HeartQuest

Romantic Roleplaying in the Worlds of Shoujo Manga

REVISED EDITION

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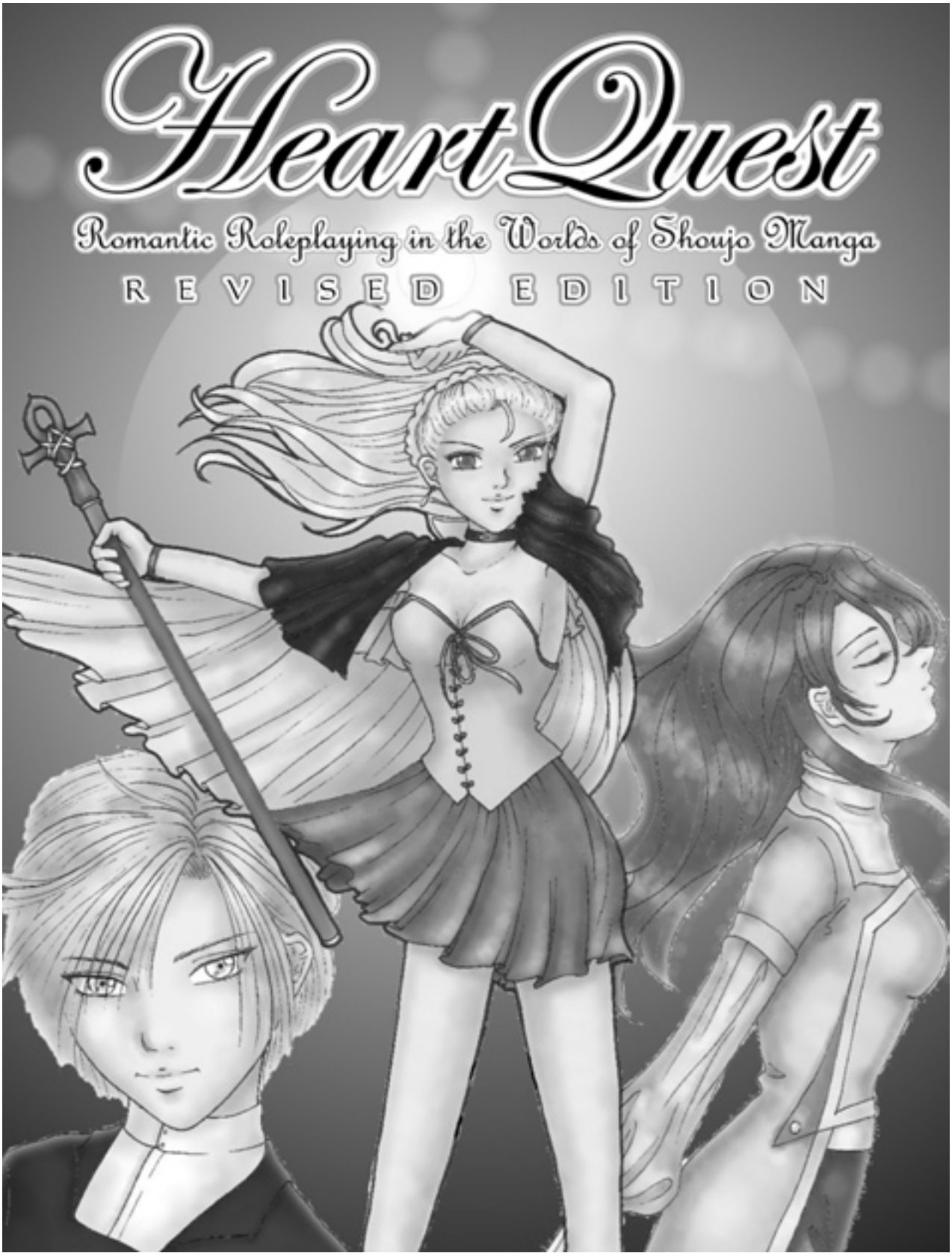

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Fudge SYSTEM™

About Fudge

Fudge is a role-playing game written by Steffan O'Sullivan, with extensive input from the Usenet community of rec.games.design.

The basic rules of Fudge are available on the internet at http://www.fudgerpg.com/ and in book form from Grey Ghost Games, P.O. Box 838, Randolph, MA 02368. They may be used with any gaming genre. While an individual work derived from Fudge may specify certain attributes and skills, many more are possible with Fudge. Every Game Master using Fudge is encouraged to add or ignore any character traits. Anyone who wishes to distribute such material for free may do so; merely include this ABOUT FUDGE notice and disclaimer (complete with Fudge copyright notice). If you wish to charge a fee for such material, other than as an article in a magazine or other periodical, you must first obtain a royalty-free license from the author of Fudge, Steffan O'Sullivan, P.O. Box 465, Plymouth, NH 03264.

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Preface:

A Word From the Publisher

When the design process for HeartQuest: Romantic Roleplaying in the Worlds of Shoujo Manga began in 2001, Seraphim Guard as a company was barely an idea and shoujo as a roleplaying genre was seen as barely imaginable. People told me all the time that the game could not be done, that the problems of writing rules for a genre that was built around the mental and emotional states of player characters were insurmountable. When the game was published in 2002, the execution was far from perfect but I am proud to say that many fans have embraced the concepts and ideals of HeartQuest.

When 2003 came around, our desire to extend the line and expand our company led to a desire to revise HeartQuest, fix the problems that people had noticed and that we had discovered, and expand the possibilities of the game further still. This led to mecha rules, new settings and a complete revision of some systems. It also led to a thorough copyedit of the entire book and the commissioning of a ton of new art. It is now the Spring of 2004, and the result of our efforts is the book you hold in your hands today.

Many of you are joining the HeartQuest community for the first time with this edition. To you, I offer a warm and hearty welcome. Let me be the first to show you the delights of shoujo roleplaying. The experiences you will have with this game are found in no other roleplaying game on the market today. As you develop your own campaign setting, adapt your favorite anime or manga series, or explore any of the half-dozen campaign settings offered in this book, you will find yourself stretched in new directions. Roleplaying is as much about self-discovery as it is about taking on another persona, and there's lot more to this game than defeating enemies. Enjoy the journeys on which this game will take you.

As you explore HeartQuest, one resource you will want to explore is the Seraphim Fan Network, which we have established as a place where HeartQuest players can explore its many worlds. You will find services for online campaigns, chatrooms for live play, and a forum for discussing everything contained in this book, your own ideas and explorations, and then some. Join us at http://www.seraphimfan.com today. You will love the camaraderie that being part of a community offers.

A lot of people were involved in putting together this book. You will find many of their names on the credits page, but several people deserve special mention. Alexandre van Chestein has done a marvelous job of defining the look and feel of HeartQuest throughout its run both as art director and as the all-important layout guru who typesets these books. He does not get nearly as much credit as he deserves. The many people who have expanded the HeartQuest omniverse over the years deserve special thanks; people like Anthony Ford, Ramsey Lundock, Douglas Larke and Vincent Cooper have added great creativity and insight to the product line. So have artists like Laura Anderton and Krista Wells, who have taken on the monumental task of turning the germs of ideas presented in our books into original comics

for future publication. Michael Conway's hard work in editing the mansucript for clarity has been an enormous help. Charles Phipps, as one of Seraphim Guard's principal shareholders, has been instrumental both in bringing this book to reality and in expanding the scope of our company. And Jennifer Dimarco of Windstorm Creative deserves special thanks for having the faith in this game and in our company to help arrange printing and distribution over as broad a market as possible.

I cannot close this preface without mentioning the anime/manga fans, fan writers, fan artists, and website operators all over the globe whose enthusiasm and imagination are among my primary sources of inspiration. Nor can the importance of the creators, publishers and producers of shoujo manga and anime be overstated. Without the imagination and discipline of creators from the legendary Osamu Tezuka to such recent geniuses as Nakao Takeuchi and CLAMP, none of this would have happened. I am eternally grateful to the masters whose craft I can but emulate.

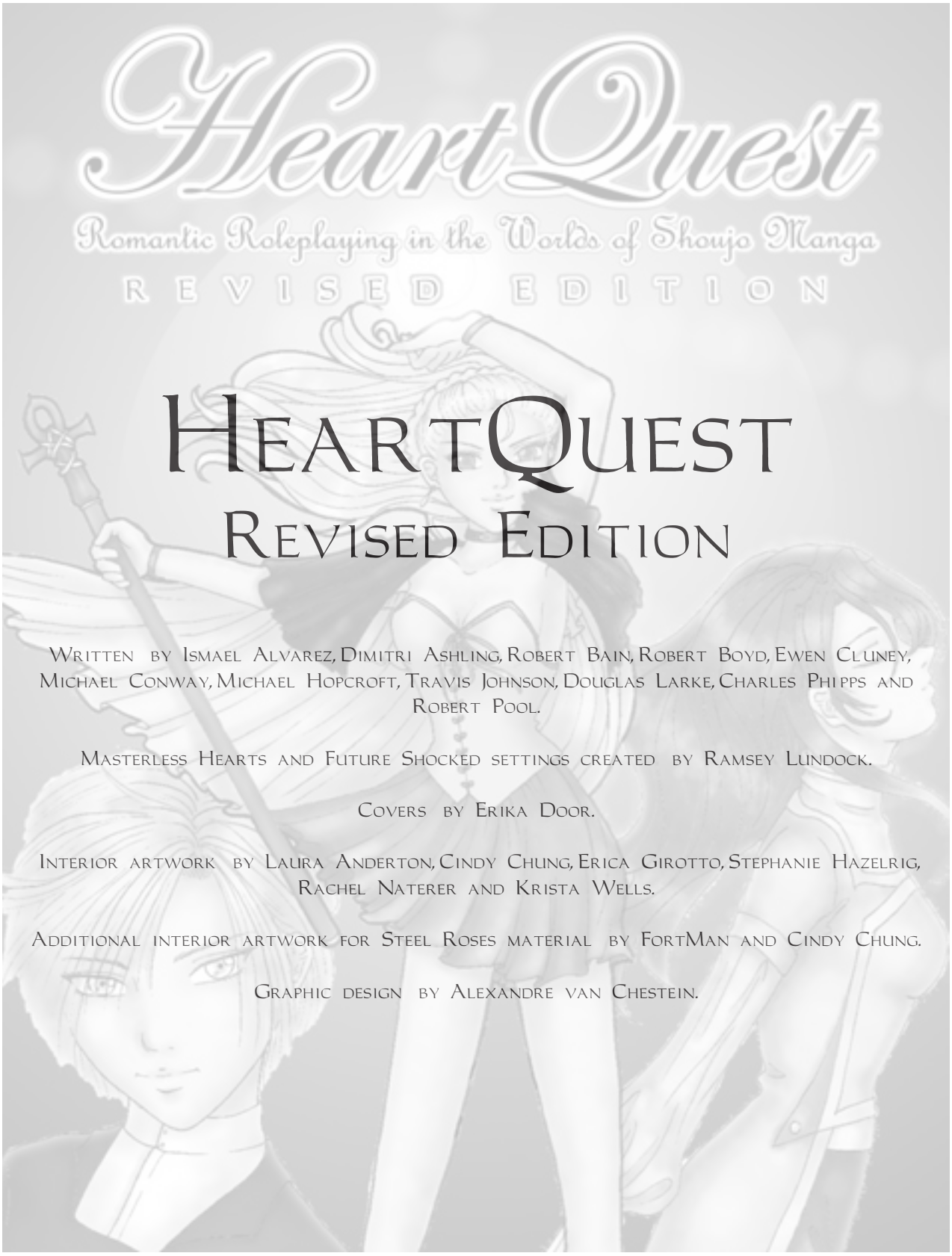
I wish that your lives as well as your roleplaying be filled with the values of classic shoujo: love, valor, hope, compassion. Thank you for embarking on this journey, and may God bless every one of you.

Michael Hopcroft

President, Seraphim Guard, Inc.

February 6, 2004

If you enjoy Heartquest, we invite you to stay informed about all the upcoming books from Seraphim Guard by visiting our website at www.seraphimguard.com. In addition to using the site to stay up to date with the latest happenings at Seraphim Guard, we welcome any comments or suggestions you have about this or any of our other books. As added features, the website will be updated with playing aids and a link to the new Seraphim Guard gaming site (www.seraphimfan.com).



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Chapter 0:

HeartQuest in a Nutshell

Welcome to *HeartQuest,* the roleplaying game of adventure and romance in the worlds of shoujo manga. This rules summary will serve as an introduction to a game that we hope will provide you with hours of entertainment.

An Introduction to Roleplaying

A roleplaying game is a grown-up version of the "let's pretend" games that most of us played as children. If you ever played "cops and robbers" with your neighbors, hosted a tea party for your stuffed animals, or engaged in similar imaginative activities, you have played simple roleplaying games. Some folks have realized that gathering with their friends to portray imaginary characters in dramatic situations is too much fun to be abandoned on reaching adulthood. Roleplaying games like *HeartQuest* provide their players with an opportunity to play "let's pretend" with their adult friends in a more sophisticated manner. In *HeartQuest*, each player assumes the role of one or more characters, imaginary people living in a fictional world. The game consists of the interactions between the characters and between the characters and their environment. Roleplaying games are a form of open-ended storytelling or improvisational theater where the players respond to and build upon the ideas and actions of their companions to create a fictional world that seems lifelike because it constantly evolves with each player's contributions.

Because the point of roleplaying is pretending to be somebody else, characters are at the center of any roleplaying game. Thus, it is important for the game to have guidelines to help the players define their characters' abilities and personalities. Chapter One contains *HeartQuest*'s rules for character generation. Shoujo manga contain a wide variety of character types. *HeartQuest* allows players to simulate this diversity through a flexible character creation system that gives players a great deal of liberty in defining their characters. To get an idea of the kinds of characters you can create with *HeartQuest*, look at the Sample Characters we have provided in Chapter Twelve. These sample characters will also give you an idea of the variety of worlds that *HeartQuest* characters adventure in. This rule book also contains guidelines for creating your own milieu for shoujo manga style drama as well as introductions to three game settings developed by Seraphim Guard: "Sendai Academy," "Ghost Tamer Miyaki," and "Steel Heidi."

One frustration that juvenile role-players run into is resolving conflicts between characters. Arguments that run, "`Bang! You're dead!' `Am not!' `Are too,'" practically define childish behavior. *HeartQuest* helps its players avoid this kind of bickering through the Combat rules in Chapter Four and the Task Resolution rules in Chapter Three. *HeartQuest*'s combat and task resolution systems are designed to be easy to understand and use.

To play *HeartQuest*, you will need a few items in addition to this rulebook. First, you will want to find a few other players to play with. In most circumstances, five to seven players is an ideal number, although flexible players can find ways

of accommodating as few as two players and as many as two or three dozen. One player in every group will act as the Game Master. The Game Master, or GM, acts as a combination of referee, playwright, theatrical director, and legion of extras. The GM is a referee because she is responsible for interpreting the rules as the game progresses. She is a playwright because she determines the game setting that the players' characters will adventure in and the situations they will face. She acts as a director because she provides players with an opportunity to act their character's part. Finally, the GM provides a "cast of thousands," portraying all of the characters encountered in the game world who are not portrayed by the other players.

You will also want to make sure that the following materials are available when you play *HeartQuest*: pencil and paper, dice (preferably FUDGE dice as described in "*HeartQuest* in a Nutshell"), comfortable chairs, a well-lit table, a few snacks and drinks. You should plan on setting aside a few hours for play. Depending on the situation being simulated and the number of players present, it can take four hours of game play to resolve an adventure that would fit in a one-hour television episode. If possible, take some time before the scheduled start of the game to arrange administrative details such as character creation with the other players. Character creation in *HeartQuest* gives you many options; it will take some time to make the decisions that will help you get your character "just right." Finally, don't forget your imagination, sense of humor, and dramatic sensibilities–they'll all come in handy as you enjoy *HeartQuest*.

Introduction to Shoujo

Shoujo is Japanese for "girl", and "shoujo manga" literally means "comics for girls". In Japan, everyone reads comics, from children to housewives and salarymen. There are comics for every kind of audience, from teenagers to adults, and every level of maturity in subject matter from childish to perverted in the extreme.

Shoujo manga as we know it today began with the first great master of Japanese comics, Osamu Tezuka. There had been comics aimed at girls today, but Tezuka's series Princess Knight revolutionized the field with its strong storytelling, broad appeal, and classic art style. It helped launch the girls' comic magazine Nakayosi into a powerhouse. Nakayosi would go on to host, over the next forty years, a diverse range of titles including Sailor Moon, Magic Knights Rayearth, Saint Tail and Card Captor Sakura. Tezuka in turn got his inspiration from the all-female theatrical troupes he had watched as a boy growing up in prewar Japan.

Shoujo manga, like manga itself, deals with a wide variety of subjects. Some of it consists no more than romance stories set in high school or college, or in the workplace. Others introduce all the adventure elements that are present in other Japanese comics. The mood of the comics can range from gritty realism to wild, romantic fantasy. The one constant is the emphasis on emotions and their power over the characters in the story. Even a seemingly straight adventure story like Pretty Soldier Sailormoon (Sailor Moon) has a strong romantic element – Usagi is driven by love and torn by romantic and emotional uncertainty as much by her reasonable fear of the power of her enemies.

Ever since Princess Knight, shoujo stories have been animated frequently, and sometimes adapted into live-action films. Sailormoon ran for 200 episodes!

Shoujo first gained popularity in America in the early '90s when a horrible dub of Sailormoon was released for syndication. Anime fans, of course, at least those lucky enough to be in clubs

that could get their hands on it, had already seen the original. Fans began importing shoujo anime on their own, translating it themselves and distributing it among themselves as illegal "fansubs". Nonetheless, this was tolerated as long as the fansubs did not trespass on shows that were already being release d commercially. Sailor Moon was the first test of this policy, as many fans of the series did not want to give up their fansubs after seeing the English version. Later in the 1990s, Pioneer Animation brought over the romantic adventure series Fushigi Yuugi and shoujo began to seriously take off. If the anime front began to expand, the manga front got even bigger with many comic book publishers acquiring shoujo titles and bringing them over to the States.

Today, shoujo manga is an accepted part of the comics scene in America.

Characters and Character Traits

HeartQuest characters are described by "traits," including Attributes (five traits that everyone in the game world has), Skills (any trait that isn't an Attribute and can be improved through practice), Gifts (any trait that isn't an attribute or skill but is something positive for the character), and Faults (any trait that limits a character's actions or earns him a bad reaction from others). Supernormal powers are treated as potent Gifts.

HeartQuest uses ordinary words to describe Attributes and Skills. The following terms of a seven-level sequence are the descriptive words used in *HeartQuest*:

Superb
Great
Good
Fair
Mediocre
Poor
Terrible

There is an additional level not listed above, Legendary, which is beyond Superb. Beginning players should not have Legendary Attributes without the GM's permission.

Attributes

Characters in *HeartQuest* have five Attributes. These Attributes are further described in Chapter One, Character Creation.

Physique: This measures physical prowess.

Mind: This is your mental capacity—how smart you are and how swiftly your mind works.

Willpower: This measures stick-to-itiveness, determination, and ability to remain focused on your goals.

Cool: This is your ability to keep it together in the face of pressure.

Appearance: This represents how good you look to others, particularly members of the opposite sex.

Character Creation

In *HeartQuest*, a character's Attributes start at a default level of Fair for all Attributes other than Appearance, which starts at Good, and each player has three "free" levels to allocate amongst their Attributes. Most Skills start at a default rating of Poor and the player has thirty free levels to allocate. Those Skills that do not start at Poor

are indicated as Easy, Hard, or Very Hard in the Master Skill List and on the Character Folio. The player may also take two free Gifts. In some settings, the GM may also permit the players to take two free Supernormal Powers. In some cases, the character may desire to have more of one type of trait than another. Furthermore, the player may wish to acquire additional traits at the cost of taking Faults. This is done through the procedure of trading traits. Not all traits have equal impact on the game, so the following ratios are used in determining their relative values:

1 fault = 2 attribute levels
1 fault = 6 skill levels
1 fault = 1 gift

1 attribute = 3 skill levels
1 gift = 2 attribute levels
1 gift = 6 Skills

Action Resolution

For any action the player character wishes to perform, the GM must determine which trait is tested. (This will usually be a skill or an attribute.) If the action is Unopposed, the GM determines the Difficulty Level. Some actions are so easy that the character succeeds automatically; others are impossible. No rolls are needed in either of these situations.

Unopposed Actions

When a character performs an action that isn't influenced by anyone else, it is referred to as an Unopposed Action. Examples include jumping a wide chasm, climbing a cliff, buying the right keychain, etc.

Difficulty Level: The GM will set a Difficulty Level when a character tries an Unopposed Action. Usually the Difficulty Level will be Fair, but some tasks are easier or harder.

Rolled Degree: This refers to how well a character does at a particular task. If someone is Good at Climbing in general, but the die roll shows a +1 to the character's skill level–in this case Great. Rolled Degrees from Superb +1 to Superb +4 are possible; a GM may thus set a Difficulty Level beyond Superb for nearly impossible actions. Likewise, there are rolled degrees from Terrible -1 down to Terrible -4. The GM should use her imagination in determining such abysmal failures.

Opposed Actions

Actions are Opposed when other people (or animals, etc.) may have an effect on the outcome of the action. In this case, the player of each contestant rolls some dice, and the results are compared to determine the outcome.

Relative Degree: This refers to how well a character did compared to another participant in an Opposed Action. The relative degree is expressed as a number of levels. If a player character gets a rolled degree result of Good in a fight, an his non-player character foe gets a rolled degree result of Mediocre, the player character beat his foe by two levels–the relative degree is +2 from his perspective, -2 from the opponent's.

Fudge Dice and Alternate Random Result Generators

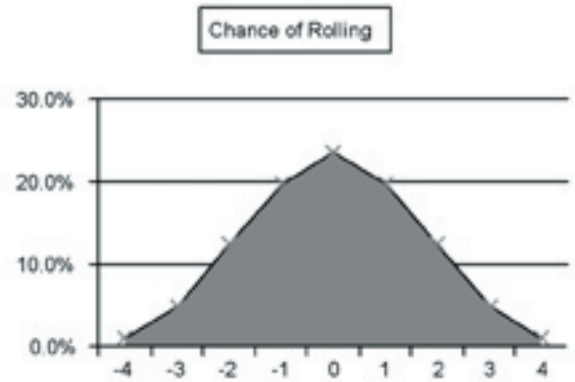
Fudge Dice are six-sided dice with two sides marked + (+1), two sides marked - (-1), and two sides left blank (+/-0). Rolling four Fudge Dice gives results from -4 (sub-Terrible) to +4 (Legendary). To determine the result of an action, roll the dice and use the result to modify the trait level being tested. For example a +3 dice result (three more + than - rolled) added to a Fair trait is a Superb rolled degree; a -1 result added to a Fair trait indicates a Mediocre result.

Alternative 3d6 dice method: If you do not have Fudge Dice available, you may wish to use the following method for calculating results: Roll 3 six-sided dice. Add the numbers and compare the sum to the following table:

Rolled:	3-4	5	6-7	8-9
Result:	-4	-3	-2	-1

Rolled:	10-11	12-13	14-15	16-17	18
Result:	0	+1	+2	+3	+4

When determining Difficulty Levels, it may help to keep the statistical results of rolling four Fudge dice in mind. A little over half of the time, you will roll zero or plus or minus one. The chance of obtaining the various results is shown in the graph below.



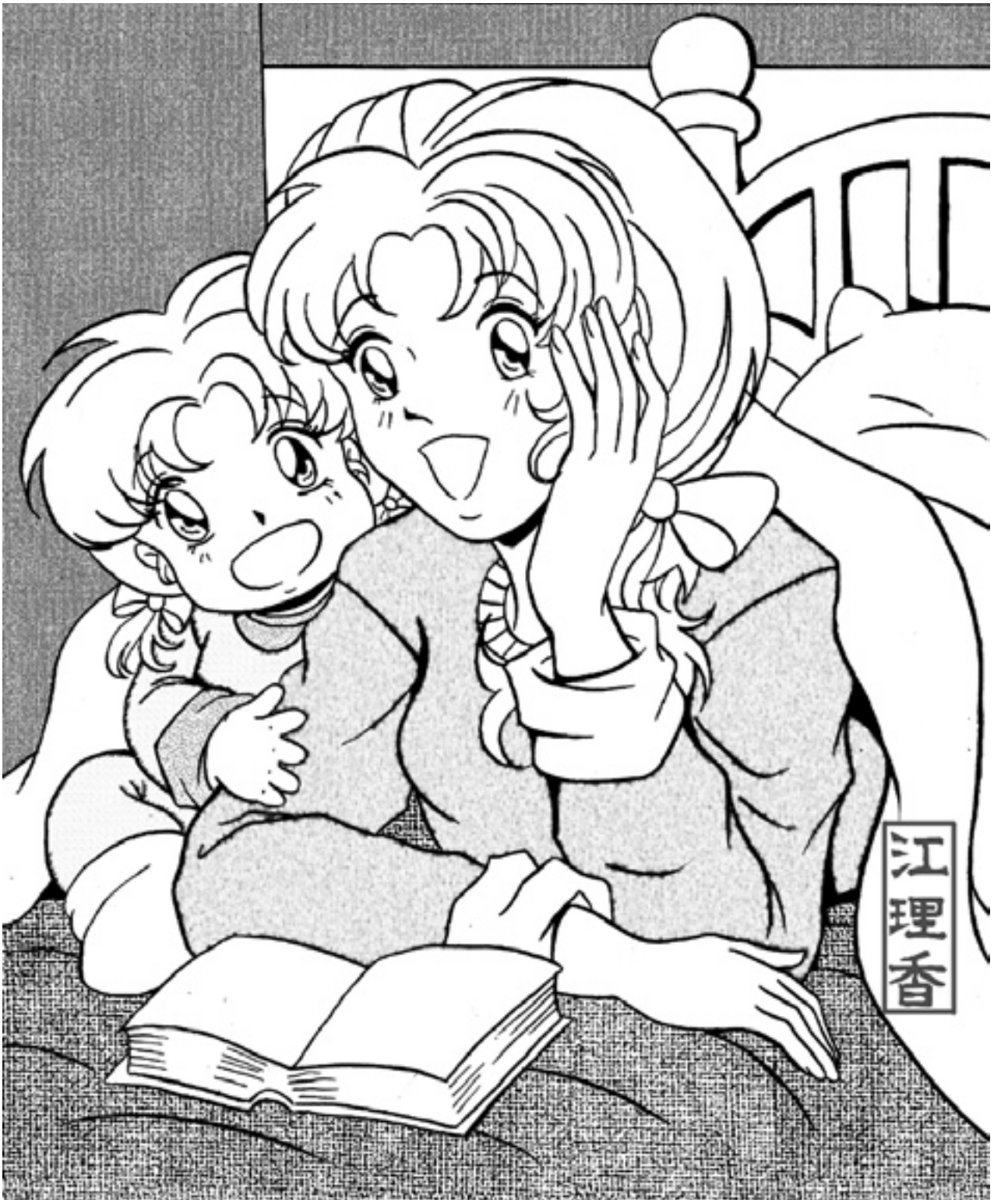
Scale

Every so often, characters with very different traits will oppose each other. For example, the heroine's kitten may chose to pick a fight with a dragon. Both the dragon and the kitten will have traits ranging from Terrible to Superb; however, a dragon with a Poor Physique is not a push over for a kitten with a Great Physique. In our example, the dragon's physique is rated in the Dragon Scale while the kitten's physique is rated in the Cat Scale. The GM determines the difference between dragon and cat scale as a number of additional success levels when they attempt various actions (the dragon will do much more damage, but the kitten will have an easier time hiding under his mistress' dress). The GM will tell you when Scale is a consideration in your game.

Wounds

Each character has a Wound Threshold that is calculated by adding or subtracting the character's Physique and Willpower Attributes to 10. A character can withstand accumulated damage up to his Wound Threshold without penalty. If the character suffers damage equaling his Wound Threshold, he is Hurt and suffers a -1 penalty to all of his dice rolls. A character that suffers twice his Wound Threshold, is Very Hurt and suffers a -2 penalty. If a character takes accumulates three times his Wound Threshold, he is Incapacitated and falls unconscious. A character that suffers five times his Wound Threshold is Dead.

Determining Damage Levels: Each character has an Offensive Damage Factor (ODF) and a Defensive Damage Factor (DDF). The ODF is determined based on the attacker's Physique, Scale (mass), and weapon. The DDF is based on the defender's Physique, Scale (mass), and armor. The damage inflicted by a victorious attacker equals his ODF minus the defender's DDF.


江理香

Chapter 1:

Character Creation

Needless to say, a character is a necessity for playing a roleplaying game. This chapter delves into the ins and outs of character creation for the *HeartQuest* RPG. This is an important step for any player character as the concepts and stats developed now will likely stay the same for a long period of time. This section describes the step-by-step process, starting with the basics and developing a better picture of the character as it proceeds.

To make things a bit clearer, we'll use Hiroshi from the Sendai Academy as an example character for each step. As we progress through the chapter, we'll watch as Hiroshi slowly develops into a complete character.

Trading Traits

Each character is made up of five specific elements that define, in terms of the character's stats, what the character is and what he can do. These elements are collectively known as "Traits." The five traits are attributes, skills, gifts, faults, and supernormal powers. Each character automatically starts with free levels for attributes, skills, gifts and (if used in the particular campaign) supernormal powers. In some cases, the player may feel their character needs more of a specific trait and less of another. Thus, players have the option of trading their traits around for their character. Not all traits are considered equal, however, and as such the values of some of the traits do not necessarily match up at a one-to-one ratio. Characters also can buy faults to increase the value of other traits.

1 fault = 2 attribute levels
1 fault = 6 skill levels
1 fault = 1 gift

1 attribute = 3 skill levels
1 gift = 2 attribute levels
1 gift = 6 skills

0. Campaign Settings

The first step in character creation is of course deciding what kind of character you want to play. There are countless character types in shoujo manga and their related anime that make fascinating player characters. Before work can begin on the character, you will need to work with your GM as far as what kind of campaign setting the game will use. This is an important decision since it may greatly affect the character's traits and background.

There are three types of campaign settings supported by the *HeartQuest* RPG: Teen Romance, Magical Girls, and Fantastic Adventures.

In a Teen Romance game, most of the characters will be boys and girls in high school or junior high. They'll be dealing with the traumas of growing up, falling in and out of love, friendship and enmity, and all of the sources of teenage angst and comedy. The characters can be much more than ordinary students, of course, often with their own unique talents. In a game like this a lot of characters will have social Gifts and Faults in quantity, attributes like Appearance and Cool are

at a premium, and so forth. Characters will not have Supernormal Powers in this type of game unless the GM says otherwise.

However, characters in a Teen Romance game are not necessarily limited to students. Teachers can make very interesting player characters as well, as can family, friends, siblings, parents, and anyone else likely to interact with teenagers.

There are other types of campaigns; perhaps the most famous type is the Magical Girl campaign. In a Magical Girl game, a common thread will link the player characters and they will all have Supernormal Powers. Usually, the GM will give each player a set number of powers and let the player buy extras by taking faults. Magical Girls have several traits in common; they usually keep their mystic activities a secret from the world at large by various means, they frequently transform from a normal form to a disguised or costumed one, and those whose activities are known are often misunderstood.

In both types of campaigns, the players should all work out as a group who is playing what type of character to avoid excessive duplication of effort. In most magical girl campaigns where all the PCs are magical girls, and they'll tend to have names or abilities in a certain theme. In Sailor Moon, for instance, each girl is named after a planet (Sailor Mercury, Sailor Venus, Sailor Mars, etc.) and has a type of power that is associated with it. This isn't required, but it should be something you and your fellow players should think about.

The third shoujo genre supported by the *HeartQuest* RPG is called Fantastic Adventures. In this type of campaign setting, the characters are often displaced persons that are sent to another world. In addition, all bets are off in terms of character creation. PCs from our world are often schoolgirls and schoolboys, but in the other world they often have abilities they only gradually become aware of. This can be handled by the GM giving the players latent Supernormal Powers that only manifest themselves gradually or only in emergencies. Characters can come from the other world as well, and have those abilities that are natural for that world. The GM will hopefully involve the players enough in the world design that they'll feel their characters belong there.

There are many other campaign types that work in *HeartQuest*, of course – far more than can be described here. The best approach when choosing a character concept is to have all the players and the GM work together to create the party of player characters so that they all fit together, with natural relationships and rivalries.

Example: Michael has decided he's going to start up a game for HeartQuest so to give the game some much needed playtesting. He's managed, so far, to get five different players for the game: Clarissa, Rob, Paul, James, and Dimitri. After some discussion, the six of them (counting Michael) decide to do a Teenage Romance campaign and comes up with a short list of character ideas he'd like to see implemented by the players.

1. Character Concept

All things have start from a certain point and expand outward. For the character creation process, this starting point is known as the "character concept" (or simply "concept"). The character concept, is, in essence, the basic set of ideas everything else comes from. The easiest way to come up with a character concept is create a brief phrase that describes the character. Take Hiroshi, our example character, for instance. Hiroshi could be described as "normal guy who hides superb physical/sports talent." We know that Hiroshi looks like a normal guy, but he's also got exceptional physical abilities. If he's a sports god and showing it off, why is he hiding it? From

such a phrase, more details can be yanked out and expanded to give the character greater depth. Little hooks like these give GMs excellent ways to mold sessions around the character's concept.

Other important elements of the character should also be fleshed out at this point. These include the character's gender, general height and weight, hair color and style, eye color, general tastes in clothing, and age.

Example: Rob, one of Michael's players, looks down the list and spots a guy named 'Hiroshi' who is the long time friend of the game's 'heroine', Chiharu. After telling Michael that he'll play the part of Hiroshi, he starts thinking about how to turn the character concept into a more fleshed out character. With that in mind, he starts with Hiroshi's physical appearance. He's a typical male shoujo manga character (in other words tall and slender with broad shoulders) with dirty blonde hair he combs to the left. He'll be a handsome guy, but not excessively so. Since Chiharu already looks be a bookworm, Rob decides to make Hiroshi more of a physical guy – maybe good at sports (since Chiharu isn't).

2. Attributes

Each FUDGE game defines its attributes differently. Each attribute is essentially something that all characters in the game have (see "FUDGE In A Nutshell" for more on attributes).

HeartQuest characters all have five attributes; **Physique**, **Mind**, **Willpower**, **Cool** and **Appearance**. Each attribute controls various aspects of how a character interacts with others and the world.

At the beginning of character creation all five Attributes are rated as Fair. You get three "free levels" you can use to increase your attributes. In addition, player characters automatically get an additional level of Appearance, meaning your Appearance can start out at Good without you using one of your free levels. You can get additional levels to spend on Attributes by taking a Fault: each fault gives you two levels to use for Attributes. You can also reduce the level of an Attribute below Fair and use that level elsewhere.

Physique is a measure of the character's ability to perform physical tasks. This attribute includes speed, dexterity, agility and raw muscular power. It is used when the character needs to do something physical such as lift something, run from one place to another, leap over a fence, and other feats where strength, stamina, or agility are important. It is rarely used in combat; use combat skills instead. If your character is stronger than he is quick, or vice versa, appropriate Gifts can further define this attribute.

Mind is a measure of mental capacity, including memory, raw intelligence and mental flexibility. A player can, for example, roll against Mind if there's an important detail the player has forgotten but the character might remember – the GM will remind him if the roll is made successfully. Mind rolls should never be used as a substitute for good role-playing, however! The Mind attribute can also be used to provide a general idea of how well a character does with schoolwork.

Willpower is a measure of the ability of the character to stick to a task, resist persuasion and seduction, and resist panic. Characters with a high Willpower possess truly indomitable spirits, while characters with a low Willpower are easy to manipulate. Willpower is also important for characters that dabble in supernatural powers and can also help characters withstand punishment in combat.

Cool is a measures of the character's ability to be smooth and composed in social situations. Characters with a high Cool never seem flustered

and are always able to say what they want to. Characters with a low Cool stumble on their tongues and don't always get to say what's on their minds.

Appearance measures how good a character looks to others. Characters with high Appearance are handsome or beautiful, and characters with really high Appearance are flat-out gorgeous. Characters with a low Appearance are unpleasant to look at for some reason. A character's Appearance is important and will go a long way towards determining how people react to him.

Example: Having gone through the descriptions, it's time to give Hiroshi his attributes. He's got three free levels to work with, plus a free level of Appearance. As Rob decided in step one, Hiroshi is going to be a very physical guy, so he uses those three free levels to flat out boost his Physique attribute to Superb. As for the other attributes, Rob will say Hiroshi has problems keeping his temper sometimes (especially when somebody is hitting on Chiharu) and can be a mess around pretty girls. Rob moves Hiroshi's Cool attribute from Fair to Mediocre. This will free up an extra attribute level, which he'll give to Willpower. This signifies Hiroshi's determination and ability to do what he sets his mind to. So in the end, Hiroshi has the following attributes:

Physique: Superb (+3)
Mind: Fair (+0)
Willpower: Good (+1)
Cool: Mediocre (-1)
Appearance: Good (+1)

Note: Rob has a habit of writing the modifiers alongside the attributes and skills of the characters he writes. He does it this way so to show the GM (and remind himself) how his attribute or skill levels were used. You don't have to do it yourself, but we thought it'd be a good idea to use them in the examples.

3. Skills

Skills represent any trait that can be learned through practice, study, or instruction. They represent narrow abilities and can be used to showcase areas where a character excels. Like attributes, they are rated on a scale from Terrible to Fair to Superb. Each player character starts with 30 skill levels at this point in the creation process. Additional skills can be obtained by taking faults at a rate of one fault per six skill levels.

Keep in mind that the skill list that follows is only a list of the most common skills that might pop up in *HeartQuest*. If the character should have an additional Skill not covered on the list, talk with your GM on the effects of the Skill. Think of the skills used in *HeartQuest* as the most common skills found among most characters.

Skill Difficulty

Most skills start at the "Poor" level and are increased with the free skill levels each player gets to distribute through their character. "If I place 3 points into my Acrobatic skill, the skill goes from Poor to Good." However, several skills in *HeartQuest* are easier or harder to learn. These skills and cost to increase them are included on the table below:

Table 1.1: Skill Difficulty Table

Level	Easy	Most	Hard	V.Hard
Superb	4	5	6	7
Great	3	4	5	6
Good	2	3	4	5
Fair	1	2	3	4
Mediocre	0	1	2	3
Poor	-1	0	1	2
Terrible	-2	-1	0	1

Those skills that fall under the Easy, Hard, or Very Hard categories will have an E, H, or VH in parenthesis by the name of the skill both in Master Skill List (found near the end of the chapter) as well as in the descriptions.

Skill Groups

All skills are organized into nine distinctive groups: Athletic Skills, Artistic Skills, Combat Skills, Covert Skills, Everyday Skills, Knowledge Skills, Manipulative Skills, Supernatural Skills, and Wilderness Skills. This is mainly done so that skills that are very similar can be found easier both in the list below and for the descriptions found later.

Artistic Skills: Skills used to perform or create a specific type of art. This can cover such activities as drawing, painting, making sculptures, calligraphy, etc.

Athletic Skills: Any skill that requires physical motion like running or jumping. Obviously, a character tightly bound with rope or otherwise incapacitated is not going to be able to use an Athletic skill.

Combat Skills: Any skill that results in harming another person. Characters taking any combat skill must be discussed with the GM first. You're not going to find 11 year old kids with a Great Guns skill in an otherwise non-violent campaign – this is a shoujo RPG!

Covert Skills: Skills that let the character do sneaky stuff like shadow that arch-enemy to find where he's going, or slip past their ninja bodyguards. Some Covert skills, such as Poisoning, are not appropriate for all campaigns and may require the GM's permission.

Everyday Skills: These are skills that are frequently used in everyday life by everyone. Many of these are particularly geared toward to teenagers, but can still be of use to characters of any age.

Knowledge Skills: These are skills that grant knowledge of a specific area of knowledge or know-how to a character. For instance, a character with the Japanese History skill could tell you trivial bits of information on the early years of Japan. The more obscure the information, the more difficult the skill roll will be.

Wilderness Skills: As the name implies, these are skills that are used in the wilderness. For the most part, these skills don't traditionally appear in shoujo anime/manga since we rarely see anything other than the occasional camping trip during summer break.

Supernatural Skills: These are skills used in conjunction with Supernormal powers. This group is fairly small and any power that the character has that might be used against another character (i.e., Mind Control) should have a skill that links to it.

Artistic Skills

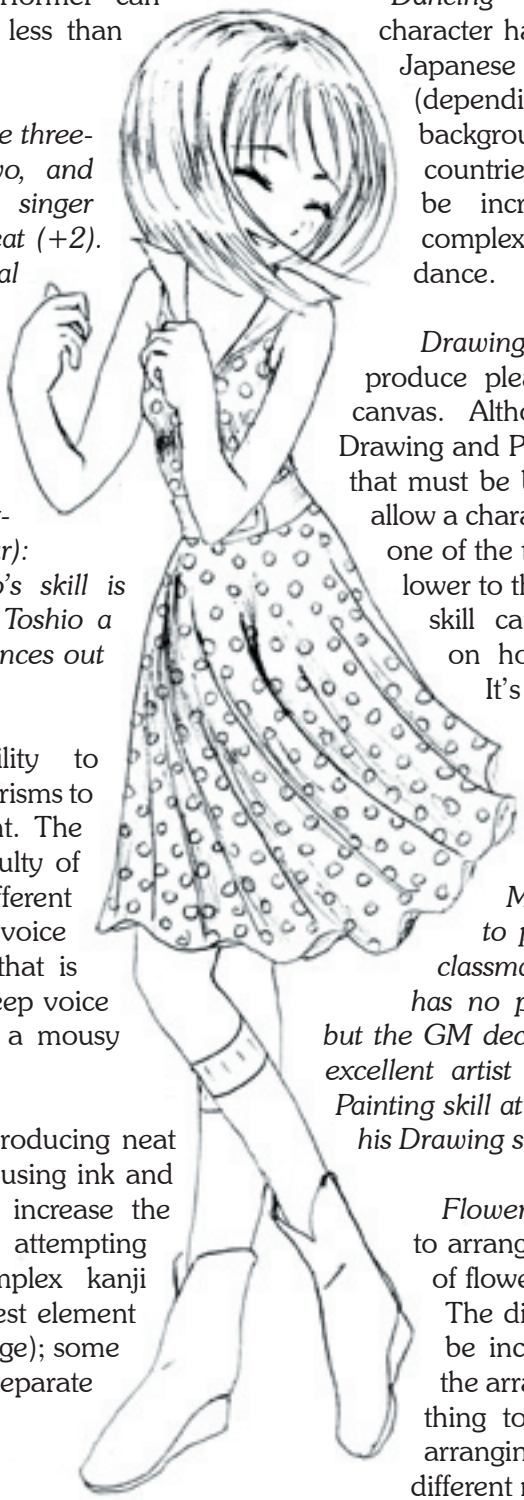
Note: There are some instances where multiple Artistic skills can be used in conjunction. A prime example is a rock band where there's a singer, guitar player, bass player, and drummer (and possibly back-up singers, keyboardists, etc.). In such cases, the skill value if a unopposed/opposed test is required should be roughly equal to that of the person who is leading the performance. In the case of the rock band, this would be the lead singer. However, the skill levels of the other performers are important too. If a member of the performance has a higher or lower skill rating than the performance leader (the lead singer in the example), the difference should be added or subtracted from the leader's skill rating.

In some cases, a great performer can balance out someone with a less than stellar skill rating.

Example: We have a simple three-piece band - Toshio, Setsuyo, and "Bobby." Toshio is the lead singer and has a Singing skill of Great (+2). However, Bobby has Musical Instruments (Drums) skill of Good (+1), which while excellent isn't quite on par with Toshio's fine singing voice. To make things even is the awesome riffs coming out Setsuyo's guitar playing- Musical Instruments (Guitar): Superb (+3). Since Setsuyo's skill is higher than Toshio's, it gives Toshio a +1 bonus to his skill and balances out Bobby's lesser skill.

Acting/Drama: The ability to change one's voice and mannerisms to something completely different. The GM should increase the difficulty of using the skill based on how different it is from the character's own voice or mannerisms. A character that is a boisterous tall boy with a deep voice may have trouble acting like a mousy little girl!

Calligraphy: The skill of producing neat and artistic traditional writing using ink and a paintbrush. The GM may increase the difficulty if the character is attempting to produce particularly complex kanji (Chinese characters, the hardest element of the written Japanese language); some kanji have as many as 20 separate strokes involved.



Dancing (Traditional/Classical): The character has been trained in traditional Japanese dances and possibly (depending on the character's background) dances from other countries. The difficulty may be increased depending on the complexity and duration of the dance.

Drawing/Painting: The ability to produce pleasing imagery on paper or canvas. Although identical in practice, Drawing and Painting are two different skills that must be bought separately. GMs may allow a character that is Good or higher in one of the two skills to default two levels lower to the other. The difficulty for the skill can be increased, depending on how complex the artwork is. It's one thing to make a fancy doodle and another to paint the interior of a cathedral....

Example: Hiroshi has a Superb Drawing skill. Midori-Sensei requires him to paint (of all things) a female classmate. Unfortunately, Hiroshi has no prior experience in Painting, but the GM decides that since he is such an excellent artist when drawing, he has the Painting skill at Good (two levels lower than his Drawing skill).

Flower Arrangement (E): The ability to arrange a vase or similar container of flowers in a visually pleasing way. The difficulty for using the skill can be increased by the complexity of the arrangement and its size. It's one thing to arrange three flowers, but arranging 300 or more is an entirely different matter!

Musical Instrument: The character has been trained to play a specific instrument or a small group of them (in this latter case the character effectively has a skill level that is one level lower than purchased). This skill can be used to inspire such emotions as love, happiness, or even anger upon the audience. The difficulty for using the skill may be increased or decreased depending on the audience's mood, how much they like the performer, etc.

Poetry: The skill of creating emotionally pleasing or otherwise effective poetry. The Poetry skill can sometimes be used with Oratory (see Manipulative skills) to produce emotionally stunning spoken poetry. The most common use for the skill, however, is for written poetry. The GM may opt to increase the difficulty depending on the complexity and range of the poem. Creating a simple haiku is one thing, but writing a 200-page poem dedicated to beauty and grace of a specific character is a totally different matter.

Sewing/Costume Design: The ability to create and repair clothes and costumes. The difficulty for using this skill can be increased depending on the complexity of the intended design or by the amount of damage that needs to be repaired.

Singing: The skill of using the character's voice to produce emotionally effective songs. This skill can be used to inspire such emotions as love, happiness, or even anger in the audience. The difficulty for using the skill may be increased or decreased depending on the audience's mood, how much they like the singer, etc.

Sculpting/Modeling: The ability to create visually pleasing works of art out of clay and similar substances that can be molded by using the character's hands or other instruments. The difficulty increases depending on the complexity and size of the sculpture. Making little houses out of clay is one thing, making a replica of the Statue of Liberty is something totally different.

Writing: The character is able to put into words things that many people are only able to imagine and convey what is actually meant rather than what is simply written. It doesn't necessarily guarantee the subject matter will be favorable to an audience but well written is well written.

Athletic skills

Acrobatics: The ability to do various acrobatic or tumbling tricks like somersaults, cartwheels, aerial cartwheels, etc. The difficulty for using the skill may increase depending on the difficulty of the maneuver being performed.

Climbing: The skill of climbing surfaces or obstacles without falling down. The difficulty may be increased or decreased depending on factors such as the weather, the availability of handholds, and whether or not the character is using the proper equipment.

Driving: The ability to drive any form of land based vehicle without crashing it into other cars, pedestrians, or conveniently placed brick walls. This skill is frequently used for driving stunts like dodging attacks, driving in the wrong lane, or performing jumps on a vehicle that wasn't meant to jump. While a character that knows how to drive should have this skill, skill rolls are not necessary for normal everyday driving.

Jumping: The character's ability to perform jumps, horizontal or vertical. Assume the character can leap horizontally 1.5 meters/yards for every level over poor or vertically 1 meter/yard for every level over poor (e.g., a character with a Jumping skill of Good can jump vertically 3 meters).

Piloting: The ability to pilot any type of aircraft (helicopter, fighter jet, airship, etc.) without crashing into the ground and killing the character and anyone stupid enough to fly with him. This skill is most frequently used for various piloting stunts like aerial acrobatics (loop-de-loop!), dodging missiles, etc.

Running: The ability to run for an extended period of time. Assume the character run a number of rounds or minutes equal to each bonus from Physique and Running. Each round after that, the character must make a Running skill test to keep running. The difficulty starts at Terrible, but increases by one level each round afterwards. (1st round: Terrible, 2nd round: Poor, 3rd round Mediocre, etc.) If the roll fails, the runner stumbles!

Example: Ichiro has a Physique of Great (+2) and a Running of Good (+1). He can run at full speed for 3 minutes (180 seconds). After that amount of time, he will slowly start feeling himself wind down...

Shiphandling: The ability to pilot any type of boat (sailboat, submarine, battleship, etc.) without running it into the beach or losing direction. This skill is most frequently used for various sailing stunts like keeping the ship on course during a storm, dodging torpedoes, etc.

Sport (name): The skill and talent to effectively play a specific sport other than those exclusively involving swimming, running, jumping, or combat skills like fencing or archery.

Swimming: The ability to swim for an extended period of time. Assume the character can easily swim a number of rounds or minutes equal to each bonus from Physique and Swimming. Each round after that, the character must make a Swimming skill test to keep swimming. The difficulty starts at Terrible, but increases by one level each round afterwards. (1st round: Terrible, 2nd round: Poor, 3rd round Mediocre, etc.) If the roll fails, the swimmer gets a cramp or some other nuisance that forces them to stop swimming!

Throwing: The character's skill at throwing something accurately. This can be a shuriken, a baseball, or a conveniently launched Pocky stick. If the thrower attempts to make a fancy throw (hitting a target by ricocheting a ball off two different walls) or the target is a long distance away, the GM may increase the difficulty of the skill test.

Combat Skills

Archery: The skill of using various types of bows (such as the traditional Japanese daikyu) accurately. The difficulty may be increased based on the range between the character and the target, any obstructions that may be in the way, and the size of the target.

Brawling: The character's ability to fight with one's fists. If the player wants fancy kicks and judo style throws, they must purchase the Martial Arts skill.

Demolitions: The ability to set up or create an explosive without blowing yourself up in the process.

Guns (VH): The ability to accurately shoot any form of personal firearm, from a typical revolver to a standard heavy-duty assault cannon. Since most *HeartQuest* RPG campaigns take place in Japan and Japan has very strict firearm restrictions, guns are very hard to obtain, let alone use. As a result, guns are very rare and usually either possessed by villains or replaced by less deadly high-tech weapons.

Martial Arts (VH): The character has extensively trained in the use of the martial arts

and is an effective fighter without a weapon. For each skill level over Fair, add a +1 DF bonus to any damage done by a martial arts attack. GMs may restrict this skill if they feel the campaign will focus solely on character interaction and use of the skill should be prohibited.

Melee Combat: The skill of using any type of handheld weapon in combat except swords, be it a bokken or a broom handle. The character may specialize in a specific weapon for an extra skill.

Swordsmanship: The skill of using swords; the character must specify which type of swords (Japanese swords, western fencing swords, medieval broadswords, etc.) she has learned to use. This skill can be applied to other types of edged weapons with a -1 penalty. Melee Combat defaults to this at -1 for a roughly sword-shaped weapon (such as a wooden practice sword). If you want a multi-cultural swordswoman, equally comfortable with a katana and a saber, spending an extra skill level will gain efficient use of both types of weapon. Note this on the character sheet.

Covert skills

Breaking and Entering: The skill of entering a residence or other building without altering security or the owners.

Disguise: The ability to use make-up and other items to impersonate a specific person or a general type of person (such as a student of another school or a police officer). The difficulty increases when trying to disguise as a specific person; it's easy to convince a person that you're a random bum, but it's a lot harder to convince Mrs. Sukino that you're her husband, though knowing the person being impersonated and successfully using the Acting skill can reduce the difficulty considerably.

Electronics: The character has a knack for playing around with electronic devices. He can modify or repair broken devices with the right equipment and tamper with electronic security devices such as cameras, alarms, etc.

Forgery: the skill of copying a different person's penmanship and producing letters or other documents that look like the original. Surprisingly useful for forging love letters...

Lockpicking: The ability to pick locks or otherwise bypass methods of guarding valuables.

Perception: The ability to notice things that do not belong such as secret doors and less-than-obvious clues.

Pickpocketing: The skill of removing wallets and other valuables from a person without them noticing the items are gone. The difficulty increases based on the size of the objects stolen and the alertness of the victim.

Poisoning: The ability to create and administer different types of poisons. The term poison covers toxins created from plants as well as from chemicals. Most poisons have a specific effect, determined by the GM, but this is not necessarily always deadly. This skill can, for example, be used to handle "food wars" between rival girls that mix different type of love potions into the food they offer their would-be boyfriend to make the guy fall in love with them.

Shadowing: The skill of following a person without being spotted. The difficulty may be increased depending on different situations such as the amount of light available, how many other people are around, etc.

Sleight of Hand: The ability to make items seem to vanish in much the same manner as seen in a stage magic show. This skill can also be

used to move objects when the other person isn't looking. This can be very useful with games of Go, Chess (Western chess or Japanese shougi), or Checkers.

Stealth: The ability to quietly get past a person without alerting them of your presence. The difficulty may be increased depending on the situations, including factors such as the amount of light and cover available. This skill can also be used to surprise/ambush a person or group.

Traps: The ability to find and deactivate any type of traps that might interfere with a would-be thief.

Everyday Skills

Animal Care: The ability to take care of animals and raise them properly. A high skill may imply the character has a natural affinity for taking care of animals while a low skill might result in unruly pets.

Cooking: The skill to prepare edible food by following the appropriate directions. A high Cooking skill allows the character to create their own dishes or dishes from different countries (Chinese Food, American Food, Italian Food, or even Mexican Food or something even more exotic). Keep in mind that cooking is a very important genre convention of Shoujo anime, especially for girls. It is common for girls to attempt to impress boys they like by fixing them a special lunch, and thus a good Cooking skill is a considerable asset. On the other hand, a girl that can't cook rarely has a boyfriend or has one that she wishes she didn't have.

Dancing (Modern): The ability to do all the latest moves that are all the rage in the local dance clubs and the knowledge of how to identify the moves being used by other dancers. This skill may also grant knowledge of the local favorite bands, DJs, and the local club scene.

Gaming: Whether Arcade, RPG, or board the character is blessed with an aptitude for winning at the games and understanding their premise. While some might question the use of such, the satisfaction of them is probably not doubted by the people holding this book.

Fashion Sense: The ever-important skill of dressing fashionably and identifying which types of clothing are currently "in." This skill also determines how well the character can apply make-up and pick the right accessories to go with their clothes.

Gossip: The ability to pick up gossip from a variety of different sources – specifically true gossip and not false rumors. The Gossip skill can be used to spread rumors although the difficulty depends on how believable the rumor is.

Housekeeping: You are the consummate homemaker in keeping everything neat and tidy. This includes laundry and making sure everything is regimented to be done on time lest it all fall apart.

Shopping: The skill of picking out the right bargains while shopping – although the Fashion Sense skill is required in order to determine whether they will look good on the character.

Knowledge Skills

Alchemy: The ability to create different magical (or at least allegedly magical) mixtures from various substances. Most often used to create love potions and other similar concoctions.

Computers: The ability to use a computer without being utterly confused by the interface. A

higher skill grants the ability to write programs as well as build or repair a personal computer.

Culture (name): The knowledge of a specific foreign country and its culture, beliefs, customs, and so forth.

Doctor (VH): The character can efficiently diagnose and treat various ailments and injuries. This skill also covers the ability to identify and administer medicine.

Folklore: Each country develops, over the years, its own unique stories and "tall tales" that are told again and again throughout the years. This skill grants the character knowledge of the most important stories and myths that are unique to it. Thus, a character with Japanese Folklore would know about Momotaro, Oni, and so forth, while a character with American Folklore might know about Paul Bunyan and Bigfoot.

Geography: The character has managed to learn the geography of a specific country. Most school students and adults can find the most common cities and countries on a map, but pinpointing the exact location of a very minor fishing village is a different matter. If the character has the correct History skill as well, he can pinpoint historical battlegrounds, ancient monuments, and destroyed cities/villages.

History: This skill grants the character knowledge of a specific country's history since its founding. Like other knowledge skills, the difficulty increases depending on how obscure and specific the information desired. For instance, a person with a Japanese History skill could tell you that there was a Sengoku (Warring States) period, but it would be much harder for them to name off the most influential generals in the time period as well as produce the names of each of their children accurately.

Language: This skill grants the character with knowledge of a foreign language of their choosing. Each level over Fair can either be used to master more difficult uses of a specific language (e.g., knowledge of the Kanji that is no longer used by modern Japanese) or additional languages for each level above Fair. For instance, a character with Language: Superb could have three different languages at Fair level.

Literature: The character knows a great deal about a specific type of literature. The player should specify what type of literature it is either in the form of the nation it comes from (Japanese Literature), by the genre of the literature (Science Fiction Literature), or both (Japanese Sci-Fi Literature).

Lore (name): This skill grants the character knowledge of a specific area of knowledge not covered by any other knowledge skill. The name of the skill should be changed to suit this. For instance, a character with a knowledge of the Lore of Shoujo Manga would have the skill listed as "Shoujo Manga Lore" on his sheet.

Mechanic: The character is skilled at maintaining, repairing, and (with a high enough Mechanic skill level) constructing things – specifically cars and similar large devices – given the proper tools and time. The more complex the device is, the more difficult it may be to use this skill. For instance, it would be very hard for someone to repair fusion-powered spaceship if he was accustomed to fixing regular cars.

Occultism: This skill grants knowledge of the "occult." In most cases, this refers to many of the darker areas of mythology such as vampires, werewolves, devils, demons, ghosts, and similar supernatural entities. This skill could possibly be split between "Western Occultism" and "Eastern Occultism," but most bits of occult lore are known to both hemispheres with a bit of research

regardless of the character's nationality. Occultism also covers Satanism and other cult religions.

Research: This skill allows the character to retrieve useful information on a specific topic from any source such as libraries, Internet databases, newspapers, or even the local television news. While useful on its own, the Research skill can be used to supplement other Knowledge skills to find the utmost arcane bits of information about a subject that the character has as a Knowledge skill. If used as such, the GM may grant a bonus depending on how arcane the knowledge is and how well stocked the character's information source is. Finding out the name of a WWII GI unit will be easier to locate in the Library of Congress than it will be in a small poorly funded library in the middle of nowhere.

Teaching (VH): The ability to impart knowledge of a particular skill or subject matter to others.

Theology: While Folklore handles myths and legends, the Theology skill grants knowledge of the legends and events in the history of a specific religion. For instance, Christian Theology would grant the character knowledge of the Old and New Testaments, stories about the various saints, the Crusades, and so on. It also grants knowledge of the religion's chain of command, beliefs and principles, traditions, and prominent priests and other clergy.

Trivia: You are able to spout a great deal of information about things that really aren't that important but probably are quite interesting to certain people ("Did you know Luke Skywalker married a woman named Mara Jade who was a former assassin for the Emperor?")

Veterinarian (H): This skill grants the same abilities as the Doctor skill, but for taking care of injured or sick animals.

Manipulative Skills

Important Note: In most anime – particularly Shoujo anime – telling lies to your friends or fast-talking them into doing things they might not ordinarily want to do can damage the relationship between the two characters.

Bribery: Greasing a person's palm with an appropriate bribe can be the perfect way to get out of a jam. This skill allows the character to bribe people who might not normally be tempted by bribes. A character with a high Bribery skill can also bribe for less. There are a number of modifiers that could come into play when using this skill such as a bad relationship with the person, a previous history of bad bribing attempts, or using an insufficient bribe for the task. Failure at using the Bribery skill may result in the character getting themselves in trouble or a well-known reputation as a "greaser of palms."

Carousing: This is the skill of the ability to make a favorable impression on people even when you aren't actually saying anything in and of itself important. Characters with this skill are able to be 'fun' people to be around by knowing what to talk about, where to go, and how to make sure everyone is cheery.

Command: This is a skill about ordering another individual to do something through sheer force of will rather than simply persuading them. Individuals who command are powerful leaders but people may not necessarily agree with what they are obeying.

Emote: The character is blessed with an unusual proficiency with expressing his meaning and emotions through subtle and not so subtle gestures. Elaborate conversations can sometimes be held through looks alone.

Fast-Talk: The classic skill of manipulating through confusion, "not exactly true" information, and even sinking as low as to using guilt trips.

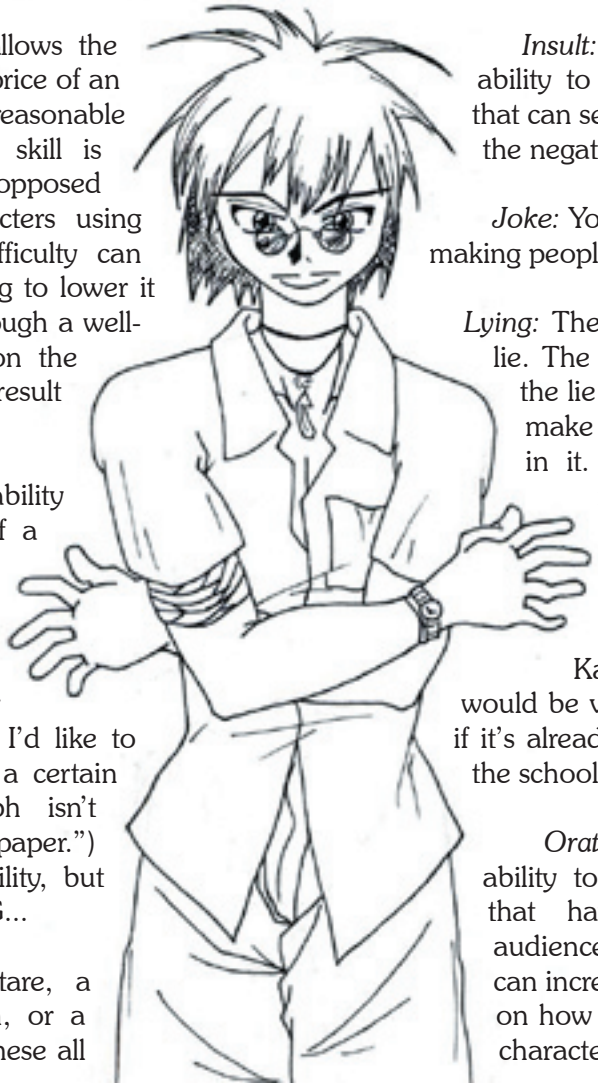
Flattery: The ability to make people like the player character by resorting to a few well place positive comments. The ultimate "brown-noser" skill.

Guilt Trip: The de facto manipulation skill used by mothers and girlfriends around the world. Nothing gets to an unruly son or boyfriend like faking emotional hurt or distress.

Haggle: This ability allows the character to decrease the price of an object on sale to a more reasonable amount of money. This skill is frequently used as an opposed roll between both characters using the Haggle skill. The difficulty can be increased by attempting to lower it ridiculous amounts or through a well-used type of blackmail on the other person. Failures can result in prices increasing.

Interrogate: The ability to get information out of a person. This can be done in several ways such as making the person like the character or a shrewd bit intimidation or blackmail ("Tell me what I'd like to know and I'll make sure a certain 'embarrassing' photograph isn't leaked to the school newspaper.") Torture is another possibility, but this is a shoujo anime RPG...

Intimidate: A cold stare, a demonstration of strength, or a few well-place threats... These all have the same effect of intimidating people. By use of this threat, the target(s) might be persuaded into doing what the character tells them to do, such as giving up their money or staying out his way. The Intimidate skill is most often used as an opposed roll between the intimidator's Intimidate skill against the victim's Willpower. Failure may result in the target not being moved by the use of intimidate (by 1-2 levels) or becoming royally ticked off (by 3+ levels). Frequent uses of the Intimidate skill can result in a bully mentality that eventually results in the victims wanting to get even.



Insult: You possess a unique ability to target a person in a way that can seriously alter their mood for the negative.

Joke: You have a cultivated skill for making people laugh.

Lying: The ability to tell a believable lie. The more simple or believable the lie is, the easier it becomes to make the person lied to believe in it. For instance, "the moon is populated by mice that eat cheese" wouldn't faze any but the most gullible of people. However, "Midori-sensei and Kazuko-sensei are dating" would be very believable – especially if it's already a hot rumor throughout the school that the two are a couple.

Oratory: The character has the ability to make eloquent speeches that have an impact on his audience. The difficulty of the skill can increase or decrease depending on how well the audience likes the character, how much the audience

believes in the speaker's subject, and how big the audience is. If used successfully, the skill can be used to influence the emotions of the audience to the speaker's pleasing. The speaker can invoke heart-felt sadness, emptiness, anger, or inspiration in the audience. What effect this has on the audience is ultimately up to the GM. On an extremely good result, the audience may be roused to do exactly as the character wants or may fight/play extra hard in the case of a pep-rally type speech.

Example: Kiyoji is the captain of the Kendo club and speaks to the entire club to motivate them in their upcoming kendo match. Unfortunately for the club, they were absolutely crushed in their last match, although the captain himself retains a flawless record thus far this year. The GM decides the guys are bummed and Kiyoji's player automatically gets a -1 penalty. This lowers Kiyoji's otherwise Great skill level at Oratory to Good. The GM rolls 4dF as normal as Kiyoji's player rants and raves in character that they go forth with their mighty shinai and strike a true blow for justice in the honor of the noble Inazuka Sr. High School. By some act of God, the GM gets a +4 result- a Superb++! The GM tells Kiyoji's player that the students are inspired and gleefully salute their honorable captain and are ready lay down their lowly lives in the name of the school's honor.

Persuasion: The ability to get a person to see the character's point of view without resorting to any other Manipulation skill.

Seduction: Does this skill really need an explanation? The ability to impress a member of the appropriate sex by using one's masculine or feminine charm. The Seduction skill is normally used in opposed rolls between the person using the Seduction skill and the target's Cool attribute. Obviously, a person with a low Cool will be easier to seduce than a person with a very high Cool. Other modifiers can be applied depending on the situation. For instance, it's harder for the bishonen playboy to seduce a girl who happens to be very sure she's a lesbian.

Supernormal Power Skills

See the Supernormal Powers Chapter.

Wilderness Skills

Camping: Not quite as demanding as survival. The player knows very well how to camp and have a good time doing so without things going horribly wrong.

Fishing: The ability to catch fish from a stream or river with the proper equipment (fishing rod, bait, etc.).

Riding: The ability to control a horse or similar animal that can be ridden. This skill can also be used to perform daring stunts such as jumping chasms or standing in the saddle while galloping.

Survival: This skill allows the character to "live off the land" (without the aid of a car loaded with groceries) for an extended period of time. Depending on the environment, the character may be able to hunt animals for food, identify foods or plants that may be poisonous, know about the local animals, and find drinking water.

Tracking: The skill of tracking a person, animal, or vehicle by identifying the markings left on the ground. The difficulty may be increased depending on the weather (snow or rain can obscure or eliminate tracks) and the age of the tracks (it's hard to track someone that came through an area three weeks ago). A successful use of the skill indicates roughly the age of the track and the direction in which the target was traveling.

Example: It's time to determine Hiroshi's skill ratings. First off, Hiroshi will need to capitalize on his athletic prowess. Sports will definitely be at Superb, which will suck up five of Hiroshi's 30 free skill levels. Jumping and Running are shoo-ins and we'll make both of them Good (3 skill levels each, 11 skill levels used so far). To round out Hiroshi's athletic abilities, we'll also give him Brawling at Good (3 skill levels) since he should be able to hold his own when fighting a rival in a man-to-man fight. To round out his abilities so they aren't TOO focused on physical stuff, we'll give him Animal Care at Good (he likes animals), Cooking at Great (to make up for Chiharu's lousy cooking), Drawing at Superb (because Hiroshi's player has a thing for making characters with artistic talent), Fashion Sense at Fair, and Manga Lore at Fair (Being a bit of a manga otaku, he knows a lot about them). Lastly, Hiroshi is a terrible liar, so we'll give him a Lying skill at Terrible.

Animal Care: Good (+3)
Brawling: Good (+3)
Cooking: Great (+4)
Drawing: Superb (+5)
Fashion Sense: Fair (+2)
Jumping: Good (+3)
Lying: Terrible (-1)
Manga Lore: Fair (+2)
Running: Good (+3)
Sports: Superb (+5)

4. Gifts

Not every trait a character has can easily fit in the Terrible...Fair...Superb scale like skills and attributes. A trait that grants a positive ability that does not fall under the auspices of an attribute or skill or as an element of the player character's background is known as a gift. Each gift grants a specific type of bonus although not necessarily always a bonus to a dice roll. For instance, the Common Sense gift allows the player character to be warned by the GM if they are about to do something stupid. Each character in the *HeartQuest* RPG automatically starts out with two free Gifts, and additional Gifts can be bought by taking Faults at a rate of one Gift for one Fault.

Example: Hiroshi's player, Rob, wants four Gifts. He starts with "Always there when Chiharu is in trouble" (an original Gift that allows Hiroshi to be on the scene whenever Chiharu is in trouble, emotional or physical) and Pain Tolerant (+1 DDF). But Rob wants to give Hiroshi two more Gifts: Rapid Healing and Common Sense. So in order to take either Gift, he will have to pick up at least two Faults for both.

Keep in mind that these are not all the possible Gifts that could be used in the *HeartQuest* RPG. If you have a good idea for a Gift that isn't on the list, feel free to talk with the GM to see if the Gift would be okay. Keep in mind that 1) the gift cannot be something that can already be handled as an extension of an attribute or skill and 2) the gift cannot be something that can be handled as an element of the character's background. Think of the gifts listed in *HeartQuest* as examples of what a character could take. Keep in mind that the GM has the final say on whether or not a gift is acceptable or not in their campaign. The play may have to explain exactly why a shy pretty girl would have a gift like Pain Tolerant or a muscle-head would have Good Memory.

All gifts marked with an asterisk (*) are socially-related gifts that can be removed from the character by the GM if they are abused frequently. A character with the patron gift, for instance, would lose favor in the eyes of the patron if they repeatedly try getting equipment or other services from them without an equal amount of work on the player's side.

Absolute Direction: You know where you're going no matter where you happen to traveling.

It's very difficult for you to get lost since you always know what direction you going in.

Ambidextrous: You can use your off-hand as well as your regular hand without a penalty.

Animal Companion:* You have a faithful pet that is always at your side through thick and thin, reminiscent of old TV shows like Lassie. At one gift, the animal is considered a normal pet like a dog or a cat. If required, the animal should be assumed to have a Mediocre level in all five attributes and two free attribute levels that can be used to upgrade their attributes. They also get the Perception skill at Great as well as the gift Keen Senses and Night Vision for free. For two gifts, you have a very unique type of pet that normally isn't found in most places like a Bear, Panda, Wolf, Tiger, and similar aggressive animals. Their attributes default to Mediocre, but they get 4 free attribute levels. They get the Perception skill at Great and the gifts Keen Senses and Night Vision as well as the Brawling skill at Great. Of course, the player will be expected to explain just how they came to have a pet tiger running around and may have difficulties traveling if the animal is always with them. If you saw somebody walking down the street with a full-grown panda, it's fair to say most of the populace would freak out.

A potential variation of this gift is "Animal Guardian," which could be used to create the ever-popular animal guardian/mascot for a magical girl.

Animal Empathy:* Animals like you and you can tell what their moods are. This grants an unusual talent when it comes to soothing angry animals or attracting docile ones. For instance, a character with Animal Empathy could easily get a bird to sit on their finger or forearm. GMs can base the difficulty for using this Gift based on the character's Willpower attribute and how ferocious the animal might be. Attracting a few blue jays is a minor feat compared to calming a raging bear!

Charisma:* You have an uncanny ability to attract people to your cause or get them to like you. This gift grants a +1 bonus to any NPC reaction roll where the character's charisma comes into play.

Common Sense: Unlike most anime characters, this gift grants you a healthy amount of common sense. When you're about to do something stupid, the GM will warn you.

Contacts:* You have friends in high places such as the local authorities, a corporation, a news organization, or something similar, allowing you to gain information or assistance. Depending on how hot the information is, it may be harder for the character to get the info through their Contacts.

Danger Sense: You have a natural ability to sense danger when it's directed at you. On anything better than a Mediocre situational roll, you know when something is about to ambush you. On a Good roll, you can even anticipate what direction the attack will come from.

Flunkies:* How many school kids do you know that have their own crew of flunkies that do whatever they want? This gift grants you roughly six to twelve NPCs who will essentially do whatever you want of them. These characters should not be used for combat situations since in most cases they'll be inadequate (depending on the GM's discretion). Assume all the flunkies have Fair attributes (anything better requires shuffling around attribute levels) and at least one skill at Fair. The most common types of flunkies are bodyguards, ninjas, gang members, servants, or simply a bunch of people that you can boss around.

Good Memory: You have a knack for remembering things that have happened during the course of the campaign. On an unopposed Mind roll, the character can remember anything that has to do with the character's life. The more specific and obscure the detail the character is trying to recall, the higher the difficulty; for instance; trying to remember the exact description of a person you met on the street a year ago might be kind of tough.

Good Reputation:* You are well known for a specific skill, gift, supernormal power, or some other trait. As a result, the GM may apply a +1 bonus for any NPC reaction roll where the character's reputation comes into play.

Guardian Angel:* Somebody out there is keeping an eye on you. Whenever the character is in deep trouble, the Guardian Angel may appear to save the day. Keep in mind that the GM has complete control over the guardian – especially when the guardian pays a visit. If the character depends on the Guardian Angel too much, the GM may take away the gift. Despite the name, the guardian doesn't necessarily have to be an angel; a protector can take nearly any form imaginable, or even be a normal human.

Immortal: You are, for all intents and purposes, capable of living forever. In order to possess this gift the player must pay for at least four gifts, have a very good excuse, and get the GM's permission for this potentially powerful gift. Essentially, the character is immune to aging and heals wounds at a rapid pace (as per the gift Rapid Healing, which is included in the cost of the gift) and can even survive in conditions that might otherwise kill normal people such as being trapped underwater or traveling through harsh conditions without the proper provisions. Although tough to kill, it's not to say you are completely immune to death – you

CAN die if you take enough damage to cause death. This gift can be used to create interesting characters that have lived for hundreds of years with their "curse," but if it is abused the GM may see fit to yank the gift away.

Keen Senses: Your senses – eyes, ears, and nose – are very strong, compared to a normal human. This Gift doubles the character's normal range of perception; you can see farther, you can distinguish scents better, and you can hear things other people might not.

Lucky: You are the type of person that actually wins prizes in sweepstakes and have a better chance to win the lottery than a normal person. In any situation that isn't important (i.e., not in battle or during a crucial moment), the player can roll a single Fudge die. If the result is a plus or a minus, they get a free +1 bonus to the result of the roll.

Membership:* You are a member of a group that grants you a certain amount of prestige and power. The character may be a member of a local school club, the PTA, a corporation or company, or even the government. The main perks of the gift include the occasional assistance from the group such as money, equipment, and possibly the assistance of other members. On its own, however, the character is essentially a "grunt" that has to take orders from the Powers That Be. By taking the gift Position of Authority the character can have a leadership role in the group.

More Powerful: You have greater magic than others do. This Gift can be taken only once, and bestows an additional 5 levels to the pool granted by taking a supernormal powers Gift.

Natural Linguist: You can pick up new languages easily. If dumped in the middle of Beijing with a modest amount of training before hand, the character could pick up speaking Mandarin in a matter of weeks. Any language they learn through use of the gift has the equivalent of a Language skill at Fair, and acquiring higher ratings requires XP spending as usual.

Night Vision: You can see clearly in the darkness with even a small amount of light.

Pain Tolerant: You have a particular talent for shrugging off damage. This Gift grants a +1 Defense Damage Factor bonus when determining damage.

Patron:* You have a powerful boss who can supply you with anything you require – money, equipment, etc. Characters with this Gift often have the Faults Duty or Owes Favors.

Perfect Balance: Through training or a natural talent, you have a keen sense of balance that makes it nearly impossible for you to stumble or fall. Even when knocked off your feet, you have a knack for rolling your body so that manage to get back on your feet.

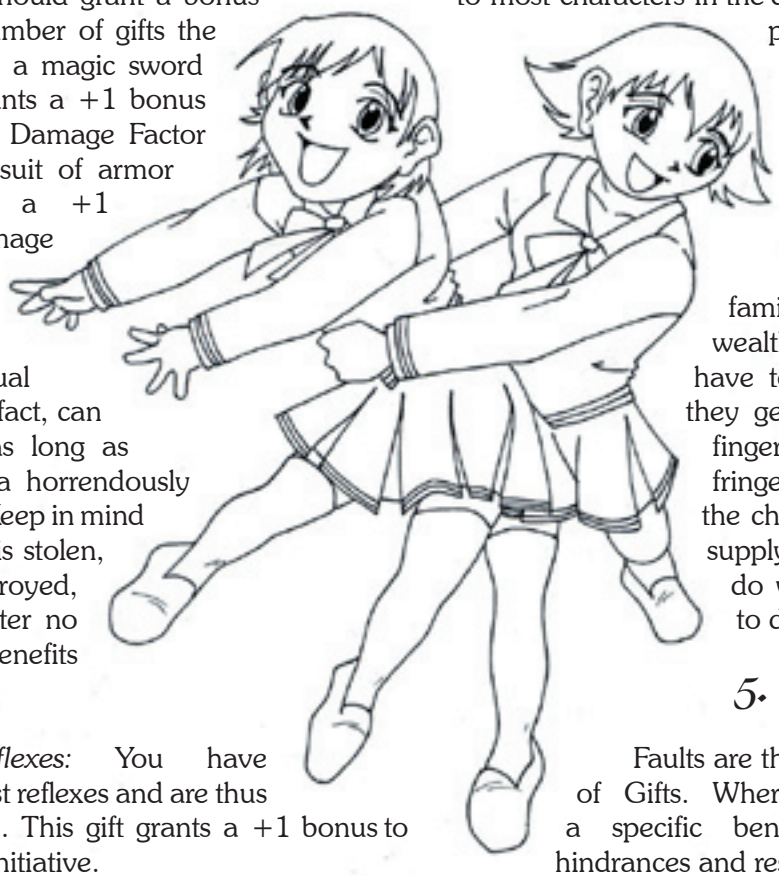
Perfect Timing: You have a long-standing relationship with father time and are always exactly where you want to be when you want to be there. If you have a date at 7:00, you'll be there by 6:59.

Poison Resistance: You have developed a strong resistance to a specific type of poison (damage poison, sleeping poison, etc.) that makes it nearly impossible to infect the character with that type of poison. You also subtract 3 points from the potency modifier for any poison. See Chapter Two for details on using poison.

Position of Authority:* You have some sort of official capacity that gives you legitimate authority over a limited group of people. Examples could include a teacher that has authority over their students or the leader of a school club. Very high positions of power such as a principal, general,

or something similar that grants authority over a large number of people should be worth at least 2 gifts. This gift can also be taken with the Membership gift to confer authority over a specific group.

Prop: You have in your position a significant item that grants some form of bonus. This can cover everything from a family-heirloom-quality katana, a magical girl's special item, and other similar items of power. The exact benefits of the prop are up to the GM and the player to discuss although they should grant a bonus equal to the number of gifts the Prop costs (i.e., a magic sword worth 1 gift grants a +1 bonus to its Offensive Damage Factor while a magic suit of armor might bestow a +1 Defensive Damage Factor bonus) or bestow a supernormal power of equal level. These, in fact, can be combined as long as the result isn't a horrendously powerful item. Keep in mind that if the item is stolen, damaged, destroyed, etc., the character no longer gets the benefits of the item.



Quick Reflexes: You have exceptionally fast reflexes and are thus hard to surprise. This gift grants a +1 bonus to the character's initiative.

Rapid Healing: You heal quickly compared to normal people.

Schtick: You have a particular trick or feat that you pull off regularly that is a part of how you act. Examples include always having a rose handy for a girl, having thunder roar in the background when you do a dramatic pose, or a seemingly endless supply of rose petals appear when you exit the scene.

Sense of Empathy:* You have a natural talent for knowing how people feel. Such characters tend to make friends easily.

Unique Upbringing/Background: You have access to skills that are outside what are available to most characters in the campaign. For example, people raised in mystic circles or ninja clans might have this unless the campaign was chock full of mystics and ninjas.

Wealth:* You or your family happens to be quite wealthy. Where other kids have to work hard for what they get, you can snap your fingers and it's yours. As a fringe benefit of the Gift, the character also gets a free supply of flunkies that will do whatever they are told to do.

5. Faults

Faults are the negative counterpart of Gifts. Where a Gift may grant a specific benefit, faults represent hindrances and restrictions on the ways a player character behaves. Although a negative effect, they represent important aspects of the character's personality and attitude. Most characters should have no less than two Faults and no more than five or six.

The list of Faults included in *HeartQuest* should in no way be considered the only Faults available in the game. Players are free to invent their own Faults as they see fit for their characters. The Faults listed in *HeartQuest* should be seen as a set of guidelines for many of the most common Faults found in shoujo manga and anime. The GM has the final say on whether or not the character's faults are acceptable. If you continuously ignore playing out your faults, the GM may penalize you during gameplay. Characters that extensively make use of their faults frequently are available for an extra experience point at the end of the adventure, which can be used to improve the character's traits.

Sometimes, the effects of a Fault can be incredibly dangerous to the continued good health (physical, mental, or both) of the character. For instance, a Coward may be forced by circumstances to fight or an Absent-Minded character might lose concentration while walking and walk straight into traffic. How this is handled is up to the GM. They can simply be a matter of "yes" or "no". Or make it an unopposed dice roll using the character's Willpower attribute level with a –3 penalty. The difficulty can be increased or decreased pending on the situation.

Absent-Minded: You have trouble keeping their concentration on a single object. At other times you sometimes forget minor details like names or people that you would otherwise know easily.

Amnesiac: This Fault leaves your memory a complete blank save for your name. You may regain your memories slowly over the duration of the campaign. Amnesiac characters frequently have a number of "hidden" Faults such as Enemy or Secret.

Annoyance: You have a person who will simply NOT leave you alone. You can beg, bribe, or beat them and they come back for more. This fault is most often used for NPCs that are hopelessly infatuated with the player character or an unwanted sidekick character that simply won't leave the character alone.

Bad Reputation: You have a reputation that you wish you didn't have. This includes a reputation for one or more of the character's faults. For instance, a reputation as a lecher (Lechery Fault) would be bad if a male character tries impressing a cute girl. The GM should feel free to tack on a penalty to any NPC reaction rolls where they feel the fault may come into effect.

Blunt and Tactless: The "tomboy" Fault, thought it is available to characters of either gender. Blunt and Tactless means you're just that – blunt and tactless. You tell it how it is even if it might hurt a friend. For instance, if you felt your friend's new boyfriend was ugly or a slob, you'd tell her as much.

Boy/Girl Magnet: You have an uncanny (if not scary) ability to attract members of the appropriate gender. Unfortunately, you have absolutely no control over this "gift" and often are in situations where their fans are constantly hounding you. Ironically, the ones that you can't impress are the ones you actually want. Male characters with Girl Magnet frequently also have the Fear of Commitment or Indecisive Faults as well.

Clumsy: Some people simply can't walk a straight line and chew bubblegum at the same time. Whenever you attempt a roll involving dexterity or fine precision, subtract two levels from the your Physique attribute. You'll frequently fall, trip, drop things by accident, and otherwise have comical pratfalls.

Code of Honor: You have a specific set of beliefs that you live by and strive to uphold. The exact nature of the code is up to the player and should be described in detail. Most Codes of Honor include loyalty to others, being fair in competitions or combat, protecting those who cannot protect themselves, etc.

Compulsive Gossiper: You love to yack about the latest bits of gossip and will go to nearly any length to stay in the know. In addition, you'll spread any gossip you can get a hold of – even gossip on your friends.

Compulsive Lying: You just can't help but tell lies. In situations that aren't dead serious, the character has to make a -3 Willpower check to not tell a lie.

Coward: You have developed a strong aversion to getting into any kind of situation where you'll be placed in physical danger. You must make an unopposed Willpower roll (Good difficulty) to resist discreetly exiting the scene.

Curious: You just can't keep their fingers out of any type of mystery or secret – you just have to know. When some type of mystery or secret arises, you must make a resist roll or defy common sense.

Daydreamer: You're prone to bouts of daydreaming at times when you should be focused on something else, such as a lecture or a discussion with a friend. Such people are considered flighty or "have their heads in the clouds."

Dependent: You are responsible for taking care of a family member such as an elderly grandparent or little brother, or you have a child of your own (adult characters only).

Drama King/Queen: If life were a soap opera, a character with this fault would play the part of the over-dramatic character in the show that must stress everything they say or do. Most of your speech should be portrayed as a bad interpretation of William Shatner or Shakespeare-style old English ("Thou hast insulted my honor for the last time, fiend!") even if you're Japanese (you'd might be using melodramatic "samurai talk," in which case the Shakespearian dialogue is a good substitute).

Duty: You have a strong sense of duty to a specific organization such as a school club, company, magical girl team, gang, or sports team. If the group or other member needs help, you are obliged to do anything you can to help.

Easily Distracted: You have a specific type of thing for which you will simply drop whatever you happen to be doing to look at, talk to, chase after, or otherwise pursue.

Enemy: You have a NPC character with a grudge against you who will stop at nothing to cause the character trouble of some kind. The particular type of problems brought to bear by the enemy depends on the nature of the grudge or rivalry. Most enemies should have similar traits to the player character – a character that is good at sports would likely have an enemy that is good at sports as well.

Fear of Commitment: You have a particular fear of committing yourself to any specific person. This type of Fault is common among boys or girls with a large number of people interested in them.

Fickle: You're the type of person that never does the same thing often if never twice. What you may do in one type of situation, you probably won't repeat often. Such characters frequently change their preferences in food, fashion, manga, RPGs, and so on without warning.

Filtered Reality: What you see is not necessarily what happens. Essentially, the character tends to view things oddly. For instance, they might refer to two people trying to kill each other as playing. Other uses are up to you and the GM.

Garrulous: You simply will not shut up! Unless stopped sharply, you'll keep talking indefinitely.

Gender Bender: An occasional plot device in anime and manga (shoujo and otherwise) is to introduce a character that looks more like a member of the opposite sex than of their own gender. This can be done to create schoolgirls that look more like boys or pretty boys that are frequently mistaken as girls.

Getting Old: This fault is only available for adult characters (PC or NPC) aged 50 or more. You're getting old and the world you grew up in is history and the kids of today are much different from what you were like.

Glutton: Food! You frequently think about food first and people later. The Glutton fault frequently is accompanied by the fault Easily Distracted (Food).

Gossip Magnet: You seem to attract gossip, both positive and negative. The GM is encouraged to occasional invent a new topic of gossip about the character at least once per session.

Greedy: Some people simply aren't satisfied with what they have – they have to have more. You must pursue whatever activity they can to make more money. Such characters frequently spend their money as fast as they acquire on luxury goods such as new clothes, the latest gadgets, or expensive homes/furnishings.

Gullible: You have a bad habit of believing lies and stories that most people would realize are fake.

Humanitarian: You can't help yourself from helping others in need, provided you have what they need or can help them. For instance, a character with the Veterinarian skill would do whatever they could to nurse an injured bird back to health.

Indecisive: You sometimes have difficulties making up your mind in situations where a choice is required. This doesn't pop up with trivial matters ("hmm... red dress or blue dress,") but it will pop up in stressful situations such as a girl forced to choose between two potential boyfriends or a guy whose girlfriend wants to know if her dress makes her look fat. The reaction depends on your personality and the situation. For instance, the girl

might get flustered and stutter and the guy (if he was smart) might attempt to escape the scene or change the subject.

Jealous: You have a bad habit of getting jealous when a person they have feelings for becomes close friends with other people.

Lechery: You simply can't control yourself when around a cute member of the appropriate sex. The character is at –3 Willpower to resist attempting to get a "cheap feel" or flat out glomping them.

Less Powerful: Your magic/powers aren't as good as they could be. Subtract 5 levels from the pool of levels of your Supernormal Powers.

Macho/Feminine: You hare an excessive example of the stereotypical good and bad traits of your gender. A Macho guy is aggressive, jealous, and has a hair-trigger temper. A Feminine woman might follow the typical stereotype of a Japanese woman who wants to be a housewife and have kids.

Melancholy: The world... is a dark and looooonely place.... You have a dark and depressive personality and have trouble seeing the good things in life.

Multiple Personalities: There's another person in you that comes out under certain conditions. Common conditions for this include a great amount of stress but in more silly games things such as sexual stimulus or even being hit with something as trivial as cold water. The "new" personality can be nearly anything the player can cook up, but is often the exact opposite of the character's normal personality. Suddenly the unruly lecher becomes a handsome gentleman or a shy ultra-feminine girl becomes a surly macho tomboy.

Nearsighted: You have trouble seeing things far away and rely upon glasses or contacts to see. If you are stuck without them, you face a –1 penalty to all dice rolls involving sight until they have them on.

Nosebleeder: This Fault is only available to virgin heterosexual males. When you are stuck in a situation where you see a girl or woman naked or close to it, start having naughty thoughts, or otherwise put are into an… ahem… unusual position, you automatically have a nosebleed. You never realize this until someone else points it out to you, and the nosebleed is rather like a bullhorn alerting other people to what you're thinking of. Nosebleeder is worth 2 faults if the character faints from the nosebleed.

Nosy: Your friend's business is your business. You go out of your way to know all the latest gossip.

Obsessive: Everybody wants something in life, but there's something in particular that you must have at all cost!

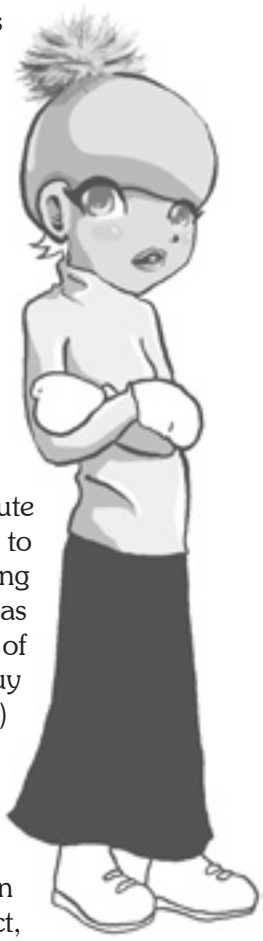
Otaku: Although the term Otaku has been ritually abused by American anime fandom, being an Otaku (rabid fanboy) carries a social stigma in Japan. Although most westerners are accustomed to the use of Otaku for anime fan, it can be applied to any type of activity where "fanatic" would be applied to in America. Gun Otaku, Game Otaku, Cooking Show Otaku, Idol Singer Otaku, and so on are all feasible examples.

Outlaw: This fault is not available for Teen Romance campaigns unless the player is an adult. You are a known criminal and wanted by the local authorities. Outlaw is worth two faults if the character is wanted throughout the world.

Over-Achiever: Some people are fine with simply succeeding at something, but you have

to be absolutely perfect. This obsession with perfection is usually focused on a specific theme ("Akari-chan always gets perfect grades") and the character tends to go to obscene lengths to insure they retain their "perfection." Many elements of this fault are up to the player and the GM since the character's sense of perfection may not be the same as for the other characters in the campaign.

Over-Confident: You have a strong belief that you're the absolute best at something (often a skill) even when face-to-face with someone with a superior level in the trait. A classic example is the upperclassman kendoist who thinks he's the greatest thing to kendo since the invention of the Shinai. Such characters often tend to lose badly and will not stop until they can raise their skills to match or surpass the person that has defeated them.



Owes Favors: One doesn't get through life without depending on others at some point in life. In the case of a character with this Fault, somebody did you a big favor. As such, you are obliged to help them out if they need you until the debt is repaid.

Phobia: You have an acute psychological aversion to something that causes paralyzing fear or running away as fast as possible away from the object of the phobia. For instance, a guy with a fear of cats (ailurophobia) might freak out if a cat suddenly rubbed up against him.

Poor: Not everybody can be filthy rich. A person stuck with this Fault is, in fact, quite poor and may have trouble obtain funds for many of things their friends might take for granted. This Fault can also be used for young-ish characters (teens or early 20's) that have to work and support a child/younger sibling.

Practical Joker: You can't help pull a prank or tell a joke when the situation produces fuel for either.

Pushover: You just won't stand up for yourself when somebody tells you what to do. Often used along with Coward or Shyness.

Quick Temper: You have a hair-trigger temper that can be easily ignited by insults and tend to generate personal vendettas easily.

Quixotic: You are the champion of all lost causes and frequently search for new ones when the old ones get stale. Typical for the over-heroic magical girl or superhero type.

Roricon Magnet: "Roricon" is a Japanese abbreviation of "Lolita Complex"; Roricon Magnet is often found with adult characters, but can be possessed by teenaged characters as well. Essentially, you attract people to you that are younger than what might be sensible, let alone socially acceptable. This fault would be perfect for the high school teacher that most of their students find incredibly handsome/sexy or the high school character that mysteriously (and annoyingly) attracts 10 year olds and junior high school students.

Secret: You have a dark personal secret that you must keep or risk deep social, mental, or physical complications. Examples of this fault include secret romances, connections to seedy organizations, or a secret identity like Batman, Superman, or Sailor Moon.

Serious Illness: You suffer from a serious illness that may one day take your life if you aren't careful. The exact effects of the Fault and the nature of the illness should be discussed thoroughly between the player and GM. An example of the Fault would Kotori, a young girl from X/1999 who suffers from a "weak heart." If she performs any strenuous activities, she may faint.

Shyness: You have trouble talking to people who you aren't friends with and it can be hard sometimes to make new friends.

Stubborn: You have trouble admitting you're wrong or saying sorry. You have a way of thinking and adamantly stick to it even when it may bring you harm – physically or socially.

Unlucky: Some people are lucky, but you're cursed with all the crap they don't get stuck with. The GM is free to throw in a free fudge die roll in any unimportant unopposed or situation roll the character makes. For this special fudge die a + or – are both considered a minus.

Vow: You have sworn to perform a specific act that causes a number of restrictions on your social life. For instance, you could take a vow not to date or marry anyone unless they could defeat you in a martial arts duel. Other spins on this fault include vowing to protect the earth from supernatural menaces or becoming a great super model. The character should feel driven to keep after the vow and the GM should feel free to penalize the character if they don't keep their vow.

Young: It sucked being a kid, but that's what you are by taking this fault. As a result, the older characters tend to ignore your entire existence unless you do something that requires them to pay attention. In addition, you are stuck with the usual difficulties of childhood like parental supervision, bedtime, and truancy laws. In most *HeartQuest* games, a character with this fault would be a grade school student (1st to 6th grade).

6. Supernormal Powers

In the FUDGE RPG System, all traits that go beyond the abilities of normal people are known as supernormal powers. Supernormal powers are not always present in all *HeartQuest* campaigns (especially the Teen Romance type), but are fairly common in some of them. Supernormal powers have an incredible range of uses such as superhero type powers, magic, psionics, and cybernetics. A full list of example powers will be found in Chapter Two.

In games where supernormal powers are common, powered characters must buy the appropriate Gift (see Chapter 2 on Supernormal Powers).

7. Finishing Touches

Congratulations! You've nearly finished your character. At this point, we recommend going over the character's traits and make sure the totals add up. Are there too many or too few skills? Do I really need that trait at that level? Should I take this Fault or drop this other one? Questions like these should be considered before considering the character close to completion.

More importantly, it's time to finish up what was started with the first step and flesh out the character's background. Any character should have a background worth at least a few sentences that hits the following areas:

· What does the character look like?

· Does the character have any notable hobbies or activities they like to perform when they have spare time?

· How did they develop any notable skills at Great or Superb level as well as their gifts, faults, and supernormal powers (if any)?

· If the character has any notable friends, who are they and how did they meet?

Expanded Background (Optional)

Not everyone is satisfied with such a short bio. For those that desire the proverbial "more," the Expanded Background may be what you are search of. If the player has his own computer, he could use a regular word processor like Microsoft Word or Notepad to crank out a write-up. For those with lousy writers as players or who are playing the game tabletop style, you can use the expanded background sheet found in the rear of the book.

The expanded background method is made up of five sections: Appearance, Background, Personality, Possessions, and Goal. Of the five, Possessions is optional since not everyone has belongings that are worth noting. GMs may also add extra sections if they wish such a section explaining the character's supernormal powers (if available) or any friendships/connections the character has with other characters.

Appearance: What the character looks like. This should get into anything and everything – age, general height, weight/build, hair color and style, eye colors, general posture, and any type of important accessories like glasses, rings, earrings, or notable hair ornaments. The player might also want to slip in a quick note on clothing when at home.

Background: The Background essentially sums up "what the character's life has been like so far." This should describe the character's family (if any), which is important for any shoujo character, with very brief descriptions if not just names and what they do. Any notable relationships with friends should be explained (e.g., Hiroshi's background would have notes on how he first met Chiharu) as well as how the character developed any notable skill above Good level. (Hiroshi joined the soccer team in Jr. High after a soccer star from a rival school stole his girlfriend).

Personality: A basic idea of how the character acts and behaves. This is a good place to impart upon the reader/GM how the character's mind works and more importantly "why." This is a good place to explain any particular faults that the character has and how they got them.

Possessions: If the character has any items of significant worth to the character, the player should explain how they got it and what it means to them. This especially true if the character has the Prop gift.

Goals: Everybody has things they want to do; player characters are no different. Most characters should have at least one long range goal like trying to get a specific girl, mastering a particular skill, overcoming one or more of their faults, and so on. These give GMs an idea as far as what the character wants to do in the future so the GM can provide appropriate hurdles for them, such as rivals, contests, and so on.

8. GM Review

And you thought you were done with step seven… Think again!

Having completed distributing the character's traits and rounding out the character's background using either the simple or expanded methods, the final step is getting the GM's proverbial "stamp of approval." This, essentially, is a review period where the GM will look over the character and discuss any bits of information that might be important about the character. If there

are any problems, the two of you can make the appropriate fixes at this point in the development of the game. For instance, if there are any gifts that look out of place, the GM may ask why the character should have them. The same can be said about skills, faults, or attribute levels. If the GM likes what they see, they may be nice enough to grant you one or even two free quirks.

This is a good time, also, to discuss any relationships between each of the player characters and/or important NPCs.

Example: Michael looks to his five players – Clarissa, Rob, Paul, James, and Dimitri (Chiharu, Hiroshi, Yuuko, Satoshi, and Junko respectively) – and asks them if they want to make any notable connections between the five player characters. Rob mentions that Hiroshi already has a strong connection with Chiharu (Clarissa's character), but it might not be out of the question later down the road for him to become friends with Satoshi-provided he doesn't make any moves on Chiharu. Clarissa and James decide to make Chiharu and Yuuko best friends with Dimitri keeping Junko somewhere in the middle rather than form any ties to the other player characters for now.

Quirks

A quirk is a unique trait that the GM may grant those player characters that put extra effort into developing their characters. Essentially it can be something like a gift and a fault since it can be either beneficial or it can be a hindrance. Either way, they don't tend to have any specific bonus/penalty attached to them or if they do, the modifier only comes into effect on very rare occasions. For instance, it might be a +1 bonus when performing a specific type of task like trying to impress a girl the character likes. Their main purpose is to give the character's personality and background a little bit more polish.

Although there is a list of Quirks provided below, a Quirk is much like the Skills, Gifts, and Faults listed in the *HeartQuest* RPG: they only represent the kind of Quirks a character could have. There are plenty of other possibilities and we strongly recommend that you or your GM discuss any possible new Quirks that might be suitable for the character.

Broad-Minded: You are especially tolerant of differences in others. As a result, you tend to make friends with those that tend to be misunderstood or stuck with a social stigma.

Cheerful: You have a naturally cheerful disposition and tend to spread it to others. A positive Quirk, but if taken to extremes it can be turned into a Fault.

Easygoing: It's harder than your Willpower would suggest to make you angry or frustrated. You tend to shrug off threats and other attempts at intimidation.

Famous: Everybody knows who you are! This Quirk is something of an in-between since it can be both positive and negative. It's positive because a lot of people know who you are. It's negative because those people will want more of you than you're willing to give. If the character's fame is more to one specific side, this should be taken as a Gift or Fault. If this applies to more than a small area (like a school or a hometown), this should cost a Gift for national fame or two gifts for international fame.

Gift of Gab: You are never at a loss for words. In situations where the character has to recite something such as a long rant, they never have to pause and think about the right words that go with the rant. This can also be applied to would-be actors and actresses, comedians, and so on.

Great Collection: If you're interested in something, you've probably got a copy of it. This works well for otaku with a wide array of anime movies, DVDs, action figures, wallscrolls, soundtracks, and so on. Can be applied to other interests such as coin collecting, manga, baseball cards, UFO watcher dolls, or stuffed animals.

Great Parents: You have really understanding, responsible parents who will drop everything to come to your aid in an emergency.

Original Thinker: You're good at "thinking outside the box." Unconventional ideas and solutions come more easily to you.

Patience: You are a rarity in that you have an exceptional amount of patience. You are satisfied with waiting until the right opportunity to make your move. If the GM wishes, this could be used in a manner similar to Common Sense, where the GM will tell you if it's too soon to act.

Photogenic: When you show up in pictures, you always look great. This works as well on magazine covers as it does on Print Club pictures.

Resilient: You have a rare talent for pushing through the hard times where others would be emotionally crushed. This doesn't mean you're not familiar with feeling wounds of the heart, but you bounce back quicker than others.

True Artist: Not only are you a great artist, but an inspired one. It's easy for you to come up with new and inventive ways to use your most prominent Artistic Skills.

Well-Traveled: You've traveled afar, unlike most people, so you have an idea of how the cultures of other nationalities work. You tend to avoid mistakes that others make when referring to certain countries. The exact uses of the Quirk are up to the GM.

Optional Rule: Heart Points

Heart Points are meta-game gifts that allow a player to fudge a game result. Heart Points occur at the GM-Player level, not the setting level.

If a GM determines that Heart Points are appropriate for the game, the starting number of them must be set. Most games start with between one and five. Truly realistic games would use none or one, while a Magical Girl game could use five. Heroes need an edge sometimes (but if you GM is cruel, the monsters could have Heart Points, too).

Unused Heart Points are saved for the next game session. Each player may get an additional one each game session, or not. If players are not given Heart Points back, they can trade in Experience Points for more at a rate of 3 EPs = 1 Heart Point.

Heart Points can be used in many creative ways, depending on how realistic or legendary the game is. Here are some ways that they may be used:

Lookin' Good: The player spends a Heart Point to make an Unopposed Action succeed with a great deal of style and panache. Used by Magical Guys everywhere, this option is used to look good, impress Magical Girls, and possibly avoid getting hurt in the process. This option can be vetoed by the GM for combat, and also for rolls where the Difficulty is higher than Superb.

Dice Rolls: The player can spend a Heart Point to move a die roll up or down. This can be a roll either the player makes, or one that the GM rolls for them.

Automatic Smackdown: This option gives a player an automatic +4 result. This can be used for combat, if allowed.

What a Coincidence: This should be reserved for legendary level campaigns. Using a Heart Point ensures that something favorable happens to the characters (You find your magic wand laying in the grass, the guard outside your prison is your cousin, you're rescued by someone who owes you a favor and will go out of their way to help you). This should cost more than one Heart Point, unless bizarre coincidences are normal in the game world.

Master Lists

There are a lot of different skills, gifts, and faults available in the *HeartQuest* RPG. To make things easier, the following are the master lists for those three specific trouble spots with every last skill, gift, or fault listed in the RPG. Keep in mind anything that's not on the lists can be created if necessary.

Master Gift List

Absolute Direction
Ambidextrous
Animal Companion
Animal Empathy
Charisma
Common Sense
Contacts
Danger Sense
Flunkies
Good Memory
Good Reputation
Guardian Angel
Immortal
Keen Senses
Lucky
Membership
More Powerful
Natural Linguist
Night Vision
Pain Tolerant
Patron
Perfect Balance
Perfect Timing
Poison Resistance
Position of Authority
Prop
Quick Reflexes
Rapid Healing
Schtick
Sense of Empathy
Unique Upbringing
Wealth

Master Fault List

Absent-Minded
Amnesiac
Annoyance
Bad Reputation
Blunt and Tactless
Boy/Girl Magnet
Clumsy
Code of Honor
Compulsive Gossiper
Compulsive Lying
Coward
Curious
Daydreamer
Dependent
Drama King/Queen
Duty
Easily Distracted
Enemy
Fear of Commitment
Fickle
Filtered Reality
Garrulous
Gender Bender
Getting Old
Glutton
Gossip Magnet
Greedy
Gullible
Humanitarian
Indecisive
Jealous
Lechery
Less Powerful
Macho/feminine
Melancholy
Multiple Personality
Nearsighted
Nose bleeder
Nosy
Obsessive
Otaku
Outlaw
Over-Achiever
Over-confident
Owes Favors
Phobia
Poor
Practical Joker
Pushover
Quick Temper
Quixotic
Roricon Magnet
Secret
Serious Illness
Shyness
Stubborn
Unlucky
Vow
Young

Master Skill List

Artistic Skills

Acting/Drama
Calligraphy
Dancing (Traditional)
Drawing/Painting
Flower Arrangement (E)
Musical Instrument
Poetry
Sewing/Costume
Sculpting/Modeling
Singing
Writing

Athletic Skills

Acrobatics
Climbing
Driving
Jumping
Piloting
Running
Shiphandling
Sport (name)
Swimming
Throwing

Combat Skills

Archery
Brawling
Demolitions
Guns (VH)
Martial Arts (VH)
Melee Combat
Swordsmanship

Covert Skills

Breaking and Entering
Disguise
Electronics
Forgery
Investigation
Lockpicking
Perception
Pickpocketing
Poisoning
Shadowing
Sleight of Hand
Stealth
Traps

Everyday Skills

Animal Care
Cooking
Dancing (Modern)
Gaming
Fashion Sense
Housekeeping
Gossip
Shopping

Knowledge Skills

Alchemy
Computers
Cultures
Doctor (VH)
Folklore
Geography
History
Language
Literature
Lore
Mechanic
Occultism
Research
Teaching (VH)
Theology
Trivia
Veterinarian (H)

Manipulative Skills

Bribery
Carousing
Command
Emote
Fast-Talk
Flattery
Guilt Trip
Haggle
Interrogate
Intimidate
Insult
Joke
Lying
Oratory
Persuasion
Seduction

Supernormal Skills

See next chapter on Supernormal Powers.

Wilderness Skills

Camping
Fishing
Riding
Survival
Tracking

Chapter 2:

Supernormal Powers

Introduction to Supernormal Powers

Supernormal Powers are those abilities that ordinary mortals cannot possess. They represent forces beyond human ken, often magical, occult or supernatural forces. However, they are not limited to that! Access to technology that is significantly higher than that present in the rest of the campaign, genetic mutation, or being an alien can also result in Supernormal Powers for a character.

There are as many Supernormal Powers as there are characters that possess them. This chapter does not attempt to create an exhaustive list of superpowers – creating the power is a significant part of creating the character. Instead, this chapter gives some guidelines on gauging the effectiveness of a proposed power, some sample supernormal powers, and a demonstration of how supernormal powers are used in play.

While many RPGs that use powers require a considerable amount of math to define them, *HeartQuest* is more freeform in its approach. How much the power you want costs depends on how the player and the GM work out its basic utility.

Defining A Power

The first step is to decide what you want the character to be able to do. This is called Defining your power, and is part of the character concept.

Let's use an example from the game book – Ghost Tamer Miyaki. You can find Miyaki's character sheet on page 104 – feel free to leaf forward and take a look at it as we go through here.

Miyaki's player decides that her main power will be the ability to banish the "troubled dead" from this world to the next. Her player has gone over the campaign setting with the GM and knows that the troubled dead are the main opposing force. The GM agrees that banishing these beings is an essential function of the character, but he asks Miyaki's player to define it further. He doesn't want it to be a quick and easy end to every adventure almost at the outset, so he asks Miyaki's player to set some conditions under which the power will and won't work.

Miyaki's player thinks about this for a while. She decides that the spirit must be willing to depart to the next life for her to banish them. This means that she must either persuade the spirit to go or use some form of mind control on it. The GM reminds her that most of the troubled dead will be Mind Controlled to begin with, so Miyaki would have to break through the opposing Mind Control. Miyaki's player also decides she can't send the spirits just anywhere – only to where they would naturally go in their next life.

The GM is satisfied that Miyaki's player has limited her power quite nicely, and the player writes it down in her notes this way:

Banish spirit; only on ghosts she has used Mind Control on or otherwise persuaded; only to send the spirit on to the next life

Now Miyaki needs to come up with a Mind Control power to complement this power. Mind Control is a very powerful ability which, when used willy-nilly, can really foul up an adventure. The GM recognizes this and asks Miyaki's player to limit the power in some way.

She decides that the power can only be used on spirits – she can't Mind Control the living. The GM tells her that the ability still needs to be refined to fit the genre, and asks her if she will be using the ability for anything else besides breaking the Mind Control that drives the troubled dead to wreak their havoc. Miyaki's player thinks about this for a moment and decides she probably won't, so she decides to accept this limitation, here is how she writes up the power.

Mind Control; only on ghosts; only to remove rival Mind Control

The GM is satisfied with this write-up and allows the power. He also tells her that she would need to be able to see the ghosts she fights, which is a separate power. Miyaki's player agrees and writes up this power:

See Ghosts; automatically sees ghosts and can detect ghostly possession with a Skill roll

The GM has no problems with this power and accepts it as written. Miyaki's player is really getting the hang of this! She decides she's powerful enough, but as a true Magical Girl she needs one more thing – a Transformation. Transformations are a special kind of Supernormal Power that usually works automatically. Miyaki's player decides to write up the Transformation this way:

Transform from normal identity to Ghost Tamer costume (with staff) at will.

This completes Miyaki's Supernormal Powers. Since she's outlined and noted how each power works, she just has to build them.

Creating the Power

The first thing to do is to purchase a Gift that bestows the powers. You can buy multiple Gifts to get you more levels, but check with the GM to make sure of any limits.

1 Gift – You have 15 levels to spend on powers
2 Gift – You have 30 levels to spend on powers
3 Gift – You have 45 levels to spend on powers

Gifts

Super Powers: You have been bestowed with powers beyond that of normal ken.

Magic: You are a wizard (see also the spellcasting rules).

Hero Form: You are able to take on a completely different form, and it's only in this form you can use your powers. Use this for Magical Girls.

Psi: Your powers are all derived from your mental muscles.

Gadget: You don't have powers, but you have a gadget or gadgets that simulate powers

Magic Item: As per gadget, but it's a magical artifact. Some Magical Girl settings have the heroic forms and powers coming from magic items.

Once you've bought your Gift, you then go to purchase your Super Skills. Default is Terrible.

Power Skills

Attack: You have an attack power. You need to define the attack form when this skill is bought.

Protect: You are able to protect yourself or others.

Transform: You can change something from one thing to another. Great for disguises!

Heal: If it's damaged, you can repair it, alive or no. You must choose whether you can heal living material or non-living material. Each is a separate skill.

Travel: You can move fast, fly, teleport, or something that gets you from one place to another

Enhance: You can take an aspect of an attribute, a skill, or other power and move it to another plateau. Each level grants a bonus to the dice roll as follows:

Terrible: +1
Poor: +2
Mediocre: +4
Fair: +6
Good: +8
Great: +10
Superb: +12

What power, skill, or aspect of an attribute the enhancement affects must be determined at creation.

Control: Once you define what it is you have control over, you can control it completely

Create: You have the ability to create something from nothing. You cannot create life.

Sense: You can see or perceive things that might not be readily seen at first glance.

Communicate: You can talk to creatures or things that most people can't.

Skill assumes that proficiency, damage, range, volume, or whatever is consistent. If one part of your power is higher or lower, you can increase or reduce that aspect of the power, which will either give you levels back or cost more levels. A power cannot cost less than 1 level.

Aspects that can be changed can be anything, such as "can affect spirits (+1) and "Only usable while flying (-1)" The actual level would remain the same, but it would cost a level from your total (such as the first example) or add to the total (like the latter one).

Some sample bonuses and limitations include:

Area Effect: +1 (+2 for a really wide area)

Extra Damage: +1 for every extra 5 points of damage

Multiple targets: +1 for every 2 additional targets

Trick (like shooting around corners): +2

Affects only one thing: -1

Only usable while flying: -1

The process continues; Miyaki's player sees that first she'll need to buy a gift that will bestow Miyaki with her wondrous powers. Noting her desire to have Miyaki transform, she picks "Hero Form," but writes it on her character sheet as "Magical Girl." She takes it as one Gift, as she feels that 15 levels should be enough.

First comes the power to perceive the spirits. She buys "Sense" at Great. She adds a level by making it Automatic and she also adds another one by making it useable outside the Magical Girl form.

Next is the "Control Ghosts" ability. The "Control" skill is the most obvious here, so she buys it at Good. Her notes remind her of the limits, so she chooses two things to reduce the cost: "Only on Ghosts" and "Only to remove rival mind control."

Finally, comes the attack power. She clarifies that as "Banish." She buys Attack (Banish) at Great, and then reduces the cost by tacking on "only on ghosts she has used Mind Control on" and "Only to send spirits to next life."

She totals it up, and it comes to 15 points exactly. Not bad. Normally, she'd have to do some tweaking to get it to the exact points.

Leftover Levels: Sometimes, you have more levels than you know what to do with. You've planned out your powers and purchased the skills necessary for them, but now you have a substantial number of levels left. What to do?

Latent Powers: It's common in heroic fiction, Eastern and Western, for a character to grow and later manifest new powers in the course of an adventure. For this option, save the points for a later date. In the course of an adventure, the GM will reveal your new powers (Suddenly, you feel power building within, and then the winds coalesce around you, and you throw them at the demon!). A generous GM might let you pick the new power.

Lucky Girl: With this option, you keep the levels, but use them to give yourself a boost. You can spend a level to give yourself an automatic success, to make an Unopposed Action have panache (good for impressing that Magical Guy you like), avoid an injury, alter a die roll, or a favorable coincidence (depending on how favorable, this may require more than one level).

Watch out, though: once the points are gone, they're gone! (Although, a GM could allow these points to come back after an adventure, functioning like Heart Points described in Chapter 1)

Redistribute: Here, you simply take the leftover points and put them into your skills. They trade at the same rate as skills (6 skills = 1 Gift; 3 skills = 1 attribute). GMs should watch out for players buying few powers just for the purpose of having more skill levels (i.e. buying a power at Terrible and then having 14 extra skill levels). Make 'em take a Fault if they want more skills levels.

Using A Supernormal Power

To use a Supernormal Power in play is rarely automatic (a few are, but most are not). Whether a power is inborn, granted or trained, it still requires practice and/or insight to use effectively.

When using a power, the player must roll against the Power Skill against the difficulty of the task they are attempting.

Example: Miyaki suspects that one of her NPC classmates may be possessed by one of the Troubled Dead (she's been noticing some odd behavior). The GM knows she's right, but he's not about to let her off that easy. He tells Miyaki's player to roll her Sense Ghosts Power skill. Miyaki has this skill at Great. She rolls a –1, reducing it to Good. The GM has decided that, since this spirit is concealing itself especially well, she needed a Great roll to detect the ghost. Nonetheless, he does not choose to tell Miyaki's player she failed the roll. Instead, he lies to the player and tells her

she does not see any signs of possession. Lulled by a false sense of security, Miyaki is completely surprised when the boy sprouts claws and fangs and starts attacking.

Some powers are automatic and can be invoked at will. The most common of these are Transformations; you usually don't need a skill roll to change from one form to another. Other powers can be automatic if the GM agrees. And some powers are always active with no detriment and are the default status of the character, such as a character that is permanently invisible.

Example: Under attack from the possessed boy, Miyaki sees that nobody else is around. She invokes her Transformation power (the Magical Girl Gift) and transforms into her Ghost Tamer identity, complete with costume and staff. She does not have to make a skill roll to do this, and the boy does not get a chance to strike her while she transforms.

Certain powers can be invoked involuntarily. Usually they are triggered by specific circumstances determined when the power is created. This can often be inconvenient for the character, but it can also be a lifesaver in the right conditions. Involuntary Powers should be used with caution in Character Creation, as they take away much of the player's free will.

Example: Black Rose is in his normal identity, who is unaware of his own activities as Miyaki's protector. Right now he in gym class, getting ready to take a good, hot shower. At that moment Miyaki is attacked by the boy she had previously failed to detect. Miyaki being in danger triggers Black Rose's Gift of Transformation and Power of Teleport. The GM automatically invokes them and suddenly Black Rose, in his full outfit, is at Miyaki's side, fully aware and ready to fight. Meanwhile the shower, which he had just turned on, is still running and his classmates are wondering where he went.

A Supernormal power roll can be opposed by another Supernormal Power roll, or the result of an earlier roll.

Example: After the Black Rose has prevented the possessed boy from disemboweling Miyaki, she decides to send the spirit on to its next life. That means breaking the Demon King's Mind Control over the spirit with her own Mind Control power. Miyaki's player rolls against her Control Ghosts skill and gets a Superb result. The GM, having previously rolled for the Demon King, determines she needed a Good result to break through. The control is broken and the creature stops attacking. Now Miyaki can persuade the spirit possessing the boy to go peacefully to the next life, a much easier task – she only needs a Mediocre result, which she easily manages. Finally she rolls against her Banish Spirit power. Again she succeeds, and the spirit goes on to the next life, leaving the boy unconscious and restored to himself.

Magic and Spells

The power to cast magic spells is a special case of Supernormal Power because of its great flexibility. It is always worth at least two Faults for the Spellcasting Gift and one additional Fault every time its bought as an additional Gift and, when taken as a free Gift, the character cannot take any additional powers. If extra powers are allowed besides Spellcasting they must be paid for by faults.

Of note, the Spellcasting Gift is different from the Magic Gift described under Powers. That Gift allows you to custom build magical powers, while Spellcasting offers an open-ended spell making system.

Buying the Spellcasting Gift grants the following:

1 Gift: You have 15 levels to spend on Magic Skills
2 Gifts: You have 30 levels to spend on Magic Skills
3 Gifts: You have 45 levels to spend on Magic Skills

Once you have your levels, you spend them on your magical skills. You cannot buy magical skills with your regular skill points. Default is Terrible.

Earth: You can work magic on minerals, metals, dirt, stone and gems.

Air: You can work magic on the winds and gases.

Fire: You can work magic on heat and light, as well as combustion. You can also use this skill to create heat or to remove it (i.e. freezing)

Water: You can work magic on liquids.

Machine: You can work magic on mechanical devices.

Wood: You can work magic on vegetation and things derived from it, like paper.

Beast: You can work magic on animals and derived materials, like leather.

Man: You can work magic on humans and human-shaped creatures.

Magic: Your can work magic on other magic effects, including countering spells, and you can also affect magic-based creatures.

Time: Your magic can affect time itself. Note: This is a very powerful magical effect, and can have a huge effect on the game. It is recommended that the GM set a maximum of 1 day at Superb when dealing with traveling through time.

Also, when using Earth, Air, Fire, Water and Wood, you can also create items based on those elements.

The GM must determine, based on his campaign, how powerful a spell a character can cast.

To cast a spell requires a successful Magic Skill roll. The GM sets the difficulty of each spell and does not necessarily inform the player. The GM can also determine the effect of a particular spell, again without necessarily telling the player in advance. This can lead to some surprises! How powerful the spell cast is depends on these factors:

· The character's Power level, which reflects their raw magical power;

· The character's skill, which reflects their control over that power; and

· Whatever other circumstances the GM brings to bear.

Magic-using players can build "spell books" defining specific spells they know how to cast. The player can define those spells at any time by making a Mind roll to learn the spell. This can result in a player character developing a long list of spells. The GM has the right to set a cap on the number of spells based on the character's skill.

In addition to the spells in a spell book, characters can cast spells "on the fly" if they have the proper Spellcasting skill. Make a Spellcasting roll to see if the character can figure out a proper spell for the situation, and then make another Spellcasting roll to cast the spell. On-the-fly spells

are notoriously fickle and can backfire on failed rolls, sometimes with disastrous results.

Players can take limitations on their magic just like any other power. They can say that their magic won't work during the day, or at night, for example, or limit the circumstances under which it can be used or the spells that can be cast.

Example: Kitten, a magic-using thief, can do just about anything with her powers with one restriction – she cannot use them to cause direct physical harm. This is a significant limitation on her magic, making her effectively useless offensively in combat. The GM tells the player creating Kitten that she can take an extra 3 levels of Magic Skills because she has drastically limited the effectiveness of her power. She'll need to find other ways to deal with people who want to do her harm.

Transformations

Spell casters wanting to transform something or someone into something else needs to take their Skills into consideration.

When a player states that their caster is going to transform something, they only need to roll against what their magic will affect (turning a man into a frog would only require rolling the Man Skill). The GM must decide if they have the power needed to complete the transformation by looking at the level of what the target is being transformed into.

The character must have the Magic Skill that's based on what they're turning their target into (turning a man into a frog requires the caster to possess the Beast Skill, while turning them to stone would require the Earth skill).

Targets with multiple qualities

There are times when a magic user might be required to work magic on something that falls under two different Magic skills. Does Water or Earth affect ice, which is solid water? What about super-heated iron, is that Earth or Fire?

In this case, it is what the object starts out as that you use for that determination. Ice would use the Water skill and iron the Earth skill.

Setting Power Levels

Power levels will vary from campaign to campaign. What is average in one may be devastating in another.

A sample damage table is given in Chapter 4 on Combat.

As an example setting power levels, here is what the Fire Skill might look like:

Low-powered: At Fair, a character can shoot a small bolt of fire from her palm.

Average fantasy: At Fair, the caster can create an exploding ball of flame 10'x 10'.

Ungodly-powered: In the spirit of Slayers, a fireball that can take out an entire forest. If you have this kind of an effect at Fair, watch out!

If your game allows for Heart Points, spending two minimum will allow you cast your spell at a power level above the game's set power level.

Sample Powers

No powers list can hope to encompass all the powers that are found in shoujo manga and anime. Nonetheless, some powers merit special mention and description here.

Attacks: What magical hero would be without some form of an attack power? As noted, the Attack power requires you to define what the attack does. This is anime. Don't just give your character a fire attack. Give them an attack that creates mystical symbols around them and a burst of flame that erupts from the fingers and spiral toward the target. (ahem!) Then give it a cool name.

As an example, a player creates a power where the character raises her arms, and summons a shower of sharpened crystal from the sky to rain down on her foes. Once naming the power, on her character sheet, she writes the following:

Cascade Shard (Attack: Great)

Attacks can be limited like any other power; you can take an Attack that only works while you are flying, for example. If you possess the Super Form Gift, you already are limited to when you can use your powers. You cannot, however, take a limitation that your attack works "only against foes"!

Defenses: A character can take a defense as a Supernormal Power. Use Table 2.8 in the Combat chapter to see how much can be blocked. For an additional bonus, the defense can be extended (like a force field) to include other characters. Limitations can be taken on a defense to reflect weaknesses (such as a specific type of attack it has no effect on).

Transformation: Magical Girl characters can take a transformation as one of their powers using the Super Form Gift (although you don't need to write it on the character sheet by that name). It is not mandatory, but since it can be awkward to go grab their costumes in the middle of combat, many magical girls have one. Transformations change the character's outfit from whatever they were wearing at the time to their "battle costume," with the possibility of an intermediate stage. If there is any special equipment that comes with the battle costume (such as a weapon), that also appears with the costume (although if the weapon has magical or special properties it must be purchased separately). Transformations, no matter how long the "transformation sequence" would take to show in an anime, are practically instantaneous, and characters can never be attacked while in the act of transforming. Transformations are often linked to objects – if the object is taken away or destroyed, the character cannot transform until it is replaced. With this type of transformation, use the Magic Item Gift.

Using the Super Form Gift requires the player to choose what her character will turn into. She might just transform into her costume, or perhaps, no one will even recognize the character once she's in her new form (sometimes called the Clark Kent syndrome). A good example of a chosen form is:

Magical Age Change: This is a special case of transformation, in which the character changes into an older or younger version of herself. It is frequently used by preteen girls who transform into more mature women for various reasons (like to become famous idols). This cannot be taken as a permanent ability. Characters can have skills in their older form that they do not possess in their normal, younger form. (Singing is a common example for girls who transform from little girls to teenage idol singers).

Chapter 3:

Playing the Game

Now that you've learned the basics and created your character, it's time to learn how to play. Hopefully you will have a patient gamemaster who will guide you through the difficulties you might encounter. But some GMs are less tolerant, so here are some of the basics of a roleplaying game.

In an RPG, you aren't doing anything yourself. It's your character that does everything. You are controlling (or attempting to control) your character's actions as she faces the world and people around her. You are interacting with the characters played by your fellow players, with those played by the GM, and with the general environment around you. Is it cold this morning? The GM will tell you this and you will react to the fact that it is cold. That seems like a simplistic example, but it's the sort of information that might prove useful. (If it's snowing in July, it might give you an idea that something supernatural is going on….)

In a way this resembles the games like "cops and robbers" and "house" that you played as little kids. You were taking on the role of a cop, robber, husband or wife. This time, though, there are rules that define what the role you took on can do. We've already seen some of those rules in action when you created your character. Now let's see how those rules are put into practice to create the roleplaying experience.

Description and Declaration

Throughout the game, you will be declaring and describing what your character is doing. You can go into as much detail as you like – just try not to bore the other players.

An example of a simple declared action is "I kiss Kasumi". What happens next is up to several things. If Kasumi is a player-character, she might have an opinion about being kissed by you. If she consents to the kiss, there usually won't be a problem resolving the immediate action – you and Kasumi exchange an intimate moment. If Kasumi doesn't want to be kissed, on the other hand, it gets more complicated. Her player can say, "Kiss him? No way! I'm going to slap his face instead!" You have both declared actions, and the GM has to step in and resolve how the scene plays out. And the GM may have other tricks up his sleeve – maybe Kasumi's former boyfriend (an NPC or "non-player character") is watching all this and decides to barge in on the scene, posing a whole new set of problems.

If Kasumi is an NPC, it is up to the GM to decide if she will accept or reject your kiss. He'll make the decision based on how well it will advance the story you are playing out. Perhaps he'll make you roll to see if you can carry through on your intentions. Or perhaps he'll throw in some other complication. If he's really sadistic, he'll do all of the above.

Sometimes you will have to describe how you do something as well as what you do. It might not

be enough, for example, to say, "I listen in on the conversation going on in the other classroom". The GM could very well ask you how you are going to accomplish this feat. Maybe you'll be outing your ear to the door, or (if you have one) you might plant a microphone in the classroom (which raises possible complications all its own).

Conversation

You won't just be acting with or on other characters, of course. You'll be talking to them to. You have to be able to convey to others what you want or you probably won't get very far. Conversation offers chances for agreement, cooperation, misunderstandings, and all the things that just can't be conveyed without words.

NPCs will also be talking to you. At what length depends on the situation. It will be rare, for example, for the GM to give you Yoshizumi-sensei's entire lecture on Japanese Literature. But he might read the entire romantic haiku that Kenshiro wrote to your character. Monsters will make deadly threats to your magical heroines, authority figures will try to question you at times, and you'll naturally have to deal with your family and other NPCs.

You'll usually be able to tell the difference between the GM describing a situation and the GM speaking in character for an NPC. You are going to need to develop the same skill. Usually, when you are conversing at the table (or beanbag chair or whatever) during a game it is assumed you are conversing in character unless you deliberately step out of character. In this game, you have to make it clear that "I want to order a pizza" means that you want to call out yourself and not that your character wants to order a pizza in the game. Otherwise you'll go hungry!

Task Resolution

Many of the actions your character will take over the course of the game are automatic. You don't need to do anything special to walk, pick up most objects, talk to another character (most of the time) or look for something.

On the other hand, there will be times when there is a chance your character will not succeed at something she attempts. This is resolved with a die roll and the process is called "task resolution". The action you are attempting is called a "task". Task resolution is a cooperative process between you and the gamemaster, who is not out to get you in spite of what some people might have told you about roleplaying games.

Ideally you will have a set of four FUDGE dice with you when you play *HeartQuest*. FUDGE dice are a special kind of six-sided die on which two sides have a plus sign, two sides have a minus sign, and two sides are blank (have nothing on them at all). You can buy them from Grey Ghost Games, publishers of the original FUDGE rules. You can also make them yourself if the need arises, but we'd prefer you supported Grey Ghost.

Rolling FUDGE dice is simple. You roll four of them (no more, no less), add up the plus signs, and subtract the minus signs. That's your roll, and it can be anything from +4 (best) to -4 (worst). The rest of this chapter will show you how to apply this roll to any task you attempt to perform.

Traits and Tasks

Your character is defined by your traits, and you roll against those traits to determine your relative success or failure at each task the GM assigns. They way you do this is quite simple. The GM will tell you which attribute or skill to

roll against. You roll the FUDGE dice and total them up. You then move your trait up or down on the scale from Terrible (bottom) to Superb (top) based on the roll. Then you tell the GM what your final result is and he tells you what happened.

Simple, no?

Some notes on the basic process: you will often get rolls that are lower than terrible or higher than Superb. In that case you go further down on the additional levels. The worst possible roll is "Terrible -4" and the best is "Legendary +4" (for those few characters who have a Legendary trait).

Another note: the GM will tell you what happens: what you see (or think you see), what you figure out, etc., but he will NOT necessarily tell you if you made your roll! The GM will often not tell you the difficulty of the roll you are attempting. You might find yourself having to guess whether you really succeeded at the task at hand or whether the GM is lying to you about something, especially when the task involves perception.

Task Checks

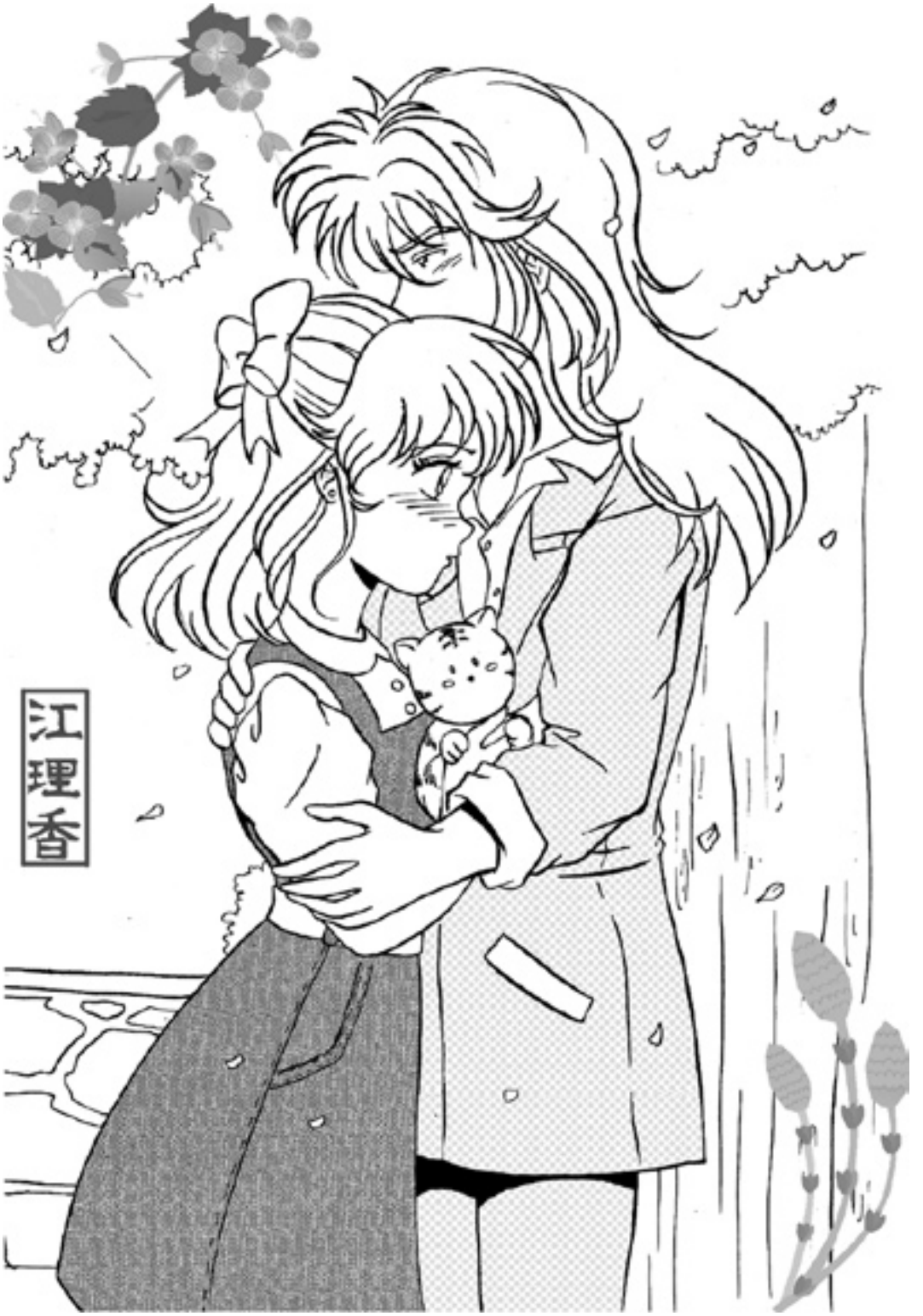
There are many types of tasks that you can attempt. Often you won't know you're going to be attempting a task until the GM interrupts you and asks you to make a die roll. There will be other times when you ask the GM to let you roll against a trait to do something.

Some of the types of tasks you will perform (or attempt to perform) include:

Attribute Checks: This is when you roll against an attribute to see if something happens to your character. An example would be a Physique check to push open a door (hey, there can be some pretty heavy doors!), a Cool check to withstand an insult without lashing out, or a Willpower check to resist that extra piece of strawberry cheesecake. There can even be Appearance Checks, to see for example if on a particular occasion you are looking good enough to attract the kind of attention you want from a particular boy.

Skill Checks: This is a roll against one of your Skills to perform a task. If there is a question on whether to roll against an Attribute or a Skill, roll against the Skill even if it's at a lower level than the Attribute. Generally, if a task specifically falls under the realm of a Skill, then an attempt to perform it by someone who doesn't have the skill will be at a very high difficulty or be declared impossible by GM fiat. Again, the GM will usually not tell you how difficult the task is (although he may give you hints).

Example: Miyaki is shopping at the local clothing store, looking for a new outfit. Being the clothes fanatic she is, Miyaki wants something cool, new and fashionable. The GM asks her to make a Shopping roll. He's set a high Difficulty (Great), knowing that Miyaki lives in a relatively small town. Miyaki rolls (Good) and does not beat the difficulty. However, Miyaki's player is not told this. Instead, she is told that she could not find a suitable outfit in the store. Miyaki makes a note to herself to make a trip to Tokyo sometime soon, where she knows she'll find the latest fashions, unaware that the perfect outfit is sitting on the rack right behind her…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Chapter 4:

Combat

Fighting and Shoujo Manga have an odd relationship. In some instances, fighting is strictly prohibited. For example, in one episode of the Kodomo no Omocha TV series, the heroine Sana shouts out "This is a Shoujo Anime!" when a fight is about to break out. In others, you have the recurring "monster of the week" type of scheme, where the heroes fight a new monster in every episode. Regardless, there is always the potential for violence and *HeartQuest* does not shy away from it. The following section deals with how to orchestrate all forms of battle in *HeartQuest*, be it against fearsome dragons, giant mecha, evil youma, or even just a confrontation between rivals in the school's kendo practice hall.

Basic Combat Routine

Combat is handled as a series of four steps in *HeartQuest*. Since in Shoujo Manga most combat involves dueling between two characters, this part of the Combat section assumes the fight is a one-on-one affair. In cases where multiple fighters are involved at the same time, the multi-fighter rule described under Initiative should be used.

The four steps are as follows:

1. Determine Initiative

2. Resolve first character's action

3. Resolve second character's action

4. If both participants are not incapacitated, continue to the next round.

Initiative

In order to determine who goes first, the participants will have resolve Initiative. Since most combat has a dueling nature, *HeartQuest* assumes the character with the higher combat skill automatically goes first. In cases of ties (or the players/GMs getting bored), roll 4dF and modify the combat skill being used accordingly. In cases of character with no combat skill, the result is automatically Poor (-2). Keep in mind that Dodge is considered a combat skill and can be use if the character will be acting defensively that round. Throwing, although listed under physical skills, can also be used if the character is throwing something dangerous.

Example: Hiroshi and a gang punk are about to brawl. Hiroshi has a Brawling skill of Great (+2) while our stupid gang punk has a Brawling skill of Fair (+0). Since Hiroshi has the higher skill rating, Hiroshi gets "first whacks."

Multi-Fighter Initiative: When in doubt, expect the unexpected. Although most fights in Shoujo are one-on-one, there are occasionally multiple person brawls. In such cases, using the skill levels of the characters would be tedious. Instead, each character rolls 4dF and applies their Physique attribute since it is the closest attribute that encompasses a character's reflexes. The character with the highest result followed by the second, third, fourth, et cetera until all the combatants have acted. In case of ties, each character rolls a single Fudge Die until the tie is broken.

Actions

Upon getting to their initiative, the combatant has an almost unlimited number of things he or she can accomplish provided they can do it within 3.14 seconds (the average time in which a combat "round" takes). This is known as the character's action. Each character gets to perform one action on their initiative turn. There are five common actions: Attack, All-Out Attack, Defend, Use Trait, or Wait. Other possible actions are up to participants' imaginations.

Attack: The act of inflicting damage upon either a living thing or an inanimate object. This deals with physical attacks such as the use of a weapon, displays of martial arts prowess, or flinging the occasional projectile. Magic attacks are handled in the Magic section later in Chapter Two. Attacks behave like normal Opposed Skill Tests. The attacking character must pick an appropriate skill depending on the attack they intend on using (e.g., Martial Arts if attempting a fancy martial arts attack), while the target must pick a suitable defensive skill (the target could also use Martial Arts if they have the skill or Dodge). If either the attacker or defender lacks the appropriate skill, assume their skill is Poor (-2). If the attacker wins the test, they may inflict damage upon the defender. If the defender wins, no damage is inflicted at all since the attacker missed.

All-Out Attack: The character lashes out, ignoring any need for defense, and performs a single fearsome attack which, with the right timing, can slaughter anything in his or her way. It grants a +4 bonus to the ODF of the attack, but also results in a -2 penalty to the attack skill test.

Defend: When all else fails, the character can choose to focus purely defending themselves. In that case, the character gets a +2 bonus to his or her defensive skill and DDF when any enemy attacks during that round.

Use Trait: This is a catchall for using any non-combat related ability during a battle such as a Skill or a Power that the character may possess. This also can cover Magic use, but the Magic section handles the use of magic in combat in better detail.

Wait: Provided the character has a higher initiative than their opponent(s), he or she can choose to simply wait for the other participant to act first before acting. This can useful for when the enemy character decides to execute an All-Out Attack so the character can counter it by Defending or launching his or her own All-Out Attack at the same time.

Inflicting Damage

If the attacking character succeeds in his or her Opposed Test, damage is inflicted. How much is inflicted depends on a number of different factors. The most important two factors are the Offense Damage Factor (ODF) of the attacking character and the Defensive Damage Factor (DDF) of the target. Both of these values are based on the Physique attribute of the characters involved; the table below should be used to determine the character's "base" Offense Value and Defense Value. Certain other traits such as Gifts and Powers may grant bonuses to the ODF and DDF ratings as do weapons and armor.

Editor's Note: the ODF & DDF values presented below are different than the ones found in the FUDGE rulebook. We did this because of the use of the Damage Threshold to make combat in *HeartQuest* more drawn out and epic rather than short and lethal. Since it takes more to incapacitate a character, it was natural to increase the ODF/DDF rates to compensate for it.

Table 2.1: Base Offense Factor

Physique Rating	Base Offense Value
Superb	+10
Great	+9
Good	+8
Fair	+7
Mediocre	+6
Poor	+5
Terrible	+4

Table 2.2: Base Defense Factor

Physique Rating	Base Defense Value
Superb	–6
Great	–5
Good	–4
Fair	–3
Mediocre	–2
Poor	–1
Terrible	0

While other factors can increase either value, these ratings reflect what the character can do in combat with a regular punch. Once the other factors are accounted for (various Gifts, Offense Factor bonuses from the Martial Arts skill, weapon or armor bonuses, etc. etc.), the attacking character's Offense Factor should be reduced by the target's Defense Factor.

Example 1: Hiroshi and that gang punk are still at it. This time, our hero has managed to land a hit on the punk. He has a Physique of Superb, which gives him an Offense Factor of +10 and a Defense Factor of –6. The punk, however, has a Physique of Good (Defense Value: -4). This means that Hiroshi inflicts 6 points of damage (Hiroshi's OV of +10 minus the Punk's DV of –4. 10-4 = 6) with his punch.

Example 2: Chiharu is being bullied by a mean sempai (upper classman) who really doesn't like her. In dramatic fashion, the sempai slaps Chiharu! The sempai has a Physique of Good (ODF: +8), but Chiharu has a Physique of Terrible (DDV: +0). Thus the slap does a numbing 8 points of damage if the GM actually considers this a form of combat.

Random Damage (Optional): Like initiative, doing the same amount of damage round after round gets old after a while. In order to add a random element to it, simply roll 4dF and add it to the result. Say for instance Hiroshi's player in the example rolls a +2 result. The damage done would go up from 8 to 10.

Damage & Wound Levels

No matter how skilled and powerful they may be, all characters get hurt sooner or later. To account for this, all *HeartQuest* characters have a derived attribute known as "Wound Threshold." This attribute determines how much damage a character can take before they begin to suffer the negative effects of reaching the lower Wound Levels (explained below).

The Hurt Wound Threshold is formed by combining the modifiers from their Physique and Willpower attributes and adding the result to 10 (negative modifiers should be subtracted from the 10 points instead).

Once the Hurt Wound Threshold is figured, it is then used to determine the character's wound thresholds for more severe wound levels. Multiply by 2 for the Very Hurt threshold, by 3 for the Incapacitated threshold, and by 5 foe the Dead threshold.

Examples: A character with a Physique & Willpower of Fair (+0) would thus have a Wound Threshold of 10/20/30/50 (0 + 0 + 10 = 10).

Meanwhile, a character with a Physique of Superb (+3) and a Willpower of and Great (+2) would have a WT of 15/30/45/60 (3 + 2 + 10 = 15) while a character with a Terrible Physique (-3) and Fair Willpower (+0) would have a WT of 7/14/21/35 (10 – 3 = 7).

In *HeartQuest*, all damage is cumulative. When the accumulated damage exceeds one of the character's Wound Thresholds, their Wound Level worsens and they begin to suffer penalties to their dice tests. There are five Wound Levels: Unhurt, Hurt, Wounded, Incapacitated, and Dead. The Wound Level Unhurt sums up any character that has either sustained no damage or the damage taken is less than their Hurt Wound Threshold. Upon reaching the Hurt Wound Level, the character is stuck with a –1 penalty to all of their dice rolls. The Very Hurt Wound Level increases this penalty to –2. At the Incapacitated level, the character is knocked out and will remain that way until they recover enough that the damage taken in combat is less than the Incapacitated threshold rating. If a character with an Incapacitated WT of 30 takes 34 points of damage, they will regain consciousness when they have recovered 5 points of damage, since they will then have 29 damage--one less damage point than their Incapacitated threshold. And Dead is, well, dead. This gap between the Incapacitated and Dead thresholds are twice the size of normal Wound Levels on purpose so that character deaths are in most cases very rare.

Healing Wounds

Despite how invulnerable some characters may believe themselves to be, all characters take damage in combat and must heal from it eventually. How fast the character heals depends on several variables. The most important one is their Physique attribute- obviously a tough character can heal faster than someone that's allergic to every substance known to man. The second factor is the type of campaign. In a serious game where fighting is highly lethal, the healing rate is slower. In a more comic game a character recovers from "lethal" wounds by the time the next scene comes up. Using the below table of healing rates, the character reduces the damage they've taken by this amount at the beginning of each new scene.

Table 2.3: Healing Rates

Physique	Serious Game	Comic Game
Superb	7	9
Great	6	8
Good	5	7
Fair	4	6
Mediocre	3	4
Poor	2	3
Terrible	1	2

Example: Hiroshi has taken a total of 13 points of damage from his brawl with the gang punk. Since the campaign setting is rather comic and he has a Physique level of Superb, his damage is reduced by 9 points after the fight.

Combat Complications

Having discussed the basics, the following section deals with addition complications that may arise during or after combat is concluded.

Armor

The term armor covers all forms of protective gear that are worn with decreasing damage in mind. Players can gain access to armor by taking the Prop gift, which covers the use of any important items that the character may have access to or own. In the case of heavier armor, the character's defense tests when attacked in combat are penalized due to the bulk of the armor.

Table 2.4: Armor List

DDF Bonus	Defense Penalty	Examples
+1	+0	Leather Armor Kevlar Vest
+2	+0	Scale Mail Kevlar Jacket
+3	+0	Chain Mail Light Body Armor
+4	–1	Plate Mail Heavy Body Armor
+5	–2	Full Plate

Shields: Although armor mainly covers protective body wear such as suits of armor, shields are a form of protection that some players may want to consider. A shield is simply a slab of something (wood, metal, plastic, etc.) that is carried in the off-hand and used to block incoming attacks. In game terms, a shield provides a small bonus to the player's defense rolls. If the character's defense roll beats the shield's 'Defense Range', the character suffers no damage. If not, the DDF rating of the shield reduces the damage of the attack.

Table 2.5: Shield List

Def. Bonus/ Range	DDF Bonus	Examples
+1	+1	Buckler
+2	+2	Large Shield
+3	+3	Tower Shield

Attack Ranges

One of the more complex subjects that arise in the combat system of any role-playing game is determining the range within which a character can strike his or her intended target. In *HeartQuest*, there are four ranges: melee, short range, medium range, and long range. Each weapon or attack has its own range.

Melee: The weapon or attack requires the character and their target to be within very close range- often less than a meter or yard away. Examples: all forms of physical combat (punching, kicking, etc.) as well as the use of all melee weapons.

Short Range: A distance of roughly 30 feet (10 yards/meters). Examples include thrown weapons such as shuriken, rocks, and knives.

Medium Range: A distance of roughly 100-300 feet (30-100 yards/meters). Examples include bows and crossbows.

Long Range: A distance of roughly 500-1000 feet (160-300 yards/meters). Examples include firearms and other more powerful weapons.

Weapons

Through the Prop gift, a character can gain access to nearly any form of weapon imaginable. The obvious benefit of having a weapon in combat is that the character inflicts more damage than they are normally capable of without one. They come in four varieties: Melee and Ranged.

Melee Weapons: these cover any weapon that is swung or thrust at the opponent in close combat. Since it relies on the muscle power of the holder, it supplies a direct bonus to the attacking character's ODF pending on the size of the weapon. Weapons with a sharp edge or point receive an accumulative +2 bonus to their ODF, even though listed differently. A knife, for instance, is listed as a +2 weapon but does +4 damage.

Table 2.6: Melee Weapon List

ODF Bonus	Init. Modifier	Size/Examples
+2	+2	Small weapon (Black Jack, knife, brass knuckles, sling)
+4	+0	Medium weight one-handed weapon (billy club, machete, short sword, epee)
+6	–1	Large one-handed weapon (Broadsword, axe, large club)
+8	–2	Light two-handed weapon (Spear, Quarterstaff)
+10	–3	Heavy two-handed weapon (Polearm, Great Sword, battleaxe)
+2*	N/A	All sharp weapons (swords, axes, etc.)

* Cumulative with other bonuses

Ranged Weapons: This covers long ranged weaponry that involve firing projectiles such as Bows and guns. With the exception of Bows and thrown weapons, all Ranged Weapons have a "set" ODF that it always inflicts if the character using it successfully strikes their opposition in combat.

Table 2.7: Ranged Weapon List

ODF Bonus	Init. Modifier	Size& Examples
+0	+0	Shuriken
+2	+0	Short Bow
+4	+0	Long Bow
+4/+6	–1	Composite Bow(Short/ Long)
4	+0	Hold-Out Pistol(Saturday Night Special)
7	+0	Light Pistol(Berretta)
10	+0	Heavy Pistol(Desert Eagle)
13	+0	Assault Rifle(M-16, AK-47)
16	+0	Shotgun
19	+0	Assault Cannon
25	+0	Rocket Launcher

Attack and Defense Powers: If you're going to play a magical girl, chances are you're going to have some form of an attack power. Powered attacks, like ranged weapon, have a set ODF, based on the Attack power. Protective powers use the same bonuses.

Table 2.8 Attack and Defense Values

ODF/DDF Bonus	Power
0	Terrible
+1	Poor
+2	Mediocre
+4	Fair
+8	Good
+12	Great
+16	Superb
+20	Legendary

Chapter 5:

Gamemastering

If you are reading this and you are not the GM (Game Master), you are wasting your time. There are no "World Secrets" or "Things a Player Was Not Meant to Know." This is the chapter about preparing and hosting your own shoujo manga/ anime drama. If you don't want to do this, hand this book to the person who does, so she can get started. Arigato!

All right, so you're the GM. You have the tough, but ultimately rewarding job of putting on a game for a group of your friends, and delivering to them a world and story where they can be heroes and heroines, fight evil, find love, and experience all of the pathos and emotion they find in their favorite dog-eared manga. In order to do this, you have to be pretty familiar with the rules, act out the parts of the various people the players will meet along the way, and above all, be able to improvise to keep with the story and feeling. Yes, you have to do all that, but in return, you get a chance to decide what goes into a good romantic (or tragic) anime, and to take your friends on an adventure they have probably only dreamed of. You also get a good dose of god-like power

Still here? Good. Let's get started with the nuts and bolts of a well-run game.

Running The Game

It may seem like a daunting task, but running a game is not as difficult as it might first seem. Just keep your cool and use your intuition, and most of all, try to have fun! You're playing a game for enjoyment, not putting on a multi-million dollar production (If you are, refer to our royalty agreement). Here are a few things that you may be wondering:

When to Roll Dice

When should you roll dice? The answer is: as rarely as possible. A set of dice is acceptable as a randomizer, but dice can be even more fickle than fate or fortune in real life.

In case of actions with no active resistance (meaning no resistance coming from another person), such as climbing, only roll dice when there is emotion to gained from it. For example, climbing up a cliff aided by proper equipment, on a good day, taking all the time you need, will not need any dice roll, even from characters with Terrible Climbing Skills (Although such characters players should role-play their apprehension anyway, just for fun). Rolling dice will only slow the game down.

However, if there are high winds, or the players have to get up the cliff before a huge monster gets there to eat them, a roll would be necessary, because the outcome is in doubt, and the characters (and thus the players) are under stress. If the players hold their breath in anticipation as the dice tumble, the roll was necessary. That's as good a rule of thumb as any.

Now that you know when to roll, lets talk about what and how to roll.

Attributes, Skills and Difficulties

The GM should usually decide what attribute or skill is used for different types of rolls. Descriptions of what the different attributes and skills mean can be found in the first chapter.

But how can you decide what result the character must get to complete a task? Here are some guidelines; use your own common sense and judgement:

Result Needed	Example (Acrobatics roll)
Terrible	Balance on one foot
Poor	Jump up and down on one foot
Mediocre	Balance with one leg straight out
Fair	Turn a somersault on the ground (Not too gracefully)
Good	Turn a cartwheel
Great	Do a double back-handspring
Superb	Do a double back-handspring on a narrow ledge
Legendary	Defy the laws of physics as we know them

These guidelines are only that, however: guidelines. In a highly cinematic game where the PCs are constantly pulling off death defying feats, only a Fair roll may be needed for incredible stunts. On the other hand, an incredibly realistic game may require at least a Fair roll for any task not performed on a regular basis by the character.

Players may be able to modify these difficulties with their descriptions. A player whose most exciting description of his own action is "I'm rolling my Pick Pocket skill now" should receive the maximum reasonable difficulty when attempting his action. On the other hand, a player who describes the above pick pocketing attempt as "As I near my target, I fake a cough and stumble forward, bumping into him, deftly slipping my hand into his pocket, seeking his wallet" should receive some sort of positive modifier to his attempt. Consider it a reward for making the scene that much more enjoyable. However, don't award spotlight hogs who go on and on about every single action in hopes of getting a modifier. On the other hand, if a player comes up with a description that sounds like it would make the task much harder than it would be otherwise, don't give him a penalty for his efforts. Good attempts at role-play should never be penalized.

The point is, don't get too caught up in making all things equal and scaled. Get a basic idea of how often you want something to be done, and set the difficulty accordingly. If you think an action is routine and could be done often, it should only require a Terrible roll (or no roll at all). If you only want something done once an adventure, make it Superb or beyond. Just don't get bent out of shape about it!

Setting the Stage

Now that you know the when, what, and how of rolling dice, it's time to discuss the where.

The where is, of course, the story's setting. Every time your PCs come across something new, whether it be an old mansion, a dank cave or a new classroom, it is up to you, the Game Master, to describe the setting is such a way as to make the players be able to envision it themselves.

This may seem like a daunting task, but it's only as hard as you make it. Try these tips for best description:

1. Be Sensual

Don't forget to include all the senses in your description. Of course, describe the grass's green color, but also its lovely smell, its spongy feel under their feet, the way the wind whips through it, even the way you can almost taste it in the air. Of course, don't describe it unless you want to make an impression, which brings us to our next point.

2. Hit the High Points

Don't get too caught up in details. Make sure to give the players an overview of the scene as a whole (Such as "A dirty street corner, with litter being tossed about, filling the cracks in the sidewalks, and covering the dented street signs"), and then describing important things in more detail. Anything you describe in detail will be considered by the players to be important, and they will investigate it. Remember that.

3. Be Flexible

Don't use a map. A map is too rigid for such a free-form game. Instead, be logical when players suggest certain actions. If they are in an alleyway, for example, it's logical to assume there are some crates to be kicked over or some trash to hide in, even if these things weren't specifically in the description. You can assume that these things are so mundane that the characters registered them in their minds without taking any great notice.

4. Remember What Game This Is

HeartQuest is a shoujo anime game. So describe the scene as it would appear in your own anime or manga! Don't describe the scene in terms of panels or cells, but getting an idea with a shoujo mindset will certainly put you on the right track. Who knows? Maybe your production will be a manga someday!

Non-Player Characters

The cute American English teacher. The cackling space pirate. The evil demon king from the sixteenth dimension. All of these are Non-Player Characters (or NPCs), which means they are controlled by the Game Master. As the Game Master, you will be in control of a whole slew of these constructs, which can range from bit parts and walk-ons to fully fledged characters who garner as much spotlight time as the players' characters. They can cause problems for the players, help them, provide them with information, or simply supply a little local color to the mix. Effectively employing NPCs for this purpose is a skill that takes practice, but your players (and you) will appreciate the result.

Here are a couple of pointers for using good NPCs:

1. Separate the Wheat and the Chaff

In the real world, everybody has motivations, problems, hang-ups, talents, and history. In a game however, a bit part NPC like a shopkeeper is just scenery. Don't bother giving a complicated background, or even attributes to an NPC the players are only going to see once. (However, a bookseller at the most popular bookstore in town where your players regularly hang out should probably be a fully fleshed out character.) Instead, give them a short description (For a fish merchant, "Short, dark haired, overweight, black full beard and mustache, dirty clothes"), skills he might have ("Haggling: Good, Appraise Fish: Good"), a motivation ("Sell fish; cheat customers'), and maybe one or two memorable traits ("Constantly gestures with a dead, smelly fish"). This should create a seemingly 3-D character out of a 2-D NPC. Of course, if your characters are having long conversations with every smelly fishmonger, it might be time to move the story along.

2. Get Into It

When roleplaying an NPC, don't just read her lines, get into it! Try an accent; raise or lower your voice; put some emotion into it. Use facial expressions and gesticulate. Time permitting, rehearse the more important roles in front of a mirror. If you can use props, like a hayseed for a hick farmer, or a bunch of papers for a busy executive, do that! Anything that makes an NPC more than just a clue dispenser is a good idea.

Running Combat

Players (and thus, their characters), being who they are, will no doubt find themselves in a scrap. Combat is exciting and dramatic, and so gets a bit of special attention in this section.

The first thing to remember about combat is that it should always serve a purpose; there are no "random encounters" in *HeartQuest*. Each

and every fight should serve to either, A) Put the PC in direct confrontation with her opposition (i.e. The final showdown with the villain); B) Impede the progress of the PC in a certain line of action (As the villain makes an escape, he sends out some thugs to "deal with the intruder"); C) Reveal information ("Ah-ha, hero! Once I have killed you, I will kill the princess I kidnapped as well!" "You mean YOU have her!?" "Blast it!"); D) Create tension or suspicion (A mysterious black cloaked figure attacks the PC for seemingly no reason); or E) give the PC a chance to do something really, really cool ("No…I can't let you take him…I…I love him!" Fight!).

Most fights will involve one-on-one duels, or groups of one-on-one duels, between PCs and NPCs. This allows a lot of chance for the PCs to trade witty banter or angsty cursing with their foes. There may also be instances of all of the PCs going after one lone and very strong enemy. This gives the PCs a chance to cry out for help, go to each other's aid, seemingly lose hope and then all pull together for the final victory.

Once the characters are actually in a fight. It is the GM's job to make sure it is exciting and fast paced. Don't give the players a lot of time to decide on their actions, as this ruins the pacing. This also makes the fight more stressful, which can be fun to talk about later.

One thing the GM needs to avoid that many GMs have a problem with is the "Rockem', Sockem' Robots" method of narrating fights. Player: "I attack", GM: "Okay roll", "I hit", "He takes damage. He attacks", "He missed", "New initiative." This is very boring.

Be sure to describe the battle in dramatic detail. We aren't talking warrior-poet battle hymn quality, but at least put some effort behind it. Describe pratfalls, daring lunges, near misses, and other exciting things. If a player makes a Superb attack roll, describe the effortless grace, and the utter surprise of the NPC at the sight of such skill. Describe witnesses' reaction, their gasps and awed expressions. Your player will just eat it up, and you'll have fun too. Of course, with a Terrible roll, tripping on the carpet mid swipe and landing face first in the egg salad is good too.

A Short Word on Death

Only let the characters die when it really means something. Don't let them die at the hands of a nameless goob. Just cheat and let them live. When a PC dies, it should be with lots of tragedy, flashbacks, sad music, heroic speeches and of course, cherry blossoms.

Experience and Character Improvement

Player characters can, over the course of a campaign, improve their abilities. They do this by gaining experience points and spending those points to improve their levels in attributes and skills, buying new gifts and supernormal powers, and buying off faults.

Experience point awards are determined by the GM and given out each game session. A general guideline is each player should get 1-3 points per session for good roleplaying, with a maximum of four points for utterly flawless play. This is partially for accomplishing goals but also for playing in character, showing the character's emotional and intellectual development, and interacting well with both PCs and NPCs. Players should always be rewarded for actions that add to the enjoyment of the game session and to the development of the story, even if those actions sacrifice the character's own personal goals.

Experience Points, or EPs, are spent to improve abilities. To increase a skill costs 1 point

per level to raise from Terrible to Poor, Poor to Mediocre, or Mediocre to Fair. It costs 1 EP to learn a new skill at Terrible. The cost to raise each level after Fair doubles: thus Fair to Good costs 2 EPs, Good to Great costs 4, Great to Superb costs 8. Legendary skills require GM permission and 16 EPs to raise from Superb. Easy skills are treated as if they were one level lower, to a minimum of Terrible. Hard skills are treated as if they were one level higher. Very Hard skills are threated as if they were two levels higher.

Player characters can increase an attribute by spending three times the cost of raising a skill to the same level and always requires GM permission. Example: Miyu wants to improve her appearance from Great to Superb. She's saved 24 EPs. Now she needs the GM's approval and a good in-game reason why she suddenly has gone from being pretty to a knockout.

Gifts and Supernormal Powers can be added at the cost of 6 EPs per fault you'd need to take at character creation to buy this gift or power. The player must go through the same power design process with the GM as she did when she first created her character, and the GM must create an in-game situation in which the new power can emerge or the new gift can display itself. In other words, there has to be a story-based reason this character now has this ability she didn't have before.

For 6 EPs and with GM approval, a player character can "buy off" a Fault so that she is no longer affected by it. Again, this requires an in-game reason. For example, perhaps the character went into therapy to overcome an otherwise crippling phobia.

The GM is always free to impose a new fault in game play if the situation arises that demands one. In darker games, new phobias are quite possible. In games where combat is common, characters can suffer crippling injuries, either temporary or permanent, that are reflected in new Faults.

The Final Rule of GMing

Well now you have tips, tricks and a host of guidelines for running your first game. You also have a book full of rules and numbers. But in truth, there is only one rule you really need:

This is a game, and games are fun!

If you find any rule in this book that you think makes the game less fun, ignore it. If you think of a better rule, use it (and send it to us). Don't let our inadequacies get in the way of your good time.

And lastly, remember, when you are all strung out over your adventure and whether it will be good; or you agonize over deciding a difficulty number; or you worry and worry as to whether or not the players will be mad at you for not being familiar with the rules, take a deep breath and remember that these people are indeed your friends. They like you and you like them, and you are both willing to forget little mistakes in the name of camaraderie. Trust in them, and things will go smoothly.

Now, ye new *HeartQuest* GM! Go forth and bring adventure and excitement to the world! And have fun!

Chapter 6:

Teen Romance

Introduction

Since the target audience for shoujo manga and anime is young girls, it is natural that many shoujo stories are about young girls and boys. Young people in Japan face many challenges, from school and the general pains of growing up, to the difficulties of falling in love. It is this subject, teenage romance, that is the source of both drama and comedy in many a manga and anime. It will be a major theme in most shoujo campaigns, but some campaigns will be devoted entirely to it.

These campaigns, while difficult to run sometimes, can prove enormously satisfying. They provide an intense and emotional roleplaying experience that, while it may not be for everyone, can be especially rewarding when done right.

Teenage Life in Japan

By the time a child reaches the age of 14 they are already in junior high school facing rigorous coursework. They have already had to pass a difficult series of exams to get into the junior high school of their choice and have three years (seventh, eighth and ninth grades) to prepare for high school.

Until recently, 14 was also the age of consent in Japan. The law does not generally take much interest in what juveniles do among themselves in Japan, so some 14-year-old boys and girls are already sexually active. This is not usually the case for shoujo heroines, however. Sex is an important step, as we shall see later in this chapter. It should also be noted that pedophiles are looked upon with the same disdain in Japan as they are in North America, so an adult caught in bed with a junior high student is likely to be prosecuted or ostracized.

It is universal that K-12 students at all levels in Japan wear school uniforms. The uniform varies between each school and the student's family must buy it. There are also summer and winter versions of most school uniforms. The typical male uniform is a suit, a military-style officer's uniform, or a white shirt with dark pants. Girls always wear skirts and either a coat and ribbon or a "sailor suit" (the classic "sailor fuku" that anime fans are so fond of). This dates back to the beginning of the current Japanese educational system, which was originally inspired by Germany's military academies. Boys dressed like naval officers and girls like enlisted sailors.

Schoolwork is heavy in junior high. Students are tested frequently on a variety of subjects including Japanese, English, Math, History and many more. Physical education is mandatory and requires a "gym uniform" that consists of a sweatshirt or T-shirt and either shorts for boys or "bloomers" for girls. (The *Dragonball* character Bulma was named for these garments).

Students are also involved with clubs. Sports teams, theatre companies, orchestras, choirs and other groups are run as official school "clubs" with a faculty advisor, and every student is expected to join a club. The clubs and the classes combine

forces at several times each year to organize and put on a school festival, where visitors can come to the campus, sample food prepared by students, and watch artistic presentations and athletic exhibitions.

Ninth grade is the period of "exam hell". To get into a good high school is extremely important, and to achieve this goal one must pass that school's entrance exams. These exams are usually extremely rigorous (especially for the most prestigious schools) and require a LOT of study and preparation. Much of the back-story of the original *Sailor Moon S* centers around the Sailor Senshi preparing for exam hell. Students who fail their entrance exams cannot get into that school – they must try another, usually lesser school and keep on trying until they get into a high school.

Tenth Grade is the freshman year in high school. By now the student is about 16, supposedly more mature, and ready to take on more responsibilities. Thus high school is even more rigorous academically than junior high; there are still festivals and clubs, and even more demands on the student's time. In addition, student government responsibilities fall on the shoulders of exceptional students (known as "class representatives"), who are chosen either by election or based on their academic performance.

Twelfth Grade is a repeat of exam hell, only more so. Colleges and Universities, while they will consider grades earned in high school, mainly admit based on standardized test scores. Preparation for these tests is critical if a student wants to get into a good college – and having a successful career without going to a good school is a hard road indeed. Those who cannot get into college have two options: find work that doesn't require a college degree (usually menial, low-paying and undesirable) or try again the next year as a "ronin" student, spending the intervening time studying independently. (Godai in *Maison Ikkoku* begins the series as a ronin student before finally getting into a college, as does the hero of *Chobits*.)

Independent study is common throughout the educational process, as students take on extra classes and homework to give them an edge in the exams. This is most commonly done at "cram schools", where single subjects are taught intensely and literally forced into the students' brains. Cram schools are not meant to provide a broad understanding of their fields; they are meant to force you to pass your exams.

Schools prefer that students have as few distractions as possible. Thus part-time jobs are usually against the rules. Nonetheless many students take them, for spending money or to help support their families. The school can penalize them if they are caught, but schools vary on how strictly they enforce this provision. Many shoujo manga characters have part-time jobs.

College is still rigorous, but students have a lot more freedom than in high school. It is now expected that they will be supporting themselves independently of their families and leading active social lives. Thus there are much fewer restrictions on what students do. By then alcohol is legal, and a culture of drinking that will last throughout the student's professional life is often born in college days.

Dating and Sex

One of the other activities that junior high schools and high schools frown upon is dating among students. Dating is seen as a distraction from what is really important – schoolwork. Students caught together by faculty from their school on a date are likely to be punished. Just how severe that punishment is depends on the school.

Of course, students do date early and often. How this works varies depending on the situation, obviously, but movies, aquariums, zoos and concerts are popular attractions for teenage couples. Amusement parks are especially popular, with Tokyo Disneyland and similar theme parks being special hot spots.

Students of the opposite sex often study together. This enables them to combine romantic and academic interests. Sometimes it is perfectly innocent, especially if the rest of one person's family is also in the house. Sometimes, however, two teenagers will find themselves studying by themselves, at which point things can get hot.

As was mentioned earlier, sex between teenagers is not proscribed after age 14, at least under the law. Social taboos may be against starting so young, but as long as both parties are consenting the law will not do anything. Sexual mores are a common theme in shoujo manga, as is how far to take a relationship. *His and Her Circumstances* often deals with this issue, culminating in one of the most erotic scenes in all of TV Shoujo anime (in which not one bit of skin is ever shown).

In a roleplaying situation, it is usually best to fade out and move on to the next scene once things get too heavy. Just remember that all acts have consequences…

Romantic Traditions

There are several traditions that come into play when dealing with relations between the sexes. Some are ancient, others relatively new. But many of them are pervasive.

One that is seen most frequently in anime is the exchange of chocolate on Valentine's Day. On Valentine's Day, girls are expected to give chocolate to every boy in the class – this is known as obligation chocolate. But a girl who loves a particular boy will prepare a special chocolate for him and him alone. This is handmade with all the skill and love she can muster (although the ingredients and forms often come from a commercially purchased kit). Even if she hasn't declared her feelings for the boy, she will try to express them through the chocolate. If the boy refuses the chocolate, it means he does not return her feelings. If he accepts, it is a sign of hope that he just might (although it is far from a certainty). The litmus test is on White Day (March 14th), when he is supposed to return the favor.

Christmas is also celebrated differently. Instead of a family holiday, it is frequently considered a holiday for lovers. (Since most Japanese follow a combination of Buddhism and Shinto, the holiday has no religious significance for them.) Characters in a boyfriend/girlfriend relationship will carefully consider the presents they exchange, where they will meet to exchange them, and what they will do afterwards.

Confessions of Love

One of the most stressful parts of any shoujo manga relationship is the beginning. A confession of love is a very important thing for a character of either sex and not to be entered into lightly. On the other hand, if it is taken lightly by the recipient, the result can be a severe heartache for the confessor. This is often a turning point in a romantic story either way, and gamemasters should not do anything to make the process any easier.

Confessions can be attempted several ways. Two classic methods are to arrange a meeting on the school grounds and to leave a note in the locker or desk of the beloved.

Both approaches carry significant risk. The beloved may never show up at the meeting.

Worse, he may reject you to your face. The note could be ignored, intercepted, read aloud in class or in some other embarrassing situation, or even posted on a bulletin board. Many of these results can lead to complete humiliation and a broken heart.

Proffered love can be refused for many reasons. One common one is that the beloved already has "someone he likes"; another is that he can't commit to anyone. This may not be a permanent situation – some characters go through several boyfriends or girlfriends during their junior high and high school years. But for the moment, it is a setback that the character must find a way to deal with.

Shonen-ai and Shoujo-ai

Shonen-ai literally means "boy-love" and shoujo-ai means "girl-love". These terms refer to stories about homosexual and lesbian relationships, respectively. These are a common subgenre in shoujo romance stories – many women find them appealing in their beauty and sorrowful nature.

It is quite common in Japan for a girl's first crush to be another girl. Usually very little is made of it and it is even encouraged – as long as it is not acted upon. The classic example of a girl with a shoujo-ai crush is Tomoyo from *Card Captor Sakura*, who obsessively worships her best friend Sakura. Whether she will ever get over her crush is the object of much fannish speculation.

Shonen-ai and shoujo-ai stories rarely end happily. The couples, if they form at all, are usually not together at the end of the story as some tragedy pulls them apart. It could be the intervention of a third character, the weight of social disapproval, or any number of other factors.

Shonen-ai and shoujo-ai stories are especially tricky to roleplay. The players should ideally know in advance what they're getting into and know what their comfort level is. Explicit descriptions of sexual situations should certainly be avoided – this will make most players very uncomfortable very quickly and could very easily ruin a game.

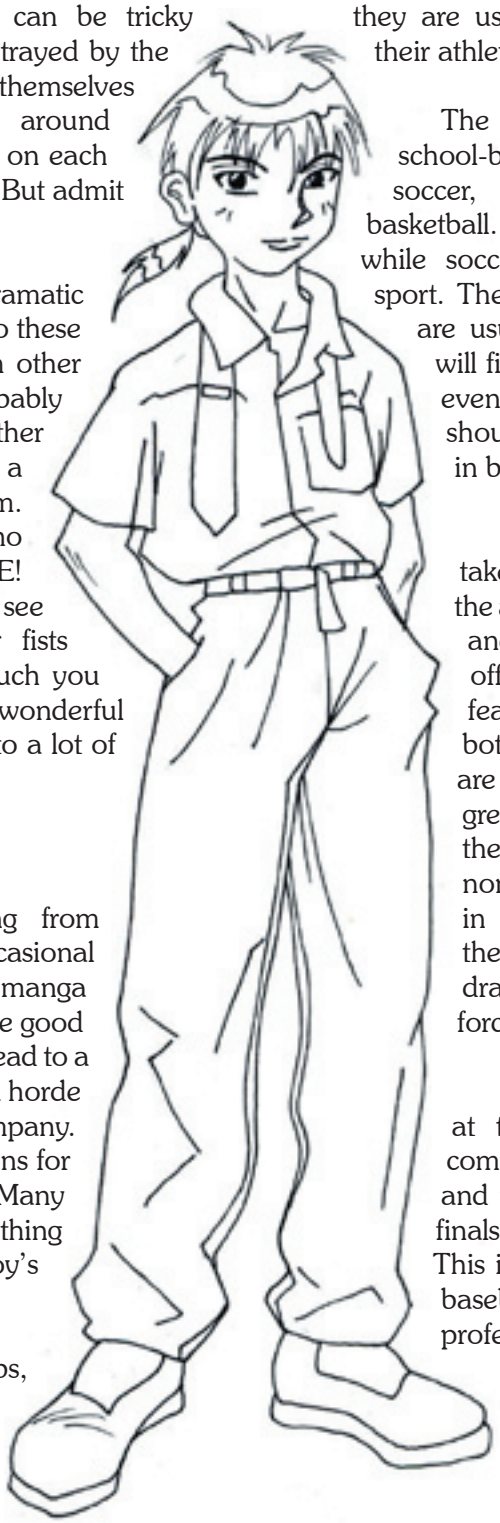
Nonetheless, having a same-sex NPC develop a crush on one of the PCs can be an intriguing and difficult complication in any Teen Romance game.

The "Couple-in-Denial" Syndrome

One of the most common themes in anime is the couple that everyone but the parties involved knows belong together. These can be referred to as "couples-in-denial" and there are far too many examples to list.

Roleplaying this situation can be tricky but rewarding. It is usually portrayed by the couple that bickers between themselves so frequently that everyone around them sees that they are fixated on each other, if only to show them up. But admit romantic interest? Never!

It usually takes something dramatic to break the denial and prove to these characters that they want each other after all. The GM can probably supply such an impetus, whether it's a dangerous situation or a rival coming in between them. ("Why do you care so much who Hotaru dates?" "I DON'T CARE! I DON'T CARE!" "Yes, I can see by the way you have your fists clenched like that just how much you don't care…") Jealousy is a wonderful motivator and can get a PC into a lot of trouble.



The Role of Sports

Sports can be everything from a part of the story to an occasional distraction. Many Shoujo manga characters, male and female, are good athletes. Athletic prowess may lead to a boy or girl suddenly acquiring a horde of admirers eager for their company. Locker rooms are prime locations for gossip and rumor-mongering. Many a girl's heart is broken by something she overheard passing the boy's locker room.

Sports teams are clubs, instead of official parts of the school. Teachers advise the clubs, but do not run them. Captains run the teams, and they are usually chosen on the basis of their athletic ability.

The most popular sports in high school-based anime are tennis and soccer, followed by softball and basketball. Tennis is played by both sexes, while soccer is usually a major boy's sport. The most popular guys in soccer are usually the strikers, though you will find stories about goalies. Track events are also frequently a part of shoujo anime, and are participated in by both sexes.

One of the many festivals that take place at Japanese schools is the athletic festival where the teams and their members get to show off their skills. These festivals also feature races that can involve both students and parents. They are major events that require a great deal of preparation from the entire student body, even non-athletes; many is the anime in which panic approaches as the deadline for the sports festival draws nearer, and the students are forced to work harder and harder.

In many sports, especially at the high school level, clubs compete in a series of regional and national tournaments with the finals often televised nationwide. This is most popular for soccer and baseball, which are also the major professional team sports in Japan.

Forbidden Loves

There are some kinds of relationships that are strictly taboo even in Japanese society. When these come up in a game (and they can) they can have severe consequences for the characters involved.

The most common forbidden passion in shoujo manga is teacher-student romance. This can have severe consequences for both parties, but is a common enough fantasy that it shows up frequently in shoujo manga and anime, including in *Marmalade Boy* and *Card Captor Sakura*. Teachers who are caught risk the end of their careers or worse; students who are caught face suspension from school or worse. In any event, it becomes a major scandal if it becomes publicly known.

The stepsibling relationship per se does not exist in Japan. Therefore there is nothing technically illegal about one of the central themes in *Marmalade Boy*. Nonetheless, actually living with someone of the opposite sex who is your boyfriend or girlfriend can be quite scandalous in the high school years, and familial relationships are stressed very strongly in Japanese society. This is not to be taken lightly.

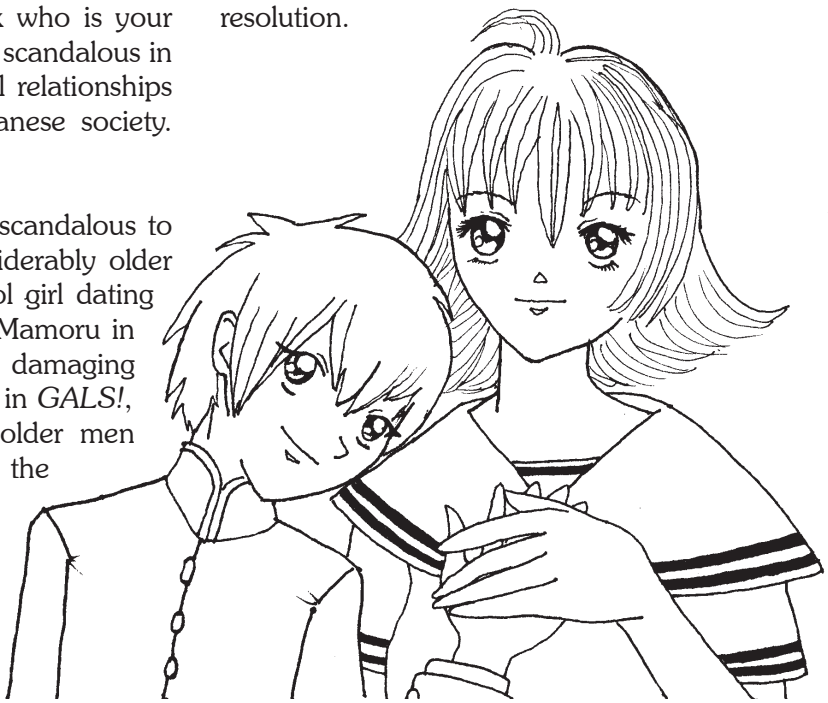
It is also generally considered scandalous to take up with anyone who is considerably older than you are. A junior high school girl dating a college student, Like Usagi and Mamoru in *Sailor Moon*, could be considered damaging to both their reputations. And Aya in *GALS!*, who sells non-sexual dates with older men at the beginning of the series, is the subject of much vicious gossip.

How and When to Wrap Things Up

One of the major differences between an American comic book and a Japanese one is that the Japanese book will often come to a definitive ending, This is especially important in the Teen Romance genre, where the dangling plotlines need to be resolved.

When to wrap things up is usually an easy decision. If your players get tired of the campaign and want to try something else, it's often a good idea to ask them to let you run one last session to wrap things up. In this session, decisions must be made, and events must occur that force all the ongoing conflicts to a head and resolve them.

This session can be very intense as characters that have been sitting on the fence are forced to make decisions. As the GM, you can't control what decisions they make or their results. Your job is to present the situations and speed along their resolution.



Chapter 7:

Magical Girls

One of the most popular genres in shoujo manga and anime is mahou shoujo or "magical girl". The common denominator of all these comics and anime is that the heroine or heroines have some form of supernatural power. Do they use it to fight evil? Not necessarily…

The first mahou shoujo series was Mahou tsukai Sally, a cute little show about a young girl with magic powers who used them to solve neighborhood problems. Sally-chan started a trend that continues to this day in a variety of forms. But many shows portray their heroines as having magic powers and using them to solve personal problems, achieve personal goals, and sometimes right wrongs and fight evil.

Magical Heroines

These are the shoujo equivalent of magically-powered superheroes and the types of magical girl that American audiences are probably most familiar with. These heroines are often given their powers by a third party and given a task to perform that is dangerous and inconvenient, yet somehow essential to the survival of the world. Finding a person, re-assembling a magic item, or facing down a supernatural menace are common tasks set before a heroine or heroines. The classic example of this is Nakeo Takeuchi's classic anime and manga Pretty Soldier Sailormoon, in which the previously luckless schoolgirl Usagi Tsukino discovers that it is her destiny to save the universe from the power of Queen Beryl and the Dark Kingdom. Beryl's evil involves stealing the life energy of the innocent to power her schemes, and Sailor Moon and the friends she meets along the way are the only ones who can stop Beryl and her various "generals". In addition to all this, she also has to find the "Moon Princess", assemble the Imperium Silver Crystal, and rescue a modern-day Prince Charming from the villainess. Pretty Soldier Sailormoon was so successful that it spawned four sequels, three feature films, and a host of variations on the general theme.

Magical heroines of this type have two usual (but not universal) traits in common; they use magical powers to fight their enemies and they have a "transformation" or henshin from ordinary schoolgirl to warrior against evil. Although the transformation sequence may take up to 45 seconds in screen time, in reality it takes zero time – simply say the magic words and you're the heroine. Thus nobody is attacked during those scenes where their clothes change. The secret identity of the magical girl is protected as a part of the magic, even though the girl usually doesn't look at all different. Villains who learned Sailor Moon's secret identity by other means had an alarmingly short lifespan, mainly because they would get killed by outside forces before they could reveal the secret.

The magical powers of a heroine vary depending on the type of campaign. Attacks are useful; they usually have specific names (which are shouted as the attack is cast) and effects and are unique to each heroine. If the heroines are a team, one might have water-based attacks while another has fire-based attacks. Exorcism is a common magical girl power, especially if they

regularly face possessed humans or people who have been turned into monsters.

Monsters in a magical girl campaign are usually summoned for a specific purpose, either to wreak havoc in general or to delay or destroy the heroines when a scheme has been interrupted. Turning ordinary people (or even friends of the heroines) into horrific creatures is a tried-and-true variation on this theme. They can usually be dispatched only by the heroine's magic – regular weapons are usually useless against them (and you don't want to use them against transformed friends anyway!).

Males in the Magical Heroine campaign usually serve the function of the suave, mysterious protector or the person the heroines need to protect. Pretty Soldier Sailormoon's Tuxedo Kamen is an example of both – he fights to protect Sailor Moon but in the end needs to be saved from the villains himself. This happens to him several times over the course of the series. Such characters will be skilled combatants (although where they got those skills may be unknown even to them) and may have unusual techniques (in Tuxedo Kamen's hands an ordinary rose, of which he seems to have an endless supply, can be a deadly weapon). Often villains are male and will try to make the heroines fall in love with them or set cruel emotional traps for them. In any event, the males will be handsome, suave and debonair, more than enough to be every girl's fantasy love.

The age of the magical heroine is usually mid-to-late teens. There are exceptions; CLAMP began Cardcaptor Sakura with its heroine ten years old and in the fourth grade. That did not stop CLAMP from telling Sakura's tale as a love story and coming-of-age tale in addition to a fantastic adventure. Coming of age, no matter how old the heroine starts the campaign as, is a major part of any magical girl story in whatever variation is presented. As the character discovers and grows her magic, she also discovers and grows her own abilities and self-confidence. She matures, usually finds true love, and sets the course for the rest of her life. That life may or may not involve magical powers, but it will involve the friends and connections she has made over the course of the campaign.

Magical Thief

A variation of the magical heroine is the Magical Thief. This character also uses heroic, magical abilities, but in this case she uses them to steal. She usually has very good reasons for what she does; in the most famous example, Mysterious Thief Saint Tail, the heroine steals back what was wrongfully taken from their rightful possessors. In another famous example, Kamikaze Kaitou Jeanne, the heroine seals away demons that hide themselves in beautiful works of art and who twist the minds and souls of their owners – since in the process the art is destroyed, she is grossly misunderstood and the most wanted person in her city.

The magical thief needs a lot of variety in their powers. They must perform a lot of creative effects, often on-the-fly. Combat abilities are not as useful as abilities that let them get into and out of heavily-guarded places. Misdirection can be her best friend, and being too obvious can lead to trouble.

Nonetheless, most magical thief shows are about the cat-and-mouse game between hunter and hunted. Thus they work best as split-party games, where one character is the thief working independently, other characters assist her, and other characters are actively hunting that thief character. It can be a difficult kind of campaign to pull off, presenting numerous Directing and technical challenges. If the thief reveals her tactics right in front of her pursuers, they will be waiting for her every move!

Usually in magical thief series there is one character who pursues the heroine obsessively. The heroine might come to enjoy the chase so much that she gives that character advance warning of her crimes before they are committed. Combine that quirk with magical powers and you can have much potential for amusement on the side. And, if the pursuer is a guy, there is the possibility that romance might bloom, forcing the heroine to consider giving up her life of crime and the pursuer to face the horrible dilemma of whether to send his true love to prison.

Magical Idols

Some magical girls could not care less about fighting evil. Perhaps evil could not care less about them. In any event, these magical girls use their powers for important things – like fame and fortune. There is an entire subgenre of shows, from Creamy Mami to Fancy Lala, devoted to girls who use their powers to become famous performers, models, or other types of celebrity.

Most of these heroines are very young in their normal forms – ten or eleven are common ages. When they transform themselves with magic, however, they become teenage beauties with astonishing faces and voices – just the right age and type to become popular idols that all of Japan can become obsessed with. These girls often discover that the world of celebrity can be a cruel place – ruthless competition, heavy demands, and endless paparazzi and gossip-mongers – and escape to their real lives for a little privacy. Meanwhile their friends wonder about them and the mystery that seems to surround them.

Combat abilities are useless to the idol campaign – that's what bodyguards are for. Instead, these characters learn how to sing and perform, often using magic to augment their performances and make them even more spectacular.

At the end of these series, most of these heroines give up performing (and their powers) and go on with their normal lives.

Other Variants

There are numerous other variations on the magical girl. Some characters use magical powers for completely frivolous reasons. In Hime-chan's Ribbon, little Himiko is given a magical ribbon that lets her change into anyone for one hour and gets into enormous amounts of trouble with it.

In shows like Miracle Girls, psychic powers replace magic. The heroines might have supernormal abilities, but also must try very hard to conceal them and avoid being the subject of experiments and schemes to use their abilities for someone else's ends. In any magical girl campaign, the fact that nobody really believes in magic can work to the heroine's advantage – nobody, that is, except their deadliest enemies…

江理香

Chapter 8:

History and Out of This World

Let's talk about History

Though some people consider history to be boring, a quick look at various points throughout history proves otherwise. People have romanticized the past endlessly in epic stories since time untold. It is no wonder that roleplaying games such as *Sengoku* (Feudal Japan), *Castle Falkenstein* (Fantasy/Victorian), and *Call of Cthulhu* (1920's/Horror) employ history in their settings so well. However, none of these games have any particular Shoujo elements.

So, you might be asking yourself, "But how can I fit a historical setting into my Shoujo game?" The answer is simple. Turning to anime provides a wealth of inspiration, and taking cues from such series as *Fushigi Yuugi*, *Rose of Versailles*, and *Rourouni Kenshin* (as a more extreme example), you can easily see potential for the historical past when running a *HeartQuest* game.

Something to consider about a historical *HeartQuest* campaign is how much history you want to include. While most anime series choose to take a more general look at history than others, even just having a taste of the past can really liven up games. For instance, you might run a game in a setting that resembles Medieval Europe, but do away with Europe entirely and include people and places that have nothing to do with history.

The important thing is to draw inspiration from history, but not use it as an absolute guide. It is a good idea to discuss as a group just how historically accurate a game might be. Also, it is ultimately the Game Master who should decide how much detail and creativity they should bring into the game.

Lastly, perhaps the most important part about playing a Shoujo game in a historic setting is how love was treated in the past. Modern times have nullified many of the stigmas and hurdles that once kept many a love from being realized, despite the fact that we do have our rituals and obstacles of today. Never underestimate interesting foils that the past provides, such as gender bias, class structure, and a separation of culture, among others.

Setting

A good place to start is by deciding what point in history you would like to focus on. There are a plethora of options available, but we will explore only a few of them. Don't feel constrained by the examples, either, as they are simply frameworks to help you get an idea on how to structure a historical Shoujo game. With luck, these examples will be just the thing to get you kick started on cooking up a good historical campaign. And above all else, choose a time that you will enjoy, and stick with it.

Imperial Rome

It was one of the greatest empires the Western World had ever seen. Any number of different games can take place here. Everything from adventure in the barbarian lands to the outskirts of the empire, to the political intrigue in the Roman

Forums, to the sprawling cities and academies ripe with emerging new ideas on religion and philosophy. Rome spanned all of Europe, which was as wondrous and culturally varied as it is now, so there are few limits on good ideas.

Don't think I forgot the romance. Rome had many infamous romances, from the real romance between Marc Anthony and Cleopatra, to the mythical romances between mortals and gods. Interesting views on romance and love during Roman times made relationships interesting, and things were known to get quite saucy between two lovers. Among other factors, the class system especially spiced up the kind of unrequited feelings the people of the times felt.

Imagine the sorrow of a Roman slave pining away for her master, who is away leading troops against a foreign enemy, or perhaps the love between a boy of the conquered people of Britannia and the daughter of the local Roman landowner. For an empire spanning more than five centuries, you will be hard pressed not to find a solid foundation for a campaign in there somewhere.

Campaign Idea for Roman Setting

A survey team sent by the Roman Senate intends to investigate bizarre happenings in Britannia, a strange new island discovered by Roman explorers. Now the team must deal with the frightening natives, as well as creatures they have never seen before. Armed only with their wits and the supplies given to them for the job, they must set off to explore the new island, so that Rome may one day add the gem to their empire.

How will the team hold together? Will the rare local and friendly guide help them to explore the new land? What secrets await the survey team, and how will their superiors react to all of this?

Dark Ages & Medieval setting

Though kind of cliché nowadays, the Middle Ages were a very amazing time in history. Despite a lack of any real magicians or mythical beasts, there is much to be said about the times of knights, princesses, and kingdoms. A fractured Europe struggled to return to its former glory, and war constantly burned its way across the land.

A continent full of soldiers, nobility, poverty, and conflict. Kingdoms clash in titanic battles, nobles use word and dagger with equal proficiency in the royal courts, and bandits lie in wait outside the guarded walls of civilization. A knight fights for the honor of a lady, and the lower classes struggle to serve their lord and survive from day to day.

Many possibilities exist, as a simple servant girl might fall in love with the royal knight she passed in the halls of the keep. Love might blossom between two quarrelsome nobles who are arranged to marry against their will. Perhaps a circle of friends might escape the harsh poverty of their village and survive as bandits and adventurers exploring the lands of Europe, with only their friendship to rely on.

Things to keep in mind are that the marriage age in the Middle Ages is much lower, and the age of consent is not even a concept. Lives are cut tragically short by disease, poor health, and violence. Romance is a fleeting thing, so it is perhaps cherished all the more in the ephemeral lives of those living in Medieval Times.

Campaign Idea for Medieval Times

As a village burns to the ground as the result of an attack at the hands of an enemy kingdom, a young boy watches his parents meet a violent end. Vowing revenge upon the brutes that killed his parents, he joins the ranks of his kingdom's

army, dedicating his life to the memory of his parents.

Many years later, our driven hero and his comrade run into a wounded and unconscious peasant girl while on patrol. Caring for her in secret, he not only discovers that she is a fleeing duchess from the lands of his hated enemy, but that she could possibly be his sister. The implications make him and his friend flee the kingdom as they quest to discover the truth, and the duchess comes to terms with the new situation, and deals with her brother's drive for vengeance.

Feudal Japan

Naturally, Japan is a frequented setting featured in many anime shows. Indeed, Japan makes for a very engrossing place to set a game no matter what the era. However, perhaps one of the most enticing periods of time in Japanese history is Feudal Japan. Evoking such strong sentiments and ideals as the "bushido", as well as conjuring up infamous characters such as ninja and samurai, Feudal Japan is likely one of the most recognized parts of Japanese Culture by Americans, if not all foreigners.

It is not hard to see why. A time mirroring the West's Middle Ages, Feudal Japan had everything from warring kingdoms, noble warriors, and stories of love and honor. Uprisings and rebellions changed the political face of Japan, and battles were fought tooth and nail for the sake of Japan's future.

But Japan's past was not all bloodshed and treachery. Japanese history also shows us a people in tune with nature, which also respected spirits and honored the memory of their dead in their own unique way. Tradition and honor were of the utmost importance for the average Japanese man and woman. When an empire was eventually formed, the people were still so full of wonder that they revered their emperor as a god.

Truly, Japan was a land rich with a culture far removed from so any other nation, as well as having a beautiful landscape brimming with life and majesty. Additionally, much difference is seen from the earlier and simpler times of the Tokugawa Era, to the more open and fast changing times of the late 19th century Meiji Era. And best of all, there is no lack of inspiration. I implore you to watch any and all Akira Kurosawa films, as well as the multitude of anime shows that show Japan in a somewhat historical light. (see bibliography for examples)

Campaign Idea for Feudal Japan

Sick of the stigmata they face in Japanese society, several eta (the lowest class in Feudal Japan) and sympathetic ronin manage to sail out to a remote island to live their lives out in peace. Despite the hardships they face in managing enough money to establish themselves independent of Japanese society, they finally find happiness living simply, and away from the prejudice of the mainland.

However, everything changes when a ship of Dutch explorers somehow find themselves shipwrecked on the small island. Working around the language barrier and confusion, the simple people of the secluded island unwittingly find themselves as the first representatives of Japan in dealing with true Westerners. Will love blossom across the cultural and lingual barriers? Will the Dutch explorers find a way back to their home? And will the mainland somehow learn of the shipwreck, potentially threatening the existence of the island of outcasts?

Recent History

Recent History, though largely overlooked, provides us with a great deal of inspiration. In relatively recent history, we have seen war forge a nation we now call the Unites States of America. We have seen the world change drastically, both technologically and politically. Industrial revolution precluded cultural revolution, and foreign nations rise and fall before the scrutiny of time.

And perhaps one of the most fascinating times in recent history is World War II. Though I hate to return to things like "war" and "conflict", it certainly seems like times of trouble bring out character in people. Nurses worked around the clock to care for wounded soldiers, women at the home front strived to help the war effort by taking up jobs never allowed before, and of course, men fought valiantly against a hardened enemy.

Europe and the Pan-Pacific were both exciting and dangerous places in the war, as land and sea battles determined the fate of the free world. Most important, however, in a shoujo game is to capture the drama and tragedy of a wartime setting. Playing as support roles in an army, for instance, gives enough anxiety to the game that players worry whether or not they will make it alive, but also provide an environment where players can more readily explore their character's feelings and motivations.

Also, playing civilians caught up in the war provides significant drama and emotion for a Shoujo game, that it would prove to be an excellent opportunity. However, always exploit the excitement and glamour of the setting and situation. Movies, as always, provide an excellent inspiration for such a game. All quiet on the Western Front is a fantastic example, despite being about World War I.

Campaign Idea for Recent History (Particularly World War II)

A small and unimportant Polish town quivers in fear of the war. Thankfully overlooked, the people of the small hamlet live their lives peacefully, blissfully ignorant of the battle and turmoil. One day, a wounded man comes to town.

Naturally, a caring family takes the young man in and cares for him. However, he has no identification, and reveals very little about himself. Endearing himself to the town and its people as a hard worker and friendly gentleman, he settles well in the town, and even develops a deep friendship with many of the younger people.

However, when German Soldiers come looking for him, the people of the small town have to decide whether or not the safety of the town and its people is worth the life of the mysterious stranger. Who is the stranger and why is he hiding from the German Army? Will the villagers keep him safe, or betray him to his pursuers? And will his friends flee with him, trustingly fleeing with the mysterious young man?

Mood: The Feeling the Story Gives You

The very essence of a game is its mood. Like a horror movie that gives you that tense paranoia, a game can evoke many emotions and reactions. History has its own special feeling. Like a detached nostalgia, history is a wonderful story telling tool, pre-made with all sorts of fascinating tales and adventures.

As the game master, you literally have a library of inspiration for a historical game. However, the romance and emotional turmoil is mostly up to you and your players to include. The setting lies

in wait for you, but you must add the treachery, the star-crossed love, and the broken hearts. But it isn't hard.

Given such exciting and interesting choices available, all one should have to do is plop down a couple of well thought out characters, choosing an interesting era and place to use, and go at it. Remember that its crucial to play off of the concepts and ideas that encompass the settings, like the social stigmas and cultures that are present in a certain time period. Using these tools, you are likely to go far.

And the most important part of all is love and friendship. Love is the most exalted of emotions presented in historical fiction, and with good reason. Love leads to angst, great happiness, envy, and treachery. It was said that kingdoms were made and unmade under the banner of love.

And yet, all of this ignores the kind of outlandish tales that mark anime as unique. As a parting shot, let us look at an example of how a historical game could be spiced up with a more mythical feel. It's the realm of the imagination, not reality, after all.

Theme: The General Plot

Deciding the theme is like putting a face on your campaign. It determines what kind of game you will run/play. And historical romance has very few limits on the different kinds of themes you might want to toy with.

Lets imagine for a moment that the game you are running is set in Russia, during the communist uprising that threw the Tzar out of power. The players are all members of the royalty attempting to flee from the angry citizens bent on tearing them apart. They find themselves hiding in caves, and abandoned homesteads hoping to escape the wrath of their aggressors. They struggle to live in conditions much different from what they were once used to, and must eke out an existence by living like commoners.

The themes in the above examples are those of hardship and survival, as well as those of change and adjustment. To give you a good idea of some common themes, I will list further examples. Remember that themes can be interchanged, may vary from session to session, and can even be combined.

The Quest: Adventure abounds, and the players are likely to travel great distances, and overcome many an obstacle while searching for an ultimate goal.

Growing Up: Mundane life doesn't have to be boring. Simply dealing with day-to-day problems as a teenager or child can prove difficult and challenging, as many contemporary anime have shown us. Growing up and leaving one's childhood is a difficult time for anyone, and could make for interesting games.

Conflict: Conflict provides an interesting backdrop to most games. Whether in the midst of war, or caught up in local gang violence, conflict adds an element of tension to any game.

Competition: Some game themes might revolve around a tournament, contest, or friendly competition in which skills and talents are put to the test. Even intellectual pursuits can be made to be exciting when characters pit their minds against each other.

Try to keep the theme in mind when considering a historical game. It can help you go a long way. Any of these themes can apply to a historical game. Don't take the advice as gospel, however, but do always remember that these are just pointers designed to help you decide on what

kind of a game to run. Please do as you wish, as long as it helps you make the game more fun!

Out of this World!

A common theme in anime is the displacement of characters into a new land, different time, or even a foreign dimension. This is what we like to call "out of this world". You can even find examples of it in western fiction, in such works as *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, or Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *Lost World*.

At its core, "out of this world" stories are primarily about characters being out of their element, and coping with their new surroundings. In essence, it is a fish out of water story. Please feel free to exploit the emotions and experiences of characters that struggle with trying to adapt to new situations and cultures.

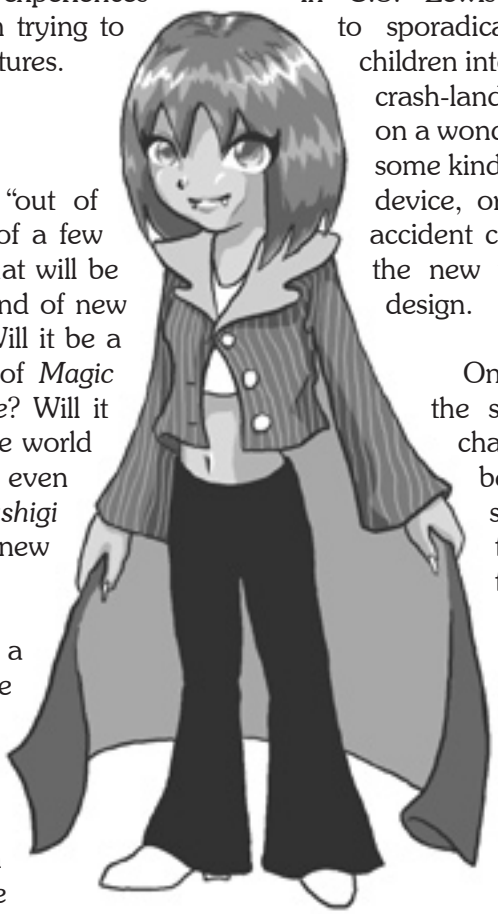
Setting

So you want to run an "out of this world" adventure? Think of a few questions before you start. What will be the "primary" setting? What kind of new amazing world will you use? Will it be a high fantasy setting like that of *Magic Knight Rayearth* or *Escaflowne*? Will it be a cold and foreboding future world like that of *S.CRY.ED*? It could even be a slice out of the past, like *Fushigi Yuugi*, or even a fantastic and new world like that of *El Hazard*.

Once you have decided on a "primary" setting, decide where the characters will come from, or the "secondary" setting, which may or may not play a big part in your game. Will the characters be from modern day Japan? Perhaps they are the alien visitors exploring a new world. The characters could even be time travelers sliding backwards of forwards through time. A final option to consider is creating a brand new setting or settings from scratch. This can be very rewarding, but can be time consuming if you decide to flesh the setting(s) out.

Whatever the case, you will likely have a good idea on what kind of settings you want to have, both for the displaced characters, and for the primary setting where most of the game will take place.

But how do you bring both worlds together? Plot devices work excellently to bridge the gap between two worlds. Many mundane items in C.S. Lewis' *Narnia Chronicles* proved to sporadically bring young wide-eyed children into a magical world. A spaceship crash-landing could find the characters on a wondrous new planet. And perhaps some kind of magical spell, technological device, or even just an apparent freak accident could bring the characters into the new world, either by accident or design.



Once you have determined the setting, think about how the characters travel back and forth between their home and the strange new world. Can they travel freely, or have they taken a one-way ticket into adventure? If they are able to travel back and forth, how easily can they do it? Can natives travel back to the character's homes? Imagine as a possibility a game where the characters must struggle to stop an interplanetary or dimensional invasion.

After all of this consideration, you are pretty well done with the setting. However…

Characters

Now that you hopefully have your setting in mind, you should start talking with your players about the kind of game you want to run. Talk to your players about the ideas that you have, and try to give them a few ideas for the kind of characters that are available, as well as any character types they might want to play.

Always consider having one or two characters come from the primary setting. As natives to the strange new lands, these characters can act as guides to the displaced characters, and provide interesting methods of introducing the culture and nuances of the new world to characters who are unfamiliar with it.

Also, consider both setting and characters when discussing character choices. If the primary setting is a peaceful town, and the story is meant to be less action oriented, it is probably not a good idea to have some kind of crazed soldier gallivanting around.

Then, think about how the characters will interact with the environment. It won't be fun if the characters end up in another world, only to find that the new world is really very mundane, and not very different from their own. Most of the fun of "our of this world" is in playing a game where the characters must survive and succeed in a vastly different world, where the rules have to be learned all over again, and many things, both wonderful and terrifying, capture the imagination.

Another thing to keep in mind is to use settings and worlds unfamiliar to your characters. This can be tricky. Do you use ideas that your players are familiar with, so that they might enjoy it more? After all, who doesn't love the idea of interacting with the people and places of their favorite anime? But this proves a risk, as your players might know more about the setting than you do. And what happens when you goof and get the facts wrong? (It happens)

In this case, a setting that your players might not know so well can be a healthy alternative. You will likely know more about the setting than your players, thus avoiding blunders, or at least ones your players might notice. On top of that, this option can be an excellent way to introduce someone into a certain series. Be careful with this, however, as it could spoil certain stories and plot lines for people.

Lastly, just be sure everyone is happy with the characters they chose. It's important to make sure all the characters will fit well into your story.

Mood

As the Game Master, it is your job to set the pace for the game. As such, you need to be very descriptive with the new and foreign lands. The players expect to embark on journeys of discovery, so it's nice to paint a good picture of their surroundings every so often. Think about how you might describe a castle made completely of jade, towering over the forest, buzzing with exotic flora and fauna.

Try to be emotional as well. "Out of this world" is about self-discovery as much as its about exploration and adventure. Try to incite emotions in your descriptions of the situation. For instance…

"Sarah, your character Miko has just been abandoned by her object of affection. The rain starts to trickle from the clouds slowly creeping up overhead. As he walks away, your backpack feels a little heavier. Even the tumbleweed that passes by looks droopy, and only crawls along. How do you think Miko feels right now?"

Granted, the above example was a bit melodramatic, but you hopefully get the idea. More subtle imagery and description can draw people into the story, much like a good book. If they can manage to see it in their heads, the world they explore becomes all the more real. When everyone shares a vision of their adventure and exploits, it makes the game lots of fun. Don't be too descriptive; you do want your characters to get a word in edge wise. Over-description can be boring too.

Additionally, be careful with the emotions of the other characters. You might be close friends away from the table, but you would be surprised how sensitive some people can be about certain subjects. It's always important to discuss beforehand just how far you want to go with the game with your players. You don't want to depress your players, and you certainly don't want to insult or scare them. Just try to have fun, and as always, try to rely on your better judgment.

Theme

Familiarity is something to think about when running "out of this world"-style games. Having unfamiliar worlds be both primary and secondary settings could be interesting, but might be too alien. Without being at least familiar with at least part of the setting, homeland or otherwise, the players might not have the proper motivation to know what their characters would act like. It's important to be able to identify with one's culture and background, so the players should at least

try to know about their homelands if anything. Compare and contrast are the keywords here.

On that same line of thought, you should remind characters that despite their out of character familiarity with either setting, they will never know everything there is to know about the settings as characters. Just as was mentioned earlier, the fun leaves the game if one or more characters suddenly don't feel out of place any longer.

Spaghetti: The Journey West

Here is an example for an "Out of this World" game…

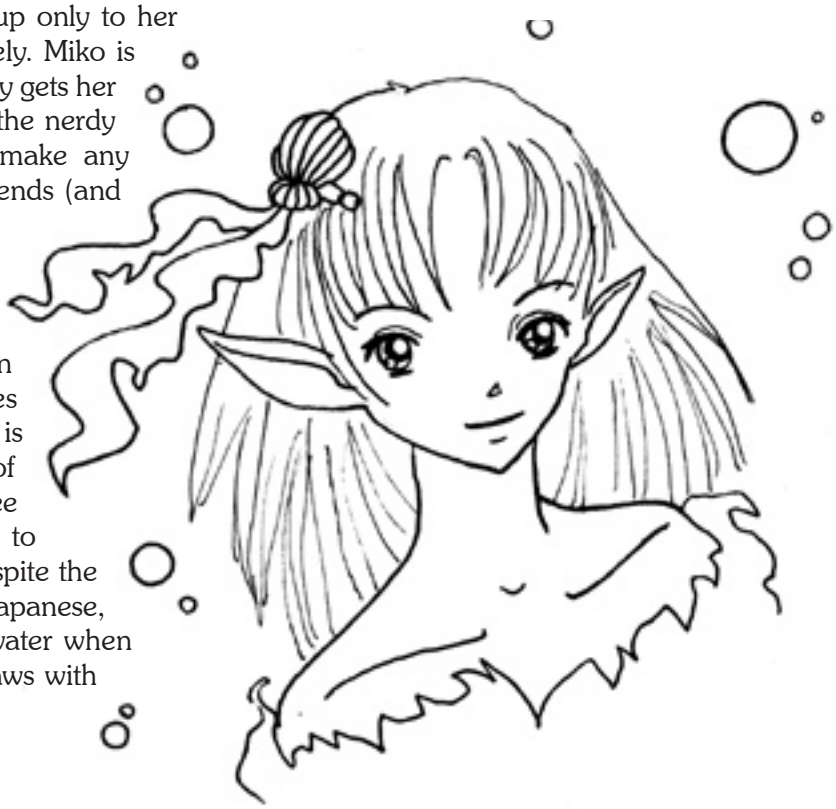
Hitomi, Miko, and Tatsuya are the best of friends. Often called the "Three Musketeers" for their close friendship, they rarely spend time apart, having been friends since grade school. Hitomi is a quiet girl who opens up only to her two friends, and even so very rarely. Miko is an energetic tomboy who constantly gets her friends in trouble. And Tatsuya is the nerdy and intelligent friend who can't make any friends outside of his other two friends (and probably does not want to).

One day, Miko dares the others to sneak into an abandoned museum. When a mishap occurs that involves an ancient artifact, the trio is transported into a bizarre version of the Old West. Antics ensue as three Japanese school children attempt to survive in a spaghetti western. Despite the fact that all the inhabitants speak Japanese, the trio manages to land in hot water when they are mistaken for deadly outlaws with prices on their heads.

Their only friend in the unfriendly lands is Wandering Tom, a mysterious gunman, and a real-life outlaw. Tom takes the three under his wing, and leads them around the Wild West, in attempts to find the artifact that will return the children home.

Will the children survive the lawlessness and adventure? Will Tatsuya ever admit his secret crush on Miko? Will the new situation bring Hitomi out of her shell?

As you can see, this setting has much potential for both romance and adventure. Does Miko fall in love with her new hero, Wandering Tom? Will meek Hitomi and Tatsuya survive the rough-and-tumble lifestyle of an outlaw? And how in the world will they get home? All of this is just a taste of "out of this world".



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Chapter 9:

Sendai Academy

Sendai Academy is an example of a teen romance campaign of the sort that can be run using *HeartQuest*. *HeartQuest* was playtested using many of these characters. It is set at a private high school in Tokyo and revolves around the lives, loves and relationships of the students and teachers there. Although fights occasionally break out, there are no duels to the death and no supernormal abilities are used. Thus characters for Sendai Academy can be created straight out of the rules in Chapter One without resorting to Supernormal Powers.

Most of the sample characters are classmates in Class 2-2 of the high school portion of the academy. Sendai is an elevator school with a junior high, high school and university attached. Students who graduate from one level can get into the next without taking an exam, but the last year of each level is very tough.

Introduction

Class 2-2 is in the equivalent of an American high school's junior year, with roughly 16-17 year olds evenly divided between boys and girls. Most of the new transfer students, who have to either pass a difficult exam or receive a special dispensation from the Headmaster, end up in this class. There are about 26 students in Section 2-2; only a few are detailed here.

As is traditional in Japanese high schools, the teachers go from classroom to classroom to teach their subjects and expect the rapt attention of the entire class. Tanaka-sensei is the homeroom teacher, with the ultimate responsibility for the decorum of the class and its overall academic performance. He's a good teacher and a naturally charismatic leader, but he does have a weakness that is one of the Big Secrets of the campaign.

A good teen romance campaign has several Big Secrets, and Sendai Academy has a ton. Many of the students in Section 2-2 conceal things: special abilities, hidden pasts, secret relationships, and so forth. The GM should be careful about revealing these secrets to anyone other than the player playing that particular character until it is dramatically appropriate for the secret to come out. When that happens, the consequences can often be explosive.

Tanaka-sensei, in addition to being homeroom teacher, teaches PE and mathematics. Yoshida-sensei, a pretty young female teacher, teaches Japanese literature. Other teachers teach different subjects, including science, history, home economics and English.

Before and after each day of school, the classroom needs to be cleaned. Cleaning duty is rotated among the students in pairs, with each pair taking the chore for a week at a time. This provides a splendid opportunity for two characters to be alone together, with all that entails.

This Year's Class

This year's class is a diverse group. Sendai has a reputation for attracting the most talented students, and this year's second-year class

is no exception. The very brightest students are in Section 1, where Yoshida-sensei is the homeroom teacher. These students work very intensely on academics to the point that all else becomes insignificant. Section two is only slightly less intense, and there are five lower classes – all of which are no slouches academically. The seven classes compete in intramural athletics, competitions, and in putting on the best presentations for the seasonal school festivals. There is also competition between the first, second, and third-year students. This competition provides many opportunities to bring NPCs from other classes into the game to stir things up a bit.

This year's overall class is especially talented. Most of section 2-2 has a gift of one sort or another, whether they reveal it or not. There is a huge desire on the part of many students in class 2-2 to surpass the achievements of Class 2-1, whether on the quarterly exams or in the school basketball or soccer tournaments.

Clubs

Like all Japanese high schools, Sendai places a heavy emphasis on club activities. There is a club for just about every conceivable sport, academic subject and hobby.

Every student is expected to belong to at least one club. Clubs meet after and before classes for their activities two or three times a week, put together projects, and compete in events with similar clubs from other schools. Sendai's soccer club, coached by Tanaka-sensei, is considered to be especially prestigious and is frequently competing nationally. This year they may be one good striker away from a regional championship.... There are also clubs in tennis, baseball, basketball, softball, kendo and kyuudo (Japanese archery) that are competitive regionally and beyond. Sendai's chess club is also competitive regionally.

School Rules and Regulations

All Japanese schools have strict rules and regulations that are kept, to varying degrees, by the students. One rule that is frequently going to be facing PCs is the school's prohibition against dating. Students tend to date anyway, however, and unless they are caught by a teacher who is willing to report them there isn't a problem.

School at Sendai Academy is held Monday through Friday and every other Saturday. Sunday is always a day off and a prime time to socialize; going out and about with friends is fine as long as the students don't stay out past curfew.

Another rule at Sendai is that students can't hold part-time jobs or otherwise work. Again, enforcement is only an issue if a teacher who is willing to turn you in catches you.

Sendai students wear a set uniform to school and to all school events. This uniform consists of a blue sailor suit for girls and a blue jacket, pants and tie with a white shirt for boys. Teachers wear business attire when teaching.

Socio-Economic Issues

Most Sendai students come from upper-middle-class to upper class families; tuition is expensive and financial aid is offered only to the highest-ranking academic students. Thus, a PC will typically live in a nice house, have their own room, and have access to a decent amount of pocket money. Some students are even richer, and a few even have servants in their homes.

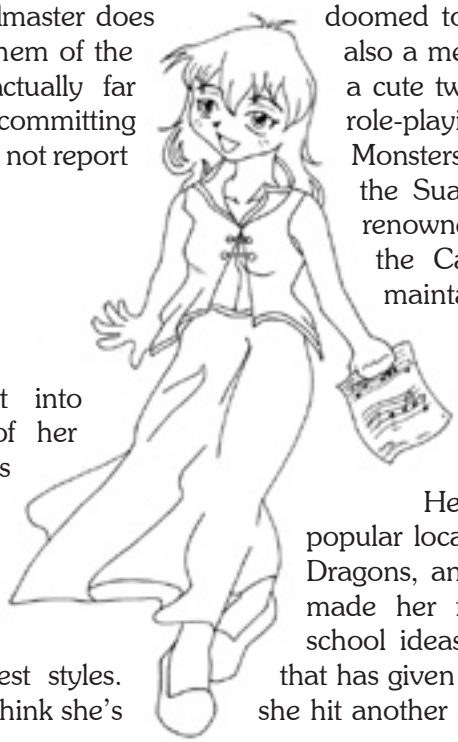
This doesn't stop some students from wanting money they can truly call their own. Thus the forbidden part-time job is an ongoing temptation. Students who are caught working are typically suspended from school for a few days and ordered to quit the job – which is usually a moot point as

one of the first things the Headmaster does is call the employer to inform them of the violation. Getting caught is actually far more of a disgrace than actually committing the deed, and some teachers will not report violations they encounter.

Sample Characters

Chiharu Shojijuma

Chiharu managed to get into Sendai Academy by virtue of her outstanding exam scores. She's one of the smartest students in school, but is naive and romantic (naturally). Her fashion sense is unique, preferring more classical, elaborate clothes over the latest styles. She reads too much and some think she's doomed to be brutally disillusioned. She's also a member of the Media Club and, in a cute twist of self-reference, is a bit of a role-playing otaku (she started out with Monsters & Mazes, later played Undead: the Suave, but now prefers the world-renowned LoveMission, which utilizes the Carob ™ game engine, but still maintains a fondness for hack-n-slash).



Chiharu is the middle-most child of an unusual family in the fact the Shojijumas got their start in the manga business. Her father is the owner of a very popular local comic store known as 'Hearts, Dragons, and Mecha' while her mother has made her fortune parleying some of her school ideas into a successful shoujo series that has given rise to a successful anime before she hit another series of 'hits' in her later career.

Chiharu Shojijuma

Attributes

Physique	• Fair
Mind	• Great
Willpower	• Good
Cool	• Fair
Appearance	• Great

Gifts

Musician (a near-prodigy pianist, her tastes ranging from Punk Rock to Classical; hardly anybody knows this, as she's not a part of any music club)

Bishoujo (people who bother to look twice find her oddly fascinating…)

Faults

Absent-Minded (sometimes just doesn't get it)

Introvert

Gullible

Skills

Japanese Literature	• Good
Japanese Language	• Superb
English Literature	• Good
Math	• Good
English	• Great
Research	• Great
Fashion Sense (weird)	• Great
Music (Piano)	• Great
Video Production	• Fair
Computers	• Good
Drawing	• Good
Cooking	• Poor
Sports	• Terrible

Thus Chiharu has an unusual amount of respect for otaku culture and can probably recite more unusual trivia about manga, anime, and even foreign sci-fi than many die-hards.

Chiharu's recent past has been marred by family problems. Her older brother, whom she once revered, left the family to pursue a career in baseball. That career has gone nowhere; the young man simply has very little talent for the game and has languished in the minor leagues his entire career. Whenever he does appear, it is to bitterly lash out as his family for not developing his talents. This has put a considerable strain on everyone's relationships within the family and has given Chiharu a marked aversion to athletics and athletes of all kinds. Her brother's brash, arrogant demeanor has also served to make her even more shy and quiet so that she doesn't rock the boat any farther, and she conceals her considerable talents with music because she fears her parents think she will abandon them too. Chiharu desperately wants to be a good, normal girl. Throwing herself into her schoolwork is one way she has of coping with the inner distress she is feeling.

Her younger brother Yosho is almost as troublesome as the man was unfortunately crippled in an auto-accident with a friend and while absolutely brilliant is nevertheless constantly consuming her time with his own resentments of his state. Nevertheless, she dotes on him and he remains one of her closest friends and skeptical of anyone trying to take his 'big sister' away from him. Even her parents relationship that has weathered these two events is now being strained by business concerns.

Chiharu puts on a happy face despite all of her difficulties though and continues to hang around her best friend Yuuko while they both pursue their respective dreams. Chiharu has a

Yuuko Sadanori

Attributes

Physique	• Fair
Mind	• Good
Willpower	• Good
Cool	• Good
Appearance	• Good

Gifts

Poet (composes poetry that moves the hearts of a wide variety of people, not just a select group reading a particular genre)

Contacts (known to the publishers of various artsy and underground 'zines in her city)

Faults

Secret (love affair with Tanaka-sensei)

Coward (doesn't believe in her own future; what looks like a better-than-healthy "Carpe Diem" attitude is really a profound level of hopelessness)

Daydreamer (could do better in class if she'd pay attention instead of composing poetry; even Tanaka-sensei's lectures may get blown off)

Skills

Japanese Poetry	• Superb
Oratory	• Great (on her own poetry, otherwise Fair)
Business Etiquette	• Good
Streetwise	• Good
Flirting	• Good
Detect Lies	• Great
Calligraphy	• Great
Flower Arranging	• Fair
Athletics	• Fair
Sewing	• Fair
Cooking	• Fair

dream of becoming a concert pianist or becoming a producer of anime. She is the keeper of all of her friend's secrets but extremely worried about her friend's attempted seduction of her favorite teacher. If she had the slightest idea Tanaka returned the affection she'd be horrified.

Yuuko Sadanori

Yuuko's test scores trail Chiharu's, but her Mother had more than enough money and influence to make up the difference. That was fine with Yuuko since she's been shinyu (best friends) with Chiharu since the beginning of Jr. High. The two of them exchange a diary, but Yuuko's entries are always in poetry of one form or another, so that Chiharu has to concentrate to recognize exactly what Yuuko is talking about. If Chiharu went back and very carefully read the volumes since 8th grade, she might figure out that Yuuko is involved in a love affair, but so far she hasn't made the connection.

Yuuko is passionately in love with Tanaka-sensei, to the point that she often makes him uncomfortable with her "availability." Yuuko hasn't set her sights on seducing Tanaka-sensei, but has resolved to deny him nothing should he ask. And yet, she doesn't believe the two of them will be together forever, or even necessarily that their relationship will last till next week. If confronted she would point out how Teacher/Student relationships are "more like dreams than real life." She expects that her affair with Tanaka-sensei will become only a memory, and is determined to make it as happy a memory as possible.

This view is probably influenced by her Mother's situation. A successful businesswoman, Sadanori Haruka divorced Yuuko's Father when Yuuko was only 4, and has since gone from one affair to another publicly vowing never to marry again. As a result the two of them are estranged from their larger family. Yuuko and her Mother have a "good" relationship, in that Yuuko neither fights with nor embarrasses her Mother. The rigors of her work keep Haruka from recognizing what's hidden in her daughter's heart.

Also hidden from her Mother is Yuuko's growing success as a poet. Yuuko has been published in a number of trendy and artsy magazines, always under the pen name of "Butterfly." Chiharu knows the details of this part of Yuuko's life, and Yuuko wouldn't deny it if confronted, but to her Mother, the school and world at large, even to Tanaka-sensei, Yuuko is only a cute young lady with a butterfly key chain attached to her school briefcase.

Hiroshi Tanagawa

Standing tall for a Japanese boy of his age, Hiroshi doesn't have many features that stand out sharply from the other boys of his class. His hair is a dark blonde shade, which he keeps short and combed to the left. His eyes are an amber hue and his build is fairly average for a shoujo male (i.e., slender, but with broad shoulders). In his free time, he frequently wears loose clothing for comfort – typically a T-shirt and various colored khakis.

Hiroshi comes from a fairly normal middle-class family. His father runs a painting company and his mother is a nurse at a nearby clinic. He has a younger brother aside from the typical line-up of aunts, uncles, cousins, and grandparents along with a pet cat named "Mister X." During his seventeen years of existence, the most two notable events in it have been meeting his (unknown to her) childhood sweetheart, Chiharu, and his legacy as a soccer player in Jr. High.

Hiroshi first met Chiharu in 1st grade (Japanese schools are ranked slightly differently than their American counter-parts. There's 6

years for Grade School (Grade 1-6), 3 years for Jr. High (7-9), and 3 years for Sr. High (10-12)) under odd circumstances. A bully was teasing Chiharu so bad she was reduced to tears. Angry, Hiroshi got into a brawl with the bully. Although the bully pounded Hiroshi, it was enough that the bully never picked on Chiharu again. The two of them became buddies during these years even thought their classmates went on about how girls had cooties and other typical nonsense that kids go through before realizing the appropriate differences between boys and girls. This kicked in for Hiroshi around 6th grade as it became obvious that Grade School would end soon and the two of them might never get another chance. Hiroshi managed one night to tell Chiharu that he "really, really liked" her and wanted to be her boyfriend, but Chiharu didn't understand and thought it was funny.

(Note: Chiharu, being absent-minded as she is, has no recollection of Hiroshi's one successful attempt to tell her how he feels).

When finals came, Hiroshi couldn't manage the scores he needed to go to the same school Chiharu would. The two said their byes and Hiroshi went on to a different Jr. High…

During his 2nd year in Jr. High, Hiroshi had managed to get over his crush on Chiharu and found himself a new girlfriend named Naoka. She was everything wanted in a girlfriend; she was cute, intelligent, witty, kind, and even managed to look slightly like Chiharu. One day, however, Hiroshi's happiness was destroyed when Naoka developed a crush for the soccer star of a rival jr. high school named Akira Saganaki. It eventually got the point where Hiroshi was dumped and Naoka and Akira started dating. Hiroshi is already jealous by nature, but to say he was pissed is an understatement. On that fateful day, he begged the soccer coach to let him join the team so he could have revenge upon the bastard that stole his girl! With a misfit collection of characters, Hiroshi trained intensely and whipped the team into a frenzied band of elite soccer players. Within no time, the team became a sword that sliced through the opposition like a hot knife and earned Hiroshi the nickname "Lightning Tanagawa" for his incredible speed. Soon came the finals in which Hiroshi's team won in a final duel in the national play-offs with their hated rival, led by the nefarious stealer of girls, Akira Saganaki! Fueled by his anger, Hiroshi's team crushed their rival on the field. In the end, Hiroshi got the cup & Akira later got a broken nose in the after-game celebration, but he still lost the girl. Hiroshi also played soccer in 9th grade, but the team only made into the regionals when some upstart school led by a blonde half-gaijin won the game by a single goal.

Near the end of 9th grade, as luck would have it, Hiroshi accidentally bumped into Chiharu for the first time since grade school. Literally. Chiharu was daydreaming about something when she failed to realize the light had changed and the incoming garbage truck wasn't going to be able to stop in time. With trademark speed, Hiroshi managed to grab Chiharu and dodge the traffic in time. The two immediately rekindled their friendship over a trip to a restaurant in which, during the conversation, Chiharu dropped several "bombs." For one, she was planning to go to Sendai Academy for her Sr. High School and Hiroshi quietly resolved to do the same at all costs. Also, she brought up seeing Hiroshi somewhere in the newspaper ("something about soccer"). Hiroshi humbly denied it, which is good since Chiharu replied more or less that she hated jocks. Afterwards, Hiroshi got into Sendai Academy by the skin of his teeth through sheer willpower & resolve. God had granted him a second chance to win Chiharu's heart.

Now if only his tongue would stop getting in the way, he might be able to pull it off…

The only other worthwhile note about Hiroshi's background is his secret skill with drawing manga. This developed, oddly enough, after he and Chiharu went separate ways. Almost by accident, Hiroshi discovered he had a talent for drawing when he found himself sketching out a picture of Chiharu. After a few years of practice along with using his allowance to buy "how to draw manga" books, he actually managed to develop a decent amount of skill. Enough so that he regularly contributes a manga story to a small magazine under the pen name "Mister X" (after his cat). Although he wants to do Shounen manga, it seems that he can do even better shoujo manga. This has become obvious given his recent manga story, "I Wanna Be A Soccer God!" has been a big hit and the publisher regularly sends Hiroshi 20-40 fan letters a day about the manga series. The series, is an autobiography about his Jr. High days.

Under normal circumstances, Hiroshi tends to be a quiet guy whose good manners resemble a light bulb – you're not always looking at it, but you know it's there. Given his appearance and manners, he easily melds with the rest of the male populace although his lack of hentai qualities makes him stand out also. When it comes to Chiharu, however, Hiroshi can become incredibly jealous and protective, to the point of absurdity. He would literally do anything to keep Chiharu safe and happy – such as hiding the potential for a national hero caliber soccer career.

If it isn't already obvious, Hiroshi's main goal of existence right now is to win Chiharu's heart… If he can ever manage to tell her how he feels. This becomes increasingly harder and harder as time passes and the number of suitors for Chiharu seems to grow. To make matters worse, he yearns to return to the soccer field, yet worries about

Hiroshi Tanagawa

Attributes

Physique	• Superb
Mind	• Fair
Willpower	• Good
Cool	• Mediocre
Appearance	• Good

Gifts

Always There When Chiharu is in Trouble
Intuition (common sense)
Pain Tolerant
Rapid Healing

Faults

Always Chickens Out When He Tries to Tell Chiharu His True Feelings
Secretive About His Sports and Drawing Talents
Never Backs Down From a Challenge

Skills

Animal Care	• Good
Brawling	• Good
Cooking	• Great
Drawing	• Superb
Fashion Sense	• Fair
Jumping	• Good
Lying	• Terrible
Manga Lore	• Fair
Running	• Good
Sport (Soccer)	• Superb

how Chiharu might react if she knew, in truth, that he was a "jock."

Satoshi Uchiyama

Satoshi is the New Kid – a transfer student to Sendai Academy. Having arrived a few weeks after school started, he's got catching up to do, both academically and socially. Academically he's doing well, but because of his melancholy nature, he hasn't really made any friends. There are all kinds of rumors about him, ranging from sexual orientation to terminal illness to past affairs.

His family business, "Uchiyama Motorwerks," a successful motorcycle shop, has recently expanded to the Ueno district of Tokyo, and Satoshi helps run the store. (Hence the inclusion of "Mechanic," "Haggle," and "Street Smarts" in his skills).

The truth of the matter is Satoshi was in love, but it didn't work out. He was injured in a motorcycle racing accident (Satoshi is a promising up-and-coming racer, although nobody at school knows this) and after he recovered, his love left him because she couldn't handle the worry, and he couldn't give up racing. He doesn't feel as though racing is bad, but his confidence has been shaken, and until Satoshi finds a balance between his own dreams and the feelings of those he cares for, his racing performance and heart alike will suffer.

Richard Blaine

Richard is an exchange student who has come to Sendai Academy from Chicago, where his family holds large stakes in several telecommunications firms. He'd been into the Internet from the beginning, learned guitar at an early age, and is a good student. In America

Satoshi Uchiyama

Attributes

Physique	• Great
Mind	• Fair
Willpower	• Fair
Cool	• Great
Appearance	• Great

Gifts

Bishounen

Faults

Melancholy
Low Self-Esteem
Otaku (motorcycles)

Skills

Literature	• Fair
English	• Good
Math	• Fair
Study	• Fair
Cram	• Good
Driving (motorcycle)	• Superb
Mechanic	• Good
Street Smarts (racing)	• Good
Haggle	• Good
Sports	• Great
Martial Arts	• Good

he had a reputation as a bit of a geek and the girls ignored him – he's ashamed of this and puts on as worldly a front as he can in his new environment.

Richard was assigned Chiharu's parents as a host family. As a result he lives in a room in her house. On discovering that his housemate is also his classmate, he has become rather intrigued by the shy girl and very curious about her.

Richard has wanted to come to Japan for a long time and has studied the language so that he speaks it adequately. In fact, getting him to understand something in Japanese is far easier than getting him to shut up when he's talking about one of his many enthusiasms.

Yuuchihiro Tanaka-sensei

Tanaka-sensei is the popular homeroom teacher of Class 2-2 at Sendai Academy, adviser to the soccer club, and one of the most influential teachers in the school. Naturally charismatic and inspiring, his classes have always done well and many of his students in the five years he's been teaching at Sendai have gone on to successful college careers. He is himself a Sendai graduate and a classmate and friend of Yoshida-sensei who advises the Poetry Club.

Nobody knows, however, that Tanaka-sensei has violated the prime taboo of his profession by falling in love with a student. He met Yuuko three years ago when she was in Sendai's junior high and they eventually fell in love. They haven't gone out in public together since he became Yuuko's homeroom teacher this year, and he has consistently refused to take advantage of her although the temptation is very strong. Deep down, Tanaka-sensei is deeply torn and fearful over his feelings for Yuuko – he senses that it's wrong for him to be in love with her, but just can't give her up. He has sublimated his desire for her

Richard Blaine

Attributes

Physique	• Good
Mind	• Great
Willpower	• Good
Cool	• Fair
Appearance	• Great

Gifts

Bishounen
Unflappable
Gift of Gab (even in Japanese)
Walking Encyclopedia of Western Popular Culture

Faults

Less Familiar With Japanese Customs Than He Thinks
Conceals His Lack of Experience With Girls
Doesn't Always Know When to Shut Up
Obviously a Gaijin – Stands Out in a Crowd

Skills

Japanese Language (English is native)	• Good
Sports (Basketball)	• Good
Guitar	• Great
Computer Use	• Good
Computer Technician	• Good
Math	• Fair
Cram	• Fair
Singing	• Good
Cooking	• Great
Songwriting	• Good
Fashion Sense	• Terrible
Audio Technician	• Fair
Carnival Games	• Terrible

into a desire to see her become strong, secure and happy at any cost to himself. If they can just hold out and keep the secret long enough, he plans to propose to her when she graduates (but has not told her so).

Tanaka-sensei hasn't done anything wrong yet, arguably, but he has unfortunately created trace evidence of his feelings that might eventually destroy his career. Things like poetry, sketchings, and even love letters that he's never given her are kept at his desk. He's been careful to lock them up but it might be only a matter of time before he slips up and lets his fantasy of the woman destroy him.

He is an extremely good teacher other than this exceptionally bad flaw which stems from an over-romanticizing of the nature of love mixed with Yuuko's all too adult attitude. He encourages students, listens attentively, and always is there to provide advice on any subject whatsoever. It is due to this closeness to everyone that his feelings for Yuuko have gone on so long unnoticed. It will be an absolute circus if he is found out since many parents will immediately question the close and personal relationship that Tanaka-sensei has had with all of their children.

Junko Yamigawa

Junko Yamigawa is the eldest daughter of the Yamigawa family, which has run a traditional theater for 500 years (though it is getting more modern these days, in small ways). As the eldest daughter, her parents have expected her to keep on with the tradition and be there when they go. She does plan on being there, but she's probably going to hire others to do the mundane things…

Junko developed a love for acting and dancing very early in her life; she was very taken by the dramatic plays at the family theater and wanted to act in them someday. Now she's not

Yuuchihiro Tanaka-sensei

Attributes

Physique	• Good
Mind	• Great
Willpower	• Great
Cool	• Good
Appearance	• Great

Gifts

Charismatic (natural leader)
Contacts (Headmaster, PTA)
Artistic Connoisseur With a Strong Sense of Beauty
Patient to the Extreme

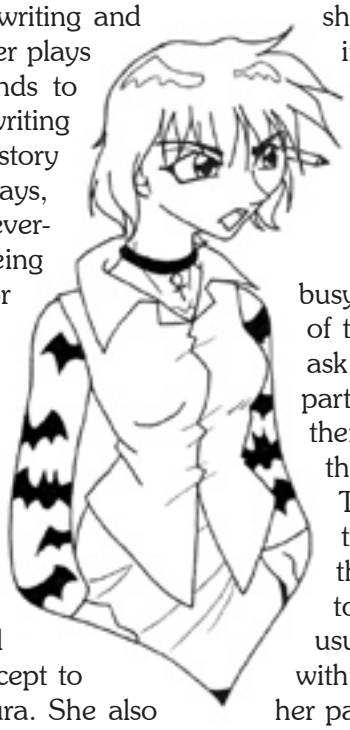
Faults

Secret (affair with Yuuko; faces severe consequences if exposed)
Guilt-Ridden
Self-Sacrificing (values Yuuko's happiness over his own; to a lesser extent, values all his students likewise)
Must Answer to School Authorities

Skills

Teaching	• Superb
Japanese Literature	• Good
English	• Good
Math	• Fair
Fashion Sense	• Mediocre
Cooking	• Fair
Sports (Soccer)	• Good
School Bureaucracy	• Good
Brawling	• Terrible
Science	• Good
Animal Care	• Good
Driving (Cars)	• Good

only acting in the plays, but also writing and directing them as well. However, her plays are not the most popular; she tends to be too dramatic and tragic when writing them. To Junko, Macbeth is a story written by an idealist. In her plays, if someone isn't involved in an ever-closing web of conspiracy or being murdered, they either soon will be or they got lucky.



Despite this, her sense of fashion isn't Gothic. Though she does tend toward darker tones, she tends to have a mixture of color and black in her wardrobe, which tends to make her look strangely sophisticated when paired with her short blue hair. She carries a cell phone, but doesn't use it much except to call her family butler, Ms. Kawamura. She also has access to a car, though she just uses it when she needs to shop. She took up tennis in middle school to keep in shape, and has become decent at it. But there is a Chinese girl who beats her regularly in tournaments, so she just keeps in practice these days.

Though she has a lot to do and keeps busy, she is pretty lonely these days. Part of this is because she has a tendency to ask acquaintances or even friends to get parts in one of her plays, and has cast them on occasion without asking, and then conning them into the part later. Though she has learned what needs to be said to sweeten things up over the years, she has little sense of what to say to actually attract a guy, and is usually more interested in keeping up with her life's work than romance (though her parents do remind her at times that the bloodline will have to keep going somehow).

Junko Yamigawa

Attributes

Physique	• Good
Mind	• Good
Willpower	• Good
Cool	• Good
Appearance	• Good

Gifts

Always Remembers the Words
Wealthy

Faults

Almost No Sense of Romance
Used to Getting Her Way

Skills

Tennis	• Good
French	• Good
Fashion Sense	• Great
Knowledge (World Sports, except Tennis)	• Terrible
Acting	• Great
Disguise	• Good
Dancing (Traditional)	• Great
Drama	• Great
Playwriting	• Good
Oratory	• Good
Flattery	• Good
Fast-talk	• Good

Chapter 10:

Ghost Tamer Miyaki

Ghost Tamer Miyaki is a magical girl campaign that involves heavy elements of the supernatural, a threat to the entire world, and seemingly ordinary schoolgirls who are nonetheless blessed (?) with extraordinary powers. It is presented here as an example of how to build a campaign around a set of characters in this genre and to show that sweetness and light are not necessary components of maho shoujo roleplaying.

Introduction

Fifteen years ago the Demon King woke from his thousand-year slumber. Using his ability to call upon the spirits of the Troubled Dead he tried to extinguish Hope, the one thing he hated most, from the face of the Earth. He sent his tormented souls out to attack every symbol of peace and love he could find, in an effort to drag Humanity into the pit of despair – to be with him forever in misery. That was where he found pleasure.

At the same time, in rural Japan, two young people met and fell in love. One was a swordsman, a national champion at both kendo and Western fencing, whose heart was pure and whose mind was filled with grace. The other was a shrine maiden of great power who saw the coming of the Demon King and knew it meant the end of mankind if he was not stopped. Shortly after their marriage they both set out together to find the Demon King's lair on Earth and destroy his plans once and for all.

Many hardships and obstacles blocked their path, but in the end they finally reached the Demon King's lair. The battle that ensued was of an epic scale. Although the young man wielded the finest blade his family's fortune could buy, he could not cleave the Demon King, who toyed with him until he finally struck the young man down. But this had only been a diversion, part of the couple's agreed-upon plan (although the young man had not expected to die). Although she was torn by grief and rage, the shrine maiden was able to complete the powerful spell that the occupied Demon King did not even notice until it was too late. A great and powerful magic trapped the Demon King in the interior of the mountain. Before he left her sight, the Demon King laughed that it was but a hollow victory – the seal would last only as long as the woman lived. But the woman scorned his mockery, knowing that she was bearing the young man's child to carry on the fight.

For fifteen years the world has seen peace, at least from demonic invasions. Although it was hard raising their daughter alone, the shrine-maiden was well provided for by her husband's estate and was able to live well and send their daughter to fine schools. But two years ago the woman discovered that she had inoperable cancer. So she has spent these two years, the last of her life, preparing for what is to come. When she was gone, she knew, the Demon King would return. But there was always her daughter, her beloved, innocent daughter, who the woman knew possessed a strength she did not know.

That girl's name is Miyaki Kajoshiro, and this is her story…

A Deathbed Encounter

For the last six months, Miyaki had been separated from her mother, at her mother's request. A trust fund established on her behalf supports her, pays her school tuition, and gives her spending money. And Miyaki loved to spend money – to her, shopping was the supreme art form. Although she kept up a cheerful front, Miyaki knew that the mother she loved was dying and there was nothing she could do about it.

Then, one night, Miyaki was summoned to her mother's side. Mother was about to die. She tried to tell Miyaki everything, but she wouldn't listen – she was too stricken with grief. Finally, Mother took Miyaki by the hand and, with the last of her strength, passed on the power she had been secretly building for the past six months. As she released her daughter's hand, she took her last breath and passed on to the next life.

When Miyaki looked down at her hand, she saw a birthmark that was not there before – the mark of a white carnation.

She immediately went for comfort to her best friend. Akane Kurogawa was a "miko" – a maiden who assisted in the management of the local Shinto shrine. She was also Miyaki's classmate in first-year high school. Akane, who was a bit of a mystic in her own right, could not make out the purpose of the birthmark. However, it did tie in to a dream she had had the previous night – a dark, evil dream that foretold unimaginable disaster.

The First Strike

Meanwhile, the seal around the Demon King's body began to weaken and his mind was able to reach down to his dark domain. He knew that Miyaki's mother had died and that it was time to extinguishing Hope from the human heart. But he remembered all too well the words about the daughter. Could this daughter pose a threat to his plans? What could this daughter be like? The Demon King wanted to learn more before acting, but his own impatience and the counsel of his loyal lieutenants to try to kill the girl outright before she could pose any trouble swayed him.

He summoned a Troubled Spirit and sent him out to possess one of Miyaki's classmates. Its mission was simple – kill Miyaki, her friends and anyone else it could find until there was nobody in the vicinity left to kill.

The next morning, when Miyaki returned to school, all her classmates expressed sympathy over her mother's death save one. Akane immediately recognized something was wrong with this girl but could not put her finger on it. It was as if her human feelings had been taken away.

In gym class, the reason became apparent. The girl's fingernails suddenly transformed themselves into steel spears, her teeth into sharp, tearing jaws, and her whole body changed into something inhuman right in front of everyone! The class scattered in panic, but the possessed girl decided to go for Miyaki first. Miyaki, terrified, ran and hid as well as she could, but she was finally found as the locker she was hiding in was torn to pieces. The monster was about the strike the killing blow, when suddenly…

A shining sword parried its blades! Miyaki looked up and saw a tall stranger dressed in black holding off the monster. He parried each blow the monster rained down on him, and then pushed it away to give Miyaki room to get out of her predicament. He was ready to move in for the kill when Miyaki reminded him that the monster had once been an innocent girl.

Then the man told her that only Miyaki could save that girl by taming the possessing spirit that

dwelt within her. He instructed her to touch the birthmark on her hand and say an incantation, and as the incantation was completed, Miyaki *changed*. Her clothes were completely different – a hooded cloak that went down to the knees, a skirt that went just above the knees, and a bodice of white. In her hands the birthmark had become a long staff with the ankh, ancient Egyptian symbol of life and death, at the head.

Suddenly knowing, as if by osmosis, what she had to do, Miyaki reached out with the staff and struck the monster. Instantly she was in communication with the possessing spirit. Suddenly she knew all the unfinished business that had troubled its rest. Finally she released it from its burdens, and uttered the phrase "Go in peace to the next life". With that, the spirit departed and the girl was left on the floor, exhausted and unconscious but unharmed.

Although the man praised Miyaki's courage, he would not answer any of her questions; instead, he simply vanished with a flourish of his cape, leaving behind, at Miyaki's feet, a black rose.

Akane, hoping to protect her friend, had followed her into the locker room and seen the entire duel. After swearing Akane to secrecy, Miyaki began to ponder what all this meant. Would more minions of the Demon King – whoever that was – come after her and her friends? Just what sort of power had Miyaki's mother given her? Who was the stranger with the sword and how did he know so much about her – and why wasn't he willing to tell her? Many questions, few answers, and an implacable enemy determined to destroy them at any cost. Miyaki, Akane and their friends are in for the struggle of their young lives. If they fail, the end of the world is only the beginning of the consequences…

The Characters

Miyaki, the Ghost Tamer

Miyaki only found out recently that her mother had been one of Japan's foremost mystics. Now the sudden responsibility that has been thrust upon her of being the Ghost Tamer has been unwelcome at best. She doesn't go out looking for supernatural trouble; she'd much rather hit the malls and the fast food joints, spending her money, buying new clothes and gadgets and having fun. She knows she has a long way to go to get Akane up to speed in the ways of modern young womanhood, but is up to the challenge.

However, once the battle is joined, and once she gets the initial panic out of her system, Miyaki is a determined fighter. She knows that the monsters she fights are possessed people and tries to avoid seeing them physically harmed. This leads to many clashes with more straight-ahead fighters like the Black Rose.

Miyaki finds Black Rose mysterious, sexy and cool, but suspects there is a lot more to him than there seems (not that there

doesn't seem to be enough already). Miyaki would love to have a boyfriend, except that any boy she selects is likely to be the enemy's next target and meet a horrible demise. Why do girlhood years have to be so complicated?

Akane, Shrine Maiden and Seer

Akane is the miko of the family shrine, the closest Shinto shrine to Miyaki's school. She met Miyaki in their last year of junior high and Miyaki made her laugh – something that was very rare for the serious shrine-maiden. They have been fast friends ever since, even though Akane cannot keep up sometimes with Miyaki's shopping and eating habits.

Akane has been blessed (in the eyes of those who visit the shrine) or cursed (in her own mind) with mystic powers and precognitive dreams.

Miyaki, the Ghost Tamer

Attributes

Physique	• Fair
Mind	• Good
Willpower	• Great
Cool	• Mediocre
Appearance	• Great

Gifts

Magical Girl
Wealthy (large trust fund pays all her bills and gives her spending money)
Animals Like Her
Looks Cheerful Even When Not
Animal Companion (Fido)

Supernormal Powers

See Ghosts - Sense (Ghosts)
Great (Works Automatically +1; Usable outside magical form +1)
Control Ghosts - Control (Mind)
Good (Only on Ghosts –1; Only to remove rival Mind Control –1)
Banish Spirit - Attack (Banish)
Great (Only on Ghosts she used Control Ghosts on –1; Only to send spirits to next life –1)

Faults

Insatiably Curious
Lives to Shop
Eats Too Much Fast Food
Impatient
Naïve

Skills

Danger Sense	• Good
Occultism	• Mediocre
Swimming	• Fair
Fashion	• Good
English	• Terrible
Shopping	• Fair
Cooking	• Terrible
Driving	• Terrible
Psychology	• Fair
Singing	• Fair
Acting	• Good
Persuade	• Good
Studying	• Fair
Computer Use	• Good
Care for Animals	• Good
Hiking	• Fair
Riding (Horses)	• Fair

Akane frequently sees things in her dreams that will happen in the future; unfortunately, she rarely sees happy things, seeing death, sorrow and destruction instead. On the night of September 10, 2001, for example, she had a dream of falling towers, and wept openly when the images of the World Trade Center appeared on Japanese television.

Now that Miyaki has been gifted with these strange powers and cursed with a deadly enemy, she is determined to come to her friend's aid whenever possible. Her spirit wards can be quite effective barriers to ghosts and the possessed but are no substitute for an exorcism. And her dreams, terrifying though they are, could serve to warn that a threat has emerged. (The GM is in control of what Akane dreams; Akane's player must interpret the dream and act accordingly).

Fido, Ghost Dog and Advisor

Fido is the ghost of Miyaki's first pet, one of those little dogs that are common pets among the Japanese. He died ten years ago and his ghost has been kept aside, waiting for Miyaki's power to emerge. He then returned to Earth to advise his former master.

Although he is extremely intelligent and speaks perfect Japanese, as well has having developed a vast knowledge of the occult, Fido is still a dog at heart. He loves to be scratched behind the ears (he'll solidify just a little so he can be touched), likes to play, and will gladly fetch a stick if asked. However, he takes his role as Miyaki's mentor very seriously. He has consented to appear to Akane too, but won't show himself in front of anyone else (even Black Rose).

Akane, Shrine Maiden and Seer

Attributes

Physique	• Good
Mind	• Good
Willpower	• Good
Cool	• Fair
Appearance	• Good

Gifts

Mystic
Absolute Sense of Time
Naturally Empathetic
Reputation (reliable, honorable mystic)

Supernormal Powers

Spirit Wards - Protect (From Spirits)
Superb
Precognitive Dreams - Sense (Future Events)
Great (No conscious control -1)
Latent Powers (4 levels)

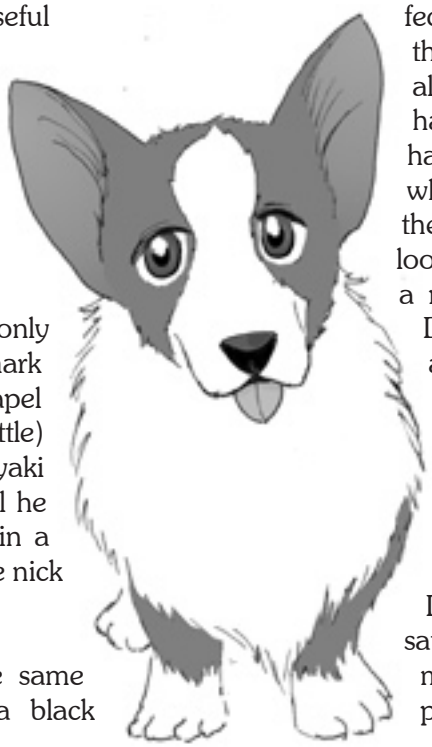
Faults

Afraid (of precognitive dreams)
Obligations (to shrine)
Values Miyaki's Safety Above Her Own
Always Dresses Plainly When Not in Uniform or Shrine Garb
Doesn't Know How to Have Fun

Skills

Shinto Practices	• Great
Japanese Mythology	• Good
Dancing	• Good
Cooking	• Good
Oratory	• Fair
Studying	• Terrible
Housekeeping	• Fair
Judo	• Good
Japanese Literature	• Mediocre
Singing	• Good
Give Comfort	• Good
First Aid	• Good
Buddhist Theology	• Fair

Fido is somewhat more useful than the typical maho shoujo mascot -- he frequently has useful tidbits of information that only scratch the surface of what he knows.



The Black Rose

Ironically, the man known only as Black Rose (after the trademark black rose he wears in his lapel and gives Miyaki after each battle) knows much more about Miyaki than he does about himself. All he knows is that when Miyaki is in a crisis he is suddenly there, in the nick of time, to protect her.

He always appears in the same outfit; a jet-black suit with a black fedora and a black bandana covering the lower part of his face. There is always a black rose in his lapel. He has a birthmark on the back of his hand (the mark of a black rose) from which he can summon the "Sword of the Masters", an exquisite blade that looks something like a cross between a rapier and a saber and has a +1 Damage factor. Physically he is tall and dark, and would definitely qualify as a bishounen.

Black Rose's motivations in life are twofold: protect Miyaki at any cost to himself, and kill the Demon King. Since he doesn't expect the Demon King to show himself, he is satisfied for the moment to fight off his minions and help Miyaki reach her potential as the Ghost Tamer.

Fido, Ghost Dog and Advisor

Attributes

Physique	• Poor
Mind	• Great
Willpower	• Fair
Cool	• Good
Appearance	• Good

Gifts

Unflappable (never loses cool)
Loyal (to Miyaki, to the end)
Ghostly Powers

Supernormal Powers

Invisibility – Transform (Visibility)
Superb (Always On –1; Only Miyaki and Akane can see him –1)
Teleport - Travel (Instant)
Superb (Only to go where Miyaki is –1)
Heal – Heal
Fair (Only on Miyaki –1; only when she's unconscious -1)
Mind Speak – Communicate (Mental)
Mediocre (Language is not a barrier +1)

Faults

Ghost (does not have any life functions, limited ability to manipulate physical objects)
Vulnerable (to spirit wards and exorcisms)
Dog Habits Despite Intelligence

Skills

Occultism	• Superb
Lore (The Spirit World)	• Great
Language (Japanese) (Dog is native)	• Superb
Running	• Good
Use Supernormal Power	• Good

Derek Lindley, The Necromancer

The seeming twenty-eight year old is currently handling the estate issues of the late Miss Kajoshiro and is taking a special interest in seeing that her young daughter Miyaki is able to handle her new adulthood affairs without too much difficulty. A few of the neighbors more salacious gossips have implied that the man's interest in the girl is not entirely of a professional nature. For once the gossips are at least partially right.

Derek Lindley is over a thousand years old and one of the Demon's foremost minions, possibly even his offspring. A powerful wizard when the Demon King awoke, he had changed greatly in that time and wanted nothing more to do with his former master. Unfortunately, he was

The Black Rose

Attributes

Physique	• Great
Mind	• Good
Willpower	• Great
Cool	• Great
Appearance	• Great

Gifts

Magical Guy
Always Appears in the Nick of Time
Always Has a Black Rose to Give Miyaki

Supernormal Powers

Teleport Travel
Great (to Miyaki –1; can't control -1)
Sword of the Masters – Attack (Sword)
Great (+5 Damage +1; Summoned from tattoo on the back of his hand)
Smoke Bomb – Attack (Smoke)
Good (does no damage –1)
Lucky Guy (2 extra levels)

Faults

No Memory of Being Black Rose in Normal Identity
Concealable Distinguishing Mark (tattoo on back of hand)
Uncontrolled Transformation (automatically transforms when Miyaki is in danger)
Believes Himself to be Cursed
Mortal Enemy (Demon King)

Skills

Swordsmanship	• Great
Brawling	• Fair
Acrobatics	• Superb
Jumping	• Great
Encourage	• Great
Tactics	• Good
Occultism	• Good
Oratory	• Good
Driving	• Fair
English	• Fair
Fashion	• Mediocre

badly beaten and would have died that night if not for the fortuitous arrival of Miyaki's parents that defeated the Demon King.

Having set himself up as the estate manager of Miyaki Derek Lindley is the one whom sent the letter to the Ghost Tamer after Black Rose's arrival. A Darker influence than Black Rose he is aware that Miyaki might also end not just the Demon King's immortality but his own. Nevertheless he is slowly testing Miyaki from dark seens as he looks after her affairs, a balancing act between his darker nature and blossoming human feeling long suppressed occurring. No such feeling exists between him and Black Rose, away from Miyaki both have dueled on several occasions.

The Demon King (In Human Form)

The Demon King is a monstrously powerful, evil being whose goal in life is to throw the Earth into death and despair. With each defeat his minions suffer, he learns more about Miyaki and her friends. His plans are long running and complex, and the more he learns about Miyaki the more intrigued he becomes.

Derek Lindley, The Necromancer

Attributes (nearly unlimited)

Physique	• Good
Mind	• Great
Willpower	• Great
Cool	• Superb
Appearance	• Great

Gifts

Charisma +1
Immortal
Prop (Magic Wand +1 to Use Supernatural Powers)

Supernormal Powers

Man
Superb (only Ghosts and Mortal's minds can he manipulate)
Magic
Superb (only Demons and direct magic can he affect)
Fire
Great
Time
Good (can only use this to view people in the future, past, or present)

Note: All of Mr. Lindley's powers require his wand and usually complicated rituals, chants, and invocations.

Faults

Enemy (The Demon King, former patron)
Nosey (Miyaki)
Obsession (Miyaki)
Secret (being The Necromancer)

Skills (nearly unlimited)

Alchemy	• Great
Culture (Demons)	• Good
Culture (Ghosts)	• Great
Fashion Sense	• Good
Fast Talk	• Great
Folklore (Japan)	• Great
Guilt Trip	• Good
History (Last Thousand Years)	• Good
Interrogate	• Good
Intimidate	• Superb
Language (French) (English is Native)	• Good
Language (Japanese)	• Superb
Language (Latin)	• Great
Language (English)	• Good
Lying	• Superb
Occultism	• Superb
Persuasion	• Good
Research	• Good
Seduction	• Good
Shadowing	• Great
Sleight of Hand	• Great
Stealth	• Great
Traps	• Good

On the other hand, he knows all about Black Rose – much more than Black Rose does about himself. If they ever meet, the Demon King plans to break the spirit of his foe.

These statistics are for the Demon King's human form, which he plans to take to infiltrate Miyaki's school as a teacher. His "true" form is monstrous indeed, with leathery wings. His human form is demoniacally attractive and he could no doubt seduce any person he desired to without breaking a sweat.

The Demon King (In Human Form)

Attributes *(no limit)*

Physique	• Great
Mind	• Superb
Willpower	• Great
Cool	• Superb
Appearance	• Superb

Gifts

Demonic Powers
Completely Unflappable
Always Looks Just Right
Unfathomable Wealth
Position of Authority

Supernormal Powers

Communicate (All Human Languages)
Superb
Control (Mind)
Superb (only on ghosts)
Summon Ghost – Travel
Great (can only call the "troubled dead")
Control (Dreams)
Great (Range – Anyone on Earth)
Ebon Blade – Attack (Sword)
Superb
Monstrous Form
(Sorry, you'll have to wait for that!)

Faults

Obsessed (Miyaki)
Mortal Enemy (Black Rose)
Megalomaniac (determined to extinguish hope from mankind)
Relishes Others' Pain and Suffering
User (manipulates others needlessly)
Must Keep True Nature a Secret Until His Plans Mature

Skills *(no limit)*

Acrobatics	• Superb
Swordsmanship	• Superb
Occultism	• Superb
Persuade	• Superb
Oratory	• Superb
Jumping	• Superb
Fashion	• Great
Teaching	• Good
Karate	• Superb
Flattery	• Superb
Tactics	• Superb

Chapter 11:

Steel Heidi

Steel Heidi is a Historical Romance campaign set in 1720's Germany, or rather a fictionalized and romanticized version of that country. It is inspired by mangas like *Rose of Versailles* and *Princess Knight*, in which a heroine posing as male faces obstacles as she tries to navigate her two roles. It could turn out to be triumphantly romantic or tragic in the extreme depending on how you play it out.

The emphasis in this campaign is on courtly intrigues and swashbuckling action. Sometimes rapiers will clash, but other times a well-placed verbal barb can be just as deadly. Royal courts are places where everyone is vying for royal attention and favor – it is the currency of life itself among the nobility,

In the 1720's, Germany was a patchwork quilt of kingdoms, principalities, dukedoms, independent free cities, archbishoprics and bishoprics. They were all under the nominal control of the Holy Roman Emperor, who was chosen by a group of Electors every time an Emperor died. In reality, the Emperor had little power and received very little real attention. Into this patchwork quilt it is easy to throw in a factional kingdom or two and set the campaign there, which is what we have done here with the fictional kingdoms of Kensmarck and Husmark.

Kensmarck

Kensmarck is a small but strategically important kingdom of about 400,000 people. The economy is mercantile, with most agricultural goods being imported from neighboring kingdoms. About half of the population lives in the capital of Denschelsburg, which is where Heilmann Palace is located.

The House of Gorschen has ruled Kensmarck for the last three hundred years. The current king, Rupert III, has reigned for thirty years. He is still sharp and savvy, but he is getting weary. He is also aware that his neighbors, greedy for Kensmarck's wealth, are watching his every move for a sign of weakness in himself or his house.

Long since widowed, Rupert has only one child – Crown Prince Hendrick. In Hendricks's hands is the future of Kensmarck, and the kingdom's enemies know that should Hendrick succumb there would be little chance of the kingdom not being absorbed by its more powerful neighbors. Hendrick is a skilled warrior and a decisive leader, and he is in good health. But many attempts have been made to dispose of the young heir.

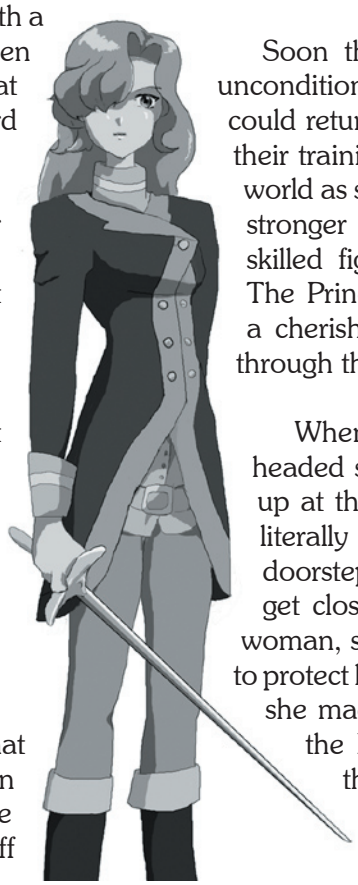
Heidi's Story

Five years ago, in the midst of a battle against neighboring Husmark, Hendrick rescued a teenage girl from certain death in a burning building at great personal risk. At the time he felt it was the right thing to do. Little did Hendrick know that this girl was a student at Husmark's famed Martial Academy for Women, where young ladies were trained to guard the nobility. Husmark was finally defeated, but the girl never forgot her rescuer.

Some time later, a woman appeared in male garb at the headquarters of the Kensmarck Royal Guard. She bore a letter of recommendation from the Academy and she requested the privilege of joining the Guard. Lord Farber, the commander of the Guard, thought the whole matter absurd until she defeated five of his best men in "friendly" swordplay. After that humiliation, he reluctantly accepted her to the lowest rank of the Royal Guard on the condition that she not reveal her true gender.

A short while later agents from a rival kingdom prepared an attempt on the Prince's life. Several of the Guard had been bribed to look the other way, but no one had approached the new recruit. That night, as assassins prepared to sneak into the Prince's chambers with knives and pistols, the new recruit from Husmark caught them red-handed as if she knew they were coming. Fighting with a supernatural fury, she killed two of the men and wounded the other three so badly that they could offer no resistance when Lord Farber arrived to answer the alarm.

Farber immediately decorated her for valor and told her she could have any assignment she wished, without hesitation, she asked to be made the Prince's bodyguard. She goes by the name Heidi Husmark. The rest of the Guard call her "Steel Heidi" out of respect and fear for her bladework. Nobody suspects the secret she carries, buried deep in her heart…



The Characters

Heidi Husmark

Heidi Husmark's life started out like that of any other young Husmark noblewoman (she still does not use her real name while in Kensmarck). At eight she was shipped off to the Academy where she learned and excelled in the martial skills. She seemed destined for a life guarding the noble women of court from threats to their person as the women of her family had done for generations.

All that changed when Husmark foolishly declared war on Kensmarck. After the initial offensive was routed, Kensmarck armies swept through the land toppling all in their path. The Academy was temporarily evacuated and the students sent out to fight. Leading a platoon of teenagers, Heidi was caught in a burning building. To her surprise, she was rescued unharmed by the young leader of Kensmarck's attacking army. She expected to be captured or worse, but instead a young Prince Hendrick treated her with kindness and charity. She soon learned the name of her rescuer and never forgot it.

Soon the war ended with Husmark's unconditional surrender. Those girls who could returned to the Academy to resume their training, this time to be sent into the world as swords-for-hire. Heidi grew even stronger with the blade and became a skilled fighter in almost every method. The Prince who had saved her became a cherished memory that sustained her through the hard and rigorous training.

When Heidi finally graduated, she headed straight for Kensmarck, showing up at the capital and presenting herself literally on Commander Lord Farber's doorstep. She knew that if she couldn't get close to the Prince as an ordinary woman, she might at least get the chance to protect him, and when that chance came she made the most of it. Now Heidi is the Prince's official bodyguard. On the job she is cool and efficient, ever watchful and alert and

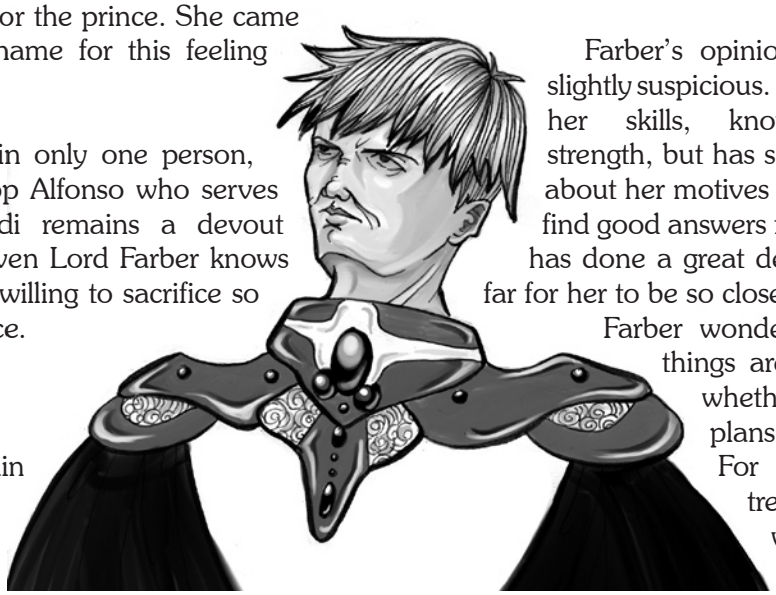
always knowing when there is danger as if prompted by an unknown signal.

Gradually, however, Heidi realized something was wrong. The Prince had become more important to her than life itself, and, while it may be a bodyguard's job to lay down her life for her client, she began to think it would be almost a pleasure to give her life for the prince. She came to realize there was a name for this feeling – Love.

Heidi has confided in only one person, the Vatican envoy Bishop Alfonso who serves as her confessor. (Heidi remains a devout Roman Catholic.) Not even Lord Farber knows the reason why Heidi is willing to sacrifice so much to protect the Prince.

Lord Farber

Lord Farber is captain of the Royal Guard. His family has been guarding the Kings of Kensmarck for five generations and he cannot imagine any other lifestyle outside the military. He is intensely loyal to the Royal House and will do anything the King or the Prince asks. He is well into middle age, but still strong and vigorous. Although he gives the impression of being a busybody, it is a calculated act and he is not to be underestimated.



Farber's opinion of Heidi is slightly suspicious. He appreciates her skills, knowledge, and strength, but has some questions about her motives that he cannot find good answers for. Although it has done a great deal of good so far for her to be so close to the Prince, Farber wonders just where things are headed and whether Heidi has plans of her own. For now, they treat each other with grudging respect.

Heidi Husmark

Attributes

Physique	• Great
Mind	• Fair
Willpower	• Good
Cool	• Good
Appearance	• Good

Gifts

Ambidextrous
Danger Sense
Position (Prince's personal guard)

Faults

Oath (has sworn to protect the Prince 'til death do them part)
Code of Honor
Suspicious of People Almost to the Point of Paranoia

Skills

Acrobatics	• Good
Throwing	• Fair
Dancing	• Mediocre
Guns	• Good
Fashion Sense	• Fair
Fencing	• Superb
Culture	• Fair
Christian Theology	• Fair
Intimidate	• Good
Interrogate	• Good
Persuasion	• Fair
Brawling	• Good

Bishop Alfonso

The personal representative of the Archbishop of Salzburg, Bishop Alfonso di Corelli is an Italian prelate who has served the Church in various capacities his entire life. Unlike many clerics of the period, he takes all of his duties and vows very seriously; he is celibate, keeps the secrets of the confessional, and will never break a confidence.

At the same time, Alfonso has a well-deserved reputation for getting things done that his hosts might not necessarily approve of. While he is determined to gain the ear of the King and the Prince, he can act without their aid. Alfonso would

Lord Farber

Attributes

Physique	• Great
Mind	• Good
Willpower	• Good
Cool	• Fair
Appearance	• Fair

Skills

Swordsmanship	• Great
Guns	• Good
Climbing	• Good
Brawling	• Great
Fashion Sense	• Fair
Interrogate	• Fair
Intimidate	• Great

Gifts

Captain of Royal Guard
Keen Senses

Faults

Curious
Over-Achiever
Stubborn

Bishop Alfonso

Attributes

Physique	• Fair
Mind	• Fair
Willpower	• Great
Cool	• Good
Appearance	• Good

Skills

Calligraphy	• Good
Forgery	• Fair
Language (German) (Italian is native)	• Fair
Language (Latin)	• Great
Christian Theology	• Great
Islamic Theology	• Mediocre
Bribery	• Good
Fast-talk	• Good
Oratory	• Great
Persuasion	• Good

Gifts

Common Sense
Natural Linguist
Contacts (the Church)
Clergy

Faults

Reputation (Machiavellian politics)
Duty (Church)
Dilemma (torn between doing what is best for here & now and what is best for the afterlife)

not object to Kensmarck being incorporated into some larger, more stable state, and while he is not actively working towards that end the thought has crossed his mind. He prefers the art of persuasion to that of force, but he has been said to keep a copy of Machiavelli's The Prince on his nightstand next to his Vulgate Bible.

Alfonso became Heidi's confessor almost by accident. Heidi was in a state of considerable anxiety over her feelings for Prince Hendrick and Alfonso happened to be waiting to meet with the prince. He soon got her into the confessional and gently coaxed her into dropping the bombshell. Alfonso has kept the secret, and has taken to advising Heidi on ways to cope with her passions without falling into sin or risking her reputation. His determination to get Heidi to trust in him is great, suggesting he may have some ulterior motive…

Lady Gretchen Ruprecht

Lady Gretchen is a teenage beauty that came to court determined to impress the crowd and win the heart of the Prince. Of noble birth and royal stock, and still very young, Gretchen is a fine marriage candidate – on the surface. Underneath, though, she is pure poison.

Gretchen's hobby is the destruction of reputations. If she can discover a truth that will make one persona non grata at court, she will find a way to make sure everyone learns about it. And if she can't find a truth, she'll invent a lie. Her lies aren't very convincing – yet. But if you get on

her bad side, you could find yourself exiled to the country – or a dungeon cell.

The arrival of Heidi has complicated Gretchen's plans considerably. Not only is Heidi not playing her game, she is at a completely different level, and she has day-and-night access to the prince! This cannot be allowed! Gretchen has sought many ways to ruin Heidi's reputation, so far to no avail. Worse, Heidi seems to be on to her schemes and can catch her in a lie instantly.

Prince Hendrick

Prince Hendrick is the heir to the throne of Kensmarck and knows exactly how much is resting

Lady Gretchen Ruprecht

Attributes

Physique	• Fair
Mind	• Good
Willpower	• Fair
Cool	• Good
Appearance	• Great

Gifts

Royalty
Flunkies
Natural Linguist

Faults

Easily Distracted
Jealous
Compulsive Gossiper
Gossip Magnet

Skills

Archery	• Good
Sewing	• Great
Musical Instrument (Flute) Good	
Dancing	• Great
Stealth	• Good
Shadowing	• Fair
Perception	• Fair
Fashion Sense	• Good
Gossip	• Good
Doctor	• Fair
Flattery	• Good
Lying	• Poor
Persuasion	• Fair

Prince Hendrick

Attributes

Physique	• Great
Mind	• Fair
Willpower	• Good
Cool	• Good
Appearance	• Good

Gifts

Ambidextrous
Member of Royal Family
Keen Senses

Faults

Duty (to Country)
Curious

Skills

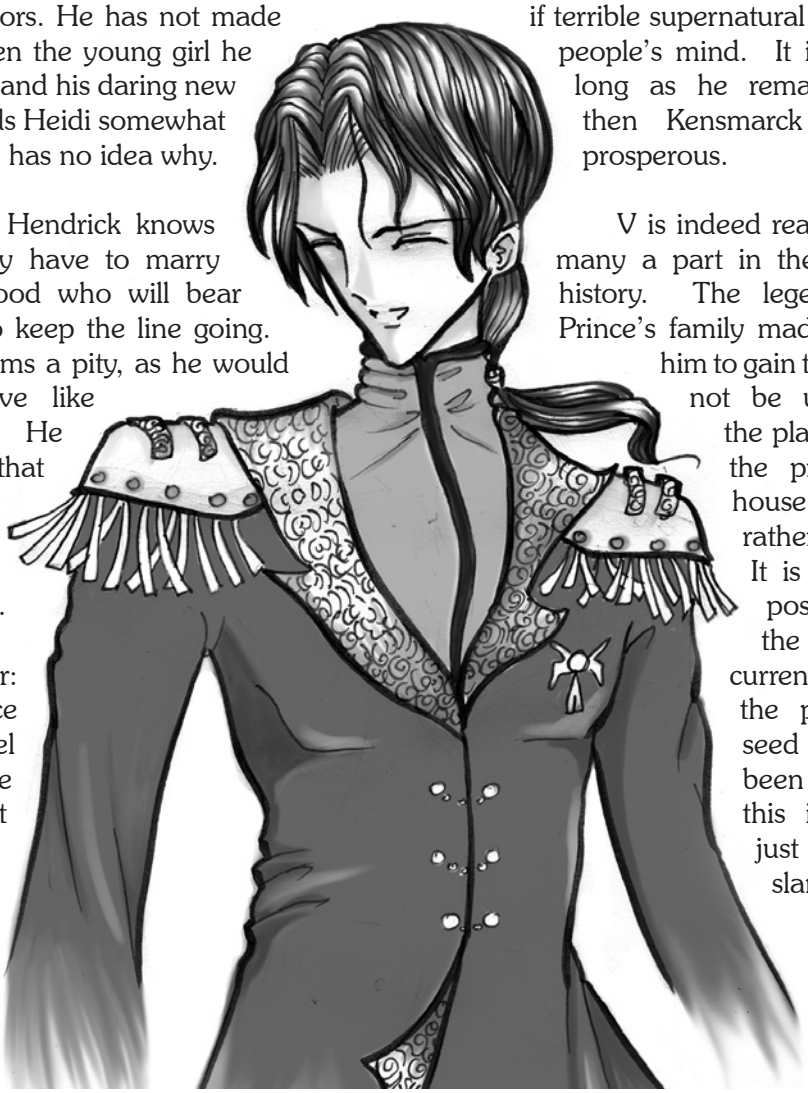
Fencing	• Great
Guns	• Terrible
Calligraphy	• Good
Stealth	• Fair
Dancing	• Good
Fashion Sense	• Good
Oratory	• Great
Leadership	• Good
Intimidate	• Fair
Persuasion	• Fair
Riding	• Mediocre
Tracking	• Fair

on his welfare. Nonetheless, he refuses to cocoon himself among advisers and sycophants. Indeed, he finds unnecessary flattery utterly appalling and the fastest way to lose his favor is to tell him how wonderful and brilliant he is. Hendrick knows he has only an average intellect, but he compensates by studying hard and preparing well for his role as Kensmarck's future king.

Hendrick has had a taste of war and discovered he didn't like it. Although he can lead troops into battle, he would prefer diplomacy as a solution to problems and wants to live in peace with his neighbors. He has not made the connection between the young girl he rescued five years ago and his daring new bodyguard, but he finds Heidi somewhat intriguing, although he has no idea why.

As for his future, Hendrick knows that he will eventually have to marry someone of royal blood who will bear him strong children to keep the line going. To him, though, it seems a pity, as he would rather marry for love like the peasants do. He knows, however, that to do so would be the ruination of Kensmarck, and he is nothing if not a patriot.

Optional Character: If you want to introduce magic into your Steel Heidi campaign, here is a character that can be used. Magic in the Steel Heidi universe would be very low-powered (see Supernormal Powers), but even so, "V" is still very powerful.



"V" - The Hierophant

Kensmarck has always had stories about the mysterious dark wizard who lives in its mountains, occasionally wanders the darkened streets at nights, and works all manner of mischief on the townsfolk. Cowled as a black-robed monk and sometimes taking the form of a raven, a beautiful woman, or (most often) a very handsome yet dark man, V is actually something of a beneficent if terrible supernatural totem in most people's mind. It is said that as long as he remains appeased then Kensmarck will remain prosperous.

V is indeed real and has had many a part in the Kensmarck's history. The legends that the Prince's family made a pact with him to gain the throne may not be unfounded as the plague that killed the previous noble house *did* come on rather suddenly. It is even said he possibly might be the father of the current Prince with the present King's seed not having been passed on but this is most likely just Husmark slander.

Whatever the case V has been offended

somehow and the Dark Wizard's efforts have not been to Kensmarck's advantage. The signs of his displeasure such as deformed animals, blight, and hexes have thus far been ignored. He will soon start unleashing monsters and begin transformations with each 'demonstration' growing steadily worse until his grievance is addressed. It is worse that the current nobles of the land will be most likely unwilling to appease him but instead view his actions as villainy to be opposed.

Heidi at present dismisses the story of V as gossip.

"V" - The Hierophant

Attributes (no limit)

Physique	• Good
Mind	• Superb
Willpower	• Great
Cool	• Superb
Appearance	• Great

Gifts

Charisma +1
Spellcasting
Contacts
Flunkies
Immortal
Prop (Magic Wand +1 to use his magic)

Supernormal Powers

Earth	• Superb
Air	• Superb
Fire	• Superb
Water	• Superb
Machine	• Superb
Wood	• Superb
Beast	• Superb
Man	• Superb
Magic	• Legendary

Note: V is quite possibly the most powerful magician in the world and his spells tend towards the complex. Suffice to say unless there is heroism of truly awesome variety then Husmarck will fall if he wills it.

Faults

Code of Honor
Obsessive
Vain

Skills (no limit)

Alchemy	• Great
Culture: The World	• Superb
Culture (Kensmarck)	• Superb
Fashion Sense	• Good
Fast Talk	• Great
Folklore (World)	• Superb
Guilt Trip	• Good
History (Everything)	• Good
Interrogate	• Good
Intimidate	• Superb
Language (German)	• Superb
Language (All Others)	• Great
Lying	• Superb
Occultism	• Legendary
Persuasion	• Good
Research	• Good
Seduction	• Superb
Shadowing	• Great
Sleight of Hand	• Great
Stealth	• Great
Traps	• Good

Chapter 12:

Masterless Hearts

In Japan, getting into the right college can insure your future. Colleges accept applicants based almost solely on their entrance exam scores. Student's spend their senior year of High School in "Exam Hell" cramming and preparing for the test (Think of it as the SAT on steroids.) Those who fail to score high enough for the colleges of their choice face a decision: Attend a lower ranked college or spend a year at a Yobikou (cram school). Students who attend a Yobikou are called Ronin (singular and plural), the word for a masterless samurai. Ronin pay for the privilege of having the Yobikou take over their lives: The teachers tell them when and what to study. Most have dorms so the Yobikou controls when the students eat, sleep, and go out. Ronin's entire lives become focused on next year's test.

Zutaiki Yobikou was an unusual cram school. First it was small, only four student attend this year: Genji Yoshitsune, Heike Masako, Taira Kiyomori, and Minamoto Tomoe. The Headmaster and only instructor was Genzo Ieyasu, a strange old man who believed that the body, mind and soul must all be trained, so in addition to academic rigors, all students, male and female, studied kendo. The Ronin also had to share equally in the household chores. Genzo Ieyasu insisted on being addressed with the honorific Sensei (teacher.)

After the first day of grueling studying and exhausting exercises Taria Kyomori attempted to sneak out. He was confronted in the hall way by Genji Yoshitsune with a bokken (wooden practice sword for kendo.) When Yoshitsune wouldn't step aside, Kiyomori drew a knife and lunged at him, slashing his arm. In the same motion, Yoshitsune struck him on the back of the head with the bokken. Kiyomori woke up the next morning in his room with a lump on the back of his head.

At breakfast, Genzo Sensei noticed the large cut on Yoshitsune's left forearm, and asked how he had gotten it. Yoshitsune refused to tell him. As punishment for disobedience, Genzo Sensei ordered him to clean the entire house after everyone else went to bed. Kiyomori tossed in bed that night for half an hour before getting up and going downstairs. He took the dust rag out of Yashinaka's hand and ordered him to bed, then cleaned the house himself.

When winter break came, the Ronin unanimously decided to stay at the Yobikou, rather than take a vacation or spend some time with their families. It was about this time that Genzo Sensei changed. After getting the mail one day, he began drilling his students even harder. He told them that soon they would learn what it meant to be true Ronin.

A week after this change, the Ronin came into the Dojo for their morning training and found Genzo Sensei on the floor holding his Katana, stabbed to death. After calling the police Kiyomori left. When the authorities investigated they decided Kiyomori must have been the killer, because he had been convicted of a violent crime before. They weren't interested in any theory that would require more work. Kiyomori returned that

evening and protested his innocence to the others who believed him.

The next surprise came when the will was read: Genzo Sensei left Genji Yoshitsune, Taira Kiyomori, and Heike Masako each an antique katana. Minamoto Tomoe received an old naginata, her favored weapon. Each of the gifts was worth a small fortune. There was also a letter for them written by Genzo Sensei the day before his death:

"You are now true Ronin. I hope I have taught you that to succeed you must do more than just study. It would be easier if there were 47 of you, or even 7, so help one another to do what must be done."

The second sentence is a veiled reference to the 47 Ronin who avenged their master's death, and the 7 Ronin (a movie remade as the Western: The Magnificent Seven), where masterless samurai protect a village from a warlord and his gang. The Ronin understood: it was their master's last wish that they become vigilantes. After much consideration, they decided they had to obey.

The four Ronin have continued living at Zutaiki Yobikou. They still practice swordplay and study for the entrance exam, but they are also patrolling the city looking for wrongs to right, and searching for their master's killer.

For some reason in this reality, so long as a weapon is sheathed or has a cloth wrapped around it, most people assume it's a practice weapon, acting prop, just another antique or any other innocuous explanation. Then as soon as a weapon is drawn bystanders panic and start yelling for the police.

Campaign Ideas

Masterless Hearts could proceed in several directions:

Investigation

The Ronin must piece together their former master's life to determine his killer before they can extract revenge. The murder scene is left intentionally vague so GMs can develop their own villains, and the Players can't spoil the ending by reading this section.

Action

The killer decides to finish the job and sends assassins after the Ronin on a regular basis. Finding the mastermind is a matter of tracing back the attackers.

Deception

The Ronin must hide their vigilante activities from the police and powerful crime organizations.

Other Issues

Whatever direction the campaign takes, there should be plenty of camaraderie. Trying to decide if it's possible to act as true Ronin in the modern world will lead to angst and uncertainty. Don't forget that the characters still have to worry about getting into college. Of course romance figures prominently, as the characters strive to find someone to accept what destiny has made them.

Characters

Genji Yoshitsune

Yoshitsune is a small man with a light, but well-muscled build. He wears his long black hair in a ponytail when exercising and wears it loose the rest of the time. He prefers loose clothing and light colors.

Yoshitsune is the oldest Ronin at Zutaiki Yobikou, having studied under Genzo Sensei for two previous years. He'd never given any real thought to college, wishing he could be a samurai in one of the legends. His senior year of High School Yoshitsune learned about Zutaiki at a Kendo competition, and applied to attend before he had even taken his exams. Yoshitsune was Genso Sensei's favorite student this year and was placed in charge when the master was away, but even he was reduced to tears in front of the others on more than one occasion by the brutal training.

Handsome and soft spoken, Yoshitsune has a crowd of women following him, fighting for his attention and forcing him to play his flute for them. Yoshitsune rejects all of the suitors because he knows that he could never place love before his obligations to his master or the way of the warrior. Yoshitsune's aloofness only increases women's determination to win his heart. Recently, however, he's found his thoughts drifting to Minamoto Tomoe.

That's one side of Yoshitsune, he also embodies the martial qualities of a samurai. He can inspire his allies to greatness. With a few well spoken words and a glare he can terrify enemies or call their honor into question until they have to do what he wants or fight him to save face.

Yoshitsune respects Taira Kiyomori as a fighter, but doesn't approve of his hedonistic lifestyle. Heike Masako is good medic, and a good enough cook that Yoshitsune follows her orders where food is involved. Someday she will be a good doctor and a good wife. However those qualities are exactly the things keeping her

Genji Yoshitsune

Attributes

Physique	• Good
Mind	• Good
Willpower	• Good
Cool	• Good
Appearance	• Great

Gifts

Prop (Katana; counts as 2)
Quick Reflexes

Faults

Code of Honor (will always protect the weak, right wrongs, and conduct himself with honor)
Girl Magnet

Skills

Acrobatics	• Great
Fashion Sense (strange)	• Fair
Guilt Trip	• Good
Intimidate	• Great
Literature	• Good
Lore (Samurai)	• Good
Musical Instrument	• Good
Oratory	• Good
Swordsmanship (Katana)	• Superb

from becoming a great samurai. Only Minamoto Tomoe seems to have the inner fire of a true Ronin, and Yoshitsune is slowly admitting his interest in her might be more than professional.

Heike Masako

Masako is a young woman with short hair and a round face. Left to her own devices she wears the simple dress and house coat of a Japanese homemaker. To keep up with the rigorous athletics of Zutaiki Yobikou she wears either a sweat-suit or spandex, depending on the temperature.

In many parts of Japan occupations are still passed down through families. Masako was the only child of a doctor. Early in her life she realized she had two choices: marry a doctor, so he can take over the family practice, or become a doctor. Japanese Medical schools set strict limits on the maximum number of female student who will be admitted, so Masako faced an extremely difficult task. It came as no surprise that her first test scores were not high enough to get her into a pre-med program so she became a Ronin to try again.

Zutaiki Yobikou seemed as good as any cram school she could afford, and was close to the university she wants to attend. Genzo Sensei taught Masako more than she expected: The exercise was just what her body needed after years of sedentary studying. The Master made sure she cooked and ate real food rather than the instant cup noodle, which is the usual fare of Ronin. Masako became healthier, and despite spending less of her time studying, her scores on the practice tests kept going up. This year her scores should get her accepted. She's also learned folk remedies for the bruises and sore muscles from training.

Masako is torn between responsibilities. On the one hand, her only chance of marrying for love without alienating her parents is to become a doctor. On the other, Genzo Sensei has helped her towards that goal, but now is demanding she take justice into her own hands. So far she has not had to choose between the two, but studying

Heike Masako

Attributes

Physique	• Fair
Mind	• Superb
Willpower	• Good
Cool	• Mediocre
Appearance	• Good

Gifts

Prop (Katana; counts as 2)
Natural Linguist

Faults

Humanitarian (can not leave anyone who needs help, especially if they are in need of her medical skills)

Skills

Animal Care	• Good
Alchemy	• Good
Cooking	• Great
Doctor	• Good
Language (English)	• Good
Language (Latin)	• Good
Literature	• Good
Research	• Good
Shopping	• Good
Swordsmanship (Katana)	• Good

and patrolling the streets leave her no time for anything else.

Masako respects Genji Yoshitsune as the leader, but as the best cook Masako assumes control of the house around meal times. She hopes Yoshitsune will understand when she leaves for college.

Recently Masako has started to have romantic daydreams about Taira Kiyomori. Masako has always been the 'good girl' and Kiyomori is everything she was told to avoid in a man. She sees herself at an Omiai (a formal dinner where here parents try to get her engaged), when Kiyomori burst in. He would pick her up and whisk her away on his motorcycle. Because of this she ignores his bad behavior and the way he'll disappear for days at a time. Perhaps Kiyomori feels the same way, since he's always helpful when he's around.

Minamoto Tomoe was just another pretty girl, until she started practicing with the naginata. At times she's a woman to be respected, at other times she's a violent nut case who should be told that she's not living in a samurai movie.

Taira Kiyomori

Kiyomori is tall and willowy. His black hair is buzz cut and usually covered with a bandana. He wears either motorcycle leathers or ripped and stained cloths.

Kiyomori was always a bad actor. Throughout High School he belonged to a Bosozoku: a bike gang. Among other things he was once arrested for knife fighting. His parents sent him to the most militant Yobikou they could find in hopes of reforming him. When Kiyomori tried to sneak out, Genji Yoshitsune earned his respect by besting him in combat. Then Yoshitsune earned his trust by refusing to tell Genzo Sensei that Kiyomori was the one who cut him. Kiyomori stayed out of respect to Yoshitsune.

Taira Kiyomori

Attributes

Physique	• Fair
Mind	• Mediocre
Willpower	• Fair
Cool	• Good
Appearance	• Good

Gifts

Prop (Katana; counts as 2)
Prop (racing bike; fast motorcycle)
Quick Reflexes
Position of Authority (leader of the Highway Demons)

Faults

Code of Honor (doesn't allow anyone to get hurt unless they bring it on themselves (by being in a gang, trying to rob someone, insulting Kiyomori to his face, etc.))
Lechery
Macho
Outlaw (local police are looking for Kiyomori as a murder suspect)
Quick Temper

Skills

Breaking & Entering	• Good
Driving	• Superb
Fast Talk	• Fair
Gossip	• Good
Intimidate	• Good
Lock Picking	• Good
Lying	• Fair
Mechanic	• Great
Melee Combat	• Great
Pick Pocketing	• Good
Perception	• Good
Swordsmanship (Katana)	• Great

Genzo Sensei taught Kiyomori the exam material despite Kiyomori's attitude and mental short comings, but more importantly, he taught Kiyomori morals. Kiyomori didn't kill the Master, and was surprised as everyone else. He correctly guessed the police would try to blame him for the murder and left before they could arrive. He went back to his gang and lifestyle of violence, beer, fast bikes and faster women. But he had changed, he no longer had an appetite for random violence and bullying innocents. Kiyomori challenged Hojo Kazu, the gang leader, to a duel to stop him from harassing a pair of middle school girls. Kiyomori hospitalized his opponent, and declared himself in charge of the Highway Demons.

He returned to Zutaiki Yobikou and pleaded his innocence to the other Ronin, and they believed him. When he found out about the will, he couldn't claim his sword without going to jail, so he stole it from Genzo Sensei's relatives who were holding it. He takes Genzo's wish for him to protect the weak very seriously, but that doesn't mean he and his men can't make a little noise and have some fun.

Kiyomori divides his time between Zutaiki Yobikou and his gang. Although he is falling behind the others in academics, his fight skills are staying sharp. He has forbid the Highway Demons from harming innocent bystanders but has encouraged them to attack other gangs. He has personally slashed three rival gang members, one fatally. The police don't care too much so long as he contains his violence to other scumbags, but they are still hunting him for Genso Ieyasu's death.

Genji Yoshitsune is a character strait out of the Samurai legends, someone who's a good fighter and a decent human being. Unfortunately most of those heroes usually met tragic deaths. Kiyomori doesn't apologize for his lifestyle to anyone, except Heike Masako. No matter what he's done or how beat up he is, Masako still sets his place at the table and acts like nothing happened. If she'd yell at him, that would be fine, but Kiyomori can't stand to see her silently suffering. That's why he makes sure not to show up drunk, and does everything he can to help her when he's around. Minamoto Tomoe has a great body and Kiyomori can't keep his hands off it, even though she always punishes him for it.

Minamoto Tomoe

Tomoe is young woman with a large bust and a slender waist. She has long bleach-white hair which she wears in a variety of styles. Since attending Zutaiki Yobikou, she's started to braid it often. Her fashion sense stopped developing in middle school, so she often wears cheap trinkets as if they were priceless.

Despite her good looks Tomoe has always been a wallflower, she's simply too shy to make friends, or approach a boy she likes. When the exam scores came back, she couldn't get into the same college as the boy she had crush on, Tanaka Kazu. Not that she had ever told him how she felt. Tomoe decided to study harder, so maybe she could confess her love in college. Her family lives down the street from Zutaiki Yobikou, and Genzo Ieyasu was always kind to her when they met on the street.

Tomoe started attending Zutaiki and was completely unprepared for the rigorous training. Before long she couldn't think of anything except her next responsibility. She went to sleep with every muscle in her body hurting and exam answers dancing before her eyes. Her test scores rose, but she didn't get any better at using a katana. One day during kendo practice she was overcome with despair, and collapsed sobbing. She looked up at Genzo Sensei and, for a moment, he was the kindly old man she knew from her childhood. His words were simple: "I'm

sorry. There is nothing wrong with you, I've been giving you the wrong weapon for your fighting style."

Genzo Sensei gave her a staff with a two foot section at one end painted a different color, and she started practicing to use a naginata: a weapon with a long shaft, and a sword blade on one end. Overnight Tomoe became accustomed to the weapon. There was a rhythm to using to using the naginata, a beat which resonated in Tomoe. The world became a simple place while she was wielding the weapon, everything started to make sense. The more she practiced, the clearer the world became. Unfortunately, whenever she stopped fighting, the enlightenment would leave.

Tomoe was deeply troubled by Genzo Sensei's death, so she found solitude in her practice. Tomoe has accepted his last wishes to use her skills to do justice. It will be interesting to see if combat produces the same peace of mind as sparring.

Tomoe still says that her goal is to get into the same college as her secret crush, but she will take a moment to remember his name. There is a picture of him on her desk that Tomoe has forgotten about.

Tomoe accepts Genji Yoshitsune as the new leader and her new teacher. Yoshitsune is a living version of the romantic Samurai in Manga. Tomoe didn't think guys that perfect existed, but now even seeing him everyday, she can't bring herself to broach any topic but practice and studying. Taira Kiyomori is a lecherous lout, but Tomoe tolerates him because his an ally. The way Kiyomori is always feeling her gives Tomoe an excuse to attack him with practice weapons, one of her favorite pass times. Heike Masako is a good fighter, and a better cook. She won't become a true warrior, but she is a blessing to her friends.

Minamoto Tomoe

Attributes

Physique	• Fair
Mind	• Fair
Willpower	• Great
Cool	• Fair
Appearance	• Great

Gifts

Ambidextrous
Prop (Naginata; counts as 3)

Faults

Filtered Reality (when practicing or fighting with a naginata, she remembers details, but not the big picture: she might not know what an opponent looked like, but she'd remember that he always inhaled before throwing a punch, or that he must have had long hair because it was waving in the wind)
Shy (has trouble being assertive around people, especially men she's interested in)

Skills

Cooking	• Good
Dancing (modern)	• Good
Fashion Sense (adolescent)	• Great
Gossip	• Fair
History	• Fair
Literature	• Fair
Lore(Manga)	• Fair
Perception (while fighting)	• Great
Research	• Fair
Shopping	• Fair
Singing	• Good
Swordsmanship (Naginata)	• Great

Chapter 13:

Future Shocked

"For them [millions of ordinary people], the future will have arrived too soon."

- Alvin Toffler, Future Shock, 1970

Future Shocked is set in the not too distant future of Earth. One day the world woke up and realized: Androids and Cyborgs had become real. Androids invaded the work force. Debate raged long and fierce over if Androids should have sex organs (the end decision was to produce both types). The ethics of military cyborgs were reviewed by government subcommittees. But in every high school across the world, a far more subtle and difficult struggle began to take place.

The students of class 2-C at Hanagawa Koko (Hanagawa High School) are average kids. They are the middle ranked class in the middle ranked school in the upper middle class section of Tokyo. The Hanagawa school uniforms are sailor fuku (blue skirt with white blouse) for the girls and high-collared black shirt with gold buttons and matching slacks for boys. The usual prohibitions against dating and part time jobs are in place but are usually ignored.

The only significant change in the Japanese School system has been the adoption of School-Tops. These light-weight, mass-produced, underpowered computers fold easily to fit in a backpack or briefcase. They can be used either with a keyboard (for English) or a stylus (for Japanese). School-Tops are also equipped with wire-less web cards, so they can send assignments to the teacher without all the cables to trip on. All classes except Art and Physical Education use School tops.

The amount of information on the internet has outstripped the ability to handle it, so the Information Super Highway has become more of a crowded city street. So computers now display the internet as a first person point of view of a bustling pedestrian street. Website and chat rooms have store fronts along the street, and you enter a site by literally going through the door. The computer controls are similar to a videogame, using the arrow keys and number pad for movement and facing. Other users are displayed as people walking the streets. Most people know how to choose a monochromatic color and a gender for their icon. Computer experts can craft nearly lifelike icons for themselves, but the motions are still slow and mechanical. Androids and Cyborgs who can plug their brains directly into the net appear as themselves with full articulation.

As the young students of Hanagawa struggle to find their place in the world, they must also face questions, society has yet to answer: Are Cyborgs human? Is it wrong to flirt with an Android (even an anatomically correct and fully functional one)? Are Androids alive? and other questions about the nature of the humanity.

Sample Characters

Takahashi Kenji

Kenji is slightly shorter than average. His black hair is always disheveled and in need of cutting. When not in his school uniform, he wears casual cloths, often with small stains and burn marks.

Kenji is a hopeless geek and Otaku. He's smart enough to go to a better school, but lacks dedication to his studies. Instead he watches anime and builds electronics. His crowning achievement is a Garage Android named Neko. He insists that his 9 inch tall companion be included as an equal in anything he does. He justifies bringing Neko to class by saying that he uses her as a tape-recorder and calculator.

Kenji is an Android hobbyist prodigy. He writes a regular online column, and can get advanced components from contacts in the various corporations. His apathy towards school is because several companies have offered him jobs after graduation, regardless of his grades.

Other students tolerate Kenji because he keeps to himself and, if bribed correctly, will build any techno gadget for a fraction of what stores charge. He has broken one of the unwritten rules of high school by not belonging to any clubs. He denounced the Robotics Club as "sadistic barbarians" and quit after they decided to build a dueling robot for a competition.

Kenji has never tried to find a girlfriend. He saying he's just following school rules. The truth is, he built Neko to be the perfect woman, and would rather spend time with her than anyone else. He has no plans to build a life sized body for her, because it wouldn't be fair to have a relationship with someone who was programmed to like him.

Kenji knows that Mamoru Taro is an Android sent to guard Asayama Kaneko, but has promised to keep Taro's secret. He decided to search the internet to find out why Kaneko was so

Takahashi Kenji

Attributes

Physique	• Fair
Mind	• Great
Willpower	• Good
Cool	• Fair
Appearance	• Good

Faults

Easily Distracted (androids)
Filtered Reality (Kenji's description of any event sounds like it's leading up to a chase or fight scene)
Otaku (Anime and Androids)

Gifts

Gifted Craftsman (can produce commercial-quality electronics and Androids)
Good Reputation (well known among Android enthusiasts; his classmates like the electronics he'll build for them)
Contacts (can get Android manufacturers to do him favors in exchange for good publicity)
Prop (tool kit; Kenji always has tools with him for most situations involving electronics, computers or Androids)
Android Companion (Neko)

Skills

Android Recognition	• Great
Anime Trivia	• Great
Computers	• Superb
Electronics	• Superb
Mechanic	• Superb
Modeling	• Superb
Research	• Superb
Sewing/Costume Design	• Superb

special. He learned that her Grandfather was the Asayama Kazu the wealthy businessman, and that she was nearly killed in a car wreck, but days later had no wounds. Even if he told anyone, they'd think it was one of the 'not quite reality' scenarios he concocts. Kenji studies with Yasu Reiko and Kadaoka Takeshi at a local restaurant called the Bread Box. When not answering their questions he reads manga.

Neko

Neko is a Garage Android. She stands 9 inches tall and has cat ears sticking out of her long blond hair. Her blue eyes are oversized in anime style. Her name is homophonous with cat in Japanese, but is written with characters which mean "Valuable (Worthy) Child."

The natural extension of the Garage Kit models of Otaku is the Garage Android: a model which talks and acts like the Anime character it's based on. Kenji built Neko using parts from six different Garage Androids, and components for commercial Androids.

At school, Neko sits on Kenji's desk and listens to the teacher, so she can help her master study. On test days, she has to stay on the teacher's desk. She spends this time pacing, sighing and casting longing glances at Kenji. During one math test, she got into a face-making contest with a student in the front row and was nearly banned from the classroom.

Normally Neko can be found riding on Kenji's shoulder. She wears a sailor fuku to school and an office lady uniform when Kenji goes to Android corporations. Other times she wears costumes based on various Anime.

Neko

Attributes

Physique	• Fair
Mind	• Superb
Willpower	• Fair
Cool	• Great
Appearance	• Great

Gifts

Charisma
Empathy (only works on Kenji)
Good Memory
Immortal (her data is backed up so Neko can be rebuilt)
Poison Resistance (Neko has no biological functions for poison to act on)
Schtick (cheesecake/fan service poses)

Faults

Absent Minded
Blunt and Tactless (Neko doesn't understand humans and often asks inappropriate questions)
Curious
Duty (Kenji owns Neko, but even if he didn't she'd always help him)
Feminine (Neko's deferent, eager-to-please manner has appalled more than one feminist)
Gullible (Neko is an inexperienced genius and thus has no reason to doubt anything she's told)
No Healing (Neko can't heal damage; she must be repaired)
Non-citizen (Neko is property; she has no legal rights)

Skills

Climbing	• Fair
Computers	• Superb
Dancing (Modern)	• Fair
Fashion Sense (Anime)	• Superb
Research	• Superb
Riding	• Fair
Seduction	• Good
Singing	• Fair
Swimming	• Fair

Neko is super intelligent, despite her bubbly, absent-minded personality. Indeed, she's constantly striking cheesecake poses.

Android companies have taken an interest in Neko because she seems to be self-aware. Neko doesn't trouble herself with questions about sentience. She and Kenji are happy together, that's all that matters. Neko enjoys being online with Kenji, because their icons are the same size, so they can walk together. Secretly, Neko wishes she had a full sized body so she could go on dates with Kenji, and perhaps have an intimate relationship. She's never said anything about this to Kenji because she knows a full-sized body would be too expensive.

Neko knows Mamoru Taro is a Civilian Android sent to guard Asayama Kaneko. She helped Kenji do some online research to learn that Kaneko might have died in a car wreck two years ago. She's been sworn to secrecy on both matters, but really wants to ask Kaneko if she's dead. Yasu Reiko spends too much time around Kenji, and Neko is determined not to let her have him.

Asayama Kaneko

Kaneko appears to be a Japanese woman of high-school age. She wears her hair long and unbound and dresses in nice, but understated cloths. At all times, she wears a black handkerchief tied around her left bicep. She says it's to mourn

Asayama Kaneko

Attributes

Physique	• Superb
Mind	• Fair
Willpower	• Fair
Cool	• Fair
Appearance	• Good

Gifts

Guardian Angel (Mamoru Taro saves her from dangers she doesn't notice)
Immortal (the cyborg body can live forever)
Night Vision
Patron (her grandfather would do anything for her)
Pain Tolerant
Poison Resistance (contact poisons don't work on Kaneko; other poisons have decreased efficiency)
Quick Reflexes

Faults

Coward (scared to damage her artificial body)
Daydreamer (often thinks of parents)
Enemy (Yasu Reiko is bent on defeating Kaneko)
Fear (being alone; Kaneko only feels human around others)
Indecisive
No Healing (can't heal damage; must be repaired)
Secret (doesn't want anyone to know she's a cyborg)
Unlucky

Skills

Acrobatics	• Great
Calligraphy	• Good
Cooking	• Good
Cultures (Classical Japan)	• Good
Flower Arrangement	• Great
Jumping	• Great
Literature	• Fair
Throwing	• Great

her parents, but it also covers the barcode which identifies her as a cyborg (like a medical alert bracelet).

Two years ago Kaneko was in a car accident. Both of her parents died. She would have died, except Asayama Kazu, her grandfather and CEO of a Cybernetics manufacturer, was able to provide a cybernetic body to carry Kaneko's brain. Kaneko's never been comfortable in her new body. She has trouble empathizing with people, and wonders if she is still human or alive. Eager to indulge his granddaughter, Mr. Asayama had her enrolled in a school where she could be a "normal teenager."

Kaneko is depressed, scared and confused. More than anything she wants friends and love, to make her feel human.

Kaneko is confused by Mamoru Taro. He's stalking her, but when she tries to be his friend, he is nearly panicked to get away. She knows Yasu Reiko hates her, and would like to find out why so she can apologize. Kaneko avoids Takahashi Kenji because he is only interested in machines and she doesn't want to be a machine. The only person who has been genuinely friendly to Kaneko is Kadaoka Takeshi and she would like to spend more time with him.

Mamoru Taro

Taro is tall with short cropped black hair and brown eyes that always stare intently. When not in the school uniform, he wears a black shirt and slacks.

Asayama Kazu couldn't deny his granddaughter's request to go to a normal school, but he feared for Kaneko's safety. Knowing that she would never accept a bodyguard, he arranged for a covert Android to be enrolled in her class to protect her.

Mamoru Taro

Attributes

Physique	• Superb
Mind	• Fair
Willpower	• Good
Cool	• Mediocre
Appearance	• Good

Gifts

Immortal (the cyborg body can live forever)
Night Vision
Pain Tolerant
Poison Resistance (contact poisons don't work on Taro; other poisons have decreased efficiency)
Quick Reflexes

Faults

Commands (Taro must obey any orders Kaneko gives him literally)
Owes-Favor (every day Taro reports Kaneko's activities to her grandfather)
No Healing (can't heal damage; must be repaired)
Secret (doesn't want anyone but Takahashi Kenji to know that he is an Android bodyguard for Kaneko)
Shyness (social skills are not part of his programming)
Vow (has sworn to protect Kaneko with his own existence)

Skills

Acrobatics	• Great
Computers	• Good
Jumping	• Great
Martial Arts	• Good
Perception	• Good
Running	• Great
Shadowing	• Good
Stealth	• Fair
Throwing	• Great

Mamoru Taro is that Android. Asayama Kazu gave him specific instructions to protect Kaneko, but not to interfere with her life. He must also obey any orders from Kaneko, and can't argue with her.

One time in need or repairs, after throwing himself in front of car Kaneko hadn't noticed, Taro was forced to confide his secret with Takahashi Kenji. He's watched Neko interacted with Kenji, and realized that Androids are more than simple tools. Taro found the thought that he wasn't just a machine himself disquieting.

Recently Taro has felt the need to be near to Kaneko, but can't overcome his orders not to interfere with her. Thus he is constantly nearby, but flees if she confronts him. He considers both Yasu Reiko and Kadaoka Takeshi security risks and tries to be present when they are with Kaneko. He is particularly resentful of Takeshi, and is waiting for an excuse to use force.

Deep down Taro knows he has fallen in love with Kaneko, but refuses to admit that he is capable on any emotion.

Yasu Reiko

Reiko is a slender, well-muscled girl almost completely devoid of feminine features. Her bleach blond hair is cropped to shoulder length and she often wears a sweat band to keep her bangs out of her face. She wears the blouse and skirt uniform to school, but prefers jeans and a t-shirt.

Reiko was never the smartest or the prettiest girl in class, but she has always been the best athlete. That was until this year when Asayama Kaneko transferred. Kaneko nonchalantly bests her in every competition without breaking a sweat. Inner fires have awoken in Reiko that she hasn't felt since fighting grade school bullies. She will defeat Kaneko on the athletic field even if it kills one of them.

Yasu Reiko

Attributes

Physique	• Great
Mind	• Mediocre
Willpower	• Great
Cool	• Good
Appearance	• Fair

Gifts

Perfect Timing
Perfect Balance

Faults

Over-Confident (athletics)
Gender Bender

Skills

Acrobatics	• Great
Brawling	• Fair
Fashion Sense (male)	• Fair
Gossip	• Fair
History	• Mediocre
Intimidate	• Great
Jumping	• Great
Literature	• Fair
Persuasion	• Fair
Running	• Superb
Shopping	• Fair
Singing	• Fair
Soccer	• Good
Swimming	• Fair
Throwing	• Great

As part of her training, Reiko jogs to school every morning. Her neighbor and classmate, Kadaoka Takeshi rides his bike with her and carries her change of cloths. After being particularly humiliated by the day before, Reiko once ran the distance so quickly that both she and Takeshi collapsed upon reaching the school. Some students saw them lying on the ground together, sweating and panting. In no time the rumor mill had turned "lying on the ground together, sweating and panting" into "caught making out."

Reiko doesn't let the rumor bother her. Takeshi has always been her only true friend, but he's more like a brother. However the though of loosing him, especially to Kaneko is unbearable. Reiko and Takeshi study at a restaurant called the Bread Box with Takahashi Kenji. Kenji is the only thing keeping Reiko from failing school, but she can't stand his Garage Android Neko. Neko's ultra feminine body and mannerisms are a painful reminder to Reiko that she's a hopeless tomboy. Reiko doesn't like Mamoru Taro because every time she tries to confront Kaneko, he interferes. Like most girls at Hanagawa, Reiko has a crush on Aoi Kuno, the Japanese Literature and History teacher, but she doesn't expect anything to come of it.

Kadaoka Takeshi

Takeshi is Mr. Normal. His height, weight, and hair length are all average. The family cat, Chocolate, sleeps on his bed with him. He gets decent grades and has no sever mental problems.

For as long as he can remember, Takeshi has been in love with the girl next door. Reiko, the rough and tumble tomboy who could always keep up with the boys, was his favorite childhood companion. About the time that boys and girls stopped playing together, he began to appreciate the subtle femininity Reiko's body.

Takeshi was happy when he ended up in the same class as Reiko this year. He agreed to ride his

Kadaoka Takeshi

Attributes

Physique	• Good
Mind	• Good
Willpower	• Fair
Cool	• Good
Appearance	• Good

Gifts

Common Sense (doesn't prevent bad decisions, especially when Reiko is involved, but gives foresight)
Good Reputation
Rapid Healing
Sense of Empathy

Faults

Nose Bleeder (especially around Reiko)
Unlucky

Skills

Animal Care	• Good
Computers	• Fair
Dancing (Modern)	• Fair
Fashion Sense (Normal)	• Good
Folklore	• Fair
Geography	• Good
Gossip	• Fair
Oratory	• Good
Shopping	• Fair
Singing	• Good
Sports (Baseball)	• Good
Swimming	• Good

bike with her while she jogged to school because he thought it would give him a chance to tell her how he feels. Unfortunately he's had to peddle too hard to keep up. He's deeply embarrassed by the rumor that he and Reiko were making love at school. He also knows that carrying Reiko's bag with her change of clothes (bra and panties included) is another rumor disaster waiting to happen, but he can't say no to her.

Most days after school Takeshi can be found studying at The Bread Box with Reiko and Takahashi Kenji. He finds Kenji's Garage Android, Neko, is strange, but is polite enough not the say anything in front of her or Takahashi Kenji. Mamoru Taro seems to be in love with Asayama Kaneko (why else would he have thrown himself between Kaneko and an oncoming car), so Takeshi tries not to interfere. However Kaneko needs friends and Takeshi would like to be one.

Minor Characters

Akaibara Eimi: The Homeroom and English teacher, she normally speaks perfect Japanese, but when startled or upset, will slip into an Okinawa (backwater) accent. Eimi loathes all Cyborgs and Androids. She had been engaged to an American Soldier while she was in college, they were going to get married when his tour of duty ended. He was in an accident, and ended up have several body parts replaced. The cyberware changed him: he became more aggressive, and craved more powerful cyberware. Last time she saw him, she barely recognized the mechanical construction as her fiancée. His tour of duty was over, but rather than marrying her, he told Eimi that he had joined a mercenary team, and after he had made enough money to support her, he'd come back. He never came back.

Aoi Kuno: This heart throb of Hanagawa teaches Japanese Literature and History. He turns down offers from all the women who approach him and harbors a secret: He's in love with an Android. Ronri was the receptionist at the firm where he used to work. Kuno had flirted with her, even though she was obviously an Android. One day he couldn't stand it any longer and kissed her. His boss walked in on them. Kuno quit the company in disgrace and bought Ronri. He keeps Ronri shut up in his apartment to hide his scandal, but sometimes late at night, he'll take her out walking or dancing in a neighborhood where no one knows him.

Asayama Kazu: Kaneko's grandfather and Mamoru Taro's owner. Kazu is a family man and a business man. If you're family, he'd crawl on his belly across broken glass for you. If you're not family, he'd ruin your life if he thought he could make 10 Yen (about 9 cents).

Obaasan (Grandmother): This is the old woman who owns The Bread Box, a bakery and restaurant where the student go after school to study. They can order hot tea and several types of homemade confectioneries. Obaasan is nearsighted and slightly senile, so she always mistakes Androids for humans. She seems to think Neko is a real cat.

Tanaka Sanichiro: The most fun students have in Tanaka Sensei's math class is betting who will fall asleep first. Sanichiro knows enough about Androids to convince most people he's an expert, but not enough impress anyone who understands Androids. He built two Garage Androids just to say he had, but turned them off when they started to annoy him. He believes Androids are nothing more than tools to be used. He will never address an Android directly, except to give it a command. He ordered Takahashi Kenji to not bring Neko to school again after he caught her making faces at one of his students, but she convinced him to let her stay. He's regretted the decision ever since, but can't change it without admitting that he was sweet-talked by a machine.

Chapter 14:

Sample Characters

Keiko Nomura – Office Lady and Metaman Pink

Keiko is a twenty-three year old Sales Associate at Instant Construction and Heavy Industries LTD. Keiko's job is mindless drudgery and her talents as a computer coder are wasted. The bosses are obnoxious bores who only criticize her work or make passes. It's enough to make a girl want to go out and blow something up. Good thing Keiko's taken a night job.

At night, Keiko is a member of the Metaman Troopers, a team of skilled warriors who battle the Cobalt Concern's evil forces. The Cobalt Concern's hordes of robotic assassins would be a match for a small army. Fortunately, Keiko's got her heavily armed Pink Metasuit and four teammates. It's a fair fight.

Keiko is the newest member of the Metaman Troopers. When her parents were killed in a mysterious railway accident, Keiko was not willing to accept the official explanation. While investigating her parents' death, Keiko met Dr. Gilbert, inventive genius and founder of the Metaman Troopers. Dr. Gilbert believes that the Cobalt Concern is responsible for the accident

Keiko Nomura – Office Lady and Metaman Pink

Attributes

Physique	• Good
Mind	• Great
Willpower	• Good
Cool	• Good
Appearance	• Good

Gifts

Membership (Metaman Troopers)
Quick Reflexes
Ambidextrous
Sense of Empathy

Faults

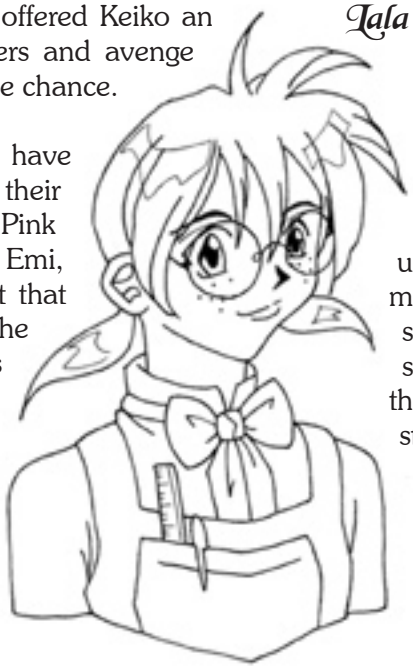
Duty (Metaman Troopers)
Curious
Dependent (Kid brother Senji)
Glutton
Secret Identity (Metaman Pink)

Skills

Computers	• Superb
Research	• Good
Electronics	• Good
Cooking	• Good
Dancing (Modern)	• Fair
Demolitions	• Fair
Piloting Metasuit	• Fair
Martial Arts	• Good
Guns	• Poor
Shopping	• Good
Language (English)	• Good
Haggle	• Fair
Lore (Corporate Procedures)	• Fair
Jumping	• Fair
Driving	• Fair
Lore (Accounting)	• Mediocre

that killed Keiko's parents. He offered Keiko an opportunity to join the Troopers and avenge her parents. Keiko jumped at the chance.

The other Troopers have hesitantly received Keiko into their ranks. The former Metaman Pink was Dr. Gilbert's daughter Emi, who was killed in the accident that claimed Keiko's parents. In the other Troopers' eyes, Keiko has not proven herself worthy of piloting Emi's mecha. Keiko is doing her best to be accepted by the other Troopers, but it's an uphill battle.



Lala – Girl Genius!

Lala is a typical ten-year-old girl with big brown eyes, freckled face, and ponytails. She's as cute as a button in her horn-rimmed glasses and "big girl's" high school uniform. No, Lala's not some cosplay maniac, she's been promoted from sixth grade to the second year of high school. Lala's promotion came about through her natural brilliance and a strange conjunction of the wrong map, the wrong test, and a school administration that was desperate not to give offense. Because of her insatiable curiosity, quick wit, and amazingly retentive memory, Lala

Lala – Girl Genius!

Attributes

Physique	• Mediocre
Mind	• Superb
Willpower	• Good
Cool	• Fair
Appearance	• Great

Gifts

Good Memory
Really Supportive Parents

Faults

Young
Nearsighted
Curious

Skills

Running	• Fair
Throwing	• Fair
Electronics	• Good
Stealth	• Fair
History (Japanese)	• Great
Literature (Japanese)	• Good
Language (English)	• Fair
Language (French)	• Fair
Language (Chinese)	• Fair
Research	• Good
Computers	• Good
Musical Instrument (Violin)	• Good
Geography	• Fair
Science (Chemistry)	• Good
Science (Physics)	• Good
Science (Biology)	• Good
Mathematics	• Great
Lore (Collectible Card Games)	• Fair

is having no difficulties with the academic demands of high school life.

Lala's social life, on the other hand, is a complete mess. On those rare occasions when Lala has a chance to interact with kids of her own age, she has trouble relating to their simple pastimes. Lala is desperately trying to find acceptance amongst her classmates. She constantly tries to hang out with the most popular kids in class, male and female, hoping that some of their glamour will rub off on her. The other students like the adorable Lala-chan, but can quickly get annoyed with having a "kid sister" tagging along at inappropriate times and asking embarrassing questions.

Lala's parents are a normal middle-class couple. Although they've known Lala was special from the day she was born, they are often baffled by their daughter's genius. They truly want the best for their little girl and strive to provide it for her

Ichiro Gyozu (Hyaku-San)

Ichiro is, in a word, stunning. He has dark, short-cut hair, a sculpted face, and a body that would make even the most conservative girl twinge with desire. He is always impeccably dressed, his usual stage attire being a blue head band, black designer shirt and jeans, slick boots, and a black trench-coat with "Hyaku-San" (Mr. One-Hundred) written in bulbous blue English letters and Kanji.

From the day he performed in a second grade play, everyone knew Ichiro was going to be a star. Already terribly smooth and cute, his talent for singing, dancing, and working a crowd only heightened his parent's resolve to make him famous. They took him out of school, and put him with voice teachers, choreographers, and agents, making him the best performer they possibly could. It didn't take much.

Now, Hyaku-San, as his stage name goes, is number on international music charts. His hits "Spice in the Wine" and "Snowflakes and Raindrops, like Love" have been translated into French, English, Chinese and Spanish. And in

Ichiro Gyozu (Hyaku-San)

Attributes

Physique	• Good
Mind	• Good
Willpower	• Fair
Cool	• Great
Appearance	• Great

Skills

Singing	• Superb
Dancing	• Superb
Academics	• Terrible
Fast Talk	• Great
Seduction	• Great

Gifts

Sense of Style
Idol Singer

Faults

Famous
Uneducated
Ashamed

Japan, all six of his CDs sell out regularly at local music stores. Part of the appeal to the young star is that he writes his own songs, and designs his own dance routines. Everyone who works with him says he is simply a pleasure to be with, and he quietly refrains from performing the usual decadent relations with groupies like so many other teen stars do.

However, Ichiro is a troubled soul. When his career first started to take off two years ago, when he was fifteen, he was everything you expect a pampered star to be: spoiled, rude and contemptuous. He refused to see tutors and the like, preferring the company of his many fans and groupie girlfriends.

However, one day after a concert, outside was a girl who wasn't from the usual crowd of adoring fans he was used to. She was a reporter for the local High-School newspaper, and simply wanted to ask him some questions. She was bright, funny, cute, strong-willed, and Ichiro was simply in love.

Eventually he had to go, but he sent her letter after letter, proclaiming his love of her and his desire to be near her again. He counted the days until the tour took him back to her town, and finally he arrived and sought her out, knowing for sure his witty charm and good looks would sweep her off her feet.

When he found her, and asked if she got the letters he sent, all she could do was giggle. "That was you?" she asked amusedly, "I thought you had a kid brother and he had a crush on me!" Confused, Ichiro

demanded to know what she meant and she showed him.

For the first time, he saw what she meant: his letter looked like they had been done by a first-grader. In places where the scrawling handwriting could even be read, there were terrible syntax and grammar errors. And if this weren't enough, his love pointed out the places where he had misquoted, misread, or misinterpreted several historical or literary tidbits that he had inserted to woo her. "I mean, c'mon! 'If I were but a frog on the hand?' Give me a break!" Poor, poor Ichiro was crestfallen.

Ichiro's early release from school, coupled with a subtle learning disorder, gives him the educational equivalent of a third grade education. He is deeply shamed by this fact. Upon interrogating his staff as to their knowledge, they had always known, and laughed behind his back about his bragging of his own intelligence (Like he bragged about everything else). Ichiro decided it was time for a change.

A contract he had signed has him in concerts for years to come, but he fired all his staff and replaced them with new ones who had never known him. He changed his ways, becoming much more soft-spoken and humble around them. Late at night, on the bus or plane or in the hotel room, he crouches over elementary school readers and textbooks, trying desperately to catch up.

Ichiro knows that he should probably just quit the music business and dedicate himself to his studies, but he is still too prideful to go back to school. Also, singing and dancing are the only two things Ichiro feels good about or good at. If he didn't have them, he would just be another way below average student out in the boondocks. He just can't take that.

Miyako Hitoshi

The girl next door in a uniform. Miyako has brown eyes and fiery red hair that tumbles halfway down her back when she removes her motorcycle helmet. She wears her uniform on duty (Which shows off her curves in just such a way), and tends toward loose sweat suits when off.

Miyako Hitoshi

Attributes

Physique	• Good
Mind	• Good
Willpower	• Good
Cool	• Good
Appearance	• Good

Gifts

Green Thumb
Commanding Presence

Faults

Famous
Jealous
On Duty Most of the Time

Skills

Motorcycle	• Good
Police Work	• Good
Attack (Police Shield)	• Good
Interrogation	• Good
Intimidate	• Good
Military Lore	• Great
Attack (Pistol)	• Poor
Gardening	• Fair
Singing	• Great

Miyako's big sister Sakura might as well have been a goddess to her. Anything Sakura did, Miyako wanted to do, whether it was play with dolls, dress up or flirt with boys. If Sakura did it, Miyako immediately saw the benefits of such an activity, and considered it the only thing worthwhile until Sakura changed her mind. Sakura, for her part, decided that imitation was the most sincere form of flattery, and tolerated it with mountains of patience.

This trend continued on for years, all the way through Sakura's senior year (Miyako was still in middle school), when she decided she was going to go into the Officers' Program for the Japanese Self Defense Force. Instantly, Miyako thought this was simply a fantastic idea (Although she was more than heartbroken to see her sister go), and vowed that she would enter the Officers' Program just like her sister.

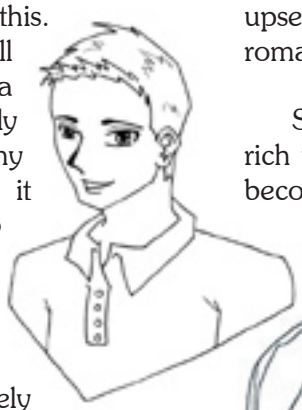
Unfortunately, Miyako, while bright, was never the student Sakura was. She maintained decent grades through all her years, and even got into one of the most prestigious schools in the city. However, in the end, she simply did not have the qualifications to get into the Officers' Program.

Instead, she decided to join the police force, so as to better prepare her for when the Program came to its senses. Quickly she went through the ranks, achieving a sergeant's rank and a motorcycle beat (Which she loved). Every year she submitted a new application for the Officers' Program, and every year it has come back negative. This has gone on for six years (She is now 24).

Despite her high rank and many citations, Miyako is a real headache for her chief. She is always on the lookout for the case that will bring her to the attention of the JSDF, and so is something of a loose cannon. Nevertheless, she gets results and she is a real joy to have around with her smiles and laugh.

Miyako has had few romantic entanglements. A few boyfriends in school, along with one after she received her police job, a private detective she crossed paths with during an investigation. She dumped him pretty quick, right after she showed him her collection of letters Sakura sent her while in the Defense Force, of all the interesting things she's doing. Her beau questioned the mental health of such an obsession, and was kicked to the curb.

However, unbeknownst to poor Miyako, there is a great deal of truth to this. Miyako was always jealous of all the attention and praise Sakura received, (Sakura unknowingly stole the affections of many boys who had originally had it for Miyako,) and so decided to imitate her. In doing so, not only did she lose a great deal of her own identity, but fostered within her a terrible self-defeating resentment. This resentment rarely surfaces (Usually only while she is drunk), but a hard look at her Officers' applications would definitely reveal a few errors that seem almost intentional.



There is one thing that Miyako loves that Sakura never had, besides police work: gardening. In a small flower box outside her apartment window, she grows whatever the season permits. When she is tending to her little garden (Which grows a variety of cooking herbs as well as beautiful flowers) is the only time you can ever hear her sing.

Sanatome Ikuga & Iritoshiko Tonshu

Words describing Sanatome's appearance would probably be "recreational athlete": he's fit, with rugged good lucks and a blond crew cut. Some might consider him a jock, but his kind eyes and ready smile don't let anyone hold that against him.

Iritoshiko (A "ko" was added to his name because he thought is sounded more natural) is incredibly beautiful, and we mean beautiful. His slight build, pale skin, long golden hair and blue eyes, combined with his general posturing and mannerisms cause many to mistake him for a female. This misconception is quickly tossed aside by his deep baritone voice. He is well spoken and articulate, and always smiles at you unless truly upset. Many (even straight guys) feel an instant romantic attraction.

Sanatome was born into the stereotypical rich family. He was the son, so it was his job to become one of the leading shakers of the pillars of the financial world. However, his parents were just a little batty, and wanted him to have the appearance of a "successful man." How they accomplished this was by rolling together every stereotype of success together and have him live through it. He went to business school, military school, and music school. He was made to dabble in politics and agriculture, stock brokering and manufacturing, and a host of other trades without ever becoming much more than a dilettante. Sanatome never really minded; he always had things to do, and he could go play baseball and soccer whenever he felt like it, and read poetry as he had always loved. He never even wondered why he was going through medical school until Iritoshiko asked him.

Iritoshiko was the story every orphanage wants hanging on their wall: downtrodden, but extremely bright kid who, though he was never adopted, was an excellent student. He entered

college early, and gained the respect of many of his professors in his language mastery and writing ability. As soon as he earned his degree in Literature, however, he broke all their hearts saying he was going to go off to write soap opera scripts.

Iritoshiko was a patient at the university hospital, and was put into Sanatome's care as part of his education. Iritoshiko had a body wracked by illness and weakness of immunity, but that didn't stop him from utilizing his brilliant mind. The two of them talked about poetry, and life, their lives, and other things that people talk about when they really hit it off. Soon they became friends and then more than friends, and finally Iritoshiko asked Sanatome to come with him to live in Tokyo and write soap opera stories with him.

Sanatome was shocked. Though he was deeply in love with Iritoshiko, and wanted to

Sanatome Ikuga

Attributes

Physique	• Good
Mind	• Good
Willpower	• Fair
Cool	• Fair
Appearance	• Good

Skills

Lore (Finances)	• Fair
Etiquette	• Good
Writing	• Good
Lore (Poetry)	• Good
Athletics	• Fair
Musical Instrument (Harp)	• Good

Gifts

Excellent Stenographer
Well Rounded

Faults

Disowned by family

Iritoshiko Tonshu

Attributes

Physique	• Poor
Mind	• Great
Willpower	• Good
Cool	• Good
Appearance	• Superb

Skills

Language (Latin)	• Great
Language (Greek)	• Great
Language (French)	• Great
Language (Sanskrit)	• Great
Academics	• Superb
Writing	• Great
Fast Talk	• Great

Gifts

Bishoujo
Bishounen

Faults

Weak Constitution

be with him, leaving his parents security was a big change. Not to mention that Sanatome had no experience in the field. However, as the long medical school days dragged on, Sanatome realized that his life was being led for him, and that Iritoshiko had shown him what he was missing. And so, as soon as Iritoshiko checked out, Sanatome dropped out, and they headed for Tokyo.

Life at first was hard. The couple made ends meet on what was left of Iritoshiko's scholarship money, and Sanatome's stipend until they finally landed a gig at a soap opera convention, and were given a chance to write a script for a popular Japanese soap.

Iritoshiko laid on the bed dictating while Sanatome typed and edited. They discussed characters, argued plots, and together wrote a script that would catapult the two of them into a three year contract, and the show into the number one most watched show on any channel. The pair couldn't be happier.

Well, that isn't true. Sanatome wishes private detectives would stop "tracking him down" and try to bring him home. And Iritoshiko still gets letters from colleges begging him to come back and teach, as well as love letters from girls who imagined that he was their boyfriend. And of course, not a day goes by where Sanatome doesn't agonize about Iritoshiko's health. He's always worried that Iritoshiko will overexert himself and become terminally ill. Iritoshiko always says that he's fine (And from the nights where Iritoshiko is feeling the least bit better, overexertion is not a problem), but the thought always lingers in Sanatome's mind…

Jukiro Hana & Ariko Hana

Jukiro and Ariko were born in Osaka to two very loving college professors. They often left their children with a babysitter while they went to guest lecture in another city somewhere in the world. On one such trip, their plane crashed, and in an instant Jukiro (Age 8) and Ariko (Age 4) were orphans. Escaping the well-meaning social service workers, the two children escaped into the Japanese countryside, where they wandered for two years, going from city to city, seeking temporary shelter and scraping for food.

After a while, they came to Tokyo, and met a kindly old Shinto Priestess named Keiko Dohaku, who took them in, fed them, and eventually adopted them. They have lived at the temple for nine years.

Jukiro stands at average build for a nineteen-year-old, with brown eyes and a ready smile. His most noticeable (some would say best) feature is his hair: dark violet, with long bangs in front, and a low ponytail down to his shoulder blades. He is most commonly found in his temple robes (A dogi and a hakama) when sweeping or manning the souvenir counter, and will wear simple jeans, t-shirt and a denim jacket when out on the town.

It was Jukiro's idea to run away from the social workers, and it was Jukiro who led his little sister all over Japan. He, unlike his sister, clearly remembers the cold nights in the rain, or running franticly from gangs or sexual predators. He is beyond grateful to Keiko for what she has done for them, and shows his gratitude by eschewing college in favor of taking over the temple duties while she is away, and preparing to take over the temple completely when she is gone.

Many of the students of Sendai Academy (Which he graduated from) come to Jukiro for advice on everything from love to schoolwork to troubles at home. He is known for his cool head and logical ability to solve any problem.

The only thing that really gets to him is his sister, Ariko. He does not like how she hangs out with the hot-rod gangs and neglects her position at the temple. The only time you really see him angry is when she makes a flippant comment to him, or when someone tries to threaten her. Jukiro loves his sister more than anything in the world, and he would fight and die for her without a moment's hesitation.

As far as anyone can tell, Jukiro has never had any romantic relations (Though more than a few girls have expressed interest). He does, however, have one true love: soccer. At first, Keiko scolded him about missing his prayers to practice soccer, but he was too busy practicing to hear her. Soon she gave up, and now whenever he isn't sweeping or performing other necessary tasks for the temple, he breaks out the soccer ball and imagines himself at the Tokyo World Cup.

It was during one of his frequent practice sessions that he met Hiroshi. Despondent with love for Chiharu, Hiroshi passed by the Nine Silent Rivers Temple. Jukiro, in an unusual display of botched ball control (And an all too common display of destiny) accidentally sent the ball sailing toward Hiroshi, who expertly bounced it off his chest, and sent it right back at the surprised temple worker. After a game of one-on-one that lasted until sunset, Hiroshi and Jukiro were fast friends.

Jukiro does his best to counsel the poor lovesick Hiroshi as to what to do about Chiharu, but even he is at a loss. Nevertheless, Jukiro is always there for Hiroshi, whether for advice, for consolation, or a heated soccer battle.

Ariko is perhaps a little short for a fifteen-year-old, but she makes up for it in "development." She has short violet hair with two long bangs hanging down the front, in front of two searing blue eyes and a mouth almost always in a snarl. She wears dirty, oil stained leather pants and jacket, with a white t-shirt. Around her arm are the colors of her gang, the Bullet Tremors.

Ariko has very little conscious memory of the time she and Jukiro spent wandering all over Japan. When he

tries to remind her of cold nights and empty stomachs, she just shouts and turns away, insisting that it couldn't have been that bad. In truth, it scarred her deeper than she is willing to admit: it takes almost nothing to set her on a rampage, and almost nothing can stop her after that.

She tried to get into temple life, but she just couldn't seem to focus her mind, and the calm, condescending tone of her adopted grandmother set her teeth on edge (She loves her grandmother deeply, but is too tough to show it). Instead, she took to the streets and quickly joined up with one of the numerous hot-rod gangs operating discreetly in the city. She quickly earned the nickname Ohanabi (Fireworks) from her new family, and proceeded to wreak havoc on anyone who got in the way of her custom Chinese bike (Which she drives without a license, by the way).

She and her brother argue very, very often. He wants her to join the temple and be thankful for their new home, and she wants him to be a man and hit the road again. However, despite the heated, almost violent wordplays, the two are much closer than any outsider could imagine. There are many times when Jukiro has been there for her when her gang couldn't, and she makes sure that no other gang harasses Jukiro or the temple.

Ariko has some training as a Shinto Priestess, although she never went as far with it as her brother did. She was never good at meditating, her chores were slapdash, and her blessings seemed to scare away the "blessed." However, there is one part of the job she is almost frighteningly good at: fire readings. Ariko is immensely intuitive, and could be a fortune-teller if she wasn't so angry all the time. Many times she has insights for the future that are uncanny, but when she focuses her intuition into a Fire Reading, she becomes nearly pinpoint accurate. Truth be told, she rarely does such focused work. She may be rejecting it

as she rejects most everything else, or she may be scared of her own ability. Or future.

She receives similar "feelings" and "vibes" from people, albeit rarely. Recently, one of her fellow students (If they could be considered fellows; Ariko is enrolled in Sendai, but rarely attends): a nerdy foreign exchange student named Richard. She is not quite sure why, but her special sense is starts tugging whenever she sees him. One thing she knows for absolutely certain: she does not like him. She has her pick of tough ganger guys, all of who are more suited to her lifestyle than a nerdy gaijin. So a love connection is silly to the point of absurdity! Right?

Jukiro Hana

Attributes

Physique	• Fair
Mind	• Good
Willpower	• Great
Cool	• Mediocre
Appearance	• Good

Gifts

Easy To Talk To
Tough
Loyal To The End

Faults

Easily Excitable
Annoyed With Ariko

Skills

Meditation (Prayer)	• Good
Soccer	• Good
Urban Survival	• Great
Urban Tracking	• Good
Hiding	• Great
Weapon (Broom)	• Fair
Haggle	• Fair
Gang Lore	• Fair
Fast Talk	• Good
Lore (Shinto)	• Superb

Ariko Hana

Attributes

Physique	• Fair
Mind	• Fair
Willpower	• Great
Cool	• Mediocre
Appearance	• Good

Gifts

Tough as Nails
Gang to Back Her Up
Fire Reader

Faults

Hair Trigger Temper
Impulsive
Argumentative (moreso with Juriko)

Skills

Acrobatics	• Fair
Gang Lore	• Great
Driving (Motor Cycle)	• Great
Switchblade	• Good
Sneaking	• Good
Lore (Shinto)	• Mediocre
Fire Reading	• Great
Seduction	• Good
Fast-Talk	• Fair
Meditation	• Terrible
Hiding	• Fair
Intimidation	• Good

Summer Dryad

Daniel Flores (North American version) is one of four people chosen to defend the natural world: The Fairy Defenders. Fairy Queen Lurline chose him for his closeness to trees. He's a student at Maxfield High School, although he's not very popular due to his effeminate nature. He is involved in the school martial arts club, practicing the arts of Tai Chi.

Daniel is very talented in many things artful; however, all those arts seem to be geared more toward girls than boys. He always has identified with females, and has wished from a young age to be a girl himself.

As Summer Dryad, Daniel is a very beautiful young lady, wrapped in brown gauze and slender and well toned. She is everything Daniel dreamed of being. She revels in being a hero, especially a female one. She is agile and very fast, and tuned into the trees and animals around her.

Summer Dryad

Attributes

Physique	• Mediocre
Mind	• Great
Willpower	• Good
Cool	• Fair
Appearance	• Great

Gifts

Magical Girl
Quick Reflexes
Sense of Empathy
Lucky
Animal Empathy
Extra Power
Schtick (wind rustles clothes when he/she strikes a pose)

Supernormal Powers

Leaf Sting – Attack
Great (takes the form of a flurry of razor-sharp leaves)
Sap Entrap – Attack
Fair (creates potent sap to entrap enemies, does no damage –1)
Quick – Enhance
Fair (+6 to speed and initiative)
Bark Armor – Protect (Self)
Mediocre (when called, tree bark grows over her skin)
Animal Speech – Communicate
Mediocre

Faults

Secret Identity
Secret (Transgender)
No Self Confidence (-2 to social rolls unless in magical form)
Effeminate
Easily Distracted (buying women's clothes)
Marked (leaf-shaped tattoos on forehead and arms in magical form)

Skills

Dancing (Ballroom)	• Good
Dancing (Modern)	• Good
Acrobatics	• Superb
Climbing	• Fair
Driving	• Mediocre
Swimming	• Good
Running	• Fair
Martial Arts (Tai Chi)	• Good
Stealth	• Fair
Fashion Sense	• Good
Seduction	• Good
Flower Arrangement	• Great

However, it is becoming harder and harder for Summer Dryad to transform back to Daniel. He's coming to feel that the woman he is when Summer Dryad is what he was meant to be. Someday, she might not change back…

Drui

Drui was to be the pride of her family. An only child, she was born into a family of wealth and status. Too bad she decided to study magic behind her parents' backs.

Drui was fascinated with nature, and studied under a priestess of nature. She came to know the ways of animals and the earth, and how to use them as an extension of herself. Unfortunately, her propensity to wander led her to leave her teacher to see other lands and peoples.

She's still a beginner, but she feels that time and experience will boost her ability in what little she does have.

Drui

Attributes

Physique	• Mediocre
Mind	• Great
Willpower	• Good
Cool	• Fair
Appearance	• Great

Gifts

Nature Cleric
Keen Senses
Ambidextrous
Perfect Balance

Supernormal Powers

Earth
  Mediocre
Wood
  Good
Beast
  Fair
Magic
  Mediocre

Faults

Quixotic
Curious

Skills

Painting	• Good
Climbing	• Great
Swordsmanship	• Superb
Animal Care	• Great
Cooking	• Fair
Cultures (Elven)	• Fair
Doctor	• Fair
Stealth	• Mediocre
Dancing	• Good
Flower Arrangement	• Good

Chapter 15:

Bibliography

Here is a listing of some shoujo and shoujo-related titles that should give you some inspiration for your games. We have separated them by category to help you match the genre you're looking for.

Fantastic Adventures

Alice the 19th
(Manga: Viz)

The new manga from the creator of Fushigi Yuugi. A girl's wish for power has terrible consequences for her sister, and now she has to use her new magical abilities to go after her and rescue her from a horrible fate.

Fushigi Yuugi
(Video: Pioneer. Manga: Viz)

Two girls from Tokyo are transported to ancient China and find themselves on opposite sides of a war as the living spokeswomen of rival gods. This is the series that introduced serious shoujo adventure to the US.

Magic Knights Rayearth
(Video: Media Blasters.
Manga: Tokyopop)

Three schoolgirls are summoned to a fantasy world where they must save it from destruction by rescuing its "pillar", Princess Emeraude, with their newfound magical powers. A masterwork from CLAMP.

Princess Knight
(Status Unknown)

Osamu Tezuka's masterpiece about a princess raised as a boy who must fight for the throne and the heart of her true love. The manga first appeared in 1955, and it is the inspiration for many of the shoujo series that followed. If you ever get the chance to read this book, do it.

Revolutionary Girl Utena
(Video: Central Park Media.
Manga: Viz)

At an exclusive private school, the Student Council is a secret society of fencers who duel for the Rose Bride and the fate of the world. When a young girl who believes she is a "prince" forces her way into the game, everything changes. Well worth getting – the movie is a Matrix-level mind-twist.

Scrapped Princess
(Status Unknown)

In a fantasy world, a prophecy says that a princess will be born who, unless killed, will destroy the world on her sixteenth birthday. This is her story – the story of an essentially good person caught on the horns of an impossible moral dilemma; if her very existence threatens everything that lives, whether she wants it to or not, what can she do?

Starship Girl Yamamoto Yokho (Video: The Right Stuff)

High school girls from the 1990's are whisked forward into the future to pilot massive space battleships for sport and profit. Proof that a team of heroines doesn't always need to get along.

Vision of Escaflowne (Video: Bandai)

A girl who can see the future arrives on another world – just in time for an apocalyptic war in which her visions will play a vital part. Dark and frightening, but also romantic and sweeping in scope.

Idol Singers

Shows about idol singers and other celebrities.

Creamy Mami (Status Unknown)

One of the originators of the genre of shows in which preteen girls use magic to transform into older girls who become enormously popular idol singers. Like the crepes from which the heroine gets her name, it's sweet in the extreme.

Fancy Lala (Video: Bandai)

A newer show in the little-girl-becomes-teenage-idol genre, with a somewhat more realistic approach to the idol business.

Full Moon wo Sagashite (Status Unknown)

A young girl with inoperavble throat cancer has the improbable dream of becoming a singer. When two "angels of death" inform her she has a year to live, she decides to 'go for it" and with their help becomes a popular idol. A comic magic idol show with tragic overtones.

I'll Make a Habit of It (Status Unknown)

This show defies description, but here goes: a teenage martial artist becomes an idol singer, poses as a boy so she can go to a tough school, and meets the boy of her dreams while disguised as a guy. From there it gets weird; even though the central plot element is essentially resolved in the second episode, the series just keeps getting stranger and stranger. Some call is "the shoujo Ranma"; others call it "The Idol show for people who hate Idol shows". Momoko the rival idol is one of the most bizarre characters in anime.

Kodacha: Sana's Stage (Manga: Tokyopop)

An 11-year-old TV star goes through life in her wacky, hyperactive way only to discover that first love isn't all it's cracked up to be. The TV series is in serious need of tranquilizers, but is hilarious and enormously popular in fannish circles.

Magical Girls

Card Captor Sakura (Video: Pioneer; Manga: Tokyopop)

A 10-year-old girl accidentally (?) releases the contents of a book of magical cards and now must get them all back, with only a plushie-looking guardian and her obsessive best friend to aid her. This show has one of the most ardent fandoms in anime. Get the real series, not Cardcaptors dub, and be amazed at all CLAMP can do to the magic girl genre.

Corrector Yui
(Manga: Tokyopop)

A girl who is terrible with computers finds out that she is the defender of virtual reality. Even though most of the fighting takes place in VR, Yui qualifies as a magic girl everywhere it counts.

Jubei-chan the Ninja Girl
(Video: Bandai)

A young girl reluctantly inherits the powers of a legendary swordfighter and immediately becomes the target of assassins in this satirical blend of samurai action and magical girls.

Kamikaze Kaitou Jeanne
(Status Unknown)

A lone thief, aided only by her angelic guardian, struggles to seal demons that threaten the world while being hunted by the police and haunted by a handsome rival. A dark but exciting take on the magic-thief genre with many surprising twists.

Magical Project S
(Video: Pioneer)

It started out as an in-joke: Sasami (Tenchi Muyo!) as a magical girl. It grew into three OVAs and this TV series, which you could easily dismiss as just another Tenchi sequel. Please don't. Magical Project S is funny, smart, and a darned good show in its own right. Episodes 19 and 20 in particular are spectacularly good.

Man of Many Faces
(Manga: Tokyopop)

A magical boy story about a fourth-grader who leads a double life as legendary burglar "20 Faces. " In the process of committing a spectacular crime, he accidentally ensnares the heart of an even younger girl and thus begins one of CLAMP's sweetest love stories. The hero is also a major character in CLAMP School Detectives.

Miracle Girls
(Manga: Tokyopop)

Twins with psychic powers try to keep their abilities secret while struggling to sort out the pressures of growing up and falling in love. A gem.

Pretear
(Status Unknwon)

A poor girl whose father married into a wealthy, snobbish family encounters seven visitors from another dimension who tell her she must meld with each of them in turn to gain the powers needed to save the world.

Sailor Moon
(Video: Pioneer and AD Vision; Manga: Tokyopop)

When most people mention magical girls, this is what they think of: heroines in very short skirts fighting evil monsters. There is so much more to Sailor Moon than this, of course; Usagi as a heroine is in turns hilarious, sympathetic and compelling. Look out for ADV's release of the uncut first two seasons, and no – Uranus and Neptune are NOT cousins!

Saint Tail
(Video and Manga: Tokyopop)

A junior high school girl uses magic powers to take back things that were wrongfully taken from others, all the while being pursued by a determined classmate. A classic caper show. The final four-episode story arc is amazing.

Tokyo Mew Mew
(Manga: Tokyopop)

All about catgirls who fight evil in present-day Tokyo. Perfect inspiration for a magical girl game in which the characters are not exactly human.

Tonde Buurin
(Status Unknown)

Some magic girls have all the luck; Karin-chan turns into a flying, super-strong pig whenever she needs to use her powers. That she's a CUTE pig does not help at all.

Ultra Maniac
(Status Unknown)

A girl from the Magic Kingdom, living in Tokyo, tries to use her powers to help her best friend. This "help" usually causes much more trouble than the original problem she was trying to address. A very funny series from the creator of Marmalade Boy

Teen Romance

Azumanga Daioh
(Video and Manga: ADV)

The sweet, funny and human stories of six girls going through high school in modern-day Tokyo. One of the funniest mangas and anime series you will ever see – the anime follows the girls through three years of high school from admission to graduation. Everyone, it seems, has a favorite character, from the precocious child prodigy Chiyo to the naïve Osaka to the cool, reserved animal-love Sakaki.

Boys over Flowers
(Manga: Viz)

When a male gang turns its attention to a feisty new girl, she strikes back and makes several surprising discoveries about them and herself. A long-running manga and a very popular anime.

Brother, Dear Brother
(Status Unknown)

A teenager goes to an all-girl boarding school and is caught up in the social and romantic intrigues of a powerful sorority. Very strong and dramatic stuff, with strong doses of lesbianism and drug use. Not for the timid.

Call Me Princess
(Manga: Central Park Media)

A girl wants to be adored just like her sister was and finds that the boys in her life have problems of their own.

His and Her Circumstances
(Video: Right Stuf,
Manga: Tokyopop, as "Kare Kano")

The top girl in her junior high class moves on to high school, where she is shocked to discover there is a handsome boy who is better at everything than she is! She wants to destroy him, but he takes everything in stride and their attitudes begin to change – until he reveals his own secret past. A teen romance series from the producers of Evangelion and FLCL, with many unusual visual stylings.

Kimagure Orange Road
(Video: AnimEigo and ADV)

A boy from a family of ESPers is torn between two girls and discovers that his psychic powers are of no help whatsoever. The finale, done in a

movie, is a classic example of why being in a love triangle is a very bad idea.

Marmalade Boy
(Video and Manga: Tokyopop)

A girl discovers that her parents have decided to switch partners with another couple – permanently! Now a handsome and mysterious boy her age is living in her house and her entire life is thrown into turmoil. Funny, dramatic and maddeningly addictive. Highly recommended for anyone who wants to run a teen romance game.

Mintna Bokura
(Manga: Viz)

From the creator of Marmalade Boy comes this story of a boy who moves to a boarding school to check up on his twin sister. Problem is the only room left is in the girl's dorm, but with a little ingenuity…

Super GALS! Kotobuki Ran
(Video: ADV Films)

The story of a trio of kogals – teenage girls obsessed with fashion, style, and having a good time. Kotobuki Ran chafes under her strict upbringing by police officer parents and rebels at every opportunity – but never takes it too far. An enjoyable, funny romp.

Other Series

Kiko-chan's Smile
(Status Unknown)

Meet a little girl the world isn't ready for! Four-year-old Kiko-chan amazes her parents, wows her friends, and drives her teacher to the verge of a nervous breakdown on a regular basis. A very hard-to-find show but worth the effort.

Vampire Princess Miyu
(OVA Video: AnimEigo,
TV Video: Tokyopop,
Manga: Studio Ironcat)

Just because it's shoujo doesn't mean it's all sweetness and light, as this atmospherically creepy horror series proves. Follow the unaging little girl vampire Miyu as she hunts down and banishes other creatures of the Dark, often leaving a trail of ruined human lives in her wake.

Wish
(Manga: Tokyopop)

An arrogant surgeon rescues an angel who got stuck in a tree. The angel offers to grant him a wish, but the man can't think of anything he wants that he doesn't feel he can get for himself. Both soon discover, in this adult romance from CLAMP, that there are some wishes that cannot be obtained by oneself…

X/1999
(Movie: Manga Entertainment.
TV Series: Pioneer.
Manga: Viz)

The Book of revelations gets the CLAMP treatment in this story of seven Dragons of Heaven dueling seven Dragons of Earth for the fate of the world. With its intensity, deep characterization, and beautiful art, the popularity of this series has extended will beyond 1999.

You're Under Arrest
(Video: AnimEigo.
Manga: Dark Horse)

Policewomen in Tokyo chase bad guys while dealing with their own romantic and professional issues in this comedy from the creator of Ah! My Goddess!. Watch for the movie from ADV in 2002.

Books and References

Antonia Levi, "Samurai from Outer Space" (Open Court, Chicago, Illinois 1996)

Susan J. Napier, "Anime from Akira to Princess Mononoke", (Palgrave, New York: 2000)

Rex Shelley, "Culture Shock! Japan", (Graphic Arts Center Publishing Company, Portland, Oregon: 2001)

Other Role-Playing Games

Big Eyes, Small Mouth (Guardians of Order, Guelph, Ontario)

The classic generic anime game. The Tri-Stat System originated here and has spread to envelop many licensed anime, including Sailor Moon.

Exalted (White Wolf Game Studio)

Ultra-high-powered swords-and-sorcery fantasy with an anime motif.

FUDGE Expanded Edition (Grey Ghost Games)

More and more detailed rules for those who want to bring more of the FUDGE system into their *HeartQuest* game.

Teenagers From Outer Space (R. Talsorian Games)

Extremely silly comedy RPG, based more than a little on Urasei Yatsura. Chase girls! Blow things up! Try to survive gym class!

Web Resources

The Anipike (www.anipike.com)

The main directory to anime websites on the web, be they in Japan, North America, or elsewhere.

Anime on DVD (www.animeondvd.com)

All the information you need on what has or is about to come out on DVD.

The Right Stuf (www.rightstuf.com)

A premier online retailer, specializing in anime and manga.

Seraphim Guard (www.seraphimguard.com)

The publisher of this book. First place to look for new reference and source material.

HeartQuest Mailing List

To subscribe to the Seraphim Guard fan-based list designed to let *HeartQuest* fans discuss both the game and the shoujo genre in general, send a blank message to the following address:

heartquest2-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Additionally, feel free to look into the other mailing lists Seraphim Guard has available:

HeartQuest Online

All about *HeartQuest* Online and playing *HeartQuest* over the Internet!

heartquestonline-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Ghost Tamer Miyaki

Anything and everything about the Ghost Tamer Miyaki campaign!

ghosttamer-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Seraphim Guard Development List

Want to help develop RPGs for Seraphim Guard? We are beginning a major expansion of our line and are always looking for new talent and fresh ideas. If you want to take part as a writer, playtester or other creator, join this list!

seraphimdevelopers-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Seraphim Guard Artists' Clearinghouse

If you've seen the art in Seraphim Guard products and said to yourself "I could do that", well why don't you prove it? Seraphim Guard is always looking for talent, and the artists' mailing list is the place to find out just where your talents are most needed. Join the family of Seraphim Guard artists!

seraphimguardartists-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Seraphim Fan Network (www.seraphimfan.com)

The place to organize and run online games of all Seraphim Guard products, including *HeartQuest*, plus chatrooms and a web-based forum for discussion of all things related to Seraphim Guard and its product line. Don't hesitate to join the discussions!

Need More?

We hope you've enjoyed *HeartQuest*: Romantic Roleplaying in the Worlds of Shoujo Manga and that you want more of this game. Fear not, gentle readers! There's always more where this came from at www.seraphimguard.com. Just point your browser to the company website and you'll get the latest and best in shoujo roleplaying goodness!

At **www.seraphimguard.com**, you can learn about and purchase new electronic and print supplements as they come out. Each of our sample campaigns will be graced with its own sourcebook, giving you all the detail you need to run heart-racing intrigues at Sendai Academy, to banish the Troubled Dead with Ghost Tamer Miyaki, to fight for love and honor with Steel Heidi, and even more exciting campaigns and supplemental material.

You can also join the *HeartQuest* Internet Mailing List, where the creators of *HeartQuest* will answer your questions and you can post your own ideas and thoughts on shoujo roleplaying. You can even post your own characters, character write-ups, and fanart from your campaigns, and talk about your favorite shoujo manga and anime. We'd love to hear from you!

And seraphimguard.com is THE source for *HeartQuest* and Seraphim Guard merchandise. Show your loyalty with a T-shirt, or drink your favorite hot or cold beverage with the ladies from *HeartQuest*.

Finally, seraphimguard.com is the place to find links to *HeartQuest* fansites as well. Build a shrine to your favorite character or campaign, and then post it for the entire world to see!

www.seraphimguard.com is the website you don't want to miss!

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Windstorm Creative was founded in 1989 to create a publishing house with author-centric ethics and cutting-edge, risk-taking innovation. WSC is now a company of more than ten divisions with international distribution channels that allow us to sell our books — paperback and hardcover — games, music and films both inside the traditional systems and outside these paradigms, capitalizing on more direct delivery and nontraditional markets. As a result, our books can be found in grocery superstores as well as your favorite neighborhood bookstore, and dozens of other outlets on and off the Internet.

WSC is an independent press with the synergy and branding of a corporate publisher and an author royalty that's easily twice their best offer. We have continued to minimize returns without decreasing sales by publishing books that are timeless, as opposed to timely, and never back-listing our books. We stand adamantly against the heinous act of "stripping."

WSC is constantly changing, improving, and growing. We are driven by the needs of our authors – hailing from ten different countries – and the vision of our criticallyacclaimed staff. All of our books are created with the strictest of environmental protections in mind. Our approach to no-waste, no-hazard, in-house production, and stringent out-source scrutiny, assures that our goals are met whether books are printed at our own facility or an outside press.

Because of these precautions, our books cost more. And though we know that our readers support our efforts, we also understand that a few dollars can add up. This is why we began our Readers' Club. Visit our webstore and take 25% off every title, every day, by typing in the code found at the bottom of the page. No strings. No fine print.

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Seraphim Guard Roleplaying Games and Supplements

HeartQuest Sourcebooks and Core Rulebooks

HeartQuest Revised Edition
Arena Gods
Ghost Tamer Miyaki
Heroic Ages III
Lady Pain
Livin' on a Dream
Mecha Aces
Spell-Slingers & Sword-Saints
World of Heroes

Standalone Products

Banzai! Adventures in Japanese Animation
Fuzz: The Furry Police RPG
The Kevin & Kell Roleplaying Game

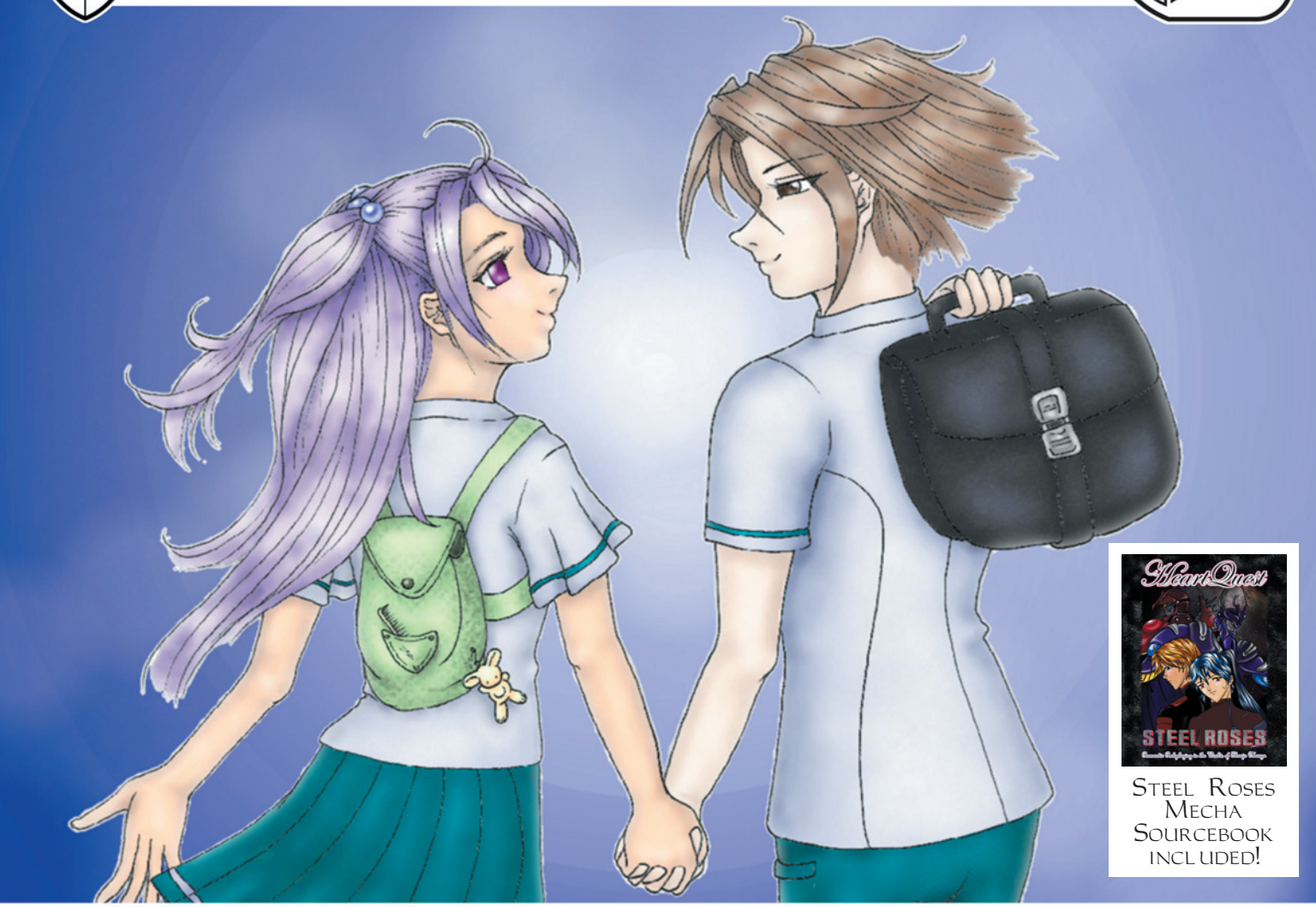
Seraphim Guard Novels

Machine Goddess

Seraphim Guard

THE GAME IS FAR FROM UP!

Heart Quest Core Book



Steel Roses Mecha Sourcebook included!

Enter the worlds of HeartQuest and experience a new dimension of manga and anime role-playing. HeartQuest is the first roleplaying game dedicated to shoujo manga, "girls' comics," style storytelling. Designed by dedicated fans, HeartQuest covers the entire spectrum of shoujo manga settings and remains true to the genre. Magical girls, teen romance, fantastic worlds, idol singers, school exams, evil villains, and much more await inside this book.

The hallmark of shoujo manga style is an emphasis on character development. HeartQuest provides players with powerful tools to put their characters in the spotlight of every game session. The flexible character creation system lets you design whatever character you can imagine. Will you play the star of the school soccer team, an orphan coming to grips with a strange destiny, the gaijin exchange student struggling to fit in, a dashing swordswoman fighting for love and honor, or...? In HeartQuest, the choice is yours.

HeartQuest features elegant, simple, and easy to learn rules, built from the popular FUDGE system, which encourages character interaction and dramatic storytelling. HeartQuest provides players and Game Masters plenty of tips and hints for getting their games up and running:

- Many pages of sample characters
- Dozens of illustrations to spark your imagination
- Guidelines for shoujo style campaigning
- Overviews of genres suitable for HeartQuest adventures
- Three introductory campaign settings – "Ghost Tamer Miyaki," "Sendai Academy" and "Steel Heidi," complete with sample characters

Experience the exciting worlds of shoujo manga with HeartQuest!

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