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PANGENRE RPG

Magic™

Release 1.00

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Table of Contents

| | | | |
|--|----|---------------------------------|-----|
| TABLE OF CONTENTS | 2 | Effect | 53 |
| MAGIC (BASICS) | 3 | Critical | 55 |
| Yo-Ho-Ho, It's Magic! | 3 | Cooldowns | 55 |
| Two Magic Models | 3 | Variants | 55 |
| High Magic Model | 3 | Scaling | 56 |
| Low-Magic Model | 3 | Restrictions | 56 |
| Mix and Match Magic Models | 4 | Skill Synergy | 56 |
| Magic Genres | 4 | Spell Synergy | 56 |
| GENERAL MAGIC RULES | 5 | Defenses | 56 |
| Mana | 5 | Notes | 56 |
| Your Mana Pool | 5 | SPELL INDEX | 57 |
| Using Mana | 5 | HIGH MAGIC SPELL LISTS | 61 |
| Regaining Mana | 6 | Arcane Spells by Rank | 61 |
| Magical Auras | 6 | Arcane Spells by Rank/School | 62 |
| Bringing Back the Dead | 6 | Arcane Spells by School/Rank | 65 |
| Resistances | 7 | Divine Spells by Rank | 67 |
| Resistance Checks | 7 | Divine Domains | 69 |
| Multiple Resistances | 7 | Sorcery Spells | 74 |
| Energy Resistance | 7 | Psionic Powers List | 76 |
| Physical Resistance | 7 | Alchemy Spells | 76 |
| Psionic Resistance | 8 | SPELLS (A) | 77 |
| Spell Resistance | 8 | SPELLS (B) | 97 |
| DIVINE ENTITIES | 11 | SPELLS (C) | 109 |
| Religions | 11 | SPELLS (D) | 129 |
| Divine Entity Template | 11 | SPELLS (E) | 149 |
| Divine Entities in your Game | 11 | SPELLS (F) | 157 |
| Origins of Divine Entities | 12 | SPELLS (G) | 171 |
| Types of Divine Entities | 12 | SPELLS (H) | 181 |
| Divine Entity Examples | 13 | SPELLS (I) | 189 |
| HIGH MAGIC SKILLS | 17 | SPELLS (K) | 197 |
| Spell Casting Skills | 17 | SPELLS (L) | 199 |
| Variant Spell Casting Skills | 17 | SPELLS (M) | 203 |
| Non-Spell Casting Skills | 23 | SPELLS (N) | 219 |
| LOW MAGIC SKILLS | 29 | SPELLS (O) | 221 |
| Using Low Magic Skills with High Magic | 29 | SPELLS (P) | 223 |
| SPELLS (BASICS) | 45 | SPELLS (Q) | 237 |
| What is a "Spell?" | 45 | SPELLS (R) | 239 |
| Attack Spells | 45 | SPELLS (S) | 251 |
| Casting Spells | 45 | SPELLS (T) | 275 |
| How to Cast Spells | 45 | SPELLS (U) | 289 |
| Casting Check Modifiers | 46 | SPELLS (V) | 293 |
| Other Considerations | 46 | SPELLS (W) | 295 |
| Counterspells | 47 | SPELLS (Z) | 307 |
| Spell Descriptions | 47 | BASIC MAGIC ITEMS | 309 |
| Name | 47 | Single-Use Items | 309 |
| Rank | 47 | Alchemical Items | 310 |
| High Skills | 47 | Craft Alchemical Item | 310 |
| Low Skills | 47 | OPEN GAME SPELL CHANGES | 313 |
| School | 48 | Removed Spells | 313 |
| Domains | 48 | Merged Spells | 314 |
| Type | 49 | Split Spells | 315 |
| Cast Time | 52 | Renamed Spells | 315 |
| Duration | 52 | New Spells | 316 |
| Delivery | 53 | OPEN GAME LICENSE NOTICE | 331 |

Magic (Basics)

Magic can enhance your campaigns by introducing supernatural elements to otherwise mundane settings. The use of any kind of magic is at the sole discretion of your GM. The GM may opt to exclude some kinds of magic.

Example: In a science-fiction campaign, the GM might only allow skills and spells that are tagged as “psionic.”

Pangenre RPG Magic is different from the standard Open Game magic system in many ways. The main difference is that magic usage in Pangenre is governed by skills (instead of character class) in the same way as mundane tasks.

Little bookkeeping is required for Pangenre Magic. You only need to keep track of whether you are trained in the employment of magic and whether you have used up your ability to cast in any given day (your mana).

Implications for Open Game Characters

If you wish to convert a character class from the Open Game rules to Pangenre, select a set of skills that cover the same abilities that were once granted by virtue of having a class level. The chapter on converting from Open Games in the *Pangenre RPG Core Rules* has more details.

Example: A “paladin” class character from Open Game rules might have Melee Combat, Armor, Diplomacy, and Divine Blessing (Low Magic) or Divine Magic (High Magic) as Pangenre skills.

Yo-Ho-Ho, It’s Magic!

The in-game effects of different types of magic skills are identical, regardless of their source. It doesn’t matter whether your abilities come from your attunement to nature, a divine origin, from diligent, wizardly study, or from eating a can of spinach. The rules work the same.

What is Magic, Exactly?

Any supernatural or preternatural effect is considered to be “magic.” This applies to actual magic, psionics, super-powers, or any other rationalization for how your magic comes about.

Two Magic Models

The Pangenre RPG gives players two different magic models to use with your games: High Magic and Low Magic. Both models use the Pangenre RPG skill system. The differences are detailed below.

High Magic Model

The high magic system model is for games where magic is both abundant and powerful, such as in traditional Open Game settings. If you want to use this model, allow your players and NPCs to choose skills from the High Magic Skills chapter. Low magic skills are still available.

High Magic Examples

“Vanilla” *Dungeons & Dragons* is the best example to cite to explain the high-magic model. Magic use is common, and individual characters can wield a wide-variety of powers.

Low-Magic Model

A low magic system model is for games where magic is rare and less powerful than in typical Open Game settings. If you want to use this model, allow your players and NPCs to pick skills from the Low Magic Skills chapter, but not from the High Magic Skills chapter.

Low-Magic Examples

Examples of media that use the low magic model include television shows such as the superhero vehicle *Heroes*, wherein most individual characters have single magic “skills” and the anime show *Witch Hunter Robin* which mixes arcane magic, psionics, and super-powers, and individual characters have one special power.

Mix and Match Magic Models

It is possible for GMs to mix and match the skills from both systems, but high magic skills tend to be more powerful than low magic, and they may not be inherently balanced. Your GM should adopt the magic model(s) best suited to his or her game.

Example: In one of our playtest campaigns, the GM allowed one particular race of creatures, the antagonists in the game, access to the High Magic skills, while the players were restricted to using the Low Magic skills.

Using Low Magic Skills with High Magic

Your GM has sole discretion in allowing or disallowing specific low magic skills in their high magic campaigns. Some low magic skills can compliment high magic, and are noted as “High Magic Complimentary” in their title information. The following low magic skills compliment high magic:

Animal Mastery, Ki Magic, Spell Resistance, Temporal Cognition, and Wild Shape.

Any non-complimentary skills are not marked as High Magic Complimentary. Their functionality overlaps the more powerful high magic.

Example: The pregenerated character, Avril Moonglade, who is intended to mimic an Open Game “Druid” character archetype, uses both High Magic (Divine Magic) and Low Magic (Wild Shape) skills.

Magic Genres

There are four basic genres of magic: arcane magic, divine magic, psionic powers, and superpowers.

Arcane Magic

Arcane magic comes from the study of the “art and science” of magic.

If you want to add arcane magic to your game, use the following guidelines:

- Allow the use of skills in the [Arcane] genre.
- Arcane magic skills usually have Intelligence as their key ability.

- Armor penalties apply to Arcane spell casting.

Divine Magic

Divine magic comes from external sources, such as deities, or perhaps just from powerful beings, or from nature itself.

If you want to add divine magic to your game, use the following guidelines:

- Allow the use of skills in the [Divine] genre.
- Divine skills usually have either Charisma or Willpower as their key ability.

Psionic Powers

Psionics, also known as “psychic powers,” derive from a character’s mastery of their mind over their environment. They are a staple of the science-fiction, and frequently, the horror genre. Telepathy, mental combat, and psychic powers—psionics is a catchall word that describes special mental abilities. Psionics are best duplicated by using the low magic skill model.

If you want to add psionic powers to your game, use the following guidelines:

- Allow the use of skills in the [Psionic] genre.
- Psionic power skills usually have Willpower as their key ability.

Superpowers

A superpower is an ability that a character possesses which does not rely on external sources for its power. Comic-style superheroes might have high-powered skills and abilities.

If you want to add superpowers to your game, use the following guidelines:

- Allow skills in the [Supernatural] genre.
- Superpowers do not require casting checks, however, they use mana.
- Superpowers are treated as skills that should scale in power with higher ranks.

General Magic Rules

Common Law Magic

Miriwen said, "These *Endure Elements* spells should protect us from the heat."

Tark asked, "Why do you have to cast it so often."

"Because the Laws of Magic say I do." Miriwen sighed, "I intensely dislike the way the Laws of Magic function."

"What's wrong with them?" Tark asked, furtively rolling his eyes.

"Well, to begin with, yadda yadda yadda yadda! And blah, blah, blah, blah!"

"Is that all?" Tark asked, not having really paid attention to Miriwen's soliloquy. He only wanted her to think he was listening to avoid hurting her feelings. and to make the time pass by more quickly as they walked onward.

Miriwen began to express ever greater frustration with the physics that formed the Laws of Magic as she continued, "Furthermore, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah!"

"Tell me why you think that," Tark prodded. Anything to keep the lady occupied.

"Oh, do NOT get me started. Yadda, yadda, yadda!"

"You don't like it, then?"

"It is old, clunky, unbalanced, yadda, yadda, yadda."

"Why don't you invent your own Laws of Magic?"

Miriwen sighed, "Because everyone else still uses the current laws..."

Mana

Mana is a generic term for the mystical forces that power your supernatural abilities. It can refer to divine power, mental power, magical power, whatever term you wish to apply.

Your Mana Pool

Your maximum mana, or "mana pool," is equal to your Willpower ability score. Even if you have more than one supernatural skill or ability, you only have a single mana pool.

If your mana pool reaches zero (i.e., you use all of your mana), you may not cast spells or use any supernatural abilities that rely on mana until your mana pool is once again a positive number.

Increasing Willpower

Whenever your Willpower score increases, your mana pool does not automatically increase along with it. See Regaining Mana, below, for more details on how to recover mana.

Example: While at full mana (12), Miriwen casts a *Boost Willpower* spell upon herself, increasing her Willpower score from 12 to 14. Her mana pool remains at 12 until she can regain the difference.

Using Mana

You can use mana either through spell casting or through using some supernatural abilities.

Supernatural Ability Mana Use

Any time a supernatural ability requires you to use mana, you simply expend one of your available mana points. The particular skill or ability will mention whether or not it uses mana.

Spell Casting Mana Use

If your natural casting check roll equals or exceeds the DC you need to cast the spell, you do not use mana on that attempt. If your natural roll is less than the DC, you use one mana point.

Example: Miriwen casts a *Read Magic* spell (DC 11). If her unmodified casting check roll is an 11 or higher, she does not use any mana. Otherwise, she will use one mana point.

Interrupted Spell Casting and Mana Use

If you are interrupted mid-cast by some effect (being stunned or similar effect), you do not use any mana. Likewise, if you voluntarily interrupt your spell casting before your spell is complete (possible if you are casting a full-round or longer spell), you do not use mana.

Regaining Mana

There is more than one way to regain mana.

Regaining Mana by Resting

If you have an opportunity to get 8 hours of uninterrupted rest, all of your mana will be restored. If you are interrupted, you can still regain up to half of your maximum mana at the end of the rest period, provided you can still rest for half the time.

Example: Miriwen has 12 Mana. She uses 9 mana in a battle. Later, she tries to rest for 8 hours, but is interrupted in the middle by a procession of obnoxious, wandering minstrels. At the end of 8 hours, Miriwen regains 6 mana (half of her maximum), bringing her available mana to 9 (3+6).

Most characters may only rest once in a 24-hour period, unless the GM allows otherwise.

GM Note: If you do not enforce this restriction on resting, your players will “chain rest” at every opportunity to keep their mana topped-off, which will make for a boring game session.

Regaining Mana by Item Use

Some magical (or even technological) items may allow you to regain mana.

Magical Auras

All magical effects emit an aura. More powerful magic gives off brighter auras. Magical areas, multiple types of magic, or strong local magical emanations may distort or conceal weaker auras.

Creatures that have been summoned from other planes of existence, such as those of the elemental creature type, are not inherently magical, but the

conjunction spell that brought them forth will display an aura.

Aura Strength

An aura's vibrance depends on the spell's rank, the creature's size, or the item's power. If an aura falls into more than one strength category, the strongest of the two is detectable.

Lingering Aura

An aura lingers after its original source dissipates (for spells) or is destroyed (for magic items). If you cast a *Detect Magic* spell and direct it at such a location, the spell indicates an aura strength of dim (even weaker than a faint aura).

Table: Lingering Aura

| Aura Strength | Creature Size | Power/Rank | Duration |
|---------------|------------------|------------|------------|
| Faint | Tiny or lower | 1-3 | 1 minute |
| Moderate | Small to Large | 4-6 | 10 minutes |
| Strong | Huge to Gigantic | 7-9 | 1 hour |
| Overwhelming | > Gigantic | 10+ | 1 day |

Bringing Back the Dead

Some magic has the power to restore slain characters to life. The process of returning a dead creature to life is generally known as revivification.

Any creature brought back to life usually loses 1 point of Constitution. This Constitution loss cannot be repaired by any mortal means, even *Wish* or *Miracle* spells. A character whose Constitution would be reduced to 0 cannot be revived.

Declining Revivification

A soul cannot be returned to life if it does not wish to be. A soul knows the name, alignment (if in use), and patron entity (if any) of the character attempting to revive it and may refuse to return on that basis.

Preventing Revivification

Enemies can take steps to make it more difficult for a character to be returned from the dead.