

TRICKERION

THE ROLE-PLAYING GAME



QUICKSTART GUIDE





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A role-playing game based in *Trickerion: Legends of Illusion* by Richard Amman and Viktor Peter, published by Mindclash Games

for the ESTIRPE game system

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THE · MAGNUS · PANTHEON ·

Imagine you are a magician capable of astonishing feats, of dazzling the most discerning crowds in the world's largest theater. Imagine a city where life revolves around magic.

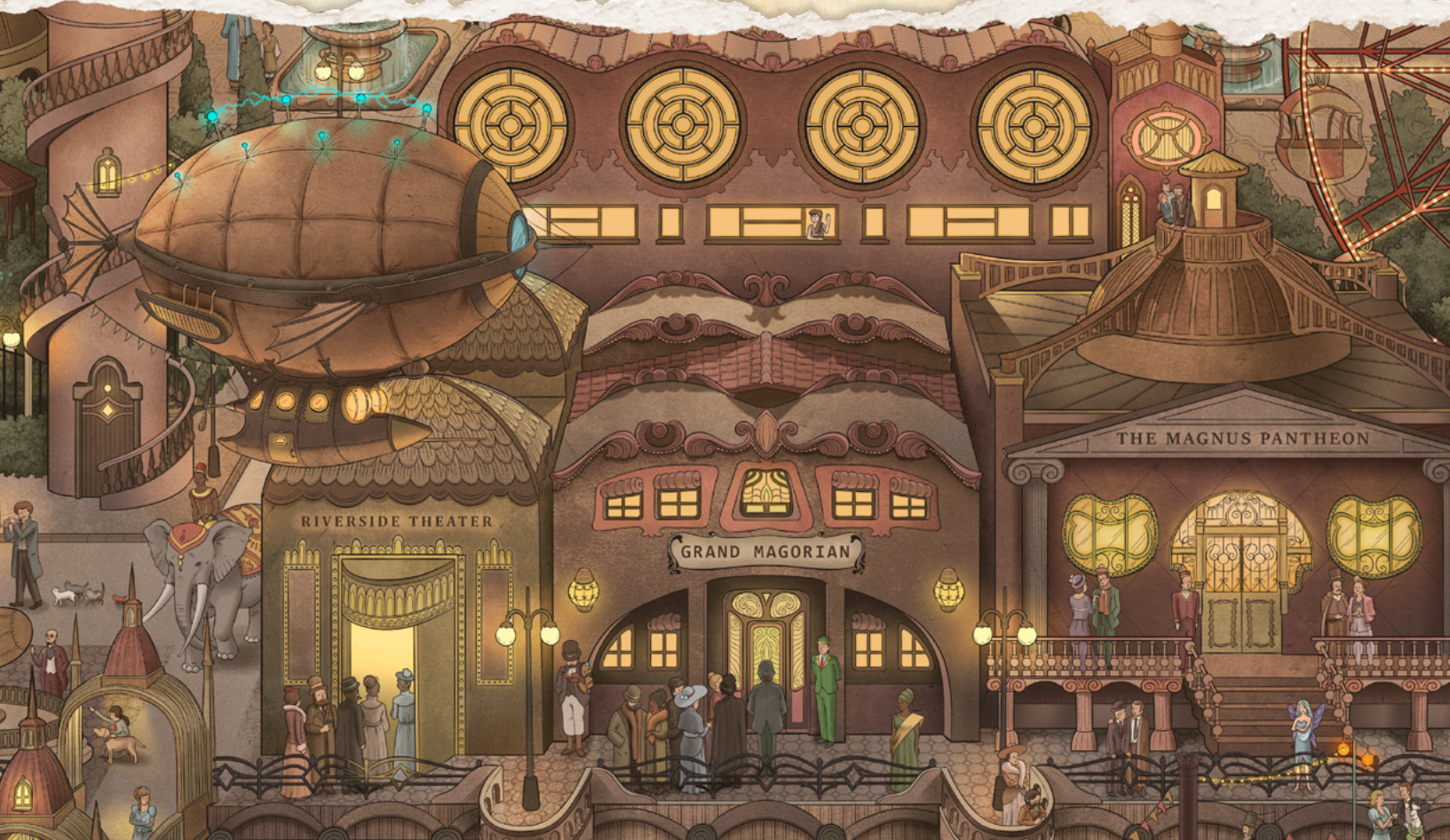
You are in Magoria, the Capital of Illusion. A place where magic not only shines on stage, but permeates every corner of the city and its people. A place that is home to a mysterious stone, the Trickerion, capable of endowing its possessor with unknown powers. And where many are willing to do whatever it takes to unlock its secrets and climb to the pinnacle of fame and power... including you and your company of magicians.

Stop imagining. Enter Magoria. Experience Trickerion.

THE NEW GOLDEN AGE OF MAGIC

I am a great admirer of life. Why? Because everything in it is magical. Don't you see? The very life that surrounds us is full of mystery and magic. Yet few people have the courage it takes to make the sacrifices to perceive it. Why not explore its secrets? Why not harness its mysteries? Another reality is possible, and it can be sublime.

Dahlgard the Magnificent, at the opening performance for the Amber Festival, Magoria's first Grand Festival of Illusion



WHAT IS TRICKERION, THE ROLE-PLAYING GAME?

Trickerion, the role-playing game, is a tabletop role-playing game set in a clockpunk Victorian world steeped in magic, whose central themes are illusions and the intricate contraptions and subtle magic needed to produce them.

Developed by Shadowlands Games, it is based on the hit board game *Trickerion — Legends of Illusion*, designed by Viktor Péter and Richárd Ámann and released by Mindclash Games in 2015.

In this game, players are apprentice illusionist magicians in search of fame and glory in the city of Magoria, the Capital of Illusion, with the ultimate goal of becoming masters of their craft.

To prepare the tricks for their performances and deepen their knowledge of illusion magic, they will have to navigate a cutthroat world, riven by factions and rife with shady characters intent on monopolizing the secrets of magic.

A BIT OF HISTORY

Nearly a century ago, under the patronage of Dahlgaard the Magnificent, the greatest illusionist the world has ever known, the city of Magoria flourished with the development of a new philosophy, enthralled by the secrets of life, and a technological revolution driven by the fantastical devices built by the companies of magicians for their performances. But the golden age of the Capital of Illusion came to a sudden end when, one day, Dahlgaard mysteriously disappeared.

Years later, Dahlgaard returned to Magoria to reveal the secret of his Trickerion Stone, which grants otherworldly powers to whoever possesses it. He then announced a Great Duel, to be held among the city's preeminent magicians. The victor would inherit the stone and his legacy to lead Magoria back to glory.

Trickerion, the role-playing game is set in the Age of the Heir, eighteen years after the Great Duel and the second and final disappearance of Dahlgaard the Magnificent.

MAGORIA, CAPITAL OF ILLUSION

Magoria is a thriving city in the central region of the Old Continent.

Its ports, canals, and streets sprawl in all directions across a sweeping, fertile plane. While the differences between some of the city's districts are virtually imperceptible, others are marked by stark contrasts in both the architecture and the people who live there. This is due to the decades of prosperity that Magoria has enjoyed thanks to the influence (direct or otherwise) of the great master magicians.

MAIN DISTRICTS OF MAGORIA

- ☞ **Downtown.** The Downtown district contains part of Magoria's oldest and most emblematic quarter. Majestic open spaces and elegant mansions alternate with soaring Gothic facades along Dahlgaard's Grand Avenue. In the vast Magoria Square, aspiring magicians gather to show off their skills by the Fountain of Illusion. Several of the city's most important buildings are located near this square, including the imposing Gothic-style Bank of Magoria and the deliciously baroque Dahlgaard Academy.
- ☞ **Riverside.** Also known as the "Magic Bank," this district is home to the city's main theaters, including the Riverside Theater, the Grand Magorian, and the Magnus Pantheon.
- ☞ **Port of Magoria.** Across the water from Riverside, on the so-called "World Bank," this massive river port welcomes all kinds of vessels laden with goods and visitors, regardless of their draft, thanks to an ingenious lock system.
- ☞ **Market.** Near the port and brimming with stalls and shops, it offers everything from food to raw materials to exotic components imported from the ends of the earth by land, sea, and sometimes air. Here you can find everything a magician might need, including the highly prized secret components required for certain tricks. (You can always head to the offices of the Wind Messengers or the Continental Imports Company to strike a deal.)



☞ **Dark Alley.** Opposite the port, stretching from the “Small Port Bank” to the factories in the city outskirts in the southwest, is the ancient and inscrutable Dark Alley district. Once a small slum home to a motley population of outcasts and eccentrics, today it has the riotous energy and entity of a district that operates by its own rules; even the authorities avoid it as much as they can. Its houses have sprung up one on top of the next, resulting in a unique jumble of architectures along the damp and narrow streets, interrupted by the occasional minor branch or forgotten canal of the Magor River.

☞ **Other areas:** Magoria is vast, full of curious places, streets that conceal legends, and plots and intrigue that spill out beyond the walls of its homes. In the *Trickerion, the role-playing game* Core Rulebook, you will find more information on the districts listed here and many other locations, such as the White Thread Industries, the foundries, the Twisted Clockmakers’ factories, the Glass Gardens and Endless Maze, the underground theaters, the House of Forbidden Magic, Illusion Boulevard and its workshops for magicians, or the Perpetual Island orphanage, among others.

THE PEOPLES OF MAGORIA

In addition to the descendants of those who came down from the Magorian plains, today the inhabitants of the Capital of Illusion are a veritable melting pot of peoples and cultures who come to the city from all over the world. Everyone is influenced to some degree by the magicians’ occult knowledge, from the reluctant aristocrats hoping to modernize or the merchant class expanding its influence through their business dealings to the artisans and engineers who devise all manner of items based on the magicians’ tricks, the factory workers who find escape from their daily drudgery in the street theaters, or the city’s most destitute denizens, who are simply seeking other ways to get by. Most of the city’s inhabitants live either bedazzled by the impossible feats or trapped by their shadows.

GROUPS AND FACTIONS

In addition to the aforementioned social strata, there are other groups defined by their origins, ideals, and goals. Everywhere you look, there are partnerships, alliances, and groups joining forces to prosper. Thus, Dahlgaard’s Heir and the Bankers’ Group jockey for influence, while the Archduke of Magoria and his fellow nobles look on with apparent amusement, even as they secretly fret about the growing bourgeois dominance of finance and what the Heir might be whispering into the open ears of the Parliamentary Council.

The Clockmakers’ Guild often boasts of its precision and the city’s growing dependence on its creations, while the League of Engineers steadily improves the designs of its steam-powered machines. Meanwhile, thanks to their (not so) veiled control of various areas of the city, the master magicians operate independently and alone, although they accept the mediation of the rector of Dahlgaard Academy. He represents the interests of Dahlgaard’s legacy in the teaching and management of illusionist knowledge, usually clashing with the authority of the Heir himself.

In Dark Alley, things only grow more complex. Its narrow streets and cramped chaotic spaces have their own take on the laws of Magoria, as well as their own laws. Organized groups of smugglers, such as the Silver Smile, vie for control of illicit imports with the Purple Butterflies, a band of young thieves capable of sneaking in where no one else can. The Sleeping Dragon prefers to stake out a middle ground with pacts and precautions, while lashing out with its tail from the murky depths of Small Port, where it controls the trade in secrets. Even here, there is theater. The Corner of Lost Souls offers perilous and macabre shows featuring some of the forbidden tricks. Try as they might, neither the Magoria Entertainment Association nor the city guard have proven able to shut them down.

This is just a small taste of what you will find in the *Trickerion, the role-playing game* Core Rulebook and its supplements.

MAGORIAN TECHNOLOGY

A century ago, technology on the Old Continent was driven by steam, steel, and gunpowder. Dahlgaard ushered in the golden age of magic. His patronage transformed Magoria: talent flocked to the city from all across the world, and with it came new and unusual uses for the intriguing engineering used in illusion tricks, sometimes borrowed, other times stolen: enhanced steam engines, carriages and vehicles powered by a blend of clockwork machinery and unknown fuels, underwater vessels and sky gliders. It was just the start.

In this Technological Dawn, the use of a strictly confidential energy (studied and controlled by the magicians) has recently enabled a technology capable of producing autonomous mechanical prostheses, automata that respond to their environment, turbines capable of controlling lightning, and even devices that can tap into the psyche of anyone who dares to look at them.

Dahlgaard’s unknown heir holds the key to it all: the Trickerion Stone.



ILLUSION AND SCHOOLS OF MAGIC

Magicians are made of special stuff. Few people have the self-sacrificing dedication it takes to develop secret talents and blaze a trail in such a fiercely contested world, yet they must also prove that they have special qualities. Many try, but most fall short: they simply do not have that special *je ne sais quoi* that allows them to evolve.

Illusion and magicians' skills have been part of the culture, life, and legends of societies around the world. But few can truly call themselves magicians, and their wonders are a secret art, admired and respected, even as they inspire distrust and fear for the use that some might make of them.

Aspiring magicians learn the secrets of magic and master their tricks in the Schools of Magic, which they access through a scholarship from Dahlgaard Academy, after apprenticing to a magician, or by other means.

But beware. This is a complicated world, and the passions it unleashes often run harsh and petty. In addition to the *garden-variety* mysteries, deception, sabotage, and betrayals, some use their art in even more unethical ways, benefiting themselves personally to amass resources and power.

SCHOOLS OF MAGIC

This starter guide offers information on the four main Schools of Magic, but they are not the only ones.



SPIRITUAL

Magicians from this school walk the ways of the spirit and claim to be able to see the unseen. They can pick the minds of their targets, see into the Beyond, and even contact the souls of the dead. They also have powers of persuasion and can discern people's intentions and influence them to a remarkable degree.

Their skills allow them to perceive and connect details to unlock others' secrets, pulling the strings of the unseen world to make it seem as if the occult obeys their will.

This includes tricks such as *Mind Reading* and *Window to the Otherworld*.



ESCAPE

Escape artists develop bodily control, stamina, and the ability to free themselves from even the most impossible bonds. They can hold their breath, remain level-headed in such life-threatening situations as being surrounded by flames, and quickly home in on the weak points of materials such as steel, locks, and ropes.

This combination of skills makes them tricky to catch and even trickier to hold on to, and their endurance can sometimes seem superhuman.

Examples of tricks from this school include *Water Tank Escape* and *Burning Mummy*.



MECHANICAL

Mechanical magicians develop knowledge and skills related to materials and mechanisms. They generally use strange contraptions and impossible engineering to achieve breathtaking effects.

Their skills allow them to understand and manipulate materials, tinker with mechanisms, and use their deep knowledge of their craft to invent new devices.

This school includes mastery of tricks such as *Linking Rings* and *Living Piano*.



OPTICAL

Magicians from this school are experts in sleight of hand and the use of visual arts to produce unheard-of optical effects, both on and off stage. They are unrivalled at hiding things and plucking them out of thin air, creating ghostly apparitions or impossible visual effects, including on their own bodies, and even controlling animals as part of their tricks.

Their skills make them singularly good at creating distractions and fooling the senses, sometimes even making their illusions come true.

This school includes tricks such as *Enchanted Butterflies* or *Rabbit from the Top Hat*.

TRICKS

Magicians deploy their art through tricks. But producing complex illusions often requires training in several abilities and studying multiple disciplines.

Tricks play a preeminent role both on and off stage and depend on both the magician's talent and who is assisting him. Sometimes, tricks have to be set up, call for certain special components, or need to be rehearsed and perfected in a workshop duly removed from prying eyes.

A magician's fame and reputation largely depend on their secrets and the tricks they can perform. This creates a constant covert struggle to come up with the new trick that will make a magician's name... and can prompt some to stray down easier paths, such as stealing or destroying other people's secrets.

LEARNING TRICKS

The greatest source of knowledge for a magician is Dahlgaard Academy, a generous legacy bequeathed by Dahlgaard the Magnificent on Magoria before his final disappearance. But ever since Dahlgaard's Heir emerged as the head of illusion, the conditions for admission to the Academy have changed, and some apprentices and magicians are unable or unwilling to meet them.

Aside from the Academy, another invaluable resource for magicians is patrons, who support their protégés financially or with influence. Thanks to them, these learners can snap up the schematics of ancient magicians at auctions and secure rare components, as well as sit in on show rehearsals. Sometimes, they can even take the entrance exam for Dahlgaard Academy and, if they pass, have their patrons bankroll their magic studies.

Another good option is to apprentice to a master magician, although their guardedness when it comes to sharing their sacred knowledge can be frustrating for eager students. Such apprenticeships are often prolonged with endless tasks and assistance in exchange for just a sliver of the master's knowledge.

Less often, magicians manage to secure the means to teach themselves. And less often still, one magician will show another their tricks. Spying and plagiarizing are far more common.

— (Note) —

You can find information on performing tricks in the “Magic Tricks” section of the game system rules in this starter guide. A summarized description of some tricks and the special abilities they involve is provided on the pre-generated character sheets.

REAL MAGIC

THE TRICKERION STONE

The Trickerion Stone is a legend. According to oral tradition, it granted unimaginable powers to whoever possessed it: eternal youth, seeing the future, control over matter, enchantments of the spirit, influence over life itself... For centuries, scholars and treasure hunters searched for it. Then, one day, Dahlgaard found it, in the obscure valley of Erion, and when he returned, eighteen years ago, to challenge the master magicians, he brought it with him. But the Heir has scrubbed it from the legends and history, and today no one can recall its origin, or even its existence, let alone who has it, or where the Trickerion shards came from.

You will find more information on the Trickerion Stone and the origins of Dahlgaard the Magnificent in the *Trickerion, the role-playing game* Core Rulebook.

THE TRICKERION SHARDS

True magicians eventually become capable of producing magical effects, subtle in most cases, but real. They can do this thanks to the best-kept secret in the world of illusion: the Trickerion shards.

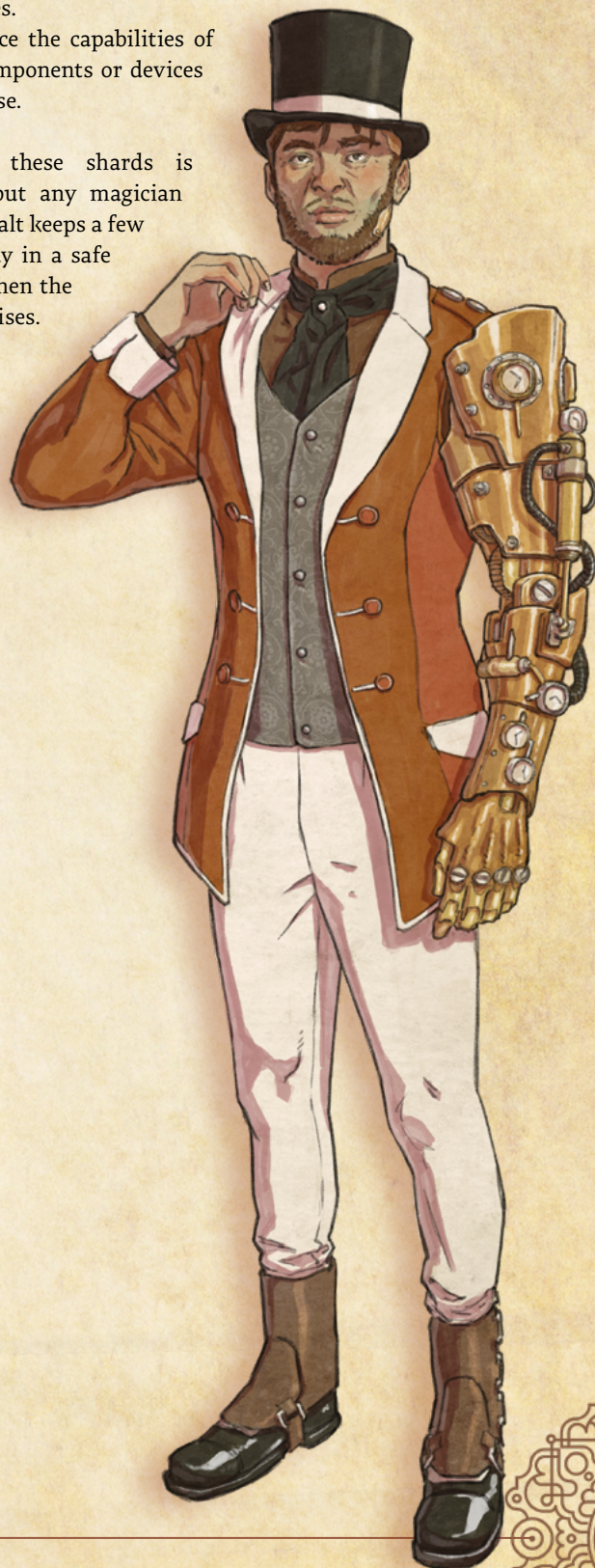
These translucent pebbles are filled with a strange ether, a writhing vaporous humor that casts a faint amber glow.

The most highly skilled master magicians are still studying its nature. The most widely accepted theory to date is that they are partially materialized energy, but that is not the only aspect of their nature to be discovered.

Magicians have also learned that they can harness the energy of a Trickerion shard with their mind to pull off incredible temporary feats, such as turning their illusion tricks into something magical and real. To this end, they can:

- ☞ Supernaturally increase their abilities.
- ☞ Enhance the capabilities of the components or devices they use.

Obtaining these shards is not easy, but any magician worth his salt keeps a few tucked away in a safe place for when the occasion arises.





QUICKSTART TO THE GAME SYSTEM

Trickerion, the role-playing game uses the Estirpe game system. Shown below is a sample of how it works.

ABILITIES AND SPECIALTIES

Aptitudes, experience, and, ultimately, everything characters know and can do – and how well they do it – are determined by their Abilities and Specialties.

ABILITIES

These are traits that determine characters' areas of expertise, experience, and skill. There are five general Abilities and a separate one for combat. Each Ability will have an associated level, expressed by a number, usually between 0 (worst) and 4 (best), with an average score of 2 for a normal person. This score will initially be what determines how many (six-sided) dice players should roll to determine whether they succeed or fail at a task that depends on one of these Abilities.



GENERAL ABILITIES

- ☞ **Knowledge.** This refers both to characters' book smarts and their general cultural knowledge and memory. Examples: recalling a legend about one of Dahlgard's journeys, reproducing an alchemical formula, or memorizing a smuggler's contact list.
- ☞ **Deduction.** This includes everything requiring perceiving clues in the surroundings, identifying patterns, analyzing documents, understanding data, and drawing conclusions. Examples: noticing easily overlooked details, identifying and interpreting hidden patterns in the bas-relief of an old workshop, cracking a magician's code to understand his schematics for a trick.
- ☞ **Charisma.** This includes not only characters' charisma and their ability to influence others, but also their personality and empathy. Examples: holding someone's attention to distract them, using your theatrical talents to impersonate someone, or bringing your full mesmerist acumen to bear to divine a person's intentions.
- ☞ **Expertise.** This comprises anything to do with technical applications, coordination, and manual dexterity. Examples: setting up a floating table, deftly opening a deadbolt lock, or tinkering with the mechanisms of a self-propelled carriage with millimetric precision to prevent it from driving off a cliff.
- ☞ **Physical.** This refers to getting the most out of your body, in terms of effort, endurance, agility, and reflexes. Examples: quickly shimmying up a rope to reach the flies or pursuing someone in leaps and bounds across the swaying platforms over the stage.

The conflict between Knowledge and Expertise

The use of Knowledge and Expertise involves different types of know-how and applied techniques. Often, the successful completion of a task in one of these two Abilities seems to require both theory and practice. A scholar hoping to apply his knowledge might lack the necessary hands-on experience to pull it off. Likewise, a mechanic who's good with her hands is unlikely to know how to operate the complex clockwork mechanism of a dragonfly automaton if she does not know how it works. In such cases, the game master will take the situation into account, along with character's past and concept, to determine whether the task falls within the scope of their abilities and they can carry it out.

COMBAT ABILITY

Although most magicians avoid this type of direct confrontation, preferring to wage their battles with their art and tricks, they sometimes have no choice but to roll up their sleeves and fight.

Combat: While physical fights are hardly a magician's primary or preferred activity, this Ability encompasses all the skills related to fighting, with or without weapons, and even to shooting.

SPECIALTIES

These are the specific skills a character excels at within an Ability. They reflect what the character specialized in during their training and where they have acquired the most experience.

Each character starts with four Specialties. They are listed in parentheses after the Ability.

When attempting a task that falls within one of their Specialties, players can reroll any dice that did not yield a success (that is, any dice with which they failed to roll a 5 or 6, as explained in the next section). This means the character not only has a greater chance of succeeding, but is also more likely to obtain additional advantages due to their greater proficiency.

Note

The **Trickerion, the role-playing game** Core Rulebook lists various Specialties for each Ability, making it easier to relate characters' experience to their profession and history.

TASK RESOLUTION

When characters want to attempt tasks whose outcome is uncertain or could have consequences (e.g., there is not enough time, they are up against a tough audience, there is danger nearby), they roll dice.

THE BASIC ROLL

Roll the same number of six-sided dice (d6) as your level for the Ability related to the task to be performed. To determine whether you succeed, look at the result of each die (do not add them up). Each 5 counts as a success, and each 6 counts as two successes. If you have at least one success, you accomplish the task you set out to do. Any additional successes can be used to enhance the outcome (see below).

Example: Frederic White, Master of Chains, has been captured by the Archduke of Magoria's guard. His wrists and ankles have been bound with steel cables secured with three sophisticated padlocks. Frederic wants to free one of his arms to reach the picklock hidden in the heel of his boot and try to spring the locks. He twists and turns, rubbing his skin raw and risking multiple dislocations. Since his Physical level is 3, he rolls three dice with the following result: 2, 2, 5. It's a success! Gritting his teeth through the pain, he manages to stretch and contort his body in impossible ways and reach the picklock.

DIFFICULTIES

If the game master decides that there are external factors that could alter the chances of success, he or she may add or subtract dice from the player's roll. For instance, the game master might take into account factors such as time constraints, the difficulty of the action being attempted, or the attitude of the person the character is dealing with.

Easy task = Roll +1d / +2d
 Difficult task = Roll -1d / -2d
 Extremely difficult task = Roll -4d

When the difficulty reduces the number of dice you can roll to 0d or fewer, you can still try, but you're going to need a lot of luck. Roll 2d and keep the worst result.

Example: Despite the tension and the pain coursing through his body, Frederic is trying to pick the complex lock holding the steel cables that bind him in place. Since he has a small picklock, he can try, but he is all but immobilized (except for one hand), so his chances of success are slim. The game master tells him that the mobility constraints, the complexity of the task, and the limited time he has to do it entail a modifier

of -4d for his Expertise roll. Frederic's Expertise is a level 3, and he has a specialty in Locksmithing. The penalties reduce his Expertise to -1. But he has no choice but to try. Since the final value is less than 0, he picks up 2d. He rolls a 2 and a 3. He fails, but since Locksmithing is one of his specialties, he is entitled to reroll up to 3 dice... However, as he can only roll 0d in this situation, all he can do is repeat the original roll. He rolls the two dice again and checks the result: a 1 and a 3. This time, his Specialty has been of no use to him.

EXTRA SUCCESSES AND THEIR BENEFITS

When a character rolls more successes than they need, they can enhance the outcome of the task performed. Depending on the task and the situation, by agreement with the game master, they can benefit from one of the following effects for every two extra successes obtained:

- ☞ They perform it better than expected.
- ☞ They perform it more quickly.
- ☞ They perform it without leaving a trace.
- ☞ They obtain additional information.
- ☞ It changes the attitude of the person they are dealing with going forward.
- ☞ It facilitates an immediately subsequent task.
- ☞ Other possible special effects (trick-related or otherwise). The game master can define them depending on the situation or the player can propose them by agreement with the game master.

Note

In the *Trickerion, the role-playing game* Core Rulebook, you will find specific examples for each Ability and special benefits related to the School of Magic and the tricks your character has mastered.

In the case of combat, extra successes work somewhat differently (see below for more information).



TASK CHAINS

There are times when the situation or a character's bravery leads a character to attempt several tasks at once, such that the outcome of one influences that of the next.

There are four main cases in which tasks can be linked together like this, depending on the goal:

- ☞ **Quality:** The successes from the first roll are added as extra dice in the second. For example: determining how to use a device with Deduction in order to then sabotage it with Expertise, or earning someone's trust with Charisma to have more time to search their office with Deduction.
- ☞ **Speed:** When a character needs to perform multiple tasks in less time, the first roll's successes determine the maximum number of dice they can roll in the second. For example: two actions in the same chase turn, such as swerving around people on a street before jumping over a fence, or reaching an automaton fast enough to have time to block its mechanism.
- ☞ **Hindrance:** The first roll's successes subtract dice from the second. For example: distracting a guard with Charisma to hamper his Combat action against an ally, or using Physical ability to burst a gas pipe in order to slow down your pursuers and limit their Physical rolls.
- ☞ **Task chains between characters:** When one character's success in performing a task can facilitate another character's subsequent task. In this case, the extra successes of the first player's task help with the second player's task. For example: distracting the Bank president's secretary with Charisma so another character can sneak into the president's office with Expertise.

LIMITATION ON TASK CHAINS

The number of tasks a character can link together depends on their Physical level, with a minimum of two. In other words, a character whose Physical level is 3 will be able to chain together three tasks. A character with a Physical level of 2 or 1 will be able to chain together two tasks.

EXTENDED ROLLS

It may not be possible to complete a task "all at once" due to its volume or complexity. In this case, the game master should determine how many different successful rolls are needed to consider the task completed. Here, extra successes would make it possible to finish it faster than expected.

Note

If it helps, think of extended rolls in terms of “requiring X number of successes,” where each player rolls for as many successive turns as needed to obtain that total number of successes.

FAILING AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

When the outcome of a roll is a failure, the task resolution can play out in two ways:

- ☞ If failing does not compromise the plot, because there are alternatives or another way for the character to get what they want, you can simply assume that they failed to achieve their goal and have to find another way.
- ☞ If failing would compromise the plot, the game master can consider the character to have succeeded, but not without suffering consequences. These consequences may be immediate or delayed in time, and they may be material or narrative (physical damage, loss of resources, leaving traces of their actions, affecting or breaking something important on stage, losing important equipment, being discovered by someone unwanted, triggering an antagonistic response).

In the *Trickerion, the role-playing game* Core Rulebook, you will find more examples of possible consequences of failing rolls, for both mundane tasks and performing tricks.

PASSIVE TASKS AND THEIR RESOLUTION

There are times when the game master can measure characters' ability to succeed in an intuitive task or the involuntary use of an Ability. These are called Passive Tasks.

For example: a character is reading a story written by a magician for fun, but it contains clues to a secret for anyone able to notice. Or a hired thief tries to rob the character as she wanders through the market lost in thought. In neither case is the character actively using their Abilities. But the game master may decide whether the character picks up on the hidden clues (Deduction) or notices the attempted theft (Perception) depending on the level of that character's Abilities.

Sometimes, asking a player to roll can be risky for the story, as it can jeopardize the plot and put players on alert. That is why the game master can ask him or herself these questions: What makes the most sense for the plot? What would have a greater dramatic impact or be of more interest to the story?



COMBAT

There are times when neither diplomacy nor a magician's powers of deception can prevent a confrontation. When that happens, the rules of combat come into play.

COMBAT TURNS

During a combat, turns become more important. A combat turn usually lasts just a few seconds, with each combatant performing a combat task. Once all the parties involved have acted, a new turn begins and so on until the fight is over.

INITIATIVE TURN

The combatant characters act in order, based on their Initiative score.

Initiative is the sum of the Physical and Combat scores. If a character is not going to launch an attack or is not currently engaged in one, their Initiative is equal to their Physical score x2.

Landing the first blow has its benefits, and there are situations that help to achieve it. Characters who have firearms at the ready can add +2 to their Initiative. Conversely, those who fight unarmed or with only makeshift weapons – objects that are unbalanced or awkwardly shaped, such as a bottle or stool – must subtract -1 from their Initiative.

The chosen maneuver also determines how quickly a character will be able to join the fray. As explained in greater detail below, characters who intend to Damage an opponent add +2 to their Initiative, those hoping to Gain Advantage add +1, and those planning to focus solely on Defending themselves add nothing.

THE COMBAT SEQUENCE

The combat sequence begins when one character decides to attack another. The characters are ranked in order of their Initiative scores (based on what each player states that their character wants to do) to determine who will go first.

When it is a character's turn, if they have not yet acted (because they were attacked by another combatant), and depending on what they said they would do when the Initiative was determined, they may:

☞ Move up to 21 feet and perform an action, which may or may not be a combat maneuver. They can do this in whatever order they choose: moving and then performing the action, performing the action and then moving, or moving as they perform the action.

☞ Run. The character concentrates their action on moving in order to go farther. Make a Physical roll to add 12 feet to the initial 21, plus 3 more for each additional success.

If a character is more than 15 feet away from any opponent when it is their Initiative turn, and they can still act, they can choose to launch a Ranged Attack as their combat action.

If a character is within 21 (unobstructed) feet of any opponent when their Initiative turn comes, and they can still act, they may choose to move toward their target and launch a melee attack as their deliberate action.

A character whose Initiative turn has not yet come up who is targeted by an enemy melee attack (see below), must respond to the aggression and remains engaged with their enemy for the rest of the turn, **losing their Initiative turn**. (In practical terms, the action of a character who is attacked is focused on defending themselves from the melee attacks received.)

A character involved in a fight who chooses to focus on a task other than fighting – severing the ropes holding the fly system's counterweights, picking a deadbolt lock – can only respond to melee attacks with the Defend maneuver. Since they are more focused on their task than on defending themselves, they suffer the penalty of not being able to reroll any dice (see below), but they can keep trying to accomplish the task when their Initiative turn comes. This penalty applies to them throughout the turn.

A character involved in a fight who chooses to focus on using a trick can only respond to melee attacks by Defending themselves, with the additional penalty of not being able to reroll any dice (see below).

RANGED ATTACKS

To determine whether a ranged attack hits, players roll the same number of dice as their Combat score. The difficulty of landing a blow may be subject to penalties depending on the player's movement and the target, the distance, visibility, etc. The details are explained in the complete rulebook, but generally speaking you can apply a bonus of +2d for easy rolls and a penalty of -2d for difficult rolls.

MELEE

When a character launches a melee attack, they choose a combat maneuver and engage with their target, who chooses a combat maneuver in response. The outcome is determined on the spot with an opposed Combat roll, without waiting for other Initiative turns. In other words,

a character that has a low Initiative score might have a plan of action, but be unable to implement it, because they are attacked by an opponent before they can do so and can only respond to that attack.

The combat maneuvers are:

☞ Damage: A character who states that they intend to deal Damage to an opponent receives +2 for Initiative. They must choose a specific target for their attack.

If, when their Initiative turn comes, the character who has chosen Damage has not yet acted (i.e., has not needed to respond to another character's melee attack), they engage with the chosen opponent (provided the opponent is still available; if not, the character can choose a different maneuver or target, paying a penalty of -2d). The target of the attack must immediately decide which action to respond with (they can attempt to Damage their attacker as well or try to Gain Advantage or Defend themselves).

If a character who has chosen Damage succeeds in their attack, they can make a damage roll, adding the same number of dice to the roll as the difference in successes by which they won the opposed roll.

☞ Gain Advantage: Characters who state that they intend to Gain Advantage receive +1 for Initiative. They must choose a specific target to gain advantage over.

If, when their Initiative turn comes, the character who has chosen Gain Advantage has not yet acted (i.e., has not needed to respond to another character's melee attack), they engage with the chosen opponent (provided the opponent is still available; if not, the character can choose a different maneuver or target, paying a penalty of -2d).

If a character who has chosen Gain Advantage succeeds, they receive a number of Advantage points equal to the difference they got on the opposed roll. The uses of these Advantage points are described below.

☞ Defend: A character who states that they intend to Defend themselves receives no Initiative bonus.

A character who has chosen Defend is entitled to reroll (one more time) any dice that did not yield a success in the opposed Combat roll. If a character who has chosen Defend succeeds, he avoids being hit and, therefore, takes no damage.

Once the two characters have chosen their maneuvers, they both roll the same number of dice as their respective Combat Abilities. Characters who choose Defend can reroll any dice that do not yield a success once.

If one character obtains more successes than the other, the result is based on the chosen maneuver, as explained above. If there is a tie, the combatants continue fighting and will have to decide what to do on their next turn.

MULTIPLE OPPONENTS

A character who has already acted and receives a melee attack can only respond with the Defend maneuver. If this maneuver is their second action of the turn, they receive a penalty of -2d; if it is the third, the penalty is -4d; etc.

ADVANTAGE POINTS

Advantage points can be used to:

- ☞ Gain the Initiative over the same opponent on the next turn.
- ☞ Add 1d to the next opposed Combat roll against the same opponent. This can be declared right before making the roll.
- ☞ Allow an ally to add 1d to their opposed Combat roll, if they are also engaged in a melee fight in this turn against the same opponent who has been beaten, to obtain Advantage points. This should be declared right before the ally makes the roll.





DAMAGE

There are two tracks for measuring a character's status: Vitality and Incapacitation. When a player makes a damage roll, the result of each die must be read separately to determine whether they need to mark any boxes in either track.

VITALITY TRACK

This track consists of eight boxes, numbered according to the die result requiring each one to be marked (1, 2, 2, 3, 3, 4, 5, 6). Thus, if a damage roll against a character yields a 1, a 3 and a 5, the victim should mark the 1 box, one of the 3 boxes, and the 5 box. If there are no boxes left to mark for a given number, they can disregard the result (the hit causes no further damage to the target; for example, it lands on an arm that had already been immobilized).

Penalty for injuries. When characters take damage, it causes them injuries that affect their concentration and physical activity. The highest unmarked number on a character's Vitality Track determines the maximum number of dice they can roll.

Example: Carla has shot Kieran in the leg. Kieran makes a damage roll using three dice and gets the following result: 5, 6, 6. Kieran thus has to cross out the 5 and the 6 on his Vitality Track. He can disregard the second 6, as there is only one 6 box on the Vitality Track. From now on,

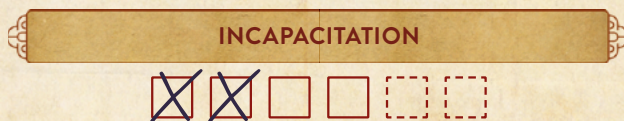
Kieran will not be able to roll more than four dice at a time (since 4 is the highest remaining unmarked number on his Vitality Track).



INCAPACITATION TRACK

This track consists of four unnumbered boxes. For each even number in a damage roll, mark off one Incapacitation box, regardless of whether you have also marked a Vitality box. If all the Incapacitation boxes are marked, the character is incapacitated and can no longer participate in the combat. Depending on the story, this could mean they have been knocked out, immobilized, overpowered, etc.

Example: Continuing with the previous example, the damage roll for the bullet was a 5 and two 6s. Kieran has marked a 5 and a 6 on his Vitality Track. He must also mark two boxes on his Incapacitation Track, one for each even result. (In other words, even though he can disregard the second 6 for the purposes of the Vitality Track, he still has to mark an Incapacitation box for it.)



MAGIC TRICKS

Magic in Trickerion consists of prepared tricks. There is nothing supernatural about these tricks, other than the handful of exceptions involving the substance known as Trickerion. The effect of Trickerion is to amplify a magician's natural abilities or the properties of the materials they use. Additionally, the world of *Trickerion* is also home to mechanical devices that, without corresponding to the historical technology of the Victorian era, do not operate in a supernatural way per se... except when they do.

SCHOOLS OF MAGIC

Each player character (PC) magician has access to tricks from one (or sometimes several) Schools of Magic:

- ☞ **Spiritual:** Anything to do with (supposedly) contacting spirits and asking them for information about people, places, or events, including information from the past, present, and even the future.
- ☞ **Escape:** Anything to do with breaking bonds or getting out of places in which one has been confined, as well as working locks, keys, handcuffs, etc.
- ☞ **Mechanical:** Anything to do with mechanical devices and automata.
- ☞ **Optical:** Anything to do with light tricks, mirrors, shadows, and even, as an extension thereof, sound.

Note

In the following sections, “victim” refers to the character targeted by a trick.

DISCIPLINES

Each School of Magic has tricks related to one or more Disciplines, specific to that school:

- ☞ **Spiritual School:** Reading (perceiving information about a person, place, or event), Influencing (a person; it can be used to gain their trust or intimidate them), Foreseeing (the future of a person, place, or event).
- ☞ **Escape School:** Locks, Contortion, Hostile Environments (such as underwater, in a tank filled with gas, trapped in ice, etc.).

☞ **Mechanical School:** Perception (devices that receive and can even record data, subject to the logical limitations of the game world's technology; for example, sound can be recorded, but not images), Communication (devices that broadcast information, either spoken or through projected images (akin to a “magic lantern”), reproducing sounds, smoke, etc.), Processing (devices that process certain types of inputs to produce a predetermined outcome, for example, that turn the lights on when you clap your hands).

☞ **Optical School:** Showing (making someone see or hear something that is not there), Hiding (making something the victim should be able to perceive vanish from sight or their senses), Modifying (making something the victim can perceive appear to them as something different).

TRICK ROLLS

When performing a trick, players must describe the desired effect to the game master, who will determine which Discipline should be used.

For example, convincing a guard to let them pass might be accomplished through the “Influencing” Discipline (from the Spiritual School), while convincing a group of people in a room that night has fallen might call for “Showing” (from the Optical School).

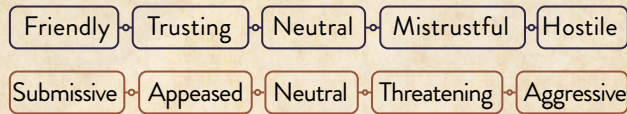
To perform the trick, the player must roll the same number of dice as the magician's level in the applicable Discipline. This is called a “trick roll.” Every 5 they roll counts as one success; every 6 counts as two successes. The sum of these successes determines the degree of precision with which the trick is performed.

RELEVANT FACTORS

The difficulty of achieving the desired effect will be determined by up to a maximum of four relevant factors, which are explained below (you will rarely need to consider more than two). The use of these factors is explained in the complete rulebook. The pre-generated character sheets have all the information needed for these characters to perform their tricks.

☞ **Distance/Visibility:** How far away the trick victim is from the components used (for example, how far away the Ms. Fawthorne mannequin has to be to look convincing) or how far away they want the effect to occur. In this case, proximity is penalized. The closer things are, the less likely they are to seem real.

☞ **Target's predisposition:** In cases in which it is necessary to influence a living being, how willing they are to change their way of thinking or attitude. This factor is expressed in “notches” on a five-step scale, for example:



☞ **Size/Number of targets:** How big the trick target, effect to be caused, or object to be shown or hidden is or how many victims have to believe the trick.

☞ **Duration:** How long the trick needs to be active for or how long the victims need to remain under its influence.

FAILURES

If a player does not obtain any successes and, moreover, rolls at least one 1, the trick is considered to have been botched. Not only do they fail to achieve the expected outcome, but the victim catches wise to the trick, discovers the equipment used, realizes that the ghost is a person in disguise, etc., with all the narrative consequences this entails, to be determined by the game master. At the narrative level, the mannequin used to represent Ms. Fawthorne falls down, the recording of the mayor's voice starts skipping or sounds distorted, or the threads used to suspend the floating candles become tangled.

PREPARATION

Every player character has a track of six Preparation point boxes. These represent the time and resources spent preparing for the trick. Remember that in *Trickerion, the role-playing game*, tricks are not (usually) real magic and, therefore, require materials and, as often as not, planning and preparation prior to their performance. If a magician succeeds in convincing the goons that have cornered her in an alleyway that she is protected by a ghost – which they hear moaning and spot moving behind some curtains – the Preparation points represent the work she and her team put in the previous afternoon setting the automaton up behind the window, after foreseeing that her enemy's minions would come out to “greet” her when she got to the alleyway.

For each Preparation point used, you can add 1d to the trick roll.

A level 1 magician can use a maximum of 2 Preparation points on each roll. A level 2 magician can use a maximum of 4 Preparation points on each roll. A level 3 magician can

use a maximum of 6 Preparation points on each roll. All the pre-generated characters in this guide are level 1.

Once the roll has been made, regardless of the result of the trick's performance, a magician may erase 1 used Preparation point for every 6 rolled.

TRICKERION

Each magician can accumulate up to 4 Trickerion “points” per level. Using 1 Trickerion point in a trick automatically ensures success (simply add a success to the result of the trick roll).

TRICKS AND ABILITIES

Some tricks are no more than extensions of the magician's own Abilities (such as using the information supposedly provided by a ghost to intimidate someone... ultimately, the goal is to intimidate them). In these cases, at the game master's discretion, once the player has made the trick roll, they may reroll (once) a number of unsuccessful dice equal to their level in the associated Ability:

- ☞ Spiritual = Charisma
- ☞ Escape = Physical
- ☞ Mechanical = Expertise
- ☞ Optical = Knowledge

THE GHOST OF THE MAGNUS PANTHEON

A STARTER ADVENTURE FOR **TRICKERION**, THE ROLE-PLAYING GAME
BY DAVID MARTÍN

The Ghost of the Magnus Pantheon is an introductory adventure for **Trickerion, the role-playing game**. It is designed as a thriller pitting rival magicians against each other in an ample, but contained location, the Magnus Pantheon theater, making it easy to read and play. It is recommended for groups of 2 to 4 players using the pre-generated characters and the abridged rules provided in this guide.

INTRODUCTION

Twenty-five years ago, during the 2nd Continental Magic Fair, the grand master escape artist *Libertas Aeterna* gave one of the event's most spectacular performances. For an entire evening, she wowed a packed house at the Magnus Pantheon theater with jaw-dropping and increasingly daring escape numbers. But *Libertas Aeterna* would ultimately be remembered for her fateful final act: the *Poisoned Iron Maiden*.

In a spine-tingling variation on this trick, her assistant and husband, *Tobías Malfatti*, and her apprentice, *Giovanna Berti*, donned protective gas masks and held the deadly lids of the steel sarcophagus ajar as it was filled with poison gas. Chained inside the *Iron Maiden*, *Libertas Aeterna* held her breath.

Tobías and *Giovanna* let go of the lids, and they slammed shut with an ominous bang. No one could survive that. The sarcophagus shook. A gaslight illuminated a burst of white

smoke on the other side of the orchestra seats. When the smoke cleared, the audience's admiration died on their lips.

Libertas Aeterna had not emerged. The heavy velvet curtain came down.

There are several versions of what happened next. Some say *Tobías* cried out in anguish, tore off his mask, and pried open the *Iron Maiden*, climbing in to embrace his wife's corpse and share in her poisoned fate. Others claim he wheeled around and lambasted *Giovanna* for an intentional mistake. She clung to him, kissing his cheeks, his jaw, his neck, but *Tobías* pushed her away through his tears, until she turned and fled, never to be seen again. A less common account tells that *Tobías* and *Giovanna* disappeared from the theater, only to be apprehended by Sergeant *Varga's* "bloodhounds" as they attempted to make off in a lightweight pyroscaphe with *Libertas's* secrets and fortune.

But there is one thing no one disputes. Ever since that tragic night, on the eve of and during the Continental Magic Fair, the gossamer figure of *Libertas Aeterna's* ghost can be seen haunting the shadows of the Magnus Pantheon, in search of indiscriminate revenge.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The following lines offer a brief summary of the plot and main events of the adventure. This section is for the eyes of the game master only. If you plan to play it, we recommend you stop reading here.

The *player characters* are invited to the 1st Rising Talents of Magoria Contest thanks to their ties to the Dahlgaard Academy. The event will be held at the Magnus Pantheon, where they will test their showmanship against the city's brightest young talents. The winner, in addition to prestige, will receive a free quarter at Dahlgaard Academy to delve into its secrets, as well as a set of magician's resources from the Magnus Pantheon's own collection.

The magicians have to make their cases for their preferred performance slots to the theater's imposing manager. The *player characters* will thus have to best their rivals if they are to secure the top slot of the day.

In the middle of the 9 o'clock performance on Saturday, something goes horribly wrong, and the magician is mortally injured. The ghost of Libertas Aeterna is seen cackling cruelly from the orchestra seats before fading into the darkness of the ceiling in a whirl of smoke and ether. She has gotten her revenge. Just then, shadows are glimpsed backstage and flitting across the flies: the Magnus Pantheon truly seems to be haunted. The audience erupts in panic and someone calls the police. The show is canceled on the spot.

The trained eyes of a magician quickly detect signs of sabotage in the performance. The suspicions point to the *player characters'* fierce rivalry with the victim. Was it really a ghost that killed the magician?

The various clues found on stage, the eye-witness accounts, the investigation of hidden structures, and the series of spectral events point to both the ghost and the *player characters*. The theater staff wants to hold them until the police come, while the audience grows increasingly skittish, thoroughly spooked by Libertas Aeterna's ghost. The *player characters* have to decide between being arrested or defending their innocence by discovering the truth in the hidden bowels of the giant theater before it is too late.

WHAT IS REALLY HAPPENING

A masked magician has hired Silver Smile to steal the contest prize. The masked magician pulls off a clever trick with his assistant to revive the legend of Libertas Aeterna's ghost with the help of two of Silver Smile's henchmen, who manipulate the lighting. This is the initial distraction to allow the crime boss and his crew to act. But what even they do not realize is that they are just another red herring, an even larger replaceable distraction.

What the masked magician is truly after is access to the Magnus Pantheon's vault to steal a small chest containing three Trickerion shards and an ingenious piece of magical technology believed to have been destroyed: the hypnotizer. Set on obtaining it at any cost, he will stop at nothing to get it, even if it means attacking an innocent bystander or double-crossing Silver Smile to divert attention and cover up his coup.

A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY

THE INVITATION

On the morning of the first Wednesday in June, a mailman approaches the workshop of the *player characters'* company of magicians and rings the bell. He hands them a registered letter addressed to the company's protégé.

Note

A protégé is someone who benefits from the support of a patron or benefactor who pays for their tuition at Dahlgaard Academy. This occupation is stated in the history of some of the pre-generated characters. If no one has selected a protégé character, the letter can be addressed to whomever you choose.

The missive is adorned with the blue ribbon and seal of Dahlgaard Academy. The character signs for the delivery and opens it.



Dear student:

Next week is the 27th Continental Magic Fair. Dahlgaard Academy has come to an agreement with the manager of the Magnus Pantheon theater to hold a contest for the city's rising talents on the eve of the fair.

As part of this agreement, Dahlgaard Academy can propose up to four companies of magicians from among its students. I am pleased to inform you that you and your company have been selected as one for your dedication and promising skills.

The contest will take place next Friday and Saturday at the Magnus Pantheon. The winner will receive a free quarter for the entire company at Dahlgaard Academy – or an equivalent cash prize – and a valuable set of special components from the theater's collection. Please excuse the last-minute nature of the invitation. The negotiations and paperwork have been tedious and time-consuming, and the agreement was not reached until the eleventh hour.

Needless to say, this is a magnificent opportunity, both because you will be performing at the Magnus Pantheon and because some of the master magicians invited to the fair are already in town.

I trust you and your company will be interested. To this end, I will meet you tomorrow, Thursday, at 11 a.m., at the office of the Magnus Pantheon manager.

Warm regards,

Professor Bernard
Rector of Dahlgaard Academy

The *player characters* must act swiftly and efficiently to decide what tricks to perform, what role each one will play, and to get everything ready.

THE MANAGER'S GAZE

The office of Alexander Krafner, manager of the Magnus Pantheon, is located in the rear extension of the theater complex. It can be accessed from Break Street, a narrow winding road connecting the less glamorous part of the theaters that line the bank of the Magor. It was named for the habit that magicians and other performers once had of ducking out behind the theaters for a breath of fresh air between acts.

The manager fixes them with an unsmiling gaze. His humorlessness is rivaled only by his obvious distaste for anyone or anything that wastes his time. He greets the nine representatives of the participating magicians' companies and gets straight down to business, explaining that:

- ☞ Each contestant will be assigned an hour-long slot for their performance. He and Professor Bernard will judge their technique and showmanship, as well as, of course, the audience's reaction.
- ☞ The performances will be spread out over two days, with four shows on Friday and five on Saturday. The first performance of each day will be at 7 p.m.
- ☞ This meeting is to decide the timetable. The candidates must now make their cases for their preferred slots, describing what they have to offer the Magnus Pantheon's esteemed audience.

Everyone knows that the best slot is 10 p.m. on Saturday. The audience is more discerning, and a good performance reaps greater rewards. The *player characters'* main rival is Julian Neitini, the talented but nasty Elusive Knight, whom they regularly compete with at the Academy.

Only one person may speak per company. Once all the contestants have ticked off their merits and described in detail what they plan to do, the ones with the best chances of landing the coveted 9 and 10 p.m. Saturday shows are Julian Neitini and the *player characters*. An opposed Charisma roll (Empathy, Negotiating) will help Krafner decide who gets the top slot, 10 p.m.

The effect of the Charisma roll will depend on the target's predisposition. This is explained in the Core Rulebook. For the purposes of this adventure, a successful opposed roll determines who makes the best impression on the manager. *Characters* with a special gift for reading people, such as a spiritualist who has mastered Mind Reading, can use their trick roll instead of their Ability check to influence the manager. If they are using a Trickerion shard, in addition to the successes, the *player character* fleetingly perceives an effort to conceal a thought, like a dark wall with a steel security door.

LIBERTAS AETERNA'S REVENGE

The young magicians will be able to access the preparation rooms via Break Street beginning at noon on Saturday. These are individual rooms on the ground floor where the companies can rehearse and prepare their tricks. They are spread out along the hallways on either side of the backstage area. Each company is given a key to keep its secrets safe.

The magicians also have access to the backstage area and the stage to prepare for their performances. If they need to, they may additionally access the flies, the ramp in the rear waiting room to bring equipment and heavy sets down to the basement storage room, and the trap room under the stage with its cleverly concealed trapdoors. These things can only be done with the permission and assistance of the discreet technical staff that the theater has made available to them (set designer, lighting technicians, props managers, stagehands, and custodians).

BACKSTAGE

Backstage is a frenzy of magicians and assistants from the various companies. It is a large area, nearly a hundred feet tall, overflowing with frames, canvases, curtains, clothes, boxes, scenery, ropes, pulleys, ladders, counterweights, and the various parts of the flies. The lights are dimmed during performances.

The *player characters* can rehearse and prepare their performance all afternoon. However, to keep things fair, the theater management does not let the companies leave the preparation rooms once the performances start; only the company slated to go on next can go backstage to make the finishing touches. The theater staff is on hand to enforce the rules.

AN EXPLOSIVE RIVALRY

The hostility between Julian and the *player characters* is palpable. When the two companies are both backstage prepping for their performances, pushing objects into place and sorting through props and costumes, tempers inevitably flare. The pre-show hustle and bustle is interrupted by a heated exchange of accusations of interference, spying, and sabotage.

Krafner, the manager, steps in to put an end to the matter, telling everyone to calm down and play fair.

A GHOSTLY TRAP

The theater is packed and the audience is buzzing with curious anticipation. Although the 8 o'clock performance drew a nice round of applause, the audience was still warming up. During the 9 o'clock performance, however, its blood will run cold.

The 9 o'clock performance

The *player characters* will most likely have ended up with the 10 p.m. slot. It is the best time, since the audience comes back from the brief intermission refreshed, reenergized, and engaged.

That is why from here on, Julian will be considered the one to be injured during his escape act.

However, if the *player characters* ended up with the second-best slot (9 p.m.), or if you decide it might be more interesting that way, the events on stage happen to them. You will find information boxes to help you adapt the adventure accordingly.

The Elusive Knight is performing his own version of the *Water Tank Escape*, with an uncovered tank and direct lighting to add difficulty and risky transparency. But something goes wrong. The magician is unable to remove the last of his chains and open the hatchway from within. A ghostly apparition materializes in the tank beside him and takes the magician in its arms. Julian is drowning.

The murmur of the audience spreads through the theater like wildfire and reaches the backstage area. Although the *player characters* were there preparing, they had not been paying attention to the stage. They are alerted by the noise and the confused gestures of the stagehands.

Before the Elusive Knight's assistant can react, the gaslights on stage burst into horrifying flames. Two counterweights plummet to the stage, which is plunged into darkness.

A tenuous light takes shape over the orchestra seats. It is the ghostly figure of a pale, wispy woman, laughing cruelly. She glides over the audience, her robes and long hair undulating around her as if she were underwater. She lets out a blood-curdling scream before soaring upward in a white flash to vanish in the darkness of the inner dome.

Shouts ring out and confusion sweeps through the orchestra seats and balconies: "It's Libertas Aeterna's ghost!" "It was her!"



By the time the lighting technicians and custodians get to the stage with their gas lanterns, Julian Neitini, the Elusive Knight, floats limp and motionless in the tank. They rush to open it and pull the magician out. Then they call a doctor and the police.

The curtain comes down.

The *player characters* can make an Expertise check (Mechanics or similar) to try to pry open the jammed hatchway and get Julian out of the tank. They can also make a second Expertise check (Medicine) to try to revive him, although the odds are stacked against them (-2d). If they succeed, Julian remains unconscious. If they fail, he will have died.

Note

These rolls can be linked, as it is vital to get him out of the tank as soon as possible. If one of the *player characters* has mastered *Water Tank Escape*, they can make a trick roll to get him out.

The *player characters'* performance

If it is the *player characters* on stage when this happens, you can adapt the events to their performance. Here are a few ideas:

- The explosion sets the magician's clothes on fire, and the magician is engulfed in flames.
- The Burning Mummy suddenly loses its effect, and the magician performing it is burned.
- A counterweight or piece of scenery crashes down onto the magician.
- The Window to the Otherworld trick shows Libertas attacking, but the object she hurls is real.
- The chains, stocks, or barrel choke or strangle the magician.
- The objects for a mechanical number break or malfunction, cutting, choking, or striking the magician.
- It is a *non-player character* assistant who is mortally injured.

SHADOWS IN THE THEATER

The contest is canceled on the spot and everyone is asked not to leave the premises. The police are on the way. Meanwhile, rumors race through the theater. Some are terrified, convinced that Libertas Aeterna's ghost is real and has taken her revenge. Others are unable or unwilling to believe it, but have no better explanation.

POINTING THE FINGER

The enmity between Julian's and the *player characters'* companies comes to a head. Julian's assistant accuses them of masterminding the deadly sabotage. The stagehands and custodians who witnessed the backstage row give credit to her suspicions. And yet... everyone saw the ghost. The manager hesitates.

The two hottest-headed members of Julian's company scoff at the idea of the ghost and look ready to pounce on the *player characters*. Some of the theater staff want to surround the *player characters* and tie them up until the police arrive, while others, frightened by the ghost, only want to flee. Professor Bernard, who was in the audience, climbs up onto the stage. Visibly shaken, he tries to get everyone to stay calm and says he wants to question the *player characters*. Other young magicians who had been competing for the prize could take sides to ease or further inflame the situation.

The tension mounts when a group of off-duty Magoria police officers and some members of the Archduke's guard, who had been attending the show while on leave, overhear the accusations and decide to step in.

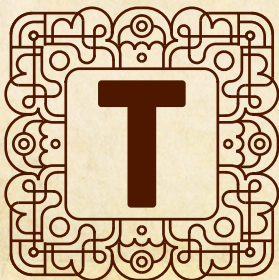
SIGNS OF THE MUNDANE FROM THE STAGE

If they are on stage, the *player characters* can hunt for clues as the tension builds around them.

- ☞ A success on a Deduction check (Machinery) will allow them to see that the ropes that had held the fallen counterweights were cut with a saw. That hardly seems like the work of a ghost.
- ☞ A success on a Deduction check (Machinery) or *Water Tank Escape* roll (you can also allow another trick involving proficiency with metal) shows that the hatch was rigged with an intentionally faulty part to throw a bolt to make it impossible to open from the inside. The part is marked with the letters I and C. The padlock on the last of the chains binding Julian was coded so that

it could not be reopened once it had been locked. A success on a Knowledge check (Underworld) or additional successes from previous rolls (where applicable) used to obtain information make it possible to:

- ✦ See that the filing of the bolts and tampering with the hatch to fit it with the faulty part are recent and skillfully done. Whoever did it knew what they were doing.
 - ✦ Know that the letters I and C stand for the Iron and Coal Foundry, on the outskirts of Dark Alley. Their distributor has been linked to the Silver Smile crime syndicate. (*Note: This obvious clue is not due to slipshod work on the part of the criminals; rather, it was planted by the masked magician to point the investigation in their direction.*)
- ☞ Amidst the lobbing of accusations, the *player characters* notice that one of the catwalks in the fly tower is swaying slightly. Shadows slip stealthily across the catwalks, platforms, and steps, climbing up to the back of the theater.
- ☞ A success on a Knowledge check (Legends, Underworld, General Knowledge) makes it possible to recall rumors that the old Magnus Pantheon building is a labyrinthine structure with multiple entrances and trapdoors.
- ☞ If any of the *player characters'* back stories includes a history with the Silver Smile outfit, they will feel someone's eyes burning into them from the wall with the entrance to the orchestra seats. They belong to a tall, slender, androgynous figure, wearing a long-visored black hat and a dark gray suit. The figure is partially hidden by the shadow of a statue of Dahlgaard and a short black cape. They tip their hat to that *player character* and flash a menacing smile, revealing shiny silver teeth. Then they seem to melt into the statue's shadow and disappear.



If the *player characters* are the ones who were injured, they will need to make the accusations. The theater workers who witnessed the backstage fracas insinuate that Julian may have been involved. If the accusations gain traction, Julian lives up to his stage name of the Elusive Knight and disappears.

With the custodians and ushers blocking the doors, his escape route involves slipping down into the long basement storage room in hopes of finding one of the underground exits leading to the Magor River. But it turns out to be a bad idea. Silver Smile's henchmen are guarding the steam-powered getaway boats, waiting for the loot. They chase Julian down and beat him to a pulp, leaving his broken body sprawled on the ground under an old set.

REVEALING THE INVISIBLE

There may be a *player character* in the company of magicians who wants to use the magical energy of a Trickerion shard with the *Window to the Otherworld* trick. You can use a spectral vision to give a clue. A ghostly mist billows up, cloaking everything in an eerie white pall. The temperature on stage plummets. The true spirit of Libertas Aeterna, slender and dressed in the Roman toga she used for her performances, weeps tearlessly over Julian's body (dead or unconscious), stroking his cheek. She seems sad to see that the young man has shared her same fate.

If asked, she looks up at the fly tower and points to something lost in the darkness, about 60 feet up off the ground. Then she fades away.

THE QUEST TO PROVE THEIR INNOCENCE

The characters have two options to get rid of their accusers: they can claim innocence appealing to reasonable doubt – success on a Personality check (Negotiating or similar) with -1d – or fight their way free, which may require action, trick, and even combat rolls.

If they succeed in temporarily convincing their accusers, the more successes they get, the more time they will have until they change their mind again and decide to give chase or report them to the police (15 minutes per success). They can also use their extra successes to enlist the help of a stagehand or custodian to guide them through the theater.

If they use skill or force to escape, in addition to the challenges of discovering the truth, they will be hounded by those who believe they are guilty.

Either way, it is a race against the clock. In less than 20 minutes (in the story world), the masked magician will reach the theater roof as the Silver Smile goons make their getaway, and the police will seize control of the theater.

The player characters are the victims

If the *player characters* were the ones to suffer the attack and point the finger at Julian, they have to convince the theater staff, Professor Bernard, and the manager of their accusation. If they go in search of him, they find that Julian is not in his assigned preparation room. His company has not seen him since the lights went out. But the door to the ramp to the underground tunnels is open.

If they get there soon enough to see the goons toss the old set over Julian's body, they can follow them if they wish. The goons take off through a maze of columns and vaults toward the damp breeze wafting in from the open drain that empties into the Magor River, slamming the grate down behind them as they go.

- If they speak with Julian, he admits that he got scared and fled, knowing he would be blamed, but insists he had nothing to do with what happened.
- If they trap one of the goons, they can get him to confess that the criminals have been double-crossed and have orders to flee. Only Silver Smile knows what happened, but he has gone off in search of the traitor in the manager's office.

THE MASKED MAN'S TRAIL

At this point, the *player characters* will most likely be considering three options: making their way across the orchestra section to go after Silver Smile, fleeing through the underground tunnels, or chasing whatever it is that is moving through the flies.

CHASING SILVER SMILE

Help from the veteran theater staff or a successful Knowledge check (Legends, Architecture) reveals a small trapdoor hidden in the base of the statue of Dahlgaard, near the wall with the entrance to the orchestra seats.

Note

Keep the theater alive. Describing how hard it is for the characters to make their way through the audience amidst the complaints or accusations of the anxious spectators and the actions of the off-duty Magoria police or members of the Archduke's guard who had been hoping to enjoy their leave is a good option.

A ladder leads down to a musty room full of rotting furniture and home to cockroaches and rats. The room opens onto a hall studded with several vaulted passageways running under the orchestra seats, stairways that descend even farther underground, and a small tunnel, about three feet high, leading to the theater's front façade.

They hear the echo of mocking laughter alternating with a voice that beckons, "This way." It is coming from deeper underground. Although it is hard to follow it, it eventually leads them to a damp room from where they can hear the sound of water running through a canal. Silver Smile is toying with them... and buying time. He strikes out at them from the shadows before quickly melting back into the darkness. If cornered, he can use his throwing stilettos or slip away using a hidden passageway behind the columns.

Once the loot has been loaded, Silver Smile heads to the passageway leading to the canal, the *player characters* close behind. When they arrive, they find him standing there waiting for them. He greets them, especially those who have had dealings with the syndicate in the past.

"What a surprise, my dears. I see that the fish keep their secrets (if Frederic is there)/I see the fortune-teller always holds one card back (in the case of Amabel)."

He tells them that they have been tricked, just as he was, but that they have played the part of mere pawns. At least he has a knight or a queen to get out of this trap. If the *player characters* try to catch him, he turns a crank on the wall, causing a gate to come down between them. He flashes his silver smile once more and climbs into one of the waiting steam-powered motorboats to make off with the contest prize.

If the *player characters* manage to catch him before this can happen, Silver Smile does not fight to the bitter end. He surrenders, enabling his people to escape (he has other ways to come through the future trial unscathed).

ESCAPE THROUGH THE TUNNELS

If they are fast enough, they can open the door to the ramp down to the tunnels and get their bearings to get out of the theater. They encounter the same difficulties described in the “The player characters are the victims” box: they spot the goons fleeing through the vaulted maze to the canal that leads to the river. Some of them run on with the stolen contest prize, while others turn to face the *player characters*. If the *player characters* stop them, they can retrieve the prize. If they manage to catch them and make them talk, they confess that they have been double-crossed, but claim not to know who it was. But Silver Smile does, and they think he has gone to the theater manager’s office to settle the score with them.

Note

In fact, Silver Smile believes that revenge is a dish best served cold. Upon seeing that his escape by river has been compromised, he uses the small passageway to get to the theater’s foyer and tries to make off through the main entrance using his powers of persuasion or stealth.

CHASE ACROSS THE FLIES

To access the fly tower’s platforms, mechanisms, and catwalks, the *player characters* can use the ladders and vertical stairs on the walls of the backstage area or attempt the much riskier but spectacular task of cutting the rope attached to the counterweights for the scenery or lighting and holding on tight to rocket upwards toward the platform over the stage.

The flies are a multi-level network of ropes, chains, fixed platforms, and moving catwalks that climbs almost 100 feet into the air. Dark figures abandon any attempt at stealth and start leaping from one platform to the next, scrambling up the vertical ladders to escape from their pursuers through one of the trapdoors at the top.

The risk and speed needed to catch up with these two shadows (black-clad members of Silver Smile) requires an extended Physical roll of 4 successes.

- ☞ If they manage it with 1 roll, they catch up to the henchmen on the flies.
- ☞ If they manage it with 2 rolls, they catch up to one of them on the flies, but the other one reaches the trapdoor at the top.
- ☞ If they manage it with 3 rolls, both of the henchmen reach the trapdoor and open it.

If the player characters catch up to them, the henchmen fight to injure and flee. The risk of fighting on the flies is less that the enemy might hurt you than that you might fall off.

If the henchmen are caught, they can confess that they were planning to make their getaway through the window in the manager’s office on the second floor. According to the plan, by now their companions should have finished the job in the manager’s office and left everything ready for them to climb out without being seen.

Note

If the player characters have fought their way out and the theater staff and audience members believe they are guilty, it is they who are pursued and encounter difficulties in the theater.

THE ENCHANTED TRAPDOOR

The masked magician has laid a trap for Silver Smile’s henchmen. On the other side of the trapdoor leading to the second-floor maintenance room above (in the rear extension of the theater), everything is dark. A burst of white light blinds whoever opens it, and the ghost of Libertas Aeterna lets out a blood-curdling shriek. With almost supernatural speed, she rakes her nails down the face of the person who opens it and gives a sharp push.

“Get off my stage!” she yells.

The first goon to open the trapdoor topples from the highest platform, bouncing off ropes, chains, and moving catwalks to land with a sickening thud on another platform, some 50 feet below. Unless he manages to grab on to something, the fall will kill him.

If the *player characters* trap the henchmen and are the ones to open the trapdoor, Libertas Aeterna’s ghost will act the same way. The *player character* who is attacked (1d of damage) has to make a Physical check (Feats of Strength or similar) to see whether they manage to catch hold of something or fall. Their companions can try to grab onto them.

Note

A *player character* who has mastered *Linking Rings* could use a Trickerion shard to harden a chain to prevent them from falling.

The ghost slams the trapdoor shut and blocks it from the other side. A success on a Physical check (Feats of Strength) or in any other magical art capable of removing the bolt on the other side is needed. A quick analysis of the trapdoor with Deduction, Knowledge, or a disguise-related trick roll reveals that, based on the smell and the slight burn marks left on the trapdoor's inner frame, the blinding light was caused by magnesium flash powder.

The trapdoor leads to the upstairs hall maintenance room. There are traces of white powder makeup on the handle of the door to the hallway. Halfway down the hallway, there is a scrap of shiny gray cloth woven with silver thread (from Libertas Aeterna's costume). Behind them, the hallway ends in a stairway. There are various locked doors on either side. In front of them, the hallway ends at the door to Krafner's office.

The ghost's obstacles

The fake ghost breaks into a run to reach the theater roof as quickly as possible. At the same time, the figure seeks to slow the *player characters* down.

There are four obstacles: the blocked trapdoor, the door to the manager's office, an analysis of the clues in the office, and the secret stairway. 4 successes – or making the right decisions – at each one makes it more likely for them to catch up to the false ghost or even confront the masked magician on the roof.

By now, the masked magician has retrieved the hypnotizer and chest from the secret chamber and is carrying them up the chimney of the tower over the vault to the roof.

Given enough time, the *player characters* can overcome the obstacles or find alternative routes. But the ticking clock requires task rolls to avoid wasting time. Failures here do not mean that they have been stymied for good, but that they have to spend more time getting past the obstacle or finding an alternative route.

- 2 failures: they're too late. They get to the roof just in time to see them leave (see the "Out in the open" section).

OUT IN THE OPEN

Whether by following the trail of the false ghost or through the clues they find, the *player characters* are likely to reach Krafner's office.

THE MANAGER'S SECRETS

The door to the manager's office is locked from the inside. It is a complicated lock (-1d). A success on an Expertise check (Fixing Things or similar) or the use of a trick involving mastery of locks allows it to be picked.

Inside, the office is a shambles. A painting has been torn off the wall and tossed carelessly aside. Papers and books have been swept from the shelves. The safe that the painting once hid is ajar. The desk drawers have been forced open, and various objects and confidential documents lie scattered across the desk. There are also thick ropes fitted with grapnels by the balcony on the side-wall overlooking the garden area behind the theater, on Break Street.

The criminals have broken open the safe where the contest prize and a stack of Bank of Magoria bonds had been kept and left the ropes for the fly-system saboteurs to make their getaway. The rest of the disarray was caused by the masked magician, to throw anyone who might be following him off his trail. To make sure the investigation of the robbery points to Silver Smile and his crew, he has also left a bit of fake blood and a silver tooth among the mess by the safe. While he is at it, he hopes to expose some of Krafner's murky dealings and accounts to satisfy an old grudge. A sufficient smoke screen for unsuspecting eyes.

If the *player characters* decide to look around and read through the documents, they can make Deduction checks (Files, Observation) to obtain information about:

- ☞ Records of unethical arrangements to grant special treatment to magicians in the theater.
- ☞ Payoffs for brokering the illegal sale of magical technological contraptions.
- ☞ Money laundering by padding theater attendance on slow days.

However, this will cause them to lose time on their quest to catch up to the masked magician. If any of the *player characters* obtains extra successes and chooses the "do it in less time" option or states that their interest is in tracking the ghost, they find white makeup and sweat on a statuette on the bookcase behind the desk chair.

Pulling on it causes the bookcase to rotate with a mechanical noise, revealing a secret ladder up to the wooden roof frame of the theater's rear extension. If they have been quick enough – if they have not wasted time on the goons or the obstacles left to slow them down – they can see Libertas Aeterna's ghost scurrying across the rafters and disappearing through a door on the other side. Otherwise, they can follow the trail of makeup left by the ghost in its haste to get away.

ESCAPE ROUTE

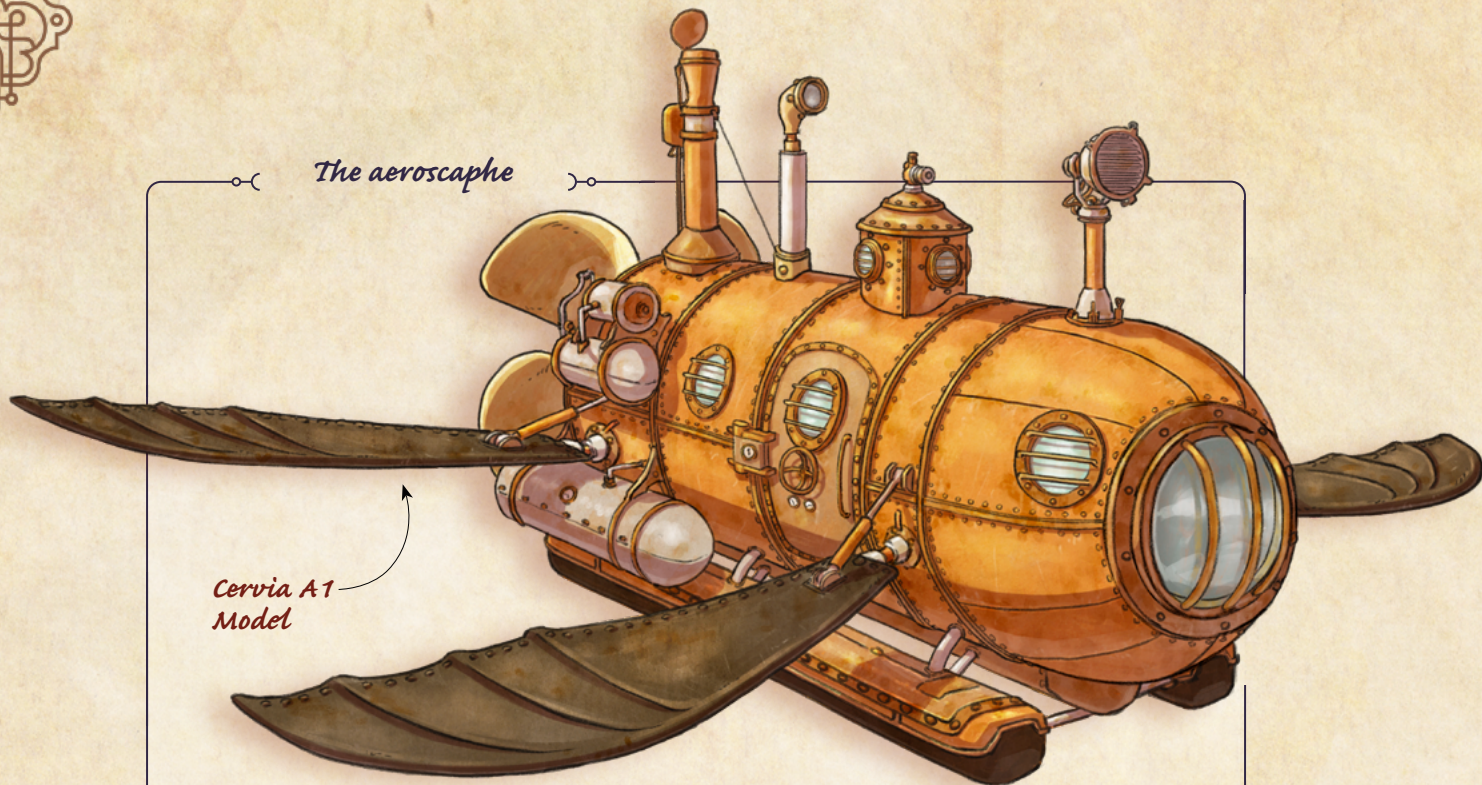
The false ghost opens a door and enters a very narrow room housing crane gears and pulleys over the backstage area. There are ladders at both ends leading up to the roof rafters over the flies. The ghost runs and jumps across the rafters to the ladder on the opposite wall and climbs down. It passes through a doorway and emerges into a large space, spanning some 450 square feet, full of columns, beams, and tall windows that let in the moonlight. It jumps to a narrow column and slides down it to a large wooden platform anchored to the walls and ceiling.

A wide double hatch equipped with pulleys looks down into the Magnus Pantheon's great secret chamber. The ghost peaks over the edge to check that the masked magician is no longer there, then dashes off to the other end to clamber up to the apex of the frame of the inner dome over the orchestra seats. There it finds the entrance to the chimney leading up to the tower. An open doorway provides access to the spiral ramp and narrow steps carved into the wall leading up to the circular tower. One of the tower's six fixed windows, stretching from floor to ceiling, has been torn out of its frame.

On the roof, in addition to breathtaking views of Mago-ria, they find the real mastermind behind the sabotage. Depending on how fast the *player characters* get there, the situation they encounter may be:

- ☞ The masked magician giving orders to one of the two crew members of a hovering aeroscaph to winch the metal basket with the hypnotizer and chest on board (one or no failures in the chase).





The aeroscaphe

Cervia A1
Model

The aeroscaphe looks like a small, antique ochre-colored submarine, with a glass nose to give the pilot a broad view. It has portholes and side hatches affording access to a small hold with seats. It is powered by a hybrid propulsion system combining a steam engine with elaborate clockwork to move its four batwings and rear propeller.

The expensive Cervia A1 model is safer and more agile than its predecessor, the Storm A2. Its creator, the mechanical magician Joannes de Cervia III, protected the ballonet by cleverly integrating it into the fuselage, balancing the flight. At the same time, he enhanced its maneuverability with the new four-wing design.

- ☞ The masked magician's loot has already been hoisted on board, and he is waiting by a ladder for his ghostly assistant (two failures).
- ☞ The aeroscaphe is beginning to maneuver away while the masked magician laughs and waves to the *player characters* (three or four failures).

CATCHING THE GHOST

If the *player characters'* actions have been successful (one or no failures when overcoming the obstacles), they can catch the fake ghost on the wooden platform or in the inner dome.

Realizing that escape is no longer an option, the ghost attempts to use its skills to delay the *player characters* for as long as possible. Each turn that it manages to do so is equivalent to the delay caused by a failure during the chase.

FACE TO FACE WITH THE MASKED MAN

Reaching the roof in time makes it possible to confront the magician and his assistant (if they have not already been caught). If they are both there, it is highly unlikely that they can be stopped, since their illusion skills and magic are superior to those of the *player characters*. Additionally, once they have brought the hypnotizer and chest on board or when they receive the order, the crew in the hold begin to pelt the *player characters* with tools and objects from the *aeroscaphe*.

However, if push comes to shove, the masked magician does not hesitate to leave his assistant, the chest, or the hypnotizer – in that order – behind in order to escape. In that case, the masked magician uses his last resort: two points of amber light appear between the fingers of one of his hands. The light snakes around his body and then quickly disappears, only to create a copy of him made out of

translucent energy in the aeroscaph's hold. First, the head, then the torso, the arms, and the legs: his body physically teleports to the copy and the energy disappears. He gives the order to take off immediately, and the craft speeds away toward the northeast of the city.

Should any intrepid *player character* choose to jump onto the ladder before the aeroscaph gets too far away, they will face a perilous future. The magician unhooks the ladder, causing the *player character* to plummet... into the Magor River? Onto the roof of another tall building? Into a garden area? To the pavement? It is up to you.

CATCHING THE MASKED MAGICIAN

If the *player characters* use their resources wisely and luck is on their side, they may be able to corner the masked magician quickly enough to prevent him from using his two Trickerion shards. In no case will the magician fight to the death. He prefers to allow himself to be caught, trusting in his abilities to free himself when the time comes.



EPILOGUE

If the *player characters* do not intervene, when the police take control of the Magnus Pantheon, they are detained and interrogated. After listening to all the witnesses' accounts, the police are unable to determine to what extent, if any, they were involved in what happened or prove that they are working with Silver Smile. The investigation turns to the crime syndicate.

In contrast, if they have successfully intervened, showcasing their extraordinary abilities, their exploits will be reported by the Magoria press with headlines such as "Fateful Magicians' Duel" or "Murder of the Ghost of Libertas."

The manager, Krafner, is also questioned, about both what happened and the documents found in his office. Only time will tell whether he will stand trial or his high-placed connections will manage to have the charges dropped or reduced.

Professor Bernard is devastated by what happened. If Julian Neitini has ultimately died, he declares him the posthumous winner of the contest. The judges unanimously agree. He seeks refuge for a time in Dahlgaard Academy, wracked with guilt for having exposed the talented young people to such danger.

If the masked magician has only taken the first step in a larger plan, nobody knows what his next move will be, nor his true nature.

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

PROFESSOR BERNARD

Rector of Dahlgaard Academy

A famous master escape artists with vast knowledge of metal craftsmanship. He is highly respected for his seriousness and impeccable manners and celebrated for his dedication.

☞ **Description:** 50 years old. Short stature (dwarfism). Fair, ruddy complexion. Short, thick, light-brown hair with bushy lynx-like sideburns and a large mustache that extends past his cheeks. He wears red-tinted spectacles, smokes a pipe, and dresses dapperly in a suit, waistcoat, shirt, and short neckerchief.

☞ **Motivation:** To produce top-tier future magicians through the demanding admissions process and curriculum at Dahlgaard Academy.

☞ **Abilities:** This *non-player character's* stats are not important. If he needs to roll, consider him to have 3d.

☞ **Tricks:** Escape 3. Most of the Escape 2 tricks.

JULIAN NEITINI, THE ELUSIVE KNIGHT

A young magician and apprentice at Dahlgaard Academy

Outgoing and flamboyant, like a human peacock. Eyes that burn with ambition and a crafty smile. He works hard to become the best escape artist in Magoria. Lacking patrons, he combines performances, training, and his studies with a part-time job at a steel mill southwest of the city.

☞ **Description:** 21 years old. Average height. Green eyes. Shoulder-length, dark brown hair, which he wears tied back in a short ponytail. Tanned skin reddened by his work near the forge. A thin mustache and neatly trimmed goatee. He wears gloves to hide the soot in the cracks of his hands and under his nails.

☞ **Motivation:** To be the best student in order to leave the dirt behind. His rivalry with the *player characters*.

☞ **Abilities:** Level 3 for Physical and Charisma. Level 2 for all the rest.

☞ **Tricks:** Escape 1. *Water Tank Escape 1, Prison Break 1.*

ALEXANDER KRAFNER

Manager of the Magnus Pantheon

Equal parts businessman and theater critic. He has murky dealings with the Bank of Magoria and various suppliers, nobles, and master magicians. Aloof and humorless, he cannot abide wasting time.

☞ **Description:** 45 years old. Tall. Dark skin (Afar ethnicity). Flinty gaze, black eyes, eyebrows shot with gray, and white, braided hair. Elegantly dressed in line with the latest upper-class fashions (black morning coat, midnight blue waist coat, white shirt, red scarf, top hat). Meticulously shaven. Walking stick.

☞ **Motivation:** Admirer of magic, although he does not practice it. The Magnus Pantheon is his ticket to wealth and fame.

☞ **Abilities:** He excels in Deduction (3) and Knowledge (3).

THEATER AUDIENCE

A disparate mix of upper-class, middle-class, and a small group of lower-class theatergoers, including a handful of off-duty police officers and members of the Archduke's guard enjoying a day off. Most have heard or seen too many extraordinary things on the job to be skeptical about the supernatural and magic.

☞ **Abilities:** Level 2 in all Abilities except their main strength – Physical for the police, Combat for the guards – in which they have a level 3.

THEATER STAFF

Service staff and technicians: box-office clerks, ushers, restaurant servers, stagehands, custodians, lighting technicians, set designers, and maintenance people.

☞ **Description:** Men and women between the ages of 18 and 50.

☞ **Motivation:** They value their jobs as a livelihood. Each may have his or her own worldview and beliefs. However, most have seen enough of what goes on behind the scenes to believe that only a select few can do true magic.

☞ **Abilities:** Level 3 in the Ability they need most for their job (Deduction for clerks, Expertise for technicians, Charisma for service workers, Physical for custodians); level 2 in all the others.

SILVER SMILE CRIMINALS

Thugs and thieves engaged in a variety of illegal activities, such as smuggling, counterfeiting, theft, and extortion.

- ☞ **Description:** Men and women aged 16 to 35. Lower-class. Dark gray tweed suit or black clothing. Black, long-visored cap. Silver dental crowns or full silver pieces; the number reflects their status in the organization.
- ☞ **Motivation:** Loyal to Silver Smile out of convenience, respect, and fear.
- ☞ **Abilities:** Level 3 in their Specialty (Expertise for thieves, Combat for thugs); level 2 in all the others.

SILVER SMILE

Leader of the eponymous crime syndicate

The mysterious crime boss's appearance is as hard to define as it is to forget. His face is particularly nondescript and androgynous. His body is slender but sinuous, and his movements are graceful. His identity is unknown.

- ☞ **Description:** Androgynous. Around 40 years old. Lower-class. Black, long-visored cap. Dark clothes. A full set of silver teeth.
- ☞ **Motivation:** To amass wealth and power through illegal activities.
- ☞ **Abilities:** Level 3 across the board, including in Combat.

LIBERTAS AETERNA'S GHOST

The masked magician's assistant

Laura Argnac is a costume design and staging specialist. For the last ten years, she has toured the length and breadth of the Old Continent, working as an assistant to the masked magician. Her loyalty to the masked man blurs the boundaries between admiration, need, and attraction.

- ☞ **Description:** 34 years old. Fair and freckled. Bright white makeup. Loose-fitting gauze and tulle clothing with strategic alterations. Use of alchemical preparations to create atmospheric vapors.
- ☞ **Motivation:** Following the masked magician.
- ☞ **Abilities:** She has a level 3 in Expertise (Alchemy, Disguises), Physical, and Charisma.

MASKED MAGICIAN

Unknown master magician

A mysterious magician who hides his face. His origin and general motivation are unknown.

- ☞ **Description:** Around 40 years old. Average height. White mask with a blue teardrop painted below the right eye. Tanned skin. Comfortable dark blue suit and long black coat. Blue eyes. Funny laugh.
- ☞ **Immediate motivation:** To steal the hypnotizer. To escape before he gets caught. To get caught before he gets seriously injured. Willing to leave his assistant behind if necessary.
- ☞ **Abilities:** He excels in Deduction (4), Charisma (3), Expertise (3), and Knowledge (3).
- ☞ **Tricks:** Escape 3, *Transported Man 2*, among others he has mastered.

