GRAY MAGICK

by Ron Edwards

Introduction

The world of Gray Magick is composed of profoundly opposed magical forces: one of altruism, healing, and love, against one of bitterness, death, and hate. As an abstract force, each is powerful and ruthless, knowing no compromise. The lands of Gray Magick reflect the conflict, in that some areas are blasted, blackened, and full of grim pockets of chaos, whereas others actually reside on the high-floating clouds, clear of worldly troubles. However, most of the lands are pretty much like the ones we know, consisting of mountains, forests, rivers, seas, and communities of various sizes. These are the Gray Lands, which the competing forces are eager to add to their ranks.

As a magic-wielding character in Gray Magick, one may decide to ally with one side and become an agent for it, in which case it becomes necessary to shun or at least de-emphasize certain spells. Or one may try to remain "gray," which requires practicing all spells in a kind of ethical balancing act. None of these roads are easy, nor can they be avoided! Being a wizard in this game often means making some tough moral choices. The nonwizard characters in Gray Magick are somewhat less constrained, but they also may find themselves enmeshed in these matters.

The game is built to dramatize these issues and thus the magic system is a bit different from those in other roleplaying games. Instead of having a huge spell list, of which each character knows a small selection, this system allows every wizard knowledge of every single spell listed in the rules. However, the consequences of preferentially casting spells of one "color" will be definite and irreversible. The more powerful spells one casts, the quicker this process occurs. Only by casting a mixture of white and black spells can one stay "gray." A nonwizard experiences these same effects by swearing and fulfilling oaths of fealty and obedience to mightier souls. Which route a character takes is up to the player and will depend on what he or she does during the course of the game.

The terms "black and white" magic as presented in Gray Magick are only used to indicate opposite principles, whose practitioners may or may not be intolerant of one another. The colors do not connote any racial judgments at all, and in fact the ethnicities of the Gray Lands range widely with no restrictions or tendencies regarding what sort of magic the peoples use.
Part One: Building a Character

Characteristics

Characters have four characteristics: Brawn, Quickness, Wits, and Charm. Determine initial scores for them by setting each equal to 1 and then adding to each the result of a 1d6 roll.

**Brawn** (B) is for:
- feats of strength, stamina, and fortitude. Roll B vs. B of opponent or difficulty level. Such a feat may reduce B.
- determining which weapons can be used.
- powering spells, which reduces B.
- assigning how much damage is done by a successful physical attack. Use base B for this amount, not B as reduced by wounds or spellcasting.
- as an index for how much damage can be taken: B is marked off.

**Quickness** (Q) is for:
- feats of agility or precision. Roll Q vs. Q of opponent or difficulty level.
- determining the order of initiated actions in a combat round.
- determining whether a physical attack succeeds. Roll Q vs. Q of opponent.
- as an index for how much damage can be taken: Q is marked off.

**Wits** (W) is for:
- feats of argument, deception, debate, trickery. Roll W vs. W of opponent.
- feats of perception, memory, making logical connections. Roll W vs. difficulty level.
- determining whose magic prevails in a magical clash. Roll W vs. W of opponent.
- determining how many Professions the character knows.

**Charm** (C) is for:
- winning others to your position or opinion. Roll C vs. W of opponent.
- gaining approval for your actions, appearance, or presence. Roll C vs. difficulty level.
- dominating others through force of personality. Roll C vs. C of opponent. This roll is modified by the number of tallies held by the character (see below).

Example: a player rolls 4d6 and gets 2, 5, 6, 3. The character's initial scores are Brawn 3, Quickness 6, Wits 7, and Charm 4. These are not yet the final scores, however; one needs Traits to define the character further.

Traits

Set the final scores for the characteristics by choosing two of the following traits for the character. A single trait cannot be taken twice, but any combination of two traits is allowed. Traits are the player's guide for roleplaying the character.

**Tough**: the character is athletic and used to hard knocks, at home in his or her body. Add +2 to Brawn score.
Brave: the character is decisive and unhesitating in action, moving ahead of less resolute folk. Add +2 to Quickness score.

Cunning: the character sees how people, things, and situations are put together and can judge their strong and weak points easily. Add +2 to Wits score.

Romantic: the character feels deeply and achieves quick rapport with others, thus is good at communicating and perceiving emotions. Add +2 to Charm score.

Noble: the character has a true code of honor, which the player must write down, and will adhere to it in his or her ends and means. See the Sourcebook, below, for a discussion of honor in the Graylands. Add +1 to Brawn and +1 to Charm scores.

Ambitious: the character places top priority on social advancement. The player must write the specific ambition down on the character sheet; note that achieving the ambition only sets a new goal. Add +1 to Quickness and +1 to Wits scores.

Example: the player decides that the character rolled above will be Tough and Noble, thus adding 3 to Brawn and 1 to Charm. The final scores are B 6, Q 6, W 7, C 5, a rather balanced character. The player might have chosen Brave and Ambitious to produce B 3, Q 9, W 8, C 4, to produce a more extreme and very different character.

Features

A character has 1 feature per 2 full points of Charm; features are chosen by the player from the following lists. The player may decide to use the opposite of a given feature. If the player desires, he or she may determine features randomly. Roll 1d6 to determine which list of features, then roll 1d6 to determine the feature, and further roll 1d2 to determine whether the feature or its opposite is taken. Finally, with the Game Master's permission, the player may simply make up features instead of using the lists.

1  Body: fat, hunched, hairy, scarred, ornamented/tattooed, long legs
2  Face: very regular, scarred, trimmed/shaved hair, ornamented/tattooed, lined, pale
3-4 Demeanor: tense, humorous, stoic, bawdy, hostile, fierce
5-6 Clothing: rich, elegant, tailored, revealing, colorful, ornamented

Features taken only add to the appeal of a character with a high Charm score, or detract from that of a character with a low Charm score. It's not what you have but how you use it that counts when influencing others, and that's what Charm's all about.

Age

A character may begin play as an adult: roll 3d6 and add the result to 18 to determine his or her age. If the player wishes to begin with a younger character, roll 1d6 and add the result to 14 to determine the character's age. A younger character
may take only one profession (see below) to begin play, regardless of Wits score. Also, for each characteristic, roll 2d6 and add the characteristic's current value. If the total is greater than 12, then add 1 to that characteristic. Only one characteristic may be increased in this way; stop rolling once a success is achieved.

Conversely, a player may want to play an older character. Roll 3d6 and add the result to 32 to determine the character's age. The character may take one extra profession (see below) over that allowed by Wits score. Also, for each characteristic, roll 2d6 and add the characteristic's current value. If the total is 12 or lower, then subtract 1 from that characteristic. Only one characteristic may be reduced in this way. If Wits is the characteristic affected, choose professions (below) based on the original Wits score, plus the one extra allowed to this age group, rather than on the modified score.

**Professions**

Although most feats a character attempts will simply be determined by characteristics rolls, some feats require specific knowledge from professional experience. A character has one profession from the following list per 3 Wits score, rounding up. Thus a character with Wits 2 has one profession and one with Wits 7 has three.

**Martial** (high): literacy, military tactics, strategy, movement and deployment of large forces, geography. In the world of Gray Magick, anyone with this profession will consider himself or herself "well-born."

**Martial** (low): camping, animal care, field medicine

**Merchant:** literacy, finances, geography, appraisal of merchandise and its properties. Triple base starting funds as determined below.

**Entertainer** (high): literacy, classy singing and dancing, instrument, poetry, high drama, literature. Double base starting funds as determined below.

**Entertainer** (low): ropewalking, juggling, exhibitionist dancing, line memorizing.

**Wizardry:** literacy, sense magic emanations, knowledge of all spells.

**Artisan:** marketable craft of choice, with associated knowledge and expertise; examples include medicine and armor/weapons making. Double base starting funds as determined below.

**Farmer:** agriculture, animals, field medicine, natural history. Note that wellborn people may have this profession as well as peasants.

**Scholar:** literacy, knowledge of 1d6 extra languages (see Sourcebook below), history, geography, literature, philosophy. Double base starting funds as determined below.

**Seaman:** swimming, shipboard tasks, coastal geography, navigation

**Outdoorsman:** natural history, hunting, survival in hard conditions, practical geography, swimming

**Priest:** literacy, theology, symbology, history, medicine. Triple base starting funds as determined below.

**Custom:** the player and/or the Game Master may invent a profession and assign it various areas of expertise, or modify one of the above
Given the character’s Traits and Professions, the player should be able to
describe the character’s social role and status. Is he or she an upstanding citizen or
an outlaw? Noble or lowborn? Rich or poor? For example, if the character has
Martial (high) or Entertainer (high) as a profession, he or she was probably born rich
or wellborn, or both. The player and Game Master should take some time to assign
the character’s possessions and money, using the following as a base and consulting
the professions above as modifiers.

**Villein:** peasant or low-status laborer of some sort. Base starting funds: 3d6 pennies, in change.
**Woodsman/Tribesman:** free person from a rustic area Base starting funds: 3d6 pennies, in change.
**Townsman:** free person from a civilized area. Base starting funds: 1d6 crowns, in change.
**Soldier:** anyone who fights as a paid profession (including highway robbery). Base starting funds: 1d6 crowns, in change.
**Petty noble:** wellborn but low in worldly assets. Base starting funds: 6d6 crowns.
**Landed noble:** top of the heap -- money, property, and social authority. Base starting funds: 10d6 crowns.

The character’s weapons, armor, and immediate pool of possessions are not
bought with starting funds but rather assigned by the player, subject to the Game
Master’s approval.

The player should give the character a name, decide where he or she is from
(see Sourcebook, below), and take a little time to complete the picture thus far. What
might the character’s goals be? How about family: who where they, what were they
like, where are they now? Choose weaponry and armor from the lists in the Combat
section below if your character will be fighting a lot, and if he or she is a wizard, take a
look at the spell lists to get an idea of magical options.

**Key Event**

The player must provide the Game Master with a Key Event for this
character. It should be written as a short story or anecdote, perhaps no more than a
paragraph or a single page. A Key Event may either have occurred long before the
beginning of play, or it may be the most recent thing to have happened to the
character. The character must display his or her Traits in the Event, and it must
involve at least one other character (whether that is a player-character, one provided
by the Game Master, or made up by the player). If the character is a wizard and/or
has sworn any oaths (see below), the Key Event should include these issues in some
way.

**Increasing Characteristics**

Characteristics are increased by characters’ actions during the game. If, by
the end of an adventure, a character has successfully matched any characteristic
against another character’s (see below), then the Game Master may allow one
chance per such characteristic to improve it. The player must roll higher than the
current characteristic score on 2d6 in order to improve it by one. Again, this roll is
allowed only at the end of an adventure, as judged by the Game Master, it is allowed
only for the characteristics that were successfully employed during that adventure,
and only one improvement roll is made per characteristic.

The only other way characteristics are improved is by gaining a color tally (see
below), which may add 3 to a character’s characteristic total, with the points
distributed as desired by the player.

Professions may added if the character has improved his or her Wits score to a
level that allows "room" for another profession (i.e., to 4, 7, or 10). This option may be
taken only if the player has previously announced that the character is studying the
new profession, or if the Game Master judges that game events provide the necessary
experience. Also, a young character whose Wits score allows more professions than
the one that he or she begins with may simply add another over time. A character
never loses a profession once learned, although he or she may choose not to practice
it.

Tallies

Each character has on his or her sheet a 4x4 matrix of color points, which
begin play "gray" (indicated by a hash mark through each point). If a character’s
matrix becomes either all black or all white, he or she gains a tally of that color.
Gaining a tally has very definite effects on the character. When a character gains a
black tally, roll 2d6 and consult the following list.

2: an imp becomes the character's constant companion.
3: the character gains the permanent service of 5d6 skeletons or zombies
4: the character gains the permanent service of 1d6 ghouls.
5: the character gains the companionship of a lich.
6: the character gains the service of a nightmare; he or she must call it with a
successful C vs. C roll for each journey. Ignore and roll again if the character
has achieved this result already.
7: the character may attain beast shape without spending Brawn or filling in
color points. Ignore and roll again if the character has achieved this result
already.
8: one of the character's limbs or facial features becomes grotesquely
nonhuman but also gains +5 to its feat rolls.
9: the character may inflict a disease on another without spending Brawn or
filling in a color point.
10: the character may Curse another without spending Brawn or filling in a
color point. Ignore and roll again if the character has achieved this result
already.
11: the character gains 1d6 Brawn lost in any way if another person dies in his
or her presence. Ignore and roll again if the character has achieved this result
already.
12: the character gains 3 points to distribute as desired among his or her
characteristics.
When a character gains a white tally, roll 2d6 and consult the following list.

2: the character gains a holy weapon. Ignore and roll again if the character has achieved this result already.
3: the character gains holy armor. Ignore and roll again if the character has achieved this result already.
4: the character is immune to all diseases. Ignore and roll again if the character has achieved this result already.
5: the character is immune to all poisons and can perceive their presence with a W vs. 12 roll. Ignore and roll again if the character has achieved this result already.
6: the character gains the permanent service of 3d6 small beasts.
7: the character gains the permanent service of 1d6 large beasts.
8: the character does not spend Brawn or fill in a color point to cast Healing. Ignore and roll again if the character has achieved this result already.
9: the character gains the companionship of an avatar.
10: the character does not spend Brawn or fill in color points to cast Circle, although he or she must pump Brawn to maintain it when it is challenged. Ignore and roll again if the character has achieved this result already.
11: the character may communicate verbally with one type of beast.
12: the character gains 3 points to distribute as desired among his or her characteristics.

The moment a tally is achieved, the matrix returns to being completely gray, with the exception of color points equal to the current number of tallies in that color.

One may achieve a tally of one color after having done so with the other color, but the second tally merely cancels the first (although it does not take away the results of the above roll). To "change color," the character must cancel his or her existing tallies before gaining them in the new color.

A further benefit of tallies is that they add to a character's personal impressiveness. All characters add their current number of tallies to their Charm when making a C vs. C roll, regardless of color.

Any character may gain color points in the following way. First, he or she must swear an oath to another character (a "liege") who already has a tally. This oath must include a specific goal and must be understood and approved of by the liege. At this point the swearing character must subtract 1d3 from his or her characteristic total, from whatever characteristics the player chooses. Subsequently, these points may be used as bonuses once per game session for feats that explicitly further the completion of the goal. Upon swearing this oath and subtracting characteristics, the character gains 1d6 color points of the appropriate color. A character may begin play having already sworn such an oath, as long as the Game Master approves of the details.

Upon completion of the goal, which includes the liege (or his or her designated representative) knowing and understanding that the task is completed, the character
regains his or her bartered character points and gains a further 1d6 color points. Once the character's matrix is entirely colored with white or black, he or she has gained a tally and consults the tables above.

Wizards may also gain color points by casting spells (see below), which means they usually have to worry a little more than other characters about aligning themselves with the black path or white. Magic has its price . . .
Part Two: Playing the Game

Basic System

Doing things in general

In Gray Magick, there are no specific skill rolls. Doing things is based on characteristic scores. All feats that a character attempts are judged successful or not based on characteristic rolls only. In theory, that means any character may attempt anything, which is essentially true. In practice, the important modifications are 1) professions and 2) logic, as adjudged by the Game Master, who assigns any necessary penalties.

If the Game Master judges that a given feat requires special knowledge, and the character lacks the profession that would provide that special knowledge, then the character’s roll is either -1d6 (see below) or simply annulled (Game Master’s choice). The list of terms following each profession should give guidelines to the Game Master for judging what feats require that particular body of professional experience.

There are three kinds of ways to resolve whether a feat works: simple, opposed, and combat. Simple resolution is used when the character is attempting a single act which is not opposed by someone else. It calls for the following roll: relevant characteristic score + 2d6, compared to a number set by the Game Master, the "difficulty level." The usual difficulty level is 12, and the number of dice rolled can be more or less depending on circumstances (see below). The character’s total must equal or exceed the difficulty level for the character to accomplish the feat.

Example: a character with Brawn 6 is trying to heft a boulder. The Game Master sets the difficulty level at 12, and the player rolls an 8 on 2d6. 6 + 8 is 14, which exceeds 12; the character heaves the rock aside.

An opposed resolution means two characters are either competing at the same task, or one is trying to overcome the resistance of the other. As in simple resolution, the contest is resolved in an instant. Both characters roll 2d6 and add the total to the relevant characteristic. The higher total prevails.

Example A: two characters, one with Quickness 4 and one with Quickness 8, are in an archery contest. The first rolls 8 on 2d6, the second rolls 7. 8 + 4 = 12, but 7 + 8 = 15, so the second character has shot more accurately.

Example B: a character with Charm 9 is trying to sweet-talk another with Wits 3 into a loan. The first rolls a lowly 2 and the second rolls a 7: 2 + 9 = 11, which is higher than 7 + 3 = 10, so the loan seems reasonable.

A tie in an opposed resolution may either mean that the two characters performed equally, as in the archery contest, or it may go to the defender, as in the negotiations, as judged by the Game Master.
Combat resolution is used for an opposed contest that takes place over time and is described in detail below.

Many times the Game Master must adjudicate the details of an attempted feat without referring to a specific rule. Simply put, an unreasonable feat will incur a penalty, usually one less die to throw, depending on the Game Master's judgment. Conversely, the Game Master may assign bonuses to feat rolls by allowing the player to roll an extra die if he or she, for example, roleplays the feat well.

If a character keeps attempting a feat after he or she has already failed it, the Game Master may choose to assign a cumulative penalty, usually one die per attempt or per two attempts.

**Combat**

**Sequence and Movement**

Combat is broken up into rounds for convenience. A round is handled by carrying out the following four phases.

1) characters state actions in order of Quickness and carry out the requisite movement, if any. If the movement component of a character's action might be opposed, then the characters are placed where they would be at that moment of opposition.
2) in order of Quickness, all *unopposed* magic and physical activity occurs. Only one such action be performed, and thereafter the character is not able to participate fully in the round.
3) opposed magical and physical events are called "clashes." All clashes are resolved (see below) simultaneously during this phase.
4) resolution: damage is sustained, secondary effects occur such as death, placing characters in new positions, and others. This is the final chance to use saved actions (see below), which are canceled at the beginning of the next round.

Characters' actions may be "saved" as well, in that they will not occur until some specified event occurs. They then may be carried out either in reaction to or to interrupt that event. The player must announce his or her intent to save when the character's turn comes up. Thus at the ends of parts 1, 2, and 3 above, remaining "saves" should be recorded. Note that movement may be saved just as actions can.

The precise relationship between how far a character may move and how much he or she may accomplish in doing so is handled in as many different ways as there are gaming systems. Gray Magick follows the lead of such systems as Cyberpunk, Talislanta, or Traveller in leaving these decisions up to the Game Master. He or she may choose to use miniatures on a hex map, carefully marking off full moves and half-moves and such, or he or she may choose to run a combat scene very loosely.

During phase 2, the characters may choose to make a magic or physical attack or to make a characteristic roll of some sort. If a character has performed
any such feat during this phase, he or she may not attack or allocate attack points to
defense during the clash phase (see below).

Resolution

The opponents in a physical clash are matching Quickness. Each must take
his or her score and match it against the opponent's for a contest, simultaneously.
Thus each may succeed, one may succeed while the other fails, or both may fail.

A sophistication of this system includes sacrificing defense for offense, or vice
versa. Thus a character with Quickness 7 may choose to subtract 3 from his
Quickness for his attack (to equal 4) and add 3 to his Quickness (to equal 10) for
defense. The sequence for resolving clashes is therefore as follows:

1) the opponents assign offense and defensive bonuses to their rolls. The
easiest version of this is simply to keep it "even," i.e., if one's Quickness is 8, then
offense is +8 and defense is +8. One may reduce one's bonus to 0, but not below, for
either offense or defense.

2) each opponent rolls 2d6 (this is the base roll; the number of dice is modified
depending on circumstances). The resulting number is added to attack and defense
bonuses, and the attack of each is compared to the defense of the other. Note that
each opponent only rolls once.

3) successful attacks record the amount by which they exceeded the defense.
Damage is applied (see below).

Weaponry

The weapons available in the world of Gray Magick are essentially equivalent
to those from our 12th century: they are not made of particularly high-quality iron
and have to be sharpened, oiled, and taken care of. Of the sword-and-knife category,
only the dagger, rapier, and shortsword have points. Crossbows are particularly
cranky and the Game Master is justified in demanding a Feat roll to re-cock it in a
stressful situation.

Weaponry in Gray Magick is divided into categories based on which professions
provide experience with them; using a weapon without the requisite professional
experience incurs a -1d6 penalty in combat. Each weapon type has a minimum
Brawn; trying to use a weapon too heavy will incur a -1d6 penalty to Quickness in
combat. Also note that weapon types have special features as given below.

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Notations are as follows.
S (sword-type) means the weapon adds 1 to the user's Quickness in a clash.
A (axe-type) means the weapon adds 1 to the user's BQ total (see below) in a clash.
O (other) means the weapon adds 1 to the user's defensive Quickness in a clash.
P (pole-type) means the weapon will add 1d6 to the user's clash resolution roll, if either opponent is charging, either on foot or mounted.
M (missile) means the weapon will only strike at range (it is a bow). Note that all M weapons do 6 BQ damage plus the difference in die rolls total (see below). The only difference between different bows is the range they may be shot effectively.
T (thrown) means the weapon may be thrown for damage.
Profession 1: any character may be considered proficient with this weapon.
Profession 2: characters with a martial background (high or low) may begin the game with proficiency with this weapon.
Profession 3: characters with the professions seaman, outdoorsman, or low entertainer may begin the game proficient with this weapon.

Note that all weapon modifications to Quickness or BQ occur during clash resolution only; they do not affect, for example, the order in which characters act during other phases of combat.

Damage

A successful attack allows the attacker to apply his or her Brawn, plus the difference between attack and defense rolls, as damage. The resulting total (also called BQ) is then divided by two, then each half is subtracted respectively from the defender's Brawn and Quickness.

Example: the attacker has rolled 13 whereas the defender has rolled 7. The attacker adds his Brawn of 4 to the difference between rolls (6) for a total of 10 points of damage (BQ). The defender subtracts 5 from his Brawn and 5 from his Quickness.

If the total BQ is an odd number, the "extra" point is subtracted from Quickness. In the above example, if the attack total had been 14, BQ would have equalled 11 and the defender would have subtracted 6 from Quickness and 5 from Brawn.
If one of either Brawn or Quickness is reduced to 0 or less, the character may still fight, although not very effectively. If Brawn is 0 or less, the character's successful attacks do no damage; he or she is reduced to defense only. If Quickness is 0 or less, the character either gets no addition (if 0) or a penalty (if negative) to combat rolls using Quickness. Note that this applies to sequence of combat as well as to clashes.

If both Brawn and Quickness are reduced to 0 or less, the character is wholly incapacitated and incapable of further combat. He or she can barely move and is easily subdued, tied up, killed, or otherwise dealt with by another character. If either Brawn or Quickness is reduced to its negative, the character is maimed: usually resulting in permanent reduction of that characteristic by 1. If both are reduced to their negatives, then the character is killed. Thus it is possible, although difficult, to be killed outright in combat; more usually characters are temporarily incapacitated.

The Game Master should not concern himself or herself with bleeding or other aftereffects of wounding during a combat; this kind of effect is what causes the reduction in BQ. However, after the fight is over, he or she may rule that a character that does not receive first aid or healing of some sort will continue to take damage.

Physical injury is healed by time: 1 day per current missing Brawn points to regain 1 Brawn. Thus a person who has lost 4 Brawn requires \( 4 + 3 + 2 + 1 = 10 \) days to recover. This assumes neither characteristic has been taken below 0, in which case add 1d6 days to the total. If one characteristic has been taken to its own negative, then the character must make a Brawn vs. 12 roll or suffer permanent damage, usually reflected by reduced Quickness or Brawn.

Armor

Armor reduces the attack total (BQ) applied to a character, before it is divided in two. It also reduces Quickness. The following armor types are designated in Gray Magick.

- leather/cloth: -1 Q, stops 4 BQ
- light mail: -2 Q, stops 7 BQ
- heavy mail: -3 Q, stops 10 BQ
- small shield: -1/2 Q, stops 4 BQ
- large shield: -1 & 1/2 Q, stops 7 BQ
- helm: -1/2 Q, stops 3 BQ

"1/2 Q" means 0.5 Q points, not half of existing Quickness. If the total reduction to Quickness is not a whole number, round down. Thus light mail and shield reduce Quickness by 2, but light mail, small shield, and helm reduce it by 3. Body armor is not additive; each type is assumed to include requisite padding, under-layers, etc. Using a shield prohibits a character from using a two-handed weapon, although a shield can be used as a second or even primary weapon.

The armor types described above are of course only categories of many varieties of vests, cuirasses, hauberks, shirts, skirts, trews, vambraces, cheekplates,
visors, etc, etc. Players and the Game Master are encouraged to describe the armor worn by their characters in some detail. Not only does it individualize characters, it also provides opportunities for aimed shots in combat (see below).

Quickness is only reduced for purposes of resolving clashes, not for determining the order of action nor for most characteristic rolls involving Quickness.

Many other game systems devote a great deal of space to exactly how certain weapons interact with certain armor types, but Gray Magick leaves these details to the Game Master, if he or she wants to include them.

The role of Quickness

Quickness must be monitored fairly closely during combat, from several different base values. First, order of actions and perceptions is always derived from base Quickness, without any modification. Second, clash resolution is always determined by Quickness modified by armor and injury. Third, damage to Quickness is always calculated from the base value, without modification aside from previous injury.

Simple clash resolution example

Two characters are facing off in a fair fight: Baron Ribeck, with B 5 and Q 6, against Charu the bandit leader, with B 6 and Q 8. The Baron uses a hand-and-a-half broadsword and wears light mail and helm; the bandit uses a short axe in either hand and wears patchwork armor best described as leather. They are simply attacking one another in a clash, having come through an ambush scenario with no damage to either up to this point.

Note that the Baron's Q for this purpose is effectively 5 because he is using a sword-type weapon (+1 Q) but wearing mail (-2 Q). Charu's clash Q is reduced to 7; his axe will do an extra BQ if it hits.

Each allocates bonuses: the Baron starts with offense +2 and defense +3, but Charu is more bloodthirsty and allocates offense +6 and defense +1. Each rolls 2d6: the Baron's total is 5 and Charu's is 10 (!). Thus the Baron's offensive total is 7, which applied to Charu's defense of 11 is ineffectual. However, Charu's offense of 16 gets through the Baron's defense of 8.

The blow does a base of (15-11) 4 BQ damage, plus 1 for the weapon type to total 5. It is deflected by the Baron's armor, which stops up to BQ.

The second round of combat also speeds quickly to clash resolution, as neither foe wants to do anything but slice at the other. They allocate again: the Baron with offense +3 and defense +2 (a little bolder this time) and Charu with the same +6 and +1. Each rolls 2d6 again: the Baron gets 8 and Charu gets unlucky, with a 4. The results: the Baron's offensive total is 11, which gets through Charu's 5 for a base BQ of 6; and Charu's strike of 7 is ineffectual against the Baron's defense of 10.
The Baron's blow does 6 BQ, and Charu's armor only stops 4 of it. Charu loses 2 BQ, which means reducing B and Q by 1 each. His new totals are B 5 and Q 7. If he had lost 3 BQ, the totals would be B 5 and Q 6, because the "odd" BQ always comes off Quickness.

Special circumstances of combat

There are many ways a combat situation can be manipulated to give one opponent an advantage. Usually, the player should state his or her attempted act and the Game Master should assign a penalty or bonus, if appropriate. Here are some of the more standard situations or ploys; others should be judged as play proceeds, using the ideas below as guidelines. In general, a character who momentarily enjoys an advantage should gain an extra die during opposed or unopposed resolution.

A character may choose not to defend or not to attack at all during a clash, in which case the bonus for, respectively, offense or defense is obviously 0. He or she also gains +2 offensive or defensive Quickness for that clash. This is distinct from merely reducing one's bonus in one direction to 0, in which case one is still both attacking and defending.

When faced with multiple foes, a fighter may decide to participate in more than one clash simultaneously. He or she may allocate bonuses to wherever seems desirable, as long as the total bonuses used do not sum to more than twice his or her Quickness. However, the Game Master should monitor the logistics of the situation carefully; a character with 10 Quickness should not be able to attack ten foes in one clash unless he or she could logically maneuver between them.

A character may use a second weapon in combination with a one-handed weapon. It may either act as a shield, subtracting 1d6 each clash from the number of damage points done to the character, or as a secondary attack, in which case the character must split his or her offensive bonus between the two attacks. This is the only way a single foe may be forced to defend against two attacks from the same attacker. A shield may be considered a second weapon in this sense as well, used either to attack or to parry, in which case it is not considered armor and stops no damage that actually gets through.

An unperceived attack gains an extra d6 for its offensive bonus. The defender may roll 2d6 for defense only, without allocating any points. The Game Master should usually allow the defender a chance to notice, whether that means a W vs. W roll (as in an ambush), or a W vs. 12 (or more) roll if the defender is engaged in something important, such as fighting someone else.

Darkness, fog, or other light-poor situations should decrease everyone's offensive Quickness by several points unless a character has Perfect Senses or some special sensing ability. It should also give thrown or missile weapons a substantial penalty. Note that defensive Quickness will not be affected, although perhaps the characters should make W vs. 12 rolls in order to perceive a sudden attack.
A character who attempts to disengage from a fight cannot attack during that round; instead, he or she must move away from the opponent during the clash resolution phase. If the character fails the Q vs. Q roll, he or she is unable to disengage. Tricky moves such as the feint are often useful in this situation.

One tricky move is the "feint," which simply means that a successful Q vs. Q roll does not strike the opponent, just disorients him or her enough so that the feinter's next move has a bonus equal to the difference between the feint roll and its failed defense. Feints can come in all kinds of forms, from flashing light into a foe's eyes to a fencing move to whatever the Game Master allows. Feints and aimed shots (below) will lead to a variety of combat situations that in other games are called critical hits and fumbles.

As written above, armor would seem to be a deciding factor in combat. However, a character may bypass some of an opponent's armor bonus by striking at an unarmored area (e.g., the head of an unhelmeted foe). To do so, he or she must resolve the clash at one less d6 (usually necessitating weighting one's offensive bonus highly); if successful, the Game Master may decree that half or all of an armor's protection is negated. The extent of the bonus depends on the armor worn and the area targeted. For example, if faced with an opponent in heavy mail and helm, the best offensive strike to bypass armor would probably get only half of its protection negated. Such aimed shots may also be used to disarm or otherwise strike at a specific part of an opponent.

Combat between mounted foes is handled much like that on foot, although the Game Master should make sure that stated actions are physically possible. A mounted character gains +1d6 against an opponent on foot, in most circumstances.

Combat is also possible without weapons. The simplest way to handle this issue is to conduct combat as usual, but to consider all or most of the damage done to be equivalent to Brawn lost through magic, i.e., it returns at the rate of 1 per hour (see below). A barehanded character facing one with a weapon may have a penalty assigned to Quickness. Other details, such as grappling, wrestling, choking, poking in the eye, and so forth should be handled by roleplaying and creative characteristic rolls, as judged by the Game Master at the time.

**Magic**

*The Big Picture*

Anyone who has the profession wizardry is a wizard: he or she may sense magical emanations from persons, places, or objects, and he or she may cast spells. There are 78 spells currently known, and every wizard STARTS PLAY with the knowledge and ability to cast ALL of them (see Options below, however, if you are uncomfortable with this rule).

However, each spell is also categorized by 1 to 3 "color points," which are either white or black. On the character sheet is a 4x4 matrix of points which should
all begin play with a single line marked through each (they are "gray"). Casting any spell causes a point to change to black or white, according to the following rules.

- a white spell turns black or gray points to white; a black spell turns white or gray points to black. It is the player's choice which of the current points are transformed.
- a white point cannot be transformed to white; a black spell cannot be transformed to black.
- if a spell causes the entire matrix to be either white or black, the entire matrix is returned to gray except for one point which is either white or black, depending on the previous color. Also, a tally is entered on the Magical Status portion of the character sheet.
- if a spell assigns more than the amount of points required to fill the matrix, the "extra" points are ignored.

Criteria for assigning color points

Not all spell-casting fills in a character's matrix. For a non-ritual spell (see below), the character will only fill in color points if the spell was cast in a stressful situation, as judged by the Game Master. For a ritual spell, the character will only fill in color points if the spell requires any contest of Wits or Charm during or because of its casting.

Options

Some Game Masters may be uncomfortable with allowing any wizardly player-character the ability to cast any of the listed spells at will. They are officially granted the option, therefore, to state that wizardly characters have as many color points of spells available at any one time as their Wits score plus current number of color tallies. Thus a character with Wits 6 and two white color points could have 8 color points of spells memorized and ready for use: 8 1-point spells, or 2 3-point and 1 2-point spells, or whatever. They are not "used up" with usage but may be replaced by other spells if the character takes an hour of concentration per color point of replacement. The memorized spells may be of either color, regardless of any color tallies the wizard has.

The major disadvantage of this option is that it removes some of the player's moral dilemma about what sort of magic to cast; by choosing spells beforehand the character has predetermined his or her color path, to some extent. A less drastic option is to allow wizards only to cast spells whose color points equal the characters' current number of color tallies plus one. Thus a wizard with no tallies may cast white or black spells of only one color point, and a wizard with two tallies may cast any spell on the list.

Also, some Game Masters may find the color matrix to be too small, that is, wizardly characters gain color points too quickly. These Game Masters are justified in expanding it to 5 x 5 cells. Making the matrix larger, however, means wizards will find it easier to stay "gray," which relaxes some of the moral context of the game. Therefore expanding the matrix past 5 x 5 is not recommended.
Magical senses

A wizard may perceive 1) the use of magic nearby; 2) a spell or enchantment on a person, place, or object; and 3) whether a creature was created by magic. He or she may also perceive whether the spell was white or black, with a successful W vs. 12 roll. The only things that can stop a wizard's ability to sense magic are distance (the target must be within range of the wizard's normal senses, including hearing) and the spell Magic Blank, in which case the wizard does not sense magic in the enchanted person, place, or object (i.e., he or she does not sense the blank itself but considers the target nonmagical). This ability is part and parcel of being a wizard and comes with taking the profession wizardry, but the player must state that the wizard is using the sense for the character to sense anything.

Casting spells

In order to cast a spell, a character simply temporarily sacrifices the requisite Brawn, which is almost always equal to the number of color points associated with that spell. Brawn lost in this fashion does not affect the amount of physical damage the character can do, but it does count as damage against the character. A wizard can incapacitate himself or herself, or even commit suicide by casting spells if he or she is not careful. The player also chooses which 1 to 3 points (the number coming from the spell description) on the matrix will become the color of the spell.

Brawn lost from casting spells is recovered at the rate of 1 per hour.

Spells are automatically successful if the target is available according to the description of the spell and there is no opposing magic at work. Opposing magic is resolved by a Wits vs. Wits contest during the "clash" phase of combat.

Targets of magic

Many spells refer to their "subjects" or "targets." Such a spell may be cast on anyone or -thing the wizard can perceive. If the person is, for example, a single individual in a vast crowd facing the wizard, or quite far away, the Game Master is justified in having the wizard spend an action making a Wits vs. 12 roll to focus in on the target. Under most circumstances, however, if the wizard is "facing" someone, that person is a potential target with no modifiers for range. This rule counts in full for long-distance perception via magic as well: a wizard can attack someone through the agency of something like a crystal ball.

Types of spell

There are three types of spell: instant, prolonged, and creative. An instant spell is cast in a moment or two, that is, a single action; it can only be blocked or countered by interrupting the caster during that time. Usually that means an opposing wizard or physical attacker must have a saved action to interrupt or counter the spell, or possibly the two characters have the same Quickness and the interrupter wins a Q vs. Q contest. An instant spell may have a permanent effect or
A semi-permanent effect, such as a Mind Rip or a Cure. These effects may be affected by future events (including normal healing), but they will not go away of their own accord because the spell itself is "over." The caster of an instant spell begins to recover the Brawn spent for it as soon as it is cast.

A prolonged spell is somewhat different in that, while it takes no more time to cast than an instant spell, its effects will last until the next sunup or sundown, whichever comes first, and then disappear. It may be blocked as it is cast, just an instant spell, but it also may be canceled by magic during its duration and its ongoing effects cease to occur from that point on. A wizard may not begin to recover the Brawn spent on a prolonged spell until its duration is over.

A creative spell is sort of a cross between the two. It too may be blocked or disrupted during the moment of casting, and whatever was created will stay in existence just as long as a prolonged spell would last (next sunrise or sunset). However, until the duration is past, the object or creature or effect created cannot be blocked, countered, or sunk magically. It can be destroyed or killed, but it will be "real" until the end of the spell's duration. A wizard may begin to recover the Brawn spent on a creative spell as soon as it is cast.

Some spells are also designated as ritual spells: they take 1d6 hours per color point to cast. During this entire period the spell may be disrupted or blocked, either magically or by disturbing the wizard. A wizard may attempt to cast a ritual spell quickly; it requires a W vs. 12 using only 1d6, and the spell's Brawn point cost is doubled.

Enchantments

Any of the spells on the spell list may be cast as an enchantment if the caster sacrifices the Brawn for the spell permanently. An enchantment will last forever unless it is broken by other magic. For spells without a direct Brawn cost (e.g. Vampirize), the Brawn to lose permanently equals the color points associated with the spell. Some spells are slightly variable as enchantments, in that they may enchant a person, place, or object; the details of these variations must be judged by the Game Master for each spell.

When a spell is cast as an enchantment, the wizard gains twice the color points he or she would normally. An enchanted object will lose its enchantment if it is broken by any means. Also, any spell cast as an enchantment becomes a ritual spell.

Magical combat

When two wizards are casting magic in a combat situation, their spells are either unopposed, thus occurring as other characters shoot arrows or perform other non-meelee actions, or opposed, and thus occurring as clashes just as in melee. In most situations, both spells being cast are considered successful unless one or both spells directly interfere with the other (e.g. countermagic, magic sink, etc). In this case the Brawn spent by each wizard will dictate whether the disrupted spell works.
In some situations, the power spent will be equal, in which case the wizards must
match Wits just as physical opponents match Quickness. Thus both, one, or neither
of the two spells may succeed.

Several spells -- Countermagic, Absorb Spell, Store Power, Magic Sink, Reflect
Spell, and Warp Spell -- are of special importance in that they affect other magic.
The sequence of spells cast during a magical conflict may become very confusing, and
some of them have lasting effects on the magical "environment" for the rest of the
conflict. The beginning Game Master may choose to disallow these spells for the first
few games, until the sequence of events during combat becomes automatic for all
involved.

An important tactic in magical combat is "pumping." This is defined as
increasing the amount of Brawn expended in a spell, usually in response to a foe's
Countermagic or other spell-affecting spell. Thus if one wizard has a saved action and
casts a Countermagic, for example, just as his foe casts a Blast, the second wizard
may pump another Brawn into her spell to overcome the Countermagic. The first
wizard may announce a pump as well. Pumping does not fill in color points under any
circumstances. Pumping takes absolutely no time; it is instantaneous regardless of
how many times the wizards pour Brawn into the conflict.

Spells

One white color point

beacon (i) - a highly visible column of light blasts upward from the wizard's
hand; similarly, any wizard within miles is magically alerted to this spell being
cast and knows approximately from what direction.

healing (i) - target has 1d6 B and Q restored (i.e., a roll of 3 returns 3 to each
characteristic). A characteristic may only be restored to its original level with
this spell, not increased above its base level. Healing will only affect physical
injury, not Brawn lost to spellcasting. If a wizard casts Healing on himself or
herself, the Brawn spent to cast the spell is still lost.

instant craft (i) - adds 1d6 to any single craft roll attempted by the target, or
allows a craft roll to be attempted in the absence of suitable materials. Both
effects can be achieved simultaneously for 2 Brawn points.

light (p) - creates a gleaming light source of whatever color the wizard desires,
either on a small object or as a hanging globe. It may be extinguished before its
duration is up if the caster wishes. It is the only way to create light in a Shadow
Cloud.

magic blank (p) - target spell, person, place, or thing does not emanate magical
vibrations and cannot be perceived as magical by a wizard, unless that wizard
is the target of a Perfect Senses spell.

perfect senses (p) - target has perfect sensory abilities (with the exception of
pain or balance) and may see in near-total darkness, hear whispers through
walls, smell or taste poison without ingesting enough to be hurt by it, or
otherwise sense the barest possible stimuli. He or she could, for instance, fight
in total darkness without penalty.

repair (i) - a broken simple object or weapon will be entirely restored. If it was
broken by a Destroy Object spell, the wizard must roll W vs. 12 to Repair it.
shimmer (p) - target has 1d6 extra Q for defensive bonus only.
summon beast 1 (c) - brings a 1 point beast of the caster’s choice (see Beasts).
It will obey the summoner’s commands, although it must be forced to continue
to fight (C vs. C) if B or Q is reduced to a negative number.
twinkletoes (p) - target has nearly perfect balance and coordination for
movement purposes.
waft (i) - target is arrested in a fall or potential fall. Waft does not permit
powered or directed flight.
warding (p) - must be cast on a target object, which warns its holder of nearby
intent to harm or trap him or her. The caster may decide if this warning is
visible, audible, tactile, psychic, or any combination of these.

Two white color points
absorb spell (i) - cancels target spell and adds the Brawn used to cast it to the
summoner’s. Absorb Spell may be cast on a prolonged spell at any time during
the spell’s duration.
armor (p) - target is granted +1d6 BQ armor score.
bless (p) - a blessed person has 1 characteristic of the caster’s choice increased
by 2, for purposes of a stated task or goal only. Many feats may be
encompassed by this goal. Alternatively, Bless may counteract a Curse of
equal or lower power. Bless is a ritual spell.
calm (i) - reduces subject’s C by 1d6 for purposes of calming him, her, or it;
alternatively, counteracts Berserk.
circle (p) - once a circle is drawn (it may be as large as a good-sized room), an
undead creature or demon cannot cross its boundaries, burrow under them, or
fly over them, unless it makes a W vs. W roll against the circle’s caster. Either
may pump B into this conflict. Circle is a ritual spell.
command plant (p) - twists and grows existing vegetation according to the
caster’s will: a wall, a net, or whatever. The plant will not exceed twice its twice
in response to this spell, nor will it become animated.
countermagic (p) - when an attacking spell encounters the subject (person,
place, object) of a Countermagic, it will fail if the Brawn to power it is 2 or less.
Both attacker and defender may pump Brawn to alter the state of affairs.
dazzle (i) - target has -1d6 Q until he or she makes a W vs. 12 roll, but he or she
also has +2 Wits during that time.
glamor (p) - adds 1d6 C to subject of spell.
grow (p) - adds 1d6 + 3 Brawn to subject, which may not be a humanoid,
undead, demon, or avatar. The subject will visibly increase to between one-half
again and twice its usual size.
instant sword (p) - an ordinary sword of the caster’s choice is created.
purify (i) - removes poison, decay, or other impurities from any substance (will
not make an inedible substance edible, however).
stop poison (i) - instant antidote to any and all poison in the subject’s system.
store power (c) - adds the 2 Brawn spent to a storage pool, which appears as a
glowing nexus of energy (it may float or be bound into a staff, gem, etc); wizard
may then recover normally and have 2 Brawn to use at some point until the
spell’s duration is up. Store Power is a ritual spell.
summon avatar 1 (c) - brings a 2 point avatar of the caster’s choice (see
Avatars). An avatar may have to be befriended or placated, depending on type.
**summon beast 2 (c)** - brings a 2 point beast of the caster's choice, subject to the terrain (see Beasts). It will obey the summoner's commands, although it must be forced to continue to fight (C vs. C) if B or Q is reduced to a negative number.

**true way (i)** - the subject perceives the route (of several possible within eyesight) that affords the least immediate danger. Alternatively, True Way counteracts the effect of Trailtwister.

**Three white color points**

**calm elements (p)** - counteracts a natural or magical storm or eruption. Calm Elements is a ritual spell.

**holy armor (p)** - subject armor protects for an additional 1d6 BQ (roll when spell is cast) and it also provides a Countermagic for wearer without Brawn cost or adding color points.

**holy weapon (p)** - subject weapon has +1d6 BQ damage (roll when spell is cast); it also may act as an Absorb Spell for its wielder without Brawn cost or adding color points.

**inspire throng (p)** - adds 2d6 to subject's C when addressing a group of people, including increased volume for voice. The bonus only applies in terms of motivating them to act; it will not calm.

**link (p)** - allows caster and one other person, avatar, or beast to use each other's character points as bonuses at will; a given characteristic point may only be used by one character during a round.

**magic sink (p)** - creates a stationary, swirling magical well in the air; any magic cast near the Sink, including that of its caster, will cost 2 extra Brawn; prolonged spells currently running must have 2 Brawn pumped to them immediately or dissipate.

**preserve (p)** - protects subject from continuing harm or decay of any kind, with the exception of the process of aging for a living subject.

**restore undead (i)** - subject undead is restored to true death if the caster succeeds in a W vs. W contest (use Wits of the creature if it has any, not the caster); it or its controller may pump Brawn to resist. Undead with IQ 0 will only resist with pumped Brawn.

**spirit warrior (p)** - a glowing white semblance steps from the wizard's body and may act independently. Its B and Q are both +1 the wizard's, and its C is +3; its Wits score is equal to the wizard's. It has an armor score of 10 and Perfect Senses, and it may not be healed by magical or other means. It may be resorbed prior to the spell's duration with a W vs. W roll. If it is brought to 0 Brawn, it disappears and the wizard receives 2d6 BQ damage and must make a W vs. 12 roll to remain conscious.

**statue (p)** - given a specially prepared statue of clay or metal, the caster may animate it as a B 10, Q 5, armor 15 creature. Its Q is not reduced by damage. Although Statue is not a ritual spell, building the statue itself is a lengthy and expensive prospect.

**summon avatar 2 (c)** - brings a 3 point avatar of the caster's choice (see Avatars). An avatar may have to be befriended or placated, depending on its type.

**total cure (i)** - subject is cured of all disease and injury, and he or she also regrows missing or maimed body parts. The wizard must make a C vs. the
subject’s C + subject’s current nonwhite color points. If the wizard casts the spell on himself or herself, the Brawn will still be lost; if the wizard is doing so and his or her Brawn score is 3 or less away from death, casting the spell will be fatal. Total Cure is a ritual spell.

**vision** (i) - with a W vs. 12 roll (made secretly), the caster may ask the Game Master one yes-or-no question, which he or she must answer truthfully. Vision is a ritual spell.

**One black color point**

**animate undead** 1 (c) - depending on the state of the corpse it is cast on, this spell will animate it either as a skeleton or zombie (see Undead). A 1 color point undead will obey the summoner’s commands unquestioningly.

**confuse** (i) - target must make a W vs. 12 roll to act in any way; once roll is made, the spell has no further effect. The target’s first chance to make the roll is during the unopposed phase of the following turn.

**envenom** (p) - when target weapon damages a character, he or she must roll B vs. 12 or suffer 1d6 additional damage. It may also be applied to food, drink, or garments of any kind. Envenom may be detected with Perfect Senses, Ward, or a W vs. 15.

**itch** (p) - target must roll B vs 12 or sustain 1 damage to Q per physical action he or she takes.

**noxify** (i) - target organic substance becomes disgusting and unusable.

**paralyze** (i) - target must make a Q vs. 12 roll to move; once roll is made, the spell has no further effect. The target’s first chance to make the roll is during the unopposed phase of the following turn. The target has one less d6 for each extra Brawn the caster spends to cast Paralyze.

**semblance** (p) - subject looks like anything else of the caster’s choice; may be recognized by W vs. 15 roll or Perfect Senses.

**shadow cloud** (c) - extinguishes all light sources (except Light spell) in an area and confuses all senses (including magic sense) such that W has a -5 penalty for perceptive purposes. If someone in a Shadow Cloud attempts to move out of it, he or she must make a W vs. 12 roll or take a wrong turn, remaining in the affected area.

**stimulant** (p) - subject adds 1d6 BQ (e.g., if 4 is rolled, each characteristic gains 2), but at the end of the spell’s duration, he or she loses the bonus and also takes 2 BQ damage (ignores armor).

**summon demon** 1 (c) - brings a 1 point demon of the caster’s choice to serve the summoner (see Demons). It must be made to obey by a W vs. W roll, made once after it appears.

**web** (i) - target area is covered with sticky webs; everyone caught in the area must make a B vs. 12 roll to escape it.

**Two black color points**

**berserker** (p) - subject does not lose Q from damage, will neither all-out defend nor retreat, and must attack somebody or something else once a foe is defeated.

**blast** (i) - inflicts 2d6 BQ damage per 2 Brawn spent. The damaged area will have a characteristic blackened, fried look without being burned.
**cloud of hate** (p) - people or beasts within the Cloud of Hate will attack one another at random unless they make a W vs. 12 roll. The effect must be resisted each turn the character is in the Cloud.

**create fake object** (i) - creates an object (less than 20 lbs.) of the caster's choice that looks serviceable and even tests well, but will crumble when it is used.

**curse** (p) - subject has 2 reduced from target characteristic; Curse may be increased by paying more Brawn, 1 per point of reduction; alternatively, Curse counteracts a Bless of equal power or less.

**destroy object** (i) - target object (must be human-sized or smaller) is broken.

**dominate creature** (p) - adds bonus equal to Brawn spent for C vs. C roll to dominate a beast, even one summoned by another wizard.

**drug** (p) - subject loses 1d6 BQ; it will remain as true injury and have another 1d6 added to it unless he or she receives another Drug spell before the duration is up.

**infect** (i) - target is inflicted with a nonfatal, noncontagious disease that acts normally in all ways.

**mind rip** (i) - the caster may ask 1 question of the subject per 3 of the caster's W, which the subject must answer truthfully; also does 1d6 BQ damage which ignores armor.

**raise undead 2** (c) - given the correct requirements, this spell raises a 2 point undead of the caster's choice, given the appropriate materials (see Undead). It will obey commands commensurate with its nature without resisting, but must be dominated (C vs. W) to do otherwise. Raise Undead is a ritual spell.

**reflect spell** (i) - any spell cast upon the subject will rebound upon its caster, or upon any target the subject of Reflect Spell can perceive. Note that Reflect Spell will not work upon prolonged spells if cast during their duration.

**summon demon 2** (c) - brings a 2 point demon (see Demons). A demon requires a special deal of some kind, depending on its type.

**trailtwister** (p) - area affected must make a W vs. 12 roll or take the path (even going backwards) they did not plan to go.

**wall of flesh** (p) - given 1 or more corpses, creates a wall with strength equal to the bodies' combined Brawns. If damaged, it will regrow at a rate of 5 B per round. The bodies used may be stretched somewhat, such that the wall is about 5' by 5' per body.

**warp spell** (i) - turns a white spell cast by or upon the caster into a black spell (i.e., it confers black color points upon the caster); the Warped spell will still have its intended effect unless the caster of Warp Spell chooses to make a W vs. 12 roll, in which case it can be altered into a Curse.

**Three black color points**

**beast shape** (c) - a humanoid subject is transformed into a bestial form with B +3, Q +3, C 0, with armor 8. Its W is unchanged. It is naturally Berserk and gains an extra offense d6. The subject must make a W vs. 12 roll to regain normal form.

**deathswap** (p) - subject may function and fight normally until both Brawn and Quickness are reduced to their negatives, although all normal penalties apply. Each round, the subject gains 1 BQ back per each he or she inflicts upon another. Also, each hour he or she regenerates 1d6 BQ. If, at the end of the
spell’s duration, he or she is at negative B or Q or both, he or she may not be healed and dies. Deathswap is a ritual spell.

die (i) - Compare current Brawn of caster and subject; both characters lose exactly that much. This spell costs no Brawn unless it is blocked in some way or pumped.

lava eruption (i) - the ground bursts forth in a miniature (20' tall) volcano, with attendant effects as the Game Master decrees. Creatures or persons in the immediate area will have a chance based on Quickness to escape harm. Lava Eruption is a ritual spell.

pestilence (i) - infects a person, place, or object with a contagious disease of caster’s choice, preferably fatal. Pestilence is a ritual spell.

puppet (p, r) - the subject humanoid will obey the caster’s verbal orders if the caster wins a W vs. W contest for each order. Puppet is a ritual spell.

raise undead 3 (c) - raises a 3 point undead of the caster’s choice, given the appropriate materials (see Undead). It must be dominated (C vs. C) in order for it to obey the summoner. Raise Undead 3 is a ritual spell.

sacrifice (i) - the caster must kill a creature to cast this spell; 1/2 of the creature’s Brawn (round down) is stored just like Store Power. If the victim is an avatar or a person with more white color points than nonwhite, then his or her full Brawn is stored. Note that any amount of Sacrificed Brawn may be used for an enchantment if the caster loses 1 Brawn permanently. Thus it is possible to create powerful magical items for minimal Brawn loss.

storm (p) - raises a storm complete with darkness, rain, thunder, and lightning. If cast in an arid area, raises a sandstorm. Storm is a ritual spell.

summon demon 3 (c) - brings a 3 point demon of the caster’s choice (see Demons). Demons usually require a deal or special roll of some kind in order to do as the caster desires, depending on description. Summon Demon 3 is a ritual spell.

vampirize (i) - the target loses 1d6 Brawn as a physical injury and the caster gains 1/2 of this amount (round down). The stolen Brawn, unless it is used up by physical injury or casting magic, will dissipate at 1 per hour. This spell costs the caster no Brawn unless it is blocked in some way or pumped.
Part Three: Sourcebook

Places and Peoples

The land itself

The world in which Gray Magick is played is called simply "the world" or "Earth" by its peoples. There are three major types of environment there: the cloudlands called Amboriyon, which float high above the land and are reputedly practically paradise for the virtuous-minded; the scattered wastelands and pockets collectively called Rbaja (ur-BAH-juh), which are quite horrid and inhabited by all sorts of twisted, vicious creatures; and the Graylands, which constitute the gameboard for the great war of powers. The Graylands include a narrow ocean and the Crescent Sea, the Great Isles, the Wide Steppes, and several picturesquely named mountain ranges, forests, and riverways across two continents.

People and culture

Human realms of the Graylands include, across the narrow sea to the south, Tamaryon, a plains-and-rivers countryside used mostly for warfare between neighboring fiefdoms without any centralized authority; in the north, Famberge, a similarly fragmented and feudal land in the forested mountains, whose nominal ruler is simply whoever assassinated the son of the last one; and also in the north, Rolke, a new monarchy recently united from a state of affairs like that in Famberge. Each is divided into a bewildering array of provinces, duchies, and suchlike.

The dominant culture, as seen in the three main countries, is much like that of Normandy during the 10th and 11th centuries: barely centralized feudalism, with "knighthood" indicating privileged status but more associated with exploitation, brutality, and feuds than with honor or pageantry. An honorable person in the Graylands means somebody who will meet social obligations to those ranked lower than himself or herself and to weaker peers. This kind of behavior isn't common and is usually well appreciated.

Also, of course, across the Graylands, there are plenty of tribesmen, pirates, cults, and other small or uncivilized groups that recognize no higher government. One such group of some importance are the Pananthuri, a tribe or race of folk that inhabited the lands which are now Famberge and Rolke before the current, more widespread people moved in. On the southern continent, Tamaryon is accompanied by some wide steppes, which are home to fierce, mounted nomadic tribes.

Ethnicities in the Graylands are as follows. The most widespread race originated in the southern continent and is sort of a bronzy caucasian in coloring. The nomad tribes of that region are a subgroup which tend to be much darker of skin, hair, and eyes, but they are basically the same race. This group has spread over the northern continent, where they tend to be lighter of hair and eyes, and supplanted the indigenous people there, the Seolinthur, to populate Famberge and Rolke. The shy Pananthuri, tall, very pale, and distinctive looking with their extensive, swirling
tattoos, are regarded with a mixture of contempt and dread by the ignorant of the northern continent.

Languages in the Graylands follow ethnicity and regional dialect: the southern nomads, the Pananthuri, and the civilized peoples of north and south speak distinct and separate languages, and scholars know of an Old Tongue from which Pananthuri is apparently debased. Various areas divide these languages by accent and specialized vocabularies.

The monetary units of the Graylands begin with the shekel, ten of which make a penny, a hundred of which make a crown. However, the exchange ratio varies tremendously between locales and the quality of the minting, so sometimes using coinage creates more haggling than simple barter.

Magic and metaphysical conflict

Wizards can be found pretty much anywhere in the Graylands, and it is certain each is up to something, usually involving thwarting another’s plans. One of the mysteries of magic is whether Amboriyon and Rbaja are respectively ruled by actual personifications of the warring magics, and whether people with high tally scores are actually sworn to their fealty. It may be that the war is merely the outcome of so many scheming individual wizards. Few people visit either land and return to tell much about it.

Still, it seems rather clearcut: white magic is nice and good, and black magic is evil and bad. Comparing the Total Cure or Warding spells to Pestilence or Sacrifice is usually straightforward. In most places in the Graylands, any wizard’s power is respected, and white wizards can expect praise and black wizards can expect fear. Tales abound of avatars swooping down to visit from the clouds to right wrongs and smite evildoers, as well as of brutal sorties and raids from the wastes of Rbaja.

However, the new ruler of Rolke is King Vance, an earnest fellow who wrested control of the realm from warring nobles, themselves manipulated by competing white and black wizards. One of the principles by which he rules is to avoid falling too much under the sway of either Amboriyon or Rbaja, for whichever is ascendant in an area tends to draw the attention of the other and lead to cataclysm. His chief advisor in this matter is the wizard Grayflame, who beyond anyone’s comprehension has been practicing magic for decades without following either path.

King Vance has issued a widespread proclamation to expand the ranks of the Rolke nobility through fealty to himself and through deeds of merit, as opposed from deeds that gain color tallies. This revolutionary concept of Neutrality is causing quite a stir across the Graylands, and elsewhere. Young King Vance is about to find that Neutrality has its price.

Creatures

All creatures are accompanied by a point score: this determines how powerful the spell it takes to summon them must be. Note that a W or C score of 0 means
that the creature in question cannot be affected by the characteristic in question, unless specified otherwise elsewhere. Beasts are assigned a W of 6 to represent their ability to track, hide, and perceive.

BEASTS

The natural fauna of the Graylands is a lot like that of Europe before the Middle Ages: lots of small mammals, wolves, bear, deer, and plenty of birds from sparrow to hawk to pheasant. There are even still some mammoths, baluchitheria, and sabretooth cats about. The rarely-seen dragon of the Gray Lands is a cranky, vicious, greedy beast which sleeps most of the time and arouses only to cause mischief and carnage; it can fly and spit a dangerous venom. There are also troublesome ogres: large, hairy, bestial humanoids which delight in terrorizing out-of-the-way communities.

People of the Graylands are not very familiar with tropical climates and would be very surprised to see monkeys, anacondas, or other jungly creatures. Perhaps the largely unknown lands and islands to the west may hold such things.

small beast (1)
includes any natural creature smaller than a human, such as a hawk, boar, serpent, panther, monkey, wolf, etc. If summoned by a spell, the animal must be appropriate to the terrain the caster is in. It will have B 1d6 + 3, Q 1d6 + 5, W 6, C 1d6 + 1, Armor 6, as set by the Game Master per type of creature.

large beast (2)
includes any natural creature larger than a human, up to elephant or slightly larger size: horse, rhino, lion, alligator, dragon, etc. It will have B 2d6 + 10, Q 1d6 + 3, W 6, C 1d6 + 6, Armor 6 to 12, as set by the Game Master per type of creature.

AVATARS

unicorn (2)
B 1d6 + 6, Q 1d6 + 3, W 1d6 + 3, C 1d6 + 6, armor 8. A unicorn may Purify at will and it also has a continual Warding. Unless dominated by a C vs. C roll, it will attack anyone with black tallies, or with current black points greater than white.

pegasus (2)
B 1d6 + 6, Q 1d6 + 3, W 1d3, C 1d6 + 6, armor 10. A pegasus has a natural True Way and can of course fly. It must be befriended with a C vs. C roll, which must be repeated if the friend gains a black point in its presence.

lammasu (2)
A human-faced lion with eagle's wings, the lammasu has B 1d6 + 6, Q 1d6 + 3, W 1d6 + 9, C 1d6 + 6, armor 10. If some idiot attempts a C vs. C roll against it and fails, it will be angered and attack. It may prophesy for you by rolling its W vs. caster's C plus current white points, in which case the Game Master will provide you with an insightful rhyme. Whomever it speaks to at any time is affected as if by a Dazzle spell.
silver dragon (3)
B 2d6 + 6, Q 1d6 + 6, W 1d6 + 6, C 1d6 + 6, Armor 20. It has a free attack to lash with its tail at anyone behind them; a successful hit means the target is knocked down. It may fly and casts white spells as if it were a wizard. It may breathe pure white flame that also acts as a Dazzle spell, by spending 3 Brawn. Finally, a dragon may absolve a person of his or her current black points, turning them gray, by rolling its W vs. the caster's C plus his or her current black points. As its first act when summoned, a dragon rolls its C vs. the summoner's C plus his or her current nonwhite points. If this roll fails, it attacks the summoner!

valkyrie (3)
B 1d6 + 9, W 1d6 + 9, W 0, C 1d6 + 9, Armor 14. Valkyries always appear riding on a pegasus. They may provide the summoner and whoever he or she designates with Blessings, which will turn into permanent Curses unless they gain white color points within the Blessings' duration. Color points gained by casting spells do not count. Alternatively, they will fight, but only to aid people with white tallies or more white color points than black.

DEMONS

imp (1)
B 1d3 + 1, Q 1d6 + 3, W 1d6 + 1, C 0, Armor 4. An imp is a small, winged, grotesque humanoid that may donate its Brawn for its summoner's or master's magical use. It is also a handy scout or annoying distraction to a foe, even if they are sarcastic, snotty, mischievous little twerps.

nzagg (2)
B 1d6 + 6, Q 1d6 + 3, W 1d6, C 0, Armor 12. A vicious, brutish, ape/dog/boar thing with a tendency toward atrocity and sudden rage. With a W vs. W roll, it can be attuned to a target or object, either to rend or guard it; in fact, such a roll is necessary when it is summoned or it attacks the summoner.

nightmare (2)
B 1d3 + 9, Q 1d5 + 3, W 1d6 + 3, C 1d6 + 3, Armor 12. An apparently iron horse with flaming hooves which can gallop across any medium, including air, excepting across running water. It will rebel on a 5 or 6 on a 1d6 roll on nearly every order, in which case the summoner must make a C vs. C roll to control it. If it successfully rebels, it will attempt to toss whoever is riding it and go for a little run and a little mayhem, eventually returning to its summoner.

blood angel (3)
B 1d6 + 5, Q 1d6 + 6, W 1d6 + 3, C 1d6 + 9, Armor 8. A beautiful, dark, winged being which attacks targets of C 5 or lower with a physical, venomous clawing (as per the Envenom spell), but prefers to go for more attractive victims. These it attacks with the equivalent of a Paralyze spell and then drains 2 BQ per round if it has the leisure to do so. If such a victim is not available or explicitly promised when the blood angel is summoned, it will resist attempts to control it and attack the summoner.
yoggoth (3)
B 1d6 per creature sacrificed in its summoning (using the Sacrifice spell), Q 1d6 + 2, W 1d3, C 0, Armor 16. It appears as a cloud with many tooth-filled maws and dangling tentacles; its horrifying appearance will overcome opponents as per the Confuse spell unless they roll W vs. 12. It seizes a victim on a successful attack (doing normal damage) and the next round may attempt to swallow him or her whole with a B vs. B contest. A yoggoth resists being banished at W+5.

chaos dancer (3)
B 1d3 + 9, Q 1d3 + 9, W 1d6 + 3, C 1d6 + 6, Armor 16. Appearing as a 9' tall, beautiful female warrior with crazy, gleeful, berserk features, it will begin to fight as soon as it is summoned, without a control roll, instantly perceiving who is on which side. It will never allocate more points to defense then offense. Its combat companions will act as if Berserk unless they make a roll of W vs. its C. Beginning with its first round, it will switch sides on a 5 or 6 on a 1d6 roll, unless the summoner makes a W vs. W roll. Controlling the dancer in this way is a full action for that round.

UNDEAD

zombie (1)
To raise a zombie, the wizard needs a fairly fresh, fairly whole corpse. A zombie is a walking corpse, but it is no pushover. It has B and Q of the person when he or she was alive, W 0 and C 0. It has an Armor score of 10. It takes damage only to its Brawn, not its Quickness, and it will fight until hacked apart (negative its original Brawn). It will also reknit its wounds at 1 Brawn per 5 rounds until it is destroyed. It has very little memory of its previous life and obeys its summoner's or master's commands unquestioningly. The Game Master should enjoy describing its self-healing abilities, as zombies are not terribly concerned about conforming precisely to the anatomical arrangement they had prior to being wounded.

skeleton (1)
A skeleton should be treated in every way as a zombie, including regeneration, except that it is more fragile: it will shatter at Brawn 0. To raise a skeleton, the wizard needs to have one handy.

wraith (2)
A wraith is not created by magic; it is created by a dying person's C vs. 15 roll as he or she swears a mighty, passionate oath. It is especially appropriate if the character has sworn fealty but has not yet completed the sworn task, in which case his or her C, for purposes of this roll, is raised by the number of color points gained by swearing. The effect is to allow the spirit to linger in hopes of fulfilling the oath. It has the W and C of the person while alive, and appears as an idealized, translucent version of the person; it is tied to a person, place, or object. If denied, mocked, or defied, it becomes a B 1d6 + 6, Q 1d6 + 6, W 0, C 0, armor 20 thing intent on revenge and destruction. A Raise Wraith spell will manifest it even against its will, and it may prophesy for the caster, if he or she makes a W vs. W roll, with an insightful rhyme.

ghoul (2)
A ghoul must be raised from a fairly fresh, fairly whole corpse. It has the B + 1 and Q + 1 of the person when he or she was alive, W 1d3, C 0. A ghoul may attack at a distance with its chilling howl, which matches its B vs. the target’s W. If the target is affected, he or she loses 1/2 the ghoul’s Brawn (round down) to Quickness. A target may only be affected by one ghoul’s howl at a time. Ghouls have an armor score of 8 and suffer BQ damage normally, and they regenerate as do skeletons and zombies. Also, they will begin to devour helpless or dead opponents unless commanded otherwise.

**lich (3)**
A lich must be raised from the body (in any condition) or the grave of a wizard. Its B is twice that of the wizard’s when he or she was alive, and all other scores are the same as when the wizard was alive. If brought to the negative of its Brawn value, it will disperse but will re-form at 1d6 Brawn per day. Unlike other undead, a lich must be commanded in a W vs. W contest to obey for every command it receives; otherwise it acts as it chooses. A lich may cast any black spell normally, but may only cast white magic along with a Warp Spell. A lich may well cast Raise Lich upon itself, sacrificing the Brawn in order to maintain its existence indefinitely, unless commanded otherwise.
CORRECTED EXAMPLE

Offense, defense, and rolls
Each allocates bonuses, from a base of +Q for both offense and defense. The Baron starts even with +5 for both, but Charu is more bloodthirsty and allocates +12 offense and +2 defense.

Version 1
Each rolls 2d6; the Baron’s total is 5 and Charu’s is 10 (!).
- The Baron’s offense = 10 vs. Charu’s defense = 12; Charu doesn’t even need his off-hand axe to block.
- Charu’s offense = 22 vs. the Baron’s defense = 10, hitting with a difference of 12 points. Adding Charu’s Brawn 6 and the +1 bonus for his axe gives a BQ total of 19 points.

The Baron’s armor stops 10 points, for 9 remaining. 4 come off the Baron’s Brawn, reducing it to 1. 5 come off the Baron’s Quickness, reducing it to 1 as well. He is effectively out on his feet, barely able to fight. Given a strong advantage in the rolls, Charu’s nearly total emphasis on attack has paid off.

Version 2
Let’s try that again with the opposite rolls, with the Baron rolling 10 and Charu 5.
- The Baron’s offense = 15 vs. Charu’s defense = 7, hitting with a difference of 8 points. Adding the Baron’s Brawn 5 gives a BQ total of 13.
- Charu’s offense = 17 vs. the Baron’s defense = 15, hitting with a difference of 2 points. Adding Charu’s Brawn 6 and +1 bonus for his axe gives a BQ total of 9 points.

Charu’s armor stops 7 points, and his off-hand axe stops 1d6 more, in this case 2, so he takes 4 BQ damage. 2 come off his Brawn, reducing it to 4. 2 come off his Quickness, reducing it to 6. The Baron’s armor stops 10 points, exceeding the BQ of 9, so he takes no damage. Given a strong advantage in the rolls, the Baron’s balanced tactic has whittled away some of Charu’s starting advantage.

Situational bonus die
The phrase “in a fair fight” was inserted in order to focus on offense and defense. However, as I now see it, a situational bonus die ought to be applied no matter what, even on both sides if applicable – but never not applied.

So, that means a lot more needs to be known about the circumstances. They’re on a wide forest road, with neither holding the high ground. One guy in mail and helm, with a sword; the other guy in lighter armor, with a short axe in either hand. Call me biased, but I think the Baron gets the bonus die. So let’s try the outcomes again, given a bonus die roll of 3.

For the first version, where the Baron’s roll is 5 and Charu’s is 10:
- The Baron’s offense = 13 vs. Charu’s defense = 12. This turns out differently; Charu is hit for 1 + 5 = 6 BQ.
- Charu’s offense = 22 vs. the Baron’s defense = 13, hitting with a difference of 9 points. Adding Charu’s Brawn 6 and the +1 bonus for his axe gives a BQ total of 16 points.

Charu’s armor stops 7 points, but if we wanted, it probably would be more fun to have him block some of it with his off-hand axe (one-die roll) before getting that far.
The Baron’s armor stops 10 points, for 6 remaining. 3 come off the Baron’s Brawn, reducing it to 2. 3 come off the Baron’s Quickness, reducing it to 3. He’s hit pretty bad.

For the second version, with the opposite rolls, with the Baron rolling 10 and Charu 5:

- The Baron’s offense = 18 vs. Charu’s defense = 7, hitting with a difference of 11 points. Adding the Baron’s Brawn 5 gives a BQ total of 16.
- Charu’s offense = 17 vs. the Baron’s defense = 18, ineffective.

Charu’s armor stops 7 points, and his off-hand axe stops 1d6 more, in this case 2, so he takes 7 BQ damage. 3 come off his Brawn, reducing it to 3. 4 come off his Quickness, reducing it to 4. The bonus die clearly made a big difference, as in this case, the Baron ends up clearly in the advantage.