

WICKED PACTS

ERRATA

During gameplay, there will occasionally be fringe situations that come up, where the rules as written seem like they shouldn't apply. For example, if a Wendigo eats a grenade, does this change the damage that the grenade deals when it goes off?

Because these situations can be extremely varied, and because we can't predict all of them, we trust the gaming group to come up with rules that make sense when these situations inevitably happen.

Some situations are more likely than others, and we've done our best to head those situations off at the pass by addressing them here, but when in doubt, go with what's fun and what's fair.

If a certain way of reading the rules gives a character limitless power, that's usually neither fun nor fair.

COMBAT

The Adversaries section of Wicked Pacts doesn't have a recommendation for how many baddies to throw at a standard group of PCs.

To rectify that, we'll make some suggestions here, although the GM should be aware that they might need to tailor their combats a little more to their particular group.

A very large group of highly skilled players won't be challenged by fights that would severely test a small group of

inexperienced players, and a group that is heavily armed and fully healed will be able to handle fights that an exhausted, under-equipped group cannot.

With that in mind, here are some suggestions for balancing fights.

Number And Type of Adversaries:

A starting group of PCs can expect a moderate amount of challenge from an equal number of Thugs and a single Lieutenant.

For a more challenging combat, the GM can add a few more Thugs, a second Lieutenant, better equipment, or a tougher scenario.

Fighting a Troll in a burning house is different than fighting a Troll in the sewers, and an easy way to control difficulty without adding more enemies to the initiative order is to make the circumstances surrounding the combat more challenging. Maybe there are traps. Maybe there are hostages. Maybe there are reinforcements that will show up by a certain turn.

For a particularly tough fight, add a Mastermind, and don't be shy about using the enemies' Adversary Abilities.

If your group is consistently crushing everything that comes its way, throw tougher situations at them and use harder monsters. Make it clear to the players that they're playing for higher stakes. Find the sweet spot where combat is challenging, but doesn't steamroll anybody, and let the bad guys target characters based on how threatening they're being. If a very combat-capable group has a low-hp, non-combat Scribe in tow, enemies can fire on that Scribe

last—until and unless the Scribe starts back-to-back casting flashy Spells.

Dealing With Armor:

With a little preparation and some quick Spellcasting, a character can pack on a lot of Armor in combat. This can let them walk into a hail of mundane bullets and survive, but it doesn't make them invulnerable.

If a party turtles up the moment combat breaks out, their enemies will start to adapt. Attacks that deal AP damage, that cause Ignition or Drain, or that apply poisons, diseases, or other debuffs can all threaten characters regardless of how heavily armored they are.

In a pinch, enemies will grapple targets that bullets just bounce off of. Or, failing that, they will aim for Hit Locations like the heart and throat where even a little damage is enough.

If none of this works and the PCs seem invincible, the bad guys will run—only to come back later, with better hardware and on their own terms.

We recommend that if the group encounters problems with Armor, the GM limit each character's total Armor to their highest single mundane item and their highest single magical bonus. This eliminates Armor's ability to stack, pressing the point that characters should try not to get hit in the first place.

Adjusting Lethality:

A lucky shot to the heart or throat can put down even a powerful mage.

This can feel a little abrupt, and may not

be what everyone wants from their game—especially from a long campaign with lots of character backstory.

Players should remember that they can use Scene Points to buy down damage inflicted to these vulnerable areas, and that they can use their Tarot Card as an emergency backup Scene Point.

For groups that want a *lot* more survivability, the entire group can decide in advance that lethal damage knocks PCs out instead of killing them instantly. As long as another character can get to the downed PC and administer medical attention, they might be in really bad shape, but they'll survive.

Characters that are saved this way cannot act until the end of the combat, and are at 1 Hit Point when they revive.

This is a drastic change, and it should only be made if everyone at the table is okay with it. Removing the risk of death from combat can make it considerably less exciting.

Quick Initiative:

In a battle with a lot of participants, rolling Initiative for each person at the start of each Round can slow down gameplay.

If this is bogging down a game, consider rolling Initiative just once at the start of combat.

Alternately, roll Initiative once, and then let characters spend an Action on their turn in order to change their Initiative. If they do, they can reroll their Initiative at the start of the next Round.

MAGIC

To address a few questions about magic, here is an example of a typical spellcast.

A Warlock wants to attack a werewolf with Dragon's Fire.

First, the Warlock checks to see if the Spell goes off. They make a Skill Test, rolling the Spell dice for Dragon's Fire against an Average difficulty (TN 7). The relevant Attribute for Warlock Spells is Intelligence, so they add that to the roll.

The Spell forms, and now they try to hit the werewolf with it.

If the werewolf is up close, they need to Touch the werewolf with the Spell. This means they make an Opposition Roll, using Brawling + REF vs the werewolf's Brawling + REF.

On the other hand, if the werewolf is further away, they need to Throw the Spell. To do this, they make a Skill Test using Magic Lore: Warlock + REF against a TN of 5 + the werewolf's REF. The werewolf can try to Dodge this, just as if the Warlock were firing a gun.

Finally, if the Spell hits, the Warlock rolls damage.

A few Spells involve more rolls than this. Some involve less. Some involve Saving Throws. Others trigger other effects.

And a few Spells involve cases where rules questions were bound to come up.

We've addressed those Spells here.

Aegis (p. 96):

Even though your stored Actions go away

at the start of your next turn, this Spell does not. It stays active for the whole Scene, allowing you to bank actions you weren't going to use anyway in order to deflect incoming Spells.

Arcane Attunement (p. 74):

You can use this Spell to create trapped items or to create items that let your friends activate your Spells. The trigger condition for an item can be anything you want, but you usually don't want it to be too general (i.e. "someone in this room breathes") or you will quickly run out of Magic Points.

When you Attune a Spell, it is Attuned with the same Skill Dice that you had in that Spell at the time you Attuned it. If you have Lightning at 3d6 and Arcane Attunement at 3d10, and you Attune Lightning...the item casts Lightning at 3d6, not 3d10.

Furthermore, Attuning a Spell to an item does not reduce the time it takes to cast the Spell. If you Attune Create Golem to an item, and then trigger the item, you do not get a Golem instantly. You get a Golem 2d6 days after the item was triggered.

Finally, items that are attuned this way do not count towards the three magic items limit (page 142). However, you may not want to create very many of these, as careless activations of your attuned items can quickly drain you of Magic Points.

Arcane Bolt (p. 98):

You can enhance unarmed attacks as well as weapon attacks with this Spell.

Binding Contract (p. 70):

When you grant a Spell this way, the

person using it is treated as if they had your dice in the Spell.

If you grant a Spell or power to a person who does not have enough Magic Points, they instead spend their Hit Points to fuel it.

Blade of the Damned (p. 98):

The Duration should say "One Scene". The Spell takes an Action to cast and the blade goes away at the end of the Scene unless the cost is paid to extend it.

Create Scroll (p. 76):

Using Scrolls does not let you avoid the time it takes to cast a Spell, nor does it let you avoid a Spell's cost. If you write Create Golem onto a Scroll and then activate it, you do not get a Golem instantly for free. You pay Create Golem's cost, and then you get one 2d6 days later.

You can work with another mage to create a scroll of any Spell that they are able to cast, but they need to be there advising you during the whole 10 minute time it takes to create the scroll.

When you create a Scroll, it is created with the same Skill Dice that you had in the appropriate Spell at the time you created it. If you have Blade of the Damned at 3d6 and Create Scroll at 3d10, and you create a scroll of Blade of the Damned...the scroll casts Blade of the Damned at 3d6, not 3d10.

Lightning (p. 101):

As written, you attack your target with Lightning to hit your target, and then the Spell hits everyone else in the area of effect.

Instead of automatically taking damage, people that get caught in the area of effect

can treat Lightning like an explosion. They can roll a Tough Reflexes Saving Throw (TN 12) in order to take half damage.

Sword of the Creator (p. 102):

The Duration should say "One Scene". The Spell takes an Action to cast and the sword goes away at the end of the Scene unless the cost is paid to extend it.

Vigor of the Beast (p. 72):

Increasing your Strength over 5 with this Spell does **not** affect your other Derived Attributes, but it *does* affect your Melee Damage Bonus. It also affects your Skill Tests and Saving Throws.

The Melee Damage Bonus increases according to the following chart, up to a maximum of 2d10 at 9 Strength.

<u>Strength</u>	<u>Damage Bonus</u>
1	-1d3
2	-
3	+1d3
4	+1d6
5	+1d8
6	+1d10
7	+1d12
8	+2d8
9	+2d10

POTIONS

Like medication, the human body can only tolerate so many potions at the same time. Knocking back a single healing potion after a fight is a great way to repair some damage, but knocking back twelve healing potions is dangerous, and may cause more harm than good.

A person can safely drink potions per day equal to the average of their Health and Willpower (round up). If they have 5 Health and 5 Willpower, they can drink 5 potions in a 24 hour period.

Any potions beyond that either don't work or cause side-effects, at the GM's discretion.

TALENTS AND SKILLS

Unless a specific Talent says otherwise, you cannot take a Talent multiple times to stack its effects.

For example, you can make friends with multiple NPCs, but only one of them can be covered by your Allies Talent.

Other issues with specific Talents and Skills are also covered here.

Dodge (p. 61):

Dodge is not considered a Combat Skill by Spells or Talents that reference Combat Skills.

Dodging is an action you can take in combat, but the Skills that these Spells and Talents are referencing are offensive Skills, such as Blades, Club, or Pistols.

Actions you spend on Dodge can still cause a Multiple Action Penalty.

Poison (p. 63):

Characters afflicted by a poison or disease get to make a Health Save to avoid suffering its effects. Poisons and diseases typically have a duration (which determines how many times a person has to save against them) and a consequence (which kicks in

every time a save is failed.) Unless the TN, Saving Throw, and Consequence are provided for a specific poison or disease, they are up to the group to determine.

Rank (p. 41):

You don't have to spend more points to be a higher rank (i.e. a Commander instead of an Ensign), but there is an implicit tradeoff. While the average civilian will probably just respect you for having served, people in your organization are more likely to respect you if you outrank them.

You are also more recognizable if you have a higher rank, and a shooting incident downtown where witness reports match a retired Navy Captain will probably be more trouble if the news gets a hold of them than if you were a Petty Officer.

On top of that, if you are currently serving, certain duties and standards of behavior may be required of you.

Shadow Duplicate (p. 37):

You can cast Spells through your Shadow Duplicate.

EXTRA

Here are a few other items that didn't fall into any particular category, but still need to be addressed.

Maximizing Damage For Area of Effects:

When you use a Scene Point to maximize the damage of an attack with an Area of Effect (such as a grenade or an enhanced Dragon's Flame Spell), everyone who is hit by that attack takes maximum damage.

For example, if a mage chucks a quarter brick of C4 (3d10+8 damage) into a group of Ghouls and spends a Scene Point to maximize the damage, the mage doesn't need to roll damage. All of the Ghouls take 38 damage.

The Pure Blood Offspring Penalty:

As a Pure Blood, you need to put at least two points in Strength during character creation. This will leave you with at least 1 point of Strength when you start the game.

Unlike the Offspring Benefits, which apply right away, the Pure Blood Offspring Penalty does not apply until **after** you have assigned your points, so the highest Strength you can begin play with as a Pure Blooded is 4.

Drain Damage:

Except where it's noted as part of a Spell or ability, there is no roll to avoid Drain damage. If a magic knife deals 6 Drain, it deals 6 Drain. A target that doesn't want to be drained should avoid getting hit by the knife, or use Scene Points to reduce the damage.

Range Table:

The Short range for the Sawed-Off should be 0 – 6. The Medium range should be 6 – 30.

The note about bows should say that they are at +3 TN at 0 – 2 yards, not 'Point Blank range'.

Throwing Weapons:

Like the Shuriken, any thrown weapon adds your Melee Damage Bonus. This applies to bricks, soda cans, or whatever else the PCs decide to chuck at people.

Enhanced Backgrounds:

At the group's discretion, the GM can assign characters advantages or disadvantages related to their backgrounds.

Otherwise, with the exception of Status and Wealth, Backgrounds are color.

WICKED PACTS **HACKS**

Any tabletop RPG will play a little bit differently at different tables. Some groups like simpler rules. Some groups like tougher challenges. Some groups just want to throw some dice.

There's no wrong way to play a game. There's just what works for the group.

So, with that in mind, we've put together some options for people that want to modify their game of Wicked Pacts.

This is just a toolkit, and none of the changes here are mandatory.

If you have questions or suggestions, write to us and let us know.

MONEY AND **EQUIPMENT**

The original wealth levels were a little generous. Revised wealth levels are as follows:

On the Run: \$750 / \$2,000

Ghetto: \$850 / \$2,500

Lower Class: \$1,250 / \$5,000

Middle Class: \$1,750 / \$7,500

Criminal Family: \$2500 / \$12,500
Well to Do: \$3,000 / \$25,000
Very Well Off: \$7,500 / \$250,000

The number of the left side of the slash is the amount of money you can expect to make in a month. This is easily accessible cash, and can be used more or less untraceably. During character creation, this is the money that can be used to buy starting equipment.

The number on the right side of the slash is how much money you have in savings. This is money that isn't tied up in some kind of obligation or debt (such as a trust, paying for someone's medical bills, or dealing with the property taxes on your house). During character creation, this money can only be used to buy property or non-magic, non-combat goods.

Being Rich:

In Pacts as in life, money makes you powerful, but it doesn't quite make you all-powerful. You are still nominally bound by the laws of magical and mundane society, and by the stricter laws of supply and demand.

That is to say, unless you go to an auction overseas, you're not going to be able to buy 200 healing potions at once, and if you start buying up crates of magical items, people are going to notice. For anything that can't be found or made locally (i.e. cobwebs, crickets, etc), shops usually don't carry a lot of a single type of magic item. Organizations like the Order and the Syndicate have stockpiles, but getting access to anything from those stockpiles usually involves a lot of bureaucracy.

If you spend a significant sum on money and weapons, you might also want to start buying magical security for your estate to reduce the risk of supernatural break-ins. Otherwise the moment it gets out that you have unsecured boxes of arcane goods on your property, organizations like the Syndicate are going to take notice. Not to mention large accumulations of magic can draw supernatural creatures like moths to the flame.

It is possible to build up a stockpile of useful items, such as Components, without running afoul of anyone, and some rich mages even hire Alchemists to make potions or other supplies on demand, but this takes time and produces a slow trickle of useful stuff, rather than a raging river.

However, mages are advised to hold onto some of their starting money for unplanned expenses during gameplay. Sometimes having an extra \$10,000 to throw at a problem can make a huge difference in the field.

EXPERIENCE POINT **GAIN AND COSTS**

The Experience Point values and costs in the core book are balanced around long campaign play, with slow character growth over time.

This may not be well-suited to groups playing short campaigns (3-5 sessions and ending permanently after that), or to groups that like a lot of character progression when they play.

With that in mind, here are two Experience Charts.

The Flat Progression Chart flattens out the cost to increase your Skills.

The Quick Progression Chart is designed for faster PC progression during a shorter campaign. Use this at your own risk, as quick character growth can unbalance a game.

Flat Progression Chart:

Gain a New Skill

1D6 11 points

Increase a Skill's Level of Learning

From 1d6 to D8 11 points

From 1d8 to D10 11 points

Increase a Skill's Practical Usage

From 1 to 2 11 points

From 2 to 3 11 points

Quick Progression Chart:

Gain a New Skill

1D6 2 points

Increase a Skill's Level of Learning

From 1d6 to D8 3 points

From 1d8 to D10 4 points

Increase a Skill's Practical Usage

From 1 to 2 3 points

From 2 to 3 4 points

Improve a Skill That's Already 3d10

Add a +1 bonus 5 points

Increase Attribute (To No More Than 5)

Add +1 6 points

Buy An Archetype or General Talent

+1 Talent (+2 Max) 7 points

Buy A Second Miracle (Templar Only)

+1 Miracle (+1 Max) 7 points

Buy Off A Complication

You may only do this with the GM's approval, and it must make sense in the game's story. Furthermore, this counts as buying another Talent, so if you do this, you may only buy one Talent with Experience Points. If you've already bought two Talents with Experience Points, you may not buy off your Complication.

-1 Complication (-1 Max) 7 points

Buy Scene Points

This does not increase your maximum Scene Points. It increases your current Scene Points. You may buy Scene Points during a game Session, not just at the beginning or end of one, and you may spend those Scene Points right away.

+2 Scene Points 1 point