

# Solo Adventures v3

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*Original rules created by [quinchris](#) and expanded by [Ezechie1357](#)*

*Forum topic with [original rules](#), [expanded rules](#) and [multi-player rules](#)*

Perhaps you have a really cool idea of a character that you really want to try out. Perhaps you are geographically isolated and you find PBP games annoying.

Of all the RPG systems available I feel that Ars Magica, with its emphasis on laboratory activities and seasonal studies, is ideally suitable for solo play.

A Covenant can be built and finances organized. A character can easily be created and each season planned and played out, research undertaken, spells and items invented.

However characters do not grow in a vacuum and there will come a point when the Covenants starting resources have been exhausted. What is needed is a method to determine those random events that make life interesting and to provide stimulus for further studies.

Below is a system I use to determine when adventures call forth the wizard from his tower.

## Solo Play

Generate your character and Covenant as per the Core Rules. Perform each seasonal activity as per the rules in the *Ars Magica Core Rulebook*, Chapter 10.

I recommend using the Covenant Finances rules in *Sub Rosa* (Issue 15, page 14) as the random fluctuation tables and Covenant resources are excellent story generators.

Also recommended are the Aura Variation rules (*Realms of Power: Magic*, page 10).

At the beginning of each year, roll for the following:

- Covenant Finances (if applicable)
- Aura Variation (if applicable)
- Adventures!

## Step 1 – Adventures!

Make a list of Character Story Flaws and Covenant Hooks and anything else you believe might generate stories. Some virtues (such as Guardian Angel or Gossip) are particularly suitable for generating adventures.

Each year:

- For each Minor Story Flaw or Covenant Hook, roll a Simple Dice
- For each Major Story flaw or Hook, roll three Simple Dice

Roll	Effect
1	An adventure occurs. Go to step 2.
2-9	Nothing happens.
10	Bad omens. Add an extra botch dice to the next adventure that year.

A character may also choose to initiate his own adventure in which he selects from the various options and rewards. This is appropriate when seeking a specific reward.

*Example: Darius of Flambeau (ArM5 page 34) has the Story Flaw Enemies (Renounced Magus). He also has Hermetic Prestige and Driven which might also be suitable for generating stories.*

*The player rolls 7 Simple Dice (three for Enemies, one for Hermetic Prestige three for Driven), resulting in 0, 2, 4 & 0 & 3, 1, 8. An adventure is going to happen as Darius feels compelled to investigate rumors of an infernal hedge wizard.*

## Step 2 – Adventure Difficulty

Roll a Stress Die, ignoring Botches.

Roll	Difficulty	Base Ease Factor
1-3	Easy	Base Ease Factor 9
4-6	Average	Base Ease Factor 12
7-10	Hard	Base Ease Factor 15
11-15	Very Hard	Base Ease Factor 18
16-25	Impressive	Base Ease Factor 21
26-35	Remarkable	Base Ease Factor 24
35+	Almost impossible	Base Ease Factor 27

The resulting number is the Base Difficulty of the adventure.

For young magi, those that are 5 years or less after Gauntlet, the difficulty is decreased by 3 points, due to the benevolent help of nearby covenants making your life easier. In fact to make it more thematic, you could make it last seven years, the duration between two tribunals, a “period of grace”.

*Example: Darius of Flambeau. A 5 is rolled making this an average difficulty. The target numbers for the challenges should be 12 and the adventure should take a little over ten days. The difficulty is decreased to 9 because Darius is only two years out of Gauntlet.*

### Step 3 – Origin of Adventure (optional)

Roll a Simple Die to determine the origin of the adventure. This is optional as it may be self evident depending of what Story Flaw/Hook was rolled. The difficulty rolled in Step 2 should be a guide for particular options.

Roll	Type	Easy/Average	Hard	Impressive	Harder
1	Nobility	Knight Errant	Local gentry	Greater nobles	Royal
2	Religion	Friar	Local priest	Monastery or Bishop	Militant Order
3	Peasant	Local	Farmer	Merchant	City Guild
4	Faerie	Knight Errant	Local gentry	Greater nobles	Royal
5	Official	Village headman	Tax collector	Agent of Noble	Papal Envoy
6	Criminal	Thief	Outlaws	Murder mystery	Assassin
7	Hermetic	Mercere	Own House	Quaesitor	Arch Magi
8	Covenant	Visit by magus	Nearby covenant	Far away covenant	March
9	Natural	Storm	Wild animal	Disaster	Plague
10	Supernatural	Ghost	Monster	Monster	Dragon

These are only suggestion to inspire creativity. There is no mechanical impact. Feel free to alter or come up with your own.

*Example: Darius of Flambeau. A 1 is rolled making this an adventure involving the Nobility. Perhaps the local lord takes exception to the sinister Darius wandering his lands.*

### Step 4 – Timing

Roll a Simple Die to determine when the adventure will occur during the year. This may modify the difficulty of the adventure as the environment is negotiated.

Roll	Season	Notes
1-2	Spring	
3-4	Summer	
5-6	Autumn	
7-8	Winter	+1 to all target numbers
9-10	Character choice	This reflects that not all story events have to be dealt with immediately. Sometimes a Magus may wish to put off an adventure until convenient.

*Example: Darius of Flambeau. A 9 is rolled. Darius hears the rumors at the beguiling of the year but does not fancy tramping about the countryside during the dead of winter so he resolves to depart in the spring.*

### Step 5 – Complexity

Roll a Simple Die to determine the Complexity of the adventure. This will determine how many sets of challenges will be required to complete the adventure.

Roll	Complexity	Challenges
1-3	Simple	One set of challenges
4-6	Complex	Two sets of challenges
7-9	Very Complex	Three sets of challenges
10	Roll twice on this chart	

*Example: Darius of Flambeau. A 4 is rolled. This will be a Complex adventure with two sets of abilities being required.*

## Step 6 – Type of Adventure

Roll a Simple Die for each set of challenges determined in Step 5.

Roll	Type of Adventure
1-2	Social
3-4	Combat
5-6	Magic
7-8	Legal/Diplomatic
9-10	Character choice. This reflects that there are often multiple approaches of resolving conflict.

*Example: Darius of Flambeau. For the first set of challenges a 1 is rolled, a Social Challenge. For the second set of challenges a 9 is rolled making this Darius's choice. While he would like to avoid conflict with the Local Lord he needs to play to his strengths so he elects to use Magic.*

## Step 7 – Opt Out (optional)

At this stage, having seen the challenge before him, the character may decide to not proceed with the adventure. This is because the difficulty is too high, the rewards too low, or he does not have the right abilities to complete the challenge sets.

Having decided to opt out the character suffers whatever losses as seems appropriate based on the adventure premise.

*Example: Darius of Flambeau. If he passed on this adventure the only likely consequence to Darius is another possible story in a future year (adding an extra dice in Step 1). However Darius does not back down in the face of danger!*

## Step 8 – Proceed with the Adventure

Resolve each set of challenges rolled up in Steps 5 and 6

Each set of challenges has a number of abilities associated with it. The character must select three of the abilities and, along with an attribute of choice plus a Stress dice, against a target equal to the adventure difficulty in Step 2.

Social	Combat	Magic	Legal/Diplomatic
Folk Ken	Awareness	Awareness	Artes Liberales
Etiquette	Martial	Supernatural	Law
Charm	Brawl	Realm Lore	Organization Lore
Intrigue	Leadership	Parma	Folk Ken

Social	Combat	Magic	Legal/Diplomatic
Guile	Stealth	Penetration	Intrigue
Organization Lore	Athletics	Magic Theory	Guile

These are Stress Rolls. One Botch Die, plus one extra Both Die for each Bad Omen from step 1.

All Organization and Realm Lore roll should be relevant to the situation.

The character must select a different ability and attribute, and cannot repeat the selection in this adventure until each ability and attribute has been used.

This means very complex missions with several sets of challenges may well involve every attribute.

The character can boost any of the rolls with the use of an appropriate spell or enchanted item. The magnitude of the spell or item effect is added to the roll to solve the ability roll. If this option is used for several rolls, then a different spell or effect must be used each time.

You also have the possibility to use a specialist for a single test during a set of challenge. In that case you use his or her Characteristic + Ability instead of yours. You can buy specialists with Build Points, but instead of costing their highest ability in Build Points, each specialist costs their main Abilities, plus their main Characteristics times two. Negative characteristics are treated as zero for the Build Point cost. They basically work like very simplified grogs: they don't have virtues or flaws, so only the relevant abilities and characteristics are listed. For example: two-handed weapon: 6, Survival: 5, Strength: +1, Perception: +2, Total Build Points cost:  $6+5+(1 \times 2)+(2 \times 2)=17$ .

As with every adventure, Confidence Points may be used to affect these rolls.

*Example: Darius of Flambeau. He elects to do the Magic Challenges first. He selects Penetration 6, Parma 5, and Spell. Possibly a magical fight as occurred. As this is a hard adventure the spell must be of at least level 20. He scans his list of spells. While Leap of Homecoming is his most powerful it is difficult to think how this might be useful in the situation so instead selects Twist of the Tongue level 30). Darius is a little worried about the Social challenge to come so he reserves his best characteristics for them. He selects Stamina 0 for Parma and Dex +1 for Penetration.*

*For the Social Challenge he would like to have used another Spell but he has already applied that option so he selects Intrigue 3 (Plotting), and Folk Ken 2 and Guile 3 (Fast Talk). It seems as if Darius is not being entirely honest in his dealings with the local nobility. He selects Intelligence, Perception and Strength. How precisely Darius is going to use Strength with Guile (Fast Talk) may be worth some consideration but as he has a -6 to Social Rolls due to his Blatant Gift it may be a little academic.*

## Step 9 – Determine Results

The success of the adventure depends on the success of the three Abilities rolls in each of the sets of challenges in Step 8.

For each set of challenges:

- Three Successes: Select a Reward plus 5 experience points
- Two Successes: Select a Reward
- One Success: Select both a Reward and a Loss (or a Story Event)
- Complete Failure: Select 2 Losses
- Each Botch in step 10: Select an additional Loss

For each set of challenges the character gains one experience point and one confidence point.

*Example: Darius of Flambeau. He rolls his dice against a target of 9.*

*First challenge:*

- *Penetration plus Dex (6+1) plus Dice roll of 5=12 Success*
- *Parma plus Sta (6+0) plus Dice roll of 3=9 Success*
- *Spell Casting total of 37 plus Dice Roll of 0=37 Success*

*Second challenge:*

- *Intrigue plus Int (4+3-6) plus Dice roll of 7=8+3=11 Success*
- *Folk Ken plus Per (2+1-6) plus dice roll of 5=2 Fail*
- *Guile plus Str (3+2-6) plus dice roll of 0=-1 Fail*

*The spell casting roll was a zero so this is a possible botch. His botch dice are 2 (one base, two for Bad omens less one for Spell Mastery). He rolls a 3 and 4. Not a botch, and his casting total is sufficient to get the spell successfully cast.*

*The Intrigue roll was initially a failure but Darius used a point of Confidence to add 3 to the result making this a success.*

*The Guile roll was a 0 so this is a possible botch. His botch dice are 3 (one base, two for Bad omens). He rolls a 0 and 8 and 0. A double botch is unfortunate for Darius.*

*The Magical challenge set has 3 successes giving a reward plus 5 experience points.*

*The Social challenge set has only 1 success and 2 botches. This gives Darius both a Reward and a Loss as well as two additional losses for the 2 botches.*

## **Step 10 – Rewards**

For each set of challenges determined in Step 9 determine the rewards for successfully completing each challenge.

Pick from the follow effects.

- **Build Points.** Gain a number of Build Points (Covenants page 5) equal to the Base Difficulty of the challenge divided by 2.
- **Remove a Flaw/Hook** gained on previous adventure
- **Covenant Boon Minor.** Temporary if difficulty between 3 and 7
- **Increase Minor Boon to Major.** Temporary if difficulty between 10 plus

- Covenant Boon. Major if difficulty 12 plus
- New Minor Virtue if difficulty 20 plus & Very Complex challenges
- Reduced Time. The adventure is completed faster than expected in Step 12

The Build Point option allows for enchanted items, Books, Money, Vis, or recruiting specialists.

Temporary effects last a number of seasons equal to the Base Difficulty

This list is not intended to be exhaustive. Players are recommended to be imaginative.

*Example: Darius of Flambeau. He has two rewards. He selects Build Points for a total of 9 points (difficulty 9 divided by 2 times 2 rewards). He recovers a Quality 9 Tractatus.*

*He also gains 7 experience points and 2 Confidence points.*

## Step 11 – Losses

For each set of challenges determined in Step 5, determine the possible outcomes for failing each challenge.

Roll a Simple Die on the table, or pick from the following effects.

Roll	Losses	Notes
1-5	Build Points	Lose a number of Build Points (Covenants page 5) equal to the Base Difficulty of the challenge divided by 2
6	Warping Points	Number of Points equal to adventure difficulty divided by five (round up)
7-9	Wound	Each person on the adventure takes damage equal to difficulty plus 5 plus Stress dice
10	Special	Select from below

- Story Flaw. Temporary if difficulty between 6 and 9
- Covenant Hook, Minor. Temporary if difficulty between 6 and 9
- Increase Minor Hook to Major. Temporary if difficulty between 9 and 12
- Covenant Hook, Major if difficulty 12 plus
- New Minor Flaw if difficulty 15 plus
- New Major Flaw if difficulty 20 plus

Temporary effects last a number of seasons equal to the Base Difficulty

Damage may be soaked and healed in the usual fashion. A shield grog may take the wound in addition to his own.

It is anticipated that the nature of the Story Flaw/Hook being rolled in Step 1 should suggest the type of rewards and losses.

*Example: Darius of Flambeau. Oh dear, 3 losses. He rolls a 2, 7 and 10. This costs him 5 Covenant Build Points, a wound and Covenant Hook.*

*The Build points costs Darius 5 points of Vis and 40 pounds of silver*

*He takes a heavy wound (difficulty 9 +5 + 6 stress dice less 5 points for armor).*

*He chooses the Story Flaw hospital local lord. This is a temporary flaw lasting 9 seasons.*

## Step 12 – Time

The adventure takes a number of days equal to the base difficulty from step 1, plus one day for each set of skill challenges, plus one day for each failed ability roll, plus one day for each botch in step 10

The time taken in adventures, as well as applicable healing time, should be taken in consideration when determining how much of each season is available.

*Example: Darius of Flambeau. It takes him 13 days in total to track down and deal with the hedge wizard. (9 for base difficulty plus 2 for both the challenges and 2 for the botches)*

## Conclusion

Weaving all the results from the above process into a cohesive story is well worth the effort.

*Example: Darius of Flambeau. In the Spring of 1232 Darius of Flambeau hunts a hedge wizard hiding in the manor of Baron Ramon. A battle ensues with Darius the victor however he suffers a heavy wound and spends some Vis.*

*Unfortunately he is heavy handed in his dealings with Baron Ramon culminating in being caught trying to stuff the body of the hedge wizard into a small chest. Darius manages to buy his way out of further trouble however the Baron remains aggrieved. While Darius is confident that the Baron will eventually calm down, it might be worth avoiding his lands for the next few years. Perhaps he should do something about that.*

*The payment of so much silver will put his little covenant into financial distress.*

*He staggers home clutching his precious tractates, while vowing to get better armor or next time to bring along a shield grog.*

## Final recommendations

My recommendation, if you want to use this rule set:

- Start with a magus fresh out of gauntlet
- Start with a Spring covenant, with 300 Build Points where you are the only magus.

Two virtues are really powerful in this rule set: Gentle Gift and Self Confident.

If you consider that you have a -3 penalty due to the Gift for any social challenge involving mundane, Gentle Gift is basically a +3 bonus for a lot of challenge. I was facing this issue in about a third of my challenge. After all, 2 types of adventure out of four (social or legal/diplomatic) and five origins (1,2,3,5,6) out of ten will put you in a tough spot if you don't have the Gentle gift (mathematically, that's 25%, I must have been unlucky with my rolls).

Self confident allows you to burn 2 confidences point for a +6 and it can really help you. Because it is a limited resource, it is not as good as Gentle gift, but when you go for really tough challenges, it will be help you squeeze the win.

## Multi-player rules

By Ezechie1357

One can wonder why design a sub-set of rules for several people to play together in a solo-player system. I would it's mainly because it can allow players who cannot find a Storyteller, or who cannot find the time to play together, to still share some fun.

To work with the base rule set of solo play, a few assumptions are required:

1. Each magus is too far away from the other to have a meaningful way to interact on a frequent basis directly – any explanation leading to such similar situation is acceptable. The purpose is to prevent magus to help each other when an adventure beyond their expertise happens and keep the “friendly rivalry” possible;
2. Each magus fits to some extend the stereotype of a hermetic magus: suspicious and generally distrustful about their sodales, and not shy of using them to improve their situation.

## Trade between magi

A magus can trade with his sodales books, vis, lab texts and enchanted items as he sees fit. Both sides agree to the deal, and the Redcaps make sure that each magus holds his part of the bargain. No foul play, simple exchange between two gentlemen (with thug mindset).

## Hermetic double-cross

Every four years, a magus can force an adventure upon another magus. Through indirect manipulation and careful scheming, a magus set in motion a series of events that should bring him significant benefits without risking much.

The scheming magus will be called “the manipulator” to differentiate him from the other magus. The manipulator selects the difficulty of the adventure, the complexity and the type of situation(s).

The magus caught in the web of intrigue can still decide to flee and avoid it. He faces the usual penalty for opting out and the manipulator does not gain anything. If the magus decides to take part of the adventure, it resolves normally, with a few modifications:

- In case of **three successes** in a situation, the magus controls perfectly the situation and reap all the benefits of it: on top of the regular rewards, the manipulator has to give him (difficulty/2) BP;
- With **two successes** in a situation, the manipulator's plan succeed perfectly: the magus gets the normal rewards, but the manipulator get as well (difficulty + 5) BP – he reaps the full benefits of his master plan;

- With **one success** in a situation, the manipulator's plan did not succeed perfectly, but could still be salvaged: the magus gets the normal loss, but the manipulator still get (difficulty -2 ) BP, better than nothing.
- If there are **no successes at all**: the plan completely fails. The magus get the usual losses, and the manipulator loses all resources he used to set his plan in motion, and loses (difficulty/2) BP.

It is a tweak on the prisoner's dilemma: if the challenge is too high, both loose, but if it too easy, the manipulator loses as well. The manipulator should know the strength and weakness of his sodales to be able to reap the maximum benefits...

## Tribunal

Every seven years, a Tribunal occurs. It is the opportunity to trade and call some favors. The Tribunal always happens in Summer (magi only travels when it is the most comfortable) and takes the whole season for the participants.

For this occasion, a magus can:

- **Ignore the Tribunal** – He has better to do than waste time in pointless debates: he still needs to undergo an adventure of difficulty  $7+1d5$ , social, legal or magic. Rewards and losses are assess as per normal rules. Success means that the magus manages to get some small benefits out of this Tribunal, losses probably means that other magi took the opportunity to tarnish his reputation or maybe he was fine for a low crime.
- **Ask for Favor or Great Favor** – Such Favor grant a bonus of +3/+5 for each test, in each challenge in a single adventure. However, the magus has to repay the favor before the next Tribunal by giving away BP (equal to the difficulty of the adventure for a Favor, or twice the difficulty for a Great Favor – the harder the adventure, the more resources the magi/covenants had to commit to assist the magus, the more he has to repay them back). It is a good way to be able in succeeding for the most difficult challenges, at a cost. To get a favor, it is in itself an adventure, very complex, with two out of the three challenges being either Social, Magical or Diplomatic in nature. The third one is up to the magus to choose (to prove he is worthy or to start already paying back). The difficulty is  $7+1d5/11+1d5$ . The magus needs to achieve at least two successes in two of the three challenges to get the favor and it is the only rewards he gets (he gets regular XP and confidence). Losses are determined as per the standard rules.
- **Trade and deals** – Tribunals are also a magical fair and a unique opportunity to get what the magus was looking for. It is resolved as an adventure of the difficulty and complexity of the magus' choice. Usually Combat or Subtlety & Trickery are not acceptable unless good justification (Combat in Normandy Tribunal could be considered as part of the joust tournament). The magus gets regular rewards and losses. In case of success (one or more), the magus can trade a quantity of BP up to the difficulty level at a preferential rate: each BP counts for 2, but can only be used to acquire Summae, Tractati, Lab Texts or enchanted items. If the magus set for a complex or very complex adventure, he gets two or three opportunities to make deals at preferential rate.