

Magical Burst

5.0 Alpha

By Ewen Cluney (©2015)

Introduction

The city contains a hidden danger that mortal eyes cannot see. The youma, creatures born of dark magic and humanity's hidden desires, prowl the shadows of the city and the souls of men. Their victims are devoured, ripped from reality itself and never seen again. However, the city is not without defenders. There are creatures born of brighter magic and purer emotion, the tsukaima, who recruit humans with magical potential to fight the youma. Males have too little magical power, and adults have even less, so girls must become *mahou shoujo*, or magical girls, to defend the city and the people they love. It is a dangerous task, but it is not without rewards. Each fully grown youma yields an Oblivion Seed, and a magical girl who gathers thirteen seeds can make a wish.

Magical Burst is a dark magical girl role-playing game. It is not dark in the sense of things being decrepit and shadowy—if anything the city is outwardly a little too shiny and perfect—but rather in terms of the human cost of the power of magic and the fight against the youma. In this game each player takes on the role of a magical girl, a young girl (age 10 to 16) who has made a pact with a tsukaima to gain the magic power necessary to fight the youma. Magical girls are not necessarily good people, and the tsukaima do not have their best interests in mind.

Version 5.0 Alpha

This is a rough, early version of this game. It should have everything necessary to play, but it lacks several elements I have planned for the final version. Notes on such things are **highlighted like this**.

Getting Ready to Play

Plan to get together with some friends for a few hours. You'll need one person to be the Game Master (GM), and around 2 to 6 people to be the players. You can play just once, or you can play regularly, what we call a "campaign."

Everyone should be at least familiar with the concept of magical girls, and comfortable with playing this game's darker take on those kinds of characters. Get everyone up to speed on the basic rules and the basics of the setting.

Playing in Person

If you're playing in person, there are some materials you're going to need.

- Sheets/Paper
- Six-Sided Dice
- Pencils

If you're planning to use the Full Battle rules (see p. XX), you'll also need these:

- Battlefield Map
- Pawns/Miniatures

Having some snacks and beverages on hand is a good idea too.

Playing Online

There are lots of different ways to play RPGs online, whether with simple text chat or full videoconferencing. You'll need something you can use to roll dice, and if you're using the Full Battle rules you'll also need a way to handle the Battlefield Map. A Google Drive drawing that everyone shares can be a good way to do that, and the Roll20 service has a built-in mapping feature too.

Pre-Game Discussion

You may want to take a little time to discuss a few things before you start playing.

Especially if you want to play a longer campaign, it's good to talk about what kinds of things you want out of the game.

If you're playing with people you know well you may not need to say it, but if there's anything you think could come up in the game that would make you unduly comfortable, you can say so now. If something comes up later you can have that conversation then too of course. There are any number of topics that could come up that would be uncomfortable or even triggering even without having girls as protagonists.

Dice Notation

"I once heard that a human scientist said, 'God does not play dice with the universe.' He was more wrong than you can possibly imagine."

Throughout this book we'll be using certain kinds of notation as shorthand to refer to how you should roll dice.

#d6: When there is a number followed by d6, it means that you roll that many six-sided dice and add them together. For example, if it says 2d6, you roll two dice, and if you were to get a 3 and a 5 the result would be 8.

#d6!: The addition of the exclamation point means that these are "exploding dice." If an individual die comes up a 6, you roll another die and add it to the total. Additional dice you get this way also "explode." Exploding dice are used for magical actions.

d66: This is a special type of die roll used to get results from a table. Take two six-sided dice, designate one as the tens digit and the other as the ones digit, and roll them. Putting the two digits together will give you one of 36 results numbered 11 to 66. For example, if the tens digit die comes up as a 4 and the ones digit die comes up as a 2, your result is 42. The d66 tables in the game are generally optional, and are there to help provide inspiration.

Credits

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Thanks to Charles Boucher, Grant Chen, Suichi Tanaka, Rabbit Éclair, Ben Lehman, Renee Knipe

Playtesters: Joshua Gervais, Joe Iglesias, Jonathan Davis, #BecomeTheMeguca (Giantree, Bardy, Charm, Mami-san, Nanao-kun, Firespitter, Kesh), Aaron Smith, Dave Empey, Grant Chen, Chris Camareno, Tinh Pham, Dave Taue, Elton Sanchez

If you playtest this game or have done so in the past and would like to be added to this list, just let me know.

A Magical World

The world is a vast place, but although mankind has always told stories of magic, to their tribes, to themselves, to the night sky, men have never held it in their grasp. Magic is real though. Magic is dangerous and terrible and beautiful. Magic is our only weapon against magic. Perhaps someday the world will forgive you for using it, but for now it hates you for it, hates your good intentions as well as your base desires. That is the world you will live in, a magical world.

The City

“The people in this city don’t care about each other. Human beings have a hardwired limit on how many other people they can care about—a defense mechanism—and it’s a lot less than two million.”

Magical Burst takes place in a large, clean, modern city. There are skyscrapers, trains, shops, schools, and homes. On the surface it is a safe place, though not necessarily a happy one. There is a sterility to urban life. Food comes on trucks, garbage leaves on trucks. People live a step removed from the natural cycle of life. Some are truly happy here, but many feel an emptiness that they cannot outrun. There are good people here, but there are also many mediocre people who provide a slow drip of misery that can build up until it becomes a flood of indifferent evil. Some would save these people if they could, some would wish all the suffering away and try to build a utopia. Others would destroy them like a vengeful god. Most simply leave them be.

Tsukaima

“Yeah, there’s something... off about Pyonkichi. But what choice do we have?”

The tsukaima (“familiar”) are cute little magical creatures who can grant girls with sufficient potential the powers of a magical girl. Some look closer to normal animals than others, but they never quite look natural. A tsukaima’s fur is always a little too clean and soft; they come in pure, vivid colors; and they often have some kind of arcane markings on them. And of course they’re sentient and capable of human speech.

It’s not clear where they came from. Somewhere far away certainly, so far that emotion and ego fade into the distance. As creatures of magic, tsukaima don’t quite think the way people do. Some are better than others at covering it up, but their values and understanding of the world are always a little off from how humans see things. Their true goals are not apparent, and if you do find out you may wish you hadn’t.

Magical Girls

“You have the potential. I can give you the power to fight them. I can make you into a magical girl.”

Magical girls are humans who can wield the power of magic. The tsukaima have not made it clear why they only recruit girls. Perhaps they are the only humans who have the necessary magical potential, or perhaps giving magical power to others has dangerous consequences. Regardless, a girl who is to become a magical girl must make a pact with a tsukaima. A magical girl receives a pendant that she can use to “transform” into her magical girl form. This transformation outwardly consists of a spontaneous change into a fanciful costume, but it unlocks her magical potential. Magical girls’ powers tend to be concentrated around particular elements or themes, though they can potentially put that elemental power to very creative uses.

Putting this kind of power in the hands of adolescent girls has consequences. They can abuse their newfound power, they can be astonishingly cruel to one another, and some will do just about anything to get their hands on another Oblivion Seed.

It's not clear how many magical girls there are in the world. They never appear in the news, and most people would dismiss them as mere fiction. However, there are others besides you and your friends. Sometimes you see things on the news that you're sure must be the work of other magical girls somewhere, but no one ever seems to suspect. Somehow, the world is not so different a place as it should be.

The Power of Magic

"Of course she 'freaked out.' Humans are weak that way."

Magic is Drawing on the Canvas of Reality

Magic is not a system of arcane incantations in dusty old books. It is a power that transforms thought into reality. Those who can use magic don't have spells so much as affinities, themes that color how they can enforce their will on the world. Some magical girls liken the theme of their magic to the main color they can use to paint on the canvas of the world.

The World Rejects Magic

The power of magic is glorious, beautiful, and feminine, and there is something about the world that hates it. Magic is like drawing on the canvas of reality, but that canvas is like a living thing, and it seems to fight against every attempt to create beauty. It strives to twist that beauty into something ugly at every turn. Even for people want to believe in magic, in the goodness of the one who wields it, the world turns magic into something unpredictable and dangerous. The world's hatred of magic pushes magical girls away from the normal world.

Magic is Powerful

One thing every magical girl learns very quickly is that the non-magical is very fragile compared to the magical. For the most part magic trumps not-magic as effortlessly as scissors beats paper. Magical girls find that against themselves and youma alike, normal people are very weak. Even the best military hardware is of little use against magical foes.

The Runes

One of the more curious aspects of magic is that it frequently features a strange form of writing. It will appear in youma's Nightmares, on magical girls' pendants and weapons, and in the air itself when some powerful magical effects are in play. No one has yet deciphered what these runes actually mean, and that may be for the best.



Youma

"We have to kill it. Otherwise it'll just keep eating people. That's how this works."

Youma are the monsters that magical girls must fight. They take countless forms, from warped humanoids to masses of abstract shapes. They can have a sort of twisted beauty, but there's always something about a youma that gnaws at the senses. There is something tragic and hurtful about each one, as though they embody mankind's most destructive impulses. They fill the air with cruel laughter, anguished screams, desperate whimpering, or dreadful silence.

Influence on Humans

Normal people cannot even perceive the youma or their influence, but they become victims all the same. Youma sap energy from unsuspecting humans, stealing memories, emotions, and life force itself. Victims who are only lightly touched by youma become tired and listless for a time, while those who suffer a more extensive attack can be turned into suicidal zombies or ripped them from reality entirely.

Nightmares

Most youma surround themselves with a distortion in the tapestry of the world called a Nightmare. For ordinary people this manifests as simply a vague feeling of dread. For magical girls and any others attuned to magic, a Nightmare appears as an increasingly surreal region of distorted reality. On the edges of the Nightmare things will seem a little off here and there, but at its heart, where the youma resides, it is a maddening jumble of objects and images. Less powerful youma will also sometimes take refuge in the Nightmare of a more powerful youma.

Memory Burst

When a youma is hurt, it will often release a burst of memories. These momentarily flood the minds of those in the vicinity, and can reshape the youma's Nightmare. Perhaps these memories are from who or what the youma was, or maybe it's just something the youma devoured coming up again.

Magical Girls and Youma

The tsukaima present the magical girls with the task of fighting and killing youma. Magic is the only thing that can harm a youma; non-magical weapons are at best an inconvenience to them. Some magical girls find they can fight youma using normal weapons, but this is because their own magic imbues those weapons with the necessary power.

When a magical girl kills a youma, its Nightmare collapses, leaving behind only an Oblivion Seed. A particularly powerful youma can leave behind two or even three Seeds. These appear as diamond-shaped gems with magical writing on them, and magical girls can store them inside of their pendants, where no one can take them while they live. It is said that a magical girl who accumulates 13 Oblivion Seeds is granted one wish. You've never seen or even heard of it actually happening, but that's what they say.

Imps

"Imps" are creatures that appear to be small, immature youma. They are still very dangerous to regular people, but magical girls can defeat them with relative ease. Some larger youma spawn their own distinct imps, while other imps wander about on their own, wreaking havoc and sometimes congregating in dark places. Left unchecked, imps will prey on people and eventually grow into full

youma. Since imps don't yield any Oblivion Seeds, the more cynical magical girls will deliberately leave them to feed on people and eventually grow into a youma they can harvest.

Witches

Magical girls can come into conflict for any number of reasons. They may fight over Oblivion Seeds or more mundane things, but they are still magical girls, still together on the last line of defense against the youma. Except, there are those magical girls who become something else, whose unconscionable deeds go beyond being self-serving. Witches are magical girls who take on some of the twisted power of the youma. You do not know how this happens, but you will quickly learn that they are terrifying foes. Where youma must hide in their Nightmares, witches are a part of the world, and can strike at you in ways the youma never could.

Basic Rules

This section covers the basic rules you'll need in order to play the earliest parts of the game and to understand the rest.

The Conversation

The core of the game is a conversation. As you play the game you talk back and forth about what's going on in a fictional world, telling/experiencing a story as you go. The players mainly talk about what their own characters are doing, while the GM handles most everything else, but everyone can offer suggestions. The conversation is special in that it serves to create an ongoing shared fiction, but it has the ebb and flow of a normal conversation too.

There are parts of the game that are more driven by rules (most notably combat), but most of the time you bring the rules into play when something in the conversation triggers a rule.

Scene Framing

We divide the game into scenes, kind of like in a play or a TV show. A scene is a block of action that takes place at a certain time and place. Scene framing is a tool to keep the game focused on the action. The GM often takes a lead role in framing scenes, but since the players control the protagonists of the story, their choices will determine what kinds of scenes the game includes more often than not.

Action Resolution

The "action resolution" rules are what we use when the outcome of a character's actions is in doubt. We treat mundane and magical actions a little differently. Mundane actions are limited by your abilities, while magic has a way of going out of control.

For a mundane action, roll two six-sided dice (2d6) and add the value of the attribute that applies to what the character is trying to do. The total is called your Result, and represents how well the character did overall.

For a magical action, you still roll 2d6 and add an attribute, but if you roll a 6 on a die you roll another die and add it to the result. Additional dice that you roll this way that come up 6s also make you roll another die. To distinguish rolls with and without these "exploding" dice, those that use this rule will say "2d6!"

Moves

Most of the time you'll make rolls through "moves." A move is a set of rules that trigger based on something happening in the fiction. Players generally shouldn't declare moves, but rather play out what their characters are trying to do. A typical move will say something like "When you X, roll 2d6 + [Attribute]." What follows will be a set of outcomes for different Results.

A 7 or less is a **miss**, meaning you fail and possibly expose yourself to more harm, an 8, 9, or 10 is a **weak hit**, meaning you succeed at a cost, and an 11 or higher is a **strong hit**, meaning you have an unmitigated success.

For magical moves a result of 15 or higher is a **critical hit**. On a critical hit you take a point of Overcharge, and specific moves may call for additional effects as well.

Mundane Moves

The following are the basic “mundane moves,” non-magical moves available to all player characters.

Act Under Pressure

When you act under pressure, roll 2d6 + Heart. On a 7 or less you buckle under the pressure. On an 8-10 you hold your own, but leave yourself exposed. On an 11+ you persevere.

Comfort Someone

When you make a significant investment in making someone feel better, they can remove 1 point of Trauma. If they wish, you can have 1 point of Hope.

Help Someone Out

When you take time to help someone, roll 2d6 + Heart. On a 7 or less your help is unwanted, or just makes the situation worse. On an 8-10 you are able to help them, but at a cost to yourself. On an 11 or higher you are able to help them in a substantial way, and you gain 1 Hope.

Hide the Truth

When you conceal the truth, roll 2d6 + Real. On a 7 or less it comes out despite your efforts. On an 8-10 you arouse some suspicions or strain someone’s trust in you. On an 11+ people don’t suspect anything for now.

Keep Up With Life

When you deal with things from everyday life, roll 2d6 + Real. On a 7 or less you mess up something pretty important. On an 8-10 you mess up something minor, but you can potentially fix it if you can take some time for it. On an 11 or higher you’re on top of things.

Lash Out

When you lash out at someone, roll 2d6 + Fury. On a 7 or less you get in trouble. On an 8-10 pick 1, on an 11+ pick 2:

- You cause them 1 Harm or 1 Trauma.
- You make them afraid of you.
- You don’t expose yourself to reprisal.

Seek the Truth

When you seek out the truth of things, roll 2d6 + Real. On a 7 or less you find trouble instead, or you learn something unrelated and distracting. On an 8-10 you learn something that gets you closer to what you wanted to know. On an 11 or higher you learn something substantial.

Girl Creation

Each player initially creates their character as a normal girl. They will most likely become magical girls over the course of the first game session. It certainly doesn't hurt to have some idea what their magical girl side will be like, but you don't need to worry about it just yet if you don't want to.

For each entry there is a d66 table. You can roll dice all the way through to see what kind of random character you get, or use them as inspiration, or just make up something entirely on your own. For those pertaining to how your character thinks and feels, you can change them later on.

Name

Give your girl a suitable name. The table below gives Japanese names inspired by magical girl anime, but other kinds of names are fine. There are magical girls in every part of the world.

d66	Family Name	d66	Family Name	d66	Family Name
11	Aikawa	31	Hino	51	Misugi
12	Aino	32	Hozumi	52	Mizuno
13	Aizawa	33	Hyuuga	53	Momomiya
14	Akatsusumi	34	Iwakura	54	Nagisa
15	Amano	35	Kagurazaka	55	Nonohara
16	Aoyama	36	Kanzaki	56	Onigawara
21	Arisugawa	41	Kasuga	61	Sawanoguchi
22	Fujiwara	42	Kawai	62	Shinohara
23	Goutokuji	43	Kousaka	63	Shirayuki
24	Hanazono	44	Kinomoto	64	Takamine
25	Haneoka	45	Matsubara	65	Tsukino
26	Hiiragi	46	Midorikawa	66	Watanabe

d66	Given Name	d66	Given Name	d66	Given Name
11	Ami	31	Miaka	51	Sasami
12	Eri	32	Michiru	52	Setsuna
13	Haruka	33	Minako	53	Sumire
14	Hikaru	34	Misao	54	Tsukasa
15	Hotaru	35	Mitsuki	55	Umi
16	Fuu	36	Momo	56	Usagi
21	Honoka	41	Nagisa	61	Yoshiko
22	Ichigo	42	Nanami	62	Yui
23	Komugi	43	Rei	63	Yuko
24	Makoto	44	Rina	64	Yuna
25	Mami	45	Ririka	65	Yuri
26	Mao	46	Sakura	66	Zakuro

What does being a girl mean to you?

This is an open-ended question, and it should reveal something about your character. Does she see herself as having unlimited potential, an heir to an exciting world? Does she feel crushed beneath the expectations people put on women?

d66	Result	d66	Result
11	A heavy burden.	41	Dealing with lots of expectations.
12	A subtler kind of strength.	42	Doing all the real work.
13	Always being judged.	43	Getting married and having kids.
14	Bearing the troubles of others.	44	Getting to wear cute clothes.
15	Being adaptable to any situation.	45	Having a unique voice.
16	Being adorable.	46	Having amazing potential.
21	Being at the mercy of others.	51	Having lots of responsibilities.
22	Being awesome.	52	Having power over others.
23	Being beautiful.	53	Having to look beautiful.
24	Being ignored.	54	Having to work harder.
25	Being talked over.	55	It doesn't define me.
26	Being the face of the future.	56	Living up to my mother's legacy.
31	Being underestimated.	61	No one cares about me.
32	Being valued less.	62	No one understands me.
33	Being vulnerable.	63	People don't listen to me.
34	Being weaker than others.	64	Sacrificing for others.
35	Carrying on the family line.	65	Taking care of others.
36	Coming apart at the seams.	66	The worst possible fate.

What two things connect you to the world? (Bonds)

Write down two things that draw your character to be a part of the world; we also call these her “bonds.” They can be people (including other players’ characters), pastimes, beliefs, ambitions, etc. For each, note down what it means to you. They don’t have to be obsessions either, just things that define and ground her. A character might complain about having to work at her parents’ shop, but have it as a Bond for how it connects her to the world. Also, this list isn’t exhaustive; your character can care about other things, and can discover more later on.

Bonds should matter over the course of the game, but the GM shouldn’t necessarily treat them as having bull’s-eyes on them. Talk about what you want to see done with them. Bonds will often create characters for the GM to handle; you should also discuss that with them.

d66	Result	d66	Result
11	A celebrity who I’m obsessed with.	41	My comics.
12	A friend who gave me a chance when no one else would.	42	My dad, who keeps me safe.
13	A friendly rival who keeps me honest.	43	My destiny.
14	An online friend I’m worried about.	44	My family.
15	Becoming rich someday.	45	My father, who I want to succeed.
16	Cooking for my friends.	46	My friends who are always there for me.
21	Exposing the truth the government is hiding.	51	My little sister/brother who I take care of.
22	Fighting for equality.	52	My mom, who I admire.
23	Helping people.	53	My mother, who needs my help.
24	Hope for the future.	54	My music.
25	Learning.	55	My older sister/brother who looks out for me.
26	Living up to my family legacy.	56	Protecting the environment.
31	My art.	61	Protecting those who are weaker than me.
32	My belief in justice.	62	Studying hard to get into a good college.
33	My beloved pet.	63	The band.
34	My best friend who needs my help.	64	The boy (or girl) I have a crush on.
35	My boyfriend/girlfriend.	65	The club I’m in at school.
36	My childhood friend.	66	The family business.

What is your wish?

If you could have a wish just come true as though by magic, what would it be?

d66	Result	d66	Result
11	For freedom to do what I want.	41	To be stronger.
12	For my father to be successful.	42	To be the greatest singer in the world!
13	For my friend to be alive again.	43	To become super-smart.
14	For my friend to smile again.	44	To end everyone's suffering.
15	For my imaginary lover to be real.	45	To find my friend who went missing.
16	For my mom to be there for me.	46	To find my sister.
21	For my mom to be well again.	51	To fix my mistakes.
22	For the pain to go away.	52	To fix the injustices of the world.
23	For the world to end.	53	To fix what's wrong with me.
24	For world peace.	54	To forget the past.
25	To be beautiful.	55	To get into a good college.
26	To be healthy again.	56	To go back in time and fix things.
31	To be loved by everyone.	61	To have my family back.
32	To be my old self again.	62	To leave this terrible world behind.
33	To be popular.	63	To live forever.
34	To be remembered for all time.	64	To live in luxury.
35	To be rich and famous.	65	To not be judged by my family's actions.
36	To be safe.	66	To undo my mistakes.

Attributes

Assign 8 points among the four attributes (Heart, Fury, Magic, and Real), giving each one a value between 1 and 4. Keep in mind that these will also affect how effectively your character can use the magical powers she'll be getting later. Fury and Magic are important for being able to mount a good offense, but Heart is useful for resisting effects and staying functional.

Heart	Your capacity for compassion and love, your ability to keep going despite adversity.
Fury	Your pure aggression, your ability to act for yourself. Used for magical melee attacks.
Magic	Your inherent potential for magic. Used for magical ranged attacks.
Real	Your ability to skillfully deal with the real world.

Gender

At its core this is a game about magical girls, and there are all sorts of girls. Cisgender girls, transgender girls, bi-gender and genderfluid girls, and more. There are any number of ways you could address the issue of gender in your own game, especially with the game's fantastical elements. I won't dictate how it should be, but I will lay out some possibilities that I think could be interesting.

- Although in theory girls are the ones who have sufficient magical potential, the tsukaima, being the alien creatures that they are, aren't especially clear on human notions of gender. Someone that they offer to make a pact with is a girl on some level, even if they don't know it themselves.
- Becoming a magical girl means becoming a girl, no matter who you are the rest of the time. For a boy, this could be an opportunity to explore a whole new point of view, one they'd never considered before.
- Rather than meddling with magic, being a transgender girl could simply be a part of who a character is. Magic didn't make them a girl; it chose them because they have the inborn potential.

Into the Magical World

Once the players have created their characters as normal girls, it's time to begin the game proper.

Introductions

Begin by having each player introduce their character. Discuss how the characters know each other, whether they've been longtime friends or will be meeting for the first time as the game unfolds.

A (Sort of) Normal World

Talk a little bit about the city where the game takes place. Think about where the characters live and go to school, and what kinds of things the city features. Also include one odd thing that's got some people a little nervous. If you're having trouble thinking of something, use the table below.

From there it should be obvious how to begin. Play out a scene or so of everyday life. For the players this is an opportunity to start getting into character, and to see a bit of what the characters are like before magic comes into their lives.

Something Strange

The GM then introduces the characters to the magical world. Some kind of threat—a youma or witch most likely—is active in the area, and the girls run into a tsukaima that recruits them to be magical girls. Play out how they run into this stuff. When they become magical girls, follow the rules in the next section.

The GM will need to have a tsukaima character ready. There are guidelines for developing them on p. XX, and a set of 7 sample tsukaima on p. XX. When they discover multiple magical girl candidates, tsukaima often make pacts with them as a group, granting magical girl powers to them all simultaneously. You will also need an enemy; see p. XX for guidelines on how to write them up as well as sample enemies.

Into the Unknown

If they confront the threat, play out the battle. I recommend using the quicker skirmish rules (p. XX) this time around, but you can run it as a full battle (p. XX) if you prefer.

From there, you can begin with the aftermath of the battle and the consequences that flow from it, and whatever course of action the new magical girls choose to take.

d66	One Odd Thing
11	A classmate suddenly went missing.
12	A girl who seems to be eating old vases.
13	A large sinkhole opened up near the center of the city.
14	A lot of people have been getting sick lately.
15	A lot of small objects seem to be going missing lately.
16	A major corporation built a new headquarters in town shaped like a household object.
21	A nonsensical fashion trend has been sweeping the city.
22	A website is accurately announcing who will die in the next 24 hours.
23	All of the computers at school are messed up because of some kind of virus.
24	An email that seems to come from the future.
25	An empty red train comes every night at exactly 1:11 a.m.
26	Animals have been agitated lately.
31	Electronic screens keep showing messages that seem to address you.
32	Graffiti of what looks like some kind of magical runes has been showing up all over the city.
33	It seems like every time you get near a street light it goes out.
34	Men are building a strange structure that you remember from a dream.
35	More and more businesses are showing up with a penguin logo.
36	People have spotted strange lights in the night sky.
41	Recurring dreams of a crystalline castle.
42	Something you thought you'd lost long ago turns up in an unlikely place.
43	The cherry blossoms are blooming out of season.
44	The clock's hands start snapping back and forth erratically.
45	The movie you're watching is going totally differently from how it should.
46	The news is talking about the discovery of an ancient statue. It looks uncannily like you.
51	The number 6 seems to be turning up all the time lately.
52	The plots in the popular magical girl anime have been getting really weird.
53	The water is oddly still.
54	The weather has been odd for this time of year.
55	There are no birds in this city anymore.
56	There are persistent rumors of a ghost haunting a shopping mall.
61	There have been a lot of insects around lately.
62	There have been a lot of minor earthquakes lately.
63	There have been an unusually high number of traffic accidents lately.
64	There seem to be cats watching you all the time.
65	There's a popular new app that seems to be able to predict the future.
66	Your diary has several pages in the future written in an unknown language.

Becoming Magical Girls

When a girl makes a pact with a tsukaima and becomes a magical girl, the player goes through the steps below to fill out the character's magical girl persona and abilities.

Starting as Magical Girls

By default this game has you start your characters as normal girls who become magical girls over the course of the first session. This is basically because I feel it's such an important turning point for the characters that it's better to play it out as a matter of course. You may feel differently of course, and if you want to start out with your characters already having their powers it's just a matter of carrying out the steps below before you start the game.

What Magical Girls Can Do

What follows is a baseline to help you understand what magical girls are generally capable of.

- **Transforming:** A magical girl has both a normal and a magical form. She can transform into her magical form in the blink of an eye (though she may experience it as a more elaborate transformation sequence), and it is only in this form that she has access to her other magical powers.
- **Fighting:** Magical girls have a natural ability to fight. Magic is so potent that non-magical things are virtually useless against it. Magical girls likewise become durable enough to stand up to the incredible destructive force of magical attacks.
- **Athletic Feats:** A transformed magical girl is capable of certain superhuman athletic feats, most notably leaping huge distances. Some magical girls take to leaping across the rooftops as they patrol the city for youma.
- **Sorcery:** Finally, magical girls have a limited ability to use their magic for other purposes. This takes some time and concentration, and it exacts a cost.

Magical Name

Each magical girl also has a “magical name,” which is encoded into her powers in some undefined way when she makes her pact with a tsukaima. This is usually some kind of title followed by her given name; see the table below for examples.

d66	Part 1	Part 2	Part 3	Part 4
11	Arcane	Acolyte	Beautiful	For the last part, use your character’s normal given name.
12	Card	Alice	Bountiful	
13	Cosmic	Angel	Cutie	
14	Creamy	Blossom	Dazzling	
15	Cutie	Captor	Diamond	
16	Dream	Child	Eldritch	
21	Enchanted	Corrector	Elegant	
22	Fancy	Crusader	Eternal	
23	Final	Cure	Exquisite	
24	Flower	Diva	Fancy	
25	Fortune	Doll	Fearless	
26	Holy	Fairy	Heartful	
31	Lovely	Fraulein	Heavenly	
32	Luminous	Girl	Honey	
33	Lunar	Guardian	Little	
34	Magic	Harmony	Lovely	
35	Magical	Healer	Lyrical	
36	Miracle	Idol	Magical	
41	Mystic	Knight	Magnificent	
42	Nurse	Maiden	Miracle	
43	Pretty	Melody	Missy	
44	Prism	Mistress	Mysterious	
45	Revolution	Moon	Pastel	
46	Sailor	Omega	Perfect	
51	Saint	Oracle	Pixie	
52	Shadow	Peach	Platinum	
53	Smile	Priestess	Precious	
54	Solar	Princess	Pretty	
55	Stardust	Rune	Radiant	
56	Sugar	Savior	Rainbow	
61	Super	Songstress	Shining	
62	Twilight	Sorceress	Silent	
63	Ultimate	Star	Stormy	
64	Unicorn	Strawberry	Sweet	
65	Universal	Valkyrie	Visionary	
66	Wedding	Witch	Wonderful	

Magical Mark

Becoming a magical girl makes some kind of change to your normal self. It's usually something small, and something that a normal person could've been born with.

d66	Result	d66	Result
11	Became athletic	41	Gained weight
12	Became delicate	42	Heterochromia
13	Became more muscular	43	Less prominent nose
14	Became older	44	Lighter skin
15	Became shorter	45	Longer fingernails
16	Became sickly	46	Longer hair
21	Became taller	51	More angular facial structure
22	Became thinner	52	More prominent nose
23	Became younger	53	Outlandish hairstyle
24	Bigger eyes	54	Rounder face
25	Birthmark appeared/disappeared	55	Scar appeared/disappeared
26	Clearer skin	56	Shorter hair
31	Darker skin	61	Softer facial structure
32	Different eye color	62	Started walking with a limp
33	Different hair color	63	Tattoos appeared/disappeared
34	Different hairstyle	64	Vision got worse
35	Dyed hair	65	Vision improved
36	Freckles appeared/disappeared	66	You now look like a different person

Magical Theme

Each magical girl has an overall “theme” to her magic. This can be an “element” like fire or lightning, an emotion, a type of object, etc. This gives a flavor to her magic, and she will occasionally be able to create special effects with it as well.

d66	Result	d66	Result
11	Animals	41	Light
12	Blood	42	Lightning
13	Butterflies	43	Love
14	Chains	44	Magnetism
15	Dreams	45	Metal
16	Earth	46	Moon
21	Fate	51	Nothingness
22	Fear	52	Rainbows
23	Feathers	53	Ribbons
24	Fire	54	Sadness
25	Flowers	55	Shadow
26	Force	56	Stars
31	Gold	61	Sun
32	Gravity	62	Swords
33	Hate	63	Time
34	Healing	64	Water
35	Ice	65	Wind
36	Leaves	66	Wood

Costume Color

Select a primary color for your magical girl costume. You can add more details about what the costume looks like if you wish.

d66	Result	d66	Result
11-12	Red	41-42	Gray
13-14	Orange	43-44	White
15-16	Yellow	45-46	Black
21-22	Green	51-52	Pearl
23-24	Blue	53-54	Gold
25-26	Indigo	55-56	Silver
31-32	Violet	61-62	Bronze
33-34	Pink	63-64	Iridescent
35-36	Brown	65-66	Rainbow

Magical Weapon

Each magical girl has some kind of weapon that she uses to attack enemies and focus her power. This can be a proper weapon like a sword or gun, a magical implement like a wand or staff, or something totally absurd.

	d66	Weapon		d66	Weapon
1 – Magical	11	Magic Wand	4 – Melee	41	Sword
	12	Magic Staff		42	Spear
	13	Mystic Orb		43	Mace
	14	Tome		44	Nunchucks
	15	Bell		45	Axe
	16	Holy Symbol		46	Pole Arm
2 – Military	21	Flintlock	5 – Domestic	51	Frying Pan
	22	Revolver		52	Tennis Racket
	23	Shotgun		53	Kitchen Knife
	24	Sniper Rifle		54	Baseball Bat
	25	Assault Rifle		55	Mop
	26	Rocket Launcher		56	Tea Ware
3 – Dangerous	31	Grenades	6 – Weird	61	Car
	32	Garrote		62	Animal
	33	Dagger		63	Ray Gun
	34	Gauntlets		64	Cannon
	35	Bow		65	Ribbon
	36	Shuriken		66	Microphone

Base Resolve

“Resolve” is a measure of a magical girl’s ability to keep fighting despite taking damage. A magical girl’s “Base Resolve” is how much she starts with, and the maximum amount she can have regardless of how much something might heal to her. Unless you take a Talent or Specialization that changes it, **your Base Resolve is 10.**

Basic Talent

Select one Basic Talent from those below. These are special abilities that can help your character both in and out of combat, and you can acquire more later on.

The first part of a talent's description explains what it does and what effect it has during normal scenes. Talents that have different effects for skirmishes and full battles will have those listed in successive paragraphs.

d6	Talent
1	Binding
2	Fly
3	Heal
4	Magical Pet
5	Power Strike
6	Teleport

Binding

You can create some kind of magical objects that can hold a person in place. By taking 1 Overcharge you can prevent someone from moving from where they are until either the scene ends or someone can inflict 2 points of damage on the bonds. The bonds will also disappear immediately if you lose all of your Resolve, or if you are killed or knocked unconscious.

Full Battle: When you successfully hit with an attack, you can take 1 Overcharge to give the target the Bound condition.

Fly

Your magic lets you actually fly; this could be with wings, by magical force, by skating on the air, etc. You can fly short distances with ease, and you can take 1 Overcharge to fly a long distance.

Full Battle: You can use a Support Action to move 2 zones.

Heal

You have the power to heal. You can take 1 Overcharge to remove up to 2 Harm from yourself or someone else.

Full Battle: As a Support Action you can take 1 Overcharge to restore 3 points of Resolve to yourself or someone else within a range of 0-1.

Magical Pet

You have a small magical pet. You can decide what it looks like. It is not capable of speech, but it has the intelligence of a fairly smart animal. Normal people can't see it. It can perform tasks for you, provided they are simple enough to convey in one short sentence.

Power Strike

You are able to concentrate your power to make an individual attack have even more destructive power. Outside of battle you can take 1 Overcharge to destroy an obstacle.

Skirmish: When using the “Go on the Offensive” move, you can take 1 Overcharge to add +2 to your Result after you roll.

Full Battle: After an attack hits, you can take 1 Overcharge to cause an additional 2 damage to the target.

Teleport

Teleportation allows you to instantly move from one place to another. You can take 1 Overcharge to teleport to another location within 100 meters or so.

Skirmish: You can take 1 Overcharge to automatically succeed at running away from the battle.

Full Battle: As a Support Action you can take 1 Overcharge to instantly move to any zone on the battlefield map.

The First Transformation

When you transform into a magical girl for the first time, roll 2d6! + Magic.

- **On a 7 or less** the change is agonizing and traumatic; take 2 Trauma.
- **On an 8 to 10** the change is strange and somewhat painful, but you persevere through it.
- **On an 11 to 14** the change is ecstatic and leaves you feeling invigorated; gain 1 Hope.
- **On a 15+** the change goes a little out of control, and it scares you. Take 1 Trauma, and you have a vision, you create an unnatural phenomenon around you while transforming, or it changes you in some way.

Advanced Rules

Transforming

A magical girl has a “normal form” and a “magical form.” The normal form is still fragile and human, but a magical girl can transform into her magical form in the blink of an eye.

Bonds

When things happen to a magical girl’s bonds, it can cause her to gain Hope or Trauma points. If the subject of a bond is substantially harmed or thwarted she takes a Trauma point, and if it is helped or fulfilled she gains a Hope point.

A player can change one of their character’s bonds between game sessions when it seems appropriate.

Basic Magical Moves

These moves are available to all magical girls when transformed.

Boost

Once per scene you can take 1 Overcharge to add 1d6! to the Result of a magical action.

Change the World

When you try to use magic to affect the real world, roll 2d6! + Heart (if you’re doing something to help others) or + Fury (if you’re doing something selfish).

- **On a 7 or less** it goes wrong and starts spiraling out of control. Take 1 Trauma.
- **On an 8-10** you accomplish more or less what you set out to do, but there’s an obvious drawback or mishap.
- **On an 11-14** things go more or less as you’d hoped, though the long-term effects remain to be seen. Gain 1 Hope.
- **On a 15+** things more or less go as you’d hoped, but in the process your power goes further than you’d like.

This move is for when magical girls try to do things like fight crime (or police corruption), play Robin Hood (or just steal for their own benefit), or otherwise use their magical strength in the real world. The scope of it will largely be up to the GM, but I recommend staying relatively personal.

Patrol the City

When you patrol the city looking for magical issues, roll 2d6! + Magic. On a 7 or less you don’t find anything, and may have called attention to yourself. On an 8 or higher you find something. On an 8 to 10 choose 1, and on an 11+ choose 2:

- It doesn’t notice you.
- You’re able to set up an ambush.
- You’re able to call for allies without it being aware.

Sense Magic

When you attempt to detect the presence of magic or magical creatures, roll 2d6! + Magic. On a 7 or less you don't find anything, and may have called attention to yourself. On an 8 to 10 you have a rough idea of where active magical things are in the immediate vicinity. On an 11 or higher you have a very clear idea of where active magical things are in the area, but on a 15 or higher you also call attention to yourself.

Sorcery

When you attempt to create a magical effect for a specific purpose, first describe an effect that stems from your Magical Theme, then take Overcharge based on the magnitude of the effect, and finally roll 2d6! + Magic. On a 7 or less something goes wrong with your magic. On an 8 to 10 it does what you want, though a few details aren't quite right. On an 11 or higher it does exactly what you want, but on a 15+ it calls undue attention to you or has added side-effects.

The number of Overcharge points you take to use sorcery depends on the magnitude of the effect you're trying to achieve. If the amount of Overcharge involved pushes you over 6, any additional points do carry over after the Fallout.

Overcharge	Effect
1	Something minor and short-lived, that could be explained as a coincidence.
2	Something impossible without magic, but which does not greatly affect the outside world.
3	Effect is flagrantly impossible without magic and has a potent effect on the immediate area.

Skirmishes

This game divides combat into "skirmishes" and "full battles." Skirmishes are quick, boiling down to a few die rolls, while full battles involve tactical combat rules and can take a fair amount of time. You can treat skirmishes like fights with minor enemies and full battles like boss battles in a video game if you like, but it's entirely possible to play the game using only one type of combat. The real difference is in how detailed the rules are.

For a skirmish all of the opposition is abstracted into one unit. The players' goal is to score enough Hits to defeat the enemy; the number required will depend on how powerful the enemy is. For youma this is equal to the opposition's total Spread value. If the players' magical girls fight each other, each side effectively has a Spread equal to the number of members it has, and the side that scores the most Hits total wins and determines the final result as usual.

Each player describes in general terms what their character is doing in the battle, and rolls on one of the skirmish moves below. Stronger or weaker enemies will give a bonus or penalty to these rolls.

Go on the Offensive

Roll 2d6! + Fury (if you rush in close) or + Magic (if you bombard the enemy from a distance).

- On a 7 or less you are unsuccessful, and you take a Personal Consequence.
- On an 8 or higher you manage to harm the enemy and score one Hit.
- On an 11 or higher you also leave the enemy off-balance, so that the next ally to attack gets +1 to their roll.
- On a 15 or higher you overwhelm the enemy and score another Hit.

Protect Someone

When you try to protect someone else from harm in battle, roll 2d6! + Heart.

- On a 7 or less you leave them exposed.
- On an 8 to 10 you take the brunt of what was coming at them, and you take a Personal Consequence.
- On an 11 or higher you are able to protect them from harm.

Run Away

When you try to flee from battle, roll 2d6! + Fury or 2d6 + Real.

- On a 7 or less the way is blocked, your escape route endangers others, or you simply cannot outrun the threat; you take a Personal Consequence.
- On an 8 to 10 you escape, but you leave someone or something behind.
- On an 11 or higher you get clean away.

Skirmish Outcome

Once each player character has had a chance to act once, total up how many Hits the group scored as a whole, and compare that to the opposition's Spread to determine the overall results of the battle.

- **Spread+2 or More:** The magical girls kill or seriously harm their enemy, whether they meant to or not.
- **Spread or Spread+1:** The magical girls trounce their foe.
- **Spread-1:** The magical girls win at a significant cost. Each takes a Personal Consequence, and there is a Group Consequence.
- **Spread-2 or Less (but still at least 1):** The magical girls suffer a defeat. They are able to get away for now, but each survivor takes a Personal Consequence, and there is a Group Consequence.
- **Zero Hits:** The magical girls are soundly defeated, and suffer a serious loss of some kind. If it seems appropriate you can say your character died. Each survivor takes a Personal Consequence, and there are 2 Group Consequences.

Personal Consequences

When a character suffers a Personal Consequence, the player selects one of the following. If you suffer multiple consequences, you cannot take the same one twice unless you are taking more than 3 at once.

- Take 1 Trauma
- Take 1 Harm
- Take 1 Overcharge

Group Consequences

When the group suffers a Group Consequence, the GM picks one of the following according to what would make sense.

- One or more normal people in the area (who no one successfully protected) get killed or seriously injured.
- Excess magical energy bleeds off to cause something unnatural to happen.
- There is major damage to buildings and such in the immediate area that will definitely be noticed.
- Something else that would naturally arise from the situation.

Full Battles

A full battle is a more detailed confrontation between the magical girls and an enemy. Where a skirmish can play out in a matter of minutes, a full battle will take more like 20 to 30 minutes.

Full battles work a little differently from other parts of the game in that it's the one instance where the GM rolls dice for NPCs. For this purpose youma and other magical foes have the same set of attributes as magical girls.

Resolve and Damage

Magical girls and other magical beings have Resolve points that represent their resilience to magical damage. A typical magical girl has 10 points of Resolve, and a typical basic attack causes 2 damage. Any time a character is hit by an attack, they subtract however much damage it caused from their current Resolve.

A magical girl who reaches zero Resolve ignores any further damage from the attack that brought her down that low, but she is forced out of her magical girl form. She can transform again as a Support Action on her turn if someone uses a talent that lets her regain some Resolve, but otherwise she will be a normal person for the next few hours. Youma who reach zero resolve will die, and unless they are very weak they will yield an Oblivion Seed.

Normal people (and magical girls in their normal forms) don't have Resolve, and instead if they take damage they sustain Harm. A person dies if they take 4 or more Harm, and if they've taken 1 to 3 Harm they subtract the amount of Harm they've taken from all rolls.

Resolve only applies during a full battle, and once a battle ends each magical girl goes back up to her Base Resolve.

The Battlefield Map

In this game we divide the area in which a battle happens into a set of abstract zones. We call the map of these zones the “battlefield map,” and the default battlefield map is a set of 6 zones arranged in a line.

We describe movement, the ranges of attacks, etc. in terms of the number of zones. An attack with a Range of zero can only affect targets in the same zone, while an attack with a Range of 1-2 can affect targets 1 or 2 zones away. An effect cannot affect targets that don’t fall within the effect’s Range, even if they are closer than the effect’s minimum range.

Battlefield Obstacles

In certain circumstances it will make sense to have particular obstacles on the battlefield. These are modifiers to individual positions that have specific effects. They can take any number of specific forms though. “Rough Terrain” could easily be dozens of metal bars magical girls must navigate through, or a wall of water they have to swim through, or something else.

- **Barrier:** A “barrier” is some kind of wall that prevents passage through the Position. A typical barrier will become passable after it sustains a certain amount of damage (4 for a fairly weak barrier, 10 or more for a stronger one). A barrier has a defensive modifier of +2, and characters must still make an attack to damage it.
- **Rough Terrain:** Any number of factors can make a position difficult to traverse. To exit a zone that has Rough Terrain, a character must either use actions for 2 Positions worth of movement, or use the Reckless Movement move. Teleportation and other abilities that skip over zones can ignore Rough Terrain.
- **Objective:** Things (and people) the magical girls might want to reach can be placed on particular positions on the battlefield map.

Conditions

Certain Moves will impose conditions on characters. Conditions remain until either combat ends or another move (such as the Recovery move) removes them.

Bleeding: Take 1 damage at the start of each round.

Bound: Moving counts as a Main Action for you, and you have a defensive modifier of +1.

Dazed: You only take one action (Main or Support) per turn, and you have a defensive modifier of +1.

Rounds and Turns

A full battle goes in a series of rounds. During each round, each participating character gets to take one turn (though many youma have the ability to take multiple turns). Normally one of the players will go first, though some youma have the ability to go first. Whenever a character finishes their turn, the one controlling that character picks who goes next from among those who still haven’t used all of their turns, and so on until everyone has used their turns and a new round begins. A youma with multiple turns cannot pass the turn to itself unless there is no one else left who has a turn.

Each turn a character has a **Main Action** and a **Support Action** for each turn they take. Main Actions are involved things like attacking, while Support Actions are smaller things like movement. You can trade your Main Action for a Support Action, but not the other way around. Unused actions are simply lost.

Basic Full Battle Moves

Melee Attack (Main Action): When you attack an enemy in the same zone, roll 2d6! + Fury (plus the target's Defensive Modifier, if any). On an 8 to 10 you hit and do 2 damage. On an 11+ you hit and either do 3 damage or give the next ally to attack the target this round a +1 bonus. On a 15+ you also do an additional point of damage.

Ranged Attack (Main Action): When you attack an enemy 1-3 zones away, roll 2d6! + Magic (plus the target's Defensive Modifier, if any). On an 8 to 10 you hit and do 2 damage. On an 11+ you hit and give the next ally to attack the target this round a +1 bonus. On a 15+ you also do an additional point of damage.

Movement (Support Action): Move to an adjacent zone. If you have more enemies than allies in the zone or if there is an enemy with the Opportunistic ability, you must use either Disengage or Reckless Movement instead.

Disengage (Main Action): Move to an adjacent zone. Unlike Movement, you can use this move even if there are more enemies than allies in that zone or an enemy with the Opportunistic ability.

Protect (Main Action): Designate another character that you wish to protect. Until the start of your next turn, any time they are attacked you can roll 2d6! + Heart. On a 7 or less the attack happens normally. On an 8+ the attacker has a -1 penalty and the target takes 1 less damage if it hits. On an 11+ any damage is reduced by a further -1, and if you attack the attacker before the end of your next turn you get +1 to the check.

Reckless Movement (Free Action): Use this move when you try to leave a zone that has Rough Terrain without using 2 Positions worth of movement, or you try to leave a zone where there are either more enemies than allies or an enemy with the Opportunistic ability. This move is considered a part of whatever move you use for moving, and thus can be used on top of Movement. Roll 2d6! + Heart. On a 7 or less you fail to move out of your current zone. On an 8 to 10 you can move, but only if you take 1 damage. On an 11+ you are able to move out of your zone successfully.

Recovery (Support Action): When you try to recover from a condition, roll 2d6! + Heart. On an 8 to 10 you can remove one condition, and on an 11 or higher you can remove all conditions.

Defensive Stance (Main Action): Until the start of your next turn, anyone attacking you has a -1 penalty to their roll, and each time you take damage it is reduced by 1 point.

Ending a Full Battle

A full battle ends when one side can't or won't fight anymore, whether from being slain or incapacitated, surrendering, or escaping the battle. Youma will normally fight to the death, but magical girls get un-transformed when they run out of Resolve, leaving a vulnerable human girl.

A magical girl who gets reduced to half her Base Resolve during a battle takes a Personal Consequence as per a skirmish, and a magical girl who loses all of her Resolve takes a second Personal Consequence.

Fallout

Magical girls have three values that count upwards: Overcharge, Trauma, and Hope. When a character reaches 6 points of Overcharge, Trauma, or Hope, the player erases those points, and the character has Fallout matching the type of points. The player selects one of the options from the appropriate type of Fallout and checks off the box next to it; if all four boxes are checked, they instead have the Extreme Fallout for that type and erase the checked boxes.

There won't always be a good spot to fit in a given kind of Fallout into the current scene. When this happens, the player can mark off the points and boxes as usual, and then the GM can fit the Fallout in whenever seems appropriate.

Overcharge Fallout

- Your magical girl form has a permanent Change (see below).
- Your normal form has a temporary Change.
- Your magic causes an unnatural Phenomenon (see below) in the area for a short time.
- There is a burst of magic based on your magic's theme at an inopportune time.

Trauma Fallout

- You have an outburst that alienates you from others.
- You hurt yourself.
- One of your Bonds becomes twisted.
- You start trying to avoid dealing with the world.

Hope Fallout

- You have a moment of sincere hope. Erase any points of Overcharge and Trauma you currently have.
- A lucky break gets you closer to your goal.
- You are able to heal someone else, removing points of Overcharge and Trauma, healing a serious injury, or removing a single effect caused by Fallout.
- You find a new friend.

Extreme Overcharge/Trauma Fallout

- There is a Magical Burst, a massive surge of magical energy that explodes outward from you.
- Your normal form has a permanent Change.
- Erase one of your Bonds.
- Your magical girl becomes a youma or a witch; only select this option if you no longer wish to play the character.

Extreme Hope Fallout

- You cause a small miracle to happen.
- Undo any alterations to your character caused by other Shifts.
- Something about your magic causes the entire world become just a little bit of a happier place.
- Your magical girl stops being a magical girl, whether by ascending to become something else or simply retiring to be a normal girl. (Only choose this if you no longer wish to play her.)

Changes

“Changes” are magical mutations, unnatural features that Fallout sometimes inflicts on magical girls. The table below is a representative sample of them; you can use it as-is or invent your own to suit the situation.

d66	Feature	Description
11	Bionic Limbs	Your arms and legs are apparently artificial on the inside, because when you exert yourself they make a motor whining noise.
12	Blood Smell	Your body smells of fresh blood. It is a coppery, unnerving smell.
13	Bloody Eyes	Your eyes take on a creepy blood-red color.
14	Camera Eyes	It’s subtle, but your eyes are in fact cameras.
15	Candy Scent	Your body smells strongly of sweet candy.
16	Cat Eyes	Your eyes have slit-like irises, not unlike a cat’s eyes.
21	Catgirl	You have the pointed ears and long tail of a housecat.
22	Cold-Blooded	You become cold-blooded. Your skin feels unnaturally cold at times, and you become very sluggish when it’s cold.
23	Compartment	There is a compartment with a simple door on your back or stomach. It seems to have random objects in it when opened.
24	Crystal Rash	Translucent crystals start growing out of your skin. They can easily break off.
25	Dead Eye	One of your eyes becomes milky white and sightless.
26	Discolored Skin	Your body takes on a strange color.
31	Fast-Growing Hair	Your hair grows unnaturally fast, such that you would need a haircut every few days just to have it be remotely manageable.
32	Forehead Gem	There is a colorful gem planted in your forehead.
33	Glittery	Your skin is faintly glittery, like some kind of makeup.
34	Heterochromia	One of your eyes is red, and the other is blue (or some other combination). Both are vivid, unnatural colors.
35	High Density	Your body becomes exceptionally dense, so that although you’re the same size, you weigh several times more.
36	Magical Reflection	Your reflection in any given surface has a mind of its own.
41	Magnetic	Your body becomes mildly magnetic, so that small metal objects are attracted to you.
42	Maw	Somewhere on your body is a large mouth with many sharp teeth. You can conceal it with normal clothing, but sometimes it gets hungry and restless.
43	Moe Girl	Your proportions are a little too perfect, your skin looks photoshopped, your eyes become just a little too large, and your hair looks like a cosplay wig.
44	Pallor	Your skin becomes unnervingly pale, and your eyes become sunken.
45	Prehensile Hair	Your hair becomes prehensile, and will move on its own when you are emotional.
46	Prismatic Hair	Your hair is made of transparent strands that display countless different colors when they catch the light.
51	Rubbery Limbs	Your limbs have a rubbery quality, as though your bones are made of rubber. It looks freaky if you’re not careful how you move.
52	Scarred	You acquire a rather nasty-looking scar somewhere on your body.
53	Scroll Body	Your body becomes covered in magical writing.
54	Second Mouth	You have a second mouth on the side of your head or somewhere else on your body.
55	Silly Voice	Your voice sounds silly and high-pitched.
56	Smell of Sulfur	There is always a smell of sulfur around you.
61	Stigmata	You have one or more wounds that never quite seem to heal.
62	Stretchy Neck	Your neck is exceptionally stretchy. Although you can look normal if you’re careful, your neck can stretch out to six feet or so.
63	Third Eye	A third eye opens up in your forehead.
64	Vivid Eyes	Your eyes take on an unnaturally vibrant hue.
65	White Eyes	Your eyes are all white, with no irises or pupils.
66	Wings	You sprout a pair of wings, large enough to be conspicuous but not large enough to fly.

Phenomena

“Phenomena” are Fallout effects that temporarily distort reality in the immediate vicinity. They aren’t necessarily things that are impossible, but they’re definitely unnerving.

d66	Result
11	A door doesn’t take someone to the right place.
12	A fruit tree starts sprouting and growing unnaturally fast.
13	A sudden gust of wind fills the air with slips of paper.
14	A wind comes up carrying choking ash.
15	All sound magically ceases.
16	Animals speak nonsense words.
21	Birds fly backwards.
22	Bugs crawl out of cracks in the walls.
23	Clocks start changing times at random.
24	Drawings in the area become animated.
25	Droplets of water float in mid-air.
26	Electronics play strange, indecipherable voices.
31	Every alarm goes off at once.
32	Every phone in the area receives wrong number calls.
33	Gravity is abruptly doubled around you.
34	It suddenly becomes extremely cold in the area.
35	It suddenly becomes very hot in the area.
36	Magical writing temporarily appears on walls.
41	Mirrors don’t reflect people.
42	Objects float as though controlled by unseen hands.
43	Objects wink out of existence.
44	Patterns on the floor contort and writhe.
45	Raindrops rise up from the ground.
46	Random arrangements of leaves, mildew, etc. seems to be faces.
51	Reflective surfaces have a short time delay.
52	Small candies rain from the sky.
53	Small objects start hopping around as though alive.
54	The area becomes eerily quiet as background noises fade away.
55	The walls flicker like a software glitch.
56	The weather changes very abruptly.
61	There is a rain of blood.
62	There is a small pocket of low gravity.
63	There is a small pocket of zero gravity.
64	There is a smell of sulfur.
65	There is an oddly sweet smell in the air.
66	There is an unnatural snowfall.

Advancement

Whenever it seems appropriate, the GM can allow the players to each select an Advance for their character. You can do this at the end of each game session, at whatever seems like a suitable milestone, etc. Try to pace them out so that the players don't run out of interesting advances to take over the course of the campaign. I recommend letting them have the first Advance early on, possibly before the first session even ends. Especially if you are using full battles much, letting the magical girls get their specializations will open up a lot of interesting options.

Advances are divided into three tiers. New magical girls can only select from the First Tier, but they gain access to more as they select more Advances. Each time you select an Advance, mark it off the list; you cannot select it again.

First Tier

- Gain a Specialization
- Gain a Basic Talent
- Gain a Specialization Talent (must have taken a specialization)
- Gain a Specialization Talent (must have taken a specialization)
- +1 Heart (max 4)
- +1 Fury (max 4)
- +1 Magic (max 4)
- +1 Real (max 4)

Second Tier

Available after you've taken at least 3 first tier advances, including the "Gain a Specialization" advance.

- Gain a Basic Talent
- Gain a Specialization Talent
- Gain a Talent from another Specialization
- +2 Base Resolve
- +1 Heart (max 5)
- +1 Fury (max 5)
- +1 Magic (max 5)
- +1 Real (max 5)

Third Tier

Available after you've taken at least 3 second tier Advances.

- Select an Advanced Specialization or a second basic Specialization
- Gain a Finishing Attack
- Gain an Advanced Talent

Specialization talents, advanced talents, advanced specializations, and finishing attacks aren't ready yet.

Specializations

The specializations in essence let magical girls specialize in particular roles, similar to an MMORPG. The Knight, Priestess, and Sorceress roughly correspond to tanks, healers, and DPS. This is more important if you're using the Full Battle rules. Although a group can potentially be more effective with one magical girl of each specialization, it's not necessary to cover all the bases. Specializations are also relatively flexible, and common talents let you dip into another specialization's role.

Knight

These magical girls specialize in defense. That doesn't mean they are passive defenders though. Rather, they punish enemies for going after their friends.

Resilience: In Full Battles, reduce the damage you take from each attack by 1. You can also shrug off injuries, removing a point of Harm once per session.

Defender: In Full Battles as a Support Action you can declare you are protecting. This applies the effects of the Protect action on all allies in the same zone as you, and once before your next turn if an enemy attacks an ally in the same zone you can make a basic Melee Attack against that enemy, but it causes 1 less damage if it hits. In Skirmishes you have a +1 bonus to the Protect Someone move.

Priestess

These magical girls specialize in support, using their powers to make their allies more effective.

Healing: Up to 2 times per scene you can heal someone. In a Full Battle this lets you restore 2 Resolve to someone within a range of 0-1 as a Support Action, and out of battle this lets you remove 1 Harm.

Invigorate: In a Full Battle, you can use a Support Action to give an ally a +1 bonus to their next roll before the start of your next turn.

Sorceress

These magical girls specialize in offense. They can deliver more powerful and accurate attacks.

Aim: In a Full Battle, you can use a Support Action to get a +1 bonus on the next ranged attack you make before the end of your turn.

Boost: In a Skirmish you can take 1 Overcharge to score an additional Hit. In a Full Battle you can, up to 2 times per scene, add +2 to the damage of a successful attack.

New Magical Girls

Sometimes new players join the game, and sometimes magical girls die or leave, so sometimes you'll want to introduce new magical girls to the story.

If you want to introduce a character who is already a magical girl, fill out the sheet completely. Give the character 1 Trauma or 3 Overcharge to start with, and then choose one from this list or create something similar:

- A magical girl you were friends with died.
- Your magic caused a major incident, hence you're now in a new town.
- You suffered a betrayal.
- You learned a terrible secret.

GM Advice

This game works off of a mixture of the PCs' agency and the unfolding world around them. There are things out there for them to discover, some of which will come bite them in the ass sooner or later, and it's up to them to figure out what to do about it.

Principles

- Talk to the characters, not the players.
- Apply pressure and see what happens.
- Ask pointed questions and build on the answers.
- Let everything flow from the fiction.
- Paint a bright and terrible world.
- Highlight the dichotomy of mundane and magical.
- Unfold the past.
- Unfold shocking truths.
- Celebrate femininity.
- Everything has a cost.
- Keep the faint, flickering light of hope alive.

Secrets

d66	Result
11	A magical girl remade the world for the better at great cost, but there are those who would turn it back.
12	A tsukaima who collects 169 Oblivion Seeds can use them to become a god.
13	All youma are actually fallen magical girls who have become consumed by magic and darkness.
14	Certain ordinary people contain Oblivion Seeds, and a magical girl can learn how to detect them. Taking the seed from such a person requires killing them though.
15	Each magical girl contains a Linker Core, a magical device that is the source of their power. It is possible to steal this and use it, but the magical girl will die soon after.
16	Each magical girl will eventually succumb and turn into a youma.
21	Each Oblivion Seed used dims the light of the stars.
22	Every wish granted to a magical girl leeches away the life of the planet. After 13 wishes are granted, it's all over.
23	Human beings are creatures of flesh and blood and nothing more. When they die, their biological processes simply stop, and they come to a very permanent end. Even magic cannot change this fundamental fact.
24	Magical girls are a tool for giving birth to the next phase of human evolution.
25	Magical girls come from something in the collective unconscious of mankind, and they are exerting a force backwards, slowly changing mankind into something else.
26	Magical girls' bodies become magical to withstand the stresses of battle, and do not age.
31	Mankind is beyond redemption and will destroy itself.
32	Some dark, mad force is creating its own crude, flawed imitations of magical girls.
33	Some magical girls are actually youma that have become fully sentient. Some of them don't even know what they really are.
34	The astral plane is where youma originate from, but there's also something else in its depths, a shining palace...

35	The city and everyone who lives there, everyone you love, are fakes except for the magical girls. No one knows what lies beyond the confines of the city.
36	The city is a tiny bubble of reality in a dying universe.
41	The government is well aware of the magical girl phenomenon, and has special agents trained to eliminate any magical girls who cause too much trouble.
42	The last magical girl will ascend to something like godhood.
43	The tsukaima are minor angels. Angels are beings of sacred geometry beyond human comprehension.
44	The tsukaima serve a particular goddess, and if the other gods find out what she's done they'll destroy all of the magical girls, and maybe even the whole world.
45	The wishes the tsukaima promise are a sham. Or at least, no magical girl has ever survived long enough to claim one.
46	The world is fragile, always on the edge of oblivion, and despite the terrible sacrifices they demand, the tsukaima are our only path to salvation.
51	The youma actually only target people with real evil in their hearts, and magical girls are the unknowing dupes of forces that wish to maintain a certain level of evil and suffering in the world.
52	There have been magical girls throughout human history, fighting and dying. Without the tsukaima's influence humanity would still be living in caves.
53	There is a being that could be called God, and if mankind is to have a future the magical girls must kill that being before it's too late.
54	There is a group of magical girls who have been murdering other magical girls in order to prevent some kind of major disaster.
55	This world is a farm, and the harvest is coming.
56	This world is actually one colossal Nightmare, and somewhere in it is a youma.
61	When a magical girl collects 13 Oblivion Seeds, she has proven too powerful and the tsukaima will try to destroy her.
62	When all of the youma are gone, the magical girls will be forced to fight and kill each other.
63	Witches are those magical girls who have turned into youma and then somehow crossed back into something like humanity.
64	Youma are a security mechanism for the world, and magical girls are actually malfunctioning youma.
65	Youma are actually the souls of the restless dead, and by defeating them you are consigning them to oblivion.
66	Youma are not beyond redemption.

World Moves

“World moves” are a type of moves that the GM uses to shape the course of the game. They’re generally less mechanical than the moves that players use, and you can think of them less as “special moves” and more like guidelines for how to handle certain events in the game.

Advance a Threat

When there is an active threat somewhere in the city, decide how many stages it will go through before it comes to pass. When it seems appropriate, move the threat forward, introducing new issues arising from its presence.

Apply Hope/Overcharge/Trauma/Harm

Although these various types of points will come up through moves the players use, you can also apply them when the fiction calls for it.

Complicate Life

Introduce something that makes a magical girl's life more difficult, whether it stems from something magical or mundane.

Endanger

Put something a magical girl cares about in danger.

Reveal a Secret

Put one of the secrets about the game's setting out in the open for the magical girls to react to.

World moves are a new thing and will definitely need a lot more fleshing out as I feel out what the game actually needs. They are of course analogous to MC moves in *Apocalypse World*.

New Moves

In creating the moves included in the rulebook I've tried to cover the major things that come up in a typical *Magical Burst* game session. That said, you may do things differently, or you could just run into an unusual situation. Sometimes you can handle a situation simply through the conversation, but you may want to create a move to handle it, especially if it becomes a recurring thing and it would be more interesting to have some rules connected to it.

More detailed notes on creating new moves to come.

Youma Creation

Youma Appearance

d66	Base Appearance	d66	Base Appearance	d66	Base Appearance
11	Amorphous	31	Flower	51	Robed Figure
12	Artist	32	Girl	52	Robot
13	Bat	33	Insect	53	Snake
14	Butterfly	34	Lion	54	Sound
15	Camera	35	Magical Girl	55	Sphere
16	Car	36	Man	56	Spider
21	Cat	41	Motorcycle	61	Statue
22	Child	42	Mouse	62	Tree
23	Clothes	43	Musician	63	Warrior
24	Dancer	44	Painting	64	Witch
25	Die	45	Rabbit	65	Woman
26	Dog	46	Religious Figure	66	Worm

d66	Odd Trait	d66	Odd Trait	d66	Odd Trait
11	Burning	31	Gemstone	51	Polka-Dotted
12	Centauroid	32	Giant	52	Runes
13	Checkered	33	Goblin	53	Shackled
14	Clockwork	34	Harlequin	54	Shadow
15	Cotton Candy	35	Horns	55	Slime
16	Demonic	36	Ice	56	Spines
21	Doll	41	Lacy	61	Suit
22	Elongated	42	Lightning	62	Tentacles
23	Eye	43	Luminous	63	Tiny
24	Faceless	44	Lycanthrope	64	Venus Flytrap
25	Flaming	45	Naga	65	Wall
26	Gelatinous	46	Plush	66	Winged

Youma Motivation

d66	Motivation	d66	Motivation
11	It believes it is a superior life form, and intends to crush all lesser creatures.	41	It wants to be completely, utterly alone.
12	It constantly lashes out because of the pain it feels.	42	It wants to be with a particular person, and will fight anyone who tries to get close to them.
13	It feels lonely, and will try to engulf anyone it thinks could alleviate its loneliness.	43	It wants to be with another particular youma.
14	It hates a certain type of person, and attacks anyone it recognizes as that type.	44	It wants to destroy the world.
15	It hates humanity, and wants to wipe out mankind.	45	It wants to die.
16	It hates magical girls.	46	It wants to end all pain for everyone, by any means necessary.
21	It hates tsukaima and wants to destroy them.	51	It wants to entice victims to come to it so it can devour them.
22	It is a creature of sincere love for all, but as a youma its expressions of love are inherently destructive.	52	It wants to kill one particular person at all costs.
23	It is a servant of entropy, and wants to destroy everything that has form.	53	It wants to spread mischief.
24	It is constantly reliving a painful memory.	54	It's a berserker animal and just attacks things.
25	It is obsessively trying to complete some small task, and deals with interruptions with murderous rage.	55	It's a scared animal and wants to go to a place of safety.
26	It is trying to give a performance of some kind.	56	It's making... something.
31	It is trying to hoard some meaningless object.	61	It's protecting a particular person, and lashes out with lethal force at any perceived threats.
32	It is trying to repeat a half-remembered mundane activity.	62	It's searching for a particular memento.
33	It seeks to punish what it considers to be sinners.	63	It's trying to hoard Oblivion Seeds, and thus lashes out at anything that looks like it might have them.
34	It simply wants to be alone, and lashes out at any who come near.	64	Someone has found something it wants to feed on, and it remains more or less tame as long as it has that.
35	It thinks of itself as a force of justice.	65	There are other, lesser youma it wants to protect and feed.
36	It wants revenge on a particular magical girl.	66	There is a particular object it despises, and it will attack that object or anyone who gets close.

Youma Magical Theme

d66	Element	d66	Element	d66	Element
11	Ash	31	Gravity	51	Rainbows
12	Black Holes	32	Hate	52	Rot
13	Blood	33	Ice	53	Sickness
14	Bone	34	Light	54	Smoke
15	Cake	35	Lightning	55	Soul
16	Chains	36	Magma	56	Sound
21	Darkness	41	Magnetism	61	Steel
22	Despair	42	Muck	62	Stone
23	Dust	43	Nothingness	63	Sugar
24	Flame	44	Pain	64	Water
25	Flowers	45	Poison	65	Wind
26	Glass	46	Rage	66	Wood

Youma Magical Weapon

d66	Weapon	d66	Weapon	d66	Weapon
11	Arrows	31	Fangs/Teeth	51	Ribbons
12	Artillery	32	Flamethrower	52	Rockets
13	Ball	33	Gas	53	Scream
14	Bare Hands	34	Gears	54	Scythe
15	Belt	35	Guns	55	Spikes
16	Blades	36	Hammer	56	Stinger
21	Bludgeon	41	Horns	61	Swarm
22	Book	42	Kitchen Utensils	62	Swords
23	Brush	43	Laser	63	Tendrils
24	Chain	44	Magic Wand	64	Tentacles
25	Claws	45	Musical Instrument	65	Vehicle
26	Daggers	46	Needles	66	Whip

Power and Spread

Each youma has two values that serve as the basis of its abilities. Power is the youma's overall level of raw power, while Spread is how widely it can project that power at a time. A Power rating of 2-4 should be challenging but not insurmountable for a typical group of magical girls, while a Spread rating equal to the number of magical girls should be about right for the youma to hold its own and provide a suitable challenge rather than being outnumbered. These are ultimately just guidelines though, and you don't necessarily need to tailor every youma to what the PCs can handle.

Skirmish Values

To use a youma in a skirmish, you only need two main values: its Spread (which you use as-is) and its Defensive Modifier, which is based on its Power. The modifier is a bonus or penalty that magical girls who fight it in a skirmish have to all of their rolls. Although it's good to have some sense of the youma's flavor to better narrate the fight, in purely mechanical terms we abstract its abilities down to these two numbers.

Power	Defensive Modifier
1	+1
2-3	+0
4-5	-1
6-7	-2

Full Battle Values

To use a youma in a full battle you'll need some more detailed information.

In full battles you can have multiple separate youma for the magical girls to fight. If you want the fight to be balanced, the total Spread values of the youma should add up to roughly the number of PCs, plus 1 or 2.

Where for magical girls Overcharge is a burden that they accumulate, for youma it is a source of power that they deplete.

Power	Resolve	Damage Bonus	Attributes	Overcharge
1	4 + (Spread x 3)	+0	2	2
2	10 + (Spread x 3)	+0	2	4
3	12 + (Spread x 4)	+1	3	6
4	14 + (Spread x 5)	+1	3	8
5	18 + (Spread x 6)	+2	4	10

Youma Classes

Each youma has a “class” that determines its abilities and general fighting style. These abilities scale based on the youma’s Spread to give it tools to be able to put up a good fight when outnumbered. Each class has basic abilities based on the youma’s Spread, and allows for Special Abilities as well.

The alpha only has basic write-ups of three of the planned youma classes (the others so far being Brute, Flytrap, and Hunter). I’m also considering having general Youma Talents in addition to the abilities from youma classes.

Artillery

Artillery youma are good at bombarding their foes from a distance.

Spread 2: 2 Turns/Round

Spread 4: 3 Turns/Round

Pick 2 of the following, or 3 if the youma is Power 4 or higher.

- **Binding Shot:** After successfully hitting a target, the youma can spend 1 Overcharge to impose the Bound condition.
- **Bombard:** The youma can spend 1 Overcharge to make a ranged attack target at all targets in one zone.
- **Escape:** As a Support Action the youma can spend 1 Overcharge to teleport to any zone.
- **Sniper:** The youma can make ranged attacks at a range of 1-5.

Duelist

A duelist youma is a tricky close-in fighter.

Spread 2: Opportunistic

Spread 3: 2 Turns/Round

Pick 2 of the following, or 3 if the youma is Power 4 or higher.

- **Hamstring:** After a successful melee attack, the youma can spend 1 Overcharge to impose the Bleeding condition.
- **Riposte:** When a melee attack misses the youma, it can spend 1 Overcharge to make a basic Melee Attack against its attacker.
- **Sweep:** The youma can spend 1 Overcharge to make a Melee Attack against all targets in the same zone as it.
- **Trip:** After a successful melee attack, the youma can spend 1 Overcharge to impose the Dazed condition on the target.

Hive Mother

Hive Mother youma work by having a swarm of Imps.

Imps: The Hive Mother begins with Spread+1 Imps. Place each one in the same zone or an adjacent zone.

Spread 3: 2 Turns/Round

Pick 2 of the following, or 3 if the youma is Power 4 or higher.

- **Spawn Imps:** Once per turn as a free action the youma can spend 1 Overcharge to create a new Imp in the same zone.
- **Detonate Imp:** As a Main Action the youma can cause one of its imps to explode. This destroys the imp, but in effect delivers a melee attack from the main youma to every enemy in the same position as the destroyed imp, with a bonus of +1 to damage.
- **Swarming Imps:** If there are 2 or more imps in the same zone, their attacks cause 1 additional point of damage. If there are 4 or more imps in the same zone, they receive +1 to their attacks.

Imps

“Imps” are small, weak magical creatures. They have the potential to grow into full youma if left unchecked, and it’s not unusual to find them in the company of youma, especially since a Nightmare makes a good shelter for them.

Skirmishes

In a skirmish, imps that accompany a youma are in effect a small part of the overall opposition. Simply factor the fact that the youma has some pet imps into the youma’s Power and Spread.

If magical girls are fighting just imps, you can determine their skirmish stats as per a youma, though it should be as a weaker youma unless the PCs are facing a particularly large number of imps at once.

Full Battles

In a full battle, imps always act on the same initiative. Each one has a defensive modifier of +1, and will die if it takes any damage from an attack. On its turn, an imp can take a Main and Support Action as usual, but it is limited to movement and basic melee attacks.

This section will also have rules for creating hostile magical girls and witches. Both will use the normal youma rules, but with special Classes.

Hostile Magical Girls

Magical girls don’t always get along, and sometimes a fellow magical girl can be a dangerous enemy. In terms of flavor you can flesh them out a bit along the same lines as the players’ magical girls, though obviously you’ll need to decide why they’re making themselves a problem for the PCs.

It is possible to stat up an NPC magical girl like a PC, but in practical terms such a character will be very vulnerable if they try to fight a group of PCs, because PC magical girls are meant to function as a team. In game terms if you want them to be a credible threat you’ll need to stat them up using the youma rules.

Witches

“Witches” are magical girls steeped in some dark power, making them stronger but twisting their minds. Even the tsukaima aren’t quite sure where they come from, but if pressed they say it seems to be some kind of variant of the magical girl system, or perhaps a malfunction. Whatever the case, witches are not merely playing at being the bad guys, and they are not normal magical girls with a conflict of interest. Something inside them is broken. They are dangerous and destructive people, and they would be dangerous even without magical powers.

Witches’ powers are considerably stronger than those of normal magical girls. In game terms you can create witches using the youma rules (tending towards the high end of the Power scale), changing only the flavor. You can develop them as characters much like a normal magical girl, with two notable exceptions.

Magical Theme and Weapon

A witch has a magical theme and magical weapon much like a normal magical girl, but these become twisted. A magical girl who once fought with blazing red-orange flames will start conjuring ghastly blue-purple fire instead.

Obsession

Each witch has an obsession, a twisted, overriding notion or desire that consumes her. It’s one of the few things holding her together, and a witch is unlikely to ignore the subject of her obsession for any reason.

Other NPCs

Section on tsukaima and normal people to go here.

Appendix

Afterword

The kernel of the idea for this game came from *Puella Magi Madoka Magica*, a dark magical girl anime series that became something of a phenomenon. From the beginning *Magical Burst* was never *quite* a PMMM RPG, but the series was nonetheless a key inspiration. I'd been fascinated by the magical girl genre, and PMMM helped crystalize several things to let me figure out my own take on it. The isolation of secrecy, the alien nature of the mascot critters, and the questions about the deeper purpose of magical girls were among the ingredients I'd been missing, and the basics of a game quickly came together. Not for the first time I hit on something that people were hungry for, and it became one of my most popular creations.

Even so, designing *Magical Burst* has been a long and frustrating process, and it's felt like the game has fought against me more than any other I've ever attempted to design. The turning point came in October of 2014 when I vented my frustrations into a sort of sister game called *Magical Fury*. *Magical Fury* is an incredibly light and lean game that does exactly what I wanted it to. It also served the purpose of breaking down creative blocks with *Magical Burst*, and let me get a fresh perspective on stuff that had been dragging the game down. Although they're ultimately two different games, this new (and hopefully final-ish) version of *Magical Burst* definitely has a good amount of *Magical Fury*'s DNA in it, and for that matter a fair amount of text outright copied over. *Magical Fury* was part of a particular point in my life, a turning point on multiple levels.

Apocalypse World has become pretty hugely influential on me as an RPG designer, but especially in the context of *Magical Burst* I think my previous attempts at drawing on it have been a bit clumsy. This version of the game veers significantly closer to AW in a lot of places, but also differs on some very important points, especially where combat is concerned. The radical simplicity of *Strike!* was another important source of inspiration, and it informed some of the key changes that make the 5th draft work. Cutting out unnecessary steps and simplifying things has been a really refreshing process, and I think it will heavily inform how I approach RPG design in the future.

Thematic Inspirations: Dark City, Key the Metal Idol, Little Boy (by Takashi Murakami), Magical Girl Lyrical Nanoha, Planet Guardian, Puella Magi Madoka Magica, Sailor Moon, Yuki Yuna is a Hero

Design Inspirations: Apocalypse World, Don't Rest Your Head, Dungeons & Dragons, Krosmaster Arena, Last Stand, Magical Fury, Meikyuu Kingdom, Persona 3, Shinobigami, Strike!