
2-5
14+
60-90min
Rules of the Game
The Big Book of Madness™
A game by Maxime Rambourg
Illustrated by Naïade
iello

For generations, the Elementary College has shaped aspiring magicians such as you in mastery of the arcane: water, fire, earth, and air. ...but your first year has been a little disappointing. So far, you can barely spark an ember a couple of inches. You spend more time memorizing books on theory than exploring real spells that will make you the great magicians you are destined to become.

Yet you know that the school's basement hides the largest magic library in the world. The most powerful spells are hidden from the eyes of apprentices like you. It is said that this library is home to the Big Book of Madness, a huge tome with mysterious powers. You were warned that opening this book would be the biggest mistake a magician could make... but surely those are empty threats professors conjured to guard their best spells!

Tonight, you decided to open the doors of the forbidden library so you can finally gain your rightful powers. Curious and excited, you lifted the cover of the immense book enthroned in the middle of the room.... In a burst of light, it seemed to come to life, the pages turning themselves.

You immediately realized your error! The Big Book of Madness is a prison, trapping the worst magical creatures imaginable, each capable of wreaking tremendous havoc... and you just released them. You must take them down!

You must quickly learn the best spells in the library around you, dominate the elements, and get away—if only you'd paid more attention in class! But beware: The mere sight of these horrible creatures may well drive you mad!



Introduction

You take on the roles of student magicians, who have imprudently opened an ancient grimoire that imprisons powerful Monsters. Your goal is to reseal the pages of the book, one by one, and vanquish the final boss, all without going completely mad.

This is a cooperative game, which means all the players win or lose together.

Contents

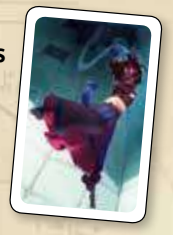
- **48 Curse cards**





- **136 Element cards**
  (34 in each of 4 elements):
  - 18 value-1
  - 10 value-2
  - 6 value-3

- **35 Madness cards**



- **56 Spell cards:**



- **20 Basic Spells (white border, 4 per player)**



- **36 Library Spells (black border)**

- **8 Magician sheets (with a player aid on the back)**





- 17 Grimoire cards:
  - 4 cover pages (with a Monster on the back) 1
  - 12 interior pages (with effects on the front and a Monster on the back) 2
  - 1 final page (with final Monster effect on the front and the back cover on the back) 3.

- 1 Invocation marker (book)



- 1 Round marker (hat)



- 1 Active Player token



- 16 Element tokens (4 in each of 4 elements)



- 1 gameboard



- The rules of the game



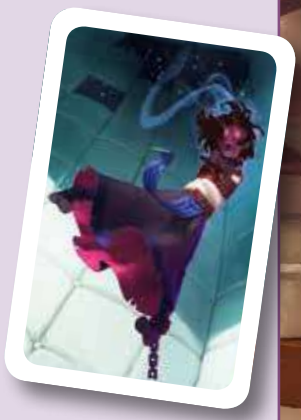


Madness Cards

During the game, you accumulate Madness cards whenever your deck is empty, or when you are beset by Curses or Monsters. If you get too many Madness cards, you risk going mad and losing the game.

Anytime you must draw a card and your deck is empty, add a Madness card to your discard pile before shuffling it back to create a new deck.

Note: You can get rid of your Madness cards by putting them in the support pool, by destroying them, or by curing them with Spells and Elements.

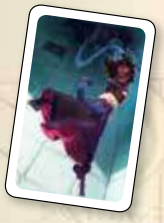




Setup

- Place the gameboard ① on the table.
- According to the number of players, place the Madness cards ② on the window space on the board. This is the Madness stack.

Number of players	Number of Madness cards
2	20
3	25
4	30
5	35



- Separate each Curse ③ according to type (Water, Earth, Fire, Air, or Multi-Element) and shuffle each type. Then place each type in a face-down stack beside the gameboard.
- Place the value-2 and value-3 Element cards face-up on the table, stacked by element and value to form 8 stacks ④.
- Each player takes the four Basic Spells (Combustion, Ice, Growth, and Telepathy) ⑤. Place your four Basic Spells face-up on the table in front of you.
- Each player chooses a Magician ⑥. Feel free to discuss your choices, especially considering the distribution of Elements in the starting cards. Then each player takes Element cards indicated on their Magician sheet. Return all remaining value-1 Element cards to the box.

  Once you receive your starting Element cards, shuffle them to form your deck, and place it face-down in front of you.

- Compose the Grimoire ⑦:
  - Place the Final Page card on the right half of the Lectern, with the Bonus/Failure side facing up.
  - Shuffle the interior pages, and draw five random pages from them. Place them on top of the Final Page, with their Bonus/Failure side facing up.
  - Draw one random Cover Page, and place it face-down (cover-side-up) on top of the other cards on the Lectern.

  The Grimoire is ready.



- Sort the Library Spells ⑧ by Element, face-down. Draw one random Spell for each Element of value 1, 2, and 3. Use them to form four face-down decks (one per Element), with the value-1 Spell on top, and the value-3 Spell on bottom. Flip over the top card (a value-1 Spell) of each deck so the top card is face-up. These are the Library Spells that you can learn during the game.



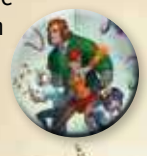
- Place the Round marker ⑨ on the Round track on the gameboard according to the difficulty level you want (see "The Round Track" below). For your first game, we suggest that you put the marker on the first level (Roman numeral I). This determines how many Curses you face per round.
- Place the Invocation marker ⑩ on the Invocation space of the Invocation track.



- Place the Element tokens near the board ⑪. You will need them only for some Curses.



- Randomly select the first player, who takes the Active Player token ⑫. Then each player draws 6 cards from their deck to form a hand.



You are ready to start the game.

The Round Track

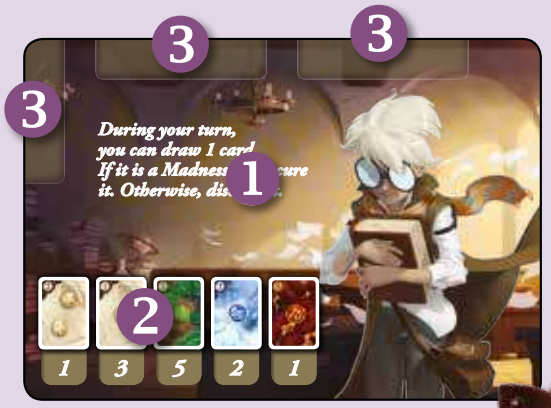
The Round track is set up like a chart. The rows on the chart mark the 6 Rounds of the game. The columns represent the different difficulty levels (I: Easy, II: Medium, III: Difficult). You choose only one difficulty level at the beginning of a game. For your first game, we suggest that you start with Easy.



The icons (/) indicate the number of Multi-Element Curses to add: 0 (if there is no icon), 1 card (), or 2 cards ().

Magician

1. Magician's Ability
2. Starting Element cards
3. Slots for cards in the support pool







8





1





3



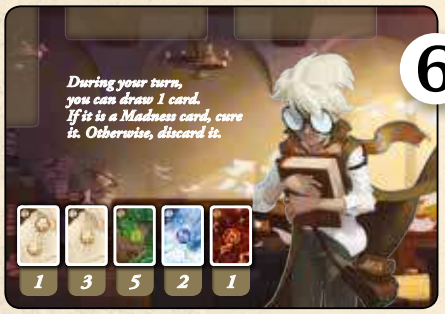
4



11

12





6

Deck



Discard

Play area for a player





5





5th Spell

Reading the Grimoire



1. Monster
2. The Monster's Arrival Effect
3. The Monster's Curses



4. Success Bonus
5. Failure Penalty
6. The Next Monster's Curses

Overview

To win, you must vanquish the Monster on the last page of the Big Book of Madness without going mad. You have 6 Rounds to accomplish this. Each Round, a different Monster attacks you by placing Curses on you. To defeat a Monster, you must destroy all its Curses before the page turns at the end of the Invocation track. If you succeed, you earn a bonus ! If you do not defeat the Monster in the number of turns allowed, the page turns, the monster escapes, and you suffer a penalty . Remember, you need to defeat only the final Monster to win. But first, you have to get to it!

Each player has a deck made of Element and (eventually) Madness cards. Unless an effect says otherwise, you can only draw cards from your deck.

When you must draw or destroy a card from your deck, and your deck is empty, you must add a Madness card to your discard, then shuffle the discard to form a new deck.

You have two other zones in your play area. One zone is indicated by the slots around the edge of your Magician. These are your support slots which form the support pool (see page 8, *Your support and the support pool*). The other zone is for your Spells. Spells (whether Basic or from the Library) are not part of your deck, but are available face-up in front of you; you are their owner.

To activate Spells at your disposal, you need Element cards. Use Element cards to destroy Curses, learn more powerful Spells, and buy better Element cards. Each player must assemble the best deck possible, while avoiding Madness cards.

Gameplay

Starting with the player who has the Active Player card, players take turns in clockwise order.

On your turn, you are the active player. Your turn is made of four phases:

- Concentration Phase
- Monster Phase
- Action Phase
- Recuperation Phase

After you complete these four phases, the player to your left takes their turn, and so on, until either you turn the last page of the Grimoire to seal it, or you all go mad.

1. Concentration Phase

Refresh the Spells that are in front of you.

Exhausted Spell

A Spell is exhausted when it is rotated a quarter turn (90°).

You exhaust your Spells whenever you activate them.

An exhausted Spell cannot be activated any more until it is refreshed (righted again).



2. Monster Phase

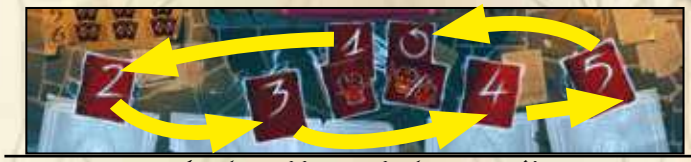
The Monster phase represents the harmful effects of the Grimoire on the players. During this phase, the clock ticks down on the current Monster and you suffer the undesirable effects of Curses.

The Monster Phase involves 2 steps:

- **Advance the Invocation marker** one space (required).
- **Apply the effects of the new space** (if applicable).

Advance the Invocation marker

Advance the Invocation marker 1 space counterclockwise along the Invocation track (1, 2, 3, etc.).



Apply the Effects of the New Space

- **If the marker lands on a space numbered 2–5:**

If a Curse is on this space, apply its effects (see *Apply Curses*, to the right). If there are no Curses here, nothing happens. You are safe… for now.

- **If the Invocation marker lands on the Invocation space:**

Check to see whether any Curses remain on the gameboard.

- **If even one Curse remains:**

Each player suffers the failure effect described on the right-hand page of the Grimoire. After suffering effects, discard the remaining Curses to the bottom of their respective piles.

- **If all Curses were destroyed:**

You vanquished the Monster!
Each player receives the bonus effect described on the right-hand page of the Grimoire.

- Regardless of bonus or penalty, immediately move the Invocation marker to space 1: New Monster. Then turn the page to move on to the next Monster. After you turn the new page, apply the new Monster's Arrival effect, described on the left-hand page of the Grimoire, to all players.

Note: During the first player's first turn, the Grimoire is closed. Advance the Invocation marker onto space 1: New Monster, and open the book, revealing the Monster on the first page of the Grimoire.

- Move the Round marker (on the chart beneath the roman numerals) down one box (except during the first turn of the game). The Round marker indicates how many Multi-Element Curse cards (0, 1, or 2) to place on the Curse spaces along the Invocation track (one per space, starting with space 2).
- Finally, draw three Curses corresponding to the Element symbols on the left-hand page of the Grimoire. Place them (one per space) face-up after the Multi-Element Curses. Start in space 2 if there are no Multi-Element Curses, and note that space 3 can hold two Curses!

Apply Curses

A Curse is applied only once, when the Invocation marker advances onto its space. Curses on earlier spaces (if any) have no further effect. When you advance the Invocation marker, check to see if there is a Curse on the space:

Note: A Curse remains in play, even if it has been applied, until it is destroyed by a player Action or by the Invocation marker reaching the end of its track.

- **If no Curse is there:** Nothing happens. Skip to your Action Phase.
- **If a Curse is on the space:** Apply its effect. Unless indicated otherwise, a Curse applies to all players, starting with the active player and going clockwise. If a player cannot apply the effect, nothing happens; move on to the next player. Occasionally, a Curse can't be applied to anyone. In this case, ignore it.

Note: Space 3 can hold two Curses. If two Curses are there when the Invocation marker reaches space 3, apply the left card's effect to all players, then apply the right card's effect.

Example of effects upon advancing the Invocation marker:

- *If the marker lands on space 2 or 4, nothing happens.*



- *If the marker lands on space 3 or 5, it has landed on a Curse. Apply the Curse's effect.*
- *If the marker lands on the Invocation space, players must accept the failure effect on the right-hand page. Since Curses remain on the Invocation track, the Monster escaped, triggering the failure effect. Then discard the remaining Curses.*

Curse

1 Elements necessary to destroy the Curse

2 Curse effect, applied when the Invocation marker reaches its space



3. Action Phase

During the Action phase, you may use your Element and Spell cards to try to vanquish the Monster and keep it in the Grimoire. Five actions are possible:

- Activate a Spell
- Learn a new Spell
- Acquire an Element card
- Destroy a Curse
- Cure one of your Madness cards

You may take as many actions as you wish, in any order, as many times as you like, as long as you have the Element cards to pay for them. **Each action costs a number of Elements, which you must pay by discarding Element cards from your hand or from the support pool or a combination of both.**

Whenever you pay an Activation Cost, you must discard enough Element cards to produce at least as many Elements as required for the action. **Excess Elements spent on an Action are lost. They cannot be used for another Action.**

A single Element card cannot be used for multiple Actions.

Example: *If an Action requires 3, you can discard three cards that produce 1 each, or one card that produces 1 and one card that produces 2, or one card that produces 3.*

You can also discard two cards that produce 2 each, but you would waste 1.

When you cannot or do not wish to take any more Actions, move on to the Recuperation Phase.

Activate a Spell

You can **activate 1 of your Spells** that is not exhausted.

To Activate a Spell, you must **pay its Activation Cost** by discarding enough Element cards to pay for its activation. Then apply the effect written on the Spell, and exhaust it by turning it 90° clockwise.

You may overpay an Activation Cost to augment a Spell's effect.

You can pay up to three times the Activation Cost. The part of the Spell that can be augmented is **the Spell's Variable** (X).

If you pay the normal Activation Cost, apply the Spell's effect as written. If you pay double the Activation Cost, multiply the Variable by 2. If you pay triple the Action Cost, multiply the Variable by 3.

Example: *A Spell requires 1. It can be applied a maximum of three times by spending 3 when you activate it.*

A Spell can only be activated once per turn, regardless of its Power. Once a Spell has been activated, turn it 90° clockwise to show that it is Exhausted and cannot be used again until it is refreshed.



You must always apply as much of the Spell effect as you can even if you can't apply all of it.

Example: *Eye of the Tornado's effect is "Each player discards 1 card from their hand, then draws 1 card." A player who doesn't have a card in hand to discard still draws a card.*

Element



1 Quantity of the Element Produced by the Card

2 Type of Element Produced by the Card

Your Support and the Support Pool

Certain Spells allow you to place cards in support. When you place a card in support, take a card from your hand and place it face-up on one of your Magician's support slots. Each Magician can have up to three cards in support.

A card remains in support until it is discarded to pay for an Action or the effect of a Curse.

Example: *To pay an Action Cost, you need 1, but you have none left in your hand or your Support. However, there is one in another player's Support. Since that is part of the Support Pool, you may use the card from there.*



Spell



1 **The Spell's Level and Activation Cost:** The number of Elements needed to activate the Spell, and to augment its Power

2 **Learning Cost**

3 **Spell Effect**

Variable (X): The part of the effect that is multiplied by the Power of your Spell

Example: *Arctic Circle's Activation Cost is 3 . If you pay at least 6 all at once, its Power doubles and you multiply its Variable by 2.*
The effect becomes: "Each player places (2) cards in support, then draws (2) cards."

Curse linked to an Element: *Destroying this Curse costs 4 , which could be paid with 2 Element cards worth 2 each.*





Multi-Element Curse: Destroying this Curse costs *1 , 1 , 1 and 1 .*

Learn a New Spell

As long as one is available, you **can learn 1 Spell** from the Library.

You can only learn Spells that are face-up on top of one of the four decks. To learn a Spell, you must pay 2 Elements of the same type as the Spell.

When you learn a new Spell, place it in front of you with your other Spells, ready to be activated. Then reveal the next Spell in the corresponding deck.

Note: You can learn the newly revealed Spell with another Action, assuming you still have enough Element cards to do so.

Each player is limited to five Spells. When you learn a sixth Spell, you must destroy one of your Spells (ready or exhausted) before placing the new one in front of you. Remove the destroyed Spell from the game.

You can use a new Spell the same turn you learn it.

Acquire an Element Card

As long as one is available, you can **acquire 1 Element card of value 2 or 3** from the middle of the table. You must spend Elements of the same type as the Element card you wish to acquire.

The cost to acquire them depends on their value:

- **Value-2 Card:** 2 Elements
- **Value-3 Card:** 3 Elements



When you acquire an Element card, place it in your discard.

Destroy a Curse

You can **destroy 1 Curse** by paying the 4 Elements displayed at the top of the Curse.

As compensation for destroying a Curse, you receive a value-2 Element card of your choice from the table, which you add to your discard. If no more value-2 Element cards remain, you receive nothing.

Cure One of Your Madness Cards

You can **cure 1 Madness from your hand or the support pool** by paying any 2 Elements of the same type. Return the cured Madness card to the Madness stack.

Note: A Madness in the support pool can be cured by any player.

4. Recuperation Phase

At the end of your turn, you must have exactly **6 cards in your hand** (cards in support do not count toward this limit). If you have more than 6, discard Element cards of your choice until you have only 6. You cannot discard Madness cards this way. If you have fewer than 6, draw up to 6. You cannot discard before drawing up to 6.

Remember: If you must draw and your deck is empty, add a Madness to your discard, then shuffle the discard to form a new deck.

If you have 6 Madness in your hand at the end of the Recuperation Phase, **you are eliminated from the game**. Return all your cards to the box, including your Spells. The other players continue the game without you.

After the Recuperation Phase, **your turn is over**. Pass the Active Player card to the player on your left. That player starts a new turn with the Concentration Phase.



End of the Game

You all win the game if you turn all the pages of the Grimoire and vanquish the last Monster.

You all lose the game if:

- You must take a Madness card, but the the Madness stack is empty.
- You fail to vanquish the Monster on the last page of the Grimoire.
- All players are eliminated from the game due to Madness.

Play Modes

The Big Book of Madness offers 3 different play modes:

Normal	Use the normal game rules.
Terror	Each player starts the game with a Madness card shuffled into their deck. This card comes from the Madness stack.
Nightmare	Each player replaces their value-2 starting card with a value-1 card.



Vocabulary and Various Effects

- Curse, Monster, or Spell effects and Magician abilities can contradict normal game rules. Card text always overrides the rulebook.
- If an effect can be applied, it must be applied.
- If an effect can be partially applied, apply every part that you can, starting with the active player and going clockwise. Ignore the rest.
- If you cannot apply an effect, ignore the effect. Other players may still be affected.

Another Player Takes an Action

Certain Spells allow another player to take an action during your turn. This player can take any action, as if it were their turn. However, the non-Active player does not reset their hand to 6 cards, and does not refresh any Spells—before or after these actions. That player only resets their hand in the Recuperation Phase of their normal turn, and only refreshes Spells in the Concentration Phase of their normal turn.

Clarifications About Some Cards

- The *Sorcerer* has the effect, "Place 1 Madness under each Curse. The player who destroys the Curse takes the Madness into their discard." At the end of the Round, if any Madness cards remain beneath undestroyed Curses, return them to the Madness stack.



- If *Avatar*'s Power is augmented, each card in the support pool can be used for only one Action regardless of the the number of Actions you have.



Discard

When you discard a card, it must come from your hand or from the support pool (depending on the effect). A discarded card always goes to its owner's discard. Discarding an Element card permits you to produce as many Elements as indicated on the card to pay the cost for your Action.

Discard Piles

You can consult your discard pile at any time. You cannot look at the cards in your deck. When you add a Madness and shuffle your discard to create a new deck, you may look at the cards in your discard before shuffling.

Determining the Target of a Spell

A Spell's effect text always indicates the players it affects.

- **You:** The player who activated the Spell.
- **Each other player:** Every player except the player who activated the Spell.
- **Each player:** All players are affected individually, including the player who activated the Spell.
- **Player:** Any player of your choice (it could be you).

Destroy

When you destroy a card, remove it from the game and set it aside. Certain effects can return these cards to play.

It is possible to destroy Madness cards. This removes them from the game and sets them aside, unlike the Cure one



of your Madness cards action, which puts Madness cards back on the Madness stack.

You may look at cards that have been destroyed.

Shuffle

If you must shuffle your deck, hand, or discard due to a Spell effect, you do not receive a Madness. You only receive a Madness card when you must draw cards, but have an empty deck.

Neutralize

Some effects might force you to neutralize a Curse or Spell. A neutralized card is flipped face-down. The card now has no effect, but is still considered to be in play.

A neutralized Spell cannot be activated, but counts toward your limit of five Spells. You can choose the neutralized Spell to be destroyed when you learn a new Spell. The new Spell goes face-up, ready for activation, as usual. If you choose to neutralize an exhausted Spell, it remains exhausted when (or if) the neutralization ends.

A neutralized Curse has no effect, but cannot be destroyed. On the following turn, the Curse flips face-up and is once again available to be destroyed. If a Monster has only a neutralized Curse left at the end of its Invocation track, you did not vanquish it, and you suffer the failure effect.

Draw

When you draw a card, always take the top card from your deck and put it in your hand. You may have any number of cards in your hand during your turn, but at the end of your turn you must have six cards in your hand (see Recuperation Phase).

If your deck is empty when you must draw a new card, add a Madness card to your discard, then shuffle the discard to form a new deck.

Magician Ability

Each Magician has a special ability that can be activated once per turn.

Exchange

A card given from one player's hand to another player always goes to the recipient's hand, never to their discard.

Receive a Madness

When you receive a Madness, take it from the Madness stack and put it into your discard. If you cannot take one because there are no more Madness cards in the Madness stack, the game is over! You have all lost, driven mad by the Grimoire.

Receive a Madness into support

When you receive a Madness into support and your support is already full, you still receive the card. However, this does not change the limit. You temporarily have an extra card in support, until an effect or Action relieves your support of the extra card.



Cure

When you cure a Madness card, return the cured Madness to the Madness stack.

Support

Certain Spells allow you to place cards in support. When you place a card in support, take a card from your hand and place it face-up on one of your Magician's support slots. Each Magician can have up to four cards in support. A card remains in support until it is discarded to pay for an Action or the effect of a Curse.

A player can use any or all of the cards in the support pool. You can also discard cards from your hand in addition to those from the support pool to pay costs.

A card in the support pool is always discarded to the discard pile of the player who put it in the support pool, regardless of who caused it to be discarded.

You may place any card in support, even Madness cards.

Madness cards placed in support are not considered to be in your hand when checking the elimination rule.

Remember: "support pool" refers to all the cards in all players' support slots. "support" alone refers to the cards in one player's support slots.

On Top of Your Deck

When you receive a card on top of your deck, place it face-down on top, making it the first card on your deck.

Higher-value

A card with a "higher value" always means an Element card of the same type, with a value precisely 1 greater. So, you can go from a 1 to a 2, and from a 2 to a 3, but never from a 1 to a 3, or from a 1 to a 2.



Here are some tips to help you play your first game better:

- Choose your Magicians carefully, so you have a good balance of starting Element cards.
- Do not neglect the Cure action. Try to keep more Madness in the Madness stack than double the number of players.
- If you specialize in one Element, your Spells will be more powerful.
- Fill your support pool! It gives you more flexibility as each Monster arrives.
- Level 2 and 3 Spells are very powerful, and can tip the balance in the game. Go ahead and buy the Level 1 spells, even if only to expose Level 2 spells.
- Sometimes, not destroying all the Curses of a Monster is OK, if you are prepared for the failure effect. "Taking a dive" can allow you to prepare your hand for the next Monster….

Credits

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ORIGAMES.FR

The Designer Thanks: A Big thanks to everyone who participated over the four years of development of this game. Thanks to the Iello team. They were able to foresee what could the Big Book could become, a game worthy of their interest; particularly Gabriel, his patience, his clear insights, and his confidence.
Thanks to Naïade for the full-blown, Big work of art; a tip of the magician's hat to this artist!
Thanks to my family who have supported the vagaries of the creative process. In particular, Maud, who has regularly shared her coffee table and her time, at every step of this game.
Thanks to Sam and Popo for all of their work.
Thanks to all the playtesters, of which there are far too many to list here. All those who have progressed things with their constructive criticism and all those crazy monstrous sessions.
Great Big Up to the Feinte de l'Ours game café and their volunteers, those who have permitted me to find the time to do all of this, I love you. Special dedication to la Feinte: This is the place that gave birth to this game.
Thanks to my printer and my cutter.
Thanks in advance to my grandmother who will be very proud of me, just like my parents, and my sister, who always supported me unconditionally.
You are all magicians! Thank you.

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