kind of attack using your Martial Arts skill, even if the attack is a type you could not normally parry with that skill. *Prerequisite: None; Path: Harmonious Strike.*

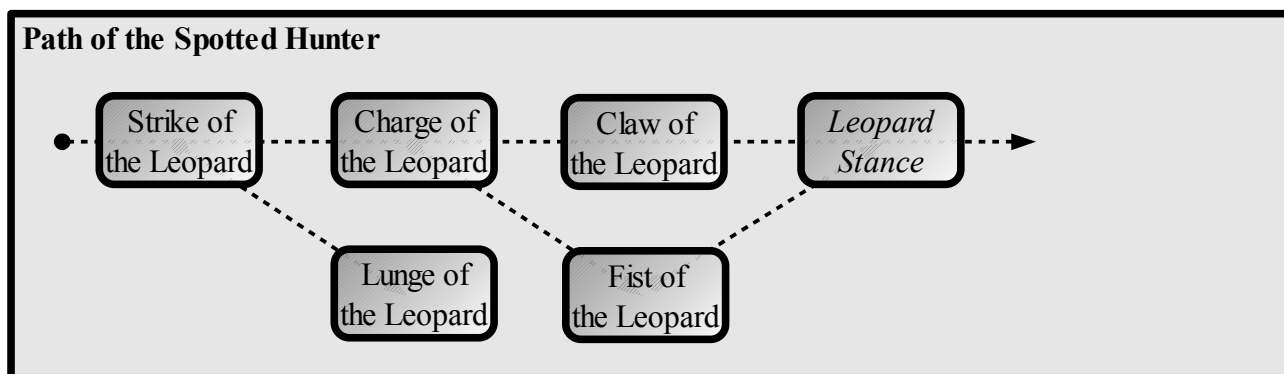
**Luck of the Master Chi: 2 / Shots: 0**

Sometimes all it takes to be lucky is a greater appreciation of the flow of chi through the world. Whenever you are called upon to make a Fortune check you may substitute your Chi attribute for your Fortune when making the check. This does not allow you to spend Chi points as Fortune. *Prerequisite: Lesson of the Master; Path: The Master's Prerogative.*

**Harmonious Strike Chi: 1 / Shots: 3**

If you have the Blast Magic Schtick or the Blast Creature Power, you may make Blast attacks using your Martial Arts Action Value against targets inside normal mêlée range. You must have a free hand to deliver the Blast. *Prerequisite: Harmonious Stance; Path: Harmonious Fist.*





**Harmonious Fist**

**Chi: 2 / Shots: 3**

*Path: Claw of the Leopard, Fist of the Leopard.*

You have discovered a way to make magic more effective if you first touch your enemy. Make a Martial Arts attack against an enemy. If you hit, do not deal damage but instead make a Sorcery attack with a bonus to your Action Value equal to the Outcome of the Martial Arts attack. This Sorcery check has no shot cost. You can delay making the Sorcery check until later in the scene, and still only have a shot cost of 0. You can use this power against the same target multiple times, adding the bonuses from the Outcomes of your Martial Arts attacks together until you unleash the accumulated power all at once. *Prerequisite: Harmonious Strike; Path: Integration of the Void.*

**Integration of the Void Chi: 1 / Shots: 0**

You may attach a Fu Power to a sorcerous blast. Any mention of a Martial Arts attack in the Fu power description instead refers to a blast attack. The chi cost of Integration of the Void is added to the chi cost of the Fu Power. This ability may not be used with Fu Powers that are clearly incompatible with a Blast attack. For simplicity, Fu Powers that use your attributes to determine effectiveness still use the same attributes. *Prerequisite: Harmonious Fist, Harmonious Stance.*

**Path of the Spotted Hunter**

**Strike of the Leopard Chi: 1 / Shots: 2**

Make a normal Martial Arts attack against an opponent with a slightly reduced shot cost. *Prerequisite: None; Path: Charge of the Leopard, Lunge of the Leopard.*

**Charge of the Leopard Chi: 1 / Shots: 1**

You may run a distance in metres equal to three times your Move attribute. This does not allow you to make particularly long leaps, however. This power allows you to participate in car chases, as described in *Golden Comeback* pg 113. *Prerequisite: Strike of the Leopard;*

**Lunge of the Leopard Chi: 2 / Shots: 1**

Until the end of the sequence, your Move attribute rises to match your Chi attribute. *Prerequisite: Strike of the Leopard.*

**Claw of the Leopard Chi: 1 / Shots: 3**

Leap a number of metres equal to your Move attribute, then make a Martial Arts attack against an opponent. Immediately after you make the attack, leap away from your opponent a number of metres equal to your Move attribute. The opponent does not get an opportunity to use powers that rely on taking an action against you immediately after or simultaneously with your attack. *Prerequisite: Charge of the Leopard; Path: Leopard Stance.*

**Fist of the Leopard Chi: 2 / Shots: 3**

Make a Martial Arts attack against an opponent- for this attack his passive Dodge is reduced by 2. *Prerequisite: Charge of the Leopard; Path: Leopard Stance.*

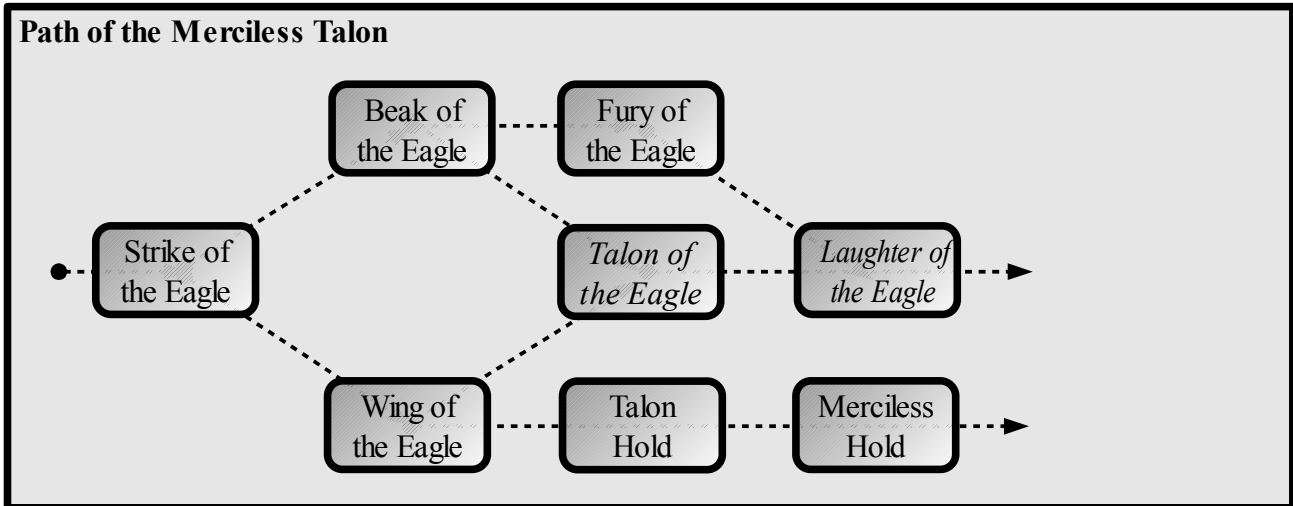
**Leopard Stance Chi: X / Shots: 0**

When an enemy makes a Martial Arts attack against you, you can simultaneously make a Martial Arts attack against them. Subtract X (the amount of Chi you wish to spend- which must be at least 2) from your passive Dodge for this attack. Add twice X to the damage of the attack you make. *Prerequisite: Claw of the Leopard, Fist of the Leopard.*

**Path of the Merciless Talon**

**Strike of the Eagle Chi: 2 / Shots: 3**

Strike an opponent bare-handed, the damage value for the strike is equal to your Strength +4. *Prerequisite: None; Path: Beak of the Eagle, Wing of the Eagle.*



**Beak of the Eagle Chi: 2 / Shots: 0**

Immediately after you are damaged by an opponent in hand-to-hand combat, you may launch a free bare-handed Martial Arts attack on that opponent. The damage for this attack is your Strength +2. This has no effect on your current shot. *Prerequisite: Strike of the Eagle; Path: Fury of the Eagle, Talon of the Eagle.*

**Wing of the Eagle Chi: 2 / Shots: 3**

Make a Martial Arts attack against an opponent. If you hit, your opponent loses his footing and falls over in addition to taking normal damage. Until he takes the time to stand up, he has -2 Impairment to his Martial Arts score. Getting up is a standard action, but can be made part of an attack as a stunt. *Prerequisite: Strike of the Eagle; Path: Talon of the Eagle, Talon Hold.*

**Fury of the Eagle Chi: 3 / Shots: 3**

Strike an opponent with a fierce blow directed at one of their most vulnerable spots. If you hit, add your Willpower rating to the Damage dealt. *Prerequisite: Beak of the Eagle; Path: Laughter of the Eagle.*

**Talon of the Eagle Chi: 3 / Shots: 3**

Make a bare-handed Martial Arts attack against an opponent. Any Fu power used as a defensive action or Fu powers in effect that make the attack less effective do not count for this attack. If the target uses a Fu power as part of an Active Dodge, then the Active Dodge bonus still applies. *Prerequisite: Beak of the Eagle, Wing of the Eagle; Path: Laughter of the Eagle.*

**Talon Hold Chi: 3 / Shots: 3**

On a successful Martial Arts task check, you may place an opponent in a joint lock hold that reduces his Dodge value by 2. The victim can use his actions to try to

break free, by making an Agility task check with your Martial Arts Action Value as the difficulty- success means he breaks free. If you attack any target other than the opponent in the hold, you release him. *Prerequisite: Wing of the Eagle; Path: Merciless Hold.*

**Laughter of the Eagle Chi: 0 / Shots: 1**

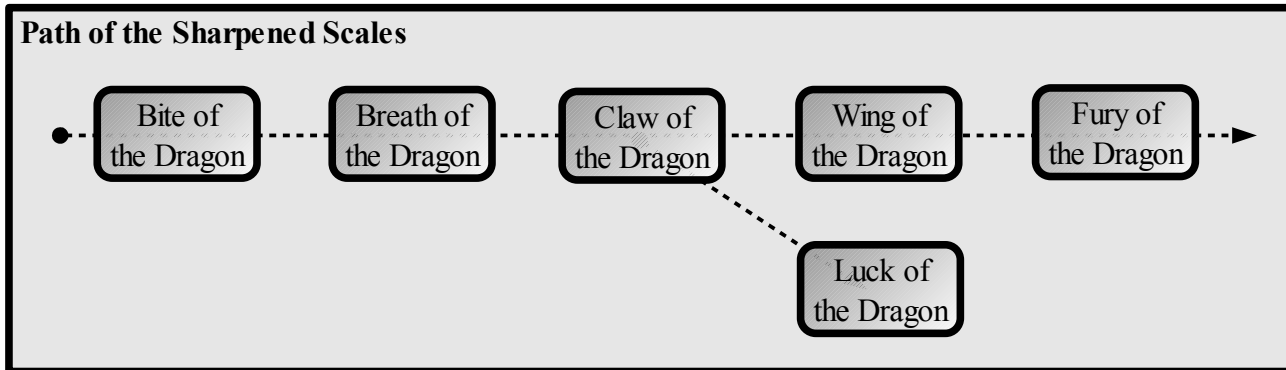
Use as a defensive action when a Fu power is used in an attack against you. If the attack does not hurt you, you receive a number of Fu points equal to the amount spent by your attacker. If these points are unspent by the end of the sequence, they are lost. *Prerequisite: Fury of the Eagle, Talon of the Eagle.*

**Merciless Hold Chi: 3 / Shots: 3**

Dig your fingers into an opponent's pressure points on a successful Martial Arts attack. In addition to normal damage, you maintain a hold that damages your opponent further when it breaks. If you do anything other than passively Dodge, the hold is broken. If your opponent makes an attack, the hold is broken. Whenever the hold is broken, the opponent takes 3 Wound Points that are not reduced by Toughness. After the action that broke the hold is resolved, you may make a Martial Arts task check with no shot cost to reassert your hold against the same target- but reasserting a hold in this way does not inflict damage. *Prerequisite: Talon Hold.*

**Path of the Sharpened Scales (extended)**

Two more schticks to tack onto the end of ever-popular Dragon-style kung fu. This is in addition to the Luck of the Dragon power in *Golden Comeback*, pg 67.



**Wing of the Dragon Chi: X+1 / Shots: X**

Launch a flurry of unarmed attacks at your opponent from above. The force of your blows, whether they hit or not, keeps you airborne until the attack ends. You make X bare-fisted attacks, each of which carries a -2 Action Value penalty. Essentially, you make a brace of snapshots with less than the usual penalty. *Prerequisite: Claw of the Dragon; Path: Fury of the Dragon.*

**Fury of the Dragon Chi: 4 / Shots: 0**

After enacting the Wing of the Dragon, you launch a powerful punch at your stunned opponent as soon as you land. This attack has a bonus to your Martial Arts Action Value equal to the number of attacks you made during the Wing of the Dragon attack. Furthermore, if you hit your opponent is thrown back a number of metres equal to the Outcome of this attack. *Prerequisite: Wing of the Dragon.*

## GROUP SHTICKS

Group Shticks were introduced in *Friends of the Dragon*. They are bought for the entire party as a whole, from a pool of Experience Points donated by individual members of the group. The cost of a Group Shtick is 8+X, where X is the number of shticks the group will have once the new one is bought.

### The Business

Your group owns (or at least runs) a business. It may be part of a Home Base. It need not even be a physical building, if the group sells knick-knacks and traditional medicines from a hand cart in a Hong Kong park. The benefits of running a business are a steady supply of money (allowing everyone to operate as if they have a Wealth Level of Working Stiff) and the possibility of generating friends and contacts among repeat customers. The down sides include having to actually run the business and having a location important to them that is (presumably) relatively easy to find. If the business is not kept running smoothly the party may lose its benefit. Failing to defend it from local gangs trying to extort

protection money quickly brings business to a grinding halt. There are also complications should the heroes have to spend an extended amount of time in another juncture. If a second shtick in The Business is bought, then everyone associated with it can operate as if their Wealth Level was rich- a business this successful requires a lot more maintenance and is well known throughout the local area.

### The Infirmary

Having your own en-suite facilities to patch up the injured is very handy. You can guarantee the best of care and avoid awkward questions about what exactly were you doing when you got shot. An infirmary may be part of a Home Base. An infirmary grants a +3 Action Value bonus to any task checks made with Medicine or the Heal Magic Shtick but only if the infirmary is equipped in the right way. Modern infirmaries have complete surgical facilities suitable for modern-style Medicine skills. Others may have a selection of powders and plants that are a boon to traditional (magical-based) healing. Still others may be filled with arcane paraphernalia to assist the sorcerer.

### The Lab

The characters have access to a fully-equipped scientific laboratory. Not only is this of immense use for all kinds of research, but it provides safe storage for any hazardous materials that need to be kept away from curious fingers. Any science-related task check made in the Lab gets a +3 bonus to the relevant Action Value. The Lab can be part of a Home Base. The lab also has a stock of useful chemicals on hand in case they are needed in a hurry. Having access to this stock helps avoid the difficulties associated with acquiring possible illegal materials (such as explosives) through other channels.

### Man on the Inside

Your group has a contact inside an organisation that is nominally your enemy. This contact can pass you information, get your passes to places you shouldn't be and lets you know if they find out that something big is

going down. As useful as this is, you do have to take special steps to ensure that your friend is not fingered as a leak or traitor, which will probably involve complicated dead letter drops or taxing counter-counter-espionage protocols. Note that while your contact is an ally, he won't necessarily put his life at risk for you.

## The Workshop

The party has workshop on hand for any big jobs that need doing. This provides working space for customising vehicles or any other heavy welding. A workshop is also a good place to keep any 'hot' vehicles away from prying eyes. Fix-It task checks made in The Workshop get a +3 Action Value bonus. It can be part of a Home Base.

# GUN SCHTICKS

## Bring It

Sometimes it's coolest to just stand your ground and fire. If you can stare down your enemy without making a move to defend yourself, you can make your next shot all the more devastating. If you decline to take a defensive action when attacked, and don't have any cover bonuses or other wimp-outs, the next time you make a guns attack you get a +1 damage bonus against the enemy that attacked you. If multiple attacks are made against you, this bonus is cumulative but only for the next shot you make. Bring it can be bought multiple times, and the effects stack.

## Custom Ammo

This is similar to the schtick 'Versatile Ammo' in *Thorns of the Lotus* pg 105, but this applies to any firearm or bow. Custom ammo allows you to spend a Fortune point to have to hand ammunition of any special type for your purposes. Incendiary round to make sure the building burns merrily? Easy. Depleted uranium sabot rounds to punch through the tank's armour? No problem. Macedonian silver blessed by three popes and a rabbi? You bet. For clip-fed weapons, you get a full clip or a clip partially filled with 6 rounds, whichever is lower. The same applies for magazine-fed weapons. For hand-fed weapons like shotguns or revolvers, you get 6 individual rounds. Feeding a single round into a hand-fed weapon only takes 1 shot. The bullets do normal damage, but have the appropriate effect based on their type. This schtick is a handy way of getting hold of enchanted bullets to deal with creatures immune to normal bullets.

## Final Bullet

If you have exhausted all your ammunition, you can

spend a number of shots searching your clothing or your surroundings for one final bullet. As long as you use the bullet in the same sequence as you exhausted your normal ammunition, you get a bonus to your Guns Action Value with that final bullet equal to the number of shots you spent searching for it.

## Flashy Reload

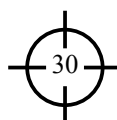
You know how to reload a weapon in a way that impresses. This does not make you reload any faster in the way that Lightning Reload does, but instead grants you a +3 bonus to any Intimidation task checks you make immediately after reloading your weapon. This bonus stacks with 'Who's the Big Man Now?' from *Gorilla Warfare*. What's more, the first shot you fire after reloading does an extra point of damage. This schtick is particularly useful for weapons with a limited ammunition capacity, such as revolvers.

## Gun Kata

When pushed at close quarters, you can use your firearms as mêlée weapons, and through rigorous training you can beat people with them nearly as well as you can shoot them. The ability is also useful when a gunshot would make too much noise or you have run out of ammunition. You can only make simple attacks with your guns, not impressive stunts. You cannot use other Gun Schticks that affect the way you attack (like Carnival of Carnage or Both Guns Blazing) at the same time, but you can use Gun Schticks that do not (like Fast Draw or Hair Trigger Neck Hairs). The damage from a gun used in this way is a uniform Strength+1, and you do not get any bonus for signature weapons (unless you also happened to buy the Fu Power Signature Weapon for it). If you are deprived of your guns, you still can't make mêlée attacks unless you also have the Martial Arts skill. You roll your Guns skill Action Value -2 for attacks you make this way. Each additional schtick decreases the penalty by 1, and you may not have more than 3 schticks in Gun Kata.

## One Target One Bullet

A real sniper only needs one bullet. If you are shooting at a target in the classic sniper scenario, or any situation where the target is completely unaware of you and you have ample time to take aim, you can gain an aiming bonus of up to your Guns skill Action Value instead of the usual 3. You must have enough time to aim the shot, and have a suitably accurate weapon to use, but other than that you really can double your skill when firing. Given that if the target is completely unaware of you, they may have a Dodge Action Value of 0, this makes snipers every bit as deadly as they should be. Targets with Hair Trigger Neck Hairs, a Threat Evaluator or some other ability that gives them preternatural



awareness can usually avoid being reduced to a Dodge Action Value of 0, but you still get the bonus to your aiming. Nice.

### This Is My Boomstick

When you fight in the secret war, sometimes you have to deal with primitive screw-heads. They're a fact of life. While sorcerers and martial artists find it relatively easy to impress in any age, the gunman suffers when no one knows why he carries that lump of metal around. Enemies don't know to fear him until after he's shot them, which often ruins the point. By taking this schtick, a character can use their Guns skill in place of Intimidation or Leadership, but only when firing a gun to impress a crowd unfamiliar with firearms. Used wisely, this can elevate a man to the status of king.

## HARDWARE SCHTICKS

Hardware Schticks are first introduced in *Gorilla Warfare*. Their cost is 25+X, where X is the number of Hardware Schticks the character will have after purchasing the new one.

### Camouflage Unit

It goes without saying that this particular Hardware Schtick was not developed by Jammers. It was developed back when the Buro was the unrivalled master of cybernetics, and never really caught on with homicidal monkeys. The device projects a field around the user, making them blend into the background. It's not perfect, but in tricky visual conditions it can be very effective. It allows you to use your Intrusion skill as your passive Dodge score. Active Dodges are still based of your best combat skill, as normal. It also grants you an Intrusion Action Value of 15, unless your natural Action Value is already higher. What's more, your Intrusion using the Unit (and hence your Dodge) can never drop below 15, even if Impairment or other penalties would apply.

### GMP

The GeoMantic Pulse is to chi flow what a mantrap is to a wheel-barrow. When triggered, everyone in the vicinity suffers -1 Impairment to Sorcery, Creature Powers, Arcanowave Devices and Martial Arts (the last only when using a Fu Power). They are also prevented from using Fortune points. The effect lasts for one scene, but the GMP can only be used once per session. There is a second function that can be used at a Feng Shui site- in this mode the GMP inhibits chi flow continually. Anyone attuned to the site suffers -1 Impairment to all their skills,

and cannot use Fortune dice. This effect lasts until the GMP leaves the feng shui site or is switched off (with a vengeful sledge-hammer, for instance). The effects of multiple GMP units are cumulative.

### On-Board AI

If you can stand having a part of yourself that gives you back-chat, you can have a little box of knowledge that can help you out in all sorts of situations. The On-Board AI can have any Info skill at an Action Value of 15. Switching it to a different Info skill is simply a matter of slipping in a different memory stick. Finding a memory stick with the information you want can be more troublesome, of course, particularly if the information isn't generally available. The GM may rule that certain Info skills can't be obtained without going to some effort to obtain the necessary information first. The AI begins with one memory stick of your choice available, and you can acquire others on a permanent basis by buying them for 3 Experience Points apiece.

## MAGIC SCHTICKS

### Illusion

Illusion allows the sorcerer to change how something appears. Unlike Influence, which gets more difficult the more people you try to fool, Illusion gets more difficult the more the illusion differs from reality.

The basic illusion affects one person or person-sized object and fools either sight or hearing. The base difficulty is 0 and the location of the illusion must be within the sorcerer's Magic rating in metres. For each person or person-sized object that's part of the illusion beyond the first, increase the difficulty by 1. To fool sight and hearing, add another 2 to the difficulty. To fool all the senses, add another 2. To include recording devices in the effect, add another 2. The Outcome is how believable the effect is. Anyone who encounters the illusion will either believe it totally or see through it. If they see through it, they are aware that there is some kind of illusion. If the highest of their Perception, Detective and Police is higher than the Outcome of the Sorcery check that created the illusion, they see through it. They get a +5 bonus if they witness the illusion being created, even if the sorcerer tries to make its appearance seem realistic.

The normal duration for an illusion is as long as the sorcerer concentrates. Maintaining an illusion in this fashion is a continuous action. If the illusion is intended to last for longer, the sorcerer can spend a Magic point when casting the spell. This allows the duration to be the Outcome of the check in hours. A long-lasting illusion can only move in a simple way and cannot respond properly

to any interaction from characters fooled by it. As soon as they try to interact with it, they would see through it. A sorcerer can concentrate on a long-lasting illusion to make it behave properly.

Illusion Backlash normally causes the sorcerer's own perception to be corrupted and unreliable. Until the end of the scene, each time the sorcerer attempts an action the GM secretly rolls one die. If it falls as a 1 or 2, the sorcerer is actually performing the action on something other than he thought. For example, he may shoot an ally instead of an enemy or throw a petrol canister on the fire instead of a bucket of water.

Taoist Wizards (from *Thorns of the Lotus*) do not take a penalty to their Sorcery Action Value when casting Illusion magic.

## Illusion Special Effects

**Creating Something** - You can create the impression that something is there when in fact it is not. Profoundly incongruous illusions have their difficulty increased by 5.

**Hiding Something** - You can mask the presence of something you don't want others to see. The illusion has to blend into the background effectively, which raises the difficulty by 2. In the event of a Backlash, the illusion is permanent and neither you nor your allies can locate the object again.

**Masking Something** - You can make something look like something else. The most obvious application is disguise. Trying to mimic a specific person exactly is particularly difficult, and adds 5 to the difficulty.

**Substitution** - You can swap the appearance of two broadly similar things. For example, you can make it appear that you are the guard and the guard is you so the other guards shoot him and not you. Because this is, effectively, two separate illusions the difficulty is doubled. The simplest version, intended to fool sight only, has a difficulty of 0, but any observers get the +5 bonus because they saw the effect happen.

## Necromancy

This schtick deals with death. Not with causing it - use Blast for that - but with playing about with the consequences. Necromancy has always been a bit of a taboo subject, even in junctures where magic is commonplace, so you may wish to conceal any knowledge of it unless absolutely necessary.

## Necromancy Special Effects

**Animate Named Undead** - You can create a powerful undead servant. It must be created from the corpse of a named human character - no mook will do! -

which cannot have been dead for longer than your Magic secondary attribute in hours. The ritual to create it takes one hour and two magic points; these points do not return to you until the creature is destroyed or dismissed (see below). Upon completion of the ritual, make a Sorcery task check with a difficulty of 15. If the person whose body you are attempting to animate felt a particular enmity towards you in life, the difficulty increases to anything up to 20. If the task check is successful, the undead is created and regards you as its master. If the check is a failure, the undead monster is created but is totally free-willed, and probably starts plotting to usurp or kill you. On a Backlash, the creature immediately and savagely attacks you, and the Magic points spent in its creation are permanently lost.

You may, at any time, try to dismiss such a creature of your own creation whose services you no longer require. This needs a Sorcery task check, the difficulty of which is the number of days for which it has been animated. If you are successful, it crumbles into a small pile of dust, and the Magic points spent in its creation return to you at the end of the session. If you are unsuccessful, it becomes aware that you have just tried to destroy it, and ceases to recognise you as its master. Oops. The consequences of a Backlash on this check are the same as for Backlash when creating it. Creatures that are already attacking you cannot be dismissed.

**Animate Zombies** - This effect allows you to animate corpses, giving them a semblance of life. This can be done on any human or other large mammal corpse that is in a relatively intact state, but does not work on supernatural creatures, or on corpses that had previously been animated. No matter what the previous game statistics of the creature whose body you are animating, all zombies have the statistics described in the sidebar, and are considered to be mooks for the purposes of damage.

The maximum number you can have animated at any one time is equal to your Magic secondary attribute. You may give them simple instructions ("defend me," "guard this place," "attack that person") either verbally or mentally as a one shot action. Zombies are incapable of performing complicated actions. Zombies given no new instructions continue to obey their most recent order to the best of their ability, or simply mill about aimlessly if this is not feasible.

On a Backlash, any zombies you have created or are attempting to create attack you.

**Eyes of Death** - You can review the last few moments of a corpse's life, from its own perspective. The corpse's brain and at least one of its eyes must be relatively intact for this effect to work. The base difficulty of your Sorcery task check is the number of hours the corpse has been dead. If you wish to add sound to your review, add 5 to the difficulty. If the corpse is not human,



add 5 to the difficulty. If you are successful, you may mentally review a number of minutes if the corpse's life equal to your Magic secondary attribute. These are always the very last minutes of life, so this effect is good for determining the cause of death, or working out who his killer was.

In a Backlash, you are overwhelmed by the sensations of the corpse's death. Take ten wound points that are not reduced by toughness, and pass out for the rest of the sequence and all of the next in a dramatic fainting fit.

**Turn Undead** - This effect is identical to the Banishment effect of Summoning (*Feng Shui*, p97) save that it affects Undead rather than Supernatural Creatures. If you are using this effect against an Undead Mook, and your outcome exceeds its highest Action Value by 5 or more, you may elect to destroy the Undead rather than turning it; you may target multiple mooks in one go with the usual penalty.

On a Backlash, you suffer a point of impairment for the rest of this sequence and all of the next.

Undead that are attacking you because of Necromancy Backlash gain immunity to this effect!

## Technomagy

As you might expect, this schtick allows you to manipulate technology. As you might also expect, it was developed by modern mages; characters from AD 69 or 1850 cannot start play with this schtick, and can only learn it with Experience Points if they've spent a significant amount of time in the Contemporary juncture or 2056. Magic Cops from the latter two junctures may add Technomagy to their list of options for starting Sorcery schticks.

The base difficulty of all the special abilities under this schtick, except Download, is 8 in the Contemporary Juncture (or against contemporary technology) and 12 in 2056 (or against tech from that era). The GM may boost the difficulty if the particular item being targeted is judged sufficiently advanced - the Ascended's central mainframe on St Francis Island is not going to be as easy to hack into as Jo Public's desktop computer! Performing an action with Technomagy should not generally be any easier than performing the same action with Fix-It, Hacking or Sabotage, though some feats may be possible with Technomagy that are simply not achievable through those other skills. (And vice versa, of course.)

This schtick is not generally effective against Arcanowave devices, in the same way that Animalism is not generally effective against supernatural creatures.

## Undead Creatures

### Zombie

**Attributes:** Bod 8 (Mov 4), Chi 0, Mnd 1, Ref 4

**Skills:** Zombies you create have a Martial Arts AV equal to your Magic secondary attribute, to a maximum of 10.

**Weapons:** Punch (9), Bite (10)

### Named Undead

**Attributes:** Bod X, Chi 0 (Mag X/2), Mnd 3, Ref X

*X is equal to the creator's Magic secondary attribute.*

**Skills:** Martial Arts, Creature Powers and Intimidation with an AV equal to the creator's Sorcery AV minus 3.

**Schticks:** A Revenant you've created gains one Damage Immunity of your choice (usually either guns or hand to hand weapons) plus two schticks of your choice from the following options: Abysmal Spines, Death Resistance, Regeneration.

**Weapons:** Punch (X+1), whatever mêlée weapon you choose to give it.

**Notes:** Named Undead under the control of a player character earn 1XP per session, plus 1 XP per attunement of their creator.

## Undead vs Supernatural

The Necromancy schtick deals with Undead creatures, as opposed to Summoning, which deals with Supernatural creatures. Undead, for this purpose, are defined as creatures from our world which were once living, and have been reanimated or in some other way returned after death. Most supernatural creatures, by contrast, are denizens of the Underworld, though a few (like Elementals and Golems) were created in our world by pure magic.

For the purposes of the Necromancy schtick, we'd treat Ghosts as Undead, as well as the following creatures from *Glimpse of the Abyss*: Corpse Factory, Dead Rider, Hungry Ghost, Spirit Dog, Tomb Spirit, Twisted Man, Vampire.

We leave it up to the individual GM whether or not you wish for the Summoning schtick to be effective against Undead. We're sure your players will have fun discovering your decision during the course of play.

### Technomagy Special Effects

**Camera Shy** - You can make yourself invisible to technology for the rest of the sequence. Cameras, microphones, motion detectors, thermal sensors... they all fail to recognise your existence. You remain as visible as ever you were to the naked eye, and to low-tech viewing aids like mirrors and lenses. You still trigger mechanical, rather than electronic, means of detection - so if you walk over a pressure plate, your weight will still shift it. You can't use this power selectively, though you can

deactivate it at will and reactivate it with a successful Sorcery task check.

A Backlash guarantees you are discovered- either by someone watching the monitors or when an alarm is triggered.

**Download** - After you have interfaced with a computer (see below), you may copy information from its hard drive and into your own brain, where you can then review it at your leisure. An amount of data about the size of this book has a difficulty of 5, and increases by 2 for each additional packet of the same size. (Note that audio and video data are much larger than a corresponding amount of text). If you wish to suck the information off of the computer, rather than just taking a copy, add 5 to the difficulty.

The data remain in your head for 10 minutes for each unspent Magic point you have; after that the information fades away. You can sift through the data mentally and focus on specific sections that you want to “read”; doing so takes a certain amount of concentration - you can walk, chat distractedly, and passively Dodge, but anything more strenuous requires you to turn your attention away from the data. Once it has faded from your mind, you remember anything you specifically “read” as though you had read, heard or viewed it normally but gain no extraordinary recall; everything else is gone completely.

On a Backlash, the computerised data overwhelms your mind. You pass out for the remainder of this sequence and all of the next, and take a -1 penalty to all Mind-based attributes for the rest of the session.

**Interface** - You can telepathically connect with a computer, and read its files from the inside. You can interface with password-protected data without needing the password, though as stated above the GM may increase the difficulty for heavily protected or encrypted files. Use of this power doesn’t grant you any special recall of the data you read - use the Download special effect for that - but does allow you to skim through a computer’s files more quickly and intuitively than is often possible otherwise.

While you are interfaced with a computer, you are only dimly aware of your surrounding real-world environment. You can hold a conversation, but you take a -3 penalty on Perception and on your passive Dodge Action Value, and cannot perform an Active Dodge or use any other Sorcery scticks apart from Download. Becoming disengaged from your computer is a three shot action.

On a Backlash, you suffer a point of Impairment for the rest of the scene; you also suffer this if the computer is deactivated while you’re interfaced with it.

**Malfunction** - This effect wrecks one machine, pure and simple. Usually, this manifests as a fatal power surge, with a very satisfying shower of sparks. The malfunction

renders the machine inoperable, but not irreparable, though subsequent events might do so (for example, causing a car to malfunction as it’s driving along a cliff edge). Signature weapons and signature vehicles are immune to this effect.

You can also use this effect to attack people with hardware scticks. The difficulty is your target’s highest combat Action Value. If you are successful, you deal wound points equal to the number of hardware scticks your opponent has; these wound points are not reduced by toughness.

On a Backlash, the target machine is treated as though it had been successfully targeted by the Repair special effect.

**Remote Control** - You can control machines remotely. You can turn machinery on or off, and make electronic devices perform any function they could usually perform. So, for example, you can open or close automatic doors; operate an automated production line, or drive a car without using your hands and feet - though any kind of manoeuvre more complicated than driving in a straight line or gently taking a corner requires a Driving task check. Operating equipment with this sctick requires as much concentration as doing so normally - if a device can be turned on and then just left to run, you can turn it on and then ignore it; if a device needs continuous attention (as in the case of driving a vehicle) you must provide that attention.

On a Backlash, the machine you are trying to control either behaves in an unintended way, or ceases to work altogether, at the GM’s discretion.

**Repair** - This functions as the Material Restoration special effect of Heal. (*Feng Shui* p95). It can also be used to heal people with Hardware Scticks, up to a maximum of one wound point per hardware sctick possessed.

## Improved Blast

Each sctick of Improved Blast improves the base damage of this sorcerer’s Blasts by 2. Expensive, but fun for the Sorcerer who has everything.

# NEW BLAST SPECIAL EFFECTS

## Animate Garment

This blast animates the garments of their wearer to stretch and strike at the target. If this blast is used as a parry, then it grants an additional +1 bonus to your Active Dodge value.

### Darkness

Darkness clouds the perception of any target it hits. Anyone hit with a darkness Blast suffers -1 Impairment to any vision-related action they take for the next 3 shots. It can also be used to cloud security cameras or obscure road signs.

### Fling

This flings the target around wildly. On a successful attack, they are thrown a number of metres with a maximum of the Outcome. If there's nothing in the way, it causes no damage. If there is something in the way, it does normal damage. Remember that the ground is usually available as a suitable unyielding surface.

### Ring of Force

This blasts everything in a circular area around the caster away from him. It can hit every target within normal mêlée distance of the caster (without the usual multiple target penalty), and in addition to normal damage throws anyone hit by it away a number of metres equal to the Outcome. The ring of force is not able to discern friend from foe, however.

### Withering Sarcasm

This blast does damage based on the target's Intelligence, with nothing added, rather than the caster's usual Blast damage. The damage is reduced by the target's Willpower rather than their Toughness. If the target cannot understand the sarcasm (an Intelligence attribute of 3 or less) this blast has no effect on them. This special effect can also be used to win arguments with internet trolls.

## STAT SHTICKS

Stat Shticks are described in *Golden Comeback*. In case you missed that memo, they can only be bought if the character has the necessary secondary attribute at 11 or higher. The cost of a Stat Shtick is the number of shticks the character will have plus the character's rating in that attribute.

### Brick House (Constitution)

You are tough. Seriously tough. You can ignore any Impairment to your combat skills with a physical cause, other than Wound Points. Tear gas, shticks, temperature, shackles- you simply ignore them. Poor visibility and mental affects still work on you normally, though.

### Diabolical Potency (Magic)

Your personal chi resonates so heavily with the Underworld that you almost carry a part of it with you. With one shtick in Diabolical Potency, you ignore the local Creature Powers juncture modifier - for you it is always 0. You can purchase up to two additional shticks, each of which increases your personal juncture modifier by 1.

### Wide Aura (Magic)

If you already have at least one of the other Magic Stat Shticks that affect juncture modifiers (Arcanowave Vibe, Aura of Sorcery and Diabolical Potency) then this shtick extends your personal juncture modifier to your immediate vicinity. Your buddies can benefit from it, but on the other hand so can your enemies. Or you can beard your foes in their lairs by over-riding the favourable chi of their inner sanctums.

### Incredible Loyalty (Charisma)

It's not you that has the incredible loyalty, you understand. It's other people that have incredible loyalty to you. You inspire considerable loyalty from your underlings whether or not you treat them well. You can be a universally loved figurehead or a feared tyrant- the effect is the same. People who know you or have heard of your reputation are more willing to become your henchmen. Mooks loyal to you give of their all to protect you- even at the cost of their own lives. Criminal Masterminds (from *Seed of the New Flesh*) with this shtick get to roll two open dice instead of one when attracting mooks.

## TRANSFORMED ANIMAL PACKAGES

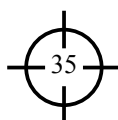
### Armadillo

*Attribute Modifiers: Toughness +3, Mind +2,  
Reflexes +2*

### Counter

**Chi: 3 / Shots: 2**

When you are successfully struck by a Martial Arts attack, immediately make a mêlée attack against your attacker, with a bonus to your damage equal to the damage you took from their attack.



**Curl** **Chi: 3 / Shots: 4**

When an opponent makes a Martial Arts attack against you you may curl up as a defensive action. The attack does no damage. You can take a second schtick of Curl that is effective against non-character sources of physical damage, such as falling masonry.

automatically eight times; after that it ceases to work completely, and you take a -1 penalty on future death checks.

You must buy the first schtick in this ability at character creation, but subsequent schticks may be purchased later.

**Shell** **Chi: 4 / Shots: 1**

As the schtick in *Feng Shui*, pg 111.

**Eagle**

*Attribute Modifiers: Move +4, Perception +4, Reflexes +3*

**Tunnel** **Chi: 3 / Shots: 3**

As the schtick in *Seal of the Wheel*, pg 82.

**Flight** **Chi: 6 / Shots: 3**

As the schtick in *Feng Shui*, pg 113.

**Cat**

*Attribute Modifiers: Body -1, Fortune +2, Mind +3, Reflexes +3*

**Peck** **Chi: 3 / Shots: 3**

As the schtick in *Feng Shui*, pg 113.

**Catspaw** **Chi: X / Shots: 0**

Add X to the damage of a successful barehanded Martial Arts attack. X is any amount of Chi you elect to spend, and may not exceed the number of schticks you have bought in this ability.

**Rake** **Chi: 2 / Shots: 0**

After you have made a successful Martial Arts attack against an opponent, rake them with your fingers to inflict 2 Wound Points that by-pass Toughness. You can buy up to another 2 schticks of Rake, each of which increases this damage by 2.

**Cat's Eyes** **Chi: 1 / Shots: 1**

Until the end of the current sequence, you can see in the dark, and take no penalty for acting in darkness.

**Stoop** **Chi: X / Shots: 3**

As the schtick 'Surprise' in *Feng Shui*, pg 115.

**Cross Your Path** **Chi: 4 / Shots: 1**

Spend a fortune die; one opponent must add an extra negative die to his next roll. You may invoke this ability after a roll has been declared, but before you know the result. Negative dice added in this way are closed dice, and you may never add more than one to a given roll. The range of this ability is your Chi attribute in metres; you may buy additional sticks to extend the range by your Chi attribute for each schtick spent.

**Hedgehog**

*Attribute Modifiers: Mind +2, Willpower -1, Reflexes +2*

**Anointing** **Chi: 4 / Shots: 3**

Rub any object with a scent against your body. Until the end of the scene, you take on that scent instead of your own, thus becoming undetectable through smell.

**Land on Your Feet** **Chi: 1 / Shots: 0**

Until the end of the current sequence, you are immune to damage from falling.

**Curl** **Chi: 3 / Shots: 4**

When an opponent makes a Martial Arts attack against you you may curl up as a defensive action. The attack does no damage. You can take a second schtick of Curl that is effective against non-character sources of physical damage, such as falling masonry.

**Nine Lives** **Chi: 0 / Shots: 0**

If you fail a death check, by any amount, you instantly die. However, at the start of the next sequence, you immediately return to life with 30 wound points. Each additional schtick you buy in this ability reduces that Wound Point total by 5. This ability works

**Scavenge** **Chi: 0 / Shots: 0**

As the schtick in *Seal of the Wheel*, pg 82.

## SCHTICKS

### Spines

**Chi: 2 / Shots: 1**

Until the end of the sequence, anyone who attacks you in mêlée combat receives 1 Wound Point that bypasses Toughness. For each additional schtick in Spines, this damage increases by 1 point.

### Octopus

*Attribute Modifiers: Body +3, Perception +3, Manual Dexterity +3*

### Aquatic

**Chi: 0 / Shots: 0**

You can live and breathe underwater as easily as most of us live on land. You may swim through water at your Move rating; breathe underwater indefinitely, survive at great pressures, and see underwater (no matter how dark it is) up to your Chi rating in metres. However, you suffer a -1 penalty to all of your Action Values when acting on dry land.

You may buy up to three additional schticks in this ability; each one doubles your move attribute, gives a +1 bonus to each of your Action Values, and adds your Chi rating again to the distance you can see in the depths, but these benefits only apply when you are acting under water.

### Inky Cloud

**Chi: 4 / Shots: 1**

Emit a cloud of inky darkness around yourself. You can see through the cloud, but it grants you cover equating to a +1 bonus to your passive Dodge until end of sequence. Each additional schtick you purchase in this ability increases the bonus by 1, to a maximum of +6. Enemies with powers that let them see in the dark (like the Fu power Friend of Darkness) are not affected by this power.

### Squeeze

**Chi: 3/Shots: 8**

As per the schtick in *Feng Shui*, page 113.

### Suckers

**Chi: 3/Shots: 2**

Until the end of the sequence, you can walk along walls and ceilings at half your normal Move rating. You must use both your hands and feet to maintain contact with the surface you're attached to. A second schtick in this ability eliminates the Move penalty on walls, a third eliminates the Move penalty on ceilings, and a fourth and final schtick eliminates the need to use your hands in addition to your feet.

### Tentacles!

**Chi: 2/Shots: 3**

Make a Martial Arts attack against two opponents with no penalty to your attack roll. If your opponents have different Dodge Action Values, use the higher as your difficulty. You may purchase two additional schticks in this ability, each one allows you to target an extra opponent. In addition, having at least one schtick in this ability gives you a +1 bonus to your attack Action Value against Japanese school girls.

### Owl

*Attribute Modifiers: Intelligence & Perception +6, Reflexes +2*

### Flight

**Chi: 6/Shots: 3**

As per the schtick in *Feng Shui*, page 113

### Hoot

**Chi: 3/Shots: 1**

You send out a psychic signal to everyone in range, communicating a single, simple idea, such as "danger here!" or "help is needed!" The idea is perceived as an intuitive gut feeling, but your targets are not compelled to act upon it. The range is your Chi attribute in metres; each additional schtick spent doubles the range. You may also spend an additional schtick to be able to target a particular type of person to hear your message, such as "other transformed animals" or "people attuned to the same Feng Shui site as me".

### Nocturnal

**Chi: 0 / Shots: 0**

You can see perfectly in pitch darkness, and suffer no penalties for acting in the dark. However, in natural daylight you suffer a -2 impairment to all Action Values, as your body thinks you should be asleep. You may purchase up to two additional schticks in this ability; each one reduces the impairment penalty by 1.

### Rake

**Chi: 2 / Shots: 0**

After you have made a successful Martial Arts attack against an opponent, rake them with your fingers to inflict 2 Wound Points that bypass Toughness. You can buy up to another 2 schticks of Rake, each of which increases this damage by 2.

### Ray

*Attribute Modifiers: Body +2, Move +3, Reflexes +2*

## Aquatic

**Chi: 0 / Shots: 0**

You can live and breathe underwater as easily as most of us live on land. You may swim through water at your Move rating; breathe underwater indefinitely, survive at great pressures, and see underwater no matter how dark it is, up to your Chi rating in metres away. However, you suffer a -1 penalty to all of your Action Values when acting on dry land.

You may buy up to three additional schticks in this ability; each one doubles your move attribute, gives a +1 bonus to each of your Action Values, and adds your Chi rating again to the distance you can see in the depths, but these benefits only apply when you are acting under water.

## Gliding

**Chi: 6 / Shots: 4**

As per the schtick in *Golden Comeback*, page 71

## Jolt

**Chi: 3 / Shots: 3**

Strike an opponent barehanded. If successful, you zap your foe with a powerful electric sting. The base damage of this attack is your Kung Fu secondary attribute; you may purchase additional schticks in this ability to increase the damage by 2 each time, to a maximum of +6. You may also purchase an additional schtick to project the attack through the air as a bolt of electricity. This is a ranged Martial Arts attack, with a maximum range of your Chi attribute in metres.

## Murky Depths

**Chi: X / Shots: 2**

Add X (any amount of Chi you elect to spend) to your Intrusion Action Value until the end of the current sequence.

## Skunk

*Attributes: Charisma -1, Perception +2, Reflexes +2*

## Intimidate

**Chi: X / Shots: 5**

Make an extended threat against an enemy- any kind of threat will do but the target must understand it. Add X, any amount of Chi you wish to spend, to your Intimidation Action Value for this check.

## Permeate

**Chi: X / Shots: 10**

You can fill an area with a mephitic odour. X unnamed characters feel compelled to leave the area in any way that does not jeopardise their immediate safety. Named characters are aware of the smell but do not have to leave the area. Another schtick makes the smell

sufficiently dreadful that unnamed characters leave by any means they can, heedless of their own safety.

## Spray

**Chi: X / Shots: 3**

Touch a target- if the target does not wish to be touched then first make a successful Martial Arts attack that does no damage. They become cursed with a foul smell. They subtract X (any amount of Chi you spend) from any task check they make with a skill based on Charisma. For every thorough bath or shower they take, the effect dissipates by one point.

## Squirt

**Chi: 3 / Shots: 3**

Make a Martial Arts attack against an enemy. If you connect, in addition to doing normal damage the target suffers 2 points of Impairment for a number of shots equal to your Outcome. For each additional schtick you have in Squirt, the Impairment increases by 1.

# EXPERIENCE SCHTICKS

Experience Schticks are a new type of schtick to *Out For Blood*. They are different from most other schticks. Firstly, they have a flat experience point cost, so they aren't prohibitively expensive for powerful characters. Secondly, they can only be gained by a character who has gone through experiences related to them. These can only have happened during play, so starting characters can't get them. Each Experience Schtick costs 8 Experience Points.

Some of these schticks require the character to have a permanent injury. Once the schtick is taken, the injury becomes permanent and cannot be healed by Medicine, Heal magic or Regeneration. If the injury is cured somehow, the character loses the benefit of the associated Experience Schtick.

## Bail Out!

If a character has been in at least three major vehicle crashes (simply popping the air-bag after bumping into a bollard doesn't count) then they can gain this schtick. Henceforth, all damage they receive from vehicle crashes is halved before Toughness.

## Blind

You have become permanently blind. This can only occur if you failed a Death Check after an attack that connected with your head, but you were treated and thus recovered. This blindness does not affect your everyday life much, as you have learned to cope and can even fight

## SCHTICKS

without penalty. However, any Perception check that depends purely on sight and cannot plausibly be passed by using other senses you automatically fail. If you are the target of any effect that relies on fooling your sight (such as darkness) then it has no effect on you. Perception checks you make that rely solely on senses other than sight get a +3 Action Value bonus.

### Bulletproof

You suffered a very close call from a bullet but survived. This can only occur if you failed a Death Check after you were shot, but you were treated and thus recovered. You might keep the bullet removed as a keepsake, or perhaps it is still lodged in your body somewhere. In any event, bullets have lost a lot of their fear for you. Whenever you have to make a Death Check as a result of being shot, you get a +3 bonus to the roll.

### Fire in the Hole!

In order to gain this schtick, a character must have been in at least three building explosions or something similar. Just being damaged by a grenade or a missile isn't enough. We're talking major property damage, here. If it's not a situation where they stumble out of an inferno with what's left of their clothes hanging off them, it doesn't count. Once they've gained this schtick, however, damage from explosions is halved against them, before Toughness.

### Fool Me Once

The prerequisite for this schtick is being brutally betrayed in a significant fashion. Simply having the wool pulled over your eyes is not enough. The character must have been strung along for some time, possibly as a major campaign event, before a harrowing realisation that they were conned. Fool Me Once allows the character to roll an extra positive die on their Perception, Detective, Police or Journalism check to establish if they are being lied to, or when the target of Illusion sorcery.

### He's Mine

Sometimes, a character wants to mark an enemy for death by their hand alone. When a character takes this schtick, they get a +1 bonus to all their Action Values when fighting one single named opponent one-on-one. They may take this schtick more than once solely at the GM's discretion. When the target of this schtick is finally killed, it is lost along with the experience points used to buy it.

### Maimed

You have lost a limb. This can only occur if you

failed a Death Check after an attack that connected with a limb, but you were treated and thus recovered. You know how to compensate for this loss in combat, and how to leverage it into getting better seats at restaurants and shows. If you wear a false limb, you can store weapons in it that are very hard to detect. You can subtract 3 points of concealment from your weapons carry. Also, once per session, you can allow an attack to hit your false limb. This destroys the limb but otherwise you are not hit by the attack. You can always buy yourself a new false limb between sessions.

### Not One Drop

If a character has the force of will to shake off a major addiction, of any kind, then they have the force of will to resist any temptation that may lead them down a similar path. If the player wishes, their character can simply ignore any such temptations, even supernaturally powerful ones. Certain schticks, like the Transformed Animal Power Mockery, are also ineffective at the GM's call.

### Phobia

A character can develop a classic phobia to something that has caused him great distress in the past. This phobia means that he avoids the trigger of his phobia whenever he can, and behave strangely around it, but when compelled to deal with it in the heat of the moment the character *never* suffers any form of Impairment in doing so. Characters with a phobia of a particular animal also inexplicably fears transformed animals of that type.

### Salvaged Humanity

If the character has survived the Corruption creature power, or anything similar, then they have earned the right to this schtick. Similarly, if a character was made to perform some action heinously against their nature by Domination or the Influence magic schtick (and we're talking major plot event here) they can also get it. A third possibility is an arcanowave user who mutated enough to be considered an abomination, but later had that mutation cured in some way. Salvaged Humanity grants blanket immunity to Corruption, Domination and Influence. Nice.

### Scarred

You have a prominent and permanent scar. Not only does this make you look more bad-ass, but it also grants you a +3 Action Value bonus to any Charisma-based task check where the appearance of being battle-hardened would help. In more refined situations, it imposes a -3 Action Value penalty to any Charisma-based task check.

## Stop, Drop and Roll

In order to gain this schtick, the character must have been set on fire at least three times. Any source of fire (including Fu Powers or Magic Schticks) is fine, as long as there was lingering fire they had to put out to avoid further damage. The benefit of the schtick is the ability to extinguish flames on oneself without spending any shots to do so.

## What Could Possibly Go Wrong?

If the character has violated the most basic rule of common sense and said something along the lines of 'What could possibly go wrong?', 'What's the worst that

could happen?' or 'The plan is foolproof!', and then everything has gone banana-shaped in a truly colossal way, they can buy this schtick. Possessing this schtick means that *every* time they say something like: 'You'll be safe here', 'There's nothing to worry about' or 'It's okay, I've done this before', they are proven spectacularly wrong. However, they are not the ones that suffer as a result. For example, a character with this schtick, when cornering Jammer-affiliated bomber, might say: "He can't possibly have any more grenades!". Clearly, the very next thing that happens is that the bomber throws a grenade—but the character with the schtick is not the target. Instead his hapless friend has to deal with the whole grenade issue. Characters with this schtick have a justified reputation as being bad partners in any endeavour.



## August 21

*I waited on the landing, gun in hand, and tried to keep calm. I could hear arguing upstairs, but that could mean anything. Once again, I questioned whether I'd made the right decision.*

*Only a few minutes ago, Mingxia had confided in me that she had persuaded Mr. Brown to let me live solely so that when someone came to rescue me she could use the distraction to steal some important data. I'd scoffed at the idea of Gappy Cho and the others sticking their necks out for me which had seemed to genuinely puzzle her. They're your friends, she had said, and friends look out for one another. Well, I'd set her straight about anyone caring if I lived or died, and she'd made me an offer. If I helped her get the data, she'd see to it I got away safely. I told her I'd need my gun to be any use and without hesitation she'd gone and got it. I considered turning on her for about 1/10th of a second before deciding that my best chance of living out the night was to stick to her like glue. And immediately after that decision, of course, I'd let her go off alone to make a distraction while we went to work. Her plan had involved setting a fire, but I knew how gangs behaved and I'd suggested that she tell one of the hoods she'd overheard another one say something uncomplimentary about him. When the inevitable fight broke out, we should have enough time to do what we had to do and escape before anyone realised they'd been tricked.*

*I almost swallowed my tongue when Mingxia appeared next to me. Damn, but I'd been watching the stairs and I hadn't seen a thing. She led me up to the ground floor and further into the warren of half-empty rooms. Eventually, we reached a dingy room with thick curtains over the windows and a sprawling mess of computers and monitors sat on a table. One bored-looking man smiled as he recognised Mingxia then reached for his gun when he saw me behind her. He didn't even get to draw it. Two blows from the girl and he collapsed sideways onto a rotting armchair.*

*I took up position peering around the door frame, making sure the coast was clear. Mingxia went to work with the computers, plugging in a USB key and searching out a headset to wear. I could hear the rain hammering on the windows.*

*"What should I do if he wakes up?" I asked her, pointing to the slumped guard.*

*"He won't wake up."*

*"How can you be sure?"*

*"Because I killed him."*

*I couldn't argue with that. Her fingers clattered away on the keys. I kept my eyes on the corridor. I might stand no chance of spotting that little freak coming, but I would be damned if I couldn't spot a grown man running towards me. The arguing at the other end of the hall grew louder.*

*"Are you getting all of this, Mr. malloc()?" Mingxia was talking into the microphone.*

*"Loud and clear," said the speakers, and then they whistled. "The Prof is going to have kittens when she sees this."*

*I neither knew nor cared what the data was. I just wanted to get out alive. Suddenly I realised I recognised the shouting voice down the hall.*

*"Brown's back," I told the girl. He was supposed to be out all evening.*

*"We just need a few minutes."*

*I doubted we'd get that few minutes if Boss Brown ended his minions' argument and came this way. If he asked them how the fight started he might work out that Mingxia provoked it...*

*A man with a scar running down one side of his face walked down the corridor towards us, gun drawn. Mingxia was in plain sight from the corridor, and there was no time to bark out a warning. I sighed, sighted down the barrel of my BFR revolver and put a bullet right between his eyes.*

*There was hubbub. There was no hiding the fact they were under attack then. If she wouldn't move I would just have to defend the corridor as best I could. I figured I've have a few seconds while everyone got their pieces ready so I left the door frame and pushed the computer table along the floor up to a wall. At least they wouldn't get a clear shot at Mingxia now. As I returned to the door three armed hoods fired at me. I was pinned down next to the door, but I figured I could handle them if they came one at a time.*

*"I'm done," Mingxia announced, "We're free and clear."*

*As she turned away from the table, the wall exploded in a hail of decaying plaster and wood. Boss Brown stood framed in the hole, fury etched on his face. He picked Mingxia up by the throat and slammed her down onto the table, breaking it in two. I had never been so glad to have a high-calibre weapon in my hand.*

# GM's Guide

## WHAT'S YOUR POISON?

So, what kind of Feng Shui GM are you, and what advice is it best to hold to heart?

### The Old Master

It may be that you've been running games of Feng Shui since the contemporary juncture was, well, contemporary. You probably already know exactly how you like to run the game, and have a brace of house rules you've introduced over the years. A lot of this chapter may seem redundant or obvious to you, but there's always something else to learn and perhaps you can find new ideas to take your games in a new direction. The important thing to bear in mind is that becoming too inflexible in how you run the game takes a lot of the joy out of it. Keep the free-wheeling anarchy at the table and you can't go far wrong.

### The Killer

Perhaps you've got a lot of experience of being the GM for other (and thus inferior) role-playing games but haven't spent a great deal of time as a Feng Shui GM. It can be very difficult to 'let go' of the course of the game if you're used to games that are more tightly structured. If the players take a route you weren't expecting, you have to bite down on your instinct to dissuade them. If you are more used to a game where precise reading of rules and powers is important, you should also eschew that approach for adjudicating on the fly without recourse to any of the books if you can get away with it.

### The Everyman Hero

So, you're an experienced Feng Shui player but you're only a neophyte the other side of the screen? Don't worry- being the GM is very much like being the player. The important thing about the transition is that you shouldn't actively seek to do so many cool things now you control the bad guys- otherwise you risk overshadowing the heroes. Being the GM opens up new horizons, but you shouldn't be intimidated by the prospect. Remember that you and the players are there to have fun, not to be in competition. You can rely on them to tell you how their

schticks work, so you don't have to commit the books to memory.

### The Drifter

Maybe you've just picked up the main *Feng Shui* book and come across *Out For Blood* while looking for supporting materials on-line. You've played other games, but never had the pleasure of participating in the secret war. You're in luck, because by looking at the schticks in this book and reading about what the other source books contain, you can make an informed choice about the next Feng Shui supplement to buy.

### The Rookie

So you've never played a role-playing game before? You might be a little scared at the idea of entertaining a bunch of your friends for a few hours. Don't be. Don't worry about the rules too much, don't fret that you're doing everything exactly right. If something is too confusing, ignore it. As long as everyone at the table is having fun, you're doing it right. If someone isn't having fun, think what you could do to let them have fun that doesn't stop other people from having fun. Trust us, playing this game is an absolute blast.

## RULE ZERO

Many groups of players have a 'rule zero' of role-playing- usually it is something along the lines of "Don't give the GM ideas!".

Feng Shui Game Moderators have a rule zero, too. It is:

*"Always accept the offer."*

It's the counterpart to the players' rule zero. It means that whenever the players have a suspicion about what's going to happen, or make a suggestion as to what happens next, you should do your utmost to fulfil it. There are several reasons for doing this.

- ◆ Sometimes the players come up with better ideas than you do.
- ◆ They get to feel really smart for guessing your 'plan'.
- ◆ The game runs more smoothly if the players

don't bark up the wrong tree.

- ◆ It makes the game feel more like a film.

## THE BOOKS

There are quite a few Feng Shui books you could have at your disposal- the original books published by the now-defunct Daedalus Entertainment and the newer books published by Atlas Games. What exactly is in each of them?

### Marked for Death

Scenario anthology.

### Back For Seconds

Contains additional character types which are already included in the second edition rule book, and some GMCs for each faction. Also includes descriptions of some Feng Shui sites and a handful of guns, Fu Powers and Unique Schticks and the Transformed Shark.

### Thorns of the Lotus

Background for the Eaters of the Lotus. New character types, Creature Powers and Magic Schticks. Describes some magical artefacts. Includes a scenario.

### Blood of the Valiant

Background for the Guiding Hand. New character types, guns and fu paths. Includes a scenario.

### Seed of the New Flesh

Background for the Architects of the Flesh. New character types, gadgets, weapons and Arcanowave Devices. Includes two scenarios.

### Golden Comeback

Background for the Dragons. Practical advice for players, lots of new schticks and guns and introduces Stat Schticks and the car chase rules.

### Seal of the Wheel

Background for the Ascended. New character types, guns, gadgets, Transformed Animal packages and a fu path. Includes a scenario.

### Elevator to the Netherworld

Information on the Netherworld and the denizens thereof.

### Four Bastards

A scenario.

### In Your Face Again

Scenario anthology.

### Gorilla Warfare

Background for the Jammers. New character types, guns, gadgets, Stat Schticks and introduces Hardware Schticks.

### Friends of the Dragon

A list of themes for Feng Shui one-off games and campaigns. Introduces Group Schticks and Sync Schticks.

### Iron and Silk

A compendium of improvised weapons.

### Blowing Up Hong Kong

Information on Hong Kong and the denizens thereof. Includes a handful of General Schticks and a fu path.

### Glimpse of the Abyss

A compendium of supernatural creatures and abominations. New character types, Creature Powers, Arcanowave Devices, a Magic Schtick, a fu path and other miscellaneous schticks. Introduces Weaknesses and includes a scenario.

## USING THE BOOKS

The number of books and the fact that they were not written as a set raises a couple of wrinkles you should be aware of.

### Not All Factions Were Created Equal

The strength and general bad-assitude of faction GMCs varies considerably from book to book. You should be prepared to scale the strength of stock GMCs to keep them in line with one another and properly calibrated

against the player characters. The exact level of power is a question of how long you expect your campaign to run and how you want their power to compare to the party's power. For some campaigns, you want the strongest GMCs on top of a mountain that takes the party a very long time to climb before they can be fought on equal terms. Equally valid is a campaign where practically anyone could be taken out by newly-created characters if the latter get a lucky opportunity. The easiest way to scale stock GMCs is to adjust their Action Values and attributes. This keeps the same 'flavour' for the character while altering their strength.

## Not All Schticks Were Created At Once

Sometimes a character will have been described in one book, only for a later book to provide schticks that would be perfect for them. (For example, Draco from *Back For Seconds* is a perfect candidate for a few Stat Schticks, and Iala Mané from *Golden Comeback* is a shoe-in for the Path of the Spotted Hunter) There's no helping that, apart from liberally adding schticks where you think it's necessary or swapping out less appropriate ones in favour of them. Remember that this can make a character more powerful so you may have to tone their Action Values or attributes down a bit to compensate.

## BALANCING FIGHTS

One of the trickiest aspects of running a game of Feng Shui is balancing the fights. If the fights are too easy there is no sense of danger and the players (and possibly their characters) get complacent. If the fights are too difficult then every fight becomes an epic slog through many sequences, risking the permanent death of characters, not to mention the frustration the players experience of never being able to damage the enemies. That said, pitching every session at the same difficulty is not the solution either, because it lacks variety. The good news is that if you don't quite judge the difficulty correctly then it just looks like you're letting the difficulty of the fights fluctuate. Go you.

You should only set out to make fights particularly difficult when it's dramatically appropriate. Most of the time, the characters should know when they're getting into a dangerous situation. Unless the party has serious contacts with rebel groups in 2056, venturing there is always going to be highly dangerous due to the ever-present monitoring of citizens and the powerful characters kept on stand-by for trouble. What may be more dangerous than the actual opponents is the difficulty in getting mortally wounded characters to somewhere that

can save their lives. Another scenario that may be high risk is where a painstaking plan for a challenging mission goes badly wrong. A third could be a well-planned and coordinated attack against the party by someone who knows their strengths and weaknesses. What these all have in common is not just a plausible reason to be dangerous, but a *dramatically satisfying* reason to be dangerous. If the party is breaking up a protection racket in Kowloon, then finding an inappropriately powerful character running it is not dramatically satisfying. The GM may well have a detailed back-story for the character that explains why they're in such a low-level position and why they are so strong. In Feng Shui conformance to the clichés of action films is more important than carefully believable back-story.

That said, the Feng Shui GM should not shy away from killing characters off. Even in low risk situations a character can get careless, or a mook get very lucky. A character death should never be dramatically unsatisfying- but the players and the GM can make it satisfying after the fact if it is handled the right way. Their death can serve as a melodramatic hook for the other characters, a statement of the tragic cost of the secret war or a testimony to the evil of the faction that was responsible. Think of the film *Leon*; (spoiler alert!) the death of the central character comes as something of a disappointment following the explosive scenes before it- but it *becomes* dramatic afterwards, by his final moments and the effect it has on the characters that survive.

## How Many Mooks?

The timeless question. The answer depends on their purpose. If the mooks are supposed to chase the PCs away from somewhere, you may well need an infinite supply. Say the encounter is supposed to tie up the party for 1 sequence, more or less. You need to find out how many mooks will do that on average. You can do a little statistics, or you can trust ours. For each character, work out the difference between her combat skill Action Value and the Action Result she needs to take down one mook. This is normally the mook's Action Value +5, unless she has automatic weapons or enough Carnival of Carnage. Then you can cross-reference her Speed in the handy chart and find out how many mooks she will churn through on average in one sequence, if she is fighting optimally<sup>5</sup>.

You can then add up the numbers for each character and voilà! You have the number of mooks that should last approximately one sequence. If a character has Carnival of Carnage, then work out how many actions they get assuming a Initiative die roll of 3 and add columns in the

<sup>5</sup> In almost all circumstances, the optimum number of mooks to attack at once is 3. Only use this knowledge for good, not evil. Interestingly, the average number of kills doesn't change much if you go for a few more. Going for less, however, has quite a large negative impact on your kill rate.

table.

For example, take a Martial Artist with an Action Value of 15 and a Speed of 5. He's attacking standard mooks with an Action Value of 8. The Action Result he would need is 13, so the 'difference' in the table is -2. Reading the correct column, this Martial Artist should be kept tied up for a sequence by 5 mooks. If he had a buddy with an Action Value of 13 and a Speed of 6, then 7 mooks should keep them occupied. If you wanted the fight to last for about two sequences, then you would need 14 mooks.

ONE SEQUENCE'S WORTH OF MOOKS			
<i>Difference (Dice Roll to take out)</i>	<i>3 Actions (Spd ≤6)</i>	<i>4 Actions (Spd 7-9)</i>	<i>5 Actions (Spd 10+)</i>
-7	12	16	21
-6	10	14	17
-5	9	11	14
-4	7	9	11
-3	5	7	9
-2	4	5	6
-1	3	4	5
0	2	2	3
+1	1	2	2
+2	1	1	2

If you find that you need an improbable number of mooks to keep the party happily mashing away, you can consider increasing the quality of the mooks (which typically reduces the number you need by 2 per player per point of Action Value) or you can give them some advantage like cover that makes them more difficult to hit.

## The 'Named Mook'

If the GM wants to give the party an easy fight but mooks just aren't doing the trick any more, consider

### Mooks at the Table

Sometimes it can be hard to keep track of how many mooks are left and what they are doing, particularly if the fight has pockets of action in different places. One way to deal with this is to have something physical to represent mooks, then it is easy to see how many there are left. You can put them in front of the player they last attacked, so you can keep some consistency in what they are doing in the fight. It also gives the players the satisfaction of knocking down enemies when they take them out in the game.

introducing 'named mooks'. They need not be any more skilled than a regular mook (although they can be a little stronger), but they do count as named characters and have Wound Points. They take longer to put down than mooks, giving plenty of opportunity for the PCs to play with them. In fact, the GM can happily bring the same ones back session after session for delicious 'hapless minion' goodness.

## How Many Named Characters?

A fight involving named characters is a different proposition entirely. Unlike mooks, which exist to delay the players and (maybe) hurt them a little, a bunch of named characters should be worthy foes pitched just below the abilities of the party. Because the party are heroes, they should always feel like they are the plucky underdogs. Their opponents should exude confidence and power. If the players also feel the same way, the trash talk will be memorable. However, getting beaten up every session is not a lot of fun, so the reality should be that the opponents are pitched just weaker than the party. The mismatch between the perceived difficulty and the actual difficulty will make the players feel good. There are several basic models for an encounter with GMCs, given below. When eye-balling the power of a GMC, the most significant aspect is their Action Values. The GM does need to take into account their schticks to assess how much damage they can lay down and how well they can defend against attacks. When considering the power of the party, average Action Value is a good yardstick. If the spread of combat Action Values is high, the GM probably has to take special steps to keep everyone engaged and useful in the fight. If the opposition doesn't have that sort of flexibility built in to it, the GM can do a lot worse than introduce the Advantage rules in chapter 8.

What can be a useful is to think about how the number of named characters and their skill can affect how the fight plays out. Here are some rough templates that can be a starting point for drawing up a fight scene.

### Dancing Partners

In this type of encounter, the named GMCs number the same as the PCs. They'll either have lower combat Action Values, or less potent schtick picks. The GM can even design each GMC as a foil for one of the PCs, leading to a mingled group of one-on-one grudge matches. Don't count on the players picking out their opposite numbers, however, without heavy prompting. An important consideration with these encounters is that the more bodies you have present, the longer the fight takes. When the named GMCs number the same as the PCs, it's probably best not to introduce mooks.

## Elite Squad

This fight has about three tough GMCs facing down the party. Individually, they'll be stronger than the PCs but they number fewer and eventually get overwhelmed. The GMCs should have Action Values one or maybe two points higher than the party. This is a good choice for a fight that starts difficult but gets easier- once one of the enemies falls everything gets a lot easier. You can add mooks for flavour- particularly if there are characters not closely focussed on combat who might not be very effective against strong named enemies.

## General and Captains

This fight has one particularly powerful GMC and two or three meagre GMCs. The 'captains' should go down fairly easily, but the general is quite tough. What makes this fight interesting is that the general gets plenty of time to hurt PCs while they are taking down his friends. If they try to take him down first, they leave themselves open to attack from the captains for quite a while. The captains should have Action Values lower than the party, the general can be two or maybe even three points higher.

## Seize Them!

The classic 'one bad guy, legions of mooks' scenario. The players have to fight their way through the chaff just to get at the main enemy, who harries them and bolsters his troops at every opportunity. Even getting in a good position to hurt him is tricky- and he is very powerful in his own right. To avoid characters with low combat Action Values being redundant, it's handy to have plenty of opportunity for indirect attacks using scenery. You should also feel free to keep spawning mooks until their leader falls. The leader should have an Action Value around three points better than the party.

## Tipping Point

This fight starts out very difficult, but after a certain point becomes a lot easier. Maybe once the amulet is snatched from the sorcerer his powers are much reduced- or the guns in the walls can be reprogrammed to fire at someone else. If the action that tips the balance involves the use of a non-combat skill, so much the better. Depending on how difficult the critical action is, you can make the enemies as powerful as you want to begin with- but you should make sure that they are a relative pushover once the tipping point is reached. Just don't be surprised when the players suss your game and take out the critical component in the first couple of actions.

## Why Yes, I Really Am That Bad-ass

One bad guy, no distractions. No mooks or named henchmen to get in the way. There should, of course, be plenty of scenery to play with. The bad guy's Action Value should be around four points higher than the party, or more for a spectacular end-of-campaign showdown. Characters with low Action Values struggle to hit them, so remember to be generous with stunts for them so they can still be useful.

## Making Named Characters Shine

You can't just throw a collection of attributes and shticks together and call it a named character. It's best to spend some time thinking about how a character with those abilities would fight. Some aspects are obvious- a guns character with shticks in Eagle Eye will probably strike from a distance, with cover. Other times, particularly when a character Fu Powers or Transformed Animal Shticks, you need to think about what shticks he uses when. Will he keep some points in reserve? When will he use Fortune points? Drawing up plans in this way makes the character fight more effectively and entertainingly, and avoids the problem that sometimes occurs of forgetting about one of his key abilities until after the fight is over, which can be most embarrassing.

## When the Party is Very Strong

It can be very difficult to cope with a strong party. Simply by acquiring a couple of Feng Shui sites and surviving for a while, a party can have attributes and Action Values that would give even Draco cause to pause. Keeping the campaign entertaining when there are only a handful of enemies that can give the party a run for their money is not a trivial task. Once the GM senses that this is starting to happen, the best bet is to work out which characters are ripe for retirement and see to it that they, at long last, get a shot at fulfilling their melodramatic hook. Once they have achieved that goal, they are then free to retire (or be killed off tragically) as circumstances dictate. In the interim, here is a selection of techniques that can be used to put a crimp in their style.

## Bitter Payback

Some factions can be very vindictive. If they can't win fair and square, they'll mess with their enemies just to get even. If the party has sent home enough Pledged assassins in body-bags, the Lodge may instead simply demolish their houses. And then the hotels they are staying. Cancel their favourite TV programme. Frame a relative for murder. And so on. The menace in this

strategy is that there are simply too many avenues for the party to protect themselves against all of them. If they spread themselves thin, they may make better targets for a more conventional assault. At the very least, it encourages the party to explore means other than just rushing to the site of the problem and opening fire.

### High Stakes Adventures

When the party is strong, they become involved in events that shape the entire Secret War. Problems that they normally wouldn't be able to do anything about fall in their reach. Maybe there's some terrible threat to the world that only they recognise, or perhaps they are needed to play a pivotal role in preventing one faction from achieving dominance. The point of high-stakes adventures is that they raise the danger level to new heights. Not just in terms of the opposition they face, but in terms of plot events that might lead to character death. Someone may need to go into the radioactive hell-hole to shut down the fusion reactor, or offer their soul to a demon prince in exchange for his return to Di Yu. What you should not do, however, is prepare a scenario where someone has to die in order for the party to prevail. If someone does have to sacrifice himself, it should be because the party dropped the ball earlier- perhaps they didn't stop that technician sneaking around to trigger the self-destruct system, or they were incautious and scuffed the ritual circle. The point about high-stakes adventures is that small mistakes that usually wouldn't matter can have very grave consequences. As a side-benefit the players may be starting being more cautious in other adventures, which makes managing their power level easier.

### Multiple Named Bad Guys

The easiest technique is just to jack up the number of named bad guys they face. Simply making the enemies more powerful is not a panacea, as it may be at odds with the established heavy-hitters in the factions. Just introduce more named characters of the same power, even outnumbering the PCs if necessary. The fights take longer, but there is a lot more going on and a tougher challenge presented to the party.

### Ritual Hosing

If their enemies can't attack the party directly for fear of taking a serious beating, they can get sneaky. Ritual hosing entails anything that makes it very difficult for the player characters to go about their business, and may leave them vulnerable to more conventional attacks. Burning one of their Feng Shui sites is a simple method, but runs into difficulty if the players have taken even rudimentary steps to protect it. Arcane rituals and curses offer an easier way to attack someone directly for factions with a magical angle. A hot-dog seller working for the

Buro may slip an arcanotoxin into the mustard for a similar affect. The Ascended would probably fabricate evidence of serious criminal wrong-doing to turn the victim into a fugitive. They could manipulate the police into accosting them without evidence, but with public shaming it would make life difficult for them in more ways. In all of these forms of ritual hosing, there are three important things that the character would have to find out what is happening to them, find out who is responsible for their condition, and then put a stop to it. Because of the highly indirect nature of the attack, the third part can be very difficult. It could form the basis of a series of adventures during the course of a campaign. Naturally, until the problem is fixed the character has a major disadvantage that hampers his usual efficiency. It is worth mentioning that although it may be the GM's motive to reduce their power for a while, it should not be permanent. It should be clear that the character will be restored to his usual potency just as soon as he resolves the problem.

### Targeted Attacks

If one PC in particular has earned the ire of a faction, then it is likely that she will be singled out for special attention. Her enemy probably has ample information on her strengths and weaknesses to put together a team tailored to beat her that doesn't rely on super-powerful combatants. This is particularly true of the Buro and the Eaters of the Lotus, who can field agents that are immune to the sort of damage the target deals out. Ideally, the target will be ambushed when alone, or at least a long way from her allies. The only chance for the target to survive is to get help from her friends, and fast. Alternatively, each PC can have a single agent sent after him- and to survive they must meet up and attack each other's foes.

### Unlikely Team-Ups

When the party was the underdog, they were nothing wrong with teaming up with whatever faction would have them. When one of the core factions is under pressure, there's no reason for them to behave differently. Even the Jammers and the Buro may kiss and make up temporarily if the players have been a big annoyance to both of them. This gives the enemies a larger pool of muscle to draw on, and the possibility that some of their unique assets work very well in tandem.

## MAKING FIGHTS FUN

Keeping the fights interesting for the players is the single most important consideration for a Feng Shui GM.

It can be easy, in a long-running campaign, to do it a bit by rote. For a gritty feel, there's nothing wrong with keeping the locations and stunts relatively mundane. Then again, even the grittiest campaign suffers around about the time of the eighth fight in a nondescript warehouse.

The important thing is to try to make every major fight scene different and unique in some way. Inconsequential fights don't need this effort as much (although they still benefit from it) but the final encounter of a session should always have something to set it apart from all the fights that have gone on before. There are several things to consider.

## Where is it Going Down?

Where, exactly, is the fight taking place? Some locations automatically lend themselves to exciting fights, whereas others need a little more effort to make them shine. Think about how the location can make a difference to what stunts the players might try and what objects may be around for their use. Is there some prevailing danger in the location, such as a long drop?

## Who Else is There?

Some locations are packed with by-standers, which the noble players may do their best to protect. In crowded areas, any kind of ranged attack has potential for going horribly awry. If the area isn't very crowded, are there still passers-by that might call the police or get into trouble? Some by-standers might take exception to a fight breaking out in their bar or outside their house and wade into the fray looking to punish both sides. In some places, the by-standers go armed as a matter of course and may mistake a contretemps in the secret war for rivals attacking them.

## What Else is Going On?

The world doesn't stop just because a life or death fight is taking place. Dockyards, stations and airports are almost always busy, any time of the day or night, and with so many people trying to get their jobs done it's inevitable that it interferes in the fight somehow. Even if everyone screams and flees when the first Abomination catches fire, machinery may be left running dangerously unattended.

## What Props Are There?

Of course, what the players will be immediately interested in is what they can find to smash over their enemies' heads. Which is not to say that you should do their work for them in saying what is there, but you can let them know if there's something slightly out of the ordinary or particularly interesting they can use. For example, fight scenes often get a lot more interesting if

they are on two levels, so you could describe a restaurant as being split-level or describe the coaching inn's stable as having a hay loft to jump into and run riot in. Accidents Waiting To Happen, in chapter 8, also fall in this category.

## Weather and Conditions

Pathetic fallacy is a term for when, in fiction, the weather reflects the mood of the scene or a character. It's for this reason that bitter betrayals often take place in heavy rain. Unlike real life, you can change the weather to match what is going on in the story. Precipitation and temperature can make a big difference to a scene. Fog can make ranged weapons next to useless. Ice can make any sudden movement a perilous affair. Even the drabest fight scene can be livened up by some inclement weather.

## Skills and Schticks

Another thing to bear in mind is how the location interacts with the PCs' and GMCs' skills and schticks. A luxury car showroom is a playground for someone with driving schticks. A location filled with explosives or tanks of combustible gas is a good place to take pyromaniac sorcerers. You can even tailor fight scenes to the particular strengths or weaknesses of characters, which is practically guaranteed to make it memorable for *someone*.

## Art Imitates Life

A good way to pass the time when you're bored is to look around your surroundings for inspiration for fights in Feng Shui. You may think that you can list all the interesting aspects of a fight in a library, with books, ladders and tables, but if you're actually stood in one you can start to see potential stunts you wouldn't otherwise think of. Full shelves offer concealment but scant protection from bullets. Movable shelving could provide an excellent way of taking out a dozen mooks in one go. Actually standing in a place you might use for a future fight scene can give you extra insight as to how the fight might look and what could go on there.

## Don't Gild the Lily

Don't try to put too much into each fight scene. A few novel elements are enough. If you try to put too much in, then not only do good ideas not get a fair chance to be fully developed, but you will inevitably forget about some aspect during the fight and end up looking a little foolish. Two or three unique attributes milked for all they are worth is better than half a dozen that are barely used.



## Save it For the Big Fight

An unfortunately error is to come up with an extra-special location for a fight then squander it on a short tussle with a group of mooks half-way through the session. What is much better is to rewrite the session so the best location is used for the most climactic fight.

## THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE FUNNY

One of the first things a GM needs to decide in her campaign is: what sort of tone do I want to set for the game? Many players and GMs alike have found that Feng easily lends itself to a fast-paced and light-hearted - perhaps even slightly silly - campaign. However, with a system as flexible as this, it's easy to experiment with different styles, from light and fluffy to grim and gritty. There's also nothing that says that the tone can't vary considerably during the course of a campaign- or even during a single session. After all, Hong Kong action films frequently mix melodrama and farce.

An easy way to set the tone of an adventure is in the character of the NPCs and factions that your players encounter, and to that end we've presented you with some ideas for the major factions in different ways. If you intend for one faction to be sometimes allies of the party, then you generally want to portray them as more sympathetic as the forces the party allies with them against. Unless, of course, you're one of *those* GMs who likes inflicting horrible moral dilemmas upon their players. Yeah, you looked like the type.

Note that the different sides presented here are *not* necessarily mutually exclusive. The Jammers can be your bosom buddies when they're helping you fight the Lotus, only to turn into implacable enemies when your own Feng Shui site works its way to the top of Potemkin's hit list. You can even switch tone right in the middle of a session, taking advantage of your players' complacency.

Note as well that the descriptions of the factions presented below are, perforce, very brief sketches. Each faction's sourcebook (see *The Books*, earlier) has far more details about the ins and outs of each Faction, and can provide excellent support for tailoring them to the specific needs of your campaign.

### The Eaters of the Lotus

**The Good:** The Lotus are a power-within-a-power, a slight glimmer of meritocracy with an Imperial system as their puppet. When it comes down to it, their methods are

### Duels and Challenges - Optional Rule

When one named GMC or PC calls out a different named GMC or PC, it is a declaration of a one-on-one contest of prowess. If the challenge is accepted, any attempts by other characters to interfere with the fight incur a -2 Action Value penalty. The GM may waive this if someone comes to the rescue of a character who is beaten and in danger of being killed. If the challenge is turned down, then the one who refused it suffers a -2 Action Value penalty against the one who issued the challenge for the rest of the scene. They can still attack other characters without penalty. If one participant does something that goes against the nature of the challenge (such as pulling a hidden weapon in a fist fight), then they had better make it count because although their first action suffers no penalty, all future actions in the duel will suffer a -2 Action Value penalty.

not really much worse than any other powerful force of their era. Gao Zhang and his cronies are ambitious, but they are not stupid. They've seen slices of completely different worlds, and have come to realise that the orthodoxy they know is not the only way things can be.

**The Bad:** Lotus sorcerers are demon-worshipping monsters, who mutilate themselves in horrific ways for an extra glimmer of power. They unleash unimaginable supernatural horrors on innocent peasants to maintain their power base, without a single thought for the massive loss of life. Gao Zhang himself is a paranoid monomaniac, who executes on the spot anyone he believes to be conspiring against him, no matter how flimsy the evidence.

**The Funny:** Lotus sorcerers are squeaky-voiced confidence tricksters, scamming hapless peasant folk tame monsters, smoke and mirrors. Their fondness for over-the-top gloating is only matched by their capacity to squander a strong position because of it. Their demonic minions, while initially frightening, are not the sharpest tools in the box and can be as much of a liability as an asset.

### The Guiding Hand

**The Good:** In a land shot through with corruption and misery, they seek to bring order through discipline and mercy. China is a troubled land in danger of losing its soul, and the Hand strive to deliver it from its torment. They know that good men will lose their lives in the process, but are prepared to shoulder that responsibility if it means preventing a bigger death toll.

**The Bad:** The Guiding Hand are wild-eyed fanatics with an irrational hatred of anything they consider

culturally impure. They have no compunction about throwing the baby out with the bathwater. Any sign of influence from outside China, even medicines, is ruthlessly stamped out. Those that 'collaborate' with foreigners are fair game, no matter how innocuous their association.

**The Funny:** Guiding Hand agents are polite, strong in kung fu, and utterly baffled by any modern technology. They do not know the difference between a weapon and a child's toy. They preface any attack they make with a shout describing what attack they are making, yielding significant strategic advantage. When pressed to use a piece of modern technology, they often grasp the general idea, but not the specifics. They may, for example, enter a lift only to dial a telephone number on the buttons and start speaking loudly into the emergency phone.

## The Ascended

**The Good:** They are people like you; assuming you come from the contemporary juncture. They like the same films, listen to the same music, and are generally closer to home than the other factions. They may run things behind the scenes, but in the interests of making life comfortable for themselves they've made the world pretty comfortable for most people. They have no interest in doing someone a bad turn unless they have to as part of one of their plans.

**The Bad:** So you're human? Tough break- you don't matter. The Ascended won't bat an eyelid if you die in agony, as long as their plans aren't upset. Human misery is a small price to pay for, well, anything. They'll scheme against one another without a moment's thought for who'll get caught in the middle. The Unspoken Name is just the same, except he's playing for keeps. And if you happen to be a Transformed Animal yourself? Death is too good for traitors.

**The Funny:** The Ascended run the world only in theory. In practice, the world is too full of different agencies and groups with their own agendas. They are overfond of conspiratorial drama- relying on codewords, cloak and dagger ploys and all kinds of other shenanigans. A good half of their plans fail because of internal politics and friendly sabotage.

## The Architects of the Flesh

**The Good:** The people of 2056 live lives free of prejudice, poverty or crime. Though many of the standards of '56 life seem wrong to our eyes, the citizens of the future are genuinely happy with their lot. Everyone is equal, everyone is free, and even the darkest monsters of the Underworld have been put in harness for the greater good. Johann Bonengel is an entirely benevolent dictator, who genuinely cares for the well-being of his subjects.

**The Bad:** The people of 2056 live lives free of

opportunity, choice, or hope. Over ninety-eight per cent of the world's population has been brainwashed into blind obedience; anyone who shows the merest hint of being able to resist vanishes without a trace. The Buro is an army of jackbooted sadists, backed up by Abominations that could break their bonds and go on the rampage at any moment. Bonengel is wilfully blind to the fact that he's become the very thing that he hated. Boatman is a sensual egotist, and to turn down his attentions is to volunteer for his latest experiment.

**The Funny:** The Buro are, well, the ultimate Bureaucrats, with comical jargon to cover every trivial aspect of life, and an Everest of paperwork between them and anyone they could conceivably try and oppress. Bonengel himself is preoccupied with finding new ways to legislate his people's happiness, and Curtis Boatman is far more concerned with testing his new cheesy chat-up lines than with doing Evil Things With Science.

## The Jammers

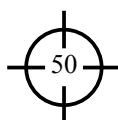
**The Good:** The Jammers are a jolly bunch of gung-ho freedom fighters, striving to free humanity from the tyranny of Chi. Battlechimp Potemkin is a dedicated, charismatic leader who knows and loves everyone in his organisation and cares passionately about doing the right thing by human kind. He knows that innocent casualties can't be avoided and has hardened himself against that sad fact.

**The Bad:** The Jammers are mad as a box of soapy frogs, and they'll let nothing stand in their way of a Chi-free world. They either buy into the Battlechimp's agenda lock, stock and barrel or are just along for the ride and the big explosions. They'll high five each other for a good job while watching civilians dancing in agony in the flames. Battlechimp Potemkin is a nihilistic sociopath, who'll burn the world to gain the briefest release from the agony of his existence.

**The Funny:** The Jammers are big on enthusiasm, but short on competence. They are just as likely to blow themselves up as other people, and when they do, the worst that anyone suffers is a blackened face and smouldering hair. They have short attention spans and can easily be misdirected with a savvy comment.

## The Four Monarchs

**The Good:** The Monarchs provide food, shelter and purpose for hundreds of Netherworld denizens, who would otherwise have absolutely no way to support themselves. They provide desperately needed stability to the society of the Inner Kingdom. Losing their world has made them more reflective and less belligerent. They've come to realise what life is like when you're not on top of the pile, and are more moral as a result.



## GM'S GUIDE

**The Bad:** The Monarchs are a blight upon the Netherworld, forcing its denizens into indentured servitude and destroying any chance of a neutral, thriving community springing up. They are bitter at the loss they've suffered, and will sacrifice anything and everything just to get a taste of that power again- even their humanity.

**The Funny:** They're a bunch of arrogant has-beans with minions that are all one-trick ponies in ridiculous costumes. They haven't quite come to terms with their reduced circumstances, often promising dire punishments they have no means of enforcing. When their impotence is drawn to their attention, they become petulant like the spoiled children they are.

# Villains

## MAKING VILLAINS MEMORABLE

Not every GMC the players encounter needs to be a rare and special jewel, but the more of them you can give a definite character to the better. Subtle elements should be avoided. How likely is it really that a subtle characteristic even gets noticed based on a few spoken lines and a fight scene? Feng Shui is based on action films, so there is no such thing as too corny. Funny voices and physical disfigurements are quick and easy ways to get some character. Tics and nervous habits do just as well.

The sneakiest way to develop the character of a GMC is to introduce them to the party before they have to fight them. A hostile exchange of words at a diplomatic banquet, where no-one wants to start a fight, can serve to introduce a GMC with great élan. Remember, you want the PCs to absolutely loathe the principal villains in your story- the more heinous acts you can show to the players the better. Remember the convention of action films- the friends and family of heroes exist only to get killed/kidnapped/tortured/eaten by the villains. It sounds harsh, but it's true. Just don't do it too lightly or too often- it should sting every time.

Once excellent way to make a GMC stick out is to give them schticks with a very narrow purpose. Players characters generally need to be versatile in their choice of abilities, but a GMC who exists solely for one fight has no need to. Three schticks in Both Guns Blazing and two signature Steyr AUGs? Why not? Three Lightning Reload schticks and a signature sniper rifle? Go to town!

## KEEPING VILLAINS ALIVE

If you want a villain to be the Big Bad for a campaign, it can be a little difficult to keep them alive. Players can be very direct, Feng Shui players doubly so, and if they sense that the villain might be getting away they will try just about anything to take him down for good. There are several ways to combat this. Firstly, a good dose of Inevitable Comeback does wonders if the villain is able to obtain it. Secondly, you can give the players an excellent reason to keep him alive- perhaps

they need information he knows or there is some dreadful consequence of his death. They will try to capture and incarcerate him, definitely, but you should feel no guilt over having him escape or be rescued whenever they take their eyes off him even for a moment. Method three is to make him sufficiently tough that they simply can't kill him, or that attempting to do so before they've improved through experience would be most unwise. Tactic four is to keep him out of reach, acting behind the scenes. The characters may know his name and hate his guts, but they've never actually seen him. He may even secretly be one of their friends or family. Stratagem five involves some unique schtick or artefact that he can use to get out of any sticky situation.

After the villain has got away once or twice, the players will probably have cultivated a deep hatred for him, which makes his eventual comeuppance all the sweeter.

And should the players manage to actually kill him when you didn't want them to? Simply have him return as a ghost who has Inevitable Comeback.

## VILLAINOUS ARCHETYPES

If a villain is there just for one session, it can be tough to flesh them out enough to be memorable. Even with a recurring villain it can be useful to have a starting point for your portrayal of them. Here are some quick and dirty villain archetypes. For actual statistics, you can take a character type and customise it or make them up out of whole cloth.

### The Brute

The Brute is uncomplicated and amoral. He kills and tortures without a backward glance- in fact he enjoys both. He lacks the imagination to be a truly efficient torturer, but he inflicts pain on a whim. He's not smart, and he has no elegance in what he does, but he's powerful and self-serving and has no limits. If someone controls him, he will happily do their bidding as long as he gets to do what he wants as well.

*Similar character types:* Abomination, Big Bruiser, Supernatural Creature.

## Great Villain Sayings

"History will vindicate us."  
 "It's almost a pity you won't live to see it."  
 "Fools! I'll destroy them all!"  
 "All you have found is your doom!"  
 "Run! Run like the insects you are!"  
 "Be thankful that I have more important matters to attend to than your deaths."  
 "Fly, my pretties, fly!"  
 "You are an obstacle that must be removed."  
 "Your antics no longer amuse me."  
 "We follow the path of righteousness; we shed no tears for those that take only one step along it."  
 "The ends justify the means."  
 "If you are not with us, you are against us."  
 "Ours is a world of order. Any threat to that order must be annihilated."  
 "Perhaps, in other circumstances, we could have been friends."  
 "For all your shallow indignation, you know in your heart of hearts that in my position you would have done exactly the same thing."  
 "One move and the kitten gets it!"  
 "It's too late for me change my path now. I must follow it to the end."  
 "Come any closer and I'll blow this whole place up!"  
 "I can taste your fear. Exquisite."  
 "Not bad, for a human."  
 "Keep looking over your shoulder."  
 "Your compassion is your weakness."  
 "You win this round..."  
 "If you kill me now, you will never know the truth about X."  
 "I should have killed you all when I had the chance!"  
 "I would have got away with it too, if it weren't for you meddling Dragons!"  
 "Sometimes one must sacrifice a little liberty to get a little security."  
 "This is our world. You just live here."  
 "Oh, what I'm going to do to you..."  
 "Are you still here?"  
 "No. I expect you to die."  
 "You may have beaten me, but you are too late to stop my plan!"  
 "Wait. I want to savour this moment. In years to come, I want a very clear memory of the day I killed you."  
 "Surprise!"  
 "Once again we meet in mortal combat, two blossoms circling one another on their descent. Which of us will touch the ground first, I wonder?"  
 "This will be the last time we meet."  
 "Any last words?"

### The Contingency Planner

He has a plan for everything. *Everything*. Because of this, his plans can be foiled any number of times and he'll bounce back with a fresh ploy. He's the sort of enemy where, after you've stormed his underground lair, he just happens to have a minisub/rocket/space hopper on hand to escape with. When he's finally nailed down, it will be most satisfying.

*Similar character types:* Ex-Special Forces, Transformed Animal.

### The Devious Mastermind

Some enemies like to have plans within plans. You know you're facing a Devious Mastermind when you discover that the plan you'd thought you foiled was just a ruse and her real goal had been achieved before you turned up with explosives. You can never be sure exactly what her plan is, which makes it difficult to foil her. Crossing swords with her is an exercise in frustration.

*Similar character types:* Golden Candle Agent, Taoist Wizard, Thief.

## The Excitable Genius

The Excitable Genius is astonishingly gifted, but rather unstable. He is capable of breath-taking feats of science and engineering yet forgetful when it comes to locking his lab door. As an enemy, the genius harangues the players about their pitiful intellects even while they are giving him a thorough pasting. He is something of an idiot savant- incredibly talented in one field but hopeless in others. They are typically an integral part of someone else's plan although they can be principal antagonists in their own right.

*Similar character types:* Criminal Mastermind, Gearhead, Techie.

## The Fallen Hero

The Fallen Hero might have been a good guy once. He was honest and caring, but all it got him was a thorough shafting. The losses and betrayals he's suffered over the years have made him bitter, cynical and self-serving. In particular, he hates heroic characters because they remind him on himself when he was 'weaker'. The fallen hero is an interesting villain to introduce because of the kinship PCs may feel with him, even as he dismisses them as naïve and idealistic.

*Similar character types:* All of them.

## The Force of Nature

This is the kind of opponent who has no time for words. He is totally committed to his task, and won't even spare an insult before fighting. This dedication can be quite disturbing. The usual niceties, such as letting your enemy know you're about to try to crack their skull like an overripe melon, are not observed.

*Similar character types:* Golem, Killer, Martial Artist.

## The Savage Taskmaster

Unlike many other villains, the taskmaster chooses to work with a pool of servants he controls very closely rather than delegating or doing things himself. It's not that he's incapable so much as he sees no reason to do anything he can get others to do. Typically he treats his minions with cruelty and brutality, which may well put him the frame for horrible payback further down the line. He's not exactly stupid; he's just very arrogant and very sure of the control he has over his servants.

*Similar character types:* Shaolin Master, Sorcerer, Über-kid.

## The Urbane Psychopath

The Urbane Psychopath is the total package- smart, manipulative, probably fearsome in combat and capable of any act of villainy. She is quite up-front about herself, maybe even boasting about her terrible acts. If you want a villain who can be pointlessly cruel, or betray people just because she can get away with it, this is the way to go. She may not even be recognised initially as an enemy, particularly if the players are her unwitting dupes to begin with. She is the type of villain who, after taking a loved one hostage to ensure a character's compliance, kills the hostage as soon as the character has left on his errand because it's just more convenient that way.

*Similar character types:* Masked Avenger, Pledged Agent, Spy.

VILLAIN INTELLIGENCE TABLE	
Int.	Behaviour
1-2	Follows simple instructions and instincts. Basically only animal intelligence.
3-4	Enemies this dumb fall easy pray to obvious traps- in fact they probably wouldn't even understand the trap if it was pointed out to them. They fight sloppily with no real sense of strategy.
5-6	Normal intelligence. They still fall for most traps, but they at least fight with some discipline until they're pushed outside what they know how to deal with.
7-8	Not only do most traps fail to sucker them in, but they'll be laying traps of their own and improvising stunts and countermeasures against their enemies. Only the weirdest opposition breaks their concentration.
9-10	You have to get up very early to get the better of them, and some of their own tactics are quite brilliant. They can adapt to any opposition, supernatural or otherwise, without losing efficiency.
11+	Whatever the players spring on them, they'll say 'I expected that' and as long as you keep a straight face while you say it the players will buy it. You can make practically anything part of their master plan retroactively.

## VILLAIN INTELLIGENCE

For most enemies in Feng Shui, any attributes other than those used in combat are pretty redundant. However, you can use their Intelligence attribute as a guide to how smart they are when they fight. By considering a

## VILLAINS

character's intelligence when running a fight, you can make smart enemies much more dangerous than stupid but strong ones.

In particular, you can give a group of named characters a leader with higher intelligence than the others. He can get the others to fight effectively as long as

he is able to lead, making the fight tougher. Taking him out of the picture helps win the fight, but it also gives scope for less combat-orientated characters to throw him off his stride by distracting him or gagging him with a table-cloth. A similar principle could apply with mooks- but mooks are so easy to dispose of anyway that it's unlikely the players would notice any difference.

## August 21

*The rain lashed against the roof, running in treacherous rivers underneath pipes and around air conditioners. The squall had gone berserk while we were downstairs, and it was vicious enough to be some unseasonal monsoon. I staggered between chimney stacks, struggling to coax bullets into the chambers of my revolver. Boss Brown was the other side of the stairway onto the roof, roaring like a wild animal and thrashing around in his sopping wet suit. Mingxia was out of sight- presumably hiding. I'd already put three bullets in him on the way here and it had only seemed to make him angrier. The rest of his gang hadn't followed the fight out onto the roof. Whatever was going on in Brown's head, it had scared them enough to make them think twice about their allegiance. With any luck, I thought, after this night's work the Brown gang would be history, even if the man himself killed us. I'd seen fist fights where one of the combatants was on PCP, and I started to wonder if that was where Brown was getting his strength and contempt for injury.*

*I spotted the top of a ladder over the lip of the roof, and figured that was the best place to try to escape. The roof had been the only place we could head for after the mayhem in the computer room, but it had certain tactical flaws.*

*Mingxia appeared behind Brown and from a crouch delivered a two-footed kick that actually lifted the big man off the ground. He kept his balance, and the girl had to cartwheel out of reach of his flailing fists. I took advantage of his distraction to run for the ladder. Water splashed high up my legs from the puddles. As I climbed down the ladder, I could see that Brown had Mingxia cornered. As soon as he passed the next duct and saw her, there was nowhere for her to run to. I squeezed off a couple of shots, one of which nicked his shoulder. When he began charging towards me I slid down the ladder and onto a lower roof. I was still running away when a great weight hit me from behind and bore me to the ground.*

*Brown had actually jumped from the higher roof and landed on me feet first. I screamed at the pain in my back and rolled away as Brown stood up. I struggled backwards on my knees and elbows, seeing the blood from my original wound seeping into the puddles beneath me. I emptied my gun into him. He actually faltered then, but quickly pulled himself together. He reached under his soggy coat, now with*

*red-rimmed bullet-holes, and pulled out his own gun with an evil glint in his eye. I started to run. The roof was a series of slanted corrugated iron pieces. Every time I reached one of the peaks, I could hear a couple of bullets whistle past me before I slid down the other side. I reached the end of the building, only to find no way down and a drop that was sure to kill me if I tried to jump. I fell to my knees, exhausted and in agony, just waiting for death to come. Boss Brown did not hurry to catch up with me.*

*I stared down the barrel. I was convinced I was going to die, but all I could think about was whether I had bought enough time for Mingxia to get away. As Brown started to pull the trigger, something hard and metallic knocked his hand aside and the bullet pinged off the roof next to me. I looked behind him to see Mingxia, halfway along the roof, preparing to throw a second metal ashtray. It curled through the air making a whirring noise, but Brown was ready for it and ducked out of the way. It bounced once on the roof next to him before disappearing into the murk. He turned back to me scowling murderously. Mingxia slid down one of the angled panels and out of sight.*

*Something happened. I don't know if it was the pain or the sense of desperation, but I got to my feet and stood in front of him. He shot me twice in the gut, but somehow it didn't hurt and I grabbed his gun hand and crushed it in my fist. I punched him in the face, hard, and he staggered backwards like a drunkard. I planted a hay-maker on his chest, and was astounded to see three horizontal red lines appear on his torso. As I watched, his heel caught the edge of the roof and he plunged downwards with a final roar.*

*Weary and confused, I almost fell over when a helicopter rose up next to me. The pilot was fighting to keep it in the air in the appalling conditions, and Mingxia was waving from the open side.*

*"Are you coming or not?" she bellowed over the rain and the noise of the rotors.*

*"Why?" I asked, dumbfounded.*

*"Your last friends didn't come to rescue you," she shouted, "I think you need some better friends."*

*I let her help me into the chopper. The pilot gave me a hand to shake.*

*"Dirk Wisely," he introduced himself shortly.*

*"Solomon Allender," I replied, then passed out.*



# General Rules

## I PARRIED AN AXE MURDERER

The generic Active Dodge is an essential part of any character's arsenal of abilities. As mentioned in the main rulebook, a parry is just a kind of Active Dodge with a different description. Making parrying a more important part of the game can open up new possibilities for stunts and cool descriptions. Instead of thinking of an Active Dodge as always being a leap away from danger, it encourages the players to stay close to their enemies while they fight.

The first question is when it is appropriate to parry. Should you require a weapon to parry an attack with a weapon? What about parrying bullets? With your bare hands? There is no hard and fast answer to these questions- it depends an awful lot of the general tone of your games. You should, however, have a consistent approach in your campaign that your players are aware of. Probably the most potent kind of parry would be a counter-blast from a sorcerer, as you can make a case for sorcery being able to parry anything, including other sorcery.

As for the differences between Active Dodges and parries, consider this a starting point:

- ◆ Active Dodges require the character to move, so they can't be performed while carrying something heavy or holding on to something fixed down. If you're hanging over a precipice, you can Active Dodge but you'd better pray for something else to grab on the way down. Active Dodging also ruins your aim if you had spent shots lining it up.
- ◆ Parries can be performed one-handed, if necessary, and don't require the character to move. However, they usually require some object to parry with. Depending on the how useful the object is against the attack the GM may impose a bonus or penalty on your Dodge. Parries do not, however, let you move away from where you are, which can be a disadvantage.

## AIMING AND ADVANTAGE

Can you aim with Martial Arts attacks? Opinion varies. What you can do is make aiming part of a more general mechanic called 'advantage'. Whenever a character does an action to make it easier for them or their ally to make an attack in the future, they are seeking advantage. Like aiming, for each shot of initiative spent the attack gets a +1 bonus, to a maximum of three. Unlike aiming, the player has to do more than simply declare their intention to get the advantage. They have to describe exactly what they're doing and why it gives them an advantage. And, like aiming, there's always the chance that the fight moves on in such a way as to make the time and effort spent wasted. What's more, they may have to succeed at a skill roll in order to pull their manoeuvre off.

Some examples:

- ◆ A martial artist fighting on a raised platform might make a series of quick, weak attacks that their opponent can trivially parry but puts them closer to the edge. The character has to make a Martial Arts check against a set Difficulty to successfully manoeuvre his foe in this way. When he makes an attack with the intention of pushing his enemy over the edge, he gets a +1 bonus for each of these weak attacks (assuming one per shot of initiative).
- ◆ A Thief caught red-handed by a Big Bruiser in a corridor might wish to throw a feint to make it easier to squeeze past him and away. She has to make a Deceit roll against the Bruiser's Perception- if successful she gets a +3 bonus to her Martial Arts roll if her next action is to elude him.
- ◆ A Scrappy Kid caught in the middle of a brawl can kneel behind an enemy to make it easier for his friend to push the bad guy over. The kid has to make an Intrusion check, but if he makes it his ally gets that +3 bonus.
- ◆ A Sorcerer hears some low-rent hoods trying to break into his curio shop. He spends a little time scattering arcane powders in a circle around himself, so when they finally climb through his window he has a +3 bonus to his first attack against them.

So, if you use advantage rules, aiming is just a

special kind of advantage that is always available when using guns.

## DEFENDING YOUR BUDDY

Sometimes you want to heroically sacrifice yourself for a friend. Doing so is effectively an Active Dodge you make during an attack against someone other than you. It costs you a shot of initiative, as usual. The effect is that your Toughness is used to reduce the damage and you take the damage. The Outcome is still figured using the original target's Dodge Action Value. You can also use this to shield objects you don't want getting damaged, such as important evidence lockers or explosive gas bottles. Naturally, such objects only have a Dodge Action Value based on their size, so you can expect to take quite a thumping if you protect them.

This is actually strictly more effective than the second part of the Bodyguard's Unique Schtick from *Seal of the Wheel*- to make up for this you can make the first part of the Bodyguard's ability only require one shot to perform.

## MIXED SKILL STUNTS

Sometimes a character performs a stunt that uses more than one of their skills. Do not make them make multiple rolls for one action. Instead, just work out which skill is the most important for the action and make them roll that. Failure can mean any aspect of the stunt can go wrong, not just the one most closely associated with the skill they used. If even the GM can't work out which skill is most important, let them use their best eligible skill. After all, we're all here to look cool.

As an example, an Ex-Special Forces wants to somersault off a balcony, land on the posh table and shoot the demon in the back. He has both Martial Arts and Guns, but as the stunt ends in an attack the GM rules the Guns is the most important. The character fails to hit to demon, but the GM rules that rather than just miss the shot the character trips over the balcony rails and crashes onto the table, scattering crockery everywhere.

You may prefer to have your characters break up these kinds of stunts into more than one action- either way is fine.

## TAKE HIM ALIVE!

So, what if the bad guys want to take a PC alive? Or the PCs need to overpower someone with information they need? Easy. Simply make a regular attack with a suitably non-lethal weapon (fists are excellent for knocking people out, naturally), and calculate how much damage you *would* do if it was a normal attack. If this is enough to force the target to make a death check, then the target makes the death check *as if* the damage had been done. If this check is failed, you have stunned / overpowered / tied up the target. If the damage is not enough to force a death check or the check is passed, then the target suffers no ill effects. This implies that you need to rough the victim up a little first, with the small chance that you might hit harder than you intended and kill the target by accident.

## JUNCTURE MODIFIERS AND SPECIAL SITES

Usually the modifiers for Sorcery, Creature Powers and Arcanowave Devices are the same through a juncture. Hong Kong is a particular exception. You may, however, want to make certain key Feng Shui sites have slightly different modifiers appropriate to their type. An Ascended research lab might well have a sorcery modifier even lower than -2, or a Monarch's pagoda a modifier of +3 or more. Having a Feng Shui site inimicable to the party's main abilities is a great way to encourage them to burn it rather than keep it.

To make the Feng Shui sites in your campaign memorable, give them fringe benefits apart from the usual Experience Point bonus. Maybe they grant anyone attuned to them a bonus to a particular skill or it provides a constant stream of money so they can all operate as if they are rich. It may even apply some bonus or penalty to certain actions within the site.

## ACCIDENTS WAITING TO HAPPEN

Plenty of Feng Shui supplements have sections called 'Cool Things That Could Happen'. While an excellent resource for GMC stunts, they tend not to trigger PC stunts through the simple fact that the players don't get to see them ahead of time. Fear not, for there's a very similar idea GMs can use to not only inspire stunts

## GENERAL RULES

but introduce a certain amount of dramatic tension: Accidents Waiting To Happen. An accident waiting to happen is a throw-away piece of scene description the GM introduces that strongly suggests a particular stunt can happen some time in the future.

During a car chase, two people carrying a pane of glass is an accident waiting to happen. A running wood-chipper just outside a window is an accident waiting to happen. Unlike a Cool Thing That Can Happen, these accidents are clearly stated to the players and the nature of the most likely stunt is easy to infer.

This is not to say that player suggestions should be sidelined. The Accident Waiting To Happen can be a stunt on standby, ready for the first player to suffer a creative

block. The characters can reference it without using until right at the end of the scene for dramatic tension. It can even be turned into the centrepiece for an extended fight with a named character- Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom has a good example with the fight on the stone crusher. The AWTTH can even be a common film trope that the GM wishes to remind her players of, in case they forget basic film clichés in the hurly-burly of role-playing.

The best thing about accidents waiting to happen is that if, for whatever reason, they don't get used, they can simply be brought out again in a later fight or session. They don't depend on the players thinking the same way as the GM or the scenario writer, and they are usually not specific to a single location.

# Mass Combat

This chapter covers some handy rules for big set-piece battles in the world of Feng Shui.

## THIS IS NOT YOUR DADDY'S ROLE-PLAYING GAME

Feng Shui is not about big set-piece battles. It is about a small number of talented fighters demonstrating their considerable prowess.

Which is not to say that big battles never occur in Feng Shui. In fact, they can be a thrilling back-drop to a fight scene- just remember that the actual outcome of the battle is irrelevant. Battlefields come with their own unique hazards, summarised in the table below.

## THIS IS MADNESS!

Of course, some times you really do care about the outcome of a fight. In this case, what the wise GM does is draw up a list of important events that occur during the course of the battle, and let the PCs participate in them.

The GM should make a list of 'waves' of attack that the characters have to deal with. Each wave should take one or two sequences at most, and have clearly defined criteria for victory or defeat. If the PCs win the wave, there is some benefit they gain in the course of the battle. Similarly, if they fail to meet the target they is some penalty. Thus, the course of the battle can be played out with a concrete indication of which side is winning.

The GM should work out what what the PCs get for winning a wave, and what it costs them for losing. A generic method is to track 'victory points' and 'defeat points'. Ideally, there should be a purpose to them- maybe the outcome of the battle hinges on scoring more victories or defeats, for example. Or there could be a final wave with a strength that depends on how many previous waves were successfully fought. Perhaps if the PCs have too many defeat points at a certain point of the battle, the walls of the fort are breached, making the battle much harder. The important thing is to keep the battle as interesting as possible. It should not be just waves of identical enemies without variation. Think of strategies the enemies might use and encourage the players to develop plans of their own. Because the battle may involve multiple fight sequences, it can last at least as long as two normal fight scenes so bear that in mind when compiling the session.

## Battlefield Hazards

**Cannon Fire** – A cannon ball passes by at speed. All characters make a Fortune roll. The character with the worst fumble (assuming any characters fumbled) is hit by the cannonball. The damage is 26, and they are carried away a number of metres equal to how much they fumbled the roll by.

**Explosions** – The artillery of later eras behaves similarly. Each character must make a Fortune roll against the number of shells being fired into the area. Failure indicates a character is caught in an explosion (12 damage). A Fumble means the character takes a direct hit (26 damage).

**Cavalry Charge** – A full cavalry charge is a fantastic thing to behold. Everyone has one chance to try to unhorse an attacker and take their place. If they don't manage it, they suffer 20 damage from a combination of lances, sabres and hooves. Even if they bring a horse down, there are still plenty of others behind it.

**Gas or Smoke** – Battlefields quickly fill up with smoke if firearms are being used. This severely impairs visibility, and can provoke bouts of heavy coughing. What is more, some unscrupulous forces may use poison gas. A failed Constitution roll against such a thing could have all kinds of unpleasant consequences.

**Hail of Arrows** – A volley of arrows lands around the characters, making the sky dark with wooden shafts. Everyone must make a Fortune roll difficulty 5. If anyone gets a negative Outcome, turn this into a positive number and say that many arrows hit him. If the roll was a fumble, then he suffers some other penalty, like having a foot nailed to the ground or dropping his weapon. A similar effect can be seen when guns are used, although the damage is greater in that case.

**Passing Mêlée** – A scrum of fighters interferes with the on-going fight. No attacks against the main combatants can be made until the fighters have moved away. Characters may take advantage of the interruption to find a tactical advantage or run away.

## Example 1: Defending a Fort

Consider if a party of characters is compelled to defend a fort in mainland China. A rebel army is marching on it at the urging of Guiding Hand agitators. Why must the party defend it? Who knows? Presumably they have a good reason.

The fort has low wooden walls with the occasional watchtower along the circumference. There is one large gate at the front, with towers either side, and a smaller gate at the rear. The PCs can choose to defend inside the walls, in one of the towers, or in the field outside the walls. If they need to get in or out, they can use the second gate as long as they identify themselves. During the battle, arrows rain back and forth between the fort and the rebel army. Every so often, character may have to make a Fortune roll as described before. Not all player characters will be able to participate in every wave, depending on where they chose to go.

**Wave 1:** Ranks of rebel spearmen are advancing on the fort. The defenders are frightened and may break. The party must kill 30 mooks in one sequence to bolster their morale. If they succeed, they get a victory point- otherwise a defeat point.

**Wave 2:** Mobs carrying ladders charge the walls. There are 5 ladders, and the party must manage to destroy or topple 3 of them in one sequence. This can be done by disabling the mooks carrying them, or using sticks to push them away from the wall. If the party manages this, they repel that assault- otherwise there will be rebels in the fort which has ramifications later.

**Wave 3:** The Hand agitators take personal action against any player characters in the field. Fight two sequences and see which side fares the best. Either side can easily escape in the chaos if they are grievously wounded. If the PCs prevail, they get a victory point. Otherwise, they get a defeat point.

**Wave 4:** A large force of Hand archers are taking position on a hill overlooking the fort. Letting them start firing has grave consequences. Any character out in the field can go to intercept them and disrupt them, but that character ends up some distance from the fort for the final push. If characters kill 15 mooks or find some other way of disrupting them, the party gets a victory point, otherwise they get a defeat point.

**Wave 5:** The final push- If the party has more victory points than defeat points, the fort repels the attack.

The rebels flee, and the characters can try to spot and intercept the Hand agitators that led them. If the party has more defeat points than victory points, then the fort is over-run. The party must escape the fort and flee into the wilderness. This task is made more difficult by the rebel army trying to slaughter everyone inside the fort. In either case, if rebels got inside the fort then they have set fires at the bases of the watch-towers. Any character in a watch-tower must try to find a safe way down. Compassionate characters may also try to save defenders from the inferno.

## Example 2: Storming a Shrine

Lotus sorcerers are up to no good. They are performing a ritual to some dread purpose, and are defending the shrine with a host of monstrous beasts. The plucky heroes have Ting Ting and her bandits to draw on, plus a rough militia trained by Guiding Hand agents. Their goal is to stop the ritual, but unless they can break the back of the Lotus forces they have to deal with an awful lot of mooks once they get inside.

Lotus sorcerers are on hand to pepper the enemy with dark magic, which can be treated as explosions. They may also attempt to fill the battlefield with fog to vex guns-using characters and sow confusion.

**Wave 1:** At the head of the demon horde is a huge, horned general. He's very tough and has a lot of Damage Immunity schticks. He boasts that no-one can hurt him. The PCs must find a way to hurt him quickly otherwise the morale of their forces plummets. If the general becomes wounded in one combat sequence, gain a victory point. Otherwise, gain a defeat point.

**Wave 2:** Ting Ting's force has reached the gates, but the defenders are holding firm and a demonic counter-attack risks forcing them away. Someone has to get inside the guard tower and open the gate. One character has to defeat the sorcerer in the tower- the rest are needed to maintain the assault. If the sorcerer flees or is defeated, gain a victory point. Otherwise, nothing happens.

**Wave 3:** A flock of winged horrors are released to run amok. The characters have two sequences to dispose of them all before they sow panic amongst the bandits and throw the assault into disarray. If most of the monsters are killed or distracted, there are no ill effects. Otherwise, the party gets a defeat point.

**Wave 4:** The demonic general rallies the last of his

## OUT FOR BLOOD

forces for a desperate defence of the shrine. He has been hurt more since the first wave, taking damage equal to half his remaining wound points. The party have to get past him to enter the heart of the shrine. If they defeat him, they receive a victory point. If they dodge past him instead, or retreat and go around him, they get a defeat point.

After the battle, the characters must then go on to

attack the sorcerers at the shrine itself. If they scored at least two victory points, then they have broken the defending demons and get a fair crack at the sorcerers. Otherwise, they have to deal with the sorcerers *and* a number of remaining monsters- a task that is much more difficult. If the party suffered two or more defeat points, then Ting Ting's bandits lost a great many of their number. It is a sad day for the Dragons that so many of their allies were killed, and their presence in 69AD will be seriously compromised.

# Artefacts

Unlike many role-playing games, Feng Shui doesn't revolve around the accumulation of stuff. Special items should be used sparingly, because they might overshadow the abilities of the characters. On the other hand, an artefact can become an important plot element in a campaign. If you build up one particular recurring villain, then the acquisition of the artefact the characters need to defeat him makes for a thrilling story. Artefacts should be considered property of the group rather than property of one particular character, to encourage passing them around to whoever can make best use of them. Even better is if the artefact has a very particular use, spending much of its time sitting in a glass cabinet in the characters' safe house and only being brought out for special occasions. Long-running TV series love to have toys around that they can break out of the vault when the writers dream up a new use for them<sup>6</sup> - why should your game of Feng Shui be any different?

Here is a selection of magical, mystical and mysterious items that characters may chance upon. They vary in power from the merely useful to positively devastating.

## Making an Artefact

The character types in Feng Shui offer quite a bit of flexibility in creating a character, and personality and mannerisms go a long way when it comes to making a character stand out. However, some players find that one Maverick Cop can play very much like another. This can be a problem for very long-running campaigns if a new character steps in and struggles to differentiate himself from ones that have gone before.

To make a character stand out, even among others of the same type, one thing you can do is see to it that he gets an artefact, or perhaps a schtick normally unavailable to him. All perfectly justified in plot, of course, but little treats like that can make players sit up and beg properly.

## Bracelet of the Master

A very long time ago, these were the traditional emblem of office for a master of a martial arts school. The secret of creating them is lost (although the King of the Fire Pagoda is the likeliest to rediscover it), and they have been stolen, lost and passed around so much that those that remain no longer have their original significance.

A character wearing one of these bracelets has an additional reserve of Fu points to spend on powers. This reserve is equal to their Fu secondary attribute, but only refreshes at the start of a session. If the bracelet changes hands, the reserve is emptied until the next session. These extra points do not increase the character's effective Fu attribute, they merely give an extra batch of points to spend in a pinch.

## Claws of Darkness

Queen Ming I of the Darkness Pagoda crafts these magical weapons and presents them to some of her favoured servants. They deal Strength+3 damage, but every time the wielder slays someone with them they recover a little health. Dispatching mooks only regains 1 wound point per mook, but slaying a named character heals the wielder by 10 wound points. Ming I's warriors typically use these to heal themselves during battle, even if it means slaying their own troops. Heroic types should feel a little uncomfortable using these weapons of dark magic, but they may come in handy for undercover work in the Darkness Pagoda.

## Dented Sword of Han Lo

The master swordsman Han Lo was one of the first to witness the guns of the Europeans when they first arrived in China. He was convinced that the sword was innately superior as a weapon, and made it the purpose of his life to develop a technique that guns would be useless against. He procured a pistol, at great personal expense, and studied its operation and abilities in depth. He never perfected his form- dying of natural causes before his work was finished- but the sword he practised with gained some power in its own right.

The Dented Sword of Han Lo is, yes, dented and less than straight after years of being hit by bullets. However, it allows the wielder to parry any projectile smaller than a man with a +3 bonus on top of the normal parry bonus of +3. Furthermore, when the wielder attacks someone who has a firearm and gets an Outcome of 2 or more, the firearm is destroyed in addition to normal damage to the wielder. Signature firearms are knocked out of reach, instead.

## Electro-Gauntlet

A joy-buzzer that is no joy at all for the sucker on the

<sup>6</sup> \*cough\* Stargate SG-1 \*cough\*

receiving end of it. Attacks are made with Martial Arts, for Strength+3 damage which is resisted with Constitution instead of Toughness. However, the Outcome is not added to the damage. For each significant metal item (guns and swords, for but two examples) the target is carrying, the damage increases by 1. If the target has any Hardware Shticks, add another 3. Jammers love these things, not so much in battle but for practical jokes among themselves. Battlechimp Potemkin has warned that if anyone attempts to recreate the version that looks like a toilet seat he will deal with them personally.

## Elemental Sword

These weapons are commonly carried by foot soldiers of the Thunder and Fire Pagodas, and sometimes by others. An elemental sword is exactly like a regular sword, except that the damage they deal counts as being a sorcerous blast. This is useful for by-passing immunity to hand to hand weapons, and also reproduces the special qualities of the Blast effect (Fire Swords set things alight, for example). The damage of an elemental sword is, however, adjusted by the local Sorcery juncture modifier- so in some places they are actually less damaging than regular swords. The Monarchs only create elemental swords of the variety of blasts closely associated with their chosen magic- Fire, Thunder, Ice and Disintegration are the classic four. Creating an elemental sword is not that difficult, requiring only a Sorcery task check at difficulty 15. The caster does need a suitable sword, Create Magical Artefact (see *Thorns of the Lotus* page 96) and Blast as Magic Shticks. They can only apply a Blast special effect they know, and to make the effect permanent they must spend 20 Magic points when casting the spell, as per permanent magic in *Thorns of the Lotus* page 94.

## Excalibur

The legendary sword of Arthur, King of the Britons, was cast back into the lake upon his death. The lake, as it happens, was a portal to the Netherworld. The purpose and allegiance of the Lady of the Lake are unknown<sup>7</sup>, but the sword might well turn up *anywhere*.

For starters, Excalibur does Strength+10 damage. It grants the bearer a Leadership Action Value of 20. So far, so good. However, every time the wielder bears witness to some unchivalrous act, the damage drops by 1 and the Leadership Action Value by 2. Note that any duplicity, even for the best of reasons, triggers this drop. It is also not limited to the behaviour of the wielder or her companions- anything less than chivalrous that happens within earshot reduces the power of the sword. It doesn't regain its lost abilities if it is passed around, it regains

<sup>7</sup> Rumours that she bore a striking resemblance to Pui Ti of the Ice Pagoda are scurrilous hearsay.

them only for plot reasons and probably after it has been discarded. Once the damage is reduced by enough, the sword is useless, and will probably be thrown into the nearest body of water.

## Gloves of Lam Wo Pung

Lam Wo Pung was a humble martial artist in ancient China who made his living as a tanner with his wife and son. One night he staggered home late after carousing with a visiting group of acrobats to discover his wife missing. Upon raising the alarm, it was discovered that a shadowy figure had been seen nearby, appearing to drag someone or something up into the mountains. He set off immediately to try and rescue his beloved. In a cave at the top of a steep track, he found the Demon of Countless Teeth had just finished feasting on her dead body. Lam Wo Pung was driven into an mighty rage, both with the demon and with himself from a sense of guilt- for if he had returned home sooner he might have saved her. It was prophesied that the Demon of Countless Teeth could not be destroyed until the end of the world, but such was Lam Wo Pung's vengeful fury that even prophecy could not survive his onslaught. After rending the demon in two, he returned home with his wife's body. Further tragedy awaited him- his unsupervised son had been knocked down by a cart and badly injured. The guilt Lam Wo Pung felt drove him to leave his son in the care of a neighbour and he dedicated his life to the destruction of all demons and monsters. He made these gloves from the remains of the Demon of Countless Teeth, and they still have some dread vitality about them.

The gloves are made of heavy leather, studded inside and out with teeth of all shapes and sizes. They look clumsy, but do not interfere with a martial artist's skill. When one is worn, teeth bite into the wearer's wrist, dealing 5 wound points that cannot be prevented, and cannot be healed until the glove is removed. Once on, a glove cannot be removed until the wearer has slain a supernatural creature or has failed a death check<sup>8</sup>.

When wearing one glove, the wearer can deal Strength+4 damage to supernatural creatures. They may not use Fu powers that increase damage with that hand, although other Fu powers are fair game. The glove also negates any Armour shticks a supernatural creature has. While the glove is on, the wearer must make a Willpower check difficulty 5 whenever they are in the presence of a supernatural creature to avoid attacking it, as the spirit of Lam Wo Pung attempts to fulfil his vow even after death.

If someone wears both gloves, they get even more potent. The gloves by-pass all Toughness of supernatural creatures, but the Willpower check has a difficulty check of 10. Remember that wearing both gloves causes 10 wound points in total.

<sup>8</sup> Amputation is a further option, but it is surprising how few martial artists consider it.



Should a supernatural creature ever wear one of the gloves, they become possessed by the spirit of Lam Wo Pung. For most creatures, he simply takes over their body and continues his work as best he can. If the wearer was, at heart, good (like a PC for instance), then after a brief moment of disbelief Lam Wo Pung realises that not all demons are beyond redemption and allow the wearer control over their own body. He becomes instead an occasional voice in their head, urging them into battle against evil. He may even take brief control of the character if there is some immediate danger he perceives but the character does not. In either case the gloves themselves meld into the flesh of the wearer, and can never be removed.

## Medicine Bag

Any character with the Sorcery skill can make one of these bags. It is particular to them, and carries their Magic secondary attribute around in a physical form. As long as they carry it around, it makes no difference to any of their abilities. They can, however, give it to another character. This drops their Magic attribute to 0 (and impedes any skills based on Magic accordingly), but the new bearer gets the Magic attribute of the donor while they have it. This does not affect their skills (as a raised attribute does usually), but might affect their resistance to certain effects that are opposed by Magic. They can also spend Magic points in the bag as if they were their own. Should a medicine bag be destroyed, then the maker cannot regain their Magic points until the next session.

## Obsidian Dagger

Weapons of this type have special significance for ritual sacrifices<sup>9</sup>. Not only do they grant an extra magic point for ritual purposes (see page 91 of *Thorns of the Lotus*), but they are especially effective when used with stealth or trickery. If the wielder attacks someone by surprise, then the target may not use Toughness or armour to soak the damage. Their damage is Strength+3.

## Spear of Destiny

The legendary weapon that pierced Christ's chest has long been thought of as an artefact of immense power. Supposedly only the spear's head has survived into the modern age. It is a seemingly fragile relic with a piece of the True Cross tied to it with gold and silver wire. Who can say what would happen if a new shaft was fitted?

We can. A large number of unpleasant battles have been fought for possession of the spear head over the years, and it has become corrupt and malevolent. In a

parody of the Resurrection story, a character who wields it cannot be slain or receive wound points by any means- until exactly three days after he picked it up, when he dies. The latter fact is not advertised in most histories regarding the spear.

Keeping an immortal bad guy occupied for the three days it takes him to drop dead might make for an interesting adventure.

## Tainted Blades

It is not just bodies that are lost to the mud on battlefields- weapons are abandoned to rust where they fall. Battlefields can become haunted areas, filled with terrors and ghosts. Some of the weapons absorb this tainted chi and become objects of terror in their own right.

Getting a tainted blade is not a trivial task- getting into the heart of a haunted battlefield and surviving to leave is a major obstacle, but matters are complicated because it's not immediately apparent which of the many swords buried in the mud has become a tainted blade.

A tainted blade has drawbacks for both the wielder and anyone hit by it. A target struck by a tainted blade loses all their remaining Fu points for this sequence, and the next task check they use a Fortune point on is an automatic failure. Every time the wielder rolls the same number on the positive and negative dice (including boxcars, naturally), they lose one point of Chi (and Fortune and Fu, if they are higher). These points do not return until the blade is destroyed. The wielder does not know anything is wrong until he tries to use Fu, Chi or Fortune points he does not have.

Certain Lotus sorcerers have taken to letting these blades fall into the hands of their enemies, then stealing them back once the wielder has been weakened but before they know what to do about it. The sorcerer can then blackmail the enemy by keeping the blade safe where it cannot be destroyed if the victim doesn't do as they are instructed.

Should a victim's Chi attribute and all its secondary attributes reach 0 because of a tainted blade, then he is consumed by the sword, trapped forever in a vortex of agony. Friends of the deceased can hear him screaming if the blade is held up to the ear.

<sup>9</sup> You didn't think it was coincidence that the Aztec empire used obsidian tools and weapons, did you?

## August 22

*I sat on the edge of the bed, trying not to feel self-conscious about the middle-aged woman poking and prodding my midriff. The Prof, as everyone seemed to call her, sucked her teeth and went back to looking at the blood sample under the microscope.*

*My back was nearly completely healed. There was only a faint mark where Mingxia's blow had broken the skin, and a pair of rapidly diminishing bruises where I had felt Brown's feet. On the front, there were only two puckered circles where I'd been shot.*

*"So what you're saying," I said slowly, "Is that I'm some kind of monster?"*

*"Not exactly," the Prof said, putting her glasses back on and treating me to a brief smile, "There is definitely a demonic component to your haematology, but I assure you that you are mostly human."*

*Yeah. Like that would reassure me.*

*"It happens," Dr. Haynes added, "And more often than most people suspect. Tell me, have you ever been attacked at night in mysterious circumstances and got away?"*

*"No. And I'm sure I'd remember something like that."*

*"Visited any shrines to malevolent forces?"*

*"I used to eat at Maccy D's, if that counts."*

*The Prof chuckled.*

*"How about this then," she said, "When you were growing up, were you ever picked on? Excluded by the other children?"*

*My hesitation must have given me away, because she pressed on.*

*"Always feeling like you didn't quite belong, always on the edge of things. Adults assuming you were up to no good without reason, children finding anything they can to tease you about?"*

*I glowered at her. There are parts of my childhood I don't like to think about.*

*"It's in your blood, boy. It's in your DNA," she cackled, "One of your forebears wasn't human, I can tell you that. And it's got passed on to you."*

*I thought about my parents, and how they'd grown apart over the years. How my mother had struggled to*

*be accepted by Dad's family and been bounced from dead-end job to dead-end job after he left. We'd always been ostracised. I had just assumed it was to do my mother's poor background, but what the Prof was saying made sense. Too much sense. My anger must have been showing, because Dr. Haynes put a hand on my shoulder to calm me.*

*"It's a lot to take in," he said, shortly.*

*The Prof excused herself and left. She was whisked away by one of those bizarre contraptions they swing about on to get from place to place in the Junkyard base. John Haynes sat on the bed opposite and offered me some Kendall mint cake.*

*"If I have this... this," I said, "Why did it only happen now? I've been hurt dozens of times and I've never healed like this before."*

*"At a guess, it was probably when Mingxia hit you with her Lightning Fist. It probably gave your personal chi a little jump-start."*

*"There's something else. Before Dirk turned up with the chopper, I think I grew claws."*

*"Nice trick if you can manage it," he said drily.*

*I was despondent. There's normally supposed to be some sort of epiphany when you find out the truth about yourself, but all I felt was numbness. If I was part demon, what was to stop me from turning on my new allies, or degenerating into some sub-human beast? Dr. John Haynes is a very shrewd man. I swear he must have known exactly what I was thinking.*

*"When we first encountered little Mingxia," he said, "She was an assassin for hire. As far as we can tell, she was trained from the cradle to be a completely amoral, emotionless killer. She was very good at it. She was contracted to kill Dirk- and she would have done, too, if Bei Tairong hadn't been there to back him up. We captured her and did what we could to deprogramme her. The Mingxia you see now, that's her trying to be normal, trying to put all that behind her."*

*His analogy was obvious. If she could hold on to her humanity, so could I.*

*"I think the best thing to do," he continued, "Would be to get a little revenge on the woman who was controlling the Brown gang. Let me tell you about someone called the Queen of the Darkness Pagoda..."*

# Feng Shui Sites

## THE ASYLUM OF THE DAMNED

In a leafy suburb of Hong Kong, there's a small but homely-looking medical facility called, officially, the Tai Po Peace Rest Home. Home to nearly twenty permanent residents it caters to people of all ages with serious psychiatric disorders, particularly those with delusions that lead them to violence. It's friendly and superbly trained staff do everything they can to give the poor unfortunates living there the very best of care. Yeah, right.

### The Truth is Not in Here

The Asylum of the Damned is staffed by demons who keep anyone incarcerated there for the right price. For a little bit extra they perform the 'full whammy' on the victim and persuade them that everything they remember of their previous life is a series delusions and false memories. It is, in essence, the ultimate facility for incarcerating and/or breaking the spirit of Secret Warriors. The only reason the place isn't better known or more widely used is that the price the demons charge is high and does not involve money.

### Keeping you Docile

The corrupted chi of the site means that anyone not attuned to it loses all supernatural or chi-based abilities as soon as they enter the grounds. They cannot use Arcanowave Devices, Creature Powers, Fu Powers, Transformed Animal powers or Sorcery until they have left the grounds. Supernatural Creatures and Abominations are forced to assume their human forms, if they have them. Ghosts lose the ability to pass through solid objects.

The staff of the Asylum have a battery of powerful drugs that they routinely administer to the patients, which keep them docile and clouds their minds. Not only does this make it easier to manage them but it also makes it easier to brainwash them into disbelieving their previous life.

### The Patients

The inmates of the asylum look pretty much like any

other bunch of long-term psychiatric patients- which is ironic given that very few of them were mad before they were imprisoned there. There are two or three genuine patients, acquired by the asylum to add realistic colour to the place, but the rest of the patients are people who annoyed someone prepared to pay a hefty price to put them in there.

Some of these patients cling, grimly, to their real memories in spite of everything. They are sullen and often violent, and have probably developed delusions and rampant paranoia (the latter not without good reason). Some patients have been convinced by the charade, and have been 'cured' of their delusions. Naturally, they still exhibit some symptoms (prompted by the staff) so they can't be released. They love and trust the staff, and would intervene on their behalf in a fight. Still others have had their minds broken completely, and scarcely react to any external stimuli.

### The Staff

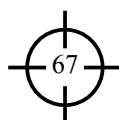
There are only three regular staff, demons all, and a mysterious figure only referred to as the Overseer. The staff maintain an outwardly human appearance almost all of the time and are careful to play the role of compassionate helpers very well indeed. Because they are attuned to the site, they are not affected by its chi-dampening effect and can use all their abilities should they need to.

### Activities

The variety of soul-crushing activities are provided to 'treat' the patients, and range from the futile to the desperately boring. There is group therapy, where the patients are encouraged to talk about their problems to each other. There is art therapy, where the higher-functioning patients are given modelling clay or paints to create with (the nightmarish creations of most do nothing for anyone's state of mind). There is also floatation therapy, where the patient is placed in a sensory deprivation tank and either left alone for hours or pumped full of psychotropic drugs and left to suffer a bad trip.

### Down Below

Any inmates that can't be made to fit in, or have abilities that the site cannot mask (like Hardware Schticks



or any monstrous characters without a human form) are instead kept in the Boiler Room, a nightmarish underground chamber where steel cages barely big enough for their occupants are hung from the ceiling. Even so, the inmates receive the same regimen of drugs to keep them tame. It is always uncomfortably hot, as the boiler is kept running day and night all through the year. It is, in fact, a little taste of hell.

## MARSTON JABBETT

Somewhere in the wilds of Warwickshire, England, there is a hard-to-find village. It is not very big, but it might be mistaken as a dormitory village for one of the nearby towns. That is, until you notice there are no children and that no-one ever seems to be leaving the place.

### The Scrapheap of the Secret War

When a secret warrior loses everything, when he become too weary and ground down to even care about why he got involved in the first place, he eventually finds his way to Marston Jabbett.

The entire village is populated with abominations, martial artists, sorcerers and even stranger people who have been involved in the secret war. Some of them are from junctures long since closed, or possible futures long since erased. All of them, however, have had their will shattered and determination destroyed.

No-one here cares about anything other than keeping their lawns tidy and their houses well-painted. They do not care for each other, and certainly can't be persuaded to care about their old allies and enemies.

### Why Go There?

It's entirely possible that one of the residents has important information the party might need, or may have taken some trinket there with them that has suddenly become very important. It may also be the last destination of a retiring character who has lost everything and cannot fight any more.

### Who Lives There?

It's difficult to identify exactly who has settled there. Periodically a team is sent to bring back a deserter, and while that is difficult it is not impossible. There always seems to another empty house just waiting for a new

arrival to set up home. Practically anyone or anything could wash up there, and most of them will be secret warriors of respectable strength in battle, even if their hearts aren't in it any more.

### How To Get Away

Leaving Marston Jabbett is not a trivial task. Residents are so broken that they would never leave voluntarily. Even visitors must confront a sense of regret and weariness and overcome it to escape. This is best role-played out, with the player describing exactly how the character retains her will to carry on in the face of flashbacks of past failures and fear about the future. Failure implies that she dithers at the boundary, unable to bring herself to take that final step. Of course, there's nothing to stop some friends from bundling her over the line once she starts to waver.

### Benefits of Attunement

Residents of Marston Jabbett get their own suburban house. Also, anything within the village is utterly undetectable by any form of divination or technological location device. Any action someone takes that threatens a resident or attempts to force them to leave suffers a -4 penalty as the chi of the location works against them.

## THE INVERTED FOREST

Far away from the most travelled byways of the Netherworld, there is a very large domed cavern. It is one of the largest open areas in the Inner Kingdom, and is known as the Inverted Forest.

The floor of the cavern is rocky but essentially flat and featureless. It extends unbroken to the edges of the cavern, with the occasional animal carcass or pile of refuse to break up the monotony. The domed ceiling, however, is carpeted with a great many old growth trees, flourishing in the dim environment and growing upside-down.

At the edges of the dome, the trees reach the ground so it is possible to climb up into them, and from there further up and into the middle. Throughout most of the cavern, the drop from tree to floor is certain death for all but the hardest individuals.

### The Tree People

The forest is inhabited by a primitive-seeming tribe of humans who have built a network of elevated wooden walkways in the branches. Their village doesn't extend far

into the trees, but the switchback planked paths and swaying rope bridges form a dense pocket visible from the floor.

The Tree People appear to be savages, wearing animal skins and with no discernible language. They do communicate with whistles and nonsense syllables, but no-one's ever managed to extract any meaning from them. The tribe lives by hunting animals in the branches of the forest. The animals resemble normal beasts outside the Netherworld, except with their heads on upside-down. The fact that the tribe have their heads on the right way up implies that they came to the forest some time in the past.

The Tree People are suspicious of outsiders, particularly if they appear violent, but small groups that offer no harm to the tribe are allowed into the forest on sufferance. The Tree People do not get along well with the major factions' forces in the Inner Kingdom. The Ascended and the Buro consider them savages unworthy of any attention, and the Guiding Hand abhor their primitive and uncultured society. The Jammers dig their tree house aesthetic, but the Tree People want nothing to do with that bunch of psychopaths. Similarly, they have a deep antipathy towards the demons the Lotus sorcerers travel with.

Dr. John Haynes, the Dragons' resident anthropologist, has made great strides in befriending them, and any wandering group of Dragons is usually welcomed into the village as long as they can make it understood that they're friends of Haynes. The tribe feed friends and tend to their wounds without wanting anything in return. Anyone staying overnight is expected to participate in the hunt the next day, however, and if a guest refuses too many times he may be made unwelcome.

Friends of the village that perform some sterling service for it, such as by saving the life of a tribesman or helping to defend it from an attack, are formally inducted into the tribe in a night of strong spirits, wild music, dancing, and debauchery.

## Defences

The walkways that make up the village are filled with lethal booby-traps that the villagers can trigger to drop the unwary to a hard death on the floor far below. The hunters of the tribe benefit from their attunement to it and usually have a handful of Fu powers apiece. Despite this, they can't defend against a determined force for long and the hunters fight to give the non-combatants time to disperse deeper into the forest. Several times the village has been left deserted after a raid, but always the Tree People have returned when it is safe again.

## The Shaman

The seeming leader of the tribe is a wizened old man who seldom leaves his hut in the middle of the village. He wears an elaborate head-dress made from an upturned human skull. He seems to practice some form of sorcerous divination, because he often seems to know more about what going on in the secret war than he has any need to. Sometimes he'll approach a visitor to the village and encourage them to drink a potion he's mixed for them. If they do so, they normally experience vivid hallucinations that contains prophetic glimpses of what is to pass over then next few days.

## Benefits of Attunement

Because so many tribesman are attuned to the site, any player characters attuning to it do not receive the usual Experience Point bonus. However, they do receive a couple of other benefits.

Firstly, they can tell by sight whether another person is attuned to the Inverted Forest. This is useful for identifying friends in the forest and introducing new people to the tribe. Secondly, whenever the character is in a heavily wooded area, in any juncture, they receive a +1 bonus to *all* of their Action Values.

# FLOATING RESTAURANT

One of the trickiest things about protecting a feng shui site is that it ties you down to a particular location. Once they've identified it, your enemies always know where to find it. The floating restaurant can travel around the harbours and docks of Hong Kong- eliminating this small but important liability.

The restaurant itself is an old paddle-steamer, with two dining floors and kitchens below deck. It has been remodelled to resemble a pagoda, with open sides so the diners can look out across the water or back towards Hong Kong. This is not necessarily an advantage when the restaurant is moored in one of the more nasally interesting parts of Hong Kong, but the patrons never seem to mind. At night, the restaurant is bedecked with coloured lanterns. It is a preferred meeting place for criminals who need to deal on neutral territory, and for gastronomes who have heard of the restaurant's legendary chilled noodles.

## The Owner

The current proprietor is One-Tooth Long, a former Triad enforcer who was granted leave from his

responsibilities to the group when he broke his back on a job. He can no longer walk, but has staff members carry his chair around the boat or onto shore as needs be. He's getting on a bit, it must be said, and there is a great deal of discussion as to who will take over the operation of the restaurant when passes on. A number of Triad bosses hold dreams of putting one of their men in charge, but it's unlikely their rivals would let them get away with it. In fact, someone completely unrelated to organised crime might stand a very good chance of winning the cautious approval of Hong Kong's underground.

## The Business

The floating restaurant does a roaring trade. It's a safe place to makes deals, or even just to talk to other gangsters it wouldn't normally be safe to approach. The restaurant floor is perpetually crowded so personal space is not respected. If a fight broke out, it would be pot-luck who was pushed over the side and who the bullets hit- which is another reason why no-one causes any trouble there.

Apart from the criminals, it is a favourite hang-out for gangster wannabes who want to be seen with the thugs they idolise. This type of clientèle is tolerated, but not if they get too drunk or start embarrassing the real businessmen. There's a sign next to the boarding ramp that says that patrons are searched for weapons, but in reality it's only the poseurs who get patted down. Anyone who looks like they really know how to use a gun is let on board with a curt nod.

The third type of customer is simply locals from wherever the boat is moored. The food is of good quality and is sold cheaply during the day. This range of customers means the restaurant can stay open 24 hours a day. It continues to serve customers even when it is in the process of moving from one place to another. More than once, a tourist party has stepped off the restaurant somewhere completely different to where they boarded it, to their bemusement.

## Benefits of Attunement

The restaurant comes with a small but competent staff, who have been working for One-Tooth Long for a number of years. They would refuse to work for anyone who forced the old man out of his position, but if someone bought it from him they would happily work for them. They can't do much apart from cook, but they are no stranger to police raids and easily misdirect and sidetrack any law enforcement looking for the owner.

No-one will get very rich from the business as it is, but it is a useful source of money. What is more valuable is the potential for making many new contacts in the criminal underworld of Hong Kong.

Finally, there is one very peculiar plus to attuning to this site: eating chilled noodles- anywhere- restores 15 Wound Points. This effect counts as a healing check for the purposes of preventing multiple healing checks between fights.

# THE RING OF GATES

Somewhere in the Netherworld, there is an octagonal room with gates that take up all the space on each wall. Some of the gates are wooden, others are carved stone, and one appears to be made of jade. They open and close at random, but they always open onto a portal out of the Inner Kingdom. These portals can appear anywhere, but they seem to have a natural aversion to appearing somewhere too obvious to the lay person.

## Sleep with One Eye Open

The biggest advantage to controlling the Ring of Gates is the ability to cross vast distances, and travel between junctures, with only a few steps. This is an immense improvement on the usual method of travelling via the Netherworld i.e. schlepping several miles through hostile territory to where the portal used to be until this morning.

The downside is that just anyone can saunter through them too and it is a logistical nightmare to try to defend a location with access points on every wall. The room does not appear to be connected to rest of the Netherworld, although as it can be Shaped to a limited extent it must be a part of it.

Groups that occupy the Ring of Gates tend to do so for a specific purpose (such as it being a very handy short-cut at the time) and then abandon it when it's more of a liability than an asset.

## Benefits of Attunement

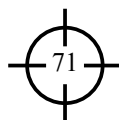
The the destinations of the wooden gates can be controlled by someone attuned to the site. If a photograph of a location outside the Netherworld and in an open juncture is folded in half, spat on, then burned with a butane lighter, one of the closed wooden gates opens a portal to somewhere near that location the next time the sun rises.

If a silver ring is swung three times on the end of a length of string and then thrown through one of the open wooden gates, then it starts closing immediately. There are only a few seconds to get the ring back, if you don't want to lose it.

## FENG SHUI SITES

Each sunset, there is a chance that one of the stone gates opens or closes. These gates appear to open to completely random locations in the open junctures.

The jade gate has not opened in living memory. No-one knows to where it might lead.



# The Monarchs

## ROYAL PAINS IN THE BACKSIDE

Practically alone amongst all the characters in the Feng Shui universe, the Four Monarchs have hitherto lacked stats. The leaders of all the factions even have stats somewhere. The monarchs are unique among the factions in that their central power base was shifted out of existence. Because they are in much reduced circumstances, they make a prime target for an ambitious group of heroes looking to remove a thorn in their side permanently.

None of the other factions are particularly vulnerable to a strike against their leaders. For some factions the location of the head honchos is secret, some have the resources of huge empires to draw on and even if those obstacles are overcome there is typically no shortage of ambitious underlings ready to take the reins. The power of chi dictates that the only sure way to eliminate a faction is to take feng shui sites from them. Robbing them of sufficient chi will probably cause a critical shift, greatly reducing their power and influence and leaving them vulnerable to a more conventional assault.

The monarchs, on the other hand, currently have most of their power concentrated in themselves. There's no reason to suspect they were any different when they ruled the world. For that reason, at their height each of them probably had more chi flowing into them than any current faction leader. All of which is an attempt to justify pegging the monarchs as the four most powerful GMCs the players ever meet.

It is entirely sensible for the four monarchs to remain without statistics as pure plot elements, capable of whatever feat is necessary for the current story and clearly beyond the PCs' abilities to fight. However, if the GM wants to make the timely demise of one of them a campaign goal (or at least a distant possibility) she needs suitably heinous stats for them. I make no apologies for the strength of them presented here. Feel free to make them even more powerful if your group is particularly potent.

## LEADING UP TO THEM

The monarchs themselves are wasted on random fights in the netherworld. They should only venture out of their fortresses when entirely necessary, and in the company of a sizeable retinue. Introducing one of them as the major antagonist in a campaign should build up to a final confrontation. There should also be a compelling reason to target a monarch. Maybe a player's melodramatic hook is revealed to require the death of a specific monarch. If no other cause presents itself, then an appropriately dastardly plan is sufficient to give the heroes the will and the need to do away with its puppet-master.

To dispose of a monarch, the players need a Plan. The Plan probably calls for allies to distract royal forces or engage them head-on. Breaching the security of a pagoda is non-trivial. The players should need to make careful plans, of whatever nature seems awesome at the time. However, as the GM you should make very sure that climax should involve a fight to the death at the very heart of the pagoda, with no distractions for either side. Such a titanic struggle demands no less.

## QUEEN OF THE ICE PAGODA

Pui Ti is arguably the weakest of the four- although she is also the most sympathetic to the Dragons' cause. However, she thinks nothing of using a PC for her own ends then abandoning them as soon as they have outlived their usefulness. She will almost certainly attempt to talk or seduce herself out of a sticky situation if it looks like she will lose. She does have her two white tiger bodyguards- but any group capable of tackling her will probably roll straight over Butterfly and Breeze without slowing down.

### How She Fights

Her first resource will be to use her Leadership skill to enhance the abilities of the troops that rush to her aid. She makes liberal use of Light blasts to blind her enemies and Ice blasts to render their weapons useless. From then



on, she fights with her sorcery. Anyone who closes for a mêlée attack gets a Bolt of Force in the gut to drive them away from her. She uses Laughter of the Fox to steal weapons if she can. As a last resort, she uses Animalism to summon creatures to distract her enemies while she attempts to escape. She is not above showing a bit of thigh to achieve the same effect.

### Pui Ti – Queen of the Ice Pagoda

**Sample Dialogue:** *“Please, have a seat. The shashlyk are particularly delicious, and I would hear what you have to say while we dine in comfort.”*

**Attributes:** Body 7, Chi 12 (Fortune 7), Mind 9 (Charisma 12), Reflexes 9

**Skills:** Deceit 18, Info/Netherworld 20, Leadership 22, Martial Arts 19, Seduction 19, Shaping 20, Sorcery 23

**Magic Schticks:** Animalism (*Thorns of the Lotus* pg 95), Blast (Bolt of Force (*Thorns of the Lotus* pg 97), Ice, Light (*Thorns of the Lotus* pg 98)), Create Magical Artefact (*Thorns of the Lotus* pg 96), Divination, Fertility, Heal, Transmutation (*Thorns of the Lotus* pg 97).

**Stat Schticks:** Aura of Sorcery 3 (included above—*Golden Comeback* pg 65), Incredible Loyalty, Unforgettable (*Golden Comeback* pg 65).

**Fu Powers:** all from the Path of the Clever Eye.

**Weapons:** Fists (8), Sabre (11), Blast (14)

### Huan Ken – King of the Thunder Pagoda

**Sample Dialogue:** *“So you seek to test your strength against the mightiest of them all? I shall see to it that both your courage and your glorious death are sung of for months to come!”*

**Attributes:** Body 13, Chi 12 (Fortune 5), Mind 7, Reflexes 11

**Skills:** Info/Netherworld 20, Leadership 19, Martial Arts 22, Seduction 12, Shaping 20, Sorcery 25

**Sorcery Schticks:** Blast (Lightning, Thunder (*Thorns of the Lotus* pg 98), Wind (*Thorns of the Lotus* pg 98)), Create Magical Artefact (*Thorns of the Lotus* pg 96), Divination, Heal, Movement, Transmutation (*Thorns of the Lotus* pg 97), Weather.

**Stat Schticks:** Aura of Sorcery 3 (included above—*Golden Comeback* pg 65), Brick House, Ich Bin Ein Bruiser (*Golden Comeback* pg 64), Immutable Self (*Golden Comeback* pg 64), Me First (*Golden Comeback* pg 66), Shattering Blow (*Golden Comeback* pg 64), Tougher Than Leather (*Golden Comeback* pg 64).

**Fu Powers:** all from the Path of the Leaping Storm.

**Unique Schtick:** *Titan of the Arena* – Whenever Huan Ken fails a death check, he can spend a Magic point to change it into a success. He's just that tough.

**Weapons:** Fists (14), Kick (15), Sceptre (16), Blast (14)

## KING OF THE THUNDER PAGODA

Huan Ken is not known for his subtlety. In all probability, he will probably be the easiest to attack by surprise. However, he can rely on both his Sorcery and his Martial Arts in a pinch and is hell on toast to actually bring down. Because of his somewhat skewed sense of honour, there is a real possibility that he will spare vanquished opponents (in exchange for some future favour) if they truly impress him with their prowess and haven't done anything to greatly anger him. He may also seek similar terms from a foe if he believes himself to be courting defeat.

### How He Fights

He begins by trying to single out one enemy for a one-on-one test of Martial Arts- probably beginning with a Flying Sword and following it up with a Flying Windmill Kick. He uses his full array of schticks to the best effect he can, demonstrating his martial superiority. If his enemies are unsporting, he expresses his disapproval and unleashes his magic. He lays about him without much strategy, striking more or less at random. He'll try a thunder blast every sequence or so to slow his enemies down. He takes care, however, to reserve enough Fu points to launch the Torrent of Fury at the end of each sequence.

## KING OF THE FIRE PAGODA

The Fire King is a pragmatist. As soon as it looks like his position will be severely undermined even if he wins, he attempts to negotiate with his attackers. He offers genuine concessions, offers that are hard to ignore, but he draws the line at putting himself completely at the mercy of his enemy. Should he be taken up on his offer, he abides by it scrupulously right up until he can free himself of his obligations without endangering his power base. Unless the heroes are as cunning as they are strong, they may well find their attack strengthens Li Ting's position in the long term instead of weakening it.

### How He Fights

His first option is to set everything around him on fire and rely on his minions with the Path of the Brilliant Flame fu to bulk up on Fu points and wipe his enemies out. As soon as it becomes clear that the enemy is too strong for that to work, he uses a combination of Martial Arts attacks and Blasts to try to capitalise on his enemies'

### Li Ting – King of the Fire Pagoda

**Sample Dialogue:** “I can see that you are very serious about this course of action. But can you not see how it weakens both our positions?”

**Attributes:** Body 10, Chi 13 (Fortune 5), Mind 11, Reflexes 8

**Skills:** Deceit 19, Info/Netherworld 20, Leadership 20, Martial Arts 20, Shaping 20, Sorcery 22

**Sorcery Schticks:** Blast (Chi, Fire, Flaming Ash (*Thorns of the Lotus* pg 98)), Create Magical Artefact (*Thorns of the Lotus* pg 96), Divination, Fertility, Heal, Improved Blast, Influence, Summoning.

**Stat Schticks:** Aura of Sorcery 3 (included above – *Golden Comeback* pg 65), Inner Might (*Golden Comeback* pg 65), The Holmes Touch (*Golden Comeback* pg 65).

**Fu Powers:** all from the Path of the Brilliant Flame, all from the Path of the Hands of Light, all from the Path of the Beneficial Flow.

**Unique Schtick:** *Contingency Contract* – Li Ting believes in being prepared. Over the years he has made many bargains with powerful demons just in case he was ever in danger. He can spend two magic points to instantly summon a powerful demon to protect him. The demon will extract serious payment later, but at least Li Ting hopes to be alive to pay it.

**Weapons:** Fists (13), Blast (17)

weaknesses. He uses Fortune for his Lightning Fist against the toughest targets, but otherwise concentrates on killing his enemies one at a time, starting with the weakest-seeming. If he is not making significant headway against his enemies, he uses his Unique Schtick to generate an ally to fight alongside him. He attempts to use this demon as a shield from the more powerful attacks while he throws more sorcery in from a distance. If his ally falls, he summons more, keeping two active at a time, while he tries negotiation. If he nears the point of death with Magic points remaining, he blows them all on a desperate effort chi Blast against all of his enemies.

## QUEEN OF THE DARKNESS PAGODA

The Queen of Darkness is serious bad news. There is nothing she will not do in pursuit of power, and power she already has aplenty. She is quite mad, although high-functioning, and will never, ever surrender. Her dark magic has had an effect on her, leaving her as something that is neither demon nor entirely human. Despite her Will Not Die schtick, she may well be destroyed if she reaches a certain number of wound points in a suitably dramatic

### Ming I – Queen of the Darkness Pagoda

**Sample Dialogue:** “You dare? I will invent a thousand new forms of agony just for you!”

**Attributes:** Body 12, Chi 12 (Fortune 0), Mind 9, Reflexes 11

**Skills:** Creature Powers 20, Deceit 18, Info/Netherworld 20, Intimidation 18, Martial Arts 20, Seduction 12, Shaping 20, Sorcery 26

**Sorcery Schticks:** Blast (Darkness, Disease, Disintegration), Create Magical Artefact (*Thorns of the Lotus* pg 96), Divination, Fertility, Heal, Movement, Necromancy, Summoning.

**Stat Schticks:** Aura of Sorcery 5 (included above – *Golden Comeback* pg 65), Immutable Self (*Golden Comeback* pg 64).

**Fu Powers:** All from the Path of the Harmonious Chord

**Creature Powers:** Regeneration, Will Not Die 3 (25 Wound Points for -1 Impairment – *Thorns of the Lotus* pg 104).

**Unique Schticks:** *Arm of Darkness* – The queen’s arm is a thing of terror. Whenever she connects with Martial Arts attack using it, she does not deal normal damage. Instead the victim must immediately make a Death Check with a difficulty equal to the Outcome of her attack. If the victim fails, they are instantly and permanently destroyed. They do not come back as a ghost, no schtick can save them or bring them back beyond the veil. They’re gone, man. Even if the target makes the death check, they will have a very interesting scar to show for it. Additionally, Ming I can also use her arm to caress a helpless captive, inflicting unbelievable pain but leaving no visible mark. When someone is at her mercy in this way, it is trivial for her to kill them and takes no shots of initiative.

*Will Not Fall Unconscious* – There is no chance of her falling unconscious as a result of her Will Not Die schticks.

**Weapons:** Arm of Darkness (0), Blast (14)

final battle. The explosive release of power will probably destroy what’s left of her pagoda. As if she wasn’t enough trouble without complications, facing her down may well involve a very tricky hostage negotiation with grave consequences for botching it.

### How She Fights

Her preferred tactic is to smite foes with her Arm of Darkness, slaying them instantly. If they prove too hard to hit, or tough enough to survive the experience, she switches to darkness Blasts to hamper them. One of her favourite tactics is to use Integration of the Void and Harmonious Fist in tandem; hitting a target with Blasts

## THE MONARCHS

that do no damage but save up trouble for later. When she is satisfied she has built up enough pending damage, she unleashes all the accumulated Outcome at once with a snap of her fingers. Her target typically vanishes in a puff of smoke or turns into a wretched pile of boils and rotten flesh. She makes full use of Movement magic to dodge attacks and move around the battlefield to keep strong martial artists away from her.

## THE AFTERMATH

Unless your campaign ends with the death of the monarch, the GM will want to give some thought to what happens next. There will be very many vultures picking over the debris looking for arcane lore or powerful artefacts, the players probably among them. Although the resultant power vacuum in the netherworld won't necessarily be filled (unless the players are very quick off the mark in capitalising on their success) the site of the pagoda will be very attractive to anyone wanting the space or somewhere with good chi that may once again

become a Feng Shui site. An entire campaign could be based around this sort of scenario.

The attitude of the surviving monarchs to their sibling's killers could be anything. They may welcome the reduced competition in the powerful sorcerer stakes. They might band together against someone who deigned to strike at one of their own. They might even develop cautious respect for the new blood and think hard on the fact that they are not as invulnerable as they thought. If the players establish themselves as a new power in the netherworld the remaining monarchs might make friendly overtures to them, in case they get a taste for regicide, or distance themselves if they believe a more established faction is likely to come and squash the newcomers.

Other factions will certainly sit up and take notice of anyone who kills one of the four monarchs, but for the most part it won't necessarily change their policies in the netherworld as one bit player is very much like another.

Of course, if the campaign runs for long enough the monarch thought dead could very well put in a reappearance- madder, badder and out for blood.

# Escape from the Asylum of the Damned

## The Pitch

The intrepid party find themselves trapped in an asylum, their histories and abilities apparently delusions they are to be cured of. How long will it be before they see through the ruse and escape the horrors of... The Asylum of the Damned (peal of thunder).

## The Location

This adventure takes place mostly within the cold, uncaring walls of the Asylum of the Damned, described in chapter 11.

## The Twist

The main problem the characters face is that the main part of the story begins with them robbed of their schticks and drugged up to the eyeballs.

Taking away characters' abilities is not something the GM should do lightly. You'll need the indulgence of the players and you should drop heavy hints that their reduced circumstances are only temporary. You should also take care that the session doesn't become too frustrating and crush their enjoyment.

It's also not suitable as an introductory session- both because the coolest parts of the system are locked away for a lot of it and the characters already need an advanced level of trust in order to help one another out of this pickle.

## CAN ANYONE ELSE SMELL CHLOROFORM?

The first part of the adventure exists purely to get all the characters into the asylum. Because they're going to be without their funkier abilities, the session starts with a nice big fight so the players don't feel short changed. The little story for this first fight doesn't relate to the rest of the adventure, so you can substitute a fight of your own if you want.

## Rumble in the Jumble

A slightly deranged man called Spencer Percival has a mad scheme for global domination involving a bizarre contraption atop a skyscraper. The actions begins just as the party emerges from the steps at the top of the building and confronts him in the final showdown.

Play this angle to the hilt. If anyone wants to muck about before the fight starts; with traps or any of that tedious character-led discussion, bop them on the nose with a rolled-up newspaper and carry on.

Percival has as many mooks with him as you want to give him. The top of the building is littered with mad science apparatus, making footing treacherous. At practically any point, some large piece of equipment could explode. The centrepiece of his plan is a giant lightning conductor, naturally. In the middle of a severe thunderstorm, he hopes for the strike that will bring his plan (whatever it is) to fruition. Mwah ha ha, mwah ha ha ha etc.

## Accidents Waiting To Happen

- ◆ Big, big electromagnets just waiting to be turned on.

### Spencer Percival

**Sample Dialogue:** *"They said I was mad! Mad, I tell you!"*

**Attributes:** Body 7, Chi 0 (Fortune 2), Mind 11, Reflexes 7

**Skills:** Deceit 12, Fix-it 18, Guns 16

**Gun Schticks:** Bring It, Fast Draw 2. Gun Kata 2, Signature Weapon (Tec-9).

**Unique Schtick:** *Manical Laughter* – As long as Percival keeps laughing in a suitably evil fashion, he takes 2 points less damage from any source.

**Weapons:** Tec-9 (13/3/32+1) or (8), punch (8), kick (9)

### Percival's Mooks

**Sample Dialogue:** *"I can't hear you over the rain!"*

**Attributes:** Body 5, Chi 0, Mind 5, Reflexes 6

**Skills:** Guns 9

**Weapons:** Tec-22 (8/2/30+1), punch (6), kick (7)

- ◆ Massive amounts of electricity and pools of standing water.
- ◆ A skylight looking into the room below.

### The Button

At the climax of the fight, when Percival has been badly injured and his plan looks to lie in ruins, he pulls a detonator from his belt and declares that if he can't have the power he craves, no-one can. If he gets a chance to use it, it causes an explosion somewhere further down in the building. It won't topple the building, but it may shake a few mooks off the roof. If it gets knocked out of his hand, or swallowed, then the explosion doesn't happen.

### Thunder, Lightning, Strike!

After Percival has been defeated, quite by chance a thick bolt of lightning strikes the conductor (or the roof in general if the conductor was sabotaged during the course of the fight) and there is a big explosion to light up the night sky. All of Percival's equipment will be ruined, so the purpose of his plan is moot. If Percival was taken alive, the lightning finishes him off so he takes no further part in the game. At this point, nothing more can be done at the top of the building so the jubilant party can leave.

### The Descent

Getting down from the building is the next step. The lifts are broken- whether as a result of the lightning strike or the earlier explosion (if it happened). This forces the party to use the cramped stairs. As they proceed, there is an unusual odour in the air, and then one by one they fall unconscious.

If any wise-guys have the ability to fly off the roof, or try climbing down the outside, they feel a sting in their neck and discover a tranquilliser dart. They fall unconscious before they hit the ground.

## WAKING UP

Before the characters wake up, they have been 'processed' by the friendly staff of the Asylum.

All weapons are taken from them and stored in the safe, in the Print Room (described later). As the characters are in the asylum, they lose access to all their supernatural abilities. They are dressed in simple shift supplied by the asylum. If any character uses Arcanowave Devices, his I/O ports are underneath heavy bandages. The explanation given is that he was self-harming and the cuts need to heal. Any character that cannot be made to look mundane- such as Supernatural Creatures without a human form and

### The Drugs

**Genuflax** – The standard sedative administered to patients. It takes a little over an hour to take effect and stays in the system for four hours after that. The effect is to make the victim feel woozy and uncoordinated. All that character's Action Values are halved, rounding down. Genuflax has no effect on Abominations, Supernatural Creatures or Ghosts. Genuflax is normally given as a tablet, but can also be given by syringe.

**Macabre** – This drug is only given as a punishment. It provokes vivid and terrifying hallucinations. It takes the form of a syrup, and can be mixed with food. It has no effect on supernatural entities.

**QRV** – This vile concoction is designed to hamper monsters. It robs them of the power of speech and dulls their reflexes. It takes effect immediately and halves their Martial Arts (and thus their Dodge rating inside the asylum). Booster injections must be given every four hours or the effect wears off. Double dosage leaves the recipient limp and unable to move. Non-supernatural creatures who receive a dose of QRV tend to suffer from immediate vomiting and nausea that lasts for four hours.

**Slammer** – When patients get uppity, an injection of Slammer is used to knock them out. Once injected, the victim has a number of shots equal to her Constitution score to act normally, then falls unconscious. Slammer has no effect on supernatural entities.

characters with permanent Arcanowave Devices or Hardware Schticks- will have been taken to the Boiler Room. The visible signs of Arcanowave mutation are suppressed in the asylum (although the effects of them are not).

They have also been shot full of drugs. In particular, each character will have a shot of Genuflax or a shot of QRV in his system depending on which is effective for him.

When each character awakes, he or she will be in a single occupancy room with a bed and no other furniture. Each patient is thoroughly strapped down to the bed until the nurse comes to talk to him. Let the characters try to break free of their bonds- it has little effect. Let them get used to the idea that they don't have their usual schticks and that their actions are hampered.

Some characters may leap to the conclusion that a critical shift plays some part in their predicament. Let them keep thinking that for as long as they like.

The one silver lining for the characters is that they have healed completely since the fight on the skyscraper.

### Nurse Ratchet

**Sample Dialogue:** *"If you don't sit down and stop throwing paint, I'll have to call for Sven."*

**Attributes:** Body 11, Chi 0 (Magic 8), Mind 7, Reflexes 7

**Skills:** Creature Powers 15, Deceit 18, Martial Arts 15, Medicine 10

**Creature Powers:** Abysmal Spines 2, Brain Shredder, Regeneration, Transformation (human form)

**Weapons:** Spiked Tail (17), Brain Shredder (7), punch (12)

### Nurse Boris

**Sample Dialogue:** *"Sit down and shut up. You won't like the alternative."*

**Attributes:** Body 8, Chi 0 (Magic 8), Mind 7, Reflexes 8

**Skills:** Creature Powers 15, Deceit 17, Intimidation 11, Martial Arts 13

**Creature Powers:** Armour 3, Conditional Escalation (deal 10 Wound Points, Body +1), Transformation (human form)

**Weapons:** punch (9), kick (10)

### Orderly Sven

**Sample Dialogue:** *"You hold his arms, I'll put the needle in."*

**Attributes:** Body 7, Chi 0 (Magic 8), Mind 6, Reflexes 9

**Skills:** Creature Powers 14, Fix-it 12, Martial Arts 14

**Creature Powers:** Blast (fire), Duplication, Regeneration, Tentacles, Transformation (human form)

**Weapons:** Blast (10), punch (8), kick (9)

### The Overseer

*The mysterious Overseer is only referred to by the other staff. It's heavily implied that he is in charge of the asylum, and hence the staff, but he is never seen.*

## Why Do You Think You Are a Secret Warrior?

One by one, each character in the asylum proper is given an assessment by one of the nurses. The nurse 'explains' why the character is there.

The story the nurse tells will say that very nearly everything they remember about their past and present is wrong. There is no secret war, no Netherworld, and especially no chi. The nurse implies that the character has been a patient at the asylum for some time, and is just recovering from some sort of episode. Any lingering pains or scars from the last fight are explained as injuries

sustained during the episode or the result of self-harm. A different history is weaved which may have some superficial similarities to the real world but leaves no room for heroics or any exceptional position.

The nurse even provides documentation of her version of events- formal certificates, photos, police reports, the works. The nurse's version of the character's history may subvert his melodramatic hook in some way. For example, a character who wishes to avenge the death of his wife and child may find himself told that both are alive and well- they just left him when his madness became too much to bear.

If the subject rejects the version of events put forward by the nurse, this is taken as resistance to treatment and the nurse makes tutting noises and adds a note to the file. Signs that the subject is prepared to believe the nurse are received with a smile.

Don't bother repeating yourself for each character- just concentrate on any bits that are different between them, particularly the revised personal history and the character's response.

After the interviews, each character is returned to their room. There are two wings to the asylum, one for men and one for women.

### Boiler Room Buddies

Characters confined to the Boiler Room are dealt with later- for the time being leave their fate unknown (but make sure the players know they're not being left out for good- they just get their turn later).

## A DAY IN THE LIFE

After the induction, it is lunch time and the characters are allowed out of their rooms. Every four hours, they get another Genuflax pill to take.

At meal times, all the patients are allowed to mingle in the break room. Most patients are broken in spirit, but there are three of particular interest that get their own side-bar. The staff of the asylum watch everyone closely, particularly if anyone starts causing trouble. The meals are bland and eaten with blunt plastic spoons. Sometimes one meal will be laced with Macabre, if the staff are bored. This is a chance for the characters to talk to one another, and maybe compare notes. If they are too open about their rejection of 'reality' then the staff might well dose them with Slammer and let them go hungry.

After lunch, there is treatment. Feel free to assign each character in the asylum proper to whatever treatment would be most interesting and/or most dispiriting for him.

## Group Therapy

Sometimes one of the nurses takes a small group of patients for group therapy. They are given an opportunity to talk about their problems- what delusions they've been having and how nice the staff are to help them. This is a good opportunity for some characters to try to work out what's happened to the other patients and observe the patterns of behaviour in the staff.

## Sensory Deprivation

One of the treatments is a sensory deprivation tank, where someone can spend the entire afternoon floating in tepid water in absolute darkness. Hot-tempered characters may be subjected to this treatment to drive them to distraction. More serene patients may find themselves shot full of Macabre to make the session a waking nightmare.

Under the effect of Macabre, the character will be confronted by nightmarish visions of terror. They may be confronted by former enemies, allies that are unexpectedly hostile and any other subversion of their history you feel like. You may even have the victim roll dice to see how well they fare in this waking nightmare.

## Art Therapy

A small group may be given paints or clay to make whatever they like. Under the effects of drugs, the results are not particularly good, but the staff say it is useful treatment. Of course, it's true purpose is to try to identify which patients may not be fully under the effect of Genuflax and thus need a higher dosage. The treatment is meant to humiliate and to build frustration. Imagine a Big Bruiser trying to sculpt with clay when medication makes his hand clumsier than usual.

At the end of the session, all the clay is balled together and the paintings thrown away. Just to rub in how futile the exercise is.

## Other Treatments

The sadistic staff periodically come up with fresh ideas to torment the patients. Feel free to add any other form of treatment you want.

## Discipline

Should any patient not cooperate with the staff, he is generally warned once then taken back to his room and given another shot of Genuflax.

Any patient who is violent gets a shot of Slammer and dragged away by Sven, the orderly. He may well be punished further during the night.

### Big Ralph

**Sample Dialogue:** "Ralph smash!"

**Attributes:** Body 10, Chi 0, Mind 3, Reflexes 6

**Skills:** Martial Arts 11

**Weapons:** Chair (13), punch (11), bite (12)

*Big Ralph was once a Triad enforcer. Now he's a broken husk of a man. Although still very strong, years of Genuflax has worn down his mind. He responds to direct stimuli and not much else. He is easy to goad into a fight.*

### Old Man Wu

**Sample Dialogue:** "The steamed bun chimes when the hour of the rat expires."

**Attributes:** Body 4, Chi 0, Mind 5, Reflexes 9

**Skills:** Martial Arts 10

**Weapons:** punch (5)

*Old Man Wu has taken refuge from the horror of the asylum in madness. Maybe it began as a ruse, but it is reality now. In rare moment of coherency he urges other patients to trust their instincts and ignore the reality around them.*

### Sarah Ling

**Sample Dialogue:** "Stop talking when they look this way."

**Attributes:** Body 5, Chi 0, Mind 8, Reflexes 8

**Skills:** Deceit 14, Info/Asylum routine 11, Martial Arts 9

**Weapons:** punch (6), kick (7)

*Sarah Ling is not fooled by the staff. But she recognises she can't do anything to help herself. At least, not alone. She may be convinced to team up with the PCs to get herself out of the Asylum.*

### Nagamar

**Attributes:** Body 9, Chi 0 (Magic 8), Mind 4, Reflexes 6

**Skills:** Creature Powers 13, Martial Arts 11

**Creature Powers:** Regeneration 5

**Weapons:** punch (10), kick (11)

*Nagamar has been a prisoner in the boiler room for a long while. He doubts he will ever be free, and just tries to be kind to the others in the boiler room. He is an amorphous grey blob with three eyes and a pair of arms to fight with.*

## NIGHT TERRORS

At night, the patients are left in their rooms. Anyone who has been violent recently will be thoroughly strapped to the bed, possibly also wearing a straitjacket.

If a patient needs to be punished, nurse Ratchet pays them a visit in the night. If she is rushed, she administers some Macabre and leaves it at that. If she has more time on her hands, she sometimes transforms into her monstrous form to freak the patient out. Often, the patient believes her appearance to be a delusion and begs for medicine to take the sight away.

Patients who grew violent under nurse Ratchet's supervision are usually be beaten with sticks while they lie helpless. This causes no damage, but leaves them very sore the next morning. Naturally, they are told their injuries were self-inflicted during the night.

## THE BOILER ROOM

Once the full day's excitement has been dealt with, turn to the characters confined to the Boiler Room. Explain that they've spent the whole day hanging in the cage, and explain how they feel weak. Nagamar, another monstrous patient, is in the cage nearest the boiler. Naturally, everyone incarcerated in the boiler room is kept dosed with QRV.

The reason for delaying the existence of the Boiler Room is to give the maximum amount of time for doubt and paranoia to develop in the main party. However, this time is for these characters to get their fair share of attention.

They soon discover that they cannot speak properly. Nagamar appears docile, but won't try to communicate with them. Explain that the day passes very dully.

Come nightfall, Nurse Boris and Orderly Sven arrive. They like to gamble on fights between patients kept in the boiler room. For a good long while there has only been Nagamar, so they are overjoyed at the prospect of renewed battles. Of course, Nagamar and any characters in the cages cannot fight very well, but that is part of the entertainment for the staff.

Nagamar and one other captive are released from their cages and forced to fight as best they can. Anyone reluctant to do so will be brutally beaten by the two staff members. The fight is not meant to cause much damage, but once it is clear that one side has the advantage the fight is stopped and the patients returned to the cages.

If more than one PC is in the boiler room, force each of them to fight at least once, then bed them down for the next day.

During the course of the fight, Nagamar passes a

small piece of paper to one of the PCs. On it is written: 'Don't try to fight them'. Nagamar communicates using notes whenever he is sure the staff won't notice. If he is ever broken out of his prison, he unhesitatingly assists any patient who helped him or suffered the same torment as he did.

## BREAKOUT

So far, everything has been intensely frustrating for the characters. They have been trapped in a terrible place and, basically, tortured. Until they escape, they get two therapy sessions a day and two bland meals a day. So, how do they get out?

### Cold Turkey

Possibly the most important step is getting off the drugs. Being dosed with Genuflax seriously restricts the efficacy of any escape attempt. While the nurses watch the patients like a hawk for the first day, if they believe a patient has resigned himself to life in the asylum they won't watch so closely. A cunning character can palm the pill or pretend to swallow it and avoid becoming dosed.

### Sneaking Out

Characters not strapped to their beds may be able to pick the locks on their doors and get out into the asylum at night. Because there are so few staff in the place it is quite easy to avoid being discovered. Naturally, getting out is easier if the character is off Genuflax.

### Distraction

There are many ways to cause a distraction, and some of them avoid one of the characters being sedated and strapped to his bed. A distraction may let a character grab a set of keys, or slip away unnoticed.

### Escaping the Boiler Room

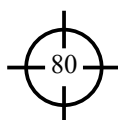
It's entirely possible that a character kept in the boiler room will be able to slip past Boris and Sven during one of the fights if he is lucky.

### Getting Caught

Aborted attempts to sneak out of sight of the staff attract a heavy dose of Slammer and Macabre and a night of horror.

### When All Else Fails

If the players have no luck in shaking things up





themselves, have Nagamar break out of his cage. He can damage a door so someone can get out of their room, or just take up all the attention of the staff while the PCs can make their move.

### One Out, All Out

Once one PC has got the run of the asylum, make it easy for her to get to the others and let them out, even if she is addled by Genuflax.

## OTHER ROOMS

Apart from the Boiler Room, there are several other places of interest in the asylum which character free to roam the facility can discover. To keep with tradition, make the door out of the building the last one they find.

### Print Room

The print room is a fully-appointed workshop to create fake ID papers and other documents. The staff use this to create the fake histories for the patients. There are raw materials here to forge practically any form of official document. There is also the safe, which contains little other than seized weapons and other equipment. Getting into the safe requires a successful Intrusion task check with Difficulty 13. However, Sarah Ling, the patient, knows the combination having overheard the staff discussing it. Once the safe is open, guns characters will be very happy.

### Pharmacy

There is little here other than many pill bottles, syringes and stoppered bottles of the drugs in the asylum. The QRV, being the only drug that could affect the staff, is very well hidden. There is also a handful of pills in a bottle marked Xalfuneg- which is an antidote to Genuflax. Make sure this bottle is found if any of the PCs are still suffering the effects of the latter.

### Overseer's Office

The Overseer's office is rather empty. There is a desk, but it doesn't seem like it gets much use. There may be a few letters from potential clients (or, at least, the enemies of potential clients) and other bits and pieces, but apart from that the office is suspiciously empty. It's almost as if the Overseer is a myth, isn't it?

## FIGHTING TO GET OUT

At some point during their running through the corridors, the staff catch up with the PCs and try to prevent them from leaving. Contrive to have this fight happen somewhere interesting, like the boiler room or the arts and crafts room. Because the party is still in the asylum, they are underpowered. If they start to lose, give them a chance to flee the premises.

### Accidents Waiting To Happen

- ◆ Lumps of clay can stick to the skin and eyes.
- ◆ The boiler itself is really very hot.
- ◆ The cages in the boiler room can be locked or unlocked from the outside but not from the inside. *Someone's* going to end up in one before the fight is over.

## FREE AND CLEAR 1

A character may simply escape the asylum before rescuing the others, with the intention of getting help. If this happens, make it clear that there's no guarantee that help arrives in time to save his friends from grisly revenge, and be sure to make the authorities supremely reluctant to help: "You escaped from where? Uh-huh. And they did what? You don't say. Tell me where you are so we can come and help you."

This should encourage the player to try to spring his fellows right away. Of course, the character could go and buy some explosives and drive a truck in through the front of the building, which gets the fight started really quickly.

## FREE AND CLEAR 2

As soon as the characters are crossing the grass surrounding the asylum and running for the boundary, the

### The Overseer

**Sample Dialogue:** "I... see... your... weaknesses... fears... and pain. I... will... destroy you."

**Attributes:** Body 8, Chi 0 (Magic 10), Mind 6, Reflexes 7

**Skills:** Creature Powers 19, Martial Arts 17

**Creature Powers:** Abysmal Spines 2, Envelope Attack 3 (*Thorns of the Lotus* pg 102), Fluid Form, Inevitable Comeback, Shadow Reach, Soul Twist 4

**Unique Schtick:** Immunity to Summoning

**Weapons:** Dark razors (14), soul twist (15)

Overseer intervenes.

The Overseer is a part of the asylum, and part of what gives it its power. It is formed from the madness and misery of all the patients that have suffered in the asylum through the years. The overseer appears to be a wall of darkness about twenty feet high, studded with baleful red eyes, which can form jagged blades from itself to attack with. The overseer prevents the party from leaving the grounds by appearing right in front of them. Fortunately, doing so reduces the asylum's power so the players get all their schticks back. If they took a heavy beating fighting the staff, they also heal up completely, as if a great weight was lifted from their shoulders.

The Overseer is a creature of nightmares. As a side-effect of its apparition, objects from the minds of the players called into being around them. These can be objects with a special significance to them or their memories, or things they are frightened of, or familiar places and things, or even just some of the crazy stuff they thought they saw when dosed with Macabre.

These objects are introduced purely to provide stunt fodder in an otherwise dull environment.

## FREE AND CLEAR 3

Once the Overseer is defeated, the aura that suppresses schticks in the Asylum is gone for good. The staff, if they still live, slink away back to the Underworld. The patients still need looking after, and the party can either take that responsibility on themselves or inform the authorities that some people need looking after.

The more coherent patients, such as Sarah Ling and Nagamar, owe a considerable debt of gratitude to the party, and may be useful allies in the future.

If the party takes control of the asylum, they have access to excellent equipment for forgery purposes. In time, the asylum may acquire a more benign aura than it did before, which may convey benefits on the patients or staff. This benign spirit may even manifest in a similar way to the Overseer.

Of course, the party may elect to reduce the asylum to rubble and salt the earth, as a way of expunging their bad memories. That's good, too. It's part of the healing process.

Oh, and on no account should you mention to the players that the Overseer had the Inevitable Comeback schtick.

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