



Paol-

*They killed for it. They died for it.
But in the end it was just a game.*

MacGuffin

by Justin D. Jacobson

MacGuffin

“We’ll always have Paris.”

A Role-Playing Game by Justin D. Jacobson
And Part of the Game Design Duel

MacGuffin is ©2006 Justin D. Jacobson. All rights reserved.
The MacGuffin name and logo are trademarks of Justin D. Jacobson.
Product code BDV7001.

Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Preparing To Play.....	8
Characters	11
Playing the Game.....	16
Appendix	33
The Script	38

Introduction

I squinted hard to focus. I was seeing two of her, which wouldn't normally be a bad thing, 'cept she was holding a gun on me. The Swede just cracked his knuckles. I thought he was too stupid to wait and see how this played out, but all those scars on his face were badges of a hard life. You don't get 'em and still breath without knowin' how to handle yourself.

There it was, on the table between us, mockin' me with its beady black eyes. I decided to make my move. I figured I'd end up with a few extra holes, but I'd be damned if I was going to fail on account of a broad. Not again. Not after the last time.

My hand trembled as I reached for the statue. She tensed her trigger finger. And damned if that big, dumb Swede didn't flash the toothiest grin you've seen this side of Hollywood.

It ended now....

What Is This Game About?

For many games, this question is an esoteric exercise in empty contemplation. For *MacGuffin*, it is of central importance. The very concept of a MacGuffin is that the characters in the movie care deeply about something that is ultimately meaningless. Superficially, it is true to say that this game is about foreign cities dripping with intrigue, fedoras pulled down low, cigarette smoke as a profound statement, the kiss of hot lead, and the lonely strains of a piano dying in the night. That's misleading. That's just the MacGuffin—the catalyst by which the players explore the true focus of the game: Desire. Against the shadow-soaked backdrop of film noir, the desire of the characters is put to the test.

What will you do to get the thing you want most? Will you sacrifice your friend or your partner or your good name? Will you kill? Will you succumb to your demons or abandon your scruples? Will you give up everything short of your last breath?

What Do the Characters Do?

The characters are drawn together for one simple reason: They all want the MacGuffin—whatever it might be. Over the course of the game, the characters will learn more about the MacGuffin and try and track it down, visiting many exotic locales along the way. While undergoing this quest, they will make hard choices about what lengths they will go to ultimately retrieve it.

A Word About Musical Theory

Players should not be dissuaded from playing *MacGuffin* out of fear that they know too little about music. No specialized knowledge of music is necessary to play. All of the relevant terms and symbols are explained and identified along the way. Ultimately, *MacGuffin* embodies music appreciation—not dissection.

A Word About Film Noir

Likewise, players should not be dissuaded from playing *MacGuffin* because they don't like film noir. Umm, are you sure? Maybe you just

think you don't like film noir. Maybe you just don't like black and white movies. Go watch *The Maltese Falcon* and make sure. But, if you want more modern fare, by all means watch *Blood Simple*, *Pulp Fiction*, *Insomnia*, or *A History of Violence* just to name a few. (A more extensive filmography appears at the end of this text.) In the final analysis, the core elements of film noir that make it so gripping—not the films themselves—are what make MacGuffin enjoyable to play. There are suggestions at the end of the text for modifying the game for other genres.

Preparing To Play

MacGuffin is a role-playing game in which the players take the roles of characters apropos to archetypal noir films: the battle-hardened private eye, the siren-like femme fatale, the imposing Scandinavian enforcer, the shadow-shrouded puppet master with a cryptic *nom de cinema* such as “The Fat Man”, and so on. During the course of play, the players create a MacGuffin and send the characters scouring the darkest corners of the globe to recover it. In the final scene, someone kills, someone dies, and someone ends up with the MacGuffin.

What You Need To Play

MacGuffin works best with three or four players. Each player will need the first page of a piece of sheet music and a brightly colored pen. Guidelines for choosing sheet music appear later in this text. You can obtain sheet music from a number of on-line sources (including one listed in the Appendix). In the end, it may be easiest to just stop in at your local bookstore (or surf over to Amazon) and pick up a physical songbook.

The group will also need a copy of the Script, which can be found in the Appendix. Ideally, cds or mp3 files of the sheet music being used can add significant mood to the play environment. Finally, while the MacGuffin is constructed at the outset of play, having a physical representation of it can give focus and import to the scenes as they play out. This might be a small figurine, a canister of film, a gaudy necklace, a cryptically marked dossier, etc.

A game of *MacGuffin* should take about 3 hours to play.

Overview of Play

A full game of *MacGuffin* covers five locales. Each locale is represented by one staff on the sheet music and resolves a specific issue about the hunt for the MacGuffin. These locales are, in turn, comprised of a series of scenes. After defining the specifics of each scene, the players resolve them by comparing the rank of notes the players select from the staff for that locale. The value of these notes can be modified by calling on the assets and liabilities of the character or by using expression marks in the sheet music, such as staccati, rests, dynamics, etc. In the last scene of

each locale, the particular issue associated with that locale is resolved, and the next locale is determined. Along the way, the characters build up Desire to recover the MacGuffin. In the final locale, these resources are fully mustered to determine who ultimately retrieves it. The character who recovers the MacGuffin is nominally the winner, though he or she may have sacrificed much they hold dear in reaching that goal.

Characters

Each character is represented by a single page of sheet music. The musical notes and other marks on the page represent the character's abilities and resources. Additional details and notations are made on the page to represent other aspects of the character, such as their name, physical description, assets, liabilities and so on.

Selecting Sheet Music

You will note that the particular page of sheet music a character uses has a dramatic impact on play. The overall rank of the notes in each staff, the number and type of expression marks, even the title and lyrics of the song, can be called on during the game. As a general rule, you will have more fun and find yourself able to do more things if you abide by a simple guideline: Choose sheet music with as much **ink** on it as possible, and don't get hung up on analyzing the minutiae. Sheet music must have at least five musical staves on the first page. Beyond that, you should choose sheet music for songs that you particularly like or that have cool

titles or lyrics or that you can simply get your hands on.

Because no two songs are alike, some sheets are inherently “better” than others in terms of the resources to be found on them. There is simply no viable way of “balancing” sheet selection. This issue can be handled a number of ways. First, these discrepancies can simply be ignored. In fact, for your first game or two, I recommend you pick sheet music at random or based solely on whether or not you like the song. If your game group is more concerned with crafting interesting stories, you can continue to select sheet music in this manner, relying on the agenda of the players to course correct for any imbalances. Second, you can restrict the manner in which the sheet music is selected. You might have each player select sheet music for the player on their left or select sheet music at random from a limited pool, such as the songbook for a particular movie. While there will still be resource discrepancies among the characters, the incentive to min-max sheet selection is eliminated. Third, if you are overly concerned about these imbalances, your group can review proposed sheet music carefully to ensure that they are in proximity in terms of resources. You could even have each player use the same sheet

music—though that does limit the depth of play.

Additional Notations

After each player has selected sheet music to represent their character, they write in additional information on the sheet. For starters, cross out any number of musical staves, so each sheet has exactly five musical staves for the game. At the top of the sheet, right above the title of the piece, the player writes their character's name. Below the title, the player should write a short description of their character. This needn't be exhaustive—just a handful of notes about what kind of character they are, what they look like, and so on.

To the left of the piece's title, write in bold script "DESIRE".

To the right of the piece's title, each player writes in one asset and one liability for their character. Next to the name of the asset, write "+3"; next to the name of the liability, write "-1". These are the starting magnitudes for the asset and liability. The magnitude of the asset is fixed, but the magnitude of the liability will increase over the course of the game.

When choosing assets and liabilities, players shouldn't worry about the magnitude as the mechanical impact is the same for all of them. They should be words or short phrases of things that could reasonably be expected to arise several times over the course of the game and mesh with the film noir genre. The names of the assets and liabilities themselves should be evocative. Assets should be signature noir feats; liabilities should be harrowing personal demons that threaten to subsume the character altogether.

Good assets are: I Know a Guy Who Can Fix Things, Lips of Fire, One Punch Is All It Takes, I Can Smell a Lie a Mile Away.

Bad assets are: .38 Special (It's just a prop; it doesn't tell us anything about the character.), Very Attractive (Boring!), Can Cast Fireball (Uhm, wrong genre, but see the "Variants" section later in the text.)

Good liabilities are: I Just Need a Nip To Set Me Right, Sucker for a Pretty Face, Faints at the Sight of Blood, Wanted in 23 Countries.

Bad liabilities are: Nasty Scar (Nice color, but it's superficial; put it in the description and try again.), Bad Temper (Boring!), Two Left Feet

(Okay in theory, but it's not *dark* enough.)

Example: Peter wants to play a tough-as-nails private eye. He comes up with a name, "Mickey Nails", and writes that at the top of his sheet. Just below he writes: "Gritty private dick, who speaks softly and carries a big stick. Scar on his left cheek." Then, he picks his asset and liability: "I'll Beat the Truth Out of Him" and "Haunted by His Partner's Death".

Playing the Game

This section presents the rules of play. Each game encompasses five locales. Each of the first four locales is further comprised of five scenes. The final locale is the site of a single showdown that determines the damaged, the dead, and the winner.

Setting the Stage

After character sheets are selected and filled out, the players choose a starting locale that will serve as the initial setting of the game. This should be a city that all the players are familiar with. It might even be the city where the game is taking place. The first locale is represented by the first staff on the sheet. Players should write in the name of the locale next to that staff.

Using the Script

The Script provides the framework for play, i.e., the order and purpose of the locales and scenes. The blanks on the Script should be filled in as

they are determined. The Script should be kept in the center of the play area for all to see. (If desired, each player can use their own copy of the Script to keep notes.) You will note that the Script identifies which characters are involved in the scenes, the purpose of each scene, and the effect of winning or losing each scene. These notes represent a summary of the information found in these rules. If the Script is vague as to a particular point, use these rules to determine the answer.

Starting a Scene

The Script identifies which characters are involved in a scene. One of the players—generally, the winner of the prior scene—is the Director for that scene. The Director specifies where the scene takes place, but it *must* take place within the designated locale. The Director narrates the introduction to the scene; this generally includes a moody description of the time, weather, etc. This is equivalent to the scene directions in a screenplay.

The very first scene of the game takes place in the first locale and always includes all of the characters. The character with the lowest high note

(i.e., the character whose highest note in the staff for that locale is the lowest among all of the characters) is the Director for that scene. For the first scene, the Director specifies the location of the first scene and narrates the introduction of the scene as normal, but also immediately defines the type of object the MacGuffin is, .e.g, statue, jewel, dossier, etc. Although all of the characters are involved in the first scene, they need not be physically present at the location. The first scene allows each player to narrate how their character first came to learn about the MacGuffin and why they want it—even before they know exactly what the MacGuffin is! Establishing the character’s motivation to recover the MacGuffin is an important part of the first scene.

Narrating a Scene

After the Director has introduced the scene, players whose characters are involved in the scene narrate the events of the scene. Each player describes their characters actions, speaks for their character, etc. Players may narrate events beyond their character’s immediate control, but these events may not directly impact the other characters unless the other players approve. Players may *never* narrate the actions or reactions of the

other players' characters. Players may not narrate the purpose and effect of a scene prior to resolution. When the scene has reached a creative climax, any player can request resolution; other players may then briefly narrate additional material they deem relevant to resolution. It is important to keep in mind that only those elements narrated prior to resolution can be called on during the resolution phase (discussed more fully in the following section). Narrating most scenes should take around ten minutes.

Resolving a Scene

Once scene resolution has commenced, players *secretly* mark their sheets, circling what notes and other marks they intend to use to resolve the scene. Marking a resource in this way is known as “burning”. Once used, the resource is stricken out and may not be used again. Additionally, relevant assets and liabilities should be identified next to the note being used. Assets and liabilities may be used in resolving any scene where relevant. Players may only use notes and other elements from the staff representing the current locale.

High Note Wins

Determining the winner of a scene is a relatively simple matter. The general rule is: “High note wins”. That is, the character using the highest note on the musical scale is the winner. For purposes of determining which note is highest, do not consider flats, sharps, key signatures, and other notations. Simply determine which note is highest up on the actual staff.

The value of the selected note can be modified by assets, liabilities, resources, and other factors. This is called bumping and dropping, discussed in the following sections. In a scene with only two characters, bumping your own character’s note or dropping the other character’s note makes no difference. However, it can make a difference in scenes with more than two characters (as dropping another character may allow a third character to win the resolution as opposed to yours).

As to both bumping and dropping, the validity of applying a particular bump or drop should be determined by group consensus. If consensus cannot be achieved, players not participating in the current scene

determine applicability; if all players are participating, the relevant element may *not* be applied.

Still, after the values of the notes are modified by all of the resources, “High note wins.”

In the event of a tie, each of the players involved secretly burns another note. The highest note is the winner. Repeat the process until the tie is broken.

Bumping a Note

Bumping a note means increasing the value of the note. Generally, there are seven ways to bump a note.

Chords: Chords represent a character’s prior experience, usually a flashback. When using a chord as a resolution note, the player uses the highest note in the chord. Additionally, they may bump the value of the note by 1 for *each* other note in the chord. Thus, the top note in a three-note-chord would enjoy a bump of 2. Chords may only be used if the player narrated a relevant prior memory, e.g., a lesson learned from a

prior case, something said by a prior lover, etc.

Locale: A character may bump the value of the note by 1 by incorporating something *specific* from the locale into the narrative, e.g., hopping off the A-Train in New York City, a body bobbing in the Seine in Paris, etc.

Assets: A character may bump the value of the note by their asset value (+3). Assets may only be used if the player narrated the relevance of the particular asset. Likewise, a character may not use an asset if they are impaired (see Ramifications below).

Sharps: Sharps represent obscure knowledge or science, mathematics, history, etc. A character may bump the value of the note by 1 for each sharp he burns up to a maximum of 3. Sharps may only be used if the player narrated some bit of arcane information in the scene, e.g., the history of the overthrow of the King of Siam in 1794. NOTE: Only sharps in the main part of the staff may be burned; sharps in the key signature (the left-most part of the staff at the beginning of the piece) may not be burned. (Sharps are represented by italicized number signs

preceding a note.)

Staccati: Hot lead. Staccati represent bullets but also fisticuffs and even a deadeye stare. A character may bump the value of the note by 1 for each staccati he burns up to a maximum of 3. Staccati may only be used if the player narrated an act of violence or intimidation in the scene—in particular, pulling a gat even if they don't pull the trigger. (Staccati are represented by a small dots following a note.)

Lyrics: A character may bump the value of the note by 3 if they invoke a relevant lyric, *at least part of which* is found in the staff representing the current locale. When burning lyrics, the entire relevant lyric is circled and stricken out. Example: “Tho the stars are bright, the darkness is taunting me” appears on the second and third staves of Harlem Nocturne; the lyrics may be burned when used in the locale represented by *either* staff, but the whole line is stricken when used. (Lyrics should only be used in a game where all players have sheets with lyrics.)

Desire: The character with the highest current Desire score may bump the value of the note by 1. The Desire bump may only be used if the

player narrated how their motivation to recover the MacGuffin influenced their actions during the scene.

Dropping a Note

Dropping a note means decreasing the value of the note. Generally, there are three ways to drop a note.

Liabilities: A character may drop the value of another character's note by that character's current liability value (-1 to start the game). Liabilities may only be used if the player narrated something relevant to the particular liability. A player may only use another character's liability once per locale. Additionally, in all scenes other than the final one, the character with the highest Desire may negate the drop from their liability, but the liability score increases by -2; their demon grows, but their desire to recover the MacGuffin keeps them going. In such an instance, the player using the character's liability is free to do so again in the same locale.

Flats: A long slow drag on a cigarette and its concomitant seductive curl of smoke. Flats represent coolness, luck, and knowing just what to say to

get the upper hand on someone. A character may drop the value of another character's note by 1 for each flat he burns up to a maximum of 3. Flats may only be used if the player narrated something he can lord of the other character, e.g., a brilliant one-liner delivered in a stentorian voice. NOTE: Only flats in the main part of the staff may be burned; flats in the key signature (the left-most part of the staff at the beginning of the piece) may not be burned. (Flats are represented by stylized lowercase b's preceding a note.)

Rests: Trenchcoats, fedoras, and settings drenched in shadow. Rests represent hesitation, slowness, fear, etc. A character may drop the value of another character's note by 1 for each *quarter* rest (also known as a crotchet rest) he burns up to a maximum of 3. Rests may only be used if the player narrated something that could lead a character to hesitate, e.g., a vicious guard dog. (Quarter rests are represented by stylized squiggles.)

Ramifications

After resolution is completed, the players determine the ramifications of it. This includes the mechanical effects on the characters, the impact on

future scenes, and a narrative of the conclusion of the existing scene.

Impairment

Impairment represents the impact of the character's liability on their ability to function. If a character had their liability invoked against them, and they did not win the scene, the magnitude of the liability increases by -1; their demon has cost them dearly and looms ever larger. If the magnitude of a character's liability ever exceeds the magnitude of their asset, the character becomes "impaired". An impaired character may not invoke their asset from that point forward, as their demon has taken an even bigger piece of their soul.

Desire

Each scene has an amount of Desire associated with it as indicated on the Script. The player who wins a scene resolution increases their Desire by that number. The player writes their new Desire total at the top of their sheet.

Setting up the Next Scene

The scene resolution also determines information about the next scene as indicated on the Script. For example, it might determine which characters may or may not be involved in the next scene. The winner of the final scene at each of the first four locales decides the next locale. The winner of the final scene at each of the first three locales decides which number of open staffs is represented by it, e.g., the second open staff. (After the fourth locale, each character has only one open staff.)

Travel Delays

The final scene at each of the first four locales always involves two characters. The non-participating characters suffer some sort of travel mishap on the way to the next locale and must burn their highest note in the next locale in order to participate in the first scene there. The players narrate the specific travel mishap and, if appropriate, how they overcame it, e.g., missing the Orient Express but hitching a ride with a barnstorming bi-plane.

Narrating the Result

The player who wins the scene resolution narrates the conclusion of the

existing scene. In doing so, the player should try to incorporate as many of the elements involved in that scene—including the bumps, drops, and ramifications—as cohesively as possible. It may not be possible to include every single element; that’s fine. When narrating the conclusion, the winner should feel free to embellish with color and style.

Denouement

The fifth locale represents the final showdown. Everything in the game has been building towards this. Someone dies; someone is consumed by their demon; and someone gets the MacGuffin!

Bidding To Be the Director

At the start of the fifth locale, each player secretly marks a single note from the staff. Players reveal, and the highest burnt note is the Director of the denouement. If there is a tie in note value, the player whose character has the *lowest* Desire among the tied characters is the Director.

Setting the Showdown

As with other scenes, the Director specifies where the scene takes place

within that locale and establishes the time, weather, etc. The location must be appropriate for all characters to be present. It should be someplace apropos to a tension-filled showdown, e.g., a warehouse surrounded by the cops, the observation deck of the Empire State Building, an abandoned mosque, etc.

Narrating the Showdown

Where the narration of earlier scenes is more orderly, social, or even genteel, the showdown is chaotic, contentious, and furious. Interrupting another player's narration is permitted when it is appropriate—refuting the character's actions on the force of their liability, for example. Drop in flashbacks to drive the point home. Players push the other characters' liabilities to the limit, squeeze every resource out of their final staff, and make their best claim for the MacGuffin. It is important to only narrate up to the moment of climax. If guns are drawn, narrate up to the point the first trigger is pulled. If the cops are ready to bust down the door, narrate up to the point the sledge splinters the wood.

When every player has said their peace, it is time to resolve the

denouement.

Resolving the Showdown

All of the rules for resolving other scenes apply in the denouement: High note wins, bumps and drops, etc. However, Denouement uses the following additional rules.

Motivation: Players *must* include their character's motivation to recover the MacGuffin.

Experience: A character may bump the value of the note by 3 by calling on an earlier scene in the game. Experience may only be used if the player narrated the relevance of the prior scene to the showdown.

First on the Scene: The winner of the last scene of the fourth locale is the first to arrive on the scene of the Denouement. The player gets to bump their note by 1 for the advantage. To gain the bump, the player must narrate how their character's early arrival affords them an advantage.

Bumps and Drops: Sharps, staccati, flats, and rests are not limited to a maximum of 3. Players may use as many of the relevant marks as they

have in the staff.

Ramifications of the Showdown

After including the points gained from the Denouement, the player whose character has the highest Desire is the winner of the game. The player whose character has the second highest Desire is damaged by their liability; their demon has fully corrupted them, preventing them from achieving their goal. The characters of the other players end up dead—exactly how remains to be seen.

If there is a tie among the characters' Desire scores, the tied players secretly burn an unused note, the higher note finishing ahead of the other, repeating the process until the tie is broken.

Narrating the Denouement

The winner of the game has free rein to narrate the final resolution. What happens to the MacGuffin? What happens to the winning character? How is the second-place finisher damaged exactly? How do the others die? All these questions and more can be resolved by the winning player. It's the

final scene in *Casablanca*. If the group has music handy, the player gets to hear their chosen piece behind them as they spin the end of the tale. It is their moment in the spotlight.

Appendix

Variants

This section presents suggestions and alternate rules for your consideration.

Alternate Genres

This game is firmly rooted in film noir. However, it is possible to use these rules in other genres: fantasy, sci-fi, historical, etc. The only requirements are that the game involve a quest for a specific item, travel to different locales, and lend itself to music. Thus, the game could explore the quest for the Eye of Vecna, the Fifth Element, or the Holy Grail. Obviously, genre-appropriate music should be used.

Using Other Marks

You might notice dozens of other curious marks on your sheet music. As you become more comfortable with the system and reading the sheet music, your group can add other relevant marks representing other

qualities and props. For example, dynamic notations might represent speed; a mordent might represent the death of a non-player character; etc. When adding new marks, make sure you clearly delineate what narration is required to burn the mark and whether it is used to bump or drop a note.

Using a Clock

You might use a timer to limit the duration of scene narration. Ten minutes is a good guideline for most scenes; five minutes for scene three solos. For the final showdown, use fifteen minutes. A visible clock, counting down, can add considerable tension—particularly to the free-for-all final scene.

Filmography

The list of film noir classics would be longer than this game itself. However, the following films, in their own unique ways, are particularly suited for the style of narrative encouraged by *MacGuffin*.

Key Largo (1948) - Humphrey Bogart as his best: a damaged anti-hero

doing what is right.

The Maltese Falcon (1941) - The quintessential MacGuffin classic.

Saboteur (1942) - A great example of a tense movie with multiple locales and an all-time classic of a climatic scene

Ludography

While every game I read offers me something, the following three games have provided specific inspiration for *MacGuffin*.

Burning Empires, Luke Crane - A stunning game with a highly formalized scene structure, competitive play, and a definitive endgame. In short, if BE is the sun, MacGuffin is its shadow—which is appropriate after all since, well, it's about film noir right?

Over the Edge, Jonathan Tweet - Free-form character traits. 'Nuff said. (Well, if you want me to say more, I'll say this: One of the most overlooked yet radical developments in RPG design.)

Spirit of the Century, Robert Donoghue, Fred Hicks, and Leonard

Balsera - While *MacGuffin* doesn't use aspects per se, the idea of mechanics serving double-duty as color is a novel one.

Selected Websites

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Film_noir - The Wikipedia article on film noir, and a damn good one.

<http://rogerebert.suntimes.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/19950130/COMMENTARY/11010314/1023> - Yeah it's a long address; what of it? It's a guide to film noir by Roger Ebert, including such gems as: "A movie which at no time misleads you into thinking there is going to be a happy ending."

http://www.8notes.com/piano_sheet_music.asp - A site with free sheet music. Mostly classical, but usable in a pinch. Thanks, Mike Reeves-McMillan!

<http://www.atlapedia.com/> - An on-line atlas with articles on every country in the world and a good spark for generating exciting locales.

10 MacGuffins

The Briefcase

The Jewels

The Last Will and Testament

The Map

The Microfilm

The Music Box

The Old Sled

The Orphan

The Photographs

The War Plans

The Script

Locale 1: Building the MacGuffin

Scene 1 - What type of object is it? What are the characters motivations for recovering it? (All characters; Desire +1)

Scene 2 - What does it look like? (All characters; Desire +1.)

Scene 3 - Interlude - One player narrates a story their character heard about the MacGuffin. (The loser from Scene 2 *only*; Desire +1.)

Scene 4 - What is it called? What is its history? (All characters; Desire +2.)

Scene 5 - Where was it last seen? (The top two characters from Scene 4; winner decides Locale 2 and staff to use for it; Desire +3.)

Locale 2: On the Trail of the MacGuffin

Scene 1 - Why isn't it in the last place it was seen? (Non-participants from Locale 1, Scene 5 must burn high notes to appear; Desire +1.)

Scene 2 - Who was the last person who had it? (All characters except the loser from Scene 1; Desire +2.)

Scene 3 - Interlude - One player narrates an encounter their character had with the last person who had it. (The loser from Scene 2 *only*; Desire +1.)

Scene 4 - Where is the last person who had it? (All characters; Desire +3.)

Scene 5 - What happened to the last person who had it? (The top two characters from Scene 4; winner decides Locale 3 and the staff to use for it; Desire +5.)

Locale 3: The Big Flashback

Scene 1 - When did the winner of Locale 2, Scene 5 first manifest their

liability? (Non-participants from Locale 2, Scene 5 must burn high notes to appear; Desire +2.)

Scene 2 - When did the loser of Locale 2, Scene 5 first manifest their liability (All characters; Desire +2.)

Scene 3 - Interlude - One player narrates a scene from the MacGuffin's history that demonstrates its value. (The loser from Scene 2 *only*; Desire +1.)

Scene 4 - Two of the participants previously confronted one another about something other than the MacGuffin... (The two characters with the highest Desire; Desire +2.)

Scene 5 - ... And the one who came out on the short end of that confrontation has never forgotten it. (The top two characters from Scene 4; winner decides Locale 4 and the staff to use for it; Desire +5.)

Locale 4: A Final Clue

Scene 1 - Where can the characters find a clue as to the current location of the MacGuffin? (Non-participants from Locale 3, Scene 5 must burn high notes to appear; Desire +2.)

Scene 2 - Part of the clue. (All characters; Desire +3.)

Scene 3 - Interlude - One

player narrates why they were the last to find the clue. (The loser from Scene 2 *only*; Desire +1.)

Scene 4 - The rest of the clue. (All characters; Desire +5.)

Scene 5 - The two participants confront each other to get a head start to the MacGuffin. (The top two characters from Scene 4; winner decides Locale 5; Desire +8.)

Locale 5: Denouement

(See "Denouement" in the rules; Desire +13.)