

GURPS DEADLANDS HEXES™

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PAGE REFERENCES

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the **GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition**. Any page reference that begins with a B refers to the **GURPS Basic Set** – e.g., p. B102 means p. 102 of the **GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition**. Page references that begin with C1 indicate **GURPS Compendium I**. Other references are CII for **Compendium II** and DL for **Deadlands: Weird West**. The abbreviation for this book is D:H. For a full list of abbreviations, see p. C1181 or the updated web list www.sjgames.com/gurps/abbrevs.html.

INTRODUCTION

Magic is not for the timid. A person who wants to wield the powers of the supernatural and shape the world to his liking has to be willing to put body, mind, and soul on the line. To cast a hex – to change the world – means facing down the meanest creatures to be found in this or any other plane of existence, matching will against will and wit against wit, and walking away smiling.

This book contains information about hucksters – the spellcasters of the Weird West – expanded beyond the material provided in **GURPS Deadlands: Weird West**. It has dozens of new hexes, new advantages and disadvantages, new template lenses, campaign and adventure suggestions, and extensive new background material for your **Deadlands** campaign. GMs will need the **GURPS Basic Set**, **GURPS Compendium I**, and **GURPS Deadlands: Weird West**.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Michael Suileabhain-Wilson has been writing gaming material for about three years, but his role-playing roots predate the second Reagan administration. His previous work includes an assortment of articles in *Pyramid* and elsewhere, as well as the **GURPS Deadlands** Conversion Notes. Aside from gaming, his interests run the gamut of ways to interact with food, books, and people. Professionally, he dances a deadly minuet with carpal tunnel syndrome, testing video games by day and writing freelance by night. He lives south of San Francisco with his fiancée, many hypothetical cats, and a fabulous sofa.



ACCORDING TO HOYLE



The history of hexslinging begins with a man named Edmond Hoyle. Most people remember him as the author of *Hoyle's Book of Games*, the preeminent reference for games of skill and chance. A select few remember him as the man who plunged into the chaos of a thousand magical traditions and brought back the Great Game: hexslinging.

HOYLE'S EARLY CAREER

Hoyle was born to a London merchant family in 1672. After dabbling in a few different trades, young Hoyle joined the East India Company and traveled to the Far East. There, in India, he distracted himself from the tedium of Calcutta guard duty by playing cards and studying the local culture – particularly its religions and beliefs. He regarded these studies as a mere diversion, but they would soon turn deadly serious.

Two years later, in 1693, Hoyle came to suspect that a man-eating tiger which had completely stymied the Calcutta authorities was of supernatural origin. Without the knowledge of his superiors, he traced the tiger to a local shrine, where he discovered that it transformed from a beast to a man every morning after ravaging Calcutta through the night. No fool, Hoyle put aside his curiosity and put a bullet through the human form's heart. Calcutta's man-eating tiger was never heard from again.

That night changed Hoyle forever. The skin-changing cultist proved beyond all doubt that the legends and rites he had been studying were not just stories. Behind the myths lay a dark truth.

Hoyle knew that revealing the truth to his peers would put him in a madhouse, so he kept his experience to himself and threw himself anew into his research. In time, however, he came to a crossroads. He had learned much, but the true rites of power were in the hands of dark cults like the one that had created the tiger. They shared their power only with those who joined their ranks. Hoyle refused to throw in his lot with the

cults and their evil ways. Instead, he returned to his native soil.

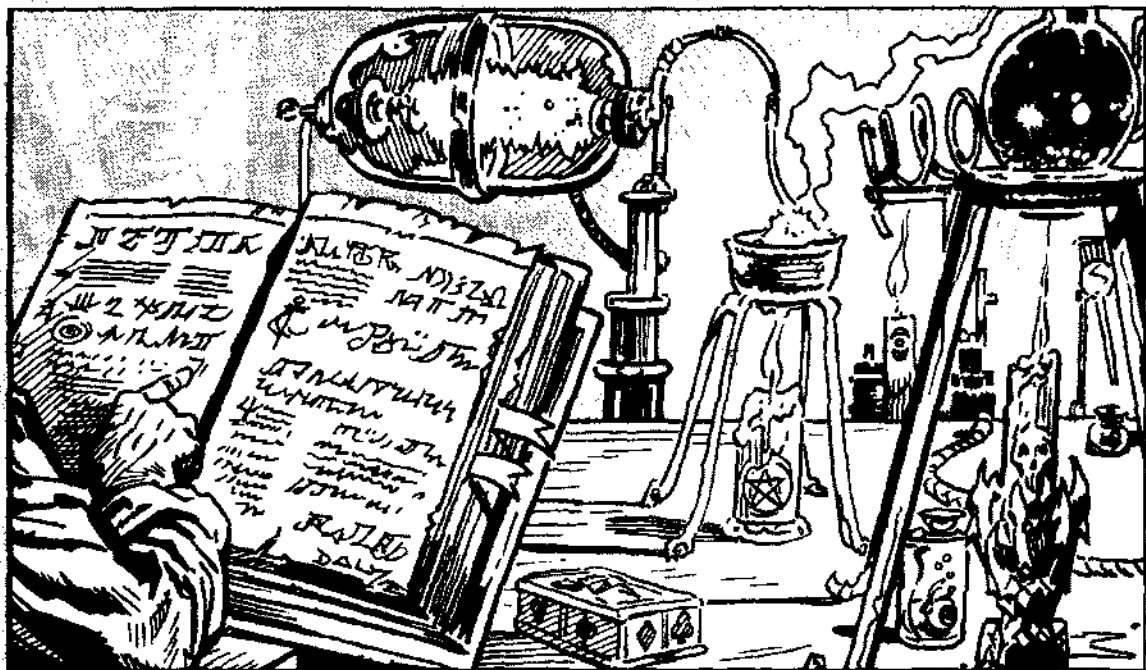
Upon his return to England, he used his back pay to pursue a classical education at Oxford and Cambridge. He gained an excellent grasp of the classics, but little wisdom about the mysteries he sought. Western thought had studiously expunged the occult arts; the very notion of the supernatural inspired derision from his professors. In time, Hoyle concluded that his country's scholars could help him no further, and he returned to the Orient.

THE FIRST CLUE

In Constantinople, Hoyle found books long since destroyed in Western Europe. From these ancient texts, he learned that the world had long been afflicted by an order of being which existed on a plane beyond mortal senses. They were known by many names – demons, spirits, djinn – but were always devious and wicked, and possessed powers beyond mortal ken. Hoyle called them "Jokers." Since the dawn of time, people had made bargains with these Jokers for the use of their supernatural powers; they were the sorcerers and witches of legend. For some reason, Jokers stopped venturing into the mortal world during the Middle Ages, allowing the rise of reason and right thinking.

Contracts with dark spirits appealed to Hoyle no more in Constantinople than they had in Calcutta, but he saw a hint at another road to magical power. If Jokers could grant power in a negotiated contract, presumably they could also be forced to surrender that power. The question was how to compel a Joker to do his bidding. His studies revealed ways to contact the Jokers' home, and after five years of research, he developed what he thought to be a workable way to wrest power from a Joker.

He was wrong, and found himself obliged to leave his lodgings a few minutes ahead of an angry mob, without his notes or possessions.



He came to Vienna, where he reassembled his work with the aid of an assistant – a Russian drifter named Ernst Johann Biren. Biren agreed to interpret for Hoyle in exchange for room and board, and in time he came to assist in his studies as well.

Biren seemed to be simply curious about Hoyle's work, but in reality he saw the occult studies as a tool to gain the power and wealth which he craved. He began examining Hoyle's book and notes on his own, and explored methods that his teacher had dismissed as immoral or just too dangerous. In time, his power exceeded Hoyle's.

A FATAL EXPERIMENT

In 1711, Hoyle attempted a second experiment, this time trying to compel a Joker to heal a lame beggar he found on the street. The hex succeeded, and both Hoyle and the beggar were elated. However, unknown to Hoyle, his assistant took the opportunity for an experiment of his own – a plague hex. Within weeks, plague swept Vienna and the rest of Central Europe, killing nearly half a million people.

Hoyle was horrified. Somehow, he thought, his hex must have gone wrong, and hundreds of thousands of innocents had paid for his hubris. Guilt-stricken, he burned his notes and renounced his occult studies. He became a mercenary; perhaps he hoped to find the peace of death on a battlefield somewhere.

Nine bloodstained years later, he was in Marseilles during an outbreak of plague. Fearing that his mistakes might still haunt the innocent, he

investigated the epidemic to see how he might be able to help. He found definite signs of supernatural influence around the earliest victims. More importantly, however, he heard of a recent visit by a mysterious Russian noble calling himself Count Biren. Suspecting for the first time that his apparently indifferent student had learned more than he had let on, Hoyle set himself to the chase.

Biren's trail led him back and forth across Europe, through epidemic after epidemic. Hoyle became certain his protege had been behind them all, and knew he had to put a stop to Biren's career. In 1722, Hoyle caught up to Biren in Bavaria. The two sorcerers at last stood face to face. Biren admitted his evil work, and the two came to blows. However, Hoyle had given up his studies a decade ago, while Biren had pursued ever-greater levels of power. He left Hoyle in a Viennese drainage ditch, physically broken and seething with infection.

RECOVERY AND REVELATION

A band of gypsies found Hoyle there, and nursed him back to health. He traveled with them for several years while he pondered his next course of action. He soon came to the conclusion that his failure to best Biren had been due to fundamental limitations in his approach. To be useful against Biren, his hexes would need to be much faster. However, every hex he knew demanded an extended battle of wills. Bending a Joker, incredibly powerful in its own domain, to one's will was not an easy task. One day, playing cards with his hosts, he hit on the answer.

The battle of wills at the heart of every hex had certain rules, handed down from antiquity. Within those rules, it took considerable time for him to best a Joker. However, given proper preparation and force of will, it might be possible for him to change the rules to his liking – to cheat, as it were – ensuring a rapid and complete victory.

Hoyle spent nearly 10 years developing mental exercises to twist the rules of the game. In time, he learned that imposing the metaphor of a game of skill and chance onto the battle of wills was the best tactic for his work. Jokers were unable to compete within the arena he forced them into, and surrendered rapidly.

However, just when he felt ready to confront his former pupil again, Russia's new czar, Peter II, died of smallpox. His cousin Anna took the throne and appointed her lover Ernst Biren to the post of Grand Chamberlain. Fearing the resources his adversary now commanded, Hoyle fled the Continent, retreating to England to work in the family business and develop his art in secret. During this period, he began to use his hexes to restore his health. Though over 60, he appeared a healthy man of merely mature years.

Safe in England, Hoyle had time to reflect. He realized that while his work had the power to do great good, it could do equally great harm. His studies must not again be allowed to fall into the wrong hands. He again destroyed his notes; this time, however, he rewrote them in code, disguising them as a series of essays on card games (a hobby he had pursued since his Calcutta days). Hiding his work in plain sight in this manner permitted him to carry and study his notes anywhere. Hoyle became a notable authority on card games; his new social prominence was a pleasant diversion while he considered the problem of Biren.

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

After several years at home, Hoyle received a letter from a Russian friend of his mercenary days. Field Marshal Christoph, with some friends and colleagues, was involved in an attempt to overthrow Biren's puppet government and restore the rightful rulers. He knew something of Hoyle's studies, and feared that the Grand Chamberlain might have similar abilities that would doom the rebellion. He had also learned that Hoyle was the one man who Biren truly feared. He asked for Hoyle's help in defeating Biren.

Hoyle knew he would never get a better chance at Biren. The rebellion would occupy Biren's flunkies long enough for Hoyle to engage him; without Hoyle's aid, conversely, the rebellion was doomed to failure. He gathered a few

supplies and hurried to Russia. There the rebels successfully toppled the corrupt government and captured Biren himself in enchanted manacles. Hoyle had prepared.

Biren was exiled to Siberia rather than put to death, which troubled Hoyle. After a few months, he followed Biren east, fearing that he might somehow escape exile. His fears were well founded: he arrived in Siberia to find Biren firmly in control of his prison and the surrounding area. Once again, teacher and student faced each other in a battle of wits and wills.

This time, however, Hoyle had spent decades deep in study, while Biren had grown soft in luxury. Hoyle's new hexes overwhelmed Biren's dark magic, and Hoyle walked away victorious, leaving his enemy's limp body to be consumed by the flames rapidly enveloping the prison. Hoyle's mission was complete. He could return home for a restful, well-deserved retirement.

PUBLISHED!

Catastrophe awaited him at home, however. One of his nephews, discovering his journal during his absence, had had the book published under the title *A Short Treatise on Whist*. It was already a strong seller, and Hoyle a minor celebrity. Hoyle was appalled. The books were in code, but he was far from sure the codes would stand up to a detailed examination. The notion of inquisitive souls all across England trying to replicate his incomplete, half-finished hexes filled him with horror; his nephew's ill-considered attempt to compliment his uncle might create a dozen Birens.

Recalling the book was impossible; it had already sold thousands of copies. Hoyle racked his brain, but the only remedy he could imagine was to write a new book, correcting the flaws and removing the most dangerous hexes. Keeping his work a secret was no longer possible, but he could at least try to distribute it in as safe a form as possible.

Writing the book took years. He refined his hexcraft, sharpened his skill at battling Jokers, and sought a more thorough understanding of Jokers and their world. In 1762, while relaxing with a book on America's native tribes, he stumbled on the mention of something called a "manitou," a spirit with which Indians claimed to deal with regularly. The more he read, the more convinced he became that these manitous were the same Jokers he had wrangled with for over half a century. The next day, over vigorous protests from his family, Hoyle booked passage for America, and arrived in the spring of 1763.



HOYLE IN AMERICA

Hoyle's travels in America proved difficult. The Indians were skeptical or hostile toward an Englishman with nothing but questions, and even those he managed to befriend often knew nothing of the manitous. When he did manage to find a shaman with true power, it often put his life in even more danger — a man who would seek out the manitous was deeply upsetting to true shamans, and many felt compelled to put a stop to his endeavors.

The man he had been looking for turned out to be a Natchez shaman named Crooked Feathers, in New Orleans. Crooked Feathers was a patient man. He heard Hoyle out, and agreed that his plan to contain the damage he had done was the best that could be done under the circumstances. He told Hoyle what he knew of magic. More importantly, he told him of the Old Ones, and the Great Spirit Wars, of the nature spirits and the manitous, and of the true nature of the spirits and the ways in which they could be tricked or compelled.

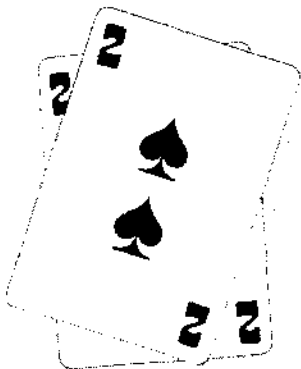
Hoyle had learned his craft through trial and error, guided only by a few vague tomes and his own experience. This glimpse into the true nature of magic was revolutionary. He saw his work in a whole new light and, with Crooked Feathers' help, was finally able to finish his book to his own satisfaction. His last quest complete, Hoyle decided to go west and continue his studies. He bid farewell to his mentor and friends among the Natchez, stopped in town for supplies, and walked into the frontier wilderness.

Edmond Hoyle was never seen again.

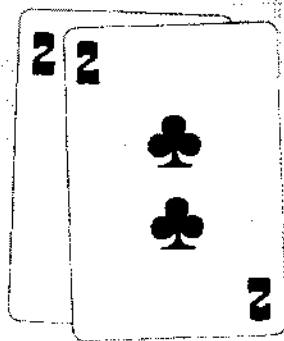
POSTSCRIPT

Five years after his departure for America, Hoyle's family received a package. It contained his last will and testament, and the complete manuscript of *Hoyle's Book of Games*. It was published in 1769. As Hoyle had feared and expected, some curious and perceptive individuals noticed the underlying meaning of the book, and began to practice the hexes they found encoded there. Hexslinging was born.

Unfortunately, over the years since, the *Book of Games* has been reprinted many times, usually by editors who didn't understand the material and made well-meaning cuts and emendations. These changes, over the years, have destroyed or obscured many of the original hexes, making the 1769 edition a precious find for any huckster.



CHARACTERS

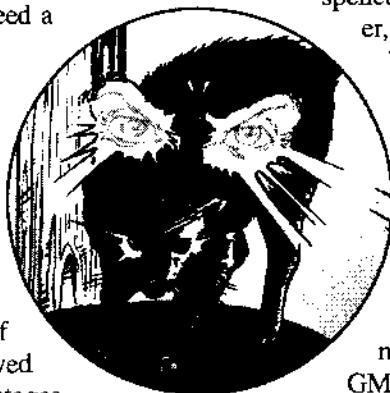


Hucksters come in all shapes and sizes, which is part of what makes them such a handful. This section includes notes on existing advantages, disadvantages, and skills; a few new advantages and disadvantages; and new template lenses for use with the templates in *GURPS Deadlands: Weird West*.

Ordinary hucksters can be built on 150 to 200 points or so, but an entire party of hucksters should probably be built on higher point totals. Your average huckster is normally fairly specialized, and if the party hopes to be able to do more than hurl hexes, they'll need a few more resources.

ADVANTAGES, DISADVANTAGES, AND SKILLS

Hexslinging has a way of twisting everything it gets involved with. As a result, many advantages, disadvantages, and skills behave in special ways when hucksters are involved.



ADVANTAGES

DAREDEVIL

SEE P. C123

Casting a hex always qualifies as high-risk behavior; hence, hucksters with Daredevil always get the +1 bonus when casting. Such hucksters may treat a black joker as a critical failure and redraw the hand.

FAMILIAR

SEE P. C137

A familiar is an animal with whom a huckster has formed a metaphysical bond. Familiars in the *Weird West* have near-human intelligence (IQ 7), and can communicate mentally with their

hucksters. When within 10 yards of his familiar, a huckster gains +1 to all his hex rolls; this benefit is worth 5 points.

Normally, familiars have no connection with the Reckoning; however, a huckster could choose to take a familiar inhabited by a manitou, in which case the Demonic Familiar option would be appropriate.

LUCK

SEE P. B21

Ordinarily, Luck cannot be used to affect a spellcaster's chances with spells. However, a huckster's magic relies, on a very basic level, on his luck. Hence, in *GURPS Deadlands*, Luck can be used to affect any hex unless otherwise noted.

A huckster may use Luck to redraw his hand of cards for casting hexes. If he decides to do so, he must draw three complete hands and pick the best one; he may not redraw a single card. The GM may require the player to reshuffle the deck between each hand; this makes the process more random and preserves the chance of backlash, but can be tedious.

GMs should be aware that hucksters with Luck – particularly Ridiculous Luck or Super Luck – can be *extremely* powerful. A huckster with Super Luck and the Soul Blast hex (p. DL78) can get an instant kill by forcing a Dead Man's Hand. Unless the GM is prepared for some very over-the-top feats of magic, hucksters with high levels of Luck should not be permitted.

MAGICAL APTITUDE (HUCKSTER)

SEE P. DL38

All hucksters have Magical Aptitude. Smart hucksters have as much of it as they can afford. It makes it easier to learn hexes, and it makes the hexes you do know more powerful.

TUNING MAGICAL APTITUDE

It is easier in *GURPS Deadlands* to get a large hand than it is in the original *Deadlands*. *GURPS Deadlands* gives extra cards for high levels of Magical Aptitude (Huckster) and for good hex rolls; original *Deadlands* only gives extra cards for good hex rolls. This makes the typical *GURPS Deadlands* hand larger, which greatly increases the chances of getting a good hand, and therefore a more powerful hex effect. As a result, *GURPS Deadlands* hucksters are, on the whole, more powerful, if slightly more backlash-prone.

Groups who want to retain more of the feel of original *Deadlands* can scale back hucksters' power by not giving extra cards for higher levels of Magical Aptitude (Huckster). Magical Aptitude (Huckster) remains valuable; it gives bonuses to hex level, and the range and duration of many hexes are based on it.

MAGIC RESISTANCE

SEE P. B21

In a default *Deadlands* campaign, Magic Resistance is not available; magic is a force that has its way with all mortals, whether they like it or not. However, some GMs may wish to allow it in their game; Magic Resistance can give the PCs an edge against an uncaring world.

NATURAL SPELLCASTING

SEE P. C141

Some hucksters have a natural intuition for the ways of the manitou. Such a huckster can sometimes, in dire circumstances, cajole manitous into doing something he never learned how to force from them. Most hexes that aren't in *Hoyle's Book of Games* came into circulation this way.

NEW ADVANTAGES

OLD HAND

15 POINTS

Characters with Magical Aptitude (Huckster) may take this advantage. It allows a huckster casting a hex to draw his cards one card at a time, stopping whenever he chooses. Therefore, if a huckster with Magical Aptitude 1 draws a King, and then another King, he may stop without drawing the last three cards – settling for a hand

level of Jacks and avoiding the risk of backlash from further cards.

TEMPEST

25 POINTS

A tempest is a person born with an uncontrolled magic talent. Most tempests die in a magical accident before adolescence, but a few manage to reach adulthood alive and kicking.

Tempest characters pick any single hex as their inborn talent. The tempest can use this hex at any time, but voluntarily invoking wild magic takes its toll. Willingly activating the power of the tempest causes the tempest character to lose one character point. This point can come out of the tempest's unspent character points, or out of skills and advantages.

When a tempest invokes his power, he draws four cards from a complete deck and attempts to assemble the best hand possible, just as if he were a huckster. Because he draws fewer cards, the higher hands will be extremely difficult if not impossible; tempests should therefore avoid hexes that require hands of Two Pairs or better. Tempests do not suffer backlash. However, if the tempest draws a joker, his talent goes completely out of control. In this case, the GM decides what happens.

The tempest's talent can also go wild on its own. Whenever the tempest is mentally stunned – usually as a result of surprise or Fright Checks – his talent activates. Fortunately, although the tempest cannot prevent the hex from going off, he can still choose the hex's target, and loses no character points.

DISADVANTAGES

COMPULSIVE GAMBLING

SEE P. C188

Every huckster has a risk-taking streak. For some, however, gambling is a real problem. They need more frequent fixes, and wind up betting on everything. The most reckless hucksters even wind up using hexes when they don't need to, just for the pleasure of pitting themselves against the manitous. It's a fatal habit.

REPUTATION

SEE P. B17

In most parts, hucksters and tempests have a -4 Reputation when they're recognized. The average townsfolk don't hold with people playing with dark powers, and even if they're not inclined to have a lynching, people who ask for trouble by meddling with magic tend to get a cold shoulder.

SECRET

SEE P. C178

Hucksters and tempests who have so far kept their powers under wraps have a Secret (Concealed magic powers) [-10]. If the secret is revealed, it becomes the normal -4 Reputation for magic-wielding people (see above).

UNLUCKINESS

SEE P. B37

A huckster's magic depends upon his luck - good and bad. A huckster unfortunate enough to suffer from Unluckiness is in for a hard time; bad luck will be drawn to his hexslinging like moths to a flame. Woe betide the huckster with Cursed (p. C196).

NEW DISADVANTAGES

BAD KARMA

-25 POINTS

You have a bad reputation among manitous. Whenever they have the chance to give you trouble, they take it. You always take backlash for drawing a joker, regardless of color.

FOCUS

-3 POINTS/LEVEL

You learned to cast hexes using some kind of item to focus, and now you have trouble working without it. Each level of this disadvantage gives the huckster a -1 penalty to all hex skills when attempting to cast hexes without the focus item.

SKILLS

CRYPTANALYSIS

SEE P. C156

Hucksters must learn something of breaking codes in order to study *Hoyle's Book of Games* and other arcane texts. Therefore, in *GURPS Deadlands*, Cryptanalysis defaults to Occultism-3.

CRYPTOGRAPHY

SEE P. C156

Cryptography is essential to writing one's notes in code, the way Hoyle did. As a result, although young hucksters know little of it, old and experienced hucksters usually pick up a bit of Cryptography, as it becomes increasingly appealing to keep some notebooks which not just any fool can leaf through.

ILLUSION ART

SEE P. C148

Any huckster who sets his mind to it can make an illusion that will trick or confuse. It takes an artist to make an illusion that will really

move someone. Under certain circumstances, the GM may allow a huckster to substitute Illusion Art for hex skill in Contests of Skill where an illusion has substantial emotional content - Phantasm, for example.

SPELL THROWING

SEE P. C149

Most combat spells don't just hit automatically. Instead, the caster has to physically hurl them at the target. This takes practice; hucksters who never threw a ball around with the neighborhood children are often at a disadvantage early in their career.

LENSES

The Huckster template in *GURPS Deadlands: Weird West* is a fine starting point, but not all hucksters are alike. Hucksters have many specialties and various types of public identities (see *Cover Stories*, pp. 51-52). The following template lenses can help you fine-tune your huckster.

BODYCHANGER

Some hucksters are fascinated with the body and its secrets. They learn hexes to repair and enhance the human form. These hexslingers are invaluable when you're leaving for a brawl and after you come back, but in the middle of things they're not much help.

Bodychanger (4 points): Reduce Acting to 13. Reduce Gambling to 15. Add Fortitude (M/H) IQ+3 [4]-17 and Might (M/H) IQ+3 [4]-17. Replace Shadow Man and Soul Blast with Draw! (M/H) IQ+3 [4]-17 and Helpin' Hand (M/H) IQ+3 [4]-17.

DIVINER

Knowledge is power. Most diviners were drawn to hexslinging not for the thrill of the game but for the pleasure of knowledge. Now that they know how to cast hexes, they use their hexes to further expand their knowledge . . . and so the circle goes.

Diviner (0 points): Reduce Gambling to 16. Increase Occultism to 15. Replace all hexes with Achilles' Heel (M/H) IQ+3 [4]-17, Home Ground (M/H) IQ+3 [4]-17, Penetratin' Gaze (M/H) IQ+3 [4]-17, and Truthsayer (M/H) IQ+3 [4]-17.

ENTERTAINER

Show business hucksters are flashier than their brethren. The freedom that their line of work gives them often makes them more open about their hexes.

Entertainer (3 points): Reduce Gambling to 15. Add Performance (M/A) IQ+2 [6] to Primary Skills. Replace Missile Shield, Phantom Fingers, and Soul Blast with Mirage, Impostor, and Sheep's Clothing.



GAMBLER

Many hucksters pose as gamblers. These tend to be even more caught up in the love of the game than other hucksters.

Gambler (6 points): Increase Gambling to 20. Replace the hexes Missile Shield and Phantom Fingers with Gambler's Luck (M/H) IQ+3 [4]-17 and Penny Ante (M/H) IQ+3 [4]-17.

MENTALIST

Part of the lure of the huckster's trade has always been putting one over on the suckers, and mentalists make that part of the job their specialty. Suave to begin with, mentalists learn an array of hexes to bend people's minds whichever way they want.

Mentalist (0 points): Reduce Gambling to 15. Replace all hexes with Forget (M/H) IQ+3 [4]-17, Incognito (M/H) IQ+3 [4]-17, Sandman (M/H) IQ+3 [4]-17, and Silver-Tongued Devil (M/H) IQ+3 [4]-17. Increase Fast-Talk and Detect Lies by 1.

NATURALIST

Nature has always fascinated people, and hucksters are no exception. These hucksters focus on the power of magic to explore the mysteries of the natural world. Many naturalist hucksters would have been shamans had they grown up in the right environment.

Naturalist (3 points): Add Botany (M/H) IQ [4]-14 or Zoology (M/H) IQ [4]-14 to Secondary Skills. Add Survival (any) (M/A) IQ+1 [4]-15 to Secondary Skills. Reduce Acting to 13. Remove Detect Lies or Fast-Talk. Reduce Gambling to 16. Replace all hexes with Beast Master (M/H) IQ+3 [4]-17, Deadly Creepers (M/H) IQ+3 [4]-17, Rainmaker (M/H) IQ+3 [4]-17, and Sculptor (M/H) IQ+3 [4]-17.

NON-HUCKSTER LENSES

Not everyone is a full-time huckster. Some folks pick up bits and pieces from the *Book of Games* while focusing their energies in other fields. The following lenses will help add some hexslinging to a different template.

MAD SCIENTIST

Thaumaturgical Diffusionist (35 points): Add Magical Aptitude (Huckster) 2 [25]. Add Occultism (M/A) at IQ [2] and any two of Analyze, Blast Furnace, Devil's Workshop, or Infernal Machine (M/H) at IQ+2 [4 each].

MUCKRAKER

Muckraking Huckster (45 points): Add Magical Aptitude (Huckster) 3 [35]. Add Occultism (M/A) at IQ [2] and any two of A Glass Darkly, Bloodhound, Looking Glass, or Truthsayer (M/H) at IQ+3 [4 each].

SALDOON GAL

Dabblers (20 points): Add Magical Aptitude (Huckster) 1 [15]. Add Occultism (M/A) at IQ-1 [1] and any 2 of Filibuster, Fortune Teller, Impostor, and Silver-Tongued Devil (M/H) at IQ [2 each].

TEXAS RANGER

Ranger Huckster (60 points): Add Magical Aptitude (Huckster) 4 [50]. Replace Paranoia with Compulsive Gambling. Add Occultism (M/A) at IQ [2], and any two of Bodyguard, Missed Me!, Tall Tales, and Watchdog at IQ+4 [4 each].

UNION AGENT

Agency Cleaner (70 points): Add Magical Aptitude (Huckster) 4 [50]. Raise Occultism to IQ+2 [4]. Add four hexes from the following list: Bash, Bodyguard, Martyr's Mirror, Rapid Fire, Soul Blast, Soul Burst, Spirit Coils, and Watchdog at IQ+4 [4 each].

SAMPLE CHARACTERS

These are sample huckster characters who PCs might encounter in their travels.

DANIELLE WINGATE

140 POINTS

ST 10 [0]; DX 12 [20]; IQ 14 [45]; HT 10 [0].

Speed 5.5; Move 5.

Dodge 5.

Advantages: Alcohol Tolerance [5]; Charisma +1 [5]; Fearlessness +2 [4]; Luck [15]; Magical Aptitude (Huckster) 4 [50]; Manual Dexterity +2 [6]; Strong Will +1 [4].

Disadvantages: Compulsive Gambling [-5]; Curious [-10]; Greed [-15]; Secret (Huckster) [-10].

Skills: Acting-14 [2]; Detect Lies-14 [4]; Gambling-15 [1]*; Guns-14 [1]; Occultism-14 [2]; Pickpocket-12 [2]; Sleight of Hand-11 [2]; Streetwise-15 [4].

Hexes: Forget-17 [2]; Incognito-17 [2]; Sandman-17 [2]; Silver-Tongued Devil-17 [2].

* Includes +2 for Magical Aptitude (Huckster).

Danielle Wingate is a charming young lady who frequents the casino riverboats of the Mississippi, playing when she has a stake and trying to swindle a stake when she doesn't. She specializes in mind-affecting hexes; typically, she chats people up with Silver-Tongued Devil and covers her tracks when necessary using Forget and Incognito. She affects a fan to cover her hand of cards.

Danielle has no connection to the Royal Court (p. 54), but will go to great lengths to meet anyone who might.

JACQUES PORTEFOUR

220 POINTS

ST 10 [0]; DX 13 [30]; IQ 15 [60]; HT 11 [10].

Speed 6; Move 6.

Dodge 6.

Advantages: Alertness +2 [10]; Charisma +4 [20]; Claim to Hospitality (Lady Luck Society) [5]; Fearlessness +5 [10]; Magical Aptitude (Huckster) 5 [65]; Patron (Inner Circle of the Lady Luck Society; on 6 or less) [8]; Strong Will +3 [12].

Disadvantages: Compulsive Gambling [-5]; Curious [-5]; Duty (To Inner Circle of the Lady Luck Society; on 9 or less) [-5]; Enemy (Royal Court; on 6 or less) [-15]; One Eye [-15]; Overconfidence [-10]; Secret (Huckster) [-10].

Skills: Acting-15 [2]; Appreciate Beauty-13 [2]; Bard-18 [1]; Fast-Talk-16 [4]; Gambling-18

[4]; Guns-15 [1]; Occultism-17 [6]; Riding (Horse)-13 [2]; Savoir-Faire-16 [2]; Sleight of Hand-11 [1]; Spell Throwing-15 [4]; Stealth-13 [2]; Streetwise-16 [4].

Hexes: Bash-18 [1]; Blink-18 [1]; Bloodhound-18 [1]; Bodyguard-18 [1]; Draw!-18 [1]; Filibuster-18 [1]; Foil-18 [1]; Foolishness-18 [1]; Hidey-Hole-18 [1]; Hunch-18 [1]; Impostor-18 [1]; Incognito-18 [1]; I Want Answers!-18 [1]; Long-Winded-18 [1]; Missed Me!-18 [1]; Phantom Fingers-18 [1]; Silver-Tongued Devil-18 [1]; Soul Blast-18 [1]; Soul Burst-18 [1]; Tall Tales-18 [1].

* Includes +2 for Magical Aptitude (Huckster).

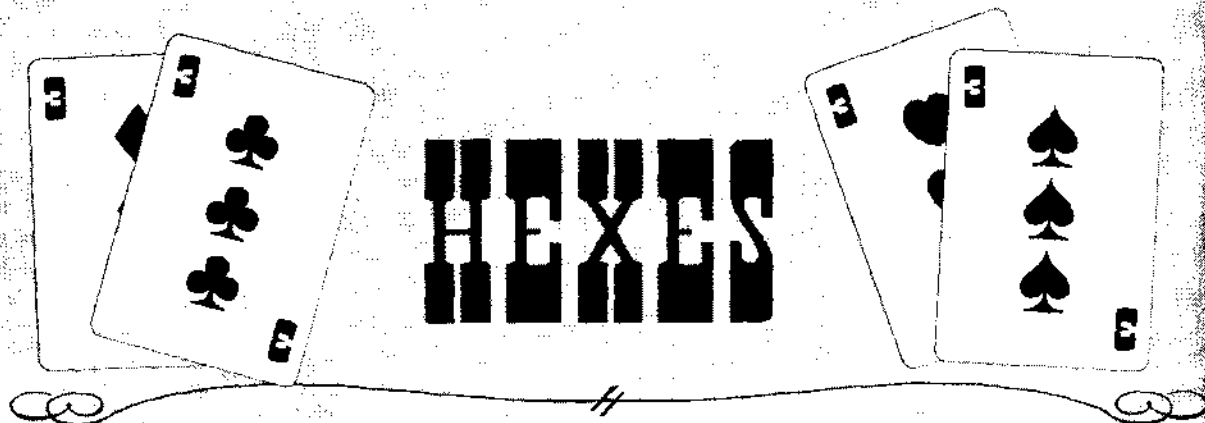
Jacques Portefour was drawn to the mystic arts by the lure of power. A young man whose charm and ambition were sadly undermatched by his means, Portefour used his hexes to rapidly acquire money, marriage, and status in New Orleans society. Having thus gained all his dreams, he became bored, turning to the riverboat casinos for amusement. There he came to the attention of the Royal Court (see p. 54).

The Court recruited Portefour easily; a secret society appealed to his vanity, and his amoral nature balked at nothing the Court required. He became a quite powerful huckster as he ascended the Court ranks to the level of a Nine.

Upon initiation as a Nine, however, Portefour was exposed to activities that troubled the scrap of conscience he had remaining. Foiling Ranger missions was one thing; the Rangers would gladly destroy the Court and its members if they knew of them. Derailing vital food shipments was another matter.

In the midst of this moral dilemma, however, crisis struck. The Rangers had followed various Court operations back to Portefour; his life was in mortal danger. The Court saved Portefour's life, and some of his reputation, but they managed his salvation by using his innocent wife as a scapegoat. It had been a marriage of convenience rather than passion, but as the Rangers dragged her away, something snapped for Portefour. He made a few preparations, gathered his liquid assets, and fled the East.

In the West, he maintained himself as a gambler, while trying to make amends for past misdeeds in whatever ways he could. One day, he met a fellow gambler who suggested that he join the Lady Luck Society, and attend the Denver tournament. He joined for the \$50,000 pot, but upon arriving at the tournament, he was approached by a man named Enoch Shaw. By the tournament's end, he had been recruited into the Society's inner circle and joined the fight against the Reckoning.



Naturally, you can't have hexslinging without hexes – preferably lots of them. The hexes that follow are divided into categories for ease of reference: bodychanging hexes, combat hexes, communication and travel hexes, dark hexes, elemental hexes, illusions, informational hexes, luck and fate hexes, meta-hexes, nature hexes, winning friends and influencing people, and thaumaturgical diffusion. After the converted hexes there are some *new* hexes, with mechanics both for *GURPS* and for Pinnacle Entertainment Group's original *Deadlands*.

This section also includes tricks – minor hexes, for when you just don't need a whole manitou to get the job done.

BODYCHANGING HEXES

Hexslingers often wind up cultivating the mind at the expense of the body. It's only natural that they should use their skills to make up for it a bit. Hexslingers practice a wide variety of hexes meant to enhance the subject's physical capacities, if only for a little while.

DRAW!

REGULAR

This hex enables the subject to act faster than usual, according to the caster's hand. If the hand is good enough to allow two actions per turn, the subject gets one turn at his usual place in the sequence and another at the end. If the hand allows three actions, he gets one action at the beginning of the sequence, one in his usual place, and one at the end. A person with an automatic weapon under the effects of Draw! may use the weapon's full RoF on every action; however, if the weapon in question is a mad science gadget, the GM should check for malfunction (see p. DL59).

Time to Cast: 2 seconds

Duration: 1 second. Maintaining this hex costs 1 fatigue per extra second.

Range: 20 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand

Ace

Pair (or 1 fatigue)

Two Pairs (or 2 fatigue)

Three of A Kind (or 3 fatigue)

Straight (or 4 fatigue)

Effect

Speed +1

Speed +2

Speed +3,
one additional
action per turn

Speed +4,
one additional
action per turn

Speed +5,
two additional
actions per turn.

FLYPAPER FINGERS

REGULAR

Causes the subject's palms and soles to become adhesive. This allows him to climb almost any surface, conferring a +10 bonus to Climbing rolls. This hex works even through gloves and shoes.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: 2 minutes per level of Magical Aptitude

Range: Touch

Hand: Jacks

FORTITUDE

REGULAR

Grants the subject a momentary boost of supernatural vitality, temporarily enhancing his fatigue and hit points, even above his usual limit. Any fatigue or hit points lost during the hex come first from Fortitude. When the hex ends, any remaining extra fatigue or hit points fade.

Time to Cast: 2 seconds

Duration: 2 minutes per level of Magical Aptitude

Range: 10 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand

Ace

Pair (or 2 fatigue)

Two Pairs (or 4 fatigue)

Three of a Kind (or 6 fatigue)

Straight (or 8 fatigue)

FT/Hit Point Bonus

+1/+1

+2/+2

+3/+3

+5/+5

+8/+8

HUNGER PAINS **REGULAR; RESISTED BY HT**

Inflicts starvation damage on the subject as if he had missed a meal (see sidebar, p. B128).

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: Instant

Range: 10 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand	Meals Lost
Ace	1
Pair (or 1 fatigue)	2
Jacks (or 2 fatigue)	3
Two Pairs (or 3 fatigue)	4
Three of a Kind (or 4 fatigue)	5
Straight (or 5 fatigue)	6

HURRY UP! **REGULAR**

Increases the subject's Move by an amount determined by the hand drawn.

Time to Cast: 1 second.

Duration: 10 seconds per level of Magical Aptitude

Range: 1 yard

Hand	Move Increase
Ace	1
Pair	2
Jacks	3
Two Pairs	4
Three of a Kind	5

MIND TWEAK **REGULAR**

This hex raises the subject's IQ temporarily, by an amount determined by the hand drawn. This increases Mental skills, but not hexes or other magical skills.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: 1 minute. Maintaining this hex costs 2 points of fatigue per extra minute per extra point of IQ.

Range: 10 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand	IQ Bonus
Pair	+1
Jacks (or 2 fatigue)	+2
Two Pairs (or 4 fatigue)	+3
Three of a Kind (or 6 fatigue)	+4
Straight (or 8 fatigue)	+5

OLD-TIMER **REGULAR**

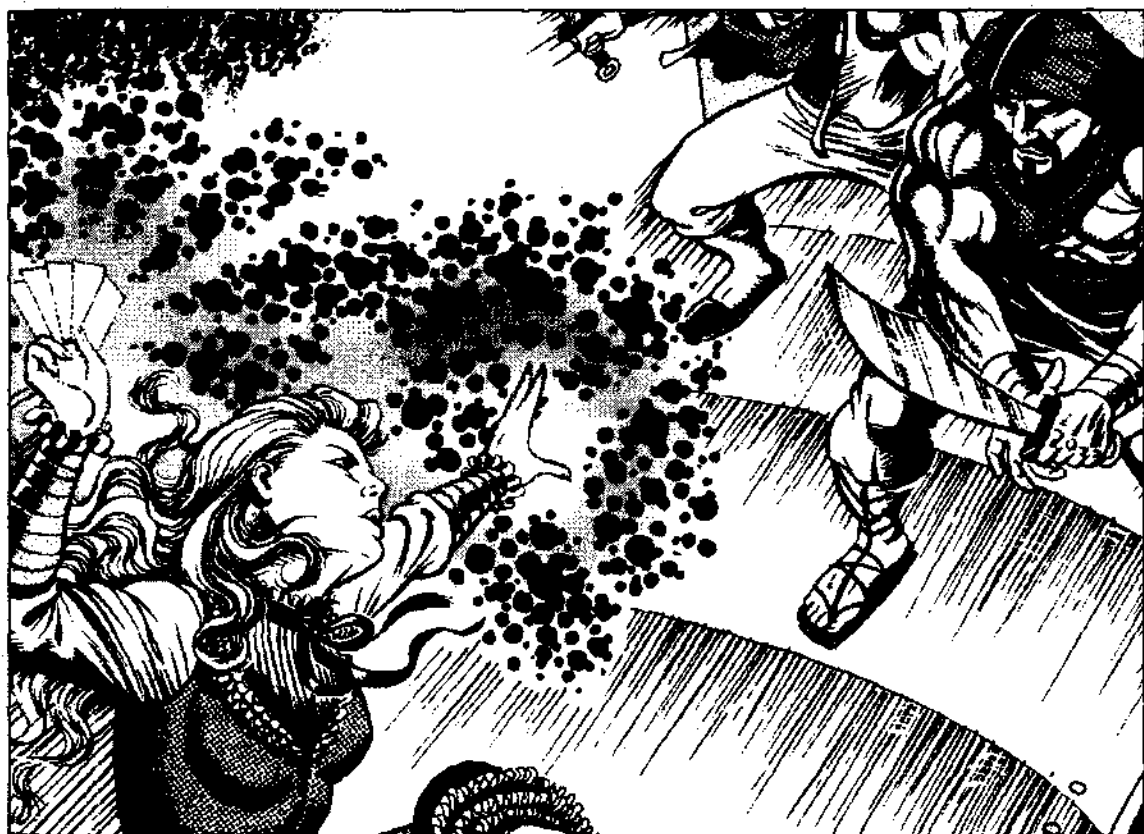
This hex prevents the caster from aging for one year each time it is cast. Unnatural causes of aging such as magic or extreme fright will still affect the caster. If he suffers backlash, he immediately ages one year in addition to any other ill effects.

Time to Cast: 1 day

Duration: Permanent

Range: Self

Hand: Pair



SAFE CRACKER

REGULAR

The subject gains a +5 bonus to all rolls for defeating locks, bonds, and other security measures - Lockpicking, Escape, etc. Each hand level drawn above the base hand gives an extra +2 to these rolls.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: 1 minute. Maintaining this hex costs 1 fatigue per extra minute.

Range: Touch

Hand	Bonus
Ace	+5
Pair (or 1 fatigue)	+7
Jacks (or 2 fatigue)	+9
Two Pairs (or 3 fatigue)	+11
Three of a Kind (or 4 fatigue)	+13
Straight (or 5 fatigue)	+15

SKINCHANGE

REGULAR

Lets the caster change to the form of an animal. Each animal form is a separate hex, which must be learned individually. Four versions of this hex are known - black cat, raven, serpent, and wolf - but others may be possible. The caster takes on the size, shape, and physical abilities of the form assumed. However, the hex transforms only the caster; gear and clothing are left behind. The caster cannot speak or cast hexes while in animal form, though he retains all his usual memories and skills. The huckster may end the hex at any time before it ends, returning immediately to human form. If the huckster draws the black joker while casting this hex and succeeds nonetheless, the huckster takes on the mental capacity and characteristics of the animal form assumed for the duration of the hex.

Time to Cast: 5 minutes

Duration: 2 hours per level of Magical Aptitude

Range: Self

Hand: Two Pairs

ANIMAL FORMS

SKINCHANGED BLACK CAT

ST: 4 Move/Dodge: 15/7 Size: <1
DX: 14 PD/DR: 0/0 Weight: 10-15 lbs.
IQ: as caster Damage: 1d-3 cut
HT: 13/3 Reach: C

A skinchanged cat gains Brawling at DX, Climbing at DX+2, and Stealth at DX+3, as well as the Night Vision advantage.

SKINCHANGED RAVEN

ST: 2 Move/Dodge: 16/8# Size: <1
DX: 12 PD/DR: 0/0 Weight: 3-10 lbs.
IQ: as caster Damage: 1d-3 cr
HT: 12/2 Reach: 3

A skinchanged raven on the ground has a Move of 1 and a Dodge of 5. It gains Alertness +4.

SKINCHANGED SERPENT

ST: 3 Move/Dodge: 4/6 Size: <1
DX: 13 PD/DR: 0/0 Weight: 2 lbs.
IQ: as caster Damage: *
HT: 15/3 Reach: C

A skinchanged snake has Type A venom (see p. CH147) which does 2d damage. It also gains Intimidation at IQ.

SKINCHANGED WOLF

ST: 10 Move/Dodge: 9/7 Size: 1
DX: 14 PD/DR: 1/1 Weight: 150 lbs.
IQ: as caster Damage: 1d-2 cut
HT: 13 Reach: C

A skinchanged wolf gains Tracking at IQ+3, Stealth at DX, and Brawling at DX+2.



SNAKE OIL

REGULAR

This hex causes the subject to ignore physical damage. He feels no pain and may even forget he has been injured. Those under the effects of Snake Oil cannot be stunned in combat, do not lose DX when wounded, and do not slow down when HT is reduced to 3. The subject is still injured; he can be rendered unconscious by accumulated damage, he still makes HT rolls to avoid death, and maimed limbs will not be rendered usable.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: 2 minutes per level of Magical Aptitude

Range: 1 yard

Hand: Ace

STAYIN' PUT

REGULAR

Holds the caster in place. He gets a +5 bonus to any roll to resist being pushed, pulled, or lifted. For each hand level drawn above the base hand, he gets an additional +2 bonus. This bonus also applies to Climbing rolls to keep from falling. Climbing rolls to move up or down do not receive this bonus. This hex also confers Fearlessness +2 and Reduced Move 1 on the caster.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: 1 minute. Maintaining this hex costs 1 fatigue per extra minute.

Range: Self

Hand: Pair

VITTLES

REGULAR

Creates food. Four human meals can be used to provide one meal for a horse or other livestock animal. The meals thus created are flavorless and bland, but nutritious.

Time to Cast: 10 minutes

Duration: Permanent

Range: Touch

Hand	Meals Created
Ace	1
Pair (or 1 fatigue)	3
Jacks (or 2 fatigue)	5
Two Pairs (or 3 fatigue)	7
Three of a Kind (or 4 fatigue)	9
Straight (or 5 fatigue)	11

WARNIN' BELLS

REGULAR

Grants its subjects superior alertness and reflexes, effectively giving them Combat Reflexes for the duration of the hex. The caster may affect a number of people within the hex's range which depends on the hand drawn. This hex does not affect characters who already have Combat Reflexes.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: 1 minute. Maintaining this hex costs 1 fatigue per extra minute.

Range: 20 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand	Maximum Number of People Affected
Pair	2
Jacks (or 2 fatigue)	4
Two Pairs (or 4 fatigue)	6
Three of a Kind (or 6 fatigue)	8
Straight (or 8 fatigue)	10

COMBAT HEXES

Of course, sometimes even the most eloquent huckster finds himself in danger that can't be talked away. When that happens, he needs something a little more direct than pretty colors and flashing lights. He needs a good combat hex.

According to some sources, the only combat hex in *Hoyle's* is Soul Blast; apparently Hoyle reckoned one fighting hex was good enough. However, in magic as in technology, there's always a market for new ways to blow stuff up. In the years since hexslinging began — particularly since the Reckoning — many new combat hexes have been developed and disseminated. Hucksters — originally a somewhat timid lot, better suited to weaseling their way out of trouble rather than blasting their way out — can now go toe to toe with some of the strangest stuff the Weird West has to throw at them.

BASH

MISSILE

Conjures a ball of occult energy that smashes and destroys inanimate objects. It has no effect on living beings, though its aftermath may cause collateral damage. The caster must hurl the spell using Throwing skill, the default of DX-3, or Spell Throwing (Curse-Missile) (see p. CT149) skill. Bash has SS 13, Acc +2; it ignores modifiers for range, but not for target size and speed. It does damage depending on the hand drawn.

Time to Cast: 2 seconds

Duration: Instant

Range: 50 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand	Damage
Pair	1d-1
Jacks	2d
Two Pairs	4d
Three of a Kind	5d
Straight	6d
Flush	7d
Full House	8d
Four of a Kind	9d
Straight Flush	12d
Royal Flush	20d

BLACK LIGHTNIN'

Charges the caster's hands and arms with dark electricity. He may hurl this energy in any number of bolts, provided that the total dice of damage done by all bolts does not exceed the total charge for the hand level drawn. The caster chooses the dice of damage done by a given bolt when it is thrown; each bolt may contain any number of dice of damage up to the caster's Magical Aptitude. The caster may hurl only one bolt per turn. When he throws a bolt, its dice of damage are deducted from his total charge.

The caster must hurl the spell using Throwing skill, the default of DX-3, or Spell Throwing (Curse-Missile) skill (p. C1149). Black Lightnin' has SS 13, Acc +2; it ignores modifiers for range, but not for subject size, speed, or cover. If a charged caster hits another person in hand-to-hand combat, the person struck is also hit with the entire remaining charge.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: 10 seconds per level of Magical Aptitude

Range: 10 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand	Total Charge
Pair	2d
Two Pairs	3d
Three of a Kind	4d
Straight	5d
Flush	6d
Full House	10d



MISSILE

BODYGUARD

REGULAR

This hex creates a magical barrier which will absorb all damage aimed at the subject. This barrier has a finite number of hit points; once its hit points have been exhausted, the barrier dissipates, leaving the subject open to future attack. Bodyguard will defend against magical and nonmagical attacks, but will not protect against suffocation, drowning, bleeding, poison, or other environmental or internal hazards. Only one Bodyguard may be in effect at a time; subsequent castings on a single subject automatically fail.

Time to Cast: 2 seconds

Duration: 2 minutes per level of Magical Aptitude

Range: Touch

Hand	Strength of Barrier
Ace	3 hit points; DR 1
Pair	6 hit points; DR 1
Jacks	9 hit points; DR 1
Two Pairs	12 hit points; DR 2
Three of a Kind	18 hit points; DR 2
Straight	24 hit points; DR 2
Flush	30 hit points; DR 3
Full House	42 hit points; DR 3
Four of a Kind	60 hit points; DR 4

BRIMSTONE

AREA

Summons a pound-sized chunk of brimstone from the pits of Hell. The caster must reach into a source of burning coals to summon the brimstone, doing 1d damage to his own hand. After it is summoned, the caster may drop, carry, or throw the brimstone if desired. It begins to smoke as soon as it is summoned, emitting foul yellow vapors which spread over an area 10 yards in radius per level of Magical Aptitude. These fumes cannot be dispersed by wind, either normal or magical. Within the fog, living beings suffer burning eyes, skin, and lungs, causing a -2 penalty to all skill and attribute rolls as well as fatigue loss. The penalty and fatigue loss persist as long as the victim remains within the cloud and for 10 seconds after leaving it. The caster is not immune to the brimstone's effects.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: 2 minutes per level of Magical Aptitude

Range: 10 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand	Fatigue
Ace	1d-1
Pair	1d
Jacks	1d+1
Two Pairs	2d
Three of a Kind	2d+2
Straight	3d

CARDSHARP

This hex summons five deadly, razor-sharp cards, which the caster may then hurl at his enemies. Unlike regular hexes, each of the five cards eventually selected is important; each card's value determines the damage it does. The cards are thrown using the Throwing skill or the default of DX-3. The cards have SS 8, Acc 1, with a maximum range of 10 times the caster's Magical Aptitude and a 1/2D of five times the caster's Magical Aptitude. For every hand above the base hand of Pair, the cards get +1 damage (note that the caster may choose to take a lower hand than the best possible in order to optimize the cards selected). If the hex expires before the caster has thrown all five cards, any remaining cards disappear.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: 10 seconds per level of Magical Aptitude

Range: Self

Hand: Pair

Card
Deuce
3 to 8
9 to Jack
Kings and Queens
Aces

Damage
thr cut
thr+1 cut
thr+2 cut
thr+3 cut
thr+4 cut

CLEAR OUT!

Creates a spherical wall of force pushing out from the caster, with a radius of 10 yards per level of Magical Aptitude. Objects and individuals within that area are pushed away from the center at a rate of 1 hex per second, with a ST depending on the hand drawn. Animate objects may resist this force with a Quick Contest of ST each round they wish to resist the hex. This hex will not affect objects heavier than 20 times its ST.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: 2 rounds per level of Magical Aptitude

Range: 10 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand	ST
Ace	ST 4
Pair	ST 6
Jacks	ST 8
Two Pairs	ST 10
Three of a Kind	ST 12
Straight	ST 14
Flush	ST 16
Full House	ST 18
Four of a Kind	ST 20

MISSILE

CRITTER WARD

AREA

Creates a spherical magical barrier that no normal animal can cross, with a radius of three yards per level of Magical Aptitude. The caster can leave the warded area after it is set up without affecting the ward. Animals under magical control may enter the warded area if they make Fright Checks at -2; while inside, they suffer a -2 penalty to all rolls. Critter Ward does not affect abominations.

Time to Cast: 5 minutes

Duration: 2 hours per level of Magical Aptitude

Range: 3 yards per level of Magical

Aptitude

Hand: Jacks



GRAVEYARD MISTS

AREA

This hex produces a thick fog covering an area determined by the hand drawn. Within the fog, vision, hearing, and smell are sharply limited; all Perception rolls are made at -2.

Time to Cast: 2 seconds

Duration: 20 minutes per level of Magical Aptitude

Range: 10 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand	Radius of Area Affected
Ace	1 yard
Pair	2 yards
Jacks	3 yards
Two Pairs	4 yards
Three of a Kind	5 yards
Straight	6 yards
Flush	7 yards
Full House	8 yards
Four of a Kind	9 yards
Straight Flush	10 yards
Royal Flush	11 yards

HELL'S FURY

REGULAR

Creates a cloak of unholy flames around the caster. These flames do not harm him or his possessions. His punches, kicks, and melee attacks do an extra point of burning damage. Any melee attack that hits him triggers a jet of flame back along the weapon, doing 1d to the attacker's torso. If the caster grapples or is grappled, his opponent will take 3d of burning damage, but the struggle will quell the flames.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: 1 minute. Maintaining this hex takes 2 fatigue per extra minute.

Range: Self

Hand: Pair

MARTYR'S MIRROR

REGULAR

Duplicates any damage done to the caster on the person who attacked him. Any damage that penetrates all defenses and harms the caster is duplicated, down to the hit location, on the attacker. Martyr's Mirror can only duplicate a limited amount of damage each turn, depending on the hand drawn. It will duplicate damage in the order it was inflicted until the maximum for the turn has been reached. Note that the caster still suffers the damage; the damage is duplicated, not reflected.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: 20 seconds per level of Magical Aptitude

Range: Self

Hand	Maximum Damage Duplicated
Ace	2
Pair	4
Two Pairs	6
Three of a Kind	10
Straight	14
Flush	16
Full House	20

RAPID FIRE

REGULAR

This hex increases any personal firearm's rate of fire. It will not affect gadgets, artillery, or similar weapons. Note that recoil is not reduced by this hex, so the increased rate of fire often results in greatly reduced accuracy. The Malf is also lowered by 1 for every two points of RoF increase - from ver to crit, crit to 16, 16 to 15, and so on.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: 2 rounds per level of Magical Aptitude

Range: 10 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand	Rate of Fire Increase
Ace	+1 RoF
Pair	+2 RoF
Two Pairs	+3 RoF
Three of a Kind	+4 RoF
Straight	+5 RoF

SOUL BURST

MISSILE

Soul Burst is an area-effect version of Soul Blast (p. DL78). Like Soul Blast, a stream of nearly invisible white energy travels from the caster to the target point. The caster must hurl the spell using Throwing skill, the default of DX-3, or Spell Throwing (Curse-Missile) skill (p. CI149). Soul Burst has SS 13, Acc +2; it ignores modifiers for range. Upon reaching the target point,

Soul Burst releases a burst of translucent bolts which explode over an area with a radius of 2 hexes per level of Magical Aptitude. Every animate creature within the affected area takes damage; inanimate objects are unaffected.

Time to Cast: 2 seconds

Duration: Instant

Range: 50 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand	Damage Done
Pair	1d-1
Jacks	1d+1
Two Pairs	2d
Three of a Kind	4d
Straight	5d
Flush	6d
Full House	7d
Four of a Kind	8d
Straight Flush	9d
Royal Flush	10d

SPIRIT COILS

REGULAR

Binds the subject with bonds of ethereal energy, like a sort of ghostly rope. The binding is quite thorough: until he frees himself, the subject cannot do anything but roll around and struggle against the bonds. These bonds endure until the subject wins a Quick Contest of Skills between the caster's hex skill and the subject's ST or until the hex ends. Each hand level drawn above the base hand gives the caster a +2 bonus to hex skill for the purposes of the Quick Contest.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: 20 seconds per level of Magical Aptitude

Range: 10 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand: Ace

TOUCH O' DEATH

REGULAR

Caster must touch the subject. The subject takes 3d points of damage to the torso; neither PD nor DR protects against it.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: Instant

Range: Touch

Hand: Two Pairs

WATCHDOG

AREA

This hex establishes an invisible alarm zone around the caster, with a radius up to 6 yards per level of Magical Aptitude. Once the zone has been established, the caster may enter or leave the zone at will. If any creature enters the zone without speaking the password, he will be silently alerted. If he is asleep when the alarm is triggered, he will wake instantly without being stunned. The caste

must choose a password at the time of casting; the password may be any word or short phrase.

Time to Cast: 5 minutes

Duration: 2 hours per level of Magical Aptitude

Range: 6 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand: Pair

WIDOW'S WEB

REGULAR

Erects a thin web-like barrier between two parallel surfaces. The caster can create two 10-foot-by-10-foot panels of web for each level of Magical Aptitude. Anyone or anything that touches the web is grappled, requiring a Quick Contest versus the web's ST of 10 to break free. Each failed ST Contest entangles the victim further, subtracting 1 from ST and DX until either stat reaches zero, at which point the victim is totally immobilized. Every hand level drawn above the base hand adds 2 to the web's ST.

The web is highly flammable; if exposed to fire, the entire web will go up in flame, doing 1d-2 fire damage to anyone trapped in the web. The web has DR 3; every six points of cutting damage done to it reduces its ST by 1 and restores a point each of ST and DX to everyone trapped.

Time to Cast: 2 seconds

Duration: 1 minute per level of Magical Aptitude

Range: 10 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand: Ace

COMMUNICATION AND TRAVEL

Sometimes the better part of valor is running away really, really fast. It's a lesson most Westerners learn early these days. And when you absolutely, positively, need to get the hell out of Dodge, nothing beats a hex.

GATEWAY

REGULAR

Opens a magical gateway from any doorway to a portal prepared beforehand. The portal thus prepared may be any normal portal, no wider than five feet and no taller than 10 feet, marked with a mark of the caster's choosing (many hucksters use a playing card). Marking a portal takes a single turn; a caster may only have one portal marked at a time. When the caster wants to use the prepared gateway, he must find a doorway within range of the return portal, successfully cast the hex, and draw the minimum hand; if he succeeds, he can step through the door and emerge from the return portal.

If the marked portal is locked, the hex fails. The caster may only take himself and whatever

he can carry through. If he attempts to carry through another person, the hex will automatically fail.

Backlash is extremely dangerous with Gateway; the caster may emerge almost anywhere, may not emerge at all, or may emerge with an unwanted companion in tow.

Time to Cast: 2 seconds

Duration: 1 minute

Range: 4 miles per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand: Two Pairs

GHOST RIDER

REGULAR

This hex summons a horse spirit to serve as a mount for the caster. The horse spirit appears as a ghostly gray horse with black eyes, mane, and tail. Its statistics are similar to a normal horse's, but with elevated IQ and Move. Its tracks are indistinct, giving a -2 to Tracking rolls. It cannot fight, and if injured, it dissipates immediately. The summoned horse is somewhat uncanny, and any observer familiar with horses will get the feeling that something isn't right.

With a hand of Three of a Kind or better, the caster gets a superior horse spirit - even faster, able to fight, and able to take damage like a regular horse.

Time to Cast: 1 minute

Duration: 2 hours per level of Magical Aptitude

Range: Touch

Hand: Jacks



HORSE SPIRIT

ST: 32	Move/Dodge: 16/8	Size: 3
DX: 10	PD/DR: 0/0	Weight: -
IQ: 5	Damage: -	
HT: 14/1	Reach: -	

SUPERIOR HORSE SPIRIT

ST: 32	Move/Dodge: 20/10	Size: 3
DX: 10	PD/DR: 0/0	Weight: -
IQ: 6	Damage: 1d cr	
HT: 14	Reach: C, 1	

GHOST TRAIL

REGULAR

Erases any trail left by the caster and two other people per level of Magical Aptitude. All affected people must remain in a group to benefit from the hex. Any person attempting to track the subjects suffers a -5 penalty to Tracking. Each hand level drawn above the base hand gives an additional -2 penalty. If a huckster using Ghost Trail is the subject of the hex Bloodhound (p. 25), Bloodhound is resisted by Ghost Trail. A horse counts as a person for the purpose of hex coverage; for a horse's trail to be erased, the horse and all riders must be covered by the hex.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: 2 hours per level of Magical Aptitude

Range: Touch

Hand: Ace



LONG-WINDED

REGULAR

Enables the caster to communicate mental messages over long distances. He selects a subject at the time of casting; if the hand drawn is inadequate to reach the chosen subject, the hex is still cast, but the message is not received. The caster will not know if the message was safely received unless two-way communication is achieved.

Time to Cast: 2 seconds

Duration: 10 seconds per level of Magical Aptitude

Range: 2 miles per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand

Level of Detail

Ace

Simple emotion

Pair

One sentence

Two Pairs

Detailed message

Three of a Kind

Two-way communication

TIMESLIP

REGULAR

Allows the caster to step out of time for a brief period of time, disappearing until the hex expires. Nothing can affect him during the hex, nor can he take any action. Effectively, he does not exist during the timeslip. He may select any duration up to the maximum determined by the hand drawn. If some other object occupies the space vacated by

the caster when the hex ends, he appears as close to his original location as possible.

Time to Cast: 1

Duration: Special

Range: Self

Hand

Maximum Timeslip

Jacks

5 seconds

Two Pairs

10 seconds

Three of a Kind

25 seconds

Straight

1 minute

Flush

10 minutes

Four of a Kind

1 day

Straight Flush

1 week

Royal Flush

1 year

DARK HEXES

There are hexes manitous just love to be summoned for. These hexes actively advance the agenda of the Reckoning - helping people become Harrowed, raising the Fear Level in an area, and so on. Most hucksters think twice about getting involved with these sort of hexes, if for no other reason than the extremely deadly attention they are likely to draw from Rangers, Agency operatives, and other anti-Reckoning sorts of folks. These are the hexes which lend ammunition to the people who say that hexslinging is all a Reckoner plot to begin with.

HELL'S BARGAIN

REGULAR

This hex allows the caster to improve the odds of the subject coming back as a Harrowed. It must be cast on the body within five seconds of death. The subject then makes additional reaction rolls for coming back Harrowed, depending on the hand of the hex. If he does come back Harrowed, the manitou inhabiting his body gets a bonus to its Will equal to the number of extra rolls. If the caster suffers backlash, the manitou will animate the subject's body as a walkin' dead (p. DL115).

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: Instant

Range: 10 yards/level of Magical Aptitude

Hand

Extra Rolls

Ace

1

Pair

2

Two Pairs

3

Three of a Kind

4

Straight

6

Flush

8

Full House

10

Four of a Kind

13

Straight Flush

16

Royal Flush

19

NECROMANCER

REGULAR

This hex enables the caster to restore the soul of a recently dead comrade to his body. Necromancer must be used shortly after death – within 10 seconds per the caster's level of Magical Aptitude. This hex does not work on Harrowed. If successful, the subject is returned to his body for the hex's duration. During the hex's effects, he gains the benefits of being Harrowed. A body so restored cannot be healed by any means; Necromancer cannot be used to save a life. However, if Necromancer is used on a body, the subject gets two extra reaction rolls when checking for Harrowing.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: 1 minute per level of Magical Aptitude

Range: 1 yard

Hand: Two Pairs



NIGHTMARE REALM

AREA

This hex temporarily raises the Fear Level within the affected area. This is an extremely evil hex, and very few people are likely to look fondly upon any huckster using it.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: 2 minutes per level of Magical Aptitude

Range: 30 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand	Fear Level Increase
Ace	+1
Pair	+2
Jacks	+3
Two Pairs	+4
Three of a Kind	+5

POWER STRUGGLE

REGULAR

Aggravates the manitou within a Harrowed, causing it to struggle for Dominion. This triggers an immediate Quick Contest of Wills between the Harrowed and its manitou for control of the body (see p. DL94 for details). The caster may aid one of the combatants, adding one point to his candidate's effective Will for each hand level drawn above the base hand.

This hex can therefore be used to help either occupant of a Harrowed body: evil hucksters use it to send Harrowed on a killing spree, while others keep it handy to help a Harrowed buddy snap out of it.

Remember that the manitou is fully aware of the struggle, and will remember the huckster who cast Power Struggle the next time it gains Dominion, whether the huckster helped it or not. Especially if not.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: Instant

Range: 10 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand: Jacks

REANIMATE

REGULAR

This hex repairs the wounds of the dead – repairing corpses, healing Harrowed, or healing other undead. The corpse need not be animated. Contrary to the name of the hex, an inanimate corpse will not become undead or animated as a result of its use.

Time to Cast: 5 minutes

Duration: Permanent

Range: 1 yard

Hand

HT Restored

Ace	2 HT
Pair	4 HT
Jacks	6 HT
Two Pairs	8 HT
Three of a Kind	10 HT

TEMPTATION

REGULAR

This hex conjures up an image to test the subject's faith. The image will be different for every subject – a forbidden desire, a dark secret from the past, etc. – and only the subject can see it. The subject must immediately roll against Will. If successful, he resists temptation. If he fails, he has given in to the power of the vision, shaking his faith. If the victim has Divine Favor, all his miracle requests will be at -1, as if he had committed a minor sin, until he somehow atones. Victims with Disciplines of Faith (p. CI89) who fail will be deeply upset but will suffer no in-game penalty. Those without Disciplines of Faith are unaffected. Each hand level drawn above the base hand gives a -2 penalty to the Will roll.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: Instantaneous

Range: 10 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand: Pair

ELEMENTAL HEXES

Some say the ultimate achievement of magic is to meddle with the physical underpinnings of the world itself – the fundamental building blocks of everything there is. Hucksters can't change lead into gold (not yet, anyway), but they can work all sorts of magic on the elements.

AIR BUBBLE

REGULAR

Creates a region of clean air around the subject's head. This clean air is refreshed throughout the duration of the hex, and will maintain its integrity against gases and liquids both magical and mundane ranging from smoke and poison gas to water.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: 2 minutes per level of Magical Aptitude

Range: 10 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand: Pair

HARD WATER

AREA

This hex causes water to become thick and syrupy, impairing the movement of boats and making swimming easier. Better hands cause thicker water. When used on mud or quicksand, treat the hand as two levels above its actual value. This hex affects an area with a radius of three yards per level of Magical Aptitude.

Time to Cast: 2 seconds

Duration: 1 minute

Range: 100 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand	Effect
Ace	Swimming +3, vessels move at 3/4 normal
Pair	Swimming unnecessary, vessels move at 1/2 normal
Two Pairs	Vessels move at 1/4 normal
Straight	Vessels cannot move

PARCH

REGULAR

This hex draws the water from the subject's tissues, causing serious dehydration damage in the process. The damage done depends on the hand drawn. Vegetation will also be dehydrated in an area around the subject; the radius of effect depends on the hand drawn. This hex does not affect things that don't need water, such as undead, machines, and most abominations.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: Instant

Range: 30 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand	Damage	Dehydration Radius
Ace	1	1 yard
Pair	1d-1	2 yards
Two Pairs	1d	3 yards
Three of a Kind	2d-2	4 yards
Straight	3d-3	5 yards
Flush	3d	6 yards
Full House	4d-1	7 yards
Four of a Kind	5d-2	8 yards

QUICKSAND

AREA

Turns an area of stable ground into quicksand. Anyone caught within the quicksand zone is stuck in the mire, and must make a Swimming-2 roll every round to stay afloat. Failure means that the victim begins to drown (see p. B91 for drowning rules). If a victim succeeds, he may move toward the edge of the quicksand at one quarter his usual swimming Move. This hex may not be used on solid rock.

Time to Cast: 2 seconds

Duration: Permanent

Range: 20 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand	Radius of Area Affected
Pair	1 hex
Jacks	2 hexes
Two Pairs	3 hexes
Three of a Kind	4 hexes
Straight	6 hexes
Flush	8 hexes

RUST

REGULAR

This hex will turn a single metal item, less than 10 pounds per level of Magical Aptitude, to rust instantly. This process will remove 1 DR, HT, and (if applicable) PD from the object. Melee weapons will be downgraded one quality level (Very Fine to Fine, Fine to normal, normal to Cheap, and Cheap weapons will break; guns will have their Malf lowered by one point (ver to crit crit to 16, 16 to 15, etc.).

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: Permanent

Range: 40 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand: Ace

SCULPTOR

REGULAR

Solid earth and stone take on the pliability of clay under the caster's touch. Fine work will usually not be possible due to the time limitations of the hex, but any sort of shape that would be possible for normal clay and the caster's skill at sculpting is possible. Generally speaking, the caster can shape no more than a cubic foot every five seconds or so; major projects are inappropriate for

this hex. When the hex ends, the affected material returns to its original solidity.

Time to Cast: 2 seconds

Duration: 1 minute. Maintaining this hex costs 1 fatigue per extra minute.

Range: Touch

Hand: Pair

THUNDERCLAP!

AREA

Produces a crash of thunder at a point within the hex's range. Anyone within an area with a radius of five yards per level of Magical Aptitude must make a HT roll or be deafened; anyone deafened may make a roll vs. HT every hour to recover.

Time to Cast: 2 seconds

Duration: Instant

Range: 50 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand: Pair

WILDFIRE

AREA

Creates a fire five yards in radius. It will ignite any flammable materials within its area, and those materials will burn and spread flame normally until extinguished. The fire created has no special properties and can be extinguished with ordinary water.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: Instant

Range: 20 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand: Two Pairs

ILLUSIONS

The traditional specialty of the huckster, of course, is illusions. Everyone's heard the story of the handsome stranger who comes into town with a deck of cards in his hands, amazing the townspeople with spectacles and marvels. Of course, in most towns the story goes on to tell how the stranger went on to destroy the town with his evil witchcraft, but that's all blown out of proportion.

BEDAZZLE

AREA

Causes the caster's hand of cards to explode into a burst of dazzling colored light. Anyone within the hex's range and facing the caster when the hex is cast must make a HT roll to close his eyes in time. This roll is made at -2 for each hand above the base hand of Pair. Anyone who fails to make the HT roll will be at -3 to DX, as well as any skill or ability requiring sight. This dazzled state will last for two seconds per level of Magical Aptitude.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: Instant

Range: 3 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand: Pair

DEuces Wild!

REGULAR

Creates an illusory double of the caster. The double may not stray out of the hex's range, but the caster may move the double around as he likes. The caster need not concentrate to control the double. The double appears identical to the caster in all respects, though a spectator may make a Quick Contest of Skills between his IQ and the caster's hex skill to notice the difference. The double has no physical existence, so it cannot interact with physical objects. Also, creatures with keen senses of smell are not fooled. If the caster draws Three of a Kind or better, he can throw his voice so that the double will appear to speak.

Time to Cast: 2 seconds

Duration: 1 minute. Maintaining this hex costs 1 fatigue per extra minute.

Range: 10 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand: Jacks

FIFTY-TWO PICKUP

AREA

Allows the caster to conjure a whirling mass of cards from a simple deck. Anyone within the affected area or attempting to affect a subject within the area suffers a -2 penalty to all Vision or vision-related rolls, plus an additional -2 for each hand level drawn above the base hand.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: 10 seconds per level of Magical Aptitude

Range: 10 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand: Ace

IMPOSTOR

REGULAR; RESISTED BY HT

Changes the subject's body as the caster wills. The subject's basic form and size cannot change, but beyond that, anything goes.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: 1 hour. Maintaining this hex costs 3 fatigue per extra hour.

Range: Touch

Hand: Pair

INCognito

REGULAR; SPECIAL RESISTANCE

Causes all beings to ignore the subject. Only creatures with a reason to notice either the particular subject or someone in that particular situation (i.e., guards may notice someone trying to sneak by them) can resist the hex with IQ.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: 1 minute. Maintaining this hex costs two fatigue per extra minute.

Range: Touch

Hand: Ace

MIRAGE

AREA

Creates an insubstantial image that can have no physical effect on the real world. The mirage may occupy an area up to 10 hexes per level of Magical Aptitude. The mirage affects all the senses except touch; anyone trying to touch the mirage will realize its illusory nature. The mirage can also be identified as false if the observer wins a Quick Contest of Skills between his IQ and the caster's Mirage skill. The caster may cause the mirage to move or change shape by taking a turn to concentrate, as long as the mirage remains within the hex's range and does not exceed its maximum area.

Time to Cast: 2 seconds

Duration: 1 minute. Maintaining this hex costs 1 fatigue per extra minute.

Range: 10 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand: Jacks

PHANTASM

REGULAR

This hex conjures up images from the subject's deepest fears, causing the subject to make an immediate Fright Check. Harrowed are particularly susceptible, suffering a further -2 to the Fright Check. Each hand level drawn above the base hand gives the subject a -2 penalty to the Fright Check.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: Instant

Range: 10 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand	Fright Check Penalty
Ace	-2
Pair (or 1 fatigue)	-4
Jacks (or 2 fatigue)	-6
Two Pairs (or 3 fatigue)	-8
Three of a Kind (or 4 fatigue)	-10
Straight (or 5 fatigue)	-12

PLAYIN' POSSUM

REGULAR; RESISTED BY HT

This hex causes an apparently mortal wound to appear on the subject's body, consonant with the last damage taken by the subject, and all signs of life become imperceptible. Only a successful Physician roll, made at a penalty of -2 for each hand drawn above the base hand, will alert an investigator to the fact that he is still alive. He can hear, and can see a little, but cannot move or take any other action.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: 20 minutes per level of Magical Aptitude

Range: Touch

Hand: Ace

SHEEP'S CLOTHING

REGULAR

This is an illusion thrown on a small object to make it look, sound, and feel different. The object must be roughly the same size as the illusion to be placed on it. An observer who examines the object closely may make a Quick Contest of Skills between his IQ and the caster's Sheep's Clothing skill to figure out that something is wrong with the object.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: 1 minute. Maintaining this hex costs 1 fatigue per extra minute.

Range: 1 yard

Hand: Ace



SHADOW MAN

REGULAR

Creates a pocket of shadow around the caster, giving a +5 bonus to Stealth. Each hand level drawn above the base hand adds a further +2 bonus.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: 1 minute

Range: Self.

Hand	Stealth Bonus
Ace	+5
Pair (or 1 fatigue)	+7
Jacks (or 2 fatigue)	+9
Two Pairs (or 3 fatigue)	+11
Three of a Kind (or 4 fatigue)	+13
Straight (or 5 fatigue)	+15

INFORMATIONAL HEXES

Hucksters like to know stuff; that's how they got into the business in the first place. For that reason, they love to make the manitous tell them things. In the process, they often learn exactly how curiosity killed the cat, but somehow it doesn't seem to stop them.

ACHILLES' HEEL

INFORMATION

Lets the caster sense any weaknesses the subject may have. Success brings a flash of intuition into the subject's weaknesses. A better hand will provide more information. This hex works on any animate creature. However, it is usually only effective against supernatural creatures; magical beings are generally the only creatures with severe enough flaws for the hex to detect. When cast on a normal person, it will only detect single disadvantages worth -20 points or more.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: Instant

Range: 2 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand: Two Pairs

A GLASS DARKLY

REGULAR

Allows the caster to look into a windowpane and see a cloudy vision of an event that took place on the other side. The length of the time frame scanned depends on the hand drawn; the caster may select when to start the time frame scanned. The hex displays in the window the most psychically potent event to occur during the period selected. Details are difficult to make out, but the general outline of the event is clear. Subsequent castings of A Glass Darkly don't review the same scene, but move to the next most potent event within the period selected.

Time to Cast: 2 seconds

Duration: 10 seconds per level of Magical Aptitude

Range: 5 yards

Hand	Period Scanned
Pair	1 day
Two Pairs	1 week
Three of a Kind	1 month
Straight	1 year
Flush	5 years
Full House	10 years

BLOODHOUND

REGULAR

Allows the caster to place a mystic tag on a living subject. He will know where the subject is if he concentrates for a second. The subject must be within the hex's range when the hex is

cast, but once the hex is cast, the range of the tracer is unlimited.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: 2 hours per level of Magical Aptitude

Range: 10 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand: Pair

EYE SPY

REGULAR

Causes a ring of faintly visible eyes to appear around the caster. He can see all around himself. In combat, all his adjacent hexes are treated as front hexes.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: 1 minute. Maintaining this hex costs 1 fatigue per extra minute.

Range: Self

Hand: Ace

HOME GROUND

INFORMATION

Gives the caster a mental map of the surrounding area. In game terms, this provides him with the Area Knowledge skill for the duration of the hex, at a level equal to his skill in Home Ground. The area affected is relative to the caster's location at the time he cast the hex; it does not move with the caster.

Time to Cast: 2 seconds

Duration: 2 hours per level of Magical Aptitude

Range: Self

Hand	Radius of Area Affected
Ace	100 yards
Pair	500 yards
Jacks	1 mile
Two Pairs	2 miles
Three of a Kind	5 miles
Straight	10 miles
Flush	20 miles
Full House	50 miles

INTERPRET

REGULAR

Permits the caster to understand an unknown language, with a skill level depending by the hand drawn. The caster may choose either spoken or written language, but not both.

Time to Cast: 2 seconds

Duration: 10 minutes per level of Magical Aptitude

Range: Self

Hand	Language Skill
Ace	6
Pair	8
Two Pairs	10
Three of a Kind	12

LOOKING GLASS

REGULAR

This hex enables the caster to create a mystic link between two mirrors, allowing him to use one mirror to observe what's happening near the other mirror as if it were a window. Only he can see through the mirror, and only those things visible from the mirror's vantage can be seen. With a hand of Three of a Kind or better, the caster can hear through the mirror as well; at Full House, he can physically pass through the mirrors in both directions (though the size of the mirrors limit how much of him can pass through). If either mirror is broken, the link is dispelled.

Time to Cast: 5 minutes

Duration: 2 minutes per level of Magical Aptitude

Range: 10 miles per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand: Two Pairs

PENETRATING GAZE

REGULAR

Allows the caster to ignore two points of vision penalties for every hand level drawn. At Two Pairs and above, he can see through one inch of solid material for each hand level drawn above Jacks.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: 1 minute. Maintaining this hex costs 1 fatigue per extra minute

Range: 50 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand: Ace

THE DEMON'S EYE

INFORMATION

Reveals a tiny glimpse of the immediate future. This vision is too vague to make out details or tell how things will go in any larger sense; rather, it is mostly useful for learning what other people intend to do. In game terms, the GM must reveal the actions that NPCs intend to take in the turn to come. The number of actions revealed depends on the hand drawn. If NPCs get multiple actions in a turn, each action takes up one of the hex's actions to be revealed. The GM should reveal actions in order of the danger they pose to the caster.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: Instant

Range: 20 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand	Number of Actions Revealed
Ace	1
Pair	2
Jacks	3
Three of a Kind	4
Straight	6
Flush	8
Full House	10
Four of a Kind	All

TRUTHSAYER INFORMATION; RESISTED BY IQ

Tells the caster whether anything the subject says is a lie for the duration of the hex.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: 20 seconds per level of Magical Aptitude

Range: 3 yards

Hand: Ace

LUCK AND FATE

Another major specialty for hucksters is hexes related to luck. Luck is a topic often on a huckster's mind; they're always in the middle of some game, be it a literal game of cards or the grand game of intrigue and statecraft. Often it seems like a good idea to gamble with a manitou in order to tweak the outcome of a gamble on the mortal plane. Not necessarily the most prudent line of reasoning, but you don't run into many hucksters who've had it backfire on them — other than the ones you meet on Boot Hill, anyway.

BLACK CAT

BLOCKING

Forces the target to reroll any successful skill or attribute roll, if cast immediately after the roll is made. The results of the second roll are binding.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: Instant

Range: 10 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand: Two Pairs

CONFOUND

REGULAR

The subject suffers a -2 penalty to his next action. Each hand level drawn above the base hand gives him an additional -2 penalty. If he takes no action for the duration of the hex, it lapses and is wasted.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: 1 second

Range: 10 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand: Ace

FORTUNE TELLER

INFORMATION

Gives the caster a vision into the possible future of the hex's subject, which must be a person. The vision will concentrate on potential dangers to the subject or other important people in his life. Better hands will reveal more information, but at any level, the information is cryptic and largely symbolic.

Time to Cast: 5 minutes

Duration: Instant

Range: 1 yard

Hand: Two Pairs

GAMBLER'S LUCK

REGULAR

Gives the subject the Luck advantage for a limited number of uses. After he has used Luck a number of times depending on the hand drawn, the hex expires. If the caster suffers backlash, he will suffer the Unluckiness disadvantage until it has taken effect three times. Luck, whether gained as an advantage or from this hex, *cannot* be used to affect the casting of this hex.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: Permanent

Range: Touch

Hand

Number of Uses

Jacks	2
Three of a Kind	4
Straight	7

KENTUCKY WINDAGE

REGULAR

Negates 4 points of penalties on all the subject's Guns rolls for the duration of the hex; each hand level drawn above the base hand negates an additional 4 points of penalty. Penalties negated include range, size, cover, lighting, recoil, hit location, etc. Note that this hex cannot actually increase the subject's effective skill.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: 10 seconds per level of Magical Aptitude

Range: 1 yard

Hand: Ace

PENNY ANTE

REGULAR

The subject gets a bonus of +2 on his next action. Each hand level drawn above the base hand gives him an additional +2 bonus. If the next action taken does not require a roll, the bonus is lost and the hex wasted.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: 1 second

Range: 10 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand: Ace

RAISIN' THE POT!

BLOCKING

Cast immediately after a successful skill or attribute roll, this hex turns a normal success into a critical success. It has no effect on failures or critical failures. If the caster suffers backlash, the roll it was cast to affect fails automatically, in addition to any other backlash that may occur. This hex may be unbalancing; GMs may want to disallow it.

Time to Cast: 1

Duration: Instant

Range: 10 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand: Two Pairs

META-HEXES

Naturally, manitous know how to alter or block the magic they work. They actually seem to enjoy it; if they're going to run errands for a human, messing with the work of one of their fellows isn't the worst way they can imagine spending an afternoon.

ACE IN THE HOLE

ENCHANTMENT

Lets the caster link any hex he can cast to a small focus object (often a playing card). This Ace can then be triggered by anyone holding it, allowing the holder to cast the hex as if he were the caster one time. After this, the Ace loses its power. However, red and black jokers alike will cause backlash, regardless of the caster's skill. While a hex is linked to an Ace, the caster who created it cannot use that hex.

Time to Cast: 10 minutes

Duration: 2 days per level of Magical Aptitude

Range: Touch

Hand: Two Pairs

BIND MANITOU

REGULAR

The Agency developed this hex for a secret facility called the Star Chamber, used to turn a potentially useful but unreliable Harrowed into agent material, by subduing the manitou within him and giving the Harrowed full Dominion. This control may erode over time as the manitou struggles free of the binding, but a strong-willed Harrowed may keep control for a very long time after undergoing this hex.

Because the manitou to be dueled is already on the mortal plane, this hex is an unvarnished battle of wills. The manitou doesn't have access to its Hunting Grounds bag of tricks, but the huckster doesn't have access to his usual array of misdirections and cheats either. The mental struggle goes on in real time; this can take many hours, and sometimes the huckster loses from sheer physical exhaustion.

The ritual process knocks out the Harrowed's consciousness, leaving the manitou in full control for the duration of the ritual. For this reason, the Harrowed is usually restrained; otherwise the manitou would attack the caster physically.

The subject of this hex receives a +5 to Will when resisting his Voices, plus an additional +2 bonus for each hand level drawn above the base hand. He loses one point of this bonus each time he fails to resist his Voices thereafter.

Time to Cast: 2 hours

Duration: Permanent

Range: 2 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand: Two Pairs



DISRUPT

REGULAR;

RESISTED BY SUBJECT POWER

Dispels an ongoing hex, Harrowed power, or black magic spell. It cannot be used against hexes or powers with instant or permanent effects. Some powers have both an instant and an ongoing effect; in these cases, Disrupt does not reverse the instant effect, but will dispel the ongoing effect. Harrowed powers resist with the IQ of the Harrowed.

Time to Cast: 2 seconds

Duration: Instant

Range: 10 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand: Pair

FOUL

BLOCKING;

RESISTED BY SUBJECT POWER

Dispels a hex, Harrowed power, or black magic spell when cast immediately after the subject hex is cast. Harrowed powers resist with the IQ of the Harrowed. This hex does not affect ongoing effects of magic powers.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: Instant

Range: 10 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand: Pair

HEX SENSE

REGULAR

Permits the caster to detect and identify any magical effects and enchantments within sight. The hand drawn determines the level of detail detected; the hex reveals the details given for the hand level drawn and all lower levels.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: 2 rounds per level of Magical Aptitude

Range: 50 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand

Details

Ace

The presence of magical effects and objects is detected

Pair

The general type of magic present is detected (i.e., divination, combat, etc.)

Two Pairs

A broad sense of the magic's effect is identified (i.e., a damage-dealing hex, an informational Harrowed power, etc.)

Straight

The exact power(s) present are identified

Flush

The remaining duration of the magic present is identified

PARDNERS

REGULAR

This hex brings together a group of hucksters to cast a hex with greater efficacy than could usually be achieved. All participating hucksters must be within three yards of the huckster leading the combined hex, known hereafter as the dealer. All participants must know the combined hex, but only the dealer need know Pardners. After the dealer casts Pardners, all participants (including the dealer) cast the combined hex. All participants must cast in the same round.

If the dealer fails the roll for Pardners or the combined hex, the hex fails. If only the dealer succeeds, the combined hex is only as effective as his hand indicates. However, for every other participant who succeeds and draws the minimum hand, the dealer's hand is increased by one level. For purposes of concentration, range, and so on, the dealer is considered the caster of the hex.

Unfortunately, if any caster suffers backlash during the casting, every member of the group suffers backlash. The GM may give every member the same backlash or determine backlash individually, as desired.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: Special

Range: 3 yards

Hand: Jacks

SPIRITUAL DISFAVOR

BLOCKING

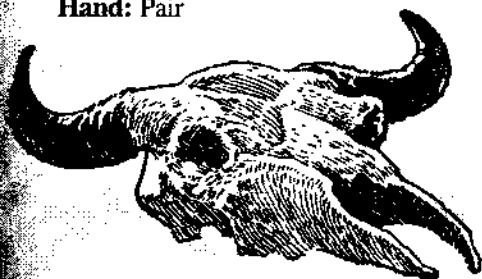
Cast during a shamanic ritual, this hex summons a manitou to harass the nature spirits summoned by the shaman, giving the shaman a -2 penalty to his Ritual skill, with an additional -2 penalty for each hand drawn above the base hand. This hex should be cast after the shaman has declared a ritual but before the roll has been made.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: Instant

Range: 10 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand: Pair



TALISMAN

ENCHANTMENT

Imbues an item with mystic powers, creating a relic (see p. DL97).

Talisman cannot be used to enchant just any item. Only items with some special history are suitable — a pen used to write a historic document, or a weapon used in a famous battle, for example. The caster must determine what general effect he wants the relic to have; this will usually be a hex-like effect, but any power is permissible if the GM approves it. The power selected should be appropriate to the item's history.

The caster must spend three days enchanting the relic, during which time he is in near-constant struggle with multiple manitous. To the outside observer, the caster seems to be playing an unending, insanely complex game of solitaire. Occasional breaks for meals are possible, but stopping for more than an hour will cause the hex to fail. The mystic powers swirling around the caster prevent him from suffering the usual penalties for lost sleep. At the end of the three days, the caster rolls against Talisman and, if successful, draws a hand. The hand required for success is up to the GM, but a minimum hand of three levels higher than the equivalent hex is a good rule of thumb.

If the caster draws a joker, the relic also requires a taint. The GM determines the nature of the taint, but it should be consistent with the item's background and the nature of its power.

Time to Cast: 3 days

Duration: Permanent

Range: Touch

Hand: Special

TWO OF A KIND

BLOCKING

Allows the caster to duplicate any hex just cast within 10 yards per level of Magical Aptitude. The effects of the hex are duplicated exactly, except that the huckster casting Two of a Kind determines the subject of the duplicate hex. Any rolls required by the original hex must be rerolled for the duplicate hex. A hex duplicated by Two of a Kind must have been successful.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: See description

Range: See description

Hand: Two Pairs

NATURE HEXES

Manitous don't like the nature spirits, but in the process of squabbling with them down through the aeons, they've learned a few things about them and their mirrors in the mortal world. Manitous can be awfully good at controlling the natural world and its inhabitants. One hopes they don't make a habit of it.

BEAST MASTER REGULAR; RESISTED BY IQ

Enables the caster to take command of animals within the hex's range. This spell will not work on intelligent beings. The number of animals controlled depends on the hand drawn.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: 1 minute. Maintaining this hex requires 1 fatigue per extra minute.

Range: 10 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand	Number
Pair	1
Jacks	1d-3
Two Pairs	1d
Three of a Kind	2d
Straight	4d
Flush	6d
Full House	10d
Four of a Kind	18d

COLD SNAP

AREA

Causes a deep, uncanny chill to settle over the affected area, radiating out from the caster. Everyone within the area (including the caster) suffers a -1 penalty to DX. Each hand level drawn above the base hand gives an additional -1 penalty. Even undead and abominations are affected (unless they are of a sort adapted to cold environments).

Time to Cast: 2 seconds

Duration: 1 minute per level of Magical Aptitude

Range: 10 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand: Pair

DEADLY CREEPERS

AREA

All plant life within an area 20 yards in radius per level of Magical Aptitude becomes animated and hostile. Concentration is required. Any creature that enters that zone, including the caster, will be attacked. The vigor of the animated plants, and hence the damage they do, is determined by the hand drawn. In a sparsely vegetated area, the greenery that exists will grow and expand to unusual size (and spikiness) for the duration of the hex. The damage represents the aggregate of many individual attacks; roll only once a turn for each person within the animated zone.

Time to Cast: 2 seconds

Duration: 1 minute. Maintaining this hex costs 1 fatigue per extra minute.

Range: 30 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand	Damage
Pair	1 fatigue
Jacks	1d fatigue
Two Pairs	1d
Three of a Kind	2d
Straight	3d
Flush	5d
Full House	8d

EARTHWRACK

AREA

Causes the earth to shake within an area with a maximum radius determined by the hand drawn; the caster may select any radius equal to or less than the maximum. Within the affected area, everyone must make a DX roll to keep their feet; buildings and natural features may take damage and be in danger of collapsing.

Time to Cast: 2 seconds

Duration: Instant

Range: 10 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand	Radius of Area Affected
Ace	1 hex
Pair	2 yards
Jacks	3 yards
Two Pairs	4 yards
Three of a Kind	5 yards
Straight	6 yards
Flush	7 yards
Full House	8 yards
Four of a Kind	9 yards
Straight Flush	10 yards
Royal Flush	11 yards

GEYSER

REGULAR

Causes a geyser to erupt from the ground. The geyser erupts from a hole in the ground with a diameter depending on the hand drawn; everyone

within the affected area is thrown by the explosion to the edge of the geyser, takes 3d points of damage, and must make a DX-5 roll to keep their footing.

Two seconds after the geyser begins, the water falls back to earth as a scalding mist over an area with twice the radius of the geyser itself. Everyone within the affected area suffers one die of damage. Armor does not protect against geyser damage; completely waterproof clothing, such as a diving suit, halves the damage taken.

Time to Cast: 3 seconds

Duration: 1 second

Range: 40 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand

Diameter of Geyser

Pair	1 hex
Two Pairs	2 hexes
Straight	3 hexes
Full House	4 hexes

RAINMAKER

AREA

Creates 1 inch of rain per hour. Although the magically conjured rain will expire after a few hours, the local weather may well pick up where the manitou left off.

Time to Cast: 10 minutes

Duration: 1 hour per level of Magical Aptitude

Range: 1 mile per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand: Ace

ST. ELMO'S FIRE

REGULAR

This hex creates a small globe of pale green light. This light provides adequate illumination to negate darkness penalties within 10 feet of the globe. The globe will hover at a height of 4 feet unless the caster physically moves it, by pushing it with a hand or tool. Only the caster may touch the light; it is intangible to all others.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: 2 hours per level of Magical Aptitude

Range: Touch

Hand: Pair

SWAMP GAS

AREA

This hex releases a vile cloud of stench that covers a spherical area with a radius of 10 yards per level of Magical Aptitude. The stink gives all Smell rolls a -6 penalty. In addition, all skill and attribute rolls suffer a penalty depending on the hand drawn.

Swamp gas ignites if exposed to fire, whether that fire is introduced to a region of gas or the hex is cast over an area where fire exists. This ignition is explosive, causing fire damage to everyone

within its area of effect. The magnitude of the damage depends upon the hand drawn.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: 10 seconds per level of Magical Aptitude

Range: 50 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand	Damage	Skill Modifier
Ace	0	-1
Pair	1 fatigue	-2
Jacks	1d-2	-2
Two Pairs	1d-1	-3
Three of a Kind	1d	-3
Straight	1d+2	-4
Flush	2d	-5
Full House	3d	-5
Four of a Kind	4d	-6
Straight Flush	5d	-6
Royal Flush	6d	-8

WINNING FRIENDS AND INFLUENCING PEOPLE

A profession as fraught with danger as the hexslinging life often requires a smooth tongue and a nimble wit. That's why they call them "hucksters," after all — hexslingers have a lot in common with hawkers of patent medicines and other con artists. However, persuasion only takes you so far; if you have magic on your side, why not use it?

FLIBUSTER **REGULAR; RESISTED BY IQ**

The caster becomes utterly entrancing to the subject. As long as the caster continues a conversation with him, the subject will be oblivious to the world around him. If he is attacked or shaken, or something vital to him is disturbed (a jailer's keys, a gambler's purse, and so on), he gets another resistance roll. The subject suffers a penalty to his resistance rolls depending on the hand drawn.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: 1 minute

Range: 2 yards

Hand	IQ Penalty
Pair	unmodified
Jacks	-2
Two Pairs	-4
Three of a Kind	-6
Straight	-8
Flush	-10
Full House	-12
Four of a Kind	-14
Straight Flush	-16
Royal Flush	-18

FORGET

REGULAR; RESISTED BY IQ

Erases or alters subject's memories. The caster may select any period of time to affect shorter than the maximum span for the hand level drawn. If the caster chooses to erase memories, those affected will be stricken from the subject's mind. A successful roll against IQ-6 will permit the subject to call back a vague outline of the affected memories, but details are forever lost. If the caster chooses to alter memories, he must also make a successful roll against IQ-4 or Bard-4 to create a plausible substitute memory. If this second roll fails, the memories targeted for substitution are simply erased.

Time to Cast: 1 second to erase memories, 10 minutes per hand level to alter memories.

Duration: Permanent

Range: 1 yard

Hand	Maximum Time Affected
Ace	5 seconds
Pair	1 minute
Jacks	5 minutes
Two Pairs	10 minutes
Three of a Kind	1 hour
Straight	6 hours
Flush	1 day
Full House	1 week
Four of a Kind	1 month
Straight Flush	6 months
Royal Flush	1 year

HOWL

REGULAR

Allows the huckster to emit a piercing shriek, striking fear into the hearts of all who hear it. Anyone within earshot of the caster when this hex is cast must make a Fright Check. Each hand level drawn above the base hand causes a -2 penalty on the Fright Check.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: Instant

Range: Self

Hand: Ace

LETHARGY

AREA; RESISTED BY IQ

Anyone within five yards of the target point of this hex will lose all desire to do anything. Affected people will be hard-pressed to do anything besides sit and maybe chat languidly. Lethargy has no effect on people in clearly dangerous or life-threatening situations; hence, it has no combat applications. Each hand level drawn above the base hand gives victims a -2 penalty to their resistance roll.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: 10 minutes per level of Magical Aptitude

Range: 10 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand: Ace

SANDMAN **REGULAR; RESISTED BY HT**

Causes the subject to fall asleep. If standing, he falls to the ground; the fall does not wake him up. He will be awakened by blows, loud noises, and other normal means; however, he will be mentally stunned and must make an IQ roll to wake up fully. At the end of the hex, he may make a roll versus HT to wake up; otherwise, he will sleep for eight hours unless awakened. Each hand level drawn above the base hand gives the subject a -2 penalty to his resistance roll.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: 30 minutes per level of Magical Aptitude

Range: 10 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand: Ace

SILVER-TONGUED DEVIL **REGULAR**

Makes the subject very persuasive, giving a +5 bonus to Fast-Talk and reaction rolls. Each hand level drawn above the base hand increases the bonus by +2.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: 2 minutes per level of Magical Aptitude

Range: Self

Hand: Jacks

SIREN SONG **AREA; RESISTED BY IQ**

Creates an alluring sound that draws anyone within the area toward the center hex of the affected zone. Anyone within the affected area must resist or become hypnotized by the sound, dropping whatever they were doing and walking toward the source of the sound for the duration of the hex. Any attack or other damage will break the spell, though. The affected area is centered at the caster's location when the hex begins, but he can move the center of the affected area after the hex begins at a rate of 1 yard per second. Victims will continue to follow the song unless it takes them into danger, at which point they may make a new resistance roll.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: 1 minute. Maintaining the hex takes 1 fatigue per extra minute.

Range: 20 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand: Ace

TALL TALES **REGULAR; RESISTED BY IQ**

Causes the subject's words to sound like outrageous lies to anyone listening. Any listener must make their resistance roll to pick out the truth from the supernatural obfuscation, though he may or may not believe what he hears. Each

hand level drawn above the base hand gives a -2 penalty to the resistance roll.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: 1 minute

Range: 10 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand: Pair

THAUMATURGICAL DIFFUSION

Recently, a few enterprising souls have started to examine what happens when you mix and match some of the various magical practices to be found in the Weird West. Most of these experiments end in failure – nature spirits don't play well with manitous, praying for a gadget doesn't seem to do much of anything, and black magic just tends to take over whatever it's allowed into. Hexslinging and mad science, however, seems to be a match with potential. Bringing the two sides together can be difficult – mad scientist dementia mixed with huckster recklessness can be a deadly combination – but slowly, new hexes are being developed which draw from and supplement mad science techniques.

The primary figure in this research is a man named Percy Sitgreaves. Sitgreaves was once an employee in Smith & Robards' Research and Development section, after dabbling in Hoyle's works early in life. He noticed that the renaissance in science and technology began at about the same time that huckstering became tremendously easier – in the mid-1860s. His unusual insight, however, was a hunch that mad science and hexslinging were somehow directly related – different approaches to the same phenomenon. Mad scientists might not be aware of the source of their work, but Sitgreaves knew the manitou style well enough, and had enough of a sense from his own tinkering work, to imagine that mad science inspirations were in fact hints fed to the scientists by manitous.

Sitgreaves kept his ideas largely to himself, for several reasons. For one, he knew that most mad scientists would laugh in his face if he suggested that their ideas came from demons from another plane of existence. More important, however, the implications of his theory scared him.

He knew the way manitous are. He'd fought them in the Hunting Grounds many times. They couldn't be helping scientists out of the goodness of their hearts. If manitous were behind mad science, mad science had to have a role in their dark plots. He watched the factories at Smith & Robards rolling out innovation after innovation in the fields of weaponry, armor, and military transport, while only a handful of devices to help humanity were even proposed, and he began to suspect that he was involved with an industry that was doing humanity terrible harm.

Sitgreaves had already developed a few hexes to help him in his work – Devil's Workshop, Analyze, Mad Insight, and others. Like Hoyle before him, he felt the only thing he could do was attempt to turn the skills he had to the service of good. He developed new hexes, using his scientific insight to supplement the usual trial-and-error of hex creation. Dismayingly, many of his new hexes were destructive, but he created several that could really help make life better for people. He decided the time had come to disseminate his work, but discreetly.

He founded a printing company named Infinity Press, and managed to wangle the contract for printing the 1876 Smith and Robards catalog (see p. 59). In its pages, he encoded the hexes he had created, as well as the theoretical revelations that had led him to their creation. Finding the code is a challenging task, but slowly, the word is spreading, and hucksters across the Americas are beginning to dabble in the marriage of magic and technology.

A huckster need not also be a Gadgeteer to use Thaumaturgical Diffusion hexes, but it helps; many of the hexes only affect the Gadgeteering process.

SITGREAVES' NEMESIS

Sitgreaves has a feeling that the forces of evil know what he's trying to do, and mean to stop him. Part of him worries that he may just be suffering early dementia, but he's actually seen the agent of his doom. He calls it the Gorgon, after classical literature: it's a metal-scaled, yellow-eyed, fire-snorting bull which looks like it just crawled out of the deepest pit of Hell. It always seems to be nearby, wherever he goes – but he only ever gets a brief glance of it, and it hasn't yet attacked him. He doesn't know why not, but he suspects he may not have much time.

The Gorgon is actually one of the diabolos (see p. DL113). It hasn't attacked Sitgreaves yet because until recently his work, like most mad science, was on the whole a bonus for the Reckoning – mostly hexes of destruction and death. However, his recent work has become much more focused on helping people. Also, the publication of the 1876 Smith & Robards catalog puts information that could harm the Reckoners' interests in the hands of many, many people. The Gorgon hasn't made a final decision yet, but the day when it sets out to eliminate Sitgreaves is probably soon. He *certainly* won't be allowed to print another year's catalog.

ANALYZE

INFORMATION

Reveals the components of an alchemical formula and the procedure for creating it. Some chemistry equipment is required to cast this hex; the process is magical, but swirling liquids and lighting things on fire helps the caster comprehend the information he is receiving.

Time to Cast: 10 minutes

Duration: Instant

Range: 1 elixir

Hand: Ace

BARRICADE

REGULAR

Conjures a wall of metal shards in front of the caster, 3 feet high and 6 feet long for every level of Magical Aptitude. It provides protection against ranged attacks for all body parts behind the wall; melee attackers can just reach over. The protection conferred by the wall depends on the hand drawn.

Time to Cast: 2 seconds

Duration: 2 minutes per level of Magical Aptitude

Range: 10 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand

PD/DR

Jacks

1/3

Two Pairs

2/6

Three of a Kind

4/12

Straight

6/18

Flush

8/24

BLAST FURNACE

REGULAR

Causes metal objects of a mass up to 20 pounds per level of Magical Aptitude to rapidly heat. Over the course of the hex, the object will heat 20° for each hand level drawn.

Time to Cast: 2 seconds

Duration: 1 minute. Maintaining this hex costs 2 fatigue per extra minute.

Range: 20 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand: Ace

BULLETPROOF

REGULAR

Causes a bulletproof carapace to grow from the subject's skin. This provides a level of protection determined by the hand drawn, and adds +2 to Intimidation from the unnatural appearance of the scales; however, every level of protection comes with an attendant -2 DX penalty, to a minimum DX of 1. Subjects also suffer a -5 penalty to reaction rolls. The caster cannot choose a lower level of success; the full level of success indicated by the hand drawn will always take effect.

Time to Cast: 2 seconds

Duration: 1 minute per level of Magical

Aptitude

Range: 10 yards

Hand

PD/DR

Pair

2/6

Jacks

4/12

Two Pairs

6/18

Three of a Kind

6/30

Straight

6/42

BULLET-STOPPER

REGULAR

If a bullet or other ranged weapon misses during a fight in which the subject is involved, and the subject could possibly be hit, the subject is always the first possible unintentional target to be checked, and the roll to hit him is 12 rather than the usual 9. The zone of possible targets is also one hex wider for purposes of determining whether the subject could be hit (see pp. B117-118).

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: 1 minute

Range: 20 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand: Ace

CAUSTIC GLOP

MISSILE

Produces a fist-sized blob of acidic goo, which the caster can hurl at a target. The goo has SS 13 and Acc +2; it ignores all modifiers for range, but not for target size or speed. The caster must hurl the goo using Throwing skill or the default of DX-3. It does damage according to the hand drawn, and then continues to burn the target on subsequent turns. Every turn, it does 1d less damage than the turn before. Caustic Glop affects and is affected by inanimate objects; hence, armor or cover can protect the target, but will be damaged in the process.

Time to Cast: 2 seconds

Duration: Instant

Range: 10 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand

Damage

Pair

1d

Two Pairs

2d

Three of a Kind

3d

Straight

3d+2

Flush

3d+4

Full House

4d

Four of a Kind

4d+2

Straight Flush

4d+4

Royal Flush

5d

DECRYPT

REGULAR

Gives the caster a +5 to Cryptology, Cryptography, and Cryptanalysis. Each hand level drawn

above the base hand adds an additional +2 bonus. This hex will work for a caster using these skills at default. Decrypt will provide its bonus to a message hidden with the hex Steganogram (p. 37).

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: 2 minutes per level of Magical

Aptitude

Range: Self

Hand: Pair

DEMENTIA REGULAR; RESISTED BY 10-2

Subject is driven temporarily insane, according to the hand drawn. The caster may choose the madness corresponding to the hand drawn or any lower hand.

Time to Cast: 2 seconds

Duration: 2 minutes per level of Magical

Aptitude

Range: 10 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand

Dementia

Pair

Delusion [-5]

Jacks

Absent-minded

Two Pairs

Mild Phobia

Three of a Kind

Paranoia

Straight

Severe Phobia

Flush

Delusion [-15]

DEVIL'S WORKSHOP

REGULAR

Provides supernatural assistance for mad scientists, reducing the time required to build a gadget by a percentage determined by the hand drawn (see pp. C1121-127 for details on Gad-geteering).

Time to Cast: 1 hour

Duration: Special

Range: 1 yard

Hand

Time Reduction

Pair

10%

Two Pairs

20%

Three of a Kind

30%

Straight

40%

Full House

50%

Four of a Kind

60%

Royal Flush

75%

HAYWIRE

REGULAR

Induces malfunctions in mad science gadgets. The severity of the malfunction depends on the hand drawn. If Haywire is used against a complex device with multiple component gadgets, the caster must pick one gadget to affect. Haywire will not affect alchemical elixirs. A gadget under the effects of Tweak (p. 37) is affected by Haywire as if the hand drawn for Haywire were one level lower.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: 2 minutes per level of Magical Aptitude

Range: 40 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand	Effect
Pair	Check for Malfunction (16-18)
Jacks	Check for Malfunction (15-18)
Two Pairs	Minor Malfunction
Three of a Kind	Major Malfunction
Flush	Catastrophic Malfunction

INFERNAL MACHINE

REGULAR

Assembles available scraps into a gadget on the fly. The caster must describe the gadget, and its difficulty, before casting the hex. Gadgets created with Infernal Machine are unreliable. Whenever checking for malfunction, a gadget thus created will malfunction on a roll higher than 10, plus 1 for every level of Magical Aptitude, plus 1 for every hand drawn above the minimum needed to create the gadget. Gadgets will always malfunction on malfunction rolls of 17 or 18. Infernal Machine cannot produce normal equipment. The caster gains no knowledge of how to build the gadget at a later time.

Time to Cast: 1 minute

Duration: 1 minute

Range: Touch

Hand	Difficulty
Two Pairs	Slight improvement on existing technology (armor-piercing ammo)
Three of a Kind	Major improvement on existing technology (25% faster locomotive)
Straight	New use of standard technology (flamethrower)
Full House	New use of cutting-edge technology (steam wagon)
Four of a kind	New but realistic technology (submersible boat)
Straight Flush	New technology that ignores the laws of science (heat ray)
Royal Flush	New technology that defies common sense (mind control lasers)

MAD INSIGHT

REGULAR

Assists a mad scientist in creating a gadget. The subject gains +5 to Gadgeteering, plus an additional +2 bonus for each hand level drawn above the base hand. If the caster suffers backlash, a severe flaw is inadvertently introduced into the gadget.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: Instant

Range: 1 yard

Hand: Ace

MAGAZINE

REGULAR

Gives a single hand-held weapon unlimited ammunition for the duration of the hex. This hex will not work on larger weapons like Gatling guns, or on exotic weapons like flamethrowers. Magazine does not affect the weapon in any way other than increasing its ammunition.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: 1 minute

Range: 10 yards

Hand: Pair

MAGIC BULLET

REGULAR

Turns any ordinary pistol or rifle round within the hex's range into a "magic bullet." If the magic bullet hits its first target, it bursts out and flies toward another target as if it had been fired from the position of the first target, doing normal damage to each target it hits. It will continue to attack new targets until it reaches the maximum number of extra targets for the hand drawn or until it misses a target. If the bullet fails to penetrate a target's armor, it still counts as a hit and the bullet continues on. If the duration of the hex expires before the bullet is fired, it returns to being a normal bullet.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: 20 seconds per level of Magical Aptitude

Range: 5 yards

Hand	Extra Targets
Pair	1
Jacks	2
Two Pairs	3
Three of a Kind	4
Flush	5
Royal Flush	6

POWER LEAK

REGULAR

Drains energy from the power source for a machine or gadget. This hex reduces the effectiveness of a device (speed, power output, damage, etc.) by 10% at the base hand, and reduces it by a further 10% for each hand level drawn above the base hand. This causes most machines to slow down and perform less effectively. Power Leak also works on explosives. As soon as the hex ends, all affected power sources return to full power. Power Leak and Power Surge offset each other.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: 20 seconds per level of Magical Aptitude

Range: 10 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand: Ace

POWER SURGE

REGULAR

Enhances a machine or gadget's power by increasing the production of its power source. The affected machine gains 10% of its effectiveness at the base hand, plus a further 10% for each hand level drawn above the base hand. A machine affected by Power Surge consumes a proportionally greater amount of fuel.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: 20 seconds per level of Magical Aptitude

Range: 10 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand: Ace

RAZOR COILS

REGULAR

Wraps the subject in barbed wire. The subject may attempt to break free by making a DX roll, at -2 for each hand level drawn above the base hand. If successful, the subject wriggles free and may act normally next turn; otherwise, the subject remains trapped and takes 1 point of damage for every 2 points by which he missed the DX roll.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: 10 seconds per level of Magical Aptitude

Range: 10 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand: Pair

REFLECT

BLOCKING;

RESISTED BY SUBJECT POWER

Summons a jagged piece of reflective, magically charged metal in front of the caster. This shard of metal provides no resistance to physical objects, but certain forms of magic – hexes, black magic spells, and Harrowed powers – are reflected by it. If the subject power fails to resist Reflect, the original caster suffers the effects intended for the caster of Reflect. Reflect does not work on area-effect powers. Harrowed powers resist with the IQ of the Harrowed.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: Instant

Range: Self

Hand: Pair

REVERSE ENGINEER

REGULAR

Enables the caster to intuit the theory behind a gadget, permitting him to construct similar gadgets without taking the time and expense to develop it himself. This means that the caster need not spend the development time, make the development skill roll, or spend the development cost; he can go straight to building the gadget for only the production cost (see p. C1121 for details of the Gadgeteering process). If the caster is not a mad

scientist, he may attempt to explain it to a mad scientist before the hex expires. The mad scientist must make an IQ-6 roll to understand what the caster is trying to explain; only one attempt is possible. If the caster is unable to convey the idea, he must cast Reverse Engineer again to get a fresh perspective.

Time to Cast: 5 minutes per level of complexity

Duration: 1 hour per level of Magical Aptitude

Range: Touch

Hand: Ace

RIDE THE RAILS

REGULAR

Allows the caster to travel very quickly along the railroad tracks that crisscross the American continent. The caster must be touching the rails when casting the hex. He remains visible and tangible for the first 50 feet of travel as he accelerates – then he vanishes in a flash of light, becoming pure energy for the remainder of the journey. The caster travels a distance which depends on the hand drawn. If he hits a break or end in the line, he stops abruptly. This sudden stop does 1d+2 damage to the caster. Encountering a train after the caster has dematerialized, fortunately, has no effect.

Time to Cast: 1 minute

Duration: Special

Range: Self

Hand	Distance	Travel Time
Ace	10 miles	1 minute
Pair	25 miles	5 minutes
Jacks	50 miles	10 minutes
Two Pairs	100 miles	20 minutes
Three of a Kind	200 miles	30 minutes
Straight	300 miles	40 minutes
Flush	400 miles	50 minutes
Full House	500 miles	1 hour
Four of a Kind	750 miles	2 hours
Straight Flush	1000 miles	3 hours
Royal Flush	2000 miles	4 hours

SHARD

MISSILE

Creates a handful of jagged metal nails and hurls them at a designated target. The caster may create as many nails as he wants, up to a maximum of twice his level of Magical Aptitude. Each nail conjured after the first causes a -2 penalty to the hex roll. The nails have SS 13, Acc +2; they suffer no penalties for range. The caster must hurl the spell using Throwing skill, the default of DX-3, or Spell Throwing (Ice Dagger) skill (p. C1149). He may throw the nails at separate targets and even call hit locations on targets, but must hurl at least one nail per turn until they are all used up.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: Varies

Range: 20 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand	Damage
Pair	1d-1 fatigue
Jacks	1d
Two Pairs	2d-1
Three of a Kind	2d
Straight	3d
Flush	3d+2
Full House	4d+1
Four of a Kind	6d+1
Straight Flush	8d
Royal Flush	10d

SHOCKER

REGULAR

Charges a metal item with a massive buildup of static electricity. The first person to touch the item before the hex expires triggers the charge, becomes stunned for (20-HT) turns, and takes fatigue damage according to the hand drawn.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: 2 minutes per level of Magical Aptitude

Range: 10 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand	Fatigue
Ace	1d-1
Pair	1d+1
Jacks	2d
Two Pairs	3d
Three of a Kind	5d
Flush	7d
Full House	10d

SLIVERSPRAY

REGULAR

Fires a spray of small metal splinters from the caster's hand. These splinters spray across a wedge-shaped area in front of the caster out to the hex's maximum range. This wedge covers about 60 degrees. Every creature within the spray takes damage according to the hand drawn. Armor protects normally.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: Instant

Range: 2 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand	Damage
Jacks	1d-1
Two Pairs	1d
Three of a Kind	2d-1
Straight	2d+2
Flush	3d
Full House	3d+2
Four of a Kind	4d
Straight Flush	6d
Royal Flush	7d

STEGANOGRAM

REGULAR

Cast on a written message or other information medium, this hex completely conceals the message from everyone but the caster and the intended recipients; the message appears to be discussing something completely different. The caster must name the intended recipients at the time of casting; the message may have two recipients for every level of Magical Aptitude. A message up to a single letter-sized page may be hidden; longer messages will require multiple castings of Steganogram.

A reader who suspects steganography may examine the message for hidden code. A Cryptanalysis-2 roll will reveal if a hidden message is in the text. A second Cryptanalysis roll, this time at -6, will be required to determine what the message is. Each hand above the minimum gives a -2 penalty to attempts to spot or decipher the message.

At the end of the hex duration, both cover and secret message become indecipherable jumbles – unreadable to anyone, including the intended recipient and caster.

Time to Cast: 2 seconds

Duration: 10 days per level of Magical Aptitude

Range: Touch

Hand: Ace

TRANSCRIBE

REGULAR

Animates a pen, which will write down whatever is spoken within the hex's range for the duration of the hex. It cannot identify speakers, but will use different types of handwriting to distinguish them. The hex cannot translate languages that are foreign to the caster, and its transcription of foreign tongues is phonetic. A writing instrument and writing surface must be available for this hex to work.

Time to Cast: 2 seconds

Duration: 10 minutes per level of Magical Aptitude

Range: 10 feet per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand: Pair

TWEAK

REGULAR

Reduces the probability of a malfunction in a gadget. A gadget under the effects of Tweak will only malfunction on an 18. At Three of a Kind, if the gadget does fail a Malfunction roll, roll twice for what level of malfunction it is, and take the better result. Tweak also improves the Malf of weaponry (from 15 to 16, from 16 to crit, from crit to ver, etc.)

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: 1 minute

Range: 1 yard

Hand: Pair

UPGRADE

Allows the caster to tinker with a gadget, transforming it temporarily into a similar gadget at the next level of complexity. Hence, an Average gadget like a gatling pistol could become a Complex device, like a gatling shotgun. Unfortunately, this process also lowers the reliability of the gadget; Upgraded gadgets malfunction on a 16-18. Tweak will raise the malfunction chance back to 17-18.

Time to Cast: 2 seconds

Duration: 10 seconds per level of Magical Aptitude

Range: Touch

Hand: Pair

REGULAR

Hand

Ace

Pair

Jacks

Two Pairs

Effect

Listen to all messages passing through the wire

Send a message

Stop a message

Listen to any message sent within the past day

ZILCH

Stops a mad science gadget from working for the duration of the hex. The hand required depends on the complexity of the gadget. A mad scientist may try to fix a gadget under the effects of Zilch by winning a Quick Contest of Skills between the caster's Zilch and the mad scientist's Mechanic skill.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: 10 seconds per level of Magical Aptitude

Range: 10 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand

Jacks

Two Pairs

Three of a Kind

Straight

Complexity

Simple

Average

Complex

Amazing

WASTE PRODUCT

Ruins fuel and explosives, turning them into useless ash. The caster may transmute 10 pounds of fuel or explosives for every level of Magical Aptitude.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: Permanent

Range: Touch

Hand: Pair

REGULAR

WEIRD SCIENCE

Allows the caster to put the inspiration of mad science to work in other fields. For the duration of the hex, he may make two rolls whenever he uses any scientific skill, and take the best result. For each hand level drawn above the base hand, he also gets +2 to the roll. However, critical failure on either roll means that the caster has come up with some bizarre theory that he is convinced is utterly sound (-1-point Delusion).

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: 2 minutes per level of Magical Aptitude

Range: Self

Hand: Pair

REGULAR

NEW HEXES

Unlike the hexes already presented, these hexes are not based on existing *Deadlands* material. For this reason, they have been described in both *GURPS* and *Pinnacle Deadlands* terms.

BLINK

This hex allows the caster to avoid an attack by instantly teleporting a few feet out of the way. If the caster experiences backlash, he could find himself transported almost anywhere (in practice, the manitou rarely take the caster farther than a mile).

GURPS Blink

Blocking

The caster may "blink" up to 3 hexes in any direction into an open hex. A hex is open as long as no one is in it, nor no obstacle larger than a person. For combat, the "blink" is treated as a Dodge that automatically succeeds if the hex roll is made.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: Instant

Range: Self

Hand: Ace

Deadlands Blink

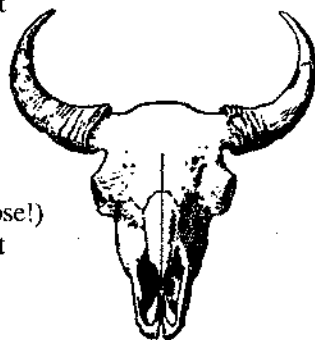
Trait: Smarts

Hand: Ace

Speed: 1 (Vamoose!)

Duration: Instant

Range: Self



WIRE TAP

Allows the caster to tap into a telegraph wire within range and listen to, send, or stop messages. The degree of control gained depends on the hand drawn. Any code used to prepare information for transmission – presumably Morse code, but other schemes are possible – is automatically translated; however, codes used to conceal information are not broken by the hex.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: 1 minute

Range: 40 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

INFORMATION

A huckster casting this hex may "blink" up to 3 yards in any direction, as long as he arrives in an empty spot. If used to vamoose, *blink* is treated as a dodge that is automatically successful.

BURNING DEATH

Causes the subject to burn from within. For the duration of the hex, the internal fire will cause the subject to experience unbearable discomfort and nausea, preventing him from taking any action other than retching up some scalding bile and maybe saying a few words. If the fire burns long enough, the subject will burst into flame, leaving behind a pile of ash and a fist-sized lump of ghost rock.

GURPS Burning Death **Regular;**
Resisted by HT

The caster must touch the subject. Every turn, the victim must roll against HT; on any failure he takes 1d-1 burning damage. On a success, he takes no damage that turn; on a critical success, the spell is broken. No defense will protect against this damage. If the subject dies as a result of this burning damage, his body bursts into flames as described above.

The subject can take no normal action during the hex, but can move at half speed if necessary.

Time to Cast: 3 seconds

Duration: Varies

Range: Touch

Hand	Duration
Ace	1 second
Pair	2 seconds
Jacks	3 seconds
Two Pairs	4 seconds
Three of a Kind	6 seconds
Straight	8 seconds
Flush	10 seconds
Full House	12 seconds
Four of a Kind	15 seconds
Straight Flush	18 seconds
Royal Flush	24 seconds

Deadlands Burning Death

Trait: Spirit

Hand: Ace

Speed: 3

Duration: Special

Range: Touch

Every turn, the victim must make a Fair (5) Vigor roll to avoid taking damage from the burning within. Failure means that the victim takes 2d6 damage to the torso. Success means that he takes no damage this turn. No protection will defend against this damage. If the victim dies as a

result of this damage, his body bursts into flames as described above.

The victim cannot act during the duration of this hex, but may move at half his Pace if strongly motivated.

Hand	Duration
Ace	1 round
Pair	2 rounds
Jacks	3 rounds
Two Pairs	4 rounds
Three of a Kind	5 rounds
Straight	6 rounds
Flush	8 rounds
Full House	10 rounds
Four of a Kind	12 rounds
Straight Flush	15 rounds
Royal Flush	18 rounds

ECSTASY

Inundates the subject in a rush of pleasure, which incapacitates him for the duration of the hex. The pleasure can be addictive.

GURPS Ecstasy **Regular;**
Resisted by IQ

While affected by the hex, the subject may take no action, even to escape immediate danger. This hex can be addictive. If a subject is exposed to this spell three times within 10 days, he must make a Will+2 roll after the third time and after each subsequent exposure until 5 days pass without exposure. If any of these rolls are failed, the subject suffers a total Addiction (p. B30) to the hex and will do almost anything for another "dose." This addiction follows normal rules, except that withdrawal causes IQ loss rather than HT. An addicted person will never resist the hex.

Time to Cast: 3 seconds

Duration: 10 seconds

Range: 2 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand: Jacks

Deadlands Ecstasy

Trait: Spirit

Hand: Jacks

Speed: 3

Duration: 2 rounds

Range: 1 yard/hexslingin' level

While affected by the hex, the subject may take no action, even to escape immediate danger. This hex can be addictive; if a subject is exposed to this spell three times within 10 days, he must make a Foolproof (3) roll after the third time and after each subsequent exposure until 5 days pass without exposure. If any of these rolls are failed, the subject suffers a severe *hankerin'* for the hex and will do almost anything for another "dose."

HELL'S ARSENAL

Causes any weapon to be bathed in a halo of flame, including firearms. This flame will not harm the weapon or its user. Weapons so enhanced will do more damage.

GURPS Hell's Arsenal Regular

A weapon under the effects of Hell's Arsenal gains a +2 bonus to damage against living creatures and flammable objects.

Time to Cast: 2 seconds

Duration: 1 minute

Range: Touch

Hand: Pair

Deadlands Hell's Arsenal

Trait: Knowledge

Hand: Pair

Speed: 2

Duration: 1 minute

Range: Touch

A weapon under the effects of Hell's Arsenal gains a +4 bonus to damage against living creatures and flammable objects.

HIDEY-HOLE

This hex removes a nonliving object to the Hunting Grounds for the duration of the hex. While in the Hunting Grounds, the subject cannot be detected by any method, mundane or magical.

GURPS Hidey-Hole Regular

Time to Cast: 10 seconds

Duration: 1 hour

Range: Touch

Hand: Ace

Deadlands Hidey-Hole

Trait: Knowledge

Hand: Ace

Speed: 10

Duration: 1 hour

Range: Touch

I WANT ANSWERS!

When this hex is cast, the caster enters the Hunting Grounds in spirit form to shake down a manitou for information about the Reckoning. The caster may ask a single question about any topic in which manitous and allied forces are involved – critters, hexes, black magic, mad science, abominations, etc. The results are usually less than helpful; manitous rarely know much about their masters' plans, and what little they know is held very close to the chest. Hence, only simple questions like "What was that thing that

just tried to eat us?" or "What was that hex with the razor-sharp cards?" will be likely to get a clear answer. Questions about unique abominations, or about any specific project, are far less likely to get an answer; only a greater manitou would be likely to know, and they're rare.

If the caster does get an answer to a high-stakes question, however, he may live to regret it. The manitous remember who pumped them for information; with minor questions, they'll likely be too afraid to admit they were shaken down, but if something important is on the line, they will report it to their masters. The caster may receive a visit from los diablos sometime soon.

This hex can be unbalancing; GMs should feel free to disallow it if they want to keep secrets out of the players' hands.

GURPS I Want Answers! Information

To determine if a manitou knows the answer to the caster's question, roll against the manitou's Hidden Lore (Reckoning) skill, determined by the hand level drawn. The roll should be made at a penalty appropriate to the subject matter of the question; if the manitou's effective skill is lower than 3, the manitou cannot possibly know the answer. If the manitou does know the answer, it won't necessarily answer clearly; at the base hand, the answer will be vague and delphic. Better hands will get increasingly better clarity and detail.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: Instant

Range: Self

Hand	Hidden Lore (Reckoning) Skill
Two Pairs	10
Three of a Kind	12
Straight	14
Flush	16
Full House	18
Four of a Kind	20
Straight Flush	22
Royal Flush	25

Deadlands I Want Answers!

Trait: Mien

Hand: Two Pairs

Speed: 1

Duration: Instant

Range: Self

To determine if a manitou knows the answer to the caster's question, roll against the manitou's *professional*: manitou Aptitude, determined by the hand level drawn. The Target Number for the roll is determined by the subject matter of the question. Questions about ongoing projects won't get answers without some fortunate ace-rolling.

Hand	Professional: manitou
Two Pairs	3d4
Three of a Kind	2d6
Straight	3d6
Flush	3d8
Full House	4d8
Four of a Kind	4d10
Straight Flush	5d10
Royal Flush	6d12

QUESTION PENALTIES FOR GURPS

Penalty	Subject Matter
0	Names of common critters, names of hexes
-2	Abilities of common critters, specific properties of hexes
-4	Names of abominations
-6	Abilities of abominations
-8	Names of unique abominations
-10	Story behind a minor completed plot (famine in Charleston)
-12	Abilities of unique abominations
-14	Story behind a major completed plot (the Great Quake)
-16	Story behind a minor ongoing plot (Simone LaCroix's zombies)
-18	Story behind a major ongoing plot (Church of Lost Angels, ghost rock)
-20	Major secrets of the Reckoning (who are the Reckoners, what do they want, etc.)

QUESTION TARGET NUMBERS FOR DEADLANDS

TN	Subject Matter
3	Names of common critters, names of hexes
5	Abilities of common critters, specific properties of hexes
7	Names of abominations
9	Abilities of abominations
10	Names of unique abominations
11	Story behind a minor completed plot (famine in Charleston)
12	Abilities of unique abominations
13	Story behind a major completed plot (the Great Quake)
15	Story behind a minor ongoing plot (Simone LaCroix's zombies)
17	Story behind a major ongoing plot (Church of Lost Angels, ghost rock)
19	Major secrets of the Reckoning (who are the Reckoners, what do they want, etc.)

LEAK

Attaches a small manitou to a pouch, backpack, or other container. The manitou will periodically remove small objects within the container to the Hunting Grounds, giving the container a tendency to "lose" whatever is put in it. Wallets will lose a coin or two every day; backpacks will lose tent pegs, silverware, etc.

GURPS Leak

Time to Cast: 1 second
Duration: Permanent
Range: Touch
Hand: Pair

Enchantment

Deadlands Leak

Trait: Knowledge
Hand: Pair
Speed: 1
Duration: Permanent
Range: Touch

PHANTOM AMPUTATION

When the caster touches the subject's limb, a manitou passes into the limb touched. The subject then loses control of the limb for the duration of the hex; in fact, the manitou may even attempt to turn the limb to various acts of mischief.

GURPS Phantom Amputation Regular

In moments of stress, the subject and the manitou must make a Quick Contest of Wills (see p. DL97 for the manitou's Will); if the manitou wins, it may use the limb to wreak whatever mischief it can for 2d turns, after which it goes quiescent again. Anyone who has been the subject of Phantom Amputation gets an extra reaction roll to become Harrowed.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: 10 minutes per level of Magical Aptitude

Range: Touch

Hand: Jacks

Deadlands Phantom Amputation

Trait: Knowledge

Hand: Jacks

Speed: 1

Duration: 5 minutes/hexslinger's level

Range: Touch

The affected limb is effectively Harrowed for the duration of the hex; draw a card from a spare deck to determine the manitou's Spirit. The subject begins with all the Dominion points, though he still cannot use the limb during the hex. Whenever he is stressed or distracted, the manitou may attempt to wrest away Dominion.



This battle for Dominion is played normally with an opposed Spirit test, the winner gaining one Dominion point per success and raise. If the manitou gains a point of Dominion but does not control the majority, it takes control of the limb for 2 rounds per Dominion point taken. If the manitou gains Dominion, it will take control of the limb until the hex ends. The subject may oppose the possessed arm with his other limbs and faculties at any time. Characters who have been the subject of Phantom Amputation draw an extra card to become Harrowed.

SEEK

This hex searches for a particular person, a particular thing, or a type of thing, specified when the hex is cast. If the person or thing (or an instance of a type of thing) is within the hex's range, the hex will inform the caster of the direction and approximate distance of the subject.

GURPS Seek

Information

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: Instant

Range: 2 miles per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand: Pair

Deadlands Seek

Trait: Cognition

Hand: Pair

Speed: 1

Duration: Instant

Range: 1 mile/hexslingin' level

SHIFT WOUNDS

It's hard getting a manitou to do something constructive, like healing someone. This hex adds an incentive: if the manitou heals the subject, it gets to inflict equally dire wounds on the caster.

GURPS Shift Wounds

Regular

The caster loses as many hit points as the hex heals. If hit locations are being used, the caster may choose which locations to transfer damage from. Crippling effects from the wounds healed will be healed but not transferred to the caster. The caster may fall unconscious or die as a result of damage transferred.

Time to Cast: 1 minute

Duration: Permanent

Range: Touch

Hand

Damage Transferred

Ace	3 hit points
Pair	6 hit points
Jacks	9 hit points
Two Pairs	12 hit points
Three of a Kind	15 hit points

Deadlands Shift Wounds

Trait: Smarts

Hand: Ace

Speed: 1 minute

Duration: Permanent

Range: Touch

The caster takes as many wounds as the hex heals. He may select which locations on the

subject's body are healed, but the wounds suffered by the caster are randomly assigned. This process may cause the caster to fall unconscious or even die.

Hand	Wound Levels Transferred
Ace	1
Pair	2
Jacks	3
Two Pairs	4
Three of a Kind	5

INSULT TO INJURY

When life has just tripped you up, this hex kicks you in the behind. What would have been an ordinary disappointment blows up into a catastrophe, with a little manitou help. This hex may be unbalancing; GMs should feel free to disallow it.

GURPS Insult to Injury Blocking

Cast immediately after a failed skill or attribute roll, this hex turns a normal failure into a critical failure. This hex has no effect on successes or critical successes.

Time to Cast: 1

Duration: Instant

Range: 10 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand: Two Pairs

Deadlands Insult to Injury

Trait: Smarts

Hand: Two Pairs

Speed: 1 (Vamoose!)

Duration: Instant

Range: 5 yards/hexslingin' level

Cast immediately after a failed Trait or Aptitude roll, this hex causes the roll to automatically go bust. To cast *insult to injury*, a huckster must make a vamoose and spend his highest remaining Action Card, with sleeve cards going first.

RABBIT FOOT

This hex fiddles with probability at the last second, snatching victory from the jaws of defeat. An attempt that by all rights should have failed may be successful with the aid of this hex.

GURPS Rabbit Foot Blocking

Allows the subject to reroll any failed skill or attribute roll, if cast immediately after the failed roll is made. The results of the second roll are binding.

Time to Cast: 1 second

Duration: Instant

Range: 10 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

Hand: Two Pairs

Deadlands Rabbit Foot

Trait: Smarts

Hand: Two Pairs

Speed: 1 (Vamoose!)

Duration: Instant

Range: 5 yards/hexslingin' level

With this hex, a huckster can allow another character to immediately reroll a Trait or Aptitude check that he has just failed. The second roll is binding, for better or worse. To cast *rabbit foot*, a huckster must make a vamoose and spend his highest remaining Action Card, with sleeve cards going first.

TRICKS

Summoning a greater manitou to light a fire is, to put it mildly, overkill. For minor, unimportant tasks, a smaller, more unassuming manitou is more than adequate to do the job. It would be silly for a huckster to take on the biggest, baddest manitou he can round up when the scruffy little spirit cowering behind a rock is more than equal to the task. Therefore, hucksters often use minor manitous for minor tasks. This process is so much less taxing and dangerous than casting a hex that it doesn't even deserve the same name. Hucksters call these hexlets "tricks."



Tricks are Mental/Hard skills, just like hexes. However, if the huckster succeeds on his Trick roll, when he draws his hand, he doesn't have to assemble a poker hand. He just has to draw a red card – any single red card. As long as one red card comes up, the trick succeeds. If all black cards come up, the trick fails, and the huckster loses 1 fatigue – hours of subjective time spent running around the Hunting Grounds failed to come up with a suitable manitou, which is draining. If the huckster draws the black joker, the cute manitou pup he picked turns out to be bigger than he thought, and he suffers normal backlash. In all other respects, tricks are handled like hexes.

Many spells from *GURPS Magic* can readily be converted into tricks; most spells with no prerequisites are appropriate, and some with one prerequisite may also be viable. Spells with a longer list of prerequisites are most likely too powerful to be tricks, and should be converted into hexes instead.

All tricks take 1 second to cast.

BANDAGE

REGULAR

Stops bleeding and stabilizes injuries. This is equivalent to unskilled first aid (see p. B127), restoring one hit point of damage. If the optional bleeding rules on p. B130 are being used, this trick stops all bleeding. This trick can only restore hit points caused by physical wounds; purely magical damage is beyond its power.

Duration: Permanent

Range: Touch

BAR

REGULAR

Reinforces a door, making it harder to force. Any door so enhanced gives a -5 penalty to any attempt to force it open.

Duration: 1 minute

Range: 3 yards

BEGGAR'S BANQUET

REGULAR

Makes bland, and even unpleasant, food taste like a home-cooked meal, or even a fine dinner from a fancy Back East restaurant. It doesn't help the actual nutrition, quality, or appearance of the food; it just makes it taste better. This trick has many applications: it can help a huckster get a job as a trail cook if necessary, it hides drugs and poisons, and it mixes well with the Vittles hex.

Beggar's Banquet affects enough food for one meal for one person.

Duration: Permanent

Range: 2 yards

CALLING CARD

REGULAR

Alters the face of an ordinary playing card, placing a mark on it that makes it immediately recognizable to the caster. The caster will always know his own cards, and others familiar with his mark may be able to recognize them as well. This trick can be handy for producing identification devices for friends and allies. This trick only affects the face of the card, and is therefore of little use as a cheating tool.

Duration: Permanent

Range: Touch

COFFIN VARNISH

REGULAR

Changes a mugful of any beverage into supernaturally bad coffee. This coffee-like brew curls a dead man's toes and dizzies birds passing overhead, but it has its uses. First, coffin varnish adds a +4 bonus to any Will roll to stay awake (see p. CII173); it also restores one point of fatigue lost to sleeplessness. Second, it instantly sobers up any drunk who drinks it. Sobering up

with coffin varnish, however, results in a crushing three-hour hangover, inflicting a penalty to IQ and DX that begins at -3 and is reduced by -1 every hour. Coffin Varnish fails if cast on a magical or alchemical beverage.

Duration: 10 minutes

Range: 1 yard

COMPASS

INFORMATION

Orients the caster with regards to the four cardinal directions. The caster knows where north is from his current position. Once he starts moving, however, he may become disoriented normally.

Duration: Instant

Range: Self

COPY

REGULAR

Instantly copies a single page of written material. The copy is not exact — it copies information, not appearance. The caster must supply pen and paper. Any codes in the text will remain intact.

Duration: Instant

Range: 1 yard

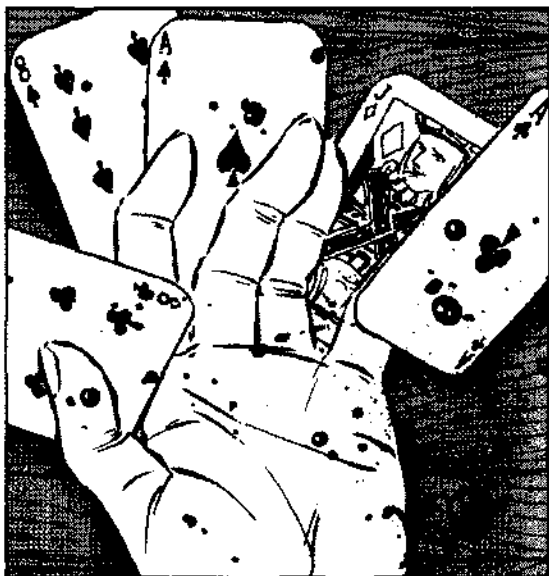
DIVININ' ROD

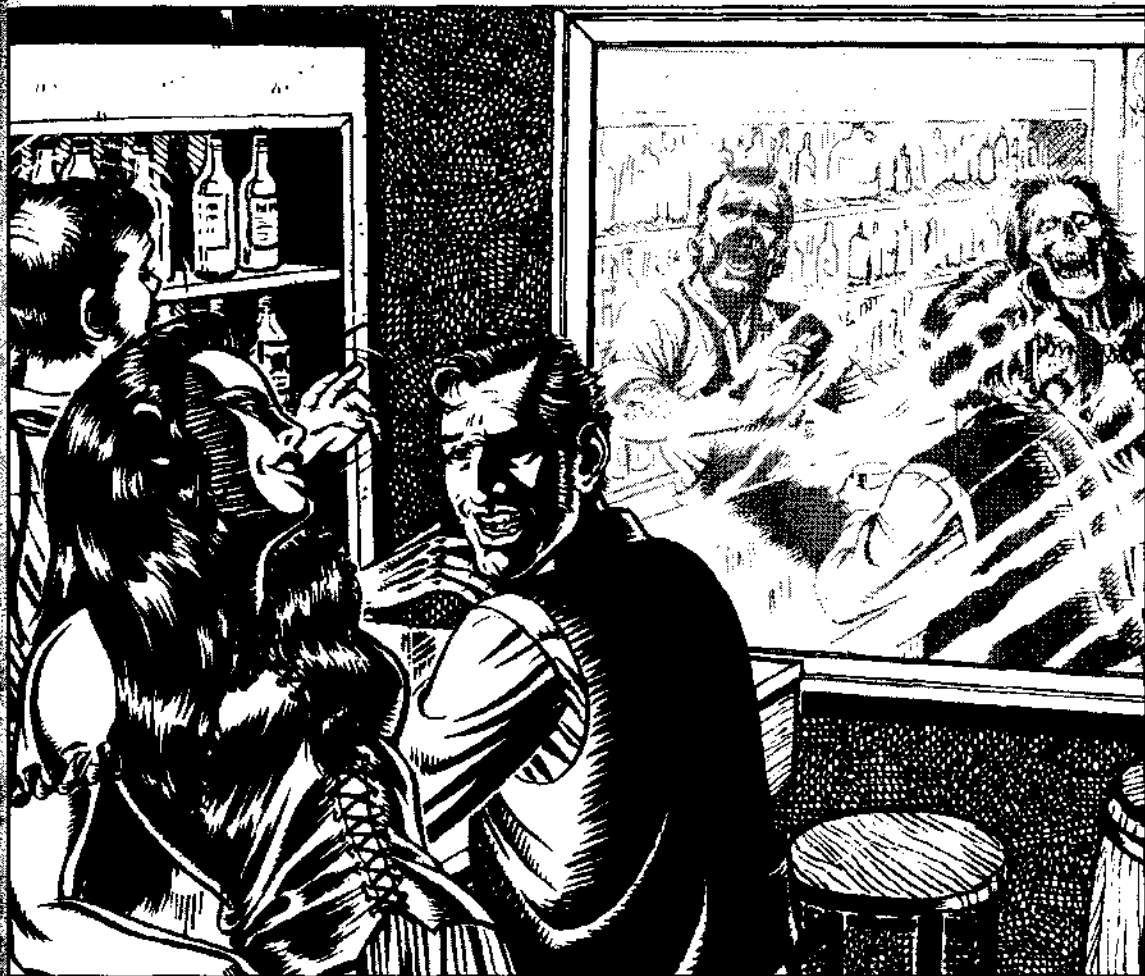
REGULAR

Locates the nearest water source within the trick's range. If a water source is available, the trick brings about one quart of it to the caster and deposits it in an empty container. If no container is available, the water pours onto the ground. The caster will know nothing about the purity of the water or the location of its source; it may be tainted, though not so much as to not be water any more (i.e., urine or mud don't qualify).

Duration: 5 minutes

Range: 5 yards per level of Magical Aptitude





ENVISION

REGULAR

This trick allows the caster to see through very thin objects. Coincidentally, the maximum thickness the caster can penetrate is about the thickness of a playing card, or an outer pocket on a garment. Envision is invaluable when cheating at cards; a huckster gains a +5 to his Gambling skill for any single hand in which he uses Envision.

Duration: 5 seconds

Range: 1 yard per level of Magical Aptitude

FALSE FACE

REGULAR

Alters minor facial features, adding a +2 bonus to Disguise rolls attempted on the caster.

Duration: 5 minutes

Range: Self

FINISH

REGULAR

Cleans up a single inanimate object, making it shiny and new-looking – polishing wood, shining metal, and so on. It doesn't fix anything that may be wrong with an object; a broken object which has Finish cast on it becomes a *pretty* broken object. Anyone trying to sell an item that has

had Finish cast on it gets a +2 to his Merchant roll for negotiating the price. This trick will only work on an object smaller than a medium-sized piece of furniture – a chest of drawers or thereabouts. This trick will work on gizmos.

FLARE

REGULAR

Causes a smallish fire – no more than 1 hex in diameter – to flare up, increasing its size by half. The fire gives off no more heat and consumes no more fuel, but it gives off more light and takes up more space.

Duration: 1 minute. Maintaining this trick costs 1 fatigue per extra minute.

Range: 1 yard per level of Magical Aptitude

FLICKER

REGULAR

Causes all artificial light within the trick's range to waver for the duration of the trick, like a candle flame in a breeze. This dimming is minor but noticeable; all Vision rolls within the affected area are at -1 for the duration of the trick. Flicker cannot affect magical lighting or daylight.

Duration: 1 minute

Range: 1 yard per level of Magical Aptitude

FOOLED YOU!

REGULAR

Creates a small, two-dimensional illusion. The illusion is about the size of a playing card or the face on a wanted poster. It cannot move, but it can be as detailed as the caster wants. This trick is useful for temporarily altering posters, cheating at cards, and other minor stunts.

Duration: 1 minute

Range: 1 yard

GUESSTIMATE

INFORMATION

Informs the caster of any penalties or bonuses that might apply to the roll for a task he is considering undertaking. The trick provides no new information; thus, it can assess penalties for lighting, footing, weather, injury, and so on, but cannot predict actions others plan to take or assess penalties for conditions the caster is unaware of.

Duration: Instant

Range: Self

HESITATE

REGULAR

Causes the target to briefly hesitate in whatever he is doing; this causes him to drop back one place in the turn sequence (see p. B95).

Duration: Instant

Range: 1 yard per level of Magical Aptitude

IGNITE

REGULAR

Ignites a single readily flammable object no larger than a cigar or candle. The effective heat is about equivalent to that of a single match.

Duration: Instant

Range: Touch

LIKKER UP

REGULAR

Reduces the target's resistance to demon rum. It reduces Alcohol Tolerance (p. CII163) by 8, and gives a -4 penalty to Will rolls to resist Alcoholism.

Duration: 1 hour

Range: 2 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

MIRROR

REGULAR

Creates a small, floating reflective area about 2 inches in diameter which acts just like a mirror. It is handy for looking around corners or at other people's hands at the poker table. The caster may move the mirror anywhere within the trick's range by concentrating. The mirror is intangible and can pass through solid objects.

Duration: 1 minute

Range: 2 yards

PALM

REGULAR

Transfers a small object from caster's hand to his pocket, or vice versa. The object must be able to be concealed in the caster's hand - a deck of cards, a matchbook, etc. Only one transfer is covered by a single trick; switching an item in one's pocket for an item in one's hand would require two castings: one to transfer the item in the hand to the pocket, and one to transfer the item in the pocket to the hand.

Duration: Instant

Range: Touch



FORECAST

INFORMATION

Gives the caster a brief vision of the weather that will occur in his vicinity over the next few hours. He can predict one hour ahead for every level of Magical Aptitude. The trick will predict wind direction, general temperature, cloud cover, and approximate amount of precipitation. Forecast cannot predict magically influenced weather patterns.

Duration: Instant

Range: Self

GROOM

REGULAR

Cleans up the caster - brushes away dust and lint, shines shoes, and generally does all the things a personal valet might do if there weren't enough time for a bath, haircut, or change of clothes. This trick enables the caster to make himself presentable in a hurry.

Duration: Instant

Range: Self

Pick Me Up!

REGULAR

Imbues a shot of liquor with supernatural vitality. Drinks thus infused with magical energy will restore 1d fatigue for every shot. However, the supercharged liquor has the effect of a shot of whiskey for every point of fatigue restored (see p. CII162 for detailed rules on intoxication). Fatigue restored by Pick Me Up! remains restored even after the alcoholic effects of the trick pass. Pick Me Up! and Coffin Varnish cancel each other out.

Duration: Permanent

Range: Touch

PRESERVE

REGULAR

Safeguards up to one pound of organic matter – usually food – from spoiling for a single day. If cast on a large quantity of matter, it must be cast enough times to protect the entire amount, or the trick fails. This trick can be very useful for long journeys, but must usually be cast many, many times (once each day for every pound of food to preserve).

Duration: 1 day

Range: Touch

RELOAD

REGULAR

Transfers three bullets into the caster's firearm. The caster must have bullets on his

person to be transferred – the trick just moves bullets, it doesn't create them.

Duration: Instant

Range: Touch

SHATTER

REGULAR

Causes a small, easily breakable item, no more than half a pound in weight, to shatter.

Duration: Instant

Range: 1 foot per level of Magical Aptitude

SHOUT

REGULAR

Projects the caster's voice up to 200 yards in the open. Anyone within range can clearly hear whatever the caster is saying. The trick does not magnify the caster's voice, merely carries it further; hence, there are no ill effects from being near the caster when he is using Shout.

Duration: 5 seconds

Range: Self

SOUND

REGULAR

Makes a single sound at a point within its range. The sound can be any essentially meaningless sound the caster desires – knocks and bumps are fine, but words are beyond its scope. Very loud noises, like a gunshot, aren't possible.

Duration: Instant

Range: 1 yard per level of Magical Aptitude





STARTLE

REGULAR

Puts the target on edge; any Fright Check made while under the influence of this hex are at -1. Animals are more susceptible to the effect; they get visibly perturbed, and any Animal Handling or similar rolls are made at -2 when dealing with animals under the effect of this hex. It is worth noting that many Westerners trust their animals' instincts: when a horse gets restless or a dog starts growling for no reason, often they know something a person might not. As a result, this trick can often be used to rile up a whole group of people.

Duration: 10 seconds per level of Magical Aptitude

Range: 2 yards per level of Magical Aptitude

TINHORN SHUFFLE

REGULAR

Causes a deck of cards held by the caster to spray into the air as if he had just badly fumbled a shuffle. This causes a riot of color and motion as the cards drift to the ground, drawing the attention of anyone within five yards. This distraction gives anyone within the affected area a +2 bonus to Sleight of Hand, Pickpocket, and Stealth for the duration of the trick. The caster cannot avail himself of this bonus, as he's the tinhorn everyone's goggling at, but an accomplice could take the opportunity.

Duration: 5 seconds

Range: Touch

WHISPER

REGULAR

Allows the caster to pass a short message, no longer than five seconds, to one person within the hex's range.

Duration: 5 seconds

Range: 5 yards

WILL O' THE WISP

REGULAR

Creates a small globe of faint green light in front of the caster. The globe is intangible, and provides only the faintest of lights; illumination extends only a few feet, and even then no details can be made out. Reading by a Will o' the Wisp is impossible. The caster may move the globe of light to any location within the trick's range by concentrating on it.

Duration: 1 minute.

Range: 10 yards

BACKLASH

Somewhere in the Weird West, a huckster just got careless. Today, when he went into the Hunting Grounds for a battle of wills, he won easily; the manitou just folded up after a couple of hands and surrendered. The huckster had a lot on his mind – let's say he was trying to call up a soul blast for that wendigo who thought his entrails would make pretty cave decorations – and he didn't have time to dot every i and cross every t. So he said, "All right then; come on across. I don't have all day." And as the manitou made that leap, over into the mortal world, it was grinning so wide the top of its head was fixing to fall off. Of course, by then it was too late.

Every huckster gets careless eventually.

Hexslinging is a wonderful thing, but there ain't no such thing as a free lunch, and backlash is the price you pay for membership in Hoyle's supper club. Once in a while, a huckster screws up, and a manitou gets across into the mortal world – into the huckster's body – without being properly controlled. When it does, there's always trouble.

GURPS Deadlands: Weird West has a table for what happens if a huckster suffers backlash. However, its options are limited, and the imagination of a manitou is a mighty thing. If a group prefers a little more variety, it can use the Extended Backlash Table offered here. Some hexes also offer suggested penalties for when a caster suffers backlash; manitous love irony, and delight in making their unsupervised havoc reflect the hex they were summoned for – making the punishment fit the crime, as it were.

And, as always, the GM should also always feel free to make something up. You never know when you'll have another opportunity to set an evil spirit loose inside one of your PCs.

VARIANT BACKLASH

GURPS Deadlands: Weird West suggests that a group which isn't using cards should give backlash for any critical failure, not just an 18, and roll again to see if the hex succeeds. Another method is to give backlash on any roll of triples – this is closer to the probability of the normal system and preserves the possibility of succeeding through backlash without requiring an extra roll. This method also allows a group to play with a deck without jokers, if a deck with jokers isn't available.



THE WHITE ELEPHANT

Most backlashes are very painful for a huckster. Very rarely, however, the manitou does no damage. It does a victory lap around the huckster's mind, stunning him for 1d turns, and then it departs, leaving a gift behind. Somehow, the huckster knows a new hex (though it's not exactly a hex), and knows that he could use it whenever he wants without fear of backlash. It seems too good to be true, which means, of course, that it is.

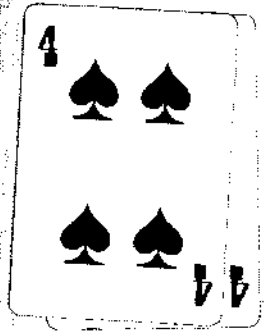
In reality, the manitou takes advantage of the backlash-induced confusion to offer a black magic pact and leave its part of the bargain in advance – a black magic spell (see p. DL103 for details) and the power necessary to use it. The first time the huckster uses the spell, the pact is sealed, and the huckster pays the price – a whopping -25 points of mental disadvantages. These disadvantages should turn the affected huckster toward darkness without substantially changing his personality. This means that disadvantages become worse (Bad Temper becomes Berserk, etc.), and other disadvantages may be altered (a Vow to "protect my family from harm" becomes a Vow to "avenge all wrongs done to my family," for example). The net changes should be subtle but meaningful. In particular, they should push a huckster towards delving further into black magic (the Obsession "Gain occult knowledge" is good for this).

Very few hucksters are foolish enough to accept a gift offered by a manitou at face value. Hucksters are notoriously bad, however, at having magic power and not using it. Eventually, curiosity may get the better of them, or they may find themselves in a life-or-death situation where using a questionable power seems better than dying. When it's over, they may feel a bit different, but on the whole it wasn't so bad. In fact, it would be nice if all their hexes were like that.

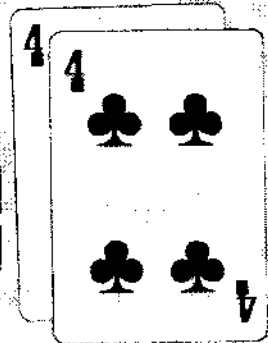
EXTENDED BACKLASH TABLE

- 3 - **Brain Drain.** The manitou tries a part of the huckster's mind. The hex fails, and he must make a Will Roll at -5 or his skill with that hex drops by one.
- 4 - **Mental Static.** The manitou's assault confuses the huckster badly. The hex fails, and the huckster can cast no more hexes for a day.
- 5 - **Befuddled.** The manitou strikes at the huckster's mind; the hex fails, and the huckster's skill in all hexes drops by one for 1d days.
- 6 - **Terror.** The huckster sees the manitou in its true form; make a Fright Check at -6.
- 7 - **Phantom Amputation.** As the hex Phantom Amputation, but the possession lasts for six hours, after which time the manitou leaves. A successful Exorcism will drive out the manitou early.
- 8 - **External Corruption.** The manitou twists the hex to harm the huckster's companions - Dexterity becomes Clumsiness, Healing Hand does damage, Soul Blasts go awry. If the huckster is alone, the manitou turns on the huckster instead. The hex has at least the minimum level of success.
- 9 - **Personal Corruption.** The manitou twists the hex to harm the huckster, as in External Corruption. The hex has at least the minimum level of success.
- 10 - **Spiritual Backhand.** The manitou strikes out at the huckster's body, doing 1d+1 damage to a random location. If the huckster loses consciousness, the hex fails.
- 11 - **Personal Backlash.** The huckster takes 2d damage to the torso. If the huckster loses consciousness, the hex fails.
- 12 - **External Backlash.** The manitou lashes out at one of the huckster's companions, doing 1d+1 damage to the torso. If there is no companion within sight, the huckster takes the damage instead. If the huckster loses consciousness, the hex fails.
- 13 - **Spirit Sap.** The manitou attempts unsuccessfully to take over the huckster; the huckster loses 1d+1 fatigue in the struggle. If the huckster loses consciousness, the hex fails.
- 14 - **Spirit Drain.** The manitou makes a concerted effort to possess the huckster. The hex fails, and the huckster loses 2d fatigue in the struggle.
- 15 - **Temporary Madness.** The manitou drives the huckster into insanity for a time; the huckster gains a mental disadvantage determined by the GM. At the end of every game week, the huckster may make a Will roll at -4 to shake off the madness.
- 16 - **Madness.** The hex fails, and the huckster is driven mad, as in Temporary Madness. This insanity, however, cannot be shaken off.
- 17 - **Total Corruption.** The manitou attempts to possess the huckster. The huckster must succeed in a Quick Contest of Wills with the manitou (see p. DL97 to determine a manitou's Will), or have his body taken over by a manitou for 10 minutes as if he were Harrowed.
- 18 - **White Elephant.** The manitou gifts the huckster with black magic, granting him Power Investiture 1 and a single black magic spell at IQ. If the huckster ever uses that spell, he instantly gains -25 points of mental disadvantages twisting him closer to evil (see p. 49).





THE HEXSLINGING LIFE



Hucksters are a breed apart. Most hexslingers agree that there was always something different about them. They were always a little more reckless, a little more curious, than other folks around them. They were always getting into trouble, until the day they encountered *Hoyle's Book of Games*. Now they get into a lot more trouble.

HEXSLINGERS

Your average huckster was always a black sheep. However, somehow he became exposed to magic. Maybe another huckster singled him out for training. Maybe he hung around the old conjure woman's cabin a bit longer than was good for him. Maybe he just grew up in some town on the weird frontier. One way or another, all hucksters get interested in the occult, and that usually takes them into *Hoyle's Book of Games*. All Anglos who want to work magic eventually make their way to Hoyle: he boiled down the essential principles of magic in ways that make sense to an Anglo better than anyone else has.

COVER STORIES

Hucksters come from all sorts of backgrounds, but they rapidly find one factor they all have in common: they need some way to keep the preacher from putting together a hemp necktie party. Toward this end, they come up with different cover stories. Some hucksters try to continue their old lives; this usually means never using their powers around other people, which often means never using them at all. Eventually, the cover slips, and the rail, the tar, and the bag of chicken feathers come out.

Most hucksters live the drifter's life, moving from one town to another. It lets a person move on before suspicion starts to attach to them in a serious way. Many hucksters also find that the traits

that make them good hucksters also make them not the settling-down type. Almost any cover is possible in a wild place like the Weird West, but most hucksters try for one that provides maximum camouflage for their art.

ENTERTAINER

Show people travel a lot without drawing attention. Some gigs – stage magician or hypnotist comes to mind – provide an excellent opportunity to hide your hexes in plain sight. As long as you remain relatively subtle, no one will ever know. And if you do something unusual outside the show, folks won't bat an eye. Of course, show folk aren't the most respected folks in the land, but you can't have everything.



GAMBLER

The classic cover for hucksters is gambling. You travel a lot, you can play with cards continuously without raising an eyebrow, and the money is pretty good (especially with a little help from the Hunting Grounds). Besides, most hucksters find that gambling suits their personalities. On the down side, some towns are less than friendly to professional gamblers. Also, so many hucksters pose as gamblers that folks in the know often assume a gambler is a huckster until they see evidence otherwise.

RESPECTABLE FOLKS

Audacity is everything. If you pose as a dignitary of sufficient gravity, no one will get into your business even if there is a slight odor of something fishy in your affairs. A huckster could pose as a banker, a preacher, or a high-society lady: just about anyone of note might be passing through any given backwater. One could spend the rest of one's life "en route" to some metropolis or another.

SCHOLAR

Posing as a legitimate scholar is a good front for someone who wants to stay relatively sedentary (though a "research expedition" is always possible), especially if he came to hexslinging through relatively orthodox occult studies. Professional scholars are generally excused a certain amount of eccentricity, and if you put on a good act, people will leave you alone for fear of another boring lecture about the spoon-billed tern.

WRITER

Everyone knows that writers aren't quite right in the head to begin with. Every Westerner's met some literary greenhorn who came out West to see a Mojave rattler for themselves, to "reconnect with the virile spirit of the American frontier," or to spew some nonsense about living deliberately. Most folks just take their money, nod, and smile.

It makes a perfect cover. Writers are expected to ask foolish questions, poke their nose into weird things, and behave in ways no sensible person would. A huckster who knows better than to summon a tornado on Main Street can hide all sorts of indiscretions behind the clacking of a typewriter. A huckster with some modicum of writing ability can even make a decent income on the side, writing dime novels or dispatches for Eastern papers.

THE HUNTING GROUNDS

Every huckster who wants to live needs to know as much as possible about the Hunting Grounds and the beings who live there. The Hunting Grounds are another plane of existence, where spirit beings dwell. Indians were the first ones to call it "the Hunting Grounds," and these days most other people do too. Ultimately, the Hunting Grounds are the source of all supernatural forces. Learning about its ways is important for any huckster — indeed, for anyone who hopes to involve himself in the fate of humanity. If certain powers have their way, Earth might come to look a lot more like the Hunting Grounds.

The Hunting Grounds are home to two types of beings: nature spirits and manitous. Nature spirits are the beings contacted in Indian ritual magic. They take their form and character from the mortal world (or the world takes its form from them, depending on who you ask). For humans, this has a good side and a bad side. On the one hand, nature spirits have a certain affinity for Earth creatures, and can be persuaded to help

people if respectfully approached. On the other hand, they have a decided preference for the way things once were — the way things should still be, according to them. They don't like cities or machines, or any of the appurtenances of the modern era. These sorts of things irritate them and make them difficult to deal with; this is why so many Indian shamans follow the "Old Ways" movement. As a result, nature spirits are generally reclusive and unwilling to deal with mortals.

Manitous are different. Manitous are unlike anything found on earth, and therefore have no particular affection or compassion for mortal beings. Also unlike nature spirits, they have no reticence about dealing with mortals; in fact, they rather enjoy it. Manitou love nothing so much as chaos and destruction, but the Hunting Grounds are an unsatisfying venue to wreak havoc. Nothing stays broken. By dealing with humans, manitous gain a means for breaking things and spreading anarchy on a plane where entropy really means something.

The Hunting Grounds are difficult for mortals to deal with. Things that we take for granted on Earth are fluid and unfixed there. The passage of time is powerfully variable; space and time change, largely in response to the beings who observe them. Very few people enter the Hunting Grounds physically, and fewer leave.

SORCERERS

In this chapter, "sorcerer" refers to a magician who casts spells in the old way, by conquering a manitou's will in the slow, laborious battles of will which were necessary before Hoyle developed huckstering.



THE GREAT GAME

There are rules, passed down through the ages, for how manitous and humans can communicate. These rules exist for a variety of reasons. Some spring out of the inherent mystic properties of the Hunting Grounds. Most, however, stem from the necessity for humans to be able to perceive and understand the interaction.

The original purpose of these rules was to facilitate the negotiation of pacts between power-hungry mortals and manitous. A human sorcerer can't be cowed by the overwhelming power of a manitou if he can't understand it. However, these rules have periodically been exploited by strong-willed humans, wrangling with the manitous they contact in a battle of wills. Because sorcerers entered the Hunting Grounds in spirit only, the resulting struggle was exclusively mental. However, the battle could take many apparent forms – physical battles, riddle games, debates, and many other forms. The legend of Proteus and Menelaus, for example, in which Menelaus must keep hold of Proteus through a series of terrifying transformations to get the answers to his questions, probably has its roots in a battle between a manitou and a sorcerer.

In time, the manitous saw advantages to these battles of will. Pacts with mortals kept them constrained to the terms they negotiated; contending with a human for dominance offered the opportunity to work on Earth far more directly and with less restrictions. They also appreciated the irony that the battles of will permitted them to turn the very breadth of human imagination to their own purposes – anything a human could imagine, a manitou could use against him.

Hoyle's crucial insight was simple. If a human could discipline his mind, and limit his vision of the struggle of wills to a single metaphor, the manitou would have far fewer options. Deprived of its resources, it could be defeated decisively and quickly. Hoyle chose the metaphor of poker; its random element, combined with the possible depth of strategy, makes it a formidable metaphor for a manitou accustomed to powers beyond human ken. Most manitous find it so confusing that unless they know they have the strength of will to overwhelm their opponent, they will give up very quickly.

UNDERSTANDING THE MANITOU

One would expect the manitous to give up dueling with humans after such a potent weapon was developed, or at least to master poker

themselves. Neither has happened, and the reasons why give vital insights into the nature of the manitou.

Manitous are reckless. They can't seem to refuse a huckster's challenge, even though they know they're likely to lose. The challenge of the fight runs deep in them, it seems; it's a quality they share with their human counterparts. Perhaps the opportunity to sow chaos is too tempting a prize to pass up. At the same time, manitous are cowards; when a battle goes against them, they roll over and give up. This is the real reason there are so few Harrowed: very few manitous have the guts to come over into the mortal world and risk their spiritual existence, no matter what the payoff.

Manitous are also cunning and stupid all at once. They can be devilishly clever, as all hucksters will attest. At the same time, all manitous are extremely ignorant. Huckstering has been around for close to a century, and no manitou can play poker worth a damn yet. They don't know when to draw or when to fold; they just try to suck as many aces out of the deck as they can with sheer willpower. Some hucksters have tried interrogating manitous about the Reckoning: they are almost willfully ignorant, knowing little beyond what they personally have been involved with. They collect fear for the Reckoners; they do all their troublemaking for the Reckoners; *everything* they do is for the Reckoners, and they don't know why. They don't even know who the Reckoners are. And they don't care.

Ultimately, this is because manitous are creatures of the moment – some speculate that they are spirits of raw chaos. The past and the future are both academic; a manitou lives in a long, continuous Now, seizing every chance to cause trouble, running from everything that looks scary. Only the most sophisticated manitous have the self-discipline to plan or consider long-term consequences. Those are the ones a huckster has to watch out for – the greater manitou.

It's not clear exactly what distinguishes greater manitous from the common herd. Are they a different order of spirit? A common manitou singled out by the Reckoners? Just a bigger and meaner manitou? Whatever their origins, the greater manitous are among the huckster's greatest fears. They are the Reckoners' lieutenants, carrying orders from the Reckoners' dark lair to the manitous who carry them out. They know some of the real truth behind the Reckoning. They have wills stronger than any human. And they have the sense not to draw to an inside straight. These are the manitous that power Royal Flushes; a huckster who tangles with one and lives to gamble again has accomplished something indeed.

AN ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESIS

Some less cheerful hucksters believe that the traditional understanding of manitous is all a front, and the real motivations of manitous are far more sinister, if such a thing is possible. These people believe that manitous continue to battle with hucksters because it serves their masters' purposes. Even if a manitou doesn't get to cause backlash, the very presence of magic on Earth does the Reckoners' work. Also, the experience of being a huckster -- with its powerful magical rewards and deadly backlash danger -- whets humans' appetite for power while driving them towards the "safer" practices of pacts and black magic.

They also believe that the manitous are ordered to remain ignorant lest some powerful huckster force vital intelligence about the Reckoners' plans out of them.

true purpose of the group is to thwart the Rangers and Agency, presumably to protect hucksters from their prying eyes.

Only at levels 9 and 10 do members begin to see some of the unsavory affairs that the Court is involved with. Most members suspect at this point that the Court is mostly interested in power; however, few people who make it to those ranks have a problem with that. These members are given the task of recruiting new members.

During the initiation to Jack, members learn the whole truth. The Royal Court serves the Reckoners. Its true purpose is to sow fear, plague, and destruction, and to stamp out any hints that might lead to their discovery. Lower-ranking members are but tools to be used and discarded when no longer useful.

The Court is ruled by a shadowy figure called the Joker. Only the face card members know that the Joker is a sugar magnate named Solomon Thayer, though many Court members are aware that Thayer is a member. Thayer is a masterful plotter, an incredibly powerful huckster, and a profoundly evil man. He rules the Court with an iron fist; any member who gets out of line meets his four enforcers, the shadowy Aces.

The Aces are a quartet of hucksters who have negotiated dark pacts with the Reckoners to gain incredible power. Each Ace harbors a manitou within their body; they are, in effect, Harrowed without having died. They have all the benefits of Harrowing, but their manitou is bound to serve them and never contests Dominion.

All Royal Court members have a 5-point Claim to Hospitality; they may receive shelter, advice, and minor aid from any Royal Court member or safe house. All members also have a Duty to the Court; this Duty is low-frequency for low-ranking members, but as a member climbs the ladder, his duties become more and more onerous. At ranks 5 and above, members also have the Court as a Patron. The Royal Court is a powerful organization with special resources, with a base cost of 20 points. The Court's frequency of appearance depends on the member's rank: at ranks 5 through 8, it appears on a 6 or less; at ranks 9 and 10, it appears on a 12 or less; and at face card ranks it appears on a 15 or less.

Working with the Court can also entail acquiring a Secret. Members of ranks 9 and 10 carry a -10-point Secret; somewhere along the line, they've all been involved in questionable activities that would destroy their public reputations. The face-card-ranking members have -20-point Secrets; if the inner secrets of the Court were revealed, the face card members would be lucky to escape in one piece.

ORGANIZATIONS

THE ROYAL COURT

On the rare occasions when hucksters gather to swap stories, they often whisper of a secret huckster society. This legendary group is said to watch over the Mississippi and its many ports, providing aid and comfort to its members. They call it the Royal Court, and its members are said to live a life free from the persecution and fear which are the lot of most hucksters. Every huckster hopes to someday find and join the Court. However, there is more to the Court than rumor suggests.

At its lower levels, it is indeed everything hearsay claims, and more. The Court spreads out in a vast network of safe houses and meeting places from its headquarters in New Orleans; its members may use its resources whenever they like.

The Court has a hierarchy of rank based on the order of cards in a deck, from 2 through King. As members progress through the ranks, they gain more responsibilities and more knowledge of the true nature of the Court. Members of levels 2 through 4 get minor go-to jobs, collect intelligence, and are told that the Court is a mutual aid society for hucksters, trying to battle the Reckoning whenever it can and make the world safe for hexslingers. At ranks 5 through 8, members receive more sensitive information and more important missions, and begin to suspect that the

THAYER'S SECRET

Unbeknownst to anyone, Solomon Thayer is, in fact, Ernst Johann Biren. His final confrontation with Hoyle did not destroy him, as Hoyle believed. Instead, he hid himself, laboriously healed the terrible burns he had suffered, and echoed the process Hoyle had gone through after their first duel: hiding, studying the magic arts, and biding his time. A century of travel and study eventually brought him to America. All through his travels, Biren had continued his hobby of spreading plagues. A few years after arriving in America in 1860, he discovered that his capabilities had increased a hundredfold.

Since then, Biren has assembled the Royal Court as a front for his work, and has kept himself busy designing new diseases. The infamous "Texas Tummy Twister" (see p. DL19), for example, is one of Biren's creations.

Biren's greatest fear is that Hoyle may not be dead, and that he may come again to contest Biren a third time. Toward that end, elements of the Royal Court have standing orders to search out the truth of Hoyle's disappearance. So far, the search has followed Hoyle's tracks a little further into the frontier than history records; but his eventual fate remains a mystery.

comprises a few dozen hucksters dedicated to fighting abominations and the spread of fear and suffering. Every year in Denver, these hucksters exchange what they know of hexcraft, of the minions of the Reckoning, and of those hexslingers who are threatening the general populace. The Society plans its strategy for the year to come in these meetings. Generally, the Society's plans involve new mysteries to be investigated, and sometimes a plot to be foiled. Often there are renegade hucksters to be neutralized; a hexslinger who turns his talents to evil is not merely a menace to those he hurts, but to hucksters everywhere. The Society also takes time at its annual meeting to welcome new members.



Shaw reserves the right to recruit all new members personally. He selects the cream of the huckster crop — seasoned hexslingers who have proven their willingness to put everything on the line to fight the Reckoners. Recruits receive a handcrafted gold pocket watch. The intricate designs engraved on the case include the key to decipher the information hidden in *Shaw's Guide to Gamblers*. The watches also serve as marks of identification for Society members in the field.

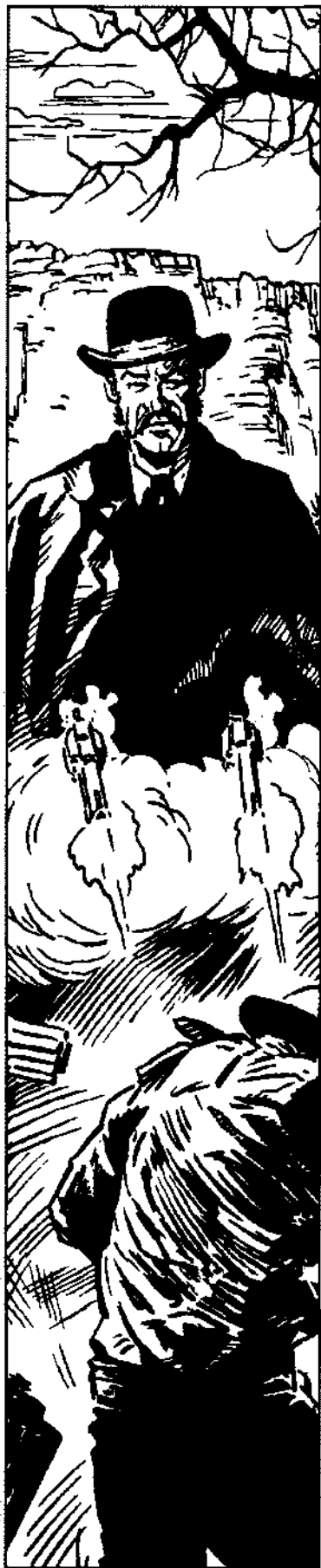
Secretly, however, the Society is a front. An ancient huckster by the name of Enoch Shaw funded Paxton to start the Society in order to provide an excuse for a large-scale annual gathering of hucksters. Shaw knows that many suspected hucksters are watched from afar by the Rangers and Agency, and the hubbub of the Lady Luck tournament keeps those watching eyes busy enough for the inner circle of the Society to conduct their business in peace and secrecy.

Their business is to oppose the Reckoners. The inner circle of the Lady Luck Society

Members of the Lady Luck Society have a 5-point Claim to Hospitality; the West is riddled with Society members or establishments friendly to them, and with *Shaw's Guide* in hand, they're easy to find. The inner circle is a medium-sized group with special abilities, with a Patron base cost of 15. Most inner circle members can only call on assistance on a 6 or less, but the more central members can call for help on a 9 or less. The inner circle also bears a Duty with a frequency of 9 or less. The core members who can call on the circle as a Patron at 9 or less usually have a Duty at 12 or less to go with it.

THE LADY LUCK SOCIETY

The Lady Luck Society is ostensibly an association of professional gamblers, run by a genial rake named Clyde Paxton. Most prominent gamblers (and, as a side result, many hucksters) belong, to be eligible for the Society's annual poker tournament, held each June in Denver, with a \$50,000 purse for the winner.



SHAW'S GUIDE FOR GAMBLERS

The information gathered by the inner circle is issued in an annual called *Shaw's Guide for Gamblers*. The *Guide* is supposedly a travelogue for gamblers, with details of note for the discriminating card shark. In actuality, the *Guide* contains reams of information on the Reckoning and the Weird West: places, people, magics, abominations, relics and so on.

Shaw's Guide is protected with an extremely robust code, much stronger than the code worked into *Hoyle's Book of Games*. It is essentially undecipherable without the key engraved on the pocket watch every member of the inner circle carries.

The Society tries to control access to the *Guide*, but strictly limiting who can get hold of the *Guide* would draw attention and defeat the purpose of hiding the *Guide* in the first place. As a result, the *Guide* is sold to any member of the Lady Luck Society at a relatively forbidding price. Members are encouraged not to distribute the information therein; interested parties should be encouraged to join the Society. Nonetheless, bastardized copies of the *Guide* are available.

ENOCH SHAW

Enoch Shaw is an enigma. An ancient man, 80 years old or more, Shaw turns up in the strangest places. Those who've met him know him as a drifter with an eye for business and a poker face so straight you could lay bricks to it. Some suspect that he's a huckster. His friends, and his many students across the Americas, know he's a huckster. The inner circle of the Lady Luck Society knows he's the oldest living huckster, and probably the most powerful one on the continent.

No one knows he's Edmond Hoyle.

Hoyle headed west after finishing the *Book of Games* to pursue his studies with the Indian shamans further. For nearly a century, he lost himself in the pure pursuit of knowledge. The Reckoning brought that to an end. Once again, dark forces posed a dire threat to humanity. Hoyle knew his skills would be needed, and came out of the wilderness, calling himself Enoch Shaw.

Hoyle knows, however, that he can't fight the Reckoning alone. He has lived more than 200 years, and even he can't hold back age forever. So he organized the Lady Luck Society. He trains promising youngsters in hexslinging whenever he finds them. He helps other folks fighting the good fight.

Hoyle and Biren are not aware of each other. Hoyle has no idea that Biren might have survived; he is aware of the Royal Court, however, and rumors have made him dubious of its intentions. Biren, similarly, has no idea that Hoyle is still alive, but the possibility haunts him. Should Biren ever get to take a close look at a copy of *Shaw's Guide*, he may realize that only one man could create such a work of cryptography. Trouble is sure to follow.

TEXAS RANGERS

The Rangers take the same attitude toward hucksters as they do toward everything else supernatural: shoot it or recruit it. Although most hucksters don't have the same evil intentions that your average abomination does, they can easily cause just as much harm. People are scared of magic; whether it's an abomination out to eat faces or a huckster who hasn't learned to keep his hexes quiet yet, the terror is the same, and the aid to the Reckoning is the same as well.

As a result, when a Ranger susses out a huckster, they're going to have a little conversation. Careless or stupid hucksters generally receive an invitation to clear out of Confederate territory. Particularly dangerous loose cannons may be dealt with more permanently.

If, however, the huckster seems responsible and competent, he may find himself in an entirely different kettle of hot water. Once the Rangers know he has special talents, he will likely be called upon from time to time to render assistance, and the wise huckster does not tell the Texas Rangers no. These requests for aid can often involve much more danger than a sensible person likes to get into. Consequently, even the most high-minded huckster keeps his head down when a Ranger is in town.

A few Rangers are themselves hucksters. These Rangers go to extreme lengths to keep their talents hidden from everyone but their comrades. The people of the Confederacy rely upon the Rangers as a bulwark against the supernatural, and it wouldn't do to have them seeing a Ranger dabble in the mystic arts. Ranger hucksters therefore tend to avoid flashy hexes like Black Lightnin' in favor of more unobtrusive hexes like Missed Me!, Kentucky Windage, or the Ranger's favorite, Tall Tales.

THE AGENCY

Agency operatives have a different procedure from the Rangers for dealing with hucksters, but the basic principle is similar. Rather than confronting a suspected huckster directly, an Agency operative will shadow the suspect for a time and compile a report to send back to Headquarters. There, the Agency's analysts will use all available reports to assess the huckster in question as a resource or a threat. Occasionally, an operative in the field will feel a huckster to be an immediate threat to the Union and will eliminate him on the spot; the Agency discourages this approach in any but the most extreme cases.

A huckster labeled a "resource" will find himself invited to assist the Agency occasionally; this has the same ups and downs as being known to the Rangers, except that the Agency lacks the Rangers' sense of manners. This has driven more than one huckster to head further West or find himself a new name. "Threats," on the other hand, are kept under surveillance by the agency; if they move from being simply unreliable to being outright dangerous, they may become the target of an Agency operation themselves.

Officially, the Agency considers hucksters too unstable to use other than as temporary assistants. This is a complete fabrication. The agency uses many hucksters; they just don't recruit them. Instead, Agency hucksters are trained at a secret facility in Massachusetts called the Library. The Library is where all agents go for their basic training in the occult, so that the many supernatural occurrences they will face don't take them completely by surprise.

Some agents, however, stay for an extended course of study, training them in the art of hexslinging. Agency huckster training is extremely grueling; many candidates don't complete the course.

THE RANGER BIBLE

Rangers usually operate alone, far from support. To properly do their job, they need information on the powers and creatures they are called upon to fight. Toward this end, the Rangers print a book called the *Ranger Bible*. The *Ranger Bible* contains a listing of all identified supernatural threats: rogue hucksters, suspected tempests, known abominations, black magic wielders, and even a few outlaw Ranger recruits. Each new update adds any new threats identified and removes threats which have been

"dealt with." High-ranking Rangers carry their own copy; lower-ranking Rangers know where a copy is to be found near their assigned post. Every Ranger is required to collect information for the next update in the course of their work, and to take all measures necessary to prevent a copy of the *Ranger Bible* from leaving Ranger hands. When the book is updated, all old copies are burned. Only a few copies have ever circulated; if the Rangers learn of a loose copy, they come down on its holder like a ton of bricks.

Those who graduate are assigned to offices across the country. Library-trained hucksters generally focus on informational and communication hexes; their usual duties involve supporting special investigations. Candidates who fail return to regular service. Washouts are discouraged from making use of whatever skills and powers they developed in advanced training, but most take away from the training a deeper mastery of occultism and cryptanalysis, as well as a hex or two which might come in handy when the chips are really down.

A very few nongraduates do not return to regular service. The Agency is close-mouthed about their fate, but it is common knowledge that a few candidates every year don't survive the training with body and mind intact. In this case, however, common knowledge is mistaken. In reality, the missing candidates enter a course of training so secret that only a handful of people know of it. This elite course produces hucksters trained in combat hexslinging. When they graduate, each combat huckster joins a team of three or four "cleaners." These teams are deployed only to handle the most intractable of problems. They never employ temporary help; they rarely talk to anyone while on a mission. Their tactics are the direct ones of the troubleshooter: they find the trouble and then shoot it.

ARCANE TEXTS

Since Hoyle's day, the huckster's art has been bound up with codes. To be a huckster, you must learn how to extract concealed information from a seemingly innocent text; regardless of how a huckster begins his career, they all master their art studying *Hoyle's*.

RECOGNIZING A HIDDEN TEXT

To identify a hidden text within a seemingly innocent book, the investigator must roll versus Cryptanalysis or Occultism. Success means that the investigator recognizes a coded text in the book, although its meaning remains clouded.



A book with a hidden text can contain several separate articles of encoded information – in this case, usually hexes. Each article must be decoded separately with a Cryptanalysis roll. Most hucksters use the default from Occultism for this roll.

Once a hex has been decoded, a huckster may study from the book to teach himself that hex. This study counts as self-taught, requiring 400 hours per character point; however, most hexes cannot be learned without a book. Each book has a maximum level in each hex it contains; once a huckster has reached that level in a hex, further study with that book will not help, and that hex can only be improved by acquiring a better book or by long, laborious practice. This is why hucksters are always looking for a better edition of *Hoyle's*.

Other information can be encoded in a text: non-hex skills, reference materials, etc. Skills can be studied from a book in the same manner as hexes.

WRITING AN ENCODED TEXT

Cryptography is the skill used to encode hexes or other information into a book. Cryptography does not default to Occultism, so not just any huckster can write a coded book.

Encoding each article requires a separate Cryptography roll and four hours of work time. The maximum skill level that an article can teach starts at a base of 10. The coder can increase that maximum by taking a -1 penalty to his effective Cryptography skill for every extra level. The maximum skill level an article can teach cannot exceed the coder's skill in the article's skill or in Cryptography.

The penalty to decipher an encoded text's articles is equal to the average of the amounts by which each Cryptography roll was made. This penalty is uniform for the entire book.

The penalty to notice the existence of an encoded text is equal to one-third the penalty to decode the text's articles.

Each article encoded in a text gives a -1 penalty to the effective Writing skill for writing the cover text – it can therefore be very challenging to write a coded book that's any good as a book. The coder can offset this penalty by taking a -1 penalty to Cryptography on all the articles encoded for every point of Writing penalty offset.

SOME NOTABLE BOOKS

SHAW'S GUIDE FOR GAMELERS

Shaw's Guide is mostly notable for the non-hex skills encoded within it – it contains Area Knowledge (Weird West) with a maximum of 18, with many more specific Area Knowledges as well. It also contains a few hexes – mostly communication and travel hexes with a few meta-hexes – at maximum levels ranging from 14 to 17.

HOYLE'S BOOK OF GAMES

This is the canonical reference for hucksters. Throughout its pages, a cornucopia of hexslinging knowledge is concealed. It is a masterwork of cryptography. Information is hidden in virtually every nook and cranny of the text: scoring diagrams, the placement of words, the page numbers, metaphor within the text – every technique known to cryptographers is used.

Rumor has it that the original 1769 edition contains every hex there is. This isn't true. Hoyle deliberately expunged all the dark hexes he knew as well as many of his more destructive hexes, and many hexes have been developed since the

Book of Games was published. However, it certainly contains a vast wealth of wisdom.

It is up to the GM's discretion which hexes Hoyle put in the *Book of Games*. Any hex which the GM rules was present in the 1769 edition may or may not have survived the changes which exist in later editions, and even the hexes which survive are usually incomplete somehow. To determine whether a hex survived into a given edition, roll against the number given on the table below for the period in question. Success means the hex survived, with a maximum level as given on the table.

Hoyle's Book of Games can also be used to study Occultism, to a maximum skill level three levels below the maximum skill level for hexes.

The *Book of Games* can be recognized and decoded without penalty.

Edition	Hex Survival	Maximum Hex Level	Street Price
1769	N/A	21	\$17,000
1780-1800	14	19	\$3,000
1801-1820	13	17	\$200
1821-1840	12	15	\$80
1841-1860	11	13	\$20
1861-1880	10	11	25¢

A SHORT TREATISE ON WHIST

This book was Hoyle's personal workbook. It includes at least fragments of all the hexes he knew before going to Russia. Its selection is in most respects more limited than the *Book of Games*, but it has one distinction that makes it sought after by less respectable hucksters: it contains all the dark hexes that Hoyle cut from the *Book of Games*.

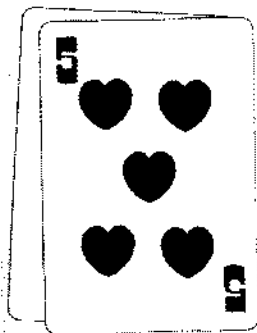
The fragmentary nature of the *Short Treatise* makes it more dangerous than the *Book of Games*; hexes learned from the *Short Treatise* incur backlash on any joker and on any critical failure on the hex roll, not just an 18.

The *Short Treatise's* code is less complex than the *Book of Games'*, because it contains fewer hexes, but by the same token it is more robust; the *Short Treatise* suffers less from being edited than the *Book of Games*. Therefore, almost all copies of the *Short Treatise* have a maximum possible skill level of 15, and a street price of \$1,000.

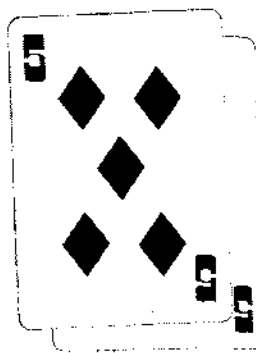
Its code is at +2 to be recognized, but attempts to decipher articles in it are at -6.

SMITH & ROBARDS 1876

The 1876 Smith & Robards catalog contains all the basic information on the art of thaumaturgical diffusion. It contains every thaumaturgical diffusion hex, with a maximum level of 16. Rolls to decipher articles are made at no penalty, but the roll to recognize the encoded text is made at -3.



CAMPAIGNS



It's easy to find adventures for hucksters; indeed, sometimes it's hard to keep them out of trouble. If their inquisitive, risk-taking natures don't lead them into sufficiently interesting situations of their own accord, there's always another group of folks more than happy to make their lives hard — Texas Rangers, Union agents, local townsfolk with an itch to lynch a witch, and so on.

THE HUCKSTER AND THE PARTY

Some parties have just one huckster. In these parties, the huckster may be the only supernaturally powered character, or he may be working alongside a shaman or a blessed person. If the former, he can expect to frequently be the center of attention — whenever something magical comes along, he may well be the one expected to know what's going on. He'll also need a variety of hexes on hand to deal with any situation that comes up. Even if other party members have arcane powers, the huckster will still draw a lot of attention with his high-stakes hexslinging and occasional catastrophic backlash. He'll want to emphasize areas in which hexslingers excel: mostly illusions, with some bodychanging and combat hexes.

Other parties, at the opposite end of the spectrum, are composed entirely of hucksters. They'll have a combat specialist, an illusion specialist, and so on. The characters also probably need to branch out a bit if they hope to get anything but hexslinging done. Huckster parties are a bit easier to plan for, as all the characters share certain common qualities. Books of new hexes will interest them; good gambling opportunities will be appealing. At the same time, they can also be more unpredictable. A party full of hucksters will have a perennial backlash problem, which can throw a wrench in their plans at any time. Then there's the inevitable drama that spins out of pushing together half a dozen inquisitive risk-

takers who are sufficiently full of themselves to take on demons from Hell.

Still other parties will fall somewhere in the middle, with two or three hucksters. These parties share elements of the other two types: the hucksters will want to specialize (unless conflict between two hexslingers with overlapping skill sets is desired), but the GM won't be able to build the campaign around the unique needs of hucksters.

CAMPAIGN IDEAS

Here are a few ideas for themes to organize a campaign around. Some are more fleshed-out than others; GMs may want to mix and match more than one.

THE TRAVELING SHOW

The party is part of a traveling circus, medicine show, or other kind of traveling entertainment. Their work introduces them to all kinds of places and interesting (if sometimes unsavory) people. The clannish secrecy of performers is a great cover for folks who dabble in unusual stuff. The show provides a wonderful way for the party to move from town to town, encountering adventure wherever they go. It can also provide experience in how to deal with being run out of town with slightly lower stakes than a huckster often has to face.

SHAW'S CHILDREN

The characters are disciples of Enoch Shaw (whether they are members of the Lady Luck Society's inner circle, or just regular hucksters, depends on the power level the group wants for the campaign). They spend their days traveling to Reckoning-related trouble spots and fighting whatever evil they find. Shaw makes an excellent Patron: he has ample resources for those times when the party is hip-deep in trouble, and he has an unending supply of problems for his henchmen to take care of.



TAKE IT TO THE CLEANERS

The PCs are a group of Agency "cleaners." They handle the worst the Reckoning has to offer – the stuff regular operatives won't touch. The unit may be an all-huckster group or a more mixed unit. Characters should be built on high point totals; in some ways, this campaign is a *Deadlands/Black Ops* crossover.

THE HIGHEST STAKES EVER

Biren has gotten hold of a copy of Shaw's Guide, and has figured out the truth: Hoyle is alive. Soon, the Royal Court will be at war with the Lady Luck Society, and half the continent may get dragged along for the ride. The campaign starts with an attack on the Lady Luck tournament by the Aces and assorted minions. The characters should probably be disciples of Shaw's, though they could be members of the Royal Court if the group wants to play the bad guys for a change.

The Court's attack on the Lady Luck tournament sets several things in motion. Shaw may be dead (though it's not recommended). In any event, it's a clear declaration of war, and both sides will be mobilizing their resources. The Court is strongest in the east, along the Mississippi, while the Lady Luck Society has its power base centered around Denver. The areas where they will be best able to strike at each other will be places like Kansas or Texas – places which already have their hands full with troubles of their own. The rail barons, for example, may have

favors owing to either or both sides, to say nothing of the Union and Confederacy themselves.

Also, the attack on the tournament will have alerted a score of Rangers and Agency operatives that a whole lot more is going on than they figured. Ranger teams and Agency cleaners will soon have their hands full cleaning up after the occult slugfests that are sure to spring up across the plains (the PCs could also be a band of Rangers or Union agents, doing their job against the backdrop of the Society-Court war).

The war that Biren and Hoyle fight by proxy will have fallout all across the continent. A new spasm of the Civil War might start up; a major turning point in the war with the Reckoners might be at hand. All hucksterdom may eventually be caught up in the struggle, particularly if Hoyle reveals his true identity, and nothing will ever be the same again.

HUCKSTERS IN DIFFERENT SETTINGS

Most huckster campaigns will focus on the normal *Deadlands* setting – 1877 America, with the Reckoning and its accompaniments more or less as described. However, there are many possibilities for interesting campaigns in slightly tweaked settings. The suggestions which follow focus on changes to the time of the campaign or to elements of the cosmology, but they should point the way for other possibilities to be explored.

OTHER TIMES

Before the Reckoning, being a huckster was much harder. Most manitous were under lock and key, and all the smaller manitous were cowering in corners. Only the hucksters with the sheer cojones to sneak past the Old Ones and duel with a powerful manitou were able to get real results.

Therefore, hucksters before 1863 start with a base hand of two cards at Magical Aptitude 1, plus extra cards for higher levels of Magical Aptitude and for good hex skill rolls. Under such circumstances, a novice huckster would be lucky to get a Pair; Magical Aptitude 7 would be necessary to assure a normal poker hand!

Things were even more difficult before Hoyle. The ancient sorcerers had to suffer a long, arduous process to bend manitous to their will. Sorcery was similar to shamanism, but dealt with manitous rather than nature spirits; as such, it was slow and time-consuming while remaining dangerous.

Sorcerers use the Ritual Magic rules, but do not buy Initiation. Each level of Magical Aptitude (Huckster) offsets one point of the -5 penalty to ritual skill rolls for non-Initiates (see p. DL85) when trying to use manitous for Ritual Magic. Any failure, critical or not, results in backlash (see p. 49).

A huckster who learns Ritual Magic skill can use sorcery in the post-Reckoning period; however, it is absurdly dangerous. There are very good reasons why most magic-workers were black magicians before Hoyle.



BLACK MAGIC BEFORE THE RECKONING

While the Reckoners were locked away, black magic was extremely difficult. Only the faintest trickle of dark energy made its way out. Hence, only Power Investiture 1 was possible during that time. However, some black magicians also practiced sorcery; Power Investiture 1 was equivalent to Initiation 1 (see p. DL83) for that purpose.

OTHER COSMOLOGIES

The standard *Deadlands* campaign assumes that the Indians have their facts more or less straight – the Hunting Grounds, manitous, the Reckoners, the Old Ones, and so forth. However, it ain't necessarily so.

NO MANITOUS

Maybe the manitous don't exist at all. Instead, the Reckoning is just a side effect of the resurgence of magic. The Hunting Grounds, the manitous, and the nature spirits are all hallucinations born from the brain of an Indian shaman trying to make sense of pure supernatural power. Magic, whether shamanic, holy, black, or huckster, is just the process of shaping wild magic energy into action. The undead are bodies reanimated by raw magic. Abominations are spontaneously generated creatures.

A no-manitous world is simultaneously more and less horrific than standard *Deadlands*. On the one hand, it means that there isn't a vast conspiracy bent on destroying all we hold dear. On the other hand, it means precisely that: there is no vast conspiracy. The Union and the Confederacy have been bleeding each other dry for 16 years all by themselves. Rev. Grimme is a crazy old cannibal. Harrowed folks "losing Dominion" are just having psychotic episodes. It means that humanity is capable of being a lot more evil on its own than people realized.

GOOD MANITOUS

The relationship between the Reckoners and the manitous is mysterious. Why would the cold, methodical Reckoners work their will through the chaotic manitous? And why do the Reckoners keep information from their agents?

Perhaps the manitous have gotten a bad rap. Perhaps they aren't the spirits of pure evil that Indian cosmology leads us to believe.

Perhaps the manitous are just another kind of spirit – more anarchic and mischievous than the nature spirits, but essentially nonmalicious – that have been enslaved and corrupted by the Reckoners, and forced to do their dark work. It puts a different spin on many aspects of life in the Weird West if manitous aren't actually out to destroy the world. Mad science may change from an evil conspiracy to a mixed blessing. The Harrowed may become less evil and more wild. Huckstering becomes less like a deadly game of chess and more like bullfighting.

Most important, the battle against the Reckoners becomes less a straight-up slugfest, and more a quest to free the manitous, thus throwing the Reckoning's infrastructure into chaos. At the

same time, the antipathy between manitou and nature spirit makes the battle lines more ambiguous: if humanity could get the manitous to change sides at the cost of losing the nature spirits, would it be worth it? In a way, by choosing science over nature, hasn't Western society in *Deadlands* already done just that? A good-manitou setting of this sort opens up a much more complex magico-political environment, which some groups may prefer to a straightforward battle against pure evil.

Another possible good-manitou scenario is one in which the Reckoning, and all the supernatural horror it unleashed on the world, was an accident – the Hunting Grounds equivalent of an industrial disaster. Abominations are mutants, created by magical toxic waste. Everything that's happened since then has been a well-meaning but fundamentally doomed attempt to help. Sitgreaves has it all wrong; the manitous are trying to help mad scientists come up with new technologies to make things better, but they tend to get distracted by interesting ideas for things that go boom. Harrowed and undead will be agents of positive change once the manitous learn how to stop reacting to physical bodies like a troubled 15-year-old given a Corvette and a keg of beer. This latter scenario is a bit more light-hearted than most, but there's no reason that dark supernatural horror can't go hand in hand with comedy.

The final question implied by a good-manitou cosmology is why the Indians have been telling everybody that the manitous are pure evil. Have they been making unwarranted assumptions based on their folklore? Were they duped by the Reckoners to hide the Reckoners' weak link? Were they duped by the nature spirits to tar the nature spirits' old nemeses? Is the "evil manitou" story a ploy by the Old Ways movement to cause trouble for the Anglo institutions of huckstering and mad science?

THE "OLD WAYS CONSPIRACY"

Regardless of the truth, it's likely that some prejudiced occultist, upon realizing that most of what is known about manitous ultimately comes from the Indians, might start spreading the idea that Indian shamans are telling lies about the way things really are. This occultist might come to believe that it's really the nature spirits who are the Reckoners' lackeys. Such a story would play well in certain parts of the country, and could pose a real problem for PCs trying to round up assistance for some mystical project or another.

ADVENTURE SEEDS

These adventure seeds are shorter chunks of plot suitable for inclusion in any campaign. Some will work as one-shot adventures; others work better as significant arcs within a campaign spanning multiple adventures.

DRAFTED!

The Rangers have identified the characters as supernatural assets. Now they find themselves dragged along on all sorts of unpleasant missions. Some might find this a great opportunity to have all sorts of adventures; others will be plotting the best way to get out of Confederate territory unobserved. This adventure also works for the Agency, although the Agency is a better hook for a one-shot adventure than a longer-term plot arc.

WE'RE JUST BROWSING

The search for a hex can be an epic endeavor, leading the party in search of arcane books back and forth across the continent, following up vague hints of an old edition of Hoyle's, or the notebooks of an old-time hexslinger who long since cashed in his chips. They may find themselves scraping up the cash to pay for an ancient tome, or just breaking into the bookshop one dark night. In the process, they may learn that the underground world of occult studies is an uglier place than they bargained for.

TOO HOT TO HOLD

The characters find themselves in possession of a *Ranger Bible*. To the right buyer, it would be worth thousands of dollars. However, to realize those profits the characters will have to avoid the hordes of Rangers vigorously searching for the book. They could just turn it over, but that would involve getting the Rangers to hold their fire long enough to explain (to say nothing of having to talk to a senior Ranger about how they got hold of the book to begin with). This adventure also works well with a 1769 *Hoyle's* or a copy of the *Short Treatise on Whist*.

THE BIGGEST POT IN THE WEST

The Lady Luck tournament in Denver is a great setting for adventures. The tournament itself is fraught with excitement: the stakes are enormous, and advancing through several rounds of high-stakes poker is strenuous enough without the back-room dealing and extracurricular activity which springs up around any major gambling event.

Add to this the dozens of clandestine hucksters in attendance, the Rangers and Agency operatives on hand to watch them, and the assorted baggage they all bring with them, and the possibilities for trouble are limitless.

PLEDGE WEEK

Almost every huckster who's heard of the Royal Court wants badly to be part of it. Someday the party may meet a mysterious hexslinger who says he's heard of them, as has the Court. The Court might be interested in taking them on, if they're willing to do a little chore for them, just to demonstrate that they're really interested. Hazing doesn't even begin to describe it.

THE SIEGE OF INFINITY PRESS

The Gorgon has finally decided that Percy Sitgreaves has to be eliminated, and the party just happens to be visiting the press that day. Suddenly, they're trapped inside a building with the father of Thaumaturgical Diffusion, with a

Gorgon outside and nowhere to run. Should be an interesting afternoon.

THE SUICIDE QUEEN

The party is approached by a Queen-ranked member of the Royal Court. He's decided that he no longer wants anything to do with the Court and their plans (an amoral, power-hungry secret society was one thing, but actively serving the Royals is another). He needs their help to get away enough from the Court's power base to hide. He knows people who can help him in Denver and points west—possibly Jacques Portefour (see p. 11). He just needs someone to help him get away from the Mississippi.

However, the Court does not take defeat lightly, and soon the party is facing a riled Alex. Whether the adventure is a long chase or a knock-down, drag-out fight, it will be an encounter to remember. This adventure can also lead into an ongoing series of adventures dealing with the Royal Court.

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