

Solo Adventures v3

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Forum topic with [original rules](#) and [expanded rules](#)

Perhaps you have a 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.

This system allows you to generate adventures for your magus.

Solo Play

Seasonal activity

Perform each seasonal activity as per the rules in the *Ars Magica Core Rulebook*, Chapter 10.

It is possible to use Covenant Finance and Aura variation for those who wants to manage in detail their covenant.

Step 0 – Mage and Covenant generation

Generate your character as per Core Rules.

As a summary:

Items	Build Points Cost
Summa (Arts)	Level + Quality (level max: 20, quality max: 11+(20-Level) or 22 – whichever is the lowest
Summa (Skills)	Level x3 + Quality (level max: 8, quality max: 11+3x(8-Level) or 22 - whichever is the lowest
Tractatus	Quality (quality max: 11)
Laboratory text	1 point per 5 level
Casting tablet	2 points per 5 level
Virtus sources	5 points per pawn/year
Virtus stock	1 point per 5 pawns
Magical items	2 points per 5 effect's level
Teacher	Communication + Teaching + Relevant Skill(s) level
Specialist	(Relevant positive characteristics + relevant skills) x2

Specialists have a specific role in Solo Play, and to reflect this, their cost has been adapted from the core rule: (Relevant positive characteristic + Relevant skill(s)) x2.

Example: Darius needs a skilled bodyguard, with Str: +2, Dex: +1, Weapon (1H): +5, Weapon (2H): +4. It will cost him (2+1+5+4)x2=14. Other skills and characteristics are not relevant thus are not taken in consideration.

Once the covenant is generated, four derived characteristics are determined:

- Attack: potential from the covenant to support any offensive action outside its walls
- Defence: potential to resist any attempt to assault the covenant and its inhabitants
- Reputation: potential to rely on allies and positive reputation in most social or diplomatic conflicts

- Resources: material resources that can be leveraged to ease some negotiations or pay fines & levy in case of failed challenges. If untapped for year, the covenant is building reserve that can be used later.

Each major boon counts for +3 in the relevant characteristics and minor boon counts for +1. A boon cannot provide bonus in two or more characteristics.

Hooks do not provide negative characteristic as their effects are already taken in account in the number of dice used to roll if an adventure occurs (see Step 1).

Example: Darius is on a hunting spree and did not settle in a regular covenant. His covenant is a small convoy of a few carts and tents settling where his prey leads him. It is a Constantly Mobile covenant (major hook), with a group of Veteran Fighters (minor boon), Loyal to Darius (minor boon). Darius managed to secure the Right (minor boon) to settle wherever he sees fit to hunt – probably in exchange of taking care of more mundane threats (let's hope no Quaesitor looks too much in the detail of such agreement with the local noble). It grants Darius hunting caravan: Atk: +2 (Veteran and Loyal), Reputation: +1 (Rights). Other characteristics are at 0.

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 and +1 to the difficulty of the next adventure.

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 rumours of an infernal hedge wizard, with two bad omens which will make is adventure more complicated (+2 to adventure difficulty).

There is also two other ways to go on adventure:

- Random adventure – only the adventure origin is selected, everything else is determined randomly. It is appropriate when there is some vague threat that the mage wants to tackle, or a simple task (like collecting vis)
- Specific adventure – see Optional rules – Selecting an adventure. This is suitable for very specific outcome: finding a Mystagogue or an expert on a specific topic.

Step 2 – Adventure Difficulty

Roll a Stress Die, ignoring Botches.

Roll	Difficulty	Base Ease Factor
1-3	Easy	Base ease factor: 8
4-6	Average	Base ease factor: 11
7-10	Hard	Base ease factor: 14
11-15	Very Hard	Base ease factor: 17
16-25	Impressive	Base ease factor: 19
26-34	Remarkable	Base ease factor: 21
35+	Almost impossible	Base ease factor: 23

To the base ease factor, add bad omens modifier(s), Period of Grace and temporary modifiers, the resulting number is the Final Difficulty of the adventure.

Period of Grace: for young magi (7 years or less after Gauntlet), the difficulty is decreased by 3 points, due to the benevolent help of nearby covenants making your life easier. This period lasts for seven years, until the next Tribunal.

Example: Darius of Flambeau. A 5 is rolled making this an average difficulty. The target numbers for the challenges should be 11+2 for the bad omens, so 13. And the adventure should take a little over ten days. Darius being 87, he is well past his younger time and does not benefit from the Period of Grace.

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.

Dice	Origine	Difficulty			
		Easy	Average - Hard	Very hard - Impressive	Remarkable & more
1	Nobility	Wandering knight	Local nobility	Great noble	Royalty
2	Religion	Brother	Local priest	Monastery/Bishop	Military Order
3	Mundane	Farmer	Merchant	Guild	City
4	Faeie	Wandering knight	Local nobility	Great noble	Royalty
5	Official	Village representative	Tax collector	Noble representative	Pope emissary
6	Criminal	Thief	Gang of criminal	Murder & mysteries	Assassin
7	Hermetic	Redcap	Mage's House	Quaesitor	Archmage
8	Covenant	Mage's visit	Neighbouring covenant	Far from the covenant	Wizard's March
9	Nature	Storm	Wild animal	Catastrophe	Plague
10	Preternatural	Ghost	Monster	Monsters	Dragon

These are only suggestion to inspire creativity. Feel free to alter or come up with your own. Especially, if the mage has flaw like Plagued by Entity or Susceptibility to..., Faerie or Preternatural Origins should be replaced by the appropriate Origin like Infernal, Divine.

There are no hard rules, use your common sense to make the story challenging and interesting. It is possible that a legal dispute is mostly settled through an exchange of letters, therefore minimizing the negative effect of the Gift.

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 Mage may wish to put off an adventure until convenient.

Note: If the occurrence can be chosen, it can happen between two seasons, minimizing the risk to impact laboratory work.

Example: Darius of Flambeau. A 9 is rolled. Darius hears the rumours at the beginning 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	Mixed Origin	Determined a second origin (Step 3) and determined the complexity for each origin. Ignore any additional 0.

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 d6	Type of Adventure
1	Social
2	Combat
3	Magic
4	Legal/Diplomatic
5	Subtle & sneaky
6	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 – BP loss equivalent to a quarter of the challenge difficulty is appropriate, which can be paid with extra BP accrued during past adventures, Resources, or vis (5 pawns for 1 BP).

The adventure having not being resolved, the next adventure will have an increased difficulty of +1.

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) or find a way to pay 13/4 rounded to the closest 3 BP of penalty. 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 several 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	Subtle & Sneaky
Folk ken	Awareness	Awareness	Artes liberales	Stealth
Etiquette	Martial abilities	Supernatural abilities	Civil and Canon Law	Legerdemain
Charm	Brawl	Realm Lore	Org. Lore	Guile
Carouse	Leadership	Parma magica	Folk ken	Awareness
Guile	Stealth	Penetration	Intrigue	Survival
Intrigue	Athletics	Magic theory	Stealth	
Org. Lore		Certamen		
		Finesse		

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. Additional skills can be used if appropriate (for example Hunt if a wild beast is involved).

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. Sometimes it requires quite a stretch to see how a characteristic can be paired with certain skills, but it will force to think in a creative way, and anyway, nobody is going to blame you.

The dice roll can be further modified by:

- 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. If it is a mastered spell, each mastery level adds +1.
- Items of quality are considered like enchanted items: they provided a +1 bonus per 5 points or fraction thereof.
- Confidence point can be used to boost dice roll as per usual.
- A specialist can be used for a single test during a set of challenge. In that case you use his or her Characteristic + Ability instead of the mage's one. It might be difficult to boost his result with a spell depending on the type of spell.
- Finally, Covenant abilities can be tapped to increase the chance of success. It is possible to have bonus up to the relevant characteristic of the Covenant for a single roll. The bonus granted by a Covenant characteristic can be spread over several rolls but will only replenish at the end of the year.
- Virtues & Flaws – the Gift and Blatant Gift gives a -3/-6 to most social challenges unless there is a plausible reason for the person to be non-pulsed by its effects (like interacting with a ghost or a fae). Other Flaws or virtue can grant modifier.

Example: Two adventures occur during a year. During the first challenge, Darius uses +1 bonus from the Covenant Attack. He can still use a remaining +1 Attack bonus during the next adventure.

Example: Darius of Flambeau. He elects to do the Magic Challenges first, supported by three spells. He selects Penetration 6+Sta(0) (Curse of the Desert, PeAq 25), Parma 5+Qik(+2) (Gift of the Bear's Fortitude, MuCo 25), and

Infernal Lore 2+Int(+3) (with The Inexorable Search, InCo 20). He started by tracking the diabolist (+9 to his roll), that he confronted with Curse of the Desert – he wanted to capture him - (+11) and resisted his magical attack (+12)

For the Social Challenge he will have to cope with the side effect of his Blatant Gift (-6 to social rolls) He will be using Folk Ken (2) + Per(+1) (Whisper through the Black Gate, InCo(Me) 15), Guile (+3)+Str (+2) (Twist of the Tongue, PeCo30), Etiquette (2)+Com (-1) (Calm the Motion of the Heart, PeMe 15). He tried to gather some information prior his meeting with the noble by talking to dead people (+6, no Blatant Gift penalty for that), then used a mixture of lies and intimidation (+11-6=+5) and preventing some of his interlocutors to oppose him and trying to remember some social graces (+4-6= -2).

Guile + Strength is usually not a combination used, but that's what Darius was left with, and he could be interpreted as a clumsy attempt to power his ways with lies and display of martial abilities. It was still better than any alternative he had.

Step 9 – Determine Results

Each challenge is resolved by three skill checks. The final outcome depends on how many successes are obtained.

For each set of challenges:

Number of successes	Reward
Three successes	One reward + 5xp
Two successes	One reward
One success	One reward, one loss
Complete failure	Two losses
+ each botch	One 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 13.

First challenge:

- *Tracking of 9 plus Dice roll of 5=14 Success*
- *Penetration of +11 plus Dice roll of 3=14 Success*
- *Parma of 12 plus Dice Roll of 0, followed by 3, 0 and 1 (two extra both dices for the 2 bad omens) =Critical fail.*

Second challenge:

- *Folk Ken plus Per (6) plus dice roll of 5=11, boosted by Confidence for 14, Success*
- *Guile plus Str (5) plus dice roll of 0, followed by 2,6,9 = 5 Fail*
- *Etiquette (-2), plus dice roll of 8 = 6 Fail*

The Magical challenge has two successes and a critical failure. So, he will pick up a reward, a Loss and one xp. Probably that he was so obsessed by capturing the diabolist that he rushed into the fight without the appropriate protection.

The social challenge allows him also to pick up a reward, a loss and one xp. He gathered good intel but was not able to put it into good use. Not only because of his Gift, but also for his lack of social skills (since he missed two tests by more than 6, the penalty linked to the Blatant Gift).

Step 10 – Rewards

For each set of challenges determined in Step 9 determine the rewards for successfully completing each challenge, according to the number of successes.

Experience & confidence

For each challenge, regardless of the outcome, the mage gets one XP and one confidence point – this confidence point cannot be used in the same adventure, they are accrued at the end of the adventure.

Rewards

Pick from the follow effects.

- Build Points. Gain a number of Build Points (Covenants page 5) equal to the Final Difficulty of the challenge divided by 2 (Base difficulty modified by Winter, Grace period and other modifiers).
- Remove a flaw or hook gained on previous adventures.
- Gain a covenant boon (minor). The boon is temporary if the final difficulty is below 10, permanent if higher.
- Increase a minor boon to a major boon if difficulty is 13 or higher.
- Gain a covenant boon (major), permanently.
- Covenant Boon. Major if difficulty 15+.
- Gain of minor virtue if difficulty is 20 or higher and very complex.
- Reduced Time. The adventure is completed faster than expected in Step 12, divides time by 2.

The accrued build points are a way to abstract all kind of valuable (for mages) items retrieved, collected, and found during the course of the adventure: focus, coins, documents, minor magical items, etc. The mage can use these BP to get tractatus, virtus, etc. Either they were found directly (like a few paws of virtus), or the mage trades them to other mages for specific item.

Temporary effects last a number of seasons equal to the Final Difficulty.

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

Example: Darius of Flambeau. He could:

- *selects Build Points for a total of 14 points (difficulty 14 divided by 2 times 2 rewards). He recovers a Quality 10 Tractatus, possibly on Infernal Lore and 2 paws.*
 - *Since it was a difficulty above 11, he could receive a permanent minor boon. Considering the adventure, Local Ally, Prestige, or Promised Favour could all be suitable - by dispatching the diabolist, some people own him and story about his skills start to spread. Considering Darius' mindset and drive, it is unlikely that he would have recruited any henchmen of the diabolist (minor boon: criminals), but who knows if he needs to bolster his troop.*
 - *Finally, he could also upgrade a minor boon into a major one, his veteran fighters might become Heavy Cavalry. As rewards for getting rid of this evil threat that cursed his wife and daughter a rich merchant gave Darius his best horses as reward.*
 - *He also gains 2 experience points and 2 Confidences points.*
- Any combination of build points and minor boon is suitable.

Items	Build Points cost (after creation)
Tractatus	Quality (quality max: 11)
Laboratory text	2 points per 5 level
Casting tablet	3 points per 5 level
Virtus sources	7 points per pawn/year
Virtus paws	1 point per pawn

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.

Roll	Losses	Notes
1-5	Build Points	Lose 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 below 13
- Covenant Hook, Minor. Temporary if difficulty below 13
- Increase Minor Hook to Major. Temporary if difficulty below 15.
- Covenant Hook, Major if difficulty above 15
- New Minor Flaw if difficulty above 18
- New Major Flaw if difficulty above 22

Temporary effects last a number of seasons equal to the Final 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, 2 losses. He rolls a 2, 7. These costs him 7 Covenant Build Points and a wound.

The Build points costs Darius 4 points of Vis and 3 Resources points.

He takes a heavy wound (difficulty 13 +5 + 2 stress dice less 5 points for armor).

He chooses the Story Flaw hospital local lord. This is a temporary flaw lasting 13 seasons – which increases temporarily is pool of adventure dice by 1.

Step 12 – Time

The adventure takes a number of days equal to:

- the final 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 19 days in total to track down and deal with the hedge wizard. (13 for base difficulty plus 2 for both the challenges and 1 for the botch and 3 for the fails)

Conclusion

Weaving all the results from the above process into a cohesive story.

Example: Darius of Flambeau. In the Spring of 1232 Darius of Flambeau hunts a diabolist hiding in the manor of Baron Ramon. A battle ensues with Darius the victor however he suffers a heavy wound and spends quite some Vis. He will not rush carelessly next time.

Unfortunately, he is heavy handed in his dealings with Baron Ramon culminating in being caught trying to stuff the body of the diabolist 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 tractatus, while vowing to get better armour or to bring along a shield grog.

Optional rules

Acquiring books, tractatus and labtext

As long as the magus can pay Redcaps fees, he can order as many books and tractatus as he wants. Summae can only be borrowed (unless earned as Major Boon - Exceptional Book).

Book	Level & Quality	Cost per year (pawns)	Availability
Roots (Art)	5/15	1	1d3 seasons
Roots (Art)	6/21	2	1d3 seasons
Summa (Art)	10+1d10/15-1d6	2	1d3 seasons
Summa (Art)	17+1d6/13-1d6	3	1d6 seasons
Roots (Ability)	2/15	1	1d3 seasons
Summa (Ability)	5/12	2	1d3 seasons
Summa (Ability)	8/10	3	1d6 seasons

Tractatus are not lent, they are sold for 1 pawn and their quality is random: 7+1d6. They are usually delivered within the next season, but if the covenant has a large collection of tractatus (10 or more) on one topic, it might take longer to secure a new one (1d3 seasons).

For labtext, it is possible to find a labtext for any spell present in the Core rulebook. For spell with general level, it becomes more costly and difficult to source higher level variant (magnitude 7+). Increase the amount of virtus required by 50%.

For spells coming from Sourcebooks, their access can be more limited and might require an adventure, or even an initiation if linked to a Mystery Cult.

Looking for a master (non-hermetic skill)

Consider this endeavour as a simple adventure (one set of challenge), of social type, with the possibility to use a Craft/Profession/Supernatural skill on top the usual list of skills.

Type of learning	Difficulty	Build points cost
Training through practice	Master's skill +3 (skill max: 9)	5+Master's skill
Teaching	Teaching source quality +6 (max teaching source quality: 9)	Teaching score quality + Skills taught
Mystagogue	Prs + Mystery Cult Lore + 8	

The teaching source quality does not take in consideration any virtues or flaws from the magus.

The Mystagogue never becomes a companion, usually Mystagogue are mage on their own. They will be willing to teach another member of their cult but would need something in exchange worth their time.

Playing with grogs and companion

Your magus wants to bring grogs with him? If they are generic grogs, they are handled as a Boon providing a bonus to Attack or Defence. If they are more unique, they are handled as "Specialist".

Each magus has always a shield grog with him, without special skill, but able to take a hit for him.

	Build Points cost
Specialist	Relevant attributes + (main skills x2)

However, bear in mind that if it is possible to have several specialists, only one test per challenge can be undertaken by a specialist.

Final recommendations

My recommendation if you want to use this rule set:

- Start with a mage fresh out of gauntlet.
- Start with a Spring covenant, with 300 Build Points where you are the only magus, with four to six minor hooks and boons or equivalent.