



Hucksters & Hexes



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Dedicated To:
Joyce, who is all the magic I need.

Visit our website for regular updates.
Deadlands created by Shane Lacy Hensley.



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POSSE TERRITORY



HOYLE



POSSE:4



CHAPTER ONE: THE OLDEST LIVING HUCKSTER SPEAKS



So, you want to learn how to cast hexes, do you? You say you want to know the secret to grabbing a tiger by the throat and using his claws for your own? Well, you've come to the right man, youngster.

Why do I say that, you ask? Because my name's Enoch Shaw, that's why. And if that doesn't mean anything to you, all you need to know is that I'm the longest-living player of the Great Game there is, and that's saying something. A fellow don't live long shuffling the cards if he doesn't know what the Game's about, and there's nobody who's lived longer with a deck in his hand than me.

Pull up a chair and have a seat, and I'll start your education right now.

Probably just about every huckster knows about Edmond Hoyle, the author of *Hoyle's Book of Games*. From the codes contained in the book, hexslingers learn the secrets necessary to cast the magics known as hexes. But hardly anyone knows much about Hoyle himself. Before I go telling you the secrets in his *Book of Games*, I think you ought to know a little something about the fellow who wrote it. You could say he's our "father," spiritually speaking.

ORIGIN OF A LEGEND

There's not much remarkable about the earliest part of Edmond Hoyle's life. He was born in 1672 to a merchant family in London. While his family wasn't rich by any means, they didn't go hungry either.

I reckon young Edmond found the family business too tame for his liking, so he tried numerous apprenticeships, ranging from blacksmithing to printing. But by the time he was the wise old age of 18, he felt the call of adventure and joined the East India Company.

He arrived in northwestern India in early 1691. The Company had just begun construction of a new city to govern the British holdings in the country. Edmond found himself assigned to the guard force for the builders.

As the "new kid," he drew most of the night shifts. Hoyle had a lot of free time to study the local culture. Over the next two years, he spent most of his free time learning what he could of the Indian religions and beliefs.

In 1693, the city of Calcutta was plagued by an unnaturally fierce tiger. Not only was the animal not afraid of men, but it actually hunted them!



Its actions baffled the local British authorities. All of them that is, except for Hoyle, now a sergeant in the guard force.

Hoyle's studies of the local beliefs convinced him that the animal was supernatural in nature. He learned of a nearby shrine dedicated to Kali, the goddess of evil and destruction. On a hunch, he hid near the foreboding shrine each night.

Finally, after nearly a week, his suspicions were confirmed. He watched from his hiding place as a huge tiger crept into the clearing around the shrine. In the moonlight, the astonished soldier saw the animal change into a man!

While he may have been a curious young fellow, Hoyle was no fool. He shot the man through the heart, killing him deadlier than a fence post. The attacks stopped that very day.

He kept his secret to himself, knowing that he would be labeled a madman if he were to tell anyone. He carefully disposed of the dead cultist's body and silently vowed to himself never to speak of what he had seen in that dark clearing.

But what he had seen changed the course of his life.

THE QUEST BEGINS

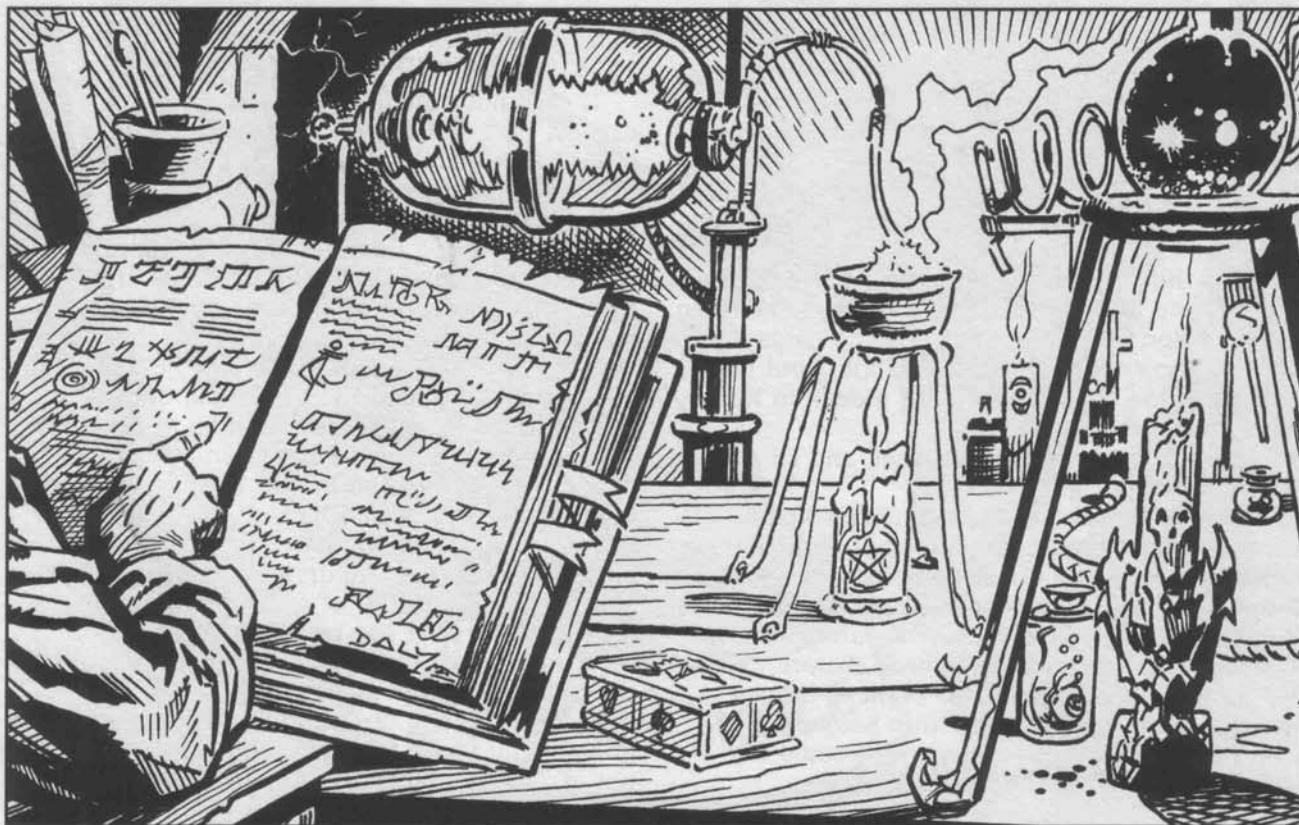
Hoyle continued in the service of the East India Company for another three years. During that time, he gathered all the information local priests could provide him on what he'd seen. By 1696, he'd learned all he could from the locals.

Hoyle left the East India Company to find answers to the questions raised by the fateful night of the tiger. He found that India was infested with secret cults practicing dark and evil magics. After a few years of investigation, Hoyle realized he could learn no more without joining one of those evil societies. Not willing to sacrifice his soul for knowledge, Hoyle left the country and returned to London.

He used some of the money he'd saved while in India to further his formal education. He attended a number of institutions of "higher learnin'," including Oxford and Cambridge. However, Hoyle found his questions on the occult remained unanswered.

You see, back then, like now, "educated" scholars scoffed at the existence of magic.

In 1705, Hoyle decided he'd reached a dead end in his home country. To pursue his quest, he'd have to search elsewhere.





THE FIRST DISCOVERY

Hoyle's travels took him to Constantinople, the seat of the Ottoman Empire, where he found libraries that were older than the British Empire. These had escaped much of the ravages of the religious purges which had plagued most western European countries.

There, Hoyle studied many ancient volumes and came to a startling discovery. Powerful entities existed on another plane outside the scope of the average person's senses. Most people encountered them only in their dreams or, more often, nightmares. They were known by many names—demons, genies, or spirits were but a few. But whatever their name, they were by nature cruel and mischievous.

These demons had once roamed freely in our world, but at some time near the end of the Middle Ages, these beings for some reason returned to their own plane. None of the books Hoyle read could explain this disappearance, but he did learn that these spirits were the source of power for sorcerers, witches, and the like. Also, he found that such people always made pacts with these spirits. These pacts invariably involved some type of sacrifice or evil act. Again, Hoyle wasn't willing to accept that type of bargain.

Hoyle believed that if the entities could freely give a portion of their power, a strong-willed individual could force it from them instead.

From the tomes he'd read, Hoyle learned how to contact the plane where these spirits resided. He found it a whole lot more difficult than his books had indicated, but still possible.

Five years after arriving in Constantinople, he decided to test his theory. Unfortunately, his experiment went wrong, releasing wild, destructive energies.

Hoyle left Constantinople in a hurry. In fact, just a few steps ahead of a mob of angry citizens looking to burn a "wizard."

THE SORCERER'S APPRENTICE

Hoyle escaped to Vienna with numerous ancient books. There he resumed his studies. Although he had a gift for languages, Hoyle had never had the opportunity to study German. As a result, he had a hard time getting along in Austria. That is, until he met a young Russian by the name of Ernst Johann Biren. Hoyle found the young man begging for food on the streets.

Biren was the grandson of a servant to Russian nobles. He'd left to seek his fortune.

Until he met Hoyle, his fortune consisted of a suit of filthy clothes, a small ball of lint, and a crust of moldy bread. Before leaving Russia, he'd studied with his Grandfather for several years and had learned many languages, including both German and English.

In exchange for food and a place to sleep, Biren agreed to work as an interpreter for Hoyle. He quickly began to take more than a casual interest in Hoyle's work.

Hoyle thought this was simply natural curiosity. Actually, it was dark ambition that inspired Biren's interest. He saw in Hoyle's sorceries a tool to gain the power he coveted. This craving would eventually take him down the very road to Hell.

Hoyle's experiments were too slow for Biren, and the young man began to secretly study the ancient texts himself. He found the quick power of black magic a temptation too strong to resist. Soon he was capable of feats far beyond Hoyle's own abilities.

Unaware of Biren's growing power, Hoyle was making small advancements of his own. In 1711, he was ready to attempt another experiment.

DISASTER!

Hoyle was pretty sure the power of the otherworldly beings could be used for good as easily as evil. To prove this, the first hex he crafted was designed to heal injuries.

A subject for the hex wasn't hard to find, given the state of medical science at the time. Hoyle, posing as a doctor, hired a lame beggar to return to his study. After several hours of labor, he was able to heal the man's wounds. Hoyle swore the newly ambulatory beggar to secrecy about the miraculous cure.

Unknown to Hoyle, Ernst Biren had followed the old beggar after he left Hoyle's study. Biren used a spell of his own on the man. Where Hoyle's hex had been intended to heal the man's injury, Biren's infected the man with plague.

Both magics were successful.

Two days later, the beggar was found dead from the Black Death. Soon, the entire country was in a panic as the Plague swept through Central Europe and beyond. By the end of the epidemic, nearly 500,000 people had perished of the deadly disease.

Hoyle was devastated. He was sure that his hex had been perverted, and his attempt at curing had instead killed almost half a million people. Discouraged and guilt-ridden, he burned his notes and ancient tomes.





A SECOND PLAGUE

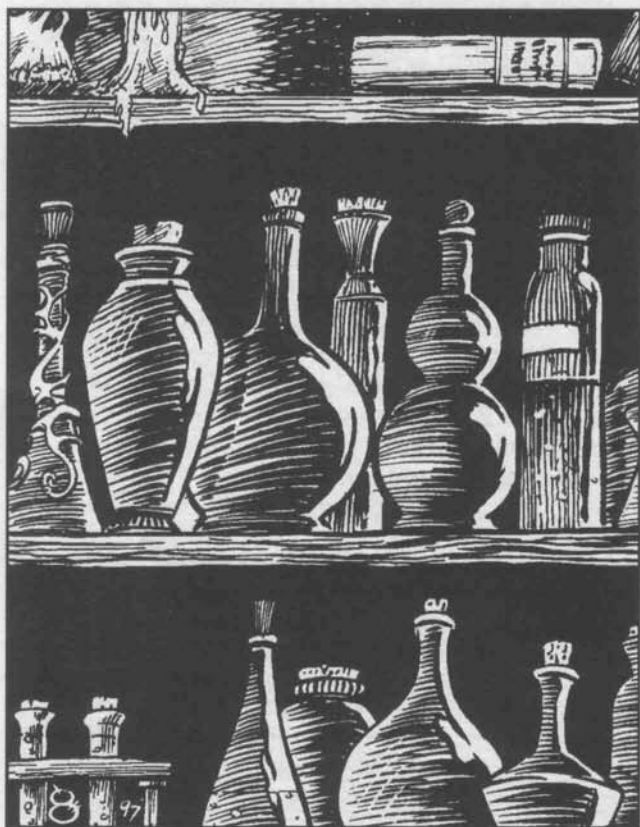
Wrongly believing himself guilty of the murder of millions, Hoyle left Austria. Perhaps hoping to meet his death in battle, Hoyle became a mercenary. During the following decade, he fought in the armies of almost every nation from Spain to Russia. The skills he learned while serving the East India Company kept him alive during this time.

In 1720, Hoyle learned of another outbreak of the Black Death, this time in southern France. Afraid it was linked to his experiment years before, he hurried to Marseilles.

After a little investigation, he discovered that a Russian noble calling himself Count Biren had been in the city shortly before the first case was discovered. Hoyle began to suspect that perhaps his former student was continuing his studies of the arcane.

An epidemic of typhoid on Sicily a few months later confirmed Hoyle's suspicions when he learned Biren had also been there. He resolved to stop his former student before any more harm could be done.

On a cold December night in 1722, he found Biren in Bavaria. It was not a happy reunion.



Biren told Hoyle what had actually happened in Vienna. Outraged, Hoyle attacked the man. But while Hoyle had given up his studies, his apprentice had only grown stronger. Biren easily bested Hoyle. The Russian sorcerer left him in the gutter, infected with disease.

WRITING THE GAME

Hoyle would have died in that ditch if a small band of gypsies hadn't found him. Their leader, an old wise woman, took him in and nursed him back to health.

Realizing he was no match for Biren, Hoyle immediately began his research again. He traveled with the gypsies for several years, learning all that he could of their legends and lore.

Hoyle also decided his own method for crafting a hex was far too slow to use against Biren. He needed a way to quickly seize the demon and wrest its power from it. However, the very energies Hoyle sought to use prevented him from being able to quickly master the spirit.

As you probably already know, on its home plane such a being is capable of incredible feats, warping reality to suit its whim. Hoyle feared he could never best such a being without a long battle.

He decided that the only way to win a quick fight against the creature was to cheat. If he couldn't defeat a demon by playing by the rules, he'd change the rules.

Since his contact with the spirits was shaped by his own perceptions, Hoyle figured he should be able to control the environment. He might also be able to limit the spirit's power enough to even the odds in a contest of wills.

For years he practiced mental exercises to gain the control he would need to test his theory. During this time, he decided that seeing the contest as a game of skill would provide him the greatest advantage. This would prevent the demon from being able to use its sheer brute power to defeat him.

Finally, 10 years after his defeat in Bavaria, Hoyle felt himself ready to confront Biren again.

BACK TO ENGLAND

Just before setting out to hunt his old apprentice, horrible news reached Hoyle. Peter II, the new emperor of Russia, had died of smallpox. His cousin Anna seized the throne and appointed her former lover Ernst Biren to serve as Grand Chamberlain.



Fearing he would be discovered in Europe by his newly empowered rival, Edmond fled. He returned to his family's business in England and continued to perfect his new skills in secret.

Although he was over 60 years old by this time, he had kept the health of a man 20 years younger through the careful use of his hexes.

Hoyle had been writing his findings in a journal for years, but he now feared its discovery could be disastrous. Another ambitious and evil mind could distort his studies just as Biren had. He began to encode his writings so that only he could read them.

He disguised his journal as a collection of essays on card games. This allowed him to carry the journal with him in public and study his findings almost anywhere. Hoyle coded his hexes in scoring diagrams, random word placements, and even index numbers. If you look closely at your copy of *Hoyle's Book of Games*, you'll see he used the same methods in that book as well.

Because of this, he gained a reputation as a very canny card player, and his advice was often sought on games and strategy. However, no matter how successful his social life became, Hoyle never forgot Biren.

THE OVERTHROW OF A DICTATOR

In the late summer of 1740, Hoyle received a message from Russia. An old friend and confidant from his days as a soldier had risen through the ranks from a mercenary to become a Field Marshal of the Russian army.

His friend wrote about an attempt to overthrow the government of Russia, now under Biren's control as the power behind the Czarist throne. The letter said the rebellion had the support of the people, but he feared this wouldn't be enough.

Hoyle's friend, who knew a little of Hoyle's "hobby," suspected Biren of being a sorcerer. He was afraid that Biren would prove too powerful for his rebels to defeat. However, he was aware (because of the men Biren had dispatched to look for him) that he secretly feared Hoyle for some reason. His letter asked for Hoyle's assistance in defeating Biren and restoring the rightful rulers of Russia to the throne.

This was exactly the chance Hoyle had been waiting for. He knew his friend was correct—the rebels were probably no match for Biren. He made a few hurried preparations and departed for Russia to visit an "old friend."



In his rush, Hoyle left his journal behind.

He arrived in Moscow in October, just in time to help seize Biren. With Hoyle's assistance, the rebels were able to capture the sorcerer. Unfortunately the Field Marshal didn't survive the battle long enough to see his people freed. Still, the Field Marshal's men secured Biren in manacles specially enchanted by Hoyle to prevent him from casting any hexes.

Hoyle remained in Russia for Biren's trial, which occurred the next year. To Hoyle's surprise, Biren wasn't executed, but instead exiled to Siberia. Hoyle delayed his departure, fearing that Biren would escape and again plague the world.

Finally, he decided to go to Siberia to put his fears to rest, but there his suspicions were confirmed. Biren had seized control of his prison and built a tiny empire in the frozen wastes.

This time, Hoyle was prepared. His new method of casting a hex was a match for Biren's black magic. The battle lasted for several minutes, destroying the prison, but this time it was Hoyle who walked away the victor. Biren's body was engulfed in the cleansing fire that swept through the ruins.



His nemesis finally defeated, Hoyle returned to England to rest. Or so he believed, until he reached home.

PUBLISHED

Hoyle couldn't have been more surprised when, upon arriving in his home country, he found himself a celebrity. His fame wasn't due to his actions in Russia. During his absence, one of his nephews had his journal published. The book, entitled *A Short Treatise on Whist*, was already a popular parlor book all over England. The young fellow had intended the act as a favor. He couldn't have guessed his uncle's response.

Hoyle was horrified! He'd never intended for the codes in the book to be examined by more than a passing glance. Not only did he fear discovery, he worried about the consequences if anyone ever tried to duplicate his unpolished rituals.

The hexes in the journal were rough and unreliable. Hoyle was able to use them only because he knew the dangers in each particular spell. Someone who wasn't aware of the pitfalls could easily kill himself or someone else accidentally.

The instant popularity of the book prevented him from recovering all the copies sold. Simply too many people had bought it. In fact, if you look hard enough today (especially in Europe), you can probably still find a copy or two of it floating around. To his way of thinking, Hoyle had only one possible course of action in this situation.

He would have to rewrite the book, correcting all of the flaws within the original hexes. If he could no longer prevent the use of his knowledge for evil purposes, he could at least give both good and evil even odds.

PERFECTING THE GAME

Hoyle spent the next 20 years of his life perfecting the hexes hidden within the pages of his book. He added sections on better dealing with the "devils" and beating them at their own game. He never stopped his quest for more knowledge of the spirits and the plane they inhabited. Little did he know where this search would eventually lead him.

In 1762, he read a book on the native tribes in America. In it, he stumbled across a reference to a spirit known as a "manitou." Digging further into the subject, he discovered the term manitou was another name for the entities he'd been studying for over half a century.

Not only were the Indians aware of the spirits, it seemed they also were capable of interacting with them! Hoyle knew right away he needed to pursue this.

Hoyle bought passage on a ship sailing to the Colonies in the spring of 1763. Although he aged incredibly well, Hoyle was over 90 years old. His family, fearing for his health, tried to prevent him from leaving. The old cardsharp's will was as strong as ever, though, and he departed for America.

SPIRIT LORE

Hoyle was determined to gain the knowledge he needed to revise his book, so he wasted little time once he reached the New World. The day after his arrival, he hired a guide, purchased some equipment, and headed out into the wilderness.

Locating Indians which could help him turned out to be much more difficult than he expected. Hoyle not only had to overcome the distrust and hostility many of the natives felt for the white settlers, he had to find Indians who possessed the knowledge he sought.



Indians with this knowledge were not as common as Hoyle had been led to believe. Many of the nature spirits which had assisted the Old Ones during the Great Spirit War remained trapped in the Hunting Grounds with them. As a result, much of the magic the Indians worked through these nature spirits had become mostly ineffectual.

With their magic failing and European settlers pushing them out of their native lands, many Indians lost faith in the power of the nature spirits. Each successive generation of shamans knew less and less of the magic of their ancestors. Much of what they did know was often mistaken.

Hoyle's travels among the Indians nearly cost him his life a number of times. Besides dealing with attacks from tribes hostile to Europeans, he also found his welcome among many friendly tribes abruptly cut short when they learned the true reason for his visit. Many of the shamans Hoyle spoke with who did possess the knowledge he sought refused to share it with one who would willingly consort with manitous. Many of these medicine men attempted to put a permanent end to his magical research.

Discouraged but undaunted, Hoyle continued his quest. Despite his brushes with death, he was now sure that the knowledge he sought was within reach.

CROOKED FEATHERS

Hoyle moved south to New Orleans. There he eventually found a shaman who would teach him more of the spirit world. This shaman, Crooked Feathers of the Natchez, agreed with the Old World mage that since the arcane knowledge he had unwittingly released into the world could not be recovered, the best course of action was to limit the damage it might cause.

The withered, old medicine man was able to tell Hoyle of the Great Spirit Wars and the Old Ones. He told him of the nature spirits and their enemies, the manitous. Hoyle learned much of the true nature of these malicious spirits and the ways in which they could be forced (or at least tricked) into doing one's bidding. Under the old medicine man's tutelage, Hoyle was able to put the finishing touches on his new book.

Once the object of his quest was complete, Hoyle decided he would travel west and learn more of the lore of this strange New World. After saying sad farewells to his friends among the Natchez, he walked alone into the wilderness of the frontier.

THE FINAL CHAPTER

Hoyle's family had no idea what had become of him until five years after his arrival in North America. A package arrived at his home in England. It contained a letter he'd written on his deathbed detailing his last will and testament. Also in the package was the final draft of *Hoyle's Book of Games*. According to his wishes, his family published the book.

Since then, more editions of that book have been printed than are easily counted. Yet to this day, only a few diligent students of the occult have succeeded in uncovering the secrets of his teachings. So if you're still ready to learn about hucksters and hexes, let's get started.

LAYOUT OF THIS BOOK

Like most *Deadlands* books, *Hucksters & Hexes* is divided into three parts: Posse Territory, No Man's Land, and the Marshal's Handbook.

Posse Territory contains information accessible to any hexslinger. If you're reading this book, we're assuming you're familiar with hucksters and you've cleared it with your Marshal to dig deeper into Hoyle's secrets.

In this area, there are details on new Edges and Hindrances, a new ability known as Tricks, a whole passel of new hexes, and details on how to design your own magics. There's also a little advice on how to keep your huckster's hide intact.

No Man's Land is where you'll find information normally restricted to Marshals and more experienced characters. In *Hucksters & Hexes*, the only secret we're hiding in there is the lowdown on some new relics, most of which relate to hucksters.

The Marshal's Handbook is off limits to everyone not wearing the Marshal's badge. In it, the Marshal gets new information on backlash and additional rules on designing new hexes. There are details on some folks that aren't too fond of hucksters, as well. And finally, we've thrown in an adventure to test your posse's powers to the fullest.

DEAL!

Okay, that's enough introduction. Go ahead, shuffle the deck, crack the spine of your copy of the *Book of Games*, and get ready learn Hoyle's secrets. It's time to deal in the Jokers in the highest-stakes card game you've ever played.

Pick a card. Any card.



TRICKS





CHAPTER TWO: TRICKS OF THE TRADE



Before we get into the full-grown hexes, here are a few little tidbits to whet your appetite. As you've learned if you've spent any time shuffling a deck, there's a fair bit more to being a huckster than simply hexes.

LIFE IN THE WEIRD WEST

The Weird West is a tough place to make a living. You'd think having powerful hexes to call on when the going gets tough would make life easier for a huckster.

Truth is, most of the time it does, but there are occasions when a huckster's greatest strength becomes his greatest weakness. Texas Rangers, Pinkertons, and frightened townsfolk all pose a threat to a huckster's continued existence, and as if that weren't enough, the very source of a huckster's power is liable to rise up and bite off his head at just about any opportunity.

No sir, hexslinging isn't the easiest or the safest profession by a fair piece.

WHO PLAYS THE GAME

With so many drawbacks, you might wonder why anyone would pick up a pack of cards. Why?

It sure beats sod-busting!

Seriously, folks drawn to delve into Hoyle's book usually have a few traits in common.

The first is hucksters have a touch of the thrill-seeker in them. Ordinary life is just a little tame for a huckster. Taking chances isn't a pastime, it's her reason for living. She may have been a gambler by trade, but even the chance of losing her life's earnings on a single hand of five-card stud doesn't give her the charge it used to. But gambling with her very life, those are the kind of stakes she's looking for! The effects of the hexes she casts are just gravy—it's the game itself she enjoys.

Hucksters who have too much of this characteristic are often daredevils, charging into the face of danger with a joke and a smile. In case you haven't guessed, hucksters of this bent seldom live to a ripe old age.

The second trait most hucksters share is guts, plain and simple. It takes a stout heart to hunt down a nightmare and wrestle with it on a daily basis. Not everyone's got that kind of bravery, but odds are a huckster does.

The third most common characteristic among hexslingers is a desire for knowledge beyond that of normal folks. This doesn't mean just the ability to cast a hex, although that does count for a lot. It also includes simply knowing more about the secrets of the Reckoning than the average fellow in the saloon. Without this urge, a would-be huckster would probably never spend the time to translate her first hex from Hoyle's codes.



Now, that isn't to say that these personality traits are the only ones present in a person drawn to Hoyle and his arcane writings. Any single huckster may have a little of any or all of them, or maybe she's got a temperament all her own. These kinds of folks just aren't that easy to pigeonhole.

BECOMING A HUCKSTER

Just because a person feels the pull of Hoyle's book doesn't mean that she can cast a hex. It's a little more involved than that. A huckster needs both talent and training.

First, the character has got to have a little background in the occult. Otherwise, the encoded hexes in Hoyle look like nothing more than odd scoring techniques or sample card games written in some cryptic manner.

A huckster must have at least 1 point in the *academia: occult* Aptitude. This allows her to see and possibly interpret the hidden messages in the text.

Being able to recognize the codes isn't the same thing as casting the hex. In fact, anyone with *academia: occult* can tell there's more to Hoyle's guide than meets the eye.



To actually draw a manitou into a mental contest and shape its power into a desired hex, the hero also needs a fair bit of supernatural talent. A huckster must have the *arcane background: huckster* Edge. Without this Edge, a cowpoke who understands Hoyle's messages is little more than a well-informed gambler.

ARCANE BACKGROUND

So exactly where does one's *arcane background: huckster* come from? There's no easy answer because just about every huckster learned his trade from a different source.

Most (though by no means all) hucksters learned from another huckster. The mentor found someone he could truly trust, showed her a copy of *Hoyle's*, and the two went out into the desert to blow their heads off together.

Other times, hucksters have discovered something strange in their early life. Perhaps a boy from the south lived near a former slave woman who also practiced voodoo. The boy learned about magic, but didn't take to voodoo itself. Later on in life, as he was traveling about, he began to discover other forms of magic and eventually came across *Hoyle's*.

Another huckster might first have learned about magic from a Chinese magician, an Indian shaman, or by being attacked by some weird critter. The experience sparked a curiosity in the youth, and he later began to learn more and more about the occult. Eventually, he came across *Hoyle's Book of Games*. (That's why so many hucksters have the *curious* Hindrance!)

In the end, all "Western" hucksters eventually end up with a copy of *Hoyle's*. That's the "introduction to sorcery" that's easiest for an Anglo-European to understand. He may delve into other forms of magic—such as voodoo or mysticism—but most Anglos just can't get a handle on these other forms because they require a different mindset—one usually formed by a culture. Or at least a religious belief in the powers behind the magic.

That's what Hoyle devoted his life to—converting scores of obscure and difficult magical practices into something an Anglo could understand.

PICKING UP A DECK LATER

Now most folks that become hucksters make the decision fairly early on, say in their late teens. It takes a lot of study and practice to master the arcane formulae and develop the mental strength necessary to trap a manitou



and shape its power into the form desired. But that's not to say it's impossible to pick up these skills later in life. Characters who want to develop hexslinging skills after creation should follow the steps below.

The *academia: occult* Aptitude is easy enough to come by. Anyone with a little time and access to a willing teacher or even simply a medium sized library can learn enough about the arcane to translate the hidden messages in Hoyle's writings. They must then spend the required Bounty Points to pick up a new Aptitude.

The *arcane background: huckster* Edge, is a little tougher to develop. The character must somehow develop the insight to the Hunting Grounds and the skills needed to trap and defeat a manitou in mental combat. This is the hardest and most dangerous step in learning to be a huckster. There are two ways to accomplish this task. Both require some time and not a small amount of risk.

The first, and simplest, is to find a teacher. This person must have the *arcane background: huckster* Edge. Training under such a mentor requires three months time, during which the hero must spend half his time studying and practicing skills the instructor teaches him. At the end of this training period, he spends the 9 Bounty Points necessary to gain an Edge after creation and becomes a brand-spanking-new huckster.

While this is by far the easiest way to learn how to cast hexes, finding such an instructor is often quite a task by itself. Most hucksters hide their abilities. With all the folks out there looking to get a piece of a huckster's hide, you really can't blame them. Pinkertons often masquerade as students of the occult to catch hucksters. Even after a student of the arcane finds a huckster, it's liable to take some mighty fast talking to convince her to take on a pupil.

Also, teaching another the secrets of Hoyle's work is tedious and time consuming. Few individuals will take a student without some form of compensation. More often than not, this is simply lots and lots of money, although in a rare case, the teacher may require some other type of recompense. Just to play it safe, make sure your hero's wallet is thick if she's looking to learn hexslinging this way.

The second method is for your hero to teach herself how to cast a hex. All this requires is a copy of Hoyle's book. That, and a whole lot of guts. Having less common sense than God gave a goose doesn't hurt, either.

It takes six months for such a brave (or

reckless) soul to learn how to contact the Hunting Grounds, lure a manitou into a test of wills, and—hopefully—defeat it. All without blowing her head off.

During this period, one half of your hero's "active" time must be spent poring over the *Book of Games* and practicing the techniques detailed within (about four hours each day).

At the end of each month of study, the hero must roll an Onerous (7) *academia: occult* roll. Failure indicates she's made a potentially disastrous mistake in her studies and suffers 3d6 damage to the guts as the manitou teaches her a hard-earned lesson. This damage can be healed normally. If she botches this roll, in addition to the damage, the month's study was wasted and doesn't count toward the six months required.

At the end of the study period, assuming she is still alive, your hero spends 9 Bounty Points and is now a huckster.

THE GOOD STUFF

Now that all that's out of the way, here are a few new rules, Aptitudes, and Edges. Most are geared specifically to hucksters, but there are a couple that anyone can use. There's also a new Knack that gives a character limited magical powers which anyone *but* hucksters can use.

HIGH STAKES

Now, playing cards with monsters straight out of a nightmare and using your very life as the stakes tend to make a fellow feel rather casual about more mundane forms of gambling. How worried is someone who regularly gambles with her soul going to be about losing a measly \$100? Just how intimidating can a well-dressed riverboat gambler be to someone who often finds herself across the table from the bogeyman?

Hucksters tend to have a calm, unreadable demeanor at the gambling tables. A truly professional gambler may have a greater understanding of the odds in a given game, but hucksters are virtually immune to the continual bluff and counter-bluff that goes on in most games of chance. Unfortunately, this immunity does not carry over into other forms of life, and their experience with very high-stakes gambling gives them such an advantage only at the gaming tables.

The way this works in game terms is that hucksters receive a bonus of +2 to their *gamblin'* skill.



NEW EDGES

Life in *Deadlands* is tough enough, and hucksters (by choice) have it a little tougher than most others. Here are some new Edges to hopefully keep your hero from pushing up daisies for a while.

ARCANE PRODIGY

3

This Edge is only available to hucksters. Well, actually, anyone can purchase it, but they'd just be wasting Bounty Points.

Learning a new hex is often a trial. An *arcane prodigy* learns hexes faster and easier than most. Heroes with this Edge learn hexes in half the required time, and they make Easy (3) *academia: occult* rolls to speed their studies.

Developing new hexes is also a little easier for someone with this Edge. When using the quick trial-run method to create a new hex (your Marshal has all the details on this), the Target Number for all Trait rolls made by an *arcane prodigy* is Fair (5). The research time and other requirements remain the same.

The details for both learning and developing a new hex can be found in the next chapter.



FAMILIAR

5

This Edge is only available to hucksters.

A *familiar* is kind of a supernatural sidekick. Your character has formed a magical bond with an animal no larger than a medium-sized dog—a collie, perhaps. Favorite animals for this purpose include cats (black, of course), crows, and dogs. This bond allows the animal to serve as a spy or guard for your hero. It also can provide some minor assistance to her when casting hexes.

The animal gains an increase in intelligence, often to human levels. In game terms, increase the animal's *Smarts* and *Knowledge* Traits to one level below your hero's, assuming they weren't already. If they were, you've got our sincerest apologies and advice to seek another profession.

The animal's *Coordinations* in these Traits are only 1, but its thought processes are now geared to human thinking, so it can reason and learn *Mental Aptitudes*. It also gains an understanding of all languages your hero can speak or read. Yes, you read that right—the *familiar* can read, assuming it has eyes.

Heroes can mentally communicate with their *familiars* when they are within 10 yards. Outside this range, they only sense general emotions: fear, happiness, and the like. Also, when within 10 yards of the *familiar*, your huckster gains a +1 to all hex-casting *Aptitude* rolls.

Because of the nature of the bond between the huckster and the *familiar*, if the animal is slain, the character suffers some of that experience as well. Your hero must immediately make an Incredible (11) *Vigor* check, or be stunned until she does so. Even after succeeding at the check, for the next 1d6 days she has a -2 modifier to all Trait and *Aptitude* rolls. Death ain't pretty.

Bonding a new *familiar* (after character creation) or replacing an old one is a long process, although not too difficult. In addition to the triple Bounty Point cost, your huckster needs to spend a month in study and preparation. At the end of the month, she needs only to make a Fair (5) *academia: occult* roll. If successful, she gains a *familiar* of your choice, provided it fits the normal restrictions. Otherwise, she can try again every week until she does succeed.

A huckster may only have one *familiar* at a time.

Although the bond is close between your hero and the animal, it still has a mind of its own. A *familiar* is more of a companion than a bodyguard. If abused, the *familiar* may very well say adios.



TRICKS

OLD HAND

3

This Edge is only available to hucksters, and only those with an *academia: occult* Aptitude of 4 or greater.

Old hands are hucksters who have been around a while. They've put aside learning new ways to blow things up for a while to investigate the true nature of the Hunting Grounds and its dangerous denizens.

With knowledge comes power. When *old hands* draw cards to cast a hex, they can draw them one at a time and stop whenever they choose. Say an *old hand* is entitled to a total of eight cards through a combination of a good skill roll and a relic he found in his last adventure. He could draw each of his cards and stop whenever he felt he had a good enough hand to achieve the desired effect. If his first two cards are Aces and that's all he wants, he doesn't have to draw the next six cards.

This Edge comes with experience and devotion to studying the power behind hexes instead of just the hexes themselves, so most every huckster should eventually devote some Bounty Points to buying it. The rules for buying new Edges are covered in *The Quick & the Dead*, but in short, it costs your huckster 9 Bounty Points and three weeks worth of study *after* you've raised your character's *academia: occult* Aptitude to 4 or better (assuming it wasn't there already).

NEW HINDRANCES

BAD KARMA

5

Your hombre has made a lot of enemies in the Hunting Grounds, where the manitous live. And they remember you.

Manitous revile your hero so much that your huckster always takes backlash for drawing a Joker, regardless of its color or his skill.

FOCUS

1-3

When learning how to cast hexes, the huckster learned by focusing on some kind of item. Now she's got a hard time working without it. For each level of this Hindrance chosen, the huckster has a -3 to her Attribute roll for attempting to cast a hex without the focus item. The focus item may be anything from a deck of cards to a ceremonial dagger. It may even be the character's favorite derby.

The Marshal should have some fun at the hero's expense with this one, of course.



OBVIOUS

1-5

Any character with this Hindrance just can't be very sneaky when casting her hexes. At these times, she must make extensive hand gestures, produce lots of flashing lights, shoot glowing cards into the air, or maybe even let loose with a feral howl. Whatever effect you choose to validate this Hindrance, it has to be, well, obvious.

This may not be the best thing in a place like the Weird West, where most people think dealing with evil spirits is wrong. Go figure. Hucksters with this Hindrance stay well clear of Texas Rangers and their like. Many try to disguise their magical disability by posing as flamboyant stage magicians.

NEW KNACK

Here's a little something for those cowpokes out there who aren't hucksters. In fact, a huckster can't even choose this Knack. Just like other Knacks, which were introduced in *The Quick & the Dead*, this can normally only be taken when you create your character, and your hero can't have more than one Knack.



TEMPEST

By now, you've probably figured out there's safer places to stand than beside a huckster who's dealing himself a hand. But a huckster is as peaceful as a sheep compared to one of the poor souls born with the power of the tempest.

Assuming they somehow manage to survive to adulthood, it's only a matter of time before some sort of Hell drops down on their heads. Folks call them "tempests," because a storm is the only way to describe them: fierce and uncontrolled. Most die long before the average kid finishes his first growth spurt. Others are luckier, and their power doesn't screw up their lives until their early teens. As if pimples and growing pains weren't enough, uncontrolled magic makes adolescence a *really* awkward age.

A few tempests, usually those who manifest their power at an older age, come out intact after the first few months. With a little luck they live long enough to get a bit of control over their abilities, sometimes enough to even call on their power at will.

Eventually, the tempest's power catches her off-guard. If this happens in the town square at noon, she'll likely end up in a noose by sundown.

5

She can bring down Hellfire, tame beasts, heal wounds, or melt into the shadows, just like a huckster. While one of Hoyle's cardsharps stares down manitous to power his hexes, a tempest calls her power from within. The only problem is, that kind of power is hard to control, and if she's not careful, one day it'll put her six feet down.

It gets worse. There's a chance the tempest's power might fire itself off when she least expects it and usually at the worst possible time—during a gunfight or in a crowded courtroom, for example.

If you decide to make a tempest character, look through all the hexes available to hucksters and choose one. But make sure you decide carefully, because your hero only gets one. The hex becomes an innate ability of your character. She can call on it as long as she has Fate Chips to spend to activate it. The power of the effect, just like with all knacks, depends on the color of the chip she spends.

Since your hero's not dealing with manitous, she doesn't have to worry about backlash. Relieved? Well, don't get too comfortable. Any time she uses her ability, draw one card from a complete deck.





TRICKS

If you get a Joker, she's lost control of her power, and the Marshal chooses what happens. The exact effect is up to him, but black Jokers usually mean worse effects than red ones.

Just to add a little more complication to her life, any time a tempest fails a surprise roll her power goes off, just as if she'd spent her lowest chip on it. If she doesn't have any chips, it works like she's spent a white chip on it. Again, the Marshal decides the effect of it, but it's more likely to work for her in this case. Oh, and since your hero's already up the creek, she doesn't have to draw from the deck in these circumstances and she doesn't actually lose any chips.

When choosing the tempest's ability, know that Two Pairs is the best hand they can normally manage, so pay attention to the minimum hand necessary. If you've got a Legend Chip, though, you can spend this to get yourself a higher hand in special circumstances. When and how you can do this is up to your Marshal.

Any effects, such as range or duration, which are based on hex level use the tempest's Coordination in the Trait associated with the hex. The color of the Fate Chip spent determines the hand drawn for purposes of the hex's effect.

POWER OF THE TEMPEST

- White:** The hex works as if you'd drawn a Pair.
- Red:** The hex works as if you'd drawn a Pair of Jacks.
- Blue:** The hex works as if you'd drawn Two Pairs.
- Legend:** Marshal's call.

TRICKS:

JUST A FRIENDLY GAME

Ever wonder if a huckster could convince the local tough to take his fight elsewhere without risking blowing her head off? Or if it's possible to perform a simple feat of prestidigitation without the danger of losing a digit?

Well, wonder no longer, friends. We're here to tell you it *is* possible! How, you may ask? Simple.

For a true hex, a huckster seeks out a powerful manitou in the Hunting Grounds. Then, she engages the spirit in a mental battle to force the manitou to channel power from there to suit her desires.

However, if a huckster doesn't need to conjure up a tornado or stop an automaton, she has other options. Just like people, spirits come in all different sizes.

Normally, a huckster tries to bring in the biggest, meanest manitou he can find, because the bigger the manitou, the more power it can channel. However, there's no need to call up a full-grown manitou to light a cigar or make a cup of coffee when there's plenty of little ones running around.

Not only is it easier to catch one of these smaller manitous, it isn't as hard to beat one as it is one of the juggernauts of the spirit world. Besides, even if one of them does manage to get the drop on a fellow, it doesn't do nearly as much damage.

PICK A CARD

To cast a trick, all the huckster has to do is beat the manitou in a simple contest of wits. To represent this, the huckster makes a Fair (5) test against the Trait identified in the trick's description. The huckster then draws one card for each success she received. If your hexslinger draws even a single red card, including the red Joker, the trick is successful.

If your huckster draws only black cards the trick fails. Pretty simple, right? Now if you draw the Black Joker, the manitou you've grabbed wasn't as small as you thought it was and it lashes out at you. Roll on the standard Backlash Table.

Oh, wait—there *is* one more thing. Each trick she loses costs her 2 Wind. There ain't no such thing as a free hex either.

TEACHIN' AN OLD HUCKSTER NEW TRICKS

Tricks are simple to learn. If the trick is chosen during character creation, it only costs 1 point. However, if your hero wants to wait until later, each trick she wants to learn costs 2 Bounty Points and two nights of studying. She doesn't need to worry about *occult* rolls, study times, or anything like that.

Once a trick is bought, the huckster can perform it. In fact, once she's learned it, she's mastered it. There is little skill beyond the basics involved in the process, so the trick cannot be improved later through more Bounty Points. Although, if your hero is still looking to lighten her Bounty purse, stick around. We'll see if we can't come to an arrangement.





TRICKS

SOME NEW TRICKS

All tricks require one action to complete. Additionally, each of the tricks described on the following pages have three entries: Trait, Duration, and Range.

Trait is the Mental Trait the huckster uses to determine the type and number of dice to roll to perform the trick.

Duration is the length of time the trick stays in effect. Most are instantaneous, although the consequences of a few may be permanent.

Range is the distance at which the trick can take effect.

BANDAGE

Trait: Smarts

Duration: Permanent

Range: Touch

It seems like there's never a doctor around when you need one. For example, when you're bleeding to death! *Bandage* lets a huckster quickly stop bleeding from wounds. This prevents continued Wind loss due to any serious (or worse) wounds the subject may have suffered up to the point the trick is performed. Further wounding causes Wind loss as normal. The trick does not in anyway prevent loss of Wind due to a hex or other magical or natural effect—only that lost as a result of bleeding.

BAR

Trait: Smarts

Duration: Concentration

Range: 10 feet

With this trick, a huckster is able to reinforce a closed door, making it more difficult to open—quite helpful when bandits or werewolves are trying to break it down. For as long as the huckster concentrates and remains within 10 feet of the door, anyone attempting to force the door suffers -5 to any *Strength* check made to open it. The moment the huckster's concentration lapses, the door loses its added resistance.

BEGGAR'S BANQUET

Trait: Smarts

Duration: Permanent

Range: 5 feet

This trick is often used in conjunction with the *vittles* hex. With *beggar's banquet* the huckster is able to make a bland or even downright unpleasant food taste like a fine dinner (or a least a home-cooked meal). The trick does nothing for the actual content or even

appearance of the food—it only changes the flavor to make it savory. This trick is a favorite among traveling hucksters, and it can often help less-proud hexslingers find themselves temporary employment as a trail cook. More unscrupulous types have used it to hide the taste of drugs or worse in their dinner companion's food. Each use of the trick affects enough food for one meal for one person.

CALLING CARD

Trait: Smarts

Duration: Permanent

Range: Touch

A huckster with this trick can alter the face of an ordinary playing card to make it recognizable to her at a glance. Often this involves a mark or symbol of singular design, but the design may not incorporate a language. The caster always knows her own *calling cards* on sight, and if a unique mark is chosen, others aware of the mark's significance can identify the cards as well. Some hucksters use this trick to create lasting "passwords" or identification devices. Note that since the mark must be on the face of the card, it's of little use in games of chance.

COFFIN VARNISH

Trait: Spirit

Duration: Instant

Range: 1 yard

Coffin varnish is a slang term for bad coffee, and that's just what this trick makes—well, sort of.

The trick must be cast on a cup or glass filled with some beverage. The contents don't matter so much—they can be anything from water to whiskey. The former beverage turns into a hot coffee-like beverage that would curl a dead man's toes. While few, if any, enjoy the truly Hellish brew produced by this trick, it does have a few uses. First, it adds a +4 to any *Vigor* check to stay awake, which can be useful on guard duty. Second, it immediately sobers up any drunk unfortunate enough to imbibe it. The poor soul has a terrible hangover for 1d6 hours after drinking the *coffin varnish* and during that time is at -1 to all Trait and Aptitude rolls.

The coffee (or "mo-joe") brewed by this trick loses its power if not drunk within 10 minutes of creation. With a flavor like *coffin varnish*, it's not for sipping anyway.

This trick automatically fails if used on a magical liquid or an alchemical concoction.





COMPASS

Trait: Cognition
Duration: Instant
Range: Self

Compass determines the direction of the four cardinal directions (north, south, east, and west), and conveys this information to the huckster. It orients her to her immediate surroundings with this knowledge. This trick is a favorite among hucksters forced to travel alone.

Unfortunately, this information is valid only for the huckster's current location. Once she moves from her position, she is as easy to disorient as anyone else.

COPY

Trait: Knowledge
Duration: 1 round
Range: 1 yard

With this trick, the huckster is able to make an instant—although rough—copy of a single page of written material. The copied item may be a page from a book, a portion of a map, or a Wanted poster. The copy is obviously a rough duplicate, and it's not likely to be mistaken for the original. However, it does quickly provide the huckster with a usable likeness. Multiple castings can be used to copy a large map or several pages of a book.

The caster must have enough blank paper to make the *copy*, because the trick does not supply the materials. When this trick is cast, the writing or sketching can be seen to rapidly appear on the paper, as if being scribed by an invisible hand.

DINN' ROD

Trait: Cognition
Duration: 5 minutes
Range: 5 yards/Cognition die type

This trick finds the closest water source within range. If water is within range of the trick, *dowse* brings one quart of it (about a canteen's worth) to the huckster and deposits it in an empty container.

Should there be no such container available, the water spills onto the ground. If someone's desperate, it's still usable, as long as she laps fast enough! The huckster has no way of knowing the purity of the water so provided, nor the location of the water's source.

The trick always takes from the closest source, regardless of the number of times it is cast. If there is no water within range, the trick fails.



ENVISION

Trait: Cognition
Duration: 1 round
Range: 1 foot/Cognition die type

A huckster using *Envision* can, to a limited extent, see through thin objects. The maximum density her vision can penetrate is a single playing card, or perhaps an outer pocket on a garment. Obviously, this trick is of great use to a card player. The cost of dealing with even a small manitou prevents this trick from being too effective in longer gambling periods. However, any single hand in which the huckster uses *envision*, she gains a +5 to her *gamblin'* Aptitude. A clever huckster often lures her opponents into a high-stakes hand, and then uses *envision* to gain tremendous advantage.

FALSE FACE

Trait: Smarts
Duration: 5 minutes
Range: Self

There's many a time when a fellow wished he could trade in his looks for a set of new ones. Anyone who's had his face on a Wanted poster or had an unwanted romantic interest has had





this feeling more often than most. A huckster with this trick can't get a new set of looks, but he can take a loan on one.

False face lets the caster change a few simple elements about his facial appearance. These changes include changing hair or eye color, adding or removing a mustache/beard, or changing hair length and style. All in all, the trick provides a +2 to any *disguise* Aptitude roll.

While these simple cosmetic changes won't fool a determined observer, they may allow the huckster to pass a casual glance. Combined with a different hat or an eyepatch, they can go a long way toward hiding the caster's identity.

FLARE

Trait: Knowledge

Duration: Concentration

Range: 1 yard/Spirit die type

With this trick, the huckster causes an existing flame or fire to suddenly flare up to 150% of its original size. The fire affected can be no more than two feet in diameter before the *flare* trick is used.

The fire does not increase in either heat or rate of fuel consumption, but it does give off more light and cover a greater area. For example, a candle which is under the effect of a *flare* does not burn its wick or melt its wax any faster, although the flame is now larger and brighter. The trick lasts as long as the huckster concentrates on it.

FLICKER

Trait: Knowledge

Duration: Concentration

Range: 1 yard/Spirit die type

By use of *flicker*, the huckster is able to dim all artificial light (lanterns, candles, campfires, etc.) in range of the trick for one round. The change in lighting is faint, but noticeable—as if a sudden draft had blown across the flame. The dimming effect is sufficient, however, to give all in its area a -1 to all *Cognition* rolls based on vision during its duration. At the end of the trick, the lighting immediately returns to normal.

This is a favorite trick of hucksters who pose as fortune-tellers or mediums. It makes it easy to make the rubes believe the spirits are "communicating" with them.

This trick has no effect whatsoever on magical lighting or daylight. Thus, it is of limited value during daytime, unless used underground or in similar conditions.

FORECAST

Trait: Cognition

Duration: Instant

Range: Self

Forecast gives the huckster a brief glimpse of what the future holds for her. At least in terms of weather. With this trick, she can predict what kind of weather will occur within her vicinity over the course of the next few hours. Exactly how far ahead she can see is equal to her *Cognition* Coordination in hours.

Her prediction is accurate, but rough. *Forecast* tells her the direction of wind, relative temperature changes, cloud cover, and the amount of precipitation, if any. The amount is a very general approximation and the quantity is given as either none, little, moderate, heavy, or storm. This hex cannot predict unnaturally influenced weather patterns, such as those caused by powerful hexes or the like.

GROOM

Trait: Smarts

Duration: Instant

Range: Self

Often after a long ride, a fellow builds up a fair amount of dirt. *Groom* serves as an instant valet and tidies up the huckster's clothes and appearance. It removes dirt and grime, even going as far as to shine his shoes. Unfortunately, it doesn't work on stains. It also cleans up a huckster's face and hair—although it won't shave or cut hair. Basically, a huckster can use this trick to make himself presentable to polite company in a hurry. It's a favorite among New Orleans dandies, allowing them to always look their best. In some places, though, it's more likely to get the huckster labeled a tinhorn.

GUESSTIMATE

Trait: Cognition

Duration: Instant

Range: Self

A huckster with this trick never has to say, "Well, that was harder than I thought."

Guesstimate gives the caster an idea of just how hard a particular action is to accomplish—before she gets in over her head.

In game terms, when cast successfully, the trick gives the huckster the difficulty of the task she's considering—Foolproof (3), Fair (5), Onerous (7), Hard (9), or Incredible (11). The more information she has on what she wants to try, the better her guess. For example, if she's looking at a cliff face and *guesstimates* how





hard climbing it would be, the trick provides not only the difficulty, but also the effect of known current conditions such as slippery or crumbling rocks, high winds, etc. On the other hand, if she's simply wondering what her odds of winning the next Union election are, it's likely she'll get some fairly sketchy information.

Guesstimate does not provide any information, it only assesses what the huckster already knows. For example, if the huckster isn't aware of a bushwacker planning to take a potshot at him while he climbs a cliff, the trick can't take into account the added difficulty of being fired at while scrambling up the cliff face.

HESTATE

Trait: Mien

Duration: Instant

Range: 1 yard/Mien die type

Hesitate is a minor magic that has, on occasion, saved a huckster's life. This trick has proven most useful in situations where seconds count. It causes the target a moment's hesitation in taking her next action.

The game effect of this is that the target's next Action Card is considered to be the next lower value. Hence, a Jack of Spades would become a 10 of Spades, and so forth.

If the target's next Action Card is a deuce, the card is then considered to be the 2 of Clubs. If it's already the 2 of Clubs, the trick is wasted.

This trick affects a character's regular Action Cards before any card the character may have up his sleeve.

IGNITE

Trait: Spirit

Duration: Instant

Range: Touch

This trick allows the huckster to ignite a small, inanimate, flammable object which he is holding. The maximum size of an object that can be affected is a cigar or candle. If a single match can't light it, neither can this trick. And, yes, to those of you with a violent bent, it could be used to ignite a fuse.

LIKKER UP

Trait: Spirit

Duration: 1 hour

Range: 1 yard/Spirit die type

Often a drinking companion just isn't drinking fast enough to suit a huckster's purpose, be that purpose benign or otherwise. With *likker up*, a hexslinger can give a target a friendly nudge



toward whiskey-induced congeniality. The effect of this trick is to give the target a -4 to *Spirit* tests to resist consuming more of the demon Alcohol (as well as to any other rolls to resist the effects of the drug).

If the target doesn't manage to resist temptation, the trick is wasted. Of course, the huckster is welcome to renew the trick when the duration expires.

PALM

Trait: Smarts

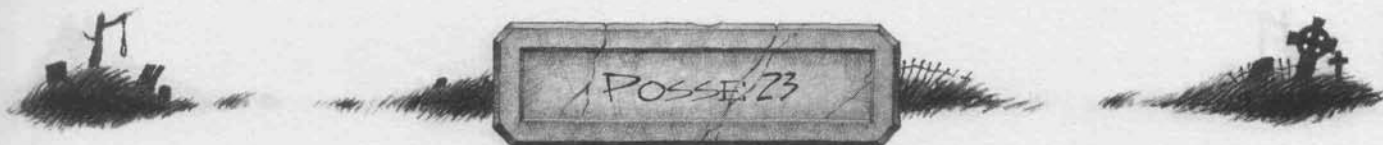
Duration: Instant

Range: Touch

Using this trick, a huckster can transfer a small object from his hand to his pocket, or vice versa. The object must be concealable in the huckster's palm. Items which might be affected include cards, coins, a matchbook, or a derringer.

Note that only one transfer is possible from each trick cast. In other words, it is not possible to transfer one item to a pocket and another back to the palm in a single casting of this trick. That would take two separate tricks.

This trick is the stock and trade of huckster stage magicians.





PRESERVE

Trait: Knowledge

Duration: 1 day

Range: Touch

This trick allows a huckster to prevent her trail rations from spoiling. It preserves up to 1 pound of food from rotting for a single day. The huckster must renew the protection several times over the course of a long journey—unless she likes her vittles a little gamey.

This trick affects all forms of organic matter, although regardless of the type of matter, it only preserves 1 pound per casting. It is not possible to partially protect a substance with this trick. If the entire amount is not *preserved* it spoils at the normal rate. For large amounts of food or the like, the huckster must cast the trick several times.

This trick has no effect on food created by the *vittles* hex.

RELOAD

Trait: Smarts

Duration: 1 action (see below)

Range: Touch

Few things are more unpleasant than pulling the trigger for the seventh time on a six-shooter. Empty firearms have probably killed as many gunslingers as loaded ones have. With *reload*, a huckster can remedy her ammunition shortages.

This trick allows the caster to transfer fresh cartridges to her weapon. There are two limitations, however. First, the caster must have fresh cartridges—there ain't no such thing as a free bullet, pardner. Second, the trick only transfers three bullets per casting—so don't waste time casting this trick on a Gatling gun. Still, three bullets are better than none—especially when they're your bullets! Unlike the Aptitude *speed load*, if the trick fails, you get no bullets.

SHATTER

Trait: Spirit

Duration: Instant

Range: 1 foot/Smarts die type

With this trick, a huckster can cause small, easily breakable items to violently shatter. Most often the target of the trick is glass, although fragile ceramics can also be affected. The item in question can be no more than a half pound in weight—about the size of a whiskey bottle. Additionally, if the item is in the possession of another person, the huckster must win an opposed *Spirit* test.

SHOUT

Trait: Smarts

Duration: 1 round

Range: Self

A huckster can project his voice a long way with this trick. *Shout* allows her voice to carry as far as 200 yards in the open. Anyone within 200 yards can clearly hear the caster. The huckster must actually yell for the hex to be effective. The trick does not magnify his voice, it merely carries it over the distance, so there is no ill effect to being close to the huckster while she is using *shout*.

SOUND

Trait: Smarts

Duration: Instant

Range: 1 yard/Smarts die type

This trick recreates a single sound somewhere within its range. The sound must be simple—a knock, click, or a bump. If the huckster wants a more distinct sound (like of a pistol's hammer), she must make an Onerous (7) *Smarts* roll. Even then, the best result would be a single muffled moan or groan—distinct words are not possible with this trick. Really loud noises (like a gunshot) aren't possible.

WHISPER

Trait: Cognition

Duration: 1 round

Range: 5 yards

Folks say that nothing attracts attention like a whisper. Well, they've never used this trick! *Whisper* allows the huckster to pass a simple message to one person within the trick's range. The huckster's message can be only one sentence in length, and he must whisper it for the trick to work, although only the target can hear the message. For the purposes of *whisper*, the sentence must be completed within five seconds or less, or the trick fails.

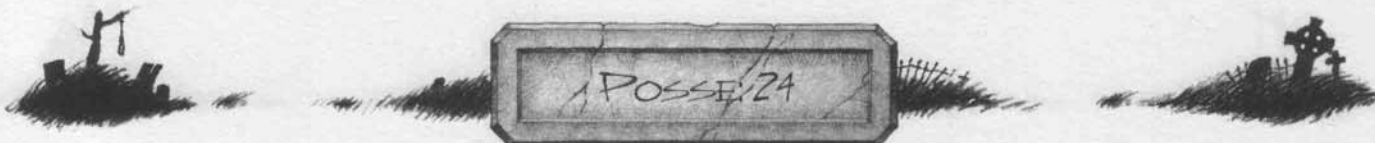
WILL O' THE WISP

Trait: Spirit

Duration: Concentration

Range: 10 yards

This trick creates a small, intangible, floating sphere of green luminescence. The huckster can control the movement of the sphere within the trick's range as long as she concentrates on it. The light produced is very faint, providing only about 2' of illumination. Even within that area, only the roughest details can be seen. You can't read by the light of a *will o' the wisp*.



TEMPEST

TRAITS AND ABILITIES

Deftness 2d6

- Filchin' 2
- Lockpickin' 2
- Shootin': rifle 2

Nimbleness 3d8

- Climbin' 1
- Dodge 2
- Fightin': brawlin' 3
- Sneak: 3
- Swimmin' 1

Quickness 4d6

Strength 3d6

Vigor 2d12

Cognition 4d10

- Search 1

Knowledge 1d6

- Area knowledge 2
- Native tongue 2
- Survival any 2

Mien 3d6

Smarts 1d8

- Scroungin' 2

Spirit 2d10

- Guts 3

Wind 22

Edges:

- Fleet-footed 2
- Keen 2
- Knack: Tempest (wildfire): 5
- Light sleeper 1
- Nerves of steel 1

Hindrances:

- Enemy -2
- Illiterate -3
- Poverty -3

Gear: .58 Springfield rifle, box of 50 shells, harmonica, \$37.50.

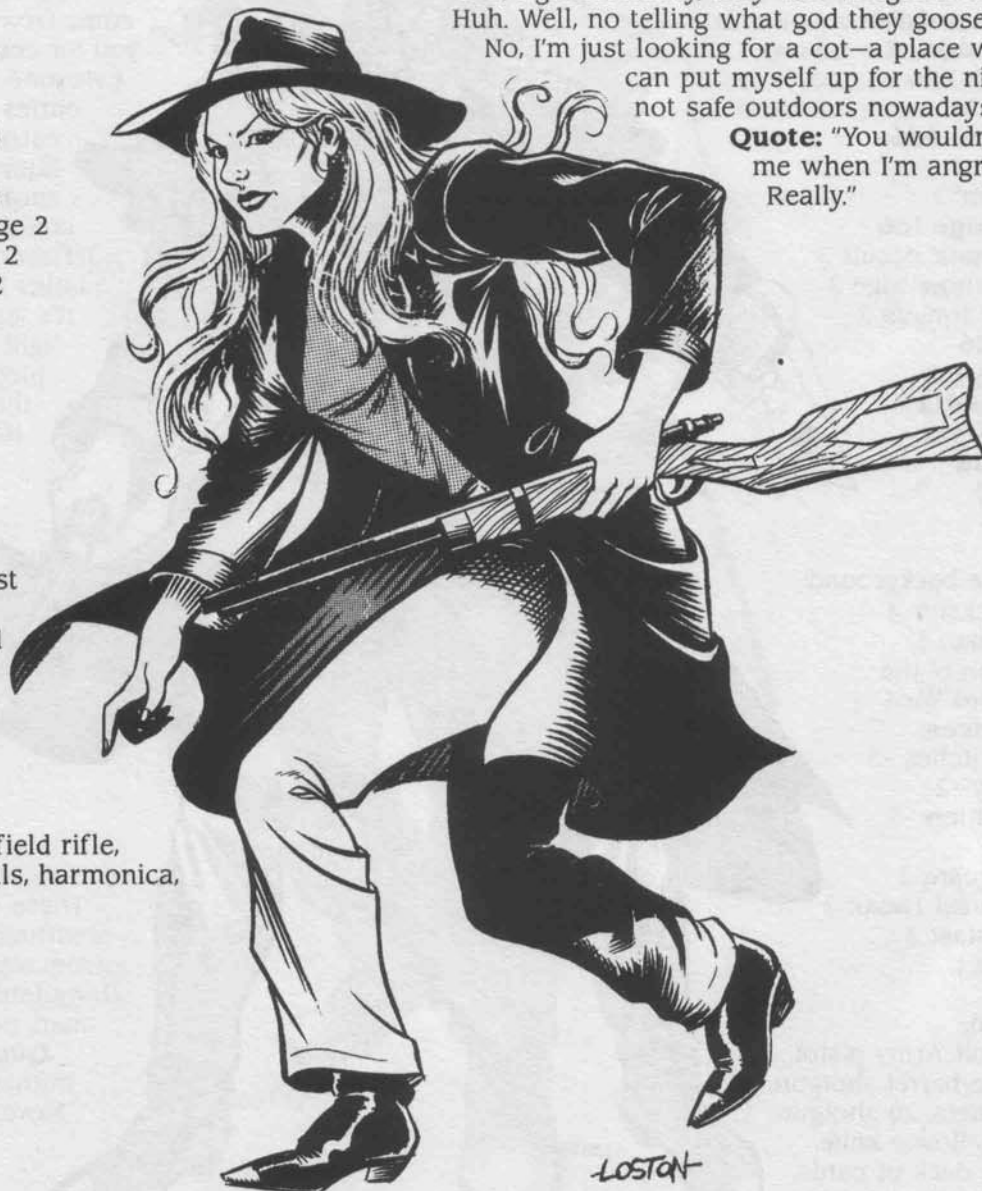
PERSONALITY

No, I'm not from around here. I'm just looking for a spot to bed down where I don't have to sleep with one eye open. I'm willing to work for my keep, no matter what it is. Got to make a living.

You say a town burned down over in the next county? Can't say I heard anything about it. Pity. Yes, these things happen. All the time. Act of God, I guess. Really, they were religious folks? Huh. Well, no telling what god they goosed.

No, I'm just looking for a cot—a place where I can put myself up for the night. It's not safe outdoors nowadays.

Quote: "You wouldn't like me when I'm angry. Really."



RANGER HUCKSTER

TRAITS AND APTITUDES

Deftness 2d10

Shootin': pistol 2
Shootin': shotgun 2
Sleight of hand 2

Nimbleness 2d6

Dodge 2
Fightin': knife 2
Sneak 2
Horse Ridin' 1

Quickness 4d10

Quick draw 2

Strength 2d6

Vigor 3d8

Cognition 4d6

Search 1
Trackin' 2

Knowledge 1d6

Academia: occult 3
Area knowledge 2
Native tongue 2

Mien 3d6

Overawe 2

Smarts 2d12

Gamblin' 2

Spirit 1d8

Guts 2

Wind 16

Edges:

Arcane background:
Huckster 3
Law man 5
Veteran o' the
Weird West

Hindrances:

Big Britches -3
Enemy -2
Obligation -5

Hexes

Bodyguard 3
Corporeal tweak 2
Soul blast 3
Vittles 1

Tricks

Reload

Gear: Colt Army pistol,
double-barrel shotgun,
50 bullets, 20 shotgun
shells, Bowie knife,
horse, deck of cards,
copy of *Hoyle's*, \$45.

PERSONALITY

Let me assure you that if there was anything out of the ordinary, I'd be the first to know. There's nothing at all to be concerned about.

Those cows were obviously attacked by a puma, nothing more. Okay, so it was a big one. A real big one, but it was just a puma.

Where'd those holes come from? Mister, I took you for country-wise.

Everyone knows a puma buries what it can't eat to save it for later. You must have surprised it before it could cover the leftovers. As to the holes bein' too deep, it's just a trick of the light. I've seen plenty puma holes that big near Nacogdoches.



These cards I keep shufflin'? Just a habit from my youth. You wouldn't be a gamblin' man, now would you?

Quote: "There's nothing to see here. Move along."

TRICKSTER

TRAITS AND ABILITIES

Deftness 2d10

Shootin': pistol 2
Sleight of hand 4

Nimbleness 2d6

Climbin' 1
Dodge 2
Sneak 2

Quickness 4d6

Strength 1d6

Vigor 3d6

Cognition 2d6

Scrutinize 2
Search 1

Knowledge 4d10

Academia: occult 3
Area knowledge 2
Native tongue 2

Mien 3d8

Performin' 2
Persuasion 2

Smarts 2d12

Bluff 3
Gamblin' 2

Spirit 1d8

Guts 2

Wind 14

Edges:

Arcane background:
Huckster 3

Hindrances:

Greedy -3
High-Falutin' -2
Outlaw -1
Scrawny -5 (Size 5)

Hexes

Diversion 2
Mirage 2
Phantasm 3
Shadow man 3

Tricks

Will o' the wisp

Gear: .44 Derringer, box of
50 shells, deck of cards,
\$238.75.

PERSONALITY

Misdirection, my friend, that's what it's all about. You let somebody figure out what you're doin', and he's liable to stop you. But if you keep him watchin' the pretty birdie in your left hand, he never even thinks about the right.

Take it from me, folks see what they believe, not the other way around. If you're clever enough, and I am, you can convince them of just about anything you want.

Quote: "Now you see it. Now you see something else."



-LOSTON-





CHAPTER THREE: THE MYSTICAL PATH



In just a moment, you're going to get to see many of the hexes hidden within the *Book of Games*. Before then, you'd best know a little about how hucksters learn new hexes.

FINDING HEXES

So how, exactly, does a huckster find a new hex? He can't just walk into the local general store and buy the latest version of *soul blast*. And he sure can't order it from Smith & Robards. That leaves three sources: *Hoyle's*, trading with other hucksters, and arcane texts.

HOYLE'S

Every publisher who plagiarized *Hoyle's Book of Games* has unwittingly carried the old mage's spells over into their own editions. They're often corrupted, mistyped, or reorganized, but someone who knows what to look for can still glean enough knowledge from the text to piece together most hexes. Your huckster can buy a recent copy of *Hoyle's* for 25¢.

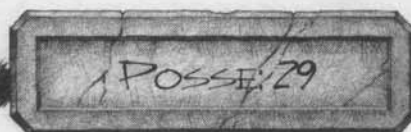
Older versions are hard to come by in the West. If you have such a copy, your Marshal should assign it a Malfunction number, just like a gizmo. Whenever you want your huckster to learn a new spell from it, roll a d20. If the roll is less than or equal to the Malfunction number, your hero finds the information he's looking for from the book. If it's more, the hex was ruined in this particular printing.

Just because your hero managed to find some information he was looking for doesn't necessarily mean he can grasp the concepts, however. Once you've determined whether or not the hex he was researching is actually in a particular edition of *Hoyle's*, your huckster needs to make an *academia: occult* roll against a TN of Fair (5), +1 for every Malfunction point the book is below 20. Thus if your huckster had an older edition of *Hoyle's* with a Malfunction number of 18, the TN of his *academia: occult* roll would be $(5+2=) 7$.

The chart below shows the average Malfunction number and cost of various editions. This is fairly common knowledge among hucksters, so we've presented it here. Your Marshal can always alter the Malfunction number if she feels a particular book is better or worse than average. Needless to say, the price of the earliest editions inflate yearly as more folks learn Hoyle's secret.

HOYLE'S EDITIONS

Edition	Malfunction	Cost
1769	—	\$17,000
1780–1800	18	\$3,000
1801–1820	16	\$200
1821–1840	14	\$80
1841–1860	12	\$20
1861–1880	10	25¢



HEXES

TRADING HEXES

Hucksters are tight-lipped ducks. It keeps them from swinging from scaffolds around superstitious townsfolk. Inevitably, however, one huckster spots another, and if they don't kill each other, they just might share a little arcane knowledge.

For each hex a character tries to teach another, the receiver must first make an Incredible (11) *academia: occult* roll to see if he can grasp it. If he fails, he can never learn the hex from this particular teacher (though he could learn it from another source). If he succeeds, he can learn it normally.

As a side note, the teacher can make a Fair (5) *professional: teachin'* roll. Every success adds +1 to the student's *academia: occult* roll.

ARCANE TEXTS

If you can tell someone else how to cast a hex, you can certainly write it down and tell them as well. A few hucksters, usually the kind who don't travel much, keep journals of their arcane knowledge. If another huckster reads this information, he may have a chance at understanding the ideas within and learning the hex himself.



When your character runs across such a goodie, the Marshal assigns it a TN based on the source. Your hero must make a *Smarts* roll to figure it out. Make it, and your huckster can learn the hex normally. Fail, and your Weird Western wizard can never learn the hex from this particular source.

LEARNING NEW HEXES

Once a character has found a new hex and understood its basic principles, he can learn and eventually cast the darn thing. Buying the first level in a new hex is just like buying a new Aptitude. The time it takes is 2d20 total hours (reroll Aces).

Though it's not required, a huckster can speed things up by making a single *academia: occult* roll against a Fair (5) TN. Every success reduces the study time by two hours.

TEACHERS

Although much of the skill to hexslinging must be mastered through individual effort, there is a benefit to having a teacher. A good teacher can show your huckster all the secret ciphers and codes pertaining to a hex, reducing the amount of time needed to learn it.

If your huckster is taught by someone else who knows the hex, halve the total time needed to learn it (after making an *academia: occult* roll to speed things up if desired).

THE GREAT GAME

To cast a hex, a huckster must find a manitou, engage it in a mental duel, and—most importantly—win. If she fails to find a manitou or win the duel, the hex fails. Losing a duel can result in backlash. Even winning is no guarantee the manitou won't get in a parting shot.

STARTING THE HEX

The first step in successfully casting a hex is opening a channel to the Hunting Grounds and contacting the manitous that dwell there. In the huckster's mind, she envisions her spirit-self actually venturing there and playing a game of both skill and chance with a manitou.

Once there, the only thing she can do through her mental contact is attempt to engage a manitou in a test of will. The bigger and more powerful the manitou, the more power the huckster gets for her spell if the spell is successful.



In game terms, the huckster must first make an Aptitude check using her level in that hex. The die type is determined by the Trait the hex calls on. If you get at least one Fair (5) success, your huckster has attracted the attention of a manitou and engaged it in a clash of wills.

Now draw five cards from a 54-card deck (leave the Jokers in). You also get one extra card for every raise you got on your hex roll. Your goal is to put together the best poker hand you can (if you're not familiar with poker, see the Poker Hands Table on page 33). Most hexes require a minimum hand to be successful. If your hand isn't up to snuff, the hex fails.

The number of raises you got shows the power of the manitou contacted. The tougher the manitou, the more cards the huckster draws, representing the potential for both power and disaster. That's why a top huckster has more chances at both success and backlash when he draws additional cards. There's no way around it.

Occasionally, a huckster attempting to contact the Hunting Grounds goes bust on her hex Aptitude roll. In that case, her attention wavered from the process at the wrong moment, and the manitou ripped her mind a new cornshoot.

THE DUEL

Once a manitou has joined a game, the huckster must win the duel. The game itself is merely the huckster's mental image of the contest of spirit. Americans usually see the game as poker, but other cultures may differ.

If the huckster wins, she forces the manitou to channel power from the Hunting Ground into her hex. The more powerful the manitou, the greater the mystical energy it can provide. It's the caster's knowledge of Hoyle's formulae which shapes the energy into a particular hex.

If the manitou wins, the hex fails. Sometimes, it uses the huckster's contact with the natural plane to cause backlash. Usually, it targets its wrath on the huckster, but occasionally some other poor soul catches Hell—literally.

In the game, this is represented by the hand you drew. If the huckster makes the hex's minimum hand, she's won and can cast the hex. If she draws a Joker, the manitou has managed to get a swipe in too.

A huckster can win the duel but still take backlash. If the hex succeeds despite the backlash, the huckster's just the victim of a poor loser's parting shot. If the hex fails, the manitou has won the contest and gotten a lick in on the huckster. Manitous are poor winners too.

WHY POKER?

Hoyle's original book didn't even have poker in it (since it hadn't been invented yet), but hucksters of the West almost universally envision that game because that's what they're most familiar with. But of course there are some oddballs who see it as a game of bridge, dice, mah jong, or maybe even tiddlywinks (though he'd best never tell anyone).

Whatever game the huckster uses to grasp the battle of wills, the *Deadlands* game mechanic used to represent the outcome is always a poker hand. If you're really gung-ho about using some other game to symbolize this contest, feel free. Just don't try to convert the game mechanics. You just won't be able to properly replicate the odds of the poker hands we use for hexes.

BACKLASH AND HOW TO AVOID IT

Did that catch your attention?

Well, here's the bad news: It isn't all that easy to dodge the wrath of a manitou. A huckster who goes bust while casting a hex gets a spiritual slap on the backside with nothing to show for it but some brain bruises. Or maybe a coffin.

Don't draw any cards. The hex just fails, and your huckster takes backlash. Thanks for playing.

Assuming you don't go bust, drawing a Joker is both good and bad. The Joker is a wild card, which means the minimum hand the huckster draws is a Pair—usually enough to get at least a minimal effect from the hex. The bad news is it means backlash for the huckster, just like going bust on the casting roll.

But not always.

Manitous are crafty and malicious entities, but so are most experienced hucksters. In fact, if the huckster's got enough skill, sometimes he can even fool (or cheat!) a manitou.





In game terms, if a huckster has a skill of 3 or higher in a hex, he can treat a red Joker as a wild card with no backlash. Unlike mad scientists, hucksters can get away with this because they know they're dealing with an evil spirit and are prepared to deal with it.

Mucking around with demons is still dangerous, so your hero shouldn't use hexes any more than he has to, but at least you can raise the odds in your hero's favor by raising her hex levels to 3 or better.

Black Jokers—like going bust—always mean backlash. Sorry, but that's the cost of dealing with manitous.

HEXES

Here's the whole reason for being a huckster—not that risking lynching from an angry mob of townsfolk, being hunted by Texas Rangers and Pinkertons, or tempting the wrath of demons isn't enough reward in and of itself.

In the following pages there are not only a whole passel of brand new hexes, but also the old, tried-and-true hexes from the *Deadlands* rulebook. We put them all together in this book to make them easy to reference.

But that's not the only reason.

Look closely at the hexes, even if you've been using them for a while. You may find a few subtle differences. We've tidied up the wording on some of the more complicated ones and extended the effects on others. All in all, you should find your hexes just a little bit better.

HEX DESCRIPTIONS

Hexes have five entries: Trait, Hand, Speed, Duration, and Range.

Trait is the Mental Trait used to cast the hex. Unlike normal Aptitudes, hexes are always tied to a specific Trait.

Hand refers to the minimum poker hand the huckster must draw to empower the hex. Better hands usually mean the hex is stronger, although depending on the hex it may affect the duration, range, and so on, instead.

Speed is the number of actions it takes to complete a hex. A few hexes, such as *helpin' hand*, *fortune teller*, or *rainmaker*, take much longer and are not really suitable for most combat situations. These hexes have their speeds listed in minutes, hours, or days as appropriate.

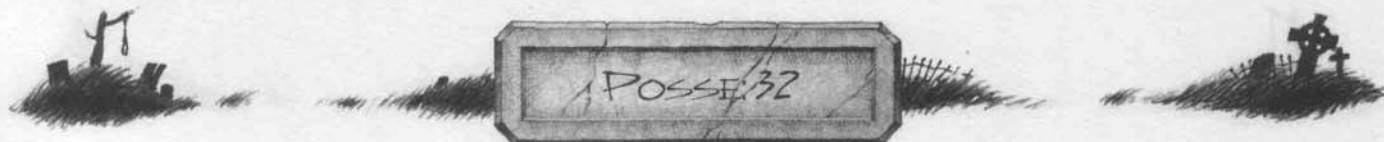
Any hex that takes a minute or longer to cast requires complex crafting to be effective. The caster must spend the entire casting time envisioning the hex's final form and effect. Any interruption to this effort ruins the hex, which makes sitting down and trying a longer hex in the middle of a fight darn near impossible.

If the hex has "(Vamoose!)" beside the number, this means it must usually be used in response to another action, and it requires the huckster to vamoose, much like using the *dodge* Aptitude. This requires the huckster to have Action Cards available. The spell's description explains the procedures for this type of action.

Duration is the length of time the hex stays in effect.

"Concentration" means the huckster must maintain concentration to keep the hex working. Meanwhile, he can take only simple actions, such as moving or talking. Breaking the hexslinger's concentration immediately ends the hex. Other hexes may require Wind to maintain, while a few use a combination of both. This means that as long as the huckster maintains concentration or pays the required amount of Wind, the hex stays in effect.

Range is the maximum distance at which the hex can take effect. For area-of-effect hexes, this is the maximum distance from the huckster to the center of the hex's effect.





POKER HANDS

All huckster spells are based on the best poker hand possible. Here's a short description of each, in progression from weakest (the lowly single Ace) to strongest (the rare Royal Flush).



Hand	Cards
Ace	A single Ace
Pair	Two cards of the same value and any suit
Jacks	A Pair of Jacks or better. Unless the hex specifies otherwise, this normally counts as only a Pair.
Two Pairs	Two Pairs (see above).
Three of a Kind	Three cards of the same value and any suit
Straight	Five sequential cards (any suit)
Flush	Five cards of one suit
Full House	A Three of a Kind, and a Pair.
Four of a Kind	Four cards of the same value and any suit
Straight Flush	Five sequential cards all in the same suit
Royal Flush	The 10, Jack, Queen, King, and Ace of the same suit.

THE HEXES

ACE IN THE HOLE

Trait: Knowledge

Hand: Two Pairs

Speed: 10 minutes

Duration: 1 day/hex level or special

Range: Touch

Hucksters don't usually play well with others. When they do, the effects can be spectacular.

This hex allows the caster to provide another person with a magical "Ace in the hole." The huckster links a hex he can cast to a small focus of some sort, usually a playing card, which can then be given to another. The holder of this focus can cast the hex just as if she were the huckster.

When this person triggers the link, she rolls the huckster's skill with the hex but substitutes her Trait dice for the huckster's. If successful, she draws the cards indicated by the roll. Of course, this means she suffers any backlash as

well. Going bust on the hex Aptitude roll and drawing *any* Joker, in this case, regardless of either person's skill, causes backlash.

There are a few limitations on *Ace in the hole*. First, the link only lasts 1 day per the huckster's level in *Ace in the hole*. Second, any hexes which could only be cast on others (*helpin' hand*, etc.) cannot be cast on either the original huckster or the person holding the Ace—they must target a third person. Any hex which can normally only be used on the huckster, can now be used either on the huckster or the person holding the Ace. Finally, while a hex is linked to an *Ace in the hole*, the huckster cannot cast that hex himself.

Velvet gives Bad Luck Betty an *Ace in the hole* with *soul blast* linked to it. Velvet's skill with *soul blast* is 5, so the link can last for 5 days. Later, Betty uses the *Ace in the hole* to discourage the attentions of a persistent cowboy. Her *Spirit* is a d8, so she rolls 5d8 to determine the success of the hex. Not surprisingly for Betty, she gets three 1s on her skill roll and gets to see a manitou face-to-face. Yeeoww!

ACHILLES' HEEL

Trait: Cognition

Hand: Two Pairs

Speed: 1

Duration: Instant

Range: 1 yard/hex level

Often is the time when a posse finds itself confronted with an abomination they're just not quite sure how to defeat. Not surprisingly, quite a few of these posses get eaten by that same monster. A huckster with the hex *Achilles' heel* can sometimes gain a supernatural glimpse into the weak spot of a seemingly invincible foe.

For this hex to be effective, the huckster must be within range of the target at the time he casts it—not always a good place to be. If the hex is successful, the hexslinger has a short vision or feeling which reveals something about the target's weakness—if it has one! The better the huckster's hand, the better the information she gets about the target's vulnerability.

Achilles' heel is only effective against animate targets and is normally only useful against supernatural beings, since regular folks usually have only minor weaknesses in comparison. However, if cast on a normal person, this hex reveals any Hindrances worth 4 or more points that the target may have.



HEXES



AIR BUBBLE

Trait: Spirit
Hand: Ace
Speed: 1
Duration: 1 minute/hex level
Range: 5 yards/hex level

This is a handy little hex if your hexslinger takes an unexpected dip or his pals have been hitting the beans a little too hard.

This hex creates a small bubble of air around the huckster's head. The air within is replenished throughout the duration of the hex, ensuring the huckster has a constant supply of fresh air.

The bubble is able to maintain its integrity against various liquids and gases, depending on the hand drawn, making it effective in environments ranging from a smoke-filled room up to, and including, underwater areas.

AIR BUBBLE

Hand	Environment
Ace	Smoke
Pair	Poison gases, swamp gas hex
Jacks	Water

BASH

Trait: Spirit
Hand: Pair
Speed: 2
Duration: Instant
Range: 25 yards/hex level

Few things make a manitou madder than being forced to serve a huckster's whim, if even for an instant. On the other hand, nothing makes an angry manitou happier than outright, unadulterated destruction. That's exactly what *bash* is all about: bashing things all to Hell.

Unlike *soul blast*, this hex is capable of damaging inanimate objects—exclusively. It can't directly hurt a living being, but the hex gives your huckster something to knock down doors with or to chuck at the big, armored steam wagon which is about to squash him flat. It can also be used to damage a rifle in someone's hands or even destroy a gizmo. Any animate thing attached to the damaged piece is unharmed by the hex (at least directly).

When cast, *bash* appears as a swirling ball of spiritual energy that flies toward the target and slams into it with devastating force.

As with *soul blast*, not only must the huckster successfully cast the hex, he needs to actually hit his intended target with an attack roll. Use the *bash* roll used to cast the hex as the huckster's roll to hit the target. There are no range modifiers, and called shots are possible (as long as they're called in advance, just like a normal). The damage caused depends on the hand drawn.

Bash moves a bit slower than *soul blast*, so if the target sees it coming and has a card left, the target may try to vamoose out of the way. Add +3 to his *dodge* (or *drivin'*, if your huckster has taken to throwing the hex at passing vehicles) roll for this.

BASH

Hand	Damage
Pair	1d6
Jacks	3d6
Two Pairs	4d8
Three of a Kind	5d8
Straight	6d8
Flush	7d10
Full House	8d10
Four of a Kind	9d10
Straight Flush	10d12
Royal Flush	10d20

HEXES

BEAST MASTER

Trait: Smarts

Hand: Pair

Speed: 1

Duration: Concentration

Range: 5 yards/hex level

With *call o' the wild*, a huckster can summon animal allies to his aid. Sometimes, however, he may find there is no need to summon the animals—they're already there. *Beast master* lets a huckster mentally command animals within range of the hex.

Unlike *call o' the wild*, this hex doesn't give the huckster much choice over what animals he gets. He's limited to what's on hand when he casts the hex. The affected animals do his bidding as long as he continues to concentrate. As soon as he stops, however, the animals revert to their normal actions.

Beast master doesn't impart any intelligence to the animals it affects. The caster shouldn't expect a squirrel to read a note over the bad guy's shoulder. Controlled animals must still make *guts* checks when faced with supernatural opponents.

If the animals the huckster targets are trained or under the control of someone with the *animal wranglin'* Aptitude, it's a little tougher to manage. Make an opposed roll between the two attempting to control the varmints, the caster's *beast master* skill versus the other's *animal wranglin'*. Characters on horseback use their *horse ridin'* instead. If the huckster loses this contest, the hex fails.

The number of animals the huckster can control is based on the hand he draws.

BEAST MASTER

Hand	Number
Pair	1
Jacks	1d4
Two Pairs	1d6
Three of a Kind	2d6
Straight	3d8
Flush	4d10
Full House	5d12
Four of a Kind	6d20



POSSE 35



BEDAZZLE

Trait: Smarts

Hand: Ace

Speed: 1

Duration: Instant (see below)

Range: 5 feet/hex level

On Mississippi riverboats, *bedazzle* is a favorite hex flamboyant hucksters use to escape a card game gone bad. It causes the huckster's fan of cards to produce a bright burst of light. The light duplicates the colors on the cards, so the truly flashy carry gaudy, multicolored decks just for this hex.

The hex affects anyone looking at the faces of the cards the huckster's holding—friend or foe. Of course, they must be within range of the hex as well. All in the area must make *Cognition* checks against a TN determined by the huckster's hand. The base TN for the minimum hand is a 3, it increases by +2 for each hand above this.

Those that make the check close their eyes and are not affected. Those who fail are blinded and suffer -4 to all Trait and Aptitude checks requiring sight. The blindness lasts for 1 round per level of the caster's skill with the hex.



BLACK LIGHTNIN'

Trait: Spirit

Hand: Pair

Speed: 1

Duration: 1 round/hex level

Range: 5 yards/hex level

Some folks are said to have an electric personality, but a huckster with the *black lightnin'* hex puts truth behind that phrase.

This hex charges the huckster's hands and arms with a strange, dark electricity he can throw on later actions. The caster receives a "charge" of a number of dice, depending on the hand drawn. He retains this charge for 1 round per level he has in *black lightnin'*.

As long as the huckster has some charges left, he can hurl a bolt on each of his actions. As the caster throws each bolt, he decides how many damage dice are in it. The only limitation is the number of dice can't exceed the huckster's hex level. Subtract the dice in each bolt from the huckster's charge. If the charge is exhausted, the hex ends.

Hitting a target with the *lightnin'* requires a Fair (5) *throwin': black lightnin'* roll. The target gets the benefit of cover, but there are no range modifiers. Worn armor does not protect against the bolt's damage. Also, called shots are not possible with *black lightnin'*.

If the huckster makes a *fightin': brawlin'* attack against a target, the target takes all the damage dice remaining in the huckster's charge.

If a bolt is cast by a wet huckster, the caster takes the damage himself.

Velvet has 3 levels in *black lightnin'*. He cast the hex and gets a Straight. He rolls 3d6 for his charge and adds them for a total of 12. He looses his first bolt (which he charges to 4d10) at a hapless gunman. Whether he hits or not, he's still got 8d10 worth of bolts to throw—at least until the hex runs out after the third round.

BLACK LIGHTNIN'

Hand

Damage Die

Charge Dice

Pair

d4

d4/hex level

Two Pairs

d6

d4/hex level

Three of a Kind

d8

d4/hex level

Straight

d10

d6/hex level

Flush

d12

d6/hex level

Full House

d20

d6/hex level





BLOODHOUND

Trait: Cognition

Hand: Pair

Speed: 1

Duration: 1 hour/hex level

Range: 5 yards/hex level

A favorite among hexslinging bounty hunters, this hex allows a huckster to put a ghostly tag on someone, allowing him to track the victim like a bloodhound.

The target must be in range of the hex at the time of casting, but afterward the range is unlimited. Depending on the hand the huckster draws, he can tell the direction, distance, exact location, or even what the target is doing. (Higher hands give all the information of awarded by lower hands too.) This hex is extremely useful for leading posses after bandits or just keeping tabs on a suspicious character.

Bloodhound even works on a huckster who's using the *ghost trail* hex. See the description of *ghost trail* for details on how this works.



Hand	Information
Ace	General direction
Pair	Rough distance
Two Pairs	Direction of travel
Three of a Kind	Exact location
Straight	Current activity

BODYGUARD

Trait: Spirit

Hand: Ace

Speed: 2

Duration: 1 minute/hex level

Range: Touch

Hucksters can't heal their own wounds—it's a fact of life. But there are a number of ways to keep from getting injured in the first place, though. *Missed me!* is one example, but what if a Weird Western wizard is facing a Maze pirate wielding a cutlass? Huckster shish-kabob, that's what!

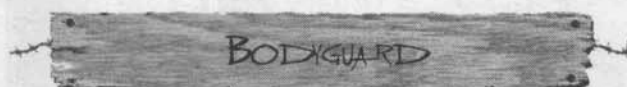
With *bodyguard*, the huckster conjures a form of magical protection for himself which absorbs some of the damage meant for the huckster. This defense is far from perfect and breaks down rapidly under attack—but, hey, it beats a kick in the head. Lots of kicks to the head, actually.

Bodyguard absorbs a number of wound levels determined by the hand the huckster draws,

preventing not only the damage itself but also the effects of the damage, like Wind loss, wound modifiers, and even getting pushed back. The huckster cannot control which wounds are absorbed by the protection—the hex stops all wounds received while it is in effect.

Once the maximum number of wound levels have been absorbed by the hex, it dissipates and the huckster is vulnerable to further attacks. The protection afforded by *bodyguard* is effective against all types of physical damage, both magical and non-magical. It does not provide any protection against suffocation, drowning, or wounds caused by excessive Wind loss (like from massive bleeding).

A huckster can have only one *bodyguard* at a time. Until the first hex ends, any further castings automatically fail.



Hand	Wound Levels
Ace	1
Pair	2
Jacks	3
Two Pairs	4
Three of a Kind	6
Straight	8
Flush	10
Full House	14
Four of a Kind	20

BRIMSTONE

Trait: Smarts

Hand: Ace

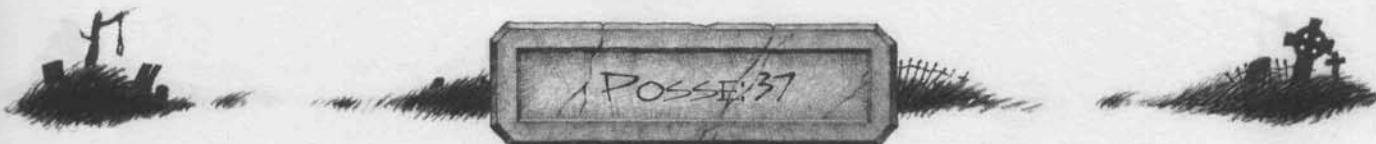
Speed: 1

Duration: 1 minute/hex level

Range: 5 yards/hex level

With hexes like this, it's no wonder hucksters have gotten a bad reputation with God-fearing folk. *Brimstone* allows the huckster to summon up a bit of brimstone from Hell itself. The thick, yellowish vapors it puts forth choke and blind everyone in the area. Once the huckster has summoned up the *brimstone*, he can drop it, throw it, or carry it around if he wants, though he's not immune to its effects.

To cast the hex, there must be a source of burning coals. The huckster reaches into the flames (which some maintain actually channels his hand straight into the Pit) and plucks out a piece of brimstone, causing 1d6 Wind damage to him. The brimstone immediately begins to smoke, causing sickly, vaguely yellow vapors to





billow forth over a circular area equal to 10 feet in radius per hex level. A blowing wind, whether of natural or magical origin, is ineffective in dispersing the Hellish fumes. Living beings within the cloud suffer burning eyes, skin, and lungs.

Until the hex's duration has expired, all Trait or Aptitude rolls made by anyone within the smoke are at -2, and they also lose Wind at the end of each round depending on the hand drawn (see the table below, amigo). The modifier applies as long as a target remains within the area and for two full rounds after leaving the cloud. The Wind loss ends immediately upon exiting the cloud and can be recovered normally.

BRIMSTONE

Hand	Wind Loss/Round
Ace	1d4
Pair	1d6
Jacks	1d8
Two Pairs	2d6
Three of a Kind	2d8
Straight	2d10

CALL O' THE WILD

Trait: Knowledge

Hand: Pair

Speed: 2

Duration: Concentration

Range: 1 mile/hex level

You can assemble quite a menagerie with this hex. *Call o' the wild* lets your huckster summon and control critters and varmints. He can't talk to monstrous abominations, only natural animals. The call goes out to specific types of creatures such as bats, rats, wolves, bears, etc.

This hex doesn't magically transport the animals to the caster, so it may take some time before the critters put in an appearance.

When the animals do show up, they do the caster's bidding as long as he continues to concentrate. The moment he lets go, vermin and lesser varmints vanish. Wolves, bears, and the like either flee or attack the closest target depending on the situation.

Varmints aren't too smart. They do whatever the huckster wants to the best of their abilities, about like a well-trained dog. Don't expect them to figure out how to fire a weapon or start speaking Portuguese.

The varmints still have to make *guts* checks against supernatural opponents, just like anyone else. That's why it's not much use to throw wolves at some shambling creature from the grave. They'd likely just run away with their tails between their legs.

The hand the huckster draws determines the type and number of creatures he can call upon. The huckster doesn't actually summon the varmints—he just calls to them. If there's none around, nothing happens, even if he draws a Royal Flush. The Marshal has to decide if the type of creatures the huckster is calling are within his range. If not, the huckster can try another animal type, as long as it is available to a lower hand.

CALL O' THE WILD

Hand	Varmints
Pair	2d4 mice, squirrels, small birds
Jacks	1d4 house cats, skunks, raccoons
Two Pairs	3d6 rats, bats, snakes
Straight	2d6 wolves, mountain lions
Flush	1d4 bears

HEXES

CLEAR OUT!

Trait: Spirit
Hand: Ace
Speed: 1
Duration: 1 round/hex level
Range: Self

Sometimes a fellow just needs some elbow room. This hex can get you some, right quick. With *clear out!* a huckster causes an invisible spherical wall of force to push outward from himself. The radius of this wall is equal to 5 yards per hex level.

Objects in the area of effect—animate or inanimate—are automatically pushed away from the caster if their weight is equal to or less than the weight indicated on the table below. Bullets and the like overcome the effect of the hex by sheer velocity, so don't count on this hex to make a huckster bulletproof. People or creatures attempting to resist the force or push forward against it must make a *Strength* roll versus a TN from the table.

If a creature encounters a wall or similar obstruction while being pushed by this hex, it must make a *Strength* test versus the TN from the table or be held fast.

Each hand above Three of a Kind adds 2 to the TN and 50 pounds to the weight moved.

CLEAR OUT!

Hand	TN to Resist	Weight
Ace	3	50 pounds
Pair	5	100 pounds
Jacks	7	150 pounds
Two Pairs	9	200 pounds
Three of a Kind	11	250 pounds

CONFOUND

Trait: Smarts
Hand: Ace
Speed: 1
Duration: 1 round
Range: 5 yards/hex level

A huckster using *confound* cannot only make something harder than it looked, he can make it harder than it is!

This hex causes the Target Number for any single Trait or Aptitude roll to increase in difficulty. Raises for this roll are figured from the new adjusted TN. It is effective against even magical Aptitudes like hexes, rituals, and even a blessed's *faith* rolls.

Confound only affects the next action made by the target. If the next action the target makes doesn't involve an Aptitude or Trait roll, the hex is wasted. Additionally, if a full round elapses without the target taking an action, the hex is wasted.

The increase of the Target Number is based on the hand drawn by the huckster. The minimum hand increases the TN by +2. Each hand above the minimum required adds an additional +2 to the TN.

CORPOREAL TWEAK

Trait: Smarts
Hand: Pair
Speed: 1
Duration: Concentration or 1 Wind/round
Range: 5 yards/hex level

Time to engage in a little self-improvement.

This hex alters a target's physical abilities, making him stronger, faster, nimbler, tougher, or more dexterous. The huckster decides on which one of the target's physical Traits he wants to *tweak* before channeling. A subject can only be affected by one *corporeal tweak* at a time. Any further *corporeal tweaks* cast on a target while one is still in effect automatically fail.

CORPOREAL TWEAK

Hand	Bonus
Pair	+1 step
Two Pairs	+2 steps
Three of a Kind	+3 steps
Straight	+4 steps
Flush	+5 steps

CORPOREAL TWIST

Trait: Smarts
Hand: Pair
Speed: 1
Duration: Concentration or 1 Wind/round
Range: 5 yards/hex level

Corporeal twist is the opposite of *corporeal tweak*. It lowers one of a target's physical Traits by one die type for each of the hands listed under *corporeal tweak*. Once the die type has dropped to a d4, the Coordination drops by 1 for each level, down to a minimum of 1d4. A subject can only be affected by one *corporeal twist* at a time. Any further *corporeal twists* cast on a target while one is still in effect automatically fail.



CRITTER WARD

Trait: Spirit
Hand: Jacks
Speed: 5 minutes
Duration: 1 hour/hex level
Range: Touch

Tired of waking up with members of the local wildlife sharing your bedroll?

This incantation allows the caster to erect a stationary magical barrier that normal animals can't willingly cross. Hucksters often use this hex to safeguard their camps at night. *Critter ward* affects a spherical area with a radius of 5 feet per level of the hexslinger's skill in the hex. After casting the hex, the huckster may leave the area without affecting the *critter ward*.

No normal animal can willingly enter the area protected by a *critter ward*. A bear ousted from its den, for example, may prowl angrily at the edge of the ward, but it can't cross it.

Animals controlled by others (by a Harrowed's *varmint control*, a familiar Edge, or a *call o' the wild* hex) must make an Onerous (7) *guts* check to enter the area. Those that succeed suffer a -2 to all Trait and Aptitude checks while within the

critter ward. Either way, these animals seek to escape the area as soon as they are freed from the control. This hex has absolutely no effect on abominations.

DEADLY CREEPERS

Trait: Knowledge
Hand: Pair
Speed: 2
Duration: Concentration
Range: 15 yards/hex level

Heard of carnivorous plants? This hex can't make a sapling nibble toes, but it might make it lash out and bash in someone's brainpan. With this hex, the huckster gives malevolent life to plants of all sorts.

Assuming there are saplings, tall weeds, or other substantial flora within a circular area equal to 10 feet in radius per hex level, any creature that enters this area is attacked. The plants attack everyone—friend or foe—including the huckster.

The maximum size foliage a huckster can affect is determined by the hand he draws. The size of the plants also determines the amount of damage done. If the huckster draws a hand higher than needed for the plants he's trying to affect, they don't do any additional damage.

The damage shown for each entry represents the blows of many vines, thickets, trees, branches, etc. Roll only once per round for everyone within the area, regardless of how many trees are there. Weeds, tall grass, and the like can also entangle. Anyone attempting to leave an area that contains entangling flora must make a *Strength* check TN (5) to escape the entwining plants. Remember that even if your huckster is going for redwoods, he might still affect any nearby vines and weeds. If there's any doubt what's around, the Marshal decides.

A huckster can only affect foliage that is actually in the area, regardless of the hand.

DEADLY CREEPERS

Hand	Foliage	Damage
Ace	Grass	0
Pair	Thorn bushes	1d4 Wind
Jacks	Thickets, vines	1d10 Wind
Two Pairs	Saplings	1d6
Three of a Kind	Small trees	2d6
Straight	Medium trees	d6
Flush	Large trees	4d8
Full House	Redwoods	4d12





DEUCES WILD!

Trait: Smarts

Hand: Jacks

Speed: 2

Duration: Concentration

Range: 5 yards/hex level

Double your pleasure, double your huckster. *Deuces wild!* creates an illusory double of your huckster. The double must remain within range and sight of the huckster at all times, but she can move the illusion around as she likes. The double appears in all respects identical to the huckster, and anyone attempting to pick out the real huckster must make an Onerous (7) *Cognition* roll. Anyone within three feet of the double need only make a Foolproof (3) *Cognition* roll to spot a certain shimmer to the fake.

The double is only a visual illusion, so its actions have no effect on physical objects. Additionally, creatures which have keen senses of smell are not fooled by the illusion—use this against a pack of wolves, and your huckster is lunch. Anyone touching the double instantly realizes it's an illusion. Physical objects pass right through it!

If the huckster draws Three of a Kind or better, she can also throw her voice so the double appears to speak.

DISRUPT

Trait: Knowledge

Hand: Pair

Speed: 2

Duration: Instant

Range: 5 yards/hex level

Sometimes other hucksters can be downright unneighborly. *Disrupt* lets your huckster dispel the effects of an ongoing hex, Harrowed power, or black magic spell.

This hex has no effect against favors or miracles. There's not much that manitous can do against the sources of their power. *Disrupt* isn't much use against instant spells or hexes like *soul blast* or *howl* or hexes with a permanent duration like *helpin' hand* or *vittles*, either. What it is good for is stopping hexes or spells with a duration, like *Texas twister* or *siren song*.

Some hexes have both an instant and a longer-term effect, like *frostbite*. In this case, *disrupt* doesn't remove the damage from *frostbite*, but it does negate the doubled wound-effect modifiers. If it's unclear whether an effect has a duration or is instant or permanent, the Marshal has final say.

To *disrupt* a hex (or a power or spell), check the table below and compare the huckster's hand with the foe's level in the hex, power, or spell he wants to disrupt. If the hand drawn equals or exceeds the opponent's skill, the target hex is cancelled. *Disrupt* only affects the specific hex targeted, the opponent may recast it on his next action if he so desires.

Earlier, Velvet was trapped in *spirit coils* by an opposing huckster. Physical strength was never his forte, so it's doubtful he could muscle his way out. Instead, Velvet decides to cast *disrupt*. He is successful and draws Two Pairs. His opponent's skill in *spirit coils* is 3, so Two Pairs is enough to dispel the hex. Velvet is freed from the coils and is looking to teach his opponent a lesson.



Hand	Opponent's Level
Ace	1
Pair	2
Jacks	3
Two Pairs	4
Straight	5
Flush	6
Full House	7
Four of a Kind	8
Straight Flush	9
Royal Flush	Any level

DIVERSION

Trait: Smarts

Hand: Pair

Speed: 1 (Vamoose!)

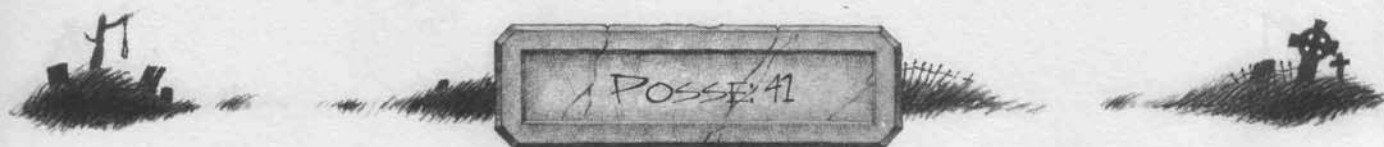
Duration: Instant

Range: 5 yards/hex level

Traveling the Weird West alone is a dangerous proposition. This hex lets your huckster keep his trail mates alive and kickin'.

Diversion lets the hexslinger deflect physical attacks—and even some hexes—aimed at his friends. The effect is to add +5 to the Target Number of anyone trying to shoot the target of this hex.

Explosives, fire from a flamethrower, and other area-effect attacks cannot be deflected, but ranged magical attacks such as *soul blast* and *black lightning* can be pushed aside. The Marshal may determine that other supernatural effects may be affected as well.





DRAW!

Trait: Smarts

Hand: Ace

Speed: 2

Duration: 1 round

Range: 10 yards/hex level

A clear head and fast hands gives a huckster an edge over his opponents. If your huckster doesn't have either of these, he'd better think about learning this hex. This hex gives the huckster additional actions which he may give to himself or any other character within range of the hex.

The target gains additional Action Cards according to the huckster's hand. Any cards the huckster draws that are higher than the current Action Card must be used immediately (though one could be put up the sleeve).



Hand	Bonus Action Cards
Ace	1
Pair	2
Two Pairs	3
Three of a Kind	4
Straight	5

EARSHOT

Trait: Smarts

Hand: Pair

Speed: 1

Duration: Concentration or 1 Wind/round

Range: 1 mile/hex level

This hex is a longtime favorite of busybodies and muckrakers everywhere. It allows a huckster to hear through someone else's ears. The subject can be a human or any other mundane creature—it does not affect abominations. The caster can only hear as well as the subject can, so if he picked a target with bad ears, she may be out of luck! On the other hand, a *keen* subject might enable her to catch something she'd have otherwise missed.

If the victim makes an Onerous (7) *Spirit* roll when the hex is first activated, he knows something's wrong. At this point, he can try to eject the huckster by engaging her in a contest of *Spirit* versus the huckster's *earshot* Aptitude level each round. The huckster can cast this spell on an unseen target if she can get her hands on an object the subject has touched within the last week.

EARTHWRACK

Trait: Knowledge

Hand: Ace

Speed: 2

Duration: Instant

Range: 5 yards/hex level

Earthwrack channels the energy the huckster taps from the Hunting Ground directly into the very ground underfoot. The destructive forces this unleashes cause the earth to buckle and crack and can make permanent changes on the local terrain.

The devastation wrought by this hex depends on the draw. Each effect is detailed below, along with the minimum hand necessary to cause it. The exact effect depends on caster's hand, but the hexslinger can select any one effect equal to or less than the hand drawn.



Hand	Effect
Ace	The earth churns itself into an area of rocky, broken ground. This area is a square with sides 10 yards long per hex level. Running across this terrain is impossible.
Jacks	The ground rolls into a mound of earth 1 foot wide, 2 feet high, and 10 feet long per hex level.
Two Pairs	Tremors do 4d12 to all earth and stonework structures in the area of effect.
Three of a Kind	A wall of solid rock 1 foot thick, 2 feet high, and 5 feet long per hex level erupts from the earth.
Straight	A chasm 8 feet wide, 20 feet deep, and 10 feet long per hex level opens.
Four of a Kind	A minor earthquake occurs. The Marshal decides on the effect this has on the area.
Royal Flush	A major earthquake rocks the area, collapsing mines and knocking down buildings.



EYE SPY

Trait: Cognition

Hand: Ace

Speed: 1

Duration: Concentration

Range: Self

While folks often speak of a fellow having eyes in the back of his head, a huckster can go him one better. When this hex is cast, a circle of faintly visible eyes rings the huckster's head. These eyes provide her with 360° of vision and make her tough to sneak up on. She gains +5 to all *Cognition* rolls made for surprise purposes while maintaining *eye spy*.

Unfortunately, the human mind is not constructed to process a 360° viewpoint. Most folks find it disorienting after a very short time. A huckster maintaining *eye spy* for long periods must make a Fair (5) *Vigor* check every 5 minutes or end the hex due to nausea.

FILIBUSTER

Trait: Mien

Hand: Pair

Speed: 1

Duration: Concentration

Range: 2 yards

Some folks have the gift o' gab. Others just don't know when to shut up. This hex makes the huckster a conversationalist that would make a Boston debutante green with envy.

When the huckster casts the hex, she must focus her attention on a single target. Guards, deputies, and rich gamblers are common victims. If she's successful, her voice becomes absolutely mesmerizing.

As long as she continues to speak to the target, he finds it difficult to pay attention to anything else. The huckster can stop speaking only for short, natural pauses for breath—anything longer than this ends the hex. At the end of the hex, the target has a feeling of disorientation, as if his mind had wandered during a tedious conversation.

To notice anything outside of the huckster and her voice, the target must make a *Cognition* roll against a Target Number determined by the huckster's hand. The base Target Number is 3 for the minimum hand of Ace. Each hand the huckster draws above this increases the TN by +2.

The target only gets such a roll when something may affect him or something he considers important. Examples include a deputy's



set of jailhouse keys or a gambler's pot of winnings. The Marshal has final say on what the target may or may not consider vital.

FLYPAPER FINGERS

Trait: Spirit

Hand: Jacks

Speed: 1

Duration: 1 minute/hex level

Range: Touch

Preachers claim angels bear the faithful to Heaven when their time comes. A huckster can't always wait that long.

With *flypaper fingers*, the palms of the huckster's hands and the soles of her feet suddenly become incredibly adhesive. This allows her to climb almost any surface—only the toughest require even a Foolproof (3) *climbin'* check. This new ability works even through shoes and gloves.

The hex can also be used to help the huckster hold onto objects or people in hand or even lift smaller things without actually grasping them. In an effort or a contest to maintain a hold on something, the huckster adds twice his hex level to any rolls.



FOIL

Trait: Smarts
Hand: Pair
Speed: 1 (Vamoose!)
Duration: Instant
Range: 5 yards/hex level

Foil lets your huckster prevent others from doing unto him that which he'd like to do to them. It allows the huckster to disrupt another's hex as it is being cast!

He does so by forcing his manitou to attack his rival's. The more skilled the opponent, the harder this is to do. This hex is only useful against black magic, a Harrowed's power, or another huckster's hex. It has no effect on either favors or miracles.

To use *foil*, the huckster must vamoose.

After spending his Action Card, the huckster makes his *foil* roll and compares his hand with his opponent's level in the hex, power, or spell being countered. The chart below tells the hand necessary to beat each level. If the huckster is successful, the opponent's hex, power, or spell fails. The opponent must still check for backlash (or misfires for black magic), as usual. If the *foil* fails, the hex or spell is resolved as normal.

This hex only prevents a single casting attempt. The opponent is free to cast the same or other hex again in later actions.

Velvet is facing a cultist who's about to send an icy *bolt o' doom* right through his favorite green velvet suit. The huckster has no card up his sleeve, but he does have one Action Card remaining. Velvet spends it and casts his hex. He's successful and draws a Pair of Jacks. Fortunately, the cultist only has a skill of 2, so the *bolt o' doom* fails, and the cultist can only check for a misfire.



Hand	Opponent's Level
Ace	1
Pair	2
Jacks	3
Two Pairs	4
Straight	5
Flush	6
Full House	7
Four of a Kind	8
Straight Flush	9
Royal Flush	Any level

FORGET

Trait: Mien
Hand: Ace
Speed: 1 (special)
Duration: Permanent
Range: 1 yard

This is a favorite hex with the rare Pinkerton huckster. It allows the devious hexslinger to erase—or even modify—the memories of some poor sod.

The length of memories the caster can erase depends on the hand drawn. The memories are not completely destroyed; they are simply made very difficult to recall.

Remembering anything from a period of time that's been affected by this hex requires an Incredible (11) *Knowledge* roll. Even if successful, the recovered memory is hazy and may contain inaccuracies.

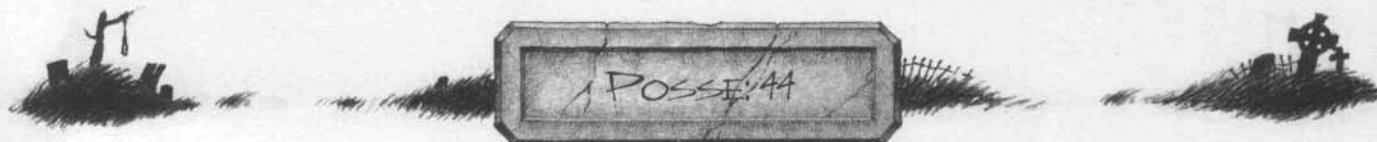
Should the huckster wish to alter the subject's memory—rather than simply erase it—the time required to cast the hex increases dramatically. This is because it's necessary to root around in the subject's mind and find material with which to build the false memory.

When altering memories, the speed of the hex increases to 10 minutes plus another 10 minutes for every hand needed above the minimum hand. At the end of this time, the huckster must make a Hard (9) *Smarts* roll to build the memory desired.

If this *Smarts* roll is failed, the memories are only erased. If the huckster goes bust on this roll, the false memory is badly flawed, and within 1d4 days the subject regains all memories the huckster had erased with the hex. The target also remembers the caster mucking around in his mind, and he's not likely going to be very understanding about it.



Hand	Erased/Altered Time
Ace	1 round
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





FORTITUDE

Trait: Spirit
Hand: Ace
Speed: 2
Duration: 1 minute/hex level
Range: 5 yards/hex level

With *fortitude*, the huckster calls on the manitou to give any target other than herself a momentary increase of supernatural vitality, even above his normal limit. This hex increases a target's Wind by an amount determined by the hand drawn. Any Wind lost comes first from that gained from the *fortitude*. When the hex ends, any of the extra Wind still left fades.

This hex can be used to return consciousness to a Winded companion. However, at the end of the hex, he is again disabled unless some other method is used to heal him.



Hand	Wind Gain
Ace	5
Pair	10
Two Pairs	15
Three of a Kind	25
Straight	40

FORTUNE TELLER

Trait: Cognition
Hand: Two Pairs
Speed: 5 minutes
Duration: Instant
Range: 1 yard

With this hex, your huckster can make a living as a traveling sideshow or just be a creepy prognosticator who utters cryptic remarks.

Fortune teller gives the huckster supernatural insight into the future of the hex's target, which must be a person. The hex reveals information about the possible future of the target in the form of a brief vision. The vision is likely to focus on events such as dangers to the target or influential people. The better the hand, the more knowledge is revealed, but this information is almost always hidden in cryptic images.

The target is normally a willing participant in the casting, but this isn't always the case. Should she attempt to resist the casting, the target and the huckster make an opposed test of *Spirit*. If the target wins, the huckster gains no information, but if the huckster wins, the hex functions as normal.



GAMBLER'S LUCK

Trait: Spirit
Hand: Jacks
Speed: 1
Duration: Permanent
Range: Touch

Pay your money, and take your chances.

This hex allows a huckster to gamble with her destiny. Anyone casting this hex must pay at least one white Fate Chip to start the hex. This is the ante for the manitou's game.

If successful, she wins some control over future events. The gain is dependent on the hand drawn and is represented by Fate Chips.

Should she go bust, not only does she suffer backlash, but she also loses all her Fate Chips. If she has no Fate Chips remaining, the Marshal gets to draw three Fate Chips from the pot.



Hand	Chips Gained
Jacks	2 white
Three of a Kind	2 white, 1 red
Straight	2 white, 1 red, and 1 blue





GATEWAY

Trait: Knowledge

Hand: Two Pairs

Speed: 2

Duration: Concentration

Range: 2 miles/hex level

Often a huckster finds herself without a horse, and the old heel-toe express just won't get her where she needs to be fast enough. With a little preparation, a huckster can use this hex to return to a spot she's chosen beforehand.

To cast *gateway*, the huckster must first select a doorway of some sort as the return portal. This doorway can be no greater than 5 feet wide and 10 feet tall.

Once the portal has been selected, the hexslinger places a unique mark of her choosing on the side of the doorway she wishes to emerge from. This mark can be as simple or as complex as the huckster wants. The mark does not have to be actually inscribed on the door, it merely need touch it (many hucksters use a playing card).

The whole process of setting up the return portal usually takes no longer than a single action. It's important to choose the return doorway carefully because the huckster can only have one prepared at a time. Also, a locked return portal causes the hex to fail (and can be awfully embarrassing for the hexslinger).

When the huckster wants to use the *gateway*, she must find another doorway, although this one can be of any size, as long as it is a constructed portal. For some reason, natural archways or openings do not work with this hex; only handmade ones.

If she successfully casts the hex and draws at least the minimum hand, she can step through one doorway and emerge from the return portal. Anyone watching either portal sees it temporarily fill with an inky blackness, and the huckster either disappears into the darkness or emerges from it.

Only the caster can make use of the portal, and she can only carry as much as she can lift. No matter how strong she may be, she cannot carry another person through the doorway. Attempting to do so causes the hex to automatically fail.

One word of caution. Backlash with this hex can be very dangerous. A number of hapless hexslingers have stepped into one end of a gateway and never emerged from the blackness. Where those unlucky hucksters ended up is anyone's guess (and the Marshal's call).

GEYSER

Trait: Knowledge

Hand: Pair

Speed: 3

Duration: 1 round

Range: 20 yards/hex level

Why travel to Yellowstone? A huckster with this hex can summon up a geyser nearly anywhere.

A hexslinger using *geyser* sends the power he obtained from the manitou deep into the earth to force boiling water to erupt at a spot he designates. The hex works even in areas without any apparent water, like deserts. In these places, the manitou just has to dig a little deeper than usual.

The *geyser* erupts with superheated water and steam in a roughly circular area, 1 yard in diameter and 5 yards high. Everyone in that area at the time of eruption takes scalding damage according to the huckster's hand, while all within 3 yards of the center of the geyser take half damage.

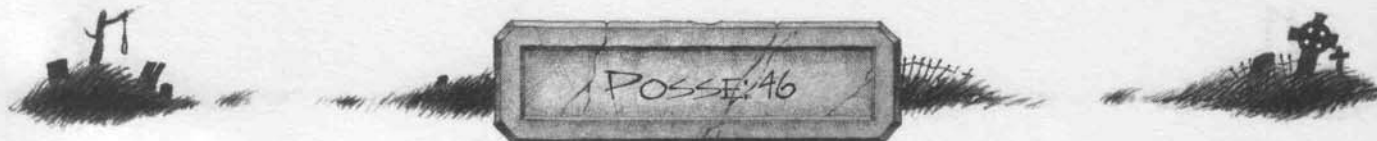
Due to the rumbling which precedes the eruption, people in the area of effect who have cards remaining may vamoose to reduce the damage they take. This requires an Onerous (7) *Nimbleness* roll. If the roll is successful, the target moves one damage level further from the center of the *geyser*, so someone in the full damage area moves to the half damage area, and someone in the half damage area moves out of the hex's area of effect.

Damage from the geyser is applied like damage from an explosion: Figure the total number of wounds and roll for the location of each separately.

Armor does not protect against the damage from *geyser*. Completely waterproof clothing, like a Smith & Robards diving suit, halves the damage taken from this hex.



Hand	Damage
Pair	4d4
Two Pairs	5d6
Three of a Kind	6d6
Straight	6d8
Flush	7d10
Full House	8d10
Four of a Kind	9d10
Straight Flush	10d12
Royal Flush	11d12





GHOST RIDER

Trait: Spirit
Hand: Jacks
Speed: 1 minute
Duration: 1 hour/hex level
Range: Touch

Living in the Hunting Grounds as long as they have, the manitous possess a small amount of power over animal spirits. With *ghost rider*, the huckster is able to use this power to temporarily procure herself a mount. This hex summons a horse spirit for the huckster to ride. No one except the huckster can ride the horse. No *horse ridin'* roll is necessary to ride; the spirit takes care of its rider.

The mount provided is always a ghostly gray with coal-black eyes, mane, and tail. It has the same exact Traits given for an average mount in the **Equipment** section of the *Deadlands* rulebook, except that its *Spirit* is 2d8 and its *Pace* is 24.

The horse can usually only perform feats a normal horse is capable of, although its tracks are indistinct and give anyone tracking it a -2 to his *trackin'* rolls. The spirit can't fight, even to save itself, and it's dispersed if it takes even one wound. At the end of the hex's duration, the mount dissipates like smoke in a breeze.

If the huckster's hand is high enough—Three of a Kind or better—the caster gets a superior mount. This mount takes damage like a normal horse, has a *Pace* of 30, and can fight. It attacks with its front hooves for STR+2d6 damage.

Any cowpoke with *animal wranglin'* who makes a Fair (5) Aptitude test knows there's something spooky about the huckster's horse. Hucksters who plan on riding a mount summoned by this hex into town had better be ready to ride it back out in a hurry!

GHOST TRAIL

Trait: Smarts
Hand: Ace
Speed: 1
Duration: 1 hour/hex level
Range: Touch

Occasionally, a mob on the trail of a huckster is befuddled when the quarry's tracks just disappear. Most likely, he's caused his tracks to vanish by means of *ghost trail*.

Ghost trail erases the trail left by the huckster and one other person per hex level. *Ghost trail* works against many forms of tracking, depending on the hand drawn.



As the hands increase in value, the huckster gains protection against visual tracking (humans) and then scent (animals and some abominations). Finally, if the huckster draws well enough, the hex actually produces a false trail leading the pursuers in a random direction away from the huckster for 1 mile/hex level in *ghost trail*.

If a huckster using *ghost trail* is the target of a *bloodhound* hex, he and the huckster casting *bloodhound* must make an opposed roll using their respective hexes. Should the huckster casting the *ghost trail* hex win, the *bloodhound* hex fails.

If the huckster casting *bloodhound* wins, she gains information on the huckster's whereabouts as normal. *Ghost trail* is still effective against more mundane methods of tracking, however, even if defeated by *bloodhound*.



Hand
 Ace
 Pair
 Two Pairs

Tracking Protection
 Visual
 Scent
 Creates false trail





GRAVEYARD MISTS

Trait: Knowledge

Hand: Ace

Speed: 2

Duration: 10 minutes/hex level

Range: 5 yards/hex level

There's nothing like a good, thick fog to hide someone who doesn't want to be seen. A hexslinger casting *graveyard mists* calls up a dense ground fog to cover an area designated by the huckster. This circular area's radius cannot exceed 40 yards per hex level, and the height of the mist cannot reach more than 30 feet above the ground.

Within the area, vision is severely limited, and sound and smell are also muted. The maximum range of sight is determined by the hand drawn, and all *Cognition* rolls, vision or otherwise, receive a -2 modifier.

Used with proper discretion, *graveyard mists* seldom appear supernatural in origin. Certainly, a thick fog on a dark night keeps most sane folk indoors, but few are liable to connect its use with a hexslinger.

Graveyard mists is most effective on heavily overcast days or at night. If exposed to sunlight, the mists burn off quickly, limiting the duration to 1 minute per hex level.



Hand	Maximum Sight Distance
Ace	20 yards
Pair	10 yards
Two Pairs	10 feet
Three of a Kind	5 feet
Straight	2 feet

HARD WATER

Trait: Spirit

Hand: Ace

Speed: 2

Duration: Concentration

Range: 50 yards/hex level

This hex causes water to become thicker than molasses on Christmas. The water becomes thicker and thicker, eventually becoming almost solid if the huckster draws well enough. It affects an area equal to 10 feet in diameter per hex level.

With an Ace, the water becomes slow moving and more buoyant, giving a +3 to anyone making a *swimmin'* roll in it. Ships or other vessels lose one quarter of their movement in this water.

With a Pair, the water is so viscous that *swimmin'* rolls are unnecessary unless the cowpoke is underwater when the hex is cast. In this case, the unlucky swimmer needs to make a Fair (5) *swimmin'* roll to push his way up through the thick syrupy water. Waterborne vessels lose one half of their movement.

With Two Pairs, the huckster makes the water almost gelatinous. Anyone underwater when the hex is cast must make an Onerous (7) *swimmin'* roll to surface. Ships have their Pace reduced to one quarter their normal movement.

With a Straight, the water becomes almost solid. Anyone underwater at this point, must make an Incredible (11) *swimmin'* roll to fight his way to the surface. Ships are stopped for the duration of the hex.

If used on quicksand (natural or magic) or thick mud, count the hand as two levels above its actual value.

HELPIN' HAND

Trait: Smarts

Hand: Ace

Speed: 10 minutes

Duration: Permanent

Range: 1 yard

Helpin' hand allows a huckster to heal a suffering companion's wounds (not his own). Each successful casting reduces the wounds in all areas by 1 level each. During this time the caster can take no actions other than sitting near the patient and waiting (a good time to brush up on one's solitaire).

The hand needed depends on the victim's highest wound level. Note that *helpin' hand* can't heal more than 1 level of wounds at a time. The huckster can treat several wound levels by casting the hex more than once, however. *Helpin' hand* also can't restore maimed limbs. Only the divine favors of shamans and the blessed can pull off that trick.

Undead, like the Harrowed, cannot be affected by this hex. To fix their wounds, the huckster must use the *reanimate* hex.



Hand	Wound
Ace	All Wound
Jacks	Light
Two Pairs	Heavy
Three of a Kind	Serious
Straight	Critical





HEX SENSE

Trait: Cognition

Hand: Ace

Speed: 1

Duration: 1 round/hex level

Range: 25 yards/hex level

With all the strange things going on in the Weird West, it's good to be able to keep tabs on what magic is floating about.

Hex sense enables the huckster to detect magical emanations and enchantments. She may be able to tell the type of magic and its purpose, as well. For *hex sense* to be effective, the huckster must be able to see the effect or source of the magic. In other words, this spell is blocked by walls or other opaque substances. She can examine an arc up to 90° wide and out to the limit of the hex's range each round the *hex sense* is in effect.

The huckster's hand determines how much information she can learn.



Hand	Information gained
Ace	Magical effects/sources within area are known.
Pair	Type of magic (relic, favor, miracle, hex, favor, black magic, or abomination)
Two Pairs	General effect of magic (protective, damaging, informational, etc.)
Straight	Exact hex or black magic power in use.
Flush	Remaining duration on subject magic.

HOME GROUND

Trait: Cognition

Hand: Ace

Speed: 2

Duration: 1 hour/hex level

Range: Self

In the wilderness of the Weird West, it pays to be as familiar as you can be with the territory you're traveling through. As any good scout can tell you, there are times when not knowing something can get you killed—or at least ambushed.

Home ground gives the huckster a mental map of the surrounding area. It shows him all major terrain features such as hills, valleys,

watercourses, and the like. It also conveys a knowledge of lesser features like cliffs, passes, watering holes, and all major regions of vegetation.

The game effect is to provide the huckster with the *area knowledge* Aptitude for the territory he is in. For the hex's duration, this is equal to his *home ground* level. The exact size of the area that he gains a familiarity with is based on the hand drawn.

When the hex ends, all knowledge of the area, except that which the hexslinger has seen for himself, is lost.



Hand	Radius of Effect
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





HOWL

Trait: Spirit
Hand: Ace
Speed: 1
Duration: Instant
Range: Self

Who said words can never hurt you? A huckster using this hex lets out an unearthly scream, affecting everyone within 10 feet of him. Anyone within the area of effect must immediately make an Onerous (7) *guts* roll. Those who succeed shake off the effects of the hex. Those who fail, however, lose Wind according to the hand drawn by the huckster.

Characters with mild *bad ears* get a +2 on their *guts* check, while those fortunate enough to be stone deaf are immune to this hex. It does not affect abominations, either. They're just not as easy to scare as normal folks.

This is not a subtle hex—the huckster's scream can be heard for the better part of a mile in open territory, a side effect that can sometimes be used as a signal as well.



Hand	Wind
Ace	1d4
Pair	1d6
Two Pairs	2d6
Three of a Kind	3d8
Straight	4d8

HUNCH

Trait: Cognition
Hand: Two Pairs
Speed: 10 seconds
Duration: Instant
Range: Self

A huckster can gain insight into the past with the *hunch* hex. To cast this spell, the huckster places her hand on a person, place, or thing and closes her eyes. If the hex is successful, the magician has a brief vision, feeling, or "hunch" about some event that happened in the target's past.

The better the huckster's hand, the better the information she gets about the target's history. The Marshal decides just what information is imparted.

In any case, the target has absolutely no way to "know" about events that did not happen in its presence.

HUNGER PANGS

Trait: Spirit
Hand: Ace
Speed: 1
Duration: Instant
Range: 5 yards/hex level

Hunger is nothing to laugh at—just ask any pioneer who's been short of food in the middle of a Montana winter. Usually, however, hunger's a little slow to use for a weapon in a gunfight. With *hunger pangs*, the huckster speeds up the natural process quite a bit.

The target and huckster make an opposed test of *Spirit*. The huckster gains +2 for each hand above the minimum. If the huckster wins the contest, the target creature loses the difference in Wind. This hex cannot take the creature below 1 Wind. Any creature brought to 1 Wind in such a manner immediately loses interest in all non-life-threatening situations in order to search for food—not to mention becoming an easy target for a sucker punch!

This hex has no effect on abominations or the Harrowed.

HURRY UP!

Trait: Smarts
Hand: Ace
Speed: 1
Duration: 1 round/hex level
Range: 1 yard

Occasionally, discretion is the better part of valor. Or maybe the huckster doesn't have to outrun the wendigo chasing her—just the guy beside her. Whatever the reason, *hurry up!* gives the subject a little extra speed.

The subject (which can be a mount) can now add to its move a number of yards determined by the hand drawn. These bonus yards are in addition to any gained by running or rolling a pick up die (see the Gitalong Table in the *Deadlands* rulebook), although it isn't necessary to pick up the pace to get the bonus from *hurry up!*



Hand	Bonus Move
Ace	4 yards
Pair	8 yards
Jacks	12 yards
Two Pairs	16 yards
Three of a Kind	20 yards



HEXES

IMPOSTOR

Trait: Smarts

Hand: Pair

Speed: 1

Duration: Concentration or 1 Wind/round

Range: Touch

Maybe your huckster is wanted for a crime, or possibly there's someone in the saloon she'd just rather not talk to. Either way, being able to change your appearance on command is a handy ability.

This hex allows the huckster to alter her looks to appear as just about anyone else she chooses. The alteration isn't limited to just the face, but encompasses the entire appearance. While the hex does allow for change of apparent sex, drastic alterations in size aren't possible, so petite hucksters probably shouldn't attempt to impersonate bareknuckle fighters. The hexslinger can only impersonate people she has seen before—in person or otherwise.

The hex gives the huckster a +5 to her *disguise* roll. Provided she doesn't go bust, this guarantees at least one success, and often that's more than enough! Each hand above a Pair provides an additional +2 to the roll.

INCOGNITO

Trait: Smarts

Hand: Ace

Speed: 1

Duration: Concentration

Range: Touch

Edgar Allen Poe would approve of this hex. It allows you to hide in plain sight, just like his "Purloined Letter."

This hex hides the subject behind a veil of magic that makes most folks (and things!) likely to just ignore him. It doesn't truly make the target invisible, just hard to notice. This concealment is totally dependent on the hex's magic, so no amount of stealth can assist it.

Since *incognito* affects the observer and not the subject's *sneak* Aptitude, the *Spirit* roll to notice the hexslinger is a straight roll versus a TN determined by the hand drawn. This roll is automatic whenever an observer is in visual range of the hex's recipient. Anyone who succeeds at this roll can see the caster (and point him out to others, giving them a +5 on their *Spirit* rolls).

If the huckster casts this hex while the target is under direct observation, it may not do much





good. Anyone watching the subject at the time the hex takes effect receives a +5 to her *Spirit* roll. The same holds true if the subject makes blatantly overt actions while under the hex. These include, but aren't limited to, firing a gun, making a physical attack, casting a loud or flashy hex, or talking above a normal voice. Those types of actions also give an immediate +5 to the *Spirit* roll. Some things you just can't ignore!

If the huckster casts this hex on someone else, he can still see her normally.



Hand	Spirit TN
Ace	3
Pair	5
Jacks	7
Two Pairs	9
Three of a Kind	11

INTERPRET

Trait: Cognition

Hand: Ace

Speed: 2

Duration: 5 minutes/hex level

Range: Self

When sailors of the Mexican Armada have a gun to your head and are excitedly asking you questions in Spanish, it's not the time to try out those few words of the language you picked up in the saloon. You're never quite sure what that señorita was calling you, after all.

A huckster using this hex gains insight into the meaning of an unknown language. *Interpret* works for either spoken or written languages, although the huckster must choose one or the other at the time of casting the hex.

If the huckster chooses spoken communication, she gains the ability to speak the language at the level indicated by the hand drawn. If written communication is chosen, the duration of the hex becomes 1 hour per hex level.

The amount of understanding gained is determined by the hand drawn. At a Pair or higher, the huckster is able to understand the language well enough that an actual Aptitude equal to the level indicated in the appropriate language is gained for the duration of the hex.

This hex does not help the huckster in any way with a language she already happens to know.



Hand

Ace

Pair

Two Pairs

Three of a Kind

Understanding

General intent
(greeting, warning,
and so on)

Language 1

Language 2

Language 3

KENTUCKY WINDAGE

Trait: Smarts

Hand: Ace

Speed: 1

Duration: 1 round/hex level

Range: 1 yard

Sometimes a bullet has your name on it, and if it doesn't, a huckster with *Kentucky windage* might just put it there! This hex offsets penalties and guides bullets to their targets. Many a huckster has used this hex to pass himself off as a trick shot.

The hex can be cast on either the huckster or a companion. *Kentucky windage* doesn't provide any bonus to hit. It only negates penalties to its subject's *shootin'* rolls. The size of penalty negated is dependent on the hand drawn. The minimum hand negates a -2 penalty. Each hand above this negates a further -2 penalty.

Additionally, since the bullet is supernaturally directed, flesh wounds are less likely. The subject can reroll any 1s on the damage dice. One casting affects all the subject's *shootin'* concentrations for the duration of the hex. It has no effect on the *fannin'* Aptitude.



Velvet is facing down an angry Harrowed. He doesn't want to expose his hexslinging abilities to the crowd which has gathered to watch the fight, so using *soul blast* is out of the question. Velvet casts *Kentucky windage* and draws Three of a Kind—enough to negate 10 points of penalties. On his next action, Velvet whips out his derringer and takes a shot at his opponent's head from a distance of 15 yards. This is normally a penalty of -9 (-6 for head, -3 for the range), but *Kentucky Windage* negates the entire penalty—Velvet hits his opponent square between the eyes on a 5! He rolls 3d6 for damage and can reroll any 1s which come up.





LETHARGY

Trait: Spirit
Hand: Ace
Speed: 1
Duration: 5 minutes/hex level
Range: 5 yards/hex level

This hex comes in handy for cooling off a poker game gone bad or stalling a lynch mob. It instills a feeling of intense laziness among all those afflicted.

Lethargy affects everyone in a 5-yard radius of the huckster's target, except the huckster himself. Anyone in the area must make a *Spirit* roll against a Target Number determined by the huckster's hand. The base TN for an Ace is 3. Each hand above the minimum increases the TN by +2. Those who fail just don't find the gumption to take any drastic action and most likely just find a spot to sit a spell. While it can't convince anyone to do anything, *lethargy* might convince someone to do nothing. And often, that's just what the huckster wants.

Unfortunately, high levels of adrenaline completely negate the effects of *lethargy*, so the hex is useless in combat or life-threatening situations that have already developed.

LOOKING GLASS

Trait: Cognition
Hand: Two Pairs
Speed: 5 minutes
Duration: 1 minute/hex level
Range: 5 miles/hex level

This is a favorite of nosy hexslingers. With it, they can look in on almost anyone with a little preparation. *Looking glass* allows a huckster to use an ordinary mirror as a sort of crystal ball, though there is a catch. There must also be a mirror in the place he is trying to observe. If there's no mirror or reasonably reflective surface (windows don't usually work), the hex fails.

In effect, this spell opens a junction between the two mirrors. Only the huckster can see or take advantage of this link. The huckster, by looking into one mirror, can see out of the other just as if he were looking through a window into the other location. He can only see what can be seen from the mirror's vantage point.

Looking glass doesn't provide any special visual abilities. If the huckster can't see in the dark, he'd better hope there's a light on where he's looking.

Higher hands improve the link between the mirrors. First the huckster gains the ability to

hear through the mirrors, as well, although the sound is slightly muffled. At a very high hand, Full House or better, the junction allows him to actually physically pass through it. An average mirror allows the huckster to stick an arm through. It takes a fairly large mirror to actually step through to the other location. Only the huckster and items in his possession can pass through the mirror. The link remains for the duration of the hex, so the huckster could cross, perform a few actions and return, all before the connection breaks.

Some caution is needed when travelling via mirror. If the mirror at either end is broken the huckster can end up stranded. If the mirror is broken while the huckster is passing through it (requiring his opponent to use a held action), he takes 4d8 damage to the guts.



Hand	Effect
Two Pairs	Visual observation of area.
Three of a Kind	Audio observation also.
Full House	Huckster can physically pass through mirrors.





LONG-WINDED

Trait: Cognition

Hand: Ace

Speed: 2

Duration: 1 round/hex level

Range: 1 mile/hex level

This is a handy little incantation for those times when you just can't seem to find a telegraph office. Having a huckster with this hex around is better than owning stock in Western Union.

With this hex, the huckster can convey mental messages over vast distances. Depending on the hand drawn, the message can vary from simply a vague feeling all the way up to full two-way communication.

The huckster decides who she is trying to contact at the time of casting. If the target is out of the hexslinger's range, the hex is still cast, only the message is never received.

The hex does not let the huckster know whether or not the target is within range, although if two-way communication is achieved, the huckster can probably figure it out for herself.



Hand

Ace

Pair

Two Pairs

Three of a Kind

Message

Simple emotion

One sentence

Detailed message

Two-way communication

MARTYR'S MIRROR

Trait: Spirit

Hand: Ace

Speed: 1

Duration: 2 rounds/hex level

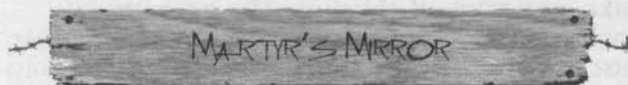
Range: Self

There's a saying that goes the best defense is a good offense. *Martyr's mirror* turns an opponent's offense into the huckster's defense. This hex deals a like amount of damage (not wounds) back to anyone or thing who damages the caster. There is no range limit to this effect.

The damage is dealt to the same hit location on the opponent where the huckster was wounded. *Martyr's mirror* can only do as much damage as was dealt to the huckster. If the huckster reduces the damage to herself through Fate Chips, the *bodyguard* hex, or any other means, the damage dealt by *martyr's mirror* is also reduced.

Furthermore, the damage a huckster can inflict on her opponent with this hex is limited by the hand she draws. The amount indicated on the table below is the maximum amount which can be reflected each round. The *mirror* affects the first damage received each round until the maximum damage has been reached that round.

This is magical damage, and as such, it does affect creatures immune to normal sources of damage, such as nosferatu or hangin' judges. Armor does not provide protection. Note that this hex reflects damage, not wound levels. A fatal wound to a huckster may only scratch a Mojave rattler!



Hand

Ace

Pair

Two Pairs

Three of a Kind

Straight

Flush

Full House

Maximum Damage Inflicted

6

12

18

30

42

48

60





MIND TWEAK

Trait: Smarts

Hand: Pair

Speed: 1

Duration: Concentration or 1 Wind/round

Range: 5 yards/hex level

Mind tweak is the mental version of *corporeal tweak*. The huckster can affect any Mental Trait with this handy ritual. This can come in handy for those times when you need just a little more brain power or even peace of mind.

A subject can only be affected by one *mind tweak*. Any further *mind tweaks* cast on a target while one is still in effect automatically fail.



Hand	Bonus
Pair	+1 step
Two Pairs	+2 steps
Three of a Kind	+3 steps
Straight	+4 steps
Flush	+5 steps

MIND TWIST

Trait: Smarts

Hand: Pair

Speed: 1

Duration: Concentration or 1 Wind/round

Range: 5 yards/hex level

Mind twist is the opposite of *mind tweak*. It lowers one of a target's mental Traits by one die type for each of the hands listed under *mind tweak*. Once the die type has dropped to a d4, the Coordination drops by 1 for each level to a minimum of 1d4.

A subject can only be affected by one *mind twist*. Any further *mind twists* cast on a target while one is still in effect automatically fail.

MIRAGE

Trait: Smarts

Hand: Pair

Speed: 2

Duration: Concentration or 1 Wind/round

Range: 5 yards/hex level

Many a cowpoke has been misled by a mirage. Not all of these are natural phenomenon—some sprang from a hand of cards!

This hex allows a huckster to create an illusion of a place or inanimate object. For the purposes of this hex, normal plants such as grass and trees are considered inanimate.

The effects of the hex are limited to an area equal to 200 square feet per hex level. This is the equivalent of a 20' x 10' rectangle, although the huckster can modify this area into any shape, as long it does not exceed the limit. If needed, the huckster can move the illusion as appropriate within the range of the hex. Note, though, that any illusory objects created with this hex must be three dimensional. Your huckster can't extend the size of his illusion by making a locomotive which appears normal from the side but which is only 1" wide.

The illusion produced by the hex is very realistic. So much so, in fact, that anyone viewing it must first have a reason to doubt its existence—and then make a Hard (9) *Cognition* roll—to recognize it for false. Anyone attempting to touch an illusion realizes it to be false without having to roll. Also, since it is visual, it has absolutely no effect on the blind or creatures that do not use vision as their primary sense.

The precision of the hex is limited by the hand the huckster draws. Initially, only simple objects can be reproduced, but with higher hands he can produce very intricate illusions.



Hand	Complexity
Ace	Single uniform object (blank wall or mound of dirt)
Pair	Single simple object or area (door, empty room, muddy pond)
Jacks	Single moderately diverse object (wagon, rifle, single dead tree)
Two Pairs	Single complex object or multiple simple objects (Gatling gun, sparsely furnished room, single live tree)
Three of a Kind	Multiple moderately diverse objects (furnished room, garden)
Straight	Multiple complex objects (complete building, train)
Flush	Extremely complex objects (interior of a gizmo)





MISSSED ME!

Trait: Smarts

Hand: Pair

Speed: 1

Duration: Concentration or 1 Wind/round

Range: Self

There are hexes which absorb damage and ones which reflect damage, but often it's best not get hit in the first place!

This hex forces a manitou to deflect bullets and other physical projectile attacks that would otherwise hit the huckster's body. The effect is to add +5 to the TN of anyone trying to shoot the huckster. Explosives, fire from a blazing flamethrower, and other area-effect attacks cannot be deflected, but ranged magical attacks such as *soul blast* and *black lightnin'* can be pushed aside. The Marshal may determine other supernatural effects can be affected as well.

NECROMANCER

Trait: Spirit

Hand: Two Pairs

Speed: 1

Duration: 5 rounds/hex level

Range: 1 yard

Generally, hucksters aren't too good at healing and the like, but the effects of this hex may make it appear that the caster can raise the dead—with good reason. *Necromancer* lets the caster restore life to a recently fallen comrade. At least for a very short while.

With this hex, the huckster can, with the aid of the manitou, temporarily call a departing soul back to its body. The huckster can only affect a person who has died within 1 round per hex level. The hex automatically fails if the subject died as the result of a Maiming head wound. For obvious reasons, this hex does not work on characters who are already Harrowed.

If successful, the subject is returned to his body for the duration of the hex. While under the effects of the *necromancer*, the subject is fairly insensitive to pain. She completely ignores 2 levels of wound modifiers and normal Wind loss, just as if she were Harrowed—which for all intents she is for the length of the spell. She also completely ignores the wound modifiers from the wound which killed her.

A character temporarily brought back to life by this hex cannot be healed by any means—even *reanimate*—so it is not possible to save someone's life by use of *necromancer*, but there are enormous possibilities otherwise.

Finally, the manitou occasionally "gets a taste" for the body and decides to keep it even after the hex expires. To reflect this, anyone who is the subject of a successful *necromancer* draws two additional cards when checking to see if she becomes Harrowed.

NIGHTMARE REALM

Trait: Spirit

Hand: Ace

Speed: 1

Duration: 1 minute/hex level

Range: 15 yards/hex level

Nightmare realm subtly warps the world around the huckster into a place straight from a bad dream—something manitous are very familiar with! Corners become darker, thickets deeper, and plants appear to wilt. Exactly why a huckster would want to actually make a place more foreboding, it's not easy to say, but *nightmare realm* lets her do it, at least for a short time.

Nightmare realm affects the entire area within range of the huckster at the time she casts it, and it actually raises the Fear Level there. The exact bonus is determined by the huckster's draw. With a high enough hand, she can turn a children's nursery into a Deadland.

This hex is particularly despised by Texas Rangers and Pinkertons, and any huckster they catch using it isn't too likely to get a chance to explain herself.



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

OLD TIMER

Trait: Spirit

Hand: Pair

Speed: 1 day

Duration: Permanent

Range: Self

What good is all the power and knowledge in the world if you're just going to die of old age someday? Right? Wrong! Not if that knowledge includes this particular gem: the very secret of eternal youth.





With this hex, the huckster can prolong his life indefinitely. Every time the hex is cast, it effectively extends his life by one year. And that's not one of those wrinkly, old, arthritis years. No sir, that's a year right now!

When he casts *old-timer* and draws at least a Pair, the huckster prevents himself from naturally aging for the coming year. Unfortunately, the hex does not protect the huckster from unnatural causes of aging, like magic, curses, or a particularly bad fright.

There is one possible drawback. If the caster suffers backlash, in addition to any other ill effects, he immediately ages one year.

PARCH

Trait: Spirit

Hand: Ace

Speed: 1

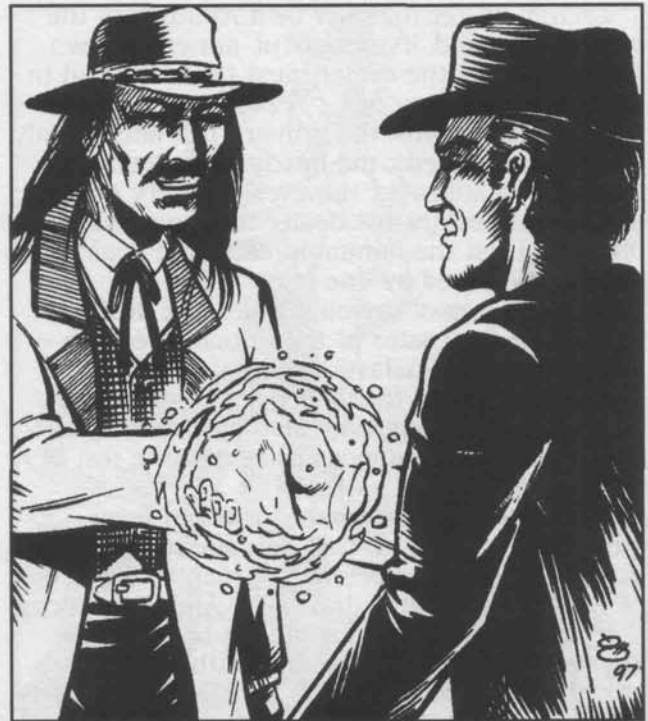
Duration: Instant

Range: 15 yards/hex level

Parch dehydrates a single target and withers and kills plant life in the surrounding area. The hex itself is invisible, but the effects of it are quite startling. The target of *parch* first begins to sweat profusely and becomes visibly pale. Then the skin becomes drawn and withers as the victim weakens, faints, and perhaps even dies.

The huckster's hand with the hex determines how much Wind is lost by his chosen target. The hand also determines the effect on the nearby vegetation. The huckster cannot choose to leave the local flora alone—it's going to wither. Wind lost to *parch* can only be regained by drinking water, and each quart of water (about a canteen-full) swallowed restores 1d6 lost Wind. The victim can only drink this quantity about once an hour.

Creatures who don't need water, like undead, machines, and most unearthly abominations, are immune to this hex.



PARDNERS

Trait: Knowledge

Hand: Jacks

Speed: 1

Duration: Special

Range: 3 yards

Poker's a whole lot better when there's more than one person playing, and with *pardners*, so is casting a hex. *Pardners* allows a huckster to get some magical assistance from, well, his partners.

With this hex, a group of hucksters combines skills to cast a hex, called the "primary hex," to greater effect than a single huckster can usually expect to achieve.

First, all the hucksters to participate in the group hex must be within range of the huckster casting *pardners*. The caster of this hex becomes the central person, or dealer, in the group's primary hex. Everyone participating in the group must know the primary hex, but only the dealer needs to know *pardners*.

As soon as *pardners* is cast, the members of the group individually cast the primary hex. If this occurs during rounds, the mages must all cast their hexes on the same Action Card. This means some might put cards up their sleeves and be patient.



Hand	Wind Loss	Plant Type
Ace	1	Grass
Pair	1d4	Wheat
Two Pairs	1d6	Corn
Three of a Kind	2d6	Bushes
Straight	4d6	Saplings
Flush	5d6	Small Trees
Full House	6d6	Trees
Four of a Kind	7d6	Cacti





Each huckster rolls her own Aptitude in the primary hex and, if successful, draws her own cards, but only the dealer must be successful in casting the primary hex.


If the dealer fails, the primary hex fails. If only the dealer succeeds, the hex is only as effective as his hand indicates. However, for every other participant besides the dealer that succeeds and draws at least the minimum hand, the dealer's hand is increased by one level.

For purposes of ongoing hexes, the dealer is considered the caster of the primary hex. For example, if the hex lasts as long as the caster concentrates, only the dealer must concentrate to maintain it. Ranges are also measured from where the dealer happens to be, not the rest of the group.

Obviously, *pardners* makes it easier for a group of hucksters to cast devastatingly powerful hexes. But before you rush to your copy of *Hoyle's*, there's one drawback. And it's a doozy.

If any one in the group suffers backlash for any reason during the casting of the primary hex, the entire group suffers backlash. On results that cause failure of the hex if the caster loses consciousness, the primary hex fails only if the dealer passes out.

If backlash occurs during the casting of the *pardners*, only the dealer suffers any ill effects.

 A group of three hucksters using *pardners* attempts to cast *bash* at a marauding steam wagon. The dealer successfully casts *pardners* and draws the minimum hand. On the next action, the three hexslingers all cast *bash*. The dealer draws a Pair of Deuces, enough to cast the spell. One of his companions pulls a Pair of 5s, while the other gets an incredible Full House (which, by the way, only counts as 1 success). The dealer's hand is increased by 2 levels on the chart to Three of a Kind, and the group lets rip with a 5d8 *bash*.

PENETRATIN' GAZE

Trait: Cognition

Hand: Ace

Speed: 1

Duration: Concentration or 1 Wind/round

Range: 25 yards/hex level

Penetratin' gaze is an extremely handy hex for bodyguards, bouncers, and those who want to see what Miss Daisy is hiding under all those petticoats.

Penetratin' gaze allows a huckster to see through things which would otherwise obscure normal vision. It works against both normal and supernatural effects—such as the fog produced by *graveyard mists* or the like—if the huckster draws well enough. The caster's vision is as clear as that of a sunny day, out to the range of the hex.

The caster can ignore all penalties to see through objects and environments listed for the hand drawn. A huckster can ignore cover modifiers for light materials if she can see through it. Additionally, the vision is cumulative, so a huckster who can see through smoke can also see through smoke in the dark.



Hand	Effects Ignored
Ace	Darkness
Pair	Fog
Jacks	Smoke, murky water
Two Pairs	Thick cloth (curtains, overcoat, and so on), magical illusions
Three of a Kind	2 inches of wood
Straight	1 inch of metal

PENNY ANTE

Trait: Smarts

Hand: Ace

Speed: 1

Duration: 1 round

Range: 5 yards/hex level

Penny ante is a favorite of gambling hucksters. They bet some poor dupe they can perform some nearly impossible feat, and then they pull it off via this hex.

This hex is the opposite of *confound*. It causes the TN for any single Trait or Aptitude roll to decrease in difficulty. Raises are figured from the new adjusted TN.

The hex only affects the next action made by the target. If the next action the target makes doesn't involve an Aptitude or Trait roll, the hex is wasted. Additionally, if a full round elapses without the target taking an action, the hex is wasted.

The decrease of the target number is based on the hand drawn by the huckster. The minimum hand reduces the Target Number by -2. Each hand above this reduces the TN by another -2. The Target Number can never be reduced below Foolproof (3).





PHANTASM

Trait: Smarts

Hand: Ace

Speed: 1

Duration: Instant

Range: 5 yards/hex level

If anything knows what scares a fellow, it's the manitous. This hex puts this knowledge to use. It conjures up images from a target's nightmares and confronts her with them. Only the target can see the visions, but to her they seem frighteningly real.

Anyone affected by this hex must make a *guts* check against the Terror score indicated by the huckster's hand. Characters who fail the check roll on the Scart Table in the *Deadlands* rulebook. Those who succeed may be a little shaky but are otherwise unaffected.

Harrowed are particularly susceptible to this hex and suffer a -2 to the *guts* roll.



Even if the huckster doesn't draw a sufficient hand to lift his target, he may still be able to effect it in a minor way. The huckster can jostle objects up to 2 hands above his draw. By bumping the target, he may be able to topple a carefully balanced object or spoil an opponent's aim. The exact effect is up to the Marshal, but as a guide, jostling a gunman gives a -4 to his *shootin'* skill.

Finally, a huckster can lift himself (levitate) if he draws Three of a Kind or better.



Hand	Terror
Ace	3
Pair	5
Two Pairs	7
Three of a Kind	9
Straight	11
Flush	13

PHANTOM FINGERS

Trait: Spirit

Hand: Ace

Speed: 1

Duration: 1 Wind/round

Range: 5 yards/hex level

Hucksters often use this hex to cheat at cards or pull an enemy's gun from his holster. It allows the caster to manipulate objects from a distance. Objects affected by this hex have a Pace equal to the huckster's *Smarts*. *Phantom fingers* can perform relatively complex manipulations with an object (such as turning a key or firing a gun), but this taxes the huckster and causes him an additional 1d4 Wind.

If the huckster tries to snatch an object away from someone, the attempt is automatically successful if the target's owner is surprised. Otherwise, the huckster must make an opposed test of *Spirit* versus his opponent's *Strength*. The huckster gets a +2 bonus for each hand above the minimum needed to affect the target.



Hand	Size/Weight
Ace	Baseball
Pair	Pistol
Jacks	Rifle
Two Pairs	Gatling gun
Three of a Kind	Person
Straight	Iron safe
Flush	Wagon
Full House	Oak tree
Four of a Kind	Freight car
Straight Flush	Manor house
Royal Flush	Train





PLAYIN' POSSUM

Trait: Smarts

Hand: Ace

Speed: 1

Duration: 10 minutes/hex level

Range: Touch

Often times a dude might wish he was dead. With *playin' possum*, he can at least look it.

When a huckster casts this hex, he appears to keel over deader than a doornail. He's really fine, but covered by a convincing illusion. A mortal wound corresponding to the last damage taken appears on his body, and anyone examining him is not able to detect signs of life unless they win an opposed test of *medicine*: any versus the huckster's *Smarts*. The huckster gets a bonus of +2 to his roll for every hand above the minimum. During this time, the huckster can hear and can even see—barely—from his eyes.

Obviously, successful use of this hex requires a little planning. Dropping dead before you're even shot tends to make folks suspicious—most canny hexslingers keep a card up their sleeve to use for this bit of deception. The huckster can end the hex at any time he chooses.

POLTERGEIST

Trait: Spirit

Hand: Ace

Speed: 1

Duration: Instant

Range: 10 yards/hex level

A hexslinger with this particular hex can make one heck of a mess.

Poltergeist sweeps up objects within its area of effect and hurls them violently about. Anyone within the area is battered by the tiny tempest. Fragile objects within the area are invariably damaged or destroyed. All damage done by *poltergeist* is treated like as brawling damage.

The amount of damage done by *poltergeist* is determined by both the huckster's hand and the objects in the area. After drawing her hand, the huckster gets the maximum effect for the available objects. If there are no suitable objects within the area, the hex fails.

Velvet casts *poltergeist* in a small Denver book shop about to be robbed by a desperate gunman. He rolls a 6 and draws five cards. True to form, Velvet draws well and gets a Pair of Jacks. Unfortunately, the only things suitable for the *poltergeist* to hurl are books, so

Velvet is limited to 3d6 damage. He rolls and gets 13 points of damage. This causes the bandit 6 points of Wind and 1 real wound level.

POLTERGEIST

Hand	Objects Hurled	Damage
Ace	Shot glasses	1d6
Pair	Small stones	2d4
Jacks	Large books	3d6
Two Pairs	Cordwood	5d6
Three of a Kind	Light furniture	5d8
Straight	Bookshelves, desks	6d8
Flush	Large rocks	8d8
Full House	Anvils, boulders	8d10

POWER STRUGGLE

Trait: Spirit

Hand: Jacks

Speed: 1

Duration: 1 Wind/round

Range: 5 yards/hex level

With this hex, a huckster can cause a Harrowed no end of difficulties. It's a little harder to cast than most because he has to affect the manitou already in a Harrowed. If he is successful, he swats a hornet's nest with a stick—in a spiritual sense.

By aggravating the manitou inside a Harrowed, the huckster is able to force it and the person it's animating into a fight for control. On each of her actions, the Harrowed must make an opposed *Spirit* test against her manitou. If she's successful, she can act normally. If she gets a raise or better, she wins a Dominion point back from the manitou. However, if she fails, she is locked in a struggle of wills with the manitou and is unable to act that action.

The same applies to the manitou. If it wins the *Spirit* test and gets a raise, it wins a Dominion point from its host. This contest of wills continues for as long as the huckster is willing to keep it going.

The huckster may side with one of the participants in the struggle if he so chooses. Each hand the huckster drew above the minimum adds +1 to the *Spirit* roll of the combatant the mage aids.

This is not a hex to use lightly. Even if the Harrowed beats the manitou and wins control, that doesn't mean that the next time it's in charge the manitou won't remember the person who aggravated it!





PRIVATE EYE

Trait: Cognition

Hand: Pair

Speed: 1

Duration: Concentration or 1 Wind/round

Range: 1 mile/hex level

Private eye allows a huckster to see through another's eyes just as if they were her own. The subject can be either human or any other creature, although it does not effect abominations. This means that the huckster can see as well or as poorly as her target can, and she suffers from any penalties the target has. On the other hand, she also gains any bonuses the target has.

This works identically to *earshot*. See that hex description for all the gory details.

QUICKSAND

Trait: Knowledge

Hand: Pair

Speed: 2

Duration: Permanent

Range: 10 yards/hex level

Quicksand enables a huckster to turn otherwise stable ground into a deadly mire. The hex is only effective in a natural environment and does not work on solid rock.

The spell affects a circular area with a radius of 5 yards per hex level. The huckster's hand determines the depth of the *quicksand*.

Any creature caught within the newly formed muck is slowed to one quarter its normal Pace if the depth is less than its height. If the depth exceeds its height, the creature must make an Onerous (7) *swimmin'* roll each round it is in the *quicksand*. If the roll is failed, the creature takes double the difference between the TN and the roll in Wind.

The *quicksand*, once created, lasts until it naturally solidifies. It's the Marshal's decision as to how long this takes. Until then, not even a *disrupt* can return the ground to normal.



Hand	Depth
Pair	3 feet
Jacks	5 feet
Two Pairs	7 feet
Three of a Kind	10 feet
Straight	15 feet
Flush	20 feet

RAINMAKER

Trait: Knowledge

Hand: Ace

Speed: 10 minutes

Duration: 1 hour/hex level

Range: 1 mile/hex level

There's no shortage of snake oil salesmen rolling around the Weird West in brightly colored wagons proclaiming they can call down rain from the sky. A few of them can actually do just that! Rainmaker does just what it claims: It can bring rain to an otherwise sunny day.

The change in the weather affects the entire region within range of the hex, 1 mile per level of the hex. The exact strength of the weather is dependent on the hand the huckster draws. Look on the Rainmaker Table and find the prevailing weather conditions in the area (the Marshal has the final say on this). Drawing the minimum hand shifts the weather one line down the chart toward Tempest. Each hand above the minimum, shifts the weather an additional line.

The caster has no real control over the storm so called, and he always receives the maximum effect drawn. Although the hex has a duration of 1 hour per hex level, if a rainstorm or higher is





indicated, the storm continues until it is spent—which may be more or less than the usual duration depending on the ferocity of the storm, and, of course, the Marshal's (maybe this time) kindly whim.

The shaman's favor *lightning strike* can be used with *rainmaker*, provided at least a thunderstorm is indicated. Also, any huckster casting a *Texas twister* during a rainstorm or better that was raised by this hex receives a +5 bonus to the hex roll.



Current Weather

Scorcher/Drought
Sunny
Mostly sunny
Partly cloudy
Drizzle
Rain
Rainstorm
Downpour
Thunderstorm
Tempest

RAISIN' THE POT!

Trait: Smarts

Hand: Pair

Speed: 1 (Vamoose)

Duration: Instant

Range: 5 yards/hex level

By raising the pot, a huckster can make a good thing better. The huckster forces the manitou to give himself or a companion a supernatural "leg up."

The hex is only effective when cast immediately after another Trait or Aptitude roll has been made successfully. To do this, the huckster must spend his highest card, just as if he were vamoosin'. He then casts *raisin' the pot!* and draws his hand. Based on the hand drawn, he increases the number of raises on the original Trait or Aptitude roll.

If the huckster goes bust on his roll or draws a black Joker, not only does he suffer backlash as normal, but the original Trait or Aptitude check fails regardless of the roll.



Hand	Raises Gained
Pair	1
Jacks	2
Two Pairs	3
Three of a Kind	4
Straight	5
Flush	6

RAPID FIRE

Trait: Knowledge

Hand: Ace

Speed: 1

Duration: 1 round/hex level

Range: 5 yards/hex level

There's no need to lug a Gatling gun all over creation when you've got this hex in your arsenal. Any hexslinger who makes frequent use of this hex should know the *reload* trick.

A huckster casting this hex gives someone using a firearm a supernatural assist by increasing a weapon's rate of fire. The weapon's mechanism is operated magically, so the firer need only aim her shootin' iron and pull the trigger. Although the firer can use her full skill on each shot, she sacrifices some control. All shots from a weapon under the effect of a *rapid fire* hex are considered to be fired from the hip (-2).





Since most firearms weren't designed to be used in this way, the weapon gains a Malfunction number equal to 20 minus its rate of fire. In other words, a pistol enchanted by *rapid fire* to a rate of fire of 3 would have a Malfunction number of 17 for the duration of the hex.

This hex is only effective on personal firearms, such as pistols, rifles, and shotguns. It has no effect on gizmos (even Gatling pistols), artillery pieces, or the like. *Rapid fire* in no way alters a weapon's number of shots, so a pistol with a rate of fire of 3 can empty mighty fast!



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

REANIMATE

Trait: Smarts

Hand: Ace

Speed: 5 minutes

Duration: Permanent

Range: 1 yard

Reanimate is another of those hexes which contributes to the bad reputation hucksters have among ordinary folk. They generally feel the deader the dead are, the better!

This hex heals the dead. It doesn't raise them—it just heals their wounds. Raising undead from scratch requires more knowledge of the black arts than is healthy for most hucksters.

Reanimate allows a huckster to heal the wounds of a Harrowed or another form of undead. If the huckster is attempting to restore the creature's Wind, a successful casting restores all Wind. Otherwise, each successful casting reduces the wound in a specific hit location by 1 level.

The hand needed depends on the victim's highest wound level in any part of his corpse. Note that *reanimate* can't heal more than 1 level of wound at a time. The huckster can treat several wound levels by casting the hex more than once, however.

Reanimate can restore maimed or even severed limbs. If the limb is severed, treat the wound level as if the limb is maimed. A success reattaches the limb or makes it otherwise

usable, but the wound level remains at maimed until healed further, either with subsequent castings or naturally healing. The *reanimate* hex can't help a maimed head wound. The victim's just plain out of luck. As with *helpin' hand*, a Harrowed huckster can't heal his own wounds with this hex.

The origins of this hex are shrouded in mystery. It isn't found in any of Hoyle's books, but it seems to have originated somewhere in Europe. Now it is passed along only by "whisper" of mouth.



Hand	Wound
Ace	All Wind
Pair	Light
Jacks	Heavy
Two Pairs	Serious
Three of a Kind	Critical
Straight	Maimed

RUST

Trait: Knowledge

Hand: Ace

Speed: 1

Duration: Permanent

Range: 20 yards/hex level

A rusty weapon is a flawed weapon. And every advantage a huckster can get in the Weird West is worth its weight in ghost rock.

This hex causes a single metal item of no more than 5 total pounds per hex level to instantly rust.

On mechanical devices and the like, the hex increases the likelihood of malfunctioning, and adds a modifier to the Malfunction toll for the item. The modifier depends on the hand drawn. (See the Rust Table on the next page.) If the item does not already have a Malfunction number, it gains a base of 20.

Metal objects like manacles, bars, or nails become more likely to break. Anyone attempting to break such items receives a bonus to any *Strength* Aptitude roll to bend or break it. This is equal to twice the modifier listed below. Multiple castings of this hex on a single object automatically fail after the first successful hex.

The effects of *rust* are permanent and immune to even *disrupt*, although a successful *tinkerin'* test against a Fair (5) TN removes one level of modifier for each success. Such repairs require an hour per modifier removed.



HEXES

RUST

Hand	Modifier
Ace	1
Pair	2
Jacks	3
Two Pairs	4
Three of a Kind	5
Straight	8
Flush	10
Full House	12
Four of a Kind	14
Straight Flush	16
Royal Flush	Disintegration!

SAFE CRACKER

Trait: Knowledge

Hand: Ace

Speed: 1

Duration: Instant

Range: Touch

Many a town marshal has found his jail emptied by this hex.

Safecracker allows a huckster to magically untie knots, pick locks, and even—as the name

implies—crack a safe. The hand the huckster draws determines exactly what type of bonds or locks the hex can defeat. The huckster can defeat one type of lock or bond for each hex level, but all must be on the same object or person to be affected by a single casting of this hex. The Marshal may determine that particularly difficult or complex knots or locks count as one or more levels higher.

SAFE CRACKER

Hand	Type Defeated
Ace	Knots
Pair	Simple key locks (skeleton-key locks or handcuffs)
Jacks	Complex key locks
Three of a Kind	Combination locks
Straight	Magical seals including spirit coils

ST. ELMO'S FIRE

Trait: Spirit

Hand: Pair

Speed: 1

Duration: 1 hour/hex level

Range: Touch

St. Elmo's Fire generates a pulsing globe of pale green light. While it may resemble the trick will o' wisp, *St. Elmo's fire* is much more useful.

The light provides sufficient illumination to negate any penalties for darkness within a 10-foot radius. The globe remains stationary at a height of 4 feet unless the huckster chooses to move it. To do so, she must carry the ball in her palm. There is no ill effect to doing this, as the globe generates neither heat nor electricity.

The magical light generated by *St. Elmo's fire* is not visible beyond 50 feet from its source. This is helpful for hucksters seeking to avoid notice by traveling at night.

SANDSTORM

Trait: Knowledge

Hand: Pair

Speed: 1

Duration: Concentration or 1 Wind/round

Range: 25 yards/hex level

Sandstorm is a hex often used by raiders along the portion of the Ghost Trail that snakes through the Mojave Desert. They use it to approach the target caravan undetected and get right in among the guards.



POSSE



This hex allows the huckster to whip up a nasty grit-filled wind. The wind covers an area with a radius of 20 yards per hex level.

Everyone within this area is buffeted by winds and blasted by sand. The unfortunates must then make Fair (5) *Vigor* rolls each round or lose 1 Wind. All Trait and Aptitude rolls made within the *sandstorm* are at -2. Each hand above the minimum adds an additional -1 to Trait and Aptitude rolls.

SANDMAN

Trait: Spirit

Hand: Ace

Speed: 1

Duration: 15 minutes/hex level

Range: 5 yards/hex level

Nightmares and dreams are familiar stomping grounds for manitous, so is it any surprise that hucksters have a hex to send a person to the land of Nod? *Sandman* causes a single target to become drowsy and, if he fails a *Vigor* check against a Target Number determined by the huckster's hand, fall into a deep sleep. The target may be awakened by any normal means—if he survives his unwitting slumber.

The base TN for the *Vigor* check is 3. Each hand above the minimum adds 2 to the TN.

If the target still slumbers at the end of the hex, he may roll a Fair (5) *Vigor* check to awaken. If he fails this roll as well, he's down for a good night's rest and should awaken after about 8 hours. Once he rises, whatever the means, the effects of the hex are ended.

While *sandman* can be used in combat, keep in mind that gunshots have a tendency to make a bit of a racket. This hex has no effect on Harrowed or other creatures or abominations that don't sleep in the normal sense.

SCULPTOR

Trait: Knowledge

Hand: Pair

Speed: 2

Duration: 1 Wind/round

Range: Touch

Whether you need to tunnel through the jailhouse wall or make an extra place setting for an unexpected guest, *sculptor* is a handy hex.

While this hex is in effect the hardest stone turns to soft clay beneath the huckster's touch. At the end of the spell's duration, the stone returns to its original hardness, although it retains any shape the caster may have molded.

The caster can shape or mold the stone into rough tools or weapons, but fine work isn't possible due to the relatively short duration. The huckster can also use *sculptor* to carve a small tunnel or even handholds for climbing. The maximum amount of stone which he can affect each round is a cubic foot—the huckster won't be digging any railroad tunnels with this hex.

This is a very taxing hex to use and keep going, and even the most robust hexslingers have difficulty maintaining its effect for more than a minute.

SHEEP'S CLOTHING

Trait: Smarts

Hand: Ace

Speed: 1

Duration: Concentration

Range: 1 yard

While a huckster can't quite hide a wolf with this hex, he can hide things even more dangerous. *Sheep's clothing* takes a small object and disguises it as something else. Usually, a huckster uses this hex to camouflage a weapon or the like as something harmless. The largest such item that can be so concealed is dependent





on the hand drawn. With a hand of Three of a Kind or better, the huckster can actually affect small living creatures—like a rattlesnake, a stray cat, or even the family dog.

Anyone closely examining the disguised item must make an opposed roll of *Cognition* versus the huckster's hex skill. If the examiner wins the contest, she finds a flaw in the deception. When this happens, the illusion crumbles instantly. Otherwise, the illusion is complete until the hexslinger decides to end it.

A successful illusion affects all five senses, but it can't withstand internal contradiction. Use of the item in its original function (or substantial movement if it is an animal) immediately reveals the illusion.

SHEEP'S CLOTHING

Hand	Item Disguised
Ace	Key, playing card
Pair	Small knife, derringer
Jacks	Stick of dynamite
Two Pairs	Pistol, Bowie knife
Three of a Kind	Snake, tomahawk
Four of a Kind	Small dog



SIROCCO

Trait: Knowledge

Hand: Pair

Speed: 2

Duration: 1 minute/hex level

Range: 1 yard

This hex calls forth a legendary desert wind: the *sirocco*. The *sirocco* originates in front of the huckster and blows in a rectangular area 20 yards wide by 40 yards long in whatever direction the huckster faces.

Anyone approaching the huckster against the force of the wind must make a Foolproof (3) *Strength* check or be stalled. This test can be made on each action and once made does not have to be made again that round. However, for every 10 m.p.h. over 30 m.p.h. velocity the wind has, the roll suffers a -1 penalty. Anyone who goes bust on this roll is knocked to the ground and must make another Foolproof (3) *Strength* roll to regain his feet.

Flying creatures and gizmos entering the *sirocco* must make appropriate flying tests against a Fair (5) TN, +2 for every 10 m.p.h. over 30. Failure usually means a crash. A kind Marshal might give them another chance depending on the circumstances.

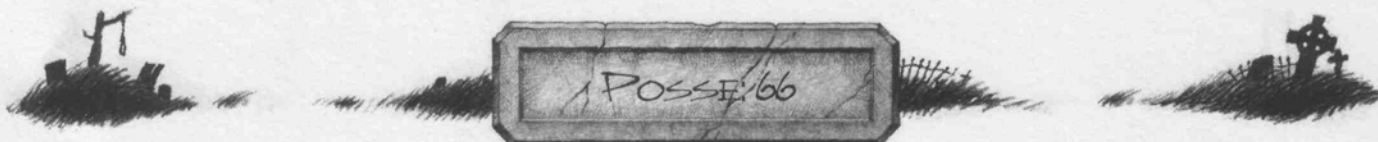
The strength of this terrific wind can be used to increase or decrease the speed of a sailing ship within its area of effect. Each 10 m.p.h. of wind velocity adds (or subtracts) 24 to the ship's Pace.

If the wind velocity exceeds 30 m.p.h., the ship must make Reliability checks each round (non-gizmo ships have a Reliability of 20) to see if the rigging can handle the strain. Add 1 to the roll for every 10 m.p.h. by which the wind's velocity exceeds 30 m.p.h.

A failed roll indicates that the masts and rigging have been seriously damaged by the *sirocco*, so halve the ship's Pace. A second failed roll means the rigging has collapsed—the ship is dead in the water.

SIROCCO

Hand	Wind Velocity
Pair	10 m.p.h.
Jacks	20 m.p.h.
Two Pairs	30 m.p.h.
Three of a Kind	40 m.p.h.
Straight	50 m.p.h.
Flush	70 m.p.h.
Full House	90 m.p.h.





SHADOW MAN

Trait: Smarts
Hand: Pair
Speed: 1
Duration: Concentration
Range: Self

This is the favored hex of serious skulkers everywhere.

Shadow man creates a pocket of shadow around the huckster. It does not make him invisible, but it does add to his *sneak* rolls. A Pair adds +5 to the huckster's roll. Better hands add an additional +2 per level.

The huckster must still attempt to move stealthily. Nothing stands out quite like a pocket of shadow moving across main street at high noon! Such actions negate the bonus.

SHADOW WALK

Trait: Smarts
Hand: Ace
Speed: 1
Duration: Instant
Range: Self

Did you ever wonder why many hucksters like to hang out in dark, shadowy saloons? This hex may have something to do with it.

Hucksters can use *shadow walk* to step into one shadow and emerge from another. The shadow he enters and leaves from must be large and dark enough to engulf his entire form.

The Marshal gets the final call as to what works and what just makes your hombre look silly.

The maximum distance the huckster can *shadow walk* is determined by the hand he draws. Regardless of the hand, the huckster has to be able to see the shadow he wants to emerge from.



Hand	Distance
Ace	2 yards
Pair	5 yards
Two Pairs	10 yards
Three of a Kind	20 yards
Straight	50 yards
Flush	100 yards
Full House	200 yards
Four of a Kind	500 yards
Straight Flush	1 mile
Royal Flush	Line of sight

SILVER-TONGUED DEVIL

Trait: Mien
Hand: Jacks
Speed: 1
Duration: 1 minute/hex level
Range: Touch

This hex makes a huckster's words slicker than snake oil. A huckster with this hex could not only sell, but actually rent ice to Eskimos—at a good price too. A Pair of Jacks adds +5 to every *persuasion*, *bluff*, or *ridicule* roll she makes. Every hand increase adds an additional +2 to the roll.

SIREN SONG

Trait: Mien
Hand: Ace
Speed: 1
Duration: Concentration or 1 Wind/round
Range: 10 yards/hex level

Most gunslingers have probably never heard of Ulysses, but that won't stop them from falling prey to this hex.

Siren song creates a mesmerizing sound like the legendary voice of the Greek Sirens. Anyone within range at the time it is cast, except the huckster, is drawn to the sound and must make a *Spirit* roll to avoid succumbing to the music. The base TN of this roll is 3. It's increased by +2 for each hand above the minimum.

All those affected by the hex become hypnotized by the sound, losing all interest in their previous actions. They begin walking toward the source of the sound, which at the time of casting is centered on the huckster.

As long as the hex is maintained, those who fail the initial *Spirit* roll remain under the effect of the song. However, any attack or damage negates the song's effect, so be ready for a fight if you bushwack your listeners.

The huckster can move the source of the *siren song* while he concentrates. Victims follow the song until it leads them into danger—such as to the edge of a cliff—at which point the subjects make a new *Spirit* roll against the original TN, this time with a +3 bonus.

After the hex is cast, others may move into range of the *siren song* without any adverse effect. The hex only influences those in the area at the time it is initially cast. Finally, anyone with the Hindrance *bad ears* receives a +4 bonus on her *Spirit* roll to resist. Those who are stone deaf or otherwise unable to hear the hex when it is cast are immune.





THE ROYAL COURT



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Now that you know the reasons why hucksters keep themselves hidden even from each other, there's one last thing you should know about.

There is a rumor among hucksters—and others knowledgeable in certain matters of the occult—of a secret society of hucksters. This mysterious group is known only as the Royal Court. The purpose of the Court appears to be, according to the rumors, to provide mutual aid and support to its members, something many hucksters would certainly appreciate.

According to the stories, the members identify each other through cryptic passwords or signs. But exactly how one contacts the Court, no one seems to know.

The only consistent piece of information contained in all the hearsay is that the membership of the Court is particularly active along the Mississippi. Some rumors even go so far as to claim the society owns a riverboat casino, thought to be based in New Orleans.

HOW TO STAY ALIVE

With everyone and everything that's trying to kill a hexslinger, sometimes it's a full time job for a gal to just keep herself out of a pine box. Most hucksters develop a healthy paranoia of those around them—at least the ones who survive do.

The first rule to remember is the best way to keep your hero among the living—and I mean the truly living, not one of those Boot Hill rejects that don't seem to know when to give up—is this: Don't cast hexes.

Now, you may ask, if you aren't going to cast hexes what's the point of being a huckster in the first place? Good question, because what that really means isn't "Never cast a hex." It means, "Don't cast hexes when you don't need to." There's a world of difference.

In other words, a huckster shouldn't cast *St. Elmo's fire* when he's got an oil lantern in his hands. If he can do something without using a hex, he's probably going to be better off. Not only is he not going to risk getting caught by some overzealous witch hunter, he also avoids chancing a manitou-administered lobotomy.

The next rule to keeping your huckster's sorry hide intact is when he does have to cast a spell, be subtle. Most hucksters who get into trouble have only themselves to blame. Don't jump up on a table during a crowded saloon brawl and let rip with a *howl*, no matter how badly the fight's going. Choose a less obvious hex—and less obvious targets.

A blatant supernatural display is a surefire way to break up a knock-down-drag-out and turn it into a drag-out-and-hang!

The third rule to surviving is to count on skill first. Use the hexes that your hero knows solid. If he's just learned *black lightnin'*, don't use it in a life-or-death situation. Instead, hit his opponents with the *soul blast* he's been practicing for years.

The better your hero is with a hex, the greater the chance he has of casting it successfully, and the chance of backlash may also be less. Any good gambler can tell you that while luck may win a hand of poker, skill determines who walks away a rich man at the end of the night.

That brings us to the last and most important detail. There is no such thing as luck. Well, maybe there is, but as soon as you start believing in it, it goes away. Hope for the best, but expect the worst, and make do with what you get.

Oh, and a loaded scattergun sometimes helps.



WOLF

Corporeal: D:1d4, N:3d8, S:3d8, Q:3d10, V:3d8

Fightin': brawlin' 4d8, sneak 2d8

Mental: M:1d8, Rest as caster.

Trackin' 5 (caster's *Cognition* Trait)

Size: 4

Special Abilities:

Bite: STR+1d4

Pace: 18

SNAKE OIL

Trait: Smarts

Hand: Ace

Speed: 1

Duration: 1 minute/hex level

Range: 1 yard

While manitous aren't particularly skilled (or overly enthusiastic) when it comes to healing, they are masters of illusion. *Snake oil* at least gives the target the illusion of good health. This illusion only affects the subject. Everyone else in creation can clearly see the effects of any wound or illness on him.

The hex is effective even if the subject knows he's under its influence. It affects not only the target's vision, but all his senses—touch and specifically pain reception included.

The game effect of this hex is the subject can ignore wound effect modifiers to Trait and Aptitude checks. *Snake oil* affects all current wounds and any the subject receives for the duration of the hex. He still suffers the actual wounds and loses Wind. The subject just doesn't feel it until the spell ends or he drops dead.

With a high enough hand, the subject may not even be aware he has lost a limb. Although he can't actually use the maimed limb anymore, he may believe it is still intact.

Note that the subject may not even be aware of a wound if the illusion is strong enough. This could be deadly if the wound is something like a snakebite!

The number of wound levels the subject can manage to ignore is determined by the hand drawn by the caster. Drawing the minimum hand allows the subject to ignore a single wound level. Each hand above the minimum allows the subject to ignore an additional wound level.

Even if a wound modifier is more severe than the hex can negate, the penalty is still reduced by this number of wound levels. So if the subject can ignore 2 wound levels and takes a serious wound, his rolls only suffer a -1 penalty.

Multiple castings of this hex on the same person have no effect.

SOUL BLAST

Trait: Spirit

Hand: Ace

Speed: 1

Duration: Instant

Range: 50 yards/hex level

The hexslinger's best friend is the *soul blast* hex. When cast, an almost invisible stream of ghostly white energy races from the huckster's palm toward his target. The stream slams into the victim like a bullet. Unlike a bullet, however, *soul blast* has no effect on inanimate objects (Harrowed, Walkin' Dead, and other abominations are very animate, by the way!) because it is purely spiritual energy. The blast can only damage things which have a spiritual component to them—people, animals, undead, Harrowed, etc.

Just because the hex comes off doesn't mean it hits its target. Determine the Target Number like a gunshot, starting with a Fair (5) TN. Ignore range, but figure other penalties such as cover, size, etc. The caster can even attempt a called shot if he wishes.

Roll the huckster's *soul blast* skill, and use that result as both your attack roll and to figure how many cards you get to draw. Remember that the Target Number to determine if the spell succeeds is not affected by modifiers for called shots or other target modifiers, except wound effects. It is possible to successfully cast *soul blast* and still miss the target.

If the hex hits, damage depends on the hand drawn, as shown on Soul Blast Table on the next page. *Soul blast* does receive bonus dice according to hit location: one die for hits to the gizzards and two dice for head shots. Armor does not protect against the damage from a *soul blast*, nor does cover. The *soul blast* just goes right through it.

For some reason, a Dead Man's Hand (two black Aces, two black 8s, and a Jack of Diamonds) causes automatic death.



Velvet hurls a *soul blast* at a scoundrel threatening a young lady with a pistol. The hex has no range increment, but Velvet wants to target the ruffian's gun hand (+6 TN), so the TN is 11. The TN to cast *soul blast* remains a 5 however.

Velvet rolls an 11, just what he needed to hit the cad. Also, he received a raise on the TN he needed to cast the hex, so he gets to draw one extra card to figure the hex's effect.



HEXES

SOUL BLAST

Hand	Damage
Ace	1d4 Wind
Pair	1d6
Jacks	3d6
Two Pairs	4d8
Three of a Kind	5d8
Straight	6d8
Flush	7d10
Full House	8d10
Four of a Kind	9d10
Straight Flush	10d12
Royal Flush	10d20

SOUL BURST

Trait: Spirit
Hand: Pair
Speed: 2
Duration: Instant
Range: 25 yards/hex level

If *soul blast* is a huckster's best friend, then *soul burst* is the friend he takes to parties. Much like *soul blast*, a nearly invisible stream of white

energy streaks out from the huckster's palm to the target. Then it releases a burst of translucent ghostly bolts which explode outward in an area of effect equal to a sphere with a radius of 1 yard per hex level. Every creature within the sphere takes damage according to the hand drawn by the huckster. This hex has no effect on inanimate objects.

Just like an explosion caused by dynamite, determine the total number of wounds received by each creature. Then roll to see where each wound is applied. Hits to the noggin and gizzards don't do extra damage. Armor does not protect against this damage.

SOUL BURST

Hand	Damage
Pair	1d4 Wind
Jacks	2d4
Two Pairs	3d6
Three of a Kind	4d8
Straight	5d8
Flush	5d10
Full House	6d10
Four of a Kind	6d12
Straight Flush	7d12
Royal Flush	8d12

SPIRIT COILS

Trait: Spirit
Hand: Ace
Speed: 1
Duration: 2 rounds/hex level
Range: 5 yards/hex level

This useful little hex can be used to keep your opponent busy while you make an escape or whip up something *really* nasty to use on him.

Spirit coils binds a single target creature with ethereal bands of energy. These bonds wrap around the creature, just as if the target had been tightly bound with ropes. To free itself, the struggling target must make a *Strength* test on its next action against a Target Number determined by the huckster's hand. An Ace is a TN of 3, each hand above this adds +2 to the Target Number.

If the target is successful, it is freed and able to move normally. If it fails, it must wait until the next round (not action!) to try again. Should the unfortunate subject go bust on the *Strength* roll, he's hopelessly entangled and held fast for the duration of the hex.





SPIRITUAL DISFAVOR

Trait: Spirit

Hand: Pair

Speed: 1 (Vamoose!)

Duration: Instant

Range: 5 yards/hex level

Gaining the approval from the spirits to work a favor is often the hardest part of a shaman's job. When a huckster casts *spiritual disfavor*, she makes it even tougher for the poor sod. This hex sends a devious manitou to corrupt a shaman's rituals, making it more difficult to win the approval of the nature spirits.

In game terms, the hex causes the Appeasement Point cost of a favor to increase according to the huckster's hand. *Spiritual disfavor* must be cast as the shaman asks for a favor—the huckster cannot wait until after the shaman has performed his rituals and then bushwack him. This means the huckster must vamoose.



Hand	Appeasement Point Cost Increase
Pair	1
Jacks	2
Two Pairs	3
Three of a Kind	4
Straight	5

SWAMP GAS

Trait: Knowledge

Hand: Ace

Speed: 1

Duration: 1 round/hex level

Range: 25 yards/hex level

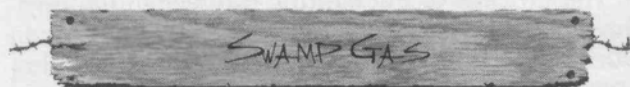
There's not much that smells worse than the odor of a fetid bayou. That rotten stench can curl the toes on a dead man—no offense intended to anyone that remark may apply to. *Swamp gas* releases a small cloud of putrid methane gas over a spherical area with a radius of 5 yards per hex level.

The stench from this causes a -6 modifier to all *Cognition* rolls based on smell. In addition, everyone within the cloud suffers a negative modifier to all Trait and Aptitude checks. The exact amount depends on the hand drawn.

The real danger of *swamp gas* lies in a fact of science even the most lackluster school boy knows: Methane gas is extremely flammable.

If *swamp gas* is exposed to an open flame, either one already in the area when the hex is cast or one applied later during its duration, it ignites explosively, causing damage to everyone in its area of effect. Due to the speed of its burning, it generally does not ignite other objects unless they are extremely flammable.

The level of modifier to Trait and Aptitude rolls, as well as the damage done should the gas be ignited, is dependent upon the huckster's hand.



Hand	Damage	Modifier
Ace	None	-1
Pair	1d4 Wind	-2
Jacks	1d6	-2
Two Pairs	2d4	-3
Three of a Kind	2d6	-3
Straight	3d6	-4
Flush	4d6	-5
Full House	5d8	-5
Four of a Kind	6d8	-6
Straight Flush	7d10	-6
Royal Flush	8d10	-8

TALISMAN

Trait: Knowledge

Hand: Three of a Kind

Speed: 2 days

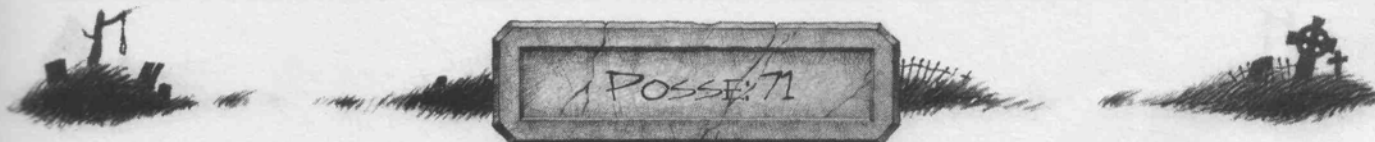
Duration: Permanent

Range: Touch

For those not familiar with the term, a relic is an item somehow empowered with magical energies. There are a number of ways this can occur. Some things are charged by being carried by a person of stature, like Wild Bill's six shooters or Wyatt Earp's badge. Sometimes a Harrowed may drag a powerful relic with him when he claws his way back from Hell. A rare few are intentionally enchanted by hucksters.

This is no easy process. First, the item itself must be special in some fashion—and that doesn't just mean it's decorated with rhinestones. It must have been involved in some near-legendary act, such as John Wilkes Boothe's pistol or the pen which signed the Emancipation Proclamation. As you might guess, simply acquiring an item suitable for a talisman hex is often the hardest part of the process.

After the huckster has procured a suitable object, he must decide the basic effect that he wants the *talisman* to have on the item. For





example, he may want a weapon to do more damage or a deck of cards to assist him in his hexslinging. The only limit to this hex's potential is the imagination of the huckster (and the Marshal's sense of game balance). Whatever effect the caster desires, he informs the Marshal of his intent for the item prior to casting the *talisman*. The Marshal then decides the hand needed to successfully enchant the item (the mad scientist's Theory Table is a good guide on hands and the power of artifacts, Marshal).

The process of enchanting a *talisman* requires three full days of seclusion with the item. During this time, the huckster plays a complicated and seemingly endless game of solitaire, breaking only to eat or take a short nap. Leaving the game for more than an hour causes the hex to fail. At the end of the three days, the huckster makes his Aptitude roll and, if successful, draws his hand.

Assuming the hand meets at least the minimum required, the *talisman* gains some form of supernatural power. The exact power is up to the Marshal, but she should come to an agreement with the huckster as to the effect of the *talisman*. Drawing a hand better than the minimum increases the power of the relic accordingly.

If the huckster draws a Joker, the relic also acquires a taint of some sort. This occurs regardless of the color of the Joker or the huckster's skill. The exact effect of the taint is up to the Marshal, but it should be connected in some way with the background of the item and equivalent to the power of the relic.

The huckster has no special bond with the item so enchanted unless such a connection is part of the relic's power. Otherwise, anyone can use the item once it has been empowered.

TALL TALES

Trait: Mien

Hand: Pair

Speed: 1

Duration: Concentration

Range: 5 yards/hex level

This hex is a favorite of Texas Ranger hexslingers!

Tall tales allows a huckster to twist another's words to make even the most reasonable statement sound like a Texan's exaggeration. No matter what the subject says, it sounds like a wild claim to the listeners. This makes it easy for already outrageous claims to sound ridiculous.

Anyone listening to the subject must make a *Cognition* test against a TN determined by the huckster's hand. Success indicates he's able to pick out the truth from the magical exaggeration, although this doesn't necessarily mean he believes the subject.

If the huckster's hex roll fails, he sounds like he's been sniffing ghost-rock fumes.



Hand	TN
Pair	3
Two Pairs	5
Three of a Kind	7
Straight	9
Flush	11

TEMPTATION

Trait: Spirit

Hand: Pair

Speed: 1

Duration: Instant

Range: 5 yards/hex level

Although your huckster may get away with casting this hex in the here-and-now, he's going to have to answer for it in the ever-after.

Temptation allows the huckster to call forth an image which tests the faith of the target. It may be her greatest secret desire or the memory of a hidden sin. Whatever the image, only the target can see it. Even the huckster doesn't know what he's conjured up.

The subject must immediately roll a *faith* test against a TN determined on the table below. If she's successful, she overcomes the image. If she fails, her will has succumbed to the temptation of the vision. As a result, her personal faith is shaken, and she loses 1 level of her *faith* Aptitude.

Once a person has successfully resisted *temptation*, she receives a +2 to further rolls to overcome the hex. Obviously, this is only of use against folks who take their religion seriously. If the target lacks the *faith* Aptitude, the hex fails.



Hand	TN
Pair	5
Two Pairs	7
Three of a Kind	9
Straight	11



HEXES

TEXAS TWISTER

Trait: Knowledge

Hand: Jacks

Speed: 2

Duration: Concentration

Range: 20 yards/hex level

This hex conjures up a minor whirlwind. In the great outdoors, a *Texas twister* kicks up dirt and sand, blinding everyone within a 10-yard radius.

Those in the twister's area must make a Hard (9) *Vigor* roll each round to do anything besides take simple actions. Of course, if they move outside of the twister's effect, they are free to act normally. Due to the dust and high winds, any attacks that cross the twister's area of effect suffer a -2 penalty.

Indoors, the twister is limited to tossing about papers and the like. Everyone within the area indoors suffers a -2 penalty to all actions unless they leave the area or make *Vigor* rolls as above. The twister also makes one hell of a mess.

The huckster can move the twister in any way she likes, as long as she concentrates and keeps it in sight and within the hex's range. It has a Pace of 20.

THUNDERCLAP!

Trait: Knowledge

Hand: Pair

Speed: 2

Duration: Instant

Range: 25 yards/hex level

Ever have trouble getting the attention of a saloon full of rowdy drunks?

This hex causes a loud peal of thunder to erupt at a chosen point within the hex's range. The thunder detonates with a forceful concussion in a sphere with a radius of 5 yards per hex level. Everyone within this area must make a *Vigor* check against a TN established by the hand drawn. The base TN is 3. Each hand above the minimum increases the TN by +2.

Anyone failing the test is stunned—just as if injured—and must make a *Vigor* roll (against the same TN) on each of his actions until he recovers. Additionally, anyone who fails the initial *Vigor* test is deaf for 2d10 rounds. Those who succeed are deaf for 1d6 rounds.

Cowpokes with *bad ears* receive a bonus to their *Vigor* rolls equal to the value of the Hindrance. Even deaf folks aren't totally immune to the concussion of a thunderclap!





TIMESLIP

Trait: Smarts
Hand: Pair
Speed: 1
Duration: See below
Range: Self

This hex gives new meaning to the phrase, "I gave him the slip."

Timeslip lets a huckster momentarily step outside the normal stream of time and escape from dangerous situations. The huckster disappears only to reappear sometime later.

When the hex ends, the huckster reappears exactly where she disappeared. If some object is now occupying that space, the huckster's appearance displaces it if the huckster has the greater mass. Otherwise, she appears as close to her departure point as possible. However, in this case, she must make an Onerous (7) *Vigor* test or be stunned until she makes the roll.

No movement or action is possible for the huckster between the period of disappearance and reappearance. However, during this period, nothing can affect the huckster either. For all intents, the huckster does not exist during the *timeslip*.



The maximum amount of time a huckster can skip is determined by the hand drawn. The huckster must decide how long the slip lasts when the hand is drawn. She cannot change the duration once the slip has begun.



Hand	Maximum Duration
Jacks	1 round
Two Pairs	2 rounds
Three of a Kind	5 rounds
Straight	1 minute
Flush	10 minutes
Full House	1 hour
Four of a Kind	1 day
Straight Flush	1 week
Royal Flush	1 year

TOUCH-O'-DEATH

Trait: Spirit
Hand: Two Pairs
Speed: 1
Duration: Instant
Range: Touch

This hex allows a hexslinger to magically squeeze some poor sod's heart and give him an old-fashioned heart attack.

The murderous huckster has to touch the target to pull this off. While a sly mage can often sneak a brush with her target, a wary target will do his best to avoid her. In that case, she must make a successful *fightin' brawlin'* roll to touch her victim. It isn't necessary to touch bare flesh—even a bulletproof vest can't stop Death when he comes calling.

After the hex has been cast, the target must immediately make a *Vigor* roll against a TN determined by the huckster's hand. The base TN is 7. Each hand above the minimum adds +2 to the TN. If he succeeds, his heart stutters but doesn't stop, and he suffers 3d6 Wind.

If he fails, however, there's a world of hurt waiting just around the corner. First, the victim suffers 3d6 Wind, and his *Vigor* is permanently reduced by 1 step. If his *Vigor* is already a d4, its Coordination drops by 1. At 0 Coordination, he drops stone cold dead.

Assuming the sap is still alive, he must make a second *Vigor* roll against the same TN—this time with the reduced *Vigor* score. If the subject fails this roll, he has a full-blown heart attack and dies within 2d6 rounds unless someone else makes an Incredible (11) *medicine* roll.





TRINKETS

Trait: Knowledge

Hand: Ace

Speed: 2

Duration: 1 round/hex level

Range: Touch

Whether you're cheatin' at cards or find yourself without a weapon at an inopportune moment, *trinkets* is the hex to have. It also comes in handy for stage magicians.

The *trinkets* hex allows the huckster to reach into a pocket, pouch, or bag of some sort and pull forth a minor mundane object. The item available depends on the hand obtained. Money can be conjured with this hex, but like anything else created with *trinkets*, this lasts only 1 round for every level the huckster has in the hex. If the huckster creates a firearm, the weapon is fully loaded, but no extra rounds are created.

Hands higher than Two Pairs are required to get very special trinkets—such as a key to open a specific lock. The Marshal must set the hands for these items himself.



Hand	Type of Item
Ace	Match, penny
Pair	Scarf, random playing card, nickel
Jacks	Derringer, knife, two bits (25¢)
Two Pairs	Pistol, \$5 coin, specific playing card

TRUTH-SAYER

Trait: Cognition

Hand: Ace

Speed: 1

Duration: 2 rounds/hex level

Range: 10 feet

Hucksters who know this spell make fine judges. Sadly, most hexslingers don't apply this hex to such noble pursuits.

A huckster who casts this hex gains an uncanny ability to detect exaggerations, tall tales, and lies. *Truthsayer* only lets the huckster know a lie has been told, not what the truth actually is.

A really clever liar can sometimes confound this hex with omissions of important facts rather than outright lies, so the huckster has to be careful what questions she asks.

TWO OF A KIND

Trait: Smarts

Hand: 2 Pair

Speed: 1

Duration: See below

Range: See below

There is no 11th commandment that says, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's hexes." It's a good thing, too—otherwise a huckster casting *two of a kind* is committing a sin. Of course, some folks would argue that casting any hex is a sin, but that's another subject.

This hex allows the huckster to duplicate another hex just cast within 5 yards per level he has in *two of a kind*. Thus a huckster with 3 levels in *two of a kind* could attempt to duplicate a hex that was cast within 15 yards of him. The hex can only duplicate those hexes which were cast in the same round in which *two of a kind* itself is cast.

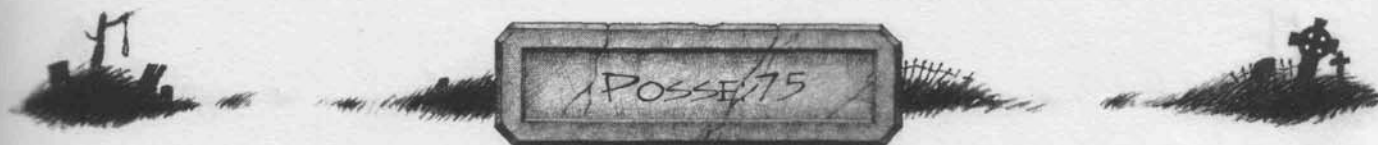
The effects of the other hex are duplicated exactly, with the exception that the target of the hex is chosen by the huckster casting *two of a kind*. Also, any dice rolls, such as those made for damage, must be rolled again. Rolls which are based on the initial hex Aptitude roll, such as *soul blast's* attack roll, are based on the huckster's roll to cast *two of a kind*.

The effects of the duplicate hex are based on the hand drawn for the original hex, not the hand drawn for *two of a kind*. Otherwise, the range, area of effect, duration, and so on, are all based on the copied hex. *Two of a kind* can only duplicate hexes, not favors, miracles, or black magic. The hex duplicated by *two of a kind* must have been successfully cast—if it was somehow foiled, it cannot be copied.



Velvet has hooked up with a posse that's just cornered a band of particularly nasty desperadoes. Among them is a huckster who just cast a very successful *soul blast*, drawing a Full House for a whopping 8d10 damage and turning one a posse member into trail mix.

Velvet sees a perfect opportunity to try *two of a kind*. He has a skill of 3 in the hex, and the enemy huckster is only 10 yards away. Velvet targets the other huckster and successfully casts his hex with a roll of 9. He draws Two Pairs and duplicates the *soul blast*. His skill roll of 9 hits the other huckster, and he rolls 8d10 to determine the damage done.





VITTLES

Trait: Knowledge
Hand: Ace
Speed: 10 minutes
Duration: Permanent
Range: Touch

Now here's a hex many a traveler in the Weird West has wished for—especially in the famine-stricken Maze. *Vittles* lets a huckster create meals, including drink, for himself and his companions. The number of meals is determined by the hand drawn. An Ace gets you a single meal; each hand above that increases the number of meals by +2. Horses and similar animals require a minimum of four such meals a day in absence of grazing or feed.

The quality of the meal isn't five-star fare, but it beats starving—just ask one of the Donner party. The meals created by *vittles* have the flavor and consistency of wet cardboard, but they provide adequate nourishment. The drink provided is water, but no container is created with the hex, so if the huckster lacks a canteen, all he's liable to get is a sad little puddle.

The meals, while filling, don't completely offset the effects of malnourishment. If a person consumes the created meals for a number of days equal to the huckster's skill level in *vittles* without additional nourishment, he begins to suffer the effects of starvation. At that time he loses 1 Wind each day, which can only be recovered by three meals of real food.

WARNIN' BELLS

Trait: Cognition
Hand: Ace
Speed: 1
Duration: Instant
Range: 10 yards/hex level

One of the best ways to get graveyard dead in a hurry is to get caught with your pants down. Figuratively, that is. Bushwhackers count on surprise to give them an edge on their victims, and they're seldom disappointed. A huckster with *warnin' bells* can help his less alert companions recover quickly from the effects of surprise.

The number of people the huckster can affect is determined by the hand drawn. A minimum hand allows 2 people to be affected. Each hand above the minimum increases this number by +2. Those who are alerted by the *warnin' bells* are snapped out of their surprise and may even be able to act in that very round.

Everyone affected by the hex immediately rolls a Fair (5) *Quickness* test and draws cards just as if it was the beginning of the round. Any cards which have already passed are immediately discarded, and the actions lost—no slipping one up the sleeve. Any cards remaining can be acted on normally when their actions are called. The following round, those affected roll their *Quickness* normally.



Ronan and Velvet are attacked by a band of Sioux. Although Velvet makes his surprise check, Ronan doesn't. Velvet rolls his *Quickness*, and gets 2 actions—10 of Hearts and 7 of Spades. Realizing Ronan is a good man to have beside him in a fight, Velvet casts *warnin' bells* on the 10 of Hearts. He's successful and draws a Pair. He only needs to affect one person, so he's in good shape. Ronan snaps out of his surprise and rolls his *Quickness*, getting 4 cards. His draw is the Ace of Spades, Jack of Diamonds, 9 of Clubs, and 5 of Clubs. The Ace and Jack are lost, because they've already been passed in the round, but Ronan can act normally on the 9 and the 5.

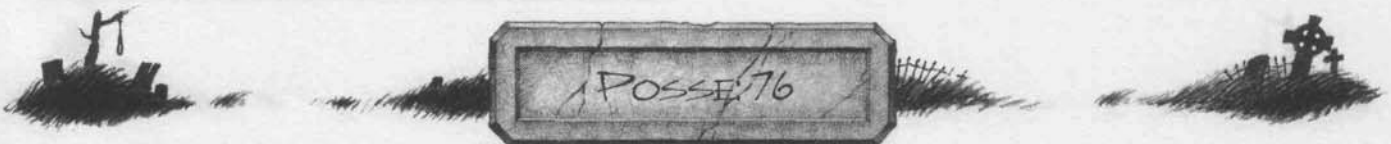
WATCHDOG

Trait: Cognition
Hand: Pair
Speed: 5 minutes
Duration: 1 hour/hex level
Range: Touch

Watchdog, along with *critter ward*, is a favorite of hucksters brave (or foolish) enough to travel alone in the Weird West.

This hex erects a magical alarm system around a stationary point. Should any person, creature, or abomination larger than a normal-sized insect enter the area without whispering the activation word, *watchdog* mentally alerts the caster, no matter how far away he might be. The activation word is chosen at the time of the casting. The huckster can reveal it to whomever she chooses so that others can enter the circle without triggering the alarm as well.

The area of effect is a circle with a radius of up to 10 feet per level of the huckster's skill in the hex. If *watchdog* is triggered, the huckster must make a Fair (5) *Cognition* roll, with a bonus of +2 for every hand above the minimum. If she is successful, she is able to act normally—even if she was asleep at the time! Should the huckster fail, she must check for surprise as normal.





WHIRLPOOL

Trait: Knowledge

Hand: Pair

Speed: 2

Duration: Concentration

Range: 25 yards/hex level

Like the name suggests, this hex creates a single whirlpool in water anywhere within range. This particular incantation is a favorite among Maze-running hucksters, because with a good enough hand the *whirlpool* can sink even an ironclad!

The *whirlpool's* diameter starts at 40 feet and increases by up to 20 feet for each hand drawn above the minimum.

A *whirlpool* can affect any ship with a length of up to one half the *whirlpool's* diameter. The pilot of any ship caught in the area of a whirlpool created by this hex must make an Onerous (7) *drivin'* roll if the *whirlpool* is of sufficient size to affect the vessel. If the roll is failed, the ship is caught in the vortex. The TN increases by +2 for each hand drawn above the minimum necessary to affect the ship. Any ship caught in the vortex is pulled rapidly down and takes 2d6 flooding damage per round until it escapes or sinks. Escaping the *whirlpool* requires the pilot to make a roll against the original TN and score at least one raise. He can roll once per round.

Anyone unlucky enough to be swimming in the area of even a small whirlpool produced by this hex, must make Incredible (11) *swimmin'* rolls each round.

The huckster must concentrate and remain within range of the whirlpool to maintain the hex. Failure to do either immediately ends the spell.



The huckster has no special control over any fire started by *wildfire* (although a *sirocco* hex might help push the blaze along in the right direction). Any other objects or creatures within the area suffer normal flame damage from the fires begun by the hex. The exact type of material ignited is dependent upon the hand drawn.

The fire created by this hex has no special properties and can be extinguished with ordinary water.

WILDFIRE

Trait: Spirit

Hand: Pair

Speed: 1

Duration: Instant

Range: 10 yards/hex level

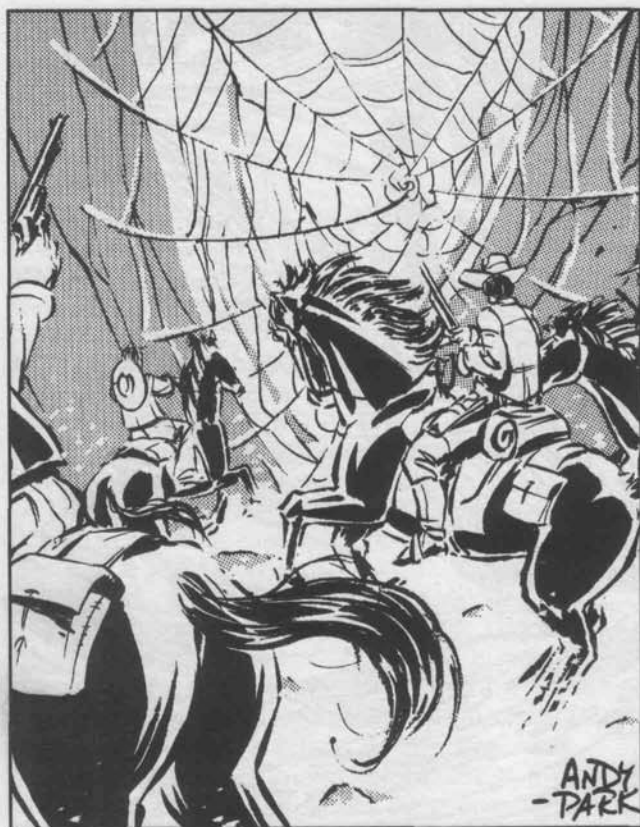
The rumors that hucksters who make a habit of using this hex have met their ends beneath the claws of a large grizzly bear remain unsubstantiated.

This hex causes a miniature prairie fire to erupt in a circular area up to 5 yards in diameter. The fire ignites flammable materials within its area, and these continue to burn normally unless extinguished.



Hand	Material Affected
Pair	Dry grass, paper
Two Pairs	Twigs
Three of a Kind	Small sticks, light cloth
Straight	Branches, hair, heavy cloth
Flush	Furniture
Full House	Large logs
Four of a Kind	Live trees
Straight Flush	Animal life
Royal Flush	Anything flammable





WIDOW'S WEB

Trait: Spirit

Hand: Ace

Speed: 2

Duration: 5 rounds/hex level

Range: 5 yards/hex level

This hex erects a strong, sticky barrier between two objects. It isn't really a wall; it's more like a giant spider's web. The silken wall is a plane 10 feet by 10 feet per level of the hex. The *widow's web* must be cast so as to contact at least two parallel surfaces, but can be oriented either vertically or horizontally.

The web is only about 2 inches thick and doesn't appear very strong, but breaking through it by simple brute force is quite difficult, requiring a *Strength* roll against a Target Number based on the huckster's hand. The base TN is 5. Each hand above the minimum adds +2 to the TN. Any creature coming in contact with the web must make a Fair (5) *Strength* roll to pull itself free of the glue-like substance coating its strands. Anyone stuck to the web may make another *Strength* roll each action to escape, but the TN is increased by +2 for each successive roll—struggling only further entangles the victim.

The web is very flammable, and the mere touch of an open flame the size of a torch causes the entire wall to be consumed in a single round. Anyone trapped in the web when this occurs takes 2d12 fire damage.

Finally, due to its nature, the *widow's web* in no way obscures sight. Nor does the wall prevent bullets or similar items from passing through its many gaps. Larger missiles, such as spears or thrown tomahawks, receive a -4 modifier to the attack roll if the target is behind the web. Any missile which misses its target due to the modifier is stuck in the web and requires a Fair (5) *Strength* roll to pull loose.

DESIGNING NEW HEXES

Just because a hex isn't listed here doesn't mean a truly dedicated student of Hoyle can't find it in his book or from some other arcane source. Hidden within the scoring examples and hand probabilities are many tidbits of arcane knowledge not covered here.

To help you exploit the deepest secrets of *Hoyle's Book of Games*, here are some guidelines for designing your own hexes. Keep in mind that your Marshal has final say on how any hex you design works.

TRAITS

The Mental Trait chosen to cast the hex is usually the Trait which is closest in relation to the hex's desired effect. Below is a list of a few general hex types and the Trait suggested for each. If you find that another Trait seems to fit better for your hex, by all means use it.

HEX TYPES & TRAITS

Hex type	Trait
Communication	Cognition
Increasing/decreasing	
Traits or Aptitudes	Smarts
Charismatic	Mien
Illusions	Smarts
Informational	Cognition
Magical energy	Spirit
Natural phenomenon	Knowledge
Summoning/conjuring	Knowledge
Willpower influencing	Spirit

This list is by no means complete, but it should help as a guideline for determining the most appropriate Trait.



MINIMUM HAND

Determining the proper minimum hand is probably the hardest part of balancing a new hex. For this reason, the Marshal should determine the hand needed to cast a hex. Keep in mind the more powerful the hex, the higher the minimum hand. It's usually a good idea to design your hex so that it has levels of effect, like *soul blast* or *mirage*. That way, you have a chance for it to work with even a low hand.

SPEED

Usually, a good combat-oriented hex should have a speed of 1, maybe 2 in special circumstances. Area-of-effect combat hexes often take a minimum of 2 actions—they require a little more effort to cast. Slower than that, and you're liable to have a belly full of lead before you finish casting it. Illusions tend to be quick to start as well. Informational hexes may take anywhere from 1 to 5 minutes to cast. The rare healing hex may take twice as long.

DURATION

Damaging combat hexes, such as *soul blast*, have an instant duration. Hexes with a lasting active effect which require the huckster's attention to guide them, like *Texas twister* or *deuces wild!*, last only as long as she concentrates. Other hexes with lasting effects but which only require minimal attention, like *impostor*, continue as long as she either concentrates or pays 1 Wind per round. Hexes which make temporary changes on existing things, *corporeal tweak* or *Kentucky windage* for example, last for 1 round per hex level. You can determine the duration for other hexes based on the effect desired (after all, what good is a ghostly steed that vanishes after 3 minutes?). One final note: Hexes which affect the natural environment tend to have an unpredictable duration—that downpour caused by *rainmaker* may not go away until the town floods!

RANGE

The base range for any hex capable of affecting a target other than the huckster himself is 5 yards per hex level. Informational hexes frequently exceed this, often having ranges measured in miles. Damage-dealing hexes seldom have longer ranges than a good rifle shot. Just remember, if it has an area of effect, it's generally considered smart to not be in the

area when the hex goes off. Other hexes may be limited to 1 yard or even touch, depending on the effect desired. Of course, any hex which only affects the huckster has a range of "Self."

EFFECTS

Certain effects are more appropriate to hexes than others. Manitous are by nature inclined toward trickery and mischief. They also have a strong influence over the more destructive side of nature.

As a rule of thumb, illusions and destructive effects are more in the huckster's domain than either protective or healing ones. That's not to say that they can't cast hexes that have such results. Look at *bodyguard* or *helpin' hand*.

It's a good idea to keep in mind the atmosphere of the Weird West, as well. Flying magicians who hurl exploding fireballs certainly have their place—but not in the Deadlands.

All that said, the only limitations to the effects of a hex are your imagination and game balance. A hex that makes the caster nearly invulnerable or causes instant death is probably not balanced, no matter how hard it is to cast. As always, the Marshal has final say, so be sure to check with him on your idea for a new hex.

RESEARCHING THE HEX



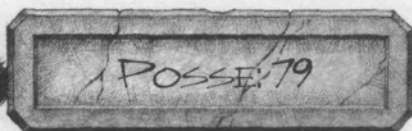
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Once you've worked out the details of the hex, you've got to make your investment. The first part is the 5 Bounty Points it's going to cost you to design the new hex.

The second step of the process is the time your character spends researching Hoyle's formulae for a new arcane combination. Your Marshal may have other tomes as well that may help (or hurt). This takes a total of three weeks, plus three weeks for each level the hex's minimum hand is above a single Ace. At the end of this time, your huckster needs to make a trial casting of the hex. If it's successful, she's got a brand-new, unique hex all her own. If not, it's back to the book, although you don't have to spend anymore Bounty Points.

Of course, there's a little more to it than that—including a short foray into the Hunting Grounds—but the Marshal has those details.

It's tough for a huckster to develop her own hex, but if it were easy, Hoyle or someone else would have already done it. On the flip side, a huckster with a truly unique hex has an Ace up her sleeve no one will expect!



YOUR HIDE





CHAPTER FOUR: KEEPN' YOUR HIDE



Now that you know most all there is to know about what it takes to be a huckster and how to go about casting a hex, it's time to talk about the more down-to-earth concerns a huckster has.

Like we said, there's a whole posse of folks who seem to make it their life's calling to persecute poor, maligned hucksters (well, some deserve their reputation). As a result there's a saying among hucksters. You've probably heard it, although maybe a little different: "There's old hucksters, and there's bold hucksters, but there ain't no old *and* bold ones."

In other words, most hucksters who flaunt their hexes end up swinging at the end of a rope.

NORMAL FOLKS

One of the greatest threats to a huckster's continued existence doesn't come from some shadowy government agency. Rather, it's the meek-looking fellow behind the counter in the local general store. Him and his 40 shotgun-toting friends.

The average townsfolk aren't as likely as a Ranger or a Pinkerton to see the "long view." Instead, they're prone to see a witch who can turn their loved ones into toads. Never mind trying to explain that a huckster can't do those sorts of things. It's kind of hard to talk with a rope around your neck.

With living nightmares running around, people are naturally just a little skittish where the supernatural is concerned. The general consensus on such things isn't "Shoot first and ask questions later," it's more like, "Shoot it! If it's still moving, shoot it again! If it's *still* moving after that, run like Hell! You don't want to know the answer."

Unfortunately for hucksters, the average person who witnesses them cast a hex is going to immediately place them in the "better off dead" category of people.

As if it weren't already bad enough for hexslingers, most religious types don't care too much for them either. It seems these folks see the huckster as "consorting with the Devil" or the like. They may have something there. What the Indians call "manitous," most Westerners would call "demons." Most *blessed* characters find a huckster's motives and actions suspect to say the least.

And don't think the Indian nations are any safer. Shamans *know* the hucksters are "consorting with the Devil"—or at least his New World counterpart. Edmond Hoyle found this out the hard way.

The Hell of it is, these folks usually hold a lot of sway in their communities. They normally contribute to the local marshal's paycheck, so if they say someone's the Devil's handmaiden, that unlucky soul had better have already made out her will!





ANDY PARK

TEXAS RANGERS

By now, everyone is familiar with the Rangers' outlook on the supernatural: "Shoot it or recruit it."

See, Rangers figure that the more people know about what's going on in the world now, the more frightened they'll be. The more frightened people are, the worse things get. It's bad enough to have to deal with some man-eating abomination, but if you add a bunch of riled up townsfolk on top of it, you've got some real problems.

Most normal folks are liable to mistake a huckster for a servant of Old Scratch himself. With everyone as jumpy as they've been for the past 13 years, that's about all that's really needed to start a good old-fashioned panic or a lynch mob.

Add to that the fact many hucksters *are* a danger to themselves and others, and it soon becomes obvious why the Texas Rangers aren't altogether fond of rogue hexslingers. They're seen as a major problem, and Rangers have a rather practical approach to life and its problems.

Now, a Ranger isn't likely to shoot someone just because he's carrying a deck of playing cards. In fact, she may not slap leather even if she learns he's a huckster. She'll likely take the time to have a little talk with him.

If he's open about his hexes or just plain dumb, then the best he can hope for is to be run out of the territory. More likely, the Ranger might find him a nice bed at the end of town, courtesy of the local undertaker.

On the other hand, if the huckster's smart and keeps a low profile, he may find himself with an offer he really shouldn't refuse: lend the Rangers a hand whenever they ask for it—or die running.

HUCKSTERS AS TEXAS RANGERS

If a huckster's unlucky enough to be noticed by the Rangers, but fortunate enough to be recruited and not shot, he's likely one cagey hombre. Any huckster who's been tagged by the Rangers as a potential helper has probably been plying his trade for a fair piece. Otherwise, he probably never would have been noticed.

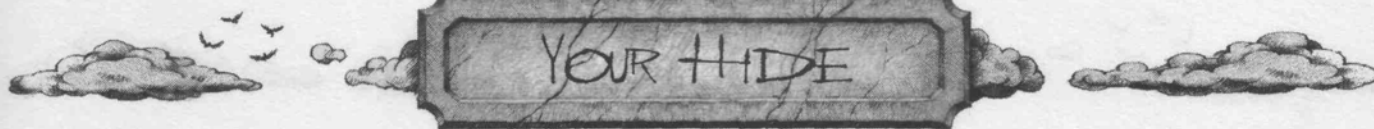
Hucksters wearing the star of a Texas Ranger (however permanent or temporary the arrangement may be) have to be able to defend themselves with both gun and hex. More than that, they've got to know when to *not* use hexes.

A Ranger never risks using a hex in plain view of the average person. Even in a life-or-death situation, she probably won't risk exposure. It wouldn't do to have citizens doubt the motivations of their front line against the supernatural. Therefore, given the types of foes a Ranger's likely to face, she's got to have other options available—like a double-barreled shotgun.

Because they don't want to chance such exposure, Rangers avoid the flashier hexes like *bedazzle* or *black lightnin'*. Most times, Rangers with arcane powers concentrate on hexes that can enhance their already formidable combat skills. Hexes such as *corporeal tweak*, *mind tweak*, *missed me!*, or *bodyguard* are all favorite combat hexes among Rangers.

Also, due to their solitary travels, Rangers tend to favor such hexes as *watchdog*, *beast ward*, and *vittles*. Although they seldom use illusions or informational hexes, *tall tales* is a favorite among the more imaginative or mischievous Rangers.

All that being said, it's unlikely any self-respecting Ranger huckster would be caught dead without at least one good combat spell. It can be downright embarrassing to run out of ammunition at the wrong time, after all.



YOUR HIDE

PINKERTONS

Pinkertons, being entrusted with the safety of the populace of the Union, have much the same motivations for their dislike of hucksters as the Rangers. However, as in most things, they take a different approach to their dealings with hexslingers than their Southern counterparts.

When a Pinkerton comes into contact with a huckster, standard procedure is to shadow him, observe his actions, and then report back to her superiors. The agency maintains extensive files on all supernatural activity its operatives encounter, including hucksters. Such files are used to keep tabs on potential "resources" and potential "threats"—the only two categories the agency recognizes. "Resources" are hucksters deemed to be relatively stable and reliable, while "threats" are all others. Needless to say, the majority of hexslingers fall into the agency's second category.

If you're considered a resource, you may find yourself contacted by a representative of the Pinkerton agency with a temporary job offer. However, if the agency has labeled you a threat, you can expect to be kept under close scrutiny by any agents you may encounter. At worst, the agency may issue a "sanction" order on you. The end result of such an order is usually that you take up residence in the nearest boneyard.

Like the Texas Rangers, Pinkerton agents seldom recruit outsiders into the actual agency. While it does happen on occasion, this is the exception rather than the rule. Rather, an agent is more likely to use a posse of hired hands to accomplish a single task and then be done with them than he is to try to fill the agency's ranks.

On such missions, Pinkertons rarely reveal any more information than is necessary to succeed. Sometimes, the agent may not even tell them that much.

PINKERTON HUCKSTERS

There are none—not officially.

The Pinkertons do not recruit hucksters because the agency's directors consider them unreliable.



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It is rumored, however, that the agency does employ a secret, elite group of hex-trained agents referred to only as "cleaners" to handle the most desperate situations. Whether or not such operatives exist, much less their actual abilities, is known only to the directors themselves.

OTHER HUCKSTERS

You'd think with just about everyone west and east of the Mississippi out to string them up, hucksters would stick together like blood brothers. Well, that's not quite how it works out in the real world.

With so many folks after their hides, laying low has become second nature to most hucksters. Since advertising their abilities is usually a quick trip to the graveyard, they disguise themselves and their hexes. While this makes it safer in polite company, it also means that it's harder to recognize a fellow hexslinger.

Now, a huckster has a few advantages in noticing another of his rare profession.

Odds are, he can recognize the effects of a hex when he sees it. All he needs to do is roll an *academia: occult* test against a Fair (5) TN to realize that a hex has been cast in his presence, provided it has a visible effect.

Certain hexes—such as *hex sense*, *penetratin' gaze*, and the like—are much harder to recognize. Illusions and such are by nature difficult to spot, as well. In such cases, the huckster has to actually catch the other casting the hex. He does this just like anyone else, except that he can use his *academia: occult* Aptitude instead of his *Cognition* Trait when rolling against the other hexslinger's *sleight of hand*.

Simply recognizing another huckster doesn't automatically mean you've found a bosom buddy. Because so many folks would like to see them dead, they're by nature suspicious of anyone—particularly someone who knows their deepest secret. It may take some time to win the trust of another huckster.

Now, before you send your huckster running out to find another hexslinger to swap stories with, here's another warning.

Some initiates of Hoyle's teachings have taken a rather uniquely Western approach to life. These hucksters, much like their more mundane counterparts, seem to have a need to prove they are the best at what they do. However, instead of packing a six-gun, they carry a pack of 54.

These hexslingers are possibly the most dangerous foes another huckster can face. They know a fair amount of combat hexes and at a good level of skill too. They're also likely to be prepared to deal with another's hexes, having either skills or magic to defend against arcane attacks.

The least danger they pose is exposing your hero as a huckster. The greatest is making worm food out of him.



HEXES



SKINCHANGE

Trait: Knowledge
Hand: Two Pairs
Speed: 5 minutes
Duration: 1 hour/hex level
Range: Self

Skinchange is actually four different hexes (which must each be learned and purchased separately), but each has the same basic effect: The huckster takes on the form and abilities of another creature. The four versions of this hex are: *skinchange: black cat*, *raven*, *serpent*, and *wolf*. The abilities gained by each form are detailed below, however the general effects of the hex are the same.

The caster takes the size, form, and many of its physical abilities of a normal animal of the type she's selected. Unfortunately, the hex changes only the caster; no gear or clothing are transformed. She gains the animal's score in all Corporeal Traits and also the animal's Mien. The rest of her Mental Traits remain her own.

The caster cannot speak or cast any hexes, though she retains all her memories and Aptitudes. She can return to human form at

anytime, but doing so ends the hex. She cannot change back and forth between human and animal form without casting the hex again.

Finally, if the huckster draws the black Joker while casting *skinchange* and the hex is successful after the effects of backlash, the huckster takes on the mentality of the animal as well for the duration of the hex. Each type of animal and its abilities are detailed below.

BLACK CAT

Corporeal: D:1d4, N:3d12, S:1d4, Q:2d12, V:2d6
 Climbin' 4d12; dodge 2d12; fightin': brawlin' 2d12;
 sneak 5d12

Mental: M: 1d6; rest as caster

Size: 2

Special Abilities:

Claw: STR

Night Vision: Can see in all but total darkness as if it were daylight.

RAVEN

Corporeal: D:1d8, N:3d8, S:1d4, Q:2d10, V:2d4
 Fightin': brawlin' 2d8, sneak 2d8 (5d8 from air)

Mental: M: 1d6; rest as caster, except that
Cognition is increased by one die type

Size: 2

Special Abilities:

Flying: Pace 20

Beak: STR. Suffers no modifier for called shots with beak attack. Superior Vision: Gains +4 on all *Cognition* rolls to spot something at a distance.

Alert: Always rolls *Cognition* against a Foolproof (3) TN to avoid surprise.

SERPENT

Corporeal: D:1d4, N:1d6, S:1d4, Q:4d12+2, V:2d4
 Fightin': brawlin' 4d6

Mental: M: 1d8; test as caster
 Overawe 2d8

Size: 2

Special Abilities:

Bite: STR

Poison: If a bite causes a wound, the victim must make a Hard (9) *Vigor* roll. If he is successful, the bitten area swells painfully. If it's a limb, it cannot be used for 1d6 days. If it's the guts or noggin, the victim must spend the next 1d6 days in bed resting. If he fails the check, however, he dies in 1d4 hours unless someone else makes a Hard (9) medicine roll before then.

Flexibility: A serpent can crawl through spaces as small as 2 inches in diameter.



YOUR HIDE

BEN' SNEAKY

Now, even if you follow all the rules above and are as careful as you can be, there comes a time when you've got to cast a hex with witnesses around. That's just the way it is. One of the first tricks every huckster learns is to keep a deck of cards in hand to fool casual onlookers. This is done by making an opposed *sleight of hand* roll versus the *Cognition* of anyone who happens to be watching.

Most of the time, this is good enough for the average person. It also explains why many a huckster pretends to be nothing more than a professional gambler—not necessarily a beloved business among honest folks. However, anyone who knows what they're looking for can usually spot a huckster casting a hex, even if he's slick about it. It's kind of a giveaway when every time something strange happens, you're looking at a poker hand.

There are other approaches to this problem. Some hucksters use a hat or similar object in one hand to mask the cards in the other. A genteel Southern belle may hide more behind her fan than a blush. And while it's generally lethally bad form to put your hands under a poker table, it is an option.

MAGICAL SHOWDOWNS

Occasionally, two hexslingers find themselves with differences that can only be reconciled by an undertaker. In such circumstances, they resort to duels similar in many ways to those fought by gunmen. These rules are similar to the dueling rules in *The Quick & the Dead*, but there are some new wrinkles, so pay attention.

Usually, hucksters are a little more secretive about their showdowns than gunslingers. A pair who hold a magical duel on Main Street at high noon are likely to both end up dead—one from his opponent and one from the ensuing lynch mob. Now, that's not to say it doesn't happen. Just that if you get involved in such a fight, you'd best have a fast horse close at hand!

Magical showdowns closely parallel mundane duels, with a few differences. Like those fought with simple shooting irons, there are two types of hexslinging duels: timed and staredowns.

Be careful who you pick this type of fight with. Often a huckster who believes himself outmatched resorts to other methods to ensure his survival. A huckster has to be prepared to face anything in a magical showdown. Many a hexslinger has entered a such a duel only to find

himself staring at the business end of a Colt Peacemaker. While it may seem like poor sportsmanship, it's doubtful the local populace will look unkindly on the "poor gunman" who had to shoot that "awful warlock" in "self-defense." Seems there are a few loopholes in the "Law of the West," eh?

TIMED DUELS

Just like a timed pistol fight, these duels begin at some agreed-upon signal. This can be anything from the chiming of midnight on the mission bell to the drop of a fair lady's handkerchief.

At the beginning of the duel, each huckster makes a *Quickness* roll and draws Action Cards as usual. The Marshal draws a single card from his own deck. If it's a Joker or a face card, he draws again. Then, after he—and only he—looks at it, he places it face down on the table.

Next, the Marshal counts down cards, exactly like in a normal round. As their Action Cards are called, the hucksters may make tests of will or hold their cards. Casting a defensive hex is not allowed during the countdown. All the other hexslinger can see is a fan of cards appear—how's she to know it isn't an attack?

When the Marshal reaches the "signal" card, he flips it face up, and the spells start flying. Each huckster must make a *Smarts* test, and the fastest thinker begins his hex first. At this point, any cards held can be used to get a +2 on the *Smarts* roll. But don't rush to dump those extra cards. You may need them! Cards lower than the signal card are useless and are immediately discarded.

Hexes cast on the "signal" don't take a card to cast, but only hexes with a speed of 1 can be cast in such a manner. If the hex has a speed of 2 or more, the huckster had better be holding a card from earlier or she won't be able to finish the spell. It requires 1 card for each additional point of Speed, and the rushed circumstances cause the huckster to take a -2 modifier to his casting roll. It pays to know a fast combat hex.

The hucksters can use active defenses only if they are still holding cards at this time. Active defenses include hexes like *foil* or Aptitudes like *dodge*. If they've spent them to get *Smarts* bonuses, they're out of luck. There's no cashing in lower cards during a duel. They've already been discarded.

Once the initial hexes have been cast, the hucksters toss in any remaining cards and start normal rounds.





STAREDOWNS

In a staredown, the hexslingers themselves decide when to begin hurling spells. This is the more common of the magical duels for a couple of reasons.

First, staredowns take less planning, and most such showdowns are spur-of-the-moment affairs anyway. Second, they don't require any outside involvement.

The hucksters make *Quickness* rolls and draw cards as usual. The Marshal counts the round down as in a normal round. As their Action Cards are called, the hexslingers may perform tests of will, cast a hex, or hold their cards.

Once either participant tries to start a hex, the duel begins. Both hucksters, even the one who initiated the casting, make a *Smarts* roll as above, with the quicker wit getting the drop. And yes, it is possible for one huckster to start a hex first but be beat to the punch by his opponent.

As with a normal duel of this sort, casting a hex doesn't require a card be spent, but a huckster can't start a hex until at least one of her cards has been called. The exception is that she can respond to her opponent beginning to cast one of his own hexes.

All cards lower than the card on which the first huckster acts are immediately discarded. Cards held when the duel begins can be spent to give a +2 to the *Smarts* roll for each card, or they can be saved to use to cast a hex.

If saved for hexes, the cards can be used to cast a hex with a Speed greater than 1, or they can be used to help with an active defense, as above.

If the round ends with no one throwing down, both duelists must discard all their cards. No holding any up the sleeve during a duel! The process begins again from the start. This goes on until someone either casts a hex or breaks and runs.

WINNING THE MENTAL BATTLE

Losing your nerve just before you go to meet the bogeyman is never a good idea. Tests of will are even more important in a magical duel than in a traditional gunfight. The following effects apply to the loser of a test of will:

A *distracted* huckster suffers a -4 penalty to the *Smarts* roll to determine who goes first. Additionally, any Joker is considered to cause backlash regardless of the hex level.

An *unnerved* huckster suffers a -4 to both his *Smarts* roll and his hex casting roll. As above, any Joker causes backlash, no matter how skilled the huckster is. In a staredown, he must take action on his next card, whether it be casting a hex, begging mercy, or drawing his six-shooter and putting a hole in his opponent.

A *broken* huckster suffers the same effects as an *unnerved* one, and in a staredown he must immediately take action, as above.

If a huckster spends all her cards on tests of will, she can still respond to an opponent's hex, but she gets a -4 penalty to the *Smarts* roll to determine who goes first.

GUNSLINGERS VS. HEXSLINGERS

As we said, occasionally a huckster who lacks confidence in his magic may fall back on that of Colonel Colt. Or maybe a hexslinger finds himself on opposite sides of an argument with an honest-to-God shootist.

In such a case, the duel progresses as above, but the fighter armed with the pistol substitutes his *quick draw* Aptitude whenever *Smarts* is called for, and his *shootin'* skill when a hex casting Aptitude is mentioned. Weapons with a Speed of greater than 1 must be fired from the hip in such duels.

NO MAN'S LAND



RELICS





CHAPTER FIVE: NEW RELICS



In *The Quick & the Dead*, we introduced you to some of the relics that are floating around the Weird West. Well, it's time to learn about a few more. Most of these beauties are specifically of interest to hucksters, although a few could be used by just about anyone.

As before, each relic's description starts with a little background on it. The next entry is *Power*, which details exactly what effect it has on whoever uses it in game terms. Finally, each relic has its own special *Taint*, just to keep its owner honest (or at least nervous).

ALABASTER'S MONOCLE

This silver-rimmed eyepiece belonged to Baron Simeon Alabaster, a New Orleans huckster with pretensions to nobility. He always aped the latest European fashions, so when monocles became the rage in court circles back in the Old World, he had to have one.

The Baron (his title occasionally jumped to Duke when he had a few drinks too many), met an unfortunate end at the hands (claws?) of an unknown abomination. What was left of him was found in his stateroom aboard the *Trulane's Belle*. His severed head, monocle still in place, bore an expression of absolute horror.

The last thing Alabaster saw through the monocle he was so proud of was some unspeakable supernatural creature. This event gave the monocle a special power.

Power: The monocle has become attuned to the supernatural, allowing the wearer to see the magical energy around him. Treat this as if the wearer cast *hex sense* with a hand of Two Pairs. The user must concentrate to activate the power and it costs 1 Wind per round to maintain it.

Taint: Sometimes the wearer is treated to quick glimpses of the creature which killed Alabaster. Each time the monocle is activated, the wearer must draw a card. If a Joker is pulled, the wearer sees one of these visions and must make an Incredible (11) *guts* check. Failure lets the Marshal roll 4d6 on the Scart Table.

BELLE STARR'S NECKLACE

This valuable piece of jewelry is said to have once belonged to the famous Belle Starr, reputed Kansas bandit queen. It's claimed Belle has been the object of many famous gunmen's attention, not the least of whom was the notorious Cole Younger. The necklace is finely crafted of gold, and it bears a red gem for a pendant.

Power: This necklace makes its owner attractive to members of the opposite sex. Anyone wearing this relic gains the *purty* Edge.

Taint: Unfortunately it seems to work best on the types of characters everyone's mother warned them about. Any character with the *outlaw* Hindrance finds the wearer nearly irresistible. Double the *purty* bonus against such characters.





BIREN'S MANACLES

These crudely made manacles, crafted by Hoyle himself, are similar to the very ones used to hold the Russian sorcerer Ernst Biren. Though over a century old, the manacles remain free of rust. Anyone touching the manacles finds them unsettlingly cool to the touch. Although the exact number of the manacles in existence is unknown, it's suspected the Pinkertons have at least one set.

Power: These manacles make any sort of contact with the Hunting Grounds impossible. Thus, a huckster cannot cast even the simplest hex, nor can a mad scientist develop or build gizmos while shackled by them.

A Harrowed character may also be bound by these manacles. While shackled, the Harrowed may not use any of his special powers because the manitou cannot draw the energy it needs from the Hunting Grounds. A Harrowed trapped in these manacles suffers 1 Wind per day, because the manitou cannot summon the energy needed to maintain the character's physical body.

Taint: There is no real taint to this relic. It has no effect on either a shaman's favor or a blessed's miracles.

HOYLE'S MARKERS

These glossy black poker chips are said to have once belonged to Edmond Hoyle himself, although this is highly doubtful, since poker chips did not exist during Hoyle's time. What's known for certain is that any huckster holding one can call in a debt from the manitous once. After it is used, the marker disappears—only to appear later elsewhere in the world.

Power: After successfully casting a hex, the huckster can cash in the marker. The huckster's hand for the hex just cast is automatically promoted to a minimum of Two Pairs. If the hand drawn is Two Pairs or better, the hand is promoted one step, so a Straight becomes a Flush, a Full House becomes Four of a Kind, etc.

Taint: As long as the huckster possesses the Marker, he draws an extra card whenever he casts a hex. This card is only used for determining if backlash occurs. Additionally, all Jokers cause backlash, regardless of the huckster's skill level in a hex.

JACKALOPE'S FOOT

Normally when you cut off a jackalope's foot, it's good for a luck charm for about a month before it starts to get a little too ripe to carry. However, someone with no small little skill in taxidermy and some occult knowledge apparently found a way to preserve the charm. While it does continue to bring the bearer good luck most of the time, when things go bad for the owner, they go bad with a capital B-A-D!

Power: Owner gains the *luck o' the Irish Edge* while in physical possession of a jackalope's foot.

Taint: Whenever the owner goes bust, treat the result as if she had the *bad luck Hindrance*. Remember, since she can't spend any Fate Chips to reroll dice when she goes bust, she can't use *luck o' the Irish* either!

LUCKY DICE

Finely crafted from highly polished bone of some sort, one of these sets of dice would be very valuable to a collector of antiquities. However, their true worth is their value to a huckster. Only a few sets of these dice exist, and they are highly prized by their owners.

Power: Anytime a huckster possessing these dice suffers a backlash, he should roll two six-sided dice. On a roll of 7 or 11, the huckster avoids the backlash.

The Pinkerton Agency is widespread and well-represented in all the major cities of the western United States. It also maintains a presence in the Disputed Territories as well, although agents in that region keep their identity and affiliation secret.

Hucksters who run afoul of the Pinkertons find themselves with a hatful of trouble. The agency prides itself on its communication network. All agents are kept abreast of "threats" within their area of operations.

The agency, while maintaining extensive files on all supernatural occurrences, does not distribute a book similar to *The Ranger Bible*. This is because the agency deals with threats in a more immediate manner than the Rangers. Pinkerton agents don't have the option to make the decision as to whether to eliminate or recruit a huckster. They only have the option to shoot if they feel the hexslinger is dangerous or simply report her location and actions.

While the agency directors prefer to make the decision to shoot or not, agents who make this call are never questioned. The Pinkertons are trained to operate under the assumption it's better to bury potential problems.

PINKERTONS

With each update of the book, any new threats are added, and those that have been "dealt with" are removed. Needless to say, "dealing with" a supernatural threat always involves the undertaker.

Also within the pages of the book are descriptions of common abominations like Mojave rattlers, werewolves, prairie ticks, and the like. It usually includes the weaknesses of such creatures. The knowledge contained in this book may explain why few Rangers dedicate much time to studying the occult.

Part of a Ranger's duty is to update the organization with any information she learns so it can be included in later editions of this book. Another part of her duty is to make sure that this book never falls into a non-Ranger's hands. The Rangers believe the information within could jeopardize the security of the Confederacy if made public. When a new edition is produced, they burn their old copies.

As the Marshal, you are the final authority on what *The Ranger Bible* does and doesn't contain. You can use it as a tool to provide the posse with as much or as little information as you want. Don't feel you have to let the Bible short-circuit an adventure.

The Pinkertons have a very elaborate and effective system for distributing information to their agents. The Rangers have their Bible. It's a toss up as to which is more effective.

Every Ranger has access to the information in *The Ranger Bible*, and all high-ranking members carry one with them. Agents of the Rangers located in central locations all keep a copy of the book (well-hidden, of course) so that lesser-ranking members of the Rangers may access it. A new edition of this book is printed and distributed every six months to a year.

Within it, the Rangers have listed every person identified as a supernatural threat. A supernatural threat includes recruits who've gone "outlaw." It includes, along with the listing, as thorough a description of the person as the Rangers can obtain.

THE RANGER BIBLE

There are two reasons for this.

First, most Texas Rangers are so overconfident they make J.E.B. Stuart look cautious. The very thought that someone would try to cross the Rangers is unthinkable to them.

Second, the Rangers have a secret weapon.



ZHARKOV'S SAW

This large saw once belonged to Zharkov the Magnificent, a Russian-born magician of some repute. He used it nightly in his act. Each night he would "saw" his lovely assistant—who also happened to be his wife—in half with it.

One night, the trick went tragically wrong. Instead of cutting through an empty box, the saw's razor sharp teeth cut into flesh and blood. Zharkov, believing his wife's screams were part of the act continued cutting. It wasn't until her screams stopped that he realized his mistake.

Overcome with grief, the magician—who in addition to his slight of hand skills possessed some true occult knowledge—made a pact with a manitou to restore his wife to him. That very night, his wife's hastily stitched body rose as one of the living dead. His joy at her resurrection blinded him at first to the differences between this walking corpse and his wife. Once he admitted to himself that the thing he lived with was not his beloved Antonia, he destroyed her body and took his own life.

Since that time, the saw has belonged to a number of lesser magicians—many of whom have met tragic ends.

Power: This saw's bloody past gives its wielder the power to create the living dead. To do this, the zombie-to-be must be killed with the saw. Once the victim's death wounds have been stitched closed, the corpse arises as a walkin' dead under the saw owner's control.

Like walkin' dead created by the Harrowed power *unholy host*, the undead created by this saw are pure evil and always interpret their master's command literally and in a way most likely to cause problems. The Marshal's sure to have fun with this.

The walkin' dead created by the saw can be killed by a head shot, but they also can be destroyed by the saw. However, walkin' dead killed by the saw can be "revived" by stitching closed the wound which "killed" them.

A revived zombie may rebel. If it wins an opposed *Spirit* roll against its master, it becomes free of his control. Its first action is usually to dispose of its former master.

Taint: The saw's owner develops a *yearnin'* to be recognized as the best at what he does. Gunslingers and hexslingers continually challenge others of their type to duels, magicians constantly try riskier and more spectacular tricks, and soon.



THE MARSHAL'S HANDBOOK



BACKLASH





CHAPTER SIX: DEALN' WITH HUCKSTERS



Usually, hucksters cause more problems for themselves and the rest of their posse than they do for the Marshal. Seldom is a Marshal faced with a huckster who consistently overshadows the other members of the posse.

To use their abilities, not only do hucksters have to succeed at a hex Aptitude roll, they've also got to draw a fair poker hand to get their hexes to work. On top of the difficulty of simply casting the hex in the first place, they've also got to worry about backlash. What all this adds up to is a character who's often reluctant to flex his muscles.

That's not necessarily a bad thing, of course. If there wasn't a way to put the brakes on these Weird Western magicians, they'd be all-powerful. Imagine if hucksters could simply throw down hex after hex with no fear of repercussions of any kind. No one would want to play anything but a huckster.

Of course, that's not the way things are. As matters stand, you've got to be pretty foolhardy to want to play a huckster. The deck is stacked against you.

Because of this, we've tried to ease things a little for hucksters. A number of hexes now work on a minimum hand of an Ace, a Joker doesn't always cause backlash, and the Backlash Table is a little more forgiving. All these factors combine to make hucksters a bit more powerful and, hopefully, fun for both the player and Marshal.

BACKLASH

Backlash is the #1 concern among hucksters. It occurs when the huckster botches a hex roll or draws a Joker while forming the hex's poker hand.

Now, it's almost always a painful experience for the hexslinger that suffers it, but backlash is a fact of life as a huckster. It's an important tool to limit the huckster's abilities. There is no limit to the number of times a huckster can attempt to cast a hex in a given period of time. It doesn't automatically drain the character's physical or mental strength. If she wants, a huckster can cast the same hex on every single action in a given combat.

Backlash is a little negative reinforcement to prevent abuse of these abilities. Any huckster, regardless of skill, suffers backlash occasionally. It's unavoidable.

However, it's almost never fatal, in and of itself. Sure, if the Marshal gets a phenomenal amount of Aces on a damage roll, she could kill a huckster with it, but it's highly unlikely. A huckster who's already injured could be in danger, or someone who's life depends upon a successfully cast hex could be in serious trouble, but a backlash result by itself shouldn't usually kill anyone.

But it does make any practitioner of Hoyle's art a little nervous, particularly when there are high stakes riding on the hex.



HANDLING BACKLASH

Pay close attention, because there are a few minor differences in the way backlash should be handled now. We've made some changes in the rules to make them just a little more huckster-friendly.

But not *too* friendly.

Just like before, a botch on a hex roll always results in backlash. However, drawing a Joker may or may not cause backlash. This depends on the color of the Joker and the huckster's skill with the hex being cast.

Savvy cardslingers are sometimes able to fool manitous, even when they've got nothing in their hand but trash. If a huckster has a 3 or higher score in the hex she's using at the time, she can treat any red Joker as a wild card without worrying about backlash.

If the huckster's skill with the hex is less than 3, she isn't experienced enough with that hex to bluff the manitou with it when she's holding a losing hand. She chokes on the chance. With this (relatively) unfamiliar hex, any Joker means backlash. Hucksters should learn to not depend on low-skill hexes in a crunch. It's a surefire way to end up in the bone orchard.



THE EXTENDED BACKLASH TABLE

At the end of this chapter is a new, more varied Backlash Table. It increases the number of possible outcomes from backlash without drastically changing the overall effects of the original table. A quick read shows that about half the time, a huckster who gets hit with backlash still has some chance of successfully casting his hex. Feel free to use it as you see fit—or not at all.

Some hexes cry out to manitous and Marshals alike for a certain type of backlash. For instance, a botched *far talk* may go through with a distorted or even opposite meaning more often than damage the huckster. Or maybe a black Joker on a *vittles* induces hunger instead of madness.

The Backlash Table is a tool to allow you more time to focus on the action in your game. But if you're feeling creative—what the Hell? After all, the manitou are notorious tricksters and manipulators of reality.

The important thing to keep in mind as Marshal is that backlash is supposed to happen from time to time. It's the price a huckster pays for dealing with the devil. As one old huckster once said, "You pays your money, you takes your chances."

DESIGNING NEW HEXES

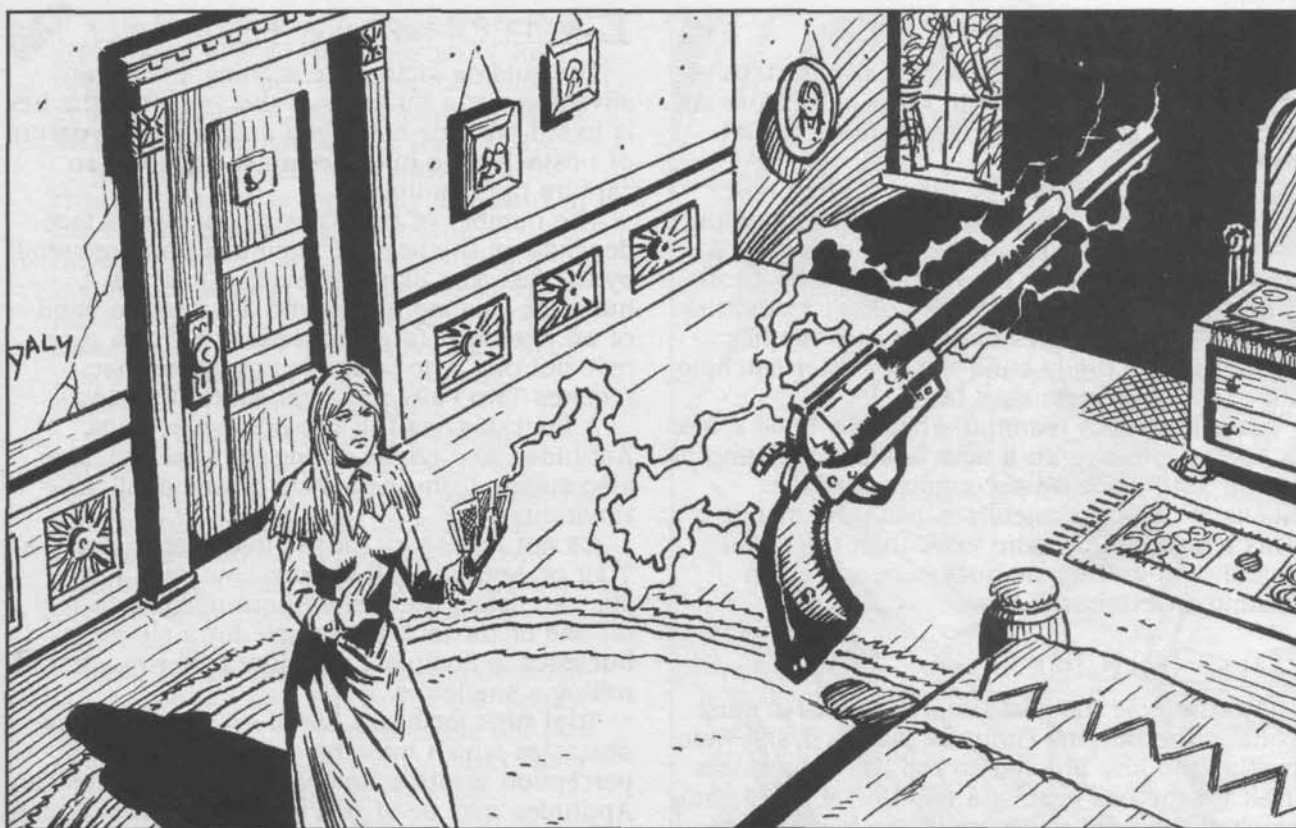
Most of what's necessary to design a new hex can be found in Chapter Three. You, as Marshal, play a very important part in the creation of a new hex.

We're not going to burden you or your player with a lot of charts and tables here. Besides, with all the possible effects for hexes, we're sure to leave out something. Instead, we've given you the basic guidelines, and we're leaving it up to you as the Marshal to keep things in line for your own campaign.

DETERMINING THE MINIMUM HAND

The power level of the hex should guide the choice of the minimum hand necessary to cast it. It's recommended that the hex work in levels of effect, so that it can have some sort of effect at an Ace or at least a Pair.

If you make a hex too tough to cast, odds are the backlash alone is going to plant your brave huckster in Boot Hill before she can successfully cast the hex once.



The minimum hand allowed to power a newly created hex is an Ace. When in doubt, setting a minimum of a Pair is usually the best and safest way to go.

Setting the hand above Two Pairs isn't advised, except for really powerful hexes. It's just too hard to get a better hand. Don't forget that the huckster's still got to make the hex roll to get the hex to work, so she's already got two obstacles in front of her. Don't make either of them too tough.

Remember, even though Jokers cause backlash, they can still be used as wild cards to help make the minimum hand. Also, about half the time backlash occurs, there's still a chance the hex is going to take effect anyhow.

Also, remember the minimum hand comes into play in two other areas of the hex design process. First, it determines the number of weeks the huckster has to research the hex—3 weeks per level of the minimum hand. Second, it determines the number of trials the huckster has to overcome the first time she casts the hex (see below). In both cases, a Pair of Jacks is counted as a separate type of hand from a simple Pair.

BALANCING THE HEX

It may seem the best way to balance a hex is to make the minimum hand tough to draw. That certainly is the easiest way, but it may lead to frustration for the player when she can't cast the hex she worked so hard to design. It may also frustrate the Marshal when she does!

A better way to balance the hex is to compare the hex to ones which have similar effects. Then consider the strengths and weaknesses of the two. If they offset each other, it's a good bet the hex is fairly balanced.

A good example is *gateway* and *shadow walk*. *Gateway* has a much greater range than *shadow walk*, but numerous limitations.

First, the huckster must prepare the hex beforehand. *Shadow walk* can be used at anytime. Second, she must have a doorway to step through. Shadows can be found just about anywhere. Third, she can only return to one location. *Shadow walk* can take her to any shadow she can see within range. Finally, the minimum hand is much harder to come by, although like we said before, this isn't something you want to really count on.

HARNESSING A MANITOU

Your player has gone through all the steps to create a hex and is ready to try it out. Before she can do that, though, she's got to make a trial run.

Normally, a huckster has the framework for her hex already laid out when she goes hunting a manitou. When your huckster is casting a newly created hex for the first time, she doesn't have this luxury. Because she doesn't know how the manitou's energies might fit into the hex, she's got to actually build the hex after catching the spirit. This is no easy task!

Holding onto a manitou while you build a hex is like wrestling with a tiger while calculating *pi* to the 354th place. To accomplish this, the huckster must completely subdue the manitou. This requires a lot more work than the usual snatch-and-grab tactic hucksters use when casting an established hex.

THE TRIAL RUN

To complete the trial run, the huckster must contact the Hunting Grounds, just as if she were casting the hex. She has to roll the appropriate Trait for the hex against a Fair (5) TN. Once she's reached the Hunting Grounds, the hexslinger is going to have to spend a bit longer there than she normally does.

The huckster has to completely and totally defeat a manitou in a contest to control it while she crafts the hex she's designed. Following Hoyle's instructions, the hexslinger puts this conflict into a familiar mental context which she can control to some degree.

There are two ways for you as the Marshal to resolve this contest between huckster and spirit. The first is down and dirty. The second is a little more involved, and requires a little more planning on your part.

THE SHORT CUT

All the huckster has to do is roll the Trait associated with the hex against an Onerous (7) TN once for each level of the minimum hand. By this, we mean an Ace is 1 level, a Pair is 2 levels, a Pair of Jacks is 3, etc.

If all of these rolls are successful, the huckster has defeated the manitou and created the hex. If the huckster fails, she can give it another try, but she has to wait at least a week. If she goes bust on any of the rolls, she takes backlash just as if she'd cast the hex, and the trial run fails.

DEVELOPING THE FULL TRIAL RUN

The guiding factor in designing a trial run adventure for a huckster is the Trait that the hex is based on. This helps you determine the nature of obstacles the huckster must overcome to capture the manitou.

The number of tests a huckster has to face depends on the level of minimum hand required by the hex, just like in the quick method. A huckster creating a hex with a minimum hand of an Ace must face and defeat only one such test, but one who is developing a hex that requires Two Pairs must encounter four tests.

A huckster has full use of all her Traits, Aptitudes, and Edges during the trial run. She also suffers from the effects of any applicable Hindrances.

It's not necessary for the huckster to make a Trait or Aptitude roll to overcome each hex if she can defeat the hex without needing to rely on one of those. It is possible for a clever huckster to complete an entire trial run without rolling a single die.

Trial runs for hexes based on *Cognition* have obstacles which must be overcome by use of perception or discernment. *Scrutinize* or similar Aptitudes may be of use in defeating the hurdles encountered in such tests.

Knowledge-based hexes have tests which rely on how much book learning the huckster has. *Academia* or similar Aptitudes are helpful against these types of tests.

Tests for hexes based on *Mien* deal primarily with personality or persuasion. A smooth talker is most likely to be successful in these endeavors. *Overawe* or the like are useful in these situations.

Smarts-based hexes have trial runs in which the test must be defeated by a quick wit. *Bluff* or *streetwise* are often helpful in these experiments.

Finally, *Spirit*-based hexes are often the most difficult. While *guts* is usually helpful, these struggles are often ethical dilemmas which the huckster must resolve.

If the huckster defeats all the tests, she's successfully cast the hex and can use it freely from now on. If she fails to overcome any of the tests, she is unable to complete the trial run and can try again in a week.

Should the unfortunate hexslinger go bust on a Trait or Aptitude roll during the experiment, he takes backlash just as if she'd cast the spell, and the run is entirely wasted. She can try again in a week.

Velvet has decided to create a hex that allows him to read the thoughts of his opponents. The hex is *Cognition*-based, and the minimum hand is a Pair of Jacks. Velvet therefore has to face three tests.

Test One: Velvet finds himself in the riverboat casino he normally envisions in his duels. However, his opponent is invisible. Velvet must somehow locate the manitou to engage it. He can do this in a number of ways, but he decides to snatch a rug from the ground and sweep it around the room, thus eventually trapping the invisible manitou.

Test Two: The captured manitou surrenders to Velvet, promising to not struggle any further while he finishes the hex crafting. Velvet falls back on old-fashioned common sense and makes a *scrutinize* roll against the manitou. He is successful and realizes the creature hasn't yet given up.

Test Three: Suddenly he finds himself faced with not one, but two of the spirits. He knows one is only an illusion, but he's unsure which is the real one. Velvet casts a *penetratin' gaze* and ignores the manitou he can see through.



MANTOUS

Manitous are malicious entities who seek to cause as much chaos and destruction as possible in the natural world. They're the font of a huckster's power, but they're also frequently the source of a lot of her pain.

While most hucksters have to wrest power from manitous by sheer force of will, there are a few who have it a bit easier.

HARROWED HUCKSTERS

When the host is in charge, a Harrowed character has no better time dealing with the manitous in the Hunting Grounds than a living huckster. She's still got to find one, defeat it, and channel the power it supplies into a hex. She also suffers backlash just like anyone else.

When the manitou has Dominion, it's a different story. The spirit has to make its hex Aptitude roll just as normal. This is because it still has to craft the hex before dumping power into it. If the Aptitude roll fails, the hex fails. However, if the manitou goes bust on the roll, it doesn't suffer any backlash. In fact, it *never* suffers backlash for any reason.

Once the manitou has crafted the hex, the foul spirit must then attempt to convince one of its relatives to help it out by powering its magic. This is no simpler for it than for a human huckster. Manitous aren't famous for their teamwork.

The creature draws cards, again as normal, but here's where the manitou has a great advantage over its human host. Coming from the other side does count for something at the end of the day.

A manitou inhabiting a Harrowed expends a tremendous amount of energy simply keeping the body functioning. Another portion of its power is used fighting for Dominion with the host. This doesn't leave it with a lot of energy left over for things like battling with long-lost cousins, but it does leave it with just enough to get by with.

Even if it was unable to get any support from its relatives on the Hunting Grounds, a manitou which has Dominion over a huckster can always power its hexes to a small degree. The manitou's hand is always considered to be a minimum of a Pair, regardless of what it actually draws. If it does draw a better hand, it uses the hand it drew. Otherwise, treat the result as a Pair of 2s.

EXTENDED BACKLASH

Roll Effect

- 1 **Mystic Sputter:** The manitou mentally jolts the huckster. The hex fails, and the huckster's skill in the hex drops 1 level for 1d6 days.
- 2 **Spiritual Backhand:** The manitou deals the huckster a glancing blow. The huckster takes 2d6 points of damage to a random location. If the huckster loses consciousness, the hex fails.
- 3 **Spirit Sap:** The manitou makes a weak attempt to take over the huckster, but fails. The huckster loses 2d6 Wind in the battle. If the huckster loses consciousness, the hex fails.
- 4 **Fright:** A companion of the huckster gets a glimpse of the true nature of the manitou. Roll 2d6 on the Scart Table and apply the results. If there is no companion within sight, the huckster is affected instead. If the huckster's result is "The Willies" or worse, the hex fails.
- 5 **Personal Corruption:** The manitou twists the hex to harm the huckster personally. Damage-causing hexes hit the huckster, healing hexes transfer wounds to the huckster, protective hexes make the huckster more vulnerable, etc. The hex has at least the minimum success.
- 6 **Befuddled:** The manitou shorts out a portion of the huckster's mind. The hex fails, and the huckster's skill in all hexes drops by 1 level for 1d4 days.
- 7 **External Backlash:** The manitou rebels and lashes out at a member of the huckster's posse. To the unsuspecting victim, it feels as if something is trying to claw its way out from the inside. A companion takes 2d6 to the guts and must make a Fair (5) *Vigor* test to keep from doubling over in pain. If there is no companion within sight, the huckster takes the damage instead. If the huckster loses consciousness, the hex fails.
- 8 **Spirit Lash:** Frustrated by a failed attempt to take over the huckster, the manitou lashes out at one of his companions.
- 9 **Temporary Madness:** The manitou drives the huckster over the brink for a short while. Roll on the mad scientist's Dementia Table. At the end of every game week, the huckster may make a Hard (9) *Spirit* test. If she succeeds, she recovers from the mental malady. Unfortunately, a botch makes the dementia permanent. No matter what happens to the huckster's mind, the hex succeeds.
- 10 **External Corruption:** The manitou malevolently twists the hex to harm the huckster's companions. Damage-causing hexes hit companions, healing hexes do a like amount of damage, *tweaks* instead *twist*, and so on. If the huckster is alone, treat this as "Personal Corruption," but in a more overt fashion, possibly blowing the huckster's cover. Damage-causing hexes may cause an avalanche, protective hexes may help foes instead, and so on. The hex has at least the minimum success.
- 11 **Mental Static:** The manitou confuses the huckster badly, and it's going to take a while for her to sort this all out. The hex fails, and the huckster can cast no more hexes for a day.
- 12 **Personal Backlash:** The manitou rebels. The huckster takes 3d6 damage to the body. If the huckster should lose consciousness, the hex fails.
- 13 **Phantom Amputation:** The manitou succeeds in wresting control of a randomly determined limb from the huckster. The manitou isn't able to use the limb, only deny its use to the huckster. The limb is numb and unusable for 1d12 hours, at which time

BACKLASH

the huckster regains control. A successful *exorcism* by a blessed character also drives out the manitou. The hex succeeds.

- 14 **Terror:** The huckster gets a good look at a manitou, and she doesn't like what she sees. Roll 4d6 on the Scart Table and apply the results. The hex automatically fails.
- 15 **Inanimate Corruption:** The manitou uses the conduit formed by the hex to wreak havoc on a possession of the huckster. It may steal a small valuable item, ruin the functioning of a complex item, chew through the strap on a saddle, etc. On hexes cast to help other posse members, the manitou instead chooses a possession of the target. The hex succeeds.
- 16 **Brain Drain:** The manitou fries a part of the huckster's mind. The hex fails, and the huckster's skill with the hex drops 1 level permanently.
- 17 **Corporeal Withering:** The manitou strikes the huckster with a minor curse. The huckster takes 2d6 points of damage to a random location. Any wound caused or Wind lost heals more slowly than normal. Lost Wind takes an hour to recover, and any wound caused is treated as two levels higher for all healing purposes, magical or natural (with a maiming wound still as bad as it can ever get). If the huckster loses consciousness, the hex fails.
- 18 **Spirit Drain:** The manitou makes a dedicated effort to take over, but fails. The hex fails, and the huckster loses 3d6 Wind.
- 19 **Madness:** The manitou ruins the hex and drives the huckster insane. Cackle insanely and roll on the mad scientist's Dementia Table.
- 20 **Total Corruption:** Not only does the manitou completely foil the hex, but it attempts to possess the huckster as if the poor sap was actually Harrowed. If the huckster fails an opposed *Spirit* test (draw a card and use the standard character generation method to determine the manitou's *Spirit*), the manitou gains control of his body for 10 minutes.



WILD CARDS





CHAPTER SEVEN: WILD CARDS



As if hucksters didn't already have a hard enough time from the manitous, there's a whole lot of folks out there hunting their hides. These range from Pinkertons to preachers, lawmen to lynch mobs. Here's the lowdown on how to run each of these groups. There's also a few secrets here on the Court and our friend Biren.

NORMAL FOLKS

Townpeople and the like are usually more afraid of a huckster and her powers than anything else. Like any sane person in the Weird West, they try to kill anything that scares them.

Often a huckster can use this to her advantage and disperse the hemp necktie party with a display of magic. This isn't always the best solution, as it draws the attention of the authorities. But if it's a choice between that and a stretched neck, we all know where the safe money is. Hucksters who handle such situations with vulgar displays quickly find themselves a source of interest for the Pinkertons or Texas Rangers.

Religious leaders are harder to deal with. These folks see the hucksters as nothing more than another type of abomination to be purged from the earth. While they might be afraid of the huckster's power just like everyone else, they may feel a duty to their faith to defeat the hexslinger. And most communities look very poorly upon striking down a servant of the Lord.

Hucksters who run into trouble with the local populace soon learn that discretion is the better part of valor.

TEXAS RANGERS

Texas Rangers, while organized like a military unit, usually operate for long periods as individuals. As a result the Rangers tend to be independent and very self-reliant.

However, the solitary Ranger often faces a dilemma in the organization's "shoot or recruit" policy toward the supernatural. The Ranger must rely on his own intuition and discretion when making the decision on which course to take when faced with a huckster or Harrowed.

While they are usually good judges of character, mistakes are occasionally made. If the decision is to shoot, the organization loses a potentially powerful ally, but if a Ranger recruits the wrong person, he could seriously damage the integrity and safety of the Confederacy's best defense against the Reckoning.

Added to this, the Ranger's duties seldom allow him time to escort the new recruit to the nearest Ranger outpost. Instead, he must rely on the recruit to honor her word and report herself. There would seem to be tremendous opportunities for trouble in this system.

Yet, in spite of the obvious dangers, the Rangers are not as trigger happy when dealing with potential recruits as you would expect.





Power: Anytime a huckster using this deck casts a damage-causing hex, there's a chance the deck's violent past kicks in and gives the hex a boost. If the huckster successfully rolls her hex Aptitude and draws any of the blood-spattered cards, the hex always has at least its minimum effect, regardless of the minimum hand. If she actually draws at least the minimum hand to cast the hex and has any of the blood-spattered cards among the five selected as her final hand, the hand is increased to the next higher hand for purposes of determining the effect. Multiple blood-spattered cards are not cumulative, except that if the Dead Man's Hand is drawn, it's treated like a Royal Flush for purposes of effect.

Taint: The owner of the deck begins dreaming about the fateful day when Wild Bill played his last hand. Due to the way Hickok was killed, the huckster slowly gains the *dementia: paranoia* Hindrance, which remains as long as she is in possession of the deck.

This may not be the worst of it though. Rumor has it that Wild Bill has returned from the grave and is looking for his six-shooters that were stolen from his body at the time of his death. If that's true, it's possible he might come looking for his favorite deck of cards next.

Taint: On the other hand, if the huckster rolls a 2 or a 12, the Marshal rolls twice on the Backlash Table and applies both results to the unlucky hexslinger.

LUKE SHORT'S DERRINGER

This fancy two-barrel pocket pistol once belonged to the famous gambler and rumored huckster Luke Short. Occasionally known as "the Undertaker's Friend," Short's prowess with a gun is reputed to be second only to his skill with a deck of cards—at least at ranges about the distance of a poker table.

Power: The derringer gives an additional +5 to any attempts to hide it. At ranges less 10 feet, the pistol negates all called shot penalties.

Taint: Any shot made with this pistol at a range of greater than 10 feet suffers an additional -5 penalty besides any other modifiers to the *shootin' Aptitude*. Also, anyone possessing this pistol picks up a 1-point *enemy Hindrance*. The owner is occasionally accused of cheating at cards and challenged. Even if she doesn't play cards, complete strangers approach her and belligerently insist she cheated them at some time in the past.

A SHORT TREATISE ON WHIST

This small pamphlet, published in 1742, is the first edition of Hoyle's famous book. He never intended this book to be released. It's little more than an encoded record of his experiments.

Power: This pamphlet walks a huckster through the steps necessary to create a new hex. Any huckster who possesses this relic can develop a new hex in half the normal time. Also, any rolls made while creating the hex, including the trial run, receive a +4 bonus. Complete rules on developing your own hexes are on pages 78-79.

Taint: A huckster studying from this text needs to make a Hard (9) *academia: occult* roll to decipher the writings, as the descriptions of the hexes are sketchy and incomplete. If he goes bust on this roll, he suffers backlash as normal, but add +2 to the roll on the table.

WILD BILL'S DECK

This is the deck old Wild Bill was playing with when he was shot in the back. The cards are worn from playing, and the 8 of Clubs, 8 of Spades, Ace of Clubs, Ace of Spades, and Jack of Diamonds all have blood spots on their faces. An enormous amount of power resides in these cards.

THE LIBRARY

The Pinkertons have an arcane training ground in Massachusetts. This is where the nonexistent Pinkerton hucksters receive their training. It's a small, heavily guarded facility. There are three separate areas to the Library.

The first is dedicated solely to familiarizing the normal field agent with the basics of the occult. Part of any agent's training includes a two-week stay at the Library. The subjects covered here include the basics of Hoyle's hexes and studies of many myths and supernatural creatures, like vampires and werewolves. Most Pinkerton agents leave with at least a passing familiarity with the arcane.

The second part of the facility is dedicated to molding Pinkertons who have shown promise in the area of hexslinging. The training for these candidates is longer and much more in depth, taking almost a year to complete.

The lessons are intensive and stressful. The instructors are careful to watch the students for any signs of inability to cope with the program. Those who can't handle the course are returned to service as regular field agents in the agency.

The staff also watches for any indication that a candidate has fallen under the influence of a manitou. Although such events are rare, it has happened in the past with disastrous results. If one of the faculty has reason to believe a student has succumbed to a manitou's power, they are fully authorized to dismiss the student—permanently.

At the end of the course, the hucksters are usually assigned to regional or district offices to provide support for special investigations. There are about 80 active Pinkerton hucksters.

Agency-trained hucksters focus primarily on informational and communication hexes. Such operatives tend to use their supernatural skills behind the scenes, seldom directly insinuating them into field operations. The average hexslinging agent is well-versed in *private eye*, *earshot*, *bloodhound*, and the like.

"CLEANERS"

The power of a well-cast *soul blast* can only be ignored by the blind or the foolish. The Pinkertons are neither.

In general, the agency steers well clear of combat-oriented hexes. These have proven time and again to be unreliable or just plain self-destructive in high-stress combat situations. The Pinkertons believe, and perhaps rightly so, that a

Gatling pistol is a better choice over a hex of any kind when it comes to a fight.

Nonetheless, even the Pinkerton Agency can't ignore that there are times when a magical solution is called for. To handle problems of this kind, the agency has developed special teams employing hucksters. When the agency calls in one of these teams, it means business.

These hucksters are different from the standard huckster agent in that their hexes are almost entirely combat-oriented. They are all highly trained in both their hexes and the use of firearms.

A team of "cleaners" has three or four members, at least one of whom is a huckster. Unlike ordinary Pinkertons, such teams work alone and do not hire additional guns, regardless of the threat. Cleaners are even more secretive about their activities than normal agents.

These teams always try to solve the problem in the most direct manner possible. They don't investigate haunted houses. They burn them down.

There are currently 10 such teams operational. A team can be dispatched to most places in the United States in the space of a week or even less.





THE COURT

The rumors about the existence of a secret society of hucksters are indeed true. Also true is the fact that the group's headquarters are on a riverboat based in New Orleans. The riverboat is the *New Dynasty*, and it's owned by wealthy New Orleans sugar tycoon Solomon Thayer. The *New Dynasty* has developed quite a reputation along the lower Mississippi River for hosting extravagant and often wild parties. Receiving an invitation to one is considered quite an honor.

Where the rumors fall short is the object of the group. While "furthering the good of the society's members" is the ostensible reason the Court circulates among its associates, it is not the true goal of the organization. In fact, few outside the highest-ranking members of the association know the society's actual purpose. Rather, few who live long.

Despite what the lower-ranking members may believe, the Court isn't a mutual aid association for the students of Hoyle—far from it. At its highest level, it is a cabal of hucksters who have willingly sold their souls to the Reckoners for earthly power and riches.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE COURT

The Court takes its name, not surprisingly, from the face cards in a standard poker deck. Its membership is spread throughout the United States and the Confederacy, with the largest numbers being found along states bordering the Mississippi. Smaller numbers can be found in Deadwood, Denver, and Lost Angels. There are also enclaves in two small towns in Nevada: Reno and Las Vegas. Exactly what interest the Court has in these locations is unknown.

The members of the association are ranked by a level of initiation. The lowest members are referred to as Deuces, with the highest being 10s.

The initiates of ranks 4 and lower are unaware of the true nature of the Court and serve the society as primarily sources of information. Occasionally, they may be given a simple courier mission or the like if they've proven themselves reliable. The bulk of the Court's membership is found in these ranks, with as many as 100 members at any time.

Ranks 5 through 8 are aware that the Court has an agenda not always consistent with that of the authorities either North or South of the Mason-Dixon. They are most often given

missions to confound a Pinkerton or Ranger investigation. However, even these members don't know the true goals of the society. No initiate can rise above the rank of 8 without rigorous loyalty testing by the members of the Royal Court. There are between 20 and 30 initiates of ranks 5 to 8 at any given time.

Rank 9 and 10 initiates are assigned the task of selecting and recruiting new members for the Court. Any member of these levels is aware of some of the corrupt practices of the Court and accepts them. There are only six initiates in each of these ranks at any one time.

Rank 10 initiates are often sent on dangerous missions where those who are of the wrong temperament to become members of the Royal Court are weeded out.

There are 13 members of the innermost circle of the Court, known properly as the Royal Court. To the other members of the society, they are known only by the names of the face cards. The Kings are the supposed leaders of the cabal, but the Joker is the real power, and the Aces are his enforcers.

All members of the Royal Court are hucksters who have fully sold their souls for the power of the Reckoner's black magic. As if this wasn't enough to make them a deadly group, most also have made certain pacts which grant them powers like those of the Harrowed.

THE GOALS OF THE COURT

The true goals of the Court are unknown to all but the innermost circle of the society. The lower initiates are almost entirely unaware of these goals, but some have formed their own opinions based on the tasks they are called to perform for the organization.

Initiates of level 4 and below believe the Court's goals to some extent parallel those of the Rangers and Pinkertons—excluding the persecution of hucksters, of course. They most often study and observe strange phenomenon in the Weird West and report back to their superiors. Although the Court doesn't take any overt hand in intervening in these occurrences, these lower initiates usually believe that somewhere behind the scenes the Court is working to combat the Reckoning.

At levels 5 through 8, most of the initiates believe the Court is working primarily to protect hucksters and their ilk from the attentions of hostile government agencies, like the Texas Rangers and the Pinkertons. Their missions usually involve thwarting these groups or at

least hiding information they desire. Most often initiates at this level have had some form of unpleasant encounter with one or more such agencies.

Initiates of level 9 and 10 hold the same opinion as those of 5 through 8, although they are aware the Court takes drastic measures to protect itself and its members from outside forces. They also know that the Court does from time to time take an interest in seemingly unrelated matters, such as cattle drives or water sources. However, these are believed to be simply portions of a greater plan to extend the Court's power and influence.

Only members of the Royal Court know the true goal of the organization: to turn the American Southwest into a charnel house of plague and fear. To accomplish this, they are willing to do absolutely anything.

The Royal Court is a knowing and willing tool of the Reckoners. They use the unwitting lower initiates to monitor the success of their plans and—in times of failure—to cover up any traces that may implicate them. Finally, when someone begins to uncover the truth about the society, the Royal Court takes any necessary steps to ensure her permanent silence.





THE JOKER

The true leader of the Court is known to the members only as the Joker. The members of the inner circle know him as Solomon Thayer. What no one knows is that he is actually Ernst Johann Biren, Edmond Hoyle's old foe.

Biren did not die in Siberia as Hoyle believed, but he was horribly burned. He had known for years that Hoyle would come for him and had an elaborate plan in place to fake his death and escape. It nearly failed.

After healing, Biren roamed Europe and Asia for almost a century after his confrontation with Hoyle. During his travels, he amassed tremendous power and knowledge.

Prolonging his life and changing his looks constantly with black magic and hexes, Biren wandered about for almost a century before departing for the United States. He arrived in America less than a year before the onset of the Civil War.

The confusion of the War allowed him to practice his favorite pastime: spreading disease. He amused himself for a few years with typhoid and dysentery epidemics until the time of the Reckoning.

Since then, he has found his capacity for mayhem had increased tenfold.

Biren finds the names Americans give diseases distasteful, longing for the days of names like "Black Death." Now, the scourges of a century ago are known by "the Tennessee Trots" or similar amusing titles.

His proudest creation to date has fallen victim to a similar fate. The horrific disease he hoped would paralyze the Southwest in terror is now called the "Texas Tummy Twister." Hardly a name to strike terror into the hearts of men. The mere mention of those words sends him into a murderous rage.

Biren appears as a middle-aged man in good health, even though he is over 175 years old. He has built a name for Solomon Thayer as a wealthy, New Orleans importer of sugarcane. Although he is careful to maintain the secrecy of his true identity, it's highly unlikely anyone who could recognize him is still alive.

He maintains a good business relationship with Bayou Vermillion and its owner, Baron Simone LaCroix. LaCroix is aware of not only the Court, but some of its shames. However, he does not know of Thayer's involvement with the cabal, nor does he know Thayer's true identity.

THE ACES

Biren rules the Court with an iron fist—and a few Aces up his sleeve. The four beings known as the Aces are Biren's secret enforcers. No one besides Biren has ever seen the Aces—and lived. Members of the Court levels 2 to 10 have no knowledge the Aces even exist. The Court just does what it's told and tries not to get "Aced."

Heroes who are particularly effective against the abominations of the Reckoners or who consistently foil the plots of The Court may receive a visit from an Ace or their minions. To merit a personal visitation from an Ace, a character must have been extremely active in fighting the Reckoners' underlings. Aces don't usually bother with heroes with less than 10 Grit. However, any character who does attract their attention had better be on his guard. The Aces don't believe in fair fights. They prefer to attack from ambush, usually after a number of their minions have softened the target up. They just deliver the coup de grace.

Anyone killed by an Ace stays that way. They know those they kill have an extremely good chance of returning as a Harrowed. To prevent this, they always destroy the bodies of their victims, usually through burning.

The Aces, like many of the other members of the Royal Court, have made pacts with manitous using ancient rituals which have only recently been rediscovered. This means that like a Harrowed character, each Ace has a manitou within them. Unlike a Harrowed however, the Aces are living, breathing people and don't have to fight for Dominion with the spirits—the manitous serve them. In game terms, Aces take damage as if Harrowed (the manitou fortifies their bodies) and cast hexes as if their manitous were in charge (so they always have a minimum hand of a Pair).

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:4d8, N:3d8, S:3d10, Q:2d12, V:3d8
Climbing 2d8, dodge 5d8, fighting: knife 4d8, horse ridin' 4d8, shootin': pistol 5d8, shootin': rifle 6d8, sleight of hand 4d8, sneak 5d8, throwin': bolts o' doom 5d8

Mental: C:4d8, K:3d10, M:3d8, S:2d10, Sp:2d12
Academia: occult 5d10, demolition 3d10, faith: the Reckoners 4d12, gamblin' 3d10, guts 3d12, leadership 3d8, overawe 5d8, search 3d8, trackin' 4d8

Edges: Arcane background: huckster, manitou pact, the Stare, the Voice

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, loyal (the Royal Court)

Hexes: Disrupt 5d10, Foil 5d10, Shadow Man 4d10, Shadow Walk 5d10, Soul Blast 5d12, Soul Burst 4d12

Black Magic: Bolts o' Doom 4, Cloak o' Evil 3, Dark Protection 3, Pact 4, Scrye 3

Gear: .45 Peacemaker, Bowie knife, Winchester '73, excellent horse.

COURT TROUBLESHOOTERS

Heroes who have made themselves a nuisance to the Court—but aren't powerful enough to merit being "Aced"—usually receive a visit from a team of Court troubleshooters. The size of the troubleshooting team depends on The Court's knowledge of the target.

If the Court knows the target travels with friends—or if it's marked an entire posse for elimination—sufficient hucksters are dispatched to deal with the entire group. Large teams may be commanded by a Court member of rank 8 or higher. The Court is willing to do whatever it thinks it's going to take to resolve the problem the heroes pose.

Like the Aces, troubleshooters always destroy the bodies of their victims. Although they are not scared of a stand-up fight, they prefer to make their victim's deaths appear accidental.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:3d8, N:3d8, S:2d8, Q:2d10, V:3d6
Climbing 2d8, dodge 3d8, fighting: knife 3d8, horse ridin' 3d8, shootin': pistol 4d8, shootin': rifle 4d8, sleight of hand 3d8

Mental: C:3d8, K:2d8, M:3d6, S:3d8, Sp:2d10
Academia: occult 3d8, bluff 3d8, gamblin' 4d8, overawe 3d6, guts 2d10, search 3d8, trackin' 3d8

Edges: Arcane background: huckster

Hindrances: Loyal (the Royal Court)

Hexes: Foil 3d8, Shadow Man 3d8, Soul Blast 4d10

Gear: .45 Peacemaker, Bowie knife, Winchester '73.

NEW BLACK MAGIC

Here's a new spell to make your posse's life more difficult. This one's practiced primarily by members of the Royal Court, but other cultists may have access to it if it seems appropriate. More information on black magic and how it works in *Deadlands* can be found in *The Quick & the Dead*.

CONTAGION

Speed: 1

Duration: Permanent (until cured)

Trappings: Evil eye, glowing hand

This spell comes straight from the grimoire of Ernst Biren. With it, he started at least two outbreaks of the Black Death and numerous typhoid epidemics.

The caster must touch his intended victim. If the target resists, this requires a successful *fightin': brawlin'* attack. Once this is accomplished, the victim must make a *Vigor* roll against the TN indicated on the table below. If she fails, the victim acquires a *Fatal ailin'* Hindrance and suffers all the effects under that description.

The disease takes immediate effect on the victim. Any disease delivered by a *contagion* spell is (by definition) contagious. Anyone coming into contact with a victim of the hex must make a Foolproof (3) *Vigor* roll or contract the illness as well. This roll must be made each day a character is contact with someone infected via this spell.

Unlike with the normal *ailin'* Hindrance, a disease inflicted by *contagion* can be cured by a physician. Healing a patient afflicted by *contagion* requires 1 week and an Incredible (11) *medicine* roll.

WILD CARDS

CONTAGION

Level	TN
1	3
2	5
3	7
4	9
5	11

ENOCH SHAW

Not only is Enoch Shaw the oldest living huckster, he's also the most knowledgeable in the ways of Hoyle's writings. Some folks attribute this to Enoch's age, saying he's had almost as much time to study hexes as Hoyle himself.

Those folks are more right than they know.

Edmond Hoyle arrived in the Colonies in the early summer of 1763. He soon found the English colonists for the most part unsympathetic to his anthropological studies. Additionally, the Indian tribes closest to the Colonies were either extremely hostile to advancing colonists or slowly losing their mystical knowledge as they took up the ways of "civilization."

By 1764, Hoyle decided to move to the French-controlled city of New Orleans. The French maintained a friendly and less invasive relationship with the Indians. Also, New Orleans had a reputation as a more socially "relaxed" environment, favorable to gamblers and other less socially acceptable people.

In the gambling halls of New Orleans, he was introduced to a card game known as poque. It uses a 52-card deck, and involves drawing a number of cards to build a winning hand. He found poque easy to adapt to his formula and faster to use than other games he was using.

Hoyle chose poque—or poker as it later became known—as the basis for his hex formulae. Other games worked, but poker was far and away the easiest and most effective.

Hoyle knew his time of death was approaching. Not his actual physical death—his hexes could prolong his life indefinitely—but rather a perceived death. Hoyle realized 95 years was a long time for a man to live, particularly one who appeared no older than 60. Soon, his family and acquaintances would begin to ask dangerous questions, so Hoyle decided to fake his death.

He finished his book and sent it, along with his "last will and testament" back to England.

Next he changed his name and headed off into the unexplored American wilderness to seek the knowledge of the Indian shamans. There he wandered for almost another century learning all he could of the native inhabitants and their beliefs, until July 3, 1863.

The Reckoning brought Hoyle, now calling himself Enoch Shaw, out of the wilderness. He knew his knowledge and skill were needed, but from his years with the Indians, he also knows for all his power he cannot face the might of the Reckoners alone. Not only that, but even with his magics prolonging his life, his 200 years of age are overtaking him. Hoyle's body is weary and now appears close to 80 years old.

Hoyle learned of the Prospector and his plans and sought him out. The two shared their knowledge and came to a decision. Jenkins would raise a band capable of replacing the Old Ones. Hoyle would attempt to slow the progress of the Reckoners. To that end, he works to spread the arcane knowledge contained within his book to as many as possible.

Hoyle currently roams the Weird West, seeking potential pupils to seed with the skills of a huckster. He takes care to avoid notice, particularly that of any government's agents. He appears to the casual eye as nothing more than an aged saddle tramp.

In his travels, he has learned of the Court. Although he doesn't know the extent of the society's goals, he suspects them of ill intent and watches closely those whom he knows to be involved with the group. Hoyle, as yet, is unaware that his old apprentice and nemesis still lives, nor does Biren know Hoyle is still alive—but he suspects, and his Aces have standing orders to investigate the possibility.

THE LADY LUCK SOCIETY

As part of his effort to recruit reliable hucksters to his crusade against the Reckoners, Hoyle created a group of his own in 1870 called the Lady Luck Society (he originally wanted to call it the Dame Fortune Society, but one of his associates convinced him that no self-respecting Western gambler would join such a tinhorn-sounding group).

On the surface, it appears to be simply an association of professional gamblers, and for most of its members it is just that. But for those who are recruited into the society by Hoyle, it is a clearinghouse of information on hexes and the abominations of the Reckoning. When necessary, it also acts to keep wayward hucksters in line.

The society boasts almost 300 members. Most of these are simple gamblers or hucksters who have no idea what the society's true purpose is. Most belong to The Lady Luck Society for one simple reason: It's the only way to be eligible to compete in the society's annual poker tournament. The winner of the tournament, which is held each June in Denver, walks away with \$50,000 in cash.

The society is run by Clyde Paxton, a wagering man with a big britches and little common sense. Clyde has no knowledge of the society's hidden agenda. All he knows is that—in return for running the group—a mysterious gentleman by the name of Enoch Shaw squared all of his past gambling debts and pays him a generous allowance.

THE INNER CIRCLE

Within the society is an inner circle of hucksters dedicated to fighting the Reckoners. This group currently numbers about 20. Each of the hexslingers in this group was personally recruited by the great gambler himself.

Hoyle created this group to perform two main functions: to destroy the abominations of the Reckoners and to police those who have learned the secrets of Hoyle's form of magic. He also uses the group to spot other likely recruits.

To fulfill the first function, Hoyle has created a book similar to *The Ranger Bible*. Each member of the inner circle has a copy. Like Hoyle's other manuscripts, this is coded into a pamphlet—*Shaw's Guide for Gamblers*, a yearly travel guide for gamblers which rates the towns of the West on their hospitality to those of their profession. Each member keeps a personal journal. These accounts are used to update the guide on a regular basis.

The members also report to Hoyle on hucksters who abuse their powers or use them publicly. Hoyle knows the Reckoners feed on fear. He doesn't want them to benefit from the magic he unwittingly unleashed upon the world. He personally reviews each report of this nature. If he feels the hexslinger acted out of ignorance, the offending huckster receives an anonymous warning to watch his step. Hucksters who acted out of malice or greed or who ignore repeated warnings generally meet an untimely demise at the hands of Hoyle's disciples.

The full membership of the inner circle meets once a year during the annual poker tournament. Hoyle created the Lady Luck Society for just this reason: It allows a group of hucksters to gather without causing undue



suspicion. Of course the Pinkertons and Rangers send agents to the gathering every year, but there are enough non-inner-circle hucksters present to more than keep them busy.

At these yearly meetings, the hucksters compare notes, swap hexes, meet new members, and plan their strategy for the coming year.

RECRUITMENT

All new members of the inner circle are recruited by Hoyle himself. He looks for experienced hucksters who have already demonstrated their ability and willingness to go up against the evils of the Reckoning. Whether a member of the posse is approached by Hoyle is entirely up to the Marshal, but in general only characters with 5 or more Grit are likely to come to his attention.

All new members are presented with a specially made gold pocketwatch. Each of these watches is hand-crafted by a trusted scientist of Hoyle's acquaintance. They are engraved with intricate designs and hidden within them is the key to decoding the information in *Shaw's Guide*. Members also use these to identify themselves to one another while in the field.

ABRACADABRA





CHAPTER EIGHT: ABRACADABRA, AND AN ARAB CADAVER



Gather 'round, pardners, for a li'l tale of one man's quest to reshape the Weird West, another man's mission to resurrect evil in a foreign land, and how the posse gets caught in between.

Oh, you're one of the posse? Whatcha doin' here then? You shouldn't be peekin' at this!

Anyway, this is an adventure full of intrigue and weird magic, barnstormin' and minglin', usual and unusual characters. The locales are made generic for ya, Marshal, so you can drop them into your campaign, and the premise is flexible enough to build a long saga on. So hold on to your boots and away we go!

THE STORY SO FAR

What Sultan Jawhar al-Khala wanted, he got: the shiniest jewels of all Persia, the biggest palace, the most fearsome desert warriors, the whirlingest dervishes. Nothing was spared in fulfilling the king's wishes.

And many wishes there were. Sometimes, the cost involved a bit of gold here, a few lives there, if the people were lucky. Often, though, they were not. Indeed, the Sultan's neverending desires usually had a mean streak running through them. But since only those who didn't mind

losing an appendage or a vital organ would dare criticize, they didn't say al-Khala was mad—they just whispered it.

So you understand if nobody cried when a few good men finally got together and stuck it to the ruthless varmint one night as he lay dreaming evil dreams.

Problem is, they didn't do the same to Akul Hasazim, al-Khala's mage-vizier. Using his dark magics, Akul secretly whisked the dead ruler's body away in a blinding sandstorm and retreated to a remote oasis with a posse of soldiers and guards. There, he plans to restore the evil sultan back to life. Then Akul can continue to work behind the scenes of the reign of his greatest of prodigies. If he has anything to say about it, the sultan will live again.

But to do that, Akul needs the fabled Amulet of Rahashimir, which, according to legends, was lost in a great war between the djinn, several nomad tribes, and King Xavier oh-so-long ago. It became harder to find than a horsefly in a tornado; even more so since not a lot of folks know what it does, let alone recognize it on sight. But the trickster he is, Akul managed to pull a card from his sleeve and got some powerful djinn to track it.





citizens. Sloan tries to get the people to safety and fend off the creature at the same time. He fails miserably at both tasks, but you can't fault the man for trying to do his job.

The Gulper may be too much for anyone to handle, but it does have a particular weakness to the Arabs' poison on their throwing darts! The monster's reaction to the poison causes its Vigor to drop to 2d12, in addition to halving its other attributes for 1d4 days. It also takes a whopping 10 points of damage per round for 1d6 rounds (cumulative with multiple darts)!

Only eight of the Arabs have a poisoned throwing dart. The first to get swallowed uses his dart to attack the rattler just before it devours him. The dart barely breaks through the creature's armor, and it only causes damage for 1d4 rounds (without any of the other effects). It's up to clever heroes to gather some darts and use them on the Gulper's fleshier parts.

If the Gulper has its way, it swallows a few tasty victims and is on its merry way. The Arabs call it a day, and Dillenger cancels the show today so the heroes can help clean up.

If the heroes somehow end the Gulper's reign of terror forever, this act sways the entire town population to their favor. Even Sloan begrudgingly accepts the characters. They and Dillenger are treated as celebrities who are always welcome, and needless to say, the exhibit is a roaring success.

THE GULPER

Corporeal: D:1d4, N:3d6, S:6d12+20, Q:2d8

Fightin': brawl in' 3d6, sneak 1d6 (when underground)

Mental: C:2d10, K:1d4, M:2d10, SM:2d8, Sp:1d8
Overawe 2d10

Size: 15

Terror: 11

Special Abilities:

Armor: 1

Bite: 2d20

Claw: 1d12

Burrowing: Underground Pace 18.

Surprise: Slap a -4 penalty on surprise checks for travelers failing to recognize the rumblings of a rattler beneath them.

BOUNTY

The heroes capture one of Akul's spies: 2 points.
The heroes defeat the living bank robbers: 3 points.

The heroes defeat the undead bank robbers: 3 points.

The heroes defeat the Gulper: 3 points.

CHAPTER FIVE:

YEE-HAW! UH,

MAKE THAT JEE-HAW!

Come the next morning, Dillenger is ready to pack the train and start down the railroad to the next dismal town.

Nothing happens until midnight, when Akul launches a serious assault, this time using elite warriors, not some ham-and-egggers plucked from a backwater dune. Posse members who are awake at this time may, with a Fair (5) *Cognition* roll, notice a flock of warriors riding toward the train, swinging their scimitars high over their heads while shouting incomprehensibly (unless one of the heroes speaks Arabic)!

Sleeping characters are awakened by this if they make a Hard (9) *Cognition* roll. Make sure too, Marshal, that at least one of the heroes is on guard duty at this time.

The posse has roughly two minutes before the raiders flank the train like buzzards circling a carcass. Unless they have a way to stop 20 men coming from all directions in that time, some of the warriors get on board. Combat should be furious and suspenseful with all the classic train scenes thrown in, like characters dangling over the railings, brawling on top of the train, shooting enemies through the roof of the train car, a witless rider getting smacked by a low pole, etc.

Some of the raiders head toward the locomotive to stop the train, the rest ransack the cars in the other direction and search for the amulet. If you took the suggestion of inserting a spy among Dillenger's entourage, put her to full dramatic use by turning on the characters right now in the worst possible way. If the raiders can't stop the train, they attempt to disconnect cars 8, 9, and 10 from the rest.

Akul's tricksters target any hucksters who display their abilities. There is one for each huckster in the group. If the posse's hucksters can take them out with out any public display of magic ability, award each huckster who does so an extra Bounty Point.

Even though Dillenger is far from the fighting type, he valiantly does his flat-out best to protect his precious cargo, defend his lady companions, and assist the posse—in that order. His lack of combat expertise, complicated by an exaggerated sense of chivalry, means he gets in the way a lot, so the heroes might need to save their meal ticket from one predicament or





THE SETUP

By now, you might have guessed that Dillenger's got the Amulet of Rahashimir, but he's still yet unaware of its power. You should also figure that Akul has gotten word from djinn buddies on who has it and where he happens to be.

Getting the posse involved in this twisted tale is as easy as having Dillenger hire them on as his personal retainers. A fine, wealthy chap like him can certainly use a few guns for protection, a couple of native squires to show him the land, some bookish types to detail his travels, plus maybe an attractive companion or two to grace his arm. As long as his underlings do good work, he pays extremely well. By the same token, they are told to hit the trail if they can't make the grade.

The posse can also be contracted by another party, preferably somebody important, to keep a lookout on Dillenger, or they themselves may have their own reasons to keep an eye on him. The local excuse for the law may want to keep tabs on a foreign bloke of such high profile. The Pinkertons and Texas Rangers in particular are interested in his collection of interesting doodads. To make things really interesting, you might have one (or both, if you really want to stir the pot) of these groups approach some of the heroes and ask them to play spy in Dillenger's camp.

Muckrakers might feel well-advised to stick around a man of Dillenger's status, unless they want to miss big stories and healthy paychecks.

Preachers may find Dillenger's cultural ambitions admirable and morally sound. If so, they can lend spiritual support and help in the reforming of the characters of the masses.

The scoundrels out there can just smell a one-way ticket to richville in Dillenger's fascinating collection.

Show me a saloon gal who wouldn't want money thrown at her, and I'll show you a hangin' judge who walks old ladies to the church every Sunday. Dillenger's ripe for the picking.

Hucksters, in particular, should hook up with Dillenger. Not only is it great to gamble with someone else's greenbacks, but who knows? There might even be a couple of spells hidden inside some of those old, dusty books that Dillenger's got.

In short, Dillenger has trunkfuls of dinero and everyone and their brother, sister, and second cousin is lining up to dip their hands in them.

CHAPTER ONE: A GENTLEMAN NEVER TRAVELS ALONE

One of the first things Dillenger sees to after getting off the boat is gathering himself an entourage. All right, make that "buying himself some friends." This is where the posse comes in.

This can turn into an open audition of sorts. Simply have Dillenger call out his generous offers in the middle of Main Street, then when every drunk in town shows up vying to serve him, run a few impromptu "tryouts."

Gunslingers try to out-trickshoot each other. Gamblers and hucksters might attempt to impress him with their card tricks. Mad scientists pitch their theories and inventions to get this moneybag's backing. Reporters start rattling off their credentials. Singing girls drape themselves all over him. This is the perfect opportunity for the Marshal to introduce new heroes, dust off old extras, renew rivalries, or start new ones.

Dillenger isn't necessarily looking for the best folks. Style weighs the same as substance to him, if not more. Heroes on the short end of a competition can still be chosen if they manage to catch his fancy in some way. Even those expressing little or no interest may still be approached if he finds something unusual about them (the way they dress, stare, walk, carry guns, etc.). Heroes minding their manners earn personal invitations from him, if not employment, as he is only too glad to travel with companions so cultured. Ideally, most if not all of the heroes win positions on Dillenger's entourage for \$5 to \$10 a day. Others wanting to come along are allowed on their colleague's say (though at a lesser pay).

After that's over with, Dillenger launches into a flowery speech of exactly what he intends to do here ("imbue the finer aspects of civilized society into the New World") and how ("by uniting the citizens through appreciation of classical arts as well as educated behaviors"). He mentions some of the invaluable items he brought with him if somebody bothers to ask.

Dillenger then announces he has secured a private train for his—and now the heroes'—crusade. They can choose to either meet him at noon tomorrow at the rail station, or join him tonight at the Wyatt Hotel (or whichever is the swankiest hotel in town). Expenses paid, of course.



During all this, every character can try an Onerous (7) *Cognition* roll to spot dark-robed figures spying on the proceedings from behind various covers. If it seems they have been spotted, one of them leaves, while the others continue to observe in the shadows. Those who remain move to stop any heroes who try to follow their comrade.

These are Akul's scouts. They have no marks or items to identify them except for their foreign-looking curved daggers; a successful Hard (9) *Knowledge* roll recognizes them as jambiyas, typical Middle Eastern weapons. All of them can speak only simple English and are, naturally, Arabian in physical appearance. To follow one is a lot more difficult than to kill one, requiring two Incredible (11) *Tracking* rolls to trail the sneaky snake back to the scouts' makeshift hideout just outside the town.

Another option is to have Akul plant one or more spies (hired locally to avoid arousing suspicion) within Dillenger's contingent. The spies are assigned to locate the amulet and assist Akul's forces when the time comes. If captured, all they know is that some "ferners" are interested in the amulet.

RUTHERFORD

ELLINGTON DILLENGER

Because Dillenger was born with a silver spoon in his mouth, the world missed a great snake-oil salesman. Like most of them folks brought up in an aristocratic society, Dillenger has a jolly fine manner that, as long as you don't have a blown fuse, would have you believe he's your best friend.

Dillenger's had the best upbringing money can buy, courtesy of a rich family. His family owns a little of everything, but made its fortune in shipping. To Dillenger, a conservative shopping spree means spending less than two C-notes. Indeed, the way he dispenses cash so freely, folks swear that money doesn't grow on trees—it grows on Dillenger.

Socially, Dillenger soaks up spotlight like a sponge with his natural charm. He especially delights the ladies with his Old World gentlemanly demeanor. Being a philanthropist at heart, he doesn't feel contempt for those who are several steps beneath his status (almost everybody in the Weird West) as much as pity. After all, they can't all be as lucky as he is. Now combine that with a chivalrous confidence and a somewhat naive view of the Weird West, and you

got someone who thinks he can change it for the better—and sets out to prove it.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:3d6, N:1d10, S:2d6, Q:1d6, V:2d6

Climbin' 1d10, dodge 2d10, horse ridin' 3d10, shootin' pistol 1d6, sneak 1d10

Mental: C:1d8, K:2d8, M:2d10, Sm:1d12, Sp:2d6

Academia: arts 4d8, academia: high society 4d8, academia: history 4d8, academia: law 3d8, academia: philosophy 4d8, academia: politics 3d8, gamblin' 2d12, performin': actin' 3d10, persuasion 3d10, tale-tellin' 3d10, search 2d8, science: engineering 2d8

Edges: Belongings 1, Dinero 5, Purty, Renown 3

Hindrances: Ferner, Heroic, Stubborn, Tinhorn.

Gear: .45 Peacemaker, checkbook, fancy suit, gold pocket watch, leather shoes, matches, pipe, pipe tobacco, walking cane, wallet with at least \$100 cash for the day.

LATE-NIGHT VISITORS

Akul's minions pay off several local thugs (2d6 in all stats) to rob Dillenger's suite late that night, breaking in through the windows and doors. Unfortunately, they have two left hands and couldn't hit water if they fell off a boat, so between the heroes and hotel security, they have no chance. The Arabs don't expect them to succeed either. If the bums happen to find the amulet, great, but they just want to see how competent Dillenger's new bodyguards are so they can make adjustments for later encounters.

When caught, the thugs confess to their crime, and on a successful Fair (5) *Overawe* roll against them, they also admit to being hired. They don't have a name for their employers and can only provide a vague description of the dark-robed figures.

The thugs were hired at one of the local saloons. They have no knowledge of the hideout Akul's scouts have set up outside of town.

The historical treasures—which are Dillenger's pride and joy and which he has been describing to everyone who cares to listen—have already been placed inside a special museum car on his train. Although these have been safely packed away, anybody can still find a small fortune in cash and luxury items inside Dillenger's room.

BOUNTY

The posse is hired by Dillenger: 1 point per hired character.

The posse captures one of Akul's spies: 3 points. The posse foils the thieves: 3 points.

CHAPTER TWO: ALL ABOARD!

Dillenger arrives at the rail station at precisely the stroke of noon. He voices his displeasure at those arriving late. The train departs promptly at 12:15, leaving any tardy characters behind. Before the characters stow their luggage, Dillenger also makes it clear that only he and the gunslinging types are permitted to carry firearms while on the train. (Well, he does make exceptions if a purty gal makes a persuasive argument.)

The locomotive itself, as Dillenger mentioned, has been hired as his personal transportation, so there are currently no passengers other than the group present. It has 10 cars:

THE TRAIN

Car 1: The locomotive.

Car 2: The coal car

Car 3: The crew car, occupied by eight crewmembers in four double-compartments (one engineer, one assistant engineer, three stewards, two cooks, and one janitor).

Car 4: The baggage car. Locked after 10 P.M.. Fair (5) *lockpickin'* roll to defeat the lock.

Car 5: The guest car, with 10 double-bunk sleeping berths.

Car 6: The deluxe passenger car/lounge.

Car 7: The dining car, complete with a kitchen.

Car 8: This special cargo car is the one with the amulet and other invaluable stuff in it. It also doubles as the "museum" car for exhibitions. It's always locked between cities, and only Dillenger has the key. An Onerous (7) *lockpickin'* roll is needed to defeat the lock. Shifts of two armed guards are set up to guard the entrance around the clock.

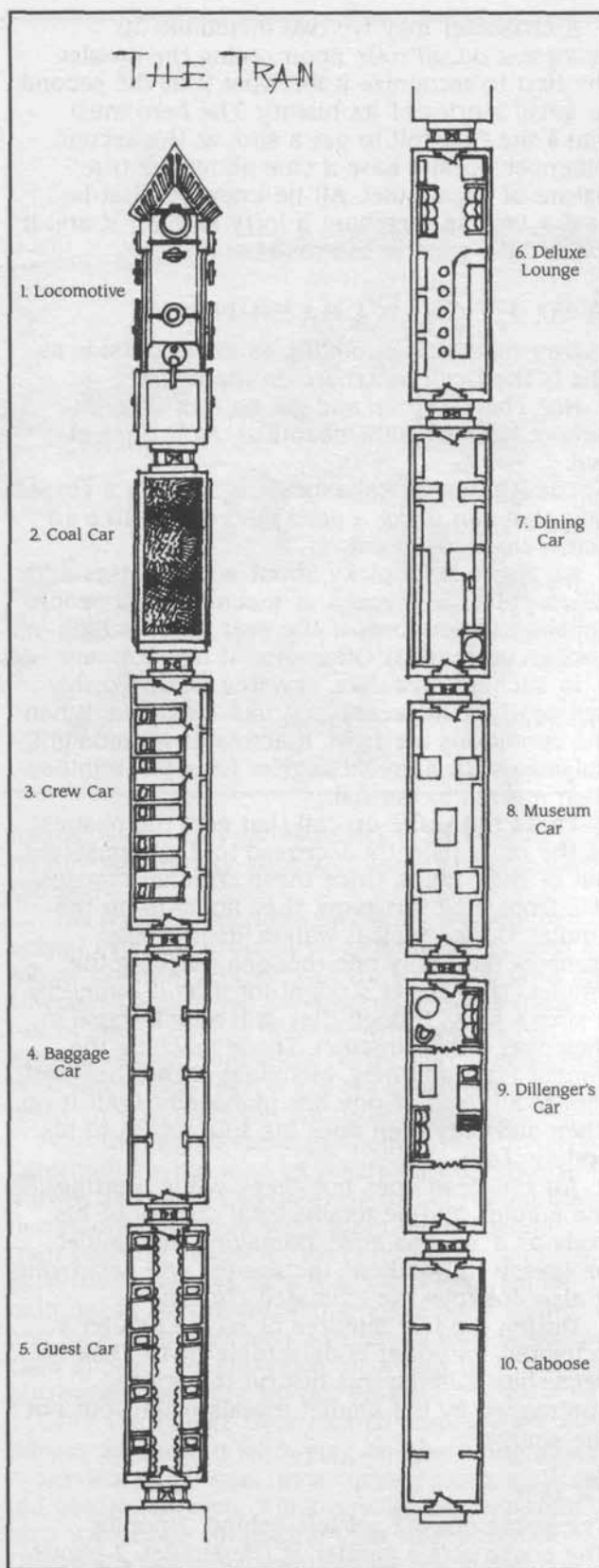
Car 9: Dillenger's car. Lavishly decorated with expensive, plush furniture.

Car 10: The caboose.

THE PLAN

Dillenger has planned many stops on his "social enlightenment tour," the first of which, Red Rock, is about two long days away.

At some point you should give Dillenger a reason—like impressing a character, demonstrating a point in discussion, or just plain bragging—to escort at least one of the heroes into the museum car and show her around. He is especially proud of his prized amulet, which is housed in an exquisite glass case.





A character may try two Incredible (11) *academia: occult* rolls upon seeing the amulet: the first to recognize it for what it is; the second to recall stories of its history. The hero must make the first roll to get a shot at the second. Dillenger doesn't have a clue about the true nature of the amulet. All he knows is that he paid a Persian merchant a lofty sum for it and it looks darn good in the case.

AMULET OF RAHASHIMIR

Ever met a cutie looking as sweet outside as she is the Devil incarnate on the inside?

No? Then step up and get an eyeful of this amulet here. It's 100% beautiful; 200% ancient evil.

The Amulet of Rahashimir is actually a cursed relic that can make a dead man get up like an alarm clock just went off.

It's also a little picky about who it raises and when. Only the corpses of mean-spirited people get the call, and only if the Fear Level is high enough (at least 3). Otherwise, it lies dormant.

In such an area (like, say, Red Rock), freshly evil dead are attracted to it like a magnet. When the conditions are right, it activates at midnight, pulsates with a greenish glow for a few minutes, then returns to normal.

That's the wake-up call that gets the nastiest of the most recently deceased to dig themselves out of their holes. Once these criminal corpses rise from their dirt naps, they home in on the amulet. Unlike typical walkin' dead, these zombies have only one thought: reaching the amulet. They travel straight for it as if pulled by a siren's song, though they still attack those in their way out of instinct. Those reaching the amulet fight anything, including each other, until they're all dead or one has managed to put it on. Then and only then does his soul return to his body in full!

An evil dead does not decay while wearing the amulet, and he retains total control of his body as if he was alive. Damaging the amulet progressively weakens the wearer, and destroying it also destroys the animated corpse.

During the five minutes or so the amulet is activated, its power is detectable by the *hex sense* hex. Casting this hex on the undead summoned by the amulet reveals magic, but not the source.

BOUNTY

The posse doesn't get left behind: 2 points.

The posse gets a gander at the amulet: 2 points.

CHAPTER THREE:

A LAUGHING WELCOME

The train pulls into Red Rock around five o'clock, right on schedule. The novelty of this locomotive, the entourage, and their rather unusually debonair patron soon attract a crowd. The heroes have all sorts of questions thrown at them ("Hey, you own this train?" "What y'all bring?" "Who's da boss?") as they disembark. Let them answer any and all they care to.

Now the folks in this town aren't exactly the kind to debate over the merits of Shakespeare, unless he can shoot straight and has a good hook, if you get the drift. Talks of "improving cultural standards," "social awareness," and other such intellectual rambles only earn the posse blank stares, then outrageous laughter followed by comments and taunts that only someone who thinks two slabs of greasy bacon is gourmet food can make.

But Marshal Sloan, the square-jawed local law, shows up just when things might start to get a little ugly. He is as incredulous at the posse's intentions as the townsfolk, but he's definitely more polite in suggesting maybe they should roll on out of here.

At this point, a very dapper Dillenger emerges from his car, introduces himself to Sloan, and through sheer conviction (plus a little payoff on the side) convinces the lawman to let him give it a try. In return, Sloan refuses to make any promise but one: He'll toss any troublemakers' sorry hides behind bars and keep them there until the cows learn to fly. With that, he scatters the crowd and leaves.

A NIGHT OUT IN THE TOWN

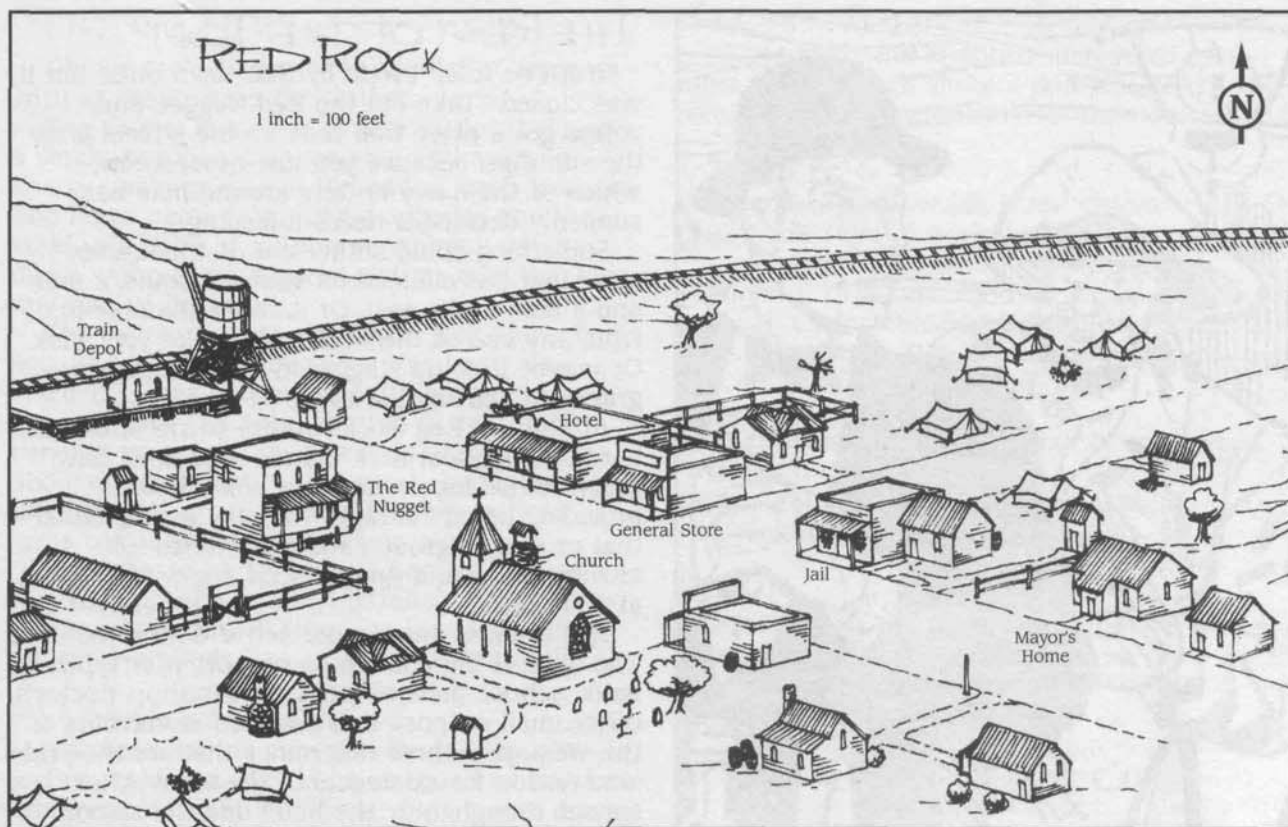
Dillenger wisely decides against getting a room in town, at least for the night. However, that doesn't stop him from making the rounds later. For this part, assume sufficient extras have been assigned to guard duty, so the heroes are free to either accompany their boss or prowl around on their own. Regardless, they have instructions to be up by 8 o'clock tomorrow morning to set up the exhibition.

Dillenger naturally heads for the busiest watering hole, a saloon called The Red Nugget. If—compared to the local folks he passes by—the quality and style of his clothes look as different as beer and wine, let's just say it widens all the way out to water and champagne when he steps inside.



RED ROCK

1 inch = 100 feet



THE RED NUGGET

The name is only half-apt: Red it is; nugget it ain't. The owner went with a dull shade of crimson for the walls and floor. He must've thought blood stains wouldn't show on them and he'd save on paint. As rambunctious as the customers can get, he might be right.

The closest thing to a nugget in here is the gambling table to the left of the bar, unless you count leggy Ginger over by the broken piano. Newbies and outsiders trying their luck had better have something up their sleeves, or the sharks suck them drier than a starved prairie tick. That goes double for golden-haired Ginger.

When Dillenger comes striding in, the noises of 20 or so tables of hard-drinking miners drop like a cart down a mine shaft. The dandy adjusts his tie and clears his throat a bit, then makes his way around the saloon under some bloody stares. He tips his hat politely at the few ladies present, all the while sticking out like the proverbial sore thumb.

Unfortunately, there's hardly an empty table to be found this night. If the heroes are present, they have to secure a seat for him (if not for themselves too). This can get hairy because the

natives aren't in a giving mood, especially to a namby-pamby, city-slicker, tinhorn foreigner like Dillenger.

This doesn't mean the problem can only be solved by fists or pistol slugs. Characters with a rep or obvious attitude can try to get by with an Onerous (7) *overawe* roll. Charming some folks out of their seats is possible with a Hard (9) *Persuasion* roll (and you'd better have a good line with that!). Plus there's always a gambler or two ready to deal a couple hands of anything.

How the heroes conduct themselves determines what kind of reactions they receive during their stay. Outsmarting or outtalking their detractors definitely wins them more friends than bashing heads. An exceptional effort might earn the friendship of a few locals inclined to help out in the future. If the posse isn't having any luck, Dillenger isn't adverse to waving some cash around, but the price for a seat is outrageous (say, oh, \$10 per person).

Once the heroes have cleared a spot, the miners go back to whooping and hollering again. A handful of people, from curious womenfolk to old geezers to even drunk caballeros, then take turn wandering by, poking their noses into Dillenger's business and perhaps his wallet too.



The high-class dilettante is a little uncomfortable in his new surroundings at first, but once he settles in, he starts to show off his abundant social skills (more so toward the ladies, of course, which tends to make the tough hombres jealous; of course, you know what can happen when tough hombres get jealous). He's up for some wagering too, so by the end of the night he's migrated to a stool at the poker table. (Although if he wins, you can bet some sore loser will accuse him of cheating.)

Should the heroes manage to get into this kind of trouble, Sheriff Sloan and his two deputies swing through the doors to round them up just as the brawl's winding down. Sloan doesn't hesitate to use his shooting irons if people don't cooperate.

The sheriff isn't going to be at a loss for excuses to run all of them in either ("Illegal gambling? But ya never busted anybody fer that before!?!") If the heroes can't get out on their own, Dillenger pays their lofty bail for them, after a lot of backroom politics with Sloan and the town mayor himself, Mr. O'Fenner. The mayor is quite impressed with Dillenger—or rather, what the Englishman's deep pockets could do for a man's political career.

THE REST OF THE TOWN

Truth be told, "I rode by that town once, but it was closed." Take out the Red Nugget, and you've got a place that rolls up the streets after the sun dips, because you just never know which of the nasty critters around here has suddenly decided it needs a feeding.

Something could slither out of the "cursed" mine that has claimed its share of souls, a mile and a half to the east. Or it could shamle in from any one of the back trails—take your pick. Or maybe it could stagger in from the foggy graveyard skirting the town.

At night in Red Rock—unless you're one of the hardy, local ghost rock miners who don't have much to live for, or you have some booze providing liquid courage—you stay inside. Either that or stay in groups and keep those feet moving because a tumblebleed might be nipping at your heels.

Red Rock is much more active during the day. The town is big enough to support your typical bank, school, general store, barber shop, doctor's office, mail outpost, and assorted storefronts of the West, plus three rich mines that are the pride (and reason for existence) of the town. After sunset, though, only the hotel and the saloon remain open, although even the Red Nugget usually wraps it up at around midnight.

The Marshal can take this opportunity to set up encounters involving any abomination of the Weird West. The posse might have the chance to save a couple kids (who sneaked out of the house to play) from a devil bat, for example, thereby becoming heroes of a sort. They might witness a night haunt about to pounce on a miner in drunken stupor (or worse, one of the heroes who's alone and inebriated). Who knows, maybe a couple of jackalopes might be looking on with keen interest.

Even if nothing else happens, the amulet comes alive amidst the town's high Fear Level. Characters in the museum car notice the glow automatically. Those nearby (say, right next to the windows) notice it if they succeed at an Onerous (7) *Cognition* check. The power of the amulet attracts a weak walkin' dead to the train, which the guards easily dispose of (after a minute of steadying their hands from the shakes) if there are no heroes around to help out.

The corpse, if not disposed of, is later identified by the marshal as an out-of-town card cheat whose luck ran out at the Red Nugget just a week before.



ABRACADABRA

"THE GULPER"

Oh, we can't do justice to the list of creepers without mentioning the Gulper.

The Gulper is a local Mojave rattler that's got a sickly, purplish crimson skin and a single sharp, slashing claw at the end of each tentacle. The name came from its big appetite and the creature's habit of gulping anything it catches down without the hapless victims ever touching any part of its mouth.

The Gulper first showed up a year and a half ago, and it's been preying on this town ever since. It comes and goes as it pleases, striking day or night. The only warning is the rumble beneath your feet. The rattler is usually only about 50 yards out at that point—barely enough time for you to get goosebumps up on your arms before you become its next meal.

If the posse hangs around here as long as they're supposed to, they definitely hear about this Public Enemy #1 from the locals. It seems almost everybody has a Gulper story to tell.

MARSHAL JACK SLOAN

Marshal Sloan is cut from the old frontier justice mold. Not only is he as tough as leather and mean as a rattler, he can sling a gun, down a quart, spit tobacco, and keep his eyes on visitors like nobody's business.

He is also honest—at least as much as an opportunist like him can be. Once bought, he stays bought. Which makes him the perfect man for a peacekeeper job greatly subsidized by the mining company's generous contribution.

Sloan's not fond of outsiders, so the posse had best not get into any fights with the locals unless they can prove they are in the right.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:2d12, N:2d10, S:3d8, Q:4d10, V:3d8
Dodge 4d10, fightin': brawlin' 4d10, horse ridin' 3d10, quick-draw 3d10, shootin': pistols 3d12, shootin': rifle 3d12, shootin': shotgun 3d12

Mental: C:1d8, K:1d6, M:4d6, Sm:2d6, Sp:2d6
Guts 3d6, leadership 3d6, overawe 4d6, professional: law 1d6, scrutinize 4d8, search 3d8

Edges: Law man 3, level-headed, nerves o' steel, "the voice" (threatening)

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, intolerance 2 (out-of-towners), mean as a rattler, obligation 3 (to the town and the mine owners)

Gear: Smith & Wesson Frontier .44, Winchester '73, scattergun, \$10.

SLOAN'S DEPUTIES

These aren't the brightest men you'll ever meet, but they can shoot a gun. Besides, Sloan refuses to hire anyone smarter than himself.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:1d10, N:2d8, S:2d8, Q:2d10, V:1d8
Dodge 2d8, fightin': brawlin' 3d8, horse ridin' 2d8, quick-draw 2d10, shootin': pistols 2d10, shootin': rifle 2d10, shootin': shotgun 2d10

Mental: C:2d6, K:1d6, M:3d6, Sm:2d6, Sp:2d6
Guts 1d6, overawe 2d6, professional: law 1d6, scrutinize 2d6, search 1d6

Edges: Law man 1

Hindrances: Intolerance 2 (out-of-towners), loyal (to Sloan)

Gear: Double-action .45 Peacemaker, .58 Springfield, double barrel shotgun, \$6.

BOUNTY

The posse gets a seat without breaking any heads: 4 points.

The posse notices the amulet's activation: 4 points.

CHAPTER FOUR: IT'S SHOW TIME!

Dillenger has it in his noggin that the train stays in Red Rock until he feels that culture has permeated the yokels or he feels like moving on. Every day until then, the hirelings are expected to rise and shine by eight o' clock and put in nine solid hours of running the show.

The exhibit is run right out of the museum car, where curious eyes can browse through Dillenger's "artistic marvels of our civilization," while the gent lauds their inestimable contributions to history and the fine arts, never once neglecting to expound upon even the most exiguous minutiae of each piece's humanocentric pulchritude. (If your eyes are glazing over at this point, you know how Dillenger's audience feels.)

The price for this cultural epiphany is a modest nickel, although Dillenger is so enthused, he hardly enforces it (and as usual, extending this courtesy to the ladies in particular). It doesn't come without extra attractions, either. From time to time, the more articulate and erudite heroes are pressed into staging scenes from classic plays, poetry recitals, ballroom dancing, historical reenactments, philosophical, theological, or scientific symposiums and



assorted "intellectual performances" just outside the car. The less-talented ones are relegated to general watch duty, crowd control, publicity, prop setup, cashbox accounting, supply run—in short, the grunt work. The dining car is also open to the public at the same time (though Dillenger is more strict about charging for meals), so the heroes might be pressed into doubling as cooks or waiters too.

Count on Mayor O'Fenner to put in regular appearances. Three guesses to his motive. The mingling mayor isn't the only special guest, however. The mysterious dark-robed figures return.

For starters, they merely peek from the rooftop of various adjacent buildings during the daytime. All it takes is a Fair (5) *Cognition* roll to pick out their silhouettes, but only for a quick second before they duck out of sight. This occurs frequently throughout the first two days, enough for the heroes to build up a healthy suspicion about them. Notifying the marshal only results in many a stranger coming down with a bad case of lead-poisoning, but if the posse sets up some sort of ambush themselves, they may likely catch the unsuspecting Arabs totally by surprise.



Besides the spies, another thing the posse has to watch for is theft. This town is known for honesty like it's known for fancy Victorian mansions. There are enough rotten apples around that a few are bound to pass through the door. Once any of these beauties with sticky fingers sees the contents of the museum car, you can cut the temptation with a Bowie knife. The posse might almost have to grow an extra set of eyes just to catch the schemes. A purty woman could "accidentally" spill tea on her dress, and before anybody knows it, a valuable trinket has found its way into somebody's pocket. What's worse, the offenders, even those caught red-handed, are likely only going to receive a slap on the wrist and some short jail time, given who's in charge of the local law.

Should a heist be successful, the Marshal can turn any retrieval attempt into a side adventure (providing the heroes wants to keep their jobs with Dillenger or earn extra bounties), especially if the Marshal decides to have the amulet pilfered. In this case, bet on Akul's underlings to join the hunt as well.

AKUL'S SPIES

These mysterious strangers work in a group of five, all of whom have been instructed by Akul to observe Dillenger for a while, then seize the amulet as soon as opportunity presents itself. In addition, they have a standing order to assassinate any lone character wandering too close. The posse doesn't find anything on a dead spy but his gear. If captured alive, none speak any English. They aren't in a mood to chat (even if they knew what their captors were saying), so prying their mission and their master out of them is going to be very difficult without supernatural means.

The spies shun confrontations. If they must fight, they prefer to stealthily sting their target from a distance with the poisoned darts they carry. They normally stick their victim in the neck with a throwing dart and let the poison do the rest. Any hit causing a wound poisons the victim. The poison induces severe dizziness, causing the victim to halve all but *Vigor* and *Spirit* rolls, and it then requires him to make an Onerous (7) *Vigor* check every round (for 3d4 rounds) or slip into unconsciousness. If the victim falls unconscious, he remains so for 2d6 hours unless supernatural means are used to wake him. Healing the poor sap can be done through spells and rituals as normal, or an Onerous (7) *medicine* roll.



PROFILE

Corporeal: D:2d8, N:1d8, S:3d6, Q:2d8, V:3d6
Climbin' 2d8, fightin': brawlin' 2d8, fightin': knife
3d8, horse ridin' 1d8, lockpickin' 2d8, sneak
3d8, throwin': darts 2d8

Mental: C:3d6, K:2d6, M:2d6, Sm:2d6, Sp:2d6
Search 2d6, trackin' 2d6

Edges: None

Hindrances: Loyal (to Akul)

Gear: One throwing dart (Speed 1, ROF 1, Range
Increment 5, STR+1d4 damage) with poison,
jambya (Arabian knife).

UNEXPECTED INTERMISSIONS

Sometime during the first three days of the exhibit, two banditos riding through the town decide to make a forced withdrawal at the bank—a neighbor to the train station.

This is a chance for the posse to become heroes. The desperados head in for a quick grab-and-run and create a big commotion while at it. The characters hear several gunshots, then have a clear view of two men leaving the bank in a hurry with bulging sacks under their arms.

If you arrange for some of the heroes to actually be inside the bank, they can try to stop the robbers right there. Everybody else must try to stop the banditos as they hop on their horses and start galloping away.

Regardless of whether the posse manages to corral them, Marshal Sloan eventually comes on the scene and shows these clowns why nobody messes with his town. Several bullets clean through the gizzards make his point!

All that's left then is to drag the bodies off and bury them. The heroes earn respect from the townsfolk according to their success in halting the robbery, though this could quickly be lost if they decide to challenge Sloan for killing the men.

LOS BANDITOS

Corporeal: D:1d10, N:1d8, S:2d8, Q:1d10, V:3d8
Fightin': brawlin' 2d8, horse ridin' 3d8, shootin':
pistol 2d8, quick draw 2d10

Mental: C:2d6, K:1d6, M:3d6, Sm:1d6, Sp:2d6
Overawe 2d6

Gear: .44 Smith & Wesson Frontier, \$12,
waterskin.

RETURN ENGAGEMENT

Well, just because they're dead and buried, you didn't expect that's the end of them, did you?
Not while the amulet's around.

The relic is only too happy to have fresh meat to animate. It weaves its evil magic that very same night like clockwork, and the banditos come back faster than you can say "sheep dip."

If any of Akul's spies met an unfortunate demise, they return in this encounter, too.

Naturally, they all make a beeline for the amulet. Now depending where the heroes are, they may or may not see the zombies lumbering toward the train. It's best to have at least two characters guarding the exhibit car at the time, with the rest fairly close by so they can help take the walkin' dead down.

SUNDAY BRUNCH

Unless the heroes throw a monkey wrench into the works with their actions, everything proceeds uneventfully until Sunday morning.

That's when all Hell breaks loose and Akul sends in a troop to circle the steam wagon.

It starts off with Marshal Sloan, the deputies, and Mayor O'Fenner dropping by to talk about expecting a large crowd after Sunday service. Meanwhile, the posse begins to notice Arabs lurking along the rooftops again—and behind the churches—and around the rail tracks.

A few sneakier spies first try to subtract potential foes (preferably the deputies) from the battle with their throwing darts. Then before anyone can say "Holy War!", the spies—now about two dozen strong—descend upon the station in an attempt to swarm the train.

Apart from Sloan, who's already there and busy with his shooting iron, the posse gets additional help if they're on good terms with the townspeople. (Heck, some of them hombres might jump in just for a good fight!) Despite having initial surprise, the spies' glaring tactical error of bringing knives to a gunfight makes this look like an easy victory for the good guys.

At least until the Gulper decides to put in its two tentacles' worth.

A tremor freezes the locals where they stand. The Arabs stop and stare at the ground. The silence is broken by a shout of "The Gulper!" Then the rattler snatches two of Akul's lackeys as appetizers. People scream and run in all directions. Once the Gulper wolfs down one of Akul's men, it spends a round thrashing in pain and then lays a real whipping on the town.

The scene quickly degenerates into chaos, as the Gulper burrows underground and makes its way randomly from person to person, gulping down everyone that's within reach. The Arabs run for their lives, as do most of Red Rock's



THE CULT OF THE DJINN

So, if Akul is so danged powerful, why is he fired up to revive the Sultan? Why doesn't he just take control for himself? Glad you asked!

The sands of the Middle East can hide a thousand years of treasure and history, but not the dark influence of the djinn (manitous to you and me). The djinn have corrupted the wisest of kings and seers to bring their evil nightmares to our world. Only the vilest of men were made privy to the plans of these dark masters.

The Cult of the Djinn surfaced around the turn of the 13th century as a guild of assassins and dark scholars. Through the deaths of certain nobles, the cult has carved itself a place in Arabian affairs. The world around the desert kingdoms knows nothing about the cult nor its dark plots. Wild tales have sprung up among the common people to explain the unnatural events, but few have taken the stories seriously.

The latest of puppet-kings in this desert realm was the Sultan Jawhar al-Khala. The cult plotted for centuries to have such a figure of power on the throne. His tutoring and rearing were closely watched by the cult, and any threats to his rise to power were squelched firmly. Jawar al-Khala

soon had his every twisted wish fulfilled. At his coronation, the young sultan appointed Akul Hasazim his royal mage-vizier and all opposition to the sultan's rule was crushed.

Prophecy and visions from the djinn marked this sultan as the one to lead the cult to greater power and world influence. No request or wish of Sultan al-Khala was denied, but each was completed with the cult's own touch of corruption. The future of the cult seemed secure.

DEATH OF THE SULTAN

Unknown to Akul, a few of the sultan's royal guards were secretly involved in a holy sect which watched the Cult of the Djinn. Very weak in numbers, the members worked carefully to place themselves close to the throne. At the right moment, the royal guards were able to assassinate the Sultan Jawhar al-Khala in a secret bedchamber. The body was quickly found by Akul Hasazim, and he publicly executed the traitorous guards and their families. The people of the land knew nothing of the sultan's fate and were led to believe he still lived.

Akul Hasazim has now bargained with the djinn to find a way to bring back his sultan, the one that would lead his cult to the world.

A DANDY OF A NECKLACE

Which leads us to Rutherford Ellington Dillenger. This dandy of a gentleman from Britain is determined to impart a little culture to us cowpokes. His line of thinking is that the West is "a decadent Hellhole which perpetuates an unrefined society." Mighty big words.

Anyway, Mr. Dillenger comes over to "the Colonies," as he calls them, in a big boat and a fancy suit and shows off a mother lode of what them upstanding folks call historical treasures. He's got all sorts of paintings of deadpan faces by somebody sophisticated, old stage plays scripted in words nobody uses anymore (or maybe ever did), musty tomes handwritten by dead monks, as well as a book called *A Short Treatise on Whist*, written by another English chap named Hoyle (see Chapter Five), crown pieces worn by royal folks who lost their heads in nasty revolutions, and so on.

Mixed in with the other stuff, there's a mysterious gold pendant inlaid with an emerald the size of a baby's fist—crafted to perfection. The worldly connoisseur he is, Dillenger can tell anybody it came from the Middle East, a desert beauty sure to bring instant class to the Western frontier—that and big trouble.



ABRACADABRA



another. He's good for comic relief if nothing else. Play him up for all he's worth.

AKUL'S WARRIORS

Corporeal: D:2d8, N:1d10, S:2d8, Q:1d10, V:2d8
Climbing 2d10, fightin': brawlin' 3d10, fightin':
knife 2d10, fightin': scimitar 3d10, horse ridin'
2d10, sneak 2d10

Mental: C:3d6, K:1d6, M:2d6, Sm:2d6, Sp:2d6
Language: Arabic 2d6, search 2d6

Hindrances: Loyal (to Akul)

Gear: Scimitar, jambiya (Arabian knife).

AKUL'S TRICKSTERS

Corporeal: D:3d6, N:2d6, S:2d6, Q:1d8, V:1d6
Climbing 2d6, fightin': knife 1d6, filchin' 2d6,
sleight of hand 2d6, throwin': bolts o' doom
3d6

Mental: C:2d8, K:1d10, M:2d6, S:1d10, Sp:1d8
Academia: occult 2d10, guts 2d8, language: Arabic
3d10, search 3d8, faith 3d10 (Cult of the Djinn)

Edges: Arcane background: cultist

Hindrances: Loyal (to Akul)

Hexes: Bolts o' doom 2, cloak o' evil 2, scrye 3

Gear: Jambiya (Arabian knife).

AKUL APPEARS

Fending off the intruders, however, does not mean the posse is off the hook. Akul makes his appearance 15 feet before the speeding locomotive's headlight and starts levitating backwards in the illumination, keeping the distance effortlessly.

The train loses its steam and screeches to a sudden halt as the Arabian sorcerer unleashes an unbelievably powerful *bolt o' doom* at the steam engine. The heroes need to make an Onerous (7) *Nimbleness* check to avoid falling over and smacking into something or somebody hard, causing 2d4 damage. Just when the heroes regain their balance, Akul—backed by any surviving members of his troop or at least two bodyguards—enters the train and begins to stride toward the museum car.

Once inside the train, the evil mage demands, with a heavy accent, the posse's surrender and for Dillenger to hand over the amulet. Akul already has a *cloak o' evil* spell prepared to keep the gunslingers at bay. He isn't shy about showing off other spells in his bag of tricks or holding a few hostages either.



When cornered, Akul rips off a necklace with five bone teeth and throws it to the ground. There is a bright flash (onlookers must make a Fair (5) Vigor roll or be stunned for a round from being suddenly but temporarily blinded), smoke covers the floor, and five skeletal warriors armed with rusty but razor-sharp scimitars—and bad attitudes to match—rise from the mists to face our hapless heroes.

The raiders are pretty tough, but the skeletons present a bigger problem. They don't get Winded, bullets don't hurt them, and unlike walkin' dead, they have no brains for you to shoot at or organs to pierce. The best bet against one of these is to club it hard with everything you've got, drop something heavy on it, grind it in one of the gears, or kick it off the train and watch those bones shatter all over the track. Its hours of family fun.

Though he's as confident as a man holding Four Aces, Akul is no fool, especially not if he's overmatched. He retreats and returns to fight another day if necessary, rather than getting shish-kabobbed. He has no compunction whatsoever about "sacrificing" his minions to delay the posse's advance.

AKUL HASAZM

The vizier of the infamous al-Khala, Akul is the right-hand man who whispered his share of abominable ideas into the Sultan's ear, ideas which were carried out to the letter by the corrupted sultan. The king might be dead right now, but not for long if Akul has anything to say about it.

Once he has obtained the sacred amulet, Akul intends to return with it to his native land. There he plans to use his power to terrorize the populace until the Fear Level is high enough to activate the relic. When that happens, he will place it upon his dead king, bringing him back to some semblance of life. Soon after, Akul will resume his place as the power behind the throne.

Akul was raised from infancy by members of the Cult of the Djinn. He is utterly loyal to the cult, but he refuses to risk his life recklessly for it. (He'd much prefer to risk the lives of his fanatical underlings.) The riches and earthly pleasures he has enjoyed as court vizier have caused him to become rather attached to his carcass. He'd like to keep it breathing as long as he possibly can.

ABRACADABRA

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:2d8, N:1d8, S:2d6, Q:1d8, V:2d8

Fightin': knife 3d8, filching 3d8, sleight of hand 3d8, throwin': bolts o' doom 3d8

Mental: C:2d10, K:2d12, M:4d6, Sm:4d10, Sp:1d12

Academia: occult 4d12, faith 5d12 (The Cult of the Djinn), language: Arabic 4d12, language: English 1d12, overawe 3d6, scrutinize 2d10

Edges: Arcane background: cultist, rank (vizier)

Hindrances: Bad luck, loyal (Sultan Jawhar al-Khala)

Black Magic: Bolts o' doom 3, cloak o' evil 2, dark protection 2, pact 4, puppet 5, spook 3
(**Note:** If you do not own a copy of *The Quick & the Dead* for the black magic rules, substitute suitable huckster's hexes for the black magic spells. Use Akul's *faith* for the Aptitude rolls.)

Gear: jambiya (Arabian knife), skeleton-summoning necklace.

SKELETONS

These are something special Akul dug up for the posse and hauled all the way over to America from his homeland. They are the remains of Arabian warriors past (and apparently those who didn't fare well enough to deserve a decent, undisturbed burial). While they might fight as good now as they did when they were alive, these reanimated raiders are much lighter and not as strong as before without any meat on their bones.

PROFILE

Corporeal: D:3d6, N:2d8, S:3d6, Q:2d10, V:4d6

Climbing 3d8, fightin': brawlin' 2d8, fightin': scimitar 2d8, horse ridin' 2d8

Mental: C:1d8, K:1d4, M:1d6, Sm:1d6, Sp:1d4
Overawe 5d6

Gear: Scimitar

Size: 6

Terror: 10

Special Abilities:

Immunity: To bullets, in addition to Wind or physical stress. Otherwise, they are affected by other forms of damage just like any other undead.

BOUNTY

The posse defeats Akul's warriors: 3 points.

The heroes defeat Akul himself: 5 points.

Dillenger is still alive at the end of the adventure: 2 points.

The heroes decide to destroy the amulet: 5 points.



AFTERMATH

If the heroes win this encounter but don't manage to turn Akul into a thick, crimson curry, the tour moves on. Bet on the sorcerer to dog the train's chosen path every step of the way until he gets the amulet. Even if Akul somehow happens to end up a, uh, "martyr," there are still some loyal followers of his to contend with. They now want to use the amulet to resurrect *him*. And if he makes it back to the land of the living, you can bet he's going to want to exact his revenge.

If Akul makes off with the amulet, the heroes are obligated to get it back (at least if they want to remain employed with Dillenger), creating room for further adventures. No true hero should ever let a bad guy have his way.

Of course, retaining the amulet can open a whole new can of worms for the posse. They probably want late-night visits from walkin' dead like they want to run through Hell with their underwear soaked in kerosene—not too mention the locals might have some complaints. It takes some research to piece together what the amulet does, then a lot of convincing to make Dillenger part with it.

BOOT HILL

AKUL HASAZIM

Attack:

Knife 3d8/2d6+1d6

Defense:

Knife 2

Hits: 30

Special Abilities:

Bolts o' Doom 3

Cloak o' Evil 2

Dark Protection 2

Pact 4

Puppet 5

Spook 3

BANDITOS

Attack:

Pistol 2d8/2d6

Defense:

Brawling 2

Hits: 30

DILLENGER

Attack:

Pistol 1d6/3d6

Defense:

Dodge 2d10

Hits: 30

THE GULPER

Attack:

Bite 3d6/2d20

Claw 3d6/1d12

Defense:

Brawlin' 3

Hits: 75

Special Abilities:

Armor 1

MARSHAL SLOAN

Attack:

Pistol 3d12/2d6

Rifle 3d12/4d8

Shotgun 3d12/2d6+4d6

Defense:

Brawlin' 4

Dodge 4d10

Hits: 30

SKELETONS

Attack:

Scimitar 2d8/3d6+2d6

Defense:

Brawling 2

Scimitar 2

Hits: 30

Special Abilities:

Immune to bullets and Wind

SLOAN'S DEPUTIES

Attack:

Pistol 2d10/3d6

Rifle 2d10/4d8

Shotgun 2d10/2d6+4d6

Defense:

Brawlin' 3

Dodge 2d8

Hits: 30

SPIES

Attack:

Darts 2d8/3d6+1d4 (plus poison)

Knife 3d8/3d6+1d6

Defense:

Knife 3

Hits: 30

TRICKSTERS

Attack:

Knife 1d6/2d6+1d6

Defense:

Dodge 4d10

Hits: 30

Special Abilities:

Bolts o' Doom 2

Cloak o' Evil 2

Scrye 3

WARRIORS

Attack:

Scimitar 3d10/2d8+2d8

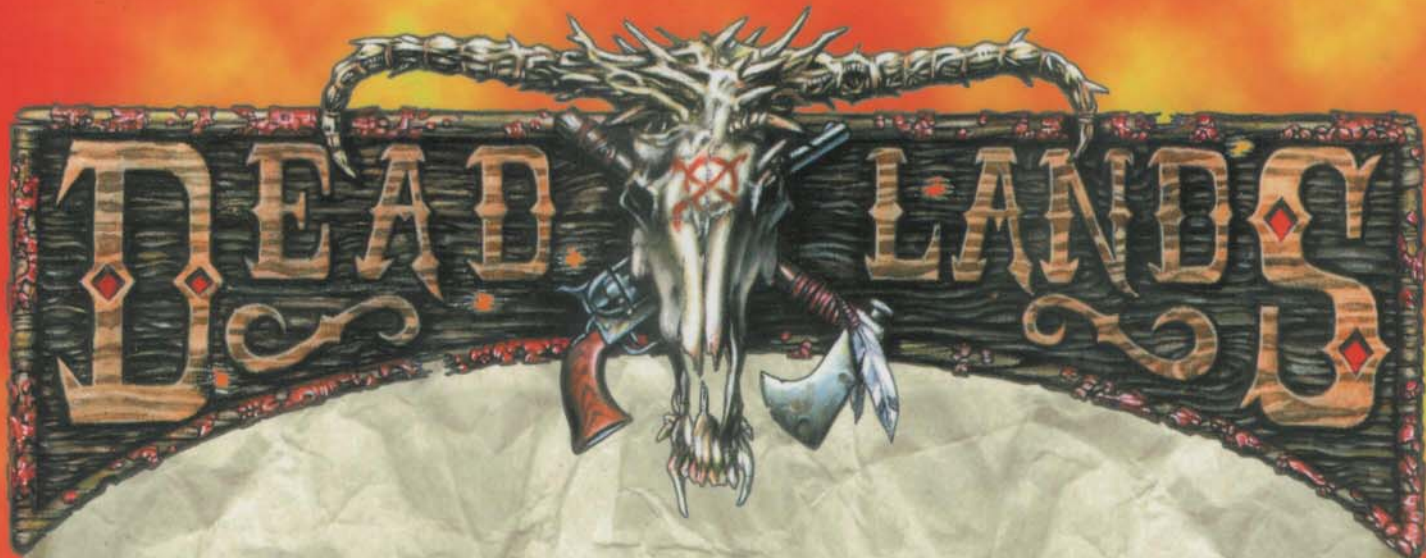
Knife 2d10/2d8+1d6

Defense:

Brawlin' 3

Scimitar 3

Hits: 30



Pick A Card, Any Card...



For hucksters, poker is a way of life. It's not just a means of making a living (although it can be mighty useful that way, too). No, it's their gateway to the Hunting Grounds—a nightmare realm of arcane power—and their means of manipulating the demonic manitous that call that place home. That's the true font of their sorcerous powers.

Hucksters & Hexes is packed with all sorts of vital information to make the life of a huckster a whole lot more interesting. There's the tale of *Hoyle's Book of Games*—the tome that launches every cardslinger down a slippery slope toward enlightenment or damnation—plus new edges and relics to broaden any huckster's horizons, and a whole new way to help them cast their deadly spells. It's also got rules for tempests (a new kind of hexslinger), tricks (a new kind of hex), and descriptions of over 100 hexes!

There's top-secret stuff for the Marshal, too, revealing the darkest secrets of the hucksters, their friends, and their foes, plus a full-scale adventure suitable for any posse.

So go ahead. Pick a card.

Just hope you don't pick wrong.



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